

NEPALI Times

#586

6 - 12 January 2012

16 pages

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Vote banks on river banks

After demolishing large parts of the city to widen roads, the municipality and government have trained their sights on Kathmandu's squatter settlements like this one on the banks of the fetid Bagmati. Politicians settled supporters on the floodplains and public land in Kathmandu over the past 20 years to pad up vote banks, occupy prime real estate and muster numbers for street demonstrations. Many in the slums are millionaires with other houses and property in the city, and they now have so much political clout no politician dare evict them.

Investigative report by Dewan Rai p12-13



BIKRAM RAI

Editorial p2

Professional saboteurs out to deliberately wreck Nepal's economy could not have done a better job than what our rulers have with the energy emergency

"Hello 102" p4

A voluntary group is upgrading Kathmandu's ambulance service and saving lives

Strictly Business p5

by Ashutosh Tiwari

Our PhD prime minister is fond of symbolism



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THE POWER TO CHANGE

It is hard to remember a winter in urban Nepal that was bleaker than this one. Till this time last year, if there was no power people could at least fire up the diesel generator. Now there is no diesel, either. Nor petrol. Nor LPG.

Industries have ground to a halt, productivity is down, transportation is crippled, it's a miracle this country is still functioning. The only explanation is that long-suffering Nepalis are so used to hardships they take each day as it comes. Survival takes up all their energy, and there isn't any left to protest. Successive politicians of every hue have taken advantage of this.

The energy crisis mainly affects the urban middle class, which is now getting a demonstration of what life is like for a majority of the population. After all, 80 per cent of Nepalis still depend on burning biomass to meet its energy needs. But unless Nepal's politicians set in motion short- and long-term solutions to the energy emergency, the economic repercussions on politics of a prolonged energy crisis will ultimately unseat them. Unfortunately, in their political lexicon 'power' only means political control, it doesn't include electricity.

Let's face it, it's not original anymore to complain about fuel lines. It has become hackneyed to bemoan 16-hour daily power rationing in a country that has one of the highest hydropower generation capacities per capita. So, Nepalis on gas station queues are resorting to black humour: "I burned the petrol that was there to look for petrol that wasn't there."



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

There will be a tipping point when the jokes will turn to anger, just like it has this week in Pakistan, Nigeria and Chile.

The electricity shortage is the result of colossal and chronic bungling by successive governments that squandered a god-given resource. And the kleptocracy fattened itself from the government's monopoly on the import of petroleum products. Even professional saboteurs paid to systematically wreck the economy could not have done a better job than what Nepal's rulers have achieved.

There are countries around the world with massive oil reserves, but remain poor because of state capture by an unaccountable and corrupt leadership. Nepal is different, it has no oil but is still mired in poverty and corruption because a rent-

seeking political class sucks the oil and power utility dry.

The conflict is often blamed for today's power cuts. But the war ended five years ago and precious little was done so supply kept up with demand growth. Petroleum is going to get more scarce and more expensive, yet we have no strategy to lessen the economy's dependence on imported oil. Borrowing billions from the Provident Fund to pay the Indians is not going to solve the problem of petrol lines.

To be sure, there have been politicians who took the bull by the horns. The previous Power Minister Gokarna Bista was one such do-er. If the Jhalanath government hadn't come to grief, Bista had plans in place at NEA to make this winter less dark. And the wisest decision any previous government made

was to introduce parity in diesel and kerosene prices despite pressure from fuel adulterers within NOC and among private dealers.

No matter what we do, the power shortage is here to stay for another five years. Question is, does the government have the political will to make necessary policy changes so that Nepal Investment Year will attract investors and capital into this sector in 2012? As for fuel, the first step would be break the NOC's monopoly on imports.

Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai would do well to spend more time on organising this, than to distract everyone with removing statues of kings, changing the calendar, or widening roads on which there is no fuel to drive.

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

WHY INVEST?

As the editorial ('Why invest in Nepal Year 2012?', Editorial, #585) correctly points out corruption is so deeply entrenched in our system that it's almost impossible for an honest person to prosper in Nepal. So at a time when the country is being governed by cheaters, looters, and murderers, it makes little sense to expect foreign and domestic companies to invest in Nepal. Also what have we done so far to resolve our problems? Nothing, we just talk about democracy, extension of CA and elections. However, I feel that what Nepal really needs at the moment is a strong dictator who can bring the guilty to books and punish them. Once the mess is cleaned up, then we can start to think realistically about Investment Year.

Kali Prasad Nepal

• This is a well written editorial, however, I disagree with your analysis of Secretary Sudha Sharma. Despite having so much power at her disposal and the ability to bring about positive changes, Sharma chose to remain a silent observer. She complained and quit only after the damage was done.

Himal

• Advice to Baburam Bhattarai: Marxism, Leninism, Maoism and Stalinism are failed ideologies. Remove their photos from the walls of offices. Learn from Deng Xiao Ping and convince the Old Guards about reforms. Maybe then we will get foreign investors.

DG

• Why would I want to invest my money in Nepal so filthy politicians can get richer? No way Jose. Baburam, in spite of your PhD, you are still harping on FDI with 16 hour daily power cuts. I will advise everyone not to invest in Nepal until the corruption is tackled head on.

Mohan Prasad Acharya

• Our poor FDI statistics must make bankers like Mr. Pandey cringe ('Investing in the future', Siddhant Raj Pandey, #585). Given our vast natural resources, Nepal had a comparative advantage in hydropower, but we have failed to attract investments even in this sector. So attracting investment in other areas will be very tough.

NepaliEconomy.com

• Political and macro-economic stability, protection of private property, financial market development and rule of law are basic requirements for an effective market ('Bye-bye NTY, hello NIY, Paavan Mathema, #585). So far these four pillars have been absent in Nepal and government assurances have been limited merely to words. Our PhD prime minister needs to get his act together quickly if he wants NIY 2012 to be even minimally successful.

Bikendra Shamsher

THE LAST STRAW

If the CA was truly a sovereign and supreme body, then it would have proved its legitimacy through political means and not through the judiciary ('The last straw', Rubeena Mahato, #585). This CA has lost its legitimacy and a constitution drafted by such a body will always be questionable. The Supreme Court is the only remaining body that can interpret the constitution and it has more often than not done a good job at it, including this time. The sad thing for us people is that even if a fresh election takes place, not much change can be expected in the structure of the legislature. The political and social structures have been so corrupted and politicised that the amount of popular will has been rendered irrelevant to how this country will be governed.

Ushaft

• Thank you Rubeena Mahato for speaking on behalf of millions of Nepalis. However, ordinary Nepalis are equally responsible for this predicament. We quietly endure the atrocities of our corrupt and incompetent

politicians. We get the government we deserve and deserve the government we get.

BNS

• Kudos Rubeena Mahato, your articles in the NT are always a refreshing blend of fresh-faced candour and common sense. Things aren't going to change with less than five months to go for CA extension. A fresh election with a new mandate is the only option after 28 May. Maoist coercion and a crisis of legitimacy in Nepal's political mainstream make any election in 2012 an all-but-foregone conclusion and the Maoists will very likely carry this election by a larger margin than before. If there is any silver lining in that particular cloud, it is that Nepal's unique geopolitical exigencies are seldom kind to any political force that seems poised to establish monopolistic hegemony over every other political element in Nepal. The king learned this lesson with rather badly-burnt fingers in 2006. Cold winds blowing from both North and South are early warning signs that the Maoists are due for the same lesson.

John Kelleher

• Bravo Rubeena jee, for your hard hitting article. I wish the Nepali Times had provided opportunities to voices like yours much earlier, rather than allowing people like CK Lal to preach their useless philosophies. It seems that at last, guilt ridden NT has started to speak out.

Eklavya Sharma

ETHNIC AID

I feel like Bahuns and other 'high' caste people are jealous. ('Ethnic aid', translated from Nepal magazine, #585) Because of aid, indigenous people know more about their rights and know how to ask for rights. Is that bad? The upper caste is always looking for opportunities to criticize funding, hoping that the funding would stop and indigenous people would be pushed to the sidelines and the status-quo be continued.

NT

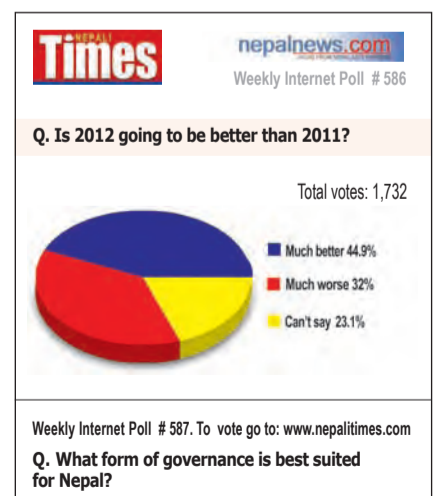
• We should have taken some lessons from India while writing our constitution. In India, the desire for a constitution sprung from the land itself, unlike ours where foreigners want a share of the pie and are racing to 'sponsor' our constitution. Why are they being allowed to play such big roles in our domestic matters?

DG

BEND IT LIKE SAGAR

Sagar Thapa's free kick was remarkable, but the hoopla surrounding Nepal's entry into the semi-finals of SAFF championship was rather pointless ('Bend it like Sagar', #585). SAFF countries have the lowest rankings in FIFA as evidenced by lopsided defeats when South Asian teams compete with countries outside the region (Jordan 9, Nepal 0). For Nepali football to truly dominate SAFF and other championships, it has to practice with more superior teams from South East Asia (like Burma, Thailand and Vietnam) and Middle East (like Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia). Only then will it be possible for our players to put up a fight with top FIFA teams from Japan and South Korea. Until then we will have to reserve the label of "resurgent" and "impressive".

Mohan



Final showdown

It does not matter whether the cat is black or white as long as it is accountable and ensures stability



BY THE WAY

Anurag Acharya

The momentum gained by the peace process in the last few weeks of 2011 carried over into the new year. The Baburam Bhattarai government is making final preparations to finally decommission the Maoist camps, and has instructed the Nepal Army to make necessary arrangements to integrate regrouped ex-guerrillas.

So far so good on the peace process. It is on the constitution that the real debates have begun. The parties have locked horns over whether we should have a presidential or parliamentary system, and the kinds of federalism. The debate has spilled over into the op-ed pages of mainstream media.

The Maoists want a directly-elected executive president while the Nepali Congress is pushing to retain a Westminster-style parliamentary system. But, in what is a classic case of negation theory, leaders on both sides are furnishing arguments in their own support by pointing towards the loopholes in other models. This approach doesn't just make a compromise impossible, it glosses over the fact that no system is flawless. Rather, it is



BIKRAM RAI

the viability of a system in a given political landscape and self-correcting mechanisms that determine success or failure of any model.

Some are convinced that the only reason we should not have a directly elected executive is because Pushpa Kamal Dahal has shown signs of megalomania before and may take over total power. Those in favour of an executive president, however, warn about the dangers of reverting back to 'failed' parliamentary democracy.

What both sides don't admit is that the models they propose have their own loopholes. In fact, a brief recap of history shows that there are examples of successes and failures of both models. An executive president in the United States may have provided stability and strong leadership, but in Russia, Cambodia and Sri Lanka it has undermined democracy. Similarly, parliamentary system may be successful in Australia, but has bred corruption and political instability in India.

The success or failure of a system depends on political culture, a strong role for an aware citizenry acting as watchdog, and a vibrant free press ensuring accountable political leadership.

The political parties are racing against time, trying to avoid a double jeopardy of constitutional void and judicial contempt in the wake of the Supreme Court verdict on non-extension after 31 May. So, it would not be surprising if they agree on a compromised 'French Model' which provides for both an elected executive and a parliament. But there is no assurance that the lowest common denominator will succeed either, because it will have two overlapping power centers that can lead to a disastrous and paralysing power struggle.

Those who see the threat of totalitarianism as the reason to reject an executive president should remember that it was a constitutional head who took over this nation not long ago. Just to be on safer side this time, may be the parties should agree on downsizing the national army instead.

Here are some workable compromise plans:

- A parliamentary system which ensures a minimum tenure to the elected government with provision of calling candidates back to their constituencies.
- An executive president with non legislative powers, effective impeachment provisions and well-defined emergency powers.
- Declaring fundamental laws of the constitution like freedom of expression and the right to peaceful political dissent as sacrosanct.

It does not matter what form of governance we adopt as long as it is accountable and promotes political stability. The Nepali people are past caring, they just want their lives to get better. 🇳🇵

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Nepali olive makes the grade

But German promoter finds a lot needs to change for Nepal to entice more foreign investors like himself

BRITTANY SEARLE

The government has declared 2012 as Nepal Investment Year, but if the experience of Hartmut Bauder is anything to go by, there won't be too many foreigners wishing to invest in Nepal.

Bauder (pictured, right) was working for the German multinational, BASF in India where he married a Nepali and moved here in 1985. He retired to the country that captured his heart and set up Himalaya Plantations to propagate olive oil, which he felt is an ideal agro-industry for Nepal.

Many thought Bauder was

crazy, and told him so. Still, he set up his plantation in Chitlang of Makwanpur and nurtured every sapling in his orchard until it reached maturity.

"This was kind of a wild idea, that we grow olives in Nepal," Bauder explained this week, sitting at his home in Thaiba. "There was no know how what so ever and we learnt the hard way that it's a very difficult business."

Bauder has met obstacles every step of the way but he has proven that Nepal is an ideal place to grow olives and produce high quality olive oil, the standard of which is praised even in Italy.

"Because the soil in Nepal is so poor, washed out and

acidic there is a lot of land where olives could grow," he says. While olive oil consumption has increased in Nepal, Himalaya Plantations continues to be the only producer of Nepali olive oil, a fact which leaves Bauder dismayed.

"My intention was to show that it works, not knowing if I would ever get my money back," he says, "I was willing to run that risk. But if it worked I had hoped the government would say thank you and promote it among Nepali farmers. But nothing really happened."

Bauder's investment in Nepal's agriculture isn't restricted to olive oil. He introduced South American

alpacas to show that Nepali livestock farmers could have additional income. Alpacas are well suited to Nepal's topography and terrain and they produce high quality wool known for its warmth. In Europe an alpaca coat can cost up to 1,000 Euros.

"It was another idea; like olives, we wanted to bring something positive to the country," says Bauder, "we thought Nepal is also high altitude, there is fantastic wool, it should work." But in the absence of an official push, alpaca farming has been slow to catch on.

Despite poor crops, persistent fungus and a war that threatened both his life and livelihood, Bauder has remained loyal to Nepal. Today, Bauder's biggest problem is not the fungus that has attacked his olive trees, but the visa officers who hassle him even though he has invested Rs 40 million in Nepal over the past two decades.

"My experience is that Nepal is not really friendly to foreign investors," Bauder says, "it's very difficult to get approvals, there is lots

of unnecessary running around."

When asked if he believed Nepal Investment Year would rectify these problems, Bauder is skeptical: "I don't know how serious they are." With luck, Bauder will be pleasantly surprised by the tenacity with which the newly-constituted Nepal Investment Board pursues its cause, asking not what investors can do for Nepal but what they can do for investors.

Whatever the outcome, Bauder can enjoy the breathtaking view from his property with a sense of pride. His dedication not only proves his point, but also offers Nepali farmers new opportunities. The rest, it seems, is up to the people in power who one can only hope love Nepal as much as this German resident does. www.himalaya-plantation.com

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EXTRA VIRGIN

Following guidelines set by the International Olive Oil Council (IOOC), Himalaya Plantations' olive oil is considered 'extra virgin', the best quality olive oil in the market with below 0.8 per cent free acidity or oleic acid per 100 grams. Himalaya Plantations' oil has been tested by an official panel of nine professionals from the IOOC who examine oils according to the quality of ingredients and chemical composition. They found the Nepali olive oil to be of "excellent quality".

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Dear Leader

Our PhD prime minister is fond of symbols and signals



STRICTLY BUSINESS
Ashutosh Tiwari

The Maoist-led government never tires of talking about the ideals of democracy and development. Its three recent actions are anything but about those ideals:

Distressed industries:

Two weeks ago, the government announced that it would provide tax relief for five years to 25 distressed companies. A distressed company, by definition, is one that is going out of business for a variety of reasons ranging from bad management to bad products. In general, such a company should be allowed to exit from the market so that newer companies, set up with private money, can come in and compete in the market place. There's no sense spending money that should go for education and rural health services to prop up failed companies.

But no. Using its omniscient wisdom, the government assigned a committee to come up with a list of distressed companies. When bureaucrats and party hacks get together to create a list of distressed companies for state subsidy amounting to figures they recommend, it's anybody's guess what sort of companies with what sort of influence make the list. Politely, this is called helping out government-designated 'nationalist capitalists'. Impolitely, it's called looting the

treasury to help one's own political friends and supporters who happen to mismanage companies on the side.

Expansion without compensation:

Many people, especially those who have come to live in Kathmandu from other parts of Nepal, have hailed the government's move to widen the streets of the city. True, there is no debating that Kathmandu's traffic congestion requires a state intervention.



But whether that intervention should come in the form of sending bulldozers to demolish private homes and properties in the name of widening the roads is debatable. In most cases, the government compounded the problem by taking a needlessly hard-headed line. It gave little or no prior information to the property owners. It did not talk about providing a paisa of compensation to them, it painted all owners with the same brush, insinuating that all were members of the bourgeoisie class who had long encroached upon public land when the verifiable truth differs

from owner to owner.

Democratic niceties be damned, the government seemed to say. What matters is impressing foreign friends when they drive around in Kathmandu next year for a SAARC convention. Broadly though, the government's sledgehammer approach to demolition signals its interest in siding with what is likely to be momentarily popular than with the matter of following due process that lays down a predictable system for doing public construction.

Havel versus Kim:

On the death of communist dictator Kim Jong Il, our government found time to send North Korea a letter of condolence. But on the death of Vaclav Havel, a democrat who defied communist tyranny and led the Velvet Revolution in the former Czechoslovakia, the government stayed silent. What is one to make of this selective gesture?

That North Korea is closer to where it wants to take Nepal next? Or, that those who fight against tyranny and totalitarianism and champion the rights and the dignity of an individual are to be shunned and are not Nepal's friends?

Our prime minister, a PhD no less, is a man fond of symbols and signals. From riding a Nepal-assembled Mustang jeep to going on live radio to answer callers' questions, he signals that he is a man of the people -- a dear leader, if there is one. But if his recent signals of handing out state funds to his capitalist friends, demolishing private property without following due process, and choosing Nepal's international friends on the basis of his party's political ideology are any guide, our journey on the road to democracy and development is going to be one long and hard trek. 🇳🇵

BIZ BRIEFS



Warmth in winter

Springwood has launched its new winter collection in the market. The high-quality yet affordable winter apparels are available in various designs and colours.

Paint your dreams



Berger Nepal has re-launched Berger Galaxy, an innovative glow in the

dark paint in a do-it-yourself kit. The Galaxy pack contains a 25gm container of glowing pigment, a 75gm container of paint binding agent, 23 stencils of various shapes and a brush.

Maintenance time

Vijay Motors' annual winter free service camp will conclude on January 12. The service center is open Sunday through Friday between 10 am - 4 pm. There are special discounts on accessories and spare parts during the Free Winter Camp.

Accolades abound

For the third consecutive year, Qatar Airways won the award for 'best international travel' at the Traveller USA magazine award function. Qatar also won the 'best business class to the Middle East' category.

Going natural

Bishwanath and Sons, the authorised distributor of Shahanaz Husain herbal products, has introduced various facial kit packs in the market. Free gifts are available in the new pack.

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Nine lives

Common women with uncommon passion to help others are awarded

Over the past 10 years, Celebrating Womanhood Navadevi Awards has honored 109 ordinary Nepali women who have fought gender stereotypes and earned the respect of local communities for their selfless work.

Shrijana Singh Yonjan established the award ceremony in 2002 because she felt there were many Nepali women who have overcome personal and social obstacles to help their communities who needed to be recognised. "Usually a handful of women 'achievers' from Kathmandu who are part of the human rights and development circle

are awarded. However, common Nepali women from rural areas who have excelled, despite the lack of support are completely overlooked. We wanted to change this trend. This award has helped establish such women as role models and we hope young Nepalis take inspiration from their success stories," she told Nepali Times.

Among this year's awardees were a midwife from Solu, a radio pioneer from Myagdi, a professional swimmer, an AIDS activist from Kaski, and a woman from Dhanusha who helped lift her family out of poverty. From left to right in picture above are:

1 KARISHMA KARKI, KATHMANDU

A professional swimmer, Karishma has won 50 gold medals and numerous other awards since she started professional swimming. The 20-year-old represented Nepal in the National Games in 2004 and 2009 and participated in the Beijing Olympics in 2008. She has displayed maturity, physical and emotional strength in competitions in Nepal and abroad.

2 YAM KUMARI KC, MYAGDI

Although Yam Kumari was born into a deprived family in Myagdi district, she worked hard in school and after graduating was active in the struggle for gender equality. Recognising the importance of awareness, she went on to establish Radio Myagdi FM which broadcasts programs on women's rights and public health issues. With drug abuse becoming a problem, Yam Kumari set up the Community Development Forum which has helped decrease the rate of drug use in her village.

3 LAXMI ADHIKARI, KASKI

Founder of Ankura Single and Infected Women's Group, Laxmi has been working relentlessly to improve the lives of women with HIV and help them become self-sufficient. After her husband died of AIDS, Laxmi who is also HIV positive was ostracised by her community. Her shelter now houses nine HIV infected women, and they help in the upkeep of the centre with farming and animal husbandry. Laxmi has shown courage to overcome her personal bereavement and stigmatisation.



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4 PEMA SHERPA, SOLUKHUMBU

Pema is the first midwife in the world to regularly use the Sono Site portable ultrasound machine and has crisscrossed Solukhumbu district, travelling from village to village on foot to examine pregnant women and deliver much-needed prenatal care and detect complications so mothers can seek hospital delivery if necessary. In her more than 20 years of work, Pema has lost count of the number of women whose lives she has saved. Besides her midwife work, she has also never been afraid to raise her voice against social injustice and corruption. She dared to speak out against a corrupt food dealer in one of the hospitals in Solu Khumbu when no one else did. Pema has been recognised for the complete devotion and total commitment with which she has devoted her life to her patients.

5 DEEPA RANA MAGAR, SURKHET

Deepa lost both her limbs in an accident as a child, but has not let this deter her from helping others like her who are in need. She willed herself to lead an independent life and was determined to provide other women with opportunities to be financially self-sufficient, too. After completing high school, she worked as a facilitator at a Participatory Learning Center where she taught various income generating activities to a group of 20 women. She built on that experience and set up a women's cooperative which now has 500 members, and has generated income worth more than Rs 2,000,000.

6 SHRIJANA PRADHAN, KATHMANDU

Shrijana founded the Sipi Beauty Club 16 years ago, and is one of Nepal's leading beauticians with her own line of beauty products. She has set the standard for urban women entrepreneurs to strive for excellence, quality service and not compromise on professionalism and commitment.

7 LAXMI TIMILSINA, KAVRE

Illiterate and married at a young age into a poor farming family, Timilsina led a very difficult life. However, things turned around when she participated in an agricultural training and women's savings and loan program conducted by the Women Awareness Center in Kavre. 3 months of adult literacy classes gave her the confidence to start an agriculture school which is now a pioneer in organic farming. Currently she serves as the district coordinator of the National Committee and has been working diligently for causes which promote women's empowerment.

8 RESHMA AND MOHILAL DAS, DHANUSHA

Initially, Reshma and Mohilal Das faced tremendous hardships. They were landless, had to work on other people's farms and were struggling to pay back loans. However, their lives improved drastically after Reshma joined the Lok Pathshala project where she took literacy and social awareness classes. She learnt how to make concrete roof and floor tiles and now earns Rs 9,000 a month. She has paid off the family loan. Since she is busy earning a living, her husband takes care of household duties and even delivers her lunch. Reshma and Mohilal received this award jointly for breaking gender stereotypes, and showing what can be achieved by working as a team.

9 KAVITA POU DYAL, ARGAKHANCHI

At 65, Kavita (not pictured) looks back at a life spent in promoting Nepali literature. And at a time when the reputation of politicians is not very high, she used local politics to strive for social justice and equality. She has published seven novels, six short story books, and six song albums so far. Married when she was only nine, and having no formal education, she managed to create a niche for herself through sheer willpower. She is recognised for making a name for herself in the traditionally male-dominated field of literature.



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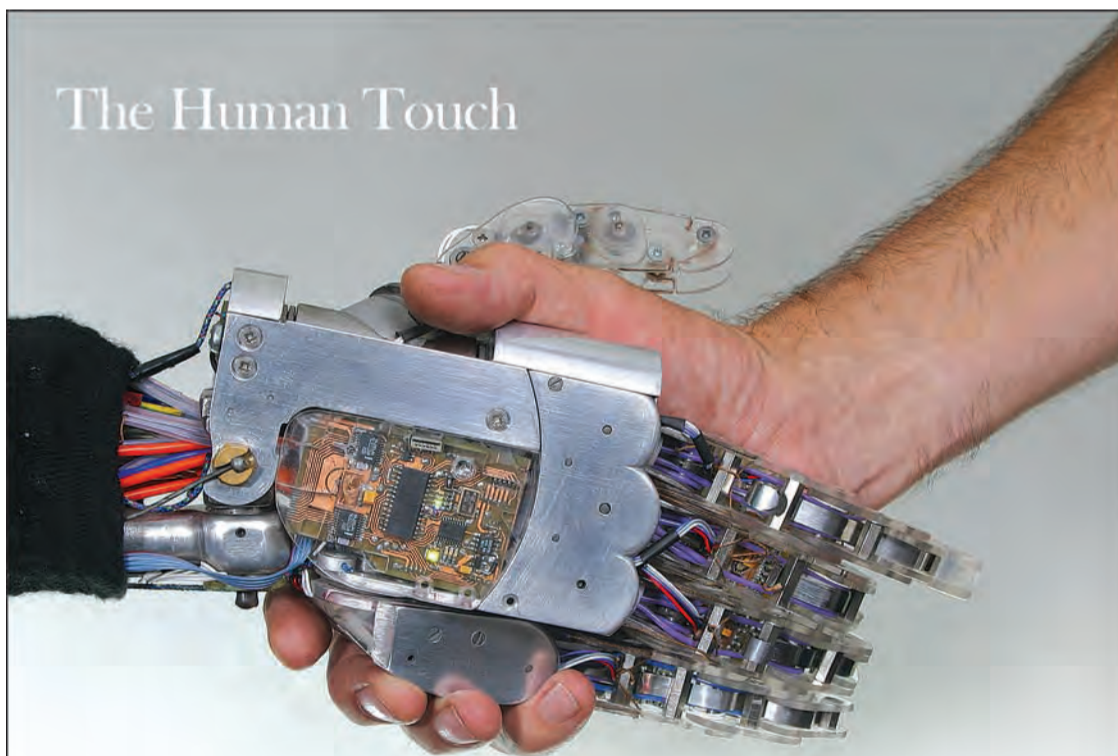
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**HIMAL
Khabarpatrika**
31 December – 14 January

REPORTS
Insecure security
Chaotic caucus
Dahal's dilemma

EVENTS



Quixote's Cove Winter Sale, buy books worth Rs 1000 and get 20 per cent off. 8 December to 8 January, 10am to 7pm, Jhamsikhel, 5536974, qcbookshop.com

Shaping Secularism, Social Science Baha presents a lecture on secularism by anthropologist Chiara Letizia. 9 January, 4pm, Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka



Pranamaya Power Yoga, Pranayama brings a month long yoga session for a healthy start to the new year. Rs 350 per class, starting from 2 January, 7am to 8pm, 1905, Kantipath, info@pranayama-yoga.com

Winter Art Camp, Artudio, The Image Park and Khushi Stationery bring you an art camp to help you learn how to paint and sketch. 31 December to 11 January, Artudio, Lazimpat, 9841408425, 9841240341

New Expressions on the Block, an exhibition of paintings by eleven artists. 21 December to 17 January, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, 4218048, 4438979, www.siddharthaartgallery.com

Beach Volleyball, don't miss the sixth Riverside Springs Beach Volleyball Tournament. 13 to 15 January, Riverside Springs Resort, Kurintar, for more information call Januka at 5544263, 9803789617

ICT Branding eXPO, get the latest gizmos and gadgets, all under one roof. 5 to 9 January, 10am to 5pm. Bhrikuti Mandap Exhibition Hall

KJC Winter Camp 2012, ten days of winter camp for children between the ages of 6 and 13 organised by Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory. 2 January to 13 January, 5013554

Hits FM Music Awards, catch the live screening of the prestigious music award ceremony. 6 January, 3pm, Nepal Television



MUSIC



Nepathya Peace Tour, Nepathya is back with its country wide tour 'Shantiko Lagi Sikchya'. 3 to 19 January, different locations in the country, 4412469, 4437893, 9851026266

Blast at the Bar, Rock Fever presents Ashesh and Nekhvam's live performance. Tickets are Rs 150, 7 January, 3pm, House of Music, Thamel

DINING

New Orleans, offers a wide variety of western dishes that are scrumptious yet healthy. We got hooked on the rosemary chicken and hamburgers. Jhamsikhel, 5522708

Cosmopolitan Café, located in the heart of Basantapur, this cozy café offers arguably the best chicken sizzler in town. Basantapur, 4225246



The Heritage Kitchen and Bar, excellent interior with delicious food, try its panna cotta and paella. Thamel

Cha Cha Café, this Japanese restaurant is popular for its spaghettis and burger steaks. Thamel



Casa de Cass, offers continental delicacies, baked goodies, brewed coffee and everything in between. Jawalakhel



Kotetsu, high quality Japanese dishes that cater to your needs and taste buds. Lazimpat



Grill Me, a haven for meat lovers, the restaurant stays true to its name. Jhamsikhel



Sol Delicatessen, a range of gourmet foods that will satiate the most refined palates. 10am to 6pm (closed on Mondays), Babar Mahal Revisited, 4216433, Soldelicatessen@gmail.com

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Tama, an assortment of traditional delicacies and old classics at an affordable price. *Gairidhara*



Rum Doodle, a hodgepodge of flavors and a must for trekkers and mountaineers. *Thamel*



Dhokaima Cafe, exquisite ambience, friendly service, cozy bar, place to see and be seen at. *Patan Dhoka, Yala Maya Kendra, 5522113*

GETAWAYS



Fulbari Resort, enjoy the scenic view as you pamper yourself with tennis, golf, drinks and dinners. *Rs 6500 per person for 2 nights and 3 days, Pokhara, 4461918, 4462248, resv@fulbari.com.np, sales@fulbari.com.np*

The Last Resort, swing into 2012 by being a part of the Amtrip Bungy or Swing Jump Event. *Rs 2700 per person for one day or Rs 4500 per person for an overnight stay, valid until December, Amtrip, Naxal, 4444690, 4444820, www.amtrip.com.np*

Meet Mrs Valentine

"Why are we given all this life if it goes unused?" Shirley Valentine, played by British actress Helena de Crespo, will ask her audience this weekend. Willy Russell's *Shirley Valentine* is a one-woman show about a middle-aged Liverpool housewife who finds herself stagnating in a lonely marriage. Her isolation stimulates the dialogues of the play but things change when her best friend wins an all-expenses-paid vacation to Greece for two. As the monologue progresses, we watch Shirley break the drudgery of cooking dinner for her husband and find herself again.



"I have performed Shirley several times, and although the play is set in Liverpool, her sentiments are universal," says Crespo. The actress has performed, directed, produced and acted in theatre, film, TV and radio in 16 countries. Having toured extensively in Europe, North and South America and South East Asia she is now in Nepal. The proceeds from the show will go to Mitrata-Nepal Foundation, a children's home that houses more than 60 children. The show will open on the Foundation's 12th anniversary. *Rs 1,200 with buffet dinner (special rates for students), 6, 7 and 8 January, 5.30 pm, Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur, Contact 9851009533, 9851046147*



SOMEPLACE ELSE

Open 365 days a year—unless of course the supreme leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea dies—the Nepali branch of Pyongyang Okryu-Gwan in Darbar Marg is not just a karaoke bar but a bona fide Korean eatery that in some ways surpasses its southern counterparts in Kathmandu.

For a few days last week, the North Korean satellite of the original Okryu-Gwan, founded in 1960 in Pyongyang, closed shop to mourn the late ruler. But since then, it's business as usual at Okryu-Gwan, where North Korean exports are not limited to cold noodles; the franchise (with exclusive

Pyongyang Okryu-Gwan

branches in Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, Mongolia, Russia and the UAE) imports its own powdered-faced waitresses, educated at schools of commerce and culinary arts, from the north side of the 38th parallel.

Dining at Okryu-Gwan is like sitting at an old-school canteen in a Soviet canton.

Anodyne tapestries of horses and tigers (hand-embroidered in North Korea our server boasted) hang on the walls. And on the far end sits a stage with a widescreen television,

where at 1pm and 8pm daily (apart from load shedding) the servers take turns at karaoke—synthesizers, cheesy montages and all. But if you're lucky, you'll dine in the privacy of a norebang or

karaoke room.

Okryu-Gwan's menu is extensive including rice cakes, cold plates, casseroles and seafood imports like eel. Common Korean staples from North and South are present like kimchi, bibimbap, and bulgogi.

Crisp and pungent, the whole cabbage kimchi is arguably the best homemade rendition of the Korean condiment, while the bibimbap, the mix-mix pot of fresh julienned vegetables, beef, rice and topped with a fried egg, is picture-perfect.

Like Picnic there are no cook-it-yourself items on the menu, despite the advertised plates of raw meats and seafood to choose from. Nevertheless, the bulgogi, or barbecued slices of beef, came



PICS: MARCO POLLO

well marinated and well done on a skillet with a side of lettuce leaves, raw garlic and onion.

At Okryu-Gwan don't miss the traditional and popular North Korean meal, raengmyon. The famed cold noodle dish is like a gazpacho or a cold consommé strewn in with sweet potato noodles, sliced cucumbers, apples, hard-boiled egg and roast beef. The server scissers into the long strands and stirs in a dollop of mustard and a splash of white vinegar before serving. The distinct flavours meld into a surprisingly appetizing treat.

It's deducible that the rise in Korean restaurants coincides with a wave of South Korean Christian missionaries in Nepal. But the phenomenon doesn't explain why Pyongyang decided to build an outlet in Kathmandu. Whatever the reason, Okryu-Gwan affords a rare taste of North Korean cuisine and hospitality. **Marco Pollo**



Off Darbar Marg, adjacent to the Yak and Yeti main entrance



Puffing away



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

Everyone says it is a bad idea to use tobacco. But just how bad is it? For starters, according to the US Department of Health and Human Services smokers have a 33 per cent lifetime chance of dying from a smoking-related cause. Smoking causes diseases in three main areas: cardiovascular, respiratory and cancer-related. While tobacco use is associated with cardiovascular deaths more than cancer deaths, there is enough evidence that tobacco causes cancer of the mouth, lungs, esophagus, kidney, bladder, pancreas, and stomach.

Tobacco smoking promotes fatty blockage in the blood vessels (atherosclerosis) which can lead to heart attacks, strokes and an entity called peripheral vascular disease. Severe peripheral vascular disease, for example, will cause pain in the legs even with ordinary walking because of restrictions in the blood supply to the

legs. Smoking is also a very important cause of chronic lung disease, rampant in our country.

Smoking also has adverse effects on both a pregnant mother and fetus. In addition, smoking delays healing of peptic ulcers and increases the risk of cataract, osteoporosis (brittle bones),



wrinkling of the skin and male impotence. There are even problems caused by passive or second-hand smoking. A meta-analysis (pooled data for analysis) of the best data has shown a 25 per cent increase in mortality associated with lung cancer, respiratory illness and cardiac diseases in people exposed to second hand smoking in households compared to households without such

exposure. Children with smoking parents have increased prevalence of respiratory illnesses. The list is endless.

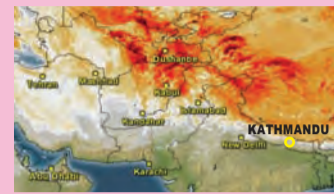
In the face of massive negative publicity against smoking, the tobacco industry has tried to improvise to maintain its profit. This tactical change by the industry is exemplified by promoting smokeless tobacco which is the fastest growing part of the tobacco industry and carries with it substantial risk for dental and gingival disease as well as oral and esophageal cancer. In Nepal, using moist snuff which consists mostly of tobacco with a scented flavor deposited between the cheek and gum is very common. This leads to gum disease, oral and pancreatic cancer as well as heart disease.

The good news is that many of these diseases can be controlled and even reversed if tobacco use is stopped. But because tobacco use is so addictive, there are counseling and behaviour change strategies including pharmacological adjuncts. But at the end of the day it is the individual who needs to be strongly motivated to kick the habit, we don't need the surgeon general anymore to tell us it is injurious.



WEEKEND WEATHER
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

The long dry spell was broken with rain and snow on New Year's day. Although farmers everywhere were joyous, there was a serious avalanche off Langtang Lirung that damaged houses and crops and trekkers had to be evacuated by choppers. We are not finished with this westerly system, though, there is lots of remnant moisture that will prolong the thick fog in Kathmandu and other valleys across the midhills. More cloud cover is expected over the latter part of the weekend in Kathmandu, although it won't be bearing rain.



FRI	SAT	SUN
17-01	16-01	12-03



BIKRAM RAI

EMPTY JARS: Gas dealers with empty cylinders protest against the shortage of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) at Khula Manch on Wednesday.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

FILL ME UP: After several hours of wait, a petrol pump in Kalimati finally begins to supply petrol to motorcyclists and cars on Wednesday evening.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

NO BUSINESS: A street venter heads home with an empty cart in Kani Bahal, Patan, following the announcement of a banda on Thursday evening.

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Feel the difference

BHRIKUTI RAI

The Americans have 911, the British have 111, Kathmandu residents can now dial 102 in an emergency, and a state-of-the-art ambulance with life-saving medical care will appear on the street outside.

Private hospitals have mushroomed in Kathmandu over the past decade, but many do not have professional and well-equipped ambulance services. Even ambulances that are on the roads do not meet minimum requirements like cardiac equipment, oxygen or emergency medicines.

A recent study by Patan Hospital revealed that only 10 per cent of patients use ambulances in emergencies. Getting the sick to hospital in private cars or taxis not only increases trauma in patients, but often leads to dead-on-arrival cases.

It was to address this crying need that a group of Kathmandu-based professionals established Nepal Ambulance Service (NAS) in April 2011. "We strongly felt Nepalis themselves can initiate professional ambulance services without seeking foreign donor funding," explains Ranjit Acharya, a founding member of NAS.

Acharya, whose full-time job is at Prisma Advertising, says NAS is an independent non-profit



PICS: BIKRAM RAI

"Hello 102"

A voluntary group is upgrading Kathmandu's ambulance service and saving lives

initiative to offer ambulances equipped with specialised life-saving equipment and trained emergency medical technicians in Kathmandu and Patan. NAS's dispatch center provides emergency pre-arrival instructions and there are 14 on-call emergency physicians for medical consultations.

Emergency personnel on NAS ambulances are trained to treat everything from spinal chord injuries, excessive bleeding, attending to breathing problems, starting IV fluids for patients in shock. NAS's general secretary, Mahesh Nakarmi, says his ambulance attendants have received specialised training in emergency medicine.

Right from its inception, NAS has received support from various corporate

houses. Golchha Organisation was among the first to donate an ambulance to NAS. "We feel that NAS is working for a great cause and believe that it will successfully address the problems of emergency medical care in Nepal," says Shekhar Golchha, director of Golchha Organisation and also a member of NAS's National Advisory Board.

NAS planned to start with five ambulances around the Ring Road and then gradually increase the number to 20 to cover the entire valley. However, only two ambulances are currently in

operation since three others are still stuck at customs. As per the law each medical institution can operate only one ambulance, and NAS has been lobbying to release the remaining three vehicles. For now, NAS is partnering with 11 other ambulance networks to handle growing demand.

NAS benefits from having professionals from various fields involved in this voluntary work.

"Members bring their unique perspective and expertise," explains Shekhar Golchha, another founding member of NAS. The monthly operational cost of the organisation is managed through financial contributions made by patrons, corporate members and board members like Golchha and Acharya.

Despite budget constraints and limited resources, members of NAS are positive about the services they have delivered so far and hope to expand their network throughout Nepal. 🇳🇵

[For more information call 4286821 or visit nepalambulance.org]



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Feel the difference

Slum millionaires

Vote bank politics is coming back to haunt the Bagmati's river bank



DEWAN RAI

The traffic is snarled on the bridge linking Kathmandu and Patan, but commuters stuck in buses and motorcycles are oblivious to the settlements below, along the banks of the fetid Bagmati.

In this netherworld of homes, stores and workshops, daily life goes on in a parallel universe where everything is transient and the future hangs in the balance. What brought the estimated 50,000 inhabitants of Kathmandu's slums here over the last two decades is a saga of political parties padding their vote banks, and occupying urban real estate in which rural migrants have been used as pawns.

The municipality and government which are already demolishing large parts of Kathmandu to widen existing roads are now training their sights on clearing illegal settlements along the Bagmati, Bishnumati, Manahara and nearly 30 other areas in the Valley where there are 2,763 households. The number of squatter

settlements has grown from 17 in 1985 to 63 today.

There had been half-hearted attempts before, but this time top leaders of the UCPN (M), UML, NC and the Madhesi Front met last month in Gorkarna to evict squatters along the Bagmati River. The Patan Appellate Court issued an interim order not to implement the plan, and the evictions have been stalled for now.

Below the Bagmati Bridge, there are more than 310 households in what is supposed to be 'UN Park', although it has nothing to do with the United Nations. Krishna Dev Yadav of the UN Park department of the municipality says: "We have tried to evict them three times, but they keep coming back."

Not all the squatters are homeless (see box). Some have property in the districts, and used political connections to have a toe-hold in Kathmandu. Land prices are so high that speculators worked with politicians to settle people so political parties got vote banks and they got prime real estate.

The government tried to work out a procedure to identify real homeless settlers last year, but it is stuck at the Ministry of



BIKRAM RAI

Physical Planning. The government even earmarked Rs 150 million last year for resettlement, but the squatters now have such political clout that no party will dare touch them.

Meanwhile, the slums have grown into townships. Shankhamul, Ramhiti Boudha, Chadani Tole, Golfutar and Khadipakha have rows of buildings made of cement blocks with electricity and water supply. The municipality has given each household a house number and residents like Pawan Gurung of Sankhamul even have receipts to prove they have been paying property tax.

The settlers below Bagmati Bridge in Thapathali were first brought in by the Maoists in 2006 for the pro-democracy movement against king Gyanendra. They have subsequently been used for political rallies like the six-day total shutdown in 2009.

"It was us who provided the numbers for the Maoist party for its show of strength in political rallies," says Dipak Rai, who leads the Struggle Committee of Squatters, "and now the same party is trying to get rid of us."

The Maoists, it turns out, were just following in

the footsteps of the UML which perfected vote-bank resettlement in Kathmandu into a fine art. There are documents to prove that as the mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Keshav Sthapit of the UML leased land to squatters in 2002 for 20 years under an agreement with the Society for the Preservation of Shelter and Habitation in Nepal, Mahila Ekata Samaj and Lumanti Support Group for Shelter in 2002.

When asked to clarify, Sthapit told us he never signed any 20-year lease agreements: "I did provide them with house numbers and identification cards for family members, but that doesn't entitle them to ownership of the land."

However, Nandu Raj Acharya of the high-powered committee for Integrated Development of the Bagmati Civilisation says the agreement is not legally binding anyway because it goes against a Supreme Court verdict on a public interest litigation filed in 2001 seeking the removal of occupants along the Bagmati floodplain.

But by now the settlers are so organised that the UN Park could not even map the area in Sankhamul because of local opposition.

The Road Department had to move its bridge construction site by 150m upstream at Buddhanagar after squatters threatened staff.

The squatters also have support and affiliations to all major political parties, so no matter which government is in power it will not take the risk of eviction, fearing a backlash.

Hukum Bahadur Lama says he had been living below the bridge for the past 20 years, and has now moved to his own house and handed over his hut to a relative. "We have been living here long before the UN Park acquired the land," said Lama, who is also president of the self-styled Nepal Sukumbasi Party.

The committee is determined to clear a 20m strip on either side of the Bagmati River to implement its pending sewage management project. But for now, other illegal settlers in core areas of the city are just too powerful to evict, even for the influential committee.

Says Mahesh Bahadur Basnet who heads the committee: "Providing an alternative is not our responsibility, we have to move the people out." 🇳🇵

Padam Kumari Lama, 80



With her ailing police husband and two toddlers, Padam Kumari first moved to Shankhamul in 1974 when they were thrown out of their rented room after they couldn't pay the rent. "We were living in rented space people kicked us around, now we have a place of our own and they are still kicking us around," she says.

Padam Kumari first put a small shack and a shop selling food stuffs and home-made alcohol. When her husband died, she worked as a domestic help and brought up her children. "Now that we are finally able to take care of ourselves, the government wants to throw us out," she says.

The hut she built 37 years ago has now been replaced by a one-storey building, the problem is that the land is designated as UN Park.

Keshav Rai, 56



Keshav Rai was a proxy NC candidate during the 1994 parliamentary election from Khotang district. The party's official candidate had him withdraw his candidacy in exchange for a piece of land in Kathmandu.

He has property in Khotang but he moved to Kathmandu. To avoid paying rent Rai and 60 others from Khotang and other districts as well decided to settle in Shantinagar and named their neighbourhood Dirghayu Tole 2001. Now, the government says he is a squatter and wants to evict them. Rai says: "I am not leaving until the government gives us alternative housing."

Changing Kathmandu

Nagarik, 30 December

नागरिक

Bhaikaji Tiwari had never expected the road expansion campaign would succeed. As the chief of the Kathmandu Valley Urban Development Planning Implementation Committee, for all these years he did not have power to move ahead with the plan until PM Baburam Bhattarai came to his support. "Kathmandu will be different now and there is no stopping it," says Tiwari. The government had proposed road expansion 35 years ago but never went ahead with the plan. "After all these years it has gained momentum and will continue until it is completed," he says. Officials say roads have often been encroached by those with political connections, which is why the road expansion plan never took off. For the first time in many years, Traffic, Urban Development, Municipality and Road Department are working in close coordination.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

Dambar Krishna Shrestha in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 14 January

हिमाल

The ongoing road expansion is a welcome move to ease the chaotic traffic of Kathmandu but the way it is being forced has created fear. As houses were bulldozed without prior notice, locals came out in protest. The government has asked the protestors to contact the concerned authority to claim compensation with evidence. The demolitions are being carried out as per the Urban Development Implementation Act 1977, but many claim their houses have been constructed as per the norms of the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC). A probe commission has been formed after the owners came out in protest. Bhaikaji Tiwari of DUDBC admits only two per cent of buildings have not followed the prescribed norms. The government, which is supposed to move the peace process has made road expansion its priority. Former Minister for Physical Planning and Works, Hisila Yami, is actively involved in the road expansion campaign. Despite holding no active portfolio in the cabinet, she presides over meetings and gives instructions.

Gonzalo's letter

Nagarik, 4 January

नागरिक

Abimael Guzman aka 'Comrade Gonzalo', founder chairman of Peru's Maoist Shining Path movement sent a message to Nepali Maoists from jail in Lima requesting them to follow the path of peace and constitution. Gonzalo also stressed that a people's democracy can only be achieved through peaceful means and not through violence. Gonzalo is currently

-serving a life sentence since he was captured in 1992 and was an inspiration for Nepal's Maoist leaders. The Shining Path insurgency cost the lives of 70,000 Peruvians in the 1980s. Gonzalo's letter has reportedly become a topic of intense debate within the Maoist Central Committee. Supporters of the Bhattarai and Dahal factions are using Gonzalo to condemn the Mohan Baidya faction and other hardliners in the party who are in favor of armed struggle.

Chitwan Parkway

Kantipur, 4 January

कान्तिपुर

The Ministry of Physical Planning and Works has decided to construct a 30 km feeder road inside the Chitwan National Park. The highway will connect Parsa and Nawalparasi district, despite strict regulations concerning infrastructure inside protected areas. The road is being built under a new map, different from the plan endorsed in the budget of the last fiscal year.

According to sources inside the department, the route has been changed under direct instruction of Minister Hridayesh Tripathi. The earlier route went through the buffer zone, but

the new route will pass through the protected area. Officials suspect foul play but project engineer Hare Krishna Shrestha, says the map was changed because the earlier route was longer which would have required building a long bridge over the Narayani. Thousands of trees will have to be cut if this road is built and the wildlife inside the park is sure to be disturbed. The Director of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Department, Krishna Prasad Acharya says: "You can't build roads inside a conservation area without permission and a proper environmental assessment." Besides, changing a plan endorsed in budget needs approval of the cabinet as well.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“There are three class within the party.”



UCPN (Maoists) leader Jaipuri Gharti in Central Committee Meeting on Tuesday

Closeup

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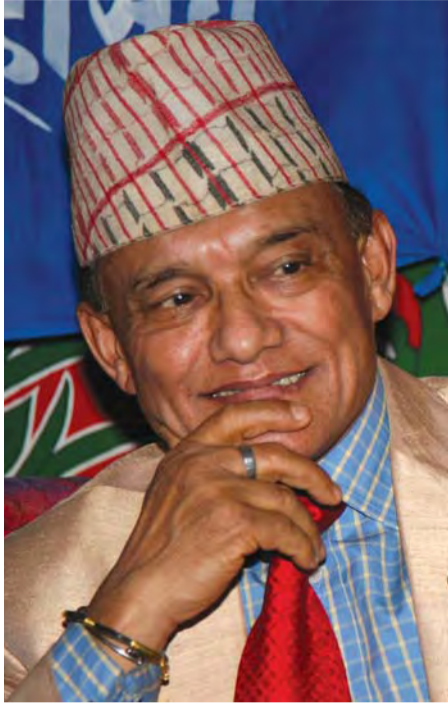
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“I will live and die in Nepal”



Interview with Rookmangud Katawal,
former Army Chief in Kantipur,
25 December

कान्तिपुर

Kantipur: So, how is life after retirement?

Rookmangud Katawal: I would like to quote Gen McArthur: “Generals never retire, neither will they be tired.” I haven’t been doing much, but haven’t been idle either.

Are you planning to launch a political party?

If our leaders go back to the jungle leaving party politics, I may think about it. What will I do opening a party? There are seven parties representing the tarai already, but look at the state of the region. Nepal has to be an independent and sovereign state, and the way we regard ethnicity and party loyalty as more important than the national

interest is wrong. I want to ask the leaders of all parties: who are you, a Madhesi, a Maoist, a Congressi or a Nepali first? I say to them, fly the national flag not your party’s flag. I am a Nepali. They can hang me or shoot me but I am not going anywhere. I will live and die on this land.

Are external factors to be blamed for our flagging nationalism?

I regularly talk to foreign envoys to Nepal. It is natural for others to be concerned when your house is on fire. This is the only foreign interest that there is in Nepal.

What do you think about the government’s decision to make a Madhesi Battalion in the Nepal Army?

It seems they want to destroy the structure of the army. The Nepal Army is a national army, it should not be divided along ethnic or regional lines. This will only take the country down the road of disintegration. The rights of the Madhesi people should be protected no doubt, but the

recruitment process should be based on free competition.

What is your take on the integration of Maoist combatants into the national army?

NA was never against integration. Our only concern was that it should follow the spirit of the Interim Constitution and the CPA. The PLA fighters are politically motivated and heavily indoctrinated. That should change. It may not be the proper word, but they should be ‘brainwashed’ for the sake of democracy and constitution.

Don’t you think the Maoists have come into the mainstream yet?

Read their manifesto. They still want the same thing they fought for, except circumstances are not allowing it. The Maoist ideology will not deliver anything. The fact is that the only reason the Maoists came to peace process was due to the army’s stance in favour of change and democracy.

Times

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Tel: 5250333, 5250845. Fascimile: 5251013
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ecofair@himalmedia.com
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ECOFAIR DETAILS

Date: February 11 and 12, 2012
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Venue: Nepal Academy Premises,
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Time: 1000 Hours until 1700 Hours

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Back to Year Zero

BRB is making real progress towards **Year Zero** by turning the clock back on Bikram Sambut and replacing it with the Gregorian calendar. During the war, the Mau Mau blew up buildings, and in govt they are continuing the demolition. Who needs diesel when there is such a Napoleonic restructuring of Kathmandu's streets? And how about replacing Tribhuvan with an idol of Comrade Yummy?



It was repeated so often in 2011 it became conventional wisdom that BRB was **pragmatic** and PKD was **dogmatic**. The way Comrade Awe-inspiring is capitulating on everything he fought for and has resolved nearly all the 200 contentious issues in the draft constitution just by snapping his fingers, shows this man is in a tearing hurry to be the executive prez and will not let his convictions get in the way. Even the dress code shows us who is the hardliner and who is the moderate. How can a man in a parrot green Salewa goose down powertex jacket be a



hardliner? Meanwhile, there is BRB who is always wearing black, has a dour demeanour, and wants to recreate the destruction wrought on Kathmandu by the Nabbe Sal quake.



We've now figured out why Brazil has decided to open an embassy in Kathmandu of all places. It's not out of solidarity for the Non-Aligned Movement, but because of a surge in bilateral trade. Nepal's imports of Brazilian chicken drumsticks has grown ten-fold in the past year because of the opening of KFC outlets in the city. And Nepali manufacturers are also gearing up to meet the demand for zillions of

crazy hats for the Football World Cup in Rio in 2014. The **Brazilian Embassy** should be located in Bhaktapur, where there is a great fan following and the entire town was festooned with Brazilian flags during the last world cup.



Just for the record, here is the latest status of the factionalism within the three factions of the Mao Buddies:

1. The PKD Faction is now divided into three sub-factions:

- a) Comrade Horrible and Comrade Ugly want Awesome to do it alone and be almighty

- b) Some comrades still want PKD to patch up with Kiran the Baidya
- c) Rain Man and others want PKD to side with BRB

2. The Baidya Faction also has three schools of thought:

- a) Com Kiran himself is now against a party split
- b) Comrade Cloudy and Comrade See Pee want to formally split
- c) Comrade Big Flop wants the party to go back to war

3. The BRB Faction is the weakest because it has only two sub-factions:

- a) One that wants Laldhoj to align with Baidya the Kiran
- b) The Other One that wants to stay with The Fierce One

(Fine Print: The above alignments are subject to change without notice and management is not responsible for the consequences.)



A Dalit is murdered in Kalikot. The Dalit caucus obstructs parliament, declares bands, brings the country to a halt. It gets the Mao-led cabinet to agree to

declare the man a martyr and release Rs 1 million compensation. But when human rights groups went to Kalikot to investigate they found out that the man was killed during a brawl at a local bhatti where a group of Baddies were drunk as skunks. The **killer** and **killlee** were both Mao Buddies. during the war, these same comrades had declared Kalikot "dry". Go figure.



Our ministers either need a crash course in English-speaking, or they need to take an interpreter on their next foreign trip so that things are not lost in translation during high-level meetings with foreign heads of state. One of the reasons Wen Jiabao called off his visit was because Kaji Naran Kamred came across as bluntly ordering Premier Wen around in Pidgin. Our Farang Ministry should replace bodyguards with Nepali to Chinese interpreters on future visits.



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