Workers splash fresh saffron water on the Boudhanath stupa on Saturday to mark the beginning of Saka Dawa, the fourth month of the Tibetan Buddhist calendar. This holy month marks the birth and enlightenment of the Buddha, who taught that keeping the “environment” clean is as important as protecting the external environment and nature.

**EVERY BREATH WE TAKE**

The air pollution emergency in the region calls for coordinated data sharing and response.

**NOT BUSINESS AS USUAL**

The global battle against climate change will be won or lost in Asia.

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**SACRED SPLASH**

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**BUILDING BRIDGES**

THIS IS IT

BY RUBEENA MAHATO

PAGE 15

**CONSTITUTIONAL DÉJÀ VU**

THE DEADLINE

BY DAMAKANT JAYSHI

PAGE 19
A FOSSIL ECONOMY

We cannot afford a business-as-usual strategy for economic growth because they are economically and politically not sustainable. A fossil economy will doom us.

The government is working to present the first full economic stimulus plan to the newly elected parliament members and we need a good sign, and one that could finally spur development spending and ensure accountability. Theoretically, Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat says the budget will reflect the country’s medium-term objective of spurring economic growth and creating jobs. The aim is to put the country on track to graduate from the ranks of Least Developed Countries to Developing Country category by 2022. The decrease of Nepal’s absolute poverty rate from 45 per cent to 23 per cent in 15 years shows that this may not be as far-fetched as it sounds.

With the appointment of Govinda Raj Pokhrel to head the National Planning Commission, we now have an “energy man” at the top policy-formation body. Pokhrel has experience from his former job in the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre implementing renewable energy projects in rural areas.

Although Nepal’s crippling electricity crisis gets all the headlines, a lot has been achieved behind the scenes in rural areas. From microhydro and household solar would transform Nepal’s energy self-sufficiency. The campaign to make all Nepali homes smoke-free by 2017 through locally-manufactured biogas in Kathmandu. This important goal affects far more people than the price of gasoline in Kathmandu.

The spread in the use of household biogas from farm waste in rural Nepal is another achievement that has gone almost unnoticed. There are now more than 350,000 biogas plants all over the country that run on cow dung and latrine waste – more per capita than India or China. This was possible because of simple, maintenance-free designs for Nepal. But more importantly, soft micro loans made installation easy and affordable. A similar formula for microhydro and household solar would transform Nepal’s energy landscape within a few years.

Unfortunately, signs are not good that the current budgetary exercise will learn from any of these past achievements. The unsustainably greedy with which MPs from the ruling coalition have demanded pork barrel funds for their constituencies to be raised from Rs 1 million to Rs 5 million is disheartening. The haste with which ministers (including Mahat) have doled out unspent grants from the last budget to their home districts doesn’t arouse much hope.

To achieve the 2022 GDP per capita target, Nepal’s economic growth needs to average about eight per cent a year. In this state, what would eight per cent growth mean for air pollution, ground water depletion, the state of the Bagmati and other rivers, the mismanagement of urban garbage, the proliferation of banned pesticides?

Switching to a green economy would help mitigate some of the corrosive side-effects of growth. For example, the 100 kg per head tax at GDP per capita or income poverty. Green growth is not just about preserving nature, but an economy that becomes more inclusive and sustainable as it grows. When planning this budget, Minister Mahat must look beyond revenue from petroleum and vehicle sales taxes, for example, and offer incentives and subsidies for renewable energy.

We cannot afford a business-as-usual strategy for economic growth because it is not economically and politically sustainable. A fossil economy will doom us environmentally and strategically. Alternate energy is no longer just a new age fad, it is mainstream economics.
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1st Time in Nepal

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YOU WON'T MISS YOUR
FAVORITE GAME ANYMORE

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LG Jersey

This offer is valid from 6th June to 14th July 2014
Every breath we take

In Kathmandu PM10 is hardly ever below 180 microgram/cu m for weeks on end

In March 2014 the World Health Organization (WHO) released new estimates attributing 7 million deaths per year – one eighth of all deaths – to air pollution.

Many air pollutants are also ‘short-lived climate pollutants’ (SLCPs) that have significant ‘short-lived climate pollutants’ impacts on local and regional climate. These include black carbon particles emitted by diesel engines, brick kilns, rook stoves and open fires, as well as the gases ozone and methane. Unlike the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO2), which, once emitted, stays in the atmosphere for centuries impacting global climate, SLCPs have atmospheric lifetimes of days to months. The good news is that shutting down their sources reduces their climate impact within days to months. It also means they do not have time to mix uniformly around the world, and have the greatest impact only in the region near their sources.

The bad news for us is that Nepal is in a region that is a major hotspot for black carbon emissions. Black carbon contributes to the melting of Himalayan glaciers and snowfields, warms the atmosphere at higher elevations and cools it at lower elevations. It also reduces visibility, and contributes to changes in monsoon rainfall patterns. Outdoor air pollution has grown steadily in recent decades. During the dry season, plumes of smoke from hundreds of millions of cooking fires, millions of diesel vehicles, generators and pump sets, as well as tens of thousands of brick kilns merge into one thick brown haze layer that extends for weeks on end in Kathmandu Valley air pollution.

In winter, pollution increases when brick kilns start operating in December, and is worse in the eastern part of the Valley where the brick kilns are concentrated as well as near roads and other pollution sources. Field studies during the first half of 2013 found concentrations of air pollutants several times above WHO’s and Nepal’s own air quality standards for extended periods of time, not just in Kathmandu but also in places like Lumbini.

Some cities respond to bad air quality days by taking short-term measures to reduce emissions and exposure when PM10 (coarse particle) concentrations reach 180 micrograms per cubic meter. In Kathmandu Valley, PM10 is hardly ever below 180 micrograms per cubic meter for weeks at a time. Without continuous air pollution measurements, and without a system to communicate the results to the public in real time, we cough through undeclared air pollution emergencies, unaware of what we are breathing and unaware of its toll on our health and economy.

Three of the Kathmandu Valley’s six air quality monitoring stations that had shut down in 2007 have been revived. However, these stations only measure 24 hour average PM10 data, and that too is reported days later. The Valley desperately needs state-of-the-art real-time monitoring stations, and a system of communicating the data to the public. It also needs pre-agreed measures in place that can be implemented when air pollution reaches danger thresholds. Other areas with high population density or natural or cultural heritage also need similar stations and systems in place to respond to air pollution emergencies.

Air pollution crosses borders daily. Shutting down Nepal’s 700+ brick kilns will not remove the pollution arriving from the tens of thousands of kilns just south of the border. We need regionally coordinated data sharing and responses to air pollution emergencies in the region. The entire southern South Asia needs a strong push towards cleaner, less polluting technologies: clean cooking, clean brick production and clean transportation.

Arnico Panday is Senior Atmospheric Scientist and coordinator of ICIMOD’s Atmosphere Initiative, arnico.panday@icimod.org
Not business as usual

Nessim J Ahmad and Kayeh Zahedi

In April this year, a world record was broken with little fanfare. The global concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the main driver of climate change, was above 400 parts per million (ppm) for an entire month for the first time in recorded history. With Asia accounting for a growing share of greenhouse gas emissions, it is clear that the global battle against climate change may be won or lost in the region. Global warming will hit Asia the hardest, with flooding, famine and rising sea levels putting hundreds of millions at risk.

The people of Asia and the Pacific don’t need to look to the record books or wait for the latest global panels to issue a report to know something profound is happening. Poor people living in the low-lying river deltas of Bangladesh, India, Vietnam and China as well as the small island states of the Pacific and Indian Ocean are the most at risk. The economic costs of climate change are being borne by the people and countries of our region with increasingly intense storms. The production of rice, maize and wheat has declined in many parts of Asia over the last few decades due to increasing water stress due to rising temperatures, increasing frequency of El Nino and a reduction in the number of rainy days. Eleven of the world’s most polluted cities are in Asia. There are over 5 million premature deaths in the Asia-Pacific region due to indoor and outdoor air pollution caused by dirty cook stoves, inefficient diesel cars and trucks and the burning of forests. Climate change and environmental degradation are emerging as the pre-eminent development issues in the region. Simply put, countries will not be able to address their development and poverty reduction priorities unless they reduce pollution, increase resilience to disasters, promote cleaner energy, manage forests and natural capital better, create liveable cities and increase food security.

Overall, climate change could seriously hinder the region’s efforts to reduce poverty, which is the core of the debate on the world’s new post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. This will be at the centre of debate during the first ever United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP later this month in Nairobi.

Governments in the Asia-Pacific region need to run faster in this race to avert the consequences of climate change. Action will pay dividends now and in the future and will decrease costs. Investment in renewable energy production like hydropower, wind and solar is crucial. Equally important is cutting back on the energy we use. Making buildings more energy efficient can pay back quickly and deliver returns for decades.

Meanwhile, greater investment in public transport can swiftly cut vehicle emissions and make cities more liveable, which is why the Asian Development Bank has committed to providing $30 billion of investment between 2012 and 2021. The region can move away from the industries of yesterday and resource-inefficient growth, and bring sustainable growth and wealth for its people. Asia-Pacific countries need to lead the charge by turning the region’s fast-paced economic growth to boosting clean and green economies. Business as usual is just too risky.

Nessim J Ahmad is Director of the Environment and Safeguard Division at the Asian Development Bank.

Kayeh Zahedi is Regional Director of the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

IFC holds seminar on risk management

IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, hosted a seminar on developing an environmental and social risk management framework that will help the financial sector assess environmental risks and develop mitigation strategies when taking credit decisions on 2 June.

The IFC-hosted workshop, supported by Nepal Rastra Bank, brought together officials from the central bank, commercial banks, bank and trade associations, the National Banking Institute, government ministries and development partners.

Soul upgrade

Continental Recaro, the sole authorized distributor of Kia Motors, has launched the all new Soul in the Nepali market. The new Soul comes in 1.6 petrol and diesel variants with a variety of color options to choose from and is priced at Rs 4.7 million and Rs 5.1 million respectively.

One more

Turkish Airlines began operating flights to Varna (Bulgaria) from 30 May, taking its total number of destinations to 252. Introductory round trip fares from Istanbul to Varna starts from 79 Euros.

Steely scoot

CG MotoCorp, authorised distributor of TVS motors in Nepal, launched its new scooter (VJ Jupiter) on 23 May. Powered by a noise-free, all-aluminium, low-friction engine, the VJ Jupiter operates on both eco and power mode.

Sony FIFA World Cup™ Promotions

25 May - 31 July 2014

* Free Blu-ray Home Theatre, Blu-ray Player, DVD Player, Xperia Z Ultra and T-shirts on Selected Models of BRAVIA.
When football comes home

Excitement. Hope. Protests. Hype. It’s all happening in Brazil as the world’s top 32 teams arrive for the FIFA World Cup

SHOBHAN SAXENA
in SAO PAULO

On 16 July, 1950, the day of Brazil-Uruguay final game of the World Cup (pic. right), Brazilians had been partying since morning as they were sure of victory. There were some 220,000 people in the Maracana Stadium that day. Things appeared to be going to plan when Friaca gave the Brazilians the lead, but Uruguay eventually won the match 2-1 and took the cup.

A silence fell on the gigantic stadium. The day that was supposed to be the happiest day for Brazilian football turned into the saddest moment in its history.

Sixty-four years later, the world is heading to Brazil again, and this time some are predicting a “big disaster” in this country.

They had turned into demands for better schools and hospitals. Some people fear the return of strikes and protests. But 2014 is another disaster because of delays and protests. But 2014 is not 1950. For most Brazilians, the media dubbed Uruguay’s shock victory as the ‘Maracanazo’, a term that is still used to describe the worst day in Brazilian football.

In 1950 at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro during the 1950 World Cup Final between Brazil and Uruguay. Brazil lost the match 2-1.

GAME CHANGER: File photo taken 16 July 1950 at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro during the 1950 World Cup Final between Brazil and Uruguay. Brazil lost the match 2-1.

But as coach Scolari and his team work on their plans and strategies at their camp in the mountains of Teresopolis, there is one thing they are absolutely certain about: support of ordinary Brazilians.

Brazilians. It took place when Brazil tried to achieve its “sixth star” – a reference to the five stars above the Brazilian team’s logo, each star signifying one of their five World Cup wins since 1958.

At the mountain resort town of Teresopolis, where the Brazilian team is training, the players look relaxed. Coach Luiz Felipe Scolari seems to have his plans in place. At a chat over coffee with a group of journalists last weekend, he said he has decided not to make any emotional talk with the players about the failure in 1950. “Certain things have to be left out of our plans. We will not remember the Maracanazo,” Scroli said.

“I want my players to be tough and strong – both physically and mentally.”

But the 1950 defeat still hurts. According to anthropologist Roberto DaMatta it was a tragedy because “it brought about a collective feeling of the loss of an historical opportunity.”

There was another reason for the pain it caused, wrote DaMatta in an essay: “It took place when Brazil tried to achieve its destiny as a great nation.”

Next Thursday, when Brazil take on Croatia at the World Cup inaugural match at the Itaquera stadium in Sao Paulo, the country will have another shot at greatness. It won’t be easy however for Brazil to earn a sixth star against teams like Spain, Germany and Argentina.

From metro trains to coffee shops people are talking about Copa do Mundo. “What’s the point of protesting when the best footballers in the world are playing in our stadiums. It’s not going to get us education and hospitals,” wrote Antonio Prata, a leading columnist in Folha do Sao Paulo this week.

Despite delays, all 12 state-of-the-art stadiums are ready. Foreign teams have started arriving to get used to the time zone and climate. People can’t stop talking about the “sixth star” – a reference to the five stars above the Brazilian team’s logo, each star signifying one of their five World Cup wins since 1958.

FIFA itself is under a cloud because of news reports of bribery by the Qataris to host the 2022 World Cup on some desperate people, the government blames it for Brazil-Uruguay final game of the World Cup.

For Brazil. The government blames the campaign against the World Cup for Brazil lost the match 2-1.тельный.

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Not getting on a plane to Brazil for the FIFA World Cup next week? Fret not. With the right home entertainment system, your experience from the comfort of your couch in the earliest hours of the morning may be even better than in the over-crowded stadiums.

And with the kind of high-definition monitors now available, the experience is much more higher than in 2010. Most popular brands such as LG, Samsung, Panasonic and Sony have in fact launched new models and campaigns with the global football extravaganza in mind.

“The World Cup has not yet started so the fever is yet to pick up, but customers are already making lots of inquiries,” said Ganesh Raj Pandey, sales manager of the Samsung division at Him Electronics. Samsung recently launched the “Amazing Cash Back Football Offer” where they provide a cash back minimum of Rs 7,100 on the purchase of tvs worth Rs 31,990, and Rs 11,99,990.

Likewise, Lalit Kumar Mishra at Chautari Group Electronics that distributes LG, TCL and Toshiba products, has seen a sharp growth in sales, and expects last-minute business in his showrooms before the tournament kicks off on 12 June.

Toshiba has also recorded increased sales in their smart tvs informs Marketing Manager Sunny Shrestha who attributes the growth to the FIFA momentum.

“With the right home entertainment system, your experience from the comfort of your couch in the earliest hours of the morning may be even better than in the over-crowded stadiums.”

Nepal - doesn’t necessarily think so. “People like smart phones, these are tvs that are digital.” The chip is also available in the Sony 32W700 (Rs 80,000) has a built-in chip called X-Reality PRO.

Basil Edward TEO

If you can’t go to the World Cup, bring the World Cup to you

BASIL EDWARD TEO

DELIVERY
So you have bought a high-end tv to watch the World Cup, but which service provider to use?

THERE ARE FIVE OPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Territorial TV (Kantipur TV)</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Near HD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dish Media Network</td>
<td>Rs 6,000 for box</td>
<td>Rs 60/month</td>
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<td>Rs 1,000/month</td>
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So the monsoon in the delta coast and Sri Lanka with a bang on Tuesday night. Usually it takes here seven to ten to make its progress across the Bay of Bengal, leaving towering clouds, make a dramatic turn eastwards along the foothills of the eastern Himalaya. Westerlies are set to reach a highland monsoon even though from the east. The rain is in the foothills is from 20 to 30 cm, while over the hills up to 50 cm, with lightning simialr, localized thunderstorms, and extremely low heat and fresh atmosphere.

FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY

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**MUSIC**

Pokhara Grande, a swimming pool to escape from the tropic heat, a massage parlour and spa to loosen up and a gymnasium to release stress. Lakeside, Pokhara

**GETAWAYS**

Raniban Retreat, situated at the other end of the Phewa Lake and nestled inside Raniban forest and the World Peace Stupa, this retreat has one of the best views of the Annapurna range. Phewa Lake, and Pokhara

**DIKING**

Take a bow, catch the jazz violinist Guiarme

**EVENTS**

City Museum Kathmandu, head down to Darbar Marg’s newest Art Gallery, Babarmahal

Art Gallery, Babarmahal

Runs till 19 June, 11am to 5.30pm, Siddhartha Kathmandu Contemporary Arts Centre.

Thebe, artist in residence at the

an exhibition of paintings by Subash #metadata,

Gallery Mcube, Chakupat

Runs till 7 July, 11am to 6pm, Manandhar.

Shakya, Ashuram Khaiju, and Palpasa featuring the work of artists Arpita

Open house,

City Museum Kathmandu,

Cha cha cha,

Learn one month’s worth of Salsa in

Academy, Bhatbhateni

8.30am/5 to 6pm/6 to 7pm, Salsa Dance Academy, Bhatbhateni

Rs 1,000 for singles, Rs 1,500

Pulchok, parkgallery.com.np

Runs till 18 July, Park Gallery,

Vootoo,

the new home of Newari cuisine, as well as a continental menu for those who want

Natsul,

a Korean restaurant for all things barbecue, from succulent pork to crunchy vegetables; you can have delicacies cooked right at your own table or partake of the delicious barbecue pit. Lakeside, (02)229198

Hyderabad House,

dine like the famous Nizams of old

Hyderabad, 

Wild Orchid Saigon

Whole lotta love,

the band Custard Pen play tribute to rock legends Led Zeppelin. At 1000/1500, 7pm onwards, Purple Haze, Thamel

Music at Manny’s,

live Hindi and Nepali pop music with Shabnam Gurung and Dinesh Quartet.

Music at Manny’s,

27 July, 4pm onwards, Battisputali

Starry Night BBQ, catch Guru Guru live as you chomp on your meat stick.

27 July, 4pm onwards, Battisputali

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27 July, 4pm onwards, Battisputali

**GETAWAYS**

Gaurighat, Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)-463722, (01) 4410051, (061)462222.

Glacier Hotel,
good value and friendly service for travellers on the lap of Lake Phewa.

Gangtey, Cabinde, Pokhara, (061)-467222, www.glacierhotel.com

Hotel Barahi,

enjoy a great view of Phewa Lake, cultural shows, or indulge in the scrumptious pastries from the German Bakery on the hotel premises.

Cabinde, Pokhara, 061-460617/465296

**DINING**

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

Chilly Bar and Restaurant, quality food and wide selection of drinks with great view of Phewa Lake, Lakeside, Hallanchok, Pokhara, (066)463146/463163

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Blame live.

Free entrance, 6 June, Jazz Upstairs, Lajimpat

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27 July, 4pm onwards, Battisputali

**DINING**

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

Chilly Bar and Restaurant, quality food and wide selection of drinks with great view of Phewa Lake, Lakeside, Hallanchok, Pokhara, (066)463146/463163

Whole lotta love,

try the band Custard Pen play tribute to rock legends Led Zeppelin. At 1000/1500, 7pm onwards, Purple Haze, Thamel

Music at Manny’s,

27 July, 4pm onwards, Battisputali

Starry Night BBQ, catch Guru Guru live as you chomp on your meat stick.

27 July, 4pm onwards, Battisputali

Music at Manny’s,

27 July, 4pm onwards, Battisputali

**DIKING**

Take a bow, catch the jazz violinist Guiarme

Blame live.

Free entrance, 6 June, Jazz Upstairs, Lajimpat

**EVENTS**

City Museum Kathmandu, head down to Darbar Marg’s newest Art Gallery, Babarmahal

Art Gallery, Babarmahal

Runs till 19 June, 11am to 5.30pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal

Birdwatching,
catch rare species and migratory birds before they leave the Himalaya.

7 June, 8am, Hotel Golokna, (9851010391)

Art and environment,
highlighting the impact of the scriptures and myths on the conservation of nature

7 June, 8am, Hotel Golokna, (9851010391)

The Heritage,
escape the hodgepodge of the tourist hub as you relish delights like paella and pausana costa.

6 to 15 June, Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal

Tuning Earth and Sky,
a rare collection of the works of artist

Jimmy Thapa.

Runs 06/June, Galleria Ishine, Kupambdi Height, Sanoj

Selling books,
buy and sell used books.

14 June, 10am to 4pm, Alliance Frances, Taktu

Retrospective,
a look back at the career of senior artist and cubism enthusiast Surendra Pratghan.

Runs 18 July, Park Gallery, Pashup, pantgallery.com.np

Rinpoche,
dharo to learn about Buddhism and meditation from the Dzogchen Tulku Rinpoche, Twic.

Rs 1,000, 8 June and 21 June, 2.30 to 5.30 pm, Pranamaya Studio, Boudha and Thamel

Majila lakhe,
Geetmire Yubraj directs renowned scholar Satya Mohan Jolly’s play.

Runs 06/June, except Tuesdays, 5.30pm onwards, Shipune Theatre, Battisputali; (01)4469621
Nepali Times is hosting its annual EcoFair on 5 to 7 June at the Bhrikuti Mandap’s open air grounds. With more than 80 exhibitors and an expected 150,000 visitors, the fair has become a platform for renewable energy options for Nepal, sustainability ideas, practical and affordable ways to save energy. Nepali Times EcoFair has also become an important event in the trade calendar for networking among green entrepreneurs, government agencies, innovators and the media.

**Date:** 5 to 7 June  
**Time:** 10am to 6pm  
**Venue:** Bhrikuti Mandap  
**Free entrance**

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**FLOOR PLAN**

**LIST OF EXHIBITORS:**

A-1 Fair Group  
A-2 Fair Group  
A-3 Sabah Nepal  
A-4 Sabah Nepal  
A-5 WWF  
A-6 Citasma Candle  
A-7 DJS Handicrafts  
A-8 Help Desk  
A-9 SCP  
A-10 Eco Prize  
A-11 South Asia Trust  
A-12 Booked  
A-13 Organic Life  
A-14 Samriddhi Int’l  
A-15 ICIMOD  
A-16 ICIMOD  
A-17 Smart Paani  
A-18 Yeti Airlines  
A-19 Birang Trading  
A-20 Maharjan Metal  
A-21 Agni Incorporate  
A-22 Cycle City Network  
A-23 Nepal Brewery  
A-24 Nepal Brewery  
A-25 Birhat Investment  
A-26 NIMHANS  
A-27 JEU  
A-28 DIVIVA  
A-29 CEPHED  
A-30 KMC  
A-31 NEFEJ  
A-32 Boderland Resort  
A-33 CIUD  
A-34 RET  
A-35 NMHDA  
A-36 FTC  
A-37 WWF  
A-38 SEV  
A-39 KMA  
A-40-cycle city network  
A-41 Bimala Boutique  
A-42 Wood Carving  
A-43 Scheme College  
A-44 Cycle City Network  
A-45 Tri Chandra College  
A-46 CEPHED  
A-47 KMC  
A-48 NEFEJ  
A-49 Boderland Resort  

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**LIST OF EXHIBITORS:**

**Date** Nepal Time  Fixture  Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Nepal Time</th>
<th>Fixture</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>13 June</td>
<td>1.45 am</td>
<td>Brazil vs Croatia</td>
<td>Sao Paolo</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 June</td>
<td>00.45 am</td>
<td>Spain vs Netherlands</td>
<td>Salvador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 June</td>
<td>00.45 am</td>
<td>England vs Italy</td>
<td>Portici</td>
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<td>00.45 am</td>
<td>France vs Honduras</td>
<td>Portici</td>
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<td>17 June</td>
<td>00.45 am</td>
<td>Germany vs Portugal</td>
<td>Portici</td>
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<td>18 June</td>
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<td>Belgium vs Algeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 June</td>
<td>00.45 am</td>
<td>Russia vs Korea</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 June</td>
<td>00.45 am</td>
<td>Australia vs Netherlands</td>
<td>Portici</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 June</td>
<td>00.45 am</td>
<td>Argentina vs Iran</td>
<td>Portici</td>
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</tbody>
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**SCORPIO PICK-UP**

**NEPAL’S MOST TRUSTED PICK-UP**

With the powerful performance, great comfort, and efficient after sales services, Scorpio Pick-Up is the pick-up you can always trust to take you where you only imagined going. So, put all your doubts, hesitations and worries behind and embark on the most adventurous journey of your life.
SELF SUFFICIENT: Sharada Maharjan of Dallu has been growing vegetables on her terrace for the past two years.

What to plant on your roof, and when:

**SPINACH**
- Pot Depth: 20-30 cm
- Pot distance: 15-20 cm
- Hill season: Aug-Jan
- Tarai Season: Aug-Nov

**KOHLRABI**
- Pot Depth: 30-40 cm
- Pot distance: 10-15 cm
- Hill season: July-Oct
- Tarai Season: July-Oct

**CORIANDER**
- Pot Depth: 30-45 cm
- Pot distance: 20-30 cm
- Hill season: June-Aug
- Tarai Season: July-Sept

**CHARD**
- Pot Depth: 30-40 cm
- Pot distance: 20-30 cm
- Hill season: June-Aug
- Tarai Season: July-Sept

**OKRA**
- Pot Depth: 30-40 cm
- Pot distance: 10-15 cm
- Hill season: July-Nov
- Tarai Season: Aug-Oct

**CARROT/RADISH**
- Pot Depth: 30-40 cm
- Pot distance: 10-15 cm
- Hill season: Jan-June

**RAYS**
- Pot Depth: 30-40 cm
- Pot distance: 15-20 cm
- Hill season: Aug-Jan
- Tarai Season: Aug-Nov

**GARLIC/ONIONS**
- Pot Depth: 20-30 cm
- Pot distance: 10-15 cm
- Hill season: July-Oct
- Tarai Season: July-Oct

**HANGING GARDENS OF KATHMANDU**

Save money and stay healthy growing organic vegetables in your rooftop garden.

Everyday we are bombarded with alarming reports in the media about how bad what we eat is for our health. The vegetables we buy are laced with pesticide residue, poultry products are practically marinated in hormones and antibiotics, the sweets are unhygienic, and even water has e coli.

But we have to eat to stay alive. Health concerns and rising vegetable prices are driving more and more people in Kathmandu to opt for rooftop organic gardening.

When Dilip Shrestha, 61, designed his house in Ratopul, he remembered to keep a wide and sunny terrace. After a career in the Nepal Food Corporation he knew first hand about inflation and shortages. He wanted to reduce his dependence on the market, so he started growing seasonal vegetables on his 200 sq ft rooftop.

What started out as a hobby in 2010 has now turned into a necessity. In clay pots and plastic trunks, Shrestha grows cucumber, ginger, garlic, coriander, onions, tomatoes, chilli, and other vegetables like beans, okra, pumpkin and a variety of lettuce. Friends bring him new seeds and plant varieties to try out and the yield is so high he is able to give away baskets full of fresh greens.

The Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) has now trained 500 homeowners on how to convert their terraces into kitchen gardens.

“Every time there is a banda or landslides block the highway, the prices in Kalanki rise as if we have a blockade,” says KMC’s Rabin Man Shrestha. “Creating garden on your roof will make you independent, healthy and it will actually help keep your home...”
Moneeta Shrestha is among few Kathmandu residents who segregates her household waste to reuse and recycle what she can. Kitchen waste is used to fertilize her kitchen garden, the glass and plastic is sold to garbage collectors for recycling. Shrestha household’s daily efforts at waste segregation helps reduce the amount of garbage which gets dumped at the Valley's only working landfill, Sisdole which is almost full and during the monsoons is frequently cut off from the city by floods and landslides.

If only there were more households like the Shresthas, Kathmandu would not have a garbage problem. The challenge is to convince city residents to reduce consumption, recycle what they can, and know that “waste” should not be wasted.

Kathmandu Valley generates almost 1000 tons of solid waste each day of which 65 per cent is organic. But the waste is not segregated and everything is dumped at the landfill site. According to an Asian Development Bank study conducted last year, household waste contributed 50-70 per cent total solid waste generation from 58 municipalities. “If people start segregating household waste at source and make use of the organic waste we would save a lot of money that is now spent on transporting it to landfill site,” says Robin Man Shrestha at Kathmandu Metropolitan City Office which spends 10 per cent of its entire budget on solid waste collection and disposal.

The Solid Waste Management Act 2011 fosters public-private partnership and sets regulations and fines for transgressors and requires every household to sort waste. “The Act mandates that waste needs to be separated at source. This is the first step for effective waste management but it is rarely done. Some municipalities such as Hetauda have started but much more needs to be done,” says Bhushan Tuladhar of UN-Habitat.

Implementation would be easier if the municipalities sub-contracted solid waste management to private companies willing to collect, recycle and generate income from selling fertilizer and energy from city garbage. A much-delayed tender process for this is still in limbo.

“Waste should not be wasted. Reuse, reduce and recycle. The answer to Kathmandu’s garbage problem.”

Moneeta Shrestha is among few Kathmandu residents who segregates her household waste to reuse and recycle what she can. Kitchen waste is used to fertilize her kitchen garden, the glass and plastic is sold to garbage collectors for recycling.

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“Waste should not be wasted. Reuse, reduce and recycle. The answer to Kathmandu’s garbage problem.”

“Waste should not be wasted. Reuse, reduce and recycle. The answer to Kathmandu’s garbage problem.”

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**CAULIFLOWER**

- **Pot Depth**: 30-40 cm
- **Pot distance**: 30-40 cm
- **Hill season**: January-February
- **Tarai season**: July-August

**PUMPKIN**

- **Pot Depth**: 40-45 cm
- **Pot distance**: 40-45 cm
- **Hill season**: January-February
- **Tarai season**: July-August

**CHILI**

- **Pot Depth**: 30-40 cm
- **Pot distance**: 30-40 cm
- **Hill season**: January-February
- **Tarai season**: July-August

**PEPPER**

- **Pot Depth**: 30-40 cm
- **Pot distance**: 30-40 cm
- **Hill season**: January-February
- **Tarai season**: July-August

**TOMATO**

- **Pot Depth**: 40-45 cm
- **Pot distance**: 40-45 cm
- **Hill season**: January-February
- **Tarai season**: July-August

**BRINJAL**

- **Pot Depth**: 40-45 cm
- **Pot distance**: 40-45 cm
- **Hill season**: January-February
- **Tarai season**: July-August

**BEANS**

- **Pot Depth**: 30-40 cm
- **Pot distance**: 30-40 cm
- **Hill season**: January-February
- **Tarai season**: July-August

**CUCUMBER**

- **Pot Depth**: 40-45 cm
- **Pot distance**: 40-45 cm
- **Hill season**: January-February
- **Tarai season**: July-August
X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

It is with pleasure that this reviewer returns after a two month hiatus to start again at the advent of summer which hand in hand with being the season of the blockbuster, also coincides with the Cannes film festival.

As a person who unabashedly loves almost all films (barring possibly the worst of the dude/frat boy comedy excesses) – it is delightful to have the prospect of GIRL POWER: Members of the Seven Summits Women team strike a pose at the airport on Monday before their departure to the United States where they are set to scale Mt Denali. The team has already scaled five highest peaks of five continents.

Days of Future Past begins with a riveting action sequence set in the future. The Sentinels, machines created to combat mutants with terrifying ferocity, have broken into a rebel stronghold, intent on their continuing mission to eradicate the world of everything but humans. With the situation being dire, the older versions of Magneto (Ian McKellan) and Charles Xavier (Patrick Stewart) team up with the remarkable Kitty Pride (Ellen Page) who has the ability to send a person’s consciousness back in time. And so Wolverine (Hugh Jackman) finds himself the only one resilient enough to undertake the epic task of going back in time to warn the younger versions of themselves of the choices that lead to the current fiasco.

So suspend your disbelief for a few hours, and let your mind escape to a world where friendship and humanity triumph - leaving you ready to face our sometimes comparatively dreary lives with just a little bit better humour and perhaps even an iota more of comic courage.

MUST SEE Sophia Pande

As a person who unabashedly loves almost all films (barring possibly the worst of the dude/frat boy comedy excesses) – it is delightful to have the prospect of watching (at least by autumn) the winner of the Palme this year Winter Sleep - a 196 minute long drama by Turkish director Nuri Bilge Ceylan, a veteran of cinema who beat out contenders like the Dardenne brothers, Belgian film-makers who have previously won the Palme twice.

As we wait impatiently for these (hopefully) edifying films to be released for the public, we have some rather satisfying summer popcorn gussling distractions at our fingertips. While Godzilla has made its mark as being surprisingly watchable, and the Angelina Jolie vehicle Maleficent sounds possibly diverting enough, with X-Men: Days of Future Past, Hollywood shows that even while being reduced to a sequel churning machine, it can still, with a little bit of real effort, produce story driven action films that bank more on character development than blinding special effects.

The great strength of this X-Men film lies, of course, in its casting. One would be hard pressed to guess that an ensemble consisting of Patrick Stewart, Ian McKellan, Halle Berry, Jennifer Lawrence, Ellen Page, Michael Fassbender, James McAvoy and Hugh Jackman would be representing a superhero movie, and yet, none among the X-Men fan base could think of more apt choices to play these beloved characters.

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The new CEO of Laxmi Bank, Sudesh Khaling, speaks to Nepali Times about his company’s emphasis on supporting environment-friendly ventures.

**Nepali Times:** Laxmi Bank has promoted renewable energy and environmental projects. Is it a conscious part of your mission?

**Sudesh Khaling:** Going Green has become a conscious practice and belief adopted by every single employee at Laxmi Bank. Promoting bicycles as emission-free means of transportation through an array of activities, offering attractive loan packages for environment-friendly products and savings product that reward the customer for eco-friendly practices are some of the bank’s activities to reinforce its focus on the environment. The bank also offers a “Green Savings Account” that has been planting one tree every year at the account a customer opens with us.

Does that mean you take a wider view of the economy that goes beyond just profit-loss and supply-demand?

Profit-loss and supply-demand are the fundamentals of any economy, and we believe that pro-environment activities should justify the economic fundamentals to allow for wider and a long-term sustainability. For example, we reward “Green Savings Account” with a slight premium on the interest rate offer; on account of the amount of reduction it brings to our overheads with lesser print of bank statements, and other documents. Electronic banking means convenience to the customer along with lesser congestion at the bank branches. “Orange Loves Green” is the bank’s “green” banking package with a suite of electronic banking channels being offered at a discounted rate, as an appreciation to the customers’ willingness to be as ‘paper-free’ as possible.

Your bank has taken the lead in backing zero interest urban household-level energy alternatives. How does that make business sense?

At Laxmi Bank, we value sustainable practices and offer packages for our customers that help them better manage their finances while ensuring that we continuously provide such benefits for our customers not forgetting that products offered by banks are business driven.

**Which sectors of the environment and energy would you like to see addressed in the new budget through incentives and subsidies?**

The grid cannot supply enough electricity and we have power outages. Solar is a good stop-gap alternative that individual households can invest in to cope with power cuts. The government has started subsidising urban household solar installation. However, a lot more could be added to the package. Make it more attractive for a wider array of households to adopt solar technologies as their household solutions. The budget could not extend this to make industries and offices also adopt solar power. The community is adopting a lot of green practices, but this adds a cost hurdle. It is as if we are punishing them for being responsible citizens. The government should incentivise such practices and make going green good for business.

**Last year, you lit up Bagmati Bridge with solar-powered lights, are there plans to extend this anywhere?**

The bank has lit up multiple places both inside and outside the valley as a part of its “Ujyalo Abhiyan” to light up public spaces even when there is no power. We find this also promotes interest and awareness of solar power as a practical and responsible alternative. The bank intends to light up at least one prominent location of public interest every year and keep the spirit alive.

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**Great Food Deserves Carlsberg**

That calls for a Carlsberg

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L
ooking for a good breakfast around rapidly expanding restaurant row in Jhamiskel is surprisingly difficult. Walking aimlessly for a satisfying pancake breakfast is a fruitless and frustrating mission. Trips into inviting cafes have generally left me disappointed. Not all cafes are created equal, and that’s why an old favourite is not a cafe at all.

Hermann Helmer’s German Bakery is the same familiar establishment it was when Ashok KC opened it more than 30 years ago. “Buy your freshly baked bread and cakes from your local family baker,” the painted words outside the bakery demand. And the Jhamiskel community continues to do just that.

Trained in Germany, Ashok has passed on the Nepali owned and operated bakery to his sons, and the family still are its hands on caretakers of freshness and service.

The pastry covered fingerprints of Helmer’s Bakery have spread all over the Kathmandu Valley as well. Cafes and bakeries like Chai Chai Cafe and Bakers on restaurant lane offer many of the same German bakery items. But it’s the whisklap of the oven-baked fresh smell that sets Hermann Helmer’s apart, and makes it worth coming back to again and again.

Everything in the small display and restaurant room smells and feels fresh. Sign ask patrons to please not touch the breads with their bare hands. While other establishments are quietly minded by a single person behind the counter, Hermann Helmer’s is always bustling with staff bagging freshly baked and sliced bread, taking orders for cakes, and serving their fresh baked items to their regular patrons.

You cannot go wrong with any of the traditional bakery items. But venture beyond its typical reach of expertise with the chicken burger that can be had on the go anytime of day. About the size of a large slider, the homemade chicken patty, also made with cheese and onions, is delicately seasoned. Slid into a fresh baked sesame bun the taste of the burger melts into your mouth forming food memories.

For Rs 125 it is both the best taste and value in burger land. A fresh baked sesame roll (Rs 60) or brown French bread (Rs 120) is much more of the norm for patrons coming in and out.

But frustration with finding a traditional breakfast turned into an alternative mission at Hermann Helmer’s. If I can’t have the first meal of the day, I might as well replace it with the last–cake.

At the staff’s recommendation I ordered an iced Swiss roll (pic, center). Ordering a Swiss roll at a German bakery was a little like ordering a French dip at a fine Italian restaurant. But as I mercilessly broke down the defenses of the thick slice of Swiss roll smeared in rich chocolate sauce and sweet vanilla ice cream nestled on top, I unlocked it’s sweet flavor, well worth the Rs 100 price tag.

You can also walk out of the bakery with daily, pre-made cakes of different shapes and sizes, as well as fruit and other fillings. Or you can order a custom cake one or two days in advance. An average sized round cake is Rs 1,100 per kg. The smaller, we’ll call it without judgement the individual breakfast size cake, is Rs 300. The soft, chilled chocolate dripping over the light vanilla frosting complemented a moist chocolate center. Cake for breakfast was an unexpected delight that I’d recommend to anyone on a hot Kathmandu morning.

How to get there: Past the Suzuki showroom in Pulchok, Hermann Helmer’s is on the right, just a few steps away. Open everyday from 7AM to 8PM (except Sundays).
Otzi, the Iceman

While trekking in the mountains, imagine stumbling into the oldest moist mummy in the world. This is exactly what happened to a German couple in 1991 when they were hiking in the Alps in the South Tyrol region of Italy. Thinking this was possibly a crime scene, they alerted the local police. But they could not believe that the 5,300-year-old human body they discovered lived 600 years before King Chepos built his pyramid in Egypt, or to put things in our context, over 2,500 years before the birth of the Buddha.

The mummy was named Otzi, after the Otzal Alps where he was found. He was carrying an axe, bear fur cap and bow and arrows, and this life reconstruction greets you at the Archeological Museum in the magnificent town of Bolzano in Italy. In the museum Otzi now “lives” behind eight centimetre thick bullet proof glass for protection. The humidity is 98 per cent and the temperature is minus six degrees centigrade to simulate the environment in the Alps where he was found. Otzi is the most popular tourist attraction in Bolzano.

From extensive radiological exams, it seems likely that Otzi died of injuries. Apparently, he was hurt in his right shoulder by a flint-tipped arrow. He had been on the run and succumbed to illness in the Otzal Alps.

This mummy has turned out to be a treasure trove for clinical medicine scientists, as studiously researching Otzi, it is hoped that Otzi’s DNA will shed new light on hereditary diseases, common neurological problems like Parkinson’s disease and even infertility.

Amazingly Otzi has more than 50 tattoos on his body mostly located in the joint areas. The tattooing technique seems modern with incisions in the skin where vegetal coal was rubbed. Certain communities in Asia and Africa to this day continue to use this technique of tattooing. Because these tattoos are located in the joint areas it has been postulated that tattooing may have been a form of medicinal treatment rather than a shamanistic practice. If true, some of us can sympathise with Otzi who may have had age-related painful joints (osteoarthritis) long before us.

Recently, a more careful study of the mummy in Bolzano revealed that there was a shrunknen stomach with food contents which was overlooked. Albert Zink, director of the EUBAC Institute for Mummies and the Iceman in Bolzano, who oversaw this autopsy, discovered that Otzi’s last meal consisted of a bit of unleavened bread made of einkorn wheat, one of the few domesticated grains used in the iceman’s part of the world at this time, some other plant or herb and some meat, probably of an ibex. From the stomach of Otzi, metagenomics (the study of genetic material derived directly from environmental samples) revealed many bacteria like campylobacter.

The fascinating news for us is that when Abhilasha Karkey and colleagues from Patan Academy of Health Sciences conducted metagenomics study of the Kathmandu drinking water, some of the same related bacteria that were found in Otzi’s stomach also showed up in theirs.

Albert Zink and his colleagues continue their fascinating study of Otzi with total body investigation of the mummy involving seven separate teams of surgeons, pathologists, microbiologists and technicians. This choreographed medical intervention is going to lead to many more interesting scientific discoveries. But the story of Otzi and his violent death caused by another human being is also a sad reminder of our frailty and human frailty.

MADE OF ICE: The latest reconstruction of Otzi based on 20 years of research and investigations.

DANHANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

It’s a 3D World

With the biggest sports extravaganza on the planet a mere six days away, football fanatics will be looking to upstage their television sets, if they have not already. With that in mind, Samsung is offering special discounted rates on its range of televisions up till the end of the World Cup. One model in particular caught Yantrick’s eye, the UA-55F8000.

A retina- piercingly detailed full HD screen, a beautiful design, a unique remote and endless features make this 55 inch 3D-enabled LED tv worthy of being the centre-piece of your home entertainment system during the World Cup, and for many years after that.

Right out of the box, the Samsung UA-55F8000 boasts class. A minimalistic yet stunningly beautiful television set, the UA-55F8000 sports a thin, glossy black bezel with ribbons of silver along its edges, and sits atop a futuristic arched silver stand. Its remote also follows this simplistic approach. A small remote with just a few buttons above a spacious laptop-style track-pad below, the Bluetooth remote is superibly responsive. Navigation is fast and accurate, and more importantly, is much more fun than a standard remote. The 3D tv also packs in four pairs of active 3D glasses in the box, and true 3D content actually looks extremely impressive.

Samsung is known to stuff its tvs with a myriad of features (a good thing), so it was not a surprise to discover that the UA-55F8000 fits the bill.

Micro Dimming Ultimate and Clear Motion Rate technology allow for truly stunning pictures especially in HD content. Voice Control and Gesture Control for a futuristic and effortless entertainment experience, as well as dedicated Basic Sports mode and Game mode for personalised viewing, confirms the UA-55F8000 to be it all. It bears the ‘Smart TV’ tag, and Samsung’s Smart Hub offers the usual array of apps, social media options and access to local and online content reminiscent of an Android smartphone. You flip through the pages by swiping the remote touch pad’s scroll bar, and the navigation and slick animations are quick on the quad-core UA-55F8000.

Overall the design is refreshing, colourful, and relatively simple. Your connectivity needs are also superbly taken care of with four HDMI ports, three USB slots, and a Digital Audio Out (optical) and host of audio and user-friendly features.

Yantrick’s Verdict: Normally retailing for Rs 35,000, the UA-55F8000 TV is available for the duration of the World Cup at a special discounted rate of Rs 28,000. Laxmi Bank is also offering 0 per cent financing of Samsung products. If you believe that the much-anticipated World Cup deserves to be viewed on a truly stunning television, look no further than the UA-55F8000 TV, available at HIM Electronics, Darbar Marg.

“I recommend Sensodyne for all day every day sensitivity protection.”

-Dr. Spiro Condil, senior practicing in the US

World’s No.1 Sensitivity Toothpaste

“Sensodyne is a registered trademark of GlaxoSmithKline Group of Companies.”

GIZMO by YANTRICK

24x7 SENSITIVITY PROTECTION

World’s No.1 Sensitivity Toothpaste

“Sensodyne is a registered trademark of GlaxoSmithKline Group of Companies.”

24x7 SENSITIVITY PROTECTION

World’s No.1 Sensitivity Toothpaste

“Sensodyne is a registered trademark of GlaxoSmithKline Group of Companies.”
A well-meaning friend who has travelled to Nepal once asked me why Nepalis don’t like bridges. Strange question, I thought. He had seen school children crossing a river by precariously hanging onto steel wires over the raging waters. The sight upset him deeply, and he couldn’t understand why the government couldn’t build bridges.

**THIS IS IT**

Rubeena Mahato

I gave him the usual answers: perhaps the bridge was bombed during the war and the local authorities didn’t have the budget to rebuild it, Kathmandu did not care, the topography may not be suitable to build a bridge at that particular spot and so on.

The question was rhetorical, of course, and there was no reason for me to be so defensive. Nepalis, I assured him, have nothing against bridges, roads or infrastructure, and derived no particular pleasure in putting their lives in danger.

But, there is really no excuse for failing to deliver basic services to the people when such a huge portion of the development budget is unspent at the end of every fiscal year. So, what is really stopping us from figuring a way out of our problems if money is not an issue, and when so much time and resources have been invested in development over the last 50 years?

Over time the same question has been asked in one form or another, occasionally with more tact, and at other times rather bluntly. While it might sound offensive to some, especially when coming from outsiders, most people mean well when they ask us why our country is so poor, or why we are not doing anything to solve our problems. We have become so used to thinking of ourselves as a permanently dysfunctional, corrupt and poor country that we don’t ask this question to ourselves anymore. We take it as a given that things can’t be any better. Our policy makers and opinion builders have brainwashed us with this notion.

The rise of India and China has done little to fuel our own desire for growth, instead fostering a sense of insecure helplessness that is reflected either in the cringe-worthy nationalism of the “Buddha was born in Nepal” variety, or in the total loss of self-respect and self-assertion vis-à-vis these two neighbour countries. This inferiority complex was most evident in op-eds that analysed the impact of the Narendra Modi landslide on Nepal.

With two big markets right at our doorsteps, a hard-working and politically-aware population, immense potential for agriculture, tourism and water resources, there is really no reason why we can’t do better. It is a cop-out to blame political instability or external sabotage for our perennial underachievement. After all, a lot of countries have prospered amidst political turmoil, and if dictatorships can deliver development, it is shameful that a democracy like ours cannot.

One can’t help but wonder if some Nepalis, especially those in positions of power, don’t really want to ‘build bridges’ in the figurative sense. Keeping the country poor is what makes the governing establishment rich. Sadder still, is that the same can be said about a section of our most educated and articulate who have made a career out of selling Nepal’s war and poverty, and who have really no incentive in seeing to it that we overcome our problems.

They work in the garb of writers, academics and consultants, doling out expert advice on everything from state restructuring to poverty reduction to transitional justice. But while the political class is often criticised for its failures and dishonesty, the intellectuals usually escape scrutiny and function with reckless abandon and lack of accountability. They get away with endorsing political violence, justifying a war that destroyed the economy and set development back decades, holding on to outdated ideologies that the rest of the world abandoned long ago. They share a part of the blame for the mess that the country is in: for serving us lies, keeping us mired in a ‘conflict trap’ and for restricting our imagination.

The poverty of thought is worse than income poverty. And while we may do away with an incompetent crop of leaders in the next elections, what are we going to do about those who shape our discourse? @rubeenaa

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Building bridges

The poverty of the imagination is worse than income poverty
Maya is a 35-year-old mother of three school-age children. She goes door to door begging for cleaning jobs and lives in her brother’s rented room in Bhaktapur. Maya had gone abroad with the promise of working as a janitor in a hospital. Instead, like many other innocent migrant workers, she ended up being brutalised and forced into prostitution.

An estimated 244,000 Nepali women work in the Gulf, mainly in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. One-third of them fly out from Indian airports, not Kathmandu, and three-fourths use illegal methods like fake travel documents. This makes them easy prey for ruthless recruiters, abusive employers and sexual predators.

A study by the Foreign Nepali Workers Rescue Center found that nearly 90 per cent of women suffer some form of sexual violence or exploitation. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are the worst offenders.

Maya had an alcoholic husband and needed to earn more to send her children to a good school. An agent offered a decent job in a hospital, and she was tempted by the promise of a salary unimaginable in Nepal. On arriving in Kuwait Maya was overcome with doubt and homesickness. “I remember asking myself, have I done the right thing?” she recalls. Two well-dressed Nepali-speaking women received her at the airport, and took her to the 25th floor of a highrise, where her passport was taken away. A week later, she was given a slinky dress to put on and joined 50 other women from India, Philippines and Nepal. Later that day, she was sent to a private room with a corpulent man with a dense moustache who asked her to undress. It soon became obvious that the apartment was in fact a brothel.

Life became a living hell for Maya as she was raped by up to eight men a day. She often fainted, unaware of what was being done to her. When she came to her senses, she would have bites and nail scratches on her body.

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It became so unbearable that one day she refused to go with a customer. The pimp beat her up severely, and with the help of the customer, threw her out of the
IT’LL BE OK: Maya comforts her daughters (left) in her one-room home in Bhaktapur this week. She was sold as a sex slave four years ago by a recruiter who promised her a job in a Kuwait hospital.

Hundreds of Nepali women queue up for passports at the Foreign Ministry every day (right) and most are going to the Gulf to work as household help.

Window of the high rise. It was a miracle she was not killed in the fall, but suffered a fractured spine and broke her left hand.

With the help of Nepali and Kuwaiti friends, she was taken to the hospital for treatment but they sent her back to the brothel. After a month, she managed to escape again but the Kuwaiti brothel owner filed a police case accusing Maya of stealing gold ornaments. She was thrown in jail for six months, but a court finally found her innocent. The Nepal Embassy provided her a ticket home, but in Kathmandu Maya’s family refused to take her back.

Hema is 45 and, like Maya, decided to go abroad to work to pay off a home loan. A recruiter offered a job as household help in Saudi Arabia. There, the employer beat her mercilessly and the nephew repeatedly raped her.

The wives of her employer knew about it but kept quiet. After two years of abuse, Hema returned to Nepal in 2013 penniless, emotionally shattered and with health problems.

Dilimaya used to be beaten by her husband, and got so sick of it she decided to go abroad to find work. In 2008, a recruiter took her to Qatar illegally via India. She worked as a domestic helper, and her employer raped her regularly. She returned to Nepal in 2011 with a baby, and no savings. She was accused of bringing dishonour to the family, and was thrown out.

The Director General of the Department of Foreign Employment, Krishnahari Puskar, admitted in an interview that 90 per cent of the 500 women who leave for the gulf countries every day do so illegally.

Sita Ghimire works for the Safe Migration Project at Helvetas and says female Nepali migrant workers lack protection. They are victims of non-payment of wages, retrenchment without notice or compensation, unsatisfactory occupational health and safety conditions and an absence of social benefits such as pensions, sick pay and health insurance.

Names of migrant workers have been changed.

Dilimaya used to be beaten by her family. “The woman is often rejected by her husband, family and society,” says Gurung, “their life back home is sometimes even more painful than in the Gulf.”

Dale Buscher, a migration expert at the Women’s Refugee Commission says the problem lies with the recruiters, who do not openly share the risks involved and employers who take advantage of the women’s vulnerability of being in a foreign land without access to the legal system.

Dale adds: “Also responsible are both the sending and receiving country’s government which has not put protective measures and appropriate legislation in place.”

Today, despite her injuries, Maya is slowly returning to a more normal life. It is the determination to provide for her three children that keeps her going.

One of her brothers came forward to provide shelter and food. But without help from the government and her family, Maya has no idea what the future will bring.
LONGER NEPALI VERSION

More secretly recorded conversations with hospital staff.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

The UML represents millions of Nepalis but some leaders are trying to convert it into a private company and become board-members for life.

UML leader Surendra Pandey, Naya Patrika, 5 June

CHITWAN: Ambulance drivers bringing patients to Kathmandu phone hospitals to negotiate commissions, an undercover investigation has revealed. Doctors ask for information about how serious the case is and personal information about the patient. If they can afford to be hospitalized for longer periods and are serious cases, drivers are paid as much as Rs 10,000 commission, while most patients fetch drivers up to Rs 5,000.

Private hospitals have employees and agents in place to rent out ICU beds. Their job is to stay in contact with ambulance drivers and coax them to bring patients to their employers’ hospitals.

Yeti Hospital and City Centre Hospital in Kalanki, Star Hospital and Shivajyoti Hospital in Balkhu pay drivers Rs 5,000 per patient. Norvic International Hospital and Blue Cross Hospital, both in Thapathali, give drivers up to Rs 4,000 as soon as patients are brought in. Green City Hospital, Barundhara, pays Rs 3,000, Alka Hospital, Jawalakhel, pays Rs 1,000, and Duga Hospital and International Child Friendly Hospital pay drivers Rs 500 each.

The more serious a patient, the bolder ambulance drivers are in negotiating their fees. When hospitals determine patients will need ICU care, they try to sweet-talk the drivers into bringing them in right away.

When hospitals get fewer patients, they increase rates to tempt drivers. But the extra charge is dumped on newly admitted patients, forced to pay large deposit sums that include the commissions.

At Chitwan College of Medical Sciences, drivers are handed a slip upon arrival, which they cash submit at the reception and receive Rs 400 in cash. The NPI Narayani Community Hospital in Chitwan pays annual commission to drivers, who are happy with this procedure because they don’t have to run around each time they turn up at the hospitals.

Drivers who are faithful to parent hospitals even get bonus gifts. A ‘new scheme’ at Life Care Hospital in Sundhara plans to give away motorcycles to drivers if they bring in 10 patients in 90 days.

Hospitals that were found to have prize schemes have not been pulled up by the Nepal Medical Council. “Because this is related to management and not doctors’ conduct, the Ministry of Health has to look into it,” says NMC Chairman Damodar Gajurel.

According to Buland Thapa, director of Bir Hospital, private hospitals charge as much they like because the government has not fixed official rates for regular checkups and hospital admission. In the absence of regulation and monitoring, private hospitals continue to take advantage of patients.

Health Minister Khag Raj Adhikari says, “I have heard there is a huge commission racket in private hospitals, but so far there is no proof. Everyone found guilty of wrongdoing will be punished without pardon.”

(Centre for Investigative Journalism)
Constitutional déjà vu

Two opposing formulae for federalism and two opposing ways to decide which one to go for

Towards the end of the last CA in May 2012, sharp differences had surfaced on the criteria for carving out states, their names, number of states, delineation of boundaries. The parties had avoided discussions on these issues until the very last moment. They kept extending the CA despite growing public dismay and frustration and the Supreme Court’s conditional approval of the extensions. The differences over federalism remain, and if anything are even more entrenched. And it is not just about state restructuring, differences also exist about the kind of electoral system and governance structure.

While the Maoist-Madhesi coalition would understandably want to downplay the mandate expressed by people through the election in November last year, the NC and the UML are playing along as if the election was a referendum on state restructuring. The Maoists campaigned for eight or more single identity-based provinces while their Madhesi allies brandished the slogan of One Madhes. Those espousing single ethnicity-based provinces and a single Madhes state were heavily trounced, even in their own strongholds. The leaders from these parties would do well to publicly accept this verdict.

But there are others as well who need to recognise what the results meant. While rejecting the idea of single ethnicity-based federalism, the people demonstrated that they were for meaningful decentralisation. Federalism is a reality, but Kamal Thapa and his party, RPP (Nepal) are still having none of it. Given the smart politician that Thapa is, it won’t be long before he adjusts to the reality. If not, he should be ready for the consequences in the next election.

Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal’s Rastriya Janata Morcha (RJM) has been one of the staunchest opponents of state restructuring into federal provinces. Taking part in discussions in the CA committee this week, KC finally acknowledged the need to go for federalism. He said his party would be open to accepting the 7-state model proposed by the NC and the UML.

“The previous CA had to be dissolved because no one could agree on the federal model, and the differences still persist,” KC was quoted as saying. “If it will help a consensus, we are willing to agree to a seven-province model.”

KC was referring to Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal’s remarks in the committee the previous day in which he held out for a consensus. But reading between the lines of Dahal’s remarks indicates his party wants consensus only on its own formula for federalism. It’s like an office boss telling his colleagues he is all for democratic practices and open discussion so long as everyone agrees with him.

Consensus is an ideal marching approach in deciding issues of long-term implications for the country. But if it comes in the way of viable state restructuring, a requisite electoral system and governance structure, the issues can be put to a vote so as to finish writing the constitution in time.

Otherwise, this Constituent Assembly will meet the same fate as its predecessor.

THE DEADLINE
Damakant Jayshri

The NC-UML ruling coalition wants to decide contentious issues like state restructuring through majority vote if consensus cannot be reached, while the Maoist opposition is insisting on a consensus-only approach.

There’s one notable difference in the second CA: the NC, UML, RPP, and other parties likely to vote with them on federalism command a comfortable two-thirds majority that is enough to pass any single provision of the new constitution. The Maoist-Madhesi coalition in the last CA lacked these numbers.

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Not-the-least Developed Country

Now, look at what the government has gone and done. It has declared that Nepal will graduate from Least Developed Country (LDC) to become a member of middle-income Developing Country by 2022. Are they daft? Look at all the advantages we have by virtue of the fact that we are poor, and intend to remain so. We get access to soft credit, and if we plead and grovel enough they can easily be converted into grants. As one of the poorest countries in Asia, we get called upon to represent this vast continent of ours at international conferences from time to time in exotic places like Istanbul, Accra or Port au Prince. We are a priority country for many multilaterals, which means we get special treatment because of their focus on eradicating extreme poverty. And since we are the most-photogenic least-developed country in the world, we are a darling of the donors.

But, alas, we are in danger of losing this super-state status, and all those special facilities if we become a Not-the-Least Developed Country in eight years time. Unless we think of something fast to keep ourselves poor, we are goners. But since we have a prime minister who seems to be half-asleep half the time, there is a fairly good chance that we will remain Last-but-not-least Developed till 2022 and beyond. However, we cannot rely just on Jhusil Da to keep Nepal in the LDC category, what if he wakes up? The guy has an erratic streak and he may just go and do something foolish like dramatically streamline FDI, create new jobs, invest in infrastructure, even write a new constitution and successfully turn Nepal into a middle-income country ahead of target. God forbid.

The other national achievement we have to safeguard is of Nepal’s coveted position as a zero carbon country, a status we reached way ahead of any other Utterly Underdeveloped Country. In fact, while other countries are increasing their consumption of fossil fuels, ours is decreasing sharply because the Ministry of Commerce and Surprise doesn’t allow NOC to import any more diesel from India because it (the gobblement) has run out of INR. Which means that Nepal is in the enviable position of being the only country in the world that has achieved strict emission cut targets set out in the Kyoto Protocol. Other countries turn off their lights one hour in a YEAR on March 29, we don’t use electricity 12 hours a DAY.

As responsible global citizens there are lots of other things we can do individually and collectively to stop the earth from heating up. So, in the public interest, we hereby list 10 ways we can all help lessen the impact of climate change:

1. Immediately set a time limit on speeches in the coming fiscal year to less than five minutes so that there is a check on the emission of hot air.
2. Stop breathing. Every breath you take consumes precious atmospheric oxygen and gives off harmful carbon dioxide. Remember every molecule counts!
3. Organise tantric rituals and make animal sacrifices at select shrines across the subcontinent to appease the gods to save us from global warming.
4. Cut flatulence in cattle and livestock. There are an estimated 22 million cows and 17 million goats in Nepal and if all of them felt free to pass wind without let or hindrance imagine the kind of accumulation of greenhouse gases we’d be left with. We’re not even counting yaks and water buffaloes here, and we all know how embarrassing those two can be in polite company.
5. Organise a Prithvi Shanti Maha Yagya in Pasupati for harmony in the universe and burn 15 tons of paddy seeds and feed 108 brahmins.
6. Collect and distribute Bagmati sludge for distribution in gas stations. The stuff is so inflammable it can be used as fuel for motorcycles.
7. Create an artificial shortage of LPG, but I notice the Ministry of Supernatural Resources has already thought of that.
8. Soda contains carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas, so avoid it. Henceforth, take your double single malt neat.
10. Ask Pasupatinath one last time to keep us in the LDC category.