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A boy sold cotton candy at Tundikhel on Sunday, 30 December, as the Gurung community celebrated its new year.

Becoming their fathers
 For the sons of Singapore Gurkhas, joining the elite corps is a way out of unemployment in Nepal
 page 12-13

THE WAR ON WOMEN

Editorial page 2

The gender agenda
 by Anurag Acharya page 3

We shall overcome
 by Rubeena D Shrestha page 4

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THE WAR ON WOMEN

Nepali rulers were probably glad that the public's attention shifted over the new year away from deadlocked politics to escalating protests in the streets of the capital against the latest atrocities against women.

But that should be short-term relief, for the reason why gender-based violence, and stigmatisation are so persistent in Nepal is because politicians have forgotten what it is all about. As representatives of the people, it is their job to ensure the safety, security, and rights of vulnerable citizens. It is the prolonged political disarray and the ensuing impunity that has led to a breakdown in law and order and an increase in gender-based crime.

It is not enough anymore to use the excuse of entrenched patriarchy or culturally-accepted gender inequity to explain away the epidemic of violence against women in our society. We had a system in place since the restoration of democracy in 1990 to set things right, and after the 2008 elections we had the most representative legislature ever in Nepal's history. Laws were passed, but enforcement has been feeble. A male-dominated society has been slow to change behaviour, and the priority for media has been male-dominated politics.

A young woman who was robbed and raped on return from Saudi Arabia, a domestic helper was murdered in Kathmandu, two young women were burnt alive by family members in Banke and Bara. These latest atrocities pushed public outrage beyond the tipping point.

But inquiries at Maiti Nepal show that there are 3-5 women every week who are robbed, exploited, blackmailed, and abused by airport personnel. Sita was just the latest, and her story only came out because



DEEPENDRA BAURACHARYA

The prolonged political disarray and ensuing impunity are fostering gender-based crime.

relatives dared to complain to the authorities.

Ironically, the protests in Baluwatar and Singha Darbar this week have provided the government an opportunity to earn brownie points and project itself as a champion of gender equality without having to change the status quo or answer difficult questions. If the Bhattarai government can fast track these cases and put criminals behind bars, the Nepali media with its notoriously short attention span will move back to covering politics and the only women who make it to the news will be semi-nude models.

Thousands of women were tortured, raped, killed, and disappeared during the conflict. It's been almost seven years since the war ended, but the formation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission is still in limbo because of the collusion of the warring sides which are now both part of the establishment. War crimes have gone unpunished. Perpetrators of atrocities mingle openly with politicians. It is this culture of impunity that allows policemen like Parsuram Basnet and others to think that they can get away with rape and murder.

Demonstrators this week held placards calling for stricter laws and fast track courts to deal with rape and domestic violence. But we all know laws won't suffice, Nepalis must examine the patriarchal values that perpetuate such atrocities.

What does it say about our culture which excuses men when they grope, leer, cat-call, assault women on public transport, at movie theatres, in the vegetable market. Worse, they put the blame on the woman: she asked for it, her clothes were too revealing, she should not have been at a party so late at night. And what message is the state sending when the police ridicules and harasses victims, refuses to file their case, and holds them guilty instead?

While the demonstrations in front of Baluwatar might provide a quick-fix to the women and their families, the only long-term solution is to raise young Nepali men and women differently. Teach them that women's bodies are not free-for-all objects of desire, they have a voice and their consent is important.

And instead of commodifying the female body, the media, movies and tv should be at the forefront of trying to change social attitudes.

ON THE WEB

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PREDATOR STATE

This is just a tip of the iceberg of a huge underlying problem that the returning migrant community faces and how they are welcomed by their fellow compatriots ('Predator state', Bhrikuti Rai, #636). The immigration officials and police have to be brought under the law. On a broader level, let's think about how we, as more privileged members of society, view men and women who are keeping the national economy afloat. Do we feel empathetic about their plight in the sandpit? Or are we ashamed when we see them cleaning washrooms every time we transit in Doha, or try to disassociate from them when they are snarled at by irritated flight attendants?

Krishna S

- There are many Sitas in our society who are victims of this corrupt system at Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA). Actually, this is the story of thousands of immigrants who leave the country in search of work to provide a better life for their loved ones and family back home. It is pathetic that the country which is dependent on remittance treats its bread-winners so miserably. TIA reflects the country's reputation to the outer world. Get rid of swindlers and put some hospitable staff. On arrival home we expect to feel safe and not be cheated and harassed by our own countrymen.

Mexx Nepali

- Hats off to *Nepali Times* for the story last week on the rape epidemic in the Tarai and this one on the despicable crime committed by the immigration authorities and police

at TIA. Let us all help Sita and others like her find their footing in society and overcome the trauma they endured. And in the long term, let us push for a government that gives its citizens options at home so they don't have to migrate for work.

Ambika

- When there is poor governance and political instability, the country becomes a breeding ground for crimes and people's sufferings are no one's concern. At least our judiciary system is working to an extent and may deter people from committing such inhumane crimes if they are able to punish the offenders.

Raju Adhikari



BHRIKUTI RAI

- I am French and I visit Nepal regularly. On my last trip, I sat down with Nepali workers during a transit in Bahrain and some of them were so sad and tired. They told me how many Nepalis work there without a day off, from the first to the last day of their stay. It makes me sick to find that upon their return, they are harassed, abused, and cheated by airport officials.

Anonymous

- Sita dared to speak and her family

chose to fight. It is highly likely that there have been several others who chose to keep quiet. Those low-lives involved in this crime must be brought to justice. Besides, we must seriously reconsider allowing women to work in the Gulf countries where women are treated like animals.

R Rai

THE PAST FORETOLD

I laughed as I read the forecast for Nepali politics in 2013 in this week's editorial ('The past foretold', #636). The same things could have been said at the end of 2009, 2010, and 2011: never ending deadlock, repeated extension of deadlines, and the musical chair for the post of prime minister. I feel we haven't really moved forward in any substantial

manner in the past five to six years. The new constitution still seems like a far away dream and who knows what is going to happen to the federalism issue. I don't want to sound too pessimistic, but NT could probably rehash this editorial at the end of 2013.

Renu Shrestha

- The problem is not only in Nepali politics, but also in our society. Both shape and get shaped by each other. Our moral decay is the heart of the problem.

Sachin Kafle

THE POLITICAL WILL

I am not surprised at the reactions of the Danish, Finnish, and Norwegian ambassadors, but I am surprised at how long it took them to lose patience ('The political will not to politicise everything',

Anna-Karin Ernstson Lampou, #636). What Nepali politicians don't realise is that behind these large bilateral donors are many national charities such as my own working tirelessly to improve various sectors in Nepal. We are exhausted and as a payer of UK taxes it is my money being spent on useless, worthless, unsustainable, politically driven projects that achieve 'sod all'. Get real Nepal, time to go to China and India for aid, we have almost had enough.

Flexible 1

- Is there anyone keeping a tab of the \$450 million spent in 2010-11 by the three Nordic countries? How much of it actually benefited the people of Nepal, and how much of it was spent trying to propagate their own views and to cover their overhead costs? They probably would have seen better results if the money had been spent on infrastructure development and job creation for the people. The Nepali government (and donors) should try to move away from this needy aid-mentality, which usually comes with a catch. To put things in perspective, Nepalis themselves sent an estimated \$3.5 billion as remittance in 2011, and the total foreign aid is just a fraction of that amount.

Dev Batsya

- It's natural for the Nordics, as well as other donor countries, to become frustrated with Nepal. They backed the regime change in 2006 and enabled the current set of politicians to come to power. But things have not gone their way which shouldn't be surprising because it was foolish of the donors to expect much from this incompetent group in the first place.

KK Sharma

- A talk of donor gripes again. Unfortunately, if aid stops, so does the job of many expats living here and sucking their own countries' money in Nepal's name. Corrupt Nepali politicians don't have to do the convincing, the westerners themselves will convince their governments that aid is needed here.

Doug Douglas

THE PRIVILEGE OF GRIEF

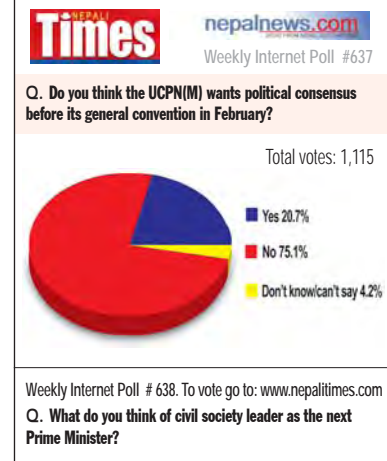
I hope that the protest in Delhi will bring in justice for the other victims as well ('The privilege of grief', Ajaz Ashraf, #636). I wouldn't be too critical of the protests as it has the potential of putting in place certain changes that would help all women in India.

Monica

THE ASSTROLOGER'S PROGNOSIS

Ass you rock ('The astrologer's prognosis for 2013', Backside, #636). Not only is your political satire funny, but your observation powers are amazing too. I only like the backside because of you, Ass.

FantASStic





BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

In May 2005, six-year-old Anuska was abducted from a playground near her house in Sinamangal in Kathmandu. Few days later her decayed body was found in a neighbour's house. The little girl had been raped, tortured, and murdered. Anuska's parents fought hard to put the suspect behind bars, but could not bear to see the culprit released after a week or so behind bars. Within a year of the crime, they had left the country for good. Since November, while activists were marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, not a week has gone by without media reports of more atrocities. The crimes make a mockery of the government's avowed commitment to protect its citizens and expose a rot that has seeped deep into our patriarchal society. Something is different this time. The murder of domestic worker Saraswati Subedi in the heart of the capital three weeks ago, the rape of a returning migrant worker by a policeman



after robbing her of hard earnings at Kathmandu airport, and the two separate so-called 'honour killings' in Bara and Banke of young women who were burnt alive allegedly by family members galvanised media attention because of the sheer brutality of the crimes. Perhaps inspired by similar protests in Delhi, rights and gender activists and ordinary citizens have taken to the

streets outside the prime minister's residence and office demanding justice. At the forefront of the demonstrations are the families of the victims, students, and common folks disgusted by the state's lack of interest in prosecuting the guilty. Despite what cynics say, these are spontaneous and largely independent protests, and as such there is a whole spectrum of demands. While some just want immediate action on recent rapes or murders, others have demanded the resignation of the home minister and even the prime minister. Some activists want better security for women, while others press for longer-term structural changes and enactment of laws equalising gender rights that were pending in the last parliament. Whatever the demand, they all boil down to addressing existing male-centric legal and social arrangements that tolerate, embolden, and even

The gender agenda

The epidemic of violent crimes against women exposes a rot that has seeped deep into our society

protect those who perpetrate violence against women. The patriarchal values are so deep rooted that they manifest themselves within families, in the community, and the nation as a whole. While the protests get louder outside the walls of the seat of political power in Kathmandu where celebrities amplify the slogans, there have been no such sustained protests in the districts of the eastern and western Tarai where rape and murder of women have taken epidemic proportions as we reported in this paper last month. Until the citizen's movements against gender-based crimes reach a critical mass and the government's response goes beyond verbal assurances and political fire-fighting, the current movement will lack both the critical mass and staying power. The root reasons for gender violence lie in the organic linkages between culturally nurtured psycho-social behaviour and the tolerance of these crimes by state and society.

They also show a glaring failure of Nepali social science academia to investigate the larger socio-political context of gender violence in this country. Which is why gender activists are still preoccupied with a political battle for representation, while the global debate has moved on to the third wave. After a week of sit-ins and stand-outs, the government has agreed to probe recent cases and promised new directives within a month. But there is no word on the hundreds of pending rape cases in courts across the country, including those from the years of conflict involving high ranking security officials. The occupiers of Baluwatar are getting the headlines, but if these larger issues are not followed through, there is a danger the movement will ultimately fizzle out despite all attempts to breathe life into it through social media.

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RUBEENA D SHRESTHA

She came in upset and in tears. Finally, she broke down and said that she had been touched. It sounded innocuous enough, but she had lost her innocence forever. At 12, she has been made to feel ashamed and dirty for

something that was not her fault. The young girl could be among hundreds of girls and women who are molested or abused on the streets, in the fields, in homes or workplaces throughout Nepal every day. Violence against women is suddenly news, with each new crime getting front page

treatment with a headline that begins with the word 'another'. But sooner or later, the crimes will be routine again to be consigned to a tiny item in the inside pages that one glances at before turning the page. The most disenfranchised, abused, and violated people in Nepal are its women. It makes

We shall overcome

At 12, she lost her innocence and was made to feel ashamed for something that was not her fault

no difference which ethnicity, caste, religion or socio-economic background they come from. Whether they are educated women from Kathmandu or an illiterate Dalit woman in the eastern Tarai, they are all victimised. They learn from very early on to live in fear of men. By their good fortune of being born male in this country, boys are valued more than girls. The discrimination starts even before they are born: the spread of ultra-sound scanners has skewed the male-female ratio in urban Nepal.

The boy gets to go to school, even if the girl is more studious. Boys are taken to hospitals even for minor ailments, while girls have to be really sick. Girls get to eat last, have to cook, wash and forage for firewood and fodder. The dropout rate for girls is double that for boys in rural schools.

It's not the little boy's fault, his doting parents instill this discrimination in him, and ensure that it is passed down to another generation. The boy grows into a young man with a monumental sense of entitlement. He may not be rich, educated, or handsome, but he is more important than a woman, any woman.

Nepali men will continue to prey on women until this mindset changes, until male sexual aggression stops being seen as the norm, glorified in movies and media, to be rewarded and propagated through parental and peer pressure. Men are accorded the power to taunt women, pass lewd remarks, grope, molest, rape, and murder. The policeman who looted and ravaged Sita is a by-product of a culture of rape where abusing women is almost sanctioned by society despite being proscribed by state laws.

In the Tarai, many victims are forced by their families, communities, and even police to marry the rapist. Although recent high profile cases have become matters of national discourse, Nepali society has always been steeped in discrimination, abuse, and exploitation of its women. The trafficking of young women

to brothels in India and now to work as domestics in Gulf countries are proof that slavery is alive and thriving in modern Nepal. The lack of outrage in society about this, and the acceptance and even collusion of the male-dominated ruling class in trafficking are shocking. Even more appalling is the fact that many of these young women have been sold off by their own relatives.

Our society's code of conduct stigmatises the very women who are victims. They are accused of 'polluting' community values if they are raped. If a woman has an opinion, dresses in jeans, has male friends, it is entirely her fault because she is begging for trouble. Films, tv shows, music videos, and popular media perpetuate this temptress myth through a cross-border culture industry. The 'good girl' listens and obeys while the 'item girl' is served up as a sexual opiate.

As a woman in Nepal you learn very early on that safety is a relative term. Walk down to the corner store, and neighbourhood boys sneer and yell, all in good fun, just some harmless 'eve teasing'. Boys, after all, will be boys. Inside buses or in religious processions, groping is routine. Shouting at an attacker gets you even more unwarranted attention, and the last place you want to go to is a police station to lodge a complaint.

So what do I tell the 12-year-old girl? That the monsters she needs to worry about are not in the movies, that they could be her teacher, her uncle, her friend, her doctor, a stranger in a bus? Do I tell her that she needs to learn to protect herself because the police and the courts won't? But I will tell her that change will come. That Nepali women are beginning to speak up, press charges, and raise their united voices. That tomorrow will be better than today, and collectively, we shall overcome. 🇳🇵

Rubeena D Shrestha is the editor of Wave magazine.

nepalitimes.com See video

India's second wind

MARTIN FELDSTEIN in NEW DELHI

The Indian economy is coming back. After several years of disappointing performance, the authorities are shifting to policies aimed at boosting the annual growth rate closer to the roughly nine per cent level that India achieved from 2004 to 2008. That won't be easy.

India has many handicaps and lacks many of the things that are needed to sustain rapid growth. Although the country has outstanding universities and technological institutes, the primary-education system is disastrously poor.

The caste system and labour laws prevent an efficient labour market. The policy of quotas for lower castes and for members of certain

democracy of 1.2 billion people spread over a large subcontinent.

The current government is a fragile multiparty coalition. The Congress party leads the government, but lacks a majority in both chambers of Parliament. Coalition infighting and the prospect of a national election in 2014 further complicate efforts to enact reform legislation.

And yet, despite everything, India's economy did record roughly nine per cent growth for several years, and even now is growing by nearly six per cent annually, behind only China and Indonesia among major economies. One key to India's economic success is a large population of technically educated entrepreneurs, who are creating new companies and building a modern middle class.

After several years of disappointing performance, the Indian economy looks set to return to its former glory

'scheduled' tribes affects educational institutions, government employment, and even private firms. Populist policies that transfer scarce budget funds to hundreds of millions of rural men and women end up encouraging them to withdraw their labour services, driving up wages and undermining international competitiveness.

True, bureaucratic rules are not nearly as constraining as they were during the pre-1991 'licence raj'. But business activity remains bogged down by myriad restrictions and a frustratingly slow judicial system, which together with a complex system of price subsidies, encourage widespread corruption at every level of government.

Moreover, India's infrastructure is inadequate for a modern economy. With too little electricity, blackouts are common. Ports are inefficient, roads are congested, and traffic is astonishingly chaotic. And while India urgently needs to reform its tax system, spending policies, and regulation, political change is difficult in a multiparty federalist

A high rate of private saving and strong inflows of capital from abroad have supported investment in plant and equipment. The Indian states have substantial policy discretion and often compete to attract businesses and achieve rapid economic growth.

The main ingredient needed to achieve faster sustained growth is increased investment. Reducing the budget deficit – by limiting government spending and combating a culture of tax avoidance – will increase total domestic savings available to invest. Convincing foreign direct investors that India is a reliable destination will increase the inflow of long-term funds.

Fortunately, the recent threat of a downgrade of India's sovereign credit rating – which would have made it difficult to finance the current-account deficit – has led to a government reshuffle and a shift in policies. The key political change was the appointment of a new finance minister, Palaniappan Chidambaram, whose selection by

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress party leader Sonia Gandhi sent a strong positive signal to the Indian business community and to financial markets.

Chidambaram, a Harvard-trained lawyer who has held the finance portfolio twice before, is committed to increasing growth and to adopting pro-market policies. He knows what needs to be done – and is pushing his political colleagues to do it.

One sign of progress is that a new cabinet committee, chaired by Singh, will review large private investment projects that have been held up by regulatory issues or other legal barriers. Breaking this logjam will be important, both in itself and for the message that it conveys to domestic and foreign investors.

Likewise, India's recent decision to allow large foreign retailers like Wal-Mart to enter the market reflects an encouraging change of attitude that is important beyond the specifics of the particular firms that will now come to India. And legislation will soon create the opportunity for expanded foreign ownership in the financial sector.

On the fiscal front, the shift from a complex system of state-level indirect taxes to a national goods and services tax (a type of value-added tax) will improve efficiency and raise revenue. Lowering the subsidy for diesel fuel was politically difficult, but will reduce both the fiscal deficit and excessive use of diesel products.

Government investment in infrastructure, both alone and in partnership with private firms, will also directly benefit growth and attract larger inflows of foreign investment. Finally, a remarkable plan to enroll every Indian adult in a program using fingerprint identification as a substitute for bank debit cards will allow more efficient distribution of funds to poor villagers and the urban poor. More than 300 million Indians have already been enrolled.

All of this is an enormous undertaking – one that confronts innumerable potential impediments, both economic and political. But I am betting that India is rising again: millions more will be lifted out of poverty in the coming years, while the increasingly prosperous Indian middle class will expand further.

Martin Feldstein is an emeritus professor of economics at Harvard University.
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Winning streak

Maruti Suzuki India has won awards in all the segments in NDTV Car and Bike Awards 2013. The new Alto 800, which is soon being launched in Nepal by CG Automobile was awarded Entry Hatchback Car of the year while Suzuki DZire and Suzuki Ertiga were awarded Sub Compact Sedan of the year and MUV of the year respectively.

Early savings

Bank of Kathmandu in partnership with Save the Children and local NGOs is conducting financial education campaign across Nepal to promote awareness about banking activities and saving habits among the youth.

Green awards

Students of Kavya School won prizes at the International Conference on Environment in Malaysia organised by ENO Asia Environment and Malaysian Nature Society Kedah held last month.

Winter care

Vaseline Total Moisture distributed prizes to the winners of Mero Amazing Skin campaign. Kalpana Shakya won a trip to Bangkok while the others took home smart phones.

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Back from the climate cliff

Farmers in eastern Nepal keep a climate diary to help them cope with erratic weather caused by global warming

BHRIKUTI RAI in ILAM



PICS: BHRIKUTI RAI

The climate conference in Doha last month was another missed opportunity to stop the catastrophic warming of the planet. Known by its wordy official name, the 18th Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), was also confined to just that: words.

The Doha Climate Summit failed to set significant emission goals and concrete financial commitments to arrest

emissions. The future of those countries most vulnerable to climate variability is now hanging by the climate cliff.

Far away from the energy-intensive desert capital of Qatar, the world's largest producer of natural gas, here we are in the lush mountains of the eastern Nepal district of Ilam. Farmers are already feeling the effects of climate change, with erratic monsoons, unseasonal rains, and freak storms. But farmers cooperatives are working to build resilience so that they can cope with the extremes of weather.

The Namsaling Community Development Centre (NCDC) has formed farmers' groups in the villages of Ilam to build locally managed weather stations that help them keep daily records. The farmers were given short training on the use of the instruments and are now keeping a 'Climate Diary'.

"The farmers are now able to understand the weather patterns and the consequences to some extent without being introduced

to the term and concept of climate change," explains Yogendra Lal Shrestha of NCDC that has installed mini weather stations to record temperature, humidity, and rainfall.

Schools in Ilam also have climate diary projects in which they record weather conditions and link it to the health of the students. "We are trying to analyse weather conditions of the months when the students record highest absence from school due to illness," says Chitrakala Baraili of Saraswati

Niwas Lower Secondary School in Kanyam village. They hope that interpretation of data will help students take precautions during certain months to avoid missing school.

The rain gauge, thermometer, and the hygrometer are monitored twice a day by representatives of each farmers' group. At the end of each month they also plot the number of cloudy days, thunderstorms, and rain to discuss at fortnightly meetings.

For Saraswati Khulal, 21,



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WEATHER WOMAN: Saraswati Khulal at the mini weather station in Bhanjyang, Ilam (*left*). The daily weather conditions are recorded in the climate diary as shown above.

of Bhanjyang taking weather records has become a daily ritual. With technical assistance from NCDC she has learnt how to read the instruments. “Not just me but everyone in my family has now learnt to make measurements,” explains Saraswati who says 17 households of Bhanjyang Farmers’ group have shown more interest, to analyse and draw a correlation to their harvests.

Officials hope that in two to three years farmers will be able to correlate weather conditions with plant diseases as well as to human health. They hope to be able to predict and adapt to erratic weather and climate variability.

Saraswati’s father-in-law, Narayan Khulal, 70, who takes up her responsibilities when she is away from home, says the climate diary has made him all the more sure about changing weather conditions. Says Khulal: “The fog period has extended significantly compared to the past and so has the humidity and cases of fungal infection on plants and we now have it on record.”

He also says that the growing use of artificial fertilisers has affected harvests. “Earlier the diseases that could be cured using ash and animal dung are now resistant to even strong pesticides,” he says.

The Khulals like many other families in Ilam have gone back to traditional organic farming methods, and hope that with the climate diary they will be able to spot at least some trends in weather patterns and be prepared so they don’t lose the market values of their produce.

While the implementation of local adaptation plans for climate vulnerable communities in the impoverished far-and mid-western region under the National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) is finally taking off, farmers in Ilam are well on their way to building capacity to adapt to the wrath of nature through their own efforts. 🇳🇵

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EVENTS

B-BOYING COMPETITION, shake and brake, and do whatever it takes to win cash prizes up to Rs 50,000. 26 January, 10.45am, Dasrath Stadium, 984925612/9849685110/9841721736

KJC winter camp for kids, music, movies, drama, arts, and a range of outdoor activities to keep your children excited this winter. 30 December to 11 January, for children aged 6 to 14, (01)5013554, info@katjazz.com.np

Appreciative inquiry, learn how ordinary Nepalis can contribute towards building a bustling economy with management guru Ravi Shrestha. 11 January, 10am to 1pm, Mahabir's Centre for Nepal Connection



STOP MOTION ANIMATION WORKSHOP, learn how to make your own animated films by designing and creating characters and backgrounds, storyboarding, capturing images using cameras and latest computer software, and compiling and editing them. 5, 6, 12, and 13 January, 11am to 4pm, shreyans@sattya.org

Cultural Rejuvenation, an exhibition of artist Deeya Bajracharya's work. 5 to 11 January, 10am to 5pm, Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal

MUSIC

Joint family, the nine member reggae band is raring to go and awaits your presence on the first Friday of 2013. Rs 200, 4 January, 8pm, House of Music, Thamel.

Live at Cafe 32, live music and delicious food every Friday. 6pm onwards, Café 32, Battisputali, (01)4244231



SHASTRIYA SANGEET, dabble in the magic of Hindustani classical music every new moon night. 11 January, 3.30pm, Ram Mandir, Battisputali

DINING

Hadock, big compound with ample parking space, its western and Thakali dishes are done to perfection. Jhamsikhel, (01)5546431

Japanese Crepe Station, try the unique Nepali khuwa crepe for a quick fix. Khichapokhari and Basantapur, (01)4256655

Salt & Pepper Restro Lounge, espresso, mocha, latte, frappuccino, cocktails, liquor, beers and flavoured shishas, with an outdoor lake-view terrace. Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)463484, 9846210568, www.saltandpeppernepal.com



CHOPSTIX, savoury Asian food cooked in true Chinese fashion sure to charm and impress. Try the famous drums of heaven. Kumariapati, (01)5551118

Cosmopolitan Cafe, located in the heart of Basantapur, this cozy cafe offers arguably the best chicken sizzler in town. Basantapur, (01)4225246

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



BOUDHA STUPA RESTAURANT AND CAFE, bide your time in the cafe's free wi-fi zone as you enjoy wood-fired pizzas, home-made pastas, and the Tibetan gyakok. Boudha, (01)4485585

Cinnamon Grill and Lounge, mouth watering delicacies with live music, try its grilled tenderloin steak and quiche lorraine with fresh fruit salad. Jhamsikhel, (01)5521339

Comfort Zone, restobar with a decent range of cocktails and barbecue meals. Thamel



SARANGKOT FORDAYS RESTAURANT, have a Sarangkot special breakfast while enjoying spectacular views of the mountain ranges. Sarangkot, Pokhara, (061)696920, 9817136896



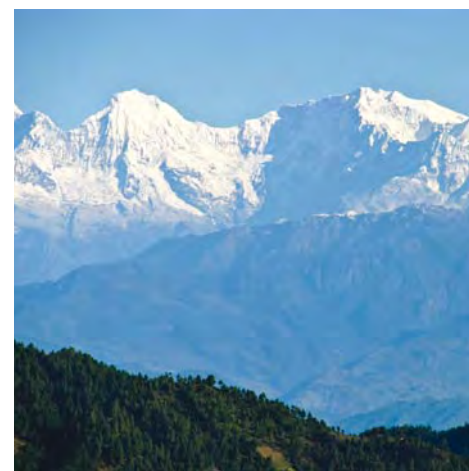
Yak Restaurant, serves authentic Chinese food, try the mala tofu, chicken with fungus, and spicy pork spare ribs. Boudha, Kathmandu

Sol Delicatessen, a range of gourmet food that will satiate the most refined palates. 10am to 6pm (closed on Mondays), Babar Mahal Revisited, (01)4216433, soldelicatessen@gmail.com

GETAWAYS

Winter camp at Borderlands, send your kids packing into the jungle where they get to develop their leadership, communication, and basic life skills while taking part in outdoor and extracurricular activities such as tent crafting, rock climbing, canyoning, abseiling, cooking and art, music, and dance lessons. 5 to 12 January, Borderlands Resort, Bhotekoshi, (01)4381214, 9802025666, www.borderlandsresorts.com

Hotel Barahi, escape the chills of Kathmandu and head to Pokhara to enjoy a great view of Phewa lake along with other charms of the lake city. Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)60617/463526



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Bust a move


The Japanese organisation Eco Party has been promoting environmental awareness to school children through various activities, and this time, they have lined up a dance competition to promote the reuse of plastic. In a symbolic display of solidarity, the participants will also use reusable plastic products as props in their dance numbers. Selection rounds have been held in Lumbini, Pokhara, and Kathmandu, and the children are raring to compete and win the Rs 100,000 scholarship prize. The evening will be topped off with a light show in addition to the hip shaking, and VJ Shinya Takaoka will be providing the pulse all day long.

5 January, Boudhanath Stupa
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SOMEPLACE ELSE

Capital Grill is my new favourite restaurant. The American style diner offers a large assortment of appetisers and entrees to suit a variety of palates and tastes. It is the perfect place to disappear on a romantic dinner date, or to go with the kids and enjoy a loud raucous meal, which is what I did.

The restaurant has been open for a while now, but hasn't really gained the popularity it deserves thanks to the road widening campaign which made this oasis appear like a war trench for more than half a year. But with the road paved and blacktopped, and new businesses opening up in the same building, Capital Grill should get itself ready for a steady stream of customers because the food is that good.



PICS: RUBY TUESDAY

Capital Grill


The coca-cola chicken wings (Rs 335) follows traditional upstate New York recipes of marinating the wings in the carbonated beverage, resulting in a dish that is moist and piquant. Though slightly sweet for my taste, the kids polished off an entire plate in a matter of minutes. The crispy calamari (Rs 390) was cooked to perfection.



The batter used to coat the squid was seasoned with fresh herbs, and was crunchy and delicious. The mollusk itself was moist and tender, having been cooked just right to avoid making it chewy and rubbery. The tartar sauce that came with it was freshly prepared. This attention to detail paid off wonderfully because the dish was delightful.

I am wary of eating pasta (read overcooked noodles dunked in ketchup) in Kathmandu restaurants, but the chicken piccata (Rs 390) at Capital Grill was a revelation. Cooked with fresh herbs, parmesan cheese, and coated in battered eggs, the chicken breasts are beautiful, succulent, and moist and superbly seasoned. It rests on a bed of al dente spaghetti threads in freshly made light tomato sauce. I have to say this again,

delicious. The barbecue pork chop (Rs 395) is equally good, comes as it does grilled nicely and served with a sauce that is tangy and teeming with flavours and zest. The only disappointment, if I can call it that was the bourbon street steak (Rs 485) for the chunk of tenderloin itself was sumptuous, cooked in Cajun spices with sautéed onions, but it all came hidden under a thick layer of unappetising brown sauce that wrecked the palatability of the meat.

Capital Grill doesn't have a dessert menu yet, but they do have an extensive bar that concocts a variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic cocktails and their margaritas are served by the pitcher. Also the island bar is probably one of the biggest in the city and good for watching games on an evening out with friends. All in all a good place to be at. 
Ruby Tuesday

How to get there: smack opposite the original Bhatbhateni Supermarket in Bhatbhateni, there is a swanky new building with a glass façade. Capital Grill is on the fourth floor. (01) 4428426



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MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

The new Tom Cruise vehicle *Jack Reacher* is definitely a bit of an evolution from his previous incarnation as Ethan Hunt in the past four *Mission Impossible* films.

The eponymous character of Jack Reacher is based on a series of novels by Lee Childs all of which are centred around Reacher. This first Reacher film (and I say first because I'm almost certain that it will spawn several sequels) is adapted from a novel titled *One Shot* (from 2005) and begins with one of most riveting opening sequences I have seen in a while: a white van drives into a multi-storey garage, parks, a man gets out, pays for parking by putting a coin in the parking metre, creeps to the edge of the building, puts on his sunglasses, takes a deep breath and swings around a sniper rifle in hand to train his sights on the promenade across where people are going about their business obliviously.

The police are quick to find and arrest a certain James Barr (Joseph Sikora), a former army sharp shooter, based on his fingerprints from the coin he used to pay for parking. During the seemingly open and shut case, Barr demands to see Jack Reacher – a name that mystifies the chief investigator Detective Emerson (David Oyelowo) and the Pittsburgh District Attorney Alex Rodin (Richard Jenkins). Just as the two are pulling Reacher's records and finding that he had been a crack former army investigator but is now off the grid, he walks into Rodin's office.

What follows is an unexpectedly nuanced detective story with many mysteries that slowly unfold before we finally come to the truth. Tom Cruise as Reacher, as I mentioned before, is very different from the Ethan Hunt character. He doesn't use gadgets, doesn't sport a designer hairstyle, and actually has allowed for the camera to appreciate the lines on his now 50-



year-old face. Reacher is jaded and imperfect just as Hunt is slick and flawless. All in all, I would pick Jack Reacher any time.

As always with films of this kind, one cannot divulge too much of the plot for fear of spoiling things for the viewers, however, I will say that there are many delights in this quite interesting new film.

Part of the originality comes, of course, from its director Christopher McQuarrie, who wrote the now iconic *The Usual Suspects* (1995), and has since graduated to directing, though not always with great success (*The Tourist* in 2010 with Angelina Jolie and Johnny Depp was possibly one of the worst films of that year).

Combined with cinematography by the great Caleb Deschanel and with astonishingly good (and surprising) cameos from people like Werner Herzog (as the arch-villain 'The Zec') and Robert Duvall as another former army sharp shooter who goes by the name of 'Cash', this film is definitely worth watching.

For those who are convinced that Tom Cruise is slightly deranged by Scientology, I would say that you are probably correct. Happily it hasn't taken away from his star power and his undeniable onscreen appeal. Tom Cruise, like Julia Roberts, always plays a version of himself, but Jack Reacher is his best and most believable incarnation yet.

Jack Reacher is currently playing in theatres. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer

Your pulse in your hands



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

Twenty years ago, if a doctor wanted to find out the amount of oxygen in a patient's blood, she would have to take a blood sample each time. Today, healthcare professionals around the world use a portable, non-invasive device called the pulse oximeter (*pic, below*) to determine how much of the haemoglobin (the protein in the blood that carries oxygen from the lungs to the tissues) is saturated with oxygen. Patients simply insert their index fingers into the oximeter and it instantly gives a reading.

Oxygenated blood and non-oxygenated blood absorb light differently. The pulse oximeter takes advantage of this phenomenon and readily shows on the screen how much oxygen there is in the blood. The other reading on the screen is the heart rate. Since an adequate flow of blood to the finger is necessary, the pulse oximeter will give incorrect readings if someone has cold hands or is in shock. Nail polish also interferes

with accurate reading.

In a country where cardiopulmonary (heart and lung) diseases like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, pulmonary TB, rheumatic heart disease etc are so prevalent, this device is clearly helpful. Today a pulse oximeter costs only Rs 5,000 so even hospitals and clinics in remote corners of the country can afford one.

Many pilgrims and trekkers who are travelling to high altitudes also carry this device. When people ascend to higher elevation, the barometric pressure decreases, and together with this the saturation of oxygen also falls. Unfortunately, there can be a wide range of correct values for a particular individual to state with confidence whether the person has adequate oxygen saturation or not for that altitude without symptoms. So just basing the

diagnosis of altitude sickness on the reading of the pulse oximeter is discouraged. The oximeter reading needs to complement the patient's history.

In other words, the diagnosis of altitude sickness is history-based, and the pulse oximeter reading in addition to the history should be used like a confirmatory test. If you carry this device during a high altitude trek or pilgrimage, it may be best to use it only if you have actual symptoms of acute mountain sickness (excessive tiredness, headache, and nausea). Otherwise, the pulse oximeter may serve to trigger an unnecessary anxiety attack in predisposed people at high altitude. 🇳🇵



BIKRAM RAI

DISINFECTION: A rapid response team from the District Animal Health Office in action after detecting strains of avian flu at a poultry farm at Sitapila on Wednesday.



BIKRAM RAI

INSPIRATION: Gurungs perform a traditional Ghatu dance in Tundikhel on Sunday afternoon as the community celebrated its new year.



BIKRAM RAI

COLD WAVE: Children light a fire to make themselves warm at Maru Tol, Kathmandu on Tuesday evening.

READERS' PHOTO



GIRISH GIRI

TIME OFF: Labourers working on the road that will connect Bhojpur and Dingla take a lunch break.

WEEKEND WEATHER

This winter so far has been characterised by surprisingly dry and warm weather, and the Valley has been devoid of winter morning fog. The last rain in Kathmandu was the 3mm that fell in the northern edge of the Valley in mid-November. The whole of December was completely rainless. The maximum temperature on 1 January was 23 celsius. And there are no signs of rain-bearing westerlies on the horizon, although some high cirrus riding the jet stream will move swiftly across the sky over central Nepal on Friday. Hazy smog in Kathmandu will give way to warm sunshine by afternoon.



FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
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Making stories come alive

David Heathfield, a storyteller from the UK was invited to Nepal by the British Council to hold workshops with students and teachers on the craft of storytelling. Before he began his career as a storyteller, Heathfield used to be a teacher and understands the importance of oral communication in the classroom and the pivotal role stories play in developing the imagination. *Nepali Times* caught up with him recently in Kathmandu.

Nepali Times: How receptive were Nepali children to your storytelling?
David Heathfield: The children have been amazingly receptive. I conducted two story telling workshops with students at Rato Bangla School and was blown away by their level of enthusiasm and participation. I was also very impressed by their competency in English and the way they used the language to express themselves so creatively.

How do Nepali children compare to children around the world?
From what I have seen so far, Nepali children are high achievers and their accomplishment at the workshops was outstanding. We were creating stories together and they responded with a great degree of maturity and imagination. They were eager to participate, wonderfully open-hearted and were just really comfortable expressing themselves with each other, which I found very exciting. A good storyteller is able to tell stories from the heart and these children had that skill in abundance.

British storyteller speaks on the importance of dealing with sensitive issues through indigenous storytelling traditions



SUCHITA SHRESTHA

Nepal has a long tradition of storytelling, how do you think Nepalis can preserve this tradition in the era of digital media?
Oral storytelling which has been practiced in Nepal for generations should be the heart of education, but unfortunately it is often sidelined. The face-to-face interaction between

teachers and students which you get through this kind of storytelling is a very powerful teaching and learning tool. However, teachers can still incorporate modern technology into traditional methods by recording the stories so that they remember all the details and know the story well enough to re-tell it.

How can Nepali students and teachers learn from other countries to build upon their storytelling skills?
I think it's really important to first know about stories from your own background and culture, but listening to stories from other countries is a great way to learn about their cultures. Within each story you tend to get very specific features of the culture where it comes from, which makes sharing information about traditions through storytelling a very creative way to learn. We in the west have a lot to learn from Nepali tradition. When we don't have access to computers or the internet, we can fall back on Nepali style of oral storytelling.

Do you think storytelling should be used as an indirect means of talking about sensitive issues?
Absolutely, that is one of the central objectives of storytelling. A story acts as a metaphor for sensitive issues, making it a very simple and safe way to explore uncomfortable topics. It allows children and adults to have discussions on issues they would otherwise find hard to talk about. It's a way we can learn about how we behave, or how we should behave, and explore the darker side of human actions through the lenses of traditional tales.

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CHONG ZI LIANG in POKHARA

It's 4.30 in the morning and 18-year-old Sai Roka and 60 other boys dig up sand and rocks in pitch darkness with their bare hands and fill their dokos. After some stretching exercises, they strip off their sweatshirts and windbreakers in the 15 degrees chill and stand at the starting line, each carrying 25kg on his back.

At the sound of "go", they break into a full sprint and roar "Ayo Gurkhali". Toughened by twice-weekly trainings, most run the five km course with minutes to spare. They are from the Lotus Training Institute, a centre that prepares young men for stringent selections to join the ranks of the elite force, which has served Britain for almost 200 years and Singapore since 1949. There were 7,819 potential recruits last year and only 236 were picked: 176 for the British Army and 60 for the Singapore Police Force.

At Lotus, boys chosen for

not only a way to keep their forefathers' legacy alive, but also an escape from unemployment in a country where 46 per cent of the population is without jobs.

The Singapore Gurkhas are just as keen for their sons to don the signature broad-rimmed hats and khukuris. In Singapore, "When are you going to start training for the army?" is a frequent conversation opener between the older men and the boys.

Sai's father, Harka Roka, 37, is staying at the Lotus hostel during his leave to support his son's bid to enlist. Anxious for his son to excel, he reminds Sai that something as minor as spitting – a common occurrence in Nepal – could kill his chances at the British camp. When an English speaker arrives at the training centre, he summons his son to speak to the visitor for 'maximum practice' ahead of his selection interview.

Former Singapore Gurkha Yem Gurung, 52, who retired in 2004 has been running Lotus for the past six years. He says the banjas raised in Singapore are not as tough as the boys who have grown up in Nepal's rugged terrain. But if they clear the fitness tests, the Singapore boys have a better chance of success because the British Army prefers

For the sons of Singapore Gurkhas, joining the elite corps is a way out of unemployment in Nepal

the final round of selections run twice a day at dawn and dusk to build speed and stamina. Afternoons are spent in Mathematics and English classes. They train with the doko every Monday and Friday. Saturday is their only day off.

Sai and four other boys from Lotus are 'banjas' – the sons of Singapore Gurkhas who grew up in Singapore. Kushal Thapa, 19, who was born in Singapore and returned to Nepal in 2007 when his father retired, says living in the Gurkha Contingent's Mount Vernon Camp made him yearn for the military life as well.

"Looking at the Gurkhas, I always thought they were special and different from ordinary people. When I was 13, I told my dad, 'One day I will be just like you, father.' He was very impressed," he recalls.

Arjun Rana, 17, also idolises his Gurkha father. His Facebook profile picture is a montage of photos of him and his father lifting weights and flexing their muscles under the caption, 'Like father, like son'.

After completing his O levels in 2011, Arjun decided against continuing his studies in Singapore even though his father had some years to go before retirement. "I can always go for further studies later, but the chance to join the army will run out in a few years," he says.

Upon their return many banjas find themselves strangers in their own land and have a hard time adjusting to life in Nepal. They cannot read the Devnagari script and speak only broken Nepali so continuing their education is challenging. Enlisting in the Gurkhas is

better-educated soldiers.

"The banjas speak English very well so they have an advantage at the interviews. Physical fitness is more easily trained," he explains. More than 20 Lotus-trained banjas have successfully enlisted so far, including his son.

The day before central selection, Sai posts on Facebook: "It's our turn tomorrow and we are ready to go. Goodbye to Facebook." The other banjas leave messages of encouragement on each other's pages. About two weeks later, congratulatory notes start trickling in on Sai's Facebook. A phone call to his father confirms that Sai has been selected.

Arjun also makes the cut. About three weeks after entering the British camp, a photo of him looking sharp in uniform appears on his Facebook followed by a post from him: "I thank each and everyone of you who have supported me in one way or another to help me achieve my dream. Will get back to Facebook next year. Farewell."

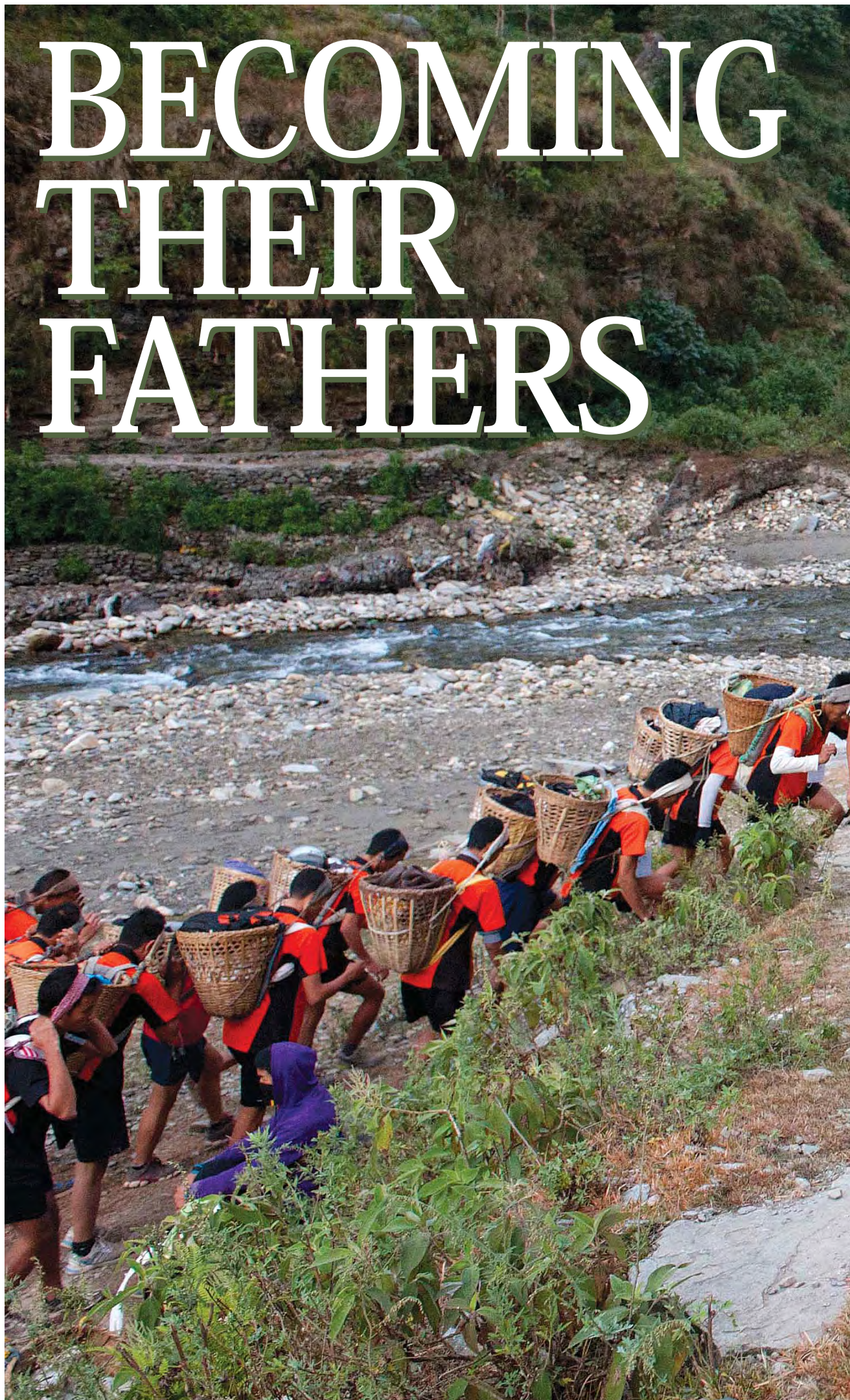
While Sai and Arjun follow their fathers' footsteps, hundreds of banjas have been rejected and will have to struggle in Nepal to find work and a sense of belonging. 🇳🇵

A longer version of this story was published in The Sunday Times, Singapore on 16 December 2012.

nepalitimes.com

The flags of their fathers, #630
Our Gurkhas, #628
Invisible force, #511

BECOMING THEIR FATHERS



FADING PHOTOS: Staff Sergeant Chandra Gurung (above), 70, with a memento from the day he received an award presented to him a few years before his retirement. The poster on Sergeant Lal Ale's fridge (right) reminds him of his favourite beer during his time in Singapore from 1978 to 2004. Gurkhas usually put up police mementos and Merlion decorations in their home, but other uniquely Singaporean items can be found too.





RACING TO SINGAPORE: Aspirants who want to be selected for the Gurkhas at a private training centre on the banks of the Seti River in Pokhara fill dokos full of stones and run uphill to build up stamina and endurance. They run the course twice a week.

Lions in the Lion City

Singapore's Gurkha Contingent was formed in 1949. The unit saw action in the ensuing decades against militant unions and in racial riots, where their image as a neutral force became an asset. Today, they are entrusted with protecting Singapore's most important people and installations. Their signature broad-rimmed hats and khukuris are familiar sights outside top ministers' homes. Thousands of Nepali teenagers apply to be Gurkhas in the British Army and Singapore Police Force each year, but less than 200 will join the ranks of this elite fighting force. Singapore Gurkhas and their families return to Nepal after their retirement, but many of their children want to follow in their father's footsteps. His Gurkha hat still fits Staff Sergeant Netra Gurung's head 10 years after her retired (right).



Mission accomplished

Editorial in *Himal Khabarpatrika*,
31 December - 13 January, 2012

When critics of President Ram Baran Yadav’s visit to India could not stop his trip, they started finding faults with the goof-up about the honorary degree awarded to him by the Banaras Hindu University, the fact that Indian President Pranab Mukherjee invited President Yadav to travel with him on his official plane from Banaras to Delhi, and the perceived breach of protocol over President Yadav accepting Indian Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh’s invitation for dinner at his residence.



To be sure, the president’s visit to India was unusual. The confusion over the degree mix-up was not Shital Nibas’ mistake but BHU’s, and not everything in bilateral relations between the countries should be bound by protocol. Besides, Russian President Vladimir Putin had also been invited home recently by Prime Minister Singh for dinner. Back in 2006, Prime Minister Singh had also broken precedence by welcoming Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala at the airport itself.

One could also argue that there wasn’t an urgent reason for undertaking the visit. The country is without parliament, governed by an authoritarian-minded caretaker, there is no consensus government, the security agencies are in disarray, the people’s sovereign rights are being squeezed by the inability of the political parties to sort things out.

On the other hand, there is a widespread perception that the formation of the Maoist-

Madhesi coalition was master-minded and nurtured by India, and that the coalition is dilly-dallying about stepping down because of that support. Which is why many people think that the Indian policy is to delay elections in Nepal, and to push identity-based federalism.

These perceptions have become convictions that today define the Nepali psychology vis-a-vis India. ‘RAW’ has entered the Nepali lexicon, and is used frequently in political and intellectual discourse about India-Nepal ties. This means India’s policy towards Nepal is seen to be dictated by an unaccountable intelligence agency rather than a political mechanism.

The Nepali public is increasingly veering to the view that the Indian political establishment is not really concerned about sustaining the Nepali people’s belief in democracy.

The reason for this state of affairs is mainly that the parties in Nepal that were supposed to defend democracy and make it deliver, the NC and UML, have been so feckless and greedy for power. Parties that were supposed to be pillars of democracy have been actively undermining it by trying to pressure the president to propel them to power. On the other hand, the ruling coalition had descended to the depths of deception and corruption.

President Yadav pushed ahead with this trip mainly because he wanted to assess India’s commitment to protecting democracy in Nepal. His mission was to apprise the Indian establishment about the belief of the Nepali people towards democracy, and in this he was successful.

After meeting President Yadav three times, India’s Minister of External Affairs, Salman Khurshid told the press, “India fully supports the efforts being made in Nepal to form a consensus government. A consensus government and elections are the best ways to stabilise politics in Nepal. India is willing to work in this direction.” Khurshid’s comments prove two things wrong: that India agrees with the Maoist-Madhesi coalition’s efforts to put off elections, and that its intelligence operatives are directing policy in Nepal.

One-woman wonder

Dilip Poudel, *Nagarik*, 1 January

When Dilsari Chhantyal of Khukhani in Baglung falls sick, she travels seven hours on foot to Chhoregaun to visit Chhamaya Argeja’s clinic. When her children get sick, she is not satisfied until they are checked by Chhamaya.

Khukhani has plenty of health workers, but Dilsari insists on making the long journey because she finds Chhamaya trustworthy. “I have complete faith in Chhamaya and feel she has the cure to all our problems,” explains Dilsari.

Locals in Bungadobhan, Taman, Khunga, Adhikari Chaur, and Nisi of Baglung district and even those in neighbouring Myagdi swear

by Chhamaya’s services and praise her soft-spoken, attentive approach to healthcare. They say Chhamaya is a one-woman wonder who treats cases of fever, pneumonia, diarrhoea, removes troublesome teeth, and even tends to pregnancy cases.

A woman in Dadagaun, Myagdi who walked a whole day to get some medicines for her ailing stomach, claims there is magic in Chhamaya’s prescriptions. “I don’t know what it is, but I get cured as soon as I come here,” she adds.

There are no doctors at the primary health centre in Burtibang, and trips to hospitals in Baglung’s headquarters and Butwal are expensive for many locals, which is why there are long queues outside Chhamaya’s clinic. While

health workers in nearby area spend their time idling around, she takes care of each patient like a specialist. Rameswor Thakur, chief of the nearby sub-health post is surprised by Chhamaya’s popularity.

Chhamaya came to Baglung 14 years ago after earning her Certified Medical Assistant degree. She says people like her methods because she pays attention to her patients’ psychological needs instead of just sending them home with boxes of medicines. “People who are ill want the doctor or healthcare worker to listen patiently to their problems and I do just that,” she says. And when she feels she can’t cure her patients, Chhamaya advises them to go to Pokhara or Kathmandu.

“Don’t reinstate the monarchy”

Interview with former crown prince Paras, *Nepal Samacharpatra*, 2 January

Nepal Samacharpatra: Why did you choose to live in Thailand?
Paras: After the monarchy was abolished in Nepal, I didn’t feel safe living there. Since the monarchy is still alive in Thailand I decided to live here and want to continue living here.

What about the illegal activities that you have been up to in Thailand?
Paras: All these allegations are part of a planned conspiracy not just to trap me but many others. It is just an attempt to ruin my reputation. Although the allegation isn’t about anything major, it has been blown out of proportion because I am a public figure.



How would you evaluate Nepal’s present situation?
Paras: Nepal needs a strong nationalistic leadership to take it out of the current impasse. But that doesn’t mean I am saying the monarchy should be reinstated. I’m not saying that.

What message do you have for Nepalis spread across the globe?
Paras: I request everyone to return back to Nepal. If they all agree to go, I would also commit to go together with them.

How is your relationship with the Non-Residential Nepalis (NRN) community in Thailand?
Paras: The Nepalis here have been very warm and helpful. After inaugurating the second global summit of NRNs I have been in touch with them and that is how I met some of them here. My trust in the NRNs in Thailand has increased significantly.

NEPALI TWEETS

नौरव खतिवडा
म फेरी भन्नु, हुन मुल,सायजलिक सवारी साधन, सिनेमा हलको लाइन, कन्सर्ट आदिमा मोकामा चौका हल्लेले बलात्कारको विषयमा नचले के राम्रो। जय नेपाल

Those who take advantage of women in crowded places, public transportation, ticket queues, concerts etc have no right to talk about rape. Jai Nepal.

सञ्जीव
समस्या सम्बन्धमा छ-आखिरी बालुवाटारमा खोजेर के गर्नु ? बालुवाटारमा सुतेहरू पनि आखिर हिसाके माध्यमले त्यहाँ पुगेका हुन्।

When the problem is with our civility, what’s the use of searching for medicine in Baluwater? Besides those who sleep at Baluwatar made it there through violence.

Narayan Amrit
जव तिमिले सिङ्गा सामाजिक, राजनीतिक र सांस्कृतिक संस्कारमा परिष्कार ल्याउदैती तबसम्म सत्ताले सीता राईहरूलाई हरेक दिन बलात्कार गर्छ।

Until you change the entire social, political, cultural setup, the administration will continue raping Sita Rais.

Girish Giri
अस्ती अनुराधा कोइरालासंगको भेटमा अध्यागमन काण्डबारे कुरा भयो।भन्दै हुनुहुन्थ्यो-यस्ता घटना थुप्रै छन्। अहिले चर्चामा आउन सफल भएको मात्र हो

At a meeting with Anuradha Koirala the other day there was a discussion on the TIA scandal. She said there are numerous such cases, it’s just that people are taking note of them only now.

म बुद्धमान
जुन देशमा कण्डम लाई नराम्रो शब्दको रूपमा हेरेन्छ, त्यहाँ कानून कडा बनाएर, बनाउन दबाव देर मात्र के फाइदा? राम्रो यौन शिक्षा दिई न पैसा सक्नेछ

In a country where condom is considered a bad word, what’s the use of making or demanding for more stringent laws? Give proper sex education first.

ज्योती रेग्मी
सबै पुरुषलाई अपराधी भन्ने महिला लाई विजिल छ नाविसिम तिमिले सम्मान गर्ने युवा,माया गर्ने भाइ,छोरा,तनमनले सम्पत्ति श्रीमान पनि पुरुष नै हुन्

Those women who think all men are criminals would do well to remember that their respected fathers, beloved brothers and sons, and doting husbands are all male.

shivani singh tharu
बाबुरामले स्पष्टीकरण मागे रेडियोमा बजेको ‘वाइट’ को लागी। चिसो क्यारे, उनको लेखले गर्दा कान्तिपुरका सम्पादकलाई धेरै पहिला के भएको थियो।

Baburam is asking for clarification about a sound byte heard on the radio. He has forgotten what happened to the editor of Kantipur long time ago after his article was published.



नागरिक Dewen in *Nagarik*, 2 January

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“If the big parties ignore us, we will pick up guns again.”

CPN-M chairman Mohan Baidya ‘Kiran’ quoted on Radio Sagarmatha, 1 January



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Ass for PM

Chairman Awe-inspiring never ceases to inspire awe and wonder among friends and foe alike. But PKD's renowned multi-forked tongue is now getting so tangled up that he has outdone Orwell with his doublespeak, graduating to triplespeak and beyond. A Kathmandu tabloid has tabulated recent PKD statements:

- 15 November: "Kangres should first agree on a PM candidate"
- 19 November: "Let's have a technocratic PM"
- 29 November: "Only a Madhesi PM is acceptable"
- 1 December: "A Kangresi PM even for one day"
- 15 December: "We will have a consensus govt by tomorrow"
- 16 December: "Who said a Kangresi PM is acceptable?"
- 20 December: "How about Badal as PM?"
- 22 December: "I can't convince Baburam, you try to talk to him"
- 1 January: "If no agreement, let's revive the CA"



The eternal search for Nepal's new PM has come a full circle with BRB visiting civil society leader Devendra Dai and Gutch making a house call on Demon Nath at their respective residences this week. The two were naturally rather flattered that they are being considered to be pradhan monkeys. Which leads the Donkey to

wonder why it wasn't offered the post too. Remember that a technocrat PM was originally an idea Awesome floated in order to have a hand-picked loyalist, and he later gave up that proposal in favour of Jhusil Kira because he thought the Kangres leader would be more malleable. Now,



BRB has hijacked the idea of a civil society PM knowing fully well that it will be shot down by the UML, NC, and even PKD himself and doesn't have the chance of a snowflake in hell to be implemented. Our PhD PM threw a red herring to prolong his incumbency till February and everyone fell for it. Sheer genius.



If your business hasn't yet received a letter signed by Baidya Daddy and Cloudy Uncle asking for a 10 lack donation then maybe you are not important enough to be noticed, and should make a career switch. The Cash Baddies and the Dash Baddies have stepped up the fund-raising competition for their respective Conventions in the coming weeks. The Dash Baddies are gearing up for their jamgat on Push 25, so their request is more urgent.

The letters are usually followed by phone calls where the exact amount is specified, and the threat unspecified. Along New Road, Dash comrades are going shop-to-shop terrorising owners by saying they'll go back to war if they don't get a donation. The Cash Baddies, being in government, aren't as pushy since they can treat the exchequer as their personal ATM. The BRB faction, under Financier Minister Comrade Artha Man (Pun Intended) has its fingers on the till, so it doesn't need to extort anyone for now. But PKD's Bash Baddies don't have access to the treasury, so they have also sent letters to big businesses requesting donations, or else.



The Clash of the Titans is getting more intense as BRB and PKD rattle their sabres ahead of their impending showdown. BRB is adding numbers and

clout to his camp by not just wooing away PKD loyalists, but also exhorting top comrades from Kiran Kaka's Dashies to defect. BRB is making overt overtures to Comrade Big Plop to join his retinue, dangling carrots in front of his face, and triggering air raid sirens to go off in both the PKD and Baidya camps.



Why was PKD in BKK? That was the question that consumed everyone in Mandu this week. This being Nepal, everyone believed the most conspiratorial theory instead of the official one that Sita was getting a checkup at Bumrungrad. Among the theories:

- PKD was feeling envious that ex-Kingji took his wife to Singapore for her checkup
- Chairman wanted to get back at the president for going off to Delhi for his checkup
- Daddy and Mommy wanted a reunion with Sonny Boy Prakash
- PKD met RAW in BKK
- Thailand has some Awesome beaches
- APECF Consultation
- All of the above



Headlines of the week:

Bhattarai rejects Koirala as PM
Koirala rejects Dahal as PM
Dahal rejects Bhattarai as PM
Koirala rejects Koirala as PM



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