

JAN MØLLER HANSEN

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A TALE OF TWO NATIONS

One is an Indian Ocean island with a hoary history of hydraulic civilisations where engineer kings built incredible reservoirs in the arid plains. Ceylon was colonised by the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British and their influences turned Colombo into a cosmopolitan entrepôt. After independence in 1948, the state invested heavily in education and health, giving the country the highest literacy and life expectancy in the region.

The other is a landlocked Himalayan country that escaped being colonised and preferred to remain marinated in a feudal monarchy for centuries. It opened up to the outside world only 60 years ago and has been trying to catch up with the rest of the world ever since.

Both countries were ravaged by civil wars. In the late 1980s, in fact, Sri Lanka had two civil wars going on at the same time: the Tamil separatist war in the north and the Marxist uprising in the south. More than 120,000 people were killed in 30 years. The Sri Lanka war ended in 2009 with a clear victor and vanquished, in Nepal by contrast, neither side lost and the warring sides both became the state after 2006.

The two countries have also diverged in the way they have approached post-conflict reconciliation and rehabilitation. As a Nepali used to the perpetual state of road-widening in Kathmandu and the dark and

Nepal and Sri Lanka are two South Asian countries in post-conflict transition, but that is about all they have in common

potholed streets, it is a shock to see a fellow South Asian capital with world class infrastructure. Twenty-five years ago, Sri Lanka looked like southern India. Today, it looks like Malaysia.

Colombo airport is now linked to the city by an expressway and it continues on south to link a new airport at Hambantota. In Nepal we are thankful to the Chinese for widening the 7km section of the Ring Road from Kalanki to Koteswor, but in Sri Lanka, China is building nearly 700km of highways, a new port city, new airports, and upgrading the railroads.

Stung by western ostracisation for the brutal end to the war in May 2009 in which up to 30,000 Tamil civilians were said to have been killed, President Mahinda Rajapaksa and his brother Gothbaya, who is defence minister, have invested heavily in high-profile infrastructure projects to clinch domestic support. It seems to be working. Most Sinhalese appear to approve of the government's can-do

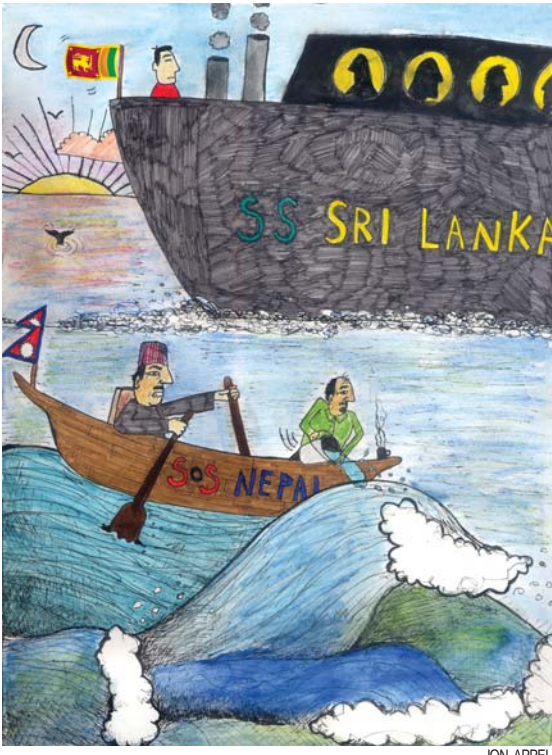
attitude. The state's PR drive is in high gear: in January vehicles using the new southern expressway got free 2014 calendars with the president's pictures and every mobile phone user in Sri Lanka received SMSs from Rajapaksa himself wishing them a happy new year.

Rajapaksa has formed the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission, which critics say does not even begin to address human rights violations and war excesses. The UN Human Rights Commission meeting in March in Geneva will debate a resolution that is expected to censure the Sri Lankan government and may even recommend economic sanctions.

There was nothing to stop successive governments in Nepal after 2006 from investing in infrastructure and development like the Sri Lankans did, but our leaders were incapable of multitasking. Nepal's Truth and Reconciliation Bill is also stalled, we have had two elections to write a new constitution.

Sri Lanka's elected rulers have been brazenly populist, but they know that winning elections is not enough, they have to show performance accountability. Hence the focus on the economy to take people's minds off politics. In post-conflict Nepal, both the economy and the politics are stuck.

There will be those who will argue that we should follow the Sri Lankan model, postpone democracy, and curb freedoms to first kickstart the economy. But we tried authoritarianism before and it was far worse. Our only hope is that the new constitution will install an inclusive democracy system designed to remove exclusion and discrimination and pave the way for peace. Sleek highways and glossy airports are not enough to protect the peace and we have demonstrated in the past that only through meaningful democracy and the accountability that it imposes on elected leaders, can we guarantee equitable economic growth.



JON APPEL

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

TRESSPASSING

The proposed railway and roads may open several doors for Nepal's economic advancement, but the irreparable damage it will cause to the nature and wildlife within Chitwan National Park can never be accounted for ('Trespassing nature', Bhrikuti Rai and Sunir Pandey, #691). In the name of haphazard development, we're losing something even more precious. The natural wonders, wildlife, and their habitats that thrive in the jungle is a common wealth shared by all humankind and demolishing it will be our greatest blunder.

Utkarsh Thapa

- If the proposed railway moves ahead, it will be a big blow to Nepal's efforts in nature conservation. Chitwan National Park is not only a thriving ecotourism destination, but also a natural world heritage site. The railway line will lead to habitat fragmentation, which is detrimental for genetic exchange of wildlife. One should not forget that when the Madi road was constructed a few years ago through the heart of the sanctuary, UNESCO officials threatened to remove the park from the world heritage list.

Kamal Thapa

- The rough sketch of the project is a good starting point and the whole report was quite interesting. We should desist from over-alarming attitudes when it comes to the development of a country with high infrastructure deficit. However, the

quality of the project will depend on various factors: who will be the operational forces, who will take care of the cash, and how favourable is the climate? There are thousands of examples around the world where science and nature have been combined harmoniously to create a just society.

Nirmal Ghimire

- The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and Chitwan National Park alone can do nothing, if civil society doesn't support them. I attended some meetings with the railway construction team, where I strongly opposed the plan and their alternatives, which pass through the park's core area. The team always prioritised cost and economics of construction work, which is worthless logic at least in my opinion as a conservationist. I do not oppose development, but am against the present proposal of railway construction work through the sanctuary. Even though the alternative route is much expensive, the government should assure the budget for the sake of wildlife and environment protection.

Maheshwar Dhakal

- First of all, the Detailed Project Report (DPR) couldn't have been leaked, as the study is still under progress, the national park authorities have not yet given permission to survey the sanctuary's premises, and the final alignment of the track is being considered. The inception report was aimed at making concerned authorities including forest department officers,

park officials, and the government aware about the pros and cons of building a railway inside the Chitwan National Park, so that they can make an informed decision. It will be a long time before the rail track is actually built. In the meantime, the media should be more responsible and stop spreading an internet hoax.

Anonymous

THE PEOPLE

Great editorial and very timely indeed since it appeared close to India's Republic Day on 26 January ('We the people', #691). Indeed, there are lots of lessons for Nepalis, especially about freedom of religion. Why are people in Nepal so hung up on secularism? Actually the Constituent Assembly of India in 1950 had rejected the word 'secular', it was only Indira Gandhi that inserted that word into the preamble in the mid-70s.

Ghosh

- Very interesting that India's constitutional framers rejected the term 'federalism' and chose 'union', but they used Baburam Bhattarai to force federalism on Nepal. I disagree with the editorial that India's constitution has served the country well. In fact, India has been falling apart and is still fragmenting because the constitution did not foresee the dangers of federalism. That is the real lesson for Nepal.

Nanda

- We had the 1990 constitution that could have been amended, but now we are all clamouring for a new document

and I do not believe we can draft it within a year. We will see where we are in 365 days from today; forward or backward, time will tell. Nepal's leaders are publicly disgraced men, infamous for their incompetence and corruption. They have amassed billions of rupees by stealing from poor Nepalis and yet, we worship and revere them as leaders. People are living without water, electricity, jobs, security, while politicians dine at hotels and fly off on expensive junkets. We need more honest men like Dr Govinda KC to take charge of leading Nepal.

Narayana Prasad

- If India 'fared well' with its 1949 constitution for whatever reason then Nepal would have been in much better shape. I wonder what the writer's definition of being well is. And if the constitution is a document in progress, what was so wrong with the 1990 constitution that it had to be replaced?

D Gajara

DOCTORS' ORDER

It is the basic right of people living in democratic societies to get affordable treatment ('Doctors' orders', Santa Gaha Magar, #691). Govinda KC is just fighting for the common cause of the underprivileged Nepalis who have been taken for granted by the politicians and health mafias. May your dreams come true Dr KC.

Anup Panday

LIVING TO EAT

Rather funny ('Living to eat',

Backside, #691). I think the large emphasis on 'khanu' (to eat) in the Nepali language is symbolic of historical poverty. Many people (even today) are living on the margin and don't know whether they will get to eat the next meal (let alone eat a meal a week later, a month later, or even a year later). Maybe this 'food insecurity' arising from economic poverty transferred historically to linguistic poverty so that most verbs in the Nepali language refer to eating (khanu) even though the context in which the sentences are used are quite different. Here's a research question and a hypothesis to test: do other cultures/languages in the world also show a close association between food insecurity and impoverishment of primary language?

Nepali

- Ass, you missed the most important khanu: 'goo khanu'.

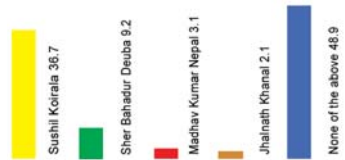
Goon



Weekly Internet Poll #828

Q. Who should be Nepal's next prime minister?

Total votes: 828



Weekly Internet Poll # 693. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Should the new assembly adopt the agreements made by CA-1?



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Stuck with you

Sushil Koirala may become the next Prime Minister, but he is already a lame duck

After weeks of political tongue-lashing and back-stabbing, the Kangresis finally put an end to their own misery and elected Sushil Koirala as their parliamentary party leader. He is also party president and may now also become prime minister, so the man is set to lead the government and carry forward the legacy of absolute control championed by his cousin before him. But will he succeed in delivering the constitution within the stipulated one year? We will let you know when we find out for sure.



BY THE WAY

Anurag Acharya

But leaders with clean images have fallen from grace before, which shows that honesty and personal integrity alone do not guarantee successful leadership in politics. It involves pragmatism and ability to make tough calls that are unpopular, but knowing they are essential.

Despite his clean image, for example, Baburam Bhattarai failed as prime minister because he wasn't able to take those tough decisions when it came to the peace process and had surrounded himself with crooks in the cabinet which made him preside over the plunder of the state exchequer.

Koirala defeated Sher Bahadur Deuba fair and square on PP leadership voting. But it is unlikely that he will get the needed support from Deuba to lead the government. We have seen Girija Prasad Koirala bring down his own party's government led by Krishna Prasad Bhattarai in 2000, while Deuba himself split the party in 2002 to remain in power. If he fails to capture party presidency in the next convention, which is in six months time, Deuba will not hesitate to do either.

Even if Sushil Koirala manages to temporarily overcome obstacles within the party to lead the government, he will have to bargain hard with potential partners in the UML, which is eying all top posts including Home Ministry and Finance Ministry. Although UML leaders are themselves divided over who would lead the party in parliament, they will come down hard on Koirala where dividing portfolios is concerned.

For now, KP Oli looks strong enough to bag the PP leadership. If that happens, the UML will probably pitch Bam Dev Gautam for home

minister. Yes, the same chap who won

them the last local elections in 1997. But Madhav Nepal's ambition to become the next president is already an irritant that Koirala will find hard to deal with, especially because the UML (read Nepal) is seeking some kind of assurance that the NC will support its presidency bid by next year. Koirala will be hard pressed on that since President Ram Baran Yadav seems unwilling to step down before the constitution is drafted.

Good news for Sushil Koirala is that the Maoists and Madhesi parties are still busy licking the wounds of their electoral defeat and won't create much problem as far as government formation is concerned. Bijay Gachhadar's MJF Loktantrik is the only one interested in joining the Congress in the government. But if all goes well with the UML, Koirala won't need his support either.

There are plenty of theories doing the rounds in Kathmandu's cocktail circles about whether or not Sushil will become the next elected head. My personal favourite conspiracy theory is the 'foreign hand', which states that the old man's cold war with New Delhi has not thawed.

Yes, Koirala isn't exactly popular down south and Delhi would have liked to see the pliable and pragmatic Deuba, for whom they rolled the red carpet last year, come to power. But, we have seen India's capacity to influence Nepal's chaotic politics wane in recent years. What they have managed to do successfully, though, is to find a way of addressing their key interests in the country by working with whoever comes to power in Singha Darbar. If they could hit it off so well with the Maoists, one presumes doing business with Koirala won't be so difficult.

It may seem improbable for now, but the NC and UML will finally agree on forming a coalition government, not just because they don't have a better choice. The two parties have a similar stance on outstanding issues of constitution drafting and will be seen close even inside CA. But the final negotiations on government power sharing will take some time to materialise. Things may become clearer in the second week of February.



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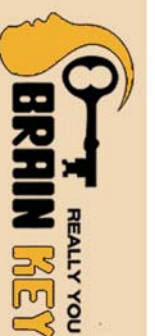
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MORE VALUE FOR MONEY

50 years of Tiger Tops shows that a focus on high value tourism may be more advantageous for Nepal

JACK BAUCHER in BARDIA



The main tourist sector of Nepal caters to backpackers travelling up from India or across from Thailand, looking for an experience at low budget that they could not find back home. The backpacker market is saturated with agents selling a trip to meet the demand and consequently, each passerby ends up on a similar trail. Jumping from one guesthouse to another, paying very little at each destination. The normal triangle is Kathmandu, Pokhara, Chitwan. But where is the real beauty? Where is the real quality experience that a well-travelled tourist would truly appreciate and be willing to pay more for? Which area provides a cultural, wholehearted authentic Nepali familiarity? There is no price for this type of trip: to visitors it is something that will stay with them for life, to be off the tourist trail appreciating real country. For Nepal, it brings in quality over quantity and creates better opportunities for the future.

One resort that has pushed quality tourism now for 50 years in Nepal is the Tiger Tops group. It started operations in Nepal in 1964 and the Tiger Tops Karnali Lodge on the periphery of Bardia National Park offers the ultimate experiential travel experience. Travelers have to fly to Nepalganj from Kathmandu and from there, the lodge staff will meet on arrival and transfer them 86km further west to the property. The lodge sits on the edge of the park, it was renovated over the 2011-2012 season and holds a chic style that no other property in the country can be compared to. The newly renovated signature rooms bring coolness to a trendy interior from Europe (*see pictures*). The onsite organic farm, sustains all the lodge's needs. The park's pristine habitat and lower numbers of visitors (compared to Chitwan) has created jeep, river and walking safaris. The lodge is now home to the

annual World Elephant Polo Championship, a one of a kind world-class competition, which has been running since 1982. The model is impressive given its remoteness in Nepal, a real gem in the western region. Nepal needs more of these models for its tourism sector to grow and develop, keeping up with the likes of neighboring countries, India and Bhutan. Quality properties will bring infrastructure, education and possibilities for those working in the trade. Great examples of quality tourism are where we have very effective public and private partnerships, with the government providing the framework and infrastructure, the private sector the products. This will generate demand and interest in the global market place, Nepal's competitors to be all emerging countries that recognise this, as oppose to its neighbors. Quality has the potential to make a huge positive impact on all areas of the economy and be a major

Undercutting ourselves

Nepal has always been a free-for-all where low budget tourists on shoe-string budgets as well as high value tourists flocked in. But as the service industry couldn't deliver quality, and Kathmandu's attractions were tarnished by urbanisation, the country started depending on quantity rather than quality of tourists. The most glaring example of this is trekking. Only one in eight tourists to Nepal goes trekking, and many bargain for the cheapest rates even though they can afford to pay more because they know the services provided are not up to international standards. Now, a new breed of young trekking entrepreneurs has started offering international standard comforts to trekking groups and found to their pleasant surprise that visitors are willing to pay more. "Nepal should be promoted as an exotic destination and not a cheap one," says Raj Tamang of Responsible Adventure told *Nepali Times*. "We have a world class product that adventure tourists from around the world want to visit again and again." Intense competition between the 2,000 or so trekking agencies means that they end up undercutting each other and the European wholesalers take advantage of this. Nepal has a fabulous trekking product, but it is underselling itself.

contributor to its GDP. The advantages of quality tourism have to be understood from policy-makers in Singha Darbar right down to the grassroots. This will enable the industry to start working and competing for the model, as oppose to operations fighting for the current driven demand. Each part of a traveler's path will have to start thinking of ways to strive and achieve

success to compete in the global marketplace. There is no doubt, the topography and scenery of Nepal is world class if not world Number One. It is just a matter of building and using the foundations to fulfill its potential. 🇳🇵

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Scanning your intelligence

Using fingerprint scans to reveal one's inherent capabilities may seem more fiction than fact, but with the help of 'Brain-Key' technology, it is now possible. The technology, based on the study of dermatoglyphics by Dr Harold Cummins, works on the premises that fingerprints have a direct link to the brain's behaviour.

While in countries like Australia and New Zealand, Brain Key already enjoys significant popularity, the multiple-intelligence test was launched in Nepal only last month by JD Group, a Bangalore-based educational centre.

The test combines computer technology and biometrics to identify an individual's interests and strengths. Upon scanning the fingerprints, the system carries an in-depth analysis of the lobes of the right and left-brain and provides a



TOH EE MING

comprehensive 30-page report about one's learning style, personality, aptitude, and intelligence type.

"It guides a person towards the right direction to achieve her life goal," explains Abhishek Agarwal (*pic above*), director of JD Group. However, when the technology was first launched, it met with tepid responses here. "There were several skeptics who dismissed it as palm reading, or linked it to astrology," says Agarwal.

But the program's popularity has soared as young Nepalis become keen on experimenting with this form of skills assessment. More than 50 per cent of JD's customers are young students, but mid-level professionals also flock the centre regularly in large numbers.

JD, which also provides other educational services like school and college admission counseling, tuition, and training, is planning to tie up with orphanages in Nepal to provide Brain-Key technology for free to the children there. Says Agarwal: "We want to reach out to underprivileged, but gifted children and offer scholarships for the deserving ones." 

Toh Ee Ming

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Where's the Rs 11 billion?

Nepali Times caught up with Tanka Mani Sharma, director general of Nepal's Inland Revenue department, to talk about the discrepancies in the tax system.

Nepali Times: What are your findings on tax evasion?

Tanka Mani Sharma: First, we investigated 528 companies and found that they still owed us Rs 7 billion in taxes. 495 other firms we investigated in our second study revealed a Rs 4 billion deficit. And after our third inquiry we found that 1,544 more companies had not paid Rs 350 million.

Are all of the firms guilty?

All the companies we investigated have evaded tax in one way or the other. Not all of them forged bills but they certainly did lie while filling up their income tax details.



Doesn't this prove that our tax system is weak?

Our system although scientific has its share of weaknesses. Our laws have given the taxpayer initial responsibility of filling in their income tax details, which means they can dictate how much tax they pay to the government. It is just that our tax system expects honesty from the private sector, which our investigations show is largely missing.

Do you mean the private sector betrayed the government?

Yes, private companies have sort of trampled on our trust. But still the government believes in the private sector.

Are you not going to make improvements in the system?

The beauty of the voluntary tax system is that you get to be clean from day 1 if you pay taxes regularly. But if the system catches discrepancies in your application, it means you can lose up to 80 per cent on your profits.

BIZ BRIEFS



In action

Two-time world champion Mika Hakkinen gave Kathmandu a taste of Formula One when he displayed his skill with speed and control at the Syakar Safety Riding Training Centre in Lalitpur on Saturday. Mika, who is the global responsible driving ambassador for Johnnie Walker, was on a three-day visit to the country to celebrate the success of Johnnie Walker's 'Join the Pact' campaign that aims to spread the message of responsible drinking.

One more

Sunrise Bank opened its newest branch at Milanchok, Butwal. The 51st branch of the bank was inaugurated by Deputy Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank Maha Prasad Adhikari.



Quake proof

In collaboration with Lalitpur Sub-metropolitan Office, Brij Cement conducted a four-day mason training program in Chyasal, Lalitpur. The training focused on constructing earthquake resistant structures and saw the participation of over thirty masons.

Super power

United Traders Syndicate announced the launch of the all-new Toyota Hiace, which is equipped with a new 2.5 litre, 16 valve DOHC Common Rail Turbo Diesel engine. The new engine offers low fuel consumption, high power output, excellent performance, low engine noise, reduced weight and high durability and reliability reads the press release.



Bon Anniversaire

NIEC, one of Nepal's pioneer educational consultancies, celebrated its 14th anniversary on Saturday. The day was marked with a blood donation program at its premises in Putalisadak.

Number one

Qatar Airways was awarded the 'Best Business Class' at the 25th Annual Best in Business Travel Awards held in Los Angeles. The carrier was also honoured with the 'Best Business Class in the Middle East' and 'Best Airline in the World' for international travel at the same ceremony.




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Back to square zero

For every step we take forward, we seem to take two back

For two months after elections, the political parties kept us waiting with their characteristic indecisiveness and haggling over Proportional Representation seats. So when the first session of the Constituent Assembly finally



HERE WE GO
Trishna Rana

got going on 22 January, even skeptical Nepalis heaved a sigh of relief. The constitution drafting process was back in its rightful chamber after 18 months in the wilderness.

However, for every step we take forward, we seem to take two back. At the second session on Wednesday, the proposal put forth by the NC, UML, and UCPN (Maoist) to officially adopt the agreements and achievements of the first CA, was immediately shot down by RPP-Nepal and Rastriya Janamorchha, both of which campaigned against federalism.

The Big Three had it coming. The proposal was conceived through their usual high-handed method: a day earlier their leaders gathered behind closed doors at the Peace Secretariat.



ROUND TWO: The first session of the Constituent Assembly finally commenced on 22 January at BICC Hall, Baneshwor.

BIKRAM RAI

When the public mandate clearly needs all political actors to work together transparently, such clandestine meets outside of the CA undermine democratic norms and deepen the chasm of mistrust among the parties. If there is one lesson for leaders from the previous failed attempt at constitution writing, it is that Nepal needs conciliatory, inclusive politics and not cliques and cartels. The High-Level Political Committee or whatever vague euphemism its creators come up with, needs to be disbanded immediately.

The RPP-N's Kamal Thapa has always maintained that

the secular federal republic agenda was forced on Nepal by the Maoists and the country can't be tricked twice. And now that his party is the fourth largest force in the House, he intends to use his clout. The three Madhes-based parties are on the cusp of unification, so Thapa's influence could wane. Which is why he wants to move quickly to ensure that unlike the previous CA, there will be an actual constitutional debate on secularism versus Hindu state.

But Thapa's insistence on starting constitution-drafting from a clean slate is sure to delay the document. For all

practical purposes, CA-2 is an extension of its predecessor. And while it is true that 80 per cent of the current CA members are fresh faces, Nepal's political landscape hasn't changed so drastically that we have to go back to square zero.

The problem, however, is that political parties here have no culture of shared ownership, every leader wants his stamp of authority on the constitution and refuses to learn from past experiences. As a result, the 1990 constitution was completely chucked aside because it was from the old regime, when we could have easily recycled many of the functional features of that

document. Similarly, right before the previous CA was dissolved in May 2012, the UML and NC engaged in irresponsible brinkmanship because they were averse to seeing a 'Maoist' constitution.

But the constitution is not a one-man, one-party document, it belongs to all Nepalis. This is not the time to dismantle the good work done by previous committees, rather the new parliamentarians should focus on building upon former achievements and retaining the positive and progressive draft statutes in full from 2008. This way, the debate in the next 12 months can remain fully centred on untangling the difficult knots of federalism, state restructuring, boundaries and names of future federal provinces. Otherwise, the previous six years will have been a waste of time and money.

The constitution is also not the end goal, devolution of power is. Setting up provincial governments and shifting the state machinery away from Kathmandu will require at least five years no matter what names we give to the future states or how many pieces we carve the country into. We've nearly exhausted the time limit for the paper, we need to move into action soon. 🇳🇵

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Central Nepal will see after effects of the second system over the weekend with some buildup, and odd chances of isolated showers. Kathmandu Valley will continue to see misty mornings mixed with inversion smog which will brighten up towards afternoon. The temperatures will remain within the normal 17 Celsius variation for this time of year with Kathmandu's temperature climbing to 20 degree Celsius over the weekend.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
18° 7°	18° 8°	19° 10°

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10 years, 100 countries

NGIMA PAKHRIN

Eleven years into his journey to tour the world on his two-wheeler, Furtemba Sherpa finds himself in the illustrious company of a small but swiftly expanding group of Nepali long-distance cyclists. But when Sherpa first decided to hop on his bike in 25 December 2003 and begin his world tour, his family and friends were stunned. As a boy, Furtemba had run away from his home in Mamling, Sankhuwasabha to

Cyclist Furtemba Sherpa spreads the message of peace and social harmony one pedal stroke at a time



HELPING HANDS:
Locals help Furtemba load his bicycle on a boat in Liberia

Kathmandu at the age of 10, so that his parents would have one less mouth to feed. After having worked his way up from the streets, his restaurant and clothing business was finally starting to do well in the early 2000s. But personal success was not what he was after.

Having witnessed the devastation of the war firsthand and the ensuing destruction of our forests, mountains, and rivers, Sherpa was determined to spread the message of peace, social harmony, and environmental protection across the globe. Sherpa writes in his blog: "One pedal stroke at a time, I hope my story will inspire people to act in their own way to make a greener Earth. I believe we can find solutions through mutual respect, dialogue and understanding rather than through violence."

After clocking in 101,321km on his bike so far, Sherpa has successfully delivered his message to the citizens of 100 countries across six continents. When on tour, he cycles 10 hours on average every day, covering 80-120km. With 51 more countries on his list, the expert cyclist hopes to finish

his expedition by 2020 so he can spend time with his wife and two daughters.

Sherpa's journey, however, hasn't been as easy as it looks and like many others before him, he has faced his fair share of mishaps and misfortunes on the road. He was looted in Nigeria, swept away by a flood in Liberia, forced to take shelter in jungles, and travelled for days on stretch on an empty stomach. The flags that adorn his shirt and bicycle - his seventh- are a testimony of the battles he's fought, but Furtemba is quick to point out that the good memories trump over the bad ones and is particularly fond of Nepalis in the diaspora.

"In all the places I have visited, Nepalis have been very helpful," recalls the 36-year-old, who was in New York last month on a break. "I am humbled and touched by their generosity and support."

While Sherpa has met several diplomats and ministers during his decade long bicycle tour, he considers his encounter with the vice-president of Liberia Joseph Boakai the most memorable. "Boakai told me that Nepal was a very rich country and it was so



refreshing to hear that. That was a moment of great pride for me," he explains.

Besides advocating for world peace and environmental protection, Sherpa has been raising funds for charities, among which is the Furtemba Sherpa foundation that he established in 2011. Through its 'giving the gift of mobility' program, the foundation donates wheelchairs to the physically-disabled in Nepal.

After his stay in New York, Sherpa will visit Nepal in February to meet his family, whom he hasn't seen for the past five years.

While at home, he also wants to follow-up on the plans for cycle lanes across the Valley, an idea that he had pitched to President Ram Baran Yadav in 2009.

"We are not an oil-rich country and most Nepalis cannot afford gas-guzzling cars," says Sherpa. "If we had cycle tracks running across the cities, travelling would be easier and pleasant and we could significantly cut down our emissions." www.furtemba.org

nepalitimes.com

Longer version
Young yogis on bicycles, #598
Around the world in 11 years, #25
Interview

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SONAM LOSAR, the Tamang community celebrates the new year.
31 January

EVENTS

Frame by frame, a two-week workshop for photographers who want to take their digital photography to the next level; participants will work on aesthetics, ethics, editing, and digital workflow and produce stories on the issues of climate change, sustainable living, migration and themes related to the ongoing Climate+Change exhibition. *Rs 4,000 ex. VAT, 4 to 18 February, 2 to 6pm, Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal, learning@photocircle.com.np, apply by 5pm, 28 January*



MUSHI MUSHI, Learn more about the culture of the land of the rising sun at the Japanese Film Festival. *1 February, 11am to 5pm, Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Pokhara, (01)4426680, np.emb-japan.go.jp*

Climate+Change, an awe-inspiring educational science exhibition about climate change and Nepal's Himalaya. *Runs till April, Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal*

Of the young, listen to Anil Chitrakar expand on entrepreneurship opportunities for engaging the youth. *9 February, 4pm, free entry, Nepal Bharat Library, New Road*



PARALLEL JOURNEYS, an exhibition of the works of artists Binod Pradhan, Sunila Bajracharya, and Asha Dangol. *Runs till 8 February, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal*

Trading paint, an exhibition of the work by artist Julian Parker-Burns. *Runs to 21 February, 10am to 5pm, Image Ark Gallery, Kulimha Tol, Patan Darbar Area*

Swasthani fast, a month of reading the pilgrims' tale of the Kathmandu Valley of yore; plenty of photo opportunities at Pasupati and Sali Nadi. *Runs to 14 February*

Made in Nepal, join over 150 makers and sellers of quality Nepali products and services.

13 to 16 February, 10am onwards, Bhrikuti Mandap, 9841578957, nyef@fncci.org

Heritage and pride, an exhibition of the paintings of Lal Kaji Lama. *Runs till 3 February, Sarwanam Art Gallery, Kalikasthan*

Birdwatch, spot a bird that has migrated from Siberia to Kathmandu for the winter. *1 February, 7am, Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park, 9841330576*

Art attack, revisit the highlights of the 2nd Kathmandu International Art Festival. *Runs till 31 January, 10am to 4pm, Patan Museum, (01)4218048*

The desert eats us, watch this documentary about migrant Nepalis in Qatar. *31 January, 5:30pm, UN Park, Thapathali, (01)5523586, 9813458716*



NOODLING, stake your claim as Nepal's top graphic designer and win up to Rs 25,000 and a spot at an exhibition in prizes. *Send entries to events@thecitymuseum.org by 20 February*

DINING



DEGAA RESTO LOUNGE, for mouth watering Newari and Indian cuisine. *Kumaripati*

Hotel Shangri-La, traditional Nepali cuisine with cultural show. *Rs 999, every Thursday, 7pm onwards, (01)4412999 ext 7520/7515*

K-TOO, if you're tired of the cold, go in for the best steak in Thamel, a warm dining room, live sports on TV, and free Irish coffee with every main course and seasonal specials. *Thamel, (01)4700043*

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

Dhokaima Cafe, exquisite ambience, friendly service, cosy bar, place to see and be seen at. *Patan Dhoka*



Pack my lunch, mother's cooking delivered to your doorstep. *9803496546, www.facebook.com/packmylunchnepal*

Byanjan Grill, its open patio is a great place to sit, enjoy a book, take in the view, and gorge on delicious cuisine when the hunger kicks in. *Barahi Chok, Lakeside-6, Pokhara, (061)466271*

Barista lavazza, the newest addition to the Valley's European inspired coffee-culture cafes serves excellent mochas and lattes, don't forget to try their grilled chicken sandwich. *Jawalakhel*

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

Chez Caroline, exquisite food, glorious sunshine and more. gam to 10pm, Baber Mahal Revisited, *(01)4263070/4187*

The Heritage, escape the hodgepodge of the tourist hub as you relish delights like paella and panna cotta. *Thamel*



FUJI BAKERY, tucked in Chakupat this bakery offers homemade goodies like apple pie, pain du chocolat, and banana cake. *Chakupat, Lalitpur*

The year of the horse gallops its way in this weekend



Xin Nian Kuai Le

Although we are well into 2014 and the Nepali New Year is not for another two months or so, millions around the world will be ushering in a new year this Friday. The traditional Lunar New Year, which is celebrated in places like China, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, falls on 29 January this year.

In accordance with the 'Shengxiao', traditional Chinese Zodiac, 2014 is the year of the horse, replacing the snake in 2013. There are a total of 12 animals in the Zodiac and the animals take

turns to be assigned years. The order of the animals was believed to be determined in a mythical race organised by a Jade emperor, who decreed that the years on the calendar would be named for each animal in the order that they arrived.

It is believed that one's personality and fortunes are determined by the animal that corresponds to their year. For example, those born in 1966, 1978, 1990, and 2002 belong to the year of the horse and are thought to be slightly untamed, but popular, independent and

skillful with their money.

Traditionally, the Lunar New Year is a time of much feasting and merriment. Families visit each other and catch up, gifting each other a pair of oranges that is considered to be traditional symbols of good fortune and abundance. Children are especially upbeat during this time of the year too, because they receive red packets full of money from the older generations, with the belief that it will bring them good luck as well.

The Lunar New Year

might not be celebrated in the same way here, but it is similar to another important festival for many people in Nepal. People from the Tibetan, Yolmo, Sherpa, and Tamang communities celebrate Losar, which also marks the beginning of a new year. Losar usually occurs on the same day, or near to the Lunar New year.

Special delicacies like guthuk noodles and beer called changkol are served during the festival. Beautiful decorations are put up and elaborate offerings are made to the Buddhist deities. People also wear traditional clothes like the Chupa and partake in dances and prayers and visit loved ones. Popular religious places like Boudha and Swayambhu get crowded with people making offerings and in prayer.

There are a number of Chinese establishments in the city that will be celebrating the Lunar New Year here. If you find yourself in a Chinese restaurant this weekend, be sure to wish them 'Xin Nian Kuai Le' and maybe bring along a pair of oranges to join in the festivities. Who knows, you might even get a festive discount. 🍊

Hariz Baharudin

MÀN MÀN CHÌ

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Darbar Marg
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Shenz Mei Hwa Chinese Restaurant & Bar
Kantipath
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Dahua Restaurant
Amrit Marg, Thamel
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Oriental Kitchen
Bhatbhateni, Tangal (opposite CIAA building)
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Hong Xiang Chinese Restaurant
Baneshwor
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Shangri-La Kitchen, Hotel Tibet International
Boudha
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The Old Lan Hua Chinese Restaurant
Gaurighat, Lakeside, Pokhara
061463797

MUSIC



SHASTRIYA SANGEET, dabble in the magic of Hindustani classical music every new moon night.
1 March, 3.30pm, Ram Mandir, Battisputali



KRIPA UNPLUGGED, young Nepali musicians and seasoned veterans give an acoustic rendition of their favourite songs.
<http://www.youtube.com/user/KripaUnplugged>

Starry nights, munch on the tenderloin with Ciney Gurung performing live.

Rs 1,499, 24 January, 7pm onwards, Shambala Garden Café, Hotel Shangri-La, (01)4412999, Ext. 7520/7515

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Glacier Hotel, good value and friendly service for travelers on the lap of Lake Phewa. Gaurighat, Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)-463722, www.glaciernepal.com



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Barahi Jungle Lodge, the first eco-jungle lodge of Chitwan directly overlooks the Chitwan National Park, spa, boutique guest room, individual and two-in-one private villas, including a suite with a private swimming pool. Andrauli, West Chitwan, www.barahijunglelodge.com

Mango Tree Lodge, culture walks, rafting in Karnali, wildlife exploration, and jungle safari at the Bardia National Park. Bhetani, Bardiya, info@mangotreelodge.com



Defrost

The ongoing Climate+Change exhibition brings exciting programmes this week:

1 February, Building a city, workshop for children to map a city with recycled materials and create a landscape before the advent of humans.

12 to 2pm, Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal,

6 February, Garbage dreams, screening of a documentary that follows three Egyptian teenagers born into the trash trade in the world's largest garbage village.

5.30 to 7pm, Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal

Climate+Change Runs till 11 April, closed on Tuesdays, Nepal Art Council
9849519933, nischal@photocircle.com.np

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Nepal is a land of geographic icons, historic adventurers, and landscapes that don't seem possible. There are lush wildlife parks, vibrant cities full of art and culture, villages preserving an ancient way of life and an infinite amount of undiscovered gems. So what made my little trip to Pokhara, one of the most widely toured cities in the country, distinct?

Well, to put it simply, over the following five days I was going to learn to sit on a 50-year-old, two-wheeled hunk of metal and ride it across one of the most thrilling and dangerous roads in Nepal. There was more uncertainty lying ahead than I had ever faced in my life, but I stalled those fears in their tracks in order to honour my road trip dreams.

As my bus hurtled west towards Pokhara from an unusually quiet Kathmandu, I couldn't help but gasp in awe of the monumental landscapes offered by the Prithvi Highway, the sun high in the sky, the heavy mist lifting to make way for the dramatic mountains. Cut to six hours and three breaks later, I found myself crashing in my Lakeside hotel in anticipation for the following day.

As Murphy's Law would have it however, the morning of my first time on a motorbike was to coincide with the first rainfall of the season. Shaking my head with disbelief I made my way to the training ground where I was to meet Matt, owner of Hearts and Tears Motorcycle Club (*see below*) and Naresh aka Motte who would be teaching me how to ride.

I JUST RIDE

‘Respond to every call
that excites your spirit’

MEGHNA BALI

- Rumi



BIRD'S EYE: Team leader matt gardner stops to enjoy the view atop a hill in tansen

“So what’s your experience with motorbikes been like?” was the first question Matt asked me to which I replied, “well, I’ve never sat on a bike and I’ve fallen off a scooter”. He threw me a helmet and smiled, “That’s what we like to hear,” before riding away.

The next seven hours involved the basic principles of riding, and after stalling several times, falling off twice, skidding periodically, frequent course language and unimaginable patience on the part of Motte, I began to get the hang of riding and the tricks that went with it. By 4pm, exhausted and drenched to the bone with icy rain, we decided to call it a day.

Day 3 of the trip had to be the most

nerve wracking of my entire stay in Nepal. Even New Year’s night in Thamel’s narrow alleys had nothing on me taking to the busy roads on a vintage motorbike with a day’s experience. The day trip involved Motte and I riding from Pokhara to the exquisite Indreni Cottages in Kande and Sarangkot just in time to watch the para-gliders during sunset. Feeling infinitely more confident on the way back to the clubhouse at the end of the day, we went through last minute bike and gear checks in preparation for the ride to Tansen the following morning.

As Matt and I navigated our way out of Pokhara and through the winding roads of Tansen, it became exceedingly obvious that there was no better way to explore the country than on a motorbike. Be prepared of course for the massive buses blaring past, inches from your face, long stretches that

make your backside extremely unhappy and probably the biggest potholes on this side of the hemisphere.

But it’s the way the locals get around, and when riding, you feel part of the environment. You can smell the wood-fire stoves, see women wash their hair, and feel the air drop in temperature all as you ride on by. What made the experience even better was the history of the bikes, the feel, and the sound that create a brilliant sense of adventure and freedom.

This sense soon turned into fear and focus as the roads begun to get steeper with dangerously acute turns as we got closer to our destination. Technically 13km west of Tansen, Srijana Farms couldn’t have been a more natural break from Kathmandu.

Smiling with fatigue we took in the fresh mountain air and saw open land filled with fruits and vegetables, cheeses and the occasional goat. In true Nepali style, we were

treated to a glass (or three) of home distilled rakshi and then to a traditional feast prepared by the wives of one of the farmers. This gracious hospitality continued through a night of stories and laughter and into the morning as we prepared for our journey back to Pokhara.

It’s been a viscerally memorable three months of travel, but the sense of accomplishment achieved after this five day experience stands alone. If you thrive on adrenaline and crave more than your average zip line, this is for you. But don’t take my word for it. Pack a bag, learn to ride, and explore the labyrinth that is Nepal. 🇳🇵

[nepalitimes.com](#)

Vroom, vroom # 604

GoPro montage

Time-lapse video

Photo gallery



The bikes less taken

Hearts and Tears Motorcycle Club is run by expats Matt Gardner (*pic above*) and Chantal Perera who aim to provide locals and tourists the opportunity to rent and learn to ride a vintage motorcycle. The clubs offers a range of pre-organised and custom courses designed to suit individual needs from absolute beginners to seasoned pros with an emphasis on safety.

You can choose from a variety of customised Royal Enfields or Yamaha RXs in a range of retro designs and rent from Rs 600 and get lessons from Rs 3,500 per day from experienced professionals.

If you’re looking for a pure heart sinking adventure that doesn’t leave your wallet empty and lasts for longer than 15 minutes, this is undoubtedly the place for you.

Hearts and Tears Motorcycle Club, Pokhara
(inside Busy Bee)

9846020293
[www.heartsandtears.com](#)



BLUE JASMINE

Woody Allen's earlier personal life is pretty dodgy (after all it doesn't get that much dodgier than starting a relationship with your 19-year-old daughter, albeit technically not biological, when one is 56). How then do we separate his works from his arguably questionable code of ethics?



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

While I raise this question as I write about *Blue Jasmine* I will not seek to answer them. I do, however, believe that when writing about Allen one ought to disclose at least that bit of essential information. It is perhaps apt then that Allen has finally made a film about a character whose moral compass is quite wonky if not completely off in Jasmine French (Cate Blanchett), the eponymous character from the title of his latest film. Jasmine's real name is Jeanette, and while she lives the swankiest of lives in a Park Avenue apartment, she comes from humble enough origins sharing her childhood with a sister named Ginger (the brilliant Sally Hawkins) who was adopted alongside Jasmine/Jeanette but was less



favoured due to her bad genes (as opposed to Jasmine's good genes). The film cuts back and forth from Jasmine's privileged past and subsequent downfall to her current existence, living at her sister's humble but warm flat in San Francisco after having clearly suffered some sort of neurotic break. Slowly as Jasmine manipulates her way through her current life, popping Xanax and chasing it with Vodka martinis we come to see how her previous existence deteriorated. From being exquisitely happy and married to a charming, astonishingly rich businessman named Hal (played perfectly by Alec

Baldwin), Jasmine's life implodes when Hal is arrested outside his office for investing and losing large amounts of other people's investments a la Bernie Madoff. We come to know Hal's fate and Jasmine's desperate grasping struggle to survive over the course of an uneven film with the standard clichés that Allen has lately so easily slid into - and yet I at least felt compelled to finish the film mainly due to the now much deservedly talked about performance by Blanchett who wavers between, vulnerable, execrable, beautiful, almost ugly but is never less than riveting onscreen in a difficult role that was perhaps even badly written, but which she managed to make her own.

Allen is no longer that man who made films like *Manhattan* (1977), *Annie Hall* (1979), and *Hannah and her Sisters* (1986) to name a few from those days when New York was his muse. Some of his recent films are unwatchable and while he continues to be prolific, it truly is hit or miss when going to see a Woody Allen film these days. So while *Blue Jasmine*, quite rightly, was not selected for Best Picture this year by the Academy, Cate Blanchett deservedly has been recognised for her excellence with a nomination for Best Actress. If all goes well, she will be winning it this time. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer

the week in pictures brought to you by

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Ground floor below Laxmi Bank
Harihar Bhavan Pulchowk
Tel 5524812

Ground floor Mayalu Center
Jamal Sadak beside Samsonite
Tel 4225627

HAPPENINGS



RAM HUMAGAIN

MORAL VICTORY: Dr Govinda KC, who had been protesting political appointments in the Institute of Medicine, ends his 14-day hunger strike on Friday at Teaching Hospital, Maharajganj.



DEVAKI BISTA

NEVER FORGET: Founder of Shakti Samuha, Chari Maya Tamang (right), receives the Krishna Mohan-Nudup Shrestha Peace Award from Khil Raj Regmi on Sunday at Bagdole, Lalitpur to mark the 11th death anniversary of the late inspector general of the APF and his wife.



SOHAN SHRESTHA

THE CONQUEROR: Athletes participate in a Sanshou match at the 10th National Wushu Championship in Dharan on Monday.



HARIZ BAHARUDIN

RACE FACE: Former Formula One champion Mika Häkkinen shows off his superb driving skills as part of Johnnie Walker's responsible drinking campaign 'Join The Pact' in Gwarko on Saturday.

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Return to the gurukul way

Caught up in an ugly rat race, schools in Kathmandu Valley are chucking aside traditional blackboards and wooden desks and hastily replacing them with e-boards and interactive 'smart' desks. Unfortunately, many of these technology enhanced classrooms come without a solid grounding in pedagogy.

Rajarshi Gurukul, a primary school located in Bhaktapur, is focused on having the basics right while also offering modern amenities and teaching aids. Breaking away from conventional, rote-learning education system, Gurkul wants its students to learn through self exploration and play.

Says Principal Dilip Rana Magar: "We want our students to grow up to become independent, creative, and analytical thinkers and look at the world with new possibilities."

When five-year-olds learn their ABCs at Gurukul, instead of simply writing the word apple on their notebooks, they get to touch and taste the fruit. For science lessons on plants, students visit farmers in nearby paddy fields to learn about local sowing and harvesting techniques and in math's class, teachers use pizza slices to illustrate the concept of fractions. Students also learn about their culture, the government, and how to manage waste and save water.



Beyond academics, Gurukul strives to ensure the overall mental and physical development of its young ones. The sprawling school compound includes a well-endowed library, computer lab, and an outdoor playground. In addition to extra-curricular classes in music, skating, swimming, the


school also offers value education classes, which aims to inculcate good social values like respect and humility.

At the end of each term, parents are provided with a 16-page progress report card detailing not only the grades, but also an in-depth summary of their children's

strengths and weaknesses, participation in the classroom, peer relationship, and health.

Although the school opened only last year in May, the institution is well-staffed with highly trained teachers and caregivers who go beyond the syllabus to instill a love of learning among the children. Currently, there are 26 students ranging from grade one to six, with two teachers per class. "Our low student-teacher ratio means that we can accommodate the individual learning styles and needs of each child," explains Magar.

As admission slowly picks up, Rajarshi Gurukul's administration remains optimistic of the future and has plans of expanding the school and introducing classes like Mandarin to provide a globally competitive education in Nepal.

"Many parents here still believe that they have to send their children to India for better education. We want to change this negative mindset and convince them that Nepal has the potential to provide world-class schooling," says Chairman Rajesh Chaudhary. 

Toh Ee Ming

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BRICKS CAFÉ

'Bricks' always struck me as an odd moniker for a restaurant; making me think of stodgy, unpalatable food and, well, bricks. But of course this line of logic was self-defeating: I didn't visit the restaurant and so never found out why they'd chosen the name in the first place, nor how good their eclectic multicuisine menu actually was. More on the m-word later.

As it turns out, Bricks is a lovingly restored Rana building, with most of its building blocks dating back to 1903. It makes for a cosy, warm dining experience, all exposed beams, Newari carvings and soft yellow lighting. Traditional dances from all over



PICS: KZ

Nepal were also performed at regular intervals throughout the evening, but not in the slightly intrusive, imposing manner you might expect in certain Thamel tourist joints. In fact, the dancers we saw focused their attention on just one group of diners, leaving us (not entirely unwillingly) in the lurch.

We opened with oyster mushroom choila (Rs 280) and buff sekuwa (Rs 260), in the spirit of the distinctly Newari atmosphere. They were great, especially the mushrooms, while the buff came served with a piquant pickle, redundant salad and bhuja.

Multicuisine menus in Nepal usually strike fear into



the heart of a food critic, as they ordinarily result in a smorgasbord of mediocrity, perhaps with only one cuisine (the one the chef trained in) executed anything like well. I'm pleased to report, however, that Bricks did a pretty great job across the board.

I just returned from my hometown - known to many as the home of traditional English fish and chips (and the holiday home of heart disease, morbid obesity, and clothes that smell of chip fat), and so I was eager to try the offering here (Rs 450), made with bekhti fish. The batter (thankfully no breadcrumbs here!) was perfect: light, crisp and golden brown, and the soft white fillets done to a turn. The menu advertises French fries as an accompaniment, but fear not, Britishers, these are proper, chunky chips. The accompanying attempt at tartar sauce was really just a herby mayonnaise, but I'm willing to overlook that if Kathmandu develops a taste for mushy peas. At that point, this'll be one of the best home comfort dinners in town.

Next up was chicken lasagna (Rs 450), which boasted of béchamel but didn't really deliver, and yet still, we loved it. Lasagne is too often let down by an abundance of sauce, but here the dish was served relatively dry, with minced chicken, which seems to me like a diplomatic choice: beef too alienating and expensive, buff too fatty and, well, just not as good.

Perhaps the only let-down was the palak paneer (Rs 210, rice Rs 85). The bright green sauce promised palak but delivered only garlic, rendering it a little two-dimensional for us. The chef (unaware he was under review)

came out to chat, and when we asked what dessert was good, he proudly replied, "All of them!" but eventually relented, directing us toward apple pie with ice cream (Rs 250). There's no inventiveness on the dessert menu, or in this particular dish, but there's a reason it's a reliable favourite from the trekking trail to the tourist trap.

Bricks Café rightly puts its ambience front-and-centre on its website and in its promotional materials, but take this review as reassurance that there's more to the place than its décor; the food could stand up in 100 years too.  CC

How to get there: From the Kupondole bus stand, head towards Pulchowk. Bricks Café is on your right-hand side, in all its restored splendour.



Great Food Deserves Carlsberg

That calls for a 

The story about the rescue of a three-year-old girl, who fell into an icy fish pond in a little village in the Austrian Alps, defies belief. Her parents frantically jumped into the pool and it was a full 30 minutes before they found her at the bottom of the pool and brought her up and started CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). When the rescue team arrived in eight minutes, her body temperature was 66 degrees Fahrenheit, she had no pulse or blood pressure, and her lungs were filled with water. Her pupils were dilated and unresponsive to light indicating brain death.



DHYANVANTI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

Despite these findings, the medics continued CPR with one of them straddling her on the stretcher pumping her chest. She was air-lifted to the nearest hospital and immediately put on a heart-lung machine to help control her oxygen and temperature. After two hours, the girl's body temperature rose and her heart began to beat. Throughout the day and into the night, physicians in the intensive care unit suctioned off water and pond debris from her lungs with a fiberoptic bronchoscope. A day later, they finally put her on a mechanical ventilator.

Amazingly, all her organs - heart, kidneys, intestines, and lungs - recovered in the next couple of days, except her brain. The doctors performed a CT scan and discovered a generalised brain swelling which suggested no focal pathology. The team then drilled a hole into her skull and inserted a probe to monitor brain pressures based on which they were better able to deliver drugs and fluids to the body.

Then the miracle happened in the next few days. The young girl's pupils started to react to

Don't freeze to death



light: she began breathing on her own and speaking in a thick and slurry voice. Two weeks after the accident, she was sent home. Two years of extensive physiotherapy and she was normal again by age five.

Three points stand out in her treatment. First, severe hypothermia (very low body temperatures) sustained in the icy fishpond effectively shut down the body; and realising this important fact, the caregivers went all out by initially continuing CPR. Second, a child's body responds much more efficiently to prompt therapy as opposed to someone older. Third, a well-coordinated rescue operation can save lives even in the direst situation in a random hospital in the west.

Hypothermia takes place when the body loses heat faster than it can produce. Normal body temperature is 98.6 F and

hypothermia occurs when the temperature passes below 95 F. At or below this temperature, the heart and the nervous system, as in the little girl's case, cannot function properly.

While it will take a few decades to upgrade our emergency services to meet the high standards of Europe and America, prevention is always better than cure. Here are some simple tips to ward off hypothermia in the mountains.

If you are going trekking, it is imperative to wear proper gear including footwear. In the Himalayas, especially at high altitudes, daytime temperatures can be warm, balmy, and almost Tarai like. But don't be fooled by it because once the sun goes down, temperature may drop dramatically and nights maybe subzero. This is when very warm clothing, like down jackets and sleeping bags, proper boots, gloves, woolen hats, is absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, many travellers disregard such basic rules and try to 'tough it out', which can then turn deadly.

GIZMO by YANTRICK

Clinching a niche

When Samsung, the largest smartphone manufacturer launched its debut smartwatch in the market last October, techies all over the world stood and took notice. The Galaxy Gear was the technology giant's entry into the wearable technology market, which still at its infancy has been filled with capable but mostly incomplete offerings.

Although packed with more functions than its contemporaries, the minor loopholes that it fails to cover makes the Galaxy Gear yet another imperfect smartwatch. The major drawback with the Gear is its inability to function with any other devices except a few Samsung devices. Right now, the Gear only works if you have a Galaxy Note III, Galaxy S4, Galaxy Note 10.1 (2013 edition), and Galaxy SIII. But if you are a proud owner of one of these Samsung products and an early adopter, then you wouldn't mind strapping on this gear.

The Gear is certainly an attractive device, the combination of brushed metal and black rubber strap lends the Gear a premium feel. It has a 1.6-inch Super AMOLED 320 pixels x 320 pixels screen, while also packing in a 1.9MP camera on the top strap. At 200gms it doesn't feel too heavy on the wrist.

Taking and making calls using the Gear is extremely convenient, and checking texts is also a breeze. The Gear has no SIM card or data connection of its own; instead it links to your phone via Bluetooth. The smartwatch is also NFC-enabled, allowing for easy one-touch pairing with your Galaxy smartphone. Battery lasts for a full day of fairly intense use but charging can become a problem. To charge your gear, you need to first strap the watch into a plastic charging case and then plug a standard micro USB cable into the back of it. So, there is no more relying on a friend's spare charger.

There is only a single button on the watch itself, which acts to power up the display, or fires up Samsung's voice recognition 'S Voice' software with a double-click. The device itself is powered by a single-core 800 MHz ARM processor and 512 MB of RAM, and also packs 4GB of storage space. Navigating around the watch is seamless, and is done using the touch-enabled display, while the interface is simple and uncluttered.

The Gear is a decent companion device for your Galaxy range of smartphones, but is slightly let down foremostly by the fact that it cannot be currently used with any other Android smartphones. Sadly, email support on the Gear is also currently missing, and the number of apps available for the Gear is also limited, which makes the approx. NPR 30K price tag a tad too high.

Yantrick's Verdict: The Galaxy Gear is definitely not a "must have" device. If you haven't bought one yet, it might be better to wait for the Gear 2 which will be out this spring.



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The website, openDemocracy, positions itself as a counter to corporate media, and is debating the problems of funding for human rights groups that may be relevant for Nepal. There was one article recently from Ravi Nair of the Delhi-based South Asian Human Rights Documentation Centre who argued that 'the Indian government's approach to foreign funding is probably as draconian, or more, as that of Russia or apartheid South Africa.'



LOOK OUT

Ajaz Ashraf

G Ananthpadmanabhan of Amnesty International India agrees that it shows how paranoid the Indian state is. He says Indian human rights groups (HRGs) should look into raising money from a large number of Indians. He cites the success of CRY, an Indian NGO that defends children's rights, in raising public money.

However, another model for fund-raising could be Delhi's juggernaut Aam Aadmi Party which has attracted an impressive corpus of funds because it persuaded ordinary people that a change in state behaviour would benefit them. Millions of rupees have been pouring in after its astonishing electoral performance in India's capital.

Why is the AAP a better model for HRGs to emulate than that CRY? One, AAP has sought citizen donations to liberate itself from the inordinate influence



WWW.GG2.NET

LEARN TO EARN: Young boys from the Aam Aadmi Party distribute newsletters and collect donations in Delhi before state elections last year.

Humans rights groups in the subcontinent should be able to raise public funds because of their progressive politics

Fund-raising models for NGOs

wielded by the corporate sector over Indian politics, typically through lavish contributions to political parties. Two, CRY attracts donations because its work is related to the idea of charity. Donating to worthy causes is extolled by most Indian religions, evident from the concept of daan among Hindus, zakat among Muslims, and charity among Christians. CRY's attempts to ensure respect for the fundamental rights of underprivileged children dovetail with the tradition and idea of religiously motivated charity.

More significantly, its inherently religious appeal to Indians is magnified through deft strategies and slick, relentless marketing. CRY's annual report of 2012-2013 shows it netted an impressive IRs 485 million in donation that year, but it also spent Rs 175 million to mobilise this fund. Of the Rs

485 million it received, only Rs 26 million came from corporates and the balance from individual donors, suggesting a massive outreach operation. It spent Rs 40 million on 'telecalling and mailing' for tapping the impulse of generosity among Indians.

By contrast, the activities of most Indian HRGs would most likely not qualify as 'charitable donations' for most religious authorities, regardless of theological spin. Despite the popular perception of the central government being slothful, Indians have dipped into their pockets to contribute to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF). In 2012-2013, the PMNRF received Rs 175 million and pulled in a whopping Rs 9.25 billion of donations in 2004-2005 after the tsunami. Devastations on a large-scale inspire people to provide help to the needy. It also enables the religiously inclined to perform

a task divinely mandated or approved. Similarly, it is easier to attract contributions for organisations like CRY because their activities are popularly perceived as ideologically and politically neutral, undertaken to either augment the efforts of the state or compensate for its relative absence.

But HRGs have an adversarial relationship with the state, not only highlighting and opposing its transgressions, but also interrogating its ideological composition. This is deeply unsettling for the Indian middle and upper classes, on whose altruism organisations must depend for donations and whose members wield disproportionate influence on the Indian state, leading it to adopt positions and policies anathema to certain regions and groups.

This, in turn, goads those groups into opposition, either peaceful or violent. The

middle class then endorses and justifies the state's unduly violent suppression of its domestic opponents on ideological grounds. Quite understandably, HRGs critique the state, which prompts many Indians to perceive the former's activities as unabashedly 'political', not 'charitable'.

It is from this perspective that the AAP's success in mobilising funds provides hope to human rights groups. Like them, the AAP is 'political' and seeks to alter state behaviour, though through participation in electoral politics and hoping to replace the current crop of state managers. This might be more effective than addressing violations on a piecemeal, case-by-case basis. 🇳🇵

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Smoky business

Until July 2013, brick-making was one of few businesses in Nepal where owners didn't have to pay any tax on their profits. All that changed with the new fiscal year and now Kathmandu's 110 operating brick kilns (*see map*) will have to pay a Value Added Tax. But at a time when most factories still operate without licences, let alone VAT registration, kiln owners say the effectiveness of this new law is highly questionable.

"Traditionally, brick kilns do not have a history of keeping records either with the

government or their own employees. So asking us owners to make bills for every transaction is a huge challenge," admits Mahendra Bahadur Chitrakar, president of the Federation of Nepali Brick Industries. "Besides, we have a hard time explaining to customers why they have to pay tax-inflated prices to build their homes."

There are more than 800 brick kilns across Nepal and Chitrakar says some factory owners outside Kathmandu are already trying to arm-twist their way out of making the change. But shelling out extra cash to the state is not their only

concern. As Kathmandu Valley expands outwards, the mines are emptying out quickly and brick kiln owners now have to compete for real estate with those wanting to build homes.

Furthermore, as people become more aware of the health risks of having fume guzzling chimneys right at their doorsteps, they are increasing pressure on factories to cut down on pollution. Bhaktapur Itta Tatha Tile Udyog (BITTU) in Jagati, the largest brickmaker in the Valley which produces up to 15 million units in a season, is drawing a lot of



BIKRAM RAI



TEXT and PHOTOGRAPHS:
JAN MØLLER HANSEN

Beyond Bhaktapur's golden rice terraces and charming palace square, lies a world of soot and grime. The capital's insatiable hunger for high rises and homes coupled with the lack of livelihood and employment opportunities, mean that hundreds of families from rural Nepal and Bihar migrate to factories here during the dry season to make bricks. In Kathmandu Valley, alone there are around 110 brick kilns employing thousands, including more than 10,000 children.

For six months a year, the labourers toil from early morning to late evening digging and kneading soil, manually moulding bricks, drying them, and finally stacking them in the kiln. With little to no protection against the suffocating conditions, they remain completely exposed to fumes and dust. The families live next to the factories in small huts made of sun-dried bricks. The younger children are left to care for themselves, while the older ones help out their parents in the kilns. Having left school in their home districts, most children are not getting an education. Instead, they are 'training' to follow in the footsteps of their elders.

Shoddy housing and the lack of basic health, water, sanitation, and school facilities make the poor families among the most vulnerable communities in the Valley. Even though the earnings are not as low as one might think – a labourer can earn up to Rs 70,000 in the season – the human costs are high.

nepalitimes.com

Photo gallery
On-site videos

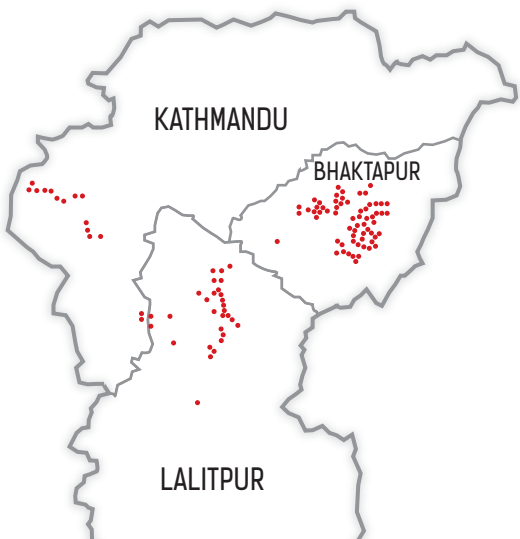


BUILDING BLOCKS

flak from homeowners on adjacent plots, about the dust that trucks cough up while transporting raw material from the mines to the factory. BITTU is currently surviving because it operates on government land and the lease was recently extended for 10 years.

"New and improved technology is available to curb pollution, but everyone wants China brick houses," explains Chtirakar. "Within a decade, all the kilns might move out of the capital, not for environmental reasons but because of a lack of space."

With construction boom in the country at its peak, the brick industry finds itself grappling, often unsuccessfully, with issues like illegal operation, lack of safety and environmental regulations, and child labour. Homraj Acharya of Global



CITY LIMITS: Brick kilns are currently located at the edge of Kathmandu's sprawl, but will eventually be pushed into the corners or outside the Valley itself.

VIGGO BRUN/FIRED EARTH

Fairness Initiative (GFI) is among a small group of organisations trying to improve manufacturing standards and leading the movement towards 'cleaner' bricks.

"The idea is to appeal to a high value market and for this to happen, factory owners must eliminate illegal labour, reduce pollution, and provide better care for their workers," says Acharya.

Currently, around 65,000 underage children live in factory premises during the dry season. They accompany their families from the villages, who work for minimum pay, and help their parents in whatever way they can.

GFI recently started a pilot program through which it hopes to eradicate unsound practices within the brick industry and then classify the factories

into green, orange, and red categories so that buyers are aware of what has gone into making their bricks. One of the participants, Mangal Maharjan, who runs Itta Bhatta in Lalitpur, says the brick industry must look at its long-term future rather than just temporary interests.

"If I produce high-quality bricks, I am sure there will be people who will buy it even at a higher price," says Maharjan.

Sunir Pandey

nepalitimes.com

Beasts of burden, #684
Earth, fire, air, #676
Back to black, #645
Blood bricks, #591
Green bricks, #539

Life began at 26

January-February, *Shikshak*

Girls in Krishna Maya Yonzon's family weren't allowed to go to school, so she spent her childhood helping her mother in the kitchen and farm. At 25, she was diagnosed with kidney stone, following which she spent a long time bed ridden and in treatment. By the time she was healthy again, she was considered too old for marriage. Encouraged by her mother, Krishna started school at 26 and completed school in the next 10 years. Krishna, who is now a health worker, leads a campaign to encourage parents to educate their children. This is her story:

I grew up in a wealthy Tamang family in Majhi Pheda of Kavrepalanchok. But my parents wouldn't let me or my sister

go to school. My mother said that it was best for girls to learn how to cook and clean so that we could find good husbands. As a young girl I grew up believing this.

Of my five siblings, only my younger brother was given an education. It was a joy watching him leave for school in his uniform each morning. The school was right next door so we could hear all the lessons from our front yard. My sister and I used to eagerly wait for our brother to return home each evening. We'd be ready with a glass of milk and snacks for him. In time that became my daily routine. All I did was cook and clean. My parents appreciated my housework and were hopeful that I would be married into a good family.

But all talk of marriage soon evaporated when I suddenly fell ill. I

lost my appetite and grew frailer every day. My parents took me to Dhulikhel Hospital where I was diagnosed with a stone in my kidney. I returned home after my operation and it was then I realised why being healthy was so important. I spent months lying on the bed while recuperating and all I ever did was sleep and eat. I was almost 26 by then.

I was still in bed-rest when my mother asked if I wanted to start school. "Your odds of getting married are slim, so if you get an education you'll at least have something to do in life," she said. The next day, I got admitted in second grade at the same neighbouring school where my brother studied. That evening my father presented me with a set of new school uniform. It was the happiest moment of my life.

I was very anxious during my first day

at school where I learnt the Nepali alphabets. All my classmates were eight-year-olds and I wondered what they thought of me. Even the teacher was younger than me and called me 'didi'. This made me feel very odd.

After a few weeks of school, my initial unease wore off and my classmates began helping me with my lessons. At 36, I completed my SLC. Had it not been for education, I would have ended up like many of my illiterate friends, coping abuse at home.

After passing high school, I got involved in a program at our village which worked to ensure every child was in school. I knew what it felt like being left out, so I visited families and tried to convince parents to send their children to school. I used my own example to bring many children into the classroom.



The campaign that started with 45 students in its first year now enrolls hundreds of children each year. In the past decade, our efforts have led to growing awareness about education.

Around the same time I also trained to become a health volunteer because a lot of people, especially children, die of minor ailments because

they don't have access to even basic healthcare.

My life is far from successful, but I am happy that education opened up all kinds of doors for me. I don't regret picking up the pen very late in life because that is what helped me become independent. I have a message for women who are hesitant about joining school taking classes because they are at a non-traditional age: it's never too late to learn.

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What went on?

Interview with former minister Jay Prakash Gupta, www.onsnews.com, 28 January

ONSNEWS: Why did you make the photo of Madhesi and Maoist leaders sharing a drink public?
Jay Prakash Gupta: As you know, I was one of the chief architects of the Maoist-Madhesi alliance and I even drafted the agreement that day. But the Madhesi parties, the Maoists, and other opportunists used the Supreme Court to finish my career.

Why are they conspiring against you?
Some leaders were not happy with the Madhesi-Maoist four-point agreement in 2011. But I took a stand saying the Bhattarai government will not last long if the agreement was not followed. I even said the Madhesi parties must leave government if the agreement was not followed and that is where they began their games.



But you have been accused of corruption for a long time now?
We're talking about a long chain of events here, from the days of the royal rule. Why did King Gyanendra put me under house arrest, when he took absolute power, even though the courts ruled that I should be set free? I was given a clean chit by the special court in 2006, but five years later they punished me.

What was India's hand in the four-point agreement?
A lot of people say that India interfered, but I don't see it that way. In fact, India was angry with the NC and UML for forging an alliance with the Maoists. The Indian establishment wished against such an alliance and all the Madhesi leaders understood this. But there were a lot of differences about this within the Maoists and Madhesi parties.

What is your relation with Madhesi parties?
There are two factions in Madhesi politics. One took part in the Constitution Assembly and sold out just to get into power. These people cannot address the real issues of Madhes and they will fool Madhes as long as they are in power. The other sort want a new power in Madhes to fight for the people's benefit. I am with the second sort even though I cannot take part in their politics.

In solidarity

Govinda KC, *Press release*, 24 January

I am thankful to everyone who believed in my quest for truth and justice. It is your love and support that kept me alive for the past 14 days. I had no other option than to put my life at stake to raise awareness about the corruption and commercialisation that is rampant in our medical sector and press for major reforms.

The last two weeks were turbulent for my beloved Institute of Medicine as well as ordinary Nepalis. Doctors from across the country showed their support for my cause and I am well aware about far reaching consequences on the public caused by the disruption of medical services.

Following the government's commitment to address the issues that plague our medical schools and hospital, I have decided to end my fast-unto-death. But unless these commitments are fulfilled and my demands properly addressed, my fight will continue. I hope to receive the same support in the future.

Once again I would like to thank everyone including Nepal Medical Association, students, the media, and all my well-wishers who expressed solidarity and prayed for my good health.

Thank you

Dr Govinda KC
Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, Kathmandu

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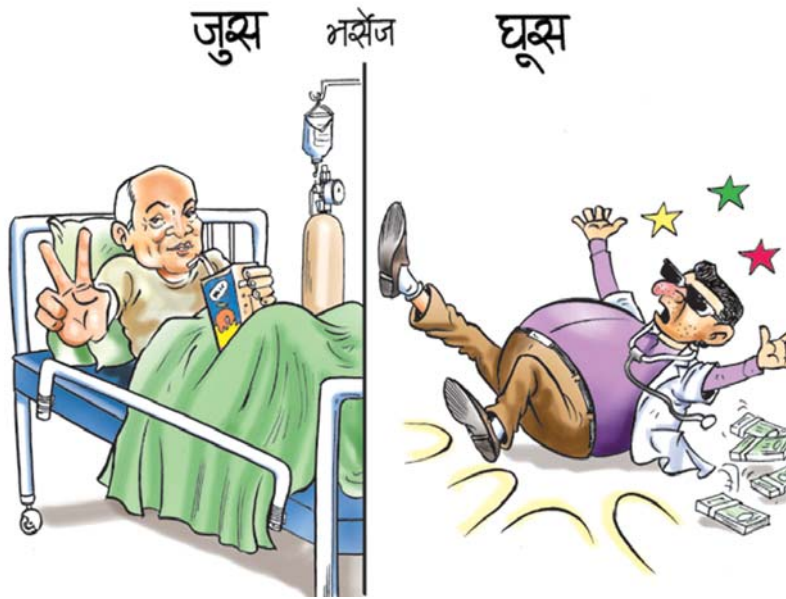
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Juice vs bribes

नेपाल Rabindra in *Nepal*, 26 January

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“No, no, let's make this a one-year agreement for now. And we can renew it later if we feel like it.”

NC President Sushil Koirala talking to NC and UML leaders about a possible four-year alliance, *Jana Astha*, 29 January

65TH REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA



HIGHLIGHTS OF INDIA-NEPAL PARTNERSHIP

A multi-layered programme comprising 484 ongoing and completed projects at the cost of over NRs. 65 billion in almost all key economic sectors based on the priorities of the Government of Nepal.

SMALL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (SDPs)

- Cover wide ranging infrastructure development and capacity-building projects costing up to NRs. 50 million covering all districts of Nepal
- 225 school projects ongoing or completed
- 24 hospital projects in 18 districts ongoing or completed
- Work on 16 roads/4 bridges ongoing or completed
- Other projects are in critical areas of drinking water, cold storage, river training, tube wells, electrification and capacity development.
- Since 1994, India has gifted 402 ambulances and 78 school buses covering 70 districts in Nepal.
- Eye care camps organized by Nepal Netra Jyoti Sangh through funding by the Government of India: Since 2001, a total assistance of NRs. 211 million extended by the Government of India. More than 1,07,000 surgeries performed, more than 37,000 students have been provided with optical devices under School Eye Health Care Programme launched in 2007. Govt. of India is going to provide NRs.33.90 million for eye care programme to NNJS during the year 2013-14.
- Goitre Control Programme – Since 1973, GoI has provided assistance of NRs. 685.8 million for Goitre Control Programme. Availability of iodized salt at household level progressively increased (99.8% in 2010). As a result, rate of Goitre in Nepal has decreased from 55% in 1965 to 0.4% in 2007. GoI is going to provide NRs. 69.00 million for Iodine Deficiency Disorders in 2013-14.
- India will provide funds amounting to NRs. 50.00 million to Gandhi Global Family Nepal for conducting 30,800 diabetic basic lab test and for providing free medicine to 1,450 diabetic patients for 6 months and free advance diabetic diagnostic test to 4,400 diabetic patients.



FLAGSHIP COMPLETED PROJECTS

- Five-storied OPD complex of Bir Hospital, Kathmandu, constructed with a capacity to accommodate 2500 outpatients.
- BPKIHS, Dharan, the largest public-sector hospital-cum-medical college outside Valley; Indian faculty support going on.
- Manmohan Memorial Polytechnic set up in 2009 became the first polytechnic providing technical education in 3 engineering streams and other vocational courses; Indian faculty support continuing.
- 807 km of the East-West Highway from Mahendranagar to Mechi (Mahendra Rajmarg).
- 22 bridges on Kohlapur-Mahakali section of the East-West highway constructed.
- 904 km Optical Fibre along the East-West Highway and 80 stations of SDH equipment.

INDIA-NEPAL BILATERAL TRADE

- Total Bilateral Trade between India and Nepal increased to NRs. 418 billion in 2012/13 from NRs. 349 billion in 2011/12.
- India accounts for about 40% of total approved foreign direct investment of Nepal, providing direct employment to around 30000 Nepalese and indirect employment to more than twice that number.
- US\$ 100 million Line of Credit (LoC) has been extended by India to Nepal, which includes development of total 14 district roads near East-West Highway corridor of Nepal.

MAJOR ONGOING PROJECTS

- Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) are being built at 4 points on the India-Nepal Border namely: Raxaul (India)-Birgunj (Nepal), Jogbani (India)-Biratnagar (Nepal), Sunauli (India)-Bhairahawa (Nepal) and Nepalgunj Road (India)-Nepalgunj (Nepal). In the first phase, works have been taken up in two of the four ICPs with Indian assistance of NRs. 4.32 billion for the segment falling in Nepal. ICPs would have state-of-the-art infrastructure and will facilitate integrated customs and immigration for smooth cross-border movement of people and goods.
- Cross-border railway links being constructed at five locations on the India-Nepal Border namely Jayanagar-Bardibas; Jogbani-Biratnagar, Nautanwa-Bhairahawa; Rupaidiha-Nepalgunj and New Jalpaiguri-Kakarbhitta. Work on Jayanagar-Bardibas and Jogbani-Biratnagar being taken up in Phase I with an estimated cost of NRs. 10.4 billion.
- First phase of Terai Roads Projects, currently under construction, covers 19 roads of 605 km in 13 Terai Districts worth NRs. 11 billion. Phase I will be followed by Phase II covering 845 km.
- Super-specialty Trauma Centre in Kathmandu with 200 beds facility with an estimated cost of 1.60 billion; Handing over to GoN expected soon.
- 26 km long road that for forms a part of 62 km long Kathmandu-Hetauda road connecting Kathmandu Valley and the Terai Region constructed with Indian assistance. Additional work on the road to commence soon.



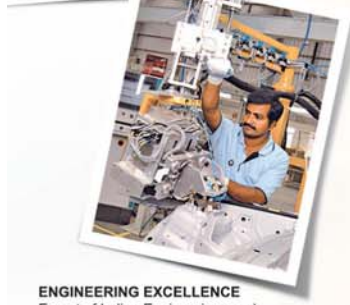
THE WORLD'S LARGEST DEMOCRACY
India has over 700 million registered voters, which is more than the combined population of the European Union and the US



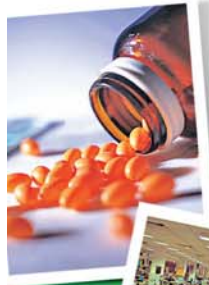
WORLD'S LARGEST OIL REFINERY
Jamnagar in India is the world's largest oil refinery



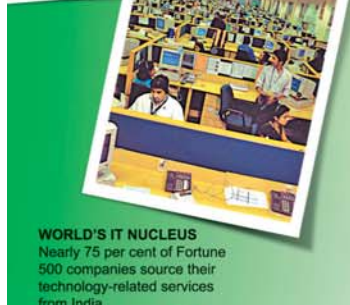
A GREENER WORLD
India's share of global market for low carbon goods and services to be US\$135 billion in 2020



ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE
Export of Indian Engineering goods is slated to grow at 27.8 per cent to reach US\$125 billion by 2013-14



PHARMACY TO THE WORLD
The Indian pharma industry is the world's largest exporter and fourth largest producer of generic formulations (in volume terms)



WORLD'S IT NUCLEUS
Nearly 75 per cent of Fortune 500 companies source their technology-related services from India



भारतीय राजदूत, काठमाण्डू
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA
KATHMANDU



On the occasion of 65th Republic Day of India I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to the Indian community and to our Nepalese friends. On this day in the year 1950, the Constitution of India entered into force. The inspiring words in the preamble of the Indian Constitution "We the people of India having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign, secular, socialist, democratic republic and to secure to all its citizens justice, liberty, equality, fraternity" provide the guiding compass for our country. India's Constitution encapsulated the aspirations of our citizens for democracy and good governance. It is a living dynamic instrument which has evolved and adapted with time to the needs and requirements of our citizens.

As the largest democracy in the world with geographical, cultural and linguistic diversity, our Constitution ensures equality in all spheres. We take pride in the plurality of our culture, languages, religions, customs, faith and traditions; in our motto of unity in diversity.

India is proud of her achievements in the economic, scientific and research fields since independence in reducing poverty and promoting economic development. Our accomplishments in science and technology demonstrate the great talents of our citizens. The successful launch of MangalYaan (Mars Orbiter), has catapulted India into a select band of countries in space exploration. India has also launched the GSLV-D5 rocket with cryogenic engine designed and built by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) putting the communication satellite GSAT-14 in orbit.

India and Nepal have close and friendly bilateral relations rooted in history. These are characterized by regular social, cultural, educational, trade and economic interactions amongst our peoples, which have deepened over time. India is privileged to partner with Nepal in its quest for growth and sustainable development. Government of India has granted development assistance to Nepal worth NRs. 65 billion through some 484 small and major ongoing or completed projects including in the fields of health, education and infrastructure. India continues to provide 3000 scholarships to Nepalese students every year. India wishes Nepal peace, stability and progress, for the welfare of its people and indeed, our region.

I extend my warm greetings and good wishes to all my countrymen and women and all our Nepalese friends on this auspicious occasion.

Jai Hind.

Kathmandu, 26 January 2014

Ranjit Rae

HYDROPOWER AND RIVER TRAINING

- India has been aiding construction of embankment of Kamala, Lalbakeya, Bagmati and Khando Rivers. The work is under various stages of progress. Till date, NRs. 2917.68 million has been disbursed to Government of Nepal.

EDUCATION

- Total 2934 scholarships to Nepalese students in 2013-14
- 2200 scholarships awarded for studying in undergraduate and graduate courses in Nepal
- 554 scholarships awarded for studying in India; The Mission conducts a COMPEX examination each year for Nepalese students to study in MBBS/BE/B. Pharma/B.V.Sc/B.Sc (Dairy Tech)/B.Sc (Agriculture) courses in India
- 33 seats are provided for studying from Class VI to IX and Class XI in Army Public Schools at Dhaula Kaun, Noida and Pithoragarh.
- 180 slots for short-term training in India for Government/non-government employees of Nepal under ITEC/Colombo Plan

EX-SERVICEMEN WELFARE ACTIVITIES

- Welfare schemes amounting to more than NRs. 110 million executed every year
- Educational scholarships for 491 students
- 1,25,000 medicine packets distributed this year
- 17 solar projects executed, benefiting around 1.5 lakhs people
- 1049 drinking water projects executed all over Nepal; 14 more under process
- Medical grant distributed to 161 beneficiaries under Raksha Mantri Discretionary Fund
- Disbursement of pension worth NRs. 22000 million annually to Government of India Pensioners
- Disbursement of Army Group Insurance (AGI) amounting NRs. 160.8 million
- Three Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Schemes (ECHS) polyclinics being opened in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Dharan

INDIA'S SUPPORT FOR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY-CUM-PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

For the smooth conduct of the recent Constituent Assembly-cum-Parliament elections, at the request of Government of Nepal, Government of India provided 716 vehicles of different types to security agencies and 48 vehicles to Election Commission of Nepal amounting to NRs. 905 million. Government of India also provided 216 vehicles as well as other logistics and supplies to Nepal Army costing NRs. 103 million.

UPCOMING PROJECTS

Sabha Griha at Birgunj • Polytechnic at Hetauda • Science Learning Centre at Lalitpur • Eye Hospital at Kapilvastu • Nepal-Bharat Maitri Pashupati Dharmashala at Kathmandu





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CIPs Take Lie Detector Tests

Congratulations are in order to all those who were honoured by the president this week as being Commercially Important People (CIP). The Ass, feeling left out, called up the organisers demanding more transparency in the criteria used by the judging panel to come up with the list only to be told that donkeys, despite the hard work they do, don't qualify. Unlike Very Impotent Persons (VIPs) who are a dime a dozen in Nepal, CIPs have various elite privileges and perks such as:

- 1. Exclusive access to the public toilet at the departure area of the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport
- 2. Visa exemption for travelling to Niger, Chad, South Sudan, and a one-way entry permit into the DPRK
- 3. Unhindered access into Singha Darbar via ladder and over the wall from Anamnagar side to avoid queues at the South Gate
- 4. Fast Track at Narayanhiti to procure new MRP by 2015
- 5. Exempted from breathalyser tests at Mapase Checkpoints throughout Nepal during the forthcoming wedding season
- 6. Double Bonus Points in Nepal Airlines Frequent Flier Miles that can be redeemed retroactively on flights to New Delhi, which haven't operated for five years
- 7. Excused from attending the excruciatingly boring Nepal Army Shivaratri Circus at Tundikhel in future
- 8. By showing CIP ID Card, one shall not be required to pay mandatory bribes at the Department of Transportation



Office for vehicle registration for a period of two years starting now

9. In pursuant to Bullet Point 8 (above) will also be exempt from Extortion Drives at Gunpoint by the Dash or Cash Baddies for as long as the CIP Card remains valid

10. Non-Hindu CIPs can sneak into Pashupati if they so want

Every day we get new proof that the Nepal Police takes its job seriously and is living up to its proud motto: "Ever Vigilant". After training its sniffer dog squad to smell not just drugs and explosives, but also bribes, police have now brought in Nepal's first Lie Detector Machine. No kidding.

And to show just how effective the polygraph machine is, the chief of police got himself all wired up the other day and administered himself a lie detector test. The Ass is glad to report that the chief passed the test with flying colours and did not tell a single lie when he answered the following questions in the affirmative:

- Is the Police Force rife with graft and corruption?
- Have you cooked up the figures to show that robberies are down in KTown?
- Is it true you have to asslick the incumbent Home Minister to get a promotion?
- Half the gold police seize from smugglers disappears, yes?
- Did money change hands below the table for affiliation for the Police Hospital?

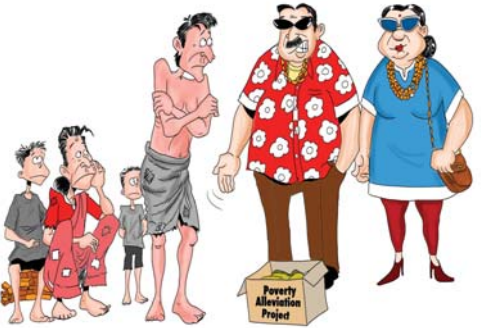
It's not true when people say that Nepali politics is moving at a snail's pace. Actually it is not moving at all. The CA has convened and the NC has got its PP chief. But the UML and the Cash Baddies still have to sort out their internal power struggles. Only after that will the NC and UML start talking about a joint gobblement. MKN desperately wants to be in Shit-all Niwas and will agree to Jhusil Da as PM only if he gets that pound of flesh. After living as a hermit all his life, Jhoos now wants the creature comforts of Balu Water's sunny lawns so desperately, he is willing to dump Ram Baron if that is what it takes. He got Ram Poodle to vote with him against the Brave Lion after assuring him that the PMship is his after one year. RCP fell for it. But what MKN hasn't taken into account is that KRR has no intention of going back to being CJ and is also keen on being prez and has powerful backing.

The Ass



PAST PRESENT FUTURE

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