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HEAVY RIDE: A mahout takes his elephant on an early morning walk near the Rapti River even as Sauraha is shrouded in thick fog.



BIKRAM RAI

Procasti-Nation

Elephants have excellent memory and they never forget. Nepali leaders, on the other hand, are notorious for their forgetfulness and the ease with which they backtrack on promises.

Procrastination and postponement have become a way of Nepali politics, and the people tuned off long ago. The leaders had promised the people who elected them that they would have a deal to break the deadlock before the Dasain deadline. It didn't happen. Then

they said they would use the festival season for 'mind fresh', and come up with a consensus. That did not happen either. Now they are promising a deal 'by Tihar'.

The reason there is no deal is that no one really wants a deal. This elastic transition benefits everyone: the Baburam Bhattarai-led Maoist-Madheshi coalition is perfectly happy to extend its tenure so it can self-enrich itself on a grand scale from state coffers, rigor mortis seems to have set in on

the Nepali Congress and UML which have become parties singularly lacking in new ideas, Pushpa Kamal Dahal is terrified of facing the electorate which is why he wants a CA reincarnation by hook or by crook, the rump Maoists also want a stab at prime ministership but don't really care how they get there, and the Madhesi parties are comfortable being sought-after kingmakers.

Editorial page 2

Not everybody's cup of tea

by **Anurag Acharya**
In the arithmetic of power politics, ignoring the inclusion agenda in the Tarai may prove costly for the parties

page 11



Best foot forward

The captain of the Nepali women's football team is taking huge strides and driving the game to greater heights

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"DID THE PRESIDENT CALL?"

Nepal's political leaders had promised the people who elected them that they would have a deal to break the deadlock before the Dasain deadline. It didn't happen. Then they said they would use the festival season for 'mind fresh', and come up with a consensus. Emerging from the holidays burping from excessive indulgence, they sat on sofas at the party tea parties this week promising a deal 'by Tihar'. Procrastination and postponement have become a way of Nepali politics, and the people tuned off long ago.

The reason there is no deal is that no one really wants a deal. This elastic transition benefits everyone: the Baburam Bhattarai-led Maoist-Madhesi coalition is perfectly happy to extend its tenure so it can self-enrich itself on a grand scale from state coffers, rigor mortis seems to have set in on the Nepali Congress and UML which have become parties singularly lacking in new ideas, Pushpa Kamal Dahal is terrified of facing the electorate which is why he wants a CA reincarnation by hook or by crook, the rump Maoists also want a stab at prime ministership, but don't really care how they get there, and the Madhesi parties are comfortable being sought-after kingmakers.

Dahal is flogging a dead horse when he tirelessly pursues his demand to resurrect the Constituent Assembly. The reason he is obsessed with this option is because he can gain some momentum on his real goal of being an executive president by exploiting identity politics, sidelining his party rival Bhattarai, and keeping elections off the agenda. Few within his party trust Dahal anymore, but the wily Chairman has found strange bedfellows in NC politicians Sher Bahadur Deuba and Ram Chandra Poudel to back his resurrection plan. The irony of it all is that Deuba and Poudel have no love lost



BIKASH DWARE

The reason there is no deal is that no one really wants a deal. This elastic transition benefits everyone

between them, but they have fallen for Dahal's argument that he will scratch their backs if they scratch his.

Besides the technical, legal, and even ethical issues over CA revival, the most important argument against it is that we all know what will happen next: once the CA is revived it can be made to extend its mandate, perpetuate itself, while five-six men sit in a dark corner and haggle endlessly, and futilely, over power.

Which is why there is really no better alternative now than to go for fresh national and local elections to

unlock the deadlock, and kick-start development. The NC and UML, plagued by internal rifts haven't been able to come up with any new ideas and keep repeating ad nauseum their mantra of launching a street agitation if the prime minister doesn't step down. They're bluffing because even the royalist party can pull more genuine supporters on the streets than their rented crowds. Besides, why should the Nepali people be called upon repeatedly to descend to the streets to bring down leaders when that should be done legitimately through elections?

For elections we will need a government of national unity just so that there is no incumbent advantage, and it is a level playing field. All the parties pay lip service to a consensus government, and what is holding things up is the chicken-or-egg conundrum: the prime minister says he won't step down until the opposition comes up with a candidate, and the opposition wants Bhattarai to step down first. And now they are playing politics again, and using the budget ordinance as a bargaining chip. Even Bhattarai's international supporters now feel he should step down to pave the way forward.

If all else fails, President Ram Baran Yadav will have to act. Like the king in chess, the President's moves are restricted, but he can (and is allowed to) play a pivotal role to remove obstacles during times of prolonged national paralysis like this. So far, President Yadav has played his cards cautiously. He may now have to threaten the party leaders that if they can't come up with a consensus government, he will have to declare one.

Like Selina Meyer in the sitcom, *Veep*, the Prime Minister may have to repeatedly ask his secretary in Baluwatar: "Did the President call?"

PRIVATE WISH FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

This is a superb, hard-hitting editorial, kudos to the writer for saying it like it is ('Private wish for the public good', #627). The political class really has to keep its selfish interests on the sidelines and forge ahead for the greater good of the people. But we need more than the tired old exhortation for consensus to untangle this deadlock. The parties must find points to agree on and move forward while agreeing to disagree. There may be a need for another neutral international facilitator (like in 2005) because these clowns are never going to be able to find a solution on their own.

Guru

- If there is anything that is keeping Nepal and Nepalis afloat, it has to be Pashupatinath. How else can anyone explain how our country is still carrying on? Nepal makes your typical Banana republic look like the ultimate system of governance.

Srijan Nepal

- Leaving things to keep afloat is very risky. No one knows when a storm might come. What gets us to the shore before we meet the storm is action. But our country has been left in the lurch for too long.

Rajan Kafle

THE FOREIGN FINGER

I agree with Dipak Gyawali's review of the book *Nepal in Transition* ('The foreign finger', #627). When I read SD Muni's chapter, I also felt it contradicted or rather undermined all other analyses in the book. In

fact, Muni's revelation goes beyond the book and undermines and scoffs at most existing literature on Nepal's transition. If only one instance of behind-the-door agreement led to such an upheaval, one can only imagine what mayhem would be unleashed if many of the clandestine agreements between Nepali and Indian leaders were made fully public.

Anil

- It is indeed a great irony that the party which vehemently opposed the OHCHR's recent report on the conflict, would not comment on Muni's article. More than the report, Muni's piece has the potential to derail the peace process.

Nidhi

- Whatever the reasons behind this book, one thing is for sure: Muni is thoroughly disappointed by the Maoists' 'revolutionary spirit'. It must be disheartening to realise his student Bhattarai is a crook who is willing to let go of his principles and integrity in exchange of power.

Nirmal

THE PAST FORETOLD

Parties are in no mood to go for fresh elections ('The past foretold', Anurag Acharya, #627). The more 'democratic' ones are more reluctant. NC-UML could have agreed to protect the CA at the last minute, but they deliberately let it go by undermining the popular aspiration of the public. They are responsible for ruining our lives and our country.

Binu

- I can't believe Anurag is advocating for CA revival. Anything declared dead cannot be revived. No one should play god because no one is. It is because of

ON THE WEB

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writers like him that leaders think that they can do whatever they want. He needs to stop making excuses for the corrupt four party syndicate.

B

- The CA may be dead for those who benefit from the way things are. For those of us who suffer everyday under transition, it's the only redemption. 95 per cent of the CA work is complete. So going to polls just because leaders cannot agree on a few points is stupid and a big waste of resources. Besides, the election has nothing to do with the constitution. It is merely a power arrangement between Dahal and others who are desperate to oust Bhattarai and get a piece of the pie. The best solution is to make the Constitution the bottom line for any agreement even if that means reviving the CA.

Anonymous

MULTIPLE RESISTANCE

Antibiotics cannot be used like hajmola candy ('Multiple resistance', Juanita Malagon, #627). But most pharmacists (and even some doctors) in Nepal

don't seem to care and run their pharmacies like departmental stores. The situation has become so bad that if a particular doctor does not prescribe antibiotics, the patient automatically assumes the doctor is incompetent. Also people don't seem to understand that incomplete use and misuse of antibiotics will cost them more money if they get pneumonia or TB in the future.

Ramprasad

PRE-DEPARTURE QUESTIONNAIRE

I personally don't mind paying higher entry fees because one man's tourist attraction is another's place of worship and I don't see an easier way of distinguishing between devotees and day-trippers ('Pre-departure questionnaire', Backside, #627). Having said that, fees can be exorbitant (for example in Bhaktapur) and often pretty inflexible too. If we are made to pay that kind of money, there should be a little more evidence that the maintenance and restoration work the fees supposedly support is actually taking place. And here's a thought: Western toilets might be nice too since the fee structure seems designed to make an issue out of how different we all are.

Colin Cooper

- Imagine having a double price system in countries like the US where non-Americans are asked to pay 10 times extra when visiting the Statue of Liberty. That would be blasphemy. Effigies would be burned, curfews would be the order of the day, and people would die left and right in protest. Thank God, Americans and Europeans are not as racist as we are.

Anonymous

- Making tourists pay to enter every single site around the Valley is a bad idea. Not all tourists are loaded and having to pay every 100 metres is downright annoying. Also what kind of message are we sending visitors that we are just after their money and we will suck them dry at every corner? A better solution is to increase the visa fees and give foreigners a single ticket that is valid at all historical sites and museums for a month.

Mangal

NOTE:

We invite you to send us pictures of daily life in Nepal with a brief description- location, subject, and thoughts on the image- to juanita@nepalitimes.com. We will upload the photos onto our Facebook page and publish the best ones on our Happenings section. Photos should be in hi-res (300dpi), maximum 2 Mb.

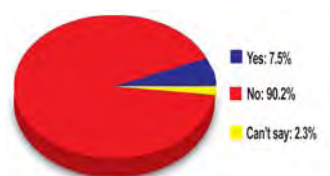
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Weekly Internet Poll #628

Q. Are you hopeful that the parties will resolve the deadlock before Tihar?

Total votes: 3,061



Weekly Internet Poll # 629. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. What should the nature of the next budget be?

Revealing Rushdie

The real reason why Salman Rushdie's parents chose to settle in Pakistan and not India are not revealed in his memoir, Joseph Anton



LOOK OUT

Ajaz Ashraf

People writing their memoirs are prone to concealing embarrassing episodes of their lives to cultivate the image they have of themselves. It's a frailty Salman Rushdie's memoir, *Joseph Anton*, too suffers from.

It is implausible he did not, as he claims, know or guess the reason why his parents chose Pakistan over India late in their lives. He has also glossed over the controversial role his family members played in Pakistan's early years. A sister of Rushdie's mother, Negin, was married to a general who established the ISI, Pakistan's premier intelligence agency. Negin's other sister was the wife of a colonel who mercilessly sanitised the official biography of Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Then, Rushdie remains silent on the issue that the probation of his father, Anis, in the prestigious Indian Civil Service (ICS) was terminated because his birth record was found forged.

A fortnight ago, I had written in a Pakistani newspaper about the erroneous connection Rushdie makes between a person's religiosity and his or her choice to opt for Pakistan. Rushdie sounds bewildered in *Joseph Anton* why his father Anis and mother Negin chose Pakistan after living a life of 'happy irreligion', and thinks their decision was 'fishy'. I argued that it was men such as Anis, modern and secular, who endorsed the idea of Pakistan, which most of the prominent ulema, or religious scholars, bitterly opposed then.

In response, I received a mail from an expatriate Pakistani (call him Mr Anonymous). His parents were close to the Rushdies, he wrote, "Theirs was neither a political nor religious decision." Mr Anonymous said the Rushdies moved to Pakistan because Negin's two sisters and a brother were already living there, furnishing their name. I called Pakistani journalists Mariana Baabar, Rehana Hakim, and Asif Noorani, who helped me piece the story of Rushdie's extended family.



At the time of Partition, Negin's sister, Amina, was married to Col Majeed Malik, who worked as Muhammad Ali Jinnah's aide and became the country's first Principal Information Officer. In his book, *Stop Press: A Life in Journalism* (translated by Khalid Hasan), Inam Aziz blamed Col Malik for issuing Pakistan's 'first press advice'. Soon after Jinnah made his famous speech of 11 August, 1947, Col Malik reportedly asked the *Dawn* newspaper's FE Brown to omit the portion in which a promise was made to recognise the right of non-Muslims to practise their religion.

The irony of Rushdie's uncle playing Mr Censor doesn't end there. Col Malik expunged large sections of Hector Bolitho's official biography of Jinnah (*Jinnah: Creator of Pakistan*). The contract between the Pakistan government and Bolitho made it mandatory for him to submit his manuscript to a specially designated official for approval. The official was none other than Col Malik. The portions he deleted can now be read in Sharif Al Muehjid's *In Quest of Jinnah*.

Rushdie's other aunt, Tahira, was married to Shahid Hamid. Lt Col Hamid opted for Pakistan and established the ISI, in the process becoming its first director-general. He played an instrumental role in the coup Field Marshal Ayub Khan staged to become Pakistan's military dictator, subsequently retiring in 1964 as Maj Gen. In 1978, he was inducted into the cabinet of President Zia ul-Haq, whom he served for three years.

Yet, Rushdie doesn't mention the role his uncles played in the making of an authoritarian Pakistan, which he detests. References to them could have denied Rushdie the opportunity to impart a touch of mystery to his parents' shift to Pakistan. It could also have made their migration appear a tad opportunistic - it may have conveyed the notion that they shifted to Pakistan to benefit from relatives who were in positions of power there. He couldn't then have created the myth that his parents were cosmopolitan and devoid of Muslim consciousness, forgetting that a person could simultaneously possess the two seemingly contradictory sensibilities.

It's also possible Rushdie is deeply embarrassed by his aunts' husbands, wishing to disown them in the same manner city-slickers do away their country cousins. You suspect this as he is effusive about his actor-aunt, Uzra Butt, a Pakistani citizen, and her famous sister, Zohra Segal, an Indian. Uzra was married to Hamid Butt, Negin's brother, and the couple shifted to Pakistan around the time the Rushdies did.

Rushdie also skirts around the story the London-based journalist Danish Khan did for *Mumbai Mirror*, in which he quoted from documents obtained from the National Archives of the British government to prove Anis was dismissed from the ICS for presenting forged documents pertaining to his date of birth. Danish's story prompted London's *Evening Standard* to do an item on it, for which Rushdie was asked for a response. He shot back, "My father died 24 years ago, and was not a public person, the fact that his son is in the public eye is no reason to exhume such ancient matters."

Mr Rushdie, one can say the same thing about personalities you have lampooned in your novels. 🇳🇵

Nepali Times begins to carry Ajaz Ashraf's syndicated column, Look Out, from this issue. Ashraf has worked for India's *The Pioneer* and *Hindustan Times* newspapers. For the last 12 years he was deputy editor at *Outlook* magazine. ashrafajaz3@gmail.com



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RAM PANT

BOSTON — When Jimmy Carter visited Nepal in 2008 to observe the first election after the end of the conflict, he observed polling in some urban centres and immediately pronounced them ‘free and fair’.

As it turned out, the election that voted the Maoists into the Constituent Assembly as the largest party was ridden with widespread voter intimidation and booth capturing. The Maoists would probably have won anyway, but with a smaller margin.

Given allegations of rampant election process irregularities in the United States in the run-up to presidential elections on 6 November, it looks like Carter should actually devote more attention to electoral inconsistencies in his country in addition to advising developing countries.

In the run-up to poll day, the US media has been rife with reports of attempts at voter suppression, voter fraud, misuse of absentee ballots, and campaigns to intimidate African American families, students, and the poor who may vote Democratic.

But by far the most serious allegations are about voter suppression in crucial swing-states such as Ohio, where pro-Republican Party activists have been trying to intimidate voters likely to vote for the Democratic Party.

A recent survey showed that 11 per cent of American voters do not have a driving

licence or photo ID. Among people above 65, this goes up to 18 per cent and a quarter of African Americans do not have IDs necessary for voting.

Conservative groups in Ohio have been using the excuse of voter fraud to install large billboards to warn voters that they need photo IDs even when it is not true. This is done to intimidate Democratic party voters from showing up at polling booths on election day. In 2008, 64 per cent of African Americans voted, a higher turnout than usual, that is credited with Barack Obama’s victory.

Recently, billionaire William Louis-Dreyfus put an

ad in *The New York Times* in which he accused some political entities of suppressing people of ‘a different political persuasion’ from voting. Louis-Dreyfus went on to describe voter suppression as an assault on democracy and pledged \$1 million to a non-partisan group to prevent this practice.

I emigrated from Nepal to the United States in 1958, but never since the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1965 have I seen as much discussion on suppression and electoral fraud as is happening during this election campaign. We Americans preach democracy in our country and throughout the world and sometimes that makes America an

international laughing stock. But if democracy is weakened in America, I believe it will also be weaker elsewhere.


America has changed. The level of ethics in society is on the decline. The cost of running for office is high at all levels and the necessity of campaign financing corrupts elected officials, making them beholden to large donors. The Supreme Court is more political than it ever was in the past, but it did recently support the Justice Department’s efforts to prevent using ‘suppression methods’ to restrict poor people from voting in several Florida counties. The Justice Department has invoked the

Civil Rights Act of 1965 to prevent voter suppression in five counties in Florida.

Obviously, voter intimidation and suppression in the US is not as serious as in developing countries, but serious enough for it to threaten the outcome of this closely-fought election. The question is: why is the United States imitating the worse forms of electoral practice from the Third World?

The other worry is about vote tampering. A large per cent of the votes in Florida is from absentee ballots or people voting early and this is where the potential for fraud is high. Yet, absentee voting has tripled since 1980 and now makes up 20 per cent of all votes in America. Absentee ballots and postal voting, where the chances of fraud are highest, can now determine the outcome of elections.

With 18 per cent of Nepalis living outside Nepal, the issue of absentee voting is going to be crucial in Nepal as well. But if the Carter Centre can advise Nepal on elections, why can’t Nepalis also have the right to advise Americans in controlling voter fraud? It may not be as outlandish as it seems to think that some day Nepal’s past Election Commissioners who have conducted relatively clean elections despite huge challenges could be deployed to monitor US elections also. 🇳🇵



Ram Pant is the President and CEO of Cambridge Global Services, a Think Tank located in Massachusetts, USA.



JUDITH GOLD

Polls apart

Nepal should return the favour and help the United States reform its electoral process



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The biology of luxury

Our inherent need to keep up appearances and display wealth is keeping the demand for luxury goods high despite the global recession



ISODARA NEPAL

ANTOINE DANCHIN

Despite the global economic crisis, sales of luxury goods are surging worldwide. Why? While marketing has contributed to the rise, the luxury market's robust growth is actually rooted in biology.

Discussions about the structure of human thought have long been dominated by the Enlightenment view that reality is composed of four elements: space, time, matter, and energy. But recently, a fifth element, information, has entered the debate. And information, it turns out, is crucial to understanding the fundamental drivers of luxury-goods consumption and thus to predicting the luxury market's future.

While animals use colourful displays and complicated behaviours to signal fitness and strength, humans use luxury goods to demonstrate economic health. But more than a symbol, buying luxury goods could indicate future success, owing to the selective advantage that showing off provides.

In nature, competitors perform and the most compelling, beautiful spectacle wins. For most animals, males are the performers. As a result, competitive

displays have been interpreted as a way to demonstrate fitness to a potential mate. A bird that survives, despite inconvenient plumage that slows it down or makes it visible to predators, must be fit and will likely sire a healthy progeny.

Given that females bear the physical burden of offspring, an unobtrusive appearance is more advantageous – and thus more common – in nature. But humans are social creatures with no natural predators, so female competition is more widespread – and demonstrative performance and display are more likely. Indeed, while visual manifestations of wealth are prevalent for both genders, women's appearance is frequently more vivid and more closely scrutinised.

But effective display is costly. Developing complex, vibrant plumage demands significant energy and genetic resources. Genes are difficult to maintain, requiring subtle and energy-intensive correcting processes. Just as writing too fast can cause typographical errors that garble a text, rapid changes to the genome can undermine a species' integrity.

Likewise, purchasing luxury goods requires substantial financial resources. This cost dictates the display's competitive impact. In today's

information-based world, selection is effective only if a striking appearance is obtained at a very high price – and that price is known.

For example, those who use cosmetics known to be expensive often seem healthier, more vibrant, and more attractive than those who do not. This is not the result of efficiency (the most effective cosmetics frequently become pharmaceutical drugs). Rather, it signals a lifestyle that values the preservation of beauty and youth. Cosmetics, like all luxury products, gain influence not from their production or even their purchase, but from their visibility.

Indeed, an expensive item with no label or identifying characteristics has less competitive impact than a recognised item or brand. For luxury goods to have any function, society needs information about their cost. This has been true to varying degrees throughout history – sometimes resulting in price bubbles.

False information, such as counterfeit goods, jeopardises the competition-based selection process. Animals commonly use mimicry to capitalise on knowledge – or fear – of another's strength. By imitating an animal with a well-known protective profile, a weaker one may enjoy selective benefits without the costs.

But mimicry's success in nature depends on the ratio of the original to the ersatz. If there are too few of the original, the profile loses its significance, and its protective value vanishes. Similarly, nobody would display a symbol of wealth if it were too common. Therefore, assessing whether luxury goods will maintain their impact, and thus their appeal, requires monitoring the extent of counterfeiting.

Given that luxury goods provide individuals with a competitive advantage, higher luxury-goods sales could indicate a brighter economic future for a country. In a time of crisis, countries in which luxury goods play their selective role effectively are the safest bets for productive investment. 

www.project-syndicate.org

Antoine Danchin is an honorary professor at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Hong Kong and President of AMAbiotics SAS.

BIZ BRIEFS

Flying easy

Qatar Airways announced its plans to launch daily flights to the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh from early next year. The Doha-based airline will be the only Middle Eastern carrier to operate into Cambodia

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with services scheduled to start from February 20

onwards. The airline has also introduced offline payment solutions for reservations made on its website. Passengers can now book tickets online and pay later at a Qatar Airways reservations and ticketing office.

Education first

Under the Nepal-India Economic Cooperation Program the Embassy of India

in Kathmandu and District Development Committee signed a MoU to provide Rs 43.39 million for construction of building at Shree Rambha Higher

Secondary School in Palpa. This is the embassy's sixth development project in the district under India's Small Development Projects.

New partnership

Ethad Airways will expand services in East Asia with codeshare

services to Hong Kong from February 2013 in partnership with Air Seychelles. The new codeshare supplements Etihad Airways' expansion in mainland China and provides passengers from Hong Kong with seamless connectivity through Etihad Airways' hub in Abu Dhabi to key destinations in Europe and the Middle East.

Showing support

Surya Nepal Asha Social Entrepreneurship Award (SNASEA) 2012 has announced the 15 finalists. From the finalists, five entrepreneurs will be awarded on 18

December. SNASEA rewards, recognises and supports social entrepreneurs all over Nepal and encourages others to follow these exemplary individuals who are solving social problems through market-driven models.




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BEST FOOT FORWARD

The captain of the Nepali women's football team is taking huge strides and driving the game to greater heights

BHRIKUTI RAI in MORANG

In between putting tika, visiting relatives, and house hopping, Jamuna Gurung makes some time to revisit the football ground at Jana Sewa School in Ramailo, Morang. This is the ground where the 27-year-old captain of the Nepali women's football team first learnt to kick a ball. "This is where it all began," she says running her fingers across the faded wooden goal post.

At five feet one inch, it's hard to believe Jamuna has scored a record 25 international goals in just four matches and won the golden boot for being the leading goal scorer at the recent SAFF Women's Championship in Sri Lanka. But her small frame belies her immense mental toughness.

Born and brought up in Ramailo, a remote village in Bayarban VDC in Morang, Jamuna was one of the few girls interested in the game. However, this did not deter her from entering the sports even if it meant being the only female player in the team. "Every time I watched my brothers play, I felt like I belonged more at the football ground than in the stands," she recalls.

Bruises and broken bones followed, but she carried on with sheer determination and at 14 she was selected for the national women's football squad at the 4th National Game in 1999. She got her first taste of international football the same year when she participated in the Asian Cup in the



Philippines. "It was after my stint in the Philippines that I decided to take up football professionally," she explains.

The cool-headed forward is also quick to give her family full credit for her success. In a

country where social acceptance for female athletes is still difficult to come by, her late brother Dambar Gurung not only coached and mentored the precocious young talent, and her twin sister Ganga, but also kept

their passion for the game alive.

Despite the initial success, her spirits were soon dampened by the constant power struggle at All Nepal Football Association (ANFA). In the ten years after she made her debut,

हिमाल खबरपत्रिका

विशेष ग्राहक योजना

बम्पर उपहार रु. ३,८५,०००

मासिक उपहार टिसोटको नाडी घडी

पाक्षिक उपहार नोकिया मोबाइल सेट

एक पटक ग्राहक बन्नुहोस् पटक पटक उपहार पाउनुहोस् ।

हिमाल खबरपत्रिकाको ग्राहक बन्नुहोस्, तत्काल र हरेक १५-१५ दिनमा उपहार प्राप्त गर्नुहोस् ।

फोटो माउन्टिङ्ग

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मेम्बरसिप कार्ड

१ वर्षे ग्राहक शुल्क ८००

मेम्बरसिप कार्ड रु. ५०० बराबरको
 ४R २५ प्रति फोटो थुलाउने रु. ३५० बराबरको
 पि.पि. साइजको फोटो ६ प्रति रु. ३०० बराबरको

२ वर्षे ग्राहक शुल्क १५५०

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 फोटो माउन्टिङ्ग (१०x१२) रु. १२५० बराबरको

३ वर्षे ग्राहक शुल्क २३००

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HUMBLE BEGINNINGS: Jamuna Gurung revisits the football ground in Jana Sewa School in Ramailo, Morang where she began her career (*top left*). Jamuna in action during a match against Afghanistan at the 2012 SAFF Women's Championship in Sri Lanka (*above*).

RAJU GHISING

the Nepali women’s team didn’t participate in a single international tournament and even local matches were few and far in between. Without regular competitions or matches, keeping themselves motivated and developing their skills and strategies became a big challenge for the team. Jamuna says this was the lowest point in her football career and she even contemplated hanging up her boots before her career could even take off.

But all that changed for the better after the South Asian Games in 2010. Since then the team has bagged three runner-up trophies: one from the South Asian Games and two from the SAFF Women’s Championship. “We have been consistently good against teams in the region except India. But we are training really hard and hope to bring home the gold next time,” says Jamuna brimming with confidence.

With more local and international tournaments being organised, the players are getting greater exposure and the team’s performance at

regional tournaments has been heartening. However, despite ANFA’s large budget very little trickles down to the women’s team.

As a result, women train with shoddy infrastructure and and meagre resources. Female players weren’t even paid a monthly salary until two months ago. A female player now earns Rs 5,000 each month compared to Rs 10,000 for men. Getting advertisers and larger audience for women’s games is also a hurdle.

“It’s hard especially for girls who are starting out their careers from small towns where training and facilities are not even half as good as the cities. Unless we improve this it will be hard to catch and retain young talents,” she admits.



However, Jamuna is still hopeful that the Nepali team can make it to the top of regional rankings if current lot of female footballers play well and set a good launchpad for younger players.

Many of her contemporaries gave into family and financial pressures and left the game midway, but Jamuna says she

is in it for the long haul. Today she juggles her duties as the captain of both the national and the Armed Police Force teams. As an avid Barcelona fan, she idolises Lionel Messi and admires his agility and sheer speed which she tries to emulate in her own game. After retirement, she plans to become a coach and pass on her knowledge and skills to young girls like her who dream of dribbling it like Messi.

With Dasain over, many in her village have returned to the cities to resume their work. But Jamuna is taking a few weeks off from her national duty to train girls in Ramailo.

“I was lucky that my family was so encouraging. But not all girls have that kind of support so I want to reach out and tell them that if they believe in themselves, they can achieve their goals. It will be great to see my sisters train at the same ground where I began my football journey,” she tells us proudly. 🇳🇵

[nepalitimes.com](#) 
[see video](#) 

Beauties with brawn

TSERING DOLKER GURUNG

The Nepali women gather into a huddle in the middle of the court at the Sugathadasa Indoor Stadium in Colombo, Sri Lanka. More than athletes they look like models straight out of a fashion magazine: hair neatly tied, eyes lined with kohl, lips painted bright red, and pink cheeks. The other teams even nicknamed the players ‘little dolls’ for being the most decked up and shortest team on court. However, once the whistle blew, the teenage girls transform into a professional unit and pack a powerful punch.

Despite being the newest kids on the block and not having a strong reputation coming into the tournament, the Nepali women’s netball team quickly became one of the most popular teams at the Asian Netball Championship held in Sri Lanka in August. The little dolls faced nine consecutive loses and did not bag the trophy, but were successful in winning the hearts of fans and opponents alike.

“We don’t have any regrets about the losses. No matter the score difference or the end result, we gave our best shot and didn’t lose hope till the end and it is what matters the most,” says 20-year-old captain Mala Limbu who is a model by profession. The fighting spirit paid off when the team won their last match against Pakistan.



WHITE LIGHT STUDIO

The team of 18 to 22 year olds was put together six weeks before the tournament. Due to time constraints, most of players were selected from the national basketball team since netball is very similar to basketball. Tarli Young and Micheal Norwood who volunteered to coach the team recall spending countless hours watching YouTube videos and taking rigorous notes on tactics and moves. The players, out of which only three had played netball before, trained for six days a week for two months.

“We even got our hands dirty, lifting kick-bags, mats and heavy taekwondo equipment from the court as we shared the same court for practice. But none of the girls ever hesitated to go the extra mile,” recalls Limbu who is a model by profession.

Until three months ago, netball was a game heard by few and played by even less in Nepal. But Deepak Lama’s determination to bring the game to the country made the formation of a national netball team possible. Lama found out about the sport through a friend in Australia, where the game is immensely popular.

“I love sports and I have been active in Nepali sports for some time now. I feel like netball will catch on quickly because basketball is so popular already,” he says. He contacted the Asian chapter of the International Federation of Netball Association that made Nepal a representative. Within a few months the Nepal Sports Council officially recognised the National Netball Association. Lama who is now the general secretary of the newly formed Nepal Netball Association, aims to encourage more youngsters by introducing the game in schools and colleges.

“The girls performed much better than we expected and it was a great opportunity for them to gain exposure. With better training we hope they will progress to the top three in the next tournament which will then encourage other Nepali girls and boys to join the sports,” explains Lama with an eye to the future. 🇳🇵



DAKINI, witness a visually stunning circus performance with breathtaking costumes and exceptional skills that magically bring to life traditional Nepali storytelling. *Rs 500 for children, Rs 1000 for adults, 10 to 11 November, 3 pm and 6 pm, Bulls Club, Nakkhu, tickets available at The Summit Hotel, Moksh, Café Soma, Electric Pagoda, 9818165730, info@circuskathmandu.com*

Writing for film, filmmaker Murray Kerr will help you hone your raw ideas into a polished script ready for the big screen. *Rs 2,500, 1 to 10 November, 11 am to 2 pm, 9813485716, (01)5523486, sara@sattya.org*



COUCH FEST, watch short films selected from the likes of Sundance, CFC Worldwide Shorts, Seattle International Film Festival among others. *10 November, 6 pm, Sattya Media Arts, Jawalakhel, www.couchfestfilms.com/films-2012-Kathmandu.html*

Our Gurkhas, an exhibition photographer Zakaria Zainal's work who will also launch his book *Our Gurkhas: Singapore through their Eyes*. *2 to 5 November, 12 to 7 pm, Nepal Art Council, Kathmandu; 7 to 8 November, 10 am to 5 pm, Pokhara Sabah Griha, Pokhara; 10 to 11 October, 10 am to 5 pm, Yumaa Fine Art Gallery, Dharan. www.facebook.com/gurkhas.sg*

Living pictures, watch Nepali and Finnish films every Wednesday evening. *31 October to 28 November, 9.30 pm, Moksh Restaurant, Jhamsikhel*

The digital tribe, a group exhibition on the changing cultural, social, and individual values in the age of digital connectivity. *2 to 12 November, 5.30 pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, (01)4218048*



THE MYSTERY OF SHAKTI YOGMAYA, a talk by Barbara Nimri Aziz on the life of the mystic Yogmaya and her contribution to Nepal's history, politics, religion, and gender studies. *2 November, 5 pm, Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka, free entrance, (01)4472807, info@soscbaha.org*

Ace creative showcase, exhibition and workshop that aims to introduce new-media art and computer entertainment, especially widespread in Japan, to the youth of Nepal. *2 to 3 November, 6 pm, UWTC Building, Tripureswor*



TRES FLAMENCAS, internationally renowned dancer Clara Ramon introduces the Spanish Flamenco for the first time in Nepal. *Rs 1200, 8 to 9 November, 6 to 8 pm, Russian Cultural Centre, Kamal Pokhari, 9813930267*

DINING

Dragon Chinese Restaurant, try the Kung Pao Pork if alone and the Mai Cao if with company. *Lakeside, Pokhara*



MAGIC BEANS, coffee, cakes and sandwiches with a magical touch and taste. *Sherpa Mall, Durbar Marg, (01)4230914*

Yellow Chili, enjoy renowned Indian chef Sanjeev Kapoor's signature in Indian delicacies and variety of other mouthwatering delicacies. *Thapathali*

Shambaling Hotel, this newly opened hotel promises a fine dining experience. *Boudha*

Chopstix, savoury Asian food cooked in true Chinese fashion sure to charm and impress. Try the famous drums of heaven. *Kumaripati, (01)5551118*

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



SAIGON PHO, spacious interior with authentic Vietnamese dishes. *Lazimpat*

Krishnarpan, a specialty Nepali restaurant at The Dwarika's Hotel serving 6 to 22 courses of authentic Nepali meal. *The Dwarika's Hotel, Battisputali, (01)4479488*



PERI PERI, home of legendary Portugese flamed grilled chicken, enjoy dishes served with the trademark Piri Piri sauce. *Jhamsikhel, 9808563803*



THIK THAK RESTAURANT, this restaurant boasts fresh fish from the lake which means the dishes are always fresh and delicious. *Lakeside, Pokhara*

GETAWAYS

Charikot Panorama Resort, enjoy panoramic views and local culture in the historic town of Charikot. Special packages on offer. *Charikot, Dolakha, (01)5529463, thapamaag@gmail.com*



EVEREST PANORAMA RESORT, a great view of the Himalayas from the top of the Mahabharat. *Daman, (01)4412864, info@everestpanoramaresort.net*

Dhulikhel Lodge Resort, located on a hilltop the resort offers a magnificent vista of valleys, foothills, and moutains to the north. *Dhulikhel, (011) 490114/494, dhulikhellodgeresort.com*

All that jazz

If you couldn't make it to the Jazz for the Next Generation gig yesterday, don't worry because Surya Nepal Jazzmandu is looking to rock you right on its tenth birthday.

Artists from Switzerland to Norway and Thailand to France have flown in, settled down, roamed about and are raring to go. "I can't believe I will be playing salsa in Nepal," says Marlow Rosado of USA, "I am very proud of my roots and happy that they have reached so far and brought me here."

On Tuesday morning, shoppers at Ason Tol in the heart of old Kathmandu were pleasantly surprised to find drum sets and amplifiers in place of lettuce and cauliflowers as Cadenza Collective set up shop not to trade, but to amuse the curious crowd with a short performance along with a music video shoot of their song Hip Break.

On Friday night Manny's in Jawalakhel will feature Beat Kaestli who will perform traditional jazz mixed with R&B and Latin rhythms. Nearby in Moksh, Jhamsikhel, the Rootman Ensemble from Thailand will play their high-energy funk, jazz, soul, hip-hop, and R&B beats.

At the other end of the city at the House of Music in Thamel, Adil and Vasundhara from India are all prepared to charm audiences with their blend of jazz, funk, folk, and blues. And slightly further at Bhumi in Lazimpat, Suzy&2

from Norway will play an exciting fusion of eastern classical and jazz laid out on African rhythms.

Suzy&2 have been in Nepal for quite some time and are teaming up with three Nepali musicians for the festival. "We promise to take our listeners on a magical sonic travel around the world," they say.

So mark your calendars and joint the Jazzmandu team on a magic-carpet ride across the soundscapes of the world.

The Valley Jams are 7:30 to 9:30pm.



Jazzmandu calendar

Valley jams, 2 November, 7.30 to 9.30 pm, Rs 400 Different venues in Kathmandu will feature performances by various Jazzmandu artists.

Jazz bazaar, 3 November, 2.30 to 10 pm, Gokarna Forest Resort, Rs 899 Far from the cacophony of Kathmandu, in the lush green forests of Gokarna, a marathon of jazz and traditional Nepali folk and classical music awaits you. Bus available from Hyatt Regency, Boudha from 1 to 4 pm and to Lazimpat at 10 pm, seats not guaranteed.

Afro-Latin jazz, 4 November, 7.30 to 9.30 pm, Hotel Shangri-La, Rs 899 A night of Afro-Cuban sounds of the Caribbean with Tito Puente Jr and Marlow Rosado, accompanied by the Jazzmandu all-star band which will

be followed by a jam with Jazzmandu musicians.

Jazzmandu master class, 6 November, 3.30 to 4.30 pm, KJC, free entry An opportunity for music students and jazz enthusiasts to interact with visiting musicians, share experiences, and get tips on techniques and instruments.

Jazz at Patan, 6 November, 6 to 8.30 pm, Patan Museum, Rs 1,299 An evening of Nepali classical music fused with Jazz played in the historic courtyard.

Jazzmandu finale, 7 October, 5.30 to 10 pm, Hotel Shangri-La, Rs 999 Bands will play their sets and later jam together, culminating in a high-energy, improvised treat to bid adieu to this year's musical festivities.



Root of the issue

As part of its monthly lecture series, the Culture Studies Group of Nepal brings you Wildlife, Forests and People in Nepal, a talk by Judy Oglethorpe on the environment and the inhabitants of the Gandaki basin. Oglethorpe is the chief of the Hariyo Ban Program which centres its activities from the Tarai arc in Chitwan to the Annapurnas. Before moving to Nepal, she directed the World Wildlife Fund US's climate change program. The talk on Nepali forests will range from estimating snow leopard population to restoring forests and helping people and nature adapt to climate change.

2 November, 9.30 am, Shanker Hotel, Lazimpat, csgnepal@yahoo.com
Rs 400 for non-members and Rs 100 for members, including tea or coffee

Look who's Bach



The French Embassy in Nepal and Vajra Hotel bring you Delights of Solitude, an evening of solo works of German composer JS Bach. World-renowned cellist Franck Bernede will be playing Suite G-Major BWV 1007, Partita

A-Moll BWV 1013, and Suite D-Minor BWV 1008 on the violoncello.

Franck Bernede is a cellist and ethnomusicologist who has been trying to bridge the musical cultures of the East and the West. He has researched extensively in Nepal, specialising on the Gandharbas of central Nepal and also the traditional Newari music of Kathmandu. He holds a doctorate in social anthropology and ethnomusicology and is the founder and director of the Singhini Research Centre, a Nepali organisation dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the music and dance of the Himalayan region.

Rs 750, 17 November, 6 pm, Vajra Hotel, Swayambhu, limited seating, booking advised, (01)4271545

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SOMEPLACE ELSE

The familiar is often ignored for the novelty of the new. This realisation was brought anew last night when after an evening of trick-or-treating, my six-year-old pipes up and says he wants to eat dinner at Buzz. Yes Buzz, the restaurant we have been to so often, but for some reason I hadn't reviewed it yet.

We love Buzz at our house, its proximity being a big reason, but definitely not the only one. The food is good and wholesome, nothing to rave about but consistently good. Also because it is set in a courtyard, it is open and allows the children some space to move around. And most importantly the place exudes comfort and acceptance and while being child-friendly, it is thankfully not a 'family restaurant'. Family restaurants in Kathmandu for

some reason demand garishly coloured walls and a standard fare of soggy fries and chicken momos.

To be fair, Buzz does have fries on its menu, but here they are fresh with a bite to them, and there are chicken momos too, though I haven't tasted them yet. The food at Buzz is definitely all grown up.



We started our mother-son dinner with Golden Fried Prawns (Rs 450), a delectable start to our meal. We continued with the Crunchy Pork (Rs 260) which is prepared with galangal and lemon grass and honey, leading to a delightful mish mash of incredible flavours. We then moved on to the Grilled Chicken Wrap



(Rs 280) that comes with fries and a small helping of fresh salad. The chicken is beautifully seasoned and softly grilled so that it retains its moisture and the resulting fare is light and appetising.

The Chicken Mongolian Noodles (Rs 260) is a filling plate of stir fried flat noodles with fresh vegetables and chunks of marinated chicken, garnished with sliced green chillies and served with fresh chutney of tomatoes and Szechuan peppers. At Buzz, they serve meals, not bite sized pretty food on a plate, but meals, and this is one of the things that makes Buzz such a popular haunt: good food at affordable prices.

We finished our meal with

the only dessert on offer- chocolate brownie with ice cream and hot fudge sauce (Rs 220). What can I say but the brownie was fresh, the ice cream cold and the sauce hot. Overall, simply delicious.

The restaurant also serves a variety of cocktails and mocktails and its version of Thai food is pretty good. Buzz has turned into a joint that people return to over and over again which says a lot about the place and the food it serves. 🇳🇵

How to get there: Walk down the lane from the original Bhat Bhateni Supermarket, 100 metres or so beyond the Chinese Embassy, a brown gate on the left leads to Buzz Restaurant and Bar. (01)4429903

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LOOPER



Looper is the perfect film to go and see in the theatre to celebrate the holiday season. It is a time-travelling, twisty thriller starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt, (one of the most promising up and comers in Hollywood) as the young Joe, a hired assassin who kills targets sent back from the future so that the body and the crime are essentially untraceable.

Sound complicated? You have no idea how much twistier the plot actually becomes and I will not attempt to explain the byzantine plot here. It is better to see and experience the film in real time with no particular pre-conceived notion so that you fully enjoy it.

Rian Johnson, the director, and Gordon-Levitt have collaborated before in Johnson's first feature film *Brick* (2005), another twisty noirish thriller that sealed Gordon-Levitt's reputation as an intense and very talented young actor. While *Brick* and *The Brother's Bloom* (2008) are both very watchable, they fall into the trap of being highly complicated, but perhaps lacking the little bit of heart that would have allowed them to transcend their genre. This is the usual pit-fall that awaits any young, dynamic, writer and director types like Rian Johnson.

I am happy to say though that he has not made the same mistake with *Looper*. With an excellent cast including, Bruce Willis (as the older Joe), Emily Blunt as a young mother protecting her disturbed but powerful child, Paul Dano as a nervous young assassin, Piper Perabo as a stripper with a heart of gold, and Jeff Daniels as the arch villain sent back in time, the film is able to carry its complicated plot with the help of the afore-mentioned cast, slick cinematography, and very real existential questions that leave you thinking.

It is rare that an action packed, slightly self-indulgent action thriller leaves you with questions and keeps the post movie debate alive and kicking.

The ending is shocking and unexpected, and afterwards you will find yourself asking, "Who exactly would I take a bullet for?"

While, hopefully, this is not a question anyone need follow through in the real world, it is important in the grand scheme of things. Is the love of a mother for her child enough to change his nature? Is that love more sacred than that between a man and a woman? Can one really alter the course of history with sacrifice? As one of my friends put it afterwards, "If you could



go back in time and kill Hitler, would you?" Well, I can't answer that question, even for myself, yet I find its premise fascinating and very disturbing.

Watch *Looper* for thrills, a bit of mind-boggling time travel, crazy complications that will leave your mind slightly addled, great performances, and some heart-wrenching questions at the end of it all.

Looper is currently playing in theatres in Kathmandu. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer

High spirits, low abuse



If you have visited a hospital between Dasain and Tihar, you may have noticed the occasional 'raksi lageko' patient. What many Nepalis don't seem to realise, however, is the magnitude of alcohol abuse that happens during the festive season.

Patients with cirrhosis of the liver caused by excessive alcohol intake are all too common in emergency wards during this time. The well-known complication of cirrhosis, namely upper gastrointestinal bleeding, is also tragically a regular occurrence.

In order to know what alcohol abuse is, it is important to understand how a drink is defined. We can broadly categorise drinks into three groups: beer, spirits (whisky, rum, vodka, gin), and wine. The regular alcohol content is about five per cent in beer, 40 per cent in spirits, and 12 per cent in wine. About 350ml of beer (one

regular can), about 150ml of wine (about two thirds of a regular wine glass, not full), and 45ml of spirit (not a 'Patiala' peg) each comprise one drink.

Based on these figures, a healthy man without any contraindications to alcohol may have two drinks per day and a healthy, non-pregnant woman



can consume one drink per day, as women metabolise alcohol differently. The quantity should not exceed more than 14 drinks per week for men and seven drinks per week for women. When people cross this limit they

risk abusing alcohol.

What about all the news about alcohol being good for you? Drinking like most things in life is a double edged sword. There is some good evidence to show that moderate consumption of alcohol may be cardioprotective. Alcohol in moderation also enhances the fun and frivolity of any party. People are more keen to attend parties which say 'drinks and dinner' instead of just dinner.

All the people that drink are certainly not alcoholics. But homicides, liver diseases, cancer, strokes, certain heart diseases are all problems associated with alcohol. And even trying to drink in moderation is difficult given the addictive power of the drug. Being able to 'hold your drink' is no protection against the ill effects of alcohol either.

Those of us who like alcoholic beverages will do well to drink in moderation in Tihar. Also with the zero tolerance on drinking and driving in Nepal, it may be wise to use public transportation (if available), take a taxi home or have a designated driver who did not drink that evening. 🇳🇵



NAMASTE: Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai and President Ram Baran Yadav exchange greetings during Phulpati Badai parade of Nepal Army in Tudikhel.



LAST-MINUTE SHOPPING: CPN-UML Chairman Jhala Nath Khanal tries on a Nepali topi at Massan Galli, Kathmandu.



CATASTROPHE CALL: Although road construction is nearly finished in Maharajganj, electric and telephone wires have been left down on the sidewalks.

READERS' PHOTO



JOLLY SWING: A happy mother looks after her newborn in Thok, Sanga Chok VDC, Sindhupalchok.

WEEKEND WEATHER

Recently, the whole Himalayan region was under high pressure which led to a drastic drop in temperatures in the past few weeks. However, the drop has somewhat stagnated now and no further dips are expected at least until next week. The fragmented and unsaturated clouds we saw in the past couple of days mean that there could be some isolated snowfall across the Himalaya. November is the driest month in Nepal and trekkers can take advantage of open skies for at least two more weeks.



FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
21°-10°	21°-10°	20°-12°

Not everybody's cup of tea



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

This week, while the political parties in Kathmandu were having their tea parties, I dropped in at a local tea shop in Biratnagar with the morning paper under my arm. It was packed with rickshaw pullers and day labourers. The Dasain festival for them is less of a celebration, more of an opportunity to make extra money.

On one corner, two graying men were engrossed in their own conversation in Maithili. “Chhath ke pahile ta kuchho na hoyi. Aa, chhath ke baad, neta sab sangh ke upar gadbada rahi, te thulo babbal hete,” one of them was saying rubbing tobacco in his palm.

The rulers of New Nepal in Kathmandu are perennially undecided about the future, but in a tea shop 400km away in the eastern Tarai, ordinary citizens are pretty sure about what is going to happen. The mood of the Madhes, which makes up half the country’s population, is of increasing impatience with the disarray and apathy in the capital.

In Dhanusha to the east, which was the hotbed of the Madhes uprising in 2007, noted Maithili writer Rajendra Bimal told me: “The leaders should know that dishonest



ANURAG ACHARYA

In the arithmetic of power politics, ignoring the inclusion agenda in the Tarai may prove costly for the parties

inclusion will prove fatal for the nation.”

On the surface, the border towns of Biratnagar, Rajbiraj, Siraha, and Janakpur, which saw some of the most violent protests in 2007-2008, seem uninterested in the conspiracies being hatched in the far away capital. But people here are not just aware, but getting jittery about the headlines that talk of ‘postponing’ identity and

federalism: two issues that galvanised the Madhes movement.

“If they declare a constitution without finalising the federalism issue, there will be protests. If they choose to go for election without making a concrete decision on federalism, there will be protests,” says 28-year-old Birendra Sah, a student from Janakpur. “If any party thinks they can sideline

the issue by luring few Madhesi netas, they should come here and talk to us.”

Nepali politics is not just full of irony, it is also full of idiosyncratic personalities who defy conventional wisdom of class, caste or any ideological political premise. So there is little surprise if a prominent leader of a party proposes Pushpa Kamal Dahal as probable PM candidate at the same time

as another leader of the same party is worried about a Maoist design for state capture.

For those who thought the hue and cry over government change was about dealing with the supposed Maoist threat, this should be a rude awakening. The opposition discomfort is not about the Maoist government, but about the cosy relationship between Bhattarai government and New Delhi.

However, for most of the country’s 26 million people, it never mattered who rules in Singha Darbar as long as they have a government that delivers services. And here in the Tarai’s urban centres it is still also an emotional struggle for dignity and respect for identity.

Who governs this country is not as important as how it is governed. But that message has never got through to the rulers in Kathmandu. Federalism may be an abstract concept in the capital, but here in the plains it is a demand that contains an aspiration for self-rule that cannot be dismissed over a cup of tea.

The preliminary results of the 2011 census show that there has been a huge movement of population from the mountains to the plains. In some districts, up to one-third of the people have migrated out, mostly to the Tarai. This transmigration trend is not just reshaping the demography of the country, but it will have a lasting impact on democracy as well. The future of Madhesi politics will depend on how leaders address the aspirations of the Madhesi people with that of recent migrants from the north.

In the eastern plains, it is festival time and soon people will be busy harvesting the ripening rice. But the seeds of yet another movement in the Tarai is also being sown. 🇳🇵



TEMPLE TREE
RESORT AND SPA

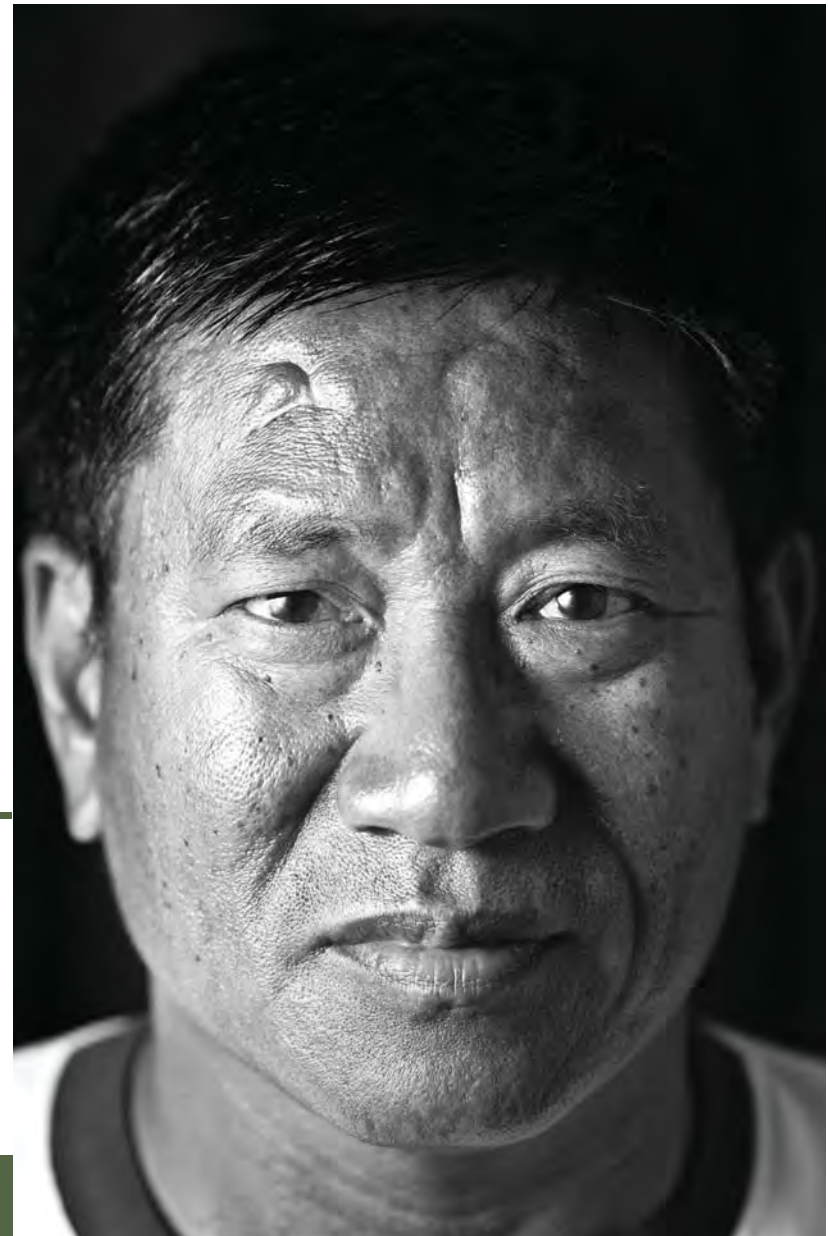


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When I arrived in Singapore for the first time, it was a surreal experience. Compared to my home in Nepal, Singapore was surrounded by so much water. I looked forward to visits to Pasir Ris beach for annual picnics with my friends from the Gurkha Contingent. And we brought our families too. There, I would watch my son, born and raised in Singapore, take a leisurely swim by the beach. Our wives and their children too will enjoy the pristine waters we cannot get back home in Nepal.

Retired staff sergeant Chandra Bahadur Thapa, 79, holds up a framed photograph of himself on office duty in 1976, three years before retirement. He served 1952-1979.



When the Gulf war broke out 20 years ago, I remember clearly how the Singapore Gurkha Contingent was called into action. Iraq was, and still remains, a major oil exporting country. The price and security of oil escalated because of the war. Immediately, we were tasked to protect Singapore's offshore islands and the oil refineries from terrorist sabotage.

Retired corporal Shanta Bahadur Gurung, 50. 1981-2006

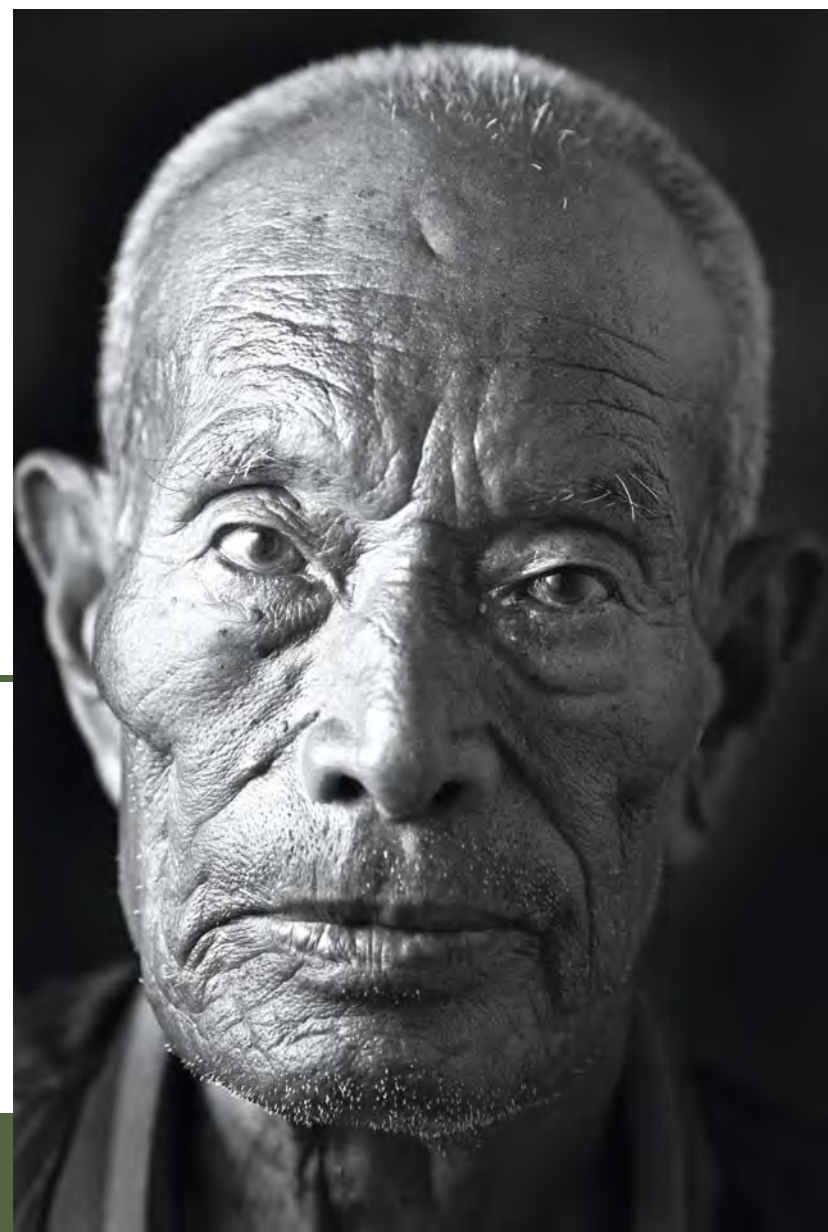
OUR GURKHAS

PHOTOS and TEXT: ZAKARIA ZAINAL



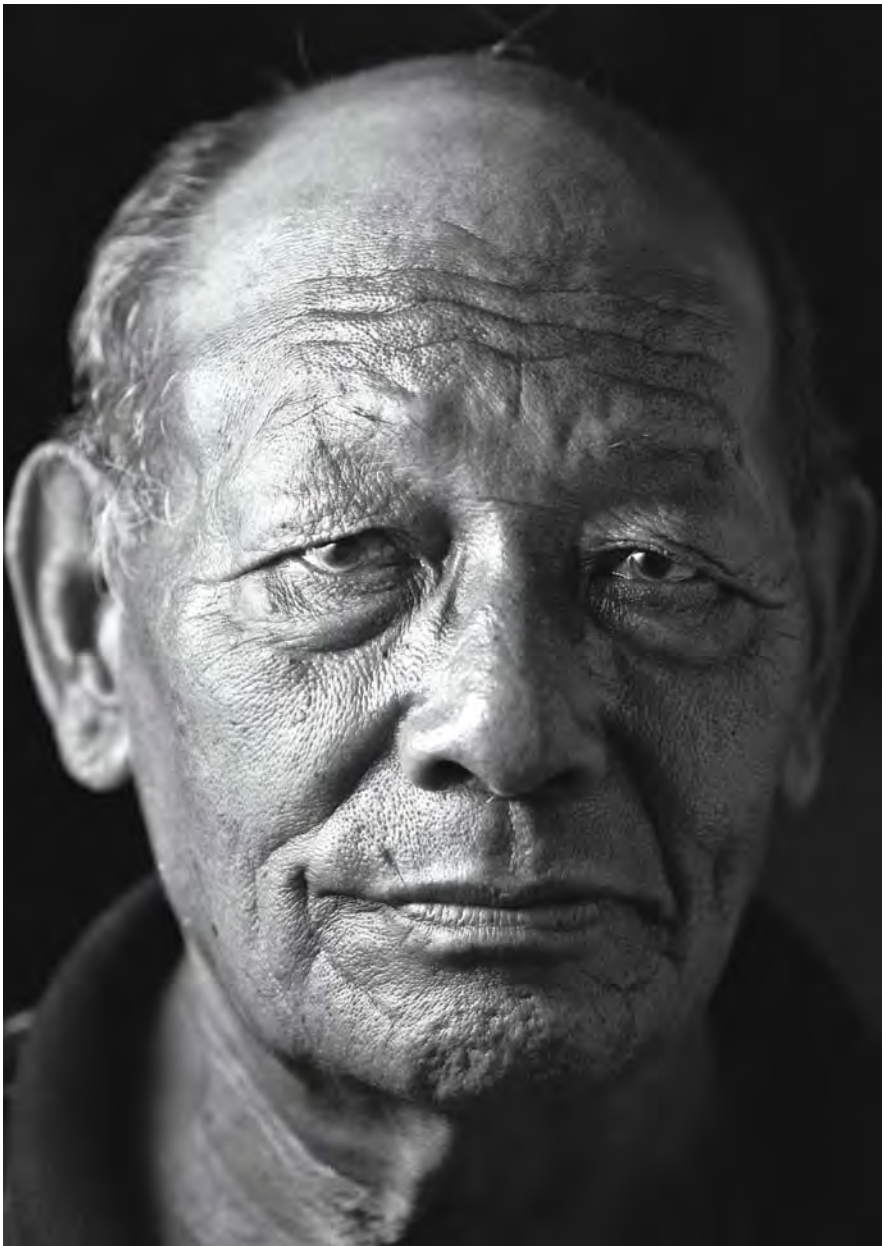
Singaporeans prepared to cast their vote in the 1959 general election under a new constitution. There was enthusiasm in the air as Singapore became independent. Singapore Gurkhas, myself included, were called for election duty and were deployed at various locations where political candidates declared their intention to contest a seat in parliament. The result: Lee Kuan Yew's People's Action Party won 43 out of 51 seats.

Retired sergeant Tulsi Prasad Gurung, 77, holds up an old photograph taken in 1966 of his section of men. 1951-1972



In the 1950s I witnessed the Maria Hertogh riots. Standing guard at the old Supreme Court, I remember seeing Maria, reluctantly, being ushered into the car with her biological mother and driven away. Malay and European communities rioted because of a court ruling to give custody of young Maria Hertogh to her biological parents after being raised as a Muslim for eight years. Outside the Supreme Court, the army had to be called in and a curfew declared.

Retired police constable Bhakta Bahadur Gurung, 88, served from 1949-1961.



How is Lee Kuan Yew and his family these days? I guarded his residence, and most of us from the Gurkha Contingent have guarded 38 Oxley Road at least once. I remember seeing Lee's daughter and two sons while they were still young. Now, they have all grown up and doing well, I hope. Now the eldest son is prime minister too, right?

Retired police constable Bal Bahadur Gurung, 78, served from 1952 till 1973.

Despite being many miles away from home, Nepali traditions and customs are a big part of our lives here in Mount Vernon Camp. I look forward to celebrating Dasain when elders put tika and bless relatives. There are drinks and food all day. It's like Chinese celebrate New Year and the Malays celebrate Hari Raya. The most important thing: such festivals help bring the family together.

Amber Bahadur Thapa, 52, served from 1980 till 2006.



An aerial photograph of Singapore's Central Business District dominates the living room wall of Bhabhindra Bahadur Malla's modest home in Pokhara. The picture was taken in the mid-1980s, the year I was born. Bhabhindra pointed to key landmarks, places with fond memories. Many of the buildings or places have changed I said. He replied: "That is Singapore, always changing."

His story was one of the many I collected in this anthology of portraits and stories of retired Singapore Gurkhas in Singapore and Nepal. The Gurkhas are famous for their bravery, loyalty, and impartiality but Singaporeans know little about them and their families who live in a barricaded compound in Mount Vernon Camp.

There are over 2,000 retired Gurkhas in Pokhara, Bhairahawa, Dharan, and Katmandu, and I tracked some of them down for this book which serves as a visual archive of an invisible community. Their memories and their stories, if not collected, will be forgotten. Remembering these Gurkha veterans is to give them a place in the history of Singapore and Nepal.



Have you eaten? I am sorry I do not know any English. Good that you are Malay and can understand what I am saying. I can still speak the language a little even after leaving Singapore 40 years ago. Sometimes, here in Nepal, we speak in Malay to practice among ourselves. Then, since the 1950s, Bazaar Malay was the common language used by your parents and grandparents and that was how we communicated. I think now, English is more common.

Retired corporal Nar Bahadur Gurung, 74, holds up a framed photograph of himself when he first arrived in Singapore in 1953. He served till 1973.

OUR GURKHAS:

Singapore through their eyes

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Pokhara Sabha Griha, New Road

DHARAN
10 to 11 November, 10 to 5 PM
Yumaa Fine Art Gallery, Putali Line



Every three years when I was in the Gurkha Contingent, I would pack my bags and prepare for the long journey back to Nepal. We Gurkhas are entitled up to six months home leave every three years. That is when many of my friends got married, and they brought their wives to Singapore to start a family. It was usually an arranged marriage. From routine guard duty work to quelling disturbances in Singapore, I now find myself ploughing the fields of my village in Baglung district preparing for the next harvest. It is tough work, but I get to see my parents and village friends back home. We traded our rifles for the sickle.

Retired sergeant Dil Bahadur Pun, 72, served from 1961 till 1984.

nepalitimes.com

Invisible force, #511
Watch Zainal's interview

One decade, one PM

Shobhakhar Panthi, *Nepal Samacharpatra*, 30 October

रंगिचावरपत्र

Speaking at a mass gathering at Arghakhanchi, Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai said that if he is given 10 more years to rule he would end poverty and unemployment and transform Nepal into a prosperous



country. He claimed his government had already taken steps in the right direction and would increase per capita income to \$3000 if given the opportunity. Referring to the opposition's demand for his resignation, the PM said that there can only be consensus through a package deal which

will see him reinstated as the head of government. "The interim constitution doesn't have provisions for another government after the elected one resigns," he said. The PM also stated confidently that consensus will be reached by mid-December, and that his party is keeping its options open for either a temporary CA revival or polls in order to work around political and constitutional complexities. "All of us are in one boat right now and if it sinks, we will all go down," he added. Former Minister for Peace, Reconstruction, and Physical Planning Top Bahadur Rayamajhi said at the same program that only the UCPN (M) could effectively lead the way because the country had already adopted their agendas. Rayamajhi also assured locals that he had plans to expand the historic Masurpata fields in Arghakhanchi and turn it into an international standard stadium.



Khanal, Koirala: We're sick of you changing words every time you speak. **Dahal:** Not anymore. From now on, I'll change them without speaking, on paper.

कान्तिपुर Abin Shrestha in *Kantipur*, 29 October

Overcoming the deadlock

Editorial in *Darshan*, 30 October

In the wake of deepening political crisis both Singha Darbar and Shital Niwas have become active players. While the president has been repeatedly summoning party leaders to his office to pressurise the latter into forging an agreement, the prime minister is busy consulting constitutional and legal experts. Both seem to be doing their part, but there is a fundamental difference over the solution to this crisis among the ruling and opposition parties due to which the much awaited agreement looks even more elusive.

Under extreme pressure from the opposition parties, the

president has been urging the parties to go for elections at the earliest. However, on Sunday, a group of former Supreme Court judges told Baburam Bhattarai that elections cannot be held without making a few amendments in the constitution which requires endorsement from the parliament. There is no arguing against the elections, but in order to avoid a constitutional vacuum due to the retirement of election commissioners and ensure voting rights of the newly eligible population, the parties must revive the legislature parliament. Furthermore, Nepal's interim constitution is a document of political consensus. So for the sake of forging an agreement, the parties can go beyond the prescribed constitutional premise and even reinstate the CA for a short time if necessary.

Imports from India up

Annapurna Post, 29 October

अन्नपूर्णपोष्ट

Although production of paddy has gone up in Nepal in the past year there has also been a sharp increase in the import of rice from India in the last fiscal year. Just in the past two months Nepal imported Rs 1.14 billion worth of rice from India, a whopping 800 per cent more than the same two months last year when only Rs 12 million worth of rice was imported. Besides rice there has also been an increase in other food crops from India. The import of potatoes, for instance, is up by 40 per cent compared to last year. Nepal's trade deficit with



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

India has shown a bigger gap because of food and petroleum imports. Nepal imported petroleum products worth Rs 15.28 from India in the past two months alone, representing Nepal's single biggest import

item. Even the import of fruits from India has gone up by 120 per cent compared to last year, according to the Central Bank. The imports of vegetables, livestock, dairy products, and tea from India have all risen sharply.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“The Maoists have already captured the state which is why it is difficult to get rid of the present government.” CPN-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal in *Kantipur*, 28 October

TWEETS OF THE WEEK



Lenin Banjade
@lenadaai

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ए काठमान्डु, मलाई घर जान दे, फर्किएर तैरै माटोमा पसिना चुहाउनु छ ! #दसैं

Oh Kathmandu, let me go home, for I will soon return to toil on your soil! #Dasain



Narayan Amrit
@amrtna

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समुन्द्र हुनेहरुले कहिलेकाँही सामुन्द्रि आँधी झेल्छन् । समुन्द्र नहुने हामी नेपालीले सधैं अभाव, अन्त्योल र वेतिथीको तुफान झेलिरहेका छौं ।

Those who have oceans are sprayed by storms and those who don't, like Nepal, are preyed upon by shortage, disarray, and mismanagement.



Dinesh Thapaliya
@dineshnsu

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पुजिबादी भनिएको नेपाली काङ्ग्रेस कङ्गाल हुदै गएको छ भने सर्वहाराको नाम भजाउने माओवादि दक्षिण एसियाकै धनि पार्टी बन्दै गएको छ ।

The so-called capitalist Nepali Congress is near bankruptcy, while the self-styled people's party, the Maoists, is the richest in South Asia.

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SAGAR SHRESTHA

Back to square one

Himal Khabarpatrika,
17 October-15 November

हिमाल
खबरपत्रिका

Inspired by revolutionary women leaders like Rosa Luxemburg, Jiang Qing, Clara Zetkin, and Nadezhda Krupskaya, young Nepali girls picked up guns during Nepal's decade long insurgency with the dream of liberating their kind from exploitation and destitution.

The Phulmatis, Rupmatis, Batulis, and Putalis who had once identified themselves with their international icons even took up revolutionary names and did their best to live up to their noms de guerre. They did not break down even after being tortured and raped and many even sacrificed their lives for the movement.

Six years onwards, the tables have turned and these brave women have become as helpless as before. The Phoolmatis and Roopmatis who broke social barriers and married across castes to end discrimination are now disowned by their families. Homeless, they are forced to wait at the doorsteps of the leaders with whom they once walked shoulder to shoulder.

These cadres gave up their lives and future for the leaders who have shown complete disregard to their sacrifice. The women who provided security to people like Baburam and Prachanda are today left searching for their own safety. All they get from their erstwhile com-

rades is empty assurances.

Having fought the war for 10 years, they are forced to watch powerful people monopolise the party while those who fought to establish it are deserted by the leaders.

The leadership seems to have put their trust on outsiders and wartime deserters, rather than the faithful ones. Those who openly criticised the party until recently have now become its greatest advocates. And those who were absent from the battlefields while the war raged on in the countryside have been unconditionally reinstated.

Since then the establishment has been involved in suspicious financial dealings, abandoned its pro-people ideals, and failed to achieve its political goals. The party that was the most revolutionary when it came to women's liberation now openly promotes oppression.

Yesterday, those who abused women were punished and Comrade Chairman would tell us, "Women are our iron pillars against counter-revolution." Today, these iron posts have been left to rust and those who bled and toiled for the revolution have been all but forgotten.

For the women who joined the revolution, the party was their home. But now they are living like orphans. The dreams of living and dying like Rosa, Jiang, and Nadezhda are shattered. From being Jwala and Kranti, the women have reverted back to being Batuli and Putali.

Aruna Rayamajhi

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And now for Tihar

As Dasains go, this year's festive season had a somewhat somnolent quality. I don't know about you, but many of us logged 18 hours of sleep a day, waking up only to gnaw at a martyred mountain goat, belching frequently in a loud and carefree manner, chewing the cud by re-eating juicy morsels of aforementioned ex-goat picked out from between one's molars, plopping paans in the mouth, pocketing marriage winnings, turning over, and going back to sleep. I know what you're muttering: how is all this different from a non-Dasain day in the Ministry of Labour's Department of Idolence and Lethargy? Good question.

Research into the circadian rhythms of an average adult male in this country shows that our sleeping patterns are essentially the same, Dasain or no Dasain. As citizens of a landlocked Himalayan ex-kingdom where the Buddha was born and that has never ever in its entire history been colonised by aliens from the Planet Voth,

we have all had a nice long vacation and now, fully rested, we once more plunge head-first into the task of prolonging the political status quo and sine qua non, not to mention the quid pro quo.

Once more this year, vegetable activists (some of my best friends among them) raised objections to the decapitation of buffaloes during Nepal's greatest carnivorous festival. They should perhaps be thankful that at least we gave up cannibalism not too long ago. Also, sooner or later, most Nepalis will be forced to become vegetarians over Dasain because at current inflation rates, a goat will be worth its weight in gold. We are still way behind the Americans who are expected to massacre about 30 million turkeys this Thanksgiving, equivalent to Nepal's human population.

Those watching the body language of our politicos at

various political tea parties this week couldn't help wonder why these back-slapping, jovial leaders observed laughing their heads off at each other's off-colour jokes, can't seem to agree on anything during closed-door meetings? And why, if the differences are so stark, they haven't strangled each other yet? In any other country, a self-respecting Maoist party never splits because the dominant faction physically exterminates a dissident faction in an internal purge before it can even break away. Could it be that our totalitarians are less totalitarian than other totalitarians?

The differences between the two Maoist parties are manifested in leadership tussles of trade unions, fraternal organisations, and even on who should control the YCL. Former young commie, Comrade Sagar who heads the YCL's Valley Committee, has decided it is much more lucrative to go it alone when it comes to extortion because he

can keep all the profits, whereas earlier he had to share it with the party. Communard Sagar has now set up the ominous-sounding Unemployed Youth Organisation Pvt Ltd, yes, the same one whose graffiti you see along walls all over the capital. Interestingly, though, the outfit is not affiliated to the mainstream Baddie party and it has been extorting the living daylights out of just about every business in town during Dasain. The Unemployed Youth is made up of the biggest gangsters in town and appear to have eaten into the Comrade Chairman's own fundraising efforts which is why he is boiling mad. Worse, the Unemployed Youth are now extorting Casinos and other business interests in which PKD has a stake. It was bound to come to this: when there is no one left to extort the Baddies are forced to extort from cash-rich fellow-Baddies.

Competition between Hyphen Comrades and Bracket Comrades has now spread to the diaspora. This is what Comrade Awesum had to contend with when he arrived on a mysterious trip to Brussels recently. His self-styled euro commie Red Guard were

behaving much the way they do back home, threatening violence on comrades from another faction who appeared at the Chairman's press con. Tongues are also wagging about why PKD made a surreptitious side-trip to Paris and there is speculation at our Paris embassy that he may have gone there to patch up with a certain ex-ambassador who had a shoe thrown at him, and to agree to let bygones be bygones.

Anyway, no sooner had we done with Dasain, and Tihar is upon us. There are workaholics among us who will insist on going to work in the coming week. Woe on such spoilsports, they need help. It's not that we are less lazy the rest of the year. But 'tis the season we can really let ourselves go by wallowing in sloth. But sometimes we lapse into exertion and toil. Vigilance. That is what is required, vigilance against anyone who works to end this political deadlock. Why resolve the crisis when everyone benefits from prolonging the quo vadis, or shall we say, the annus horibilis?



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