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Eyes of justice

Unless Nepal comes to terms with the war crimes committed between 1996-2006, there is a danger that we will repeat them. The structural roots of violence and the objective conditions that led to conflict still remain and there is a risk that a future conflict could be an even more virulent ethnic one. Only by confronting the ugly secrets of the past will we be able to protect the future.

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"If you want peace, abolish hunger"

Interview with Professor Johan Galtung

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History will not forgive you Mr Prime Minister

by **Anurag Acharya**
The political and moral blunder of promoting a war criminal will haunt Baburam Bhattarai for a very long time

page 11

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OUT, DAMNED SPOT

In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the plotters of a regicide deal with the aftermath in different ways. Duncan's murder led to regime change, but left the perpetrators mired in a cycle of violence and bloodshed. Lady Macbeth did not do the deed herself, she just master-minded it and egged her weak-willed husband on, but she is consumed by guilt. She cannot seem to wash the imaginary blood from her hands, and is so tormented by guilt that she commits suicide at the end of the play. Human beings are born with an innate ability to tell right from wrong. Our brains are hardwired to be good, kind and to respect the sanctity of life. Which is why militaries invest so much time and energy to train recruits to overcome and suppress this sub-conscious abhorrence of bloodshed.

On 2 October, on Gandhi's birthday, the world marked the International Day of Non-Violence to draw attention to the Mahatma's teachings on peaceful political struggle. But here in Nepal, we marked it by promoting army officers guilty of war crimes, continuing to let a person accused of a war atrocity to serve as the spokesperson for the ruling party, witnessing the head of government publicly coddle a convicted murderer and dismiss 36 cases against members of the government that were in the courts.

In one of his typically hyperbolic moments after the end of the conflict in 2006, Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal compared himself to Gandhi. And this is a man who has confessed to ordering his cadre to terminate class enemies "with a bullet to the temple". Gandhi said political violence was never legitimate, it was counterproductive to those who unleashed it, and societies are doomed to live through the legacy of such violence for a long time.

This week, the government had no answer as to why it was trying its best to suppress the Nepal Conflict Report compiled by the United Nations High Commissioner for



Only by confronting the ugly secrets of the past will we be able to protect the future

Human Rights (OHCHR) which is a meticulous archive of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law of which this country is a signatory. It contains 30,000 cases stored in the Transitional Justice Reference Archive and is based on conflict-era testimonies and documents with the National Human Rights Commission, and courageously recorded and collected by human rights activists during the conflict years. More than 9,000 of the cases are serious cases of violations carried out by both sides.

Nepal is somewhat different than other post-conflict countries in that there is no clear victor or vanquished. Both warring sides are now the state. Some of the Maoist

guerrillas have just been inducted into the national army, and former rebel commanders are sharing the governing coalition with their sworn enemies. Which is why there is a conspiracy of silence between the two sides to sweep the dirty bits under the carpet.

In fact, there seems to be a tacit understanding between the security forces and the former rebel leaders to suppress, deny, or openly defy allegations of gross violations of human rights during the conflict. The army's promotion of an officer in charge of a barracks in the heart of the capital which was the centre for torture and forced disappearances, and the Maoists openly protecting war criminals in its ranks is the result of a convergence of interests on both sides.

When asked about why it is against the release of the Nepal Conflict Report, the government uses the argument both warring sides have used in the past: to protect the fragile peace process. In fact, the peace process would be best protected by airing these incidents so that the perpetrators are named. Many victims and relatives of those murdered and disappeared do not expect justice right away, but they want the truth and they want acknowledgement at least. The fact that the former enemies have banded together to deny them even that shows just how ridden with guilt they are about what they did in the past.

Unless Nepal comes to terms with the war crimes committed between 1996-2006, there is a danger that we will repeat them. The structural roots of violence and the objective conditions that led to conflict still remain. In fact, there is a risk a future conflict could be an even more virulent ethnic one. Only by confronting the ugly secrets of the past will we be able to protect the future.

The evil that men do lives long after them, which is why Lady Macbeth asks: "What, will these hands ne're be clean?"

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

RANSACK THE TREASURY

Baburam Bhattarai is as clever as a fox and knows very well that his job is secure for a really long time because as long as his Indian counterparts are happy, no one can touch him ('How to ransack the treasury', Editorial, #625). Besides why would he quit premiership now when he knows he fought all his life to get here? Bhattarai came to power not to solve the country's problems, but to promote himself and his coterie. It's time we accepted this truth.

Anonymous

- Why is *Nepali Times* always giving Bhattarai the benefit of doubt? Even here the writer claims the PM is personally honest and that only people around him are corrupt. But he is the chief ideologist of the Maoist party and has never repented for the atrocities he unleashed, still believes in murdering people, and protects war criminals. Until he says sorry he will remain a villain in the eyes of ordinary Nepalis.

Samshere

- Please explain to me how a prime minister who runs the most corrupt government of Nepal is still considered an honest man? Perhaps Bhattarai's PhD and PR stunts are preventing the Nepali media from fairly assessing his performance.

Nirmal

- Nepali Times* has no rights to complain about the mess Bhattarai has landed us in. Six years ago, the paper openly lauded Bhattarai and

his comrades and presented them as our saviours. Now NT should just accept the loot and plunder in the name of naya Nepal.

SS

- Let's not blame Bhattarai, he is just following in the footsteps of corrupt and immoral leaders who came before him. We have hardly had any honest, motivated, and visionary leader in the long history of this country. The only thing we can do is to hope that Bhattarai will realise his mistakes and maybe steer the country in the right direction.

Baje

A SAFER SKY

This is a very well-written article by Vijay Lama on Nepal's poor air safety standards ('A safer sky', #625). I hope officials at CAAN read this piece and take the suggestions seriously so that no more lives are lost in the future. And I totally agree that graphic images from accidents should neither be aired on TV or on social networking sites.

Mingma Sherpa

- A very incisive piece by Lama, but I have to disagree with the captain on one issue. He says Nepal has to bring its air safety target up to 90 per cent. But even 10 per cent chance of accidents is an awful lot. I would never travel in an airline that has such a poor record.

Sura

- Most articles on the post-crash analysis do not mention the fantastic job done by the captain and crew. In the few seconds that they had, the crew steered the aircraft away from

human settlement and as a result not a single life was lost and no one was injured on the ground apart from the ill fated passengers and crew.

SBS

- How can we sell Nepal as a tourist destination when authorities turn a blind eye to these preventable accidents? Every tourist will now think twice before including Nepal in her itinerary. No matter how beautiful a country is, it is not worth risking one's life in these avoidable mishaps.

Salil P

- Overloading is an endemic problem at airports throughout Nepal because of corruption, greed, and a fatalistic attitude towards life. It is the same culture that allows 120 people on a bus that can seat only 60. As an expat living in Nepal, I can tell you that air and highway travel will not be safe until this culture changes.

Bill

- Like many past accidents, the Sita Air crash will be followed by reports and proposals. But I am afraid the Nepal government and tourism entrepreneurs will take safety seriously only when foreign governments start issuing travel warnings to Nepal or advising their citizens against flying on certain airlines.

Pakhrin Bal

- Since a posting at CAAN's safety department is very lucrative, only the most corrupt (and by implication the most incapable) people with high connections seem to gain entry. So unless there is a major overhaul in CAAN, safety standards are unlikely to improve.

Gemmi

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

As a fire-fighter, I feel Andy Joshy's criticism of the Sita Air crash management is unwarranted ('Disastrous disaster management', #625). I think my fellow fire-fighters did a commendable job extinguishing the fire and preventing deaths on the ground. Despite the fact that we receive minimum training and our salary of Rs 12,000 a month is barely enough to pay for rent and food, we are there to serve the people, rain or shine. Let's give credit where it's due.

Fire-fighter

- I am not sure how the writer came to the conclusion that 90 per cent of air crashes happen due to pilot error. Isn't weather a crucial factor too? Also the aircrafts that fly in Nepal have poor navigation tools like ground proximity warning system which costs thousands of dollars. So I will have to disagree with Joshy on this point.

Highlander

NEPAL BY AIR

- You can't expect a world-class airport when you have third-class governance in a country ('Nepal by air', #625). An airport reflects the state of the country and how efficiently and honestly it is ruled. No wonder TIA is so dirty, because it is a hotbed of sleaze.

Bob

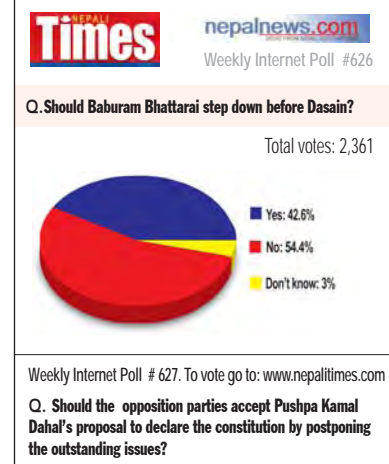
It's clear that the airport in Kathmandu cannot handle any additional traffic especially during the fog ridden months of winter and early spring. Extending the landing distance available at Biratnagar or Bhairawa by a few thousand feet, installing an Instrument Landing System, and redirecting some

of the flights from the Gulf countries to these towns will help ease the capital's load. Similarly, building an international airport in Pokhara will also make air traffic more manageable in Kathmandu and boost the economy.

Krishna S

- The aviation industry loses millions of dollars every year because flights are forced to hold for hours due to poor visibility. While experts agree that using more sophisticated technology will make landing easier during fog, they fail to realise that pollution in the Valley is also responsible for poor visibility. The smoke from vehicles at Tinkune and surrounding brick factories accumulate right around the approach area and the condition is getting worse every year. So in addition to controlling birds, how about controlling the pollution in Kathmandu?

Rajesh Pilot



“If you want peace, abolish hunger”

Professor Johan Galtung is an award-winning Norwegian founder of peace studies, who has generated a unique conceptual toolkit for empirical, critical, and constructive inquiry into the study of peace. His 'transcend' method tries to go to the roots of conflict by analysing the goals of protagonists and the means they use to achieve those ends. Galtung is visiting Nepal in January and Federica Riccadonna of the Galtung-Institut caught up with him recently in Basel, Germany.

Federica Riccadonna: You say different communities have varying abilities to overcome and transcend conflict which you call the 'local potential of peace'. How do you assess the Nepali people's potential for peace?

Johan Galtung: Nepalis have a high capacity for negative peace. The 10-year-long conflict was a testament to their potential for excessive violence, while during the 18 days of Jana Andolan II in 2006, they toppled a 240-year-old monarchy without resorting to violence. Nepalis are specially good at 'negative' forms of non-violence like civil disobedience, demonstrations, and non-cooperation, but they struggle when it comes to positive non-violence like nation building and constructive actions towards peace.

You have been a strong proponent of federalism in Nepal. But will it be economically viable, and won't Nepal's unity be compromised by such a system?

Many people don't understand the concept of federal states. Federalism helps devolve power and resources from the rich parts to the poorer, deprived sections of the country, but it is by no means a division. The states will have autonomy over resources and the authority to decide on matters like what languages are taught, but they will still function as part of the nation, a country.

But given the deep political cleavages in Nepal, won't federalism exacerbate the problem by reinforcing these divisions?

Yes, but exactly by doing so federalism would address those cleavages. Federal states are demarcations in terrain, but since one of them is not permitted to infringe on the rights of others, they will be forced to work as parts of the same country.



The Interim Constitution of 2006 included the right to same sex marriage, greater rights for minorities, and it abolished the death penalty. Is it better to have a new constitution, or would the best strategy be to work on the existing constitution through amendments, keeping the main draft?

Although the right to same sex marriage has been very important in western countries, I don't think it was on top of the minds of Nepalis. The right to have a guaranteed meal per day would be more important. The constitution of Nepal, in short, should be more action less constitution.

How do you define legitimate and illegitimate goals? For example, is the restoration of monarchy a legitimate goal?

One central task for the 'transcend' method is to legitimise the means and ends. The sanctity of life is central, killing is not legitimate. But I face a problem in not forcing this attention to legitimate goals into a pre-judgement. We are not allowed to pre-judge the other's 'truths' or terms of reference, but when we legitimise on the basis of human rights, international humanitarian law, basic needs, and local systems of law, we are already formulating a strong judgement. I do not feel comfortable using outside frameworks, except with the killing-not killing model.

As far as monarchy in Nepal is concerned, I will not refer to it as illegitimate, I would say despotism is illegitimate. I also make a distinction between monarchs and monarchy. Many Nepalis seem attached to the concept of monarchy, a constitutional monarchy would give you the symbolism of monarchy and the regulation of a constitution. I was once talking to a police chief in Kathmandu during the conflict and he told me it was very difficult for him to crack down on the Maoists when he agreed with 39 of their 40 demands, except the abolition of the monarchy. So maybe the Maoists went outside the common people's views in that regard.

How can we translate peace to impoverished communities, the whole community, not just to the elite, educated, trained, funded, and organised classes?

You know, Bishop Helder Camara in Recife in north-eastern Brazil always said that hunger is another word for war. You want peace, abolish hunger. You can't just have peace only its western sense and victory for institutionalised state military that according to the Westphalia system has the monopoly on ultimate force. Translating peace to impoverished communities is to guarantee basic needs, resolve that and we are on the way to sustainable peace.

How do you assess the role of the media in promoting and maintaining peace?

The media could be a key player, but I find most of them are lagging behind. The reason is that the top has an image of what peace looks like and the bottom has a different image, but the media has no image of peace at all. It only has an image of what negatives look like and what battles look like, or what violence looks like because that's what it is reporting all the time.

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Read the longer version of the interview
Watch youtube videos of Galtung

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SENSITIVE TOUCH : Chiranjivi Poudel of Seeing Hands Kathmandu attends to a client.



Job seekers to

Social Bazar gives small-scale entrepreneurs the chance to take off

The courtyard at Baber Mahal Revisited looked and felt like a thriving bazar last week where 60 enterprises from across Nepal gathered to showcase their products, services, and innovative ideas. Organised by ChangeFusion Nepal, the three day long Social Entrepreneurship Bazar aims to help aspiring social entrepreneurs expand their ventures by bringing together potential investors and customers under the same roof. The event was also a curtain raiser for Surya Nepal Asha Social Entrepreneurship Award 2012 which will take place later in the year.

If the teeming courtyard was anything to go by, the bazar definitely provided the entrepreneurs with a much needed kick start. *Nepali Times* brings you two innovative businesses showcased last week.

FEELING IS BELIEVING

Amidst Thamel's labyrinth of alleys, a modest white building tucked in a corner without flashy signboards or thumping loud music is easy to miss. For the past two years this building has been home to Seeing Hands Kathmandu, a massage clinic run by the visually impaired. Started by Chiranjivi Poudel who was born blind, the clinic provides remedial massage therapies and the business has picked up steadily as news of its excellent service spread by word of mouth.

Poudel who is from Kapilbastu is one of the first blind people to become a certified masseur. He received training through a UK-based charity called Seeing Hands Nepal. He was determined to empower other visually impaired Nepalis and make

them socially and financially independent. So after working at the Pokhara branch of Seeing Hands for a few years, he opened Seeing Hands Kathmandu in 2010. The clinic currently employs three visually impaired people and has trained three as massage therapists.

Seeing Hands Kathmandu has a devout clientele, mostly trekkers who come to relax and relieve their pain after long trips and the guest book reflects the appreciation for its commitment to improving the lives of the visually impaired. Profit from the clinic goes directly to the funds used to train masseuses. Poudel is proud that his enterprise has become self-reliant within a short time, but he admits that it's hard to expand his business with limited resources.

"People come looking for us, but we don't have the resources or finances to expand our services to cater to our growing clientele," he says. He hopes that as massaging and physiotherapy culture becomes more popular among Nepalis, he won't have to rely exclusively on seasonal tourists and can generate revenue throughout the year.

Despite being lumped together with Thamel's 'infamous' massage parlours, Poudel and his employees are determined to let their work speak for them and not the location or their disability.

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job makers



THE VILLAGE CAFE

Hira Devi Shrestha, 43, had been working as a knitter for over three decades. But as age caught up, her eyesight became poor and she was afraid she would lose her job and end up being unemployed. Today Shrestha works as a chef and supervisor at the Village Cafe where her signature lunch is a weekly special and a favourite among patrons.

"When my eyesight became poor, I could no longer knit and needed to find another job. Friends told me about a training program organised by Sabah and that's how I got into the restaurant business," recalls Shrestha.

Started by Sabah Nepal (SAARC Business Association

of Home Based Workers), the Village Cafe incorporates women empowerment with indigenous knowledge and taste buds. Sabah trains those women who would otherwise be completely dependent on their husbands or fathers in household skills, helps them overcome personal and social obstacles and provides a source of income. Currently the Cafe employs 28 women both as cooks and administrators most of who come from the villages of Bungmati and Khokana.

The Village is open seven days a week and features six different lunch menus by six chefs for every business day of the week besides the staple Newari cuisine. In addition to the dining service at Pulchok, the restaurant also provides catering services, home and office deliveries, and also keeps stalls at festival events.

In addition to providing food at affordable prices, the Village Cafe is promoting Nepali cuisine and is helping women become bread earners in their families.

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Loop by loop, #580



Qatar Airways joins oneworld

NEW YORK -- Qatar Airways, the largest airline which had not yet aligned to one of the big global alliances announced on Wednesday that it is to join oneworld®, as part of a trend of Gulf-based airlines partnering with international airline groups.

Qatar Airways is the first of the three major airlines based in the Gulf to sign for any of the global airline alliances. Emirates has partnered with Qantas and Etihad has teamed up with KLM-Air France. The carrier is set to move into a brand new home in 2013 with the opening of the New Doha International Airport, designed to strengthen its position as a premium global hub with an eventual capacity for 50 million passengers a year.

As a member of oneworld, Qatar Airways will fly alongside some of the biggest and best brands in the airline business that includes British Airways. In just 15 years of operations, Qatar Airways has built up an international route network flying to 120 destinations in 70 countries. Qatar Airways will substantially strengthen oneworld's customer offering by providing superior routing alternatives to oneworld's 856 destinations in 159 countries.

When Qatar Airways becomes part of oneworld, the 2.2 million members of its Privilege Club frequent flyer program will be able to earn and redeem rewards on any of oneworld's other carriers.

BIZ BRIEFS

Fantastic fares

Etihad Airways has launched its special anniversary fares to European destinations from Kathmandu to celebrate its fifth anniversary in Nepal. The offer is valid on ticket sales for the whole month of October while the outbound travel is valid until 20 November.

Tasty success

Chaudhary Group's popular snack Kwik's Cheeseballs has launched a campaign to celebrate its 25th anniversary with the slogan: "Making people lick their fingers for last 25 years."



Celebrations begin

Nepal General Marketing, authorised distributor of Hero MotoCorp, will provide cash discounts and Philips photo frames with the purchase of Hero motorcycles and scooters. Under this scheme lucky buyers will receive Philips LCD TV through the weekly draw.

Festive offer

M.A.W., authorised distributor of Skoda, has announced its Dasain scheme. People can now take home Skoda Fabia through a new financing scheme with a downpayment of rupees 3,50,000.



Affordable ride



Syakar announced its Dasain-Tihar scheme for Honda Brio Car. On every purchase of the car, customers will get cash discount worth Rs100,000 and a comprehensive insurance coverage for free.

Love and care

Chaitanya Medi Spa is offering 20 per cent festive discount on all its services on the occasion of Dasain and Tihar.



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ESCAPE the EXCESS

This year get away from the garbage-filled, concrete capital and celebrate Dasain a little differently

Day three of Dasain: you are exhausted from the house hopping, the children are getting cranky, and the masu, bhat, raksi overload is starting to take its toll. Or maybe you feel like ditching your obnoxious relatives and the 'eat, drink, gamble' schedule all together.

It's the longest paid holiday of the year, the monsoon has subsided, and the countryside is lush green, there just couldn't be a better time to see Nepal. So dust off those cycles in your backyard, pack your bags, and get ready to recharge your batteries. To help you decide where to escape to, *Nepali Times* brings you a list of excellent destinations, some very close to home and others a few hours' drive away:



PATALEBAN VILLAGE RESORT

CHISAPANI (16km)

For those desperately seeking some well-deserved downtime close to home, Pataleban Vineyard Resort is the ideal getaway. A half an hour drive from central Kathmandu, you can make a short day trip to the resort or spend the remainder of your holidays here. Take a leisurely stroll through the beautiful vineyards or just sit back, enjoy a glass or two of Pataleban wine and revel in the jaw-dropping views of Ganesh Himal and Manaslu Himal. If you want to recover from the Dasain food coma, join other holiday-makers on a half-day hike to Indradaha or explore the surrounding villages with a local guide. At 1,600m the resort fuses tradition, simplicity, and modern comfort with ease and promises to leave you rejuvenated just in time for Tihar.

4316377 or 9841679364

www.patalebanresort.com

PHARPING (18km)

What better way to detox your body (and soul) than through yoga and meditation? Pranayam Yoga is offering classes at the Neydo Monastery Resort in Pharping: two before the festivities from 15 to 17 October and 22 to 24 October and one right after Dasain from 29 to 31 October. Gurus Shannon Rose Chmelar (Sati) and Lisa Alessandra (Yogatara) will combine relaxation techniques, Buddhist teachings along with a healthy diet to increase your energy levels and leave you refreshed. The premises of the Monastery which is home to around 200 monks is an ideal setting for the three day getaway and your accommodation fees will help support the monks' education.

While in Pharping, travel around the neighbourhood and see how the community has been uniquely shaped by both Hindu and Buddhist influences. There are two main Shiva caves in the area which are worth exploring and also numerous Buddhist monasteries and centres that you can visit.

9851002920 (Sam Voolstra)

www.pranamaya-yoga.com



PRANAMAYA YOGA



NUWAKOT (73km)

The Famous Farm is a traditional Nepali farm on the terraced hillsides of Nuwakot. The property was converted into a family-oriented hotel with 11 bedrooms with traditional windows, low beds, and low-ceilinged bedrooms. It also has a barn and a garden where children can help pick fruits and vegetables. The view of the mountain ranges is spectacular and the town is in close proximity if you want to shop or mingle with the locals. There is even a quaint temple 15 minutes walk from the farm. This is the place to be especially if you have young children. You can let them play and run around the farm as you lounge lazily and sip on hot tea.

4700426/4700335



RABI THAPA

HETAUDA (132km)

Adventure enthusiasts take your bikes to the nearest shop for repairs and then drive down to Lifecycle Farm in Hetauda where there is something for everyone to enjoy whether you are an amateur cyclist or a seasoned pro. Whizz past quiet sal forests and lush rice fields on your two-wheeler or cycle along the banks of the Rapti River while enjoying the gentle breeze. The dare devils can try out the more challenging off-road tracks as well.

Not a cyclist? Not a problem. The farm also offers running and hiking trails, a fresh water swimming pool and other outdoor activities. So sit back, relax and enjoy the comfortable accommodations and fresh home cooked meals.

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BADRI PAUDYAL

LAMJUNG (315km – Kathmandu to Pokhara to Besisahar)

Ever wondered what it is like living with someone else's family? Gurung families in Ghalegaun, Ghanpokhara, Bhujung, Pasgaun, and other VDCs in Lamjung district have opened up their doors and hearts to guests as part of a home stay program and you are cordially invited. Many of these villages are untouched by modernity and most of the traditional architecture and lifestyle are still intact. The route known as 'Gurung Heritage Trail' starts at Besisahar and ends in Thumsikot and is helping Lamjung residents make a living through hospitality.

Located at an altitude of 2,070m Ghalegaun offers breath-taking views of the Manaslu range in the east, Lamjung Himal and Annapurna II in the north, and Machapuchhare in the west. Relish traditional Gurung food and hear grannies and grandpas reminisce about a bygone era. With a satisfied tummy, venture out into the bazar. In the evenings, watch women perform song and dance routines depicting Ghantu (celebrating Lord Buddha's birthday), Sorathi, and Krishna Charitra. **Contact the Tourism Management Sub Committee (TMsC) which manages all the home stays in the region for more information.**



BANDIPUR (143km)

Situated on a mountain ridge, Bandipur used to be a major trading route until a few hundred years ago, but years of neglect turned it into a ghost town. Through the restoration efforts of the Bandipur Development Committee and locals, the town is slowly regaining its former glory and the tourists are flocking. The old houses and temples with their traditional Newari windows and low-ceilings all recreate the charm of the old days and you are bound to be transported to 18th century Nepal as you take a stroll through the cobblestone streets (where no vehicles are allowed). Watch as the artisans make clay pots or shop for trinkets and handicraft in one of the many family-owned businesses.

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A photograph of four men standing side-by-side in an office or workshop setting. From left to right: a man with a beard wearing a black t-shirt with 'TEAM' printed on it; a man in a blue t-shirt with a globe graphic; a man in a yellow t-shirt; and a man in a white t-shirt. They are all smiling at the camera. In the background, there are computer monitors and a chalkboard with some writing on it.

A black and white photograph of a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark t-shirt, playing a dark-colored electric guitar. He is looking down at the instrument. The background is dark and out of focus.

New Tushita Restaurant, relaxing
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DRAGON CHINESE RESTAURANT, try the Kung Pao Pork if alone and the Mai Cao if with company. *Lakeside, Pokhara*

Mike's Breakfast, huge breakfasts and an endless supply of coffee amidst a lush garden setting characterise this café, popular among tourists and locals alike. *Naxal, 01-4424303*



THE HERITAGE, escape the hodgepodge of the tourist hub as you relish in delights like paella and panna cotta. *Thamel*

Krishnarpan, a specialty Nepali restaurant that serves 6 to 22 courses of authentic Nepali meal. *The Dwarika's Hotel, Battisputali, 01-4479488*



OCTOBER JAZZ

On the occasion of its fifth anniversary, the Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory has a three day festival lined up for October. It will feature performances by students, teachers, and guest artists, as well as a film screening. The festival also includes an exposition attended by people working in the music industry.

11 October, 6 pm, performance by the SAY Project, followed by the screening of *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, free entrance

12 October, 7.30 pm, performances Resonance, Fried Eggs, and participants of the Gene Aitken Workshop, Moksh, Jhamsikhel, Rs 300

13 October, 12.30 pm, performances by KJC ensembles, What The Funk, and other acts, Jhamsikhel, Rs 100. 7 pm, performances by Urjazz, Verona Chard, and the KJC faculty, Moksh, Jhamsikhel, Rs 500

Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel, 01-5013554

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SOMEPLACE ELSE

I was so excited about finally going to Brian's Grill House because I had heard only good things about the place, and in my excitement I took my entire family along, promising them a meal they would remember for a long time. As there was no electricity that day, the lift was not working and we had to hike up eight floors to reach Brian's. But this did nothing to dampen



our enthusiasm, if anything we were glad the climb worked up our appetites so we'd enjoy the food better. The restaurant area is open and spacious and decorated tastefully with quirky details and a visit to Brian's Grill is worth for the spectacular views of central Kathmandu alone.

Brian's describes itself as an American restaurant and offers burgers, steaks, Tex-Mex cuisine, basically a whole lot of meat. This was shaping up to be the perfect place for a self-avowed carnivore like me. We went a little overboard with our orders and soon our table was groaning under platters heaped with food.

The Cowboy Burger (Rs 560), American style beef chili topped with Colby cheese, crispy bacon, sliced jalapenos was a burger lover's delight. Moist and full of flavours, this burger did countless rounds of

Brian's Grill House



PICS: ARVIN SHARMA

the table and the person who actually ordered the meal did not get more than a few bites. We were quick to pounce on the burger simply because the other dishes didn't quite live up to our expectations.

The Maker's Mark Bourbon Tenderloin (Rs800) is drool inducing on paper. In reality, it is a lump of meat, grilled well -I'll give it that- but bland and unexciting. The grilled vegetables and fries which accompanied the tenderloin were

oily, soggy, and so disappointing. The Brian's BBQ Plate (Rs 890) is a half rack of BBQ ribs and pulled pork with coleslaw, cornbread, and fries. The BBQ ribs were adequate, nothing to rave about, but the pulled pork was a huge disappointment. I was expecting meat cooked so slowly that the fat had melted into the flesh and imbued with flavours of whatever condiments were added to it such as honey or ginger or just plain salt and pepper. But what I got instead

was a mound of what tasted like boiled pork tossed in tomato sauce. And since when did 'American' food become completely saltless?

The Jameson Irish Car Bomb Cupcake (Rs 290) declares itself to be a chocolate cupcake made with stout beer, filled with an Irish whiskey ganache and topped with Bailey Irish Cream frosting. I had visions of lush lusciousness exuding with flavours, what came instead was crumbly and dry. Arid is a better word for it actually.

I don't like to slam restaurants just to be critical or outrageous and am definitely not niggardly with my praise, and I am still ready to give Brian's Grill House the benefit of the doubt. Maybe it was having an off day, maybe because Brian himself was not there, maybe my expectations were too high. Whatever the reason, I cannot rave about the food at this establishment. ❌

Ruby Tuesday

How to get there:
Brian's Grill House is on the ninth floor of the newly opened CG Mart in Dillibazar, in Sunrise Biz Park, Charkhal road.

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MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

Summer is over, and with it, thankfully, the summer block-busters (there *are* the occasionally good ones, let's people assume that I am a snob). With autumn here the best films of the year will finally be available to those of us who do not have access to Sundance, Venice, Cannes, Berlin, Toronto, and other film festivals at which all of the award season's contenders are released. And we will have the pleasure of films like Wes Anderson's *Moonrise Kingdom*, Steve Soderbergh's *Magic Mike*, David Cronenberg's *Cosmopolis* and many more.

For today we can be content, however, with *Arbitrage* a film by Nicholas Jarecki about a New York billionaire, Robert Miller (played by the suave and silver haired Richard Gere), who finds himself in a very tight spot, on the brink of ruin, due to the unfortunate coincidence of several disastrous, unforeseen events.

Miller, one of the most highly regarded hedge fund managers is on the verge of selling his company. He returns to his lovely Gramercy Park home from a high profile interview to be greeted by his picture perfect family who has organised his 60th birthday. Around the table are his wife, Ellen (Susan Sarandon), his son Peter (Austin Lysy), his daughter and heir apparent the brilliant Brooke (Brit Marling) and their assorted partners and children.

Moved, Miller makes an impromptu speech saying how his family is his biggest accomplishment, and that soon, after the merger is complete, he will finally be able to relax.

Things seem perfect. That is, until we see Robert exiting his home, telling his wife he has to work out a few details for the merger. And as with everything that

does seem too good to be true, Robert Miller walks into the swanky SoHo loft of his mistress, Julie Cote (Laetitia Casta), a French art dealer that he has set up in New York, and who is not afraid to demand his attentions, alternately sulking and pouting, or crying copious tears at the knowledge that he will never leave his wife.

As the plot thickens, we slowly begin to understand that Robert has had to cook his company's books, hiding losses of over \$ 400 million in order to sell it to another high profile company. His daughter Brooke, a financial wizard, has started to catch on, but even she has not begun to fathom that it might be her very own beloved father who is behind the tremendous fraud.

Racing against time, Robert bribes accountants to ensure that the deception is never revealed, all the while maintaining his perfect veneer of success and extraordinary philanthropy – holding the strings as tightly as possible so things do not spin out of control.

And so they do, but I will not give away essential plot lines here, except to say it involves his mistress Julie, the New York homicide department, and a young black man from Harlem.

The pleasure of *Arbitrage* which, by the way means the simultaneous buying of something in order to take advantage of price differences, lies in its taut performances, its excellent, sophisticated, atmospheric cinematography and the slow revelation of the extraordinary amorality of an initially likeable character.

David Denby, a long time film critic from *The New Yorker* mentioned recently that there are no longer films made for grown-ups. He is correct, but happily this film is surely one of those rare exceptions. Caught between horror and pity, *Arbitrage* is a thriller, which captivates with baited breath. I don't think you will be disappointed. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com
Watch trailer

A different diet this Dasain



Thirty-eight-year old Tiwari woke up one night during Dasain with a red, tender, and swollen big toe. The pain was so excruciating that even the weight of a light blanket hurt. Tiwari, an avid golfer, is an occasional drinker and like many Nepalis indulged in meat delicacies over the festive season. He went back to sleep with great difficulty and mistakenly believed he may have banged his foot while playing golf. Next day he was surprised to learn from the doctor that he had gout.

Gout, sometimes non-specifically called baath in Nepali, is a very painful type of arthritis which often starts at night and is caused when uric acid crystals form in the joints. Although not always a reliable



test, uric acid in the blood is often checked to diagnose gout. The condition is very common among Nepalis and younger Nepalis (less than 40 years) have a greater predisposition to it than people of similar age in other countries. The reason for this anomaly is not yet known.

Gout cases sky rocket during Dasain and Tihar when there is heavy intake of alcohol (beer in particular), soft drinks, red meat,

organs, and pulses. Eliminating most high protein food will help, but may not always be practical and won't help avoid gout attacks all together. Some medicines like diuretics (water pills) and some diseases like diabetes, obesity, and kidney problems may also lead to gout. So avoiding these medicines, keeping yourself well-hydrated and making sure these diseases are under control will help. Moreover, gout is not always associated with dietary indiscretions. Even vegetarians and teetotalers may sometimes suffer from gout.

If you get more than two or three gout attacks per year, it may be wise to consider taking long-term medicines to prevent gout and other related complications such as kidney stones. Effective drugs like allopurinol which have been tried and tested over many decades are available, but they need to be used under proper supervision of a competent doctor. 🇳🇵



WE OBJECT: Relatives of war victims submit a memorandum to PM Baburam Bhattarai at his residence in Baluwatar on Tuesday protesting against the promotion of Colonel Raju Basnet and the amnesty given to Maoist leaders.



THIRSTY FOR MORE: People listen on as Mohan Baidya explains the CPN-M's plan to announce a new constitution from the streets if its demand for a round table conference is ignored in Basantapur on Wednesday.



MUSICAL INSPIRATION: Australian musician Mark Aitkins performs the didgeridoo on Tuesday at Siddhartha Art Gallery during a function organised to mark the 20th Anniversary of the Fred Hollows Foundation.

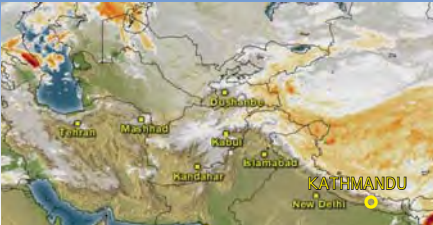
READERS' PHOTO



MAKE IT FRESH: The prayer flags are changed and the Boudhanath stupa is repainted with a fresh coat of white and brown once every year.

WEEKEND WEATHER

The ridgeline of a low pressure system that affected eastern Nepal this week and which represented the dying spasm of this year's summer monsoon was swept away. The westerlies have now firmly established themselves over the Himalaya, but this has brought prevailing winds from the southwest. This means the Indo-Gangetic inversion haze is upon us earlier than usual, reducing visibility up to 3,500m and filtering sunlight. Kathmandu Valley will be have cool days with minimum temperatures in the low teens and chances of passing showers in the higher elevations.



FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
24°-15°	25°-16°	24°-15°

History will not forgive you Mr Prime Minister

The political and moral blunder of promoting a war criminal will haunt Baburam Bhattarai for a very long time



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

The promotion of a tainted Nepal Army officer and withdrawal of war time cases against the Maoist leaders by the government, without proper investigation, have left the entire country in disbelief. National and international bodies have condemned the government's decision in strongest possible words, while the families of the victims are picketing in front of the prime minister's residence. But all the protest seems to have gone into deaf ears.

After coming to power, one of the things Baburam Bhattarai had promised to the nation was setting up the truth commission at the earliest. There was reason to doubt this claim even back then, since the parties were deeply divided over the content of the proposed TRC and Disappearance bill. But no matter how much the leaders disagreed, there was hope that the elected body would ensure a comprehensive bill whenever it was formed. So when the CA was dissolved, nobody expected Bhattarai to deliver on his

earlier promise. But not only did he try to push through a weak bill in the form of an ordinance, his cabinet decided to take back war time cases against the Maoist leaders Bal Krishna Dhungel and Agni Sapkota among others, and promoted disgraced officers in the Nepal Police and Nepal Army.

To be fair, the Supreme Court had cleared Kuber Singh Rana for promotion, even though the allegations against him remain under investigation. So politically, the decision was still tenable and his personal image as an honest officer worked in his favour. However, there was no administrative or political pressure on the government to push through war time cases or promote the tainted Army officer. Bhattarai could have let the matter be handled by the truth commission whenever it is formed by the representative body. But as the head of the government, he took the decision in personal capacity, and whether or not there was a covert pressure from the Army establishment is irrelevant at this point.



As a leader, if you bow down to pressures and compromise on fundamental principles of justice, you do not have moral authority to lead the country. The level of insensitivity shown by Bhattarai in this case added insult to injury of the victims when they were baton-charged by the police in front of his residence while protesting peacefully. What can be more shameful for a revolutionary who once took up arms against the state to protect the same people?

Bhim Basnet's two sons were arrested by the Army in 2003 and he hasn't seen them since. The anger and humiliation of the father who failed to secure justice for his sons rolled down his cheeks as he questioned Sadhu Ram Sapkota, Joint Secretary of Ministry for Peace

and Reconciliation, at a program in the capital this week: "My sons disappeared from that camp and instead of asking the man about their whereabouts, how could you promote him?" The embarrassed bureaucrat apologised saying he did not have all the answers.

"We don't expect the government to punish Raju Basnet, but the least Baburam Bhattarai could have done for his comrades who fought alongside him for ten years is not reward this man," says Maoist student wing leader Himal Sharma, who was among those detained and tortured in Maharajganj's Bhairab Nath battalion.

One of the biggest intellectual challenges scholars have faced in the past decades is to understand the relationship between democracy and freedom. The social movements of the 1960's and 70's including decolonisation in Africa and Asia, led many to believe that democratic societies were more vibrant and gave greater freedom to the people. However, the way modern states with democratic institutions are increasingly becoming intolerant towards dissent and criticisms has

prompted many to question this straightforward relationship.

The casual assumption that democratic governments are necessarily tolerant grossly underestimates their capacity to legitimately use state power against their own people. Andrew Kolin's *State Power and Democracy* discusses how United States' supreme military power became a deterrence against its own people when they questioned their government's so called 'war on terror'. Similarly, the use of disproportionate force by European governments lately against students protesting cuts in their scholarship funds, persecution of the tribals by the Indian government in its hinterland as well as dumbing down of the dissenting voices in Bangladesh are lessons for emerging democracies that states with powerful military and brute police can undermine even the most democratic society.

Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai may not be concerned by national and international outrage now, but this political and moral blunder will haunt him for a very long time. Even if public memory is obscured by day to day politics, history will not forgive him for promoting a war criminal. 🇳🇵



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OUTSOURCING PEACE

The army is keen to improve its public relations and wants to project its role as an international peacekeeping force with a good record overseas

MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA
in LEBANON

It's 3am in Beirut and 450 uniformed men from Shree Rudradhoj 51st Battalion of the Nepal Army are waiting to board their flights at Rafic Hariri Airport. Some have dozed off, while others are busy checking their emails and catching up with friends and families back home.

Another battalion arrived at the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) a week ago to replace the current lot and will carry on Nepal's

54 years of peacekeeping in Lebanon. Currently there are nearly 4,000 Nepali peacekeepers serving in Lebanon, Congo, Haiti, Liberia, South Sudan, Iraq, and East Timor (*see map*).

However, as violence escalates in neighbouring Syria, the men serving in countries like Lebanon and Iraq have been on high alert for the past year. UNIFIL's base was attacked thrice in May, July, and December 2011 by terrorists who oppose the Lebanese government's reliance on UN forces. The flow of illegal arms both ways across the

Lebanon-Syria border has also increased the chances of the Syrian conflict spilling over into Lebanon.

Tara Bahadur Karki, head of the Nepal Army's Directorate of Peacekeeping Operations, visited Lebanon recently for an inspection, and says the Nepali forces are performing well despite the instability in the region, and Lebanon's legacy of conflict with Israel.

"The locals trust us because we are neutral in terms of religion and we look similar to them, this has made it easier for our troops to work in the area," he explains.



ALL PICS: MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

In addition to military operations, Nepali forces are also involved in humanitarian duties. They organise medical and dental camps, make house-calls to the elderly and have been assisting Syrian refugees. Recently, they also took part in the heritage preservation

program in coordination with the residents and handed out furniture to the local cultural centre.

Since Nepal started its first UN peacekeeping assignment in 1958 in Lebanon, the country has contributed 92,555 peacekeepers to 37 missions



1. Nepali peacekeeping troops depart from their base for sentry duty. 2. Hours before heading home, peacekeepers take the chance to chat with their families at the airport in Beirut. 3. The new contingent of the Rudradhoj 51st battalion prepares to board the plane to Lebanon. 4. Nepali troops on armoured vehicles patrol the area near Meis-al-Jabal.

The Lebanese Dai

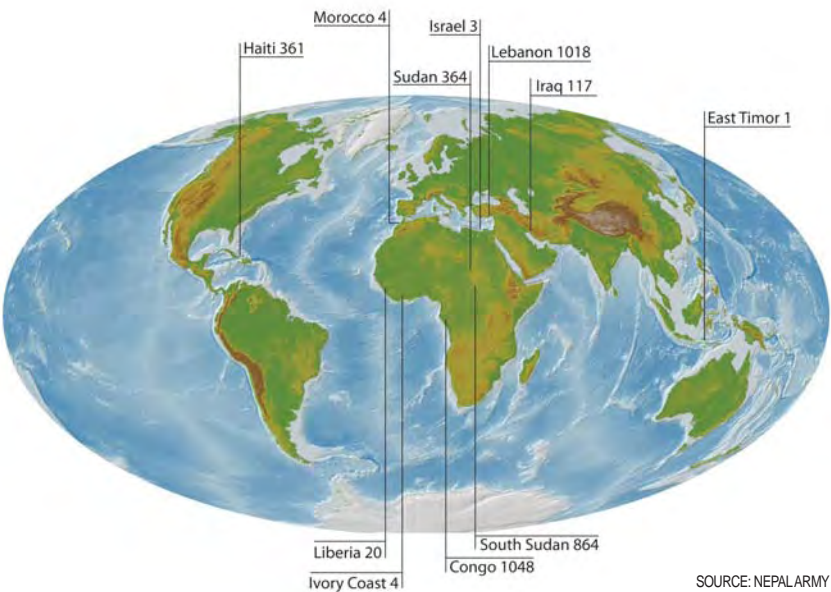


Forty-year-old Ali Abdullah Akbar is an ordinary Lebanese who runs a small business and earns a living selling olives, tobacco, and grapes. But ask him to speak in Nepali and it's easy to forget that the man is from the small southern town of Siddiqin.

Akbar first came in contact with Nepali peacekeepers when he used to go to the UNIFIL base in Meis-al-Jabal to sell his

goods. He learnt to speak Nepali from the troops posted there and today they lovingly call him Lebanese Santosh Pant because of his uncanny similarity to the Nepali actor. He has already been to Nepal twice and says he wants to go on a longer holiday and maybe learn to write in Devanagari script. Akbar who is still unmarried can be often heard humming a Nepali folk tune that the soldiers taught him to sing to his future bride: "I won't attack you like a tiger, or claw you like a leopard, but will woo you and carry you off in a palanquin."

The total number of Nepali peacekeeping missions across the world:



worldwide, making it the fifth largest contributor to the UN's peacekeeping force. Karki says sending soldiers on overseas deployment is a way to reward their good work, boost their morale and give them much needed international exposure. However, over the years Nepali peacekeepers have made the headlines for the wrong reasons. Last year 34 officers from the Armed Police were ordered by the Supreme Court to answer to allegations of embezzling Rs 300 million worth of kickbacks on the procurement of faulty armoured personnel carriers in the UN mission in Sudan. The 2010 cholera outbreak in Haiti which killed nearly 6,200 people was traced back to the Nepali peacekeeping base after DNA analysis of the cholera bacillus, but the Nepal Army has denied it was responsible. During the heights of the civil war, Nepal's involvement in overseas missions had also come under the cloud because of the Nepal Army's human rights record during the war, and the controversy this week over the promotion of two officers accused of war crimes has put fresh focus on this. Despite this, NA spokesperson Ramindra Chhetri

says Nepali forces have received excellent feedback from the host countries as well as the UN. "They admire us for our neutrality and dedication across the ranks. The UN's secretary general Ban Ki-moon has spoken highly of us in many occasions," he adds. In addition to global exposure, peacekeeping missions also provide a constant source of revenue for the Army. A soldier receives \$1,000 a month, out of which 22 per cent goes towards the army's welfare fund which is used to support veterans, widows and orphans of those killed during war. With the integration of ex-Maoist combatants almost completed, the army is keen to improve its public relations and wants to project its role as an international peacekeeping force with a good record overseas. It is keen to diversify its activities at home as well as abroad, and although the UN has no such thing as permanent peacekeeping force, the Nepal Army feels it could fit the role if that force is ever set up.

With additional reporting by Sunir Pandey

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Pardoning themselves

Dilli Acharya and Ishwari Subedi,
Rajdhani, 9 October

राजधानी

On October 4, the government went against the Supreme Court's order and decided to withdraw 695 criminal cases including those against Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai, UCPN(M) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal as well as cadres of the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum.

Earlier in March, the SC had ordered the state to make amendments to the provisions for withdrawal if it wanted to take back the registered cases. Instead of making the required changes, the government suspended one of the provisions for two months in order to pardon its own cadres.

Then in July, the government sought legal advice from the office of the Attorney General regarding the possible withdrawal of the criminal cases, and it is understood that these recent decisions were taken based on the AG's suggestions.

"Whatever the standards and processes says, cases registered during the insurgency and during the Madhes uprising can be withdrawn as exceptions by suspending clause number four for two months," says the statement released by the cabinet.

On the day the cabinet took its decision, the Home Ministry had passed files to the Ministry of Law for recommendations, which in turn, passed it back to the government the same day without changing a word.

Among the withdrawn cases, 14 are related



to murder and conspiracy to murder, eight are concerning arson, eight about robbery, and two are related to riots.

A total of four cases of arson and robbery against Bhattarai and Dahal registered during the early years of the insurgency have been withdrawn. These cases were suspended by the district courts as soon as the Maoists joined the peace process.

Some of the withdrawn cases which the government describes as politically motivated involve crimes against humanity. Murder charges against the UCPN(M)'s Surya Man Dong and Haribol Gajurel, and other cases against Agni Sapkota, Uma Bhujel, Khag Raj Bhatta have also been revoked.

Based on the recommendations of the district court in Sarlahi, the government has also withdrawn cases against three members of Deputy PM Bijay Gachhadar's Madhesi Janadhikar Forum who were involved in the murder of two men in 2007 saying these cases were registered out of political biasness.

'We feel betrayed'

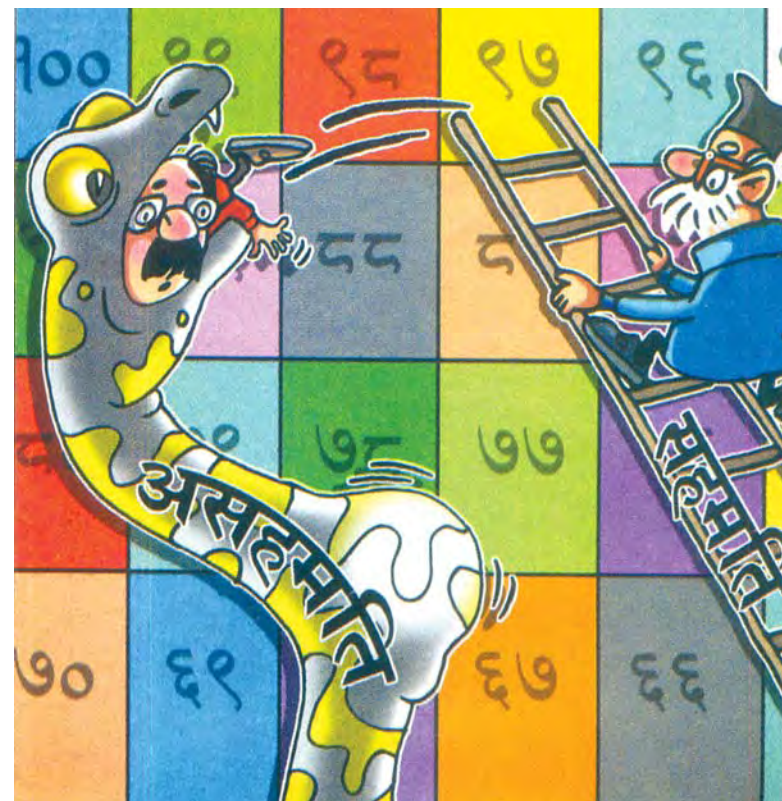
Himal Sharma, *Naya Patrika*, 8 October

नयाँ पत्रिका

The government's decision to promote NA officer Raju Basnet despite the prime minister's earlier assurances has raised suspicion about the whole incident. The victims and the families of those disappeared from Maharajanjanj barrack had met PM Bhattarai and requested him not to promote Basnet. He had agreed that Basnet's fate would be decided by the truth commission, whenever it was formed. Chairman Dahal was also present during the discussion.

Campaigning against Basnet's promotion was not easy. I was threatened on many occasions, but I did not let the intimidation deter me. It is sad that our leader, the prime minister has let us down. If he could not bring Raju Basnet to books, he could have at least not rewarded him for torturing, raping, and killing his own comrades.

When I came to know about the decision, I called Bhattarai, but he said he would explain to me later. I hear Basnet was promoted because he threatened to go public with names of top NA brass involved in the incident.



Snake: Disagreement
Ladder: Agreement

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट Basu Kshitiz in *Annapurna Post*, 9 October

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“The only way to resolve the deadlock is to reinstate the Constituent Assembly. But there has to be a pre-agreement on contentious issues first.”

Ram Chandra Paudel, NC leader.

The new Tibetan wave



Purna Basnet in *Nagarik*, 6 October

नागरिक

Last week, more than 400 Tibetans from 26 countries gathered at a Tibetan school in Dharamsala in northern India signaling the new wave of the Tibetan movement. However, Tibet's spiritual leader in exile Dalai Lama was conspicuous by his absence in the meeting which was chaired by Lobsang Sangay, an important political figure in the movement. The meeting was organised to send a strong message to China as it gears up to choose its next leader in November during the Communist party's eighteenth congress.

The meeting also allowed Sangay, who was recently chosen as the Sikyong (similar to prime minister) of the Tibetan Government in Exile, to establish himself as the new leader among Tibetans in the

region and around the world. This change of guards makes Beijing's problem more complicated, since China will now have to approach a more radical Lobsang for future talks, instead of the moderate Dalai Lama.

Although Sangay has formally expressed his commitment to Dalai Lama's 'middle-path', during the meeting he gave the Tibetan Youth Congress permission to run its Free Tibet campaign all over the world. Besides, some of the other decisions taken at the gathering, such as expressing solidarity with those performing self-immolation, as well as establishing ties with anti-Beijing dissidents in Taiwan and Hong Kong are sure to irk the Chinese government.

Despite having garnered global support for the Tibetan cause, the leadership in Dharamsala will have a hard time convincing powerful western governments to stand up to Beijing.

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Swine flu and Chivas

There is now only one way to stop the wanton slaughter of Nepal's forests. The NC should once and for all give up its election symbol. Ever since the Kangresis adopted the tree as their registered trade mark, extremists of the loyal left and the royal right have been chopping down every tree they see. The lefties and the righties spend most of their waking hours thinking about which tree to axe next. During the Panchayat referendum, the Mandalays turned most of the Tarai into desert. And when the Commies came to power, they mowed down what was left. Once they had stripped the countryside bare, the Raja Baddies under the able guidance of ex-Majesty Gyancha wanted to remove the last remnants of the Rana regime and sawed off all the stately gum trees along Balu Water and Pool Choke, citing security reasons. Not ones to allow themselves to be outdone, the Mao Baddies once they got to power are now on a logging spree as part of their Great Leap Forward To Widen Kathmandu's Roads. The motto seems to be: "Don't Let a Single Tree Stand".

As one little big wag put it recently, the reason Prime Minister Ram Babu came to office last year and immediately



started riding in a Mustang four-wheel drive vehicle was because his plan had always been to use bulldozers to turn Kathmandu's roads impassable to all, but the most sturdy all-terrain SUVs. Just as well that BRB is going to remain PM till after Tihar because otherwise our demolished roads will never be rebuilt. And comes another proof that Premier Laldhoj is a Man of the People. Now he's got Swine Flu just like the rest of us.

What goes around comes around seems to be the lesson that the Baddies are learning from the ongoing Battle

of the Factions not just between the Hyphen and Bracket Baddies, but even within the Bracket Comrades between the BRB and PKD flunkies who are coming to blows over control over their fratricidal unions. For instance, since the Awesome loyalists get most of the cuts from the casinos, the Ram Babu loyalists have started enforcing the rule about Nepalis not being allowed to gamble. Cronies of Lotus Flower who profited from his sweetheart deals for telecom licences have been lying low abroad because Baidya Ba's Boys (B&B&B) also want their pound of flesh.

Whenever PKD goes off on a retreat, we know he's up to some mischief. Usually he used to go to Sukute Beach on the Bhote Kosi which was run by friendlies, but that hotel has recently been closed by local Kiran Kaka Kadre (KKK). That is why the Great Helmsman decided to go and kill two birds and get stoned in Pokhara to assure agitators supporting the new airport that everything is on track, and to also chill out at Begnas Resort. The irony seems to have been lost on the Dear Leader that this was the resort that was ransacked and burnt to the ground by his sidekicks during the war. And there he was knocking back Chivas Regal King of Kings on the rocks by the lake. Wonder what the horses, sheep, mules, and the beasts of Kaski who were looking through the window at Comrade Napoleon taking on the ways of Farmer Jones. Which is why one can understand Deuba Dai's outburst the other evening when he told confidantes: "He drinks Chivas, and he calls me feudal?"

And here's more on the Pokhara airport debacle. The project is stuck because even the Chinese Exim Bank thought that the Nepali comrades raking in \$100 million on a single

project was too audaciously corrupt. So the Financial Ministry had to send a delegation led by none other than Comrade Raj Kaji, yes the same one who publicly admitted to taking a Rs 5 million bribe 'for the party' from airport contractors. Some countries go to pot because of crony capitalism, here the rot has set in because of crony communism.

You can tell that the holiday spirit is upon us when you hear that both the opposition and the government cancelled street agitations because it was way too difficult to rent a crowd when people have already started going home for holidays. But the Eh-maleys did manage to let off a blitzkrieg last weekend before allowing supporters to slip off into holiday coma. This year, all over Nepal, people are not chanting "Dasain Ayo, Dasain Ayo", but "DV Ayo, DV Ayo".

Yeah, and how come EU envoys need a clearance from Comrade Nayaran Qazi when the ambassadors of China and India can slip in and out of Shitall Nibas at all times of day or night?



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