

### Ist CENTURY EDUCATION





# **BENIGN NEGLECT**

High on a ridge above the Arun River in eastern Nepal is the lost rural grandeur of Muga's Thapagaun, the ancestral village of powerful political leaders, generals and businessmen in faraway

were pulled away to Kathmandu's power centres.

For the first time in 25 years, 87-year-old Surya Bahadur Thapa attended the once-in-three year clan puja in Muga this week, as priests paraded past the ruins of the once-stately homes (*pic*, *above*). His son, Minister of Commerce and Supply Sunil Thapa from the RPP, also attended.













Kathmandu.

It was this link to the country's political elite that made Muga the target of Maoist rebels. The grand mansion of many-time prime minister Surya Bahadur Thapa was destroyed, and its caretaker killed in 2004. Muga's decline had begun even before the attacks, as its inhabitants



#### **GET LOST** in Bhaktapur

To search for the true allure of Nepal's bestpreserved town, you first have to lose yourself in it.

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### 2 EDITORIAL

# HINDU RATE OF GROWTH

🦳 ix years ago, Nepalis cast ballots in elections that they hoped would finally bring peace, justice and development. They ousted the Congress and the UML and voted in the Maoists.

Even the former revolutionaries were taken aback by the unexpected windfall, but the people identified with the Maoists' agenda of inclusion and equality, and were impressed by the Chairman's charisma. Even those opposed to the Maoists voted for them in the hope that the comrades would abandon

the jungle and join the democratic mainstream. After the results were announced, a garlanded and vermilioned Pushpa Kamal Dahal appeared on live tv to announce: "This is not just a victory for my party, it is a victory for peace, and a victory for Nepal."

Every Nepali watching the breathless breaking news of Narendra Modi's electoral avalanche on Indian tv will be reminded of how we were similarly torn between accepting a man under whose watch thousands died, and the need to put the past behind to play catch-up on development and growth

True, one cannot really compare a person who allowed murder and mayhem for a political goal, with a Chief Minister who didn't do much to stop his supporters from unleashing a religious pogrom. But in the perception of the victims and those who suffered, both are demagogues adept in the art of using the modern mass media to airbrush their role in history. Both understood that if people are fed up enough with corruption and bad governance, and desperate enough for jobs and development, it is possible to convert collective amnesia into votes by giving them a tantalising glimpse of the promised land.

Once elected, neither has said sorry for the past. Both have reveled in triumphalism and allowed supporters

There are parallels between the results of India's election and Nepal's **Constituent Assembly** polls in 2008.

to speak the language of intolerance and intimidation. In Nepal, we have seen Prachanda Path unravel, implode, and finally suffer a humiliating drubbing in the second CA election last year.

India, meanwhile, has made another tryst with destiny. In the world's largest first-pastthe-post electoral exercise, a party which took communalism to the brink for votes has found that the strategy paid off brilliantly. It has an absolute majority in parliament, even though it garnered only one-third of the total votes.

Maybe once in office, the BJP and its even more radical allies will pull back from their corrosive rhetoric and focus on performance and delivery of the economic agenda of "minimum government and maximum governance". But supremacist intolerance, once unleashed, can't be easily capped.

As some researchers have pointed out, while Modi's much-hyped Gujarat Model did raise the growth rate, it is Bihar that outshined all other states in performance. With nearly 85 per cent of the MPs in the new Lok Sabha crorepatis (up from 58 per cent in 2009), however, questions have been raised about whether such a pro-corporate legislature will allow new growth to trickle down.

As for Nepal, most of the analysis of the Indian election so far has been devoted to the possible revival of the monarchy or the Hindu state. The anti-theist snob

secularism of the left has to be refined and redefined in Nepal's new constitution to mean religious pluralism. But too much sewage has flowed down the Bagmati for Gyanendra to be re-throned. Even the RPP-N BEEP conclave this week is expected to quietly jettison the monarchy and emphasise the party's Hinduistic mission.

Instead of looking at the political fallout on Nepal, we should try to see how a strong BJP in New Delhi could benefit our economy. Indian diplomats often say they want stability in Nepal. The opposite is also

true: a stable and vibrant India will benefit Nepal, too. If Modi can quickly jumpstart India's stalled economy, he can give new meaning to the term: 'Hindu rate of growth'. That locomotive which can also pull Nepal along.

But we first have to put our own house in order. Instead of looking at Delhi all the time, it is time to improve the investment climate for Indian business, push energy and water tieups, treat the 1,900km open border as an benefit rather than a barrier, get our national airline to start flying to India again, and finally send an effective ambassador to New Delhi.

**RIHANA'S PLIGHT** 

I was in Dhanusha for a month, and was surprised to see that even the poorest families had at least one Pulsar motorbike parked right next to their cattle, all of which came in dowry ('My and in-laws left me to die', Ayesha Shakya, #707). This is a scene repeated in all villages in the Tarai. Child marriage, violence due to dowry, it's all a vicious cycle



For this kind of socio-religious curse to be eradicated, what we need is combative men and women in each unit of our society empowered with

rule and so-called multi-party democracy, we see that it was always the innocent who faced the wrath of insecurity, instability, and accountability. It is very unfortunate and sad that such bloodshed took place in the birthplace of Buddha. And, sadder still that the culprits always get away with the help of those in power.

**YB** Gurung

 Social justice and the rule of law are crucial for any democracy. Neither the army nor politicians should be above the law. @pigreen

#### **COMMUNIST CACOPHONY**

Communism and communists are a big curse on Nepal ('Communist cacophony', Trishna Rana, #707). Especially even more so, if the communist netas are pseudo communists, that have one goal in replace these goons who with blood on their hands still act like Mahatma Gandhi?

#### Kale

 BRB should also be aware that the big boss is trying to coax his former teacher Kiran to come back to the fold. So the PhD man might find himself jobless soon if he tries to be too much of a revolutionary. Prasad

#### **SCOT FREE**

AJIT NINAN/IP

A general sense of apathy has taken over this land and its peoples ('Getting away with murder,' Editorial, #707). The young are migrating, the retired await their remittance, while the rest live in a state of eternal somnolence. When a nation can't protest for basic amenities like water and electricity, TRC and all its implications just don't matter.

Ashraf, #707). When will Nepali people do the same with their incompetent and corrupt counterparts in Nepal? Nirmal Ghimire

I think the solution you suggest is the actual problem: Sonia Gandhi's children, Rahul and Priyanka. Why is there a need for a dynasty? Why can't a regular hardworking party leader come out of the woodwork? This is the problem. We see similar issues with the Koirala clan in nepal.

#### **KESHA KUMAR DAMINI**

Nice to see entrepreneurship on rise in Nepal. ('Empowerment through entrepreneurship,' Marrit Bakke, #7

#### @freakamu

Nh

 Kesha Kumari Damini's story is very impressive. Needs to be more

more than enough,' Ass, #707). I laughed so hard at this one I nearly forgot to breathe! I'm still chuckling. Dubya

Congratulations, you have passed the test. You may kiss the bribe now. Haha!

#### Shankar

 If Nepalis cannot satirise what goes on in Nepal, and therefore perhaps wake people up to change, then foreigners will do it, and it will be much worse! (By the way, this goes on for every country, not just Nepal). So be thankful to the donkey. At least he is doing it for the right reasons, Because, I believe, he cares for his country and is pained by what goes on. He is also doing it with amazing talent. He is not ridiculing ordinary Nepalis, amazingly resilient and beautiful

### YOUR SAY

jurisdictional authority. Count the total number of VDCs and multiply them with 2 -- a learned and proactive man and woman -- that's what we need for at least 5 years. Proactive combat is very different to sloganeering Nirmal Ghimire

 Hard to fathom that practices like bride burning continue to this day. @UN Piper

#### **JUSTICE DENIED**

Thank you Nepali Times for keeping the struggle of the families of victims alive ('I need to know why,' Gopal Gartaula, #707). Thank you for remembering us.

#### K Khatri

If we were to take a look back at history-the Rana regime, panchayat mind, self improvement. Just look at the lifestyle of Bhattarai or Makuney or Jhala Nath. Communism needs to buried alive in Nepal, the sooner we accomplish this task, the brighter the future of all the people of Nepal. Narayana Prasad

 Now that Modi is in charge of India, let's get all the goonda leaders of Nepal BRB, PKD, KB, SK, SBD, JNK, MKN, et all and bus them off to Delhi for a few years so they can learn how to manage a country and steer it towards economic progress. Nepal is smaller in size than Gujarat, and if Namo can do wonders in his state, why can't our lot? **Bikash Singh** 

I hate both Prachanda and Baburam equally. Are there no young leaders like Gagan Thapa who can

24 years is a long time for justice to continue being denied. But, what can we expect from our leaders (a bunch of disgraced and corrupted men) who somehow continue to remain in charge. Everyday we are told that by 22 Jan, 2015 we will get a Constitution. We won't, it's not going to happen. Murderers, criminals and corrupted political mafia is not going to bring jobs, security and prosperity to rest of Nepal. Why do we allow a handful of men to continue to take us in the path of gloom and doom?

#### NP

Namah

#### **CONGRESS FALL**

Salute the courage of Indian people for having erased the incompetent ruling alliance from the electoral map ('The rise and fall of Congress', Aiaz

widely known.

David Seddon

#### RARA

07).

 Thank you for sharing ('On heaven's shore,' Binita Dahal, #707). It's my favourite spot to stay.

Vogelvrije Huisarts

 Awesome pictures of unexplored Rara. @anilkarkie

 Hotels will find their way there soon. Hopefully, even with them there, the area around will be able to maintain its pristine state.

@himanshu

#### ASS

Your Ass column should carry a mandatory health warning ('Once is people, which I have had the privilege to know and love over my 12 visits to Nepal.

#### Daniel Lonita



nepalnews.com Weekly Internet Poll #708



Weekly Internet Poll # 709 To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.

Q. Will Narendra Modi's government have a positive impact on Nepal?



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# **\ teetering stability**

The relative lack of political drama in Nepal in the last few months has fooled many of us into thinking that we are witnessing a rare period of political stability. Parties which acted as sworn enemies not very long ago are now bosom buddies.

They agree with each other on everything from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission bill to



THIS IS IT Rubeena Mahato

appointing heads of constitutional committees. It is uncharacteristic for our main parties to display such consensus and one is bound to ask: what's the catch?

Increasingly, it is looking like there is no opposition left in Nepal, political or otherwise and this is why the present consensus seems more worrisome than comforting. Every action of the coalition goes unquestioned and the voice of criticism or defiance, which is becoming rarer by the day, is silenced with the cacophony of a compliant media.

The shamelessness with which parties have launched themselves

into politicising the judiciary and the approval of silence written all over Nepali newspapers as they continue to under-report the issue leaves little doubt that neither the media nor the judiciary can now be counted upon to protect our democracy.

It is not unusual for journalists and media bosses to cozy up to those in power and the highly politicised air of Kathmandu

makes it all the more easier for journalists to succumb to their own biases, but the TRC episode last month took Nepali journalism to an all-time low. Rarely has it been so unabashedly proestablishment, not even bothering to hide its bias. It faithfully regurgitated the government line on transitional justice and helped run a campaign of lies and misinformation against victims and their families.

If this is any indication of things to come, the fact that 80 per cent of us turned out to vote for the 'least bad' of the choices on offer is hardly going to matter. Without check and balance in the form of a strong and independent judiciary and without a vibrant

### We don't live in a democracy but in the dictatorship of a syndicate of parties

and adversarial media, the elected government would run much the way as a dictatorship would.

What is worse about dysfunctional democracies as opposed to clear-cut dictatorships is that you don't know who the enemy is, and this makes for a confused and unorganised polity, unable to mount a strong resistance against the rise of an absolute government. We know that voices are being silenced in this country and civil liberties are being curtailed, we know that decision-making remains exclusive and we know that people feel disenfranchised and excluded, but we can't put a face to these problems. Our dictator is not a person, but a syndicate of parties that will bypass democratic principles and political ideologies to stick to the corridors of power. Our democracy is ironically imperiled by parties whose legitimacy is rooted in the framework of parliamentary democracy.

It is not without reason that Nepal has what looks like a permanent place on Freedom House's list of 'Partly Free' countries. It is in the interest of the political leadership to keep the country in this ambiguous space, where privilege and access can be controlled but where rights exist only so that people can let

off steam and grievance do not accumulate to the point of revolt.

There is an argument that some countries are poor simply because their leaders or policymakers do not know how to solve the problems they are facing. But if Nepal is proving to be a basketcase, it is because our rulers refuse to solve our problems because it perpetuates their hold on power and resources.

It is not unnatural for the powerful to try to protect their privileges, but more worrying is the fact that the vanguards of democracy too have decided that co-option is the way to go. What happens when Big Media which holds inordinate power and influence decides to toe the establishment line and manufacture truth? What happens when big parties dump principles for the politics of accommodation and when the only voice of opposition comes from a leader of a fringe party who is ignored by the mainstream press?

We take our freedom for granted and will not realise what we have lost until it is taken away. Let's hope it does not lead to another democratic reversal, and we have to head back to the streets to reclaim the press freedom and credibility we have so willingly given up. 💟 @rubeenaa



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# Governance with a human face

How to channel compassion towards the excluded and downtrodden for better governance

Governance is a process of managing the affairs of a state or an institution through rules, regulations and norms that are negotiated and agreed upon by all key stakeholders. On the other hand, love and compassion are deeply felt personal emotions and sentiments which would seem not to merit a legitimate place in governance.



Love and compassion have guided the best of individual human behavior and values throughout human history. But suspicion, indifference, animosity and hatred have also characterised human relations -- particularly in dealing with people of different ethnicities, religions and cultures. Because of the subjective nature of these sentiments, they are rarely factored in designing systems of governance of our public or private institutions.

There are many inspiring examples of how love and compassion can lead to good governance and human progress. Here are some from my experience at UNICEF.

In 1980 more than 15 million

children died annually -- or 41,000 every day -- from causes that were readily preventable at very low cost. The head of UNICEF at that time, James Grant, was surprised how people were not shocked or outraged by such statistics, and politicians felt no shame or accountability for allowing such genocide. He was determined to change this indifference through a global campaign for child survival.

Grant adopted a strategy that appealed to people's hearts, to their feelings of love and compassion, to take bold and decisive action to save children's lives and to promote their wellbeing. He reached out to Heads of State and Government, and civic leaders, inquiring if they had experienced deaths of children in their own families, how they felt about it, and what they would be prepared to do to prevent such tragedies. Many leaders in the Third World had direct personal experience of such loss, but felt helpless to do anything about it on a mass-scale.

When told that there were many low-tech, low-cost remedies like immunisation, oral rehydration therapy and breastfeeding that even poor countries could afford, and the international community would support, many Third World leaders sprang into action. Grant motivated leaders of rich countries by asking them directly how they would react if a jumbo-



jet full of children crashed on their shores every few hours, and how a tiny fraction of their aid budget could help avert such daily tragedies in developing countries.

Besides the compelling scientific evidence and public health argument, it was this appeal to their human feelings of love and compassion that motivated world leaders to support a global movement for child survival and development. This resulted in dramatic expansion of childhood immunisation, improved nutrition and control of infectious diseases that saved the lives of millions of children in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The governance of public health system itself changed dramatically in many countries focusing on low-cost and lowtech primary health care rather than expensive, high-tech prestige projects of sophisticated hospitals that were beyond the reach of ordinary people. The result led *The New York Times* columnist Nicolas Kristof to remark that the child survival campaign that UNICEF's Jim Grant led in the 1980s and 90s, saved more children's lives than were killed by Hitler, Stalin and Mao Zedong combined.

In Brazil, the life-saving practice of breastfeeding had declined dramatically in the 1980s, because of advertising of bottle-feeding of infant formula and changes in lifestyles of 'modern' women. In a counter-advertising campaign, UNICEF enlisted the support of football star Pele's mother, who proclaimed that her son was the best football player in the world because she had breastfed him, and commended all mothers to do so. Within a few years, exclusive breastfeeding rates in early childhood in Brazil increased from 8 per cent to 40 per cent, saving the lives of tens of thousands of children every year.

There are many such examples of how non-violent civic activism, harnessing the power of compassionate solidarity has influenced public policy, governance and human wellbeing.

The good progress Nepal has made in reducing maternal and child mortality in the past two decades is partly due to the compassionate commitment of thousands of our female community health volunteers and front-line health workers.

Still, we should be outraged that 65 children die every day due to diseases that are preventable or curable, children being trafficked, migrant workers duped by recruiters and exploited by employers, and half the children in Nepal being under-nourished. This outrage should be turned into action by harnessing the positive potential of compassion in improving our governance.

Kul Chandra Gautam is a former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, and this piece is adapted from his address at the Spirit of Humanity Forum in Reykjavik recently.



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### BUSINESS 5

#### एभरेष्ट बैंक EVEREST BANK BIZ BRIEFS



Black beauty Colors Mobile unveiled its latest phone Pearl Black K22 OCTA last week. Priced at Rs 30,000, K22 OCTA will be available in stores from 1 June.

#### Car shop

Laxmi InterContinental, the sole distributor of Hyundai vehicles in Nepal, has opened a new Hyundai showroom at Bhatbhateni, Kathmandu. The showroom was inaugurated by Choe Yong-Jin, South Korean ambassador to Nepal and Ganesh Shrestha, chairman of Laxmi InterContinental.



#### **West wing**

Laxmi Bank has opened its newest branch at Damauli Bazaar, Tanahu. With this expansion, the bank aims to further strengthen and increase its western region network.

### **Socially responsible** As a part of its CSR campaign, Yeti Airlines on

19 May handed over cheques of Rs 409,513 each to Save the Children, The United Mission to Nepal, Care Nepal, and Habital for Humanity.



#### **New operations**

Hamad International Airport welcomed a celebratory Qatar Airways' VIP flight on the airport's soft opening last week. Qatar Airways will move its entire hub operations to Hamad International Airport on 27 May.

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### **LOCKED HORKED HORKED** Internal power struggles within parties have paralysed constitution writing

There is a visible and not so visible turf war going on among the top leaders in the three big political parties. Although mostly the result of personality clashes, the



protagonists give the impression that it is a struggle over principles and future direction of their parties.

Back-stabbing and intrigue has always been a part and parcel of intra-party politics in Nepal more



than anywhere else. As always, internal rivalries are more serious than competition between parties. Many of these squabbling leaders, in fact, seem to have more in common with figures outside their party than those within.

In the Nepali Congress, it is even uglier: Sushil Koirala the prime minister is playing second fiddle to Sushil Koirala the party president. He is more focused on managing the party than running a coalition government and facilitating the constitutionwriting process. His rival in the party, Sher Bahadur Deuba is in a deep sulk.

NC Vice President Ram Chandra Paudel, for his part, feels he has become collateral damage in the Koirala-Deuba war. Paudel now wants to fight for the post of party president at the next general convention of the NC – a threat hurled at Koirala who, Paudel claims, backed down from making him NC's "acting president" despite promising to do so.

In the UCPN (Maoist), what we see is just the latest bout in the chronic tussle between party Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and former vice-chairman Baburam Bhattarai. The most immediate cause of Bhattarai's disaffection (and that of another former vice-chairman Narayan Kaji Shrestha) began when Dahal filled PR nominees for the Constituent Assembly mostly from among his own loyalists.

Since then, both the ex-es have discovered that the party needs a "transformation". While Shrestha is somewhat low key in airing his displeasure, Bhattarai has launched social media and oped broadsides against Dahal.

Bhattarai also talked about establishing a "new power", bringing together like-minded "progressive democrats" from other political parties. What he left unsaid was that he wants to lead this new political force. What he also does not mention is that the idea is borrowed from his former colleague, Muma Ram Khanal and others.

In Biratnagar, Bhattarai called Dahal "a Stalinist", and he did not mean it as a compliment. Perhaps in Putin's Russia, this is an honour, but Dahal was quick to retort: if he was Stalin, Bhattarai would be in a Gulag by now.

When daily headlines oscillate between imminent party split and the two factions nearing agreement, it is hard to say which way it will go. It is looking more and more like a love-triangle between the Dahal, Bhattarai and Baidya factions.

Things are strangers still in the CPN-UML. Two leaders who are ideologically on same wave-length (Madhav Kumar Nepal and K P Oli) are both hospitalised, and both have chosen strange bedfellows: those with whom they had sharp differences in the past. Nepal is courting the support (and so far seems to have it) of Chairman Jhala Nath Khanal while Oli has teamed up with Bam Dev Gautam. During the last CA, Khanal and Gautam were closer to the Maoist-Madhesi alliance while Nepal-Oli were effectively aligned with the opposition NC.

Despite his health, Oli has declared his intention to fight for the party's top post. Many who see themselves as the next generation party chiefs are on his side and no prizes for guessing why. Nepal is younger and also wants the top job.

All this is distracting attention from the job at hand: writing the new constitution, as second and third-tier leaders are drawn into the intra-party power struggles. The CA still does not have the 26 nominated members even six months after the election. There is an intense faction fight over who should be nominated, most of whom will be from party ranks and not accomplished nonparty individuals. Positions in the Supreme Court, the National Human Rights Commission, Public Service Commission and ambassadorships are up for grabs.

Because of the centralised power structure and the monopoly in decision-making by the top leaders of the three parties, the internal power struggles have paralysed governance. Younger, idealistic leaders within all three parties have been reduced to being helpless spectators.







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**TSERING DOLKER GURUNG** 



Rathmandu has a long-standing problem of "nothing to do." Friday nights here mean bar-hopping in Thamel (and now Jhamel), and Saturdays include trips to the mall to watch yet another bad Bollywood blockbuster.

Enter: The City Museum Kathmandu. Finally something to do. Less than a month since its opening, this permanent exhibition, art gallery, gift-shop, café, seminar venue and concert space is drawing crowds.

Located in the dinner-friendly side road off Darbar Marg, the Museum was set up by photographer and writer Kashish Das Shrestha. He first came up with the idea in 2004 while talking to his grandfather Dwarika Das Shrestha of Das Studios. "I wanted the museum to be a place where people could come and see the urbanisation of Kathmandu from the mid-1900s through the medium of photography," explains Kashish, "Our Gallery is a space dedicated to contemporary arts and film screenings, and we are always looking to showcase new talents."" Spread over three floors of an elegant and functional building designed by Prabal Thapa, The City Museum Kathmandu makes a notable addition to the Valley's contemporary cultural landscape. Although it had no choice but to expand vertically because of lack of space, it is a great to place to spend an afternoon moving between floors. Here's how we did it:



#### 1 to 2pm **The Fig Café**

Named after the large old fig tree that it overlooks, the Fig Café (*pic, left*) is the first thing you see when you enter the building. The cafe serves an impressive range of organic Nepali coffee, sandwiches, pastries and baked goods. Chill with a glass of iced coffee (tastes similar to Chikusa's) especially after a ride on a packed microbus in the heat. There is WiFi in case you want to check-in, and a work-station for those interested. A friend and I had made big plans to cozy up with our books here, all of which was forgotten once the food and the drinks arrived. The plan for next time is to stick to the plan.





#### 3.30 to 4pm The Museum Shop

Once you have relived the history of Kathmandu, head to the shop (*pic, above*) which has a decent collection of local art products by companies like Himalyan Atelier, Karma Coffee, and Kaligarh and Aksha, which both create ethnic jewelleries with a modern touch.

4pm onwards: This week, the museum hosted the Indian Film Festival. An exhibition of the digital prints of Rabindranath Tagore's original paintings is also on until 25 May, as a part of the Indian Cultural Festival 2014 organised by the Indian Culture Center, Embassy of India, Kathmandu. www.thecitymuseum.org

2 to 3.30 pm The Museum

### and the gallery

A fter quenching your hunger and thirst, head over to the third floor which houses the gallery and the museum space. It is designed to resemble a traditional Newari neighbourhood, with bricks collected from demolished houses laid out as flooring, and wooden walls divide the space in order to give one a sense of walking in alleys. A corner of the room recreates a *bahal*.

The images in the Museum are primarily from its founding

archives of Dwarika Das Shrestha. A few images from the Chitrakar family, who were court photographers, are also included. The Museum is currently working to include works of other Nepali photographers. Kashish's own images of modern day Kathmandu also make a small appearance. A small collection of art pieces painted during the Khumbila benefit held last week was on display in the gallery during our visit.





#### **EVENTS**



#### Cha cha cha.

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#### City Museum Kathmandu,

head down to Darbar Marg's newest gallery on the block for personalised guided tours.

Tours run daily, accommodates up to 15 people, info@thecitymuseum.org



Solitudes.

an exhibition of the work of Finnish photographer Päivi Wells. Runs till 6 June, Image Ark Gallery, Kulimha Tol, Patan Darbar Square

#### Who is a feminist?

Find the answer at a feminist reading group by Chaukhat. 23 May, 3 to 5pm, Martin Chautari, Thapathali



Tuning Earth and Sky, a rare collection of the works of artist Jimmy Thapa. Runs till 21 June, Galleria Ishine, Kupandol Height, Sanepa

Opening night, DJs, slam poetry and movie screenings. 23 May, Alliance Francais, Teku







#### Open house,

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

#### Story of a bulb,

Spanish experimental photographer Ana Alvarez's exhibition of the series of photography walks taken in Kathmandu.Runs till 25 May, 3pm onwards, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited

#### Retrospective,

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

#### Umbugland ko muthbhed,

trouble is brewing in Umbugland whose ministers want to dethrone the child queen.

Rs 200, Rs 100 for students, Runs till 14 June, except Mondays, Mandala Theatre, Anamnagar, 01-6924269

#### Selling books,

buy and sell used books. 14 June, 10am to 4pm, Alliance Francais, Teku

#### Words,

attend this three-day creative writing workshop with novelist Samrat Upadhyay to learn about content, stylistics, and themes to hone your writing skills. Rs 1200, 10am to 12pm, 4 June, only 12 seats available

#### **Bold outlines.**

learn the craft of stencil-making with artist Chifumi Korhom. Rs 500, 25 to 26 May, 11 am to 2pm, sattya. org/stencil-making-workshop-with-chifumi/

#### The seagull,

Anton Chekhov's famous play comes to Kathmandu. Runs to 25 May, Theatre Village, Uttar Dhoka Lajimpat



#### Majipa lakhe, Ghimire Yubaraj directs Satya Mohan Joshi's play. 30 May to 14 June, except Tuesdays, 5.30pm onwards, Shiplee Theatre, Battisputali.

(01)4469621



#### Vol Au Vents.

go crazy with your choice combination of fillings for scones, crepes and vol au vents with the Lounge's new interactive menu. Rs 400 (exclusive of tax) onwards, The Lounge, Hyatt Regency, Tusal

#### Trout it all about,

fish lovers, rejoice: special trout dishes in any style of your preference. 6.30 to 10.30pm, Rs 1500 plus taxes per person, Olive Garden Radisson

#### Little Italy,

go vegetarian at this new Italian food chain and don't forget to end your meal with the chef's special, chocolate bomb. Darbar Marg

#### Alfresco.

for homemade pastas and other lipsmacking delights. Soaltee Crowne Plaza, (01)4273999

#### Mulchowk

the blend of culinary expertise and charms of a bygone era. *Babarmahal* 

#### Lal Durbar Restaurant.

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

#### Hyderabad House,

dine like the famous Nizams of old Hyderabad. Bhatbhateni



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







#### Authentic Nepali Dinner With Culture





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23 - 29 MAY 2014 **#708** 

#### MUSIC

#### Starry Night BBQ,

catch Ciney Gurung live as you chomp on your meat stick. *Rs 1499, 7pm onwards, Fridays, Shambala* 

Garden Café. Hotel Shangri-La, (01)4412999

#### Rootdown festival,

DJs, breakdancing, skateboarding, rap, street art, beatboxing and slam poetry. 23 to 24 May, Alliance Francaise, Teku, alliancefrancaise.org.np



#### Rashid in Kathmandu,

go watch the great Indian vocal maestro Ustad Rashid Khan live, accompanied by Jyoti Goho, Satyajit Talwakar, Murad Ali Khan, Yaswanth Golcha, Manoj Gautam, and Salikram Ghimire. *Rs 1000/2000/3000/5000, 23 May, 5.45pm onwards, Academy Hall, Kamaladi* 

#### Kripa Unplugged,

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

#### Shastriya sangeet,

the best of Hindustani classical every new moon night. 28 May, 4pm onwards, Battisputali

Mahindra

Rise



#### Take a bow,

catch the jazz violinist Guillaume Blanc live. Free entrance, 6 June, Jazz Upstairs, Lajimpat

#### Folk beats,

Nepal's most popular folk band Kutumba perform live. 24 May, 3pm onwards, Trisara, Lajimpat

#### Underbelly,

the rock band Underside are playing live before heading to the Shillong Open Air festival. *Rs 150, 29 May, Red Chili, Bank Road, Hetauda* 

#### Music at Manny's,

live Hindi and Nepali pop music with Shabnam Gurung and Dinesh Quarted. *Manny's Eatery and Tapas Bar, Jawalakhel* 



#### Whole lotta love.

the band Custard Pie pay tribute to rock legends Led Zeppelin. *Rs 300/500, 7 June, 3pm onwards, Purple Haze, Thamel* 

#### GETAWAYS

#### Waterfront Resort,

take advantage of the summer discount and while away in the lake city. *Rs 8,999 per person for two nights and three days, Sedi Height, Pokhara, (061)466370/04, 9801166311, waterfronthotelnepal.com* 

#### Cosy Nepal,

short, medium and long-term rentals around Patan and Kathmandu Darbar Square.

Swotha House, Patan Darbar Area, 9860111757, cosynepal.com



#### The Last Resort, test your limits with canyoning, hiking, rock climbing, rafting, mountain biking, bungee jumping. *Bhotekosi, Sindhupalchok, (01)4700525/1247*

#### Weekend brunch,

start your weekend with a sumptuous breakfast, swimming included. *Rs 1,499, 11am to 3pm, Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha, (01)4375280/952, ktmgh.com* 



### **Outhouse exile**

This month in the Cultural Studies Group Nepal's monthly lecture series, videographer and director Ramesh Khadka will give a short talk on his film *Chhau*, followed by a question and answer session with the audience.

Under the Chhau system in mid and western Nepal, menstruating women are forbidden to enter their homes and are kept in huts. A woman spends almost eight years of her life in these tiny and unhygienic huts.

Khadka's documentary shows the prevalence of Chhau system in Dhungachalna Village of Achham, farwestern Nepal, where women have to deal with tradition as well as challenges to their personal well-being.

Director Khadka made over 150 short and long films in the development sector, of which *Chhau* won first prize at the Croatian Film Festival in 2011 and second place at The Moscow International Film Festival.

Date: 30 May Time: 9.30am Venue: Shanker Hotel, Lajimpat Rs 400 for non-members, Rs 200 for students, tea/coffee included



# This country is yours

Exhibitions and guided tours by the acclaimed Nepal-born Canada-based photographer Surendra Lawoti

25 May, 4 to 5.30pm, Surendra Lawoti in conversation with audience
31 May, 11am to 7pm, get your portofolios reviewed by Surendra Lawoti *Runs till 1 June, 11am to 7pm, Nepal Art Council, photocircle.com.np*

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ALL PICS: HARIZ BAHARUDI





# FIND YOUR

ust off Dattatraya Square is a hidden gem that embodies the old-world charm of historic Bhaktapur, yet promises the most luxurious of homestays.

The three-storey refurbished Milla Guesthouse (3 pics, above) is emblematic of pure Newari style, having been touched by the artistry of Götz Hagmüller, the renowned architect (profile, bottom right) who designed Patan Museum and Garden of Dreams in Thamel.

With elements like low wooden ceilings,

brick walls and timber and terracotta tile floors, Milla Guesthouse retains the flavour of the Malla period architecture. However, it has modern amenities like solar panels, fast wifi and a kitchen. This melding of old and new is a truly winning combination.

As a guest, be assured of the utmost privacy-the guest house has only two rooms, each with its own attached bathroom. Once in possession of your personal set of keys (comes with a handy LED light), no one would blame you for

pretending to be the proud owner of this house. The rooms are spacious and comfortable, and elegantly designed with custom-made, handpicked furniture.

If you can pull yourself out of bed, go downstairs to explore the labyrinth of quaint alleyways, or opt to just sit by the balcony and watch local life play out in the charming courtyard below.

Milla Guesthouse's secret is its top floor dining-living room with a kitchen and openair terrace. It feels almost too good to be

true, as you relax in the deck chairs and take in the views of the southern hills of the Valley. The well-stocked kitchen also makes it great for long homestays.

What makes one's stay truly memorable are Laxman and Sanu, the friendly Nepali couple who attend to the guesthouse. Their attentive service and warm smiles make you feel right at home. They prepare an elaborate, western-style breakfast of homemade bread, complete with a platter of fresh vegetables and cheese, and





# HILOST...

#### **TOH EE MING** in Bhaktapur

he ancient Newar town of Bhaktapur is the Valley's living treasure, but is often overshadowed by its sister city Kathmandu. Just 12 km to the east, along a six lane highway you are transported back into history in a time capsule.

Bhaktapur continues to exude a sense of timelessness. Every aspect of its architecture-from

its intricate woodcarvings, golden statues of kings and stone monoliths—gives a glimpse into the magnificence of the great Malla kingdom in the 15th century.

Bhaktapur was listed as a **UNESCO World Heritage site** in 1979 for its abundance of monuments, 345 in total, including the Golden Gate, the Palace of 55 Windows, the 5-storeyed pagoda of Nyatapola, and the world-famous Bhaktapur Darbar Square.

One of the best-managed

cities in the Valley. Bhaktapur is upheld as a model of successful heritage conservation. The efforts to restore Bhaktapur to its former glory have been supported by the Bhaktapur Development Project (BDP), and the tourist entrance fee (Rs 1500 for tourists, Rs 100 for Chinese and SAARC) ensures that there is enough money to plough into the town's upkeep.

Compared to Kathmandu, Bhaktapur is significantly quieter and cleaner. There is a sense of



unhurried calm in the russetcoloured neighbourhoods of traditional brick and tile. For architect Rabindra Puri, it is this authenticity and liveliness that makes it so special.

"There are so many cities around the world that are famous for their art and culture, but I feel that most of them are dead. But Bhaktapur is a living heritage, I can't imagine living anywhere else," Puri says.

Yet much of Bhaktapur still remains off-the-radar. There is so much more to Bhaktapur than the usual tourist sites of Darbar Square and pottery square.

The best way to know Bhaktapur is to "get lost". Stray off the main. well-worn path that is lined with the usual touristy shops hawking their wares. Instead, venture into the winding alleyways, nooks and crannies and find yourself in the true heart of the town. That is the true spirit of travel -- to stumble upon small gems and make the place your own.

Bhaktapur is worth more than a day trip: if you need a respite from Thamel, this is where you go to spend a quiet weekend. 💟





### **BACK TO BASICS IN** BHAKTAPUR



# SFI F

#### steaming hot coffee.

It is this pampering that makes the steep \$70 per night well worth it. Especially if you are a refugee fleeing the dust and congestion of Kathmandu. 🔽 Toh Ee Ming

Milla Guesthouse mghbhaktapur@gmail.com +977 9851024137/ +977 9851027012 Between Dattatraya Square and Naag Pokhari, Bhaktapur

#### HARIZ BAHARUDIN

hen asked about how much longer he is going to stay in Bhaktapur, Austrian architect Götz Hagmüller offers a very clear answer: "Why would I leave, when I am happy to have found my own little paradise here?"

The 'little paradise' that he refers is his home of 30 years (*pic, right*): a restored *math* that he shares with his wife. It is one of the 13 maths in Bhaktapur, out of 30 in the entire valley. Although originally used for prayers and conducting religious ceremonies, Hagmüller used his architectural knowledge to transform this old building into the impressive living space that it is today.

"It is not even done yet, there is always something that needs to be fixed or designed, but I like it that way," Hagmüller said.

His home is only one of the many impressive designs that Hagmüller has worked on since visiting Nepal for the first time in the 1970s. He is wellknown for his restoration works with the Bhaktapur Development Project in 1979, the Garden of Dreams in Thamel as well as the Patan Museum. Hagmüller's extensive work as the museum's architect even enabled him to produce Patan



Museum – The Transformation of a Royal Palace in *Nepal*', a 144-page homage to the museum and the artefacts it contains.

Hagmüller says that his love for Nepali architecture and design stems from how unique it is. "The Malla architecture that you find here is unlike anywhere else in the world," he said.

But it was specifically Bhaktapur that stole his heart 35 years ago, so much so that he decided to settle down here. According to him, the allure of the town lay in how it reminded him of older European cities, before modernisation changed

the architecture of those places.

An amazing feature of Bhaktapur is the city has the largest amount of old stone water spouts as well as the pokharis littered throughout Bhaktapur.

The city still has a long way to go in terms of development however. Many areas still do not have proper water supply, or street lights. There is an apparent lack of attractive food options, an area the city needs to improve if it wishes to maximise its enormous tourist potential.

But Hagmüller is content to leave Bhaktapur the way it is. He says: "Even though Bhaktapur is less developed, you see people are happy. I love to see the children playing in the streets, without any worry. Nowhere else do you see that." 🔽



The Valley's Ancient Heart Still Beats, #120 Living in Bhaktapur the Austrian Way, #615

### 12



# **CANNES 2014**

orget about *Grace of Monaco*. Some of the most L noteworthy films at this year's Cannes Film Festival deal with human rights and the fight for press freedom, and they come from directors who have had to overcome financing, censorship or infrastructure difficulties to tell stories that they believe need telling.

Timbuktu, by Mauritanian director Abderrahmane Sissako, is one of the 18 films in competition for the top Palme d'Or prize at the festival. This visually striking work, set against the back drop of religious extremism in northern Mali in 2012, already has people talking, not only about the movie but also about intolerance and the effects of conflict on civilians.

During the reign of terror, the young parents of two children

were stoned to death for the "transgression" of not being married, and Sissako cites that act as the motivation for his film. "The video of their

killing, which was posted online by the perpetrators, is horrid. I must testify in the hopes that no child will ever again have to learn their parents died because they loved each other," he says.

With more than 1,700 films submitted for consideration in Cannes and only a fraction chosen for the festival's official selection, it is a tough game, whether one has a message or not.

Another film that highlights human rights, and specifically press freedom, is Caricaturistes – Fantassins de la Democratie (Cartoonists - Foot Soldiers of Democracy). French

filmmaker Stéphanie Valloatto follows 12 cartoonists from around the world as they use humour to confront injustice and hypocrisy.

Among others, it profiles Syrian cartoonist Ali Ferzat, who in 2011 was badly beaten by armed forces as they tried to destroy his hands in an attempt to prevent him from ever drawing again. His crime: he had criticised the regime of President Bashar al-Assad in some of his cartoons.

Other films at Cannes that focus on global, humanistic topics include the daring and deep *Winter Sleep*, also a contender for the Palme d'Or. This 196 minute long film explores relationships alongside the themes of inequality, the seemingly unbridgeable distance between rich and poor, and the role of

SEE MUST

religion in life. Made by Turkish director Nuri Bilge

Ceylan, the film is set in central Anatolia and uses stunning imagery, subtle humour and engrossing dialogue to keep viewers enthralled. At the end, one is left with questions about what the individual can do to bring about a better world, protect the rights of others and perhaps even achieve personal redemption. 🔽 A D McKenzie/IPS





HAPPENINGS



BON VOYAGE: An official from the Ministry of Environment (right) presents Nepal's flag to Maya Sherpa (centre) and Pasang Lhamu Sherpa (far left) who are set to scale Mt K2 in Pakistan next month.



NO SHOW: UCPN(M) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal (in blue) at a meeting with other Maoist leaders at the party's headquarter in Koteshwor on Friday. Baburam Bhattarai did not attend the meeting





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FUTURE PLANS: Visitors move from stall to stall at the Higher Education Fair in Bhrikuti Mandap on Saturday.



MELODY UNCHAINED: A trio of classical musicians serenade audience at the 8th anniversary of Yala Maya Kendra in Patan on Friday.

# Trouble in Umbugland

verybody loves a benevolent autocrat, but the problem is you seldom come across one. Umbugland, the peaceloving country where Mandala Theatre's new play Umbugland ko muthbhed (Encounter in Umbugland) is set, has the fortune of getting two in a row.

King Bichitrabirya has been ruling the tiny country for the past 60 years with supreme conviction and authority. A pack of scheming, groveling ministers serve his royal ambitions, but they too want to sit

on the throne. Princess Bijaya, sole heir to the kingdom, is still a child and has no interest in politics or protocol. Just when he looked like he would rule forever, the old king dies and the games begin.

Umbugland's ministers can't decide who among the five of them should rule the country, so Bijaya is made child queen. The court seeks a regent role and even succeeds in getting a royal ordinance to defer all executive power to the cabinet. But Bijaya, like every maturing monarch in history, now gets used to premiership and wants to bypass her ministers on every decision.

Adapted from Indian writer Vijay Tendulkar's Marathi play *Dambadwicha Mukabala* (translated and published

in English as *Encounter in Umbugland*), the Nepali version is uncannily similar to the last half-century of our politics: monarchs seek to rule by divine right and corrupt ministers preach for democracy.

At the heart of the conflict is Bijaya's wish to bring the Kadambas, a large-ish minority of Umbugland's population, to the mainstream. The ministers refuse, making the similarities between Nepal and the nonsensical sounding Umbugland even clearer. Like Nepal 2006, the battle of rhetoric between

> Bijaya and her ministers spills out into the streets and culminates

in angry riots and retaliating gunfire inside the steaming tin-roofed theatre.

As the ministers eye the streets from their safe vantage point, one of them, like politicians quoted in newspapers, declares quite matter-of-factly: "There can be no revolution without spilling blood." Another hopes, "surely twenty brave citizens will be martyrs," while the most cunning one decides: "Twenty? I think five hundred! Seven hundred!"

Bijaya too is far from perfect. Her naivety may make her seem sympathetic, but it speaks volumes of monarchy and its customary rights if Bijaya's eunuch servant has to keep reminding her why diplomacy is better than recklessness.

Tendulkar, renowned for exposing the hypocrisies of patriarchal India in his plays, has named his heroine after himself and makes an idealistic intrusion to settle the score. But it is his satire that

leaves no one untouched that makes *Umbugland ko muthbhed* so enjoyable. *Sunir Pandey* 

#### Umbugland ko muthbhed

**Directed** by Aashant Sharma **Written** by Vijay Tendulkar **Cast:** Pramod Agrahari, Sirjana Subba, Anoj Pandey, Suraj Malla Thakuri, Manish Niraula, Suresh Sapkota, Sambhan Shrestha, Kamal Devkota Rs 200, Rs 100 for students, runs till 14 June (except Mondays), Mandala Theatre, Anamnagar, 01-6924269



### IHE BAKERY CAFÉ

annual momo festival dedicated to our nation's favourite snack. I like to dip the momo while it's still piping hot into the accompanying bowl of tomato chutney, then add a swirl of tomato ketchup and a dollop of sheng cheung chili sauce and pop the whole thing into my mouth- the clashing flavours and the heat transforming the humble momo into one that comforts my soul. Though the dish honestly needs to come with a cautionary caveat- know that a plate of this



accordingly priced restaurants in the valley.

Oftentimes in life, in our rush to try the new – experiences, places and people, old faithfuls fall on the wayside; not forgotten but relegated to the back of the mind knowing that they will still be around. No recriminations, no questions asked, just so welcoming that you fall into old patterns and that is how revisiting the Bakery Café felt - like visiting an old familiar and comforting friend. *Ruby Tuesday* 

How to get there: In Darbar Marg, turn left from the roundabout, The Bakery Café is next to KFC and Pizza Hut. You can also enjoy the exact same tastes in Naxal Bhatbhateni, New Road, Baneshwore, Pulchowk, Jawlakhel and even at cities outside the capital.

Wind by the Nanglo Consortium of restaurants and after 25 years of being in the business, The Bakery Café still hasn't earned culinary credibility. Food snobs turn their noses up at the thought of a meal here and the general consensus among most of them seems to be that they wouldn't be caught dead eating here anymore. But when in Darbar Marg and the hunger pangs hit hard, it is still a good place to go for a quick bite and a satisfying one at that. The place which had started reeking a little of general seediness and decrepitude has undergone extensive renovations. With its revamped look, the cafe hopes to regain some of its lost popularity with the young crowd and Darbar Marg frequenting yuppies.

Colour blocked green and orange walls pay homage to the original colour scheme and newly upholstered leather chairs and the addition of a bar and a coffee counter seek to lure in new patrons. Having spent a large part of my youth in here, I have to admit I know the menu really well. Back then Kathmandu didn't have as many gustatory choices to sample from and also, the Bakery Cafe was best suited to a young person's limited budget. Happy to note that the prices are still reasonable and a decent meal for two can still be had for less than a thousand rupees.

The buff momos (Rs 155) here are the most popular dish – so popular that Nanglo even has an will leave you burping, and retasting said flavours for the rest of the day!

The hamburger (Rs 165) is plain, unadorned and perfectly adequate- it is what it is supposed to be – a meat patty in a bun. No surprises there. The chicken sizzler (Rs 350) comes with noodles, roast potatoes and steamed vegetables with brown sauce. The meat was beautifully cooked- tender and falling off the bones and so moist- much better than at many over-hyped and thus

### **Great Food Deserves Carlsberg**

That calls for a arlsberg

### 

## Altitude illness awareness

The catalog of epidemiological research on high altitude sickness almost exclusively documents its effects on trekkers and climbers, but research on other groups, especially pilgrims, is missing.



**DHANVANTARI** Buddha Basnyat, MD

Epidemiological studies about altitude sickness on Himalayan trekkers, as well as climbers in the US, the Swiss Alps, Aconcagua in Argentina and Kilimanjaro in Kenya demonstrate a relatively high incidence of about 50 per cent of acute mountain sickness (AMS), the benign form of the disease; but generally a low incidence of about one per cent of the life-threatening forms of high altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE) and high altitude cerebral edema (HACE) is evident.

Historically however there is one group where the HAPE and HACE rates were as high as 15 per cent-Indian soldiers. They were air-lifted from sea-level in Delhi during the 1962 India-China border war to about 5000m near the Ladakh area to fight against the Chinese. The Chinese were well versed at carrying out high altitude skirmishes against the Tibetans. In addition the Indian soldiers exerted themselves unnecessarily in the first few days of arrival, and were dressed for summer, not the cold mountains. There is no question that altitude sickness



determined the outcome of that war.

An important group that is consistently underrepresented in altitude sickness studies is pilgrims. In numbers alone the pilgrims are probably the largest group that ascend to high altitude. High altitude pilgrimage sites in the state of Uttarakhand in India like Kedarnath and Badrinath at over 3000m sees over 3 million pilgrims every year. Yet altitude sickness epidemiological data on this group is almost non-existent.

The pilgrims have important differentiating characteristics. The pilgrims are primarily older, poorer, sicker than trekkers, less literate and inclined to suffer from hypothermia due to a lack of availability of warm clothing. Well over 100 pilgrims died in 2012 during the Shri Amarnath Yatra at about 4000m mostly due to hypothermia and altitude sickness.

The most crucial differentiating feature of the pilgrims may be they are more fatalistic and resigned to the outcome of their higher risk factors than trekkers. In fact this resignation often makes it difficult to organise a rescue on their behalf when it is appropriate.

The lack of education of the ill effects of low oxygen (hypoxia) cause even healthy pilgrims to fall victim to severe AMS, HAPE or HACE. Now that the pilgrimage season is here to go to places like Kailash and Manasarovar in the neighborhood of 5000m in Tibet, it is prudent to learn more about altitude sickness (ismm.org).

In a 2012 large epidemiological study Jean-Paul Richalet and his colleagues examined risk factors for severe altitude sickness in trekkers once again. Rapid ascent of greater than 400m per day at high altitude, prior history of altitude sickness, young people who did regular physical activity meaning they "pushed" themselves excessively, participants with a history of migraines and those traveling to Ladakh in India were all more prone to the illness. Why trekkers to Ladakh suffered more from this illness than those doing the Annapurna circuit in Nepal was a mysterious finding. 💟

# Burst your bundle

**GIZMO by YANTRICK** 

Generic, out-of-the box earphones are one of Yantrick's pet peeves. You've bought a shiny new mobile device, packed it with high-quality music but the bundled earphones make the music sound terrible. Yantrick's policy is bundled earphones in emergencies only. In contrast, the world-renowned audio equipment manufacturer Bose has been producing great-sounding and good-quality mobile device earphones as well, and the MIE2 and MIE2i earphones offer the kind of sound, comfort and durability that bundled earphones can only dream of.

The MIE2 and the MIE2i represent the second-generation of Bose's in-ear headphones. Although the MIE2 earphones are meant for Android, Blackberry and Windows devices, while the MIE2i earphones work only with Apple's mobile devices, they look identical. Decked in black, white and silver, the earphones certainly radiate an executive-feel, and the included jet-black leather protective carrying case further accentuates that executive look.

Bose has a fundamentally different approach than other companies, by designing in-ear headphones that sit outside the ear canal, rather than burrowing in. The soft silicon gel tips offer a comfortable, unobtrusive fit, and stick to your ears snugly, and far better than most. You can wear the MIE2 and MIE2i for long stretches without feeling the need to adjust them or take them off. They do not isolate noise like most rivals do, but that can be a good thing for people who like to be aware of what is going on around them.



Put on some decent-quality music, and you will immediately realise what the fuss is really about. Boasting Bose's legendary sound, the MIE2 and the MIE2i offer tonally balanced sound with crisp highs, deep lows, and an extremely detailed sound along with a pleasantly full bass. Your bundled earphones will be literally bundled, unused in the bottom of your bag.

Music, videos and movies sound awesome on the MIE2 and the MIE2i, making them perfect companions for your next-gen mobile devices. The inline microphones allow for calls to be answered while using the earphones as well. Yantrick's buddies remarked that he even sounded louder and clearer than usual on the phone. Sound-wise, the MIE2 and the MIE2i have blown away bundled earphones.

Yantrick's Verdict: With Bose, you know you are getting a quality product with quality sound in a comfortable package. The price tag of approx Rs 15,000 for these thus don't seem steep.



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-Dr. Spiro Condos, dentist practicing in the US







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NATION 15

# **Post-poll ghettoisation**

The BJP victory will strengthen the position of orthodox Muslims in India

ne fallout of the victory of the BJP-led NDA in India's parliamentary elections will be to strengthen the orthodox brigade among the country's Muslim minority, and push its secular-liberals on the backfoot.

The community will predictably stereotype the Hindus – that they are anti-Muslim, unable to overcome their primordial passion in voting for a party and its leader, Narendra Modi, whose agenda they suspect is to reduce them to second-class status. Forgotten will be the



LOOK OUT Ajaz Ashraf

overlapping layers an electoral verdict always comprises. The Muslims will not make allowance for the pull Modi's mediamanufactured development agenda had on the people, nor will they factor in the erosion of UPA's credibility, not even that the NDA's victory is based on a majority of less than 50 per cent of votes cast.

The BJP has underscored the possibility of reducing Muslim voters to irrelevance. Indeed, Muslims have been effectively disenfranchised: for the first time in India's history, the Lok Sabha election has been won without their contribution.

For over 20 years, the BJP countered pressure from its cadre to build the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC). It



claimed these two contentious issues had to be ejected from its agenda because of the demands of coalition politics. This election has buried the argument. The BJP hardliners will demand their leaders implement the two political projects forthwith.

This logic was pointed out to me in many phone calls within hours of the BJP's incredible victory. The Muslims feel their bargaining power has been lost, that to come out to protest in the streets at a future date on, say, the Ram Temple issue will only enhance the Hindu consolidation. Yet, they won't willingly concede to the BJP's demand.

Perhaps the BJP leaders, particularly Narendra Modi, will tread cautiously. After all, except in Uttar Pradesh, voters supported the BJP for its development agenda. But the BJP's footsoldiers are likely to interpret the results as a licence to flex their muscles. Within hours of the BJP winning a majority, there were already demands from them that Muslims relinquish claim to the land where the Babri Mosque stands.

Muslims know that the Congress lacks the vigour for street agitation. Its leaders are accustomed to controlling the levers of power, not riding the passion of streets. And so, Muslims will wonder who will stand for them now. Their nervousness will strengthen orthodox political elements within the community. They will mock liberals for bestowing faith in the idea that Hindus are religiously eclectic and tolerant. By fanning their insecurity they will seek to

strengthen their control over the community, frighten the young and educated about the bleak future ahead, hoping they would relinquish their search for alternative politics, even lifestyles. All this will lead to ghettoisation, of the mind and living space.

Which is why it is important to analyse the impact of the defeat of AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal on Muslims. Varanasi was a case-study of the circumstances in which the community could break free from the shackles of the politics of identity, and that old idea which demanded they vote in favour of those who could assure them security and safety.

Yes, they admired Kejriwal for displaying the audacity in confronting Modi headon. What excited them was AAP's political rhetoric of ushering clean and responsive governance. They believed that all other social groups, particularly the oppressed, could not but support the AAP's idea of politics.

When I was in college, my history professor was fond of referring to the mutiny. "1857 was a turning point for India, but India failed to turn," he liked to say.

The Varanasi experience may prompt Muslims to say: "We were willing to change, but not the Hindus." Who is to tell them that shifts in social plates are never permanent? Who is to explain that old style Congress politics has led to the assertion of the Hindu right? You just hope their search for alternative politics never ends. ashrafajaz3@gmail.com





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#### **SUNIR PANDEY** in KAVRE

6 APRIL: Jeep skids and falls 300m below road in Sindhupalchok. Six killed, 10 injured.

**3 MAY:** Speeding bus swerves to avoid hitting motorcycle and falls off road in Kavre. Six killed, 30 injured.

**5 MAY:** Driver falls asleep at wheel and bus falls off bridge into river in Sindhuli. Six killed, 31 injured.

ll three highway accidents happened in the space of Lone month, and police found that all were caused by careless drivers. Most of the injured from all three accidents were brought to Dhulikhel Hospital since Kavre has become the strategic point for all highways headed east from Kathmandu.

In the last 12 months, Dhulikhel Hospital treated an average of 12 Road Traffic Accident (RTA) cases every 10 days. Its proximity to three major highways has made it the default post-crash care centre for accidents in districts like



**HIGHWAYS OF** 

Sindhupalchok, Ramechhap and Dolakha, and even Sindhuli.

"Some people ask to be referred to Kathmandu because they think everything is better in the capital, but they are in for a rude surprise when they discover it is just more expensive," says

Shailesh Shrestha, who works in orthopaedics department of the Emergency at Dhulikhel.

It has only been less than a year since Dhulikhel Hospital started digitising its in-patient details, but even their incomplete records show an alarming

regularity of highway accidents

Rama Shrestha, who also works in the ER, says the treatment ranges from curing cuts to performing immediate surgeries on fractures. Sometimes patients come a few days after the accident and after other complications.

Travellers in other districts, though, are not so fortunate. Depending on where an accident takes place and how critical the case is, victims are rushed off to the nearest private hospital. If this option is not available, they go to zonal or district hospitals.



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But this practice is dependent on a witness or a survivor phoning the police, who in turn organise a rescue. If accidents take place at night, like in Doti in January 2013 where 33 were killed, survivors are trapped themselves and there are no witnesses. Emergency help when it does arrive is too late.

And even if an ambulance arrives in time, it will not have emergency equipment on board to treat the injured. Very few ambulances have medical personnel or equipment, they are basically vans with drivers. Many of those with serious internal injuries die because of poor handling during rescue, or en route because of the lack of emergency care on ambulances.

Even when they arrive alive at a rural health post or hospital, the injured have to be referred to a bigger hospital in Kathmandu. The treacherous highways of the Karnali and the Far-West are the most poorly served, but there are no trauma centres or ambulances stationed even along the busy 100km stretch between Mugling and Kathmandu (86 people died from mid 2012 to mid 2013 in Dhading where the largest section of the highway lies). The seriously injured die while being taken to Kathmandu or Bharatpur because of traffic jams and poor road condition.

In Kathmandu, the government has been planning to open a 'model trauma centre' for years. In 2012 the then Health Minister Rajendra Mahato even announced the Nepal-India Friendship Emergency and Trauma Centre would open soon. Mahato was accused of trying to appoint cronies to positions in the hospital, and a new row between the government and the Nepal Academy of Medical Sciences

at Bir Hospital means that the Indian-built facility hasn't seen a single patient.

With more highways and vehicles, and emergency services not keeping pace, the rate of fatalities from highways is rising sharply. More than 11,000 people have died in highway accidents in the past eight years, and over 30,000 have been seriously injured in the same period (*see chart*).

Negligence, carelessness, poor road conditions, lack of vehicle maintenance, and government neglect in ensuring highway safety are to blame.

The Khurkot section of the BP Highway from Dhulikhel to Sindhuli has seen major accidents in the past three years because heavily-loaded passenger buses ply on a road that is not even completed yet. Here and elsewhere, the government allows transport companies to run buses

and personnel are overstretched when they are on duty and

drivers always find a way to evade checks. From cases of buses turning over to motorcycle hitting bulls, police records show nine out of 10 accidents are due to drivers' negligence.

"Ultimately, everything fails when vehicle owners themselves don't take enough precaution," says Adhikari. "For example, it is compulsory to have two drivers in a long-route bus. But transport companies want to cut costs, so no amount of police warnings or punishment will reduce accidents." 💟

#### nepalitimes.com

Getting over the influence, #694 Nepal's highways of death, #666 Roadkill, #666



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### **18** FROM THE NEPALI PRESS



#### Selena Gomez in Nepal

Annapurna Post, 22 May

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

US actress and singer Selena Gomez dances to a Tharu song in Satbariya in Dang on Tuesday. Gomez, a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador also visited local schools and interacted with members of children's clubs in the district.



Black goat: Judiciary White goat: Parliament

कान्तिपुर Batsyayan in Kantipur, 21 April

# **BHU vs JNU in Nepal**

Yubaraj Ghimire in Setopati.com

#### सेतोपाटी

After India's partition, there was no political entity that protected the interests of India's Hindus. The Jan Sangh party was formed in 1950 to look after the interests of Hindu refugees from Pakistan, protect Hindu values and to change India from a secular to a Hindu state. Heading it was Shyam Prasad Mukherjee, who was a member of India's Constituent Assembly, but the Jan Sangh's entire organisation, platform and expansion was actually the responsibility of the Hindu Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) which was formed in 1924.

In Nepal, the RSS invited King Mahendra to Nagpur for a Maghe Sankranti festival in 1965 but Indian ambassador Sriman Narayan conveyed to the king that it was a bad idea to go since the RSS was a communal Hindu organisation. The king was unhappy, but obeyed. Jawaharlal Nehru had described Mahendra's coup in December 1960 as a "setback to democracy", but the Jan Sangh's Dindayal Upadhyay defended Mahendra by blocking a debate on Nepal in the Indian Upper House by saying it was the internal affair of another country. In 1961, when the Jan Sangh formed the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, it sent a person named Dr Garg to establish the Council's presence in Nepal. He remained for 15 years.

At around the same time, Jogendra Jha also moved to Nepal from Bihar, and was a strong presence in Nepal's state structure because of his proximity to Mahendra. According to one former BJP chairman, Jha and BJP's former vice-chair Vijayaraje Scindia of Gwalior both acted as links between the Nepal palace and the Jan Sangh and later the BJP. The Jan Sangh's pro-monarchy leanings were later shared by the BJP's Lal Krishna Advani who always maintained that the Nepal monarchy represented unity in diversity, and Nepal should remain a Hindu state, even after the 12-point agreement of November 2005 and the 2006 People's Movement. Advani was supported by the VHP's founder Ashok Singhal, but it was Atal Bihari Vajpayee who endorsed Nepal's transformation into a secular, federal republic

In 1980, the Jan Sangh became the BJP and it was led by Vajpayee. He came to Nepal in 1977 as foreign minister and privately urged King Birendra to send BP Koirala for medical treatment. And when India conceded Nepal's demand to sign separate trade and transit treaties with Nepal in 1978, Vajpayee had opposed the move in parliament. Although he was considered to be more tolerant and pragmatic and less Hinduistic than his colleagues, Vajpayee did felicitate the BJP and VHP after the demolition of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in 1992. When Vajpayee came to Nepal as prime minister in 2001, he flatly denied that Nepali Maoists were sheltering in India, but it is now known that within a few months it was Vajpayee himself who allowed the Maoists to travel in and out of India, and for its leaders to base themselves there.

Vajpayee is now in poor health. His and Advani's generation has now been replaced by Narendra Modi and Rajnath Singh. The historical links of Nepali politics with Banaras has been broken. The BHU (Banaras Hindu University) culture in Nepali politics has been replaced by the JNU (Jawaharlal Nehru University) culture. Even so, there are many RSS activists in Nepal in student, professional and educational institutions. They maintain that Christian proselvtisation has increased after Nepal became secular.

It is too early to say if the new Narendra Modi government in India will make a difference in India's foreign policy towards its neighbours, including Nepal. We will get a better sense after his advisers and ministers are named. But the BIP and RSS have their own networks in Nepal and a separate source of inputs, which will be more important than the information and recommendations of the embassy in Kathmandu. We will probably get indications of this in the next few weeks.



# Sorry



are always want to be in a hurry to justify ourselves before the investigation of the Central Child Welfare Board, about never Chief District Office and police was completed. The police's professional norms while investigation report found several of the allegations against Dil Shova to be true, but couldn't find any instance of sexual abuse. We realise that the story hurt Dil Shova's reputation and we feel responsible for the hurt that it caused her, and for this we are sorry.

our bounds. However, we didn't

#### QUOTE OF THE WEEK



**E** I only returned to the central committee because the chairman promised to discuss my proposal with everyone. I am not becoming his deputy again.

Baburam Bhattarai, quoted in *Nagarik*, 22 May

### **Seoul searching**

Nikunj Tiwari, Karobar, 22 May

#### कारोबार

Of the total 18,800 Nepali workers who went to South Korea through Employment Permit System (EPS), 1,117 are working there illegally shows a recent report by the South Korean immigration department. According to the report, there are a total of 52,000 illegal migrant workers in Korea.

The Korean government had implemented EPS in 2004 to meet the required workforce in small and medium sized industries through migrant workers. Since then 250,000 workers from 15 countries have come to South Korea through this system. There are more than 1.6 million migrant workers in South Korea of which close to 500,000 are Chinese.



In order to reduce the number of illegal workers, the Korean government is now planning to implement a new rule that will allow workers to receive home return insurance, once they arrive back in their home countries. The workers have been receiving the amount in Korea, which is 10 per cent of the deducted sum from their monthly income, after their contract ends. However, the trade unions have been opposing the decision.

Nagarik, 20 May

नागरिक

Front page apology for story published in February about social worker Dil Shova Shrestha:

We at *Nagarik* had printed the story without any prejudice. We we felt we were professional in publishing Dil Shova's story it was quickly apparent that many of our readers felt we had overstepped

Last year the government also implemented a tough law for employers hiring illegal migrant workers, which has a provision of a fine worth USD 2,000 or three years in prison.



### NATION 19

#### **TUFAN NEUPANE** in BARDIA

B ardia tops the list of districts in Nepal with the highest number of forced disappearances by the security forces during the conflict. Especially notorious was the Bhim Kali Company of the Royal Nepal Army stationed at Chisapani Base which alone was responsible for most of the atrocities.

Most of the victims were from the Tharu community, and there are hundreds of families in Bardia which have lost husbands, brothers and uncles. Of the 2,000 cases of disappearances registered with the National Human Rights commission, about 200 are from Bardia.

One of them was Rampyari Tharu's husband, Kaliram who was a rickshaw driver in the town of Motipur. Rampyari (*pic, right, with her husband's photo*) was just 19 when soldiers from the Chisapani Base barged into their house just before midnight on 2 October 2002, blindfolded Kaliram and drove him away. But before that they shot dead Kaliram's brother Tagga, the soldiers tied his body to the bed he was sleeping on and took him away as well.

Kaliram and Tagga's mother, Parbatni who is now 77, was so psychologically traumatised by the loss of her sons that she hasn't



spoken since and stares vacantly into space. Rampyari's son was two then, and has no memory of his father.

Rampyari says neither her husband nor her elder brother was political. She went to the Chisapani base many times to find out about her husband and to get back the body of her brother-in-law. But the soldiers at the gate would rudely tell her to go away, and kept denying he was detained inside.

Tagga's son, Lohari was seven then and had seen his father being shot in front of his eyes. Today, aged 19, he is still waiting for the killers to be be punished. "My mind will only find peace when the soldiers who shot my father face justice," he says. The same night that

Kaliram was taken away, in the nearby village

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BARDIA

of Madaha some soldiers had beaten up Baburam Chaudhary, Darbari Tharu, Tulsiram Tharu and Laxmiram Tharu and taken them away. None of them were seen again.

Baburam's father Babu Prasad died of worry two years later. His mother Ratni, 60, lives with her daughter-in-law and says she has only one wish before she dies: to see the perpetrators punished.

Baburam's sister Gangarani joined the Maoists to avenge the disappearance and death of her brother. But she herself was captured in Padanaha in Bardia, taken into the jungle and killed. She was 20.

Although Ratni says her daughter's body was never found, the Maoists declared her a 'martyr' and send her a photograph. She says: "No one in our village was really a Maoist, we were all share croppers. And because we were demanding our share of the harvest from the landlord, they labeled us Maoists."

Between December 2001 and September 2002, the Royal Nepal Army dissappeared the husband,

son, daughter-in-law and daughter of Dujani Tharu of Magargadi in Bardia. Dujani is now 75 and lives with her 14-year-old grandson, who takes care of her. She wants to see the soldiers who did this to her family punished.

KATHMANDU

None of the soldiers from the Chinsapani Base who carried out extra-judicial killings, forced disappearances, rapes or torture were ever caught.

The commander of Chisapani Base at the time, Major Ajit Thapa, along with Capt Ramesh Swar were named in 2006 by eight political parties of Banke district as being responsible for atrocities in Bardia. But not only did the two never face trial, Thapa was even promoted to Lt Colonel.

#### nepalitimes.com 🧤

Disappeared, dead or alive, #351 Giving conflict victims a voice, #610 The war's not over yet, #542

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### **20** BACK SIDE

## Headlines on deadline

Thank goodness we live in an era when journalists no longer have to be correct, we just need to be politically correct. What a great load it is off our backs not to anymore have to double-check every piece of gossip and conspiracy theory for its veracity and vivacity. When you can get into trouble for telling the truth, why bother? We can all sit back, relax and prepare for the World Cup with a cylinder of Pringles and let the chips fall where they may.

WARNING TO READERS: Don't believe every word we say. Believe every other word.

Now that we have those legal niceties out of the way, we can get down to what you have all been impatiently waiting for with barely-concealed boredom, which is a roundup of this week's main events:

#### **ROLE OF MEDIA STRESSED**

POKHARA – The Minister of Culture and Agriculture has stressed the role of media in the under-development of the country. Speaking here in the Lake City on Tuesday at the inauguration of the All-Nepal Federation of Non-working Journalists (Counter-Revolutionary) he said: "Journalists should not make anything up. But if they want to, they should check with me first."

#### **KOIRALA LYING LOW**

KATHMANDU – Prime Minister Sushil Koirala has told an international news agency that he likes to lie low. This is because he doesn't own a bed and sleeps on the floor.

Koirala's only possessions are three mobiles, none of them smart phones. He also made the surprising disclosure that he is not a bachelor, but has been secretly married all this time to Lady Democracy.

In an interview to mark 100 days in office, Koirala told Xinhua News Agency this week that he has dedicated his whole life to the love of his life. Asked about his honeymoon, Koirala said he has always kept a low profile, and aside from hijacking a plane once has tried to do as little as possible in his life. He said he was trying not to ever again repeat the mistake of being decisive and bold. He said he had steadfastly stuck to this philosophy during the last 100 days in office.

"In order to prevent the government from making serious blunders, we have not taken any decisions," he said. "We won't actually be doing anything during my term in office so as to minimise our chances of making serious mistakes."

#### MODI FELICITATED

KATHMANDU – Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, in a dramatic and decisive move, today sent a message of felicitation to Indian prime minister designate, Narendra Modi.

The Cabinet deliberated long and hard whether it was appropriate to congratulate Modi before his inauguration or after, with the meeting equally divided between those who said protocol demanded that messages could only be sent from one HoG to another HoG, and those who said it should be sent immediately.

The meeting ran late into the night, and since it was way past his bedtime, the prime minister took the bull by the horns to say "Send the damn thing", and declared the meeting adjoured.

#### **AMBASSADORS SHORT-LISTED**

KATHMANDU – After months of indecision, the Cabinet has finally agreed on a shortlist of political appointees and career diplomats for 12 vacant Nepali embassies abroad.

The shortlist has 1,567 names. Given the victory of right-honourable Modi in

India, top contenders for Nepal's new ambassador to India could be Rishi the Dhamala and ex-king Gyanendra.

"This is the first step, we will now shorten the shortlist and announce the names of the new ambassadors by the end of the next fiscal year," the Gobarment spokesman said.

#### WHETHER OR NOT

Now, the weather forecast. In general, roughly speaking, it is our guesstimate that there may or may not be some likelihood of partly cloudiness hereand-there in isolated parts of Nepal in the next more or less 24 hours or so, approximately. Or, there may be not. Let's face it: we don't really know how soon the monsoon will arrive, but we know it may be sooner or later,

or both. When it does rain, it will pour and there is a 50-50 chance that the rains may stay mainly in the plains.



The Ass

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