

IT STINGS: Thirty-four-year-old Dorje Bhote of Chumasur, Sankhuwasabha, collects honey from wild bee colonies in Chyamtang village. The honey is sold across the border in China for Rs 3,000 per beer bottle.



SUNIR PANDEY

CLIFFHANGER

Two and half months ago when Khil Raj Regmi was installed in Singha Darbar at the behest of the four parties he was given a one point agenda: hold elections.

But it is now increasingly difficult to tell whether Regmi is supposed to work independently, or just follow the orders of the four-party cartel that put him in office. After writs were filed demanding Regmi's resignation from the post of chief justice, the Supreme Court has asked political parties to explain why he was made PM.

Differences between Regmi and the politicians are coming out in the open and leaders within the NC and UML are openly divided about the former CJ's dual role. The parties are bickering among themselves over election technicalities and the High Level Political Committee meeting this week did not make any headway.

After initially agreeing that the new parliament should have 491 members, the Maoists are now backtracking and the NC and UML don't want parties who don't win even one per cent of the votes in their constituencies getting seats in the parliament. The Maoists and Madhesi also want cadre who have criminal charges to be able to stand in elections.

Despite the foot-dragging, there have been some signs of progress: 139 parties have already registered at the Election Commission. Although there is no reason why polls can't be held in November, there is a visible lack of political will to iron out the legal and logistical issues. 🇸🇰

Sunir Pandey



QUALITY CONTROL IN TOURISM

PAGE 16-17

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THE ECONOMY NEEDS OXYGEN

World Environment Day this week was marked by various officials giving officious speeches, there was lots of energy expended to declare that we should use less energy. Every year on 5 June, we are told that it's too late for words and time for action.

This year's environment day came and went with the continued plunder of the Chure Hills, the boulevard of stately jacarandas on the Ring Road, the mining of sand and boulders from the Indrawati and Trisuli rivers to feed Kathmandu's voracious appetite for construction material, and far away from the media spotlight poor border villagers from Taplejung, Rasuwa to Gorkha continued to axe forests to take timber to Tibet and barter it for liquor.

The poor who are given no other choice pose a danger to the global environment, but a much greater threat comes from the wasteful extravagance of the rich. The shifting cultivator in Olangchungola burns forests and sells timber across the border to survive. But it is the unsustainable lifestyle of urbanites that has a greater impact on the environment. Add to that greed and graft that drive illegal logging, river sand mining, the plunder of boulders from rivers, the wholesale destruction of the Siwalik range, and Earth doesn't stand a chance.

As we have said on previous environment days in this space, ecology dovetails with economy which in turn is determined by politics. The mismanagement of hydropower in this country, the growing addiction to fossil fuels, the loot of our natural resources by the rich and powerful are all indications of rotting politics. The air, water, and soil are ravaged when politics loses its way, governance fails, and there is neither rule of law or accountability.



FOO CHEE CHANG

Recent history shows that authoritarians have been the main enemies of the environment

It is not surprising that Nepal lost most of its forest cover under dictatorship. The hardwood jungles of the Tarai were decimated to finance a referendum in 1980, the results of which were used to smother democracy and perpetuate an authoritarian monarchy. It was under decentralised local self-governance post-1990 that Nepal's community forests thrived. Is it perhaps something to do with the election symbol of the Nepali Congress being a tree that successive authoritarians have been so intolerant of greenery?

Kathmandu's street eucalyptuses were mowed down in 2006 for security reasons, but that didn't save king

Gyanendra. After the strict censorship that followed the royal-military coup d'etat on 1 February 2005, we wrote a metaphorical editorial lamenting the chopping down of trees in the capital, linking it to the dismemberment of democracy and open society.

And it is now, under an unelected "technocratic" government that by its own admission is "answerable to no one but the people who installed it in office", that the trees along the Ring Road are being needlessly cut in the name of road-widening.

But what happens in Kathmandu is just the visible tip of the proverbial iceberg. With no local elections and grassroots democracy and no obligation to the public interest, many forest user groups have been infiltrated by criminalised politicians. In the Tarai and now increasingly in the hills, forests that took communities a generation to protect and

nurture are being mercilessly cut.

The Tarai forests are nearly all gone except for what remains within national parks and the rot is spreading to the Chure hills along the Himalayan arc from Jhapa to Kanchanpur. The Chure is different from the Mahabharat range, it is the first wrinkle of the Himalaya and is made up of sand and boulders with very little top soil. Once its Shorea robusta forest cover is gone, the Chure literally dissolves during the monsoon. This has enormous implications for sedimentation, floods, and water supply in the plains directly below.

Reforestation on World Environment Day will help, replanting jacarandas on the Ring Road will restore a ravaged urban landscape. But ultimately, for green growth and long-term equitable prosperity, the only path is accountable, democratic governance.

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

This is a really good piece on Nepal's relationship with its neighbours ('Between a rock and a hard place', Editorial, #658). We must stop thinking of India and China as our enemies. They just want to make sure that Nepal is stable so that they don't have to worry about their borders. They do what any other country does: business. They dump products into Nepal that they can't sell in other places and have effectively destroyed local entrepreneurs and enterprises. We need to stop being ridiculous and focus on our policies and develop better agendas instead.

Kamal Kishor

- The problem facing Nepal comes not so much from our neighbours, but from the short sightedness and selfish nature of the current leaders. Their intention and policy of divide and rule within and without the country have to stop and they need to start working with common sense for the general good of all Nepalis.

Basudeb

JUST WANT JUSTICE

As sad as the current situation is where the perpetrators of war crimes have been granted blanket amnesty, nothing much is going to change until the current generation of leaders - both in the state and the security forces - retire ('Just want justice', Dambar K Shrestha,

#658). Till then no matter how much victims cry for justice, their pleas will fall on deaf ears. And if we finally have a proper truth and reconciliation process, it will be too late just like Bangladesh.

R Regmi

- Thank you *Nepali Times* for publishing this article. The state of victims' families is terrible. I wish Krishna Adhikari's parents luck and hope the authorities can show compassion. I also hope the world is watching how the Nepali government cares for its vulnerable people.

John Murray

- The story of Nanda Prasad Adhikari and Ganga Maya is heartbreaking, but the state seems reluctant to address the issue. War crimes need to be seriously investigated.

Bishesh Arya

ROT AT THE BOTTOM

Nepali politics has turned into a big joke ('The rot at the bottom', Trishna Rana, #658). We can't even hold student elections on time, anyone who believes we will have national elections in six months is a fool. And where is the TU in all this? Does it not have any authority? Or does the university's keys also lie somewhere else? Administrators should have put their foot down and issued an ultimatum: run for elections on 6 June or we will disband student unions on all campuses. But since our sirs and madams get pocket money from

political parties, why would they bother?

R Rai

- The way student elections turned ugly in the last few weeks and were eventually postponed, I now have very little hope for national polls taking place in November. Senior leaders will most likely follow the youth brigade's footsteps: rig voters' list, act self-righteous, fight among themselves, and force elections to be postponed indefinitely.

Anonymous

- It's heartbreaking to see Nepali politics both at the bottom and the top in such a sad state. We have very few honest and capable young leaders who can take over when the current generation of politicians depart, which is a big tragedy.

Kancha

- I wouldn't mind if these so called student leaders simply left Nepal and migrated abroad in droves. The fewer goons we have to burn cars and padlock campuses, the better.

Shanti Nepali

REPEATING HISTORY

Bhaskar Koirala gives great insights into the history of Nepal's relations with China ('Repeating history', #658). Most Nepalis will probably agree that China has always been Nepal's better liked neighbour because of its relatively minimal interference in domestic affairs.

What will be interesting to see is how ties between China and its other neighbours unfold as the communist state expands its economic and military power and if the Chinese, like the powers before them, seek to remake the world in their image.

Aideeah

HANDS ACROSS THE HIMALAYA

I hope Chinese inputs don't erode what makes Nepal one of the most fascinating countries to visit ('Hands across the Himalaya', Ramesh Kumar, #658). I know some friends who won't visit Tibet anymore because its geography has been spoilt by the Chinese 'mark' of progress: concrete roads and buildings.

Amanda Mclean

- As far as business ties are concerned, if there is win-win situation it's good for both countries. However, when it comes to autonomy, Nepal should remain strong and stick to the principles and values of sovereignty.

Tashi Lama

PEOPLE WHO MAKE IT POSSIBLE

Excellent review of the great documentary *Sherpas: The True Heroes of Everest* ('The people who make it possible', Kunda Dixit, #658). This is the best thing I've read throughout the anniversary coverage and is people-centred journalism at its best.

Situ

Q OF THE WEEK

What made the road widening project successful when previous attempts failed?

facebook

Indra Giri: Look at the human and environmental costs. A failed attempt at best.
Prosperous Nepal: It is not successful because they've failed to compensate the legal property owners.
Diwakar Chettri: It seems everyone got a share of the pie.
Binod Acharya: I don't remember previous efforts which were serious enough on what they were going to do.
Robin Gurung: Baburam Bhattarai.

twitter

@arpankh228: Determination, vision, future orientation, political support.
@Editorasia: All credit goes to the city's civic authority.

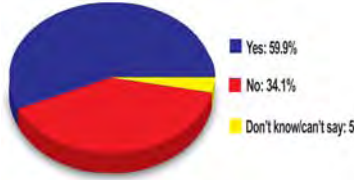
This week's **Question of the week:** If you could have any super power what would it be?
Go to www.facebook.com/nepalitimes or www.twitter.com/nepalitimes to respond.



Weekly Internet Poll #659

Q. Was it right for civil society leaders to boycott the government's celebration of Republic Day?

Total votes: 841



Weekly Internet Poll # 660. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. What needs to be done to improve fire safety standards in Nepal?



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Including the excluded

The only way to justify Nepal's painfully long transition is to ensure election rules that level the playing field



BY THE WAY

Anurag Acharya

Establishing a date for elections has been delayed because of disagreements over a bill to delineate electoral constituencies and set a threshold for proportional representation. At the heart of the disagreement is the desire of the main political players to keep monopolising power. After the Madhes Movement of 2007, the first amendment to the Interim Constitution in April that year provided for delineation of electoral constituencies through changes in Article 154, according to which constituencies were to be determined taking into account the structure of population and its density, geographical uniqueness, and accessibility as well as cultural identity of those who reside there.

But the delineating committee already had its work cut out. The amendment to Article 63, among other things prohibited changes to existing administrative boundaries and mandated that existing number of electoral seats in each district may be not be reduced. So the committee only had the jurisdiction of delineating constituencies in 20 districts of Madhes and five mountain districts where population had increased. The committee set a threshold of 94,000 voters per electoral representative in these districts which resulted in increased seats of 240 from the existing 205.

"The added seats increased the number of representatives, but it did not necessarily lead to inclusive representation because the first amendment prevented changes in the existing administrative boundaries essential to the task," anthropologist Dambar Chemjong, who was part of the delineation committee, explained to me the other day.

The committee came across a big constituency of Chepangs in Dhading, Makwanpur, Chitwan, and Gorkha. It met all the constitutional

requisites of forming a constituency including geographical continuity and cultural uniqueness. But since Article 63 prevented making any changes in the existing administrative boundaries, it could not be delineated. There was a similar case in Saptari where a potential constituency for Tarai dalits could have been carved out.

Chemjong says population alone must not be the basis for delineating constituencies in a country with varied demographic structure as well as geographic and cultural diversity. If that is the case, there is a need to redefine Nepal's administrative boundaries consistent with our search for an inclusive representative body.

Last month, responding to a writ petition filed by JP Gupta, the Supreme Court directed the government to form another delineation committee to recommend changes in the number of constituencies based on data from the 2011 census. But as long as Article 63 is in effect, such exercise will only benefit metropolis districts like Kathmandu and Lalitpur with high population density without serving the interests of under-represented and sparsely populated mountain districts, or marginalised communities that have a distinct geographical presence, but are separated by arbitrarily drawn administrative boundaries.

In the last CA, out of 601 members, 335 were chosen from proportional representation from marginalised communities making it the most inclusive legislature in our history. The reason it failed to come up with a statute is a matter of debate where perspectives differ. But the exclusivist political top brass blamed the size of the CA and decided to reduce PR seats to 240 in the 11-point agreement signed in March.

Nepal is gearing for another Constituent Assembly election, but more than seven million voters still remain without voting cards, while nearly two million absent voters are at risk of being denied their fundamental right to be represented.

Similarly, the controversy over the one per cent threshold required for smaller parties to gain PR seats in the CA has also contributed to the delay in passing the electoral bill. While it is a globally accepted

practice to have a threshold in a PR system, out of the 56 political parties that competed in the last CA elections, 47 obtained less than one per cent of the popular votes. They won only



one direct seat in the Assembly, but received 33 PR seats and two through nominations.

Most of the parties in this category had ethnic, regional, and cultural background with a stated agenda of representation. This reflected the failure of bigger political parties to incorporate marginalised voices in their ranks and that reluctance to include the excluded persists.

Nepal has been in transition for seven years now. The only way to justify this painfully long exercise is to come up with a political document that is owned by groups across political, cultural, and regional boundaries. But for that to happen, we need to ensure an inclusive body that can empathise with the most repressed and muted aspirations. ■

SHAH RUKH KHAN AND HIS AQUARACER

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Number of people who have climbed Mt Everest:

674

From 1953-1996

3,157

From 1997-2012

522

In Spring 2013 alone

STILL DANGEROUS

Numbers killed in Spring 2013



on Mt Everest
(3 in China, 6 in Nepal)



on Dhaulagiri



on Kangchenjunga



on Makalu

Silly season on Sagarmatha

BILLI BIERLING
from EVEREST BASE CAMP

Having buzzed with mountaineers coming down from various Himalayan peaks, Kathmandu is slowly getting back to normal. Hotel lobbies are no longer crowded with blue barrels filled with climbing gear and emaciated climbers with sunburnt faces have disappeared from the streets of Thamel.

Mt Everest got all the attention this year because of the 60th anniversary of the first climb and few climbers were doing new routes or attempting an unclimbed peak this season.

“Most people are going up and down the fixed ropes on Everest,” says Himalayan archivist Elizabeth Hawley, “what would really impress me is if somebody finally climbed the difficult East Ridge with its overhangs and knife-edge ridges.”

Out of the 900 or so climbers and Sherpas attempting Mt Everest from the Nepal side this year, two small expeditions were not doing the South Col route. Both were on the treacherous South West Face, but abandoned the climbs early in the season.

Italian climber Simone Moro, Switzerland’s Ueli Steck, and



The world’s highest peak gets record numbers of climbers, and some bad press

British Jonathan Griffith got into a fight with a group of Sherpas over rope fixing and left the mountain. Russian climber Alexei Bolotov, who was attempting a new route on the South West Face with the Kazakh Denis Urubko, died in a fall during a practice climb.

But Everest had numerous ‘firsts’ this season: the highest base-jump, climbing Everest from Nepal and China within a few days, climbing without arms, the first female amputee on the summit, equaling the world record for most ascents, the oldest person on top,

the first Saudi and Pakistani woman.

“I am not sure whether people are climbing for themselves or whether they want to become some sort of hero,” said New Zealander Russell Brice, who has led commercial expeditions for 18 years. When asked about some of the new records Hawley, 89, answers back: “So what?”

However, one remarkable ‘first’ was that of Nepali/Canadian Sudarshan Gautam, who became the first double amputee to climb Everest without prosthetic arms.

Gautam injured himself after falling on the Yellow Band, which quickly led to another record: the highest helicopter rescue in the world. Italian pilot Maurizio Folini dropped a ‘long line’ from 7,900m to pull the 30-year-old off the mountain just below the South Col, the last camp before the summit (*pic, above*).

One of the more modest records is probably Phurba Tashi Sherpa’s 21st ascent of Mount Everest. With his two consecutive summits, the 42-year-old from Khumjung broke even with Apa Sherpa, the





Women role models

Eight years after the first Muslim women scaled the highest mountain in the world, Raha Moharrak from Saudi Arabia and Samina Baig (*pic, above*) from Pakistan followed in their footsteps. "My climb was a mission to tell all the women in Pakistan that they can scale mountains – no matter whether it is a real or a symbolic one," said the 22-year-old from Gilgit-Baltistan.

"Even though it was very exhausting, it was one of the happiest moments in my life. I must not forget that it was not an individual success, but a historical achievement." By becoming the first female amputee to reach the top, Arunima Sinha from India was another female role model on the mountain this year.

current holder of this record. "Everest is work for me, but I am very happy that I have managed to climb so often always coming back down healthy," he said during the 60th anniversary ceremony in Kathmandu last month.

If Phurba Tashi wanted, he could probably break

the record of the fastest ascent, a feat that US-citizen Chad Kellogg tried without supplementary oxygen for the third time this year but had to turn back 550m from the summit because of wind chill. He was trying to beat the record of Frenchman Marc Batard, who climbed Everest without

supplementary oxygen in 22 hours, 29 minutes in 1988.

Wind chill did not seem to bother Valery Rozov from Russia when he jumped off the North Face in Tibet, recording the world's highest ever base jump from 7,220 metres. "Only when I got back home did I see how hard it was for me both physically and psychologically," Rozov said after the jump, reaching speeds of more than 220km/h. For this reason, some have suggested that Sagarmatha should get a rest and remain 'closed' for one year. Hawley thinks this is an absurd idea. "It is just a huge pile of rock, it doesn't care if you are there or not."

Reinhold Messner, the first Everest soloist and first to climb without oxygen, was in Nepal for the anniversary and says garbage on Everest has been exaggerated. He told *Nepali Times*: "Everest is much cleaner than it was in the 1990s and it still has many challenges."

www.billibierling.com



Billi Bierling is a journalist covering mountaineering in Nepal. She has climbed Everest, Lhotse, and

Manaslu and this year was on Nuptse.

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War's legacy: a gun culture

The conflict may be over, but a new survey shows high levels of violence because there are so many guns around

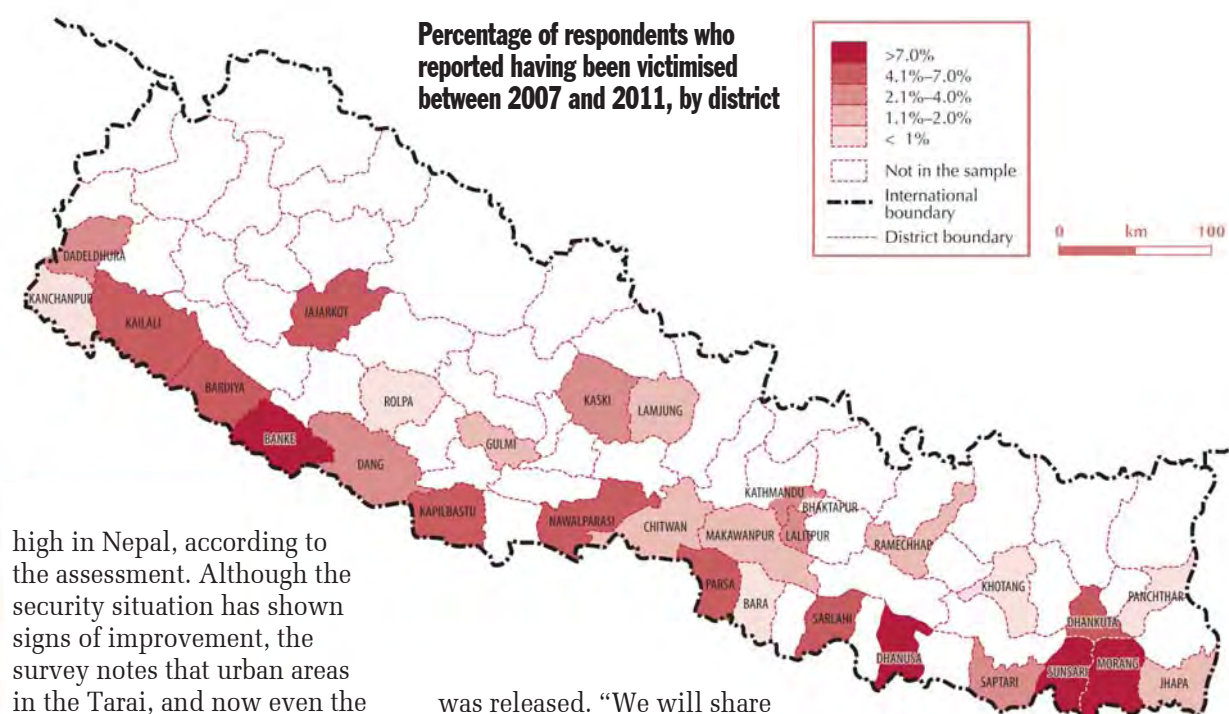
SULAIMAN DAUD

The Nepal Armed Violence Assessment released recently shows that although the conflict may be over, the prevalence of small arms and a legacy of violence have promoted gun culture in society.

The two-year study by the Small Arms Survey group showed a persistence of serious gun crimes all over the country. The worst affected regions are the eastern Tarai with more than seven per cent of citizens in Sunsari, Morang, and Dhanusha saying they had been personally victimised by gun crimes between 2007-2011 (see map).

The findings include a record of 440,000 privately held firearms (mostly locally made 'katuwa' pistols) currently in Nepal and that the entry points for the illegal trafficking of arms have moved from the western region to areas around the Kathmandu Valley as well.

The prevalence of guns, criminalisation of politics, joblessness, and poverty are factors keeping violence levels



high in Nepal, according to the assessment. Although the security situation has shown signs of improvement, the survey notes that urban areas in the Tarai, and now even the capital, have become 'hotbeds of criminal activities'. It recommends lessening political interference in police work and the courts and more training to security personnel.

"Nepal has been suffering from armed violence since the last decade, particularly in the Tarai and urban centres," said Finance Minister Shankar Prasad Koirala, who used to be joint secretary in the Home Ministry when the survey

was released. "We will share information with the other countries to better control the flow of arms."

An investigative report in *Himal Khabarpatrika* last year showed that small arms were readily available across the border in Indian towns and could be bought for as little as INR 2,000. Experts say more information is also needed on residual small arms from the conflict, obsolete or surplus stocks of state arms, as

well as storage and inventory conditions.

The Nepal Armed Violence Assessment is a project of the Small Arms Survey, a project of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva and is supported by the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development and AusAid.

"Following the UN Conference on small arms in

2000, Switzerland decided to focus on practical, small-scale programs," explains Swiss ambassador Thomas Gass, "the culture of violence still persists in Nepal and violence is still committed with impunity. Implementing the Geneva Declaration, which Nepal became a signatory of in 2008, requires teamwork and not blame."

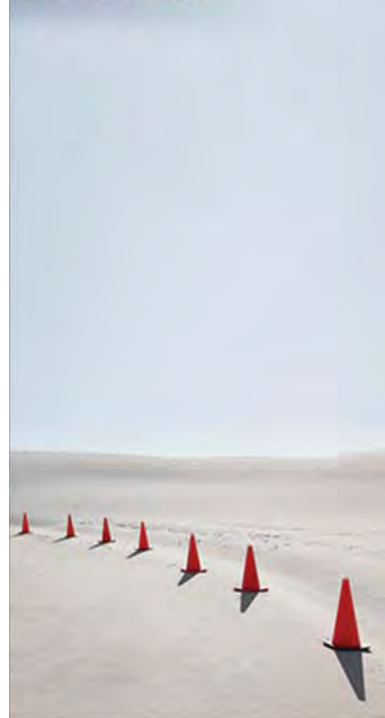
The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development is a diplomatic initiative aimed at addressing the link between armed conflict and development. First adopted in 2006, the Declaration calls for the support of programs, both practical and academic, aimed at reducing violence so as to promote development.

Mihaela Racovita, an associate researcher of the Nepal survey, said it was based on primary research, including household surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews with key informants. www.smallarmssurvey.org

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The arrival of the pre- monsoon in Nepal has had Kathmandu's populace blessing the skies for the extra hours of electricity. But meteorological forecasters in Nepal are still haven't predicted when the actual season will begin, whether late or on time. Only last week, Indian media announced the beginning of the wet season in Chennai. Which means Nepal will continue to see hot and humid cloudy days with brief interruptions of hard rainfall. Kathmandu will see the weekend begin with rain and thunder and end relatively calm.



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JALPA GOLD ORGANIC COFFEE

Jalpa Gold Organic Coffee is one of the most popular coffee brands manufactured in Nepal. Grown at an altitude of above 600m in Nuwakot district, the Arabica coffee is wet processed unlike others which are dry processed. USDA certified, Jalpa Gold is exported to several countries including Germany, Japan, Russia, and Korea. The company also recently launched its instant coffee which you can purchase at the EcoFair.



HIMALAYAN NATURALS

For the past four years, Himalayan Naturals has been involved in facilitating the production of agro-based, natural hand made goods like briquettes, quilts, and organic ginger in rural villages of Dolakha and Sindhupalchok. The organisation also helps market these products both within Nepal and internationally.

NATIONAL COLLEGE-CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

National College-Centre for Development Studies was established in 1999 with the aim of promoting sustainable development through rigorous academics. The college offers two multidisciplinary academic programs: Bachelor's in Development Studies and Bachelor's in Development Finance in affiliation with Kathmandu University. Under the Nepal-Japan exchange program, students and faculty members of the two countries have the opportunity to collaborate with each other on research and social work in sustainable development.

BIRTHDAY FOREST

As Nepal's once dense forests gradually dwindle, one company is determined to give them a chance to grow back. Winner of Pivot Nepal 2013 'social' award, the recently launched Birthday Forest encourages Nepalis to plant trees on their birthdays. For just Rs 980, you can not only plant a tree in one of the 17,000 community forests across Nepal, but also have it named after you and you don't even have to worry about taking care of your plant because the company will look after it for three years. So give yourself the greenest gift this year.

SEEING GREEN

Nepali Times kicked off its second edition of EcoFair on world environment day. The exhibition which runs until 7 June will showcase environment friendly technologies and solutions. Everything you need to know about solar technologies, waste management, rain water harvesting, organic farming, electric vehicles, and other eco-friendly products will be available under one roof. Find out more innovative ways to be planet friendly from our exhibitors.

BIRD CONSERVATION NEPAL

Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) seeks to promote interest in birds among the Nepali public, encourage research, and identify major threats to their habitats and survival. The foremost scientific authority providing accurate data and information on birds and their habitats throughout Nepal, BCN is also part of the BirdLife International Partnership, a network of more than 117 organisations around the world, working on a global agenda to conserve birds and their habitats.

ONE PLANET SOLUTION

Since 2011 One Planet Solution has been providing eco-friendly and economical solutions to the capital's water, energy, and waste crisis. The company's SmartPaani systems include rainwater harvesting, water recycling, wastewater treatment, water filtration and consultancy. SmartPaani goes one step beyond to not only store and recharge rainwater, but also make rainwater safe for drinking. Its energy branch, SmartUrja, was recently awarded the first prize at Nepal Renewable Energy-Waste to Energy Bazar organised by AEPC and the World Bank.



INNOVATIVE ENERGY

Established in 2009, Innovative Energy (iEnergy) has been working in the field of energy efficiency, conservation, and renewable energy. The company promotes intelligent energy efficiency solutions from the UK. Its products include Realtime Energy Management System, Intelligent motor energy controller (iMEC), air conditioner energy saver, chiller unit energy saver, high efficiency LED lights, and solar street lights. iEnergy products help save upto 50 per cent of energy.

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EVENTS



NEPAL AFRICA FILM FESTIVAL, watch amazing movies from 15 different African nations as well as selected films from Nepali. 18 June, Kathmandu, Russian Centre of Science and Culture, Kamalpokhari

My voice, a photography workshop where you tell stories through your camera lens. Rs 3000, 6 to 12 June, 7 to 9 am, Suchana Bibhag Building, Sinamangal, 9851000178, download application: www.dropbox.com/sh/obosg38yjjislrp/JeVHbHTDN7



THE RADIANT CHILD, a documentary on Jean Michel Basquiat, an artist who was constantly confronted by racism and misconceptions. 7 June, 4 to 6pm, Gallery Mcube, Chakupat, Lalitpur, (01)5260110

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

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 products worth Rs 1,000 and above from Civil Mall outlets and get a chance to win Samsung mobiles, home appliances, and Bajaj Pulsar. Runs till 7 July, Civil Mall, Kathmandu.

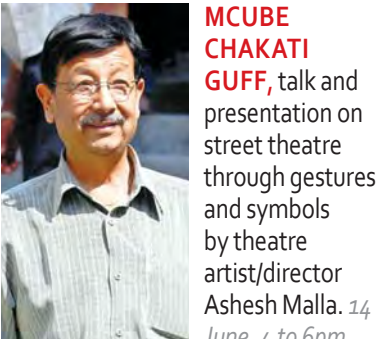
Dance marathon, dance away for 8 hours 8 minutes and 8 seconds to show your support for gender equality and equity. Rs 500 for participants, Rs 100 to 200 for audience, 15 June, 10am to 7pm, T.T. Hall, Lainchour, www.facebook.com/events/162638933910996/?ref=22, register at bit.ly/dmnepal

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



MAN OF STEEL, watch the premiere of *Man of Steel* and contribute to the Music Museum of Nepal. 14 July, 6pm, QFX Cinemas- Civil Mall, book your tickets at 9803039750

Into the flashlight, a 14 day workshop on how to use flash technique for ultimate output with limited flash equipment. Rs 8000, 15 June, 7 to 9.30am, School of Creative Communications, Kupondol, 984124307



MCUBE CHAKATI GUFF, talk and presentation on street theatre through gestures and symbols by theatre artist/director Ashesh Malla. 14 June, 4 to 6pm, Gallery Mcube, Chakupat, Lalitpur, (01)5260110

A federal life, an exhibition of contemporary paintings. 15 to 20 June, 11am to 5.30pm, Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka

DINING



THE HERITAGE, escape the hodgepodge of the tourist hub as you relish delights like paella and panna cotta. Thamel



CAPITAL GRILL, this American style diner offers a large assortment of appetisers and entrees to suit everyone's tastes. Bhatbhateni

Oxygen Lounge Bar, for a relaxed ambience and acoustic music. Rosemary chicken with mashed potatoes is a hit among patrons. Lakeside, Pokhara

Lhasa Bar, enjoy a beer or a splash of cocktail at this springboard for excellent young musicians starting out on the Thamel circuit. Thamel

Tamas-laya, promises a refined dining experience, try the prawn tempura, fisherman's fish, and Balinese chicken satay. Naxal, Kathmandu

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

Boomerang Restaurant and German Bakery, offers a large selection of cuisine for those who want to enjoy a full meal and desserts. Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)461412/462978

Momotarau, step in for mouthwatering Japanese delicacies, try its diverse variety of fresh noodles and authentic sauces. Sanepa Main road, (01)521988



NEW DISH, grab filling meals like pork momos, spring rolls, and chop sueys with excellent value for money. Khiccha Pokhari



COSMOPOLITAN CAFE, located in the heart of Basantapur, this cosy cafe offers arguably the best chicken sizzler in town. Basantapur, (01)4225246



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MUSIC



RAP, ROCK, REGGAE, one evening, three different bands three different styles of music.

Rs 400, 8 June, 6pm, House of Music, Thamel

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

Jazz divas, enjoy a laid back evening with brilliant performances by three talented women performers.

Rs 200, 7 June, 7.15pm onwards, Moksh, Jhamsikhel

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



MANGO TREE LODGE, indulge in culture walks, rafting in the Karnali, wildlife exploration, and jungle safaris at the Bardia National Park.

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Dhulikhel, (01)4420774/6, reservations@dmrnepal.com



POKHARA GRANDE, a swimming pool to escape from the sweltering heat, a massage parlour and spa to loosen up, and a gym to release stress, all in all a great place to unwind. *Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)460210*

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

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BAUL MASTERS OF BENGAL



Rabindranath Tagore was inspired by them, calling himself one of their kind. Baba Allauddin Khan went around collecting their melodies before he established the Maihar School. Satyajit Ray included their songs and themes in his early black and white films.

Well, now that Purnal Das Baul and Dibyendu Das Baul have come to Kathmandu from the plains of Bengal, you have a chance to savour the essence of the 'madcap Baul', as Tagore called them and see why the geniuses in our part of the world were so transfixed by union with the divine.

Invitees only, 7 June, 5.30pm, Nepal Music Centre, Pingalsthan, Daushala, (01)4412715

Business and pleasure

The scenic backdrop of unbroken mountain ranges, stunning lakes, and serene weather make Pokhara perfect not only for casual travellers and trekkers, but also for hosting seminars, workshops or more relaxed team building activities.

The number of hotels spread across the city offer conference facilities for organisations to choose from according to their budget, purpose, and convenience. Maybe a visit to Pokhara will also freshen the minds of employees.

Start your day with the sunrise in Sarangkot and then head down to Pame for fresh fish with lunch. Later in the afternoon after meetings end, relax in the traditional hot springs of Bhurjung, and then drift Lakeside-wards in the evenings. Learn the lessons of cooperation and team building in Nepal's cleanest city.



GO GREEN

The second installment of Nepali Times EcoFair is finally here. The three-day event 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, recycled Lokta paper products, or organic coffee. And also enjoy live model presentations and musical performances.



Nepali Times EcoFair
Runs till 7 June, 10am to 6pm,
Nepal Academy, Kamaladi,
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Playwright and director Andrew Rajan was in Kathmandu recently for a three day radio-writing workshop organised by the British Council to promote budding talents in the Valley. Also speaking at the workshop was 39-year-old Sharmily Rana, winner of last year’s playwriting competition. *Nepali Times* caught up with the duo to learn about the craft of storytelling and the future of radio play writing.



***Nepali Times:* How powerful is the medium of radio?**
Andrew Rajan: Because radio is non-visual, it’s a very intimate medium. Listeners get to create their own images in their minds.
Sharmily Rana: I think radio is like a friend, wherever people go they can carry a small set.

With news, information, and music available at the click of a button, how do you see the role of radio today?
Andrew Rajan: Radio is an old art, but it doesn’t mean it’s obsolete. Everyone thought the medium was going to die, but even today BBC gets 14 million listeners every day. Radio will always have an audience.
Sharmily Rana: Nepalis of all ages and from across the country still listen to the radio. My mother-in-law is not tech-savvy, so for her the radio is the ultimate source of information and entertainment. My husband listens to the radio while driving.

What are some of the themes that students seem most interested in during

the workshop?
Andrew Rajan: Usually there are a lot of stories about trafficking of young Nepali women to brothels in India. But no matter how good the writing is, they can’t be put on air because BBC has rules that make certain topics out of bound. BBC doesn’t want to broadcast a play about violence or rape at 4pm when children are in the kitchen with their mothers. What works really well on radio, though, is humour. It doesn’t matter how serious the subject is you can always infuse it with humour.
What inspires you to write?
Sharmily Rana: After I got married, I had a lot of free time so I just started to write. Day-to-day experiences and events inspire me.

What is your play about?
Sharmily Rana: My story called *Life Reflected* revolves around the theme of reincarnation: when the main protagonist looks in the mirror she sees someone else in the reflection. I have tried to explore the lives, experiences, and coming of age of two women.
Nepal has a long tradition of storytelling, how do you think Nepalis can preserve this tradition in the era of digital media?
Andrew Rajan: There is a lingering sense of frustration among Nepalis and lot of people want to pour their grievances through stories. Unfortunately, there is very little outlet for these stories. That is why it’s important to have regular writing workshops so that different voices have an opportunity to

express themselves. With the influx of digital media, more stories from the West will come here, but Nepal’s stories are just as valid and the more Nepalis stick to stories of their own people, the more the outside world will be interested in hearing them. Storytelling is a great way for Nepalis to introduce their culture to people who are unfamiliar with this place.
Are some societies better at storytelling than others?
Andrew Rajan: I think some of the best stories come from really interesting cultures. This doesn’t mean other cultures are bad at storytelling. It’s just that they haven’t yet grasped the tools with which to tell their stories.

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JUANITA MALAGON

BREAK TIME: Andrew Rajan (left) and Sharmily Rana (right) record Rana's play *Life Reflected* which won the British Council competition last year.

Play to win

Applications for the British Council's 15 minute Nepali radio play competition are being accepted until 31 July. The winner will get the opportunity to have the play recorded and aired on BBC Nepali Service.



general.enquiry@britishcouncil.org.np
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PEDAL POWER

Ever since the first ascent of Mt Everest in 1959, the Himalayas have become a symbol of mankind's attempt to challenge nature and push the limits of human endurance. Recently, two amputees – Arunima Sinha of India and Sudarshan Gautam of Nepal – made it to the top of the world.

Now a team of bikers, among them three tetraplegics, plan to cycle all the way from Lhasa to Kathmandu (see map), through the roof of the world and to the Chinese side of Everest base camp, crossing 10 high mountain passes in 28 days. This gruelling ride of extremes is part of a campaign led by The Catwalk Spinal Cord Injury Trust to raise one million dollars to fund the research of a possible cure for spinal cord injury.

For the woman behind Catwalk, Catriona Williams (pic, right), the debilitating injury hasn't kept her away from her passion for horse riding or from leading an independent life. Williams used to be a professional equestrian who represented New Zealand during the World Cup finals in show jumping in Sweden before a tragic accident in 2002, where she fell off her horse, left her incapacitated.

Today she is channeling all her energy to draw attention to the plight of people around the world suffering from spinal cord injury. "Together we can show that we are not afraid to take on a challenge no matter how high or difficult it is," says Williams.

A team of 15, including Williams and two other tetraplegics, their caretakers, friends, family, and members of the trust will land in Kathmandu on 12 June and fly to Lhasa before pedaling back 1,200km to the Valley. Williams' team representing Catwalk will also be visiting the Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Centre in Dhulikhel, a hospital that owes its existence to spinal cord injury to one of its



founders, Kanak Mani dixit.

With increased funding, Williams hopes research into the field will grow and eventually help patients with spinal cord injury get back on their feet. Her personal dream: to be able to walk and dance again. 🇳🇵

Sunir Pandey

www.spinalnetwork.org.au/bigcycle

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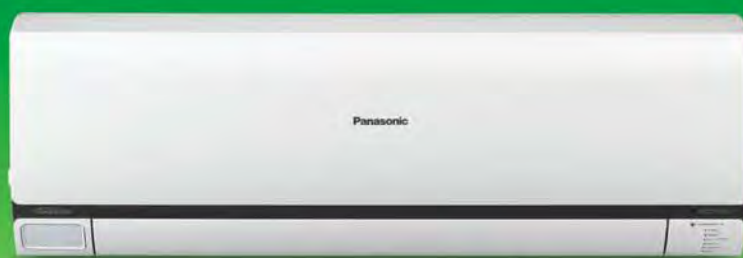
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5 FEATURES



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SIDE EFFECTS



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande



The Cannes film festival has just ended and in its glowing array of the lofty chosen is a film called *Behind the Candelabra* about the pianist Liberace and his secret affair with his chauffeur Scott Thorson. Although I have not seen this film, I mention it because it goes a long way in showing the diverse range of subject matter that Steven Soderbergh, the director, is interested in.

Behind the Candelabra was made the same year as *Side Effects*, a psychological thriller with an inherent social commentary on the dangers of prescription anti-depressants. So in 2013, Soderbergh, who also shoots his own films under the pseudonym Peter Andrews, made a

film about a gay romance and one about murder and the American pill taking culture.

Sadly, Soderbergh has declared his distress at the current sequel churning nature of Hollywood and has decided to retire from filmmaking in order to paint. If you have been reading this column, you may remember that *Side Effects* is the third Soderbergh film I have reviewed. This is because when you begin a film by him you know you are about to view the work of an expert, a deeply professional filmmaker who ceaselessly explores his medium, relying on transparent, cool filmmaking techniques while tackling extremely diverse and complex subjects.

A few days after Martin's release, Emily drives her car into a wall on purpose. At the hospital, where she is concussed, scratched, and bruised, she meets Jonathon Banks (Jude Law), an experienced psychiatrist who immediately recognises her depression and only agrees to release her on the grounds that she see him regularly.

For the next few months, Emily struggles to adjust to various anti-depressants, most of which do not agree with her, making her vacant, lethargic, and still prone to suicidal tendencies. It is only when she almost jumps off a subway platform that Banks agrees to put her on a new drug called Ablixa, which was recommended by Emily's previous psychologist Victoria Siebert (Catherine Zeta-Jones), who used to treat her when the couple were flush with Wall Street cash.

As Emily becomes normal again with Ablixa, barring a few sleepwalking episodes, it comes as a shock when the film suddenly morphs from a sociologically inclined drama to a full-blown murder mystery.

I won't go further into plot details so

that you may enjoy the intricate detective work in this greatly entertaining film. All I will say is, this film, which I really hope will not be Soderbergh's last, is one of the best written, tightly acted, and riveting mainstream movies I've seen in a while.

Side Effects, scripted by Soderbergh's long time collaborator Scott Z Burns, could have gone horribly wrong in a more self-indulgent director's hands, becoming melodramatic and maudlin. Instead, in Soderbergh's capable hands it wields a cool thrill.

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer

GIZMO by YANTRICK

Bold and beautiful

The latest from Colors, a brand known for making reasonably priced smartphones, X200 Bold 2 is reminiscent of smartphones from S series of the Samsung family. With identical designs and matching plastic body it is hard not to compare the two. But the truth is Bold 2 comes at half the price of Samsung phones and caters to those looking to switch to a smartphone rather than upgrade to a newer model.

The first thing that you notice about Bold 2 is its sheer size. Big but slim, the phone is heavier when compared to recent releases from other brands. The 5.3 inch screen easily beats the 5 inch screen of many others in the market and with a resolution of 960 * 540 and digital theatre sound, watching videos becomes a truly pleasurable experience. Bold 2 runs on android 4.1.2 Jellybean and has 1.2 Ghz quad core processor which makes it perfect for gaming. Yantrick enjoyed a game of Criminal Case and the joys of solving a murder case on this phone was altogether a different kind of fun. The large screen is definitely an advantage while watching movies or playing games, but it's quite a hassle to fit the phone into pockets.

The capacitive touch panel makes it easy to navigate through apps. There is also an in-built Yamaha amplifier so you can get the party started anywhere you want. On the camera front, Bold 2 does a decent job. The 12 MP rear camera takes fairly good pictures and thanks to the 1.3MP front facing camera, you don't need to rush to a computer to make video calls.

The 3,000mAh li-on battery lasts a long time which makes it a good companion during the long hours of load shedding. Bluetooth and wifi are available along with WAP/GPRS/EDGE. With the help of wifi tethering, you can use your phone like a router and share the internet connection with other devices.

Where Colors may fail to pull in customers is in its lack of unique features and applications. At a time when manufacturers are competitively finding novel ways of boosting sales, Bold 2 seems like just another reboot of previous models.

Yantrick's Verdict: At Rs 19,995 Bold 2 is definitely a steal and a good upgrade for those who are yet to hop on the smart wagon.



- SPECIFICATION**
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 - Display:** 5 inches, WVGA Capacitive, touchscreen
 - Size:** 480x800 px
 - Memory:** Cardslot microSD, 8GB card, upto 32GB
 - Internal Memory:** 4GB, 512 MB RAM, 4GB ROM
 - Camera:** 5 Mega Pixel (Autofocus) LED Flash
 - OS:** Android 4.0 (Ice Cream Sandwich)
 - CPU:** 1 GHz Processor

A greener way to fly....

In 2010, Yeti Airlines took an initiative and launched "Green Far West Project" with a strong partnership with RAAIKA Tours and Travels, DRSP (District Road Support Programme) and Tiger Mountain Nepal.

Under this Green Project, for every ticket sold in Kathmandu, Dhangadi or Nepalgunj sector, Yeti Airlines plants a tree sapling on passenger's behalf in one of the chosen community forest in the Far-Western region of Nepal. Till date, more than 0.1 million tree saplings have already been planted and taken care of. Yeti Airlines contributes Rs. 20 /-(one way ticket) and Rs. 40/-(a round trip ticket) for Kathmandu-Dhangadhi or Kathmandu-Nepalgunj sector only. You are welcome to visit any of the community forest sites where your tree saplings are planted and taken proper care.

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Stringing maestro

Arbaja, a Nepali instrument once played by the Gandharvas, has found a saviour in singer Lochan Rijal

Not many Nepali youngsters know what an Arbaja looks or sounds like. But singer Lochan Rijal is determined to save this unique instrument once played by the Gandharvas from becoming extinct and make Arbaja a familiar sight in Nepali homes. "I felt that it was time for me to devote myself to music that belongs to Nepal," says the 33-year-old, who spent a month in Kaski last year documenting the production process and strumming techniques as part of his PhD thesis on transmission of music in Nepal.

When he arrived in Kaski, Rijal was shocked to discover Mohan Gandharva, the sole remaining teacher of Arbaja, didn't possess one. "When I found out just how much this form of music and its history had been neglected, I was saddened. But it also motivated me to learn more," he explains.

For three weeks Rijal trained under Hari Gandharva of Kaski to make Arbajas which bear a close resemblance to the more well-known Sarangi. He made numerous trips to the jungles in search of Khirra, the wood used to make the instrument. "It was one of the happiest moments of my life. Not only was I learning to play the Arbaja but making them and helping to preserve the culture in a small way," he admits.

In 2006, Rijal made it big in Nepal's pop-rock circuit by bagging four awards at the Hits FM Music award for his album *Coma*. Having left medical college to study music, he has a bachelor's and master's degree in ethnomusicology from Kathmandu University and plays the guitar, dhime, table, keyboards, violin, and sarangi equally well. Now a lecturer at KU's school of music, Rijal spends most of his time writing music with Arbaja.

"You can play different tunes on a guitar, but the sound of Arbaja is very unique. After all you can't create your identity with a guitar," he explains. "Arbaja has given a new definition to my music and I now have opportunities that I wouldn't have if I had limited myself to pop music."

His latest single *Paurakhi* is one of the few recorded songs that exclusively feature the



Arbaja and Sarangi. And like his other songs this one too carries a social message about youth migration. His other project includes Eelam Dixit's movie *Red Monsoon* which has a heavily Arbaja-infused soundtrack.

Says Rijal: "The new generation of Nepali singers are taking the easy way out and forgetting that originality and identity

are the most important things. If we don't save Nepali music and instruments, who will?"

Anushil

nepalitimes.com

Watch Lochan Rijal's music videos



SOMEPLACE ELSE



PICS: CINDREY LIU

MARRONNIER

Westerner's superior physical strength.

Although such restaurants can be hard to find outside Japan, there is one yoshoku in Patan. Marronnier is situated in a side alley off Pulchok. Although well-hidden, the journey is worth it.

Set in the grounds of a large converted bungalow, with a fountain and garden outside, coming to the Marronnier feels like visiting a friend's country house (a rich friend). The dining room itself is wood-floored and rather small with only about eight tables, but it adds to the cosy atmosphere. If you are bored and happen to



read Japanese, there are a number of comic books, magazines, and novels to flip through while you wait for your order.

The Marronnier steak (Rs 450) is an excellent choice for a main course. Although portions are slightly smaller than usual, the

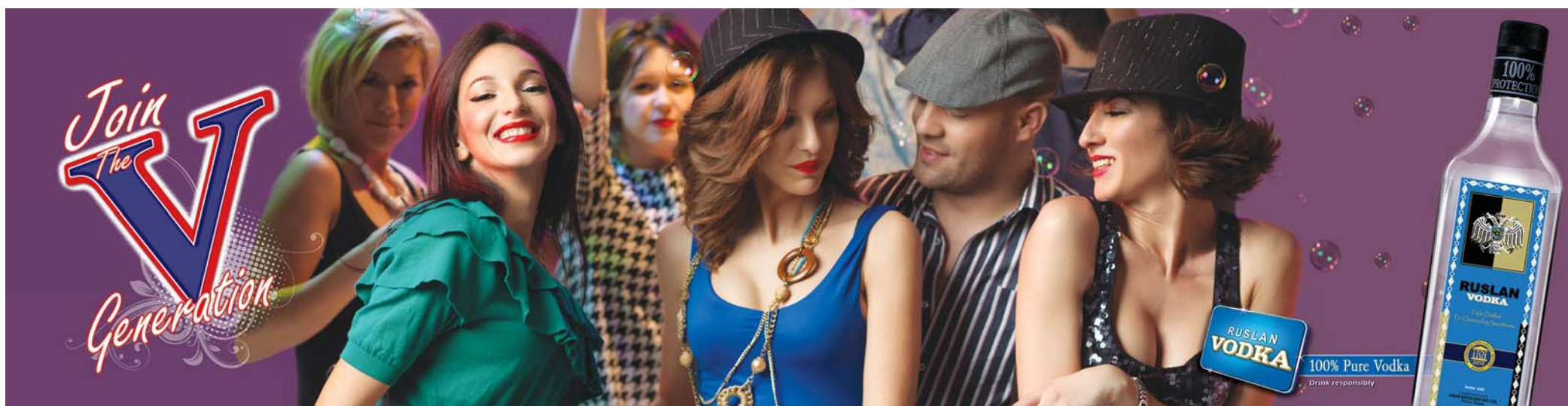
meat was grilled to perfection. Eating steak with Japanese sticky rice was a new experience, but it made the meal more filling. The breaded shrimp (Rs 600) was also a good pick, with the fried shrimp bigger than one would normally expect. The saute chicken (Rs 460)

was less satisfying as it was a little undercooked. However, the kitchen staff brought us another plate when we complained. All main courses come with salad, clear vegetable soup and either sticky rice or slices of bread, if you pay an extra Rs 120.

For dessert we ordered vanilla ice cream (Rs 170 for two scoops) and a Japanese style ice-cream butter sandwich (Rs 90), which really pleased our sweet tooth. The Marronnier also boasts clean bathrooms and a relaxed, quiet atmosphere away from the chaos of Pulchok. Visit today for a taste of Western cuisine as seen through Japanese eyes.

Sulaiman Daud

How to get there: Walk down Pulchok and turn right into Harihar Bhawan neighbourhood. You'll find Marronnier on your left.





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Absolute loss



DHANVANTI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

When we were in medical school, life expectancy, infant mortality rate, standardised mortality ratios etc were used to assess the general health of a population. In the last decade, however, the World Health Organisation has come up with more comprehensive measures to determine the burden of disease in a country.

Known as disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), this method takes into account both absolute

years of life lost due to disease (premature death) as well as productive years lost because of disability. DALYs reflect the effects of disease within a population more accurately because individuals who fall ill cannot contribute fully to society.

Interestingly when DALYs are used as the main measure to indicate the burden of disease in a community, depression (unipolar depressive disorder) accounts for the greatest burden in high-income countries. Depression by this measure even supersedes ischemic heart disease (heart attacks), cerebrovascular disease (strokes), Alzheimer's, and disorders related to alcohol abuse.

Although depression is quite common in developed countries, death rate is low and is mainly reflected in suicides. So it creates disability and loss in productivity without any significant impact on years of life lost. Depression often develops at young age and persists or recurs throughout an individual's lifetime, leading to significant morbidity over time. However, ischemic heart disease still continues to be the main cause of death in the West.

What about low-income countries? What accounts for the highest number of DALYs? These are the four most common choices provided in medical examinations: a) diarrhoeal disease b) human immunodeficiency virus c) ischemic heart disease d) lower respiratory disease and e) malaria. Although, many including healthcare professionals pick diarrhoea, lower respiratory disease is the correct answer. (Lower respiratory disease indicates the lungs as opposed to upper respiratory disease which includes sore throat, sinusitis, and pharyngitis).

In fact, lower respiratory tract infections (such as tuberculosis and obstructive lung disease) not only account for the highest number of DALYs in low income nations, but are also the main cause of death. Though both infections are easily preventable, they kill thousands every year in Nepal and leave hundreds more disabled. Therefore to boost the country's productivity, the state has to give greater priority to the prevention of these diseases. 🇳🇵

HAPPENINGS

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BIKRAM RAI

HERE I GO: Vice-president Paramananda Jha (right) departs from TIA on Tuesday to attend the First China South Asia Expo in Kunming, China.



BIKRAM RAI

THE GREEN LIFE: Chief Secretary Lila Mani Paudel (centre) visits stalls at Nepali Times EcoFair in Academy Hall, Kamaladi on Wednesday.



SANTOSH DAS

LEAVE US ALONE: Kamlaris who had been protesting outside Singha Darbar on Sunday are detained by police.

READERS' PHOTO



NGIMA GELU LAMA

TIME FOR A MAKEOVER: A worker sprinkles water on the freshly painted white dome at Boudhanath stupa.

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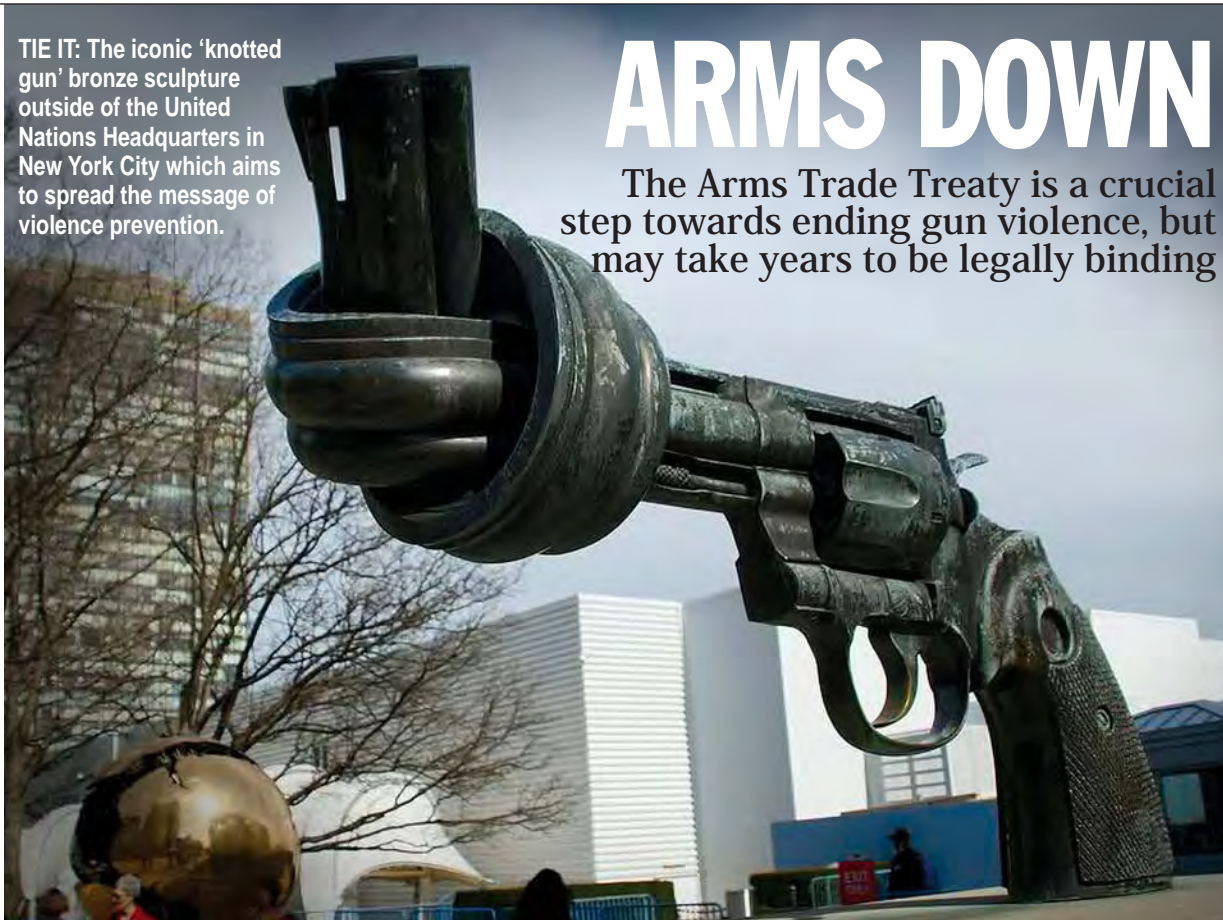
The United Nations witnessed a historic moment on 4 June with the signing of the Arms Trade Treaty, the first time the \$85 billion international arms trade has been regulated by a global set of standards. Negotiations took place between 193 countries, 63 of which signed on Monday. More countries are expected to sign by the end of the week.

The treaty will regulate all transfers of conventional arms and ban the export of arms if they will be used to commit crimes against humanity. The treaty also calls for greater transparency and for nations to be held more accountable for their weapons trading. States will undergo rigorous assessment before they move arms overseas and have to provide annual reports on international transfers of weapons.

But some of the world's major arms importers and exporters, whose inclusion is crucial for the treaty's success, have abstained or declined to give their signatures. Syria, North Korea, and Iran were the only three countries to fully oppose the treaty, while Russia, China, and India abstained.

The United States, the world's largest arms exporter, did not sign, but is expected

TIE IT: The iconic 'knotted gun' bronze sculpture outside of the United Nations Headquarters in New York City which aims to spread the message of violence prevention.



ARMS DOWN

The Arms Trade Treaty is a crucial step towards ending gun violence, but may take years to be legally binding

to by the end of the year. Technicalities in the language of the treaty were the reason for not signing; while US support for the treaty is "strong and genuine", there were inconsistencies in comparison between the English-language and translated versions of the treaty, said Daryl G Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association.

"All other countries are looking to what the United States does," Kimball added. Ray Offenheiser, president of Oxfam America, said it was critical that the United States sign the treaty, which has been

10 years in the making.

In a statement released by the State Department on Monday morning, Secretary John Kerry welcomed the treaty, ensuring that the US's signing would not infringe on the fiercely debated Second Amendment rights of US citizens.

"We look forward to signing the treaty as soon as the process of conforming the official translations is completed satisfactorily," Kerry said.

The treaty is a crucial step towards ending the deaths of the 500,000 people Oxfam estimates perish from armed violence each year. "The most

powerful argument for the treaty has always been the call of millions who have suffered armed violence around the world," Anna Macdonald, head of Arms Control, Oxfam, said, "their suffering is the reason we have campaigned for more than a decade."


When asked if the treaty could prevent atrocities like those which have occurred in Syria, Macdonald said she believed it could, if implemented correctly. With such vast negotiations taking place, disagreements were bound to arise.

"Items such as the scope

of weapons covered by the treaty and the strength of human rights provisions preventing arms sales in certain circumstances are not as strong as we would have wished," said Jayantha Dhanapala, president of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. He said the treaty was a "long overdue step" in realising Article 26 of the UN Charter, which calls for the 'establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments'.

The treaty will go into force after it receives 50 ratifications from states that have signed. This is expected to take up to two years, but some states, including the United Kingdom, have agreed to already start enforcing the rules of the Treaty. One victim of gun violence was at the UN to witness the signing, the first step on the path to the treaty's ratification.

Alex Gálvez, 36, was 14 years old when he felt a bullet course through his right shoulder, exiting through his left one. Gálvez is now executive director of Transitions Foundation of Guatemala, an organisation that helps Guatemalans living with disabilities, many of whom have been injured by small weapons.

"Unfortunately not everyone had the opportunity to get treated in time, to get educated about arms," Gálvez said. "It's not just Guatemala that is suffering [from armed violence]; many other countries are suffering too." 

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QUALITY CONTROL IN TOURISM

Re-opening the lodges inside Chitwan National Park would restore the balance between ‘quality’ and ‘quantity’ tourists in Nepal

ROBIN MARSTON in CHITWAN



Last year, the safari lodges inside Chitwan National Park were closed after the government decided that it went against conservation ethics for tourists to be staying in a protected area.

The lodges inside the park attracted premium guests who paid more and the closure was a reminder of the old debate between ‘quality’ and ‘quantity’ tourism models. Bhutan imposed a high minimum charge for visitors and went for quality, while Nepal took a democratic approach and opened its doors to all.

In the 1970s, Nepal was the flavour of the month. High profile international visitors, celebrity world travellers, mountaineers, and budget trekkers all flocked to Kathmandu Valley. The capital was an emerald Shangri La then, with little traffic, no pollution, warm welcoming people, and a lively culture.

In Chitwan, Tiger Tops opened in 1965 and pre-dated the establishment of the national

park in 1973. With its canopy rooms, jungle ambience, and conservation ethos, Tiger Tops set the standard and in its own right helped establish and market tourism to Nepal. But with the instability after 1990, tourism lost traction and the conflict halved arrivals.

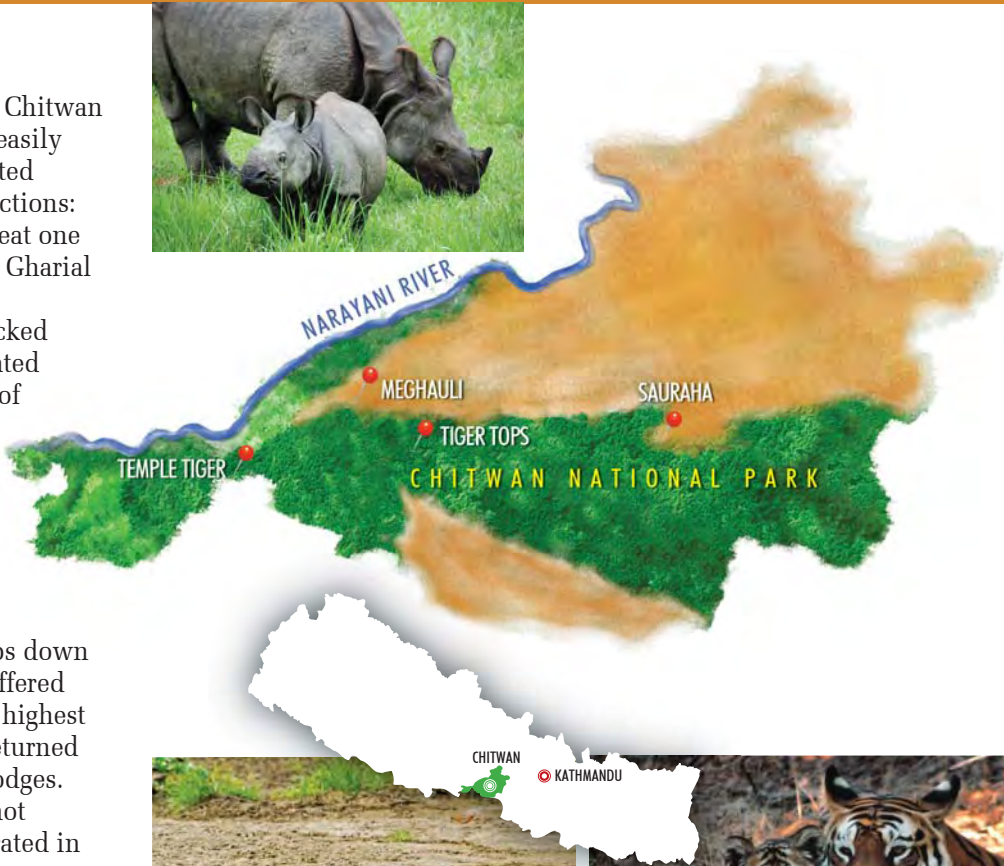
By the time the war ended in 2006, Nepal had lost its shine. Kathmandu became a place to avoid, but a glut of airline seats caused by the Gulf migrant worker traffic led to a steady growth in tourist arrival numbers. Most of this was for the ‘back packer’ segment and the top end of the tourist market stagnated. If it hadn’t been for the increase in visitors from India, China, and Southeast Asia, tourist arrival figures would be dismal.

Contributing to this erosion of ‘quality’ tourism has been the closing down of six lodges inside Chitwan National Park after their

leases ran out last year. Chitwan is the largest and most easily accessible of the protected areas with the star attractions: the Bengal Tiger, the great one horned rhinoceros, and Gharial and Mugger crocodiles.

The Lodges were tucked away in the jungle, located to ensure the dispersal of impact of visitors, and well regulated by the government. Early morning elephant rides in the mist, jungle walks in the towering sal forests, jeep safaris, bird watching, float trips down the Rapti or Narayani offered special exposure of the highest quality before clients returned to the comforts of the lodges.

Today, visitors are not dispersed, but concentrated in Sauraha from where government owned elephants are given priority access. Private jeep safaris are allowed for a fee. Wildlife exposure for visitors is limited and with Sauraha now overbuilt, new lodges are coming along right across the





GLORY DAYS: The famous self-portrait of a tiger in Chitwan taken by a camera trap installed by Chuck McDougal (*left*). Tourists on elephant-back safari get up close with a grazing rhino in Chitwan in the 1980s (*above*). Tiger Tops in the 1970s, the Chitwan luxury safari lodge that put Nepal on the international quality tourism map (*below*).

product. It can't afford to lose the income and taxes from the lodges, the loss of 1,500 jobs, and another 1,000 or more daily wage staff. There was also the multiplier effect on provisions suppliers, transporters, and their families who have been adversely affected.

There is a clear danger that with the closure of Chitwan lodges, there is an imbalance between quality and quantity tourism in Nepal. We have the 'quantity' side in the lodges in Sauraha, but the higher-paying quality tourists have stopped coming.

We have the Himalaya, Mt Everest will always be there, Pokhara offers adventure tourism and fine hotels, the Great Himalayan Trail can revitalise trekking, and there is a vast potential for pilgrimage tourism to Lumbini, Muktinath, and Pashupati. And with Chitwan, we have potentially the finest wildlife experience in the world.

What more can a country ask or offer? Nepal must make sure to attract both ends of the market to maximise the potential of tourism to generate income and create jobs. We have the expertise, the products, and the service, but we must stop this downward drift towards 'quantity' tourism only.

Chitwan can still help Nepal reverse this trend and 'quality' can be restored if the lodges in the park are given a new lease on life. 🇳🇵



Robin Marston travelled overland from the UK to Nepal 35 years ago this month and has stayed ever since.



park boundary. For tourists willing to pay more, the safari experience in Chitwan is just not what it used to be. Higher paying clients now go to Bardiya, or even to parks in India and Africa.

One of the advantages of having limited numbers of lodges inside the park was that it discouraged wildlife poaching and kept track of animal movements. It is still too early to tell, but in Sauraha the perception is that wildlife poaching has increased and one of the reasons could be the absent lodges. In Africa, poaching levels increased in national parks where lodges are kept outside.

There are also financial implications, lodges were maintaining the roads and fire breaks, and patrolling the jungle. Now, without the hefty annual leasing fees the lodges were paying, the national park doesn't have enough money for maintenance.

Nepal needs to maximise its income from its tourism

nepalitimes.com 🇳🇵

Resorting to politics, #619
Harm reduction, #464

Keeping out kamlaris

Sanjay Panthi, Karobar, 3 June

कारोबार

“Back home owners raped and scarred us for life and now in Kathmandu, the government is leaving us battered and bruised,” says one of the protesting kamlaris (girl-child indentured labourers).

On Sunday, women gathered outside Singha Darbar’s south gate to demand investigation into the mysterious deaths of kamlaris in the past year. Suddenly without warning, security forces baton-charged them. But even as the police got brutal, the women stood their ground as more joined in. Surprisingly there was not a single female police officer on duty to control the crowd of over a hundred kamlaris. Eight kamlaris had to be taken to hospitals, out of which four hadn’t gained consciousness even till late in the evening.

The women had come to the capital in hopes of getting justice for the mistreatment they suffer at the hands of their owners and organised a relay hunger strike in Shanti Batika, Ratnapark to make their voices heard. But since the state didn’t pay any attention, they began a sit-in in front of Singha Darbar.

“The government beat us up as if we were the culprits. This is not our government and the ministers aren’t our guardians,” states Urmila Chaudhary president of



SANTOSH DAS

Kamlari’s Abolition Struggling Committee. Fakala Tharu who was present during the protests says that instead of addressing their demands and helping them, the state resorted to unnecessary force: “No matter how much force they use, we will continue to protest peacefully,” she claims.

Although the kamaiya system was officially abolished 13 years ago, it is still widely practiced in many of Nepal’s southern districts including Dang, Banke, and Bardiya and violence against the women is quite routine. In the latest atrocities, 16-year-old Meghi Chaudhary from Kailali and 12-year-old Shrijana Chaudary from Dang were found dead under suspicious circumstances at the homes of their owners. Eleven kamlaris are missing so far. Yet there has been no arrests or investigation into any of the cases.

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 Nepalis’ reading habits:

How much do you spend on books each month?

- Rs 500 52.5%
- Rs 500 to 1,000 32.4%
- Rs 1,000 to 2,000 9.7%
- Rs 2,000 to 5,000 1.7%
- Don’t know 3%

How often do you read?

- Daily 44.1%
- Sometimes 25.8%
- Once a week 25.4%
- Once a month 4.7%

What kind of books do you read?

- Literature 28.8%
- Religious 13.7%
- History 12.4%
- Fiction 10.4%
- Non-fiction 9.4%

NEPALI TWEETS

Anita Thapa

“राष्ट्रियता र लोकतन्त्रको रक्षाको लागि नागरिक अभियानको मेला !” र ----- जोक

“A civil society gathering for the protection of nationalism and democracy!” – what a joke

Dhiraj Kandel

लाइफको जित्नेकिमा यी तीन कुराहरु प्रति म कहिल्यै गर्व गर्दिनः
१ विश्वको सर्वोच्च शिखर नेपालमा,
२ बुद्ध नेपालमा जन्मिएका हुन्,
३ म नेपाली हुं

I will never be proud of these three things in my life: world’s highest peak in Nepal, Buddha was born in Nepal, I am from Nepal.

Rubina shrestha

खासमा यो टवीटर भन्थ्यो वालिरनुपले मान्छेका लागि गज्जबको जिनिस हो विमानदेखि चुप लागेर बस्नु पन्थो भे कम सकस हुन्थ्यो !! घन्त !!

Twitter is made for people who just can’t stop talking. Imagine how hard it would be for them to remain quiet. Thank god.

SociBaba (सोशल बाबा)

Dharmaraj Thapa in ICU. “@KANepal: अरु देश सवै जागेर डटे, हाम्रो न आँखा चिम्केर सुत्ने... नेपालीले माया मारे वरीले !”

Dharmaraj Thapa in ICU: other countries progressed, while we went to sleep. Nepalis have broken my heart.

Radioactive decay

Bhojraj Bhat, Nepal, 2 June

नेपाल

Marie Curie won two Nobel prizes for her pioneering work in the field of radioactivity. Her discovery of radioactive elements proved to be a boon for modern science. But the discovery of uranium in Tinbhangle of Makwanpur district seems to be doing more harm than good for its residents. Although the link between exposure to uranium and higher incidences of cancer and diseases in the region has not been proved yet, experts say there is a connection.

“Although exposure to radioactive rays doesn’t cause immediate harm, prolonged exposure through the air, water, crops, and animals is detrimental in the long run,” explains Professor Binil Aryal from the department of geology in TU. “People should not be allowed to build homes around areas where radioactive elements are found.”

Fourteen years ago, the Department of Mines and Geology discovered uranium in parts of Tinbhangle. Back then there were no houses around the site, today settlements have grown as people from Kavre’s Simle, Falengtar, Chitre, Saure,



LOSING IT: Sali Maya Jimba’s nails are falling most likely due to long term uranium exposure.

Jure, Dadegaun started migrating here from mid-60s onwards. Almost everyone in the village suffers from diarrhoea, vomiting, and skin diseases. Other harmful effects of radioactivity such as hair fall, falling of nails, miscarriage during pregnancy, and lung diseases (like tuberculosis) are also on the rise. Even the cattle fall sick often.

Santa Gyaneshwor Guro who lives in an area with the highest level of uranium says he feels nauseous every time he enters the house. He has lost his appetite and has difficulties sleeping at night. Fellow villager Man Bahadur’s 57-year-old mother Kantimaya suddenly

stopped talking three years ago. Numerous trips to the capital have proven unfruitful as the doctors cannot diagnose her ailment. Man Bahadur himself looks emaciated and sick.

Lal Bahadur Lungwa of Chatiwan Katlekhola suffers from skin cancer. About 10 months ago he noticed something that looked like an insect bite on his neck. At first Lungwa didn’t pay much attention, but with time the bite began to hurt. He went from hospital to hospital seeking treatment but with little success. At Bharatpur Hospital he discovered he had cancer.

Bhumeshwori Primary School lies 50km east of the region. Teacher Jima Kumari Jimba says she has seen signs of mental illness among students here. “They stare into space and cannot remember their lessons. Sometimes the students even faint,” she explains. 12 students out of a school of 150 are currently receiving scholarship for learning disabilities.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, human habitats should be evacuated if radioactive level crosses over five per cent. In 1987-88, the then Minister of Forest Hem Bahadur Malla ordered the relocation of residents to Rangpur of Rautahat and Toriamai of Makwanpur. But the orders couldn’t be carried out as the Panchayat thought it was done so in alliance with Save Chure movement.



Dahal: “Comrade Bhattarai is washing away his sins in the Trisuli.” Signboard: Trisuli III-A

नागरिक Rajesh KC in Nagarik, 5 June

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“ If the one percent threshold rule is implemented, there will be no polls. ”

President of Nepal Workers and Farmers Party Narayan Man Bijukchhe, Naya Patrika, 6 June.

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The dark night

Yubraj Ghimire, *Setopati*, 2 June

सेतोपाटी

I was in Seoul with a friend when I read online about the royal family massacre. We left the conference and flew back to Nepal immediately. Since there was a curfew in town, the police drove us from the airport to Kantipur's headquarter in Tinkune. The entire nation was in shock and denial. Nepalis just couldn't bring themselves to accept that they had lost their beloved King Birendra and his family. And they were neither in the mood to accept Crown Prince Dipendra as the murderer.

At work, I found that Baburam Bhattarai's column, in which he blamed India and the US for planning the massacre and accused then PM Girija Koirala and to-be-crowned King Gyanendra of helping them, was going to press. We decided to print the piece, but were soon put in police custody for 'treachery'.

In the wake of the palace

massacre, everyone was consumed with Gorakhnath's prophecy that Prithvi Narayan Shah's dynasty would not rule beyond 10 generations. As I spent the night in police custody at my office, I privately hoped that the government, political parties, and everyone else would come together in this time of grave crisis. It never happened.

The state proved completely inept at providing relief to a nation in mourning. PM Koirala didn't even bother calling a parliament meeting or informing the public that he was going to set up an investigation panel. The latter was of more importance, but Koirala and opposition leader Madhav Kumar Nepal backed out and urged the palace to conduct its own investigations. When the palace secretariat finally spoke out, its explanations were wholly unsatisfactory.

There was an enormous information vacuum and the public found itself swarmed

with endless rumours. No one had even heard about the serious injuries that Gyanendra's wife Komal had sustained.

In cases like these, the blame is usually put on those who happen to benefit from the event the most. Ever since that dreadful night, Gyanendra had to deal with insulting and unfounded accusations with silence. And due to his notoriety, his son Paras – who had used his presence of mind to save many family members – became the prime suspect.

When I met the new king three months later for the first time, I told him how the faulty investigations had left Nepalis searching for the truth. Since the CJ-led team had already submitted its report, it was too late to form another investigation panel. So it wasn't hard to understand the miseries of a king who couldn't show any signs of weakness despite losing his entire family on his way to the throne.

When the Constituent Assembly decided to abolish the monarchy in Nepal, Gyanendra challenged those in power by telling them that he would cooperate with any investigation into the massacre. Nobody accepted his challenge. Instead all the leaders like Pushpa Kamal Dahal continued accusing him.

The palace always kept Dipendra's outrageous behaviours under wraps and it seems no one really bothered to educate or groom the future king. He was given free rein and his problems went unchecked. Since Paras was the more notorious of the young royals, Dipendra's antics went largely unnoticed.

The prince's fiery temper and obstinate nature were no secret among close friends. Dipendra once half-buried a lover to scare her. Another time he locked a girl in the bonnet of his car as he drove around town. "We never thought these behaviours would eventually lead to him killing his entire family," says one of his friends on the condition of anonymity.

Twelve years on, there are still no clear answers about what actually happened on the night of 1 June, the debate lingers on. We can attribute

much of the confusion to the lethargy that has come to characterise this country's politics and administration. When filmmakers and historians try to reconstruct this tragic event in the future, the validity of their stories will depend on humanitarian instincts or its lack thereof.

nepalitimes.com

Dipendra kicked his father after he shot him, #555
Listen to Ketaki Chester's interview on BBC



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Ass first into the monsoon

Many of you have been taking the Ass aside at parties in the past weeks to ask when elections will be held. And I have confidently and unequivocally replied: “How the hell should I know? I am an Ass, not an asstrologer.” But if you really want a prognosis on CA elections, then all you have to do is follow the student union elections which have just been postponed infinitely. In fact, college unions in this country have always behaved exactly like their parent parties, which is why when the students grow up they just keep on continuing to burn effigies of each other. No surprise: the First Daughter’s union was involved in padding up the electoral rolls with fake students by mobilising 20 lacks for their admission fees. The other unions cried foul, not because they were outraged but because they didn’t have that kind of moolah. The young turks couldn’t agree on a date for union elections and therefore effectively cancelled it. Which is probably what is going to happen to national elections.



Take it from me: don’t even think about elections until the Maddies unite and form an alliance with the Baddies. That is Awesome’s strategy to ensure a 2/3rd majority to ram through a constitution that will make him an executive president. But the problem is that the Maddies are so divided that they hate each other more than they hate the hillybilly parties. Thakur Sa’b called a meeting to forge unity, but Rajinder (fast-unto-



death) Mahato didn’t go because he is trying to be the supreme himself, neither Gutch nor Updaro attended saying, “Just because your father calls us you think we will come?” or words to that effect. Upadro can’t stand Gutch, neither can stand Jupta, and Sarat doesn’t get along with Gutch and no one likes Rajinder. The Hidden Hand must have hands full trying to sort that out.

are forever striving to be the first in the Guinness Book to be the first to do things backward. Couple of years ago, someone became the first person to try to read the best-selling Nepali epic, *Muna Madan*, from back to front. This season on Mt Everest, a Nepali mountaineer wanted to enter the Guinness book by being the first person to climb the world’s highest peak ass-first. By the time he got to Camp II the poor fellow had frost-bitten toes and had to be medevaced. And now, a fellow hack wants to travel across Nepal riding a bicycle backwards. Ass’ take: when the country itself is going backwards, why bother?

Many readers from all worldwide nooks and crannies have been writing worried notes to us asking if it is safe and sound to return to Nepal for the forthcoming monsoon season and if they do, whether they can eat the salad. Because most of the queries have come from highly litigious countries in the

western hemisphere, we have consulted our lawyers and now can be brutally frank: no, keep off, leave us alone this monsoon season. We can’t afford to be sued. And, no, don’t touch the salad.

- The monsoon gets a bad press, and it is time to rebrand it by extolling its virtues:
1. Your gut reaction will be to stay away because of the prospect of a violent uprising caused by diarrhoea. True, it is not covered by the Warsaw Convention, but diarrhoea is a great way to lose weight. Slogan: Visit Nepal and Lose 10kg in 10 days.
 2. The road-widening project has turned the streets into sludge and we can take political mud-slinging to a whole new level in Mudmandu by launching our version of the Glastonbury Festival.
 3. Road-widening has also blocked all drains, flooding the city. Rickshaws could be replaced by gondolas and Kathmandu can be promoted as the ‘Venice of the East’.

शहरमित्र स्वर्गिय आनन्दको अनुभूति गर्न पाईने।
सर्वोत्कृष्ट आधुनिक सुविधा सम्पन्न हाउजिङ्ग न पहिले थियो न कहिल्यै हुनेछ ।

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CIVIL HOMES PHASE - VI

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Advantages:
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Other Facilities:
सडक बति र प्रत्येक घरलाई सोलार पावरको ब्याकअप हुने तथा हरेक घरको दुवैतिर खुल्ला चौडा बाटो हुनुको साथै २४ से घण्टा सुरक्षा र पालीको व्यवस्था हुने ।

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