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KUNDA DIXIT

## Waiting to get the politics right

**A** Nepali Congress poster shares a tree trunk with a sign declaring the village of Kalikasthan in Achham open-defecation free (*pic, above*). Achham and Kalikot have become the latest districts in a government campaign of toilets for all by 2017. The rest of the country is not waiting for Kathmandu to get its politics right, as the capital's messy transition drags on.


Suddenly, though, politics lurched forward after a three-month deadlock with the announcement of Tuesday, 19 November 2013 as the date for elections. The logjam was cleared once the Big Four political parties accepted their failure to agree on amending

electoral laws and allowed the Chief Justice-led government to sort that out and announce an election date.

There are still doubts about whether the parties have really abdicated their role and if the interim election government is only a rubber stamp body. But the announcement on Thursday gives it more legitimacy.

In a day of fast-paced developments, Chairman Khil Raj Regmi met Chief Election Commissioner Nil Kantha Uprety in the morning to iron out details and the council of ministers worked on the wording of the changes in electoral laws in an ordinance to send to President Ram Baran Yadav for formal ratification.

The ordinance has finally bypassed disagreements between the big four main parties over the question of threshold for proportional representation, delineation of constituencies, and whether or not candidates with criminal records should be allowed to contest elections. The cabinet also decided to set up an Electoral Constituency Delineation Commission to map out new voting areas.

However, the breakaway CPN-M faction of the Maoists needs to be brought on board. "Fixing the election date without taking our demands into account could lead to conflict," warned CP Gajurel of the CPN-M on Thursday, "we will not accept forced elections." 



### CHARIOT CAM

Reuters' Naves Chitrakar attaches a GoPro camera on the head of the Machhindranath priest to take this stunning picture of the coconut throw. Find out how he did it.

PAGE 7

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IMPATIENT PATIENTS

Poor healthcare in Nepal is not a medical problem, it is a political one. The contrast couldn't be starker between modern medical care in the cities with state-of-the-art diagnostics and sub-health posts across the country without basic medicines and personnel.

The ultra-commercialisation of healthcare in this country has put most medical interventions beyond the reach of all but the super rich. The only saving grace is that many now don't have to go to Delhi or Bangkok for treatment because comparable care is available here and this saves the country money. But also true is that given the cost of ultrasounds and MRI scans, few Nepalis can afford private hospitals.

At the other end of the scale are places like Kalikot and Achham in far-western Nepal where district hospitals, such as they are, don't have enough medicines, doctors are absent, or run clinics where they refer patients to themselves. The equipment are often not working and the generators are always out of diesel.

Which is why few people go to district hospitals when there are alternatives available. In Dadeldhura, the TEAM hospital run by the HDCS was seeing 800 patients a day and making 1,000 deliveries a year. Virtually no one went to the government hospital up the mountain. Last month, selfish and greedy local politicians forced it to close and hounded TEAM out of Dadeldhura.

In Achham, the district hospital in Mangalsen refers patients to the charity-run Bayalpata Hospital near Sanfegagar because it has neither water nor electricity for tests and procedures. Bayalpata is run by a team of health experts from the US and Nepal, who have taken it upon themselves to prove that healthcare can and should be free, especially for the poorest, most disadvantaged, and excluded sections of society. Bayalpata isn't trying to



SAM KANG LI

Politicians may think they have more pressing matters in their hands, but the poor state of healthcare is symptomatic of massive political failure

replace the government, it is trying to demonstrate that affordable and quality care is possible. (See page 16-17)

As Duncan Maru and Roshan Bista of Bayalpata argue in their piece in this issue that healthcare has a cost even when it is free. It is the responsibility of the state to use taxes paid by citizens to pay for universal healthcare. That may seem like an unrealistic dream when successive governments waste billions to pay phantom guerrillas, loot the exchequer to distribute cash to cadre, or pocket millions in kickbacks from contracts for hydropower deals. But these are all the result of the

erosion of accountability during this messy and endless transition: nothing that can't be set right with clean elections at the national and local levels.

Even despite the lack of elections and accountability, rife corruption, and an uncaring state, Nepal has made remarkable progress in lowering the mortality rate among mothers, reducing child deaths, and increasing the average lifespan of citizens.

Institutional deliveries are going up, even in remote areas as new roads are built. The increase in female literacy has reduced the incidence of child marriages. The work of Female Health Volunteers in pushing vaccination and nutrition in rural areas has been cited as a model for other developing countries. Now, the country is poised to remove a major cause of child deaths from diarrhoeal dehydration and pneumonia by making all 75 districts open-defecation free and free of indoor firewood smoke by 2017.

Now that we are making statistical progress on quantity, however, it is time to also look at equity and quality of healthcare. As the health focus in this edition shows, there are working examples of public-private partnerships to make government hospitals affordable and efficient. If the Bayalpata model can be scaled up and spread to the cities to provide free and reliable healthcare, it would automatically reduce the commercialism in the sector because people would have alternatives.

Government hospitals are under-staffed, under-resourced, and under-supplied. Politicians may think they have more pressing matters in their hands, but they should know that the poor state of healthcare in this country is symptomatic of massive political failure.

ON THE WEB  
www.nepalitimes.com

ECONOMY NEEDS OXYGEN

I am so happy to hear that air pollution is finally being considered a political issue and it's time for politicians to act ('The economy needs oxygen', Editorial, #659). People don't realise the air they breathe is dependent on each and every tree. Why are young Nepalis not acting as a united pressure group on this issue?

Rebecca Johnson Bista

The editorial says that the Tarai forests are nearly all gone except for what remains within national parks. The writer could have at least credited the Panchayat, late King Birendra, and former King Gyanendra for establishing and promoting these parks. Perhaps it is too much to ask as we Nepalis are experts at kicking people when they are down.

Samjhana

Thanks to the road widening campaign, four 30-year-old trees had to be removed from a stretch of about 200m with no other trees between two road junctions. Sadly, countless, older and grander trees had to be chopped off for development's sake.

Anonymous

QUALITY CONTROL IN TOURISM

Robin Marston's article should be read by all those who make the policy in the government ('Quality control in tourism', #659). The advice comes from a man who loves Nepal and Nepalis and knows what he is talking

about with his vast experience in travel trade for more than four decades.

Dorji Tsering Sherpa

I remember during a morning safari ride on a Land Rover in the Chitwan National Park, Chuck McDougal asked the driver to pull over and walked back a few hundred metres to pick up a small plastic litter. These are dedicated people who have done a lot for this region and the country by not just bringing in high-end tourists, but also keeping track of animals, raising anti-poaching awareness, and fund raising among other things. I desperately hope that the government will reverse its decision and allow resorts inside the park to resume service.

Krishna S

The government has failed to devise a plan to provide adequate protection to wildlife in the national park. The sad part is the money that is generated is filling up the deep pockets



of a few corrupt officials while the animals, who should have been the ultimate beneficiaries, are running out of space and are constantly harassed by thrill-seeking tourists.

Anonymous

What about tourists (many domestic) who cannot afford to stay in these premium lodges? Low budget riff raff be damned.

Tonk

The answer for quality tourism lies not necessarily in allowing a few lodges to run inside the park, but in controlling the mushrooming growth and development all along the fringe of the park. It calls for an overall revamp in tourism licence policy.

J Talchabhadell

I rarely agree with anything Nepali politicians decide upon, but closing down hotels in Chitwan is to be commended. Invoking the 70s in a nostalgic vein is pathetic and cute, but after residing in Nepal for 35 years, Marston should have learnt by now what the country is about and the international competition in tourism it faces. Lamenting about the preference the government is giving to certain other operators is moot and proves only one thing: despite all the hush money, you can't always get what you want.

Carl

STRINGING MAESTRO

I am ashamed to admit that I had no idea what an arbaja looked or sounded

like before reading this article ('Stringing maestro', Anushil, #659). I think this tells us how terrible we Nepalis have been in preserving and passing down our cultural heritage. Thank you Lochan dai for trying to keep a little bit of Nepali history alive. I am now a great fan of your music.

Sneha R

Thank you Lochan Rijal for helping preserve one of Nepal's endangered instruments. Keep up the good work.

Tattwa

DOCTOR WHO?

I have seen NGOs in Simikot mushrooming in the last few years ('Doctor who?', Bhrikuti Rai, #655). The aim of most people who run these organisations is to catch the big 'white fish'. I am not being derogatory, but just using a common Nepali term for donors. Each of them produce colourful and glossy reports claiming to have made significant contribution to Humla, but few do what they claim.

Real Humli

SEEING GREEN

In a land locked country like ours, innovations in the field of energy is much needed and welcome ('Seeing green', #659). Thank you Nepali Times for profiling companies and products that are trying to make the planet a little more green.

Tashi Lama

Q OF THE WEEK

If you could have a superhuman power what would it be?

facebook

Nick Sankey: The power to widen roads in days instead of years  
Rebecca Johnson Bista: Healing Prabin Jung Thapa: To correct political judgment especially in Nepal  
June Moh: To be free from war  
BonandAlb Hampton: To feed the world  
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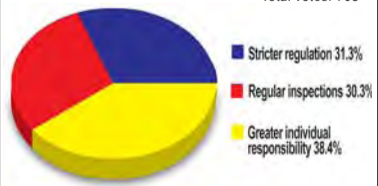
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This week's Question of the week: What is your favourite sports team? Go to www.facebook.com/nepalitimes or www.twitter.com/nepalitimes to respond.



nepalnews.com  
Weekly Internet Poll #660

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



Weekly Internet Poll # 661. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Why do so many students fail their SLC exams despite grade inflation in the past few years?



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# Breaking views

As elections look more probable, the mainstream media also becomes an extension of the political parties



BY THE WAY  
Anurag Acharya

Last week, during a televised interview a Madhesi leader expressed his commitment to democracy. The interviewer couldn't help pass a snide and cynical comment: "But you worked closely with the Maoist-led government, how can you be a democrat?"

A few days earlier, a radio interviewer belittled the political intelligence of Rekha Thapa in a condescending and patronising way for joining the UCPN (M) and goaded her for joining a party that was responsible for the death of 16,000 Nepalis. "If you are fond of helping fellow human beings, why didn't you just stick to extracurricular charity like your fellow actors?" he asked her.

Sure, these are public figures or celebrities with political ambitions and the media's role is to ask tough questions, but it proves just how Nepal's political polarisation is now reflected in the mainstream media. As the possibility of poll dates being announced by the Chief Justice-led government increases, electoral competition among the Big Four is manifested in

editorialised headlines and slanted op-eds.

When political adversaries snarl at each other through the medium of journalism, opinion makers and opinion seekers in the old and new media are dividing themselves into opposite sides of the field. At a social gathering this week, a Congress leader admitted casually that the tussle over provisions of thresholds and candidature in the electoral bill was nothing but a clash of egos. But when this clash is played out in the media, there is less chance of a solution being found.

The appointment of Lokman Singh Karki as the head of CIAA and the Trisuli 3A controversy got sustained coverage, as rival broadsheets pushed opposing sides. Journalism rules were openly flouted as news masqueraded as views and the line between fact and opinion was blurred.

"The journalist seemed more keen on firing at the prime minister by resting a gun on my shoulder than on reporting the facts of the matter to the public," said an aggrieved senior bureaucrat dragged into the Trisuli story.

To be sure, there is nothing new in all this. Despite improvements in professionalism of journalists in Nepal, the media still unleashes smear campaigns on companies that refuse



to advertise and those who blackmail and lie are not exceptions. As the elections get closer, this is bound to become worse unless the Election Commission lays down strict media guidelines.

Senior hardcopy journalists who started the popular investigative online portal, 'Setopati', were greeted last week by the launch of an unabashedly copy-cat 'Ratopati' that owes its existence to the UCPN (M). A publisher's note on Ratopati said it could counter the 'dominant narrative of the mainstream media' which, it claimed was 'status quoist and biased'.

As journalist and media critic John Pilger points out, it is ironic that with the advancement in media technology it is not just traditional means of journalism that are getting obsolete, but its honourable traditions as

well. Even before the battle for ballots begin, the battle for hearts and minds of the electorate has begun and the media has become an extension of parties and leaders to sell their political viewpoints and smear rivals.

The advent of social media, it was hoped, would level the playing field and democratise the space monopolised by the mainstream press. But the new media just reflects the political biases, ownership patterns, and commercialism of the old media. Despite its exponential growth, Nepal's cyberspace is not being used so much to access information but for communication and entertainment. And when it is, the users are mainly male city-dwellers. No doubt, social networking sites have given a voice to

those marginalised, but crucial issues of state restructuring and inclusion are skewed by the domination of the traditional elite.

Nationwide annual opinion polls carried out over successive years by this newspaper have shown that of all institutions, the public's trust in the media is by far the highest. But it won't stay that way if journalists start flying party flags so openly.

The media is an essential part of the check-and-balance in a democracy. And it is when the legislature, executive, and judiciary are weakened that the role of the fourth pillar – the independent media – becomes even more critical. We are in the business of agenda-setting, not consent manufacturing. 🇳🇵

Anurag Acharya is program manager at the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ). [www.cijnepal.org](http://www.cijnepal.org)



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# BOSPHORUS BLUES

IAN BURUMA in NEW YORK

One interpretation of the anti-government demonstrations now roiling Turkish cities is that they are a massive protest against political Islam. What began as a rally against official plans to raze a small park in the centre

of Istanbul to make way for a kitschy shopping mall quickly evolved into a conflict of values. On the surface, the fight appears to represent two different visions of modern Turkey, secular versus religious, democratic versus authoritarian. Comparisons have been made with Occupy Wall Street. Some

observers even speak of a ‘Turkish Spring’.

Clearly, many Turkish citizens, especially in the big cities, are sick of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s increasingly authoritarian style, his steely grip on the press, his taste for grandiose new mosques, the restrictions on alcohol, the arrests of political dissidents, and now the violent response to the demonstrations. People fear that sharia law will replace secular legislation and that Islamism will spoil the fruits of Kemal Atatürk’s drive to modernise post-Ottoman Turkey.

Then there is the issue of the Alevis, a religious minority linked to Sufism and Shi’ism. The Alevis, who had been protected by the secular Kemalist state, deeply distrust Erdoğan, who further unsettled them by planning to name a new bridge over the Bosphorus after a sixteenth-century sultan who massacred their forebears. Religion, then, would seem to be at the heart of the Turkish problem. Political Islam’s opponents regard it as inherently anti-democratic.

But things are not so simple. The secular Kemalist state was no less authoritarian than Erdoğan’s populist Islamist regime; if anything, it was more so. And it is also significant that the first protests in Istanbul’s Taksim Square concerned not a mosque, but a shopping mall. Fear of sharia law is matched by anger at the rapacious vulgarity of developers and entrepreneurs backed by Erdoğan’s government. There is a strong leftist bent to the Turkish Spring.

So, rather than dwell on the problems of contemporary political Islam, which are certainly considerable, it

More than a clash between democracy and autocracy, the anti-government demonstrations in Turkey points towards a class conflict


might be more fruitful to look at Turkey’s conflicts from another, now distinctly unfashionable, perspective: class. The protesters, whether they are liberal or leftist, tend to be from the urban elite – Westernised, sophisticated, and secular. Erdoğan, on the other hand, is still very popular in rural and provincial Turkey, among people who are less educated, poorer, more conservative, and more religious.

Despite Erdoğan’s personal authoritarian tendencies, which are obvious, it would be misleading to regard the current protests purely as a conflict between democracy and autocracy. After all, the success of Erdoğan’s populist Justice and Development Party, as well as the increasing presence of religious symbols and customs in public life, is a result of more democracy in Turkey, not less. Customs that the Kemalist secular state suppressed, such as women’s use of headscarves in public places, have reappeared, because rural Turks have more influence. Young religious women are turning up at urban universities. The votes of conservative provincial Turks now count.

Likewise, the alliance between businessmen and religious populists is hardly unique to Turkey. Many of the new entrepreneurs, like

the women in headscarves, are from villages in Anatolia. These newly rich provincials resent the old Istanbul elite as much as businessmen from Texas or Kansas hate the East Coast elites of New York and Washington. But to say that Turkey has become more democratic is not to say that it has become more liberal. This is also one of the problems revealed by the Arab Spring. Giving all people a voice in government is essential to any democracy. But those voices, especially in revolutionary times, are rarely moderate.

The demonstrators are right to oppose Erdoğan’s haughty disregard of public opinion and his stifling of the press. But to see the conflict as a righteous struggle against religious expression would be equally mistaken. Higher visibility for Islam is the inevitable result of more democracy in Muslim-majority countries. How to stop this from killing liberalism is the most important question facing people in the Middle East. Turkey is still a democracy. It is to be hoped that the protests against Erdoğan will make it more liberal, too. [www.project-syndicate.org](http://www.project-syndicate.org)

 Ian Buruma is Professor of Democracy, Human Rights, and Journalism at Bard College.

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### Connecting people



iClinic Healthcare has partnered with Haryali Travels to launch web based medical consultation services. The platform will enable patients in Nepal to connect with doctors across India.



### Sporty ride

Laxmi Inter Continental, distributor of Hyundai vehicles in Nepal has launched the new i-Gen i20 in Nepal. It has 1.2 Kappa petrol engine and comes with rear parking camera, auto headlight control, rear disc brakes, and sporty alloy wheels.



### Click click

Him Electronics, authorised distributor of Samsung digital cameras in Nepal has introduced ES95, DV 150F, and WB30F digital cameras. These entry level cameras capture brilliant details and also shoot high



definition videos.

### High on tab

Mercantile Office Systems, the sole authorised distributor of Acer in Nepal, has launched Acer Iconia B1 tablet.

Targeted at first time users, the tablet is easy to carry, read, and powerful enough for fast media performance according to the press statement.

### Vroom vroom



MAW Enterprises, the sole distributor of Yamaha motorcycles in Nepal, organised Yamaha Day-Out Rally for R15 V2.0 riders in association with WFS services

last week. More than 40 riders participated in the rally that started from Darbar Marg and concluded in Royal Beach Camp, Dhading.



### Drink in style

Scotch Whisky house, John Walker and Sons has launched Odyssey, a rare triple malt whisky in Nepal. Luxury whisky mentoring session with

Richard Gillam, the brand ambassador of Odyssey was also conducted at the launch.

### 110 and counting

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### Bright and clean

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# CLOSE TO THE EDGE

In a remote corner of eastern Nepal, villagers log timber to barter for food from Tibet



SUNIR PANDEY  
in SANKHUWASABHA

Tucked between the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area and Makalu-Barun National Park, this corner of Nepal is so isolated from the rest of the country that you have to walk two days to reach the nearest village. Olanchungola is three days away over the Lumba Sumba pass in Taplejung, a route so hazardous that few locals venture across it.

But now that pass is part of the Great Himalayan Trail across Nepal and there is potential for locals to benefit from trekkers.

We are in the remotest corner of a roadless part of Sankhuwasabha which has remained much like Nepal was before trekking and tourism came. There are no health posts, no schools, no telephone towers, there is little here to suggest the presence of the Nepali state except a poster urging the conservation of red pandas.

“We had a school here five years ago,” says 15-year-old Phurpu Bhote (*pic, left*), “but the teachers stopped coming, so we now work.”

Since he doesn’t go to school and hasn’t had much contact with outsiders, Phurpu can’t speak Nepali properly. His friends Sonam Lopsang, Pemba, Lhakpa, and their siblings (*pic, below*) spend their days herding yaks. As the boys get older, they will take the animals to meadows above 4,500m in the monsoon. Once they turn 18, they will get married, after which life will be a battle between growing needs and scant resources.

Even with healthy monsoons, at this altitude very little farming is possible. The 20 households here get most of their food and necessities from Tibet in exchange for timber and medicinal herbs. A wood plank two metres long fetches Rs 100 across the border and because the moist cloud forests are rich in pine and fir trees timber trading provides a good income and has sustained families for generations. But as the villagers get more desperate and Tibet becomes more affluent, the slopes around Thudam are being unsustainably logged. Without trees to hold the top soil, the mountains are scarred by landslides.

The banks of the nearby Modek Chheju River are

littered with packets of Chinese noodles and candy wrappers. Selling yak milk, ghee, and chhurpi to villagers downstream brings in Nepali currency, a rare commodity in this part of the country. Having little contact with ‘mainland’ Nepal means Thudam residents feel closer to Tibet than Nepal and questions about politics in Kathmandu draw blank stares.

“Since the state has neglected them for so long, they don’t want to be associated with it,” explains Kumar Ghimire, a vet posted at Hedangna Gadi. “Villagers are used to doing things their own way and openly admit they would be better off with Chinese passports because they are dependent on Tibet for everything.”

With its lush forests, stunning scenery, and an intact culture, Thudam has tourism potential. But its remoteness and lack of facilities mean few venture here. “If we had more trekkers, we could open ourselves to the outside world and maybe that would help improve our living standards,” admits 50-year-old Tenzing Bhote, but there seems to be no interest in the district or national capital.

For now, Thudam is protected by its own isolation. But unless the villagers here have an alternative source of income, they will have squandered away the forests that would make it attractive for visitors. ■





## EVENTS



**FARMERS MARKET**, shop for the freshest organic products. Every Saturday, 9am to 12pm, 1905 Restaurant and Bar, Thamel

**Mcube Chakati Guff**, discussion and presentation on street theatre through gestures and symbols by theatre artist/director Ashesh Malla. 14 June, 4 to 6pm, Gallery Mcube, Chakapat, Lalitpur, (01)5260110

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

**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](http://www.facebook.com/events/162638933910996/?ref=22), register at <http://bit.ly/dmnepal>

**Nepal in Pictures**, showcase your photography skills in this nation-wide photo competition organised by Photo Journalist Club Nepal and get a chance to win cash prizes.

Deadline 15 June, 9851056865, [www.pjclub.com.np](http://www.pjclub.com.np)

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

**Business Square**, meet entrepreneurs, share innovative business ideas, and market your business in a casual setting. 20 June, 6 to 9pm, The Embers Restaurant, Krishna Galli, Lalitpur, (01) 4785454, [info@candidservice.com](mailto:info@candidservice.com)



**ROPAIN**, a day out for playing in mud and planting some rice. Rs 1750(for adults) Rs 1000(for children under 10 yrs), 29 June, 9.15am to 4.45pm, Bajrabarahi, Lalitpur, Register at [ropain-efbevent.eventbrite.com](http://ropain-efbevent.eventbrite.com)

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

**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](http://www.image-ark.com)



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

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

**Kathmandu Bolchaa**, a video journalism workshop. Learn to tell stories through videos with minimal equipments. Rs 3000, 16 to 20 June, 9am to 1pm, VENT! Office, Sanepa Chowk, apply at [bit.ly/ZHuLws](http://bit.ly/ZHuLws)



**CINEMANDU**, watch the screening, meet the crew and share your views on the movie Uma. Free entrance, 14 June, 3.30pm, Nepal Bharat Library, Nepal Airlines Building, Sundhara.

## DINING

**Kasi**, spread out over a large terrace overlooking Phora Darbar, Kasi offers a delectable plate of Newari delicacies. *Darbar Marg*

**Falcha**, give yourself away to the twin pleasures of lemon jeera chicken and mutton handi kabab. *Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur*



**HIMALAYAN PIZZA**, this Italian restaurant has enough options to keep both adults and children coming back for more. *Thamel*



**BHUMI RESTAURANT & BAR**, savor delicious Newari, Nepali, and Indian cuisine in a welcoming environment. *Lajimpat, (01)4412193*

**Nanglo Restaurant**, fail safe place for family dinners, the chicken sizzler is a cut above the rest. *Darbar Marg*



**BENCH BURGER**, juicy burgers and much more. *Krishna Gali, Patan*

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



**ALFRESCO**, for homemade pastas and other lip-smacking delights. *Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 4273999*

**Shangrila Kitchen**, try the majestic Gyakok and a wide variety of cocktails. 9 am to 10.30 pm, Hotel Tibet International, Boudha

**Lhasa Bar**, enjoy a beer or a splash of cocktail at this springboard for excellent young musicians starting out on the Thamel circuit. *Thamel, 985101043*

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## MUSIC

**Reggae Afternoon**, enjoy the symmetric rhythm of reggae with friends and family.

Rs 300, 16 June, 3 to 6 pm, Moksh

**What the funk, we r soul'd out**, dance to the beats of this reggae band.

Every Tuesday, 7.30pm onwards, Rs 250, Moksh, Jhamsikhel



**GYPSY JAZZ**, spend your Friday night listening to some jazz with Hari Maharjan and Dharmendra Mali.

14 June, 7pm, Delices De France, 2nd Floor, Ganesh man Singh Building, Thamel

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

## GETAWAYS



**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 once you get here.

Gaurighat, Lakeside, (61)465819

**Shivapuri Heights Cottage**, escape the hustle and bustle of Kathmandu and enjoy a breath of fresh air, peace and tranquility with good food.

Rs 3500 per person per night inclusive of dinner and breakfast. 9841371927, 9802012245, info@shivapuricottage.com

**Dhulikhel Mountain Resort**, announces summer bonanza offer. Stay at this lovely establishment for a discounted rate.

Dhulikhel, (01)4420774/4420776, reservations@dmrnepal.com

**Himalayan wellness centre**, a one-stop centre for a relaxed mind and a healthy body inside the Park Village Hotel.

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

## Fete de la Music

Start off your weekend to the Sounds of music at Alliance Francaise. Then head down to Mandala Street, Thamel to groove to the beats of popular artists and bands. Tired of the sun but have not had enough of music? Sit back and relax at one of the various pubs for some great music with good food and better company. Not in Kathmandu? No worries. Head down to Pokhara or Dharan. Celebrate International Music Day on 21 June across Nepal A series of concerts to mark the International Music Day brought to you by Alliance Francaise, Nepal.



1 to 3 PM  
Alliance Francaise of Kathmandu, **TRIPURESHWOR**

4 PM to 8PM - Mandala Street, **THAMEL**

8 PM Onwards -  
Musical Night in various pubs **KATHMANDU**

Purple Haze Rock Bar, Namaste Café, Paddy Foley's Irish Pub, Lhasa Bar, House Of Music, Fluid Bar, Reggae Bar, Everest Irish Pub, KC's Bambooz Bar, Brezel Bakery Restaurant & Bar, Jingle Restaurant & Bar, Teku, Woodstock Restro & Bar

**PATAN**  
Back Yard Food Joint, F4 Garage

8 PM Onwards -  
Musical Night in Pubs **POKHARA**  
Oxygen Lounge & Bar, Club Amsterdam, Freedom Café & Bar, Silk Road Restaurant & Bar, V-gins Restaurant & Bar, Center Point Restaurant & Bar

**DHARAN**  
Roadies Bar, Hungry Eye Restaurant

21 June, Kathmandu, Pokhara, Dharan,  
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## A FEDERAL LIFE

On December 2007, Nepal was declared a federal republic after the parliament passed a bill. Almost six years later, after a failed attempt at writing a constitution, federalism has become a controversial subject.

But what do the common people think about federalism, if it's good, bad, suitable, disastrous, and how would they implement it if it was up to them?

Twelve artists from the Kathmandu University School of Arts will show you through their art.

15 to 20 June, 11am to 5.30pm, Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka



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# TYING THE NORTH-S

TSERNG DOLKER GURUNG

When Norwegians Kristin Andresen and Gunvald Hagen first arrived in Kathmandu last year on a FK Norway program, they just knew one thing about Nepal: the Himalayas. “We were excited to be accepted into the program and getting the opportunity to work in a foreign country, but had little idea of Nepal,” admits Andresen.

Like Andresen and Hagen, around 200 young Norwegians travel to countries in

Asia, Africa, and Latin America every year through the state-sponsored Fredskorpset Norway program started in 1963. Initially modeled after the American Peace Corps, FK Norway adopted a more inclusive approach in 2000 and a started mutual programs between partner companies in Norway and the global south. Since then almost 6,000 volunteers have been a part of this international exchange.

“Abandoning the traditional donor-recipient model has revitalised the entire program. Both partners now feel they are contributing equally and is a great motivation for participants,” says Nita

Through its wide ranging exchange programs, FK Norway is letting young people in the global north and south learn more about one another

Kapoor, director of FK Norway who was in Nepal last week to celebrate the institution’s 50th anniversary. “Usually one thinks of only countries in the south receiving development assistance, but the relationship really works both ways.”

For the past year and a half, Andresen and Gunvald have been working at the Nepal Music Centre in Battisputali. “Nepal has become a second home for us,” says Hagen who teaches keyboard at the centre while his girlfriend helps in day-to-day administration. Initially, the couple were in Nepal on a 12 month assignment, but requested to extend their term by six months because they enjoyed working





## The Blue Elephants

Not they are not an exotic species of elephants, just a regular jazz band with a somewhat peculiar name: Oh No! Blue elephant with no hat or straw is flying in air. The group was born last year when saxophonist Kristin Andresen and pianist Gunvald Hagen, two FK Norway volunteers, met Nepali musicians - Riju Tuladhar, Nikhil Tuladhar, and Sunit Kansakar - at the Nepal Music Centre. "We were blown away by their talent and hard work and wanted to collaborate with them," says Hagen.

While the band plays mostly jazz music, it's the mix of western and Nepali instruments with Riju on bass, Sunit on guitar and sitar, and Nikhil on drums that make them unique. Familiar faces in Kathmandu's music circuit, the Blue Elephants will be out with their first album later in July.

# SOUTH-SOUTH KNOT

here so much. The music centre, a partner of University of Agder in Norway, has three of its employees currently working there.

FK Norway also runs a south-south program which sends volunteers and young professionals from one developing country to another. People, Energy, and Environment Development Association (PEEDA), a Nepali organisation which promotes renewable energy, is a part of this exchange and has hosted two Bhutanese and an Indian participant so far. Biraj Gautam of PEEDA spent 10 months in India in 2011 and says the stint helped improve his confidence. "My co-workers tell me I came back a more

confident and efficient person," he admits.

With over 300 local companies participating, Nepal is currently the largest partner for FK Norway. The country has hosted more than 100 volunteers and sent about 150 Nepalis across the globe in the past 12 years. While these organisations are involved in diverse fields ranging from bio-diversity to agriculture, civil society, human rights, health, media, arts and culture, FK Norway wants to shift its focus to sustainable energy. Part of the reason the institute chose Nepal to celebrate its anniversary is so that it can begin searching for potential partners in this field.

"International volunteers only have positive things to say about Nepal. Most fall in love with the people, culture, and warm hospitality," explains Kapoor. When asked how Nepalis contribute to the program, she says: "The ability to be innovative and produce results even with minimal resources is a quality we most admire about our Nepali participants."

Scheduled to return home at the end of August, Andresen and Hagen are looking to make the most out of their last two months in Nepal. Andresen's remarkable rendition of the Nepali national anthem on her saxophone during Norwegian Day celebrations in May left

the audience in complete awe and showed how quickly she has assimilated into her new culture. The duo will also release an album with their Nepali friends in July (*see box*). Says Andresen: "The people we met and worked with, the music, the culture, and the experiences we gathered will live on even after we leave. We will carry a piece of Nepal with us for the rest of our lives." [www.fredskorpset.no/en](http://www.fredskorpset.no/en)

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)

Watch Kristin Andresen's rendition of the Nepali national anthem



### GOING GLOBAL (l-r):

Biraj Gautam of PEEDA spent 10 months in India in 2011 as part of FK Norway's south-south program. Gautam worked at Tara Technology and Action for Rural Advancement and is seen here conducting a survey in Uttar Pradesh.

Hemanta Basnet also from PEEDA did a year long exchange in Bhutan. She worked at Tarayana Foundation teaching local women about cooking and nutrition.

Director Nita Kapoor was in Kathmandu recently to commemorate FK Norway's 50th anniversary.

# STOKER

films, just not as much violence. That being said, *Stoker* is violent and very disturbing indeed and so, in its own way, vintage Park. Written by Wentworth Miller, *Stoker* is a lark of a film, made by a director who just wants to have fun. It is slightly creepy to watch someone so talented indulge himself with visual violence, and yet, the cinematic world would be slightly colourless without a director like Park. Set in a grand old country



South Korean director Chan-wook Park has had a cult following for years stemming from *Sympathy for Mr Vengeance* (2002), an astonishingly violent and very stylish film. While Park had been making films from the early 90's, it was only with the aforementioned movie that he hit his stride - that being having a knack for making the most gorily enjoyable, over the top, hit me over the head with a bludgeon, type films. He has since made the wildly popular *Oldboy* (2003), *Lady Vengeance* (2005), *Thirst* (2009), and now, *Stoker* his first English language film. Even if you do not know, or have not seen any of Park's films you will enjoy *Stoker*. For those who anticipate his style and are waiting with baited breath for this new film, you will be slightly disappointed. It has all the style and brilliance of his other

house, *Stoker* begins with a voiceover from 18-year-old India Stoker (Mia Wasikowska), a troubled, brilliant young woman who's father, Richard Stoker, has just died under mysterious circumstances. India sees and feels everything, yet she hates to be touched, and has an eerily distant relationship with her statuesque mother, the beautiful slightly frigid new widow Evelyn (played by Nicole Kidman). Enter Uncle Charlie (played perfectly by the divinely handsome Matthew Goode), Richard's long lost brother who turns up at the funeral back from his world travels to commiserate with the family and stay 'for a while'. And so, the fun begins, with the disappearance of the old, loving, loyal housekeeper Mrs McGarrick (Phyllis Somerville) who clearly is taken aback by Charlie's unexpected return.

As Evelyn starts to fall under Charlie's spell, so too does India, however reluctantly in a perverse but fascinating (and incestuous) unfolding of events. There is a scene, perfectly executed, where, believe it or not, Charlie seduces India while playing the piano with her. The scene unfolds with an intensity of acting that makes the entire film worth watching just for its incredible finesse. What happens next? Well, there is some strangling, more seduction, and of course, as in any classic whodunit, some surprising revelations. *Stoker*, while without the wild style antics of his previous films, still has some very interesting, very beautiful camera work. Shot by Chung-hoon Chung, the cinematography, sometimes

formally classical, sometimes hand held, serves the story so well that it is a pleasure to watch. It is also satisfying to be able to see the work of a naturally exuberant director, toned down to suit the subject matter. So, a South Korean director makes a classic Western murder mystery film to perfection. I cannot wait to see what he will do next. Watch *Stoker* and if you like it, go out and buy all his other films, if you haven't seen them already. I must warn you though, there is a lot of blood and while I am not condoning violence in any way, you will hopefully understand the fascination that film lovers have for Chan-wook Park's disturbing but riveting body of work. 📺

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)

[Watch trailer](#)

**GIZMO by YANTRICK**

## Just chill

As we plunge headfirst into monsoon, trying to keep vegetables from wilting and leftovers from morphing into an odious pile will be the biggest headache inducers this season. Add load-shedding and we might as well give up on eating fresh food. But LG promises to add some chill to your family's kitchen with its GL-M 252VML refrigerator. Ever since Persian genius Ibn Sina invented the refrigeration coil more than a thousand years ago, humanity has been searching for better ways to minimise vapours. Building upon 900 years of cooling technology, LG now brings you Green Ion Door Cooling. Combining catechin, a natural preservative found in green tea leaves, with a mineral called tourmaline that releases ions to deodorise fridges and cars, the 252VML will prevent food from ageing while keeping out mould and micro-bacteria, so your fridge will not reek.

In early generation fridges, cool air swept in from the freezer and circulated inside the bottom partition in a top-down manner which meant all food had to be covered and fruits like apples developed wrinkles too quickly. But in the 252VML, cool air rushes in from behind the door and circulates into the corners of each shelf, keeping food fresh and avoiding moisture build-up all over. LG is a pioneer in home appliances and holds the bragging rights for the fastest ice-making refrigerators. Gone are the days of preparing ice-cubes days in advance if you had guests coming over. The 252VML will take no more than 30 minutes to change liquid to frozen solid.

The secret to this, LG says, is aluminium. The shiny metal heats fast, as you might have noticed from observing huge momo-cookers across Kathmandu and it's no surprise the reverse is also true. So go ahead, pour a jug into the aluminium ice-trays, pick up your fablet to shoot a quick email to the friend you have been meaning to write to. By the time you're done, 252VML will have cubes of Mt Everest ready for you. Besides these features, the fridge boasts a roomy interior illuminated by a strong, clear lamp. Trays behind the door and wire shelves inside provide ample storage space for all kinds of food and vegetable cabinets at the bottom are ideal to stock up during bandas.

Although not available in Nepal at the moment, LG is gearing up to introduce this model in the market. In the meanwhile, clean out your old set, visit the nearest scrapyard, and make some space for the double-door 252 litre capacity freezer in your kitchen (and heart). 📺  
**Yantrick's verdict:** At Rs 33,990, the GL-M 252VML is a bargain you ought to strike.



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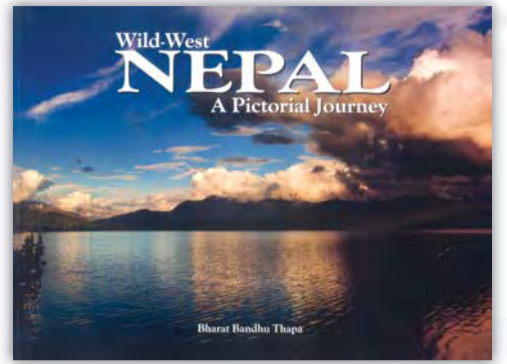
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## RE VIEW

Nepal's remote western region has always had an image problem. The trans-Karnali has suffered neglect from a succession of rulers in the capital and centuries of exclusion have left the region behind. A lack of priority and investment from Kathmandu for the western and far-western regions is one of the problems. But even elected legislators and senior ministers and prime ministers from the region largely abandoned their constituents when they got to Kathmandu. The west's potential for harnessing natural resources to lift its living standards was therefore scandalously squandered.

Journalists, artists, and professionals from western Nepal have been trying to change the perception in Kathmandu of their region being 'backward'. One of the latest is Bharat Bandhu Thapa who has brought out a photographic coffee table book, *Wild-West Nepal: A Pictorial Journey*.

The book doesn't just illustrate through some stunning images the potential for tourism of Khaptad, Rara, Bardiya, and Sukla Phanta National Parks, but also give us a glimpse of the region's rich cultural heritage. It is all the more ironical that western Nepal should be neglected because this is where the ancestors of the Brahmin and Chhetris



### Wild West Nepal : A Pictorial Journey

Pictures and text by Bharat Bandhu Thapa  
Himalayan Map House, 2013  
128 pages, Rs 1,250

A climber approaches the summit of Mt Saipal on the northwestern corner of Nepal.


# Nepal's wild west

of Nepal first settled before they started migrating eastwards.

Thapa has spent eight years crisscrossing western Nepal from the Tarai, the Inner Tarai Valleys and the remote and rugged mountains near Kanjiroba, Api, and Saipal and beyond into the trans-Himalayan

Valleys of Limi in Humla. Thapa takes us from the summits of Saipal to the meadows of Khaptad and down to the wildlife safaris of Sukla Phanta.

This is a living album that introduces the far-west to Kathmandu and the rest of the world and illustrates the cruel paradox that

people living in a land of such stupendous beauty should be so poor. But Thapa shows us through images what a great potential the 'wild west' of Nepal has to prosper. The author's conclusion is convincing: Nepal's west has the potential of not just improving the living standards of its long-suffering citizens, but also for pushing the whole country towards development. 

Rameswor Bohara



## SOMEPLACE ELSE

The mama at Mama's Curries is Julie James (*pic, right*), a former teacher who ran a high school in Jhamsikhel for 27 years with her husband Kim. Julie's culinary skills were a well-kept secret among close family and friends for years. But after much coaxing from her son, Julie Miss opened the aptly named Mama's Curries in Jhamsikhel three months ago.

Small but cosy, it's a delight to see Julie firing it away in the open kitchen as you wait for your lunch seated in one of the five tables. Even though orders can take longer than expected, it doesn't feel like a drag because being at Mama's feels like lounging around in a friend's kitchen on a lazy Saturday afternoon.



The menu here isn't too elaborate. The owners have stuck to what they know best - Indian food. A variety of curries, kati rolls, and biryani make up the mains while you have a choice between alu chop, dum alu, chicken tika, and pakodas for sides. Just as with the food, the options for drinks are limited. And if like me, you are not well versed in Indian cuisine, ask Julie for suggestions as talking with the only waiter present




PICS: AMIR JOSHI

wasn't too helpful. But I'll give it to him for understanding my "not too spicy" request perfectly; the food came out just the way I had imagined.

The dum alu (Rs 185), our first order, came to us looking every bit appetising. A staple at many dinner parties in Nepali households, the alu at Mama's is a Nepali version of the famous Kashmiri dish. Pieces of boiled potato sautéed in oil and spices and coated with cumin

seeds. Delicious. I thoroughly enjoyed our second round of snacks, vegetable pakoda (Rs 200), but my colleagues found the finger food too bland.

For mains we settled on chicken kofta curry (Rs 350) which comes either with rice or roti depending on your taste, served with raita, and pickled mango on the side. The deep fried chicken balls are as delicious as the gravy they are served in. And the chicken biryani (Rs 375) is the closest I have ever come to tasting typical Hyderabad biryani. Brilliantly seasoned and cooked to perfection, it was very easy to forget table manners while tearing apart the large pieces of chicken.

Mama's is ideal for those hungry days when all you want is a filling meal and not pretentious food served in miserly portions in the name of fine dining. 

Juanita Malagon

How to get there: walk past fire brigade road in Pulchok, turn right into the road between Dan Ran restaurant and Vesper House. Mama's is a few metres away, right opposite Kantipur FM station.





# High devotion



**DHANYANTARI**  
**Buddha Basnyat, MD**

A trip to Pashupati or a visit to the neighbourhood temple is how most Hindus in Nepal like to get in touch with their spiritual selves. But for devotees seeking adventure and wanting to put their faith to test, there is Shree Amarnathji yatra in Kashmir.

At about 4,000m this Shiva cave, which sees up to 600,000 pilgrims every year, is one of the most dangerous holy sites in the world. From Srinagar in Kashmir, pilgrims travel to Pahalgam by road and then embark on their

five to six day trek to the cave.

There is another shorter one-day route from Baltal, but this is potentially more dangerous. Over a hundred people have died each year on this trip in the past two years. 250 pilgrims lost their lives here in 1996. Add threats from militants around the region and you will understand why only the most devout undertake this journey.

This year's yatra begins on 28 June and culminates three weeks later on the day of Janai Purnima (August 21) when about a hundred sadhus take the sacred mace called Charri Mubarak to Shiva's shrine. The Gosainkunda Yatra in Nepal's Langtang region (4,300m) also comes to an end on the same day with a holy dip in the surrounding lake.

While trekkers and mountaineers usually spend a long time training and getting ready for their expeditions, pilgrims are generally unprepared to meet the challenges of high altitude and harsh weather. Most don't take time to acclimatise or wear weather-appropriate clothing. As a result, they are extremely vulnerable to altitude sickness and hypothermia. What's more, some partially-hypothermic devotees then proceed to take 'holy' dips in the icy rivers. They are also more likely to have pre-existing illnesses (such as uncontrolled diabetes) which becomes worse if they fast along the way.

In an effort to make the pilgrimage safer and accident-free, in February this year the Indian Supreme Court ordered the health ministry to set up a committee to train healthcare professionals so that they are better prepared to look after visitors. The local government is also making an effort to ensure that all visitors wear adequate warm clothing, but getting Sadhus to give up their saffron garb will undoubtedly be tough.

If you are planning on taking the ultimate leap of faith this season, you are advised to spend some time learning about how to prevent altitude sickness and hypothermia. Consult your physician if you have prior illnesses so that they are well controlled during the trip. A little homework now means safety and spiritual fulfilment at 4,000m.

## HAPPENINGS

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BIKRAM RAI

**TALK TIME:** Leaders of NC-affiliated Nepal Students Union meet Khil Raj Regmi at Singha Darbar on Tuesday to discuss student elections.



NEPAL ARMY

**FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURS:** Chief of Nepali Army Gaurav Shamsher Rana (right) meets his counterpart from the Indian Army Bikram Singh (left) at Army headquarters in Bhadrakali on Monday before the 'flag in' ceremony of the joint Everest expedition.



BIKRAM RAI

**FINGERS CROSSED:** Students check results of their SLC exams at Sanothimi, Bhaktapur on Tuesday.

## READERS' PHOTO



DIANA ARGUETA

**STILL WAITING:** Boats await customers at the bank of Phewa Lake in Pokhara.

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# People won't take to smoking just because their favourite actor smokes in the reel world...

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LOOK OUT

Ajaz Ashraf

Every time Leonardo DiCaprio or anyone else lights up in the film, *The Great Gatsby*, a message pops up on the screen warning viewers of the dire consequences of smoking.

The (dis)credit for killing the joy of going to the movies in India must go to its former Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss who launched a war against smoking eight years ago. His crusade has created a new breed of pariahs – smokers – who have been hounded out from public places, made to suffer ignominies, and compelled to accept their inferiority as both deserved and legitimate. Smokers accept their status and fate grimly, not least because a barrage of statistics has persuaded them about the causal link between their addiction and a variety of health problems.

Yet, even the non-smoking public should oppose the rule demanding film directors insert a warning in every smoking scene they conceive. The rationale behind the rule is specious. Its proponents like Anbumani believe popular actors portrayed smoking on the screen could inspire the impressionable to take up the habit. The warnings superimposed on smoking footage will serve as a countervailing influence, they argue, ignoring how they intrude into the film. The edict has its impact in Nepal, as viewers here also have to watch anti-smoking messages across the screen in Hindi cable programs.

Those who favour the insertion of warning scrolls even in scenes of hair-raising suspense have an intolerant attitude, as also a dim view of human beings. The plebian are incapable of choosing wisely and are denied the opportunity of making choices. In case you think I am a smoker venting my frustration at the slew of anti-smoking laws in India, you must read the utterances of Anbumani, the self-anointed general in the war against smoking.

In a recent interview to The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy, Anbumani criticised the political parties of Tamil Nadu for spawning three cultures in the state. “The first is the culture of freebies, the second, alcohol culture, and the third, cinema culture...we are against all these three cultures,” he said.

Anbumani is entitled to his opinion, but the undemocratic

streak in him came to the fore as he etched out the contours of what his PMK party bills as its ideology of ‘New Politics, New Path’. “The first signature,” he said, “a PMK Chief Minister is going to put on a document in 2016 (election) is total prohibition in Tamil Nadu.”

From this peep into his worldview, a few quick conclusions can be drawn about Anbumani. One, he believes it is he who knows what is best for people and, therefore, must decide for them. It's this certitude of his that led him to campaign for scrubbing out smoking scenes

from films altogether, until judicial intervention had the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to settle for the less authoritarian but infinitely irritating measure of inserting the warning lines.

Two, moderation is a word which doesn't exist in Anbumani's vocabulary – nothing less than a ban on alcohol would do for him. No question of weaning the people away from alcohol through persuasion, no consideration for those who enjoy a peg or two and are not alcoholics. Like with others who take things to extremes, there exist no shades



of grey. The world is divided into smokers and alcoholics and those who don't puff or quaff. Three, in equating the culture of cinema with that of liquor and freebies, Anbumani displays a deep disdain for films – and the enjoyment they provide for the masses. He presumably believes films corrupt the viewers and undermine society.

In acquiescing to his over-the-top crusade against smoking – and accepting the government's rule demanding warnings against tobacco imposed on smoking scenes

– we have emboldened him to now think of banning liquor. In case Anbumani does realise his grand dream of becoming the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, don't be surprised if he were to impose high taxes on cinema to discourage what he presumably believes is a terrible habit.

Anbumani secured his medical degree from the Madras Medical College, so you could say we don't necessarily imbibe what we see or are taught. Indeed, people won't take to smoking just because their favourite actor smokes in the reel world. [ashrafajaz3@gmail.com](mailto:ashrafajaz3@gmail.com)



Embassy  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Kathmandu

### Bekanntmachung für Deutsche zur Wahl zum Deutschen Bundestag

Am 22. September 2013 findet die Wahl zum Deutschen Bundestag statt.

Deutsche, die außerhalb der Bundesrepublik Deutschland leben und im Bundesgebiet keine Wohnung mehr innehaben, können bei Vorliegen der sonstigen wahlrechtlichen Voraussetzungen an der Wahl teilnehmen.

Für ihre Wahlteilnahme ist u. a. Voraussetzung, dass sie

1. **entweder** nach Vollendung ihres 14. Lebensjahres mindestens drei Monate ununterbrochen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland <sup>1)</sup> eine Wohnung innegehabt oder sich sonst gewöhnlich aufgehalten haben und dieser Aufenthalt nicht länger als 25 Jahre zurück liegt, **oder** aus anderen Gründen persönlich und unmittelbar Vertrautheit mit den politischen Verhältnissen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland erworben haben und von ihnen betroffen sind; sowie
2. in ein Wählerverzeichnis in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland eingetragen sind. Diese **Eintragung erfolgt nur auf Antrag. Der Antrag ist auf einem Formblatt zu stellen; er soll bald nach dieser Bekanntmachung abgesandt werden.** Einem Antrag, der erst am 02. September 2013 oder später bei der zuständigen Gemeindebehörde eingeht, kann nicht mehr entsprochen werden (§ 18 Abs. 1 der Bundeswahlordnung).

Antragsvordrucke (Formblätter) sowie informierende Merkblätter sind online auf der Seite des Bundeswahlleiters ([www.bundeswahlleiter.de](http://www.bundeswahlleiter.de)) erhältlich. Sie können auch bei

- den diplomatischen und berufskonsularischen Vertretungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland [Die Botschaft Kathmandu wird Antragsvordrucke ab Mitte Juni 2013 vorrätig haben],
- dem Bundeswahlleiter, Statistisches Bundesamt, Zweigstelle Bonn, Postfach 17 03 77, 53029 BONN, GERMANY, oder per E-Mail <[bundeswahlleiter-bonn@destatis.de](mailto:bundeswahlleiter-bonn@destatis.de)>,
- den Kreiswahlleitern in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland

angefordert werden.

Weitere Auskünfte erteilen die Botschaften und berufskonsularischen Vertretungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.

Kathmandu, 06. Juni 2013

Botschaft der Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
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# Holding up half the district

If the rest of the country was like Bhageswor, Nepal wouldn't be a least developed country anymore

KUNDA DIXIT in ACHHAM

After returning from a recent trip to far-western Nepal, people in Kathmandu asked me what I was doing there. Covering Achham district being declared open-defecation free, I replied, amidst sniggers and an eruption of scatological jokes.

Yet, building latrines and persuading people to use them can be a matter of life or death in a country where at least five children die every day of diarrhoeal dehydration. Once regarded as backward and under-developed, Achham and Kalikot have become the latest two districts where people don't have to defecate in the open anymore. The same can't be said of Kathmandu yet.

Walking across the arid and rugged mountains of western Nepal 30 years ago, I used to be powerfully reminded every step of the way of the famous Nepali saying "gu ayo gau ayo". As we approached every village, the trails would be mined with

human faeces. Three decades later, climbing down from the Mangalsen-Doti Highway to the village of Bhageswor is a pleasant walk through a community forest dotted with berry bushes and scented with spring flowers. Not only is it defecation-free, there isn't the litter of plastic noodle wrappings that now deface trails across Nepal.

"If you came here five years ago, you wouldn't be able to breathe or walk along this stream," recalled Ratan Bohara, as he walked us to his village.

Faecal contamination of water supply meant that till as recently as three years ago, cholera epidemics were common. Diarrhoea was the number one health problem for the children of Bhageswor. Today it ranks 12th.

The same community mobilisation that allowed Bhageswor to stop open-defecation has also made it the first village to be free of 'Chhaupadi', a traditional practice



PICS: KUNDA DIXIT

that banishes women to the cow shed during their periods and childbirth. It is also one of the first villages in Nepal to have 100 per cent school enrolment, full-vaccination coverage for

all children, the village has eliminated acute malnutrition, child marriage, and domestic violence. If Bhageswor could be scaled up to the national level, Nepal

would no longer be a least-developed country. Even more remarkable is that the village is located in Achham, the district with one of the lowest female literacy and life expectancy

## Crowdfund globally, act

When need is great and care is first-rate, a hospital can sometimes be too successful. That could be what is happening to the unique public-private partnership that runs Bayalpata Hospital in remote Achham district. In the past five years, the hospital has provided better medical care than hospitals in the capital in one of Nepal's poorest districts. For free.

The facility has now become so popular in Achham and surrounding districts that the hospital is overstretched and needs to expand to cope with the sheer volume of patients.

On a recent morning, out-patients were thronging the registration counter waiting for their turn to see doctors. Inside, all 15 beds were full of recovering maternity cases, children who had fallen off kafal trees, those injured in road accidents.

Soon after it was built 30 years ago, equipment at Bayalpata Hospital was dismantled and moved to the district capital of Mangalsen due to political pressure. The people of Sanfebagar requested an NGO working on anti-retroviral treatment of HIV patients to take over the facility and the US-based Nyaya Health set up by two Harvard Medical School graduates stepped in. The hospital's annual



expenses are about \$700,000 a year and nearly all of that comes from individual donors and foundation grants, while the government has been providing \$40,000 a year since 2010.

Leading non-profit evaluator GiveWell called Nyaya Health a 'standout organisation' last year for its 'unusual

standards of transparency', a distinction only one per cent of charities evaluated received. Country director Stephen Petersen says Nyaya is lobbying for an increase of annual government contribution to \$110,000.

Nearly all the doctors, nurses, and volunteers are Nepali, and most of them are from the far-west. Physician Roshan Bista is from Achham and says he was motivated to give up a city practice to return to his home district. "As a boy I had seen the need for healthcare in Achham and after I became a doctor, I had to see how I could help," he told us, while doing the ward rounds. "Money can't buy the sense of fulfilment I get here."

Bayalpata adheres strictly to its policy of providing free treatment and medicines since most of the 120,000 patients it has treated since 2008 are from ultra poor families. The hospital

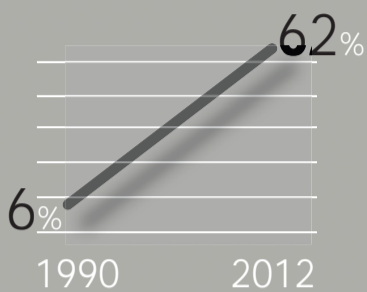
is now using two crowd-funding partners, Watsi which is used for improving access to specialised surgical care and Kangu to fund safe births. Details of deserving patients, like a child who needs heart surgery in Kathmandu or a mother with a complicated pregnancy, are put up on the sites and overnight pledges pour in



## 4 IN 10 NEPALIS DEFECATE IN THE OPEN

72% have telephone | 62% have latrine

### HOUSEHOLDS WITH TOILETS



TARGET: ALL 75  
DISTRICTS  
OPEN-DEFECATION FREE  
BY 2017

ACHHAM  
KALIKOT

KATHMANDU

### FIVE KEY HYGIENE AND SANITATION BEHAVIOURS

- Use of toilets
- Hand washing with soap
- Safe handling and treatment of drinking water
- Personal hygiene (nail cutting, bathing, cloth washing, tooth brushing)
- Proper solid and liquid management



**PROUD MOMENT:** Bhageswor village in Achham has declared itself open-defecation free as well as free from the practice of Chhaupadi because of campaigners like Sabitri Batala, Janaki Bohora and Laxmi Sharma (left). “I am not satisfied that my village is Chhaupadi-free when women in my parent’s village still practice it,” says Batala.

rates in Nepal.

A lot of the credit goes to Bhageswor’s women who have taken the lead in mobilising households through mother’s groups, female health volunteers, and a paralegal assistance unit. Nearly half of all young men in Achham are migrant workers in India and increasingly the Gulf, so the women have taken charge.

What clicked in Bhageswor when surrounding VDCs still practice Chhaupadi and have made less headway in promoting health and sanitation? The answer comes in a gathering under the village pipal tree. Despite political

and class differences one gets the sense of a unity of purpose and in the absence of local elections there is performance-based accountability – both qualities sorely lacking in the national discourse in Kathmandu.

Now that Bhageswor will meet the criteria for Child Friendly Local Governance, the village meeting is charting out a strategy for a higher standard of education, more reliable health care, improved water supply, increasing household income through skills training, better quality latrines where effluent can be used as fertiliser.

“The reason Bhageswor succeeded where others haven’t is that the women here decided to involve the men in changing attitudes,” explains UNICEF’s Manju Wagle, “once the mindset of the men changed there was no problem for the women to take the lead.”

Indeed, at the village meeting the most forceful speakers are women like Sabitri Batala, who as a girl found it hardest to convince her own mother that Chhaupadi was a superstitious practice. “I had to tell her, look, I don’t go to the cow

shed when I have periods yet our buffalo hasn’t died, our crops haven’t been raided by wild animals, the gods haven’t punished us,” she tells us. “But I am not satisfied that my village is Chhaupadi-free when women in my parent’s village still practice it.”

The people of Bhageswor realise that turning one village around is not enough. Achham being declared open-defecation free doesn’t mean much as long as water is scarce and contaminated, women are still banished to cow sheds every month.

Still, Achham and Kalikot could shame other districts to also declare themselves open-defecation free so the country can meet the target of latrines for all by 2017. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Video on Chhaupadi



# locally

from donors around the world.

In the next three years, Bayalpata hopes to reach half of Achham’s population by expanding the hospital as a rural teaching centre and maintaining a network of 38 health and sub-health posts by mobilising a network of 400 female community health workers. In five years, Nyaya Health hopes to have two more hospitals modeled after Bayalpata in Nepal.

We ask Nyaya Health’s Executive Director, Mark Arnoldy if that isn’t too ambitious. He replies: “Ambitious? Yes. Needed? Desperately.” 🇳🇵

Kunda Dixit in Achham

Invest in Nyaya Health’s work in Nepal, visit [www.nyayahealth.org/donate](http://www.nyayahealth.org/donate)

[donations@nyayahealth.org](mailto:donations@nyayahealth.org)

nepalitimes.com

Resurrection Achham, #528  
Video of Bayalpata Hospital  
Video of Kanga



PICS: KUNDA DIXIT

**PATIENTLY WAITING:** Roshan Bista (left) came back to his home district to work as a doctor, and says money can’t buy the fulfilment he gets from working at Bayalpata Hospital. Volunteer Bhinnata Piya uploads profile of a maternity patient for possible crowdfunding through Kangu (above).

# Free-for-all healthcare

**Equitable, just, and quality healthcare is never free, it requires state investment**

DUNCAN MARU and ROSHAN BISTA

**R**ecently the government announced it would be expanding its list of free medicines provided at district hospitals from the existing 40 to 60. But it is worth considering what ‘free’ actually means.

Someone always pays for life-saving medicines, the question is: who should pay and when? In Nepal, patients and their families pay at the time of illness. But user fees exacted at the point of care represent a deterrent to receiving effective care for the sick, especially if they are poor.

A study of seven African low- and middle-income countries that exempted patients from user fees found that there were immediate and significant increases in service utilisation. Here in Nepal, the post-conflict interim constitution integrated strong rights-based changes into the government’s approach to healthcare delivery that prioritised access for the poor.

A policy of free care at all health posts and sub-health posts and for 40 essential medicines at the district hospital level was adopted. Other services, such as deliveries, were not only provided free of charge, patients also received a small stipend to encourage use of those services.

One study covering Bardiya, Dailekh, and Jumla showed that there was a 215 per cent increase in patients in health posts and 133 per cent increase in sub-health posts. Decreasing the financial burden patients and their families incur with ‘user fees’ has led to increased service utilisation across the board.

This supports the case for society-at-large via the government bearing the cost of essential medical care. There are no ways to avoid this should we truly value having a deep and reliable social safety net. The expansion of the essential medicines list is a step in the right direction, but its deeper impact remains to be seen. The new mandate on the right to free healthcare has, unsurprisingly, been difficult to translate into actual advances in the right to health for Nepal’s excluded populations. Much of this has to do with the inherent challenges of delivering care to the poor and excluded.

Fifty-five percent of the richest quintile births take place in a healthcare facility, compared with only four per cent of the poorest. One review of Nepal’s free healthcare policy showed that 85 per cent of hospitals suffered medication shortages and 24 per cent of healthcare facilities were understaffed owing to absenteeism and competing work by staff in the private sector.

Improving these realities is made difficult by patterns of healthcare utilisation in the post-free care era: 84 per cent of the poorest quintile utilised public sector services and 10 per cent went to the private sector, compared with 64 per cent and 29 per cent in the highest. Wealthier individuals going to private sector facilities tend to have more socioeconomic means to advocate for improved services and so the accountability of the public sector suffers. Government hospitals and clinics throughout Nepal therefore remain woefully under-staffed, under-resourced, and under-supplied.

How would more medicines in this context be beneficial? A mobilised citizenry and empowered patient population, aided by more transparent data, are needed to improve government services. This requires a virtuous cycle: public sector services are more accessible, comprehensive, and professional, leading to greater citizen engagement and patient utilisation.

Expanding the accessibility and reach of public sector services via expanded access to medicines can help facilitate this cycle.

The more that the public sector offers, the more patients will utilise them, the more patients utilise services, the more they demand them. The more they demand the services, the better the government should deliver on them.

Yet achieving equitable, just, and excellent healthcare outcomes is never free. It requires active investment from a state and its citizens. Nepal has been a global leader in commitments to and innovations in the kinds of investments required. It has demonstrated leadership on innovations in delivering on a robust social safety net with the female community health volunteer network, existing essential medicines program, and safe motherhood initiatives.

Mechanisms to finance essential medicines need to be further developed to ensure that declarations on paper get translated into effective supply

chains that reach the most remote communities.

These investments do cost money, but they offer tangible steps towards making Nepal a more healthy and just nation. 🇳🇵

*Duncan Maru is co-founder of Nyaya Health which works in a private-public partnership with the Nepal government to provide healthcare at Bayalpata Hospital in Achham. Roshan Bista is a staff physician at Bayalpata Hospital.*

# The curse of the contraceptive



SUNIR PANDEY

Mina Sharma, *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 2-8 June

हिमाल

Rita Lama of Devichaur, Lalitpur started Depo-Provera, a birth control drug that is injected every three month, after the birth of her first child. Five years later her weight has doubled to 90kg. The staff at her neighbourhood clinic said the weight gain was caused by overeating and sent her off. The 32-year-old doesn't want to use temporary contraceptives anymore because of the unpleasant side-effects.

For seven years Bishnu Kumari Tamang also from Devichaur had Norplant capsules implanted under the skin in her upper arm. But the mother of two switched to Depo-Provera because the capsules were causing irregular menstruation cycles and heavy bleeding. However, with the new birth control her periods completely stopped. When Tamang visited the district health centre, the staff laughed it off and told her that not having periods was the best form of contraceptive. "They didn't even bother to find what was wrong and said it was not a big deal," says Tamang.

Currently about 50 per cent of adult Nepalis use contraceptives. In its efforts to boost this number to 70 per cent in the next two years, the government set up the National Family Planning Policy Service in 2012. The goal is to make a wide range of birth control methods available to the general public as well as provide consultation and counseling services to couples and individuals. But most health centres only offer two types of drugs – injection or capsules – so women who experience severe side effects have no other option than to use what is available. And there are hundreds like Lama and Tamang who have no one to turn to for advice and are starting to abandon temporary contraceptives all together.

While irregular periods and sudden fluctuations in weight are the most common side effect of contraceptives, some women also experience nausea, headache, excruciating pain during menstruation, excessive vaginal discharge, and in extreme cases even amenorrhoea - the complete absence of periods. The misuse of contraceptives, however, is not only harmful to the body but results in unwanted pregnancies and further trauma caused by multiple abortions.

Senior gynecologist Bhola Rijal says the main problem in Nepal is that on the one hand a few pharmaceutical companies have a monopoly in the contraceptive market and on the other, women don't have the resources to pick and choose birth control wisely. "Temporary contraceptives are being distributed in the same way as condoms. Women need to first check whether particular methods suit their bodies or not. Unfortunately there is a lack of qualified healthcare workers to help them," he explains. "Family planning doesn't only mean controlling the number of children, but also taking care of your family. But how can you do this when you are sick?"

## WEEKLY BAZAR POLL #16

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' opinion on their political leaders:

- Which political leader do you trust the most?
- Don't know 13.3%
  - Won't say 13.3%
  - Sushil Koirala 12.7%
  - Baburam Bhattarai 9.1%
  - Pushpa Kamal Dahal 7.7%
  - Madhav Kumar Nepal 7.5%
  - Jhalanath Khanal 4.7%
  - KPS Oli 4.7%
  - Ram Chandra Poudel 4.1%
  - Kamal Thapa 3.9%
  - Sher Bahadur Deuba 3.6%
  - Gagan Thapa 2.5%
  - Mohan Baidya 1.9%
  - Upendra Mahato 1.7%
  - Ram Bahadur Thapa 1.1%
  - Mahantha Thakur 0.8%
  - Bijay Kumar Gachhadar 0.6%

- Do you think Nepal should adopt federalism?
- Yes 52.2%
  - No 31.8%
  - Don't know 14.9%

- How do you rate the following institutions on a scale of 1 to 10?
- Police 4.25%
  - Local bodies 4.24%
  - Election Commission 4.24%
  - Courts 4.23%
  - Government 3.5%
  - CIAA 3.29%

## NEPALI TWEETS

**Kamal Kumar**  
वर्षमा एक दिन भए पनि गोरखापत्र धुमधडाका विक्री हुन्थ्यो । त्यो पनि यो इन्टरनेटमा रिजल्ट राखे चलन ले खाइदियो । #SLC  
For a day every year, sales of *Gorkhapatra* would skyrocket. With SLC results being published online, even that is gone. #SLC

**Gagan Thapa**  
सामुदायिक स्कुलका ७२% फेल, निजीका ८७% पास ।। पाटी जहाँ छन्थ्यो पास सबै फेल, जहाँ छैन पास सबै पास, स्कुलमा हामीलाई प्रवेश निषेध अनिवार्य छ  
Public schools: 72 per cent fail, private schools: 87 per cent pass. Wherever there are parties, there is poor results. We should be banned from entering schools.

**संदीप बजाल**  
योर्ड फस्ट भएका सबै बाबुराम हुँदैनन्, र फेल भएका सबै हरिवंश पनि हुँदैनन् । सबैको आफ्नै स्थान छ, दोब्ब र तीन छान्नुपर्छ।  
Not everyone who tops their SLC exams is Baburam and not everyone who fails is Hari Bansha. Everyone has their own place. Let's stop comparing.

**Basanta Basnet**  
त्रिशुली धी ए को निर्णय फिर्ता भएछ । लत्र त यो देशका नदीनालाको नामलाई विजय बनाएर कविता लेख पनि गाउँ भइसकेको थियो । #Trishuli3A  
If the decision on Trisuli had not been revoked, it would have been difficult to use Nepal's rivers as symbols in poems. #Trishuli3A

**Devendra Raj Panday**  
सुन व्यापारीले मिसावट गर्ने, पेट्रोल देखि ढालचामल घेर्नेले नापनीलमा जे गरे हुने ।। खरवपतिहरूले देशको सम्पत्ति बाहिर लाने। दोष सबै राजनीतिको?  
Gold traders cheat customers. Petrol and amenity sellers tinker with measurements. Billionaires siphon the country's wealth outside. But politics is to be blamed for everything?

**Sanjeev**  
क्यान्टोनमेन्टमा गएका अरवौं हजार घातः सर्वानिरबाट गैर्याला बढ्छन्, त्रिशुलीमा गडबडी गर्ने अस्थीरताले रोक्ने । राम्रा काम गर्ने रोक्ने।  
Instability did not prevent them from pocketing billions from the cantonments, gathering earthworms, or messing up Trisuli. But it stops them from doing anything worthwhile.

# Reunity of the unified

Rajdhani, 9 June

राजधानी

The Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist, which split a year ago, are headed for reunification. The CPN-M has put forward two proposals for unity and sources say the UCPN (M) is inclined to agree to them. The faction led by Mohan Baidya had split off after the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. The main party is said to be close to agreement on the CPN-M's rejection of a parliamentary system of government and to adopt the agenda of building on a popular revolt based on the 'people war'.

Baburam Bhattarai and Narayan Kaji Shrestha have been trying to get the factions reunited and those demands were put forward by Baidya, Ram Bahadur Thapa, and Deb Gurung. A formal proposal for unity was made by Krishna Bahadur Mahara. A source quoted Pushpa Kamal Dahal as telling Baidya: "The parliamentary system doesn't work, it does not favour us and we are willing to consider an agreement on a united agenda for a popular revolt."

Shrestha says efforts for unity have been underway ever since the Hetauda Convention, but there are still some issues to be ironed out. He told *Rajdhani*: "We are moving ahead based on Comrade Kiran's acceptance of our proposal for re-unification." Sources say Bhattarai is still not convinced about abandoning the parliamentary system completely and Dahal has taken the responsibility of convincing him. The reunification drive has been spurred by the need felt by both factions not to split the Maoist vote in elections and the CPN-M has not yet registered itself as a separate party. Both sides also want to agree on the basic points of the new constitution after uniting and to transform the relation between the judiciary and the executive. Dahal is said to have agreed with Baidya that a bourgeoisie republic is not acceptable and that the party should be prepared to set up a 'communist republic'. The two parties also want to work towards uniting all the communist parties in Nepal and transform the country into a two-party state that can move ahead towards stability and prosperity.

# Fall and fall

Pushparaj Acharya, *Karobar*, 11 June

कारोबार

The devaluation of Indian rupee has caused the Nepali rupee to hit a record low of 93.79 against the dollar on Wednesday. The Nepali rupee which is pegged with its Indian counterpart has been sliding continuously following the freefall of the Indian rupee since the last 11 days. According to economists the sharp depreciation of the Indian rupee has been accelerated by slower growth and worsening public finances.

According to the records of Nepal Rastra Bank, the Nepali rupee has been devalued by 3.5 per cent in the past 11 days. The exchange rate was Rs 90.60 per 1 USD on 1 June. The weaker currency makes imports costlier and if the trend continues Nepal's import based economy will be adversely affected by a stronger dollar.

- Advantages:**
- Nepalis living abroad sending remittance
  - Export could rise if inflation was reduced
  - Increase in customs revenue
  - Decrease in imports
- Disadvantages:**
- Imbalance of payments
  - Inflation increases because of increased imports (fuel etc)
  - Payment of foreign loans
  - Power Purchase Agreement on electricity in USD will lead to a loss for the NEA
  - Nepal will lose out on its revenue from international business partners
  - Black market for dollars will thrive



Trisuli IIIA Hydropower Project



Capacity expansion

कान्तिपुर Batsyayan in *Kantipur*, 9 June

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“We believe all problems should be solved peacefully and that is the beautiful aspect of democracy.”

UCPN (M) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal in letter to Sonia Gandhi after the Indian Maoist attack in Chhatisgarh in which 28 people were killed last month

# Holy matrimony

Umita Basnet interviews chairman of Reporters' Club Nepal Rishi Dhamala and wife Aliza Gautam on Himalaya TV



**Umita Basnet: Why did you decide to get married on the first month of the Nepali calendar?**

**Rishi Dhamala:** New Year brings new hopes and messages. So I thought it would be the perfect time to start a new life.

**How did you two meet?**

**RD:** I saw her at a program organised by the Rastriya Prajatantra Party where she was accompanying her mother Gita Gautam. I liked the way she looked and behaved.

**To fall for someone at first sight you must have thought about your ideal girl a lot then?**

**RD:** She is everything I ever dreamt of. Look at her, she is considerate, understanding, perfect - beauty with brains.

**How did you approach her?**

**Aliza Gautam:** He talked to my mother.  
**RD:** When it comes to marriage, families should be involved. It should be with the consent of the parents. I don't have time to fall in love. Rishi Dhamala doesn't have that much time to take a girl to a restaurant or a park. Let's just put it like this - I don't have time to date.

**What is the age difference between the**

**two of you?**  
**Rishi Dhamala:** 17 years.

**Since there is a big age gap, did you ever worry that you might not get along or understand each other?**

**AG:** No. It all happened all of a sudden. But whatever happened was for the good. Not everyone is lucky to have such a well known husband.

**RD:** She has a positive attitude and doesn't let it bother her. Age doesn't matter when it comes to love.

**What sort of wife is Aliza?**

**RD:** She is understanding and considerate. For a person like Rishi Dhamala who cannot give a lot of time to his personal life she is unbelievably understanding.

**How is Rishi Dhamala as a husband?**

**AG:** He is busy most of the time, but he still calls and texts me. And that is one thing I like about him.

**Tell us about his daily routine.**

**AG:** He wakes up in the morning and does yoga, drinks a glass of hot water, and leaves then comes home for dinner at 11 or 12 at night.



**Have you made any changes to your schedule after marriage?**

**RD:** No. Friends on facebook and twitter said my routine would definitely change after marriage, but I haven't let it affect my schedule.

**Don't you think you are depriving your wife of quality time together just to prove others wrong?**

**RD:** No, not really. Even though I am not there I have managed everything for her. If people want, they can make time for everything. She knows that although I cannot be by her side all the time, I belong to her and I am hers alone.

**How often do you go shopping?**

**AG:** Very regularly. I shop for him as well.  
**RD:** Her choice is really good. She buys me beautiful clothes just like herself. I feel

happy wearing beautiful clothes bought by a beautiful person.

**She made a good choice - she chose you.**

**RD:** Yes, she chose me. Otherwise she could've turned down the proposal when her mother talked to her. Initially I thought I'd never get married but when I met her, she had a certain effect on me and it was wonderful to have the blessings of her family.

Actually no one thought I would get married. When senior leaders like Prachanda, Jhalanath Khanal, and Sushil Koirala heard I was getting married, they thought it was a rumour. And they joked that even on my wedding day I would be busy reporting. Which actually turned out to be true. On the day of the wedding, I went the radio station at 6.30am to complete my live talk show and then came back to the mandap.

**Were there any other girls in your life before Aliza?**

**RD:** There were a lot of girls who liked me and proposed. But I never looked at them or told them I liked them. I had no intention of getting married to them.

**Why do you like red so much?**

**RD:** It is part of my identity now. At first I wore a red coat and then a red high neck with a black overcoat. During winter I wore red muffler so often that people started teasing me. And now a red tie. It's become my style statement.

**Is there anything about your husband you would like to change?**

**AG:** I wouldn't change anything about him. I like him the way he is.

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Full interview



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Clueless in Kathmandu

After petroleum tanker drivers went on strike recently to be allowed to steal fuel en route from Amlekhganj to Kathmandu and taxi drivers staged a show of force for the right to fleece passengers, it is now the turn of K-town's jewelry shops who have taken umbrage at the Department of Standards and Metrology inspectors daring to test the purity of the gold they sell and check the accuracy of their weighing machines. How dare they? Don't they know it is now standard operating procedure in the Syndicated Demagogic Republic of Nepal for crooks to cheat crooks? Not to be outdone, meat traders also went on strike this week violating the basic human right of Nepalis to be carnivores. By forcing temporary vegetarianism on the denizens of the capital, butchers have shown their dissatisfaction at not being warned before inspectors arrive to assess the hygiene level of their meat shops and to determine whether goats are really goats and not other recycled street fauna.



Why should tanker operators, taxi drivers, gold traders, and butchers not be allowed to cheat when the main bone of contention over elections is whether or not criminals should be allowed to contest elections? Yup, that's what is holding things up. Baddies want their top comrades accused of woman and/or manslaughter to be allowed to contest elections since, if the rule banning

candidates with criminal records went into effect, both Dash and Cash Baddies would have very few contenders running for elections. If this happens, Nepal will probably be the first country in the world to decriminalise murder.

It becomes clearer why LMSK was brought into the CIAA: to give those who put him there a clean chit and hound rivals. The corruption watchdog has

hit the ground running by summoning all secretaries to growl at them and show who's boss. He wants road contractors to be hauled over the coals over potholes on the streets and is going about his job with such a fine tooth comb that he only catches fleas. No wasting time investigating the bloated hyenas who are purloining public land, Comrade Hasiya's vermiculture farm (BTW, will she have to refund the earthworms now that 3A has been scrubbed?) and the billions stolen over six years by ministers for the upkeep of Mau Mau cantonments.

Good to see that KhiRaRe is finally girding up his loins and showing that he has gonads, after all. He summoned the Syndicate to Balu Water last week and gave them an ultimatum ("either agree among yourselves, or I'll unilaterally announce elections") shaming the four-party cartel into passing the ball to the Chief Minister's court. So it looks like the Regmi Regime is all set to announce an election date and let the chips fall where they may.

Still, the powers that be seem to

be more interested in erections than elections. Construction is set to begin after the monsoon of the Republic Tower in Kirtipur, which when finished will surely go down in the Guinness Book as the ugliest and least functional erection ever. Costing over 90 corrodes, the 100m high tower will be the most expensive sun dial ever made in world history. The architects scrapped the idea of putting the figure of a phoenix on top because that could apparently have been construed to mean the monarchy rising from the ashes.

Patriotic Nepali leaders trooping off to Delhi refuse to speak in Hindi to their Indian counterparts and insist on conversing in English, re. One recent visitor burped loudly after a banquet at Hyderabad House and said: "I feel so fulfilled, I am fed up." And while being seen off at IGIA, the Nepali politician shook the hand of his Indian host and said: "Thank you from the bottom of my heart and from my wife's bottom, too."





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