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BASIL EDWARD TEO

The penalty of history

Nearly seven months after elections, most Nepalis have stopped following the games being played inside the Constituent Assembly, and are getting ready to follow the Fifa World Cup in Brazil. Television showrooms in Kathmandu were doing brisk business (*in Kumaripati on Thursday, above*) as people upgraded to larger flatscreens just hours before the first game at 1:45 AM Friday.

The two-week parliament disruption by the opposition Maoists was finally resolved, and behind closed doors there seems to be gradual convergence on the vexing issue of federalism. Next on agenda: the budget.

PAUSE, PLAY, REPEAT

HERE WE GO
BY TRISHNA RANA

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Interview with **Prashant Jha** on the release of his new book, *Battles of a New Republic*

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TIMES OF WAR AND PEACE

BY THE WAY
BY ANURAG ACHARYA

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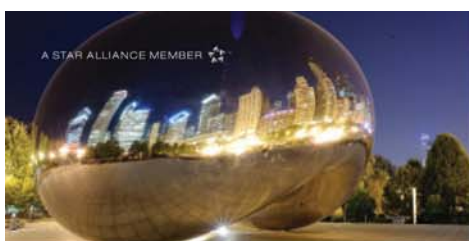
buzz

IN GOAL WE TRUST



Exclusive weekly roundup of the World Cup
BY **SHOBHAN SAXENA** IN SÃO PAULO

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THE 'F' WORD AGAIN

It's that time again, when the Constituent Assembly is once more trying to take the bull by the horns and tackle the thorny issue of federalism.

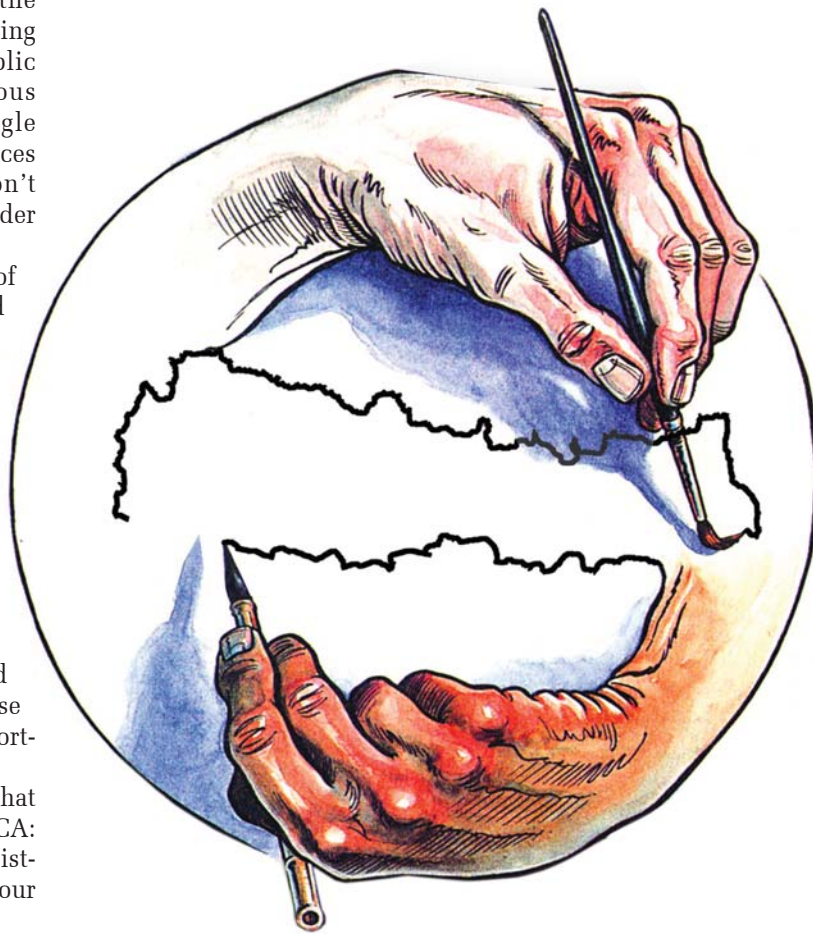
The committee has finished its preliminary hearing, taking views of various political parties and their widely differing formulae on how the state should be restructured. It reviewed what was agreed on in the last CA's committee and tried to reconcile it with current thinking on the issue. From the looks of it, the parties seem to be ironing out their differences behind closed doors, but for public consumption they still have to stick to their various positions: 14 single ethnicity-based states with single Madhes, 12 states and double Madhes, or seven provinces with geographical nomenclature. Which means, don't believe the alarmist headlines every morning, one insider told us the parties are mostly posturing.

Chitra Bahadur KC of the Rastriya Jana Morcha, one of the most eloquent opponents of not just ethnicity-based federalism but any kind of federalism, has come around to accepting federation. The UCPN(M) seems to have got the message from the electorate, and is secretly pulling back from its demand for single-ethnicity provinces. Although if we interviewed Pushpa Kamal Dahal tomorrow, he would vehemently deny that.

While parliament is stalled and all the main parties are paralysed with power struggles, behind the scenes work is going on to find a compromise acceptable to all. It is as if, by design, the parties are being sidetracked to be preoccupied with Baburam vs Prachanda, Deuba vs Sushil, Madhav vs Oli so that they will be too distracted to interfere with a federalism deal. Just as well, because if we decide on future state structure on the basis of short-term political horse-trading, it would be a disaster.

The big difference with 28 May 2012 and today is that the tables have turned in the balance of power in the CA: the opposition is now the ruling coalition, and the Maoist-Madhesi alliance is now in the opposition. Those in favour

Federalism is not about drawing boundaries but ensuring equality and prosperity.



of single-ethnicity federalism had a majority in the CA last time, and in this one it is those opposed to it who together with other smaller parties have a two-thirds majority. The two positions seem to be cancelling each other out.

What is important is not that we have a directly elected presidential, parliamentary or mixed system, but whether or not democratic fundamentals are protected, and accountability ensured. Federalism should help raise living standards of all Nepalis, and not lead to perpetual conflict over natural resource sharing and wasteful duplication of state machinery that we cannot afford.

Care has to be taken to balance local self-governance and political autonomy with the need to preserve national unity. Let's hope that unlike last time, the parties won't indulge in political grandstanding, and that cooler heads will prevail. There is an emerging consensus on just six provinces (plus Kathmandu) that will balance and safeguard ethnic and linguistic diversity within them and redress their sense of exclusion.

Whether or not these provinces are named after a particular ethnic group is not as important as whether all ethnicities within that province are treated equally. Name it 'federalism' or anything else, the crux is that political power and economic decision-making should no longer be the monopoly of the pampered and discredited rulers in Kathmandu alone.

After coming so far on the peace journey since 2006 with demobilisation and disarmament of the Maoist militia, their golden hand shakes and reintegration into the national army, two elections and thousands of hours spent on the draft of the new constitution, we just need to muster the political will to find a win-win formula on federalism.

As long as we agree that the constitution will guarantee autonomy, prosperity and equality, what we call the new provinces will just be semantics.

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

GREEN ECONOMY

Nepal is already dependent on hydropower, a source of alternative energy, for its electricity needs ('A Fossil Economy', Editorial, #710). But economic growth without the use of fossil fuels is impossible. For example: Industries that require huge energy needs are useless with just electricity. It needs huge fossil fuelled generators, engines and smelters.

Lalu



■ "Switching to a green economy would help mitigate some of the corrosive side-effects of growth that only looks 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." Yes!

Ojaswi Ghale

■ The old model of development is not sustainable, #green #economy is the way to move forward.

@paudelp

A FAILED MINDSET

Our failure as a democratic society is the direct product of the bankruptcy that pervades our individual psyche ('Building bridges', Rubeena Mahato, #710). The course of a nation cannot change until its citizens embrace the change within themselves first. There are countless examples of nations pulling themselves by their bootstraps and radically changing their own lives and the trajectory of their nation within a generation. The Japanese did it after WW2. The South Koreans did it after the Korean War. The Chinese are following in their footsteps. All the while, we Nepalis wallow in our collective mediocrity.

Politics can be changed, leaders and parties can be voted out of office. That is not the difficult part. Who can we look up to, to replace the current crop of political and civil leaders, when we as a society have embraced moral and intellectual bankruptcy, that's the bigger question.

Jay S

■ Well said, the failure of the nation is to be shared by all. Putting the blame solely on our leaders is ignorant. We are the ones who select inept, corrupt leaders and it's us who feed their insatiable sycophantic hunger. Worse,

neglecting our civic duties we expect a charismatic leader to descend from the city and cure all the ills in a blink of an eye. Until we cleanse our intellectual destitution and realise that the responsibility to build a nation is on all of us, our dream of becoming a prosperous country will remain far-fetched.

Keshab Giri

■ I am sick and tired of listening to this old cliché about our potential and comparison with north and south. You can't do that. They have completely different geography and economic/resources/size advantages. Instead let's look towards our east and west and start our analysis. Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Bhutan have similar topography and resources. They have been doing pretty good recently. We can learn a lot from them.

Krishna S

ETHNIC LINES

It would be best if we retained the current five development regions which have taken into consideration interdependence of Himalaya, Hills and Tarai ('Constitutional dejavu', Damakant Jayshi, #710). The problem with Panchayat regime was it created these regions and promised devolution of powers, but they never acted on their promises. With judicious decentralisation and devolution of powers, these five regions would have been serving much like federal provinces today.

One benefit of this delineation is that economic growth in China and India can trickle down to these

provinces, and they can capitalise on growth and development to the north and south. One may criticise this proposal as an attempt to return to status quo. But there's no option other than to make the state bodies, including that of provinces, most inclusive and accommodative. It would be a mistake not to include this model, which is viable and less risky, as an option in the referendum ballot. Let the people be the ones to either accept or reject it.

Anil Karki

■ I think we take ourselves too seriously. In terms of land and population we are but an average sized state if we were part of India or the US. Yet we believe that as a great large nation we are entitled to sub dividing ourselves into 'states'. As if that in itself will ensure acceptable governance.

Please don't divide along the lines of language and/or ethnicity. Take a look at what the Indians have brought upon themselves. If Nepalis really believe that redrawing administrative lines in the sand will ensure BSP (Batti, Sadak, Pani (Electricity, Roads, Water) then I can only pity them.

Namah

WASTED WASTE

The garbage collectors should be actively encouraged to persuade their clients to segregate waste ('Waste should not be wasted', Bhrikuti Rai, #710). There should be incentives to segregate recyclable inorganic waste. Organic waste

should be recycled into compost.

@CharuGajurel

■ As far as I can see, the problem of waste management will always lag behind the volume of waste production until Kathmandu stops being the center of everything. This is the root cause of what is wrong in Kathmandu.

@Jhyaure

GREEN TERRACE

The writer could have given better detail on water-proofing the roof ('Hanging gardens of Kathmandu', Santa Gaha Magar, #710). Otherwise, excellent article on rooftop gardening in KTM.

@anilbhattarai

■ Rooftop gardening also helps cool the roof, and even helps percolation and ground water recharging (if the *kausi* drive spreads).

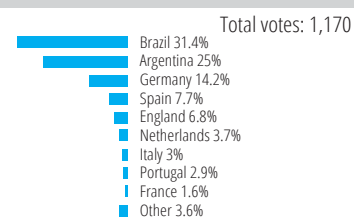
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Weekly Internet Poll #711

Q. Who will win the football World Cup?



Weekly Internet Poll #712
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Will Nepal take part in the football World Cup in the next 20 years?

Pause, play, repeat

Consensus politics is critical given Nepal's deeply fractured polity, but losers can't always be choosers



BIKRAM RAI

For 12 days, parliamentarians in Baneswor held the floor of the Constituent Assembly hostage to put pressure on the government to agree to their demands.



HERE WE GO
Trishna Rana

From the sidelines, the Kamal Thapa led RPP-N and Madhes-based parties accused the NC-led

government of corruption during end of the year budget transfers, while the UCPN (Maoist) lead the charge with its unrelenting call to fulfill the four-point deal that the three major parties signed in December last year.

The agreement included: completing a draft of the new constitution within six months and passing it within one year, setting up a parliamentary panel to investigate alleged fraud during the November 2013 elections, forming a High Level Political Committee (HLPC) to conclude the peace process, and establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Parliamentary proceedings finally resumed on Wednesday after the Maoists were duly appeased.

As CA-2 moves closer to discussing issues that are paramount to the future of the country, a separate power centre in the form of a HLPC to be led solely by Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal provides an opportunity for the Maoists to position themselves as kingmakers once again.

And now that the TRC bill has been tabled in parliament, the HLPC will also allow Dahal & Co to mould the future commission to their liking and rein in the debate surrounding transitional

justice with the ultimate aim of giving perpetrators on both sides a clean chit.

The Maoists' importunate demand to revive this undemocratic mechanism is further proof of their inability to play by the rules and unwillingness to accept the humiliating loss at the polls. If Nepalis really wanted the UCPN(M) to lead from the front, the party wouldn't find itself in third place with only 80 seats in the Assembly. While consensus politics is critical given Nepal's deeply fractured polity, losers can't always be choosers.

With a little over six months to go before CA-2's mandate expires, other parties cannot afford to put the parliament on hold whenever they please either. They must find different recourses in order to have their grievances addressed. Political leaders squandered two months following elections because they couldn't finalise their proportional representation lists. The 601-strong CA is still 26 members short because parties cannot come to an agreement on how to divide up the seats, and we are running out of time fast.

There is, however, some good news on the constitution writing front. After almost two weeks of deliberating over state restructuring and distribution of power, the Constitutional Records Study and Determination Committee on Tuesday forwarded its report to the Constitution Drafting Committee, while issues that required further debate were handed to the Political Dialogue and Consensus Committee.

Disagreements between parties over the exact number of federal states

still remain, but at least leaders are looking far more flexible and open to compromise than they were in 2012. Maybe they have finally realised that there will be no third chance. The Maoists and Baburam Bhattarai in particular, who heads the Political Dialogue and Consensus Committee, now have a real chance of redeeming themselves in front of ordinary Nepalis if Bhattarai can steer away his committee members from political brinkmanship and deliver a clear proposal on how the future map of Nepal should look.



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TRISHNA RANA

Lumbini set to take off

An upgraded Bhairawa airport will launch Buddha's birthplace as an international pilgrimage site

MATT MILLER
in LUMBINI

After centuries of being forgotten, and five decades of neglect by Kathmandu, the birthplace of the Buddha is about to be connected directly to the outside world with a new international airport that could transform the economy of Nepal's third-largest city and the central Tarai.

Nepal urgently needs a second international airport to service a growing working diaspora, as well as for flights diverted from Kathmandu due to bad weather. However, plans to upgrade Bhairawa airport to accommodate large jets had been as much in limbo as the masterplan to develop Lumbini itself.

Now, both the Gautam



Buddha International Airport and the Sacred Garden are getting top government priority. Buddha's nativity site is as important for the world's 350 million Buddhists as Bethlehem is for Christians and Mecca is for Muslims.

The \$97 million airport is partly funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and is expected to serve 760,000 passengers per year by 2030, with more than half of them visitors to

Lumbini, which is 20 km to the west.

The new runway length will be 3,000m which means it can accommodate Airbus 330s and Boeing 777s, and the existing runway will be used as a parallel taxiway. The project plan also includes a new terminal building, advanced navigation and other upgrades.

Airport expansion Project Manager Murari Bhandari says construction will begin

BUDDHA PORT:
A model design of the upgraded Bhairawa airport expected to be completed by 2017.



in the next few months once the contractor is finalised, and the airport should be operational by 2017.

"Once the airport is upgraded and operating, it will have a multiplier effect on the local economy, and people of the central Tarai will benefit both from the construction as well as the completion of the airport," Bhandari said.

The number of pilgrims to Lumbini has been increasing, but most make day trips from Kathmandu or India because of the shortage of proper accommodation. Direct flights to Lumbini could increase pilgrims from China, Japan, Thailand and Sri Lanka. Nepali workers in the Gulf would also no longer need to come to Kathmandu to fly in and out.

China has seen the largest increase in visitors to Lumbini, with a 40 per cent rise in the past year, and aviation officials hope the new airport can also directly serve Chinese cities.

The tourism industry is also gearing up to meet the expected demand for services, and new five-star hotels are waiting for the project to get the go-ahead.

"They are watching for the airport to start construction," says Bhandari, "they assured us that once work starts at the airport, they will also start building."

The renovated airport's biggest contribution could be to provide an alternative to Kathmandu's over-crowded airport which is often closed due to poor visibility. Nepal also needs another airport to accommodate heavy jets for relief flights in case an earthquake damages Kathmandu airport.

But perhaps an even more difficult task of the Lumbini Development Trust is maintaining the sacredness of Lumbini as a spiritual destination. Many argue that Lumbini is already overbuilt.

The Trust is overseeing the execution of the 36-year-old master plan of Japanese architect Kenzo Tange which envisaged the Sacred Garden as a tranquil and leafy place of meditation.

However, unregulated construction of large temples have become eyesores. The other challenge is to ensure that the surrounding mainly-Muslim villages feel a sense of ownership about the benefits of Lumbini's visitors.

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Brazil's own goals

Brazil needs to embrace more than just football fans

MATT SLAUGHTER
and **JAANA REMES**
in RIO DE JANEIRO

Ready or not, Brazil is rolling out the welcome mat for sports fans from around the world. As soon as the clock winds down on the FIFA World Cup final match in July, the country will resume preparations to host the 2016 Summer Olympics.

Brazil is now the world's seventh-largest economy, propelled by a commodities boom and rising consumption. Yet it ranks 95th in per capita GDP. This disparity is partly explained by its 43rd-place ranking for "connectedness" in terms of flow of goods, services, finance, people, and data and communications.

Sealing itself off from the bracing effects of global competition is sapping Brazil of much-needed momentum. Most households have experienced only modest income growth. While Brazil has halved its official poverty rate since 2003, prohibitively high consumer-goods prices and astronomical credit-card interest rates (avg 145 per cent) prevent many from attaining middle-class lifestyles.

In order to lift a still-vulnerable population into the middle class, Brazil will need 4.2 per cent annual GDP growth on average through 2030 – a target that can

be met by tripling productivity growth. An assessment of how global connections affect economic growth suggests Brazil could boost its average annual rate of GDP growth by 1.25 per cent if it becomes more integrated in global markets.

Brazil's economic policy has drawn on the strength of its huge domestic market and protected local industries through a complex system of subsidies, taxes, and tariffs. But exports are equivalent to only 13 per cent of GDP, far below India (24 per cent) or



Mexico (33 per cent). From 2005 to 2012, Brazil's \$20 billion trade surplus in manufactured goods swung to a \$45 billion deficit.

Despite efforts to liberalise trade, reform has been uneven. In the heavily protected automotive industry, high import tariffs encouraged foreign automakers to establish factories in Brazil. But their productivity remains low; auto plants in Mexico produce twice as many vehicles per worker. This contrasts with Brazil's success in developing innovative and globally

competitive aerospace and agricultural sectors. One critical difference was the authorities' emphasis on boosting R&D in these sectors before reducing the government's direct role.

Brazil's trade in goods suffers from the country's inadequate transportation and communications networks. The rail system is limited, and only 14 per cent of roads are paved. A large share of the population lacks Internet access. Brazil's connectedness agenda should also include efforts to attract more foreign talent. Today, only 0.5 per cent of Brazil's workforce is foreign-born.

And of course tourism also offers significant growth potential if Brazil can build on the rare opportunity presented by hosting both the World Cup and the Olympics.

However, with its large and growing consumer markets combined with the possibility for demonstrative international growth, is there a place better than Brazil to incubate the next Facebook? If that sounds farfetched, consider that Instagram co-founder Mike Krieger is a Brazilian who left home to find his fortune in San Francisco.

This month, the World Cup is bringing the world to Brazil. It is up to Brazil to invite it to stay. www.project-syndicate.org

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More trees

On the occasion of the World Environment Day, Yeti Airlines in collaboration with Solukhumbu Herbal Garden planted over 4000 saplings in the district. The airline contributes Rs 20 and Rs 40 per sale of each ticket towards its forestation program.

New avatar

Gorkha Brewery unveiled the new look of Tuborg beer at a gala event held at Radisson Hotel on 6 June. The new bottle comes with a pull-off cap letting customers enjoy their drink without worrying about a bottle opener.



Reaching 28

Chairman of NMB Bank Nanda Kishore Rathia inaugurated the bank's new branch in Maharajgunj on 6 June. With the latest opening, the total number of branches operating in the country has reached 28.

Codesharing

Etihad Airways has announced a major expansion of its codeshare agreement with Jet Airways. The two airlines have obtained regulatory approval to codeshare on 43 additional routes.



Facebook famous

Qatar Airways has exceeded the four million Facebook fan milestone and is the fourth most "Liked" airline across the industry. "Qatar Airways has developed a strong social media presence across 14 platforms as a means of building relationships with our expanding customer base," said Qatar Airways Chief Executive Officer, Akbar Al Baker.



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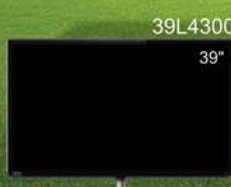
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Times of war and peace

Prashant Jha's *Battles of the New Republic* will anger and shame us

In Kathmandu, a capital city that lacks basic sanitation facilities, an elderly man from the Tarai is forced to take a roadside leak. A local man pelts a stone and curses him. The next day, the same man humiliates the old man in front of his son by trying to publicly pull down his dhoti. The young boy holds on to his father's hand as the old man runs away.



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

Two decades later, the boy has grown up to be a young man, and is working hard to ensure that the next generation of Nepal's Madhesi people do not have to live in fear and humiliation in their own land.

Hundreds of kilometres away in the remote hills of Rolpa district, another young boy joins an armed rebellion to

undo historical wrongs. For the next 15 years, he fought his own government and wrote songs of awareness to instill passion and indignation in the hearts of his fellow comrades. Mal Bahadur Budhamagar and thousands like him sacrificed their youth for a life of dignity.

Prashant Jha's *Battles of the New Republic: A Contemporary History of Nepal* will anger and shame us at the same time for being part of a society that has failed to stand up for its weakest and most unfortunate. Divided into four sections, the book is the personal account of a journalist as he discovers underlying causes of an insurgency. It is about the people who joined the rebellions, those who betrayed it, and those who amassed personal and political fortune cashing in on the misery of Nepalis.

The book goes back and forth in history to explain behind-the-scene events that shaped our immediate past and present. We see how ego and ambitions prompted Girija Prasad Koirala to thwart peace efforts during the Krishna Prasad Bhattarai government. The favour was



Battles of the New Republic
Aleph Book Company, 2014
Paperback, Rs 635, 288PP

returned by Sher Bahadur Deuba few years later, when Koirala's own effort to broker peace with the Maoists failed.

Based on interviews with protagonists and fact checked with others who were there, Jha unravels what was happening in the corridors of power. But he has also managed to capture the mood on the streets, for example, that led to the rise of the Madhes-based parties and their leadership through the stories of citizens who were part of the movement.

This is also a subaltern history.

Jha's personal rapport with actors across Nepal's political mainstream, security agencies, diplomats and Indian spooks gives him enviable access to insider information. We hear the dirty secrets behind those closed door meetings, mid-night deals and uninvited visits from down South.

One reads with disgust how, behind all the drama of a sovereign exercise, even the head of state and chief of the Army have pleaded with New Delhi to intervene and influence political course back home.

In a moment of vulnerability and arrogance, an Indian intelligence officer, after the fall of the Maoist led government over the sacking of CoAS Rukmangad Katuwal in 2009 tells Jha: "If Katuwal was the problem, he (Pushpa Kamal Dahal) should have come to us. We would have worked something out."

As in Sudheer Sharma's *Prayogshala* the book exposes the hypocrisy of politicians of the left, right and centre who seek foreign patronage, are subservient to them but then shout the loudest about sovereignty and nationalism.

Jha also exposes contradictions and mutual distrust among pro-federalist forces like the Janajati and Madhesi outfits, which he believes was one of the reasons for the failure of the first CA.

A senior military officer's prophetic observation about the fate of the CA after a Maoist win in 2008, and a lawyer's comments on the impossibility of a 'Maoist written' constitution, help us understand that the course of history was being shaped by powers within.

Battles of the New Republic is a meticulously researched book, a tale of aspiration, conviction and empowerment, as well as about anger and dejection with hopes dashed. The plot is almost cinematic with an array of emotions including passion, empathy, ambition, envy, greed, lust, betrayal and revenge. In that sense it is a political thriller.

Jha ends with a note of hope, a tinge of optimism, to remind us of the momentous changes to which he had a ringside seat. 🇳🇵

For archive of Prashant Jha's Plain Speaking column in Nepali Times

"India-bashers and ultra-nationalists will be disappointed"



Prashant Jha's much-awaited book *Battles of the New Republic* will be launched in Kathmandu next week. He spoke to *Nepali Times* about the background to the work.

Nepali Times: What prompted you to write *Battles of the New Republic*?

Prashant Jha: While I was writing my weekly column on the Tarai and later Nepali politics in *Nepali Times*, sometime in 2009, I realised I had a lot more to say. I had a story to tell about the people of the plains – Madhesis, Tharus, Muslims, Dalits, Pahadis – and their place in the Nepali state structure, their angst and churning. I realised that Madhes could not be seen in isolation from the political history of the country – of the Panchayat years, of the 90s, the Maoists, India's role, and the larger peace and constitution process. The book continued to expand and take a life of its own, eventually emerging as a personal account of the entire political transition.

Were your interviewees open in answering questions?
I remained a reporter and commentator through the

process of writing this book. So a lot of my journalism over the past six years or so has fed into the book. I was fortunate enough to have access to almost everyone across Nepal's mainstream political spectrum (except the former king, though I did speak to his aides) and key officials in the Government of India – both in MEA and RAW. This helped in providing diverse accounts of the same episode, enriching the book. I deal extensively with the Maoists, and conversations with Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai at key moments are littered across the book; so are testimonies of Madhesi leaders and activists. Some interviewees were reserved, many were open.

You write about the role Indian intelligence played in micro-managing events in Nepal, but some may say that on balance the book sanitises their role?

That is an unfair criticism. If Nepal's ultranationalists are expecting this to be a blind India-bashing book, they will be disappointed. And if India's cheerleaders expect the book to turn a blind eye to Delhi's role and mistakes, they would be disappointed too. I think the book carefully chronicles India's role, including that of the agencies. But I don't think RAW can be looked at in isolation – it operates in a complex political eco-system and Nepali politicians are enmeshed in it; it is also only one of the stakeholders in a complex Indian governance framework. I have tried to bring out new details about why RAW – according to officials serving then – was engaging with the Maoists even when the government termed them terrorists; I have documented RAW's role in government formation processes. I have been critical of India's policy at key moments. But I have also recognised India as a central actor in Nepali politics,


which has enormous leverage, which played a hugely positive role in 2005-06, which is often dragged in to domestic battles by our own netas, army, media houses, and business lobbies.

What would be your advice to the Maoists in order to reinvent themselves?

The key reason for the Maoist decline is they got sucked into the same political culture they ruthlessly criticised through the 1990s. Central Kathmandu's *hawa* is toxic – you start doing the rounds of Singha Durbar and there, the same factional fights, the same corrupt deals, the same lust for ministerial offices infect you, at the cost of everything else. And you lose touch with the base and with the aspirations which brought you to power in the first place. This happened to both Maoists and Madhesis, who suffered from one additional problem – the permanent establishment was deeply hostile to them, and was waiting to entrap them.


Readers may feel pessimistic about Nepal's future. But would it be correct to say that you are actually optimistic?

You are right. I am optimistic. Nepal has gone through multiple transitions – from monarchy to republic, Hindu kingdom to secularism, from unitary to a potentially federal state, from an exclusivist sense of nationalism to inclusive citizenship, from an army under the king to an army under civilian government in principle – in a compressed period of time. Yes, the day to day governance paralysis is utterly depressing. And the emerging conservative backlash is worrying. But I believe that the big story of the last ten years has been the deepening of democracy.



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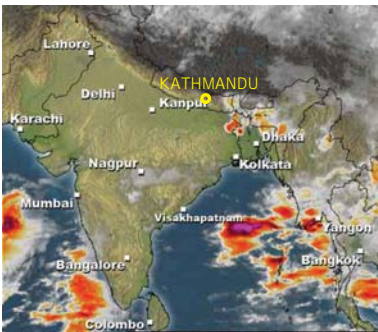




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IN IT
FOR THE
LONG HAUL

Porter-turned-marathoner Sudip Kulung Rai shows Nepalis have what it takes to compete in international races

MATT MILLER

Sudip Kulung Rai (*pic, below*) is a world-class athlete, but he doesn't look it. Short and stocky, he is built more like Spongebob Squarepants than London Olympic 10,000m gold medalist Mo Farah.

But Kulung Rai doesn't excel on a track, he does in the mountains in high altitude trail racing. If this was an Olympic event, he'd be in the discussion for a gold medal in 2016.

Kulung Rai is from Solukhumbu and was working as a porter lifting more than his own weight on his back till as recently as four years ago. On the day of the 65k Everest Ultra race he asked organisers if he could also participate. They relented, and much to their surprise he won.

He has gone on to place 28th at the competitive Swiss Alpine Marathon in Davos, 2nd at Mt Kinabalu Climbathon in Malaysia, and in Nepal won the Annapurna 100k, and last month came first for the second time in the Tenzing-Hillary Everest Marathon clocking 3:53:09. The course was moved to Gorakshep this year due to heavy snow from its usual starting point at 5,364m at Everest Base Camp, and finished at Namche Bazar at 3446m.

What would make the biggest difference for Nepali athletes is opportunity, which starts with funding and education. Rai trains by himself and is self-coached, although he got a start while training with British Gurkha veteran Ramesh Battachan who supports trail racing in Nepal.

Richard Bull is another supporter of Nepali runners, races, and tourism in Nepal and runs an informational website for runners.

He says: "The main problem in this sport is cash. Running is not widely popular. Those trying to support runners look for help overseas, and crowdsourcing donations for race travel."

But by investing in runners, Nepal will get to fly its flag in competitions overseas. "Nepali runners are great, wholesome ambassadors for the country," Bull told *Nepali Times*.

But a reasonable question is can the runners guarantee results? There are two factors affecting athletic performance: lifestyle and genetic factors. Nepal does not have a rich history of athletic excellence, but Nepali athletes (like East Africans) are better acclimatised and have greater endurance.

One tribe of Kenyans, the Kalenjin, make up 75 per cent of all Kenyan Olympic medals, and Ethiopians are always winning Olympic medals. Acclimatisation alone is not enough to win Olympic marathons, but with investment in training and development of young runners there is no reason Nepalis can't compete.

Rwanda, for example, set up a national cycling team which supported their eventual flag bearer in the London 2012 Olympics. Next week, the Africa Rising Cycling Center is opening in Rwanda with the goal of forming the first all-African team in the Tour de France.

Nepali mountain bikers regularly win races in Nepal like the Annapurna Yak Attack. With a similar level of support, Nepali athletes can do even better. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Make way for Nepal's mountain bike champs, #700

PICS: RICHARD BULL

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BURMESE DAYS

On the week that Burmese democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi is visiting Nepal, the weekly *Nepali Times* is organising a talk and discussion by Emma Larkin and slide show by photographer Nic Dunlop. Emma Larkin still uses the pseudonym that allowed her to go in and out of Burma during the junta days. Her 2005 book, *Finding George Orwell in Burma*, is a political travelogue through Burma when it was still closed through which she explains George Orwell, and especially his famous books, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-four*.



Photographer Nic Dunlop has spent two decades profiling Burma under military rule. His black and white images offer an insight into a country that is only now beginning to emerge from decades of dictatorship.

Learn more about Burma's transition to democracy, and it's past, present and future from a writer and photographer who know the country well.

Date: 13 June

Time: 6 to 7.30 pm

Place: Yala Maya Kendra, Dhokaima Café, Patan Entrance free.



KICKOFF

Date	Nepal Time	Fixture	Location
13 June	1.45 am 9.45 pm	Brazil vs Croatia Mexico vs Cameroon	Sao Paulo Natal
14 June	00.45 am 3.45 am 9.45 pm	Spain vs Netherlands Chile vs Australia Colombia vs Greece	Salvador Cuiaba Fortaleza
15 June	00.45 am 3.45 am 6.45 am 9.45 pm	Uruguay vs Costa Rica England vs Italy Ivory Coast vs Japan Switzerland vs Ecuador	Fortaleza Manaus Recife Brasilia
16 June	0.45 am 3.45 am 9.45 pm	France vs Honduras Argentina vs Bosnia & Herzegovina Germany vs Portugal	Porto Alegre Salvador Salvador
17 June	00.45 am 3.45 am 9.45 am	Iran vs Nigeria Ghana vs USA Belgium vs Algeria	Curitiba Natal Belo Horizonte
18 June	00.45 am 3.45 am 9.45 pm	Brazil vs Mexico Russia vs Korea Australia vs Netherlands	Fortaleza Cuiaba Porto Alegre
19 June	00.45 am 3.45 am 9.45 pm	Spain vs Chile Cameroon vs Croatia Colombia vs Ivory Coast	Rio di Janeiro Manaus Brasilia
20 June	00.45 am 3.45 am 9.45 pm	Uruguay vs England Japan vs Greece Italy vs Costa Rica	Sao Paulo Natal Recife
21 June	00.45 am 3.45 am 9.45 pm	Switzerland vs France Honduras vs Ecuador Argentina vs Iran	Salvador Curitiba Belo Horizonte

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TWO WHEELS GOOD

A new bicycle courier service will deliver a package anywhere within the Ring Road at incredible rates in one hour flat

TSERING DOLKER GURUNG

You need to collect your passport from the embassy, but your flight is in an hour and you still have a dozen errands to run. What do you do? Michel Dudal found himself in a similar situation last month when

he received his visa to the UK only hours before his flight. A quick Internet search for courier services introduced him to KTM Couriers, a Lalitpur-based logistics company that offers one-hour delivery service to anywhere in the capital. Dudal dispatched a messenger

immediately to pick up the package. Anxious about catching his flight on time and unsure if the company could indeed deliver on its promise, he went to BVS himself only to find the KTM Couriers messenger was already there. "He is not the first client to

have doubted our services," admits Smriti Singh Suwal, 27, who started KTM Couriers with her brother Sajan Man Singh Suwal two years ago.

While Kathmandu has other delivery companies that use motorcycles, KTM Couriers

exclusively uses bicycle messengers for deliveries. This makes them more competitive and sends an environment-friendly message. And in some cases when traffic is gridlocked, bicycles can be faster than motorcycles. Smriti, a management graduate



Finding echoes
of *Animal Farm*
and *Nineteen
Eighty-four* in
junta-led Burma

KUNDA DIXIT

After nearly 20 years going in and out of Burma to write two books on the country under a pseudonym, Emma Larkin often heard the junta-governed former British colony described as an "Orwellian" state.

But Burma was Orwellian in another more literal sense: this was where George Orwell served in the police while the country was still a part of British India. Larkin started working on the premise that Orwell's allegorical satire on revolution (*Animal Farm*) and novel set in a future super-state of dystopian surveillance and control (*Nineteen Eighty-four*) were based on his experience in the colonial police in Burma in the 1920s.

In *Finding George Orwell in Burma*, Larkin travels up and down a country under the iron fist of a military junta that was known by an Orwellian sounding acronym SLORC (State Law and Order)



PICS: BIKRAM RAI

PREMIUM RUSH (l-r): 21-year-old student Subir Nepali is one of the four bike messengers for KTM Couriers. He says he likes the flexible working hours.

Founder Smriti Singh Suwal (*on the phone*) started KTM Couriers with her brother Sajan Suwal in 2012.

The dispatch team at the company's office in Sanepa.

from the US, handles operations while Sajan is the technical brains behind the project and is an IT grad currently based in Bangkok.

Orders can be placed by phone or online through the company's user-friendly website. A one-hour delivery for a small package (up

to 3 kg) costs only Rs 180, and the price is less if you don't require express service. Word-of-mouth has helped increase the company's profile and added to its credibility, but Smriti admits it's still a challenge to convince people that deliveries made on bicycles can be

quick and reliable.

Young entrepreneurs with their own start-ups form the majority of KTM Courier's clientele. Fashion magazine *Navyaata* and popular online shopping sites Urban Girl and onlinekinmel have been using their service for the past year.

The messengers are all young students - some are in their gap year while waiting for acceptance from universities abroad. Bike Messenger Subir Nepali (*pic, main*) is a student who has been working part-time with the company for seven months, and he likes the flexible working hours. However, there is no girl messenger in the team.

"We did get a girl cyclist who was very eager to join us but her parents didn't permit her to work for us," says Sailendra Dongol of Kathmandu Cycle City Network who is on board as an adviser. The company is also working to provide life insurance to all its messengers.

As a part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) last women's day, it presented five women home-based workers with bicycles with funds collected from Kickstarter. The recipients were taught to ride bicycles for a month and Sailendra says they have been using them for their daily commute.

The Sanepa-based company is now looking at expanding with three more hubs in the city centre and Bhaktapur. They are also working on a mobile app that will allow customers to track their package, a service already available on their site. Food and flower delivery are also on the cards. Although the company only offers delivery during office hours at present, plans are underway to start night time deliveries soon.

Says Smriti: "There's a lot of room to growth, and we will grow with time." 🇳🇵

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PATHWAY OUT OF POVERTY

In May 2013 American couple Caleb and Emily Spares sold their house and business to start Portal Bikes, a not-profit that owns and operates bicycle shops in developing countries. Seven months ago the Spares moved to Kathmandu to start operations here.

"We help people turn bicycles into businesses that create pathways out of poverty," says the couple on their website. Although the company is registered as a private limited, Caleb says Portal Bikes in Nepal follows the same social-business model of its parents company in Colorado.



The company's first project is a cargo bike (*pic, above*) 'long-tail' that Caleb designed that lets cyclists ferry heavy loads but without the hassle of a trailer. "I thought this would be perfect for Nepal," he says.

Portal Bikes has partnered with local cycle chain Epic Mountain Bike for the project. The company is yet to begin mass production but display of the cycle's prototypes at various fairs has already earned the company many interested buyers. Caleb hopes to start retailing the 'long-tails', priced Rs 33,000 by January next year.

For sale of every three bikes, the company will offer one to an aspiring entrepreneur on a micro-credit basis. www.portalbikes.org
www.epicmountainbike.com

IN AN ORWELLIAN STATE

Restoration Council). She retraces Orwell's steps to the cities he served in: Rangoon, Moulmein and the little town of Katha in the north, the setting for his novel *Burmese Days*.

Just like George Orwell was a pen name for Eric Blair, so is Emma Larkin, since it was impossible for journalists and writers to get visas to Burma. When Larkin's book was published in 2004, a monk's uprising had just been crushed, it had been 25 years since the student revolution of 1988, Aung San Suu Kyi was under house arrest, and it looked like Burma would remain forever in darkness.

But in 2011, Burma took dramatic steps towards political reform. Suu Kyi was released, the press was freed, elections are due next year, and although democratisation is slow and fragile, Burma is changing. Suu Kyi is herself on a visit to Nepal this weekend to receive a freedom award.

Larkin takes us back to days

when political dissidents, students, monks were being detained, tortured and disappeared even on flimsy suspicion of harbouring "incorrect ideas". British-era prisons in Mae Sot and Insein became notorious concentration camps. Burmese political dissidents had an unspoken understanding that if one of them was taken in and tortured, they would hold out for three days: enough time for their comrades to go into hiding.

Everywhere she looks in Burma, Larkin sees people that remind her of Winston Smith, Julia, Farmer Jones, Snowball, or Napoleon. She finds evidence that Orwell himself was inspired by the colonial administration he was reluctantly a part of. Rangoon was in a state of perpetual war with ethnic separatists, echoing the slogan "War is Peace" from *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Larkin reminds us that Orwell had foreseen Burma's downfall along ethnic faultlines as far back as the 1930s. There was resonance even then with the *Animal Farm*



FINDING GEORGE ORWELL IN BURMA

By Emma Larkin
The Penguin Press 2004

slogan "All Animals Are Equal, But Some Are More Equal Than Others" in the treatment of minorities by the Burman elite. That intolerance is now manifested in pogroms against the Rohingya and other Muslim communities by a militant Buddhist clergy. In fact, for a Nepali reader there could even be an echo of the Brahmanisation of Nepal with the Burmanisation of Burma.

Larkin finds Orwell trapped between his resentment of the Empire he represented and the Burmese people's resentment of him. In fact, Orwell seems to not have been particularly popular among his British colleagues either.

The history of Burma after the military coup in 1962 by Gen Ne Win retold the farce of *Animal Farm* even better than Orwell's original. Just as the pigs led the uprising against oppressive Farmer Jones only to allow corruption and greed to ruin the farm, Burma's quaintly Marxist-Buddhist socialism soon went astray, turning one of Asia's

richest countries into its poorest.

Orwell actually wrote only one novel about Burma: *Burmese Days*. *Animal Farm* was the only George Orwell book to be translated into Burmese (called 'Four-legged Revolution') and the BBC Burmese Service even serialised it, but the book was never really popular because most intellectuals and dissidents were leftists.

Although Orwell meant it as a satire on the Russian Revolution and Stalin's purges, Larkin says she often felt in Burma like she was living a real-life version of *Animal Farm*. She regards *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-four* as a part of Orwell's trilogy of Burmese history. 🇳🇵

Emma Larkin and photographer Nic Dunlop will be speaking on Burma at 6 to 7.30PM on Friday, 13 June at Yala Maya Kendra, Patan.



A Wes Anderson film, in a nutshell, sells nostalgia. Not necessarily overtly or obviously, yet each of his finely wrought, carefully designed films have that ineffable longing for things past.

My personal favourite is *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001) partly because this film carries that perfect mix of hyper Anderson

MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

style and a crushingly good coming of age story that while being quite hilarious will also break your heart, leaving you longing for more of that particular world in which it is set - hence the nostalgia.

While I love almost all Wes Anderson films, his latest caper *The Grand Budapest Hotel* really has something in it for everybody.

THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL

Minutely realised, as per usual, the film is set at the eponymous Grand Budapest hotel in 1932, in the fictitious Republic of Zubrowka. The hotel is an alpine getaway for the rich and elderly and is run to perfection by Gustave (Ralph Fiennes) the concierge extraordinaire. Gustave is a bon vivant who has impeccable taste, runs everything at the hotel with the precision of a Swiss made clock and in return for his labour sleeps with all the wealthy blonde female guests who invariably adore him.

It is when one of these guests, Céline Villeneuve Desgoffe-und-Taxis, also referred to as Madame D (played to decrepit perfection by Tilda Swinton), who has just left the hotel after spending a night with Gustave passes away that our

film's grand adventure begins. Gustave rushes to Madame D's residence with his protégé, the wonderfully named Zero Moustafa (played by talented young newcomer Tony Revolori), just in time for the will to be read in front of dozens of expectant relatives. To the immediate family's dismay - Madame D has left a priceless painting cheekily titled "Boy with Apple" to Gustave. Dmitri (Adrien Brody), Madame D's villainous oldest son, refuses to hand over the painting, at which point Gustave and Zero take it off the wall with the tacit approval of Serge X (Mathieu Amalric) the slightly shady butler and abscond back to the Grand Budapest.

Many things go hilariously wrong before Gustave and Zero get their due, and if you have been reading carefully you will have noticed that the cast in this film is part of an exclusive register of the finest thespians from Great Britain, the United States, and France, all of whom appear to be delighted to appear in even the smallest of cameos.

In addition to spotting these wonderful appearances, you will enjoy, with surprise, Ralph Fiennes' wonderfully comic turn as the loveably flawed Gustave. The only complaint perhaps being that the film at 99 minutes, runs just a little bit short for its sometimes complex, sometimes borderline farcical, animated, enchantingly convoluted yet thoroughly captivating storyline. 🇳🇵

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HAPPENINGS



BIKRAM RAI

ALL SET: CPN-UML leaders Bamdev Gautam, Bidya Bhandari and KP Oli (third from l-r) attend a program at Bhrikuti Mandap, Kathmandu on Monday ahead of the party's general convention.



BIKRAM RAI

AFTERMATH: People walk past Tri Chandra College at Ghantaghar after a clash between students and police at the college on Monday.



DEVAKI BISTA

KEEP WALKING: Newly recruited personnels of Nepal Police train near Pashupati area on Tuesday.



BASIL EDWARD TEO

WRITER'S TALK: Samrat Upadhyaya reads from his forthcoming novel *The City Son* at Dwarika's Hotel on Wednesday.

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SUNIR PANDEY

MAJIPA LAKHE

capital of concretes. The scholar and writer Satya Mohan Joshi must have felt the same when he sat down to rewrite it as a play, and perhaps wanted to show us what life was like in those standstill days.

In Shilpee Theatre's recent production of *Majipa Lakhey*, the story is elementary like all folk tales. A farmer's daughter, named Balamaicha ('beautiful girl' in Newari), falls in love with a Lakhey (read son of demons, with godlike powers). Smitten by the beauty and devotion of his young beloved, the Lakhey carries her off to Lakhey-land. Bala's parents weep and wail and send young men from the village to rescue her and catch the upstart. Lakhey and Bala are put on trial, the verdict of which sees Lakhey-dancers participating in the Indra Jatra till this day.

For all the supposed myth around the Lakhey, who gives the play its title, it felt a bit unusual to have Balamaicha as the audience's stand-in. Actor Pawan Jha's Lakhey is so monstrous that any feeling of awe and wonder at the majesty of the demon evaporates quickly, and it doesn't help that his beloved is remonstrating all the time.

Director Ghimire Yubaraj says he faced a challenge in cutting down the parade-y

anthropological tendencies, to which cultural plays are prone, and he has achieved a measure of success in this regard. But there are other times when an unabated hullabaloo creeps back into the performance. As the tale of love in impossible circumstance gets sidelined, the play becomes an excuse for rustic types - your typical village drunkards, outcasts, smart-alecks, graybeards - to make a lot of noise.

There is a moment at the end when Balamaicha (and, with her, the audience) realises her lover is now public property forever. At this moment, you feel the play should have spent more time on nurturing

this bittersweet love instead of elongating slapstick village-square episodes. **REVIEW**
Sunir Pandey

Majipa Lakhey

Director: Ghimire Yubaraj

Writer: Satya Mohan Joshi

Cast: Pawan Jha, Pabitra Khada, Jeevan Baral, Lunibha Tuladhar, Krishan Bhakta Maharjan

Rs 100/200/500,

Runs till 14 June, 5.30pm, Shilpee Theatre

Every year when Indra Jatra processions jam the streets leading to Kathmandu Darbar Square and scores of tourists and locals happen to look down narrow gullies in anticipation of yet another chariot, it is the Kumari who arrives out of nowhere to steal the spotlight. Despite all this attention on the living goddess, there is another character

central to Indra Jatra, whose legend is now all but forgotten by the city's many inhabitants.

But the Majipa Lakhey survives in myths retold to children living in the old settlements near the Rani Ban jungle of old Kantipur. It is a story that held sway in the secluded, jackal infested fields and hillocks of yore but which is now impossible to invent in the



Mike's Breakfast

Five strips of dry, bland chicken accompanied with mashed potatoes that tasted like it was prepared from a dry instant mix with gravy that was clumpy, lumpy and floury was not what I had in mind when I ordered the roast chicken breast with rosemary and garlic (Rs 470). To add insult to injury, the garlic bread on the side was stale, and the butter had been melted and then left to solidify so that it tasted like a bad, mass-produced ghee.

The Club Sandwich with French fries (Rs 335 and an extra Rs 100 for the fries) was my date's choice. While I chided him for being boring and unimaginative and for playing it safe, it was actually



a fortuitous decision. The bread was clearly from the same batch as the aforementioned garlic slice. It was old and hard and thus the entire sandwich disintegrated on the very first bite. Plus the entire thing was just insipid which is strange because it is very difficult to make bread with egg, cheese,



PICS: RUBY TUESDAY

salami, ham, lettuce, tomatoes taste bad. To Mike's Breakfast's disgrace, they have managed to ignominiously pull off this seemingly impossible feat.

The positive part, is that the fries are still crispy on the outside with a soft starchy interior. But it is a sad day when all you can find redeeming about this much loved place is that they haven't forgotten how to fry their potatoes.

The lemon meringue pie (Rs 120) in the display counter looked delicious with a light, peaky whipped egg-white top beautifully complementing the rich yellow custard. Alas, the crust was underdone, the custard so gelatinous that instead of the curd being light, fluffy and redolent with the flavors of freshly squeezed lemon, it was so thick and cloying that it actually left a bitter taste in the mouth.

Even though friends had been bemoaning its decline for awhile now, I wanted to see it for myself

because I did not want to give up on Mike's. And even after this visit, romantically I choose to hold on to the notion that I just happened to be there on a 'bad day'.

Ruby Tuesday

How to get there: Mike's Breakfast is in a lane opposite Grihini Supermarket in Baluwatar, near the Nepal Rastra Bank.



Great Food Deserves Carlsberg

That calls for a Carlsberg

Antibiotic resistance: a reality



Antibiotic resistance (ABR) means that common infections no longer effectively respond to the usual antibiotics, necessitating the use of more powerful antibiotics. But often even these strong antibiotics are unable to resolve infections leading to complications and death in a patient.



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

It is abundantly clear that ABR is a reality. Every day in medical outpatient clinics to intensive care units (ICU) doctors are required to use the latest generation of antibiotics to deal with mutant strains of what used to be ordinary bacteria causing the common urinary tract infections or pneumonias for example.

Resistance to antibiotics develops when pathogenic organisms mutate into a more dangerous form which the regular antibiotic is unable to kill. Then, the resistance genes of the

pathogen start to circulate in the local community. This spread is facilitated by poor hygiene in hospitals and homes, increasing global travel and medical care abroad, and also due to interspecies gene transmission with misuse of antibiotics in animals.

Many Western countries, especially the Scandinavians, have realised that this is a very serious problem akin to malaria, HIV, and TB and have taken appropriate action. But without the help of developing countries this worldwide problem is not going to go away because of increased frequency of global travel. International health agencies like The World Health Organization need to more effectively address this serious problem.

Many people including doctors erroneously think there is an unending supply of many different antibiotics with many more in the pipeline. Producing new antibiotics is not as lucrative as discovering a new drug for chronic diseases like cancer or heart diseases, and drug companies have shied away from investing in making new antibiotics. For now we are

left with the current batch of antibiotics, hence their proper usage is important.

Unfortunately in countries like Nepal and India, even the most potent antibiotics can easily be bought over the counter. Both their overuse as well as under-dosing of the antibiotics leads to increased resistance.

In many countries there is no national policies regarding ABR like there is for HIV and malaria. The lack of these national policies is an example of how lightly the issue is taken. The first step to establish a policy would be to carry out proper surveillance of ABR so that the trend of the resistance can be plotted and understood for rational use of antibiotics.

In the developing world, the other important emphasis has to be given to microbiology. This is a neglected field due to lack of resources. But drug companies, governments and health research charities can change that by investing in "rapid diagnostics" and also make them inexpensive. Rapid diagnostics are point of care tests that can be done with a high degree of accuracy with the results promptly available.

For example, in typhoid fever, there are no quick, reliable tests to make a diagnosis since blood cultures may take a week. Therefore doctors use a variety of antibiotics to clear the unknown fever which is conducive to ABR, when they could be using a reliable rapid diagnostic test to help administer a specific antibiotic.

Proper diagnosis and treatment is fundamental to maintaining the effectiveness of antibiotics, but it appears ABR is here to stay unless we get to work now.

GIZMO by YANTRICK

Smart Knight

Who does not want a top-end smartphone weighing down their pocket? But owning one, without burning a sizeable hole in said pocket, sounds impossible. At a time when it is the norm for flagship smartphones to be priced around the 60K mark, what if Yantrick told you that a phone boasting similar top-end specs is available for half that price? Behold the Micromax Canvas Knight, India's answer to high-end smartphones, but attainable for the masses.

Straight out of the box, the Canvas Knight makes a solid first impression in the Black and Gold, White and Gold, or the All Black variant. The stylish, slim metal casing, rounded edges and the rear panel with an elegant glass finish all lend the Canvas Knight a premium feel, reminiscent of the Sony Xperia Z2 and the iPhone 5S. Add to that a stunning five-inch, full HD Gorilla Glass screen, boasting pixel density of a retina-popping 443 pixels-per-inch, and the Canvas Knight should have your attention. In terms of performance, the Canvas Knight's screen offers vibrant colours, good contrast and a bright sharp display, with HD content especially looking absolutely stunning.




Under the hood, the Canvas Knight is also thoroughbred smartphone through and through. Its True Octa-Core processor offers a decisive combination of performance and power-efficiency. The 2GB of on-board RAM allows for a faster and smoother mobile experience, with graphics-intensive videos and games running without any lag whatsoever, and the Android (version 4.2.2) interface and menus feel extremely smooth. For all your storage needs, Micromax has provided 32GB of space with the Canvas Knight, although the option to add more via a MicroSD slot would have been welcome.

The Canvas Knight also sports an astonishing 16MP primary camera, capable of capturing absolutely stunning and detailed pictures,


while videos recording at 1080p resolution equates to high definition overload. Micromax has not ignored your selfie needs either, with the front 8MP camera capable of taking crystal-clear images. The Canvas Knight has impressive sound as well, the Yamaha-amplified speaker pumps out loud and detailed audio. Plus the smartphone 'usuals' like the accelerometer, gyroscope, proximity meter, compass, GPS, Bluetooth, etc, should come as no surprise in a high-end device. All the power and features of the Canvas Knight are backed up capably by a 2350 mAh battery that lasts around 10 hours of fairly intensive use.

Yantrick's Verdict: The Micromax Canvas Knight is proof that Indian companies can also produce world-class hardware that is stylish, functional, and durable. Priced at Rs 35,000 (approx) the Canvas Knight is available at mobile stores in New Road.

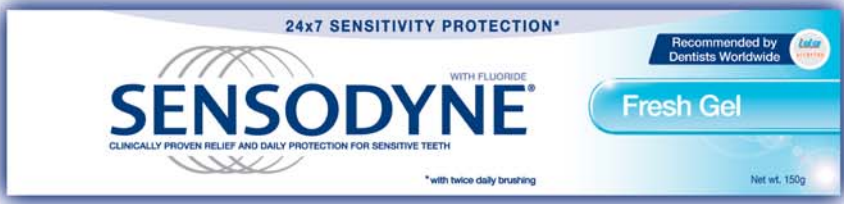


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SHOBHAN SAXENA
in SÃO PAULO

Last Thursday, when the Brazilian team landed in this city of 21 million people for another warm-up game, there were massive traffic jams across the city as the Metro workers went on a flash strike, sparking anger among the people.

Irrespective of what has been appearing in western media, ordinary Brazilians have kept away from anti-World Cup protests. In Rio, Sao Paulo and Brasilia, three cities which have seen rallies in recent weeks, small and peaceful demonstrations have been organised by unions with affiliations to opposition parties.

"They are telling people that money for education and health has been spent on stadiums. It's a total lie," says Carina Vitral, president of UJS, a left-leaning student union. "We want health and education but we also want the World Cup."

Brazil prides itself as the Home of Football. So, when the biggest football show comes home, there is excitement. Almost all of the 3.3 million tickets for the World Cup have been sold. On Wednesday, when FIFA opened some counters for a few available tickets, people queued



up from 3am. In the neighbourhoods of Sao Paulo, people are painting their streets in green and yellow. The Brazilian flag is hanging everywhere: from windows to bakery shops to bars and gyms.

But a few people are still angry. Like any other country, Brazil is a divided society. While football is a great social leveler and unifier, it is also a vehicle for social justice. So, some social movements are using the World Cup as an opportunity to put their



issues on the national agenda.

This week, a powerful graffiti appeared on the entrance of a public school. Painted in strong colours, it depicts a small black boy, with an emaciated face and hungry eyes, holding a fork and knife and staring at a football placed on a plate in front of him.

"We need food, not football," reads a slogan emblazoned across the wall. Seen and clicked by thousands, the image has gone viral on social media. "My intention is to expose the country's problems. The

government wants to hide some problems, but we want to highlight it," says the graffiti artist Paulo Ito. "World Cup is good time to raise such issues."

Even as Ito's powerful imagery is being appreciated, few agree with the message. Mass hunger and poverty are now things of the past in Brazil, which is officially a middle-class country. Though 12 million people are still below the poverty line, the government plans to declare Brazil "free of poverty" by the end of 2014.

"Most people want to enjoy the World Cup. And people are getting angry with those who want to disrupt it," says Sara

Puerta, a journalist who writes on music and social issues. "We don't want visitors to have a bad image of Brazil."

Even as security officers prepare for games and protests, they are sure of one thing: support for the Brazilian team among ordinary people. "A lot of anger is against FIFA, and not against the team and Brazil," said the police officer. "We are getting good support from the people."

With the World Cup coming closer, the country is getting in party mood. Even those going out to protest are rooting for Brazil to win the title for the record sixth time. Last week, when the Brazilian team arrived at the mountain resort of Teresopolis, a group of 20-odd teachers walked along the team bus, chanting anti-World Cup slogans. After shouting for a few minutes and getting their photos, the leader of the group spoke to foreign journalists.

"No one here is rooting against Brazil," said Alex Trintino, the coordinator of a local teachers' union. "It was just a symbolic act."

In this football-mad country, those who would go out to shout against FIFA and World Cup would be quietly praying for Seleccion Brasileira. Neymar and his mates can be sure of that. 🇧🇷



Shobhan Saxena is a journalist and visiting professor at University of São Paulo. This is his exclusive weekly column on the World Cup for Nepali Times.

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THE RETURN OF THE MICROBES

Resistance to life-saving drugs threatens to set back Nepal's progress in controlling endemic infections

SUNIR PANDEY



Nepal has taken major strides in the past 50 years in controlling communicable diseases like tuberculosis, malaria and HIV.

But the microbes are fighting back, and a worldwide scourge of drug resistance threatens to undo public health achievements.

Nearly half of all Nepalis are carriers of the TB bacillus, although not all show symptoms of the disease. But there are now at least 950 patients a year not responding to the cocktail of antibiotics that made Nepal's

Direct Observation and Treatment Short-course (DOTS) program a model for TB control worldwide.

"Drug resistance to tuberculosis is a huge problem," says Rujan Malla at the National Tuberculosis Centre. Multi-drug resistant TB (MDRTB) is now seen in 2.2 per cent of all new cases and up to 18 per cent of relapse cases in Nepal. One in four patients with MDRTB dies and many more go undetected.

Every year there are an estimated 45,000 new TB cases, of which 35,000 are administered

DOTS treatment. Up to 5 per cent of them will not be cured and will have to come back for a second treatment, which takes up to 20 months to complete, has severe side effects, and cost much more to treat. Donor agencies like The Global Fund and LHL International (Norway) support the program.

"The big question for all of us is: what happens with the missing 10,000?" says Malla. Half of them opt for care at private hospitals, who may not have the time to set up a patient-focused DOTS, and

may have to pay more for over-the-counter drugs which may not be as effective.

Those whose treatment is incomplete or who are not treated at all have the danger of surviving with MDRTB and spreading the resistant variety to at least 15 other people before they die.

Giampaolo Mezzabotta, WHO Medical Officer for TB in Nepal, says: "MDRTB in Nepal is at a warning level and has been so for some years now. The way to stop it from infecting first time patients is through early detection

and treatment."

Since most people living with HIV are infected with TB because of their weak immune system, studies have shown that drug-resistance makes it more difficult to treat them even if they are on anti-retrovirals (ARV). According to WHO routine surveillance of HIV drug resistance in Nepal has not kept pace with the scale-up of treatment in many countries.

There are an estimated 40,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Nepal, of which over 15,000 are enrolled in some form of



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SUNIR PANDEY

treatment program, including 8,000 under ARV. Nepal does not disaggregate its TB treatment outcome by HIV status, experts say, so there are no figures to prove that HIV patients with drug-resistant TB have a higher mortality.

“Studies have shown that early HIV diagnosis and access to treatment for HIV can reduce a person’s risk of TB by 65 per cent,” says Ruben del Prado (see interview, right) UNAIDS country director for Nepal. “When treatment of TB is combined with

TB

New cases every year
45,000

DOTS success rate
90 %

MDRTB cases every year
Approx. **950**

MDRTB treated every year
250-300

MDRTB survival rate
74 %

HIV

HIV prevalence (ages 15-49)
0.23 %

New cases in 2013
1,408

Estimated people living with HIV (as of 2013)
40,723

People on ARV
8,860

anti-retroviral treatment for HIV, the risk of TB disease can be reduced by around 90 per cent.”

But a new WHO report says that across the world germs are developing resistance faster than newer medicine can be invented. Indeed, in the past 25 years no new antibiotics have been discovered at a time when tuberculosis, HIV, gonorrhoea, pneumonia, urinary tract infection, malaria, and even diarrhoea have increasingly become drug-resistant all over the world.

To make matters worse, even perfectly healthy people may be developing hidden resistance because of the antibiotics they ingest through meat products. (see page 18) Most chicken meat sold in Kathmandu were found to contain residues of penicillin, sulphonamide and tetracycline, that were administered to poultry to make them grow faster.

Malaria control is another public health success story, and Nepal exceeded its MDG target to cut morbidity and mortality from the disease by 40 per cent in the past five years alone. The plan is to eradicate indigenous malaria transmission by 2026, but three-fourths of Nepal’s population lives in areas bearing malaria risk, and both the mosquito and the parasite are developing resistance to existing drugs. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Multiple resistance, #627
TB or not TB, #248

“TB is both preventable and curable”



UNAIDS Country Director for Nepal, Ruben F. del Prado explained to *Nepali Times* the links between TB, HIV and drug resistance.

HIV diagnosis and access to treatment for HIV can reduce a person’s risk of TB by 65 per cent. When treatment of TB is combined with anti-retroviral treatment for HIV, the risk of TB disease can be reduced by around 90 per cent. People in high-burden settings should have the opportunity to learn their HIV status and start treatment early in order to prevent active TB disease. If people living with HIV develop active TB disease then immediate ART can reduce their chance of dying by around 50 per cent. Unfortunately, despite what is known about the importance of early diagnosis and treatment of both HIV and TB, millions of people often discover too late that they have HIV and TB.

How serious is the threat of drug resistance to both diseases?

UNAIDS launched Treatment 2015 to expand access to HIV treatment, which is important to both HIV and TB prevention efforts. UNAIDS is calling for an innovative, integrated effort to prevent HIV and TB — working together to increase resources and reach everyone living with HIV with key TB prevention interventions, including earlier access to HIV and TB testing and treatment. UNAIDS is working closely with countries, donors and partners, including the Stop TB Partnership, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to produce sustainable solutions to fully integrate and deliver critical HIV and TB services.

Nepali Times: How are the two epidemics – TB and HIV – linked?

Ruben del Prado: TB remains a leading cause of death among people living with HIV. The dual impact of TB and HIV is devastating for millions of people and their families, worldwide. This is unacceptable as TB is both preventable and curable. By expanding access to basic TB prevention for people living with HIV, the target of reducing TB deaths in people living with HIV by 50 per cent can be reached by 2015.

But don’t the two conditions need different medical treatments?

Scientific studies have shown that early

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Sick of eating

Santa Gaha Magar in
Himal Khabarpatrika, 25 May

हिमाल
खबरपत्रिका

When doctors started recommending white meat to their patients who suffered cardio-vascular disease, chicken became a popular alternative. But a study has shown that Nepalis are unknowingly consuming antibiotics and growth hormones through chicken.

At least half of samples tested by the Food Technology and Quality Control Department (FTQCD) recently showed traces of antibiotics tetracycline, penicillin, and sulfonamides concentrated mainly in the livers and gizzards of the birds.

But now even veterinary doctors have become involved and are prescribing medicine to 'nutrition deprived chickens.' Veterinarian Sunil Sapkota says



clients stopped coming to his clinic after he refused to prescribe these medicines.

According to FTQCD's website, over the counter sales of tetracycline and penicillin were banned 31 years ago. It is also illegal to produce, sell, distribute, import, or use mixtures of tetracycline-Vitamin C and sulphonamide-penicillin in Nepal. These rules were designed to regulate human consumption of the antibiotics, but veterinarians were allowed to continue their use. However, the drugs are now finding their way to humans through the food chain. A vet

in Jawalakhel says that there is widespread use of antibiotics in poultry farms.

A recent WHO report on anti-microbial resistance shows that bacteria that cause common infections are mutating into drug-resistant varieties because of antibiotic misuse. The report says one major concern is the use of antibiotics as growth agents in animals.

Buddha Basnyat of the Global Antibiotic Resistance Partnership says antibiotic resistance has the capacity to become a silent epidemic in Nepal, precisely because the government is failing to regulate the chicken-feed industry and outlaw antibiotics in the poultry industry.

"The bacteria that infect us are now used in the medicine that was supposed to help us," says Sameer Mani Dixit, also a member of the global partnership.

None of the 200 poultry feed producers in Nepal include a list of ingredients on their sacks and because farmers are under pressure to make sure their chickens grow up to weigh 2.5 kg each, they have to use what is available.

Director of FTQCD Jiwanprabha Lama accepts that the government is failing to regulate the poultry industry. Says Lama: "Chicken liver is fed to young children for the high-protein content, and now our children will be unnecessarily exposed to antibiotics from an early age."

An average Nepali consumes 4.8kg meat and 65 eggs in a year and the figures are much higher in city areas. In 2013, altogether 783,701 tons of meat and 1.8 billion eggs were sold in the market.



Rajesh KC on
Twitter, 12 June

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“This party was started to bring revolutionary change. We have to go back to our roots.”

UCNP(M) leader Narayankaji Shrestha in
Naya Patrika, 12 June

स्वास्थ्यको जाँच हुनुहोस् पास

स्वास्थ्य जाँच गराउनुहोस्, स्वस्थ जीवन बिताउनुहोस्

थकानले हैरान ?
थाइरोइडको असन्तुलनले उदासी, स्थिरता, अनिद्रा वा कपाल ढर्ने समस्याले सताउन सक्छ ।

के तपाईंको मुटु स्वस्थ छ ?
स्वस्थ रहँदा नुदुरोगको सतर्क घट्छ ।

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Outside Valley Center: Orchid Diagnostic, Bharatpur (Opposite Chitwan Medical College) • Mother Teresa, Alakhya, Birgunj Ranisati Healthcare Service, Paropakar Medical Hall (Behind NTC building) Mahendra Pool, Pokhara • Aryan Health Services, Rani Sati Mandir Birgunj • Alpine Diagnostics, Chitwan (Infront of BPKMCH)

Outside Valley West: Marchawar Poly Clinic, Siddhartha Nagarpalika, Bhairahawa • Himal Pathology, Hospital Road (Infront of Banke District Court), Nepalgunj • Kanchan Pathology Service, Kohajpur, Banke • Kanchan Pathology, Kailali (Infront of Seti Zonal Hospital), Dhangadi Rakshit Diagnostics, P. Bir Hospital Complex, Hospital Line, Kapilvastu • LB Medical Services, Banke Lumbini Health Services, Butwal (Near Lumbini Hospital) • Kalika Pathology, Main Bazar, Dang

Outside Valley East: Subh Laxmi Enterprise, Jaleshwar, Janakpur • Unique, Jaycess Chowk, Damak (Opposite to Damak Pharmacy) • Advance Pathology Lab, Janakpur • Jalan Pharma Distributors, Station Road, Janakpur • Chetna Medical Hall, Mahendra Path, Dharan Super Health Care Centre, Rangeli Road, Biratnagar • Pardhan Diagnostic, Birtamode (Opp NBL) Suryodaya Health Care, Damak, Jhapa • Purwanchal Milani Laboratory Clinic, Biratnagar

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HIGH STAKES: Locals gather at Dho-Tarap just before police intervened in a dispute over Yarsagumba. Thundup Lama at Kathmandu airport (below) on Sunday, he died the next day.



PHURWA DHONDUP GURUNG

FIGHTING FOR YARSA

The recent yarsagumba dispute has thrown into sharp focus how the question of natural resources will be addressed in future

BHRIKUTI RAI

Nepal's yarsagumba season empties entire villages, schools are closed, and a large part of the trans-Himalaya resembles the wild west. It is like a gold rush as thousands trek up to pick the caterpillar fungus that fetches astronomical sums across the border in China where it is believed to have aphrodisiac properties.

And, inevitably, there is violence.

In the worst incident, seven yarsagumba pickers from Gorkha were killed by locals in Manang in 2009. Six people from the village of Nar in Manang were convicted for the murders and got life sentences. Last week, two people were killed in Dolpa after police intervened in a dispute over yarsagumba harvesting.

As Nepal debates setting up autonomous federal provinces in a new constitution, the violence over control of yarsagumba has thrown into sharp focus how the

question of natural resources will be addressed in future. For example, how will downstream provinces share water and energy from rivers that flow down from the mountains?

"We have only been discussing about resource sharing at the central, province and local levels but how it will be done still needs to be mapped out," says lawmaker Gagan Thapa, who was member of the parliamentary committee on natural resources in the first Constituent Assembly.

Discussion over the agreed upon contents prepared by the then committee on natural resources has already begun at the CA and Thapa says they have a second chance to make it fair.

Corruption, lawlessness, political protection of organised criminals involved in the yarsagumba trade means that the situation in northwestern Nepal today is similar to opium-producing regions like the Golden Triangle or Afghanistan.

Unless new laws governing yarsagumba harvests, and sharing its benefits with local people is laid out, there will be more clashes in future experts say. "There could be even more violent disputes in future and more importantly the ecological impact caused by unsustainable harvesting of yarsa might severely impact local communities," says noted Biologist Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha.

Last week's incident in the village of Dho-Tarap of remote Dolpa seems to have been triggered by overlapping jurisdictions between lowlanders backed by the administration and police, and locals over harvesting fees in the buffer zone of the Shey Phoksundo National Park.

According to local reports, the people of Dho-Tarap demanded



Precious fungus

Yarsagumba is a moth caterpillar that has been mummified by a fungus. It is considered to have medicinal properties in China, and is worth its weight in gold. The demand from oriental medicine provides mountain villagers in northwestern Nepal with much-needed income.



Yarsagumba sticks out of the ground, at sparsely populated mountain areas up to 5,000m. But the desire to strike it rich draws many poor farmers from lower valleys up to the mountains during the pre-monsoon harvest season, and this often brings them into conflict with local villagers.

greater transparency over the fees collected by the buffer zone management committee. This escalated the protest which turned violent after police fired in the air to disperse the crowd. Phurwa Tsering (pic, right) died at a health post the morning, and Thundup Lama Dolpo died in a hospital in Kathmandu five days later on Monday after being airlifted out.

CDO Krishna Prasad Khanal admitted by phone from Dunai that police had fired in the air, but told *Nepali Times*: "There was a dispute over royalty collection but the fatality was not due to police firing, the person died at home."

Locals, however, strongly contest this. They say Phurwa Tsering's body was deliberately not sent for post-mortem and was released to his family to prevent the truth from coming out. They say the police also prepared a report saying Phurwa Tsering fell off a cliff while collecting grass.

"We don't have grass growing in Dho-Tarap at this time of the year, it is absurd," said Sey Namkha Dorje, chairperson of the Dolpo Concern Center (DCC). Another member of DCC Phurwa Dhondup Gurung was also injured during the fight on Tuesday and had to go into hiding to avoid arrest. "We were there just to demand more transparency over fees by the buffer zone management committee and taking steps to protect local diversity when the fight broke out," recalls Gurung.

Although CDO Khanal told us last Thursday that the wounded were only lightly injured, the fact that Thundup Lama had to be medevaced to Kathmandu where he died proves him wrong. Lama had deep injuries in his abdomen and chest from beatings, allegedly by police.

Reports of targeted attacks on

the locals and mismanagement of harvesting fee have been confirmed by Sey Namkha Dorje and Constituent Assembly member from Dolpa Dhan Bahadur Budha, who visited Dho-Tarap to investigate the incident.

DCC filed a complaint at the National Human Rights Commission on Tuesday demanding investigation into last week's incident.

Sey Namkha Dorje says that the violence was the worst that Dolpa had ever seen. "Not even during the war did we have such gunfire and attacks, it has left the people of Dho-Tarap deeply traumatised," Dorje told *Nepali Times* after flying to Kathmandu on Sunday.

The buffer zone management committee hiked the fee for yarsa pickers this year from Rs 1,100 to Rs 3,000 for people outside Dolpa, Rs 2,000 for Dolpa locals up from Rs 600 last year and Rs 1,000 from Rs 150 for locals from the VDCs within the buffer zone.

"The resource is scarce here and the root cause of the dispute needs to be resolved to avoid similar violent confrontation in the future," Dorje said, "the buffer zone committee needs to coordinate with the local community for the sustainable use and conservation of the biodiversity."

The lesson from the Dolpa killings is that yarsagumba picking has to be regulated much more even-handedly and efficiently by the central government, taking into account the needs of local people.

Says Gagan Thapa: "This is the time to work on nuances of natural resource sharing along with setting up autonomous federal provinces."

nepalitimes.com

Despair and hope in Dolpo, #609
See video



Oh, FAQ!

For the first time in recent memory, the number of unique online visitors to the official Non-Government of Nepal website (www.non-gov.np) has exceeded the actual number of hardcopy visitors to Nepal. It is a matter of pride and an indicator of the rapid strides we have taken in Information Technology in this country that more digital investors are visiting the Federal Democratic Republic than actual physical ones in the last fiscal year.

However, since no website is complete without a dropdown menu for Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), the National Investment Bored also needs a one-stop window containing answers to everything potential investors want to know about Nepal but are afraid to ask because they think they are stupid questions.

So as a service to venture capitalists, startups, kickstarters and crowdfunders, we present a list of the daftest frequently asked questions with our equally asinine answers:

1. Where is Nepal?

Good question. We were just trying to figure that out ourselves before you walked in. In a philosophical sense you could say that we as a nation state don't know where we are at the present time, which way we are headed or whether we are coming or going. But, seriously, Nepal is a sweet potato tuber misplaced between two boulders and anyone who finds it please return it to its rightful owner.

2. What is Nepal known for?

For the birthplace of Lord Buddha.
For the in-laws of Lord Ram.
For longest road-widening project in world history
For the world's highest mountain.
For the world's fastest clock.
For the world's tallest dwarf.
For the world's most trustworthy crooks.



3. What if I get itchy in Nepal?

Nepal is a safe haven for itchy persons and visitors can scratch away to their heart's content and no one will bat an eyelid (to mix metaphors a bit). You see this right on arrival at the airport where despite heavy security, immigration staff risk life and limb to scratch themselves in front of visitors waiting for their visa on arrival. In fact, if we didn't already have a national past-time (going on relay hunger strikes), then poking around in one's toolbox without let or hindrance and in full view of spy satellites could well be it.

4. What are the rules on tipping?

I was afraid you'd ask that. Tipping is mandatory in Nepal and, unlike most other places, is given before a job is done. For instance, if one wants to head the Nepal Telepathy Authority (NTA) one has to first tip the minister. Nepalis aren't so crude as to call it a bribe, we call it a Prepaid Fee.

5. What is the most common form of greeting in Nepal?
"Khanu bho?" Translation: Have you partaken of your kickback for today?

6. What is Nepal Time?
Nepal Standard Time is plus-minus two hours of whatever is indicated on your wristwatch. Nepali Time is elastic and it is one of the few places in the solar system where Einstein's Theory of Space Time Continuum can actually be scientifically demonstrated. Nepalis will never do today what should have been done three weeks ago. In fact, we won't even do in this life what can be accomplished in our next incarnation.

- 7. What are some basic customs I should know about Nepal before deciding to invest there?**
- Do as Nepalis do: never offer anything with your left hand.
 - If it is under the table, offering with either hand is OK.
 - Take your shoes off when you enter a house.
 - If you notice that the occupants have stopped breathing, take your socks off as well.
 - Always pay at least five times what locals pay for all forms of transport within Nepal.
 - Nepalis are naturally friendly, so don't make them unnaturally unfriendly by insisting that taxi driver returns your Rs 500 change.
 - Despite his outward appearance, the Great Asiatic One-horned Rhinoceros is a shy and thin-skinned animal, always ask for his permission before taking a photograph.
 - Nepal is now an open-defecation free country, however answering calls of nature by the roadside is allowed, but only if you can prove that it is an emergency call.
 - Public display of affection is considered offensive, so refrain from holding hands in public unless you are of the same sex.
 - Nepalis have a great sense of humour, in case you hadn't noticed.



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