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BIKRAM RAI

Patan's literary jatra

The historical Patan Darbar Square is hosting a first-time literature festival over the weekend. More than 30 well known national and international writers will hold forth on languages, minority voices, journalism, politics, history and books, books, books. They include Akshay Pathak, Alka Saraogi, Jug Suraiya, Namita Gokhale, Shazia Omar, Tarun Tejpal, William Dalrymple, Mohammed Hanif and our own Abhi Subedi, Anbika Giri, Naryan Wagle, Rabi Thapa and Sanjeev Uprety, among others.

p8-9 Full program of the Kathmandu Literary Jatra,

p11 Rabi Thapa on reading between the lines at the Jatra,


Next week, a young Nepali woman with cerebral palsy, whose only way of communicating is by writing with her foot, is being awarded Nepal's most prestigious literary prize, the Madan Puraskar

p6-7

p16 The Nepali translation of Ani Choying Drolma's auto-biography, *Singing for Freedom*, titled *Phoolko Ankham* is being launched later this month p11


p17 Collection of Wayne Amtzis poetry, *Quicksand Nation*, looks at Nepal's war in the context of the unhappy peace that preceded and followed it


INSIDE



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A FUSION SO EXQUISITE
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AND CONNOISSEURS.





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REALITY CHECK

A cross-section of Nepalis we spoke to on a swing through central Nepal this week were unanimous in their support for Baburam Bhattarai. After months of paralyzing deadlock, there is hope that the new prime minister's intellec and integrity will help unknot the hopelessly tangled politics.

Ordinary Nepalis are clutching at straws. This positive perception of Bhattarai, even by those not traditionally well-disposed to the Maoist party, stems from a feeling that desperate times call for desperate measures. Most are willing to overlook the lack of transparency in the four-point agreemen with the Madhesi front that allowed Bhattarai to be propelled to Singha Darbar. They brush aside the Maoist support for the Madhes autonomy proposal as politically expedient, and they are even willing to ignore the clause on the general amnesty to those accused of wartime atrocities. This desire to see Bhattarai succeed has prompted many activist wallahs to soft-pedal the agreement that made him prime minister.

But the international community has now taken serious note of the amnesty clause. Undeterred, the new Maoist-appointed Attorney General Mukti Pradhan has made an outrageous statement that all murder cases against Maoist leaders from the war years will be dismissed.

The NC and UML, after initially promising to behave themselves in the role of a constructive opposition seem to have developed a deep distrust of Maoist motives. Within the Maoist party, the gloves have come off with Baidya faction now openly talking of a showdown at the central committee meeting on Monday that will decide



DIWAKAR CHHETRI

on whether or not to officially split off. The talk of revolt now is of a revolt within the party.

With all this going on, the people's expectations on one beleaguered prime minister may be unrealistically high. Bhattarai himself has fed these expectations by working 20 hours a day, getting to work in Singha Darbar while the gates are still locked, and getting his secretary to act on the 1,000 emails he gets every day. Although the public is responding favourably to the crackdown on food adulteration, the prime minister's relief package is somewhat populist and it is questionable whether curbing organized crime should come under "emergency relief".

The statement by Gopal Kirati this week about floating a movement of Bahun Chhetris is a dangerously cynical attempt to exploit a further polarisation of Nepali society. Kirati is so close to Pushpa Kamal Dahal that he staged a noisy demonstration against the lack of Janajati representation in the previous cabinet at the behest of his boss. Which leads us to the conclusion that Dahal is now worried that his party may have pushed too far with ethnic politics and this may cost him votes in the next elections because a large chunk of "high" caste voters feel alienated. This is his clumsy attempt at protecting the caste flank, but it seriously risks driving a wedge in Nepal's social fabric between Bahun Chhetris vs the rest.

The prime minister, as vice-chairman of his party, and a PhD will not have to be told about what a dangerous game this is. While he keeps one eye on the current crises, Bhattarai may have to devote some of his waking hours to the seeds of long-term discord that are being laid by his own comrades.

ON THE WEB
www.nepalitimes.com

GAJANAN TO BHATTARAI

What is lost in all this euphoria about Comrade Baburam becoming PM is that he has just replaced excellent professional Yubaraj Sangraula as Attorney General with party cadre Mukti Pradhan (Editorial, #570). You can just imagine what is now going to happen to all the wartime atrocities. If this is the way Baburam is going, he is going to be worse than Prachanda.

KiranL

● If the Maoists cannot hand in their weapons to the government run by them now, the question is when will they? Will they ever?

Satya

● Let's not fool ourselves. Baburam Bhattarai doesn't care about the nation state known built by our ancestors or the country that could have been Nepal. He is the principle architect of the caste-based federalism and has even considerably changed the design for this in the last few years. He aims to make Nepal a USSR styled confederation. His connection with the unification of Nepal notwithstanding, one can only sympathize with the naivity of the editor in expecting that Baburam will behave in a certain way just because he has some relation with Gajanan.

Nishachar

● Baburam showed his ability of good leadership when he earned the highest revenue during his tenure as finance minister of Nepal, these are his abilities to do something better. He still has those potentials if he could unlock himself from the shackles of outdated Maoist ideas and

bring his own new concept of revolution and politics for 21st century Nepal.

Tashi Lama

● Baburam's ancestor's will probably not be too proud of how there descendent has become PM. However, he does hold the best chance of concluding the peace process compared to any other leader. Whether he will be able to conclude it is another question altogether considering the current political climate.

Rishav

CAN'T EAT SLOGANS

Thank you for a very nice report on the Madhes. ('You can't eat slogans' # 570). It is touching and gives us accurate picture of the present Madhes and Madhesi people. The Nepali language media should follow the example and publish such articles, news features and in-depth reports. It will contribute to rebuild the harmony of the country's people.

Ambika

● How many Madhesis are actually Nepalis? How many Madhesi families were there when Nepal was formed? There should be investigation into the citizenship, those who are not Nepalis should not be given citizenship and those issued without investigation should be scrapped.

WC

● Himalmedia should conduct a large scale and systematic opinion poll in different parts of the country including the Tarai region, to gauge public opinion on issues of federalism, ethnic issues and identity, religion (secularism) and so on. The above story is nice, but if there's more evidence to back up claims like "overwhelming

numbers of people in the Madesh themselves don't agree," then it could put more pressure on those who are deciding things like federalism.

Ushaft

● I was totally taken aback by this completely new perspective on the Madhes. The article has revealed the Achilles' heel of the Madhesi leaders, they are just creating a hullaboo in the capital in the name of Madhesi people who hate them.

Mahesh S

9/11 DECADE

What can extremely slow individuals like myself tell those gifted with superhuman intellect such as Anurag Acharya who compares the bombing of church to disaffection with America in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world, when GON is headed by a character who justified the murder of many, and denied the genocide in Cambodia and elsewhere? ('9/11 decade' #570)

Soni

● India should follow Nepal's example and make the Terrorist-in-chief the head of the government. Terrorist problem solved.

Jange

FALLING FOR FLATS

As long as these high rises are made with genuine materials and with highest earthquake safety standards, vertical housing is the best for Kathmandu city ('State of the real estate', #570). From the safety point of view, and to meet the demand of rapidly growing population of Kathmandu I myself would go for apartment rather than a single house. I only wish the apartments were more affordable to the middle class.

Sherpa

● The reality is cruel in Nepal. I can't imagine climbing dark staircase to the 17th floor. Lift would have been "the answer" but there's nothing that can be done to overcome 16 hour of load shedding. Occupants will need to employ porters for sure. Besides, running water in Kathmandu is almost zero, are they magically going to get the force of water, to reach the 17th floor?

G Monk

BOW TO WOW

It is shocking that there are 22,000 street dogs in the city, many in a pitiable condition ('From bow to wow', #570). We picked up a tiny puppy from the roadside one dark load-shedding night, took her home and now she is a part of our lives. She is healthy and very lovable. When we take her out on her lead, people stop us and ask if she is a foreign dog but they are surprised when we say she is a Nepali mongrel.

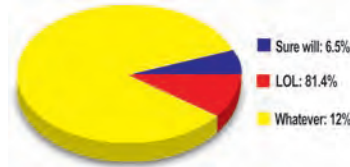
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Q. Home Minister Bijay Gachhadar's remark that he will make the country corruption free is:

Total votes: 2,155



Weekly Internet Poll # 572. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Should the Prime Minister travel in economy class?



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JOHN NARAYAN PARAJULI

Where justice is a game

Perpetrators of war crimes often assume power to use their positions to escape prosecution



BY THE WAY

Anurag Acharya

On 25 April, 2006, with the nation still in a state of euphoria after the people's movement, 15 security personnel under the command of army captain Prahlad Thapa Magar raped and murdered Sapana Gurung, a resident of Belbari of Morang. The medical report confirmed she had been shot dead after being raped. When villagers demonstrated in front of the army base, security forces opened fire, killing six people and injuring dozens.

A parliamentary probe confirmed the involvement of Prahlad Thapa Magar and two others, Bir Bahadur Mahara and Nirmal Kumar Panta, recommending immediate arrests and a criminal investigation. Five years on, the incident has vanished from the public memory. "Even after repeated request, the government has refused to give us a copy of the report," says Mandira Sharma of Advocacy Forum who has been following the case.

At least 16,000 people were killed in the war. There is no official study to show how many died in direct combat on both sides and how many were actually raped, tortured and murdered. But even some emblematic cases like that of Maina Sunuwar and Muktinath Adhikari are enough to expose the fault-lines in our judicial system.

When Maoist politburo member Agni Sapkota, accused in the murder of Arjun Lama of Kavre in May 2005, was appointed Minister for Information and Communication in the Jhala Nath Khanal government, there was widespread condemnation by human rights bodies nationally and internationally. A delegation of Nepal's human rights activists even filed a PIL in the Supreme Court but they could not prevent Sapkota from taking the office.

These are just two cases of justice being denied, not because of lack of evidence or laws, but because supremacy of law has been challenged by political and military institutions that refuse to submit to its jurisdiction.

Last month, the Maoists and the Madhesi alliance signed 4-point deal which, among other things, talks about extending blanket amnesty in excesses perpetrated during the conflict period. After taking office, Baburam Bhattarai clarified that the cases will first be investigated to ascertain the seriousness of the crime. It is within government's power to grant amnesty, but given the history of atrocities, it is ethically wrong and violates the victims' right to justice.

Similarly, the failure of the government to ensure civil court trials against army and police involved in extra-judicial killings and shameful silence on the matter across the political spectrum and civil society is an indication that security institutions have not submitted to civilian control. Investigation into civilian casualties is jurisdiction of the state and the Nepal Army's refusal to cooperate in prosecuting personnel involved in such cases in a civil court makes it a violator of the law of the land (Army Act 2006, Art. 63, 66).

Yubaraj Sangraula, who defended Agni Sapkota as Attorney General told me this week: "The court cannot prosecute a person on the basis of an FIR and a report which does not have a legal standing." Experts like Sangraula believe the problem lies in Nepal's criminal justice system which lacks the institutional framework to bring the crimes committed in special circumstances like war, where no FIR are filed or statements have not been submitted, within the legal jurisdiction.

Global experience shows perpetrators often assume posts of power and use their positions to escape prosecution. Nepal's post-conflict managers must learn from it and come up with legal provision for an independent body that can probe into such cases and ensure effective remedies where grave injustice has been done. The need for an independent Truth and Reconciliation body stems out of this logic.

In the last few weeks, the Baburam Bhattarai government sent a positive message about its commitment to democracy and rule of law. But if it is sincere about what it says, it must help in the investigation of wrongdoings involving its members. Similarly, Nepal Army's empty commitments to civilian supremacy will not clean its tainted human rights record.

The administration of justice is the foremost duty of the government, and Bhattarai has the job of bringing all sides to the table to complete the peace process, while making them accountable for their deeds.

The pursuit for justice has been a mirage. It can't wait any longer. 🇳🇵

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Sajha Sawal is 200



BBC Nepali’s popular radio discussion program hits a second century

When Narayan Shrestha of Sajha Sawal radio discussion program goes anywhere in Nepal these days, people throng the venue just to catch a glimpse of the dapper presenter. It just goes to show how popular radio is in Nepal and reflects approval for the way in which Shrestha afflicts the powerful.

Friday, 16 September marks the 200th episode of the immensely popular Sajha Sawal radio discussion program that has been

broadcasting continuously since 2007 on the BBC Nepali Service.

“It was hard to get people to ask questions initially,” Shrestha admitted in an interview with Nepali Times this week, “they mostly gave suggestions. We had to run an orientation on how to ask questions.” Four years later, the program’s format has become famous for sharp and hard-hitting exchanges between public figures on the stage and a citizen audience.

Imitation being the best form of flattery, Sajha Sawal

has spawned a whole lot of similar radio and tv discussion programs. But when it started four years ago, it was a revolutionary format for radio and TV in Nepal: common people asking questions to a panel of invitees which included political leaders, bureaucrats and experts.

“Our idea initially was to involve the common people’s voice in constitution making and peace process,” Shrestha says, but as the program started traveling across

the country the discussions soon ranged from agriculture, foreign employment, local development and infrastructure.

In the last 200 episodes, Shrestha has witnessed big political leaders being humbled by ordinary citizens, like when Pushpa Kamal Dahal was silenced by a question from a student in RR Campus.

But ultimately, Shrestha says, the public’s concern is not with the nitty-gritty of politics or tedious theorising by civil society stalwarts but

with day-to-day survival issues. “They just want the politics to get in order so that they can get by,” Shrestha says. “People are concerned more about availability of seeds, fertilisers, jobs, better schools for their children and health facilities.”

One of the most memorable episodes on Sajha Sawal was with horticulturalist Kedar Budhathoki who developed a unique wilt-resistant, high yielding variety of tomato called Srijana. The program which was shot in Budhathoki’s farm elicited a wave of enthusiasm among Nepalis.

“Even till today we get at least one call a week inquiring about Budhathoki’s super tomatoes,” Shrestha says.

Besides listeners nationwide who listen to the BBC Nepali Service, Sajha Sawal registers 7,000 hits a week in the BBC Nepali’s website and is popular among the Nepali diaspora. The program also travelled to the UK and US where issues concerning overseas Nepalis were also discussed.

Rubeena Mahato

nepalitimes.com

Sajha Sawal audio clips

Karnali community

HARIDEVI ROKAYA in JUMLA

JUMLA - I was 16 and waiting for my SLC results when I made my first radio program for the Karnali’s first radio station here in Jumla. It was a program for children, to provide them with knowledge they would not get from textbooks in an entertaining way. It was challenging and exciting for me, but it also brought plenty of criticism in our patriarchal society. I had gone against the traditional norms of society, and what was expected of young women. I had to go out into the countryside to collect information for my program, often in the company of men. The work at the radio meant staying late at the station, meeting new people every day. All this gave plenty of grist for the gossipers in town. Fortunately I had a mother was fully supportive and cushioned me from the criticism.

My colleague Krishnamaya Hamal’s mother wasn’t as supportive, and came under so much pressure at home that she had to abandon her dream of working as journalist. There are many young women like her here in the Karnali who have had



to give up their aspirations to serve in the media.

So imagine my pride and sense of achievement when we established the Karnali’s first all-women FM station, Nari Awaz last month. Back then, I had never imagined that seven years later we would have our

own station to broadcast programs on gender issues and women’s empowerment. We overcame the obstacles, the rumour mongers and naysayers, the technical and financial difficulties and we challenged societal norms to set up Nari Awaz.

In this we were assisted by women

working in different fields in Jumla who had the conviction that a radio station would strengthen their voice and make a difference in a society that is lagging behind the rest of the country precisely because more of its women are not involved in decision-making. It has been an uphill struggle, but the day the transmitter tower went up and stood out against the deep blue monsoon sky was the proudest moment of my life. It is now a question of providing meaningful and relevant content to the listeners of Nari Awaz, who I might add are not just women. Nari Awaz may be an all-women radio station but its most important role is to educate and inform menfolk of the Karnali as well.

Today, I believe the Karnali Zone has a reason to smile. Women in the Karnali now have a sizable presence in the media sector, and Nari Awaz will set an example for other women to also take up journalism to spread awareness about the role women can play in uplifting the Karnali community.

Haridevi Rokaya is the Jumla correspondent of the BBC Nepali Service.



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The new radio revolution



THIS IS IT
Rubeena Mahato

In the 14 years since Radio Sagarmatha became the first FM station to get a broadcasting license, Nepal's radio revolution has survived regime change, crackdowns in newsrooms, and crippling power cuts.

The quality of the content may not match the quantitative growth of radio from Jumla to Taplejung, but the stations have been serving people so far left out of the informationsphere. Travelling across Nepal today, one of the most noticeable things apart from new roads are the new transmission towers. Even in the remotest of places, there are FM stations playing songs in local dialects, running adult literacy classes and SLC tuitions on air.

These radios achieve a rare goal in a country where half the people are still illiterate: they keep the people informed, engage them in the information

production process and help in development and rural empowerment.

Four months back while travelling through Darchula in far-western Nepal, I met an enterprising farmer, Hari Singh Mal. After hearing horticulturist Kedar Budhathoki talk about a wilt-resistant variety of tomatoes, Hari Singh introduced tough tomatoes known as Srijana in his farm. The breed developed by scientist Budhathoki yielded him 10 kg of tomatoes from a single plant.

Since Nepal Telecom extended its service to Gokule, Hari Singh is now a mobile user and listens to Saugat FM, broadcast from neighbouring Baitadi in his new handset. BBC Nepali and the Ujyalo FM network are now the most popular programs being syndicated by local stations. Programs on current affairs, national politics, economy and agriculture reach people all over the country via these channels.

Numerous FMs are run solely by women (see overleaf), a phenomenon



programming and allowed global Nepalis to connect to the concerns of their communities back home. A Jhapali living in the US can now directly listen to a local FM from Damak. People can go back to programs in the archives, listen, comment and view the content in a multimedia format.

Many people today hardly remember the struggle and years of lobbying that have gone in freeing frequency modulation for private broadcasters. Today, community radios in Nepal are grappling with coming-of-age problems like political control, commercialism, centralised syndicated content, and erosion in quality of programming.

The challenge is to preserve the participatory and grassroots nature of the medium, ensure sustainability and find ways to improve quality amidst rising commercial pressures. ■

that is yet to happen in print or TV. There are now all-women community radios in Parbat, Udaypur, Morang and many other places. Bringing in women, farmers, students and the rural community into its programming and production, community radio comes closest to being a democratic media in Nepal today. It empowers citizens with information, and spreads awareness about rights and development.

Now radio is on the cusp of a new revolution:

extending its reach through the internet. "Radio are no more restricted to the range of the signal from the transmitter, we can now broadcast worldwide through the net," explains Gopal Guragain of Ujyalo FM which recently made the switch to digital first streaming audio through the net.

Ujyalo is now being heard by Nepalis in 105 countries and gets regular feedback from Saudi Arabia, US and UK, with 5,000 hits daily. This has led to a more diaspora-focused

of lobbying that have gone in freeing frequency modulation for private broadcasters. Today, community radios in Nepal are grappling with coming-of-age problems like political control, commercialism, centralised syndicated content, and erosion in quality of programming.

The challenge is to preserve the participatory and grassroots nature of the medium, ensure sustainability and find ways to improve quality amidst rising commercial pressures. ■

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PICS: JANAASENBRENNEROVA



In the beginning of his new book 'The Times of My Life' Jug Suraiya recounts the heady young days at JS magazine, the iconic Indian magazine for the pre-internet, pre-cable, pre-Shining India youth of India. 'I never wanted to be a journalist,' he writes at the beginning of this book. But he did, and has been with The Times of India, writing a weekly Sunday Column called 'Jugular Vein' as well as a comic strip called 'Dubyaman' depicting the post 9/11 world. Suraiya is one of the international speakers at the Kathmandu Literary Jatra this weekend. Nepali Times caught up with him before he left Delhi for Kathmandu (with his passport):

“A sense of belonging”

Nepali Times: Your book deals with the young JS Calcutta of the 1960s. Is Calcutta home?

Jug Suraiya: My heart is indeed in Calcutta. But it is a Calcutta of the past, the people and places that made it what it was are no longer there. You can't call the past your home. So where is home for me? I'm not sure. But I'd like to think of home not as a geographical location but as a dispersed domain, a constituency made up of my readership. My home is where people read me.

When is it the right time for a journalist to do a book?

When the irresistible urge to do a book overcomes the almost immovable inertia of laziness. At least, that's the way it was in my case. Like Nike, I knew that I had to just do it.

What is the role for satire when everyday politics itself feels like a tragic-comedy?

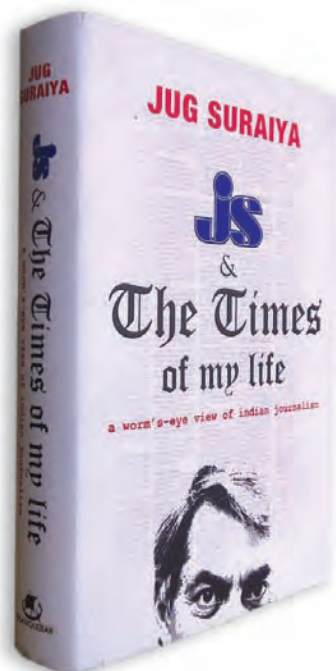
No satire or spoof can be as outrageously farcical as the conduct of the great majority of our so-called

political leaders, who should more aptly be called our political bleeders because by their corrupt ways they leach all the blood out of the body politic, which is you and me. Can you further satirise or spoof someone who already is a caricature of greed and arrogance?

You can't. In our subcontinent, the satirist is a Don Quixote tilting against windmills in a losing battle.

What can we do to make journalism sharper and more hard-hitting so as to get politicians and bureaucrats who rule our daily lives sit up and take notice?

Perhaps one idea might be to have a day-to-day Corruption Report, like we have the daily Weather Report,



which would record the exact number of reported bribes paid the previous day, and to whom.

You keep coming back to Kathmandu, what is the attraction?

Desmond Doig introduced me to Nepal way back in 1969. Since then, my wife, Bunny, and I have both fallen in love with the country and have visited it more times than we can count. What is it that draws us here? It's a sense of belonging, which

is the gift that the people of Nepal so generously and so spontaneously give to all those who visit the country. We'd like to thank Nepal for the recurrent gift of hospitality that it has always given us.

Interview with Jug Suraiya



her toes



THOMAS BELL

In her autobiography, *Is Life a Thorn or a Flower?* that won this year's Madan Prize, Jhamak Ghimire writes about her struggle to learn the written word despite suffering from cerebral palsy that left her unable to speak and paralysed since childhood. Ghimire taught herself to write by clutching a twig with her toes.

At 30, Ghimire has now been thrust into celebrityhood with an autobiography that describes her struggle for self-expression, battling discrimination from the community and family, fighting fatalism and superstition in Nepali culture at the same time.

She describes the first time she wrote the letter

'ka'. "I could not share that moment's joy with anyone, my first letter was written in the dust on the ground and in my heart I could pronounce it. I was so happy that I rewrote the letter many times."

Ghimire recalls how writing on the ground made her foot bleed, yet her initial efforts went unnoticed. "Just so that people would see what I had written I wrote a big 'क' and left it there, but far from looking at my letter people stepped on it and my first letter got erased without anyone seeing it."

Besides her prize-winning book, Ghimire has published four volumes of poetry, two books of short stories and many newspaper columns. "I am very happy to get the award," she wrote, replying to questions with a pen between her toes. "But at

the same time I feel a sense of responsibility. I will start writing again soon." Ghimire's book will soon be published in English.

The prominent Nepali novelist and translator Manjushree Thapa praised Ghimire's work. "Jhamak Kumari Ghimire's expression seems to have gained elegance not despite, but because of, the physical challenges she has overcome," says Thapa, "she speaks for an entire generation when she writes: 'Father! Why are you siring /renegade children like me?'"

nepalitimes.com

Jhamak speaks, Book Review #516
A renegade child of the hills #468
Of poverty and poems #105

Jhamak ghimire by Chhong256



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The Kathmandu Literary Jatra is a three-day festival that provides a platform for discourse on Nepali literature. Held at different venues within the Patan Durbar Square complex, the festival will host 55 national and 12 international writers and poets and feature readings, workshops and discussions pertaining to Nepal and South Asia.

JATRA DAY I

Venue: Patan Museum Courtyard

Time: 2pm to 3.30pm
Inauguration

Time: 4pm to 5pm
Session: Nepali Literature in the Age of Democracy.
Gopal Ashka, Narayan Dhakal, Sanjeev Uprety and Sharada Sharma



Time: 5pm to 6pm
Session: Uncovering the Truth.
Tarun Tejpal in conversation with Anagha Neelakantan

Time: 6pm to 7pm
Poetry Recitations in Different Languages

Venue: NMB Hall (Inside Adarsha Kanya Niketan School)

Time: 4pm to 5pm
Session: Writing and Change.
Sujeev Shakya, Rabindra Mishra, Gopal Thakur and Sarad Pradhan

Time: 5pm to 6pm
Session: Getting Things Done! Presented by Rotary Club of Yala.
Karna Sakya introduced by Prafulla Man Singh Pradhan

JATRA DAY II

Venue: Patan Museum Courtyard



Time: 10am to 11am
Session: Narratives as a Window to History.
William Dalrymple and Aditya Adhikari

Time: 11am to 12pm
Session: Languages of Nepal: A New Renaissance?
Amrit Yonjan Tamang, Dharendra Premarshi, Gopal Thakur, Sulochana Manandhar and Yug Pathak

Time: 2.30pm to 3.30pm
Session: The New Age of News presented by The Asia Foundation.
Akhilesh Upadhyay, Kunda Dixit, Mohammed Hanif, Prashant Jha and Tarun Tejpal



Time: 3.30pm to 4.30pm
Session: Bridging the Language Divide.
Alka Saraogi, Anmole Prasad, Yuyutsu RD Sharma and Namita Gokhale

Time: 4.30pm to 5.30pm
Session: Insurgencies and Nepali Literature.
Khagendra Sangraula, Narayan Wagle, Gopal Ashka and Govinda Bartaman

Time: 5.30pm to 6.30pm
Session: The East India Company, the Mughals, and the Gorkhali Empire.
William Dalrymple in conversation with Kanak Mani Dixit

Venue: NMB Hall

Time: 10am to 11am
Session: Being a Woman, Becoming a Writer.
Gyanu Pandey, Anbika Giri, Sanjeev Uprety and Momila

Time: 11am to 12pm
Session: The Power of Social Media.
Anil Chitrakar introduced by Nayan Pokhrel Sindhuliya

Time: 1.30pm to 2.30pm
Session: Ashoka Mauryan and his Legacy.
Nayanjot Lahiri introduced by Rohit Ranjitkar

Time: 2.30pm to 3.30pm
Session: Dalits in Nepali Literature.
Ahuti, Bidushi Dhungel, Khagendra Sangraula and P Sivakami

Time: 3.30pm to 4.30pm
Session: Immersed in Nepali Literature
Abhi Subedi introduced by Ammar Raj Joshi



Time: 4.30pm to 5.30pm
Session: Open Minds: Libraries and Treasure Troves of Stories presented by German Book Office.
Akshay Pathak, Reshu Aryal Dhungana, Paro Anand and Shazia Omar

Venue: Patan Durbar Square

Time: 8am to 10am
Event: Heritage Walks
Sign up in advance

Time: 10am to 11am
Event: Poetic Pie: Slices from Different Languages

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Common Questions

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Time: 11.30am to 12.30pm
Event: Book Launch: Bhakata Prasad Bhyaguto

Time: 11am to 3pm
Event: Children's art activities and reading
Sign up in advance

JATRA DAY III

Venue: Patan Museum Courtyard

Time: 10am to 11am
Session: Politics in Nepali Universities.
Gagan Thapa, Manushi Yami Bhattarai Pratyoush Onta and Ram Kumari Jhakri



Time: 11am to 12pm
Session: The Man Behind the Words.
Jug Suraiya in conversation with Dubby Bhagat

Time: 2.30pm to 3.30pm
Session: Nepali Literature Beyond Nepal.
Devendra Bhattarai, Indra Bahadur Rai, Susan Waten and Ujjwal Prasai

Time: 3.30pm to 4.30pm
Session: Selling out, or telling it like it is? Getting real in South Asian fiction.
Namita Gokhale, P. Sivakami, Shazia Omar and Rabi Thapa



Time: 4.30pm to 5.30pm
Session: Urdu and English - Walking Two Worlds.
Mohammed Hanif in conversation with Sophia Pande

Time: 5.30pm to 6.30pm
Session: The Future of Nepali Language.
Archana Thapa, Buddhisagar, Narayan Wagle and Rajendra Bimal

Venue: NMB Hall

Time: 10am to 11am
Session: Kali-katha: via Bypass.



Alka Saraogi in conversation with Uday Adhikari

Time: 11am to 12pm
Session: Sumnima to Sakambari: Female Characters in Modern Nepali Novels.
Archana Thapa, Krishna Dharabasi, Sudha Tripathi and Nayan Raj Pandey

Time: 12.30pm to 1.30pm
Session: Chittadhar Hridaya and the Newari Bhasa Renaissance.
Subarna Man Tuladhar introduced by Prawin Adhikari

Time: 1.30pm to 2.30pm
Session: Book Markets: Local Scope, National Ambitions.
Shazia Omar, Kiran Krishna Shrestha, Sujeev Shakya and Akshay Pathak

Time: 2.30pm to 3.30pm
Session: Maithili: A Literary History.
Rajendra Bimal introduced by Dharendra Premarshi

Time: 3.30pm to 4.30 pm
Event: Tagore Play: The Parable of the Lost Post Office by Parnab Mukherjee



Venue: Manga Hiti (Dhunge Dhara)

Time: 10am to 7pm
photo.circle presents Retelling Histories
16 to 18 September

“Retelling Histories,” organised by photo.circle, explores Nepal's cultural memory through an exhibition of archived photography from old family albums, dug up and contextualized. As part of the Nepal Picture Library, the project engages viewers in Nepal's history and identity through images.



SOMEPLACE ELSE

Imago Dei offers a glimpse of Kathmandu's well to do in mid-week play: broods straight from Stepford convene on comfy couches; clean-cut, architectural types in an adjacent art space discuss over *frites* and beauty queen runner-ups primp up on their laptops. The café gallery in Gairidhara boasts a pleasant atmosphere that encourages social dates and casual conferences in style. Its whitewashed, wide-open space with red accented walls, high ceilings and natural lighting are ideal for vernissages and mixers.



MARCO POLLO

But despite its divinely inspired moniker and airy environment, Imago Dei's fare is lackluster and far from ambrosial.


Its version of adobo, chicken or pork cooked in a ginger and hot and sour sauce reduction, doesn't do justice to the Spanish or Filipino dish. The meal was too salty, even with a mound of brown

rice, and tasted more like a Chinese stir-fry. Sanepa's U Café maintains the standard for adobo in the city.

On the list of specials, the bacon avocado wrap, according to the server, has been long unavailable. Then, why advertise? So to our dismay, we opted for the Mexican taco wrap, which was disappointing: chopped

salad and minced chicken (barely traceable) folded into a moo-shoo style wrap. And the fish and chips apart from its watered-down mayo dip was good but not worth Rs 400 and could be better served with malt vinegar, London-style.

Pasta options are abundant, but the spaghetti was overcooked and the

tomato sauce and chicken meatballs lacked seasoning. Imago Dei's redemption aside from its inviting space is found in its ends. As a starter or snack, the spinach and artichoke dip and chips is a cheese concoction that will have customers relishing in seconds. Desserts like homemade macaroons and tiramisu pair well with a cup of French-pressed brew or a sup of imported liqueur. Look into Imago Dei to meet friends and colleagues over snacks or cakes and coffee, but steer clear of price-blinding specials that leave us hankering elsewhere.  Marco Pollo

Up road from Darbar Marg, find the cafe facing the eastern wall of Narayanhiti Museum

Service	★★★
Bread 'n water	★★
Space	★★★★★
Deal-icious	★★★
Rep-eat?	★★★



Safe drugs



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

In Western medicine, there was a time when a famous doctor would proclaim the usefulness of a certain medicine and many of us in the medical profession would agree wholeheartedly, without questioning. Now,



you need hard evidence. In the 1950s, it was Bradford Hill who started the process of doing proper drug trials to determine the efficacy of drugs.

The evidence-based concept is now called randomised controlled trial (RCT). In the classic RCT, to determine if drug x works

for a disease y, first you need an adequate sample size of patients with disease y who will be administered the drug x. To a similar number of patients you need to administer a sugar pill or a dummy pill, called a “placebo” in medical speak. Then over a certain period of time, if you can show that those in the drug arm of the trial did better than in the placebo arm of the trial, you may be able to conclude that the drug X is effective against the disease y. But the difference in effectiveness has to be what is called, “significant”.

And this significance is determined by statistical testing which tries to eliminate “chance” as the cause for drug x being more effective. To eliminate the chance factor, randomisation is very important.

For example in determining who receives the placebo versus the drug in question, the choice has to be random. If the patient is pre-

selected to receive the drug or the placebo then you have introduced bias (chance) into the study.

One of the first diseases to be subjected to human trials was tuberculosis. At one time only one drug was used for TB, then RCTs revealed that the disease responded significantly better to combination of drugs than just one drug. This lesson was carried over for a more modern scourge, the HIV virus against which a combination therapy is now utilized.

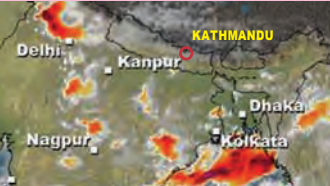
RCTs are now also made use of for studying the efficacy of vaccines. The injectable typhoid vaccine that is used worldwide was first studied here in Kathmandu by Dr I L Acharya and colleagues in the early 1980s using the RCT concept.

Finally, besides efficacy, adverse events or side effects of drug also have to be assessed properly to avoid the kind of tragedy that the drug “thalidomide” caused. So, a world of regulations has spawned around RCTs to make sure drugs are safe and effective. 🇳🇵



WEEKEND WEATHER
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

The three strategic low pressure zones over Asian continents are shifting their positions, and will affect the performance of South Asian Monsoon. The Satellite picture of Thursday afternoon shows one over Tashkent, the other over Chengdu (China) and the third over India. This means heavy showers in most of the country during and beyond this weekend. Expect cooler days with fresh showers and gradual departure of monsoon from the west in about a week after.



FRI



25-18

SAT



25-18

SUN



26-19



BIKRAM RAI

DIVINE DANCE: Masked dancers perform during the Indra Jatra festival at Basantapur Darbar Square on Sunday.



BIKRAM RAI

DIFFERENT VIEW: *Pulbata Herda*, adapted from Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge*, being staged at Rimal Theater, Gurukul, on Tuesday.



BIKASH DWARE

DEGREE: Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai meets vice-chancellors of five universities to discuss their activities at Singa Darbar on Tuesday. PM Bhattarai kept his promise to re-open the universities that were padlocked by protesting professors' unions.



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नेपाल सरकार
स्वचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय
स्वचना विभाग

DEGREE: Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai meets vice-chancellors of five universities to discuss their activities at Singa Darbar on Tuesday. PM Bhattarai kept his promise to re-open the universities that were padlocked by protesting professors' unions.

Telling tales?

RABI THAPA

The Kathmandu Literary Jatra is in town. The glorious courtyards of the Patan Museum are set to play host to unprecedented intellectual discourse over the weekend. Three score and more national and international writers will hold forth on languages, minority voices, journalism, politics, history and books, books, books. The cynic may deride such events as mere celebrity chaff, but this is as much about bringing writers to their audiences – for intellectual interaction – as anything else. For Nepali audiences keen to get a grip on how their many-hued country is being represented in these crucial times of uncertainty, the Jatra may provide some answers.

For writers of fiction, questions of representation have always been tricky. This is especially the case for those using languages that don't originate in the societies that they are describing. Take a Nepali writing in English about Nepal: who is the writer writing for? Locals or globals?

In Nepal, if a writer's compatriots are not full of praise for her latest work, they are liable to be attacking her for having misrepresented the Nepali culture, as if there were ever such a monolithic culture beyond the outdated, state-sponsored notions of dhaka topi and dalbhat. So when Samrat Upadhyay debuted with 'Arresting God in Kathmandu' (2001) and dared to allow his characters to indulge in carnal relations, there was something of an outcry.



While no one could deny the fact of Nepalis having sex (otherwise we wouldn't be here at all), many felt that it was unnecessary to dwell on the fact. It was smutty, it was not representative of Nepali culture, they said, why exaggerate?

Many more words have flowed under the Bagmati Bridge since, and the river ain't getting any cleaner. Or perhaps it's just the stodgy nature of some Nepali readers. Ten years on, I published, and was predictably criticised for apparently dwelling too long on Kathmandu's indolent youth, who couldn't possibly spend all their time on

smoke, sex, and swearing. Just because you're an upstanding citizen who disapproves of your sons and daughters doing the same, I wanted to tell them, don't imagine everyone else is.

But the flip side to excessive (thus supposedly unrealistic) reality is exoticisation. We've all heard about Orientalism, but what about Self-Orientalising, whereby a writer internalises Western notions of the East, and imbues her fiction with an excess of spirituality or exotica? Take Upadhyay's debut again. Does the juxtaposition of 'Gods' and 'Kathmandu' in the title not invoke the idea of Shangri-La, never mind that 'arresting' them speaks of a more mundane reality? Again, before the publication of my own book, the publisher and I spent quite some time

debating the title, cover and the blurb on the back. It was important to represent it a certain way, and needless to say, we disagreed. Come the next round, I almost dare not dwell on steaming cups of tea, spices, arranged marriages, gods and demons any longer than is necessary, lest I be accused of exoticising my own culture, either out of romanticism or a calculated eye to the bottom line.

'Selling out, or telling it like it is? Getting real in South Asian fiction' is the title of the session I will be moderating on the final day of the Kathmandu Literary Jatra (replacing the one on biography with Patrick French). It will feature Indian writers Namita Gokhale and P Sivakami and Bangladeshi writer Shazia Omar, and will attempt to apportion blame between writers, publishers and dear readers. This session, along with 30 others, will attempt to get at the story behind the story, literally and literarily. This, we hope, is what the Jatra is all about. 🇳🇵

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A far-away rescue

Young girls from the remote mountains of northwestern Nepal who were trafficked to the southern tip of India are rescued this week

RUBEENA MAHATO in COIMBATORE, INDIA

In the suburbs of Coimbatore at Suler, the first thing that one notices in the impressively walled Michael Job Centre is the sheer enormity of the complex. There is a school, a post graduate level college and an orphanage in the sprawling premises housing some 500 girls that the organization claims are abandoned or orphaned children of Christian martyrs. The last thing one would expect to find there are young girls from the remote Nepali district of Humla. But there they are, all 23 of them with Christian names living for the past nine years here as orphans despite having

parents back home. They were rescued from the centre last week at the initiative of the Esther Benjamins Memorial Foundation (EBMF), Nepal, Childline India and the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) at the state of Tamil Nadu. EBMF got into action when the families of four girls from Humla requested them to find their missing daughters. The parents of the girls had sent them along with their brothers in the care of Dal Bahadur Phadera, a local politician. Many families in Humla had paid Phadera Rs 5-20,000 to get their children out of war-ravaged villages at the time and educate



Shangmo with her elder daughter Jael

PICS: RUBEENA MAHATO

them in boarding schools in Kathmandu. The boys are still in the institution run by Phadera, but the girls, between 3 to 7 years old, were taken away nine years ago. Their families never heard from them. When rescued, many girls didn't remember their

parents' names or where they came from. They have been given Christian names and identities. In the website of Michael Job Centre, the girls are falsely depicted as children of Christian martyrs in Nepal murdered by Maoists. The Centre runs on the donations

given by Christians from all over the world for 'orphans'. In one of the pages of the website was where we first saw pictures of Anna Bella, Daniela, Persius and Jael (Christian names given by the centre, original names withheld). Their mother and brother had made a three



PICS: KAPILDEV KHANAL

CLOSE CALL: Selmendo Tamang (centre) with her father-in-law and husband. Selmendo was being trafficked by her own uncle, but escaped (above). Fifty-two year old Selmon Tamang is still unmarried because there are no girls of marriageable age left in his village (right).

The

After decades of trafficking, there are no young women left in northern Nuwakot

KAPILDEV KHANAL in NUWAKOT

Selmon Tamang (pictured, right) is 52, and for most of his adult life he has been searching for a bride in his village of Sisipu of Nuwakot. But there aren't any. This village 90km north of Kathmandu has no young women left: they have all been trafficked to brothels in India. Selmon is not alone. There are hundreds of young men here in northern Nuwakot who can't find brides. It is estimated that more than 5,000 of the women from this remote mountain region are in brothels in Mumbai and other cities in India. "I have been searching for a bride for the last 11 years, but only underaged girls are left in the village," says Kanchha Tamang, 37, of Sisipu. Gangphedi's population growth has gone down to below replacement rate fertility. Even married women are being tricked and sold, sometimes by

days journey from Humla to join us in Kathmandu for the trip to Coimbatore in India’s southern tip. Persius and Jael’s mother Shangmo Lama had never before been in a car before. After a long and tiring journey to Coimbatore, a frail Shangmo smiled for the first time when we stepped inside the gate of the Centre to get back her daughters. She had waited nine years for this moment.

At first, the principal of the centre flatly denied having any Nepali children at the centre. But she was forced to accept having illegally kept the girls as orphans when the photos of the children and the mother were shown.

Outside, a very Nepali looking girl’s face stopped me. After few exchanges in English, I asked if she was Nepali. The girl’s face brightened up. Lynsy then gave me her Nepali name, informed there were now 23 of them left in the centre and that they have not forgotten to speak Nepali. Soon the news spread of the team from Nepal and Nepali girls surrounded the principal’s office.

There was noisy chatter and a sense of jubilation in the office. Some of the girls were seven years old and all had parents and families back home and hadn’t heard from them in all these years.

It was an emotional scene when Shangmo met her girls, who at first failed

to recognise their mother. But her brother’s daughter Daniela instantly recognised her aunt.

PP Job, the centre’s founder has denied having known that the children had families in Nepal. The self-styled Christian preacher has alleged that the children were brought to him by Phadera and that the center has only provided good education and living to these underprivileged children.

“It is illegal under the Indian law to bring children, orphaned or not from Nepal to India, and house them in an institution here. It is a clear case of trafficking,” Nandita Rao, Childline’s lawyer told *Nepali Times*.

The Centre is now under investigation by the social welfare department in Tamil Nadu and has been given 15 days to furnish details and prove that it was not involved in child trafficking. On Monday, 500 activists from different Hindu organisations staged a protest outside the orphanage accusing it of proselytizing.

“Poor countries are turning into a missionary haven for religious zealots and this has led to a new form of trafficking,” says Philips Holmes of Esther Benjamins Memorial Foundation. The girls are now on their way home by train via Gorakhpur.

The girls had kept the memory of their home



An emotional Anna Bella breaks down at seeing her aunt

country alive for nearly a decade, and were full of pride as they sang the Nepali national anthem for the rescue party from Nepal. They had memorized the words from the mobile ring tone of a Nepali visiting the center.

Said an ecstatic Sabita Bogati: “I want to go home. I would not mind walking all the way to Nepal.”

POST SCRIPT: EBMF is now preparing to file charges against Phadera on charges of trafficking. In India, child rights organisations have taken up the issue and are now planning to bring PP Job and his accomplices to book. Efforts to repatriate children trafficked from Tibet



and Bhutan who were also kept in the centre are now underway. But even if the children are reunited, their lost years, separation from parents and loss of identity will never be returned. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com 🖱️

Circus slave, #504
Juggling with young lives, # 405

missing half



relatives in India. “My wife was sold by her own relatives to a brothel in Kolkata,” says Lal Bahadur Tamang of Shikharbesi. The trafficking ringleader, Chhopa, alias Kale Tamang, was finally caught last month (see box). Chhopa sold another woman, Kumari, just 37 days after she married Mangale Tamang, tricking her with promise of a job. Asmita Thapa of the anti-trafficking organisation, Shakti Samuha, says Kumari was sold to a brothel in Kolkata run by her own aunt.

There are those who return to tell horrific stories of abuse and exploitation. Among them is Thulimaya (name changed) who has returned after working in brothels in Mumbai for 25 years. As seems to be often the case, after five years of working in a brothel, Thulimaya started running her own.

Kamal Sitaula, a teacher in Shikharbesi believes young women at first don’t know that they are going to be sex workers. They are attracted by the glamorous tales of

wealth by relatives who have returned from Mumbai or Kolkata to recruit. Sitaula estimates that 60 women from Ghyangphedi run their own brothels in India, and they regularly seek fresh young girls from the village.

Eighteen-year-old Selmendo Tamang’s (pictured, left, centre) own uncle took her to Rasuwa to sell her off. “It was only when police arrived that I realised I was about to be sold,” Selmendo recalls. Her marriage to Aitaman Tamang last year was been the only marriage in Sisiphu in the last eight years.

Ask any parent here about their missing daughters and the standard answer is: “She is in college in the city”. Bishnu Prasad Acharya, the principal of a primary school in Simtang says more than 15 girls from his school have been trafficked.

Government apathy, political protection of recruiters and lack of opportunities mean that the social structure of villages here is falling apart. But local communities are now working to spread awareness, and Shakti Shamuha is carrying out rescue and rehabilitation. 🇳🇵

himalkhabar.com 🖱️

Longer version (Nepali)



Get out of jail

Kale Tamang alias Chhopa, 41, who has been responsible for many of the cases of trafficking from Nuwakot, was finally caught by police last month. In a career spanning 16 years since 1996, Chhopa is estimated to have trafficked at least 400 women. Police here say there are another 30 people who are still at large. However, anti-trafficking activists are worried that middlemen are trying to get Chhopa out of jail by posting a Rs 6 million bail.

Back with HIV

Kanchimaya Tamang is 49. She was sold to a brothel in India by her relatives when she was a teenager. When she got infected with HIV, she was sent back to Nepal. In the last three years, seventeen people have died due to HIV/AIDS in Shikharbesi alone. There are many women like Kanchimaya with HIV in Shikharbesi, and many have married because of the shortage of brides.

Peace first



BIKRAM RAI

Editorial in *Nepal Samacharpatra*, September 11

संविधान

Two weeks into office, the Bhattarai government has already come under fire from opposition parties NC and UML for its neglect of the peace process. They had earlier expressed commitment to support the government based on its merit. But the latest comments by the leaders in the opposition indicate that the parties are unhappy with the way things have been handled so far.

Having seen two governments come and go without making much difference to the peace process, there is an enormous burden of hope on the present government. So, the opposition's rhetoric casts a shadow of doubt on public that it may face similar fate. The NC and UML have accused the Maoists

of avoiding the major issues of peace process: integration and rehabilitation of ex-combatants, focusing solely on constitution drafting. The meeting held between the two parties last week concluded with an understanding that they would push for decisive breakthrough on the peace process before cooperating on constitution drafting.

Even the coalition partner, the Madhesi front showed remarkable flexibility by dropping their demand for immediate induction of 10,000 Madhesis in the Nepal Army, on condition that the future recruitments in NA would be inclusive in nature. The Maoists must exhibit similar flexibility by respecting concerns of all the major political stakeholders and work towards taking the peace process to its logical end before focusing on constitution drafting.

Madarsa futures

Rajdhani, 11 September

राजधानी

The government hasn't yet granted permission to madarasas to run secondary level education. This has been a let-down for girls from the Muslim community in Nepalganj. Their dreams of pursuing higher education has come to an abrupt halt as their poor parents can't afford to send them to public schools. Madarsa Darulam in Neplaganj has been running classes till Grade 8. The principal, Maulana Mustafa Nurani says: "We have met all the required criteria including a two storey building with 17 rooms but we haven't yet been granted permission to



run classes above Grade 8."

Madarasas are religious schools run by the Muslim community where students are taught free of cost. Muslim parents who find the environment of other schools unsafe prefer to send their daughters to madarasas. So, parents hesitate sending their daughters elsewhere.

Udhav Shrestha, head of school inspection for Banke says that the DEO has issued license to 118 madarasas. Among them, five provide lower secondary level education and one, secondary level education. The inability of community run madarasas to fall in the government's education policy has adversely affected the lives of many students.

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“Baburam has betrayed us”

Interview with Maoist politburo member Netra Bikram Chand, in Karobar, 11 September

कारोबार

Karobar: Why has the conflict within the party increased after the formation of Maoist- led government?

Netra Bikram Chand: It is only natural because we have not yet agreed with the government formation process, its policies and programs. The issues that we had agreed on including army integration, state restructuring wasn't implemented. We are leading the government but its policies have been changed. Especially on the army integration things haven't gone according to our agreement. Before regrouping they moved ahead with arms handover. Even Jhalanath Khanal hadn't agreed to that, and it has led to dissatisfaction within our party.

What is the main disagreement on?

There are two things that need to be concluded before the army integration. Whether or not the PLA will be included in the national army needs to be decided first. Depending on this decision further provisions regarding its structure need to be made. Furthermore, an effective relief package should be provided for the rehabilitation of the soldiers in PLA. But Babram Bhattari, after being appointed prime minister took Pushpa Kamal Dahal to his side and drifted away from the party's decision.



What is the issue over the keys handover?

Everything rests on the keys. The pride of the people's army and Nepal's revolutionary movement lie on those keys. Handing over the keys is a symbolic gesture and means handing over the PLA too.

But your faction is said to have agreed to this.

Sometimes even lies seem to work in politics. They shouldn't have kept us in the dark over the changed decision. Pushpa Kamal Dahal had removed the decision of handing over the keys, but he changed this in the final decision. He put on a fake show.

But you seem to want the ministries, right?

Had it been about ministries we'd have given up our stand on these issues to please Prachanda and Baburam. We have only been opposing their decision because it contradicts our belief. Whether we want to give in to the status quo or move ahead has been the main issue amongst us.

Will the Baidya faction be a part of this government?

They have made a huge mistake by handing over the key. We are ready to work together if they are willing to correct their mistake. They have to take their decision back.

Is it true that the Baidya faction is dissolving the party?

Those who have been accusing us are just doing it for their momentary self indulgence. And as for the internal struggle, it will last only until everyone is ready to agree to come to single point of understanding.



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नागरिक Deven in *Nagarik*, 11 September

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ I have been receiving threats, but we will continue our supervision and nobody will be spared. ”

Yubaraj Khatriwada, Governor, Nepal Rastra Bank





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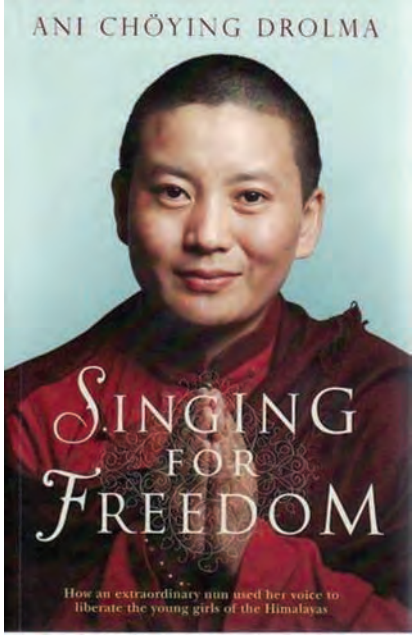
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Ani's story

When fame came to her as Nepal's famous 'singing nun' few knew the true story of the struggle of this refugee child growing up in Kathmandu. In fact, the outside world knew more about Ani Choying than Nepalis themselves. Now, Publication nepa~laya is bringing out the Nepali translation of Ani Choying Drolma's autobiography, *Phoolko Ankham*.



The singer of the hit song *Phoolko Ankham*, is coming to Nepali readers as a writer

Ani Choying's heart-rending story of her childhood and her decision to become a nun is told in simple, yet deep prose. Very early in life, Ani Choying learnt to be self-reliant, and was motivated to take up the challenges of life, and to help others like her.

Being born to her mother was the first good thing that happened to Ani Choying, and being a nun was the second best. "If I had not become a nun, I would have probably been an unidentified wife and a mother of probably 3-4 children," confesses Ani Choying. "My decision to become a nun and the blessings I from my mentors, has made my life more worthwhile. I am thankful that through the talent my Gurus helped me identify, I have been able to serve many people and our society."

Ani Choying's positive outlook on life has made her living proof that a troubled childhood is not the end of the world, but can open new horizons in life. *Phoolko Ankham* is the Nepali translation

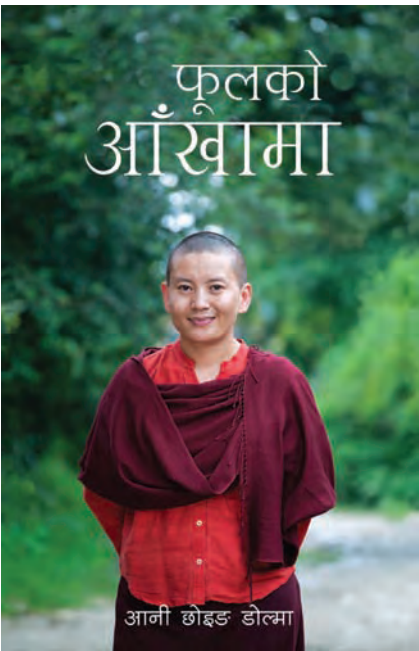
of the original published in French in 2008 by Oh! Editions. French writer, Laurence Debril collaborated with Ani Choying in structuring the story.

Since then, the book has been published in 12 languages: French, German, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, English, Portuguese, Russian, Polish, Slovenian and Hungarian. The Nepali edition of the book has been translated in collaboration with Girish Giri.

"I could have written three books during the time I spent working on this," says Giri, "but it was a really worthwhile experience to collaborate with Ani on the Nepali translation."

Kiran Krishna Shrestha of nepa~laya says the book will be released before Dasain. "There are many books written and published around the world on Nepal, which remain unnoticed by Nepali readers," says Shrestha, "this book marks the beginning of our effort to bring world literature on Nepal to the Nepali public."

The book is being published in



Nepali with formal arrangement with the original copyright owners, Oh! Editions of France.

For her part, Ani Choying says she is glad her book has come out in Nepali after being read in 11 languages. "I am glad my story is finally coming home to Nepal," she says. She has contributed all the earnings from her book to the welfare of kidney patients in Nepal.

The English translation of *Singing for Freedom* is published by Pier 9.

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Songs of peace, #554

Music video of Phoolko Ankham

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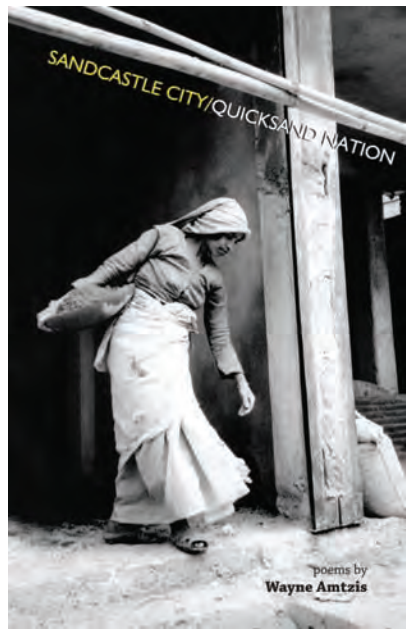
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Quicksand nation

Collection of Wayne Amtzis poetry looks at Nepal's war in the context of the unhappy peace that preceded and followed it



The core of *Sand Castle City/ Quicksand Nation* written in Kathmandu by Wayne Amtzis between 2003 and 2008, during the Maoist insurrection and aftermath, are emotive, sound-driven poems born of sickness and disquiet. It is an outsider's attempt to empathise with a country and people tearing themselves apart and more universal ruminations on violence, torture, impunity and death. The work that opens and closes the book, however, was

composed mostly in the early 1990's and in the present day. These image-driven depictions of street-life in Kathmandu present a city-dweller's recounting of the world he passes through; poems formed with a detached and an omnivorous eye. In the first instance the aim was catharsis and in the second, awareness. Says Amtzis: "The aim for the conflict poems was catharsis and for the street poems, awareness. My concern throughout was with how lives are lived and suffering endured."

The reader can see the years of violence in the context of the unhappy peace that preceded and followed it. These are poems of witness that ask the reader to look through the images to the world that brought them forth, and feel through the sounded words to the emotions that engendered them. In both instances they ask that a judgment be made.

THE TASK

"peace decays forever" –Jean Follain

A tall woman in a tent-like dress,
raises a tray of rocks
to her head. Coolness and heat
at play on her skin, air and blood at war
in her ease. As she treads the mud path,
from rock-strewn street
to wall-less tower, a hint of rain
aslant the air, neither hurries
nor halts her steps. From an all-day vantage,
she stands in place and never moves,
un-told, unaccounted for,
a traceable sadness drawing us
to her eyes. Across the street,
worlds apart, a trio of blind schoolgirls
chatter as they walk.
The sole seeing sister among them,
clearing the path with her single-minded stare,
wary at what stands in the way,
yet sure-footed in her shepherding,
as they are, hand in hand, in halting grace,
linked in new-found pride
that draws them in a single wave
on and on...

Far from these lives, on the see-saw,
in the grand public display,
(while the usual sycophants and hacks
–the better to see by– crowd round,
tossing matches in the air)
in packs, the leapfrogging leaders
stammer and squeal... as their bottoms
settle in, as they push and rise,
their feet barely touching the ground.
So careless in the to and fro,
in their squabbling rites of succession
that they... Or is just monkey see
monkey do they do not care,
they know they'll make a monkey
out of you. They know...
when the accounting is done
it is the clerk in the requisite government office
(first this one, then that) who explains
–with registry, signature and stamp–
how much it takes
to complete... (and while sipping tea,
how much more!)
to initiate... the glorious
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Something cooking in the kitchen cabinet

There are two ways to look at the prime minister's decision not to fly business on his trip to New York next week. One is to see this as proof that he is anti-business. Or, we can say that by flying economy he has shown that he is serious about the economy.

This is a heads-I-lose-tails-you-win situation, either way the PM is going to be accused of endangering his own health by exposing himself to deep vein thrombosis risk, or splurging the national exchequer. Frankly, we don't want a photo op with the head of the Nepali delegation in the General Assembly dozing off at the desk, so please do us all a favour, prime minister, and get yourself a free upgrade. What would be much more meaningful, though, (and the Ass has just sent this email to (bhattaraibaburam@gmail.com) would be for the PM to refuse to use the VIP departure lounge at TIA and stand in line for one hour at immigration and x-ray with the rest of the hoi polloi and face what Nepal's proles have to face every day. But all this may be academic



because BRB now thinks flying 40 hours roundtrip with long layovers in cattle class is just too much trouble, and we hear that he is trying to call off the trip.

And that may be just as well with all the knife-sharpening that is going on. Com Red Flag faces challenges on multiple fronts. The Baidya faction is now publicly accusing BRB of being a medium rare Indian stooge. The NC is up in arms about the 4-point pact and the promise to induct 10,000 Madhesis into the army. The UML's right

wing Oli faction is flirting with the Maoists' left wing Baidya faction to undermine Baburam. And then there is Awesome the Enigmatic, who just can't stand his vice-chairman's superior intellect and is back to wearing his Hawaiian shirt which he always does when he is plotting some big breakthrough.

People are past caring, but the donkey would like to remind everyone that the next deadline for CA extension is 30 November. With the PM gone next week and then the country closing down for Dasain

Tihar for a month after that you can bet your bottom that this is going to another one of those hair-raising photo finishes.

The party leadership seems to know something that we don't: that this time there won't be no extension of the CA and that they'll have to go for new elections. Which must be why the Madhesi front was so desperate to get plum posts in the BRB coalition so that they could make hay when the sun came out and replenish their depleted war chests. And, knowing how important muscle power is at election time, all parties are getting their militant youth wings ready for some serious booth capturing and arm twisting.

Another sure proof that the Baddies are girding up their loins for elections is that even a former Raja Baddie-turned-Mao Baddie Gopal "Shoe-thrower" Kirati is setting up an organization of Maoist Kshetris. Which has prompted Lekha Raj Bhatta, the Lion of the

West, to revive his non-Tharu front for a territorial province in the trans-Karnali of which he is already the self-declared warlord. What has prompted all this, according to notoriously reliable sources, is that the Baddies realized rather belatedly that their ethnic identity politics was having an anti-Maoist backlash among the Bahun-Kshetris who make up nearly a third of the electorate.

All is not well in the governing coalition, the cabinet is still incomplete and some Madhesi ministers are openly defiant of the prime minister. Like Comrade JP refusing to be party spokesman, and telling BRB publicly that it would be better if he got one of his yes-men to do the job. But if the frequency and length of meeting between the Gang of Three, BRB, Sitola and Right Honourable Amreso Singh is anything to go by, something is cooking in the kitchen cabinet.



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