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Fight to the finish

A post-mortem of the aborted political deal on Monday has revealed that it didn't go through because Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai rejected outright an agreement brokered by Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and the NC for a change in the leadership of the coalition.

This last-minute failure to meet President Ram Baran Yadav's fourth deadline to form a consensus government to take the country to elections has exposed the widening rift between the two top Maoist leaders. It has brought back memories of 2004, when Dahal actually had Bhattarai, his wife and other loyalists arrested and tortured because of a clash over ideology.

Dahal is determined to replace Bhattarai before their party's convention on 3 February, and Bhattarai is equally determined to cling

on to power. Both are competing to expand their control over the party with the break off of the Baidya group earlier this year. This intra-party feud is impacting directly on national politics, and prolonging the deadlock over the formation of an all-party election government.

President Yadav extended the deadline for government formation for the fifth time, and would like to wrap things up before his visit to India on Monday. But it is unlikely that Bhattarai will give in to Dahal's pressure to remove him from office at least till the convention in February.



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SAVE THE CHILDREN

The horrific slaughter of 26 children and their teachers last week in the US state of Connecticut was a shock reminder to Americans to urgently address the need for gun control. Nowhere else in the world is the right to bear arms taken as seriously as in the United States, and the latest massacre underlined the necessity to amend the Second Amendment. Passed as far back as in 1791, the law needs a serious revision in an age when assault rifles and other weapons of mass murder have been used by killers. The per capita rate of shooting homicide in the United States is 20 times higher than in Europe. There are over 10,000 murders by firearms in the US every year, compared to 30 in Australia, 37 in Sweden, and 8 in Japan. The frequency of school shootings in the US shows that the adult American's freedom to own a gun is infringing on the right to life of American children.

Here in Nepal, the latest US shootings reminded us of the murder in Kathmandu of 10 members of the royal family by another deranged and gun-crazed individual in 2001. That massacre set off a media feeding frenzy that put Nepal briefly on the global news map. Part of the reason for such lop-sided coverage is the prevalent news paradigm, the parameters the media uses to define an event as newsworthy.

Journalism schools teach students that for anything to have news value, a whole lot of people, preferably well-to-do or living in a rich country, have to die suddenly, all in one place, and it would help if there are interesting visuals. These unspoken, cynical and callous criteria define the threshold of what is deemed important enough for the people to know.

Which means that a textile factory fire that kills 100 workers in Bangladesh, or a typhoon in the Philippines that kills more than 1,000 farmers are eclipsed by relatively smaller events in the industrialized world. Seventy thousand Nepali children

Nepali children are being killed by state neglect, bureaucratic apathy, corruption and bad governance.



FREDERIC LECLoux

die every year of diarrhoeal dehydration, pneumonia and other vaccine-preventable deaths. That is about 200 children dying needlessly every day, but it doesn't merit headlines around the world, not even in Nepal, because they are mostly poor children in remote areas who die silently and are scattered across the land. The death of 200 children every day in Nepal should be news, but alas, it doesn't fit the standard news format.

To be sure, Nepal has made dramatic progress in child survival, and that should be news too. But it isn't. The country's poverty rate has declined to 25 per cent, the national literacy rate has doubled in the past 15 years, enrollment in primary schools is nearly 100 per cent, and there is parity between boys and girls. Nepal's under-five mortality rate is down from 162 per 1,000 births to less than 50 today, and the maternal mortality rate has come down from 850 per 100,000 births to less than 200 in 15 years.

Still, these figures are national averages and mask the glaring disparity between urban and rural areas, between the mainstream and marginalised communities. There are still 200,000 children who are out of school, a quarter of the population is living below the absolute poverty line, and 41 per cent of children under five are underweight which makes them vulnerable to killer infections. Most worryingly, the female literacy rate is plateauing off and the child mortality rate has been stagnant for the last few years.

Nepal's daily tally of child deaths cannot be equated with heinous mass murders like the premeditated shooting of primary school children, but they are crimes against humanity nonetheless. Nepali children are not just dying, they are being killed by state neglect, bureaucratic apathy, corruption and bad governance. There is no other way to put it politely: the lack of accountability resulting from endless political bickering is delaying development and killing our children.

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

THE POWER OF ONE

Thank you Nepali Times for your recognition of Pushpa Basnet and Anuradha Koirala ('The power of one', Editorial, #634). While these brave women have brought fame, fortune and honour to Nepalis everywhere, the disgraceful men in politics have only looted, lied, and brought despair to the people. It's good to focus on the positives of Nepalis. Most are honest, loving and work hard each day to provide for their families. An honest person

had more Anuradhas and Pushpas, we would have more peace and prosperity for all Nepalis. The message that is hitting home among young and old women is that they can dream and fulfil their dreams. We do not have to be second class any more, we do can rise above male domination that is so rampant in the Nepali culture and society. We can be equal or better than men. I would like to continue reading about the success of Nepali women on Nepali Times.

Bhawani Tuladhar



BIKRAM RAI

has to emerge on the scene, and lead the real revolution that is brewing now. Until the present political mafia is removed, nothing will change.

Govind Kafle

It feels wonderful to see my Nepali sisters finally getting local and international recognition. If we

The women in Nepal have been abused and mistreated by men for a long time. The tide is now turning. We need strong laws to punish domestic violence and abuse against women. Pushpa Basnet will go down in history as one of our great women, and the hope for millions of abused children and women of Nepal.

Bindu Malla

It's very refreshing to read about the success resulting from hard work and sacrifice of Nepalis, especially when the whole world celebrates them. There are many selfless souls that are bringing joy to the needy. These are the stories we want to read about. Politics can be confined to the hell it exists in.

Nita Pokharel

Very moving editorial and touched my heart. Line to line yaad garna layak chha. Thanks for the brilliant writing.

Ram

Loved reading your editorial. Except that it is a grave sin to take the name of Pushpa Basnet and Pushpa Kamal Dahal in the same breath. Pushpa is known for her honesty and sacrifice. Dahal is a disgraceful and congenital liar an uncouth murderer and looter of the people.

Sabita Gurung

TELLING TRUTH TO POWER

It is a bitter reality that our journalism is also as polarised as the political parties ('Telling truth to power, Anurag Acharya, #634). It's sad to see that even journalists don't have consensual voice regarding the national interest and integrity. Media houses and political parties are the same in Nepal: they complement each other because they serve their masters and not national interest.

Mexx Nepali

As long as our journalists (like our intellectuals) prefer to be sheep in one partisan flock or the other, Anurag Acharya's dream of an independent media will remain a dream.

K. K. Sharma

Thank you Anurag Acharya for remembering Uma Singh. Thanks also for the first critique, in a long time, of the increasingly shallow English-language press we have in Nepal. We hope for much more.

Sabina

Nepal's media is influenced by criminal activities of cowardly politicians who lack ethics, by impunity resulting from the collapse of the rule of law, as well as the overbearing control of media barons, and the misinformation and yellow journalism in their papers. But despite all this, there are many honest and fearless journalists who risk everything and speak the truth.

Dinesh

THE TOWN LESS TRAVELLED

In comparison to Darjeeling, the history of Ilam in tea and tourism has long way to go ('The town less travelled', Trishna Rana, #634). Ilam needs socio-economic development for the benefits of the local population, but let's not make the decision in haste and suffer the consequences of overpopulation and lack of proper infrastructure such as transportation, public utilities, hospitals, reliable financial institutions, schools and colleges, housing developments, hotels, and sports facilities. In other words, long term economic planning for over all development and tourism needs to be considered for the eastern Nepal. Government commitment and investment is the key.

Dinesh Chamling Rai

Why do we need to measure and compare with all development

indicators and force tourism on Ilam? Focus should instead on building on Ilam's strengths. Let Ilam be Ilam, why turn it into Switzerland or Darjeeling?

Sima

ROAD RAGE

Politicians do what they know best: Demolition, and not just physical ('Road rage', Sunir Pandey, #634). Each sector around us has been rendered useless and, sadly, and it will remain so for many more years to come.

Armugam

MID-LEVEL CRISIS

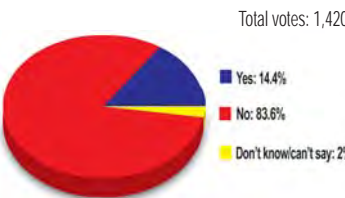
A well written article and a reflection on the discrimination against women, male arrogance and male domination of society. ('Mid-level crisis', Puja Tandon, 634). However, each one of my staff in Kathmandu is female: all are highly educated, committed, hard working, and constantly learning to improve. They spend every day helping others. Why would I want a Nepali male?

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Q. Do the parties deserve another extension if they fail to meet the president's fourth deadline?



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Q. Should the current government continue till the elections are over?



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IS REVOLUTION OBSOLETE?

IGNACIO RAMONET in BOGOTÁ

People in the streets and squares of the Colombian capital are breathing easier. The air is fresh with hope.

The war in Colombia is one of the longest-running armed conflicts in the world. It began (or intensified) when Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a popular social activist who advocated fiscal and land reform, was murdered by the oligarchy in 1948.

Today, in a continent that

20,000 combatants, and the only one that has not been defeated by force of arms. But satellite tracking and massive use of drones now allow their communications and movements to be tracked.

The killings of the FARC's top commanders have made it more difficult for the guerrillas to regroup. And FARC's use of kidnapping, summary execution of prisoners and indiscriminate attacks on civilians, have made the group unpopular.

The FARC are far from defeated, and could probably

After nearly 70 years of war, peace may be finally breaking out in Colombia

is overwhelmingly at peace, Colombia's 65-year-old conflict is like a vestige of another era. After many fits and starts, the peace process this time seems to be serious.

President Juan Manuel Santos publicly announced in early September that the government and the insurgents would be starting peace talks, first in Oslo and then in Havana, with the governments of Norway and Cuba as guarantors and Venezuela and Chile as observers.

But why has Santos, an implacable opponent of the guerrillas as Defence Minister under former President Álvaro Uribe, chosen the path of negotiation? Because this time, he says, "the stars are aligned to end the conflict." In other words, the national and international conditions are propitious.

Firstly, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) are no longer what they used to be. They remain the most formidable guerrilla force in Latin America, with

continue the conflict for years, but they are certainly not going to win. Peace talks, if they lead to a dignified agreement, would let them leave the field walking tall, to join political life.

But Santos did not decide to talk because the FARC was weakened militarily. It was also because the oligarchy opposed to land reform are no longer the dominant power in politics. A new urban ruling class has emerged in the last decade, with far more power than the rural elites.

During the worst years of the war, the large cities were cut off from the countryside. It was impossible to travel overland from one place to another, and the portion of Colombia that was usable was limited to a sort of archipelago of cities. To these large cities came the millions of people fleeing the conflict, and dynamic, growing local economies developed, based on industry, services, finance, import-export and other sectors.

This is the economy that predominates and Santos represents it to a certain extent,



WHO IS WHO?: A Colombian guerrilla (left) and a PLA combatant in Rolpa during the Nepal conflict (right). In both conflicts

just as Uribe represents the large landowners who are opposed to the peace process. The urban oligarchy wants peace for economic reasons. The cost of peace, after all, will be borne by the big landowners. The urban elite is not interested in the soil, but in the subsoil: pacification would allow exploitation of Colombia's immense mineral resources, for which China is an insatiable market.

The urban business community also perceives that if peace is achieved, the present excessive military expenditure could be devoted to

reducing inequality. Colombia's population will soon exceed 50 million, a significant critical mass in terms of consumption, if average purchasing power rises.

Meanwhile, Latin America is experiencing a high point in terms of regional cooperation, with the recent creation of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), in which Colombia plays an important role.

Given these dynamics, as Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez keeps pointing out, the

war is an anachronism, and the FARC knows this. Current events in Latin America show that gaining power by peaceful, political means is possible for a party with a progressive agenda.

The peace process is still being opposed by Pentagon hawks, ultra-rightwing members of the military, landowners and paramilitaries. But all signs from Havana show that the end of Colombia's conflict may at long last be at hand. 🇨🇴

IPS

Ignacio Ramonet is the editor of Le Monde Diplomatique in Spanish.

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women formed a sizeable proportion of the fighting force.

JUANITA MALAGÓN

When I just arrived in Nepal, a friendly man at a small shop in Bhaishapati asked me where I was from. After I said Colombia, he replied with a grin: “Ah, the land of the FARC.” I was taken aback because normally few in Nepal have heard of Colombia (those that have think of the capital of Sri Lanka, or a university in New York) let alone a South American guerrilla group. That was the first time I realised that there

may be a link between the conflicts in Colombia and Nepal. Nepal is ahead of Colombia in guerrilla matters in some ways. It signed a ceasefire in 2006 and concluded the peace process with the Maoists, and the former combatants are in the process of integration into the national army and assimilation into society. The Maoists became the largest party in the 2008 elections, and have been leading the government. In Colombia, FARC has just entered the peace process and the country has

the dubious distinction of having one of the longest running conflicts in the world today. FARC has been fighting for the last 48 years and two generations of Colombians have never known peace. News of the peace process has been greeted with hope and apprehension; after all, there have been failed peace attempts before. A recent public opinion poll showed that 75 per cent of Colombians welcome the peace talks,

is now internationally recognised as a terrorist group, it has fewer combatants, no new generation of leaders with communist ideology, and they are heavily dependent upon drug trafficking to survive. They agreed to negotiate again with the government because they realised that they will never come to power by military means, and need to accept democracy. Many of the rebels are not interested in politics anyway, and seem to prefer the drug business. This time the government has been more cautious and insisted on conditions for peace. It didn't offer any ceasefire and military operations against the FARC continue. Talks are not open to the public to avoid a media circus, and are not held in Colombia but in Norway and Cuba. The parties have agreed to talk on five points: rural and agricultural development, political participation, an end to the armed conflict, drug trafficking, and ensuring the rights of the victims of the conflict. The first point focuses on land reform,

Just as Nepal, Colombia will also have to grapple with closure for the families of victims

but 45 per cent do not hold much hope that it will succeed. The last time there was a ceasefire in 1998, the President Andrés Pastrana government gave an area of 42,000 sq km to the rebels as a safe haven in the southeast of the country, promising no military strikes there. The rebels took advantage

access to and use of land, formalisation of property, providing development to remote areas and creation of jobs. The end of the armed conflict includes a bilateral and definitive ceasefire, disarmament, releasing prisoners and reintegrating the guerrillas into society. Anti-drug trafficking activities include crop substitution, and environmental regeneration in areas affected by narco-traffickers. Victims of the conflict will also be ensured truth and justice. Just as in Nepal, Colombia will also have to grapple with transitional justice, impunity and closure for the families of victims. There is some apprehension about giving ex-guerrillas public positions. But, as one Colombian journalist put it recently: “We prefer to have ex-guerrillas behind a microphone than behind a weapon.”



Juanita Malagón is a Colombian journalist currently Online Coordinator of the digital edition of Nepali Times, www.nepalitimes.com

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Let them all eat cake

This Christmas, bakeries across Kathmandu have given yet another yummy reason to rejoice

BHRIKUTI RAI

You know your olfactory senses are doing just fine, even with all the dust and congestion blocking your nose, when you pass a bakery and the toasty aroma of sweet buttery bakery delights wafts out to the chilly sidewalk. Bakeries have suddenly become a

rage, not just in Thamel and other tourist areas of the country, but all over. They are even giving Indian sweet shops a run for their money with their delectable assortment of cakes, cookies, breads, and croissants.

Krishna Pauroti Bhandar was established in 1948 and marked the beginning of western-style loaf baking in Nepal. For 30 more years, Krishna



ALL PICS: BHRIKUTI RAI



at Kamal Pokhari was the only show in town, but things have changed of recent with with bakeries and cakeshops springing up like mushroom patties wherever tourists and expats congregate.

Ghanashyam Rajkarnikar of Krishna Pauroti Bhandar remembers the days when his father Krishna Bahadur Rajkarnikar pioneered baking. “Although bread and buns are still popular, as a pioneer establishment we have diversified into cakes, cookies and pastries,” he says.

But it is at Christmas that the Valley’s bakeries do their briskiest business, and it’s no longer just for expats. “The new generation needs an excuse to celebrate and Christmas is suddenly fashionable here,” explains Rajkarnikar.

Other bakeries too wait eagerly for Christmas to put up their special selection of Christmas delights. European Bakery at Baluwatar is in its ninth year and offers a wide range of breads from millet to garlic besides the assortments of pastries and cookies, says Bimal Bhandari, who bakes a special range of cheese and mint pies along with Christmas fruit cake and stollen bread

this week.

The curiously-named Hygiene Bakers, also in Baluwatar, claims to offer an authentic Christmas sugar fix. Baker Rome Ghimire recommends his plum pudding and Christmas-themed cakes.

Hermann Helmers is a pioneer bakery on the Patan side of town and baker Rita KC has noticed more and more local customers over the years at his outlet in Jhamel. “We had only a few orders for cakes this Christmas, but sales of puddings and mousse have gone up in December as always,” KC says.

Other popular Patan-based bakeries like Fuji and Julies say that business is good during Christmas despite not having Yuletide delicacies. Radha Thapa of Julies in Kupondole points at the empty racks meant to showcase doughnuts, cakes and special Swiss chocolates, saying they vanish faster at Christmas.

While December does bring in extra business, it also comes with its own set of challenges. “Load-shedding is a real headache because it coincides with higher demand for items like our sour cream cookies,” admits Bhumi Shakya of Fuji Bakery at Chakupat. 🇳🇵

HOT OFF THE OVENS

HIGHER GROUND BAKERY

Linked to the Higher Ground Café in Jawalakhel, this bakery employs women at risk. Bhanimandal, 5528505

CAFÉ HESSED

The delectable doughnuts and cupcakes are for those with a sweet tooth. Jhamel, 9803608601

PUMPERNICKEL BAKERY

A favourite among locals, backpackers and expats Pumpernickel has expanded its services. Thamel, 4259185

MASTER BAKER

Since it broke away from the older Mabacos, Master Baker makes muffins, sandwiches and Swiss rolls. Kamalpokhari, 4418649

JULIE’S CAKES AND PASTRIES

In addition to the regular breads and cakes, Julie’s displays a sinful assortment of Swiss chocolates. Kupondole, 5539862

HERMANN HELMERS

The popular bakery continues to live reinvent itself with impressive range of cakes, pastries, cookies, chocolates and mousse. Jhamsikhel, 5524900

HOT BREADS

The whole range of baked products and sandwiches, and yes, a restaurant on the side. Jawalakhel, Durbar Marg

NANGLO’S BAKERY

One of the original fast-food restaurants of Kathmandu, the Nanglo chain has outlets all over the country. Jawalakhel, Durbar Marg, Gwarko

JUST BAKED

The assortment of pastries, cakes and buttery cookies and failsafe momos will have you craving for more Old Baneshwor, 9808663505

GERMAN BAKERY

Purists swear by its doughnuts, but cheese plaits and patties also have a huge following. Jawalakhel, 5523789

EUROPEAN BAKERY

The busiest bakery in this residential neighbourhood serves baking hot delicacies Baluwatar, 4422047

FUJI BAKERY

Tucked away in an alley in Patan, Fuji is spick and span and has a fan club. Chakupat, 5260678

KRISHNA PAUROTOI BHANDAR

It looked as though the building might collapse under the road-widening, but Krishna Pauroti survived and rebranded itself. Kamal Pokhari, 4410067

A green Christmas

If Bing Crosby’s song ‘White Christmas’ is hammering in your head this season and the wish for ‘tree tops glisten and children listen to hear sleigh bells in the snow’ makes you want to have trees and wreaths and lots of snow, look for a green Christmas next week.

After all, ‘tis the season to be eco-friendly. Instead of chopping down fresh pine trees and branches, you can have a small tree in a pot, look after it throughout the year, and then when Christmas finally arrives you already have the habit of making it grow. Or why not follow the tradition in Philippines where fresh pine trees are

too expensive and locals prefer to make Christmas trees out of bamboo stalks and then decorate them with lights?

But, the best option is to plant poinsettias inside and outside the house, its red petals the perfect symbol of Christmas.





Shrishti and her chocolate factory

Among the many food items that the world got after the Europeans reached America besides potatoes, chillies and maize is chocolate. Today, the chocolate's dark smooth texture, bittersweet flavour and seductive scent is a mass-produced treat.

Good chocolate completes the joy of Christmas along with other yuletide musts such as walnuts, marsipan, candles and glittery decorations. And you can't go wrong with an assortment of designer chocolates as a gift.



Asia is the new market for chocolate where it is competing with traditional flavours. In Nepal, the market is still immature, and although many bakeries offer delicate chocolates, it is still rare with local chocolatiers.

Down a warren of streets near Maligaun is a residence that's probably Nepal's only homemade chocolate factory. Shristi Joshi Malla (pictured) started Moni's Creations in 2005 to produce handmade stained glass, beads, candles and chocolates.

In her display room, Malla urges a visitor to sample a chocolate in bright green foil wrapping from a gift box. The velvety smooth, melt-in-the-mouth, mint praline is one of the specialties at Moni's. The packaging is tastefully done as well, with hand-made cavity boxes of Nepali Lokta paper.

"It all started as a hobby, but with time it grew into a business," explains Malla, who sells her world-class chocolate and other handicrafts as corporate gifts during festivals, as wedding and birthday presents and at Christmas time.

Moni's Creations has something of a cult following among discerning Kathmandu locals and expats for its uniquely flavoured chocolates in custom-made boxes. A favourite is the silky smooth truffle, and other specialties that Malla created with inspiration from trips abroad, are chocolates with almond, mint, butter scotch, cappuccino, crunchy cracker and other tempting fillings.

Anna-Karin Ernstson Lampou

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EVENTS

B-BOYING COMPETITION, shake and bake, and do whatever it takes to win a cash prize of upto Rs 50,000. 26 January, 10.45am, Dasrath Stadium, 984925612/9849685110/9841721736

Bato ko cinema, six movies, six screenings, six fabulous opportunities to watch amazing documentaries on the streets of Patan. 21 December, 6pm onwards, Patan, 9813485716, (01)5523486

Katha-kuro, opportunity for young aspiring writers to learn the art of narrative storytelling at this feature-writing workshop with journalist, blogger, and aspiring filmmaker Pranaya Rana. Rs 1,000, 22 and 23 December, 10am to 2pm, Ting's Tea Lounge, Lazimpat, editor@ventzine.com

The Gurkha's daughter, meet the Darjeeling-born author Prajwal Parajuly, and take part in a talk programme on literature in and around Nepal. 21 December, 3 to 5pm, Institute of Advanced Communication, Education, and Research, Baneshwor Heights, (01)5536974/4471915/4467528

Dabangg 2, catch the new Bollywood flick at a charity screening that aims to support Hospice Nepal, a nonprofit organisation providing palliative care to cancer patients. 23 December, 6.30pm, Civil Mall, 9802051400

Artmandu, the month long celebration of art comes to a spectacular end. 21 December, 6pm, Naag Bahal, 9721383294

Cycle race, lace your boots and crank your wheels for a 17km race in the streets of Pokhara, cash prizes included. 25 December, Pokhara

KJC winter camp for kids, music, movies, drama, arts, and a range of outdoor activities to keep your children excited this winter. 30 December to 11 January, for children aged 6 to 14, (01)5013554, info@katjazz.com.np



ROTARY PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION, chance for professional photographers to show what they're made up of. 30 December, rcjphotocomp@gmail.com, 9841634909/9802087277

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, 22 December, 10am to 7pm, Fun Park, Bhrikuti Mandap, (01)5201997

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



TRISOUL, Abhaya Subba Weise will perform live at the release of her latest album. 21 December, 7pm onwards, Factory, Thamel, (01)4701185/4701187

Chopstix turns 5, catch Hem Lama and Band at the fifth anniversary of the restaurant, and try the 5 new dishes prepared for this very occasion. 22 December, Chopstix, Kumaripati

DINING



REGGAE CAFE AND BAR, gather with your friends for drinks, and also catch the English Premier League live as Arsenal take on Wigan Athletic. 21 December, 6pm onwards, Thamel

Salt & Pepper Restro Lounge, espresso, mocha, latte, frappuccino, cocktails, liquor, beers and flavoured shishas, with an outdoor lake-view terrace. Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)463484, 9846210568, www.saltandpeppernepal.com

Boudha Stupa Restaurant and Cafe, bide your time in their free wi-fi zone as you enjoy our wood-fired pizzas, home-made pastas, and the Tibetan gyakok. Boudha, (01)4485585

Chilly Bar and Restaurant, quality food and wide selection of drinks with great views of Phewa Lake. Lakeside, Hallanchok, Pokhara, (061)463614/463163



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

Tass and Tawa, savour a wide variety of Nepali meat dishes and reserve your palate for the heavenly Chusta. Pulchowk, Kathmandu

Yin Yang Restaurant, east meets west as you choose from a variety of Thai and continental dishes. Add a little spice to your life with the pad thai or green curry. If you can't handle the heat, fall into the safety net of its western dishes. Thamel, 10am to 10pm, (01)4701510

Shambaling Hotel, this new hotel promises a fine dining experience. Boudha



CHA CHA CAFE, this Japanese restaurant is popular for its spaghettis and burger steaks. Thamel

New Tushita Restaurant, relaxing ambience and good food. Don't miss out on its penne with creamy bacon and mushroom sauce. Lazimpat, 44432957

GETAWAYS

Shivapuri Village, eco-tourism close to the Shivapuri National Park replete with a charm of bygone days. Patishwara, Shivapuri National Park, (01)4017725, 9851034141, info@shivapuri.com.np

Winter camp at Borderlands, send your kids packing into the jungle where they get to develop their leadership, communication, and basic life skills while taking part in outdoor and extracurricular activities such as tent crafting, rock climbing, canyoning, abseiling, cooking and art, music, and dance lessons. 5 to 12 January, Borderlands Resort, Bhotekoshi, (01)4381214, 9802025666, www.borderlandsresorts.com



DHULIKHEL LODGE RESORT, located on a hilltop the resort offers a magnificent vista of valleys, foothills, and mountains to the north. Dhulikhel, (011) 490114/494, www.dhulikhellodgeresort.com

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16 - 30 DECEMBER

COMMENTARY
Three Hours in the Killing Fields
Keshab Dahal
The Exhaustion Game-plan
Purushottam Dahal
Madhesi Morcha Booby-trapped
Chandrakishor

REPORTS
A Decade of Golden Opportunities
Milk at water's price

TRIBUTES
Inder Kumar Gujral
Bhim Bahadur Tamang

INTERVIEW
Kulman Ghising

COVER
Maoists in Maoist Captivity
High-ranking officials of the UCPN(M) were detained and tortured by their own party

EDITORIAL
Consensus for a Return To Normalcy



Spread the word, Santa's come to town

Father Christmas is visiting Manny's Eatery this weekend, so don't forget to take your kids to the Children Mela organised there as part of the season's festivities.

Besides Yuletide cheers, the carnival will feature boat rides, trampoline, face painting, bouncing castles, lucky dips, puppet shows, treasure hunts and lots of other filled activities, in addition to a food court.

If your kids happen to be whisk wise, persuade them to take part in the evening's special 'Manny's Junior Master Chef' event so that they may show their culinary expertise to contemporaries and seniors alike.

A part of the proceeds generated will be contributed towards the Mary Ward High School in Lubhu.

A fun filled weekend awaits all families, door prizes and gift hampers galore.

Call (01)5536919 for registration and booking.

The lake-city beckons

Head out to Pokhara this week as the lake-city gears up to celebrate the coming of the new year, and not just the Gregorian one, during the 14th Pokhara Street Festival.

Tamu Lochhar, the new year of Gurungs, falls on December 30, and Pokhara is likely to be at the centre of all festivity.

The five-day party will have over 150 stalls, with restaurants also setting up shop



on the road, and will also showcase arts, crafts, culture and traditions of Pokhara and the surrounding areas to promote Nepal amongst tourist and local alike.

If the winter has halted your trekking, rafting and mountaineering plans, come out on the streets and to the streets and party like a Pokhareli.

28 December to 1 January

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SOMEPLACE ELSE

The newest entrant to the Valley's vibrant dining scene has a lot going for it. Situated as it is in the large inner courtyard of Babar Mahal Revisited, the location imbues it with historic aestheticism, old world charm, and a certain elegance. Its decor relies heavily on dark wood and ambient lighting, and creates creating a space that is snug and warm, yet chic.

It is said that love is in the details and this is certainly true of Mulchowk. The glassware has been flown in from as far away as Slovakia. Its single malt collection is among the finest in the country. The coffee served is has been washed with Himalayan springwater and roasted in Britain. The meat served is exclusively from Nina and Hager, say the folks, to



PICS: RUBY TUESDAY

maintain hygiene and quality standards.

And while it may sound like Mulchowk is intimidating or overly expensive, nothing could be further from the truth. This is largely due to the young entrepreneurs, who own this place, wanted to create a classy fine-dining area where they could loosen their ties and indulge in good times with family and friends.

As regular foodies in Kathmandu know, the nicest places often serve the most disappointing food. Here, the Greek salad (Rs 290) had lettuce, tomatoes and onions with barely




three chunks of feta and an even measlier helping of olives, which did not bode well for the rest of the meal. The essence of tomato with vodka reduction (Rs 250) sounded experimental and

inventive, ultimately it turned out to be plain ol' tomato soup in camouflage. Freshly made tomato soup, yes, but nothing, nothing justifies bequeathing it a name as fancy as that. Also the toast could have been served with butter and freshly ground pepper instead of the store-bought variety. It must be about the details in the food too.

The tenderloin steak (Rs 750) somehow managed to cajole us because the steak, though a tad dry, was well seasoned and grilled. But what saved our evening was the fish steak with lemon butter sauce

(Rs 450). It was, in a word, delicious. Soft, succulent, flaky, and heaving of flavours, everything was finally right. The mashed potatoes served with pureed eggplant were an epicurean delight.

We ended our meal with the raspberry cheesecake with chocolate sauce, and what can I say except that Mulchowk had redeemed itself in our eyes. We walked in as skeptics and walked out as fans. I've been told that the slow cooked lamb shanks are said to be a life changing experience, and I can't wait to return and sample those and more.

Being so new, Mulchowk does have a few kinks to iron out, but these minor hassles should easily be resolved. The staff is polite, well-trained, and extremely personable. The wash room is squeaking clean (a rarity in Kathmandu), and the whisky collection is outstanding. I predict that Mulchowk will not only be around for a long, long time to come, but also become very popular among Kathmandu's food loving fraternity. 

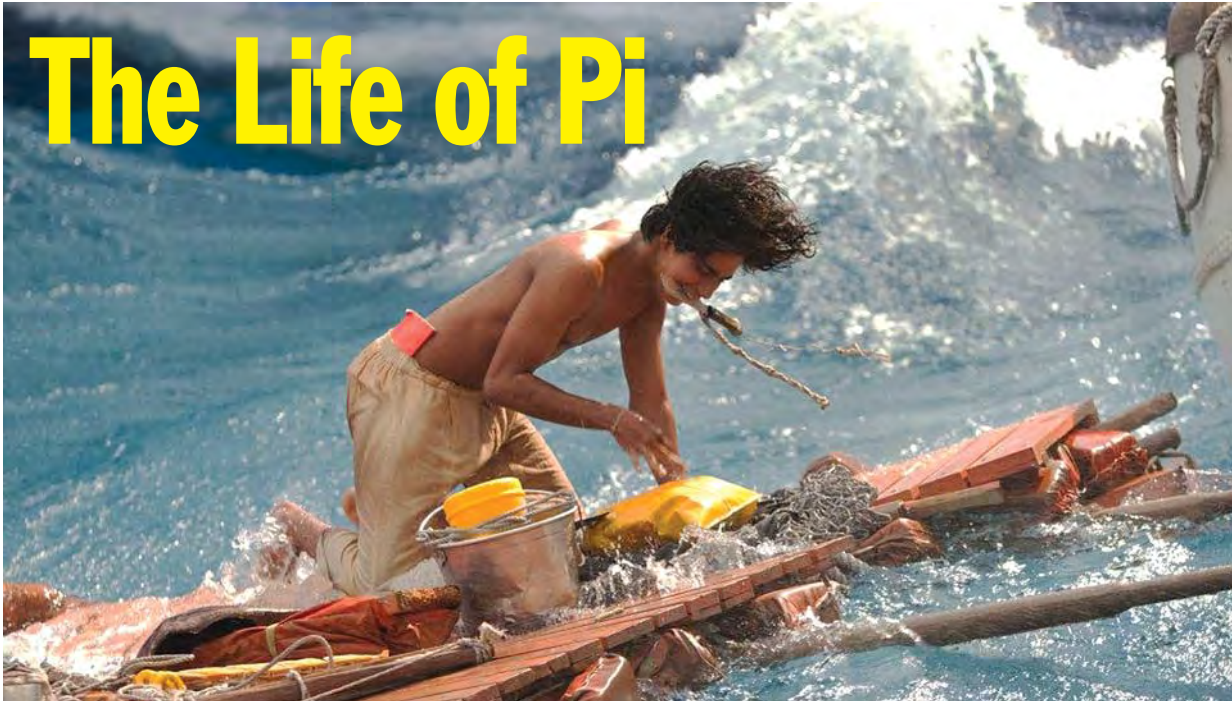
Ruby Tuesday

How to get there: in Babar Mahal Revisited, Mulchowk is in the inner courtyard near Faces Beauty Salon and Pasal. (01)4259801

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MUST SEE

Sophia Pande

When Ang Lee graduated from film school he struggled to make a film, and no one would give him a chance.

Only with his trilogy on Taiwanese culture, Pushing Hands (1992), The Wedding Banquet (1993), and Eat Drink Man Woman (1994) did he manage to gain the kind of attention he deserves. All three films are delightful, insightful dramas about Taiwanese people seeking to adapt to the world changing around their traditional values. So, it was even more surprising when Lee then leapt into adapting Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility the very next year in 1995, which also won an Oscar for 'Best Adapted Screenplay'.

This astonishingly fine adaptation is even more of a shocker when Lee admitted, that while making it, his English language skills were far from good. Due credit must be given to the wonderful Emma Thompson who adapted the screenplay and starred in the film as Eleanor, the older, sensible sister, but ultimately it is Lee's direction that carries this elegant and beautifully shot film. Since then, Ang Lee has changed genre and style with almost every film, an admirable and awe-inspiring feat for any director.

Before tackling the intimidating task of adapting the tricky

structure of The Life of Pi, a novel by Yann Martel, Ang Lee had also already produced the ravishing epic Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000), Brokeback Mountain (2005) - a gay love story about two cowboys, and the still more controversial but absolutely entrancing Lust, Caution (2007).

So, it was with some trepidation that I approached watching the Life of Pi, that too, in 3D (not my favourite form). While I still maintain that the film could have been a wee bit shorter - it is 127 minutes long - I cannot help but wax poetic about the sheer visual beauty of Claudio Miranda's cinematography. Yes, a great deal of it was computer generated, yet even from the opening credits which show scenes of the animals at the zoo run by Pi's father, it is clear that Miranda is supremely gifted in what he does.

I will not say very much about the story, and I will leave it up to you to watch the film so that you might know the whimsical anecdote behind why an Indian boy from Pondicherry is called Pi.

The film version is always an entirely different entity from the novel, and it is always disappointing to compare the two very disparate forms. However, for those who have not yet read the novel, I would not recommend rushing to do so before seeing the film. That way, it might come across as even more surprising and delightful.

Watch the film, take your children, and remember to cover their ears when Richard Parker roars. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer



Wheeze, wheeze



DHANVANTARI

Buddha Basnyat, MD

Although there are many causes of wheezing in the chest, bronchial asthma is one of the most common. And since the winter cold can bring this on, asthma is a relevant topic for this season.

Wheeze happens when the chest makes strange noises as we breathe in and out. The reason for asthmatic wheeze is that the airways in bronchial asthma narrows and the inhaled air passes the wall of the airway instead of flowing smoothly down the middle.

Narrowing of the airways is brought about when smooth muscles, which line the airways,

constrict (broncho-constriction or broncho-spasm is the medical terminology). Broncho-constriction may be caused due to many reasons including cold, allergy, exercise, mental stress and so forth. Therapies have been designed to decrease or reverse this constriction.

One of the most commonly used medicines in bronchial asthma are beta agonist inhalers which help relax the smooth muscles of the airways and reverse the process of asthma. Asthalin (a common brand name of a beta agonist) inhalers are used commonly and are usually effective. However it is important that the patients learn to use the inhaler properly. Many people do not inhale the medicine but rather swallow the puff of medicine. The medicine goes into the alimentary tract when

it was meant to be delivered into the respiratory tract. Or, improper coordination can lead to exhaling air out of the lungs while the puff of medicine is being delivered, which leads to the medicine being wasted into the atmosphere. Beta agonist pills are less expensive but may lead to unwanted side effects.

About 25 years ago, some smart pulmonary scientists determined that relaxing the smooth muscles was just one part in the treatment of bronchial asthma. A revolutionary treatment strategy using inhaled corticosteroids (beclate is a trade name) was put forward because it was clearly shown that persistent asthma had a sizable component of inflammation in addition to the smooth muscle broncho-constriction. Hence, anti-inflammatory medicines in the form of corticosteroids were deployed with startling improvement in asthma care.

It is now routine to add a steroid inhaler if the beta agonist alone is not effective in the treatment of bronchial asthma. Although cold and exercise may be triggers for an asthma attack, travel to high altitude regions amazingly does not seem to worsen existing asthma. This is probably due to lack of allergens at higher altitudes. 🇳🇵



THREE MUSKETEERS: Jhalanath Khanal (l), Sushil Koirala (c) and Pushpa Kamal Dahal (r) talk to the press after meeting President Ram Baran Yadav on Tuesday at Shital Niwas



INTERNATIONAL LOBBY: Diplomat and writer Gopalkrishna Gandhi talks to the audience at Annapurna Hotel on Tuesday about power and leadership in Southasia.



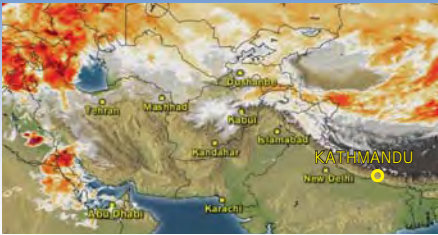
ALL SMILES: Bishal Dhakal, Chiranjeevi Poudel, Jasmaya Pun, Prachanda Shakya, and Shanti Shakya Dolma (from l-r) receive Surya Nepal Asha Social Entrepreneurship Award 2012 winners' prize at Hyatt Regency hotel on Tuesday.






ON THE ROCKS: A group of children have fun and enjoy their holiday on a big boulder at Thangpalkot VDC, Sindhupalchok.

WEEKEND WEATHER

No sign yet of the long-awaited westerly front from the Mediterranean that usually brings winter rains about this time of year. There is a low pressure trough that is being driven by the jet stream that is crossing the Persian Gulf as we prepare this forecast on Thursday afternoon (seen on this satellite image). However, it is a weak system and may not have much water vapour left by the time it reaches us over the weekend. Still, there may be some fast-moving high-altitude cloud cover. Kathmandu will have smog haze trapped under its usual inversion layer, but no morning fog until the rains arrive.



FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		
20°-3°	21°-3°	18°-6°

BIKRAM RAI

MIN RATNA BAURACHARYA

BHRIKUTI RAI

BHANU PARAJULI

Patriarchy in the political hierarchy



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

The exclusive behaviour of powerful Madhesi leaders ridicules the inclusion agenda they claim to champion

Tabassum Alam from Sarochiya near Biratnagar was married into a family across the border in Forbesgunj six years ago. Three years later, the groom's family started to torture her to put pressure on her family to pay more money. Tabassum's family had paid as much dowry as they could afford: Rs 300,000 in cash and a new motorcycle for the groom. When her family couldn't pay any more money, Tabassum was returned to Nepal. Her family sued the groom in the Indian courts, but after four years she hasn't got justice.

Recently, Dinesh Mandal from Bardibas arranged for his sister Sabita's wedding with a well-educated and employed young fellow-Madhesi man. But the groom's family demanded Rs 500,000 and a motorbike as dowry. "We had hoped an educated fellow would not ask for a dowry," said the crestfallen brother.

When a mainstream daily in Kathmandu published details recently of the accumulated property of influential Madhesi ministers, they said publicly that they had acquired the property as dowry payments. They defended the practice, saying it was part of the "Madhesi tradition". Gender rights activists did not seem unduly perturbed that politicians saw nothing wrong with women being price-tagged and sold off in the name of culture in Nepal's Tarai. The rot, it seems, starts right at the top of Madhesi society.

The 2007 Madhes movement

called for the restoration of the identity and dignity of Madhesis. Five years on, the leaders of the movement have been preoccupied with power consolidation at the centre. As kingmakers in the current political equation, they have put inclusive Madhes as a pre-condition to their support. But in their lexicon, identity and dignity does not include the identity and dignity of their women.

Not a single Madhesi leader has so far admitted that the Madhes's problems go beyond statelessness. While demanding political inclusion, few are willing to be inclusive in their own political and personal behaviour. The glaring absence of Madhesi, Muslim and Tharu women among decision makers in Madhesi parties ridicules the inclusion agenda they claim to champion.

The cultural decay in the Madhes is perpetuated by poverty and ignorance, reinforced by a cultural orthodoxy of the educated and powerful. The discrimination faced by Madhesi women at the hands of their own has its roots in their alienation from social, economic and political life. The victims of rape, torture and other forms of domestic violence are mostly poorer, illiterate women. Perpetrators of the violence walk free because they enjoy political patronage. (See story on page 12-13)

This is the same society where till not long ago, women were forced to hurl themselves into the funeral pyres of their

dead husbands. Wife immolation may have been eradicated, but the patriarchal value system that spawned the practice is alive and well, manifesting itself in dowry, rape, wife-burning, acid-throwing, "witch" hunting, and honour killings. Not a day goes by without some form of domestic violence against Madhesi women by their own kind.

"The government can bring legislation to ban dowry but the

state cannot police it away as long as the embedded practice is not challenged from within the community," says Mohana Ansari, one of the few Muslim lawyers in the country, and a member of National Women's Commission.

Ansari believes the campaign to end violence against women will remain ineffective as long as those expected to lead it stand guilty of perpetuating it. She is among few female voices

from the Tarai's Madhesi and Muslim community who speaks out in Kathmandu's power circle, and blames the social conservatism of the Madhesis themselves for discouraging women from asserting themselves.

According to a recent Education Ministry report, the number of school-going women in the Tarai has gone up, but the dropout rate is high and their participation in higher education remains low. Crime against women in the Madhes stems from their disempowered status. Effective legislations, community mobilisation and gender sensitisation can help safeguard their rights but long term solutions lie in ensuring access to mainstream social, political and economic life.

But that seems to be in no one's agenda, least of all for leaders steeped in patriarchy who are supposed to represent the Madhes. ■

(Names of the victims have been changed)

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RAPE for RANSOM

Police don't arrest rapists in the eastern Tarai, they give in to local pressure and marry them off to their victims

SHATRUDHAN KUMAR SHAH in MAHOTTARI



Sexual violence against women in the eastern Tarai districts has reached epidemic levels because perpetrators don't just go scot free, but are often rewarded for their crime.

Two years ago in Mahottari, a young woman was forced into a sugarcane field and raped by Farmud Ansari and Murduj Ansari. They were caught, but

instead of punishing both of them, locals padlocked the girl's house and expelled her from the village for having "corrupted" local youth. After seeking help from police and political leaders, the girl got a compensation of Rs 40,000, half of which was taken by the mediating all-party leaders as a donation for their 'community development fund'.

The local representatives of the TMLP, Maoists, NC, Madhesi Forum and UML all signed the agreement for compensation in the presence of the head of the Women's Cell of the local police. And as a 'reward', the locals tried to force the girl to marry one of the men. Mahottari's police chief said: "The best alternative was to allow the victim to re-assimilate

herself in society."

Another young woman from Laxmipur of Rautahat was forced to marry her rapist, Sagar Darji, under pressure from the local administration and civil society organisations, including gender rights activists. Police chief Pradip Kandel said: "It is not possible to deliver justice in all rape cases. Sometimes we need to find an alternative

mechanism."

'Alternative mechanism' has now become an euphemism for letting rapists to not just get away with their crime, but actually take the rape victim home with them. And the most outrageous aspect of this is that it is aided and abetted by local politicians, police and even human rights activists.

"The rapists who come from

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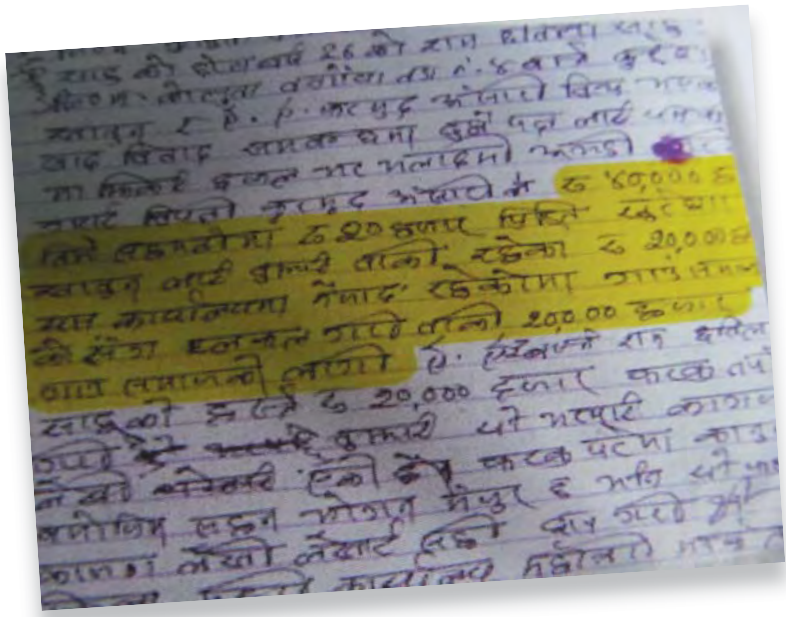
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GETTING AWAY WITH IT: A 13-year-old girl in Mahottari who was raped at knife-point by a neighbour recovers in hospital. Police said this was a “normal” case. This agreement between a rapist and his victim’s family was mediated by an all-party committee that awarded Rs 40,000 to the victim, but took away half the amount for their ‘community development’.

powerful families never get punished, the victims who are poor never get justice because the police themselves work to cover up the crime and work out an arrangement,” says civil society activist, Madan Jha. Other activists say rape is not a sexual crime, but projects

violence and power deeply-rooted in the Tarai’s patriarchy. Earlier this year, a 17-year-old girl in Mahottari’s Bairganiya village was raped by 25-year-old Ranjit Das who also filmed the incident and circulated the minute-long video via mobile and YouTube. When

local authorities were informed about the crime, instead of punishing the accused, they collaborated with local bigwigs to force the victim to marry the perpetrator. Das is now in custody, but the video is being sold from phone to phone, and has even reached Nepalis in Qatar and Malaysia. In August, another 17-year-old girl from the same district was raped by Ahmed Miya, who got his friend to record the act on his mobile phone. By coincidence, a young man from their village saw the video on a phone in Qatar and alerted the girl’s family. But instead of arresting the accused, important men in the village forced the girl to marry her rapist. There are many more such incidents which go unreported in the media, and rape for ransom has become a thriving business because of impunity. Many of the victims are minors violated by neighbours, teachers and relatives, but are forced into a settlement. In many cases, the rapist stands to make a lot of money selling videos of the crime across the border in India, and the spread of mobile phones

has made it easier to record and disseminate such explicit material. Many of these sexual predators don’t just go scot free, but are rewarded, emboldening criminals who are now killing the victims after raping them. A 18-year-old girl from Mahottari was gang-raped in broad daylight while carrying water from the communal well recently. “I noticed they were taking a video of me with their phones as I struggled,” she recounted to police. She named her rapists as Hajrat Kawari, Dil Mohamad Kawari, Dawud Kawari and Kalmuddin Kawari. Police arrested all of them and took their case to the district police office. But the girl’s family withdrew the complaint after powerful locals put pressure on them. “They threatened us, we are poor what can we do? So we withdrew the case,” the girl’s mother said. There have been 11 rape cases registered in Rautahat alone in the past year, of which nine have been settled by written agreement after the victim’s family was threatened. All 17 rape cases registered at the Women’s Cell of Rautahat Police have been suppressed

because of local pressure. In Mahottari, there are 16 rape cases that are pending in the courts for the past three years. Because the police have become complicit as mediators, many victims now take their cases to a women’s rights group in Jaleswor where there are 37 cases registered. Earlier this year, a 14-year-old student was found to have been repeatedly raped by her school teacher. When found out, locals and police mediated and forced the teacher to marry his minor victim. Another 13-year-old girl in Mahottari was raped inside her own house by a neighbour, Samsul Nafad, who threatened to kill her if she reported it. The girl’s father saved her life by rushing his bleeding daughter to hospital. Even though Nafad was later arrested, Jayanarayan Yadav of the area police post initially dismissed the complaint: “This happens all the time, it’s a normal case.” (Names of victims have been changed) For the complete Nepali version of this piece from the Centre for Investigative Journalism, see www.cijnepal.org



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The identity question

The NC's Kul Bahadur Gurung in *Naya Patrika*, 18 December

Some Janajati leaders have left their parties recently saying they want to struggle against ingrained discrimination against ethnic groups in Nepal. In fact, they quit because they didn't get due opportunities from their senior leaders. Politics is a social service that aims to provide rights to people, all people, Janajatis and non-Janajatis. If you serve the people well, the Janajatis will also benefit. Once the citizenry has access to sovereign rights, it will automatically benefit indigenous people as well. After all, how can Janajatis get what nobody else in Nepal has?

People like Ashok Rai, who was the deputy chairman of the UML, have even formed a separate party to establish their rights. But did he enter politics in the name of Janajatis, or as a UML leader? The public did not vote for him because he was a Janajati, but because they trusted him to lift their living standards.



I did not enter the Nepali Congress because I was a Janajati, or whatever. Never in my 60-year political career at various positions in the NC did I work under the halo of a Janajati. My colleagues, Bal Bahadur Rai, Yogendra Man Sherchan or Bhim Bahadur Tamang did not join the NC to wear the Janajati label but to be public servants. And the public admired them not because of their caste or ethnicity, but because of their principles and their commitment to helping people.

When the Maoists and UML formed ethnic factions within their ranks, I had raised my voice in the NC and said this

should never happen in our party. We should not be in the business of identity politics, but using politics for the betterment of all Nepalis who are disadvantaged and downtrodden. The NC must establish itself as a party of principle and not as a Janajati party. If the NC follows the Maoist and UML lead, it will weaken itself just like they have.

It was King Mahendra who started identity politics during the Panchayat by tempting Janajati leaders away from the NC and other democratic parties. It did not work then, and it will not work now. These days, the question of identity has been defined in wrong terms. This

will be to the detriment of the entire nation, of the Nepali people and of the Janajatis themselves.

I have been in the NC from its heydays when BP Koirala was our leader, and I have never found the party to be discriminatory. In fact, BP made it a point to go beyond tokenism to make a diverse party that encompassed representation. Today, the NC must make policies that will ensure ethnic harmony and prevent social tensions from erupting.

Nepal's Janajati movement is being directly influenced by foreign interests. It is being fuelled by INGO and donor dollars from outside.

My Janajati colleagues are on the wrong track. They must work for the interests of the whole country, and must include everyone not just fragments of society. We must be Nepalis first, and then maybe NC, UML, Maoists later. We must not carve our boundaries as Gurung, Magar, Rai or Limbu. Other parties have not dared say this, at least the NC should.

NEPALI TWEETS

Nagarik News
Politics हिसिलाको बदमासीमा प्रधानमन्त्री भन्छन्- 'त्यो नकोटयाउँ, त्यता नजाउँ' अर्जुन सुवेदी, काठमाडौं, पुस ४ -... [bit.ly/SPNT8uu](#)
Politics: 'PM on Hisila's misdemeanor - "I'd rather not talk about it": Arjun Subedi, Kathmandu, 19 December

Bandana Sharma
संसार ध्वस्त भयो भने पनि नेपालमा केही असर पर्नेछैन किनकि नेपाल ध्वस्त नै छ पहिल्यै देखि ।

No problem for Nepal if the world gets destroyed, it's been like that for ages here.

Prabin Poudel प्रविण
@dipakbhattarai पार्टी भित्र समेत आफुलाई टिकाउन युवा नेताहरूको पार्टी नागन्तुपरले युवा नेताले एकले देशको सत्ता हाक्न सक्छन् त? [SajhaSawal](#)
@dipakbhattarai Will these young leaders, who cling to their seniors for space within the party, ever assume state power by themselves?

नेपालकाधारी ब्लग
उहिले रिक्किक वा अरु कसैले नेपालबारे गलत बोल्दा आगो बल्थ्यो।अहिले नासाले गल्ती गर्दा सोसलमिडिया आफै सच्याउने कामभयो।केही प्रगती भएछ नि
Years ago they burned tires when Hritik or anyone else spoke ill of Nepal, while days ago they corrected NASA's mistake through the social media. Some progress at least.

Lenin Banjade
नेपालका धनी र गरिब व्यक्तिीको सूची (१) विजय गच्छादार, प्रचण्ड लगभग सवा १ खर्ब (२) हिसिला यमी: करिब ५० अर्ब (३) लेनिन वज्रजाड: १५५ रुपैयाँ P
Nepal's Rich-Poor List: 1) Prachanda/Gachhadhar – Rs 100 billion 2) Hisila Yami – Rs 50 billion 3) Lenin Banjade – Rs 155.

PKD vs BRB

Annapurna Post, 20 December

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

The deepening rift between Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai and chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal erupted into the open after Bhattarai showed reluctance to step down despite Dahal's behind-the-scenes compromise deal to make Sushil Koirala prime minister. Dahal asked Bhattarai to make way for a consensus government, instead of being the obstacle saying the stalemate was affecting the country's progress. Bhattarai flatly refused, saying there was no way he would hand over power to an opponent of federalism. The heated discussion between Dahal and Bhattarai ended in the prime minister walking out in a huff and not answering calls the whole of the next day. The prime minister's political adviser Devendra Poudel visited Dahal in Lazimpat but without success. Bhattarai was present at a meeting in Lazimpat Tuesday evening, but didn't even share pleasantries with Dahal. Meanwhile, Bhattarai met with Netrabikram Chand of the breakaway CPN-Maoist requesting him to support his leadership.

“Don't bypass MoFA”

Interview with Deputy and Foreign Minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Nepal, 16 December

नेपाल

Nepal: You have been criticised for taking a two-month leave that led to dillydallying on the Prime Minister's visit to China and the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Nepal.
Narayan Kaji Shrestha: I wasn't on holiday, I was convalescing. I have been pressing for the Prime Minister's visit to China as much as I had pushed for Chinese Prime Minister's visit to Nepal. It is in the records of China's Foreign Ministry. As for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Nepal's visit, he was supposed to here around 27 May but the situation here hasn't improved since then so his visit got shelved.

And what was your reason for writing to the American Embassy?
We wrote to them seeking transparency. The American ambassador met the president and the army chief, and for the first time the ministry

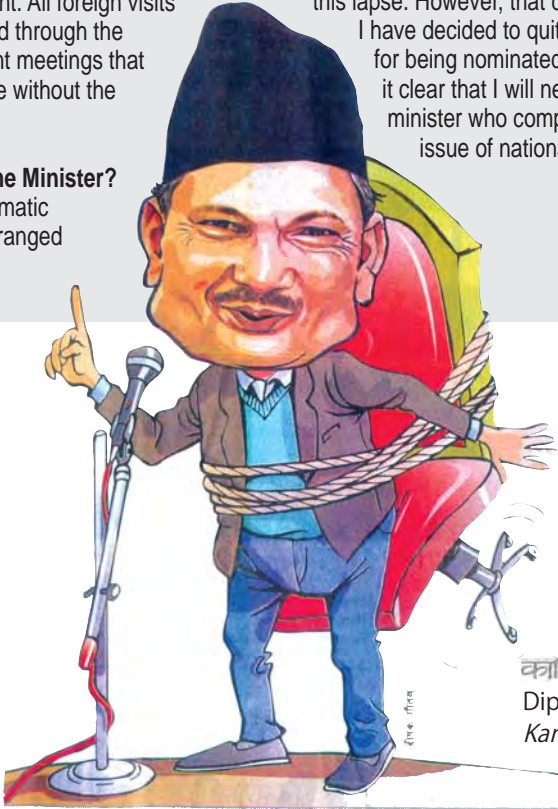
didn't know about those meetings. They have been cooperative about this, and now there is a representative of the ministry at such meetings.

Do you think the President has bypassed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?
It isn't just plain carelessness here, it has been happening repeatedly and the bypassing looks intentional. This is not just about one country, and I wouldn't blame the foreigners. It's our fault that we encourage others to meddle in our affairs and put our national sovereignty in danger. In a republic, the only adviser to a constitutional president is the government. All foreign visits and meetings are arranged through the MoFA. However, the recent meetings that made headlines took place without the ministry's knowledge.

And what about the Prime Minister?
Although most of his diplomatic meetings and visits are arranged through MoFA, there have

been some instances when we've come to know about some meetings only through the media. If such meetings take place repeatedly without our knowledge, I make it a point to bring not just the ministers' but even the Prime Minister's attention to the diplomatic code of conduct.

The party has nominated you as an alternative candidate for the PM's post, but you have been hinting at leaving politics. Are you serious?
My remarks about leaving politics were in a different context, and my frustration is with the diplomatic code of conduct being flouted by top leaders. It is disheartening that the change that was brought about by the sacrifice of thousands of Nepalis is being squandered. I feel guilty and responsible for this lapse. However, that doesn't mean I have decided to quit the party. As for being nominated, I have made it clear that I will never be a prime minister who compromises on the issue of national sovereignty.



Dipak Gautam in Kantipur, 18 December

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“I couldn't get him to resign, now it's up to you to convince him.”

UCPN(M) chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal to NC and UML leaders about Prime Minister on Jana Astha, 19 December.



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BEST NEW ARTIST

1. Deepak Ghimire - *Ma Timi Bina*
2. Dikyí Ukyab - *Ukalo Oralo*
3. Fedrick N' the H2O - *Timi Roop Ki Rani*
4. Navakranti - *Priye*
5. Sarita Shahi - *Juga Bityo Tara Tyo Din*

BEST SONG ORIGINALLY RECORDED FOR A MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK

1. Bhakta Raj Acharya - *Aago Ko Raap Jeewan*
2. Deepak Raman - *Siri Siri Daadarma*
3. Manoj Singh - *Himalma Hiun Sari*
4. Sachin Singh - *Jaba Jaba Maya Baschha*
5. Shikhar Santosh - *Kasko Chha Ra*

BEST VOCAL COLLABORATION

1. Avas Shrestha & Juna Prasai - *Timi Chau Ra Ta*
2. Sonam Bajyu Tamang & Reema Gurung Hoda - *Taada Taada*
3. Rajesh Payal Rai & Anju Pant - *Phool Bhai Hasne Maan*
4. Sudip Shahi Thakuri & Rajina Rimal - *Timi Ankha Ma Nani*
5. Swaroop Raj Acharya & Anju Pant - *Najarko Timro*

BEST FEMALE POP VOCAL PERFORMANCE

1. Ciney Gurung - *Eklai Eklai*
2. Dikyí Ukyab - *Ukalo Oralo*
3. Seema Sangraula - *Jitera Mero Maan*
4. Shashi Rawal - *Timro Haat Samai*
5. Shreya Sotang - *Najik Chhaina*

BEST MALE POP VOCAL PERFORMANCE

1. Adrian Pradhan - *Nasamjha*
2. Deepak Ghimire - *Timilai Dekhe Dekhi*
3. Jems Pradhan - *Bhijeko Roop*
4. Nima Rumba - *Rangaun Ki Ma*
5. Yogeshwar Amatya - *Timro Aankha*

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A GROUP OR DUO WITH VOCAL

1. Fedrick N' the H2O - *Timi Roop Ki Rani*
2. Lakhey - *Adharma Bageko Chha*
3. Monkey Temple - *Anumati*
4. Navakranti - *Priye*
5. Robin & The New Revolution - *Hamro Desh*

FOLK RECORD OF THE YEAR

1. Bhanu Oli & Juna Prasai - *Sunima Jauna*
2. Birahi Karki - *Herdaa Ramro*
3. Bhumí Raj Rai & Khusenichho Chamling - *Sangai Jaaun Hai*
4. Milan Lama & Tika Pun - *Besaaray*
5. Rajesh Payal Rai - *Khau Kasam Bhaakera*

FOLK ALBUM OF THE YEAR

1. Bhanu Oli & Juna Prasai - *Lok Mala Bhaag 2*
2. Birahi Karki - *Dukha 3 "Biraha"*
3. Bhumí Raj Rai & Khusenichho Chamling - *Bhet Bho Maya*
4. Milan Lama - *Rajdhani*
5. Rajesh Payal Rai - *Jadau 3*

BEST POP COMPOSITION

1. Albert Gurung - *Nasamjha*
2. Jems Pradhan - *Bhijeko Roop*
3. Nhyoo Bajracharya - *Eklai Eklai*
4. Nhyoo Bajracharya - *Timilai Dekhe Dekhi*
5. Urgan Yonjan - *Priye*

BEST ROCK COMPOSITION

1. Fedrick N' the H2O - *Ghaat*
2. Jems Pradhan - *Aankha Ma Lukaun Ki*
3. Manish Godar - *Bhashan*
4. Monkey Temple - *Anumati*
5. Nhyoo Bajracharya - *Ma Timi Bina*

BEST ARRANGEMENT

1. Albert Gurung - *Nasamjha*
2. Ashish Abiral - *Ekai Pal Pani*
3. Kiran Kandel - *Basi Rahun Bhanchu Timi Sangai*
4. Gopal Rasaily - *Ma Timi Bina*
5. Gopal Rasaily - *Baadalar Haru*

BEST COMPOSITION

1. Albert Gurung - *Nasamjha*
2. Ashish Abiral - *Ekai Pal Pani*
3. Deepak Jangam - *Basi Rahun Bhanchu Timi Sangai*
4. Nhyoo Bajracharya - *Ma Timi Bina*
5. Raju Singh - *Baadalar Haru*

BEST ROCK VOCAL PERFORMANCE

1. Deepak Ghimire - *Ma Timi Bina*
2. Jems Pradhan - *Aankha Ma Lukaun Ki*
3. Monkey Temple - *Anumati*
4. Navakranti - *Bhashan*
5. Robin & The New Revolution - *Hamro Desh*

BEST FEMALE VOCAL PERFORMANCE

1. Lochan Bhattarai - *Ke Hune Ho Kathai Priti Layo Bhane*
2. Nisha Deshar - *Basi Rahun Bhanchhu Timi Sangai*
3. Rajina Rimal - *Raat Pare Pachhi*
4. Reema Gurung Hoda - *Chiso Chiso*
5. Sangeeta Rana Pradhan - *Manda Manda*

BEST MALE VOCAL PERFORMANCE

1. Deep Shrestha - *Baadalar Haru*
2. Deepak Kharel - *Joon Chhaunda*
3. Narendra Pyasi - *Ekai Pal Pani*
4. Rajesh Payal Rai - *Birsu Bhanchhu*
5. Shiva Pariyar - *Uni Ramri*

POP / ROCK ALBUM OF THE YEAR

1. Adrian Pradhan - *Saath*
2. Deepak Ghimire - *Poise*
3. Dipesh Kishor Bhattarai - *Denn*
4. Dikyí Ukyab - *Silver Lining*
5. Jems Pradhan - *Aawaj*

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

1. Adrian Pradhan - *Saath*
2. Deepak Ghimire - *Poise*
3. Dipesh Kishor Bhattarai - *Denn*
4. Jems Pradhan - *Aawaj*
5. Reema Gurung Hoda - *Samaya Sangeet*

SONG OF THE YEAR

1. Gagan Gurung - *Phool Phooli*
2. Kiran Kharel - *Mero Biswaasma Saandh Hunna*
3. Krishna Hari Baral - *Jamana Kharaab Chha*
4. Ratna Shumsher - *Najikko Bhet Bhanda*
5. Yogendra Mani Dahal - *Baadalar Haru*

RECORD OF THE YEAR

1. Adrian Pradhan - *Nasamjha*
2. Deep Shrestha - *Baadalar Haru*
3. Deepak Ghimire - *Ma Timi Bina*
4. Narendra Pyasi - *Ekai Pal Pani*
5. Nisha Deshar - *Basi Rahun Bhanchhu Timi Sangai*

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Prime Minister eats a rat

If you are reading this on Friday morning it means the world didn't end after all, so you can all go back to clipping your toe-nails. But wait, we have some breaking news. The Mayan calendar runs on **Eastern Daylight Saving Time** which means Armageddon is actually 9AM Nepal time on Saturday. Good, Baburam has another day in office.

Kings have been known to eat crow. Paranoid presidents sometimes smell a rat. But ours is the only country in the world where a prime minister actually eats a rat. This must belong somewhere in the Guinness Book together with the King of Lesotho and his 13 wives who once served barbequed boa during a state banquet.

Now that Lord Ram is on shaky grounds, may

we make a humble suggestion that he not stray too far afield during his once-a-month sleep-in with the huddled masses? The country can't afford these junkets anymore. How about just driving down from Baluwatar on recently-widened streets and spend the night in one of the shacks under Bagmati Bridge at Kopundole? Saves tax payer's money and clears the sinus.

Can't say the Ass didn't warn you six months ago that BRB was stuck to his chair with superglue and PKD can't make his comrade-in-arms budge. The two had a shouting match the other night at the Lazimpat Villa after Red Flag sabotaged Lotus Flower's carefully-laid plans to replace

the prime minister with Jhusil Kaka. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to both, Gutch has hatched a plan to sneak into Baluwatar through the backdoor, and is using his aboriginal credentials to lobby for himself. The only regret about Jhusil not becoming pradhan monkey is that we were all looking forward to him breaking into a patriotic song after his swearing in.

In private conversations with Jhol Gnat and Makunay, PKD has been pouring out his woes and blaming "The South" for sabotaging his plan. As Awesome sees it, he has bent over backwards to kowtow to the DilliDarbar, and they still don't trust him. As a result, Ferocious is looking more and more like a maneater that has lost its fangs. Both BRB and PKD are rolling up their sleeves for a

major kickboxing bout during the party's convention next month. The real power struggle is not between the political parties, but between these two bahun comrades.

So it looks like **Dhrube** the rogue elephant has been machine gunned to death in Chitwan. Interesting that the citizens of Madi closed down Chitwan demanding that Dhrube be executed for killing two people, when the human killers of 36 bus passengers in 2005 are roaming free in the home of the brave. Good thing the grovelment declared Dhrube's victims martyrs, it sets the precedence for others like the guy who nearly self-immolated himself driving a motorcycle through a tunnel of fire to be declared a semi-martyr. The best news is that if the world does end on Saturday as scheduled, we can all claim martyrdom compensation.

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