



TOH EEMING

CLEAR THE CLUTTER

Four months after elections, the committee set up to draft rules of the House is deadlocked and its term has been extended twice. The next hurdle is the nomination of the remaining 26 members to complement

the technical expertise needed in the CA to write a proper democratic constitution. Because the parties are in the habit of buying and selling CA membership, this is expected to delay things further. These prolonged

gridlocks have once more spread disillusionment and hopelessness among the voters who showed up in large numbers last November to elect this body. As always, the leadership of this country is more concerned with

political score-keeping and the immediate goals of sticking to the power than anything else.

For a nation writing its constitution, we don't display the level of enthusiasm or ambition to discuss larger issues that will determine the socio-political and economic direction of the country. If we need long-term resolutions of problems plaguing us, we have to start here and now.

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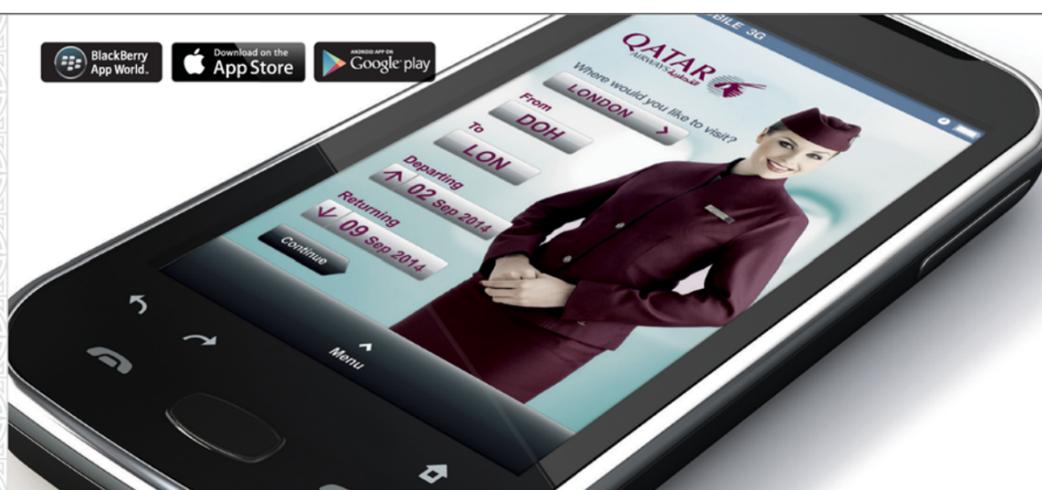
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CART BEFORE THE HORSE

It has become the hallmark of political horse-trading in Nepal that the protagonists put the cart before the horse. It happens over and over again, just after the people have taken tremendous risks to reassert their trust in the democratic polity in 1990, 2006, 2008 or 2013 the honourable members of the elected House proceed to fritter it all away.

It is happening again. At a time when they should be working overtime to finish writing the constitution in eight months time, ruling party's CA members are taking to the streets to free cronies in the guise of 'students' who were caught red-handed with weapons in a taxi at 3am on the streets of Kathmandu.

When they should be debating state structure, type of government, election rules, justice for wartime atrocities, and citizenship they waste three weeks in haggling over who should take credit for promulgating the new constitution. Write the damn thing first!

Because the last Constituent Assembly ran aground largely as procedural issues weren't sorted out beforehand, this time the parties in their wisdom decided that they should first agree on the rules. Oh boy, did they underestimate their ability to find compromises.

Four months after elections, the committee set up to draft rules of the House was deadlocked and needed to have its term extended twice. The most egregious disagreement was between the NC and UML over who should formally authenticate the new constitution with the NC insisting that it is President Ram Baran Yadav's job, while the UML wanted its very own House Chair Subhas Nembang to do it. It is hard to believe that this was such an intractable problem that it needed weeks and weeks to resolve. The committee finally decided to send the matter



When they should be busy drafting a constitution, honourable members wasted three weeks haggling over who should take credit for promulgating it

'upstairs' for a political resolution and announced on Wednesday to allow the chair to certify the constitution, while the president will make a public announcement in this regard.

The stalemate in the rules drafting committee also concerned whether or not cross-party caucuses can be formed and if party whips should take effect during

CA debates. As expected the parties were divided according to perceived advantage certain rules would give them. The disagreement over the formation of caucuses of women, Dalit or Janajati members is slightly less whimsical. Here, the NC and UML were on the same side and it was the UCPN (Maoist), Madhesi, and smaller parties who were for caucuses: not for any grand ideological reason, but because cross-party alliances would weaken the two main parties. The NC and UML were also in favour of parties being allowed to issue whips to CA members to vote along party lines. The UCPN (M), quite hypocritically, said no whips because its members vote en masse anyway. It has now been agreed that there will be provisions for neither caucuses nor whips in the House.

Needless to say, these prolonged and chronic gridlocks have once more spread disillusionment and hopelessness among the voters who showed up in large numbers last November to elect this body.

There was much hope that Sushil Koirala was a behind-the-scenes consensus builder. He is supposed to be clean and has no hidden agenda besides the protection of democracy. But three weeks after being sworn in and one foreign junket later, the man is being defied by dissidents within his own party and openly disparaged by the UML and the opposition.

After the rules committee delay, the next hurdle is the nomination of the remaining 26 members to complement the technical expertise needed in the CA to write a proper democratic constitution. Because the parties are in the habit of buying and selling CA membership, this is expected to delay things further.

It's time the prime minister showed statesmanship, hitched the horse to the front of the cart, and started cracking the whip.

DIWAKAR CHETTRI

ON THE WEB

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NOT JUST HALF THE SKY

The Nepali state has devised several methods to discriminate against women (Not just half the sky', Editorial, #697). Although acquiring citizenship has always been a long battle for children without fathers, getting hold of birth certificates is also becoming increasingly difficult for children who cannot submit their father's details. And it doesn't end there. Starting this year, children who do not have birth registration may not be allowed to sit in district level examinations in grade eight as well as for their SLC. How much do we mothers and our children have to pay for our fight for justice?

Deepti Gurung

- Let the next Nepali prime minister be a woman. All the men who came before Sushil Koirala were either very corrupt, gutless or both, which is why Nepal is in such a sorry state. We should ask the Koiralas, Nepals, Khanals, Dahals, and Bhattarais how they would feel if their children were sold and forced into prostitution. For 20 years, in the name of democracy, Nepal has been raped by these evil men in power. It's time for them to go away. I wish all the women in the CA great success and I hope Onsari Gharti Magar is elected the next PM.

Narayana Prasad

- The process of emancipating women should begin from the

individual level. First empower your sisters and daughters and give them the opportunity to excel. Never make them feel that their achievements and dreams are any less important than those of your sons or brothers. If they grow up in a family where they realise women are only different but not inferior to men, they'll change the world in ways we men can't.

Ajit Jung Gurung

MACHO NATIONALISM

Mallika Aryal's piece is a well argued case for issuing citizenship cards to children who are born to a Nepali mother and foreign father ('Macho nationalism', #697). However, the arbitrary number of 4.3 million without citizenship card is not sourced to any data. It used to be the political slogan before the citizenship act was passed in 2006. Through that act, around 2.5 million people received citizenship cards, some of them not Nepali as well (which is another issue that I do not intend to argue here). And the estimate is still 4.3 million people and counting.

Bijaya

- Having worked in both Bihar and the Tarai for years, I know that the fear of Indian men marrying Nepali women for citizenship is completely absurd and dates from a different era. There is very little reason for Indian men to seek Nepali citizenship. Bihar's economy is growing rapidly, as are land prices, while job opportunities in Indian urban centres for the poor and in

the service sector are far better than what is available in Nepal. Secondly, there is a two way flow of women across the border for marriage and the demographic implications of providing equal rights in Nepal would be minimal. The concept of having to be interviewed by the CDO who has the sole right to decide whether to give citizenship is absurd, and perhaps emerges from the vestiges of a feudal past, which allowed elites within the bureaucracy can use their personal power to control access to state resources.

MS

- When the whole world is debating dual-citizenship, Nepal is lagging so far behind that we still don't believe women are worthy of passing on their citizenship to their children.

Sweta

LADY EXCELLENCIES

One of the reasons why these seven women have been appointed to head foreign missions in Nepal could be that this country is not considered to be a very desirable location ('Their lady excellencies', Ayesha Shakya, #697). The way to improve gender parity within Nepal is for the civil service to set a minimum standard and employ 50 per cent men and 50 per cent women?

Girish Kharel

- UNICEF's country representative Hanaa Singer is a very classy woman

and what more she is an Arab, which is so inspiring.

Oumaima Gannouni

- Why use the term 'lady' excellencies? I didn't realise that excellencies denoted the male gender by default.

Namah

CABIN 16-17

For the love of Pashupatinath, someone please convince Nanda Prasad and Ganga Maya Adhikari to end their fast ('From Cabin 16-17', Kanak Mani Dixit, #697). I know they are sacrificing their own health so that their son's murderers are punished, but if they pass away their pleas to know the truth will also die alongside them. We need to keep the couple alive.

Mote

- Very well-written article, I feel sad that Krishna Adhikari's elderly mother and father have had to take such a drastic step in their search for justice. What happened to the 'right to live'?

Sunaina Sharaf

- Now that you have highlighted the plight of the Adhikari couple, you should not stop Mr Dixit. Please continue to write until justice is delivered.

Aakash Pandey

- True justice for the murdered teenager Krishna and his family can only be achieved by forgiving those who committed the crime. Putting

perpetrators behind bars for crimes they committed during the war would not help anybody, not even Krishna's parents. The couple has inflicted enough pain on themselves. They should break their fast and live the remainder of their lives in peace.

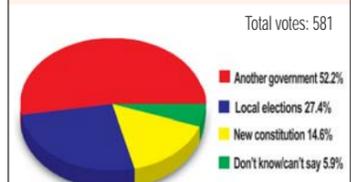
Ram

- How ironic; first the writer says, 'In the end, it is the Nepali people who should be up to the fight for justice' and goads the 601 CA members into action. Then the very next paragraph he begs Western embassies and aid agencies to arm twist our leaders to begin the Truth and Reconciliation mechanism. This was a war we started, that we ended on our own, so justice too needs to come from within. It will take a long time, but it needs to be Nepali-made.

Renu Shrestha



Q. Which of the following will happen first?



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Q. Will Nepal progress to the next round of the ICC T20 World Cup?

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Missing the point

When it is possible to circumvent the democratic process and still enjoy political power why would anyone want to be accountable?

Our leaders wasted three months just to form a government and spend most of that time bargaining for the home ministry. They were stuck for three weeks over a superfluous debate on who should promulgate the constitution.

We see a familiar pattern emerging. As always, the leadership of this country is more concerned with political score-keeping and the immediate goals of sticking to power than anything else.



THIS IS IT
Rubeena Mahato

Never mind that we are at a critical point of nation-building that requires a great deal of commitment, long-term vision, and self-effacement on part of key political stakeholders. Perhaps all that is too much to expect from a political community whose survival has always depended more on appealing to the interests of external forces than any popular endorsement from the inside. While the political parties are busy at their games, a vibrant debate is raging in the national media about why 'development' has largely failed in Nepal and what should be a workable model for us.

This discussion may be several decades too late, but it is a good sign nonetheless. A lot of us simply expected



TOHEE MING

democracy to automatically usher in development and good governance, forgetting that democracy is not an irreversible process and is prone to rollbacks and failures if not nurtured and strengthened from within. Of course the war did not help, but we might have avoided a lot of problems if some questions were settled in the crucial first few years after 1990.

A major source of instability is that even now we are not reconciled with some fundamental questions about how the country should be run and what political

and economic systems are acceptable. Some political parties still see liberal democracy as a bourgeoisie conspiracy and consider state-capture as their ultimate goal. There are forces that promise to deliver development and stability in return for giving up democratic freedoms. Are we okay with the use of violence to attain political goals however grandiose or benevolent they may be? Consolidated and functional democracies have often resolved these questions and are only concerned with strengthening existing

institutions.

Not having these debates in the public sphere has let our political leadership get away with many crimes. Political reporting and analysis in Nepal has not moved beyond speculating over who is building alliance with whom and who returned with what piece of enlightened wisdom from the North or South. Newsrooms in Nepal have a joke that one can publish the same piece of news from 10 years ago by changing a few names and people would hardly notice. This is a state that has effectively co-opted democracy into a clientelistic,

patronage based system.

The way our political parties have avoided going to local elections exposes their lack of democratic values. When it is possible to circumvent the democratic process and still enjoy political power and privilege, why would anyone want to be accountable? What is the incentive to deliver development, growth, and good governance when those in power can suck the country dry without consequences? Why would politicians be bothered to perform if political office and government formation depend more on the appeasement of our neighbour than voters? The irony is we are so used to the idea of India micro-managing our affairs that it is not an issue anymore.

There is absolutely no debate about what our foreign policy should be in the changed times. We are so engrossed in the humdrum of day-to-day politics and in the daily struggle to meet our basic needs these questions don't occur to us anymore. For a nation writing its constitution, we don't display the level of enthusiasm or ambition to discuss larger issues that will determine the socio-political and economic direction of the country. If we need long-term resolutions of problems plaguing us, this is where we have to start.

The only good thing about living in challenging times is perhaps everyone can play a role in making great changes. This generation may feel burdened with the legacy of problems it has inherited, but we also stand at a unique position to contribute in the process of nation-building, define the basis of statehood, and while doing so avoid the mistakes that others have committed. In the closed political space of the moment, there is not a lot we can do, but we can start by asking the right questions and picking the right fights. 🇳🇵

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Yes Indians can

KISHORE MAHBUBANI

It will come as a big shock to many Indians to learn that they are the world's number one in the most important global competition in the world: the competition in economic performance. In the United States, their per capita income now ranks as the highest of any ethnic group: in 2010, Indians earned \$37,931 annually, compared to a national average of \$26,708.

If India's population of 1.2 billion could achieve only half of the per capita income of Indian immigrants in the United States, the country's GDP today would be \$24.65 trillion instead of a relatively trifling \$1.85 trillion, less than Italy's. India's performance in the US arena is not exceptional though. Wherever they go, they have done well.

However, the gap between India's potential and its actual performance is huge, perhaps the biggest of any country in the world. Sadly, few Indian leaders or policymakers seem to have

understood the meaning of this comprehensive global data on the economic competitive abilities of Indians. If they did, India would become the top champion of more rapid globalisation. Instead, even though the evidence shows that Indians could benefit from globalisation's acceleration, the government continues to put its foot on the brakes whenever globalisation is discussed. To reverse this disastrous pattern of self-destructive behaviour, Indian society should immediately embrace three new attitudes.

Firstly, it should completely change its mindset about the competitiveness of the Indian economy. Instead of seeing it as a weak and defenseless economy about to be ravaged by global competition if trade and other barriers are reduced, it should work on the assumption that Indians in India, like Indians outside, will thrive when faced with open global competition.

Secondly, India should make greater use of one of its richest natural resources: the successful Indian diaspora.

BIGGEST ASSET: Former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund and professor of finance at the University of Chicago, Raghuram Rajan (*right*) was appointed as the governor of the Reserve Bank of India in September 2013.

The appointment of Raghuram Rajan as the governor of the Reserve Bank of India was a brilliant move. He exudes cultural confidence. This was the man who bravely stood up to all the heavyweight American economic gurus and told them that a major global crisis was about to unfold.

Thirdly, India's business barons need to drop their ambivalence towards globalisation. This hesitancy is understandable. On the one hand, they realise that they are globally competitive. Many Indian firms have succeeded globally, including Tata, Wipro, and Infosys. On the other hand, they are reluctant to push the Indian government to say 'yes' in WTO negotiations because they don't want to give up their privileged access to the fast growing Indian consumer market. They see no reason why they should share this huge market with others. In adopting this ambivalent attitude, India's business barons are sacrificing both their own and India's long-term interests in return for some short-term profits.

The big question remains: can Indian companies become as culturally confident as Indians in America in competing on a globally level playing field? If so, they would become the new champions of globalisation that our world desperately needs. www.yaleglobal.yale.edu

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Longer version

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Awarded

Nepal Business Forum was awarded the global Howard Award for Outstanding Achievement in Public Private Dialogue (PPD) at the 7th International Symposium on Public-Private Dialogue, held from 3-6 March, in Frankfurt, Germany. The award was presented to the Nepal delegation by Marita Brommelmeier, director of economic development and employment division, GIZ.



Free Hit

Him Electronics, authorised distributor of Samsung in Nepal, recently launched a scheme, 'Free Hit'. As per the scheme, customers will receive a scratch card on purchase of selected Samsung series and win prizes according to the runs collected on the card.



Soaring high

Etihad Airways announced record financial results for 2013, with net profit up 48 per cent to \$62 million. "We have hit every financial target for each of the last seven years, bringing sustainable profitability to a business which has grown from just \$300 million in revenues in 2005 to more than \$6 billion today," said James Hogan, President and CEO of Etihad Airways.

Expanding on

Qatar Airways Cargo will begin freighter services to Hyderabad (India) and London Stansted (UK) and re-start services to Zaragoza (Spain). "Our goal is to be a world-class air cargo service provider and in order to achieve that goal, we need to constantly increase frequencies and expand our number of destinations," said Qatar Airways Chief Officer Cargo Ulrich Ogiermann.



Band branders

Kutumba has been appointed the brand ambassador for Incentive Group of Companies (IGC). "The band will be representing IGC's corporate identity and represent all the companies under it," reads the press release.



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BIKRAM RAI

Seeking a revival

One of the first ministers to be inducted into Sushil Koirala's cabinet, Ram Sharan Mahat has emphasised the need to get the country's economy on track by exploring potential in manufacturing, hydropower, agriculture, and tourism. *Nepali Times* caught up with the finance minister to talk about the new government's top economic agenda.

Nepali Times: How does it feel returning as finance minister after six years?

Ram Sharan Mahat: This is my fifth stint at the Finance Ministry and I feel like I am back home. I am well aware of the challenges and responsibility that lie ahead. Nepal's rulers have neglected the economy for far too long and as a result, the economy is tottering precariously. We need to inject new life into it. Despite these shortcomings, we are performing well on several financial indicators largely because of foreign remittance. For

instance inflation is under control and tax revenues are satisfactory. However, investment in the manufacturing sector remains dismal. Manufacturing makes up only six per cent of the national GDP, down from 10 per cent. The development of hydropower projects and transmission lines has been painfully slow and we are still living in darkness.

What are your top priorities?

My first priority is to pass ordinances in the parliament related to finance. The reforms that happened in the 1990s need to be updated. The administration needs to be more efficient and achieve the targets it has set out for itself so that people there is good governance in the country.

How will the new government ensure development and good governance?

The newly elected government is sending

out a positive message to investors that all stakeholders are serious about growth. Just last month, Kathmandu hosted two high-profile conferences: one on Business Ethics for a Prosperous Nepal and the other a hydropower summit, which was attended by high level government and private sector officials from various countries, representatives of Asian Development Bank, and prospective investors. If we can maintain political stability in the country, deliver on our commitments in time, and trim down on bureaucratic red tape, large investments will soon start to pour in.

How much importance is the government putting on hydropower?

Our priority is to complete all the projects and programs that lay stagnant. And it is not just hydro, agriculture also has immense potential. If the villages are well connected with roads, irrigation

network, and electricity, agriculture in Nepal will undergo a major revolution. Tourism is equally important for the economy, but we need an international airport at Nijgadh and link it with the fast track. Many finance related bills are still stuck in parliament. We just cannot complain about the lack of investment when laws are not being formulated.

Where do local elections stand on the priority list?

Local elections are a national agenda and all political parties are committed to it. Polls are imperative to guarantee financial transparency and accountability at the local level.

How will Nepal progress from a least developing to a developing country when the economic growth has stalled at below 4 per cent in the last decade?

The reason Nepal's financial system is floundering in uncertainty is because we failed to focus on our economy. If we are willing to shift our focus, then economic expansion is possible in Nepal. Politically driven policies that don't yield returns need to be discarded from the budget.

How can the government curb criminal activities that currently plague the transportation and medical industry and well as the private sector?

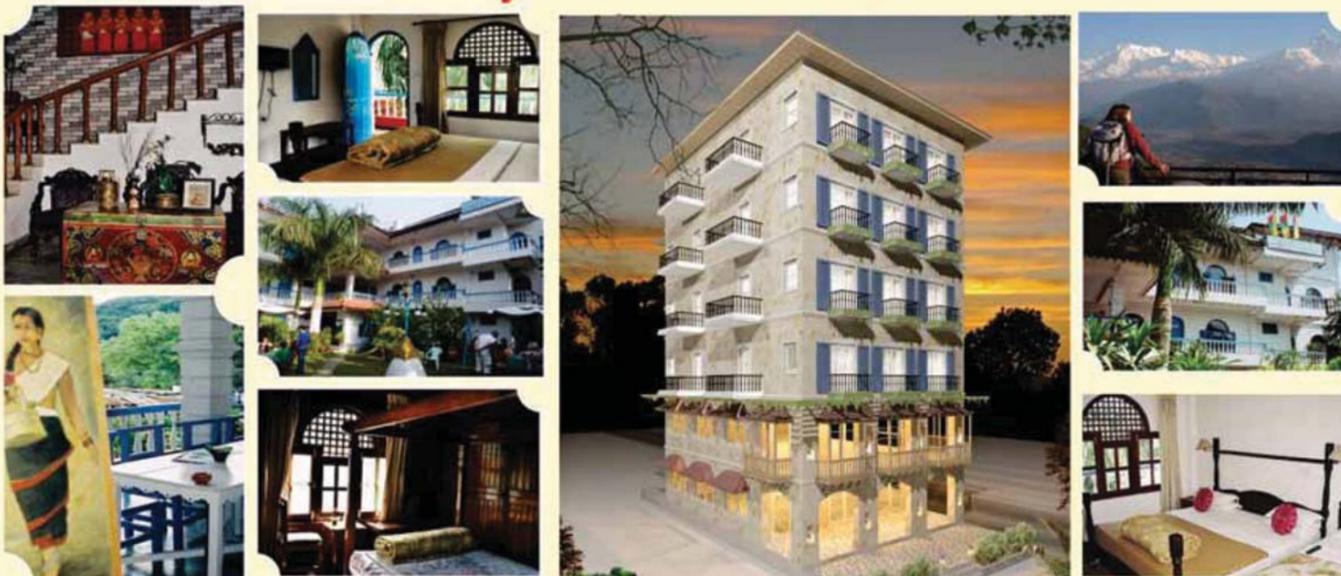
These problems are a result of the lack of rule of law and a weak government. The state needs to reassert its authority to ensure the success of liberal economic system. I am committed to making the tax department more efficient and punishing those who evade taxes.

What about reforms within public institutions that are a burden to the state?

We are planning to invite the private sector in our efforts to manage the now defunct public institutions. We paid millions of rupees to the employees of the Janakpur Cigarette Factory after it was shut. We want to initiate steps to restart Nepal Metal Company, Magnesite, Butwal Threads, Nepal Medicine Limited among others. Instead of being run by the state, these institutions need to function on a public-private partnership model.

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The last two westerly fronts that swept through Nepal have now rid themselves of most of their moisture. Which means that in the coming weeks we will get more clouds, but no rain. Expect partly cloudy skies with snow in the mountains of western Nepal. Kathmandu Valley will continue to be plagued by smoggy mornings and minimum temperatures will still stay in the double digits.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
22°	23°	22°
11°	12°	13°



AYO HOLI!

The festival of colours is back, but the lolas can wait

For a long time, the full moon day in the month of Fagu has been celebrated as the victory of good over evil, the beginning of spring, and a celebration of life. The Hindu scriptures, the *Puranas*, say that Holika, a legendary demoness, was burnt to death on this day. Although she had this nifty power of being resistant to fire, she was burnt to death when she leapt into a pyre with Prahlad, her (pious) nephew who refused to accept his father Hiranyakasyapa as the most powerful creature on earth. Other legends have the young Krishna playing pranks on Radha and her friends in the forests of Vrindaban during this season; clearly the inspiration of wannabe Krishnas today, who see sexual harassment as justified by religion. In Northern India, Holi fires are lit on the eve of the festival. In Nepal, the chir pole is put up in Basantapur Darbar Square a week before Holi to be burnt symbolically. However, Fagu Purnima isn't just about ushering spring, it commemorates a good harvest and the colours and water symbolise rebirth and rejuvenation. Here is a look at similar spring celebrations around the world where families and communities come together to cherish new beginnings:



AU NATUREL

If your idea of fun on Fagu Purnima is smearing everyone in sight with colour and hitting them with those lethal little water balloons, think again. Lab tests on two of the most common colours, abir (red and yellow) reveal high percentages of toxic heavy metals like chromium, cadmium, lead, nickel, and even traces of mercury. Some of these can leave permanent harmful traces in the body if inhaled or ingested, others cause skin irritation and eye infections. Try out these DIY tricks and keep your skin and eyes happy and healthy.

Make a paste from these ingredients and mix them with gramflour (besan) for volume:

- For yellow – marigold, chrysanthemums, turmeric powder
- For red - rose, hibiscus, tomato, beetroot
- For green – henna, spinach, dried leaves of Royal Poinciana (gulmohar)
- For brown - boiled tea leaves



NOWRUZ, IRAN

Nowruz, which means 'new day' in Persian, marks the Iranian New Year. With its roots in Zoroastrianism, the festival is celebrated across Central Asia and in parts of Syria, north-western China, and Albania and marks the first day of spring. Celebrations include a traditional spring cleaning and the Wednesday Suri, the festival of fire in which participants jump over bonfires to symbolise the triumph of light (the good) over darkness (the bad).

THINGYAN, BURMA

Thingyan or the water festival marks the Burmese New Year and is usually celebrated over four days. Historically, the date for Thingyan was calculated following the traditional Burmese calendar, but today it is based on the Gregorian calendar. Water cannons and hoses fill the streets of Rangoon, the capital, during the festival. Thingyan celebration is similar to Songkran in Thailand, Pi Mao Lo in Laos, and Chaul Chnam Thmey in Cambodia.



HOLLA MOHALLA, PUNJAB (INDIA)

One day after the Hindu festival of Holi, another big spring celebration takes place across the northwestern state of Punjab: Holla Mohalla. During this three-day Sikh festival, people showcase their martial art skills in mock fights and the art of fire breathing. The festival is also a time when followers reaffirm their devotion to Khalsa Panth (the worldwide community of Sikhs).

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EVENTS



STREET ART AT TINGS, catch Imagine Nation artist Sneha Shrestha as she gets featured as the Nepali solo artist.

14 March, 6 to 8pm, Tings Tea Lounge, Lajimpat

100 years, an exhibition highlighting heroines and milestones on the path to equality between women and men in Finland, the 20th century's world leader in women's rights.

Runs till 15 March, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal

Sustain KTM, a series of photographic narratives on how we are coping with our growing city.

Runs till 30 March, 11am to 7pm, except Tuesdays, Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal

Dharma and the academy, a symposium on critical reasoning about faith, doctrine, and practice within the Buddhist faith.



15 March, 1 to 5pm, Hyatt Regency, Boudha

Karmic Vibes, get great discounts on drinks and products, with live jazz music, pizza feast, and a kids' corner.

15 March, 12 to 5pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel

Haat bazar, a chance to buy from, sell to, and meet everyone in the agro-industry.

Runs till 15 March, 11am to 7pm, Nepal Art Council

Howzzat!, four days of insane cricketing.

14 to 15 March, 21 to 22 March, Riverside Springs Resort, Kurintar

Open house, Docskool will hold the second Nepal Cine Symposium later in 2014 and invite you to a series of discussions, presentations, installations, and interaction with everyone of substance in the emerging Nepali film industry.

Runs till 17 March, Teku

Film Lab, learn film history, storytelling, scriptwriting, cinematography, editing, project handling and network with professionals.

12 April to 15 May, register at (01)4251335

CRAFTED IN NEPAL, attend the 6th Handicraft Buyer Seller Meet 2014, and meet the artists who make them. 21 to 25 March, talk program on 22 March, 10am to 5pm, Patan Museum, Patan

DINING



STARRY NIGHT BBQ, dine fine with Ciney Gurung singing for you.

Rs 1,499, every Friday, 7pm onwards, Shambala Garden Cafe, Hotel Shangri-La, (01)4412999

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

Thamel

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

Le Sherpa, past the dustbowl chaos on the road outside is culinary paradise. Panipokhari, Lajimpat

Club Amsterdam and Café Bar, great food, exotic cocktails, live band, BBQ, and more. Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)463427

Wunjala Moskva, treat your palette to Newari and Russian dishes in the lush garden with ancient trees and trickling streams. Naxal, (01)4415236

Hotel Shangri-La, delicious Nepali cuisine with traditional cultural show. Rs 999, every Thursday, 7pm onwards, (01)4412999

GETAWAYS

Waterfront Resort, head to this eco-friendly resort to make your stay right in front of Phewa Lake.

Sedi Height, Pokhara, (61)466 303/304, 9801166311, sales@waterfronthotelnepal.com

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



BALTHALI VILLAGE RESORT, a small, cosy retreat with a bird's eye view of green terrace fields dotted with ochre painted houses.

Balthali, Kavre, 9851075818



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Shantipatan, Lakeside, Pokhara. (061)466760 / 400207, info@atithiresort.com



THE RIGHT NOTE

For connoisseurs of all ages and persuasion, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory presents a free music education programme.

MASTERCLASSES & WORKSHOPS, James Miley and team from Willamette University, USA, will tutor students on guitar, piano, bass, drums, wind instruments, and improvisation. 24 to 28 March, 2014, 8am to 9pm

MUSIC TEACHERS TRAINING, Mike Nord, music educator at Willamette University, will show how teachers can give their best to young students. 25 to 28 March, 8am to 9pm

FUSION BEAT, a concert where east meets west. 28 March, Patan Darbar Square, free entrance.

Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, (01)5013554, info@katjazz.com.np, www.katjazz.com.np

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HOLI DAY

The festival of colours and water balloons is upon you, celebrate it with friends at these events



Tomatina, celebrate Holi with tomatoes instead of water balloons, rain dance, food festival, live music, matka breaking, and plenty more stuff.

16 March, 10am, Swimming Pool Complex, Satdobato, 9843008833, 9851146713, 9841186840

M&S Holi party, soccer splash, colorful foams, and two separate music stages.

16 March, Imperial Court, Sanepa

Rang, party with DJ Orawan and MC Essence on Holi.

Rs 500, 16 March, 6pm onwards, Embassy Restaurant

Electric Holi, DJ Kranti, DJ Vibe, and DJ Sabir will be spinning the craziest tunes for you on Holi.

Rs 500, 16 March, 10am, Electric Pagoda, Thamel



ROCK, RIDE, RUN

Join professional and amateur outdoor athletes from Nepal and around the world to hit the mountains. Run, climb, or bike through trails, rocks and downhill slopes.

If that isn't enough, you can take part in dyno competitions, slacklines, ice-axe pull-ups, flying fox,

mini zip-line, rappelling, mud run, and an auto expo.

Plenty of music, food, and booze to keep you busy as well as gear and cycle stalls to tease your restraint.

Himalayan outdoor festival 21 March, Hattiban Resort, Pharping

WOMEN MONTH

Martin Chautari brings you women-themed discussions throughout March:

18 MARCH, former police SP Parbati Thapa and former army



brigadier general Lalita Joshi talk on challenges to women in the state's security apparatus. 3pm

20 MARCH, Laxmi Ghalan, Durgha Thapa, and Manjila Chaudhari talk on sexual minorities in the ongoing social change. 3pm

23 MARCH, Seika Sato, PhD, talks about challenges faced by women outside their home in gender exclusionary places in Kathmandu. 3pm

Martin Chautari, Thapthali, (01)4238050, chautari@mos.com.np



On the terraces

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

14 March, Haat bazar talks, experts, entrepreneurs, and students will present on farming practices. 3 to 5pm

15 March, children will learn from artist Sunita Maharjan on how to create fish from recycled material and install them in aquariums and rivers created by Sheelasha Rajbhandari and Hit Man Gurung. 12 to 2pm

20 March, screening of Erin Brockovich, a 2000 biographical film by Steven Soderbergh, on the real-life Brockovich who fought against the energy corporation Pacific Gas and Electric Company. 5.30 to 7pm

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



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AVAILABLE COLOURS





NEW DISH

No pampering service but the best momos

New Dish (ND) has the most basic décor. It serves no tea or coffee, and lingering long after one's meal is frowned upon. Also, there are only 14 tables and there is always a rush. It's not the most conducive environment to have a heart-to-heart but you don't go to ND for long conversations. You go there to eat, eat good food quickly and leave. With just about twenty items, your choice is limited: soup, momos, fried rice, noodles, a few well-loved Nepali snacks and not much else. But momos are what ND is famous for and what great momos they are.

Best dish Pork Momo
Meal for one Rs 350

In New Road, enter the road leading to Khichapokhari and look out for a little Shiva Linga. In front of it is a little dark entrance, the shops surrounding it sell musical instruments and cheap lingerie. Enter, walk up the flight of stairs and you are there.

KOREAN KITCHEN PICNIC

Japanese style lunchboxes with Korean flavour

Among the Korean options in Thamel, Korean Kitchen Picnic is the cheapest but least Korean. No tabletop grills for kalbi cooking action in either one of its oddly separated dining areas; no spicy, pickled napa cabbage (a standard kimchi) so essential to Korean cuisine. Instead this decade-old establishment once run by Korean expats, offers an extensive catalog of traditional Korean intermixed with mock bentos (Japanese lunch sets). Offerings include a bento box of barbecue pork or beef, pork cutlet, fried fish or chicken, or hamburger steak. Each set comes with an assortment of freshly cooked sides.

Best dish Pork BBQ
Meal for one Rs 500

Off a tangent on the northern side of Tridevi Marg opposite the taxi train, closed every 25th of the month.



CAFÉ HESSED

Stop your calorie count once you enter

For those accustomed to our chiya pasal ko doughnuts, Hessed is a revelation. Take your pick from rows upon rows of doughnuts glazed with dark and white chocolate (with multi-coloured sprinkles), doughnuts armed with choco-chips, strawberry jam-filled doughnuts, and more. Prices are reasonable too, at Rs 60-70 per piece, compared to other 'fancy' coffeeshops about town. Most of what's at Hessed is consistently good

rather than exceptional, which probably suits cupcakes and doughnuts just fine. Along with the sugar-filled goodies, the café also whips up intriguing drinks from green tea lattes to more safe choices. Hessed is ideal for coffee dates, or simply to bring your laptop and work without the distraction of restobar tastes in music.

Best dish Blueberry filled doughnuts
Meal for one 300

Towards the near end of Jhamel's Restaurant Lane, on the right before New Orleans, 5530993

BARO BIT

From steaming plates of ramen to bento boxes, you don't need to eat your way around the city. Here are *Nepali Times* picks for places un-



THE VILLAGE CAFÉ

Home-cooked Newari goodness

With its home-made quality food and affordable prices, The Village Cafe is an ideal place for lunch and dinner. Started by Sabah Nepal, (SAARC Administration Business Association of Home Based Workers), the cafe employs around 30 women. The women use their indigenous culinary knowledge to whip up tasty Newari dishes seven days a week. Besides Newari favourites ala Bara, Choyela, you have to try their famous Cheese balls (only Rs 90). The dining area is located in the open, with large umbrellas to provide shade. The best part about eating here: you'll leave with a content tummy and happy heart knowing that your meal (in a small way) is helping disadvantaged women.

Best dish Khuwa Yamari (Rs 35)
Meal for one Rs 400

From the Ashok Stupa alongside Pulchok Road, follow the road north past the Ncell telecom building and look out for the Village Café's sign on the left.

LE TRIO RESTAURANT AND BAR

The experience of eating momos in a Parisian café

Le Trio is one of the inexpensive places to eat in an otherwise expensive street. The vintage-esque posters that line the walls, silver gilt-edged clock, and rustic wooden tables all give the impression that you've stepped out of noisy Kathmandu into a 1960s Parisian café but the menu is very much local in its taste. The restaurant is known for serving the best jhol momos and boy, are they good. Drenched in a large, piping hot bowl of aachaar (tomato sauce), the thinly skinned momos remind us once again why this simple dish is a national staple.

Best dish: Jhol Momo
Meal for one Rs 400

Towards the near end of Jhamsikhel's Restaurant Lane, opposite to New Orleans and next to Singma Food Court.



YAK RESTAURANT

Dusty and grimy tables offering the best Chinese

At Rs 20 a pop for a bowl of rice and Rs 10 for a tingmo, a visit to Yak may feel like travelling back in time. This tiny hole in the wall serves the best Chinese food to be had this side of the border at the most reasonable prices. A good old plate of mala tofu costs Rs 130, the chicken with fungus Rs 240, fried white find Rs 170 and chicken fried rice Rs 120. No chop suey drowning in tomato ketchup or chili-this-and-that which make up most menus at so-called 'Chinese' restaurants. Go in only if you are ready to overlook the dirt and grime for the pleasure of digging into bowls of gastronomic delights.

Best dish Spicy pork
Meal for one Rs 400

Walk clockwise around the Bouddhanath Stupa until you see an alley beside a huge gumba. Walk through the alley pass the street-side shops until you see Yak Restaurant on your right.



JAPANESE NOODLE KITCHEN

With love from Japan

Japanese Noodle Kitchen may not be one of the places: at the Dhobighat stretch of a cacophony, dust and debris. But it is a neighbourhood not known for high prices offers a fresh, fast, uncomplicated meal at an affordable price. The focus, as you know, whether in 'dry', curried dishes, or bowls of broth. All noodles come with a variety of condiments (powdered and pickled) and spice things up a little.

Best dish Chicken Curry noodles
Meal for one 400

Coming from Jawalakhel, turn right on the main road and you'll find Japanese Noodle Kitchen Grill and Kwaliti Food Café.

GAIN ES

momos to Japanese-style
need to spend a fortune to
the world in Kathmandu.
imes' top picks for
der Rs 500



KITCHEN

be located in the most ideal
n of Ring Road, all chaos and
's a welcome surprise in a
h-quality, low-cost food. JNK
l Japanese dining experience at
the name suggests is, on noodles,
r by adding substance to steaming
with a side of kimchi and a range
kled chili, soy sauce, and others) to

nt onto Ring Road at Nakhu Dobato
itchen wedged between On the

THE CHIPS FACTORY

Fresh, fried, homemade chips
Serving over 15 different flavours,
ranging from the conventional
(tomato, chilli, cheese) to the exotic
(pineapple, banana, and mango) this
no-name chips shop at Pimbahal,
Patan is a well-kept local secret.
The chips made at the owner's
house are fresh and crunchy to the
bite. The friendly owner even lets
you mix the different flavours at no
extra cost. Rs 100 gets you a bag of
chips that is enough to be shared by
four people. Next time you throw a
party, you know where to get a bag or
four.

Best chips Tomato flavour Chips
One bag starts from Rs 20

THAKKHOLA THAKALI CUISINE

Fill your belly with the best Thakali in area
Situating at the end of the cluster of up-market restaurants in
Jhamsikhel, Thakkhola Thakali Cuisine (TTC) has carved a niche
among scores of other eateries offering Chinese, Indian, and
continental varieties. TTC skips the MSG-enhanced fare dished
out by many and specialises in Nepali food of the Thakali
kind. Both squat-down and table-chair seating options are
available. Start with Alu Anda Timmur (eggs and potato fried
in Szechwan pepper), sukuti fry with timmur ko chop (deep
fried, dried mutton served with Szechwan pepper powder),
and then move on to the choice dish: the rice set. Don't forget
to try a glass of chhyang, the fresh rice brew here is thicker
than usual, a scent of cardamom and there a hint of cinnamon.

Best dish Dhido set
Meal for one Rs 400
Turn right from the fire brigade bus stop in Pulchok and head towards
Dhobighat. Turn left at the second four-way crossroad and TTC is on
the other side of the road.



HONACHA

Aila and choyela go hand in hand
If you've ever set on a quest to find the best Newari
food in town, you'll have surely heard of Honacha.
This Newari bhatti situated right behind the majestic
edifice of Krishna Mandir in the heart of Patan Durbar
Square has been serving the hungry and the thirsty
for decades. The menu has remained the same and so
has the setting. A full meal with cold drinks for four
sets your wallet back by a mere Rs 500. If you want
to breathe in the multiple flavours of the common
men and women of the country, there is no better
place than Honacha. But if you are one of the delicate
ones, take home some baras, switch on your favourite
channel, and enjoy them with apéritifs in the comfort
of your home.

Best dish Keema Bara
Meal for one Rs 200
Honacha is located righth behind Krishna Mandir at
Patan Darbar Square.



CHIKUSA CAFÉ

A lot goes down at the back of the café
The former Japanese café, established in 1998,
specialises in 'real coffee', breakfast items and pressed
sandwiches—all made to order behind a narrow,
diner-like bar straight out of an Edward
Hopper painting. Bottles of American maple
syrup and extra-large 'Super Dad' mugs
that line the shelves yield a homespun
charm. Every plate, prepared in plain sight,
is just plain good. No green eggs and ham,
the ham and eggs (as you like it) are a savory side
that compliments any of the sweet, back-menu treats,
including crepes, waffles and real flapjack pancakes
topped with sliced bananas and syrup. The only
drawback is that substitutes can't be made for items
in the fixed breakfast sets (Chikusa and English), and
sides like baked beans and sausages can't be ordered
separately.

Best dish Banana pancakes
Meal for one 400
Jog south from the Moroccan Consulate in Thamel and
look for "Real Coffee!" under the Lhasa Guesthouse.

NOYOZ

Taste from the east
This tiny little joint in Bhatbhateni serves
momos, aludum, meat and more meat,
and they all taste like your mother's
home-cooked dishes. Originally from
Dharan, Barsha Limbu, the proprietor and
chef, learned cooking from her mother,
grandmother, and her many aunts and
she tries to emulate their style in her
own kitchen by serving up nutritious,
hearty, and wholesome meals with a
special astern touch. Sargemba (Rs 150),
the Limbu version of blood sausage is



truly delicious so is their Dharane style
pork momos (Rs 95). In a relatively short
time, Noyoz has become extremely
popular among nomadic writers, artists,
and musicians from east Nepal and it
has taken on the air of an 'intellectual
adda'. They congregate here to talk about
all things Nepal while eating bona fide
purveli meals, just like back home.

Best dish Aludum with roti (Rs 100)
Meal for one Rs 300
Noyoz is smack opposite the Chinese
Embassy's gate in Bhatbhateni.

SANDWICH POINT

Skip small, opt for extra-large at this sandwich bar
Often the last-stop for hungry party-goers,
Sandwich Point in Thamel is as busy
during the day as it is post-midnight. The
tiny sandwich bar offers a wide range of
sandwiches including chicken bbq, tuna,
ham and cheese, smoked salami, and even



chocolate in three different sizes. A wallet
friendly price and consistent taste has
loyals fighting for space everyday of the
week so beware. SP recently branched into
Lalitpur with the opening of an outlet in
Jhamsikhel.

Best dish: Chicken BBQ sandwich
Meal for one: Rs 135
From Himalayan Java, walk to the second
intersection of Thamel, and turn left.



CRAZY BURGER

Juicy, meaty, filling burgers
Crazy Burger is one of those places that
offers pretty decent fare at affordable
prices. We satisfied our burger cravings
with the fish burger (Rs185). Though
sliced a little too thinly, the fried fish
fillet packs a punch. Enveloping the fish
is chewy and warm bread. Altogether, the
burger feels like a healthy choice, and the
portion is just enough to fill your tummy.
Its other burgers sound equally promising,
like its chicken tikka, big ham, and spicy
chicken burger. If you're in the mood
for something adventurous, you can opt
for the ostrich grilled burger (330 Rs).
Besides fast-food, Crazy Food is also well-
known for its western dishes like pastas,
milkshakes and pizzas.

Best dish: Fish Burger
Meal for one: Rs 200
From Kathmandu Guest House in Thamel,
walk straight, when you reach a curve look
on your right.



ALMAYA FRIED HOUSE

18 minutes of wait equals to half an hour of deep fried pleasure
Move over KFC, Almaya Fried House is here
to claim its rightful place as the choice
fried chicken joint in Kathmandu. At
Almaya's fried chickens are served in kilos.
A kg (Rs 760) is enough to feed a hungry
group of three and served piping hot with
a delectable tangy sauce. Besides this
southern comfort, this hidden gem also
offers more exotic Newari offerings like
fried tongue, liver, and lungs. So dig into
oily goodness.

Best dish Fried Spicy Chicken
1kg Chicken Spicy Rs 700
From the Gwarko Bus Stop at Ring Road,
head north-west for about 300m. Almaya
Fried House is located after the second
junction.

The epically strange and oddly beautiful Tilda Swinton and the chiseled, Byronically good looking Tom Hiddleston are perfectly cast in Jim Jarmusch's latest indie concoction *Only Lovers Left Alive*. The love story portrays the relationship between Adam (Hiddleston) and Eve (Swinton), two millennia old vampires who drift world wearily through their existence with languid elegance, anchored only by their fortuitous connection (call it love if you will) with each other.

ONLY LOVERS LEFT ALIVE



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

This addition to the now ubiquitous canon of vampire lore is an entirely different animal from *Twilight* or any of the other teen romance nonsense though. If anything, Jarmusch, a deeply erudite, highly experimental filmmaker is more interested in the premise of love evolving over eons and battling the ennui of living forever - hence the handy trick of having his two protagonists be blood drinking beings with attractively pointy teeth.

Hiddleston's tortured Adam lives in a romantically desolate and beaten up Detroit, surrounded by cassettes of his music, his antique guitars, and a reliable source of pure O negative from the local corrupt doctor. Disgusted by humanity (whom he rather meanly calls 'zombies') Hiddleston asks his local fixer Ian (the always endearing Anton Yelchin) to find him a wooden bullet - using

the subterfuge of a potential art project to hide his recurring suicidal thoughts.

Luckily, Eve reaches out to him just in time from her abode in Tangier. Realising that all is not well with her immortal beloved, she flies through the night to be with him in his desolation, cheering him up with her ethereal beauty and her graceful acceptance of what they are.

Watching these two lovers together is one of the great pleasures of this very particular

film, which seems - once it has ended - more of a wish fulfillment on the part of Jarmusch (albeit a sublimely gorgeous one) than a proper film as convention would have it. That being said, most of Jarmusch's films are similarly meandering in their whimsy, sometimes almost incomprehensible in terms of dialogue and always filled with the most eclectic and marvelous music. In that particular way this brilliantly atmospheric film is no different - taking us out of our rather banal ordinary lives and into the richness of a cinematic world where Christopher (Kit) Marlowe (played by the wonderful John Hurt) is a vampire too, living in Tangier, writing prose that surpasses Shakespeare and stroking Tilda Swinton's blonde mane as he talks to her about arcane philosophy.

There is a story of sorts in *Only Lovers Left Alive* - but the real reason to watch this film is to immerse oneself in a world alive with romance and possibility, where beautiful age old beings drift about dancing to rock music, with their sunglasses on as they reminisce about Tesla, Einstein and Schubert. Does this sound insufferably arty to you? It isn't, mainly because of the brilliant casting and Jarmusch's unerring sensibility.

nepalitimes.com
Watch trailer



HAPPENINGS



NIMESH RAI

UNDER CONTROL: Fire fighters try to douse the fire that erupted in a squatter settlement at Sinamangal on Sunday.



NEPAL ARMY

GOOD LUCK: Chief of Army General Gaurav Shamsher Rana bids farewell to the peacekeeping force leaving for Lebanon and Syria on Tuesday at Panchkhal, Kavre.



GAGANSHILA KHADKA

ROCKSTARS: Artists take part in Women In Concert to celebrate International Women's Day at Lainchaur on Saturday.



RSS

ACTION: A Nepali film crew shoots at Shukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve in Kanchanpur on Wednesday.

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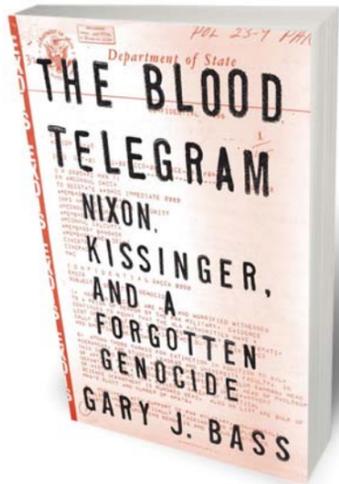
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A forgotten genocide

In his new book, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide*, Gary J. Bass, recounts an incident where former secretary of state Henry Kissinger is correcting US President Richard Nixon as he repeatedly refers to the then East Pakistani leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as Mujo, not Mujib. Many Nepalis may find this anecdote hilarious if not for the deadly atrocities that were being committed in present-day Bangladesh with tacit approval of two of the most powerful men.

While the Watergate revelations have caught the global public's imagination for decades, Nixon and Kissinger's support of West Pakistan's military dictatorship in East Pakistan and subsequent brutalities are not as well-known. Bass effectively mines the heretofore unexploited portions of the Oval Office tapes that Nixon secretly recorded in 1971, to divulge the dirty secrets of Bangladesh's liberation war.

Nixon and Kissinger were told in no uncertain terms by their diplomats (chiefly Archer Blood in Dhaka, hence the title *Blood Telegram*) of a potential genocide by Pakistani



The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide
By Gary J Bass
Knopf 2013
Price \$30 (hardcover)
528 pages

military rulers at that time. But the president and his right hand man obviously chose to ignore these warnings. In fact the tapes make it clear that they stood staunchly behind Pakistani President General Yahya Khan and his men.

Nixon was genuinely fond of Khan and harboured a deep seated antipathy towards Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, who was behind Bangladesh's struggle for independence. This, however, was only part of the reason for America's support. International geopolitics also played a decisive role.

REVIEW

Kissinger and Nixon were secretly trying to establish a historic meeting of US and China, which would bolster Nixon's approval rating. The go-between man who would help arrange this meeting was none other than General Khan. Anything else that came in the way (like East Pakistan's seething discontent after the army quashed the results of the historic 1970 elections) had to be shoved aside for a greater cause.

Amazingly, Nixon and Kissinger also secretly encouraged China to amass troops

on the Indian border to scare the Gandhi government and illegally (the US government had voted against this) supplied weapons to the Pakistani military. When the tragic slaughter of Hindu Bengalis took place in East Pakistan, it was clearly with the help of America's devastating firepower.

As a result of this genocide (a tragedy apparently bloodier than Bosnia), about 10 million refugees poured into the Indian state of West Bengal. The Indian government was at its wits end trying to control the unfolding calamity. Much to India's credit, it did not close its borders to the Bengali Hindus who were fleeing their own country from the marauding Pakistani soldiers. Finally with the intervention of the Indian army and the Bangladeshi liberation fighters (at times the latter group sought their own cruel justice against the Pakistani soldiers), Dhaka fell in the winter of 1971 and a new country was born.

What comes across very strongly time and again in *The Blood Telegram* is that Nixon and Kissinger were driven to do what they did not just by Cold War realpolitik, but a bitter personal dislike for Indira Gandhi and India. And not unsurprisingly both men gloss over this important 'game-changing' tragedy in South Asia in the several books that they would go on to pen. **Buddha Basnyat**



HYDERABAD HOUSE

I had been waiting with bated breath for Indian restaurant chain, Hyderabad House, to open right next doors in Tangal. An ardent lover of biryani, just the signboard announcing 'opening soon' had been tantalising me for months. Adding to my anticipation was the fact that this restaurant chain has been around since 1975 and has franchises around the world, and now finally was opening an outlet in Kathmandu. I walked in with high expectations, only to have the old adage proved true - expect in haste only to repent in leisure (or words to that effect).

Though the entrance is unobtrusive, the owners have tried to imbue the restaurant with some old-world charm by hanging pictures of the Nizams of faded sepia prints of Hyderabad, in its days of yore, on the walls of the staircase leading to the main dining area. But the décor is mostly nondescript and comes right out the cookie-cutter mould of most Indian restaurants, along with the de rigueur maroon upholstered chairs.

The menu is impressive to say the least with offerings of goshts and luqmis and haleems; melt-in-the-mouth delicacies that

promise a legacy of delicious meat marinated in exotic spices and slow cooked over a hot tandoor. And that in a nutshell is the problem with romanticism; for reality always pales in comparison.

The chicken 65 (Rs 373) that the waiter assured us was their specialty starter was nothing more than chicken chili with curry leaves a strange amalgamation of two divergent cuisines that didn't really gel well. While the meat on its own without the dousing of masala would have been passable, the combination just makes for a strange combination. The mutton sheek kebab (Rs 592) didn't fare

much better being dry and just generally lackluster.

The description on the menu sold us on the gosht dumphukh biryani (Rs 686), is described as a traditional biryani with choice tender pieces of mutton with basmati rice and a 'potpourri of traditional Hyderabadi spices'. What was served to us was cold and oily and not particularly tasty. The accompanying raita and the mirchi ka salan were tastier than what for this restaurant is its signature dish.

The saving grace of our meal was the roomali roti (Rs 51 per piece) and the talahua paneer,

(Rs210) a good old paneer curry. We ended our meal with the double ka meetha (Rs 160) - a sticky sweet bread pudding with what tasted like gajar ka halwa. After the meal that we'd had, the dessert was more than we were expecting. Or maybe we had just decided to be extremely forgiving by this point.

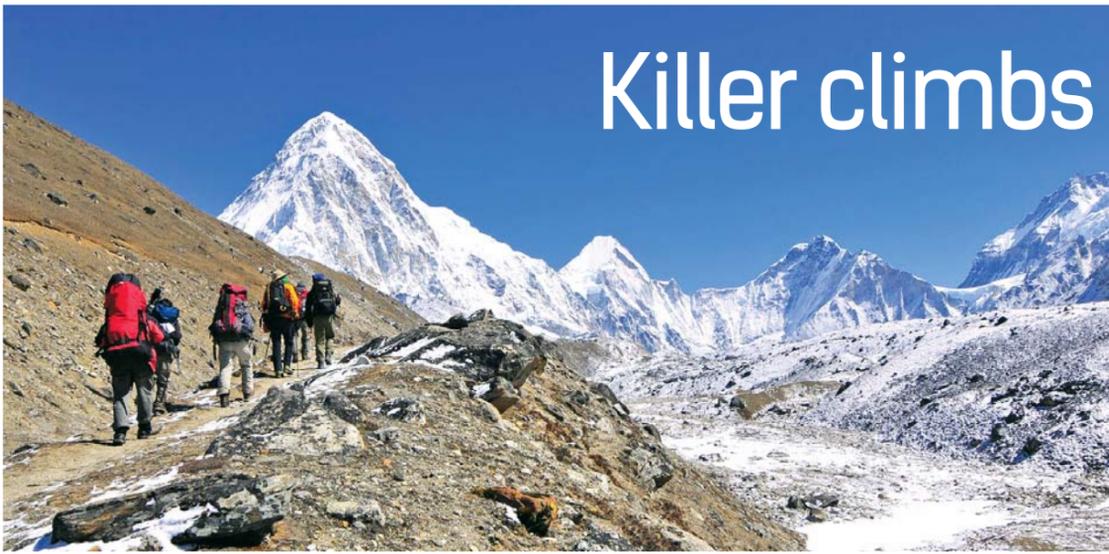
When new restaurants, offering a specific cuisine not available at every other place in Kathmandu, open up, my initial reaction is glee, only to be let down on sampling their fares. And that is the problem with Hyderabad House. It's a crying shame, for Kathmandu needs a really good Indian restaurant that is not ensconced in a five star hotel. **Ruby Tuesday**

How to get there: Hyderabad House is opposite Bhatbhateni Supermarket in Tangal, in the same building as Anmol Sweets.



Great Food Deserves Carlsberg

That calls for a Carlsberg



Killer climbs

Imagine you are a mountain guide on an Everest expedition and are attacked by a client with an ice axe at 7,000m. If this were a dream you would wake up in cold sweat. Yet in almost every season, an encounter of this nature is not uncommon in the high Himalayas.



DHAVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

As mountaineers ascend tall peaks, altitude sickness especially in its life-threatening forms like high altitude cerebral edema (HACE) and high altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE) can affect climbers. Excessive brain swelling at altitude or HACE may lead to psychosis, violent behaviour, and eventual death due to cold exposure or accidental falls.

The Himalayan range, which includes 14 peaks above 8,000m, is unique in that it begins where the European Alps reach the highest point (about 4,000m). Clearly, hypoxia (lack of oxygen) stress that climbers feel in the Himalayas is much greater and therefore much more medically significant than in the Alps or perhaps even any other mountain

range in the world. For example, the probability of suffering from HACE at Mount Rainier (4,392m) in Washington State, USA is much lower than in the 8,000m Himalayan peaks.

Now that climbing season is almost here, it is relevant to discuss ways in which guides can help climbers at these very high altitudes. Nepali guides are well-trained in many aspects of mountain climbing, but knowledge about life-saving drugs is unfortunately amiss.

Acetazolamide (Diamox) is a familiar drug which prevents and treats acute mountain sickness, the harbinger of the more dangerous forms (HACE and HAPE) of altitude sickness. But another lesser-known drug, dexamethasone, can be far more useful in life-threatening situations.

Dexamethasone very effectively decreases swelling of the brain and treats symptoms like psychosis, which can potentially help the climber cooperate in his own rescue. Unlike drugs like penicillin, this corticosteroid (different from the kind that the infamous Tour de France cyclist Lance Armstrong consistently took to win), does not cause a deadly anaphylactic (allergic) reaction; in fact dexamethasone is used in the treatment of anaphylaxis.

Although mountain guides

are not trained medics, perhaps an exception needs to be made because finding a doctor at 7,000m to administer dexamethasone is extremely unlikely. Besides, the risk-benefit analysis tilts clearly in favour of giving the drug: the medicine works within hours, has very little side-effects, and usually one dose is enough. Having a properly trained guide could, therefore, mean the difference between life and death for the climber.

But administering dexamethasone orally to a patient who is trying to kill you with an axe due to temporary derangement caused by high altitude hypoxia, might not be possible. It will need to be injected into the muscle or vein. The hardest part for the guide will, therefore, be to administer the injection to the sick climber.

Life-threatening illnesses at high altitude are best prevented. But in reality, our mountain guides will be faced with these problems and will need the skills and knowledge to deal with them. Hence proper, conscientious training in administering this drug will help guides save the lives of intrepid climbers and go a long way in projecting Nepal as a safe and attractive destination for mountain climbing.

GIZMO by YANTRICK

Drop by drop

The impending summer brings with it the constant need to keep hydrated and to help you beat the heat in style, Indian water purifier giants Kent has introduced four new water purifiers. Maintaining its reputation of providing safe drinking water solutions at affordable prices, Kent sets a new bar with its gravity-based 'Gold' range: Plus, Optima, Cool, and Crystal.

The four water purifiers all function with the state-of-the-art UF (Ultra Filtration) technology at their core. UF technology is known to destroy close to 100 per cent of harmful micro-organisms such as bacteria and cysts from tap water, apart from other impurities like dust, sand, chlorine, etc without the need of any chemicals. Each Kent water purifier is equipped with a UF membrane, which in combination with fine nylon filters, effectively remove dust and sand particles as well as organic impurities and dissolved gases in water, ultimately resulting in odour-free, great tasting water. A UF membrane is capable of filtering up to 4,000 litres of water before it needs replacing.



The new models are neither electricity-dependant, nor do they use chemicals such as chlorine, bromine or iodine for purification, thereby making water extremely safe, healthy, and convenient for consumption. The quality and purity of water produced by the gravity-based purifiers are guaranteed to be clean and safe, as certified by the Gold Seal awarded by the Water Quality Association (WQA), USA, one of the most recognised certifications in the drinking water treatment industry.

Of the four water purifiers, Gold Plus (Rs 4,790) is a tabletop purifier that can hold up to 20 litres (10 litres of purified water). Gold Optima (Rs 3,390) is another tabletop purifier with a capacity of 10 litres (five litres of purified water), suitable for small families. Gold Cool (Rs 6,690), with a capacity of 17 litres (nine litres of purified water), features a thermally-insulated designed, which keeps water chilled for more than eight hours, ideal for when the mercury crosses 30 degrees.

Kent's Crystal water purifier can be placed directly on top of water dispensers, an ideal replacement for those cumbersome 20 litre jars. The crystal can hold up to 13 litres of purified water. All four purifiers are constructed of non-breakable food-grade plastic which ensures higher durability and long life.

Yantick's Verdict: Reasonably priced, non-electric, chemical free, and easy to install, Kent's range of gravity-based water purifiers are perfectly suited to the Nepali market for those long summer load-shedding hours when your AC-powered purifier is just an expensive paper-weight.

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THE HELP: Members of the Jat community thank Congress President Sonia Gandhi for heeding to their demands and including them in the Other Backward Classes (OBC) list.

No political party, even in the world's largest democracy, seems immune from the temptation to take cynical decisions to woo voters. India's Congress-led government decided recently to include the powerful peasant caste of Jats in the category of Other Backward Classes (OBC) which is a list of socially and educationally disadvantaged groups and entitled for reservation in jobs and education.



LOOK OUT
Ajaz Ashraf

In Punjab state, Hindu and Sikh Jats are a prosperous and powerful social group and not exactly disadvantaged. The Congress-led UPA had not included Jats in Central list, but then the Akali Dal-BJP government in Punjab decided to include them paving the way for their eventual inclusion as a disadvantaged group at the Centre.

As in Nepal, where the second Constituent Assembly will have to grapple with the backlash of 'higher' caste Brahmins and Chhetris to

REVERSING RESERVATION

Nepal must learn from India's experience with the politics of identity and steer away from its pitfalls

declare themselves indigenous peoples, the decision threatens India's affirmative action efforts. It mocks the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) which is responsible for including those excluded from the central reservation pool. The NCBC has persistently advised the government against including Jats in the Central OBC list, but the lame-duck UPA government did it anyway.

What is also worrying is the silence of other political parties at this brazen subversion of the reservation policy. There hasn't been a squeak from the BJP, the Left, the regional parties, even the Aam Aadmi Party. But how could you have expected

them to behave otherwise? India's parliamentary elections are just a month away and nobody would want to anger the powerful Jats concentrated in contiguous pockets. Jats make up a quarter of the population of the northern Indian state of Haryana and drive its politics.

India's mainstream media has largely preferred to ignore the story, demonstrating the bias of predominantly upper caste journalists, as their interests are not affected by the decision to extend reservation to Jats. Their children compete for jobs in the general pool, the Jats can only eat into the share of the more underprivileged classes.

Though the Jats have been agitating for an inordinately

long period to be included in the Central OBC list, it can be argued that the UPA chose to override the advice of NCBC now only because of the political implications of the anti-Muslim Muzaffarnagar riots.

The NCBC had earlier wanted to conduct a social survey to determine whether the Jats are indeed socially and educationally backward to be included in the Central OBC list. But the UPA cabinet decided: 'NCBC be requested to reconsider its earlier decision of conducting a survey and tender its advice of inclusion of Jats in the Central list of OBCs based on the reports and material available.'

The Congress seems to have attributed its defeat in local

assembly elections in December to the alienation of Jats and the Muzaffarnagar communal riots pushed the Jats towards the BJP. More significantly, the Congress' suggestion to the NCBC to 'tender advice' on the 'reports and material available' was the government's method of mounting pressure on the NCBC to fall in line. Unfortunately for the Congress, the NCBC not only refused an OBC status for Jats, it issued a dire warning that if Jats are included they will corner all jobs and opportunities going to the excluded groups.

But this is precisely what the UPA government did last week, illustrating vividly how India's reservation policy has become skewed. The very idea behind forming the NCBC was to conduct periodic social surveys to weed out from the reservation pool those castes which had been scientifically determined to have overcome backwardness. This was thought necessary in order to ensure the benefits of affirmative action accrue to the most backward classes. But India is going into reverse: including castes which are socially advanced. As Nepal charts out for itself a democratic future, it may as well look closely at India's experience with the politics of identity and steer away from its pitfalls. ashrafajaz3@gmail.com

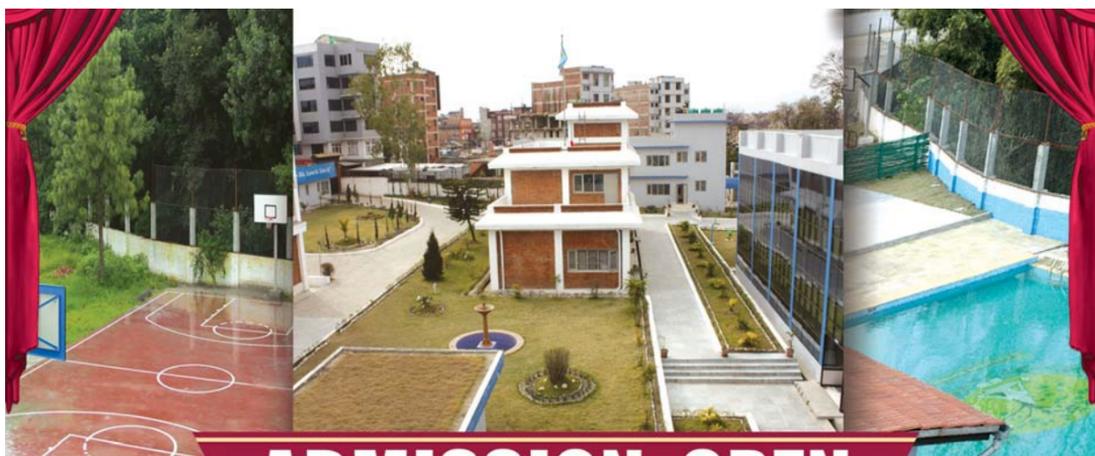
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APPLY ONCE: Gita Parajuli (centre) and Ganeshmaya Ranjitkar (left), female community health volunteers from Ugratara, Kavre, demonstrate how to apply the chlorhexidine ointment on a newborn's umbilical cord.

BELLY-GAZING

An ointment applied on newborns' navels could prevent one out of four neonatal deaths

government worked closely with Saving Lives at Birth partners (USAID, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada, and the World Bank) and a local pharmaceutical company Lomus to develop such an ointment. Lomus now produces up to 10,000 tubes of Navi Malam a day at its Gothatar factory. The tube is available for Rs 18 as part of the government's National Safe Motherhood Program.

"We didn't want our 'intervention' to seem out of place, so we stuck to a formula that locals were most comfortable with," says Shanda L Steimer, director of USAID's Office of Health and Family Planning.

Since it was first introduced in 2011, 'Navi Malam' has been adopted in 41 out of Nepal's 75 districts, thanks to the role played by Nepal's Female Community Health Volunteers. Established in 1988, the 52,000 strong force has been instrumental in convincing new mothers and especially their families, that the ointment really shields their baby from infections.

"First you take off the cap, wash your hands, apply the entire contents, wrap the baby with a shawl, and leave the cord to dry for around seven minutes," instructs Gita Parajuli, an FCHV since seven years, to a group of new mothers at Ugratara, Kavre.

When Parajuli had her first baby at 18, the ointment wasn't available and her husband's family did what everyone else did – massage the baby with mustard oil. Now, except for some who still want to take care of their children in the old-fashioned way, most expecting parents ask volunteers for the ointment themselves.

Last month, USAID awarded the Nepali government with the pioneers prize for its exceptional support and leadership in the chlorhexidine cord care program. Inspired by our success, 11 other countries like Nigeria and Kenya are looking to promote chlorhexidine as a effective method of reducing neo-natal mortality. 

BABY STEPS

Neo-natal mortality rates (per 1,000 live births)

- PAKISTAN **42**
- AFGHANISTAN **36**
- NEPAL **33**
- INDIA **30**
- BANGLADESH **24**
- BHUTAN **21**
- IRAQ **19**
- CHINA **9**
- MALDIVES **6**
- SRI LANKA **6**
- JAPAN **1**

absence of skilled birth attendants. Four out of 10 newborns will have their cords treated in the customary manner – hacked off with a hasiya and a mixture of turmeric, ash, and mustard oil applied on the remainder.

Lack of healthcare services and superstitions surrounding child-rearing mean that Nepal has one of the worst neo-natal mortality rates in Asia (*see chart*).

Forty per cent of deaths occur because of infections.

In 2005, a study conducted by the Nepal Nutritional Innovation Program Sarlahi found that cleansing the umbilical cord stump with a chlorhexidine solution would reduce neo-natal deaths by 23 per cent. Similarly, a pilot study undertaken between November 2008 and May 2009 in Banke by the Ministry of Health and Population, supported by USAID and JSI Research and Study Institute, found that families preferred using gel on their newborn whose texture was consistent with the mustard-turmeric paste.

Over the next two years, the

apply it on the stump.

Navi Malam is a colourless, odourless gel that contains the disinfectant chlorhexidine. When applied correctly to a new-born baby's umbilical cord stump, it binds to the skin and closes the open wound on the infant's belly and repels water and other traditional ointment. "The easiest way to prevent infections is by keeping the naval area dry and untouched until the stump falls off," explains Dangol. "But since most of our patients return home a day after delivery, we give them the cream."

Almost 750,000 babies are born every year in Nepal and up to two thirds of all deliveries take place at home in the

SUNIR PANDEY in KAVRE

On a warm morning in March, the maternity ward Dhulikhel Hospital is abuzz with activity as doctors and nurses move from one room to another helping with deliveries and checking up on the newborns and their mothers. The hospital delivers around eight babies everyday and resident doctor Anjana Dangol is in charge of all cases.

Just hours ago she delivered a boy to Sangita Shrestha, 18, of Sindhupalchok. One of the first things she did after cutting off his umbilical cord was to get a nurse to squeeze out a tube of Navi Malam and

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SUNIR PANDEY

Inspector Ban

When Megharaj Ban first joined Maunabudhuk Health Post (MHP) in Dhankuta in 1987, there were no road networks connecting this small village to district headquarters and health workers were faced with a chronic shortage of medicines. His own villagers were skeptical about how far he could improve the well-being of the community.

Twenty-five years on, Ban has single-handedly reformed the VDC's health-scape. From convincing locals to adopt preventive care measures to upgrading facilities at MHP in spite of a lack of funding, the health-worker has become so popular that every time he gets posted outside Maunabudhuk, villagers request the district administration office to send him back.

On Monday, the 49-year-

old, who is now a public health inspector at MHP, was presented the Nick Simons Award for his outstanding contribution to improving health services in his village and his unwavering commitment towards his people. For the past six years the Kathmandu-based NSI has honoured healthcare workers in rural Nepal who have overcome financial obstacles and lack of resources to help communities.

In November 2012, Ban helped establish, entirely with local resources and knowhow, a new birthing centre at MHP with four rooms where mothers and their babies receive 24-hour care.

Next on Ban's to-do list was a health laboratory. Again with no financial support from the government, he helped build a well-equipped laboratory, which also employs a local lab assistant. Now, patients no longer have

travel to district headquarters in Dhankuta or Dharan in the Tarai for basic services like blood tests, HIV tests, and DOTS treatment.

Ban also started a safe motherhood emergency fund in 2009 so that expectant mothers could take out interest-free loans to cover their medical bills. The fund, now worth Rs 80,000, can provide loans upto Rs 10,000 for three months.

Call it chance or a twist of fate, but a career in public health was the last thing on Megharaj's mind after completing his SLC in 1985 even though he had trained and worked as a health assistant. The eldest of four siblings, Ban studied economics in high school and wanted to join the civil service. He had even passed his Lok Sewa exams, but at the last minute his post was given to someone else. So Ban chose public health.

But his two decade long journey has not been without its challenges. During the height of the insurgency, Ban had to flee Dhankuta and seek refuge in Kathmandu. Most of his friends migrated abroad, but he felt he wasn't cut out for it. After

working for nine months in the state-run Vitamin A program in western Nepal, Ban was selected for a six-month senior assistant health worker training in 2004, after which he returned to Maunabudhuk.

"I am grateful that the hard work that the team has put into the health post over the years

has finally been recognised," says an elated Ban. "Now that people know about us, we will have to put in more effort to live up to their expectations."

Sunir Pandey

nepalitimes.com

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Put Ranjit Karna behind bars



RSS

Ameet Dhakal, 10 March, *Setopati.com*

सेतोपाटी

Ranjit Karna, CA member and president of the NC-affiliated Nepal Student Union (NSU), has overstepped his jurisdiction by demanding that SSP Ramesh Kharel, who arrested five NSU members on Monday for carrying guns with expired licences, be prosecuted. More than a personal opinion, Ranjit's statement was an explicit threat to authorities at a time when his own party is heading the government.

During a regular traffic check on early Monday morning, the police caught Shubha Ram Basnet, president of the Free Student Union at Shanker Dev Campus, along with four others at Sitapaila with three guns. The police discovered that the licence of one of the pistols had not

been renewed. However, Ranjit claims the security check was premeditated and prejudiced and that his cadre should be released after they pay a fine for the guns. He blames Kharel for taking the law into his own hands and is insisting that the SSP be tried in court. But perhaps Karna is unaware that it is not just guns, it's a crime to even drive with an expired licence.

The case leads to some intriguing questions. Why were NSU members travelling around with guns at 3am in the morning when rest of the city was fast asleep? Where were they going to or coming back from? Did they have any intentions to cause harm?

The incident also raises the issue of firearm licences. The pistol under question was registered under Shambu Ram's

WILD ONES: Members of the NC-affiliated Nepal Student Union disrupted traffic in the capital and hurled bricks at the police on Monday after five cadre were arrested in the morning for carrying guns with expired licences.

father. But the permit to possess a gun is strictly personal, which means ownership does not extend to other members in the family. So why was Shambu Ram carrying his father's pistol and moreover, with an expired licence?

Instead of immediately suspending the five men from NSU, president Karna put undue pressure on the police and incited other students to come out on the streets to protest. This is not the first time that NSU has bought the city to a standstill and disrupted daily life. Over the past month, Congress students have frequently wreaked havoc in front of Shanker Dev Campus.

If Karna continues to instigate students and if his men cause further suffering to common Nepalis, then the CA member should be held responsible for such disorderly behaviour and must be arrested. No one, not even a parliamentarian has the right to interfere in a criminal

prosecution. So far the NC has not made any public comments on the arrests or on Karna's statements. But the mother party needs to uphold the rule of law and stop its students from hindering investigations. Otherwise, its legitimacy to rule will be under scrutiny and NC leaders and politicians will lose their credibility.

Monday's arrest once again

exposes the criminalisation of student unions in Nepal. Leaders of different student organisations have time and again been caught breaking the law and being involved in illicit networks. To protect the country's educational sector and to nurture a new generation of qualified and respectable leaders, it is important to bring the unions under the purview of parent parties.



Banner: "Constitution in a year"

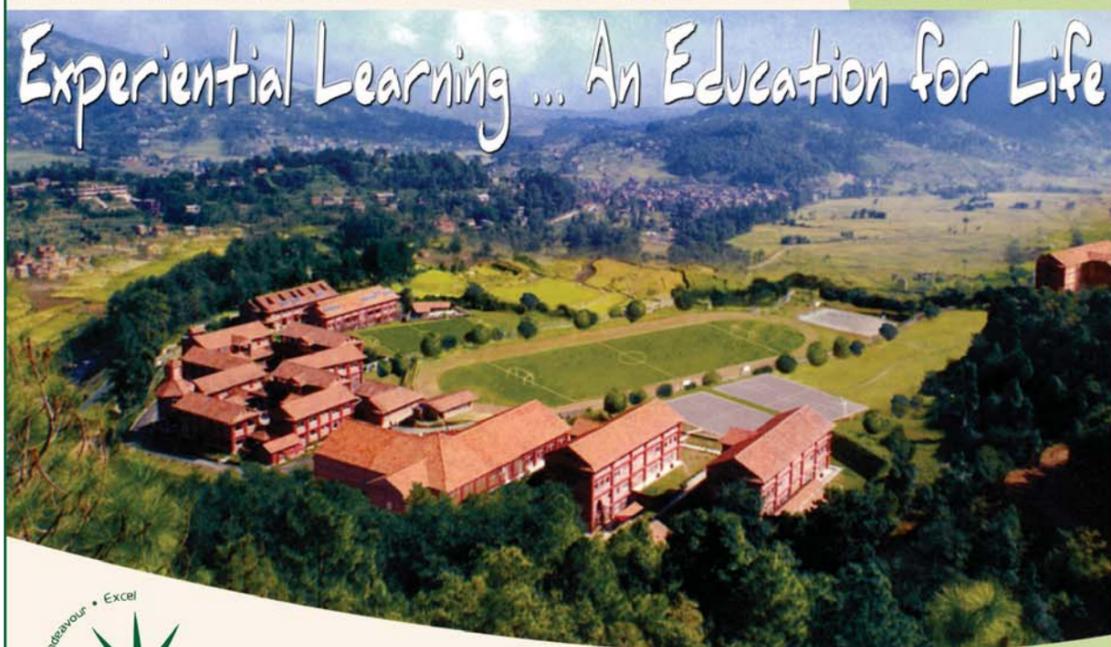
क्रान्तिपुर Batsayan in *Kantipur*, 10 March

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“What will the public think when our own student wing is clashing with the police while we are in power?”

UML CA member Surendra Pandey, *Naya Patrika*, 11 February



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Thou shalt not lie

The media can't just function as a business, it has to relentlessly pursue the truth so our freedoms are protected

Last month, police caught a man who they said was the key link to solving the mystery of the Janakpur bomb in 2012 that killed five and wounded a dozen other Mithila activists at Ramananda Chok.

Mukesh Chaudhary had provided local journalists with copies of his telephone conversation with the alleged mastermind four months after the bomb. But the mainstream media largely ignored the news. In May last year, a television news channel telecasted a report playing the tape and an interview of Chaudhary taken in an unknown location.

However, the report itself lacked credibility due to clear tampering with the tape in the first few seconds where Chaudhary addresses the second speaker as 'minister'. After the incident,

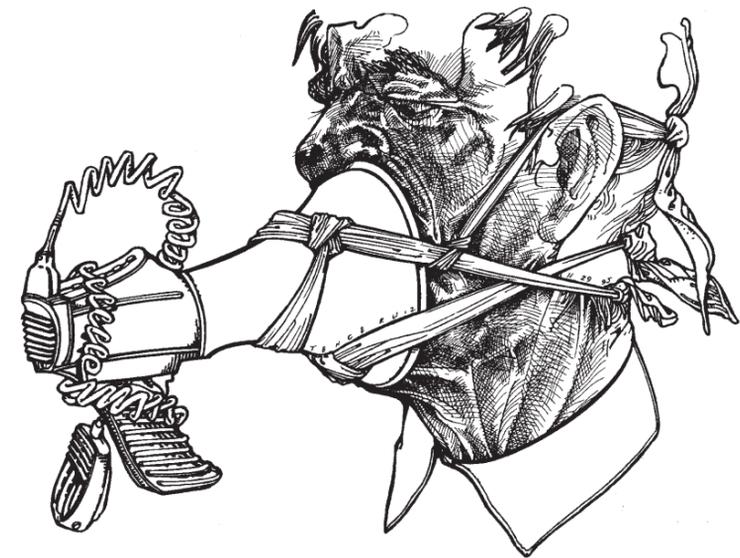
there was widespread speculation that the blast was intended to intimidate the Mithila movement activists. Even Mukesh claims that to be the real reason behind the explosion in his 'exclusive' interview. But the original conversation in the tape reveals that the target was only one man sitting among the protesters at Ramananda Chok that day.

What remains unanswered is: who was the target and who felt threatened by him? After investigating the incident for over a year, we have compelling evidence that behind the political pretext of the Mithila movement, Janakpur is reeling under a turf war between a political strongman and a local businessman, both with criminal backgrounds.



BY THE WAY

Anurag Acharya



But it is not just Janakpur, the entire Tarai belt of Nepal has become a hotbed for corruption and crime. From illegal sand mining and logging, drug peddling, human trafficking, and smuggling of small arms, most Tarai districts sharing the border with India are de-facto being run by powerful mafia with political protection. There is a dangerous nexus of bureaucrats, politicians, and organised criminals who seize all development contracts and plunder local resources. These are the same resources they use in the long run to elevate themselves to power. It is a shame that those supposed to be behind bars are sitting in the parliament writing the constitution of this country.

Driving through the much touted Postal Highway of Dhanusha, Mahottari, and Sarlahi, filled with crater size pot-holes, it is not difficult to see that the Rs 2.5 billion spent by the Indian government to build eight border roads along three districts have been pocketed by the contractors and their political bosses.

"It's looting in broad daylight. I drove on the roads they constructed a week ago and there is a big pothole," a local bus driver told me as we drove along the Janakpur-Jaleswor road. Neglected by Kathmandu and betrayed by those claiming to be their true leaders, it is the poorest of the poor who are bearing the brunt of underdevelopment and mis-governance in the Madhes.

Reports published by the Centre for Investigative Journalism in the last two years reveal that politically sheltered school committees in several Tarai districts are pocketing grant money by inflating the number of students.

Illegal sand mining companies are operating along the East-West highway causing irreparable damage to Chure hills. There is an organised group of timber smugglers who have bought over the entire local administration in far-western Tarai districts, plundering the community forests for the last three decades.

All this is happening while our mainstream media is busy covering who gets to pose with the copy of the constitution in front of national and international media, but would not dare publish a story that exposes how profit mongering business houses are gambling with public health, putting millions of lives at risk.

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Yeah and Nepal is ruled by hairy octogenarian men.



Only 8 of them have bathrooms.



And it has been downhill ever since.



That is true and we just made asses of ourselves.

When it comes to attracting more visitors to Nepal we haven't even started to scratch the tip of the proverbial iceberg. It is plain that we in Nepal have fallen behind the rest of the world in exploiting the vast tourism potential of this great nation of ours. Let's face it, folks at the Ministry of Tourism and Fatalism, the Nepal Tourism Bored, and the Department of Immitation need to get their balls rolling if we are to hit the target of a million visitors by the end of this year. And for this there is no other way but to gird up their proverbial loins.

✂

Which is why we commend the initiative taken by Thiruvananthapuram International Airport's public-private partnership initiative to get a liquor maker to come up with welcome signs at the arrival concourse to give visitors a quick summary of why Nepal is great. We don't know who came up with these great blurbs, but quite a lot of vodka must have been consumed in thinking them up.



The Ass

PAST PRESENT FUTURE

DIWAKAR CHETTRI

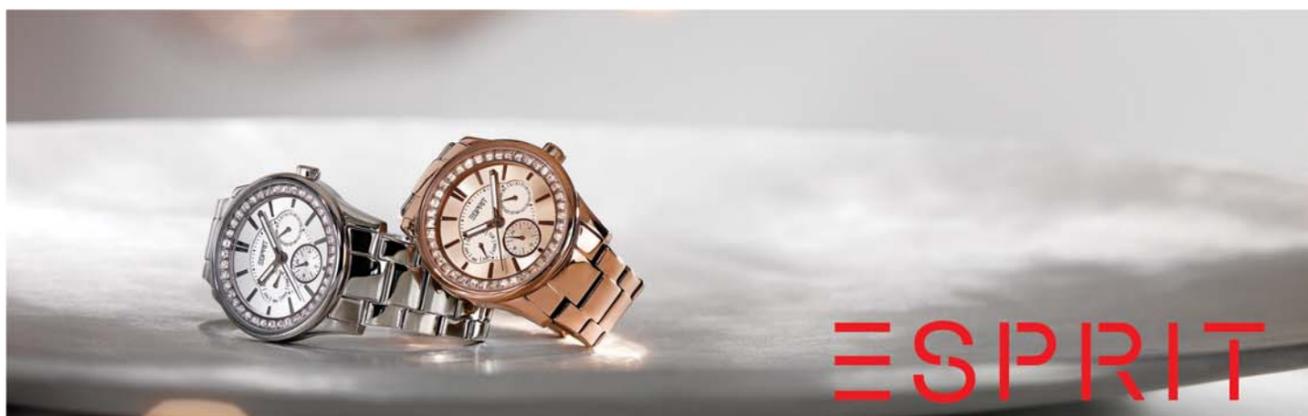
The ANTICS of our LEADERS have made the PARTY STRAY AWAY from its original STANCE...



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