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BIKRAM RAI

ANY LUCK?: Young boys search for coins in the Bagmati at Pashupati Aryaghat on Saturday afternoon.

Fishing in muddy waters

Whatever the outcome of the Supreme Court verdict on the writ petition challenging the legality of the UCPN (M) proposal to make Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi the head of an election government, the question is not 'if' there will be elections,

but 'when'. June is out of the question, even November is looking iffy given the hemming and hawing from party leaders, so May 2014 may be a safe bet.

Whenever they decide to face voters, all parties will be desperate for a win, which makes it all the more important to have the mechanisms in

place, the rules laid out and agreed, and the laws passed. This is a formidable task and renewing voter lists, demarcating constituencies that reflect new population densities, and requiring photo IDs for voters are questions with deep political ramifications. There is also a strong case to

have local elections in June or November, preceding general elections.

The next general elections is up for grabs to anyone who can guarantee integrity, vision, and good governance.

Editorial page 2



So you want to be a Nepali?

In Nepal's gender apartheid, the very existence of women can be only certified by men: father, brother, husband, father-in-law, brother-in-law, uncles. The real day for women is still a long way in Nepal.

Deepti Gurung

page 3



Lumbini special: DESTINATION PEACE

Spread across 777 hectares with the Maya Devi Temple on the southern end and the Peace Pagoda on the northern and dozens of international monasteries on either side, Lumbini today is an international hub that brings together people of different beliefs, colour, ethnicity, and nationality under one garden.

Trishna Rana

page 15-17



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FRESH FACES



The next general election is up for grabs to anyone who can guarantee integrity, vision, and good governance

At last it looks like the top leaders of the main parties have agreed to agree. In public, they all say they all want elections, but who knows what they really want? All this week, while a task force was meeting in Kathmandu to iron out the details of the constitutional and logistical provisions for elections, the top leaders fanned out across the country addressing supporters and accusing each other of trying to sabotage elections. In a sense, the speeches were campaign-style tirades. The parties are already in campaign mode.

Whatever the outcome of the Supreme Court verdict on the writ petition challenging the legality of the UCPN(M) proposal to make Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi the head of an election government, the question is not 'if' there will be elections, but 'when'. June is out of the question, even November is looking iffy given the hemming and hawing from party leaders, so May 2014 may be a safe bet.

But none of the parties want Regmi to be at the helm for too long. The Maoist-Madhesi coalition led the most corrupt government in Nepal's democratic history and it has amassed a commendable war-chest to finance an election win, but this ill-gotten hoard will deplete the longer it is out of power. The opposition is underfunded for polls, especially if it gets really dirty.

Whenever they decide to face voters, all parties will be desperate for a win, which makes it all the more important to have the mechanisms in place, the rules laid out and agreed, and the laws passed. This is a formidable task and renewing voter lists, demarcating constituencies that reflect new population densities, and requiring photo IDs for voters are questions with deep political ramifications. There is also a strong case to have local elections in June or November, preceding general elections.

But the first order of business is to have a whole

Election Commission and the easiest thing to do would be to re-commission commissioners who retired earlier this year. Voter registration efforts need to go into top gear as well. Not only does it have to keep pace with population growth to include those who have grown up to voting age since 2008, women voters as well as those from excluded communities need to be given IDs. For this, all those eligible for citizenship should have citizenship papers. It is a gross violation of human rights to disenfranchise Nepalis currently stateless just because their Nepali fathers are missing (see page 3). Provisions have to be made for absentee voting by the nearly three million Nepalis outside Nepal.

The integrity of the voting process itself needs to be ensured: minimising cheating, booth-capturing, vote-buying, intimidation, and violations of the election code that were rampant in 2008. In their hurry to get the elections over and done with, international observers prematurely declared those polls free and fair. The Maoists would probably have won anyway, but by a much smaller margin had the voting been cleaner.

We can't afford a flawed election this time, when the conditions are, if anything, more difficult. The Annual Himalmedia Public Opinion Poll that is conducted annually sampling more than 4,000 respondents all over the country shows this year that there is huge disillusionment with the political parties. This year's opinion poll results which will be carried on Sunday's edition of *Himal Khabarpatrika* and next Friday's issue of this newspaper indicate the popularity ratings of all political leaders have fallen to the single digits and are too close to call. The proportion of those who either didn't know or hadn't decided has exceeded 40 per cent.

The next general elections is up for grabs to any political party that can show it has integrity, vision, and the managerial skills to guarantee good governance - even a completely new party with fresh faces.

DIWAKAR CHETTRI

ON THE WEB
www.nepalitimes.com

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?

● So uplifting 2 look up & over the horizon! @nepalitimes new 'buzz' section looks ahead a mere 10 years @ what is possible.

Robert Piper @UN_Piper

● Your article Nepal in 2022 really made me reconfirm that it's not April 1 today. Is everything said in it really possible?

Dipika Shrestha @ShresthaSmiley

● I have been reading articles like this for the last 15 years but nothing seems to change.

Smitkoirala

STABILITY AT WHAT COST?

Why are you mincing words in this editorial ('Stability at what cost?', #645)? Call a spade a spade. The CJ as PM project is an Indo-US idea that Europeans have been duped into thinking is about elections. This is about removing all the checks and balances so that whoever rules Nepal in the future will not be an obstacle to future energy projects and regulation of Nepal's rivers that feed the Ganges. There is also a long-term geo-strategic goal of encircling China. Your editorial is right about one thing though: the CJ option will make it more difficult for outsiders to achieve those results because Nepal will become more unstable in the long run.

Ganga

● Certain elements of Chief

Justice Khil Raj Regmi heading the election government are unclear. Does he remain the CJ and concurrently lead the judiciary as well or will he relinquish his position? If he relinquishes, then will a new CJ be appointed to replace him or does the CJ position remain vacant and Regmi will be reinstated after the election? If he is not reinstated, does he retire from public service thereafter? If these issues are made clearer to the public, then only will we know whether the principle of separation of powers will be violated in the event CJ heads the election government.

C Thapa

ASHES TO ASHES

I don't think smoking is a public health concern for Nepal right now. ('Ashes to ashes', Hari Devi Rokaya, #645). It is a personal choice and even uneducated people know what a pack a day can do to their lungs. Women still die during delivery in the absence of proper health care in rural Nepal and here in Kathmandu people are thinking of how to stop others from smoking. This happens only in Nepal.

Shreeman

[If a lot of Nepali women smoke does it mean] ... emancipation and modernisation or should we be ashamed of this?

shivani basnet @ShivaniBasnet

BECAUSE THEY ARE THERE

Being certified by the International Federation of Mountain Guide

Associations is a decisive move towards a fully professional approach to mountaineering in Nepal ('Because they are there', Kanak Mani Dixit, #645). I hope this achievement will translate into improved all round training, less accidents and deaths, and better salaries and opportunities for our guides. This recognition will also serve as a guarantee for insurance companies - a very important step for operators.

MR

● This news feels much better than others appreciating Nepali loyalty, valour, and honesty 2 be fit 4 working as security guards.

Sabita Thapa @sobst

BACK TO BLACK

Will the 300 improved stoves really help curb emission coming out of the 'highly efficient' engines of Skoda ('Back to black', Bhrikuti Rai, #645)? Wouldn't it be far more helpful if petrol and diesel run vehicles go hybrid and companies like Skoda stopped lobbying against electric vehicles?

Subhash Singh

CAN RAHUL?

The title of this article should be changed to: Can Rahul survive? ('Can Rahul revive the Congress?', Ajaz Ashraf, #645). Once in the front-line you survive either on your charisma or on your wit, you cannot go on and on with excuses. So far this scion of Nehru-Gandhi dynasty has failed miserably on both fronts to be taken seriously.

Bishu Nepal

HIGH COSTS, LOW FARES

This is in reference to your article ('High costs, low fares', Sunir Pandey, #642) where you mentioned our current discussions with the United Nations regarding its safety categorisation of Yeti Airlines. We are pleased to inform you that the UN agreed to review our zero accident record in the trunk route sector and has officially graded Yeti Airlines as the safest domestic airlines in Nepal, besides also placing us in its 'B' category. Our subsidiary Tara Air has also been upgraded to Category 'C'.

We would also like to clarify that we are in the process of clearing the UN World Food Program's (WFP) audit for qualification for its global passenger charters. The audit clearance process has not been completed yet, but we are confident of obtaining clearance within the next couple of months which will make us the first Nepali airlines to qualify for the WFP's global passenger charter tenders.

Umesh Chandra Rai (General Manager, Yeti Airlines/Tara Air)

ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR

Animal Nepal is deeply shocked and distraught over brutal killing of a dog by policemen in Baluwatar last week. Officers first injured the dog by shooting it and then bludgeoned it to death with bamboo sticks. The images of the killing are being watched and

condemned by people across the world. What they probably don't know is that killing stray dogs is very common in Nepal.

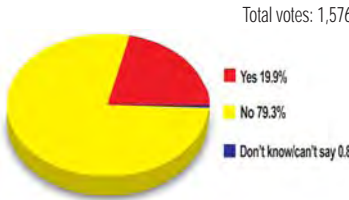
The incident in Baluwatar proves that Nepal needs to take animal welfare seriously. Authorities must find humane solutions to animal problems and animal welfare legislation is the need of the hour. Only when these things are in place can we convince the world that no other Nepali dog will be tortured in a similar manner. We urge the authorities to investigate the brutal (and illegal) killing, take action against the officers involved, and train the police about humane dog management.

Pramada Shah and Lucia de Vries (Volunteer Directors, Animal Nepal)
www.animalnepal.org



nepalnews.com
Weekly Internet Poll #646

Q. Is it acceptable for the police to apprehend people based on how they look?



Weekly Internet Poll # 647. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Should there be local elections in June even if general elections can't take place?





Nepal’s gender apartheid

The real day for women is still a long way away in Nepal



GUEST COLUMN

Deepti Gurung

I have lost count of the number of times I have visited the CDO and Ward offices to try to register the birth of my daughters so they can become citizens of Nepal. Men sitting behind desks have reminded me that my husband’s identity is a must if my children are to be citizens of my country.

Out of sheer exasperation, last week I wrote to Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai about the gross violation of the human right of my children to citizenship. I told him about Nepali children being prisoners in their own motherland. I wrote about my own case: a woman gets married at a young age, a child is born, and the man abandons the family. The mother works hard to bring up her children, but they are deemed stateless and forced to grow up in a land that doesn’t even accept their existence.

I couldn’t believe my eyes when I opened my email the next day. There was a message from the PM’s personal assistant: ‘The prime minster wishes to meet you and your family regarding your citizenship issue and he has taken it with priority.’ I was speechless with anticipation. A new horizon of hope had opened up.

Next morning, I went with my family to meet the prime minister in Singha Darbar (pic, above). Below an imposing picture of Mt Everest, Prime Minister Bhattarai greeted us with a smile and heard us out. He had summoned the chief secretary and men from the ministries. The PM agreed that citizenship must be granted in the name of the mother, and asked the officials: “If we have endorsed laws on gender equality, why does this problem persist?” He directed the officials to ‘use common sense’ and look into our case.

Things moved fast, the very next day we were summoned to the Home Ministry. The CDO was also there and we told our story all over again: that my daughters are born from a Nepali father who left us 15 years ago

and doesn’t want to have anything to do with us.

The CDO looked sceptical. He agreed that we live in a patriarchal society, but he said emotions had no place in law. My children could get citizenship if the father is identified and in case the father denies paternity, a DNA test could resolve it. But if the children’s father is not Nepali they can’t be given citizenship because otherwise “bhanja bhanjis” (his words, meaning nieces and nephews) from across the border may swamp us and threaten our national security. So unless there is an amendment to the constitutional provisions for citizens he can’t do anything.

Prime Minister Bhattarai’s intention of creating a just and egalitarian Nepal is noble, but he has no chance if these are the officials who have to implement his policies. I have come to the sad conclusion that if a revolutionary can’t change the laws to make them more just, then no one can. It seems laws are only made to force citizens to pay their way out of the problem.

Nepali women are discriminated against at all levels, but they face a further ostracisation on the issue of citizenship. The most inclusive elected national assembly in our nation’s history, before it was dissolved last year, had a draft provision on citizenship that was even more regressive than the interim constitution. Under it, only children of Nepali mothers and a Nepali fathers will be eligible to citizenship which means a Nepali mother who can’t prove the father is Nepali (because he is not, because he left her, because she doesn’t have one, because she was raped) can’t have children who are Nepali.

The CDO said the following documents are needed for children to get citizenship in the name of the mother:

- 1 Father’s citizenship
 - 2 Father and mother’s marriage certificate
 - 3 Recommendation from District Development Officer or Village Development Officer (confirming the child has been conceived by the parents).
- Nepal’s citizenship act says



that any unclaimed children found within the country’s territorial boundary will be considered Nepali until the time

their biological parents are identified. So if I deliberately abandon my children on the streets they will get citizenship, but not if I follow procedures and go to the CDO office?

Nepal has one of the most progressive gay, lesbian, and transgender rights in the region. Theoretically, if I went to Thailand and got a sex change operation and came back as the

father of my daughters, I could get them citizenship over the counter.

The Supreme Court made a very important decision on the Sabina Damai case and ruled that children can get citizenship in the name of their mother if the child is conceived because of multiple physical relationships by the mother and the mother cannot pinpoint the real father. But what if the children are born from the mother’s relationship with a husband who has abandoned her? We punish the offspring who are already punished.

When I started a Facebook page ‘Citizenship in the Name of Mother’ I realised there are tens of thousands of Nepali mothers like me. In Nepal’s gender apartheid, the very existence of women can be only certified by men: father, brother, husband, father-in-law, brother-in-law, uncles.

Children without citizenship can’t give SLC exams, can’t apply for a driving licence, they have no bank account, no right to vote, no passport. The fear of Indians swarming across the border to

become Nepalis is misplaced: why would a Bihari want to be a citizen of Nepal when there are no jobs and we have such primitive laws on citizenship? Is our national sovereignty so fickle that it sees its own women as a security threat?


Gender activists and lawyers have been fighting a lonely battle against a political, bureaucratic and legal system that is weighted against women. My suggestion is that if a husband and wife are living separately and the child has been brought up solely by the mother without any financial help from the father, the law must give the mother the right to pass on her name to her child and grant her citizenship. 🇳🇵

Got to Facebook page ‘Citizenship in the Name of Mother’ to comment.




SO YOU WANT TO BE A NEPALI?


Nepali father + Foreign mother = Nepali child
Nepali mother + Foreign father = Stateless child
Raped mother + Fatherless child = Stateless child
Disgraced mother + Unknown father = Stateless child
Unmarried mother + Unclaimed father = Stateless child
Divorced mother + Stepfather not in mood to own up = Stateless child
Working mother + Drunkard, criminal father = Nepali father’s Nepali child
Congress mother + German father = Nepali daughter
Congress ama + German father + Nepali daughter + Bangladeshi son-in-law = Nepali citizen



OYSTER PERPETUAL DATEJUST



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Kathmandu, Nepal



“Make the rules and stick to them”

Russian ambassador to Nepal Sergey Vasilievich Velichkin has been in the country since 2010, holds a PhD in Indology, and speaks Urdu and Bengali. He spoke to *Nepali Times* this week about the history of Russia-Nepal relations, the current political deadlock, and even about how road-widening will affect his embassy.



CINDREY LIU

Nepali Times: Do Russians know enough about Nepal?
SV Velichkin: Basically, there’s the universal understanding that Nepal is a friendly country and that we should get to know it better. But Nepal is far away and we need to resume direct flights between Kathmandu and Moscow. The number of Russian tourists is growing,

but is still only about 8,000 annually. There are also many more opportunities for trade and investment that haven’t been explored yet.

Most Nepalis who studied in the Soviet Union returned to Nepal, what is your impression of them?
Whenever I meet those people who graduated in the 70s and

80s from Soviet universities I’m quite impressed. They’re extremely motivated. They see personal fulfilment incomplete unless they have some ideas of changing their own country, not necessarily ideological ideas. Many of them are at the top in their chosen professions: medicine, engineering, journalism. This is what Nepal needs, more people coming

back to serve their country.

What’s your opinion of the current situation in Nepal? Are you optimistic about the future?
Not all the solutions and scenarios are necessarily brought from outside. There is enough imagination among Nepal’s politicians to find their own solutions. I am not pessimistic, there is a remarkable spirit

among leaders here. Even if they criticise each other, they are ready to sit down and talk. Some people underestimate the importance of that. I believe Nepal is on the path of gradual reconciliation, the peace process is not just words, and I would not dismiss the achievements so far. It’s going to be difficult, but you have to be patient.

The Russia returns

Nepali alumni of Russian universities are high-achievers in their chosen professions

SUNIR PANDEY

It was the Cold War and Nepal was trying to steer an equidistance path between the superpowers. So when the Soviet Union offered free technical education for Nepali students, King Mahendra saw it as a cheap and effective opportunity to develop the country’s human resources.

The Soviet Union was competing with the West for influence and reach in the Third World and even if Mahendra harboured misgivings about Nepalis returning from Russia brainwashed into communism, it doesn’t seem to have deterred him.

Hundreds of Nepali students who studied engineering, medicine or journalism in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev or Odessa did not come back as communist zealots. In fact, the opposite happened: many went on to become successful businessmen and cut their teeth trading in jeans and chewing gum between Finland and the Soviet Union.

But more importantly, most Soviet-educated students came home to work in Nepal. “The USSR did not have a policy of bringing in highly-skilled migrants and rightly so because their economy could not support it,” recalls Hemant Dabadi, Director General of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce, who studied in Russia in the 1970s. “A lot of us saw through the ideology and there was no charm for Nepali students to stay back and live there.”

Back home, despite graduates from the West getting preferential treatment, the Russia returns worked hard and rose to prominence in many fields. Among the more notable ones are



BACK IN THE DAY: Nepali students along with their international classmates pose for photos at the Red Square in Moscow in 1988.

ex-ministers Ganesh Shah and Dipak Gyawali, cardiologist Awanibhusan Upadhyaya, psychiatrist Bishwa Bandhu Sharma, journalism trainer Manju Mishra, solar-energy pioneer Jagannath Shrestha, and engineer Bijaya Man Shrechan.

“Most Nepali graduates from Russia have returned to work in their country, I have been impressed with their passion and patriotism, they are extremely motivated and are at the top of their professions today,” says Russian ambassador, Sergey Vasilievich Velichkin (*see Interview*). Russian-trained doctors were generally more willing to work with the rural poor, civil engineers went to remote areas to build highways,

and geologists explored the country for minerals.

“There was a time when you could go to any of the 75 districts in Nepal and probably find at least a doctor or an engineer who studied in the USSR,” says Dipak Gyawali, former Minister for Water Resources. “None of us knew much about communism when we went there as 18-year olds. It was just another strange land with its own rules. But living together with our Russian batch mates, studying obligatory Marxism while participating in the ubiquitous black market, we did see two sides of the coin. We developed a critical eye towards capitalist consumerism, but also saw the corruption of that ideology which was no different

from our Panchayat classes in Nepal.”

There is a popular Russian joke about education in Russia. Two Third World leaders met in the lobby of the UN. One complained that it was getting impossible to govern his country with the communists calling strikes and bandas all the time. The other said he had the same problem but he solved it. How? He sent all the ring leaders off to Moscow to study and they came back total free marketers, that is black marketers.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, many universities were privatised and the scholarships for Nepali students were dropped. Nepalis still go to study in Russia, but most pay their own way now. The numbers are not as many as before, says Dil Ratna Shakya of the Russian Cultural Centre, but strong technical education and news of Nepali billionaires in Russia still lure Nepalis to Russia.

The most successful, and best-known, Nepali who studied in the former Soviet Union is Upendra Mahato who made his fortune because as a Nepali he adapted better and faster to capitalism and the free market when communism collapsed. Today, Mahato commands a multinational business empire that straddles Belarus, Russia, and Nepal. Among the Nepalis who studied in Russia and didn’t come back to Nepal, many like Mahato, invested in their homeland in hydropower, banking, media, and tourism.

Russia returns have their own organisation called Mitra Kunj to keep track of the more than 5,000 alumni of Russian universities even hosting a meeting of graduates last year in Moscow. But as the Soviet-era graduates now reach retirement age, it is becoming less and less likely that today’s Nepalis who go abroad to study will want to come back. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Nepal’s ‘Russian mafia’, #20
From Russia with love, #225

Is patience one of the things we can learn from Russia's own transition after the collapse of communism?

We went through a tremendous change, the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century: the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The destabilising potential of the largest country in the world with a nuclear arsenal disintegrating was huge. It could have been disastrous, but we managed to prevent it. There was some bloodshed, the country broke apart, there was a tremendous down slide in the economy. Few countries in the world have gone through wrenching change like that.

Nepal doesn't face anything like that, it is one single nation and I'm sure it will remain so. We have some experience of transition which could be useful to share. One of them is to prioritise political dialogue and try to stick to some rules. Our constitution was highly controversial and was adopted through a referendum in 1993, but it has worked well through all further upheavals.

But now we all stick to the rules despite the controversy in which it was born. This is the lesson: make the rules and stick to them. In our case it took several years to adopt the constitution, it didn't happen at one go. In Nepal's case the priority is to find a proper way to conduct national elections

so that an elected Constituent Assembly can write a constitution to set the rules of democratic governance.

How about the controversy about the chief justice being named chief executive?

You're building democracy. You're in the process of construction and you need to move some blocks around. Sometimes what is going to be at the top is lying in some corner at the construction site. For example, out of the three pillars a particular pillar is so important that you might want to temporarily sacrifice another one. Let's not dismiss this matter of elections. Elections are essential. An elected legislature is as important for the completeness of democracy as an independent judiciary.

Russia has helped build factories and highways in Nepal in the past, but there isn't much aid now. Those projects were the backbone of our cooperation in the 60s. At that time the most important thing was to lay down the basis for industrial development of the country.

The current situation is different. The main thing now is to address the contemporary challenges of Nepal, including the economy. The agenda has changed. Today, it's about meeting the requirements of a 30 million strong country of which three million work abroad. Nepal is a very mobile country with a young

population with enormous spread of education, a country which wants to develop itself.

Are there possibilities for Russian investment?

We recently managed to get the Nepali and Russian energy ministries to form a joint working group, they will be meeting in Kathmandu soon and this will be just the beginning. I expect the Nepali side to make a strong pitch for investment and offer opportunities. If the conditions offered are attractive, there are possibilities for investment. In recent years, Russia has invested in hydropower in several countries, including India.

What's your position about the road widening project in Kathmandu?

Kathmandu needs road widening. It will be odd if someone would oppose this process. But in the process not only me, but authorities and the general public have come to know about the difficulties involved. It seems that much of the problems which we face are due to a lack of coordination between different departments. As a result we have troubles with the embassy premises. There were some suggestions about moving our wall from the External Affairs ministry. There's not much we can offer by way of helping in that regard. This happens to be our property, we have not encroached an inch of municipal territory.

BIZ BRIEFS

Hola!

Qatar Airways has signed a three year agreement with the powerhouse of European football FC Barcelona. As the club's main global partner, Qatar's brand name will feature on jerseys starting from the 2013/14 season.



Hot wheels

Syakar Trading, the sole authorised distributor of Honda four-wheeler in Nepal, opened its new showroom at Thapathali. The showroom was inaugurated by Shin Sakurai, senior staff of customer service operation at Honda Motor.



Beat the heat

Triveni Group has launched an exciting line of Panasonic FSV air conditioners. According to the press statement Panasonic's FSV is a reverse cycle VRF system specifically designed for offices, shops, and multi-storey apartments.



Joyride

CG Automobiles, the sole authorised distributor of Suzuki motors for Nepal, has introduced Alto 800 through its 22 sales outlets across 17 cities. According to the press release the new Alto is 15 per cent more fuel efficient than its older cousins.



Safety first

Yeti Airlines has been upgraded to category 'B' in the United Nations safety categorisation after the UN reviewed its zero accident record in the trunk route sector. Its subsidiary Tara Air has also been upgraded to category 'C'.



Lightening speed

CAS Techno has introduced Thunderbolt series from LaCie in Nepal. Thunderbolt is a hardware interface that allows for the connection of external peripherals to a computer using the same connector as mini-display port.



Resort on Lease

A recently constructed resort in scenic banks of the Narayani River in Nawalparasi is available for long term lease. The property covers 80 ropanies (6 bigas) and is across the river from the pristine wilderness of Chitwan National Park. It is a short half hour drive(17km) west of Narayanghat on the way to Butwal and is located only 2 km. south from the East-West Highway. Chitwan National Park entrance is just next to the view tower.



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Irrelevance of innocence

Karachi has become a microcosm of Pakistan's politico-ethnic rivalries which have transmogrified into deeper cross-cutting complexities

KANAK MANI DIXIT in KARACHI

Rabia Flower is an apartment block in the Abbas Town neighbourhood of Karachi, on the road named Isphahani after an associate of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The twin-blasts on 3 March, just as the evening prayers were coming to a close in this Shia residential locality, was the result of a 'triggered IED'.

More than 150 kg of high explosives were detonated as shoppers filled the market below and families took in the evening sea breeze in the upper storey balconies. Fifty died and many times that were maimed. Water from broken mains mixed with the blood of innocents.

Local youth and ambulances swung

to the rescue, while security personnel took their time to arrive, probably late because the mass-murderers have taken to setting off explosions in sequence, killing those who respond to the emergency – local youth, journalists, firefighters, police, and rangers. Or they were late because they had to provide security to a VIP wedding in the city that day.

Karachi has become a microcosm of the bloodletting in Pakistan and earlier politico-ethnic rivalries have transmogrified into deeper cross-cutting complexities. The city today harbours a frightening brew of militancy, involving drug, arms, and real estate mafiosi placed on top of additional layers of communal polarisations. Class-based secular politics, for which Sindh and its capital were celebrated, has its back to the wall.

Beyond the tension between the

political parties representing the Urdu-speaking Mohajir and the Sindhi indigenes, there are now those claiming to represent Punjabi, Baloch, and Pashto interests. In terms of sectarian targeting, the sense of vulnerability now goes beyond the Christians, Hindu or Ahmadiya.

What has taken Pakistan by deathly storm is the attacks on the Shia, a somewhat larger minority. There has been Shia-targeting in all parts of the country, from Gilgit-Baltistan, Lahore to Quetta in the north, east, and west. And now Karachi in the south.

For a while, other issues are forgotten as television brings live reports of the hospital emergency intakes, the family members in shock, and excavators digging into the debris. The nervous wait for the upcoming national and

provincial elections slated for May, the fears of how the departure of NATO forces will buffet Pakistan, the threat of US sanctions if Islamabad insists on importing desperately needed natural gas from Iran, the debate over the handing over development of Gwadar port to Chinese contractors – all are forgotten momentarily as all eyes are glued on the upper storey of Rabiya Flower that continues to burn.

Karachi is a massive city of nearly 20 million and regular preoccupations take over as evening turns to night. Other localities, from the violence-prone Lyari township to the humongous 'informal settlement' of Orangi, to the posh and secure colonies of Defence and Clifton, go back to their interrupted lives. The wedding reception of up-and-coming Sindh politician Sharmila Farooqi proceeds as planned. Other than in Abbas Town and the nearby Patel and Agha Khan hospitals, the sound of sirens indicates not the arriving ambulance but the ubiquitous signal of 'VIP movement'.

A well-regarded journalist had told me on Sunday afternoon just before the bomb, "The killings in Karachi are now more targeted. Unlike in the past, there are fewer mob killings or random blasts."

The mass killing of citizens is a continuous exercise and the sense of fatalism is such that instead of demands for accountability and justice, there is simply the sad wait for the next mayhem. Last month it was Quetta, next month it will be someplace else. Says one IT engineer: "Religion should be a warm cloak, but it has become a shining badge of certitude."

Across the breadth of the subcontinent, in Bangladesh, the perpetrators of 1971 are being brought to book four decades after their crimes. The masterminds of the mayhem at Abbas Town may at least feel threatened if they knew that the sturdy arm of justice will follow them years and decades from now and hold them accountable for drawing the blood of innocents.

This piece first appeared in *The Hindu* on 5 March

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As winter marched right into summer this past week, the Valley saw warmer days while mornings and evenings were just as chilly. Haze in the mid-hills accounted for a temporary suspension in Kathmandu's sightseeing activities, and with a fresh westerly brewing in full flow there should be further cloud cover over the weekend. Northwest Nepal will see a few showers and some precipitation could even make it into Kathmandu as early as Saturday. Nights will remain chilly and it is advisable you sling a jacket if you go out in the late afternoons.



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PICS: ACHYUT BHAKTA SHRESTHA

ARUNA KARKI

Aruna was 13 when she first stood on stage under the spotlight. 19 years later, her love for acting has only grown stronger. A small town girl from Sarlahi, she says she dreamt of being a theatre actress ever since she was old enough to understand.

Aruna started her journey as a student of Nachghar and later entered Gurukul where she was an instrumental part of many performances. She says her undying devotion for the art is what has kept her going for almost two decades and gave her the strength to persevere even in the most trying times. Staying true to her art, she works extremely hard to get into the skin of each character she portrays and her colleagues say she transforms into a totally different person everytime on stage. In her latest role in *Chhadke*, Aruna does an extremely convincing job as a doting wife.

THE QUEENS OF DRAMA

This women's day we celebrate female trailblazers of Nepali theatre

SUMAN RAYMAJHI

While the big boys of politics hog the headlines left, right, and centre, there is a quiet revolution underway in Nepali theatre.

For too long theatre remained the sole dominion of Nepali men. There was a time when there were zero female artists and men enacted all their roles.

The 'boy's club' mentality still continues to some extent even today, where female playwrights, producers, directors, actors, set designers face greater difficulties trying establish themselves and are paid pennies compared to their male counterparts. Many simply pass into oblivion within a few years.

Today, however, we celebrate three women power players from the Nepali theatre. Despite immense adversities, these trailblazers have made an unwavering commitment to their art and are inspiring other female artists to break free of cultural shackles through their hard work.



DIYA MASKEY

Diya is perhaps the most well-known face of Nepali theatre today. A trained Kathak dancer, she feels she expresses her ideas and emotions best through acting. Before stepping onto the stage, she was part of the popular television series *Dalan*. A former student of Anup Baral, Diya joined Actor's Studio after realising that it was possible to earn a living out of the profession. Now she is an instructor at the very studio where she first found her footing.

She built her success by showing immense patience and putting in long hours even when things were not going her way. So it came as no surprise to those who knew Diya when she won the love of critics and ordinary Nepalis through her stellar performances in *Kagbeni* and the recently released *Soongava*. She says theatre isn't for the light-hearted or those looking to become overnight sensations. Her mantra for success to young actresses: a single-minded focus on what they are doing rather than being influenced by what others think and say about them.



SUMANA KC

Sumana KC is among the very few Nepali artists who has an international degree in drama. After dabbling in the art for a few years, she left for India to get her diploma because she felt she needed to learn the basic concepts and theories. She says her years in drama school not only helped her get a deeper understanding of acting, but also the economics and marketing behind that happen behind the curtains. Not one to limit herself, Sumana has experimented with direction through plays like *Budhhamatanah Dhoncholecha* (The Clever She Goat), *Purgatory*, and *Bodhi*. She wants to devote the next few years solely to acting and then direct plays, and eventually feature films.

EVENTS



NEPAL INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FILM FESTIVAL, the seventh edition of the annual NIIF will explore issues related to Nepal's minority. 25 to 28 April, City Hall, Nepal Tourism Board, Exhibition Road, (01)4102577, ifa_festivals@yahoo.com, www.ifanepal.org.np



PRANAMAYA YOGA, immerse yourself in a whole day of yoga activities with Nicky at the wonderful Sri Aurobindo Ashram with Nicky and the children. Rs 2,500, 9802045484, info@pranamaya-yoga.com

Himalayan rush, run, swim, or cycle around Begnas Tal and promote healthy, community-based tourism around the lake. 30 March, Pokhara, 9851021852/9851102046



HUMAN RIGHTS FILM SERIES, celebrate Women's Day with a powerful documentary on the nomad supermodel Waris Dirie, with screenings throughout the month. 7 to 31 March, 7pm, Attic Bar, Uttara Dhoka, www.hrffn.org



MUSTANG TRAIL RACE 2013, be part of a group of athletes and get the experience of a lifetime by running through the roof of the world. 27 April to 10 May, info@mustangtrailrace.com

Chakati guff, Dutch art promoter Beata Wiggen will give a presentation on how to promote your artwork in the Netherlands and Germany. 8 March, 3 to 5pm, Gallery MCube, Chakapat, (01)5260110

Women for children, rally from Patan to Budhanilkantha, and then join Kutumba, Samridhi Rai, and Manoj KC for live music and lunch at Park Village Resort. 9 March, 7am, Patan, Budhanilkantha, 9851133378



BACKYARD SCREENINGS, watch great cinema while enjoying delicious food. Rs 100, 2 to 28 March, every Thursday, 6.30pm, Backyard Café, Jhamsikhel

Mustang, a spiritual odyssey, an exhibition that showcases thangkas, photographs, sand mandala, installations, and dance from Mustang. Runs till 13 March, Siddhartha Art Gallery

Rally for rights, join other concerned citizens and raise your voice against violence against women. 8 March, 7.45am, Bhadrakali

DINING



NOYOZ, this tiny little joint serves food that tastes like your mother's home-cooking. Bhatbhateni



STRAWBERRY DELIGHTS, pop up at The Pastry Shop for a variety of strawberry delights. Rs 125, Runs till 14 March, Radisson Hotel, Lajimpat, (01)4411818 (ext. 1370)



FUJI BAKERY, tucked in Chakapat this bakery offers homemade goodies like apple pie, pain du chocolat, and banana cake. Chakapat, Lalitpur

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



TIAN RUI, if you're looking for genuinely good Chinese food this restaurant is the place to go. Thapathali

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

Taal & Taal, this terrace restaurant with a panoramic waterfront view

of Phewa Lake offers is offering excellent discounts on its opening. Waterfront Resort, Sedi Height, Pokhara, (061)466303/304



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

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



CHEZ CAROLINE, exquisite food, glorious sunshine and more. 9am to 10pm, Baber Mahal Revisited, (01)4263070/4187

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

New Tushita Restaurant, relaxing ambience and good food. Don't miss out on its penne with creamy bacon and mushroom sauce. Lajimpat, (01)44432957



BOMBAY MASALA, transcend the limits of geography with a wide variety of cuisine. Pulchok

MUSIC



ALICE, the Swiss duo jams with Kiran Nepali, Hari Maharjan, and Rizu Tuladhar. 21 March, 6.30pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel



STORMBRINGER COMIN', time to glide down to Tripureswor for an evening with rock legends Deep Purple. 15 March, 3pm, Dasrath Rangasala



BACKYARD BRUISIN', opt out of the haze-filled rituals at Pashupatinath and spend the night of potency with bands Rai ko Ris and Tank Girl. Rs 100, 10 March, 7 to 10pm, Backyard, Jhamsikhel, (01)5548968, raikoris@wlink.com.np



SHASTRIYA SANGEET, dabble in the magic of Hindustani classical music every new moon evening. 11 March, 3 to 6pm, Ram Mandir, Battisputali

Sundance music festival, celebrate the arrival of the summer with great musicians from around the world and dance the night away. Rs 4000, 16 to 17 March, The Last Resort, Sindhupalchok

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

GETAWAYS

Everest Panorama Resort, if you can't get enough of the Himalayas in smoggy Kathmandu, a great view from the top of the Mahabharat is just what you're looking for.

Daman, (01)4412864, info@everestpanoramaresort.net



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, (061)460210

The Yellow House, bed and breakfast for the light traveller. *Sanepa*, (01)5553869/5522078, www.theyellowhouse.com.np

Dhulikhel Lodge Resort, located on a hilltop, the resort offers a magnificent vista of valleys, foothills, and mountains to the north. *Dhulikhel*, (011) 490114/494, www.dhulikhellodgeresort.com



HIMALAYAN WELLNESS CENTRE, a one-stop centre for a relaxed mind and a healthy body inside the Park Village Hotel.

Budhanilkantha, open all week, 9801066661, www.himalayanwellness.com.np

Haatiban Resort, tucked away near a jungle at the side of a hill with a 270 degree view of the Valley, this is the ideal weekend getaway for Kathmandu residents.

Pharpi, Kathmandu, (01)4371537/561

LUMBINI

Buddha's Maya

It's been a long tiring day. You've spent five hours exploring the almost five km Lumbini garden stretch and are desperate to leave behind the throng of tourists. A 10 minute stroll from the gate at Mahilvar road, past yellow mustard fields you will find your oasis: Buddha Maya Garden Hotel.

Spread lavishly across eight acres, the hotel belongs to the KGH Group owned by environmentalist, forester, and best-selling author of self-improvement books, Karna Sakya and has the charm and

being in the middle of a tropical island. Travellers with small children can choose to stay in the spacious apartments with private kitchenettes and balconies. For health enthusiasts there is a jogging track surrounding the pond, but those not too inclined to put on their running shoes can lounge around the restaurant balcony chatting and sipping tea.

The sprawling garden and large parking space make Buddha Maya the perfect host for conferences like the Nepal-India Tourism Mart in January 2013.




TRISHNA RANA

elegance reminiscent of its sister in Thamel. And its remarkably peaceful surroundings make it ideal for relaxing the body and cleansing the mind.

As one of the top luxury hotels in the area, Buddha Maya regularly hosts heads of state, diplomats, and movie stars. Even the Queen Mother of Bhutan, Tshering Yangdon, made the Garden her home for a night when she visited in February.

Starting at \$75 per night, guests staying in the main wing wake up to the sight of the stupa shaped lotus pond while those in the Kotugoda Dhammawasa building are treated to stunning views of brilliant green palm trees giving them the feeling of

As buses after buses of Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese, and European pilgrims arrive every day, the front desk staff is swamped and they are likely to get busier in the coming months as Buddha Maya expands to 100 rooms. The upgraded hotel will also boast of a swimming pool, badminton court, a spa to help you recharge your batteries, and a bigger restaurant.

So pack your bags and begin your quest for inner peace right here at Buddha Maya. 
Trishna Rana

www.ktmgh.com/buddha-maya-garden.html
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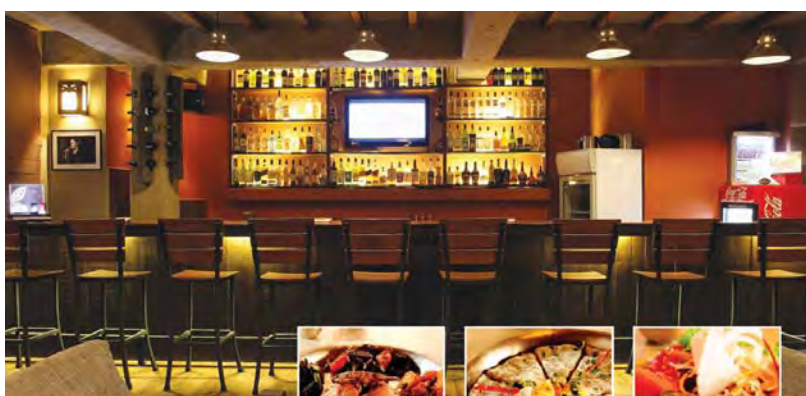
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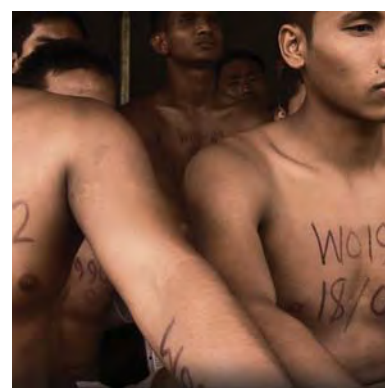
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LAHURE LURE

Every year 10,000 young Nepali men vie for the 200 or so openings in the British Army which has been recruiting soldiers from Nepal for 200 years, ever since the end of the Anglo-Nepal Wars of 1814-16.

Kesang Tseten's documentary *Who will be a Gurkha* looks at the selection process where the boys, attracted by the myth and glamour of Gurkhas, seek to go for glory in spite of the dangers of death in the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq.

The film won the top award at Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival 2012 and also featured at the International Film Festival of Amsterdam. It will hit theatres



next week making it the first Nepali documentary to be screened in cinemas.

Who will be a Gurkha, director Kesang Tseten, in cinemas from 15 March



Dancing in the Sun

The eighth annual Sundance Music festival is upon us and will once again bring together music lovers and musicians to the lush green setting of the Last Resort near the Tibetan border.

Established eight years ago by Sam Voolstra of The Last Resort and Nirakar Yakthumba of Moksh, the Sundance Festival is still the only overnight open-air live music event in Nepal. The festival has been extremely popular with both tourists and locals alike, and gives Nepali bands a chance to jive with international groups.

This edition of the festival will feature Albatross, Joint Family, Soul Train, and many other artists. DJ BPM will have the crowd on moving to his beats the whole night. Guests are requested to bring their own sleeping bags.

Rs 4000, 16 to 17 March, The Last Resort
Tickets at the Last Resort Office, Thamel, and Moksh, Pulchok
(01)4701247/4700525, info@thelastresort.com.np



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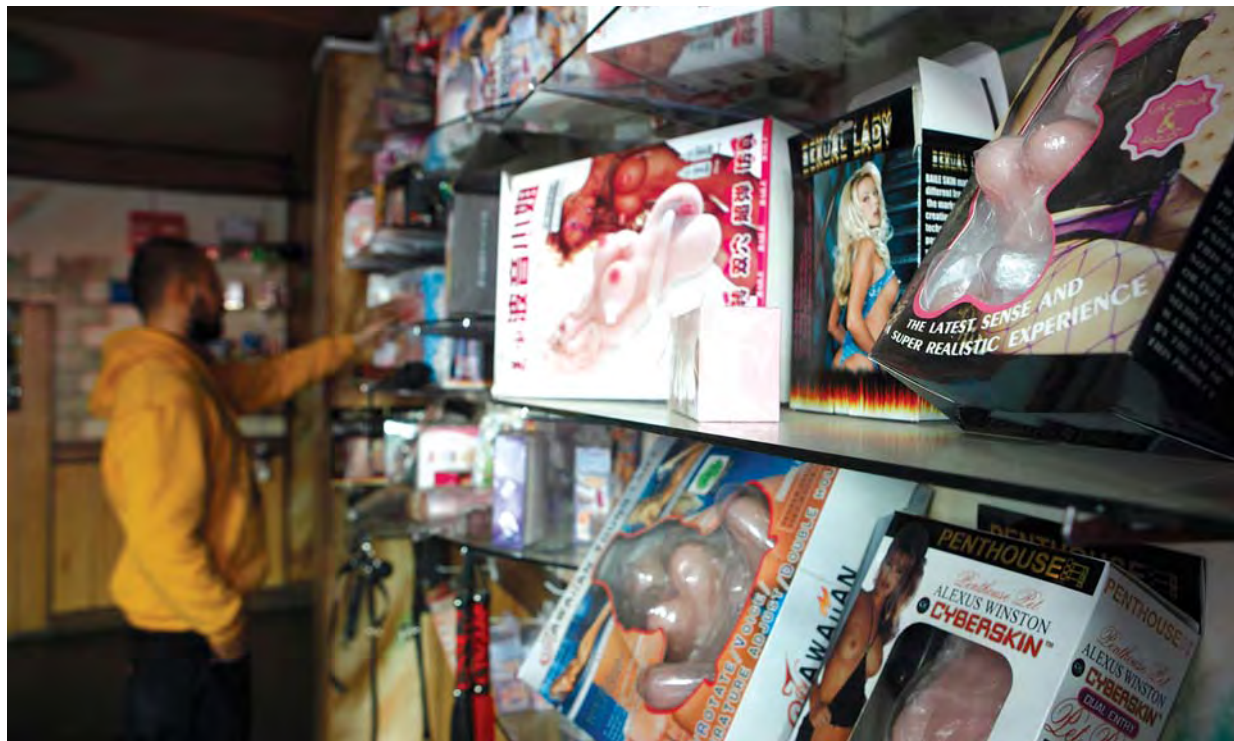
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BIKRAM RAI

Think in kink

Customers at Kathmandu's sex shops are mostly men above 35, but that is changing

BHRIKUTI RAI

A busy alley in Khichapokhari, in the heart of Kathmandu's main business district, is abuzz with shoppers. The one stop solution for retail therapy recently had a kinky addition: Khichapokhari is now home to two registered sex toy shops.

On the third floor of a commercial building alongside clothing stores, is Nice n Naughty where shelves are laden with bright coloured toys and devices that hint at unimaginable pleasure. A full bodied doll occupies the space beside a range of skimpy lingerie that even Victoria's Secret models would think twice about wearing. Established six months ago by Prabin Dhakal and Suraj Bhattarai, the sex toy store has received phenomenal response: it has a monthly turnover of Rs 300,000.

"Although we were worried in the beginning, we haven't had any protest or disturbance," says Dhakal, 28, who first ventured into the sex toy business with

Sweet Secret, Nepal's first registered sex toy store which is now closed. Despite initial hiccups, the registration of 'Nice n Naughty' went ahead smoothly and there have been no problems with shipping products.

Just a few minutes walk away from Nice n Naughty, near Sundhara is Nepal Condom House which has come a long way since its establishment in 2009. "The first year was tough," admits owner Yogesh Neupane, "back then people hesitated about even asking for a condom and fellow store owners had reservations about the shop and even on my character."

Luckily things have changed for the better now and the store has steady flow of people shopping for items to enhance their sex life. The walk-in shoppers are mostly above 35 and mostly men.

According to both the store owners, women don't frequent the store as

often as men, but they do receive a lot of orders through phone and online. "We are planning to have a separate room with a female attendant just to cater to them," says Neupane, adding that dildos are popular among women in their twenties.

"The demand for sex toys was huge when we started, so we began selling them along with condoms," says Neupane. Nepal Condom House now has outlets in Damak, Itahari, Dharan, Birtamod, and Chitwan, where the demand for sex toys is steadily increasing. Nepal Condom House has 49 different types of condoms and also sells items like dildos and vibrators imported from Thailand.

"Many people have changed their attitude towards sex and are warming up to the idea of using toys to improve their sex life," says Suraj Bhattarai. The trend of gifting wives and girlfriends sex toys is catching on, and more so because of the rise in the number

of men going abroad for work. When Nice n Naughty organised a bumper sale last Valentine's Day, it was an immediate hit with many customers thronging the store and others ordering online.

While many youngsters visit the store and leave giggling without buying anything, there are many who come here seeking genuine help, says Neupane, who runs a sex clinic next door.

Although the store owners have helped many overcome their apprehension regarding sex toys, they still find it difficult to make their own families understand about their career choice. Admits Dhakal: "My father who is very traditional still has problems with the store, but hopefully he will understand that it is just like any other business." 🇳🇵

www.nicennaughty.com.np
www.nepalcondomhouse.com

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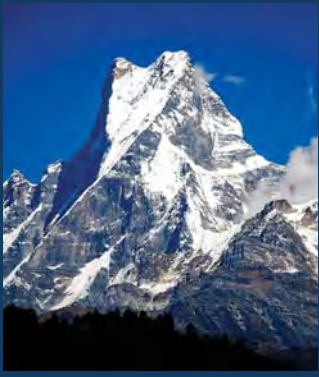
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नेपाल रिपब्लिक मिडिया | नेपालगञ्ज ०८१-५५९२९८ | पोखरा ०६१-५४०३१० | बुटवल ९८७६२६३८८ | लारायणघाट ९८४५५५७३७ | विराटनगर ०२१-४२९२२८

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कमल कौशल स्टोर्स: न्युरोड, ४२२२४५६ | त्रिसा सप्लायर्स: लमनखेल, ४८४१४९७०४५ | गोर्खा न्यूज एण्ड स्टेशनरी: सोलुखुम्बु, ४३५५७६० | जयबागेश्वरी कम्प्युनिकेशन: जयबागेश्वरी, ४४६७०३४
एस् एस् सेढाई: बसुन्धारा, ४३५६४७५ | सिस्टम फोटोकपी: पाटनढोका, ५५५०९७९ | न्यू लालिच प्रिन्टर्स: लमनखेल, ५५४३५८२ | निसा बुक्स: लमनखेल, ५५३९५७७ | अंकुर ट्रामल्स: गढाघर, ६६३३५५८ | भण्डारी साईबर: मैतीदेवी, ४४९८४९४ | किपु बुक्स: कीर्तिपुर, ४३३९७७५
न्यू पि. बुक्स: कलकौ, ४२८०६७३, ४२८२४५९ | दीपसेवा कम्प्युनिकेशन: कोटेश्वर, ४६०००७० | सुमिता क्लासिफाईड: नयाँ बानेश्वर, ४९०४२३७ | साई न्यूजिक: बापनाउँ, ४४६९३५५, ४४४३५९२

*शर्तहरू लागूहुनेछन् ।



FISH BELOW FISH TAIL

Ex-Gurkha transforms district's economy with a trout farm in the shadow of Machhapuchhre

JIVAN PRASAD RAI in POKHARA

When Amrit Gurung (*pic, right*) retired from the Indian Army, he wanted to come home and start a business but his savings were not enough. He found a job in Japan and worked there for nine years.

He returned from Japan six years ago with not just cash, but also a passion for rainbow trout. He felt the clear, cool streams of his native Kaski were ideal for starting a fish business. Today, Gurung's Gandaki Rainbow Trout Farm produces 15 tons of fish a year, and with expansion plans underway he will be raising that to 50 tons a year.

Gurung has also been training other farmers to farm trout, and now there are five big trout farms in Kaski and surrounding districts. Gurung doesn't see them as competition, he feels there is enough business to go around and fish farming could uplift the livelihoods of Nepalis and



convince them to stay home instead of migrating to work.

One of the pioneer trout farmers in Nepal is Purna Bahadur Lama who used to work at the government fishery farm in Trisuli. After retirement in 1997, he started raising Japanese rainbow trout with one pool and 400 fish and with a grant from the National Agriculture and Resource Centre expanded his farm and restaurant.

nepalitimes.com

Fishy business, #393

GOLD AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW

The trout is a carnivore fish from the salmon family.

It is native to lakes and rivers of North America west of the rockies, but is now farmed across the world.

Average life span in the wild:
4-6 years

DIET:
Insects, crustaceans, and small fish

SIZE:
51-76 cm

WEIGHT:
3.6 kg

Rainbow Trout Farms in Nepal

- 1 NUWAKOT
- 2 LALITPUR
- 3 DOLAKHA
- 4 MAKWANPUR
- 5 RASUWA
- 6 KASKI
- 7 MYAGDI
- 8 BAGLUNG



HABITAT: Cool, clear rivers, streams, and lakes water temperature between 3-20 Celsius

GRILLED TROUT RECIPE

Ingredients

- 4 rainbow trout
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1/2 tablespoon fresh ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice



Directions

Clean trout and remove head
Preheat grill to 400 degrees
Coat outside of trout with oil
Sprinkle salt and pepper on inside of trout
Add lemon juice to trout
Place trout on grill, reduce heat
Flip when grill side becomes white
Serve trout immediately

HEALTH BENEFITS

Trout contains fat, but they come from Omega-3 fatty acids which reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke, arterial clogging. Trout also:

- Reduces bad cholesterol (LDL) as well as blood pressure
- Protects the body against circulatory problems like thrombosis and gout.
- Has very little sodium
- A filet of trout has up to 19 grams of healthy protein
- Trout has cholesterol, but that is compensated by fat burning properties
- One filet makes up most of the body's requirement of Vitamin B12, B6, Niacin
- Rich in potassium, phosphorous and selenium, minerals essential for good health



Beasts of the Southern Wild



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

Benh Zeitlin’s entrancing new film, also his first feature, has the heart and soul of true independent cinema. Shot on 16 millimetre film in the heart of Louisiana, the film was made for a little under \$ 200,000, the majority of actors had never been on camera before, and the main character, the six year old ‘Hushpuppy’ played by the fierce, vulnerable, adorable Quvenzhane Wallis was actually only five years old at the time of her audition.

Beasts of the Southern Wild has rawness, a poetic heart, beautiful imagery, and a little girl as the protagonist. With its hints of magical realism, the film follows in the footsteps of other greats such as *The Spirit of the Beehive* (1973), a wonderful movie by Victor Erice about a young girl who befriends a Frankenstein type monster lurking on the outskirts of her rural home, and *Pan’s Labyrinth* (2003), a film by Guillermo del Toro, about another young girl called Ofelia who discovers a magical world of not so benevolent fairies and fauns during the height of fascist Spain towards the end of World War Two.

Beasts follows in this grand tradition of young girls grappling with monsters, slowly coming of age, but without losing their

innocence. Hushpuppy too, must deal with the decline of her oft drunk father, the loss of their charmed lives in the ‘Bathtub’ (an area of Louisiana unprotected by the levees and thus extra vulnerable to hurricane like storms), and the approach of the Aurochs, behemoth like prehistoric, mythical creatures that have melted out of the ice that entrapped them and are making their way across America towards Hushpuppy and her beloved home.

While the film has been both lauded and criticised for its episodic, almost fragmented narrative filled with searingly beautiful scenes, it is far from an arbitrary bunch of images tied together through Hushpuppy’s charming narration. The writers, Zeitlin and Lucy Alibar, are skilled storytellers who know exactly



what they are doing.

The beginning of the film, though apparently formless, introduces the carefree lives of the community who choose to reside in the ‘Bathtub’ despite its hardships and their life of relative squalor. The various and colourful characters are all named during this time, each of them standing out in our minds.

When the storm does come, this introduction makes us care for all of the characters, young, old, drunken or not.

The writers also draw the relationship between Hushpuppy and her father ‘Wink’ with pathos and humour. They love each other, but each character, being indomitable in their own ways, resists the other’s overtures fiercely until the storm and Wink’s illness finally create an unspoken understanding between them.

It is Hushpuppy though, that astonishes the most in this wondrous film. Wallis shows no artifice as she explores her world, alternately marveling at the beauty around her, laughing, scowling, burping, ripping apart lobsters, and punching her father in the chest when appropriate.

Hushpuppy’s journey, her courage, her imagination, and her wide-eyed stare are the reasons behind this film’s resonance. Somehow, Benh Zeitlin managed to write a version of “The Great American Story”, but with a heroic little black girl at its heart. Even more astonishingly, he managed to find the one girl who could actually pull it off.

For anyone who loves cinema, this film is a must. It might seem experimental, fragmented, and pretentious to some, but for those whose minds are open, *Beasts of the Southern Wild* is an adventure for your soul. 🍿

GIZMO by YANTRICK

HOP ON

For all the women who have not yet gone ‘solo’ because of the long labour of love involved in the ‘pelvic massage’, a little fuzzy friend is here to the rescue.

Diamonds are no longer a girl’s best friend, the rabbit vibrator is. The buzz first started when the rabbit made its debut on silver screen on the popular HBO series *Sex and the City*. The drama launched the vibrator into superstar status overnight and since then it has been creating ripples in places where only a few men have successfully ventured.

The rabbit vibrator originated in Japan, where it is illegal to produce sex toys that resemble male genitalia. And after taking millions of woman across continents on the ultimate joyride, the funny bunny has made its way to Nepal.



Available at the handful of sex stores around the Valley, the rabbit vibrator amps up the pleasuring power with lots of sexy features to target your g-spots. The seven inch long dildo makes it perfect for deep penetration while the shaft with rows of spinning beads ensures the most pleasant and intense massage down there. The well-formed head rotates often, giving untold internal stimulation. Add to that the classic bunny ear shaped tickler that flicks your clitoris setting you off on a new world of sexual bliss!

The rabbit clit stimulator and the shaft operate through different buttons allowing you to adjust the speed and stimulation level individually. Powered by 2AA batteries the delightful rabbit comes in different colours and materials ranging from silicon to latex.

While vibrators from Philips and Trojan are yet to hit the Nepali market, the made in China bunnies from lesser known brands which start at Rs 5, 000 onwards don’t disappoint either.

The only odd feature about the ultimate pleasure toy is the fake moaning and groaning sounds that the rabbit vibrator plays. Instead of heightening your excitement, it just interrupts an intense solo session. Luckily, you can turn the volume down. Some rabbit vibrators available here don’t have bees horns instead of bunny ears.

Now who’d have thunk a rabbit could make for an affordable ‘gateway’ pleasure pal? Just so you make the most of your rabbit, the rotating beads at the shaft also do wonders to shoulder and back pain. Just a suggestion!

Yantrick’s verdict: This perfect fuzzy friend never gets tired, never turns down an advance because of a lousy football match, and makes you explode into joyful million pieces every single time. How many men can beat that?



हिमाल
विशेष ग्राहक योजना

बस्पर
उपहार
रु. ३,९५,०००
मलेशियन
Cougar वाइक

नयाँ नेपालको
नयाँ हिमाल

अब हरेक आइतबार



मासिक उपहार
टिसोटको घडी

पक्षिक उपहार
मोडिया मोबाइल सेट

साप्ताहिक खबरपत्रिका हिमालको ग्राहक बन्नुहोस्, तत्काल र हरेक १५-१५ दिनमा उपहार प्राप्त गर्नुहोस् ।

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फोटो कन्सर्नबाट पाउनुहोस् आकर्षक उपहार

१ वर्षे ग्राहक शुल्क रु १०५० मा नगद छुट रु २५०

मेम्बरशिप कार्ड

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फोटो मारनटिङ्ग (१०x१२)

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२ वर्षे ग्राहक शुल्क रु ३५०० मा नगद छुट रु ६००

मेम्बरशिप कार्ड

पि.पि. साइजको फोटो ६ प्रति

4R ५० प्रति फोटो घुसाउन

फोटो मारनटिङ्ग (१०x१२)

जम्मा रु ३२२० बराबरको

३ वर्षे ग्राहक शुल्क रु ५२५० मा नगद छुट रु ९५०

मेम्बरशिप कार्ड

पि.पि. साइजको फोटो ९ प्रति

4R ५० प्रति फोटो घुसाउन

फोटो मारनटिङ्ग (१०x१२)

जम्मा रु ४८५० बराबरको

एक पटक ग्राहक बन्नुहोस् पटक पटक उपहार पाउनुहोस् ।

Witness to history in the making

Under a blue sky in the summer of the year 1978 Nepal waited the arrival of a celebrity guest from its neighbour to the north. China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping had chosen Nepal for one of his rare foreign jaunts, and King Birendra, the enthusiastic host, had ensured that a red carpet was rolled. Vice-Premier Deng's visit to China's tiny neighbour in South Asia had evoked immense interest and the world media based in the region had descended to Kathmandu to cover the event.

Page 22, *My Tryst with Writing*

This is one of the many milestones in Nepal's recent history that correspondent Madhav Acharya writes about in his book, *My Tryst with Writing*.

The book is a combination of other events and anecdotes which Acharya witnessed



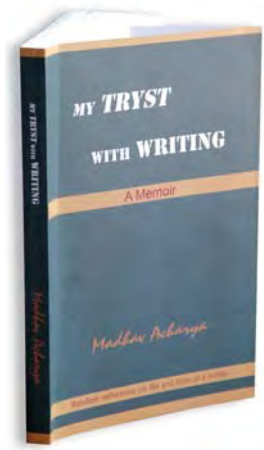
Acharya has an accurate recall, and an eye for detail that has stood him in good stead as a correspondent. He has a ready turn of phrase when recounting many of the personal, political, and national stories that have held our interest over those years.

The book opens somewhat slowly with the

firsthand and which he now recounts. As a journalist with RSS and Radio Nepal, and later correspondent for Kyodo News Agency, Acharya lived through a pretty tumultuous period of Nepali history.


account of how, urged on by his grandfather, he turned away from the family teaching tradition to become a writer and journalist. Perhaps the readers' attention might have been more easily captured early on by opening with the true story of how, at 10:15pm on 1 June 2001, he got the 'scoop' on the tragic story unfolding from the Royal Palace and sent it off to Kyodo. Others followed, but Madhav had the story out accurately, and ahead of the rest.

He also relates his encounters with BP Koirala, Liz Hawley's Reuters days, Girija Koirala's ups and downs, the story of Bhutan refugees, the then King Gyanendra's coup, the Maoist insurgency, India's influence in Nepal politics, Lumbini developments, and the Japanese involvement, meeting with Baburam Bhattarai north of Gorkha and Sher Bahadur Deuba in Kathmandu. He also has a section on



My Tryst with Writing
A Memoir by Madhav Acharya
Publisher Kisgu Acharya
Rs 300

Himalayan mountaineering.

Acharya could be faulted about having perhaps rather too many references that reflect a man who feels that much of the time his cup was half empty rather than half full. There are far too many examples of 'Nepali English', but that lends the book a quaintly exotic voice. But I am probably biased because Madhav is my golfing buddy. 
Robin Marston



SOMEPLACE ELSE

If you're looking to sample some southern delights during your stay at Lumbini, you will be sorely disappointed because most restaurants here offer the usual Nepali/Indian/Chinese/Continental muddle like Thamel.

We picked 3 Fox Restaurant because it had been highly recommended by travellers

on the web. The place is decent with very basic decor: cemented floor, seven or eight big tables set up around the room, and a small terrace for those lovely early summer days. Since it had been pouring the whole morning, we started with a warm bowl of hot and sour vegetable soup (Rs 90) to beat the chill.

Our soup took forever to show up and the service in general was pretty slow. But we were quick to forgive because there was probably just one cook toiling away on a cold, overcast day trying to prepare orders for five tables. What we could not forgive was the mishmash of oily, overpowering tomato paste with tiny dices of carrots, cauliflowers, and garlic that 3 Fox tried to pass off as soup.

Next came our appetisers: chips chili (Rs 100) and cheese balls (Rs 150). The chips too were a major letdown. The tomato base (like in

3 FOX

the soup) was just too sweet, the slices of tomatoes that were thrown in with capsicums and onions were too big and too ripe. To make things worse the fries were completely soggy and lacked the crispiness that makes chips chili such a favourite among Nepalis.

Luckily for us (and a face-saver for 3 Fox) the eight balls of cheese were heavenly. Deep fried and with generous portions of cheese, the fromage frais oozed out; almost tempting us to order another round. Our main course chicken Manchurian with plain rice (Rs 160) again was nothing much to write about. Other than the slow service, the waiters seemed pretty disinterested in our table and more



PICS: TRISHNA RANA

absorbed in what was playing on tv.

Although the food is pretty ordinary, 3 Fox is popular among solo travellers and is a great place to chit chat with fellow tourists, share tips about places to visit in Nepal, ask around if anyone wants to share a taxi ride back to Bhairawa or find a travel companion. 

How to get there:

From the Lumbini gate at Mahilwar road, walk towards the bazar and after 500 metres make a right turn. Walk another 100 metres and you'll see 3 Fox on your left-hand side.

Sunflower Travellers Lodge and Restaurant

For dinner, we went Chinese at Sunflower Travellers Lodge, which was definitely a better pick than our lunch option. Owned and run by Chinese who speak fluent, endearing Nepali, this place takes its 'authentic' tag seriously. The menu is extensive and you have to place your order and pay at the front desk before you seat yourself in the dining room on the second floor or if weather permits at the rooftop terrace on the third floor.

We ordered chicken kothey (Rs 180) for starters, the manager said it was a hit among Nepalis and for the main course we had chicken hot pot (Rs 380) and Kung Pao chicken (Rs 220) accompanied by a bowl of plain rice (Rs 50).




The eight pieces of kothey are definitely some of the best we have tried. They were deep fried but not heavy, no onions and the meat

masala was barely traceable. The hot pot, however, was the highlight of our meal.

Meant for two, it is big enough to be shared among three and is a wonderfully light, healthy yet delicious concoction of cauliflower, broccoli, black mushroom, Chinese spinach, and tofu in chicken broth. The broth was bought to us in a pot and a small candle at the bottom kept the soup warm and nice throughout the evening.

When our massive plate of Kung Pao arrived, it was a delight for our eyes and bellies. The diced marinated chicken stir fried with peanuts, onions, carrots, zucchini, crushed green pepper flakes, and peppercorns was the right

amount of juicy, tangy, fresh and a perfect way to conclude a pleasing meal.

There are no frills at Sunflower, the dining area is very simple, but the efficient service and excellent food more than make up for the lack of fanciness. Our favourite part is definitely the generous portions which means a group of three can eat for less than Rs 400 each. 
Trishan Rana

How to get there:

From the Lumbini gate at Mahilwar road, walk towards Parsa chok, after ten minutes you will see Sunflower's three-storey red brick building on your right.



A breath of filthy air



BIKRAM RAI



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

This past winter has been very harsh on our lungs. The thick inversion layer trapped dust and smog in the air for weeks and Kathmandu recorded dangerously high levels of pollution with the unfinished road expansion project making the city's air more unbreathable. And if you smoked during this time, you made yourself doubly vulnerable to a host of chronic lung disease such as COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) as proved by studies by doctors like Mark

Zimmermann and Paban Sharma from Patan Hospital. But to better understand air pollution and figure out ways to protect ourselves, we need to understand aerosols. Aerosols are a collection of particles that remain airborne for a substantial period of time. Many pollutants exist in this form and their pattern of deposition in the lung depends on the size. Larger particulate matters above 10 microns (PM 10) are trapped in the nose and upper airways, but the finest and most deadly particles, PM 2.5, find their way into the inner recesses of the lungs. Most Kathmandu residents don masks or cover their mouths with handkerchiefs when out on the streets. But PM 2.5 which is about 30 times thinner than human hair

can easily penetrate these generic masks. While many of us know how harmful air pollution is to our lungs, the relation between pollution and cardiovascular diseases is not talked about too often. Many people are surprised to find out how these small particles lead to an increased susceptibility to heart attacks and strokes. However, outdoor air pollution is not our only enemy. Thousands of households across Nepal still burn wood and dried cow dung to use as cooking fuel in their kitchens. Inhaling this exhaust is as worse as smoking five packs of cigarette a day and women who are in-charge of the kitchen are at most risk. In a recent study conducted by our Patan Hospital staff and Italian colleagues in Khumbu, a non-invasive ultrasound revealed that the inner lining (endothelium) of the arteries of a large number of inhabitants of this region was impaired. Derangement of endothelial function of the arteries leads to atherosclerotic disease, the hallmark of heart attacks and strokes. Although Khumbu has clean air, most people here still use bio-mass in homes which causes the damage in the endothelium. The good news is that both outdoor and indoor pollution are reversible, but we need to create awareness and the political will to make a change. 🇳🇵

HAPPENINGS

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MAHESHWAR CHAMLING RAI/REPUBLICA

SENIOR CLASS: PM Baburam Bhattarai honours Okhaldhunga resident Narmada Bhattarai on Monday during the 50th anniversary celebrations of Gramodaya Yugakavi Siddhicharan Higher Secondary School as Bal Krishna Dhungel looks on (centre).



BIKRAM RAI

TANK HALF EMPTY: A young girl watches as a long queue of motorcyclists lines up outside a petrol pump in Baneswor on Tuesday afternoon.



BIKRAM RAI

JAI SHAMBO: A sadhu puts tika and gets ready for the day on early Wednesday morning. Thousands like him have flocked to Pashupatinath ahead of Shivaratri next week.

READERS' PHOTO



MANGAL

HIRE US: While people rest under the shade of the temple, two porters await potential clients at Patan Darbar Square.

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Whose Lumbini is it anyway?

Greed, conflict of interest, and a lack of sustainable long-term vision on the national level have held back Lumbini for far too long

TRISHNA RANA in RUPANDEHI

Visiting Lumbini is an odd experience. While the historical and spiritual significance of the white box Maya Devi Temple leaves one in awe, if you look underneath its calm veneer, the birthplace of Buddha is contemporary Nepal in a microcosm.

Under the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation, the Lumbini Development Trust (LDT) has been implementing the master plan drawn up by Japanese architect Kenzo Tange in 1978 and managing the 1x3 mile zone since 1985. However 35 years on, the larger Lumbini area is still not in the picture and the project is moving at snail's pace.

The state's inability to support LDT financially is one reason for three decades of foot dragging. Out of its Rs 130 million budget for 2011, the government could only supply Rs 15 million. While international support for the master plan remains strong, none of that has translated into monetary help.

The high-turnover rate at the Trust as well as the ministry has

prevented continuity of ongoing projects as each new incumbent comes with his own agenda. Since 2008 there have been three vice-chairmen at LDT.

The large chunk of the problem, however, lies in the Trust's inability to move with the times and its refusal to be flexible on the master plan. Ask officials at LDT about why there aren't even basic services like information officers and centres, guided tours or guides on hire, the usual response is, "We will start once the master plan is completed."

Architect and UNESCO consultant Kai Weise says LDT's should remain true to the spirit of the master plan without necessarily following every single detail. But this would require a major shift in the style of functioning not just of the Trust but the entire ministry.

Like other 'big fish' projects in Nepal, greed, conflict of interest, and a lack of sustainable long-term vision on the national level have held back this international heritage for far too long. The government's notorious lack of foresight was on display during the Nepal-India Tourism Mart organised in



ANYBODY HERE?: A kiosk set up by LDT to help visitors find guides has rusted and lies abandoned at Mahilwar, Lumbini.

Lumbini this January.

The Indians came prepared with books, posters, and other promotional material about the Buddhist pilgrimage circuit in their country whereas ours showed up empty handed. The state was similarly ill-prepared to organise Visit Lumbini 2012, right at the heels of Nepal Tourism Year 2011, and the event came and went without much fanfare.

As the birthplace of Buddha, Lumbini should ideally be the starting point of the pilgrimage circuit. Unfortunately, most

foreigners journey through Kushinagar, Sarnath, Bodhgaya in India and finally make a few hours 'lay-over' here. Out of the nearly 4,000 tourists that arrive each day only 1,200 or so (30 per cent) stay overnight.

When asked why it's so difficult to get tourists to spend more time and money on our side of the border, officials get defensive and shift the blame elsewhere. "Our responsibility is to develop and protect the world heritage site and surrounding areas, not to do business," says a LDT officer, "it's the job of travel agencies and hotels to sell the place, network with their counterparts in India, attract more tourists, and convince them to stay longer."

As both vie for the largest piece of the Lumbini pie, this

turf war between the government and private businesses is not only hurting those who spend thousands to come here but also defeats the spirit of the Buddha.

Instead of working as partners these various parties treat each other as adversaries. The tension between the LDT and hotel owners in particular is palpable. Hotels blame LDT for killing business by allowing monasteries within the Lumbini complex to open hostels and house pilgrims for cheap.

"The number of tourists has soared, but our business has not been able to keep up," explains the manager of Hotel Peace Land in Lumbini, "LDT's unfair policies are driving us out."

The Trust, on the other hand, says hotels in the area haven't bothered to improve their quality or contributed towards Lumbini's development in anyway and are only concerned about squeezing every last penny out of visitors.

But all this ping pong politics holds little significance for rickshaw drivers like Krishna, who earns around Rs 600 a day taking tourists around the garden. Families like his are hardly ever included in national and international discussions about Lumbini's 'development'. And while the windfall from Buddhahand provides employment to some, it has done little in terms of uplifting living standards or improving education in the region. ■

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A 10 hour ride on a rickety bus from Kathmandu (most tourist buses only go till Chitwan or Butwal) or a pleasant 30 minute flight to Bhairawa and then half an hour on a taxi will take you into Lumbini. While village walks, bird-watching, and a day trip to neighbouring Tilaurakot in Kapilvastu are some of the highlights, it's the nativity site and the Lumbini development zone that are the main attractions.

The tour is best done on foot. Make sure you have an entire day (two days are ideal) to explore the nooks and corners of the garden as well as a visit to the museum. Or there are rickshaws on queue at the main bus stop gate and the gate at Mahilwar who will give you a four hour tour for Rs 400. Bikes are also available for rent at Rs 100 an hour.


The gigantic grey Korean structure easily towers above the rest and can be seen from a far distance. Still under construction, the three-storey monastery manages to awe visitors with its sheer size. Step inside the uncluttered prayer hall where you will find portraits and paintings of Korean spiritual leaders, light an oil lamp, and let the empty space help you clear your mind.






Distance from Lumbini: **25**km west

 Rs **2,000 - 2,500** in **40** minutes

 Rs **100** per hour in **2** hours

 Rs **1,500** in **3** hours

Tilaurakot 4

Perhaps one of the most neglected sites in the Lumbini circuit, Tilaurakot in Kapilvastu district was once the crowning glory of the Shakya dynasty. Today Buddhist devotees and tourists who have more than a night to spend at Lumbini venture out to observe the abandoned remains of the palace's fortification wall.

The former palace ground is in an overgrown forest in the middle of nowhere. A huge pond and a Maya Devi temple guarded by elephants add to the

eerie sense of calm you find here and although there is nothing much to do, all it takes is some imagination to transport you to 500 BC Nepal.

Although you can hire a taxi or van for the day, the best way to see the countryside is biking especially because the roads are so smooth and flat. The scenery alternates between endless mustard fields and busy bajars with several minarets and temples peppered in between. Take photos of boys playing cricket, old couples tending cattle, and families of three or four all squeezing on the back of a crumbling bike.

Those who are not in the healthiest shape or are looking for little more adventure, can hop on the back of a rickshaw. You will double your travel time, but won't regret the decision. Stop for regular breaks, head into street-side tea shops for the sweetest cups of chiya you will ever taste, try a samosa, and listen to men engage in animated discussions about, you guessed it, local politics. The ride here is the best part of the journey.



Zhong Hua Buddhist Monastery (China) 5


You have seen it on TV: the sweeping roof with yellow glazed tiles, loping ridges decorated with a line of statues, and big, beautiful courtyards. But you've always wondered what the Forbidden City in Beijing might look like in real life. Here is your opportunity to explore traditional Chinese architecture and art without the visa hassles. Let laughing Buddha welcome you at the gate. Make sure you take your time to allow for a leisurely stroll around the monastery and admire the detailed handiwork of the artisans.





ANDREAS LEHNERT

Peace Pagoda 6

Built in 1993 by the Japanese, the pagoda is almost identical in architecture and design to the one in Pokhara. But surrounded by a sea of green, it is definitively more charming. Visit during the late afternoons when the warm orange sunshine falls directly on the gold plated Buddha making him almost come to life. On the periphery of the Lumbini zone, you can either start or end your journey here.

 Two-way airfare to Bhairawa:
Starts at Rs **6,300** (Nepalis) and \$**242** (others)

 From Bhairawa airport to Lumbini:
Rs **1,000**

 From Kathmandu to Lumbini:
Rs **1,300** to Rs **1,800**

Sakura Travels and Super Salina run three buses in the morning (between 7 to 8am) and two at night (between 7:30 and 8:00pm) which leave Kathmandu from Naya Bus Park at Gongabu. Microbuses also have direct routes to Lumbini.

2011	2012
Total: 587,538	Total: 795,794
Nepal: 395,570	Nepal: 539,210
India: 63,709	India: 120,583
Sri Lanka: 52,691	Sri Lanka: 52,671
Thailand: 26,382	Thailand: 28,480
Burma: 12,503	Burma: 17,595
China: 8,961	China: 8,598

SOURCE: LUMBINI DEVELOPMENT TRUST

 Entry to Maya Devi Temple:
Free (Nepalis), Rs **16** (Indians), Rs **200** (others)

 Boat ride (one-way):
Rs **45** (Nepalis), Rs **50** (others)



PICS: TRISHNA RANA



BIKRAM RAI

Change the constitution to change the government?

Narayan Wagle, *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 3 March

हिमाल खबरपत्रिका

Major leaders are once again busy meeting behind closed doors. They want Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi to become PM without much resistance and are looking for ways to ‘suspend’ the democratic principle of separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary. However, Nepal’s constitution will not allow this.

Yes, Bhattarai’s government needed to be replaced but on moral and political grounds, not on constitutional grounds. The current deadlock exists exactly because everyone is busy seeking a constitutional answer to a political problem. But giving an unelected person the keys to the cabinet will set the wrong precedence for the future and push the nation into an even deeper crisis.

In their last ditch attempt to dislodge Baburam Bhattarai from power, NC and UML leaders have unwittingly agreed to forgo the constitution and handed over victory to Bhattarai. Not only has this move tarnished their democratic credentials but also shown how weak they are.

If the opposition wants to keep the constitution alive, it must demand that Regmi resign from his post before taking over Baluwatar. But the UCPN(M) has played its cards very well (especially with Bhattarai taking a tough stance on citizenship, TRC bill, army integration, and voter registration issues) and completely bullied the opposition leaders into surrendering to its will. Continuing to comply with the Maoists will only put their existence at further risk.

Since November is the earliest possible date for polls, the CJ will basically be in charge for nine months. This will be a huge problem. There are critical questions the opposition parties need to reflect on: did the Maoists propose the ‘last resort’ CJ idea because they wanted to merge the two powers all along?

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Unfinished business

Editorial in *Sourya Dainik*, 7 March

सौर्य दैनिक

On 6 June 2005, the Maoists ambushed an overcrowded bus in Bandarmude, Chitwan. 38 people died and more than 70 were wounded in the attack. It was by far the worst terrorist attack perpetrated by the Maoists during the conflict.

Almost eight years after the incident, UCPN(M) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal visited Bandarmude and announced that a relief package worth Rs 6,000,000 had been earmarked for the victims. However, the PM’s personal secretary later clarified that the government had made no such decision. It is unfortunate that leaders of a party responsible for the tragedy in Chitwan cannot even come to an agreement on how to help the victims.

Dahal has now said that the money will be released from the Maoist party’s treasury. But the ongoing rift between party chairman Dahal and PM Bhattarai, coupled with Dahal’s reputation of double speak, raise doubts over any probable relief for the victims.

Locals of Bandarmude have been denied justice for far too long. They have seen the perpetrators of



heinous crimes get political protection and suffer silently as the killers walk freely alongside the PM and other high-ranking government officials.

The families of victims are not alone in seeking justice. Thousands of people across the country still don’t know who killed their loved ones. If justice is not given to these people, no one will have much faith in the country’s judiciary.

NEPALI TWEETS

Kamal Thapa
हिंसाको गौरव गान गाएर संस्थागत गर्ने खोजिएको परिवर्तनको अप्पन हो बन्दको संस्कृति। के सार्थ विगतका त्रुटि सच्याउने साहस गर्ने सकौं? आत्मालाई सोधौं।

This ‘banda culture’ is a result of efforts that try to institutionalise change through glorifying violence. Can we be brave enough to correct past mistakes? Let’s ask ourselves.

salokya
आज लगानार दोस्रो दिन स्कूल बन्द। यही हप्ता नेपाल बन्द नि छ रे। तीन दिन लगातार चाँहि सार्वजनिक विदा। बन्द र विदा मै हप्ता जाने भो

For the second day in a row schools have been forced to shut down. Apparently there are more bandas this week, not to mention consecutive public holidays. Week wasted by bandas and holidays.

Deepak Dahal
नेपालीले धेरै साग खाँदैनन्, रातपरेपछि फुटबल सुरु भएको छ, आँखाले साथ देओस्।

Nepalis don’t eat their greens. There’s a football game on at night, so let’s hope their eyesight doesn’t fail them.

shivani singh tharu
@Sadan_Adhikari दुखित अपन चिन्दा करो। सक्थो टो कनाली ब्लुज पढो। ठरलीक को सम्बोधन गर्दो। बुद्धिसे सिक्थ्यो। नक्कली सद्गुणमुटि काकोरि छिन्थे।
@Sadan_Adhikari You worry about yourself. And read *Karnali Blues* if you can to learn how to address Tharu women. Why show fake sympathy?



“Remove your hands”
“It hurts!”
“Then, let it be.”
“It hurts!”
Boulder: CJ-led government

कान्तिपुर Abin Shrestha in *Kantipur*, 5 March

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“ We don’t need a constitution. All we need is development. ”

Central committee member of UCPN(M) and first lady Hisila Yami speaking at a press meet in Balaju, *Kantipur*, 5 March

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BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

Foreign domestic policy

Nepal's quest for sovereignty and international credibility stands at odds with its geo-strategic balancing act

One of the few privileges governments in developing countries enjoy is a free hand in matters of foreign policy. The everyday existential problems means citizens in these countries couldn't care less about how their government deals with refugees. When Nepalis are ill-treated by Nepalis, there is little time to find out how we deal with those who have sought refuge in our land. So when a Tibetan man burns himself to death in Kathmandu or Bhutanese refugees are refused entry into their own country, people go about their business as if nothing has happened. In countries like ours, the common citizen's interest in foreign affairs is limited to status of demand for manpower in Qatar, Malaysia, and South Korea. The urban middle-class despise it even more. Their international concerns stretch only as far as Raxaul from where our regular supplies of oil enter the country. When the people of an erstwhile Hindu kingdom celebrate their great festival in a couple of days, thousands of refugees and 'second-class' citizens of this country will be denied cultural rights to celebrate the birthday of a spiritual leader. But like the year before and the year before that, Kathmandu's brightest whose conscience is offended to see



BREAKING THEIR SOULS: Police surround defiant Tibetan protestors after firing teargas to disperse a peaceful demonstration outside the UN Building in Kathmandu in 2008.

SAM KANG LI

the prime minister pictured alongside war criminals, will willingly look in the other direction at the way refugees from Bhutan, Tibet, Somalia, and Iraq are treated here. When the Vietnam War broke out in the 1960s, thousands of Americans came out on the streets against their own government. Four decades later the same people protested on the streets against American foreign policy in Afghanistan and Iraq. Closer to home, critical sections of the Indian media and civil society have been condemning the UPA government's

tacit support of Sri Lanka's human rights violations during the war and their government's mistreatment of the Kashmiri Muslims. Even a small country like Ecuador stood up to a western superpower and granted asylum to international whistle blowers against possible persecution. The fact that we live in a landlocked state, trying to survive at the mercy of two nuclear giants needn't stop us from doing the right thing. On Monday, the Supreme Court issued a show cause notice against Nepal Police for detaining four Tibetans

who were on their way to TU Teaching hospital to pay tribute to a 25-year-old self-immolator. The same police later that evening were arresting young men wearing ponytails and earrings. Last time I checked this country's interim constitution, neither was listed as a criminal offense. Every government in Kathmandu since 1956, after Nepal recognised Tibet as a part of China, has used the Chinese card to leverage its political influence vis-a-vis Indian pressure. We have leaned over backwards to be friendly to the North to counterbalance our dependence on the South. The failure of Nepal's diplomacy in the last six decades has reduced its foreign affairs to a balancing act and crude economics that only seeks to influence domestic politics. Assertion of national interests, defined in terms of influencing regional geopolitics by elevating international image of the country has remained a dream. Nepal's inability to sign the 1951 Refugee Convention and blatant violation of customary international laws in the treatment of refugees fly in the face of the Foreign Minister who makes lofty claims about defending national interests. We don't just have the right but an obligation to protest against government policies that have turned us into an international pariah. ❏



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Still polls apart

Now that elections look impossible in June, improbable in November and implausible in the 21st century, the Mao-Baddies seem to be losing interest in their own plan to make the CJ a CEO. To be exact, it is BRB who seems to be in the mood to back down and has been whispering to people that the whole CJ idea was to hold elections in June and if that ain't happening then he'd rather like to reluctantly continue in office, thank you. The Justice-in-Chief is never going to forgive the Ideologue-in-Chief.

The guy who is most miffed about this, of course, is Chairman Ferocity who staked all and was rubbing his hands with glee ever since he first disclosed the proposal at the Hasiya Conf in Hatauda. As paranoid as only the comrades can be, PKD is said to be more and more suspicious that BRB has pulled another fast one, has no intention of stepping down, and never had. Which is why Kamred Awesome is blowing kisses at Kiran Kaka again. Where does this leave the middlemen who brokered this deal, Shri Amrace and Shri Shitola, one wonders?



The real reason the Justice-in-Chief ship is floundering is not because the opposition parties don't want it (the Kangresis in fact have their tails wagging and paws in the air) but because the Task Force has been deadlocked by the Mau Mau proposal to include a 'package' that includes a watered down TRC Bill and impossible demands for seniority of integrated gorillas in the Nepal Army. If it hadn't been for these demands and Comrade Rawal standing firm, Justice Rag-me would have already thrown his suitcase over the wall in Balu Water. And, speaking of our Praetorian Guards, since when did anyone give the generals the power to write to the censor board to stop a movie?

After all the blood he helped shed during the war with an ideology that sanctioned hacking off hands of teachers and driving nails into the knees of class enemies, Com Red Flag seems to miss all the blood and gore. How else would one explain his extraordinary statement in Okhaldhunga the other day where he said that his party hadn't abandoned the revolution, but was just slitting the throats of reactionaries 'halal-style'. At first it seemed like a sloppy way to appease Muslim voters, until we saw that he said this in the presence on the podium of Bal Krishna ("I did Ujjan Shrestha in") Dhungel.

It's not just BRB, his First Lady is also afflicted by foot-in-mouth and admitted publicly on Monday that she and she alone sanctioned building a highway bypass through the Garden of 22 Fountains in Balaju. She added: "We don't want a constitution, we want development." Ooops. Then Yummy's hand-picked Attorney Generalissimo Comrade Mukti declared in a speech: "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is out of date and not applicable to Nepal." These guys aren't going to be visiting

Europe anytime soon, you can be sure of that.

We hear Chairman Lotus Flower is mighty sore that Binod Chow-chowdhury beat him to the Forbes' list of the stinking rich, Following Kingji's example, PKD has refused to pay 15 lacks in water bills for KUKL tankers that brought water to his former Pistachio Palace twice a day. But in order to defuse an embarrassing protest during his visit to Chitwan on the anniversary of the Madi bomb, he promised families of victims 6 million bucks compensation, saying he had just got it sanctioned by the finance minister and prime minister. Only problem was, they hadn't, Awesome was lying through his teeth as usual. When he got found out, to save face he got flunkies in Paris Danda to issue a cheque 'from the party'.

- In order to ensure that evil compradors of Western Imperialists and Southern Expansionists don't influence our Dear Leaders, Kamikaze Narayan has got the Farang Ministry to issue guidelines about when and where netas can meet dips:
- Keep the Qazi informed of all dates
 - Wear a bracelet with a GPS tracking device all the time
 - No more cocktails, especially in the vicinity of Lainchaur and Maharajganj
 - Get venue cleared by Ministry so they can plant bugs



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