

# NEPALI Times

#546

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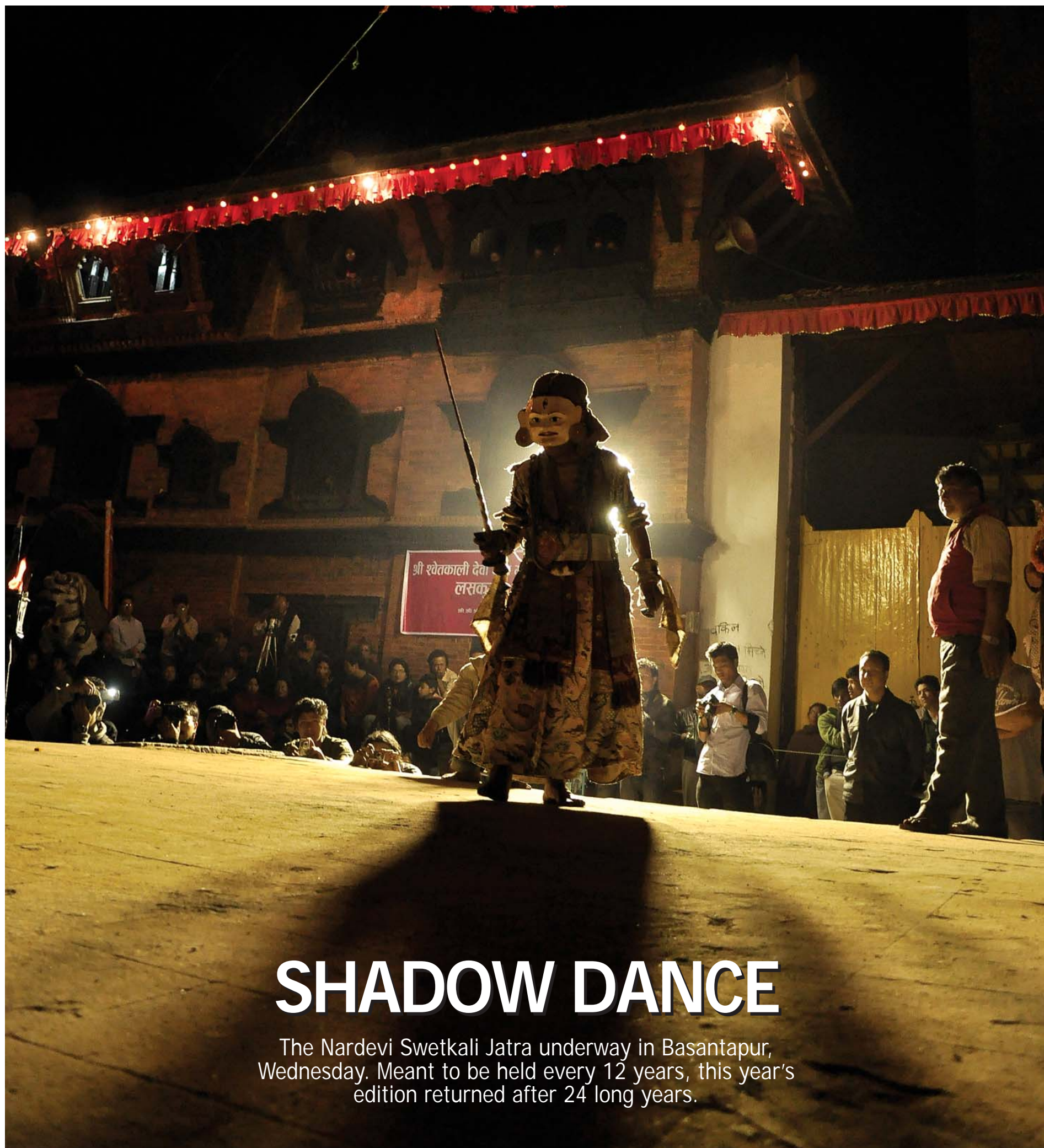
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## SHADOW DANCE

The Nardevi Swetkali Jatra underway in Basantapur, Wednesday. Meant to be held every 12 years, this year's edition returned after 24 long years.

BIKRAM RAI



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# MAKE HASTE SLOWLY



BIKRAM RAI

Of late, political wrangling appears to have taken a back seat. This is not to say that it is not continuing with the same intensity as it has been, simply that there has not been as much fodder for the media. A half-formed cabinet (with the imminent addition of the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum led by Upendra Yadav) is better than none, people seem to be thinking, so let us get on with our lives. Reports of progress made by the Commission for the Investigation of the Abuse

of Authority and inquiries into factors that have contributed to Nepal's general economic malaise have cultivated a sense that if things aren't great, at least some progress is being made somewhere. In the meantime we must keep an eye on the deadline for the drafting of the constitution. Work by the sub-committee under the Constitutional Committee continues apace, and its tenure was extended by a fortnight last week. But it's hard to

avoid the feeling that with another extension of the Constituent Assembly an increasingly likely possibility, the biggest issues are being dodged. While each and every one of the disputed constitutional issues is important, until the politicians come to an agreement on governance structure and the restructuring of the state, Nepalis will be in the dark regarding what shape the federal republic of Nepal will take. With public consultations an impossibility under the current timeline for constitution writing, by now it is probably not a good idea for the politicians to rush through a makeshift constitution, even if they were able to. If the relatively straightforward issue of citizenship rights, particularly with regards to women, generated such cackhanded resolutions on the part of the now-defunct high level taskforce, one can only imagine what political exigencies will do to the practical, legal and moral concerns that must be taken into account when deciding on how Nepal is to be structured. There must be checks and balances on the mistakes the Constitutional Committee might make in the form of public consultations. This will be possible once more if the Constituent Assembly is extended. A detailed timeline on both integration/rehabilitation of the PLA and constitution writing is an absolute must before this extension is effected. Of course timelines can and have been adjusted to suit political inaction. It is thus all the more necessary for the Maoists, UML, Nepali Congress, and the fragmented Madhes bloc to come to an agreement if not on power-sharing, at least on these two outstanding issues. Nepali Congress must rouse itself from its slumber and play its part in the peace process, if not in government. The Madhes parties should immediately desist from dreams of another movement aided not by the people of the Madhes, but its criminals. There is no time to stand and stare, and even less to indulge in repellent brinkmanship.

## ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

### FUNDAMENTALS, FLAWED

"The uneasy accommodation will continue, till a systemic crisis breaks the compact." ('Dysfunction, Inc.', Prashant Jha, #545) And, that systemic crisis has been averted by only one factor in this crumbling economy – remittances (the blood and tear-soaked money of Nepalis working abroad). The disequilibrium you pointed out would have very easily led us to the path of Mogadishu or Congo, if not for the remittances supported economy. There is no inherent equilibrium in the combination that you have pointed out. It is the exogenous factor that has sustained this disequilibrium.

**Anjan Panday**

● Prashant has clearly stated how a corrupt system works. But isn't this a new manifestation of feudalism? Who suffers the most in our system are the people who do not have the political or business connections. And since business connections are hard to make for the poor, all the poor and disillusioned join politics, only to be used by the parties to gain power and hobnob with businessmen with deep pockets. I would argue that the current political parties, who all claim to fight the rich, are indeed a manifestation of feudalistic attitudes. They use the poor and their cadres to gain power and money. We are ruled by corrupt leaders in all parties, including the monarchists. Those who should be fighting these corrupt leaders and business elites are the young, small entrepreneurs whose rise in economic status is the only way Nepali is going to

develop. Otherwise, our blood will continue to be sucked by those who walk the halls of power.

**Sagar Onta**

**SKY'S THE LIMIT**  
Getting celebrities such as Nirakar taking the lead will go a long way in getting the average Nepali to start enjoying what nature has given him: a wealth of beauty and some of the most amazing landscape in the world...a boon for anyone looking for adventure, be it biking, trekking, or anything at all ('Riding the storm', Rabi Thapa, #545). The sky is the limit!

**Raj Gyawali**

**LIMITED SKIES**  
It is sad to read about the current state of NAC caused by the machinations of corrupt politicians and by inept management within NAC itself ('Grounded too long', Vijay Lama, #545). There are many honest and hard-working Nepalis like those working for Nepal Airlines as Vijay Lama has stated. You can find them throughout the country in almost every field working as farmers, labourers, teachers, small businessmen, doctors, engineers etc. There are honest people like these even in the government bureaucracy and the police force. There are millions of them who are labouring abroad and sending remittances back home to support their families, and thereby supporting the country's economy. It is easy to overlook these silent people because they rarely if ever make the headlines; they do not make loud threats against their fellow citizens, or indulge in violence. All they are trying to do is make an honest living by going to work every day, and supporting their families. Because of their

honesty and integrity, they are of little use to any political parties or organisations, they frequently get sidelined for promotions, and their grievances are hardly ever heard. All the headlines are usually captured by the brass loud-mouthed leaders affiliated with different political parties and organisations. Most often these so-called leaders, unlike the silent class, are people who rarely have any professional skill or a job, and do not have to go work daily to support their family. They parasitise and subsist on the hard-earned labour and income of others by threatening them directly for donations or thrive by misuse of public/government funds (collected again through the hard-earned labour of the silent majority). Until the silent majority wakes up and shakes off this parasitic class and demands more accountability from the government, political parties and civic organisations, the country will keep on sliding towards the same fate as Nepal Airlines.

**Dev Batsya**

NAC is a metaphor for the state of Nepal:

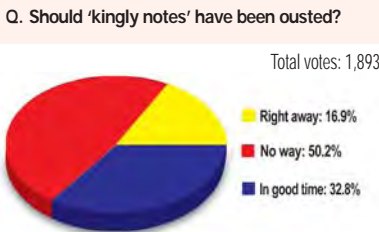
- 1) Cancellation and not reaching your destination = Political impasse
  - 2) Lack of in-flight entertainment, lack of spare parts, etc = Rubbish infrastructure, loadshedding, water shortages
  - 3) One airworthy 757 = No other options ...you get the idea.
- But seriously, as Captain Lama has said, NAC could be a profitable enterprise by just servicing the manpower industry. I'm looking into flying to Kuala Lumpur soon and heard that the govt has rescinded the licence for Air Arabia to fly

direct KTM-KL due to lobbying by NAC. Apparently, this route is the most lucrative for NAC. So I thought about flying direct to KL with NAC and looked at the flight schedule on the website about two weeks ago. The number of cancellations for the KL route put me off so now I'll pay a premium and take Thai Airways via BKK instead. If NAC were reliable then I would have flown with them and my rupees would have remained in Nepal. The govt and management of NAC better decide on what business model to adopt and do it quick. In my opinion Qatar Airways is now the de facto standard for international flights to and from Nepal although they're getting pretty pricey and Air Asia/Air Arabia are waiting in the wings at the low cost end. Once they're established NAC won't get another look in. NAC is dying a slow death and is in ICU. 4) No national flag carrier = no country.

**Anant**



nepalnews.com Weekly Internet Poll # 546



Weekly Internet Poll # 547. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com  
Q. Is the CIAA on the right track with former minister Wagle's corruption conviction?





# All's not lost



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

For a man who was preparing to be PM for so long, Jhala Nath Khanal has got off to a disappointing start. Fifty days after being elected, he doesn't have a full cabinet. The promised progress in the peace process is yet to be seen. He has not been able to build the broad-based consensus with NC and Madhesi parties that he will eventually need to make progress on constitutional issues. His rivals within the party may be quiet for now, but by not

It's easy to dismiss PM Khanal at this stage, but he can still expand his working alliance and accomplish what eluded his predecessors

reaching out to them, he will end up strengthening the constituency in UML that fears that the party is about to be swallowed by the Maoists. And most importantly, one does not sense any urgency in the PMO about the grave political challenges the government will inevitably face.

Having said that, it would be a mistake to underestimate what this government, and the alliance, is capable of achieving if it musters the political will.

The first few weeks of government formation are always the most difficult. This is when positions are most rigid, leaders stake claims to ministerial portfolios, coalition partners have to be managed, and debts paid for past support. Remember how long it took Madhav Nepal to form a cabinet, and that was done in installments too. That is because politicians know that once the cabinet takes shape, it will be difficult to gain entry into the power structure and this is the moment to strike. A similar tussle can be witnessed within UML and the Maoists. MJF's decision was delayed because Upendra Yadav was working hard to ensure the party didn't split if they joined the government.

But the PM's real priorities must lie in political management and showing progress on the peace and constitution front. The Special Committee meeting on Wednesday was a positive step, with the secretariat being provided with human resources for monitoring purposes – though those at the forefront of throwing out UNMIN should reflect on who has benefitted the most through the virtual absence of monitoring since. On integration and rehabilitation,

the key question remains: have the Maoists made a strategic decision to move ahead with the process or not? There are conflicting versions, but they appear more amenable to taking tangible steps regarding the re-grouping of combatants, which will potentially lock them into a process if it is accompanied by a broader deal on modalities and numbers.

The Maoists really have no excuses anymore, and obstructing progress while in power will erode their credibility drastically and not earn them much goodwill with combatants either. At the same time, there are many in NC who believe that

the success of this alliance will marginalise them. This school, which has been traditionally skeptical of integration, will be tempted to veto any proposal on the table, and paint it in terms of Maoist 'state capture'. Unlike his president Sushil Koirala, who has no concept of give-and-take in politics, Ram Sharan Mahat – NC's key man on integration – is a smart man. He is a tough negotiator, but should recognise the costs of not reciprocating if the Maoists show willingness to move ahead. Integration into security forces is one model, but a mixed force where the Maoists do not have command

and there are adequate checks could well be thought through and not necessarily dismissed just because it was in the 7-point deal.

There is a visible energy on the constitution-writing front. The sub-committee has made progress, especially on the judiciary and legislature. The Constitutional Committee has begun work on the state restructuring report, although a consensus will be difficult. There was suspicion that the Maoists want to promulgate a draft constitution in order to eliminate the role of the president in the transitional period and then consolidate power. But the sub-committee's decision this week to have the president continue in office until the next election as part of the transitional arrangements should allay those apprehensions. The Maoists are in a hurry, and are willing to come down from their stated positions, since Dahal knows demonstrated progress will make CA extension easier, and help him claim leadership of government post-28 May.

Obviously forces exist that will want to discredit this government. But as long as Dahal and Khanal work closely together, keep their ambitions in check, manage internal contradictions, work on integration and the constitution by taking NC on board, address Madhesi issues, and not act against India's security interests (which includes not behaving irresponsibly, for instance by showing black flags to the Indian envoy), these forces will not be able to destabilise the alliance. It has not been a good start, but all is not lost for the government yet. 🇳🇵

## THIS WEEK

### Energy emergency

The government on Wednesday declared the country was facing an energy crisis and announced a plan of action to tide over the energy shortfall in the next four and a half years. Deputy PM and Finance Minister Bharat Mohan Adhikari announced plans to produce 2,500MW of electricity within five years. The government has also proposed an Energy Crisis Control Commission to oversee government programs for power production. According to the plan, the government will reduce power leakages from 26 per cent to 20 per cent in the next six months, waive custom duties for materials related to the production of solar power, utilise all available thermal plants, and waive income tax for the first 10 years for hydropower companies beginning construction in the next four years. The government aims to reduce loadshedding by at least four hours a day by next year. Singha Darbar, the country's main administrative complex, will be powered through solar within nine months.

### Knocking on the Iron Gate



The School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exams began Thursday across the country. About half a million students are attempting to graduate from high school and this time around the Controller of Examinations has introduced provisions to reward schools and

exam centres with minimum or no cases of cheating. Nepal Electricity Authority has reduced loadshedding by two hours every day in view of the SLC exams.

### Military aid from China

Chinese army chief General Chen Bingde arrived in Kathmandu on Wednesday leading a 15-member military delegation on a three-day goodwill visit to Nepal. He met Nepal Army chief Chhatraman Gurung, with whom he signed an agreement for Chinese military aid worth Rs 1.42 billion. The assistance includes medical equipment for army hospital and engineering equipment for Nepal Army rescue operations.

### MJF in

Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) President Upendra Yadav agreed Wednesday to join the UML-Maoist coalition after the party was assured of timely constitution writing, a logical conclusion of the peace process, and the implementation of past agreements with Madhesi parties. MJF's central committee will finalise its ministerial list on Thursday. It has been learnt the party has been offered three ministerial berths.

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# Ncell sells

Ncell CEO Pasi Koistinen recently spoke to Nepali Times about his company's experience in the two years since its much vaunted launch in Nepal.



It has been two years since Ncell entered the Nepal mobile telephony market. How has the experience been so far?

Mobile penetration last year was 20 per cent, now we estimate it to have passed 35 per cent. Growth has been fast, and we are happy that Nepal has welcomed a quality operator like us. This is a unique market compared to other developing countries; the needs of Nepalis are very different. For example, nowhere in the world is the PRBT (Personal Ring Back Tone) service as popular as it is in Nepal. But this is a developing market; penetration is still low. Voice communication has not been exploited to its fullest.

In our experience, perceptions have changed since we rebranded our products. We have developed in terms of services, quality and variety, and people have felt the change.

Customer satisfaction with mobile services in general is not very high because of unreliable connections between service providers. Could it be that growth has been too fast? We are still evolving. We are determined and capable of providing international standard

telecom services, but when big changes are effected, many seen and unseen factors play a role. Other players need to be competent as well, and service quality is affected by the network quality of these players. Capacity is still an issue after two years of struggle.

As far as calls within our network are concerned, there are very few complaints. But with 14 hours of loadshedding every day, things are difficult to manage. We have prioritised green site solutions, and 50 per cent of our new sites in

rural areas will be green sites, meaning they will draw on solar energy.

Have there been efforts to try to bridge the communication gap with Nepal Telecom?

It is a reciprocal process. I have to say that it is improving but a lot depends upon the other side as well. It's a good discussion we're having but connecting capacity between services is something they need to work on.

You also introduced Blackberry services late last year, amidst some skepticism. How has the response been?

Blackberry is a success story. A lot of effort, resources and time went into this, but we got the end result we wanted. It has helped us enhance our corporate image with clients, and has elevated our position in the market.

What are your future plans?

Corporate responsibility, service excellence and customer trust have always been the top priorities of our company. We strive to be the trusted, number one choice of customers and aim to deliver high quality services that offer good value for money and contribute to our customers' success.

We are also supporting education in Nepal; through our CSR project we are supporting 11 schools across Nepal in 2011. We are a leader in innovation, telecommunications products, and customer services. We want to be a benchmark in Nepal, not only in the telecommunications industry, but as an exemplary company in general.

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SNo	TIME	FARE	SNo	TIME	FARE
1	08:30	3210	3	13:20	3210
2	10:10	3210	4	16:20	3210

२. त्यसपछि म्यासेज बक्समा bk<space>SNo टाइप जारी **3553** मा फेरि पठाउनुहोस् ।

उदाहरण : यदि तपाईंलाई 10:10 को flight मा टिकट बुक गर्नुपर्नेमा bk<space>2 टाइप जारी **3553** मा पठाउनुहोस् ।

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# Off with the heads...nah!



**MY TWO PAISA**  
**Paavan Mathema**

After a yummy plate of momos at a local restaurant last Monday, when I offered the *sauni* the meal's worth, she refused to accept my cash. "*Raja nabhaeko paisa dinus na,*" she insisted, explaining that she had already exchanged her stash of notes bearing likenesses of the ex-king. Luckily, my friend was carrying notes with Mt. Everest on them and we were able to get out of the situation.

That wasn't the only shop avoiding kingly notes last week and the proprietor certainly wasn't the only one who had rushed to the bank with her cash. Six months ago, Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) issued a directive to financial institutions to filter out notes bearing portraits of the former kings. It also urged the public to exchange such notes, setting 15 March 2011 as the deadline. But being the last-minute people that we are, it was only two weeks before the deadline that the directive received much attention.

Knowing that the money they had would soon lose its value was bound to trigger a frenzy. People had to queue outside banks to exchange the notes. Many had to wait a day or two to get the new notes. Traders stopped accepting them. It was then that a complaint was filed at the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) that the directive had not followed



The rushed decision to outlaw kingly notes provoked an expectedly frenzied reaction

legal procedures and was simply inconveniencing the general public. It was the government not the central bank, the CIAA maintained, that had the authority to dismiss a particular banknote as legal tender. The directive was duly rolled back.

Nevertheless, the central bank was still able to replace Rs 61 billion worth of king-imprinted paper money. The move wasn't just

politically motivated, however. The directive was part of the Clean Note Policy of the central bank, which aimed to replace old, worn-out notes. Indirectly, the strategy aimed to encourage the public to bring cash hoarded at home into circulation via deposits into the banking system, in order to ease the liquidity crisis.

NRB may be correct in its reasoning, but the time period allotted was too short to implement the directive. The central bank should have used the financial institutions to filter out the old notes instead of giving an ultimatum to the public. If indeed the bank wanted to bring publicly held cash into financial circulation, a nationwide campaign should have taken place to publicise the decision. This would have prevented the havoc created in the market.

A huge number of Nepalis were unaware of the decision even in the last week before the deadline, and did not know that money could still be exchanged at the central bank after the deadline. Some even incurred losses by exchanging their cash for lesser amounts than its face value, fearing that it would soon be demonetised. Two farmers from Nala VDC, for instance, gave away ten Rs 500 notes for just Rs 300 each in Banepa.

The market still circulates Rs 8 billion worth of notes with likenesses of the kings printed on them. The average life of a paper note is a year and a half, so the remaining notes will go out of circulation in due course. For now, the kings are here to stay. 🇳🇵

## Rain collection

Bottlers Nepal has started a rainwater project within its factory premises on the occasion of World Water Day. The main aim of this project is to replenish the groundwater level by collecting rainwater.

## Updated security



Neoteric Nepal has launched Trend Micro Titanium Maximum Security 2011, an anti-virus system that provides data theft protection as well. Added features are the system tuner,

Wi-Fi verification, and online backup up to 10GB. It is available at ilife store, New Road, City Center, Kamalpokhari and Samsung Plaza, Putalisadak.

## New showroom

Shrestha International Trading Center, authorised dealer for Mahindra 2 Wheelers in Nepal, has appointed Suwal Enterprises as the sub-dealer for Bhaktapur. The showroom will sell the Mahindra Rodeo-125, Mahindra Duro-125 and Mahindra Flyte-125 and spare parts.

## Zooming in

Canon has launched a variety of new products including two DSLR cameras – the EOS 600D and EOS 1100D. It has also introduced four new EF lenses and one super telephoto zoom lens with improved features to complement the next generation of DSLR cameras.



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NEPAL TOURISM YEAR 2011

# Mistake 2.0



On Wednesday, the two main coalition partners signed an agreement with Madhesi People’s Rights Forum to pave the way for the latter to join the government. This latest in a series of agreements, however, fails to recognise the reality of post-conflict transition in Nepal.

Ever since Madhav Kumar Nepal replaced Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal as prime minister after the latter’s botched attempt to dismiss the then army chief, there had been a dispute about the roadblock to the peace process and constitution writing posed by the absence from the power equation of the largest party in parliament.

The concern was appropriate but the argument was wrong, on at least two counts. First, the Maoist party and their apologists deliberately failed to mention that Dahal alone was responsible for bringing down his government. Second, the Maoist party could not be out of the power equation precisely because they became the single largest party after the election, with 238 out of 601 seats in the

Only if the two principal architects of the peace process work together will it be concluded

Constituent Assembly-cum-Parliament. Even with fewer seats, they would have to be part of any decision-making process relevant to the peace process and the new constitution.

The reason is simple. In the post-conflict transition, a party to the conflict cannot be kept out of power-sharing. That reasoning applies to Nepali Congress as well.


However, it’s the same mistake all over again. It’s back to the post-election days when the two major communist parties were in power and NC was in the opposition. The peace process and constitution writing cannot proceed without the active participation of the Maoists and NC – the two principal architects of the peace process.

With the deadlock continuing and the CA being extended for a year on 28 May last year, Madhav Nepal offered to leave to pave way for consensus. When consensus proved elusive, he resigned anyway last June to facilitate power-sharing. In other words, it was to create an opportunity to accommodate the Maoist party without humiliating them. But that opportunity has been squandered.

So what do we have now? It is worth looking back to plan ahead. We have seen the back of two majority-wielding governments, each of which did not include a key party. First NC was out of the Maoist-led cabinet (August 2008-May 2009), then the Maoist party stayed out of the UML-led government that included NC (May 2009-June 2010). With Nepal’s resignation, it is silly to argue about numbers in parliament. After all, Nepal commanded a comfortable majority when he resigned.

We are back to the old, and likely-to-fail, equation. The seven-point deal between UML chief and current PM Jhala Nath Khanal and Dahal has effectively shut the door on NC’s participation in a national consensus government, as it speaks of a rotation of government leadership between the two communist parties. Further, as Khanal hounded his own party’s government when it was led by Nepal, the latter and party colleague KP Oli are making things difficult for him. All their talk about democracy and the peace process is mere eyewash.

But if the peace process, genuine power-sharing and constitution writing are still the goals, NC has to be part of the decision-making process. Time is at a premium here. The two parties have to reach out to NC but first, they have to discard the seven-pointer. NC, on the other hand, needs to internalise the fact that it made a blunder by not reciprocating the overtures from Dahal. Now it should not hesitate to join the government should the offer come.

There is still a possibility of concluding the peace process and constitution writing if the Maoists and NC come together, ably supported by UML and the Madhesi parties.   
[damakant@gmail.com](mailto:damakant@gmail.com)

काम सानो ठुलो भन्ने हुँदैन । पसिनाको कुनै  
रङ र जात पनि हुँदैन । काम गरेर खान लजाउनु पनि हुँदैन । चोरेर,  
ढाँटेर, छलेर, लुटेर खान पो लजाउनुपर्छ । जो जहाँ रहेर जुन काम गर्छ  
ऊ त्यसैमा रमाउनुपर्छ गौरव गर्नुपर्छ र समर्पित भएर गर्नुपर्छ । काम नै  
शक्ति हो, भक्ति हो र मुक्ति हो । कामको इज्जत गरौं,  
पसिनाको सम्मान गरौं ।

नेपाल सरकार  
सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय  
सूचना विभाग





1

# FABULOUS FAR WEST



2



3



4

TEXT & PHOTOS:  
DAMBAR KRISHNA SHRESTHA

Nepal's far west has always been perceived in a negative light, and indeed is chronically underdeveloped in comparison to the rest of the country. It faces yearly famines, en masse migration of youth to India for work, and a silent HIV-AIDS epidemic.

A recent visit to Doti, Baitadi, Dadeldhura and Achham revealed a different side to the far west. The region is blessed with beautiful valleys, the stunning mountain ranges of the Api-Sapial, the roaring Karnali, and attractions such as Ghodaghodi Taal, Ghataal Than and Khaptad.

Dadeldhura is almost 800kms by road from Kathmandu, but an hour and a half by air will get you to Dhangadi, from where it is a four-hour drive. Three more hours and you are in the regional capital of Dipayal in Doti. Saphebagar in Achham is another two hours away.

The district headquarters and highway settlements are relatively more developed. But there are many villages here that are two to three days walk from the nearest road. Large swathes of uncultivated land are seen throughout the journey, as men prefer to migrate for work than farm. Tourism could encourage them to stay. With adequate promotion, planning and infrastructure, the far west is a tourist destination waiting to be tapped. 🇳🇵



5



6

- 1 The Mahabharat range and the Saipal, Jethi Bahurani and Babai mountains as seen from the Doti-Dadeldhura highway
- 2 Budhi Ganga river, Doti
- 3 Local women dance to Deuda tunes at the Saphebagar Festival in Achham, 5-11 February
- 4 Saphebagar, Accham, with the festival camped on the airport runway
- 5 A woman near Mangalsen in Achham
- 6 Far, far west: Dadeldhura and Kathmandu are 798km apart



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EVENTS



**Lives and Faces**, pictures from the Maoist insurgency in India by Mustafa Quraishi. *Till 17 April, 11am to 4pm, closed on Tuesdays, Shanti Sangrahalaya, Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya, Patan Dhoka, 5549948*

**Poetry Slam @ House**, featuring Neelanjana Banerjee and Robin Sukhadia, followed by local poets and an open-mic session. *25 March, 8pm onwards, House of Music, Thamel, Rs 100, 9851050166*

**Disability and Fine Arts**, an open art event on disability. *25 March, 12.30pm to 5.30pm, Basantapur*

**Mithila Cosmos: New Narratives**, an exhibition of Mithila paintings by SC Suman. *Till 5 April, with Maithali poetry readings and music, 27 March, from 3pm to 5pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, 4218048*

**Screening of two episodes of 1980s epic TV series Mahabharat**, deconstructing Indian pop culture and impacts of India-originated media. *28 March, 4.30pm onwards, Docskool Film Centre, Gaurighat, docskoolnepal@gmail.com, www.docskool.org*

**Rato Ghar Documentaries and Film Show**, screening of *The Greater Nepal* followed by a brief talk on the film. *27 March, 4pm, Rato Ghar, Ravi Bhawan, 984172009, birkha.aid@gmail.com, Rs 10 for students, Rs 20 for others*

**Artists in the city — Urbanization and Urban Culture**, presented by Social Science Baha and the

Interactive Mapping and Archiving Project, theatre, art exhibition, documentary. *Till 31 March, 4.30pm, Nepal Art Council*

**Watercolour paintings of unique and exquisite orchids**, by Hemlata Pradhan. *Till 1 May, Serindia Gallery, O.P. Garden, Soi Charoenkrung 36, Charoenkrung Road, Bangkok, 022386410, serindiagallery@gmail.com*

**Book discussion on Robin Sharma's *The Monk who sold his Ferrari***, organised by Himalayan Readers' Book Club. *26 March, 3pm to 4.30pm, British Council, Lazimpat, contact himalayanbookclub@gmail.com or send an SMS to 9851076996 for registration, Rs 30*

**KJC Spring Camp for Kids 2011**, a 10-day camp for 6 to 13-year-old children. *Starts 4 April, 5013554, info@katjazz.com.np*

MUSIC

**KJC Concert Series**, enjoy the spirit of Combos, The Big Band, The Chamber group, duets and much more. *26 March, 4.30 pm, KJC-Moksh Auditorium, Jhamsikhel, free entrance, 5013554, info@katjazz.com.np*

DINING

**Chopstix**, savoury Asian food cooked in true Chinese fashion sure to charm and impress. Begin your feast with the Dragon Chicken, it's one-of-a-kind. *Kumaripati, 5551118*

**The Factory**, a trendy restobar for a refreshing stopover in the chaos that is Thamel. Great food and drinks, with zesty music. *Mandala Street, Thamel*

**Newari cuisine at Hotel Himalaya**, local flavours to warm up the breezy evenings. *Every Friday, 6.30pm onwards, Rs 1,199 nett per person, Kupondole*

**Milk Coffee 'n Cocktail Cafe**, coffee house during the day and a cosy lounge serving cocktails at night, try their yarchagumba and molecular cocktails along with the



famous Starbucks. *Woodland Complex, Darbar Marg*

**Black Pepper Café & Pub**, cosmopolitan dining and drinking in a traditional style courtyard, try the Charcoal Jalkapur fish and enjoy the good service, *Sanepa, Lalitpur, 5521897, 5536926, http://blackpepper.com.np*

**Casa Toscana**, for pizzas, pastas and everything Italian, they also have a delectable range of bakeries and confectionaries. *Pulchok*

**The Oriental Tearoom at Pipalbot**, try sake-cured salmon for lunch and twice-cooked caramelised pork belly for dinner. *Babar Mahal Revisited, 4267657, bookings preferred*

**Splash Bar and Grill**, continental and Mongolian BBQ. *Till March end, every Wednesday and Friday, 5.30pm to 9.30pm, Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat, 4411818, Rs 1500 nett per person, includes BBQ platter, snacks and a bottle of San Miguel*

GETAWAYS

**Park Village Resort**, Saturdays and Sundays combo package with swimming, lunch and a bottle of beer. *Budhanilkantha, Rs 990 for adults and Rs 800 for children, call 4375280 for reservations*

**Club Himalaya**, for amazing mountain views and refreshing weekend escapades, special package available for Nepalis and expatriates. *Nagarkot, 4410432*

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When *Kagbeni* was released to critical acclaim in 2008, there were many who felt that the Nepali film industry was ready to stand up and be counted. But despite the enthusiastic reception of film festivals hosting new documentary and short film talent, Nepali films are, by and large, still dross. Even more 'modern' productions have not moved beyond hackneyed themes and characterisations within the framework of a musical.

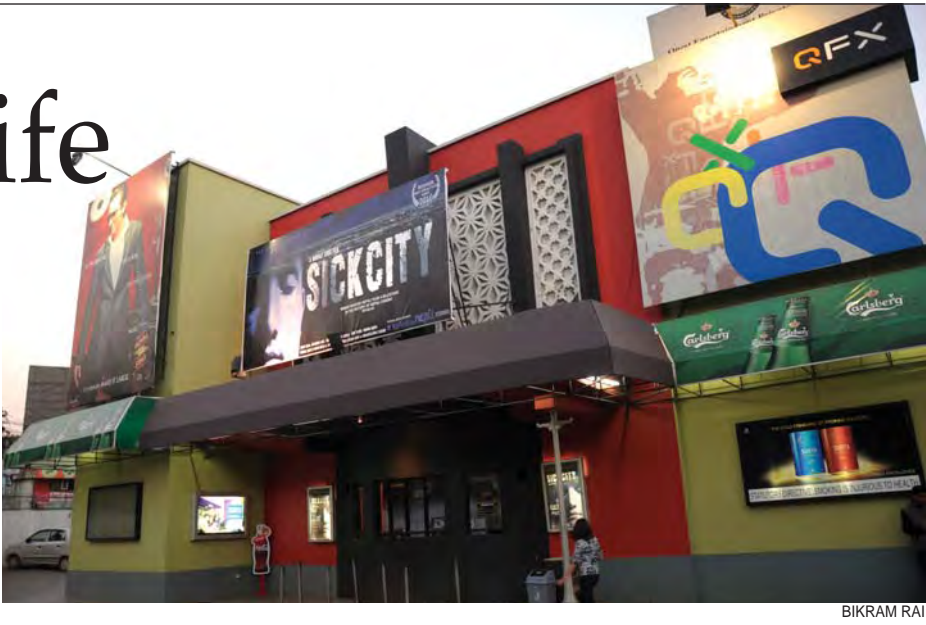
It could be that Nepali filmmakers feel constrained by the ostensible demand for conventional Bollywood-derived fare. Perhaps this is why it took a British director to offer us a different kind of Nepali movie. The Nepali-language *Sick City*, written and directed by Murray Kerr, recently made the unlikely leap from the Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival (where it won the Juror's Prize) to Jai Nepal. Audiences had all of a week to judge for themselves.

That *Sick City* is a new breed of Nepali cinema is obvious as soon as we are introduced to the protagonist, Krishna (Arpan Thapa). He's on the run, weaving through

# Signs of life

Kathmandu's thoroughfares to his family... from whom he promptly borrows money to pay off his pursuers. Krishna is a drug peddler in the employ of a gangster, and Thamel is his playground. At least in the dance bars and alleys of what is now much more than a tourist zone, Kerr's vision of a metropolis where money means all and corrupts everything it touches is a believable one. The understated Krishna, constantly brushing off well-meaning, preachy types as he hurtles towards his doom, is a good a guide as any to Kathmandu's underbelly. And Kerr's handycam shots, imaginative editing and pulsating soundtrack are appropriate to the subject at hand.

Of course, one expects a realist movie to be consistently so. When *Sick City* falters, then, it stands out that much more. This is perhaps unfair, given the low budget on which the movie was made, and even more so in comparison to the stilted fantasies of



BIKRAM RAI

Kollywood. Nonetheless, the linear narrative could have been streamlined further; a friend even suggested it could be completely remade for the international market.

That's for Kerr to decide. For the time being, as he declared before the premiere, he wants "to show Nepali filmmakers that there are other ways to make movies". With

*Sick City*, Nepal finally has an indie movie on mainstream release. One hopes the momentum it has provided will encourage these Nepali filmmakers to take more risks and portray the other realities of a capital and a country that, while certainly afflicted to various degrees, is far from moribund.

Rabi Thapa



# DHABA

as well we asked that our dishes be delivered whenever they were ready, as Dhaba is not renowned for its quick service.

The Tandoor Shimla Mirch looked and tasted good, with grilled bell peppers stuffed with potato et al making for a nice texture, but it was a little underwhelming. Ditto for the Kastoori Kebab, despite the best efforts of the squeezed lemon and the intriguing combo of yoghurt-marinated chicken rolled in beaten eggs. It was almost as if the chef had got everything right – the presentation, the fragrance, even the taste...but the spark, what Nepalis label 'twakka', was missing. Perhaps more subtle palates would not mind.



The Bagmati River is the antithesis of an appetiser on your way to dinner. But I couldn't ignore Kathmandu's culinary scene any longer, and Dhaba provided the opportunity to harken back to those days before Jhamel. Perhaps because of the latter, this upmarket resto loosely modeled after India's ubiquitous roadside establishments seemed quieter than I remembered it.

But the cabin-like interior, with a thatch-roof, roll-up straw curtains, wooden furniture and flagstones, was as pleasant as ever (there's a spread of alfresco tables, too). With an attentive staff at hand, we were ready to peruse the extensive North Indian menu.

We tried to spread our bets as we downed summery masala cokes and jeera jals. A starter, a kebab, and meat and veg curries. It was just



We were repaid in full, however, by the Kashmiri Ghosht. This fiery dish had us reaching for the Roomali Rotis, and also wishing there was more mutton (off the bone) to accompany the reddish gravy. The Baigan Bhurta was milder, but the smoked and mashed eggplant was delicious and had a wonderful texture to it. We had it marked off for our doggy bag, but couldn't resist its charms. Not so much the pickle-from-a-bottle.

Dessert was a disappointment. The Phirni (nutty rice kheer) was indisposed, so we ordered the Kulfi, which duly arrived in halved slabs of thickened milk sans the rose syrup the menu promised. When we suggested it be returned, the waiter apologetically informed us this wasn't really done, that he could do so, but that it would go

to waste. We consumed the dull concoction out of a sense of obligation. Free guilt trip with your meal!

Dhaba's certainly somewhere you can enjoy a great range of North Indian delicacies without five-starring your wallet. But if it wants to keep to its own high standards, it needs to pull up its embroidered socks.  *Nepali Kukur*

*Coming from Maitighar, Dhaba is on the right next to a Chinese restaurant, before the Bagmati Bridge. From Patan, past the car showrooms, on the left.*

Space	★★★★
Bread 'n water	★★★★↓
Service	★★★★
Deal-icious	★★★★↓
Rep-eat?	★★★





GUFFADI

Noo-clear city

I guess them 'English'-wallahs are teaching us a thing or two. We hired a 'British' football coach to teach our national team....how to play them football sootball...and now we have another 'British' guy teaching us how to make them movies kya!

Yes, 'Sick City' is out and it's a different kind of feelim rey! No gaana saana rey! Lau hai...heard a lot about 'Batch No.16'...hope they get their 1.15 crores ko investment back... and I will be going to them film hall sall to watch 'Sick City'...hope our film-wallahs will learn a thing or two from the kuireys!

What is..? That you can make a movie for peanuts...and make sure you hire a kuirey because then you can get away with a lot of things...hahah...I hear 'Goodbye Kathmandu' ko folks got into trouble...everywhere they go...for them shooting... local goondas just come and ask for donations rey!

Next tyam...just get like 2-3 kuireys and let them do the dealing sealing...paisa pani dinoo pardaina...baroo ulto local goonda haroo pani feelim seelim ma acting pani gari-dinchan ni! Jay bhaye pani...do we need a kuire to teach

us how to tell a story, play football or even... how to run this country?

Talking about them 'two words'... wouldn't it be fun if our netas just said exactly two words instead of going on and on and wasting our tyam syam...in them so-called 'udghatan karyakarams'?

First, please arrive on tyam...if the program says 10:00am then don't wake up at 10 and then brush your teeth, do your yoga and read them papers and then arrive at the scene at 12 kya!

Second, just take your seat...don't expect us to welcome you and then request you to place your 'humble' arse on them sofa kya! You are not humble and you should be more worried about them 'sambhidaan' than attending fokatey ko programs ni!

Ani...lastuh ma if you are asked to give your 'two words'...then don't go on a rant for the next two hours...because you arrived late and we are tired and really more excited to go back home than listen to your fokatey ko bhaa-shun...so if you must say them 'dui sabda' then just say...'Thank You'...hahah...and leave!

Asti was going back home from office saw-fish...ani Micro ma euta auntie was like...'Ye, ani chora chori

lai tuition naw-pathau-noo...24 ghanta samma ghar ma basnoo parcha rey'...so Rajnikanth (ki usko copycat ho!) asked, 'Didi, kay bhayo baccha haroo... biraami?' 'Hoinuh...tyo nuclear nuclear kay bhaacha ni...paani purr-naw lagyo abuh tyo Nepal ma pani aucha rey kya!'

How come...I am the last person to read or hear about 'jpt' news? Let us pray for our brothers and sisters in Japan and hope everything will be okay but Japani haroo afno desh choderuh tuh gaako chaina ni...ani Kathmandu baasi haroo chahi kay bhaako?

But if we are lucky bhanney ki unlucky...to witness them Indo-Pak nuclear war someday...then we better run not for them hills sills baroo...just climb Mt. Everest...heard from a local jogi that if you are on top of Mt. Everest...tyo nuclear radiation afaai freeze sreeze hooncha rey...!

Meantym Nepal ma them animals are being fitted with them GPS devices! Tigers and Rhinos pachi abuh vultures haroo ko palo! And our so-called don son haroo lai pani Nepal police lay upahar diye-ka chan kyaaruh! How about fitting all our so-called netas with this GPS stuff...then we can all log in and watch where they are eating-shitting hola ni!



Griffith Pugh: unsung Everest hero



Griffith Pugh (1909-1994) was an eccentric Welsh physiologist instrumental in the successful 1953 Everest climb by Ed Hillary and Tenzing Norgay. But he was so absent-minded that he was wearing pajamas when John Hunt's team was formally presented to King Tribhuvan after the ascent.

Regarding his eccentricity, a well-known incident on the 1953 expedition regards a heavy crate of Pugh's 'physiological equipment'. The Sherpas carefully manoeuvred the crate up the treacherous Khumbu Icefall, only to find later that it contained bottle after bottle of mango chutney! No surprise then that Pugh, back in London, would often forget where he had parked his car. He would then report to the police that his car had been stolen, following which it would be eventually recovered.

Pugh may have been odd, but no one questioned his brilliance. In the spring of 1952, the Swiss team of Raymond Lambert and Tenzing Norgay (the same Tenzing who would later summit with Hillary) were only 300m from the top of Everest. Amazingly, they abandoned their attempt!

Griffith Pugh, using field studies in May



1952 in the Cho Oyu area, determined that there were two important reasons for the failure of the physically strong Swiss team. Pugh concluded that dehydration due to excessive deep breathing (hyperventilation) could be severe at extreme altitudes if not replenished by generous quantities of fluids. Incredibly the Swiss team in 1952 forgot to pack a stove in their ultimate bid for Everest and were melting snow with candles for drinking water. Pugh, in an extensive report to the Royal Geographical Society, emphasised the importance of plentiful fluids for a successful climb. Indeed, as a result Hillary and Tenzing were drinking 'mugs of lemonade' as they ascended.

Pugh also concluded that the second reason why the Swiss team failed was that the supplemental oxygen apparatus in those days allowed climbers to breathe oxygen only while resting. So he designed a device that enabled climbers to inhale oxygen even while on the move.

Climbing experts agree that there is little doubt that the Swiss team, born and bred in the mountains and possessing a technical climbing ability superior to that of the British, failed in the spring of 1952 primarily because of insufficient attention to oxygen and hydration. Eccentric Griffith Pugh cleverly determined why they had failed and was thus key to putting the British team on top the very next year.

Weekend Weather by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

Daily temperatures have risen by two degrees in the last week, marking a transition from post-winter to pre-summer with stormy weather and possible hailstorms and thunderstorms. Fresh satellite pictures show no moisture-bearing clouds in the skies above Nepal, though winds are heading towards the eastern Himalaya as a result of an emerging low pressure trough. Expect sunny intervals and dusty skies due to passing clouds and turbulent winds.

Map showing weather conditions over Nepal and surrounding regions (Delhi, Kanpur, KATHMANDU, Dhaka, Kolkata, Nagpur).

Weather forecast for FRI, SAT, and SUN.

FRI	SAT	SUN
30-10	27-11	28-11

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LUGGAGE AREA: Bags wait outside Shri Mandan Smarak Higher Secondary School, Pulchok, on Thursday. It was the first day of the SLC examinations, which 496,243 students are sitting for this year in 1,672 centres.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS: Three visually impaired men hand-in-hand in Jamal on Friday. With footpaths encroached on by street vendors, there is little space for pedestrians.



BIKRAM RAI

THIRSTY WORK: Students from LRI School participate in an art competition in Basantapur on Tuesday, organised to mark World Water Day.



# The case against Yunus

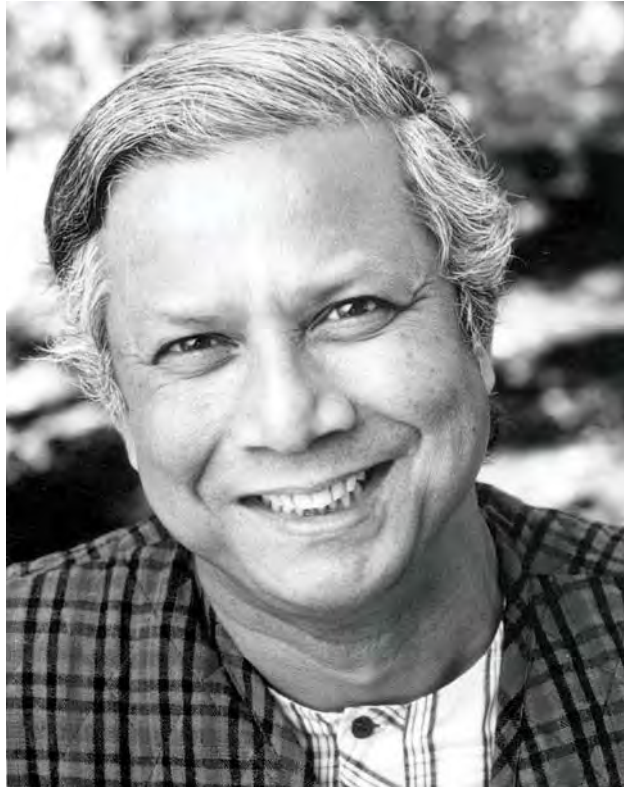
DAVID BERGMAN in DHAKA

Nobel Laureate Muhammed Yunus's position as managing director of the Grameen Bank, the pioneering microcredit body in Bangladesh, is still in the balance. Earlier this month, Bangladesh's central bank sent a letter saying that he was no longer the managing director as he is 10 years past the age of retirement. The case is now before the Supreme Court, but there are vastly different opinions on its validity.

Mahfuz Anam, editor-in-chief of the *Daily Star*, the country's biggest English daily, is an avid Yunus supporter. "To me the whole situation is baffling. It totally goes beyond anything I can understand," says Anam of the situation the founder of the Grameen Bank faces.

Four years ago, Yunus tried to set up a political party during a period of emergency rule and although he quickly withdrew from the process, he said some very harsh words against politicians such as the current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"When I consider all the explanations that are being floated, the fact that Yunus criticised Hasina makes the most sense because Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League are



basically political creatures. They judge everything politically," muses Anam.

"Yunus may delve into politics in the future. He has a huge profile and has personally touched the lives of many. If he does enter politics in the future he could be a real threat, but this does not explain the vitriolic nature of the hatred that seems to

reflect some of their actions," he says.

At a coffee shop on the other side of Dhaka, journalist, businessman and friend of the prime minister, Mozammel Babu has a very different view.

"There is no vendetta. Rather I would say this government was very soft towards Dr Yunus. If it was not Dr Yunus in these circumstances he would be put in jail," he says.

He argues that there were very serious allegations against him.

"I believe over a period that Dr Yunus violated the service rule exceeding 60 years of age, the service rule for joining politics and financial regulations for lending money. Over a period I believe it will be proven that he has actually siphoned off money from the Grameen Bank to other concerns," says Babu.


The Grameen Bank and Dr Yunus vigorously deny these allegations, as does Mahfuz Anam.

"Not a shred of evidence has been provided to support those allegations. They say that he or his family directly benefited from these actions, but to the best of my knowledge this is absolutely false. Nowhere in all these ventures does Yunus or his family own a single dollar worth of shares," he says.

Anam argues the government will come off worse in the controversy.

"What I really find irrational is that the cost to the government's image is going to be far, far greater than whatever marginal advantage they may find by removing Yunus from the Grameen bank," he adds.

Mozammel Babu, however, thinks the Grameen Bank has nothing to fear from the government. He also argues that it is now a matter of sovereignty for the government and they must hold firm.

"Bad publicity is unfortunate. There are people within Bangladesh who are helping to attract this bad publicity. The West, donor groups, so-called civil society and some well-regarded newspapers are actually working as media partners for Yunus. Nationalist feeling is growing very rapidly. So we will resist any aggression from the West in Bangladesh in the name of Dr Yunus," says Babu.  [www.asiacalling.org](http://www.asiacalling.org)



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Namobuddha is transferred to a trailer for the journey ahead



Translocation from Chitwan to Bardiya



On the verge of being released into the jungles of Bardiya



# Cross-country tiger







◀ Namobuddha being returned to his cage



PHOTOS by MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**N**amobuddha, the 28-month-old Royal Bengal Tiger that was transferred from the national park in Chitwan to the Babai valley in Bardiya on 22 January, is now able to hunt for itself, according to WWF reports based on information from the GPS collar it has been fitted with.

Six months previous to his transfer, Namobuddha was discovered injured following a territorial skirmish with adult tigers in Chitwan. Following treatment, the tiger was fitted with a GPS-enabled satellite collar and translocated by land to Bardiya, which offered a safer habitat with abundant prey. The move was a first for Nepal, and involved over 100 people, including park staff, state security and WWF experts.

According to the Ministry of Forests, there are 18 tigers in Bardiya, 125 in Chitwan, 8 in Shukla Phanta Reserve and 4 in Parsa National park, making for a total of 155 adult tigers in Nepal. The government plans to double this number by 2022. 🇳🇵

▲ The 28-month-old Namobuddha gets a thorough check-up following GPS collaring, Chitwan

Those involved in the translocation pose, sans trophy, in Bardiya



◀ A collared Namobuddha walks free into the brave new world of Bardiya





# India to play Madhes card

Editorial in *Naya Patrika*, 21 March

नयाँ पत्रिका

Madhesi politics in Nepal has always been shrouded in mystery and the recent visit of Madhesi leaders to Delhi has only deepened this. Chairman of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (Democratic), Bijay Gachchhadar, Chairman of Tarai Madhes Democratic party, Mahantha Thakur, and Chairman of Sadbhavana Party, Rajendra Mahato, not only briefed Delhi about the political equation back home



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

but also forged a mysterious alliance with Madhesi armed groups in a secret meeting organised by Delhi recently.

The support of Delhi to the Madhes-based armed groups in Nepal, which have been involved in several criminal activities here, has come out this openly for the first time. The Madhesi leaders have also acknowledged their agreement with the armed groups and warned of a revolt if the constitution is not drafted in time.

Whenever progressive forces in Nepal come to power, the Indian establishment tries its best

to thwart them by playing games and hatching conspiracies. India, which has wrongly concluded that its strategic interests will be hurt if a proper, progressive political system is institutionalised in Nepal, always wants to see instability in Nepal. Which is why India is always looking to use the squabbling political parties to further its interests here. When that does not appear possible, it proceeds to use the Madhes card. As much as it is necessary to acknowledge the historic importance of the Madhes uprising, we also have to be careful about Indian intentions to manipulate Madhes discontent to its own ends.

The Indian establishment is not happy with the Jhala Nath Khanal-led government in Nepal. This displeasure is what has led it to invite several political players from Nepal to Delhi. After talking with top leaders of Nepal who openly work for India's interest, and holding consultations with the Panchayati leader of yesteryear, Surya Bahadur Thapa, India prepared for a secret meeting with Madhesi underground groups, which speaks volumes about its plan to use the Madhes card in Nepal. The Delhi meeting has also indicated the prospect of fresh violence in the Madhes in the coming days. The Madhesi parties should now be ready to take responsibility for any activities carried out by these armed outfits.

It is ridiculous for Madhesi politicians to talk about revolt when all they seem capable of doing is constantly split up into factions for the love of power and money. The unholy alliance between the Madhesi parties and the armed groups spells trouble. It is now perhaps time for the Madhesi people themselves to rise up and show their politicians that simply wearing a dhoti-kurta does not make one a Madhesi leader.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

## Water going to ground

Shyam Bhatta in *Nagarik*, 23 March

नागरिक

The daily drinking water requirement of Kathmandu is 320 million litres but supply hardly amounts to 100 or 110 million litres.

Groundwater levels are being depleted by 1.9 metres each year. Marking World Water Day, water expert Nawaraj Shrestha notes that 15 years ago, Kathmandu's groundwater was at the level of 20 to 30 metres below the ground. "But now we need to dig deeper than 80 metres to hit water."

A 1997 study by Australian researcher Chris Well shows that on current trends, Kathmandu's groundwater supply will dry up in 100 years. "Degradation has been accelerated by unmanaged urbanisation," Shrestha says.

Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited (KUKL) has moved its water boring system from Teku following the drying out of the supply there. It has been operating just 57 of its 78 groundwater centres. These provide 6 million litres of water per day. As the water supply decreases, KUKL installs new boring systems, on average in four new sites every year. But it has not introduced any programs to recharge groundwater.

Shrestha suggests that the government encourage people to construct wells to collect groundwater and allow rainwater to seep into the ground. The government should also act against river bank encroachment, conserve old water bodies, and manage urbanisation.



Together with







March 2011



# Congress needs the Madhes

CK Lal in  
*Himal Khabarpatrika*,  
15-29 March

हिमाल  
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Political parties are not mechanical entities, they function through a combination of ideology, organisation, leadership, and the activism of cadre and supporters. Parties want to lead society, but they are also buffeted by changes in society itself. Political parties or leaders that can't understand societal trends will be confined to history books.

The question before Nepali Congress in the coming days is whether or not the party can retain its relevance. The party of KP Bhattarai has lost the last member of its founding trinity. Political leadership goes through several phases and its success is determined by ideological clarity, integrity, adherence to principles, management and organisational skills, understanding fluid situations, and the flexibility

to deal with them. However, leadership's role in history is determined by its capacity to take risks.

BP Koirala took the risk of joining Tribhuvan Shah's cabinet under Indian pressure and ended up paying for that mistake for the rest of his life. He took another risk by accepting King Birendra's referendum result in 1980. Girija Koirala also took a risk by extracting the Maoists from the clutches of India and drank the hemlock by joining them in the 12-point agreement. But that decision allowed him to take the lead in the 2006 movement. And the reason his party took second place in the 2008 election was because of its inability to win the trust of the Madhes.

Historically, NC has taken the lead in most people's movements for democracy in Nepal. The only exception was the Madhes Movement, in which the party found itself on the wrong side, and showed once again that



MIN RATNA BAJRACHRYA

only progressive parties and revolutionary leadership can lead society.

Today, most of Nepali society's class divisions remain where they were. The quest for identity and respect remain undelivered. The administration is defunct, and the army still hasn't earned back its esteem. Public frustration may be directed

against the political parties, but they are an expression of dissatisfaction with the status quo. It looks like the nation is ripe for another revolution.

But the precursor to revolution is never just outrage. As long as there is hope that tomorrow will be better than today, the people will not rise up. That point has not yet been reached.

The time is not right for the Maoists to lead another uprising, and a violent movement will not deliver anything but violence. And it will take more time for the Maoists to actually lead a non-violent movement. UML is a middle-of-the-road party of the middle class, and seems incapable of being a harbinger of change.

The current situation is just right for a re-designed

Congress to take the lead, but the party lacks leadership qualities. They say a revolution devours its own children, and the children of the NC revolution of 1950 have gone with the slogans of nationalism, democracy and socialism.

Congress is a party of globalisation and capitalism. The party has no program to attract or inspire the people, but an even bigger problem than the lack of a program is the lack of leadership.

The first step is for Congress to show the difference between left-right ultra-nationalism and a broad nationalism that also placates the Madhes. A Congress without the Madhes will be a paper tiger. The new democracy must be inclusive and federal. A new constitution by 28 May looks impossible, but there is no alternative to the CA. The place for the people's representatives to show their presence is on the doorsteps of the people, in the villages and on the trails of this country. But where is Nepali Congress? 🇳🇵



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# उज्यालो ९० नेटवर्कमा

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# The Lukla layover

One extracurricular activity that hasn't been sufficiently marketed here and abroad to extend the stay of tourists in Nepal is the highly popular Lukla Layover. Last year alone, according to the latest statistics from the **Nepal Tourism Bored (Revolutionary)** there were more than 25,000 extra tourist-nights logged in Lukla because of bad weather, overbooked flights and delays.

Having recently been an involuntary participant in this unique form of anticipatory tourism, the Donk would like to share with readers the huge potential we have to increase our nation's GDP growth by forcing visitors to spend extra involuntary bed-nights in Lukla during Nepal Tourism Year 2011. Indeed, we can make more money by holding people in Lukla and other mountain airports than from regular tourism. Here is how:

1. Some people have described the Rs 500 packet of Wai-wai and Rs 1,000 for dal bhat they had to pay while it rained in Lukla as



'price gouging'. The Ass would not put it so crudely, let's just call it premium pricing. It's a demand-supply thing, there is more demand because 3,000 trekkers have been waiting for flights home for a week, so the price goes up. Naturally, Nepal.

2. First Pay First Fly. This unique upgrading system practiced by domestic airlines allows those without confirmed seats to be bumped up onto the first flight out for a fixed underhand fee (like \$300 or so) by bumping off someone else with a confirmed seat. This **Special Upgrade Service** is officially sanctioned by the Tourism

for Poverty Reduction Project.

3. If there are just too many angry tourists who have waited more than a week and fist fights have started breaking out in the 'departure lunge', the government will send in army choppers to Lukla to restore law and order, but only if there are enough passengers willing to pay through their noses to be ferried to Gauchar.

4. Trekkers who have over-stayed their visas because of weather delays in Lukla will be fined on departure at KTM airport immigration as part of our national effort to maximise

earnings from the tourism industry.

5. Word-of-mouth transmission by visitors who have experienced the Lukla Layover will generate more interest worldwide for those eager to go through a similar adventure, as well as ensure repeat visitors among those interested in inflicting pain and misery on themselves.

It's interesting that every time the infighting within his party looks like it is heading for binary fission, Chairman Supersonic suddenly starts giving speeches about the unity of all of Nepal's 23 commie parties. Having to deal with Com Buy-dia on one hand and Com Doc on the other must really be giving the Bossman heartburn because last week he once more held forth in Kirtipur about merging with UML. We've just done a back of the envelope calculation and figured out that if all the 13 Maoist provincial councils, four state councils, the 20 or so class organisations as well as the Akhil Wimmin,

Revolutionary Trade Union and Kranticurry Students were to be split three ways, Paris Danda would have to deal with 135 different extra organisations. Maybe that is why the internal Bautick Carbuys have started. If that's the case, may as well split the party into three and get it over with. PKD can always reunite 'em later.

Just some breaking news on last week's **Asstalk** on why PKD did a sudden About Turn by switching Com Mahara's portfolio from phoren to telecom. Looks like it was all part of a Top-Secret Plan because the minister has since appointed a trusted left-hand man as the CEO of Nepal Telecom. Apparently the appointment was hurriedly consummated while the info sec was away on an ITU shindig and there are even rumours of 20 million smackeroos going to the party coffers in return for the appointment with assurances of future kickbacks from purchases of generators and photovoltaic back-up for base stations from a certain company from a neighbour country the name of which starts with 'C'.





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