

NEPALI Times

#663

5 - 11 July 2013

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SONAM LAMA

ROAD TO NOWHERE

Across Nepal, surveyors are leaving red markings like this one in the remote Tsum Valley on rocks (left) for soon-to-come roads. The alignments do not respect cultural heritage, environmental factors or important trekking routes that provide incomes to thousands.

Indiscriminate highway-building is causing enormous collateral damage to Nepal's culture, nature, and economy. Driven by greed and graft, roads are being built where one already exists and even if it would end up destroying an area's culture and tourism prospects. If the Tsum road goes ahead, locals insist on an alternative alignment that protects their holy sites and a vital trekking route.

Sonam Lama in Tsum Valley

MAKING INROADS

In eastern Nepal, new roads are transforming the economy of previously inaccessible districts providing local farmers with access to markets and improving their living standards.

Pranab Man Singh in Khotang

LOOK NORTH

Tarai towns that have road links to hill districts in the north have better economic growth than ones that don't.

Prabhat Bhattarai in Saptari

PAGE 16-17



NO SUPPLY, ONLY DEMANDS

EDITORIAL

PAGE 2

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NO SUPPLY, ONLY DEMANDS

There are many everyday indications of the toll that Nepal's prolonged period of uncertainty is exacting on the people, but perhaps the most glaring is the pervasive impunity. The six-year transition after the conflict ended in 2006 is marked by a collapse of governance, a sense that anyone can get away with anything, that money buys power, and might is right.

To be sure, most countries in transition go through a limbo period as the legacy of violence and dictatorship is replaced by democracy, rule of law and an open, stable society. Twenty years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, for example, its many fragments still struggle to come to terms with the criminalisation that the momentous change unleashed.

In Nepal, one could say the transition is needlessly messy and protracted. What we are striving for in the new constitution is an inclusive democracy in which all Nepalis have equal say, opportunities are more equitably distributed, and where there is a system of accountability. We elected an assembly to write that constitution and it failed. We are trying again in November, but the neo-ruling class (including former revolutionaries who promised to liberate the people) can't agree on the procedures for polls.

Nepal's transition is characterised by a criminalisation of politics and a politicisation of crime. Smuggling, human trafficking, illegal sand-mining or logging, name any illicit activity in this country and the political leadership has its hands in the honey-pot. And the whole machinery is lubricated by payoffs, kickbacks, and corruption.

When a prime minister walks around in broad daylight with a convicted murderer, or one of the most unsavoury characters from our recent past is appointed as corruption



A free market is governed by the law of supply and demand. In Nepal we have only the law of demand: unscrupulous businesses demanding the right to cheat consumers.

watchdog, and war criminals from the army and police are rewarded with promotions, society gets the message that anything goes.

In a country run by a cartel of four political parties, why should it be any surprise to anyone that there are

cartels in transportation, gas dealerships, tanker companies, gas stations, sweet shops, water suppliers, the dairy industry, and even gold and bullion traders. When impunity is rife and regulation feeble, even legitimate businesses engage in profiteering, price-gouging, adulteration, and cheating consumers. And when a weak state tries to crack down on this politico-business nexus, the government is brought to its knees through strikes and forced to roll back on inspections or punishment of frauds.

The interim electoral council's TOR was to hold elections and it seems to think day-to-day governance is not a part of its mandate. Our bureaucrat ministers say they inherited the problem from the politicians, so let them solve it. That is why when drinking water distributors stopped supplies for four days last week to protest the government's effort to ensure hygiene and safety, the government quickly capitulated and allowed the suppliers to keep selling contaminated water. When taxi drivers go on strike to

be allowed to keep cheating passengers, the state caved in. Tax payers are already footing the bill for subsidised LPG and now the dealers want a bigger cut. Cartels hold the people hostage in just about every sphere of life and the government is powerless to stop it.

Just as democracy has been replaced by a free-for-all, the free market economy has let unscrupulous businessmen do what they want. The open marketplace is supposed to be governed by the laws of supply and demand. Our free market is just governed by the laws of demand: demand from businesses to be allowed to continue cheating the public.

ON THE WEB

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STREETS ON THE CROSSROADS

I don't see anything new in this article ('Streets on the crossroads', Sunir Pandey, #662)? I lived in Nepal for nearly 26 years and sadly, little has changed. When I first arrived, we could bike all over the city and there were few cars. I also remember the trolley car. What happened to it? The beauty of this great city is being hidden by traffic, pollution, cutting down trees, and any evidence of green. I cry when I think of it.

Margaret Kerr

- Bus bays are good solutions for smooth traffic flow. There are some government owned properties that should be turned into 30m length bus lanes: Jamal, Bahadur Bhawan, Sital Niwas, and Kanti Hospital for example. When the Bhadrakali road starts functioning, the state should build a bay in front of the Supreme Court, and then that entire segment will be clear.

Daniel Gajaraj

- Nepal's streets are too narrow anyway. The roads were built for horse carriages during the Rana regime, but have not kept up with the population boom that has occurred since then. Bus lanes and mass transit options are fine nevertheless the roads need to be widened as well.

Roshan Shrestha

- Mere widening of roads won't solve Kathmandu's traffic jam. What we need is to open up new links between arterial routes at any cost.

The government will have to acquire land and relocate house owners, but this must happen sooner than later.

Shiva

- Interesting that both documents cited in the article are from the developed world that are way past their industrialisation and peak growth of motorised transport for the common man which is what Nepal is facing right now ('Wider roads, heavier traffic', #662).

Anonymous

- The only way to improve traffic congestion in Kathmandu is to standardise public transport. The Sajha bus model should be followed in every route, so that passengers don't feel like third-class citizens while travelling on a bus. A railway system or even cable cars if feasible must be put into place. We must always think long-term instead of trying to fulfil short-term goals.

ABSN

- Kathmandu's roads are a disgrace and they needed to be expanded. When we are done with that, we can sit down and explore alternatives by focusing on public transport. Just look at Sajha buses, great idea, but they struggle to ply on Kathmandu's roads at the moment now.

Sabin A

MAN MADE DISASTER

Since the past several years, experts at the Department of Water Induced Disaster Prevention have been stressing the need for permanent concrete dikes at the district headquarters of

Darchula, Chainpur, and Beni ('Man Made Disaster', Editorial, #662). Unfortunately, the Ministry of Finance of our poor country has other priorities.

Anonymous

SLIVER LINING IN THE NEPAL SKY

How is spending \$150 million on Nepal Airlines good for anyone other than the employees - twice the number that work at Druk Air, which operates the same number of aircraft and flights - and the politicians who hand out those patronage jobs ('Silver lining in the Nepal sky', Hardik Gurung, #662)? If NAC could somehow miraculously operate reliably, efficiently, and profitably then it could offer Nepalis a reasonable option to the Gulf region. But with five other carriers already flying there from Kathmandu, why bother? The 'national pride' argument seems completely bogus to me. Does anyone not affiliated with the airline actually care? People I know go out of their way to avoid NAC.

John Child

- It's a total waste of money and there's no point in reviving NA's plane purchase. The amount of money spent on those planes can be used in other development activities. I don't believe that any private or government owned company is the country's pride. Let's hope Buddha or Yeti airlines will grow and represent us internationally.

Ajit Jung Gurung

INTO THE BOARDROOM

Most of the businesswomen featured in Ramesh Kumar's report are

solely there because of their family connections ('Breaking into the boardroom', #662). None of them have started any businesses of their own and none of them have made a significant contribution to society. In fact, some of them have made a negative contribution by not convincing their family owned businesses to pay taxes. This article reads more like an advert and it's no different from the other 'entrepreneur' stories that glossy weeklies carry.

Prasanna KC

- I do not see any of the women profiled here getting their feet wet. They are the 'who's who' of Kathmandu and so I don't think the glass ceiling has been broken. I would much rather prefer to read about someone who started from scratch. Nepal's corporate sector really needs to start employing non-family members who deserve more attention and opportunity.

Barun Thapa

- Let's do a little reality check here. How many Nepali women have made it into the boardroom just on the basis of their skills and hard work (I'm not talking about the smaller enterprises and companies, but the ones that make big bucks on the national scale)? Maybe a handful. And let's not forget the daddy's boys, most of the young powerful businessmen today have also inherited their empire from fathers, father-in-laws or uncles. Our politics is the same, the rot runs deep. So why blame only these women?

GVR

Q OF THE WEEK

Who is your favourite Nepali writer?

facebook

Archana Hengaju: Krishna Dharabasi
Manohar Budhathoki: Saru Bhakta
Chandra Mani: Narayan Wagle
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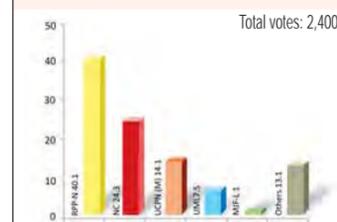
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This week's **Question of the week**:
What is your favourite adventure sports in Nepal?
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Times nepalnews.com
Weekly Internet Poll #663

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



Weekly Internet Poll # 664. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Is the CPN-M right to boycott elections?

Our leaders haven't learnt from history and are Doomed to repeat it



HERE WE GO
Trishna Rana

When the interim electoral council led by the Chief Justice announced the date for CA elections in mid-June, we all heaved a collective sigh of relief. There was reason to hope that the political stalemate and

been set up in mid-March immediately after Khil Raj Regmi was appointed instead of waiting till June.

The Madhes-based parties demand that the Tarai get a total of 120 out of the 240 constituencies in the first-past-the-poll (FPTP) ballot, so the CDC will have to negotiate hard with politicians as it tries to stay true to the interim constitution in deciding how to distribute the 35 available seats among districts that have seen a



NT ARCHIVE

prolonged uncertainty might end.

But just when it looked like the country and its politics might finally be moving in the right direction, things are falling apart again. With a little over four months for the 19 November polls, the political parties are stuck again over the size of the CA, the delineation of constituencies, and the threat by the CPN-M to sabotage polls.

The political leadership has once more demonstrated its unwillingness to learn from past mistakes. They should have known that, like in 2008, the debate over constituencies would be highly divisive. Although Clause 3 in the 11-point agreement says the number of electoral constituencies shall remain the same, parties are again playing politics with it. The Constituency Delineation Commission (CDC) could have

rise or reduction in population in the 2011 census. But there isn't enough time to get into that now.

When the CA failed to draft a constitution in May last year, most Nepalis blamed the 601 lawmakers for squandering time and money. However, it wasn't the CA members' fault, they were just obeying the party whips. Despite its flaws, the CA was the most inclusive assembly ever in Nepali history with 192 Janajati representatives, 196 Madhesis, and a 33 per cent strong women caucus. The future CA will need to be as, or even more, inclusive.

By slashing proportional representation seats from 335 in 2008 to 240 this year, many worry that historically marginalised Nepalis (especially women and Dalits) will once again be left behind. But Krishna Khanal, professor

of politics at Tribhuvan University, says the reduction in PR seats does not mean that we have to compromise on inclusiveness.

"It's not about numbers, more about political will," he told me, "even with 100 PR seats, it's possible to ensure that Nepalis from marginalised and backward communities are well represented."

Setting a slightly higher quota than in the previous election on the per cent of female/Dalit/Janajati/Madhesi candidates each party must field in FPTP and PR ballots is the most obvious solution. For example, to achieve a 33 per cent female representation in the 491-member assembly, if six females are selected for the 11 nominated posts, then parties will have to field about 60 per cent female candidates in the FPTP race, and then make up the rest in the PR

seats.

Unlike in 2008, no party should be exempted from following the quota because of its small size. What would also help ensure greater inclusiveness is to require parties to use either a ranked PR list where voters know which candidates from marginalised groups are high on a given party's list, or an open PR list where voters can directly pick a candidate instead of a party.

Beyond numbers and quotas, the fringe parties are becoming increasingly vocal and pose the biggest threat to elections in November. Although weaker in number than the 'bracket' Maoists, Mohan Baidya's 'dash' Maoists still have enough influence and willing allies to derail the entire democratic process.

Even if elections do take place under these circumstances, writing a

constitution in the absence of important political players who feel no sense of ownership towards it, is a recipe for future unrest.

Former chief election commissioner Bhoj Raj Pokhrel says: "What use is a new constitution if opposition forces start burning the document the very next day?"

Pushpa Kamal Dahal could bring Baidya and friends into the fold, but what will Baidya ask in return? The NC and UML, for their part, are happy to see the Maoists stay split.

The CA met its ignominious end last year after 22 obdurate men couldn't agree on the kind of federalism and form of governance. Whether Nepalis will queue again at polling booths this winter will depend on how quickly these very men demonstrate they have learnt from the past and want to build a future. ■

SHAH RUKH KHAN AND HIS AQUARACER

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SWITCHING ON

Kathmandu's first electric crematorium will reduce funeral costs, but will have to overcome cultural sensitivities

SUNIR PANDEY

Ganesh Prasad Dhakal, 48, is dressed in a white dhoti and waits at the cremation site at the banks of the fetid Bagmati at Pashupati for his shift to begin.

When Dhakal moved here from Kavre 30 years ago, this was the only job going, so he started out carrying logs for the pyres. Today, he is one of 28 'body-burners' in the payroll of the Pashupati Aryaghat Service Committee (PASC) to manage the cremations. He earns Rs 1,000 per funeral.

"It may seem like a lot, but I have to feed a family of seven back home in Kavre," says Dhakal. "Initially, I was squeamish about handling corpses but now this is the only work I know."

Dhakal points at two large brick buildings of the electric crematorium coming up to the south of the Pashupati cremation site and wonders if it will put him out of job. Kathmandu's first electric crematorium will reduce cost and cremation time, save firewood, and minimise pollution of the Bagmati River.

But there are questions about how culturally acceptable it will be for Nepali families who may be liberal in other ways, but still cling to traditional funeral rituals. Although there are three other holy cremation sites in Kathmandu in Sankhamul, Shobha Bhagwati, and Teku, most people still prefer Pashupati on account of it being one of the holiest Hindu temples. Anyone who dies or is cremated in Pashupati, it is believed, bypasses the purgatory of Baitarni and goes straight to heaven.

"That is why we thought of constructing the crematorium at Pashupati," says Akrur Singh Mahat, an engineer at the PADT, citing examples from Banaras in India where people shifted gradually from traditional cremations to electric crematoria because they were culturally sensitive.

The new electric crematorium (*pic, foreground*) at Pashupati is nearly finished and the electric furnaces are expected in a fortnight. It is composed of two buildings, one of them with an event hall as well as rooms for mourners

(*pic, left*), the other will be a crematorium (*pic, right*) housing the two furnaces, a ritual hall, and an eye-donation booth operated by the Tilganga Hospital. The crematorium will have dedicated electric supply and a generator for standby.

"The building will have a hall in which all rituals can be performed," says Mahat. "After the deceased's family finishes the rituals, the body is then placed on a trolley for cremation. At the other end of the building, the family may collect the ashes to complete the funeral."

Since only skilled operators are allowed to run the electric furnaces and none of the current workers at Aryaghat are trained, Dhakal hopes to at least get a job as a gardener or gatekeeper although he will have to take a pay cut.

But for the denizens of Kathmandu, the crematorium will make funerals cheaper and cleaner. It costs up to Rs 10,000 for a traditional firewood cremation, but an electric cremation could cost as little as Rs 2,500 and even this could be reduced if there is a government subsidy.

CREMATION TIME

FIREWOOD	ELECTRIC
3 hours	1 hour

ENERGY CONSUMED

FIREWOOD	ELECTRIC
250kg of wood for one cremation	1800 KWh for 40 cremations per day
Per funeral cost: Rs 3,000	Per funeral cost: Rs 570

THE PRICE OF DEATH FOR TRADITIONAL CREMATION

FIREWOOD	Rs 3,000
GHEE	Rs 900
STRAW	Rs 1,200
BAMBOO	Rs 200
SANDALWOOD (optional)	Rs 2,000
LABOUR	Rs 1,600
REGISTRATION	Rs 100
TOTAL (with sandalwood)	Rs 9,000

"We expect most people to ultimately favour the economical electric option, so I think the traditional firewood cremation will remain as a more expensive option to those who want to continue older methods," explains Shyam Shekhar Jha, director of the Electric Crematorium project.

Surveys by PADT have found that up to 80 per cent of respondents, both Hindu and Buddhist, have reacted positively to electric crematorium and say they will use them if it is cheaper.

On an average, one funeral consumes up to 250kg of firewood and there are an average of 35 cremations a day at Pashupati alone. Most of the firewood comes from a community forest in Dhading and the introduction of the electric crematorium would save more than 9,000 kilos of firewood a day. The electric funerals will also help clean the Bagmati which is severely polluted below Pashupati because ashes of dead, half-burnt wood, clothes of mourners are all ritually thrown into the river.

"Traditional funerals pollute the air and water, and cut down forests. We want to reduce the impact funerals make on the environment, so that is the main aim of introducing electric cremation," says Jha, adding that there has also been interest for a second crematorium in Devghat, Chitwan. 🇳🇵





SUNIR PANDEY

BIZ BRIEFS

Football crazy

Qatar Airways has been named the official title sponsor of the FC Barcelona Asia Tour to be held in Thailand and Malaysia in August. The La Liga champions will take on the Thai National Football team in Bangkok and an all-star team of the Malaysian League in Kuala Lumpur.



Lucky seven

Syakar Trading, authorised distributor of Honda two wheelers in Nepal, announced the winners of its New Year scheme. Ram Prasad Gyawali, Surya Thapa Magar, Bisha Gautam, Mann Bahadur Thapa, Barun Trade, Milan Shah, and Indra Pun won Rs70,000.



Monsoon Bonanza

Etiihad Airways is offering exclusive discounts on pearl business and coral economy class tickets to popular destinations in Europe, Africa, and the US. The special fares are valid until 13 July while the travel period is valid from 1 September to 30 November.



Winning numbers

The winners of Rs 100,000 of the second week of Pepsi 20-20 campaign have been announced. The winning numbers are 756154P, 971724B, 301602F, 536459V, 893487J, 369398Y, 507530W. The seven-week campaign will run until 6 August and winner of the grand prize will pocket Rs 2 million.



Light up

CG CFL bulbs, introduced in the market three years ago are sold with a warranty of 15 months. The bulbs have a shelf life of 8,000 hours making them much more durable than other CFL bulbs in the market reads the press release.



Joy ride

Go Ford launched the urban SUV Ford EcoSport in Nepal. It is available in 10 variants across four trims, three engine options, and seven colours. Ford EcoSport also has voice-activated in-car connectivity and emergency assistance features.



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The politics of death

The hallmark of Indian democracy at election time is to turn the statistics of corpses to political advantage

people, but are we to hail Kunjwal for his candour even though it embarrassed his party? Not really, because there is intense rivalry between factions owing allegiance to Bahuguna and Union Cabinet Minister Harish Rawat, arguably the most popular Congress leader in the state.

Following last year's election, Rawat had believed Congress President Sonia Gandhi would designate him chief minister. After all, in 2002, he had been persuaded to step aside in favour of ND Tiwari. But Bahuguna, a political lightweight, was anointed chief minister, and Rawat was placated with a Cabinet rank at the Centre and Kunjwal, his follower, was made the speaker.

Kunjwal has been openly mocking Bahuguna. The death toll Kunjwal cited was yet another sharp spear flung at Bahuguna, underscoring the inability of political leaders to sweep aside rivalries to alleviate the plight of people.

The politics of death among the state's Congress leaders matches the attempts of Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi to milk the devastation in Uttarakhand for

political ends. Modi sought to build his persona of a 'doer' by parachuting on the state, his spin doctors providing astonishing figures of the number of people he rescued. As the story unravelled, as all spins eventually do, the BJP has been tying itself in a tangle through flimsy denials. It was, again, the hope of gaining from the politics of death that inspired Rahul Gandhi to belatedly bustle around the state littered with corpses.

Since 1984, death has been repeatedly invoked for electoral purposes. The assassination of Indira Gandhi and the anti-Sikh riots were harnessed to the Congress electoral machinery. The Congress tried to engender a sympathy wave through advertisements which repeatedly quoted from her last speech before her death: "I shall continue to serve until my last breath and when I die, I can say that every drop of my blood will invigorate India and strengthen it."

Twenty-nine years later, the assassination of Indira still constitutes the rhetoric of the Congress. Rahul Gandhi recently spoke of his torment at the unbearable loss of his grandmother. His sentiments can't be made light of, yet the compulsions of the politics of death made Rahul skip any references to the turmoil the Sikh children experienced in 1984.

Perhaps the most spectacular

enactment of the politics of death was during the weeks of the Kargil conflict with Pakistan in 1999. The BJP displayed coffins from Kargil for public viewing and took the dead for cremation or burial in procession. French scholar Max-Jean Zins writes in a paper: 'The Kargil funerals provided an excellent opportunity to stage a spectacular extravaganza, a sort of meticulously choreographed national funeral ballet.' Yes, election was just weeks away.

Again, when the train at Godhra, Gujarat, caught fire in 2002, the Narendra Modi administration, despite warnings, brought the charred bodies to Ahmadabad and handed them over to their families in processions. It created the setting for the riots that followed, allegedly allowed to go out of control for the purposes of winning elections then just nine months away.

Neither a natural calamity magnitude nor violence prompts the political parties to overcome their competing interests to provide help to people. In contrast, they have united to oppose the verdict that seeks to bring the political parties under the ambit of the Right to Information Act.

It tells you about the depth to which India's political class has fallen and the illness plaguing Indian democracy. ashrafajaz3@gmail.com



LOOK OUT

Ajaz Ashraf

corpses into a statistical detail to serve its political goals. Indeed, 1984 onwards, the politics of death has come to dominate the saga of Indian democracy.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Vijay Bahuguna has been seeking, from the very start, to suppress the death toll figures acutely aware of the political price attached to a high casualty count. Uttarakhand Assembly Speaker Govind Singh Kunjwal claimed the Himalayan Tsunami could have killed over 10,000

In the stench of rotting bodies after the floods in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand is also present the foul odour of the politics of death.

As Uttarakhand desperately cremates the bodies, the political class has turned the



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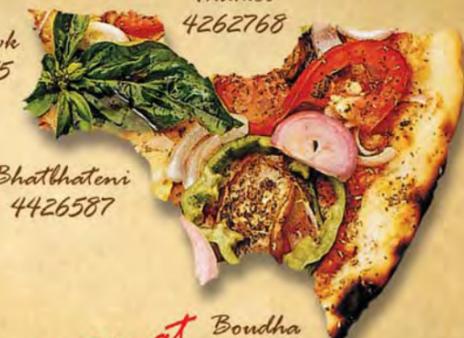
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South west monsoon took a short breather this week over Nepal as the moist winds of the Bay of Bengal got waylaid by a massive trough over the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh which is bringing torrential rain to the Deccan plateau. But a series of monsoonal pulses are headed our way as the rains get second wind, as it were. Which means precipitation will pick up over the eastern mid hills which have so far got deficient rainfall this season. Kathmandu valley will receive short sharp burst of rain mainly in the evening and at night over the weekend.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
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ONE STRAND AT A TIME

(clockwise): Tulsī Thapa (centre) cooks allo lokta in water and caustic soda, which is then washed, processed, and left to dry. Managing director and owner Mala Thapa Magar inspects the dried yarns. Sumitra Shrestha (left) rolls the yarn into balls.



PICS: AMIR JOSHI

SAHINA SHRESTHA

Starting with a modest investment of Rs 500,000, Mala Thapa Magar has managed to turn her small allo business into a profitable company worth Rs 3 million in just four years. Magar and a family friend first set up Himalayan Allo Udhyog in Balaju in 2009, today it produces five to six tons of allo - Himalayan nettle - fibre every month and provides employment to over 20 locals at three factories in Budhanilkantha, Basundhara, and Boudha.

The 24-year-old sociology graduate initially wanted to become a social worker and volunteered at a school for orphans. But after she saw that it was possible to run a business that looked beyond immediate profit and worked for the larger good of the community, she took the risk. "In the beginning it was hard. Not many people trusted me due to my age. But now I have loyal clients who have complete faith in our product," she explains. "I couldn't have done all this on my own, I have a very supportive team." Shree Lal Bogati, who has been involved in the textile industry for more than 30 years, helps Magar buy raw material and sell the fibre, while Khadak Bogati has been managing the factories for the past year.

Himalayan buys raw allo known as allo lokta from farmers in rural Darchula, Bajhang, Mugu, and Manang. The factory in Budhanilkantha is almost completely staffed by local women who are paid Rs 6,000 a month on average. Twenty-two-year-old Tulsī Thapa who is originally from Okhaldhunga has been working here for three months and says the numerous skills she has acquired

in a short time will make it easier to find employment in the future.

Ganga Chaudary, 31, from Narayanthan worked at a school for eight years before joining the company a few months ago. "Although the work here is a little difficult than at the school, the environment is good and my co-workers are very friendly," she explains. Housewife Sumitra Shrestha, 46, too is thrilled to

be earning a good income and learning new skills. She says: "It is better to work than to sit idle at home."

Himalayan Allo does not have a retail shop or an online outlet at the moment, most of the business is carried out by word of mouth. While carpet makers are the company's biggest clients, handicraft shops including Sana Hasthakala in Kupondol and Blue

Diamond, Thamel are also regular customers. With monthly sales averaging Rs 800,000, Himalayan's products reach as far as Korea and there are plans of expanding to Japan.

In the next few months the factories in Basundhara and Boudha will be closed down and the entire production will move to Budhanilkantha as Magar and her team look to broaden their

identity. "Right now we are just manufacturing fibre and fabrics which other companies use to make finished products. We want to start making our own clothes and accessories with the Himalayan Allo Udhyog tag so that we become an instantly recognisable brand," says a beaming Magar. 🇳🇵

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v-chitra/Honda Amaze/13

Ujyalo Birganj

A young public health graduate lights up villages in Tarai with bottles of water and bleach

AMIR JOSHI

When 26-year-old Anudha Mishra (*pic, below*) learned about My Shelter Foundation's 'A litre of light' project during one of her classes, her thoughts immediately turned to Nepal where large sections of the population still live in darkness. The technology developed by MIT students is not only simple, but environmentally friendly and affordable. Plastic bottles are filled with bleach, covered by metal sheets, and tucked into roofs. When sunlight hits the bottle, the water refracts the light and provides about as much illumination as a 55-watt light bulb (*see box*).

My Shelter first started installing these makeshift lights in 20 cities across the Philippines in 2002. Today the project has helped illuminate hundreds of homes of poor families in Argentina, Peru, Bangladesh, and India. Determined to replicate its success in her home country, Mishra, a public health graduate from the University of Colorado, began Ujyalo.

As a participant of Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) University in Missouri earlier this year, Mishra had the opportunity to network and learn from other young entrepreneurs as well as experts. While CGI provided her training in skills needed to run the project, money for Ujyalo was raised through donations online.

Mishra decided to base the pilot project in the Dom community of Birganj after Ujyalo's baseline survey showed that majority of people in

this area lived in dark, damp, windowless homes. "I know the energy crisis in Nepal is too large to be solved by a few hundred bottle bulbs," she admits. "But there are communities in Nepal that live in absolute darkness even during the day. We want to make their lives a little better."

Once in Nepal, Mishra and her Ujyalo team partnered with Sano Paila a local NGO which works on improving health, sanitation, and social infrastructure in the district. But even before they could begin, they discovered a shortage of used soda bottles in the villages as people there rarely consume soft drinks. The team had to switch to using mineral water bottles, which aren't as sturdy as soda bottles, but still last for three to five years depending on how well they are looked after.

Convincing people to open their homes was the next challenge. "In the beginning locals were not convinced how

a bottle of water and bleach could light up their homes. And they were naturally hesitant to let in strangers to make holes on their roofs. But after a few demonstrations, I think they realised how useful the makeshift lights could be and slowly began warming up to the idea," explains Mishra.

Within three weeks in June, Ujyalo and Sano Paila installed 130 lights in three wards of Birganj. To give locals a sense of ownership and involvement in the project, a carpenter from the community was hired and trained to fix bulbs on rooftops and help with the long-term maintenance of bottles. Home-owners for their part will have to clean the bottles regularly and replace them every three or four years.

Says Mishra, "Ujyalo is not just about providing light. It's about training locals in new techniques so that they can generate sustainable energy at the grassroots level even with limited resources. They don't have to wait for years for the government's million dollar projects to come through."

Mishra who is currently in the US will return to Birganj in October for a follow up. She hopes to expand Ujyalo's reach into other districts in the coming year and wants to turn her small project into a lifelong endeavour to light up more Nepali homes. 📧

www.ujyaloinnepal.wordpress.com
www.sanopaila.org.np
www.aliteroflight.org

nepalitimes.com

A Litre of Light



AMIR JOSHI

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1.5 litre pet soda bottle
 Galvanised iron (GI) or steel sheet
 Rubber sealant
 Bleach
 Filtered water

HOW IT'S DONE

- Step 1:** Add 10ml of bleach to a soda bottle filled with distilled water.
- Step 2:** Cut approximately 9x10 inches of GI sheet and draw two circles at the centre. Cut a hole out of the inner circle.
- Step 3:** Cut the 1cm difference radially from the second circle, making strips. Bend the strips upwards, perpendicular to the sheet.
- Step 4:** Insert the bottle into the GI sheet. Apply rubber sealant on the strips above and around the area below to protect the bottle from falling. Let it dry.
- Step 5:** Cut a hole in the roof with a circumference similar to the bottle's.
- Step 6:** Place the bottle into the hole.
- Step 7:** Drill four nails on each corner of the bottle bulb.
- Step 8:** Apply rubber sealage around the edges of the sheet of the bottle to avoid leakage.
- Step 9:** Place a protective plastic tube on the bottle cap and apply rubber sealant.

SANJOG MANANDHAR

LIVING their DREAMS

Bhutanese refugees in the US are determined to carve out a better life on foreign soil

JANGBU SHERPA in SAN FRANCISCO

After Bhutan evicted 100,000 its Nepali speaking population in the early 1990s, the refugees settled in camps in eastern Nepal. Countless negotiations between Bhutan and Nepal only resulted in failure. Finally in 2008 eight countries agreed to take in the displaced Lhotsampas. More than 71,000 refugees have been resettled, nearly 90 per cent of them in the United States as of September last year. Another 35,000 are waiting for their turn to find a permanent home.

Dal Bahadur Khatri is among the thousands who fled to Nepal two decades ago. After living in tiny shacks at the overcrowded camps in Jhapa, Khatri was relieved when he learnt he would be moving to the US.

"I can finally lead a safe and secure life and that's something I had never experienced before," says an emotional Khatri. Today he is preparing for a PhD in neuroscience at the North Carolina Central University and aspires to land a federal job. "This land is full of opportunities so I am not scared to dream," he says.

Many young people like Khatri who were resettled in America have left behind their turbulent past for a fresh start. "I always knew education was the key to success," says 19-year-old Ganesh Sharma who came to the US in 2009. A hardworking student, Sharma was selected for the highly competitive Gates Millennium scholarship which receives more than 1,000 applicants each year. The scholarship will cover all his



Dal Bahadur Khatri



Yug Dawadi

expenses for his four year undergraduate degree in aerospace engineering.

The frail bamboo huts with leaky plastic roofs at Khudunabari refugee camps never deterred Yug Dawadi from working hard in school. He supported his education by



Tej Mishra

tutoring local kids. But even for such a bright student life in Nepal was very difficult. He was refused admission at a medical school because he didn't possess a citizenship card. "The hardships I went through in Nepal inspires me to work harder to achieve

my goals," says Dawadi. His perseverance has finally paid off and he is now pursuing a master's degree in medical science at Idaho State University. "There are plenty of opportunities awaiting us here," he adds.

Like Dawadi, Tej Mishra who wanted to study microbiology was refused admission in Nepali colleges for the exact same reason. Mishra is currently completing a master's degree in public health at Boston University. Looking back at the 18 harsh years he spent in refugee camp, he says life in Massachusetts feels surreal: "It still feels like a dream sometimes."

While many have given up hopes of returning to Bhutan choosing instead to focus on their lives in America, few like Mishra haven't forgotten their homeland. Says Mishra: "Even though Nepali-Bhutanese are scattered all over the world, we will not let our voices die out and will continue to speak against the injustices unleashed by Bhutan."

nepalitimes.com

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日本語話せませす

EVENTS



I WAS WORTH 50 SHEEP, a simple and moving story of Sabere, an Afgan girl and her family's struggle to survive. 5 July, 6.45pm, Bikalpa Art Center, Arunthapa Chok, Jhamsikhel, (01)5013524

Government of Peace, a public lecture by Dr. Ranabir Samaddar, Director of the Calcutta Research Group. Free, 5 July, 3 pm, Hotel Annapurna, Durbar Marg



MEET AND GREET, an interactive session with Anil Chitrakar, author of *Take the Lead-Nepal's Future has Begun*. Rs 500, 5 July, 5pm, Salt & Pepper Restolounge, Pokhara, Reservation: 463484

Troubadours-Poetry on the move, enjoy a poetic evening with verses of Madhav Prasad Ghimire, Majul Nepal, Manu Majil and many more.

5 July, 5.30pm onwards, Imageark Gallery, Kulimha Tole, Lalitpur, (01) 5006665

Biggest Yes+ course, build up your confidence, clear your mind, learn to concentrate, and manage time. 1 to 6 July, 6 to 9 am or 3 to 6 pm, United World Trade Centre, Tripureswor



CINEMANDU, watch Nepali movie Sanghuro and interact with the makers and the cast after screening. 5 July, 4pm, Nepal Bharat Library, Nepal Airlines Building, New Road Gate

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

Book collection, help Phan Nepal collect educational materials for the youths of 5 districts. July 14, 7 to 8.30 am, Santwona Multiple Campus, Shantinagar, infophan.blogspot.com/

Raw Barz, be a part of the first rap battle league. Rs 200, 6 July, 2pm, Peri Peri Restaurant, Sanepa, www.facebook.com/xclusivezertainment

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

Cook book, learn to cook authentic Indian cuisine, tips and tricks for everyday cooking and interact with food enthusiasts and experts.

Rs 1500, 10 July, 1 to 3pm, The Yellow Chilli, Tripureshwor, for registration: 9808060131/9803226840

AI and Storytelling, meet people from various walks of life, explore and discuss the role of the Nepali media in facilitating the changing political scenario of Nepal. 14 to 18 July, 11am to 2 pm, Sindhuli, Nepal

Motor Rally, ride your way from Kathmandu to Pokhara in a treasure hunt and get a chance to win a free trip for two to Thailand.

Rs 9,999, 13 to 14 July, Ford Service Station, Swoyambu, register till 5 July, www.facebook.com/events/146634092196352



STROBIST PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP, take out your DSLRs and explore the studio world with Ganga Sagar Rai. Rs 5000, 7 to 12 July, 7 to 9.30am, Folio Magazine - Studio, Dhalko, (01)4244348

Images, seven students explore the photographic medium and experiment with ideas of memory, home, family and incorporate illustration, design, and videos in their work. 5 to 14 July, 11am to 6pm, Bikalpa Art Centre, Jhamsikhel

DINING



TASS AND TAWA, savour a wide variety of Nepali meat dishes and reserve your palate for the heavenly Chusta. Pulchowk, Kathmandu

New Tushita Restaurant, relaxing ambience and good food. Don't miss out on its penne with creamy bacon and mushroom sauce. Lajimpat, (01)44432957

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



SAL'S PIZZA, almost round, almost cheap, always delicious, the cheesiest pizzas in town. Lajimpat, behind Jazz Upstairs

Yellow Chilli, enjoy renowned Indian chef Sanjeev Kapoor's signature Indian delicacies and a variety of other mouthwatering dishes. Thapathali

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

New Orleans Cafe, buckwheat waffle, pancakes, lowfat yogurt, and music on Sundays. Patan

Délices de France, belt out the blues in the free participation concert and try the special menu. 6 July, 8pm onwards



KOTETSU, authentic Japanese dishes that cater to your needs and taste buds. Lajimpat

Krishnarpan, a specialty Nepali restaurant that serves 6 to 22 courses of authentic Nepali meal. The Dwarika's Hotel, Battisputali, 01-4479488



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



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MUSIC



MONKEY TEMPLE LIVE, listen to songs from their second album *Shades of Grey* and covers of *Incubus*, *Wolfmother* among others. 5 July, 7.45pm, Irish Pub, Lajimpat

Disharmony, bang your heads to the loudest, noisiest and heaviest musical extravaganza, a combination of hardcore, death metal and alternative rock. Rs 200, 7 July, 2pm, Tamu Dhi, Naya Bajar, Kathmandu, www.facebook.com/events/418470058256035/



HOUSE OF MUSIC, a musical evening in the company of Kutumba feat Hari Maharjan with a special performance by world renowned Bansuri player Manose Singh. Rs 300, 6 July, 7.30 pm, House of Music, Thamel, 9851075172

Drummer's day out, watch drummers take the center stage. Rs 100, 13 July, 2.30 pm onwards, Moksh Bar, Patan

GETAWAYS

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



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*



CYCLE FOR A CAUSE

Kathmandu Cycle City 2020, Cycle City Network Nepal is raising funds for Lokmaya, a 9 month old little girl from Butwal suffering from anal atresia. Lokmaya will be operated at the Green City Hospital.

KCC 2020 is organising a cycle rally to help the financially deprived family pay for the child's education and further health support. The cycle stand at the Green City Hospital will also be inaugurated at the event. Donations are welcome.

Registration fees: Rs 100
Date: 6 July 2013
Time: 8 am
Meeting point: Green City Hospital, Basundhara
Route: Green City Hospital- Kalanki- Ekantakuna- Jawalakhel- Bricks Café Kupondole

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Reaching out



With the aim to help the flood victims in Darchula, Bardiya and Kailali, Himalayan Climate Initiative's Youth platform- The Gen-nep in collaboration with Television Artist Federation of Nepal (TAFON) is organising a 10-day fund raising campaign.

The campaign which is set to begin from 6 July aims to collect funds both in cash and kind through a series of fundraising events in schools and colleges and musical events in Kathmandu. The collected funds will be handed over to Nepal Red Cross Society.

Date: 6 July
Venue: Basantapur, Kathmandu
Time: 2 to 6 pm
www.gennep.org
www.facebook.com/events/374706825964902/

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World War Z



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

A film about zombies is always improved if it is actually a film about many other things as well. This summer's *World War Z* starring Brad Pitt, though long delayed in its release due to chronic script problems (it is now advertised as being 'loosely' adapted from a novel of the same name by Max Brooks) is therefore surprisingly intense and really quite good.

Like Steven Soderbergh's excellent *Side Effects* (2013), which was reviewed previously in this column, *World War Z* is a film that is a bit of a hybrid. While undeniably following in the footsteps of the best of zombie lore, the film is part horror, part science fiction, and part medical thriller. Having not read the literature on which this movie is based, I cannot say for sure how much it deviates from its original source material, but I can say that though the film went through several re-writes, in the end the screenplay is so much more sophisticated than what one might expect from a film about the walking dead.

As anyone who is immersed in popular culture today will know, the world of mainstream cinema and fiction has lately been dominated by vampire, werewolf, and, most recently, zombie mythologies. Most are mediocre hack products, very few are fairly watchable. I am happy to say that this film, though it could have easily fallen into the former category, has instead sought, however humbly to transcend its own pulpy roots.

This is party achieved by the toned down, excellent, non-swaggering performance by the main character played by Pitt. While I will not go so far as to say that he is an anti-hero, he is nonetheless incredibly effective without his usual "I'm a very attractive, very successful actor who is also married to Angelina Jolie" persona.

This is a film about fairly ordinary people who are asked to do extraordinary things and they do them because they have to for the sake of decency. There are no theatrical heroics here and Pitt's character, Gerry Lane, although he was once a crack investigator for the United Nations, is now just a dad who makes pancakes for breakfast for his two daughters and then does the washing up.

It is only when the family are

on their way to school that the film begins to resemble the as promised full-fledged zombie fest that will keep you clutching the edge of your seat, nibbling the ends of your fingertips, and occasionally even putting your fingers in your ears so that your heart doesn't jump out of your chest.

The very first glimpse of zombies is accomplished in a masterly set piece when the Lane family is in the car, on the streets of central Philadelphia, in bumper-to-bumper traffic. All of a sudden, all hell breaks loose: cars crash into each other, cops start running away from something as yet unseen, and in an incredibly effective aerial view shot, we see a swarm of fast moving humanoid creatures tearing into crowds of petrified people who are as slow as they are bewildered.

There are many such scenes, on rooftops jumping into helicopters, on tarmacs, and very memorably in the city of Jerusalem, where Gerry eventually finds himself, on his mission to trace the origin of the outbreak.

World War Z has its extremely entertaining moments, and dare I say it, scenes of real blockbuster material genius, elevating it from what could have been one of those soporific run of the mill disasters into a film that one might even want to go see again while it's still in theatres. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer



GIZMO by YANTRICK

Blown away

Successor to the immensely popular Bowers & Wilkins Zeppelin, Zeppelin Air is the benchmark against which all iPod/iPhone speaker systems are compared. But earmarked at Rs 60,000, that benchmark does not come cheap. Blessed with a brilliantly unique design to go with its rich sound, Zeppelin Air is well worth your money and your ear.

Capable of streaming music wirelessly from your iDevice (Airplay enabled), or a Mac/PC running iTunes, Zeppelin Air now frees your iPhone/iPod from its previously docked position and lets you control it without having to walk to the Zeppelin every time. Setting up the wireless Airplay feature might be bit confusing for the less tech savvy among us, but should not be a problem if you follow the instruction manual diligently. Once you have set the Airplay feature, you will forever renounce the 'physical' method of playing music.



Besides Airplay, has also undergone under the hood changes that, while indiscernible to the eyes, are certainly a treat for your ears. If you do not own an Airplay enabled iDevice, or an iDevice altogether, then despair not, you can always dock the older/classic iDevice models to the speaker, or connect your music via the traditional 3.5mm audio jack.

Sound - crisp, detailed, and well-balanced - is what makes this black beauty really stand out from the pretenders. Projection too is extremely impressive given its size and your neighbours will agree. Zeppelin's rich tone and healthy bass make listening to any genre from classical to rock, pop to hip hop, and R&B to electronic enjoyable. Your music has never been heard like this.

The downside for those of us in Nepal is finding a Zeppelin here. Pleading a relative or friend who lives abroad to get one for you might be the cheapest way right now, but be aware the Air is heavy at six kg and said relative/friend will literally be burdened by your 'euta favour'. Select gadget shops in Kathmandu will order one for you from Hong Kong, but also charge an extra Rs 5,000-10,000 for the 'service' along with a waiting period of upto three weeks and the same goes for Harilo. But Yantrick can assure you, Zeppelin is well worth the money and the wait. 🇳🇵

Yantrick's verdict: Zeppelin Air is the best designed, most technologically advanced, and best sounding iDevice/iTunes music system in the market today and offers significant value for money despite its serious price tag.

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Viplob Pratik bares his soul

Let's face it, translations of Nepali poetry have been done too poorly for too long. In fact, are poems translatable at all? Can the sound of words in a language lend itself to be verbalised into another? Given the existing translations of Nepali originals to English available on book shelves, the answer is no.

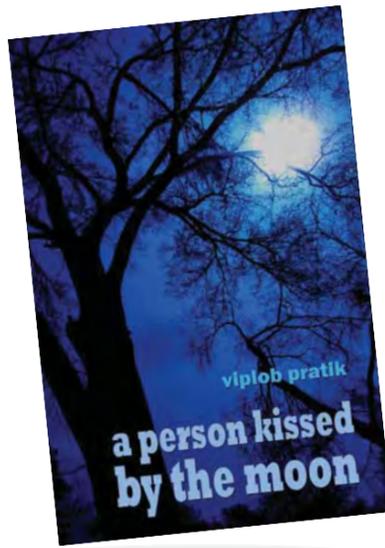
Exceptions would be translations of Mohan Koirala, Bhupi Sherchan as well as the book *Himalayan Voices* by Michael Hutt of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Although there is a lot of mediocrity around, Nepali poetry attained a high degree of sophistication in recent years, but this is not reflected in the translations that would give it a wider global audience. The conflict and the violence unleashed on Nepal's psyche set off a burst of creativity, but it is confined to the Nepali speaking world.

In the foreword to Viplob Pratik's new collection of translated poetry, *A Person Kissed by the Moon*, which he helped edit,

Turkish poet Elif Köksal says: 'Translators are traitors, as the saying goes. Translators and editors of poetry, unfortunately so.' But Köksal, who is the author of *Homelike in Kathmandu* adds: 'Viplob Pratik's melodious, comforting Nepali may not translate perfectly, but there is something else, something precious in his writing that is worth the treason.'

Indeed, Pratik has a melancholy that pervades like a sweet ache through the lines of the 30 or so of his poems translated from Nepali to English. Pratik became a poet when he was a child and was acclaimed as a poetry prodigy. And if it is true that the voice of words in a poem reflects the real-life personality of the poet, then Pratik is proof of this. His poetry is full of existential angst, wavering resolve, moral doubts, unanswerable questions about chance, needlessly self-effacing humility, and of life and after.

Manjushree Thapa, whose translations of Pratik's verses are included in this book, once wrote: 'How to write of sadness without



bathos? How to speak eternal truths without generalisations? What kinds of line-by-line movements might make a poem fresh and unexpected? These are the craft and vision questions that face Pratik now ...'

A Person Kissed by the Moon contains lines that resound long after you have set it aside for some mundane chore. The sound of voices echoes in your mind and even in translation, it carries the urgency of a Nepali appeal. There are words of a poet's place in the universe, amidst the mystery and beauty of nature and overwhelmed by the bestial violence of war. These lines are translated by Jyoti Thapa and bring back haunting memories of the nightmare of conflict:

Save the very man you have tortured
So that breathing his last
He will signal you with his eyebrows to
finish him off
And bless you for taking his life without
delay.

This is how it should be
This is how you have to make your mountain
of corpses
Set the blood-river flowing; bring about
the monsoon of tears.
This is how you win the war.
This is how you win the war.

Pratik's words have a hesitancy that reflects his humble manners and ways. But he is also brave as he confronts his demons head on, using his words as a sabre as he opens up his own soul for all to see. This is Manjushree Thapa's translation of the *Undefeated Person*:

I'm eager to hold out a costly tray
decked with tears strung as finely as
pearls
I stand alone in the field
The moon is alone/the sun is alone/the
earth is alone
I stand alone in the field
Available in Amazon

Kunda Dixit

nepalitimes.com

Doubt and the drive to write, by
Manjushree Thapa #75



SOMEPLACE ELSE



PICS: PM

It's not easy to miss Tushita. Housed in a two-storied traditional Nepali building inspired by old Newari architecture, complete with oil tiles and beautifully carved wooden windows, overlooking a courtyard, the restaurant stands out in Lajimpat's concrete jungle.

Taken in by the charm, we went in believing Tushita specialises in local Nepali cuisine. But like most restaurants in the capital, the menu here is a mix of Nepali, Indian, Chinese, and continental with a selection of popular Nepali snacks. Ordering only a plate of the good old chicken chili (Rs 220) for starters, we jumped straight to the main course. We were spared the usual ketchup-laden chicken chili served at most places around

Kathmandu. The sauce was freshly done and had the right amount of spiciness. The chicken pieces were soft enough to cut through with a fork. Only glitch, in the last helping of my boneless chicken chili, I discovered a bone.

For the main course, we first ordered Tushita chicken (Rs 375). Tushita chicken is chicken breast stuffed with bacon and cheese with a serving of fries and salad on the side. The chicken breast was crispy on the outside but tender inside. A mouthful of the combination was heavenly. The mild taste of cheese worked well with the saltiness of the bacon and a generous amount of both had been used for the stuffing. The shredded bacon made it easy to cut the portion. The salad - fresh vegetables dressed with a dash

TUSHITA RESTAURANT



of lemon - though was not too exciting.

Next, we had a chicken sizzler, served with fries and steamed vegetables (Rs 350). The sizzler looked great on the plate, placed on cabbage leaves. The chicken was grilled well and had a smoky taste. We could taste a hint of basil in the mild savoury sauce. The noodles

were soft and complimented the dish.

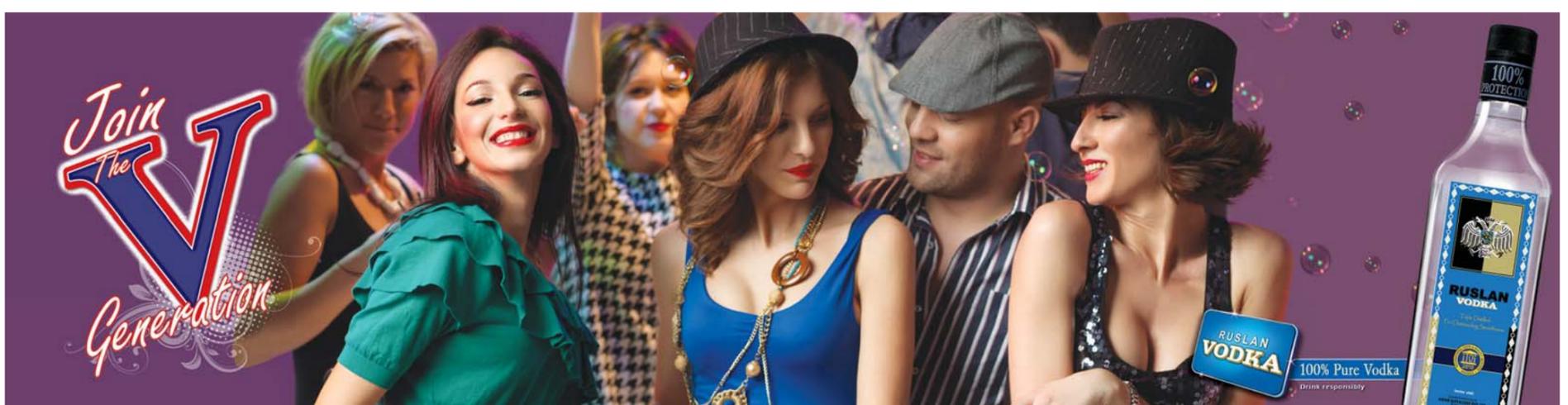
Our next order was a classic macaroni and cheese (Rs 299), which took home the title of 'most disappointing dish of the day'. What we tasted had the sweetness of cinnamon and resembled Nepali kheer more than the simple mac and cheese.

Tushita's saving grace was the grilled chicken and cheese crepe (Rs 300), served with salad. Although the menu had a selection of sweet crepes, the savoury ones looked inviting. The crepe was surprisingly well done and not soggy despite a stuffing of the sumptuous chicken inside. Melting cheese on top,

crisp crepe, and chicken with caramelised onions, the flavours worked wonderfully together.

Even though the restaurant is right next to Lajimpat's busy main road, it has a quiet ambience and the waiters are very courteous. Though unplanned, our lunch became a celebration of chicken and cheese. On our next visit we want to try Tushita's Indian selection and traditional Nepali lunch set. PM

How to get there: head straight from Lainchor chok to Lajimpat. Tushita is on your right before you reach Hotel Shangrila.



THE KILLER BITE

219 MILLION cases of malaria recorded each year

660,000 malaria related deaths annually

90% of all malaria deaths occur in Africa

Every **60** seconds a child dies from malaria

Malaria mortality rates fell by **26%** around the world between **2000** to **2010**

\$5.1 BILLION needed each year to achieve universal access to malaria interventions

\$2.3 BILLION available in **2011**

79% of Nepalis live in areas with high risk of malaria

National Malaria Eradication Program (NMEP) launched in **1958**

Government to make the country malaria-free by **2026**



SOURCE: WHO MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Guts of the anopheles



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

From the first century to late 19th century the prevailing medical view in Europe blamed foul air (miasma) for malaria. In Italian language malaria means 'bad air'. Outbreaks in densely populated Europe were attributed to miasma from open sewers, dumps, graveyards, and open waste disposal. This notoriously inaccurate understanding of malaria transmission, however, compelled public health authorities to eliminate squalour and make water potable.

In the late 19th century when British doctor Ronald Ross (*pic, right*) suggested that mosquitoes may be responsible for the transmission of malaria he was at widely ridiculed. However Patrick Manson (*pic, left*), a Scotsman and the father of tropical medicine teamed up with Ross to finally identify anopheles mosquito as the carrier of the malaria parasite. The collaboration was not easy as



Manson was based in the UK and Ross was working in Sigur Ghat in South India. Communication through snail mail of that era took months.

Having spent most of his life in India, Ross noted that the incidence of malaria was higher in areas with mosquito infestation. Despite early doubts about the parasites' existence, the doctor had a vague notion that there might be some connection between malaria and mosquitoes. After numerous failed attempts, Ross was almost ready to give up. But Manson kept urging him on from half a world away. Unfortunately, Ross was looking at the wrong species of mosquito called culex which we now know is



responsible for the transmission of Japanese Encephalitis.

Though the duo's work proved revolutionary for medical science, Ross had to make many personal sacrifices. While studying the malaria parasite in Sigur Ghat, he contracted serious malaria. As if that was not enough, he also fell ill with cholera, standard disease of the day in India.

Through year of painstaking observation and trial and error, Ross finally found the malaria bug in the anopheles mosquito which he had identified had bitten some of his patients. This remarkable discovery not only ousted the miasmatic theory, but more importantly led to better disease control and effective treatment.



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HAPPENINGS



BIKRAM RAI

COME TOGETHER: Farmers celebrate rice planting festival in Bhaktapur on 15 Asar, Saturday.



DEVAKI BISTA

HOWZAT: Captain of the Nepali cricket team Paras Khadka (*left*) is awarded Pulsar Player of the Year (male) during an event organised by Nepal Sports Journalists Forum at Academy Hall, Kamaladi on Tuesday.

READERS' PHOTO



JOANNE WELLINGTON

BUCOLIC AND BEAUTIFUL: A tourist enjoys the scenery near Machim village with locals.

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Periphery of news

Despite professional hazards, local journalists continue to play crucial watchdog role. But at what cost?



BY THE WAY

Anurag Acharya



ANURAG ACHARYA

DHANKUTA – In the transparent monsoon air the view from the quiet hill station of Bhedetar is majestic. You can see all the way to Itahari and the wide swathe of the Kosi as it breaks through into the plains.

The scenery provides the perfect backdrop for a group of journalists on a retreat here to review the working conditions and role of the district media in a country where politics seems perennially stuck.

More than 20 journalists from 14 districts had come together under the auspices of the Centre for Investigative Journalism this week to see how they could apply the skills of in-depth reporting to their setting. But it was clear that the journalists already had vast experience in the practical tricks of the trade they had learnt in the harsh world of rural media.

“I never had any formal

training, but I learnt it the hard way, by doing things. Nobody taught me how to report, write or edit news, but I have learned to do all three,” explains Hari Bahadur Lamjel who reports, edits, and publishes *Dhankuta Daily*.

Lamjel is clear about his sustenance policy and says he makes a living by publishing advertorials and depends on nominal endowment provided by the government to media to cover printing costs. The circulation income barely makes up for administrative costs, he says.

Dhankuta Daily is an example of how most local print newspapers in eastern Nepal with a few hundred hard copy circulation still survive despite the increasing penetration of national dailies, little advertising revenue, and plummeting subscriptions.

Nabina Kharel, a reporter at *Purwanchal Dainik* who surveyed media companies in Jhapa recently found a woeful lack of professional training for journalists. “Most reporters did not have adequate academic qualification or basic

training in news reporting,” she recounts, “but it is also true that local media houses seemed not too keen on hiring qualified journalists or investing in trained staff.”

Manoj Bishwakarma who writes for *Fight Daily* published from Belbari of Morang quit journalism after finding he could not survive on the income. Bishwakarma returned to journalism after being dissatisfied in his other job, but admits he may quit again if things don't work out. “You can't eat job satisfaction,” he told me.

Part of the problem lies with publishers, both local and national, who exploit journalists and use them as marketing agents. “They don't pay us for months and when we ask for our salary, they tell us to fetch advertisements, increase subscription or recover debts from the market,” a reporter who doubles as an ad collector for a Dhankuta newspaper confided.

Many journalists admitted that they had to moonshine and work on partial contracts for more than one media outlet because the employers were unwilling to hire full-timers and pay them monthly

minimum wage prescribed by the government.

At a time when the national media is obsessed with Kathmandu politics, role of regional media in covering local issues has become more crucial. But the costs of working or reporting from remote districts are high and not just financially.

Last year, investigative reporter Trishna Kunwar was attacked by a criminal gang when she was on an assignment to report illegal logging in community forests in western Nepal. Similarly, a journalist from Panchthar had to request a TV station not to telecast an investigative report about timber smugglers after he was threatened by them.

In Kathmandu, media watchdogs talk about the need for reporters to exhibit integrity and credibility to do honest and factual reporting. But here on the ground, the hard reality is that reporters are under too much pressure to survive to take extra risks. Little has been done at the policy level by the state and at the professional level by media owners to enhance competence of the reporters, as well as ensure their physical and job security.

Nepal's grassroots democracy has been dead for 15 years and whatever little accountability exists is largely because of rural radio and community media holding up the tenets of a free press. But their very survival is in question in a fragile media periphery. 🇳🇵

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Road from nowhere to nowhere



SONAM LAMA

SONAM LAMA in GORKHA

Nepal's obsession with 'development' and 'growth' is causing enormous collateral damage to its culture and heritage.

In a hurry to improve access in this mountainous land, we are following a development model that is obsolete and a copy paste of so-called 'developed' countries. The most glaring example of this is the spread of new roads to once-remote valleys.

One of the easiest ways to argue for a development budget these days is to propose a road, even if it from nowhere to nowhere. Driven by greed and corruption, roads are being

built where one already exists and even if it would end up destroying an area's culture and tourism prospects.

A road comes with the propaganda of development and creates the illusion among locals of manna from heaven. Aided and abetted by unscrupulous contractors in the district capital, roads have destroyed much of what used to be Nepal's unique tourism selling point in the Annapurnas and other Himalayan valleys.

Undoubtedly, villagers in remote areas would want roads because they get access to markets, health services, education, and makes it easier to get to and from the city. But the way the roads are being built in Nepal is bringing



little development, mostly destruction.

The government wants to build eight strategic highways under the North-South Transit Road Development (NSTRD) to serve as trade arteries between China and India and also to use river corridors to connect Nepal with Tibet. Even though the road through the Manaslu Conservation Area and the Tsum Valley (*see map*) is not even included in the NSTRD, it has already been sanctioned and construction has begun

from the south.

Budi Gandaki to Larkya Pass has now become the third most popular trekking route in Nepal as roads have destroyed other areas. Some 10,000 people, including 4,000 Tsumpa who live in this isolated and sacred side-valley of the Budi Gandaki behind Ganesh Himal will be affected by the road. The Gorkha district administration has sanctioned a road up the Tsum Valley to the China border.

No one asked the Tsumpa about the road, decisions were

taken by local politicians and contractors far away in Gorkha. There was no effort to organise prior consultation, when the alignment started being surveyed earlier this year. No one tried to find out the economic, cultural and environmental impact of the road on this fragile valley and to minimise the damage. About 3km of the road has now been surveyed and the alignment slices through chortens, monasteries, and mani walls of historical and

Making inroads

PRANAB MAN SINGH in KHOTANG

The excavator had clawed a road to Bakshila of Khotang district a few days earlier and the bazar was finally coming of age. Although an 18km stretch connecting the town to the Midhill Highway is yet to be handed over, impatient residents are already using the unfinished road and it is a source of pride. Carved through the mountains by an excavator, however, the road looks unlikely to survive this monsoon season.

Unlike most villages in Khotang, (*see map*) Bakshila is not homogenous and the ethnic and religious mix seems to be preventing the town from working together. Communities north of Bakshila have got together to ensure electricity and drinking water supply, but the town



ALBAN VON STOCKHAUSEN

itself has no power and water is scarce. Work on the road to Bakshila was started once the regional highway reached nearby Jalpa four years ago through the combined effort of three surrounding VDCs which topped off the district-level budget. But the lack of money means it will remain a dirt track for now.

"We can't upgrade the road unless we get some support from donors or the central government," says local road promoter, Ratna Mani Rai. The new road is not the only one coming to town, another village-level road is being built to connect Bakshila to the district capital in Diktel. To avoid duplication, the villages could have pooled resources to build one good road, but as elsewhere politics and corruption take their toll. Still, Bakshila residents hope to capitalise on their popular Wednesday market and become

New roads are changing the economy of previously inaccessible districts of eastern Nepal

When greed drives roads, it can destroy the economy, culture and environment of fragile and remote valleys like Tsum



MADHU CHHETRI

cultural significance, some of which are 2,000 years old. Tsum Valley is known as the Beyul Kyimolung, the holy hidden valley of happiness, first described by the Guru Rimpoche Padmasambhava in the eighth century. Milarepa meditated in the caves of Piren Phu and there are centuries old nunneries here. The valley is part of the sacred Kyimolung circumambulation of Siringi Himal. Mustang and Manang suffered vandalism, theft and destruction of their Tibetan

Buddhist and Bon Po heritage after roads were built, a similar fate awaits Tsum.

The road is supposed to link India and China via Nepal, but the 5,093m high Ngula Dhajen pass is covered with snow and ice for more than four months in a year and there is no road yet on the Chinese side. Not only is this road environmentally and culturally destructive, it doesn't even make economic sense. Like elsewhere in Nepal, this is a road driven by greed and ambition of lowland politicians

a trade hub in the area. Farmers hope they can sell produce without having to pay for porters and mules to carry the load to Diktel. Bakshila hopes to sell cardamom worth Rs 40 million a year once the road is fully operational.

A further four hour walk north is Sungdel and talk of the approaching road has already got residents excited. Preparations are already underway to set up a committee to extend the road there and there are disagreements about two proposed alignments: one along the ridgeline and another one passing the local school. Before the roads started snaking up the mountains, Sungdel was the most remote part of Khotang: a two-day walk from Diktel and three days from the closest airport in Lamidada. Isolated and neglected, nothing ever happened in Sungdel and the government was virtually absent. Today, the dZi Foundation has tied up with a local group called Creative Porters Society to start community projects to improve livelihoods through farming. Five years ago, hardly any vegetable was grown

in the three villages around Sungdel. Farmers grew millet, maize, potatoes, wheat, barley and buckwheat on rainfed terraces. Now, they are growing tomatoes, onions, radish, cabbages, cauliflowers, and broccoli.

With improved nutrition, children became healthier and the farmers' perception of themselves changed. What they once thought as barren land suddenly held possibilities. Sungdel is



ROAD BLOCKS: The remote and sacred valley of Tsum (*left*) lies in the Himalayan rainshadow. The Valley, also known as Beyul Kyimolung, is a popular pilgrimage route but its ancient foot trails and monasteries are threatened by a proposed new road where surveyors have left red markings (*far left*). The new road also threatens the popular Budi Gandaki trekking route.

and contractors who want to profit from the government infrastructure budget by building a harmful road.

Experience from the Annapurna area has shown that roads can help locals connect to markets, spread health and education, but it must be done in consultation with local people, respect local heritage sites, reduce the harm to the environment, and maximise the benefits of trade and tourism. The current alignment would not just destroy heritage sites in Tsum, but wreck the trekking route up the Budi Gandaki.

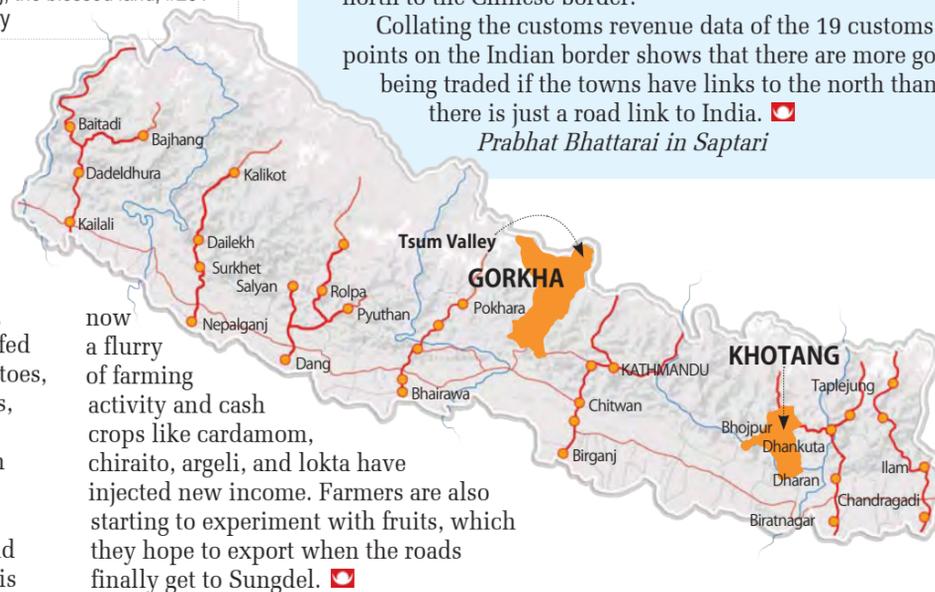
The locals of Tsum are not against the road per se, they are against the politicised top-down decision making without prior consent of the locals, and a complete lack of responsibility for the environment, cultural, and economic impacts.

If the Tsum road is to go ahead, the locals insist on an alternative alignment that protects their holy sites and a vital trekking route. 🇳🇵

Sonom Lama is a native of Tsum Valley and an architect who specialised in emergency housing in Germany and Spain.

nepalitimes.com

In the mountain of the soul, #644
Kyimolung, the blessed land, #201
See gallery



now a flurry of farming activity and cash crops like cardamom, chiraito, argeli, and lokta have injected new income. Farmers are also starting to experiment with fruits, which they hope to export when the roads finally get to Sungdel. 🇳🇵

Cash from crops

A road can be a double-edged sword: it can wipe out local products because of cheap imports from the city, or it can provide access to the market for local produce.

As the roads reach remote VDCs in Khotang, farmers see the potential of investing in cash crops. But they still face bureaucratic hurdles, fluctuating prices for crops, and exploitative middlemen.

Lakpa Sherpa (*left*) in Sungdel says the road will make it easier to sell his medicinal herbs, but most other farmers are unaware of market rates, transport cartels,

and official paperwork. When a local forestry official tried to ask Sherpa for a bribe recently, he organised other farmers to stage a protest.

Now, farmers from surrounding VDCs have set up the Srijansil Jadibuti Production Cooperative to collect and sell produce. The cooperative gives farmers strength in numbers, allows them to bargain for a good price, and to confront corrupt officials.

Supported by CPS and the dZi, the cooperative expects itself to be self-sustaining by next year and turning a profit in the near future.

Explains Gyan Bahadur Bhattarai of dZi: "The idea is to protect the interest of farmers to strengthen their collective bargaining power and insulate them from corruption."

Roads to riches

The factor determining how prosperous the country's 20 Tarai districts are depends on whether or not they have roads connecting them to adjacent hill districts, a study has shown. More than half of Nepal's population lives in the plains and their standard of living is directly linked to whether or not their district has road access to the north.

This shows that the economies of the Pahad, Himal, and Tarai districts are inextricably linked. When they are connected to the hills to the north, there is more economic activity and more customs collection from points on the Indian border. Of the 20 districts in the Tarai, nine (Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Bara, Parsa, Chitwan, Rupandehi, Dang and Banke) have had road links to the north for decades and these are far ahead of the other plains districts. The 11 districts which are not connected yet, the pace of development is slower, such as in the eastern Tarai.

One example of this is Saptari and its capital, Rajbiraj, which has been overtaken by Biratnagar and Chandragadi because of its lack of road access to hill districts directly to the north. Madhesi stalwart Gajendra Narayan Singh understood this and had long advocated a highway linking Rajbiraj with Udaypur and on to Diktel of Khotang district. But the planners in Kathmandu ignored him. However, Saptari is now poised to reap the benefit of new roads to Okhaldhunga, Bhojpur, and Khotang. "Once those roads are built and we construct the link road to the Indian border at Kunaili, Rajbiraj will see an economic boom," says Satrugan Rauniyar of the Saptari Chamber of Commerce.

Similarly, it is because Ramechhap and Dolakha in the hills have not been linked to Sarlahi, Mahottari, and Dhanusha in the Tarai that these plains districts have been left so far behind. Even though the BP Highway has linked Kathmandu with Janakpur and Sindhuli, the lack of a bridge over the Sun Kosi has obstructed economic activity.

Comparing the economies of Bara and Parsa with Rautahat makes this even starker. Bara and Parsa are directly linked to Kathmandu and Chitwan, whereas Rautahat has no road links north of the East-West Highway. "Since the fast-track highway to Kathmandu is still some years away, we will have to wait to take benefit from linkages with the hills," says Dharmanath Jaiswal, a businessman in Gaur.

It is because it has a highway linking it to the north that Rupandehi is far ahead of neighbouring Kapilbastu and Nawalparasi. Proof of this is the growth of economic activity in Butwal, which is seeing another surge of development after the district got its road link to Gulmi. Another proof is the town of Bardibas which has seen a spurt in activity after the BP Highway connected it to Kathmandu.

When roads link the mountains of Nepal with the Indian trading towns on the border via the Tarai, the plains benefit. The highways benefit farmers in the Tarai and the businessmen in the towns. Says former Finance Secretary Rameswar Khanal: "If you connected Tarai towns with the hills, we can see tremendous growth, imagine how much more progress there would be if we took that road further north to the Chinese border."

Collating the customs revenue data of the 19 customs points on the Indian border shows that there are more goods being traded if the towns have links to the north than if there is just a road link to India. 🇳🇵

Prabhat Bhattarai in Saptari

"CA elections are no good"



BBC Nepali Service, 3 July



Interview with CPN-M Secretary Netra Bikram Chand about his party's plan to boycott and disrupt elections.

BBC: Do you have the power to prevent polls from taking place?

Netra Bikram Chand: We aren't just talking about disrupting elections, we have also said that we will participate in polls if there is a consensual environment.

What kind of consensus will it be if all the progress made to keep this government in place will have to be rolled back?

From the years of conflict to the conclusion of the peace process, our party has played a key role in Nepali politics, how can the country go for polls without our involvement? We will consider running for elections only if there is an all-party agreement on the blueprint of the constitution. We are open to discussing these matters with the government.

But you said you won't hold talks with the government. Are you rethinking your position?

We said we couldn't hold discussions without deciding on a subject. The process through which Khil Raj Regmi came to power was unconstitutional, apolitical, and illegal, so those were our positions then. But since Regmi has

already made some major decisions, our new resolution is to discuss our agendas, the people's agendas, and outline of the constitution.

So when you get back to Kathmandu, the first thing you will do is meet Regmi?

No, no. First we will hold discussions with other parties, then with the president. We have heard that Regmi has also called us for talks. After all that, we will decide.

If the talks are unsuccessful, will you post soldiers at every booth and not let polls take place?

No, nothing about soldiers. Our main goal is to hold discussions and take part in elections. But if they want to sideline us and move ahead, the people will not agree with this. We plan to assemble the masses and send them to the booths. Even BP Koirala told journalists he would make the people prosperous by improving land ownership laws and employment opportunities. Our concerns are the same.

Everyone takes Koirala's name, but one of his main philosophy was holding regular elections. Why are you against this?

We do not oppose elections. But polls that break agreements and invite conflict, like this one, are meaningless. Even the NC took up arms during three elections after the fall of the Panchayat regime. It is not necessarily true that elections are the backbone of democracy, because both Nazis and Fascists came to power through popular vote. Our main point is that this election is against the people's wishes and will invite more trouble.

And after agreeing on a broad outline of the constitution, you want to hold parliament elections?

Yes, yes. Everyone is sick and tired of this intangible constitution and if you look at India, China, and other countries, their constitution was not written by a CA.

You want to write a constitution based on all-party discussions, pass this document, and then contest parliamentary elections?

Yes. If everyone agrees and is serious about our politics and struggles of the last 60 years, I don't see why we can't come up with a constitution based on our discussions. There is a huge difference in understanding among NC, UML leaders, and constitutional experts. How can we hold elections under such circumstances?

So you want to assemble the parties inside a room and then call this congregation's decisions the people's wishes? How is this democracy?

No, I never said that. We have gone to the people so many times now, they have stopped believing in what we say. So what are we going to tell them this time?

WEEKLY BAZAR POLL #18

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 drainage system in cities:

What do you think of the drainage system around your neighbourhood?

Not good **55.8%**
No drainage system **22.8%**
Good **19%**
Don't know **2.4%**

Is your property in danger of being flooded by rainwater or rivers?

Yes **57.6%**
No **35.2%**
Don't know **7.2%**

NEPALI TWEETS

Baburam Bhattarai Follow

औपचारिक पदमा नरहेर पनि देश र जनताको सेवा गर्न सकिन्छ र तिथित अवधिपछि उच्च तहमा रहनेहरूले स्वेच्छिक पदत्याग गर्नु राम्रो हुन्छ भन्ने सोच हो

One can always serve the nation and people even without holding an official post. And I believe after a certain time in power, people should voluntarily step down.

Bhojraj Bhat Follow

बाबुरामभन्दा प्रचण्ड धेरै गुणा ठीक, कमसेकम नबरा त गढलन, सिधै राष्ट्रपति हुन्छु भन्छन बाबुराम राजिनामा गरेर जागी हुन लागेको पनि झंडन ति

Prachanda is way better than Baburam, at least he doesn't shy away from his aspirations to become the president. Besides Bhattarai is not turning into a saint.

Dilli Malla Follow

पेरिसडाँडानिरको हिलो छयापाछयापले असार १५ को रोपाई दिवसै फलप भा जस्तो छ । अति भो अय जनता, कायकता नरुवाऊ ।

The mudslinging at Parisdanda has put 15 Asar's rice planting festivities to shame. Don't make the cadre cry.



Kathmandu Metro(hell)opolitan City

नेपाल Rabinra in Nepal, 30 June

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



"I am here not because I asked God but because the parties could not come to an agreement."

Chairman of the Interim Electoral Council of Ministers, Khil Raj Regmi, Budhabar, 3 July

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NEPAL ACADEMY HALL
Kamaladi, Kathmandu, Nepal.
11 and 12 July 2013

Flying proud

Vijay Lama in Setopati, 31 June

सेतोपट्टी

I am a pilot and when I fly around the region I meet people of various nationalities, ethnicities, and class in my travels. They all identify themselves by their nationality, their nation, and profession. I am inspired to similarly respect my citizenship and identify myself with my nationality. This is why I am hurt when someone says something derogatory about Nepal or Nepalis. And that is also why I stay in Nepal, I will not abandon my Motherland when she needs me most. I will not leave my nation's flag carrier when she needs me most. But I and others like me who want to think positively about Nepal Airlines cannot save it alone. It needs robust political will on the part of our leaders. Our politics may be ugly and repulsive, but we can't ignore it. We need our leaders to rebuild the airlines' and the country's future.

When I heard that President Ram Baran Yadav had flown to Bangkok on Thai on his way to Japan for medical treatment, I was deeply disturbed. I watched from across the apron of the cockpit of a Nepal Airlines Boeing 757 flight RA 401. Soon after the Thai jet carrying the president took off, I flew the Nepal Airlines flight on the same route to Bangkok.

Wasn't NA good enough for his Excellency the President, didn't he feel that it would send an important symbolic message by flying an airline that flew the nation's flag? As long as we don't respect our own nation, our nation will not move forward.

Vijay Lama has been flying with Nepal Airlines for the past two decades.

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Seesaw politics



This has become a national trend: everyone and their grandmother is going on strike protesting government crackdowns on those cheating consumers. Gudpak shops went on strike last year when it was found they were making ladoos from recycled sewage. Taxi drivers were outraged that the government dared to stop them from charging passengers an arm and a leg. Petrol stations shut shutters whenever the government takes action against

adulterers. What is surprising to us here in the donkey's den is why other sectors of society are not also on warpath against government heavy-handedness. For example:

1. Why aren't those accused of driving while drunk organising chukka jams to demand their fundamental right to drink whenever they want?
2. Why are senior bureaucrats whose bank lockers were opened by the CIAA not organising sit-

- ins and stand-outs?
3. Why aren't body burners at Aryaghat stopping cremations to protest job loss due to the electric crematorium?
4. Shouldn't immigration officers caught in flagrante cheating passengers be shutting down the airport?
5. APHIN (rhymes with coffin) should shut private hospitals to protest the govt's effort to make healthcare affordable.
6. Our embassy in Washington DC should stop work to protest the NSA's snub of not snooping on the Nepal embassy. We not important enough for the Amrikans, or what?

Just as we thot: the Maobuddies are hemming and hawing again about elections in November. While pretending to be on the campaign trail, Pushpa Kamal Dalal has been privately voicing doubts about polls to his firanghi friends. The reason

is quite simple: a split party and plummeting popularity has convinced El Commandante that not only is he not going to be Nepal's first Execution President, but he may not even get elected in his own constituencies. It has come to a point where Baddie leaders like PKD and ComeRed Rainman can't even drive to what was once their heartland in Thawang, they have to take helicopters.

PKD is also getting sleepless nights because of BRB's resignation from the post of vice-chairman. He sees this as a direct challenge to him to give up the leadership of the party which he has held for 25 years. PKD has made sure that he will get to field a majority of his own loyalists in the elections and distributing a few tickets to followers of BRB, NKS, and others. It's looking more and more like the real rivalry is not between Cash and Dash, or even between Baddies and Not-so-Baddies, but between the personality cults of Comrades Lotus Flower and Red Flag. Given the tradition of back-stabbing among commies, it wouldn't surprise anyone if the Dash baddies and the Cash

Baddies reunite and sideline Babuji. Things have got so bad that PKD is planting stories and even editorials in sympathetic papers against Comrades Hasiya and Hatoda donating corrodes worth of cash and land to their Marxian Academy. The war of the comrades has also gone viral on FB, Twitter, and RatoParty.com, with @brb_laaldhwoj tweeting the other day that under no condition was he going to withdraw his resignation.

And this just in: Dash cadre are all busy making voter IDs. Why would they be doing that if they are going to be sabotaging elections? Ass' prediction: Cash and Dash will be one again before elections, otherwise there won't be elections.

Actual Headlines of the week:
NASA To Meet
White House in Finals
Nepal Goes to Sri Lanka
Next week's headlines:
Pentagon Beats Watergate
Nepal Is In India
Dash Captures Land
Captured by Cash



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