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Return to glory

In 1970, when Crown Prince Birendra got married, as a wedding present the German government renovated the Pujari Math in Bhaktapur. The Bhaktapur Development Project (BDP) grew out of this restoration and set in motion a 17-year German involvement in reviving the town, which had become a faint shadow of its former self by then.

Today Bhaktapur retains the ambience of the original Kathmandu Valley civilisation more than any other town. It has preserved not just the unique architecture and culture of the Newari people but is also a model for town management.



More on page 11-13

BDP

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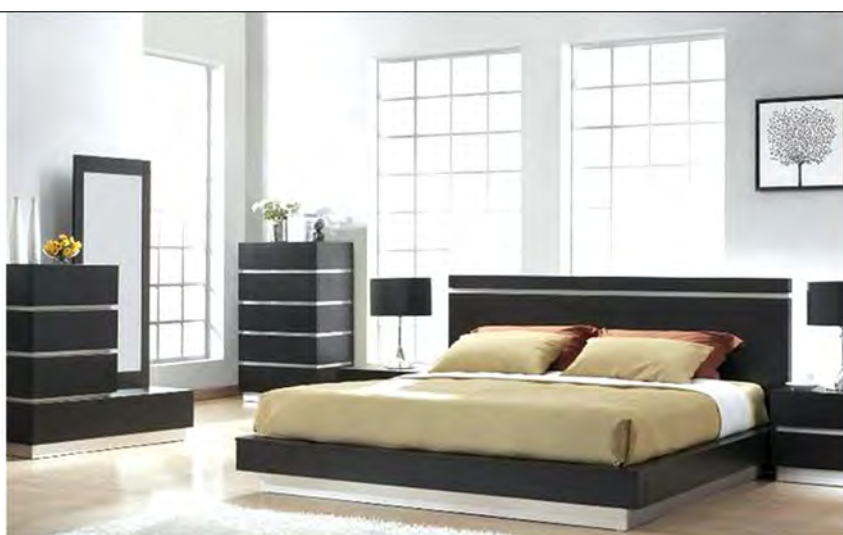
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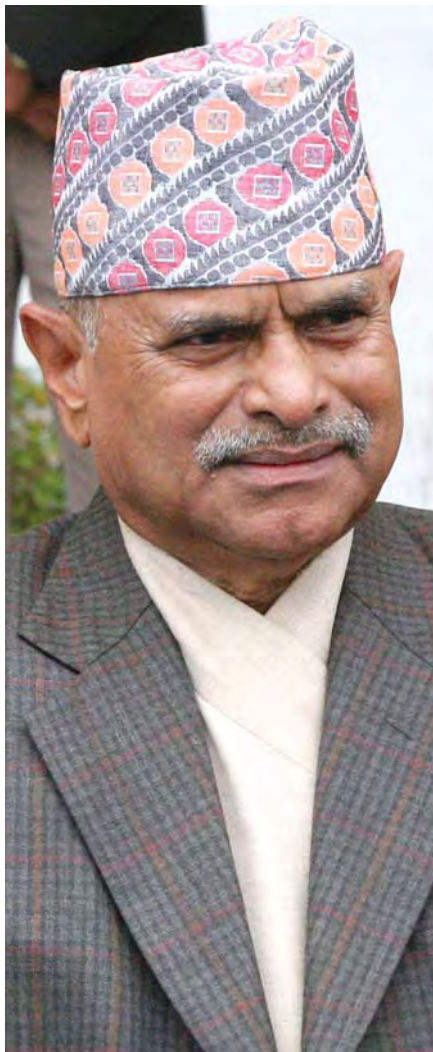
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TAKES TWO TO TANGO

For those who have given up hope on Nepal, President Ram Baran Yadav stands out as a symbolic bulwark against dictatorship, disintegration and disharmony. The fact that the son of an ordinary farmer from Mahottari, and a lifelong freedom fighter, should one day rise up to be Nepal's head of state is itself a sign of how far we have come.

But President Yadav is an improbable personality to wear that mantle. He became president by fluke four years ago because Girija Prasad Koirala and Pushpa Kamal Dahal were so busy trying to stab each other in the back for the job that they cancelled each other out. Yadav himself was at first reluctant and awkward in his new office, and immediately embroiled himself in controversy by reinstating an army chief that Prime Minister Dahal had removed.

But Yadav has matured on the job. Even though in private he is said to have a quick temper, and is not averse to using explicit Maithili expletives when he is not within earshot of the media, in public Yadav projects the persona of a patient guardian. He is not the most scintillating speaker,



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

Only decisions that President Yadav and Prime Minister Bhattarai take jointly will have a semblance of legitimacy in the current political limbo.

tends to ramble a bit especially when reminiscing about his good old days with BP, but everywhere he goes in Nepal, there is genuine affection and respect for this farmer's son. People spontaneously throng to shake his hand, and throw flowers at his feet.

Part of this esteem stems from the regard people have for the office of president, which replaced the monarchy as the symbol of national unity. The other is a result of Yadav's careful adherence to the rules of his office. But what can't be discounted is the support he gathered by not joining the opportunist bandwagon to play identity politics and defecting to

Madhesi parties in 2007. The Madhesi parties may scoff at him and call him a "traitor", but wherever he goes in the plains there is genuine outpouring of support from people for one of their own who has risen to the highest position in the land. His own colleagues in the NC are envious of the public support he commands.

In the post-27 May vacuum, President Yadav's every move is carefully watched for signs of the steps he may be contemplating. Some openly urge him to declare Presidential Rule, others criticise him for over-stepping his mandate by giving Prime Minister Bhattarai a hard time. But in reality, the president has been restrained, patient, and playing a behind-the-scenes role in finding a solution to the current impasse.

Those who think President Yadav is going to do a Gyanendra can think again. What he has done quite successfully is to clip Bhattarai's wings by reminding him repeatedly that he is a caretaker, and to be picky about what he signs into ordinance.

Yadav is tempted to give Bhattarai an ultimatum on setting up a government of national unity, but he knows that the deadline will not stick. Being a former Kangresi, he understands the psychology of the hate-triangle between Poudel, Deuba and Koirala very well. Bhattarai knows this as well, and he is using the rivalry within the NC to linger on in government.

Anything a ceremonial president does now will be legally iffy, and whatever a caretaker prime minister does will be constitutionally questionable. Only decisions that President Yadav and Prime Minister Bhattarai take jointly will have legitimacy. It takes two to tango, and the good news is both Yadav and Bhattarai have grudgingly come to accept this.

ON THE WEB
www.nepalitimes.com

CERTAIN UNCERTAINTY

When people lead, leaders will follow ('Certain uncertainty', editorial, #614). Case in point, Dahal is finally moving out of his extravagant palace in Lazimpat. If we Nepalis can revolt and overthrow corrupted leaders of the NC and UML, the country might see better days.

Sheila Pradhan

THE UNCRITICAL MASS

Kudos Rubeena Mahato for your outstanding analysis of the recent attacks on schools ('The uncritical mass', #614). I really appreciate your fearlessness, honesty and the 'could care less about upsetting any side' attitude with which you approach your columns. Burning school buses, destroying school computers and threatening teachers highlight the growing culture of violence and impunity in our country. And the saddest part, as you point out, is that these goondas who are currently raising havoc on the streets will be in Baluwater or Singha Durbar 10 years from now. This does not bode well for Nepal at all.

Anita Khadka

- Why don't people who support vandalism and destruction of private schools speak out or take action to improve government schools so that they match the quality of private ones. If state schools were better, private schools would not flourish as much as they have. Also when private schools are targeted, many parents will be compelled to send their children to India, which will

lead to brain drain and capital outflow.

KK Sharma

- Let's call a spade a spade: burning buses and destroying school property are acts of terrorism, and the perpetrators are cowardly extortionists and criminals who need to be punished. 'Democrat'

'Democrat'

- People who incite violence and defend their actions by saying "the end we're going to achieve will justify the violence that we'll be using" are cowards and suffer from mental bankruptcy. Bhattarai and his comrades are nothing more than wimps.

Nirmal

- Rubeena hits the nail on the head when she says we have become a land of anarchists where the moderates remain silent and the extremists make the most noise. The mere thought of these criminals assuming leadership roles after a decade or so makes me sick.

Salil

- This is another well-written article by Rubeena and I completely agree with her: it's high time we questioned our value system. From incompetent, corrupt politicians, to blanket impunity for criminals, and violently enforced bandas, Nepal's moral fabric has completely broken down. But sometimes I feel like the way we Nepalis tolerate everything, we deserve to be in this mess.

Anonymous

- I am not trying to justify acts of vandalism, or support the old clichéd argument for class warfare. But imagine

a Nepali who earns Rs 6,000 per month (which is higher than the average national income of \$700 annually), and has two children whom she cannot send to private schools which charge anywhere between Rs 4,000 and Rs 15,000 every month. Would she feel differently about the recent incidents?

Krishna S

- Although this is a good piece, Rubeena fails to talk about the disparity between state and private schools which is an underlying reason for the attacks. Private schools earn abnormal profits, but have no sense of social responsibility. Also the article only blames the Maoists, but the NC and UML are equally responsible.

Shyam Basnet

- After reading this column, I was reminded of Rubeena's earlier article where she wrote about the need for journalists to show 'honesty and integrity' and do away with double standards. But if she really believed in what she preached, she would have acknowledged *Nepali Times'* connection to Rato Bangala School, which was attacked. Would NT dedicate entire columns to the incident if only other schools had suffered?

'Ironic'

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Since we live in a pluralistic society we need to accept views from across the political spectrum ('Anger management', Anurag Acharya, #614). But when a journalist justifies violence against children because he waves the same flag as the criminals on the streets, he loses his credentials. Also Anurag's 'violence is needed to make

an unresponsive state hear the voices of the marginalised' argument has already failed spectacularly in Nepal. We tested this hypothesis during 10 years of war and what did we get? Devastation, loss of lives, grief and a pushing back of the country's development. Yes there is an urgent need to address the class divide in education, in politics, in the job market. But burning buses of rich schools is not the way to go about bringing change. Violence only makes things worse.

Bina S

- The bus-burning hooligans are not innocent, poor, talented-but-cheated youths. They are paid for being full-time goondas of the party, and are often given luxuries not available to even very educated and hard-working Nepalis. This double standards become clear when you look at the lavish lifestyles of YCL or ANNFISU-R leaders.

Ushaft

- It's refreshing to read such polar opposite opinions from two columnists in the same paper. While Rubeena Mahato tells us that the attacks are nothing more than attempts to threaten and extort, Anurag Acharya rationalises the attacks and says they are a symptom of the class divide in education and youth's frustration.

Anonymous

- 'I'm angry, so I'll burn a school bus' is what Anurag seems to be saying in his column. Utter nonsense. May Pashupatinath save us from intellectuals like him.

Jang

EXTENDING THE EXTENDED

I am eagerly waiting to see how the Ass analyses the fireworks that took place between badmen and worstmen at the seventh plenum ('Extending the Extended Central Committee', backside, #614).

Anonymous

- The initial gimmickry was fine, but now the Ass is using expletives in every paragraph. I appreciate his smart payoff on words, but the editor needs to cut down on blatant vulgarity. I don't want to recommend this article to a colleague, because I am worried that she might think I found 'anal-ist' and 'blow-job' very clever. Moral policing is not cool, but it's such crudeness that gives rise to it.

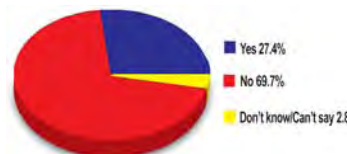
'Seven'

CORRECTION: The article Coffee and conversations (#614) on page 8 was written by Roshani Adhikary.

Times nepalnews.com
Weekly Internet Poll #615

Q. Will people support a Janajati party?

Total votes: 2,922



Weekly Internet Poll #616. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. What do you think of Nepal Rastra Bank's decision to allow Nepali investment in the foreign market?



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

The seventh plenum of the UCPN-M, which concluded in Kathmandu last week will be remembered for all the wrong reasons. But besides the chair chucking, fist-fighting and ugly factionalism, the meet was historical in terms of the decisions that were taken: most significantly to hold a general convention in February next year.

For the first time in its history, the party which waged a decade long war against the 'feudal and corrupt' state is on its way to fight democratic deficit and weed out corruption within its ranks. The largest party has been rattled by revolt and the leaders seem to have realised that there is an imminent existential threat to the party if they don't mend their ways.

After the party joined formal politics in 2006, cadres have complained about financial and moral corruption among their leaders, but the leadership had not allowed an open debate on the issue. The taboo was finally broken on the third day of the plenum after members of youth wings and ex-combatants demanded that party reveal details of income and expenses of the last six years.

An ex-brigade commander Kamala Naharki raised ethical questions over the character of the leaders. "Why is the party sheltering corrupt and morally bankrupt individuals? Is this what our friends and families died for?" she asked.

Naharki's statements reflect a general perception within the Maoists that the 'air-conditioned lives' of the top leaders in Kathmandu have conditioned



BIKRAM RAI

Revolution begins at home

A party which has set out to change society must first change itself

their way of thinking, that the leaders have abandoned the true purpose of getting to power and made it into an end, instead of a means to a larger good. As a result, a party which calls itself the vanguard of the peasants and working-class may slowly be eroding its legitimacy among the people it claims to champion. Last month's split had immediate political reasons, but Mohan Baidya was able to cash in on the seething anger within the party against the luxurious lifestyles of the leaders and the establishment faction's one upmanship.

However, it's not just the Maoist party that suffers from democratic decay. Nepal's

political culture has always been dominated by individuals rather than institutions. The oldest party in the country, the Nepali Congress has been ruled by one family since its establishment in 1947. It is only ironic that the party which claims to be the pillar of Nepal's democracy has never promoted internal democracy.

Even in other parties like the UML and the Madhesi parties, personalities of a few leaders have overbearing effect on the decisions they make. Last week, the UML leadership 'relieved' several senior Janajati leaders from the party's responsibility under incredulous grounds that they had acted against the

party's interests. They were actually being punished for continuously speaking in favour of identity-based federalism, a position that goes against the UML's Brahmin-dominated leadership.

This is a major fallout of Nepal's multi-party democracy, which has been discussed often but left unaddressed. How can a country be run democratically by political parties that are undemocratic in their culture? When parties are run on the whims of few ambitious men, it gives them unfettered power to chart their course. The corruption and impunity that we see in national politics have strong resonance with the same

inside the parties.

For the politics of money and muscle power to end, the institution itself must be made stronger and more influential than those running it. It's a daunting task which requires honest and upright leaders who command popular support.

The UCPN-M's commitment to promote internal democracy, accountability and transparency is a welcome move and it should back them by taking concrete steps in that direction. Despite its split, it is still the largest party and enjoys support due to its agenda for change. But the party which has set out to change society must first change itself.

THE SUBISU WORLD

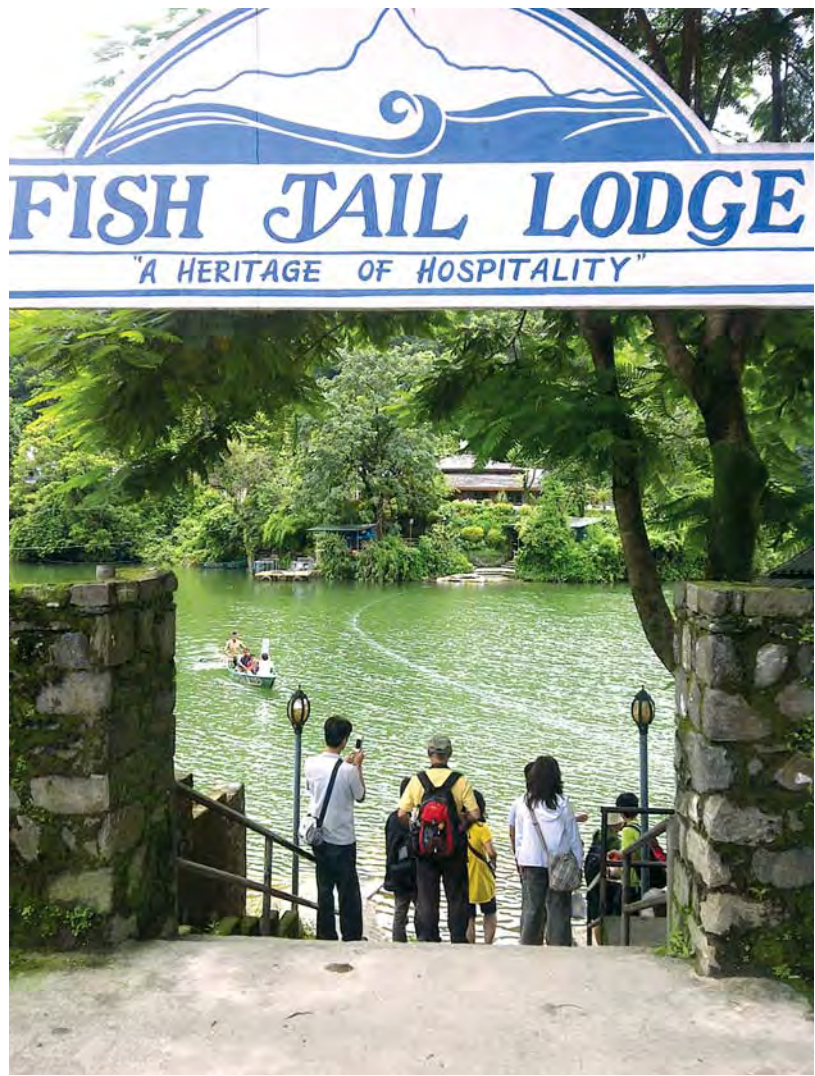
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KUNDA DIXIT

TRISHNA RANA

Growing up, Jayanti Shah saw her grandfather, uncles and family members suffer and succumb to coronary heart disease. So, throughout her life, the former princess looked for ways to help heart patients and make cardiac care more affordable and accessible for Nepalis.

But Jayanti Shah was one of the members of the royal family killed in the massacre at the Narayanhiti Palace in 2001, and her wish remained unfulfilled. Her mother, Helen Shah, established the Jayanti Memorial Trust (JMT) in her memory and turned her vision into reality.

For the past decade, the Trust in partnership with two state-run cardiac hospitals (Shahid Gangalal National Heart Centre and Manmohan Cardiothoracic and Transplant Centre) has saved the lives of more than 2,000 patients. It

helps spread awareness among Nepalis about how to take better care of their hearts, and how heart disease doesn't just afflict the affluent.

The unique feature about JMT is that it runs on the profit generated by the Fishtail Lodge in Pokhara which is owned by Jayanti Shah's family. One of the best-located hotels in Pokhara because it offers views of the reflection of Annapurnas on Phewa Lake, Fish Tail was attacked twice by the Maoists during the war and was closed till 2006.

With renovations and professional management, Fish Tail is now doing well and transfers 100 per cent of its profits to the Jayanti Memorial Trust for the treatment of Nepali heart patients. The Trust also accepts private donations, some from grateful former patients themselves. And although the Trust started as a private initiative, it is now managed by an independent board to become a model for

Healing Nepali hearts

A charity that channels tourism profits directly to benefit poor cardiac patients has saved many lives

other charitable organisations.

"People in Nepal donate money and that is where their social work ends, many don't bother to find out where their money ends up. We are transparent and our donors know exactly what their money is being used for," explains Shreejana Rana, secretary of the Trust.

Selection of patients eligible for the Trust's support is left entirely to the doctors. Fees are paid directly to the hospitals to settle medical bills. To make patients more responsible towards their treatment and recovery, the Trust encourages them to contribute whatever they can towards their treatment. JMT also sponsors the social service unit at the Teaching Hospital which helps needy families find alternate sources of support.

JMT member and former Nepali ambassador to the UK, Singha Bahadur Basnyat, organised a charity musical event that raised 15,000 pounds to get JMT started. A musician himself, he produced the CD *In Memoriam* dedicated to those who died in the royal massacre and to raise money for JMT.

"I expressed through music what I felt inside, but the most fulfilling part of it was that the Trust is carrying on the memory and wishes of Jayanti Shah," says Basnyat.

Chief cardiac surgeon at the Manmohan Centre, Bhagwan Koirala, has been involved with the Trust since its inception. He admits that he was at first sceptical about

a scheme started by the former royal family, but now says it is one of the most fulfilling things he has done in his career.

"Even if we can provide just Rs 20,000 during an emergency, we save lives," he told *Nepali Times*, "lack of money should never be the reason why a patient has to die in a hospital in Nepal."

Besides covering the medical expenses of underprivileged heart patients, JMT regularly organises free health camps in Pokhara where locals get thorough checkups and counselling. It also donates streptokinase injections used in emergency procedures after a heart attack, and artificial valves to hospitals in Kathmandu.


The Trust brings cardiac specialists from the US to Nepal so that doctors can share experience and expertise, train each other and build stronger partnerships.

Rana says the Trust plans to open free diagnostic centres in district hospitals, but the bureaucratic maze is a



JMT

HEALTHY HEART: Dr Bhagwan Koirala (left) and Dr Fred Grover (right) examine a patient at a free health camp in Pokhara.

deterrence. She says: "We can't go it alone, only by working together can we bring about real improvement in cardiac health in the country." 

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Heart in the right place, #159
Musical diplomat, #135

Second innings

Bikash Dahal (name changed) was 19 when he lost his parents to HIV/AIDS. Bikash's father was neck deep in loan which he had borrowed to pay for treatment. Soon after his death, the bank seized their house and family property leaving Bikash and his two younger sisters with nothing. To make things worse, the teenager and his youngest sister fell ill with heart complications. The younger one succumbed to the disease due to lack of treatment. A local foster home finally took notice and took in the two children and paid for Bikash's travel expenses so that he could get a check-up at Gangalal Hospital in Kathmandu. The doctors recommended immediate surgery and referred him to Jayanti Memorial Trust which footed his entire medical bill. Bikash recovered quickly and is back in his village leading a healthy life. "I have been given a new life, I want to use it to look after my sister and foster parents," he says.

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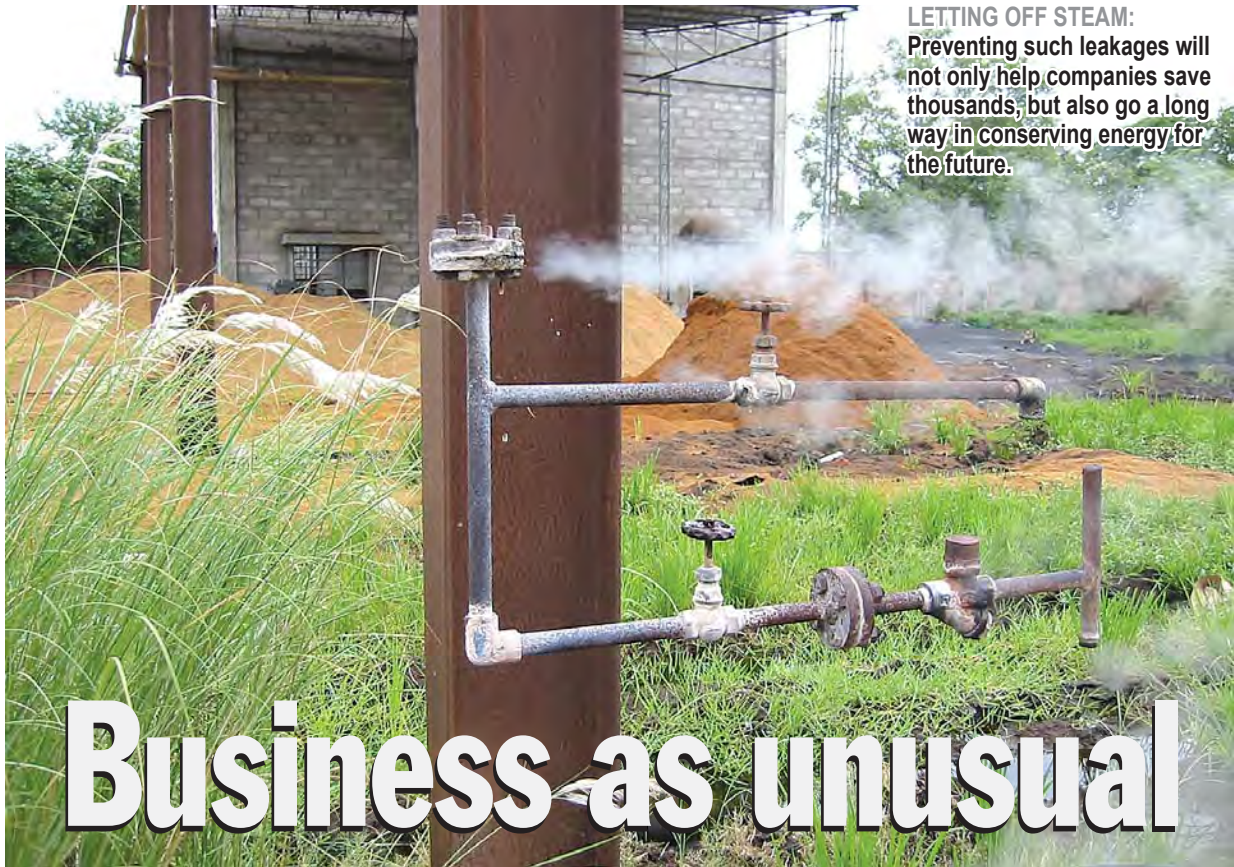
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LETTING OFF STEAM:
Preventing such leakages will not only help companies save thousands, but also go a long way in conserving energy for the future.

Business as unusual

BHISHMA PANDIT

ANNE RENZENBRINK

Hotel Radisson in Lazimpat has hosted heads of state, foreign diplomats and rock stars. But even an international hotel chain like Radisson is not immune to Nepal's chronic energy crisis. Like every grid-connected building in the country, it does not take long until here, too, the lights go out and the diesel guzzling generators take over.

In an effort to slash its diesel bills, which makes up a large chunk of the operating costs, and maximise its energy consumption, chief engineer at Radisson, Kiran Joshi, is introducing innovative methods. "We want to become an energy-efficient business, because for us saving energy means saving money," says Joshi.

Radisson is a good example of what the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and the German aid agency, GIZ hope to achieve through their new energy efficiency project.

After the success of a cleaner production program by the Nepali and Danish governments between 1999 and 2005, FNCCI along with GIZ launched the energy efficiency centre (EEC) in 2011 to encourage the eight most energy-intense industries in Nepal, such as hotels, to reduce their energy consumption and save money.

In corporation with district chambers, the project will carry out awareness programs in industrial towns across Nepal. EEC will also train 45 energy auditors to conduct 40 audits in private companies, under the supervision of long-term experts and regional experts from each of the eight industry.

Company owners and managers will be advised to replace incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient LED bulbs, regulate the temperature of boilers and insulate pipes to reduce heat loss and raise water temperatures. Through

these initiatives, EEC aims to cut energy consumption by 10 per cent in at least five of the 40 audited companies until the program ends in 2014.

"Convincing companies is not always easy," says Susanne Bodach, energy and environment expert with the EEC, "Many might ask how they can save energy when they don't have enough electricity in the first place."

Some companies are deterred by the initial cost of introducing energy-efficient systems. Even banks are hesitant to provide loans, because it's more profitable and risk-free for them to finance real-estate projects rather than such initiatives.

With the energy crisis getting worse and fuel costs rising, a new joint FNCCI and GIZ program is promoting more energy efficiency in the private sector

However, simple measures like changing light bulbs or insulating pipes don't need much investment and companies can cut down production costs in a short time and lower their dependence on expensive imported fuel.

Besides persuading companies or banks to invest in energy-efficiency projects, changing the industry culture is another challenge. Bodach says some companies are not even aware of how much energy they use because they don't have records. Establishing a culture of energy management is therefore a crucial part of EEC's plan.

Asking workers to adapt to newer methods is also difficult. "You have

workers and plant operators who have been doing their job for 20 years and then a young energy auditor comes in and tells them to do things differently. This can create problems," explains Bodach.

EEC feels the government isn't particularly keen on energy-efficiency programs, because most work happens behind the scenes, there is no visible physical structure like a PV plant and the results are less tangible. "Policy makers usually don't like such projects, because there are no ribbon cutting or inauguration ceremonies," says Bodach.

While countries like India and China are already including energy efficiency in their energy strategy, the energy policy in Nepal is still in its infancy.

Despite the challenges, Bodach is optimistic that the program will be successful and the targeted energy consumption cut of 10 per cent will be met. "We hope we can exceed our target," she adds.

Bodach is also hopeful that companies will make efforts to continue the initiative in the long-run even after the project ends in three years. "The 40 energy audits will hopefully produce 40 good entrepreneurs who are willing to implement energy-efficient systems and be role models for other entrepreneurs," she says.

Gyanendra Upadhyay, long-term expert and energy auditor with EEC, who was involved in the joint Nepali-Danish program, says the response so far from partner organisations in the districts has been positive as they feel the EEC program is more-suited to their needs. 🇳🇵

www.fncci.org
www.giz.de

nepalitimes.com

Moving beyond buzzwords, #610
No light at the end of the tunnel, #541

BIZ BRIEFS

Ride upgraded



Morang Auto Works, the sole distributor of Yamaha in Nepal recently launched the upgraded version of the Yamaha SZ-R 153cc bike available in red, white and black. It also started Upgrade Yourself campaign with test rides and a chance to win cash prize up to Rs 50,000.

Unbeatable offer



Chevrolet has introduced Chevrolet Thriller Campaign, offering discounts up to Rs 2,50,000 on its three models Aveo, Uva and Optra. The offer also includes three years warranty and

three years of free maintenance.

Picture perfect

Pashupati Paints has announced the winning pictures of the Hamro Nepal photography contest organised by Artudio Nepal in collaboration with Pashupati Paints. Of the 4,000 entries in the competition, the winning pictures have been incorporated in the Pashupati Paints Calendar.



Spreading wings



NMB BANK
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NMB Bank has launched NMB visa debit card. Customers will now have greater access to their accounts from more than 400,000 ATMs and 2.5 million point of sales (POS) terminals in India and Nepal. NMB Bank has 20 branches, one extension counter and 23 ATM outlets across the country.



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- ✓ Provides opportunity to learn filmmaking skills through hands on experience!!
- ✓ Perfectly balanced between theory and practice (of filmmaking)!!
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- ✓ Participants will have access to one of the largest resources on filmmaking in Nepal!!

For details and registration, visit www.middlewayfilms.com



ALL PICS: TONG SIAN CHOO

Old, but new

Cosy new B&B in Patan offers a modern twist to traditional Newari culture

TONG SIAN CHOO



While the house retains its Newari architecture, it displays a tasteful fusion of the old and new and is equipped with amenities to match a fancy hotel.

“Why tear down a charming old house with so much history, when we can easily integrate our contemporary lifestyle and needs into it,” explains general manager, Camille Hanesse, “Homes like Swotha are not only beautiful, they are perfect for Kathmandu’s climate and you can enjoy all the comforts of modern houses.”

Swotha also gets brownie points for being an environmentally and socially conscious business and promoting sustainable practices. Solar power keeps all rooms brightly-lit during power cuts and provides guests with 24-hour hot water. Window frames from the old house have been turned into classy glass tables. The housekeeping staff and management come from the community, while the cotton curtains, sheets, carpets and soaps are all made by locals from Patan.

Once in the bedroom, its minimalistic and aesthetically-pleasing design impresses the visitor. However, you might find that the dim lightings and unstable Wi-Fi are not conducive to skyping. The lack of phone in the room also means you have to keep running up and down the hotel to ask for room service, which shouldn’t matter at a time when everyone has a mobile.

The old world charm and genuinely friendly and helpful staff more than make up for the shortcomings, which look like minor teething problems. Restaurant staff is willing to go the extra mile to prepare new soups to suit your taste buds, provide mosquito nets, and even help remove a spider in the middle of the night as happened to this visitor.

The café (*pic, left*) is a favourite, even among non-guests. Its clean interior and cosiness make it an oasis within the old town of Patan. The menu is revised regularly, and there are new Nepali and western dishes to try out every week.

Swotha was started by a consortium of investors



that includes an architect, and the attention to detail is remarkable. Let’s just hope that since imitation is the highest form of flattery, there will be more bed and breakfasts like this opening up in Patan so visitors are not required to stay in the tourist ghetto of Thamel. 🇳🇵

www.traditionalhomes.com.np

Located in the heart of Patan just down the alley in Durbar Square, Traditional Homes Swotha is the right combination of simplicity and elegance. Doing more with less, and adding only what’s needed, the owners have renovated this 80-year-old Newari home but kept its heart. Traditional wooden windows, closets, low ceilings and pillars are all intact.



Third World Guest House

Overlooking Patan Durbar Square, the old palace and the Krishna temple, Third World Guest House was the first of the pensiones in this old town. It offers a spectacular panorama of the palace of the Malla kings, and the hotel's biggest asset is its location. However, Third World Guest House lives up to its name in terms of service, and although it is meant to be a 'Newari' house, the cemented facade and interiors hint at an identity crisis of sorts.

The lodge has 10 bedrooms, one of them is a penthouse with a balcony, attached kitchenette and WiFi. The staff is friendly, although some of the information is lost in translation and any specific request may need prompting. Ear plugs are recommended because the bells and chanting at Krishna Mandir start quite early and the dogs in the square are noisy.

The penthouse is \$35 per night, which is a bargain even if it is just for the location.

Candice Neo
+977-1-5522187



Newa Chen

Renovated and refurbished from a Newari residential home believed to be at least 350 years old, guests at Newa Chen are looked after like family members. You can enjoy a simple English breakfast on the second floor next to the breezy window, which overlooks the quiet courtyard and home of the owner, Devendra Shrestha. Newa Chen was originally his family house, now preserved as a guest house under a UNESCO restoration project.

The traditional windows, low beds and low-ceilinged bedrooms all recreate the charm of a bygone era. Because of the low ceiling, visitors need to bend their heads when they enter the room. This could be uncomfortable until you are told that this is a way to show respect in local custom. The attic room on the top-most floor displays a collection of old jugs and oven used by the family and gives guests a better understanding of Newari culture. Newa Chen is the ideal place to get acquainted with Newari lifestyle and feel at home away from home. Rooms range from \$15-45.

Candice Neo
www.newachen.com



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EVENTS



FUTSAL CARNIVAL, enjoy a fun-filled fair as you cheer for your favourite futsal team, dance to the music of DJ Phuchhey and savour delicious snacks from the food stalls. 28 July, 11am to 7pm, Grassroots Recreational Centre, Mandikatar

ARTalk Vol II, discussion on recent trends and development in the South Asian Contemporary Art Scene. 27 July, Nepal Bharat Library, New Road



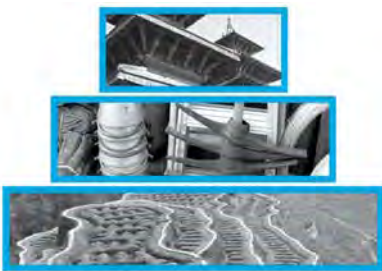
TEDx KATHMANDU, an event where you can share your ideas and engage in great discussions. 28 July, Yala Maya Kendra, register at www.tedxkathmandu.com

Monsoon Exhibition, an exhibition of civic technology and media art. 27 July to 3 August, Wednesdays through

Saturdays, 11am to 4pm, Jawalakhel, <http://monsooncollective.org/>

Amalgam 2012, an exhibition of paintings by Dina Bangdel. Open until 4 August, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal

Demystifying Portraiture, a workshop by Spanish photographer Arantxa Cedillo for photography enthusiasts, who want to meet people and tell their stories through portraits. 28 to 29 July, 9am to 3pm, Jhamsikhel, www.photocircle.com.np



A FEW WORDS IN MATERIAL NEPALI, a residency solo exhibition by Robert Cervara Amblar. 29 July to 3 August, Kathmandu Contemporary Arts Centre, Patan Museum



PRODUCTION ORIENTED THEATRE TRAINING, two-month long workshop for acting enthusiasts on every aspect of theatre. Rs 3000, 7am to 9am,

register by 24 August, Sarwanam Theatre, Kalikasthan, 4438947, 9841978353

I am youth because, short-film making competition on environmental issues. Rs. 100, register by 6 August, info@yes.org.np

DINING



DECHENLING, the place to head for Bhutanese and Tibetan cuisine, their pleasant and spacious garden is ideal for big gatherings. Thamel



TRISARA, with dishes like Flambeed Prawns, Crispy Chicken and Khau Soi, it would be a folly to pass this eatery. Lazimpat



PASTO VOSTRO, for great pasta in a warm ambience. Their bacon wrapped sausages are a must. Thamel

Sal's Pizza, almost round, almost cheap, always delicious, the cheesiest pizzas in town. Lazimpat, behind Jazz Upstairs

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



CHONGQING FAST FOOD, gear up for some mouth watering Chinese dishes like Sour and Spicy Pork and Kung Pao Chicken. Thamel

Yellow Chilli, enjoy renowned Indian chef Sanjeev Kapoor's signature Indian delicacies and variety of other mouthwatering delicacies. Thapathali

Dhaba, for an excellent range of North Indian food, try their unbeatable Kashmiri Gosht. Thapathali



8 DEGREES, from lemon lassis to spicy pork stews, 8 degrees is a great place to try continental dishes. Jhamsikhel

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



BENCH BURGER, be it fish or steak burgers, Bench Burger offers varieties that will satisfy your palate. Krishnagalli, Patan

MOLLY JO GOREVAN

“In each and every house in Kathmandu, you might find a Radhika,” Deepak Rauniyar, the director of *Highway*, says of one of his characters. “A woman whose husband has been working out of the country for two or three years, a woman left alone. How can we blame her for needing love?”

Highway follows a bus full of strangers across Nepal to Kathmandu. The characters are unusual: a young gay man, an unfaithful wife, a transgender victim of sexual violence, a wealthy divorced doctor slowly losing his mind. These are not the airbrushed clichés of Bollywood-style movies. The fragmentary narrative of Rauniyar’s film plunges the audience into deeply personal vignettes of each character aboard the bus.

“Each character is a window into a hidden facet of Nepali society,” Rauniyar says. The viewer gets vulnerable portraits of these outsiders, reel after reel of secrets. A woman gyrating on stage at a dance club as her eyes fill with tears, a young girl about to become a bride smoking a cigarette alone in a locked bathroom. These visceral glimpses into the secret lives of the passengers are performed with the same violence with which the film attempts to redefine Nepali cinematic identity, against the overwhelming, homogenous presence of imported cinematic formulas from South Korea and India.

Highway embodies the changes that Rauniyar wishes to see in contemporary Nepali films. “First and foremost, we have to start telling our story,” he says. “So many directors are watching Bollywood or Korean movies and using those formulas



“Why should a film be real?”

Director Deepak Rauniyar defends his unflinching portrait of contemporary Nepal in his new film, *Highway*

to make movies for Nepalis, but we need our own stories.”

This is not supposed to be an easy film to watch, said Rauniyar, acknowledging his intention to frustrate viewers accustomed to smooth plots with the interruptions of one banda after another, and repeated recordings of failed cell phone network messages as a secondary soundtrack for the film.

“A banda is a great example of

selfishness, of forgetting the rights of others,” explained Rauniyar. *Highway*’s realism extends to its cinematography. Jump cuts stitched together create jolting exchanges between characters, and the camera bounces with the uneven road. “The road is not smooth, just as life is not smooth in Nepal,” says the director.

Rauniyar was surprised about the censors excising the part with Limbuwan activists. “Why censor in films something

present in everyone’s lives? Nepali people hear this stuff on the radio, on the TV, everyday, so why can’t they see it in a movie?” Rauniyar quoted one explanation he received from a bureaucrat in defense of the censorship: “He told me: ‘Why should a film be real?’”

There is a unique freedom that the bus ride provides, away from the constraints of society, bringing together a cross-section of individuals with diverse economic and cultural backgrounds. During their journey the passengers transcend shortcomings and inertia through collective imagination. When the bus arrives in Kathmandu, they are cut off from each other, disappearing into the dark, urban sprawl, each drawn back into the solitary enclosures of their private lives.

There are no happy endings. The young gay man pulls back the rubber sheet to identify the dead body of his transgender friend. The army lieutenant tracks down his wife run down by a car and finds she has lost a baby not his own. The band is left, unpaid, in full wedding dress in the rain.

“This lack of a resolution reflects the betrayal our society is experiencing,” explained Rauniyar, “I wanted the viewer to feel as lost and alone as each of the character, if we are not together, we are nowhere.” And yet the viewer is left with the sensation of hope, a memory of all that was possible within the bus.

Highway has encountered anger and criticism on its Facebook page. “This is the worst movie of all time”, says one. Another commentator accuses the film of being un-Nepali because it was shot by an Indian cinematographer and produced by an American, even claiming that Rauniyar intended his film to cater to a European audience rather than a Nepali one. There are also strong arguments in support of the film’s innovations.

“Like it or dislike it,” Rauniyar said, “you cannot avoid it.”

nepalitimes.com

Read page 10 Must See, Sophia Pande

GETAWAYS



CHARIKOT PANORAMA RESORT, enjoy mountain views and local culture in the historic town of Charikot. *Special packages on offer. Charikot, Dolakha, 5529463, thapamaag@gmail.com*

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Mango Tree Lodge, culture walks, rafting in Karnali, wildlife exploration, jungle safari at the Bardia National Park. *Bhetani, Bardiya, info at info@mangotreelodge.com*



Paleti celebrates the Adhunik

After breaking its long hiatus, Paleti series now brings you a Paleti Utsav – the first annual festival of contemporary Nepali music. Showcasing the best from the yesteryears of the Adhunik genre, the festival will feature maestro Ambar Gurung on the first day and legendary singers Phatteman Rajbhandari and Shanti Thatal on the second and third days. In addition, Gurung’s favourite student Aavas will perform on the final day. The festival is a celebration of the past 10 years since Paleti first began with the vision to rejuvenate Nepal’s contemporary music. The festival will be held at DAV School, Jawalakhel from 9 to 12 August. For tickets, contact Tewa, 9851103922 and Nepalaya, 9818192569.

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SOMEPLACE ELSE

El Mediterráneo



PICS: RUBY TUESDAY

El Mediterráneo is small, clean and elegant and reminiscent of the tiny, usually family owned and run restaurants that dot the Spanish and Portuguese landscape. The clean white washed walls, blue ceiling and general air of wholesomeness gave me the illusion of that I had been teleported to the Mediterranean to indulge in some feisty paella and fresh seafood and cold sangria. But all good things, even dreams, come to an end and such was the case with El Mediterráneo.

First off, the food is all Spanish. There is no momo or chow mein anywhere on the menu and this alone got me excited. Living in Kathmandu is a gustatory delight with more and more restaurants not shying away from offering a variety of cuisines, which I see as a silent appreciation of the growing

number of people who travel (channel surfing, trawling through food blogs and reading cook books for recreational purposes also count) and want to experiment with more than just the regular dal bhat, hamburger, sizzler et al.

No self respecting Spanish restaurant could forego tapas and the Patatas Bomba (Rs 80) and Croquetas de Pollo (Rs 100) at El Mediterráneo are delightful. The Ensalada Mediterráneo (Rs 410) with goji berries, slivers of almond, tomatoes and luscious shrimps on a bed of lettuce, tossed in balsamic vinegar dressing is one I highly recommend.

However, the Seafood Paella (Rs 450), which the menu at El Mediterráneo very simplistically explains and I quote ‘something like

a biryani’, was a big turn-off. Google images of seafood paella and compare it with the one on this page to see what I mean. A mush of under-cooked short-grain rice drowning in tomato sauce with nary a shrimp in sight is not what I was expecting. Closer investigation with my fork revealed bits of squid and octopus and other bits of seafood. Knowing how difficult it is to find good seafood in Kathmandu, I was willing to forgive the gaffe if it wasn’t for the waiter who condescendingly told me, “Oh that’s the way it’s meant to be.”

The Calamar Renello (Rs 570) – squid stuffed with a mouth-watering mixture of spinach, paneer and raisins went a long way in redeeming the restaurant. At this point, I would have loved a glass of wine or even some sangria in a pitcher, but sadly though

the bar menu offers a variety of ‘hard drinks’ there isn’t any wine on it. For dessert we had Natillas (Rs 160), a custard dish with milk and eggs that tasted a lot like pureed burfis and their summer special, Mango Mousse (Rs 160), which was okay.

What was not okay, however, is the way we were treated. Many restaurants especially in busy tourist ghettos like Thamel and Pokhara’s lakeside are guilty of ignoring locals in favour of foreigners. Although not welcome, such behaviour is still understandable, because the businesses in these areas rely largely on foreigners. But El Mediterráneo in Jhamsikhel, which is a favourite among Kathmanduites and expats alike. Besides, I paid for my meal, asked for no discounts and am always polite to the waiters.

I walked into El Mediterráneo really excited and eager, but I left with a bitter taste in my mouth, not from the food, which is more than adequate, but from the despicable attitude of the waiters. My presumed bank balance and the colour of my skin were enough for the restaurant to put me in the ‘second class’ category, while they served people with lighter skin tones like celebrities. 🇳🇵

Ruby Tuesday

Getting there:
El Mediterráneo is in Jhamsikhel opposite Epic Mountain Bikes.



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Ruby Tuesday

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6.5
OUT OF 10



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HIGHWAY



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

Deepak Rauniyar's new film, *Highway* is an experimental film for Nepal in many ways. It is the first film that anyone has directed to date, here, in which all of the acting of the considerably large cast is improvised. Astonishingly the dialogue too was largely improvised, and, as a result, for the first time in Nepali cinema, we hear our language spoken as it is on the streets and in our homes and not in the stilted clichéd accents we have become used to in other Nepali films. The literature that we studied growing up is beautiful, but it does not seem to translate well into spoken dialogue on film, a mystery that is yet to be solved. Perhaps it is something to do with the fact that our spoken Nepali today is an odd amalgam of Nepali and English with all kinds of other things thrown in, and therefore it sounds rather inelegant on the screen. *Highway's* improvisational spirit has managed to circumvent this problem neatly, and with not a little innovation.

The screenplay for *Highway* was written by Abinash Bikram Shah and is a classic interweaving of stories à la films like *Crash* (2004) or *Syriana* (2005). We are shown a number of disparate characters: Pratiek (Eelum Dixit) is a troubled, possibly gay young man travelling home to his lover; Pooja (Shristi Ghimire) is a young pretty medical student travelling with her mother to Kathmandu to get married; Mahili (Nirmala Rai) is a mother going home to counsel her daughter against divorce; Manoj (Dayahang Rai) is a former Lahure rushing home to his wife after consuming a potion from a local healer that might reverse his impotence (it must be made good within 36 hours of consumption). All these

different players are brought together with the device of a bus that is travelling from Eastern Nepal towards Kathmandu, at a time when bandas were (well, still are) the flavour of the month. As the bus is stopped by the usual destructive angry mob enforcing a banda, the group on the bus collectively concoct a cock and bull story involving the two youngest people on the bus (Pooja and Pratiek) being newly weds and claiming that the bus is, in fact, their wedding bus. Fortuitously, the bride-to-be has her wedding clothes, and there is a band on board complete with their uniforms and instruments. The film flashes backwards as each character's previous history is revealed. Most laudable is the diversity of the actors in age, gender and ethnicity. This, of course, is the higher motif that lies behind the title *Highway* – not merely the story of a bus stuck on a road, but also of a cross-section of the country coming together at different periods in their lives and somehow interacting – cooperating constructively for a common goal.

Some of the performances are the best I've seen to date in Nepali cinema. Reecha Sharma as the dance-bar girl with a small daughter, who is also the girl friend of the bus-driver, is raw and heart wrenching as she portrays the bravery that is required of single women in a dodgy profession in a fast devolving metropolitan city. Likewise, Shristi Ghimire is charming and very convincing as the vulnerable young medical student torn between her lover Ronit (played by Saugat Malla) and the America returned boy Abiral (played by Karma) that she is headed to marry.

There are many great performances that induce both laughter and tears in this small gem of a film that has for the first time pushed the boundaries of our local, homegrown cinema (the film played at the prestigious Berlin Film Festival). Made simply, but not simple, with an experimental open-ended conclusion, Deepak Rauniyar has shown us that we can make good, and brave new cinema economically, but beautifully if our hearts are in the right place.

It is in theaters now, see it for a breath of fresh air and for its sincere and true contribution to our cinematic future. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer

A narrow escape



DHNAVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

Twenty-four-year old Purna Rai from Khotang in eastern Nepal was admitted to Patan Hospital with bacterial meningitis. After four days he recovered completely and both he and his wife, who was nursing him, were overjoyed.

Once the diagnosis was made by performing a spinal tap (which allows for the patient's cerebrospinal fluid to be properly examined), the treatment was straightforward. A powerful, intravenous antibiotic was prescribed. Although meningitis is life-threatening, the patient had a prompt, and uneventful recovery with the raging fever and throbbing headache disappearing in quick time.

More than the medical aspect, the case was fascinating because of how Purna made it to Patan Hospital.

Purna had fallen ill in Khotang for a day with headache, high fever and bouts

of vomiting. His condition deteriorated when he became delirious and then lost consciousness. His family knew that the situation was life-threatening and called up their closest relative in Kathmandu. The relative wasted no time in arranging for a helicopter to fly to Khotang which brought Purna promptly to a hospital in Kathmandu.



Many patients from the hills of Nepal suffer from meningitis and other potentially curable but dangerous illnesses everyday. But the outcome is not as positive as in the case of this patient. In Purna's case the whole family understood the

seriousness of the situation and worked effectively to rescue the young man.

In addition, the family had enough financial resources and contacts to arrange for a rescue helicopter. In the context of Nepal, the sequence of events and how well they were orchestrated are miraculous. However, it was still a tremendous financial burden for the family which is still trying to pay off the loan.

In Nepal, a catastrophic illness like this can push even relatively wealthy people to grinding poverty. Unless this problem is dealt with effectively by strengthening primary healthcare in places like Khotang and providing universal healthcare, severe illnesses which lead to immense financial problems will continue unabated.

It is unfortunate that India (whose example we seem to follow in all matters) has not taken the lead in health issues for the masses in South Asia. Dr K Srinath Reddy of India said that due to high cost of healthcare, 40 million Indians are pushed into poverty each year. There is an abundance of expensive, state-of-the-art medical institutions in the country, but very few Indians have access. Perhaps with political will, Nepal can take the lead in healthcare. 🇳🇵

WEEKEND WEATHER

After a weak start, the Monsoon is finally on its normal track, having gained enough strength in the last couple of weeks to make up for the low precipitation earlier in the month. Expect high humidity throughout the weekend and intermittent rain mostly during nights. Residents of Kathmandu Valley will finally get to enjoy cool and calm weather while temperature continues to soar in the southern plains.



FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
25-21	25-20	24-20



BIKRAM RAI

SOUND BITE: Chief election commissioner Nilkantha Upreti (left), along with Ram Chandra Poudel, Jhalanath Khanal and Pushpa Kamal Dahal are swarmed by the press after their meeting at the Election Commission in Kantipath.



BIKRAM RAI

LIGHT FOOTED: Performers at Lyrical Dances program organised by Nriya Aagan at the Army Officer's Club in Sundhara on Friday.



BHRIKUTI RAI

UNSAFE RIDE: Students go to school on a rickshaw van in Nepalgunj on Wednesday.



SIAN CHOO TONG

FRUIT FIESTA: A vendor at Shree Complex in Pokhara awaits customers with an array of seasonal fruits.

BHAKTAPUR

Forty years later, Bhaktapur is a living example of the successful integration of heritage conservation with town development

LUKAS GRIMM

Bhaktapur, the city of devotees, retains the ambience of the original Kathmandu Valley civilisation more than any other town. It has preserved not just the unique architecture and culture of the Newari people but is also a model for town management.

Bhaktapur evolved out of a cluster of villages on the Valley's eastern edge, straddling the vital trade route connecting India and Tibet. By the 10th century, the town was powerful and developed enough to crown its own king, Ananda. His dynasty, the Mallas, ruled Bhaktapur until 1768 when it was defeated by Prithvi Narayan Shah of Gorkha. During the Malla

period, Bhaktapur enjoyed exposure to foreign cultures and ideas brought by passing trade caravans.

Its strategic location not only brought resources, but also enough political importance that by the beginning of the 14th century, King Jayasthiti Malla decided to make it the administrative and cultural centre of the Valley. Together with Kathmandu and Patan, Bhaktapur's golden era of art and architecture took place between the 16th and 18th centuries.

Artisans competed to build the most elaborate temples and courtyards for their rulers. Pride became priority. Money was of no concern as the three city states vied with each other through aesthetics. By the 18th century, Bhaktapur had reached its cultural climax and the seat of power shifted to Kathmandu.

The new and shorter trade route to Tibet through Kalimpong and Nathu La opened by the British in the 19th century weakened Bhaktapur's role as a trade hub, and the final blow came

with the annexation of Tibet by China in 1952. The new Kathmandu-Lhasa Highway built by the Chinese in 1972 bypassed the town all together.

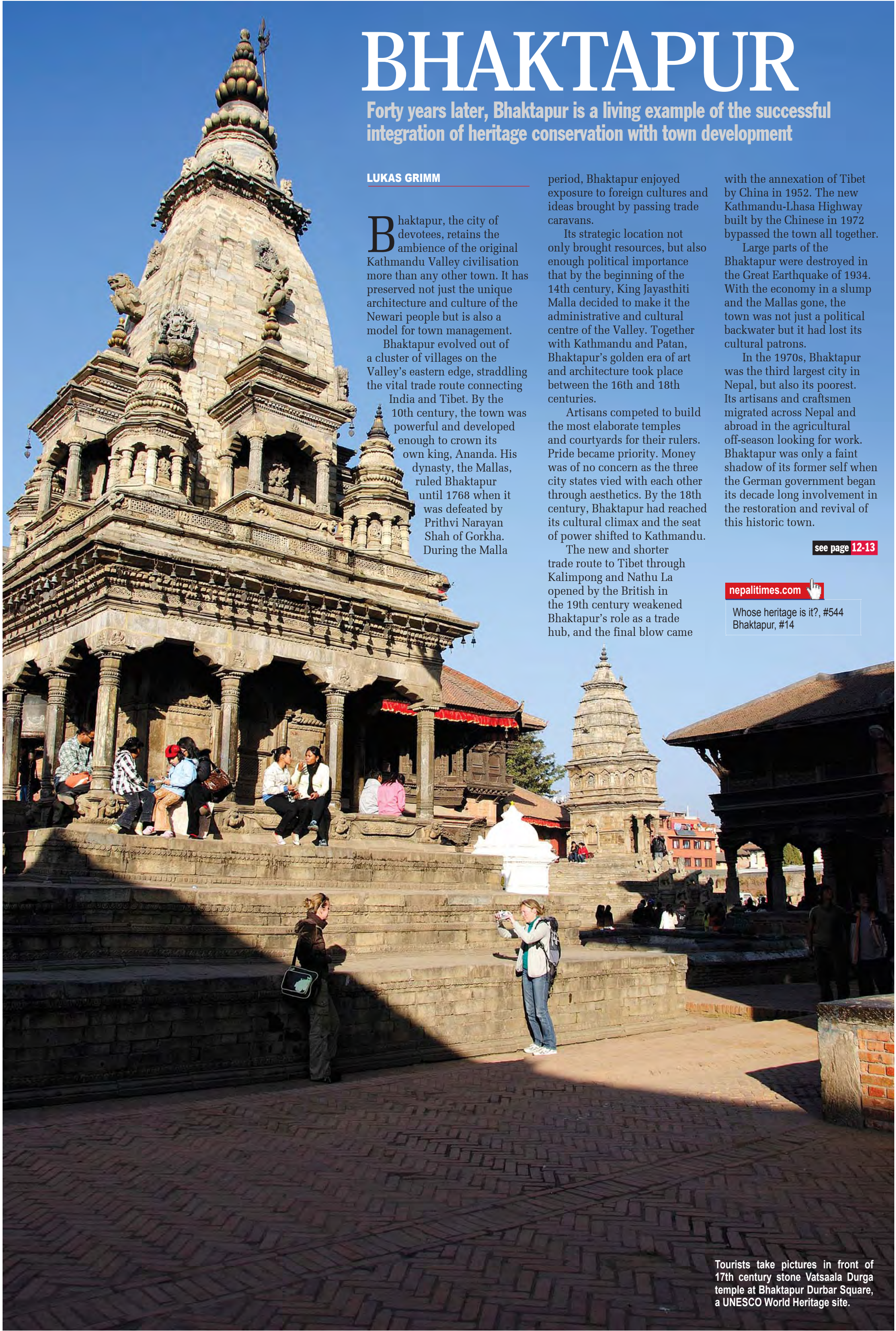
Large parts of the Bhaktapur were destroyed in the Great Earthquake of 1934. With the economy in a slump and the Mallas gone, the town was not just a political backwater but it had lost its cultural patrons.

In the 1970s, Bhaktapur was the third largest city in Nepal, but also its poorest. Its artisans and craftsmen migrated across Nepal and abroad in the agricultural off-season looking for work. Bhaktapur was only a faint shadow of its former self when the German government began its decade long involvement in the restoration and revival of this historic town.

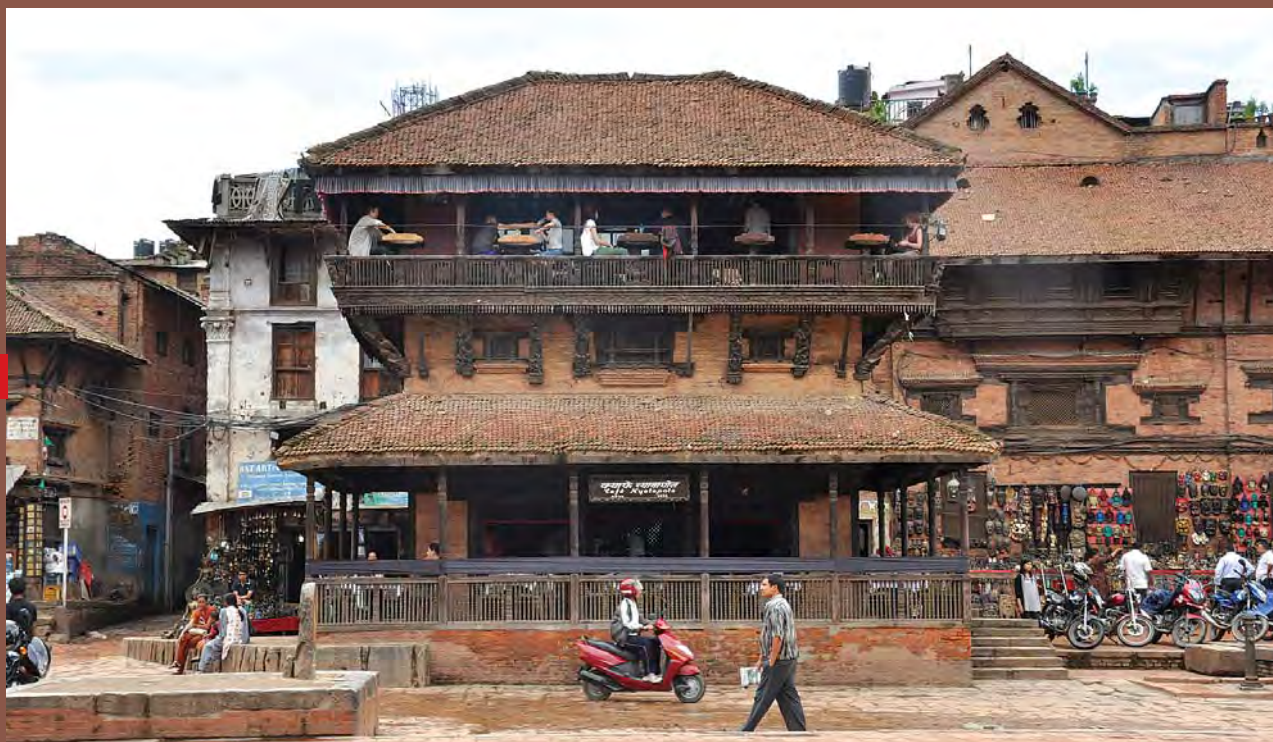
see page 12-13

nepalitimes.com

Whose heritage is it?, #544
Bhaktapur, #14



Tourists take pictures in front of 17th century stone Vatsaala Durga temple at Bhaktapur Durbar Square, a UNESCO World Heritage site.



LUKAS GRIMM

In 1970, when Crown Prince Birendra got married, as a wedding present the German government renovated the Pujari Math (*pic, below*) in Bhaktapur. One of the architects involved was Niels Gutschow (*box*).

Having visited Nepal for the first time in 1962, Niels knew what he was getting himself into. He had 100,000 Deutsche Marks for the project and spent six months restoring the 15th century monastery. The Bhaktapur Development Project (BDP) grew out of this initiative and set in motion a 17-year German involvement in restoring Bhaktapur to its former glory.

When the project began in 1974, it aimed to improve the living conditions of the people of Bhaktapur and restore the historic city. But although the infrastructure was being rebuilt and many historic temples renovated, the people weren't necessarily happy. In 1979, there was so much discontent that the project had to be halted.

Studies were conducted to find out what the community wanted, and the project goals adjusted accordingly by a Nepali manager. German 'experts' became German 'advisers' and the project took a new, more cooperative approach.

A serious effort was made to communicate with local inhabitants, and get their support.

The result of these efforts is a functioning infrastructure which included a sewage system, private access to water for individual households and street upgrading.

The model of using tourist entrance fees for the city's upkeep was also introduced. Investment was made in education, and in 2001 Bhaktapur opened its very own Khwopa College.

The BDP was the catalyst that got things going, but much of Bhaktapur's success in urban management is due to the efficiency of the Bhaktapur Municipality led by the Nepal Worker and Peasant Party (NWPP) which has allowed the city's cultural preservation and development to go hand in hand. 🇳🇵

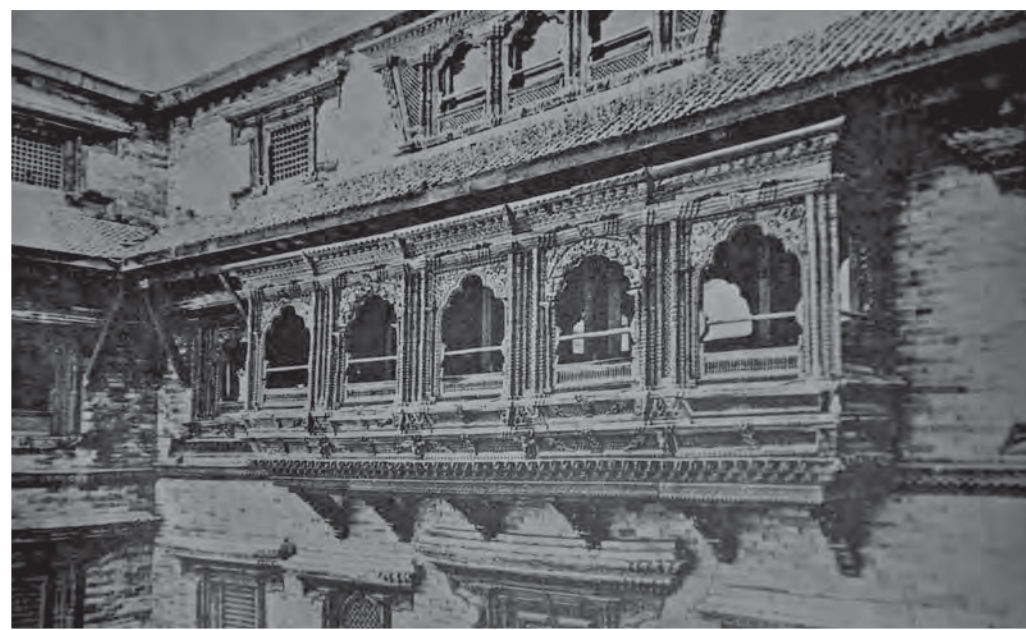
1 Nyatapola Restaurant opened shortly after the project ended, and remains open to date with a beautiful view of Taumadhi Square.

2 Dattatreya Square during restoration, now one of Bhaktapur's bigger attractions and home to the Pujari Math.

3 The Pujari Math, the first to be restored in 1971 by Gutschow seen, here shortly after restoration and in current condition.

The rebirth of Bhaktapur

A unique German-Nepali initiative has helped restore Bhaktapur to its former glory



ALL BLACK & WHITE PICS: BDP



Krishna Pranjapati

Krishna Pranjapati welcomes a visitor courteously at the gate and leads the way to his office next to Bhaktapur's Durbar Square where he has been working for the past two decades, the majority of the time dedicated to the conservation of Bhaktapur's architecture.

Having grown up here he has witnessed Bhaktapur's evolution from a quiet town into a bustling city and has seen the effects of the BDP and the long-term results. "The BDP was very good for Bhaktapur. If I had not been studying I would have liked to work for the BDP very much".

Asked what made Bhaktapur a success story, Pranjapati replies, "We used the money in the right places to solve problems in water supply irrigation, medicine, maintenance and conservation. The funds for all this come from the entrance fee and we use about half of it for conservation, the rest is spent on roads and infrastructure".

For Pranjapati, Bhaktapur is a work in progress. Last year he oversaw the renovation of 53 wells as the municipality tackled water shortage. Many of his peers have left, and gone abroad, but Pranjapati is happy to have stayed behind to help his hometown. He says: "I get a lot of satisfaction from serving Bhaktapur. My dream is for Bhaktapur to be seen in the eyes of visitors like Rome is seen today."



Horst Matthäus

In 1970 Horst Matthäus was working for a German aid agency in Kathmandu and remembers driving past green fields to visit Bhaktapur. The city was in a state of complete neglect, he recalls, and had little to offer visitors other than the ruins of temples and monasteries. "Only hardcore tourists that were interested in architecture or history ventured to Bhaktapur because there were no toilets and no restaurants you could trust," Matthäus remembers.

In 1978, Matthäus who was now living in Germany, applied to work in the BDP. The experiences previously gained in Nepal, such as speaking the language and having been around Bhaktapur helped Matthäus make up his mind and so he found himself in the infrastructure department that same year. Later he worked as a team leader and stayed on until the project ended in 1986.

When asked what he thought to be the greatest achievement of the BDP Matthäus reflects, "There were a lot of challenges we faced and in the first phase we experimented a lot. To stop the project, take the lessons learned seriously and restructure the approach of the entire project are huge achievements." In hindsight Matthäus is genuinely proud of Bhaktapur and its people, and says with a smile: "When I'm in Bhaktapur I feel at home".



Niels Gutschow

The first time Niels Gutschow visited Nepal was 50 years and 2 weeks ago, in July 1962. He was on his way to Burma from Hamburg by bus, which took him through several countries, including Nepal. In 1970, he came back to Nepal to work on the German-funded Pujari Math restoration. Gutschow fell in love with Bhaktapur and its people, and has since returned to it regularly.

The Pujari Math helped Gutschow discover his deep interest in architectural conservation and urban planning, and he has researched and written extensively on this topic. Gutschow spends most of his time in Germany, but returns every year to spend a few months in a house he has restored at the edge of Bhaktapur where the attic is filled with books, pictures, drawings and scrolls, the documentation of his 25 years of involvement with the town. This quiet loft is also where Gutschow along with his assistant worked on his latest book, *Architecture of the Newars: A History of Building Typologies and Details in Nepal*, a three part documentation of Newari architecture. For Gutschow, Bhaktapur is something extraordinary. Its unique identity and culture have brought him back throughout the years. Asked about his most interesting experience living in Bhaktapur he asks "Have you seen the living Gods of Bhaktapur? They are masks which are 'born' in October and burnt in April or May. Whenever the locals wear them they are representing the Gods. This way the Gods are alive and not intangible. One does not have to believe in them because they are simply there".



ALL PICS: LUKAS GRIMM

Living in Bhaktapur the Austrian way



When Götz Hagmüller first arrived in Bhaktapur in 1979, he was instantly fascinated by the Kuthu Math, its intricate wood carvings and unique Newari architecture. Within a week, the Austrian architect and preservationist rented the Math and made it his permanent home.

Today Hagmüller is a well-known figure in the Valley, and his restoration work of the Patan Museum and Kaiser Mahal serve as inspiration for architects and designers around the world.

Built more than 150 years ago, the Kuthu Math was maintained by one of the many guthis, trusts which care for temples, maths or other historic buildings and are an intricate part of Newari society. The 1934 earthquake devastated the Valley, but spared the Math to a large extent, damaging only the south wing.

Since it did not fall under the BDP's plan, Hagmüller spent three decades restoring the entire structure on his own. Over the years he installed electricity,



redid the water supply, drilled a 90 foot well and attached solar panels to the roof. Tucked away between neighbouring brick houses, the Math's garden has evolved from a few citrus plants into a botanic paradise and stands as a testament to Hagmüller's unrelenting effort.

The Math also features a small painted room, rediscovered during the renovation process. Restored by artists, it remains largely unchanged as

Hagmüller is quite content with preserving old paintings. The largest room is located in the south wing, which according to Hagmüller used to be the sleeping quarters for pilgrims travelling through. It too has been rebuilt and now holds a small library in one corner.

Hagmüller says his determination to preserve the spiritual core of the Valley keeps him motivated. Like the Patan Museum and the Kaiser Mahal, the Kuthu Math is aesthetically pleasing, however it remains as practical to live in as it is beautiful.

Lukas Grimm

nepalitimes.com

The Valley's ancient heart still beats, #120



Krishna Jwala Devkota, *Nayapatrika*, 22 July

गर्दा पत्रिका

Two years ago, Madhav Nepal's government promoted Nepal Army's Toran Bahadur Singh who was accused of participating in the massacre at Bhairav Nath Battalion. This week Bhattarai's government is preparing to promote another accused soldier, Raju Basnet. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has named Lieutenant Colonel Raju Basnet as the prime culprit in the Bhairav Nath case where 49 people were murdered and buried in Shivapuri jungle. The National Human Rights Commission has confirmed OHCHR's findings

and recommended to put Basnet on trial and start proceedings to court martial him. But the state seems to have no problems promoting the guilty soldier to the post of a Brigadier General. This is especially surprising since the people who were killed in Bhairav Nath were Maoist cadres and the government promoting Basnet is also led by the Maoists. Failure to act on the Bhairav Nath massacre case does not just raise legal and moral questions, it makes the state an implicit accomplice in crimes against humanity. If Basnet is allowed to walk free, then no criminal in this land deserves to be behind bars.

Promoting impunity

Interview with UCPN-M affiliated student leader Himal Sharma.

You were also arrested and kept in Bhairav Nath barrack, can you tell us what happened there?

I was arrested on 20 October, 2003 by Raju Basnet and taken to Bhairav Nath barrack. They had already arrested several of our friends including women comrades. All of them were blindfolded and handcuffed. At first they beat us to find out information. When we refused to give in, they started torturing us. Women were tortured and raped by senior officers. One woman was gang raped by 19 officers in front of my own eyes. Raju Basnet was one of them. She was in labour at that time and pleaded with them to let her give birth, but they did not spare her. Two hours later, she gave birth to a dead girl and later succumbed to her injuries.

What were you given to eat? They gave us plain rice in a small tea cup every 18 hours, just enough to keep us alive for the next round of torture. Three of our friends starved to death. A 62-year-old man named Khadga Bahadur Buda was beaten to death because he asked for food. A husband and wife

were stripped naked and asked to have sex in front of everybody. When they refused, the husband was severely tortured and the wife was raped.

You were thought to be dead, how did you survive?



On the night of 20 December, 2003 we were about to be taken to an undisclosed location in a truck. But they probably received orders from their commander, after which I and two other friends were sent back to detention. But rest of our friends were taken to Shivapuri, shot and buried in the jungle. A soldier who saw the whole incident told us later.

Why were you not killed? They were probably planning to kill me and my friends later. The torture did not stop, but this incident raised a storm in the media, and human rights organisations and the court got involved. That is why they could not kill me.

How long were you kept there? I was detained in the barrack for 27 months. After the Supreme Court ordered my release, they let me go, but I was immediately arrested on false charges and put in Naklu jail. I was tortured there as well, but compared to the barrack, the jail was a heaven.

The name game

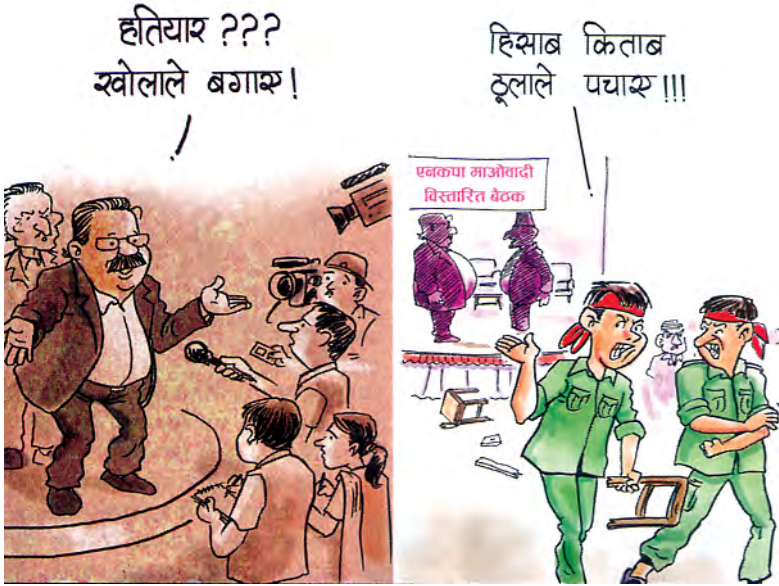
Gunaraj Luitel, *Nagarik*, 25 July

नागरिक

Private schools have become the latest victims of Mohan Baidya led CPN-Maoist which terrorised numerous schools in the past week. Although the death of seven-year-old Kajol Fathima in a similar bus attack during the 'people's war', continues to haunt the mother party, the recently split faction has resorted to the same tactic of spreading fear to extort money. While the use of foreign names to lure and sometimes trick students to schools and colleges is questionable, changing such practices isn't the responsibility of a political party. There are government organisations to monitor the quality and operation of educational institutes. Parties can implement their policies when they are in government but shouldn't resort to violence and vandalism. Such tramautising events leave deep psychological scars on the minds of young students and cheat parents of their hard earned money. No matter how much private schools are criticised, their contribution in improving the quality of education in Nepal cannot be denied. Since the quality of state schools



had dropped significantly in the absence of effective management, private schools stepped in and took advantage of the situation. As parents spend a huge part of their earnings on their children's education, many schools now have huge endowments. The Maoists understand this which is why they make schools their primary target time and again. A school's name shouldn't really matter as long as it provides quality education. But the cadres of revolutionary parties have resorted to cheap tactics to earn quick buck on the pretext of schools having non-Nepali names. Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai, whose UCPN (Maoist) attacked and shut down Sanskrit schools a few years ago, is singing praises about Sanskrit and its importance today. For the CPN-Maoist, addressing the problems of the farmers reeling under fertiliser shortage isn't as profitable as vandalising schools as the latter is likely to provide moolah for the newly formed party. And the protest against schools will most likely end as soon as the party coffers are full. Instead of terrorising the future generation, the party should first try to change its name into Nepali.



Weapons down the river. Millions down the throat
नेपाल Rabintra in *Nepal*, 29 July

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“China does not want foreign intervention in Nepal in the name of federalism.”

Mohan Baidya, chairperson of CPN-Maoist quoted in ekantipur on 26 July

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Made in Nepal

Nepal is generally known throughout the world for its culture, stunning geography and diversity. But local products like noodles, herbs, crazy hats, and pens are helping the country rebrand itself in the international and domestic market, and broaden its identity beyond being the land of the Buddha and Mt Everest.

Customers in over 80 countries buy seven billion worth of Nepali handicrafts each year. Statues, thankas, metal works, pashmina shawls and silk scarves reach China, Switzerland, Germany, USA and many other countries. Similarly, Nepal is the undisputed leader in the noodles market for South Asia. Today, Rara and WaiWai are not only international brands, but WaiWai has even managed to open factories in Sikkim, Guwahati and Rudrapur in India. Nepal has also taken a giant leap in the juice market with profits extending beyond six million.

Out of the 1,600 medicinal herbs found in Nepal, 162 are exported in half-processed forms to various countries. In the fiscal year 2067-68, export to India alone was worth Rs 860 million, but these figures could have been much higher. Since Nepal lacks laboratory facilities, herbs like yarsagumba, nettles, jasmine, mint, cinnamon have to be sent abroad for processing. As a result, only herbs that are well-known to foreigners find a market.

Among cash crops, tea, cardamom, and ginger reign supreme. Tea ranks among the top twelve crops of high-value exported to third countries, and Nepali tea has even overtaken

Local products are carving out a niche market at home and abroad and helping Nepal broaden its identity



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

Darjeeling tea. Nepal is currently the largest exporter of black cardamom used for medicinal and cosmetic purposes in the west. Ginger from Salyan and Pyuthan reaches the Gulf countries through India.

Nepali construction products are also performing well. Out of the 3 million tonnes of cement required annually in Nepal, over 70 per cent is produced locally.

The pipe industry has annual transactions amounting to Rs 1.5 billion. 80 per cent of Bhutan's electricity transformer need is met by a Nepali-Thai company.

After multinational companies like Unilever and Dabur entered the country, many products like Close-Up, Pepsodent, Babul, Dabur Lal are now made in Nepal. In fact, Dabur Nepal, sells 80 per cent of

its products to India.

Another Nepali product, Star Line ball-pens are very popular in Australia, New-Zealand, Japan, Korea and the Gulf.

The prime minister's economic advisor Rameshwor Khanal says the rapid rise of Nepali products is a result of growing internal consumption which motivates companies to develop better quality products, which in turn improves brand value and increases exports.

However, Ratnaman Maharjan who exports handicrafts to the US, Europe and lately China laments the mass exodus of skilled and semi-skilled workers, many of whom now make handicrafts abroad. He says if this problem is not addressed, a whole generation of artists will never learn their ancestral art and those who do, will make Nepali handicrafts that sell under foreign labels.

According to Nepal Rastra Bank's data, the total volume of exports for the first six months of the current fiscal year stands at Rs 35.92 billion, a significant increase from last year's Rs 64.56 billion. However, imports still largely out number exports and the trade deficit has increased by five per cent to Rs 330 billion. Experts agree that this gap could be reduced if the companies paid more attention while marketing unique brands like herbs, mineral water, and textile.

Nepal Tourism Year 2011 and Visit Lumbini Year 2012 have played important roles in rebranding a country that went through 10 years of civil war. But greater possibilities in tourism, agriculture, and medicinal herbs still lie untapped. **Himal Khabarpatrika**



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Fox guarding chicken coop

Many well-wishers have taken the Ass aside at watering holes in the past week to ask for the donkey's take on the fracas at the Maobaddie Plenum where the Prime Minister was collared by Com Prabhakaran, and Chairman Awesome was nearly hit over the head by a chair. Well, my response to all these fun and games is: "Thank heavens it wasn't a sofa." These guys used to fight over the chair, now the chair is doing the fighting for them. The Baddie party split into the School-bus burning CPNM (Loony) and the Chair-throwing UCPN-M (Revolting), but now even the Mau Party looks like it is on the verge of bifurcating into the Extremely Moderate Faction led by BRB, and the Moderately Extreme Faction led by PKD.



Now that Professor Mooney has bared all in his chapter in Comrade Ian's book and exposed that PKD and BRB both gave it in writing to Indian leaders that they would never harm Indian interests in 2002 (in return for which they were allowed to stay on in Noida) it clears up in hindsight a lot of things that were puzzling us. The intermediary in these negotiations were the duo's Uncooked handlers who wanted



a written guarantee that the Baddies would not pursue the fulfillment of their 40-point demand (that BRB himself drafted before the start of the war in 1996) among which were calls for a boycott of Hindi films, entry of Indian cars, renegotiations of all kinds of treaties, etc. Then in 2004, Comrade Awe-Inspiring decided to go back on his written commitment and declared a "tunnel War" against India, and got his comrades to start burrowing tunnels all across the Himalayan hinterland in anticipation of what he said was an imminent Indian invasion. PKD then threw BRB, Com Yummy and other sidekicks into the Gulag. But somehow they were made to patch up their differences, both said no hard feelings and shook hands. Which begs an answer to the biggest riddle in the Mau Mau

Party: how come every time BRB and PKD are on the verge of coming to blows someone important makes them kiss and make up?



The good professor cleared up a lot of things in his chapter but the only thing that is still a mystery is why Comrade CP was arrested in Madras, Kiran Kaka in Siliguri and then Comrade Ale and Upadro in Delhi? Apparently, it was because of the lack of coordination between the domestic spooks at the International Baccalaureates (IB) and the international spooks at Uncooked (RAW). This is a golden opportunity for the Extremely Bad Baddies of the Hyphen Commies to stage a torch rally outside Lainchour demanding that India respect Nepal's territorial integrity and national sovereignty by

terminating the activities of IB in Nepal, and working only with RAW since this is an independent foreign country where the Buddha was born.



With elections around the corner, everything is about electoral fundraising, and cashing in on vote banks by stoking controversies involving squatters. It makes for strange bedfellows: erstwhile rivals the Moderately Left UML and the Extremely Left Baidya Maobaddies got together to shut down Lalitpur for three days. (By the way, now that Scott is gone, who is going to enforce the US visa ban on anyone calling bunds?) Not even the Prime Minister's party is above all this. At a time when a consortium of international creditors and investors, including the IFC, ADB and South Korean investors

were about to sign on the dotted line for the 260 megawatt Upper Trisuli project, the Govt of Kathmandu suddenly pulled the plug on it because of an order from the First Lady's office. Apparently a sidekick wanted a kickback. What this means is that the country is not going to see the end to power cuts even by 2016. Bravo. Way to go. Attaboy. Solar Power Zindabad.



Being the respectful student that he is, PM BRB seems to still think Professor Mannohan Singh is his guru. He has tried to do a NAREGA in Nepal, which guarantees at least 100 days of employment for every citizen. It has worked brilliantly in India, but in Nepal, just before elections, such a scheme is bound to be used for mass vote-buying.



As the Ass predicted in the previous column, the Mau Mau Plenum has appointed a Chanbin Samiti to find out what happened to the Rs 9 arabs that the state exchequer gave to the cantonments for the upkeep of the guerrillas. The Committee is chaired by Comrade Postman. Talk about a fox guarding the chicken coop.



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