

# NEPALI Times

#530

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16 pages

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# CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

Just over a year ago, Elinor Ostrom won the Nobel Prize for Economic Sciences, for her work on economic governance relating especially to the commons. With this recognition, the Nobel Committee has also honoured the success of Nepal's community-managed forestry and irrigation systems, which Ostrom has studied over the course of a quarter of a century. The implications are profound, as they validate the ability of diverse Nepali communities who live in close proximity to each other to cooperate democratically to manage their natural resources. This success has been undermined in recent years by a lack of local elected officials, populism, and inter-party collaboration to exploit resources that rightfully belong to the communities.

Elinor Ostrom is back in town this week as a guest of the Government of Nepal, and is expected to

meet the president and speak at Social Science Baha, among other things. Her presence here indicates just how much Nepal and her continuing work here means to her, despite the fact that she is 77 and has found life after winning the Nobel prize, in her own words, "very intense"; she's completely booked up for talks in 2011. It is also an opportunity to highlight the value of her work, and ensure that proven systems of local governance are enshrined within the constitution to come.

Other foreigners who have contributed much to Nepal include such luminaries as the late Edmund Hillary. He was not only the first atop Mount Everest, but also impressed himself deeply in the hearts of the Sherpa people whose welfare he worked for. He was duly honoured by the Government of Nepal, first with the Suprasidha Prabal Gorkha Dakshin Bahu in 1953, then with honorary citizenship in 2003.

Then there's the late Toni Hagen, the Swiss geologist

who probably travelled across more of Nepal than anyone ever has, in the course of geological and developmental research. In 1984, the king awarded him the Birendra Pragya Alankara.

Last month, it seemed the entire state mechanism was jamming up trying to shake Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal's hand. The cabinet hurriedly recommended that the president award the Saudi prince the Maha Ujjwal Rashtradeep. The nation's highest civilian honour is now to go to someone who may well make significant investments at some point in the future, but to date hasn't done, or committed to anything at all.

Our errant caretaker prime minister, who was so keen to be seen hobnobbing with royals, has now jetted off to Cambodia, so it's no surprise he isn't on hand to meet Ostrom. But perhaps he could activate his moribund cabinet for yet another, infinitely more deserving, recommendation?



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

another polarising issue. NC, UML, and Kathmandu technocrats will not buy the Maoist map and argue it goes too far; the Madhesis and ethnic groups will claim it does not go far enough. There is however a greater degree of agreement between the national parties on the limited powers to be given to the states.

There is also a consensus among national parties in the CA on the need for land reform, though Madhesi parties have reservations. The difference is on whether compensation should be paid to those whose property is above the limit set by the state. The Maoist emphasis on 'first/prior rights' to locals over their resources is important, for the battles of the future are over resources and related displacement. This often gets linked up with their support for prior political rights for 'dominant nationalities', thus alienating parties that give precedence to individual over group rights and represent traditional interests.

The other parties do little except react to and reject Maoist proposals. But the point is to show that the Maoists cannot get a PFDR Nepal. Here is what looks achievable—a republic; possibly a directly elected head of government (with checks); secularism; a multiparty democratic system; a quasi-federal system built up incrementally over years; affirmative action for marginalised ethnicities but no recognition of 'prior rights'; and an NA under the government in principle.

Can the Maoists agree on a 'revisionist' democratic republican statute, make the compromises required to get such a system, and reconcile themselves to the fact that they will not necessarily enjoy unfettered political dominance? If Palungtar is anything to go by, the answer is no. 🇳🇵

# Mission impossible

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

In 2005, the Maoists decided at Chumbang that their immediate aim was a 'Democratic Republic Nepal'. Their Kharipati meet in 2008 declared that the objective was to draft a constitution for a 'People's Federal Democratic Republic' (PFDR). That aim persists, though many leaders at Palungtar used an alternative nomenclature—'People's Federal Republican Nepal'.

Chumbang led to consensus and Kharipati sharpened the polarisation. How Palungtar will play out in large depends on how far the Maoists push their political project.

Broadly, this is how the Maoists define PFDR Nepal—an executive presidency; federalism with nationality as a prominent basis; secular state; 'democratisation' of the Nepal Army; 'first rights' to local communities; 'revolutionary' land reform; and eventually, restricted multiparty political competition where 'feudal and pro-imperialist' parties will not be allowed

to operate.

The Maoists hope this framework would give the 'people' (read the party) a firm hold over the state, and break existing structures and nexus that govern policy. But intention is one thing and capacity, especially under the prevailing balance of power, another. A brief review reveals why this model provokes opposition from different sources and is not possible.

The Maoists want a directly elected president for multiple reasons. They do not want to return to a parliamentary system, against which they waged a war; it is seen as too unstable; and party leaders think they have the best chance to win in a direct contest. But look at the coalition ranged against it. Many see in the demand underlying ambitions for an 'authoritarian' ruler. Small parties worry this would deprive them of a share in power at the central executive level. Planners have warned about potential gridlock as a result of president-legislature battles. And the Maoists cannot push the model unilaterally in the CA.

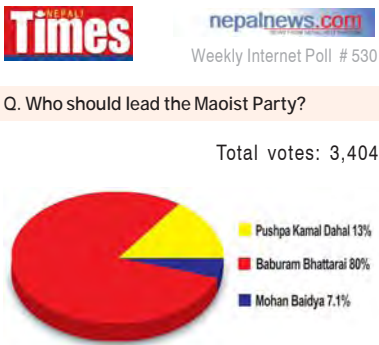
The NA has gone through a set of changes since 2006. There is no palace to report to; a Janajati has become chief; there has been an increase in the interaction

between the army brass and the defence ministry; army chiefs have testified before parliamentary committees; and there is relatively more information about how the army operates in the public domain today.

The Maoists dismiss these as token steps and cite the Katawal incident, or NA's recent lobbying on UNMIN, to show how there is no 'civilian control'. But they have neither explicitly explained what further 'democratisation' of the NA means, nor been able to allay the fears of others that this is a ploy to increase Maoist influence over the military.

Party leaders should read Washington Post journalist Bob Woodward's recent book, *Obama's wars*, which details how Pentagon truly boxed in the White House during the review of the Afghan war strategy and extracted an additional 30,000 troops. This is no way for democracies to function, but it will give them a sense of how governments struggle with sensitive civilian-military relationships. Crucially, the Maoists cannot push their model of integration in the changed context.

The Maoist stand on 'restricted political competition' is something no other party can accept for reasons of both principle and survival. Federalism is



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Q. Should the salaries of bank CEOs be capped?



# Bring high-altitude rescues down to earth



I knew Capt. Basnyat personally and agree with the author that Basnyat's demise is not only a brutal tragedy for his young family but also a huge blow to aviation, mountaineering and adventure sports in Nepal ('Losing lives to save them', Dambar Krishna Shrestha, #528). But Shrestha left out a few important facts.

Fact 1 – Mountain rescues are high-risk maneuvers: period. It does not matter who does it or where. Nepal poses a unique risk when it comes to choppers flying at high altitudes. Performance is compromised given all the variables are in the negative. High altitude = negative machine output = negative supply of oxygen = negative lift = negative pilot performance. It's this lethal mixture that is behind all the major helicopter accidents that took place in the Solukhumbu region, barring one of the most horrific accidents, involving Shree Airlines in the Kanchenjunga area, which wiped out an entire generation of Nepali conservationists.

Fact 2 – \$\$\$\$\$. Mountain rescues are driven primarily by a monetary, not a humanitarian impulse. It's not a trade secret that insurance companies and even individual climbers pay out substantial amounts to airlines and expedition companies as well as pilots themselves for high-altitude rescues. This is the "I will hold your hand and take you up to the summit if you pay me well" effect – the reason why the same person summits Everest 19 times. It proves a point, breaks a record, and brings in the money. Quite simply, it's the forces of demand and supply. As long as people willingly pay top dollar to conquer Nepali peaks and ski down the Himalaya, climbing – and rescue – businesses will thrive.

Fact 3 – Zero regulations. Sure, high-altitude rescues are the stuff of legend but no regulations and no oversight = accidents. Why is it that civil aviation officials and sometimes even company owners hear about 'highest rescues' only after one takes place? Before Capt. Basnyat's world record, a certain Major (then) KC had this accolade when he plucked an Everest aspirant from Camp II. He was almost grounded because he flew an army helicopter without any clearance. KC would later crash the same chopper a few months at a much lower altitude.

Our rescue pilots need to be properly identified, trained, certified and insured according to international standards by the same companies that make all that money. Until that happens, it won't be long before another little child loses a father who absolutely loved what he did – flying the high mountains regardless of the risks. And then we'll talk about it all over again.

Pankaj

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# Stopping forced labour

The International Labour Organization's **Caroline O'Reilly** heads the special action programme to combat forced labour, which is part of the programme for the promotion of the declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work. During her recent visit to Nepal, she spoke to *Nepali Times*.

**Nepali Times: How does the ILO combat forced labour globally?**  
**Caroline O'Reilly:** One of the basic principles of the ILO is that all people should work in conditions of freedom and human dignity. No one should be forced to work against their will, but the ILO estimates that there are at least 12.3 million people trapped in forced labour today. Almost all our member states have ratified the ILO convention that prohibits forced labour, so we work with them to fulfil this. This may involve capacity building of partners in different countries, mainly the ministries of labour, trade unions, and employers. We need good laws in place not only to stop forced labour, but also to help victims get their wages,

protective services and so on.  
**But trade unions in Nepal have become very politically oriented, and are considered a nuisance by many.**  
 Trade unions represent the interests of their members but also reach out to other people. That is particularly helpful for those in forced labour, which doesn't tend to happen to people in the organised sector. Frankly, it is happening in the informal economy, people who are working in agriculture, in construction, but who are not part of the organised work force. Trade unions can raise their awareness about what their rights are and also offer legal assistance and advice.  
 We do work with trade unions here in Nepal, particularly in protecting the rights of migrant workers, who might find themselves in exploitative situations abroad. We also assist the ministry of labour and the department of foreign employment in revising the rules and regulations concerning foreign employment. We are working with



recruitment agencies to help them adopt and put into practice a code of conduct.  
**Is there a link between migrant workers and human trafficking?**  
 Absolutely, especially when migrant workers don't go through official channels, they are vulnerable to forced labour. Many people think trafficking is just about the movement of women and girls to be exploited in the

sex industry, but it can happen to anyone, man woman, girl or boy for any sort of purpose, not just for sex, but also for work in agriculture, construction, or domestic service. Forced labour actually is what happens after trafficking.  
**In Nepal 75 per cent of migrant workers are unskilled. What needs to be done to protect them?**  
 We cannot prevent people from

leaving but we can help them to improve their skills so that they can get better paid jobs abroad and within the country. If people can find good work at home they will not feel obliged to leave their family and move thousands of miles away.  
 But we also have to look at what happens in the destination country. The ILO works closely with labour inspectors charged with inspecting workplaces; they need to know how to identify victims of forced labour and how to respond to it. The issue is not high on their agenda, but we try to increase awareness about the risks and problems faced by migrant workers among labour administrations. For example, we are about to conduct training in Jordan for labour attachés from Nepali and other south Asian countries so they can recognise problems and provide help and protection to those vulnerable workers who need it most. 🇳🇵

## THIS WEEK

**Plenum concludes**  
 The sixth extended plenum of the UCPN (Maoist) concluded Saturday without a resolution of the dispute between the party's top leaders. The seven-day plenum discussed the political papers presented by Party Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and vice chairmen Baburam Bhattarai and Mohan Baidya but failed to come up with an official party line. Dahal's final document failed to integrate the party's three lines.

**Diplomatic crisis**  
 The US embassy in Kathmandu has regretted the disclosure of classified documents through Wikileaks in a statement issued on Tuesday. This follows reports that of the 251,287 cables to be released, 2,278 are related to Nepal. The cables sent between 2005 and early 2010 are believed to deal with the Maoist insurgency, Bhutanese and Tibetan refugees, Nepali political parties, and Nepal's relations with India and China. "I cannot vouch for the authenticity of any one of these documents. But I can say that the United States deeply regrets the disclosure of any information that was intended to be confidential," US ambassador to Nepal Scott H DeLisi said.

**Small step forward**  
 Ex-Army General Balananda Sharma has been appointed the coordinator of the secretariat to oversee PLA management and integration. The Special Committee unanimously endorsed Sharma to head the secretariat, ending a two-month tussle over the post. Earlier, the NC and UML had floated Sharma's name for the post while the UCPN (Maoist) had insisted on the appointment of PLA deputy commander Nanda Kishor Pun 'Pasang' as head of the secretariat. The Maoists agreed to retract their claim in order to fill the long-vacant position and make way for the secretariat to start work.

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Economic deals

Teletalk has launched Colors Mobile's X9 Feather. The model is a full touchscreen business phone that supports Dual GSM cards. X9 comes with a 3.2" screen with a dual 3.2MP, camera and supports a variety of features and applications. The market price of X9 is Rs 7,980.

Mobile bank

Bank of Kathmandu has launched its mobile banking services under the name M-Paisa. After registering, BOK customers can transfer money to anyone anytime, make payments, recharge mobile phones and check their accounts through their mobiles. This service is limited to NTC subscribers.

Going 3D

Nepa Hima Trade Link has introduced a series of Sony's 3D entertainment solutions. The launch of 3D BRAVIA NX810 and NX710 3D televisions has been complemented by BDV-IZ1000W, which delivers surround sound via five ultra slim speakers. In addition to regular playback features, Sony's Blu-ray 3D player can be connected to a broadband internet network to stream videos.

Imported flooring

Bajra & Bajracharya Enterprises has introduced a new series of Spanish tiles – Porcelanosa. The tiles are showcased at Bajra and Bajracharya's showroom in New Baneshwor.



Re-generation

RUBEENA MAHATO

Four years ago, the nation watched in disbelief as the leading lights of the conservation movement were lost to a tragic helicopter crash in Ghunsa. Among the dead were veteran geologist Harka Gurung, and eminent conservationists Mingma Norbu Sherpa and Chandra Prasad Gurung. In just moments, the country had lost some of its most brilliant and dedicated minds.

It seemed as if conservation in Nepal would now be rudderless. The family of late Mingma Norbu Sherpa, however, decided to establish a scholarship in his memory. Mingma's wife Phurba and her two children set up the Mingma Norbu Sherpa Memorial Scholarship in 2008 to help produce highly trained and capable environmentalists to fill the void created by the loss of Mingma and others.

Salina Poudyal from Kathmandu (*pic, above*) was one of the first two students awarded the scholarship. Along with Anu Lama, Salina pursued her master's degree at the prestigious Lincoln University, New Zealand, Mingma's alma mater. Two years later, Salina has returned with a degree and a stronger conviction to work in the conservation field in Nepal.

"It was not just any scholarship. There is a great deal of respect and admiration for Mingma in Lincoln and we knew we had to live up to his name," Salina says. She studied Environmental Policy and Planning, while Anu Lama studied Parks and Recreation. Mingma, too, had completed a diploma in Parks and Recreations at Lincoln and a post-graduate degree in Natural Resource Management at the University of Manitoba before returning to work as a warden in Sagarmatha National Park. It was the beginning of an impressive, but sadly curtailed, career.

Like Mingma, many Nepali conservationists were educated at Lincoln and at one time the directors of almost all conservation projects in Nepal were Lincoln graduates. "It is an honour to be able to study in a place that has produced such luminaries," says Salina, no slouch herself. She had impressive academic and work credentials while in Nepal. In New Zealand too, she consistently performed well.

Salina plans to work for a while in Nepal before going back for a PhD. She wants to combine her background in environmental science with her policy and planning studies to bring reform to the environmental sector. The scholarship that Salina has received does not make it mandatory for her to return and work in Nepal, but she thinks it is only right that she does so.

"We have big shoes to fill," Salina admits, before adding, "There's a lot to do before we can even come close to the achievements of those who we lost in Kanchenjunga. For now, we can at least follow their footsteps." [www.thehigh.org](http://www.thehigh.org)

Remembering Mingma Sherpa

The man who grew up to be a leading conservationist in Nepal had humble beginnings. Born and raised in a village near Everest, Mingma Norbu Sherpa continued his education through several scholarships initiated by Sir Edmund Hillary.

After completing his Masters in Natural Resources Management from University of Manitoba, Mingma returned to work in the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP). As a founder and later director of the project, he introduced conservation efforts that built on local participation. Mingma was a great believer in community-led conservation and handed over ACAP's management to the communities as soon as he could.

He was also involved in developing a model for environmental education in the country, establishing conservation areas and parks in Nepal and Bhutan, and curbing poaching and deforestation in the Himalayan region. While working with WWF, he was involved in projects to conserve the endangered one-horned rhinoceros and the Royal Bengal Tiger.

Mingma was working to set up the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA), a project close to his heart, and was returning from a ceremony to hand over control of KCA to the local council, when the helicopter he was in crashed. All 24 aboard were killed instantly; the victims included a who's who of the conservation movement in Nepal.



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PAAVAN MATHEMA

It's that time of the year again, when every few weeks the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) announces a new loadshedding schedule, adding more hours of darkness to our lives. We will stock up on diesel for our generators or fiddle with power-hungry inverters, and pay huge bills at the end of every month.

Solar is no longer the new kid on the block. Solar panels for passive water heating systems in urban homes have been around for a while now, but lately, photovoltaic (PV) solar cells have begun to make their presence felt. Nepal lies in a prime solar region, too, getting two to three times more solar energy than Germany, the largest producer of solar electricity in the world.

“Solar electricity is an eco-friendly technology and the most viable alternative energy source available here,” says Moon Pradhan of Gham Power. “Loadshedding has forced people to look into solar as a convenient and safe power option.” In operation since February this year, the company has already installed over 70 PV solar systems.

Companies are now providing customised solar packages according to the energy requirements of households or offices. These systems can range from those that supply just two bulbs to those with the capacity to operate heavier appliances like water pumps and refrigerators. It's possible to have a fully solar-dependent power system, though most are opting for a more economical hybrid system. A hybrid system allows a battery to charge through solar as well as the main power line, ensuring 24-hour power supply. Systems can be designed to supply power even on gloomy days.

While interest in solar electricity has grown over the years, people usually shy away when they are confronted by the outlay required. True, a system to cover even the basic lighting requirements of a household can cost over Rs 50,000. “Solar might sound expensive upfront,” acknowledges Rajeev Subba of Kathmandu

Power Company. “But it is a one-time investment.” And banks like Clean Energy Development Bank are now providing low-cost loans for solar systems.

The costs also come down if low-wattage electronic appliances are installed. “We need to be conscious about power consumption when we purchase electronic goods,” says Manish Bajracharya of Lotus Energy. “It can easily cut down on our energy requirements and bills.”

Another plus point is that the investment in the system pays for itself in the long run. “Sunlight is abundant and free,” explains KR Khanal of Ultra Group. “And unlike other energy options, the operating costs of a solar system are minimal.” Most PV solar panels come with a 25-year warranty, and the only maintenance they require is cleaning. Batteries require a change of distilled water every three to six months.

Surendra Mathema of Tahachal has a 200W solar backup in his house and is one satisfied customer. “I also use a solar cooker, which makes my cooking gas last longer,” says Mathema. He now has another 500W of solar capacity and is exploring the possibility of joining it up to the main grid.

However, the government is yet to introduce the concept of net metering,

which would allow independent electricity producers to sell their surplus to NEA. “The government needs to have policies that will encourage people to become independent producers of solar electricity,” says Madhusudhan Adhikari, Solar Component Manager of the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre. If consumers can realise an economic return on solar electricity then households will be motivated to be part of a solution to the nationwide power crisis, rather than wait for mega hydro-projects to deliver.

nepalitimes.com

The age of enlightenment #505

From hydro to solar #201



## Rural power

Use of PV solar modules for electricity started in Nepal with rural electrification projects in areas that did not have access to the main hydroelectric grids. “A solar lighting system does not require huge infrastructure, can be installed in a day and even a small system can power the energy needs of a rural household,” says Yug Tamrakar of Solar Electricity. According to the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre, more than 225,000 PV solar systems have been installed in rural households, a total of 8MW of electricity. The use of solar in rural areas has been boosted by a subsidy for rural solar projects that ranges from Rs 5,000-Rs 10,000.

Size/production	Capacity	Starting rate
0.5 unit/day 95W panel	4 11W bulbs and a TV	Rs 75,000
1.5 unit/day 185W panel	6 11W bulbs, a TV and a computer or a water pump	Rs 145,000
3 units/day two 185W panels	6 11W bulbs, a TV, a computer, a water pump, a fridge and a rice cooker	Rs 280,000

Sample rates from Gham Power, finance available



EVENTS

**Russian Film Festival**, films on Russian society, culture and



history. *Till 3 December, Russian Centre of Science and Culture, Kamal Pokhari, 4416650*

**AWON's Annual Christmas Bazaar Fundraiser**, festive shopping, delicious food and unlimited fun. *4 December, 10am to 4.30pm, Hyatt Regency, Boudha, 4410342, Entry fee: Rs 100, Rs 50 for children*

**Expression of Repression**, painting exhibition by Kapil Mani Dixit and Sohan Babu Khatri to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS, dwelling on the theme of 'nudity'. *3 December, 5.17 pm, Yak & Yeti Hotel, Ticket: Rs 3,500 (dinner included), 9841873912, Dress code: Red and Black. Exhibition continues from 4 December to 10 December, 10am to 6pm, Nepal Art Council, Babar Mahal*

**Writing workshop**, Kathmandu International Mountain Festival and Quixote Cove is organising a three-day workshop with Terry Gifford, submit poetry or prose with a letter of interest. *10 to 12 December, 9.30am to 11am, Rastriya Sabha Griha, Bhrikuti Mandap, application deadline: 3 December, info@qcbookshop.com, 5536974*

**Trees and Leaves II**, painting exhibition by Samjhana Rajbhandari and Bidhata KC. *26 November to 4 December, 5pm, Fusion Studio, Sagarmatha Bazaar, Mandala Street, Thamel*

**Balgo**, an exhibition of contemporary Australian

indigenous art. *Till 5 December, 11am to 6pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, 4218048*

**Once in a lifetime**, an exhibition of mixed media works by the Australian artist Donato Rosella. *21 November to 5 December, 11am to 6pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, 421804*

**Kathmandu International Theatre Festival 2010**. *17 November to 7 December, Gurukul, Old Baneswor, for details see schedule on opposite page*

**Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival 2010**, the biggest film festival in the country is back, this time with 62 films from 35 countries, on themes of migration and biodiversity. *9 to 13 December, Rastriya Sabha Griha, Nepal Tourism Board, Bhrikuti Mandap, 5542544, kimff@himalassociation.org, www.kimff.org*

**Dreaming of Player Flags: Mantra on the Wind**, an exhibition of impressionistic photography by Sandy Shum. *Till 6 December, Kathmandu Contemporary Arts Centre, Jhamsikhel, 5521120*

**Glocalization of Art**, works by various artists. *4 December, 1pm to 3pm, Lasaana premises, Chameli Nursery, Jhamsikhel, 9851001487*

MUSIC

**Golden Moments**, the best bands in Nepal pay tribute to classic rock: **1905 Restaurant**, Kantipath, *3 December, 7pm, all-star performance*

**Kgarira Festival Dub FX Live** beat-boxing at 1905, presented by digital om productions. *5 December, starts 7pm onwards, 1905 Restaurant, Kantipath*

KIMFF – the 8th edition



If you're wondering where to go after the international theatre festival concludes next week, don't worry. The 8<sup>th</sup> Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival 2010 (KIMFF'10) kicks off 9 December. 2010 is being celebrated as the International Year for Rapprochement of Cultures and the International Year of

Biodiversity, so most of the 62 films from 35 countries selected for the festival reflect these causes. Twenty films will be screened in the International Competition category, 36 in the International non-competitive category, and 6 in the Nepali Panorama category. This year, the festival has partnered with Quixote's Cove to conduct a writing workshop with Terry Gifford. A filmmaking workshop by Docskool is also a part of the festival along with an animation workshop by Danish animators Anja Perl and Laura Büchert Schjødt. Book your tickets for back-to-back film screenings at the City Hall and the Nepal Tourism Board, Exhibition Road. The festival will run till 13 December. [www.kimff.org](http://www.kimff.org)

Kathmandu International Theatre Festival 2010

17 November to 7 December  
Rimal/Sama Theatre, Gurukul, Old Baneswor, Kathmandu  
**Interactions with directors and actors every day at 3pm, Sama Theatre**  
**Performances at 5pm, Rimal Theatre**

Friday 3 December  
*Men always come back home* directed by Abdollah Barjasteh Yazdi

Saturday 4 November  
*Siddhartha Gautum dekhi Buddha samma... ek yatra* directed by Bipin Kumar

Sunday 5 December  
*Prison* directed by Kamaluddin Nilu

Monday 6 December  
*Suina Karnalika* directed by Sunil Pokharel

Tuesday 7 December  
*Colombo Colombo: The story of your coffin* directed by Indika Ferdinando

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**Dec 8, 2010**  
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**Dec 8, 2010**  
Wednesday  
5 pm

**Dec 10, 2010**  
Friday  
7 pm

**Word Warriors: Spinning at the Wordmill**  
at Quixote's Cove, the bookshop, Jawalakhel, Patan.  
Entry fee: Rs. 50.

**Lecture on "The Poetry Slam In America: An Art Form Journey from Chicago in 1985 to Kathmandu in 2010"**  
at Pimal Theatre, Gurukul, Old Baneshwor, Kathmandu.  
Free event.

**Word Warriors: No word left untuned**  
at Pimal Theatre, Gurukul, Old Baneshwor, Kathmandu.  
Entry fee: Rs. 50.

**Word Warriors: On the Road**  
at House of Music, Thamel.  
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Poetry is not an unknown quantity here. Adi-kabis, ashu-kabis, bal-kabis, you name it, we'll rhyme it. But something wicked this way doth come. Poetry slam in Nepal? Gimme some.

Last Friday, in the stuffy environs of the Nepal-Bharat Library, New Road, the audience was kept waiting for the three members of Lyrics Independence, the main act for the 'Word Warriors' prelude to December's poetry slams to be organised by Quixote's Cove. Outside, hawkers hitched their own rhymes to the cheap goods lining the streets, and we began to wonder if this was the only poetry we'd get that day. But the traffic finally cleared, and in a flurry of embraces, the poets arrived.

Lyrics Independence call themselves a lyrical hip-hop trio, and it showed in the way they spoke, dressed, and interacted with each other and the audience. But their verse, delivered singly in English and Nepali, was thankfully stripped of the bling and blather of MTV-hop. It reminded us what hip-hop was perhaps always meant to be. Granted, the format – rapidfire recitals in front of a mixed audience – was always going to favour belligerent, rhyming verse and wordplay that doesn't quite encapsulate poetry's artistic range. But there was no doubt about the poetic spirit on display from Gaurab Subba, Yanik Shrestha, and Aidray. Speaking at the end of the short program, Gaurab exhorted youth to take part in the events planned for December. "If you're a youth living in Nepal and have nothing to express, he declared, "You're a stone, man." 'Nuff said.

See Wordmill poster for details of the poetry slams taking place in December.

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Yeti Airlines in partnership with RAAIKA has launched the pilot Green Dhangadhi Project to plant one tree for every ticket sold in Kathmandu-Dhangadhi-Kathmandu sector for which Rs.20 on every one-way and Rs. 40 on two-way tickets sold in the Kathmandu-Dhangadhi sector will be set aside for the funding of the programme which is in Kailali District, Regional Head Quarter Far-West - Rajpur & Doti, and Kanchanpur area.

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# Medical marvel



This story of the rescue of a three-year-old girl, who fell into an icy pond in a little village in the Austrian Alps, defies belief. The parents jumped into the pond to save her, but it was a full thirty minutes before they found her at the bottom, brought her up, and started CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). When the rescue team arrived, eight minutes later, her body temperature was 66 degrees (F), she had no pulse or blood pressure, and her lungs were filled with water. Her pupils were dilated and unreactive to light, indicating brain death. Despite this, CPR was continued, with a medic pumping her chest as a helicopter took her to the nearest hospital. They put her on a heart lung machine at the hospital and controlled her oxygen supply and temperature through the system. After two hours, her body temperature rose and her heart began to beat. Throughout the day and night, the physicians in the



intensive care unit of the hospital suctioned out water and pond debris from her lungs with a fiberoptic bronchoscope. The following day they put her on a mechanical ventilator. Over the next few days all her organs (heart, kidneys, intestines, lungs) made a remarkable recovery. Except the brain. The doctors did a CT scan and discovered a generalised brain swelling that suggested no focal pathology. Amazingly, as though what had already been done was not enough, the team drilled a hole into her skull and put a probe in to monitor brain pressures, based on which they were better able to deliver drugs and fluids to the body. The miracle continued to unfold. Her pupils started to react

to light; she began to breathe on her own; and she started speaking in a thick, slurred voice. Two weeks after the accident she was home. She received extensive physiotherapy, and by age five, she was a normal child again. Three things stand out. How severe hypothermia (a potential problem in our Himalaya) sustained in the icy fishpond effectively shut down the body, and the caregivers, realising this important fact, went all out by initially continuing CPR. Second, how efficiently a child's body, as opposed to an old man's, responds to prompt therapy. Third, how a random hospital in the West, if well coordinated, can indeed perform miracles. 🇳🇵

## GREEN SCENE

# Plastic out, students in



Plastic bags are used for so many things that most people think they can never be successfully banned. But a school in the capital has been successfully running an anti-polythene campaign for 10 years now, and has set an example for many other schools to follow. The signboard outside United School in Satdobato that reads 'polythene-free zone' continues to attract attention from passersby a decade after it was put up. But for the parents, teachers and students of said school, it's routine to be checked for polythene bags at the gate before they are allowed inside. "The harms of polythene bags were just so many compared to the little effort needed to replace them. And our experience tells us it is only a matter of time before people embrace the habit," says Seema Rai, Principal of the school. The school's drive against polythene is spearheaded by the students' Eco club, which also

carries out tree plantation and cleaning programs regularly. The school's efforts in banning polythene have been so successful that students have started enforcing the 'no polythene rule' elsewhere. "Most of our students have banned polythene by choice also in their homes," Rai confirms. All new students, parents and teachers are required to participate in a session where they are briefed about the school's anti-polythene policy. Defaulters are fined Rs 500, to be deposited in the School Welfare Fund. In the time the program has been running just two individuals have breached the rule, both of whom were school staff. "Our objective was to develop environmental awareness among students right from their formative years. In 10 years, 400-500 students have graduated from here. If half of them can continue living without polythene, that's a big achievement," Rai says. United's success in banning polythene has prompted other schools in Lalitpur to declare polythene-free zones as well. The campaign is not without problems, however. Some goods brought in from outside, including food for students and staff, come ready-wrapped in polythene bags. These are emptied into containers right at the gate so that the polythene does not enter the school. "It is sometimes inconvenient but now we have many shopkeepers, most of whom are parents of our own students, who have stopped dealing in polythene with us," Rai says. A plastic-free future is already a reality for some. 🇳🇵



USE ME: The District AIDS Coordination Committee of Birganj organised a rally on Wednesday to mark World AIDS Day, with this year's theme 'Universal Access and Human Rights'.



EXCELLENCE AWARDED: Himal Khabarpatrika's Santa Gaha Magar receives the SEJON Outstanding Economic Journalist Award 2010 from Governor Yubraj Khatriwada, Wednesday. Magar received the award for his investigative reporting on financial fraud by Unity Life International.



CONQUEROR: Maiti Nepal founder Anuradha Koirala returned home on Thursday with the 2010 CNN Hero of the Year Award for her work against human trafficking.

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WEEKEND WEATHER by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

November passed as expected, with no rains in the mid-hills and plains, but light snowfall in the high mountains above 4,000 metres. The present trend will continue as there are no signs of clouds coming in with the westerly winds. One can, however, expect a change in local weather patterns this week due to a strong northerly wind blowing across the Himalayan passes, chasing the giant low pressure trough sitting over the Indian Ocean with its centre along peninsular India. Expect sunny days, chilly mornings and clear night skies.


FRI	SAT	SUN
22-4	23-3	20-5





The 'youth' of Nepal should ask to be treated like adults instead of seeking special protection

were not listening to people like him. The solution, he said, was to get young people into the decision-making process. But there are 137 members in the Constituent Assembly below the age of 35. If you whack another hundred 20-year-olds in there, nothing substantial is going to change.

In fact, tokenisms like the National Youth Policy have further disadvantaged this broad demographic. Young people make up the largest chunk of the electorate. In a democracy, votes are power. Young people think they are a special group that needs special protections and privileges. But if you can vote, if you can legally marry, and if you can have children, you are an adult. Ask to be treated like one. We should abolish the word 'youth' from our political lexicon, and lobby instead for an education, health or business policy. Perhaps a few Ainsley Hayes would do the trick. 

# Special treatment



**POLITICALLY CRACKED**  
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In an episode of the White House presidential drama *West Wing* a young Republican attorney, Ainsley Hayes, denounces efforts to pass an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the US Constitution. "Women do not need any special constitutional protection," she says. "They are already protected by the 14th Amendment," an 1868 addition to the constitution that provides equal rights and protection to all citizens.

"Well, then I guess you just love that wage gap," replies her colleague. "We believe in the ERA. How can you have an objection?" "Because it's humiliating," Hayes replies. "I do not have to have my rights handed down to me by a bunch of old white men. The same Fourteenth Amendment that protects you protects me. And I went to law school just to make sure."

A surprising demographic in Nepal that is seeking the hand-holding that Hayes would call humiliating is the group of 'youth' whose advocates fought hard to pass a National Youth Policy in 2008. It was the first such policy paper to be promulgated in history recognising youth as a special group needing privileges, while in reality they make up a major chunk of the demographic. It also stretched the definition of youth as people from 16-40 years old, a broad spectrum if you consider that the United Nations defines

youth as 16-24 years in age.

Granted, the definition of youth varies among countries worldwide because besides biology, social and cultural factors determine how someone is treated. In Nepal, youth has come to mean powerlessness. It was because of this that Sushil Koirala and Ram Chandra Poudel remained 'youth leaders' until the party gave them some authority. But have the youths themselves, the real ones, fared any better in changing this dynamic?

When formulating the National Youth Policy, the age group of 16-40 was chosen at the insistence of the student organisations of the political parties, who remain in college way into their 30s and 40s, politicking instead of studying. The young political leaders also form a branch of Nepal's 'patronage network'. International Crisis Group observed in its September report that the state's "raison d'être is not serving citizens so much as servicing the needs of patronage networks and keeping budgets flowing and corruption going."

Meanwhile, young people on the street (I am still sticking with the official age group here), see this dynamic and feel powerless. Only a few days back a few hundred 'young' people gathered in front of the BICC and walked backwards to Singha Darbar to protest the lack of progress in constitution writing and the selfish attitude of the political leaders who are impeding progress.

When one of the participants was asked why he was at the march he said the CA members



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# India or China?

JAGDISH BHAGWATI

NEW DELHI – When US President Barack Obama visited India in November and complimented its leaders on the growing success and prowess of their economy, a tacit question returned to centre stage: Will China grow faster than India indefinitely, or will India shortly overtake it?

In fact, this contest dates back to 1947, when India gained independence and democracy became the country's defining feature, while China turned to Communism with the success of Mao Zedong after the Long March. Both countries, the 'sleeping giants', were expected to awaken at some point from their slumber. But, since the growth model in vogue at the time laid principal emphasis on capital accumulation, China was widely held to have the advantage, because it could raise its investment rate higher than India, where democracy limited the extent to which the

population could be taxed to increase domestic savings.

As it happened, however, both giants slept on – until the 1980s in China and the early 1990s in India – mainly because both countries embraced a counter-productive policy framework that crippled the productivity of their investment efforts.

Reflecting flawed economic arguments, India embraced autarky in trade and rejected inflows of equity investment. It also witnessed economic interventionism on a massive scale, including the proliferation of public sector enterprises in areas beyond public utilities. In China, the results were similar, as the political embrace of communism meant going autarkic and giving the state a massive role in the economy.

After progressively dismantling their inefficient policy frameworks in favour of 'liberal' reforms, the two giants began to stride forth. The race was finally on. And, once again, China seemed to be the horse to bet on: it grew faster, because it changed its policy framework

much faster than democracy permits. But there are good reasons to suspect that China's authoritarian advantage will not endure.

First, while authoritarianism can accelerate reforms, it can also be a serious handicap. Years ago, when both Mao and Zhou Enlai were alive, Padma Desai, the Columbia University expert on Russia, was asked about China's future growth prospects. She answered: it depends on whether Mao dies first or Zhao dies first – her point being that in a top-heavy system, growth paths can become unpredictable, and thus subject to volatility.

Moreover, we know from experience elsewhere – and now in China itself – that as growth accelerates, political aspirations are aroused. Will the Chinese authorities respond to them with ever greater repression, as they have with dissidents and Falun Gong, creating discord and disruption, or will they accommodate new popular demands by moving to greater democracy?

Again, China's authoritarian politics means that it cannot profit from the innovations that

depend on software, as that is an instrument through which dissent can flourish and become subversive of total control. As one wit has observed, the PC (personal computer) and the CP (Communist Party) do not go together.

Finally, China's growth must continue to depend on its exploitation of external markets, which makes it vulnerable in a world that is increasingly making democracy and human rights a central preoccupation. In such a world, continued hassles and hiccups for Chinese exports can be confidently expected.

Economic factors also militate against Chinese prospects. China was clearly able for many years to exploit a 'reserve army of the unemployed' à la Karl Marx – to grow rapidly without facing a labour-supply constraint, so that capital accumulation would not run into diminishing returns. But now, given China's one-child policy and lack of adequate infrastructure (including housing) in rapidly growing areas, labour is getting scarce and wages are rising.

In economic jargon, the supply curve of labour was flat but is now sloping upwards, so that rapidly increasing demand for labour resulting from rapid growth is driving up wages. That means that China is beginning to 'rejoin the human race' as capital accumulation meets scarcer labour and growth slows.

By contrast, India has a far more abundant supply of labour, as well as a more favourable demographic profile, so that, as India's investment rate increases, labour will not be a constraint. India will thus become the new China of the past two decades.

Besides, in contrast to China, where economic reforms were quicker and more complete, India still has a way to go: privatisation, labour-market reforms, and opening up the retail sector to larger, more efficient operators are all pending – and will give a further boost to India's growth rate once they are implemented. ■

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www.project-syndicate.org

China has been able to move faster to boost its economy, but its authoritarian advantage will not endure



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# Good business

KATY WILLIAMS

Tourism already indirectly employs 548,000 Nepalis, and it's not hard to see that it will continue to grow. But if Nepal's tourism assets are to benefit future generations and drive socially equitable economic growth, poverty alleviation and conservation, then sustainable best practices must be implemented.

SNV Nepal (in partnership with UNEP and the Nepal Tourism Board, with EC support) is working with a range of operators to do just this. Ghalegaun Village Resort, for instance, has been involved in community-based ecotourism for eight years, taking five groups a year to remote Gurung villages to visit traditional honey hunters. Since taking part in the SNV programme, the resort has provided training in sustainable practices, the environment and tourism for 15 honey hunters, who are encouraged to only harvest from about 40 per cent of hives identified, so the endangered honeybee (and the native plants that depend on it) remains protected.

Everyone's heard of The Last Resort, which has one of the world's highest bungee jumps. But how many know of its responsible practices? Sales and marketing manager Bhuwan Sharma says, "When people ask why we are more expensive, we explain about our community development program and that staff are paid legal wages and get overtime. The whole community is developing in line with our resort. Ninety per cent of our clients come back precisely because of this."

Of course, examples of sustainable 'best practice' within Nepal's tourism

community remain the exception rather than the rule. Many feel they have no choice but to survive by maximising profits – usually by exploiting natural resources and workers. Others operate differently, but haven't yet understood that 'responsible travel' can actually be an asset. 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking has made a huge contribution to women's equality and education, enabling women from poor, mountainous regions to become confident and self-sufficient through guiding and portering (rock climbing

training, above). "We were doing all these 'responsible' things but had no idea they had a business value that we could promote," says Lucky Chhetri, one of the three siblings who runs 3 Sisters. "The marketing program gave us a sense of business. Client numbers are up by 10 per cent."

The Everest Resort has also seen its visitor numbers rise by 20 per cent in the last year, and attributes this to its shift to responsible practices and better marketing. Managers Ang and Dorjee Lami Sherpa only hire local

staff, source fruit and vegetables as well as fair trade crafts locally, and minimise water and power use through such innovations as collecting snowmelt and rainwater. "We have learned the importance of respecting others and if possible of creating income for others, too," says Dorjee.

Awareness of sustainable practices is not only important for tourism operators, but also for local communities and consumers, whose demand creates a virtuous cycle. "Unless you talk about the good things you do people won't know about them," says Abhi Shrestha of Himalayan Encounters, which runs The Famous Farm in Nuwakot (pic, below). The charming boutique hotel, which overlooks a medieval fortress amidst terraced hills, is installing solar water heating systems and biogas toilets. The hotel hires local guides, trains local farmers in organic farming, has a pro-women recruitment policy, and is constructing a school for the hearing and speech impaired. "Local communities doubt you, think your sole motive is profit making, and are non-cooperative. But if we are environmentally conscious we conserve the assets on which the company is based. If we can make the local people feel part of the changes and improvements then they will be happier and more hospitable to tourists and us."

The Last Resort is one of several companies looking to set up an alliance for responsible tourism and has already given out guidelines for developing such practices. "The purpose is to monitor each other in terms of how responsible we are", says Bhuwan. "Let's see if we can help each other become more responsible." ■

## Nepali tourist enterprises are discovering that business can be good in every sense of the word







# False consensus

Interview with KP Oli, Standing Committee member of UML, in Chhalphal, 28 November

**Chhalphal: How do you assess the current political situation?**  
**KP Oli:** Nepali politics is in transition. Democracy has been restored and we have to institutionalise it. The Maoist insurgency ended but the peace process is still ongoing. In other words, the peace process is a fight against violence, which is still ongoing. Apparently, the republic has been established, but the Comprehensive Peace Accord only brought about a ceasefire. The objectives of the war, weapons and policies are still as they used to be. The Maoists still control the PLA combatants and weapons, on the basis of which they warn of violent protests time and again. The government has not been formed in five months, ever since the prime minister resigned. We have only six months to conclude the peace process, but the issues of the constitution and peace process have not been touched yet. This is why we are hearing voices of frustration and protest.

**What is the root cause and who is responsible for this?**  
The Maoists' intention to capture power, the continuity of the politics of violence, and a craving for weapons are the real problems. Some other forces are also behind them for their own interest. They said Madhav Nepal's resignation would pave the way for political consensus, some even launched a signature campaign demanding his resignation. In fact, they did not understand the ulterior motives of the Maoists. Whoever was involved in this episode is responsible for the current situation.

**How have you taken the incident in parliament?**  
The parliament incident was an inexcusable, condemnable, unethical deed. The culprits should be brought to book. But this is not a surprising act for an extremist party, it's not a big thing for a party that slaughtered thousands of people. This incident should not disrupt the peace process and ongoing dialogue but they should not be allowed to act however they want.

**When will the government be formed?**  
The Maoists are not ready to accept anyone's leadership. People saw their attempt to block the budget. They seem to be determined to create a vacuum by preventing the formation of the government.

**Who is likely to lead the new government?**  
There is no possibility of the Maoists leading the government because they have not implemented past agreements, denounced violence or given up weapons. They cannot lead the government until they transform themselves into a civilian party. Whatever the UML and NC decide should offer a way out.

**If the current stalemate persists, will the president take over?**  
The Nepali president is not a military president and we are not about to risk democracy. There is a provision for a state of emergency in the constitution. If the government has to declare a state of emergency, there can be discussions on presidential rule. In democracy these kinds of discussion are natural.

# Maoist resolution

Editorial in Kantipur, 27 November

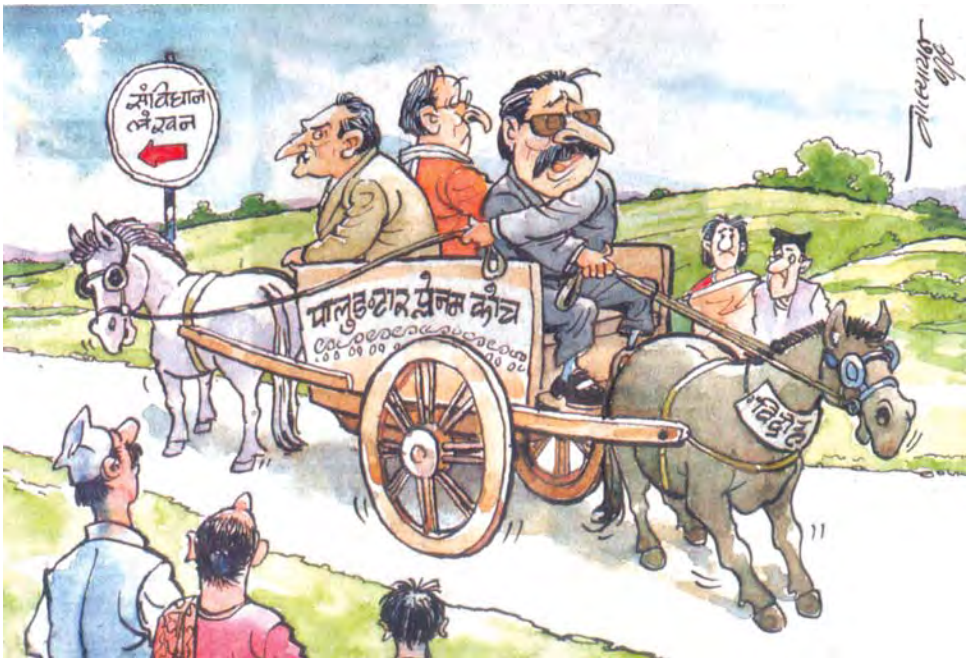
कान्तिपुर

The Maoist extended plenum, which concluded on Saturday, returned the political paper presented by Party Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal to the central committee. It's clear even this extended gathering could not smoothen over the internal differences in the party. Vice chairmen Baburam Bhattarai and Mohan Baidya held different opinions on many of Dahal's policies. The triangular conflict within the Maoists remains and now the challenge for the Maoist leadership is to address this internal dispute and give the party a direction.

Concluding the plenum, Dahal announced that the party has a single goal and will go forward united. However, he has also admitted that the party is yet to resolve its internal differences.

At the week-long plenum, the leadership could not agree on the direction of the party or the party's stance on India. But they did pass a proposal to revolt if the peace process and constitution do not reach a logical conclusion, confusing their cadres as well as national politics. The Maoists have lost a chance to commit to an unconditional peace and the constitution. Baidya's belief that the party needs to go into revolt and Bhattarai's commitment to the path of the constitution may soon collide with Dahal's conditional line. This clash might manifest itself as the discussion on the paper starts in the central committee.

Differences of opinion are not unusual in a communist party, but ideological and personality clashes were also responsible for the intra-party conflict seen at Palungtar. However, it is positive to see that the party has adopted a democratic system internally, calling on all central and committee level party workers for a discussion. There are specific processes to resolve internal conflict in a party and now, the Maoists should call a general convention.



Palungtar Plenum Coach  
Road sign: Constitution writing  
Horse: Revolt

कान्तिपुर Batsayan in Kantipur, 1 December

# Welcome Ostrom!

Suresh Neupane in Himal Khabarpatrika, 2-15 December

हिमाल

Elinor Ostrom is an American political scientist who received the Nobel Prize for Economic Sciences last year, for her work on the successful indigenous practices of Nepal. She is visiting the capital this week.

Since 2002, when the tenure of elected local governments across Nepal ended, issues of local governance, good governance, resources and structure have been absent from political vision. Village-level indigenous practices of cooperation and collaboration that are rooted in history have also been gradually eroded. The issue of native practices, which form a part of the Nepali identity, have not received attention since Nepal witnessed massive political transformation in 2005-2006. Instead, the centre's policies were imposed even at local level to strengthen vested political interests. In the transition to a federal republic, issues of local level governance have barely featured in political and constitutional debates. The entire state is centralised. It seems as if local governance modules and community initiatives have failed.

But if it were so, Professor Elinor Ostrom would not have found Nepal to be one of the exemplars of successful community and local governance. Having chosen Nepal as her area of research, she was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics in 2009. This did not just bring Ostrom into the limelight but also gave a new dimension to the Nepali identity that was



sketched out by Tony Hagen in the 1950s – of successful indigenous cooperative practices.

A professor at Indiana University in Bloomington, United States, Ostrom visited several villages during her research to identify community forests and irrigation systems, as well as other community development ventures that mobilised local resources.

Ostrom's argument that people and community-based organisations are more committed to the rules crafted by themselves than to decrees imposed by the state or to solutions provided by donor agencies has been bolstered by successful examples in Nepal. Her argument that local residents and community are best equipped to manage local natural resources was based on successful paradigms in countries like Nepal, Kenya, and Nigeria. In her last visit to Nepal in 2002, Ostrom visited Chitwan, Sindhupalchowk, and Dang to study good governance exercises surrounding groundwater irrigation.

It is no coincidence that she is visiting Nepal at a time when the country stands at the crossroads of constitution writing and state restructuring. It must have been her special attachment to Nepal that compelled her to accept the official invitation from the Government of Nepal, enabled by The Asia Foundation. Over three days, she will meet President Ram Baran Yadav and interact with senior officials of the Nepal Government on the theme of local good governance and resource utilisation. Ostrom is also the keynote speaker for the Annual Mahesh Chandra Regmi Lecture organised by Social Science Baha on 7 December.



# Minister gets home

Gokul Ghorsaine in *Nepal Samacharpatra*, 29 November

समाचारपत्र



GOKUL GHORSAINE

Deputy Minister of Physical Planning and Works, Kalawati Devi Paswan, has solved a big problem for herself. Ten months after being appointed as a minister, Paswan has built a cement house for herself in her village in Bara. The 16-room, two-story house was built at a cost of Rs 1.5 million. An unknown group had torched her house, reducing it to ashes, immediately after she was elected in the Constituent

Assembly and Paswan had been living in a thatched hut ever since. "My lifelong ambition is fulfilled," Paswan said. "I have built the house with the support of the party and the people." Paswan explained that the government contributed Rs 600,000 and her party, the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum, chipped in Rs 300,000 to build the house. "I had also saved some money from my salary and allowances," she said. Paswan, who comes from the Dalit and landless community, had lived in a thatched hut for a long time. "It does not suit a minister to live in a hut. I used to work as a wage labourer before. Now that I have built a house, all my worries are gone," she says. The locals are also happy that the minister has built her house in the village. Former VDC chairman Ramananda Chaurasiya said, "If other ministers too built their houses in their villages it would contribute a lot to village development."

# Disgraceful game

Editorial in *Naya Patrika*, 29 November

नयाँ पत्रिका

At the end, the jumbo team of Nepali sports officials returned home, proud of the one bronze medal won by boxer Deepak Maharjan. The 16<sup>th</sup> Asian Games became a sad memory for Nepali sports lovers. They only played audience to the tug-of-war between officials of the country's highest two sports institutions – the National Sports Council (NSC) and Nepal Olympic Committee (NOC). While the players were training, these officials were calculating how much they could earn on commissions. This clearly reflected on the performance of the players. But rather than the failure of the players, it was the public tussle between NSC and NOC that shamed the country in the international arena.

Even after the prime minister had bid them farewell, the players were stranded in Nepal. While the officials and their relatives enjoyed transit-free air tickets from the organisers, those meant to play at the games had to endure over 10 hours of transit to reach Guangzhou in China. NOC's treasurer has revealed that the committee's president Dhurba Bahadur Pradhan pocketed a hefty commission on the tickets. It is hard to say who benefited from Rs 800,000 taken from the Player Welfare Fund to finance the tickets.



The drama continued even after they reached Guangzhou. NOC's Pradhan and Jeevan Ram Shrestha enjoyed a seven-star hotel while they put Sports Minister Ganesh Tiwari and members of the NSC in a four-star hotel. At the competition, two officials held up a banner for 'Save the Mission', turning our country into a laughing stock in front of the international community. Nepal's team at the 16<sup>th</sup> Asian Games comprised 100 players but there were five times as many officials. It's clear that the majority were there just to enjoy a foreign trip and made no contribution to the Games. Instead of being concerned about the poor performance of the players, the officials were out shopping and sightseeing.

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# Quickie-leaks from KTM

If Prof S D Muni says Chairman Awesome is not really anti-Indian, we have to believe him. And if Muni is right then it means **PKD has been lying through his teeth all along.** (Which is what we suspected.) So, thanks to the prof for confirming our worst fears.

As expected, PKD has sailed through his Extended Plenum by lying left, right and centre. He reiterated yet once more how much he hated revisionism, hinting that Rambabu has serious revisionist tendencies. But BRB himself exposed his boss's hobnobbing with ex-royals as being worse than revisionism.

Now, why would Kollywood personality Gopal Bhutani be cremated bedecked in the red hammer and sickle? Do similar honours await other non card-carrying Baddies when they kick the bucket? And what of people who have been at the receiving end of Maobaddie terminal physical elimination?



Meanwhile, Makunay had all the time in the world to attend the Tiger Summit, but rushed back not to attend to the country's political deadlock, but to resolve a slight glitch in his dotter's wedding plans. Did Nepal



commit to double the population of big cats by 2020 or not? And do we trust the Deforestation Minister to do it? And before we could say 'Angkor Wat', Makunay was back at the airport clocking more frequent flier miles by jetting off to Cambodia for a meeting that he could easily have sent a flunkie to. As we speak, he is on his way to Brussels to return only in mid-Dec. Is there a method to Makunay's madness? Is he trying to show everyone else just what he thinks of the inability of his colleagues to resolve the succession issue? Maybe. But my guess is we have a PM who desperately wants his

Gold Medallion Status renewed.



And just as well he is outside the country because when the prime minister is here, he takes momentous decisions like proposing the erection of the Republic Tower on the right bank of the Bagmati. Besides a gate fetish and clock tower craze, this will unleash a nationwide **epidemic of Republic Tower erections.** MKN has taken personal charge of the design and we have it on good authority that it is an obelisk with a bronze winged horse on top. And dignitaries trooping to it in

future to lay floral tributes on Republic Day will all faint as they are asphyxiated by the aroma wafting up from the river.



Six months after the Chinese gifted the Mandu Municipality with street scrubbers and sidewalk vacuum trucks, the vehicles are still rusting away in Teku. The reason is that the trucks still don't have registration plates and green emission stickers. But even if they did, the Ass's prediction is that they will stall on their first day of scrubbing as their tubes are overwhelmed with all the rubbish this city has to offer.

Maybe the Chinese should have just given us brooms.



The Minister of Foreign Affairs must be nervous about the Wikileaks expos of sensitive American diplomatic cables. Not because everyone will know what the U.S. embassy here thinks about her, but because there may be no mention of her at all. Wot, am I not important enough to be mentioned in secret diplomatic cables? Pity the leaks don't go back to the early 1990s, though. We'd really like to hear about what Julia had to say about her

match-making strategy to get Lion Brave hitched to Ar-Zoo.



Much more interesting would be if we had the Freedom of Information Act to find out what our own embassies are cabling to Naryanhiti. For instance, our envoy to Canberra must have written back about the speech he gave on the Kommunist Manifesto to a group of flustered Kiwis in New Zealand. Our man in Seoul must be cabling back about everything but the imminent war with the North. London's classified cables must reveal some pretty gory details about the structural status of the Kensington building. And we can't wait for the quickie-leaks from Bara Khamba Road about the latest visits by Nepali political figures for 'medical' treatment.




**Kathmandu Irrational Airport** is mulling the purchase of full-body scanners. Bad idea. Now that NTA has shut down porn sites, desperate cops may take to ogling the privatised parts of VIP passengers. I'd rather they intensified their pat downs to make them more invasive, then we could market them with a new slogan for Nepal Tourism Ear: 'Get an Arousing Full Body Massage As you Leave the Country'. [ass\(at\)nepalitimes.com](mailto:ass(at)nepalitimes.com)



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