

NEPALI Times

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BIKRAM RAI



REVIVING THE TRADITION OF BABY OIL MASSAGE

BABY SPA
PAGE 10-11

HEALING THE WOUNDS OF WAR
BY RUBENA MAHATO
PAGE 3

THINK NATIONALLY, ACT LOCALLY
BY DAMAKANT JAYSHI
PAGE 4

As 2070 draws to a close, a lone bicyclist pedals on Nepal's longest pedestrian bridge across the Mahakali River of the country's westernmost district of Kanchanpur. The Nepali New Year on Monday, 14 April is part of a regional tradition of new year festivals in Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Burma, even southern China -- underlining a shared cross-border cultural heritage. In Nepal, the old year will be remembered for an election that reaffirmed the people's faith in democracy. But sluggish movement on the constitution has cast doubts if it will be finished within 2071. A bill tabled in parliament on Wednesday with blanket amnesty provisions for war criminals defies a Supreme Court ruling and international norms.



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IRRECONCILABLE TRUTHS

"You just can't turn the page. You have to read that page before you turn it."

Seven years ago this week, Kathmandu saw hundreds of thousands of people massing up in the streets against a king who wanted to turn the clock back to the era of absolute monarchy. From the other side, the Maoists were busy exterminating 'class enemies'. Democracy was being squeezed from both the extreme left and extreme right. But what the Maoists could not achieve with ten years of war and 17,000 deaths, was achieved in 19 days of peaceful pro-democracy street protests that forced Gyanendra to step aside.

Whatever the glorifiers of violence and apologists for brutality may say, April 2006 represented a moral victory for peaceful political struggle. It proved that in this day and age one need not kill a whole bunch of people to bring about political change, even to remove a state that perpetrates structural violence.

The Maoists are not the type to say sorry, or admit that their ideology is obsolete and counterproductive. The question is how do we deal with the post-war legacy of violence, the simmering anger among survivors and relatives of victims, so as to help the healing process. How should we handle reconciliation in the aftermath of a conflict that neither side lost, and both want to forget?

Wars leave scars. The deep wounds take decades to heal. Twenty years later, Rwanda is still trying to come to terms with the abhorrent atrocities of its genocide (*see page 3*). The Tutsi leader who took over avoided retribution against Hutu mass murderers to help heal his country. South Africa took a similar step by naming and shaming rather than trying apartheid era crimes. Nelson Mandela's famous maxim was to "forgive, but not forget".

In Spain, an amnesty pact between Franco and the leftists protected a fragile democratic transition. But 40 years later, a survivor who is taking his torturer to jail told *The New York Times*

this week: "I agree with the idea of reconciliation. But you just can't turn the page.

You have to read that page before you turn it." Bangladesh and Cambodia have shown that sooner or later war crimes have to be addressed.

'Reconciliation', 'transitional justice', 'truth' may sound like donor vocabulary, but survivors everywhere need closure. They need to know what happened to relatives, why they were killed and by whom, and justice must eventually be served to prevent the wounds from festering. Every country takes its own path, and Nepal's road to reconciliation should be much easier because ours wasn't an ethno-separatist or religious strife, but a class war. There is much less bad blood, relatively less of a sense of revenge, but that doesn't mean there isn't a need for truth and reconciliation.

Collusion between former enemies has led to the tabling of a bill in Parliament on Wednesday to set up commissions for truth and reconciliation and disappearances. The NC and the UML were glad to let the Maoists take the flak for obstructing the bills, but they aren't pushing it much either. The Maoists, in characteristic fashion, blocked task force negotiations on parameters of the bills, while stalling parliament proceedings to protest delays that they are primarily responsible for. But all four main political groups are responsible for Wednesday's bill to white wash their past.



It is now meaningless to ask which side perpetrated a war crime. Both sides are now the state, and it is the state's responsibility to deliver truth and justice to the families of Krishna Adhikari, Maina Sunwar, Dekendra Thapa, the Doramba 18, the Kotbara 35 or the tens of thousands of others. Without truth and justice, these questions will remain irreconcilable.

ON THE WEB

www.nepaltimes.com

URGENT NEED

If we do not have a constitution come January, we should all plan a real revolution ('Urgent need for a sense of urgency, Editorial, #701). The leaders are getting richer by the minute, while the poor masses are reeling under poverty- no jobs, water, electricity, petrol, law and order. We, Nepalis, are extremely stupid. We have elected the same men in power who have been abusing their authority for over two decades now. And yet, we believe them capable of improving our lives. With Nepal's potential in hydro and tourism, we should be living comfortably, but it's quite the opposite. Most of us are still struggling to provide ourselves one square meal a day. The time is here for the people to unite against our corrupted *netas* and proclaim that enough is enough.

Narayana Prasad

■ Nepal risks becoming lost in the Indian Ocean with all passengers on board.

@pigreen

■ When society lives in perpetual 'emergency', a sense of urgency is not an urgent need.

@SubaskC1

MODI'S MOMENTUM

Why all this fretting and fear-mongering over Narendra Modi?



The people of Gujarat elected him three times, so he cannot be all that bad for them ('Modi's momentum', Kanak Dixit, #701). Let the Indian people decide whom they want to vote for. They are not stupid, and they obviously want their country to do better.

Even today, almost 67 years after Independence from the British, the majority of Indians still live in poverty. Maybe people are just tired of the suffering, especially when many countries with less resources are doing much better.

The lesson for Nepali leaders is that people everywhere are more informed nowadays, and will vote for parties with a track record of good governance and not those with empty populist and fear-mongering slogans.

Dev Batsya

■ If Kanak Mani Dixit recalls, the population neither demanded nor voted for Secular Nepal. It is up to Nepali citizens to decide whether this country should be called a Hindu nation again or not. It's not for Modi to decide. In the current context, a referendum has become a necessity. However, Modi's premiership might help in counterchecking EU's sponsored rampant conversions as Hindu related organisations in Nepal will get a power boost.

Sumir

■ Your article began with a great question (and I paraphrase): What the elevation of the Hindutva hawk (Modi) will do to his country, and also how will it impact Nepal? Unfortunately, you spent more time talking about the first part and left the second part almost untouched. I am sure other Nepalis felt the same way. I was hoping to read a little more detailed analysis on how Modi's election will impact Nepal, but I all I got was a beating around the bush with some mundane speculations.

Iuv Nepal

■ There's much anti-Hindu bias in this article ('The shaky pillar of Indian democracy', Anurag Acharya, #701). Anurag seems to have paid no heed to the plight of Hindu minorities in his dreamland of Pakistan and Bangladesh while writing this one. He

has not missed any attempt to hurt the sentiment of the god fearing Hindus of Nepal. But then, he's not alone, all the English-language papers of South Asia are guilty of untiringly vomiting venoms against Hindus which in a way is helping us to unite.

Shashi K Thapa

■ *Nepali Times* has tried its best to analyse the election trends in India which after all will have a big impact on Nepal. Thank you.

Jha

KADOORIE

China and India's dependence on coal in producing almost more than 70 per cent of electricity and energy needs is well known ('Kadoorie in the land of Gurkhas', Kunda Dixit, #701). China Light and Power Holdings in which Kadoorie holds a majority stake is now facing pressure from the Chinese government to discontinue using coal in generating electricity in its coastal cities like Hong Kong, Guangdong, Beijing and to adopt the west policy to meet its energy demand. You may have seen pictures of Chinese cities covered in smog in the news and how the use of coal, petrol and China's rapid industrialisation have heated up the earth to the point of explosion.

Kadoorie's decision in possibly investing in Nepal's hydropower sector, which is a renewable source of energy, and transferring the electricity to China

and India is understandable at a time when the debate on global warming and climate change is at its peak. His contribution in the field of education in Hong Kong is also worthy of praise.

Kalu

■ Donations, grants and assistance breed a culture of dependency that will undoubtedly shackle Nepal into a cycle of poverty. We are great at being poor, and earning pity and attention. It's time we stand-up as a nation and work towards Nepal's economic prosperity. Rather than reading about other countries building toilets for us, we should be doing it ourselves.

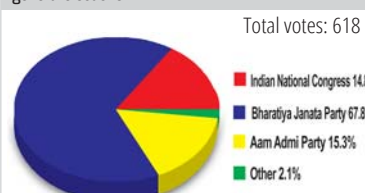
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Weekly Internet Poll #702

Q. Who do you think will emerge strongest from India's general elections?



Weekly Internet Poll # 703.
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Q. Are you more optimistic about 2071 compared to 2070?

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Healing the wounds of war



KUNDA DIXIT

This week marks 20 years since the genocide in Rwanda. More than 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed in a 100 day period in 1994 by the Hutu-led Interahamwe militia as the international community hesitated to intervene. The killings continue to haunt

the world, and weighs on its conscience. UN's inability to prevent the genocide prompted the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect. Rwanda itself has undergone remarkable transformation under President Paul Kagame. Rwanda has seen some stability and normalisation of ethnic relations although his regime has restricted civil and political freedom. Reconciliation in a country



THIS IS IT
Rubeena Mahato

like Rwanda is challenging, but the country has proved wrong predictions of a doomed future and relapse to war. This week's anniversary reminds us of the horrors that people are capable of inflicting on others in the name of ethnicity, race, and ideology. Commemorating also helps achieve another important function: establishing and reiterating the wrongfulness of those actions and of preventing a repetition. Without repentance and condemnation of past brutalities and rejection of violence and persecution as a means for political bargaining,

war-torn societies cannot move forward. This is a lesson we may want to consider as Nepal starts its own journey towards peace and rebuilding. Our conflict ended seven years ago, and the former rebels have successfully assimilated into the political mainstream. Amidst the political circus unfolding every day, we seemed to have forgotten that there was even a war here. There may be hundreds and thousands of war victims and their families waiting for closure, but for the most part, Nepal seemed to have forgotten that 20 years ago a political party thought it was acceptable to raise arms against a young democratic government.

After all these years of brainwashing his cadres to be willing to kill and die to overthrow an elected government to achieve radical transformation, Baburam Bhattarai doesn't seem to see the irony of now proposing a new force based on the fusion of socialism and capitalism. The romanticism of rebellion, of simple peasant folks rising up against oppression has a certain appeal for the intellectual class. It allows arm-chair revolutionaries to unleash brutality without ever going to the battlefield. While their grievances are exploited to justify violence, the poorest usually end up suffering the most in this power struggle. Whether it is the Senderistas in

Peru, the New People's Army in the Philippines, or the Maoists in Nepal, the rebel leadership is almost never from the underprivileged class they claim to represent. They maintain similar control and domination over the oppressed to use them as cannon fodder. The disillusionment in the rank and file of the breakaway CPN-M today proves that even they don't believe the war was waged to liberate them.

Forget the lost years, the resources diverted and the energy spent on dealing with the insurgency. The human cost of the war, the brutalisation of the society and the misery of the young Nepalis in Gulf who fled to escape the conflict should alone make us question if it was necessary to attain the grandstanding goals of the Maoist party. In *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, Gene Sharp notes that guerilla warfare almost never benefits the oppressed and leads to a high rate of casualty amongst them. Even when insurgencies succeed, the new regime that comes to power, he argues, ends up becoming more dictatorial than the one it replaced. Independent groups and institutions that protect individual liberties and democratic freedom are destroyed during the upheaval. It was not a dictatorship that the Maoist leadership was fighting against, but a six years

old democracy which had only started to consolidate its institutions. True, it was somewhat dysfunctional but by targeting it at a time when the royal right was also trying its best to undermine, it reversed this country's democratic evolution. The top brass of the Maoists may well have realised that their way might have caused much more harm than good, but they will never admit it. It was not their armed struggle but a spontaneous uprising of hundreds of thousands of ordinary, unarmed Nepalis on the streets of Kathmandu in April 2006 that forced the king to restore parliament. The progressive agenda that the Maoists now claim credit for, would have come in due course without the bloodshed. Lasting structural changes happen with institution building, good policies and participation of people, not through violence and coercion. The peace we have now is so fragile, any reflection on the war and the years following it is considered grave-digging. But a generation or two from now, how will people remember the conflict? Will they know better not to go down the same path when a group of politically ambitious people decide to 'finish the revolution'? More importantly, is it possible to achieve stability at all when violence remains an acceptable alternative for politically unsatisfied forces? We can continue to pretend the worst is over or we can make an honest assessment of the last 20 years so the future won't have to suffer. The choice is ours. @rubeenaa



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Think nationally, act locally

Federalism and local elections are not contradictory, they are two sides of the same coin

How often have we heard this: "Local election is a conspiracy against a new federal constitution."? This is stretching the argument, and by a long shot.

It would be a great achievement if the new constitution was promulgated by January 2015 as per the timetable recently announced by the parties. Who knows, they may give us a surprise that is, for once, pleasant.



THE DEADLINE

Damakant Jayshi

But given the track record of the political parties, it is plausible that the deadline will be missed. So shall we keep on postponing elections for VDCs, DDCs and municipalities?

The first meeting of the new Constituent Assembly was held two months after the election, it took four months to elect a new prime minister, and more weeks to agree on CA regulations after wasting time on needless haggling over who should certify the new constitution.

Now, even if the constitution is written and adopted within a year, the actual federal make-up of the country would take much longer than anticipated. New laws need to be written and ratified for a federalised Nepal. Laws governing provincial governments and their rights



and responsibilities, the subjects to be governed by national and state governments and legislatures, the relation between states, the tax collection structure – these are just a few of the issues that need to be legislated and passed. Given that there is no precedence in Nepal, we will be learning as we go along.

Moreover, the distribution of natural resources could be sensitive and is likely to cause much frustration and anger. Aggrieved communities

could take to the courts to resolve disputes, and that would be the best case scenario. Worse, animosities could spill out into violence, adding to the challenge faced by political parties. Then there is the election of state legislatures. It requires laws and a certain time-frame to accomplish these.

So, shall we postpone the local bodies' election until all of these are finalised? It could take decades. How are local polls against federalism? Lest we forget, all major parties had committed to


holding the local election within six months of the CA polls. Their election manifestos and the last point in the 11-point agreement of March 2013 specifically speaks of holding the local bodies' election by the end of 2070 BS, that is by 13 April this year. The agreement was signed by the UCPN(M), the NC, the UML and the then Madhesi Morcha.

But the parties that fared badly in the election – UCPN(M), Madhes-based parties and the 33 parties led by the CPN-Maoist,

which argue that unelected people are better suited to decide important matters of the country than the elected ones, are against holding the local body elections. They call it "a conspiracy against federalism". Even the NC and the UML that emerged as the largest parties after polls, have not been able to push through this objective.

Sixteen years has passed since the last elections for local bodies and 12 years since they were dissolved. The delivery of even the most basic of services in VDCs and DDCs have been seriously hit, corruption is rife and local development have been hit hard in many places.

And we are being told that there should not be local elections until the country is cared out into federal units. This is a disservice to the people who despite threats and pervading cynicism participated in the November election to demonstrate, yet again, their abiding faith in democracy. The parties need to match the people's faith in democratic culture. So far, the signs have been dispiriting.

After all, isn't federalism all about decentralising power, giving local people a bigger say in the affairs of the place they live in and strengthening grass-roots democracy? If one can use the term localising democracy, then this is it. Local bodies guarantee precisely that. So why is local elections against federalism?  @damakant



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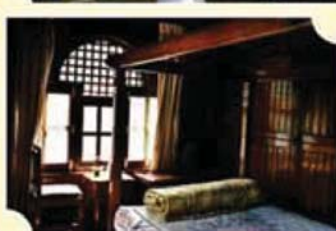


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The tale of two Commissions

BINITA DAHAL

Seven years after the conflict ended, the government on Wednesday finally tabled a bill in parliament to form two commissions to look into wartime excesses. In 2006, the seven political parties and the Maoists had agreed to form a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and a Commission on Disappearances (CD) within six months of the promulgation of Interim Constitution.

The proposal has been mired in controversy ever since, through six changes in governments. The delay was not because the Maoists and their former enemies disagree on its mandate, but because they agree. Neither side lost the war, and since politicians of all hues could have blood in their hands, they want to wash it off.

The bill was opposed by both former enemies in the name of protecting the peace process. Clauses in the draft bill include a general amnesty for criminals, which would go against the Supreme Court decision and against international law.

Thousands of conflict era survivors are still in search of justice. One such is the family of journalist Dekendra Thapa who was buried alive in Dailekh after being tortured by the Maoists in 2005. Last year, after one of the perpetrators admitted he

had helped bury Thapa, Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai and Attorney General Mukti Narayan Pradhan ordered the district police office and attorney to stop any further investigation into the First Information Report. The Maoists have maintained all along that all conflict-era cases should be handled by the new Commissions and not through the regular courts.

But the Supreme Court, addressing a writ petition against



Bhattarai and Pradhan, ruled that conflict-era crimes could be investigated and prosecuted under regular criminal procedure in the absence of transitional justice mechanisms. Sources involved in drafting the TRC and CD bills say most of the provisions are based on court directives, but senior Maoist leaders have been most vocal in objecting to them arguing that it goes against the Comprehensive Peace Accord and the Interim Constitution.

The main role of the

Commissions is to address transitional justice and hear the voice of the survivors. There are thousands of cases where the FIR on conflict-era cases has been ignored by police or the district attorney. And even when cases are filed, the government has been reluctant to punish criminals. Some politicians convicted and jailed by the courts are still walking free.

In cases perpetrated by both sides, like those of Arjun Lama and Maina Sunwar of Kavre, Ujjan Kumar Shrestha of Okhaldhunga, Krishna Prasad Adhikari of Gorkha, there has been no justice served. Now, it is even less likely the guilty will be caught.

In the last seven years of transition all six governments have tried to withdraw cases against their cadre and prevent the commissions being set up. The Ministry of Law has more than 2,000 conflict-era cases still pending but which successive governments tried to dismiss.

It is clear that the political will was always lacking, and the victims and their families will ever get justice. The political parties risk the anger of the victims and serious censure by the international community.

nepalitimes.com

True reconciliation, #661
Nothing, but the truth, #648
Justice is peace, #583

EVEREST BANK BIZ BRIEFS



Tee off

Gorkha Brewery has announced the dates of the Carlsberg Golf Series 2014. Open to amateur golfers from all over Nepal, the Carlsberg Golf Series will be played in three editions, the first of which was held this month at the Gokarna Forest Resort.

Fighting fire

Hansraj Hulaschand, the sole distributor of Bajaj Motorcycles in Nepal donated 10 'Fire Motorcycles' to the Juddha Barun Yantra fire station. The company hopes that these bikes will improve fire control by helping firefighters reach accident sites quicker.



Trade off

On the occasion of the Nepali New Year, EOL has introduced the 'Toshiba X-Change' scheme. Customers can now trade in any of their old CRT/LED/ LCD television for brand new Toshiba television sets.

World class

Pooja International Nepal unveiled its newest Volkswagen showroom at Thapathali on Friday. "We hope to have more interaction with our customers and increase our after-sales service," reads the press release.



Expanding wings

Qatar Airways has introduced a new route between Doha and Philadelphia International Airport (PHL), making the city the airline's fifth gateway to the United States. Its existing hubs include New York, Washington, Chicago, Houston, and Philadelphia.

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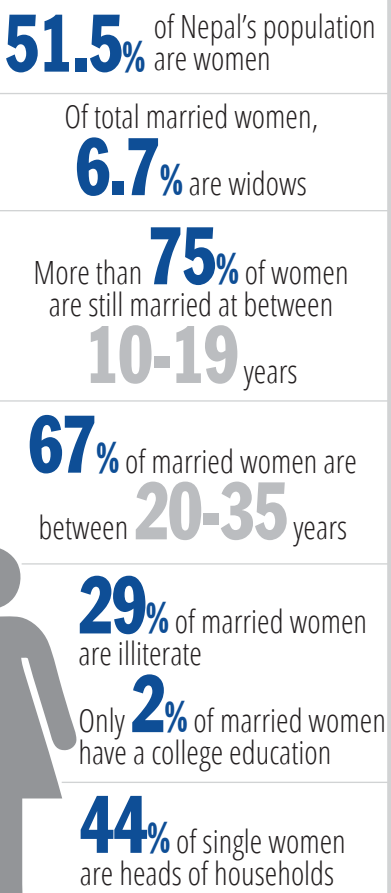
JUANITA MALAGON

Paru and Lila have many things in common: they are young women from remote parts of Nepal, they have children. And they are both widows. They also own mobile phones, a device that has transformed the lives of single mothers who are often ostracised by families and rejected by society. A woman may not have to jump into the funeral pyre when her husband dies anymore, but she is required to mourn her husband endlessly and never remarry. Many don’t have access to property, have difficulty obtaining birth certificates, citizenship cards, and proof of relationships for their children. Single women are vulnerable to abuse and


sometimes denied access to their own children by the husband’s family. Paru who is from remote Bajura district was married at 14. Her husband escaped to India to avoid forced recruitment into the Maoist army, but died two years after their marriage, leaving Paru to raise their son who is now 10-years-old. After her husband died, her in-laws began to mistreat her. She couldn’t leave the house, attend religious functions, and was even banned to talk to anybody, especially men. “When people see a young widow they naturally assume that she will remarry and run away with the property with the new husband” Paru told us over her mobile phone. The 26-year-old says she now contacts other widows like her over the phone and provides them with counselling. By renting

Owning a phone empowers single mothers, helps them become independent, and earn respect

her phone to neighbours who pay per call, she has also been able to generate a small income. Her financial independence has earned her new respect in the community. Today Paru and many other widows like her have mobile phones donated by Women for Human Rights (WHR) which provides widows in districts like Bajura, Dadeldhura, Palpa, Sankhuwasabha, Saptari, Sindhuli and Kavre with mobiles. Lila B (*pic*) used to work on a construction site in Bardibas in the eastern Tarai with her husband until he died. Alone with small children, and with no means to raise them, she moved to Kathmandu and found a cleaner’s job. Lila doesn’t want to talk about her past and gives short answers and changes the subject when asked about her life. But she is proud now to have her own mobile phone, and says it has helped her keep in touch with friends. Nepal’s mobile penetration rate has grown to 75 per cent from barely 30 per cent in just five years. WHR hopes to expand its pilot project to distribute donated cell phones to more women like Paru and Lila for whom a mobile is not a luxury but a device that gives them a sense of belonging and empowerment through the ability to communicate.



SOURCE: WHR

“Owning a mobile phone helps single women become independent, start a business and be a part of the community,” explained Shreejana Kafle, a social worker with WHR. Lila lives alone with her two young daughters in a tiny rented room that has a stove, a double bed and a small wardrobe. But her most prized possession is her old Nokia. She says: “I’m able to listen to music, take pictures of my children, and call someone if something happens to me.” 
Donate used mobiles to: Women for Human Rights, Single Women Group +977 1 444 6020, 441 3868

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14 April marks the first day of the traditional Tamil calendar and is celebrated by Tamils in Tamilnadu and Pondicherry in India, as well as within the Tamil communities in Malaysia, Singapore and Mauritius. In the temple city of Madurai, the New Year is celebrated in the Meenakshi Temple where a huge exhibition called *Chitterai Porutkaatchi* is held. Each household throws big feasts and entrances are decorated elaborately with kolams. In the northern part of Tamilnadu, the game of '*por-thenkai*' or coconut wars is played in villages.

EVENTS



Climate+change,
the four and half month long
exhibition on the changing
environment in the Himalaya comes to
an end next week, be sure to catch it if
you haven't been there.
*Runs until 12 April,
Nepal Art Council Babarmahal*

Czech castles,

the National Museum of Czech Republic
comes to Kathmandu with an exhibition
on the country's castles.
*Runs to 25 April, 10am to 5pm,
Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal*

Scooter Diva Cup,

safely race fellow female scooter riders
and win the Scooter Diva Cup 2014.
3 May, 10am, Monster Bash, Kupandol

Random impact,

an exhibition of contemporary arts and
performances.
Runs till 18 April, Alliance Francaise, Teku

All that glitters,

an exhibition of the art of British artist
Annette Ashworth. *Runs till 22 April,
Classic Gallery, Pulchok, 9841224753*

The Spoken word,

spit it out with the best slam poets of
Kathmandu.
*12 April, 2 to 5pm, Electric Pagoda,
Thamel*

Open house,

featuring the work of artists Arpita
Shakya, Ashuram Khaiju, and Palpasa
Manandhar.
Runs till 7 July, 11am to 6pm

Twannasin,

an exhibition of paintings by
Bipana Maharjan.
*12 to 25 April, 12 to 7pm ,except
Saturdays, Artist Proof Gallery, Pulchok*



Educational spaces,

students, artists, and experts discuss how
museums and galleries can be used to
get students engaged in thinking about
critical issues.
11 April, Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal

Common effort,

a discussion on political transition and
education in the context of federal state
restructuring.
*12 April, 3 to 5pm,
National Law College, Pulchok*

DINING



Saigon Pho,

spacious interior with authentic
Vietnamese dishes. *Lajimpat*

New Tushita Restaurant,

relaxing ambience and good food. Don't
miss out on their penne with creamy
bacon and mushroom sauce. *Lajimpat,
(01)44432957*

Public Cave,

while its pizzas, sizzlers, and spring
rolls are a hit among customers, the
main attraction is karaoke. Dihikopatan,
Pokhara, 9856032958



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*

Hotel Shangri-La,

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

Balthali Village Resort,

a small, cosy retreat with a bird's eye view
of wheat fields dotted with ochre painted
houses. *Balthali, Kavre, 9851075818*

Tass and Tawa,

savour a wide variety of Nepali meat
dishes and reserve your palate for the
heavenly Chusta. *Pulchowk, Kathmandu*



Pack my lunch,


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

Natssul,


reminiscent of the establishments in
Seoul's Hongdae district, this eatery
strives to be the best Korean restaurant in
town. *Pokhara*

Backyard,


reasonable prices and modest and
simple food have made this restaurant
everyone's favourite. *Jhamsikhel*





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MUSIC

**Shastriya sangeet,**

dabble in the magic of Hindustani classical music. 15 April, 3pm onwards, Ram Mandir, Battisputali

Kripa Unplugged,

young aspiring musicians give their own renditions of classics. 8.30 and 10.30pm, TTV, youtube.com/user/KripaUnplugged

**Starry Night BBQ,**

catch Ciney Gurung live as you chomp on your meat stick.

Rs 1,299, 7pm onwards, Fridays, Shambala Garden Café. Hotel Shangri-La, (01)4412999 (Ext. 7520/7515)

Music Jams,

enjoy great live music every Tuesday. Moksh, Jhamsikhel

Reggae night,

get a load of jah music from Chari Amilo Kala Samuha every weekend. Rs 200, 28 March, 6pm onwards, Base Camp, Jhamsikhel

GETAWAYS

Shivapuri Cottage,

escape the hustle and bustle of Kathmandu and enjoy peace, tranquility, good food, and fresh air. Rs 3,500 per person per night inclusive of dinner and breakfast. Budhanilkantha, 9841371927

Temple Tree Resort and Spa,

a peaceful place to stay, complete with a swimming pool, massage parlour, and sauna, it'll be hard to leave once you go in. Gaurighat, Lakeside, (61)465819

Buddha Maya Gardens Hotel,

add value to your travel in Lumbini with a stay at probably the best hotel in the area. Lumbini, (71)580220, 9801033109, info@ktmgh.com

Park Village Resort,

far away from the madding crowd yet so close to the city. Budhanilkantha, (01)4375280, pvh@wlink.com.np

**The Last Resort,**

test your limits with canyoning, hiking, rock climbing, rafting, mountain biking, bungee jumping. BhoteKosi, SindhuPalchok, (01)4700525/1247

HAPPY 2071

The Nepali New Year is turning a leaf this weekend, and we bring you what's happening and where.

Bisket jatra,

they make merry throughout the country during the new year, but in Bhaktapur it is especially grand - watch out for inpromptu photo-ops. 14 April, Bhaktapur

Bandipur festival,

spend this new year at Bandipur, a quaint old Nepali trading town and now a popular tourist destination. 12 to 16 April, 9am to 7pm, Bandipur, Tanahun, 9851046368

Oldies gold,

get nostalgic this New Year's Eve and party with Prism, one of Nepal's oldest rock bands. Rs 2,500, 13 April, 6.45 onwards, Manny's Eatery and Tapas Bar, Jawalakhel

Round and round,

celebrate New Year's Eve by enjoying a panoramic view of the city in Kathmandu's new revolving restaurant: unlimited food, unlimited drinks, unlimited fun but limited tickets. Rs 3,000 for individuals, Rs 5,500 for two, Cloud Zero, Summit Residency, Airport, (01)4112636/37/38/39



Boudha Stupa view Guest House & Roof top Restaurant with Cafe

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AWARDS



BABY SPA

**TOH EE MING AND
HARIZ BAHARUDIN**

A nurse gently lifts the baby out of the thick swathe of blankets and begins to delicately massage the baby's chest in a regular, clockwise motion. The baby is then bathed in a bucket of warm water and rubbed with mustard oil, until she gurgles in contentment and falls asleep.

This is one of the few techniques of Newari baby massage that was taught to nurses at Dhulikhel Hospital at a workshop held last week. The training, organised by Nasma Scheibler-Shrestha, is an attempt at reviving the art of traditional baby massages that ironically has seen a downfall at home, while gaining popularity elsewhere.

Nasma is the woman responsible for taking this ancient Newari tradition to Europe. When Nasma, who settled in Zurich after marriage, had her first child, her mother wanted to give the baby a traditional oil massage. But the hospital staff objected, as they did not understand why a healthy baby would require a massage, recalls Nasma. But after much persistence, the hospital staff finally obliged. The episode motivated Nasma to promote this alternative practice and in 1986, she opened the Professional School of Baby Massage in Zurich, where she taught adapted Newari massage to suit the European lifestyle. Over 1000 students have since received the training.

These massages are believed to promote better sleeping, relieve colic, prevent digestive problems and enhance the infant's immune system. But most importantly, it gives the mother time to set aside a quiet space and communicate her love for the new-born through touch. According to pediatricians, such closeness is also necessary for the baby's psychological and physical growth.

In Europe, time-starved working mothers have also started turning to baby massage as a way

Reviving the art of traditional baby massages

to bond with their child. However, it is not just women who sign up for classes. Fathers are doing it too. "When I first saw men in these classes, I was shocked as this doesn't happen in Nepal," says Ashma Shrestha, a midwife who trained under Nasma.

To suit the Western culture and habits, Nasma had to make a few changes. Heaters and carpets replaced traditional fire and straw mats. The knowledge that was

passed down orally from mother to daughter is now written down in systematic steps. "We're trying to preserve our tradition, but develop it in a modern way too," says Nasma.

While the popularity of baby massages has seen a surge in Europe, over in Nepal, the practice is in danger of extinction as mindsets become more westernised. Nasma explains, "In Nepal, there is no written record of

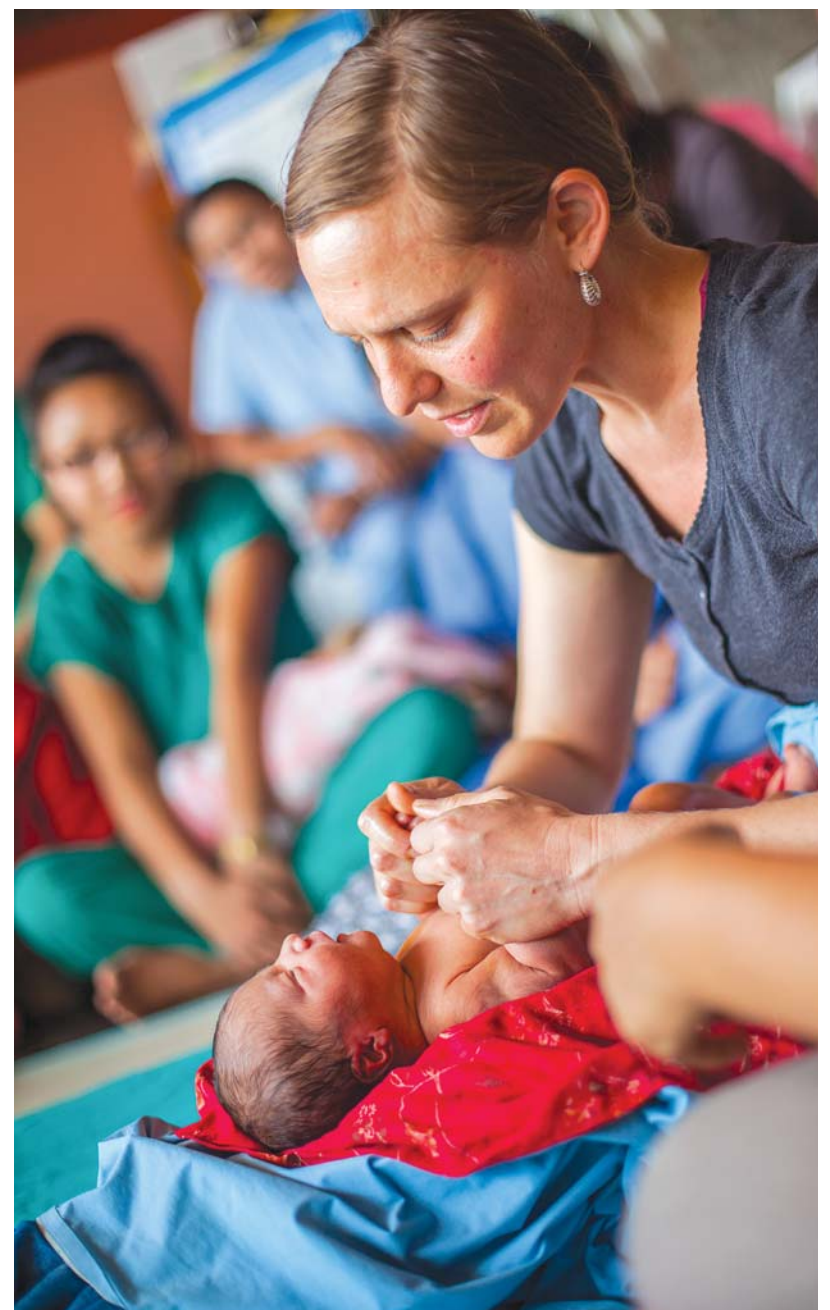
baby massage. The young parents have to rely on the customary oral tradition. But with the growing popularity of nuclear families, this tradition is also getting lost."

Nasma sees an urgent need to revitalise this tradition, and is working towards making people more aware. Currently, she is advocating for the baby massage to be carried out immediately after birth as mothers as per general practice are separated from their

babies and kept aside to rest for two to three weeks. "After being in the womb for so long, they enter a new, unfamiliar world, and to keep them away from their mothers for so long is like punishing them," says Nasma. Thus, it is important for the mother to hold the baby and reassure it, as it is their first contact.

But for that to happen, Nasma admits there needs to be regular, systematic training





for professionals like midwives, pediatric nurses and physiotherapists, who can then spread their knowledge to future parents as she sought to do with her workshop. nasma@bnm-newar.ch
www.bmm-newar.ch

LOST ART: (clockwise) A day-old baby is gently lowered into a bucket of warm water which is used to replicate the warm environment of a mother's womb, Ashma Shrestha, a midwife from Austria, has returned to Nepal with the aim to train more locals in the art form, a Swiss volunteer demonstrates a baby massage technique, application of mustard oil before the massage is believed to keep the baby warm during the massage, babies are first massaged, bathed and then massaged with mustard oil, Nasmah shows participants how to make a carry-on from a long cloth.

nepalitimes.com

Baby's day out, #278
A newly born gets a head massage

ALL PICS: TOH EE MING AND HARIZ BAHARUDIN



SHERLOCK

Flatmate wanted: must share bathrooms, living rooms, kitchens, mailboxes, and landlady's prying. You may find your laptop's battery drained and IP tracked. Violent criminals may send you text messages and or lock you in their cross-hairs, mistaking you for yours truly.

Such is the volatile but minutely analysed world of 221B, Baker Street, where army doctor John Watson (played by Martin Freeman of The Office and The Hobbit fame) moves in as he seeks a sense of belonging in his solitary civilian life. Watson has tried everything from therapy to bloggingbut can't keep his mind off the war. If he's looking forward to friendly chitchat, however, Watson is severely mistaken.

In the BBC's hit series Sherlock, Benedict Cumberbatch's Holmes is

so addicted to crime scenes and morgue visits, he has no need of friendship and isn't interested in conversation. Frequently invited to help police investigate cases, Holmes doesn't miss a chance to belittle their inefficiency and condescendingly provides leads that ultimately lead to the crime being solved. When Holmes explains why a serial killer made mistakes ("The frailty of genius is that it needs an audience") the audience can only smile guiltily because it applies to him, too.

As Holmes solves one case after another with consummate ease, he finally comes face to face with an equal nemesis and this is when things begin to get really interesting. Obsessed with crushing Holmes by any means possible, provided Holmes admits defeat, Jim Moriarty

(not the former US ambassador to Nepal) is brought to life on television with such vileness that Arthur Conan Doyle's description of Moriarty, through Watson's reportage, seems bland.

Also expunged are Holmes's cape, pipe, and hunting hat. This 21st century Sherlock takes place in an era of smartphones and smartbombs, and digital manipulation is the norm. And in contrast with Doyle's moody detective, Sherlock here is a nasty, almost vampire-like mad genius who wears nicotine patches and suffers no fools.

In choosing from 56 Sherlock Holmes novels and stories, it's not as if there is a dearth of material for those involved in this BBC makeover. However, credit must be given to the writers for preserving the persona and charisma of Arthur Conan Doyle's hero, while also keeping abreast of technological advances. Never has Sherlock Holmes's implausible befuddling of our senses seemed so tangible and probable.

Sherlock only has three episodes per season, which means dialogue and plot are taut and fresh, and only recently announcements were made that a new season will be aired next year. Running at 90 minutes, each episode would qualify as a standalone film if all of them weren't so similar in style.

Sunir Pandey

nepalimes.com

Watch trailer



HAPPENINGS



BIKASH DWARE

NEW FACES: Prime Minister Sushil Koirala administers oath of office and secrecy to newly appointed ministers Sunil Thapa of RPP-N and Nilam KC of CPN-ML at Sheetal Niwas, Kathmandu on Monday.



HARIZ BAHARUDIN

ALMOST SET: Preparations underway for Bisket Jatra at Bhaktapur on Sunday. The eight-day long festival began on Thursday.



BIKRAM RAI

LONG WAIT: Patients form a cue outside the Geta Eye Hospital in Kailali on Friday. Most have come from India for treatment.



LAXMI GAUTAM

OUR TURN: Students of Rama Bajar in Panchthar district take part in a rally to declare schools as peace zones.

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If you surf YouTube as much as I do, love music, and are a big fan of covers, chances are you'll have come across these names: Smriti Shrestha, Shreya Rai, Bipul Pandey. Amongst the hundreds of new-gen Nepali musicians who have taken to the video streaming site to showcase their talent (sometimes non-existent ala Mr Bhim Niraula), these three stand out for their renditions of classic Nepali hits that have not only earned them subscribers but also ignited a renewed interest in Nepali music of the yester years.

Shrestha's cover of legendary singer Aruna Lama's *Pohor Saal* is in a word 'exquisite'. The 24-year-old's raw, rustic tone is the hero of this acoustic version which manages to maintain the melancholy feel of this famous song almost as well as the original.

"I've always loved old Nepali songs. This cover was an effort to bring these forgotten songs back to people's memory," writes Shrestha in a Facebook message from Boston where she is studying International Relations. In five months, the video has received a lot of love and a lot of views, making it her most popular upload till date. Says Shrestha: "The feedback I get from people on YouTube has encouraged me to do this more seriously and the criticism has



SMRITI SHRESTHA



BIPUL PANDEY



SHREYA RAI

Tube stars

By revisiting forgotten classics, young Nepali YouTubers are introducing iconic Nepali songs to Generation Y and earning fans

helped in my growth as an artist."

As with Shrestha, it is UK-based artist Shreya Rai's rendition of *Eh Kancha* originally sung by Aruna Lama and Rudra Gurung that has earned her more hits than many of her other videos. Rai's cherubic voice lends this timeless love song a lullabylike feel and I suggest listening to it right before going to bed. But might I warn you that you'll be

hooked and it'll only be after playing it another 10, 20 times before you finally go offline for the day. Since the video was first uploaded in July last year, comments have come flurrying on Shreya's wall, all positive and full of praise for the young singer.

For 23-year-old Bipul Pandey, YouTube came as the perfect outlet to release his hidden musical aspirations. A self-confessed introvert, Bipul says even his friends didn't know that he could sing. That was until he uploaded his first YouTube video *Barsha* four years ago. But it was only his cover of Narayan Gopal's *Euta Manchhe*, that YouTubers really began to take notice.

"YouTube has given me a platform through which I am able to connect with a larger group of audience and artists,"

RECOMMENDS

writes Bipul who is currently pursuing his undergraduate degree

in Physics and Mathematics from the University of Texas at Austin. "Apart from that, I've also received positive feedback from some of the actual artists whose songs I covered which was simply unbelievable," he adds.

The popularity of these three artists' covers of classics show that there is more than a place for forgotten medlodies in today's time of eletronica and autotune. Tsering Dolker Gurung

nepalitimes.com

Pohar Saal (cover)
Eh Kancha (cover)
Euta Mancheko (cover)

The huge influx of Chinese tourists in Nepal recently has led to many eateries opening up in Kathmandu, especially in Thamel, to cater to this emerging demand. The emphasis now is on providing 'authentic' Chinese cuisine as opposed to the westernised ketchup-sweetened versions of what normally passes for Chinese fare.

The Jyatha area is home to many such restaurants and one of the newest entrants is the rather speciously named Chinese Garden Restaurant, for there isn't a garden in sight, not even verdantly over-flowing flower pots. The rest of the décor consists of paste-outs of air-hostesses on the windows and the water-cooler and an overabundance of kitschy oriental inspired wall paper, red paper lanterns all accompanied to the strains of tinkly music and the gurgling pump of the fish tank. Owned by Chinese residents, it serves various dishes cooked by a chef of the same country.

The hot-pot (the price depends on the assortments you order) is what brought us to the Chinese Garden Restaurant on a miserably cold evening, for global warming has wrought such changes in our weather patterns that days can be cold enough in April to indulge in some bone warming, heart pleasing soup.

The Hot-pot is a dish you cook at the table itself. You select between spicy soup and plain



PIC: RUBY TUESDAY

broth, or can opt for both, like we did. And then you can go crazy with all that you would like to add to the simmering stock.

The selection is vast. We settled for chicken strips, pork, gizzard, buffalo tripe, tofu, mushroom, spinach, and yams. You are also provided with the basics like sliced onions, tomatoes, ginger and a variety of condiments.

The spicy soup is for those who like the zing of Szechuan pepper. The combination of the

peppers with chillies and other spices creates a broth that is so hot and so zesty that it can effectively numb your tongue. The plain chicken broth is definitely my recommendation because you can always add spices and chillies to suit individual tastes.

The Hot-Pot is not a meal to enjoy solitarily or one that you can rush through. Gather a group of like-minded friends, click your chopsticks and get dunking. This dish encourages conversation, as

CHINESE GARDEN RESTAURANT

the meats take time to cook, the vegetables need to blanch and the yams must absorb the flavours of the broth. Leisurely scoop out choice bits, add it to your bowl of rice and allow the goodness of this humble yet nourishing soup to seep into all your cells that needed healing.

Being an 'over-orderer', I'd also asked for the Roast Duck but that was so excruciatingly bad that I have decided to erase that experience from my memory. I choose to revel in the sense of communion and harmony and general well-being that the hot-pot conjured.

So will I revisit Chinese Garden restaurant- definitely for their hot-pot. The complimentary tea that accompanied the meal was soothing and tasted vaguely like cream cracker biscuits.

The staff is friendly and the ambiance requisitely Chinese. It's a nice place if you want to meet up for good, authentic Chinese food with friends or family. The next time Kathmandu's weather

decides to go crazy on you, waltz on down to this Chinese restaurant tucked away in the alleys of Thamel. Ruby Tuesday

How to get there: On entering Thamel, take the first left that leads to Jyatha. Walk down till almost the end of the road and look for its signboard on the right, opposite the International Youth Hostel. Chinese Garden Restaurant is on the first floor.



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That calls for a Carlsberg



BEWARE OF VECTORS

World Health Day on 7 April focused on vector-borne disease – a fancy way of describing infections in which an insect carries the bug to humans. The best known vector is the mosquito which transmits the malaria parasite.



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

Now that summer is almost here it may be useful to look at what our unfriendly neighbourhood mosquitos are up to, especially in spreading dengue fever which has seen a huge surge in tropical South Asia in recent times. In recent years dengue has spread across the Tarai in summer, and even Kathmandu has seen the occasional patient. This spread is not surprising because there is a migrant population with the disease and

an abundant supply of the carrier mosquitoes. Because of the porous border with India, many migrant labourers (both Nepalis and Indians) with the disease enter Nepal. The vector mosquito enjoys a blood meal from these infected patients and transmits the disease to a healthy person after a bite. More importantly, different species of mosquitoes transmit different diseases. So, the mosquito that transmits malaria will not transmit dengue. Mosquitos that transmit dengue are called Aedes while it is the female Anopheles that transmits malaria, and the Culex carries Japanese encephalitis. The diagnosis of dengue should be strongly considered in any patient presenting with fever that has developed within 14 days of even a brief trip to dengue- endemic places like Bangkok and Delhi. The dengue mosquito is generally a city dweller unlike the malaria mosquito, which prefers a rural environment. In most people, dengue illness, which comprises of fever, headache, eye pain and joint aches, subsides in about a week's time. Doctors will treat only the

symptoms in dengue as there is no specific antidote. For prevention, use mosquito repellents and wear full length clothing even during the day since the dengue mosquito is a day time mosquito unlike the malaria mosquito which is nocturnal. Turn over watering cans and pails after use so that the dengue mosquito does not breed in them. Although typhoid fever, commonly seen in Nepal, is not a vector-born disease as it is transmitted by eating or drinking contaminated food or water, typhus (which almost sounds like typhoid and has lead to confusion) is vector-borne. Definitive studies done at Patan Hospital have established that murine typhus fever is a very common cause of fever in Nepal. Murine typhus organism (called rickettsiae) is carried by fleas which live on rats. These fleas transmit the disease to humans when the flea faecal material contaminate the area where the flea bite takes place. So even the vector (flea) is being carried by another animal (rat) before it finally reaches humans. Clearly, diseases like murine typhus thrive in places where housing is poor and the environment contaminated. Hence the disease exacts its heaviest toll where the poor live. Indeed, on World Health Day, WHO's Margaret Chan said: "The control of vector-borne diseases can make a major contribution to poverty reduction, as it precisely targets the poor."

GIZMO by YANTRICK


Flat magic

With a reputation of manufacturing solid high-definition televisions behind them, Toshiba have now entered the Smart TV domain with their new L4300 Series of smart LED TVs. The screen sizes range from 32 to 58 inches, but Yantrick found the 39 inch specimen a perfect balance between price and screen size. Toshiba have chosen to follow a simple blueprint in designing the 39L4300. A rounded rectangular frame, coloured gun-metal like the rest of Toshiba's TVs, envelopes the flat 39 inch screen. The sides and top of the TV have a glossy black bezel, and on the bottom runs a metal strip. As you press the on switch, it comes to life in pure HD. With an energy-efficient LED backlight etching out the sharp contrast, the on-board AutoView component automatically adjusts settings based on room lighting conditions. Also on board is a colouring technology called ColorMaster which makes use of a six-colour palette to control hue, saturation, and brightness. When Yantrick made it a point to check true 1080p video on the TV, it was almost like going to the cinema. With its built-in 20W speakers, it also sounded like one, as far as TVs go. Toshiba have used all their experience and resources to make sure that movies, games, and true HD television content look and sound immaculate.




Fortunately, even at 39 inches, Toshiba have incorporated the Advanced Cloud TV feature within the 39L. This smart TV platform, powered by Google's Android operating system, really makes the product value for money. And faster too, because with it comes the ability to connect with other Android devices as well as access to thousands of apps. The 39L comes with Wi-Fi and HD connectivity and allows you to hook up your laptops, tablets, mobile devices, USBs - you name it. Families may be particularly fond of Family Calendar, an app that allows you to send pictures and messages to your relatives. There's also a streaming news section that keeps you posted, and is customisable with your most trusted news sources. As a source of amusement and information, the internet is already consumed as an alternative to television. No worries then, because the Toshiba 39L comes equipped to handle both.

Yantick's Verdict: The Toshiba 39L4300 satiates your yearning for HD entertainment without burning a hole in your pocket.

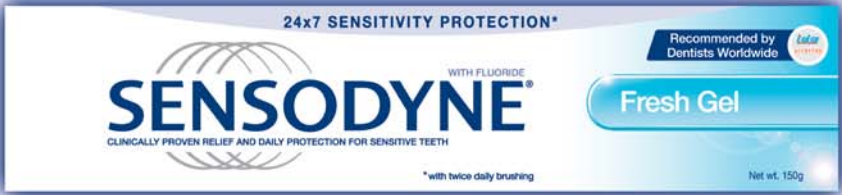


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INDIA ELECTIONS
2014

India's month-long election may be happening in the world's biggest democracy, but the country's system of parliamentary representation is deeply flawed. There is a disconnect between the popular imagination about the role of MPs and the functions the Indian Constitution has scripted for them.



LOOK OUT
Ajaz Ashraf

MPs are expected to participate in the framing of laws, discuss policies of the government, reining it from an executive over-reach. They are also supposed to articulate the issues involving those they represent.

But talk to people across India today and you realise the MPs are not judged on their performance in Parliament. People grade them on parameters the MP is not much in control of: development. Accessibility is another yardstick. Did the MPs continue their dialogue with the electorate after getting elected? Voters want an intimate relationship with MPs, wishing to see and speak to them, regardless of the effectiveness of this dialogue. Yet, such interactions are impossible because Indian constituencies are huge with an average population of 2.5 million spread out in remote hamlets and bustling towns.

An MP wishing to establish personal contact with the electorate must commit enormous resources, energy and time. This is precisely why Indian democracy thrives on a patronage system: the MP maintains personal contacts with influential, often wealthy, mofussil elites, hoping they will help harvest votes in return for favours later.

In no position to address the aspirations of people, political leaders harness caste, religious or linguistic identities to mobilise votes. They turn elections into an issue of group or community pride and solidarity. Caste and religion become the most cost-effective methods of mobilisation in a short time.

Indeed, the mammoth constituencies provide an intrinsic advantage to big parties which can mobilise election funds. Money is needed to bankroll advertisement campaigns and party footsoldiers who enable a candidate to establish a substantial presence, and for pay-offs to leaders of social groups to which they don't belong but want

Patronage and representation

India's election exposes flaws in its system of parliamentary representation



CAMPAIGN TRAIL: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on a recent visit to Odisha

RAHULGANDHIINDIA.WORDPRESS.COM

their votes.

The disconnect between the constitutional contemplation and the popular perception of the MP's role was the principal factor behind the demand to initiate the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme. In his new book, *Public Money, Private Agenda: The Use and Abuse of MPLADs*, journalist A. Surya Prakash says the idea of having a separate development fund for MPs was a consequence of the delinking of Assembly elections from Lok Sabha elections, which, till 1967, were held simultaneously.

However, Indira Gandhi decided to hold parliamentary elections in 1971, a year before they were due, triggering unintended repercussions. Till then, the MPs piggybacked the MLAs of their constituencies.

The delinking of Lok Sabha and assembly elections provided MPs with a personality of their own, but also mounted pressure on them to address their electorate's concerns to bag their votes. It was this realisation which prompted MPs to clamour for a separate fund to meet the needs of their constituencies. Since 1993, each MP is entitled to

recommend projects worth ₹50 million per year.

Considering the enormous size of Lok Sabha constituencies, an expenditure of ₹250 million over five years, even when diligently spent and monitored, can't lead to overwhelming changes in the lives of citizens. Worse, the efficacy of MP local allocations have been eroded because of defalcation of funds.

No wonder, sitting MPs increasingly incur the wrath of voters. For instance, 60 per cent of sitting MPs who contested the 2009 Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh

16th
INDIAN ELECTION

Dates: In 9 phases from
7 April–12 May

Results to be declared on
16 MAY

543
PARLIAMENT SEATS
(272 needed for majority)

814.5
MILLION VOTERS
(100 million new voters
since last election 2009)

Cost of elections:

₹**35** BILLION

Campaign spending by candidates:

₹**305** BILLION

lost. The list of sitting MPs who won in 2009 mostly comprised of those who had a national profile, or were dynasts, or caste and religious leaders, or had a certain glamour quotient. Indeed, India's representative system will increasingly seem a sham unless, for starters, the existing parliamentary constituencies are split and the role of MPs redefined. ashrafajaz3@gmail.com



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Wealth from waste

We need to dump our attitude that waste is useless and needs to be disposed

BHUSHAN TULADHAR



RECYCLE, REUSE, REDUCE

The answer to Kathmandu Valley's garbage problem is right under our noses

DONATELLA LORCH



PICS: DONATELLA LORCH

Although Kathmandu's world heritage sites are well known, few may be aware of a new archeological dig that stretches for several kilometers along the Bagmati River. Deep trenches have been dug out, creating 20ft-high hills made of dirt held together with striations of blue, pink and black polypropylene that tell the 30-year local history of the plastic bag: Nepal's most ubiquitous landmark.

In the Kathmandu Valley, garbage is the gift that keeps on giving. It is everywhere, stuffed in plastic bags and dropped in drainage ditches or piled high in empty lots, on the roadside or on the edges of the city's rivers. It is thrown out of bus windows, off roof tops into neighbor's yards. As long as their house and yard is swept clean, the vast majority of valley-dwellers don't seem to care. When it gets too high, the garbage is burned in open areas, the toxic fumes blanketing nearby houses. The plastic bags clog the rivers and choke drainage pipes, creating flooding and spreading fetid, disease-carrying refuse. The health impacts are felt at all levels.

Rapid unplanned urbanisation has brought traffic jams and choking pollution, but politicians in Nepal's new government have, with few exceptions, shown little political commitment to solving the problem of garbage. In 2011, the government passed the Solid Waste Management Act that set rules, regulations and fines for transgressors but enforcement is weak and detailed responsibilities are unclear.

The Valley needs clean water, but the sole operating waste water treatment plant is handicapped

by more than 12 hours of power cuts a day and needs to be overhauled. Sewage flows untreated into the rivers. There are no proper slaughter houses in any municipalities and no rules for disposing of the city's dead cows and dogs. They end up in shallow graves near river banks, leaching into the water supply. Hospitals are responsible for disposing their own hazardous waste such as needles, tissues, organs and other body parts, but the government has not provided a dumping site. Some hospitals burn in the open, and others use incinerators that releases dioxin and furan, two highly carcinogenic pollutants.

An exception is the government-run Bir Hospital that has even built a bio-gas plant on its premises. Sumitra Amatya, executive director of the Ministry of Urban Development's solid waste management technical support center, says sanitation in the Valley is in a state of crisis management.

Serving Kathmandu and Lalitpur, the Valley's only working landfill, Sisdoile, 24 km from the capital, is almost full and during the monsoons is frequently cut off from the city by floods and landslides. The government has bought the land for another site but needs billions of rupees and at least four years to make it operational, Amatya says.

As a stop gap measure, Sisdoile is being expanded. The Asian Development Bank, which last year published the most researched and detailed Solid Waste Management report on Nepal to date, will begin work later this year on Kathmandu's waste-water treatment plant. The

government has begun dredging the highly-polluted Bagmati, with the aim of laying down sewage pipes as well as planting green areas. It is unearthing tons of dumped plastic and earth but narrowing the river-bed, which experts say can cause severe flooding during the monsoons, spreading disease through its water.

City life has eroded the social dynamic of communities that galvanise neighbors to act together. Many try to make a difference. But they are not enough. One ongoing high-visibility clean-up campaign, led by Chief Secretary Leela Mani Poudel, has been bringing hundreds of people together to clean the fetid Bagmati every Saturday morning for the past 45 weeks. But a one-time cleaning, though highly commendable, is not a permanent solution and it will not make the river waste-free. In addition, small non-governmental organisations, many of them focusing on women, teach composting and garbage segregation.

Politicians are quick to point to a new landfill as the solution. But only 40 to 50 percent of the Valley's garbage goes to Sisdoile, and most of it enters the dump unsegregated. The rest ends up on the streets and rivers. Changing the mindset of city-dwellers is the only way forward, Amatya says.

Since 60 per cent of Kathmandu's garbage is organic, composting is one solution. There is the need for a government-supported country-wide public awareness and education campaign about the 3R's – Recycle, Reuse, Reduce in schools, in the media, door to door.

The campaign can start with the environmental damage of one-time-use plastic bags. As Bhushan Tuladhar, regional technical advisor (South Asia) of U.N. Habitat, puts it: "We have to dump the attitude." Only a social movement can keep Kathmandu from being buried in garbage. www.donatellalorch.com



nepalitimes.com

Out of sight is not out of mind, #574
Cash from trash, #418
Rubbish life, #374
Interactive chart on Solid Waste Management

“Waste is merely raw material in the wrong place.”
Fedrick A. Talbot, 1920

This quote from the book *Millions from Waste* is as relevant today as it was when Talbot penned it almost 100 years ago.

50 years ago, Gopal Singh Nepali, while describing the customs of the Newar society in Kathmandu Valley in his book *The Newars* wrote: “Waste was sold for Rs 0.50 per tin.” This demonstrates three critical principles of waste management that was part of the Newar culture:

- waste has value
- waste management means waste recycling
- waste generators are themselves responsible for managing their waste

Today, when most people have forgotten these core values associated with waste management, Birgunj-based photographer Manish Paudel (*pic, left*) has once again reminded us how valuable wastes can be. For his exhibition, part of SUS.TAIN.KTM, a joint exhibition of eight photographers who through photographic narratives showed how the city is coping with its growth, Manish collected different types of waste and photographed them as one would a commercial product (*see pics*); separating each item in the waste stream and highlighting it – thus giving it its identity and value.

Most people, from waste generators to policy makers, view waste management as an activity related to cleaning and dumping useless matter. This will never help us manage our waste. It will only transfer this resource to another place at a great cost to the economy and the

environment. Waste needs to be sorted and used as a resource, as suggested by Manish, along with many people in this country who continue to turn trash into cash and make a living from it.

About two thirds of our waste is organic materials such as kitchen waste. This can easily be converted into compost or biogas – both very valuable products for an agricultural country like ours, which is also facing problems of energy security. About 10 per cent of the waste is plastics and another 10 per cent is paper, both of which can be recycled. Similarly, other materials such as metals and even inert materials such as soil and rocks can be recycled, leaving very little left for the landfill.

Nepal's new Solid Waste Management Act has mandated municipalities to separate waste at source and maximise recycling. Yet most cities are continuing to look for a dumpsite for their garbage.

We need to learn that the first thing that needs to be dumped is our attitude that waste is something dirty and useless that needs to be disposed. Only then will we begin to solve our waste management problems.





To hell and back

Tikaram Neti, 7 April, Annapurna Post

Laxmi Lingden of Jhapa returned from Saudi Arabia mentally disturbed. Her ordeal began when she left her village after recruiter Bhola Dahal told her she didn't have to pay anything for a job abroad. She was then taken to Delhi, forced into prostitution before another middleman finally sent her on to Saudi Arabia using the passport of another- Jamuna BK. "The family I worked for in Riyadh treated me like an animal, if I said anything they would beat and harass me," Laxmi recalls.

Laxmi is among the few lucky ones who have returned. There are many other illiterate, poor Nepali women like her, sold and tricked by Nepali recruiters, whose whereabouts are still unknown.

Many return home pregnant or with babies. Among women still missing from eastern Nepal after leaving for the Gulf are Sita Subba, Sushila Sunuwar, Dilmaya Gajmer, Smriti Subba, Dakmaya Bishwakarma, Indira Mahara, Prem Kumari Baraili, Begum Miyani, Bushimaya Sitaula, Ganga Darnal,



Pramila Darnal (see pic). All were first taken to Delhi before being sent to their promised destinations.

The local administration is aware about the nexus of brokers and traffickers who trick helpless women like Lingden, but say they don't receive enough complaints to arrest anyone. "Of the 100 passports we issue daily, almost 40 per cent are to women, especially poor Dalit and Janajati women aged between 20-40," says Jhapa CDO Sagar Mishra.

Gayatri Karki, Devi Raya and

Gyan Maya Prasai recently returned from the Gulf where they were tortured and abused by employers and were forced to work in dire conditions. But the ill treatment began much earlier, from their own compatriots in Nepal.

After being told, that she didn't need skills or education, and didn't have to pay any fees to go abroad, Gayatri Karki left for Mumbai. She was taken to Padam Baraili's apartment where 20-25 girls like her were brought every month. In India they were forced to work for three months to pay off their debts to recruiters. Many of them continue paying them even after returning from the Gulf.

Local recruiters who sent Gayatri Karki, Devi Raya and Gyan Maya Prasai are now refusing to hand them their travel documents (transcript of a phone conversation, below) and are plotting to send them back to the Gulf.

The number of women applying for passports in Jhapa has increased and so have the number of women who have gone missing, many commit suicide on return. Even those who return are ostracised in their villages.

Phone conversation between Gyanmaya and the local recruiter Kamal Murmu

Gyanmaya: Hello! Is this Kamal?
Kamal: Yes.

Gyanmaya: Where is my citizenship card? I had given it to Khalil.

Kamal: It must be with him then.

Gyanmaya: But you are my agent, why are you refusing to hand over my documents?

Kamal: Don't worry my people will give it to you in a few days. What about your passport?

Gyanmaya: It's with Rita.

Kamal: Some of the agents are in prison now, but they will be out in a few months.

Gyanmaya: Why were they arrested?

Kamal: I don't know, I was in India when they got arrested.

Gyanmaya: I don't know the other agents properly, you were the one who took me, so I have filed a complaint against you.

Kamal: Why are you so angry sister, you will get your citizenship soon. I had even given you money because all I wanted was to help you.



Aide: "Deputy PM at inauguration, Finance Minister at book release, Culture Minister at lecture, Defence Minister at opening, Education Minister at seminar, Agriculture Minister..."

Sheet: Constitution on 22 January, 2015

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट
Basu Kshitiz in Annapurna Post, 5 April

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“The government is making all necessary preparations to hold local elections on time.”

Deputy Prime Minister Prakash Man Singh, 9 April, Naya Patrika

Aid directive

Karobar, 10 April

कारोबार

Chief Secretary Leela Mani Poudel has directed all the secretaries to make provisions to restrict foreign assistance to income generating medium and large-scale projects that provide direct employment. He has instructed secretaries to end the practice of accepting foreign assistance for smaller projects that take up too much of government's time and extra resources on documentation, report writing and hiring consultants.

"Monitoring and evaluating smaller projects running on foreign assistance puts extra financial burden on the government and when resources are scattered the quality isn't always consistent," Poudel says in an 11-point directive, also issued to the National

Planning Commission, the Prime Minister, and Finance Minister.


He has also directed line ministries not to hire international consultants unless in need of a specialised skillset. Even if local consultants are hired, the concerned ministries need to limit their number.



"This is the first time we have received a written directive from the Chief Secretary regarding issues of foreign assistance," says Finance Secretary Shantaraj Subedi.


Poudel has also instructed secretaries to fine advisers or consultants who do not perform on time, or if there is negligence, even after the project completion.

Chief Secretary Poudel also addressed the problems related to the Public Procurement Act and amend them to help mobilise foreign assistance effectively.



Alice is a quintessential family restaurant because of the fact that one can spend quality time in a peaceful environment and well facilitated dining destination. Secluded from the hustle and bustle of busy streets, the location was cautiously thought of considering the fact that the restaurant was set up not too long ago.

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IN SAFE HANDS: Lojung Kippa Sherpa's children testify to police after the CIB rescued them from Happy Home Nepal in Dhapakhel in February.

SUNIR PANDEY

SELLING SYMPATHY

Beware of fake orphanages that exploit children and fleece bleeding-heart donors

BHRIKUTI RAI

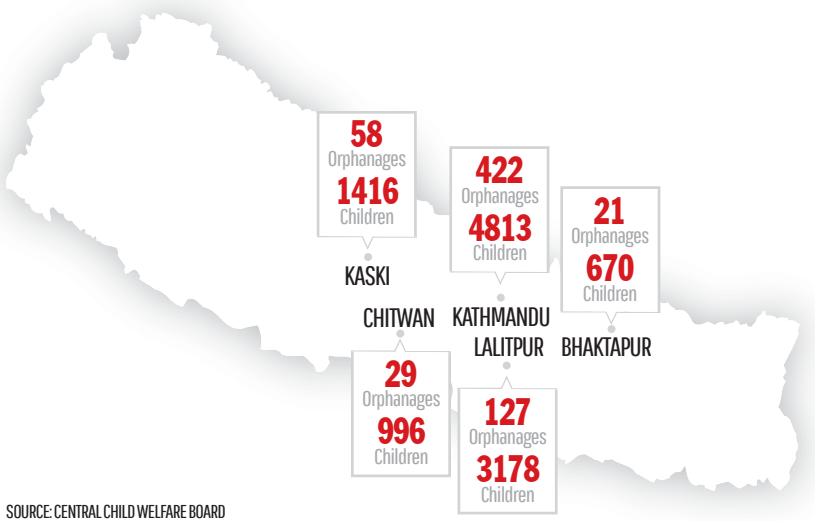
Lojung Kippa Sherpa who comes from the mountains of eastern Nepal had difficulty feeding and raising her three children. So, when her sister told her about an organisation promising to take them to Kathmandu and provide free schooling, she readily agreed. That was seven years ago. In February, police raided the Happy Home Nepal shelter in Dhapakhel (pic, above) and freed four children, among them Sherpa's three children who were found to be undernourished. One of them was suffering from TB and hadn't been to school in two months. Happy Home's founder, Bishwa Pratap Acharya, allegedly used the

children as bait to raise funds from Czech, Slovak and British donors, amassing tens of thousands of euros since 2006 while neglecting his children. "The owners didn't let me see or take my children back home for all these years because they used my children to make money," Sherpa said after being reunited with her children there and then. Happy Home Nepal was raided on 14 February by the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) after repeated complaints of abuse. Acharya has been charged with fraud, abduction and kidnapping and the Lalitpur District Court refused him bail last month. There are 15,000 children in over 787 registered orphanages across Nepal, but child rights activists say the numbers could

be much higher because many children and shelters are not registered. Surveys have shown that although many shelters call themselves 'orphanages', 80 per cent of the children have parents. "Most children from remote districts such as Humla and Kalikot have parents, and the owners make money from the children by promising the parents free education," says Tarak Dhital of the CCWB. The number of fake orphanages has increased after the crackdown on the adoption racket, and traffickers have set up fake shelters as a new revenue stream based on foreign donations. Despite receiving complaints against many such fake shelters, the child protection authorities don't immediately raid and "rescue" children, citing lengthy procedure and limited resources. "We are doing our best with whatever resources we have to ensure strict monitoring in these homes, but we aren't always able to act on all the complaints we receive every week," says Namuna Bhusal of CCWB. So it came as a surprise to many child rights activists when CCWB raided Amako Ghar in Kuleshwor for its sub-standard hygiene and care less than two weeks after the raid at HHN. The raid on the shelter which was set up by social worker Dil Shova Shrestha, and the 'rescue' of its 35 children got wide media attention, eclipsing Happy Home Nepal and the larger structural problems with child protection in Nepal. Rajiv Shahi who is from Humla had sent his nine-year-old son and five-year-old daughter to Amako Ghar six months ago so they could get an education. After the raid he has taken them back to Bardia where he has five other children and lives in a shack by the highway. "No one has made it beyond primary school in my family," the 54-year-old father told us, "I thought my children's future was secure."

What happened to the Shahi children is a saga of how innocent children suffer even when the authorities try to protect them in the blaze of media coverage. A front page investigative story in *Nagarik* daily in February accused Dil Shova Shrestha of running a sub-standard shelter and of sexual abuse. This unleashed an uproar in social media in Dil Shova's support, and the story is being investigated by the Press Council. Although Amako Ghar had sub-standard hygiene and care, most agree the shelter and its founder were unjustly punished. Even government officials admit mistakes were made in targeting Amako Ghar. "No one talked about the children, their future, and the future of those in the many bogus orphanages where the conditions are worse," one government official told us. "If the situation at Amako Ghar was so perilous, why are the elderly folks still allowed to live there?" There has been a sudden spurt in 'orphanages' ever since inter-country adoption was tightened. It is not a coincidence that 90 per cent of the shelters are in the five top tourist districts: Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Kaski and Chitwan where foreign visitors see the poor condition of children and donate generously. Networks of child recruiters convince parents to give up their children and bring them to shelters for a commission. "We have found local politicians are either directly involved or protect trafficking networks," says a child rights activist. Child rights activists also blame foreign volunteers and donors who easily buy into the plight of children. Most 'volunteers' have to pay to be a part of these shelters and traffickers are known to tour Europe with photo albums of children. "Foreigners are part of the problem," says Martin Punaks of Next Generation Nepal, which helps reintegrate rescued children

with parents. "They need to be more aware when choosing to support organisations in Nepal." In September 2011, young girls from western Nepal, trafficked as fake orphans by the infamous human trafficker Dal Bahadur Phadera and cohorts to Michael Job Centre (MJC) in southern India, were rescued through the efforts of Esther Benjamins Memorial Foundation. EMBF then filed a case against Phadera and MJC for their involvement in human trafficking. But the case is still undecided because Phadera used his political connections to get hearings postponed. Sano Paila, a Birgunj-based group that works with Freedom Matters in UK, has tried to get permission from the National Human Rights Commission and CCWB to rescue and rehabilitate the remaining children from Happy Home. But Lalitpur Chief District Officer Sashi Shekhar Shrestha has refused to sanction rescue of the remaining children saying there haven't been reports of mistreatment at Happy Home, and there is no need for rescue now. But parents of Happy Home children and activists are determined to take Acharya to trial. Says Sano Paila's Kanchan Jha: "We hope that the arrest, detention, and eventual conviction of Bishwa Pratap Acharya will serve as a warning to others who was trafficking and exploiting children for profit." In Bardia, Rajiv Shahi is thankful Amako Ghar took care of his children for a while, but is now worried about their future. "The children are happier here at home, but I can't afford to send them to school." 🇳🇵



SOURCE: CENTRAL CHILD WELFARE BOARD

nepalitimes.com

(Un)happy homes, #695,
Long journey home, #573
Cashing it big on children,
Children trapped between supply
and demand, #558
Baby bajar, #339



How to survive the mating season



HARIZ BAHARUDIN

Why anyone would want to get hitched at a time when the country is engaged in the serious business of writing a new constitution is beyond me. The institution of marriage, however, has many advantages but till press time I haven't been able to remember any of them.

As you young fellows and fellas of reproductive age who have had the pleasure of tying the nuptial knots of holy matrimony this week may have noticed, marriage is not just a popular card game in Nepal.

The institution of marriage is a legally binding contract between a man and his in-laws under which in exchange for a Yamaha 153cc, in which the groom can go vroom, he is obliged to sow his seeds to bring forth new human beings into the planet and live happily ever after until he is reincarnated, at which point he will have to do everything all over again.

Those of you addicted to card games will soon realise that you are in familiar territory because marriage is also a gamble.

For instance, you could discover on your wedding night that the person you have chosen to be your lawfully wedded husband, because he is the son of a mover and shaker, is as hairy as a yak and snores like one. You win some and lose some.

But marriage is a compromise and as generations of couplets before us have discovered, the perfect antidote to a snoring spouse is to learn to snore yourself so you can drown out the nocturnal nasal saxophone, and turn a solo concert into a duet.

As someone who has been married for donkey's years since the early Lichhavi period, I have some unsolicited advice to all you newly-weds out there about the birds and the bees and what they do to each other in the privacy of their hives.

Statutory Government Warning: At this time, any minors reading this are advised to go out and play in the swing.

- The most important part of a wedding is the marriage party which takes place simultaneously with 15,000 other

parties all over town, including the 34-party Constituent Assembly at the BICC Party Palace. This is the acid test: if you survive Sgt Pepper's Wedding Band you will survive anything married life has to offer.

- The wedding night. This is the second most important part of a marriage and the time when couples weigh their pros and cons and decide that, despite the armpit aroma, on the whole cohabitation is a fine invention.
- In a marriage one engages in the most intimate acts known to man: holding hands while watching the sun set, sharing Q-tips and listening to each other's stomachs growl.
- For conjugal bliss, a marriage must be filled with love and passion, as you engage in mutual pleasure-giving by squeezing each other's zits.
- Because it's like having a room-mate for life, a marriage is about compromise between keeping the seat upright or not while attending to a long-distance call from nature. Wife: "Look, my aim is to keep this place clean, your aim would help."
- No marriage is complete without unwrapping the wedding gifts. For some reason they are all replicas of endangered animals, like this bottlenose dolphin caught in blue crystal leaping over a wave on a glass pedestal simulating an undersea tableau. Great resale value, can be recycled to people who give you alabaster swans in future weddings. As marriage matures, it can also be used as a projectile.

The Ass



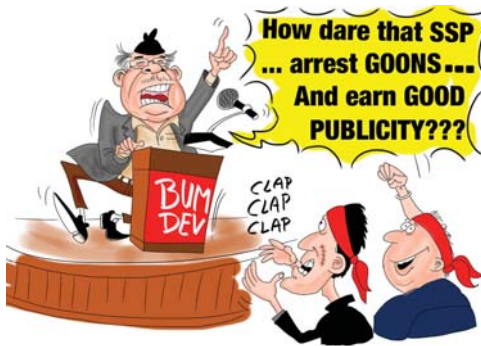
PAST PRESENT FUTURE

DIWAKAR CHETTRI

He became the HOME MINISTER after vicious POLITICAL WRANGLINGS...



Hope he says something WORTHWHILE...



R U trying to buy/invest or sell your property ???

R U looking for a tenant or property to rent out ???

R U searching for a rental spaces for residence/office/business ???

R U looking for a property management ???

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R U planning to make your own house ???

R U searching for interior designer & architect.

R U searching for realstate legal solutions ???

R U looking for plumbers, masons, electricians, carpenters ???

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