

NEPALI Times

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TIC TAC TOE

PAGE 15

DIWAKAR CHETTRI

GREEN WAY

It's not just a trend anymore. Going green is a necessity for sustainable living. Nepali Times is hosting its annual EcoFair on 5-7 June at the Nepal Academy premises in Kamaladi.

With more than 50 exhibitors and an expected 150,000 visitors, the fair has become a platform for renewable energy

options for Nepal, sustainability ideas, practical and affordable ways to save energy. The Nepali Times EcoFair has also become an important event in the trade calendar for networking among green entrepreneurs, government agencies, innovators and the media.

EcoFair 2013 offers many

ideas about sustainable lifestyles and workable examples of how to live with shortages of everything: from solar home lighting to biogas, electric vehicles, organic agriculture.

buizz

PAGE 7-9

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BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

You may call it the ‘little country syndrome’. Small states situated among larger neighbours tend to have an exaggerated sense of their own importance, and think that other countries are competing to gobble them up.

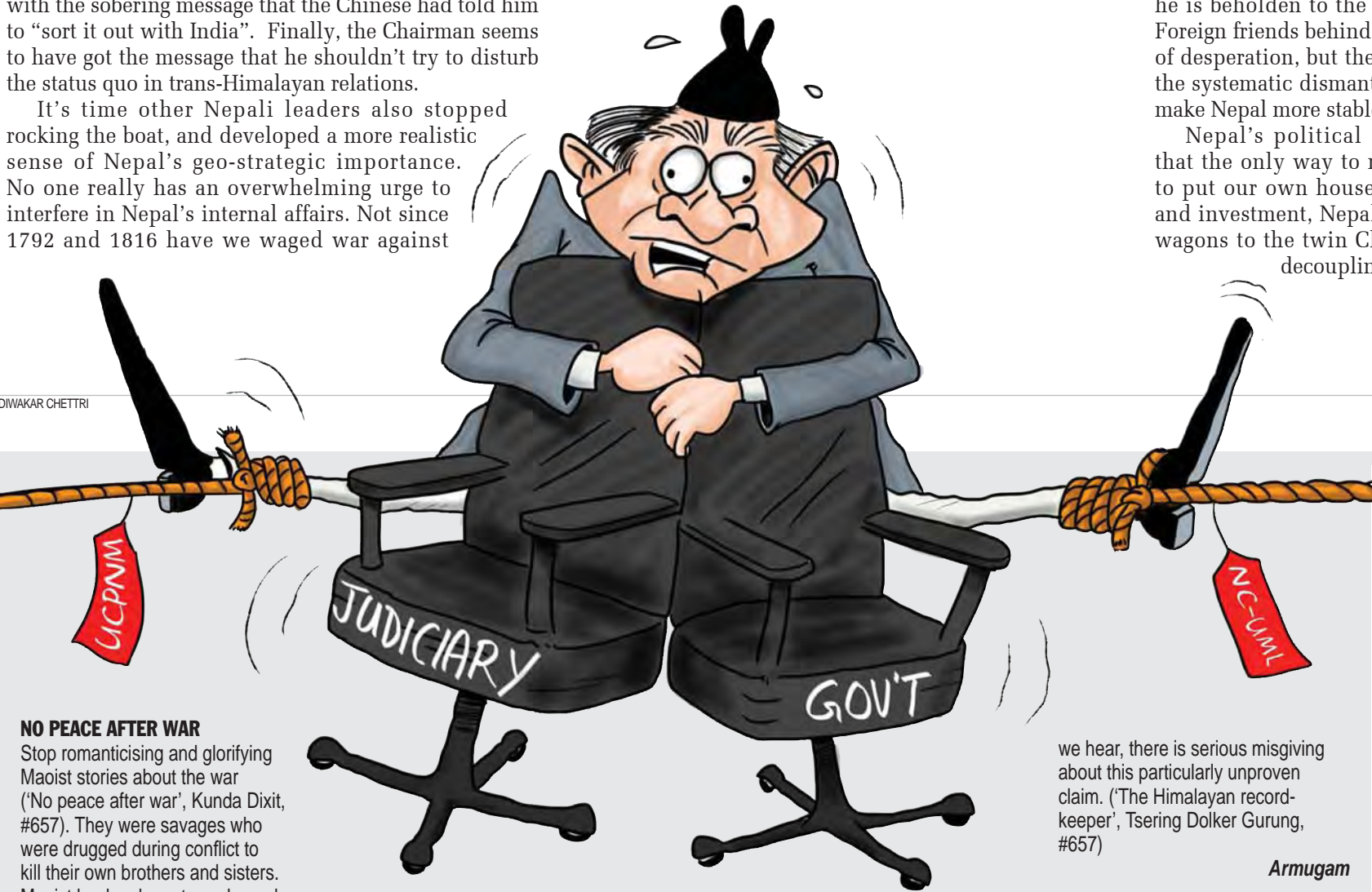
At the time Prithvi Narayan Shah made his famous reference to Nepal being a sweet potato between two boulders, the nation he unified was three times bigger than it is today. We are still a yam, but a much smaller one. Fast forward to Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal who once got so carried away he made the suicide-bomber statement that Nepal could be “a dynamite between two boulders”.

Dahal was trying to threaten the big neighbours to take him more seriously. He repeatedly failed to learn from the mistakes of his predecessors that playing India off against China doesn’t work. It never did. Even in the cold war years of the mid-1960s just after China and India fought a bloody Himalayan conflict, Mao Zedong had a clear message to a visiting Nepali prime minister: “Tell your king: keep India happy and find your space.”

After his last visit to China in April, Dahal came back with the sobering message that the Chinese had told him to “sort it out with India”. Finally, the Chairman seems to have got the message that he shouldn’t try to disturb the status quo in trans-Himalayan relations.

It’s time other Nepali leaders also stopped rocking the boat, and developed a more realistic sense of Nepal’s geo-strategic importance. No one really has an overwhelming urge to interfere in Nepal’s internal affairs. Not since 1792 and 1816 have we waged war against

DIVAKAR CHETTRI



NO PEACE AFTER WAR

Stop romanticising and glorifying Maoist stories about the war (‘No peace after war’, Kunda Dixit, #657). They were savages who were drugged during conflict to kill their own brothers and sisters. Maoist leaders have turned people like Navin Jirel into war addicts who get an adrenaline rush firing guns, swinging khukuris and seeing blood and dead bodies around them.

Prad

After too much of bloodshed and losses of more than 15,000 Nepali, thousands injured, widowed and orphaned in the name of people’s revolution, what we see today is that nothing has changed for the welfare of Nepal and the people at large. It’s all dirty politics for power in which the narrow minded and selfish have benefited. However, the consequences of the dirty politics are dragging Nepal to poverty and instability.

Tashi Lama

Radha’s story is very inspirational, her sense of generosity, loving kindness should be cherished by all, and we all need to learn from

her. Political leaders of Nepal lack such moral values of leadership. The narrow mindedness and selfishness of Nepali politicians and government officials have sickened Nepal till today. We need warm hearted people like

Wangmo

UNITED BY LIFELONG GRIEF

Many innocent people lost their lives in vain to bring the Maoist to power. What an irony and a tragedy that the Maoists are now ruining the country. (‘United by lifelong grief’, Rameshwor Bohara, #657)

Saied Jeffrey

SYNDICATED FEDERATION

What an excellent article by Bihari K Shrestha. It was a ploy used by the PKD to cash in the ethnicity based issues to fan their rebellion. We are better off as a single country: one without ethnic enclaves (‘Syndicated federation’, #657).

Raithane

Our politicians are as bad as their counterparts anywhere, but what makes them unique is that they are utterly and shamelessly much more selfish, greedy, and nervous about external pressure than they should be compared to average politicians around the world.

Bejat

War doesn’t just bring changes, but safeguards the future in favour of the winner, who will do as they please and the loser must suffer (‘Unfinished business’, Editorial, #657). Apart from the Gandhian revolution in the subcontinent the world we live in is the direct result of gruesome violence, brutal wars and forgotten memories.

Krishna S

EVEREST

I’m just curious, if Elizabeth Hawley’s chronology has entry related to Pasang Lahmu’s claimed successful ascent? As

Armugam

Groucho

SSP

Basudeb

we hear, there is serious misgiving about this particularly unproven claim. (‘The Himalayan record-keeper’, Tsering Dolker Gurung, #657)

Nepali Times did a great job on the coverage of the Everest anniversary: Wonderful stuff on glaciers, mountain tourism, on Da Tenzing, and interviews with Liz Hawley and David Breashers. But I did not like your Backside column (‘Climbing Mt Neverest’, Backside, #657), Sir Ed would have been horrified.

What’s the point in trying to say or imply Tenzing got there first? He chose to become an Indian. So, who cares?

Those days Nepalis were bare honest, brave, courageous, and took satisfaction by giving enjoyment to visitors, which actually is very difficult, uncommon to do, and it’s a greater victory than climbing a mountain.

borders. China has territorial issues in the East China Sea, North Korea and Taiwan, and India has its hands full with a pesky neighbourhood, and making its presence felt in the larger world stage.

Both countries are in a race against time to maintain economic growth so that their vast populations have jobs, and China in fact is India’s largest trading partner. Neither wants the tectonic distractions of an unstable Himalaya. The spheres of influence between our neighbours, and Nepal’s place in it, are fairly well-established and neither wants to shake it up.

When they do think about Nepal, our neighbours probably worry about us not being worried about our future. This week marks the first anniversary of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly: a symbol of the spectacular failure of our politics. But there is also relief in many quarters that the constitution would have led to fragmentation and chaos. When the political parties failed to agree on an electoral government, the international community backed the plan to make the Chief Justice the prime minister.

It is now clear that the chief justice is just a puppet, he is beholden to the forces that gave him the post. Foreign friends behind this formula say they acted out of desperation, but they should ask themselves: does the systematic dismantling of democratic institutions make Nepal more stable?

Nepal’s political players should finally learn that the only way to reduce outside interference is to put our own house in order. Our future is trade and investment, Nepal will benefit from hitching its wagons to the twin China-India locomotive, not by decoupling ourselves from them.

Q OF THE WEEK

How much time do you spend on Facebook every day ?

facebook

Taufik Temanggung: 12 hours
Bobin Shrestha: Just to check the newsfeed.
Björn A Wallner: Too much!
Yulina Amatya: Morning time, day time, night time, lunch time, bed time.
Dhanu Shrestha: 4-6 hours a day.
Narbahadur Pun: 40 minutes approx
Sharad Duwal: More than I want to
Shova Gurung: A lot

twitter

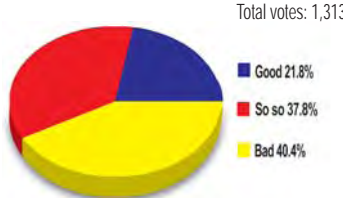
@AlishaSijapati: It depends on how free mind and time are.
@gurunjjagan: About one hour a day.
@nebingrg: I spend hours and hours.

This week’s Question of the week: What made the road widening project in Kathmandu successful when all previous attempts failed? Go to www.facebook.com/nepalitimes or www.twitter.com/nepalitimes to respond.

Times

nepalnews.com Weekly Internet Poll #658

Q. How do you assess Khil Raj Regmi’s two months in office?



Weekly Internet Poll # 659. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com
Q. Was it right for civil society leaders to boycott the government’s celebration of Republic Day?



“It is a win-win-win situation”

Nepali Times: Chinese investment in Nepal is growing dramatically, what could be done to increase it even further?

Wu Chuntai: According to the statistical data from Department of Industry, Nepal has attracted more than \$100 million investment from China and Chinese entrepreneurs have established more than 500 local companies in Nepal. In order to boost Chinese investment in Nepal, we suggest that the BIPPA (Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement) be signed by the governments of Nepal and China which will significantly enhance our bilateral economic relationship. In addition, the PDA (Project Development Agreement) is vital for Chinese investment in hydropower projects, which is needed for the Chinese investors to finance adequate funding to develop the projects.

What are the main areas of investment that Chinese companies are attracted by in Nepal?

The Chinese companies are engaged in the hydropower sector, tourism, hotel, restaurant industries etc.

And what would you say are the main obstacles they face for further growth in investment?

The Nepali government has done a lot to attract foreign investors. However, the investors are now facing some common difficulties, such as the political transition, power shortage, lack of raw materials etc. It is believed that more conducive and preferential policies will provide a safe and stable investment environment to attract foreign investors

China's ambassador to Nepal, Wu Chuntai, spoke to Nepali Times this week about Nepal-China trade, investment and potential for future cooperation. Excerpts:



CINDREY LIU

including Chinese investors.

Bilateral trade has also been growing, but it is a bit one-sided. What prospects do you see for balancing Nepal-China trade?

The bilateral trade between China and Nepal has been developing steadily and continuously for many years. The total bilateral trade volume in 2012 reached nearly \$2 billion, increasing by 67 per cent, and Chinese imports from Nepal went up by 112.9 per cent, which is the highest rate of increase among South Asian countries. The Chinese government has provided several policies and measures to promote bilateral trade, including duty-free privilege to 95 per cent of total tariff lines as a follow-up to the 60 per cent facility which will be

implemented. The Tatopani Dry Port being built under a Chinese grant is under construction and will help Nepal improve its trade facilitation services. All these efforts will draw an optimistic picture of the bilateral trade development between China and Nepal.

Which specific infrastructure and energy projects is China looking at being involved with in Nepal in future?

We are extending the Kathmandu Ring Road and constructing the dry port in Tatopani, that I mentioned before, with grant assistance. We are also building the Upper Trisuli-3A hydro power project with concessional loans, preparing the construction of Pokhara International Airport and discussing other potential projects with Nepal

government. From the private sector, Chinese investors are looking for different kinds of projects in hydropower and other infrastructure areas. Some are under evaluation process. Sinohydro is constructing the Upper Marsyandi, a joint venture with a local company under build-operate-transfer (BOT) model. The China International Water and Electric Corp (CWE) is also investing in the Upper Modi hydropower project.

How realistic is the trade and transit potential for Nepal to benefit from its location between India and China?

Both India and China are neighbours of Nepal, India is Nepal's largest trading partner while China is the second largest trading partner. It is through Nepal that some trade activities between China and India happen, like some Indian importers purchase Chinese products through Tatopani in Nepal. It is believed that Nepal has immense opportunities to benefit from its location between the two huge economies. The improvement of north-to-south transportation infrastructure between Chinese dry ports and Indian dry ports through highways, even railways, through Nepal, will provide great help.

What possibilities are there for tri-lateral cooperation between China, India and Nepal?

Nepal has large potential in hydropower, tourism and infrastructure areas. It offers a good cooperative platform for investors from different countries, including China and India, to boost the Nepali economy. The Chinese government encourages Chinese investors to cooperate with partners from Nepal as well as India. It is also well known by private sector companies that there is a huge potential for benefits from tri-lateral cooperation. We think it is a win-win-win situation.

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- ET ZIGWHEELS •TOP GEAR •AUTOBILD

SUV OF THE YEAR

- BLOOMBERG UTV AUTOCAR •NDTV CAR & BIKE •CNBC OVERDRIVE •ET ZIGWHEELS
- CAR INDIA •AUTOBILD •AUTOJUNCTION.IN •MOTOR VIKATAN

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HANDS ACROSS THE HIMALAYA

Chinese trade and investment in Nepal is mounting exponentially



TELECOM

Huawei has bagged a Rs **10** billion upgrade of Nepal Telecom

ZTI is working with Ncell on its mobile infrastructure



AVIATION

Rs **3** billion soft loan to buy five turboprops for Nepal Airlines

Rs **13** billion soft loan for a new international airport in Pokhara



HYDROPOWER

Rs **140** billion in the 750MW West Seti Project by Three Gorges

Rs **10** billion soft loan for the 70MW Upper Trisuli 3A
Additional projects: Upper Marsyangdi, Upper Madi



TRADE

Rs **53** billion Nepal's imports from China (apparel, electronics, vehicles)

Rs **1** billion China proposes to invest in Nepal in the coming year to generate employment for 3,000



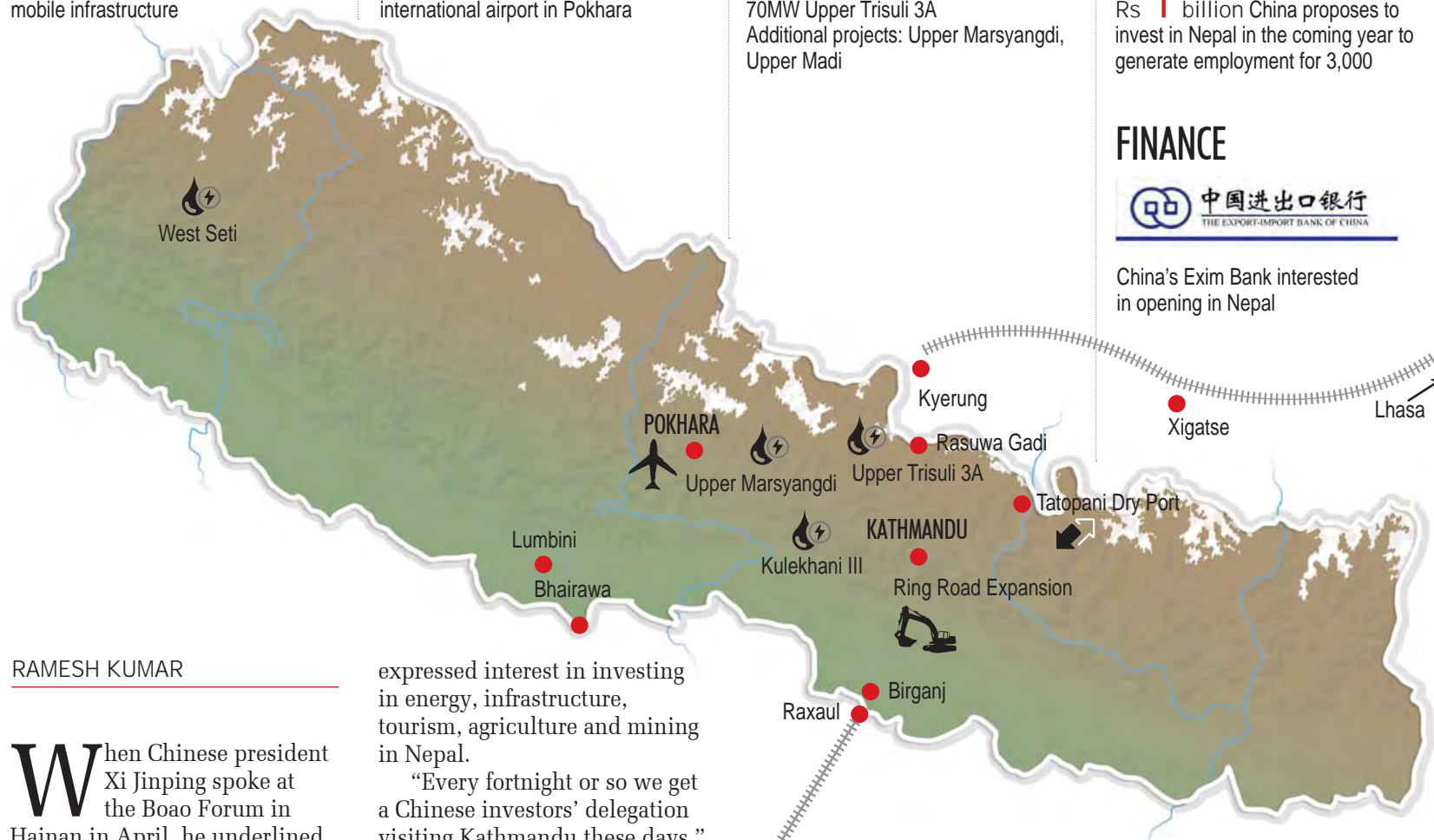
INFRASTRUCTURE

- Tatopani Dry Port and customs infrastructure in Rasuwa Gadi, Olangchung Gola, Mustang and Lamabagar
- Completing the remaining 18km segment of the Syabru-Rasuwa Highway
- CGGC is building the Upper Trisuli 3A, and Pokhara airport
- Chinese contractors are building Chameliya, Kulekhani III and other energy projects
- New apartment construction by Chinese contractors

FINANCE



China's Exim Bank interested in opening in Nepal



RAMESH KUMAR

When Chinese president Xi Jinping spoke at the Boao Forum in Hainan in April, he underlined that China's prosperity wasn't possible without the prosperity of its neighbours.

Indeed, China's position as the second biggest economy in the world has impacted in its periphery. This is most pronounced in East and Southeast Asia, but increasingly in South Asia. China is now India's biggest trading partner, and Chinese investors and businesses have a strong presence in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Nepal shares a 1,000km long Himalayan border with China, and Chinese investment, trade and tourism with Nepal has also been growing exponentially. A Chinese business delegation that visited Kathmandu this month

expressed interest in investing in energy, infrastructure, tourism, agriculture and mining in Nepal.

"Every fortnight or so we get a Chinese investors' delegation visiting Kathmandu these days," says Rajesh Kaji Shrestha of the Nepal-China Chamber of Commerce. Statistics tell the story: Chinese investment in Nepal has grown six fold in the last ten years. Bilateral trade grew from Rs 10.7 billion ten years ago to Rs 53 billion this year. Although the balance of payments deficit has been growing, Nepal exported over Rs 2 billion worth of goods to China in the first eight months of this fiscal year, compared to only Rs 980 million last year. This was after China granted tariff incentives for 7,757 items.

Chinese investments in Nepal which started with small-scale outlays in restaurants has now grown to include hospitals, hotels, software

companies, construction, airports and hydropower. Nearly half the applications for new investments in Nepal are from Indian companies, and 10 per cent from Chinese, but the latter is growing much faster. The biggest interest from China is for hydropower projects, with Three Gorges interested in investing Rs 140 billion in the 750MW West Seti reservoir project. The Chinese are also involved in the 60MW Trisuli 3A, the Upper Marsyangdi and Upper Madi projects as joint ventures. China's Exim Bank has agreed to grant Rs 3.8 billion for the purchase of five Chinese turboprop aircraft for Nepal Airlines and construction of the Rs 13 billion new Pokhara

International airport.

Chinese exports to Nepal have exploded in the past ten years. Affordable Chinese apparel have transformed the way Nepalis dress, and Chinese electronic goods and vehicles have flooded the market. To facilitate this burgeoning trade, China is helping build a Rs 200 million dry port at Larcha near Tatopani and to upgrade the Kodari highway. China is also upgrading the border facilities at Rasuwa Gadi, anticipating that most trade will move there once the highway on the Nepali side is complete and the Chinese railway network arrives in Kerung via Xigatse.

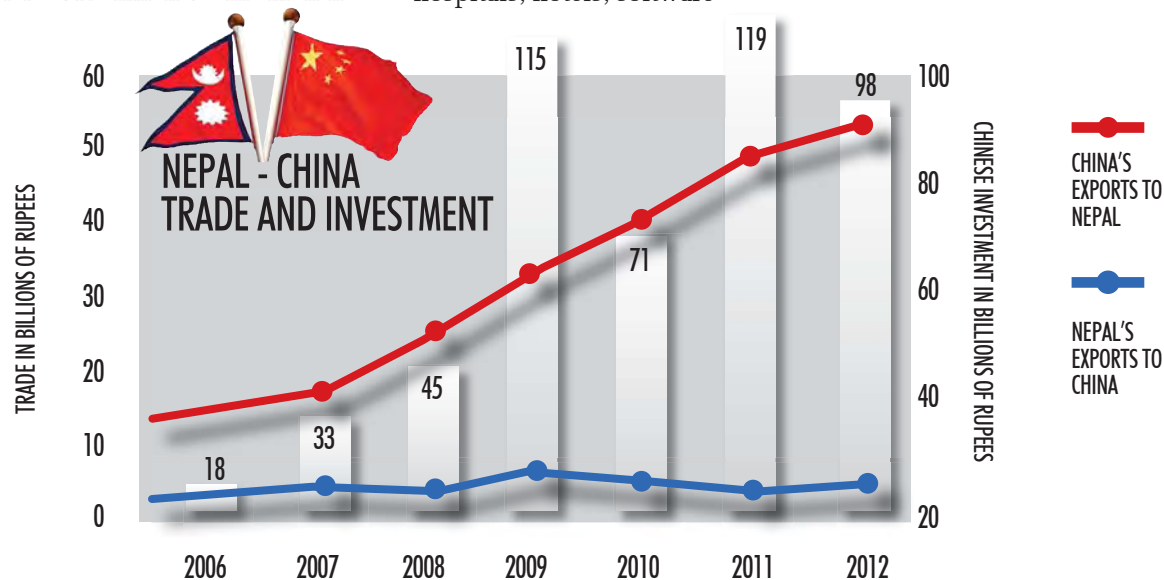
In infrastructure, it appears as if Chinese contractors have a monopoly in hydropower, airport and telecom projects in Nepal. In most energy projects, the civil works, hydro-mechanical and electronic contracts are being carried out by Chinese companies. Sino Hydro is building the civil works in the 456MW Tamakosi Project and Kulekhani III. A Chinese company is even building the Korean-financed 30MW Chameliya Project in western Nepal.

However not all the experiences with Chinese contractors have been good. The contractors building the

Melamchi Project left after their demand for a 200 per cent cost increase was not met. Only 6km of the 26km tunnel was dug. Chameliya, which was supposed to be finished this year has also been delayed after the Chinese contractor left. The Upper Trisuli 3A was mired in controversy over a decision to increase project capacity, leading to a cost overrun.

Despite this, Chinese contractors still outbid most international rivals, and have amassed experience in working in the Nepali situation. Nepal Telecom, plagued with chronic overcapacity, has gone with China's Huawei for a Rs 10 billion upgrade of its telecom infrastructure. Even the private sector Ncell works with ZTI.

Tourism is another area where there is huge potential for growth. In 2000, just under 4,000 Chinese tourists visited Nepal. This year, it has grown to more than 53,000, and Chinese now make up nearly 10 per cent of all arrivals. Air China, China Eastern, China Southern and Dragon Air, now have nearly 20 flights a week to destinations in China. If seat capacity is improved and with better promotion, Nepal could attract vast numbers of Chinese tourists. 🇨🇳



China's e-tail revolution

Mass consumption in China is coming of age in the Internet era

SHANGHAI – When you think about centers of technological innovation, Silicon Valley, Seattle, and Seoul are probably the first places that come to mind. After all, they are the homes of Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google, Intel, Microsoft, and Samsung – companies whose innovations transform the way other sectors, from financial services to telecoms and media, do business.

Now, however, the rise of 'e-tail' (consumer-facing e-commerce) in China is enabling Hangzhou – the base of Alibaba, China's largest online retailer – to join their ranks. Indeed, on 29 April, Alibaba signaled its ambitions by buying an 18 per cent stake in Sina Weibo, China's version of Twitter. And, as with technology hubs elsewhere, innovations born in Hangzhou are determining the development path of related industries.

China's e-tail market is the world's second largest (after that of the United States) with an estimated \$210 billion in revenue last year. Since 2003, the market has posted a compound annual growth rate of over 110 per cent. By 2020, China's e-tail market could be as large as today's markets in the US, Japan, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France combined.

Despite a broadband penetration rate of only 30 per cent, e-tail commanded six per cent of total retail sales in China in 2012, on par with the US. And the sector is already profitable: Chinese e-tailers are logging margins of ten per cent of earnings before interest, taxes, and


amortization, which is slightly larger than the average margin for physical retailers.

Roughly 90 per cent of Chinese e-tail is conducted on ad-funded virtual marketplaces. On these platforms manufacturers, retailers, and individuals offer products and services to consumers through online storefronts. By contrast, in the US, Europe, and Japan, roughly 70 per cent of the market is composed of e-tailers running their own Web sites, whether online-only merchants like Amazon or traditional brick-and-mortar retailers such

as Carrefour, Dixons, and Walmart. Online purchases in China do not simply replace offline purchases. Rather, e-tail supports incremental consumption: \$1 of online consumption seems to generate roughly \$0.40 of additional sales. Mass consumption in China and other emerging economies is coming

of age in the Internet era. Given that industry structures are still developing in many of these countries, e-tail is set to shape not only the retail landscape, but also the manufacturing and financial-services industries: and even the urban landscape itself.

Alibaba (which owns marketplaces such as Taobao) and 360buy.com (which focuses on electronics) rank among China's top ten retailers, and already provide national coverage through the reach of express delivery companies. As a result, China's retail sector seems more likely to follow a two-stage development path, with e-tailers emerging as the major national players. By removing some of the benefits of scale and specialisation that characterise the consumer-goods industry elsewhere, e-tail enables new manufacturers to join the market, selling goods like apparel and cosmetics directly from workshops and factories to consumers. Such businesses are also leveraging their broad access and widely recognised brands to expand their role in the financial-services sector.

China may have largely missed the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century. But its approach to e-tail is poised to be one of the forces shaping the emerging-market Internet revolution of the twenty-first century. 

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BIZ BRIEFS

Oman bound

Qatar Airways has commenced services to Salalah, joining Muscat as the airline's second destination in Oman. Salalah, south of the Arabian Peninsula, is the Doha-based airline's fifth new route of the year taking its global reach to 127 destinations.



Flying in style

Etihad Airways has introduced early bird special fare for its pearl business class. With the special fare customers can indulge in a 6'1" fully flat bed, award-winning cuisine with a dedicated onboard Food & Beverage manager, stylish lounges and complimentary Etihad Chauffeur Service. The sale period is valid from 26 May to 30 June and the travel period is valid from 1 August to 30 September.



What a TV!

LG Electronics has become the first company in the world to launch commercial sales of a 55-inch OLED TV. According to the company, it is just 4 millimeters thick and weighs around 10 kilograms.



Art and peace



Nepali and foreign artists conducted an art camp on the occasion of Buddha Jayanti at Buddha Maya Gardens hotel in Lumbini. It was organised by Fine Arts Nepal, students of Lalit Kala Campus and Demo Nepal.

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Repeating history



Taking a long-term time horizon gives a new perspective on Sino-Nepal relations



GUEST COLUMN
Bhaskar Koirala

Analysts of foreign policy and diplomacy typically focus on events that occur over a limited period of time to draw conclusions about the nature of relations between states. But in the case of Sino-Nepal relations, if we take a much longer time period to discuss some of its intricacies, we are afforded with a unique historic perspective on developments of the contemporary period.

Beginning with the introduction of Buddhism from Nepal to China right up to the launch this week of a Chinese weekly newspaper in Nepal, it is an exceptionally long legacy that constitutes the association between these two states. The notion of 'tripartite relations'

involving China, India and Nepal, for instance, is not new.

In 1770, the first Governor-General of Bengal, Warren Hastings, dispatched an emissary to Nepal to put forward a proposal to Jaya Prakash Malla of Kathmandu and Pritivi Narayan Shah of Gorkha seeking their cooperation to assist the East India Company to establish a direct channel of communication with Peking.

The British at the time were facing problems in commerce in the port of Canton from what they termed 'narrow-minded local officials' and felt that if 'they could present their complaints directly to Peking many of their problems would be solved'. Though the conditions were different, there was a precursor for trilateral cooperation nearly 250 years ago.

Sino-Nepal relations were also 'global' in nature. The Marquis Charles Cornwallis

(1738-1805), a leading British general in the American War of Independence used to be Governor-General of India and received complaints from the Court of Peking about encroachments by the 'Government of Nepaul' upon territories under Chinese jurisdiction and so therefore had come to the 'resolution of chastising the aggressor, or the Robber' as the king of Nepal was described in the dispatches.

China and Nepal went to war in 1791-1792, the last battle of which was fought near the Betrawadi River, a mere 20 km north of Kathmandu. Sitting in Calcutta, Cornwallis had procrastinated on requests for assistance from both sides during the hostilities, but decided eventually that 'the commercial advantages that Bengal may obtain by a friendly and open intercourse with both countries [made it] no less political than humane in us to interfere our good offices and endeavor to reestablish peace'.

However, the envoy that Cornwallis had selected to mediate, Col William Kirkpatrick, was in Patna en route to Kathmandu when he discovered that the 'Nepaul Regency', either dubious of the efficacy of our interposition with the Chinese, or fearful of the influence which, if successful, it might give us in their future councils, had suddenly, and without any reference to the British Government, concluded such a treaty with the invaders, as entirely superseded the necessity of the proposed mediation'.

Ironically, this peace agreement signed on 30 September 1792 between Kaji Dev Dutta Thapa and General Fu K'ang-an stipulated and introduced the quinquennial mission system (five-yearly Nepali missions to the Peking Court) that lasted more than a century till 1906 and laid the foundations for an unprecedented and sustained interaction between China and Nepal.

GEOPOLITICAL HISTORY: Nepal was always a 'middle kingdom' since the time of (left to right) Chinese Emperor Qianlong, British Governor General Warren Hastings, King Harshavardana in northern India and King Prithvi Narayan Shah.

communication between China and India by opening a new and more efficient route across the Himalaya at Kerung Pass.

This new route between Lhasa and Kathmandu was first used by an official Chinese mission to Nepal commanded by army officer Li Piao and 22 others, who proceeded on to the Court of King Harshavardhana of India, a convert and great patron of Buddhism then ruling over the entire Indo-Gangetic plain north of the Narmada River.

Li Piao's delegation was received in Kathmandu by King Narendra Deva who took pleasure in showing his guests around, even escorting them to 'the south-east of the capital [where] there is a lake full of water and of flame. The water does not flow but it always boils. If one holds a lighted candle by hand, the whole of the lake is set on fire; the fume and flame rise upward to several feet'. It was believed that in the bed of this lake was embedded the crown of Maitreya Buddha. This Chinese awe at the mysticism and exotica of Nepal has carried through to this day and is what draws increasing numbers of Chinese tourists to Nepal. It is also the legacy of a shared history that sustains Nepal's ties with China.

Bhaskar Koirala is a PhD student at the School of International Studies, Peking University and also director of the Nepal Institute of International and Strategic Studies www.niiss.org.np



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The ties were remarkably stable in spite of the changes in leadership in both countries during this period with six emperors, five kings and seven prime ministers in the two countries. Perhaps it is based on this historical memory that China today does not maintain rigid fraternal relations with any specific political element in Nepal, rather engaging as it does with whoever occupies the seat of power which is essentially a reflection of the will of the people.

Triangular trade between China and India via Nepal goes back even further, to the period of Princess Bhrikuti in the 7th century. The matrimonial alliance had the effect not only of opening Nepal to the outside world, it also facilitated



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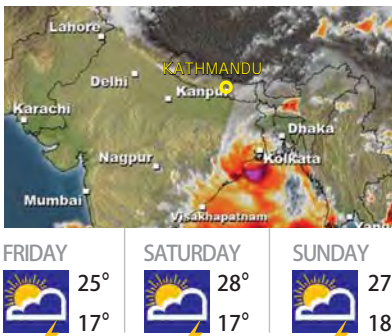


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This is the time of year when all attention is on Indian and Sri Lankan meteorological forecasters and their monsoon simulations. Indian scientists monitoring the pressure patterns over the Arabian Sea and the Subcontinent predict that the monsoon will hit the Kerala coast on 3 June. In Nepal, a extra-heavy pre-monsoon has stoked fears of a late arrival of the real thing. But it's too early to tell, and fingers crossed that there won't be a long dry spell in early June. The pre-monsoon storms will continue into the weekend, with evening showers, sometimes heavy.



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HONDA

EVENTS



HI-TEA, enjoy your cup of tea and performances while helping the children of Aishwarya Children Home. 1 June, 2 to 6pm, Hotel Orchid, Tripureshwar

The British School and Circus Kathmandu, a photo exhibition that is a culmination of creative projects done by class 7 and 8 students. Runs till 31 May, Image Ark Gallery, Kulimha tole, patan, (01)5006665

Threefold, an exhibition of paintings by three emerging artists reflecting Nepali culture, their personal psychological evolution and scientific wisdom. 19 May to 2 June (except Saturdays), 10.30pm to 5.30pm. Park Gallery, Pulchok, (01)5522307



NEPAL-AFRICA FILM FESTIVAL, watch amazing movies from 15 different African nations as well as selected Nepali movies. 18 June, Kathmandu

Shelter, a documentary on the issues of Nepali squatters. Rs 100, 1 June, 2.45pm. Rato Ghar, Ravibhawan, Kathmandu, (01)4287471



MY VOICE, a photography workshop where you tell stories through your photographs. Rs 3000, 6 to 12 June, 7 to 9 am, Suchana Bibhag building, Sinamangal, 9851000178, download application from www.dropbox.com/sh/obosg38yjiislrp/JeVHbHTDN7

Photography Workshop, beginners and keen learners take out your cameras and learn the basics of photography. Rs 3000, 1 to 9 June, 7 to 9am, Register at (01)4002037/9851180088/9851182100, www.artudio.org/event.php?event_id=47

Uni, She, celebrate the beauty of womanhood, a photo exhibition by Uma Bista. 2 June to 2 July, 10am to

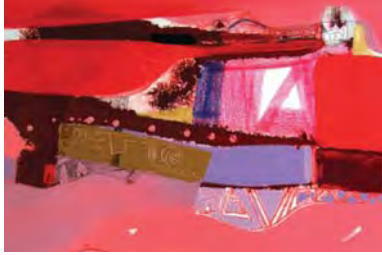
5pm, Image Ark Gallery. Kulimha Tole, Patan, (01)5006665, www.image-ark.com

Shopping Carnival, purchase stuff worth Rs 1000 and above from Civil Mall outlets and get a chance to win Samsung mobiles, home appliances and Bajaj Pulsar. Runs till 6 July, Civil Mall, Kathmandu.

Photo Exhibition by Nancy and Tyson Moktan. 1 June, 10am to 6pm, Le Sherpa, Pani Pokhari, Lazimpat, 9813663930

Dance Marathon, dance away for 8 hours 8 minutes and 8 seconds to show your support for gender equality and equity. Rs 500 for participants, Rs 100/200 for audience, 15 June, 10am to 7pm, T.T. Hall, Lainchour, www.facebook.com/events/162638933910996/?ref=22, register at <http://bit.ly/dmnepal>

Nepal in Pictures, showcase your photography skills in this nationwide photo competition organised by Photo Journalist Club Nepal and get a chance to win cash prizes. Deadline 15 June, 9851056865, www.pjclub.com.np



UTSAV, an exhibition of paintings by Sagar Manandhar. 5 to 30 June, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, (01)4218048/4438979

DINING



TRISARA, with dishes like flambeed prawns, crispy chicken, and khau soi, it would be a folly to ignore its aromas. Lajimpat



PERI PERI, home of legendary Portugese flamed grilled chicken, enjoy dishes served with the trademark Piri Piri sauce. Jhamsikhel, 9808563803

Boudha Stupa Restaurant and Café, bide your time in the free wi-fi zone as you enjoy wood fired pizzas, home-made pastas and Tibetan gyakok, Boudha, 9841484408

Alice restaurant, step in for scrumptious Thakali, Chinese, Continental and Japanese cuisine. Gairidhara, (01)4429207

Pumpnickel Bakery, get an early breakfast or brunch with interesting

choices of bread, experiment with its goat cheese or yak cheese sandwiches, or have a sip of coffee in the classy indoor dining area. Thamel, 7.30am-7pm, (01)4259185

Bhumi Restaurant & Bar, savor delicious Newari, Nepali, and Indian cuisine in a welcoming environment. Lajimpat, (01)4412193



MOMOTARAU, step in for mouthwatering Japanese delicacies, try their diverse variety of fresh noodles and authentic sauces. Sanepa Main road, (01)5521988

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



SAIGON PHO, spacious interior with authentic Vietnamese dishes. Lajimpat, (01)4443330



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MUSIC



SUMMER FEST, enjoy 12 hours of live music with bands like Cob Web, Lakhey and others, bike stunts, food stalls and gaming zones. *Rs 200, 8 June, 8am to 8pm, Bhrikuti Mandap Park, Exhibition Road*

Sukarma unplugged, spend your evening listening to the acoustic sounds and sipping fine wine, best food and chilled beer. *4 June, 7pm onwards, Tamas-laya, Naxal*

What the funk, we r soul'd out, dance to the beats of this reggae band, *every Tuesday, 7.30 pm onwards, Rs 250, Moksh, Jhamsikhel*

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

GETAWAYS

Himalayan Peace and Wellness Centre, yoga, detox, and Ayurveda treatments and retreats every day. Get 10 per cent discount on all Ayurvedic treatments. *Park Village, Budhanilkantha, 980106661, peace@wellness.com.np*



TEMPLE TREE RESORT AND SPA, a peaceful place to stay, complete with a swimming pool, massage parlour, and sauna, it'll be hard to leave the premises once you enter. *Gaurighat, Lakeside, (61)465819*

Dhulikhel Mountain Resort, announces summer bonanza offer. Stay at this lovely establishment for a discounted rate. *Dhulikhel, (01)4420774/4420776, reservations@dmrnepal.com*

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

GO GREEN

The second installment of Nepali Times EcoFair is finally here. The three-day fair will feature various stalls displaying eco- friendly products and services. Know more about solar energy, bio energy and electric vehicles. Learn about sustainable ideas and practices that help you do your bit for the environment, like rain-water harvesting, bio briquettes, and energy saving lights. Look around or purchase traditional crafts, pottery and recycled and Lokta paper products. And also enjoy live model presentations and musical performances.

5 to 7 June, 10am to 6pm,
Nepal Academy, Kamaladi, (01)5005601



World Environment Day



Ride with Pride, celebrate the World Environment Day- pedal your way from Basantapur Darbar Square to Patan Darbar Square, *Free Registration, 1 June, 7am, Kathmandu Cycle City, 9808961613/ 9802024586/9851087878*

Green Soldiers, a bicycle rally to mark the world environment day. *5 June, 7am, 9841530912*

Nepal Environment Film Festival, watch the latest documentaries, short films and movie clips on different environment issues and participate in the discussions and talk programs. *Free entrance for public/tickets for corporate houses, 3 to 5 June, 2 to 5pm, Russian Culture Center, Kamal Pokhari.*

Clean up the city, join the campaign to make the city clean and green and create environmental awareness among people. *5 June, 6.30am, Boudha Stupa, Chabahil*

EVEREST TRIVIA ANSWERS

Last week we tested our readers' knowledge of the world's highest mountain. If you are still searching for the answers, here they are. Go to www.facebook.com/nepalitimes to see if you have won the contest. The winner receives a six month subscription of Nepali Times and a red NT cap.

1. Chomolungma, Peak XV, and Sagarmatha.
2. British Surveyor General of India.
3. "Well, George, we knocked the bastard off."
4. Reinhold Messner (together with Peter Habeler) in 1978.
5. Junko Tabei from Japan in 1975.
6. Namgyal Wangdi.
7. Appa Sherpa.
8. Western Cwm.
9. Rongbuk Glacier.
10. The Yellow Band.



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LAXMI BANK
As a part of its Ujyalo Abhiyaan campaign, Laxmi Bank installed solar street lights at Bagmati Bridge in Thapathali and Saint Xavier's School in Godavari in 2012. The campaign is an initiative of 'Laxmi Cares'—an NGO formed and run by employees of Laxmi Bank. Ujyalo Abhiyaan aims to light up one public space each year and has already installed solar street lights in places like Patan Durbar Square, Three Star Club office and Mangal Bazaar Police Station.

AEPC
Alternative Energy Promotion Centre is a semi-autonomous government body that endorses renewable energy technologies and efficient use of energy. AEPC has been working in the areas of biogas, micro hydro, solar energy, improved cooking stove, improved water mill and bio fuel production in collaboration with donors and the government.



BRIHAT INVESTMENTS
Brihat Investments works with organisations to attract investments in the housing sector. One of their successful ventures includes a project in Sitapaila which incorporates a range of eco-friendly products. Their other project, Community Rental Home By Owner (CRBO) is already a pioneer in the field of hospitality and housing. They are also developing knowledgeable and trustworthy real estate marketing agents through training and education program

CENTRE FOR INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT
CIUD has been working vigorously for sustainable urban solutions to support and compliment the government's effort to tackle urban challenges since 2002. It will showcase products made from recycled plastic and bio briquette in the upcoming Eco Fair.

CLEAN ENERGY NEPAL
Clean Energy Nepal conducts education and advocacy campaigns on the use of sustainable energy. It aims to influence both policy makers and those affected at the grass roots towards using cleaner energy sources and diminishing the ever-increasing dependence on bio fuels.



GAZZAB - CO TEA
Gazzab-Co Tea promotes organic drinks including organic tea, coffee, honey, and aloe vera juice in Nepal. Gazzab-Co will organise organic green tea tasting sessions and launch stevia sugar free powder during the three day Eco Fair.

CHOYALI
Choyali art is an independent organisation that promotes different types of thankas including tara thanka, manjushree thanka and traditional wooden windows.

SOLAR ELECTRICITY
Solar Electricity, established in 1991, is a pioneer in solar home systems in the country. So far the company has lit up over 1500 households across the country.



to produce and sell candies, teas, juices, coffee, and spices.

ESEWA
Established in 2009, eSewa is the first online payment portal of Nepal. With eighteen banking partners and unique services like mobile wallet, payout agent and internet wallet, one can send and receive money as well as make purchases online.

HIMALAYAN CLIMATE INITIATIVE
HCI has introduced programs to make the people in Himalayan region resilient to climate change through their Climate Smart Living initiatives. The HamriBahini: The Green Angel project has created green jobs for 200 rural and young Nepali women helping them in a self-sustained business of making, and distributing cloth and paper shopping bags to replace use of polythene bags in Kathmandu.



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT
Ministry of Environment addresses issues relating to environmental conservation, pollution control, renewable energy promotion, environmental standards enforcement and monitoring, environmental impact assessment and climate change adaptation and mitigation. It aims to promote sustainable development through environmental protection.



KARUNA NATURAL WEARS
Established in 1997 Karuna Natural Wears promotes natural fabrics such as hemp, bamboo, linen, allo and ramie through its clothing and accessory line. Infusing minimal design elements, Karuna Wears' products are a perfect mix of fashion and nature. It has showrooms at Lazimpat and Durbarimarg.

KATHMANDU METROPOLITAN CITY
The environment division at KMC has been raising awareness on reducing waste from the source while managing the waste generated by 8,00,000 plus population of the valley. Though a ban on plastic had been announced few years ago, KMC is determined to implement the ban strictly from next month. It encourages the use of paper and cloth bags as an alternative to plastic bags. s

SV GALLERY
For the first time in Nepal, SV Gallery has launched Indian parquetting made with German technology. It is waterproof, shockproof, and fireproof. The HDF particle parquetting is available at the same price as other inferior products.



SYAKAR TRADING
Syakar Trading, the authorised distributor of Honda motors in Nepal recently introduced Honda Insight, a hybrid car in the market. The colour-coded instrument panel glows green when you are driving efficiently and turns to blue when you are guzzling gas. Free test drives on the Insight will be available during the Eco Fair.



GREEN

It's not just a trend anymore. Going green has become a lifestyle. *Nepali Times* is hosting the second edition of EcoFair, showcasing eco-friendly products and services on 5, 6 and 7 March. The fair aims to develop a platform for green entrepreneurs and services. It will be an event to discover products and services together green entrepreneurs, government bodies and businesses into the future. This year's EcoFair will exhibit workable examples of how to live with shortages of electricity, biogas, electric vehicles to organic agriculture.



SABAH NEPAL
Sabah Nepal is an organisation of home based workers that has more than 1100 members. These women produce finest quality accessories, home furnishing, apparel, and other hand crafted products. The popular Village Café in Pulchowk run by members of Sabah Nepal serves mouthwatering traditional Newari delicacies.

has become a necessity for sustainable growth. On 6 and 7 June at Nepal Academy Hall, Kamaladi. For showcasing sustainability ideas, products and practical, new eco-living habits that will bring positive changes and innovators who are leading the charge. Several ideas about sustainable lifestyles and changes of everything: from solar home lighting to e.



Solar Solutions provides solar energy solutions to both residential and commercial customers. It was established in 2008 by energy professionals with wide range of experience in renewable energy technologies. The company has a wide network of branches to ensure quality of delivery, installation and after sales services.



Estimated to be around 150 years old, Namuna Ghar was restored to its former glory by architect and owner Rabindra Puri in 2001. Designed in a traditional Newari style, the three-storey brick and wood structure has inspired many to follow in its footsteps. A perfect example of cultural restoration, the house today serves both as a residence and venue for art and cultural events.

Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) is an autonomous apex body to promote science and technology in the country. NAST also lends its technical expertise to partner organisations working for environment conservation.

Nerolac has introduced eco-friendly paints with low VOC (volatile organic compound), which means neither your house nor the environment is damaged when you use their range of interior and exterior emulsions.



Shyam Badan Shrestha started Nepal Knotcraft Centre in a small workshop thirty years ago to make special macramé handicraft. Today there are hundreds of women from all over Nepal involved with the company producing macrame handicrafts, furniture and accessories, all made with recycled materials.

Established in 1999, School of Environmental Science and Management (SCHEMS) is a pioneer institute providing bachelor's and master's degree course on Environment science. The teaching faculty comprises of people from interdisciplinary background who have helped produce skilled human resource in the environment conservation sector.



The demand for urban homes in Nepal will be close to one million this decade and to tackle this situation UN-Habitat Nepal has launched Green Homes, promoting sustainable housing. The three-year project incorporates five major areas—green building, passive solar design, energy efficiency, water conservation and sustainable management of waste and waste water at household level.

Since 2006 RHCC has been actively promoting rainwater harvesting in Nepal. With technical and advisory support from RAIN Foundation, Netherlands, the centre aims to increase access to water for drinking, better sanitation and micro-irrigation for income generation through this technology.

SCP promotes green building materials and solutions, and provides consumer information on the benefits of clean energy and energy-saving building material for sustainable consumption patterns in the construction industry. At the fair, SCP will showcase environment friendly construction techniques.

What started out as a pharmacy in Jawalakhel is now a hospital serving the residents of Lalitpur and beyond. Alka Hospital provides a range of diagnostic facilities, OPD services, surgery, as well as maternity care.

With products like UPS, lamps, charge controllers, solar panels, and industrial batteries to boost your solar sets' efficiency, Sipradi Energy has been servicing the alternative energy market since 2010 with the help of 140 dealers across the country.

Sunray Energy Nepal has introduced several solar related technologies in Nepal. Its products include solar panels, solar street lights, solar tukki, tabular batteries and charge controllers that provide better alternative during the crippling power cuts.



NEVI Tradelink, which was involved in the Safa Tempo campaign, took green transportation initiative further by importing 100 per cent electric cars and buses from China. Bijuli I and Bijuli II are 4-seater and 5-seater vehicles, respectively whereas the buses are 14-seaters. The maximum speed of the buses is 40 kilometres per hour while Bijuli I and Bijuli II have maximum speed up to 65 and 105 km per hour respectively.

Triveni Byapar has launched energy-saving products- Panasonic and Yasuda. The new range of smart air- conditioners from Panasonic has ECONAVI system that automatically adjusts power levels reducing waste, saving energy and money.



Future Green Energy has introduced eco-friendly solar powered LED lights. These products use a new generation of Lithium Iron Phosphorus battery that is environment friendly and more efficient than sealed lead acid batteries. They also last longer with up to 3000 charge cycles.

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THE SCENT OF GREEN PAPAYA



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

Neurotically memorising the names of the winning films and their directors of the Cannes Film Festival is no fun game. But it is a game cinephiles worldwide are compelled to play until the films are available. *Blue Is the Warmest Colour*, a film about a lesbian romance by Abdellatif Kechiche, was awarded the coveted Palme d'Or this year.

As we impatiently anticipate the film's release among many others from this year, it may be a good idea to revisit an old classic from the festival. In 1993, a young Vietnamese-French director named Tran Anh Hung made such an impression on Lazennec Productions that they financed his first feature film, the now famous and revered *The Scent of Green Papaya*, set in Vietnam but actually shot on a soundstage in Boulogne, France.

Watching the film today, twenty years later, one is still struck by the verisimilitude of the provincial Vietnamese setting that the film depicts with such loving care and attention to detail - something a director can only achieve with a great deal of perseverance, excellent visual memory, and of course, an extraordinary affinity for that specific place or country.

The story in *The Scent of Green Papaya* is gentle, and simple, yet transcends its very simplicity due to the immense skill of its maker who clearly loves deep character study and realises that the smallest

gesture can be the most telling if captured correctly by the camera.

The film centers around a young girl Mui (Man San Lu) who is brought to work for a rich family at the age of ten. Mui quickly learns the ways of the household, helping to chop vegetables and preparing traditional Vietnamese meals. We see her blossom as she quietly observes the world around her and wins the heart of the mother of the household with her graceful ways.

Over the course of the years, we watch Mui (now played by Tran Nu Yen-Khe) grow into a beautiful and thoughtful young woman who has become beloved to the now old mother, but chooses to change households to work for a handsome young pianist.

As we watch her move about the new household, putting things to right and creating a harmony with everything around her, we fall in love with this older Mui just as the pianist does.

It is no surprise then that this film won the Camera d'Or that year at Cannes, a prestigious prize awarded annually to a director for their first feature film.

Personally, *The Scent of Green Papaya* is one of my favourite films. It is like a treasured book or poem that I can pull out at any time, either watching it all the way through or skimming to the best parts to be inspired and to warm my soul in a way that only a thing of pure beauty can do. 🇻🇳

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer



GIZMO by YANTRICK

Ice ice baby!

Nothing beats the summer heat quite like a chilled glass of beer. So this week Yantrick went around town in the scorching heat hunting for a refrigerator and tried the recently launched Panasonic 415 VNWA. The sleek model in stainless steel colour isn't just an eye candy, given its energy efficiency it is also a great bargain for many more summers to come.

For those of you who like Yantrick take that extra mile to save power, should know that recent sleek models of refrigerators consume a third of energy compared to its vintage cousins. A fridge manufactured in 1972, for example is said to consume 2000 kw of electricity per year while one made in 2001 consumes just about 485 kw.



Unlike most other refrigerators, this glossy model from Panasonic has refrigeration on top and a pull-out drawer freezer on the bottom. Initially it takes some time getting used to it but once you figure your way

around, you realise just how convenient the design is. The tempered glass shelf in the center is aptly located and with a capability to hold up to 100kg, there is no worry about over stocking your fridge. The Panasonic 415 VNWA (415lts capacity) comes installed with an AG filter that cleans circulating air to deactivate bacteria and reduce odour. But the best part about the fridge is its smart eco-friendly behaviour.

With the help of sensors that detect everything from the level of lighting in the room, to when and how often the fridge door is opened and the temperature of the room, the fridge is able to control its internal temperature, minimising excess energy. You can choose among the two modes of operation which further enhances the product's eco-friendliness. The night mode automatically reduces the cooling power when lights are switched off, while the smart eco mode regulates the refrigerator's internal temperature according to usage behaviour. When you go to sleep, so does your fridge. This system saves up to 25% electricity besides cooling effectively.

A refrigerator consumes about one-sixth of the total electricity consumption at home. So, buying a fridge that is energy efficient may just be the way to bring down your electricity bills and head towards a greener life. 🇻🇳

Yantricks verdict: It isn't just eye candy, given its energy efficiency it is a great bargain for many more summers to come.

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RE VIEW

The people who make it possible

It was one of those flukes of history that the Swiss lost out on being the first expedition to summit Mt Everest in 1952. But it was the South Col route that they pioneered which was used a year later by Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay for the successful ascent. Tenzing had in fact been on the Swiss expedition and reached the altitude of 8,595m with Raymond Lambert on the Southeast Ridge of Everest. The two tried heroically to press on to the summit, bivouacking at 8,400m without oxygen or tents or stoves, and drinking water by melting snow with a candle. One wonders how different history would have been if they had made the last 300m.

The Swiss came back to Everest several times, and were there in a commercial expedition led by noted mountaineer Kari Kohler in 2008. They took along a camera crew and made a stupendous documentary about their climb and the Sherpas who made it possible, called *Sherpas, The True Heroes of Everest*.

The documentary was released in 2009, and won the best film award in the



Kathmandu International Film Festival (KIMFF) in that year. In the year of the 60th anniversary of the first climb, and also the year when there was the first and highest-ever brawl on Everest between Sherpa rope-fixers and western climbers, it is instructive to revisit this film.

First of all, the documentary has footage that makes it almost feel like you are there yourself on the South Col or on the icy cliffs of the Lhotse Face, dangling by a rope. Not as

vivid perhaps as the IMAX film, *Everest*, but almost as dramatic. Secondly, it humanises like no other film, the porters, guides, high-altitude rope-fixers that make Everest expeditions possible. This is a film that should be seen by all who still use the word 'sherpa' to mean porters (or all-terrain vehicles) interchangeably with 'Sherpa', an ethnic group from Nepal.

The film follows Long Dorje, Norbu, Mingma and Ang Nima from their farewells with families in Kathmandu, Thame and Namche to Base Camp, up the Icefall, the camp-fixing on the Western Cwm right up to the top. Earlier in the film, Long Dorje, breaks down during an interview, wiping away tears. Surprisingly, he isn't getting emotional remembering a friend who died on the mountain, but chokes up when he is describing how as a child he never got to go to school like his brothers. His wife, Pasang Tiki, sheds tears as well as she describes how traumatic it is waiting for news from Everest while her husband is on the mountain. He has climbed 13 times, but she has never got used to it.

This is a film that brings out the dignity, generosity, compassion, companionship and bravery of the hardy folk that the world has come to rely on to make it possible to climb in the Himalaya and beyond. Norbu, in a characteristic Sherpa understatement, calls expedition work "a hard job" but says "it has to be done".

"Every year we come back to Base Camp, and think we will never come back, but we always do," he says. The film shows

the haggling over rope-fixing, camp-setting and portering, all done light-heartedly with the Sherpas happy to earn the "last price" of about \$5,000 per expedition. It may sound like a lot, but that is their annual income for most. The footage of the congestion on the Icefall and the Hillary Step caused by inexperienced climbers, the ladder crossings of crevasses gives viewers goose pimples.

The documentary also covers the death of one of the climbers from exhaustion on his way down, and how his guide, Mingma, risks his life and nearly dies trying to save him. The scenes of the near-vertical Lhotse face and the extreme difficulty of driving ice pitons for ropes in 6 100 km/h gales at -40 degrees gives us an idea of the conditions which triggered the fist fight on the mountain last month. Whoever was right, one walks away from this film with a much better understanding of the lives of a people who make mountaineering possible in Nepal.

Kunda Dixit

Has been shown all over Nepal, including in the Khumbu. Sherpas The True Heroes of Mount Everest 2009, A film by Frank Senn, Hari Thapa and Otto Honegger, Swiss National Television and Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, 51m

nepalitimes.com

To watch trailer of the documentary



SOMEPLACE ELSE



PICS: CINDREY LIU

Patan Durbar Square is one of the most interesting places in Lalitpur. It is easy to lose track of time once you are inside this beautiful maze of ancient temples and curio shops. Less crowded and more peaceful than Kathmandu's Durbar Square, the area is perfect for a weekend outing. Once you have satisfied your thirst for art and history, there are a lot of dining options within the square that will cater to your hungry stomach. Everything from local Newari dishes to vegan food, Indian and Western cuisine is up for grabs. Some of the restaurants even have rooftop dining areas that lets you enjoy a magnificent view of the entire square.

CAFÉ DU TEMPLE

Café du Temple might have the best view of all, revealing the whole of Patan Durbar Square from its top floor. During the Lalitpur festival, my friends and I had an excellent view of the free concert taking place within the Square from that very spot. Tarps and other shelters keep off the sun and the rain, although it does tend to leak during a particularly heavy downpour.

The restaurant offers a range of Nepali, Indian, and Western dishes, as well as snacks, drinks and



desserts. It is a pretty standard fare, with one or two standout selections. The vegetable korma curry (Rs 225) is excellent, not too spicy but rich and tasty. However rice isn't included and comes as a set dish at Rs 70. We tried the Temple Special Chicken, a grilled thigh covered in a cheesy sauce. The chicken itself was a little dry, but when accompanied with the sauce, no complaints there. The Deep Fried Fish came with chips and a small salad. The special tartar sauce is a winning combination with the juicy, breaded pieces of fish.

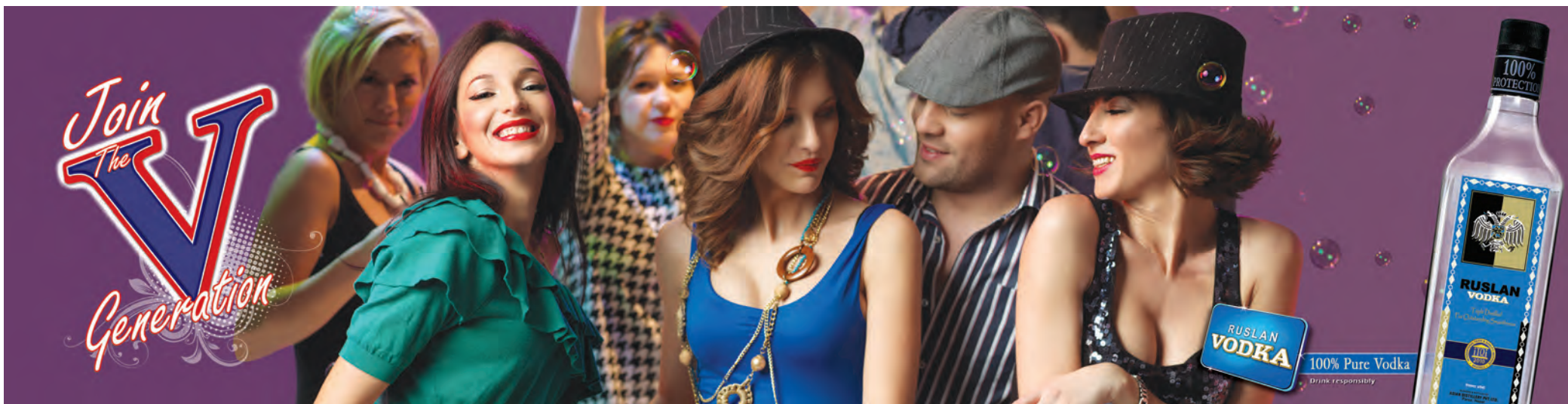
To finish our meal we ordered a couple of milkshakes, mango and chocolate (Rs 95) which were quite

a disappointment. The perfect milkshake has to hit that sweet spot between a drink and an ice cream, and the ones we had tasted more like juices. It wasn't ice-cold either.

On the whole, Café du Temple might be better remembered for its spectacular view than the quality of its food. Our meal was fine, but certainly not something to sing about later. However the pictures we took from the rooftop were definitely something we would be showing off to our friends.

Sulaiman Daud

How to get there: Café Du Temple is located at Patan Durbar Square, south of Krishna Mandir.



Nick Simon's Institute



DHAVANTARI

Buddha Basnyat, MD

For seven years now the Nick Simon's Institute has worked to provide quality health care to Nepalis especially in rural areas. The institute has devised effective training programs to this effect. But the most impressive aspect of the NSI approach has been to consider whether these training programs have a long term impact on government policies. This consideration is key because simply carrying out training programs without follow-

up does not yield effective results.

Few organisations can boast of providing the sort of training that NSI offers. In total, NSI has five areas of training.

Anesthesia Assistant Course (AAC) is a one-year international course for nurses and health assistants. There are still no anesthesia doctors in 60 of our district hospitals. Nine people have passed the course and 14 are currently studying to fill this gap in the districts.

Similarly, the Biomedical Equipment Technician (BMET) is a one- year course that trains college graduates to maintain and repair hospital equipments. Twenty participants are being trained this year. This is almost

useful training in the case of Nepal where majority of the hospitals have equipments stored away because of lack of simple repair job.

The Skilled Birth Attendant training (SBA) is a 4-10 weeks training for nurses, midwives and doctors to conduct deliveries including those with complications. So far the NSI has provided this training to 173 candidates. The government of Nepal's National Health Training Center has requested an expansion of this program. A 3- month course of ultrasound training for government doctors to do basic diagnostic is also available. The simple ultrasound examination has revolutionised diagnostic capabilities.

Finally the Mid-Level Practicum (MLP) training which is a three- month clinical-based course, upgrades the skills of government mid- level workers (health assistants and auxiliary health care workers). These workers form the backbone of the rural health care team, but are often left languishing in rural areas because of lack of refreshment courses. In the next 7 years we hope NSI moves from strength to strength so that many more Nepalis in rural Nepal will benefit from their programs. ☐

HAPPENINGS

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DEVYANI SHIWAKOTI

OUR VOICE COUNT: Around 1,200 people gather in Baneshwor demanding the resignation of Khil Raj Regmi as Chief of Justice on the occasion of Republic Day



KUNDA DIXIT

COMMUNITY PRIDE: Kalpana Chapagain (left) of Radio Didi Bahini and Khem Kumari Pokhrel of Radio Mukti are conferred the National Media Award.



CINDREY LIU

WELCOME ALL: A stall owner shows books to buyers at the Education and Book Fair 2013 held at Bhrikutmandap on Monday.



SATHAPORN KAMKONG

TEA TIME: An elderly woman enjoys break from work with a cup of tea in Kathmandu Durbar square.

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Just want justice

DAMBAR K SHRESTHA

Krishna Adhikari was 18 years old when the Maoists took him away from his home in Phujel of Gorkha district on 4 June 2004. His body was later found in Chitwan.

Krishna's parents, Nanda Prasad Adhikari and Ganga Maya, went to the National Human Rights Commission, civil rights activist groups, the police, and district administration to lodge a complaint. No one listened to them.

So, out of desperation and with nothing left to lose, Nanda Prasad and Ganga Maya came to Kathmandu in January this year and staged a hunger strike outside Prime Minister Babu Ram Bhattarai's official residence in Baluwatar. The police picked them up and dragged them to the Kamal Pokhari Station, where they were illegally detained for 48 days. Later, they were handcuffed and taken back to Gorkha in a jeep and dumped there even though the Maoists had evicted them from their home.

Now, Ganga Maya is sick, and the couple are back on the pavement outside Kathmandu's Bir Hospital, waiting for some charitable person to pay her medical bills. It doesn't look like



DAMBAR K SHRESTHA

Parents of youth murdered during the war are themselves illegally detained

the Adhikaris will get either justice or treatment. Passers-by crowd around them, but their plight is drowned in a capital with so much misery.

"We went to Baluwatar because no one listened to us," says the bearded Nanda Prasad, "we thought at least the prime minister from Gorkha would.

But they locked us up. Now we are back because my wife needs treatment."

The Adhikaris want to lodge a complaint with the police naming the Maoist cadre who they say are behind their son's murder: Januka Poudel, Chhabilal Poudel, Kali Prasad Adhikari, Baburam Adhikari,

Ram Prasad Adhikari, Shiva Prasad Adhikari. Among them, Januka Poudel is now personal assistant to Baburam Bhattarai's wife, Hisila Yami.

After their son's murder, the Adhikaris were threatened by the Maoists and were told their other son would also be killed if they didn't withdraw their FIR


application. Then in January 2008, the Maoists killed all their livestock and chased them out of their homestead in Phujel.

When asked why the couple was illegally detained in January, the then head of Kathmandu Police, SSP Rana Bahadur Chand told us: "We took their problem to the district administration and the Home Ministry, and gave them food and shelter while they waited. But since it was a case in Gorkha we sent them back."

Kamal Pokhari Police station chief Dipak Bhandari said they were removed because they were obstructing traffic outside the prime minister's residence, but had no answer to why they were locked up. He said they were sent to Gorkha on instruction of the district administration.

The CDO of Kathmandu, Krishna Karki said the couple refused to take the Rs 1 million compensation for families of conflict victims, and insisted that they wanted the murderers prosecuted. "But it is not possible to file a case because all conflict-related cases like these were scrapped in 2008 by the Pushpa Kamal Dahal-led government," Karki said.

Human rights lawyer Tika Bhattarai said it is illegal to detain anymore more than 24 hours without producing them in court. "If we are to respect the rule of law, everyone involved in detaining the Adhikari couple or ordering their detention can be prosecuted and the victims must be compensated." 🇳🇵



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Abt Associates, a major global health research, technical assistance, and consulting company, seeks qualified candidates for a potential 3-year project to evaluate family planning activities in Nepal. The project will work with the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Nepal Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) to evaluate outcomes and impacts of family planning activities and pilot projects. Brief descriptions and qualification requirements for open positions are listed below. All positions are contingent on project award.

To be considered for any position, an applicant must submit his/her CV and an application letter that provides details of the applicant's specific qualifications for the desired position to:

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In the subject line of the email, write the title of the position for which you are applying. If you wish to apply for more than one position, please submit separate applications for each position. Applications that do not follow these instructions, or that do not meet the stated minimum qualification requirements, **will not be considered**.

Team Leader — Provides overall strategic direction, management and technical leadership to the project. Leads program evaluations and family planning studies, including formative, process, implementation and impact evaluations of DFID-funded family planning pilot projects. Acts as the primary liaison between the project, DFID, the MoHP, and the companion DFID-funded family planning service provision project. Responsible for ensuring responsiveness and quality of project results. Guides project staff and the overall management of operational, financial and administrative aspects of the project.

Qualification Requirements: Masters Degree (minimum), PhD (preferred) in Economics, Demography, Public Health, Sociology, or other relevant field and 10 years of international health experience. Substantial experience in all phases of evaluation research and impact evaluations including protocol design, sampling, instrument design, data collection, data analysis and report writing and evaluating. Experience in evaluating family planning interventions. Demonstrated ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with DFID, ministry officials, and other development partners.

Monitoring & Evaluation Advisor — Provides technical assistance to the Government of Nepal and to the DFID-funded family planning project to improve routine monitoring of family planning provision, including safe abortion in both the Government and non-state sector. Supports the MoHP and the DFID-funded family planning service provision contractor to develop logframes, indicators and routine monitoring and evaluation plans for family planning interventions.

Qualification Requirements: Master's Degree in Economics, Public Policy, Demography, Public Health, Sociology, or other relevant field and 8 years of experience. Experience in developing and implementing routine data monitoring systems for family planning programmes. Demonstrated ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with DFID, ministry officials, and other development partners.

Finance & Administration Manager — This position is part-time with potential to be full-time. The Finance and Administration Manager manages contract, procurement, subcontracting, financial management and reporting, and provides general administrative support to the program. Develops and tracks budgets, manages payroll and vendor relations, and controls all financial transactions and reporting, both for the client and for Abt Associates headquarters.

Qualification Requirements: Bachelors in Business, Administration, Finance, or Accounting and 4 years of experience in administration, project management and/or financial management, working with international donors in a development setting. Experience with DFID contracts desirable.

Short-Term Program Evaluation Consultants— Abt Associates is seeking qualified experts in the areas of impact evaluation, survey design and implementation, mapping, process evaluation, qualitative research, and value for money evaluation.

Qualification Requirements: Master's Degree and 10 years of experience.

Interested individuals can learn more about Abt Associates' multi-disciplinary group of dedicated professionals who provide technical assistance, research, analysis, and systems strengthening services in more than 100 countries at:

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Arunima conquers two Everests



KUNDA DIXIT

When Arunima Sinha neared the highest point in the world at 10:55 in the morning of 21 May, she let out a shriek. Her climbing partner, Nima Sherpa, thought something was wrong and rushed to her side, asking “What happened, what happened?” Arunima turned around and with a big smile said: “I am

shouting with happiness. I did it.” It has been a long way in a very short time for Arunima from a hospital bed at AIMS in New Delhi after her left leg was amputated a year ago. This is story of a young woman who attained two Everests: one to climb the physical mountain, the other to overcome a tragic injury and strive for an impossible goal. Arunima was a national volleyball player from the Uttar Pradesh team and was travelling on a train to Delhi when six men tried to snatch her necklace. When she resisted, they threw her out of the running train at 1AM. An incoming train ran over her left leg, and Arunima lay there between the tracks, her body broken. Other trains passed within inches of her face. She was rescued six hours later. Surgeons amputated her left leg and replaced her right femur with a steel rod. She refused to be on crutches and turned away a wheel chair, and started immediately into physical therapy. Doctors had said she would take up to two years to be able to get up on her artificial leg, but she was walking with the help of parallel bars within two days. They can’t explain how it happened. It was while she was recovering in her hospital bed that Arunima decided that if she was to overcome her disability, she needed to set a goal, and she gave herself the most difficult task she could think of: climb the world’s highest mountain. Her brother, Om Prakash, encouraged her and soon she was making what doctors called a “miraculous” recovery. “Everyone would come to hospital and console me saying ‘bichara,’” Arunima said in Hindi, “I decided I would not be a ‘poor thing’ and set an example for others like me.” Arunima’s inspirations were cricketer Yuvaraj Singh, who successfully battled cancer and Bachendri Pal, the first Indian woman to climb Everest in 1984, who encouraged her and lined up a sponsorship from the Adventure Foundation of Tata Steel. Arunima had always idolised Pal and felt honoured to have a mentor like her as

TRUE GRIT: Arunima Sinha, the first female amputee to make it to the top of Mt Everest last week, Arunima at a climbing wall with her prosthetic leg (centre) and with her mentor India’s first Everest sumiteer Bachindra Pal.

she trained in the Garwhal Himalaya, climbing many of the peaks there. Finally, after also climbing Island Peak in Nepal, she was confident enough to join up with the EcoEverest 2013 Expedition with six other Indian members. When more than 500 climbers get to the top within one week, is Everest still a challenge, we ask her. “People think Everest is easy, it’s not,” she replied, “the vertical Lhotse Face and the Hillary Step are the hardest things I have ever done. The crampons work well on ice, but they scrape and slip on the rock, one small mistake and you either fall into China or down to Camp II.” Arunima had the stamina, but her endurance was also tested to the limits. Because she was slower than others, it took her 26 hours of continuous climbing to get from the South Col to the summit and back. Once, near the South Summit Arunima slipped and was saved because she was hooked to the fixed rope with her carabiner. Finally, when she saw the top, Arunima had to suppress a strong urge to run to it. “The view from the top is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen, we were above the clouds, the others peaks looked so small and far below,” she recalled. Arunima is now working on a plan to build a sports academy for underprivileged children in the town of Unnao in Uttar Pradesh. She has got the land, but there is no money for the facility yet. She hopes the publicity about her climb will help her in fund-raising. Arunima adjusted her prosthetic leg as she prepared to leave for the Nepal government’s reception for Everest Sumiteers at the Naryanhiti Museum on Wednesday, and said: “Everyone has Everests in their lives, but however impossible it may look no goal is insurmountable. You just need to believe in yourself.”



CHINA DAILY ASIA WEEKLY
Wishes our readers
A Happy and Prosperous
Chinese New Year
CHINA DAILY
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By CHAN KIN SANG in Hong Kong
Bachendri Pal, the first Indian woman to climb Everest in 1984, who encouraged her and lined up a sponsorship from the Adventure Foundation of Tata Steel. Arunima had always idolised Pal and felt honoured to have a mentor like her as

‘8’ IS FOR PROSPERITY BUT WILL IT BE A SLIPPERY YEAR OR A SMOOTH RIDE AHEAD FOR ASIAN INVESTORS?

Asian investors will have a collective sigh of relief when the dragon ascends to the heavens on Feb 10 at the end of its zodiac cycle. In good omen to the proverbial fire and brimstone, the dragon has left global financial markets and economies relatively unscathed. And as the snake, the sixth in the 12-animal cycle, dithers in to usher in a new year in the Chinese calendar, investors can take heart that while the economic crisis remains unresolved, the worst may be over – the US has avoided its fiscal cliff and fears of a hard landing in China’s economy offers greatest comfort to the rest of Asia. Despite moderating growth, GDP still expanded 7.6 per-

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DEVYANI SHIWAKOTI

The uncertainty over politicised student union elections reflects doubts over national elections

The rot at the bottom



HERE WE GO
Trishna Rana

Campuses are covered in a sea of red as college students across Nepal prepare for union elections that were scheduled for next week. Ever since the Panchayat, college elections in Nepal have been a proxy for the political parties which were banned in those days. And today, just like national elections are uncertain, student elections start looking iffy just as their dates are announced. There was already a controversy about voter lists, with allegations that student unions have padded it with fake student admissions, and after university officials and student-body representatives this week could not agree on technicalities, the elections were indefinitely postponed. 6 June will be yet another deadline the country just missed.

Free Student Union (FSU) elections for 60 constituent campuses of TU are supposed to take place annually, but

were put on hold for four years because of disagreements over the electoral system, finally settling on a mixed electoral system earlier this year. Even after TU announced dates for April, polls were pushed back twice due to lack of preparation. Seen as a dress rehearsal for the CA elections later in the year, parent parties went all out to boost the chances of their proxies. Party leaders who don't tire of harping on the virtues of free and fair elections funded unions and instructed them to do whatever it took to bolster vote banks. Union heads held college administrators hostage earlier this month and hundreds of fake students were admitted.

The lead up to college elections has not only set a wrong precedent for national polls, it also shows how the rot in Nepali politics starts at the very bottom. With unions heavily reliant on parent parties for funds and institutional support, it's not surprising to see problems that are all too familiar on the national level: corruption, violence, and intimidation. Students are conscripted as foot soldiers to do their parties' dirty work in college campuses. From enforcing bandas by burning

school buses to manhandling college management, student unions are anything but student friendly.

"There are broken chairs, light bulbs don't work, the library does not open on time, we don't have a set timetable for exams, and results are published ten months later. Why don't unions pay attention to these basic issues first?" asks 24-year-old Ranjana Koirala, a English literature student at Patan Multiple Campus. "Let politicians do the politics."

Ask union heads why campus life is so politicised and why issues of federalism get precedence over more pressing concerns like reforming the university system or youth employment, the answer is the same regardless of which flag they fly: "If politics is set right, then everything else will fall in place".

Students shouldn't be held hostage to promises of a stable polity. Even through a decade of conflict Nepal managed to achieve 90 per cent enrolment in primary schools and virtual gender parity. These children will soon be going to college. They need a more modern curriculum, better infrastructure, regular

and reliable classes free of politics. When TU tried to introduce an age limit of 28 for candidates contesting FSU elections, students filed a petition. The Supreme Court had to intervene and declare the act would come into effect starting from 2015. Leaders who use colleges as a stepping stone into mainstream politics will see their careers end if the age bar is implemented and will no doubt revolt again in 2015.

Student unions and political parties make all decision within campus grounds, and this points to institutional failure in Tribhuvan University. For a month in April, the university was without an examination controller as parties tried to arm twist their candidate to the post.

Having a student body that is politically aware and informed is good for the nation, but when students set such low standards of activism the future of Nepali politics looks dismal. The only way student leaders can gain genuine affection and support from their peers is if they lose some of their revolutionary zeal, and focus on what is important: improving the basics of student life and letting their responsible and accountable behaviour trickle up into national politics. 🇳🇵

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Mend your ways

Editorial, *Kantipur*, 29 May

कान्तिपुर

Once again, the Maoists have shown their wild side by attacking NC leader Gagan Thapa at a program in Rukum. Their leaders in Kathmandu keep talking of political transformation, but the cadres’ action in Rukum speaks the exact opposite.

Since they signed a peace treaty accepting mainstream politics seven years ago, the Maoists have tested the limits of democracy, using the YCL to force donations and marching armed combatants out of cantonments in a show of power. But after Baburam Bhattarai’s prolonged stint in government, which saw progress in ex-combatant integration, everyone thought their ways had changed. This latest incident in Rukum raises serious doubts over this supposed transformation.

During the insurgency, members of other parties were not allowed entry into Maoist strongholds like Rolpa and Rukum. Many local NC and UML leaders were beaten up, killed, or chased away. As the conflict grew worse, these areas became Maoist base areas. But now with elections coming up, local leaders are going back to the villages, which is why Gagan Thapa headed to Rukum recently.

A lot of NC and UML leaders became Maoists during the insurgency. So, it was only natural for some unsatisfied Maoist leaders in Rukum to join the NC. But a simple welcoming program turned violent because the Maoists in Rukum could not quit their old ways.

Not only does this raise doubts about the Maoists’ commitment to democracy, it also puts the next elections in doubt. Will they really be free, fair, and neutral as proposed?

Maybe the Maoists don’t want free and fair elections, and want to hold polls on their own terms, with violence and intimidation. If not, their actions must show they are committed to peaceful politics. The party’s leadership must take action against its wayward cadre so that other parties’ members do not have to fear for their life.

Ultimately, the Maoist leadership must accept that Nepal’s don’t want a democracy defined by the Maoists, they want a democracy that ensures the rights of sovereign people.



DIWAKAR CHETTRI



SHRAWANKUMAR DEV

Murder mystery

Himal Khabarpatrika, 26 May

हिमाल

Former CA member Sadrul Miya Haque (*pic centre*) was found dead on 21 May at the residential quarter of his own petrol pump in Kalyanpur, Saptari. Haque’s throat had been slit, and his body was covered in injuries. Despite the Central Investigation Bureau’s involvement in the case and the formation of a probe committee, Haque’s murder is still shrouded in mystery. The 55-year-old had returned to his room on Monday night after attending a wedding. It is still unclear who accompanied Haque back to the village.

When he didn’t return home in the morning, the family members set out to search for him and found his body at the residence of the petrol pump. A sharp weapon used to murder Haque was found at the same place while his shirt, slippers and notebook were found near the petrol pump. Since the body was found at Haque’s room local police suspect the involvement of someone close to Haque’s family.

According to relatives, Haque had been under immense stress after being unable to pay the workers at his brick

factory. During the wedding some people had overheard a phone conversation about money. Haque had worked in India for a few years before he started a brick factory in his village. He was elected the ward secretary in 1997 and was also the president of the Tarun dal, the youth wing of NC in his village. He was elected to the Constituent Assembly as an independent candidate from Constituency number 5 of Saptari district in 2008. When it came to issues related to minorities and Muslims, he was always vocal and actively fought for their rights. After the CA was dissolved he returned to his village and was involved in business and social work.

NEPALI TWEETS

sarojraj

समय अर्कोको पाल्टामा परेका बेला गणतन्त्र दिवसको उत्सव फिका हुने रहेछ ।

Celebrating Republic Day doesn't make sense when we are in someone else's back pocket.

Govinda Adhikari

पुकटलाई अन्तराष्ट्रिय समुदायले कहाँ बोलाउनु ठीक हो - मानवताविरोधी अपराधमा मुद्दा चलाउन हेगमा कि नोबेल शान्ति पुरस्कार दिन ओस्लोमा ?

Should the international community call Pushpa Kamal Dahal in Hague for crimes against humanity or in Oslo to give him the Nobel Peace Prize?

संदीप बडाल

काब्रेस, एमाले र माओवादीका झण्डा उचालेर दौडिने विद्यार्थी युनियन स्वतन्त्र कसरी भए ?

How can student unions who carry the flags of Congress, UML and Maoist call themselves independent?

WEEKLY BAZAR POLL #15

In weekly polls conducted with the support of The Asia Foundation, Himal Khabarpatrika asks 375 respondents in 12 cities across Nepal every Monday for their opinion on contemporary issues. This week’s result of interviews about the traffic police’s measures:

What do you think of the police’s drunk-driving checks?

Good **87.3%**
Bad **9.3%**
Don’t know **3.2%**

Do you think drivers should be allowed to drink to a certain limit?

No **54.1%**
Yes **40.3%**
Don’t know **5.3%**

Scaling new heights



Sheela Pandey, *Kantipur*, 21 May

कान्तिपुर

Sudarshan Gautam became the first person without both hands to climb Mt Everest, stepping on its summit at 9am on 20 May and being the first double hand amputee to climb the world’s

highest mountain.

Since the last six years Gautam has been living in Canada, working as a motivator for disabled people and raising campaigns with the slogan – ‘Disability is not inability’.

In 1994 Gautam lost both his arms as he tried to get a kite unstuck from an electric pole

using an iron rod. He slowly recovered and taught himself to cook, shower, shave, and dress . Before long, he had learnt how to ride a horse, and in 2001 he even learnt how to drive a car in Kathmandu.

In 2005, Gautam climbed the 5520m Yala Peak in Langtang without oxygen or prosthetic arms. It was then that he set his sights on Everest, only to realise this dream eight years later with the help of safety ropes and four climbing sherpas.

Gautam’s record previously belonged to American Thomas Whittaker, who made it to the world’s highest peak in 1998 with one prosthetic leg. Also in 2001, Erik Weiheymayer of the US was the first blind person to summit Everest. This year (*see page 16*), India’s Arunima Sinha became the first woman amputee to climb Everest.



Yesterday
Today
Chair: Chairman of Ministers’ Council

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट Basu Kshitij in *Annapurna Post*, 28 May

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“The government keeps saying we have weapons and should hand them over to avoid getting shot. Well, I challenge them to shoot us.”

Ram Bahadur Thapa, General Secretary, CPN-M, *Naya Patrika*, 29 May

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Boring Entrepreneurs Association to go on strike

One has to give credit where it's due, and laud the Grubberment of Nepal's contribution to the Comic Relief fundraising expedition to Mt Everest by black-listing David Hughes for skyping from the summit on 19 May. Despite the danger of being an international laughing stock, GON wanted Hughes dead or alive for wearing a red nose and daring to take a live video on his mobile without permission.

Apparently, thanks to GON, Comic Relief raised a lot more money than expected because of the publicity generated by the threat to deport Hughes and ban him from entering Nepal for five years. GON sure has the knack of demonstrating to the world just how anal it can be, which is great for charity. Good thing our government doesn't have half the brains of a smartphone. And, finally, a word from our sponsors: if 3G works so well

on the top of the world's highest mountain how come it doesn't work in Kathmandu?



The Foreign Ministry's Fam Trip for Kathmandu-based diplomats this year was designed to give plenipotentiaries a taste of the Real Nepal. A dip took a dip during the rafting trip down the Sun Kosi, and then they were all asked to schlep for a whole day climbing 4,000ft up a hill in

the hot sun on one of the least scenic corners of Kavre district with no creature comforts. It was another GON masterstroke that in a country endowed with such natural beauty, and during the Everest anniversary year, the diplomats were made to endure labour camp conditions. Was the Firanghi Ministry trying to get back at the firanghis for something?



DIMAKAR CHETTRI



The Quote of the Week for Inadvertently Blurting Out the Truth this week must go to Khil Raj Regmi for telling members of the High Level Political Syndicate (HLPS) who were pressing him to resign his Chief of Justice post: "Why should I resign? I am only responsible to those who appointed me."



The Chief Minister seems to have all the time in the world to launch doves and inaugurate handicraft fairs, but not to decide on a date for elections. Finally, he gave in and said on Wednesday: "It will be in November, the exact date isn't important." Comrade Maximus, meanwhile, announced at another election rally that the date for announcing the date of elections was Republic Day, but that day came and went without a date. Now, we are waiting for a date for changing the election laws, only then can there be a date for announcing the exact date of elections.



Meanwhile, PKD got a bit carried away the other day during an election campaign speech when he said that although Girija Babu is no more, that shouldn't stop the Nobel Prize Committee in

Oslo from considering him as a candidate for the 2013 Peace Prize. It makes perfect sense, the inventor of dynamite honouring the user of dynamite. But, seriously, if Barack Obama can get the Peace Prize for refusing to ground drones, our Fearsome One is fully deserving of the award, the Shaktikhor Tape notwithstanding.



Another sign that elections are nigh is that Rekha Thapa has been inducted into the party and threatened to carry a real gun. Mahara Dai has let off a trial balloon saying that if ex-Kingji behaves himself the Cash Baddies could give him a ticket. All party leaders are campaigning in the Tarai, is that why Comrade Gyanendra has also decided to head down? KingG is said to be not happy with the rise of Loktantra Man who openly defied him during the royal reign when LMSK was chief sec. And here is a new one: Awesome has proposed Gyancha as the new prez and himself as PM.



Headlines of the week: Criminals Should Be Allowed To Contest Polls: UCPN (M) Boring Entrepreneurs Association on Strike



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