

WIDER ROADS WON'T SOLVE KATHMANDU'S TRAFFIC WOES

PAGE 16-17

AFTER THE RAINS

Now that elections look more probable after the rains end, the parties are getting serious. Anyway you look at it, the frontline of the November polls will be the Tarai. While the NC and UML have largely written themselves off the plains vote, the Maoists and Madhesis are targeting the Tarai. Which also brings them into a

collision course as they vie for the same votes. Madhesi leaders may not be able to stand each other, but they also know that divided they fall.

Most Nepalis, however, have more pressing matters and couldn't care less about elections. Party leaders have done their best in the past to convince voters of their incompetence. The

polarisation is now so intense that the chances of a free, fair, and violence free polls are iffy. Some leaders are already complaining about the Election Commission's code of conduct that bans helicopters and excessive expenses during campaigning.

BY THE WAY
by **ANURAG ACHARYA**

More on **page 3**

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MAN MADE DISASTERS

It is the same old story every monsoon season, only this year it started earlier than usual. Massive cloudbursts over western Nepal and the neighbouring Indian state of Uttarakhand in mid-June unleashed the total average monthly rainfall in a short span of 24 hours.

Every year, the downstream Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh blame Nepal for ‘releasing’ water. This time, it was Nepal that accused India of letting out water from the Dhauliganga Dam on a tributary of the Mahakali River that forms Nepal’s western border with India. Someone forgot that the Dhauliganga is a run-of-the-river scheme with daily pondage so it doesn’t store much.

It is the same blame game every rainy season: governments are blamed for lack of adequate and timely response, the Indians are blamed for building embankments, Biharis blame Nepal for letting water out from non-existent dams, climate change is blamed for our lack of preparedness, and everyone blames God for unleashing a ‘natural disaster’.

The rainfall this year was heavy, but it was hardly unprecedented. Northern India has historically suffered major floods, including the damming of the Alkananda in 1894 by a landslide and the bursting of the impounded lake which unleashed a wall of water that devastated the valleys below all the way down to Hardwar. The district capital of Darchula, Khalanga, itself is located on an elevated bank that is the relic of catastrophic floods on the Mahakali in historic times.

As with earthquakes, there is no point blaming God. Floods and earthquakes are a given in Nepal, the question is what have we done to mitigate loss of life and damage? These are not ‘natural’ disasters but man-made calamities because population pressure, greed, and corruption lead



Let’s not blame nature, the real disaster is the failure of governance that leads to lack of preparedness.

people to flout building codes and zoning laws. The Himalaya is a fragile and geologically young range, prone to erosion and landslides in what is also the most densely-populated mountain region in the world. The combination of topography and climate make the

Himalaya vulnerable to disasters. Hazard mapping pinpoints where settlements can be relatively safe. Our forebears knew it was dangerous to live along floodplains and built homesteads on higher ground. Cloudbursts have always been a feature of the Asian summer monsoon, so settlements and infrastructure have to take these risks into account and heed nature’s repeated warnings. The tragedy that struck Uttarakhand was made worse because it coincided with the pilgrimage season to the holy Hindu sites when thousands of Nepalis flock to northern Indian states either as pilgrims or porters. As it turned out, more Nepalis were killed in India than in Nepal itself.

There have been heroic rescues and miraculous tales of survival from India. Even the Indian state, with all the heavy-lift helicopters and a relatively better equipped disaster response setup at its disposal, found it difficult to cope with the sheer scale of the disaster. One shudders to think what would have happened had the Nepali side been hit harder.

Floods and landslides during the monsoon should not surprise anyone, what is surprising is our utter lack of preparedness, the ad hoc nature of the response, and the disaster tourism of our ‘cockpit netas’. As pressure on land forces people to settle on floodplains and climate change increases the intensity of extreme weather events, our response should be better early warning systems, and preparedness for rescue and relief.

Let’s not blame nature, the real disaster here is the failure of governance and the lack of political will not just to be prepared but to even provide the relief that is needed when disaster strikes.

DIWAKAR CHETTRI

ON THE WEB

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POLL VAULT

It will be good for Nepalis to have elections, even if it is rigged by the Gang of Four (‘Poll vault’, Editorial, #662). Polls will pave the way for better things to come. Nepalis should vote smartly for men and women of integrity and boycott Pushpa Kamal Dahal or Sushil Koirala. The elections can also avenge the grief of thousands of those who were murdered and buried alive during the war. So if Nepalis use the power given by Mahadev, then the current thugs can be sent to rot in jail for the rest of their stinking lives.

Sidarta Pradhan

THE KINGDOM NEXT DOOR

While Bhutan must be commended for its progress, we must also keep in mind that one of the main reasons behind its success stems from a serious lack of respect for diversity (‘The kingdom next door’, Hum Gurung, #662). While expelling Bhutanese citizens of Nepali origin may have raised the country’s economic indicators and living standards, it can hardly be condoned. We, as Nepalis, should admire Bhutan for its controlled development. However, when it comes to embracing diversity, our neighbours have a lot to learn from us.

Epacific

- Bhutan has done quite well in preserving the environment and keeping pollution to a minimum.

However, the image of the ‘happy’ Bhutanese in their cute national dress is a result of state sponsored propaganda. How can we forget the way Bhutan expelled thousands of Lhotshampas from the south in a large scale ethnic cleansing pogrom? The international community, for reasons unexplained, has turned a complete blind eye to this issue and seems satisfied with enjoying a pleasant holiday in the last ‘Shangri-la’. At least we Nepalis should not forget.

Anonymous

- Bhutan’s high-end tourism policy already reached its zenith and is not helpful for the country anymore. About 50 per cent of all tourists will come to Bhutan for a short period only and visit Paro, Thimphu, and Punakha. The regions in the east hardly benefit from tourism dollars. While Nepal has a lot of problems, its tourism is a success story for sure. A lot of poor Nepalis benefit working as guides, porters, small restaurant, home-stay, lodge owners. In Bhutan the tourism cash goes back and forth between a small group of elites.

Michal Thoma

- It would be good if our Bhutanese friends stopped comparing their country with Nepal all the time to prove how well they are doing. The two have little in common except for the Himalayas and have chosen different paths to development. Bhutan has a fantastic product and has chosen high-value tourism that will benefit a few. Nepal has gone

democratic, with all the mess it entails. For now, Bhutan may look cleaner and greener, but it is a police state. Nepal is dirty and messy, but it is an open society.

Tenzing

CONGRESS CONGRESS

It had been years since India paid any attention towards the Nepali Congress (‘Congress, congress’, Anurag Acharya, #662). Maybe New Delhi was taking its time to figure out who exactly from our current crop of leaders is fit to explain the present scenario in Nepal and as well as take its advice. Due to his history of being PM multiple times, frankness, and a certain appeal among the masses, Sher Bahadur Deuba seems to be India’s ‘chosen one’ at the moment.

Albert

- Deuba is an idiot. If Anurag Acharya thinks our future is secure in the hands of politicians like him, we are really in for some turbulent times.

B

#GENDERVIOLENCE

As someone who participated in the Occupy Baluwater and showed up outside Baburam Bhattarai’s residence regularly, I must say it was good till it lasted (‘#GenderViolence’, Trishna Rana, #662). But the conversation-discussion-discourse have all died out. A 100 days on the road and a 100 #tags and status updates could not end violence against women. Social media is definitely good at spreading information (although not always

accurate) and it made us aware about Sita and Chori Maya. But there are thousands others we have missed out on.

Anonymous

CLOSED MINDS

While we blame politicians for disrupting our lives with bandas every week, I think the general Nepali public is also at fault (‘Closed minds and shutdowns’, Dhana Hamal, #662). We have let hooligans take advantage of our tolerance and our ‘ke garnu ra?’ attitude. Imagine if all of us - schools, private organisations, public transportation syndicates, individuals - decided to defy bandas every time they were announced. They can intimidate a few car owners and shop owners, but will they be able to intimidate all of us?

Gayu M

TRUE RECONCILIATION

We do not have a conducive environment for transitional justice (‘True reconciliation’, George Varughese and Tamar Luster, #661). Perpetrators are leading the process, excluding victims-survivors, and few elites are making decisions about the lives of others. Victims have little trust in Nepal’s legal mechanism and do not feel any sense of ownership of the process. Without wider participation, representation, and empowerment of victims in the justice mechanism, I do not see the possibility of reconciliation and harmony in our communities. Rather, it is likely to increase anger and frustration among survivors and their families.

Ram Bhandari

Q OF THE WEEK

What non-political personalities would you like to see running for elections in November?

facebook

Dhanu Shrestha: MAHA duo, Rajesh Hamal, Rabindra Mishra
Prabin Jung Thapa: Rajesh Hamal
Sharad Duwal: Samrat Upadhyay
Aseem Shamsher Rana: Even if the person wins he will be bought by one of the 4
Yash Kumar: Sudhir Sharma, Ajay Bhadra Khanal, Narayan Wagle, Yuvraj Ghimire, and Gunaraj Luitel
Sulaiman Daud: Ass from the Backside

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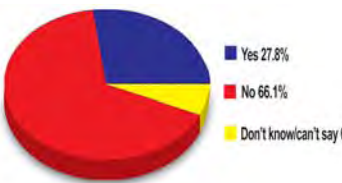
This week’s Question of the week: Who is your favourite Nepali writer? Go to www.facebook.com/nepalitimes or www.twitter.com/nepalitimes to respond.



nepalnews.com Weekly Internet Poll #662

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

Total votes: 763



Weekly Internet Poll # 663. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Who will you vote for in the upcoming elections?



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Battle for the ballots

Now that November polls look probable its back to the good, bad, and ugly in politics



BY THE WAY

Anurag Acharya

One reason why everybody seems so disinterested in political developments these days is because they can anticipate the outcome of it all simply by assessing behaviour, competence, and credibility of those involved. The likes of Sushil Koirala, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Jhala Nath Khanal, and Madhav Nepal have done their best in their past tenures to convince us of their incompetence. Which is why Nepalis couldn't care less what they are saying these days.

Those of us who wish to see a new generation of leaders with fresh ideas taking over the election leadership to restore public faith in the institution of politics, will be disappointed yet again as the frail and failed leadership shamelessly refuses to relinquish power.

Nothing that the party top-brass has done so far in the so called High Level Political Mechanism has helped to create environment for the polls. In fact, just the opposite. So we are certain about elections in November not because our politicians want it, but because the international community led by Lainchour wants it. The real question therefore is not whether polls are probable, but what kind of polls and under what circumstances.

When the Constituent Assembly was dissolved in May last year, we had warned that holding another CA elections would be a challenge not just constitutionally but also politically. Nepal's transition and statute drafting process had come to a grinding halt on 28 May after the assembly was polarised over a few points of disagreement. One year later, we are no closer to resolving those contentious issues on state structure, identity-based federalism, and form of government. If anything, the parties have hardened their positions.

In 2008, the parties and their leaders had election manifestos that reflected aspirations of those they claimed to represent. The leaders went from door to door, convincing the people about their political programs. This time they will not do that. The electorate itself is polarised already on political allegiance. Even the media and civil society are visibly divided and deep down the leaders know which side of history they will be on when the people give their verdict.

That is one reason why chances of a free, fair, and violence free polls are iffy. With political parties and their probable candidates already aware of the arithmetic, they seem determined to use good, bad, and ugliest of means to turn the results in their favour. And it will be the Madhes, with more than half the constituencies, which

will decide the outcome. The electoral front in the Madhes is beginning to take shape with visible efforts from senior leader Mahanta Thakur. Speculation about the 'invisible hand' at

work may also be true, but what has actually brought them together is a collective sense of co-existence. The Madhesi leaders may not be able to stand each other, but they also know that divided they fall.

Last time, the Madhes based parties were divided when they went to polls. This time they will field a common candidate which might double their seats. The NC may further lose its base in the Madhes because it has done very little to retain it. Its proposal to carve out linguistic federal units in Madhes has already been booed out by the Tarai media and the lack of sufficient Madhesi representation in its candidate list makes the NC an outsider party.

So the fiercest battle for ballots in the Tarai will be fought between candidates of the Maoist-Madhesi alliance. The declaration from its top leadership to contest polls from

Madhes, creation of Madhes bureau, and senior Madhesi leaders like Ramchandra Jha and Nandan Kumar Datta joining the party proves that the epicentre of the Madhes vs Maoist contest will be played out in the plains.

Periodic elections are the lifeline of democracy and an opportunity for the parties to acquire mandates. But if the polls become an excuse for them to use money and muscle to muster that support it loses its essence. The parties have shown their bad faith by openly criticising the Election Commission's proposal to prevent candidates with criminal records from contesting elections and banning the unrestricted use of helicopters and unlimited campaign expenses.

This is not just an election to parliament, but also to an assembly that is supposed to draft a new constitution. Remember? 🇳🇵



SAM KANG LI

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CINDREY LIU in KASKI

After toiling in Saudi Arabia for seven years, Narayan Bhandari (*pic, right*) returned home in 2011 determined to earn a living in his own country.

He planned to invest the money he had saved up to upgrade his family farm in Bharat Pokhari, but soon realised it wasn't viable. He then heard about 'artificial insemination' (AI) that farmers in his village claimed helped improve the breed and increase productivity of their livestock. The 33-year-old took the risk and adopted AI in the Sunrise Multi-Agrofarm that he set up.

By using sperms from high breed bulls, farmers can produce superior quality calves and vastly improve production traits. Crossbred calves give almost twice as much milk as their mothers. At Bhandari's farm, a mother cow produces six litres of milk per day, while her calves produce up to ten.

Artificial insemination also removes the risk of injuries and transfer of diseases from male to female animals and helps farmers cut costs on rearing bulls. Usually one herd bull is enough for a medium-size farm and farmers like Bhandari, who owns 22 cows and no bulls, are also sharing one male among themselves.

"Nepal has 13 million cattle and buffaloes, but only two million produce at an average of two litres per day, while artificially inseminated breeds can produce 20 litres," says Bimal Kumar Nirmal at the National Livestock Breeding Centre (NLBC).



CINDREY LIU

Currently, 51.5 kg of milk is available per capita per year in Nepal, which is far below the WHO recommended 91.25 kg. The Jersey and Holstein cattle breeds and the Murrah buffaloes are preferred because they are more suitable for the country's climate. Although artificial insemination was first introduced in Nepal 50 years ago, it was only practiced on five per cent of all cattle and buffaloes.

"We were just not producing enough quality semen and farmers did not have faith in our products," explains Nirmal.

In an effort to boost milk production and raise the income of dairy farmers, the government started the Promotion of Livestock Breeding Improvement project in 2011 with an initial budget of Rs 100 million. NLBC was given the responsibility of producing and distributing semen throughout the country.

Within a year, Nirmal and his

"My dairy farm is doing well, I will never go back to Saudi Arabia again."

Narayan Bhandari
Bharat Pokhari, Kaski

team were able to quadruple semen production to 400,000 doses, most of which was then distributed to 58 districts across Nepal. In the past 12 months, more than 130,000 artificially inseminated calves have been born and the total coverage has reached 15 per cent. Dairies in Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Chitwan that used to import 200,000 litres of milk from India every morning are now using locally produced milk.

The project wouldn't have been a success, however, without the active participation of local communities. The 250 Community Livestock Breeding Centres across the country which help in the distribution of semen and supervision of inseminators are completely run by farmers.

Satish Lamichhane, 31, from Lekhnath of Kaski started working as an inseminator three years ago after being trained by NLBC. On average, he performs four inseminations a day and is paid up to Rs 500 each time. There are currently 600 inseminators at 500 centres (both government and private) spread across the country and NLBC provides them with necessary equipment free of cost.

Says Bhandari: "My dairy farm is doing well, I will never go back to Saudi Arabia again." 🇳🇵

Dairy diary

After tests carried out by the Food Technology and Quality Control Department earlier this month found dangerous levels of coliform bacteria in milk supplied by at least six dairies in the Valley, demand saw a sharp decline and dairy farmers found themselves in a tight spot.

What is considered a 'safe' level of coliform varies from country to country: zero per cent in the US, five per cent in the EU, and ten per cent in India and Pakistan. Dairy experts agree that demanding milk producers in Nepal to maintain zero per cent bacteria is not feasible and will only harm poor farmers.



"Maintaining hygiene is a long process that should start in the cow shed and be followed all the way to the consumer's kitchen," explains Heramba Rajbhandary, owner of the private Nepal Dairy. "We could train farmers but there is shortage of clean water in many parts of the country. We could introduce stricter measures at the chilling plant, but there is 8-10 hours of load shedding. The problems within the dairy industry are indicative of larger problems in the country."

He says Nepal just doesn't have the technology at the moment where we can replicate the level of hygiene that is practiced in the US. While regular state monitoring and harsher laws will help keep dairy owners in check, there is also a need to improve infrastructure in the villages and towns from where most of Nepal's milk is collected. Training farmers in hygiene methods in a country where cow urine and dung are still considered holy is also essential. Until then, the onus to remain safe will be on the consumers.

Trishna Rana

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BIZ BRIEFS

Timely honour

In recognition of their long-term service, Thai Airways honoured 12 staff members at its office in Kathmandu. The staff who had been working for 15, 25, and 35 years were presented with certificates and rings engraved with the airways' logo.



Growing routes



Qatar Airways is expanding its Boeing 787 services to Europe with the new state-of-the-art aircraft being deployed on three Scandinavian routes. The Doha-based carrier will launch 787 flights to the Swedish capital Stockholm on 1 August, followed by flights to Copenhagen and Oslo a month later.

Startup help

Bank of Kathmandu on Monday introduced a new loan service called 'Mahila Udhayamshil Karja'. Female customers of Grihalaxmi savings account and Gramin Mahila savings account who are interested in starting their own businesses are eligible for the loan. Loans up to Rs 300,000 can be granted and is payable within three years of issuance.



Amazing race



Ford in association with Party Nepal Outdoors is organising 'The Amazing Motor Rally,' to be held from 13-14 July. The rally which begins in Kathmandu and ends at Pokhara constitutes a total of 20 tasks and 10 treasure hunting contests. Participants will also have the opportunity to test drive Ford EcoSport which will be the lead vehicle at the rally.

Sleek ride

Syakar Trading, the authorised distributor for Honda Car in Nepal, launched its much awaited family sedan the Honda



Amaze on Monday. Priced at Rs 2,800,000, Honda Amaze will be available in six colours- majestic blue metallic, carnelian red pearl, urban titanium metallic, alabaster silver metallic, crystal black pearl, and taffeta white.

Baby services



Standard Chartered Bank has opened a day care centre at its head office in Naya Baneshwor to cater to young parents who are employees at the bank. "The private sector needs to step up its act and follow in the footsteps of Standard Chartered," said Kewal P Bhandari, executive director of Social Security Fund at the inauguration program.

Retail assistance

NMB Bank opened its newest branch and retail hub at Kantipath last week. The new branch aims to provide customers the entire range of banking products and services under one roof according to the press statement. NMB Bank has 21 branches and 25 ATM outlets across the country.



NMB BANK
एनएमबी बैंक

Online makeover



With the objective of providing clients an advanced online platform, Dragon Air upgraded its flagship website on Sunday. The airline hopes these improvements will boost its online and mobile presence.

Helping hands

Radisson Hotel donated TV sets, beds, writing tables, mattresses, and carpets to three organisations at a charity program on Wednesday. The hotel is also collecting funds for the victims of the Darchula flood.



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Sliver lining in the Nepal sky

Nepal Airlines is finally breaking from its past with its Airbus order, but must reform management by the time the jets arrive in 2015



HARDIK GURUNG

At the Dubai Air Show in November 2009 then Executive Chairman of Nepal Airlines, Sugat Ratna Kansakar, signed a MoU with Airbus to purchase an A330-200 and an A320. This deal received

a lot of international media attention and proved that the airline was finally breaking from its past. After 25 years, Nepal's national airline was finally buying new jets to service not just the tourism industry but also the three million or so

Nepalis who work abroad. As per the agreement, the wide-body 330 and the narrow body 320 were to have been delivered in two years. But after the \$750,000 advance was sent to Airbus, Kansakar was jailed for financial irregularities and not following procedures.

Last month, the deal was revived, but the order was changed to two A320s with the Employees' Provident Fund chipping in \$106 million for the purchase. If the original deal had gone through, Nepal Airlines would today already be ferrying Nepali workers back and forth from Malaysia and Qatar and ensuring that their hard-earned money stayed at home. The A320 would have revived Kathmandu's short haul links to major Indian hubs.

Although the Boeing 737-800 would perhaps be a more suitable aircraft than the A320 and maintained fleet compatibility with NAC's existing Boeings, management seems to have decided to ditch Boeing for Airbus. Now that the decision has been taken, the question will arise what to do with the superannuated 757s, it is not feasible for a small airline like NAC to keep two jet types in its stable.

And even though the wide-body order has been replaced with a narrow body, there is a sense of optimism about the


IT'S A DEAL: After then Executive Chairman of Nepal Airlines, Sugat Ratna Kansakar (*left*) signed a deal at the Dubai Air Show in 2009, he was jailed for alleged irregularities. But a reduced version of the deal for two Airbus 320s like the one pictured here is going ahead.

growth of aviation and tourism in Nepal. Other countries with large migrant workforce and tourism potential like the Philippines and Sri Lanka have long-haul wide-body flights to diaspora markets. Nepal Airlines has guaranteed traffic from Kathmandu to many points in India, the Gulf, Southeast Asia, it must not stop at two narrow body planes.

NAC now has two years to upgrade its governance and modernise management. Political interference, corruption, politicised unions, employee favouritism, irregularities on aircraft leases have prevented the airline from realising its full potential. It has got so bad that the airline now makes most of its revenue not from flying, but from ground handling. Although fleet augmentation was necessary, it will not keep the airline afloat if management remains as it is.

When Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation acquired two 727s in the 1970s and added state-of-the-art 757-200s in 1985, it had a good reputation for service and reliability and had a virtual monopoly on international flights. The new A320s, however, will compete directly with international airlines with better service, young fleets, and international networks. NAC needs to reinvent, reposition, and perhaps even rebrand itself in the next two years.

The flag carrier is not only an airline company, it is also a symbol of Nepal's national pride. Even though the existing 757s are old and the in-flight service poor, Nepalis have a sense of pride flying an airline that flies our flag. But let's admit it, that pride has taken a dent lately.

With a reinvigorated management, visionary leadership, political stability, efficiency, discipline, and service quality, there is no reason it can't fly high again. The success story of Ethiopian Airlines serves as an excellent example. With a fleet size of more than 80 planes, including the Boeing 787 Dreamliner, Ethiopian is the leading and fastest growing airline of Africa. Nepal's aviation market is estimated to be worth more than \$1.10 billion, this gives Nepal Airlines a huge opportunity as the sole flag carrier. 

Hardik Gurung is a graduate student at University of Houston at Clear Lake in the United States.

Note: The former CA Women Caucus had prepared the following appeal, and handed them over to the leadership of Nepali Congress, UCPN-Maoists, CPN-UML and CPN-Maoist, among others. The parties had expressed their commitment to accept our appeal. However, the current government, the political parties and the Election Commission have overlooked our demands in endorsing the election laws. We strongly object to this move. We, therefore, once again, urge the government, parties and the Commission to reconsider their decision and amend the laws to incorporate our demands. This statement has been published for making a public appeal in this regard.

Our Previous Appeal to Ensure Election of 33% Women in the Results of CA Polls:

The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly (CA) that was formed as a result of various political movement and struggle and with the aim of addressing the decades-long aspirations of the people of Nepal to write their constitution by themselves, has been a great setback that has pushed the country into grave political crisis. The state of political vacuum has worsened instability, anarchy, corruption and culture of impunity. Moreover, the incidents of violence against women such as rapes, and burning them alive have increased. As a result, there is a feeling of insecurity among the people, in general, and women, in particular. The country is suffering and our nation and nationalism is becoming weaker day by day. Since holding of election for second CA has emerged as the least-risk option to resolve the prevailing political and other crises, we affirm that a free and fair election of Constituent Assembly should be held at the earliest by bringing all political forces on board.

The dissolved CA had been able to achieve a leap forward in ensuring the proportional representation of various groups and communities that had long suffered exclusion. The attainment of 33 percent representation of women had been exemplary for the world and it was a matter of pride for the whole country. It is the need of the hour that such an achievement should be continued and not let to become a mere historical fact.

However, the provisions in the ordinance proposed to amend the CA Member Election Act, which is currently being considered, can deal a setback to our achievements so far. Any policy must be forward-looking not regressive. If the proposed ordinance is passed as it is, the women representation will slide from 33 to 22 percent. That is not acceptable to us at all. We are ready to launch any kind of movement to ensure that women representation does not decrease.


Therefore, even though the women should have been represented on the proportional basis of their population at the CA, since the parties have agreed to adopt mixed election system, we urge to ensure the following:

- A. Closed list of the candidates should be prepared on the basis of priority. The names of the candidates should be listed thus - first the name of woman and then the name of man,
- In case the fully proportional election system cannot be agreed upon, adequate measures must be taken to ensure that the women representation does not slide below the existing 33 percent
1. There must be fifty percent women candidates under the First Past The Post (FPTP) system.
 2. Under Proportional system
 - 2.1 Of the total proposed number of members, 66 percent should be from women
 - 2.2 Party winning a single seat must send a woman representative
 - 2.3 There is a provision that allows the Election Commission to accept 10 percent plus or minus in the list of winning candidates from various communities fielded by the parties; however, in case of women the EC should accept only 10 percent plus and not accept any lower number
 - 2.4 While rounding up the election result, the upper figure should be accepted in case of women
 3. There must be 50 percent women among those nominated as members of CA

Finally, we urge you all to ensure the afore-mentioned provisions and take steps to urge other parties, as well, in this regard.

The Former Women Caucus of CA

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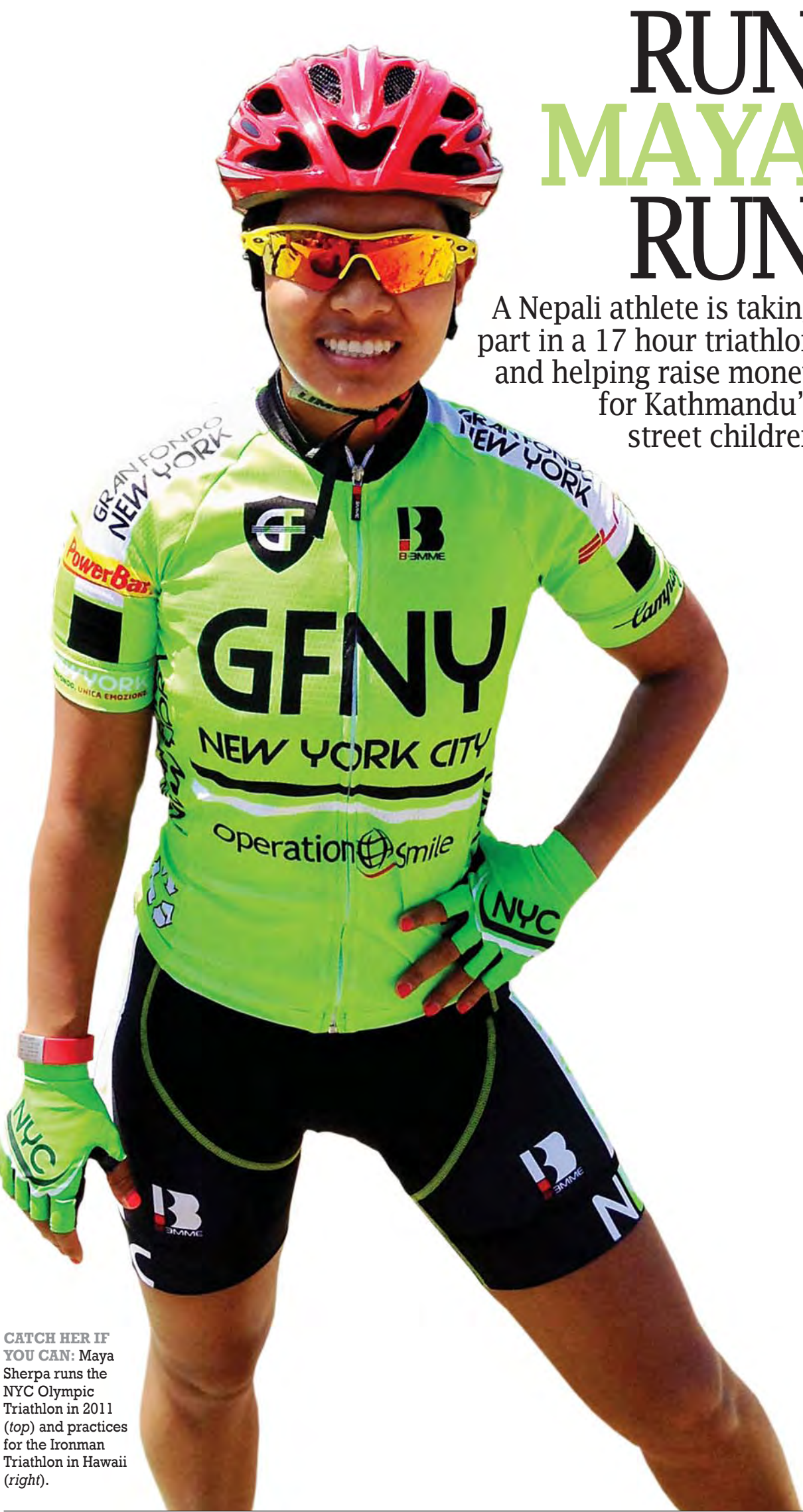
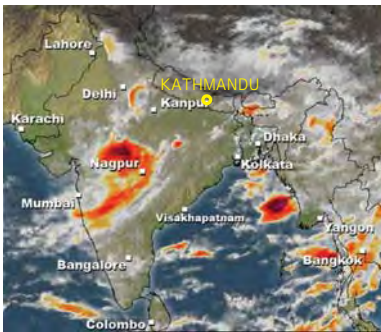
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CATCH HER IF YOU CAN: Maya Sherpa runs the NYC Olympic Triathlon in 2011 (top) and practices for the Ironman Triathlon in Hawaii (right).

RUN MAYA RUN

A Nepali athlete is taking part in a 17 hour triathlon and helping raise money for Kathmandu’s street children



For the past six months, Maya Sherpa’s daily routine has revolved around training for the 17 hour long Ironman Triathlon taking place on 28 July at Lake Placid, a village in upstate New York. The 32-year-old who is from Solukhumbu and currently works in NYC gets up early in the morning and swims for an hour or two. After work she goes for short runs around the city. Her weekends and vacations are set aside for long distance running and riding.

Contestants will begin this year’s Ironman Triathlon at 7am with a two-loop 3.86 km swim in Mirror Lake. They will then hop on their bikes at the Olympic Speed Skating Oval and complete two loops of 180.25km with stunning views of Adirondack Mountains in the background. For the last leg of the race, participants will come back to the Oval and set off on the 42.2km run which will take them through downtown and around

the lake. The final clock in time is midnight.

For an athlete of her strength and skills, it’s hard to believe that Sherpa had little interest in sports when she was in school and only started exercising and becoming more active during her college years at Baruch in New York. “In 2005 when I went to cheer my friend at a marathon, I saw many disabled athletes competing and I was inspired to begin running professionally,” she says. “I realised everything is possible if I put my mind to it. Nothing else matters.”

So far Sherpa has made it across the finish lines of NYC, Miami, Tennessee, and Philadelphia marathons, three half Ironman races (2km swim, 90km biking, 21km running), and numerous 100 mile bike rides. The first Nepali to compete in the Ironman Triathlon, she hopes to raise \$5,000 for Empower One, a New York based NGO that supports underprivileged children in Nepal. Empower will use money from the race to provide shelter, healthcare, and rehabilitation for street children in Kathmandu.

“When I see orphans and abandoned children living without education or basic needs, it pains me. I am healthy and fortunate to be doing what I love and if I can raise money at the same time, I don’t mind running an extra mile or swimming an extra lap,” she says. The Ironwoman’s next mission: the demanding three day La Vuelta cycling race in Puerto Rico. 🇳🇵

Ngima Pakhrin

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BIKRAM RAI

The Butterfly effect

Milan Rai's butterflies are spreading peace and positive vibes throughout the world

SAHINA SHRESTHA

When artist Milan Rai installed his first set of white butterflies on the remains of a once magnificent tree at Naxal in November last year, little did he know his creations would spread their wings across 18 countries. Today protestors at Taksim Square in Turkey are using Rai's art to express solidarity just like demonstrators at Baluwatar did a few months ago. In France the butterflies were used to console a mother of a fatally ill two-year-old and in Scotland to send messages to loved ones. Extremely popular both at home and abroad, the white butterflies are headed to New York soon.

The 28-year-old was first struck by the transformative powers of butterflies while he was working on a project called Katha Bagaichako. "One fluttered and settled on my paint brush and I was transported to a more magical place filled with hope and positivity," explains Rai. "If a tiny creature could so easily transform my state of mind with a flutter

of its wings, I wondered what swarms of butterflies descending on dirty, dusty Kathmandu, could do to the city?"

He started out by making butterfly outlines on white paper recycled from printing presses around the Valley, cutting them out, and going around the city planting his creations on trees, lamp posts, old dilapidated houses and walls. Suddenly residents of Kathmandu were treated to the sight of butterflies all around them. When he revisited some of the spots and noticed that the butterflies had vanished, instead of feeling angry, he made more.

Initially, the butterfly man carried out his project on a shoe-string budget from his own pocket buying stacks of A4 paper when he could find none in the press. But soon the money ran out and he was forced to take a break. With no apparent source of funding, Rai had almost given up on his dream when an anonymous donor from California sent him money. "I still have no idea who sent me the money, but I would like to thank the person

for helping my butterflies cross borders," he says.

Rai first broke out into Kathmandu's art scene with his exhibition in 2007. A series of live painting sessions in collaboration with various artists soon followed. But the young artist's defining moment came in 2012 when his exhibition called Ekphrasis - where he attempted to blur the lines between art, theatre, and fashion - was well received by the art fraternity.

Recently, Rai's butterflies have found a home on trees along the Ring Road that the government is planning to chop down as a part of its road extension project. "It saddened me that these trees were being cut for the sake of development. So I decided to lend my butterflies as a show of support," he says. "We are not anti-development. We just want to show the state that there are better ways of doing things."

www.milanrai.com

nepalitimes.com Watch Milan Rai's interview



FLIGHT TIME (top to bottom): White butterflies on the steps of Maju Deval temple in Basantapur Darbar Square. Milan Rai pins butterflies on tyres found at Ring Road during a banda in June. Students show support for the white butterfly movement at Occupy Baluwatar. A fallen tree trunk near Maiti Ghar where Rai had earlier installed butterflies.



SRIJANA JYOTI

Surrounded by a loving family, Srijana Jyoti led a life of comfort. But she was never quite satisfied being just a dutiful wife and mother. An MBA graduate from KU, Jyoti's managed to keep her passion and business acumen alive even as she spent years taking care of her young children. Egged on by her husband and brother-in-law, she made a comeback to the corporate world three years ago and quickly rose to the rank of marketing director at Jyoti Group. "Working with family has definitely made the transition easier, but outside of my immediate office I have had to face difficulties," she says.



ALL PICS: BIKRAM RAI

SUBEKSHYA BASNET

After graduating with degree in business from Germany, Subekshya Basnet got involved in her father Bharat Basnet's Bhojan Griha restaurant and tourism business. In 2010 she started her own organic business along with her sisters, while still working full time for her father. "Without my father's guidance I wouldn't have made it so far," says Basnet. "Almost every field is male-dominated and women face extreme challenges. But the mantra to success is to keep an open mind and approach problems creatively."



PHOTO CONCERN

SRIJANA THAPA

Everytime she got a break from school, Srijana Thapa would rush to her grandparents' photo studio - Photo Concern - and spend hours and hours trying to learn the ABCs of photography. Two years ago Thapa took charge as the managing director and is happy with the way the company, one of the oldest photo studios in Nepal, has grown despite the rising competition. Starting as an intern, she is now the chairperson of Nepal Digital Colour Lab Association and credits her family for her progress. "I never felt inferior to my male colleagues just because I am a woman," says Thapa.

Breaking into the boardroom

Qualified and skilled Nepali women are forging ahead in the corporate food chain

Breaking the glass ceiling has never been easy for women anywhere. Nepali business women find themselves doubly disadvantaged: by the aggressive male-culture prevalent within corporate circles and the deeply-rooted patriarchal values of society. However, as more and more skilled and qualified women forge their way into senior management positions, they have become role models for younger females. Even then the women say they continue to feel discriminated and have to work much harder than their male counterparts just to prove their worth.

Ramesh Kumar



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

SEEMA GOLCHHA

As a young marketing executive in India, Seema Golchha never pictured herself as a stay at home mom. But when she got married into a traditional Marwari family, where women working outside their homes is still frowned upon, Golchha quit her job and spent nine years as a housewife. In 2001 she began leading Him Electronics, a Golchha enterprise. "Family members were skeptical, but I didn't lose heart," explains Golchha. Today, Him is one of the fastest growing electronics company in Nepal selling international brands like Timex, Samsung, and Bajaj. Says Seema: "If my husband and father-in-law had not encouraged me, it would have been very difficult to make it to where I am today."



MEGHA CHAUDHARY

Born into a well-known business family, Megha Chaudhary had very high expectations of herself. Determined to succeed at any cost she started out nine years ago by working as an intern at Norvic Hospital (owned by her family) and demonstrated her skills time and again. She is now actively involved in the expansion of the hospital and improving the Pashupati Biscuit brand. "I feel empowered working at the decision making level. But every time I have to deal with government officials, I realise how being a female entrepreneur is still a big challenge," she says.

EVENTS



LOVE IN COLOURS, a painting by Chirag Bangdel. Runs till 4 July, Manny's Eatery and Tapas Bar Jawalakhel

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

Wordmill, join this writing workshop and take inspiration from three amazing writers. 29 June, 10.30 am to 1.30pm, Thame International College, Baneswor, Register at: docs.google.com/forms/d/1mw1AEfrtxixyi7NWG1uZ2s5wQLPniykHmijztg3ryvA/viewform

For photographers, a one-on-one consulting sessions for freelance/ beginner/working and enthusiasts. Rs 1000, 29 June, 11 am onwards, Nepal Tourism Board, Kathmandu, 9851000178

Watch the birds, head out to Gokarna for a day of bird watching. 29 June, 6.30am, Hotel Gokarna, 98510745756

Journey of Writing, calling all reading enthusiasts 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

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. KulimhaTole, Patan, (01)5006665, www.image-ark.com



ROPAIN, a day out for playing in mud and planting rice. Rs 1,750 (for adults), Rs 1,000 (for children under 10 yrs), 29 June, 9.15am to 4.45pm, Bajrabarahi, Lalitpur.

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, Lajimpat, for registration: (01)4002037/9851180188



ROPAIN AND RAFTING, a day of traditional ropain, dahi chiura, games, music, and rafting. Rs 2,500 (for day trip) Rs 3,500 (overnight), 29 June, Sunkoshi Beach Camp, Sukute, Sindhupalchok, www.facebook.com/events/20577749545836/



FUTSAL TOURNEY, head out to the futsal arena in Sanepa and participate in the one day futsal tournament. Rs 3,000, 1 July, Sanepa, 984908570/9843195273

It's a Slam, seven slam poets battle it out for the title of Slammer. 6 July, 1 to 4 pm, The Yellow House Sanepa

Biggest Yes+ course, build up your confidence, clarity of mind, concentration, time management skills and many more, a workshop for youth . 1 to 6 July, 6 to 9 am or 3 to 6 pm, United World Trade Centre, Tripureswor

Paintball Battle, show off your skills in the ultimate paintball battle. Rs 500, 13 July, The Target Arena, Sanepa

DINING



BAGAICHA, serves Nepali, Indian, Chinese, Continental, and Thai dishes. Jawalakhel

Chilly Bar and Restaurant, quality food and wide selection of drinks with great views of Phewa Lake. Lakeside, Hallanchok, Pokhara, (061)463614/463163

Cafe Cheeno, comfortable and elegant, this is the perfect place to have a cup of coffee and chat with friends on a cold day. Patan

Buzz, the food here is good and wholesome and will leave your palate buzzing. Baluwatar



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



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



BOUDHA STUPA RESTAURANT AND CAFE, bide your time in the cafe's free wi-fi zone as you enjoy wood-fired pizzas, home-made pastas, and the Tibetan gyakok. Boudha, (01)4485585



HERITAGE KITCHEN AND BAR, quick, friendly service, good Thai food, and the charm of a refurbished old Newari building. Thamel

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





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CONNECTION LIVE@TRISARA, enjoy a variety of music from rock to reggae, originals to dancing tunes with Connection. 28 June, 6pm onwards, Trisara, Lajimpat, Kathmandu

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



MUSIC JAMS, enjoy great live music every Tuesday. Moksh, Jhamsikhel

Gypsy Jazz, spend your Friday night listening to some jazz with Hari Maharjan and Dharmendra Mali. 28 June, 7pm, Delices De France, 2nd Floor, Ganesh Man Singh Building, Thamel

GETAWAYS

Temple Tree Resort and Spa, a peaceful place to stay, complete with a swimming pool, massage parlour, and sauna, it'll be hard to leave the premises once you enter. Gaurighat, Lakeside, (61)465819

Glacier Hotel, a lovely place to stay complete with a waterfront terrace, free wi-fi, children's playground, and probably the best spa in town. Gaurighat, Lakeside, Pokhara, (61)463722



HIMALAYA WELLNESS CENTRE, enjoy relaxing yoga, detox and Ayurveda treatments and retreats every day under one roof and get 10 per cent off on all Ayurvedic treatments, Park Village Hotel, Budhanilkantha, 98010 66 661

Balthali Village Resort, a small, cosy retreat with a bird's eye view of green terrace fields dotted with ochre painted houses. Balthali, Kabhre, 9851075818

Dhulikhel Mountain Resort, announces summer bonanza offer. Make the resort your home for a price you can't beat. Dhulikhel, (011)490114/494

Shrijana Shakti

A celebration of culture from all corners of Nepal including Dang, Morang, Dhankuta, Sindhupalchok, Rupandehi, and Sunsari. View ethnic paintings and masks made by folk artists and female artists from different districts. The exhibition comes out of the workshop on painting and mask making that was organised to celebrate Women's Day. Also enjoy mask dances which is an integral part of festivities in Nepal. Get a firsthand experience of Tharu, Newari, Himali, Mithila art and culture in the same venue without the hassle of travelling.

Venue: Nepal Lalitkala Pragya Pratisthan, Naxal, Kathmandu
Date: 26 June to 19 July



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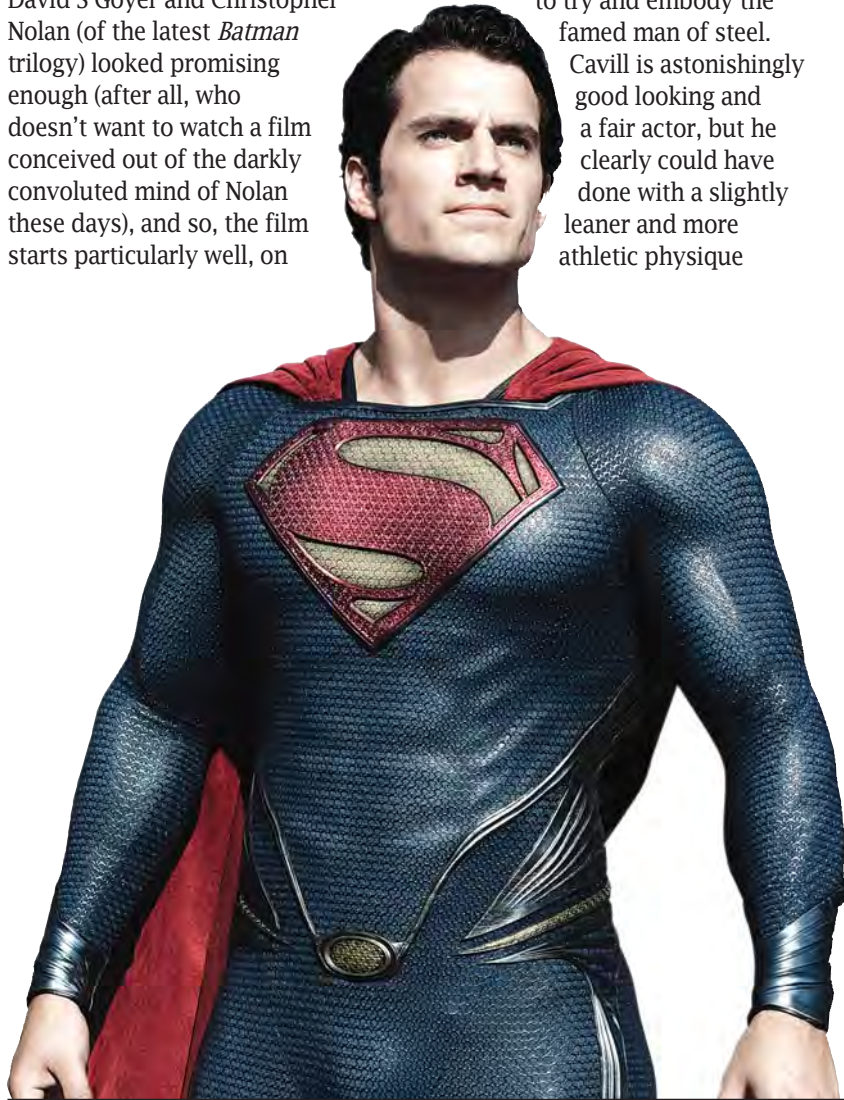
Man of Steel



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

Superman is back, this time in yet another origin story, as has become the latest norm in Hollywood. Directed by Zack Snyder, who unfortunately has the slightly ignominious reputation of having directed the brutal, needlessly violent *300* (2006), the interesting but lengthy and self important *Watchmen* (2009), and most recently the puzzlingly bad *Sucker Punch* (2011), the latest iteration *Man of Steel* is interesting enough to hold one's attention, that is, right up to the last 20 minutes or so, when the action is needlessly protracted and the villain just won't die.

The script, co-conceived by David S Goyer and Christopher Nolan (of the latest *Batman* trilogy) looked promising enough (after all, who doesn't want to watch a film conceived out of the darkly convoluted mind of Nolan these days), and so, the film starts particularly well, on



Krypton, Superman's home planet. We are treated with a spectacularly realised world where Superman's father Jor-El (Russell Crowe) is trying to save what remains of their species by sending his new born son, Kal-El to Earth, with the Codex, a complete genetic history of their race. Krypton is dying and every one on it is doomed, even though Jor-El, the leading scientist there implores the leaders of the council to try and salvage what remains. Enter the unfortunately named General Zod (Michael Shannon), a rabid warrior who attempts to stage a coup to save his beloved planet. He fails, but he kills Jor-El in the process and is imprisoned along with his team, just as Kal-El's shuttle takes off and Krypton collapses into its own core.

On Earth, Kal-El is played by the British actor Henry Cavill, who has radically inflated his physique to try and embody the famed man of steel. Cavill is astonishingly good looking and a fair actor, but he clearly could have done with a slightly leaner and more athletic physique

rather than the beefy armed, sloped shouldered action hero he has rigorously trained to be, apparently by consuming 5,000 calories and training two hours per day.

Regardless of this slight error in judgment *Man of Steel* carries itself along well, aided by the efforts of Amy Adams as the courageous Lois Lane, Kevin Costner and Diane Lane as Jonathan and Martha Kent, Kal/Clark Kent's beloved human parents, and Laurence Fishburne as Perry White, the editor in chief of *The Daily Planet*, the newspaper that Lois works for.

The story on Earth begins with Kal/Clark as a wandering adult, drifting from city to sea, struggling with his strength and his 'otherness'. His upbringing with Jonathan and Martha is shown to us in poetically shot flashbacks each time Kal has a conflict, whether emotional or physical. While this is an attempt to alter the conventional structure of past Superman films, and is mostly successful, it does result in further lengthening an already unwieldy film that clocks in at a whopping 2 hours and 23 minutes.

I will not elaborate on the plot; especially since it is fairly obvious from the very first scenes that General Zod is going to make a comeback. I will say though, that in this summer action blockbuster, it is not the action that is most interesting but rather the human relationships and Kal's struggle with himself to become the adult that both his fathers dreamed he would become.

To my delight, Russell Crowe, in a slyly cool performance makes a posthumous comeback, which, while slightly preposterous, can be forgiven for its sheer enjoyability. Watch *Man of Steel* with this in mind, once the plane hits the alien spaceship, you can leave, unless you really really want to see Superman kiss Lois Lane. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer

GIZMO by YANTRICK

A mind reader

From the big boys to lesser known Chinese counterparts, electronic companies around the world are busy rolling out 'jack of all trade' devices one after another. Just like a cell phone that can only text and make calls isn't good enough anymore, a TV that won't let you surf the internet, watch 3D television, play games, and iron your shirt (well not quite, but you get the point) belongs in the junkyard.

Panasonic's recently launched Smart Viera definitely raises the 'smart' quotient by a few notches by successfully bridging the gap between mobile devices and TV. With the Viera, you can flip through channels and menus from a tablet, swipe and share your files from phones to TV, and with just a simple tap on the thumbnail



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displaying what's on screen, you can send the video playing on TV directly to your smart phone. If you do not like putting too much strain on your fingers, fret not. Panasonic lets you indulge in your laziness: simply belt out commands through voice control.

Another attractive feature of the Viera is the new 'My Home Screen', Panasonic's new graphical user interface, that loads when the TV is turned on and displays a myriad of apps. Users can even personalise their home screens to suit their tastes. This is especially useful to those who don't have the luxury of owning their personal idiot box. And for those of us who don't like being disturbed by multiple notifications from apps while watching TV, there is a 'full screen' option that can be selected during startup.

Unlike previous models, Panasonic has integrated wi-fi into its newest TV which makes internet buffs like Yantrick extremely happy. There are also ports for v1.4 HDMI's, D-Sub PC port and three USB ports which can be used to play videos, music, and photos from external devices. In its definitive leap to the Einstein category, the Viera supports a wide range of file formats like JPEG, MP3, .wmv, m4a, .avi, .mov, .divx and other MPEG related files which was previously possible only on computers.

While all these features will undoubtedly enhance your viewing experience, it's a good idea to invest in a digital setup box for best picture quality as the picture on screen from the cable line appears a little grainy. 🇳🇵

Yantrick's Verdict: Using a smart TV gets much simpler with Panasonic's Smart Viera.

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Reading in the rain

Two books on the monsoon to read while rain drops keep falling on your roof

The rainy season is made for reading. The romance of reading in the rain is only exceeded perhaps by the romance of singing in it. Nepali Times recommends two classics about the monsoon that should be required reading this monsoon.

There are new books about seasonal summer rain in South Asia, but two stand out: National Geographic photographer and old Nepal hand Steve McCurry's 1988 picture book, *Monsoon* and *Chasing the Monsoon* by Alexander Frater.

For McCurry, it was a visual journey to document in images the life-giving rains that also take lives in Nepal, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh every summer. The anticipation of the moisture-laden clouds as the Indo-Gangetic plains swelter under sauna-like heat. But this heat is necessary

to build the low pressure necessary to suck in moisture-laden air from the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. McCurry travels to Pokhara, braves landslides and photographs rice-planting on dizzyingly steep rice terraces, and on through the Kali Gandaki gorge (the Jomsom road had not yet been built) to the rain-shadow. But McCurry doesn't need words, his pictures tell it all: dust storms in Rajasthan as it waits for the rains, a tailor carrying his sewing machine neck-deep in flood waters in Bangladesh, the emerald wrinkles of paddy terraces of the Manohara Valley in Kathmandu, a boy herding water buffaloes wearing a banana leaf.

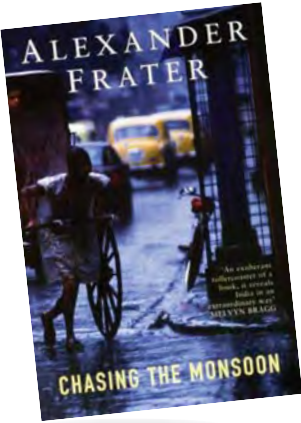
But to really learn about the physics of the monsoon, Frater's book is a thriller in which you follow the author as he waits to rendezvous with the first dark squall line as it arrives in Kovalam beach on the Kerala

coast in early June and literally chases it across the subcontinent. On to the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta in Bangladesh, the waterfalls on Cherrapunji which has the highest annual precipitation in the world and the rains are so heavy the hills have no topsoil, along the way why although the rain arrives from the east, it is called the south-west monsoon, and how there are two arms of the monsoons: the eastern one from the Bay and the western arm from the Arabian Sea.

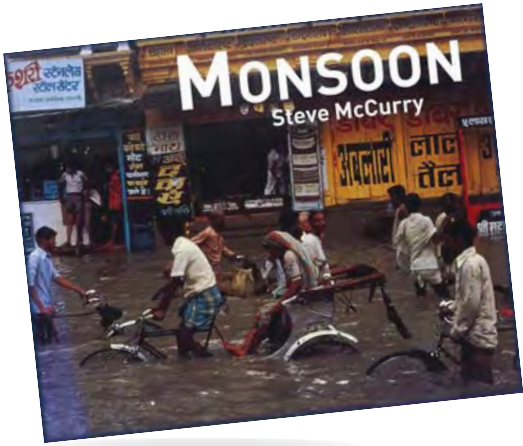
Frater's fascination of the monsoon goes back to the days he grew up with his Scottish doctor father in the South Pacific, and he does a good job in expanding the geography of the monsoon beyond the subcontinent to northern Australia, Madagascar, the Philippines and even Central America. You learn about the pressure systems that

drive this seasonal rush of moisture that brings the rain that farmers across the world depend on for subsistence.

This is travel writing at its best: a passionate look at something that we take for granted and often curse. While chasing the rains, Frater describes the people he meets, the bureaucrats who try to stall him, a glimpse of the travails of travelling across India in the 1980s. But there are parts of it that are still timely and accurate descriptions of India during this year's monsoon, which has brought so much havoc already: 'As a romantic ideal, turbulent, impoverished India can still weave its spell, and key to it all — the colours, the moods, the scents, the subtle mysterious light, the poetry, the heightened expectation, the kind of beauty that made your heart miss a beat - well, that remained the monsoon'



Chasing the Monsoon
By Alexander Frater
Picador
Paperback \$5:40
Also available on Kindle



Monsoon
By Steve McCurry
Timeless Books, 1988,
1995, 1998



SOMEPLACE ELSE

Until a decade ago French press, drip brew, cupping were alien terms to but a few who indulged in 'real' coffee. Chiya was the go-to drink for most Nepalis and even when people did drink coffee, it was the instant kind. Today not only does Kathmandu have a thriving coffee culture, but farms are sprouting all

across the country from Kavre to Gulmi turning many of us into coffee connoisseurs.

Aashish Adhikari used to be a regular at Coffee Point in Thapathali. So when the owners decided to shut the cafe down, it left the diehard coffee lover heartbroken. Adhikari took over, spruced the place up, gave it a snazzy new name - Red Mud- and reopened it six months ago.

Located within a business complex close to colleges and offices, Red Mud is hugely popular among young professionals and students who drop by to enjoy a cup of joe before heading home for dal-bhat. The atmosphere is casual, college-cafeteria like but thankfully without the noisy crowd. Coloured spray cans and model gramophones line the shelves while framed doodle art done by students of ArtLab



RED MUD KITCHEN

decorate the bright orange walls giving the cafe a hipster feel.

But before we could make ourselves comfortable on the black leather sofas, we had to place our order at the counter. Besides the usual hot and cold coffee drinks, the friendly barista informed us that Red Mud has a unique rendition of Americano mixed with latte which it calls the Nepalino.

In mood for something chilled, we skipped the Nepalino and opted for peach ice tea (Rs 60) instead. Made from scratch just like everything else on the menu, the iced tea was light and refreshing,



no instant powder tricks here. While it felt sinful to indulge in a tall glass of blended mocha (Rs 185) especially after polishing off a plate of crisp fries (single: Rs 60, double: Rs 100), the calorie count was all but forgotten with a sip of this cocoa flavoured coffee.

At Aashish's recommendation we tried the house specialty chicken burger (Rs 150). The patty, prepared fresh in the kitchen, was juicy and succulent and had just the right amount of spice to tingle our taste buds.

If you are looking for something healthier, there is an endless selection of sandwiches from tuna, ham, salami, smoked chicken, to tomato and cheese. Unlike regular sandwiches with fillings stuffed in between two slices of bread, Red Mud serves it sandwiches in three slices with the filling spread between. If you are looking to splurge a little pick the chicken burger combo (Rs 210) which comes with a small plate of fries and a drink of your choice.

A bit of advice to Aashish and his crew: please expand the bread section to include brown and rye breads. Those of us looking to keep our waist size in check will pop in more often.

Khanchua

How to get there: Walk towards Thapathali from Maitighar. At the midpoint you will see Trade Tower complex on your right. Red Mud Coffee is on the ground floor of the first building.



PICS: BIKRAM RAI



If it roars, go indoors



DHANAVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

According to Hindu mythology Indra, the god of rain and thunderstorms, hurls thunderbolts at earth to display his vanity. But for mere mortals, flashes of lightnings often lead to loss of life and destruction of property.

Last week, three school children in Bara died after being hit by lightning. There have been more than 50 lightning related deaths this year already and as heavy monsoon continues to sweep over the country, the toll is likely to cross last year's estimate of 130.

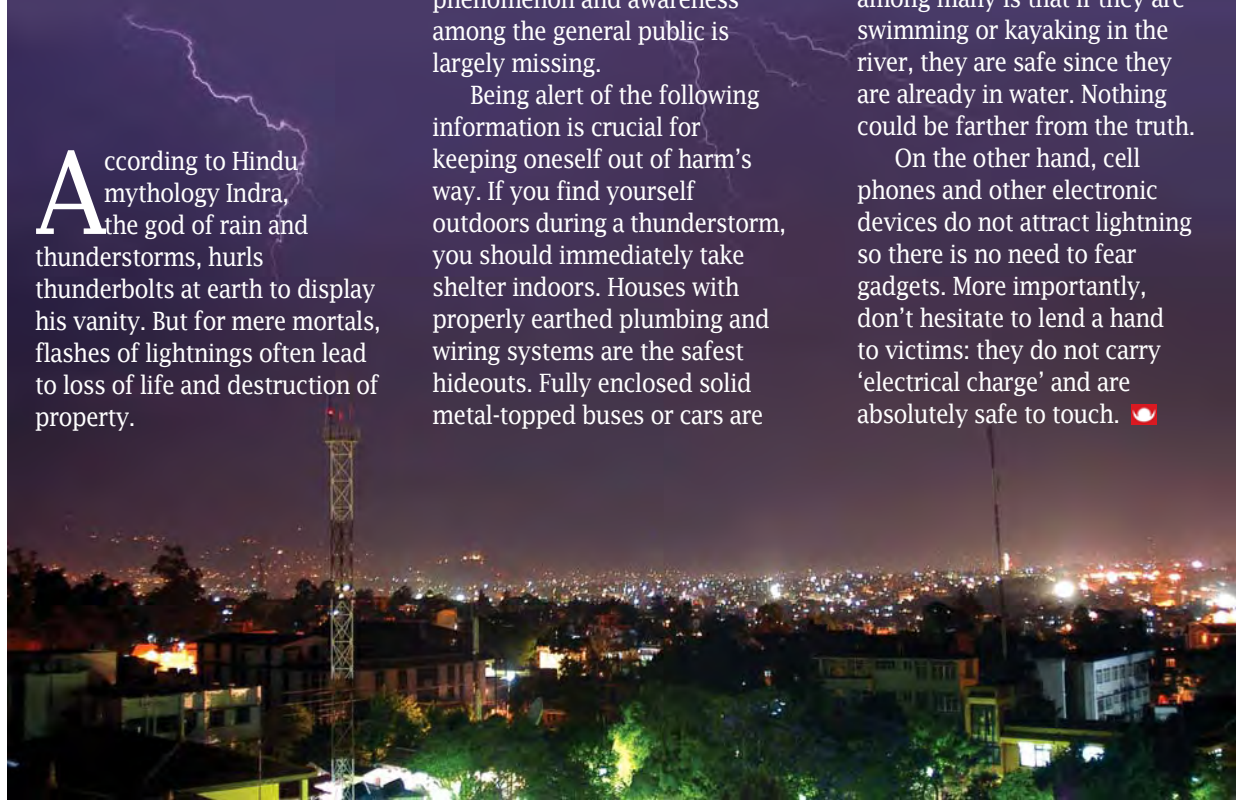
The primary cause of fatalities during lightning is not burn injuries, but rather heart or respiratory problems. And while 90 per cent of those affected manage to escape alive, many are left with lifelong disabilities. In Nepal a lot of superstition surrounds this natural phenomenon and awareness among the general public is largely missing.

Being alert of the following information is crucial for keeping oneself out of harm's way. If you find yourself outdoors during a thunderstorm, you should immediately take shelter indoors. Houses with properly earthed plumbing and wiring systems are the safest hideouts. Fully enclosed solid metal-topped buses or cars are

also amazingly good options. Electrical current travels along the outside of the vehicle's body, which acts as a metal conductor, and dissipates through the rain water to the ground or flashes off the axles or bumper.

If people don't have an option of seeking shelter indoors, there is little that can be done to decrease the risk of injury. Taking shade under trees or remaining in open fields is extremely dangerous. Sitting on backpacks or sleeping pads won't help. A common misconception among many is that if they are swimming or kayaking in the river, they are safe since they are already in water. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

On the other hand, cell phones and other electronic devices do not attract lightning so there is no need to fear gadgets. More importantly, don't hesitate to lend a hand to victims: they do not carry 'electrical charge' and are absolutely safe to touch.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

HAPPENINGS



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BIKRAM RAI

TALKING POLITICS: Chairman of the Interim Council of Ministers, Khil Raj Regmi (right) and Chinese state councilor Yang Jiechi (left) during a meeting at Singha Darbar on Tuesday.



NARESH SHRESTHA

SONG OF JOY: Indian ambassador Jayanta Prasad (right) presents a memento to Shreya Sotang (left) for lending her voice to Earth Anthem at Hyatt Hotel on Tuesday.



DEVAKI BISTA

SMELL OUT: Police dogs from the Narcotics Control Bureau search for drugs at the cargo division of Tribhuvan International Airport on Tuesday.

READERS' PHOTO



KSHITIZ SHRESTHA

LOOKING FRESH: The skies of Kathmandu have finally cleared up after days of heavy rainfall.

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DISASTER TOURISM: Narendra Modi is accused of milking the tragedy in Uttarakhand for political benefit.

No need to panic

India won't go topsy turvy in elections next year, just as the world didn't in 2000 due to the Y2K syndrome



LOOK OUT
Ajaz Ashraf

The Indian media's obsession with Narendra Modi ahead of elections next year threatens to turn him into the political equivalent of what was called the Y2K challenge, the magnitude of which eventually turned out to be overblown.

On 1 January 2000, computer glitches were widely expected to have planes falling off the skies, disrupting public utilities, and even freezing elevators. None of this happened.

In 2013, Modi has spawned similar passions, fears, and analyses reminiscent of the countdown to the end of 1999. Modi's supporters believe his charisma can sweep aside class, caste, regional, linguistic, even religious, divides to enable the BJP-led NDA to sweep out the UPA from power. His opponents perceive his rise portends the end of the idea of India.

The responses of both his supporters and opponents betray the Y2K syndrome, which had stemmed from a seemingly sound assumption: since digital memory was designed to store years in double-digit – 1999 as 99, 1998 as 98, and so on – it was assumed that at the turn of the millennium, the computer would recognise the year 2000

as 00 or 1900 and, therefore, go haywire.

Similarly, it is made to appear that Modi's much-vaunted charisma would neutralise identity politics and inspire the voter to behave in unforeseeable ways, just as computers afflicted with the Y2K bug were feared would.

No doubt, BJP cadre and the middle class find Modi mesmerising. But they are just a subset of the Indian electorate. The BJP hasn't even acquired a critical mass in, say, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, or Andhra Pradesh, for it to gain from the advantage Modi-led election campaign is expected to spawn. In the recent Karnataka assembly election, he articulated the Hindutva ideology during his campaign in Mangalore, yet the city elected Congress candidates, two Muslims and a Christian.

More significantly, every social group perceives its leader most charismatic. For instance, Mayawati is to the Dalits of Uttar Pradesh what Modi is to a section of the middle class. It's unlikely he can wean away the Dalits from her. Further, charisma is just one of the many factors voters take into account at the time of casting their ballot.

Modi's supporters say his appeal is based on his proven record of governance. It is the reason, they say, the corporate world loves him, and the pink papers portray him as the leader who can treat the economy. Not

to support Modi is depicted as voting for economic stagnation. Don't forget, in 1999 too, software experts fanned the Y2K fear to bag lucrative contracts. In Modi, the middle class see a leader who can preserve and promote their interests.

Modi's supporters know his appointment as the BJP's campaign chief will have his opponents harp on the dangers he poses to secularism. This could polarise the voters and help him garner the 'Hindu vote', in much the same way

as our fear of a chaotic world helped balloon the profits of software firms in 1999.

The BJP believes Modi has it in him to enable it to win seats close to a majority-mark, thereby rendering redundant the need to win support of several allies. This was why the objection of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who was till recently the BJP's principal ally, to Modi's appointment was swept aside. The veracity of their belief can be checked only through the 2014 election. You can't but sit

out the next 12 months to get proof of Modi's vote-catching ability countrywide.

It gives time to Modi's opponents to bolster their forces, it also opens the possibility of Modi making mistakes. For instance, his intervention in the rescue operations after the floods in Uttarakhand last week hasn't been as effective as his spin doctors tried to project. Some have accused him of milking the tragedy for political benefit. ashrafajaz3@gmail.com

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STREETS on the CROSSROADS

It's official: widening Kathmandu's roads is not the solution to traffic management

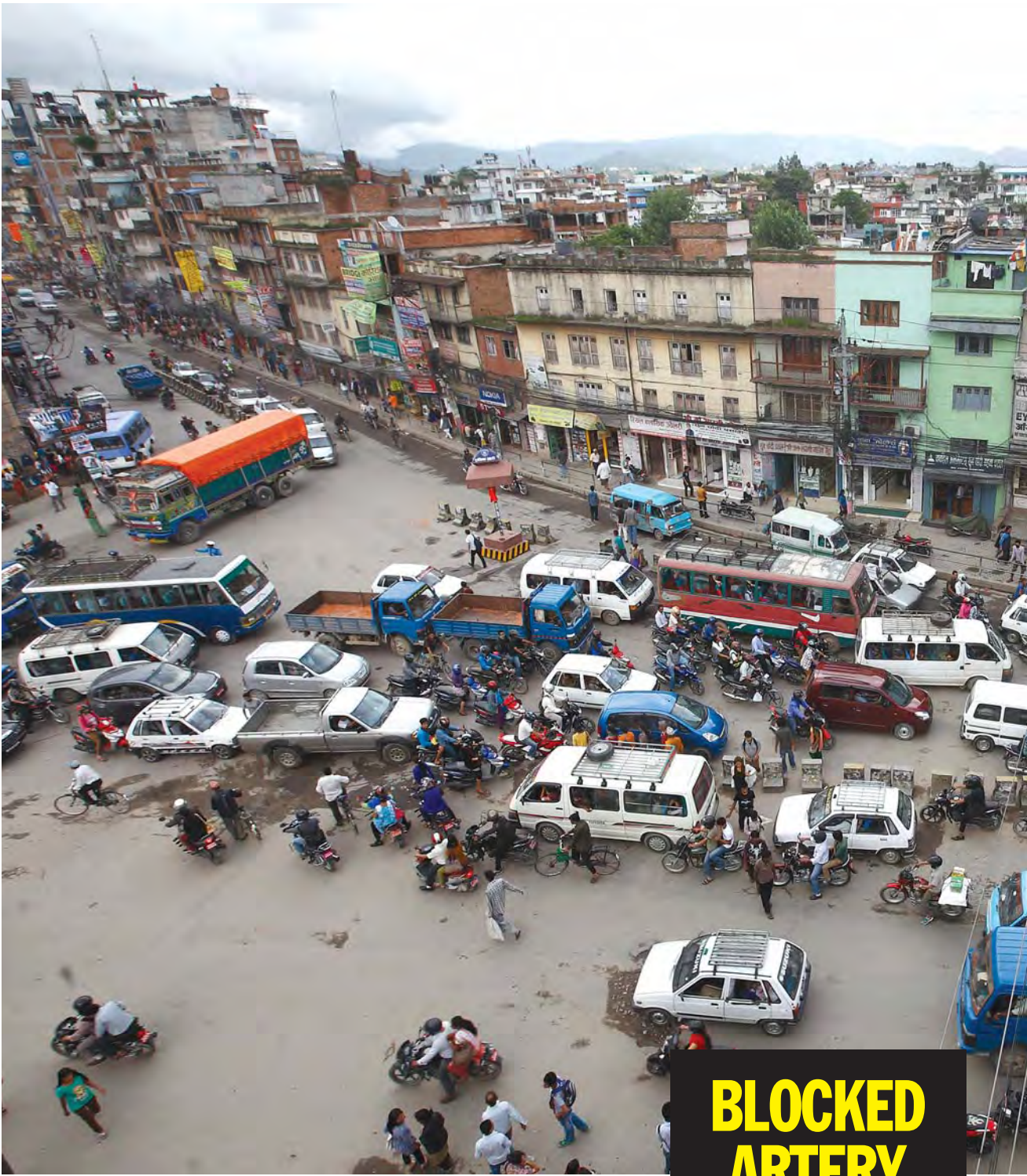
SUNIR PANDEY

When he is sent on duty to the newly expanded Kamal Pokhari-Shital Niwas road, traffic policeman Shiva Kumar Thakur feels lucky. The days of traffic jams on this particular stretch are over, he just stands there and waves cars through. But it is during rush hour that Thakur gets stressed. A never-ending stream of motorcycles clog up every inch of the road, buses stop anywhere but at designated bays, traffic starts backing up and he has to try to clear way for VIP convoys as escort vehicles with sirens arrive. The clean and smooth road around Baluwatar during off-peak hours presents the ideal of what Kathmandu's road-widening was trying to achieve, but the rush hour congestion there is proof of why just broadening the road is not the solution. "Most of the time it's very quiet on these newly expanded roads," says Thakur, "but everyone wants to go first during rush hour and it gets as bad as Thapathali and Chabahil."

The wider roads just mean more private vehicles are using it. Nearly 750,000 vehicles are registered in Bagmati Zone, with 570,000 of them motorcycles, 14,000 are public vehicles that circulate inside the valley, 8,000 are buses to and from outside the capital, and the rest are private vehicles. Kathmandu's total road length has crept up to almost 1,500km but 10,000 new motorcycles are added each year and registration will be open for more following road expansion. With statistics like that, transportation experts say the road widening may actually worsen traffic. A city of three million people doesn't have a proper mass urban transit system and unless new feeder roads along the Bagmati and Bishnumati corridors are added to ease congestion in the city core, Kathmandu's traffic is going to be out of control. The city is lavishing its budget on showcase widening, including an eight-lane boulevard from Maitighar to Tinkune and on to the airport. Shyam Kharel, head of

Kathmandu Valley Road Expansion Project, says it will have an exclusive fast lane in the middle, double service tracks running on both sides, and also bus bays. But that is just a four km stretch. "There will be plenty of traffic going to and coming from Tatopani and Bardibas-Sindhuli-Ramechhap areas and they will all use the same road. So we need to expand our capacity," says Kharel. However, other arteries like the Lajimpat road and new access from Kamal Pokhari to Battis Putali. Mitra Park to Naxal or even the Kamal Pokhari-Shital Niwas sections

have little space for bays where buses can pull over. Congestion is exacerbated by three-wheelers and micro-buses which add to congestion and are inadequate to meet the needs of commuters. The introduction of high-capacity Sajha buses has been welcomed by commuters, but the city needs many more of the green buses. Micro buses, safas, tempos, and rickshaws may provide livelihoods, but they take too much space for the few passengers they carry. When the government has tried to retire some of these vehicles, transport companies enjoying political protection have resisted. Experts say the medium-term solution to Kathmandu's traffic mess is a reliable mass urban transit system, not road widening. And in the long-term, the capital can have an underground tube network which will be easy to build because of the soft alluvial soil. Few of the Japanese-installed traffic lights are working and there just aren't enough policemen to direct traffic at intersections. One officer is responsible for 1.7km of road, 417 vehicles, and 3,883 people. Major crossroads like Thapathali, Maharajganj, Chabahil, and Keshar Mahal are choked with traffic mainly because of the lack of traffic discipline. 🚦



BLOCKED ARTERY

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Bigger, better, broader
by Dasain?, #622
Road rage, #634
Road expansion and traffic
awareness



BIKRAM RAI

Wider roads, heavier traffic

Why is Kathmandu pursuing a policy of road widening instead of learning from best practice in urban renewal and avoiding mistakes made in other urban areas? The world has learnt the hard way that road widening is not the answer to relieving traffic congestion: on the contrary. The answer is better public transport, walking, and biking paths. Excerpt from *Road Expansion, Urban Growth, and Induced Travel* (Journal of the American Planning Association, Vol 69, No 2, Spring 2003):

Traffic is thought to behave more like a gas than a liquid: it expands to fill available space. Improved roads simply spur additional travel or divert trips from parallel routes, quickly returning a facility to its original congested condition. This is called 'induced demand'. You can't pave your way out of traffic congestion: 'build it and they will come'.

The preponderance of empirical evidence to date suggests that the effects of induced demand are substantial. A widely cited study based on 18 years of data from 14 California metropolitan areas, found that every ten per cent increase in lane miles was associated with a nine per cent increase in vehicle miles travelled four years after road expansion, controlling for other factors.

Another study of 70 US metropolitan areas over a 15-year time period concluded that areas investing heavily in road capacity fared no better in easing traffic congestion than areas that did not. Using a meta-analysis of more than 100 road expansion projects in the United Kingdom, it was found that proportional savings in travel time were matched by proportional increases in traffic on almost a one-to-one basis, a finding that prompted the UK government to jettison its longstanding 'predict and provide' policy of responding to traffic-growth forecasts by building more motorways.

FOOT POWER

It's important to note that walking and biking, which are cheap and have essentially no carbon footprint, should be given top priority prioritised highest of all in our ways of getting around. That doesn't necessarily mean building sidewalks everywhere, but it does mean that planners should always be thinking with their feet. How will this new development face the street?

Will the design reinforce our human curiosity and make it an interesting place to walk or bike past, or will it silently push people away with blank walls? Do our streets have safe ways for people to get across? The current generation has to work on flipping our transportation system upside-down ...

Mike Hicks, streets.mn



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No populism

Himal Khabarpatrika, 30 June



Interview with Finance Minister Shankar Koirala

How are you preparing this year’s budget?
Shankar Koirala: Last year’s budget came in three instalments and was bad for the economy, so this year we want to announce it on time. We have received various proposals from each ministry and for three hours every day we hold ministry-level discussions so that the budget comes out by 15 July.

How is this year’s budget going to be different than the previous editions?
Since we don’t have an elected parliament, this year’s budget will be passed through an ordinance. It will be election-centric. Besides that, we will also accelerate development and prioritise energy, infrastructure, agriculture, tourism, and export sectors. Instead of catering to populist demands, this year’s budget will address national development.

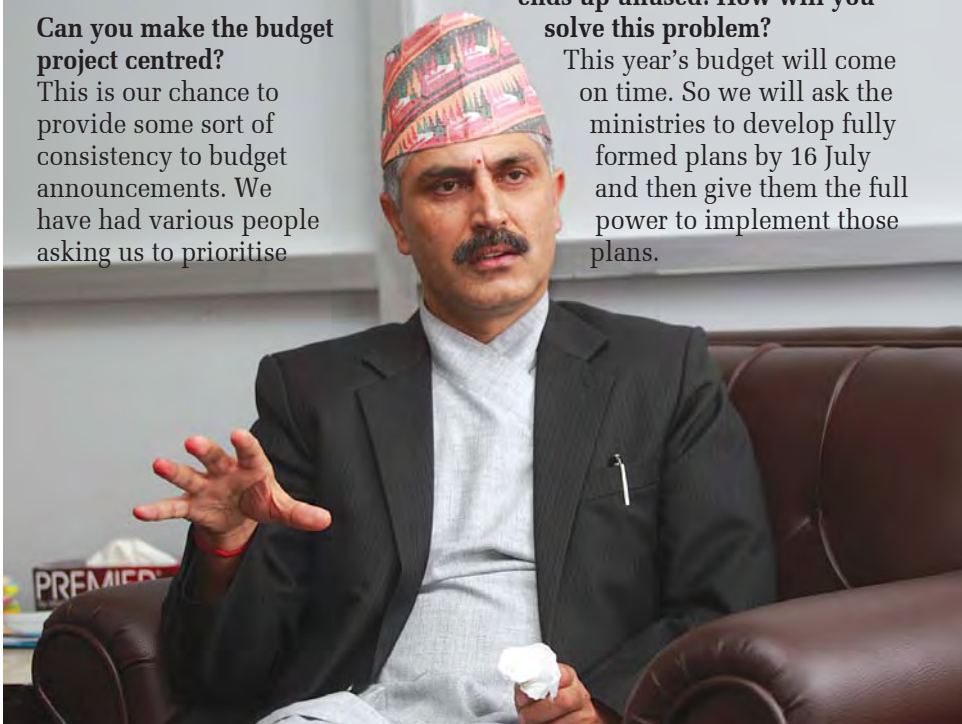
Can you make the budget project centred?
This is our chance to provide some sort of consistency to budget announcements. We have had various people asking us to prioritise

certain sectors, but there is very little political pressure. So we will focus on proposals passed at local, regional, and central levels as well as those authorised by the National Planning Commission.

In the past, parties have siphoned off parts of the budget for their own cadre. How can you stop this culture?
We have stopped all forms of financial support including donations and won’t create ‘distributaries’ budget like in the past. This year’s programs have not been shaped by political greed or pressure.

Is it true that this government doesn’t have the power to change tax rates or announce a full budget?
No, the amendment to the constitution gave us powers to come up with a full-fledged budget. But we don’t plan to change tax rates.

Every year, development money ends up unused. How will you solve this problem?
This year’s budget will come on time. So we will ask the ministries to develop fully formed plans by 16 July and then give them the full power to implement those plans.



BIKRAM RAI

100 days of disappointment

Editorial, Rajdhani, 26 June



Following in the footsteps of their predecessors, Khil Raj Regmi-led government also published a booklet on its 100 days in office where it tries to present the announcement of election date as the most important accomplishment. While it’s natural for the government to see the setting of election date as a big achievement, if we look at the bigger picture, these 100 days have actually been quite disappointing.

Assessing what others have done in the same time frame will help put Regmi’s achievements into perspective. Former chief justice of the Supreme Court Ram Prasad Shrestha was able to introduce stern measures to stamp out corruption within the first three months of his six month tenure. Unlike Regmi, Shrestha did not waste half the year making plans. Anup Raj Sharma who replaced Shrestha, went a step further and set a strong precedence for the hearing of corruption related cases.

This shows that if there is a will then it’s possible to make things happen even within a short time. Regmi has a historic opportunity to change the course of Nepal’s future.



BIKASH DWARE

And this is not the time for him and his band of ex- bureaucrats to pat each other on the back and bask in the glory of announcing election dates.

Yes this government is bounded by certain obligations, but if we analyse these 100 days carefully, we see that it has failed to address critical issues related to the public like the proliferation of the black market or worsening air pollution or the incomplete road-widening project. Good governance was largely missing in these three and a half months. What’s even more disappointing is that Regmi was not able to address the concerns of opposition parties and civil society members regarding the separation of powers.

The government faced a lot of difficulties while trying to settle election dates, but these hurdles could have been easily overcome with a bit of foresight and smart decision making. Furthermore, it used the delay in reaching an agreement on polls as an excuse to overlook issues that affect ordinary Nepalis. When the government comes out with its ‘achievements of six months in office’ book, the public will be hoping that along with creating a safe environment for polls, it is able to fulfil some of their more pertinent demands.



The losers

Jay Prakash Gupta, Facebook, 26 June



I posted this status a couple of days ago and it got more than 60 likes and 80 comments:

53 Armed Police Force inspectors were promoted to the post of Deputy Superintendent of Police namely: Sigdel, Shrestha, Pokharel, Khanal, Adhikary, Bohara, Wagle, Lamsal, Khadka, Subedi, Shrestha, Bajracharya, Shrestha, Thapa, Joshi, Poudel, Dhinal, Pandey, Bhandari, KC, Sharma, Joshi, Dhital, Bogati, KC, Lamichhane, Rayamajhi, Shahi, Bhatta, Timilsina, Pandey, Bahadur Singh, Ghimire, Khanal, Chand, Sapkota, Giri, Dhimire, Dhami, Lohani, Thapa, Bhandari, Adhikari, Basnet, Dhungana, Thapa, Dwa, Karmacharya, Nepal, Thapa, and Parajuli.

I simply omitted the first names and put the surnames as published by *Naya Patrika* daily on 23 June. My concern here isn’t limited to the number of inspectors who got promoted or the community they belong to. I am more worried about the declining representation of Madhesis and Janajatis in the overall political scenario.

In 2007, the population of the Hilly region was 52 per cent and it got 117 seats in the constituent assembly while Tarai where almost 49 per cent of Nepalis live just got 88 seats. Only after the Madhes movement did people come to realise how unfair this situation was and the number of seats was increased to 116. But now that the size of the constituent assembly is being slashed to 491 members from 601, it is quite obvious who will be the biggest losers. The number of seats for Madhesis is likely to decrease by five to six per cent even though the region is home to more than 50 per cent of the population. The same is true for the Dalit community whose representation is likely to go down to 6.31 from 8.31 per cent. Now the question here is why should these communities bear the brunt of downsizing the CA?

NEPALI TWEETS

Ananta Koirala
भारतीय समाचार च्यानलले बाढी प्रभावित क्षेत्र छोडेका छैनन्, नेपाली समाचार च्यानलहरू बाढी प्रभावित क्षेत्र पुगेकै छैनन् । : (Diffidence)
Indian news channels have not left the flood affected areas, Nepali news channels haven't yet reached the flood affected areas.

निशा अधिकारी
निशा अधिकारिलाई सगरमाथा घडाएर सामाजिक दाईत्व पुरा गर्ने संघ संस्थाले पश्चिम नेपालका बाढी पिडितलाई पनि सहयोग गरेर सामाजिक दायित्व पुरा गर्नुस
Organisations that put Nisha Adhikari on top of Mount Everest as part of their social responsibility, please help out flood victims of western Nepal and fulfil your other social responsibility.

PHALANO
राष्ट्रपतिलाई क्यान्सर रहेनछ, खुशी लाग्यो । तर यो नेपालमै नेपाली डाक्टरले पुष्टी गरेको भए नेपाली चिकित्सा विज्ञानमा भरोसा हुन्थ्यो । कहिले ?
The president does not have cancer, I am happy. But if this had been confirmed in Nepal by Nepali doctors, we could trust the country's medical science.

देवदास बाबु
कतारका राजाले शासन सत्ता आफ्नो छोरालाई सुम्पे यो एउटा उदाहरण हो विश्वलाई देश बुढाले होइन युवाले बनाउछन्। नेपाली बुढालेता हो ध्यान दिनुहोस्
Qatar's King has passed on the reign to his son, this shows that the world is run by young people not senior citizens. Perhaps Nepal's octogenarian leaders should pay attention.

WEEKLY BAZAR POLL #17

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

- Do you think elections will be held on 19 November?**
No **48.5%**
Yes **34.5%**
Don't know **16.7%**
- What should the government do to create conducive environment for polls?**
Fulfil legitimate demands of opposition parties **67.1%**
Hold polls anyhow **23.9%**
Don't know **8.1%**
Won't say **0.8%**



Title: Great leap
Horse: Whitey
SUV: Pajero

अन्नपूर्णपोष्ट Basu Kshitiz in Annapurna Post, 22 June

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“I don’t think Deuba visited India for personal benefit. So to say that New Delhi chose him as an alternative is baseless.”

NC General Secretary Krishna Prasad Sitaula, *Naya Patrika*, 27 June

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A gorment of super-achievers

The Regmi regime is sure made up of super-achievers. The techno-cats held a press conference last week to mark the 100th day of their honeymoon period and distributed a 100-page document listing their achievements. Impressive as it is (the interim council has notched one achievement every other day) a lot of the real accomplishments of the chief minister's gorment could not be included in the list because of lack of space. The Ass has got exclusive access to the achievements that didn't make it to the document:

101: Ensured that the South-west Monsoon arrived in timely fashion this year.

102: Prevented Edward Snowden from sneaking into Nepal through the backdoor.

103: Inaugurated 2 art exhibitions, 1 album launch, and 3 handicraft fairs.

104: Played madal with fellow-Syangjalis.

105: Declared war on Kollywood movie billboards.

106: Patched irritating pothole at

Bhatbhateni intersection.

107: Chairman Regmi actually smiled during a photo-op with visiting Chinese dignitary.

108: Only 12 bunds in 100 days.

109: Declared KTM plastic bag-free, then promptly retracted the ban to protect jobs.

108: Took the trouble to count our achievements and publish this list.

Now that they have abandoned the underground jungle and made their homes in the concrete jungle that is Kathmandu, Baddie comrades can't seem to get enough of flying around in helicopters. PKD doesn't need an excuse to get into an Ecuriel, BRB may have chosen a Mustang to ride around Kathmandu, but he was in the habit of commandeering Mi-17s for his monthly sleep-over with the proletariat, Comrade Rainman once took a seven-minute chopper ride to cut a red ribbon in southern Lalitpur. So there was nothing surprising about Chairman Fearsomeness



DIWAKAR CHETTRI

asking Kill Raj to loan him a Super Puma so he could visit flood victims in Darchula. To his credit, KRR showed he is still awake by giving PKD a firm but polite "no" and then the Erection Commissioners on Wednesday issued an edict banning the use of choppers during election campaigning. The loudest howls of protest came from the Baddies. Could it be because they were once in the habit of chopping off the limbs of class enemies that

they can't keep away from choppers?

So it came to pass that the 'black spot' in the president's larger intestine was not malignant, in fact Japanese doctors couldn't even find the black spot which is clearly visible in the x-rays done in Nepal. The Ass can make a fairly good guess what the black spot really was: the hospital in Kathmandu hadn't serviced the x-ray machine and there was a stain in the film. Anyway, the long and short of it is that the country ended up paying Rs 10 million for treatment that not only could have been done in Nepal, but which wasn't even necessary. BTW, is anyone checking if all members of the Prez entourage actually return to Nepal?

Suzie Q has been going around the world pretending she is still Phoren Minister. After her faux pas in Germany, she was in Thailand last week extending an invite to PM Yingluck to visit Nepal. Whoa, is the SE Asia Dept apprised? Must say, though, that the recommendation of the Standing Committee of the Cash Baddies to nominate Comrade Yummy to the post of Treasurer was an excellent choice. As a fund raiser, the Former First Lady is type cast, they couldn't have found a better man for the job.

The real epicentre of government has shifted from Balu Water to Lodging Part, where the Fierce One holds court and meets KRR every Wednesday evening to give his instructions for next morning's cabinet meeting. The talk of the week was also the secret meeting between PKD and MBK about reunifying the un-Unified CPN-M just after Lotus had met a certain Chinese visitor. The go-between is none other than Krishna ("50 corrodes") Mahara in whose house in Patan the hush-hush meets take place.





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