THE AIRLINE THAT FLIES TO MORE COUNTRIES THAN ANY OTHER, IS HERE.
AS OF SEPTEMBER 2ND

ECONOMY, STUPID
Nepal cannot afford to wait till it straightens out its politics to rescue the economy.

ANNA LA
Ani Choying Drolma hits the high note with her collaboration with renowned Indian composer AR Rahman.

ASI AN NOBEL
The advocacy group, Shakti Samuha, which was set up by survivors of sex trafficking, received the Ramon Magsaysay award for its work to rehabilitate young Nepali women rescued from brothels. Charimaya Tamang speaks about her activism.

Garbage has piled up in Lalitpur because dumping trucks can't drive on muddy roads to the landfill site. The writing on the wall exhorts students to vote for the Revolutionary Students' Union, promising a 'clean educational environment'. Just when you thought the Maoists had brought closure on their revolution, we are back to square one with the UCPN(M) threatening to fight off rival CPN-M who want to sabotage the November polls.

Trash Heap of History

ECONOMY, STUPID
Nepal cannot afford to wait till it straightens out its politics to rescue the economy.
by the estimated 2 million Nepalis who work in India keeping the Nepali economy afloat is the INR sent home estimated $4 billion. We like to say that this is propping constitutes 40 per cent of imports from India due mainly imports from India alone doubled in three years, and now in their productive age are in India, the Gulf or Malaysia. Nepali migrant workers overseas sent home an estimated $4 billion. We like to say that this is propping up the economy. Actually, those dollars sent home goes to pay for third-country imports of electronic consumer goods, cars or gold bullion. What is actually keeping the Nepali economy afloat is the INR sent home by the estimated 2 million Nepal's who work in India as seasonal migrants at any time. It is clear that Nepal's widening trade gap with India is unsustainable. Nepal has to either export more to India, or it needs to make more INR to pay for growing imports from India. Yet, look at the way we maintain relations with our biggest trading, investment and business partner: there hasn’t been a Nepali ambassador in New Delhi for nearly three years now, and Nepal’s national airline which used to have 14 flights a week to four Indian destinations at one time doesn’t fly to anywhere in India. Despite lip service, we have done nearly nothing to lure even a small fraction of the huge outbound Indian tourism market next door.

Nepal-India Business Conclave organised on 26 July by the Nepal India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NICLI) in Kathmandu, government officials, academics, Indian and Nepali investors discussed about ways to redress some of the problems in bilateral trade, investment and tourism. One of the speakers, Srikant Srivinasamuthan of Unilever Nepal listed eight steps that Nepal can take right away without waiting for a resolution of the political uncertainties (see page 4).

Actually we know what the problems are, we also have the solutions. But we just can’t seem to get over the lethargy and inertia even on cooperation we have already agreed on like the cross-border petroleum pipeline, streamlining trade across the Siliguri corridor, or the use of Vizag port.

The formula for economic revival and to push GDP growth is quite clear: massive investment in transportation, energy and irrigation infrastructure to generate jobs so that even more jobs are created by downstream industries when those projects are completed. If by then there is surplus power, we can always export it to India for premium peak hour prices. But the aim should be to generate cheap hydro-energy so that domestic manufacturing is competitive and foreign investors set up shop here to generate even more jobs.

We Nepalis have such low self-esteem we say we are a small and landlocked country. The 4th most populous country in the world is not small, it is just small compared to our giant neighbours. And we are not poor, just poorly governed.

Just to change the subject from endlessly pontificating from this pulp with unsolicited advice to politicians, this week we take a look at the country’s diré economic crisis. If you think our politics is a mess, you should take a look at our economy. The two are, of course, interconnected. But it has now got to the point where Nepal cannot afford to wait till it straightens out its politics to rescue the economy. We can no more use the excuse of ‘political transition’, ‘constitution’ or ‘election’ to attract much-needed trade and investments. Businesses have much greener pastures in Vietnam, Burma or even Sikkim or Himachal.

Some figures: 450,000 young Nepalis join the labour force every year, but no new jobs were created in manufacturing or construction last year because there was virtually no investment. At any given time, 18 per cent of our population is working abroad. And since most of them are young men, it means up to 60 per cent of men in our productive age are in India, the Gulf or Malaysia. Nepal’s trade deficit with India grew to NPR 316 billion in the last fiscal year: our exports to India grew by only 0.4 per cent, but imports grew 25 per cent. Petroleum imports from India alone doubled in three years, and now constitutes 40 per cent of imports from India due mainly to demand from generators.

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The Maoist revolution is beginning to look like Kathmandu's road-widening project. Just when you think it is over, they start digging up the roads again.

We all thought that there had been closure on the peace process after the integration of the 1,300 Maoist fighters into the Nepal Army in May. But the split in the Maoists has brought us back to a full circle again. The CPN-M started raking up old issues we thought were resolved as soon as the integration was officially completed. Unless the demands of the Dash Maoists are settled, elections held, and the constitution written and ratified, therefore, we will not be in a position to declare with certainty that the peace process is concluded.

Despite the lip service everyone is paying to elections, it is the two factions of the Maoist party that is most reluctant to face polls. The CPN(M) says it is serious about elections and its leaders say the antics of the two Maoist parties have confused voters, and made them even more apathetic about elections.

The end of the conflict left a lot of loose ends that were never tied. The period after 2006 saw non-transparent decision making by the Big Four that progressively made Nepal more dependent on the outside. The CA had to be dissolved because the promises and slogans to the marginalised and disenfranchised could not be kept, and fissures within the Maoist party erupted in the open. The election tactics of both Maoists is to weaken each other. Mohan Baidya has vowed to sabotage elections, while Pushpa Kamal Dahal has announced that the YCL will be deployed to attack those who attack polling booths. Yige YCL is already on the rampage in Chitwan, presaging the strong-arm tactics of its campaign. Outwrytly, it looks like one is for and the other against elections. But internally, both are against. Both Maoists think they have sufficient support to defeat each other if they separately contest polls. So the CPN(M) doesn't want the CPN-M to take part. The CPN-M meanwhile wants elections postponed until it musters at least as much support as its rival. In a way, this rivalry is an extended playing out of the unfinished business of the conflict.

After the formation of a non-political interim government led by a Chief Justice, the CPN-M tried to fill the role of the main opposition party, which to a certain extent it has succeeded in doing. This has allowed it to benefit from the anti-incumbent factor and be the voice of those disillusioned with the status quo. However, it would be a mistake to see only the CPN-M as the obstacle to elections even if it has taken the retrogressive road to a royalist revival to trumpet its nationalist line. But that is no different that the UCPN-M's unprincipled and chameleon-like partnership with the Madhesi parties and new ethnicity-based parties.

The opportunistic tendency of nepali Maoism means it can be concurrently be everything to everyone: it can be pro-Indian, pro-Chinese, monarchist, republican as long as it gets the party closer to state capture and absolute power.

For a while last month, after Dahal went to Singapore on the pretext of treating his wife and Baidya went to China, it looked like the party may be headed for re-unification. Baburam Bhattarai's resignation from vice-chairmanship of the party had made such a reunion even more likely. Dahal rushed back to meet Indian Minister of External Affairs, Salman Khursid, and that destroyed the half-built bridge between the two factions. Jointly, the two Maoists can reinforce each other’s opposition to polls in November. This will not just mean no elections, but it will delay the constitution-writing process, and prolong the period of never-ending uncertainty and instability. Managing Nepali politics now means managing the contradiction within the Maoist party. Until we do that, there will be no closure.

Muma Ram Khanal was a Central member of the Maoist party during the conflict. This is the second of his fortnightly column, Inside Out, in Nepali Times.
Believing in Nepal
Eight economic reform actions on how to get over this difficult phase to make Nepal stronger

GUEST COLUMN
Srikanth Srinivasamadhavan

In the last two decades, Nepal has been constantly trying to redefine itself socially, politically and economically. This transition period has been defined by a low GDP growth rate, attempts of various models of self-sufficiency, a low domestic savings rate, a high dependence on foreign aid and high unemployment. The response needs to be drastic and quick, and the reforms need to go ahead despite the fluid situation.

The most basic and important focus of the economy has to be on stimulating domestic demand. This has helped many other countries grow and prosper, and Nepal should also intensify efforts through quick reforms to boost demand that will build a more competitive economy that benefits businesses and consumers alike.

To improve Nepal’s economy to boost investment and demand, here are eight action areas:

1. Stimulate local consumption and incentivise local manufacturing. This will not only generate employment but also create a strong competitive environment to generate consumption and demand. The government needs to differentiate between companies who have invested locally and stayed on so as to encourage investment and enable faster and cheaper innovation that drive local consumption, and perhaps give rise to export opportunities. Facilitating and stimulating local manufacturing will lead to stronger investments and help the economy grow faster.

2. Improving tax collection. Create greater drive and stronger mechanisms for tax collection and enable other reforms. Proper VAT implementation will help the government generate even more revenue from a reduced VAT rate in future as the base expands.

3. Encouraging domestic savings. Savings help fund economic growth and ensure that the current underemployed working population will be able to find local jobs more easily. Nepal has a significant advantage due to its robust remittance. Continued progress in remittance, and increased work opportunities locally will be key drivers for higher GDP growth.

4. Key sector reforms. Focus on deregulating tourism, power, education, IT, banking etc so the country can generate large-scale employment and benefit from technology transfer and practices.

5. Improving infrastructure reliability and access. Infrastructure bottlenecks to growth are keeping Nepal back. Improving road connections to towns and villages and increasing access to electricity are challenges facing Nepal today. Improving infrastructure reliability, reducing cartellisation and transportation time are important areas for reform.

6. Shifting emphasis from foreign aid to foreign investment. Foreign aid is driven by the ideology of charity and relief. It sometimes promotes inequality, dependency, and in many cases may not be aligned to what the country wants to do. Foreign investment, on the other hand, allows one to demand equality, promotes incentives to work, and helps the economy grow, creates atmosphere for self-reliance and empowerment.

7. Protecting intellectual property. Globally, the development of new products and services have been possible because of significant research and development. Foreign investors will seek strong protection for their intellectual property. While a country seeks investments, along with it comes the burden of protecting the investment from elements that will undermine future investments. Enforcing intellectual property rights, curbing copies and the grey market will help the government generate even more revenue with its presence in other countries that want to emulate Nepal.

8. Strengthening labor reform. Simplified labour laws will help to drive the confidence of the investors, and can be a significant driver of foreign investment. Such laws will help set up large-scale projects that can provide the much needed export earning. Nepal needs to seize this opportunity to become an exporter of limited cost advantage and a skilled, English-speaking workforce. Nepal’s location between India and China will be an advantage if it combines this with a strong partnership with other emerging economies.

Despite having gone through tumultuous changes over the past two decades, Nepal is poised to take off. There is more optimism than there ever was in the past, reflecting the indomitable spirit of the Nepali people. It is now time to act on reform.

Srikanth Srinivasamadhavan is the Managing Director of Unilever Nepal and this piece is adapted from his presentation to the Nepal-India Business Conclave organised by the Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) in Kathmandu on 26 July.
After the Election Commission announced its Code of Conduct last week for the November polls, Nepal’s business community has also revealed its own code in which it has told political parties it will not contribute to campaign financing.

At a function attended by government head Khil Raj Regmi, the National Business Initiative (NBI) on Sunday said it would prioritise consumer rights, strive for transparency, ensure environmental protection and not continue anymore to support political parties and politicians.

The code is supported by more than 30 business organisations involved in construction, manpower, handicraft, LPG, tourism and other areas. “At a time when every sector of the state is failing, we want business to take the lead in restoring confidence and transparency,” said NBI’s Padma Jyoti about the code.

Also on Sunday, the FNCCI organised its first of a series of interactions with political parties on how their election manifesto can be business-friendly. Sunday’s meeting was with the Nepali Congress and was attended by NC president Sushil Koirala and Sher Bahadur Deuba.

“It was the first post-1990 NC government that adopted a free market economy and freedom of expression that ensured 8 per cent growth rate,” said FNCCI president Suraj Vaidya, “we need that political will to attract investment, create jobs, generate power and lift the country’s economy.”

However, the NC politicians used the forum to heap blame on Maoists and royalists for destroying the economy. Koirala and other NC leaders said that for a free market to develop fully, it needed democracy.

The FNCCI gave the politicians a checklist for their election manifesto that includes a collective commitment to raise the per capita GDP growth rate, guarantee private property rights, raise productivity and generate jobs, transparency and regulating labour.
Run, Milkha run
Biopic of India's most famous athlete distorts his determination

Beyond the debate over what is fact and fiction in Bhaag Milkha Bhaag, the new Bollywood biopic of the 1960s Indian Olympic athlete, the film's most troubling aspects are the unidimensional depiction of the horrors of the partition of India and Pakistan. The plot in variance with Milkha Singh's own account to the Times of India, which conducted the interview with him four years ago but decided to can it until the film's release.

No doubt, the Partition traumatised Milkha Singh, as he was witness to the killing of his parents. In the interview to the newspaper, Milkha says it is one of the two experiences of his life he can never forget. The other was the medal he missed in the 1960 Rome Olympics. The film etches out the disabling aspect of his trauma through the symbolism of looking back, thus injecting a profound meaning to his inexplicable decision to glance behind as he ran the scorching 400m race in Rome. This momentary lapse of concentration cost Milkha a medal.

"This lapse, we are told, has a story, "Bhaag Milkha Bhaag" (Run, Milkha, run) was what his father screamed as he lay dying during the birth of Pakistan. Milkha's race loss is consequently linked to the partition. From it springs the problem the film seeks to answer. How does the athlete, and implicitly therefore all of us, overcome the trauma of the past?

From the ahistorical plot, it would seem there was no bloodshed in India, no targeted slaughtering of Muslims. The religious passion, of which Milkha's parents were victims, did not abate evident from the structuring of the competition between the ace Indian athlete and the duo of the Pakistani sprinter and his coach, whose only motivation seems to revolve around the partition of the country. Indeed, Milkha remembers the Lahore meet happened months before Milkha failed to bag a Olympic medal in Rome. Perhaps the sanitised version of the partition demanded that Milkha overcome his traumatic past on Pakistani soil.

Milkha visits his village, kneels down and cries bitterly, presumably exercising himself of ghosts of the past. In the reel-life, it is shown to have taken place following the Rome Olympics. The chronology was in fact the reverse: the Lahore meet happened months before Milkha landed in India. The film, therefore, runs the race of his life, doesn't glance back, and eclipses his Pakistanist past. Stunned Pakistanis give him a standing ovation.

"What is the message of this belated balancing act, its symbolism? Don't look back at your traumatic past lest it hobbles you? Or that the only way of liberating the present from the past is to vanquish your rivals, and strike awe in them to the point they can't but hail you? What kind of meaning does it hold out for those who are asked to forget the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 and Gujarat 2002?"

It is another matter that Milkha Singh is yet to visit his ancestral village in Pakistan, and hopes to fulfill his desire before he dies. The greatness of Milkha is that he ensured the scars of his life didn't impede him from chasing his dreams, nor turn him viciously bitter. In contrast, Bhaag's depiction of him is subtly dressed up in marketable jingoism.

Ajaz Ashraf was for the last 12 years deputy editor at Outlook magazine. He contributed this weekly column, Look Out, to Nepali Times.
Nepal's singing nun collaborates with renowned Indian composer A R Rahman

ANI MEETS A.R.

SAHINA SHRESTHA

‘Extremely excited and extremely happy,’ is how a smiling Ani Choying Drolma describes the moment when Indian music composer A R Rahman got in touch with her earlier this year.

For over a decade Ani Choying has brought Buddhist hymns and chants to a mass audience not just in Nepal but around the world. Working with Rahman, who won two Oscars for his music in Millionaire, on a song from MTV Coke Studio Nepal will see heavy precipitation. Daytime temperatures will stay within the 28 to 30 range.

“E
the call from Mumbai just before she was

set to leave for a concert in Indonesia, but her initial excitement turned to worry when it looked like the date they wanted her to come clashed with her Indonesia gig. Luckily, Rahman was flexible with the date. ‘I have followed him on TV and listened to his music so when I met him, I felt as if I was meeting someone I knew,’ Ani told Nepali Times. Rahman wanted a song in Nepali so she sang a few lines of compassion mantra fusion.

They rehearsed together from 1-6 July and Ani says she found Rahman to be a spiritual person, and quite reticent. ‘His compositions are really different from others, he creates something that touches your heart and spiritualism is the key ingredient,’ she told us.

Ani made headlines in the Indian media when Indian lyricist Javed Akhtar, in Hindi,” she says of the only the language will be

“surprisingly successful”. She needn’t have been, her lullaby-like spiritual songs have been a hit in Nepal, America and Europe, India was just waiting to discover her. Many

parents are not giving their children enough moral and ethical education, and wants to supplement this with the message in music.

It broke my heart to see a little girl at a program dancing, dressed in adult clothes and behaving like adults,” says Ani. “The moral foundation of society is dwindling and behaving like adults,” says Ani. “The moral foundation of society is dwindling and spiritualism is the key ingredient,” she

told us.

Ani’s performance with AR Rahman recorded in the Coke Studio will premiere on 15 August on MTV.

Ani’s story #571 Ani’s school #554 Watch interview

nepaltimes.com

Ani’s story #571 Ani’s school #554 Watch interview

nepaltimes.com

Watch UNICEF’s video

UNICEF Nepal has featured Ani Choying Drolma in a public service announcement for its campaign to end violence against children that it is

being aired over television channels and in cinema halls around the country. At a function on Wednesday (pictured) Ani recalled how as a girl she and her mother suffered domestic violence from the hands of her father. “I had a lot of anger and violence in me as a child,” Ani recalled, “but I realised that the first victim of violence is the perpetrator himself. My father made me and my mother suffer, but he himself suffered the most.”

UNICEF says violence against children takes many forms in Nepal: corporal punishment in schools, domestic violence, sexual abuse, trafficking, child labour and most of it is unreported. There are an estimated 1.6 million child workers, 5,000 street children and an untold number of children suffer abuse mainly at the hands of their own relatives, teachers, or neighbours. Ani says in the television spot: “Just because we don’t see it, doesn’t mean it is not happening.”

Watch UNICEF’s video
A Step for Freedom, a painting exhibition by eight young upcoming women artists from Pokhara. 2 to 11 August, 10 to 6 pm except Saturdays, Artist Proof Gallery, New Orleans, Pulchok, Lalitpur

Reflective instances, a joint exhibition of four painters Bhawana Marandhar, Rajesh Marandhar, Niraj Chitrakar, and Ganesh G.C. 2 to 19 August, Park Gallery, Pulchok, (01)5522307, www.parkgallery.com.np

Event management workshop, bring out the event manager in you in the one day workshop designed to enhance your skills required for effective event management. Rs 2000, 12 August, Staff College, Jowalakhel, register at 9851169713

Voices, join in the discussion with Akhilesh Upadhyay (Chief Editor, The Kathmandu Post) and Sudheer Sharma (Chief Editor, Kantipur). Free entry, 2 August, 3.30 pm, Nepal-Bharat Alliance Francaise, Banshi Ghat, Lake Side, Hallanchok, Pokhara, (061)463614/463163

Les Chansons D’ Amour, a story about new relationships, love, jealousies. 15 August, 7 to 9 pm, Alliance Francaise, Banshi Ghat Marga, Teku road, Tipureshwar

Leisure time activities, a painting exhibition by eight young upcoming women artists from Pokhara. 2 to 11 August, 10 to 6 pm except Saturdays, Artist Proof Gallery, New Orleans, Pulchok, Lalitpur

A People War, an exhibition of photographs that portrays the reality of Nepal through 20 years of insurgency. Everyday except Tuesday, 22 am to 4 pm, (01)5529352

Learn Tai chi, relax and refresh your body and mind and improve the internal harmony of body, mind and spirit. 21st week of August, 6 to 7 pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays, Gyan Dojo, Gyanmandala, Thamshikhel, (01)5521120

Bottoms up, take your taste buds and olfactory nerves on a joy ride at the 20th Annual wine tasting festival at Kilroy’s. Rs 200 per glass, Rs 500 per half litre. 7 to 8 August, Kilroy’s, Thamel, (01)4512440/41

Event management workshop, bring out the event manager in you in the one day workshop designed to enhance your skills required for effective event management. Rs 2000, 12 August, Staff College, Jowalakhel, register at 9851169713

Finding a Family, a film based on the true story of Alex Chivescu’s search for a new mom and dad in order to pursue his one passion - education. 3 August, 3 pm, Thames International College, limited seats, for tickets – 9864915721

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THE EDGE BAND, go on a journey with the awesome Nepali rock band as they launch their new album Alag.
Rs 300 & Rs 500, 3 August, 3 pm onwards, Dipendra City Hall, Pokhara, www.facebook.com/events/694431280573696/

THE EDGE, BATTLE OF THE BANDS, watch 12 bands battle it out for the opening spot for Michael Angelo Batio’s Live concert in Nepal.
Rs 100, 3 August, 1 pm onwards, Moksh, Jhamsikhel

NATTU and the band, catch Youtube star Nattu live.
Rs 200, 2 August, 7 pm onwards, Capital Grill, Bhatbhateni, Kathmandu

GETAWAYS
WATERFRONT RESORT, stay at this lovely resort for only Rs 4444, or if you are there on a weekend enjoy refreshing fresh water swimming, and delicious lunch on Saturdays at Rs 999.
Sedi Height, Lakeside Road, Pokhara, (66) 466790, www.waterfrontnepal.com

HIMALAYAN WELLNESS CENTRE, a one-stop centre for a relaxed mind and a healthy body inside the Park-Village Hotel, Budhanilkantha, open for web, 9812666662, www.himalayanwellness.com

ATITHI RESORT, a perfect place to stay, nearby pool, massage, sauna and delicious food of your choice.
Shantipatan, Lakeside, Pokhara. (61) 466760 /400207, info@atithiresort.com

A benefit concert
The youth cell of Ganesh Man Singh Foundation is organising a free concert for the benefit of the flood victims.

Why not reach for your pockets this Saturday and contribute whatever and however you can to help the victims out? Be a part of this noble deed.

Date: 3 August
Time: 3 pm onwards
Venue: Basantapur, Kathmandu, facebook.com/events/cp610987381033845

MUSIC

A bite of the boot
Craving Italian? Forget the laborious 15 hour flight to Rome, gather your friends and families and make a quick trip to Soaltee Hotel in Tahachal, Alfresco, the hotel’s signature Italian restaurant, just rolled out a revamped menu and is offering delectable delicacies from southern Italian regions of Sicily, Sardinia, and Livorno.

With warm tones, tiled floors, walls adorned with paintings of stunning topography, food items suspended from the ceiling (a local tradition), Alfresco perfectly encapsulates the mood and charm of the boot shaped peninsula. The restaurant overlooks a pool and even has separate section for those who like to take a puff or two while waiting for meal. Its open kitchen means you get to see each delicacy being made from start to finish in front of your eyes.

Start off with a piping hot bowl of Ribollita (Rs 675), the popular Tuscan soup and then dig into the Scampi marinate All’ agiòe alle Erbe (Rs 1,150), a dish of fried prawns accompanied by garlic, herbs served with roasted peppers, chili basil that goes delightfully well with the accompanying Nepali sauce.

Sit back, relax, and enjoy a bite-size of bella Italia.

Crowne Plaza Soaltee Tahachal, Bagachha Road, Kathmandu (01)4273999
The art of making paper from the fibrous inner bark of the daphne shrub, locally called loka, dates back to the 8th century. However, by the 1960s cheap machine made papers from India had driven most local papermakers out of business and pushed this ancient tradition to near extinction until Bibendra Shrestha decided to revive it and started Nepal Kagaz Udhyog in 1969.

After the paper found its way into the international market in Europe and the US during the early 1990s, business boomed: Today rainbow hued loka paper accessories, wallpaper, notebooks, cards, lamps, and even clothing have found homes from China to Chile. In Japan, the fibre is used in making the country’s currency the yen. The Nepal-made paper’s huge popularity was evident when Beijing’s Grand Hyatt Hotel needed to redesign its wall panels for the 2008 Olympics, it outsourced the order to Sherpa Everest Art Paper, a loka factory in Bhaisipati run by Lhakpa Geljen Sherpa.

Encouraged by the surging international demand, Hari Kumar Kadel opened his own factory - SP Handmade - in Bhaktapur in 2011 after working for ten years in the industry. Business picked up within a year and Kadel is now able to export handmade paper to the UK, Sweden, and Japan and makes Rs 1.5 to 2 million a year even with a modest plant with...
Quality control and sustainability remains the two major concerns for one of Nepal’s top exports.

Currently there are over 500 lokta producers in Nepal employing about 50,000 workers, mostly women. However, as demand rises and new firms mushroom every year, entrepreneurs are having a difficult time finding a steady supply of lokta plant. Grown at an altitude of above 3,000 metres, daphne shrubs are found in 55 districts of Nepal. Like sugarcane, the plants are harvested by cutting the stems about 30cm above ground. “Finding raw material is a challenge,” admits Kadel who usually gets his barks from Jiri, Dhading and Sindhupalchok. To ease this problem, commercial farming of lokta has started in a few districts of eastern Nepal, but sustainability remains a challenge.

The industry has survived the test of time through its eco-friendly production, fair employment practices, and socially responsible behaviour. But as more players enter the business and as a major export market like the EU prepares to implements its ‘acid-free paper’ policy from 2014 onwards, there is a real need for a quality control mechanism that will ensure production standards are maintained across the board. Having a national monitoring body will not only help entrepreneurs who are currently forced to send their products to India for testing cut costs, but also guarantee the long-term prosperity of the ancient papermaking art.

Tsering Dolker Gurung
Miyazaki's famed Studio Ghibli. To the faithful followers of the Studio Ghibli films, who have never heard of his other works, I have no words to describe the beauty of half a lifetime of adventures that took you to the world of Totoro, Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind, Howl's Moving Castle, The Secret World of Arrietty, My Neighbour Totoro, Princess Mononoke, Spirited Away, Howl's Moving Castle, Ponyo, and many others. These films are taught to parents to their children as illustrations of life and love.

For everyone who loves those stories, this is a must-read. For everyone who has never heard of these films, and has never been able to pick up any of these films immediately; you will not be disappointed. Miyazaki's films work, like the best children's books, on several levels. While the animation aspect affects the sublime part of children's minds, the complex stories and characters are firmly for the adults. As for myself, I have never been able to pick a favourite, but I do have a special place in my heart for Howl's Moving Castle, perhaps because the very charming and intrepid female lead is called Sophie.

So, you may ask, what exactly is it about Miyazaki's films that make them so special. Well, they are special because they are truly magical. His stories and his animation transcend reality, his characters are utterly captivating, and he is very didactic, always surprising his viewers with his depictions of good vs evil. Miyazaki's films are always 'baddies' in the Miyazaki films who redeem themselves, often most hilariously and sometimes very touchingly.

For everyone who loves those children who are always a little wiser than their age... animals, and, yes, I know I said it before, magic, then pick up The Secret World of Arrietty (2010). While Miyazaki only scripted this film, making way at the grand old age of 69 (he is now 72) for younger blood, this film is as lovely as a fresh monsoon breeze.

Arrietty (voiced by Saorise Ronan) is a 'borrower', a tiny human girl who lives among gigantic humans borrowing little things like sugar cubes here and there for their families. When a young boy called Shô (Tom Holland) arrives to recuperate in his pastoral family home (he has a heart condition), Arrietty and he strike up an unusual friendship that is aided by his grandmother Sadako (Phyllida Law), and alternately foiled by Arrietty's parents' disapproval, and the presence of a rather cute, but initially quite vicious family cat.

As their friendship deepens, and Niyu, the cat has a change of heart. Arrietty and Shô come of age amongst the luminous nature of Shô's home - both realising, painfully, that their friendship can only last a while.

And so The Secret World of Arrietty joins the ranks of all the other special Studio Ghibli works, making your children think, and taking you back to those days when you could believe in anything and the power of your imagination was your most precious resource.

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**THE SECRET WORLD OF ARRIETTY**

**WATCH TRAILER**

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**R**emember when you were a kid and you could spend hours daydreaming, your mind embarking on various, vivid adventures that took you to the most exciting, mostly fictitious places? Well, you can still enjoy that kind of adventure, the kind that took you to the most enchanting places? Well, you can still enjoy those adventures that took you to the world of Totoro, Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind, Howl’s Moving Castle, The Secret World of Arrietty, My Neighbour Totoro, Princess Mononoke, Spirited Away, Howl’s Moving Castle, Ponyo, and many others. These films are taught to parents to their children as illustrations of life and love.

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British standards at Nepali price

What are the admission requirements for TBC?
Prospective students need to meet the criteria of the universities in the UK. For a three year bachelor’s degree, applicants need at least 80 per cent in their 10+2. If they scored less than 80 per cent, they have to enroll in a foundation course at TBC first. Once admitted, students are expected to attend classes regularly and submit work on time. Punctuality is the key. Students cannot pay their way to a degree.

Is it easy for TBC students to transfer to partner universities in the UK?
Students can transfer at the end of each academic year, but they should know that once they enroll at the universities in UK, they have to pay the British fees.

How does a British degree help students in the Nepali job market?
A British degree has international credibility because of the standard, structure, and quality of education and gives students that extra edge. But the degree in itself doesn’t guarantee jobs. What students need to understand is that TBC is an educational institution not a job placement agency.

What possibilities and challenges do you see for Nepali colleges wanting to collaborate with British universities?
The possibilities are enormous. There are many British universities looking for suitable franchise partners in different regions because the soaring price of education means that less and less international students can afford an education in the UK. When students have colleges and universities of global standards in their own country, it’s easier for them in terms of finances and also culturally they are more at ease. The challenges is for the Nepali government to monitor and maintain the quality and standard of the universities coming in to Nepal.

www.thebritishcollege.org.np

I f you frequent Thamel’s OR2K as much as I do and sometimes long for a bit of ground spiced lamb in your bumus or a beef version of its yummy burgers, I have good news for you. The owners of OR2K, the vegetarian restaurant serving Middle Eastern and Israeli delicacies, have opened a non-vegetarian twin: Friend’s Cafe and Bar. Friend’s is housed in the same location in Mandala Street where OR2K stayed temporarily while its building was under construction.

Friend’s menu tilts more on Spanish inspirations, with few Middle Eastern choices. Although we were tempted to order non-veg versions of my OR2K favourites, we began with the Spanish tapas (Rs 240) served on

richly flavourful tomato sauce. We finished with a chocolate fudge cake: warm, soft, sweet, and delicious with the melted chocolate on top. Friend’s gets good marks on food and decor, but we were slightly disappointed with the service. On one occasion the waiters took so long to respond I thought that maybe I had been calling on the wrong person. When someone finally came, he looked like he had just been dragged out of bed. Not to mention, the most comfortable seat in the house seemed to have been occupied by their noisy acquaintances who refused to leave. Note to the owner: check the IP cameras you’ve installed, I’m not lying.

If the service gets its act together, Friend’s will become as popular as OR2K.

PM

How to get there: walk along Mandala Street in Thamel past the entrance to the underground parking. Look out for a flight of stairs on your right, it will lead you up to Friend’s.

The star of our visit was the tortilla de bocadillo (Spanish type bread). Friend’s lets you pick three from six options, a little stingy for the price I think. We chose the tapas with mushroom, salmon, and chicken sausage. But when it arrived, our salmon was switched with another option: tuna potato salad with hardboiled egg, same the tuna potato salad. When asked about the lonely egg, the waiter apologised and brought out the salmon. All’s well that ends well, the combinations worked great. Special thumbs up for the chicken sausage option, which was served with roasted and pickled bell peppers and mustard.

Next up we had tortilla de patatas (Rs 180). What made this Spanish style potato omelette yum was the aioli side. Aioli is a traditional sauce made of garlic, olive oil, lemon juice, and egg yolks and Friend’s had made it perfectly smooth. The Thai salad (Rs 205) was a bowl of beef strips, mixed with bean sprouts, bell peppers, spinach, cucumber, cabbage and cashew nuts, topped with Thai dressing. The grilled beef strips were tender and the salad was a fresh delight.

The star of our visit was the hot pot (Rs 325). The hot pot arrived in an iron cast pan with a dough lid. Under the baked dough blanket was a generous serving of chicken meatballs, soft and well done, simmered in

How is The British College (TBC) different than other colleges in Nepal?
The British College is getting full franchise from two universities in UK—Leeds Metropolitan University and University of West England. This means TBC has to maintain the same quality of education as the universities in UK. Representatives from Leeds Metropolitan University and University of West England carry out regular inspections to make sure the college has adequate resources and qualified staff to meet the British standards.

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Mountains are perceived to be the abode of the gods, and people have sought to obtain religious merit points (punya in Sanskrit, soma in Tibetan) by ascending mountains to pray. Moses, Mohamed, Shiva, all have important associations with mountains. Before we discuss the health issues of ascending mountains, a word about the many high altitude sacred sites in our region.

Damodar Kunda in the Mustang region of Nepal (4,890 m), Muktinath (3,900 m) north of Jomsom, Kedarnath (3,584 m), Damodar Kunda in the Sacred lake of Kalakut and bats. Near the base of the mountain, the titans lay hold of one end of the rope around the mountain, the titans laid hold of one end of the rope and the gods the other. They churned for a thousand years. After Vasuki had been wrapped back the base of the mountain. The lake area is completely packed during Janai Purnima which are chiefly headache and nausea.

Volunteers with accurate knowledge of altitude sickness from the Himalayan Rescue Association and the Mountain Medicine Society of Nepal will also be at hand to help you. Taking diamox, if you don’t have sulphur allergy, will help to prevent and treat AMS. Drinking 2 liters of clean water (boiled or treated with chlorine/iodine tablets) per day will help avoid hydration. Proper rain gear and carrying some table salt to deal with leech bites will come in handy. The lake area is completely packed during Janai Purnima so being psychologically acclimatized. You need to listen to your body and not push ahead relentlessly disregarding symptoms of acute mountain sickness which are chiefly headache and nausea.

The lake, in the memory of this selfless act by Lord Shiva, pilgrims annually take a holy dip in the lake and wash away their sins. But just like for the great Shiva, this pilgrimage is not risk free.

Gosainkunda lake will be the venue for the climactic enactment of the greatest Vedic tradition. Starting from Dhunche in Rasuwa district, it is best to take 4 to 5 nights to reach the lake so that you are properly acclimatized. You need to take special precautions.
Lost crown and country

The country is crying out for someone to step up. But it’s not you Mr Gyanendra Shah

byproducts of transactions between senile men who have sold the country down the river. But it does not translate into a royal revival. Here is a checklist for the king wanna-be, but never-gonna-be:

 Get rid of your Wayfarer. Chuck it away, or gift it to flood victims, please. You need to muster some courage to look people in their eyes without shades, and acknowledge their existence if you want them to do the same to you.

 Get rid of your current gatekeepers and have-been hangers-on. They not only tell you what you want to hear, they also keep you away from the real Nepalis standing behind the people lined up with garlands: the really poor and the really young.

 Change the name of your daughter-in-law’s charity. Slapping a person’s name to an organisation will never allow it to bond meaningfully with the people. Jordan’s Queen Rania runs Jordan River Foundation. Prince Charles oversees International Business Leaders Forum.

 Set up a Twitter account even if there will be abuse as well as right royal sucking up. Here’s your first Twitter post: ‘@GyanendraShah Education is the silver bullet to transform our country. Schools should be run like palaces. Teachers should earn a six-figure salary’.

The country is crying out for someone to step up. But it’s not you. We Nepalis have an ethos at whose core is a healthy disrespect towards the political establishment, that’s the only reason people are offering flowers to you. But what you need to understand is that we also love burning effigies of our kings and prime ministers. Nepalis are not the sheep you thought they were. They see through you. They don’t want someone who demolished democracy. The garlands are not meant for you, the people are still waiting for someone who deserves it more.
from October to March, the scenic but impoverished district of Humla in Nepal’s north-western corner is mostly snowbound. The only greens to be seen are the conifers. The summer harvest has to see the district’s 50,858 inhabitants through the long, harsh winter.

Even until four years ago, the winter diet of people here used to be limited to buckwheat dhindo and sisnu nettles. Vegetables were even rarer than rice.

In the past few years, Humla’s villagers have taken to vegetable farming in a big way, building greenhouses so that they have greens even in winter.

When Kal Bahadur Singh (see pic), 46, first heard of greenhouses he thought it was way beyond his means. It took some convincing before he finally took out a loan of Rs 100,000 to extend his farm and build a greenhouse just before winter to grow mustard greens, bitter gourd and ladies’ fingers.

Within a few months, the mustard had grown knee-high and with so much demand in his own village, he didn’t have to travel uphill through the snow to Simkot to sell three winter harvests. From February to April this year he earned Rs 25,000 just selling cauliflower, zucchini, cabbage, tomatoes, potatoes, asparagus and cucumber.

“With this extra money I bought stationary and clothes for my children and there was enough to eat and sell last winter,” Kal Bahadur told us. “This greenhouse is like a cash cow.” Indeed, this resourceful farmer represents Humla’s green revolution, rising from subsistence to being the district’s richest farmer.

It hasn’t always been easy, the winter blizzards sometimes blow down the greenhouses, and lack of knowhow means farmers sometimes make expensive mistakes.

“Because of its isolation, farming practices in Humla are a bit different from the rest of Nepal,” says Yogi Kayastha, programme coordinator at Humla Development Institute, a Norwegian-supported group that is helping farmers here by distributing seeds and teaching them new agricultural methods. “For example, they don’t make mounds while planting potatoes, which would increase yield. We try to show them by comparing their ways and ours, and when they see the results they accept it.”

When Kayastha first came to Humla five years ago and tried to promote the benefits of eating vegetables, local villagers avoided it in the belief that they would fall sick if they ate greens. It changed with awareness and education, but what really encouraged farmers was when they found out they could make money selling vegetables.

Humla is one of two remaining districts in Nepal without road access, everything has to be flown in by air. Tomatoes that cost Rs 20 per kg in Nepalganj cost Rs 200 here. Which means that the poorest people in the most deprived part of Nepal end up spending most of their income on food at the cost of health and education.

Neglect and corruption has kept Humla isolated and poor. A road link to Kalikot to the south-east, or to Tibet to the north would break the district’s debilitating isolation. And although every annual budget sets aside money for a road to Humla, the promise of access has become a cruel joke for its people.

Jeevan Shahi, former elected DDC chairman of Humla, worked hard to link
SAMJHAUNE BUDHA, 43
Samjhaune Budha of Chari took Rs 5,000 of her savings from selling vegetables to Simkot a few years ago and put it in a bank. Every year, whatever her earnings, she continued to add to her savings. There were enough vegetables in her greenhouse to feed her family and she sold the surplus.

She says: “In the last five years, we have changed our food habits and have realised that eating vegetables is good for health.” Now, Budha wants to install a water supply system in her village so children don’t get stomach infections.

TIRSANA SHAHI, 40
With five sons, two daughters-in-law, one daughter, and a loitering husband to feed, 40-year-old Tirsana Shahi had trouble earning enough from her lodge in Dharapori. During the off-season, she couldn’t find enough food to feed her customers, and vegetables that came from Simkot were too expensive.

But after she built a greenhouse in her garden last year, Tirsana has been able to not just diversify her menu but also sell the surplus vegetables to locals. Now, traders and trekkers travelling from Simkot to Hilsa and back, eat and stay over at her lodge. “I spent Rs 35,000 to build this greenhouse,” says Shahi. “It has paid for itself and paid for my children’s food and education.”

DHANE PARIYAR, 67
Dhane Pariyar of Syanda has an infectious laugh that makes his neighbours envious. In his youth he had to make a living by stitching clothes and playing music at weddings. With a growing family this was not enough, so he thought of farming apples to augment his income.

“Last year I sold Rs 70,000 worth of apples,” says Pariyar. “In the last 14 years, I’ve spent quite a lot so I’ve changed my profession from tailor to farmer.”

With money and ideas he got while working in Himachal Pradesh in India, he understood the importance of education and sent his children to school. They have done well, and they take care of him now.

Kal Bahadur Singh is a living example that it is possible.

Himal to Hilsa on the Chinese border, but the conflict interrupted the work. He has also tried to cut the dependence of his district on subsidised rice initially flown in for civil servants.

He says: “If we get help to farm vegetables and grain in the lower valleys, fruits and nuts in the areas around Simkot, and develop livestock in the upper regions, Humla would not be poor and hungry anymore.”

Doctor who? #655
Humla’s road to progress, #526
Sunlight in Humla, #245
See 1972 documentary.

STONES 21000
WOOD 14000
PLASTIC COST 11000
LABOUR CHARGE 20000
FITTING MATERIALS 5000
TOTAL: 71000

Greenhouse

5.5m x 1.2m x 1.5m

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KATHMANDU

HUMLA

Area
Population
Per Capita Income
Literate Rate
Child Mortality Rate
Expected Life
Humla
5,565
5,526
$127.3
12.9%
50%
54
Nepal Average
5,526
5,526
$377
23.9%
48%
64

THARIK LAMA
All pics: Sunir Paney

INCOME PER WINTER = RS 25,000

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Selfish nationalism

Madhav Dhungel, Annapurna Post, 29 July

When Mohan Baidya led CPN-Maoist announced that his party was interested in cooperating with ex-king Gyanendra Shah to safeguard Nepal’s sovereignty, it set off an uproarious debate on nationalism. With NC president Sushil Koirala urging political parties to make elections a success and CPN-M chairman’s vehement opposition to elections, the common citizen is stuck in the middle. However, the debate is not a new one. After the advent of democracy in 1990, ‘nationalism’ was used by all parties to blame one another. During the 1991 election campaign, the UML accused the NC of ‘selling’ the Kosi and Gandaki rivers to India. The CPN (UML) boycotted the house after the then prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala signed the Mahakali Treaty. In 1998, the CPN (UML) split over the Mahakali Treaty with Bamdev Gautam forming the Communist Party of Nepal. When the CPN failed to secure even a single seat in the parliamentary elections of 1991, few leaders including Gautam returned to CPN (UML) while a few others joined the Maoists.

In Nepal the definition of nationalism and who is a nationalist or who is a broker of foreign powers is contingent upon whether a party is in power or in the opposition. Maoist leaders in particular are most guilty of double talking when it comes to nationalism. In 23 January 1995, Baburam Bhattarai, chairman of the United People’s Front submitted a 40 point memorandum to the then prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. The first nine points dealt directly with protecting Nepal’s ‘nationalism’ from foreign elements:

1. Abrogate all discriminatory treaties, including the 1950 Nepal-India Treaty.
2. Annul the so-called Integrated Mahakali Treaty signed on 29 January 1996, as it threatens our nationality and can be prove to be more damaging in the long run.
3. Regulate, control, and systematise the open border between Nepal and India. Prohibit vehicles with Indian licence plate from plying in Nepal.
4. Close down the Gorkha Recruitment Centres and provide dignified employment to Nepali citizens within Nepal.
5. Priority should be given to Nepali workers in different sectors. If foreign workers are required under special circumstances, a work permit system should be implemented.
7. Devise and implement appropriate customs policies that facilitate economic independence of the country.
8. The country is being invaded and corrupted by imperialist and colonial culture. Ban films, videos, and magazines.
9. Prohibit the invasion of colonial and imperial elements in the name of NGOs and INGOs.

But when the same ‘nationalist’ Bhattarai came to power in 2011, he signed two major agreements including the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA) without a moment of hesitation. According to the deals, Nepal government is liable for any damage caused to industry with Indian investment.

Victims to leaders

Himal Khabarpatra, 29 July – 4 August

Last week, Shakti Samuha received the Ramon Magsaysay Award in recognition of its relentless efforts to rescue and rehabilitate trafficked young women. Started in 1997 by Chairima Tamang, victim of trafficking herself, the NGO is run entirely by trafficking survivors. Himaal Khabarpatra caught up with Tamang to find out her reaction after winning the award and future plans.

Himal Khabarpatra: Did you have any feeling that Shakti Samuha would win this year’s Magsaysay Award?
Chairima Tamang: Earlier in January, a team from the award committee came to visit Shakti Samuha and did a thorough inquiry. Then about two weeks ago we were asked to mail them the organisation’s profile and information. On 24 July we were informed via email that we had won the Magsaysay Award.

Why do you think Shakti Samuha won the Magsaysay? Did you have any idea that this would happen?
Chairima Tamang: After winning this award, we want to empower trafficked women. We don’t want to sit around, wait for the government to do everything. We want to empower trafficked women to lead the change.

How will Shakti Samuha use the $50,000 award money?
Chairima Tamang: Few people knew about us before the award, now we are internationally recognised and have greater exposure. We realise that rescuing trafficked women is not enough. Victims need income generating skills and employment. We will use the prize money towards this cause. We will also use the award to develop our institutional capacity and continue to move forward with the full involvement of victims.

Read full interview: http://www.himalkhabar.com/?p=35076

Mukarung in the NC

Shrawan Mukarung in Naya Patrika, 28 July

I never used to be in any political party. Yes, now I have joined the NC after giving it a lot of thought. Today, common man is important. All communist parties have become democratic even though they seem ashamed to call themselves democratic. It was the NC that brought the Maoists into the mainstream. No one offered me anything to join the Congress. I did it out of my own free will because I believe it is the party that is that is least hypocritical and guarantees freedom of expression. If any NC leader offers me any position in government in the future, I will reject it.

This politics is important, because it is political and determines the country’s future.

I don’t think non-Congress people should have any issues, since they have accepted CPN (Maoist) chairman’s victory at the Congress lottery. I don’t want to get into a Janajati party because I don’t think they have a future. I don’t want to narrow myself down to Janajati politics. I want the freedom of being involved in wider national dialogue.

I agree with this need for identity-based federalism, but am against federalism with just one identity. Nepal is a mosaic of ethnicity, we have all been living together. No ethnic group is dominant anywhere. I definitely choose with NC’s policy framework.

I see a lot of doubts about elections in November. But elections are necessary. I think the people will forgive the political parties and give them the chance to hold elections to write a new constitution. If there are elections the NC will be the largest party, there is no doubt about it. It is because of the failure of the parties that we have a technocratic government. This is just a temporary arrangement.

I admire Shakti Samuha’s selflessness and sacrifice for democracy. I also like Prachanda’s charisma and his vocal political skills, but his weakness is his lack of consistency. I wonder how many times he has. I think Madhav Kumar Nepal is clean but I don’t have a very high opinion of his capabilities. Baburam Bhattarai has the right intentions, but I think his repudiation has taken a knock. Gyandanda looks like he wants a political role, but he brought himself and the monarchy down because of his own stupidity, but I think Kamal Thapa is clear-headed and consistent in his beliefs.
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The Ass found it hard to keep awake while clocking an average of 12 hours a day watching the aptly-named Asses Series on Sports Ten recently. Cricket is a game that you can watch in your sleep. But as the live coverage of the series progressed, the donkey’s uncolonised mind couldn’t make head or tail of the game. Hope is at hand, however, since some of the intricacies of the game have rubbed off even on the Ass and made me somewhat of a pro, if I may say so myself. Now, finally, I can explain the game to our valued customers.

Cricket just looks complicated, actually it is a very simple game. All you need to do is throw a ball at about 550 mph at a guy holding a bat and try to knock off both his tentacles from a distance of 50 ft. But, like in all sports, there are some simple precautions that need to be taken so no one gets hurt, therefore all cricketers who value their crown jewels wear body armour to prevent themselves from being inadvertently castrated by a Mach 3 beamer.

Ever since cricket was invented by Genghis Khan, people have tried to make the game a little more exciting. Once, an entire stadium was knocked unconscious by an exceptionally boring Australia vs England match, so in India they came up with the idea of the IPL T20 to add a little more zing to the game. They even brought in Uzbek cheerleaders wearing just knickers. But the game is still slow and dull, so the Ass feels it is its duty to come up with some tips on how to inject some excitement into cricket:

- Redefine ‘Break leg’ to actually mean breaking legs of batters and fielders and (sometimes) umpires.
- Live tv cameras so far zoom in only on wives, mistresses and GFs of players in the spectator stand. Allow them into the batting lineup to liven up the game.
- So no one has unfair advantage, outlaw leg pads, helmets, groin guards and the Pepsimobile.
- Get the Chinese hooked to cricket so we can have real Chinasmen.
- Replace leather balls with steel ones with titanium coating and booster rockets.
- Replace grass on pitch with slippery wet surface so players can make spectacular slides at silly point
- Allow unisex teams
- Rain or hailstorms never stop play

Asia is divided into two types of countries: those that play cricket and those that eat them. The Line of Control between these two eco-biological domains passes along 118 degrees East meridian in the vicinity of the Andaman Sea. There is also a third type of country in Asia, which is the one that likes to play with crickets by tying pieces of string on their hind legs, and gambling on cricket races. But in general, it would be safe to say that west of the Abdomen Sea, cricket is a sport, and to the east, it is a meal.

Many people think cricket is the most boring sport on earth. They’re wrong. It is the most boring sport in the known universe.

We in Nepal have to thank our lucky stars our country was never colonised by leg breakers, and therefore did not inherit a sport with a scoreboard that looks like the results of a general election. In fact, it is matter of national pride and a symbol of our national sovereignty and territorial integrity that we do not play cricket, and we must doubly redouble our efforts to uphold this glorious tradition so that we can continue to claim that we were never under a colonial-imperialist yoke. We will fight tooth-and-nail to foil the grand design of the foreign hand that tries to force us to play cricket.

But we have, over the years, paid a heavy price for our independence. We will never, for instance, know the pleasures of hanging out with the Third Empire in our jodhpurs on the gymkhana veranda, sipping ginger beer to applaud the home side juggernaut, and running in our cummerbunds to our dak bungalows when rain stops play so that we can dip our biscuits in the tea. Fair Play and a Level Playing Field are the hallmarks of cricket, which is why the game is so alien to our value system. We will allow cricket on one condition: if match-fixing is legalised.