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FAST TRACK: Women bathe on the Bagmati at Pashupati on Tuesday at the beginning of the month-long Swasthani fast.

BIKRAM RAI

Reflecting on our past

Editorial p2
One step forward,
two steps back

The peace and constitution process has ground to a halt, mainly because of a disputed provision in the new constitution about whether or not Nepal should have a presidential or parliamentary system of government. Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal has not tried to hide the fact that he seeks to become the executive president. When the NC and UML objected, Dahal did not just stall negotiations, he went back on previous commitments agreed to in

the sub-committee he himself heads.

The political parties all share the blame for obstructing progress, but by far the greatest responsibility for the current deadlock goes to the Maoist party, and particularly its chairman. The internal rift within the party has been a useful bargaining tool for Dahal in negotiations with the opposition, but he has now played this card once too often.

Neither the NC or UML should have any problems with a presidential system, there are plenty of examples where it has worked. There are also places where it has been a disaster. The real issue is that the executive should be accountable, should

have renounced violence and proven a commitment to democratic politics. The others are reluctant to trust a party that has often shifted the goal posts, keeps threatening violent state capture, or plunders the state coffers. Chairman Dahal is both the problem and the solution to this stalemate. ■



Faith in healing p12-13
Faith healing complements modern life



Rearranging the furniture

pA-D

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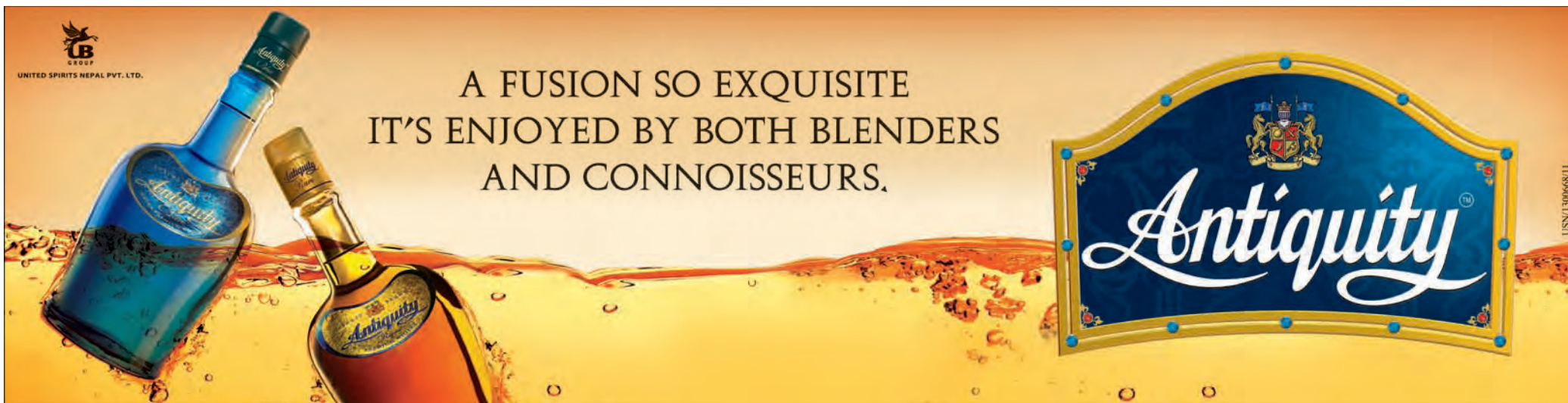
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ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

Within the first month of Baburam Bhattarai taking office last November, there was dramatic progress on peace and constitution. Hopes were raised that this time, politicians were committed to move ahead. Three months later, the process is stuck again. The blame game has reached a crescendo, and we are lost in a tangle of distrust and dispute between and within parties.

The peace process got a boost with the agreement on the numbers and modalities for integration and rehabilitation of Maoist fighters. A State Restructuring Commission was formed, and although packed with political appointees, it was a step forward. The Dispute Resolution Sub-committee, headed by Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, rapidly removed most of the 200 contentious issues in the new constitution. It finally looked like this Constituent Assembly would be able to meet its final deadline by 28 May.

Now, the whole process has ground to a halt. The political parties all have to take a share of the blame for obstructing progress, for putting their personal and partisan interests above the national need for closure, and for the colossal opportunity cost of the prolonged transition on governance, the economy and delayed development.

But by far the greatest responsibility for the current deadlock goes to the Maoist party, and particularly its chairman. Dahal's inability and unwillingness to stand up to the hardliners within his party has made him go back on most of the progress cited above. In fact, it looks like he wants to have his cake and eat another one, too. The internal rift within the party has been a useful bargaining tool for Dahal in negotiations with the opposition, but he has now played this card once too often.

To understand what Dahal is after, one just has to look at where the process is stuck: on the disputed provision in the new constitution about form of governance. Dahal has made no secret of the fact that Nepal should have a directly-elected presidential system, and the first president should be none other than himself. When the NC and UML objected, Dahal derailed the entire process not just by stalling talks,



Pushpa Kamal Dahal is both the problem and the solution to the deadlocked peace and constitution process

but by going back on what had already been agreed to in the sub-committee he himself heads. This is a classic case of the one step forward and two steps back strategy that the Maoist party has practiced since 2006.

Neither the NC or UML should have any problems with a presidential system, there are plenty of examples where it has worked. The problem is that the directly-elected president provision in the

constitution is being put forward to fulfil the personal ambition of one man, and not because of its suitability for the country.

As we have argued in this page before, there are equally compelling arguments for all three governance systems proposed. There are examples of executive presidential systems that have succeeded spectacularly, and just as many countries where they have failed miserably. The same goes for the parliamentary system. The real issue here is that the executive should be accountable, and should not have an opportunity to become a dictator. Democracy has been derailed once too often by demagogues who used the electoral process to gain power and remain there forever. By the time we find out whether or not Dear Leader Dahal is desirable, it will be too late.

Do we trust with a powerful executive president a party that hasn't yet publicly abjured violence, still believes in state capture through rebellion, wants to turn Nepal into a 'people's republic', wants mandatory military training for all citizens, and in government has treated the national treasury as its party war chest?

The person who desperately seeks the mantle of president has time and again shown through wildly contradictory statements that he can't be trusted, he has been caught on camera boasting about how he lied and misled the international community. Foreign governments are rightly wary of him, he has issued open threats to the media, he has shown himself to be manipulative and venal. And that's not just us saying it, disillusioned revolutionaries within his own party use even stronger words.

It has become de rigeur for pundits to tar all parties with the same brush, to spread the blame for the delayed peace and constitution process on all political parties equally. It's time to call a spade a spade and pinpoint the obstruction.

Chairman Dahal has a great opportunity to rebuild trust by delivering on past promises, publicly renouncing violent rebellion, and showing statesmanship. Dahal is both the problem and the solution.

ON THE WEB www.nepalitimes.com

TIPPING POINT

There is no tipping point, there never was ('Tipping point', Editorial, #588). The same students who are destroying the property and livelihood of ordinary Nepalis today, were made heroes when they were spreading chaos on the streets of Kathmandu during the king's regime. All these shortages, the price rise, lawlessness and corruption are gifts of Nepali 'intellectuals', and their rowdy student unions, to a really cowardly nation that refuses to think for itself.

Soni

- Baburam Bhattarai's tenure is marked by overt corruption, shortages and general lawlessness and he has proven to be weak and incompetent leader. While many of his predecessors were forced to resign on account of similar problems, Bhattarai's reign continues unabated. Is it mere luck or is the opposition spineless? Pushpa Kamal Dahal and the Maoist party are well aware that if they lose their top position in government they will have very little bargaining power and will have to rely entirely on street politics. Perhaps this is the reason why Bhattarai's frail government is limping along.

Nirmal

- It seems like all the honest Nepalis have migrated to foreign countries and the ones left behind in Nepal are dejected, helpless and powerless. But we shouldn't lose hope so soon, it only takes one person to topple

a corrupt regime like in Tunisia. Nepali politicians are good at duping ordinary Nepalis. Let's stop this unnecessary suffering and unite for a common cause.

Deepak Gurung

CHAOS

I am not completely convinced with the way Nepali newspapers collect data ('Caucus chaos', Anurag Acharya, #588). They usually over-generalise findings, discard any data that goes against their ideologies and ask too many loaded questions. Statistics are reliable only if the results can be replicated over time and in various locations. However, in my 15 years as a statistician, replication of results has been alarmingly low. Also if we were to isolate results based on geographical locations, the number of people who prefer not answer would be high.

Dino Shrestha

- Nepalis have no reason to fear the proposed 14 federal states. State restructuring won't cause the country to break apart into ethnic enclaves, rather it will help devolve power so that local people will have control over resources, manpower and development in their respective regions. The indigenous people want to be treated as genuine citizens of this country and want their languages, cultures and traditions to be recognised. And until the new state structure is more inclusive, Nepal cannot expect long term in peace.

Kushal

- We think that since we voted



for our representatives, they're answerable to us. However, in reality, our democracy is limited only to voting, the fairness of which has also been questioned. Is the constitution being written in the interest of the people? Do the leaders fear that if they don't write a good constitution or a constitution at all, they'll be rejected by the people? No. Because we've allowed foreigners to meddle so much that our leaders feel more answerable to them than to the taxpayers. Their vehicles, liquor, meeting costs, the library and almost everything has been paid by donor agencies, many of whose track records aren't very good.

Ushaft

GODS NO MORE

Stuti Sharma's article fails to take into account some vital statistics

which are necessary before we can declare Nepal Tourism Year a 'success' ('Gods no more', Stuti Sharma, #588). Where are the figures on how much tourists actually spent in hard currency or the total number of nights they spent? Also as sad as it is to see tourists suffer in our country, it is important to remember that the visitors only face a small portion of the hardships that Nepalis face every day. If the condition of ordinary Nepalis improves, tourists would naturally have better experiences in Nepal, and not the other way around.

Bhaje

DOUGHNUTS TO DIESEL

Bravo Mr Maskey ('Doughnuts to diesel', Dewan Rai, #588). You have utilised waste and shown ordinary Nepalis why waste should be treated as a resource. Given that the country has severe petroleum crisis, bio-diesel is undoubtedly the best option. It has been successful in many South American countries and I wonder why Nepal is still hesitant to experiment with bio-diesel. After all our economy is heavily based on agriculture and there should be sufficient amounts biomass.

B'road

ORGANIC

Bravo Judith for your your pioneering work ('Everything Organic', Rubeena Mahato, #588)! First Dadhikot, now Kavre. I think the whole district should be declared an Organic District, if not by the Ministry of Agriculture, then by the resident farmers themselves.

And chemical pesticides should be completely banned.

GNR

- Kudos to Ms. Mahato for covering this important cause. However, the finances can be quite tricky when working on such projects and sometimes the calculations don't add up. One can be easily misled by beautiful writing and reality is obscured. I have worked on an organic tea garden and believe me it isn't easy to be organic.

Nunghami

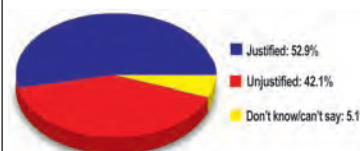
- Although I appreciate Judith and Jim's efforts, I don't agree with all the procedures. If they are handled appropriately, pesticides don't harm non-target organisms as much as people think. In fact smart use of pesticides supports increased productivity which is required to feed Nepal's (and specially Kathmandu's) booming population. It would be best if some areas like Kavre are declared pesticide free zones and continue producing organic goods while other farmers continue using chemicals but in moderation.

Jhalendra



Q. The increase in the prices of petroleum products is:

Total votes: 1,629



Weekly Internet Poll # 590. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. What are the chances of present government giving way to a consensus government?



Is it just us who are confused by the sight of fraternal student organisations of all three main parties uniting to spread mayhem on the streets, while their parent parties hold the nation hostage through divisive politics? Even more ironic: one of those unions protesting the fuel price hikes belongs to the Maoist party, which leads the coalition government that raised the prices.

This week youth and student wings of various parties took to the streets across the country, picketing against the fuel price rise and inflation. The 13 student and youth factions of the major parties, including the Maoists, shut down Kathmandu valley on Wednesday. Staged protests like these, act as safety valves so frustrated youngsters can vent their anger through random tyre burning and windshield shattering. Street protests and hooliganism release the pressure of social discontent.

However, to look at the protests as spontaneous public reaction to inflation misses the point. There are larger issues that affect the students and youth of this country than rocketing fuel prices. One thousand young Nepali men and women leave the country every day for lack of employment opportunities. Private education is unaffordable for most and public education lacks quality. While the nation is reeling under 18 hours of power



ANURAGACHARYA

Street drama

Youth groups shut down the country to protest a fuel price rise announced by their parent parties in government

cuts a day in certain areas, efforts to revive the economy have become victims of bad politics.

If the country had strict legal enforcement, the corrupt petroleum mafia would not have been able to create an artificial shortage of LPG and other petroleum products for the past two months. If we had invested in public transportation and made a timely switch to renewable energy sources that are in abundance, we would not have ended up with an anemic economy running on expensive fossil fuel. Petroleum deposits are running out globally, diesel and petrol are going to be scarcer and more

expensive, and we have no long-term plan to deal with this.

The rise in fuel prices has hit the students, no doubt, but they are not alone. It is unreasonable to demand subsidy for students without actually identifying what category of students are the needy, and without proper mechanism to ensure the subsidy is not misused.

Providing a subsidy for a section of the population on goods whose price in the international market fluctuates every week is unsustainable and irrational in the long run. It affects the development expenditure and compromises on

drinking water, health and education projects for the remote areas.

Even before the protests intensified, government was already giving into protesters' demands and said it was willing to reconsider the decision if other parties support. Obviously, Baburam Bhattarai does not want to sign the bankruptcy papers alone. So there is little surprise that the government relented when it finally did.

It's also quite apparent that the current protests have more to do with forthcoming student union elections than anything else. All student unions feel they will lose out in the race if they don't take part in these protests. It is absurd that the youth groups have united while their parent parties are at each other's throats. If mutual self-interest works in student politics, why shouldn't it work in national politics?

Politics is only as effective as the ability of the polity to demand accountability from the elected representatives for their actions. Students and the youth factions of the parties are as much responsible for the political mess we are in because they have their own share in this inglorious legacy of bad politics. Those who are convinced Nepali politics can change for the better if the current generation of leaders hand the baton to the next should have seen the youth wing members beating up sidewalk traders on Wednesday for daring to defy their shutdown.

Destroying public and private property and terrorising traders and commuters have become the standard operating procedures in making a banda a 'success'. No matter how you look at it, a banda requires violence and fear to be enforced, and thus violates the fundamental human right of citizens. The leadership of all the parties should know they are playing with fire. The tyre smoke they unleash will one day choke them as well. 🇳🇵



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Cairn still in wait-and-see mode

MARK WILLIAMSON
in EDINBURGH

The Scottish company that found a billion barrels of oil in India said it is still interested in Nepal but won't drill without a big improvement in the political situation in the country.

The new chief executive of Cairn Energy, Simon Thomson, said the company believes the licences it was awarded in the Tarai region in 2004 may contain the geological and commercial ingredients of success. But Thomson indicated Cairn may decide it has no future in Nepal unless there is a quick end to the political problems which have made it impossible to explore for oil and gas in the country so far.

"What has stopped us has been the political position, in that we just haven't been able to move forward with the activity that we wanted to do," Thomson (pictured, above) told *Nepali Times*.

"Nepal remains of interest," he added. "The question is can we actually move forward and generate activity? That remains to be seen."

Nepal's politicians will

Oil company says it won't drill in Nepal until the investment climate improves

have to work hard to convince Thomson that the country should have a place on his agenda at Edinburgh-based Cairn, where he became chief executive in July last year. Thomson succeeded Sir Bill Gammell, a Scotland rugby star who is a friend of ex-US president George W Bush and went to school with Tony Blair, the former British Prime Minister.

During 30 years in charge, Sir Bill led Cairn on a push into South Asia which culminated in the company making a series of bumper finds in the desert in Rajasthan from 2004. Success in India propelled Cairn into the oil and gas premier league and won it a place in the elite FTSE

100 stock market index. Amid booming global demand for oil, production from the finds will flood the plains and foothills of the Himalayas in August 2004, on attractive terms.

Cairn Energy recently sold a controlling stake in the Cairn India operation to India's Vedanta Resources for \$5.5 billion. The deal was finally completed in December following months of wrangling in India. Cairn Energy retained 22 per cent stake in the Indian operation. Directors will use some of the proceeds of the Indian success to fund the search for similar transformational finds in other countries.

On 24 January Cairn

shelved plans to award Sir Bill Gammell £2.5m shares for his work on the Vedanta deal following pressures from some shareholders.

Cairn India's Sri Lanka subsidiary announced last year that it struck natural gas in Sri Lanka's offshore Mannar Basin in the very first well it drilled in the narrow strait. The company has spent \$1.2 billion on a pioneering hunt for oil and gas in the icy waters off Greenland, and is also looking at the waters off Spain and off Lebanon in the Mediterranean.

A company spokesperson said Cairn will seek meetings with ministers and officials in



Nepal to help management assess its options. Cairn Energy has an office in Kathmandu but has been focused on analysing data previously collected by others.


The company was awarded 100 per cent stakes in five licences in the Tarai, Chitwan and Dang region in August 2004. In August 2005, six months after former king Gyanendra seized political control, the company declared contractual force majeure, suspending its work commitments in view of the security situation, and lifted it again in January 2010.

Even if Cairn stays in Nepal it could be years before it produces any oil in the country. In the giant Mangala find in Rajasthan in 2004, Cairn struck oil seven years after it started work. Production from the field started in August 2009. 🇳🇵

Mark Williamson is a business correspondent at The Herald, based in Scotland.

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Is oil Nepal's next big bonanza?, #211



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Paavan Mathema

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Any sane businessman will say: "Go away." However, these are the parameters under which foreign investors work in Nepal. Let's face it. If you had money you would go elsewhere. There isn't much attracting investors to Nepal.

The CEO of a multinational investor admitted that the biggest time consuming part of his job here is to extend his visa every four months. You have to pay Rs 5,000- 500,000 to expedite the process, or you will be left out in the cold for months. And this is someone who has invested US \$100 million in Nepal.

The case of Cairn Energy (see p4) is another case in point. If Cairn finds oil and gas in the Tarai, the whole country will benefit but if unsuccessful it will lose the millions it has spent so far. The Scottish company is taking a calculated risk, but we have made it inordinately riskier with our political fluidity, corruption and tedious bureaucracy.

According to the United Nation's body on trade, investment and development issues, UNCTAD's latest World Investment Report, Nepal is in the bottom of the heap with Afghanistan, North Korea and Bhutan when it comes

to attracting foreign direct investment. As per Department of Industry statistics, FDI commitment declined by 48.35 per cent in 2010-11. FDI increased by 30 per cent during the same period in Bangladesh.

The list of investor woes is long: power cuts, shutdowns, militant labour, extortion, local opposition, tedious paperwork, corruption, low productivity and skill of the workforce.

"It is embarrassing," the Nepali in-charge at the Kathmandu office of a multinational company confessed to us this week. "As a Nepali, it is embarrassing to explain to our head office what those in power demand to get work done here. These are foreign companies, they don't pay without a receipt."

Most investors we talked to said the last four months of the present government has been the worst they have ever seen in terms of corruption and extortion. It is no surprise that the maximum FDI we have is from India. Other than geographical and cultural proximity, the reason may be that they do

not have to worry about extending visas.

This is an open market and if Nepal wants investors, foreign or local, it will have to clean up its act. We have a terrible reputation, and the new Nepal Investment Board needs to do a lot of catching up in the investment year 2012-13.

The legal and practical problems faced by investors have to be resolved so that they have hassle-free experiences. We aren't offering the best deals, so there has to be incentive to invest. The bureaucracy is slow, and the political will is absent.

But Nepal does have some unique selling points. We are strategically placed with access to two of the biggest markets in China, and India. Energy, among other sectors, offers a lucrative business opportunity. Goods produced here are granted preference by the European Union.

But these advantages are far outweighed by the chronic political instability and the lawlessness of the land. ■



BIZ BRIEFS

Education first

Himal Remit has donated Rs 200,000 for infrastructure development at Shree Birendra Higher Secondary school in Parbat. On the occasion of Himalayan Bank's nineteenth anniversary its CEO Ashok SJB Rana handed over the money to the school's principal.

New for old

CG Electronics, the authorised distributor of LG Electronics in Nepal, has launched a new LG Exchange Offer to provide LG LCD or LED TV to broaden its consumer base. According to the scheme, consumers will receive LG LCD or LED TV in exchange of an old TV of any brand.



Easy money

Bank of Kathmandu has introduced BOK international debit card and prepaid card in the market. The card can be availed by all customers having Foreign Currency Account

and also by customers who travel overseas and seek foreign currency exchange facility. The international debit card /prepaid card can be used in all ATM & POS having Visa network and is valid all over the world.

Smart lighting

Explore International one of the trading subsidiaries of Panchakanya Group has launched Oberon Lighting System in Nepal. Explore International will oversee the marketing & strategic aspect of the product. The energy-saving and environmentally friendly products are designed in Singapore with aim to provide quality and high value to the customers.



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2012 Results

- NEPALI RUNNERS MEN'S EVENT**
- 100km**
1. Aite Tamang 11:30 (Nepal Army)
 2. Sudip Kulung 11:30:02
 3. Bed Bahadur Sunuwar 11:55:11 (Nepal Army)
 4. Tirtha Tamang 11:55:13 (Nepal Army)
 5. Upendra Sunuwar 12:28:28
- 70km**
1. Samir Tamang 7:28:55 (Nepal Army)
 2. Bhim Bahadur Gurung 7:30:16 (Nepal Army)
 3. Bikash Shahi 8:20:38
 4. ChhituKulung 8:58:16 (Nepal Army)
 5. Krishna Karki 9:02:48 (Nepal Army)
- 50km**
1. Hom Lal Shreshta 4:27:16 (Nepal Army)
 2. Purna Tamang 4:48:17 (Nepal Army)
 3. Ram Kumar Khatri 4:48:20 (Nepal Army)
 4. Shyam Kumar Parajuli 5:15:38 (Nepal Army)
 5. Kumar Bogoti 5:15:40 (Nepal Army)
- NEPALI RUNNERS WOMEN'S EVENT**
- 50km**
1. Mani Kala Rai 6:15:10
 2. Yangdi Lama Sherpa 6:55:24
 3. Dolma Sherpa 7:28:33
- FOREIGN RUNNERS MEN'S EVENT**
(Provisional results)
- 100km**
1. Christophe Le Saux (France) 13:16
- 70km**
1. Marco Beretta (Italy) 12:11
 2. Yusuke Tateno (Japan) 12:14
 3. Tom Bellamy (UK) 14:32
- 50km**
1. Peter Gijssels (Belgium) 6:03
 2. Shinsuki Ogura (Japan) 7:46
 3. Michael Haseldine (Australia) 7:54
- FOREIGN RUNNERS WOMEN'S EVENT**
- 70km**
1. Xing Ruling (China) 14:35
 2. Cecilia Bellotto (Italy) 15:17
 3. Katja Fink (Switzerland) 18:15
- 50km**
1. Claire Price (UK) 7:00
 2. Victoria Leckie (UK) 7:31
 3. Dominique Price (Canada) 8:35

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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
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EVENTS



Talk on Newar and the Trans-Himalayan Phylum, Dr George van Driem talks about Newar linguistic and genetic ancestries. *31 January, 11am, Martin Chautari, Thapathali*

The Nepali Way, don't miss out ECS Nepal's photography contest 'The Nepali Way' with the theme 'People'. *Submit your photograph at <http://ecs.com.np/contest>, until 31 January*



Emotions in Motion, an art exhibition by Govinda Sah with exquisite modern paintings. *Closes on 7 February, 11am onwards, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babermahal Revisited*

Cycle 7: Identity, three photography installations: Navarasa, Ink'd and The Tales of Dirty Feet by talented photographers. *9.30 am to 8pm, 6 January to 15 February, Galleria CUC, Deetya Complex, Maharajgunj*

New Wangden Carpets and Furniture Exhibition, check out the Wangden Carpet Collection by Rupert Smith or browse through Nepali and Tibetan carpets and furniture. *17 December to 30 January, 2pm onwards, Indigo Gallery, Naxal, 4413580*



GIHE Youthfest 2012, music, food and unlimited entertainment with performances by Nepsydaz, Albatross and Adrian Pradhan. *11 February, 11am, GEMS Complex, Dhapakhel, 9849511171, 9849831493, 9808530042*



CAN Info-Tech 2012, be tech savvy as you browse through gizmo and gadgets in this tech expo. *26 to 31 January, Bhrikuti Mandap*

Ultimate Photography Workshop, Artudio presents the 12th session of digital photography workshop. *Rs 3000, Starting from mid-February, 7am to 9am, Artudio, Lazimpat, 9841498425, 9841379780*

MUSIC

Nepfest Reloaded, Nepfest is back with bands like Aimbaze, White and many more. *Rs 150, 28 January, 1pm, House of Music, Thamel*

Black History Month, celebrate the spirit and culture of African Americans with music and literature events and documentary screenings. *House of Music, Thamel*

Jazz Night, Fusion Jazz and vocals by Sadip Shahi with delicious French dishes. *27 January, 6.30 pm, New Orleans, Jawalakhel*



Golden Moments, a tribute to Elvis Presley with Prism Band and Tom Bartlett as Elvis Presley. *28 January, 7pm onwards, Garden Terrace Coffee Shop, Soaltee, Tahalchal, 9851087197*



DINING

Bench Burger, be it fish or steak burgers, Bench Burger offers many types and tastes to satisfy your palate. *Krishnagalli, Patan*



Fire and Ice, home to some of the most delicious pizzas in town. *Thamel, 4250210*

Chongqing Fast Food, gear up for some mouth watering Chinese dishes like Sour and Spicy Pork and Kung Pao Chicken. *Thamel*

Casa de Cass, offers continental delicacies, baked goodies, brewed coffee and everything in between. *Jawalakhel*



Grill Me, a haven for meat lovers, the restaurant stays true to its name. *Jhamsikhel*



Cha Cha Café, this Japanese restaurant is popular for its spaghetti and burger steaks. *Thamel*



GREEN on the INSIDE

A hotel that doesn't use plastic water bottles, a briquette-maker and orphans with green thumbs

Handy waste

Fuel prices have increased again and people are finding it more and more expensive to heat their homes and businesses. "An alternative to traditional energy sources for heat is briquettes," says Sanu Kaji Shrestha of the Foundation of Sustainable Technologies (FoST), which has been advocating the production and use of briquettes since 2004.

A briquette is a block of combustible material made from biomass waste that has the same utility as firewood. Fuel briquettes can be produced from bio-degradable residues including paper, sawdust, scrap wood, dried leaves and weeds, rice husks, and kitchen waste.

A two-inch thick briquette six inches in diameter can burn for about 40 minutes. Shrestha says that a briquette emits 70 per cent less smoke than wood, thus reducing indoor air pollution. FoST gives training courses on briquette production and usage in 40 districts. A briquette pressing machine costs Rs 7,000 and can produce over 20 kg of briquettes a day.

Briquettes are priced at Rs 20 a kilo. FoST has been encouraging its trainees to start commercial production so that they can generate income from briquettes. Shrestha has shared this technology in Afghanistan, Cyprus, Cambodia, India and the Philippines.

Contact number - 01 4361574 or email at fost@ntc.net.np



No plastic

Order water at any restaurant in Kathmandu, and chances are that you will be served water in a plastic bottle. However, at Kantipur Temple House, the waiter will graciously hand you a metal flask. No plastic, no non-degradable waste.

The guests are discouraged to use mineral water bottles and plastic bags. Instead, the hotel lends them reusable water bottles and cloth shopping bags free of cost.

"Our aim is to minimise plastic usage in the hotel," says Subechhya Basnet of Kantipur Temple House which saved 8,000 mineral water bottles from ending up in landfill sites last year alone.

Even though it is a four-storied building, the hotel's owners decided against installing an elevator. And as most guests are trekkers, they don't complain about it. Kantipur Temple House doesn't have power-hungry ACs either. The greenery of the hotel's garden is an oasis in built-up Thamel. The hotel uses compost from kitchen waste in its own organic vegetable garden.

Basnet says, "We are trying to promote responsible tourism and our guests have come back because they value what we do." Visit their website www.kantipurtemplehouse.com



Green thumbs

Some of Kathmandu's youngest green thumbs in a Balkot Children's home have ditched the 'orphan tag', and replaced it with a 'green tag' in an effort to give Nepali children a more sustainable future. Chairperson of the Maya Children's Organisation, Bikash KC, says his ambition was to develop a home and a schooling system to support the children from the 'grassroots'.

KC has transformed a handful of Balkot's orphan children by introducing them to a more sustainable lifestyle. "We're trying to make the kids think greener," he says. "We also want to make the children's homes more homely rather than have them live in institutions." One of the three children's homes that KC is involved with is called Hamroghar Children's Home, meaning 'our home'.

Green thumb and orphan Sagar Magar, 15, lives in an Australian-funded orphanage called Meg's Home in Balkot. He's been trying to set up a green club at school as a result of KC's mentoring. "We are learning how to manage crops and the green club will help in recycling," he says. "The degradable products will go into a compost pit, plastic goods will be recycled."



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*



Just Baked, a cozy café with amazing pastries and friendly ambience. *Old Baneshwor*

Kotetsu, high quality Japanese dishes that cater to your needs and taste buds. *Lazimpat*

Irish Pub, for the simple reason that the place actually feels like a bar. Don't miss out on the Irish coffee. *Lazimpat, Ananda Bhawan, 4416027*

New Dish, you will be in for a treat here as it serves one of the best pork momo in town. *Khichapokhari*

The Yellow Chili, Sanjeev Kapoor's restaurant with Indian cuisine and local delicacies. *Bluebird Complex, Thapathali*



Dechenling, the place to head for Bhutanese and Tibetan cuisine, their pleasant and spacious garden is ideal for big gatherings. *Thamel*

Dragon Café, try your favorite snacks at a reasonable price. *Kumaripati*

GETAWAYS



Amtrip Adventures, be a part of the Amtrip Bungy or Swing Jump Event. *Rs 2700 per person for one day or Rs 4500 per person for an overnight stay, valid until the end of January, Amtrip, Naxal, 4444690, 4444820, www.amtrip.com.np*

Fulbari Resort, enjoy the scenic view as you pamper yourself with tennis, golf, drinks and dinners. *Rs 6500 per person for 2 nights and 3 days, Pokhara, 4461918, 4462248, resv@fulbari.com.np, sales@fulbari.com.np*



GHT UPDATE

The Great Himalayan Trail - Climate Smart Celebrity Trek team is well on their way towards Kangchenjunga base camp and has passed through Ghunsa Thursday. After a warm farewell by Taplejung locals, the team has commenced the trek at Suketar on 22 January. They were immediately hit by heavy snowfall, as it made its way down to the headwaters of the Tamur river.

The team updates its progress on Facebook. They are currently on the first section out of ten on the 1,700km Great Himalayan Trail that will take four months to complete. So far the team hasn't come across any difficulties and Dawa Sherpa has said with his famous understatement: "Tough times are out of the way for few days."

Team member and journalist Saurav Dhakal posted this cryptic sentence on Twitter: "Sorry friend for less update due to less internet footprint." The team is led by Apa Sherpa who has climbed Everest 21 times. Along with him is two times Everest summiteer Dawa Steven Sherpa, Saurav Dhakal and Samir Jung Thapa. Follow them:

On Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/climatesmarttrek>
On Twitter: #GHT12



SOMEPLACE ELSE



served with a separate bowl of plain egg noodles. The popular street food is a perfect merienda, a light afternoon snack to sate that pre-prandial craving.

Reliable standards for carousing and nibbling at good prices suggest a prospective happy hour haunt. But still in its nascent stage, at what was the former Royal Hana Garden (vestiges remain like a copse of bamboo trees and an empty hot tub), Trisara has a chance to better showcase its culinary potential, namely in its main courses, and redeem its edenic subtitle: a 'Garden in Heaven'. 🇳🇵

Marco Pollo

Pass the Hotel Shanker going north on Lazimpat and right into the garden driveway

Flip through Trisara's menu presents token characters from the typical Kathmandu supper club like American Chopsuey, chicken chilly, sadhekos, pakodas, and tempuras, which make us wonder, "What's new?"

The recently opened Trisara in Lazimpat risks running up against the humdrum of the 'resto lounge': a garden patio, coffee tables, bolstered settees, a gamut of drinks and quick appetizers and live music. But after further inspection of novel dishes and flavorsome classics, Trisara proves a worthy contender for a night out on the town.

Among the non-vegetarian options, the Flambéed Prawns (Rs 280), sautéed in Mekong Whiskey and basil leaves and featured on a bed of bok choy, are a savory complement to a stiff drink, but a bit on the salty end. Drink up.

Of the many chicken options, the Crispy Chicken (Rs 175) marries strips of meat tendered and fried to an even crisp and dotted with a garlic chili blend.

Likewise, for vegetarians, the Crispy Garlic Mushroom with Garlic Potato (Rs 130) stirs up a stinking, delicious delight that would stave off even the most dogged necker.

For chow, Khau Soi (chicken Rs 250; shrimp variation, Rs 300) is pure comfort. The Thai-Burmese chicken dish is simmered in a thin coconut curry, similar to massaman or yellow curry, and



A Separation



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

‘Riveting’ is the first word that comes to mind while describing Iranian director Asghar Farhadi’s *A Separation*. The pacing, the slow unfolding of its story, the gradual opening up of layers behind layers, both of the plot as well as of the characters, are the hall-marks of a sophisticated script and incredible restraint. Not every director can take subject matter that has so much to do with the internal workings of the human mind and keep it from becoming dead boring, or conversely, descending into melodrama.

The story starts with a married couple, Simin and Nader, in front of the judge. Simin is arguing her case for a divorce. She wants to take their 11-year-old daughter, Termeh, and leave Iran for the United States. Nader, however, refuses to leave his frail Alzheimer-ridden father. “Does he even know you are his son?” reasons Simin. Nader responds, “I know he is my father”. With these lines we have the beginning of a film that deals with all the nebulous areas when duty and loyalty are called into question, and when one must ask questions like, “Is it always over-archingly important to tell the truth?”

The story starts to become complicated as Simin leaves Nader and Termeh and goes to her mother’s house. Nader is forced to hire someone to look after his incapacitated father while he works and Termeh goes to school. Enter Razieh, a devout and superstitious matron, who struggles from day one to take proper care of the old man. She has a long commute to come to work with her little girl in tow, and she is quite

heavily pregnant.

Not giving away crucial events of the story, one day Nader returns to find that Razieh has done something unforgivable. He shoves Razieh out the apartment door and leaves weeping helped down the stairs by some passing neighbours. What ensues is a series of “he says” vs “she says” in a court room. Razieh has lost her baby, she blames her miscarriage on Nader’s ill-treatment of her. Nader is accused of murder and arrested. In turn he files a case against Razieh for ill-treating his father. Razieh’s hot-tempered husband makes an appearance finally, irate at the loss of his unborn child and determined to get his blood money.

The drama of the story hinges on several questions. Did Nader know Razieh was pregnant when he employed her? His wife and Termeh seem think he did. Is the religious Razieh strictly truthful? Why does Simin assume her husband is guilty of allegedly pushing Razieh down the stairs?

Perhaps these seem like petty little questions in a small domestic drama, but this framework of inter-locking questions in the skilled hands of Farhadi’s direction, opens up a world of ambiguity and questions. No one is quite telling the truth, no one is quite the bad guy. Even Termeh, the innocent teenager caught between her two parents is forced to equivocate at one point.

A film like *A Separation* (made for under a million dollars), is the truest kind of counter-point to a big budget Hollywood melodrama, a gem-like, multi-faceted film that keeps one talking, and thinking, long after it is over. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer



Healthier Nepal



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

In these days of political doom and gloom, there is welcome news about Nepal’s health indicators. The World Bank’s health assessment of Nepal gives something to cheer about.

Even though Nepal’s gross national income (GNI) is three times lower than India’s, Nepal’s health indicators have surpassed India’s when the opposite was true a few decades ago. In 1990 Nepal was behind in every development indicator. This phenomenal improvement appears almost paradoxical, given that Nepal is the poorest amongst the neighboring countries being compared.

The government’s health programs and international and national NGO’s will be quick to claim credit, but perhaps the contribution from hard-earned remittance sent directly to their families in village Nepal by self-sacrificing Nepalis abroad may well be significant. The

improved health indices data is also in keeping with the recent finding, albeit controversial, that Nepal’s poverty level may have fallen by about 15 per cent. Levels of poverty and health indices are in general correlated.

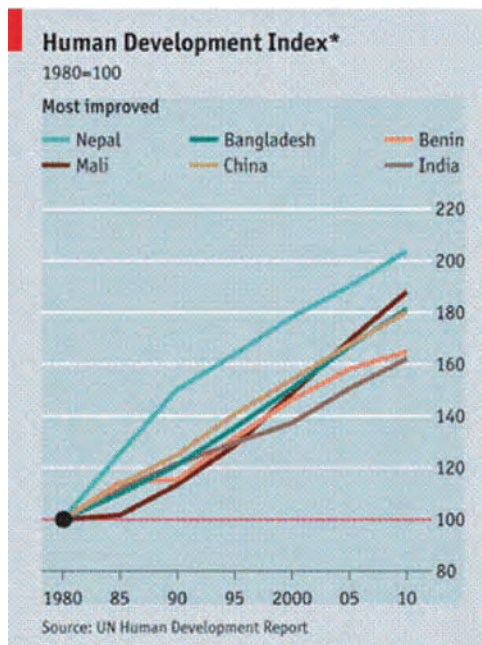
Although Bangladesh with somewhat similar GNI outpaces

ahead of us, and in the coming years we need to strive to reach their level.

There is however one area where we fare very poorly: we still have the highest maternal mortality ratio in comparison to the neighbouring countries. Each week 42 Nepali women die in childbirth. Mark Zimmerman, executive director of the Nick Simon’s Institute expresses the beginning of this tragedy vividly: “In her home high in the mountains of western Nepal, a woman goes into labour to deliver her first child. She does it the same way that her mother did and her grandmother before her: on the floor, with only a relative to help.”

With the newly-trained, more competent, and dedicated skilled birth attendants working in the hills of village Nepal today, hopefully the next World Bank’s assessment will show improvements in the maternal mortality ratio as well. 🇳🇵

<http://search.worldbank.org/data?qterm=nepal&language=EN>

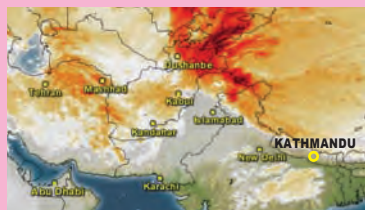


us in most categories, clearly Nepal appears to be the most improved player on the block. Sri Lanka and China are way



WEEKEND WEATHER
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

A low pressure system riding the westerlies has brought moisture into the region and with it fog cover in the Tarai and the midhill valleys. The weekend will have minimum temperature in Kathmandu hovering over zero with the mercury climbing up to 18 Celsius as the sun burns off the mist. Wednesday’s spotless clean skies, though, had nothing to do with weather patterns, it was caused by the lack of vehicular pollution in Kathmandu. However, thick Indo-Gangetic smog will continue to waft up the mountains most afternoons.



FRI	SAT	SUN
18-02	18-03	18-00



BIKRAM RAI

WE DIDN’T START THE FIRE: Students belonging to 13 students unions end their torch rally, Tuesday, on the eve of their banda against the petroleum price hike. The government decreased the prices on Thursday.



KRISHNA SINJALI

BEATING THE DRUMS: Limbus perform Chiyabrung dance at the International Conference on implementation of indigenous people’s right to self determination and autonomy in Dharan on Saturday.



GIFT WRAPPED: Indian Ambassador Jayant Prasad hands over buses and ambulances to Nepali charities on the occasion of the 63rd Indian Republic Day on Thursday.

Who says Nepal is divided?



Glancing at the front pages of the newspapers these days, or watching the evening news, one gets the overwhelming impression that Nepal is breaking apart.

Media is not interested in the good things that happen, highlighting people who struggle to make a contribution to their communities and society. Things going right don't make news, things have to break to be considered a 'breaking news'. Reporters give undue importance to the corrosive rhetoric of those who want to carve Nepal up into small pieces, they highlight the handful of spoilers and ignore the vast, silent majority of Nepalis who want to live in harmony and peace.

Politicians play with fire when they whip up ethnic animosities in the name of correcting historical discrimination. Yet, the media unthinkingly gives the most prominent coverage to those who shout the loudest, who say the most outrageous things. As a pilot and talk show host myself, I have come to realise the enormous potential for the media to set things right in society by offering hope through the power of good example. Yet, I wonder if the media is now a part of the problem.



Which is why I wasn't surprised to find too many reporters at the Sonam Tamang new year celebrations at Tundikhel on Tuesday. This was a celebration not just of the Tamang community, but it belonged to all Nepalis. We saw Newars, Bahuns, Chhetris, Gurungs, Rais and Limbus

all mingling and enjoying themselves in a rich microcosm of Nepal itself. Under a bright blue sky and the warm glow of a winter sun we celebrated a new Nepaliess that is united by its diversity. Who says Nepal is divided? Who says Nepalis can't live as one united family like they always have? Who

dares break Nepal up?

Whenever I speak to Nepalis in Kuala Lumpur, Doha or Hong Kong, they speak as if they belong to a joint Nepali family. People never talk about what divides them, but what unites them: the languages, cultures, festivals and the land of mountains, valleys and plains that we are proud to call our own. We speak in Nepali, the language that cements us, about the shared history that our ancestors built together. We say we are Nepali first, and then we belong to our various nationalities.

There is no point going into who settled here first. Except for some of the 103 ethnicities in this country, we all came from somewhere else and came to become Nepalis at heart. In the past few years, I have attended the new year celebrations

The Tamang new year celebration on Tuesday proved Nepalis are more united than ever

of Nepal's other communities as well. Everywhere I find the same sense of harmony and tolerance of diversity. No one is trying to exclude any other community.

Yet, in the narrow minded politics of today we see leaders trying to drive a wedge between ethnic groups, carving up a united nation into overlapping provinces with confused boundaries, trying to create walls and fences where there aren't any.

It was telling that when the prime minister arrived at Tundikhel on Tuesday and the politicians started delivering their tired old speeches, no one was listening. Only the reporters were taking notes. 🇳🇵



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You got to have faith

Modern medicine and faith healing can complement each other in Nepal

BRITTANY SEARLE

Nepalis have retained their faith in faith healing despite the spread of modern medicine, and they desire a spiritual dimension to treatment that they don't get from doctors.

Nepal's traditional dhami-jhankri and shamans offer a parallel health care system in a country where hospitals are either overcrowded, expensive or don't help patients get better. Even practitioners of western medicine admit there may be aspects of this traditional form of healing that can complement modern treatment methods.

Mark Zimmerman is with the Nick Simmons Institute in Kathmandu and has been a doctor in Nepal for the last 25 years. "The first thing we were taught in medical school is that faith heals," he explains, "whether a doctor, a surgeon, a faith healer or alternative medicine person, if I can engender your faith it will



increase my chance of healing you."

Many think that faith healing is only practiced in remote parts of Nepal, but there are dhami-jhankris who are in demand even in Kathmandu. And in the heart of the capital is the Shamanistic Studies and Research Centre where both

locals and foreigners flock to be healed, cleansed or spiritually awakened.

Founded by Mohan Rai in 1988, the centre aims to revive shamanism by reintroducing it to the modern world. Rai, who comes from a long line of traditional healers, believes that shamanism

complements western medicine by re-introducing the spiritual element to healing.

"I am trying to explain to the world that shamanism is not primitive but can add to modern medicine," explains Rai.

Australian Laura Martino is taking a course at Rai's centre and is learning traditional

drumming, organising spiritual ceremonies, and making field trips to places in Nepal with a strong tradition of shamanism.

"I didn't plan to come to Nepal, I just stumbled across faith healing," she says, "but everything has fallen into place. You can say it's a coincidence, but it's more than that."

Shamanism, Korea's



JASON STROTHER in SEOUL

Tech-savvy South Koreans are shamanic believers who complement their belief in Buddhism, Confucionism and Christianity

Bowls of fruit are laid out on the altar. There are also bottles of whiskey and a meter-high stack of Marlboro cigarette cartons. With a grin, Korean shaman Tae Eul says his gods like to drink and smoke.

You'd be mistaken if you thought tech-savvy South Koreans only worshiped smartphones and the latest cars -- many believe in an ancient, animistic spirituality. At the center of Korean shamanism is the mudang, or shaman, the medium between the material and spirit world.

"People hear about me through word of mouth," explains Eul, from inside his temple on the slopes of Korea's Mt Sangak. "I try to figure out how the energy of the universe

DRUM ROLL: One of the faith healers who works at Mohan Rai's centre chants during a cleansing ceremony in Kathmandu recently.



BIKRAM RAI

The reason for the continued popularity of faith healers in Nepal has often been explained by the people's limited access to hospitals. Yet, the fact that faith healing is still popular and is even being studied by westerners proves that it goes far beyond that notion. Nepal's faith healers have



GETTING BETTER

Tamangs, Newars, Rais, Limbus and many other ethnic groups in Nepal have strong ties to faith healing. To most it is not a religion or a culture but an indigenous practice with ties to nature. Ceremonies often involve the village dhami-jhankri attempting to address the spiritual imbalance within a patient, performing puja to appease ancestral spirits or drawing an offending spirit from the body. According to shamanistic practitioner Mohan Rai, faith healers can do a lot but at the end of the day they are only medium between the patient and the spirit world. The effectiveness of treatment often depends on the mental attitude of patients, who have to will themselves to get better and put their faith in the spiritual healer. In modern medicine the effectiveness of belief in healing is best captured in the concept of the 'Placebo Effect', where patients are given sugar pills and are told they will feel better. Doctors agree that in one-third of the cases they treat, patients are healed of their ailments even if the pill doesn't contain any active ingredients. Many patients get better because they believe they will be better.

been successfully employed to supplement the efforts of health workers. Dhami-jhankris have been trained to administer antibiotics and refer patients who are too ill to hospitals. In the 1980s when there was even less access to hospital care than now in remote Jumla, the people's trust in faith healers was put to good use to treat the biggest killer of children in western Nepal: acute respiratory infections. The infant mortality rate came down dramatically as a result. Ravi Shankar, assistant professor at Manipal College of Medical Sciences in Pokhara and a leading voice for integrative medicine, believes traditional and modern forms

of treatment should go hand-in-hand. "The two are very different and I believe knowing the strengths and weaknesses of each and respecting each other are important." Despite their scientific training both Shankar and Zimmerman agree that medicine is only effective if patients believe in it. And Rai, who has worked at teaching clinics across Nepal, says he prays that science, technology, healers, and therapists can come together. "Let's work together," he says passionately, "you do it the scientific way, but if you miss something you may be missing a lot of things. If you can't do it maybe we can." 🇳🇵

spiritual core



flows through, then the gods show the way." The 38-year-old shaman says that even if he wanted to stop being a mudang, he couldn't -- the spirits control him now. Inside his mountain temple, a robed Eul asks a Korean woman to light candles and bow in front of an altar as he summons the gods of the mountain and sky and calls out to her ancestors. Amid the crashing of cymbals and the blaring of a

horn, Tae Eul stands barefoot on knife blades that somehow do not puncture his skin. He spins in circles waving a sword in one hand and a silk scarf in the other. After the ceremony is complete, Tae Eul says his client will be fine. The gods have opened a door for her to solve her financial problems, he says, and will make sure she'll spend her money more wisely and have a luckier future. Shamanism is the indigenous faith of the Korean people and despite centuries of influence from other religions, it still appears in many aspects of modern life there. Tae Eul says that many of his clients are not necessarily believers in shamanism. Some are often devoutly religious in other faiths.

In Korea, religious beliefs are not always mutually exclusive. For example, a mother might pray at a church, then a Buddhist temple, and then visit a mudang all in hope of bringing good luck to her family. It's this intrinsic search for spiritually divined good luck that keeps the nation's 50,000 mudangs in business, says David Mason, author of Sacred Mountains, a book on Korean shamanism. "It seems to me that many Koreans are still shamanic believers at the core of their psychology and then layers of Buddhism or Confucianism, then Christianity and modern scientific thinking as the outer layers." 🇳🇵

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Amchis want recognition

Packets of powdered medicine lie in the middle of a meeting hall at Shechen monastery, circled by a group of traditional Tibetan healers known as 'Amchis', who are chanting. The ceremony is one of the many features that are unique to the Tibetan science of healing which has its origins 1,700 years ago on the plateau. This is a ceremony in which the healers are empowered and the medicines are blessed so they are more effective. It is the last step in the production process of traditional Tibetan medicine at a recent eight-day workshop organised by the Himalayan Amchi Association (HAA). After the establishment of Tibetan medicine schools in India, China and Nepal, more and more students, even those with no ties to Tibet are studying to become Amchis. While the Ministry of Education in Nepal through Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) has agreed to HAA's proposal to certify students and give them titles when they complete the required years of education, the practice is yet to earn legal recognition in the country.

President Amchi Gyatso Bista of HAA (pictured, right) says he is dismayed by the lack of legal recognition in Nepal. "We have been pressing for this since the beginning," he said. "I can't understand why the Ministry of Health doesn't want to give us official recognition."



While China and India have recognised the practice, in Bhutan and Mongolia traditional Tibetan healing is part of the national health care system. Even in China, the Tibetan medicine industry is booming with factories producing more than 100 medicines every day. Aamchi Namgyal from Dolpa, one of the participants at the Shechen workshop, began his training at age 12 under his father's guidance. But the tradition of the knowledge passing from generation to generation is changing after the establishment of Tibetan medicine schools. The Nepal government's reluctance to give the Tibetan medicine system recognition has socially and economically marginalised Amchis in the country, affecting their ability to make effective medicines. Tibetan medicine has been practiced in Nepal for the past 1,000 years and forms a part of the traditional and faith-healing culture even after the advent of modern medicine. Amchis say they work not just with the patients' bodies, but also their mind and soul. They don't just try to cure one ailment at a time, but look holistically at the person and seek long-term solutions. Until a decade ago, there were only a handful of Tibetan clinics in the country. Today there are more than 20 just in Boudhanath. Many operate under the 'Ayurveda' label, something Amchi Bista doesn't approve of. He says: "This is not a branch of Ayurveda. It has its own unique identity that should be maintained and this is possible only when we get due recognition." 🇳🇵

Tsering Dolker Gurung

Bankers on the run

Nawaraj Mainali in
Naya Patrika, 23 January

ढाँचा पत्रिका

The police have arrested sixteen bankers in the last eight months for embezzling millions of rupees from financial institutions, while more than hundred officials who face charges are on the run.

Nepal Rastra Bank and Police's Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) began a joint investigation campaign eight months ago which first led to the arrest of Gorkha Development Bank's former president D.B. Bamjan who had siphoned off five million rupees from the bank. Thirteen other members were implicated for misappropriating funds and the Nepal Rastra Bank had issued warrants for their arrests.

While most of the culprits have already fled the country, some who have political connections are still in Nepal.

The police also rounded up Rabindrabahadur Singh and Radhakrishna Amatya of United Development Bank in Bara on similar fraud cases and Rashtra Bank has scrapped the bank's license.

Six people involved in the misuse of money in Merchant Capital have also been arrested while Pawan Karki, the prime suspect and former board member along with 35 others are hiding from the police.

Nepal Share Market, one of the oldest

financial institution in the country is also embroiled in controversy. Its CEO Yogendra Prasad Shrestha was arrested in October for embezzling 2.61 billion. Similarly, officials of Samjhana Finance and Progressive Finance were also arrested while the officials of People Finance are on the run.

CIB's chief DIG Upendrakant Aryal says that even though banking fraud is a serious criminal offence, negligent

laws and lack of investigation promote such behaviours in Nepal's banking sector. However, Aryal claims that since the arrest of many bank officials, the number of financial irregularities has decreased.



Delhi disposed

Interview with Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Bijay Kumar Gachhadar in *Kantipur*, January 22

कान्तिपुर

What is the feeling in New Delhi regarding Nepal's peace process?

BG: India has been very supportive throughout Nepal's peace process and political transition. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, home minister, defense minister and leaders in the opposition, everybody extended their good wishes for a speedy completion of the peace process and constitution writing.



Is the Indian establishment still suspicious of the Maoist led government?

India is very positive towards the present coalition government led by the Maoists. I do not see the possibility of a change in the government, except in case of a national unity government.

What role will India play in the improvement of Nepal's security forces?

Alongside helping us establish a police academy, they have promised to provide lethal and non-lethal weapons and the non-lethal weapons are expected to arrive soon. We also requested for logistical assistance for the Nepali police so that we have better patrolling, fire brigade and riot control facilities.

You have been criticised for breaching diplomatic protocol. What do you have to say about that?

Shiva Shankar Menon is a friend of mine. My meeting with him was unofficial and very personal. Besides, we have to rise above protocols at times to understand the significance of an incident.

समावेशी व्यवस्थापन



Hon. Murderer, Hon. Fraud, Hon. Corrupt, Hon. Smuggler, Hon. Dacoit, Hon. Kidnapper

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट Basu Kshitiz in *Annapura Post*, January 21

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“The Maoists can return to the jungle if they don't want peace.”

NC president Sushil Koirala at a function in the capital on Saturday

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INCREDIBLE INDIA

India witnesses more than 5.5 million annual foreign tourist visits. The tourism industry in India is expected to generate an income of US\$ 275.5 billion by 2018



PROCESSING GROWTH

To achieve market potential, India's food processing sector calls for over US\$ 250 billion in investments



A RICH FOOD BASKET

Indian food sector processing industry will receive FDI of US\$ 23.5 billion between 2008-2011



TALENT AND YOUTH POWER

50 percent of India's population is under the age of 25 years. 7.7 million join the workforce every year



MICROSOFT'S WINDOW TO THE FUTURE

All tooling work for Microsoft's software for mobile devices is carried out in India



A SOFTWARE HUB

The 2.3 million strong Indian IT-BPO industry is all set to grow 400 percent by 2020



HEALING THE WORLD

3,500 India drug makers export medicines worth US\$ 10 billion to over 100 countries



GROWING ON THE FAST TRACK

India exported 74,305 heavy and medium commercial vehicles in the second half of the financial year 2011



THE GOLDEN SKY LINE

India is the leading real estate investment market in Asia. Construction margins in India are also



NEW WINGS NEW DIRECTIONS

Boeing's Bengaluru Technology Centre is helping the company build fuel-cell powered futuristic aircraft



MANUFACTURER PAR EXCELLENCE

India has been ranked second in terms of manufacturing competence globally

Being Together Growing Together

Education

- 200 schools/campuses constructed in 70 districts
- 2000 scholarships provided to Nepalese students annually to study both in India and Nepal
- Manmohan Memorial Polytechnic set up in 2009 became the first polytechnic providing technical education in 3 engineering streams and other vocational courses
- Polytechnic at Hetauda to be constructed for engineering degree in 4 streams



Health

- Five-storied OPD complex of Bir Hospital (Kathmandu) constructed with a capacity to accommodate 2500 out-patients
- Super-specialty Trauma Centre at Bir Hospital, Kathmandu constructed for the treatment of trauma patients
- BPKIHS Dharan, the flagship cooperation project, is the largest public-sector hospital-cum-medical college outside Kathmandu valley
- 21 hospitals constructed in 17 districts
- Availability of iodized salt at household level progressively increased (99.8% in 2010). As a result, rate of Goitre in Nepal has decreased from 55% in 1965 to 0.4% in 2007
- 342 ambulances and 66 buses covering 70 districts have been gifted since 1994
- 4.25 lakh Cataract/Trachoma patients examined, 87,000 surgeries performed, optical devices provided to 27,000 students through Nepal Netra Jyoti Sangh



Telecommunications

NRs. 1.18 billion provided for laying 904 Kms Optical Fibre along the East-West Highway and 80 stations of SDH equipment

Roads and Bridges

- 807 Kms of the East-West Highway from Mahendranagar to Mechi (Mahendra Raj Marg) constructed
- 22 bridges on Kohalpur-Mahakali section of the East-West Highway constructed
- First phase of Terai Roads Projects, currently under construction, covers 19 roads of 605 Kms in 13 Terai districts worth NRs. 11 billion. Phase-II will cover 900 Kms
- 7 villages/urban roads and 3 bridges constructed



Electrification/Power Projects

- 31 villages been electrified through NEA grid
- Solar electrification projects completed in 17 villages
- Work to start on the upgradation of Thame Khola Small Hydropower Plant in Solukhumbu
- Assistance being provided for grid connectivity to enable importing an additional 200 MW of power from India



सत्यमेव जयते

भारतीय राजदूत, काठमाण्डू
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA
KATHMANDU



On the occasion of India's Republic Day, I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to our friends in Nepal and to the Indian community. We mark this day to commemorate the entry into force of the Constitution of India. It is also a celebration of India's freedom and democracy.

The Constitution of India articulates India's diversity and complexity. It gave our nascent state a structure and system of government. Our Constitution commits India to pluralism in different domains: in the political domain through democracy; in the cultural domain through federalism; in the religious domain through secularism; in the economic domain through equality and equal opportunity; and in the social domain through equality, justice and non-discrimination for all.

India is a multi-cultural society in which all its citizens, regardless of region, religion, caste, race, language or gender, enjoy equal rights. India's democratic order has ensured that every Indian, regardless of economic status, has the right to a life of dignity and self-respect, and is able to make his or her unique contribution to the development of the nation.

India's economic regeneration, its human, technological and financial resources, the quality of its institutions, and its expanding markets represent an exceptional opportunity for growth in the whole of South Asia. It especially offers favourable prospects for the fraternal people of Nepal who share exceptionally close ties with India, and who have the added advantages of proximity, connectivity and established institutional ties.

The people of India wish their sisters and brothers in Nepal every possible success as they engage in the historic task of drafting the new Constitution of Nepal – a Constitution that reflects the needs and aspirations of people of Nepal and ensures stability, multiparty democracy, inclusiveness, and prosperity.

India's relations with Nepal are multi-layered and multi-faceted. They have been marked by continuing closeness, goodwill, mutual respect and mutual benefit. India has been a longstanding partner of Nepal in its quest for progress. India remains committed to deepening and diversifying its development partnership with Nepal and to extending all possible cooperation for Nepal's social and economic development, in accordance with the wishes and priorities of the people and Government of Nepal.

Jai Hind

26 January 2012

Jayant Prasad

Drinking Water

- Drinking water projects installed in more than 200 villages
- An ambitious project to provide drinking water facility in Solukhumbu is being undertaken

Strengthening of Cross-border Linkages

- Integrated Check-Posts being established at four major points along the India-Nepal border namely Raxaul-Birgunj; Sunauli-Bhairahawa; Jogbani-Biratnagar and Nepalgunj Road-Nepalgunj. Work started on Raxaul-Birgunj with a cost of NRs. 3.92 billion
- Cross-border railway links being constructed at five locations on the India-Nepal border namely Jaynagar-Bardibas; Jogbani-Biratnagar; Nautanwa-Bhairahawa; Rupaidiha-Nepalgunj, and New Jalpaiguri-Kakrabhitta. Work on Jaynagar-Bardibas and Jogbani-Biratnagar being taken up in Phase I with an estimated cost of NRs. 10.4 billion

Flood Control and River Training

NRs. 2369.08 million provided for strengthening embankments along Lalbakeya, Bagmati and Kamla rivers; River training works along Gagan, Trijuga, Lakhandei, Sunsari, Kankai and Kaligandaki rivers in Nepal worth NRs. 231.29 million provided; River training works on Banganga River (Kapilvastu) initiated at a cost of NRs. 40 million



Army Welfare Activities

- Disbursement of pension worth NRs. 19.47 billion annually to 1,24,000 ex-servicemen
- Educational scholarships for more than 225 students
- 1,24,000 medicine packets disbursed this year
- 17 solar projects completed benefiting 1.5 lakh people
- 1033 drinking water projects installed; 16 more projects being installed
- Medical grants distributed to 87 beneficiaries this year

Upcoming Projects

- Sabha Griha at Birgunj
- Mahendranagar-Tanakpur Road link
- Science Learning Centre at Khumaltar, Kathmandu
- Eye Hospital at Kapilvastu
- Nepal-Bharat Maitri Pashupati Dharamshala



EMPOWERING PEOPLE

The e-Choupal or rural Internet empowers India's 220 million farmers



OUT OF BOX

The size of the Indian television industry is projected to be US\$ 13.3 billion by 2014



A WELL-ENGINEERED FUTURE

India's revenue from engineering research will be US\$ 45 billion from 2020



REFINING CRUDE POWER

India's petroleum refining capacity would increase to 255mtpa by financial year 2012



A GEM OF A MARKET

India's diamond jewelry market will grow at a whopping 95 percent between 2010-15



LENDING A SPARKLE

India currently exports 95 percent of the world's diamonds

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Meeting point

Editorial in *Kantipur*, 25 January

कान्तिपुर

PM Baburam Bhattarai has declared that there will be a breakthrough in the peace process by next week but we haven't seen anything concrete so far. And if anyone is to blame for the protracted stalemate, it is the Maoists who have not given up on threats of a revolt in spite of joining the mainstream. The Bhattari and Dahal faction have given in to Baidya's political blackmailing and endorsed revolt only to balance out the hardliners. However, the events of the last six years make clear that the Maoists cannot go back to the jungle.

Also is it okay for one party to jeopardize the entire constitution writing and peace process for its narrow interests? Dahal has done a good job keeping the party together and not letting it split. He should now show the courage and decide in favor of peace and constitution.

If the Maoists are ready to compromise for the peace process, the Congress should be flexible in the debate of governance system. If the Congress keeps on insisting on a Westminster model and the Maoists on a presidential system, there will be no way out. There are two options left now: the mixed model or a directly-elected Prime Minister and a ceremonial president elected by the parliament. The parties have to come to a decision soon.



Divided we stand

Bishwamani Pokhrel in *Nagarik*, 26 January

नागरिक

Even though the State Restructuring Committee has outrun its 25 January tenure, members who got into a disagreement during the first meeting on November 27 still find themselves divided over crucial issues. The members have requested for a week's extension citing obstacles like load shedding and strikes and promised to work over their differences.

According to leaked information, members are yet to sort out their differences over the number of states, basis of state division, levels of governance and whether or not to give foreright to the people from the majority caste in each state.

The committee shouldn't prepare the report under any political influence or pressure. Rather they should take into consideration Nepal's social, cultural, geographical, religious diversity and carve out the future federal structure using scientific findings. It should be able to make bold decisions regardless of the ongoing politicised debate over federalism. The committee's report will also have to give space to sensitive questions like whether to divide states along ethnic lines. Furthermore, decisions need to be made on the demands of groups like the Dalits.

The committee members need to analyse the political consequences of submitting the report to the government. Once the report is made public, debates surrounding federalism are likely to become more polarised. If there are provisions of foreright in ethnic federalism then conflicts might arise in a diverse society like Nepal. However, after a decade long civil war the country cannot afford another ethnic conflict. The commission has a big responsibility on its shoulders and needs to accomplish a lot in a short time.

Nepal flunks rights test

The New York-based group, Human Rights Watch, says Nepal has failed to make progress on checking human rights violations. The report points towards a glaring apathy of the government and the political parties in addressing atrocities committed during the war, blaming the state for 'weakening already dysfunctional justice system by ignoring court orders and appointing people allegedly guilty of serious rights violations to senior government positions.'

Several national and international reports have criticised Nepal's poor human rights record in the past, and the report says refusal to extend the mandate of UN human rights field office this year is a major step backward and calls into question the commitment of the political parties in the government and opposition. Human Rights Watch director in Asia, Brad Adams concludes: "Nepal is no closer to fulfilling the lofty rights-focused commitments spelled out in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement now than when it was signed five years ago."

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Having nothing to do during the Wednesday bund, the Donkey sat down and started calculating the number of agreements the political parties have reached thus far. Looks like there have been at least 25 major agreements since the 12-point agreement between the seven party alliance and the Maoists in 2005. And since each agreement has a whole lot of sub-agreements and points, the Big Three have agreed on a total of at least 526 points in that period, which gives us an average of 100 points every fiscal year. By this yardstick, Nepal is probably the most agreeable country in the world.



Nothing surprises one anymore in this **Syndicated Kleptocratic Republic of Nepal**. In the past, even the most incompetent government would beg, borrow or steal to pay off Indian Oil, raise prices and suddenly the lines at gas stations would disappear. Not anymore. This government raised prices, but there is still a shortage. This is because Demand and

Supply Minister Lekraj But, in his wisdom, declared that the prices could go up even further. So the gas dealers are hoarding what they have. The Ass' namesake, Comrade But, after saying no way he was going to roll back prices, has now been agreeing to one unworkable plan after another, like reinstituting the dual price for diesel which was scrapped recently precisely because it opened the floodgates for adulteration and black market. And, buckling under pressure from student unions belonging to his own party, the minister wants to give discounts to students to buy gas which is

going to cost this bankrupt govt another Rs 4 billion a year. How is a government machinery that can't even collect taxes from supermarket chains like VAT-Bhateni going to ensure subsidised LPG for students without gas leaks?



It was going to happen sooner or later. Goons manning barricades during bands instead of stoning vehicles that dare defy their orders to be off the roads, have now started pocketing Rs 500 per taxi plying to and from the airport and waving them through. Which is why there were relatively fewer tod-fods

on Wednesday. The laissez faire (translation: anything goes) economy is alive and kicking in this Maoist republic.



You'd think that by now our netas would have run out of excuses for a delayed constitution, but that would be unfair on their collective creative genius. The Kangresis blame the Baddies, the Baddies blame the Kangresis, the Eh-maleys blame both and vice versa. The Madhesis blame everyone else but themselves. But now Comrade Krishna "50 Karod" Mahara has come with his own theory: he blames the dreaded **Foreign Hand** for conspiring against a new constitution.



Comrade Awesome's foot-in-mouth syndrome seems to have suffered a relapse considering his recent utterances, the latest of which is this Freudian gaffe: "Why would I want to be executive president? I am already more powerful than the president." Lately he's got a bee in his bonnet about a conspiracy hatched in "Hotel Revisited" to prevent him from being the Execution President. Ex-PM MKN who became PKD's first guest at his new Winter Palace in Lazimpat, tried to calm him down by telling him he was at

Caroline's too and there was no such conspiracy. But **Comrade Napoleon** is convinced the sheep are ganging up against him.



The countdown has started for the demise of the BRB govt, and the Kangresis are already licking their chops. Comrade Prime Minister has been spooked by Lotus Flower's latest utterances, and is openly consulting aides about PKD undermining him. BRB's suspicions were confirmed when Maoist youth dressed in 'Let Baburam Work' t-shirts were themselves showing him black flags. And in Palpa the other day, he noticed Awesome smiling slyly. But, for what it's worth, BRB is going nowhere just yet, and he is still trying to cobble together a govt of national unity under his own leadership. Which, considering the alternatives, may not be such a bad idea.



Policemen checking for drunk drivers at night are all falling sick. Police don't just have to endure bad breath as drivers do "Aahh", but are being infected with tonsillitis, respiratory tract inflammation, and even suspected tuberculosis.



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