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**Times** nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll # 424

Q. What is the best option for army integration?

Total votes: 4,155



- Integrate at PLA into NA 12%
- Integrate some PLA into NA 23%
- No integration at all 65%

Weekly Internet Poll # 425. To vote go to: [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com)

Q. How will the Obama victory affect Nepal and the region?

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# Seesaw politics

## Valuable time is being wasted

DEWAN RAI

There are two main hitches to getting the constitution-drafting process started: finalising the Constituent Assembly's rules and agreeing on a committee to oversee army integration.

So far, house rule-making is stalled because some politicians don't want to obey the party whip on constitutional issues. The Maoist members say the whip should be followed by members for the sake of party discipline.

A meeting of the rule drafting committee on Wednesday ended once more inconclusively over the issue. "A party wouldn't be a party anymore if its members did not follow its rules," senior Maoist, Mohan Baidya, told *Nepali Times*. But Baidya predicted the rules would be finalised next week.

If that happens, work will have to begin on setting up various committees to draft the constitution, so that the actual clause-by-clause writing can start.

Asked if army integration wouldn't again put a spanner in the works, Baidya said efforts are continuing to get the NC to join the high-level committee on integration.

The cabinet formed a special committee before Dasain, comprising of coalition partners and the opposition NC, to discuss assimilation of the PLA into the Nepal Army. The NC refused saying the decision on composition of the committee was made without proper consultation.

"The kangresis can't run away from their responsibility of integrating the PLA into the national army," he said. The NC has demanded two seats in the committee from each party, just as the Maoists have.

Baidya says the Maoists don't want to dominate the committee just to push through their agenda on integration, but want it to work on a basis of consensus.

Law and CA Minister Deb Gurung said in Pokhara on Wednesday that if an agreement can't be reached, his party would push for a Swiss-style referendum on integration. But sources say the Maoists aren't really serious, they just want to use a referendum as a pressure tactic on the NC.

Vice President Paramananda Jha this week has been speaking out on legitimacy of the committee. His party is against integration and wants Madhesi recruitment into the army.

Baidya said Jha was way out of line: "The vice president has overstepped his brief by speaking out on a political matter."



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Obama mania

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ANN FLORINI  
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BILASH RAI



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## WIN SOME, LOSE SOME

Among all the challenges before us in the constitution drafting process, perhaps the most daunting will be the lack of political cooperation between the parties.

The democratic alliance of 2006 finally broke down after the NC decided to stay in the opposition after its election defeat. But the UML-Maoist marriage of convenience is also rocky, and there is no love lost among other members of the coalition. The Maoists themselves are not even bothering to hide their internal strife, and are playing it out in the full glare of media as they postpone their cadre conference yet again.

Disagreements are necessary in a democracy. Finding a compromise between dissenting opinion is what gives a pluralistic democracy its creative, problem-solving edge. But this works only if there is a common goal, a destination for the nation on which there is a consensus. Our leaders should have listened carefully to the speeches by the presidential rivals after the results were announced in the US elections this week.

In Nepal, politicians have never really shown the ability to agree to disagree. It is as if a point of disagreement, however minor, must lead to an irreparable divorce. The democratic parties, it has to be said, have been self-centred and self-serving. The left has also split regularly, reflecting divides in the global communist movement.

The NC may want to play the loyal opposition to keep the Maoists from straying from the democratic path, but there has to be a minimum understanding on the parameters of a mutually agreed set of rules that facilitates the writing of the new constitution before the April 2010 deadline. There can be no sabotaging of this critical component of the peace process.

The NC has refused to agree to full integration of the PLA into the national army, demanded the YCL be disbanded, a return of all confiscated property and adherence to the rule of law. There is also the larger concern about the Maoists' commitment to pluralistic democracy. The Maoist leadership may be inclined to strike a deal, but is prevented from doing so by its own rank and file.

And until the NC and Maoists can agree on these points, the constitution-writing process will face obstacles at every step even if gets started in the coming weeks.

There can be a win-win solution to this, but only if the NC and Maoists remind themselves of the larger national interest, and that in a democracy you lose some and win some.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**E**arly Wednesday morning, when Nepalis woke up to listen to the news, it looked like the republican candidate John McCain was leading in the polls. As election results from more states started trickling in Barack Obama overtook



**INTERESTING TIMES**  
**Mallika Aryal**

his opponent. By 10:30 AM Obama had won 334 electoral votes and it was clear America would have its first president of African origin.

President Ram Baran Yadav wasted no time in dashing off a congratulatory note to the president-elect. Throughout the day Nepalis closely watching the race were sending congratulatory messages to each other, Nepali blogs and message boards were full of praise for Obama, FM stations and Nepali tv channels were interviewing experts who have been following the American elections closely. In the evening many Nepalis celebrated Obama's victory with democrat American

expats in Kathmandu.

American presidents these days have such a strong influence on the rest of the world many have demanded, only half-jokingly, that the rest of the world should be allowed to vote too. Obama is now not just an American president, but a world leader because what America does with its military, what Americans spend on, how much fossil fuels Americans burn have such an impact on the rest of the planet.

After eight years of the junior Bush, Americans have finally rejected his unilateralism in world affairs. Which is why this was such a closely-watched election in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan. Elsewhere across the world, people realised that the elections would have a bearing on global recession, international trade, investments, immigration, humanitarian assistance, remittance, military alliance and climate change. Obama is therefore the planet's president.

It turns out that the Nepali diaspora is also significantly democratic. Since Obama's victory Nepalis across the world have been asking one question: what will

# Don't be mean

## The NC is blaming UNMIN for its own mistakes

**G**irija Prasad Koirala was at his caustic best this week while ripping apart UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and, by extension, UNMIN. He wondered about the massive security of the UNSG ("I thought



**PLAIN SPEAKING**  
**Prashant Jha**

they were coming to scare me"), and threw a barb at the tight schedule ("They said he has only ten minutes. What can one say in that time – he shouldn't have come at all.")

Koirala may have been funny but his only substantive criticism was that Maoists were entering the CA with UN-certified arms. Prakash Sharan Mahata echoed that: arms were not in containers, disqualified combatants were still in cantonments, and the UN had not kept a track of combatants and activities inside.

The NC criticism is flimsy. It's not UNMIN's decision to take back arms meant for security of Maoist leaders. The government has to review the past agreement and make a political call, UNMIN can then follow up. All other arms are still locked in the containers.

The discharge of disqualified combatants is not UNMIN's job either. There has to be discussion between the political actors and the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction about rehabilitation of those who did not meet the verification criteria. UNDP, UNICEF have a supportive role.

Does the NC have a roadmap of what to do with 4,000 people or is it suggesting they should

just be thrown out? As reports from the Kailali cantonment this week revealed, the foot soldiers do not necessarily agree with their Maoist commanders on discharge, rehabilitation and integration options. The issue is complicated because of domestic politics, not because of international institutions.

Our politicians are still ignorant about what the UNMIN can and cannot do regarding activities inside cantonments. The Agreement on Monitoring of the Management of Arms and Armies (AMMAA) asks the UN to monitor the confinement of Maoist combatants. But this is only a broad supervisory role, the designated sites are 'under the command, control, communication and information of the Maoist army site commander'.

UNMIN has little enforcement authority. It can't dictate terms to the PLA fighters. If it learns about major violations, all it can do is communicate it to the JMCC and party leadership and request them to take corrective measures.

Could the UN have more effectively controlled, monitored and reported on all movements inside, including that of soldiers who walk out? Yes, but it would have required another mandate asking UNMIN to manage the armies, not merely monitor their management. It would also have also entailed a much larger contingent of arms monitors who were armed themselves. No one wanted that. The NC's criticism of the UN is, in this respect, self-criticism. Does it now feel UN should have had a more expansive role?

The other criticism against UNMIN is that it wants to stay on in Nepal. Even if this was true in the past, it does not hold now. The top brass is pushing for speedy integration because it wants an exit route. The UK, its key sponsor in New York, is internally divided. Both the foreign office in London and the UK mission at the UN are skeptical of further extension though the embassy here and the Nepal desk will push for more time.

UNMIN will probably get another extension if asked. But that is the result of Nepali politicians not having finished their work on time.

UNMIN can be criticised on many grounds. It is opaque and secretive about information it collects. Some individuals, claiming to work on behalf of the organisation, tried to get involved in the Tarai. The mission took a soft and flawed stand towards the Maoists when it withdrew from the government last September. It should have engaged with India better. The fact that the mandate is still not clear reflects poorly on the public information office. Whims of Kathmandu bosses have meant that some of the best ground staff did not get an extension.

But all this does not take away from the fact that UNMIN has been an important pillar of the peace process, having done a lot of behind-the-scenes unglamorous spade work.

Our left rants at the United States. The nationalists abuse India. And now the centre-right has found a new bogey in the United Nations. When will we grow up and confront our own weaknesses? ●

## Obama mania

### What does the Obama win mean for Nepal?

Obama as president mean for Nepal?

The Maoist-led government may think that the Obama administration will be more responsive to their party's removal from the terror list, but they overestimate American legal requirements for this to happen. What the euphoria of the election result conceals is the broad continuity in American foreign policy no matter who is president.

Nepalis expect Obama's America to be more immigrant friendly. He is in support of revamping the legal immigration system, against increasing the fees so that poor families who cannot afford lawyers are not left behind. Obama wants undocumented immigrants to come out of shadows and has promised to allow them to go to the back of the line for the opportunity to become citizens. For tens of thousands of Nepalis living illegally in the US this may be the chance to finally get their papers.

After 9/11 the Bush Administration put in tougher US visa restrictions for tourists and foreign students in the US. Many Nepali students started to opt to study in Australia, Canada, New Zealand

and even Cyprus. Obama's victory has redeemed America's image and many are hoping that visa restrictions will be loosened so that the young students getting ready to leave to study in the US will not have to face the same hassles as before. Obama's administration has also said they would raise the cap on the number of H-1B visas issued annually so that foreign graduates can work legally in the US. This is good news for many fresh Nepali graduates.

In 2006 the US agreed to take at least 60,000 Bhutanese refugees over a four-year period and give them permanent residence status. This process is expected to continue, and the quota may even increase.

Americans, who make up only four percent of the world's population consume 28 percent of its resources, including fossil fuels. Obama's commitments on curbing greenhouse gas emissions if carried through could begin to turn the clock back on global warming.

In the longer-term, on a broader canvas, perhaps this means this American election will have a direct bearing decades hence on slowing glacial retreat in the Himalaya. ●



## LETTERS

## FAKE

Thank you for the investigation into fake Indian currency (ēFake or real?i, #423). It is natural that when politicians and criminals start scratching each others' backs on both sides of the Nepal-India border the result will be smuggling. It is nothing new, what is new is that counterfeit currency is being smuggled in such huge amounts now. But you have missed the other currency being smuggled: fake Nepali Rs 1,000 notes counterfeited in India and smuggled into Nepal. Try investigating that one.

**Dinesh G, Pokhara**



• Whenever India can't control its own corrupt bureaucracy and wants to hide its inability to curb crime, it blames the ēforeign handi. And so it is with these allegations of fake currency being smuggled by Pakistani intelligence through Nepal. Last week, insecure Indian officials said they had intelligence terrorists were planning to hijack an Indian airliner from Kathmandu. In printing this investigation on fake currency, the *Nepali Times* sounded like a clone of the Indian media.

**Surya B Panday, email**

## TERRAIN

I read your editorial ēTerrain warningi (#421) and the feedback (ēLettersi, #422). I think in the general lynch-mob mentality against pilots one point everyone seems to have missed. It is the criminal negligence in not equipping Nepal's airports, especially in remote areas, with necessary ground equipment. Pilots have long

complained of inadequate navigation aids and beacons at remote area airports and way points. There is also a complete absence of fire-fighting equipment at many airports. Even an airport like Lukla which sometimes handles 40 flights a day has no fire fighting capability. In last month's Twin Otter crash, villagers were trying to extinguish the flames with small buckets of water. Perhaps not all the passengers would have died, and even the bodies of those who tragically lost their lives would have been easier to identify if the fire could have been extinguished in time. And let's not forget the negligence at the Civil Aviation Authority that allows even Kathmandu airport to have many hazards including monkeys and birds on the runways, plastic bottles blowing about on the apron and the lack of proper centreline markings and approach lights.

**A pilot, Kathmandu**

## MEDIA MANIA

I thought newspaper businesses all over the world was following the well-trodden path of the buggy whip due to what else, the internet (ēMedia mania,i #423). Looks like it is not the case, at least in Nepal. May be Nepal can be the ēoasis of print journalismi.

**Name withheld, email**

I agree with Ashutosh Tiwari with regards to the decline in revenue generated by traditional media. Therefore it is extremely important for media houses in Nepal to take an integrated approach where new media complements traditional media. In order to ensure that editorial credibility is never compromised, it is essential for the commercial side of the business to think of new and innovative ways of generating revenue.

**Itisha Giri London**

## ASS

The Ass is right in deftly observing how our always-ill former PM GPK has come all alive all of a sudden (ēAss for salei, #423). People have been asking where does this renewed vigour and energy come from. Where was it when the country needed it? Tales about his sickness look like a well-thought-out plan to outfox the opponents. Cunning, but wasteful.

**S Pradhan, email**

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DEAD-END: The asphalt road on the Chinese side stops abruptly at the Humla Karnali river which marks the border near Hilsa.

ALL PICS: SAM COWAN

# Timber to Tibet

Nepal's high Himalayan forests are felled to feed China's growth



**Y**aks, dzos, mules carrying pine logs struggle up the last pass before the trail descends to the border checkpoint at Hilsa. Dozens of timber convoys can be seen every day along Humla's dusty trails, all heading into Tibet carrying freshly sawn logs that will be bartered for food. The timber feeds the construction boom across the border, a result of rising income and investment in China. But Tibet is too dry for trees, so the demand for timber is being met by the supply of pine forests on the Nepal side in Humla, where villagers face a chronic food shortage.

The problem is that trees in these high montane woodlands take much longer to grow back because of the altitude. Forests cleared during the Khampa war of the 1960s still haven't regenerated. The Nepalis sell timber in Shera to Chinese middlemen who bargain hard. They bring back mainly food, clothes and also cheap Chinese beer and alcohol. The yak trains follow the new road, that Humla's DDC tried to build, from the border settlement of Hilsa to the district capital in Simkot. But Kathmandu was never really interested, and money ran out. Landslides and avalanches

have taken out whole sections of the road. However, an asphalt road now winds down from Taklakot right up to Shera, which is on the Chinese side of the Humla Karnali opposite from Hilsa. The contrast between the smooth black tarmac on the Chinese side and the dusty mule track in

Nepal is stark. The Humla highway, when linked to the Chinese road from Taklakot, was supposed to make it easier for essential items like food, fuel and building material to be brought in more cheaply to Nepal's most remote district. But given the pace at which the forests here are being destroyed, it may be just as well that the road was never finished because

**CARAVAN:** Shera is seen at the bottom of the valley as the yak convoy comes over the last pass (left). Yaks heading up towards the Nara La in Nepal towards the Tibet border.

instead of yak-loads of timber, there would be truckloads going across. ● Sam Cowan in Humla

See also: (Nepal timber to Tibet), #17 (Don't kill the Karnali with your aid), by Jivan Bahadur Shahi #260†





## New Everest

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## Prime service



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## Smooth print

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## Carry gifts



American Tourister, a range of suitcases, has introduced an offer to give away free DVD players or vacuum cleaners to customers. The offer is valid at Samsonite outlets in Khichapokhari, Jamal, Kupondole and Bluebird.

## Shopping bank

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Peoples Bank Ltd. got approval to operate as a commercial bank. The bank has Rs 2 billion paid up

# Integrationomics

The Beed likes to stay away from pontificating on politics. So, this week he will not get into the political side of the integration of the two armies, but from an economic standpoint the deal doesn't look at all viable.



**ECONOMIC SENSE**  
Artha Beed

Ten years ago, a finance minister had said the pension costs of security personnel will be a major fiscal burden in 15 years.

Looks like it will happen sooner than that. A 100,000-strong national army means the state has to be ready to dish out a big chunk of regular expenditure towards pension costs of retired soldiers. When the current prime minister abandoned the jungle and entered the peace process, in one of his fiery speeches he had pointed out how he will reduce the army to just 10,000. It's perhaps time to turn that rhetoric into action because the country just can't afford to keep such a bloated army.

But maybe we need to analyse what is the minimum size of the army we require. The questioned needs to be not only answered from the political perspective, but also from a budgetary standpoint.

Along with the size and costs, the other issue is accountability. For decades, the Nepal Army has

managed to stay outside the normal accountability structure- not due to lack of procedures but the mannerism in which it operated, especially with the Supreme Commander (the king), the accountability institution of last resort.

The prime minister generally took the ceremonial Defence Ministry and Palace Affairs which literally meant that there were no competencies or systems to regulate the army. The Auditor General's offices paid token visits to look through army accounts,

India- having the Ministry of Defence regulates the armed forces. This perhaps suits the Nepal's democratic republic model. The key caveat of course is that the Ministry of Defence can exercise control in the real sense or go the extreme of the minister, becoming the virtual Commander-In-Chief and replacing the role of the King.

For the numbers, there are solutions. A division can be created that literally gets outsourced by the UN and other humanitarian rescue operations,

## Nobody is looking at the economics of army integration

and accountability was minimal. Even the Army Welfare Fund, that belonged not to the state but the army personnel and their families, could get away from disclosure obligations.

There are two ways of managing army spending. One, by the State Treasury just giving grants out of a budget allocation and not asking any questions, hoping that there are self-regulatory mechanisms within the system to take care of accountability. This practice has been used by Singapore after independence, but then one has to have the accountability levels of Singapore to pursue a system like this.

The second is like the one in

thereby building a competency in global policing and disaster management capabilities.

Therefore, from an army that will never be called on to fight its neighbors and hopefully never its own citizens, it will develop into a revenue earning part of the government.

On the accountability front, a lot will depend on the attitude of the current and future governments that will really take the onus of serious reforms within the system that not only brings about accountability but also better the lives of the people serving in the armed forces. ●

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# 'The war was better'

Nabin Bibhas in *Naya Patrika*, 5 November

नयाँ पत्रिका

PLA fighters, who have been living in the cantonments since the signing of the CPA in November 2006, say they are beginning to feel like prisoners. Many think that although during the war years they were scared for their lives, living as PLA fighters was much better than being locked up in the cantonments. They want army integration to begin soon so their lives can return to normal again.

There are seven cantonments and many other sub-cantonments in Ilam, Sindhuli, Chitwan, Nawalparasi, Rolpa, Surkhet and Kailali. These are full of small, makeshift huts covered with blue plastic sheeting and corrugated tin roofs. According to the UN there are 19,604 fighters in the cantonments. They are busy from 4AM-9.30 PM every day and spend time on sentry duty, studying and in military training.

Commanders, platoon commanders and all the fighters are busy with one duty or another throughout the day, says PLA fourth division sub-commander Madan.

I feel useless and distanced from the battle front, says the platoon commander in Sakram sub-cantonment, Mina Oli Sarala. A company commander in the same cantonment, Tilak Gharti Magar Arjuni, says: We used to remain hungry for days, used to eat whatever the people gave us in the villages. Still, that was better than these camps.

Kul Bahadur Oli Pratirodh feels the same: We went to war with the dream of people's liberation. How can we be happy living like prisoners in the cantonment?

PLA fourth division fighters in Hatikhori sub-cantonment are also disappointed by the slow progress of army integration. Fighter Putala Sunar Swarnimi describes how difficult it is to live in the camps: This is like a modern jail. The government hasn't done anything for us. Only those who are living in this hell know how difficult it is.

Those living in the Jhyaltung Danda cantonment in Nawalparasi also talk about their difficult days in the cantonment. This place is like a cage, we feel like we have been dumped here, says Sarita DC Namuna. Another fighter, Kamal Batha Abhasi says: It is very lonely here.

They say that if the process of army integration doesn't start soon, they want the government to make regulations to manage the camps better.



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# Kick start

The constitution-drafting process can't be delayed any longer



KIRAN PANDAY

DHRUBA SIMKHADA

It has been six months since Nepal was declared a federal republic but the work to draft the Constituent Assembly Rules and Procedures hasn't even started. Until that is ready, constitution writing cannot start. According to the Speaker Subash Nembang (pictured above), these rules were supposed to be finalised on 31 October.

In the last six months the CA sat for 10 meetings. After the elections in April the parties started concentrating more on government-making and less on constitution-drafting. Nembang says that since the members of the legislative and the constituent

assembly are the same, they are forming different regulations so that there is no confusion.

The CA Secretariat says the proposed rules and procedures will have 10 committees according to the subject and other four administrative committees. The former committee will establish the principle of the constitution and the latter will take it to the people.

The constitution has to be written within two years. Six months have flown by. It is imperative for the parties to let go of petty wrangling and prioritise constitution-writing. "The political parties need to let go of this obsession over

power because that is the biggest obstacle in constitution building," says UML leader KP Oli. It is understood that one of the major reasons why the Rules and Procedures is stuck is because the parties can't decide whether the Speaker must obey his party's whip.

The reintegration of PLA in Nepal Army is also holding up the drafting of these the Rules and Procedures. The wrangling within the Maoist leadership, and opposition to army integration within the NC, UML and MJF is delaying the process. The meetings between these parties are often disrupted because they can't agree.

NC leader Ram Chandra

Poudel says that the Maoists need to once and for all shed their warlike mentality: "If the Maoists continue to think that the fighters in the cantonments and their locked up weapons as their strength, the constitution will never be written."

**The government also needs to pay due attention to:**

- delays in implementation of agreements with groups representing women, Dalit, Janajati and other indigenous groups
- deal with the issues of compensation of victims of war,

the internally displaced, disappeareds, the Badi

- ending the terror tactics of groups in the Tarai and east Nepal
- the need to create an environment for assistance from the international community, INGOs, and civil society

Restructuring of the state and the nature of federalism is another challenge that constitution will have to address. Poudel says, "Issues relating to language, ethnicity, caste, class are some of our biggest challenges. We need to discuss it, be inclusive and move forward."

## Drafting committees

The various drafting committees can only be formed once the Rules and Procedures are agreed to and finalised. Only then can the process of drafting a new constitution begin.

The 601-member CA has been meeting at its rented premises at the international convention centre, but so far it has been engaged only in its parliamentary functions. None of the work on the constitution has started, even though there are now only 17 months to go. Even if the committees are finally decided upon, there will still be the issue of physical space. Besides the main plenary hall, the only other meeting room available is the Lhotse Hall. The rest of the complex is occupied by UNMIN and may be available only in January when its mandate expires.

In the past, parliamentary committees used three rooms in Singha Darbar but their capacity is no more than 80 people each. Speaker Nembang says the secretariat is talking to the government to make available at least ten new meeting rooms presently used by various ministries for committee meetings. Since the legislative assembly and constituent assembly will have different meetings they would need additional secretariat employees.

The rules and procedures states that the formation of the committees, drafting of the constitution and public hearings will have to follow is strict timeline. Nembang is confident that once the schedule is made, it will be followed and it will give the Nepali people the perception that work has begun. He assured us: "The new constitution will be ready on time but there has to be very good understanding between the political parties."

# Against discrimination



Interview with Tara Gharti Magar (Maoist)

**There is a feeling that although your party is leading the government you are still not serious about writing the constitution.**

These are baseless accusations coming from the NC. In fact, they are the reason why it has been delayed. Since the Maoist-led government was formed they are looking for excuses to foil and delay the process.

**Will CA members of your party obey party whip?**

CA members must remain under their party's discipline. That is not a negative thing. Because the constitution will guarantee the rights of the people, it is imperative that the members use their wisdom.

**What are some of the gender issues that must be included in the new constitution?**

We are going to the people to ask them for suggestions on what should be included in the constitution. One thing remains clear: men and women need to be equal.

**You have been talking about a people's republic. What would that look like?**

To write a constitution in favour of people and sections that have been discriminated against is the most important aspect of a people's republic.

# For equity

**Why is the constitution writing process delayed?**

We are worried that it may be getting too late. We should have been able to do quite a lot in these last six months. We have been told that the constitution writing process cannot start until the Rules and Procedures are ready. But I think it is because of the wrangling between the political parties that is delaying the process. Since the Maoists are leading the government they are responsible for this.

**But the Maoist leaders are saying that NC has refused to cooperate.**

That is not true. We may be in the opposition in parliament but not in the constituent assembly. Whatever they say, we will not stop pressuring for a democratic constitution.

**Your party has said that its CA members must obey the party whip.**

It is only if the members are in the legislative assembly that they have to obey their party's whip, not in a constituent assembly. The constitution can't be re-written again and again, which is why the members need to be allowed to use individual discretion. A party doesn't send



someone they don't trust to the assembly. It is high time the parties understood that their members have a mind of their own and can vote wisely.

**What kind of constitution are you envisioning?**

The NC wants a constitution that can establish Federal Republic of Nepal. The right of all ethnicities, language, regions, religious minorities and discriminated groups must be protected. Discrimination with regards to education and property between men and women must end. There must be reservations for women for a short period of time in all sections of the state.





Chobhar Track



AIR-BORNE: Padam Sabenhang (Limbu), 23, flies with his bike during practice in Chobar before the championship.

KIRAN PANDEY

# closeup

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Kehi Paal - Norbu Sherpa  
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**FOLK RECORD OF THE YEAR**

Basyo Yo Dil - Rekha Shah & Madhav Bhandari  
Bikam Baarulai - Dev Gurung  
Chaati Charkyo Khabar Sunera - Bima Kumari Dura  
Dhaanai Nachau Soalteeni - Shukra Raj Limbu & Manu Nembang  
Saathi Khojai Chhu - Raju Pariyar & Bishnu Maajhi

**FOLK ALBUM OF THE YEAR**

Bhagya Phutyo Aaena Phute Jhain - Bimal Dangi  
Bhutukai Banaayo - Mahesh Budathoki  
Bilauna - Bima Kumari Dura  
Dhaanai Nachau Soalteeni - Shukra Raj Limbu  
Soalteeni Maya Saatauna - Raj Rai

**BEST SONG ORIGINALLY RECORDED FOR A MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK**

Kaag beni - 1974 A.D.  
Ma Timi Bina Manhaalchu - Shambujit Baskota  
Phulko Dali - Suresh Adhikari  
Roop Ki Rani - Mahesh Khadka  
Timi Phulai Phulko - Alok Shree

**BEST VOCAL COLLABORATION**

Narendra Pyasi / Anjana Gurung - Shirai Phula Shirma  
Prashna Shakya / Vishan Mukarung - Paari Pakha Ghaam  
Ruby Joshi / Sapana Shree - Dobato  
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Sunita Subba / Ramesh Gurung - Aau Aaja Hami

**BEST PERFORMANCE BY A GROUP OR DUO WITH VOCAL**

Abhaya & The Steam Injuns - Malai Bachna Deu  
Karma - Mero Desh  
Mukti & Revival - Jaba Ma Samjanchu  
Neipal - Maile Boine  
Vedh - Samikshya Garaun

**BEST ROCK VOCAL PERFORMANCE**

Jaba Ma Samjanchu - Mukti & Revival  
Samikshya Garaun - Vedh  
Timro Jasto - Rajani Dangol  
Timro Mann - Dibya Subba  
Yaani Maya - Karma

**BEST FEMALE POP VOCAL PERFORMANCE**

Aayo Hai Aayo - Pratima Rajbhandari  
Chahana Sakiyo - Shashi Rawal  
Chorera Lagyo - Mausami Gurung  
Hara Raat Mera - Suniti Adhikari  
Malai Bachana Deu - Bidya Bangdel

**BEST MALE POP VOCAL PERFORMANCE**

Bhumo - Tsujil Karmacharya  
Malai Bhulyauki - Sunil Ranabhat  
Mero Mannko - Deepak Limbu  
School Pathshala - Sugam Pokharel  
Timro Saatha - Dipesh Kishore Bhattarai

**BEST FEMALE VOCAL PERFORMANCE**

Adhuro Yo - Manila Sotang  
Juwari Kotko - Kunti Moktan  
Khopi Rakhaula - Radha Rai  
Makhamali - Pratima Rajbhandari  
Mero Maya - Sunita Subba

**BEST MALE VOCAL PERFORMANCE**

Batuwa - Rajesh Payal Rai  
Dukha Sukha - Jagdish Samal  
Hajuni Chadkay - Gurudev Kamat  
Kehi Paal - Karna Das  
Timi Binako Jeevan - Narendra Pyasi

**POP / ROCK ALBUM OF THE YEAR**

Bhumo - Tsujil Karmacharya  
Dekhdaichu Ma - Mukti & Revival  
Entrance - Shashi Rawal  
Karma - Karma  
School Pathshala - Sugam Pokharel

**ALBUM OF THE YEAR**

Antaranga - Sunita Subba  
Dekhdaichu ma - Mukti & Revival  
Karma - Karma  
Manko Sapana - Kunti Moktan  
Preet - Karna Das

**SONG OF THE YEAR**

Batuwa - Saran Chhinam  
Huncha Malai Bihana - Durga Lal Shrestha  
Khopi Rakhaula - Bhupal Rai  
Nirdosh Chu Aafu - Dinesh Adhikari  
Timi Binako Jeevan - Anand Adhikari

**RECORD OF THE YEAR**

Batuwa - Rajesh Payal Rai  
Kehi Paal - Karna Das  
Mero Maya - Sunita Subba  
Timi Binako Jeevan - Narendra Pyasi  
Timro Saatha - Dipesh Kishore Bhattarai

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# wheels good



ALL OTHER PICS: SUNDAR SHRESTHA

**PEDAL AWAY:** Nepali participants practicing for the cross-country category in Chobar on Monday.

**C**himi Urkyen Gurung, president of the Nepal Cycling Association (NCA), puts it best: “Mountain biking and Nepal were made for each other.”

With its endless rocky trails, tough climbs and steep descents, Nepal is the perfect place for mountain biking. And you only need to ride a few minutes outside Kathmandu’s Ring Road to get there with the added bonus of a splendid mountain backdrop.

After two years of lobbying by the NCA, Nepal finally signed a contract this summer to host the XIV Asian Mountain Bike Championships, the first such event the country has hosted. If it goes well, this should open the door for Nepal to host other sporting events, including the 2010 World Mountain Biking Championships.

Dhanjit Rai, one of Nepal’s top riders, is keen for the country to put on a good show: “We all hope that this will heighten the interest in mountain biking as a sport for both tourists and Nepalis here.” ●  
*Shailee Basnet and Shradha Basnyat*



**TEAM NEPAL:** (l-r): Dipendra Bajracharya, Surendra Rai, Padam Sabenhang (Limbu), Suresh Kumar Dulal and Dhanjit Rai are participating in the upcoming XIV Asian Championship.



**DOWNHILL:** Sajja Rajhanshi, one of the promising contenders from Nepal, races downhill in Chobar on Monday.

## About the competitors

Eight riders will represent Nepal. The seven men and one woman, have been training for the first time, and learning from each other. For some, it is their first time in an international competition.

Sajjan Rajbanshi and Padam Sabenhang (Limbu) are two of the toughest riders in the squad. Rajbanshi, nicknamed the “Himalayan Hurricane” in the US, spent six years in cross-country races before switching to downhill two years ago. He has participated in two Asian Championships, and finished 12<sup>th</sup> in 2001 in the championships held in Thailand.

Sabenhang, though one of the youngest contenders, is considered one of the strongest. He started racing for fun five years ago but began to take it more seriously after he kept finding himself on the winners’ podium. As reigning national champion and the best cross-country racer in the team, his medal chances look bright.

Among the international competitors, China, Japan and Korea are all fielding very strong teams.

## About the race

From 6-10 November, more than 60 competitors from Nepal and 12 from other Asian countries will take part in the XIV Asian championships. The winning team will qualify for the 2012 London Olympics. In the cross-country race, 30 men and 11 women will compete in their respective elite categories over the steep, rocky five-km track at Chobar. There will also be a downhill race, with 22 men and three women competing.



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# Health for those without

Four facilities in Kabhre prove medical care needn't be unaffordable

PAAVAN MATHEMA in KABHRE

**B**anepa and Dhulikhel are towns that most people drive past on their way to Jiri or Kodari. But in recent years, the twin towns 25 km east of Kathmandu are developing as a centre for model health care.

At a time when most medical facilities are based in the capital and are private profit-oriented ventures, Dhulikhel and Banepa have shown the way to provide affordable yet world class health care to Nepalis.

The four hospitals in Banepa and Dhulikhel run on one philosophy: quality health care need not be expensive. These self-run institutions can be a model for Nepal's private and state-run health care system.



Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre moved into its new purpose-built facility in Banepa

K SHRESTHA

## Children first

Eight-year old Yasodha aims her strike on the carom board. Her striker hits the queen and it slides into the hole.

It is easy not to notice the metal braces on her right leg. The other children have white bandages on their hands and legs. Yasodha Iyer suffers from cleft foot deformity and is receiving treatment at Hospital and Rehabilitation for Disabled Children (HRDC) in Banepa.



Nine-year-old Sudina Dongol smiles as she tries her crutches for the first time at Banepa's HRDC.

"Because we deal with children, we have to use a different approach," explains Binod Bijukachhe, as he takes visitors inside the "soft room" where patients play. This is a specialised hospital for children with physical disabilities, the only of its kind in Nepal. It focuses on reconstructive surgery, rehabilitation of the children and their integration into the society.

HRDC was established in 1985 with support from Terre des homes and Friends of the Disabled. It now has 72 beds, which are usually all occupied and a staff of 142. Every year, the hospital treats over 9,000 children. HRDC has had patients from not just Nepal but also from India, Pakistan, Tibet and even Mongolia.

For those who don't make it to the hospital, HRDC conducts medical camps every month, reaching out to 40 districts all over Nepal. The camps

screen children and bring ones who need specialist attention to the hospital, a charity fund covers the costs of needy patients.

More than often, rehabilitation takes a long time and is expensive. To use the time well, the hospital has classrooms for children and vocational training.

Physiotherapist Sudip Ranjit says: "Although it is a challenge working with children, they heal much faster."

## Backbone of health care

While medical treatment is understood as a necessity, the significance of rehabilitation is often ignored in Nepal. "Rehabilitation is crucial in spinal injuries which can completely change the life of the patient," says Esha Thapa of Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre (SIRC), the newest medical facility to open in Banepa.

SIRC is the first rehabilitation centre in Nepal for spinal injury. The lifestyle of the rural people in Nepal make them very prone to accidents that can result in spinal injury which can paralyse patients. Survival becomes difficult and most patients lose hope.

"It is possible to restore normalcy in their life through proper care, therapy and training," says Thapa. SIRC strives to help individuals with spinal injury through physiotherapy and occupational therapy, counseling and nursing. It takes an average of 3 months for most patients to recover. SIRC also gives vocational training so that the individuals have means to sustain themselves later on.

The centre has helped over 550 patients to lead normal lives again. SIRC is moving this month from Jorpati to its purpose-built facility in Banepa. This building is wheel-chair friendly and is much better equipped for the treatment needs of patients.

Says Thapa: "Even if they can't walk again, patients who have lost hope of leading normal lives get back their hope."



ALL PICS: PAAVAN MATHEMA

Dhan Kumari Manandhar came to Scheer Memorial Hospital in Banepa after she broke her leg after falling down the stairs. Her doctor Rupesh Vaidya says she will recover.

## We treat, God cures

"No matter what, a sick at the doors of the hospital should not go unattended," says Milan Gurung of Scheer Memorial Hospital in Banepa. In a country where patients are often turned away from hospitals because they are poor, this is a motto that can make a difference between life and death.

Scheer Memorial is a missionary hospital started by Seventh-day Adventist medical missionaries in 1958. What started out as a one-room facility is now a 150 bed general hospital with a staff of 190 and two ambulances.

Services are heavily subsidised with a charge of only Rs 50 per bed for a night. Many of the staff are volunteers from abroad and the hospital also has four outreach centres all over Nepal. Scheer Memorial also runs a Bsc in Nursing program. A primary school caters to children of staff.

# The United Nations now

The interests of the UN and Nepalis coincide in making the peace process a success

**S**ecretary-General Ban Ki-moon's visit to Nepal was so short it is hard to remember when he came and when he left.

When he flew down to Bhairawa en route to Lumbini on his Bombardier jet, he was



**COMMENT**  
Kanak Mani Dixit

retracing the footsteps of Dag Hammarskjöld, the second UN Secretary-General and the first to visit Nepal. On his outbound trip in March 1959, he made detour on King Mahendra's DC-3 to take

pictures of Annapurna and Dhaulagiri.

You could term this Nepal's first 'mountain flight', and Hammarskjöld's photographs and article were printed in the January 1961 issue of the National Geographic. In September 1961 Hammarskjöld died in an air crash while on a peace mission to Congo—a country that is still ravaged by civil war.

Our own Rishikesh Shaha, a man of letters and a permanent representative to the UN, was asked to chair the crash investigation. Shaha had himself faced near-death when he was stabbed in Manhattan's Central Park. The rumour mill in

Kathmandu has it that Shaha was within striking distance of serving as Hammarskjöld's successor, but King Mahendra scuttled it.

It was Burma's U-Thant who succeeded Hammarskjöld, and he visited Nepal in April 1967. His famous tears at the sight of dilapidated Lumbini helped launch international interest in the site of the Sakyamuni's nativity. The UN commissioned Japanese architect Kenzo Tange to develop the site as a spiritual centre dedicated to world peace. Tange was the designer of the Hiroshima memorial, but 50 years later, his Lumbini masterplan gathers dust while various sects

compete in ostentatiousness.

There is a United Nations Committee on Lumbini, made up of Buddhist nations and led by Nepal. Sadly, the committee has been allowed to lapse, primarily because those who ran the Kathmandu government through autocracy and democracy did not understand the value of this committee in maintaining the spiritual and meditative nature of Lumbini as well as in fund-raising.

The United Nations, of course, has been in Nepal right after the end of the Rana era. Toni Hagen, the Swiss geologist who was already here in 1949, evolved as a UN development expert. Various

UN agencies have been active in Nepal since, and it is fair to say that the overwhelming peace focus of the Ban Ki-moon visit did not give enough importance to Nepal's development arena in which the UN has been a central player.

It was during Kofi Annan's tenure that the UN saw the departure from development work to conflict resolution. UNMIN was established by the Security Council in January 2007, responding to a request by the Nepal government after New Delhi was convinced this was the only way to get the Maoists to abandon their 'people's war'. The verification process and



# wealth

## A hospital with a heart

Man Bahadur Tamang, a 61-year-old patient at Dhulikhel Hospital is worried. He has cancer but no money for treatment.

"Don't worry about anything, Buwa, we will operate on you on Monday," Ram Shrestha assures his patient. Shrestha set up Dhulikhel hospital precisely to provide affordable health care. But he tells us later he doesn't know where he will find the money for Tamang's operation.

He adds simply: "I can't deprive him of a chance to live just because he can't afford it. Something always comes up."

Shrestha started the hospital in 1995 with support from the Dhulikhel Municipality in land contributed by the locals. The

hospital has grown from a two-room facility to a full-fledged 317-bed model community health centre that treats 400,000 patients from all over the country every year.

The heavily subsidised services are as efficient and professional as any in an expensive city hospital. It includes specialised departments with 70 doctors, 120 nurses and 70 support staff with three ambulances.

The policy here is 'treatment first, bills later' which is a surprise to many who have heard horror stories of private hospitals demanding accident victims buy their own bandages and medicines before treating them.

"If someone is unable to pay, the hospital has a charity fund that covers expenses," explains Dipak



Cancer patient Man Bahadur Tamang (right) with his doctor, Ram Shrestha, at Dhulikhel Hospital. Tamang wouldn't have been able to afford his operation elsewhere.

Dahal, the hospital's administration officer. About 17 per cent of patients come from extremely poor families.

Dhulikhel runs eight outreach health centres in remote areas that basic, 24-hour services and are equipped for minor operations. Once a week, a specialist supervising team visits each centre. Regular mobile health camps are also organised.

While international grants were used for the buildings and equipment, treatment is subsidized by bachelor-level courses in medicine that Dhulikhel Hospital has started in collaboration with Kathmandu University.

Says Shrestha: "This hospital is proof that nothing is impossible. What is required is honest implementation."

election support have been completed by UNMIN, and its extended term is about to expire on 23 January. It is not likely that the 'integration' and 'rehabilitation' of Maoist combatants will be completed by then.

After their success in the April elections there is an attempt in some Maoist quarters to shift the goalposts when it comes to the incomplete peace process. The wholesale entry of politically trained cadre of one party into the national army would lead to crisis.

Simply put, the acceptable formula would be the free-choice entry of individual combatants into the NA based on accepted standards. In one stroke this would allow the Maoists to mollify their cadre, and address the practical necessity of partial integration, while ensuring genuine rehabilitation of the rest.

Nepali political actors will

decide the nature of integration and rehabilitation of Maoist combatants, of course, but it would be good if the UN was on the same page. Today, the interests of United Nations and the citizens of Nepal coincide in making the peace process in Nepal a lasting success, where Nepalis can return to being a society where political violence is rejected absolutely.

Here, it was distressing that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was not heard to utter the words 'impunity' and 'accountability' during his Kathmandu stopover. There can be no lasting peace, nor democracy, without them.

A denouement which is respectful of the people's desire to live without violence and in pluralism, and which responds to humanitarian needs of individual Maoist combatants, will leave Nepal at peace and the United Nations Secretary-General with the satisfaction of a job well done. ●

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Applications must be in by Monday 17 November 2008  
Interviews will be held on Thursday 20 November 2008

Only short listed candidates will be called for interview



# Who will run the world now?

America may be damaged, but no replacement is on offer

SINGAPORE ñ Barack Obama's election comes at a moment when a new bit of conventional wisdom is congealing. It concerns the end of America's global dominance.††

True, freewheeling American-style capitalism has not acquitted itself proudly of late. And America's military superiority has not proved all that useful in accomplishing American ends. But who may pick up the slack in providing global leadership?



**WORLD IN WORDS**  
Ann Florini

The uncomfortable answer that Obama is likely to confront is this: nobody. America may be damaged, but no replacement is on offer. Europe is self-absorbed, focused on creating whatever kind of entity it ends up deciding to be. China's standard response to any suggestion that it exercise global leadership is to hide beneath its vast internal agenda and plead poverty. No other country comes close to having either the capacity or the ambition.

In the face of the familiar litany of desperate global problems ñ not just financial instability, but also climate change, energy insecurity, potential pandemics, terrorism, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction ñ the prospect of a rudderless world is more than alarming. What is to be done? And by whom?

Given that the United States has not been playing much of a leadership role on many of these issues recently, it is worth taking



a look at what happens when no one country exercises effective leadership.

Consider climate change. It is now clear that avoiding catastrophic climate change requires dramatic and rapid reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions, cuts that would lower annual emissions to 80 per cent

below 1990 levels by 2050. Yet emissions are not just rising, but accelerating. The coming recession may stem their growth temporarily, but only slightly. The necessary reductions imply a rapid and radical transformation of industrial, energy, and land-use systems around the world.

Supposedly, by December

2009 in Copenhagen governments will agree on a new treaty to set limits on emissions. But the prospects are close to nil. The new Obama administration will have only a few months to develop meaningful proposals that can win domestic support, and will be preoccupied with the aftermath of the current financial debacle and the Iraq war.

Europe is pushing for ambitious targets but is having trouble with its own vested interests. The large emerging countries, although they will suffer disproportionately from wilder weather and rising sea levels, show little interest in picking up the slack. Negotiation watchers term the current American-Chinese dance of mutual blame a suicide pact. In short, the process is a mess.

This is hardly surprising. An inter-governmental system that falls apart under the challenges of trade negotiations and proliferation threats is unlikely to master the deep complexity and multitudinous vested interests that the issue of climate change entails. Traditional diplomacy will at best devise a face-saving but meaningless accord next year.

There are many ways to put matters on the global agenda, as shown by Bono's campaigns on African development and Al Gore's on climate change. While enforcement in the coercive sense remains the domain of states, coercive enforcement is rare even when it comes to inter-governmental agreements. Whether countries abide by agreements has far more to do

with international processes of persuasion, socialization, and capacity-building ñ and those can be done by anyone with a good argument.

The big question today is whether all these alternative approaches can add up to more than a bit of desperate tinkering around the edges. Standard international-relations thinking does not even entertain the question, and those conventional ways of seeing the world have blinded us to looking at this crucial question.

As a result, we do not yet know the answer. Data remain scarce. There are hundreds of global public-private partnerships working on various global ills ñ but few have been examined to see what good they do. The mishmash of initiatives, actors, campaigns, and appeals creates opportunities for major progress ñ and mass confusion.†

If there is to be real progress toward more effective and efficient global governance that can address the unprecedented challenges posed by climate change and the rest of the global agenda, we must do much more than look for an easy replacement for American hegemony. We must figure out how to make sense of this enormous diversity of ways of saving the world. ●

*Project Syndicate*

*Ann Florini is Director of the Centre on Asia and Globalisation at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore.*

## Three-dimensional chess

One of the first challenges that President Barack Obama will face is the effect of the ongoing financial crisis, which has called into question the future of American power in the world.

Wall Street's crack-up is seen in Asia to presage a global tectonic shift, the beginning of the decline



**MIGHT AND RIGHT**  
Joseph S Nye, Jr

of American power. Yet the dollar, a symbol of American financial power, has surged rather than declined. Foreigners seem to have more confidence in America's ability to solve its problems than Americans do.

Many claimed that with the rise of China and the petro-states, an American slowdown could be decoupled from the rest of the world. Crises often refute conventional wisdom, and this one reveals that the underlying strength of the American economy remains impressive.

The larger question concerns the long-term future of American power.

Power always depends on



Barack Obama understands that even the most powerful country can't go it alone

context, and in today's world, it is distributed in a pattern that resembles a complex three-dimensional chess game. On the top chessboard, military power is largely unipolar and likely to

remain so for a while. But on the middle chessboard, economic power is already multi-polar, with the US, Europe, Japan and China as the major players, and others gaining in importance.

The bottom chessboard is the realm of transnational relations that cross borders outside of government control. It includes actors as diverse as bankers electronically transferring sums larger than most national budgets, as well as terrorists transferring weapons or hackers disrupting Internet operations. It also includes new challenges like pandemics and climate change. On this bottom board, power is widely dispersed, and it makes no sense to speak of unipolarity, multipolarity, or hegemony.

Even in the aftermath of the financial crisis, the giddy pace of technological change is likely to continue to drive globalization, but the political effects will be different for the world of nation-states and the world of non-state actors. In inter-state politics, the most important factor will be the continuing 'return of Asia'.

The challenge for Barack Obama is that more and more issues and problems are outside the control of even the most powerful state. Although the US does well on the traditional measures of power, those measures increasingly fail to

capture much of what defines world politics, which, owing to the information revolution and globalisation, is changing in a way that prevents Americans from achieving all their international goals by acting alone.

For example, international financial stability is vital to American prosperity, but the US needs the cooperation of others to ensure it. Global climate change, too, will affect the quality of life, but the US cannot manage the problem alone. And, in a world where borders are becoming increasingly porous to everything from drugs to infectious diseases to terrorism, America must mobilise international coalitions to address shared threats and challenges.

The problem of American power in the wake of the financial crisis is not one of decline, but of a realisation that even the most powerful country cannot achieve its aims without the help of others. Fortunately, Barack Obama understands that. ●

*Project Syndicate*

*Joseph S Nye Jr is a professor at Harvard and author of The Powers to Lead.*



# The other brother

DHRUBA SIMKHADA

There is only one feeling as you finish reading Matrika Prasad Koirala's recently released memoir: déjà vu.

It suddenly strikes you how little Nepal has changed. The Ranas have just been overthrown, but the political forces are at each other throats. There is infighting within the Nepali Congress, and the backbiting is even more vicious within the Koirala clan. India is concerned that Nepal is not listening to its concerns, which has to mainly do with taming Himalayan rivers.

MP's memoirs are from a rewritten manuscript after the original was lost and half of the book is an appendix made up of a fascinating series of letters and official documents between Nehru, MP and Tribhuban.

Krishna Prasad Koirala (Pitaji), the father of MP, BP and GP was a freedom fighter who was exiled to India because he stood up against the Rana regime. The Koirala brothers followed their revolutionary father foot-steps and were also packed off to India.

At first, they participated in the Indian independence movement. MP and BP were even imprisoned in India by the British and there they came in contact with Mahatma Gandhi, Jaya Prakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohiya and other Indians who were on the frontline of the struggle against colonialism.

After 1947, the Koirala brothers with other young Nepali political activists turned their attention to liberating Nepal from the century-old Rana Oligarchy. It is obvious the democratic movement in Nepal gained its inspiration from the Indian freedom movement, but they soon realised the bitter truth that a newly-independent India was not at the outset supportive of the anti-Rana insurrection. The Koiralas at first took up arms against the Ranas, with Mahabir

## MP's new memoir shows us how little Nepal has changed since 1950

Shamsher helping to transport guns and dropping pamphlets in Nepal from a DC-3 of his airline.

Under MP's command, the insurrection spread in 1950 and border towns like Birganj, Nepalganj, Dhangadi and Biratnagar were captured. Thir Bam Malla was killed during the Birganj attack, and the bada hakim was killed during the battle for Dhangadi. Rana soldiers fired on

Tribhuban and the Congress. The so-called tripartite agreement, it turns out, was actually bilateral: between the Jawaharlal Nehru and the Rana rulers. Indian ambassador CPN Sinha was holed up at Hyderabad House with Tribhuban, and he constantly bullied Matrika who had wanted the meeting to take place in Nepal.

Then there was the case of the 3.5 million in Indian currency that the guerrillas had captured during the insurrection. The money was taken to Patna from where MP, BP, Subarna Shamsher, Mahabir Shamsher and MP's sister Vijaya took it on a DC-3 to Delhi. But at Delhi airport, the plane was seized by Indian intelligence, the entire group was detained at the customs office overnight.

The next morning when MP Koirala went to see Nehru at Tinmurti Bhavan, he was rebuked. MP maintained that the money was brought to Delhi to be handed over to Tribhuban, so the king would give his blessings for the anti-Rana revolution. MP suspects that Subarna Shamsher had colluded with Delhi to discredit the movement.

We see a glimpse of the real Nehru in his outburst at the Nepali freedom fighter in which he threatened to put BP and other Congress leaders behind bars. 'Mr Nehru ranted for more than an hour, and I patiently listened,' MP recalls in his chaste English in the book. Nepal's democrats return dejected from Delhi. MP writes: 'Our reliance on the Indian leader and the Indian government was completely shaken and naturally we had to depend on our own resources of men and material, however meager that may be.'



A Role in a Revolution by MP Koirala 375+XIV Rs 700 Jagadamba Prakashan, 2008

protesters in Gaur, killing many people. Narad Muni Thulung took over Bhojpur and later advanced on Kathmandu via Sindhuligadi. The book takes us through the splits between the BP and Dilliraman Regmi factions and the patching up to set up the Nepali Congress.

MP acknowledges BP's role, and does not criticise his brother even though their relations were strained. By shunning populism, MP showed statesmanship but it isolated him and ultimately cost him political support.

The book gives us insight into the 1950 Delhi Agreement between the Ranas, King



# Of crime and punishment

Boy A has paid for his sins, but perhaps he hasn't paid enough

Boy A opens with an exchange between a paternal social worker and his charge- a young man, almost childishly ecstatic on what seems to be the eve of his release from prison. We have no idea what his crime might have been, though it is apparently sufficiently serious to warrant a new identity to protect him from vigilantes.

The name he picks for himself, Jack, offers the promise of a new future, a way to separate himself from what came before. Yet despite his own hopes and his guardian Terry's cautious optimism, it is clear the stubborn past will be hard to escape.

One narrative strand follows Jack's adjustments to adulthood as an active member of society in a community that appears willing to give him a chance, while another revisits his troubled childhood and the inexorable march towards a fatal mistake.



CRITICAL CINEMA A Angelo DiSilva

Director John Crowley adeptly builds the tension in both story threads, raising the possibility that the Jack of the present may lose the new life he is building for himself as

events from his dark past catch up with him. Inevitably, the gruesome moment from his childhood produces a narrative collision that throws up a mixed bag of ethical questions and emotions.

Boy A is curiously reminiscent of last year's Stephanie Daley, which took a tabloid headline story in that case, the story of a girl who abandons her newly-born child and rendered it into a human story. Both films involve knotty ethical problems in situations that touch a raw nerve. And both employ an objective yet compassionate eye that implies a neutrality above the issues. Of course, Boy A invests heavily in making you relate to its protagonist, keeping the messy details of his past from the viewer for as long as possible.

As with Stephanie Daley, Boy A is greatly dependent on the strength of one or two performances. Andrew Garfield illuminates each fractured facet of Jack's personality, rendering his broken, tenuous grip on himself with a raw, lifelike intensity. During the interval of Jack's incarceration, which is completely absent from the film, he has grown physically into an adult but lacks any experience and knowledge of society outside prison.

There is a skittishness, a cautiousness coupled with a sensitivity and lack of guile that is played to perfection. Garfield displays a scintillating intelligence not simply in playing the powerful emotions that Jack experiences, but also in the tiny dissonances with an unfamiliar reality. Similarly, Terry, the protective and proud father-figure to Jack is a three-note character, but actor Peter Mulan plays them very well. Terry's faith in Jack confirms our sympathies, and Mulan's performance amplifies our distress when tragedy strikes.

Even as Terry urges Jack to let go of the past and embrace the future he tells him he has earned, his own memory and guilt stubbornly dog the present. Yet ultimately, Boy A is not simply about the inability to escape one's past. It implicates a society unwilling or unable to accept a prison sentence as a debt paid, or give a second chance to someone who made a mistake, however awful that may have been. The film incriminates the sweeping, judgmental nature of the tabloid press that ignores nuance and depends on facile fear-mongering. This is a small film, easily overlooked amid the buzz of bigger-budget fare but Boy A delivers a searing drama of redemption.

Boy A  
Director: John Crowley  
Cast: Andrew Garfield, Peter Mulan  
2008. R. 99 mins.

# Jazz carnival

The Kathmandu Jazz Festival, held from 22-27 October at various venues in the city, was a huge success. The festival seems to have touched many souls and turned some into jazz lovers. Suresh Limbu, band supervisor of the Greg Lyons Trio, said: "I didn't dig jazz music before but now I seem to love it. I even got some CDs to listen to." Abhaya Subba of Abhaya and the Steam Injuns said she enjoyed and loved Global Unity- the Mumbai-based band.

The event drew a mix of local and foreign jazz fans who cheered the international acts. Canadian performer Terrence Bowry says he enjoyed Nepal and its people so much that he plans to move here from Germany early next year.

Festival coordinator Chhedup Bomzan says that the festival, which began seven years ago, still has a long way to go, but he remains confident it will continue to get bigger and better each year.

Jazzmandu podcasts are available for download [www.motleymix.nepal123.com](http://www.motleymix.nepal123.com). Pravat J Gurung



PICS: PRAVAT J GURUNG









MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**THE SON ALSO RISES:** Prakash Dahal was a stand-in for his father, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, at the Nepal Sambat ceremony during the Peace Photo Exhibition at Basantapur on 29 October organised by the National Photo Journalists' Forum.



**CHEQUE THAT:** Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal receives a cheque for Rs 1 million on Sunday at Singha Darbar from Kamran Bakr (right), managing director of Unilever for the rehabilitation of those displaced by the Kosi. Unilever director Ravi Bhakta Shrestha is at left.

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# Commissars in the committees

**W**ill someone please give Parmananda the Veep something to do before he goes and does something silly again? Over Tihar, the office of the president of vice summoned the press for a tea party and told them he was bored stiff. But no one could think of anything for him to do. So, just to be noticed, this week the vice-prez went to the Reporter's Club to demand that he be given the same chores as the president: inaugurate schools, launch books and visit flood victims.

After that he promptly threatened to resign if the government didn't take him seriously. Don't think anyone would notice even if he did. He met Prez Yadav the other day to see if he could wangle a book launch somewhere. Although both the presidents may be from the Tarai, however, one is a **Jha** and the other is a **Yadav** and their mutual animosity runs deep. Besides, Yadav is said to take a dim view of his deputy's recent outspokenness.



There is an old practice that if a government can't solve a problem it forms a committee and outsources it. At the rate our

coalition is forming committees, pretty soon we will need a mother of all committees to keep track of what all the committees are doing. Why not just dissolve the government and rule the country by committee?

Setting up a committee is also a great way for the political parties in government to neutralise troublesome party colleagues. **PKD** is getting rather irritated by Comrade Vaidya's constant whining, so he kicked him upstairs to the UML-Maoist Joint Coordination Committee. That seems to have given Jhallu Bau the idea to get Makunay off his hair by appointing him also to the committee.

But how a baddie hardliner who can't even stand Comrade Terrific will work with someone he has in the past reviled as a "revisionist royal lackey mongrel" remains to be seen. Will the infighting in the coalition stop just because they now have committees to sort out the pesky details of day-to-day government, constitution writing procedures and army integration?



Probably not. Which must be why they have formed yet another committee tasked with

ironing out the intractable details of army integration. This committee was supposed to be set up within 15 days of the formation of the government, and it took nearly three months. And we have to thank Ki-Moon Kaka for that, because if it hadn't been for him even this committee wouldn't have been formed.

Things had got stuck because the baddies not only wanted Comrades Cloudy and Prabhakaran as members but one of them also leader of the five-member committee, and the kangresis would have none of that. So Bum Dev got to lead that committee, and till presstime on Thursday Terrific was still trying to get through to Girjau to see if he could use his charm to get the NC to send a member.

**PKD** knows that **GPK** hates **SBD** so much that the Old Fox would just love to cut a deal with the baddies on army assimilation behind Lionheart's back and pull the rug from under his kangresi nemesis. I know, it's totally crazy.



The pressure on PKD from his coalition partners to recall

kangresi-nominee ambassadors seems to have got too much to bear. Being Manmohan Singh's student and having organised high-level meetings in Delhi for his prime minister last month wasn't enough to save Durgesh the Man his job.

Dr Suresh in **DC** got the sack despite having hosted the finance minister in the embassy guest room so **BRB** could save his **WB/IMF DSA**.

Rumours are that the baddies want to appoint a sympathiser who is a Fulbright abscondee and contributor to a Moonie paper as the next ambassador to the US. In which case the Forum may get to chose someone for India and we may have a UML ambassador in Berlin.

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