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.

**LOOK NORTH**

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

**Prabhak Bhattarai in Saptari**

**EDIToRAL PAGE 2**

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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 control the state, to keep track of the many criminals from our recent past is appointed as ministers in new governments. 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 minister, it shows how far we have come since the end of the Maoist insurgency.

In Nepal, one could say the transition is necessarily messy and protracted. What we are striving for in this new constitution is an inclusive democracy in which all Nepalis have equal say, 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 control the state. The transition process is not easy; it takes time, and it is messy. The country must always think long-term instead of short-term goals.

The government has to make a decision on how to proceed with the case of the alleged human rights violations committed by the army during the insurgency. The case has been pending for years, and the families of the victims are still waiting for justice.

The move by the government to introduce a new constitution is a step in the right direction. The new constitution will provide a framework for a more democratic and equal society. It will also ensure that human rights are respected and protected.

The election process will be a crucial part of the transition. The government must ensure that the election process is free and fair, and that the people have a real choice in who they elect. The government must also ensure that the election process is transparent and accountable.

The government must also ensure that the economy is stable and that the people have access to basic services. The government must also ensure that the rule of law is respected and that the people have access to justice.

The government must also ensure that the country is safe and secure. The government must also ensure that the country is open to investment and that the people have access to opportunities.

The government must also ensure that the country is inclusive and that the people have access to their rights. The government must also ensure that the country is sustainable and that the people have access to a clean environment.

The government must also ensure that the country is prosperous and that the people have access to a decent standard of living. The government must also ensure that the country is peaceful and that the people have access to a safe society.

The government must also ensure that the country is healthy and that the people have access to good health care. The government must also ensure that the country is educated and that the people have access to a good education.

The government must also ensure that the country is free and that the people have access to freedom. The government must also ensure that the country is democratic and that the people have access to democracy.

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

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 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 from the CPN-M to sabotage polls.

The political leadership has once more demonstrated its unwillingess 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 Delination Commission (CDC) could have made up the rest in the 2011 census. But there isn’t enough time to get into that move.

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 percent strong women caucus. The future CA will need to be as, or even more, inclusive.

The CA met its ignominious end last year after 22 obdurate weak political parties demanded 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 rise or reduction in population in the 2011 census. But there isn’t enough time to get into that move.

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’ 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.

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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, 46, 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 job 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 start out carrying logs for the traditional cremations to 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 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.

“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.

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.

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

On 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 Kathmandu, as it saves up to 9,000 kilos of firewood a day. The electric funerals will also help clean the Bagmati which is severely polluted below Kathmandu, as it saves up to 9,000 kilos of firewood a day.

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 Dharahara, Chitwan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CREMATION TIME</strong></th>
<th><strong>ENERGY CONSUMED</strong></th>
<th><strong>THE PRICE OF DEATH</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>FIREWOOD</td>
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<td>3 hours</td>
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<td>LABOUR</td>
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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, Bishnu Gautam, Mani Bahadur Thapa, Barun Trade, Milan Shah, and Intra Pun won Rs70,000.

Monsoon Bonanza
Etihad 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 76154AP, 917324B, 301802F, 536459V, 890347J, 369389Y, 507630W. 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.
The politics of death

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

As Uttarakhand desperately cremates the bodies, the political class has turned the 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 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 excellent opportunity to stage a spectacular extravaganza, a sort of meticulously choreographed national funeral ballet.

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 are perhaps the most spectacular enactment of the politics of death 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.

As the story unravelled, as all political parties under the ambit of the Right to Information Act.

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.
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 Tulsi 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 Hastakala 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.

(01)4275879/9851156725

In four short years Himalayan Allo Udhyog has become one of the top suppliers of nettle fabric in Nepal

The fibres of success

ORDINARY IS OUT. AMAZING IS IN.

The amazing new Honda Amaze is here

HONDA

The Power of Dreams

AMAZE

© Honda Motors India Pvt. Ltd.
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 refraacts 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 knew 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 Pala 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 useful the makeshift lights could be and slowly began warming up to the idea,” explains Mishra.

Within three weeks in June, Ujyalo and Sano Pala 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.

The idea is simple. Generate 55 watts of light using cheap, durable, and readily available materials. Although, the energy can’t be stored for use at night, this sustainable technology has helped light many poor communities around the world during the day.

**WHAT YOU NEED**

- 1.5 litre pet soda bottle
- Galvanised iron (GI) or steel sheet
- Rubber sealant
- 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 upwads, 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.
After Bhutan evicted 100,000 of 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 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 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.”

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

I WAS WORTH go SHEEP, a simple and moving story of Sabere, an Afghan girl and her family’s struggle to survive. 3 July, 6.30 pm, Bikalpa Art Center, Arunachala Chak, Jhamkhiya, (01)413224

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 Adil Chitkara, author of Take the Lead-Nepal’s Future has Begun. Rs 500, 5 July, 5 pm, Salt Pepper Restolounge, Pokhara, www.facebook.com/xclusivezentertainment

Troubadours-Poetry on the move, Reservation: 463484
enjoy a poetic evening with verses 5 July, 6.45pm, Bikalpa Art Centre, Tribhuvanwar

SESSION WITH Troubadours-Poetry on the move, Reservation: 463484
Al 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. 24 to 27 July, 11 am to 2 pm, Srinathul, Nepal

CINEMANDU, watch Nepali movie Sanghurao and interact with the makers and the cast after screening. 5 July, 8pm, Nepal Bharat Library, Nepal Airlines Building, New Road Gate

It’s a Slam, seven slam poets battle it out for the title of Slammer. Free. 5 July, 2 to 4 pm, The Yellow House Sanepa

BOOK COLLECTION, help Phan Nepal collect educational materials for the youths of 5 districts. July 24, 7 to 8.30 pm, Santwona Multiple Campus, Shankrangi, info@phannepal.org

RAW BARZ, be a part of the first rap battle league. Rs 200, 6 July, 6 pm, Peri Peri Restaurant, Sanepa, www.facebook.com/lookseventertainment

PAINTBALL BATTLE, with ideas of memory, home, family and experiment with the photographic medium and video in their work. 5 to 14 July, Images/Dalali Art Centre, Tribhuvanwar

STROBIST PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP, take out your DSLRs and explore the studio world with Ganga Sagar Rai. Rs 5000, 7 to 12 July, 9 am to 1 pm, Polka Magazine - Studio, Lalitpur,
014443438

Images, seven students explore the hodgepodge of the tourist hub as you take out your DSLRs and explore the studio world with Ganga Sagar Rai. Rs 5000, 7 to 12 July,
9 am to 1 pm, Polka Magazine - Studio, Lalitpur, 014443438

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

Yellow Chili, 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. Jhamkhiya, 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

Kristinaran, 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 relax in delights like paella and panna cotta. Thamel

DINING

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

New Tushita Restaurant, relaxing ambience and good food. Don’t miss out on its penne with creamy bacon and mushroom sauce. Lajimpat, 014443997

Shangrila Kitchen, try the majestic Gyoabok and a wide variety of cocktails. 9 am to 3 pm, Hotel TIA International, Boudha

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Explore the information beyond your knowledge.
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

Disheirmoney, bang your heads to the loudest, noisiest and heaviest musical extravaganza, a combination of hardcore, death metal and alternative rock. Rs 200, 7 July, 7.45pm, Tamu Dhi, Naya Bajar, Kathmandu. www.facebook.com/events/428470058256035/

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, 7.30pm, House of Music, Thamel, 9841259413

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

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. Gaughright, Lakeside, (03) 65639

CHARIKOT PANORAMA RESORT, enjoy mountain views and local culture in the historic town of Charikot. Special packages on offer. Charikot, Dolakha, 01-552946, thapamansay@gmail.com

Dhulikhel Mountain Resort, announces summer bonanza offer. Make the resort your home for a price you can’t beat. Dhulikhel, 1812/3021/494

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, Budhanikanti, 98150 66 66

Reaching out

With the aim to help the flood victims in Darchula, Bardiya and Kailali, Himalayan Climate Initiative’s Youth platform - The Gen-ne 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/

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
Dates: 6 July 2013
Time: 8 am
Meeting point: Green City Hospital, Basundhara
Route: Green City Hospital- Kalanki- Ekantakuna- Jawalakhel- Bricks Café Kupendole

HIMALA YA 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, Budhanikanti, 98150 66 66

smart paani

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World War Z

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 fingernails, 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.

S
uccessor 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 Phone/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 inconsiderble to the eyes, are certainly a treat for your ears. If you do not own an Airplay enabled Device, or an Device 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 Haris. 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 (iDevices/Tunes music system in the market today and offers significant value for money despite its serious price tag.
Viplob Pratik bares his soul

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 chuli (Rs 220) for starters, we jumped straight to the main course. We were served the usual ketchup-laden chicken chuli 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 chuli, 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 and 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 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 caramalised 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.

Join us for the final round of nepalitimes.com #75

How to get there: head straight from Lainchaur chok to Lajimpat. Tushita is on your right before you reach Hotel Shangrila.
**Guts of the anopheles**

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 miasmic theory, but more importantly led to better disease control and effective treatment.

Malaria mortality rates fell by 26% around the world between 2000-2010.

$2.3 BILLION available in 2011.

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

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

National Malaria Eradication Program (NMER) launched in 1958.

Government to make the country malaria-free by 2026.

(source: WHO/MINISTRY OF HEALTH)

**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 50 seconds a child dies from malaria.

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Come together: Farmers celebrate rice planting festival in Bhaktapur on 15 Asar, Saturday.

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

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

HAPPENINGS

**READERS PHOTO**

JOANNE WELLINGTON

**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.

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Anurag Acharya

5 - 11 JULY 2013

#663

NATION 15

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 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 Bellari 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.
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.

Roads have destroyed much of what used to be Nepal’s unique tourism selling point in the Annapurnas and other Himalayan valleys.

The excavator had clawed a road to Bakshila of Khotang district a few days earlier and the bajar was buzzing with excitement. Bakshila 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.

Unlike most villages in Khotang, 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 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 a tourist hub.

New roads are changing the economy of previously inaccessible districts of eastern Nepal.
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 (Bhapa, Mustang, Sunari, 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 the north. Madhesi stalwart Gajendra Narayan Singh understood this and had long advocated a highway linking Rajbiraj with Udyapur 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 Kusma, Rajbiraj will see an economic boom,” says Satrughan Rainiary of the Saptari Chamber of Commerce.

Similarly, it is because Rapti and Dailekh the hills have not been linked to Sarlahi, Mahottari, and Dhamisha in the Tari 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 that 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 the road to the north, the locals insist on an alternative alignment that protects their holy sites and a vital trekking route.

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

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

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 ridge and another one passing the local school. Before the roads started suddenly held possibilities. Sungdel is now a flurry of farming activity and cash crops like cardamom, chinpiro, argoli, and lokta have injected new income. Farmers are also starting to experiment with fruits, which they hope to exploit when the roads finally get to Sungdel.
“CA elections are no good”

BBC Nepal 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 consensus 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 Nepal 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 will consider running for elections only if there is an all-party agreement on the blueprint of the constitution. We will only come up with a constitution based on our discussions, pass this document, and then contest elections under such circumstances.

And after agreeing on a broad outline of the constitution, you want to hold parliamentary 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 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 philosophies 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 for 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.

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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 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 beaches. Even BP Koirala told journalists he would make the people prosperous by improving land ownership laws and employment opportunities. Our concerns are the same.

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GAO election are no good”

In weekly polls conducted with the support of The Asia Foundation, Himal Khadapatrika 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%

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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 Nepal 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.

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Flying proud

Vijay Lama in Sentopati, 31 June

I am a pilot and when I fly around the region I meet people of various nationalities, ethnicities, and classes 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 737-400 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 it good enough for his Excellency the President, don’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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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 Nepali embassy. We not important enough for the Amrikans, or what? PKD is also getting sleepless nights because of BBR’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 BBR, 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 Cashbaddies reunite and sideline Babuji. Things have got so bad that PKD is planting stories and even editorials in sympathetic papers against Comrades Hasya and Hatoda donating crores worth of cash and land to their Marxist 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