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**INUNDATED:** Locals of Darchula watch from the rooftops as the flooded Mahakali river threatened to wreak more havoc on Thursday morning.



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## TROUBLED WATERS

After the four parties ran out of excuses for dilly dallying, they gave the CJ-led government the green signal and on 14 June, the cabinet set 19 November as the date for elections. While there are other technical and logistical hurdles, by far the most worrying aspect is the opposition to polls from the CPN-M, the Madhes Front led by Upendra Yadav and the newly-formed Federal Socialist Party led by Ashok Rai. But none of their demands look so inscrutable that they can't be resolved through dialogue and we see no compelling reason now not to have elections in November.

To get the ball rolling, the Election Commission announced a timetable this week. Let's hope our leaders leave behind their bad habit of missing deadlines this time round.

- **Voter registration:** Until 15 July
- **Discussions with stakeholders:** 7 July to 2 November
- **Formulate, amend, enforce, and report election audits and policies:** 7 July - 15 December
- **Complaints against voter lists:** 16 July - 3 August
- **Media inspection:** 16 July - 30 November
- **Decide voting centres:** By 25 July

- **Voter awareness training:** 28 July - 24 October
- **Final decision on party registration:** 3 August
- **Appoint, train, and set office for election officers:** 18 August - 14 September
- **Prepare and finalise proportional representation system:** 18 August - 21 September
- **Run pre-election program:** 8 - 28 September
- **Establish joint election centre:** 18 August - 23 November
- **Develop, manage, and run media centre:** 7 July - 15 December
- **CA elections:** 19 November
- **Vote counting, result processing, and announcement:** 20 November onwards
- **Formulate, amend, enforce, regulate Code of Conduct:** Until 15 December

## TAKE THE LEAD

Social entrepreneur and energy planner Anil Chitrakar paints a highly idealistic image of Nepal in his debut book, but the engineer says people who talk negatively about Nepal usually don't understand the country and are merely watching it from the sidelines



PAGE 8

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# POLL VAULT

When the four political parties, egged on by the international community, finally agreed to set up an interim election government led by the incumbent chief justice in March it was instructed to hold elections in three months. It took the Chief Justice-cum-Chairman Khil Raj Regmi three months just to set the date for polls.

The blame doesn't all go to Regmi, of course, because although he formally heads the government it was the four-party syndicate effectively giving orders. And since they couldn't agree on amending clauses of the electoral laws dealing with delineation of constituencies, the threshold for proportional representation, and the ban on candidates with criminal records, the date for elections couldn't be set.

Last week, the four parties ran out of excuses for dilly dallying and told Regmi: "You do it." And on 14 June, the cabinet set 19 November as the date for elections. It is a measure of just how paralysed Nepali politics has become that even setting a belated date for elections is regarded as an achievement. Needless to say, the public greeted the announcement with a yawn. Given the track record of the parties, there is widespread public skepticism that they will stick to even that date.

Indeed, there are still many logistical, technical, and political hurdles to cross between now and November. Nearly three million Nepalis at any given time live and work abroad and not giving nearly a quarter of voters the chance to cast absentee ballots makes a mockery of democracy.

The Election Commission may not have enough time to sort it out, but absentee voting for overseas Nepalis must be an option for the next general election. Another estimated two million citizens who were not yet 18 in the last elections need voter IDs by November. Electronic



BIKRAM RAI

## The government and EC must be firm, but flexible, to bring the boycotters to the fold.

voting is not going to be feasible because there are just too many political parties, which will prolong vote-counting.

But by far the most worrying aspect is the opposition to elections from the CPN-M, the Madhes Front led by Upendra Yadav, and the newly-formed Federal Socialist Party led by Ashok Rai. Together with 33 other small parties, they oppose elections conducted by the CJ-led government, want the High Level Political Committee disbanded, and aspects of the constitution firmed up before they agree to elections.

None of these demands look so inscrutable that they can't be resolved through dialogue, which leads us to the conclusion that the small parties just want to be taken more seriously. The dash Maoists, for their part, are

bargaining for a greater role in the parent party. Knowing this, the government needs to be firm on conducting elections, yet flexible enough to bring the disgruntled into the fold.

The pressure to accommodate all naysayers may lead to another 601-member CA and we know how unwieldy and unworkable that one was because it served as a rubber stamp body controlled by party whips. Another contentious issue is the one for extending constituencies in the Tarai to reflect new demographics.

One confidence-building measure could be for Regmi to abandon his chief justice post. With poll dates announced, the HLPCL has outlived its usefulness and might as

well be scrapped. Regmi and the EC must also set strict guidelines to make the polls free of intimidation, vote-buying, and cheating. It must have a code of conduct for campaigning and draw a red line on electioneering that provokes ethnic unrest.

The Big Four are playing politics with the boycotters because of the perceived advantage they see for themselves. The UCPN (M) may find it useful to use the CPN-M to disrupt elections if it feels that it can't get a majority by November. The NC-UML could be calculating that if it can keep the Maoists divided, it will split the vote. There must be similar electoral calculations about Upendra Yadav among the Madhesi parties.

Whatever the case, we see no compelling reason now not to have elections in November. The new CA may very well get stuck once more on the disagreements that deadlocked the last assembly. We can cross that bridge when we come to it and hopefully better sense will prevail this time.

### ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

#### HOLDING UP HALF THE DISTRICT

I was very impressed with the progress being made in Bhageswor VDC, but was also surprised that UML leaders who are from the village seem unaware and rather dismissive of the work and achievements of women in their village ('Holding up half the district', Kunda Dixit, #660). Our political leaders, even intelligent ones, don't seem to be impressed with the heroic activities of female health volunteers, para-legal women's groups, and Ama Samuha, and do not consider them important. I am delighted that *Nepali Times* highlight such issues. Keep up with the reporting, it is an uplifting reprieve from the depressing political stuff in the media.

Kul Gautam

- Salute to the women of Bhageswor VDC who have made their village open-defecation and Chhaupadi free. Achham should indeed shame other relatively forward districts into taking similar steps.

Subhas Lamichhane

- The women in Bhageswor are the real feminists and change makers. The rest of us in Kathmandu who hold up placards at occupy this and occupy that are merely armchair activists who step out of our comfortable existence once in a while to claim a moral high ground. Can the government and private organisations please put money into such communities which have a proven track record and who are genuinely involved in improving lives?

GVR

#### FREE-FOR-ALL HEALTHCARE

Obviously something needs to change to improve the healthcare of poor Nepalis, particularly in rural areas ('Free-for-all healthcare', Duncan Maru and Roshan Bista, #660). However, I would like to see the option of an insurance-based system that relies on the profit motive of the private sector to be considered, rather than just depending on the government to be both the funding source and the service provider.

Ken Pumford

- The sad truth is that too many western charities and agencies seek to impose their own solutions for healthcare on Nepal rather than working with a nation in fiscal straights after a long running civil war and beset by endemic fiscal corruption in its governance. They draw lines in the sand, with the best of intentions, but often create the opposite effect to the ones they intended. Imposition of western 'wants' is not the best way to meet Nepal's actual health needs and the lack of Nepali doctors, dentists, and other healthcare professionals willing to work outside the major cities and towns ensures meeting these Western wants and expectations for funding projects in remote and rural areas, are next to impossible.

Peter Thomson

#### IMPATIENT PATIENTS

How can healthcare be honest and public service oriented when the rest of the country is corrupt and commercialised ('Impatient patients', Editorial, #660)? When the rot starts at the top with selfish and immoral politicians, how can education, health, media, labour department be well-run? Clean the head and the rest of the body will automatically be clean.

Subhas

- Greed is the biggest enemy here. When commercialisation drives a country's healthcare and the medical mafia gets political protection this is what happens. The biggest investors in the medical industry now are the Maoists, it has become even more

lucrative than education. It is in their interest to destroy the government health system so that poor patients are forced to come to them. The writer should have written about this link between politics and health.

Subodh

- One day we'll have to ask for a legal explanation to VIPs over the further impoverishment of poor Nepalis. It is true that the dismantling of public service is already done through neoliberal policies of the past governments of all the colours, but as responsible citizens of Nepal we must try to make each other smarter so that we are not ripped off by these thugs who don't hesitate even to fabricate diseases and/or treatments to fill their pockets.

Anonymous

- Instead of going to Japan with an entourage of 10 at the state's expense, the government should have airlifted President Ram Baran Yadav to Bayalpata Hospital in Achham for tests and operation if necessary. Imagine the message that would have sent.

Dotel

#### PICTURE PERFECT

Trust Nepalis to create controversy where there is none ('Picture perfect', #660). Instead of lauding the young photographer's creativity, here they are questioning his credibility.

Laxmi Ale



## Q OF THE WEEK

What is your favourite sports team?

### facebook

- Narayan Acharya: Manang Marshyangdi Club
- Jibachh Chaudhary: Manchester United
- Ravi Budhathoki: Real Madrid till I die
- Manooz Sharma: 3 Star
- Subash Subedi: Nepali national cricket team
- Ravi Budhathoki: MMC and COPS
- Manoj Dumar: Nepali national football team
- Bigyan Gauchan: Sahara!
- BonandAlb Hampton: Boston Red Socks
- Dhanu Shrestha: Three Star

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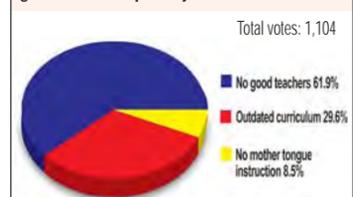
- @Paudel94: Nepali national dandibiyo team
- @iBshnu: Always @threestarcub!

This week's Question of the week: What non-political personalities would you like to see running for elections in November? Go to [www.facebook.com/nepalitimes](http://www.facebook.com/nepalitimes) or [www.twitter.com/nepalitimes](http://www.twitter.com/nepalitimes) to respond.

## Times nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll #661

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



Weekly Internet Poll # 662. To vote go to: [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com)

Q. Was the government's response to the nation-wide floods adequate and timely?



# True reconciliation

Setting up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission will not by itself ensure truth or reconciliation

GEORGE VARUGHESE and TAMAR LUSTER

The commitment to form a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was part of Nepal's 2006 Comprehensive Peace Accord. But more than six years later and in the absence of a legislative-constituent assembly, the so-called TRC Ordinance was signed by President Ram Baran Yadav in March amidst controversy.

was finalised and approved by only four of Nepal's political parties, with even officials of the National Human Right Commission claiming to have been denied access to the ordinance's final version. These and other TRC-related steps illustrate a somewhat circumscribed and politically expedient understanding of the fundamental purpose of a TRC.



BIKRAM RAI

Most problematic in the ordinance is a legal provision allowing the commission to recommend amnesty for perpetrators of conflict-era human rights violations. In turn, the donor community has expressed its reluctance to support a TRC that does not meet international standards. Nepali conflict victims and human right activists have also challenged the TRC ordinance on similar grounds in the Supreme Court.

Responding to the petitions, the Chairman of the Interim Electoral Government and Chief Justice stressed that amnesty will not be recommended without perpetrators fully confessing to conflict-era violations and establishing a basis for pardon. While well meant and constructive, both criticism and response focus on an individual or personal level of agency that is to be intermediated by the TRC.

Further, despite its critical public importance, the ordinance

How has a reconciliation-oriented mechanism managed, even prior to its inception, to cause such deep disagreements, frustrations, and tensions? Is something missing in the understanding and discussion of Nepal's transition through truth and reconciliation? As the amnesty debate continues to sputter, broader questions regarding Nepal's transitional processes need to be asked.

Could a TRC alone enable truths to emerge? A TRC provides the opportunity to establish a wider form of truth, one that emerges from a broad engagement of a society trying to better understand its past and reshape its future. South Africa's TRC called this a 'societal' or 'dialogue' truth.

However, the mere establishment of a TRC is unlikely to foster, by itself, an environment conducive for such truths to emerge. First, the creation of a safe and open

space for stories to be told and the installment of strong social-support mechanisms for those who shared their stories, a necessary part of this process, were yet to be discussed. Second, deepening frustration among conflict victims regarding their limited participation in the formation processes of the current ordinance might further shape and reduce their future engagement with the TRC.

Furthermore, as conflict victims object to amnesty, they are stating that the truth produced by TRC cannot replace the different and additional truth established in court, one of individual's legal responsibilities vis-à-vis conflict-era crimes.

Could a TRC alone foster reconciliation? Nepal's TRC drafts have tended to focus on the types of reconciliation available within the immediate framework of the commission: namely, inter-personal

reconciliation processes between victims and perpetrators. The different versions of the TRC bill proposed mediation procedures to bring together victim and perpetrator. However, setting aside problematic language in the now-approved ordinance regarding victims' consent to these processes, reconciliation has to be viewed as more than inter-personal mediation processes between victims and perpetrators within the walls of a TRC. Reconciliation entails addressing communal and societal aspects of the aftermath of the conflict and examining its root causes.

The question is not only whether amnesties could be granted if or when the victim is willing, but also how public participation can be fostered in the process, how Nepal's legal system can be strengthened for effective conflict-era prosecutions, how the claims of victims regarding hundreds of

conflict-era proceedings (which have been withdrawn) can be addressed, and how to ensure legal and judicial impartiality.

Finally, although TRCs aim to foster reconciliation, they also conceal an inherent risk of becoming a source of additional mistrust and disagreement. Nepal's envisaged TRC will have to constantly work to transcend existing inequalities and injustices and ensure access, participation, and voice to diverse individuals and communities. ■

*George Varughese is The Asia Foundation's country representative in Nepal and Tamar Luster is a graduate intern. Views and opinions expressed here are those of the authors and not those of The Asia Foundation.*

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For a longer version of this piece

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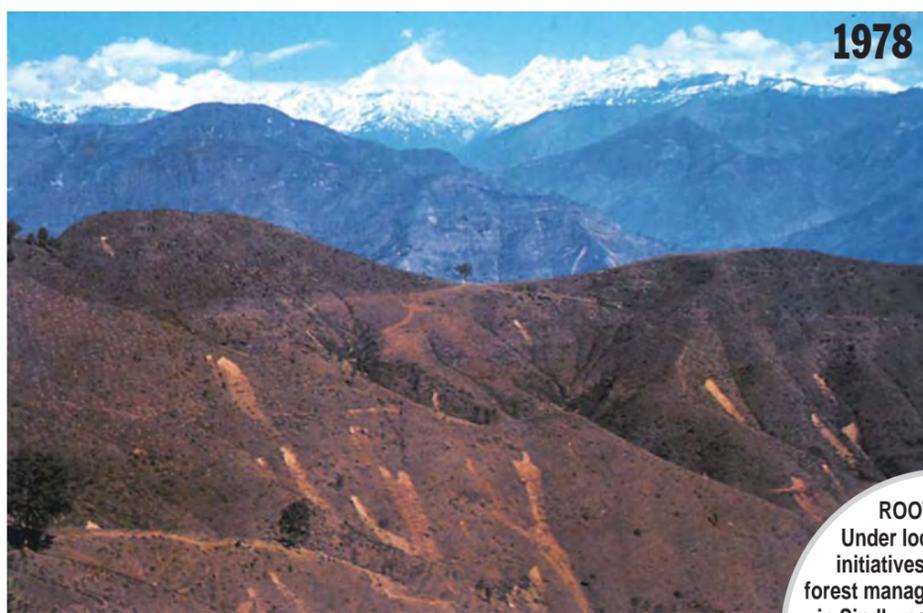
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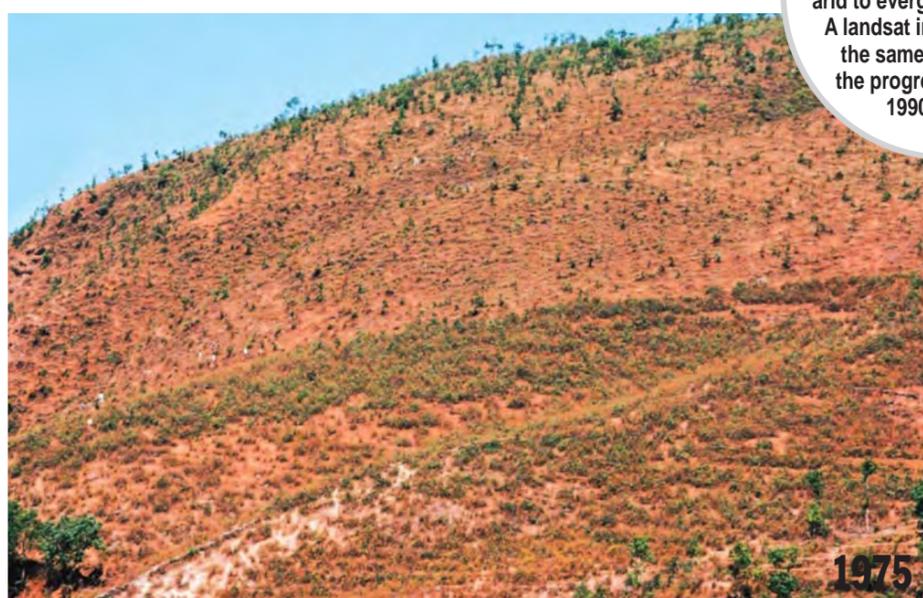
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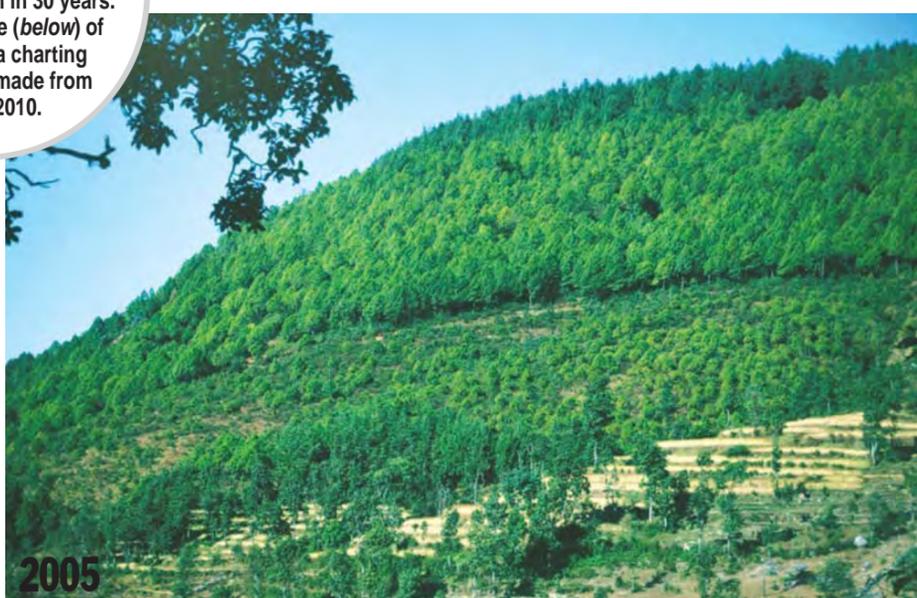
MARTY LOGAN

**ROOT CAUSE:**  
Under local grassroots initiatives in community forest management, these hills in Sindhupalchok went from arid to evergreen in 30 years. A landsat image (below) of the same area charting the progress made from 1990 to 2010.



1975

SDC



2005

# NON-POLITICAL BUDGET

Empowering the grassroots institutions must be the legacy of technocrat budget framers



COMMENT

Bihari K Shrestha



HELVETAS

It has become a ritual as the budget is again around the corner that interactions and discussions are organised across town to discuss priorities. The only difference this time is that it is a technocratic election government that is doing the planning.

In one of the discussions, bureaucrat Finance Minister Shankar Koirala said the government budget is basically a 'political' document. What did he mean?

The current non-political government, composed entirely of former officials, faces a moral and professional imperative to show that it is different. Most previous budgets have suffered from three fundamental deficiencies.

First, while they have all been made to sound right in terms of numbers and principles, they were invariably tampered with by the party in power by hiding allocations to serve their own party or personal interests. The expanded grant allocations to the VDCs initially made by the UML in mid-90s in the name of so-called 'Build Your Own Village Yourself' campaign is one such notorious example. Since the allocation was not backed by any serious programming or policy provisions, it was clearly designed to buy votes in the next election. But it turned out to be a one-way traffic. All governments that followed only continued to embellish these grants year after year. Politicians of all hues colluded with local officials to partake of the

spoils.

Second, most finance ministers with their penchant for populism, promise just about everything under the sun in budget speeches only to forget them after its passage. In post-1990 Nepal, the first prime minister to resort to such deceit was GP Koirala whose government then promised that "the absolute poor will be identified and preference will be given to them in government-run projects". The promise was about job reservation for the poor. Had that promise been implemented, Nepal today would be on a different growth path benefitting from the demographic dividend. Instead, that dividend is being appropriated by other countries which use our workforce.

Third, corruption just got a further boost at the hands of this 'non-political' government which appointed the celebrated Lok Man Singh Karki to the high office of CIAA chief at the recommendation of none other than the four party syndicate which has become

synonymous with corruption and extortion.

So whatever the laudable principles that are enunciated in the budget speeches, the resources allocated remain subject to cuts at various levels at the hands of politicians themselves and the colluding officials and contractors protected and promoted by them.

Pakistan's experience with a technocrat government 15 years ago may be useful to remember. A neutral non-political government under Moeen Qureshi, a World Bank vice-president, was installed to conduct elections. Within just a few months it became so popular that there was nationwide clamour for it to continue indefinitely. Being unencumbered by excess baggage of unholy political loyalties, a non-party government can accomplish much as long as it is guided by professionalism and integrity.

Despite poor governance, Nepal has made its mark in two areas. Firstly,

we are an acknowledged world leader in community management of natural resources because of the dramatic restoration of our forest wealth through the nationwide network of forest user groups. Nepal is also at the top of the table in world ranking in meeting the MDGs in child survival and maternal mortality rate reduction.

These achievements were possible due to the nationwide network of mothers' groups and their female community health volunteers. While these grassroots institutions were innovated in 1988 during the Panchayat, they continued to grow during the post-1990 years because they were owned and managed by the users themselves.

But the tragedy is that despite such pioneering work and extraordinary successes, no multiparty government in the last quarter century ever thought of extending it to other sectors of community-led development. This is where the present government could make a difference through the upcoming budget.

By all indications, if grassroots empowerment could encompass all development sectors in the communities, then our rural landscape would steadily transform for the better even when the politicians continue their corrupt ways. Finance minister Koirala must see the upcoming annual budget as a political document only in the sense that it empowers people at the grassroots in this predominantly rural country. 

*Bihari Krishna Shrestha is an anthropologist and was a senior official in the government.*

# Copycat capitalism

Given the West's anemic performance in recent years, it is hardly surprising to see countries wanting to emulate China's economic dynamism

ALEXANDER FRIEDMAN  
in ZURICH

It is all too easy to envy China. At current growth rates, the Chinese economy will double in size in only nine years, raising an estimated 100 million people above the poverty line in the process. Compare this to the major economies of the Western world. The eurozone's GDP remains mired below 2008 levels and the United States last enjoyed Chinese-style growth back in 1984, when gasoline was \$1.10 a gallon and the first Apple Macintosh was rolling off the production line in California.

Given the West's anemic performance in recent years, it is hardly surprising that envy of China's economic dynamism has manifested itself in official policy. Even hitherto independent central banks have not escaped the creep toward state-sponsored capitalism. The US Federal Reserve has been gently encouraged to buy 90 per cent of annual net issuance of US Treasury bills, effectively funding the US fiscal deficit and ensuring, via the resulting negative real interest rates, that businesses and individuals wishing to save, rather than spend, will lose purchasing power by doing so.

Ironically, Western countries are shifting to statism at the very moment that China appears to be heading in the opposite direction – witness its recent moves to liberalise its financial system. In just 10 years, the share of state-directed bank lending in China has fallen from 92 per cent of new credit creation to less than half.



But copycat capitalism is not without risk; indeed, it is unlikely to end without someone getting scratched. The West's efforts to emulate China are hindered by its inability to replicate the conditions of Chinese growth, such as labour mobilisation and its unwillingness to pursue practices such as the one-child policy. Thus, the West's forays into state capitalism are more likely to result in the misallocation of capital, more in the vein of China's vastly oversupplied steel industry but without the stellar headline economic performance of the national economy.

Coming from the other direction, China's crawl toward a more market-oriented brand of capitalism also has potential pitfalls. We need look no further than its recent problems with so-called wealth-management products (WMPs) for evidence that reform

intentions without adequate regulatory institutions can cause problems.

WMPs were commonly marketed to individuals as alternatives to deposit accounts. But the funds contributed were then invested in riskier assets that included 'trust loans' to companies such as property developers. The number of trust loans rose by 40 per cent in 2012, which triggered serious concern among China's authorities that WMPs could become the next financial 'WMDs' because banks had strong incentives to make uneconomic lending decisions. The subsequent state-directed WMP regulation put a brake on credit creation and sent Chinese stock markets plunging. Ultimately, however, the measures should enable China's shadow banking system to continue to grow at a more manageable pace and in a more sustainable way.

There is a risk that the lack of growth in the West may make economic transformation in the direction of the Chinese model appear more urgent to its governments. But the Western economic model has brought about unprecedented standards of living. This achievement should not be dismissed because of one crisis, no matter how prolonged, and the economic model that produced today's living standards should not be cast aside without careful consideration. [www.project-syndicate.org](http://www.project-syndicate.org)



Alexander Friedman is  
Global Chief Investment  
Officer for UBS Wealth  
Management.

## BIZ BRIEFS

### Award gallore

Qatar Airways was honoured with three awards at the annual Skytrax World Airline Awards 2013 held at the Paris Air Show in Le Bourget. The airline bagged three categories: world's best business class, world's best business class lounge, and best airline staff service which it had won last year too.



### Giving back



Yeti Airlines donated Rs 1.66 million to Save the Children, United Mission to Nepal, Care Nepal and Red Cross Society as a part of its corporate social responsibility program. The Airlines has donated a total of Rs 10.06 million to various social organisations since it began the CSR program in October 2006.

### Smarter upgrade



Colors recently launched Xfactor HD, the latest model to join the Xfactor series. The dual-sim 3G phone runs on Jellybean 4.2.1. android operating system. Colors is also offering free leather case and an 8GB memory card with the purchase of this phone.

### Highly intelligent



The highly awaited Panasonic Smart Viera TV is now available in the Nepali market. Equipped with new and intelligent features, the Viera boasts of excellent picture quality, stunning designs, and promises to give patrons an excellent viewing experience.

### Gallop away

Gokarna Forest Resort is introducing horse riding classes from next month onwards. The program had its soft launch last month and will go into full operation starting 1 July.



### Achieving excellence



Dragon Air (KA) was named the World's Best Regional Airline and Best Regional Airline in Asia at the annual Skytrax World Airline Awards. Cathay Pacific Airways which bought Dragon in 2006 was also honoured at the program with the World's Best Cabin Staff and Best Transpacific Airline.

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# Advani down, but not out

The BJP knows that politics of Hindutva suffers from limitations in India's diverse society



LOOK OUT  
Ajaz Ashraf

The furious debate in India this week over the wisdom of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in projecting Narendra Modi as its prime ministerial candidate in 2014 has primarily focused on his divisive politics and unacceptability to potential allies.

But it also proves the Sangh Parivar's ability to raise the threshold of acceptability of Hindutva in Indian society and underscores the perpetual pressure on Hindutva leaders wishing to play a national role to reinvent themselves.

Those outside the Sangh Parivar wanted former Home Minister LK Advani to be the party's campaign chief, claiming that he, unlike Modi, pursues a soft line on Hindutva and adheres to consensus politics. It is strange that Indians should forget the political tornado Advani unleashed in 1990, jumping on a Toyota-turned-rath to journey from Somnath to Ayodhya and dividing India as sharply as it perhaps had been at the time of partition.

Indeed, there are few BJP leaders of stature who haven't dabbled in divisive politics. Those in the BJP who wish to carve a national role are first required to win the support of Sangh cadres with a pronounced Hindutva line. It is why Advani became their mascot two

decades ago, as is Modi now.

Yet, the politics of Hindutva suffers from limitations in India's diverse society. It alienates both the religious minorities and downtrodden classes and Dalits. Despite the BJP's attempts at social engineering, it is popularly perceived to represent upper castes and the urban middle class, who together can't provide it a majority. No wonder then, every BJP leader nursing a pan-India ambition feels compelled to cultivate a persona acceptable to other sections of the population and, in this era of fractured polity, regional outfits as well.

Advani's metamorphosis came about through what is called his 'Jinnah moment' during a visit to Pakistan in

2005 when he hailed Jinnah as a "great man" and described his address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11 August, 1947, as "a forceful espousal of a secular state..." In the six-year-rule of the NDA, Advani tempered his Hindutva rhetoric not least because he was India's home minister. It was now time for him to go in for a complete makeover. Advani needed the new persona for leading the NDA, the BJP-led alliance, in the 2009 election.

By contrast, Modi emerged from relative anonymity through the grisly Gujarat riots of 2002 and his subsequent communal rhetoric. Advani's lowering of rhetoric allowed Modi to appropriate the partially vacated Hindutva space, post-2002. The BJP's poor electoral

performance indicated the party required a new leader to spearhead it. Confident of the Sangh's rank and file, Modi took to cultivating the image of 'Mr Development' to widen his appeal beyond the BJP.

The need to reinvent is inscribed in the BJP's DNA. Take former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who is often extolled for his liberal views, but who was earlier in his career as pugnacious a Hindutva leader as any.

It is pertinent to ponder why Vajpayee and Modi succeeded in persuading people about their makeover and Advani failed. For one, Advani's endorsement of Jinnah, anathema to the Sangh, alienated its cadres from him. In politics, you can't hope to win from a weak home-base. Second, the Congress stole a march over the BJP through welfare measures, visibly reflected in the 2009 election verdict.

The liberal persona Vajpayee took on found acceptance, as there was a pressing need for a leader who could provide an acceptable ideological architecture for an alliance against the Congress, which has weakened considerably in the 1990s. Somewhat similar is the context in which Modi has attempted a makeover. Scams and indecisive governance have eroded the UPA's credibility. Modi's slogan of development has charmed many into forgetting his past.

You can't rule out a second coming for Advani. Should the Modi-led BJP fail to get more than 170-180 seats, the 'liberal' or 'reasonable' Advani would be asked to lure regional outfits for forming a coalition government. Such is the dichotomous categorisation of Modi (hardliner) and Advani (softliner) that nobody will hark to the latter's past, not even the secular camp.

From Vajpayee to Advani to Modi – the Sangh Parivar has indeed come a long way, putting before India every few years a Hindutva face rendered presentable through a shrewd makeover.  [ashrafajaz3@gmail.com](mailto:ashrafajaz3@gmail.com)

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The southwest monsoon arrives in Nepal from the southeast because the Himalayan mountains bend the Bay of Bengal arm of the monsoon and forces it westwards. The Indian summer monsoon also has an Arabian Sea arm which usually manifests itself in July in Nepal. This year, a huge low pressure build up over northern India which sucked in moisture from the Arabian Sea and when mixed with cold air from the north created the devastating flash floods in Uttarakhand and western Nepal this week. The monsoon will now slow to its more routine advance with night rain into the weekend.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
27° 18°	28° 19°	30° 17°

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PICS: HUM GURUNG

# The kingdom next door

Bhutan's high-end tourism model strikes a fine balance between boosting economy and conserving traditions and the environment

HUM GURUNG in THIMPHU

There was a time when Nepal was known as the last Shangri-la. Today that title rightfully belongs to Bhutan. Even as the Himalayan kingdom



**BEST OF BOTH WORLDS (clockwise from top):** Even with 80,000 residents in the capital, water from the Thimphu river is safe to drink. As buildings have to follow a strict code for design, houses throughout the country look similar and have a certain old world charm. Nestled between rice fields, Tashichho Dzong on the northern edge of Thimphu houses the offices of the royal government. The highway that leads into Thimphu from Paro is as well made and maintained as those in the west.

cautiously opened itself to the outside world in the mid-70s, it kept one step firmly rooted in the past. By adapting modern technology without deserting its culture and forested wilderness, Bhutan is one of the few success stories of sustainable development.

The country's journey started in 1972 when former king Jigme Singye Wangchuck introduced 'Gross National Happiness' to his people. He believed that the overall wellbeing of the Bhutanese and their

traditions and natural resources were of greater importance than pure economic progress. Even in tourism, Bhutan made a deliberate choice of quality over quantity by imposing a \$250 fee on all visitors. Despite the hefty tariff, thousands throng here every year to appreciate and learn about the Drukpa lifestyle that remains largely intact. And it is this mixture of the past and the present that puts Bhutan on top of every traveller's list.

English is widely spoken, there are Western-style hotels and food throughout the country. Young, urban Bhutanese are hooked to their gadgets and yet boys dressed in their traditional robes, gho, and girls in their ankle length kiras is a very common sight. More than conformity it a genuine show of affection towards their culture and a desire to stay in touch with their roots.

The streets here are clean, the highways are wide and well-

maintained, traffic jams are rare. While we in Nepal have turned our rivers into open sewers and stripped naked our forests, the Thimphu River that flows through the capital city is still in its emerald green glory. Bhutan has made it big without sacrificing its rolling green hills and fresh air. Us neighbours have a lot to learn. 🇧🇹

Hum Gurung, PhD, is CEO of Himalayan Sustainable Future Foundation.

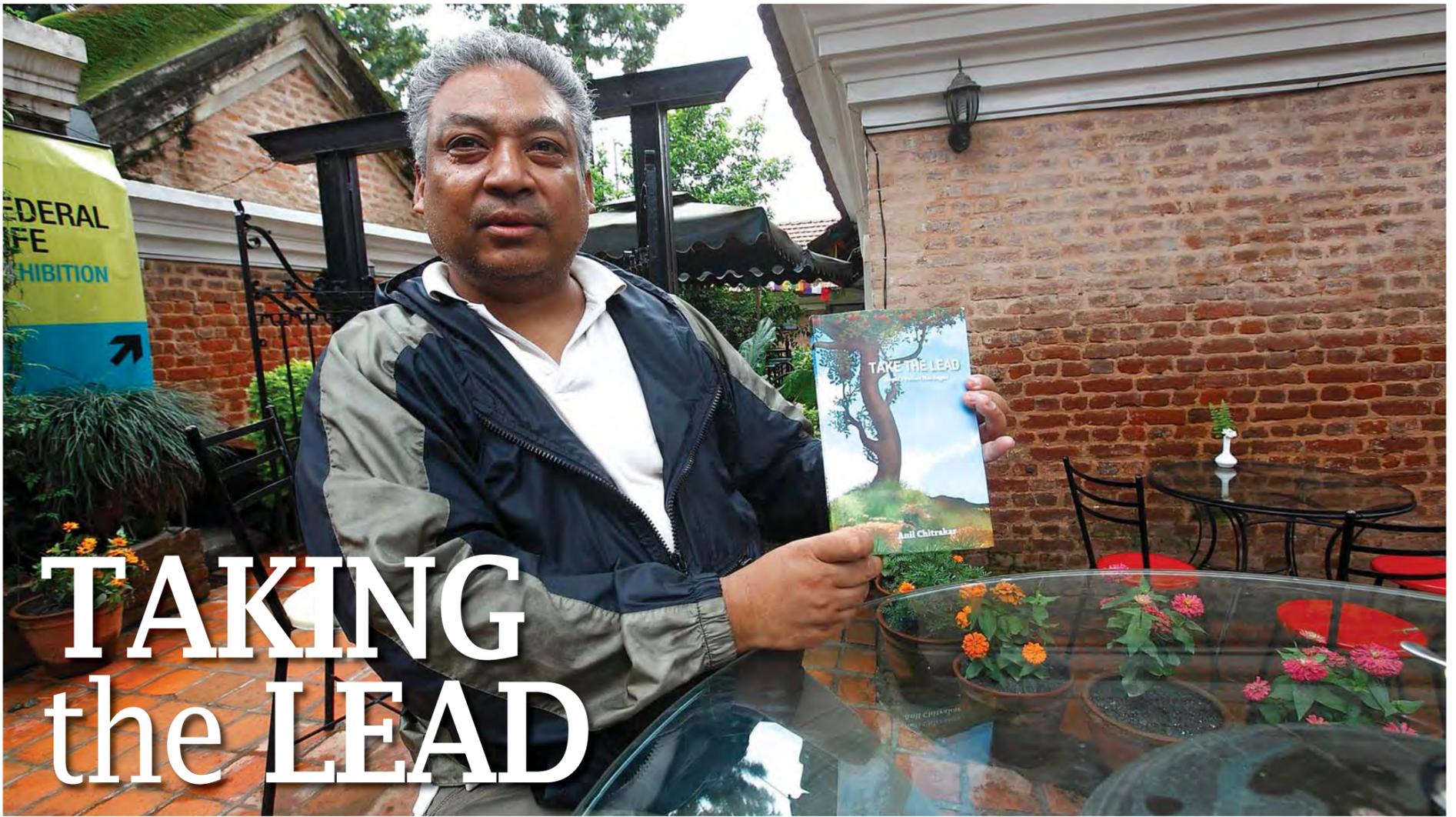
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**HONDA**



# TAKING the LEAD

BIKRAM RAI

## Anil Chitrakar's book infuses hope into Nepal's cynical and negative public sphere

TSERING DOLKER GURUNG

It's 2020. Nepal is at peace, there is economic stability, corruption is at an all time low, and the country has made great progress in reducing its carbon footprint. This is the naya Nepal that Anil Chitrakar projects in his debut book *Take the lead: Nepal's future has begun*. Quixotic, yes, but the engineer says it is possible.

"People who talk negatively about Nepal usually don't understand the country and are merely watching from the sidelines," explains the 52-year-old social entrepreneur and energy planner. "If we make the right decisions like South Korea and Singapore in the 60s, these goals can be achieved."

The author's in-depth understanding of Nepal's political, economic, and environmental landscape is reflected in the compelling anecdotes, commentaries, and reflections on history that make up *Take the lead*. Tired of the growing cynicism

and negativity among fellow Nepalis, Chitrakar hopes that perhaps a few will have a change of heart after finishing the book.

Released three weeks ago, sales have picked up rapidly through word of mouth and schools and organisations are recommending the book as a quick guide to understanding the country's current state of affairs. The author now wishes to see *Take the lead* included in school and university curriculum too. Chitrakar tells us he always wanted to write, but it took a young entrepreneur to convince him to take the plunge and once he started, he simply couldn't stop. A meticulous note taker, he was able to complete the book in just six months.

Growing up near Hanuman Dhoka in a family of artisans, Chitrakar was fascinated by machines from a young age and spent hours trying to fix old alarm clocks and other gadgets. After earning a degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Rajasthan, the math whiz moved to

the US to study energy planning at the University of Pennsylvania. "I chose energy because I knew it would be the future," he says.

Chitrakar began his career as an energy engineer at the Academy of Science and Technology, went on to head the Nepal chapter of IUCN, and even served as a member of the Kathmandu City Planning Commission. Today he works as a freelance consultant and volunteers at several non-profit organisations including the Himalayan Climate Initiative which he helped found.

He is also involved with the greater Kailash conservation area, a project which aims to promote sustainable development through regional cooperation between neighbours Nepal, India, and China. For two of his energy projects, one, to develop an off-grid telecom system and two, to convert waste into energy, Chitrakar will be visiting 72 sites.

His work in developing sustainable alternative energy in rural Nepal and

heritage conservation earned him the Rolex award which recognises promising social entrepreneurs, the Silicon Valley Tech award. He also won a global development market place award for his efforts to promote the use of solar tuki throughout Nepal. In 1993 Chitrakar was named one of the 100 'global leaders for tomorrow' at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland.

"I could be working at a place like World Bank, but I chose a different path because I wanted to help bring a change," says the writer who has been a part of several social campaigns. When asked if he sees a future in politics, he replies candidly, "Mainstream politics comes with a lot of baggage. I prefer doing my own work and helping out in whatever little way I can." 🇳🇵

*Take the lead: Nepal's future has begun*  
Anil Chitrakar  
Kathalaya Publication  
Rs 299  
112 pages

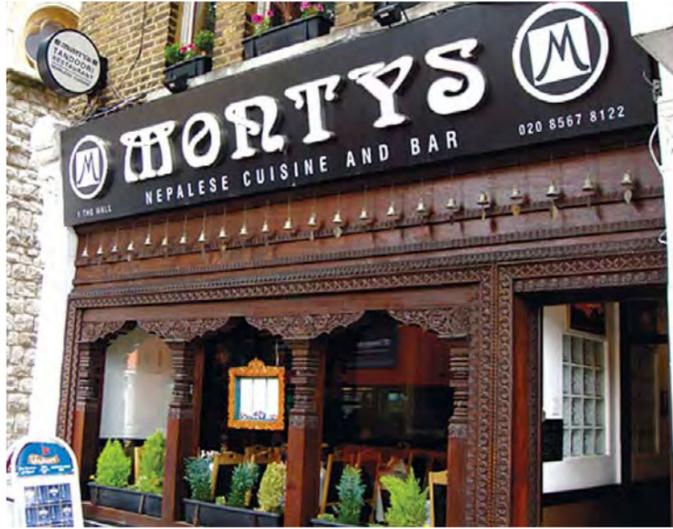
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# Let's drink to that

A Nepali owned British beer is leaving a flavourful froth around the world



SUNIR PANDEY

When Khukuri Beer was launched in Nepal last week at the British Embassy, the event went completely unnoticed. What few in Nepal know is that Khukuri is the largest selling Nepali-owned British beer in the UK. And the green bottle has been delighting beer connoisseurs from Canada to Finland and Portugal to Japan for the last decade.

The man behind the beer and the brand is restaurant owner and businessman Mahanta 'Monty' Shrestha who moved to London in the 70s. When the owners of the restaurant he was looking after decided to shut it down, Shrestha took over. Monty's was born in 1980 and is now a household name in the London tandoori scene. But Shrestha

didn't stop there. The growing Nepali diaspora with an affinity for its own cuisines and palatial peculiarities, encouraged him to introduce a drop of the motherland on the lunch menu.

In 2003 Shrestha partnered with JW Lees, the famous 180-year-old English brewery, four years later he became the sole owner of the company. Now the beer ships to both sides of the Atlantic, selling 250,000 litres in 2012. It has already surpassed that volume within June this year.

As a British brewed Nepali beer, Khukuri is a good example of bilateral trade between the two countries. In 2012, the beer won the gold medal at Monde Selection - an international non-competitive award given to food and drink products. Although Khukuri isn't available in the Nepali market yet, that is

something the management is looking to put right.

"Beer lovers all around the world are appreciating the Nepali flavour, so why should Nepalis not get to enjoy it?" says Prashant Kunwar, Business Development Director at Khukuri Beer. "The feedback so far has been amazing and there is definitely a demand, but we are still studying the market to see whether this will be feasible in the long-term."

Locally brewed alcoholic drinks like tongba, tho, chhyang, and raksi are firm favourites among Nepalis. Despite this pervasive drinking culture, beer is still seen as an expensive means of socialising. But the wide availability of international brands shows that a little bit of coaxing is all it takes to convince Nepalis to experiment with their drinks.

"People in the UK know their beer and don't go to pubs to drink commercial brands," says Kunwar. "So in countries where we ship our beer, we try to project our Nepaliness." Gurkhas and their khukuris are well-known symbols in the UK and Khukuri Beer builds its image on their reputation.

With plans of storming into Swiss and Australian markets, Khukuri Beer is certainly making business sense. "It makes me happy that I am able to introduce Nepal to the world through our beer," says Mahanta Shrestha.

So next time you're in the global mofussil, be sure to savour the flowery hops and malt bitterness of this crisp, light beer with spicy Southasian food at a Nepali restaurant. 🇳🇵

[www.khukuribeer.com](http://www.khukuribeer.com)

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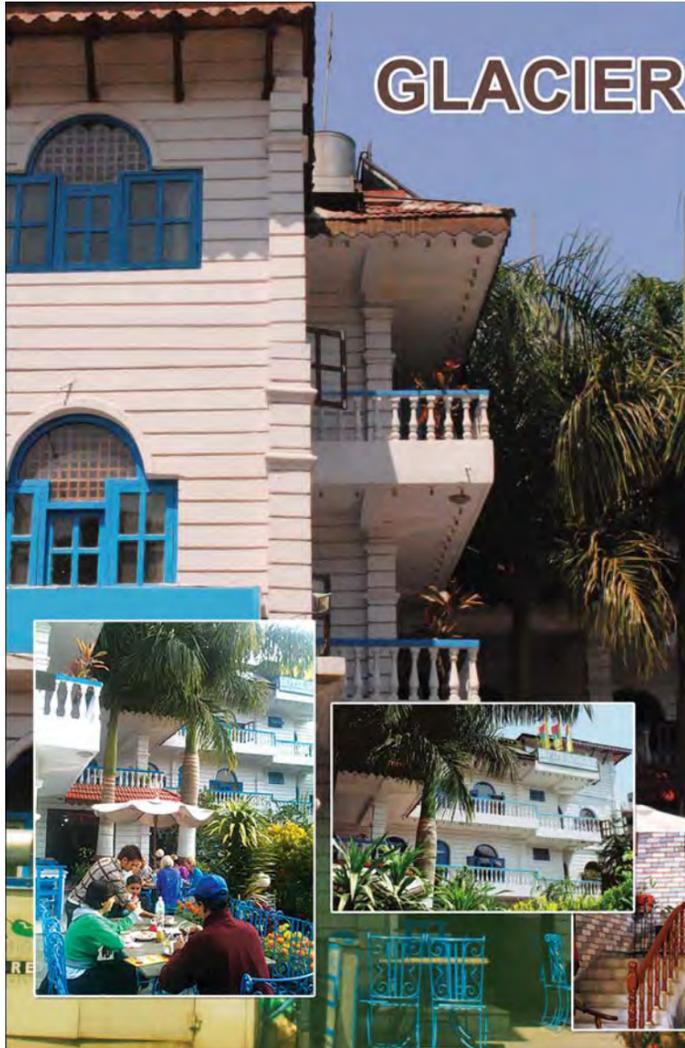


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日本語話せませす

**EVENTS**



**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.  
Until 2 July, 10am to 5pm, Image Ark Gallery, Kulimha Tole, Patan, (01)5006665, www.image-ark.com

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

**Photography workshop**, learn the knowhow of photography in a workshop designed for beginners and photography enthusiasts.  
Rs 4000, 23 June to 4 July, 7 to 9 am, Artudio, Lazimpat, For registration call (01)4002037/9851180188



**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

**MCUBE CHAKATI FILM**, spend your evening in the company of three filmmakers.  
21 June, 4 to 6pm, Gallery Mcube, Lalitpur, (01)5260110

**Farmers Market**, shop for the freshest organic products.  
Every Saturday, 9am to 12pm, 1905 Restaurant and Bar, Kantipath

**Fete de la Musique**, enjoy a day filled with music, music and more music.  
21 June, Alliance Francaise

**Poemandu**, recitation of poems of Yugkavi Siddhicharan Shrestha by prominent poets of Nepal and launch of *Siddhicharan ki Kavya Sadhana*.  
24 June, 3 to 5.30pm, Nepal Bharat Library, Nepal Airlines Building, New Road.

**Fast Track**, take the first step towards your photography journey and learn the basics in this 3 day photography workshop.  
Rs 3000, 26 to 28 June, 7 to 10.30 am, The Image Park, Bagbazar, Kathmandu, www.facebook.com/events/105772292956663/

**Journey of Writing**, calling all enthusiastic readers and aspiring writers interested in short fiction to an interaction program with Samrat Upadhyay based on his collection of short stories *Arresting God in Kathmandu*.  
Rs 100, 30 June, 3pm onwards, Martin Chautari, Thapathali, Kathmandu, register at himalayanreaders@gmail.com

**Cycle Lane**, attend the inauguration of the 350 meter x 2m, a model cycle lane and join hands for the promotion of green lane.  
22 June, 2 to 4 pm, Thasikhel, 9803276895



**STROBIST PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP**, learn the tricks of studio photography  
Rs 5000, 9 to 12 July, 7 to 9.30 am, Folio Magazine Studio, Dhalko, Kathmandu. Register by: 6 July, type FOLIO STR to 4001/9841240341, www.facebook.com/events/140445166150076/

**Talk Talk**, exchange ideas and learn more about the trends sweeping today's businesses.  
21 June, 11.30 am, Madan Bhandari Memorial College, New Baneshwor, (01)4464775

**DINING**



**8 DEGREES**, from lemon lassis to spicy pork stews, this is a great place to try continental dishes.  
Jhamsikhel



**TUKCHE**, step into this Thakali joint for some great thakali dishes and yes when it comes to dal bhat no one does it better.  
Uttar Dhoka, Lazimpat (01)4430356



**BUZZ**, the food at Buzz is good and wholesome, it will leave your palate buzzing. Baluwatar

**Krishnarpan**, a specialty Nepali restaurant at The Dwarika's Hotel serving 6 to 22 courses of authentic Nepali meal.  
The Dwarika's Hotel, Battispatali, (01)4479488



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

**Backyard**, incredibly reasonable prices, modest and simple food has made this restaurant a favourite among Nepalis and foreigners alike.  
Jhamsikhel



**Bu keba**, the organic restaurant in town, offers continental and Indian food along with chef's originals.  
Sanepa



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## MUSIC



**ORIGAMI NIGHT**, sit back, relax and groove to the music of Abhaya and the Steam Injuns.

21 June, 7.45 pm, Zumba Lounge Bar, Jhamsikhel

**Live at Cafe 32**, live music and delicious food every Friday.

6pm onwards, Café 32, Battispatali, (01)4244231

**Music Jams**, enjoy great live music every Tuesday.

Moksh, Jhamsikhel

**Live Music**, listen to soothing live acoustic music and feast on Italian delicacies.

Every Monday and Thursday, 8 to 10 pm, Fire and Ice Pizzeria, Thamel



**VAIRABI**, enjoy the sounds of khin, dhime, sarangi and more from the Nepali folk instrumental band Vairabi

Free entrance, 21 June, 4pm onwards, Kathmandu Durbar Square

## GETAWAYS

**Mum's Garden Resort**, head out to Pokhara for a peaceful and comfortable stay in beautifully designed cottages surrounded by a lush green garden offering great views of Phewa Lake and the Annapurna range.

Lake Side, Pokhara, (061)463468, www.mumsgardenresort.com

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

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

**Glacier Hotel**, a pretty place to stay, complete with a waterfront terrace, free wi-fi, children's playground, and probably the best spa in town.

Gaurighat, lakeside, Pokhara, (061)463722



## WORDMILL

Want to be a writer or simply love writing but suffer from the inevitable writer's block? The ideas are in your head but when it comes to putting it down on paper you fail miserably. Head down to Thames College this weekend and take inspiration from bestselling Nepali author and professor of creative writing Samrat Upadhyay and two American writers, Trevor Mackesey and John Thomas Howard. Join the creative writing workshop on fiction and non-fiction.

Date: 29 June  
Time: 10.30am to 1.30 pm  
Venue: Thames International College, Old Baneshwor, Kathmandu  
Register at: docs.google.com/forms/d/1mw1AEfrtxixyi7NWG1uZ2s5wQLPniykHmijztg3ryvA/viewform

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# Waltz with Bashir



**MUST SEE**  
**Sophia Pande**

In 2008, in New York, I went to see a film that has stayed in my mind ever since. Israeli director Ari Folman's sublime, deeply personal animated documentary *Waltz with Bashir* had competed at the Cannes film festival previously that year, been given rave reviews, and had just been released in North America that fall. As the film came to an end, I have never since experienced the same kind of hushed contemplation from a stunned and awestruck audience.

Although *Waltz with Bashir* took four long years in the making, due to its very specific kind of animation technique (no, it is not rotoscoping by the way, where animators draw over live footage), its actual inception, though Folman did not realise it at the time, was all the way back in 1982, when he was a 19-year-old soldier in the Israeli Army during the time of the Lebanon War.

When Folman's friend and fellow soldier approaches him more than two decades later claiming that he has been having a recurring nightmare about 26 ferocious dogs chasing through the streets in search of him, Folman asks him how he can help, after all, he's just a filmmaker.

When his friend says he

knows why it is exactly 26 dogs, not more, not less, because that was the same number of dogs he shot in a Lebanese village so that they wouldn't alert the insurgents back in 1982. Folman realises that he himself remembers almost nothing of his own experiences in the war, even though he was only few hundred metres away from the most infamous incident of that conflict: the Sabra and Shatila massacre, where Lebanese Christian Phalangist militia slaughtered unto 3,500 Palestinian and Lebanese Shia Muslims in their camps in retaliation to the assassination of the newly elected Lebanese President Bashir Gemayel. The Christians had wrongly assumed that the Palestinian militants had killed him. The massacre took place under the noses of the Israeli army who were guarding the camps.

As Folman embarks on a journey to try and remember where he was and how he felt during that time, we experience his surreal and painful journey, in a film that has found just the right medium with which to treat such a quest. Only with animation, could Folman recreate his friend's terrifying dream of the 26 dogs, as well as his own deeply haunting repeating dream as he gets closer to the truth, of rising naked out of the sea, surrounded by his fellow soldiers, holding nothing but their machine guns, and walking onto the beach of war torn Beirut with flares falling out of the skies, lighting

up the carnage going on not so far away.

Folman speaks to many people, all of whom were involved in the war, all of whom struggle with their memories, and many of whom have certain specific nightmares, dreams and hallucinations. In this film, the horrific and longstanding impact of war on the fragile human mind comes alive in the most innovative addition to cinema that I have seen in a long time.

As the animation weaves seamlessly from long conversations between Folman and his friends, to their memories and dreams, we actually get an inkling of what it must be like to be in the midst of a war, what happens after, and the mind's struggle to eliminate things that just cannot be dealt with.

Cinema has rarely been so riveting and so visceral. *Waltz with Bashir* is an important film, for everyone, but especially cathartic in a nation like ours where we are still trying to deal with our very own aftermath. Watch it and weep.

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



**GIZMO by YANTRICK**

## Tab this

Iconia B1 marks Acer's entry into the competitive market of tablets. This budget friendly tab is generically designed, the only exception being its blue border tone that pleasantly sets it apart from the rest of the dull-looking tab crowd.

Weighing just under 320g and measuring 11.33mm in depth, the Iconia B1 is light and slim. Its rectangular screen display of 7.0 inch (600 x 1024 pixels) is decent enough to view videos, play games, and run other apps. The B1 runs on a 1.2 GHz Dual Core processor with 512 MB of RAM and 8GB internal storage and operates on Android Jelly Bean (4.1). While other functions of the tab runs pretty smoothly, the 512 MB RAM falters when games with high graphics or full HD videos are played. As for the display, Yantrick experienced no problem with viewing regular video files, but as soon as high resolution videos were played, colours seemed to saturate.



- Display:** 7-inch TFT display with 1024x600p resolution and 170ppi pixel density
- Operating system:** Android 4.1 (Jelly Bean)
- Processor and RAM:** 1.2GHz processor, 512MB RAM
- Storage:** 8 and 16GB internal memory, 32GB microSD support
- Connectivity:** Wi-Fi, microUSB 2.0, Bluetooth 4.0
- Camera:** VGA front camera
- Battery:** 2,710mAh

Another disappointing element is the forward facing VGA camera which is average at best. The camera produces weak and grainy images and to makes things worse, there is no rear camera. So if you want a tab that can substitute as a camera, look elsewhere.

The B1's audio player fares better though. It is not the loudest, but the quality is much better than average speakers. You might want to invest in a pair of earphones as it does not come with the set.

Unlike other tablets, the Iconia B1 has a micro USB port located at the bottom while the power/sleep button is on the upper end of the right side. There is also a Micro SD slot which can be used as an external hard drive to store data.

For internet connectivity, only Wi-Fi is available. While 3G users will have a bone to pick over this, the tab is otherwise well equipped with a variety of options for connectivity. There is Bluetooth 4.0 with A2DP and USB for PC interfacing and charging, GPS for location based applications like Google Maps and Foursquare. Along with all the standard applications found in handheld devices these days, Acer has added a Cloud app, which is used as a backup for this device.

The battery can sustain six to eight hours of use so you don't have to worry about running to the switch board after every hour.

**Yantrick's Verdict:** The Iconia B1 leaves a lot to be desired, but for Rs 15,900 it is a better buy than more expensive products in the market.



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RE VIEW

# THE F WORD

December 2007. Four months before Nepal was to hold its first Constituent Assembly election after Gyanendra Shah abdicated Narayanhiti, the interim assembly amended the interim constitution with a very permanent bill: Nepal was to become a federal republic, sentiments be damned.

Fast forward to mid-2013. One year since the CA was disbanded, federalism is still a controversial subject. Politicos wax rhetoric on the media, blame each other for their collective failure to write a constitution, and commentators follow suit. But what of the common Nepali man and woman on the street?

Supported by the United Nations Development Program, 22 young artists from the Kathmandu University School of



AMIR JOSHI

Arts' Fine Arts program went through a two-day workshop on federalism and came up with 22 paintings depicting the f word.

"The sound of the bell represents the hope and expectations of the Nepali people," said Krishna Shrestha. In his painting, 'Expectations', a huge bell, like the one at Patan Darbar Square, hangs in the middle, garlanded by diverse faces from

Nepal. Written across its rim is the word 'federalism' in the Newari script.

Textual arrangements form the core of a lot of the paintings. Maybe this easy assimilation of the signifier and what should have been signified came subconsciously, because the common Nepali consumes all discussions on federalism in words: reports of one politico bashing another, columnists

lobbying for and against, and the media itself taking sides. As such, the challenge of depicting this concept with swathes of colour has been skirted around by the artists by working on slogans, making 'painting' far too outdated and alien as far as 'art' is concerned.

Never mind what federalism actually is (or isn't), this exhibition succeeds in showing what federalism means to educated, urban, youngsters of this country and through this shows that the debate of federalism is centred in Kathmandu. If labelling federalism as the magic pill to cure Nepal's condition is frightfully simple, projecting it in simplistic terms, as many of the artists are guilty of, is equally naïve but understandable.

For an exhibition that aimed to encourage serious discussions on federalism, there were no descriptions in Nepali, or any other local language of the artists' ideas and approaches either. Perhaps the man who asked me what 'LOL' meant in chat language drifted into the gallery by accident? Absent also, as some commentators have already noted, is a debate on whether federalism is right or wrong.

One should touch the word 'art' with a pair of pliers these days, because the very definition of it is changing, as it does all the time. Does an artist provide honest observation of what he sees around him - "No why, just here," as said the musician John Cage - or is he also supposed to provide tangible alternatives to an existing world? You decide. ■

Sunir Pandey



SOMEPLACE ELSE

With a tiny dining area decorated in traditional Buddhist apparel, Vienna gives you a feeling of being in your grandma's cosy living room. And while the staff is attentive, they are also kind enough to let you place orders at your own pace. So bring along your favorite afternoon read, order a cuppa, and lounge around for as long as you want.

Serving sandwiches, hot and cold beverages, and a breakfast menu, the food at Vienna is simple. If you want a meal to last you for the day, try the smoked chicken sandwich (Rs 190 for white bread and Rs 200 for rye) which comes in servings of two half cut baguettes. The filling of smoked chicken with lettuce, tomatoes, and onion gherkins makes this one of the



## VIENNA BAKERY

better sandwiches around town with little reliance on heavy doses of mayo for taste. A suggestion: ask the staff to warm the bread beforehand.

Breakfast lovers will be delighted to know that this two year old joint also offers an ala carte option, available throughout the day. Choose from rye, brown, white, and baguette for bread, all of which are prepared in a kitchen a few metres away, ham



PICS: TRISHNA RANA

(Rs 80), salami (Rs 80), and smoked chicken (Rs 80) for meat, and butter (Rs 30) and jam (Rs 20) and cheese (Rs 50) for spreads. Wash it down with a cup of Americano (Rs 80) while enjoying the first days of monsoon.

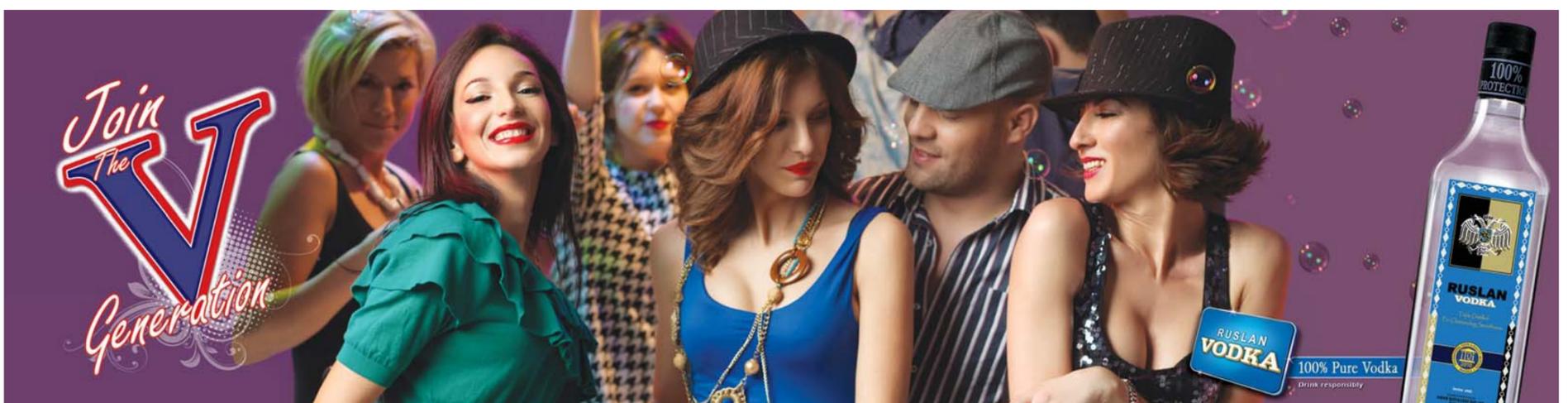
Once weary from all the reading, writing, and gossiping, head over to the counter to browse through the baked goodies. From the classic American pretzel (Rs 45) to the German Berliner (Rs 55), to fresh fruit cake (Rs 180) there is something for just about everyone. The challenge, however, is to settle on one item because visually everything looks tempting.

The pretzel which we were so excited about was hard and chewy and left us wondering if it had been lying around on the shelf for

a couple of days already. The fruit cake decorated with thin slices of kiwi and cantaloupe and sprinkled with pomegranate seeds, on the other hand, won us over easily. Succulent and the right amount of sweet, this is the perfect dessert for those of us looking not to go up by a pant size.

Vienna also sells jam, incense, eggs, chocolates, and other items both at the store and at the organic market in 1905, Kantipath every Saturday. Make sure you leave some spare time just to window shop. ■

Khanchuwa  
*How to get there: From fire brigade road in Pulchok walk towards St Mary's School. Vienna is right behind the school, next to Falchha.*



# Holding off hepatitis



**DHANVANTARI**  
Buddha Basnyat, MD

Three issues that will make headlines in Nepal this monsoon are elections, flash floods, and possible outbreaks of hepatitis E. While hepatitis B and C are transmitted through blood transfusion, intravenous drug use or sexual activity, hepatitis A and E are spread primarily by drinking water that is contaminated with faeces. As Kathmandu's leaky mains become more susceptible to contamination in the rainy season, hepatitis A and E outbreaks are very common this time of the year.

Almost everyone over the age of 10 who grew up in Nepal has had at least one run in with Hepatitis A. The infection is often characterised by a flu-like illness, instead of jaundice, lethargy, and nausea, which are the signature symptoms of all other hepatitis. The good news is that a single infection with hepatitis A guarantees lifelong immunity with protective antibodies. However, it is not clear whether this lasting immunity also applies to hepatitis E.

The hepatitis E virus was first discovered during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 80s, after an outbreak of unexplained hepatitis at a military camp. A pooled faecal extract from affected soldiers was ingested by an enthusiastic scientist of the research team. This scientist

patients who have lived here all their lives don't require it.

In expectant mothers, hepatitis E infection may lead to fulminant hepatitis - acute liver failure - and turn deadly. Fortunately, for the last several years we have seen less number of pregnant women infected with this virus.

It is possible that hepatitis E comes in outbreaks and Nepal has simply been lucky not to experience this epidemic. The other good news is that Hecolin, the world's first commercial hepatitis E vaccine, is now available in China and will arrive in the Nepali market soon.

For 99 per cent of hepatitis B cases, no anti-viral drug treatment is required as patients recover without specific treatment, but a vaccine does exist. Hepatitis C is less benign and may require treatment after infection. The final form of hepatitis, D, usually co-exists with hepatitis B and leads to severe complications.

The secret to avoiding these common viral hepatitis is to be aware of the modes of transmission and take suitable precautions. For hepatitis A and E, the single most important preventive measure is drinking clean boiled water, eating hot food, and avoiding salads when eating out. ☑



fell sick and the new virus was detected in his stool.

Although many patients in Nepal resort to Ayurvedic treatment, both hepatitis A and E have a self-limiting course and specific medication is not required. There is a hepatitis A vaccine, but

**HAPPENINGS**



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DEVAKI BISTA

**WISH YOU WELL:** Japanese Ambassador Kunio Takahashi bids farewell to President Ram Baran Yadav at Tribhuvan Airport on Monday afternoon before Yadav departed for Japan for medical treatment.



NEPAL ARMY

**ON ALERT:** Army and police men evacuate goods from homes affected by the flood in the Mahakali River in Darchula district on Monday.



BIKRAM RAI

**NOTHING TO DO:** A mother and her children are stranded in Ratna Park on Sunday due to the banda called by opposition parties to protest against the announcement of CA election date.



SADINA SHRESTHA

**WATCH OUT:** Construction workers dig up canal walls along the Dhobi Khola as part of the Bagmati corridor project.

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BY THE WAY  
Anurag Acharya

After snubbing the Nepali Congress for the last two years, New Delhi finally rolled out the red carpet for vice-chair Sher Bahadur Deuba as if he was a head of state. Such is the significance of a Delhi visit here that the reception the NC's second man got in Delhi put to rest any doubt about the party's continued significance in Nepali politics.

But most Kangresis aren't exactly thrilled and complain instead that the manner of the visit was aimed at humiliating the party president Sushil Koirala and discouraging Deuba's arch rival Ramchandra Poudel. Koirala was seen to have been punished for his angry reaction conveyed to the ambassador himself to remarks by India's Birganj consul general about the Madhes.

Deuba, for his part, suddenly seems a more reassured politician and already has a prime ministerial swagger. His statements to the media after landing at the TIA were short and diplomatic, one could say almost statesmanlike. Such is the effect of taking a Delhi



## Congress congress

The congress government in New Delhi finally rolled the red carpet for Nepal's grand old party

shuttle.

Later, Bhusan Dahal of Fireside grilled Deuba about whether India was in favour of UCPN (M)'s model of democracy or the one proposed by the Nepali Congress. Deuba sounded like he was echoing something someone had recently told him somewhere: "Both parties have accepted fundamentals of democracy and expressed commitment to its basic principles. So there are no

two models."

Dahal wasn't satisfied and pressed on, trying to trap Deuba into saying something about Pushpa Kamal's suggestion that India was in favour of linguistic federalism. Deuba deftly sidestepped the question.

At a time when most NC and UML leaders have been high-pitched about the UCPN (M)'s democratic credentials and commitment, Deuba's comments point to a new willingness to

engage in a healthy competition with political rivals rather than endlessly antagonise them. He has tried to use the visit to distinguish himself from Koirala's leadership, which is seen to be rigid and unpragmatic.

From a reputation of being an impatient, immature, and short-sighted leader, Sher Bahadur Deuba is suddenly exhibiting political acumen, level headedness, and most

importantly, tolerance towards dissenting views.

These are not just healthy signs for the oldest party, but also a silver lining for Nepali politics, which has been paralysed by dissent, deadlock, and a sense of drift. While the NC with its legacy of struggle claims to be a pillar of Nepali democracy, the new forces including the Maoists and the Madhesi Morcha want to redefine those pillars.

The distinctiveness about Nepal's political transition is that the political system envisioned by different social movements since the 2006 People's Movement has rejected the outside models in favour of a system that best reflects the aspirations of the majority as well as minorities of this land.

Despite widespread resentment, political parties are still the only legitimate bodies who represent that aspiration. The failure of the last CA should have made it clear to the political top brass that statute drafting is not a 'winner takes all' affair but a concerted effort to institutionalise a way of life for the nation.

In a society with plurality of views like ours, we need leaders who can take a step back at times in order to take a collective stride forward. This affords the Nepali Congress the opportunity to reinvent itself in the upcoming election by fielding a new crop of candidates with fresh ideas. ■



## JOB VACANCIES

### Kathmandu Animal Treatment Centre

KAT Centre is a ten-year-old organisation dedicated to public health through promoting canine health, protection of community dogs, and prevention of rabies. Its main work is the 'animal birth control' (ABC) programme. Currently engaged in the process of re-organising the organisation and make it more efficient and effective, the KAT Centre Board seeks to fill the following positions:

- Veterinary Doctor
- Education & Communications Officer
- Accountant/Administrative Assistant
- Veterinary Assistant
- Kennel Staff
- Animal Care-Giver
- Dog Catcher
- Night Guard

Job Description details are available at KAT Centre, Chapaligaun, Budhanilkantha.

Deadline for receipt of application: 7 July 2013

Application should contain a curriculum vitae and cover letter responding to the job requirements.

Send application addressed to KAT Centre Board to the following email or postal address

E-Mail: [katcentre@wlink.com.np](mailto:katcentre@wlink.com.np)

Postal address: EPC4120, Bansbari

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BIKRAM RAJ

# #GENDERVIOLENCE

Social media spreads the message quick, but cannot replace grassroots activism



HERE WE GO  
Trishna Rana

When the Arab Spring erupted in 2011, social media was the catalyst that unified demonstrators and accelerated the movement. Since then netizens around the world began seeing social media as an alternative means to inspire grassroots movements and help find solutions to issues from poverty to unemployment to violence against women.

As experts and activists gathered in

Kathmandu this week to discuss the progress made in understanding and reducing violence against women, the conversation kept returning to the role of social media. How can platforms like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and blogs be utilised to educate and engage men and women about domestic violence and rape? Is it possible to translate online activism to a change in values offline?

Away from the purview of traditional mainstream media, social media has helped democratise Nepal's public sphere and provided an outlet to large groups of otherwise unheard voices. However, in a country where the entire discourse on gender is driven by a middle class, Kathmandu-centred understanding and

issues of representation have been deeply problematic, social media might actually widen the gap between women who are suffering and those who chose to speak on their behalf.

Currently a quarter of Nepal's population has access to the internet. There are 1.45 million facebook users and a couple thousand active on twitter (most of them men). In this confined space, who gets to decide what constitutes violence, who gets to decide which 'forms' of violence are more 'pressing' and need greater attention? Like Urmila Chaudhary, a former kamalari, asked at the conference where were netivists when kamalaris were baton charged by the police in the middle of the capital for demanding justice?

As we reported in this paper last week, a group of ordinary women in Bageswor, Accham district successfully mobilised their community to put an end to Chhaupadi – a humiliating and harmful practice of sending women to live in cow-sheds during periods or childbirth. Women like them help change attitudes at the grassroots level, but in the realm of social media their efforts are reduced to simplistic VAW and GBV hashtags.

One way of stamping out gender violence is to have longer, persistent dialogues that seek to change the patriarchal value systems of an entire generation. But a medium where what is news right now is relegated to the annals of the internet an hour

later and where users are known for their notoriously short attention span, might not be the best place to carry out meaningful discussions.

For four months, the Occupy Baluwatar movement managed to stir up urban Nepalis' conscience and every morning a small yet loyal base of supporters kept showing up outside the PM's residence demanding for justice for Sita, the young woman who was robbed and raped by immigration officials on return from Saudi Arabia, and others like Chori Maya Maharjan. After Khil Raj Regmi promised to fast-track the cases and provide justice to victims and their families, the protests were suspended in mid-April.

Today the core group of campaigners is still actively involved with Sita and Chori Maya's court cases and updates the Twitter page regularly, but the larger debate seems to have fizzled out. While the movement was successful in convincing like-minded Nepalis to come together through Twitter and Facebook, it also exposed the inherent weakness of social media: make people "stick around for the longer conversation".

When a woman is raped or beaten, forced to abort, or made to sleep in cow-sheds, she needs supportive family, friends, and community members, strong laws, and a sensitive and efficient justice system. Creating this system should be the focus of both the state and organisations working to promote gender equity. Social media, though an important messenger, comes second.





# Closed minds and shutdowns

Politicians think they can punish the people and still get their support

DHANA HAMAL

**W**e planned to take the early morning bus from Nepalganj to Kathmandu after a family wedding. But the Tarai was shutdown by a banda called by Tharu activists.

Some bus drivers decided to risk driving at night so they could make their day wages. Like the bus drivers and conductors, some of us had jobs, others studies to return to. Within two hours, we had to stop in Lamahi of Dang behind a long line of trucks and buses on the highway that had been waiting for nightfall and APF escorts.

There were some 500 people sitting on the middle of Nepal's main highway artery, drinking and celebrating a "successful banda". The security forces were powerless to remove them. Finally at midnight,

when the revelry ended, the convoys began moving again.

Even then, faceless people in the dark would throw stones at the vehicles. A bus to Kakabhitta in front of ours was hit, its driver injured and windscreen shattered. As the bus careened through the night, I sat in the front of the bus shielding my young niece from more rocks. It took 19 hours for us to get to Kathmandu.

Back in Kathmandu earlier this week, my eight-year-old nephew saw his uniformed school mates going home, so returned saying there was a banda. It took me two hours to walk to a meeting, on the way there were many elderly and sick being helped along. At Baneswor intersection there was a small group of men with flags intimidating anyone who dared ride a motorcycle or car.

The 42 political parties don't agree with the government, so they are punishing the people. Finally, there is hope that

Nepal will get over its political deadlock, but the smaller parties have important criticisms of its timing and structure. What better way to assert yourself and be taken seriously than by enforcing a shutdown through street intimidation? By some counts, Nepal has been shut down for 380 days in the past five years.

Here is the contradiction. When elections happen in November, the same political parties will have to ask the same people who suffered from their enforced closures for votes. What will they say to them? Will they apologise to people who had to suffer from their violation of the citizen's right to free movement and freedom from fear?

In a democracy, what should be paramount is the public interest. What kind of democracy is this where political parties compete with each other to terrorise and torture the very people who they

want to vote for them? In 1990 and 2006, the art of hartal was honed as a fine form of political action. People joined protests spontaneously against perceived enemies of democracy. Who is the enemy now? A banda is no longer 'called' it is 'forced' upon people who want to have no part in it by politicians using street intimidation to make a point. For the organisers, the people are

collateral damage, expendable ammunition for the cause. And the cause is usually nothing more than political upmanship: to get back at the other guys.

How many more times before November will the Nepali people have to be forcibly shackled for an exercise that is supposed to set them free?

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DEVYANI SHIVAKOTI

## Devastation in Darchula

Rashmi Raikhola, *Setopati*, 19 June

सेतोपाटी

Nepal's president and prime minister are sons of ordinary farmers. They fought against a tyrannical monarchy so that the rest of us could live in a free and democratic country. But today they are turning a blind eye to the plight of poor people. Massive floods in western Nepal have destroyed properties worth millions and rendered hundreds homeless and yet news about the president's sickness managed to overshadow the tragedy. A budget of Rs 600,000 was allocated for Ram Baran Yadav's treatment, but budget for flood victims amounted to a meagre Rs 500,000 and five hundred blankets. This amount doesn't even cover the loss of one life.

No one has control over natural disasters and it is stupid to point fingers at India. According to local sources, the dam at Dhauliganga Hydro Power in Dharchula was at the brink of bursting after heavy rainfall caused the levels to swell. If the water had not been released into the Mahakali River, the damages would have been far worse.

The Nepali government has to take the main responsibility for this disaster. Where was the state when India was constructing barrages at multiple points? Couldn't the government build one on Nepal's side too? Maybe then, the devastation could have been minimised. The victims of the flood are more disappointed by the government's inept response than the actual catastrophe and they are convinced beyond doubt that the state treats people of the far-west as its step-children.

And where are all the leaders of the political parties who queue up to offer sympathies to victims of international disasters? Why is there such silence on their behalf? What is the future of the parties without the support of common Nepalis? Should the far-west disown them?

What do occupants of Singha Darbar know about the sorrow of Nepalis who saw their homes and a lifetime worth of hard work swept away in front of their own eyes. But if those in power have even an ounce of humanity left, they will pay some attention to the people of Darchula.

*Rashmi Raikhola is a nursing student who lost her aunt in the flood.*

## Driven to insanity

Rupesh Acharya, *Annapurna Post*, 20 June

अन्नपूर्णपोस्ट

In June 2004, Krishna Adhikari was dragged from his home in Phujel of Gorkha district, taken to Chitwan, and killed by the Maoists. Krishna's parents Nanda Prasad and Ganga Maya spent years going from one office to another seeking justice for their son. When no one bothered to listen, they travelled to Kathmandu in January of this year and began a hunger strike in front of the prime minister's



NIMESH JUNG RAI

residence in Baluwater. They were illegally detained by the police for 48 days and sent back to Gorkha.

Despite Ganga Maya's deteriorating health, the couple returned and started another hunger strike in front of Bir hospital. On Sunday, the Adhikaris were manhandled by the police and dumped at Patan Mental Hospital. "We refused to eat until we got justice, but they force fed us fruits under the effect of anaesthetics," explains Nanda Prasad, who only woke up on Wednesday after being

bought to the hospital. "We have bruises all over our body and we are in a lot of pain."

Except for administering daily shots of anaesthetics, no one at the hospital bothers to look after the old couple. In 2007, Gorkha police drove the Adhikaris away from their home, after which their house and land were captured by the Maoists. After the Maoists found out that where the two were staying in Kathmandu, they threatened the lodge owner who asked them to leave. "We had to change hotels," says a visibly

frail Nanda Prasad.

Krishna gave his SLC exams from Chitwan in 2003. He was killed when he was home to see his results. In their FIR application, the Adhikaris have named Januka Poudel, Chhabilal Poudel, Kali Prasad Adhikari, Baburam Adhikari, Ram Prasad Adhikari, and Shiva Prasad Adhikari responsible for their son's murder.

nepalitimes.com

Read report by Dambar K Shrestha

### NEPALI TWEETS

सन्तर काण्छो

दायुला चगेर के मोर ! महाकाली सन्धि गर्ने हरे ले काठमाडौं मा महल बनाइसकेका छन्

Who cares if Darchula is flooded? Those who signed the Mahakali treaty have built palaces for themselves in Kathmandu.

BINU SUBEDI

खिलराज हेनिकप्टर चढेर बाढी प्रभावित क्षेत्रमा जाने रे। सक्छौं भने हेनिकप्टर चढदा कति खर्च लाग्छ, बाढी पिडितलाई बाँड, रजिता हेर्न किन जान्छौं?

Khil Raj is visiting flood affected areas on a helicopter. Why don't you distribute the money spent on helicopter fuel to flood victims instead? Why be a spectator?

काठी दाई

नमुना मतदान गर्ने रे निर्वाचन आयोगले ! अय वैध वा से लि नमुना बन्द गर्छन होला .)

The EC wants to hold mock elections. Maybe Baidya baa would also like to organise a mock banda.

Urmila Thapaliya

आज सक्क कुनै पनि देशमा सविधान सभाको निर्वाचन दुई पटक भएको छैन रे थाहा छैन हामी देशमा कति पटक सक्क हुने हो !

Nowhere in the world have CA elections been held twice. Who knows how many times we will have it here in Nepal!

Jotare Dhaiba

दक्षिण अफ्रिकाको पूर्व राष्ट्रपति विरामी हुँदा देशवासी सुख्छन् । हाम्रामा बलबल राष्ट्रपति विरामी हुँदा शंका, गाली र फतुर ! कठैः सोच !

When the former president of South Africa falls ill, the whole country cries. But when our incumbent president falls ill, we hurl abuses and question his intentions!

Babita Thapa

राष्ट्रपतिज्यूको आन्दाजमा सानो घाउ भएछ, उहाँलाई जापान पठाएर उपचार गराउने रे! तर मेरी नेपाल आमाको मुटुमा ठूलो घाउ लागेको छ, कसैलाई मतलब छैन !

They want to send the president to Japan to treat the small wound in his intestine. But who will care for my mother Nepal who has a big hole in her heart.

ज को हुँ ??

जानेन्द्र चुम्न निस्कदा विरोध गर्नेको हैसियत के, के जानेन्द्र नेपाली होइन? के उसको चुम्न पाउने अधिकार छैन? बोलन पाउने अधिकार छैन?

On what basis are people protesting against Gyanendra touring Nepal? Is he not Nepali? Does he not have the right to travel, to speak?

पुवती

नेपालीहरूको सरदार आयु ६७ वर्ष भन्छन अहिलेको अखाद खाद खादा खादा ५० पनि पुगिएला रे खै

Nepalis' average life expectancy is 67 years, but after consuming all this unhygienic food it looks like I won't even live to be 50.

## On top of the world

Nisha Adhikari, *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 9-15 June

हिमाल

Thirteen years ago when Pemba Tsering Sherpa became the youngest person to climb Everest at the age of 16, I thought to myself: one day I will make it to the top. On 17 May my dream finally came true and I conquered the 8,848 metre peak.

My journey to Sagarmatha began almost a year ago.

I went to Manang for a mountaineering course last summer where I learnt about the technical aspects of climbing. There I met Everest summiteers like Shailee Basnet of Seven Summits Women team who encouraged me and helped me stay focused on my goal.

Before I left for Manang, I was terrified of flying into Lukla airport. Luckily we all landed safely. The nine days trek from Lukla to base camp was a real eye opener. As I passed through the scenic villages of Namche, Syangboche, and Pangboche surrounded by majestic mountains and lush green forests I felt blessed to be born in such a beautiful country. I have to admit, before this trip I sometimes regretted being born a Nepali and even thought



about leaving the country. But now I have realised there is so much more to see and explore here beyond Kathmandu's cacophony.

News about deaths at the summit became a routine during our one month stay at base camp and it was terrifying to see so many dead bodies being brought back. Seven climbers including two from our team had already died as we started the ascent to the top. Even if I didn't make it to the summit on my first attempt, I just wanted to be safe.

The higher we went, the more challenging the climb became. There were a few times when I narrowly escaped death. I was only a few centimetres from plunging down the Khumbu Icefall when one of the team members rushed to help me. Getting past the Hillary Step was equally strenuous and the long queue of climbers only made life harder. But once we reached the summit our fatigue completely vanished. The sunrise from the top was the most beautiful thing I have ever seen and I will always remember the 20 minutes we spent there.

The achievements of these past weeks are just beginning to sink in, but I can proudly say that I have returned a stronger individual and above all a Nepali who loves Nepal.



Wagon: Second CA elections  
Sign: Baidya's shop

कान्तिपुर Batsyayan in Kantipur, 16 June

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“You can't build a nation by blaming its past. Nobody should be denied a chance, because there is no alternative to consensual politics.”



Gyanendra Shah, former king, *Naya Patrika*, 20 June



RADIO DIDI BAHINI

# Women in charge

Despite the challenges, women broadcasters are making their presence felt on the airwaves



KUNDA DIXIT

**ON THE SAME FREQUENCY (l-r):** Women who make up majority of Radio Didi Bahini's audience at an International Women's Day program organised by the radio in Parwat in March. Kalpana Chapagain (left) of Radio Didi Bahini and Khem Kumari Pokhrel (right) of Radio Mukti are conferred the National Media Award.

HARI DEVI ROKAYA

When Kalpana Chapagain of Radio Didi Bahini and Khem Kumari Pokhrel of Radio Mukti won the National Media Award three weeks ago, they joined a small but illustrious group of female broadcasters in the country.

Out of the 200 community radio stations in Nepal, there are five run by women: three in the Tarai (Biratnagar, Udaypur, and Butwal) and two others in Parbat and Jumla. Radio Purwanchal in Biratnagar and Radio Mukti in Butwal were two of the first women-run stations. While Radio Purwanchal allows men to sit on its management committee, Mukti

is entirely headed by women.

"People were very condescending in the beginning, they made fun of us, but the situation has definitely improved over the years," said Chapagain at the award ceremony.

Working in radio, women get to be both knowledge producers and disseminators and lead discussions on difficult topics like domestic violence. Female listeners also seem to feel greater connection with their sisters on radio. But despite making major inroads on the airwave, surviving in a male-dominated workplace is still the biggest challenge.

"It is remarkable to find women-run radio stations in parts of Nepal where females are still treated like second class citizens," says Raghu Mainali, former

station manager of Radio Sagarmatha, the first community-run radio station in South Asia. "And it is equally impressive to find that women have won the trust of their audience despite the ridicule they faced in the early days."

At a time when radios across Nepal are struggling to survive because of falling revenues and crippling power cuts, these female broadcasters find themselves at a double disadvantage.

"Through community radio we are increasing women's access to information and empowering them," explained Khem Kumari. "Unfortunately, advertisers still don't have complete faith in our abilities."

Community radios have been lobbying for the state to treat them like

a public service and reduce royalty, taxes, and renewal fees. They argue that in the absence of clear policies on FM radio, the government is granting licences to groups that function as mouthpieces for political parties and the FM spectrum is getting crowded in many regions.

Chapagain and Pokharel, who received Rs 200,000 cash prize each for their contribution to broadcasting, hope their achievements will help motivate and inspire other women journalists to keep working hard despite the hurdles.

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# Through the benefit of hindsight

During the conflict, the Baddies dug tunnels to prepare for an imminent Indian invasion. Now, the same comrades are backing a tunnel project to link Kathmandu to the plains. At the rate at which the rupee's purchasing power is being eroded, by the time the tunnel is built, its Rs 3,000 toll for lorries will probably be a bargain. But promoters of the Kathmandu-Hetauda tunnel, who had galvanised support from the four-party syndicate, see the army's track opening of the Bagmati Highway as a threat to their venture. Hence, unusually reliable sources tell us, they are trying their level best to put the fast track into a slow lane. Political wrangling over which highway should come first will probably mean neither will be built during this century.

The Censor Board has allowed steamy bedroom scenes to go through in new Nepali movies, but asked the makers of *Uma* to take out references to "Comrade

Prachanda". Why? Is it a bad word? And it appears that Janajati journos don't want to be known as "indigenous" anymore because the word sounds like they are of Indian origin. Is that why they changed the acronym of their group to 'FONIJ' (pronounced "phoneys"?)

Since no one has bothered to bring out full page ads in national broadsheets to congratulate the Ass on its nomination to be a life member of the American Biographical Institute, allow the Donkey to toot its own trumpet. Just how rare and momentous a recognition this is can be gleaned from the fact that only two other Nepalis in history (an ex-king and a multi-billionaire) have been thus honoured by the American Biographical Institute (Motto: 'Send us a cheque for \$1,000 plus \$49 for courier charges and your certificate is in the mail'). It's a peculiarly Nepali trait that we don't like to see fellow-Nepalis

being recognised and getting ahead, so it is only natural that the Ass' peers should seethe with jealousy and not send congratulatory SMSs. But at the end of the day, comrades, the fact of the matter is that I was honoured by the American Biographical Institute and you guys weren't. So, you can all go stuff it.

More congratulations are in order. A business transaction the Ass has recently entered into with a Nigerian partner is going to make it both rich and famous. This is all in strictest confidence, so please keep this to yourself.

Dear Sir,  
I hope this mail finds you in the pink of health. Unfortunately I can't say that about myself. Ever since my uncle, Mr Sonny Abacha, died I have been running from pillar to post trying to extricate his vast fortune stashed away in his secret Swiss bank account. My family would like to access the money so we can donate it to earthquake victims in Iran.

Unfortunately, my uncle's account has been frozen and all the \$890 million in it. I can only get it if I can name you Finance Manager of the Earthquake Relief Fund. Rest assured you will be adequately compensated, in fact you will get 30 per cent of the total sum for your troubles. All you have to do at the present time is deposit \$100,000 in refundable earnest money in the bank account below.

Yours in deepest confidence,  
Ms Abigail Abacha

It's not every day that one gets a proposal to get rich quick while at the same time helping out in a humanitarian cause. After wiring the earnest money two months ago the Ass has been waiting patiently for further communication from Ms Abacha who has promised to get back as her lawyers complete the legal formalities.

LAST NOTICE AND REMINDER  
Pursuant to the Foreign Exchange Act 2054 as well as the Registration of Businesses

Decree 2061 and other laws of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal we, on behalf of our client (hereinafter known as 'The Ass'), hereby notify Mrs Abigail Abacha (niece of Mr Sonny Abacha of Lagos, Nigeria) to return the \$100,000 (One Hundred Thousand US Dollars and No Cents) our client transferred to her bank account in the Cayman Islands on 15 April, 2013 as earnest money in lieu of the \$25 million in cash which, as per a verbal understanding with our client, was to have been handed over to The Ass in person by a courier.

This notice has been published because Ms Abigail Abacha has not responded to repeated emails and has evaded attempts to establish telephonic contact with her regarding the matter. Prompt reimbursement of the \$100,000 would be much appreciated by our client, who would be eternally grateful if this matter could be discretely and amicably settled.  
**Bhattarai, Bhattarai & Bhattarai**  
Barristers-at-law  
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