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RIGHT FOOT FORWARD:
A young student walks past an election graffiti along Exhibition Road that urges citizens to use their votes wisely.



BIKRAM RAI

Point of no return

When the four-party mechanism decided to put Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi in charge of a careening state eight months ago, everyone shook their heads at the political failure that had come to characterise post-insurgency Nepal. Now that elections are bound to happen on 19 November, people have accepted that casting their ballots, no matter how unappealing the candidates maybe, is the only way to end this prolonged transition.

With no local government in place for the last 16 years, ordinary Nepalis care less for federalism and constitution and more for roads and drinking water. The more discerning candidates have therefore refrained from speaking about state restructuring during their door-to-door campaigning.

The 2008 elections came on the back of a popular uprising that promised to give voice to many who had, till then, little say in how their backyards were governed. In

the five years since, many of these aspirations have been betrayed and there is a general disenchantment about round two, not to mention indecision over whom to vote for.

At least this time, the Election Commission has updated the older, proxy-prone voter lists into ones with colour photographs, so Nepalis can go to polling booths knowing everyone's ballot is equal. Whatever the result, we will have to put our faith in democracy to get us out of this tight spot. 🇳🇵



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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

TWO POLLS

Perhaps it is natural that this election feels more like a parliamentary poll than an election for a Constituent Assembly that it is. The reason is that the public mood is one of disinterest and apathy towards issues like state structure, federalism, electoral process, and the role of the judiciary, which all led to the dissolution of the last assembly.

On the campaign trail, the candidates felt the pulse of the people thus their speeches are not so much about the constitution or federalism, but about development and services. The political parties, whatever they may say in their manifestos about the new constitution, are promising people jobs, roads, healthcare, education, electricity, irrigation, and water supply. And that is natural because with inflation, unemployment and stagnant investment, that is what most people are concerned about.

This focus on development is also a result of the absence of local elections for the past 16 years which has left Nepal's villages, districts, and municipalities without elected councils. And even though VDCs and DDCs acquired some residual accountability from the last local elections in 1997, all that was destroyed in the past five years by corrosive cartel politics that turned Nepal into a predatory four-party dictatorship.

The voters also know that this election is necessary because the political parties couldn't agree on state restructuring and forms of government in the last CA. And they haven't seen any progress since last May to address those differences and are doubtful if this election will help resolve them. So they have turned their attention to the everyday issues that are foremost in their minds, knowing full well that it is the political instability of the

Most voters regard this as a parliamentary election and not one to elect a Constituent Assembly. Wonder why?

seven years after the ceasefire that has prevented Nepal from benefiting from the peace dividend.

Nepalis have always shown common sense and voted maturely in elections. And they instinctively know that this interim election government was not strictly constitutional and it was perhaps put into place by

outside interlocutors. Even though the main job of the assembly-to-be is to draft a new constitution within the first year of its five-year tenure, most people are doubtful that this CA will succeed where the past one failed.

But Nepalis are also generally optimistic and we are all open to a pleasant surprise. Which is why if allowed to vote independently and without fear, it is likely that in many constituencies the old faces will lose out to fresh candidates with new ideas. There will still be block votes by caste and ethnicity, there will be intimidation and vote-buying as in the past, but it would be logical to assume that most voters will show that they want change.

But the most positive thing to be said about this election is that it will send the chief justice back to the job he was seconded from. And if all goes well in the coming weeks, he may even do that with his reputation intact. That will restore the separation of powers and perhaps help the process of bringing Nepal's democracy back on track.

Despite the scaled-down strike called by the Dash Maoists and the widespread defiance by the people, this campaign period has gone relatively more smoothly than the YCL-infested poll period in 2008. In the East, the split Limbuwan movement has lost its edge. The Tarai seems particularly subdued. Perhaps it is that the Madehsi people have realised that the leaders they sent to Kathmandu have let them down, or that federalism isn't such a turn-on anymore. The only lame reply Madhesi leaders on the hustings have been able to give is: "Oh, Pahadi leaders are also corrupt."

It is time to move on and the hope is that the 19 November polls will be that turning point.



DIWAKAR CHETTRI

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

THE WAGES OF SIN

I have decided to hold my nose and vote for one of the major national party candidates in my constituency depending on who is best poised to defeat the Maoists at polling time ('The wages of sin', Editorial, #680). I am faced with three choices in this election: sit it out, cast a protest vote for an independent or minor-party candidate or vote for the least of the evils. A protest vote is a tempting proposition, especially to punish the NC and UML for taking my support for granted and failing to deliver, but at the end of the day, I don't have confidence that independent and minor party candidates can really win or make much of a difference in writing the new constitution.

If there is one reason I am voting this election, it is to stop the Maobadis from repeating the charade of the last six years. As mad as I am with the NC and UML, I blame the Maoists, along with the Madhesbadi parties, more than anyone else, for the failure to write a constitution and for poisoning ethnic harmony in the country. I also realise this election has to be about the future and not the past. The NC-UML (or even RPP) may

appear to some people to be spent forces from another era, but their vision for the country, as flawed as it might be and doubts about their past performance notwithstanding, provides a better recipe for future political stability than the highly polarising, sensational, and anarchist ideas of the others.

Nepali

- While it is commendable that the EC has disqualified Bal Krishna Dhungel, the fact that the EC had to wait for a 'formal written complaint' until two weeks before polls when the highest court of law, the Supreme Court, had already convicted the candidate and pronounced him guilty of manslaughter, leaves much to be desired.

Prasanna KC

THE ROAD TO SAFETY

I think that to improve the accessibility of Kathmandu Valley it is crucial to have a cycle route ('The road to safety', Bhrikuti Rai, #680). However, we should all understand that building bicycle tracks will not solve all the traffic problems in the city. Smarter traffic management laws, road worthiness, proper and adequate signage, and educating the general public to follow

rules are equally important.

Sandesh Dahal

- Education for drivers and riders is the key. Everybody should be conscious of the rules of the road and follow them and learn to be courteous to others road users. However, it seems that nobody likes to follow road regulations in this country. Even Nepalis who go to developed countries continue driving with disregard to the laws of those places. It is little wonder Nepalis are becoming the number one road offenders in countries like the US and Australia.

Max

IS BEING CHRISTIAN A CRIME

I worked with United Mission to Nepal during the 80's as a physician, when Christians were commonly persecuted and jailed ('Is being Christian a crime', Jagdish Pokhrel in Setopati.com, #680). It is so wonderful to hear about the newer, more open thinking about individual choice in Nepal. In its pure, unadulterated form, we don't like to think of Christianity as a religion, but rather as a relationship with God that knows no national boundaries. After-all, Jesus was from the Middle East, not the USA.

Sigmund Stengel

- Religion is not to persuade and convert. It is manipulative to see how this whole thing is working in Nepal since late 90's. I am a Hindu and I have grown up among many Catholics. In Nepal, Protestant missionaries are actively reaching out to the poor and influencing their thoughts and baptising them. It is sad. The story is similar in Northeastern states of India too. I do believe in Christ, but I do not believe that he ever said, "Reach out to the poorest and make them my disciple, I shall pave your way to heaven."

BG

LAUGHING MATTER

Congratulations Shailee Basnet, you are a role model for many young girls not just in Nepal, but also around the world ('Laughing matter', Shailee Basnet, #680). Keep conquering more mountains and continue making everyone laugh. I wish you all the best for whatever endeavours you choose and hope to see your stand-up comedy someday. Are any of those available online?

Shailendra Sharma

- Shailee is one of my favourite Nepali 'celebrities'. She is humble, funny, and incredibly talented. Is

there anything that the woman cannot do?

GVR

A BURNING DESIRE TO HELP

Kudos Dr Andreas Settje for helping burn victims rebuild new lives ('A burning desire to help', Kunda Dixit, #680). All is not doom and gloom in this world. There are people who transcend every barrier to do greater good for humanity.

Citizen Galore

- Dr Settje deserves Nepal's highest honour.

Duj

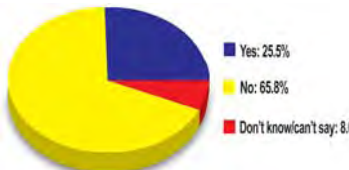


nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll #681

Q. Do you think CA-2 will write a new constitution?

Total votes: 1,053



Weekly Internet Poll # 682. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Do you think any party will win an outright majority in 19 November elections?





MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

There are just three days to go to E-day. Nepalis will be casting their votes in the second election for a Constituent Assembly. There is a lot of apathy and disillusionment, but most people know that voting is the only way to get this country back on the rails.

It was just two years after the end of the conflict that the first



INSIDE OUT

Muma Ram Khanal

CA election was held. It was conducted under the shadow of war and its legacy of violence. But there were insurmountable disagreements over the constitution and competition for power that deadlocked the polity.

The stalemate was so debilitating that we had to reluctantly accept the smothering of the judiciary and the squelching of democratic values to form an interim electoral council. Ironically, we had to undermine democracy to save it through another election. Just about the only

A second chance

Nepalis are set to reject totalitarians, oligarchs, separatists, and anti-nationals in this election

remarkable decision the last CA made was to vote for the abolition of the monarchy in its first sitting in 2008. Other than that, it is difficult to think of what else it accomplished. UCPN (Maoist), the largest party in that assembly, was hell-bent on getting to power under the misleading slogan of an 'urban insurrection'.

The Maoist leadership squandered its mandate and lost the trust of domestic political forces and the international community. Comrades started calling each other 'rightist deviationists', 'anti-nationalists', or 'renegade capitulationists'. On the other hand, the international community and national political forces blamed the mainstream Maoists of being anti-peace and inconsistent and for attempting to capture state power by means of

unconstitutional sleight of hand.

No matter how much the Maoists and their apologists try to airbrush history, the first CA was in trouble from the day Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal tried to unconstitutionally remove then army chief Rukmangad Katwal. The rest of the CA's tenure was wasted in trying to restore Dahal to power. The Maoists' delay in pushing through army integration and the attempts to buy CA members with cash, were tactics Dahal used to backpedal to Baluwatar. The CA's constitution writing deadline of two years was extended, twice.

Dahal is an ambitious man and espouses the doctrine of 'après moi, le déluge' and his backroom powerplay was mostly responsible for the

demise of the CA last year. The country then headed towards the precipice, the only way to drag it back was through the polls that are now upon us.

The time has come to use our discretion again. It is important in this election to analyse who was most responsible for getting us into this rut. Who paralysed the country for so long? Who tried to undermine democracy time and again? Who handed the country over to outsiders? Who raised the ultra-nationalist voices and then metamorphosed them into anti-nationalism? This election, without the fear that characterised the 2008 voting, will be determined by who the people blame for the violence of the conflict and the machinations after 2006.

Most Nepalis are asking

why it was necessary to kill more than 17,000 people. Even Maoist cadres wonder, looking at the behaviour of their leaders. The UCPN (M) has no answer to this in its campaign rallies. It is trying to distract attention from its violent past by getting people to focus on the Baidya group and its election boycott. A handful of leaders have used the proletariat to propel themselves to a neo-elite class through blood-soaked war.

The UCPN (M) knows the election climate is not right - its leaders sense it at the rallies. The vote bank is split and there is mass disenchantment among the comrades. The Nepali people are aware and alert, they know exactly what is going on and who is who. They also value their freedoms and will vote for those who are for democracy, rule of law, human rights, and peace.

Forces that support the idea of totalitarianism, oligarchy, national capitulation, and separatism will not fare well. The result of the first CA has shown that the victory of these forces means the defeat of peace and of the constitution. We have no more chances to set things right. Let us not waste it. 🇳🇵

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JON APPEL

Our daughter from Nepal

My name is Bijay Gautam and I am a Nepali living in Mumbai where I have made great friends. One of those generous spirits is Kiran Kumar Karlapu who is from Visakhapatnam and works as the Assistant Customs Commissioner at Mumbai's international airport. Over Diwali, I read his blog and was overwhelmed with emotion. I invited him over to my home, hugged him, and thanked him on behalf of my country and the people for what he did. I visited the airport and thanked all of Kiran's colleagues who helped this Nepali woman. This is the story from Kiran's blog (*Two Standard Deviations*) of what happened that night at Mumbai airport. Some names have been changed.

KIRAN KUMAR KARPALU

It was half past two in the night. Air India Riyadh had just left and it meant only one thing. For an hour, we had a break since no flight would land, giving all of us in the customs counter a much needed respite.

Sahib, a middle-aged man with wrinkled features and folded hands walked towards the counter. His nose, short stature, and colourful cap indicated he was from the hills. The green Nepali passport clinched it. Behind him was a young woman, probably 20 or so. She looked terrorised.

"This girl is from Nepal," the man said, "she is returning from Riyadh after 15 days. She doesn't have a ticket to

Kathmandu and she doesn't have any money."

There was silence at the counter. She met this man on the flight back to Bombay and told him her story. She was sent to Riyadh two weeks ago by an agent who picked her up from a village 10 hours by bus from Kathmandu. He had promised her family quick money saying that she only had to clean houses in Saudi Arabia. Soon, she realised she had been trafficked for the flesh trade.

An old Sheikh used her and sent her back to India with 100 riyals in her hand. "She has to go back to Nepal and doesn't have money," said her compatriot, "I have only Rs 1,000 and can give that but the ticket costs Rs 25,000. Can you help her?"

I searched my phone address book, there is no Nepali consulate in Bombay. My superintendent, Ms Salma spoke up. "We don't need an embassy. Today is Diwali, let's send her home. Come on everyone, a thousand rupees each out of your pockets right now." None of us hesitated to dig into our wallets and hand over the money. Sridhar started collecting.

A female officer gently escorted the Nepali woman into

the office to get her something to eat. I noticed her properly for the first time. She was a little over five foot two inches, wore a worn out yellow kurta, and walked with a slight limp. The hair was tied up in a messy round bun behind her head and there were remains of aquamarine nail polish on one of her feet. Not the other. Strange. There were burn marks on her neck and wrists.

She spoke only Nepali and a smattering of Hindi. All she said was "Saab. Ghar bhejdo (send me home)," in a tired, almost inaudible, voice.

Armugam went upstairs to the first floor Air India counter to book the tickets. But Bombay to Kathmandu via Delhi was fully booked. "Who has died and needs to be shipped to Nepal?" asked the Air India person. Armugam narrated the story to her and she said she could get her on standby. The ticket was Rs 24,000.

We had to call Delhi Duty Manager of Air India, Jagjit Arora, to get her ticket confirmed. But there are always a few seats blocked for emergencies.

"Aroraji. Good Morning. This is Karlapu here. Must be a chilly morning in New Delhi. Happy Diwali to you too," I said looking at the girl sitting in a corner of the arrival hall as I spoke to him. "I need a favour. Delhi-Kathmandu is full. We need to unblock a seat. It won't happen from Bombay because the servers are showing 'stagnant seat block here'. You'll need to log in from Delhi and get it done. It's urgent. A dear friend of ours is going."

Ten minutes later, Arora calls back. Delhi has released a seat, it has to be captured and given to the passenger. I gave my officer the thumbs up and he immediately ran behind the Air India counters to print the boarding passes.

We all stood there. Armugam. Salma. Rodney. Joyce. Sridhar. Me. Outside the gate. The coach for the domestic transfers had just come. The girl had boarded the bus and would be taken to Santa Cruz for her flight to Delhi. She didn't look out. She just sat there next to the window looking down. We waited for the bus to leave and returned inside.

"Our daughter from Nepal", Ms Salma said quietly. This was the second abused and helpless Nepali woman returning from the Middle East at Mumbai airport this week. 🇳🇵

www.twostandarddeviations.wordpress.com/2013/11/03/our-daughter-from-nepal

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The biggest losers

Climate talks underway in Poland must agree on the basics to deal with extreme weather events

BHRIKUTI RAI in WARSAW

As typhoon-ravaged Philippines grapples with the aftermath of the disaster, the debate on climate change rages on at the UN climate talks being held in Poland from 11-22 November. Thousands of delegates from all over the world, who have convened in the capital Warsaw, are literally going round in circles in a football stadium-turned-venue for the 19th Conference of Parties (COP 19).

The talks this year began with an emotional appeal from Yeb Sano, chief of the Philippines delegation, who commenced voluntary fasting until the conference comes up with meaningful solutions. Said Sano: "In solidarity with my countrymen, who are struggling to find food, and with my brother, who has not eaten for the last three days, I will now start a voluntary fasting for the climate."

The findings from the fifth assessment report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in September along with World Meteorological Organisation's recent studies confirm that rapid industrialisation has warmed the earth to record breaking levels. Yet the planet's future remains uncertain as countries continue to bicker about who should cut carbon emissions and by how much and where will the money for adaptation come from.

The devastation caused by Haiyan in the Philippines, which has suffered from 22 typhoons this year, has put the spotlight on the new 'loss and damage' program that helps developing countries deal with the affects of climate change like typhoons

and severe flooding. It remains to be seen if the negotiations this year will come up with any institutional mechanism to address such loss.

Pakistan, ranked third on the Global Climate Risk Index launched on Tuesday at the UN Climate Summit, is among the three countries most affected by extreme weather events for three consecutive years. "We have lost almost \$15 billion to floods and droughts in the last three years and we need billions more to adapt to the changing climate," said Muhammad Irfan Tariq, director general of Pakistan's climate change division. "Can anybody imagine how a country can possibly rebuild itself from

greenhouse gas emissions and the lowest capability to combat climate change impact. "Unless emissions are cut down, the cost of adaptation will continue to increase and that will only be an extra burden for nations like ours," explains Mathema.

Nepal's core negotiating team believes that the country, ranked 28th on the index, has a strategic advantage as the chair of the LDC group to be more vocal about melting glaciers and receding snowlines that are the most dramatic visible proof of global warming.

Nearly one billion people downstream in China, Southeast Asia, India, and Pakistan depend on the Himalaya and the Tibetan plateau for water. Given the low per-capita carbon footprint of Nepalis (less than one ton of carbon dioxide per person per year, compared to 17 tons in United States and 55 tons per capita in Qatar), the issue of climate equity along with funding is a major issue for developing nations.

The Doha Climate Gateway adopted in 2012 agreed to amend the Kyoto Protocol by establishing a second commitment period from 2013-2020 and exploring new ways to increase the cuts in emission. Warsaw is the first stop for the countries to settle on the basic formula for a new agreement on emission reduction before they head to Paris in 2015 to sign a comprehensive treaty. The remaining days of the conference will therefore be crucial in how future negotiations on a treaty to stop catastrophic warming of the planet will shape up.

nepalitimes.com

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UNFCCC

huge catastrophes like the 2010 Pakistan flood?" he asked the audience gathered in the stadium.

The atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide crossed 400 parts per million this year and scientists and climate activists hope it will strengthen the case for world leaders to set limits for future emissions.

"We need urgent and drastic reduction in emissions to limit the temperature gain to 1.5 degrees," says Prakash Mathema, Nepal's joint secretary at the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment, who chairs the Least Developed Countries (LDC) at COP 19. LDC is a group of 49 countries with negligible contribution to

EVEREST BANK BIZ BRIEFS

Together we can

The Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce (FNCCI) and Industry organised a peace rally on Wednesday to defy the transportation strike called by the 33 poll-opposing parties. The rally started from Tundikhel, passed through the main city centres before culminating in Patan.



Thousands participated in the rally with various umbrella organisations including Nepal Chamber of Commerce, National Business Initiative, PABSON, N-PABSON, Hotel Association Nepal, Restaurant and Bar Association Nepal showing their support.

Speaking at the mass meeting, president of FNCCI Suraj Vaidya urged all the parties to work out their differences through political means and not to hold citizens hostage. "It is unfortunate to see our leaders act without reason," said Vaidya. In 2011 22 political parties had signed a letter to not organise strikes as a commitment to promote tourism.

Saving lives

As a part of its 17th anniversary celebrations, NCC Bank organised a blood donation program. More than a 100 people including the bank's employees, customers, and shareholders participated in the drive.



Grand winners

Philips announced the grand prize winners of its Festive Bonanza scheme which was introduced last month. Winners Nitesh Kumar, Suraj Bhattarai, and Sagar Amatya will each receive a Philips 42 inch LED TV, Philips 5.1, and Philips 2.1 Home Theatre system respectively.



Fair fare

Qatar Airways celebrated its joining the One World Alliance by offering customers discounts for upto 25 per cent on Qatar Airways fare.

The promotion ran from 11 to 13 November. Tickets purchased during the promotional campaign are valid for travel until 14 June 2014.

Kashmiri delight

Soaltee Crowne Plaza is organising 'Kashmiri Food Festival' on Friday at Kakori, its north-west Indian specialty restaurant. A wide range of vegetarian and non-vegetarian Kashmiri delicacies will be up for grabs.



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NO SHOW: During a protest rally in October, a student from Chennai signs a petition urging countries to boycott the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting that is being held in Sri Lanka this week.

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Sorry, can't come

The Indian PM's decision not to attend the Commonwealth Summit in Colombo rings a bit hollow

In this season in India of election and hunting for allies, it is possible to empathise with the decision by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh not to attend the



LOOK OUT

Ajaz Ashraf

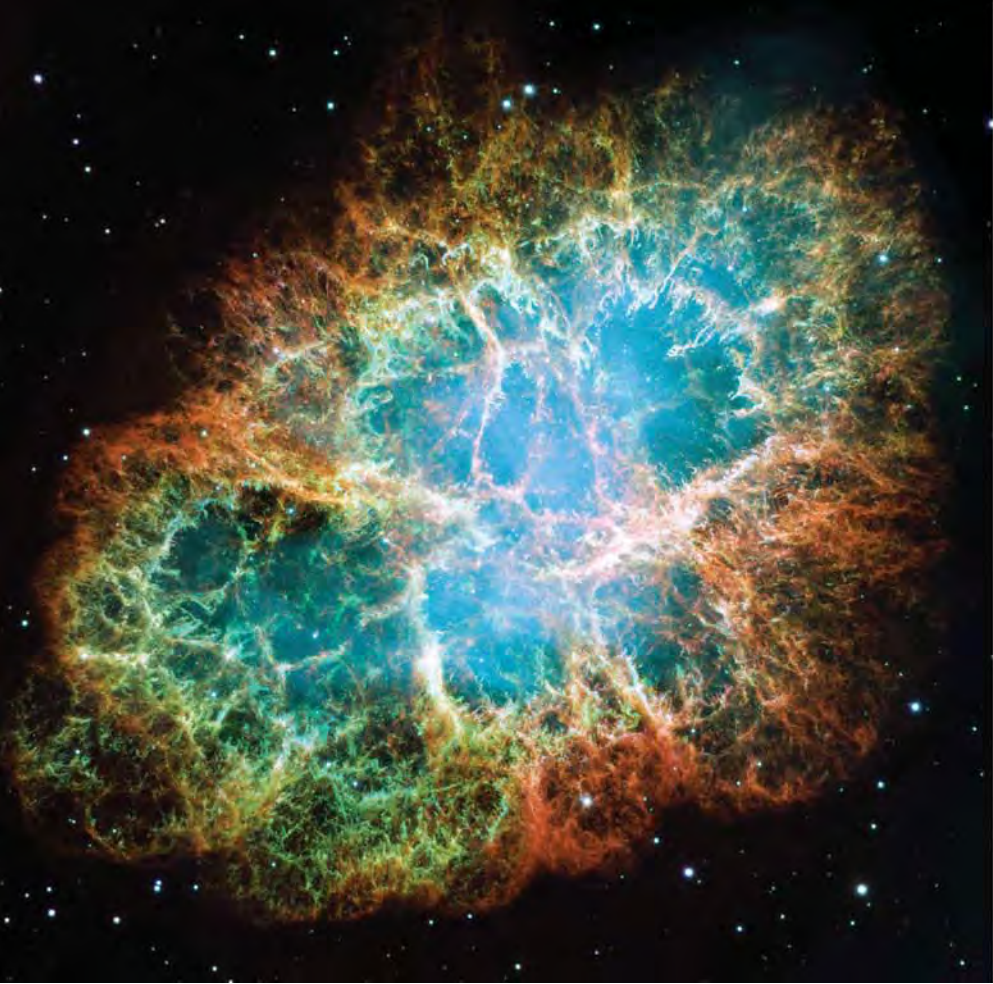
Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Colombo. But what is difficult to comprehend are the reasons a section of the media and Tamil Nadu politicians have cited to endorse Singh's decision. It is time, they said, New Delhi expressed its anger

at Colombo's continued concealment of horrendous human rights abuses during the last few months of its war against the LTTE, its stonewalling of the demands to implement the 13th Amendment that provides for devolution of powers to provinces, its brazen attempts to dilute these powers, and its reluctance to initiate a reconciliation process which could assure Tamils of their equal status in a society from which they remain alienated. Singh's call to cancel his trip was touted as just the reprimand the island nation needed. Before hailing New Delhi for admonishing Colombo, however, they should have

scrutinised India's alleged violation of human rights in handling secessionist movements. As is true for most societies which have undertaken the project to become modern nation-states, India's history too is blood-soaked. Might not Indians one day discover more powerful nations lecturing them on the need to respect human rights and for melding a diverse society through measures other than guns and bullets and draconian laws? No doubt the Sri Lankan army was ruthless. Anyone who has seen the documentary *No Fire Zone* will recoil in horror at spine-chilling scenes of brutality. The country's

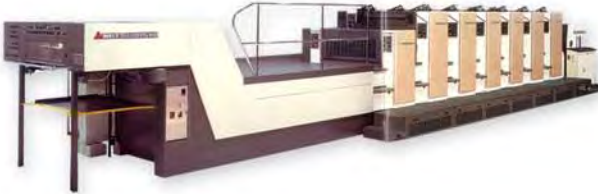
civil war registered an unconscionable death toll: the United Nations believes 80,000 to 100,000 people died between 1982 and 2009. Others say it was closer to 130,000. It's morbid to compare death tolls in different secessionist movements to grade the dangers they posed to the respective states battling them. Nevertheless, considering the applause that has greeted New Delhi's berating of Colombo, might we not ask: what has been the death toll in the 23 years of secessionist violence in Kashmir? Kashmir's chief secretary, SS Kapur, said in 2008 that about 20,000 civilians, 7,000 security personnel, and 20,000 militants had died in the violence. Before Kashmir, Punjab and India's Northeast suffered major loss of life. The book *Reduced To Ashes: The Insurgency and Human Rights in Punjab* by Ram Narayan Kumar and three others, is a chronicle of disappearances, extra-judicial killings, and mass cremations in

the state's brutal response to the proponents of Khalistan. Separatists in Northeastern India were similarly crushed. The Indian Air Force strikes in Aizawl during the uprising of the Mizo National Front in 1966 are most telling. Yet the embers of secessionism still smoulder. According to South Asia Terrorism Portal, 3,093 people died between 2001 and 2013 in Manipur, a casualty figure quite high for a state which has a population of just 2.6 million. India has weaned away parts of the Northeast from secessionism through negotiations. Mizoram is an example, yet critics would say the state is averse to opting for the softer, humane touch in its handling of alienated sections of the population. Why else, they would ask, has it stubbornly refused to withdraw the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)? Enacted by the Indian Parliament in 1958 to tackle the Naga movement, the AFSPA has been extended to other parts of the Northeast and in Kashmir. It allows security personnel to arrest any person on mere suspicion that they are planning a terrorist attack and grants immunity to security forces from criminal prosecution for use of force, even when it causes death. The Act has become an instrument to protect men in uniform resorting to actions not linked to combating terrorism, but which are blatantly criminal in nature. The demand for repealing the AFSPA has been recommended by five different committees over the years. The last of these - Justice JS Verma Committee (2013) - thought it was ridiculous to invoke the law to claim impunity for acts such as rapes, which only the perverted can consider as an appropriate measure to tackle terrorism. Indeed, the Tamil Nadu State Assembly's concern for human rights can be taken seriously only if it were to pass a resolution demanding a repeal of the AFSPA. ashrafajaz3@gmail.com



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Nepal Police's only composite artist is helping put more offenders behind bars



“For more accurate results, we need locally-made software,” explains Maharjan. But until that happens, he plans to travel to as many districts as possible to study the diverse facial features of fellow Nepalis. 🇳🇵

EVENTS



B-BOYING TOUR, Dharan-based b-boying group Da-Pace is travelling to six major cities to promote tourism through dance.
Starts 15 November

Expansion, an exhibition of paintings by Jaya Shankar Son Shrestha.
Runs till 20 November, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal, (01)4218048, www.siddharthaartgallery.com

Tell your story, make a 1-2 min video about how girls are changing the world; contest open to girls aged 12-25, winner takes \$10,000.
www.letgirlslead.org

What is coworking, discuss how Kathmandu's growing number of creators can work at a commonplace to inspire, encourage, and support each other.
15 November, 3.30 to 5pm, Sattya Media Arts Collective

Running in the mountains, the first edition of the Manaslu Mountain Trail race takes participants close to the 8th highest mountain, with proceeds going to the Samdo hydroelectricity project.
Lasts till 22 November, www.manaslutrailrace.org

Guru Nanak diwas, Sikhs worldwide celebrate the birth anniversary of the founder of their religion. *17 November*

Straight sets, go watch the young talents at the first ever junior open tennis championship.
Runs till 23 November, Satdobato, (01)5202114



PRESS PAUSE PLAY, watch this documentary film about some of the world's most influential creators of the digital era.
15 November, 5.30pm, Sattya Media Arts, Jawalakhel

Rev up your spirit, ride with hundreds of other bikers from Basantapur, Kathmandu, to Sukute, Bhotekosi.
23 November, 8am onwards

60 seconds film festival, make a minute-long short film and earn wide exposure.
Deadline 25 November, www.sixtysecondfilmfestival.com



NEPAL VOTES, 18 months after the first Constituent Assembly was dissolved, Nepal weighs its options and votes again for a new CA.
19 November, public holiday from 17 to 20 November

Study tour and picnic, take a tour of Bisnudwaar, the source of Kathmandu's second largest river Bisnumati, bring your kids along.
16 November, 7.30am, Narayanthan Temple, Budhanilkantha 9803485433



RETURN TO NATURE, an exhibition showcasing importance of water colour and landscape painting in fine art. Runs till 19 November, 12 to 4pm, Park Gallery Art Studio, Pulchowk, (01)522307

DINING

Backyard, incredibly reasonable prices and modest and simple food have made this restaurant a favourite among Nepalis and foreigners alike.
Jhamsikhel

Momotarau, step in for mouthwatering Japanese delicacies, try its diverse variety of fresh noodles and authentic sauces. *Sanepa road, (01)5521988*



SAIGON PHO, spacious interior with authentic Vietnamese dishes.
Lajimpat

Kasi, spread out over a large terrace overlooking Phora Darbar, Kasi offers a delectable plate of Newari delicacies. *Darbar Marg*

Trisara, with dishes like flambeed prawns, crispy chicken, and khau soi, it would be a folly to ignore its aromas. *Lajimpat*



CHOPSTIX, savoury Asian food cooked in true Chinese fashion sure to charm and impress. Try the famous drums of heaven.
Kumaripati, (01)5551118

Shangrila Kitchen, try the majestic Gyakok and a wide variety of cocktails. *9 am to 10.30 pm, Hotel Tibet International, Boudha*

Tamas-laya, promises a refined dining experience, try the prawn tempura, fisherman's fish and Balinese chicken satay.
Naxal, Kathmandu

Chez Caroline, exquisite food, glorious sunshine and more. *9am to 10pm, Baber Mahal Revisited, (01)4263070/4187*



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MUSIC

Kripa Unplugged, young Nepali musicians and seasoned veterans give an acoustic rendition of their favourite songs. 10pm on Sundays, TTV, www.youtube.com/user/KripaUnplugged

Cancion del Mariachi, listen to Latin and gypsy jazz with Monsif Mzibri and Hari Maharjan and drink jugs of sangria. Every Saturday, 7pm onwards, New Orleans Cafe, Jhamsikhel



MOHIT CHAUHAN LIVE, everyone's beloved balladeer is coming to town, Rs 500 to Rs 5,000, 30 November, 4.45pm onwards, Dasrath Stadium, Tripureswor, 9818842177

Shastriya sangeet, dabble in the magic of Hindustani classical music every new moon night. 2 December, 3pm onwards, Ram Mandir

GETAWAYS



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The thrill may be gone, so the blues definitely ain't. Soak yourself in the best of the blues at the 5th Himalayan Blues Festival with bands from USA, France, Italy, and Nepal.

20 November, Blues Around the Town, Kathmandu
22nd November, Blues Big Bang @ 1905
23rd November, Patan Museum Sessions, Lalitpur

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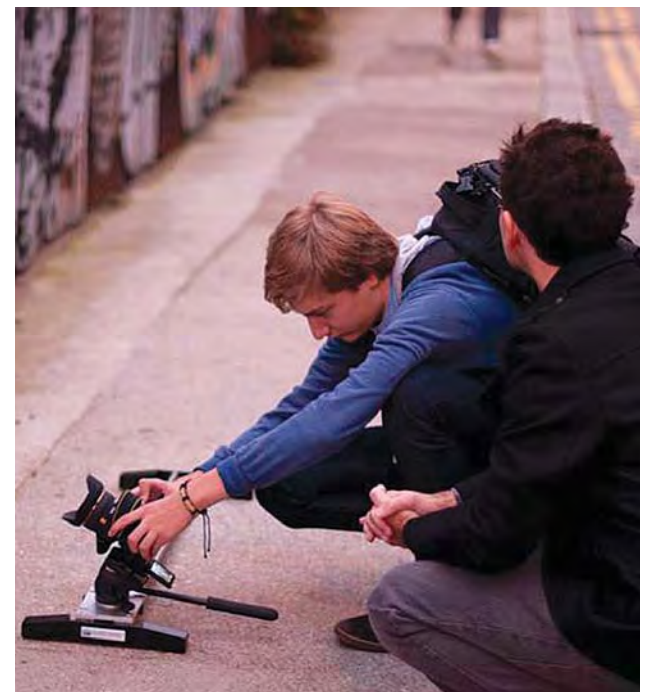
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Have you got an idea for a film and can only fork out a shoe-string budget? Here's just the opportunity for you.

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4 to 5 December, 10am to 4pm, Sattya Media Arts Collective, Jawalakhel, www.sattya.org, www.uzairsawal.com



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मिफ्ट भौचर

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गाढक शुल्क रु ५५५० मा
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HOT WH

- 1 The second day of racing for the Men's Elite category starts.
- 2 Narayan Gopal Maharjan sprinting during the individual Time Trail which was part of the Langkawi Prelude.
- 3 The Nepali team regroup after the heat and endurance of the 80km marathon where Aayman finished 10th and the riders qualified for the World Cup Championships in 2014.
- 4 The team waits for the start of the Time Trail, a first of its kind experience for the four Nepai bikers.





HEELERS

Nepal's national mountain bikers leave their tracks on the global stage

TYLER MCMAHON

On 26 September, five Nepali men boarded a plane to Malaysia. Unlike the thousands of youth who queue outside Kathmandu airport everyday to escape the despair back home, these were professional athletes who would represent Nepal at the six-day long UCI Langkawi Island Mountain Bike Challenge and the World Championships qualifier.

Nepal's top mountain bikers Ajay Pandit Chhetri, Narayan Gopal Maharjan, Aayman Tamang, Roan Tamang and team mechanic Santosh Rai arrived in Kuala Lumpur with the determination to leave their tracks on the international mountain biking circuit.

The event kicked off on 28 September with an 80km race where the top 20

automatically qualified for the Mountain Bike Marathon World Cup Championships 2014 taking place in South Africa. The Nepali team initially found itself at a disadvantage because unlike the steep terrain back home where they excel in, the course was relatively flat. But their mastery of the sports was at full display as three riders made it to the championships. Aayman Tamang, the second youngest rider on the team, finished in 10th position. Narayan and Roan followed close behind in 14th and 15th, respectively.

Unfortunately, Nepal's current national champion, Chhetri was a victim of two punctures and broken gears forcing him to pull out from the qualifier even before the first lap was over. The most experienced



rider on the team, however, proved very resilient and came back strong in the six-day race. Maharjan, arguably the most powerful climber on the team, suffered an allergic reaction to a leech bite that would keep his ankle abnormally swollen throughout the race.

The prologue for the Langkawi Challenge included a short 2.5km sprint, used to seed the riders for the remaining five days. It was new territory for the Nepal team, as none of them had participated in this type of event. Chhetri began his bounce back from the disappointing qualifier by leading the team in the prologue, followed closely by Roan, the youngest rider on the team.

Stage 1 was where the real race began; a 65km circuit of Langkawi Island. Chhetri continued showing his mental toughness by placing 24th out of 93 riders on the day, the highest-placing in the team. Maharjan was only two minutes behind in 29th place. Aayman and Roan followed in 41st and 45th positions respectively a further six minutes back from Maharjan.

Chhetri continued his resurgence in Stage 2 with another 24th position finish. Aayman and Narayan followed in 36th and 39th respectively with Roan a bit further back in 49th. The third stage again saw Chhetri at the top of the team standings, something he would repeat in stage 4. Stage 4 with its short laps and Stage 5, a 1km loop mountain bike criterium race were both new types of racing for the team, which compounded the disadvantages they faced with the lack of hills.

Despite a rough three days in the middle that included a still swollen ankle and a hard crash on day 4, Maharjan led the team on the last day, managing to stick with the field throughout the race, completing all laps of the criterium.

Overall the team did well, gaining the respect of professional teams across the world. Out of 93 bikers who started

the race Chhetri finished 29th overall, Maharjan was 38th, with Roan and Aayman 45th and 46th respectively. Chhetri also made up for his bad luck during the marathon qualifier by gaining valuable UCI points, which means he too will be flying to South Africa next year. Roan at 45th place was the fastest young rider (19 years) in the race and Aayman, barely 21, was only four seconds behind him.

Year after year, Nepali bikers have dominated the grueling Yak Attack race around the Annapurna Circuit. Long races with lots of climbs suit our riders, but in Langkawi with its unfamiliar terrain, the team still excelled. The Malaysian race is a testament of the men's immense technical skills and stamina and shows that they have what it takes to make it big on the global stage.

The contest also highlights the importance of setting up professional cycling teams to complement the weak national infrastructure. Singletrack Team, the first professional cycling team, provided support for Narayan, Aayman, and Roan. The Ravenswell Foundation, a Swiss organisation that is helping develop mountain biking in the country, funded Chhetri's travel.

"It was hot, humid, and wet throughout the six days. Some of the best bikers in the world and from Asia took part. Competing alongside them under such conditions was a great experience for the team and we learned a lot," says Chhetri. 🇳🇵

www.mtbmalaysia.com

www.singletrackteam.com

www.theravenswellfoundation.org

nepalitimes.com

Race to the top, #665
Yak Attack 2013, #649
Videos of the race



Top of the Lake

I have never made a secret of my immense admiration for Jane Campion despite possible accusations of feminine bias. Rarely does a contemporary director exhibit such a singularity of vision with the ability to pull it off. All of her work starting from her very early, but also



very excellent *Angel at My Table* (1990) are marked by certain unmistakable Campion signatures: the female protagonist, the breathtaking cinematography, a distinctive sensibility, and a willingness to push the boundaries of cinema which some might regard as 'quirky' (a word that is death to an artist), but which I see as true experimentation.

Top of the Lake, Campion's

latest creation which came out earlier this year, is a seven part 'mini-series' and in some ways perhaps her most conventional piece of work. That being said, it is far from the usual formulaic murder mystery concoction in every way. As with the best of the genre, like the iconic *Twin Peaks*, *Top of the Lake* starts with the disappearance of a young girl named Tui, who, as we find out over the course of the film is 13- years-old and somehow pregnant.

Enter the formidable Elisabeth Moss as Detective Robin Griffin, a tough as nails cop with a deep, dark, and terribly ugly backstory of her own. Robin is on leave visiting her mother in the small but stunningly beautiful town of Lake Top (in New Zealand) when she is called in to counsel Tui when her pregnancy is initially discovered.

Over the course of these brilliant seven episodes we are treated not only to the unravelling of a truly complex mystery, but also, and therein lies the genius of the production, a study of a remote small town where everyone has their secrets and humanity manifests itself in its finest and most venal forms.

I will not plot summarise, it is up to you to go out and find this indelible piece of work from a woman that just seems to get better with experience. Instead, I will just pique your interest a little bit more by telling you that in addition to Moss' riveting and powerful performance, we also have the pleasure of watching that other phenom called Holly Hunter in one of the strangest (but also perhaps most compelling) roles of her career as GJ - a cultish figure with long flowing white hair who ends up renting a piece of land in Lake Top called 'Paradise' and proceeds to raise the hackles of almost every full-blooded male in that small town.

Intrigued? Oh, you should be. *Top of the Lake*, if I had to choose just the one adjective to describe it, is the most thrilling piece of cinematic work I have seen in a very long time. It is also one of the most nuanced and layered studies of character that you'll find. This is a film that I know I will come back to again and again knowing each time I will find something new. That is the hallmark of truly great art. 🇳🇵

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HAPPENINGS



INDIAN EMBASSY

MAKE WAY: Minister for Foreign and Home Affairs Madhav Prasad Ghimire (right) receives 716 vehicles as election aid from Indian ambassador Ranjit Rae (left) at Singha Darbar on Wednesday.



DEVAKI BISTA

WE'RE OPEN: Youth from Bibeksheel Nepali party defy the 10-day banda, called by the CPN-M and its allies, in front of Shahid Gate on Sunday.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

FORGOTTEN LEADER: Locals of Swaha Bhagwati, Guheswori adorn the statue of Ganesh Man Singh with garlands to mark his 98th birth anniversary on Saturday.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

QUICK FIX: A couple spreads fertiliser on their farmland on Wednesday morning in Changu Narayan, Bhaktapur.

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Why Nepalikukur will 'bhote' for Kukur!

Why vote for Kukur, the canine emblem of the virtually known yet unknown Bibeksheel Party?

"Your vote will be wasted," a relative informs me, even as he proclaims he is for Kamal Thapa of RPP-Nepal and I reply with equal relish that his vote will be not just wasted, but pointless to boot. What is the point of stepping forward into the past? The point, he declares, is to register a protest vote. Not because Kamal Thapa is any less of a thug than all the others leering their way across the nation right now, but because he feels aggrieved that the Nepali people were never consulted on the question of the secular republic. Fair point, I acknowledge, my vote for Kukur, too, is first and foremost a protest vote. That's one reason I'm voting for Bibeksheel Nepali's Ujwal Thapa in Kathmandu-5.

The second reason may be located in Narahari Acharya, the Nepali Congress incumbent for Kathmandu-5. I cannot see that his victory last time around has improved anything for his constituency, where I live, nor that Acharya, as a Congress



intellectual, managed to decisively influence the constitutional process. Perhaps I have not been paying enough attention - he may be one of the better choices available to us - but no one except my neighbour has really canvassed for my vote on his behalf and his one-liner 'Sambidhan ko laagi' was as vague

as the man's professed vision. Compare this with local dawg Ujwal Thapa's practical roadmap. Having a constitution is all very well, but don't we have to live in the meantime?

The third reason lies is the UML candidate Ishwor Pokharel, whose website divides an About Me section into: My journey, About me, My history, and Biodata.

He's the general secretary of his party and an ex-minister. Yet on the campaign trail he did nothing but look on from the podium as his Youth Force goons thrashed a member of the public who'd dared to ask him what he'd done with the money he'd stashed away from his time in power. A fair question,

wouldn't you say?

A fourth reason is the Maoist and RPP-Nepal candidates, left and right respectively. They both belong to a discredited past. 'Nuff said.

Which brings us back to our best friend, Le Dog. Voting for Kukur is a protest vote at the very least, but it could also mark the beginning of a genuine party of the people, or even one whose moment has already arrived. Yes, the Bibeksheel Nepalis may be limited to a young urban base at the moment and it is only too easy to dismiss them along with the various social media movements their four candidates have been associated with. They must reach out and this I believe they are trying to do with whatever resources they have, inasmuch as independent candidates are allowed to do so by the competing thugs of major parties. But they deserve my vote at least as much as any of the others do. At least I have seen with my own eyes what Ujwal Thapa has done in the last few years through his involvement in Entrepreneurs for Nepal and his work with Nepal Unites and the anti-banda alliance. I have also seen with my own eyes what the rest of Nepal's politicians have done over the years. And, believe you me, seeing is believing. 🇳🇵

Nepali kukkur



Behind the gaudy sheet-metal façade of the newly opened Norkhang Complex in Jawalakhel, lies the source of quite possibly the best espresso in Kathmandu.

The newly minted Barista Lavazza coffee shop in Pulchok is the newest addition to the Valley's European-inspired coffee culture cafés. Lavazza is Italy's answer to Starbucks and appropriately ups the class in a warm and trendy environment. With its large dining area, variety of seating options, and extensive menu, Barista Lavazza appeals to the European in all of us.

Despite the large counter display at the front of the store, the café offers attentive table service. I took a spot near the front of the building overlooking Pulchok road, next to St Xavier's School. The section was separated from the rest of the dining area in a hybrid patio area with open window sections that provided nice cross-breezes. The ventilation diffused not only a nearby smoker's exhalations, but his partner's over-applied perfume. The only problem with the windows was the constant noise from the



SOMEPLACE ELSE

PICS: LAWRENCE MILLER

street below, which competed with the café's PA system. When the playlist turned out to consist of soulful male-fronted Adele and Rihanna covers, I found the noise less of a problem.

I started my meal with an iced mocha (Rs 175), which I quickly

sucked down. The drink was rich and smooth, the chocolate and coffee flavours blending nicely. For a light starter, I tried the grilled chicken salad (Rs 200), which, when garnished with the proffered Tabasco sauce, was quite delicious. If I weren't so hungry,

Barista Lavazza

the salad could have been an ample light lunch, perfectly dressed as it was with a vinaigrette and pepper. Instead, I ordered the cottage cheese delicacy sandwich (Rs 325), which was featured heavily on signboards around the establishment. The sandwich, unfortunately, was a disappointment. The curried cottage cheese failed to bite through the thick poppy-seed roll, leaving a bready and bland aftertaste. With the chilli sauce, I managed to polish it off, but without much delight.

Ready to clear my palate, I ordered a small cappuccino (Rs 125) and almond-raisin muffin (Rs 105). If I learned anything from my experience, Barista Lavazza's specialty is in its coffee drinks. My cappuccino was smooth and perfectly frothed, even and foamy to the end. My muffin was also good, graciously heated up by the staff and not-too-dry, as these café baked goods tend to be. I sat and finished my muffin, pondering love and life as I watched campaign vehicles and motorbikes drive up and down the road.

With the extensive and varied menu, Barista is a venue benefited



by multiple visits. The café's strengths are in its wide-ranging menu to suit everyone's tastes and its relaxed, clean-edged environment, perfect for a meeting, date or just to get out of the dust.

Looking for other locales to enjoy your latte? There are additional outlets in Uttar Dhoka, Lajimpat and the departure lounge at the airport. 🇳🇵

Lawrence Miller

How to get there: head towards Jawalakhel Zoo from Pulchok, you will see Norkhang Complex on your right next to St Xavier's School. Barista Lavazza is on the second floor.

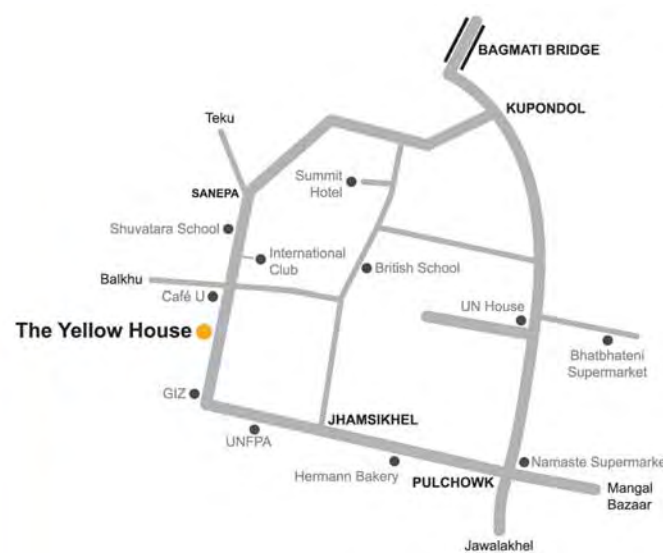
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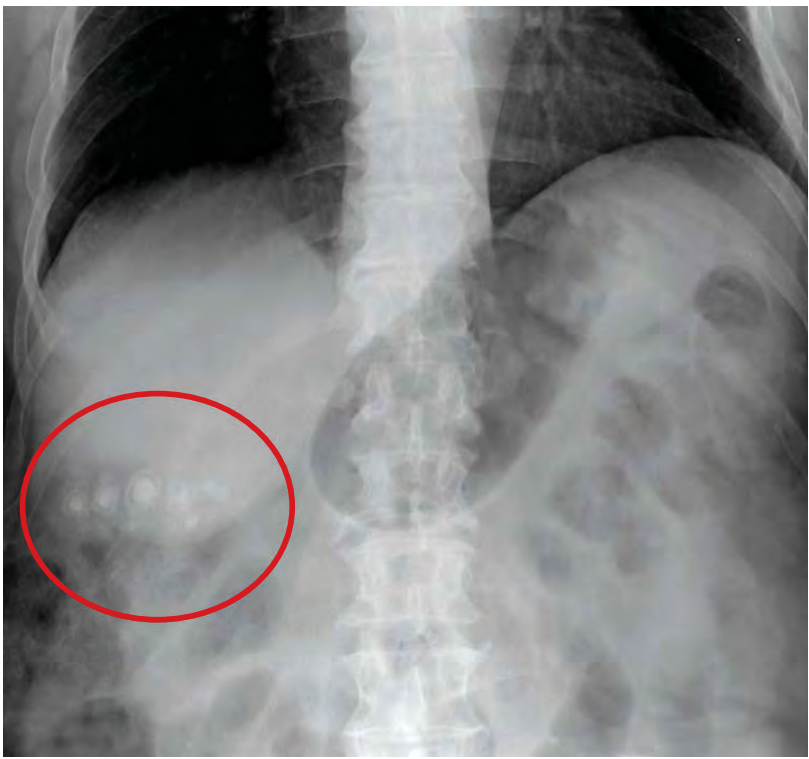
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Leaving stones unturned

Forty-two-year old Ram Devi came to the clinic complaining of a burning pain in her upper abdomen, which got worse when she ate spicy and fatty food. She had been taking antacids to relieve



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

the ache. After performing specific tests, the doctor diagnosed Ram Devi with stomach ulcer and began her successful treatment.

But her ultrasound also revealed gallstones in the abdomen and she was recommended to undergo an operation to remove the stones and prevent further complications. However, the patient decided against surgery because she was scared. Five

years after the stones were discovered, Ram Devi has had no problems and is able to carry out her daily activities comfortably. Was she correct in ignoring the doctor's advice?

Approximately eight per cent of men and 17 per cent women worldwide suffer from gallstones and the problem is common in Nepal as well. Medical students are taught the 'fat, female, fertile, and forty' rule which means those who fit this description are more predisposed to stones in their gall bladder. Importantly, the take-home message here is that while gallstones are widespread, most patients will not need an operation. In fact it is estimated that only one per cent of patients suffering from the disease require surgery. If Ram Devi had severe, sustained pain on the upper-right side of her abdomen, accompanied

by nausea and vomiting on several occasions, she would have been a candidate for surgery. Acute abdominal pain caused by a diseased gall bladder (cholecystitis) is usually unforgettable once it is experienced.

Vague abdominal pains and bloating should not be regarded as gall bladder disease even if gallstones are detected during ultrasound examination. Often after the stones are surgically removed, the symptoms by which the patient suffered will persist. Hence, gallstones may just be 'incidental' findings. That is, the actual disease may be elsewhere, but since gallstones are so common in the general population and are noted on the ultrasound, abdominal pain symptoms may be incorrectly ascribed to the stones.

Besides frequent attacks of cholecystitis which may necessitate gall bladder surgery, other indications for surgery may be a very large stone (more than 3cm), or inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis) caused by gallstones. Obesity, cholesterol rich, or high-calorie diets are triggers for gallstone formation. In Nepal, those who eat large quantities of rice everyday with minimum physical exercise are clearly at threat.

Some health authorities believe that gallstones are a risk factor for gall bladder cancer, a very rare form of cancer. Statistically, however, this has not been proven because very few patients (about 0.2 per cent) with stones develop gall bladder cancer. Many other factors could easily influence the development of this uncommon cancer. Finally, performing surgery to remove gallstones is not without life-threatening risks, however small.

As medical science gets more advanced with CT scans, MRI scans, and sensitive screening tests, increasing number of incidental findings suggestive of many diseases are likely to be noted. Hence, careful assessment needs to be made so that unnecessary and dubious treatment is not prescribed for patients.

GIZMO by YANTRICK

Apple's apps

They say the best things in life are free and that is certainly true of iOS apps. With more than 400,000 available apps, Yantrick is saving you the trouble of scouring the App Store by narrowing your list to these four tested and approved must-download apps.



TUNEIN RADIO

A radio streaming app, Tunein Radio requires an active internet connection to run and gives instant, free access to global radio stations across all music genres. From classical to rock, pop to alternative, R&B to hip hop, electronic to house, news to sports shows, Tunein Radio app lets you choose from local and international stations to cater to your mood.



DEAD TRIGGER 2

Battling hordes of the evil undead while saving the world from the Zombie Apocalypse has never looked so good on an iOS device. Sequel to the immensely popular Dead Trigger

(also free), Dead Trigger 2 looks stunning on the Retina Display and its immersive gameplay and simple controls equal to hours of first person shooter fun.



SMART OFFICE 2

Viewing and editing documents, spreadsheets, PDFs and presentations on-the-go has never been easier, or more free. The Smart Office 2 is a handy application for students and 9-5 workers alike and is easiest to use on an iPad. While it may be cumbersome to create entire documents, spreadsheets, and presentations on an iOS device, Smart Office is extremely useful for editing and making last minute changes to them, especially when your laptop/desktop lets you down.



VLC

The immensely popular PC media player also has an iOS app. If you are tired of iTunes forcing you to convert your video files to Apple's format prior to letting you copy

the same to your iOS device, then this app is definitely for you. Its ease-of-use (you simply drag and drop the movie file from iTunes) will have you watching more movies on your device, especially during the long load-shedding hours.

Yantrick's verdict: they're fun, they're free, and they'll keep you occupied when the lights are out this winter. Spare an hour this weekend downloading these apps on your favourite device.



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LET'S NOT REPEAT 2008

If the 19 November ballot can be relatively clean, the possibilities are that Constituent Assembly-II will have a life

Before the April 2008 elections, I had predicted that the Maoists would come in third place. Of course, that turned out to be 'wrong', whereas analysts who had kept mum prior to the polls could claim smugly that they had known the outcome all along. Truth be told, pretty much everyone believed that the Maoists would come a poor third, including the key diplomatic missions that keep a watch on Nepal. The Maoists themselves were taken aback by their overwhelming success, making them bigger in the CA than the Nepali Congress and UML combined.



COMMENT

Kanak Mani Dixit

How did the Maoists achieve victory and what can be said regarding the upcoming elections of 19 November? The CA-I elections had been originally set for November 2007, but the Maoist leadership successfully pushed for postponement, because 'preparations' were incomplete. Pushpa Kamal Dahal was confident enough to go for polls on 10 April 2008 (see the 'Shaktikhor video' and its reference to money, muscle, and bone-breaking), but still surprised by the result.

The basis for the 2008 Maoist showing can be divided roughly into three parts. One-third of the win was earned, based on a 'vote for change' fed by an ultra-populist campaign that promised everything to everyone. A third was due to the atmosphere of all-out intimidation during the campaign period: the parliamentary parties that had evacuated the villages during the conflict could not get back to show their presence because of the deployment of the Young Communist League and ex-combatants from the cantonments. The last third had to do with



election-day 'herapheri', massive electoral fraud including doctored voter lists, prevention of non-supporters from going to voting centres, intimidation of polling personnel, and ballot-box stuffing.

There were many other contributory factors, including the declarations of the then-chief election commissioner that the polls had to be seen as a part of the peace process, the implication being that hanky-panky be excused. And that's what happened on the appointed day – if the Election Commission had acted to cancel polling in specific booths when the first incidents were reported from Ramechhap in the morning, the outcome would have been somewhat different.

There are many reasons why the CA-I failed after four years of desultory work. However, the foundational cause has not really been discussed: unfree and unfair

polls. As a result, the assembly failed to garner credibility and the public's trust, even though of course it went through the motions of constitution writing.

"Let us not repeat the type of polling of 2008, please," was the cumulative refrain of journalists, political activists, and common citizens, when I travelled through Nepalganj, Surkhet, Mahendranagar, and Dhangadi of the Far West earlier in the week. The folks in the villages and towns believe that the country cannot afford another dirty elections, one that would fail to inspire confidence in both the forthcoming government and the CA.

The superstructure of the upcoming election is exceedingly weak, due to matters related to 'threshold', the unlocked nature of the proportional list, the release from 'inclusiveness' for the

EARLY WARNING: The infamous Shaktikhor video, where Pushpa Kamal Dahal explained in detail how the 2008 elections were to be captured for his party.

smaller parties, and criminals accused of war crimes being allowed to run. Given this, the only option is to try and ensure free campaigning and election day security.

This is where the civil society of the Far West is worried. While the cantonments are now a memory and the UCPN (M) cannot activate the YCL with the same destructive ability as it did five years ago, the locals say there will be extensive electoral fraud through threats of violence and unloading of hard cash. A journalist told me this week, "Away from the bajars, things are not that much different. The election observers are as timid, the security forces are spread out too thin, and whole communities remain intimidated."

With its increasingly violent anti-election activity, Mohan Baidya's CPN-M has sought to mar the campaigning, ensuring that the electorate is diverted from the issues at hand – national sovereign manoeuvrability, plunder of the exchequer, inter-community polarisation, and candidacies of alleged perpetrators. The spate of cowardly bombings of the past week has begun to make Baidya look like an accessory of Dahal.

The only recourse left on the side of democracy is for the EC to be gutsy and act where it failed in 2008 – to cancel polling in individual booths or whole election districts the moment voter fraud and intimidation are confirmed. If we are to treat the CA election once again as a part of the peace process, we will neither be able to revert to representative democracy, nor get a constitution. 🇳🇵

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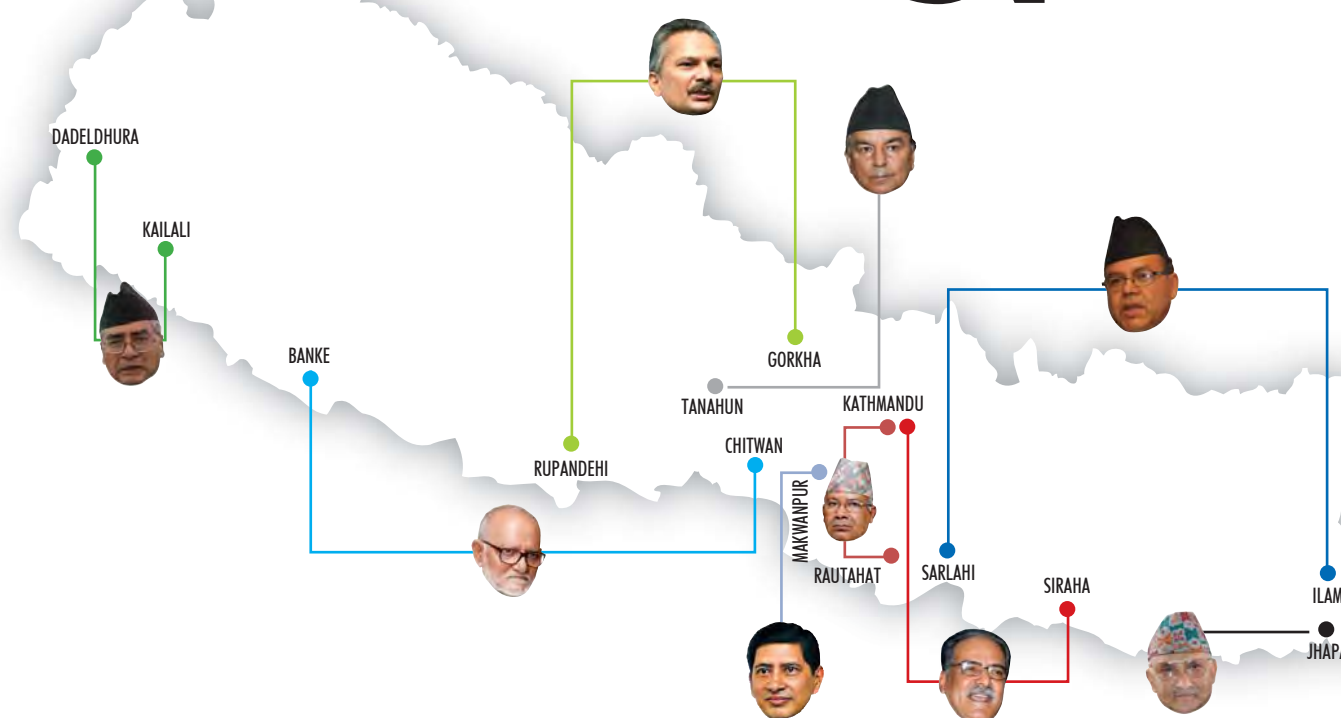


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WEIGH-IN



As men and women across the country get ready to queue again at polling booths on Tuesday for a second round of CA elections, *Nepali Times* looks at how senior leaders of the three main parties stack up against their opponents. Five years of political bickering and foot dragging mean that most Nepalis have lost faith in their leaders. The candidates face an uphill battle even in their home districts, where they attained easy victories in 2008 and neither can they rely on traditional vote banks. However, by standing in multiple constituencies and fielding weak candidates in each other's voting regions, senior politicians are doing their best to ensure that they don't lose.



PUSHPA KAMAL DAHAL, CHAIRMAN OF UCPN (M)
CONSTITUENCIES: KATHMANDU-10 AND SIRAHA-5

2008

KATHMANDU-10
23,277 VOTES, WON

ROLPA-2
34,220 VOTES, WON

In 2008, Pushpa Kamal Dahal managed 10,000 more votes than his nearest competitor in Kathmandu-10 and claimed a landslide victory. This year though, his election trail in the capital is far more difficult. Residents of this constituency, which includes Kirtipur municipality and 12 VDCs, are angry at Dahal for not following through on his commitments and are more drawn towards local candidates.

Dahal had promised the people here to turn Kirtipur into a model town, return land encroached by Tribhuvan University, and improve road networks, water supply, and ensure proper sewage system. None of that happened. The municipality alone has 27,000 registered voters, but very few are actively supporting the Maoists. Standing against Dahal are the NC's Rajan KC, who contested against him five years ago, and local aspirant Surendra Manandhar from the UML.

Even though the Maoist party and Janamorchha Nepal (which later merged with the Maoists) won in Siraha-5 during the last elections, Dahal's position in this eastern Tarai district is weakened because a lot of cadres from the area defected to Mohan Baidya's camp after the mother party split. He will face stiff competition from the UML's district chairman Lila Nath Shrestha, whose election campaign is stronger and better organised than Dahal's who has visited Siraha only thrice. Independent candidate Jagat Prasad Yadav is also expected to put up a good fight since he has the support of both Matrika Yadav, chairman of CPN (Maoist), and Baidya's party.



SUSHIL KOIRALA, PRESIDENT OF NEPALI CONGRESS
CONSTITUENCIES: BANKE-3, CHITWAN-4

2008

BANKE-3
5,969 VOTES, LOST

Out of the four times he has contested, Sushil Koirala has won twice and lost twice. In 2008, Koirala was defeated in his home district of Banke by Sarvadev Prasad Ojha of Madhesi Jana Adhikar Forum and only managed to secure third position. But with the MJF losing its grip in the region, Koirala's aides believe luck will favour him this time round. Cadres, who had left the NC en masse to join Madhes-based parties in the previous election, have returned and revived the party's chances of winning. The Muslim community, a pivotal vote bank in Nepalganj municipality, is also likely to side with Koirala because other parties have failed to nominate Muslim members.

The NC president will face a tougher battle in the five Madhesi majority VDCs surrounding Nepalganj. He will be up against Pashupati Dahal Mishra of Tarai Madhes Loktantrik Party (TMLP), a well-known leader in the district. Former mayor and RPP candidate Dhaval Shumsher Rana with his slogan 'development and Hindutva' and former president of Nepalganj Chamber of Commerce and Maoist candidate Damodar Acharya, are Koirala's closest challengers.

Victory in Chitwan-4 where Koirala is contesting for the first time seems easier. However, his opponents – former NC district chief Bikash Koirala, who is running as an independent candidate, UCPN (M)'s Chitra Bahadur Shrestha, who won the last election here, and UML's Dil Kumari (Parvati) Rawal – are capable of putting up a good fight.



BABURAM BHATTARAI, UCPN (M)
CONSTITUENCIES: GORKHA-1 AND RUPANDEHI-4

2008

GORKHA-2
46,272 VOTES, WON

Although he garnered seven and a half times more votes than his closest rival in 2008, a walkover victory is far from reach this time round for Baburam Bhattarai in his home district Gorkha. Therefore, he has made a tactical shift in constituencies and chosen to contest from Gorkha-1. But this move might backfire, because the development work he initiated during his term was largely limited to Gorkha-2 and native Kiran Babu Shrestha of the NC is far popular than Bhattarai in Gorkha-1.

While Bhattarai's supporters continue to threaten opponents in the area, they lack the political clout they possessed five years ago. The district committee too is more partisan towards Dahal and to make things worse 2008's winner Parvati Thapa is in the Baidya camp. Since the Maoist leader has channelled most of his election energy on his constituency in the Tarai, he hasn't spent much time campaigning in the villages unlike contenders Shrestha and UML's Ram Sharan Basnet. However, the party's strong organisational apparatus and Bhattarai's stature in national politics might still propel him to top position.

In Rupandehi, Bhattarai will be up against UML secretary Bishnu Prasad Poudel, who won the elections here last time, and the NC's Surya Prasad Pradhan. His competitors have labelled his campaign slogan of ushering greater prosperity in the area as mostly lip-service and claim they too are actively involved in the development of Lumbini on the local and national level. With former district secretary Basanta Shrestha, who ran in the 2008 polls, siding with CPN-M, Rupandehi is now a stronghold of the Baidya faction, making the situation unfavourable for Bhattarai.



SHER BAHADUR DEUBA, NEPALI CONGRESS
CONSTITUENCIES: DAELEDHURA-1, KAILALI-4

2008

DAELEDHURA-1
20,529 VOTES, WON

KANCHANPUR-4
12,824 VOTES, WON

It maybe a walk in the park for Sher Bahadur Deuba in his home district of Dadeldhura where he has won all five elections since 1990, but things will be a lot tougher in Kailali-4 where he is contesting for the first time.

In Dadeldhura, Deuba will face Maoist candidate Khagaraj Bhatta, who gave him a strong challenge in the last election, and UML's Tara Dutt Joshi. However, former CA member Hari Lal Thapa's switch to Baidya's party has noticeably weakened Bhatta's position in the district. The return of UML cadres, who joined the Maoists during the people's war, to the mother party and his strong stance on declaring Kailali-Kanchanpur as a 'Tharuhat' state and thus not supporting a unified Far-West have further diminished Bhatta's popularity, which will in turn help Deuba.

Lila Bhandari of UCPN (M) and UML's Maheshwor Pathak are Deuba's rivals in Kailali. Since Bhandari, who won the previous elections from the same constituency has suffered a major blow to this popularity because of the CPN-M, Pathak is emerging as a strong candidate and will pose the greatest threat to Deuba.



RAM CHANDRA PAUDEL, NEPALI CONGRESS
CONSTITUENCY: TANAHUN-2

2008

TANAHUN-2
18,970 VOTES, WON

Since 1990, Ram Chandra Paudel has won four consecutive elections in Tanahu-2, but his road to victory is not so simple this time. Paudel is up against businessman and UML candidate Krishna Kumar Shrestha from Damauli, the municipality with the largest number of voters. But his strongest challenger so far is Purna Bahadur Gurung, a central committee member of NC's youth wing, who is running as an independent candidate and is immensely popular among the youth and the Gurung community. Even though he has been kicked out by the mother party, Gurung still has the support of Congress cadres in the area including party secretary Bishwa Neupane. To make things worse, NC's district president Dhurba Wagle is close to Sher Bahadur Deuba and hasn't shown much support for Paudel. However, his clean image and good standing in national politics should help Paudel on election day.



MADHAV KUMAR NEPAL, UML
CONSTITUENCIES: KATHMANDU-2, RAUTAHAT-1

2008

KATHMANDU-2
12,325 VOTES, LOST

RAUTAHAT-6
8,986 VOTES, LOST

There is a good chance of victory for UML's senior leader Madhav Kumar Nepal in Kathmandu-2, who lost here in 2008 to Maoist candidate Jhakku Subedi. Voters are extremely dissatisfied with Subedi, the UCPN (M) has fielded Lila Mani Pokhrel, and a relatively unknown student leader Pratima Gautam is running for NC in the same constituency. Therefore, Nepal is quickly emerging as the strongest candidate. The UML's solid organisational structure in the area and the reputation that Nepal built during his time as prime minister should both come in handy.

It is his Tarai constituency in Rautahat-1 that Nepal should be more worried about, where he will be contesting against Madhesi Jana Adhikar Forum (Democratic)'s Ajay Gupta and Anil Jha of Sadhbhawana Party. Whether voters will drop their ballot in favour of Madhesi candidates or based on Nepal's past performances remains to be seen.



JHALANATH KHANAL, CHAIRMAN OF UML
CONSTITUENCIES: ILAM-1, SARLAHI-1

2008

ILAM-1
17,655 VOTES, WON

Winner of Ilam-1 during 2008 polls, the road to success for Jhalanath Khanal is littered with barriers. Many cadres in the district have abandoned UML in favour of Asok Rai's Federal Socialist Party. His opponents blame him for ignoring the region's development during his time as prime minister and several stints as minister. The party's tendency to hide behind the NC and Maoists, its indecisiveness, and failure to give any direction to CA-I proceedings will also hurt Khanal's campaign. He will face his stiffest competition from NC's district president Himalaya Karmacharya. However, his affable personality and the UCPN (M) and NC's dipping popularity in the area should work in his benefit.

The contest for Khanal in Sarlahi-1 looks relatively easy. The NC's Sushil Karki is unlikely to put up a major challenge and the UCPN (M)'s Shambu Lal Shrestha, who defected from the Congress, does not have the backing of Baidya and his men.



NARAYAN KAJI SHRESTHA, UCPN (M)
CONSTITUENCY: MAKWANPUR-2

2008

PR CANDIDATE

In 2008, Makwanpur-2 went to Maoist Prem Bahadur Pulami with nearly 17,000 votes. Narayan Kaji Shrestha's former party Janamorcha Nepal came in third place with 3,000 votes. However, now that Janamorcha has merged with the UCPN (M), he stands a high chance of registering victory here.

Compared to his opponents, Shrestha's track record of development projects is poor, which will be his biggest weakness. Standing against him are the NC's Jaya Ram Lamichhane and UML's Subas Thakuri, both local candidates who have built their reputation around infrastructure development in the region. Thakuri is credited with kick-starting the construction of the Kathmandu-Sisneri-Hetauda road, while Lamichhane is the director of the infrastructure company that is in-charge of the Kathmandu-Hetauda Tunnel Highway. Two other issues that might work against Shrestha are: voters' discontent with former CA member Pulami, who they say did not bring any concrete changes during his tenure, and the breakup of the Maoist party.



KP OLI, UML
CONSTITUENCY: JHAPA-7

2008

JHAPA-7
14,959 VOTES, LOST

KP Oli's winning streak was disrupted during the 2008 elections when Maoist candidate Bishwadeep Lingden took top position in Jhapa-7. But Oli is determined to snatch victory this time. The UML has a strong grip on this constituency consisting of Damak municipality and three VDCs. Furthermore, Lingden joining the Federal Socialist Party, the UCPN (M) fielding an outsider candidate, Gopal Kirati, and the NC putting a relatively unknown candidate, Suresh Yangya, have cleared the path for Oli.

However, no one is quite certain which way the large population of landless and labourer class, who voted for the Maoists in 2008, will lean towards this time. Their ballot is going to be decisive. Also since most other parties have fielded candidates from indigenous groups, which make up a significant vote bank in Jhapa-7, it could prove detrimental for the senior UML leader. Will voters remember Oli's contribution to national politics and his fierce criticism of the Maoists' violent ways on Tuesday? We will only know after 19 November.

On the tube

Here is what the leaders have been saying during their door-to-door election campaign, *YouTube*



Gagan Thapa, NC, Kathmandu-4
At every mass meeting, friends ask me: “What will happen in your constituency?” My answer is always the same: we might win or we might lose, it completely depends on the voters and we will have to wait until 21 November for the final results. But we don’t have to wait to see who won or lost the politics, because we are already winners in our constituency. In 1996 when our Maoist friends took up arms, they told us that begging for votes from the podium is futile. They said the only way to state power and to bring true change and progress in society is through the barrel of a gun. If I had chosen to join the war in Rolpa and Rukum, my politics would have lost and they would have won. But the exact opposite has happened, we have won, our politics has won. Former rebels have laid their rusted guns down and are now standing on the same podiums that we built and asking Nepali brothers and sisters for their votes. It has been proven that violence is wrong and that peaceful politics is the only path to prosperity. Unfortunately, it took 10 years and 17,000 lives to understand this basic truth. We stand at a most challenging juncture in our modern history as we elect another CA. But what if we fail to write the constitution this time too? We cannot revive the 1990 constitution. Neither can we run the country on the interim constitution. Our journey towards peaceful politics will end even before we reach our destination and we will be forced into authoritarianism. There will be another uprising and democracy will return, but Nepal will lose yet another generation. We simply cannot afford to be trapped in this vicious cycle. Therefore, we have no other option than to make CA-II a success. However, we also need to introspect and analyse why the previous CA failed. In 2008, our Maoist friends had a huge majority on the assembly floor. But they couldn’t establish a strong leadership and couldn’t give Nepal a new constitution. There were so few NC candidates, that we had very little clout. When a party that wins politics loses the ballot, Nepal cannot find a long-lasting solution.



Baburam Bhattarai, UCPN (M), Gorkha -1 and Rupandehi-4
Butwal is the gateway to Lumbini and it is of great cultural, social, and historical importance to Nepal. Right around the corner is the Jitgadi Killa, where Nepalis crushed a British invasion. The city is a symbol of the defeat of imperialism and is also the centre of industrialisation and economic progress. If we can develop a place like Butwal, it will kick-start the development of the entire nation. Currently, the Tarai is home to 51 per cent of the country’s population. In the next decade, the number of people living here will continue to increase and there will be fewer people in the Hills. If politicians from the hills, whether Gorkha, Kaski, or Ilam, ignore this demographic reality and focus only on their home region, then Nepal cannot flourish and its unity will be at risk. Therefore we need to focus on the unity of the mountains, hills, and plains and major leaders need to develop their ideologies into a national agenda and be able to represent people of both the hills and Madhes. That is why UCPN (M) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal is a FPTP candidate from Kathmandu and Siraha and I am standing from Gorkha and Rupandehi.



Kamal Thapa, RPP-Nepal, at a rally for candidate Udhav Poudel, Kathmandu-4
The past seven years have set a terrible precedence in Nepali politics. As a result, the country is currently sucked into a whirlpool of crisis: our unity, integrity, and independence are at risk; our religion and culture are under threat, and our economy and society are in a downward spiral. We should use the 19 November elections as a means to rid the country of these catastrophes. We should not forget that we are repeating CA elections for the second time. If the citizens are going to approve the failed policies of the past and give continuity to old ways, then what is the use of conducting polls again? Nepalis want progress and respite from the political deadlock out of the upcoming elections. We want to assure all 12 million voters that if they support us, we will reestablish Nepal as a Hindu nation where all religions are given equal respect and freedom. We will create a constitution that can accommodate everyone from the king to the Maoists.

nepalitimes.com

Watch the full speeches

Party manifestos on agriculture

Himal Khabarpatrika, 9 November



UCPN(M)

- Land to the tiller principle
- Free redistribution of land above threshold
- Ban on fallow farms
- Establish chemical fertiliser industry
- Promote organic fertilisers
- Agricultural tools industry
- Ten-year loan for landless at low interest
- Farm and livestock insurance
- Minimum buying price for produce
- Minimum wage for agriculture workers

NC

- Land reform according to the commission report
- Zoning of farmlands for agriculture only
- Build chemical fertiliser plant within five years
- Establish mountain agriculture research centre
- Farm and livestock insurance
- Access to markets for farmers

UML

- Farmers to have access to land
- Zoning of agricultural land
- Only farmers allowed to keep farmlands
- Increase soil fertility with organic fertilisers
- Compensation for farmers for damaged harvests

MADHESI PARTIES

- Support for cooperatives - MJF
- Corporate agriculture - MJF and Tamalopa
- Subsidy for mechanised agriculture - Tamalopa
- Farm loans at low interest
- Assured price for produce - MJF

A murderer in the CA: not again

Himalkhabar.com, 8 November



Interview with UML’s PR candidate Ramkumari Jhakri, who filed a complaint in the Election Commission demanding it cancel Maoist candidate Bal Krishna Dhungel’s ticket. In 2010, a SC bench had pronounced a life sentence on Dhungel for the murder of Ujjan Shrestha in Okhaldhunga during the war. But the Maoists pardoned him and nominated him to the CA in 2008.



Himalkhabar: Why did you file a complaint against Dhungel?
Ramkumari Jhakri: A murderer sentenced to life by the SC was running for elections again and no one had dared to stand up against such injustice. So I did. I have seen the sadness in the eyes of Ujjan Shrestha’s sister. She has spent years going from one government office to another seeking justice.
How do you feel after the EC revoked Dhungel’s candidacy?
I believe in the rule of law, in citizens’ rights, and human

rights. I have fought revolutions on behalf of these issues. Despite having a criminal case lodged against him, Dhungel took advantage of a weak state and became a CA member in 2008. If he had his way, he would contest in the upcoming elections as well. I wholeheartedly welcome the EC’s decision. It has set a good precedent and shown that no one is above the law and that the state does not protect the accused.
Will digging up war crimes encourage more violence?
Conflict-era excesses are

unpardonable and the accused cannot be set free under the pretext that they were political in nature. If a Truth and Reconciliation Commission had given Dhungel general amnesty, then that would have been fine. But the state cannot be blind to injustices. Therefore, we must set up the commission as soon as possible so that it can carry out impartial investigations into war crimes committed by both the state and Maoist forces. Even after two of its senior leaders became prime ministers, the Maoist party showed no sense of urgency in establishing a commission.
But revoking Dhungel’s ticket does not mean the Shrestha family have attained justice.
Dhungel was sentenced to life imprisonment by the SC under Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi. He should have been arrested by the state, but he is walking around a free man. Regmi should implement the verdict he gave. If not this government, I hope a future government takes up this case and delivers complete justice.



Paper: Strike

कान्तिपुर Abin Sherstha in Kantipur, 14 November

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“I am glad they greeted me with a gun salute.”

UCPN (M) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal after finding out bombs were planted at his rally in Kanchanpur, *Naya Patrika*, 14 November



SUNIR PANDEY

SUNIR PANDEY in FAR-WEST

Khadak Bahadur Singh, 45, had no time to go watch UCPN (M) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal conclude his Mechi-Mahakali election campaign on Tuesday. From his home in Chandani, beyond the Mahakali, Singh sets out every morning on his Uttarakhand plated motorcycle to Mahendranagar, where he owns a liquor shop. It is election season and demand is high, but every other patron insists on buying on credit. In the little slice of Nepal across the Mahakali, locals are still in Tihar mode – or Diwali as they call it here – long after Kathmandu finished with festivities. No one cares if election campaign posters have come half unstuck. Apart from the convenience of having polling centres on their side of the river, locals of Chandani

and Dodhara feel they have little to gain from the political future of Nepal, federal or not. “The sooner it’s over the better,” says Jaya Raj Bhatta, 24, of Chandani, who works as a bartender in Mahendranagar. He will have to travel across the river to vote, but his constituency also extends into ‘mainland’ Nepal, meaning his representative may never even bat an eyelid across the Mahakali. When the major parties squabbled over state restructuring as the first Constituent Assembly entered its final stages in May 2012, the Far-West gave birth to Akhanda Sudur Paschim, a movement that called for the region to remain ‘undivided’ even if the rest of Nepal was demarcated along ethnic lines. As clashes between non-federalist and federalist forces intensified, the region was closed down for 32 days and similar movements sprang up across

Far-fetched in the Far-West

Rather than making promises they can’t keep, the people would like candidates to deliver on basic services

FIRST THINGS FIRST: Saraswati Nath of Dadeldhura says she will vote for whoever guarantees to bring piped water to her house.

the country. “It was a one-time thing and people have moved on, claims Dirgha Raj Upadhyay, editor of *Paschim Today*, a local newspaper in Dhangadhi. “There are no racial overtones to this election.” But Hinduism, monarchy, and a non-federal Nepal have retained their appeal in a region traditionally given to conservative values. The idea of an undivided Far-West with a capital in Dadeldhura, the gateway to all other hill districts, is not unheard of among party cadre who are keen to out-compete their rivals on the publicity front. Parties like the Akhanda Nepal and the Tharuhat Tarai have fielded candidates based exclusively on ethnicity. But they are likely to receive votes only from their cadre because the bigger parties are rallying together members within these communities.

Karna Malla, the NC’s district chairman for Dadeldhura, says there are no ethnically charged discussions above the Tarai up in the hills. “Only people who want to maintain their feudal privileges argue over Akhanda vs Tharuhat,” he says. Up in Amargadhi, headquarters of Dadeldhura, people are already talking

about a guaranteed victory for NC’s Sher Bahadur Deuba. Hoteliers, businessmen, and industry heads, who are keen to develop hydroelectricity projects and road links to Taklakot, are particularly adamant the NC will emerge as a winner. The former prime minister spent his weekend visiting the flood-hit Jogbudha Valley where 19,000 of the district’s 60,000 eligible voters reside. Deuba promised aid, but so did his strongest competitor Khagraj Bhatta of the UCPN (M), who lost to Deuba in 2008. Those who voted in 2008 are not sure who deserves their approval this time round. At the back of everyone’s minds is the memory of politicians who sweet-talked during election season, but preferred the comforts of Kathmandu when their constituencies needed them the most. Candidates claim they will write a constitution within months – provided they are voted in – but locals have a different understanding of priorities, which are shaped by the absence of local governance ever since the insurgency started. Saraswati Nath lives near the ruins of the historic Ajayameru fort, a six-hour walk from Amargadhi. What will she ask for if Deuba or Bhatta come requesting her vote? “Water,” she says. 🇳🇵

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Let the games begin

The gubberment in its infinite wisdom decided to get tough against the Dash Baddies and retaliate against their 10-day bund with its own four-day nationwide shutdown. So, having just enjoyed Dasain, Tihar, Id, and Chhat festivals we can now go into a weeklong hibernation for the Erection Mela. At this rate, we will need another holiday just to get over these horridays. People are already stocking up on beer-seer, booze-sooze, and wine-swine so that they can be first past the roast. Look at it this way, the Baidya Jugend will be so drunk they won't even be able to stand up straight and can't go around making bus bonfires. If they are lucky they may even blow themselves up with their own pressure cookers.



We may have sorted out the liquidity crisis for the coming week, but there is a deep sense of gloom and doom in the Tarai because the Indo-Nepal border is going to be sealed during the elections to prevent infiltration by dummy voters. Whoever made that daft decision doesn't have the interests of the people in mind: how on earth are they going to survive without being able to smuggle stuff back and forth for a week? It will be disastrous for the Tarai economy.



But as far as The Ass is concerned this week's top news is not the preparation for elections. It is the revelation that Nepal Police is introducing state-of-the-art lie detector tests for the first time in the country. We suppose that these contraptions aren't corrupt, unlike their



human counterparts, otherwise who will be able to tell if the lie detectors are telling the truth?

The danger is that they may end up becoming like the vehicle emission testers which are so designed that they can be circumvented and diesel jalopies that belch like brick kilns can be certified in exchange for tea money, which the last we heard was in the order of Rs 5,000 or so. Or, we hope it's not like the state-of-the-art breathalysers imported by the police for the mah-pah-say campaign against drunk drivers in which the analysers conked out within a few weeks. The manufacturer refused to replace them despite a warranty because the detectors were not made to be constantly assessing alcohol levels from the oral cavities of Kathmandu drivers that were off the charts.



The first ones to be put through the lie detector tests should be top leaders of the Four Party Junta who are candidates in elections next week. The Donkey is willing to wager a bale of the choicest barley fodder that all of them will pass the test with flying colours because they have all perfected the art of lying through their teeth without batting an eyelid, with a straight face, and without breaking into sweat. These western lie detector kits have not been designed for the superior ability of Nepal's political leaders to be so convincingly economical with the truth.



As election day nears, what The Ass is really glad about is that he can go into the polling booth, take the ballot paper, and stamp the swastika on the hammer and sickle. We must thank our lucky stars that we live in a land where we are allowed to label a Marxist-Leninist-

Stalinist-Maoist party with what in certain cultures is a symbol of fascism. The embalmed Mr Tse Dung must be tossing and turning inside his mao-seolum.



The Americans have put out another Travel Advisory to cover their legal asses. 'US citizens in Nepal are strongly urged to avoid demonstrations, political rallies, or large crowds during the election period,' says the notice. If that caution was strictly followed, most of central DC and Wall Street would have been out of bounds for American citizens last year. The advisory goes on to say: 'In addition, US citizens are advised to exercise caution during any travel taking place during a 'bandh'. Most vehicular transportation is not permitted and confrontations between motorists and protesters could occur, especially at major intersections.' Hello. Nepalis have been defying the bunds and you want your citizens to stay home? Good thing most Americans are smart enough to ignore it and go wherever they want to by pretending to be Canadians.



The manifestos of all the parties promise utopia by next year, but the one that takes the cake is the Cash Baddies who want mandatory military training for all Nepali men and women above 18. Kid you not. Is Comrade Shock and Awe planning to invade India or what? That is seven million people multiplied by two lacks each and the total has so many zeros it is equal to the annual budget.

The Ass



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