Parliament is preparing its first post-constitution session for Friday even as Nepal is hit hard by an Indian blockade that has now lasted ten days. The good news is that talks between the top three parties and Madhesi dissenters have gathered pace in Kathmandu.

A three-member negotiation team of the NC-UML-UCPN(M) held talks with Madhesi leader Mahanta Thakur, indicating that both sides feel the impasse has dragged on too long and want a settlement. Prime Minister Sushil Koirala is expected to step down on Friday, paving the way for UML Chair KP Oli to lead a new all-party government that will include the UCPN(M). Sources said some of the negotiations this week were also centred around Madhesi and Tharu leaders joining that government.

On Thursday, the three parties agreed to readjust federal boundaries by forging an all-party consensus and implement past agreements. They also created a conducive environment for talks by withdrawing the Nepal Army from violence-hit areas, providing medical treatment for injured protesters, and Rs 1 million for families of the estimated 40 people killed by police in the past month.

Thakur is expected to take the proposals from the three parties to other Madhesi leaders like Upendra Yadav and Rajendra Mahato in Gaur. Early this week, Thakur had met the three party leaders and returned to Rautahat to discuss whether to sit for talks. But Madhesi parties, emboldened by India’s backing, refused talks and instead denounced the ban on Hindi television channels and announced that they would stop paying government taxes.

“One would have expected a far less obvious move on India’s part at such a crucial time,” said a source.

Court of the Madhesi leaders, and India will have to play a crucial role.

The Madhesi parties and New Delhi are not said to be too happy about Oli being the next prime minister, since he is considered a hill hardliner.

**BLOCKADE BLUES**
One would have expected a far less obvious move on India’s part at such a crucial time

**ONE TO MANY**
by Bidushi Dhungel

**IT’S NOT ABOUT THE CONSTITUTION**
The current standoff is more about the feeling of being left out

**AS IT HAPPENS**
by Om Astha Rai

**SHOWING WHOS BOSS**
Editorial

**DISCOVER TURKEY WITH TURKISH AIRLINES**
Discover harmony in diversity.

**WIDEN YOUR WORLD**
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** Discover Turkey with Turkish Airlines. Discover harmony in diversity.**
SHOWING WHO’S BOSS

It is in India’s strategic interest to ensure equilibrium and stability in Nepal, but the blockade has undermined that.

Nepal’s constitution was finally promulgated on 20 September by an overwhelming majority in a freely elected Constituent Assembly with a fair and proportionate representation of most ethnic, caste and gender groups. Less than 10 per cent voted against or boycotted the promulgation. Even rejectors and die-hard critics of the constitution will admit that it was the product of a fully free and fair democratic exercise.

Which is why it is surprising that the world’s largest democracy and the United Nations have been so grudging in accepting this as a document that, while flawed, ended years of deadlock and can be the basis of an inclusive and durable constitution.

To express its misgivings about the constitution, India has obstructed the flow of food, fuel and goods entering Nepal, hoping that the hardships the Nepali people are suffering will bring their leaders to their knees.

But when it became apparent that the federal delineation was not to his liking, Gachhadar was leaned upon to quit the MJF-D. The government waited out the weekend to request the US to stop India from imposing an embargo against Nepal to put pressure on Nepali leaders to amend the new constitution, youth activists carry out a rally in Kathmandu on Saturday.

Whatever reservations India had about the new constitution had failed to address the concerns of Nepal’s excluded, it was declared. Critica have latched on to deficiencies that can be corrected in the future through future amendments, and have ignored many of the positive points in the document. The constitution thus became a lightning rod for everyone with a grievance, including politicians who lost the 2013 elections and needed constitutional guarantees of representation so they’d never again suffer such a miscalculation: they never thought India would go so far as to seal the border in retaliation.

In Nepal, it has undone the dramatic breakthrough in bilateral relations achieved by Prime Minister Nawendra Modi’s visit last year. Most Nepalis had forgotten two previous Indian blockades, but this past week has brought back memories of anti-Nepal rallies, and bitterness.

Nepalis from the plains have always suffered discrimination from the hill establishment, they have always been treated with respect, and their loyalty to the Nepali state is questioned every step of the way (see pages 16-17). This Indian intervention, however camouflaged, will now make it even more difficult for them.

New Delhi and Kathmandu both need to de-escalate. In the first sitting of parliament on Friday, Tarai MPs from the Big Three could push amendments to the constitution to address some of the concerns of the Madhesi parties and India, including the delineation of constituencies based on population broadly based on districts, re-insert ‘proportion’ and ‘Tari Madhes’ in the wording.

The new Prime Minister and his government have their work cut out for them. They have to rush to rescue relief delayed by politics and the blockade, they have to heal the serious rifts that have emerged between the hills and the plains, and they have to steer the country on a path to rapid economic growth.

This is still possible to do, and it would be in India’s own strategic interest to help Nepal attain equilibrium and stability.

VICIOUS CYCLE

India has lost all sense of diplomatic decorum (‘Vicious cycle,’ Editorial, #777). As a believer of realpolitik, I am unable to comprehend their win-lose strategy. To win Bihar elections, they are willing to lose Nepal. Bring back Sushma Swaraj. Let her handle foreign policy and get rid of the ignorant hawks in Delhi. The current impasse must be addressed and resolved with pragmatism and acuity, any delay is going to hanker us for many years, like a deeply ingrained splinter.

Nam

India is NOT a friend of Nepal. Never was. never will be. What more proof do you need? Wake up Nepalis, and smell the roses.

Sridhar KC

GOOD EDITORIAL, well balanced, to the point and free of irrational jingoism that the Nepal press is full of nowadays. Krishna S

HASHTAG REVOLUTIONS

It’s actually our fault. We should have built two super highways – one to Kathmandu and one to Keros – long time ago (‘Hashtag revolutions’, ‘Tering Dolker Gurung, #777). We shouldn’t be in India-locked, we need to open up our northern routes too, only then will our southern neighbors be interested. Look at how India marginalises ethnic Nepalis in Darjeeling, Sikkim and Assam. Look at how they conspired with the Bhutanese regime to drive out ethnic Nepalis. We need to be strong and take care of ourselves and our own.

Kirad

Online Keyboard Fighters. I almost LOL when I see people signing petitions to request the US to stop India from interfering in Nepal. What are we even doing guys? Keep in mind, India couldn’t afford to lose Nepal because it is a potential market. We will always win.

Tamang

COSTLY CONSTITUTION

Amend the Constitution. Let everybody be included (‘Costly constitution’, #777). Stop the killings. Leaders of Nepal, do not take precious and innocent lives for granted.

Bikas Gurung

GNU

People may soon start longing for the Panchayat days once it all sinks in that all of us were taken for a costly ride by PKD, BRB and their M chamas. (‘The Great National Unravel’, Foreign Hand, #777).

Geug

LANTANG RISING

This is a nice example of how resilient the Nepali people are (‘Langtang rising’, Upanasa Khadka, #777). After such a massive earthquake and so much loss, they are back on their feet. It would be so much more helpful if government backed them up.

 Bipin Karki

2  EDITORIAL 2 - 8 OCTOBER 2015 #778

YOUR SAY www.nepalitimes.com

Most shared on Facebook
In an unscheduled blockade against Nepal to put pressure on Nepali political parties to amend the new constitution, youth activists carry out a rally against Indian interference in Kathmandu on Saturday.

Most reached on Facebook
Gopin Ra photo, abon (63,773)

Most popular on Twitter
Bikas Gurung language (9,377 retweets, 394 mentions)

Most visited online page
Are you in a funk about Nepal? by fiu (4,427 views)

Most commented
Hashing revolutions by Tering Dolker Gurung (47 comments)

Panchayat days once it all sinks in that all of us were taken for a costly ride by PKD, BRB and their M chamas. (‘The Great National Unravel’, Foreign Hand, #777).

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 Biplin Karki

#778
THERE ARE two striking features of the last couple of weeks: a surge in nationalist sentiment and the imposition of what looks and feels like an Indian blockade on Nepal. It may be undeclared indeed, but even if unofficial, one must call a spade a spade.

There are so many motivations and conspiracy theories doing the rounds regarding what is causing this undeclared blockade. After talking to a fair number of people in and out of government, in embassies and newsrooms, here are some of the revelations shared.

There are those who are convinced that India’s interest is a no-strings-attached inclusion of Madhes with the main issue being the naturalisation clause in the constitution which bars men of Indian origin from holding top positions in government. Then, there are those who say the blockade has nothing to do with the Madhes, but is instead about Nepal having been declared a secular state while the Indian establishment was pushing in the other direction.

There is also the argument that India is, in fact, not imposing a blockade at all and that it is the Madhesi protests on the Nepal side, and this is the official Indian position. The Indian Ambassador claims to “not understand at all” what has happened and where all of this anti-India sentiment is coming from. Apparently, the notion that India is “pro-Madhesi” couldn’t “be further from the truth”.

A senior NC leader said that actually this is all about Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ego. “He’s even following every tweet and the more #BackOffIndia he sees the less he is going to back off,” he said. Then there is the “hill mentality” of UML leaders in particular blamed as the source of the current crisis. Delhi also felt “completely betrayed” by Nepali leaders who had gone to Delhi and made various promises. “So there you have it. These are the many reasons why Kathmandu has no petrol and why everything else is in short supply. But how did India-Nepal relations, in the words of a senior diplomat, go “from a to z in six months”? The leaders of the NC-UML-UCPN(M) were well aware of India’s stance on the constitution months before its promulgation and were listening intently just weeks before, such obliquely taking turns to go to Delhi and receive blessings. The all-out rejection of India’s role in Nepal seems then to be a populist move to justify an otherwise sub-standard statute.

The visit just two days before the promulgation by S Jaishankar was not only ill-timed, but so blatant in its intent to intervene that it gave Nepal’s political leadership the impetus to bring forward its nationalist agenda to cover up their own follies. For all the back-room deals made in this country, one would have expected a far less obvious move on India’s part at such a crucial time.

The agitating Madhes-based parties are also not doing themselves, or anyone else, a favour by welcoming the current intervention and taking active part in the closing of the border. It is only working to prove the fears of Kathmandu that the Madhes and India are indeed interchangeable. And given the highly nationalist mood, attitudes in Kathmandu towards Madhesi leadership are hardening.

In reaction to the blockade, young protesters sat on the street outside the Indian Embassy. The song about always being able to wake up to a view of the Himalayas was on full blast, followed by the other one about the son of Nepal who wouldn’t bow down. There was a cycle rally with a large banner: ‘No petrol, no problem’. Our dear comrade Prachanda had also said something about ditching his car for a bicycle, though he barely looks fit enough to pedal even 1km. All Indian TV channels have gone off air in protest. This is what we have reduced ourselves to: an array of meaningless actions that say very little about our sovereignty as a nation, our ability to self-rule or anything else positive about our national character.

It’s a blockade, sure. And of course it is low, petty – and illegal – to resort to strangling an already-struggling neighbour because things didn’t go one’s way. But the blockade is really just the icing on the cake. Even without it, we were in the gutter. The idea that the Madhes problem will go away as soon as the border opens up for supplies is naive.

The political leaders have no choice but to bring the agitators on board and amend the constitution. That would also go a long way in easing the situation that many Madhesi lawmakers in the NC, UML and UCPN(M) find themselves in. They may have signed on to the statute, but they did so with a heavy heart and in the words of one lawmaker, “we closed the door to our constituencies”.

ONE TO MANY

Bidushi Dhungel

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The idea that the Madhes problem will go away as soon as the border opens up for supplies is naive.
A healthy free for all

The constitution’s lofty aim of upgrading health care can be achieved with a proven public-private partnership model

The implementation of the constitution’s commitment to provide free health care services will require building new facilities, rehabilitating old ones, and adding or replacing medical equipment and supplies. Thirdly, the MOHP needs to ensure that there is adequate staffing within these health institutions. If the MOHP is truly committed to its vision of providing health care services to all Nepali citizens, it must work hard to achieve those tasks. It will require great planning and cooperation at the inter-ministerial and National Planning Commission (NPC) levels. Additionally, work must be coordinated with external development partners who will help finance our health sector. However, leadership must come first and foremost from the MOHP. In order for there to be any true chance of success, the MOHP must own the idea of free health care, and under its direction, provide these needed resources in the immediate short-term.

As we move forward to build a health care system that will provide free services for all Nepali citizens, the MOHP must identify mechanisms to optimise use of the limited resources it has available. One model for such a system is public-private partnerships – the government partnering with non-governmental organisations to provide health care services to the people of Nepal.

One model is the Bayalpata Hospital in Achham District, which has been providing free primary and comprehensive health care in a public-private partnership with the MOHP since 2008. More than 285,000 people have benefitted from the free services, including outpatient, inpatient, surgical, laboratory, radiology and pharmacy services.

Through the public-private partnership, the MOHP regulates and oversees health care services implemented by the Nepali NGO, Possible. This model ensures accountability to the public while simultaneously leveraging the extra capacity for health care service implementation in the private sector.

The number of patients visiting Bayalpata Hospital keeps increasing day by day, as there remains limited access to quality services for those in rural areas. With our country’s new constitution, and the guaranteed right of free health care for all Nepali citizens, innovative public-private partnerships led by the MOHP, like Bayalpata Hospital, can act as a model for addressing Nepal’s health care needs.

Considering the constitution’s impressive aims with regards to health care services, the MOHP needs to work seriously and urgently with the National Planning Commission and other ministries to plan and coordinate its strategy to deliver on these promises. We have the opportunity to learn from, and collaborate with, non-governmental organisations within Nepal, and from other governments and organisations around the world, but we must move promptly. The people of Nepal have waited a long time, this is the time for action.

Bikash Gauchan is the Medical Director of Bayalpata Hospital in Achham.

GUEST COLUMN
Bikash Gauchan

equitable health care has brought hope especially among rural Nepalis who lack access to even basic health care, implementation is going to be tough given the state’s track record.

Despite the government’s earlier policies ensuring free services at district hospitals, patients still have to pay for consultation and medication. Another policy demands that 41 essential medications be made freely available at health posts and 71 at district hospitals. But that rarely happens.

Another problem in public health care is the lack of proper infrastructure and clinical capacity. Most well-equipped hospitals are concentrated in Kathmandu and this centralised health system is too expensive for most Nepalis.
NEPAL, KEEP WALKING

JOHNNIE WALKER® SALUTES THE INDOMITABLE “KEEP WALKING” SPIRIT OF NEPAL WITH A SPECIAL LIMITED EDITION, BLUE LABEL®.
History on canvas

When I was a boy, light bulbs were like stars to me. They twinkled only in the houses of my well-off friends. The rundown house I grew up in did not have electricity, and I used to do my homework with the light of a kerosene lamp.

I have time to see very few art exhibitions in Kathmandu this week and you adore the traditional art forms of Nepal, then this selection of 70 paintings by artist Hari Prasad Sharma (pic, left) should be it. Sharma is self-taught and was an apprentice with Chandra Man Maskey and Kalidas Shrestha. Now 78, his interest in Newari art is reflected in the culture intimately and this influence is reflected in the Valley. Although not a Newar himself, Sharma has studied events alongside the lifestyle of pre-modern Kathmandu. The paintings may not be historically accurate but recreating such events on canvas takes a lot of effort and imagination which Sharma displays in abundance.

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The current standoff is more about the feeling of being left out

After brokering a 12-point deal that united the Maoist rebels with the parliamentary parties against the monarchy, India saw itself as a shareholder of Nepal’s peace process. It later facilitated another key deal between the government and Madhesi parties. But India seemed left out when the top three Nepali leaders ignored New Delhi’s message to halt the constitution process and bring on board the disgruntled Madhesi parties. UML Chair KP Oli was apparently in a hurry to get the job done so that he could be PM. UCPN (M) Chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal was equally desperate to take credit for the constitution and revive his political career. To portray himself as a nationalist, he said Nepal was not ready to be New Delhi’s ‘Yes Man’.

Madhesi leaders, too, felt left out. Most Madhesi protesters probably do not know how - or if - the constitution has discriminated against them. They are just angry about how Kathmandu has ignored them.

After key Madhesi leaders met Indian special envoy S. Jaishankar in Kathmandu, I asked one of them, Mahendra Ray Davar, what their demands on the constitution were. He had no answer, and just said: “The Nepali state has always discriminated against us since the time of Prithvi Narayan Shah, and we aren’t an exception in it.”

Rakesh Jha is a local Madhesi leader in the eastern Tarai district of Siraha. He had no qualms about claiming that the seven points of constitutional flaw, which New Delhi reportedly told Kathmandu to correct, were indeed their demands. But when I asked him if he would like to see an Indian national becoming Chief Minister after marrying a Madhesi woman and acquiring Nepali naturalised citizenship, he said: “No, we never want that.”

Many in the Madhes are relatively flexible about demarcation, but even Madhesi leaders of the NC, the UML, and the UCPN (M) are not ready to give up on proportional representation and demarcating election constituencies in proportion to population.

But the good news is that the top three parties are ready to address these issues by amending the constitution. So, the Madhes is not ready to calm down because of trust deficit resulting from arrogance of some elite Bahun leaders in Kathmandu. It took 48 days and 40 deaths for Kathmandu to wake up. Jha says, “Policemen from the hills call us ‘Dhotti’ and use vulgar words against us.”

If Kathmandu stops acting arrogant and shows a willingness to listen, the Madhes will come on board. But for that to happen, withdrawing the army, instructing police to exercise restraint, committing to provide medical treatment to all the injured protesters and ensuring maximum flexibility in the demands of the plains groups are necessary. And we need India on board.

The longer it takes, the more complicated things will get.
There is an enormous high pressure area lingering over northern India which is sucking in dry air from the west. So, the monsoon has now almost retreated from Nepali territory with an average of 30 per cent less precipitation than normal. Which is not bad. However, there are pockets of the central Tarai and parts of eastern hills where the deficiency was much greater. There is a circulation building up in the Bay of Bengal which may bring a last gasp of the monsoon next week, but expect a sunny weekend with temperatures in the high 20s that will feel like the 30s because of humidity.

KATHMANDU

GOPEN RAI

Mustang, witnessed the thrilling Yartung Festival in Lo Manthang and explored the tropical jungles of Chitwan National Park. With a combined reach of 6.85 million followers, the photos shared from the trip have garnered between 10,000 and 100,000 likes each. The photos were shared using the #MyGHT hashtag on Instagram, and GHT is encouraging other users to do the same to share their Nepal experience.

“Since the campaign, we have seen a large rise in the number of our followers, the level of engagement and the use of our hashtag,” says Shrestha. Currently, the Great Himalaya Trails Instagram page has over 5,000 followers and showcases landscape photos selected from its followers.

The campaign was a collaboration between the Great Himalaya Trails, UK Aid funded Samarth-Nepal Market Development Programme (NMDP) and Yeti Airlines.

With the autumn trekking season here, the industry hopes that this is the best time to promote Nepal’s destinations to international and domestic travelers. GHT is also partnering with the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) to host ‘AdventureWeek’ in Kathmandu in October, with 20 influential journalists and tour operators from around the world who will go trekking in the Everest and Annapurna regions.

With fierce competition not just from neighbouring countries, great content and its outreach is needed to inspire travelers to visit Nepal. With GHT gearing up on its social media presence, other organisations should follow suit and harness the use of digital platforms to promote Nepal’s countless destinations.

Instagram: @greathimalayatrails

Besides destruction, the biggest casualty of the 25 April earthquake was Nepal’s tourism industry. While travel advisories issued during the immediate aftermath were relaxed after a few months, and only 14 of Nepal’s 75 districts were affected by the earthquake, the damage had far-reaching consequences. Hotel reservations until the spring of 2016 have been affected and trekking expeditions postponed or cancelled.

Still, individual travelers can find out which trails are safe, and trekkers have returned to the Everest and Annapurna trails this season, although not in the same numbers as last year. In an effort to hook hikers, the Great Himalaya Trails got four international and two local Instagram influencers (pic, right) to explore renowned destinations within Nepal and share their experiences with followers on the photo-sharing platform.

“Social media has become an effective medium for sharing visual and authentic information on post-earthquake Nepal. By publishing real-time images, tourists and social media influencers can help change the narrative and hopefully restore consumer confidence in the safety of Nepal as a tourism destination,” says Neha Shrestha of Samarth.

Among the group members were Tyler Metcalfe, a photographer and producer with National Geographic, renowned international instgrammers Liz Eswein, Jordan Herschel, Hirotaki Fukuda, and two homegrown photographers, Shikhar Bhattarai and Mohan Duwal.

The 10-day trip took them from one of the most remote regions to one of the most popular holiday destinations within Nepal. Together they traversed the arid mountains and cliffs of Upper Mustang, witnessed the thrilling Yartung Festival in Lo Manthang and explored the tropical jungles of Chitwan National Park.

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Instagram: @greathimalayatrails
At you a traveler who likes to snapshot your vacation and wonder which Instagram filter would best enhance the picture of the delicious dessert you just ate? Do you like to be out in nature, but can’t bring yourself to compromise your own comfort? If your answers are yes, then the Kasara Resort is the place for you.

This luxury resort, located in the lush setting of the Chitwan National Park, is both minimalist, and modern, offering guests a relaxing, mosquito-free, stay in the jungle. Every section of this property is so well-designed and the scenery is spectacular that it would be selfish not to share your pictures on social media.

Once you are done with social media uploads, you can join jungle activities to explore this exotic locale. For those who value their privacy and prefer a more secluded stay, Kasara offers two private villas with (oh-la-la) private pools.

We heard on Twitter that the last king stayed here recently. You may even bump into ex-royalty at Kasara.

Kasara packages start at Rs 8,000++ per person on double occupancy. Packages include one night accommodation, all meals, and a selection of wildlife activities.

www.kasararesort.com
info@kasararesort.com
www.ruralheritage.com, (01)4422617

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info@kasararesort.com
www.ruralheritage.com, (01)4422617

T his newly opened farmhouse at the base of Chure Hills is only a four-hour drive from Kathmandu. Gaining popularity among Valley denizens, the Gyan Farm in Hetauda is the ideal vacation spot for those who love outdoor activities. There are lots of cycling trails around the farm and for those who prefer water sports, there is tubing on the nearby Rapti River. If you are not really the active type, but prefer just to lounge around, Gyan also has a natural spring-fed swimming pool and hot tub. The farm uses fresh organic produce from its garden for all of its meals, service is excellent and the staff super-friendly. You read about it first here.

Famous Farmhouse, Nuwakot

www.gyanfarm.com
(01)5521120

GO NEPAL

Happy Earthquake Anniversary Day 2015!

Himalayan Height Resort (formerly Hattiban Resort), 20km south and 800m above Kathmandu Valley, is the place to be this Dasain for a retreat amidst pine forests and spectacular views. You can have a frontoilet of this serene place if you start walking from the main Pharping Highway which may be a bit steep if you take the shortcut but quite pleasant if you follow the groomed road.

The hotel is nestled in the middle of a wide lush ridge with bungalswows laid out in a row – all facing north for a view of Kathmandu below and the mountains beyond. Each bungalow has a small and intimate terrace. The rooms are wide, varying in space to welcome couples as well as families with children. Wi-fi and/or sauna for those so inclined. The dining building is situated near the entrance of the compound, the food is not something to write home about but, hey, you came here for the view – including Mt Everest on a clear day. You can also hike up to Champa Devi (2249m) for an even better panorama of the Himalaya.

Packages start at Rs 4,000++ and include one night’s accommodation and breakfast.

(01)4371537, 9805111567

Milla Guest House, Bhaktapur

The three-story refurbished Milla Guesthouse in Bhaktapur is one of Bhaktapur’s (and the Valley’s) best kept secrets. The same architect who designed the Patan Museum and the Garden of Dreams in Thamel (Goz Hagmuller) also remodeled this place. With its Patan Museum and the Garden of Dreams in Thamel.

Bhaktapur. You in the right frame of mind to explore post-quake Bhaktapur. You can have a frontoilet of this serene place if you start walking from the main Pharping Highway which may be a bit steep if you take the shortcut but quite pleasant if you follow the groomed road.

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(01)4371537, 9805111567

Gurja Khani, Myagdi

Gurja Khani, also known as the Hidden Village, is home to 256 farming households. This Dalit village is a week-long trek from Kathmandu and offers splendid views of the Dhaulagiri range. The more adventurous can choose to forego an easier trail and tread on a challenging circuitous route, which involves crossing a 3800m high pass. For those hikers who find steep passes and deep canyons unappealing, there are horse riding trips up to the honey-hunting cliffs.

The Himalayan Map House recently published a map of the Gurja Khani and the Hidden Village with a detailed trail guide that includes photos and additional information about the surrounding area which would be of great help to anyone planning a trip there this October.

www.shiningpeaks.com

Mara nam, an exquisite Middle-Eastern restaurant serving succulent kebabs and shawarmas. Pashchim, (01)4554159, 9808900417

Hannah’s Cafe, a low-key cafe serving excellent breakfast. Dhashighat, Lalitpur

Coffee, cake and wine, A monthly event by kar ma coffee, on offer are coffee, wines, cheese and pastries. 2 October, 7pm, Gyermendo, Jomson Road, Bhaktapur.

Maan nam, Enjoy a nice cuppa coffee in the lush garden or try out your golfing skills. Aflo!


Taza, An excellent Middle-Eastern restaurant serving succulent kebabs and shawarmas. Pashchim, (01)4554159, 9808900417

Ankit Tiwari Live, Popular Bollywood singer comes to town for the first time. 3 October, 7 to 8pm, Jawalakhel Football Grounds, Lalitpur. Tickets Rs 500/Rs 1,500/ Rs 3,000

The Latination, India’s reputed Latin jazz outfit brings you festive sounds from sahia and tumbao to modern jazz, and Afro-Latin rhythms. 9 October, 7.30pm, Alliance Francaise, Nax Road, Twerpepoe, Kathmandu, (01)4241163

Gharana Music Festival, A one-of-a-kind international classical music festival organised by the Gharana Music Foundation (see page 13). Rs 3,000

Relax at Hyatt, Enjoy a one-night stay at the five-star for only Rs. 9,999++. Package includes a complementary breakfast for two, spa access. (Only for Nepalis and local residents)

Festive Shangri-La, Three days, two nights in a deluxe room, complimentary breakfast and one free meal, lots of discounts on other services. As 6999 nett per person on twin sharing basis. 30 October, www.shangri-la.com, (01)4491234

Tiger Mountain Lodge, Pokhara

The mountain lodge, situated 1,000 feet above the Pokhara Valley, offers spectacular views of Machhapuchhre, Dhaulagiri, Annapurna and Manaslu. This month the lodge became the first hotel in Nepal invited to join Secret Retreats, a group of individual, small, unique hotels throughout Asia.

www.tigermountainpokhara.com, (01)4482647, 9849198474

100-day package, South Asia’s first premium travel experience with Nepal Airlines has launched attractive casino packages for Indian tourists. Packages start at Rs 19,000++ and includes accommodation, return air fare, buffet meals, sight-seeing trips, Lalitpur, Kathmandu, (01)4273999, www.crowneplaza.com

Bodhi Books and Bakes, This newly opened cafe offers a rich collection of cakes and pastries and good books. Mohanpur, (01)4532062

Big Daddy, A comfy new place that serves mostly burgers and steaks. Thamel, near Himalayan Jaus

Tiger Mountain Lodge, Pokhara

A low-key cafe serving A low-key cafe serving breakfast.

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Big Daddy, A comfy new place that serves mostly burgers and steaks. Thamel, near Himalayan Jaus
A Chinese artist’s creative journey across the Himalaya

JUSTIN ZHAO

Nepal has been an irresistible fascination to me with its juxtaposition of different Asian races in this small yet diverse Himalayan country. I watch the majestic peaks each time the plane flies over the mountains that separate Nepal and China.

This past January, I decided to invite my parents over for a visit. My father, Zhao Jianqiu, is a famous artist in Chinese ink wash painting and very fond of depicting natural landscapes and folk architecture. I was nervous but sure that he would find Nepal interesting.

The first morning we had breakfast at a rooftop restaurant in Thamel from where we could see the geographic outline of the Kathmandu Valley. The fog was thick and mountains invisible, but my father was intrigued by the varied forms of low concrete buildings in the city. He was amused by the flocks of crows, which are inauspicious birds in China. I explained that although they are also associated with death in Nepal, people revere them during a special festival.

My parents’ first encounter with the city was during a walk from Thamel to Basantapur through Jyatha, the same route I took on my first day in Kathmandu. The bustling market and crowded alleys reminded my parents of their youth in the Dongting Lake region of China.

reaching Basantapur, my father immediately set up his tools to paint the rather obscure Kotilingeswor Mahadev Temple next to Taleju. He must have been experimenting with the new subject matter and therefore did not choose the more grandiose temples. The Chinese brush-strokes and ink wash created an image that was completely different from the common oil paintings that I saw in Thamel every day, and I was glad to have brought my father to Nepal. My father was impressed by Patan Darbar and Pashupatinath, and complained incessantly that he didn’t have time to find the best angle from which to paint. Bungamati residents were intrigued when he moved...
the location of the stupas on his canvas for a better composition, and he entertained villagers in Panauti as he bantered with the women knitting on straw mattresses.

We travelled to Kakani, where my parents had a glimpse of the Himalayan Range before heading down to Nuwakot Darbar. We stayed at the idyllic Famous Farm inn where we enjoyed superb hospitality and delicious organic food. The views were clear enough to observe both the golden sunset over Ganesh Himal and the dreamy morning mist shrouding the Trisuli valley.

In Pokhara, Machapuchre welcomed us every morning and we walked from hilltop to hilltop looking for the the best view. My father was enthralled by the ingenuity and playful designs of the village houses, and he lovingly drew the stone-slab adobe houses shadowed under the snowy peaks, and included our jeep in the painting as an homage to its contribution.

My parents returned to Nepal in April, and my father rode rickshaws everyday between Thamel and Basantapur painting non-stop from dawn to dusk. He became friends with the palace guards and rickshaw drivers, and later painted two pieces in their honour. My parents left a week before the earthquake struck.

Shocked by the news of damage to the places he had visited, my father worked furiously in his studio to finish the panoramas of Pashupatinath and the Darbars of Basantapur, Patan and Bhaktapur. He also refined a new approach to draw the Himalas and created monumental works of the mountains and human residences. His Nepal works have won the appreciation of art critics in both Nepal and China, and will be exhibited in October and November in Kathmandu and Beijing.

Justin Zhao is with the Beijing Centre for Chinese Studies, and visits Nepal frequently.

## ZHAO JIANQIU

**Celebrating the Trans-Himalayan Bond: An Exhibition of Chinese Brush Paintings on Nepal and China**

**October 11-18**

Nepal Art Council, Babar Mahal, Kathmandu

November 8-20

National Museum of China, Beijing

### Celebrating the Trans-Himalayan Bond: An Exhibition of Chinese Brush Paintings on Nepal and China

**ZHAO JIANQIU**

The exhibition ‘Celebrating the Trans-Himalayan Bond: An Exhibition of Chinese Brush Paintings on Nepal and China’ by Zhao Jianqi marks the 650th anniversary of Sino-Nepal diplomatic relations. The historic ties between China and Nepal go back to the 4th century when monks like Faxian (337-422) and Xuanzang (602-664) made their way to Nepal, and recorded their travels. Later, there were matrimonial alliances between the royal families of Nepal and Tibet and Princess Bhrikuti helped spread Buddhism. Skilled Nepali craftsmen journeyed to Tibet to construct monasteries and share metal casting and pauba painting skills. The Nepali artisan Arniko left an indelible mark in Beijing with his White Stupa.

So, when Zhao Jianqi came to Kathmandu he saw the architectural antecedents of the monuments and shrines of Tibet and China here. The echoes of history are found in his ink and brush depictions of Kathmandu and the Himalayan landscape. The paintings have a Chinese character, but the subject matter is Nepali. Intricate brushstrokes on Chinese rice paper capture the urban vibrancy of Kathmandu and the vast vistas of the Himalaya. Earth tones dominates the artist’s palette and colour is used sparingly — sienna highlights the terracotta composition created by the roofs, red accentuates the fabric that hangs directly below the temple roof and yellow marks the brass spires and domes of revered monuments. Emphasis is laid on only a few members of a crowd gathered at the courtyard — a delicate wash of translucent color highlights their vestments. Motorcyclists, blue plastic water tanks and an obscure garden umbrella are treated similarly.

Zhao’s ‘Village near Pokhara’ provides a lead into larger panoramic paintings of the Himalayas. The painting is an idyllic representation of the rural as the artist portrays a small cluster of village homes, literally in the lap of the towering Himalaya. The vegetation and hay stacks illustrated by the artist are a sharp contrast to the barren mountains in the distance. Zhao’s monumental landscape painting of the Himalaya shows craggy snowcapped mountains shrouded in mist.

This exhibition also includes Zhao’s exquisite paintings of the diverse Chinese landscape and folk architecture, from the southern lakes to northern hills. This juxtaposition of Zhao’s Nepal and China paintings are a celebration in canvas of the historical and cultural ties between the two neighbours.

Sangita Thapa
As the first independent feature-length Hollywood film to be shot almost entirely in Nepal, and with two Nepalis playing central characters, anticipation around Highway to Dhampus had been building up in Nepal and in the diaspora for months before its release.

Directed by Rick McFarland, the film’s setting plays a pivotal role in the storyline. Elizabeth James (Rachel Hurd-Wood), a rich, spoilt socialite, arrives in Nepal for charity work and photojournalist Colt Morgan (Gunner Wright) is sent along to document her stay to erase her notorious reputation back home in England.

They make their way to an orphanage in Ghandruk with Ajit (Raj Ballav Koirala), who becomes their personal pilot and guide for the remainder of the trip. In Ghandruk, they meet the orphanage’s headmistress Laxmi (Suesha Rana) who helps coordinate the gift distribution to her students.

Egos clash as Colt becomes increasingly frustrated with Elizabeth’s diva behaviour whereas a subtle bond develops between Ajit and Laxmi. As the plot unravels, circumstances change, and relationships evolve. Compared to the slow start, the second half of the film carries more emotional depth and explores the theme of love and loss. Since most of the film is in flashback, audiences can anticipate what is coming but they can never fully predict it.

Both Hurd-Wood and Wright give strong performances as the snobbish, British socialite and the seasoned photojournalist. Koirala is effortless, and has a smooth screen presence. Rana gives a nuanced performance as the headmistress, although her delivery could have done with some improvement.

For Nepali audiences, hearing the actors converse in Nepali is a joy. Despite the excellent performances, the characterisation is weak. Elizabeth is known throughout the film as the spoilt socialite, and she acts the part, but the audience never finds out much more than that. We are not aware of her past and of how she became a fodder for the paparazzi. Similarly, not much is known of Colt apart from the fact that he’s a war photojournalist.

Using the spectacular Annapurnas as a backdrop for the film, McFarland makes optimum use of the location with his cinematography. The stunning aerial shots of Pokhara and Dhampus, together with Sam Cardon’s moving original music, can make overseas Nepalis homesick. Highway to Dhampus is a must-see, and apart from a few inconsistencies, authentically portrays the hardships of Nepalis without romanticising it.

Ayesha Shakya

Highway to Dhampus is showing at QFX Cinemas and iCube Cinemas in Kathmandu.

nepalitimes.com

I QUIT: Ex-Maoist leader Baburam Bhattarai quit the UCPN(M) party on Saturday and travelled to Janakpur to address a Madhesi rally this week.

SIMMERING ANGER: Students stage a protest in front of the Indian Embassy at Lainchaur against the border blockade by India on Monday.

LONG WAIT: Motorists wait in line at the the Nepal Army fuel station Bhadrakali in Kathmandu on Wednesday, five days after the Indian border was sealed.

NOT OVER: Dr Govinda KC called off his seventh hunger strike for medical reform on Tuesday citing the country’s present dire situation.

NOT DIVA DELIGHT: Bollywood actress Mallika Sherawat at the launch of Casino Mahjong at Soaltee Crowne Plaza with General Manager Upaul Majumdar on Saturday.

DIVA DELIGHT: Bollywood actress Mallika Sherawat at the launch of Casino Mahjong at Soaltee Crowne Plaza with General Manager Upaul Majumdar on Saturday.
A four-day international music festival in Kathmandu next week aims to promote western classical music appreciation and education in Nepal and will feature performances from world-renowned musicians.

The festival is organised by the non-profit Gharana Music Foundation which was established earlier this year by Dan Linden, an American classical guitarist and music teacher based in Kathmandu.

Nepal has a vibrant music scene that has strong Indian classical elements and traditional Nepali folk, and Kathmandu has become hub for jazz and blues festivals. Gharana hopes to bring classical Western music into the mix.

“We main aim is not to entertain but to educate,” Linden said. What helps make the Gharana festival so unique is that in addition to world class performances there will be free music workshops open to the Nepali public. The performers themselves will lead the workshops which will be attended by the music and art community of Kathmandu.

“It is the first time an international classical festival is being presented in such a concentrated way with this level of artistry and with unique educational opportunities for students interested in the genre,” Linden explained.

Some of the festival’s key acts include a solo performance by well-known New York-based cellist, Laura Metcalf, as well as performances from acclaimed guitarists Rupert Boyd, Ana Maria Rosado and Paul Cesarcyck. It will also feature local artists like tabla player Rabindra Shrestha and didgeridoo player Salil Subedi.

While the workshops are open to the general public, spaces are limited. Linden hopes to make this an annual music event in Nepal. As he said: “We want to see Kathmandu become a music destination and a city where the arts can flourish.”

Gharana Music Festival
8-11 October
Yak & Yeti Hotel
Tickets: Rs 500 (Rs 250 for students)
Available at: (Patan and Balkuwati), Himalayan Java (Thamel), Mandala
Book Point (Jamal), The Old House (Darbar Marg)
Le Sherpa (Lajimpat)

Pre-register for workshops: info@gharanamusicfoundation.org

Western classical comes to town

Tucked away in Jawalakhel, Kairos Café is a quaint, colourful restaurant with a great coffee selection and a mix of American and British cuisine. While the inside of the café is considerably smaller than the outside patio, it has a long L-shaped couch and several comfy armchairs lined with soft cushions, providing the perfect place to read, study, work or simply lounge around.

On a hot day, we were eager to visit Kairos Café for a sandwich and a tall glass of their famous cold brew coffee. Iced coffee aficionados may agree that it is often difficult to find iced coffee that not only quenches your thirst but is also flavourful, full-bodied and aromatic. You can call of your search. Kairos’ iced coffee is perfect pick me up. You don’t even need to add any milk or sugar. We were told by someone at the café that the secret is in steeping the grounded coffee beans in cold water for a prolonged period of time. This process gets rid of the acidity and leaves you with a naturally sweet, smooth, refreshing cup of iced coffee, which at Rs 250, may seem pricey but is definitely worth it.

The menu offers traditional British pub food, like fish and chips (Rs 600) and bangers and mash (Rs 400) as well as a varied selection of salads and sandwiches. Opting for a lighter lunch, we settled for an order of the tuna salad sandwich (Rs 300 for a 6-inch sub and Rs 450 for a 12-inch) and the beetroot and goat cheese salad (Rs 450). Both dishes were exquisite. Oftentimes, tuna salad is either too dry or dripping in mayonnaise but, thankfully, this sandwich was somewhere in the middle. The tomatoes were also fresh and juicy and the red onion complemented the tuna perfectly. The salad was crisp and crunchy and the beetroots and goat cheese went very well together.

All of the baked goods at Kairos are fresh, made in house every day. So naturally, we couldn’t leave without splitting a scone or a muffin. We opted for a scone that came with a choice of either strawberry or blackberry jam and a side of fresh cream and cost only Rs 200. Aside from the coffee, this was definitely the best part of the meal. The scone was light and fluffy, baked to perfection, and the jam (we opted for blackberry) added some zest to this delicious pastry dish.

With its friendly staff, excellent coffee and tranquil atmosphere, Kairos Café is a great place to relax and recharge.

How to get there: From the Jawalakhel roundabout, go west towards the Zoo, when the road comes to a “T” make a right and go about 10 meters. Kairos’s Café is the third house on the left with a big yellow sign.

Kairos Café

The "Freshest" Beer in Nepal.
Hi all,

Relationships are a big jumble of compromises, struggles, confusion, uncertainty, growth and most importantly love and happiness. No two people in the world have the exact same definition of a happy relationship. There are couples who meet and fall in love within months and get married, and manage to live happily ever after. Then, there are those who have known each other for years, get married, only to find out they can no longer stand each other. If two people truly love each other and want to make a relationship work, I would like to believe that they can always make it work provided they both put in the effort. However, relationships are not always that simple. Sometimes, situations or people change, priorities change and this in turn changes a relationship. Unless two people continue to share passion, intimacy and a level of commitment to one another, it is not easy to maintain a happy relationship.

Send me your questions to: askanjanaanything@nepalitimes.com or @AnjyRajy

Hi Anjana,

I am a 30-year-old professional woman who has been in a serious relationship with a 35-year-old man for the past three years. My boyfriend is currently in his final year of getting his Masters and I am very proud of him. We both love each other but after being together for three years, I want some sort of promise that this relationship is leading somewhere. He doesn’t think this is important. We also live in a culture where, I am constantly scrutinised for dating someone who is not willing to get engaged. Honestly, I personally do not care about getting married but my family does, and I would like to make them happy. He thinks we can be happy just the way we are and claims that society is constantly changing, but I disagree and think that our society in Nepal still expects us to get married if we both have been in a committed relationship for this long. I am still with him hoping that we will eventually get married because if he does not have the intention of marrying me, I cannot invest anymore time in this relationship. Am I being selfish? Shouldn’t he want to marry me if he loves me? How can we stay together without eventually getting married?

SWR

AR: Honestly, I do not think there is a right or wrong answer to your question about what is more or less acceptable in Nepali society. If you are both mature adults who have been in a serious relationship for three years and you both want different things, it is clear that you need to sit down and have a serious conversation to voice your concerns to each other.

Your desire to get engaged is not selfish, but getting engaged just to satisfy the societal pressures you may be experiencing may not be the best reason, despite the strength of these pressures in Nepal. If you want to get engaged and get married, you should be able to be honest with your partner about why you want to get married. At the same time, I do not think your boyfriend is wrong in saying that he is happy just the way things are and does not see the rush in getting married. But, the problem here is that you two are on different pages and want different things out of the relationship. It is important to discuss this and see how you both can reach a compromise – irrespective of how your society may perceive you, are you happy without being engaged to him? Is he willing to get engaged and married to you, even if it is not his own priority?

It is hard to say that a relationship is going somewhere, when the two parties involved want it to go two different directions and it looks like that is what is happening here. Talk to him and see who is willing to compromise a little for the sake of the other, otherwise it will not go anywhere. Good luck.

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A
fter the constitution was promulgated on 20 September, the Madhesi parties agitating for amended provisions in the new constitution changed their tactic of demonstrations and shutdowns and started blocking the border with India.

One week later, as Nepal reels under a shortage of fuel and other essential commodities the top three parties, which pushed through the constitution, have formed a three-member committee to negotiate with the disgruntled Madhesi parties and talks are expected to begin in a couple of days.

But what are the major demands put forth by the Madhesi parties? They are not different from the seven points that India reportedly pressed Nepal to address.

The Madhesi parties want the five disputed Tarai districts to be in two plains provinces, rights for demarcation of electoral constituencies in proportion to population, special rights for demarcation of election constituencies in proportion to population, and people from some districts of the Tarai to be included in the plains provinces.

Are these demands genuine, and are they too difficult for the government to address? Madhesi leaders belonging to the top three parties say two of these demands are genuine and can be easily addressed. But they say the other two, if addressed, will hurt the long-term interests of Nepalis.

Nepal’s 2007 Interim Constitution adopted principles of proportional representation in all state organs. The new constitution has partially incorporated them. In its preamble, the new constitution states that an equal society shall be created on the basis of principles of proportional representation. In Article 285, it again states that principles of proportional representation shall be adopted to appoint civil servants. But the word ‘proportional’ is missing in the fundamental rights. “It is not a big issue, and it can be resolved through an amendment,” UML’s MP Satrughan Mahato says the top three parties are ready to include this word even in the next parliamentary session,” he says.

The new constitution bars naturalised citizenship holders from settling in the Tarai after marrying Indians. But I do not have reservations against Indian cultural ties with Indians, and Indians living there want,” explains Jaisawal of the UCPN(M).

Students are trying to wriggle out of the earlier provision. They believe that the word ‘proportional’ was deliberately omitted to exclude already-excluded communities. “Madhesi parties have misrepresented it to spread the lie that 45 per cent of government jobs will no longer be reserved for them,” says Mahendra Yadav, a Nepali Congress (NC) member of the parliament. “This is not a big issue, and it can be resolved through an amendment.”

UML’s MP Satrughan Mahato says the top three parties are ready to include this word even in the next parliamentary session,” he says.

UML’s MP Suresh Prasad Jaisawal says the demand for demarcation of election constituencies in proportion to population is genuine and the top three parties are ready to address it. “Proportional representation and demarcation of constituencies in proportion to population were our demands, too,” he says. “We signed the constitution only after our respective parties promised to address these demands by amending the constitution.”

All Madhesi leaders of the top three parties believe that addressing these two genuine demands will ease tension in the Tarai. Mahato of the UML says: “People in the Madhes are angry because the state quickly reversed this constitutional provision is a big issue, and it can be resolved through an amendment.”

The Madhesi parties say people in the Tarai share kinship and cultural ties with Indians, and this constitutional provision is a discrimination against those who settle in the Tarai after marrying Madhesi men or women. But all Madhesi leaders of national parties believe that allowing naturalised citizenship holders the right to assume important posts would be detrimental to the long-term interests of the Madhesi people.

“Reversing this constitutional provision would mean that those Madhesis who were born in the Tarai have to work with Indians married to our sons and daughters to become Chief Minister of the Madhes province,” explains Jaisawal of the UCPN(M).

“And this provision does not stop our children from becoming Nepal’s President even if we are married to Indians.”

Madhesi parties want no more than two provinces in the Tarai. The new constitution has created just two plains provinces. But Sunnari, Morang and Jhapa in the east and Kailali and Kanchanpur in the far-west have been put in the hill provinces. Madhesi parties want these five districts to be in the plains provinces. But not all Madhesi support this demand.

UML’s MP Shital Jha says: “I am fighting for a Mithila state, but I do not have reservations about how provinces have been demarcated in the Tarai. What if we insert Sunnari, Morang and Jhapa in the Madhes province, and people from these districts rise up against it? We should listen to what a majority of people living there want.”

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NATION
Before it’s too late

Southern Nepal is in the middle of a humanitarian crisis, we need to act soon

Puru Shah

T

he country, its capital and the media have been largely silent about the humanitarian crisis in the Terai and the human rights violations. Most of the victims are children, journalists, and ordinary Nepali civilians who have nothing significant to gain from the constitution or federalism. They simply want to live with dignity in a safe environment, earn a living and feed their families. Millions of Nepalis in the Terai who have no say have been caught up in this political unrest.

As the protests turned violent, millions of ordinary Madhesis have locked themselves inside their homes for more than a month now. They are not even safe in their homes as police often enter while chasing protesting Madhes. The blockade of the border is now making life even more difficult.

Most Nepalis of the Terai have no interest in participating in any of the protests with the Madhosi Morcha, or to attack the police. Please do not let the violent methods of a few thousand overshadow the millions of peaceful Nepalis who are suffering. There was an acute shortage of basic food and fuel even before, now it is worse. The unrest in the Terai has become more statistics, but there is a human side to the story, and it affects half of Nepal’s population. Millions of children in the Terai have been unable to attend schools and several have died in protests. Children have been victims of police brutality, and many are psychologically traumatised. My three-year-old nephew is terrified of the police. Army trucks patrol the streets, pointing guns at whoever dares to poke their heads out of doors.

In response to a few greedy political leaders, we have the response of a rogue state. The headlines are all about clashes between protesters and police, but this is a much bigger disaster. The National Human Rights Commission of Nepal will most likely investigate these deaths and send reports to the government. But how is that going to bring back the dead?

We have to end the blame game between the Madhosi Morcha and Kathmandu. Who started it doesn’t matter anymore, what matters is that it needs to stop. When innocent children and civilians are killed by police inside their homes, or a mob lynch policemen have gone too far, and we need to speak out.

The state and most of the Kathmandu-based media have only criticised the violence against the police while the brutality against civilians continues unchecked. A majority of Nepalis are still indifferent, and this needs to change to save Nepali citizens in the south from a full-fledged humanitarian crisis. We know there are extremists on both sides. People face discrimination in the Madhes and in the Pahad. It is time to move beyond those differences and build a better and united Nepal. Except for Pahad. It is time to move beyond those differences and build a better and united Nepal.

Many young Nepalis in the Pahad and Madhes feel a sense of alienation. Many wonder what has befallen upon us that we have become so deeply polarised that reconciliation seems to be a challenge. The provincial demarcation was all gerrymandering. The number of federal states have oscillated between 14, 11, 6, and then 7 which shows that political agreements can change to accommodate grievances. Sooner or later, political squabbles will be solved, with or without India’s mediation. We know this from history. But innocent lives cannot be brought back, and communal tensions need to be healed.

When the earthquakes struck in April, Nepal was united. People in the Terai collected food and brought relief to the hills. Today, the Terai is in the midst of a humanitarian crisis, yet the rest of the country appears indifferent towards the people there. How can one part of the country celebrate while the other is mourning for its dead?

This constitution is historic because it was formulated through a democratic process by members elected by the people. It has also institutionalised federalism and the republic, which are big achievements. Yet, it has still not guaranteed gender equality for women and citizenship for their children. People in the Terai and elsewhere have also been cheated on the basis of citizenship, proportional representation, number of constituencies, cultural, and linguistic freedom. We should fix these deficiencies.

Irrespective of the construction and the federalism model, most Nepalis will still have to fend for themselves, like they always have. The survivors of the earthquake are still waiting for help that never came, somehow they have tried to make do.

The Madhesis also know that they cannot depend on the government for jobs, education, healthcare or basic services. Instead of us we will gain little from the new constitution or the federalism structure. All we want is to live with dignity, but for the past month we have faced oppression, death, fear and humiliation. Even moderate and indifferent Madhesis are resentful. It is still not too late to heal and unite.

“Every abusive word, every bullet and every death added fuel to the fire.”

Sant Gaha Magar, in Mahottari

What started as a street movement of the Madhes Front, an alliance of four Madhesi parties, has now become a Third Madhes Movement in less than a decade. In January 2007, Upendra Yadav, who is now a key leader of the Front, was arrested for burning the Interim Constitution in Kathmandu. His arrest set off protests across the plains and Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala agreed to include federalism and autonomy for a Madhes province in the Interim Constitution. A year later, Yadav and other Madhes leaders launched another movement and agreed to participate in the first Constituent Assembly (CA) elections only after getting a deal on proportional representation
And Injury

Parajuli got police prepared to by Dhanusa CDO Kali Prasad of government officials led Janakpur, an emergency meeting surrounding areas to overrun organised protesters from and others joined the protests. As response as the protests spread to started using excessive force in the streets.

The UML did not come out into national parties like the NC and had voted for candidates of of each Madhesi person killed and others even announced that their future movement. They knew this, and necessary for a sustained have the organisational structure what was agreed upon in the past. constitution gives legitimacy to not back off unless the new uprising in progress. Madhesi state organs. Now, there is a third for marginalised communities in the trade centre of Birganj, while declared the provincial capital.

For example, the people here are united for now, but there are there are groups with varying interests. For example, the people here have already secured a Madhes province, but are divided over which Tarai city should be declared the provincial capital. Some Madhesi leaders want the trade centre of Birganj, while others are pushing for Janakpur, the heart of the ancient Mithila kingdom. Madhesi groups were competing with each other to do more radical, and to suffer more fatalities to bolster their cause for the location of the capital. Whatever the reason for the escalating violence, the issue of every Madhesi life added fuel to the fire, radicalising even the moderate. Lalan Dwibedi became Chief of Thakur Ram Multiple Campus in Birganj with the backing of the NC, but is outraged by the heavy-handedness of the state and a lack of respect from Kathmandu for the people of the plains. “How can they call us chotto? We are all Nepalis, and we are now fighting a battle of dignity,” he says. “Every derogatory word by a government official, every bullet fired by police, and the death of every Madhesi protester adds fuel to the fire.”

Madhesi protesters, who have blocked border points with sit-ins during the days and sleeping on no man’s land at night, have welcomed India’s blockade. However, the seven-point of amendment, which New Delhi reportedly pushed Kathmandu to accept, does not find resonance with every Madhesi leader. “I don’t understand why there is so much fuss about citizenship,” says Lalbabu Raut, Vice Chair of Federal Socialist Forum and a member of the parliament. “Except for a few Madhesi leaders, the Madhesi people are satisfied with citizenship provisions.”

Raut says proportional representation of Madhesi in all state organs, demarcation of constituencies in proportion to population and wider boundaries of plains provinces are the key demands. “This is what we are fighting for, the other demands are minor” he adds. Interestingly, after the Madhesi parties changed their tactics and started sit-ins at the border no one has been killed in protests. But the ordinary people across the Tarai are suffering, and they want Kathmandu to take steps to end their hardship.

When Madhesi parties organised protesters from surrounding areas to overrun Janakpur, an emergency meeting of government officials led by Dhanusa CDO Kali Prasad Parajuli got police prepared to counter it.

“We were afraid we might not be able to contain the situation if thousands of protesters resorted to vandalism,” says Parajuli. Violent clashes erupted and three people were killed in Janakpur as the situation spiralled out of control. The Madhesi parties appear united for now, but there are groups with varying interests. For example, the people here have already secured a Madhes province, but are divided over which Tarai city should be declared the provincial capital. Some Madhesi leaders want the trade centre of Birganj, while others are pushing for Janakpur, the heart of the ancient Mithila kingdom. Madhesi groups were competing with each other to do more radical, and to suffer more fatalities to bolster their cause for the location of the capital.

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for marginalised communities in state organs. Now, there is a third uprising in progress. Madhesi leaders say this time they will not back off unless the new constitution gives legitimacy to what was agreed upon in the past. However, the parties leading this struggle did not initially have the organisational structure necessary for a sustained movement. They knew this, and even announced that their future provincial government would give Rs 5 million to families of each Madhesi person killed by state security. Even so, the Madhesi people, most of whom had voted for candidates of national parties like the NC and the UML, did not come out into the streets.

After eight policemen were lynched in Kalai, Tharu protesters on 24 August, police started using excessive force in response to the protests spread to the eastern plains. That is when people like Satya Rupa Singh and others joined the protests. As the police used more force, the violence escalated.

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Across the Madhes, many have traditionally married across the border. Women born in India and married to a Nepali national will not have the same rights as people who are Nepalis ‘by descent’. This is discriminatory and violates the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of which Nepal is a signatory. But this is a political issue needs to be settled by Nepalis themselves. But by lending its voice and imposing a blockade, New Delhi has undermined the Madhesi cause and its own long-term interest.

Those for the provision in the constitution had argued that it was necessary to prevent Indian men, by the millions, marrying Nepal to acquire citizenship, and by coming out so aggressively India has bolstered that argument. It will now be doubly difficult for Nepal to attain gender justice in our constitution. However, the seven-point of amendment, which New Delhi reportedly pushed Kathmandu to accept, does not find resonance with every Madhesi leader. “I don’t understand why there is so much fuss about citizenship,” says Lalbabu Raut, Vice Chair of Federal Socialist Forum and a member of the parliament. “Except for a few Madhesi leaders, the Madhesi people are satisfied with citizenship provisions.”

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Five principles of peaceful coexistence
1. Kakarbita border
2. Biratnagar border
3. Raxaul border
4. Bhairahawa border
5. Rupaidiha border

Batsayan in Kantipur, 28 September

Five principles of peaceful coexistence

Book: Constitution
Yuwak in Nagarik, 27 September

Yuwak in Nagarik, 27 September

Basu Kshitiz in Annapurna Post, 29 September

Left: Diplomat Right: Relations
Dewen in Nagarik, 28 September

Rabindra Manandhar in Kantipur, 28 September

Batsayan in Kantipur, 28 September

Rabin Sayami in Nagarik, 29 September

Blockade Arcade

Dr. Madhepuri
Rabin Sapkota in Nagarik, 29 September

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Then we bring them together!

FunnY, they've not figured out our Nepal policy till now!

The land of the brave

pahelopost.com, 29 September

On 3 August 2014, Indian Prime Minister’s “We cannot bear to see our Nepali brothers go to bed on an empty stomach” speech drew thunderous applause in the Constituent Assembly (CA) in Kathmandu. Fast-forward to 2015, India has imposed an unofficial economic blockade against Nepal, cutting off supplies of essential commodities. With the fuel crisis deepening, people have had a hard time commuting and there is even a shortage of medical supplies. But the same Modi who commuting and there is even a shortage of medical supplies. But the same Modi who a year ago expressed his solidarity with Nepal has not a year ago expressed his solidarity with medical supplies. But the same Modi whocutting off supplies of essential commodities. With the fuel crisis deepening, people have had a hard time commuting and there is even a shortage of medical supplies. But the same Modi whocutting off supplies of essential commodities. With the fuel crisis deepening, people have had a hard time commuting and there is even a shortage of medical supplies. But the same Modi who

8 international laws violated

Naya Patrika, 29 September

Experts of international relations say the blockade has violated at least eight international laws and conventions, and this is tantamount to aggression.

1. The Vienna Convention

The VIENNA Convention on Transit and Trade of Land-locked States in 1965, allows land-locked nations like Nepal to import goods from other countries, without any hindrance.

2. Law of the Seas

UN Convention on the Law of the Seas 1973, to which both Nepal and India are signatories, allows all land-locked countries unhindered access to the sea.

3. WTO laws

More than 165 countries, including Nepal and India, are members of the World Trade Organisation, and they are entitled to the right to trade with each other.

4. Transit Treaty

In 1989, India imposed an official economic blockade against Nepal when a transit treaty between these two countries expired. The treaty is still in force but India has imposed an undeclared blockade against Nepal.

5. Bilateral Trade Treaty

Nepal has signed a trade treaty with India to access the sea via Indian territory, which has been violated.

6. Asian Highway Agreement

Asian countries, including Nepal and India, have signed an agreement to connect their high roads for regional trade.

7. SAFTA agreement

South Asian countries have adopted the concept of South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) to promote trade and business with each other. SAFTA law does not allow any country to block other country’s goods.

8. Members of ASEAN SAARC, and BIMSTEC which guarantee free trade among its member countries.

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I don’t know if I can make you any more cheerful about the state of the nation than you already are this week. But let me give it a try: Nepal may depend on India for fossil fuels, but thank goodness we are completely self-reliant in the production of beer.

As you all know we have been hoisted on our own petard by the Indians with an alleged, unofficial, undeclared, purported, unannounced, so-called, supposed, informal, (quote) blockade (unquote). Since Prime Minister Jhusil Da is not on email, he was sent a telegram by his Indian counterpart this week which read: ‘SO YOU PASSED A CONSTITUTION, COMMA NOTED, COMMA OIL, STOP, COMMA GAS STOP.’

Scientists have long known that there is a direct correlation between Himalayan geo-tectonics and geo-politics. The April Earthquake and the September Blockade have the same geological genesis, both were caused by India pushing into Nepal. This plate expansionism is linked to the convection of magma deep below the earth’s mantle and there is absolutely nothing we can do about it when folks South of the (Quote) Blockade (Unquote) Border suffer one of their bouts of irritable bowel syndrome.

None of this is new, of course. We have to remember that India has been acting pushy for the past 70 million years, ever since it broke off with Gondwanaland, shed Madagascar and Mauritius along the way as it sailed across an ocean that bears its name, and rammed into Eurasia. Which is why Nepal finds itself squeezed between India and China, a fact that our founding grandfather Kingman Prithvi Narayan the Great recognised 250 years ago when he coined the famous phrase: “Let’s face it: Nepal has its nuts in a vice.”

Seismologists have used geo-location sensors along the Main Boundary Thrust (MBT) in the Tarai to come up with the astounding recent discovery that there is no No Man’s Land anymore. Border pillars have been found to move by up to 50m in the course of one night. And way out there at the tri-junction of India, Nepal and China on Lipu Lekh the seismic plates have moved so dramatically that a whole chunk of Nepali territory, unbeknownst to Kathmandu, was thrust over to the Indian side.

The Nepal grovelment response to the unofficial blockade so far has been half-hearted and incomplete. If we are serious about tackling this crisis head-on there are five immediate measures we can undertake on an urgent warlike footing:

Do absolutely nothing. Yes, that’s right, let the blockade continue into the unforeseeable future so as to reduce our widening trade deficit with India. In the past week of the blockade Nepal has saved Rs 50 billion in imports. According to FinMin Mahat, if we can keep this up for the rest of the 2015-16 fiscal cycle, Nepal will have a balance of payments surplus with its southern neighbour. Yay!

OK, you say, but that still leaves us with the water crisis. We can do without oil, but kind of difficult to flush the toilet without water. Which is why the government is working on a cunning plan to get Legendary Ojha, who discovered water on Mars, to try to find water in Kathmandu as well. Better hurry before Aaj Tak says Ojha was born in #India.

And speaking of Indian tv, Nepal’s Ministry of Disinformation and Miscommunication is worried about the cable operators blockading Indian channels and is planning to transmit North Korean teleserials for Nepalis to watch over the holidays so we can forget our woes. The government is also weighing its options to dig a motorable tunnel under the Indo-Nepal Line of Control at Dhangadi, Birganj, Biratnagar and Nepalganj in order to bring in essential perishables like bananas, pineapples and pomegranates into the country. We have to have our poms.

As already announced by the Minister of Industry, Nepal will “soon” be exporting petroleum to India. That is why getting the Indians to build the Arwankha pipeline was a masterstroke: we will actually be sending crude the other way as soon as we fast-track exploration permits along blocks in the Tarai and strike oil by Sunday.

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