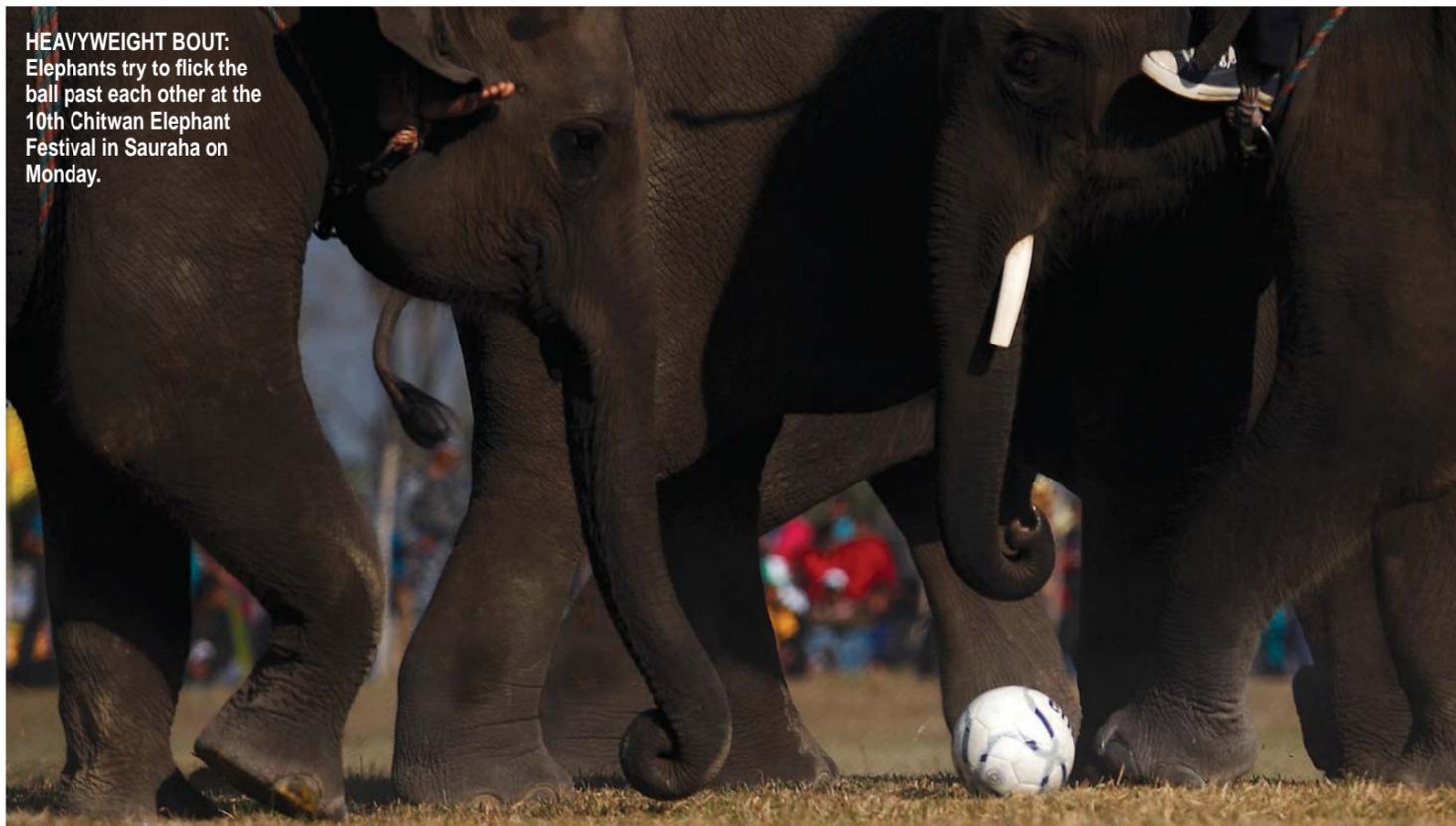


HEAVYWEIGHT BOUT: Elephants try to flick the ball past each other at the 10th Chitwan Elephant Festival in Sauraha on Monday.



DANCING FOR THE GODS

Bharatnatyam artist Sulochana Gopali used to spend hours inside her bedroom copying the dance moves from her favourite films while her friends played hide-and-seek. After performing in India, Europe, and all 75 districts of Nepal, Gopali now wants to revive Nepal's classical dance forms and pass the knowledge to the next generation.

PAGE 7

THE WARS OF OTHERS

The new year marks two war centennials in Nepal. 200 years ago, an expanding Gorkha Empire clashed with the East India Company and lost almost half of its territory and kept its sovereignty.

And a century later in 1914, over 200,000 Nepali men set sail to Europe after Kathmandu's elite gambled on British victory in a European war. Gurung, Magar, Rai, and Limbu

heartlands in central and eastern Nepal were emptied of their young men as the British shipped them from Flanders Field to Mesopotamia and Gallipoli to Palestine.

In the 100 years since, more Nepalis went and fought wars for the British in Europe (again), Burma, Malaya, Borneo, Iraq and Afghanistan, as history came a full circle from the Anglo-Afghan wars in which Gurkha regiments took part.

As our special military

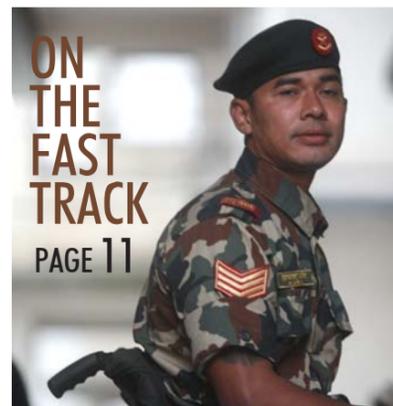
coverage shows, the lessons from 200 years ago are just as relevant for Nepal today as it was then. If empires went to war over tea and cotton in the past, today's prime commodity is labour that migrates outwards from poorer countries. And unless a state protects its citizens and provides for their future, the world outside will continue taking advantage.

Unfortunately for us, Nepal's diplomatic acumen and foreign policy remain much the same.

DOUBLE CENTENNIAL EDITORIAL PAGE 2

50 YEARS AFTER TIBET RAID PAGE 4

200 YEARS OF LAHURES PAGE 15-17



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DOUBLE CENTENNIAL

The new year marks two war centennials in Nepal: the 200th anniversary of the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814-16 and the start of the First World War 100 years ago in 1914. In the first, an expansionist Gorkha Empire clashed with the British East India Company and in the second, Nepalis paid a heavy price for supporting the Allied war effort in Europe.

The Sugauli Treaty of 1816 allowed Nepal to remain independent, but at the cost of losing one-third of its territory, allowing a British resident in Kathmandu, and permitting recruitment of its soldiers into the British Army. Later, Nepal's Rana rulers became Anglophiles, adopting the lifestyles of the English nobility and building lavish palaces. They sent Nepali soldiers to help the British quell the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and deployed them in the colonial campaigns to pacify pesky tribes on the Afghan frontier.

As a direct legacy of the Sugauli Treaty, more than 20,000 Nepali soldiers in the British Indian Army ended up being killed a century later in the trenches of Flanders Field in Belgium, in the quagmire at Gallipoli, and in the deserts of Mesopotamia. One in every 10 young Nepali men recruited didn't make it back home. At a time when Nepal's population was only 5.6 million, up to 200,000 young men were fighting and dying in some far-off land for a cause not their own. And since many of them were from specific ethnicities, entire communities in the remote mountains of Nepal lost their men.

Thirty years later, the world was engulfed in war again. Nearly 250,000 Nepali soldiers again went down to Calcutta to join troopships sailing off to Europe and South-east Asia. Another 30,000 Nepali soldiers in the British Army died during the Second World War



BY JON ARNY

The ambition and greed of powerful men write the history of nations and sow suffering for peoples

in 'theatres' in Italy, North Africa, Burma, and Malaya. Many of them were sons of soldiers who had been killed in World War I.

Nepal's soldiers first fought Maoist guerrillas not in their own backyard from 1996-2006, but in the jungles of British Malaya in the early 1960s. And in an example of history coming a full circle, Gurkhas have returned to

Afghanistan more than a century later as a part of the British NATO forces in Helmand today.

As our special coverage of the two centennials in this issue shows (see Page 15-17), the ambition and greed of powerful men write the history of nations and sow suffering for peoples. The British East India Company didn't go to war with Nepal so much for territory, but for trade. It needed control over the trans-Himalayan passes to Tibet. And after it had hacked off the region west of the Mahakali River, the Company had access to the high passes over the Himalaya and saw no need to conquer and keep, what even then, looked like an ungovernable state.

But the terms of the treaty that preserved Nepal's nominal sovereignty, altered our nation's boundary and history and started the tradition of Gurkha recruitment that continues to this day.

Incongruous as it may seem in this day and age that the citizens of one country should be laying down their lives for the sake of another, the lessons from 1814 and 1914 are as relevant today as they were then.

The first lesson is economic: small countries are mere pawns in the world of globalised trade and each country needs its own strategy to take full advantage from this lopsided relation to spur growth and create jobs. If it was tea, cotton or shahtoosh 200 years ago, the commodity today is labour. Four coffins arriving at Kathmandu airport everyday is a wartime casualty rate.

The second lesson is political: a nation is only taken seriously if it is united, if it cares how it is perceived by the outside world, if its people take pride in their shared history, if its rulers protect citizens and provide for their future.

ON THE WEB

www.nepaltimes.com

TO DO LIST

A check-list for Nepali politics, let's not kid ourselves ('To do list', Editorial, #687). Our leaders make and break deadlines on will and as the events of the past month have proved (once again), they have no respect for the public mandate. If the Election Commission is as persistent as it was about the 19 November polls, then perhaps we might have local elections in 2014, but hoping for a new constitution within a year is stretching it a little too far.

Renu Shrestha

- How spineless are the senior leaders of the Congress and UML, to let Pushpa Kamal Dahal walk all over them? Dahal, on the other hand, has shown without a speck of doubt how little he cares about public opinion. His party was heavily defeated at polls, but why be bothered about the people's mandate when you can blackmail your way back to power? The four-point agreement will go down in the annals of Nepali history as one of the biggest farce. Shame on us for allowing this to happen.

Nepali

- What is this editorial trying to say: now that the leaders have their four-point agreement in place, they need to complete the wish list? Got to love that message, but got to love Nepalis even more for voting the same leaders back to power. I wonder when people will accept the fact that they tried to fix something

that wasn't broken and failed miserably at it.

SS

PR FOR PR

The same politicians, who had promised to respect the public mandate, are once again failing us and we are fools for trusting them ('PR for PR', Trishna Rana, #687). Six weeks after elections, the Proportional Representation lists are just being decided. Maybe we could borrow Arvind Kejriwal and his Aam Aadmi Party from Delhi for a few years to set our politics right.

Gaya

- Even after a third extension to the deadline, 19 out of 30 parties, and only the UML from the big three, have managed to submit their PR lists before 30 December. The EC should say 'enough is enough', disqualify the 11 parties who have once again flouted the deadline and distribute their seats to others. This is the only way to teach an important lesson to the wayward parties and their leaders, who believe they are above the law.

Loppa

- So far the debate around PR has focused solely on the 33 per cent quota. But what about the skills and competency of our future CA members? The UML refused to give a seat to a seasoned leader like Ram Kumari Jhakri, who is not only the first female president of the Free Student Union, but was also at the forefront of the 2006 Janandolan. In her place the party sent candidates

whose only qualification is that they are daughters/wives/mother-in-laws of powerful men or that they donated/are capable of donating large sums of money. Even if there are 300 women in the 601-strong CA, I wouldn't necessarily call it inclusive or progressive if highly-qualified and deserving female leaders are being kept out of BICC hall.

Mahila

- I absolutely agree with the writer on the need to modify our PR system. In Nepal, a closed list ballot would work best. People will be voting for parties, but the ranked list will tell them exactly in which order and which candidate is going to win. More importantly, both the closed and open ballots will save time, because the parties will have to submit their lists before election day.

Sandy

- If human rights lawyers and journalists are coy about pressuring the International Court of Justice to investigate the murder and mayhem unleashed by the Maoists, Dahal and his comrades will continue to be smug for a long time to come. However, if the president of Kenya is being perused in the Hague, I wonder who/what is stopping the ICJ from interrogating Nepal's war criminals.

Poudyal

AAM AADMI

As long as the Aam Aadmi Party stands firm on its manifesto, it has an encouraging future in Delhi and immense potential to win a

large number of seats in UP and Maharashtra in the upcoming general elections ('For the aam aadmi', Ajaz Ashraf, #687). Yes, the Congress and BJP will constantly pose problems and try to thwart the AAP government, but it seems Kejriwal and his team are prepared to lead cautiously. The AAP shouldn't worry too much about its length of stay in power, instead it should focus exclusively on how to fulfil the promises it made to the 10 million citizens of Delhi.

Anonymous

- I watched Kejriwal's swearing-in ceremony at the Ramlila Maidan live on tv and despite my initial reservation about the AAP, I must admit it was a very moving and honest speech, a rarity in the era of career politicians. I wish the party all the best and hope it lives up to the very high standards it has set for itself. If the new chief minister and his cadres can accomplish even half the points in the party manifesto, then their political experiment will go down in history as a major success. Who knows, there might even be a real Indian Spring.

Arti

WHEN SNOW FELL IN BARDIYA

Thank you Amrit Gurung and band for giving us Nepalis such world class concerts every year ('When snow fell in Bardiya', Kunda Dixit, #687). I attended your show in Pokhara in 2011 and

was blown away not only by the on stage performance, but how much the audience was enjoying itself. Your message of peace, unity, and quality education for our children is as pertinent as ever and hope you continue with the good work for many, many years to come.

Sangita

- The concert in Kathmandu Valley was terribly managed. Tens of thousands of fans went to Patan Darbar Square to see the concert, yet there was no crowd control. Many were injured in the stampede at the end. I personally feel relieved to have gotten out alive. The sound system was horrible, the music could be barely heard from a 100 feet. The final show could have been phenomenal; instead it ended up a disaster and tarnished the reputation of Nepathya.

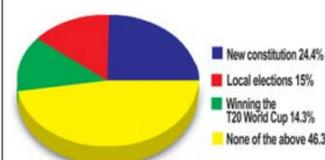
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Times nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll #688

Q. Which of the following is more likely to happen in 2014?

Total votes: 602



Weekly Internet Poll # 689. To vote go to: www.nepaltimes.com

Q. Are you satisfied with the PR nominations?

Statutory warning

Political parties that suffer from a democratic deficit within can't give us a democratic constitution



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

The month after elections has once again proved that Nepal's present breed of top netas are an embarrassment not only for those who voted them to power, but also for their own young cadre.

The shameless display of greed, power, lust, and favouritism by senior leaders in all major parties has sparked intra-party conflicts.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal bypassed both deputies to get his way with the Proportional Representation list this week, but resignation by 11 senior district leaders of Jumla including an elected CA member is a tight slap on his face. The way a 'people's leader' has eroded his personal and political credibility over the years, means that the only legacy he will leave behind is that of deceit, double-speak, and debauchery. The attack on dissenting groups by Dahal supporters in Birganj and the arson in Dhading (*pic, below*) are an indication of which way the party is headed.

Dissatisfaction is also rife in the UML after hardworking leaders like Rajendra Rai and Ram Kumari Jhakri, also from marginalised backgrounds, were left out while family members of senior leaders were rewarded. It is no secret that the seats were internally divided between Madhav Kumar Nepal, Jhala Nath Khanal, and KP Oli, who cherry-picked their favourites. After nobody from their district made it to the PR list, all 40 committee members from Solukhumbu resigned on Sunday. In Inaruwa, Kosi cadre padlocked the party office in protest of the decision.



SITARAM ADHIKARIANS

For those celebrating Kangresi victory as a comeback for democracy, its PR list debacle must have come as a rude reality check. This is a party that has long been divided, split, and patched together to

suit the selfish interests of a few top leaders. The divisive politics between Girija Prasad Koirala and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai was inherited by Sushil Koirala and Sher Bahadur Deuba, who now run their own coteries along with some powerful kingmakers.

The NC's outspoken Gagan Thapa, who signed a note of dissent along with 12 CWC members, feels it's not just a question of why Meena Subba did not make it to the PR list or why the tainted Khum Bahadur Khadka's wife did. Thapa is more worried about the longstanding democratic deficit within the party and disappointed by the feckless submission of senior leaders to such feudal practices.

"Seats were divided at the very top, individuals' interests prevailed over party norms and values, yet very few chose to speak against it," a dejected Thapa told me.

Leaders of the Madhes-based parties have made it easier on everybody by not even pretending a democratic exercise while handing PR seats to their wives on the women quota. Rajkishore Yadav, Rajendra Mahato, Anil Jha, and Sarat Singh Bhandari chose their near and dear ones while Bijay Gachhadar has rewarded seven businessmen who funded his pricey election campaign.

It's ironic that the people have given the democratic mandate of drafting a statute to parties that have yet to prove their democratic credentials. Claims that the NC and UML are vanguards of Nepali democracy falls flat in the face when its leadership is exposed of undermining internal democracy for vested interests. Similarly, the Maoist commitment to peace and democratic politics becomes a joke when the leadership is openly promoting lumpenism to threaten and discipline opponents.

Unless political parties stop paying lip service to democracy and begin upholding it within, there is a real danger that the second CA will also fall victim to the same dysfunctional practice that brought down the first. ❑

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Two declassified Foreign Office files in the UK National Archives shed interesting light on events in Kathmandu in July 1964 which put newly arrived British Ambassador Antony Duff in a predicament, seriously discomfited King Mahendra and caused problems for Panchayat officials.

50 years after the raid into Tibet

SAM COWAN

George Patterson had been a missionary in Kham in eastern Tibet and spoke the dialect well. Along with documentary maker Adrian Cowell and cameraman Chris Menges, he was keen to film Khampa fighters in Mustang carrying out a raid so he could show the world that Tibetans were still fighting the Chinese.

The build up of the Khampas in Mustang was a badly kept secret. The Indians were getting worried that a strengthening of Tibetans on Nepal's northern border could lead to China sending troops into Nepal. The first two CIA airdrops of arms from Hercules aircraft 10km inside Tibet took place in April and December of 1961. The third and final drop was made into Mustang in May 1965 by a DC-6. The Khampas had suffered heavy losses: of the 49 parachuted into Tibet, 37 were killed in action against the Chinese. In 1964, the CIA shifted its strategy to infiltrating small groups of Khampas into Tibet on intelligence missions.

The Nepali authorities knew what was going on in Mustang and who was backing the Khampas with money and material. There was therefore no chance that Nepal would allow Patterson anywhere near Mustang, but they underestimated the man's guile and determination.

In his book, *A Fool at Forty*, Patterson describes the web of deceit he spun in Kathmandu about his real aim beneath the cover of making 'a tv film about Nepal'. Patterson saw most of the key people: Tulsi Giri, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Prakash Thakur, the Chief of Protocol, Mr Banskota, the Director of Publicity, and General Padam Bahadur Khatri, the Foreign Secretary. He also had a two-hour meeting with Mahendra's brother, Prince Basundhara.

Patterson clearly pulled the wool over all their

eyes as he quickly got permission to start filming in and around Kathmandu. His application to go Mustang was refused and he obtained a permit for 'a trek to Pokhara', but left the trail at Arughat to walk north up the Budi Gandaki and after passing the Indian wireless station at Setibas, headed up the long, steep trail to Tsum.

Contact was quickly made with a small Khampa group which had one Bren Gun, eight rifles, and no means of communication. Tendar, their commander, had led reconnaissance sorties across the high snow passes to monitor traffic on the Dzonkha to Kyrong road, but little offensive action had taken place. A July 1964 dispatch from Duff reported a meeting he had with Michel Peissel, the Himalayan explorer and author, who told him that there had been no raids across the border since early 1963.

Still, Patterson persuaded Tendar to carry out a raid so he could film it. With his eight lightly armed men and the three foreigners, he crossed the high passes and on 9 June 1964 ambushed a PLA convoy, killing eight Chinese soldiers. In his book, Patterson gives a detailed description of the raid, which was successfully filmed.

The team returned to Kathmandu on 27 June and Cowell dispatched the footage of the raid on the first plane out to East Pakistan. A few days later, the three of them went to see Duff to confess all. Cowell and Menges were dubious, but Patterson agreed that Duff could pass the information to King Mahendra at an audience already fixed for the evening of Friday, 3 July. One of his two telegrams that day stated that he was going to inform the US ambassador and it would be reasonable to assume that this is when the CIA would have first known about the raid. At this stage, the UK was still accepting categorical denials from the US that it was not involved in support for the Khampas.

King Mahendra's first reaction was to tell Duff that the film would be "a big headache for us and

for you". Mahendra immediately summoned the Foreign Minister Kirti Nidhi Bista who transferred the monarch's ire to his subordinates at a meeting the next day. Duff reported: 'The main brunt fell on Padam Bahadur Khatri who took it especially hard because he would much sooner not have known anything about it all.'

That same morning, as previously planned, Cowell and Menges left Kathmandu to drive overland to India via Raxaul, but were detained overnight at the border. Some innocuous film footage and audio tapes were confiscated and Duff reported that the palace had given the order to release them without informing the Foreign Secretary.

A week later Duff reported: 'Judging by conversations with the King and the Foreign Minister at a reception, I have acquired no merit at all for telling the Nepalese about the sortie over the border into Tibet. The Foreign Minister indeed muttered something about it being sometimes better to conceal things for a while.'

At the same reception, Mahendra said that the film ought to be stopped. Duff told him this was not possible. Patterson and Cowell had told Duff that they would wait for three months before showing the material, but the finished film called *Raid into Tibet* was not shown on British tv until 1966.

Patterson was clearly not prepared to sit on his story. In March 1965, he wrote a lengthy propagandist-style article on the raid in *The Reporter*, an American magazine, describing the ambush in graphic detail. Large extracts appeared in the *Hindustan Times*, under the heading *Nepal-based Khampas harass Chinese*. The files show that the articles caused concern among British officials which suggests that perhaps ATV, the independent company which finally transmitted it in the UK, had been persuaded to delay showing the film.

Duff had argued a better outcome might be

THE INSURGENTS (l-r): Khampa fighters in Mustang prepare for an attack on Chinese forces in June 1964. George Patterson, a Scottish engineer and missionary, led the covert effort to film the ambush which was later made into *Raid into Tibet*.

achieved by taking a conciliatory approach with Patterson. Mahendra and the palace were receptive, but Padam Bahadur Khatri wanted some measure of retribution. Two weeks later, police prevented Patterson from flying out and when Duff complained, no one in Kathmandu could or would identify who had given the order. Patterson was allowed to leave three days later, having signed a five line note saying essentially that he was sorry for straying from his trekking permit.

'Why that curious little statement should have satisfied anyone is merely one of the many mysteries about Nepalese behaviour throughout this affair.' That comment from Duff's final dispatch seems an apt way to end this tale as it also neatly conveys the opaqueness of government during the Panchayat days, which so confused outsiders and so suited the monarch.

In addition to the UK archive material and Patterson's book, other information about Tendar and the Khampas in Mustang comes from *The CIA's Secret War in Tibet* by Kenneth Conboy and James Morrison.

Sam Cowan is a retired British General who knows Nepal well through his Gurkha connection and extensive trekking in the country over many years.

nepalitimes.com

Longer version
Patterson's video of raid on Tibet

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The girl can't help it

NAOMI WOLF in NEW YORK

When Mary Barra (pic, right) was named CEO of General Motors last December – the first woman to head a major American automaker – it seemed to many to be a milestone in women's struggle for equal rights and opportunities. But in a climate in which, as Catalyst, the feminist glass-ceiling watchdog, points out, only 4.2 per cent of US Fortune 500 CEOs are women, is Barra's promotion really a victory?

One way to answer that question is to consider who is doing the judging. In the United States, by one count, two-thirds of professional journalists are men and they account for almost 90 per cent of bylines in economics and business reporting in traditional media. In fact, the reflexive worldview of male-dominated business-news coverage invalidates all talk of a victory, whether for Barra or for the rest of us – including impressionable 15-year-old girls seeking role models and a message of empowerment.

Many news stories about female CEOs and other high-achieving women are coded with a set of reliable clichés: they lucked into their new roles (and thus do not deserve them), inherited them from male relatives or spouses (and thus do not really hold the reins of power), or will not be there for long. If all else fails, coverage concentrates so narrowly on gender that a woman's very leadership is weakened.

These clichés not only undermine successful women's



COURTESY: GENERAL MOTORS

reputations; in the case of CEOs, they also reduce their value to their companies. And all of these clichés were reproduced in the coverage of Barra's appointment at GM.

For example, CNN covered the story by referring to Barra's "knack for climbing the corporate ladder" – a phrase with some suggestive undertones and one that would never be used with a man at the top.

The New York Times led with Barra's father and its headline suggested that she was "born to" her role, as if ambition and hard work had nothing to do with her ascent. It notes the car her husband drives and describes her as "soft-spoken." And it includes an excruciating quote from her predecessor, Daniel F Akerson: "Mary was picked for her talent, not her gender."

It is difficult to imagine a black male middle-aged CEO (Barra is 51) being introduced to reporters with the assurance that "he was not picked for his race."

Then there is the 'Potemkin CEO' approach, which implicitly assumes that powerful men would never really choose a woman to lead an important institution. According to this cliché, Barra's promotion must be a public-relations ploy, with men retaining the real power behind the façade. So we get this headline from *Fortune* magazine: "Is GM's Board Setting up Mary Barra to Fail as New CEO?" The article goes on to explain that being surrounded by male rivals for her job may fatally weaken Barra, as if male

CEOs were not also surrounded by would-be rivals.

Perhaps that is because she really is just a lady first, not a manager. An interview in *The New York Times*' business section manages to focus the entire discussion on how things have changed for women at GM, rather than on what Barra intends to change at the company as CEO, or even on how things have changed in the car industry – surely an important question. The interviewer even asks at the end whether her husband is a GM employee.

I cannot fathom why serious journalists commit such egregious breaches of basic professional norms of fairness and impartiality. When they do, they are performing the role of guard dogs of an endangered patriarchy, defending – and thus strengthening – the glass ceiling. www.project-syndicate.org

EVEREST BANK BIZ BRIEFS

IT Mela

The 20th edition of CAN InfoTech kicked off on Thursday at Exhibition Hall, Bhrikuti Mandap. Organised



by the Computer Association of Nepal (CAN), the six-day expo is supported by the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment, Ministry of Information and Communication, Nepal Telecommunications Authority, FNCCI, and Nepal Chamber of Commerce.

With more than 200 stalls offering the latest gadgets and tech services, and an IT conference to boost, the organisers hope to draw thousands of visitors. As in previous years, several companies have announced attractive schemes for buyers at the fair. Nepal Hima Trade Links, the authorised sellers of Sony product, is offering seven-eight per cent discount on the purchase of its goods. Likewise, Nagmani International, the authorised seller of Asus notebooks, is also providing five-ten per cent discounts.



Building blocks

Chaudhary Group has introduced its new product- 'CGCement'. CGCement's OPC cement is now available in the market and the company plans to launch its PPC and PSC brands in the near future.

Dream homes

Asian Paints Nepal announced the top 50 finalists of its 'Dream Home Contest'. A team of architects will now visit the homes to pick the top 10 finalists.



Cash cash



Sykar Trading has announced a new scheme on the occasion of new year. Customers now stand a chance of winning cash prizes from Rs 4000 to Rs 100,000 on purchase of a Honda motorcycle or scooter.

Athletic look

Jayshree Retail, a subsidiary of Jayshree Group, has launched JOMA, a Spanish sportswear brand. JOMA in Nepal will showcase a large variety of sports apparel and footwear reads the press release.



One more

Bank of Kathmandu recently started an extension counter service at the Inland Revenue Department in Pokhara. The counter will provide revenue collection services to the department and tax payment facilities to customers.

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Condemned to repeat history

The past will haunt India in 2014, the year of general elections

New year's greetings reflect people's innate desire for fresh beginnings and an end to what is painful. Yet it is impossible to divide time other than on calendars and dials of watches: the past invariably shadows the future. Ghosts we think we laid to rest, return to torment us.



LOOK OUT

Ajaz Ashraf

So it was that as 2012 ended last year, India's capital erupted over the gang rape of a physiotherapy intern on a bus. It persuaded us into believing the nation had turned the corner on gender justice as anti-rape laws were made stringent. Yet, within weeks of new laws being enacted, a five-year-old was raped in Delhi. Is our society impervious to change? Or does the outrage indicate we are no longer indifferent to the plight of women in the public domain?

Later in 2013, a legal intern went public with her allegation of harassment against a former Supreme Court judge, AK Ganguly. Then a journalist took on her editor, Tarun Tejpal, for sexually assaulting her. Societal change or not, the glare of the media spotlight ensured that neither accused slipped behind



the armour of privileges that bestows immunity from intense legal scrutiny for the powerful in India.

Hurrah, then? Not really, for the past returned wearing a new guise in December, through the suicide of Khurshid Anwar, executive director of the Delhi-based Institute for Social Democracy. Months earlier, an activist had accused Anwar of raping her. She did not file a police complaint. Instead, she videotaped her statement about the incident to academician Madhu Kishwar and disappeared from the city. The video found its way to two tv channels, which triggered a virulent campaign against Anwar. Deemed guilty, he committed suicide, prompting many, including women, to condemn the culture of trial by media.

The suicide of Anwar challenges the manner in which our increasingly sensitised

society responds to allegations of rape. Are we to presume all such charges are true and the media justified in pillorying the accused? Then again, is it not possible that anti-rape laws can be misused, as anti-dowry laws have sometimes been? Such questions will continue to haunt us in 2014, even as sexual predators will discover their victims rising laudably against them.

The religious riots in Muzaffarnagar will go off the headlines in 2014. Yet, the town in the state of Uttar Pradesh will become the petri-dish to grow and multiply the virus of communal hatred, to drive a wedge among communities, and attempt at consolidating the Hindus against 'the other': the Muslims. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will try to harness this divide as it did through its public felicitation of the accused, to bolster its chances in the 2014



General Elections.

No doubt, the BJP and its prime ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi, will go for broke in 2014, hoping to exploit the discredited Congress. However, contrary to popular belief, the BJP will not forget its Hindutva past: it will be presented to the electorate in the glossy wrappings of development.

The past will return in 2014, the year of elections. For Modi to become the prime minister, it is vital that the BJP dramatically improves upon its 2009 performance in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where the Congress isn't even in the hunt. It must, for one, wean away the middle and lower caste supporters of a clutch of regional leaders – Mayawati, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Lalu Prasad Yadav, and Nitish Kumar – to enhance its strength. What better way to achieve this than to harp on the

Hindu-ness of these castes, for which the rhetoric of riot is a proven tool.

For Rahul Gandhi and the Congress, 2014 will be severe, voted out of power as they probably will be. The Congress might even see its seat tally in the Lok Sabha dip to its lowest ever and confront a spell in oblivion. Rahul, too, will have to return to the past, to fathom the process underlying the emasculation of the grand old party and discover a new mantra to appease the ghost haunting his party.

In India's political firmament, it is the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and its leader, Arvind Kejriwal, for whom the year 2014 heralds a fresh beginning – it rose out of nowhere to become the country's great hope. He has captured the nation's imagination through the audacity of adhering to his promise of fighting and winning election on meagre resources collected with transparency. The AAP and Kejriwal are fortunate to have begun the new year without a past. 🇮🇳

Ajaz Ashraf was for the last 12 years deputy editor at Outlook magazine in India. He contributes this weekly column, Look Out, to Nepali Times. ashrafajaz3@gmail.com

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The westerlies carrying snow-laden clouds made it to Nepal's western border and brought in heavy snowfall with temperatures dropping to -7 degrees in hilly district of Jumla. There is no other frontal system in sight so expect clear, though often hazy, winter days this week. The weekend will see a further drop in minimum temperature in Kathmandu's outskirts.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
15° 9°	15° 8°	15° 6°

DANCING FOR THE GODS

Bharatnatyam artist seeks to revive Nepal's classical dance forms

RISHEERAM KATTEL

While her friends would bicker about who would be the 'doctor' or 'pilot' during pretend play, young Sulochana Gopali always chose to be a dancer. Such was her love for the art that the girl from Makwanpur spent hours in her room perfecting the steps of her favourite dances from actress Mithila Sharma's movies.

After completing high school, Sulochana moved to Kathmandu in 2002 and began studying

dance at Padma Kanya Campus. Having grown up watching popular Kollywood and Bollywood dance numbers on TV in her village in Tistung, she got cold feet when she was put in a Bharatnatyam group in her first year.

"I had never heard of Bharatnatyam in my life. Getting the precise movements and expressions correct was very challenging. But with practice and my gurus' guidance I started enjoying the dance," recalls Sulochana who trained under Krishna Pradhan and Yagya Man Shakyia in college.

With a BA degree in hand, the talented dancer left for Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in 2010 to sharpen her craft and broaden her understanding of classical dance forms. It was during her two years in Banaras when Sulochana realised how far we lag behind in our performing arts curriculum. "My Indian classmates were far ahead of me and the first semester was definitely the toughest," she admits. "I felt like I was starting from the very bottom because everything I had learnt in college was a fraction of what I was expected to know at BHU."

Sulochana's hard work and perseverance finally paid off when she graduated last year with a master's degree in Bharatnatyam.

An extremely precise dance style with the knees bent in a basic stance called araimandi where the body is divided into three triangles, Bharatnatyam is traditionally performed to Karnatic music. The theme is devotional love: a love for god that is at once physical, emotional and spiritual characterised by human emotions like jealousy, anger, happiness, playfulness, and betrayal.

Since the craft demands extensive training - a minimum of six years is usually required before a dancer is considered ready to

present a full recital on stage - and a lifetime of dedication, it does not have the mass appeal as other Indian dances. The number of Bharatnatyam artists in Nepal can be counted on the fingers of two hands and those with an academic degree are even rare.

Sulochana has travelled across the 75 districts of Nepal as well as many parts of Europe and India honing her talent. "No matter where I perform, I concentrate on giving my best when I am on stage," she says.

Besides live shows, the 26-year-old is also a dance instructor at schools around the Valley and is now being sought after by colleges to teach Bharatnatyam at university level. Padma Kanya, which is introducing a master's program in dance, reached out to its alumna recently to work on the new degree. "I am humbled to be working besides my guru ji on developing the new program which I hope will benefit many dance enthusiasts who want to perfect their skills," explains Gopali.

The gifted artist, however, is saddened by how quickly traditional dances in Nepal are losing their appeal and fears that without proper promotion and support, they will soon die out. "From popular media to dance schools, our children are watching and learning only western dances and Bollywood routines. When I try to teach classical dance like Charya to my young students, they shy away," says Sulochana. "If we want to inspire young people to take up traditional dance professionally, us teachers need to incorporate modern styles into ancient dance forms without altering their core elements."

Sulochana now wants to go beyond teaching and research on Nepali folk and classical dance forms like Charya so they become more popular among the youth. She says: "It is unfortunate that we haven't been able to pass on the skills and passion for our traditional dances from one generation to the other. I hope to work closely with my teachers to ensure that we don't lose such an important part of our cultural identity."

www.twitter.com/GopaliDance

nepalitimes.com

The dance of devotion, #154
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CLIMATE+CHANGE, an awe-inspiring educational science exhibition about climate change and Nepal's Himalaya. December to April, Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal

EVENTS

Tree of life, an exhibition of the paintings on the Mithila cosmos by SC Suman.

Runs till 6 January, 5-30pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal



MAGHE SANKRANTI, a month of reading Swasthani, a pilgrims' tales of the Kathmandu Valley of yore.

15 January to 14 February

Winter camp, give your children a chance to make good use of their holidays by learning music, arts, and drama.

Runs till 10 January, 10.30am to 4.30pm, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel, (01)5013554, www.katjazz.com.np

Satsang, read, reflect, discuss, and assimilate the meaning of the Hindu scriptures with fellow enthusiast. 8am, Saturdays, Mind Body Library, Babarmahal, (01)4102025

SALUT, be one of over 550,000 students all over the world to learn French.

Session starting on 27 January, Alliance Francais Centre, Teku



DINING

Lal Durbar Restaurant, authentic Nepali dinner with cultural shows. Hotel Yak & Yeti, Darbar Marg, (01)4248999, reservation@laldurbar.com



YINYANG RESTAURANT, east meets west as you choose from a variety of Thai and continental dishes. Add a little spice to your life with the pad thai or green curry. If you can't handle the heat, fall into the safety net of its western dishes. Thamel, 10am to 10pm, (01)4701510

Chopstix, savoury Asian food cooked in true Chinese fashion sure to charm and impress. Try the famous drums of heaven. Kumaripati, (01)5551118

Délices de France, taste a piece of France in the heart of Kathmandu. Thamel

Boudha Stupa Restaurant and Café, bide your time in the free wi-fi zone as you enjoy wood fired pizzas, home-made pastas and Tibetan gyakok, Boudha, 9841484408



KASI, spread out over a large terrace overlooking Phora Darbar, Kasi offers a delectable plate of Newari delicacies. Darbar Marg



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

Alice restaurant, step in for scrumptious Thakali, Chinese, Continental, and Japanese cuisine. Gairidhara, (01)4429207

New Dish, grab filling meals like pork momos, spring rolls, and chop suey and enjoy excellent value for your money. Khichapokhari

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RATO BANGALA FOUNDATION

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Rato Bangala Foundation (RBF) is a non-profit organization that works towards ensuring children's right to quality school education. RBF seeks a Program Manager to plan, implement and manage a number of academic and social RBF initiatives aimed at improving public schools, in order to ensure quality education in the classrooms of Nepal. The Program Manager will have overall strategic and operational responsibility for RBF's programs, human resource development, execution of the current RBF mission and plan for expansion and build upon and strengthen the vision of RBF. S/he is required to develop deep knowledge of the work conducted by RBF in the field, and its core programs and operations. It is essential that the Program Manager possess sound knowledge of Nepal's school education system and the non-profit sector and its mechanism.

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Application Procedure

Please email a three-hundred word response to how you think you can contribute to furthering of RBF's mission along with your resume and cover letter addressed to the Administrator at rbf@ratobangala.edu.np with "Application for post of Program Manager" in the subject line (please no calls, faxes or drop-ins). Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for interview.

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Rs 200, 13 January, 6pm, Café des Arts



STARRY NIGHTS, munch on the tenderloin with Ciney Gurung performing live.
Rs 1,499, 3 January, 7pm onwards, Shambala Garden Café, Hotel Shangri-La, (01)4412999, Ext. 75207515

Shastriya Sangeet, dabble in the magic of Hindustani classical music every new moon night.
30 January, 3.30pm, Ram Mandir, Battisputali

Happiness happens, the best of continental, Chinese, Nepali, Newari and Indian food in a new modified version with live performance by Lucky Sitaula and band. 6 to 10pm, 3 to 4 January, Fusion Restro and Bar, Jhamsikhel, (01)5009076

GETAWAYS

Himalayan wellness centre, a one-stop centre for a relaxed mind and a healthy body inside the Park Village Hotel.
Budhanilkantha, open all week, 9801066661, www.himalayanwellness.com.np

Glacier Hotel, good value and friendly service for travelers on the lap of Lake Phewa.
Gaurighat, Lakeside, Pokhara, (61)-463722, www.glaciernepal.com

Waterfront Resort, the lakeside hotel invites you for special barbeque dinners on Friday and lunches on Saturday. Sedi Height, Lakeside road, Pokhara, (061)466303/304, www.waterfronthotelnepal.com



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Killing the giants

The world's oldest cup competition is back as EPL heavyweights take on lower-league minnows in a tournament known for upsets.

January 4
Rovers vs Man City, 6.30pm;
Everton vs QPR, 8.45pm;
Arsenal vs Tottenham, 11pm

January 5
Derby vs Chelsea, 8pm;
Liverpool vs Oldham, 8.45pm;
Man Utd vs Swansea, 10.15pm

Airing on Star Sports



Andolan

Sarod maestro Suresh Raj Bajracharya and his group The Sarodists bring their second annual festival for connoisseurs of classical music.
4 January, 2.15pm onwards, Patan Museum

Tharu day out

15 January, Maghi Parba, the Tharu community of Nepal celebrates its annual festival. Early in the morning, Tharus bathe in the river and light oil-lamps. They then dress in their finest and have a sumptuous meal - pork, fish, snails, rice-bread and home brewed alcohol. Married daughters return for the day to their parents' house, where they are guests for the occasion. Throughout the day, each village organises a special seasonal dance called 'Maaghi naach'. It is also the start of the new fiscal year for Tharu villages - the landless are given farming land on rent and village headsmen are appointed for a one-year term.






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- CNBC OVERDRIVE • ET ZIGWHEELS CAR INDIA
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The shoe on the other foot



SANGITA SHRESTHOVA
in LOS ANGELES

It all began on Facebook a few months ago, when several Nepali friends linked to a new product in their newsfeed: the new Nepal Boots created by Toms Shoes.

The shoes were beautiful, woollen, and furry; their colours reminding me of Tiji and Tihar. The Toms website explained that the boots were 'inspired by the beautiful fabrics and textures of Nepal'.

Nepal Boots was a part of Toms 'giving the gift of sight' initiative and its One for One program through which the company donates a pair of shoes for every pair it sells. A local store had the boots in stock and within minutes I received a confirmation email thanking me for my Nepal Boots purchase.

Based in California and founded in 2006, Toms Shoes exemplifies a trend where companies donate or support

philanthropic projects as an integral part of their for-profit activities. While such efforts are laudable, the effectiveness of these humanitarian interventions are questionable.

Development, foreign aid, and poverty alleviation are complex issues entangled in many local and global realities. Yet, these socially conscious companies would like to have us believe that purchasing a product can, and indeed does, help solve enduring issues of inequality and poverty.

As I waited for my Toms Shoes delivery, nagging questions crept in, jeopardising a pleasurable consumption moment. Surely, donating a product to 'someone in need' must come with its own disruptiveness? Doesn't the local shoe merchant suffer if the shoe market is flooded with imported donated shoes? And how does purchasing a pair of Toms' Nepal Boots that are 'Made in China' even begin to help support sustainable entrepreneurship in Nepal?

I sent Toms a Facebook message politely asking for more

Toms bypasses Nepal in the production of its new boot and engages with Nepalis as recipients of charity

information about its Nepal specific programs: 'You are clearly benefiting by branding your shoes with the Nepal name and through this associating them with this country's resplendent mountains and Himalayan cultures. Why not complete the circle and give back to Nepal directly? Some Nepali youth would love to do your shoes proud.'

Back came a polite, but unsigned, reply. Toms assured me that it 'welcomed my feedback' before admitting it didn't 'have a specific answer right now'. It went on to explain that: 'While the inspiration for our Nepal Boots was found on a Giving Trip in Nepal' the company was 'not currently set up with a giving partner to give

shoes there'.

But, it comforted me, Toms does 'give the gift of sight' in the country through Seva Nepal. As proof, it included a link to a short film about a Toms supported eye clinic in Khandbari. Finally, it encouraged me to suggest new 'giving partners' in Nepal, but warned me that it wasn't accepting applications at this time.

Toms is doing more for social good than most shoe companies, but its response raised some issues in the change model it supports. The boots are named after Nepal and the company gains from the country's cultural imagery and cache. The shoes are made in China and sold in the United States. Some of the profits

from these and other sales are then used to support eye surgeries and shoe donations in countries like Nepal.

At first glance, it would appear that everyone benefits. Americans get to buy shoes that make them feel good. The Chinese efficiently produce the shoes in their factories. And, Nepalis get to receive 'gifts' bequeathed on them through the Toms giving apparatus.

But Toms bypasses Nepal in the production process and engages with Nepalis only as recipients of charity, missing an opportunity to support sustainable growth in the country through investment in local talent and manufacturing infrastructure.

The success of companies like Toms suggests that responsible consumption is a growing trend. Consumers want to buy products that do more than just serve their needs. They want to feel that they are, in a small way, helping make the world a better place, but socially conscious entrepreneurs should evaluate their change models carefully.

In November 2013, Toms Shoes founder Blake Mycoskie indicated he is giving these issues more thought. In an interview with *Huffington Post*, he acknowledged that Toms needs to 'create jobs' if it is 'serious about poverty alleviation'. Mycoskie also promised that one third of Toms Giving Shoes would be produced in the countries where they are donated by the end of 2015.

So, maybe one day Nepalis may actually help design and produce the Toms Boots that already carries their name? Maybe they can buy and wear the boots too? Gazing west to an imaginary point where the Pacific Ocean meets the Himalaya, I can almost convince myself that my Nepal Boots will one day be made by someone in Nepal. 🇳🇵



Sangita Shresthova is a Czech-Nepali media scholar focusing on the intersection between popular culture, new media, politics, and globalisation.

Branding the Himalaya

Nepal, the very word still has a mystic pull. The majestic mountains, friendly people, and an unspoilt way of life are the attributes that make manufacturers employ Nepali names for their products. International companies like Toms have launched 'Nepal' lines, and a New Zealand entrepreneur launched the Kathmandu brand of sportswear and outdoor products. Companies like Aveda have tried to link their sales with charity work for Nepali children, especially during the holiday season.

As a brand, Sherpa Adventure Gear stands out because it was started by a Nepali. Its distinctive 'endless knots' logo, the Sherpa brand name, and Made in Nepal label, make it one of the most internationally recognised Nepali brands today. Founded by Tashi Sherpa, the Seattle-based climbing and outdoor clothing company opened its flagship store in Nepal in 2009. The five-floor building in Narayanhiti Marg houses



the company's research and development unit. Most Sherpa apparel, sleeping bags, and tents are manufactured in Nepal generating employment for hundreds. Sherpa Adventure Gear's insulation jackets, fleece hoodies, down jackets, sleeping bags, and trekking gear with its proud Made in Nepal tags are now sold across stores in the US, Europe, and Asia.

Sherpa enlists Nepali celebrity mountaineers like 12-time Everest summiteer Lhakpa Rita Sherpa as 'brand athletes' and helps specially with education for Sherpa children in the Khumbu. Sherpa's Paldorje Education Fund helps children of Nepali mountaineers who are injured or killed while climbing. The company donates Rs 50 from every item sold to the fund. Says Tashi Sherpa: "I know it was a huge leap of faith to base myself in Nepal. But it's not about me, I am just the custodian of the Nepal and Sherpa brands." 🇳🇵

ON THE FAST TRACK



A soldier paralysed during the conflict inspires others like him to stay positive and fulfil their dreams

MINA SHARMA

It was a nippy November afternoon in 2003. Lance corporal Himlal Aryal was returning from a patrol in Makwanpur's Sunachari. The Maoist insurgency was at its peak and the rebels were attacking security forces across the country.

An army truck carrying the troops was about to reach Kulekhani when a landmine exploded, propelling Aryal in the air and disposing him on the roadside. All he remembers is seeing his fellow soldiers lying on the ground covered in blood. Before he could crawl any further, Aryal felt a throbbing pain in his head and then everything went dark. He woke up a week later at the Army Hospital in Chhauni and found out that the attack had left his lower body paralysed.

After four years in and out of the hospital, Aryal returned home in a wheelchair. That was not how the young soldier had envisioned his life when he joined the army in 2002 and he remembered the times when his family had begged him, unsuccessfully, to leave the security force. "Friends and relatives, who respected me because of my job, began avoiding me and my family and took pity on us. It was the most painful time in my life," he recalls.

Aryal, however, didn't let anyone or anything come in the way of his recovery. Even while he was being treated in the hospital, the native of

Rupandehi, who had a keen interest in art since childhood, picked up his brush again as a form of therapy. After his first painting of a peacock sold for Rs 1,500, he was encouraged to pursue the hobby further.

To keep his mind occupied, Himlal began vocal training and learnt to play the guitar. But regaining physical strength was equally important which led him to take up weight lifting and wheelchair basketball.

The fitness, stamina, and mental toughness that he built in the last six years have stood him in good stead at sporting events across the globe. In 2010, Aryal travelled to China to participate in a weightlifting competition where he met and interacted with athletes like himself who had won medals despite their handicap. "Every time I feel weak, I remember my fellow participants in China. Their stories provide me with the moral boost I need to pick

myself up again," explains the 34-year-old.

Currently a sergeant, Himlal is posted Beni. He is thankful to the Nepal Army for helping secure a job for his wife in the military and for their constant support throughout his grueling journey.

Says Aryal: "If I had chosen to blame my destiny, then I would have remained confined to my wheelchair. I hope my outlook towards life post-accident, inspires others to stay positive no matter how huge the barriers are." 📷

nepalitimes.com

Photo gallery
Out of the dark, #431
Soldiering on, #575





Everyone who ever grew up reading *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* books have one thing in common - an obsession with Middle Earth and a deep yearning and nostalgia every time we pick up those beloved books.



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

So when the first instalment of *The Lord of the Rings* came out in 2001, I was in a heightened state of anxiety, I mean, after all, how could Peter Jackson possibly realise the soaring expectations of millions? And yet he did - with that first trilogy which I count among my three favourite films of all time.

The anxiety and speculation started again with rumours that Jackson would then develop and direct *The Hobbit*. When it was later announced that that slim book would be extrapolated into not

one but three films, we all shook our heads - this time Hollywood's avarice had gone too far. So it was with trepidation that I went to see the first of these three films last year - circa this time.

Although panned by critics, I must admit I was delighted to find myself back in Middle Earth, surrounded (courtesy of ubiquitous 3D) by the Shire and dwarves and elves and of course Gandalf (the legend that is now Ian McKellan).

So going to see the *The Desolation of Smaug* was slightly less stressful. It is clear by now that Jackson's greatest strength is his commitment to Tolkien's material in all of its entirety. This is why you will find entire storylines in these films that you will not remember from *The Hobbit* - Jackson and his screenwriting partners have in fact incorporated information from the appendices to *The Return of the King* and cleverly worked them into the story.

Hence we have a wonderful storyline harking the return of

Legolas (arguably Orlando Bloom's best role to date) and even more excitingly his potential love interest Tauriel (played beautifully by Evangeline Lilly). There are many other elements that you will not recognise from the book - but rest assured, they do not bloat the film, only elevate its complexity.

Jackson's strengths have always been his ability to cast just the right people for these archetypal parts and so in addition to the already brilliant Martin Freeman (Bilbo Baggins), Richard Armitage (Thorin Oakenshield), Stephen Fry (Master of Lake-town), we also have the much talked about Benedict Cumberbatch (of *Sherlock Holmes* fame) as Smaug the last, great, terrifyingly magnificent dragon of Middle Earth.

This second and middle film (always a tricky one) is astonishingly good at propelling forward the quest to reach the mountain and the dragon with a great deal of extraordinarily choreographed action set pieces linking the narrative to ensure that we never lose our sense of the grand adventure. The only regret I had when leaving this 161 minute long film is that despite its length, it never quite had the time to breathe, give us a bit of that hobbit humour we have so grown to love, and, most unfortunately, we never have the time to linger in the beauties of Middle Earth - for this film deals more with Orcs, a rather terrifying Necromancer, and of course with dragon-fire.

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Watch trailer

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Tel: 5526989

HAPPENINGS



BHASHWOR OJHA

THREE'S A CROWD: Tanka Dhakal (centre) speaks to the media after registering Nepali Rastriya Prajatantra Party (NRPP) at the Election Commission office in Kantipath on Monday. The NRPP is a breakaway faction of Kamal Thapali Rastriya Prajatantra Party Nepal.



DEVAKI BISTA

HAPPY NEW YEAR: Women from the Gurung community perform the Ghatu dance on the occasion of Tamu Losar at Tundikhel on Monday.



BIKRAM RAI

BEAUTIFUL BEAST: A female elephant takes part in a beauty pageant during the 10th Chitwan Elephant Festival in Sauraha on Saturday.



NEPALAYA

THE END: Nepathya performs its final show of the nationwide Education for Peace concert tour at Patan Darbar Square on Sunday evening.

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Cosmic consciousness

For centuries, humans have been obsessed with understanding the conscious and subconscious mind. We want to determine who we are and what we're doing in the world. Do we serve a greater purpose, or are we destined to merely perambulate life but not fully understand? And what is our connection to the universe? These are the breed of questions that are evoked when experiencing SC Suman's *Mithila Cosmos: Perambulating the Tree of Life*.

What really stood out for me was the sheer consistency of the 50-plus works created by Suman for the exhibit. Extended across the three floors at the Siddhartha Art Gallery, the pieces take you on a visual journey into another context altogether. Inspired by his Maithili heritage, Suman employs the use of acrylic, natural dyes, and pigments used with pens, brushes, and even bamboo sticks.

In the true style of a Madhubani or Mithila painting, the works are characterised by geometrical patterns and symmetry. This



MITHILA CALLING: Indian Ambassador Ranjit Rae (centre) at SC Suman's exhibition. BIKRAM RAI

is of course aligned with the concept of cosmos or a beautifully arranged, almost perfect universe. The motif of the tree which is present in every one of his works represents just this, ecological harmony. Like our world, Suman's paintings look simple, yet hold complex and profound ideas of human relationships as well as

dynamics of love and power.

What makes Suman's form of art interesting to look at are the use of bold colours and intricate details. His *Milan, Bibaha, Kohbar Ghar and Bidai* is especially wonderful because the more the viewer observes, the greater meaning the painting gains. While at first it may seem to be a simple

story of a girl getting married, at second and third observation the audience realises there is more to the story, a kind of visual dialogue that is occurring between Suman and the responder.

Art has always been an important form in the sense that it reflects the world around us; however it may not always be

relevant to the one viewing it. Suman on the other hand, narrates stories of identity, family, religion, and history through his paintings of village people, their daily duties and responsibilities; concepts that have intrigued us for centuries.

Admittedly apprehensive before walking into the gallery, Suman's modern take on traditional Mithila art was finally, appreciatively unpretentious and a visual delight. Because of the universal nature of the themes expressed, the responder consciously or subconsciously finds a piece of themselves in the work. Be prepared to be lost in Suman's vision for some time.

Meghna Bali

Mithila Cosmos: Perambulating the Tree of Life
Runs until 6 January
Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal
Revisited

Ignore the terrible name; Phat Kath might just be my new favourite restaurant. Offering French-ish food, a takeaway crêperie, low tables and hookahs for hippies, tables and chairs for normal people, and a formidable hip hop soundtrack for everyone, there's a lot to love.

In many ways this looks a bit like any of the two-bit, ill-conceived throwback joints Thamel has been drowning in for as long as most of us can remember: all old John Lennon record sleeves, space-poor, kitsch-rich layout and the gastronomic equivalent of the gaudy rainbow patchwork kurtas I overheard two other diners regretting they'd bought. But something more compelling is happening at Phat Kath and it starts with the blackboard menu adorning the open kitchen, which you can just about squint to see from front-of-house.

With a total lack of pretence, the restaurant announces its burgers, crêpes, Breton galettes, and miscellany without printed menus: the blackboard, or rather the dishes it discusses, is the



SOMEPLACE ELSE

PICS: PM

centrepiece. PM ordered sea-buckthorn juice (Rs 150), which I'd only ever seen advertised out of season in Langtang, and it's great, if you've never had it.

But things really got going with the Phat burger (Rs 350), which came as a generous helping of

sliced steak, bacon, egg, cheese, and salad (yes) on a good (read: savoury, not sweet) bread bun and with a side of fries. The burger held together well - there are people and I aspire to be one, for whom this is a science - meaning a mouthful ensured even

PHAT KATH

was essentially a few vegetables stirred into a bland, generic cream sauce. There was nothing gratinated about the dish and PM is now petitioning that we stop ordering vegetarian altogether.

We couldn't leave without sampling something from the crêperie. The streets of Paris are lined with these stalls, serving both sweet and savoury pancakes to the city's notoriously discerning passersby. Because I am actually five, I went for the chocolate-banana crêpe (Rs 200) which, if I'm feigning expertise (which I am), was a little on the thick side.



distribution of every ingredient and not a single morsel was wasted.

The forest galette (Rs 300) - a kind of stuffed pancake made with wholemeal or buckwheat flour - was filled to bursting with tender pieces of chicken, wild mushrooms grown here in Nepal, and a creamy mustard sauce.

The only low point, for us, was when we went vegetarian. This predictably recurring theme is perhaps unsurprising - vegetarians in predominantly carnivorous lands have often suffered from bland, uninspired, put-something-on-the-plate slop servings. The vegetarian au gratin (Rs 350), served with wilted spinach, rice, and - for no apparent reason at all - coleslaw,

Phat Kath doesn't demand to be taken too seriously: it's laissez faire. What's refreshing is that, unlike so much of the district, this place provides an atmosphere where diners can seriously kick back, all the while - vegetarian food aside (and who goes to a French joint for vegetables, anyway?) - these guys are taking what they do very seriously indeed.

CC

How to get there: look (very carefully) for a small, floor-standing sign pointing into an alley off Chaksibari Marg. Phat Kath is on your right if coming from JP School Road.

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A milestone article



Unfortunately, PCR tests are very expensive and not available in most hospitals or clinics in Nepal. Keeping this drawback in mind, we tried to figure out if clinically (that is without blood tests, just based on signs and symptoms of the disease) if these PCR-diagnosed typhus patients were different from regular typhoid patients. But there were no clinical characteristics that clearly distinguished

Typhoid is a common illness in Nepal. But are there instances when a patient looks like he or she has typhoid fever and it turns out to be something else? At Patan Hospital we had clearly suspected this may be the case, but had never quite proved it in a scientific manner.



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

There were serological diagnosis of various organisms resembling typhoid, but these tests are not always fool-proof because there is the chance of getting mixed up (cross-reactivity) with other organisms which also appear serologically alike.

A little-known, but landmark study carried out in 2008 called, *Murine Typhus and febrile illness, Nepal*, looked at the possibility of one other important, common cause of fever in Nepal besides typhoid. We focused on typhus (specifically, murine typhus) because first there was, as mentioned above, the evidence of the non-diagnostic positive serological tests and second, the commonness of rodents in Nepal.

Indeed, this murine (which actually denotes rodents or rats) typhus organism (called rickettsia) is carried by fleas on rats. These fleas transmit the disease to humans when their faeces contaminate the area on the person's body where the bite takes place.

The incubation period for murine typhus is about two weeks and the patient suffers from fever, headache, cough, and generalised malaise. Unlike other places where this disease is endemic, in Nepali patients, we found no rashes. These symptoms look exactly like typhoid fever and that is where the confusion arises and may lead to a misdiagnosis.

The test employed to diagnose murine typhus was a PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test, a modern, DNA-based study that makes the diagnosis almost certain. We tested 85 blood samples from patients whom we suspected to have typhus. Fifty of these patients had a positive PCR diagnosis for typhus (for various reasons we actually think these numbers reflect an underdiagnosis). However, the sheer sample size of this final diagnosis makes this an impressive finding.

typhus patients from those with blood-culture positive typhoid patients.

Medical textbooks mention that murine typhus patients, in contrast to typhoid patients, have more respiratory problems like shortness of breath, cough, and findings on chest X-ray. Although our initial findings did show this to be the case, the final statistical testing did not bear this out. Interestingly, our study revealed that most people who had murine typhus were women from Kathmandu with high fever in the winter.

The findings from the 2008 study are very important because they have the potential to change prevalent therapy. Many antibiotics used for typhoid are not very effective in treating typhus fever and because typhus and typhoid are common and generally indistinguishable, it is vital to use proper antibiotics at the outset. Since similar environmental conditions prevail in our region, the diagnostic finding of murine typhus is not limited to Nepal and applies equally well to other countries in the Subcontinent. Hence this article (Emerg Infect Dis 2008 ; 14(10): 1656-1659), which is easily available online, needs to be read by all healthcare professionals while dealing with treatment of fever in South Asia. 🇳🇵

GIZMO by YANTRICK

No middling affair

As the nerve centre of any home theatre system, an audio-video receiver is supposed to be an immaculate multitasking device. It must decode surround sound formats, coordinate your loudspeakers, and switch between audio and video components seamlessly. Which means that simply buying a Blu-ray disc and tossing it into the tray won't guarantee you an enriched cinematic experience.

With this in mind the folks at Onkyo USA have come up with a gem. The new TX-NR727 doesn't betray the company's reputation as a manufacturer of solid audio-video equipment. Quite the contrary.

Capable of delivering surround sound at 110 watts on the 7.2 channel, the TX-NR727 is worthy of being the centrepiece of your TV room. But what impressed Yantrick the most is that it has all the hallmarks of a trustable equipment. Classic look, check. Firm, weighty feel, check. Customisable features, check. Brilliant sound, check.

And it is not all form over function. With THX Select2 Plus certification an equally fancy-sounding Audyssey DSX and Dolby Pro Logic IIz audio processing capabilities under its hood, you are sure to get the most accurate performance from your movie and game soundtracks.

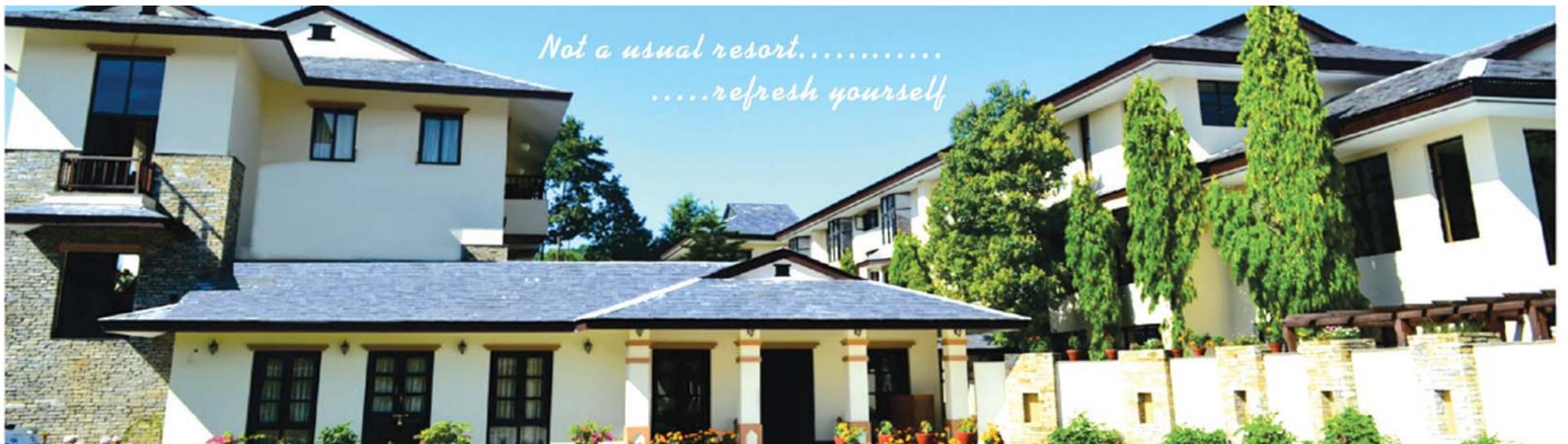


The rear end of this console comes with above par connectivity options. Eight HDMI inputs allow for multiple devices like DVD/Blu-ray players, games consoles - you name it. Two analogue to HDMI video conversion out-ports provide up to 4K HD outputs. Add to this its Marvell Qdeo video processor that also supports 3D and you are spoilt for choice.

Music lovers have an equally grand plaything. The TX has built-in wireless and Bluetooth for hassle-free connection to your smartphone, tablet, or PC. A remote control app for Apple, Android, and Kindle devices gives further options to enhance your sonic adventures.

The bane of home theatre systems has always been the difficulty one faces in setting up and calibrating them. But with an in-built microphone, the TX does this by itself. However, its interface can seem puzzling to a first-time user. But once you get more familiar with the device, you will find that all the bells and whistles have a purpose. This A/V middle-man is a friend, not a foe. 🇳🇵

Yantrick's verdict: retailing for approximately Rs 70,000 excluding the speakers, the Onkyo TX-NR727 is not cheap. But once you recline on your sofa and close your eyes to the entire sonic spectrum, you will hear exactly what you paid for.



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THEGURKHAMUSEUM.CO.UK



Still from Kesang Tseten's 2012 documentary *Who Will Be A Gurkha* (above) that looks at the recruitment process of Nepali boys into the British Army.

6th Gurkha Rifles at Gallipoli, Turkey in 1915.

More warlike

The British preferred to recruit soldiers from Nepal's mountain ethnicities rather than from the high castes

Nasiri and Sirmoor Battalions had Brahmins, Chhetris, Thakuris, and Dalits. But it was evident that British officers preferred men from Tibeto-Burman ethnicities like Gurung, Magar, Rai, and Limbu.

The British asked for and got permission in 1886 to carry out its own selection of recruits in the mountains of Nepal. So when World War I came around, most of the regular soldiers were from the Tibeto-Burman communities. However, there were still between 5-10 per cent Brahmins and Chhetris in the British Indian Army's regular force that saw action in the 1914-18 war in Europe.

After the war ended in 1918, the proportion of higher castes went up in the Nepal's royal army while the numbers of Janajati soldiers increased in the British Army. This trend continued till the time World War II broke out and Gurkhas were once more fighting in

distant lands for the British Empire. Most of the names of Nepalis killed in action in the battles of Monte Cassino in Italy, in Imphal and Burma, or Malaya had Gurung, Magar, Rai, and Limbu names.



Deepak Aryal is a researcher at Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya in Patan.

nepalimes.com

Becoming their fathers, #637
The flags of their fathers, #630

DEEPAK ARYAL

The only newspaper in Kathmandu in the early 20th century, *Gorkhapatra*, referred to the First World War as the 'European War' and carried regular reports from the front in which tens of thousands of Nepali soldiers were fighting. The news was about how many were killed in which battle on which front, but did not talk specifically about Gurkha regiments in the British Army that were in the trenches of Flanders Field or at Gallipoli in Turkey.

When the war started, 26,000 Gurkha soldiers were already serving in the British Indian Army and by the end of the conflict, this number had doubled. However, in the five years of fighting, another 200,000 young Nepalis had been recruited for the British Army and 20,000 were killed

in action. At that time, the total population of Nepal was estimated at 5.6 million, which means entire villages must have been emptied of young men. And if one takes into account that most of the soldiers came from certain ethnicities, their home villages must have been emptier.

The recruitment of Nepalis into the British military started 100 years previously during the Anglo-Nepal War and initially was made up of deserters, mercenaries, and irregulars from Kumaon and Garhwal. After Nepal's military expansion ended in 1816, there were about 30,000 battle-hardened ex-soldiers who joined the British Army.

British Resident Brian Houghton Hodgson said recruitment would soothe diplomatic relations with the Nepal Darbar and allow Britain to induct Nepal's warlike tribes into its ranks to defend its

possessions in the subcontinent. At first, Nepal's rulers appear to have been reluctant to allow their men to join a foreign army, but by the time of Bir Shamsher in 1885, they saw financial and diplomatic benefits and allowed Nepalis to officially join the British Indian Army.

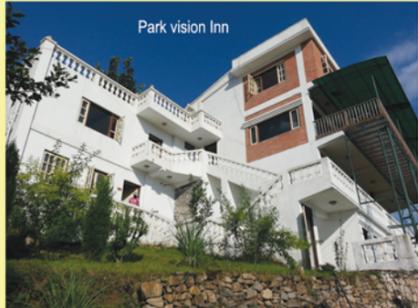
The first Englishman to describe Nepali hill dwellers as 'martial tribes' was Francis Buchanan-Hamilton in 1819 after seeing the fearless soldiers in action during the conflict with the East India Company. The first Gurkha units of the





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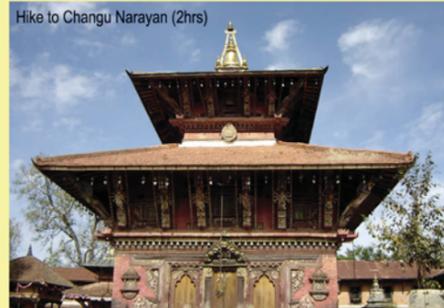
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THE PASHMINA WAR

The Anglo-Nepal War 1814-1816 was more about trade than territory



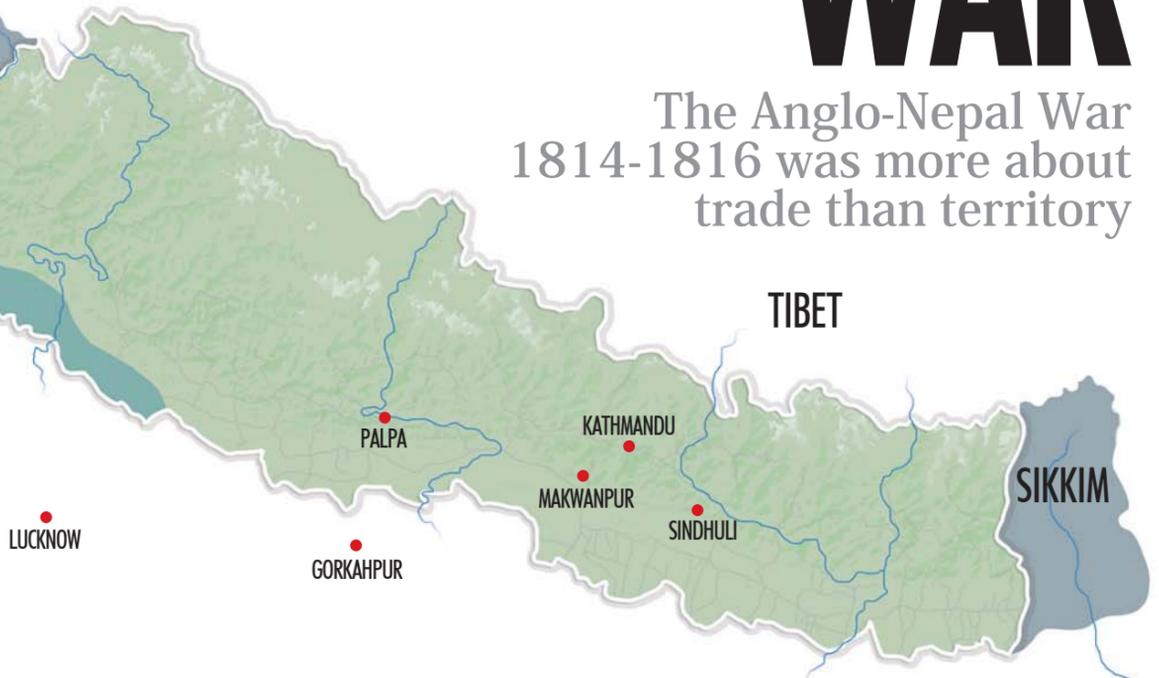
KUNDA DIXIT

The 19th century conflict between the Kathmandu Darbar and the British East India Company in Calcutta is often attributed to a clash over territory between two expansionist powers in the subcontinent.

The Gorkha Empire was its peak, stretching 1,500km from Sikkim in the east right up to Punjab in the west (see map). Britain's colonial project in India was outsourced to the East India Company that was answerable to shareholders back in London.

The Company was in financial trouble. The beginnings of the Industrial Revolution had made it possible to mass produce cotton fabric cheaply in Lancashire and it no longer made sense to source it from India. The Company was in the business of selling the cotton in China, getting China addicted to Indian opium and Indians addicted to tea originally from China.

Although it was a trading house, the Company was a political and administrative force with a standing army. It was on the lookout for more commodities to trade and looked longingly across the



Himalaya at products from Tibet that it could sell in Europe. Primary among these was the shatoosh wool from the Chiru antelope that roamed the western Tibetan Plateau, shawls from which were prized in England. But the Gorkhals controlled all the traditional

trans-Himalayan trading passes and the lucrative taxes on goods.

Even before hostilities broke out in 1814, the Company had already engaged militarily with the Gorkhali Army. After Prithvi Narayan Shah conquered Nuwakot in 1742, he advanced on Kathmandu Valley. King

Jayasthiti Malla of Patan sent an SOS to Calcutta and the Company dispatched a force under Capt George Kinloch. The invaders had to first battle malaria, swollen monsoon rivers and desertions after tiger attacks in the Char Kose Jhari. By the time they reached the



1743

Prithvi Narayan Shah becomes the King of Gorkha and recruits Khas, Gurung, and Magar men into his army



1767

Gorkhals defeat Captain George Kinloch at Sindhuli Gadhi



1768-69

Gorkhali army overcomes Kathmandu and Shah dynasty rules over the Kingdom of Nepal



1814-16

Nepal stretches 1,500km from Teesta to Satlaj; start of the Anglo-Nepal war with loss for Nepal



1857

Nepal aids British India in quelling the Sepoy Mutiny and earns back Western Tarai

100 years of platitudes

SUNIR PANDEY

Ten days after the Austro-Hungarian army fired shots into Serbia, the 2/8 Gurkha Rifles battalion of Imperial Britain's Indian Army corps were ordered to war. They would march from Sirmoor to Delhi, then onwards to Karachi from where the 620 natives and their nine British officers would board a ship to Marseille. Twenty four hours after reaching the frontline in central France, 156 Nepalis would perish in their first skirmish on 30 October 1914.

Over the next 12 months, the battalion would be repatched

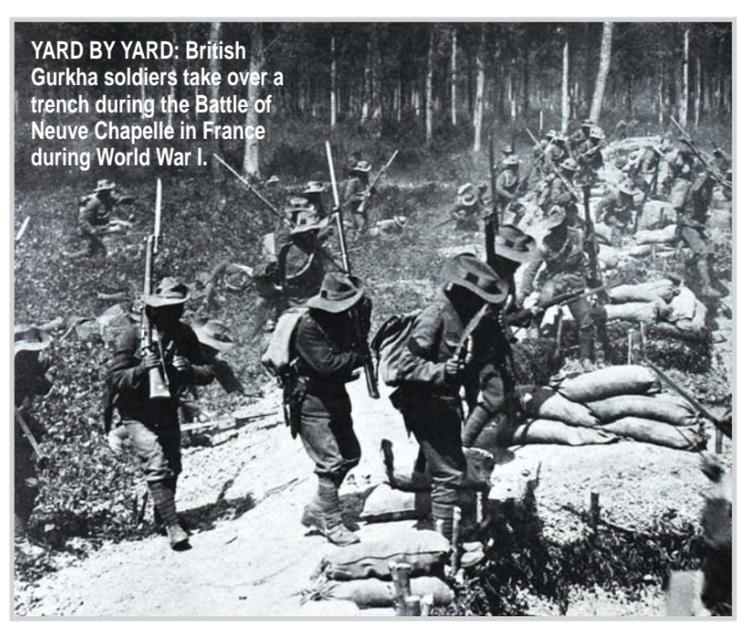
with new recruits, sent out beyond the barbed wire to gain a few yards of trench-line, only to be decimated by machine guns and poison gas. Other Gurkha units suffered a similar fate. After a year of heavy casualties and little progress in Flanders Field, much of the Indian army and with it the Gurkha troops were shifted to Egypt and Palestine.

In Gallipoli, a brief resurgence in a disastrous British campaign to cut through Turkish lines and relieve Russia would leave plenty of Australian, New Zealand, British, and Gurkha soldiers dead. After Allied forces were evacuated from

The involvement of Nepali soldiers in the First World War has more to it than military gallantry

the Turkish coast in January 1916, the Gurkhas were moved to the Gulf and took part in the campaign to realise the British Mandate for Mesopotamia.

Of the 200,000 Nepali soldiers who took part in the First World War, 60,000 were involved in direct combat,



YARD BY YARD: British Gurkha soldiers take over a trench during the Battle of Neuve Chapelle in France during World War I.



KEY BATTLES: 17,000 Nepali soldiers faced 40,000 British troops along a 1,500km frontier which included the strategic garrison in Nalapani (left) and the Kangra Fort (right), during the Anglo-Nepal War.



mountains, the Gorkhals were waiting at the fort on Sindhuli Gadi with hornet nests that they hurled down at the attackers.

The British were so chastened by the defeat, they didn't return to Nepal till 1814. Under the pretext of a border dispute in Butwal, the Company launched an all out offensive with four columns led by Major-General Rollo Gillespie and Colonel David Ochterlony in Garhwal and Kumaon in the west, Gen John Wood in Palpa, Maj-Gen Bennet Marley on Makwanpur and Kathmandu, and another along the Kosi in the east.

The Nepali forces were under the overall command of Prime Minister Bhimsen Thapa in Kathmandu with

his son Ranabir Singh Thapa commanding Makwanpur Fort, Balbhadra Kunwar defending the strategic garrison at Nalapani in Garhwal, Col Ujir Singh Thapa in Palpa, Gen Amar Singh Thapa at Malaoni Fort, and his son Ranajore Singh Thapa at Jaithak Fort.

The first frontal attack on Nalapani and Deuthal did not go well for the British, but as the war wore on the Company used the combination of siege tactics and mountain cannons to squeeze the Gorkhali forces. The siege of Nalapani, Deuthal, and Jaithak and the bravery shown by Bhakti Thapa, Bal Bhadra Kunwar, and Amar Singh Thapa is the stuff of legend in Nepali history books. The British were so impressed that they started

recruiting the Garhwali and Kumaoni fighters from the enemy to form the first Gurkha regiments.

After losing the territory west of the Mahakali, the English forces proposed a treaty to end the war. However, Bhimsen Thapa felt that Nepal was strong enough to withstand the British and refused to sign. So, in the spring of 1816, the British sent Gen Ochterlony, the commander who had inflicted the greatest defeats on the Nepalis in Kumaon, to attack Kathmandu. Ochterlony surprised the defending Nepalis in Makwanpur by using little-known mountain trails and attacking them from the rear. Bhimsen Thapa was shocked to find the British so close to

Kathmandu and agreed to sign the treaty.

Nepal kept its sovereignty, but lost territory, had to agree to Gurkha recruitment, and allow a British presence in Kathmandu. The East India Company needed the Himalayan passes in Kumaon and Garhwal for access to precious antelope wool from western Tibet and were not really interested in conquering the rest of Nepal, which it probably considered ungovernable, and wanted to keep us as a strategic buffer against Tibet and China.

The Company never did get to profit from the pashmina trade, however, because the raw Chiru wool trade from Tibet was traditionally monopolised by the Kashmiris. Jung Bahadur Rana, who had staged a bloody coup in Kathmandu, became the first royalty from the subcontinent to visit Victorian England and his ulterior motive for the trip was to spy on British military might to gauge whether it was worth going to war to regain lost Nepali territory. He came

back suitably impressed and dispatched his army to quell the Mutiny in India in 1857. London disbanded the East India Company and assumed direct control by the British Crown over India.

Nepali soldiers have been fighting and dying for the British ever since, in the early Afghan Campaigns, in both World Wars, in Malaya, Borneo, and the Falklands. The Gurkhas are back in action in Afghanistan as part of the British NATO contingent in Helmand.

Bhimsen Thapa ruled for another decade before falling from grace after Queen Regent Tripura Sundari died and clan fighting with the Pandes landed him in jail. The British resident, Brian Hodgson, favoured the Pandes and Bhimsen Thapa committed suicide in jail in 1838. 🇳🇵

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Interactive timeline and maps
Photo gallery
BBC's documentary on the Gurkhas



1914-18

200,000 Nepali men serve as part of Britain's Indian army in WWI



1939-45

250,280 Nepalis fight under the Crown in WWII



1997

After Hong Kong is handed over to China, Gurkha headquarters is shifted to Aldershot, UK



2001

Gurkhas serve in Afghanistan and Iraq as part of the British NATO contingent



2009

The British parliament allows Gurkhas, who retired with four years of service before 1997, to settle in the UK

others were army bearers or part of hospital units. Although largely undocumented, there were over 20,000 casualties. Also undocumented, as historian Pratyoush Onta says, is the physical harm faced by soldiers who were maimed in the war.

To the outside world, the Gurkhas turned into instant heroes – the martial race with the reputation of unwavering loyalty, bravery, and superior fighting skills. Kulbir Thapa and Karan Bahadur Rana became the first Nepalis to receive the UK's highest military decoration, the Victoria Cross, for gallantry 'in the face of the enemy'. But censored letters from injured soldiers to loved ones back home, reveal more shock and awe than bravery.

A letter written by a soldier in a hospital in Brighton, UK reads: "My mother used to tell

me that if I did not quit my job and came back home, I would be sorry for it. I laughed at this and now I am repenting at my leisure. When I think of my mother, I say to myself, 'What can I do?' What was fated to happen has come to pass. We have been caught just as fish are caught in a net." It is not known what happened to this soldier or if the receiver got his post – all names were erased by the British army's record keepers.

The men, who risked their lives in the battlefields of Europe and Africa a century ago, have played a far greater role in their country's history, diplomacy, economy, and culture than they are given credit for.

While the recruitment of Nepalis into the East India Company army began soon after the Anglo-Nepal War of 1816, it was only in 1885

when Bir Shamsher became prime minister through a coup that he was compelled to recognise British India's 'right' to draft Gurkha soldiers. In exchange, they would blindly support his questionable ascent to power. Thus the Gurkha lahureys became, as anthropologist Mary Des Chene writes, 'the coin of trade between British and Nepali interests'.

In the early 1990s, Chandra Shamsher went on to pledge Nepal's entire armed forces and all possible recruits to Britain even before war broke out in Europe in 1914. The British would provide concessions in arms purchase and an annual subsidy of Rs 1 million for the rulers' private treasury.

The Gurkha regiments bought prosperity not only to Rana rulers, but injected untold wealth into our restricted economy. The survivors of

World War I came back with an unprecedented Rs 130 million in remittance, which far outstripped the country's annual revenue of the time. The families and friends of the soldiers were introduced to the kind of affluence and material riches that they had never imagined possible in their lives.

Writer and analyst Jhalak Subedi, in his book *British Samrajyaka Nepali Mohara*, quotes court historian Bhim Bahadur Pande: 'All the way from Nautanawa, these youngsters spent so much money that porters charged more, taverns opened up along the foot trails, minstrels got fatter, and land-prices soared ... everyone started hoarding Indian currency at home and people migrated to India and Burma because Kathmandu couldn't provide the lifestyle

that they were dreaming of.'

Lured by the colourful tales and newly acquired wealth of their foreign-retained relatives and friends, young men in the Janajati communities were convinced that upward mobility comes quickest through army pay-cheques. Even today tens of thousands train, apply, and fight for the 230 coveted spots in the British Army every year.

While the days of a Nepali mass exodus to other armed forces are all but over, the exceptional contribution of Gurkha soldiers to their homeland and their adopted battalions in the past 200 years, remains a willfully misconstrued historical oddity. 🇳🇵

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Reading list
Multimedia special



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Rajyalakshmi vs Ram Kumari



Amit Dhakal, *Setopati*, 30 December



Interview with UML student leader Ram Kumari Jhankri, *Ghatna ra Bichar*, 1 January

questioning the UML's decision to nominate controversial candidates when there are people within the ranks who are far better qualified and who have sacrificed a lot for the party. I talked to senior leaders after the closed list was announced, but I wasn't convinced with their explanation.

Do you want the UML to modify the list?

Of course, only then will the party's loyal cadre be convinced that leaders are willing to mend their old ways. I am not saying that all 84 PR candidates are undeserving and need to be changed, but those with tarnished reputation or those who got seats because they made hefty donations must be removed to protect the UML's standing. My message is clear: the public mandate cannot be misused by incompetent candidates to loot the country.

Has the PR process been turned into a money game?

The PR mechanism was introduced so that people from marginalised communities would have an equal say in the drafting of the new constitution as well as to bring them into the national mainstream. Unfortunately, the parties have made a complete mess of the process. Those with money, those who are close to party heads, or those who funded individual election campaigns are handpicked to sit in the CA, while deserving candidates are easily disposed of. Our short-sighted leaders have turned this inclusive mechanism into just another way of making more money for themselves.

Many were expecting you to be on the UML's proportional representation list. Why didn't the party nominate you?

Ram Kumari Jhankri: I am just as shocked as everyone else by the UML's PR list. However, my complaint is not personal; I understand that not every member can make it to the Constituent Assembly. My main concern is rather with how senior party leaders went about finalising the list.

You have been vehemently protesting the party's decision through various media outlets.

It's not just me. All of us who value transparency and fairness have been

सहमत विचार

In Memoriam



Georgs Mote

10.5.1964 21.12.2013

A brilliant engineer, systems visualizer and an invaluable colleague who helped set up State of Art network for Resonance Nepal passed away in a tragic accident in South Africa on 21 December, 2013.

We are eternally grateful for his contribution and offer our heartfelt condolences to his family.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Members of the Board and Management.



The daughter of a well-known film producer in Bollywood, Rajyalakshmi Golchha moved from Mumbai to Nepal after marrying Mahendra Golchha and has been running the family business ever since her husband's death. She has zero experience in politics, apart from donating large sums to parties.

Ram Kumari Jhankri was born in a Magar family in Myal Pokhari, Gulmi, 40km away from district headquarters Tamghas. Active as a UML student leader all her life, Ram Kumari went on to become the first female president of the Free Student Union in 2008.

The Golchha family has been the patron of Nepali Congress for a long time. And yet it was the UML which readily gave Rajyalakshmi a Proportional Representation seat, while keeping a young, capable junior leader like Ram Kumari out of the constitution making process.

However, it's not Rajyalakshmi's fault. The way PR seats are allocated in Nepal is deeply symptomatic of our corrupt political culture where money has the final say. Plenty of parties have auctioned their PR seats to businessmen and entrepreneurs have been more than willing to oblige because they see their time in BICC hall as a way to earn back the millions they have invested in the parties in the form of donations.

The Ram Kumari versus Rajyalakshmi case shows us that if we want to protect our nascent democracy, we must urgently change the PR process to make it more transparent. We must break this unholy nexus between politics and the corporate world. But for this to happen, ordinary Nepalis need to support clean and professional candidates like the Americans did with Barack Obama and Indians with Arvind Kejriwal.

Since the first mass uprising in 1951, major transformations in Nepal's polity have come from the lower and middle classes. Politics must, therefore, remain within the reach of this group. In the battle between Rajyalakshmi and Ram Kumari, the latter must prevail.

सहमति !!



Consensus

नेपाल Rabindra in *Nepal*, 29 December

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“You should first buy land and build houses in Belgium. After you establish yourselves, you must try and seize power.”

UCPN (M) leader Dina Nath Sharma talking to Nepalis in Belgium, *Jana Astha*, 1 January

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Legally binding resolution

The trouble with new year resolutions has always been that by 7 January of every year, since records started being kept, we break them and resume snarling at our slightly better halves, plucking our nostril hair in public, smoking five packs of ciggies a day, and getting a lifelong membership of the Nepal Bars Association where our favourite tippie is the Famous Grouch.

The main drawback of new year resolutions and the reason they never make it to the implementation phase, is that they are not legally binding. There is nothing there in writing. And in the absence of a Letter of Intent that will stand up in a court of law, such resolutions are easily broken. That is why this year the Ass has taken the unprecedented step of getting corporate lawyers at the Bhattarai, Bhattarai & Bhattarai Law Firm to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding with my unreformed self and got the document duly notarised by the Chief District Officer and signed by two witnesses who are senior civil servants in His Erstwhile Majesty's Government that puts me under a contractual obligation to abide by the resolutions I made for 2014.

The lawyers have sent me a draft of this iron-clad MoU and given the stiff penalties involved in breaking one or more of the terms and conditions therein, I will think twice before reaching for fags on 7 Jan.

NEW YEAR RESOLUTION AGREEMENT BETWEEN I, ME, AND MYSELF

Preamble

WHEREAS all Nepalis great and small are entitled to earn karma points during their current passage through life so as to ensure reincarnation as higher primates (hereinafter referred to as 'monkeys') in their next incarnation; AND WHEREAS we consider that it is the interest of every citizen to enjoy the fundamental human right to make an ass of himself and/or herself in the course of the Gregorian New Year; DETERMINED to get intoxicated during the traverse by Planet Earth in its trajectory around the Sun of the exact spot in its orbit that it (the Planet Earth) was at 365 days ago; BEING DESIROUS of making amends for the perfect ass (hereinafter referred to as 'donkey') I made of myself at midnight of the 31st at the Radisson; BEARING in mind that there are 16 other new year parties where I can make a donkey of myself (viz: Bikram Sambat 2072, Nepal Sambat 1030, the half-dozen Losars, and the Inuit New Year); NOTING that although there is a case to be made for a moratorium on said new year parties; NOTING FURTHER that this country, however, needs to keep partying on since we no longer live in a partyless system; I HAVE resolved with myself during the 2014th year of the Birth of Our Lord to carry out the following reforms in my general behaviour:

1. I will get up every morning at 5:30am, jog to Tin Kuney, and be

back in time for a breakfast of muesli, whole-wheat, and a warm frothy health drink which used to be the favourite of a certain ex-prime minister of a neighbouring country which starts with the letter 'T'.

2. That I will stop picking my nose in public (or private) unless ordered to do so in the national interest by the High-Level Political Mechanism.
3. That I shall not cast aspersions during the whole of 2014 about the female relatives of motorcyclists who try to overtake me from the left while on the Pani Tanki uphill.

APPENDICITIS (A) A Court of Arbitration shall be established pursuant to the Preamble above to resolve any disputes arising from the non-implementation of The Resolution, or if they are carried out in a manner that is not in consonance with the letter and spirit of this agreement.

APPENDICITIS (B) This agreement shall be deemed to be null and void if the contractual party and/or The Publisher (hereinafter referred to as 'The Sau') decide to terminate this column in the national interest during the course of 2014.

The Ass



PAST PRESENT FUTURE

DIWAKAR CHETTRI

Gan gan gan gan ...



Gan gan gan gan ...



This is what gan-gantantra means.



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