

Special Offer for Wedding Season...



**FURNITURE LAND STORE**

Show Room: Bluestar Complex, Tripureswor Tel: 4224797, 4228833  
New Show Room: Bhat Bhateni Superstore, Maharajgunj Tel: 4016277



KIRAN PANDAY

## Fatal apathy

The extended political deadlock is costing the country dearly. But until there can be a power-sharing agreement that includes all three big parties, nothing is going to move.

The CA committees are way behind schedule, and the constitutional committee can't start drafting until that work is finished. The assembly has now amended its timeline for the seventh time to meet the 27 May 2010 deadline.

### PLAIN SPEAKING

Prashant Jha  
Reality check

p2

But most people are past caring, says Prashant Jha. Apart from the party faithful, and tiny pockets of politically mobilised segments, the apathy towards wider politics has never been as deep as it is today. Hidden in the cynicism is wisdom. Decisions are made in Nepali political culture when three Bahun men are pushed by the Indian ambassador to sit in a drawing room and arrive at a consensus.

## Solheim says

Norway's Minister of Environment and International Development, Erik Solheim, speaks to the *Nepali Times* about the political deadlock in Nepal. He says: "I have spoken to Prime Minister Nepal, former Prime Minister Prachanda (and other leaders). They have all given the impression that they want to continue the reconciliation process and they want to find a solution to the problem, but of course they indicate different ways out of the problem... there are no specific ideas about what it is we can do at present."

Full interview p10

**LAVAZZA**  
ITALY'S FAVOURITE COFFEE

The Ambience Restaurant & Bar - Patan  
Baryo Fiesta - Naxal

**YISHION** ई-शॉपिंग  
FASHION FREEDOM  
BRING IT TO YOU BY  
U.F.O. The Clothing Store

**LaCie Mobile External USB Drive**

- Interface : Hi-Speed USB 2.0
- Transfer Rate : Up to 480Mbps/s
- Rotational Speed : 5400 rpm
- Cache: 8MB
- Weight : 170 gram

**LACIE**  
Made for iMac

Available Size : 250GB / 320GB / 500GB

**CAS CAS Trading House Pvt. Ltd.**  
Address : Putalisadak, Kathmandu  
Phone : 977-1- 4440271, 4440272  
E-mail : amar@cas.com.np

**Jacuzzi & Steam Series**

**BATH** Ph: 4216476, 4230052  
Teku Road, Kathmandu

**OAKLEY**

Available at: **Labels** Bluebird Mall **Labels**  
Durbarmarg, Tripureswor, Sherga Mall  
Ph: 4241802 Ph: 016910737 Ph: 4227182



Enjoy the moment  
a swing at a time

**Signature**

UNITED SPIRITS NEPAL PVT. LTD.



**NEPALI**  
**Times**

editors@nepalitimes.com  
www.nepalitimes.com

Published by Himalmedia Pvt Ltd, Editor: Kunda Dixit  
Desk Editor: Rabi Thapa  
CEO: Ashutosh Tiwari Design: Kiran Maharjan  
DGM Sales and Marketing: Sambhu Guragain marketing@himalmedia.com  
Marketing Manager: Subhash Kumar Asst. Manager: Arjun Karki  
Hatiban, Godavari Road, Lalitpur  
Fax: 5251013  
GPO Box 7251, Kathmandu 5250333/845  
Printed at Jagadamba Press 5250017-19



# Reality check

## BEAR UNMIN WITH A GRIN

The government is peeved at the way UNMIN has deliberately looked the other way on continuing Maoist excesses, while pulling up the Defence Minister for a trial balloon she floated on recruitment. How come UNMIN is so prompt to slap the army on the wrist at every turn when the PLA gets away with murder, literally, in camps supervised by the UN?

Be that as it may, one can't blame the delay in demobilising and disarming Maoist combatants on UNMIN. That was the responsibility of the parties and the high-level committee set up to take the peace process forward. It is now clear that without a deal on power-sharing between the parties, the necessary trust on disarmament and rehabilitation, the rest of the peace process and finalising the constitution by May 27 simply won't be there.

The performance of UNMIN leaves a lot to be desired, but the UN is always the lowest common denominator of its member states. To expect it to be superhuman is unrealistic. A bloated, bungling UN peacekeeping machinery is a given. It is up to us to work within its narrow mandate to extract what we need for our own peace-building. Ultimately, it is up to the host government to create conditions that can put pressure on the international agency to discharge its duties in a more impartial and effective manner.

It's no fault of the UN monitors here that a political settlement to ensure the discharge of unqualified combatants has not yet been made. That should have been the first priority of the 22-party coalition that most resembles the seven-party alliance government that signed the peace agreement with the Maoists.

The demobilisation of Maoist combatants cannot begin as long as there is no consensus between political parties about the structure of the process. Good intentions are not enough.

By now, it should be clear that the business of constitution writing will continue to be problematic as long as the Maoists are not taken on board again as full partners of the peace process. That is a goal that has very little to do with the UN.

The best and fastest way to get rid of UNMIN is making its presence unnecessary. For that, Nepal's political leadership has to get its act together.



KIRAN PANDAY

From Baneshwor, here is a faint glimmer of good news. A seventh committee of the CA, on fundamental rights, recently submitted its draft report in line with the mid-November deadline.

Here is the bad news. The committees on state restructuring, forms of governance, and distribution of natural resources could not



**PLAIN SPEAKING**  
Prashant Jha

finish off their concept papers. By extension, the constitutional committee, which has the unenviable task of integrating these diverse papers into a comprehensible, meaningful text, can only wait. The CA has now amended its timeline for the seventh time, while sticking to the broader goal of having a statute by May 28. The time for public consultations and article-wise discussions has been curtailed.

And this is the ugly reality check. Most people just don't care any more. Apart from the party faithful, and tiny pockets of politically mobilised segments, the apathy towards the wider politics has not been as deep in the past three years as it is now. Ask people what they think about the constitution, and the usual refrain is, "These *chor netas*, thieving politicians, have hijacked everything. They will



## Get on with the power deal so we can deal with the real issues

share the loot and write what they want at the end."

Hidden in the cynicism is wisdom. Decisions are made in Nepali political culture when three Bahun men are forced by the Indian ambassador to sit in a drawing room and arrive at a consensus. The only other time they are galvanised into action is when a popular movement threatens their survival. When there is such a confluence of internal and external pressure, the political bunch realises there is no alternative and gets its act together.

At its root, the CA process faces three challenges.

The first challenge is to reconcile conflicting views into a common document. In each committee, there are differences between parties – on land reform, the nature of state organs, federal structure and powers, national security policy, border management, the scope of affirmative action, and prior rights for local communities.

It would be a bit simplistic to see this as merely a Maoist-non Maoist divide. There are five competing models at play. The first is the regressive social conservative model. This would like to see Nepal revert back to a monarchical, Hindutva, centralised state controlled by elites. The second is the business as usual liberal democratic model, which would like to replicate the key features of the 1990 constitution such as periodic elections and the free press, and make mild concessions to curb the more recent ethnic and class upsurges. The third is the ethnicity-centred model, which is pushing for ethnic homelands, and sees Nepal's problem as exclusively that of identity discrimination. The fourth is the dogmatic Maoist model, which believes all institutions have a 'class character', and thus have to be brought under the people's, read, the party's control. But there is a fairly broad

common ground that can span party lines.

This fifth model can be termed the radical social democratic model. This would take into account the need for a viable and strong centre; the liberal notions of freedom, pluralism, and open society; have a deep, internalised commitment to federalism where ethnicity is a factor and to radical affirmative action policies; create a welfare state that can address what Devendra Raj Panday has called 'failed development'; and overhaul state institutions to make them truly accountable to the wider citizenry – unlike what the NC and UML were used to in the 1990s and the Maoists want in more extreme form now.

The second challenge is converting the constitutional design into real institutions. An excellent policy brief by Martin Chautari has highlighted the "dangerous vacuum in planning for interim structures and a consequential potential for governance gap". There is a need for time frames, structures, schedules for handing over of power, and overall management of expectations. It is time to think of what happens when the statute is in fact completed.

And the third challenge is to ensure the widest ownership possible. The time for public consultation has been the first casualty of the subsequent delays. There are several groups out there, who are not in the CA but have emerged as important stakeholders on the ground. Getting predominantly Bahun Chhetri parties to agree, with a few token Madhesi leaders thrown in, will be an inadequate political settlement, and it will sow the seeds of further discontent.

Politicians need to reach a new power-sharing deal as soon as possible, so they can focus on the critical issues that will really determine whether a Naya Nepal can come into being. ●

## LETTERS

### MULE RULES

Sane people always have read the Ass as the true image of Nepal for that week and beyond. Sometimes, the column makes you cry because it's so truthful and at other times, it's hilarious to an extreme and yet carries a deep undercurrent, which you figure out once your laughter stops.

**Aawartan Discuss Nepal,**  
[www.facebook.com/nepalitimes](http://www.facebook.com/nepalitimes)

### PEACEFUL PROTESTS

The demonstrations were very peaceful so it's dishonest to say they weren't ('Ultra-violence', #475). Would people have preferred the routine tyre-burning and brick-batting kind of protests! The Maoists should teach NC and UML how

to hold a peaceful protest.

**Dev Joshi, www.facebook.com/nepalitimes**

### NC HEROES

CK Lal's got it wrong ('The daughter also rises', #472). He says Sujata's rise is a concern of Kathmanduites only and even blasts NC leaders who opposed her promotion to DPM. Let's not forget that while Sujata lost the elections, Ram Chandra Poudel won by a big margin, without having contested in

multiple locations. Poudel deserves far more respect.



movies in the past. It's doing well simply

### COPYCAT

Rajesh Hamal's interview was very interesting, but I don't think he's right when he says Bollywood rivals Hollywood now partly because it has a history of copying Hollywood films. He suggests this justifies Nepali films copying Bollywood. But Bollywood isn't doing so well today because it has produced unoriginal

because India's so much wealthier today than it was, say, a decade ago.

**Name withheld, email**

### LETTERS

*Nepali Times* welcomes feedback. Letters should be brief and may be edited for space. While pseudonyms are accepted, writers who provide their real names and contact details will be given preference. Email letters should be in text format without attachments with 'letter to the editor' in the subject line. Email: [letters\(at\)nepalitimes.com](mailto:letters(at)nepalitimes.com) Fax: 977-1-5521013 Mail: Letters, Nepali Times, GPO Box 7251, Kathmandu, Nepal.

# The queasy bourgeoisie

During the Constituent Assembly elections last year, the world came to learn of the political loyalties of Nepal's leading business personalities. The Beer Baron turned out to be a Marxist-Leninist. The Noodle Tycoon admitted to have been a closet Stalinist. The owner of a premier trading house joined the Maoists to safeguard his market position. The super-rich, in believing that they can use whoever is in government to their advantage, continue to be supremely confident of their political abilities.



STATE OF THE STATE  
C K Lal

Perhaps that's the reason the overclass has not taken the challenge of the Maoists too seriously. Unlike the panicky NGO-entrepreneurs, the bankers and builders appear to believe that Baburam Bhattarai is no different from Mahesh Acharya or Bharat Mohan Adhikari. This complacency of the rich is confusing the middle class no end.

The class base of Nepal's political parties has never been very clear. However, a rough generalisation was still possible until the mid-nineties. Following the first Jana Andolan, the upper class retained its loyalty to Panchayat-era politicians. Independent professionals and the self-employed gravitated towards the Nepali Congress. The NCP (UML) emerged as the bastion of the petty bourgeoisie. In European terms, these three groupings formed the conservatives, the social democrats and the Hindu democrats of the Nepali polity. Since there was no political force that represented the peasants or the working class, they simply traded their loyalties whenever and wherever they could.

Enter a group of wily political entrepreneurs, who mobilised the unorganised and carefully presented themselves as a credible challenger to all existing forces. For the royalists, this new



KIRAN PANDAY

formation was republican. For the NC's free market fundamentalists, they were reinvented communists. And for the hubristic Brahminists of the UML, these new politicians who organised the outcasts, untouchables and the marginalised were a challenge that undermined their standing at the very core. The Maoist brand name helped — nothing galvanises the underclass as strongly as the idea of getting back violently at their real or perceived oppressors. But it was such an incendiary mix of ideas that the resulting wildfire soon careered out of control. The middle class watched in fascination until the heat of the insurgency became unbearable.

It was the very composition of the Maoist party base that most frightened the insecure middle class. Maoist enforcers were neither peasants nor workers but belonged to a group that Marx called the *lumpenproletariat* — those renegades of society who often turned out to be "bribed tools of reactionary intrigue". The Maoist people's carnival last week was a mammoth public relations exercise to reassure the Kathmandu

## The Maoists have little to offer the aspiring middle classes

bourgeoisie that there was no need to fear a party whose chairman was willing to boogie in public with a Nepali actress. Unfortunately for the Maoists, the charade turned out to be completely counterproductive.

Over half of Kathmandu Valley's three million residents are well off by Nepali standards. In emerging societies, prosperity doesn't come cheap; in fact it often extracts a very heavy emotional, moral and physical price. The protestors that the Maoists paraded around Singha Darbar last week gave the

aspiring class of the capital city a glimpse of their own past. No wonder the motorcyclists looked so terrified. The sight of tens of thousands of upstarts singing and dancing, ostensibly to grab their hard-earned comforts, must have been pretty unnerving.

The upper class of yesteryear had at least a vague notion of noblesse oblige and rid itself of its guilty conscience through favouritism, acts of kindness towards those who could come in handy in times of trouble. For the overclass, everything has a price and everybody is for sale, including the Maoists. Meanwhile, the underclass has little to lose and looks up to the Maoists with expectant eyes. So what if Comrade Chairman lives in a fortress? Even in a Dalit village of straw huts, local deities have to be housed inside a brick house.

But for the aspiring class that has earned its present level of prosperity by treating greed as god, the Maoists have little to offer except assurances. The future of the UCPN (Maoist) ultimately depends on how it can win over the terrified middle strata of Nepali society. ●

Did your paper arrive on time this morning?  
If not, call our

Customer care @  
**525 0002**

DIRECT LINE



Himalmedia Pvt. Ltd.  
Hatiban Lalitpur

## Why do people prefer Fishtail Air?

- No. 1 Helicopter Company in Nepal
- Maximum number of fleet
- Highest Flying altitude (23000 ft)
- Sling operation (1400 kgs)
- Suitable for all types of helicopter missions
- Comfortable seating arrangement
- Equipped with latest technology
- Experienced pilots and engineers
- Fail safe design
- Fully automated and computerized

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



Head office: P.O.Box 5465, TNT Complex, 2nd Floor, Tinkune, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Tel: 4112230, 4112217, 4112206, Fax: 4112297  
Airport Office: 4494692, 2100579, Hunting Line: 9751000120/19/18/17/15/14  
E-mail: [operation@fishtailair.com](mailto:operation@fishtailair.com), [office@fishtailair.com](mailto:office@fishtailair.com), [marketing@fishtailair.com](mailto:marketing@fishtailair.com)

# Safeguarding children in New Nepal

Today marks four decades of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Nepal, and twenty years since the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child came into force. These are anniversaries worth celebrating. When UNICEF opened its country office in Kathmandu in 1969, the situation of Nepal's children was among the worst in the world.



**GUEST COLUMN**

**Kul Chandra Gautam**

In 1970 Nepal had the 12<sup>th</sup> highest child mortality rate in the world. By last year, we had moved ahead of 50 other countries, to rank 62<sup>nd</sup>. During this period the under-five mortality rate went down by nearly 80 per cent, from 250 to 51 per 1000. Four decades ago, 400,000 children were born every year, but 100,000 of them died before reaching their fifth birthday. Last year, 732,000 children were born, but less than 40,000 died. Forty years ago, barely a quarter of school-age children went to primary education. Today 90 per cent of children enroll in primary school, including a majority of girls.

That certainly is progress. It is all the more remarkable that Nepal made great strides in reducing the number of child deaths even in the middle of the violent conflict of the last decade. In our lifetime,



KIRAN PANDAY

**UNICEF has had a remarkable four decades in Nepal, but there's some way to go**

we have seen dreaded diseases like smallpox and polio eradicated, deaths due to measles drastically reduced, goiter disappear, and immunisation services for children becoming virtually universal.

The children of Nepal today are healthier, more educated, and more knowledgeable about the world than in any previous generation.

Both 1990's first Jana Andolan, which ushered in democracy, and the coming into

force of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), gave great impetus to the cause of children. Whereas earlier programs for children were designed to be needs-based, sometimes even as a charitable response to the plight of children, a rights-based approach came into vogue following the advent of democracy and application of the CRC.

While UNICEF continued to help tackle some of the age-old problems of illness, illiteracy and

malnutrition in Nepal with some success, three new problems surfaced in the past two decades: HIV/AIDS, trafficking and abuse of children on a massive scale, and a terrible civil war that led to new forms of violence and exploitation of children. But through its innovative, dynamic approaches to complement its traditional programs in health and education, water and sanitation, UNICEF has been able to address these challenges. In doing so, UNICEF has become a household name, a true child-friendly UN presence in Nepal.

As we look ahead, I see a bright future for the children of this country, provided we Nepalis are able to overcome our

self-destructive orgy of hyper-politicisation and violence and adhere to the overarching principles of the CRC. These principles are non-discrimination, the best interest of the child, the right to survival and development, and respect for the views of the child.

We must therefore ensure that in education, for instance, we are not satisfied by high average enrollments but go for universal and equitable progress, with special measures for children who are likely to be disadvantaged, such as Dalits, those from certain indigenous communities and girls.

We may have reduced child mortality, but death is only the tip of the iceberg. We must invest heavily in maternal, newborn and child health especially to combat our unacceptably high levels of child malnutrition, and to promote early child development. After all, whether a child will grow to live up to his or her full human potential is largely determined in the first few years of a child's life, before the child enters school.

Young people are amazingly resourceful and we have seen time and again that child participation *works*. Participation is a passport to belonging, so let us give our young people their place in shaping their lives and a more democratic, peaceful and prosperous New Nepal.

Finally, in everything we do, if we are not sure what the right way forward is, we should always ask the question: is it in the best interest of our children? ●

*Kul Chandra Gautam is a former Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF and UN Assistant Secretary-General.*

## Too big to fail

**We are perilously close to an economic crisis**

### INDU NEPAL

The Armed Police Force and the Nepal Police were not paid their salaries last month. Neither were they able to withdraw money for their rations. The five biggest hospitals declared they had run out of funds in October. Several districts failed to pay their schoolteachers last month. If the budget remains pending, no one will pay them next month either. Nor will the government be able to provide allowances to Maoist combatants stationed at various UNMIN camps. Prison authorities have run out of funds to buy food for inmates.

At the time of writing, the Rs 296 billion budget has not been passed. The government is the largest single spender in the country, and the budget accounts for almost 28 per cent of the economy. A pending budget basically means that the economy is running on an empty tank.

The inability of the government to spend is already manifest in signs of a liquidity crunch: money is not moving through private markets. In response, on Sunday, the inter-bank interest rate rose from three per cent to a whopping 10.2 per cent.

But it's not just a matter of injecting money into the economy. Remote areas are dependent on the government for all of their economic activities. During the harvest season, the



KIRAN PANDAY

government usually delivers essential crops to remote areas for the winter months. None of this has happened so far. Exacerbating the problem is the dramatic decline in agricultural production this year because of a 60 per cent decrease in monsoon rain.

The government was entitled to spend

one-third of the budget in advance. Four months later, most of the ministries have already used up this allowance. Government institutions are now staying afloat by taking loans from each other. The office of the prime minister, for example, had to borrow money from the Ministry of Physical Planning and

Works to pay its staff. "We have been told that prison authorities had to borrow from the National Food Corporation to feed inmates," said Finance Minister Surendra Raj Pandey.

Bishambar Pyakurel, Professor of Economics at Tribhuvan University, is categorical. "If the budget fails to pass, we will have a crisis, much more severe than the Maoist war."

But even if the budget is passed quickly, our troubles are not over. The budget was structured on the basis that the country would enjoy a growth rate of seven per cent in the following year. It was an ambitious assumption considering it was five per cent when the Maoists were leading the government.

Even aiming to maintain this rate is not realistic, points out Pyakurel: "With the political stalemate of the last six months, Nepal will be lucky if it has a growth rate of 2.5 per cent."

The budget could be passed by ordinance, effectively bypassing parliament. But this is only a stop-gap measure. The ordinance would need to be ratified in parliament within six months, postponing the political crisis for another day. "Passing a budget through an ordinance basically means waging war with the Maoists," says Pyakurel.

In the past few days, the government has scrambled to find a way to pass the budget. On Tuesday, Finance Minister Pandey said, "We have no alternative but to pass the budget. We are in discussions with the opposition party about it."

But the opposition party is framing this as the government's problem. Maoist leader Baburam Bhattarai accused the government of using the issue of the budget to divert attention from their demands for civilian supremacy. "We have never said we will stop the budget from being passed," he said. "They should have been more responsible and addressed our demands on time." ●

## Xcharge

Nokia has started a charger exchange program under which certain Nokia-branded chargers manufactured by a third-party supplier can be exchanged for free replacements. Call 4241923 for more information.

## Helping hand

International Money Express held a free health check-up camp at Bhaleshwore Secondary School in Malpi VDC. The camp was held in



association with the Lions Club of Kathmandu-Ashoka, Ananta and Abishekh. Over 600 individuals were treated.

## Memorandum

Himalayan Infrastructure Fund and the Indian Credit Rating Agency signed a MoU on 16 November to help set up a Credit Rating Agency in Nepal.

## Sky rocketing

Kumari Bank opened its 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> branch in Koteshor and Budhanilkantha. The AGM of the bank approved 10 per cent Bonus Shares, the

redemption of existing 70 per cent Promoter Shares to 51 per cent and the remaining 19 per cent Promoter Shares to Public Shares.

## Care camp

Morang Auto Works, sole authorised dealer of Yamaha motorcycles for Nepal, announced the 'Yamaha Care Camp' for 150cc Segment Yamaha Motorcycles from 17 to 20 November.



**YAMAHA**

motorcycles for Nepal, announced

## Warming earth

The Mountain Institute in partnership with Hokkaido University (Japan), ICIMOD Nepal, and the American Alpine Club carried out their first field expedition in the remote Hongu valley of Makalu-Barun National Park between 12 October and 15 November, 2009 to assess the condition 'potentially dangerous' glacial lakes.

## Automobile saviour

BG, an American-based line of system service products, has finally arrived in Nepal. Sole distributor BG Nepal guarantees your vehicles will be pollution free, eco-friendly and efficient.

## Flying high

Yeti Airlines unveiled Dhangadi as a new destination on 16 November, and has also started supplementary flights to Janakpur and Bhadrapur.



# Lessons from India

**G**urgaon: Just as I was wondering, while cruising down a world-class expressway connecting Gurgaon and Delhi, what was behind India's booming prosperity, I hit a kilometre-long queue at a toll plaza.

The cars are being held back by unscrupulous drivers criss-crossing lanes, many using cash in the RFID pass lanes. As a result, it takes more than 20 minutes to drive through the toll plaza. So much for the time I saved on the expressway.

The point is, the benefits of the best roads and technology count for nothing if you can't change people's attitudes. So, lesson No.1:



**ECONOMIC SENSE**  
Artha Beed

hardware and technology upgrades have to be backed by changes in mindset, which are always the hardest to achieve.

The skyscrapers may have given Gurgaon a look that puts some of the west coast developments in the US to shame, but the streets are dotted with shacks, cattle and garbage. Every cop wants to pull you over to make a quick buck. To be sure, cops, car mechanics and politicians may be the same all over the world, but how can a city claim to drive the Indian economy when its residents remain the same as their brethren in Jogbani or Raxaul?

If the government makes lots of money collecting taxes from multinationals and other companies operating in the cities, it has a duty to provide better citizen services too. Lesson No. 2, the government must invest the taxes it collects in a particular area or service back in the

same area or service. For instance, at our own airport, while airport tax collected from a mere 25 passengers could pay for a luggage trolley, we still rely on other organisations to give them to us.

Gurgaon's world-class housing and golf courses arrived in advance of public infrastructure, fancy bathroom fittings preceded a reliable water supply and expensive, sensor-aided, hygienic WCs were given priority over sewer lines. In the absence of public transportation, the choice is between driving a BMW to the mall, and a subsequent 20-minute wait for a parking slot, or riding a man-pulled rickshaw. Lesson No. 3 for Nepal, we should build efficient service infrastructure before satellite cities.

Perhaps there should be a system of collecting high infrastructure development fees from builders to be put into a fund managed according to public-private partnership models. This could ensure basic service delivery.

During every visit to India's National Capital Region, this Beed is struck by the realisation that distance kills. While it takes minutes to confirm a meeting on one's Blackberry and respond to emails, it takes hours to get to the meeting that has been so easily set up. The Beed keeps wondering how this hurts productivity. When most services are outsourced, it becomes more important that the outsourced service is delivered on time. When computer networks go down or when physical delivery of items is impeded by traffic, what is the effect on productivity?

A well-managed city, therefore, has enormous advantages. Would it be better to have a city where distances are manageable or one where distances are managed well? Lesson No. 4, does Nepal have the opportunity to leverage this and use it to attract businesses? ●

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

## Gurgaon's flashiness masks its infrastructural weakness

**1** The most selling projectors in the world  
**PROJECTORS**  
OFFICE AND HOME PROJECTORS  
**EPSON**  
EXCEED YOUR VISION  
'EPSON BEST SELLING PROJECTORS IN THE WORLD', ACCORDING RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY PACIFIC MEDIA ASSOCIATES 2007

Convenient Connectivity for any Projection Environment

Multimedia Projector  
**EB-S7/X7/W8**

USB 'Plug and Project' connectivity for quick projection on the spot.



**EASY & SPEEDY USB DISPLAY FUNCTION**  
Simple Connectivity  
Instant projection is possible by simply connecting the projector to a PC using the USB cable, included with the EB-S7/X7/W8  
Support for Smoother Presentations  
Control of the mouse and/or "page control" function can be achieved easily with the remote controller that is included with the EB-S7/X7/W8



Small, Smart and Stylish

**Small and Stylish**

Modern, smart and elegantly designed to fit comfortably in your hands, the EB-S7/X7/W8 is lightweight and easy to carry around at only 2.3kg.

**Front Exhaust**

The exhaust is intelligently positioned in the front so that it will not affect the audience at the side of the projector.



**MERCANTILE OFFICE SYSTEMS**

Mercantile Building, Durbar Marg, Kathmandu  
Tel: 4220773, 4243566 Fax: 977-1-4225407  
Email: market@mos.com.np

STAR OFFICE AUTOMATION  
PUTALI SADAK, 4266820, 4244827  
HIMALAYAN TRADING HOUSE  
POKHARA, 061 521756  
ECSC COMPUTER  
BUTWAL 071 545699

UGRATARA TRADING HOUSE  
DHANGADHI, TEL: 091 523601  
MANAKAMANA HI-TECH  
NEPALGUNJ, 081521473  
ADVANCE COMPUTER  
BANEPANA, 9841311011

DINESH ELECTRONICS  
DHANGADHI, TEL: 091 521392  
E-NET SOLUTIONS  
NARAYANGHAT, 9855056309  
BIRAT INFOTECH  
021-538729

# Extortion

Santa Gaha Magar in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 1-15 November

हिमाल  
खबरपत्रिका

Side by side with the Maoist street protests, there has been an increase in the number of beatings, robberies, extortion cases and other acts of violence by the Maoists nationwide. In fact, all this is reminiscent of the war years. One example of this is the extortion of trekkers and security agencies in recent weeks. Last month, a group of trekkers who had just returned from the Manaslu and Annapurna circuits held a press conference to complain that they were all stopped and asked to pay Rs 2,000 each (see pic, *trekker with Maoist receipts*). TAAN chief Rajendra Bajgai says the Maoists have forcibly solicited 'donations' from many of the 15,000 trekkers who visited the Manaslu area this season.

He says: "This has not just spread terror along the trekking trails, but it has also put a damper on the trekking industry." The Maoist-affiliated All Nepa I Security Workers Union has been collecting a compulsory levy from all security guards. Union boss Ghanashyam Thakuri admits that his group collects Rs 425,000 a month from the estimated 17,000 security guards in the country.



Says former Maoist central committee member and the coordinator of the newly-formed Revolutionary Communist Party, Mani Thapa: "The Maoist strategy is to use violence and extortion to propel themselves into power." Union boss Thakuri says the levy from individual guards is not compulsory, but security guards working for Group Four Falk, Fishtail, Welfare, and another agencies say they are all forced to pay Rs 25 a month to the nationwide network of security guards set up by the Maoists. Says one guard with Kantipur Security: "Even if you don't agree with the Maoist ideology, you're required to pay the fee. We never get a receipt, and no one tells us where our money goes."

# Marooned



Mohan Shahi in *Kantipur*, 14 November

कान्तिपुर

There aren't any cows in Godadaka's stables anymore. Instead, they're packed with Dalits displaced by floods and the subsequent landslides that swept through the village on 5 September.

85 families have been displaced for the last 40-odd days, largely because government help hasn't been forthcoming, reports the Godadaka VDC.

Many of the displaced wake up every day at dawn to go to Siligudi Municipality to look for help. Some even carry their infant children with them.

Tularam Luhar says, "Because it's so cold, many children are sick and have been tossing and turning all night."

Taradevi Luhar adds, "We're about to die of cold and hunger."

But their pleas have gone largely unheard. "People from the municipality gave us Rs 2000-4000 and told us to forget our problems," says Sher Bahadur Luhar.

Doti district has so far received five million from the government, but the Dalit families have only received Rs 2000-4000 and 25 kilos of rice, which they claim is insufficient.

# Schools, no students

Kokila Dhakal in *Rajdhani*,  
17 November

राजधानी

Almost all community schools in Ilam are short of students since they transferred to private schools in the region. "It's pointless coming to the school, there are hardly any students," complains Taranath Khanal, principal of Saraswati Prathamik School.

Just two years ago the school had more than 80 students per class, but there are now only eight students in the entire school, of whom five belong to the same family. Four private schools opened simultaneously in the region, following which the 'wealthy' locals of Ilam decided to spend more on their children's education. Some parents still enrol their children in community schools in order to receive compensation from the government but send them to private schools for their actual tuition.

Says local Bhednath Khatiwada, "Unlike community schools, private ones include an English curriculum." This is attractive to students and their parents. "Had community schools



PICS: KIRAN PANDAY

incorporated English, the students might not have moved to private schools," he adds.

Meanwhile, the irregularity and deteriorating quality of education in community schools is worrying those who cannot afford to send their children to private schools.

# Begum live



The police have a warrant for the arrest of State Minister Karima Begum for assaulting a CDO, but who will dare arrest her? Despite the warrant, she apparently shared a meal with the Home Minister inside Singha Darbar the other day. Then she entered the Kantipur TV studio for a live interview on its program Prime Time. The interview lasted 13 minutes, possibly the longest live studio interview in Kantipur TV's history. When news anchors Rupesh and Simrika tried to cut her off by telling Begum her

time was up, the minister shouted at them: "If you call me, you have to let me speak, you can't say your time is running out." Rupesh and Simrika were lucky she didn't slap them on camera. She was asked whether she would surrender or go into hiding, with a warrant out for her arrest. She replied that she wouldn't do either. But she didn't deny that she slapped the CDO, explaining that it was the CDO who first quarrelled with her and grabbed her hand.

*Comment:* From Bir: It is true Karima Begum did the wrong thing, but she is not the only person to blame. What kind of a party is it that gave her a ticket? And how about us who voted her to office? Unless we the people become more aware and punish those who misuse the system, episodes like the Matrika Yadav scandal, Karima Begum scandal, Lauda scandal and Tanakpur scandal will keep happening as long as this planet exists.

From Sirkar: I've never seen a useless interview like this. A minister who can't even talk, who doesn't even know what she is saying. She is a shame on Nepal, a shame on her party.

View the interview on:

<http://www.mysansar.com/?p=6765#more-6765>



Rato Bangala School  
Excellence in Learning

**Vacancy**  
for  
**Primary and Middle School Teachers**

Applicants must have fluency in English, an ability to relate to students and a willingness to learn.

Interested candidates can collect application forms from the school office or download it from [www.ratobangala.edu.np](http://www.ratobangala.edu.np). Applications must be in by 30 November, 2009.

**Rato Bangala School**

Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur

Phone: 5522614 / 5534318 / 5542045

email: rbs@mos.com.np

# “If the constitution isn’t written, the Maoists will be to blame”

Increased tension amongst the parties has convinced many the approaching May 2010 deadline for the constitution will not be met, as *Himal Khabarpatrika* discovered during discussions held in Surkhet’s Birendranagar.

**Himal Khabarpatrika:** How do you view the constitution-writing process? Do you think the deadline will be met?

**Khagendra Thapa (teacher):** I never thought the deadline would be met. People are trying to split up the country, and we face mountains of challenges. The biggest issue is that of federalism. I seriously doubt the constitution will be written on time.

**Pitamber Dhakal (Vice-Principal, Surkhet Campus):** The Rana regime ended in 1951, but as we had not decided what kind of democracy we wanted, it was not sustainable. We are facing the same situation now: the parties do not know what kind of constitution they want.

**Uddhav Pyakurel (researcher):** Our politicians are accustomed to coming to last hour agreements, so they will agree on a constitution. But without discussing the contentious issues, it will be difficult to come up with the type of constitution the people expect.

**Hariharnath Yogi (teacher):** Hopes of a constitution and sustainable peace are fading. Maybe the constitution will get



KAM SINGH CHEPANG

written in another two or three years?

**Prem Bahadur Thapa (Chairman, Nepal Workers Peasants Party, Surkhet):** We’ll get a constitution within the period specified but the issue is what kind of constitution. Better to have a good constitution rather than one that might leave us without a country.

**Should we insist on having the constitution ready by May or extend the term of the Constituent Assembly?**

**Khagendra Thapa:** The biggest problem lies within the Maoists, and this has resulted in the call for ‘civilian supremacy’. If the constitution is not written it will be because of the Maoist protests. **Rishi Gautam (Bheri-Karnali State Committee Secretariat Member, UCPN-Maoist):**

Politics has obstructed the whole process of constitution writing. Everything the Maoists say is viewed with suspicion. This has to be bridged by trust among the leadership. **Arjun Bahadur Airi (Assistant Principal, Birendranagar Multiple Campus):** If we can’t meet the deadline, then we could amend the interim constitution or add time to come up with a good constitution.

**What kind of federalism do the residents of Surkhet want?**

**Pitamber Dhakal:** The decision to go for federalism was an emotional one made in the aftermath of the Madhes movement. Before that there was only some talk of state restructuring, there were no

demands for federalism. If the mountain, hill and Tarai regions are separated the Nepali people will be dealt a terrible blow. Federalism must incorporate regions from the north to the south.

**Uddhav Pyakurel:** Federalism was meant for inclusion. But if this is done on the basis of ethnicity, it will lead to more divisions.

**Arjun Bahadur Airi:** There are no calls for ethnic federalism here. Even though the Tharus in the south and the janajatis in the north are demanding rights this is to achieve inclusion. Federalism shouldn’t be based on ethnicity, and neither should provinces be named after ethnicities as this will give rise to the feeling that some groups won and others lost.

**Pabitra Shahi (social**

**worker):** Federalism is for the distribution of power, for development and social progress. It’s to safeguard national sovereignty, not to split the state into pieces. Everyone should be able to feel that federalism was for their sake.

**Khagendra Thapa:** We have to ensure that provinces won’t go broke and consider the risks of divisive forms of federalism. If we really were to talk about ethnic inclusion, then we’d have to talk of Chhetris and Bahuns, who constitute 15 and 12 per cent of the population respectively.

**Sanju Singh Biswokarma (Dalit rights worker):** The disadvantaged communities do not want pity or alms, they want participation on the basis of population.

**Prem Bahadur Thapa:** Federalism should join the north to the south. If this is done then language rights can be given to local states. The provincial capital should be in Surkhet on the basis of its regional headquarters. Dang could also be made a central capital.

**Shobha BK (social worker):** If One Madhes One Pradesh comes into being then all the capital will accumulate in the Tarai at the expense of other regions. If the midwest becomes one province then what will be the basis by which it will sustain itself? If we go into federalism without doing our homework it will lead to more problems.

## “I am not in favour of an ethnic state”

Dhyan Gobinda Ranjit, NC, Kathmandu-9

**You seem more occupied with the party’s mahasamiti meeting than the constitution?**

I haven’t missed a single CA meeting. The committee to protect national interests, of which I am a member, has already submitted its draft and the Assembly has already discussed it. I am focusing on the mahasamiti meeting because the CA is not in session right now. I am the party’s district chairperson, and since the meeting is in Kathmandu, I have some obligations to the party.

**A while back some CA members pledged to establish a Newar state in Kathmandu. You were absent from the meeting?**

I got the invitation at the very last minute. I didn’t have much information on the meeting either, so I didn’t attend.

**There has been vigorous debate about establishing ethnic federal states in the CA,**

**hasn’t there?**

I believe in democracy, so I don’t care about caste and religion. My faith is in democracy, not in ethnicity. That’s why I am not in favour of an ethnic state.



KIRAN PANDAY

**Is that stalling the constitution-writing process?**

Constitution writing hasn’t gained momentum because of the refusal by some parties to accept a majority government and the obstruction of parliament.

**Can the constitution be written within seven months?**

There is no way it can’t be written. Some people used to say we wouldn’t have the CA elections. But we addressed the

Madhes uprising and held the elections. The same people also said we couldn’t overthrow the king and establish a republic state. We will have the constitution written just as people talk about how impossible it is. If we can mitigate the differences between various parties, we can definitely write the constitution on time.

## “I will speak up for the landless and Dalits”

Ram Rati Debi Ram, UML, Siraha

**How is the constitution writing going?**

It was postponed until Chhat (24 Nov). We have been moving forward since. Six committees have already presented their drafts, which have been discussed in the Assembly. We hope the rest of the drafts will be presented soon.

**Will the constitution be written on time with all the dilly-dallying?**

Of course. We don’t have an alternative. We will all drown if we don’t write the constitution. So, the challenge is whether we should ruin our careers or write the constitution on time.

**Who is to blame for the current delay in the process?**

All parties, including the Maoists, are weakening the process. We can’t write the constitution until the parties reach a consensus.

**Do you think the delay is caused by the Maoists’ obstruction of the parliament?**

One House’s effect is obviously felt in the other House. Obstruction in the parliament means trouble for



DEVRAJ POKHREL

parliamentarians. When they are affected, that is obviously going to affect the CA. Representatives shouldn’t be held hostage to sloganeering to create chaos.

**What are your experiences since joining the CA?**

I used to talk about Dalits and the landless back in my village. So I will be raising those issues here as well. I am also looking at what can be done for women. Dalit issues have been discussed a lot in the CA, and I have been participating in those discussions.



Bolivia  
takes  
measure  
of its  
treasure  
of  
lithium

# Electric dreams



**ROCK POOL:** Miners extract the floating lithium from salty evaporation ponds filled with water from the underground lake beneath the fields, a process that takes about two months.

**SCALING UP:** Salt miners have long worked on the salt fields of Uyuni for a pittance, but the advent of industrial scale lithium mining could ring in the changes for the economy of Bolivia, the poorest country in South America.





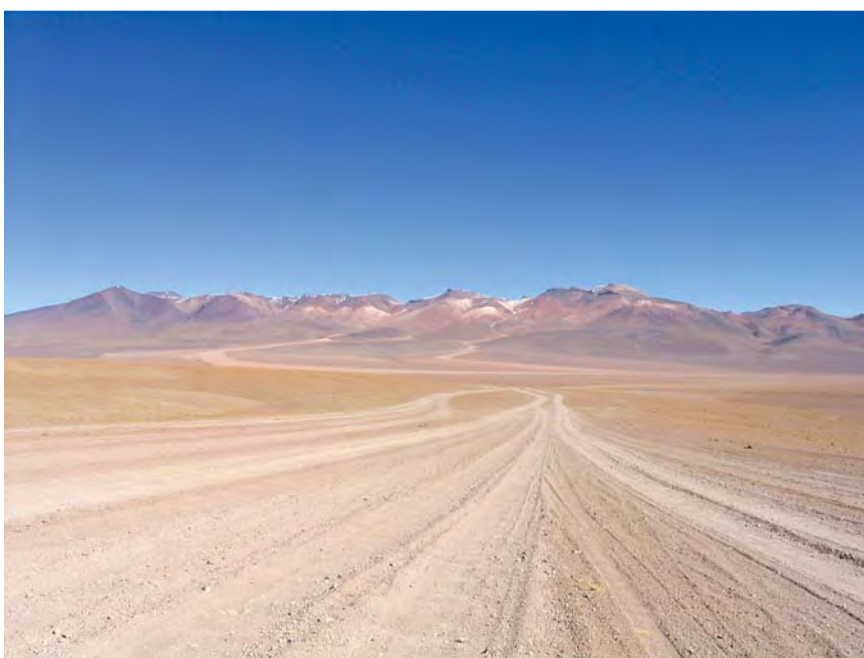


TEXT AND PHOTOS by **RABI THAPA**

**L**ithium is used to make lightweight, high-powered batteries for mobile phones, laptops and increasingly, hybrid and electric cars. Demand is expected to triple in the next 15 years. With an estimated 50 to 70 per cent of the world's lithium supply buried in the salt flats of Uyuni, Bolivia is poised to capitalise on its new-found status as the 'Saudi Arabia of lithium'.

Foreign governments and multinationals such as Mitsubishi and LG have expressed interest in investing in lithium mining in Bolivia. Its socialist government, however, means to tread lightly on the Salar de Uyuni to avoid foreign profiteering that ignores the indigenous communities that make up the majority of Bolivia's population. Bolivia has invested \$6 million in a plant in Uyuni to go operational by the end of this year, and has so far only accepted technical advice from abroad.

**PASS THE SALT:** Bolivia's Salar de Uyuni spreads over 10,582 square kilometres in the remote southwest of the country and contains an estimated 100 million tons of lithium.



**REMOTE ATTRACTION:** About 60,000 tourists visit Uyuni annually to marvel at its surreal mixture of tinted lakes, salt flats, volcanoes, hot springs and flamingos.

**NEW GENERATION:** The burgeoning market for hybrid and electric vehicles will depend on a regular supply of lithium for battery cells.



MARTIN BERNETTI/AFP/GETTY IMAGE

# Animal fights

There I was, in deep discussion with a member of the Animal Welfare Network Nepal, getting the low-down on the impending sacrifice of half a million animals at the Gadhimai Mela in the southern district of Bara. "It sounds like madness," I nodded as I listened to her deride what seemed a veritable orgy of alcohol-fuelled slaughter condoned by mass superstition to the ends of organised crime syndicates.

Then a friend who'd been listening in blurted out: "Didn't you just take part in one of those things?"

It was true. Only months back, I'd visited my ancestral village northwest of Dhankuta under the pretext of attending a *kuldevata puja*, wherein 400 goats had been sacrificed to our clan gods (#470, 'The land of my fathers'). Or was it the other way around? No doubt discovering the land of my fathers was a profound experience, but would it have been the same without the excitement of that day of bloody colours?

"I'm sorry, I'm a totally compromised animal lover," I offered lamely, but my cover was blown.



**KALAM**  
Rabi Thapa

Not that caring for animals precludes the killing and eating of them. But ideally, it should at its core consist of a conviction that if we use animals for

labour, food, entertainment or companionship, our treatment of them should be humane, in as much as killing can be humane.

Many campaigners for animal rights, too, understand that foisting vegetarianism upon the essentially omnivorous human species is unlikely to work. They are therefore willing to accept that most people (for the foreseeable future) will continue to eat meat, as long as the process by which they obtain their meat is kosher, so to speak. Life is full of half-measures after all, else we would be either gods or demons, not humans.

What this means in practice is not always so clear. While I've always found it a little disturbing to see roadside goats tethered next to the remains of their erstwhile companions, I am not convinced slaughterhouses are better in any sense other than that of scaled-up efficiency and hygiene. These are good enough reasons to keep animal slaughter out of the public space, surely, but in a country where animal sacrifice is so deeply embedded in religious culture, one can't just decree it out of existence.



AWNN

How then does one who accepts animal sacrifice as virtually indistinguishable from the process of obtaining meat for food face up to slaughter on the almost unimaginable scale of the Gadhimai Mela? The Animal Welfare Network Nepal and the 1000-strong membership of the various Mela committees are diametrically opposed on the issue of animal sacrifice, and may inevitably end up demonising one another. Those in between may root for those half-measures – quarantine checks and vaccinations for livestock, adequate arrangements for the anticipated 10 million pilgrims, transparency in Mela finances, among other things – but what of the actual fact of the mass slaughter?

It is the fact of the slaughter, more than anything else, that attracts or repulses. The imagery employed by those speaking out against the mass sacrifice – drunken men hacking away at 20,000 hapless young buffalos, a marshland of blood and gore – betrays a horror of industrial scale barbarism that is anathema to (western) notions of sanitised, civilised progress. The focus is on this *barbarism*. Never mind that 40 million turkeys are sacrificed in the name of the nation's history every thanksgiving in America. At root, the global protests against Gadhimai can be applied to all individual sacrifices in the name of religion that are conducted within the premises of the household, the temple, or the street. They constitute an appeal against the faltering machismo of the young Chettri boys compelled to wield khukuris on the fatted goat come Dasain, an initiation not only in manhood, but also, some would have you believe, barbarity.

So until we resolve the conundrum of animal sacrifice at the heart of Nepali Hinduism, we can work on making God's work a little less barbaric. If the Meat Act and the Animal Transportation Act are implemented, and if a much-needed Animal Welfare Act ever sees the light of day, then we will not only be performing a service to public health and safety, but will also do much to ease the suffering of those animals whose deaths we consider necessary to our lives. ●

## "Nepal needs to come back to the spirit of finding a homegrown solution"



KUNDA DIXIT

Norway's Minister of Environment and International Development, Erik Solheim, spoke to the *Nepali Times* on Wednesday in Oslo about the political deadlock in Nepal, Norwegian development aid and the negotiations leading up to the international climate conference in Copenhagen next month.

**Nepali Times:** I understand you have been speaking to Nepali leaders on the phone from here. What is your assessment of the situation in Nepal from these conversations?

**Erik Solheim:** I have spoken to Prime Minister Nepal, former Prime Minister Prachanda and UML leader Jhalanath Khanal, and Mr Koirala has also agreed to speak to me but there are some practical difficulties. They have all given the impression that they want to continue the reconciliation process and they want to find a solution to the problem, but of course they indicate different ways out of the problem. They have all asked Norway and the international community to do what they can to help. We of course stand ready to do that, but there are no specific ideas about what it is we can do at present.

**But don't you tell them this is something they should sort out themselves?**

Indeed, and that has been the beauty of Nepal's peace and reconciliation process over the last few years. At every crossroads, in the end you have found solutions yourselves

without any substantial foreign interference, and that has been very positive. It seems, however, that some of the momentum has been drawn out of the process over the past year and it is important to come back to that spirit of finding a homegrown solution.

**Are you worried by the continued use of violence by the political forces?**

You have to expect this to take some time but it should be made very very clear that every form of political violence should be stopped. There must be no compromise on that idea. The YCL as well as the youth groups affiliated with other parties should stop using violence. And of course, the Nepal Army should be a completely depoliticised defender of the Nepali state.

**What future do you see for UNMIN?**

I think UNMIN played a very crucial role over a long period of time. This kind of international presence is always very helpful, in this instance with the demobilisation of the Maoist fighters. The usefulness and future of UNMIN is up to the Nepalis to decide for themselves.

**Are you satisfied with the track record of Norwegian aid in Nepal?**

Basically our engagement on development issues is unconnected with the government of the day, we cooperated closely with the Maoist-dominated government at a time when Prachanda was prime minister, and of course now with the Madhav Nepal government. As long as they are in power through a democratic process, whoever is in government can reckon with Norway as a development partner. A key area where we want to increase our involvement is in the hydro sector. Norfund has lined up with India's Tata group in a partnership to boost investment in hydropower. We also stand ready to find ways to support the peace process, through small amounts of money, or Norway can offer its embassy. But in principle it should be a Nepali-driven process.

**You've just returned from Copenhagen. The negotiations seem to be stuck.**

I am fairly optimistic we will get a political agreement in Copenhagen that will be followed by a legally binding agreement later in 2010. All the main players: the US, China, India, the EU, all want an agreement. But a lot more needs to be done. Nepal is very vulnerable to climate change as your big rivers and glaciers will be affected by melting snows, and this can be an area of future cooperation between Nepal and Norway. I have agreed to meet with Prime Minister Nepal in Copenhagen next month. Your environment minister has also indicated an interest in coming to Oslo, and he is most welcome. I myself should be in Nepal early next year to catch up on climate change issues, but also to talk to the main players in the peace process.

**Your program to help forestry worldwide through the REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) mechanism doesn't yet recognise and reward the contribution of Nepal's successful community forestry program. Any plans?**

I am absolutely ready to talk about that. The main focus of the REDD program has been the protection, conservation and sustainable use of rainforests because those are the most important from the viewpoint of biodiversity and climate change, but we can expand it to 'REDD Plus' to include other aspects like community forestry. We are absolutely interested in discussing this.

# Norwegian guru

After a lifetime devoted to developing Nepal's indigenous capacity to harness water resources, what does Odd Hoftun have to say about the power cuts in Kathmandu?

The sprightly 82-year-old Norwegian is surprisingly upbeat. "Look, so much political change has taken place in Nepal since 1990, it takes time to digest it all and move ahead," he said this week in Oslo during the launch of his biography *Kraftverket* (The Hydropowerplant). "You just need a new generation of technocrat politicians to take charge and move forward."

The book was launched on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Norway-Nepal Association in Oslo last week, following three years of research by author Peter Svalheim. Hoftun went to Nepal as a missionary in 1958 and helped build the Tansen Hospital, which half a century later still stands as a model community medicine centre. Hoftun soon realised that to tap Nepal's enormous hydropower potential and use it to drive development, indigenous capacity had to be built. He started work at the Butwal Technical Institute and later the Butwal Power Company (BPC), which worked on successively larger hydroelectric projects like Tinau, Andhi Khola and Jhimruk.

Today, BPC is part of a larger consortium of joint Nepali-Norwegian energy companies that built the Khimti project and is now working on the Tama Kosi 3 power export project in collaboration with India's Tata



MANOHAR SHRESTHA

**BEFORE AND AFTER:** Odd Hoftun with his wife Tullis in Tansen at the half-built hospital he helped build in 1959, and last week in Oslo at the launch of a biography that details his life's work in helping Nepal develop its hydropower capacity.

## Odd Hoftun's contribution to Nepal's hydropower development is remembered in a new biography

Group. The step-by-step growth of engineering capacity is just what Hoftun had envisioned 50 years ago: to make Nepal self-reliant, to spread the risk, and take on ever larger projects as the technical capacity of Nepali engineers improved.

The book, which will soon be translated into English and Nepali, also follows Hoftun's life in Nepal through the tragic loss of his anthropologist son Martin

in a plane crash in Kathmandu in 1992, to the setting up of the research centre, Martin Chautari, in his name. The centre holds regular discussions on the social sciences, media, education and policy issues.

Hoftun was a keen observer of Nepali society, and says that it was evident even when he first arrived that conflict was inevitable. "Nepal was an innocent society in those days, but the injustice, the discrimination of the caste system were glaring. It was the neglect of these issues that ultimately led to the upheavals of the 1990s," he recalls.

A modest and self-effacing man with a frugal lifestyle, Hoftun has shunned interviews and avoids the media. But, he

says, he wanted to publish the book so there would be a record not just of his life but also of his 'small is beautiful' philosophy towards technology.

He calls this the 'bottom-up approach' of empowering rural areas first. But Hoftun is careful to stress that not all big is bad, and that a country and society have to be ready for big projects and make sure the benefits are distributed equitably while they support national development. You can have a network of small hydro plants but, he says, for national-level planning and economies of scale there have to be big reservoir projects too.

Hoftun remains supportive even of the much-delayed Melamchi project because, he says, it is a project whose time has come. He agrees with Nepali activists who want the current design to be expanded to include hydropower and irrigation components that will make it a multi-purpose regional scheme, and not just a water supply system for Kathmandu.

He also thinks power exports to India are now a necessity because of Nepal's trade deficit with that country. "We now need export projects," he explains, "but we have to build our own industrial base at the same time." Hoftun's use of the words 'we' and 'our' are a giveaway as to his loyalties. That feeling was reciprocated at the book launch at the Nepal-Norway Association function, where he received a standing ovation.

Says the Association's Marit Bakke: "We wanted to honour Hoftun's life and work because it is an inspiration for the next generation of Nepalis and Norwegians." ●  
*Kunda Dixit in Oslo*



*To every child in Nepal, we wish you  
a chance to live your dreams*

A Future of Peace, Health, Education, Happiness, Play and Prosperity

The World is Celebrating 20 Years of  
The Convention on the Rights of the Child  
UNICEF is celebrating four decades of  
working together with the government,  
children and people of Nepal.



unite for  
children  
www.unicef.org/nepal

unicef  
नेपालमा चार दशकको साझेदारी  
4 Decades of UNICEF in Nepal



# Cycling for life

SUBEKSHA POUDEL

It's not everyday one cycles from London to Paris. But that's exactly what Alison Marston and other keen cyclists from 60 different charities did to raise funds over three and a half days. They managed an astonishing £160,000 in total. Alison herself raised £2000 (Rs 224,859) from friends and relatives supporting her sponsored bike ride. The donations went to Burns Violence Survivor Nepal (BVSNN) and will be used for the care of burn patients in Bir Hospital and other government hospitals.

## One woman's bike ride will be a balm for many at Bir's Burns Unit

"It got extremely tiresome at times," Alison confesses. "I thought only Nepal had hills, apparently England does too." But the spirit of her friends back in Bir Hospital kept her going.

Alison has been working for the Burns Unit in Bir Hospital since 2001. Patients

from all over the country throng the unit for its exceptionally inexpensive treatment. "It's generally marginalised people, mostly women, who come," Alison explains, adding that there are many cases of attempted suicide or domestic violence. Had it not been for the services Bir Hospital provides, the dressing, nursing and medication required to treat burns would have been prohibitively expensive for these patients. Also, the hospital provides the patients with protein-rich meals free of cost. The people who come here are usually so poor the entire family shares the free meal.

Unfortunately, the country's premier government hospital has been without a much-needed plastic surgeon for four years. This means burn victims, without the surgery needed to treat deeper wounds, not only heal more slowly but may also end up becoming disabled or disfigured.

With Alison's help, Acid Survivors Trust International (ASTI) is willing to train surgeons for the Burns Unit in Bir hospital. ASTI is a UK-based charity that recruits teams of volunteer doctors to provide medical, surgical, and other forms of professional assistance to doctors in developing countries.

If you would like to help improve the condition of burn patients in Bir Hospital, please contact [alimarston@alimarston.com](mailto:alimarston@alimarston.com), as the hospital "desperately needs help". ●

**The Himalayan**  
unstoppable

As we pull out all the stops, The Himalayan Times now comes to you loaded with Specials everyday. Spanning the gamut of life, your daily is loaded with something exclusive for everyone. Easy to expect nothing less when you've accepted the unstoppable.

Specials

- Sunday - Shopping Plus - info, bargains, discounts, destinations
- Monday - Hi Tech Plus - technology and gadgets
- Tuesday - Health Times ; Medical Board - Nepal's best doctors respond to queries ; Wheels - everything automobile
- Wednesday - Campus Plus - collegiate life ; Appointments - careers and jobs
- Thursday - School Times - everything kids should know
- Friday - Green - environment matters
- Saturday - Property Plus - weekend two pager focusing on real estate



# Watching Israel

The Israeli film fest wasn't one for the brochures, but made for compelling viewing

Most of us seated in the Russian Cultural Center's auditorium are finding this hilarious. We're watching funky seventies Israeli film *Kazablani's* finale. That standard scene in a musical where everyone celebrates everything turning out OK, with the hero getting the girl. But here it is set to a community celebration of a Briss, the male circumcision ceremony central to the Jewish faith. Now that must be what the organisers of the Embassy of Israel's film festival meant when they said they were confident such cultural events would serve as a bridge between the people of Israel and Nepal.

Israel has drawn more column inches since the end of the Second World War than probably any other country in the world, with the exception of the United States and Russia. Everyone seems to have an opinion about

Israel, often ill-informed, and most of us know precious little about its rich culture. The 4<sup>th</sup> Israeli Film Festival, held from 16-19 November, was intended to redress that with stories from a young and outward-looking country steeped in four thousand years of religious heritage.

My education started with a look at the underbelly of Tel Aviv. Yaky Yosha's *Dead End Street*, from 1982, is a portrait of a young prostitute who is picked up unexpectedly by a cynical and exploitative film crew tasked with documenting the challenges of rehabilitation.

Danny Verete's *Yellow Asphalt* is even starker. Calm, quiet and devastating, it tells three short stories of personal tragedy, brought about by the uneasy co-existence of indigenous Bedouin tribes and Jewish settlers in the Israeli desert. The focus of

this outstanding film is firmly on women: the wailing widow whose child is run over by truckers; the German wife of a Bedouin prevented from going home by village elders; the Bedouin house-cleaner shunned by her Jewish employer-turned-lover when the affair is discovered.

These two films are certainly not tourism board material, to the credit of the organisers. Even Menaham Golan's upbeat *Kazablani* comments on the pressures of social diversity, something as relevant for Israel as for Nepal. The Israeli embassy is to be commended for a thought-provoking film festival that gave Nepalis here a glimpse into their society and culture, warts and all, through the medium of what is clearly a healthy domestic film industry. Here's hoping that other embassies organise equally compelling (free) programs. ● Alexis Morcrette

# A People War in permanent exhibit

When nepa-laya published its pictorial record of the conflict in December 2006 it became an instant bestseller. A selection of the 180 photographs in *A People War* were then taken around the country in a travelling photo exhibition that was seen by a staggering 350,000 people in 32 districts.

Now, nepa-laya is teaming up with Madan Puraskar to put the photographs on permanent display at the latter's library in Patan. The exhibition centre will also feature follow-up photographs of some of the subjects of *A People War*, as well as temporary exhibits from visiting photographers from conflict zones around the world.

The exhibition will serve as a repository of war experiences and testimonies for visitors as well as an archive for literature, letters, posters and other artefacts from the Nepali conflict that lasted from 1996 to 2006.

Explains nepa-laya's Kiran Shrestha:

"We are very happy with this collaboration with Madan Puraskar and hope that a lot more people will not only view the photographs but also record their experiences and help in the healing process."

The permanent exhibit will open on Saturday, 20 November to coincide with the launch of the last book in Kunda Dixit's trilogy of books on the conflict, *People After War*. The third book follows *A People War* and *Never Again*, and also follows the subjects of the first book to find how they have coped with the legacy of war.

Says Dixit: "These are astounding stories of how people have struggled with their sorrow, survived and in many instances come out stronger. It shows the resilience and inner strength of the Nepali people."

Some photographs from *People After War* will also be touring various parts of the country for three weeks until 14 December. ●



**FOLLOW-UP:** The last in nepa-laya's trilogy of the conflict, *People After War*, is being launched on Saturday and pictures from this collection will be part of a permanent exhibition at Madan Puraskar from Saturday onwards.

Nepali Times is excited to announce a new feature on our website – two new blogs. For a continuous update of news in Nepal, visit The Brief – this blog summarises news events in Nepal as they happen. Now you no longer need wait until Friday to get your news from the Nepali Times.



Visit Kunda Dixit's travel blog East-West for a deeper understanding of the ground realities as he wanders across Nepal and abroad.

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



**Rangjung Yeshe Institute**

Buddhist Teachings, Practice and Discussion

*The Buddhist Path to Enlightenment*

Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche  
Chokling Rinpoche

Seminar  
Dec. 05 - Dec. 10, 2009  
Vajrayana Empowerments  
December 11, 2009

Location  
Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery  
The Big White Monastery  
Boudhanath, Kathmandu

Registration: December 04 at the monastery, 10:00 to 15:00.  
Seminar Begins: December 05 at 9:00 am Saturday  
Contact: 4470788

US\$ 80 for 6-day seminar and empowerments.  
All proceeds go to the monastery.



रेडियो कार्यक्रमको आदान-प्रदान  
**नेटवर्क हाइवे**

हरेक दिन बिहान र बेलुका साढे ६ बजेदेखि ७ बजेसम्म



Communication Corner Pvt. Ltd. Broadcast Office  
Kupondole, Lalitpur, Tel: 5546277 Sanepa, Lalitpur, Tel: 5551716

Fax: 977-1-5549357, P.O.Box:6469, E-mail: [info@unn.com.np](mailto:info@unn.com.np), URL: [www.unn.com.np](http://www.unn.com.np)

रेडियो तरङ्ग १०७.६  
पोखरा

फरक परिवेश  
फरक संस्कार  
फरक भूगोल

उज्यालो ९० नेटवर्क  
सानेपा

रेडियो चितवन ९४.६  
रत्ननगर

अब सधैँका साथी

## ABOUT TOWN

## EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **A People War**, permanent photo exhibition, Sunday-Friday at Madan Puraskar, Patan Dhoka.
- ❖ **'Unfold invention'**, exhibition of paintings by Govinda Sah Azad at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, till 23 November, 11.00AM-5.00PM, 4438979
- ❖ **Exhibition 2009 of Nepalese Buddhism and Hinduism Art Painting** by Sudarshan Suwal at Summit Hotel, Kupondole, till 30 November

## EVENTS

- ❖ **Whatever Works**, movie screening at Lazimpat Gallery Cafe, 26 November, 6PM, 4428549
- ❖ **Spanish Fiesta**, at the Mirabel Resort Hotel in Dhulikhel, 28 November, 12PM onwards, 4439584, reservations required
- ❖ **Nepali Art: In Present Scenario**, documentary screening, 28 November, 2.30-3.30PM and 5-6PM, Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka, 5553767
- ❖ **Kathmandu Chorale**, a winter concert at The British School, Jhamsikhel, 12 Dec, 3.30PM and 6PM
- ❖ **Patan Press Club** meets every Thursday at Dhokaima Café, 6PM, 5522113
- ❖ **Himalayan Buddhist Meditation Centre**, Tai Chi 10-11.30 AM Saturday, Yoga 8.30-9.30 AM and Meditation 5-6PM weekdays, Keshar Mahal Marg, Thamel, 4410402
- ❖ **AWON Christmas Bazaar** with locally produced arts and crafts, 5 Dec, 10AM-3.30 PM, Hyatt Hotel, awoncom@gmail.com

## MUSIC

- ❖ **HyJazz** every Friday evening by Inner Groove at the Rox Bar, 4489362
- ❖ **Baja gaja** every Tuesday at Moksh, Pulchok, 7.30 PM onwards, 5526212
- ❖ **Live band** every Friday and rooftop bbq everyday at Kausi Kitchen, Darbar Marg, 4227288
- ❖ **Sunday Jazz brunch**, at The Terrace, Hyatt Regency with barbeque and live jazz by Inner Groove from 12-3.30 PM, 4491234
- ❖ **Live Band Sensation** every Saturday till late with Aprilrush at Rox Bar, 4489362
- ❖ **Jazz evening** at Delices de France Restaurant every Wednesday, 11AM-2PM, 4260326
- ❖ **Some like it hot**, every Friday BBQ and live music by Dinesh Rai and the Sound Minds, Rs 899 at Fusion, Dwarika's Hotel, 7PM onwards, 4479488
- ❖ **Happy cocktail hour**, ladies night on Wednesday with live unplugged music at Jatra Café & Bar, Thamel, 5-7PM
- ❖ **Nepali Ghajals** and songs at D'Lounge Beijing Duck Restaurant, every Thursday 6.30 PM onwards, 4468589
- ❖ **Rudra Night** live fusion music by Shyam Nepali every Friday, 7PM at Gokarna Forest Resort, 4451212

## DINING

- ❖ **Thanksgiving Celebration**, at K-Too Beer & Steakhouse, Thamel, 26-28 November, 4700043
- ❖ **Live continental BBQ Fiesta**, exclusive BBQ Dinner at Splash Bar & Grill, Radisson Hotel, from 6.30-10.30PM everyday
  - ❖ **Global flavours** at the casual table for thin-crust pizzas, fruity hookahs, brewed coffees & desserts, 4254809
  - ❖ **Chocolate, Coffee and Caramel**, every evening at The Lounge, 4.30-6.30PM, 4491234
  - ❖ **Wine and cheese**, every Friday & Saturday at The Lounge, 5-8PM, 4491234
  - ❖ **A cafe's cafe**, Dhokaima Café, Patan Dhoka, 5522113
- ❖ **Jazzbell Café**, relaunched at Jhamsikhel, TGIF, 10% discount all day, happy hour 6-8PM, 2114075
- ❖ **The Corner Bar**, 5-7PM, 3-11PM, Radisson Hotel Kathmandu, 4411818
- ❖ **Al Fresco**, for homemade pasta, steak and freshwater trout, Soaltee Crown Plaza, 4273999
- ❖ **Kakori**, for biryanis, curries and kebabs, Soaltee Crown Plaza, 7-10.45PM
- ❖ **Chez Caroline** for French and Mediterranean cuisine, Babar Mahal Revisited, 4263070
- ❖ **Mediterranean cuisine** every Friday from Greece, Italy and the Middle East at The Café, Hyatt Regency, 4491234
- ❖ **Teppanyaki** meat items and garlic rice at Le Restaurant, Gairidhara, 4436318
- ❖ **Plat Du Jour** at Hotel Shangri-La, Lazimpat, Rs 600, 4412999
- ❖ **Reality Bites**, The Kaiser Café, Garden of Dreams, operated by Dwarika's Group of Hotels, 9AM-10PM, 4425341
- ❖ **Starry night barbecue** at Hotel Shangri-La with live performance by Ciney Gurung, Rs 999, at the Shambala Garden, every Friday 7PM onwards, 4412999
- ❖ **Himalayan Rainbow Trout** at Hotel Yak and Yeti, Darbar Marg, 4248999
- ❖ **Tiger for Breakfast**, breakfast everyday at 1905, Kantipath, 4215068
- ❖ **Stupa View Restaurant**, for vegetarian creations & clay oven pizza at Boudha Stupa, 4480262
- ❖ **Gokarna Forest Resort** for a variety of sizzlers at Tripti bar, 4451212

For inclusion in the listing send information to editors(at)nepalitimes.com

## Quest Entertainment



Avantika (Kareena Kapoor), a psychology professor in New York, decides to make her way back to India to be with her ailing father. She temporarily finds work at the prestigious Delhi University and meets Ehsaan Khan (Saif Ali Khan), a substitute teacher there. Ehsaan's charm is irresistible and despite reservations about Ehsaan being a Muslim, Avantika's father agrees to their wedding. Avantika and Ehsaan get married and leave to start a new life in New York in a conservative Muslim society. Her changed lifestyle is a shock to Avantika, and her life turns upside down once she is warned not to trust anyone.

Call 4442220 for show timings at Jai Nepal  
www.jainepal.com

काम सानो ठूलो भन्ने हुँदैन । पसिनाको कुनै रङ र जात पनि हुँदैन । काम गरेर खान लजाउनु पनि हुँदैन । चोरेर, ढाँटेर, छलेर, लुटेर खान पो लजाउनुपर्छ । जो जहाँ रहेर जुन काम गर्छ ऊ त्यसैमा रमाउनुपर्छ, गौरव गर्नुपर्छ र समर्पित भएर गर्नुपर्छ । काम नै शक्ति हो, भक्ति हो र मुक्ति हो । कामको इज्जत गरौं, पसिनाको सम्मान गरौं ।

नेपाल सरकार  
सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय  
सूचना विभाग

**POWER LUNCH**  
@ AQUA JAVA zing

**Veg: 450/-**  
**Non Veg: 550/-**

Glass of Wine/Mocktail/Cocktail of the day  
Exotic Salad buffet with choice of dressings  
Soup of the day with Hot Garlic Bread  
Sizzling Veg Fajita (choose any 1)  
( garden fresh veggies/paneer steak/ chipotle tofu skewers )  
OR  
Sizzling Non Veg Fajita (choose any 1)  
(grilled chicken/baked chicken/paneared chicken.)  
Dessert Platter

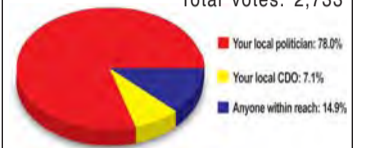
12:00 PM - 10:30 PM  
THAMEL  
OPPOSITE : NEPAL INVESTMENT BANK  
1st FLOOR  
01-4254809

\*conditions apply

Times nepalnews.com  
Weekly Internet Poll # 477

Q. Who would you slap if you had the chance?

Total votes: 2,733



Weekly Internet Poll # 478. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. What did Girija and Prachanda find in Singapore?

**fastrack eye gear**

## WEEKEND WEATHER by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

Expect foggy mornings and clear days this week. The cyclone in the Arabian Sea, which had generated cloud cover last week, has by and large disappeared. Satellite pictures show scattered, passing clouds. Daily mean temperatures are dropping by 1 degree every two weeks on average. Conclusion: hit the trails, the mountains will be clearer than ever.



## RECIPES

by GRAHAM SYDNEY

## 'Tabouleh'

This middle eastern salad can be varied by adding almost anything you want. Try variations like adding chopped chicken, shrimps, smoked salmon, sautéed mushrooms, feta cheese, grated carrot, finely chopped green peppers or roasted vegetables  
(Serves 6-8)

1-1½ cups	couscous
½ cup	orange juice
½ cup	olive oil
½ cup	cold water or vegetable stock
4 tablespoons	lemon juice
2 cups	roughly chopped raw spinach
2 cups	roughly chopped rocket
1 cup	finely sliced spring onion
1 cup	roughly chopped coriander
1 cup	roughly chopped parsley
1 cup	roughly chopped celery
½ cup	toasted shaved almonds
1 teaspoon	ground cumin
½ teaspoon	ground red chilli
	salt and pepper to taste



In a large bowl mix the couscous with the orange juice, lemon juice, water, olive oil, cumin and red chilli and allow to soak for 20-30 minutes, breaking up any lumps with a fork every few minutes. Mix the spinach, rocket, spring onion, coriander, parsley, and celery together and mix in the couscous. Add the shaved almonds and season to taste with salt and pepper. Garnish with some extra shaved almonds and serve.

Summit Hotel  
Somewhere special



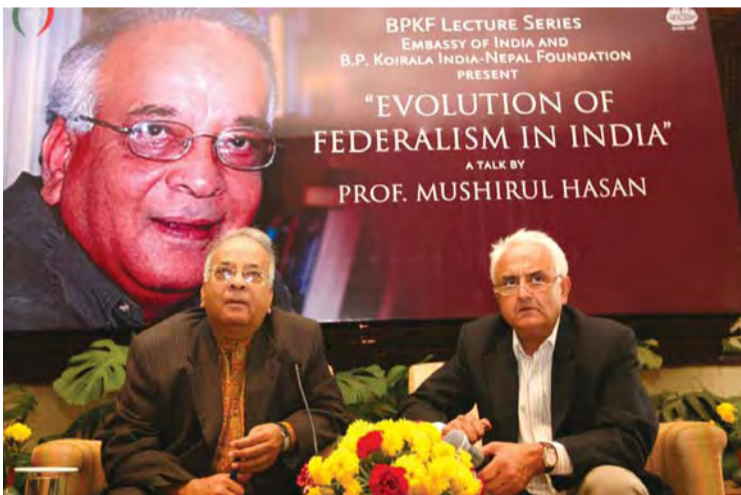
KIRAN PANDAY

**YOU STOLE MY SPOT:** Prachanda and Paras' cars side by side at Tribhuvan International Airport before their flights to Singapore on Tuesday.



KIRAN PANDAY

**LIFE AND DEATH:** Maoist protestors block an ambulance during demonstrations outside Singha Darbar on Friday.



KIRAN PANDAY

**LEARNING BY EXAMPLE:** Himal Editor Kanak Mani Dixit with Professor Mushirul Hasan, who spoke on the 'Evolution of Federalism in India' at the Yak & Yeti Hotel on Tuesday.



KIRAN PANDAY

**DONE DEAL:** Prithivi Pande of Himalayan Infrastructure Fund and P.K. Choudhary of ICRA Limited shake hands on Wednesday after agreeing to a joint venture to set up a credit rating agency in Nepal.



ANUP PRAKASH

**CHAMPIONS:** Everest Bank's volleyball team lifts their championship trophy after winning the RSR Beach Volleyball 2009 at Kurintar on Sunday.

**Have you taken a stand?**  
Against added Sugar

Against added Colour | Against added Flavour | Against added Preservatives

"Hi, I am Divya. Part homemaker, part professional and a full time multi-tasking expert. Being constantly on the move, I'm always hard pressed for time and end up compromising on my food habits. I never realized the effect it had on my health till my body started complaining. I knew I couldn't change my lifestyle but I decided to take a stand against unhealthy and artificial things that were making me unfit.

That's when I introduced Réal ACTIV juices in my life. Made from select fruits and vegetables, Réal ACTIV juices are 'PURE and NATURAL' as they have NO Added Sugar, NO Added Flavour, NO Added Colour and NO Added Preservatives. They rejuvenate my energy and replenish my body with vital Nutrients and Antioxidants.

So, pick up a pack today and **LIVE ACTIVE- LIVE HEALTHY.**

**ANTIOXIDANT-RICH JUICES**  
Activ Orange Carrot 1 Glass = 100% RDA of Betacarotene\*  
Activ Orange 1 Glass = 100% RDA of Vitamin C\*

**REFRESHING COOLER**  
Activ Apple 1 Glass\* = Juice of 4 Apples

0% ADDED SUGAR  
100% TASTE

\* 1 Glass = 230ml. RDA = Recommended Dietary Allowances. The % RDA are approximate values. The comparison here is made with -Woman, moderate work.

Apple | Orange | Orange Carrot | Cucumber Spinach | Beetroot Carrot

For more information, log on to [www.dabur.com](http://www.dabur.com)

**Kathmandu**  
21st Nov, 2009 onwards  
Madan Puraskar, Patan Dhoka  
Co-organiser:  
Madan Puraskar

**Itahari**  
23rd - 24th Nov, 2009  
Itahari Nagarpalika Hall  
Local Partner:  
Youth Media Centre

**Ilam Bazar**  
26th - 27th Nov, 2009  
DDC Hall  
Local Partner:  
FNJ - Ilam

**Damak**  
29th - 30th Nov, 2009  
Red Cross Hall  
Local Partner:  
Shree Himalaya Higher Secondary School

**Hetauda**  
2nd - 3rd Dec, 2009  
Palpasa Hall  
Local Partner:  
FNJ, Makwanpur  
Narayani Transport Entrepreneurs Association

**Kawasoti - Nawalparasi**  
5th - 6th Dec, 2009  
Khanepani Hall  
Local Partner:  
Young Star Club  
Kumarwanti Multiple Campus

**Nepalgunj**  
8th - 9th Dec, 2009  
Bheri Technical School Hall  
Local Partner:  
FNJ, Banke  
Nepal Sports Journalist Forum, Nepalgunj  
Antaral, Nepalgunj

**Tansen, Palpa**  
11th - 12th Dec, 2009  
Bal Mandir, Palpa Durbar  
Local Partner:  
FNJ, Palpa

**युद्धपछि जनता**  
परिवर्तनका अवस्थाहरू

लडाइँमा जनता, फेरि यस्तो नहोस् र युद्धपछि जनता पुस्तकबाट चुनिएका चित्रहरूको

**फोटो प्रदर्शनी यात्रा**  
PHOTO EXHIBITION TOUR

Images from A People War trilogy  
(A People War, Never Again, People After War)

६ - २० मङ्सिर २०६६ 21st Nov - 12th Dec, 2009

**PEOPLE AFTER WAR**  
Nepalis live with the legacy of conflict

Envisioned by  
Kunda Dixit | कुन्द दीक्षित

**nepa-lyaj**  
[www.nepalaya.com.np](http://www.nepalaya.com.np)

# Gleneagles Summit

Didn't Girjau just go to S'pore on Monday, and isn't he returning on Sunday? Don't PKD and GPK get together every other day at Maharajganj anyway? And each time after every meeting don't they express their commitment to resolve their differences by forging yet another high-level political mechanism to break the deadlock? Then what was the need for a **Singapore Summit**? Is there something even beyond the Ass' surveillance radar going on here?

Or did something path-breaking really happen on the seventh floor VIP room at Gleneagles Hospital? We will know only if the govt indeed falls as Awesome predicted as soon as he got back. If it doesn't, then we could legitimately ask who paid for the Maoists' roundtrip on Royal Silk Class and who paid for GPK's Learjet air ambulance.

ॐ

The bizarre nature of the Singapore shuttle has set a lot of tongues wagging and a lot of speculation flying about why Singapore. OK, Prof Muni is a visiting faculty member at LKW but does he have to be a facilitator for a secret power-

sharing pow-wow? That seems to be stretching it, and methinks the professor is floating that rumour himself to boost his image as **kingless Nepal's kingmaker**. Besides, GPK and PKD are united by their common interest in weakening Makunay, their mistrust of the Indians and the shared allergy for President Ram Baron. They don't really need an ex-JNU prof to expedite things, therefore.

ॐ

So that leaves us with the only possible explanation for the Gleneagles Summit: the self-importance of these two leaders. With eternity staring at him in the face, GPK is finally worried about his legacy. The image of the great statesman that he cultivated during 2006 has now been whittled away by his later opportunism and willingness to sleep with the enemy just so his dotter could be deputy PM. The most unpopular leader in Nepal after king G just got more unpopular and the old man wants one last chance to **launder his reputation** by fixing the political deadlock. We would never be in the soup we are in now if we only had let Girjau be president last year. He took it out on all of us, and still hasn't quite forgiven us.

ॐ

Now there is noone left to blame, and he wants to fix things before he goes. And Makunay must be feeling his days are numbered cos he just named Cousin Bikupa as consul general to Hong Kong.

ॐ

One has to hand it to the Maobaddies, the comrades are serious about corruption control. And what an ingenious way they have found to go about it. Those who bemoan the delay in passing the budget miss the point. Since so much of the budget is embezzled, by not letting parliament function to ratify the budget, the Maoist have removed the biggest source of corruption in the country. If there is **no budget**, there can be **no corruption**, hoina?

ॐ

If the Mule hadn't actually seen the circular Dfid sent out to its partners recently, it would never have believed it. With a new surge in Baddie extortion being reported nationwide, the department fell over backwards to justify it by saying by way of preamble: "we have to **understand that the UCPN-M have expenses** and have to take care of their cadre" or words to that effect. With an agency

from a democratic country that would never tolerate political violence on its own soil justifying extortion here, who needs enemies?

ॐ

Here's this week's most interesting vacancy ad. It's sure to set off a stampede outside the Norwegian embassy for a **Specialist Visa**.

#### WANTED

Nepali Brahmin Priest  
Recently resettled Bhutani

refugees in Alta, Norway, need a Brahmin priest pronto to officiate all annaprasans, bratmans and bihays. Should be a god-fearing vegetarian who can read the stars of the northern hemisphere and work for extended periods above the Arctic Circle. Interested candidates should apply with references from all three political parties.

ass(at)nepalitimes.com



**top of the world coffee**  
November 2009 - Three New Products!

**(1) Coffee Lover's Holiday Sampler Pack**  
A great personal or gift item, packed in a unique lokta (traditional Nepali paper) box, for celebrating the holidays...in Nepal or abroad.

Buy now for US Thanksgiving, Christmas & New Year 2010!

**(2) Thai Raming Coffee**  
A delectably smooth nuanced Grade A coffee hailing from the Thai highlands north of Chiang Mai.

A great "primer" for your possible winter trip to Thailand?

**(3) New Flavours**  
Caramel Swirl, English Toffee & Toasted Almond

For guaranteed freshness order on-line at:  
**www.topoftheworldcoffee.com**  
Free home & office delivery...no credit card required!

**"Placing Nepal on the World Map for Quality Coffee"**



**S.B. FURNITURE**

**TRIZZ** NEW COLLECTION 2010  
MIX YOUR LIFE, MIX YOUR DESIGN,  
MODERN CONTEMPORARY STYLE

**S.B. FURNITURE SHOWROOM**  
**S.N.JOSHI & SONS COMPANY PVT.LTD.**  
Patan Hospital Road, Lagankhel, Lalitpur  
Tel: 5004047 Fax: +977-1-5524697  
E-mail: sbfurniture@snjoshi.com.np

