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As urban pressure grows, settlements are encroaching on farms. There is less land to grow the food to feed a growing population. Urban sprawl is most visible in Kathmandu (third picture) but is also happening in Pokhara (top) and other metros like Banepa (middle). With land running out, developers are going vertical with a growth in high rise apartment construction.

See full coverage in our **Flat Special** pages A-D.



Editorial p2 Gajanan to Bhattarai

Prime Minister Bhattarai risks being tainted by his proximity to crooks.



9/11 decade
By the Way
by Anurag Acharya p3



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GAJANAN TO BABURAM

Three hundred years ago, Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai's ancestor Gajanan Bhattarai helped King Drabya Shah of Gorkha to lay the groundwork for the nation state that came to be known as Nepal. The monarchy is now gone. The republic that replaced it is torn by competing demands for autonomy within a proposed federal structure that Bhattarai is the co-architect of.

Privately, some Maoist leaders admit that their federalism formula is unworkable and they need a face-saving exit strategy. But they can't say so in public since the whole rationale for the war and their populist platform in the 2008 elections used identity politics for recruitment and votes. Bhattarai now needs all the negotiating acumen he is supposed to have to prevent the break up of a Nepal his ancestors helped forge.

The reason this issue has come up now is because of the murky, ambiguous and reckless four-point agreement that installed Bhattarai as prime minister. The Madhesi Front extracted its pound of flesh by not just grabbing half the portfolios for tainted netas from the past, but also getting the Maoists to agree to a fully-autonomous federal state with ethnically-defined provinces.

Then there are the clauses in the agreement that provide blanket amnesty for wartime atrocities by all sides,

which has set off a chorus of outrage from human rights organisations.

The only silver lining we see in all this is that neither the Madhesi parties nor the Maoists probably intend to stick to their pact. This is nothing new, signed agreements have rarely been implemented in the past. Madhesi leaders just want to show their constituency in the Tarai that they are sticking to their principles and are not obsessed about getting into Singha Darbar. The Maoists, for their part, were willing to sign anything away as long as it got them to power.

An agreement on something as momentous as autonomous ethnic federal provinces that doesn't rope in the second and third largest parties in the house can only have been driven by political expediency. The field report by Rameswor Bohara on page 12-13 shows that Madhesi anger is now directed at the leaders they elected to go to Kathmandu who never bothered to address their grievances.

And the people of the Tarai seem to doubt that a single Madhes will ever deliver them prosperity. Academics and civil society leaders in Janakpur and Rajbiraj are convinced future provinces must encompass the plains, hills and mountains to be economically viable and politically sustainable. When will the sloganeering politicians listen to these voices?

That said, of all the alternatives for prime minister available



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

two weeks ago to form a new government, Baburam Bhattarai presented the better option. The NC squandered its chance by foolishly putting up two candidates, and the UML had really nothing left to show for itself. The public rates Bhattarai's intelligence, diligence and honesty highly. He has started well with populist, yet popular, decisions. And he would have moved even faster on the peace process if the Baidya faction hadn't tried to put a spanner in the works.

However, having made it to the top job by aligning with a party with which it has little in common, Bhattarai risks being tainted by his proximity to crooks. He will need all the support he can get from his coalition partners, the opposition and the bureaucracy. And, watch your back, Doc.

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

MAKE OR BREAK

Cartoon hits the spot. (Make or break, #569) Let's see how it pans out. Hopefully for better.

Amar

- One of the greatest cartoons ever. Who Cares



- Great cartoon, speaks much louder and much clearer than thousands of speeches made by all the narrow minded politicians of Nepal.

Tashi Lama

- This one deserves the best cartoon of the year award.

Ramhari

- Dewan Rai in 'Getting down to business' (#569) says of the Maoists 'perhaps with the deliberate intention of never keeping their promises'. Why do you say 'perhaps'? How can anyone believe anything the Maoists, NC, UML promise? They have all involved themselves in destroying a society and nation to satisfy their own greed for power. They have taken what was 25 years ago a peaceful nation with solvable problems, and ruined it for their personal gain and power.

Danny Birch

- You decimate home grown industries, brainwash labour for cheap votes, have most worthwhile people leave the country for better opportunities abroad, and now you try to revive the Made in Nepal tag by riding the Mustang! Bravo!

ASDF

JNU TO KATHMANDU

Re: Jyoti Malhotra's 'From JNU to Kathmandu', #569. For a person like me, it does not matter who becomes the PM, be it from NC, UML, Maoists or from any other fringe parties. They will appoint their own lot to look after their interest only. We will continue to be neglected and marginalised until a time comes when we are compelled to choose the same path that Prachanda and Baburam took about a decade and a half ago. No efforts have been made by successive governments to integrate our lot into the mainstream. We lost so many lives and time in the Maoist revolution and now it looks like all was for their own selves only. Not for us.

Man Tamang

- If India is happy about BRB being PM, all the Nepali intellectuals who followed directions

from India since 1989 should also be happy too.

KK Sharma

Challenges for Baburam:

- Taming the extreme militants within the Maoist camp (seems to be doing this well)
- Madhesi parties 4-point deal, which includes stopping any criminal investigations into their party members. This will be a big stumbling block with human rights organisations, including Amnesty International.
- Conclusion of the peace process, probably has the best chance among any other leader from any of the parties.
- Needs to watch his back. His long time foe/best friend Prachanda is a clever, devious political fox who will be secretly banking on Baburam's failure in order for himself to resurface again.

The Maoists will eventually civilianise as they know deep down there is no return to the jungle, they have the taste of Kathmandu and power. Eventually they will be a party pretty much resembling the CPN-UML of the early 1990's.

Rishav

- The current relationship between Nepal and India needs to be thoroughly reviewed, redefined and put in a new historic perspective. India can give Nepal an uninterrupted free access to sea ports in Bangladesh. Similarly, Nepal can invite Indian side to invest heavily in a couple of mega hydropower plants. This will be the first trust-building measure. There is a great opportunity for both sides to give a new strategic direction in Indo-Nepal relationship specially with Dr

BRB's long-standing link with the "nerve-center" of India. Nepali leaders need to free themselves up from their slave mentality and India should free herself from hegemonic attitude.

Anonymous

BROKEN UMBRELLA

Re: Ashutosh Tiwari's column, 'Broken umbrella', #569. What do expect from businessmen who are CA members from communist parties. Ethics? What ethics?

Anonymous

APOLOGISE

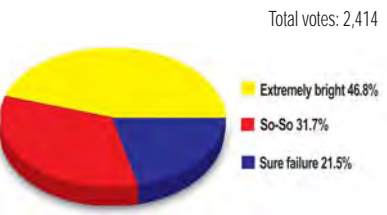
I have always appreciated the Ass for its satires. In all the editions so far I have never found it casting a racist slur. Yet, in 'Get on with it, Tonga', #569 the way Amresh Singh is addressed is out-and-out racist and derogatory.

Pramod Bhagat



nepalnews.com Weekly Internet Poll # 570

Q. Rate Baburam's chances to succeed



Weekly Internet Poll # 571. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Home Minister Bijay Gachhadar's remark that he will make the country corruption free is:



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The 9/11 decade

It doesn't matter if America's cruise missiles are guided, if its foreign policy is misguided



BY THE WAY

Anurag Acharya

That day ten years ago today when airliners exploded into the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon marked a signpost in history. It was such a seminal event that everything after that now happens in the "post 9/11 world".

Despite overwhelming sympathy for the shocking attack and the loss of life, America's rulers squandered the moral high ground by plunging into a dirty revenge war in Iraq for which it made up evidence of weapons of mass destruction. It is slowly extricating itself from Iraq, but is bogged down in the Afghan quagmire.

In the run-up to the tenth anniversary, commentators are saying of the 9/11 attacks that the United States did it to itself, and that the country never learnt from its mistakes. All the root causes of anti-Americanism in the Middle East (US backing for Israeli occupation of Palestine, its support for conservative dictators to ensure the supply of cheap oil, its indiscriminate use of military firepower) are still there. Some would say the anger at America is greater now than ten years ago.

The self-fulfilling prophecy of a clash of civilisations is coming true because of ill-advised foreign policy in the Middle East and elsewhere. Despite tighter airport security and the removal of Osama bin Laden, America isn't more secure because it hasn't bothered to look at the underlying causes of terrorism. The cost of waging a worldwide war on terror has essentially bankrupted America and contributed to its current political paralysis.

Gone are the days when the United States could deploy its military anywhere in the world and not worry about the consequences. If the US has monopolised violence as a means of compliance for this long, the rise of the non-state actors have ended that monopoly. And if the powerful states have misused globalisation to intrude upon lives of people in distant lands, their adversaries have developed a similar capacity to strike back globally. It doesn't matter if American cruise missiles are guided if its foreign policy is misguided.



PUBRECORD.ORG

And it's not just America that has become more vulnerable, it has exported its insecurity to its allies around the world. Here in the subcontinent, the war on terror has sucked Pakistan into the maelstrom of terror so it can't now be a part of America's exit strategy from Afghanistan. Pakistan's instability makes India vulnerable, and the dominos keep tumbling.

The elimination of Bin Laden may ultimately give the Americans a face-saving exit from Afghanistan, but it still needs someone to police the region. Pakistan could have done it, but is falling apart. So the Americans have turned to India, making it the target of jihadist terror. This week's attack on Delhi's High Court is the latest in series of attack India has witnessed in the recent years.

Nepal gets sucked into this because every time there is a terrorist attack in India, the media there is full of intelligence leaks that the attackers slipped in through the open Nepal border. At a meeting with visiting Nepali editors in Delhi in July, Home Minister P Chidambaram devoted all his time talking about security.

The mistakes America has made on the global scale, India is making at a regional level. One of the enduring after-effects of 9/11 on South Asia has been Washington's outsourcing of regional security to New Delhi. And in many ways India is behaving locally like the global bully America is. It's not without reason that the IPKF debacle in Sri Lanka is called "India's Vietnam".

The failure to see terrorism as a by-product of bad governance that manifests into violent excesses has led to stigmatisation of communities for their religious and political beliefs. States fail to see how terror groups exploit individual grievances to carry out such strikes, and instead look to pre-empt attacks through suppression rather than prevention.

Closer to home, ethnic tensions, the bombing of churches and desecration of mosques are all initial signals of seething grievances. Terrorism can be countered only when states police their citizens less and govern them more. Brute force will not reduce injustice, in fact there is evidence it will make it worse. The solution is to address wrongs before the extremist few choose to redress them using violence and terror. 🇳🇵

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“Brink of the unknown”

On 18 September 1961, UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld was killed in a plane crash while inspecting UN peacekeeping operations in the Congo. Fifty years later, Hammarskjöld’s concept of UN-led peacekeeping and peace-building is being applied everywhere from Nepal to Libya.

CARL BILDT

When Dag Hammarskjöld was appointed Secretary-General of the United Nations on 7 April 1953 it was by no means a safe bet that the UN was going to be more successful than its predecessor, the League of Nations, in preventing an outbreak of a new world war.

Hammarskjöld, however, had a firm belief in the United Nations role as an international peacekeeping body and protector of the interests of less powerful nations. He was also a strong believer in the power of diplomacy.

When the Suez Crisis erupted in 1956, the UN Charter did not contain any provisions for using impartial and armed UN forces to stabilise fragile situations. It still does not, but neither has it ever barred such arrangements. For Hammarskjöld, this void was an opportunity rather than a constraint. On the basis of a suggestion from Canada’s Foreign Minister, Lester Pearson, he devised the concept of peacekeeping and managed to assemble the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) within weeks. The basic principles of UNEF’s operation have remained a central feature of UN interventions to this day.

The end of the Cold War gave rise to intrastate conflicts of political as well as ethnic and religious stripe. Today, the actors are more numerous and the agenda is broader.

Recently, the discussion on the new challenges has been guided by two landmark publications: the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations of 2000 (the “Brahimi Report”), and the UN Secretariat “non-paper” A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping of 2009 (the “New Horizon” initiative).

The Brahimi panel found that peacekeeping operations were increasingly deployed not in post-conflict situations, but in stalemate situations where at least one of the parties was not seriously committed to ending the confrontation.

The New Horizon non-paper took stock of the increasing scale and complexity of UN peacekeeping operations. It emphasised the need to forge a stronger political consensus, shift the focus from quantity to quality of troops, enhance the accountability among the stakeholders of UN peacekeeping, and develop a coherent strategy for the UN field support system.



The Brahimi Report and the New Horizon recognise, as Hammarskjöld did with regard to the United Nations as a whole, that UN peacekeeping is an imperfect but indispensable instrument for the international community.

The increasing numbers of international actors do not depreciate the role and importance that the UN plays in global peacekeeping. On the contrary, it is an acknowledgement that many states and actors today feel a direct responsibility to partake in the global agenda for peace and conflict prevention.

The common ground that has been reached needs to be consolidated and broadened :

1. The success or failure to protect civilians directly affects the credibility of UN peacekeeping operations, as well as their standing with populations in conflict areas. Missions need to have clear Security Council mandates, well-crafted guidelines, robust command and control systems to perform this difficult task.
2. The nexus between peacekeeping and peacebuilding must be strengthened, with peacekeepers providing security and support, for national and international actors to implement peacebuilding measures.
3. The demand for civilian expertise in complex peacekeeping operations must be respond to by strengthening the support of civilian personnel.
4. We should follow the example of Dag Hammarskjöld’s Summary Study and turn our scrutiny to the UN system itself and our working methods.

In conclusion, let us remember Hammarskjöld’s view that the United Nations embodied the “edge of development of human society” and worked on the “brink of the unknown” remains an inspiring vision.

Carl Bildt is Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. A longer version of this piece can be seen at: www.nepalitimes.com



Keeping the peace

DEWAN RAI

Nepali peacekeepers in the UN missions recently made the headlines for all the wrong reasons. The Haiti cholera outbreak to kickbacks in the procurement of substandard APCs for the Darfur mission tainted the image of Nepali police and soldiers who have served in peacekeeping operations abroad.

The Haiti cholera epidemic in October 2010 killed nearly 6,200 people and a whole genome test last month traced the cholera bacillus to Nepal. However, the Nepal Army says the incident will not affect future UN deployment.

“There was a protracted campaign to smear our image, but the Nepal Army will remain an important contributor to peacekeeping missions around the world,” says NA spokesperson Ramindra Chettri.

Then in June, the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) ordered 34 police officers to appear in court to face charges of pocketing kickbacks on the procurement of more than 300 million rupees worth armoured vehicles for the UN’s Darfur operation. The court is yet to give its verdict, but there is widespread suspicion that higher-up politicians profited from the deal.

Over the past 50 years, Nepal has contributed 85,000 peacekeepers to 37 peacekeeping missions worldwide. Nepal is in fact the world’s fifth largest contributor to UN peacekeeping force. UN has around 110,000 peacekeepers

from 120 countries, deployed in conflict zones.

Nepal Army alone has 3,550 soldiers serving in 11 different missions in African and the Middle East, while Nepal Police has 476 personnel, mostly working in African countries (See box). “Nepali peacekeepers have earned a reputation for professional competence, non-complaining and friendly attitude,” says Binod Singh, the spokesperson of Nepal Police.

Nepali troops as well as police have remained in high demand for peacekeeping

missions around the world, particularly ones that require working under hazardous conditions. A case in point is the recent request from New York for Nepal Army deployment in Iraq. A group of 170 army personnel has already been trained for the operation under the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) and will fly out to Iraq in two weeks. This is the second time the army is sending peacekeepers to Iraq after 1990.

Nepali soldiers have been praised as ideal peacekeepers for their legendary fighting skills, toughness ingrained from the rugged terrain back home, discipline and dedication through rigorous training blended with an easy-going attitude and honesty. Especially on tricky missions like UNIFIL on the Golan heights, Nepalis have stood out for their impartiality and courage.

Peacekeeping missions also provide an opportunity for both individual soldiers and the Nepal Army and Police to earn substantial incomes. At present, the daily allowance for Police peacekeepers is around \$150. Police personnel have to manage their accommodation from this allowance, whereas soldiers live in their own barracks.

Police peacekeepers contribute up to 14 per cent and NA personnel contribute up to 22 per cent of their allowance for the respective welfare fund. 🇳🇵

Nepal Army peacekeeping missions

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|------------------|
| Lebanon |
| Iraq |
| East Timor |
| Congo |
| Liberia |
| Haiti |
| Darfur Sudan |
| Sudan |
| Ivory Coast |
| Israel |
| Morocco |
| UNHQ, NY America |
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Nepal Police peacekeeping missions

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|--------------|
| Haiti |
| South Sudan |
| Darfur Sudan |
| Liberia |
| East Timor |

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Home they brought her peacekeeper dead, #6 Peacekeeping away from home, #197

The price of 9/11

George W Bush's war on terror was the first war in history paid for entirely on credit



ONE WORLD
Joseph E Stiglitz

The 11 September 2001 terror attacks by Al Qaeda were meant to harm the United States, and they did, but in ways that Osama bin Laden probably never imagined. President George W Bush's response to the attacks compromised America's basic principles, undermined its economy, and weakened its security. The attack on Afghanistan that followed the 9/11 attacks was understandable, but the subsequent invasion of Iraq was entirely unconnected to Al Qaeda: as much

as Bush tried to establish a link. That war of choice quickly became very expensive (orders of magnitude beyond the \$60 billion claimed at the beginning) as colossal incompetence met dishonest misrepresentation. A conservative tally of America's war cost was \$3-5 trillion. Since then, the costs have mounted further. The social costs, reflected in veteran suicides (which have topped 18 per day in recent years) and family breakups, are incalculable. Even if Bush could be forgiven for taking America, and much of the rest of the world, to war on false pretenses, and for misrepresenting the cost of the venture, there is no excuse for how he chose to finance it. His was the first war in history paid for entirely on credit. As America went into battle, with deficits already soaring from his 2001 tax cut, Bush decided to plunge ahead with yet another round of tax 'relief' for the wealthy.

Today, America is focused on unemployment and the deficit. Both threats to America's future can, in no small measure, be traced to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Increased defense spending, together with the Bush tax cuts, is a key reason why America went from a fiscal surplus of 2 per cent of GDP when Bush was elected to its parlous deficit and debt position today. The wars contributed to America's macroeconomic weaknesses, which exacerbated its deficits and debt burden. Then, as now, disruption in the Middle East led to higher oil prices, forcing Americans to spend money on oil imports that they otherwise could have spent buying goods produced in the US. In Afghanistan and Iraq, the US and its allies knew that long-term victory required winning hearts and minds. But mistakes in the early years of those wars complicated

that already-difficult battle. The wars' collateral damage has been massive: by some accounts, more than a million Iraqis have died, directly or indirectly, because of the war. Not all of the consequences were disastrous. Al Qaeda, while not conquered, no longer appears to be the threat that loomed so large in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. But the price paid in getting to this point, in the US and elsewhere, has been enormous, and mostly avoidable. The legacy will be with us for a long time. It pays to think before acting.

Joseph E. Stiglitz is University Professor at Columbia University, a Nobel laureate in economics, and the author of Freefall: Free Markets and the Sinking of the Global Economy.

Growing up behind bars

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Feel the difference



Imagine what it's like to be a child growing up behind cold metal bars surrounded by criminals serving time. That is exactly what dozens of children are doing. This is the story of children who are growing up behind bars for no crime of their own, but they have no choice. There are as many as 100 children trapped in various jails around Nepal, not because they've done anything wrong but simply because their parents have. With no one to take care of them, the parents have brought their children along to jail. The children are growing up with almost no basic amenities, without education, and without hope for a better tomorrow.

Pushpa Basnet has devoted her life to helping children who are in prison for their parents' crime

Amidst this story of gloom and doom, there is a tiny ray of light provided by Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) which is working to provide imprisoned children a better life, while working to free them. Pushpa Basnet, who set up ECDC 10 years ago, says she made this her cause in life after meeting a little girl in jail during a college social service trip to Dhulikhel Jail. Since it was started, ECDC has freed nearly 100 children from jail, overcoming red tape and building trust among the jailer, the mother and Pushpa herself. It all starts off by locating a child who is stuck behind bars,

Pushpa personally travels to the jails herself even if it is in a remote part of Nepal to make official agreements with jailer, parent and ECDC. After agreements are complete the child is taken to the ECDC home in Kathmandu where a new life awaits them. The child is welcomed by the other children already at the shelter, but this transition phase is the hardest for the child. Many are emotionally, physically and mentally scarred by their traumatising experience in jail. There are children who have seen their fathers kill their mothers, and even young girls who were raped by their fathers. The

children are given necessary attention, from food to health, care and love. All children have different periods of adjustment but they are looked over and monitored through every step. The ECDC residential home provides the child everything they need to ensure that they have the best life possible until their parents are released from jail. The children are enrolled in school, and they get additional tutoring if they are falling behind. ECDC has also set up a day care center near Sundhara Prison for children less than six years whose mothers are in jail. These

children are too young to be separated from their mothers, but at least get to see life outside jail even if it is only for the day. After winning an interest-free loan from the organization, Change Fusion Nepal, in 2009 Pushpa has also trained mothers in jail to make handicrafts that are exported to generate income for the upkeep of shelters. *Suyash Rajbhandari*

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Jailed kids get a release, #282
Empowering young entrepreneurs, #525

Vijay Pande's interview with Puspa Basnet

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From bow to wow

PAAVAN MATHEMA

The Rajbhandari family lost their pet dog Cyber last year. His friends suggested he purchase a pure breed, but Pranab wanted a mongrel just like Cyber. He turned to the internet and discovered that there are several animal centres in Nepal that offer local mixed breeds for adoption. His family finally selected Scamper from the Animal Nepal dog sanctuary in Chobar, and five months later he is a part of the family. “Scamper is easy to take of and is growing to be a

healthy, friendly and a little mischievous,” says Pranab, who is glad he adopted a mongrel instead of wasting money on an expensive pure breed. Animal Nepal and other shelters in Kathmandu rescue stray and abandoned dogs from the streets, treat them for skin and other diseases and put them up for adoption. According to a dog census earlier this year, there are over 22,000 stray dogs inside the Ring Road. Unlike the Municipality that still poisons stray dogs to control their population, Animal Nepal holds regular mobile sterilisation clinics.

Animal Nepal has started a campaign called ‘Adopt a Nepali Dog’ to get dog owners to turn to Nepali mongrels and this year alone 14 dogs from the shelter have found happy homes. “These dogs are used to having people around them, so they are very friendly and good natured,” says Lucia de Vries of Animal Nepal, and adds there are upsides to adopting a mongrel as opposed to the fashionable pure breeds. Mongrels are healthier, easier to take care of and more adaptable. A mongrel pet is also more economical, they don’t have a price tag and the maintenance cost is low.

Animal Nepal provides free medical care for one year after adoption. Surendra Kuwar Basnet, the vet at the sanctuary discourages families from purchasing costly pure breeds. “A pure breed puppy can costs as much as 20,000,” says Basnet. There are numerous ‘puppy mills’ that focus on the business rather than on dog welfare. Surprisingly, while Nepal is run after pure breeds, there is a demand in India for Nepali mongrels which are known for their hardy and friendly nature and are sold as Himalayan Breeds. Traders even smuggle up to

20 street puppies in one small cage, cover it up with jute bags and traffick them across the border for sale. Many die en route. Animal Nepal alone took care of 36 rescued puppies last year, and the shelter found homes for all of them. Says Vries: “We tell families why buy a German shepherd, Japanese Spitz or Tibetan Mastiff when you can have all in one for free?” adoptanepalidog.blogspot.com

nepalitimes.com

A dog's best friend, #540
K9-friendly, # 460

Tour the Chobar sanctuary

K-9 Unit

A police academy for sniffer dogs becomes an invaluable part of the Nepal Police

STUTI SHARMA

When Kali and Juli arrived at the Central Police Dog Training School in Feburary they were only six weeks old. They were immediately put into intensive training to join the police’s sniffer dog squad. Today, the two alert and intelligent adolescents are in obedience training. Kali, being the more outgoing one, is being trained to detect explosives and Juli is going to be a specialist in sniffing out drug smugglers. Dogs from the school located in Raniban have made some major arrests. Shova Shrestha, who murdered an entire family, was sniffed out by a graduate of the CPDTS and another one helped find the body of murdered journalist Birendra Shah in Bara two years ago. Police



KUNDA DIXIT



PICS: STUTI SHARMA

dogs also foiled a potentially deadly terrorist attack by finding a 20 kg explosive at Pokhara Stadium in 2005. Even as Nepali Times was at Raniban reporting on this story, two teams of dogs had been dispatched to the BICC and Singha Darbar for routine inspections and another one was in Kirtipur to help locate a lost child who was later found. Baburam Adhikari, a DSP at the school, says while sniffer dogs used to be imported, today private breeders in Nepal donate puppies, or they are bought from local kennel clubs. “Some donors get really impressed when they see how professional the puppies they gave away

have become at the airport, and they promise to give us more dogs,” says Adhikari. The school was established in 1965 with four dogs from Malaysia, and the number has now risen to 45. Kali and Juli were donated by Rato Bangala School and like others have become members of the

SIBLING REVELRY: Kali and Juli when they were just six weeks old in February (left) and now underdoing training to detect explosives and drug smugglers.

Nepal Police. After training, the dogs can join four police units: arms and explosives, tracking, search and rescue

Pick me

Friendly dogs (and a cat) looking for loving homes



Lassi (female, 7 months old)
Lassi is a friendly and good natured dog. Her leg injury will soon heal.



Shuri (male, 4 months old)
Happy, playful, purring cat. Catches mice, and could be adopted by Nepal Airlines.



Sumi (female, 8 years old)
A very calm dog that loves the company of children and other dogs. Sumi has teeth problems so can only eat soft food.



Ricky (male, 5 months old)
Ricky had rickets but his legs have improved. Now he's a running and playful companion.



BIKRAM RAI



Bhunti and Munti (females, 6 weeks old)
Playful and intelligent, these pups need a loving home.



and the narco unit.

"Depending on the dog's temperament, we give them specialised training for their units," explains Adhikari. Dogs used by the tracking unit sniff out criminals and missing persons and need nine months of basic training. Airports dogs are trained in six months to detect

explosives and drugs.

However, all dogs need to undergo the 3-month basic obedience training course when they become five months old during which they learn to lie down, sit, remain still and do the famous doggy handshake. They are also trained to refuse food from strangers and to respond to

their handler's voice only.

Some puppies do fail their basic training course, and get an honourable discharge to become pets. Retirement age for sniffer dogs is 10 after which they spend the rest of their days at the School or are adopted by dog lovers.

Pramod Raj Bhatta is a vet at the School, and says it is not enough to look after the physical health of the dogs, sniffer dogs perform best when they are happy and develop a bond with the handlers. "It is important that they are looked after, and this includes the handler spending time with the dogs playing and fetching," he says. Labradors, German Shepherds and Doberman Pinschers are considered ideal for policing tasks because of their acute sense of smell, muscular bodies, stamina and agility.

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EVENTS



VO'YE: The Newari Feast, walk with the chariots and have a special feast to celebrate Indra Jatra for charity. *11 September, 2.30pm to 8pm, Kathmandu Durbar Square*

Fashion Night Out, celebrating fashion and style. *9 September, 6pm to 11.30pm, Gazebo Restro-Lounge, Durbar Marg*

Transforming You, popular youtube makeup star Promise Tamang comes to town. *9 Septmeber to midnight, Moods Lounge, Bluebird Mall, Thapathali*

Poultry and Livestock Expo, international exposition for poultry and livestock. *Till 10 September, DECC, United World Center, Tripureshwor*

The Blacksmith, a documentary delving into the recent history of a community of Dalit blacksmiths. *9 September, 1pm, Russian Cultural Center, 9841366092*

Grand Opening of Sphinx, one stop for trendy clothes and accessories. *9 and 10 September, Times Square Mall, Durbar Marg*

NEC Fete 2011, performances by celebrated bands, great food and fun games. *9 and 10 September, Nepal Engineering College, Changunarayan, Bhaktapur*



Theatrical Circus, magical experience with a fusion of circus, acrobatics and theatre. *14 September, 6pm to 7.30 pm, the British School, Jhamsikhel*

Anbug Drive 2011, Volkswagen Beetle Drive from Kathmandu to Gyantok in Sikkim. *6 to 13 September, 4222636*

Ssatangs and Bhajans, celebration of Universal Brotherhood Day followed by talks and hymns from Babaji Bob. *11 September, 2 pm to 5 pm, Police Club Auditorium, Exhibition road*

Kathmandu Literary Jatra, three day literature festival. *16 to 18 September, Patan Durbar Square Complex*

9th Annual Wine Festival, taste 15 wines from six countries. *Till 15 September, Kilroy's, Thamel, 4250440-41*

YES! Course, by the Art of Living for 13-18 year old youth. *11 to 16 September, 2pm to 5pm, The Art of Living New Baneshwor Centre, Dil Niwas, New Baneshwor, 9803039750*

Lyrics from the Junkyard, junkyard sculptures by Meena Kayastha. *Till 9 September, 11am to 6pm, The Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited.*



Nepal Rendezvous II, paintings from eminent artists from Bangladesh. *10 to 16 September, 11am to 6pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited*

Cycle 6: Life, nature and wildlife photography by Om Yadav. *Till 30 September, 10am to 5pm, Galleria CUC, Maharajgunj*

MUSIC

Nepfest II, fledging bands to showcase their musical talents. *9 September, 12.30 pm onwards, Fun Park, Bhrikuti Mandap, 9841721736, 9841277757*

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Music at Neon Pub, music evening for all interested in the town's underground music scene. *9 September, 12.30 pm to 6 pm, Neon pub, Thamel*

Pokhara Concert, catch X-Mantra in Pokhara. *10 September, 5.30 pm to 8.30 pm. Pokhara.*

DINING



Milk Coffee and Cocktail Café, coffee house during the day and a cozy lounge serving cocktails at night, try their yarchagumba and molecular cocktails along with the famous Starbucks. *Woodland Complex, Durbar Marg*



Comfort Zone, expansive restobar with a decent range of cocktails and barbeque meats. *Thamel*

Bu keba, the newest organic restaurant in town, offers continental and Indian food along with chef's originals. *Sanepa*

Alfresco, for homemade pastas and other lip-smacking delights. *Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 4273999*

Attic, newly transformed lounge/bar ideal for Friday night drinking before hitting the dance spots. *Uttar Dhoka, Lazimpat, 984161476*

Black Pepper Café & Pub, cosmopolitan dining and drinking in a traditional style courtyard, try the apple sauce pork chops and enjoy the good service. *Kopundole Height, Lalitpur, 5521897, 5536926*



Vesper Café, has quaint outdoor patio good for leisurely weekend brunch. Serves good salads, and steak-wraps. *Jhamsikhel*



Hankook Sarang, from Bibimbab to Samgyeopsal, Hankook offers a wide range of Korean delicacies at affordable prices. *Thamel (opposite Road house café)*

Lazy Gringo, fail-safe Mexican restaurant. The lemonade with refills is what won us over, but the food is mighty fine. *Jawalakhel*

Bhojan Griha, traditional Nepali restaurant that serves up great local food with folk music and dance. *Dillibajar*

1905 Restaurant, feast on roasted delights within this converted aristocratic residence. Walled ambience and green surroundings make it an oasis within the city, *Kantipath, 4215068*



Ghangri Café, a quiet place with comfortable sofas and a lovely courtyard, perfect for those sunny afternoons. Although famous for their open sui mai, they offer a few other great dishes as well. *Pulchok*

GETAWAYS



The Last Resort, one stop for Adventure Sports, bungee jump over the Bhote Khosi river 160 metres below or mountain biking up to the Tibetan border. *The Last Resort Sales Office, Mandala Street, Thamel, 4700525*

The Dwarika's Himalayan Shangri-La Village Resort Dhulikhel, overnight package with accommodation, dinner and breakfast. *Call 4479488 for reservations*

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*



SOMEPLACE ELSE

Tourist hubs and heritage sites go hand in hand but often yield substandard options for the belly. Restaurants in Bouddha thrive more on their terrace, rooftop or room with a view of the iconic stupa and less on the quality of their menu. But stemming off the sacred roundabout is a narrow brick corridor characteristic of an artful brasserie that has become the area's trusted choice for continental. In line with Kathmandu's obsession with long-drawn menus, Flavor's Cafe and Restaurant keeps patrons vacillating with an extensive




Flavor's Cafe

MARCO POLLO

selection that's actually worth exploring. Inferred from its menu, there are two types of people in this world: 100 per cent vegetarian and 100 per cent beef. The stuffed eggplant, served with steamed rice and a side of salad sounds like a bland excuse for the health conscious. But for accuracy's sake, 'cheese' should be emphasized; the eggplant

is lathered with white cheese and chopped veggies that dishes out delish, outdoing its ordinary, grey appearance. Whether medium, rare or well done, the beef (100 per cent) is done simply well. For fearless carnivores, go for the Mixed Grilled Meat Pot Sizzler, a sizzling skillet of tender chicken, beef and sausages marinated

and smothered with a tangy BBQ sauce, cuddle by a stack of fries or a mound of real mashed potatoes—a godsend from another mother. But in the art of pizza, Flavor's requires a bit more schooling. The Flavor's Special vegetarian pizza, a 12-inch pie topped with homemade tomato sauce, black olives, mushrooms, green peppers, capers and

mozzarella, is a filling round of dough but unbalanced and subpar when matched against the thin-crust creations at Fire and Ice or La Dolce Vita in Thamel. If paunch permits, order a slice of the Chocolate Mousse cake or hover to the cafe's patisserie and select from the day's indulgences, and be sure to order a shot of espresso pulled just short of perfection—easy on the tanning. Flavor's diners are paying for the location but with no additional charges (VAT or service) yet in sight, so tighten your fanny pack.  *Marco Pollo*

Circle Bouddhanath, round and round, clockwise 'til you find Flavor's

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



The hard facts



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

In 1985, Stephen Jay Gould wrote a best seller in the US entitled, *The Median Isn't the Message*. He was a patient with mesothelioma, a deadly form of cancer. He was also a discerning scientist, and so he looked up mesothelioma and found that it was fatal with a median survival time of about eight months. However he saw that the survival curve for mesothelioma was skewed to the right with a long tail on the graph suggesting that some people lived many years longer than the average time of eight months. Gould however stressed on the unlikely probability of a longer life and even wrote the book because indeed, he went on to survive for 20 more years. Lucky guy.

In a sense, the American medical system especially

as regards terminal problems like cancer care, end stage lung/heart disease, has been built around the improbable: the long tail of the graph. This means spending millions of dollars to entertain the notion of hope, that perhaps this particular patient is an exception. Unfortunately even in the US health care budget is limited, and this has lately hit home with the



passage of the health care bill. How is all this relevant for a deprived country like Nepal? Take malignant lung cancer, an increasing form of cancer in Nepal, thanks to smoking and air pollution. The median survival time

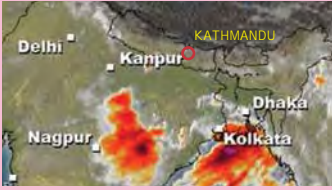
no matter what you do is generally a year for this cancer. Receiving chemotherapy, radiation, or even surgery for this cancer is possible here, and there may be clear cut indications for doing this in some instances.

But in many cases in Nepal proper control of pain in the patient and promoting 'hospice' like care may be more relevant and acceptable. This would mean that the patient and the family rather than spending lakhs on ineffective treatment would spend more quality time together. In the US the likely scenario is that in the last stages a lung cancer patient will be in intensive care with tubes and catheters. Amazingly even in the US, and especially due to the budget crunch, many people are opting for hospice care for a more satisfying exit. In Nepal we do not seem to have a choice. 🇳🇵



WEEKEND WEATHER
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

What we are seeing this week is the last phase of the monsoon as a weakening south easterly stream brings moisture into the Himalayan mid-hill. This turns into thunder storms in afternoon and evenings. This process is going to gradually taper off by late next week as the westerlies establish themselves. Clear mornings and afternoon built up into the weekends.



| FRI | SAT | SUN |
|-------|-------|-------|
| | | |
| 27-16 | 28-16 | 29-17 |



BIJAY RAI

TIMELY HONOUR: President Ram Baran Yadav conferred the PP Prasai Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award to tourism entrepreneur Tek Chandra Pokharel at Shital Nibas on Monday.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

GANESH NAMAHA: Artist Bidhata KC gives US Ambassador to Nepal, Scott DeLisi, a tour of the Sri Ganesh exhibition at Nepal Art Council on Thursday. More than 45 interpretations of lord Ganesh by various artists were exhibited.



BIKRAM RAI

FACE-LIFT: A boy cleans up as the Gaddi Baithak, Basantapur Darbar Square, gets a fresh coat of paint on Tuesday, ahead of Indra Jatra on Sunday .

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Whose team is it anyway?



“So what’s new? 2-1? 1-1? 3-2? Eh?”

My cousins smile at my little joke and continue with their sports chatter. I’ve no idea who’s playing who in the eternal round robin of the European football leagues, nor do I care. Don’t get me wrong – I do think football is a beautiful game and once every four years I pick the wrong team and thank the lord above for giving us beer to drown our sorrows in. I just don’t care to follow the undeniably talented yet obscenely paid mercenaries who gurn across the world’s screens day in, day out.

It’s impossible to say in what proportions a Manchester United fan, who’s not a Mancunian, cares about the city of Manchester, the quality of football it purveys, and the glamour attached to its multi-billion dollar global franchise. One suspects there are plenty who claim to love football, but are equally enamoured of the glitz.

Getting local United fans to follow the national leagues of Nepal might be the acid test. Would they rather head to a bar and be transported to Old Trafford or hike down to the Rangala to catch Manang Marshyandi vs Police Club? Better still, how about a trip to Sonpur, Bihar, to see a youth club from Birganj battle against a ‘running tie sheet’ of regional Indian teams?

Oh, the glamour! The boys featured in Girish Giri’s sports documentary *Team Nepal*, 2005, (pictured) reach Sonpur to find they are to put up in a train carriage for the duration of the ‘Late JN Singh Memorial Football Tournament’. They do so, most cheerfully, and in full knowledge of just how far away they are from the glory of their Premier League idols. Fingering a football jersey, one of the lads quips:

“Maile Chelsea bata lyaeko!”

The others laugh. “Chelsea kun desh ma cha thahacha?”

“Malai Lampard le diyeko...”

“Lampard!”

“Chelsea ma toilet sapha garne thees hola haha!”



Jokes aside, the joy of playing for a local club (for Rs 100), and in their own understanding ‘representing’ Nepal against Bihar, elevates these boys above the mercenary footballers Nepali youth so idolise. If only we could bring ourselves to support the countless sportsmen and sportswomen who truly represent us, rather than saving our callow jingoism to counter perceived insults.

Sport, of course, in the words of Mandela, ‘has the power to unite people in a way that little else does.’

Search for Common Ground

has taken this quite literally by supporting the production of parallel television series in seven countries that follow the trials of a football team cobbled together from all parts. NGO-fied it may be, but Nepal’s *Hamro Team* is possibly the best-made program ever to be broadcast on Nepali television (which admittedly isn’t saying much). Judging by the positive response, Hamro Team has tapped into a reservoir of passion not just for the sport of football, but for the ideal of a national team that draws on the full strength of Nepal’s socio-

cultural and ethnic diversity and works together to achieve, literally, ‘goals’.

The irony of course is that *Hamro Team* is a microcosm of Nepal in much the same way the CA was meant to be. I am not going to insult the reader’s intelligence by casting about with the hope that our past, present and future MPs and PMs will manage to coexist in a state of exalted harmony. A parliament represents a country in a rather more complicated manner than a national team does. But the lesson’s there to be learnt. It may seem naïve to hope for life to imitate art, but in some sense *Team Nepal* the documentary is a real life reflection of *Hamro Team* the TV series. Even at this late stage, it’s not impossible to believe that the aspirations of millions of individuals will not coalesce into collective achievement at the highest level. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Crossborder football, #266

Hamro Team trailer

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“You can’t eat slogans”

Many in the Madhes feel that a united federal Madhes will actually make them poorer

RAMESWOR BOHARA in SIRAHA





Ideologically poles apart, the Madhesi Front and the Maoists have struck up a marriage of convenience. The extent to which the Maoists have compromised to woo Madhesi support is evident from the fact that they are even willing to accept a united Madhes federal province.

It was only after the Maoists agreed to support the formation of an autonomous Madhes with the right to self-determination that the Front joined the government, barely hours before the CA was to vote for a new prime minister. Things couldn't have worked out better for the Madhesi Front, which now has half the portfolios in government, most of them key ministries.

The demand for 'One Madhes' derives its rationale from CA's State Restructuring Committee's report and the Maoists have been pushing for ethnic federalism, so they couldn't refuse it.

But here in the eight poorest Tarai districts between Parsa and Saptari where most Madhesi Front leaders come from, there is no jubilation. Instead, we saw overwhelming disillusionment with the leadership's disdain for their welfare. Madhesis themselves say that their leaders have used the slogan of 'One Madhes' to cover up the neglect of their home constituencies.

Surendra Labh, Janakpur-based scholar and lecturer told us last week: "The call for a united Madhes, was misinterpreted as a call for one Madhes". Other Madhesi academics and civil society leaders say federal provinces that isolate the plains from the hills and mountains would create even more economic imbalance.

Rajbiraj-based lawyer Himmat Singh puts it bluntly: "If we separate the Madhes from rest of the country, there will be nothing left."

National-level Madhesi leaders, however do not accept this. The TMLP's Hridayesh Tripathi argues

that the Madhes is self sufficient when it comes to resources and agriculture. Its location astride the Indian border gives it unparalleled advantage for trade and commerce, he adds.


Besides the economic and political challenges of the Tarai, however, there is the added problem of population explosion fuelled by high birthrates, and migration from both India and the hills. Deforestation of the Chure hills in the past four years have worsened floods, and sedimentation has raised river beds. Droughts and flash floods have made things worse for farmers here in the eastern Tarai.

A federal Madesh unit would have to depend on upstream provinces for water for irrigation and power for its industries. If federalism is not smooth, this could lead to future water wars.

Sadbhavana leader Rajendra Mahato likes to say that since 80 per cent of Nepal's tax revenue is collected from the Madhes, this should be used to develop the Madesh. But Arun Kumar, a professor in Janakpur argues that most of this tax is collected for goods exported or imported for the whole country. "The revenue collection and its allocation is jurisdiction of the center," says Kumar, "all regions have equal claim to it."

Experts based in the Tarai say the only way to ensure balanced economic growth into the future is to have districts within each province complement each other. Electricity generated from hydropower projects in Dolakha district of Janakpur Zone could help in the industrialisation of its Tarai districts like Dhanusha. Even when it comes to tourism, the potential of Lumbini and Janakpur are linked to pilgrim arrivals in Swayambhu, Baudhha and Pashupati, and vice versa. Only with close economic and social linkages between mountain, hill and plains, can a federal Nepal be stronger than the sum of its parts, they add.

But Madhesi leaders are engaged in populist identity politics that overwhelming numbers of people in the Madesh themselves don't agree with. Identity without progress and dignity without development will, it seems, neither benefit the Madhesi population nor help unleash development that geographically integrated provinces can.

Because their political rhetoric has now become so strident, Madhesi leaders have painted themselves into a corner and can't moderate their views even if they want to. The Kathmandu establishment, including Madhesi leaders at the centre) cannot ignore the identity and dignity of the Madhesis any longer. And many in the Madhes are convinced that a united federal Madhes will actually make them poorer. 



My son died in vain

RANI DEVI MAHATO in SIRAHA



We invested our hard-earned money to educate our son, so that he would grow up to become a learned man one day. But he became the first martyr of the Madhes movement four years ago. Many others lost their children and we consoled ourselves that maybe our son's blood will bring prosperity to this land. But the leaders have shown disregard and disrespect to our children's sacrifice.

Once Upendra Yadav came and made promises, which he never kept. Rajendra Mahato got my younger son a job in Biratnagar. But the leaders are so greedy, they even took 1 lakh out of the compensation money that the government paid us, saying they need it to build a statue of my son. The Madhes movement opened the door for our leaders to get into government and fill their pockets.

I watch all this, and I feel my son died in vain. If he was alive, he may have gone abroad and sent us money. The next time Madhesi leaders come to my door for votes, they will have to first account for my son's death. I know they will come sooner than later.

Rani Devi's son Ramesh Mahato was killed by Maoists in Lahan during the 2007 Madhes movement.


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become a victim of political
uncertainty. Second is the

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
संचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय
संचना विभाग



Here you go, keys to all the ministries. Pick your favorites

कान्तिपुर Abin Shrestha in Kantipur, 8 September



“There are criminals in every party. UML has hundreds of them, Maoists have hundreds and even congress has them in its party. Why make a fuss if I have one Ganesh Lama?”

Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Bijay Kumar Gachhadar

Guerrilla to minister

Nagarik, 5 September

नागरिक

Trading her childhood for war, Kamala Roka, became the first trained female Maoist guerrilla during the conflict. Now she is the first female guerrilla who has become a minister. Stepping into politics in 1989, she became a whole-timer of the Maoist Party in 1991. Wife of YCL Chief Ganesh Man Pun, she started out from her native district Rukum where she became a member of the district committee in 1996. Working in various committees in the Mid-Western Region for six years she shifted her focus as a PLA fighter in the Maoist Gandaki brigade in 2001. She was nominated to the interim parliament and is a CA member from the PR list of the maoist party and served a whip in the Maoist Party for the last three months.

Probe essential

Editorial in Nagarik, 7 September

नागरिक

Suspicion over the growing proximity between Maoists leaders and some private telecom companies has been fuelled further by recent Wikileaks revelations. According to leaked cables from US embassy in Nepal, Smart Telecom had allegedly sponsored Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal's Singapore trip to meet the ailing Girija Prasad Koirala in 2009.

The contents of the cables may not be entirely accurate, but shrugging off diplomatic cables by terming them American propaganda is also foolish. Especially at a time when news of Maoist leaders trying to interfere with Nepal Telecom to benefit Smart Telecom and other companies have surfaced.



A Singapore-based company has 70 per cent of the shares of Smart Telecom. Even back then the Maoist chairman and his team's expensive trip to Singapore made headlines. The information was provided to the US embassy in Nepal by a person from the same firm who made arrangements for the trip. A parliamentary investigation established that Smart Telecom benefited through the intervention of a Maoist minister of communication. The Nepal Telecommunication Authority subsequently issued directives to stop them.

Although Wikileaks also shows how Dahal's tickets and expensive hotel lodgings in Singapore were paid by Smart, there is still not enough basis to prove the chairman's wrongdoings. However, given his anchoring role in the peace process and constitution writing, it matters that his credibility is under the scanner. The evidence so far indicates wrongdoing and only an independent probe can clear the matter.

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We'll cross that bridge when we get to it

Dr BRB's first ten days in office were accompanied by major national crises, as indicated by the following award-winning headlines from the daily press this week, only one of which is made up:

- NAC Rats Out After Air Crew Rats on Rat
- Valley Sweet Shops Have Sour Experience
- Garbage and Politics Turns Capital Stinky
- Phora Fries Suck: Wikileaks



With the prime minister fully engaged in fire-fighting mode from Day One, it's no wonder he is now getting to Singha Darbar as early as 7:30 AM with his tiffin box and returning to Balu Water only at midnight. But as the crises pile up, even this may not be enough and he may have to start sleeping over at the office. He may as well bring along his kitchen cabinet to Singha Darbar, too.

Despite BRB's strict orders not to have sycophants put expensive ads in the papers congratulating him on his prime ministership, there are still some who can't resist the temptation to be noticed and are coming out of the woodworks. Meanwhile,



BIKRAM RAI

taking his cue from his boss, Hridesh Tripathi has refused the official limo and residence and has decided to stay on at his private residence and drive around in his own car. What happened to the bullock cart?



The show of unity between the three factions of the Baddies in Sindhuli the other day seems to have gone down well, and brought the party back from the brink of a split. But we hear Com Kiran has amassed 40 per cent of the central committee

votes and hopes to have a showdown this weekend. He wants to stage a coup in the party by out-voting Com Pukada. In this, he has the backing of Com Cloud, Com Hitman, Com God, Com CP and a long tail of other comrades. The irony of it all, of course, is that if PKD and BRB stick together MBK has little chance to get the required numbers. Alert readers will recall that it was MBK, Cloudy and BRB who themselves got together not so long ago at the Siddharth Cottage in Dhobi Ghaut to clip PKD's wings. Just goes

to prove the axiom that there are no permanent enemies or permanent friends in politics, only back-stabbers.



Gachhu the Godfather was so nervous about taking over as Homely Minister that he got the astrologers to find the time of the exact alignment of the planets when to enter his office. But it really ticked him off that no one was there when he arrived. How is a guy who has been publicly seen hobnobbing with K-town's prominent gangstas ever

going to curb organised crime? But the minister has other more pressing headaches: to get his nominee for defence minister, comrade-in-arms Sarat Sing, to be sworn in. Sarat got a call an hour before last week's swearing in from Gachhu himself saying there was a hitch and "we'll do it some other time". There are conflicting reports about what happened. Some have it that the army brass put pressure on Gachhedar to drop Sarat because they didn't want Madesi leaders to lead both home and defence (even though neither are technically Madesis). But others say Gachhedar came under enormous pressure from purer Madesis who felt it was their right to lead both the army and police.



BRB has been busy splitting ministries in order to accommodate all those who want portfolios. After cutting in half Forests and Soil Conservation, Water and Sewage it looks like he may have to even split the Ministry of Foreign Affairs into the Ministry of Foreign and Ministry of Affairs.





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