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BIKRAM RAI

## ABSENT FACES

The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) released the final report of Nepal's Population and Household Census conducted in 2011 this week.

The 278-page report points towards dramatic changes in Nepal's demography that will have greater social, political, and economic significance in

the days to come.

One of the highlights of the census report is the staggering number of absentee population. Close to two million Nepalis were registered as absent in the report and since the census was conducted during the monsoon, it did not take into account seasonal migrants who left the country after sowing the fields

and returned only during the harvesting season.

The government may boast about high remittance inflow, but behind the glow of foreign currency are the stories of common Nepalis who are have to abandon their families for harsh lives in distant lands with uncertain future.

At a time when the country

is reeling under an energy crisis, industries are shutting down, and few jobs are being created at home, people may have little choice than to leave. And unless the state takes serious steps to check this exodus of robust manpower, prospects of long-term growth in Nepal remain bleak.

**Census analysis page 3**



Gyanodaya Int'l Residential School



Performances by:

**Phiroj Shyangden and the Boyz Next Door**  
**What The Funk "We're Sold Out"**

**Finale of the**  
**Battle of the Bands**

**Extreme Sports**

**Local & Int'l cuisine**

Venue: Gyanodaya Int'l Residential School  
Bungmati/ Khokana, Lalitpur  
Date: Saturday, 1st December 2012  
Time: 10:30 am to 5 pm



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# POLITICS FOR POLITICS' SAKE

Politics gets a bad rap because its practitioners are generally so self-centred, power-hungry, and corrupt. Most people with integrity and a vision are put off by what they perceive as the dirty business of politics and the fear that it will taint them too.

Democracy, also, has earned a bad name for itself in Nepal largely because of the antics of a succession of elected leaders who exhibited an appalling lack of accountability since 1990, many of those faces are still with us aspiring for elected office.

The problem is that Nepalis, while being hopelessly disillusioned with 'trad pols' and elected ex-revolutionaries have come to blame the system of democracy. It's fashionable to argue that democracy is not suited for Nepal's divisive culture, it's poor and illiterate citizenry and that we may need some kind of benevolent dictatorship. Sound familiar? That was the justification King Mahendra used way back in 1960 to dismiss Nepal's first nationally-elected government, dissolve parliament, and imprison the prime minister and his cabinet.

There is a nostalgia for the command and certitude of the past, but many forget that authoritarianism has been disastrous for Nepal, whether during the Rana period, the 1960-90 Panchayat years, or Gyanendra trying to turn the clock back. Democracy is the messiest system of government, to paraphrase Churchill, but it is a mess that can be fixed if politicians put their minds to it.

After all, politics is just the mechanism that allows democracy to function. Competitive politics offers a marketplace of ideas through which citizens can select the leader they think has the integrity and managerial capability to govern for four years, and lift their living standards. Unfortunately, the cacophony of the media reduces politics to an endless quarrel over power, where today's talking heads in the evening tv news are rebutting



**We are obsessed with the operational strategy of politics, and have lost track of the larger picture of what politics is for**

yesterday's talking heads. It is politics for politics' sake. We are obsessed with the operational strategy of politics, and have lost track of the larger picture of what politics is for.

And that is precisely what is happening with the media-fanned row between President Ram Baran Yadav

and Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai. In fact, as we understand it, there is no row at all. If there is a clash it is actually between Bhattarai and his party Chairman, and between rivals within the three other parties who can scarcely hide their loathing for each other.

Yadav, despite his ceremonial role, is caught in the middle at a time when there is no parliament and the mandate of the prime minister and his government has expired. Any move that the president or the prime minister make will be constitutionally questionable, even illegal.

These are uncharted waters, and only decisions taken by the president and the prime minister together will have a degree of legitimacy and help untangle the overlapping political knots. All President Yadav is trying to do is goad a recalcitrant caretaker coalition that has got comfortable in its job to disassemble itself and accommodate other parties to form a new election government. That is so that no party has an unfair incumbent advantage during the campaign.

The current disagreement is over who gets to be prime minister, and who bags the powerful Home and Finance portfolios in that government. The Madhesi parties in the governing coalition are wary of being sidelined, and that is where things are stuck.

This day-by-day jostling for advantage is being played out in the media, and the rhetoric had got shrill ahead of the president's Friday deadline for the formation of a consensus government. This being Nepal, it will be a miracle if the four forces come up with an agreement. So Yadav will have to extend the deadline, multiple times if need be.

In all this, we should not lose track of the goal of holding elections sometime in 2013, only that will stabilise politics and allow the country to catch up with lost time and move ahead.

## ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

### SLAPSTICK POLITICS

Any number of changes in the government is not going to change the chaotic political environment in any substantial way ('Slapstick politics', Editorial, #631). It will actually just add fuel to the fire. There have been enough discussions, consensus meetings, and tea parties already. What we need now is for the leaders to come up with an actual solution not hollow assurances and sound bites to fool the people.

**Bhimraj Gurung**

- It would be naive to think that President Ram Baran Yadav's seven-day deadline for the parties will cure Nepali politics. If the patients are not willing to heed to the advice made for the greater good, there is no way to treat them. The current symptoms suggest that we are heading towards a state of dead-end politics.

**Nirmal**

### BAD PRESCRIPTION

The appointment of a political candidate like Sangita Bhandari as the vice chancellor of Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS) angers me ('Bad prescription', Kim Lama, #631). Like all Nepali political candidates, I have no doubt Bhandari will use her position to make good money for herself and will seek to get her own relatives admitted into the school. All the hard work and effort of Dr Arjun Karki and the selfless staff is going to be wasted if she is not removed. The

politicians have robbed the country of every good thing, and now they want to ransack the little that is left.

**Anonymous**

- I worked for a year at PAHS and was very happy with the way things were managed, especially the mutual respect that junior and senior doctors and staff had for each other. It's truly upsetting to read about the politicisation within the hospital and I kindly request the people who are trying to meddle with PAHS to show more respect towards the founding members of the institution.

**Sajin**

- If PAHS's constitution says that the chancellor (who is the prime minister) will appoint the VC, then no matter who is chosen, she or he will always be a political appointee. Even founder Arjun Karki was a political appointee of GP Koirala. Dr CP Maskey, the current chief of service commission is also a political appointee. If PAHS really wants to keep positions and its educational foundation free from politics, it should oppose the system that draws politics into institutions. Attacking an individual will not help.

**Patanite**

### PEOPLE AND POWER

All year long, I have been hearing about dirty politics, so it was refreshing to read about locals taking development into their own hands and working to provide electricity for their community ('People and power', Anurag Acharya, #631). Good roads, 24 hours of water and electricity,

and accountable local governance are needed for a country to progress, everything else is secondary. Why do our politicians refuse to understand even the basics of development?

**Samip**

- Our politicians should learn from the villagers' effort.

**Denzil Gurkha**



### RED ELITE

Great job Ass, this is by far the funniest Backside ever ('Plutocracy of the red elite', Backside, #631).

**Moti**

- Whoever does the photo-shopping/ designing at *Nepali Times* is a genius. I loved last week's Gangnam-PKD and this week's Muhammad Ali-PKD (pic, left) is even better. Please keep entertaining us through these difficult times.

**Anonymous**

### SAVE THE CHURE HILLS

The main recharge area of the ground water system of the Gangetic plains

lies at the base of the Chure hills ('Help save the Chure hills', Tirtha B Shrestha, #631). Indiscriminate logging and mining are destabilising the Chure and putting the largest ground water system of South Asia under serious threat. The loggers, miners, and their bosses are definitely filling their pockets right now, but if everything is lost, what will they do? They cannot eat money to survive. I hope people realise that their greed will cost them and the future generations dearly and pray that good sense will prevail.

**Sashi B Bisht**

### PARANOID POLITICS

Thank you Ajaz Ashraf for speaking up, most journalists and media houses either kept quiet or immortalised Bal Thackeray with their over the top eulogies ('Paranoid politics', #631). I was appalled to see Bollywood fraternity, sport stars, and the business community, coming out to express their 'utter grief' at losing a 'great soul'. Much of the outpouring might have been to avoid a backlash, but it's ridiculous that people who are supposed to be role models are supporting a man who has ordered death and violence against anyone who is different.

**RR**

- The outpouring of grief following Thackeray's death is an example of our hypocrisy and xenophobia. As long as it is the 'others' who suffer we look the other way. The brotherhood we are so proud of and which was in perfect display during his funeral procession would have been more welcome if it had been used to counter the Shiv

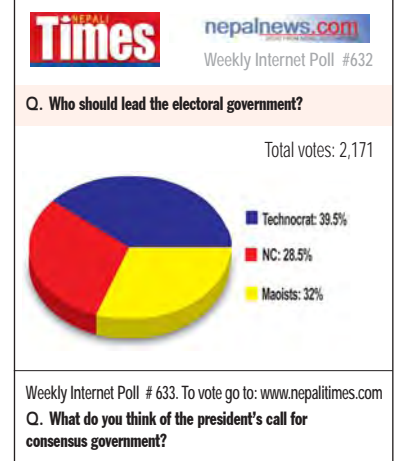
Sena when they were exercising their muscles against whatever they found unacceptable. We as Indians really need to think harder and decide what we stand for and how we project ourselves as a nation.

**'Munna Bhai'**

### SINGAPORE LESSONS

There are no human rights, freedom of speech, or freedom of expression in China ('President Xi's Singapore lessons', Michael Spence, #631). And yet the writer is only concerned about the economic stability and longevity of the highly oppressive one-party state. The only way a country can truly progress is by balancing money and morality. Singapore has made it so far because of its multiparty system and open society. It's the duty of influential analysts and academics like Spence to keep reminding China to respect human life and rights for the greater good in the world.

**Tashi Lama**





# In a state of flux

Nepal's changing demography provides conditions for broad socio-economic transformation, but is the political class ready to lead the country in that direction?



BY THE WAY  
Anurag Acharya

This week the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) released the final report of Nepal's Population and Household Census conducted in 2011. The 278-page report points towards dramatic changes in Nepal's demography that will have greater social, political, and economic significance in the days to come.

The rise in literacy rate, women's increased share in the economic pie, and robust working age population are encouraging indicators for a growing economy. However, these broad scale changes warrant deeper scrutiny and analysis.



BIKRAM RAI

The last decade has seen significant improvement in Nepal's literacy rate. Female literacy has jumped from below 35 to 57 per cent. Recent reports from various organisations also point towards improved enrollment rate for girls in primary, secondary as well as higher secondary education.

However, the rise in the number of women leading households and those owning property points more towards the absence of male population in the economy than women's empowerment. Besides, the literacy rate of women, especially those from the most deprived sections including Dalits and Muslims remains disappointing.

The other important indication from the census report is that 57 per cent of the country's population is of robust working age. This excludes close to two million absent population who have migrated to other countries in search of better opportunities.

The protracted political crisis, leading to economic downturn, has frustrated the young population who are leaving the country in large numbers. The productive age-group is also the most assertive and failing to address their needs could sow new seeds of conflict in Nepali society. The growing militancy among the youth, especially those in various youth wings of major parties and in the Tarai's armed groups is a disturbing sign. The recent attacks on the

party heads of NC, UML, and UCPN-M are bitter experiences that Nepal's political class would do well to learn from.

The Census reveals that almost half of Nepal's population now lives in the Tarai. This dramatic demographic shift is due to accelerated in-migration from the nearby hill districts. The harshness of life in the mountains - the absence of basic amenities like roads, electricity, and drinking water as well as the digital divide - is forcing people to move towards the more accessible Tarai districts.

"Madhes is already an agricultural and industrial hub, and with growing national and international investments, it will become the backbone of Nepal's economy in the coming decades," says sociologist Chaitanya Mishra.

However, in-migration from the hills is also creating a cultural flux which could lead to bitter conflict for social, political, and economic control over Madhes. The political parties will look to consolidate their position in the Madhes, which

is sure to become a hot-bed of Nepali politics in the coming days. The Madhesi Morcha will lobby for more constituencies in the Tarai to increase its influence in national politics, while the growing number of people from non-Madhesi origin, who now make up one-third of Madhes' population will also play a crucial role in setting agendas for future elections.

Needless to say, New Delhi's plans to influence its stake in Nepali politics through Madhes will be even more pronounced. The signs will emerge in the coming weeks as the parties look for a 'consensus candidate'.

Given the comprehensive coverage, the Census report also provides useful information to the planners in terms of reflecting upon the impacts and future needs. The trend of population exodus from the mountains points towards the need to invest in basic infrastructure in the region and address the digital divide. Similarly, growing density in the cities demand expansion of services and security.

Nepal's demographic changes provide material conditions for its socio-economic transformation and it is the responsibility of the political class to lead the country in that direction. But by engaging in endless bickering, Nepal's political parties will not just betray public faith, they will be guilty of failing the institution of politics. 🇳🇵



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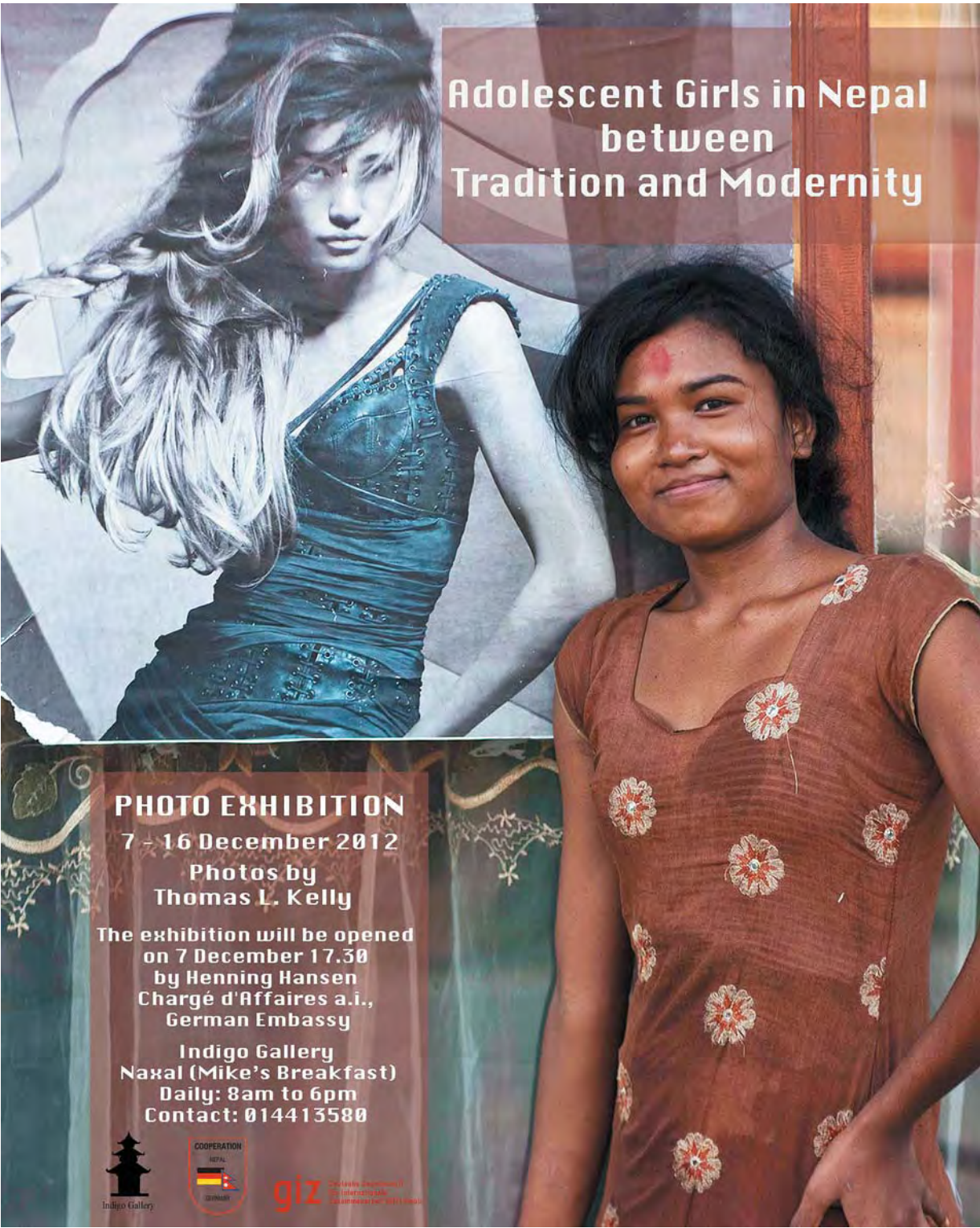
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## Adolescent Girls in Nepal between Tradition and Modernity

**PHOTO EXHIBITION**  
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Thomas L. Kelly

The exhibition will be opened  
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Indigo Gallery  
Naxal (Mike's Breakfast)  
Daily: 8am to 6pm  
Contact: 014413580





# Our ama, our hero

Graphic journalist tells the story of Pushpa Basnet and her children through comics

When Pushpa Basnet visited the women's prison in Sundhara seven years ago as part of a college social service trip, she had no idea that one afternoon would alter her life radically. Seeing the condition of the children trapped behind bars along with their incarcerated mothers moved her so much, she came home and told her parents she wanted take care of the children and give them a better future.

Her family thought she was crazy because Pushpa neither had the experience or the money to start such an ambitious project. Today the 28-year-old is president of the Early Childhood Development Centre (ECDC) in Budhanilkantha and her selfless work and dedication has made her one of the ten finalists for CNN's Hero of the Year award. The winner will be announced on 2 December.

Started in 2005, ECDC currently houses 40 children whose parents are serving time. Pushpa and her team send the children to school, nurse them back to health, provide psycho-social counseling, and help them rebuild their lives. In the last seven years, ECDC has freed more 100 children from jail. Pushpa travels regularly to prisons all across the country, making agreements with jailers, parents, and ECDC and bringing children to Kathmandu. She also runs a day care centre near Sundhara prison for children under six

whose mothers are in jail and has been training the women to make handicrafts for the last few years.

The stories of the children at ECDC are illustrated here through a series of comics by graphic journalist Dan Archer. "Comics are a powerful way of getting readers to experience testimonies from a first person perspective," says Dan, "I wanted to put the children's stories front and centre for the first time." He is currently working on adapting testimonies of trafficking survivors into comics and using the cartoons to engage with a younger, hard to reach audience, and teach them about the dangers of human trafficking.

Dan is fundraising for his project on an online site called kickstarter that has different reward patterns according to the amount pledged. [www.ecdcnepal.org](http://www.ecdcnepal.org)

[www.archcomix.com](http://www.archcomix.com)

[www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com)

[www.heroes.cnn.com](http://www.heroes.cnn.com)

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)

Growing up behind bars, #570

Watch Dan's introductory video





# Reinventing brand Nepal

Nepal needs to stop using geography as an excuse and learn to exploit its comparative advantages



ECONOMY STUPID

Pooja Tandon

Nepal's abysmal economic performance is often linked to its geography: 'India-locked' on three sides with China on its north. However, being landlocked does not necessarily destine countries to poverty. While not having direct access to the sea does have its disadvantages, there are plenty of opportunities as well. Take Switzerland or Dubai for example.

Often compared to Nepal for its size, natural beauty, and geography, Switzerland with a population of about eight million ranks 19th in terms of GDP. It has exploited its comparative advantages by exporting high value goods like watches and specialised goods and services like dairy products and banking.

Dubai, on the other hand, has transformed itself from a desert city into a microcosm of globalisation and markets itself with this unique tagline: bring your money to Dubai, no questions asked. With its modest oil reserves (expected to dry up within the next decade), which account for only 15 per cent of the state's income, Dubai adopted a blue ocean strategy of resurrecting its trading links and has quickly become one of the most sought after destinations for immigrant labour from South Asia and Africa.

The latest national census released by the Central Bureau of Statistics last week shows that around two million Nepalis migrate abroad for employment each year. And if figures, including unofficial ones, are to be believed these workers, constituting 10 per cent of the population, contribute about a quarter of the national economy. Over time, export of human resources has unconsciously

become the single biggest revenue earner for the country.

However, there has been very little effort to understand the migration sector and develop it systematically. Why not export developed human resources with the target of drawing them back in the future? Global HR trends have changed and traditional staffing has given way to temporary staffing called 'temping'. Organisations are hiring knowledge workers for projects lasting from two to 15 months.

The Indian temping industry alone stands at IRs 172 billion and there is a growing demand in the IT and engineering sectors, FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods), retail, banking, and finance. If Nepal can value add and



methodically feed its professional and general workers as temps in such international firms in India and other South Asian countries, not only will it be a revenue spinner, but this exposed labour force will have increased employability and will be more likely to turn into small entrepreneurs when transitioned back to Nepal.

This could be a good way to enhance entrepreneurship in a country where small time aspirants line up to various social venture funds for seed capital. However, all this requires a change in our mindset, an increased willingness to take risks, and trade off job security for international exposure and a better future.

We might not have mass production potential as China, but we have some homemade high-end products like Pashminas, rugs, khukri knives, speciality cheese and now adventure gears and wristwatches to flaunt. Despite the political chaos, tourism still remains our biggest selling point and Nepali hospitably still defines our brand equity.

We lack well-linked, economically viable value and supply chains in Nepal, but the country can certainly become a value chain partner for various high-end international brands. For instance, niche high-end products like Sherpa Adventure Gear and Kobold watches have exploited the Himalayan charm very well. Kobold, a renowned US watch company has set up a workshop in Nepal, assembling Himalayan Everest edition watches, the dial of which is made up of a piece of rock collected from the summit of Mount Everest (each watch sells for around \$ 15,000).

Nepal has also been a popular MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions) destination for our Indian neighbours especially for weddings. The first tier Indian cities might have lost interest in Nepal, but we still have the attention of the second tier cities.

Like Switzerland, Dubai and various African countries, Nepal needs to find alternative revenue sources as a means of lessening its dependence on foreign aid, which will eventually dry up. From being landlocked it should move towards creating a blue ocean and stop competing in areas where it has no comparative advantage. It can overcome its poor economic track record by identifying a viable 'brand' that is not determined by political manipulation. With its natural charm, Nepal has the potential to shape trends and become a key business partner for many advanced economies. However, this requires determined leadership and direction. ■

## BIZ BRIEFS

### Online incline

CG Electronics, the leading company in durable consumer goods and digital technologies, launched its online e-store at [www.cgdigital.com.np](http://www.cgdigital.com.np) on Tuesday. The e-store offers customers the widest range of CG products like audio visual, home appliances,



mobiles and offers brands like CG, LG, Toshiba, Godrej, Onida, TCL, Kelvinator, Lava, and Rico. The full line of products can be now easily purchased online 24X7 through credit ordebit card, net banking, and Cash on Delivery (COD) as well.

### High five

Etiha Airways, the national carrier of the United Arab Emirates, recently celebrated five years of services to Nepal. Since its



commencement in 2007, the airline which offers connections to more than 87 destinations around the world, has carried more than 500,000 passengers from Kathmandu.

### Taking the lead

Ace Development Bank signed an Emission Reduction Purchase Agreement (ERPA) for Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS) carbon credit trading with Rural Mutual Development (RMD) in Dhading. Under the agreement, Ace will buy Emission Reduction from 1,935 ICS in the district and revenue generated from this carbon offset initiative will be utilised for further promotion of improved cooking stoves.



### Speedy reach



Syakar trading company, authorised distributor for Honda motorcycles and scooters in Nepal has named Kapuri Brothers Enterprises in Balaju as its new dealer. Kapuri Brothers also has Honda showrooms in Birtamod and Illam.

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# Home away from home in Tsum

AMELIA PRIOR

A rooster crows loudly and outside, the snow peaks towering above are silhouetted in a lightening sky. Here in northern Gorkha's Tsum Valley, the finger of Nepal jutting out into Tibet, time stands still for trekkers and it takes time when they wake

up in the morning to process where they are.

Tsum is one of numerous holy valleys, or beyul, in the Himalaya where the Mila Repa or Guru Rimposhe are believed to have meditated. Mila Repa is supposed to have meditated at the Piren Phu Cave more than a thousand years ago, and seeing the serene mountain panorama there one understands why the

sage chose this spot. Nearby is the Mu Gompa monastery with spectacular views.

Lhakpa, the mother of the house in Chekampar, is boiling water for tea and tsampa for breakfast for her family as well as the two trekkers who are home-staying with her. In this unique concept, hikers in the Himalaya stay not in commercial lodges, but with

individual families, providing income directly to the hosts.

Tsum Valley is ideally suited for home-stay trekking since it hasn't yet got a developed infrastructure like other popular trekking valleys in Nepal. The region to the north of Ganesh Himal only opened

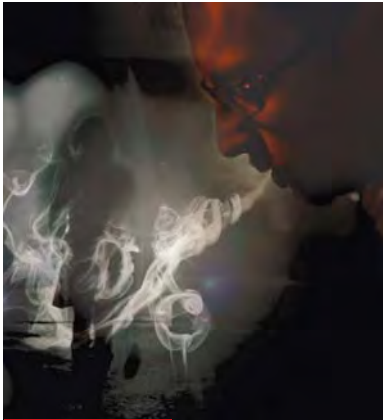
## Home-stay tourism injects income directly to local families in Nepal's remote Himalayan valley











## EVENTS

**1 PERCENT**, keeping World AIDS Day in mind, this new Nepali film on the 'window period' of HIV diagnosis will be releasing worldwide on Youtube. 30 November, [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

**Living pictures**, watch the prize-winning Finnish film Punk Syndrome. 5 Decemeber, 6.30pm, Moksh Restaurant, Jhamsikhel

**AWON Christmas bajar**, latch on to the yuletide spirit and visit this one stop destination for handicrafts, clothing, candles, paintings, brass and metal ware, silver jewellery, and other handmade items. Rs 100 for adults, Rs 50 for children, 1 December, 10am to 4pm, Hyatt Regency Boudha, 9851022363, 9851934190

**Sattya rooftop sale**, donate clothes, appliances, books or decorations to charity and support Ama ko Ghar. 1 December, 11am to 5pm, Sattya Arts, Jawalakhel, (01)5523486, 9818409207



**BATO KO CINEMA**, six movies, six screenings, six awesome chances to watch amazing documentaries in the streets of Patan. 6 to 21 December, Thursdays and Fridays, 6pm onwards, Patan, 9813485716, (01)5523486

**Green solutions fair**, learn new ideas for a clean, green living. Free entrance, 8 December, 10 am to 4 pm, ICIMOD Knowledge Park, Godawari, half-hourly bus available at Jawalakhel

**Thamel mall festival**, enjoy Japanese, Newari, Manange, Tibetan, Korean, and Chinese food, and take advantage of discounts on clothing, jewellery, fancy and accessories. 2 December, 9am to 9pm, Thamel Mall, 9841801391

**Adolescent girls in Nepal between tradition and modernity**, an exhibition of Thomas Kelly's works which reveal the risks and challenges faced as well as the opportunities available to young women in Nepal. 7 to 16 December, 8am to 6pm, Indigo Gallery, Naxal, (01)4413580

**Christmas fair**, find beautiful, hand-made products by artisans around Nepal including decorative items, clothing, fashion accessories, children's items, paper products, coffee, tea, and spices. 2 December, 10am to 4pm, Hotel Annapurna, Darbar Marg



**PIANO LESSONS**, a month-long tutelage under Thomas Duvigneau who shall be teaching rhythm, sight reading, scales, simple and advance harmonisation, piano solo, and comping. 9 December to 9 January, 5 classes a week, register by 5 December, (01)5013554, info @ [katjazz.com.np](http://katjazz.com.np)

## MUSIC

**KCM inter-college music competition**, rock the living daylight out of your competitors, and win up to Rs 145,000 in cash and kind. Rs 5000 registration fee, 15 December, 10am to 7pm, Fun Park, Bhrikuti Mandap, (01)5201997



**ATIF ASLAM LIVE**, don't miss the Pakistani heartthrob who is in town to make your winter cheerful. 30 November, gates open at 1pm, Dasarath Stadium, Tripureswor

**Live at Café 32**, live music, and delicious food every Friday. 23 November, 6pm onwards, Café 32, Battisputali, (01)4244231



**NIGHT LIVE**, the sublime neo-folk band Night will perform songs from its upcoming album. Rs 200, 30 November, 4 to 6pm, Nepal Music Centre, Pingalasthan, (01)4465463

## DINING



**KARMA COFFEE**, be there at the Christmas opening to savour the delights of mulled wine, spiced coffee, KJC choir singing, The Boyz Next Door and Tabla Jam, and let your children take part in abseiling. 30 November, 2pm onwards, Jhamsikhel

**Fuji Bakery**, tucked in Chakupat this bakery offers homemade goodies like apple pie, pain du chocolat, and banana cake. Chakupat

**Boomerang Restaurant & German Bakery**, offers a large selection of cuisine for those who want to enjoy a full meal and desserts. Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)461412/462978

**Hadock**, big compound with ample parking space, its western and Thakali dishes are done to perfection. Jhamsikhel, (01)5546431



**COMFORT ZONE**, restobar with a decent range of cocktails and barbeque meals. Thamel

**Thik Thak Restaurant**, this restaurant boasts live fish from the lake which means the fish dishes are always fresh and delicious. Lakeside, Pokhara

**New Dish**, grab filling meals like pork momos, spring rolls, and chop suey and enjoy excellent value for your money. Khicchapokhari



**TAMAS-LAYA**, promises a refined dining experience, try the prawn tempura, fisherman's fish and Balinese chicken satay. Naxal, Kathmandu

**Falcha**, give yourself away to the twin-advances of lemon jeera chicken and mutton handi kabab. Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur



**ALFRESCO**, for homemade pastas and other lip-smacking delights. Soaltee Crowne Plaza, (01)4273999



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

**Lhasa Bar**, enjoy a beer or a splash of cocktail at this springboard for excellent young musicians starting out on the Thamel circuit. Thamel, 985101043

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

## GETAWAYS



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

**Grand Norling Hotel**, countryside weekend package offering suite room, swimming, gym, massage, and discounts on other facilities. Gokarna, (01)4910193



**HOTEL BARAHI**, enjoy a great view of Phewa lake, cultural shows, or indulge in the scrumptious pastries from the German Bakery in the hotel premises. Lakeside, Pokhara, 061-460617/463526

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Applications should be sent by e-mail along with a cover letter and a detailed CV to [cvnepal.2008@gmail.com](mailto:cvnepal.2008@gmail.com) not later than the close of business on Sunday, December 16, 2012.



## Mountains come alive

Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival (KIMFF) is back in its tenth reincarnation. Altogether 62 films representing 28 countries will be screened in the competitive, non-competitive, and Nepal Panorama categories.

Top ten films from the Educating Nepal short film competition will also be featured in the festival, and all movies are eligible for Audience Award.

Besides the screenings, KIMFF will also host talks on grassroots filmmaking, 'Know Your Himal' quiz, photo and alternative book exhibitions, and documentary and filmmaking workshops.

7 to 11 December, 11am to 5pm, Rastriya Sabha Griha, Nepal Tourism Board, Brikutimandap, (01)4440635/5542544 [www.kimff.org](http://www.kimff.org)

## Artmandu

The Kathmandu International Art Festival kicked off last week with fascinating pieces installed across the Valley. In Bhrikuti Mandap, artists baked mud and made clay statues before an inquisitive public. At the Central Zoo in Jawalakhel, a giant plastic reptile hovered above the pond much to the amusement of swans, both real and foot-pedalled. Images of peace and transcendence were projected onto the walls of the Boudhanath Chaitya.

At the Nepal Art Council gallery in Babar Mahal, school children witnessed the sorry fate of the Gangetic plains after all the Himalayan glaciers had melted down. Two floors below in the same building, a sun-parched field gave fruit to all possible grains for the last time ever. Burnt matchstick men cried in anguish, and fell to the



ground. A gas mask made of roses snuffed out the acrid poisonous stench. The stripes of a Bengal tiger unravelled into untold agonies. A perennial full moon shone in a metropolis, flooding it with bright white lights, and caught the solitary wanderer unawares in a world with no dark corners to crawl into. Expect wild agitations of the mind, body, and soul in the next three weeks of KIAF.



## Recipe for disaster

Renowned geodesist John Galetzka from the California Institute of Technology will conclude the lecture series that Cultural Studies Group of Nepal has been organising throughout the year. Galetzka, who spends much of his time in remote, earthquake prone parts of the world gathering samples, collecting data, and developing networks of monitoring instruments, will talk about the geology of Nepal. Take advantage of his expertise and learn how Nepal's position along major fault lines makes a recipe for disaster.

30 November, 9.30am, Shanker Hotel, Lajimpat  
Entrance free for members, Rs 400 for non-members, tea/  
coffee served  
csgnepal@yahoo.com  
www.facebook.com/CulturalStudiesGroupOfNepal



## Paint the town blue



The sixth edition of Himalayan Blues Festival is here to extend the festive mood of the Valley residents. Artists from the US, Norway, Finland, and Nepal promise to concoct a treat for the ears, and scare off any premature winter blues that have threatened to set in. If you missed the opening shows yesterday, be sure to attend the rest of the party over the weekend.

### SCHEDULE

Blues Big Bang, 30 November,  
6.30pm onwards, 1905 Restaurant  
Wentus Blues Band (Finland), Sean Carney (USA), Amy Hart (USA), Oh no! Blue elephant with no hat or straw is flying on air (Norway & Nepal NSV faculty), Matt (USA), The Midnight Rider (Nepal), Ugra (Nepal), All star jam session.

Blues Garden, 1 December, 7pm onwards, Garden of Dreams  
Night (Nepal), Wentus Blues Band(Finland), Sean Carney(USA), Amy Hart (USA), Matt (USA), The Midnight Rider(Nepal), Ugra(Nepal), all star jam session.

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**SOMEPLACE ELSE**

The restaurants I find toughest to review are not those that are awful or really good, but those in-betweens that I don't want to slam but don't offer much to write about either. Kasi falls into this mediocre category.

It is rather difficult to find the restaurant as you have to enter a tiny alley next to the Benetton shop and walk up three flights of stairs to get to it. There is a large banner to indicate that Kasi is situated somewhere in the vicinity, but there are no signs, and no arrows to pinpoint its exact location.

Kasi is spread out over a large terrace overlooking the Phora Darbar and provides a gorgeous view of

Nagarjun hill. It would have been more appropriate to name the place 'kausi' (meaning terrace) instead.

The joint is suited for long lazy afternoons spent basking in the sun rather than late on a chilly winter evening, which is when we were there. The waiters ask if they can 'bring you fire' (their words, not mine), and I definitely recommend taking them up on their offer.

The food at Kasi is predominantly Newari, with the usual suspects: beaten rice, soybeans,

# KASI

and lots and lots of meat (ears, tongues, brain, intestines, and stomach all feature prominently on the menu). I decided to take the safe route and ordered fried vegetable momos (Rs 100) and Mustang Alu (Rs 100) to start off my evening.

The momos were ok, the Mustang Alu was delicious. The waiter had recommended the dish to us saying that it was a specialty as the potatoes are actually bought from Mustang.



PICS: RUBY TUESDAY

The dish is quite simple: chunks of parboiled potatoes coated with spices and fried with spring onions and garlic. The outside had a light crispiness to it that encased the soft, almost buttery smoothness of pure luscious starch inside. It was the high point of our meal.

The egg wo (Rs 70), a patty of ground lentil with an egg on it, was crusty on the outside and good. The samay baji set (Rs 250) comes with beaten rice, potatoes, spinach, a boiled egg, fish, choila (marinated and grilled bits of chicken), and alu tama. They say that in the days of yore, prospective Newari brides were selected on their ability to make Alu Tama. This broth of potatoes, soya beans and bamboo shoots would reveal the personality of the bride. Well if that belief is anything to go by, the cook at

Kasi is adequate, but insipid and boring.

The food is very reasonable and so are the drinks. Kasi regularly puts together music shows and soirees and the atmosphere is perfect for that, sipping a glass of red wine and listening to good music. It's also a good place to disappear for a quiet date. Having open spaces in Kathmandu is always an added bonus, albeit the only way to enjoy the space is to travel up to roof tops. It is for these reasons that Kasi will likely be around for a good number of years. 🇳🇵

Ruby Tuesday

How to get there: In Darbar Marg, look out for Benetton shoe shop. On the left of it is a small alley, enter the building right at the back and walk up three flights of stairs. (01)4220787

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# RESCUE DAWN



What does it say about a story if a filmmaker decides to revisit the same one twice? Well, Werner Herzog did just that when he made a film called *Rescue Dawn* (2006), which is based on a documentary he directed in 1998 called *Little Dieter Needs To Fly*. I will only talk about the latter film here, and will not refer to the fact that it is based on a true story. This is partly because to do so would be to open an entirely different can



of worms that has to do with reality versus fiction. Let it be said that any story-teller sometimes needs to take a little bit of artistic licence (if you will) in order to render the story in its best possible form. *Rescue Dawn* falls into the sub-genre of the 'escaped prisoner of war' stories. If you do not like this genre, you will not like the film. It is made in the classic form of 'pilot gets shot down, pilot runs like hell, gets captured, suffers, plots his escape, escapes, suffers more, and is finally rescued'.

So what's the point of watching this film? Well, as with all

Herzog films it is for the strange and deeply bizarre characters that inhabit them. Christian Bale plays Dieter Dengler the young, happy go-lucky, slightly annoyingly starry eyed pilot who gets shot down on his first mission over Laos at the very beginning of what would become the Vietnam war. When he is captured by the Viet Cong and taken over land to a guarded camp, he meets five other prisoners. Two are Asian, but not Vietnamese, their nationality is never discovered, and two are Americans. As with all such camps there is already an established hierarchy when Dieter arrives. Gene (Jeremy Davies) is the leader, a bit of a bully, and obviously also a bit mentally unstable. Also present is Steve Zahn's character Duane Martin, a gentle, quite tender hearted person with chronic stomach problems. As Dieter begins to plot his escape he creates a conflict with Gene who insists that if they sit tight they will be rescued regardless. As months pass and no rescue happens, the other prisoners slowly start to gravitate towards Dieter's indomitable spirit. Finally, they all agree that they should plan their escape for 4 July, American Independence day. When they finally do break free, many things go wrong, and Dieter and Duane find themselves on their own, shoeless, with two guns and an approaching ferocious monsoon. I will not detail the journey of these two men and Dieter's eventual rescue, but I will say that it is deeply moving, and the end in particular is spectacularly Herzogian in its strangeness and dissonance. In a film like this, a great deal rests on the performance of the actors, and they are extremely powerful. Watching them, one is brought viscerally into the world of the prisoner of war, the cosmic miseries, the little pleasures, the petty jealousies, and the camaraderie that comes with this kind of bond. One can only be thankful that Herzog, in his eccentricity, decided to make this film twice.

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer

# Super stem



When developmental biologist John Gurdon (*pic, below*) was 15, he was ranked last among 250 boys studying biology at Eton. His teachers thought he was stupid. 64 years later all that changed.

Gurdon was jointly awarded the 2012 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine with Japanese stem cell researcher Shinya Yamanaka with whom he shared the 750,000 pounds prize money.

In 1962 Gurdon produced living tadpoles from the adult cells of a frog. He extracted the cell nucleus of the frog which contains chromosomes, the genes that carry heredity information. He then injected these chromosomes into a frog's egg whose own nucleus had been removed. The new genes took over, the new nucleus was



introduced, and tadpoles were produced. But no one could figure out in detail what had happened at the cellular or genetic level. It was a reprogramming feat. Where good luck intervened was his intuition that this reprogramming would work. Independent of Gurdon, Yamanaka working with mice decades later discovered that the reprogramming is accomplished by gene control agents, what are

now called transcription factors. These transcription factors are basically proteins made by master genes to regulate other genes. So finally the genetic answer to Gordon's discovery of creating tadpoles was revealed by Yamanaka. How fitting then that they won the Nobel Prize jointly.

Many people object to stem cell research on ethical and religious grounds because they feel it interferes with the mysteries of nature. But stem cells, primitive cells from which mature tissues of the body develop, are very useful in regenerative medicine. It has the potential to treat heart disease, diabetes, and Parkinson's by regenerating old damaged cells and tissues. So biologists and other scientists like Yamanaka have forged ahead despite these moral battles.

New transcription factors which regulate other genes and allow people to better adapt to high altitude have been discovered at higher altitude destinations. This is relevant for us because Sherpas seem to have this gene which perhaps allows them to perform better while climbing the tallest peaks in the world. This obviously requires further research. But there is no question these are exciting times in stem cell medicine, especially with scientists winning Nobel prizes in this field.



**WARM UP:** Leaders of the CPN-UML gather at party headquarters in Balkhu on Tuesday afternoon to decide on a candidate for prime ministership.



**HIGH FIVE (L-R):** Pawana Shrestha (country manager), Suresh Acharya (joint secretary at the Ministry of Tourism), Adam Phillips (vice president, Asia Pacific North and Indian subcontinent), and Amer Khan (general manager for Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal) celebrate Etihad Airways' five years of service in Nepal at Hotel Hyatt, last Thursday.



**A NEW LOOK:** Workers bring a huge bag of old plastic bottles to a recycling factory in Balkumari, Lalitpur on Wednesday afternoon. The bottles are crushed and sold to soft drink companies.

READERS' PHOTO



**LOOKING FOR THE FUTURE:** A boy takes a break after spending an entire day taking care of trekkers' horses in Dhading district.

WEEKEND WEATHER

The cold air mass that dominates the skies currently is constantly checked by the warmth from the south. The effects of this tug-of-war will be seen in the high mountains in the form of light snowfall. Summiteers are likely to be put off by this, but slow trekkers will get an opportunity to enjoy snow at lower altitudes. Over the weekend, Kathmandu Valley will see sunny days and clear nights, disturbed occasionally by the looming Siberian cold wave that has travelled across Mongolia and mainland China, and hovers over the Himalayas.



FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
19°-8°	18°-7°	18°-8°



# Us, them and the others

Twenty years ago this week, Indian society was polarised by politics of the Babri Masjid demolition



LOOK OUT

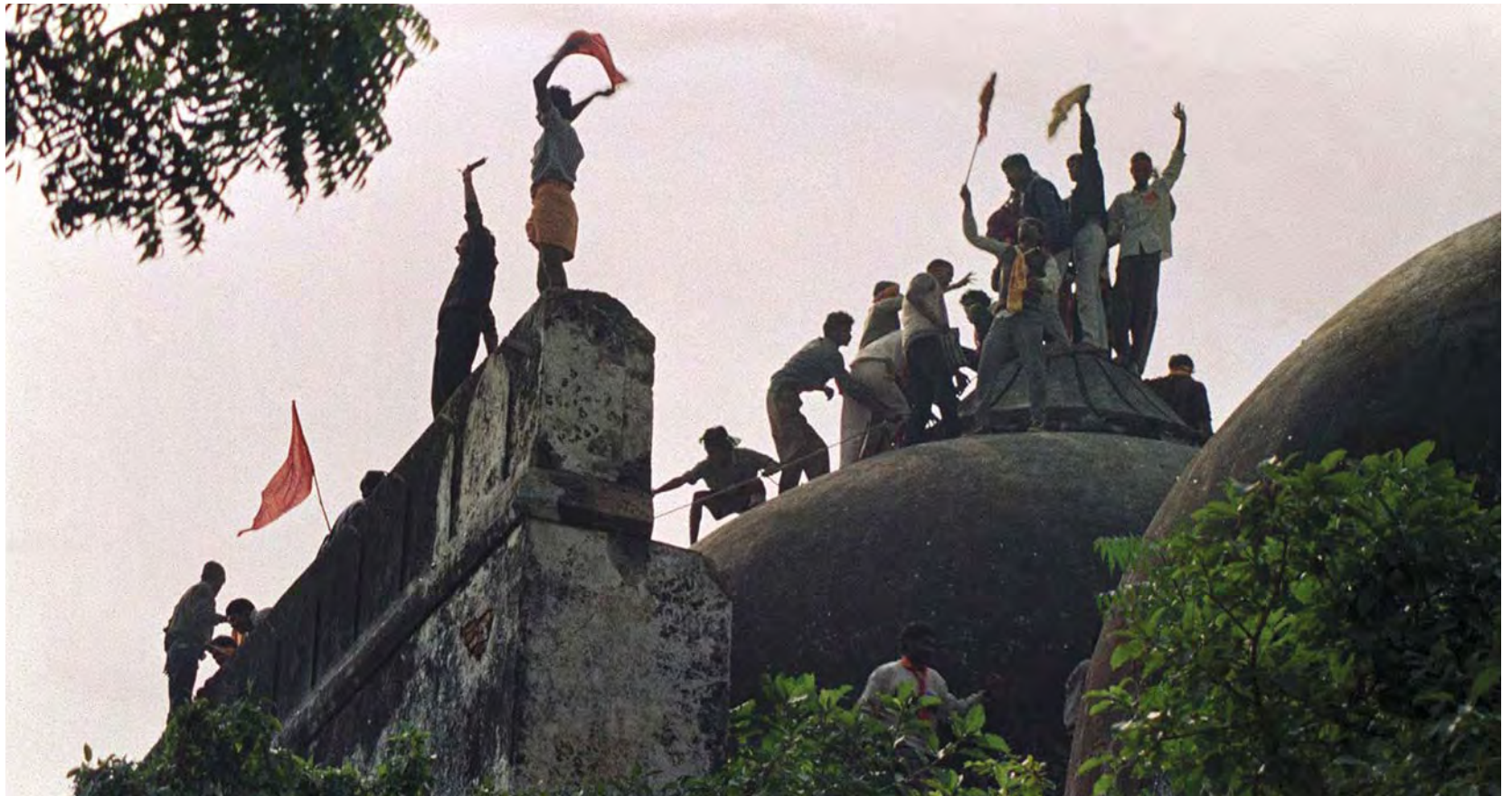
Ajaz Ashraf

Twenty years ago this week, I was in a deep sleep typical of people below 30 years, until the persistent ring of the telephone woke me. At the other end was a friend, a Hindu.

His voice trembled as he said: "It is happening in Ayodhya. They are demolishing the Babri Masjid." At those words my late morning grogginess sloughed off, as did the chrysalis of innocence in which I lived, from which emerged another man who was to discover a world tucked beyond the then existing limits of political imagination. It was a world in which hatred was the language of politics and violence a legitimate, even righteous, expression of inexplicable indignation.

Such was the cataclysmic nature of 6 December 1992: the day on which a medieval mosque in India's Ayodhya was demolished to undo a wrong of history. That 'medieval structure', it was claimed, was built on the spot where Lord Ram was born.

It was the day on which a new fault line emerged in Indian society. The word 'they', as my friend had used, acquired another meaning. Who constituted 'they' and who 'we'? Religion was not always the factor determining membership to either of the two categories. You were 'they' or 'we' depending on your position on the Babri Masjid, whether you believed its destruction was a wedge driven into the very heart



MJOSHI.BLOGSPOT.COM

of India or, alternatively, an expression of Hindu resurgence, necessary as well as inevitable. 'Them' and 'us' wrote in the newspapers, openly making it known to which category they belonged.

The differences between the two groups were irreconcilable. It was thought pointless to engage members of the rival group in debate because it could have no closure. Soon suspicion seeped in, you avoided talking of the Babri Masjid, even politics, with those who you believed were on the other side. Such suspicion engendered possibilities of sundering friendships, for it was always a shock to discover a friend whom you had known for years belonging to 'them'.

It was heartening to note


that religion was not the overarching canopy under which the 'us' banded together. Yet certain complexities could not be ignored. Every Muslim was deemed to belong to 'us'. It was impossible for him or her to belong to 'them', not because they all revered mosques, but largely because the existence or destruction of the Babri Masjid symbolised their future status in India. The converse was therefore equally true: the category of 'them' had to consist only of Hindus, obviously not all of them, for there were many who, like my two friends, were firmly in the camp of 'us'.

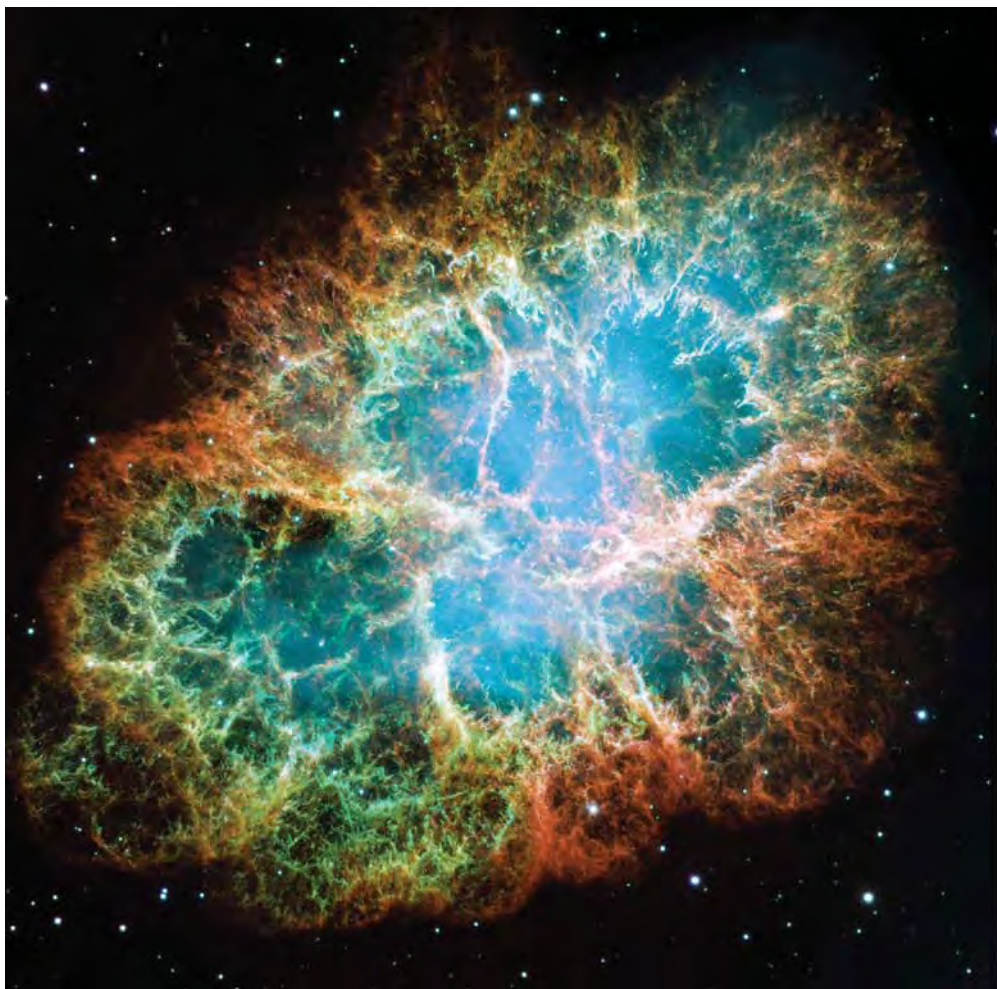
Yet the patently lopsided distribution of religious communities in 'us' and 'them' underlined the sociological

truism that an individual's identity is thrust upon him or her. You are Muslim because others consider you to be, because to put it crudely, your name will be reason enough for you to be targeted. It is this fear which reinforced the tendency among Muslims to live in ghettos, where they are relatively insulated from experiencing the dehumanising feeling of fear.

The imposition of identity is precisely the reason that despite the existence of two rival camps of non-religious 'us' and 'them' the Muslim community, on and after 6 December, became the 'other'. No doubt, the BJP sought to create the 'other' for papering over the innumerable divides in India's Hindu society, reflected in its

hierarchical division of castes. Yet the party was unable to implement its agenda of making religion as the basis of nationhood.

The BJP failed to achieve its goal because it couldn't muster a simple majority in the Indian parliament on its own. But this wasn't because it lost the ideological tussle between 'us' and 'them'. Rather, it was largely a result of subaltern castes preferring to support parties representing them than backing the BJP, which is the preserve of upper castes. Twenty years from 1992, 'us' and 'them' are, once again, divided sharply over the suitability of Chief Minister Narendra Modi of Gujarat becoming the prime minister of India. The battle rages on, so little has changed. 



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# The diamond in



SHAMSHER THAPA

## SKYE MCPARLAND in LAMJUNG

For years Deb Gurung saw children from his village in Gaunsahar of Lamjung district walk for hours every day to neighbouring villages or migrate to Pokhara and Kathmandu for better schooling. Gurung, a teacher at a local government school, was determined to change this.

He started a private school called Diamond Hill Academy in 2008 to provide quality English-medium education at one-third the cost of city schools. While many parents

were happy that they wouldn't have to send their children away any longer, making the school self-sustaining was a huge challenge for Gurung and his team.

During the first few years, there was a shortage of teachers, textbooks, and teaching materials. The two classrooms, made of bamboo walls and a tin roof were makeshift. In an effort to get more teachers, the school agreed to have volunteers from abroad eager to help Nepal's rural education.

When Erik Bouchard (*see box*), a successful American investment banker offered to

volunteer as an English teacher, Principal Shamsher Thapa of Diamond Hill Academy was too embarrassed to send photos of the school.

"He was worried that if I saw the state of the school, I would change my mind, and run away," Bouchard explains.

When the American volunteer arrived, he noticed that despite the lack of resources, the children were thriving. Grade 2 students of Diamond Hill had better English skills than students in Grade 9 at government schools. As he became more involved with

## Diamond Hill Academy is changing the rural landscape one student at a time



the school, the ex-banker put in money to build two new classrooms and a bathroom.

Bouchard then got his banker friends to donate five new laptops to the school. During school hours students get to use them and outside these times anyone from Gaunsahar has access to the computers. Students along with villagers are given free computer lessons before and after school which have helped locals build their self-confidence.

Diamond Hill now uses new technology to focus on cultivating a child-friendly learning environment. It has banned corporal punishment, and Thapa is now convinced that there are more effective ways to teach students a lesson than by beating. "If you hit a student, she might behave momentarily, but it doesn't stick with her in the long-run," he explains. Instead, students are not allowed to participate in

activities they enjoy like games or are made to read and write in the office room.

Although the education system in rural Nepal still has a long way to go, schools like Diamond Hill Academy are changing the rural landscape one student at a time by providing an enriching environment, good teachers, and modern infrastructure on par with city schools.

Says Bouchard: "The children are very capable and smart, they just needed support. The first few weeks I spent with them, I saw that even a box of pencils made a big difference to their learning. It's amazing how much you can do with so little."

[www.diamondhillnepal.org](http://www.diamondhillnepal.org)

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)

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# the hills



PICS: ERIK BOUCHARD

**BABY STEPS** (clockwise): Village girls in class 10 take computer lessons with Bouchard before school hours. Students from LKG eagerly line up for a group photo. A girl from LKG practices her multiplication table on the blackboard. Students pass by piles of stones kept at the school premises for the construction of new classrooms and bathroom. The children show off the new pencils that they got from Bouchard.



## Banking on change

By the time his friends finished college, Erik Bouchard was already earning a six figure salary and on his way to the top of the corporate ladder. However, the higher he progressed, the less satisfied he was from his career. “Most people would have been thrilled to have my life, but I didn’t feel I was contributing to anything, but my bank account,” he says.

In desperate need of change, Bouchard took a short break from his hectic job in Singapore and moved to Nepal. He travelled to Gaunsahar of Lamjung district and immediately fell in love with the simple way of life and the beautiful landscape of the Nepal Himalaya.

However, while in Gaunsahar he noticed that many NGOs and charities which were set up to help the rural poor were actually far out of reach of people who needed help the most. Children were the worst hit and even their basic needs were not being met. “Children in remote areas were missing out and I wanted to help them and make sure they could make their way to college,” he recalls.



SKYE MCPARLAND

**SUNNY-SIDE UP:** Erik Bouchard donates a solar powered lamp and radio to Gyanu Bahadur of Gaunsahar since he has no electricity in his home.

What started off as a holiday soon became the catalyst for an entirely new profession. Bouchard started the See Change Foundation, which focuses on meeting the health and education needs of children in rural Nepal. The charity will launch online early next year, but the ex-banker has already been working hard to make a positive difference in the lives of underprivileged children.

In the 13 months since his arrival, he has worked tirelessly to provide emergency health care to children, built two new school rooms and bathroom for Diamond Hill Academy (*see main article*), provided scholarships and found sponsors for children of poor families, and installed a sanitation system at a local orphanage in Besisahar.

Choosing all his projects through word of mouth, Bouchard wants to make as big an impact on the lives of Nepali children as they have made on his. “I haven’t made a dollar in a year, but I’ve never been happier,” says Bouchard, breaking into a wide grin, “I feel immense satisfaction knowing I’m making a difference and the work I am doing can make a lasting impact.”

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# A thought for the far-west



DAMBAR KRISHNA SHRESTHA

Editorial, *Gorkhapatra*, 26 November

गोरखापत्र

The Federation of Chambers of Commerce in Kailali has begun a voluntary donation drive called ‘Mission One Paisa’. This region may be ‘far-west’ from Kathmandu, but for its residents it is close-by and personal. Perhaps that is why the locals were the first ones to donate to the cause.

Chadani and Dodhara VDCs lie across the Mahakali and are probably last on the government’s priority list. In fact, all districts of the far-west have been sidelined from the mainstream. Money allotted from the budget for this region is either frozen or shifted to other programs.

What was once the capital of ancient Nepali culture and politics has been rendered weak and poor as the rest of the nation continues to modernise rapidly. One can make a long list of people from the far-west who have served in government posts both during

the Panchayat era and post-1990, but none of them have contributed or bothered about the region’s welfare.

But it is not possible to improve the status of the far-west through individual efforts alone. Development activities will count only when rights and resources are decentralised to the region, and locals are made agents of development plans. Given the government’s medieval approach towards decentralisation, it is no surprise that policies drafted inside Singha Darbar by officials with Ivy League certificates have very little effect in the region. In the past, these plans failed to take the far-west’s needs into consideration, which is why nobody here feels any progress has been achieved.

In Nepal, protests are characterised by bandas, transportation strikes, and violence. But leaders of Mission One Paisa say theirs is a dignified movement, aimed at alleviating poverty and encouraging locals to show more commitment towards regional development. They have made it a point to keep identity politics out.

The campaign, however, must not be limited to the far-west. Steps must be taken to seek the support of fellow Nepalis and friends from the international community. Also the ones driving this campaign must ensure that funds are used properly and there is zero tolerance for corruption.

In the recent past when efforts were made to divide the nation based on narrow ethnic or communal identities, the unity shown by the residents of the far-west was commendable. If this initiative is taken forward with the same level of honesty and integrity, it has the potential to put the region back on the national map.



## Terror in Tarai

Kamalesh Mandal, *Rajdhani*, 29 November

राजधानी

The rising unemployment in the Tarai districts is leading to an increase in the crime rate. The staggering number of cases where the police have been involved in cross fire with local criminals suggests widespread proliferation of small arms in the Tarai.

According to Mahottari district police, local gangs in the Tarai have been found in possession of homemade pistols, improvised bombs with detonators and large amount of ammunitions. “The use of guns in petty crimes has become all too common,” says Suraj Khadka of Mahottari police, “the locals know the criminals, but they are so terrified that they refuse to come forward to provide information.”

The porous Nepal-India border poses a huge challenge for security forces in controlling arms smuggling. Criminals can easily buy homemade and Chinese pistols from border towns of Siliguri, Jayanagar, Sitamadi, and Raxaul. So far, the police have recovered more than 100 weapons in Mahottari district alone. The Home Ministry is aware of the political influence these armed groups use to evade prosecution by the police. But so far, it has failed to intervene.

### NEPALI TWEETS

**Basanta Basnet**  
एउटा प्रधानमन्त्री सम्प्रेलाई बाइसके पचण्डले। िजो विधान काबिसकोपालो सिदियो भनेका थिए, बेलुकी सुशीललाई दिन सकिन्छभन्ने। आजवादललाई दिने रे।  
Prachanda has doled out the post of prime minister to all leaders at least once. Yesterday morning he said the NC had lost its turn and then offered the post to Sushil Koirala in the evening, today he is saying Badal deserves to be PM.

**DIE4g00NeR™**  
शुशिलकोइरालाले खासमा बोलेके बुझिदैला। यिनी पत्र भएर चिनले गोली रोक भनेर आदेश दिदा, पुलिसले गोली 'ठोक' भन्ने बुझ्यो भने खतम भएन।  
It's hard to understand Sushil Koirala. If he becomes the PM and orders the police to stop (rok) the bullet, what if they hear “open fire” (thok), won't that be a disaster?

**Bhatrai Bal Dev**  
सहमतिकोलागि न्याग भन्ने कुरा त एकदेशको कथा जस्तै हो। सत्ता हातबाट फुत्के सारा म्यस हुन्छ भन्ने सोच छ। अनि कहावाट, के को सहमति।  
Sacrifice for the sake of consensus is like a 'once upon a time' fairytale. Why would anyone come to an agreement when they are terrified they might lose everything if they give up power?

**robinhdno odmkonav**  
संविधान सभा निल्यो, संसद खायो, अखिलयार, निर्वाचन आयोग, सर्वोच्च अदालत, लोकसेवा आयोग सबै रित्याउने साँढे। साझा ६ वजे फेरी झुकाउँछ रे।  
The bull swallowed the constituent assembly, ate the parliament, and plundered the CIA, election commission, public service commission. He is shouting again at 6pm tonight.

**Rubina shrestha**  
राजनीति आलुको बोरा जस्तै हो पले एउटा दुइटा आलु कुहिएको थियो पछि सबै कुहिए यस्मा विस्मृत भान्नुहुन्छ।  
Politics is like a sack of potatoes, in the beginning one or two became rotten, now the entire bag is rotten. It shouldn't surprise us.

# Knowing right



RISHIRAM KATTEL

Ramji Dahal in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 16-30 November

हिमाल

Nepal’s interim constitution guarantees the right to information to all citizens. However, government and non-government institutions are notorious for denying even the most basic information to the public. In many government offices, the bureaucrats

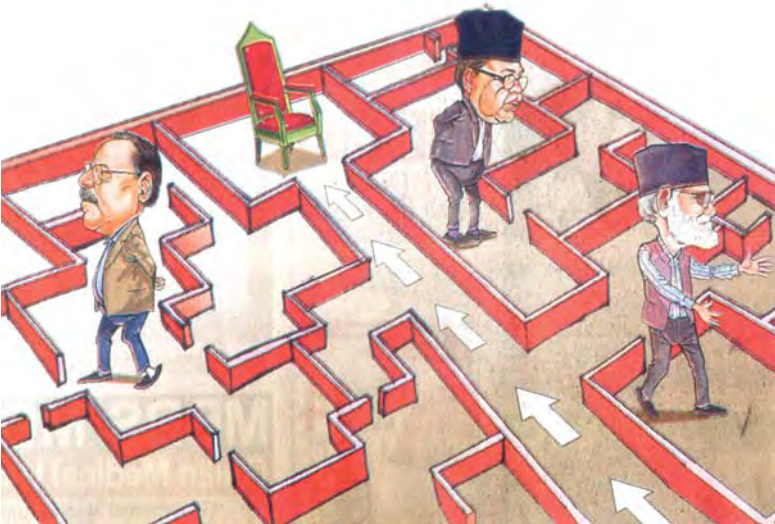
warn people of ‘dire consequences’ for pursuing sensitive matters or supply incomplete information.

Even the National Information Commission which is responsible for providing necessary information to the public has failed to deliver on its mandate. When a group of people seeking information from various institutions filed a complaint with the commission, the officials passed

the buck back to them. Information Commissioner Sabita Baral admits that there is a tendency to withhold information in the bureaucratic circles and blames it on the change-resistant mentality of the officials.

A few months ago Mahendra Bhattarai, a student at Koteswor Multiple Campus was arrested on false charges for demanding financial information from the campus administration. Bhattarai, later filed a complaint at the commission seeking information, but the campus authorities defied the commission’s directive to disclose information, following which campus chief Govinda Bahadur Karki was summoned by the commission. But Karki has so far refused to provide information to Bhattarai has not responded to the summon. Similarly, Dolakha’s Education Officer Shiva Kumar Sapkota filed a case against a local journalist demanding information about the procurement of laptops and books for local schools. Sapkota has alleged that he was verbally abused by the journalist.

Giving in to pressure from journalists and members of civil society, the legislature parliament passed the Right to Information bill in 2007. Five years later, the struggle to access information is still on.



कान्तिपुर Dipak Gautam in *Kantipur*, 25 November

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“I had gone to the president with my resignation letter on 22 November, but he refused to accept it.”

Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai quoted in *Nagarik*, 29 November.

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# Committing to the future

RAJU PANDIT CHHETRI in DOHA

The 18th Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), also known as COP 18 is underway in Doha. More than 12,000 delegates from 194 countries have gathered here in the over-cooled conference halls.

Even before the conference began there was scepticism among environmentalists and vulnerable nations about its outcome. The fact that the COP is being held in an OPEC country, which is the world's highest per capita carbon emitter has put off many.

Besides, the failure to salvage an international legally binding climate treaty at the Copenhagen climate talks in 2009 has led to a low level of trust among the countries. Since then, much effort has gone into getting this multilateral process to move ahead.

Last year, at COP 17 held in Durban, rich nations racked by an economic crisis bought time to agree on an internationally binding treaty, postponing any agreement up to 2015, to be implemented by 2020.

These delaying tactics have raised serious concern among the vulnerable countries, particularly the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the low lying island states. Nearly 100 countries whose total emission is less than six per cent of the global greenhouse gas emission have the lowest capability to combat climate change impacts.

The Doha summit is unlikely to



## The Doha climate summit this week won't make any breakthrough

make a major breakthrough, but activists and the vulnerable nations are doing what they can to achieve incremental milestones to reach a deal in 2015. One of the goals is to get the big economies to agree on a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

The Protocol is the only instrument under the UN framework that legally binds the developed countries (also termed as Annex I) to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The first commitment period of the protocol ends this year.

The report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

produced in 2007 states that in order to minimise the impact of climate change, global average temperature must not exceed two degrees. For that to happen, the global carbon emission must be reduced by at least 25 to 40 per cent by 2020 and 80 per cent by 2050 based on 1990 level.

However, the current trajectory shows an increase of 3.5 degrees in the same period, which could accelerate melting of the polar ice and snow caps in the Himalaya and climate stress.

The United States, the second largest greenhouse gas emitter in the world, is refusing to sign the Kyoto Protocol and

OUR TURN (l-r): Kabindra Rai, Narmaya Tamang and Lakpa Tenzing of the Khumjung School's Eco club take part in an interaction program organised by the United Nations Environment Program to draw the attention of Nepal's legislators to the twin dangers of ozone depletion and climate change.

setting a bad example. It has prompted countries like Canada, Japan, Russia, and New Zealand to move out of the protocol as well. They have also argued that the emerging economies including China, Brazil, and India should also take legally binding actions.

For developing countries like Nepal, another issue of interest in Doha is the commitment of support by developed countries in tackling climate impacts. During the Copenhagen meeting, developed countries had promised \$100 billion per year in financial and technical assistance. In the next seven days, the LCDs will look to get the developed countries to agree on short-term financial pledges scaling up to the original commitment.

Nepal has been part of several rounds of COP negotiations in the past and as chair of the LDC Group for 2013-14, it will have a strategic advantage to forward its demands and be more vocal. 🇳🇵

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# So you want to be a prime minister?

The president's deadline looms as the Ass goes to press, and there are still no takers. There is no new gubberment agreement because the parties can't decide who should preside over a national erection. The crux of the biscuit, as Frank Zappa used to say, is that they are all cancelling each other out. PKD cancels out BRB, SBD cancels out RCP, BKG cancels out MT & UY, and Brave Sun is being blocked by Brave Cloud. And PuKaDa is confusing everyone by sending mixed signals: telling the Madhesis they must lead an electoral government, while simultaneously egging on Messrs Kaji Naran, Jhusil, Sher, Cloudy, and Gutch.



The only reason this is not already more complicated is because the eh-Maleys are not in the running. Thank Gods for that, otherwise we'd have the Red Bahuns of the Unfed Marxist-Leninists also kicking each other in the gonads. At this rate, the power struggle is going to go on till eternity unless we come up with innovative new ideas to short-circuit the whole dam thing by employing one or more of the following methods to choose a new prime minister:

1. Agree on a rotational prime ministership among 365 aspirants

2. Declare a National Lottery and whoever wins, becomes prime minister for as long he, she, or it wants. Asses are encouraged to apply.
3. Ask the two main rivals in the four parties to pick straws until everyone is eliminated, then appoint a Young Turk.
4. Organise a roundtable of all 48 top leaders of the top parties and have them play Russian roulette. The last man left sitting is automatically prime minister since everyone else is dead.
5. Re-enact the Lig Lig Marathon, and whoever can bribe the organiser to win can be declared the prime minister.
6. Have an Elocution Contest to narrow the field because both Sher and Jhus would be disqualified.
7. Televisé live a Kaun Banega Corrode Pati competition, and find who has the potential to get rich quickest.



Amreshbabu apparently blew a gasket when he found out that certain journos were tweeting about him accompanying BRB to meet RBY, and that the prez scolded the pee-em for having a spook for a sidekick. The Ass has it on good authoritarians that it did not happen that way. But Amrace was prowling around Shitall Niwas before and after the prime minister was there, which is in itself intriguing. What everyone forgets is that the prez was following his agreement with Chairman Supercalifragilistic under which he would sign the budget ordinance in return for a time frame

for a new consensual grovelment with or without BRB stepping down. But BRB pulled the rug from under PKD's gameplan by his "I-me-my any sacrifice" speech, and the prez had to rebut with his ultimate ultimatum. So, to cut a long story short, this is a fight to the finish between two baddest Baddies, and all we can hope is that the better Baddie wins.



The gossip around the neighbourhood water-hole these days is all about why the Mao-Mad Coalition is reluctant to step down. One theory is that there are so many irons in the fire, juicy aircraft contracts to multifuel powerplant purchases, and projects to reconstruct the deconstruction wrought by demolition contractors in Kathmandu, that the coalition needs slightly more time to finalise kickbacks and payoffs before they step down. For example, there is a battle royal brewing between PKD and BRB over the appointment of the new chief of the NTA. Being Nepal's Telecom Czar, Awesome is not going to

let go of that one that easily.



As rumours swirl about further sinful antics of the ex-clown plince in Pattaya recently, it looks like even his royal antecedents is not going to protect him from Thai justice this time. Daddy-G has more or less excommunicated his son much in the same way that Great Leader Comrade Lotus Flower has defrocked Dear Leader Comrade Luminous for his dangerous liaisons. CP Porous used to be in Singapore, which is a fine city, until his fines made it unaffordable. Interestingly, that is where Daddy-ji is headed next week.



Jhusil Da is suddenly looking 10 years younger after Awesome convinced him he should shoot for PMship. The Congman is shoring up all his pluck and energy to show that he has what it takes to do the Paji Job. Brave Lion is glad Lord Ram is out of the way, but still secretly fancies himself back at the Sand Castle.



Our winning sound bite of the week comes from Gutch the Homely Minister: "I have a zero tolerance policy towards corruption."





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