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21st century education



KE GARNE

Two students sit by a pond in Bhaktapur on Monday amidst a backdrop of graffiti against power cuts. Despite being a darling of the donors and after six decades of foreign aid, Nepal is still near the bottom of the heap in the least developed country category. Although foreign aid helped Nepal make progress in basic health and education, it hasn't raised GDP growth. The government is suddenly being assertive about how much aid it wants and for what in its new Development Cooperation Policy 2014. Inside: Special coverage on foreign aid.

BIKRAM RAI



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KNOWING HOW TO ASK FOR HELP
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HARE RAISING



Farmers around Kathmandu can't keep up with demand for rabbit meat.

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A TREASURE CHEST OF HISTORICAL GEMS

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It would be unfortunate if proponents of the status quo in a conservative state apparatus force donors to stop support for social justice issues

There is a cynical view that overseas development aid is a mechanism for taking money from poor tax payers in rich countries and giving it to the rich in poor countries who don't pay taxes. Like all aphorisms, there is a grain of truth there. But it is also true that a substantial chunk of foreign aid is still recycled back to the donor country in tied-aid contracts, consultants or overheads.

Despite being a darling of the donors and after six decades of foreign aid, Nepal is still near the bottom of the heap in the least developed country category. Foreign aid makes up less than six per cent of GDP and more than half the development expenditure. Although it has helped Nepal make dramatic progress in basic health and education, foreign aid hasn't helped GDP growth much as donors pulled out of infrastructure in the past decade.

To be sure, foreign aid is a convenient scapegoat

BEGGARS AND CHOOSERS

to cover up domestic deficiencies. Successive rulers in Kathmandu have been reluctant to admit their share of the blame for the failure of governance and the inability to set our own political house in order. You can't keep blaming the squalour in your living room on neighbours who share your housing colony.

Because of the dependency that outside aid fosters and the fact that it often comes with strings attached, the ideal scenario would be for us to wean ourselves from it. Total foreign multilateral and bilateral disbursements last year was only one-sixth of cumulative receipts from the estimated 4 million Nepalis who work abroad. In fact, it could be argued that Malaysia and Qatar provide more budgetary support for Nepal than all donors combined.

In the past 15 years, many donors shifted from grants and loans for infrastructure to support poverty-reduction, basic services, democracy, human rights and conflict resolution. Even the World Bank, for instance, pulled out completely from hydropower after the Arun III debacle in 1994.

After the dissolution of the last Constituent Assembly there has been a surprising new assertiveness at the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Finance and the National Planning Commission (NPC) about aid priorities. UNDP's five-year strategic document was delayed last year because it contained terms like 'exclusion' and 'structural discrimination' that the government found objectionable. Donors have been told bluntly that Nepal would now like aid to concentrate on 'hard' sectors like hydropower, roads and irrigation and not on 'soft' areas like human rights and inclusion. (See story on page 16-17)

Officials say they want development partners to work with it on its own priorities and not unilaterally. The government also wants aid to

go through its budget mechanism rather than be disbursed directly to NGOs and INGOs. Officials say they are trying to finally assert the country's sovereign right about where outsiders can spend money.

Even so, it is clear that the shift is partly a backlash from a conservative political and bureaucratic class against donor support for inclusion and social justice issues. In the corridors of powers, officials privately blame donors for funding political activists and NGOs which support ethnicity-based federalism in the new constitution.

While it is understandable that a sovereign state would want to exercise some control over overseas assistance, Nepal's governance failure, its inability to meet development expenditure, and the neglect of women, children and marginalised groups means that in practical terms donors will continue to have asymmetric say on where their tax-payer's money goes.

Nepal's development partners are frustrated with the lack of progress on the constitution, and are understandably worried that the new statute will not adequately address exclusion and discrimination. Multilateral creditors have also publicly voiced concern about the government's inability to spend money, and of the corruption when it does. Bilateral donors are dismayed at the lack of accountability, especially at the grassroots level, due to the lack of local elections.

Some donors seem to be needlessly on the defensive when it comes to supporting non-governmental actors working on democracy, human rights and transitional justice. This is not the way to respond to the intolerant streak we detect in the state apparatus since the last elections. It will reverse the gains that have been made in the past seven years in pushing for social justice and an open society.

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

JUST FREE

Terrific editorial ('Just free', Editorial, #705)! The only additional point to be made from Nepal's experience is that democracy hasn't led to the strengthening of a free press but has actually helped erode those values through self-censorship and intimidation. While one would expect the Maoists to behave as they have done previously, what is much more disappointing is the Congress playing handmaiden to this by not speaking out on freedom and human rights. One didn't expect this from the founders of Nepal's democracy.

Tika

■ 26 CA chairs are still empty. Embassies are without ambassadors. It is the media's role to keep this news alive until concrete action takes place. The timely issues of Constitution and local elections are equally important and must be given due coverage. The common man's question for the corrupted politicians in charge is - what would you do, when your lies are exposed and you do not deliver the Constitution in the next 6 months? Or, what will the people of Nepal do to their own lying politicians? We will have to wait and see.

Narayana Prasad

TARAI TEST

Since I've realised how the current format of SLC examinations hinders

the educational progress of the nation as a whole, I am for its abolition ('A Tarai test case', Trishna Rana, #704). The education system needs to be revamped to have a new scientific and pro-learning focus that could better evaluate the student's abilities, thus helping to create skilled and learned generations of Nepalis for decades to come.

Nirmal Ghimire

■ How does one justify the right to cheat in exams?

KK Sharma

Couple of questions:

1. Why quotidian checks?
 2. Why are the police armed at schools?
 3. What kind of 'frisking', by whom (male/female officers) of whom (male/female students)?
- I think the folks in the Tarai need a cold drink to cool their nerves. Just getting a bit riled up over Madhesi identity.

Namah

■ When I gave my SLC exams in 1992, it used to be one of the toughest exams. But now SLC is not an iron gate anymore. These days, students don't bother to study at all for SLC. Instead of encouraging their children to study, parents are often seen helping the students cheat during tests. This kind of trend exists everywhere in Nepal, but it is even more common in the Tarai. The writer is arguing unilaterally on behalf of students and parents, but do you think if someone

scuffles with security officials, they are not going to do anything about it? Security might have to use force to keep the situation under control. This is why lawlessness is more prevalent in our country now. I agree that those students should be given the chance to retake those tests. But I vehemently disagree that they should have the right to cheat.

RJackson33

JUSTIFYING THE JUSTICES

The Judicial Council (JC) records show some of the recommended justices have a questionable track record ('Justifying the justices', Binita Dahal, #705). How would appointing the individuals who have been in JC's bad books as Supreme Court justices be justified? Over the last few years, good and competent justices were kept in an ad hoc status and let to retire. It's also known that JC was kept in confusion under different pretexts and never reached the decisions for appointing justices. JC itself isn't transparent, nor is it accountable. This shows that the JC has turned into a venue of foul play to serve the vested interests of some people. The recent controversy should be viewed in this context.

Justice appointment through JC has courted controversies since the beginning. Now for its remedy, we need to change the process of appointing justices through JC. If the government appoints justices, it'll have to be accountable to the parliament. It's time for policy makers to review this process immediately.

Anil Karki

■ Surprised that Narahari Acharya would get embroiled in such controversy.

CT

DRONE FEVER

Drones have proven their effectiveness in Pakistan and Yemen ('Game of drones', Sunir Pandey, #705). FDR of Nepal cannot be an exception. Its use in our terrain could be unimaginable: from saving tigers and rhinos in our pristine national parks to looking out for criminals in the once-safe Langtang NP, to spying on politicians and women traffickers and traffic offenders. What do we do when we catch the culprits - just release them after tweaking their ears? There should be enough legislation to not only allow drones to fly the length and breadth of the Himalayan skies but also to dispatch the criminals once they are snared with the help of drones. Otherwise the drones will be as ineffective as our criminal justice system which cannot punish the criminals.

Jwahr Talchabhadell

■ Nepal should be developing appropriate legislation to ensure their peaceful and constructive use.

@pigreen

EDUCATION ABROAD

Indian and Chinese universities and government colleges are ahead of many European universities and colleges in terms of research and future opportunities after completion of education ('To go or not to go,' Matt

Miller, #705). It's a fact that most Asian educational institutions are better regulated and maintained than their European counterparts.

In England especially, education doesn't just harness human potential but it is also a main source of income. If you take the UK's private or public colleges (apart from the few prestigious research institutions and universities), they are totally profit-oriented, so standards are compromised and the government has turned a blind eye in hopes of attracting more revenue.

Nepali

■ I used to think one could learn something in Europe, but with the xenophobia and unemployment crisis, it's a waste of money. Forget Europe, India or China is now the place where Nepalis choose to study.

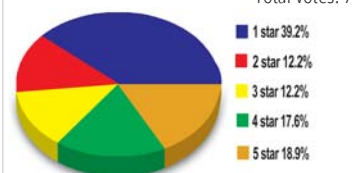
Ravi Raj Kapur

Times

nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll #706

Q. How do you rate Sushil Koirala's premiership?



Weekly Internet Poll # 707
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Do you think Baburam Bhattarai should form a new party?

Imagine no borders

Separating communities by drawing lines on a map will alienate them, propagating a cycle of hate

I have always avoided writing about myself. Like most journalists, I was trained to keep myself out of the picture and focus on the story. Even when writing opinion, I have relied on evidence more than personal experience and anecdotes. After all, reason doesn't need to shout. And of all the ways to persuade readers, appealing to emotion is perhaps the most disingenuous. Still, I may need to tell you who I am.



THIS IS IT
Rubeena Mahato

I was born in a multi-cultural household where I had uncles and aunts and cousins and grandparents so diverse that they looked like they came from opposite ends of the world. It made for very peculiar-looking family portraits. We celebrated festivals together, participated in family rituals, enjoyed each other's food and tried to learn the languages of the two sides of my family.

We enjoyed the sweet

delights of Chhath as much as we savoured *sel roti* and *yomari*, and reveled in flower showers during Mha Puja. My two sets of grandparents were farmers and small traders. They weren't highly educated and hadn't travelled much. They were simple village folk who embraced each other's new families and learnt mutual love and respect despite the cultural quirks, something I don't think would have been possible elsewhere in the subcontinent.

Sitting in the midst of two great civilisations, Nepal has for ages accommodated people and cultures and has developed into a more receptive and egalitarian society as a result.

Growing up, we were always aware of the negative stereotypes and more often than not, felt the sharp edges of not-so hidden racism in classrooms, playgrounds and neighborhoods. School kids can be brutal and they don't hesitate to repeat what they hear adults say at home. But being exposed to different cultures and languages at home opened up our minds, and we grew up tolerant to diversity.

Even when at the receiving end of prejudice, I never had any doubts about the goodwill that



exists among communities in Nepal. I still believe that we are capable of co-existence and of resolving our differences without resorting to hatred and violence. There are more and more inter-ethnic families like mine in Nepal that prove this. The only way to root out the inequality and discrimination that plagues Nepali society is to

make room for more interaction, exchange and intermingling.

There is a lot of resentment and understandable rage among the communities historically excluded by Nepal's mainstream. They want dignity, respect and a feeling of belonging as much as equal opportunities. The state has not done enough to address these concerns and the traditionally dominant groups in Nepal continue to guard their privileges, at times with force and impunity.

Inclusive policies, reservation in public and private sector, development of curriculum in local languages, access to political power all are needed to tip this balance of power.

But perhaps because of my upbringing, I refuse to believe that setting up artificial boundaries among communities, alienating them further and propagating the cycle of hate and counter-hate is any solution.

As examples around the world have shown, when people start to organise themselves around religious or ethnic identities and give up other identities in the process, the result is always tragic. Sarajevo was a cosmopolitan city and had one of the highest rates

of interfaith marriages in the world before politicians rallied ethnic groups against each other. That led to the eventual disintegration of Yugoslavia. Indeed, nothing seeds hatred and mutual distrust faster than creating 'us versus them' divisions. This is perhaps the most important reason why we should be wary of restructuring the country along ethnic lines.

The very idea that ethnic groups need separate enclaves to be able to exercise their rights and freedoms is based on the assumption that communities cannot co-exist peacefully, and that they need to get away from each other to thrive and prosper. What we should be aiming for, instead, is building a country where ethnic groups can enjoy equal status in a rich multi-cultural, multi-racial setting, where a Madhesi will feel equally at home in Taplejung as a Limbu would in Janakpur and where people are more than their last names.

This is a long struggle, but one worth undertaking. As Ukraine edged to the brink this week, I remembered my ethnic Uzbek friend. She had escaped persecution from Kyrgyzstan, the country she had always called home but where she was not welcome anymore. She now works to help refugees and I will never forget what she said: "Despite what happened to me, I can never hate my neighbours." @rubeenaa

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Nepal, an emerging rainbow nation, #521

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New planes, new hope



BIKASH DWARE

VIJAY LAMA

For many Nepalis, it seems to be a compulsory ritual to badmouth our nation and its national airline. By repeating that there is no hope for Nepal and no hope for Nepal Airlines there is a danger that it will be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

When the airline finally added a new aircraft (*pic, above*) to its fleet last week for the first time in 27 years, there were cynical comments in media and social networking sites about airline managers thinking about kickbacks.

The poor condition of our

country and its flag carrier have nothing to do with Nepal or Nepal Airlines. The blame goes to greedy and selfish politicians who put their own interest ahead of the interest of the country, its people and its flag carrier. The tragedy is that we have learnt nothing from the mistakes of the 1990s that led to the deterioration of the airline.

For us loyal employees, however, the induction of eight new aircrafts in the next two years has restored hope and confidence that we can rebuild a once proud company. But we are still wary about political interference and lack of transparency that may once more stymie efforts to run

New planes and overhauled management can restore confidence in Nepal Airlines and the country whose flag it proudly flies

an airline that all Nepalis will be honoured to call our own.

Unfortunately, the sense of relief about the new plane did not last long as private operators saw the drastically low promotional fares offered by Nepal Airlines on trunk routes as a threat. There has been intense lobbying to question the safety record of the MA60, and to spread rumours that this was the real reason the EU put Nepal on the black list.

The Xian MA60s were originally intended for the Royal Nepal Army during the conflict years in a deal backed by the palace. Because the advance had already been paid, in 2010 the government renegotiated a 'buy-one-get-one free' deal so that one of the two MA60s and two of the four Y-12s will be grants.

The Nepal Airlines management was attacked for pushing a plane that had a questionable safety record, and the opposition was so fierce that negotiations nearly collapsed. Managing Director Madan Kharel, however, persevered and overcame intense pressures to get the contract back on track.

As a pilot myself, I can state categorically that we don't buy a plane unless it is safe and its airworthiness is beyond doubt. Having visited the Xian factory in Shanxi and inspected their

manufacturing process, I can vouch for the fact that both the MA60 and the Y-12 meet international aviation safety standards. The twin-engined turboprop is based on the Russian designed An-24 to land in rough and short airstrips with minimal ground support. Its two engines are Canadian-made Pratt & Whitney PW127J turboprops, and it is equipped with Rockwell Collins cockpit avionics from the US.

More than 150 MA60s have been delivered to airlines mainly in Asia and Africa, including Merpati in Indonesia operating a fleet of 14 and Lao Airlines flying four. Much has been made of the six hull losses that the type has suffered, but none of them were determined to be due to technical fault with the aircraft.

We can understand private operators being concerned about the state-run airline starting trunk route services because its low fares will directly challenge their monopoly and high prices. This cartel system keeps air fares outrageously high not just in the domestic sector, but also on international routes. Surveys have shown that Nepal is one of the most expensive destinations to fly to, and to fly within.

The proposed acquisition of two Airbus 320s next year will allow Nepal Airlines to serve a

price controlling function so that Nepali workers will not have to pay their hard-earned money for exorbitant fares on the Gulf, Malaysia, and India routes.

To be sure, adding new equipment will not solve the problem if the airline's management remains weak and exposed to political interference. To turn Nepal Airlines into a service-oriented, sustainable business, it needs to be cleaned up: its management streamlined, pilots and engineers made more productive, and the company freed from the clutches of rival unions and the government.

One immediate challenge for Nepal Airlines will be to restructure the salary scale of air and ground crew so that professional staff can be retained. The airline is suffering a shortage of pilots and engineers who have been attracted by better salaries and perks in private airlines. Staff salary should more realistically reflect market rates.

There are two ways to look at Nepal Airlines. One is to say nothing will change and the airline is doomed. The other is to hope that new equipment will reinject new vigour and hope for the airline and the country whose flag it proudly flies. 🇳🇵



Captain Vijay Lama has been flying for Nepal Airlines for the past 27 years.

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EVEREST BANK BIZ BRIEFS

Second Win

Real Juice has announced the second round, Game 2, of its Score the Real Goal campaign, following the end of Game 1. The rules of the game remain the same, and players simply need to identify the Real Ball amongst 11 different balls featured in Real's advertisement and SMS it to 5002.



Steely Future

Jagdamba Steels presented its recent achievements and future prospects at Kumari Hall last week, at a function titled 'Milestones'. The company hopes to revolutionise the market for cut and bend products with its future plans.

Won it

Turkish Airlines was awarded the Best European Cargo Airlines at the Cargo Airline of the Year Awards held at the Lancaster London Hotel on 26 April. The awards - the oldest in the cargo industry - are considered the most respected event within the sector and are operated by Air Cargo News.



Home shopping

Navin Distributors, the sole authorised distributor for Hisense products in Nepal inaugurated its exclusive Hisense showroom at Sherpa Mall in Durbar Marg this week. The company has complete range of Hisense which includes Smart TV, 3D TVs, LED, LCD, Refrigerators, Chest Freezers, Air Conditioners, Wine Chiller, Mobile Phones, and Washing Machine.



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| GL-251BML | 246 ltr. | 246 ltr. |
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The power of one

Chief Secretary Leela Mani Poudyal (*pic, right*) has demonstrated that passion and perseverance do yield results. Nearly one year into the citizens' Bagmati cleaning campaign the river and its tributaries are still as smelly as ever, but at least the trash is gone from the filthiest stretches along its banks.



THE DEADLINE
Damakant Jayshi

However, the single most important achievement of this campaign may be to restore the faith in the people that cleaning up the once holy rivers of Kathmandu Valley is doable. And the symbolism is great: if a river can be cleaned up maybe governance in this country can be too.

Compared to cleaning the Ganga in India which carries industrial waste and other toxic pollutants from the densely populated plains through which it flows, restoring the Bagmati to its pristine state is very much possible.

There have been attempts to clean the Bagmati in the past, but they all fizzled out mainly because they were momentary



If a river can be cleaned up maybe governance can be too

BHASWOR OJHA/KANTIPUR

outbursts. Whether from a businessman's angst during a family funeral or a high-profile trophy seeking city mayor, the motivation was there but sustained implementation was lacking.

That's where the work of Chief Secretary Poudyal, and the citizens' campaign for river cleaning stands out. It has so far got spontaneous public support, and is growing. But this and other popular movements will also grind to a halt if it doesn't reach a critical mass. Volunteering every Saturday morning wading knee deep in the black muck would

boost the morale of hundreds of other Kathmandu residents already there.

The Bagmati has been defaced by three activities as it flows through the city: dumping solid waste, emptying raw sewage and encroachment into its floodplain. The citizen's campaign tackles the first.

A much-delayed project is underway to lay down sewer mains on both banks of the Bagmati and its tributaries so that sewage is diverted to treatment plants. Encroachment is a larger issue linked to urbanisation, vote banks and

land mafia with political protection. This needs strong-willed leadership to solve.

The biggest danger now is the relapse factor. Parts of the rivers that have been cleaned have to remain that way. This calls for strict enforcement by those who live along its banks to apprehend the sly dumping of garbage from bridges under cover of night, and to enforce hefty fines.

There are the cynics who scoffed on social networking sites about the Chief Secretary literally taking the plunge to bathe in the Bagmati on New Year's Day. The negativism got

too much to bear, and Poudyal dashed off an op-ed in *Kantipur* this week. 'Sitting in the sidelines to complain doesn't help anyone,' he noted, 'all individual action adds up.' Indeed, if nothing else, the media publicity around the citizen's campaign has served to embarrass the municipality and the government whose real job it is to take care of the capital.

The larger question is whether it is the Chief Secretary's job to get his hands dirty on weekends. Shouldn't his time be better spent on attending to the structural governance lapses that has led to urban decay? Poudyal's answer in his op-ed is: those who do nothing have no right to complain.

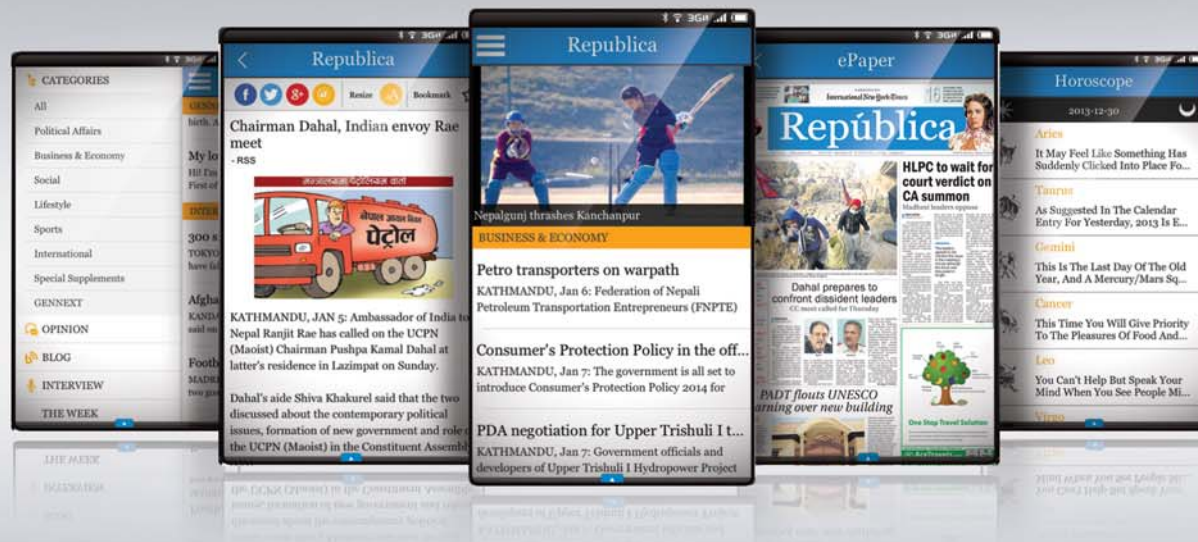
The Chief Secretary is prone to such lone wolf actions. Three years ago, returning from his ancestral home in Gulmi after Dasain, he was so outraged by the damage done to the Prithvi Highway by overloaded tipper trucks that he took personal initiative as secretary at the Prime Minister's Office to instruct three ministries to control overloading and repair the highway. As we know, things got much worse and the endless repairs are still continuing.

One can understand Poudyal's frustration that even a highly placed official finds it difficult to get the creaky machinery of government to move. One must admire his perseverance to not wait for it to start doing its job, and to actually get his hands dirty to set an example. 🇳🇵

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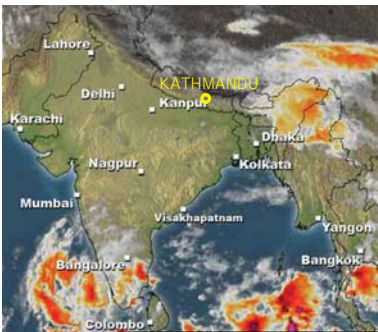
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This is the El Nino year, so things are going to be kind of unpredictable and crazy. Add to it the effect of global warming on erratic monsoons and the weather is going to be literally pretty much up in the air. Last week's low pressure system ended a long dry spell, and brought down temperatures to up to six degrees below normal. There is still some moisture about which will rise as the sun heats the plains, unleashing some storms here and there over the mid hills. But Kathmandu Valley will remain largely dry over the weekend, with some buildup on Saturday and a slight chance of an evening shower.

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BEND BUT DON'T BREAK

Practising yoga the right way is no easy feat

TSERING DOLKER GURUNG



NICKY ZAMMIT



Before my first class, my only yogic knowledge was courtesy of Bollywood diva Shilpa Shetty and superstar yoga guru Ram Dev Baba. Years ago, I was coerced into buying the tutorial DVDs of the two after an onslaught of 'fat' comments from family and friends. But as was the case with my gym and pilates classes, the practice merely lasted a few days.

So, when I signed up for a month of unlimited yoga classes at the newly opened Pranamaya's studio in Thamel last month, I had my doubts. How different would yoga in a western style studio be from the free yoga classes offered at Tundikhel and every other neighbourhood corner? Was it really worth forking out several thousands on?

My secret confidence from a few days of elegantly copying postures from my laptop screen lasted for exactly five minutes into my first Hatha yoga class.

The first downward bend of the sun

salutation made my knees ache. Holding the body in a plank position was a challenge. Even a half cobra bend hurt my back. By the time we got to a tree stand (a concentration pose) and I was struggling to stand on one leg, I knew yoga was a change I needed. At 24, my body felt like a 60-year-old's.

Because Hatha yoga practices only the basic yoga postures, I wanted something more challenging in my second class and jumped straight into Ashtanga—a novice's mistake. If my Hatha class made me feel a little stiff and sore, my Ashtanga class made me realise just how unfit I was.

The names of the postures, known as asanas, are terrifying in themselves: Prasara Padotanasana, Uttitha Hasta Padangustasana. But don't let these hold you back from giving this rigorous and demanding style of yoga a try. You'll have a tremendous feeling of accomplishment

afterwards.

The month turned into a quest to try every style of yoga. Iyengar class was next. Combining a variety of slow-moving forms of asanas (eg: stand, sit, lie down), Iyengar focuses on lengthening the spine and finding proper alignment in a pose. Yoga props such as blocks, straps, chairs are also used commonly for support. Mid-class, we were challenged to do a headstand. Despite standing on my head, I was told I had it all wrong. I have been working ever since to headstand the right way and I believe I am getting there. Like Hatha, Iyengar yoga won't work up a sweat, but it is amazing to see just how demanding it can be to stay put and not jump around.

My month long yoga journey ended with my first Yin Yoga class. A more meditative approach to yoga, asanas are held for longer periods of time. The main aim is to apply stress to the connective tissues, to increase

circulation in the joints and improve flexibility. In keeping with the meditative theme, a singing bowl was used to signal the change in each posture which lasted from three to five minutes. At the end of the class, I felt like I had had a long massage session at a spa. It was that calming and relaxing.

Although, it did take some time for me to get used to chants of 'Om Shanti Om' in a foreign accent, I feel more active and energetic thanks to yoga. After trying just about every form of exercise and in the process leaving pairs of workout shoes at every other gym in town, I am glad to have finally found the one that gets me up in the morning. 🇳🇵

www.pranamaya-yoga.com
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EVENTS



Birdathlon,
celebrate World Migratory Bird Day by participating in a bird race to raise awareness on the conservation of migratory birds.
10 May, Pani Muhan Gate, Shivapuri National Park, 6.30 to 11am, 9841442323/9841028940



Buddha Jayanti,
celebrate the birth of the great philosopher in the country of his birth.
14 May

Ubhauri,
celebrate the arrival of summer with the Kirat people of Nepal. *14 May*

Cha cha cha,
learn one month's worth of salsa in four days.
Rs 1,000 for singles, Rs 1,500 for couples, 28 April onwards, Monday to Thursday, 7.30 to 8.30am/5 to 6pm/6 to 7pm, Salsa Dance Academy, Bhatbhateni

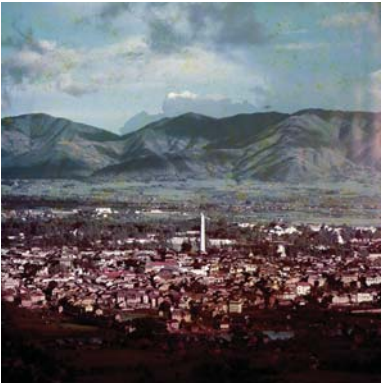
Open house,
featuring the work of artists Arpita Shakya, Ashuram Khaiju, and Palpasa Manandhar.
Runs till 7 July, 11am to 6pm, Gallery Mcube Chakupat

Film Lab,
learn film history, storytelling, scriptwriting, cinematography, editing, project handling and network with professionals.
Runs to 15 May, Docskool, Gaurighat, register at (01)4251335



Retrospective,
a look back at the oeuvre of senior artist and cubism enthusiast Surendra Pradhan.
Runs till 18 July, Park Gallery, Pulchowk, parkgallery.com.np

Life is flow,
an exhibition by photographer Susanna Ferran and poet Frederic Hoffman accompanied by sound healer Chaitanyashree. *Runs to 22 May, Image Ark Gallery, Kulimha, Patan Darbar Square*



City Museum Kathmandu,
head down to Durbar Marg's newest gallery on the block for personalized guided tours.

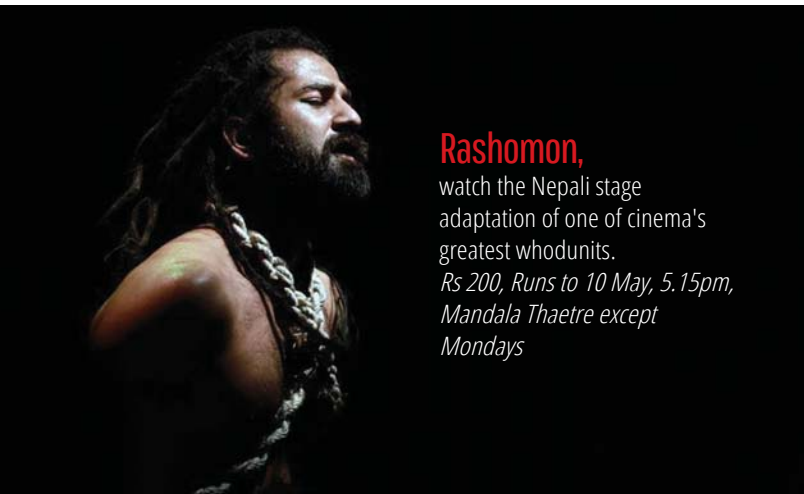
By winds and tides,
an art exhibition.
Runs to 12 May, Alliance Francaise, Teku



Chandeswori jatra,
Nepal's fastest growing town Banepa celebrates its biggest festival, photo-ops galore.
13 to 15 May, Banepa

Motherland across the sky,
a solo exhibition of the works of poet and artist Sandhya Regmi. *Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal*

In conversation,
historian Surendra KC talks with writer Prakash A Raj.
Free entry, 9 May, 4pm onwards, Nepal-Bharat Library, New Road Tours run daily, accommodates up to 15 people, info@thecitymuseum.org



Rashomon,
watch the Nepali stage adaptation of one of cinema's greatest whodunits.
Rs 200, Runs to 10 May, 5.15pm, Mandala Theatre except Mondays

DINING

Kancha ko bhancha,
the best of Nepali cuisine at this newly opened eatery. *Kupandol*

The Village Cafe,
authentic Newari food that comes straight from the heart. *Pulchowk*

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



Tian Rui,
if you're looking for genuine good Chinese food this restaurant is the best place to go. *Thapathali*

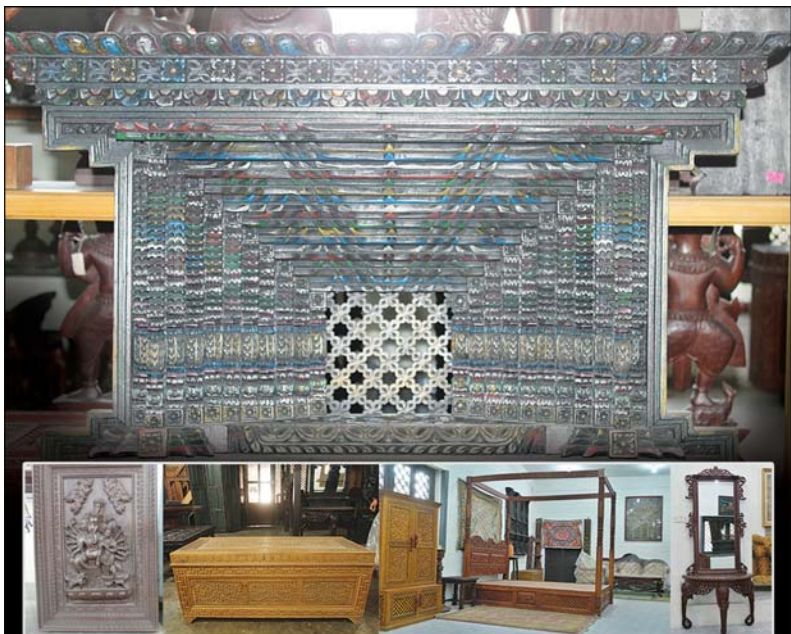
Chongqing Fast Food,
gear up for some mouth watering Chinese dishes like Sour and Spicy Pork and Kung Pao Chicken. *Thamel*

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big compound with ample parking space, its western and Thakali dishes are done to perfection.
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MUSIC

**Free launch,**

the Nepali underground band Divine Influence play live to release their new EP *Scarecrow*.
17 May, Purple Haze

**Khumbila,**

Remember the families of the brave Sherpas who lost their lives in the Everest accident through a live art and fund-raising concert, where Kutumba and Grammy-nominated artist James Catto is set to perform.
Rs 400, 6:30 pm, 8 May, The City Museum Kathmandu, Darbar Marg, thecitymuseum.org

Dance-mandu,

party with 20 sets of performers from Nepal and India, with other attractions like cocktail bar, children's play area, djembe jamming, and a fire juggling show. 17 May, 10am onwards, Norling Restaurant, Darbar Marg

Kripa Unplugged,

young aspiring musicians give their own renditions of classics.
youtube.com/user/KripaUnplugged

Starry Night BBQ,

catch Ciney Gurung live as you chomp on your meat stick.
Rs 1,499, 7pm onwards, Fridays, Shambala Garden Café, Hotel Shangri-La, (01)4412999 (Ext. 7520/7515)

Danse de la bonheur,

party with DJ Surr and DSL Nepal, dinner on booking.
15 May, Delices de France, Thamel, (01)4260326

Gloria Spring Concert,

Enjoy the angelic voices of Kathmandu Chorale as they perform works by beloved composers like Vivaldi, Mozart and Faure.
Free admission, 10 May, 6pm onwards, The British School, Jhamsikhel, 9851139956

**Rashid in Kathmandu,**

go watch the great Indian vocal maestro Ustad Rashid Khan live, accompanied by Jyoti Goho, Satyajit Talwalkar, Murad Ali Khan, Yaswanth Golcha, Manoj Gautam, and Salikram Ghimire.
Rs 1,000/2,000/3,000/5,000, 23 May, 5.45pm onwards, Royal Academy Hall

GETAWAYS

**Monsoon Madness,**

head out of the capital to cool off from the summer heat. Rs 5,555 per person on twin sharing, get back coupons worth Rs 2,999, for 2 nights/3 days.
Shangri-la Village Resort, Pokhara, (061)462222, (01)4410051, salesvrv@hotelshangrila.com

Himalaya Wellness Centre,

enjoy relaxing yoga, detox and Ayurveda treatments and retreats every day under one roof and get 10 per cent off on all Ayurvedic treatments.
Park Village Hotel, Budhanilkantha, 980106661

Mum's Garden Resort,

head out to Pokhara for a peaceful and comfortable stay in beautifully designed cottages surrounded by a lush green garden with great views of Phewa Lake and the Annapurna range.
Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)463468, www.mumsgardenresort.com

The Last Resort,

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

Stockholm travelling

Stopping by Kathmandu on their Asian tour of Thailand, Malaysia, and China are Postiljonen, an electronic dream pop trio from Stockholm. Featuring Norwegian vocalist Mia Bře alongside Swedish multi-instrumentalists Daniel Sjörs and Joel Nyström Holm, the band released their debut album 'Skyer' in 2013 to critical acclaim. Don't miss out a chance to catch them live.

May 9, 7.30pm, House of Music, Thamel
www.postiljonenmusic.com



PEOPLE OF KARNALI

Café Mitini Gallery opens to the public with an exhibition of photographs by Jiban Bhai Images. This time, the focus is on Karnali. Nepal's largest zone is also its most remote and poorest. Almost every conversation on Nepal's lack of development centres on how hard life is in Karnali. But in his photos, Jiban

Bhattarai has gone beyond the tomes of fiscal planning and looked at the actual lives of the people that live in the harsh geography and poverty of the region.

Date: 4 to 31 May

Time: 10am to 7pm

Venue: Café Mitini, Lajimpat
cafeshopmitini.com, (01)4002070

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PICS: HARIZ BAHARUDIN

Ravir



TOH EE MING

It takes time to adjust to the darkness in a small, dimly lit shed, west of Kathmandu in Balambu. What you'll find yourself face to face with when your eyes adjust is rows upon rows of furry rabbits.

"Please try not to make them look too cute in the photos, it'll be

bad for business," says the owner Ujjwal Chapagain (*pic, right*), not that he has much to worry about. The first commercial rabbit farmer in Nepal has done brisk business of late as consumers in Nepal are quickly developing a taste for rabbit meat along with its associated health benefits.

"Nepal faces a huge demand for meat, but there is insufficient production. People also prefer healthier

meats," explains Ujjwal.

Not surprisingly, this delicacy is in high demand by foreigners. Every month, Ujjwal's Balambu-based Himalayan Rabbit Farm supplies 150kg of rabbit meat to select restaurants in the Lajimpat, Babar Mahal and Thamel area, like Le Sherpa, Chez Caroline and Soaltee Hotel.

Rabbit meat is increasingly favoured by those who "are becoming more health conscious, yet do not

wish to compromise their habit of eating meat," says Ujjwal. The protein-rich meat is believed to be leaner, have lower cholesterol and is thus seen as a healthier alternative for those with heart-related diseases.

Besides catering to foreign tastes, Ujjwal plans to introduce this meat into the Nepali diet. He is currently working with Nepal's largest barbeque chain Bajeko Sekuwa to innovate different rabbit meat

ROCKING THE AIRBRUSH

Customisable Air Brush T-Shirts a hit among people in Nepal



ng for rabbits

As health-conscious Kathmandu consumers turn to rabbit meat, farmers struggle to cope with demand



dishes.

Eager to tap into this market, many enterprising farmers are following suit. A number of commercial rabbit farms are currently being constructed around Kathmandu. If rabbit meat is properly marketed, Ujjwal believes this trend will extend to other highly populated areas like Pokhara and Chitwan.

As the process is less labor intensive, yet provides high-value

returns, some prefer rabbits to trout farming which has also spread on the Valley's outskirts. It is even preferable to poultry because of the lower overheads.

"In one year, a female rabbit can produce up to 40 rabbits, and the gestation period is short," explains Ujjwal. The impressively clean farm houses about 400 rabbits of the New Zealand White and Soviet Chinchilla species. The meat is then sold for

Rs 800 per kg to the restaurants in Kathmandu compared to Rs 350 for chicken.

The Himalayan Rabbit Farm has already spawned local-level partnerships, where Ujjwal supplies rabbits to farmers in Sindhuli and Dolakha districts. After receiving Ujjwal's training on how to manage and market rabbits, these farmers are expected to be self-reliant and raise their own rabbits.

Ujjwal is also experimenting with farming rabbit fur (*pic, second from left*). Given an increase in production, the farm can work with leather companies to produce luxury items like fur handbags and gloves in the future. 📷

nepalitimes.com

Tour of The Himalayan Rabbit Farm 📷
Green state of mind, #690
Seeing Green, #652

HARIZ BAHARUDIN

At the Kumaripati Street Festival in Jawalakhel held last month, it was not the superstar bands or popular celebrities that got all the attention – a humble t-shirt stall operated by homegrown Rock A Billy Airbrush had a swarming, unrelenting crowd struggling to place orders for designs that caught their eye.

"It was one of the most intense days ever, and the orders just kept on coming, but I'm glad they did," said Rock A Billy Airbrush designer Monish Maharjan. More than 140 people got their own customised shirts that day, with designs ranging from popular cartoon characters to bright, loud typography.

Monish started painting these unique airbrush t-shirts 14 years ago when he was living in the US. Upon returning to Nepal three years ago, he joined an office job which he was not satisfied with, prompting him to start Rock A Billy Airbrush to continue doing what he loved.

"I hated having to wear a tie and type things into a computer. Art is my passion because it's the only thing I love doing. If people appreciate it and I can make a little money to survive, I'm a happy man," said Monish.

The designs that require the most work, according to Monish, are portraits, which can take several hours to finish painting. "When it comes to portraits, it takes me a long time because you have to be very careful. Once you spray, it becomes permanent so you need to be precise with the details," Monish explained.

Rock A Billy Airbrush is the only airbrush t-shirt printing service in Nepal. A t-shirt with a name in stylised typography costs Rs 700, while one with a design of a well-known character costs Rs 1000. They also do custom orders, where customers can choose anything they like to be printed in Monish's distinctive air brush style.

Despite being a young company, Rock A Billy Airbrush has carved quite a name for itself. Monish and his team opened up stalls at numerous festivals, including the Nepal Inked Tattoo Convention last year at the Bhrikuti Mandap Exhibiton Hall.

In addition to printing t-shirts, Monish designs and paints other graphics. Some of his works are displayed in restaurants around Jhamsikhel and Patan, and he also designed the album cover of the recent Kutumba album *Karmath*.

The airbrush artist feels that a lot of his success is due to the booming arts scene in Nepal, for which he is very thankful. "It is an awesome time for art in Nepal, just look at all the talented street art everywhere. Even in this t-shirt printing business, we are not just printing yaks or mountains anymore. You just have to be innovative and creative," he said.

When asked about his hopes for the future, Monish offers a simple answer: "You have to do what you love. As long as I get to continue painting, no matter what, I'll be happy". 📷

Rock A Billy Airbrush
9841280522, 015547499



URBAN YETI



EKSAYEATH/108



JUJU WEARS

SPOILT FOR CHOICE

Heavily influenced by pop culture, the Pokhara-based Urban Yeti has managed to set itself apart from other t-shirt shops thanks to its smart, quirky designs. The brand is gaining popularity quickly among both locals and tourists because of its atypical graphics. Designs by Urban Yeti are not just simply rehashed, clichéd icons of Nepal – designer Jeewan Bhattarai composes them with a focus on making people actually want to wear them. The result is a brand that is so unmistakably offbeat that it is sure to stand out among other Pokhara t-shirt shops.

Lakeside, Pokhara
www.urbanyetitees.com

True to its simple name, EkSayeAth's designs have a minimalist approach – not that it makes their graphics any less eye-catching. These thoughtfully designed t-shirts take inspiration from Nepali roots and culture, carrying with them the vitality of this patriotic spirit throughout the collection. Based in Kathmandu, EkSayeAth operates as a closely-knit group of designers and clothing enthusiasts who are committed to preserving culture while still delivering stylish apparel. In addition to catering to locals, the brand also has retail partners in Hong Kong and the USA.

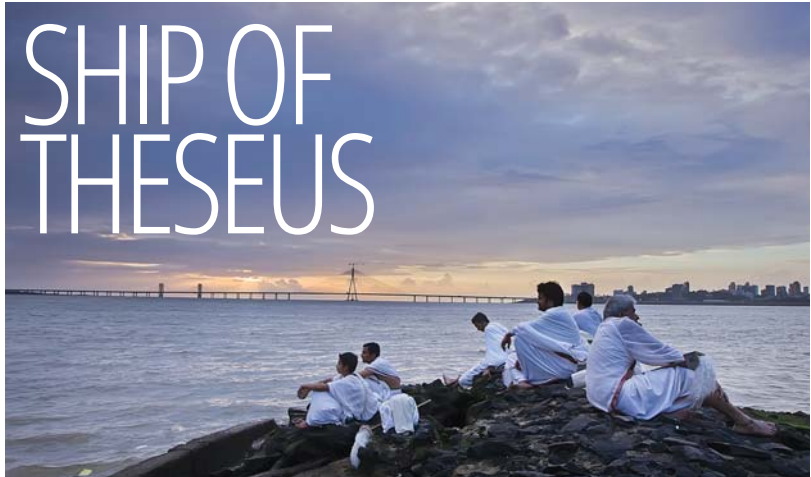
Bhatbhateni, Kathmandu
www.eksayeath.com

Juju Wears is no stranger to fashion enthusiasts in Nepal. The clothing chain, run by Shraman Apparels which exports garments to the USA for big-name stores like GAP and Walmart, already has two flagship stores and many more distributors across the city.

The brand aims to encourage the budding arts scene in Nepal by using designs from the often-underappreciated local artists.

Juju Wears also aims to promote the rich culture and traditions of Nepal through designers and incorporate it in their products.

Jhamsikhel, Kathmandu
www.jujuwearsnepal.com



Two thousand years ago the Greek historian Plutarch raised this question: if the planks of a ship were replaced part by part, until nothing remained from the original build, could the preserved one really be the original ship? Centuries later the English thinker Thomas Hobbes took this parable further, asking which would be the original ship if all the replaced parts were collected and another one was built?

Without attempting to answer these questions and instead choosing to celebrate contradictions over the finality of conclusions, Indian filmmaker Anand Gandhi ponders upon the notion of duality in his film *Ship of Theseus*.

The first part of the film is about Aliya, a photographer who took up the practice after losing her eyesight completely as a child. After a successful eye transplant, Aliya finds the chaotic world of Mumbai rather mundane, and her pictures suffer. She admits she took photos to archive, document,

remember when she was blind. But Gandhi steps in with the question of what is the difference if the fully-sighted Aliya is motivated by the same reasons, especially if she needs to blindfold herself to take good pictures?

In the second part, monk Maitreya has filed a case of animal rights abuse against pharmaceutical and cosmetic research companies. Maitreya is also diagnosed with liver cirrhosis and is advised to take medication produced by the same companies. Pestering him constantly is a young lawyer who tries to quantify the elder's dualist philosophy in order to keep him alive. The monk wants to practice what he preaches in spite of failing health. But Maitreya's self-harm seems inconsistent with his care for the plight of animals - is his love for them really reciprocated?

The third story is about Navin, a stock-broker who has no interest in anything else than his job. There is much more than happiness in the world, his hospitalised

grandmother tells him, but Navin is not keen to explore. One night after he finds out someone nicked a man's kidney when they were operating on his appendix, the quiet and unassuming Navin plunges into the shady world of organ theft. As someone who had a kidney-transplant recently, Navin speculates whether he received one in a similarly dodgy way and is ultimately fighting on behalf of a victim.

Before he made films Anand Gandhi wrote screenplays and dialogues for popular Indian soap operas, therefore *Ship of Theseus* does feel didactic at times. But where it succeeds is in making age-old musings strangely contemporary. Fresh new faces have acted out stories unexplored in any other Indian film of late.

Although *Ship of Theseus* never opened in theatres in Kathmandu when it was released in mid-2013, it got the plaudits it deserved when it won Best Feature Film at India's National Film Awards on 2 May for being a "quietly powerful film that depicts issues of intuitive brilliance, metaphysical belief and intricate morality in a world full of contradictions."

The meditative nature of the all three stories means *Ship of Theseus* is a film made for second, and possibly solitary, viewings. And you can do that with ease because the entire film is available for free downloads.

Sunir Pandey

nepalitimes.com

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HAPPENINGS



DEVAKI BISTA

WELCOME: President Ram Baran Yadav receives the letter of credential from Egypt's ambassador to Nepal Bahir Nabil Abdel Fattah Hemly at Shital Niwas, Maharajgunj on Wednesday.



BIKRAM RAI

VICTORIOUS SMILE: Mahendra Bista (centre) is surrounded by well-wishers after being elected the president of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists on Monday.



HARIZ BAHARUDIN

CLAY PLAY: A tourist tries her hand at pottery in Bhaktapur on Tuesday.



HARIZ BAHARUDIN

ALL SET: Worshippers get ready to pull the Rato Machhindranath from Pulchowk to Mangal Bajar on Saturday. The chariot will travel around Lalitpur for the next two months.

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Fighting a savage civilisation

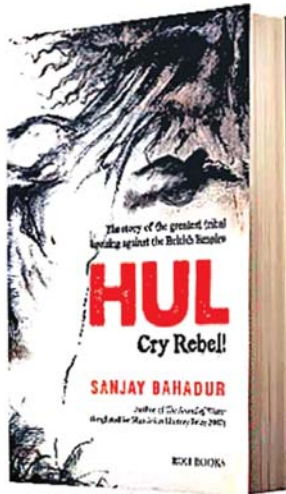
The indigenous inhabitants of a forest in India are forced out of their land by greedy landlords protected by politicians. They can't endure the injustice anymore and decide to fight back. The ensuing war leads to horrific massacres.

Sounds like the Maoist insurrection led by indigenous people that is ravaging Jharkhand state of present-day India. But more than 160 years ago, the same region saw the Santhal tribe rise up against local upper caste zamindars and British colonial troops.

The 1855 uprising was crushed with between 30-50,000 members of this aboriginal group killed by British troops in brutal massacres. The bows and arrows of the Santhals were no match for the British canons and muskets. The rebellion preceded the Sepoy Mutiny by three years and the Naxalite movement by about a century.

Now, Indian author Sanjay Bahadur has written a historical novel, *HUL Cry Rebel!* centred on this little-known historical uprising which could be taken straight out of present-day Jharkhand. Fictionalised characters meet real-life protagonists from the British colonial administration, the rebel leadership and the injustices that forced the Santhals to rise up when their hunter-gatherer lifestyle was threatened by land grabbers.

Sanjay Bahadur worked for the Indian Revenue Service and was assigned to Jharkhand's mineral rich coal mining towns, and spent time learning about the Santhal way of life and the tribe's tragic and bloody history. During his research, Bahadur realised



HUL Cry Rebel!

Sanjay Bahadur
Roli Books New Delhi 2013
Rs 800 soft cover
416 pages

REVIEW

that these areas of India, that includes Jharkhand and Chhatisgarh, have seen uprisings by local indigenous people every few decades. Today, the region is once more wracked by violence as the Indian state, big companies and multinationals are drawn by the enormous mineral wealth of a region populated by forest-dwelling indigenous groups who are the original inhabitants of India. It is still a David vs Goliath fight that pits hunter gatherers against a resource hungry globalised juggernaut.

Among Sanjay Bahadur's fictional characters, not all the bad guys are bad and not all the good guys are good.

The story revolves around Shibani, a young English-educated widow in a Bengali landlord household and Lt James Davies who understands that the Santhals have their backs against the wall. Both share concern about the plight of the tribe, and in the process of helping them are also drawn to each other. The book also follows the saga of three generations of Santhals who find themselves reluctantly in the middle of a war they initially didn't want to be a part of.

Bikram is forced to struggle nearly single-handedly against injustice. The author says Bikram's character was inspired by the story of Chief Seattle who lived and also fought colonial invasion of native American lands at about the same time as the Santhals in India. Bikram struggles against the savage forces of 'civilisation' that threatens to devour his culture, while coming to terms with love and betrayal in his own personal life.

As you turn the pages in the book, you are reminded of the uneasy balance today in Jharkhand and elsewhere around the world between natural resource exploitation needed to fuel economic growth and the identity and the cultural bonds of indigenous people to the land.

In an interview Sanjay Bahadur has said: "All I can say is we are condemned to repeat mistakes if we don't learn from history...as a fiction writer, I wanted to remind and inform thinking readers about forgotten fragment of our history that still casts a grim shadow on our present." Sanjay Bahadur takes his novel to a riveting climax, but as you can imagine, it just cannot be a happy ending for the *adivasis* of India.

Kunda Dixit

COCINA MITHO CHA

Cocina Mitho Cha is an initiative led by a Spanish organisation that has been working in Nepal for a long time, helping out orphanages and displaced children. It realised it needed to do more than educate the students till high school and then send them out in the world with few skills with which to make a living. After a lot of deliberation, the team decided that due to the booming tourism trade, the service industry would always be on the look-out for trained cooks, waiters and house-keeping staff, and that is how Cocina Mitho Cha came into being.

Located in the heart of Lajimpat, the compound that houses the restaurant also has a cookery school and classrooms



PICS: RUBY TUESDAY

that offer classes in catering and house-keeping. They also have four rooms to let out; which in addition to providing a place for the learners to practice what they are learning first-hand also bring

in much needed funds.

I was impressed by its story and the tour I got of the premises from one of the students and also our waiter for the afternoon, but I was mainly there for the food.

The zucchini cream soup (Rs 150) was recommended and what sold me on it was his description of it being flavored with freshly cut rosemary straight from their organic garden. It was definitely creamy, a little too much for my liking as it drowned out the flavours of the vegetable and the rosemary was so mild as to be virtually non-existent.

The coca de recapte (Rs 290, *pic. below*) was thin crust pastry baked to a crisp that comes topped with escalivada, a Catalan dish that uses grilled vegetables, caramelised onions, peppers and goat cheese. The sweetness of the pastry contrasted sharply with the pungency of the onions and peppers, and though the variance in the two takes some getting used to, it is a delightful little starter.

The Pollo al ajillo (Rs 425, *pic. above*) was described on the menu as a typical Spanish dish of roasted chicken and potatoes aromatised with parsley and garlic. I had no expectations of what the dish would be for I was venturing into completely new culinary territory. The plate set in front of me contained just what the menu had described- chunks of chicken with potatoes.

And while this would have been perfectly acceptable if I was say, eating in a Spanish home, with salad or some accompaniment on the side, but as a restaurant dish, I expected a little more detail to presentation and service. Though both meat and starch were cooked well, it was dry and if it hadn't been for the delicious iced tea

to lubricate each bite down my throat, I would have left with a bruised and scraped gullet.

I needed some happiness to end my meal and that came in the guise of Crema Catalana (Rs 180). A rich velvety dessert with crunchy sugar bits that can at best be described as Catalan's version of the much loved crème caramel.

While I loved the whole ethos behind the opening of Cocina Mitho Cha and will go back, because in a small way I want to feel like I'm helping others while feeding my gluttony, I also think that unless the restaurant works on improving the food that they serve, they will have more patrons walking out saying 'Cocina Mitho Chaina' instead of the other way round.

Ruby Tuesday

How to get there: On Lajimpat's beautifully new paved streets, look out for Hotel Gangjonj. Cocina Mitho Cha is in the gully smack opposite it.



Great Food Deserves Carlsberg

That calls for a Carlsberg



women infected with this virus than previously. It is possible this could be explained by hepatitis E coming in cyclical outbreaks, and we have just been lucky to not witness these recently.

The best way to prevent both hepatitis A and E is to make sure to wash hands with soap and water, drink only clean water and eat well-cooked food. These proven methods will inhibit transmission of the disease.

In early 2000, the US and Nepal military collaborated with GlaxoSmithKlein to conduct a careful trial on Nepali soldiers which produced a very effective vaccine against hepatitis E. Unfortunately it was never commercially manufactured because there was no financial incentive to produce the vaccine as the disease affected mostly poor people. However, the Chinese soon came to the rescue as hepatitis E is a scourge in China too. After one of the largest vaccine trials in history, China has produced a very effective, commercially-available hepatitis E vaccine which should soon be available in Nepal.

In contrast, hepatitis B and C are not transmitted by the faecal oral route. Blood transfusion, intravenous drug use or sexual transmission is the usual route of entry. There is a useful vaccine for hepatitis B, but not for C. In 99 per cent of cases of hepatitis B, no anti-viral drug treatment is required as patients recover without specific treatment. Hepatitis C is less benign and may require treatment after infection. But finally, the hepatitis D virus can cause severe complications only when it co-exists with hepatitis B.

Clearly, common viral hepatitis (A to E) can be prevented if we are well-aware of the modes of transmission and take suitable precautions. 📺

Hepatitis ABCs

Many Nepalis incorrectly think jaundice (yellow discoloration of the white of the eyes) is a disease. Actually, it is often just a symptom/sign, not the diagnosis.

Just like fever often is a diagnosis without a known cause, jaundice too is usually a sign that the liver is unwell. Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver, and is one of the most common causes of jaundice. Now that several hundred cases of jaundice

jaundice, but just a flu-like illness, lethargy and nausea which are the signature signs of all hepatitis.

The good news is that a single infection with hepatitis A appears to give a lifelong immunity. Most Nepalis will be protected against this common hepatitis for life. However it is doubtful if this immunity after a single infection applies to hepatitis E.

The fascinating discovery of the hepatitis E virus happened during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s, after an outbreak of unexplained hepatitis at a military camp. An enthusiastic scientist came to the rescue by ingesting a pooled faecal extract from affected soldiers. This scientist became sick and the new virus was detected in his stool.

Both hepatitis A and E have a self-limiting course, and no specific medicines are required, although many do receive Ayurvedic treatment in our country. However when pregnant women are infected with hepatitis E, it may turn deadly and lead to fulminant or life-threatening hepatitis. Luckily, for the last several years we have seen fewer pregnant



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

have been reported in Biratnagar because of contaminated water, viral hepatitis is a timely topic for this week's health column.

In Nepal the most common version of infectious viral hepatitis is Hepatitis E. Both hepatitis E and A have a faecal-oral route of transmission, which means ingesting something contaminated with faeces. Hepatitis A affects most Nepalis in their childhood. Usually this infection is not

GIZMO by YANTRICK

GEN Z2

The sequel to Sony's excellent Xperia Z1 smartphone, the Z2, is Sony's next-gen answer to recently launched flagship smartphones like HTC's stunning One M8 and Samsung's mighty Galaxy S5. Combining blistering performance, a stunning display, an excellent camera and cutting-edge Android software into a body that is gorgeous to look at, the Xperia Z2 is an all-round performer worthy of topping any smartphone wish-list.

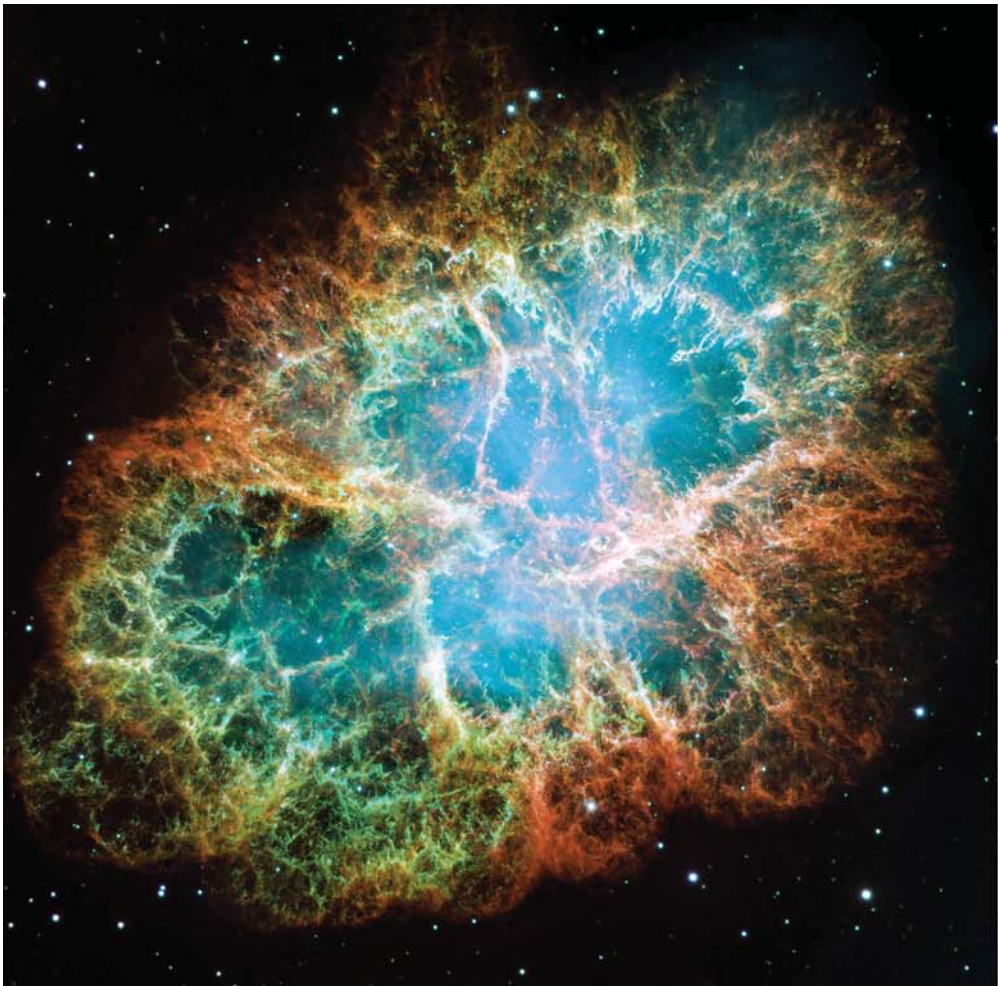
Design-wise, the Xperia Z2 retains its predecessor's stylish aluminium and beautiful tempered-glass template. The Z2 has the same glass front and back and aluminium band running around the edge. It still looks stunning and feels extremely luxurious to hold, and it definitely feels premium with Sony's standard level of exemplary build quality. The Z2 is also completely water-proof, capable of surviving in up to 1.5 metres of water for up to 30 minutes at a time. The Z2 now ships a larger 5.2-inch Full-HD panel (pixel count: 423 PPI) that boasts Triluminos display technology, along with Sony's X-Reality engine, which translates to one of the best mobile displays. HD content especially showcases the screen's brilliance.



As expected from a new flagship smartphone, the Z2 packs the latest processor, putting it head to head with its top-tier rivals. There is a blistering 2.3GHz quad-core processor along with 3GB of RAM, so your performance issues are well and truly taken care of. The Z2 is stocked with Android 4.4.2 as well as Sony's proprietary user interface, which feels intuitive and brilliantly complements the beautiful screen. The Z2's camera is where it trumps its rivals, with its 20.7MP rear camera capable of capturing breathtakingly detailed pictures. The camera is quick to load, fast to focus and almost always takes fantastic images. Add to that the ability to record videos in 4K resolution and you have the best to-date smartphone camera in hand.

The Xperia Z2's battery life is also quite impressive, easily capable of lasting a good day's use. If you are running low on juice, 'Stamina' mode also makes a huge difference, by turning off all non-essential functions when the phone is locked. A minor gripe is the Xperia Z2 only comes with 16GB of internal storage, which is actually more like 11GB when you account for Android and all the bloatware that Sony has included. However, a microSD card slot that supports up to 64GB should meet your storage needs, but honestly, a little more out of the box would have been nice. 📺

Yantrick's Verdict: Available for around the Rs 75K mark, the Z2 is not cheap, but if you want a premier performance, you have to pay premier price too.



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India has entered the last phase of its six week election process, as the Congress candidate Rahul Gandhi fights to brake the momentum of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) juggernaut. And nowhere is this struggle more intense than in the Amethi constituency in Uttar Pradesh state.



LOOK OUT
Ajaz Ashraf

The other electoral battlefield is Varanasi where the leader of the new anti-corruption citizen's party, Arvind Kejriwal of the AAP has taken on the BJP's Narendra Modi head-on. Analysts say Kejriwal has become the most authentic face of the opposition to the BJP, and not the Congress.

This may be why the Janata Dal (U) is supporting Kejriwal in Varanasi, and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) has asked its cadres to work openly for him. Many of the Communist Party of India (CPI) cadres in Varanasi have also supported Kejriwal, shunning their own Hira Lal Yadav of the CPI (Marxist).

The CPI (M) has fielded its candidate and the Congress has parachuted its leaders, particularly those from the Muslim community, into Varanasi to ensure that the AAP doesn't galvanise the anti-BJP vote.

Political exigency and the ideological battle for India's soul have combined to persuade three parties to overlook their differences with AAP to align behind it. JD (U) leader Nitish Kumar is from the Kurmi caste which accounts for 250,000 votes in Varanasi. The city also has



India's last lap

HINDUSTAN TIMES

The triangular battle between the BJP, Congress and the AAP in northern India means the result could be close.

a substantial number of Bihari students who may be attracted to Nitish.

The beleaguered Nitish seems to have weighed in for AAP with an eye on the future. The breakdown of the JD (U)-BJP alliance has turned his administration in Bihar into a minority government. Nitish can't count on Lalu Prasad Yadav or the Congress to come to his defence, likely as they are to derive advantage from the Bihar government meltdown.

Nitish has an assurance of support from the Left, but they are

on the decline, and not expected to even get the votes they got in 2004. The AAP's electoral strength isn't likely to match that of the Left, but Kejriwal has been sharply critical of Modi's Gujarat model of development. The Left has concluded that Kejriwal stands the best chance of challenging Modi.

Ironically, it was the Left which accused the UPA government of favouring big business through its allocation of natural resources for industry. Yet, it is Kejriwal who is identified as the implacable

opponent of crony capitalism in the popular consciousness, having taken the idea to the people and linking it to corruption. In Indian democracy: an issue needs a popular leader to gain traction.

It is not that the communists in Varanasi are enamoured of Kejriwal, who has said he is "neither right nor left". They are supporting Kejriwal because they identify with his anti-capitalist stance and they must have thought it was futile to favour a CPI (M) candidate who can't possibly vanquish Modi.

The CPI (ML) leader Dipankar Bhattacharya told me he decided to unilaterally support Kejriwal in order to "oppose Modi's Varanasi's expedition and expose and challenge his variety of

BALLOT TIME: Voters in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh line up to vote at a local polling station.

corporate-driven communal politics".

By contrast, the Congress is working overtime to ensure its candidate in Varanasi, Ajai Rai, emerges as the principal contender to Modi. It has sent a clutch of Muslim leaders there to hack at the increasing community consolidation behind Kejriwal. Partly, the Congress is trying to get back at the AAP's campaign against Rahul Gandhi in Amethi. But it's also about ensuring Kejriwal doesn't turn in an exceptional performance, for this would challenge the predominance of the Congress in the anti-BJP space. ashrafajaz@gmail.com

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KNOWING HOW TO

Nepal's new foreign aid policy will have to balance urgent infrastructure spending with the need to invest in the social sector

BHRIKUTI RAI

A year after the government started showing rare firmness with donors about where it wanted foreign aid to go, it has finished drawing up a new aid policy to lay down the rules. The NC-UML coalition government wants to ensure that foreign aid directly contributes to economic growth and job creation through investment in hydropower, highways and other infrastructure.

The Finance Ministry has been taking the lead in lobbying for the new directives with donors,

while Chief Secretary Leela Mani Poudyal has sent directives to all line ministry secretaries to insist on foreign assistance only for medium and large-scale employment generation projects.

'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,' Poudyal wrote in a 11-point directive he sent in April to the National Planning Commission, the prime minister and finance minister. The government will not accept aid projects of less than \$5 million.

The government's new Development Cooperation Policy 2014 will replace the existing

| LIST OF TOP BILATERAL DONORS |
|------------------------------|
| United Kingdom |
| USAID |
| Japan |
| India |
| Switzerland |

Foreign Aid Policy 2001, and will address aid fragmentation by focusing a large proportion of foreign aid on infrastructure, agriculture projects and less on human rights, democracy, inclusion, and constitution writing.

"We are not trying to undermine the achievements in social sectors achieved through foreign aid in the last decade but it is now time to focus on projects of national priority that will empower communities financially," Madhu Marasani of the Finance Ministry's International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division told us. "Human rights are also protected when people are financially empowered, so we are reassessing our priorities."



LET'S TALK: Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat (right) with Asian Development Bank (ADB) President Takehiko Nakao at a meeting on the sidelines of ADB's 47th annual meeting, in Astana, Kazakhstan last week.

Marasini's office recently released the Development Cooperation Report 2012-13 which stated that more than one-third of the \$960 million

foreign aid to Nepal through 580 projects last year bypassed the government's budget. The government hopes that the new policy will direct most aid

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ASK FOR HELP

SECTOR DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN AID DISBURSEMENT IN FY 2012-2013

EDUCATION
141
million

HEALTH
129
million

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
118
million

ROADS
109
million

ENERGY
91
million

AGRICULTURE
38
million

PEACE AND RECONSTRUCTION
37
million

monies through the budget process.

However, other Finance Ministry officials say although the percentage of directly-funded aid projects in 2012-2013 increased slightly from 23 per cent in 2011, because the government just couldn't spend aid money.

"Off-budget projects have increased because of the weak government mechanism to implement projects," said one official, citing that only 36 per cent of foreign loans and 74 per cent of grants earmarked last year were ever spent.

At the recent annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank in Astana of Kazakhstan, Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat stressed the need to channel foreign aid into infrastructure projects. However, most donors feel that unless the government works on spending capacity and delivery, it will not be able to raise more money from multi- and bi-lateral sources.

One donor official told us in a background interview: "This is not the first time the government has told us to shift from social sectors to infrastructure projects, but first we need to see improvements on implementation of existing projects before asking us to commit." 🇳🇵

TOP 5 MULTILATERAL DONORS (2012-2013)

WORLD BANK
231.40
million

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
101.20
million

UN COUNTRY TEAM
68.66
million

GLOBAL FUND
28.24
million

EUROPEAN UNION
28.07
million

Nothing to hide

In the last few months INGOs operating in Nepal have come under increased scrutiny. The government leaked to the press that only a handful of them submitted project and expenditure details to Social Welfare Council. But INGOs feel that the new requirement to report online through the Aid Management Platform (AMP), introduced by the Finance Ministry in 2010, is an extra burden and only deflects attention from the inefficiency of the Social Welfare Council, which monitors these organisations.

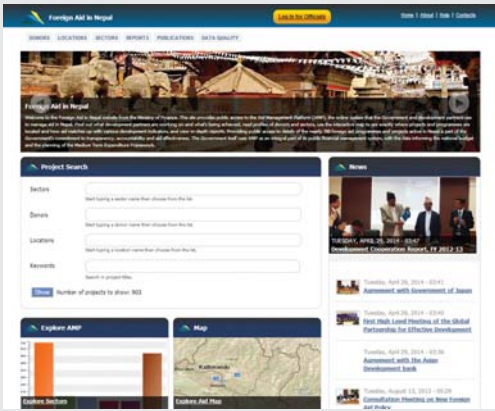
"Strengthening the SWC makes more sense than lumping all INGOs in one basket and portraying them in negative light," says Ashutosh Tiwari, of Wateraid, who chairs the Association of INGOs in Nepal (AIN). "Having a one window policy to report our activities would have made it easier for us to report to and for the SWC to relay findings to concerned ministries."

The Finance Ministry is working with AIN to bring all INGOs under the AMP ambit to better monitor and coordinate aid flows to Nepal. So far, over 80 AIN members have received AMP-related training.

"We hope bringing INGOs and donors under one platform to monitor aid flow will help to avoid duplication of similar projects and show donors and concerned ministries where foreign aid is concentrated," says Tilak Bhandari of Finance Ministry who works with INGOs on aid management.

Earlier this week, the Embassy of Denmark signed an agreement with UNDP for a grant assistance of Rs 9 million for support to the Finance Ministry's AMP initiative.

"This will ensure important work on the aid management information systems of the Ministry of Finance will run smoothly," said Jan Møller Hansen, Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of Denmark. "It will contribute to enhancing coordination and documentation of development assistance to Nepal."



Message by Mrs. Rensje Teerink, Ambassador of the European Union to Nepal on Europe Day 2014



Today is a significant day, not only for Europeans but also for those who have always cherished the hope for the wellbeing of individuals and societies everywhere. The 9th of May, is marked as 'Europe Day'. The day marks the reconciliation of the countries torn by war in Europe.

Robert Schuman, the French Foreign Minister, called for cooperation among the European States on this very day in 1950. The goal was to make another war impossible on the continent. Since then, European integration has grown gradually reminding the world that the force for change and development lies in the 'unity of nations' rather than their division.

The European Union, a regional grouping of 28 Members, has been the outcome of the Schuman Declaration that has been setting good examples of propagating peace and well-being in different parts of the world. Today, the EU is looked up to as a global player in the protection and promotion of human rights and

is one of the largest donors of humanitarian assistance.

Around the globe, whether in Cairo or Kiev, people want what the EU represents: fundamental rights and freedoms, democratic governance, rule of law and a decent living.

Recent events in Ukraine show that we cannot take these values for granted. In today's Europe, we see that democracy is a constant work in progress; we share a responsibility to safeguard and nurture it. And we will stand by those who go to the streets to call for it.

We created a European External Action Service to ensure that when we speak, our voice is heard. And when we engage, our actions make a difference. Our citizens know that in the face of big problems such as fragile states, pandemics, energy security, climate change and migration, we are more effective together.

Over the past years, we have built a diplomatic service for the 21st century. Through its work, the EU has become a truly global player, able to promote its values and interests around the world. We have made human rights the silver thread that runs through EU foreign policy, assisting democratic transitions around the globe and helping oppressed minorities, social groups and civil society to voice their concerns.

The EU also has an important role to play in bringing together partners around the world to achieve lasting peace and stability. The EU's High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton leads the talks between the EU 3+3 (Germany, France and the United Kingdom as well as U.S., China and

Russia) with Iran. They resulted in an interim agreement on Iran's nuclear programme last November - a crucial step towards making this world a safer and more secure place.

In crises around the world, the EU adopts a comprehensive approach that combines all the tools at its disposal: diplomatic, developmental, military and economic. This allows us to address not just the symptoms, but also the causes of the problems we face.

Take the Horn of Africa, where thanks to a combination of political dialogue with the government of Somalia, our naval mission ATALANTA, and targeted development aid and humanitarian assistance, piracy has been reduced by 95%. Today the young boys that manned pirate ships go to school and learn the skills that will help them lead their country towards a more prosperous future.

2014 is a special year for the EU. Ten years ago, ten new members joined our Union. The 2004 enlargement was a crucial step towards overcoming decades of division on our continent. Since then three new members have joined our club; a testament to the continuing attraction of closer ties to the EU.

This year is also special for European citizens. From 22 to 25 May, voters will go to the polls to cast their ballot in the elections to the next European Parliament. This means citizens will have a clear say in what should be the EU's priorities for the next five years.

Sixty-four years ago, Robert Schuman took a decisive step towards what we know as the European Union (EU) today. Today, Europe Day is an opportunity for all of us: to commemorate

past achievements, but also to look ahead at how we can shape our European future together and promote peace and prosperity at home and in the world.

Now looking at the European Union's engagement in Nepal, there are ample reasons to be optimistic since the Union's partnership with Nepal has grown manifold over the years.

The EU together with its Member States, is Nepal's largest donor and above all, a very close friend. The EU wishes to see a peaceful stable and inclusive Nepal. The accomplishment of these objectives alone would allow the citizens of this country to fulfil their aspirations.

The EU stepped forward to support the 2nd Constituent Assembly elections with the belief that elections were the only way out to give a new political course to the country. We hope that the consolidation of democracy will be completed successfully.

EU's engagement in Nepal will become more prominent in the years ahead and will be focussed on areas which are key to the prosperity of the country, such as rural development, education and democratic governance. We are looking forward to tripling our development assistance for the next seven years from the initial allotment of Euros 120 million to Euro 360 million. This increase, will hopefully, help to achieve some of the most pressing development goals for Nepal in the years ahead.

*Mrs. Rensje Teerink
Ambassador
Head of the European Union
Delegation to Nepal*



Gokarna Gautam, *Nepal*, 4 May

नेपाल

When his older brothers talked about beating up villains and dancing with heroines, Daya Hang Rai dreamt of being an actor. Two decades later, his popularity has made the macho-men of Nepali film look outdated.

Nepali actors were typically required to be well-built or baby-faced. With Rai's popularity, even those with squinty eyes, chubby bodies and flat noses can aspire to stardom and the film world is finally looking more inclusive.

Rai got his start at a time when

Film's funny man

audiences were sick of watching cheaply produced and badly acted mock-Bollywood movies. Nepali filmmakers too had started looking at cinema in a slightly different way and based their stories and characters on what they had seen in society.

Says Rai: "How else would a chink like me become an actor?"

Born in Khawa, a remote corner of Bhojpur, Rai was already writing plots before he finished high school. After taking part in an acting workshop at the Nachghar, he wanted to become a director.

But his teacher, the actor and director Anup Baral, encouraged him to continue acting. "He was a shy one, maybe he was afraid too," says Baral. "But I could see he had what it took, so I forced him to act in one of my plays."

After receiving positive feedback for his role as an old man in the play *Siruma Rani*, Rai felt Baral had been right after all. But theatre alone wasn't enough for him. Rai kept on hoping he would get cast in a film.

Almost by coincidence, Rai met Ram Babu Gurung who was looking for a Mongolian-faced actor for his Gurung language film *Anagarki*. He

played the hero but got very little exposure because the film was limited to charity shows after it was made. Rai's hard work paid off when he was cast in Manoj Pandit's film *Dasdhunga* and was praised for his acting.

Next was *Loot*, where he played a comical would-be bank robber. The film became an overnight hit and propelled Rai into stardom. Every Nepali producer wanted to cast him in their films.

But Rai doesn't want to be known as the funny man from *Loot*. "Each of my films must establish a different character, or else I will be typecast and outdated," says Rai. His role as Kaji in *Kabaddi* has somewhat helped his cause, but Rai is worried audiences might take him for a comedian who makes people laugh by making faces.

These days Daya Hang Rai commands up to Rs 700,000 per film, but he is still humble as ever and leads a simple life. He prefers local eateries and often travels by public transport. Says his mentor Baral: "He really is a hero for young Nepalis to look up to."



"Get up, Sushil-da. It's getting late to write the constitution." "Is it one year already?"

कान्तिपुर
Batsyayan, in *Kantipur*, 8 May

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“Stalin used to kill his rivals. What have I done to deserve the comparison?”

UCPN(M) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal quoted in *Janaastha* after members of Baburam Bhattarai's faction accused him of being autocratic, 7 May



Dogs for sale

Karobar, 5 May

कारोबार

The trade in dogs has increased dramatically as breeders are selling canines to middle class buyers. Kathmandu alone has more than 30 kennel clubs that do Rs 40 million worth of business selling exotic breeds of dogs. The increase seems to be due to the rising affluence of the middle class as well as the need for security at home. Ninety per cent of the dogs sold are bred in Nepal itself. The most expensive breed is a Pug puppy which can sell for as much as Rs 30,000. German Shepherds sell for Rs 18,000, and so do Boxers. Labradors and Retriever puppies sell for anything between Rs 5-30,000. Earlier, imported puppies dominated the market but they have now been replaced mostly by locally bred dogs. However fancy dog foods are still being imported.

Jailed abroad

Hom Karki, *Kantipur*, 8 May

कान्तिपुर

Four Nepali women who worked as household help in Saudi Arabia have been locked up in jails after failing to provide the identities of the fathers of their newborns. According to Nepal's ambassador to Saudi Arabia Udayraj Pandey, the women are between 25-35 years and have been jailed along with their babies. "Two of them have been in prison for two years while the other two have been imprisoned since the last eight months," he said.

One of them is presently at a prison in Jeddah while the other three are at Nasing and Mallaj prison in Riyadh. All four women were arrested after they gave birth to their babies at local hospitals. "They couldn't present complete details about their children's father so they were arrested for further investigation," said Pandey. "The law here is tough against women who fail to disclose the identity of the child's father."

The women told that the fathers were Bangladeshi and Indian men but failed to present full details which led to more problems, says ambassador Pandey. The Saudi government had requested the Nepal Embassy send the women back to Nepal with their babies but in the absence of the fathers, the embassy hasn't been able to provide travel documents for the children.

Pandey said: "We have been in touch with the ministry of foreign affairs and home ministry regarding the travel documents and have begun the process to send them back home."

According to Nepal's citizenship act, travel documents cannot be issued to children of foreign fathers. The embassy has reportedly been receiving a lot of similar cases of babies born out of wedlock where the fathers are either unknown or are foreigners.

A Nepali woman who worked at a cleaning company in Qatar was also arrested on the same grounds after she was found to be five months pregnant at a routine check-up. She gave birth to her baby in prison. The embassy in Doha has issued her travel documents.

Back to business

Interview with Constituent Assembly's documentation committee chairman Bishnu Poudel, *Annapurna Post*, 5 May

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

Anapurna Post: When will the documentation committee handover business to CA?

Bishnu Poudel: The six sub-committees will soon report to us regarding the reports prepared by the first CA. We have already called for our committee's meeting where we will discuss how to handover our findings and get the CA back to business soon.

Will the committee provide individual reports or a collective one?

We will start sending the reports that are ready so that the other committees can begin working on their areas. Except for some technical aspects, most of the work is complete so we hope things will move ahead smoothly now.

Will the committee be able to send all the reports within the stipulated time?

Our primary focus is to complete everything on time because only then will we be able to meet the constitution deadline. We are under immense



pressure and the committee and sub-committees are working actively to not waste any time.

What about the contentious issues of the first CA, will they be discussed?

Our jurisdiction is clearly stated in the CA guidelines which allows us to look into the past agreements and disagreements from the first CA and forward it to concerned thematic committees. The contentious issues will be handled by the political committee. It is important for all committees to work together to speed up the constitution writing.



Village of the widows

Time hasn't healed the sorrow of the women of Dang who are dismayed by the self-pardon of perpetrators

DEVIKA GHARTI MAGAR
in DANG

After they launched their insurrection in 1996, Maoist rebels had been fighting with the Nepal Police. But near midnight on 24 November 2001, they launched simultaneous attacks across the country on Royal Nepal Army bases.

The biggest attack was on the barracks in Ghorahi of Dang district where 14 soldiers and 11 policemen were killed and a large quantity of modern weapons looted.

Four days later, the Army retaliated by rounding up and killing suspected Maoist sympathisers in Dang, which straddled the strategic access to the Maoist strongholds in Rolpa and Rukum.

Prasadu Chaudhary, his brother Sital Lal, nephews Jagman and Khushi Ram were among 11 ethnic Tharu sharecroppers harvesting rice in the field of a landlord in Bagardi village. Since they were working under the new Maoist scheme of “trikhandi” where the tillers got two-thirds of the harvest, they were considered to be Maoist supporters. The 11 were lined up, shot, and buried.

Besides Prasadu, his brother and nephews, the other Tharus killed were Ruplal, Ramu, Krishna, Asharam, Jogi, Sondra and Risman.

"I don't think I will be able to forget what they did even if we get justice," says Prasadi's wife, Phulmani who is now 62.

Jagman's wife, Parbati, was 16 then and had a seven-month-old baby. Khushiram's wife, Bhauni, also had a baby in her lap and a four-year-old son. "What had we done to them that they had to kill our husbands, we were just tilling the landlord's farm," Bhauni says.

Even today, Bagardi is a village of widows. Budhani, Punya and Chameli also lost their husbands that day, and say they would at least have a sense of relief if the murders of their husbands faced justice.

Nine months after this massacre, soldiers guarding the telephone relay station on Rajakot in Dang intercepted a group of villagers who were gathering firewood and fodder in the forest.

The forces blindfolded and lined up 12 Dalit men from the village of Kauwadhari: Nip Bahadur Sarki, Resham Sarki,



PICS: DEVIKA GHARTI MAGAR

A portrait of a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a green top and a yellow and pink shawl. She has a bindi on her forehead and is looking slightly to the right.

SINGLE WOMEN: Security forces lined up, and shot 12 villagers from Kauadhari in Dang in 2002. Three of them were the sons of Bijuli Sarki (*above, right*). The husbands of Sita, Lakshmi and Sabitra (*sitting at back*) were also killed.

The widows of Bagardi village in Dang (left) whose husbands were among 11 summarily executed by the Army in November 2001. Among them was Parbati Chaudhari (far left) who was 16 and had a seven-month baby when her husband was killed.

Somraj Sarki, Mangal Sarki, Bhupal Sarki, Ramesh Sarki, Deviram Sarki, Ramesh Sarki, Ram Prasad Sarki, Ramlal Sarki, Jog Bahadur Sarki and Kadag Bahadur BK. They shot them execution style.

Mangal, Bhupal and Ramesh were brothers. Their mother Bijuli Sarki is now 58 and says time hasn't healed her sorrow, or the sense of injustice. Ram Prasad's wife,



Sita, has single-handedly raised her seven children. Now 50, she says: "If the government doesn't go after the killers, we will."


Chabe Sarki remembers that day 13 years ago like it was yesterday. He was 33 and says the Army knew the villagers because they

used to often see each other in the bazar. They carefully jotted down the names of all of them before executing them just below

the telephone
he remembers.
Chabe managed
to run away, the shots
fired missed him. He hid
in a nearby village and later fled
to India.

When Ramesh was killed, his wife was 23 and was pregnant with her third child. She remembers the security forces threatening the widows not to have funerals for their husbands. She says, “We waited

all these years for justice,
and now
they have
rubbed salt in
our wounds
by pardoning
each other."

Deb Bahadur Sarki lost his only son, and the 58-year-old today is raising his three grandchildren. He says the massacre left a deep scar which will not heal until the perpetrators are tried and punished. 



GLACIER HOTEL POKHARA

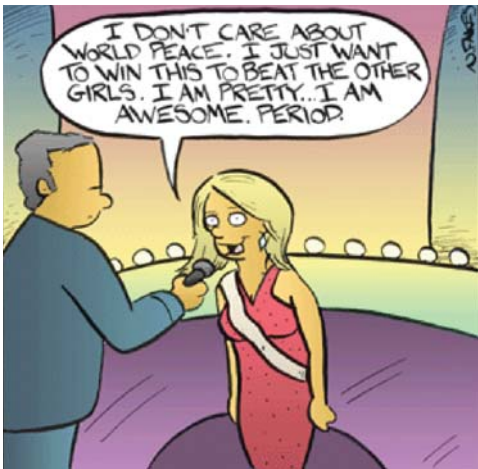
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I Miss Nepal

homogenised global-Western neo-liberal value system of cultural imperialism, neo-colonialism and bourgeois pseudo-nationalism in a backdrop of antagonistic contradiction between hegemonic transformation

There was a time not too long ago when every revolutionary worth his and/or her salt in this country strongly opposed the Miss Nepal pageant on ideological grounds, and tried to sabotage it with slogans and arsons. They had a point. The contest was nothing but a patriarchal commodification and sexist objectification of women that reinforced traditional gender hierarchies within the

from the status quo, habeus corpus to quid pro quo and, it goes without saying, it directly led ipso facto to ad nauseum. Some of the arsonists who set fire to Miss Nepal billboards at the future CA ten years ago showed that they could shed the shackles of male domination and turn the pageant into a burning issue. Some of the firebrand activists could easily have qualified for, and perhaps even won, the Miss Opportunist, Miss

Pyrotechnic or the Miss Dandruff titles. But they didn't let such temptations distract them from expressing in no uncertain terms their firm opposition to anyone daring to have gorgeous and stunning hair at a time when the country was sinking into a quagmire. The protestors had reason to be mad as hell: they never stood a chance to ever be crowned Miss Nepal. Because many of them were men. Some of these same men were back at the Miss Nepal contest last week, sitting on the front row applauding winners in the Swimwear Competition which included the Udder and Hindsight Categories. The organisers had to include those rounds: how else could they confirm that all participants were

in fact of the female persuasion? In this manner, through a process of natural selection, the girls finally made it to the pinnacle of evolution, which was the climactic moment of the make-or-break Most Photogenic Belly-button Contest. What I want to know is how come the gals get to have all the fun? When are we going to have our own Speedo Round? When is someone going to judge us he-donkeys by our looks? Why isn't anyone interested in the size and shape of our pectoral fins? Why can't I enter my gluteus maximus in some competition and be crowned Mr Ass? It is a travesty that in this day and age, when all known genders are supposed to be equal, there is not yet a Mr Himalayan Hunk Pageant for us trophy hunters. To prepare for the day when men will also have the equal opportunity to enter beauty pageants, yours truly is now taking weekly coaching lessons in conversational English since I have been told that it is the all-important Interview Round which determines who wins and who loses. The trick, apparently, is to practice the same answer no matter what the question. For instance, if the question is: "What would you exchange your good looks for?" Your answer should be: "I will work for world peace." There will be questions deliberately designed to throw off contestants like: "Where was the Buddha born?" If you don't know the answer, the best option is to impress the judges by saying: "Like the Buddha, I will work for world peace." Then the judges are sure to ask you: "What would you do if, god forbid, you were elected prime minister?" Your answer must be: "I would work for world peace." Now that we have beauty contests for men and women, for all the 123 known ethnic groups in this country, for tots, teens and married folks, the only beauty pageant we are missing is the one



for newly born babies. Which is why the Ass is proud to announce the holding of the Master and Miss Infant Nepal 2014 Contest. (Motto: "Catch 'em young!") Rules: Only babies whose umbilical cords have already been cut are eligible. All babies must pass the elimination procedures, which include the Koochi-koochi-koo Round, Crawling-Around Round, Diaper Round, Breast-feeding Round, Drool Round and the Wee-wee and Poo-poo Rounds. Judges will evaluate participants on the basis of noise, poise, odour, motor functions and response to questions in the Interview Round about what they want to be when they grow up. Winning answer: "I will work for world peace."



SHAH RUKH KHAN
AND HIS AQUARACER

TAG Heuer
SWISS AVANT-GARDE SINCE 1860

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Kathmandu, Nepal.

Alice Restaurant
Garidhara, Kathmandu
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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.

Purity is the diamond of soul

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