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BIKRAM RAI

Festival of feasts

As we enter the Dasain holiday season, many in Nepal will be enjoying plentiful feasts. Animals will be slaughtered and the markets will be overflowing with food and people purchasing it.

Bhat Bhateni and other supermarkets will see a frenzy of business and mountains of will be wasted in the Kalimati vegetable market.

This may give an impression that Nepal is a land free of hunger. Sadly the facts tell a different story. Over a third of the country's 75 districts suffer from high food insecurity, with chronic

food insecurity affecting up to 80 per cent of the population in heavily-affected areas such as the western Tarai.

The festive season also brings into sharp focus the widening gap between the rich and poor in our country, the way conspicuous consumption and the widespread destitution exist side-by-side.

What keeps Nepal afloat is the individual resilience and the capacity of Nepalis to endure pain and hunger. We have long given up expecting anything from our rulers, and when they don't deliver, we

aren't that surprised.

For this Dasain, we can only hope that the private wish for the public good of all Nepalis in Nepal, and across the world, will soon become a reality.

Private good for the public good

The only thing that is keeping Nepal afloat is individual resistance and the capacity of Nepalis to endure pain and hunger

Editorial page 2



Food for thought this Dasain

page 3

HAPPY DASAIN

Himalmedia wishes readers and partners peace and happiness this holiday season.

Nepali Times is taking its annual Dasain break and will not come out on Friday, 26 October. The next hardcopy edition will be on 2 November, but you can follow us on www.nepalitimes.com without interruption.



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PRIVATE WISH FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD



The only thing keeping Nepal afloat is individual resilience and the capacity of Nepalis to endure pain and hunger

cent of the people in areas like the western Tarai and mountains are chronically hungry (see page 3).

During the 1996-2006 conflict, people looked forward to the Dasain ceasefire, a temporary respite from violence and brutality which the warring sides used to regroup, re-arm, and rest before they started killing each other again. Those memories are fading, only to be replaced by disillusionment with our untrustworthy and hypocritical leaders, as well as a sense of hopelessness and foreboding about the future. The economy is in tatters, and the sharp increase in prices, especially of essential food items, means that a majority are in no mood to celebrate.

The economic woes are linked directly with deadlocked politics. The trinity of high priests that

have taken it upon themselves to command our destiny has proven itself incapable of thinking beyond tactical moves to outsmart rivals within their own parties, or in other parties. The calculation is all about preventing elections at all costs, even by restoring the Constituent Assembly, which is creating strange bedfellows with the Maoist hierarchy in a mysterious agreement with the rightwing of the Nepali Congress. And when the ceremonial president, in reflecting the general public anxiety, cautiously reminds the top leaders to get their act together, the prime minister responds with a strong public rebuke.

Nepal has only nuisance value left among the international community and in the two capitals of our big neighbours there is growing concern and anxiety about the instability unleashed by our feckless, reckless rulers. The reason foreigners interfere so much here is because most of our politicians are such serial delinquents. You can be sure that the bargaining behind closed doors over Dasain will not be about protecting national interest, but about carving up what's left of the country. And there will not be an agreement because it is a zero-sum game for the players.

A big portion of the blame must go to the Maoists, and their chairman. Being the largest party in the last election, it was their responsibility to deliver. But they keep changing the rules of the game and Pushpa Kamal Dahal's double tongue has become so legendary that cartoonists are having a field day. The NC and UML, however, have no fresh new ideas and their leaders lack charisma, vision, and leadership.

For long-suffering Nepalis, the peace dividend evaporated long ago. It has been replaced by great disenchantment and disappointment. What keeps Nepal afloat is the individual resilience and the capacity of Nepalis to endure pain and hunger. We have long given up expecting anything from our rulers and when they don't deliver, we aren't that surprised.

For this Dasain, we can only hope that the private wish for the public good of all Nepalis in Nepal and across the world will soon become a reality.

Dasain is said to have its origins in pre-Vedic celebration of post-monsoon harvest festivals. This is why it still commands that joyous, secular following to complement its rituals. The heat and the rain are over, there is a nip in the air, the sky is blue and the mountains are out.

We go back to our roots, looking for the familial and ancestral ties that bind clans. Like all traditions elsewhere in the world, Dasain too, is shedding its religious antecedents and has become more of a family festival. Which is why the campaign to boycott Dasain doesn't have much traction because its proponents have chosen to ignore the fact that Dasain is a Nepali cultural festival much more than it is a religious one.

The more worrying part is of Dasain's over-commercialisation and the celebration of the hollow rituals of an ersatz civilisation. All this is especially glaring when inflation, lack of development, economic woes, and political uncertainty weigh upon the populace, and Dasain takes on a desperate, escapist edge. More than at any other time, Dasain brings into sharp focus the widening gap between the rich and poor in our country, the way conspicuous consumption and widespread destitution exist side-by-side.

The first target in the list of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals calls on countries to halve absolute poverty and hunger by 2015. Poverty is said to have gone down in Nepal, and 'only' one-third of the people are living below the survival threshold of \$1.25 a day. This result seems to be based on a calculation that simply divides annual remittances estimates with the total population, and masks the fact that in large parts of the country the poor remain desperately poor.

The Dasain revelry, the wining, dining, and wasting of money and food, may be a good time to reflect on this gap. Call us spoilsports, but such fun and merriment are obscene when more than half the children in this country go to bed hungry at night, even in Dasain. Many of them are physically and mentally stunted because their daily calorie intake is less than the required minimum. One-third of the districts in Nepal are food-deficit, 80 per

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

OUT, DAMNED SPOT

This is an absolutely brilliant editorial: sharp, lucid, and bold ('Out, damned spot', #626). Both sides of the war keep pushing ugly secrets of the past under the carpet, but sooner or later the guilt will catch up. And here is another line from *Macbeth* that could work well as a soliloquy for Bhattarai: "Tomorrow, tomorrow, and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day."

Dubya

- As the writer correctly points out the situation in Nepal is complicated by the fact that there are no winners or losers in the war and both warring sides are now in ruling circles. In the short term it serves the Maoists and Nepali Army well to pardon all war crimes, but this does not bode well for the country in the long run. Unhealed wounds are potent ingredients for future conflicts and there can be no two ways about setting up a Truth and Reconciliation Committee that is capable of functioning independently. Those of us who were not directly affected by the war also have to come out and join victims and their families in putting pressure on the government and army.

Renu R

NOT FORGIVE BHATTARAI

I don't understand what's so strange about the promotion of Colonel Raju Basnet ('History will not forgive

Bhattarai', Anurag Acharya, #626). It's one war criminal extending a favour to another war criminal.

Tilak

- It seems Baburam Bhattarai has completely sold out to the mainstream and those who looked up to him and believed in him for being a man who once fought for justice are now more outraged than ever.

Binu



- Good article Anurag Acharya. Yes, history may not forgive or forget Bhattarai, not that he seems to care much, but Nepalis have such short memories, I won't be surprised if they forget the whole incident in a few years. However, what worries me more is that the Maoists and Nepali Army seem to be getting cosier to serve their mutual agendas. Human rights activists need to pursue the murderers until they are brought to justice because that is the only way we will achieve true peace.

Prafulla Mahato

- I am not saying the army and police men who were involved in war crimes should not be punished. But there are definitely huge double standards when it comes to post war truth and reconciliation process. Yes, promoting Basnet is wrong. But what about promoting Bhattarai and Dahal to heads of state? Why were victims' families, the media, and intellectuals so jubilant when these men came to power? Why wasn't there an uproar against this gross injustice? Let

RR

us not forget these men and their cadres (many of whom are now in the government) are proven human rights offenders.

- I don't understand why everyone is after Basnet who was actually just obeying orders and doing his job? Why are human rights activists not creating the same hue and cry about the Maoists who killed over 19,000 innocent Nepalis and unleashed so much violence?

Lal Babu

- History will not forget or forgive the Maoists and I can sense millions of Nepalis like me who are angry against the injustice, unnecessary violence, and humiliation the Maoists brought on us and our country. Even their peace time activities are wholly abhorrent.

Manohar Budhathoki

IF YOU WANT PEACE, ABOLISH HUNGER

Johan Galtung is spot on when he says the right to same-sex marriage is not on top of the mind of Nepalis ('If you want peace, abolish hunger', Interview, #626). I am glad there is finally someone to challenge the overpowering political correctness of our times. But what makes Galtung so certain that federalism is a good idea? There are many other ways to go about effective decentralisation.

Gert

- Although I agree with Galtung, I don't like the way he implies that the right to same-sex marriage is not important enough and the issue can be ignored for now. But there will always be 'more important' problems like poverty, unemployment, corruption, and so on. So should the LGBT community wait for all these other problems to be fixed before they get their rights? Rights for sexual minorities have nothing to do with being poor or rich, in a third-world country or the west, they should simply be treated as basic human rights.

Nirmal

ESCAPE THE EXCESS

Thank you *Nepali Times* for a great selection of destinations. Now I am really tempted to ditch my annoying relatives and go detox over the holidays. The home stay program in Lamjung look really fabulous, maybe I will get couple of my friends to come along.

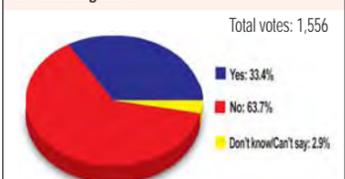
Tara

NOTE:

We invite you to send us pictures of daily life in Nepal with a brief description- location, subject and thoughts on the image- to juanita@nepalitimes.com. We will upload the photos onto our Facebook page and publish the best ones on our Happenings section. Photos should be in hi-res (300dpi), maximum 2 Mb.

Times nepalnews.com
Weekly Internet Poll #627

Q. Should the opposition parties accept Pushpa Kamal Dahal's proposal to declare the constitution by postponing the outstanding issues?



Weekly Internet Poll # 628. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Are you hopeful that the parties will resolve the deadlock before Thar?

Food for thought this Dasain

More than 80 per cent of people in parts of Nepal do not have enough to eat

We all love food. We love eating it, sharing it, love growing it and love celebrating it. We are all passionate too about the land where we live, grow, and harvest our food. From our first bites to our most memorable dinners, it's a part of all our lives, customs, and traditions. Food joins friends, families, and communities together all over the world.

As we enter the Dasain holiday season many in Nepal will be enjoying plentiful feasts. Animals will be slaughtered and the markets will be overflowing with food, and people purchasing it. Bhat Bhateni and other supermarkets will see a frenzy of business and we will see mountains of wasted food in the Kalimati vegetable market.

This may give an impression that Nepal is a land free of hunger. Sadly, the facts tell a different story even as we marked World Food Day last Tuesday. Over a third of Nepal's 75 districts suffer from high food insecurity with chronic food insecurity affecting up to 80 per cent of the population in heavily-affected areas such as the western Tarai. A majority of Nepalis are farmers yet many cannot adequately feed their own families, and food imports are steadily rising.

Nepal's food production is headed towards crisis. Compared to Asian averages, yields are very low and the main reason is low investment for fertiliser, improved seeds, water development, and farmers' access to credit and insurance. Increased investment in transportation infrastructure, storage, processing facilities, distribution networks, and market development are also needed. Farmers at present do not receive fair prices for their produce and costs are not competitive with neighbouring countries.



It is not economically attractive to be a farmer in Nepal, and young people are deserting the rural areas for low-paying and demeaning work in the cities or abroad. Labour scarcity is a problem and valuable local farming knowledge is being lost. Suppressing food production further is the declining water availability, reliance on unpredictable rainfall, and extreme weather patterns linked to climate change and farmers' increasing vulnerability to it as well as their lack of resilience.

A final factor limiting food production is the lack of access to land for the majority of people suffering from chronic food insecurity. Even if Nepal successfully increases food production, it will face many challenges to ensure that food is equitably distributed and accessible to everyone in the country. Addressing this will first require a clear legal recognition enshrined in the new Constitution of every person's right to food of adequate quality and quantity. This must be then backed up by relevant investments and policies. Meeting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals for poverty reduction will ensure a larger number of people will be able to afford food for their families. For those still below the poverty line appropriate safety net programs must be developed and funded for implementation.

Nepal must adopt equitable access to food for all as a core goal, and to make progress towards this goal it should:

1. Protect the universal right to food:

- Enshrine in law the legal right to food and employment.
- Reduce vulnerability by creating a minimum social protection floor to lift people out of chronic food insecurity.
- Effectively implement an integrated array of adequately financed and inflation indexed universal entitlements to protect food security.
- Ensure that government programs prioritise the needs of children and women, especially from marginalised communities.

2. Support smallholder farmers:

- Prioritise land reform and redistribution of land and support poor peoples' rights to land and other assets essential for productive livelihoods.
- Increase agricultural investments that benefit smallholder farmers, especially women.
- Support agro-ecological, climate resilient and sustainable agricultural techniques.
- Ensure farmers receive fair prices for their produce.
- Ensure farmers access to required inputs.
- Incorporate the above measures in the new Agricultural Policy under development.

3. Adapt to and mitigate climate change:

- Invest in climate change adaptation measures.
- Provide leadership in the UN as LDC Chair for resources and policies to address climate change globally.
- Invest in Disaster Risk Reduction to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience of farmers and the food insecure population.



Scott Faiia is Country Director for Oxfam in Nepal and has worked on relief and development in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan since 1973.

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The foreign finger

SD Muni's revelations completely undercut the foundations on which all the other chapters premise their analysis in Nepal in Transition

DIPAK GYAWALI

Not having been a European colony, Nepal has always been a fascinating subject for Orientalism. Books explaining what is 'really' happening in Nepal find a great market. In 1980, a book written by a group of East Anglia neo-Marxists called *Nepal in Crisis: Growth and Stagnation at the Periphery* (Piers M Blaikie, John Cameron, David Seddon) created political waves. Thirty years later, one of its authors admitted in an interview with this newspaper recently that their dire predictions were 'unduly pessimistic'.

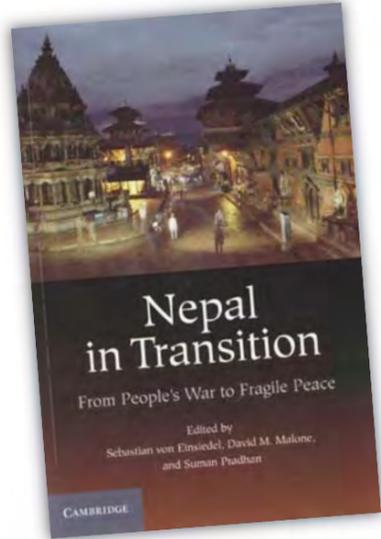
This year's centre-stage has been taken by *Nepal in Transition* and one of its main Indian contributors has not even had to wait 30 months for his mea culpa in the blogosphere. While *Nepal in Crisis* had a theoretical Marxist class basis underlying its analysis, this one seems to be based on deconstructive, post-modern anthropology that rants against undefined 'elites' maintaining an exclusionary state even when governments these half dozen years since sidelining the monarchy in Nepal have been led by communists.

Its 14 chapters have been written by nine Nepalis, two Indians, and eight Westerners. Of the latter, five are or were associated with the UN or its peace mission in Nepal, UNMIN. The furore the book left in its unwitting wake seems to have destroyed the political legitimacy and legacy of Maoist supremo Pushpa Kamal Dahal and his prime minister Baburam Bhattarai.

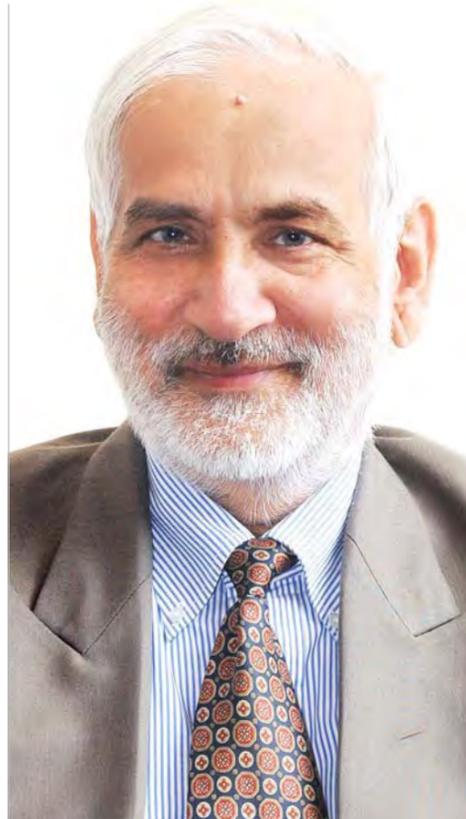
In terms of impact, the chapters can be divided into two types: the chapter by JNU academic SD Muni (Bhattarai's mentor) and the chapters by all the other authors. Because of who he is and what he reveals in the book, it is Muni versus the rest. Indeed, Muni's revelations completely undercut the foundations on which all the other chapters premise their analysis.

The Nepali writers are all well-known public figures who have served in important government positions or have been prominent opinion writers with in-depth knowledge of the shenanigans of the last decade and a half in Nepali politics. Unfortunately most of these chapters seem to have been written in 2009 and 2010, and the subsequent unravelling of the political architecture that culminated in the collapse of the CA after May 2012 means that optimism for a New Nepal that underlies their writing too has unravelled.

The chapters by Western authors, given the viceregal status many of them enjoyed in Nepal as dispensers of donor largesse



Nepal in Transition
From People's War to Fragile Peace
Edited by: Sebastian von Einsiedel, David M. Malone, Suman Pradhan
ISBN: 9781107005679
Cambridge University Press, 2012
412 pages
Price: Rs 792



especially for the bounteously endowed 'peace industry', reveal interesting insights. Teresa Whitfield describes in a moment of candour that all external actors were entrepreneurs of the blooming peace industry, ostensibly promoting themselves and their wares rather than the peace process itself. Most argue that what stymied all their efforts were India's 'neuralgia towards international involvement' as well as the dishonesty of Nepali politicians and the ubiquitous but undefined 'elites'.

Human rights activists Frederick Rawski and Mandira Sharma describe the laughable oversell of UN commissioner Navaneethem Pillay comparing Nepal's situation with Rwanda. Most interesting is Ian Martin, head of UNMIN which arrived with much hype and retreated with a whimper after turning a blind eye to Maoist duplicity and making a bad situation worse. His side of the story is that if only he had been given a bigger mandate by the Security Council he could have done his job, but he could not given India's resistance, a partisan peace ministry, a flawed Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and weak Nepali governments unable to implement agreements. In normal English, this could be called 'blaming the victim'.

While the writings of all UN types are full of excuses why they could not do their job, they are also rife with factual errors, very selective use of facts, and the

filtering out of inconvenient truths as well as the unquestioned acceptance of media propaganda of the day. The first sentence in chapters by both Whitfield and Martin begin by saying that the Nepali peace process was a wholly Nepali-led affair, but then the rest of the chapter explains in shameful detail the amazing foreign involvement and their role in it.

Catinca Slavu and Martin both make the incredible claim that the attempt by the king's regime in February 2006 to hold municipal elections three years after party-led governments failed to do so as being 'organised against democracy'. They fail to mention how the 'democratic parties' had given a hit list to the Maoists to assassinate candidates who stood for elections, a claim made by top Maoist leaders subsequently on national media which to this date has not been refuted by the parties.

What really undercuts the premise of the other writers is the chapter by Muni which proves what many had long suspected in Kathmandu: India's deep involvement and 'double standards' declaring the Maoists to be terrorists, but providing their leaders shelter and patronage in Delhi and using them as leverage against both the parliamentary as well as the king's government in Nepal.

Muni's footnotes between pages 317-329 show how a section of the Indian establishment led by the intelligence agencies had a covert agenda of removing

the king as early as 2002 because of 'the complete failure of the monarchy to ensure India's security and development interests'. He also writes that around the same time, the Maoists had given assurances in writing to Indian leaders 'that they wanted the best of relations with India and would not do anything to harm its critical interests'.

And all this was happening even while Nepal had a functioning parliament and a government led by a democratic party fighting the Maoists. The intelligence-led part of the Indian establishment, Muni writes, was able to undercut the Karan Singh mission that convinced the king to hand over power to the Seven Party Alliance led by Girija Koirala in April 2006.

Even as Pranab Mukherjee (then defense minister, now president of India) was pleading on the phone with party leaders to accept the Karan Singh deal, the spooks-led faction was egging the parties not to accept it and to force the king to step down, which is what happened. And even as the BJP-led Indian government had declared Maoists as terrorists, its intelligence wing had taken their leadership under its protection and was strangling the Royal Nepal Army by cutting off even normal supplies already on the pipeline. These revelations completely demolish the premise that the other chapters have been built on: that April 2006 was a popular Nepali uprising for inclusiveness.

Why was such a chapter and indeed such a book written, then? Writing in times of uncertain flux is only for politicians and opinion makers who want to influence the course of events their way, not for cautious scholars who fear that the turn of events can make any analysis irrelevant. In about a year or two since most of these chapters were written, events in Nepal have taken a political turn that has seen the collapse of the basic political architecture of regime change. But the editors and authors did not, could not, anticipate such an eventuality and must have been motivated either by the wish to be the first to describe the 'historic changes' or to take credit for them.

In judging the book as a whole, one has to ask a simple question of all the authors: did you even know what the other chapter writers (especially Muni) were writing and did you get a chance to reflect on how what they said would contradict what you were writing about? 

Dipak Gyawali is a former Minister of Water Resources and the cabinet of which he was a member negotiated an indigenous ceasefire with the Maoists in January 2003. A longer version of this review appeared in Biblio-India. www.biblio-india.org

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Chasing the Nepali dream

The Chase Community competition shows how Nepalis are engaged and ready to rally around positive change

For 14 days in September, Nepalis both at home and abroad flocked to their twitter and facebook accounts and voted for their favourite charities and non-profit organisations in the Chase Community Giving competition. Hundreds of votes poured in from places as remote as Achham where satellite internet connection was installed only five years ago.

With more than 100,000 votes three Nepali organisations - Help Nepal Network (HeNN), Grassroots Movement in Nepal (GMIN), and Nyaya Health - made it to the top 10 and won grants worth \$100,000 each.

The Chase experience, however, wasn't just about supporting remarkable organisations and people's faith in these causes. As board members of Nyaya Health, we also got compelling insights into Nepali people's psyche.

It is fashionable to lambast Nepali politicians, political institutions, public schools, and hospitals. And indeed the ground reality is harsh. Every day teachers and health care workers across the country struggle to fulfil their responsibilities because



BILASH RAI

of the meager resources at hand. Students and patients don't have access to the education and care they deserve.

However, despite the political failures and the implementation challenges of public sector services, the Chase competition showed that Nepalis are engaged and ready to rally around positive change in the country. Most votes were cast out of a belief that progress is possible, that a better Nepal and improved governance is possible. This is the real people's movement.

It is a movement that will take democracy into government offices, private businesses, and NGOs. The revolution, however, will not be achieved through the use of violence or bandas, but through pragmatic action where

citizens hold organisations accountable and compel them to stay true to their mandates and deliver on their promises.

It will require organisations such as Nyaya Health, HiNN, and GMIN to identify a social justice need, work through partnerships, and remain committed to transparency.

This is the only way we will achieve the basic economic, social, justice, and health rights that so many Nepalis are lacking. The Chase Campaign gives us hope that together we can build a new Nepal, one grounded in the true realisation and implementation of social justice.

Duncan Maru, MD, PHD and Bibhav Acharya, MD are board members of Nyaya Health, which partners with the Ministry of Health and Populations and local communities to build justice-oriented health care systems in far-western Nepal.
www.nyayahealth.org
www.helpnepal.net
www.gmin.us
www.chasegiving.com

nepalitimes.com

Rs 1 million in 2 hours, #618
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BIZ BRIEFS

Flying in style

Etihaad, UAE's national carrier, is offering special discounts for passengers on Pearl Business Class between 1 November and 12 December. Pearl Business Class offers dining on demand with a food and beverage manager at the beck and call of customers, along with award winning 6'1 inch beds that are equipped with massage system. The offer is valid on ticket sales from 12 October to 30 November.



London calling

Sherpa Adventure Gear was launched in London at the Ellis Brigham Store in Covent Garden. Sherpa Gear will also be available in Edinburgh and Glasgow in the next few weeks.



Easy on the nose

Berger Jenson and Nicholson-Nepal has launched an eco-friendly paint called Silk Breathe Easy. The paint is low in Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) and toxin free. It has also been certified as eco-friendly by Singapore's Green Label Committee.



Winning stroke

Kalu Ghale won the Carlsberg Golf Classic 2012. While Rekha Ghimire was the winner in the women's category. Winners took home the running trophy, a premium golf club set along with other Carlsberg gift hampers.

Seafood galore

Bluefin Freshmart recently opened its Baluwatar outlet which offers a wide variety of seafood, chicken, and pork items. Bluefin is currently offering a festive discount of 10 per cent on its overall range of seafood products in its Jhamsikhel, Bhainsepati, and Baluwatar outlets.



Easy wheels

CG Automobiles, authorised distributor of TVS two-wheelers in Nepal has launched its Dasain-Tihar offer with cash discounts up to Rs 10,000 on the purchase of TVS motorcycle or scooter.




HIGH ACHIEVERS: The winners of Celebrating Womanhood Awards 2012 pose for photographs at Yala Maya Kendra on Tuesday.



ALL PICS: DAMBAR K SHRESTHA

The real life Durgas

Award recognises the extraordinary efforts of ordinary Nepali women

When Shrijana Singh Yonjan started Celebrating Womanhood Navadevi Awards in 2002, it was more a fashion program where the who's who of Kathmandu Valley gathered for a night of entertainment. Eleven years later, it is one of the most awaited award ceremonies which recognises the extraordinary achievements of ordinary Nepali women from Surkhet to Solukhumbu.

"Award ceremonies in Nepal usually focus on well-known women from the entertainment industry or NGO and INGO circuit. We wanted to change this trend and support women who have made their way up from the bottom rung of the social and economic hierarchy," says Yonjan.

From HIV activists to athletes with disabilities, a total of 119 women have been rewarded in the past decade. The award recipients have not only fought gender stereotypes, but earned the respect of local communities through their dogged determination and altruism. The women also get the opportunity to build networks with fellow awardees and potential investors.

This year's recipients include a civil servant from Kathmandu who is redefining waste management, a folk singer from Pokhara, a professional sprinter with a disability, and a housewife who has overcome her illiteracy to run a microfinance institution in Makwanpur.

Bishnu Thakali

Bishnu collects things that other people are dying to throw away. As president of Women Environment



Preservation Committee (WEPCO) she is at the forefront of recycling and has found ingenious ways to turn household waste into compost, biogas, and recycled paper for the past 20 years. She is also training other women about recycling techniques and providing them with job opportunities.



Neeta Sapkota

After nearly two decades as a presenter at Nepal Television, Neeta is now a household name among audiences across the country.

She has produced programs on health, education, and gender for pre-schoolers to teenagers and used TV as a tool to empower the youth.

Maiya Bisunkhe



Born without a right hand, Maiya used to beg on the streets of Jhapa for survival. Losing her mother at a young age pushed her further into the fringes of poverty, but despite her disability and difficult childhood, Maiya is one of the most accomplished athletes in Nepal today. She competed in the recently held Para Olympics in London, Asian Para Games in China, and Under-16 Asian Championship in Japan and has won several gold medals. The 19-year-old who currently lives at SOS Children's Village in Jorpati is thankful for the support of her friends and specially Father Robin Nepali.

Mohana Ansari

Mohana was the first person in her family to graduate from college with a degree in law who then went on to earn her master's degree. She is also the only female Muslim attorney in Nepal. Growing up



in a conservative community, she dared to rebel against the practices and beliefs that demean women. Not satisfied with her personal achievement, she has been helping other women by providing free advocacy and legal training in over 45 districts. As a member of the National Women's Commission she is fighting for the right of quick and fair trial for rape victims and citizenship in the name of the mother.

Sabita Rai



Sabita was only 20 when she decided to commit her life to the cause of single

women subjected to violence and exploitation. Even after a decade her enthusiasm and strength haven't wavered. She is the president of the Single Women's Group of Dharan and advocates for women's rights. The group has built a shelter for victims of violence. She also counsels victims and prepares them to face the police before reporting the abuse. The group has also started saving and credit facilities for women.



Om Devi Malla

Om Devi is the executive chairperson of Reliable Saving and Credit Cooperative Society and is among the few women who have successfully climbed the corporate ladder. She strongly believes that every Nepali woman deserves to live a life of dignity and that this is only possible when women are economically independent. She has been working relentlessly to make economic policies more women-friendly and is a strong advocate for a cooperative culture from the grassroots level.



Prativa Subedi

Prativa Subedi not only works to empower rural women providing them with economic opportunities through her organisation Women Awareness Centre Nepal (WACN). The organisation's cost-effective programs have generated more than rupees 4 million in women's savings and investments, benefiting thousands of women through the 41 cooperatives across Nepal.

Department of Education under the Ministry of Education. But throughout her journey she has not failed to uplift the quality of education for all. Her contribution in developing a modern educational system is enormous. She also played an instrumental role in introducing sex education and HIV/AIDS awareness in schools 20 years ago when it was still considered a taboo. She is currently in charge of facilitating the implementation of programs to make education accessible for children throughout Nepal.



Hari Devi Koirala

Living legend Hari Devi Koirala has been enriching Nepali music with her soulful melodies for over three decades and is an inspiration for all budding musicians. She has composed, sung, and compiled 75 solo and 24 group albums. Even after 30 years in the field her songs continue to warm the hearts of listeners. Besides music, she has dedicated her life to speak out against injustices done to women and children. She also established the Literature and Music Appreciation Trust to support Nepali music and artists.

Kanchi Gole and Somlal Gole

Kanchi Gole and Somlal Gole from Makwanpur are an exemplary couple. While Kanchi provides free health services and advice to children and pregnant women in her community, her husband Somlal takes care of household chores and works as a painter. Through Kanchi's initiatives Shrijana Women's Savings and Loan Cooperative was established which has helped women farmers and small business owners become financially independent. Today the cooperative has 706 women share holders. Kanchi and Somlal have show how couples working together can overcome immense difficulties and inspire an entire community.

Rajyalaxmi Nakarmi

Rajyalaxmi Nakarmi has come a long way from a teacher to deputy director of the



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EVENTS

KITE-FLYING, bring your own aerial paraphernalia and join others for an afternoon of friendly competition. 20 October, 1.30 pm, Dhulikhel, 9841766465

Art in many colours, an exhibition of works by artist David Douglas who has been painting in Nepal for over 30 years. 5 to 19 October, Red Dingo Restaurant, Jawalakhel



SATURDAY BIRD WATCHING, take a morning walk to the largest national park in Kathmandu Valley and see if you can spot rare species of birds like the Spiny Babbler. 20 October, 7 am, Shivapuri National Park, 4381214, 4381425

WCN nature and wildlife photography competition, take photos of flora, fauna, landscape, macro, and human interaction with nature to promote awareness and interest in conservation. Deadline 31 October, forms available at www.wcn.org.np

The mountains that unite us, an exhibition by Russian photographer Ivan Kozorezev. 9 to 30 October, 10 am to 5 pm, Russian Culture Centre, Kamal Pokhari, 01-4416650



A LITTLE OFF THE BEATEN PATH, slideshow on Himalayan guide, author, and photographer Gary McCue's recent travels in Asia, and book sale. *Trekking Tibet*. October 16, 6.30pm, Indigo Gallery, Naxal, 01-4413580

Tres Flamencas, internationally renowned dancer Clara Ramon introduces the Spanish Flamenco for the first time in Nepal. Rs 1200, 8 to 9 November, 6 to 8 pm, Russian Cultural Centre, Kamal Pokhari, 9813930267

DINING

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

Kathaa Bagaicha ko, installation art by artist Milan Rai featuring a collection of thousands of earphones used by famous and unknown personalities. 14 to 18 October, Patan Darbar Square, 9808058913



WRITING FOR FILM, filmmaker Murray Kerr will help you hone your raw ideas into a polished script ready for the big screen. Rs 2,500, 1 to 10 November, 11 am to 2 pm, 9813485716, 01-5523486, sara@sattya.org

Abstract photography, a collection of abstract photographs by participants of a photography workshop. 15 to 29 October, 10 am to 5 pm, Galleria CUC, Maharajganj

All fall down, witness the grimy side of Kathmandu's road-expansion project. 19 to 27 October, Café Mitra, Thamel, 9851048598



BYANJAN, enjoy great food at an affordable price. Shrimp cocktails, grilled fish, and desserts are favourites among guests. Lakeside, Pokhara

Sarangkot Fordays Restaurant, have a Sarangkot special breakfast while enjoying spectacular views of the mountain ranges. Sarangkot, Pokhara, 061-696920, 9817136896



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

Him Thai Restaurant and Bar, for authentic Thai cuisines in town. Lazimpat, 01-4418683

Dragon Café, enjoy momos, sizzlers, and vegetable coins at the most reasonable prices. Kumaripati



EVEREST STEAK HOUSE, an old-school joint for everything steak, indeed a sanctuary for meat-lovers. Thamel, near Chhetrapati Chowk, 01-4260471

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

Lazy Gringo, fail-safe Mexican restaurant. The lemonade with refills is what won us over, but the food is mighty fine. Jawalakhel

GETAWAYS

Haatiban Resort, tucked away near a jungle at the side of a hill with a 270 degree view of the Valley. Pharping, Kathmandu, 01- 4371537, 4371561

Charikot Panorama Resort, enjoy mountain views and local culture in the historic town of Charikot. Special packages on offer. Charikot, Dolakha, 01-5529463, thapamaag@gmail.com

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PHOTO ESSAY
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Playing by the rules

COMMENTARY
Looking back at communist schooling
Subhas Devkota
Revolutionary housewives
Aruna Rayamajhi
Villains of Nepali politics
Purusottam Dahal

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COVER
A Nepali mother: the struggle of Nepali women to create a space for themselves in modern society, while maintaining their roles as mothers has earned them high respects

REPORTS
Taking the nation hostage
Lost generation, shattered dreams

LITERATURE
Hosting the prime minister
Narayan Wagle
One night in Atlantis
Jiva Lamichhane



BALTHALI VILLAGE RESORT, a small, cosy retreat with a bird's eye view of green terrace fields dotted with ochre painted houses. *Balthali, Kabhre, 9851075818*

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

Hotel Heritage, enjoy the exquisite architecture and traditional ambience, but make sure to book your rooms online with NepalSutra. *Bhaktapur, 01-6611628, info@nepalsutra.com*

Hotel Landmark, made entirely from traditional Nepali brick and woodcraft, this hotel is rich not only in heritage, but also in services and boasts an award winning restaurant, the Hungry Eye. *Pokhara, 061-462908/463096/464897, www.landmarkpokhara.com*

Pokhara Grande, a swimming pool to escape from the sweltering heat, a massage parlour and spa to loosen up, and a gym to release stress, all in all a great place to unwind. *Lakeside, Pokhara*

Fulbari Resort, enjoy the scenic view of Pokhara as you pamper yourself with tennis, golf, drinks, and dinners. *Rs 6500 per person for 2 nights and 3 days, Call 01-4461918, 01-4462248*



RANIBAN RETREAT, situated at the other end of the Phewa lake and nested inside the Raniban forest and the World Peace Stupa, this retreat has one of the best views of the Annapurna range, *Phewa lake, and Pokhara. World Peace Pagoda, Pokhara, 977-61-692136, 9841382053*

WATCH OUT

Major departmental stores will remain closed during Dasain festivities. So stock up your fridge with at least a week of supplies. Also don't bother looking for fresh bakery items or dairy products during the festival because bakeries, dairies, and grocery stores will remain shut.

You should also make careful choices when going out to dine. Almost all restaurants will be closed from 22 to 24 October, so calling up your favourite restaurant before heading out is a good idea. An exception is the Red Dingo Restaurant in Jawalakhel which will remain open throughout the holidays.

Visit www.foodmandu.com for information on restaurant timings and availability.

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SOMEPLACE ELSE

Until a few years ago, the long stretch from Old Baneswor Chok to Gaushala wasn't particularly known for its eateries. All that changed for good when Just Baked popped right next to an established, but boring joint along the same lane.

Just Baked offers what most other cafes in Kathmandu do: chicken chili, momo, pakodas, and chow mein. What sets it apart, though, is the simplicity with which each dish on its elaborate menu is prepared. The cafe's delectable selection of cakes and pastries deserves a special mention.

Sadly, the Lord of Fries (Rs 100) was a disappointing start. Topped clumsily with onions and mayonnaise, the



fried potatoes were saggy, and there was nothing grand about this pretender. After this lacklustre fare, we made a safe bet and ordered the good old chicken momo hoping to get our taste buds rolling.

The chicken momo was succulent and went perfectly with the light clear soup and tangy tomato chutney. The 10 mouthwatering pieces vanished from the plate in an instant leaving us craving for more.

Equally appetising was the barbeque chicken wings (Rs 140) that had us picking every last sinew. Although



the chicken wings were perfectly crispy and begged to be had for seconds, they were slightly burnt in places and could have been better prepared.

The star, however, was the chicken stroganoff (Rs 210) which tasted just as good as it looked on the plate. The soft chicken strips and mushroom slices in the velvety sauce were packed with just the right amount of sour cream. They went perfectly well with the generous helping of rice and sautéed vegetables. Only one complaint: better ventilation would make meals



PICS: TRISHNA RANA

much easier to sit through.

For those with an insatiable sweet tooth, Just Baked is the most affordable haven to indulge yourself in sugary delights. Besides the regular black forest and chocolate cakes, there is a lot to choose from. The multi-layered mama mia cake, mango cheese cake, fruit tart and American brownie are among the most sought after delights.

The American brownie looks hard on the outside but when you bite into it, the moist chocolate melts in your mouth leaving your teeth to

fare with the nutty toppings. A scoop of vanilla ice-cream is the ideal companion.

If you are lucky enough to find fruit tart at the cafe, don't miss out on the sinful goodness of whipped cream, custard, and fresh fruits all packed together into a sweet pastry mix.

With its casual ambience, a select assortment of pastries, and a menu that won't impale your wallet, Just Baked aims to please.

Biru R

How to get there: walk from Dwarika's Hotel towards Old Baneswor, you will find Just Baked on your right-hand side.

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MAGIC MIKE



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

My first impression of *Magic Mike* while viewing its first, and admittedly very captivating stripping scene involving Channing Tatum suavely dancing to *It's Raining Men* with a bevy of other chiseled men with six packs in perfect complement behind him is hard to describe.

Perhaps the best and safest thing to say is that my face probably went through a series of expressions including amazement, delight, slight embarrassment, outright blushing, and then back to amazement, but not necessarily in that order.

This obviously has something to do with the undeniable voyeurism that is inherent in watching a film that initially seems to be just about the glamorous lives of male strippers living and working in Tampa, Florida.

However, once one catches on that this is also a Steve Soderbergh film, enlightenment dawns. There has to be more to it than that, one thinks, and there is.

While not on the same and exceptional level of Soderbergh's 1980s masterpiece *Sex, Lies, and Videotape*, *Magic Mike* does emulate its coolness, its naturalistic style, and a measure of its controversial subject. Centred loosely around Channing Tatum (who plays Mike the main man in the strip club's ensemble pieces) who had a stint as a stripper when he was a young, struggling actor, the film chronicles the events of a few months one summer when Mike takes an aimless but handsome young man, Adam (Alex Pettyfer), under his wing.

At first Adam only does odd jobs around the strip club, but due to a sudden lull in the program, Mike and the club's

ridiculously tanned owner, Dallas, who could only be played by Matthew McConaughey, push him onto the stage, half as a joke, and half to test his nerve.

The new boy is a hit, and thus begin the adventures of Mike and Adam, overlooked by Adam's pretty but uptight sister Brooke (Cody Horn), with whom he lives, sleeping on her sofa and generally behaving like the epitome of a young man who suddenly finds himself in cash and surrounded by adoring women.

Irritating as Pettyfer's character is, Tatum's is incredibly well drawn. Tatum, who has initially wasted himself on films like *GI Joe* (2009) and *The Vow* (2012) has recently come into his own with the buddy cup comedy *21 Jump Street* (also 2012) and now with *Magic Mike*, showing unexpected nuance in his chiseled face and using his astonishingly refined dance moves to heart-stopping effect.

Soderbergh's style has always had a light and easy touch, and so too does this film. Like *Sex, Lies, and Videotape* which also deals with a number of intense, and controversial themes, it is also, more often than not, very funny, and the characters are full of charm and wit.

There is an unforgettable scene when Brooke goes to the club, invited by her brother Adam, and stays to watch Mike's number. Inadvertently attracted and reluctantly fascinated by his undeniable appeal on the stage, her face is a play of emotions, until she leaves hurriedly unable to sustain her cool in the charged atmosphere.

While not one of the fall's heavy hitters and perhaps not an award contender either, *Magic Mike* will keep you in your seat with its more obvious appeal, its subtle depths and over all the immense likeability of its main character, Magic Mike. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer

The Important Medical Technician



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

Many years ago, there was a genius at Shanta Bhawan Hospital (now Patan Hospital) called Pettibone who was highly skilled in repairing biomedical equipment.

When the stethoscope or the ophthalmoscope (an instrument to examine the eye) broke down, he fixed them magically. The handiman also took care of the lab equipment, X-ray machines, and operating room instruments expertly.

Only when I moved to another hospital in town did I realise the importance of technicians who handle biomedical equipment. Many equipment were in a state of disrepair at my new workplace. Instruments which were otherwise in good condition, but for their blown fuses were left to rust in the corner while the authorities ordered new machines because no one knew how to fix the fuse.

Unfortunately, even today where we have become increasingly dependent on hi-tech medical equipment the problem continues. Studies have shown that more than half of all hospital equipment in Nepal is broken and very few function at their optimal level. Basic precautionary measures would have avoided this situation and simple repairs can restore their function.



So it is heartening to know that the National Health Training Centre together with the Nick Simons Institute are introducing a Biomedical Equipment Technician program. Depending on their education level and time availability, participants can attend a one year, two months, and even a two week long program.

The one year program requires a 10+2 certificate and provides six months of classroom training and six months practical training after which graduates will be able to run biomedical departments in mid-sized hospitals. The training will take place at the National Health Training Centre in Teku.

We usually assume that doctors and nurses do all the work in a hospital. But consider this scenario for a second: a patient is brought to the emergency room with chest pain, a cardiac monitor is attached to her, an oxygen machine delivers oxygen and other equipment may be used for assessment. If these vital instruments don't work properly or malfunction and give incorrect readings it could turn out to be fatal.

The wellbeing of patients certainly depends on the expertise of health care professionals, but equally important are the medical technicians who calibrate these instruments on a timely basis, and when necessary promptly trouble shoot. No wonder sometimes we thought Pettibone was an actual magician. 🇳🇵



BIKRAM RAI

ON FIRE: A huge fire broke out at the Chaudhary Group Electronics factory in Satungal, Kathmandu on Sunday. The cause of the fire has not been determined yet, but short-circuit is thought to be the most likely culprit.



KRISHNA SINJALI

COACH ON BOARD: Jhapa CDO Narendra Raj Sharma inaugurates three luxurious buses that will serve Kathmandu-Kakarvitta route on Kathmandu on Monday.



BIKRAM RAI

CANDLE IN THE WIND: Youth Action Fund Nepal organised a candle light vigil to wish Malala Yousafzai a speedy recovery in Basantapur on Monday evening. The Pakistani girl who advocates for education was shot by the Taliban and is undergoing medical treatment in England.

READERS' PHOTO



ANUP ADHIKARI

FISHY EXPECTATIONS: Despite the fact that the Bagmati River is highly polluted, these young boys try their best to catch fish using a net at Tilganga in Kathmandu.

WEEKEND WEATHER

The latter half of October will see light clouds move towards the mid hills. The unsaturated local clouds will not produce rainfall, but lead to low temperatures at nights. The weather will be clear across the country and it is a good time to observe constellations in the sky. Trekkers and mountaineers are encouraged to hit the altitude in the coming weeks.



FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
24°-14°	25°-15°	24°-16°

The past foretold

The parties may strike a deal by the end of this month to revive the CA, but that won't solve anything



BIKRAM RAJ



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

The so-called agreement between the parties last month to go for fresh CA elections had effectively put the ghost of the dissolved CA to rest. It is a sign of the unpredictability of Nepali politics that a born-again CA is haunting Nepali politics once more.

Constitutional experts and media pundits may be divided over the legitimacy of a revived CA, the president may be urging the parties for elections, but that won't stop them from bringing back the house if there is a deal at the top level. And it does look like a deal is on the table and will be discussed over mutton curry and rice this Dasain.

To understand why the parties may ultimately strike a deal, we must not get distracted by what few leaders in each camp do or say, but look at the

larger political reality through the lens of each party.

To begin with, the parties are well aware that elections cannot take place in the present situation. The NC and UML leadership, as many believe, are nervous about an electoral backlash for their alleged anti-federal position. But more importantly, the feeling has sunk in that the Maoists and Madhesis are calling the shots and with a compromised position on federalism, they do not have sufficient public support to put the government under political and moral pressure by resorting to street protests.

Does this mean the deadlock will be resolved and the nation will get the constitution through a revived house? Yes and no. The ruling coalition may succeed in getting the NC and UML to agree on a CA revival, but unlike what we had hoped for, the parties may not have a pre-agreement on all the sticking issues and the constitution may be declared without going into specificities of federalism.

To put it bluntly, the parties are not in a position to negotiate their respective positions, and are only trying to avoid radicalising the streets. The Maoists and Madhesis have already taken a firm stance on identity-based federalism without sufficiently making it clear to their constituency that there are four more categories of identity besides ethnic identity. So they are now scared to explain it, lest they would be seen as selling out.

Similarly, the Madhesi Front is anxious about making a deal on size and number of Madhes Pradesh fearing backlash from the Upendra Yadav-led morcha which is looking to undermine their influence.

The confusion within the NC and UML about identity remains. They know they will have to address the issue at some point, but there is a strong section in both the parties that sees any flexibility on the issue as succumbing to Maoist pressure.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal left for Brussels after throwing a deal

on CA revival into the pot to see how it cooks. On his return this weekend he will launch another charm offensive on the NC and UML to accept his compromise to shelve discussions on identity-based federalism and pass a constitution on agreed points.

But a CA revival will not necessarily untangle the deadlock. The most it will do is pave way for a NC-led electoral government and the declaration of a half-way constitution that will satisfy few. The parties are hoping that if they agree on tentative number of federal units, the Janajatis and Madhesis will buy it.

But there is still a lack of a clear understanding as to how the names and numbers will be decided and whether the agreement on forms of governance and judiciary which was compromised upon in the final days of the CA is still valid.

Besides, the NC and UML may be wary that once the CA is revived, there will be increased pressure on the parties to

table the State Restructuring Commission's report and go for voting because of which the last CA was dissolved without even convening.

The parties are once again trying to take an easier way around by postponing the difficult bits. Very few ideas are emerging that attempt to address the root of the problem. NC leader Gagan Thapa proposes 'one person three votes' solution whereby the country can simultaneously have local, parliamentary, and CA elections. "To avoid unnecessary politicking, we can ensure that members don't share CA and parliamentary seats and give a definite mandate," he told me on Wednesday.

Having a pre-agreement and declaring the constitution without postponing the federalism issue may still be the quickest and surest way to resolve the deadlock. But if the CA is revived only to pave way for power-sharing and postponing of key issues, the danger of polarised elections will remain. ❏




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KUTUMBA



JAZZY 10th BIRTHDAY

Mark your calendars for a week of jazz

A week off during Dasain is barely enough and Tihar seems ages away. But fret not. Surya Nepal Jazzmandu this year, like the past ten editions, promises you a smooth transition from one festivity to the other.

After playing at the Palmer Street Festival in Sydney in 2000, Navin Chhetri, drummer and vocalist of Cadenza hatched an audacious plan with some friends to introduce Kathmandu and the international jazz circuit to each other. Two years later Jazzmandu was born and now has a guest list that boasts the likes of Trilok Gurtu, Ari Hoenig, and Louis Banks, and artists from opposite corners of the world from Honduras to Australia and Norway to Thailand.

Besides giving us another reason to party, Jazzmandu is encouraging youngsters to pick up an instrument. This year will see the return of Jazz for the Next Generation Music Competition which gave rise to young talents like Abhisek Bhadra (see box). Jazzmandu also organised two workshops in October in partnership with the Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory to introduce jazz to young audiences. "Not having to explain what jazz is anymore has been nice," says Chhetri.

And on its 10th birthday, Jazzmandu has a tasty treat lined up for Kathmandu's crawlers. Headlining this year's festival will be Tito Puente Jr from the US, who has been carrying his legendary father's repertoire and passion to audiences around the world.

Beat Kaestli and Ben Stivers (Switzerland), Marlow Rosado (USA), Rootman (Thailand), Suzy&2 (Norway), Adil and Vasundhara (India), and Nojazz (France) will perform with their respective ensembles and with each other across the Valley, while Cadenza, Kutumba, and Urjazz will be the flag bearers for Nepal.



TITO PUENTE JR



SUZY&2

THE JAZZMANDU CALENDAR

Jazz for the next generation,
1 November, 2.30 to 4.30 pm, KJC, free entry
 Performance by local musicians out of whom three finalists will be picked to perform at Jazz Bazaar alongside top Jazz artists from around the world. The finalists will also get to interact and engage in a private workshop with Jazzmandu musicians. Limited seats available.

Valley jams,
2 November, 7.30 to 9.30 pm, Rs 400
 Different venues in Kathmandu will feature performances by various Jazzmandu artists.

Jazz bazaar,
3 November, 2.30 to 10 pm, Gokarna Forest Resort, Rs 899
 Far from the cacophony of Kathmandu, in the lush green forests of Gokarna, a marathon of jazz and traditional Nepali folk and classical music awaits you. Bus available from Hyatt Regency, Boudha from 7 to 4 pm and to Lazimpat at 10 pm, seats not guaranteed.

Afro-Latin jazz,
4 November, 7.30 to 9.30 pm, Hotel Shangri-La, Rs 899
 A night of Afro-Cuban sounds of the Caribbean with Tito Puente Jr and Marlow Rosado, accompanied by the Jazzmandu all-star band which will be followed by a jam with Jazzmandu musicians.

Jazzmandu master class,
6 November, 3.30 to 4.30 pm, KJC, free entry
 An opportunity for music students and jazz enthusiasts to interact with visiting musicians, share experiences, and get tips on techniques and instruments.

Jazz at Patan,
6 November, 6 to 8.30 pm, Patan Museum, Rs 1,299
 An evening of Nepali classical music fused with Jazz, played in the historic courtyard.

Jazzmandu finale,
7 October, 5.30 to 10 pm, Hotel Shangri-La, Rs 999
 Bands will play their sets and later jam together, culminating in a high-energy, improvised treat to bid adieu to this year's musical festivities.

www.jazzmandu.org

nepalitimes.com

Once upon a time in Jazzmandu, #574
 On the eighth note, #524
 Let them hear jazz, # 472

URJAZZ



ADIL AND VASUNDHARA



CADENZA COLLECTIVE



ROOTMAN



MARLOW ROSADO



SWORUP RANJIT

Generation Jazz

The story of Abhisek Bhadra, a young and tremendously talented pianist, goes to show just how far jazz has come in its decade in Nepal and just how important the influence of Jazzmandu and Kathmandu's early jazz musicians has been. Bhadra impressed many international musicians at Jazzmandu 2011, where he was chosen as the best young musician at the Jazz for the Next Generation competition.

Asked how he started playing jazz, Bhadra points to a night many years ago when he heard Cadenza – Nepal's first jazz band – playing fusion music at a Jazzmandu event. "I did not get the music at the time, but I was hooked," recalls Bhadra, "and I soon began my own exploration into jazz." Bhadra is now pursuing his musical education in Europe on a scholarship.

Kathmandu's music scene has come a full circle as a new crop of musicians learn and build upon the efforts of those who came before them.

Roman Gautam



NOJAZZ

JAZZING UP KATHMANDU

Nepali Times caught up with artists playing at Jazzmandu 2012 via email just as they were packing their instruments and getting ready to board their flights to Kathmandu. Learn about their experiences, expectations, and pre-tour jitters.

Nepali Times: How popular is jazz in your country?

Adil and Vasundhara: There are just a handful of jazz bands in India. However, the music scene as a whole is evolving and on the rise in Delhi. The city has become a hotspot for indie musicians and we are very fortunate to be living in a place where we can sustain ourselves by making music we love. Also it's wonderful to see more and more young people taking an interest in the genre. They are flocking to concerts, searching for tunes on the internet, forming bands, and even blogging.

Rootman: The jazz scene in Thailand is quite good. For the past 15 years universities and colleges have been including jazz courses in their music program and there is a new generation which has grown up listening to and wanting to play jazz. We also have popular festivals like Thailand International Jazz Conference, Bangkok Jazz Festival, and Hua Hin Jazz Festival which are helping promote and encourage young artists.

What are your expectations from your gig in Nepal?

Adil and Vasundhara: This is our first visit to Nepal, but we've heard a lot about the music scene in the country. Some of our friends who visited the conservatory had great things to say. We are very excited to meet, interact, and jam with musicians in Nepal. Every time we travel, we are inspired by the visuals and our interactions and collaboration with local talents. We hope our Nepal experience will be equally enriching.

Rootman: We've never been to Nepal either and are very excited to perform here. I've heard some Nepal traditional music on YouTube and found they are similar to traditional Thai music.

Nojazz: We were in Nepal last June for a concert, but didn't have an opportunity to listen to any Nepali music. This time we definitely want to collaborate with Nepali musicians.

Nojazz has been around for a long time. How has the experience been?

Nojazz: With 11 years of experience, we can now react to any situation on stage, constantly interacting with the public surprising ourselves. We also don't want to play the same way for ever that would be a trap. We want our listeners to have fun and that's what we want to do in Kathmandu too. How would you describe your sound?

Rootman: Our sound is a mix between groove, R&B, funk, jazz, and electronic. Some members are students at the Mahidol University, some are fulltime musicians in Bangkok. And when we come together, we happen to sound like something between jazz and grooves.

Nojazz: It's a bit of jazz, a bit of not-jazz, more like a gentle provocation because we don't want to sound too mainstream.

All of you have an album coming up shortly.

Nojazz:

Rootman:

What do you have lined up for your fans in the next 12 months?

Rootman: We just finished recording our album and are waiting for it to be mixed. Hopefully, we'll bring it to Jazzmandu We will be organising a concert and also recording live somewhere in Bangkok and invite guests like MC Shimori and turntables teams.

Adil and Vasundhara: We hope to have mastered our songs by the time we return to Delhi so we will just have to add the final touches on our next EP, Ampersand. Besides the core quartet, the album will feature many leading musicians from India like Louis Banks, Ranjit Barot, Loy Mendonsa, Sanjay Divecha, Sankarshan Kini, and Zubin Balaporia. Our band members Saurabh Suman (bass) and Pranoy Praveen (drums) have also started writing new material so that should keep us busy.

Nojazz: In early 2013 we plan to go to Japan and then we have concerts lined up in Paris and other locations in Europe in the latter half of 2013. So the fans can look forward to our new tunes.

Stateless or dual citizens?

Navin Jha, *Nagarik*, 6 October

नागरिक

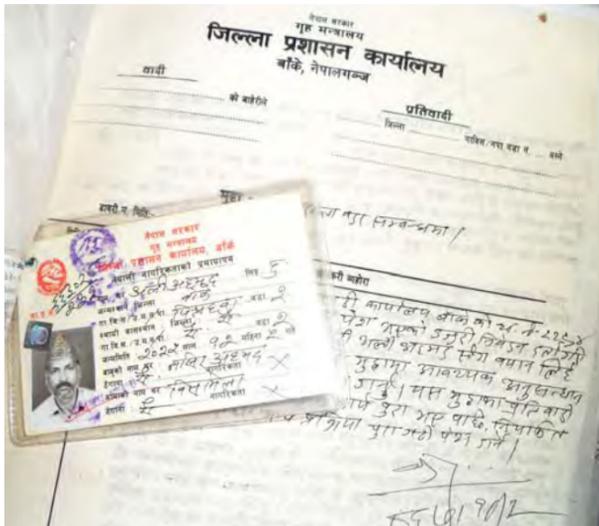
Sources at the Election Commission say forged citizenships are becoming a huge problem in the Tarai. In 2006, the Home Ministry had distributed 1.2 million citizenship cards throughout the region.

Several complaints have been filed at the District Administration Office in Banke regarding fake citizenships. Five individuals have been found with cards with identical numbers. The DAO records also show that two different citizenship cards were issued in the name of Lalit Rauniyar, the vice-chairman of Tarai Madhesi Lokrantrik Party's Banke chapter.

In Jaispur VDC alone, the identity of 239 'citizens' is highly questionable. Bhure Jolaha and Raju Halwai who are from Nanpara, India are among the 524 people in Jaispur who received Nepali citizenships through birth. Although they don't own houses or property in Nepal, they were

still able to register themselves on the voters' list. Having casted their votes in the state elections in Uttar Pradesh few months ago, Jolaha and Halwai are ready to vote in the upcoming elections in Nepal as well.

When officials from the Election Commission visited



Jaispur last year to issue voters' registration cards, locals protested against the move claiming the cards were being given to 'outsiders'. Owing to the pressure, card distribution was halted for 18 months in Kapilbastu and Banke. But after immense pressure from Madhesi

leaders and an agreement between top leaders everyone was provided with voter's cards.

People from across the border want Nepali citizenship because it is easier to get work permits for foreign employment on Nepali passports rather than Indian passports. Officials blame the faulty mechanism set up in 2006 as the root of the problem. Deepak Poudel, secretary of Jaispur admits that the fragile political atmosphere in the Tarai at that time led to issuing of citizenship certificates without proper documentation or investigation.

Election Commissioner Ayodhya Prasad Yadav, on the other hand, is worried about the electoral implications of the huge number of fake citizens. "Having large number of people with forged citizenship can change election dynamics drastically. Also if this trend goes unchecked, many people in the Tarai will lose out on jobs and business opportunities to outsiders," he says.

Dahal's doublespeak

Muma Ram Khanal, *Kantipur*, 16 October

कान्तिपुर

The failure to institutionalise achievements of the people's movement in 1990 and then in 2006 has taught us that in a democracy individuals must not be allowed to become stronger than institutions. After the 1990 movement, the nation suffered under the weight of Girija Prasad Koirala's personality, while post 2006 politics has been held hostage by Pushpa Kamal Dahal.

Despite Dahal's doublespeak and constant shifting of the goal post, the opposition has failed to impress due to its lack of vision. So far, opposition members have not been able to rescue the peace process and statute drafting from falling prey to Maoist diktat. But what makes greater mockery of democracy is Dahal's rejection of every political proposal forwarded by the opposition, only to repeat the same ones back to them in the name of forging consensus.

Dahal's politics not only reflects his own dubious personality, but also conceals the vested interests of other power centres in Kathmandu. On the eve of CA dissolution, Dahal had rejected the NC and UML's proposal to declare the constitution by postponing contentious issues. It is highly ironic that he is now talking about reviving the CA by holding off on problematic issues as if it is a revolutionary idea.



Koirala: CA revival?
Dahal: No CA elections?
Koirala: Elections?
Dahal: Lets revive.
Koirala: The CA?
Dahal: Elections!

Hookah: Power

कान्तिपुर Batsyayan in *Kantipur*, 13 October

Moving up the ladder

Ram Bahadur Rawal, Janak Raj Sapkota, *Nepal*, 14 October

नेपाल

Nepali poets have always waxed lyrical about village life. But hidden behind such words are the agonies of millions who have been deprived of even the most basic necessities. Lately, villagers have proved that it is possible to improve living standards and raise income levels not by migrating abroad, but staying put. This urge to see one's homeland turn into centres of prosperity has spread across the country and villages are undergoing massive changes through the efforts of local communities.

A few years ago, planning expert Pitambar Sharma used to worry that newly constructed roads wouldn't translate into progress for villagers. Today he is elated to see families transform their kitchens into restaurants, homes into hotels and class rooms once again humming with the sounds of students.

Former chief-secretary Bimal Koirala says that the villages are the sole reason Nepal has not turned a failed state. "Leaders in the cities promise revolutionary changes, but it is

the rural areas which are propping up the country's economic and social development," he explains.

Take the case of Dhuskun village in Sindhupalchok district. Only recently, village leaders travelled all the way to Kathmandu to consult with officials at the Ministry of Local Development about the plans and prospects for their village. Having learnt the hard way that progress comes only with local involvement, Dhuskun residents have formed committees to manage education, transport, irrigation, electricity, telecommunications, and even livestock.

Similarly, villagers from Dalla in Bardiya, Namje in Dhankuta, Bagarkot in Dadeldhura, Bhujung in Lamjung, Karnas in Parbat, Dumarwana in Bara, Bhulke in Surkhet, Shankarpur in Sarlahi, Chuntal in Kabhre, and Jyamire in Palpa have turned around the fortunes of their families and communities with floriculture, tourism, home stay programs, horticulture, and livestock rearing. Perhaps Nepalis who are returning to families this Dasain will be encouraged by the unprecedented progress and might want to stay behind to build a better future for their hometowns.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



"A caretaker prime minister does not have the moral authority to speak against the head of the state."

President Ram Baran Yadav in conversation with Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai quoted in *Rajdhani*, 17 October

हिमाल
खबरपत्रिका

विशेष ग्राहक योजना

बम्पर उपहार रु. ३,५५,०००

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पि. पि. साइजको फोटो ६ प्रति रु. ३०० बराबरको

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Multiple resistance

Misuse of over-the-counter antibiotics is leading to increased drug resistance among Nepalis

JUANITA MALAGON

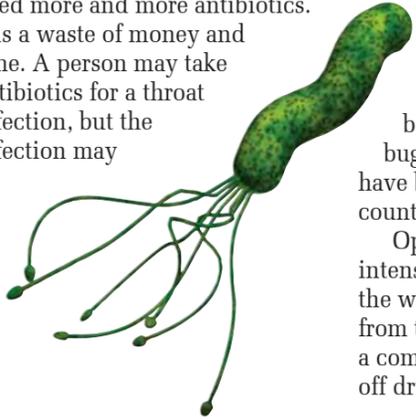
Every time Maya has a sore throat, she visits her neighbourhood medicine shop, gets her tonsils checked by the pharmacist and returns home with a packet of antibiotics. It's quick, easy, and cheap. The medicine is available over-the-counter so she doesn't even need a prescription.

Thousands of Nepalis like Maya pop antibiotic pills for common cold and flu. However, antibiotics are only effective against bacterial and fungal infections and certain kinds of parasites, not against viruses that cause cold and flu.

"In Nepal, people with no medical background act as experts and advise friends and families to take antibiotics. And since antibiotics are readily available at most pharmacies, people start taking them when they experience even minor discomforts," says Buddha Basnyat, medical consultant at Patan Hospital.

Such misuse of antibiotics, especially in developing countries, means that many significant bacterial infections are now becoming resistant to commonly used antibiotics leading to a major health crisis.

"When bacteria (*pic below*) become drug resistant, patients need more and more antibiotics. It is a waste of money and time. A person may take antibiotics for a throat infection, but the infection may



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

FINISHED WITH MY PILLS: Nepalis can buy antibiotics over-the-counter without prescription

"Once patients start feeling better, they stop taking drugs halfway through the prescribed course. The bacteria that survive become more resistant, stronger, and keep multiplying," explains Basnyat. Lack of sanitation and hygiene, which enables proliferation and spread of pathogens, also helps spread the resistance.

The threats of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (TB) have major public health implications in Nepal, where more than half the local population are carriers of the bacillus (*see box*) according to reports. The main cause of death from HIV/AIDS is also through resurgent TB. The only way to control this is through stricter regulations at pharmacies, public awareness, and planning contingency measures for a super bug outbreak. 

spread to other parts of the body," explains Rajendra Pant, director of National Tuberculosis Centre.

Antibiotics resistance can be fatal as was the case in Prasuti Griha last month. The maternity hospital in Kathmandu closed down for a week in September after staphylococcus, an antibiotics-resistant pathogen, was found in equipment used in the operation theatre. The infection resulted in the death of Lata Gurung who had just delivered a baby and another new born. Outbreaks of 'super bugs' resistant to antibiotics have been found in other countries as well.

Operating rooms and intensive care units around the world usually shut down from time to time to undergo a complete sterilisation to kill off drug resistant bacteria and

infections. Although Prasuti Griha claims it follows this accepted procedure, the hospital seems to have fallen behind on its monthly sterilisation routine and failed to maintain proper hygiene standards thus allowing the staphylococcus to spread.

Besides the health risks, antibiotics resistance also puts a heavy financial burden on patients and their families. As drugs become increasingly ineffective against certain types of bacteria, the illness is prolonged and the cost of additional tests, treatment, hospitalisation, along with loss of income due to absence at work can put serious dent on their finances.

It is not only humans who are developing antibiotics resistance, livestock and poultry are also becoming immune because of the gross abuse of antibiotics by farmers who self-

administer the drugs.

While unregulated use of antibiotics is a major cause of drug resistance, failure to complete the full course of treatment is also responsible.

Resisting tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is endemic in Nepal and it can be transmitted from person to person through breathing. More than half the population are carriers of the tuberculosis bacillus, but not everyone develops the full-blown disease.

Due to the magnitude of the infection, the government made TB treatment a health priority starting from early 1990 and provided greater access to DOTS (directly observed treatment). Nepal's DOTS program is internationally recognised as being very effective, and serves as a role model for other developing countries.

Drugs for TB work in the same way many common antibiotics do: if the treatment is not completed, or the drugs are not right, there is a chance of the bacteria multiplying and becoming stronger. And that is when the bacteria return with increased levels of resistance.

The second line of antibiotics which is required to treat the multi-drug resistant TB is not only much more expensive than regular antibiotics, but the treatment takes longer and the side effects can be severe.

TB patients in Nepal cannot buy antibiotics over-the-counter as drugs and treatment are only administered by the government free of charge. Although this helps in the regulation of antibiotics, it is difficult to ensure whether patients actually finish their course and controlling drug resistant TB becomes complicated.

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Art from the heart

Art competition encourages medical students to explore their creative talents

Ever wondered what interests future doctors bring into medical schools? Contrary to the usual stereotypes, many of Nepal's budding doctors are also painters, poets, photographers, and musicians.

For the past two years, Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS) has been supporting its students' artistic endeavours by hosting an art competition for second years who are studying cardiology. They were asked to artistically conceptualise what they learnt about the heart and circulatory system.

The popular competition named Mero Mutu, Mero Kala (my heart my art) by Achyut Koirala from batch one, saw a surge in submissions this year with 30 pieces of art, two music videos, and an animation film. A panel of 10 judges chose the top three pieces and the top logo which were put on display at the college grounds on 11 October. The winners also received stethoscopes and PAHS mugs.

"We want our students to have a holistic education with a combination of arts, humanities, and sciences. This will give them a better understanding of the human condition and make them well prepared to become innovative health care leaders in rural Nepal one day," says Dr Carol Ann Courneya, an international faculty at PAHS who started the art contest and was one of the judges.



SEEMA BHANDARI (2nd prize)



I have always been interested in art and was very involved during high school, but haven't been able to devote much time to my hobby since joining MBBS. So I'm glad the college organised this competition, it gave me the creative push.

I decided to make a 3D model because I wanted to try something new and simply making a sketch or painting wouldn't have been very interesting. The black and white hands stand for people from all ethnicities, religion, and races and the red nail polish represents women, all of whom come together in harmony. I attached a map of Nepal to the heart and coloured it red and blue just like our flag to signify that despite our differences we all have a common heart. It took me about a week to finish the project and I managed to take out time in between classes and after I completed my homework.

JEETENDRA BHANDARI AND SAJAN ACHARYA (3rd prize)



I write poems all the times in my diary. It helps me release stress and fight boredom. Sometimes I let my friends read my poem

if they are feeling depressed. I usually don't limit myself to particular topics, but this was the first time I was writing about the heart (*Sajan, left*).

Sajan had written a poem and it was my idea to turn it into a video montage including all our memories from our first year in college. It took us four days, but it was great fun. We didn't think we would win, we did it for the experience. I would finish my homework by 10pm and work on the project for an hour or two. It's completely possible to combine a medical degree and still keep up with your interests. Besides nobody can study all the time, they would go crazy. (*Jeetendra, right*).

CARMINA SHRESTHA (Logo winner)

I am not really an artist, but I like to keep myself busy and this contest seemed like a good outlet. I



मेरो मुटु मेरो कला

feel like people usually put doctors in a pigeon hole: boring, studious, practical. In fact, most creative people work in the field of medicine.

Our creativity is expressed in the way we handle different cases, communicate with patients, and manage time between work, family, and our interests.

My logo says that we should always keep our country within our hearts and nurture and love it as we would do ourselves. From the medical point of view, the logo emphasises the importance of our hearts and the need to take good care of it. The hands on the bottom represent the caring faculty and staff at PAHS.



KAMAL SAGAR THOKAR (1st prize)



I have been passionate about painting and drawing ever since I was in nursery. I like charcoal sketching in particular. Whenever I am bored or have free time I sit down with my sketch book and spend hours. I made a simple pencil sketch of the heart for the competition.

Sometimes people unnecessarily attach all sorts of complicated emotions to the heart, but at the end it is a very simple organ which gives us life and teaches us to love. It took me three hours to complete the drawing and I was pretty surprised when I won the first prize because I took part because of my passion not with the aim of winning.



EYES THAT SEE AND HEAR: Deaf artists Ganesh, Anjasha, and Jyothi (top to bottom) recently exhibited their paintings at Eyes Empowered in Bangalore. They have already displayed their works in Kathmandu twice.

EYES THAT HEAR

The world is what they see and for the hearing impaired the sense of sight seems to take on deeper significance and adds another dimension to compensate for their lack of hearing.

That is the impression one gets after looking at the paintings in Eyes Empowered, an art exhibition that was exhibited in Bangalore recently after being organised twice in Kathmandu with the works of young deaf artists from India and Nepal. It is the brainchild of Sarah Giri, an activist who has worked with the deaf in Kathmandu and Bangalore, where she is now based.

Giri is the chairperson of the Nepal-Indo Deaf Art and Culture Society which organised the exhibition tour that was hosted recently at Bangalore's Leela Palace. Says Giri: "The deaf are a cultural and linguistic minority, this is the first time in India that deaf artists from the two countries are coming together under one roof. It forces us all to walk the talk on social inclusion."

An exhibition of paintings by Nepali and Indian deaf artists is held in Bangalore after being shown in Kathmandu

Giri is also a faculty at the Indus Business Academy where she teaches managerial communication. She is a sign language expert and has made a documentary for the deaf in sign language. She organised the first two Eyes Empowered exhibition in Kathmandu in 2010 and 2011 in which 32 deaf artists from India and Nepal took part.

"My years with the deaf have enriched my own life, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually," says Giri, "reaching out to touch their lives is a small way to say thank you."

During the Bangalore exhibition, six artists sold 60 of their works and the proceeds encouraged them to make art a source of livelihood. Giri has also got an order for 16 large murals for a hotel in India which want their murals to be done by deaf artists after a consultant for the hotel visited the exhibition.

nepalitimes.com

Deaf like me, #555

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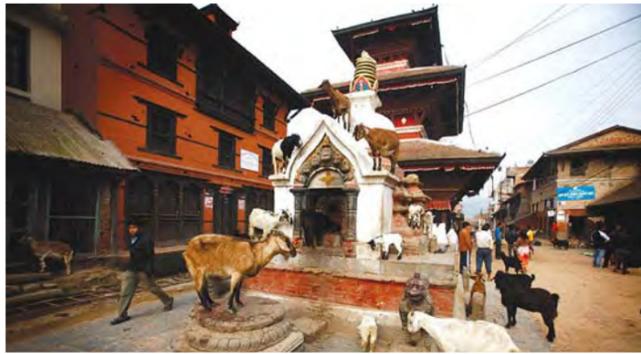
asianpaints

Pre-departure questionnaire

As Nepal strives for service excellence, the unconcerned authorities are planning to hand out Pre-Departure Visitor Feedback Questionnaires to dear and departing tourists while they wait for their flights at Kathmandu airport.

This is an excellent idea. Bored passengers waiting for delayed flights will have something to do and tourists can get things off their chests so they don't go back with a bad impression. The feedback will help Nepal's tourism industry to fine tune its product range, upgrade services, streamline procedures, find out where we still don't charge entry fees so we can start doing so, and it will bring constructive suggestions about upgrading our tourist services which we can then completely ignore.

To start with, tourists will be required to mandatorily pay \$5 for taking the trouble to fill out this form. The money will be used to print more questionnaires for future feedback. If there are 1 million tourists next year, that means Nepal will earn \$5 million from questionnaires alone. Please be so kind as to take a few moments of your time to complete this short survey. The information you provide will be held in strictest confidence, unless of course you decide to be nasty in which case we will put your photo on the Nepal government's Facebook page and draw a moustache over it. Ready?



1. Did you find Nepal up to your expectations?

- Better than expectations
- Worse than expectations
- What do you expect me to say?

2. If you were looking for Nirvana in Nepal, did you find it?

- Yes
- No
- Om

3. What was the condition of the public toilets at the airport?

- Excellent
- Cured my sinus
- Fainted twice

4. Was your privacy respected?

- Go away
- No, I don't want to buy another bloody khukuri
- You want to see my khukuri?

5. What is your opinion of the promo ads about Nepal in your country?

- Lies
- Damn lies
- Statistics

6. Which of the following did you expect to see during your visit versus what you actually saw?

Expected to see	Actually saw
Gorillas	Guerrillas
Gurkhas	Airport friskers
Gardens	Garbage
Abominable snowmen	Abominable men
Yak	Yak & Yeti
Treks	Trax
Paradise	Paragliding

7. How do you rate our overall service?

- Compared to where?
- You really want to know?
- Let's just say it was a memorable trip

8. Was the visa officer at the airport courteous?

- You're joking, right?
- \$50 minus \$35 is \$15, not \$5
- He was, I wasn't

9. Who will you recommend Nepal to:

- Friend
- Foe
- Friend and foe alike

10. If one more guy asks you to pay Rs 800 to enter a Darbar Square, you will:

- Strangle him with your bare hands in broad daylight
- Embrace him tightly and execute a Heimlich Maneuvre so he regurgitates his lunch
- Drop verbal hints about his canine motherhood
- Show him the khukuri you bought



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