

A collage featuring a woman in a white dress and three circular images of modern interiors. The woman is on the left, wearing a white sleeveless dress with a peplum waist. The circular images show: 1) A kitchen with red cabinetry and stainless steel appliances. 2) A living room with a white sofa, a red ottoman, and a large window. 3) A living room with a white sofa, a red ottoman, and a large window.

A top-down view of a white ceramic coffee cup filled with a latte. The coffee foam is decorated with a smiley face design using dark coffee powder. The eyes are two solid black circles, and the mouth is a wide, curved line made of coffee powder. The cup sits on a white saucer, which is placed on a dark wooden surface.

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A group of approximately 12 people, including children and adults, are seated on a wooden bench outdoors. They are positioned in front of a wall made of horizontal wooden slats. The individuals exhibit a range of expressions, with many looking directly at the camera with somber or distressed faces. Some are resting their heads on their hands, while others look away. The group is diverse in age, with children in the front and back rows and adults in the middle. They are dressed in casual, everyday clothing. The overall atmosphere is one of hardship and emotional strain.



Rock climbing as an anti-stress vertical workout

PAGE 10-11

CALCULATED RISK

During Narendra Modi’s speech to parliament on 3 August, we were treated to the supremely ironical sight of political leaders who have ruled Nepal for the past 20 years thumping tables to cheer lustily as India’s prime minister told them what they hadn’t done in that time to make Nepal prosperous.

Modi sold us a dream. It was a vision of growth and co-prosperity from sharing Nepal’s natural resources more equitably. His main mantra was connectivity: building physical and virtual highways and transmission lines to trade hydro-energy. And as if to prove just how far behind we are in our thinking, we got Modi to launch a postage stamp.

Nevertheless, as we had hoped in this space last week, the visit has revived the 6,500 MW Pancheswor storage project on the Mahakali River which was mothballed 18 years ago. Researchers can do PhDs on Pancheswor as an example of why joint water projects are stuck: one political faction in Nepal preventing another from taking credit, mutual distrust, misplaced nationalism, and asymmetry in negotiations.

After the euphoria of utopia from the Modi visit, hard reality has set in. How is officialdom now going to take things forward on Pancheswor, the Indo-Nepal Power Trade Agreement, or the project development agreement with GMR for Upper Karnali when two rent-seeking states are inhabited by the same babus?

WAKEUP CALL

It was as if to remind us of the hazards of infrastructure planning in the Himalaya that on the eve of the Modi visit, a massive slope failure over the Bhote Kosi blocked the river. An estimated 150 people perished, the impounded lake threatened downstream populations, and the country’s major trade and tourism artery to Tibet was cut.

As chief minister of Gujarat state, Narendra Modi was



DINESH GOLEINAGARIK

In the enthusiasm for infrastructure and hydroelectric projects, let’s not forget the dangerous geology of the Himalaya.

the downstream beneficiary of the controversial Narmada project. The issues of equity and justice of the mammoth trans-state scheme delayed the Sardar Sarovar reservoir for many years. But within 20 days of becoming India’s prime minister, the Modi government decided to raise the dam height by 17 metres.

We are now looking at the possibility of at least a half dozen Narmadas coming up in the Nepal Himalaya. And whereas questions about Narmada were mostly about social justice, in the Himalaya we have additional questions of economic and environmental cost, climate change,

seismicity and the frequency of major flood events.

Nepal is the most densely populated mountain nation in the world. And most of the country’s hill population lives in river valleys which are also the only areas with surplus food production because irrigation allows multiple cropping. Submerging Nepal’s valleys would mean enormous socio- economic dislocation.

The Himalaya is also the youngest mountain range on the planet, and its fragile southern slopes have heavy rates of precipitation making them prone to flashfloods of the kind we saw in Uttarakhand last year, and valley-blocking landslides like Bhote Kosi. Climate change has made all this even more unpredictable: dozens of swollen glacial lakes are on the verge of bursting, monsoons have become erratic with cloudbursts and unseasonal blizzards.

It is best not to underestimate the dangers of Himalayan geology, and the fury of its rivers. Future urban planning, design of infrastructure and hydropower projects have to factor in the risk of floods of biblical proportions. For example, had Pancheswor been built ten years ago as it was supposed to, how would it have fared in last year’s once-in-a-lifetime flood on the Mahakali?

The Bhote Kosi has four small and medium-scale hydroelectric plants, and three more are planned. The bursting of a landslide dam would have wiped them all out within minutes. The most worrisome is the spread of dense settlements along river-hugging highways, like Lamosangu and Dolalghat where there were panic and stampedes last Saturday as word spread of the landslide blocking the river.

But we cannot do without energy, roads and bridges. It is prudent not to place all our infrastructure eggs in one basket, better to go for many medium-sized schemes and spread them out than one large one. Disasters are just waiting to happen, and we cannot completely remove risk. The idea is to minimise it.

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

Brilliant writeup, very balanced and exposes the reason why Nepal and India haven’t made any progress in an issue that is so vital to the both of them (‘Speaking truth to power,’ Editorial, #718). The Nepalis are so stupid we don’t even know what benefits us, and the Indians want to dominate and always have their way. “It is not in India’s strategic interest to make Nepal poorer through unfair deals.” Absolutely. You hit the nail on the head.

Bijen

■ Good thoughts. Prosper thy neighbor and peace will prevail. Where the opposite happens, chaos, wars and deaths are the result.

Gerald Fernando Heng

■ The babus of south and north block are steeped in proverbial blame game politics with Nepal. Until there is a wholesale change in their attitudes, I am quite sure nothing positive will come out of Indo-Nepal photo op sessions.

Namah

■ In any international negotiation the parties may have opposing interests - the trick is to manage those in the interests of all.

David Seddon

■ Why do Indians waste their time and manpower in dealing with the petrified politicians of Nepal (‘Modifiable relations’, Damakant Jayshi, #718)?

Harry Subba

■ Nepal and India share a brotherly

relation. A well managed process may lead to a win-win outcome.

Sabita Thapa

■ Ever since the unification of Nepal in 1769, our country has waged a quest for political and territorial survival. This has dominated our history for two-and-half centuries. For the last 60 years, however, it has been a search for democratic stability and economic development. In between, sadly, we seem to be losing our moorings. In this context, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s speech to parliament seemed to be uplifting and encouraging for Nepal and the Nepalis perhaps because it was such a dramatic departure from the previous Indian stance. May be now India will no longer be an impediment as we seek a second unification for economic progress under our own leadership and using our own vast cultural and natural resources.

Modi’s speech seems to suggest a change in thinking in New Delhi as well: that bullying Nepal doesn’t work and in fact backfires on India. The question now is: do we have the capability of using this new relationship to catapult our economy? Do we have the moral and economic equivalent of a second *Dibya Upadesh*? A leader with vision, our own Narendra Modi, perhaps? The signs are not good, but we can hope that our democracy will also throw up such a leader.

S Singh

NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US Nepal as a country has far greater concerns than to grant you the permission to marry (‘Nothing about

us, without us,’ Sunil Babu Pant, #718). People are struggling to eat, to get clean water, to educate their children, yet you care only about whether gays and transgender are accepted? Sad.

Miki

■ Should we wait for development -water, education, food for all - before we demand equal rights for ethnic/ religious minorities too because they make up a small percentage of the population? The right to live as they please and to marry whom they want with the protection of the state are basic human rights which we can’t deny or keep pushing back just because Nepal is a poor country.

RTS

■ Nepal is quite advanced in comparison with other nations regarding the fundamental rights of the gay community. It is a very delicate subject where people have to be at first well-educated to have both broadmindedness and magnanimity relevant to mores and cults.

Whatever

■ I wonder what the basis is for re-criminalising homosexuality. It’s preposterous. Making the citizens of the country go through turmoil by prolonging the writing of the constitution and hindering development wasn’t enough for a disgraceful government. To show their incompetence they are targeting citizens on a basis of sexual orientation. It’s just appalling that a government elected by the people makes laws which go against citizens who put them in power. I’m ashamed to call myself a citizen of Nepal.

Annol Rajbhandari

■ As a closeted gay girl living in Kathmandu, I wanted to add my personal experiences (‘Hidden in plain view,’ Ayesha Shakya, #718):

1) Trying to make sense of my sexuality in the 80s/90s with no internet was a terrifying, unsettling, and isolating experience. I didn’t know what to make of my feelings and desires for girls, had no clue that other people like me existed, or whether my behaviour was even ‘normal’. It took until college to figure out my inner workings and truly accept myself. So I am happy that some schools are finally including sexual/ gender diversity in their curriculum. But this needs to be much widespread and parents and family have to be educated so they can help their children from a young age.

2) Sadly, the level of education/ social status/exposure are not good indicators of how accepting or understanding a person can be. Tons of rich/well- educated/well-traveled people I’ve met have been extremely narrow-minded & cruel.

3) The degree of separation in Kathmandu circles is so small that it becomes impossible for many of us to come out to colleagues/ friends/relatives even if they might be understanding. Personally I am scared that if I open up about my sexuality to anyone, gossip will eventually make its way to my family and will land me in trouble.

4) Despite these obstacles, there are women/men/third gender people in Nepal who have dared to live their truth and broken free of society’s stupid rules. Kudos to them.

Arpana

Times WHAT’S TRENDING



BIKRAM RAI

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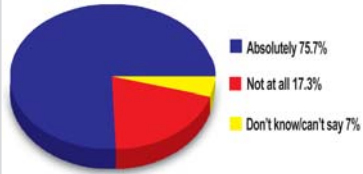
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Times nepalnews.com Weekly Internet Poll #719

Q. Does Modi’s visit of Nepal indicate a new era in Nepal-India relations?

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Q. What should Nepal spend its USD 1 billion soft loan from India on?



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BIKRAM RAI

COPING MECHANISMS

Nepal is exposed to all kinds of risks, but doesn't have the structures in place to deal with them

Last Saturday, a landslide 500m across fell down on the Bhote Kosi River, burying houses and blocking the river upstream from Lamosangu. This created a lake, five km long which submerged houses, a section of the Araniko Highway, farms and bajars.



CROSS CUTTING

Ashutosh Tiwari

As of this writing, rescue work is going on, with 33 bodies found so far, and about 150 still missing.

Few can predict where and when disasters of various intensities and frequencies strike. Still, since man-made and natural disasters are common occurrences in Nepal, could we have taken general actions that

might have helped minimise the adverse impact of risks to lives and property?

Accountable local governance: We have not had local government elections since 1997. In the absence of periodically elected and locally responsive leaders, a representative of the central government heads local councils, which are patchworks made up of various squabbling local politicians. Left to fend for themselves by national parties, these local politicians compete with one another to find ways to divert the funds coming to their villages and districts to themselves.

Over time, this practice has evolved into a risky form of local governance: For a fee, unelected local politicians can give you permissions to rent bulldozers to flatten sections of the hills, to mine sand from the rivers and to extract water from the ground to sell commercially, to construct

hotels near the river banks, to let settlements grow into a bazar, and to look the other way when it comes to enforcing building codes. So, when disasters strike, no one can really be held locally accountable for having let the risks dangerously multiply on the side of people and property.

Spread of insurance markets: Forty-six years after the establishment of Rastriya Beema Sansthan, insurance markets, hobbled by regulations that hinder their spread, still serve a small sliver of the urban rich. They leave out the majority of Nepalis who are poor, vulnerable and in desperate need of insurance products that help them cope with the effects of disasters.

To be sure, private insurance providers will not go looking for the poor. But given that we will continue to face natural disasters, finding ways to help the under-served cope with such risks

through appropriate insurance products – micro-insurance, community insurance, insurance schemes in which the government tops up the community contributions, etc -- is where the government's leadership is most needed. Examples of how to bring the poor and the vulnerable into appropriate insurance schemes could be adapted from other countries. Else, in coming times, the cost of emergency response and reconstructive relief will only go higher for the poor and the state.

Nepal Risk Board: Though the Indian Prime Minister's speech to the Constituent Assembly emphasised the opportunity side, Nepal can be perceived as a country with all sorts of risks: labour unrest makes large-scale manufacturing challenging, political uncertainties erode investors' confidence, a persistent lack of public services

such as water, electricity and health care drive urban professionals to live and work outside of the country, a lack of jobs make young villagers go to the Gulf, and natural disasters routinely upend lives, property and businesses.

To be sure, we cannot avoid all these risks. What we can do is craft our responses to them through the formation of a Nepal Risk Board, tasked to co-ordinate the government's efforts to prepare for and cope with the effects of risks, while educating the public about their nature.

Risks are part of our lives. But setting up institutions – local government, appropriate insurance products and a risk board – are some of the ways that help better cope with the effects next time a whole mountain falls down on a river. 🇳🇵

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कारोबार

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Mitigating disaster

THELMA MEJIA
in TEGUCIGALPA

For some 250,000 shantytown-dwellers in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa, fear of dying or losing their home due to a landslide or other weather-related event has been reduced, thanks to a global warming mitigation plan that has carried out small infrastructure works in 180 ecologically and socially vulnerable neighbourhoods.

The 100x100 Plan is part of a climate change risk mitigation project financed by the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEL) with a 26-million-dollar credit granted on concessionary terms.

"Before the bridge was built, this area would be cut off when it rained," Xiomara Castellanos, who lives in the poor neighbourhood of Mololoa, told *IPS*. "We used to come down the hill barefoot to cross the river, which rises a lot in winter, and has even swept away several houses."

The more than 100 small projects are scattered all over Tegucigalpa, which is home to 1.8 million of Honduras's 8.5 million people.

The capital, located in a chain of mountains that reach 1,300 metres in height, was among the most affected parts of the country when Hurricane Mitch left at least 11,000 dead and 8,000 missing in 1998, besides causing enormous



damage to infrastructure.

Julio Quiñónez, assistant director of Honduras' Municipal Emergency Committee, told *IPS* that environmental vulnerability is high in many parts of Tegucigalpa, but "mitigation works, large and small, have now reduced the levels of risk."

One of the projects involved construction of a small bridge (*pic, above*) and the strengthening of the banks of the river in the Mololoa shantytown, on the northeast side of the city, where local residents are now able to get in and out of their neighbourhood and to evacuate in case of a storm.


Johan Meza, in charge of mitigation projects in the 100x100 Plan, told *IPS* that the small infrastructure works include the construction of ditches, gutters, stairways, evacuation routes, pedestrian bridges, and storm water drains.

A few metres from one of the

city's main roads, in the east, is La Villanueva, one of the most populous slums in Tegucigalpa. It is highly prone to landslides and the collapse of the homes that line the hillside.

Pointing to the new stairways for which residents waited three decades, community leader María Elena Benítez told *IPS*: "We used to climb down the hill on all fours, to reach the bus; when it rained this was all mud, you can't imagine how hard it was for us."

"The aim is for no one to die in weather-related incidents," Tegucigalpa Mayor Ricardo Álvarez told *IPS*.

The next phase of the 100x100 Plan involves climate change adaptation, which includes an intense programme of training and provision of equipment in the areas that received assistance, so people are prepared and know how to use the evacuation routes in case of disaster. 

www.ipsnews.net

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MAW Enterprises, the sole authorised distributor of Yamaha scooter in Nepal has launched the all-new Yamaha Alpha in the Nepali market. Priced at Rs 169,900, the scooter is available in 5 colours. "The scooter boasts the longest seat, and comprises of the largest storage segment," reads the press release.

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Before Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Kathmandu on Sunday, Nepalis had mixed feelings about his personal and political agenda. Most Nepalis were not exactly jumping with joy, unlike the political leaders who were behaving as if Dasain had already arrived. Railways, highways, hydroprojects, hospitals – every leader wanted a free gift.



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

After his 45 minute address to parliament where he acknowledged Nepal’s historic changes, his popularity soared in inverse proportion to the disapproval of our own leadership. It was a fresh departure in Indo-Nepal relations, which had hit the rock-



BIKRAM RAI

Great expectations

New Delhi’s foreign policy shift in dealing with neighbours offers Nepal a chance to redefine ties

bottom many times in the last two decades.

As it turned out, India isn’t planning to gift us a hydroproject, but did promise to immediately start work on reviving the Pancheswor dam. He announced a USD 1 billion concessional loan package that will at once counter Chinese investment in infrastructure, as well as keep at bay multilateral donors.

Modi hit all the right notes: carefully dispelling any doubts about where the Buddha was born or that Nepal was a sovereign nation, not that we needed any reminding. He assured Nepalis that India was ready to walk shoulder-to-shoulder for their progress, but asserted that Nepal’s politicians must show leadership. What he really meant was: if you want us to stop interfering, don’t come running to us with your problems. Less than 24 hours later, a group of

leaders met him and did exactly that.

It does not bode well for leaders of a sovereign nation to go crying like a bullied child on the first day at school to tattle to the principal. Nepal’s Madhesis have fought long and hard for their rights and dignity against an insensitive hill establishment. And over the years, meaningful gains have been made, thanks to their growing assertion in the streets and in the constituent assembly. Leaders from the Tarai must have faith in the Madhesi constituency and their own leadership, and continue their struggle for political space rather than seeking patronage elsewhere.

Despite several days of marathon talks to prepare for the Modi visit, Nepal’s political parties could not muster a consensus on a draft proposal for power trade. The Indian draft had a few loopholes where amendments could have been suggested. Clause 3(b) of the proposed draft implied that Nepal’s hydropower could be developed exclusively with Indian investment or on a joint-venture with Nepal. This is not just impinging upon rights of a sovereign nation, but also violates Article 6 of the 1996 Energy Trade Agreement between the two countries that gives freedom to each side to enter into separate agreements with a third country for its benefit. Similarly, clause 4 (b) restricts licensed foreign producers in Nepal from trading their electricity in the Indian market, and 4(c) restricts the energy traders from fixing rate for electricity according to market price.

We now have 45 days to get back to them with an amended draft. Then there are other pending issues like settlement of outstanding border disputes that have affected Indo-Nepal border towns. This also seems a right time for Nepal to push through long standing plan for joint regulation to curb various cross border crimes including human trafficking, and smuggling of arms, drugs, animal parts and other contraband items. Facing threats of terrorism and counterfeit Indian currency, a regulated border, not necessarily restricting movements on either side, is in India’s interest as well.

From his well-scripted PR move to bring Jeet Bahadur home, to expressing empathy for victims of the Sunkosi landslide, offering a grand puja at Pasupatinath, and going walkabout on Kathmandu streets, Narendra Modi tried to change Nepali perceptions of big brother India. He also seemed determined to whitewash his image from a radical Hindu nationalist back home, to a leader of an emerging superpower. His decision to resist the temptation of commenting on Nepal’s secularism, ongoing debate on federalism or the monarchy stems from that.

Narendra Modi has offered a promise of change in New Delhi’s approach in dealing with its neighbours. But in the art of diplomacy, the devil is in the details. The new man in New Delhi may have sent all the right signals in Kathmandu, but it is the babus sitting in South Block and in Lainchaur who must walk his talk. 🇳🇵

@Anurag_Acharya

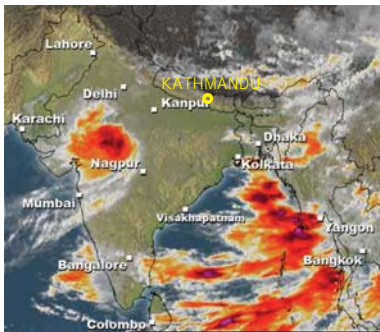
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There are signs the monsoon is trying to play catch-up, but once again this week it lost steam. The fallow paddy fields in the midhills and Tarai show the effect of this. The rain has come down, for example it was 140mm mm of rain over a 24 hour period last week that triggers the massive landslide on the Bhote Kosi. Unfortunately, with climate change we will see more frequent extreme rainfall events like this. The weekend will see clear cool mornings with hot and humid afternoons, and passing monsoon squalls over central Nepal.

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PICS: BIKRAM RAI

THE GREEN HOUSE

A six-storey oasis in the middle of the city

DAMBAR K SHRESTHA

When you think of Darbar Marg, you picture crowded streets, busy traffic and fancy establishments. So, when you walk into couple Suman and Riva Thapa's home located on the lane leading towards Hotel Yak and Yeti, you feel like you have been transported to the city outskirts. The duo have not only managed to create an oasis amidst all the chaos, but paid close attention to

do so in an environment friendly way.

The building where the house is located was designed by architect Prabal Thapa (*pic, above*) who worked alongside Austrian architect Götz Hagmüller on renovating Garden of Dreams in Thamel. The building has six floors, four of which have been sublet for commercial use. The City Museum occupies two of the floors. The Thapas reside on the fifth and sixth floor.

From the beginning Suman



and Riva knew what they wanted and architect Thapa was given three simple pointers: the building should have natural light, good ventilation and lots of greenery. Prabal has delivered on all three.

In order to minimise energy use, Thapa installed double glazed panes on all floors. "During summer, these windows prevent the heat from entering and during winter keeps the cold out," explains Prabal. Panel devices outside the windows also help reduce radiation.

The rooms are spacious, airy and bright. The strongest cross-ventilation keeps things breezy and obviates the need for air-conditioning. The four bottom floors, each occupying 5000 sq feet are all divided into two units, making the stair cases wider. "Space was created to make movement easier," says Prabal.

Prabal Thapa incorporated the pillars as part of the design. In many places, the cemented walls and ceilings have been left raw and bare, allowing the tenants to

decorate it as per their preference.

Within their own home, the couple went traditional in their choice of interior. Hanging old paintings on the walls, use of jute mats, display of Nepali artifacts and mud utensils all add to the cosy elegance of the house and lends it a Nepali touch which contrasts perfectly with the building's modern outlook.

Greenery is a big part of this building and the Thapas worked to ensure that there was plenty of it both indoors and outdoors. A terrace garden greets you right as you enter the residence on the fifth floor, which has everything from apricot to pomelo, jasmine to bay leaves.

"When people ask where greenery in Darbar Marg is, I want them to point towards our house," says Riva. "We wanted people to feel like they were walking in a garden when they entered our building." 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

- Hanging gardens of Kathmandu, #710
- A day at the museum, #708

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commemorating those who passed away in the last year, and also Nepal's annual LGBT pride march. *11 August*

Experience Kathmandu's version of dance meditation under the tutelage of Prajwal Ratna Vajracharya and immerse yourself in nature, consciousness and compassion.
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Take part in the ultimate B-boying competition in Nepal and compete with dancers from New Delhi and Mumbai to win Rs 25,000 in cash prizes. *Rs 250, 10 August, St. Xavier's School, Jawalakhel*

Come hear from fair trade producer
Manushi on their work empowering
women's lives through tie dye production.
*Runs till 14 August, Café & Shop Mitini,
Lajimpat*

Be one of 30,000 participants to form the largest human national flag and make it to the Guinness Book of World Records.
9 August, 6 to 9am, Tundikhel, Kathmandu

an exhibition of installation art, film, and
drawing by Tiffany Singh.
*4 to 12 August, Siddhartha Art Gallery,
Baber Mahal Revisited*

The priests of Patan are organising a nine-day ceremony for peace and well-being.
Hiranya Varna Mahabihar, Lalitpur



Learn the art of belly dancing at this free workshop.
9 August, 3 to 5pm, Core Fitness Studio, Lalitpur

FA Cup winners Arsenal hope to make a statement against champions Manchester City. 7.30pm, Reggae Café n Bar, Thamel



The Nepali-English literary magazine *La.Lit* launches its third edition and they've got a festival lined up for you:

5.30pm, poetry session featuring slam poets Yukta Bajracharya, Sanket Shrestha and performance artist Tsherin.
8 to 10pm, performance by bands Jugaa, Squirt AGuns, Social Nerve. Rs 200

5pm, readings from and launch of La.Lit
vol III
6pm, screening of *Louder than a Bomb*, a
documentary about four teenage poets
of Chicago

5 to 6pm, young and published poets
and artists engage in interactive activities
about the creative process
6.15pm, screening of *Gonzo*, a film about
the life and work of Hunter S Thompson
City Museum, Darbar Marg

escape the hodgepodge of the tourist hub as you relish delights like paella and panna cotta. *Thamel*

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

Pokhara

the newest addition to the Valley's European inspired coffee-culture cafes serves excellent mochas and lattes, don't forget to try their grilled chicken sandwich. *Jawalakhel*

this tiny little joint serves food that tastes like your mother's home-cooking.
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savour a wide variety of Nepali meat dishes and reserve your palate for the heavenly Chusta. *Pulchowk, Kathmandu*

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MUSIC

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Fusion Night,

Ninad with his fusion sound, *7pm onwards, 25 July, Places Restaurant & Bar, Thamel, 9808263228, 9843402821*

Lipin conjuring

Local musicians Kamero will be performing a tribute show to legendary prog-rockers Tool. *Rs 300/500, 23 August, 3pm onwards, Purple Haze Rock Bar, Thamel, 9843664132*

Starry Night BBQ

Spend your Friday dinners listening to soulful numbers by Ciney Gurung. *Rs 1,499, Shambala Garden Cafe, Hotel Shangri-la, (01)4411999 ext. 7520/7515*

**Gypsy dance,**

Acclaimed musicians Hari Maharjan and Marloes Oudeman take you on a musical ride on a gypsy caravan, so you can't miss this two-show night. *9 August, 5 to 10pm, Base Camp, Jhamsikhel*

**Norwegian wood,**

An acoustic tribute to The Beatles, featuring their best-loved tunes. *10 to 11 August, 6.30pm onwards, Prithvi Café, Sapena*

**Hey Netaji**

Party with Kathmandu's hottest reggae group Joint Family International. *10 August, 5pm, Base Camp, Jhamsikhel*

Shiva Rudrastakam

Nepal's very own Vedic Death Metal band Dying Out Flame are releasing their debut album with a live show featuring fellow scenesters like Old God, Deflesh, Undefined Human, Torment, Aatmaglani, and Forensic Torture. *Rs 150/ 350(including CD), Hetauda, 9 August*

GETAWAYS

Monsoon Madness,

get out of Kathmandu and take advantage of this seasonal offer until the monsoon lasts. *Rs 5,5552 per person for 2 nights/3 days. Shangri-La Village Resort, Pokhara, (01)4410051, (061)-462222*

Jhule mountain resort,

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beginners," he said. "They just want to go and have the experience. It's much cheaper to learn here than in North America or Europe."

Hardcore offers day trips to Nagarjun Forest (\$55 including lunch, transport and equipment) as well as a four-day rock climbing clinic (\$250) which is available for four consecutive days or over several weeks, depending on the climber's schedule.

"For the climbing clinic, we teach everything from belaying and anchoring to lead and sport climbing, as well as rescue skills," said Chandra. "It's a really good basis and you receive a certificate of completion at the end."

Rock climbing is addictive and many new climbers can't help coming back for more. One of them is Alexis Amini, 21, who is in Nepal for three months doing a research project. She has been to Nagarjun twice, and is taking the two-day climbing trip this weekend.

"I first went rock climbing for an adrenaline rush," Amini said. "I most definitely want to continue it here, I'm thinking of actually taking the four-day training course. And I would like to comeback - not only for rock climbing, but also caving and canyoning."

In addition to cliff-side outdoor climbing, there are also couple of climbing gyms for a quick practice in the evenings after work: Astrek Climbing Wall in Thamel and Pasang Lhamu Sports Climbing Centre in Maharajganj. 🇳🇵

www.hardcorenepal.com

www.astrekclimbingwall.com

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TRACKS

In 1977, a young woman named Robyn Davidson decided to walk across the Australian desert, starting from Alice Springs and ending at the Indian ocean, crossing 2,700 kilometers with her dog, Diggity,



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

and four camels Dookie, Bub, Zeleika, and Goliath. Davidson's journey was sponsored by *National Geographic* magazine. When the article, (that Davidson wrote herself), complete with photographs taken by her friend and occasional lover Rick Smolan, was published a year later, it garnered huge public interest, so much so that Davidson went on to write a book based on her nine-month journey. *Tracks*, the film version, directed by John Curran and starring the already great Mia Wasikowska as Davidson, was a difficult film to make. Any film that chronicles a journey is tricky, especially if the

journey is one that is successful. It is hard to create drama out of a story where a woman walks from point A to point B, albeit through the desert and with camels. Rick Smolan's photographs are indelible because he is documenting reality. Curran's film on the other hand struggles with the burden of having to create conflict in an otherwise fairly straightforward story. Yet, I found *Tracks* strangely compelling. One of the reasons is, of course, Wasikowska's uncanny ability to portray Davidson's inner life and fierce determination without having to resort to words. There is also the stunning and sometimes grim landscape of the Australian desert that plays an equal part as a character in the film, an unforgiving landscape that says you must either "do or die". While we never quite understand why Davidson set off on her journey - Curran explains slightly clumsily with dreamy flashbacks to her childhood, with her golden retriever and a tragedy seen through the eyes of a child - it is not quite enough to understand the impetus behind such a potentially fatal journey. Davidson in real life, and as played by Wasikowska, therefore, remains a bit of an enigma. She loves her animals and her solitude passionately, and yet her life after her epic journey involves hobnobbing with the very famous, including a period where she lived with Doris Lessing, became friends with Bruce Chatwin, and had an affair with Salman Rushdie. It is a bit difficult to elide the surly Davidson from the film with the honey haired beauty who emanates warmth in Smolan's photographs. For those who already know her story, it will require a bit of detective work trying to find where reality and a filmmaker's license diverge for the sake of cinematic poetry. *Tracks* is riveting in its depiction of an unusual woman who pushes herself beyond the norm. I do not think you will regret the time you spent on it. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com
■ Trailer



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HAPPENINGS



MODIFYING DIPLOMACY: Prime Minister Sushil Koirala welcomes Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Tribhuvan International Airport on Sunday.



SLOPE FAILURE: A major landslide about 500m wide dropped down on the Bhote Kosi River at Jure on Saturday.

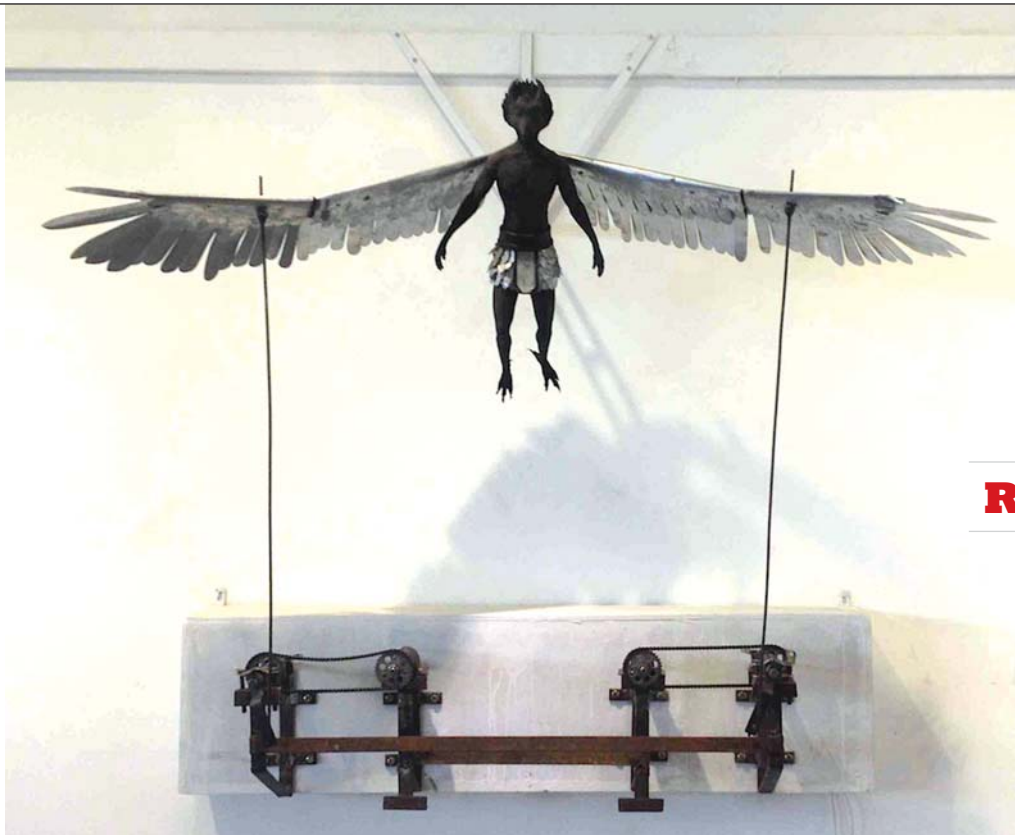


RESCUE EFFORT: Rescue workers continue their search for bodies on the third day of the Bhote Kosi landslide, on Monday.



SACRED SERPENT: A devotee offers milk to a statue of a serpent during Nag Panchami at Nag Pokhari on Friday.

A place called home



KU Art+Design's week-long exhibition at the Nepal Art Council in Babar Mahal which ran until Wednesday was the creative explosion of a generation of graduates from Kathmandu University's Bachelor of Fine Arts.

BFA Exhibition Project 2014 signified unfettered creativity as much as the discipline required to complete a four-year degree and six months of intensive studio work - the installations, even the most straightforward of which deviate from what Nepali audiences might traditionally define as "Art", were a collective revelation.

Living as they do in a country struggling to reconcile past and present, it was no surprise that much of the work on display grappled with themes of environmental degradation and socio-political boundaries. Many of

the artists drew on the familiar to refresh our understanding of a culture besieged by modernity. Kiran Rai's startling mechanical prostheses for mythical creatures, such as a pair of shiny metal wings for a *garud* that flaps about with unwieldy grace at the flick of a switch, shatter our perceptions of myth as something frozen in time. The notion of beauty itself was challenged by Prajwal

Bhattarai, whose "re-cycles" reveal a deep understanding of how (discarded) objects can be repurposed to recall wholly different arenas of aesthetic endeavour.

In a related sense, Anish Bajracharya and Tsewang Lama play with reinterpretations of that which is familiar to Nepalis. Bajracharya's refashioning of the iconic Goldstar, the "shoe of the masses", was simply inspired. Or as

he put it in the tagline for his imaginary brand (albeit fronted with real shoes that I was tempted to try on), "inspired by the land". If Goldstar dares to come out with a shoe that incorporates within its design Nepal's plains, hills, water bodies and mountains, it would be, if you'll excuse the pun, "revolutionary". Lama's critique of urbanisation, meanwhile, could be viewed as one more in a long line of anguished responses to Kathmandu's apparently inexorable decline. But his representations of the chaos of the capital churn inside of the viewer's mind. The

style recalls the clichéd touristic vistas of Nepal's mountains, temples and alleys; the content, conflagrations of cars and concrete, quite literally demolishes that becalming notion.

I remember the excitement I felt when I encountered US-based artist Binod Shrestha's installation, *Rhythm of Solitude*, at the Yala Maya Kendra in Patan. Back in 2009, it seemed to me that installation art was a relatively new chapter for Nepali contemporary art. *BFA Exhibition Project 2014* proved that explorations in this genre are far advanced. The young Nepali artists on show at the Nepal Art Council which ran until 6 August were poised, like the aforementioned mechanical Garuda, to launch into their self-defined, disparate orbits before too long - this was a rare opportunity to catch them all in the flesh and ask them about the worlds they envision, before they have quite created them. 🇳🇵

Nepali kukur



PICS: RUBY TUESDAY

each was tastier than the next.

And then I had another plate of food. This time I went for the saffron rice; it was actually one dish that I thought I'd give a miss, but the aromas that wafted and then lingered so fragrantly had me convinced otherwise. The mutton rogan josh was spiced piquantly and was rich and delicious. The dal- mixed lentils with a rich ghee and garlic tadka- was thick and the proteins had broken down to create a luscious and silky texture that was delightful.

At the Café, they make the favourite Thai snack, Som Tam with citrusy raw papaya, tomatoes, peanuts, lemon, basil and all sorts of other good things that are vigorously pounded together in a stone mortar and pestle in front of you. The end result is amazing-- alive and bursting with flavors and freshness. I have to also put in a good word for the fried fish: basic and simple fried fish fillets that are flaky and moist and oh so tasty.

And then onto the desserts: sticky toffee pudding, assorted cupcakes, fruit gateaux, shot glasses of fruit salad, dudh malai, chocolate mousse and tiny bite-sized bits of apple tart and the most delicious passion-fruit Bavarian. There is also ice cream with dried fruits and nuts, syrups and a homemade (well, hotel made) strawberry sauce- freshly macerated berries with just a hint of balsamic vinegar.

If I do have a gripe with this meal, it is that there is so much of it and it all looks and smells so appetising, but it is just not humanly possible to eat and enjoy

them all at one seating. But maybe that's their strategy- lure them in knowing that we will be back for more. 🇳🇵

Ruby Tuesday

How to get there: The Hyatt Regency is in Boudha.

The weekend brunch at the Hyatt Regency (Rs 1800 per person, includes all you can eat, a tea or coffee and swimming) starts at 12.30pm and carries on late into the afternoon on Saturdays and Sundays.



The Café at Hyatt

Now that Narendra Modi has departed, we can head back to the Hyatt for the weekend brunch. Lavish and sumptuous do not begin to describe the feast spread out for your gustatory as well as visual pleasure. There are live stations for pasta and shwarmas, a salad bar, bread baskets and lots of desserts.

The salad leaves and herbs are sourced from the in-house chef's garden and deliciously fresh. The rocket leaves have a snap and crunch to them and I chose the freshly made pesto as my salad dressing of choice. The spiciness

of the basil and the creaminess of the nuts in the sauce elevate the simple salad to absolute sublimity. What impresses me about the Hyatt whenever I dine there is the emphasis on freshness and providing locally sourced, organic fare as far as possible.

The bread and cheese counter have a variety of cheeses, flavoured butters and an assortment of pickles and cold cuts to choose from. The smoked fish in particular is delicious. There are also mini chicken burgers, spicy sausages and crisp French fries catering particularly

to the taste buds and palates of the young, and the young at heart.

The chicken shwarma is marinated overnight and then grilled for over four hours till the meat is so soft and succulent and infused with all the flavours that it is sliding off the spit- this is chopped up and sandwiched between two warm Turkish pitas with onions, mint and tomatoes and a slight drizzle of Greek yoghurt- each bite an explosion of Mediterranean freshness and flavours. I chose the red cabbage with apple salad, cucumber tzatziki, hummus and Greek salad with feta cheese as accompaniments and

Great Food Deserves Carlsberg

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Stoves and toilets

Stephen Luby, a professor of medicine at Stanford University, is an expert in sanitation in South Asia. His seminal article in *The Lancet* in 2005 which was a randomised controlled trial on the significant benefits of soap in decreasing



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

infections in the slums of Karachi is one of the most elegant pieces on public health from the region.

The good doctor is now helping out with another major study to see the effect of sanitation on the growth of children in Bangladesh,

sanitation on growth. Stunting may lead to not only shorter stature, but the children may also be mentally deficient.

Data is beginning to show that despite a reasonably good diet, Indian children are more stunted than their counterparts in sub-Saharan countries like Somalia and the Congo where nutritious food may not be as readily available as in India for children.

The one significant difference in Indian children is that they are brought up in an environment of open defecation, unlike in Africa. Indeed, half of India's population urinates and defecates outside, and by all accounts Nepal cannot be far behind.

In the Ganga in Varanasi where many pilgrims bathe, a stream of 20 million gallons of sewage flows directly every day into the river just above the bathing



Kenya and Zimbabwe. One of the reasons that has prompted this study is very relevant to Nepal and India where there is phenomenal open defecation.

It is now believed that poor sanitation leads to stunting of growth in children. Luby's study deals with trying to determine the magnitude of the effect of poor

ghats. Many pilgrims bathe in this water and brush their teeth in nearby outlets. In a smaller way, the polluted waters of the Bagmati and Bishnumati witness similar activities.

Infections like hookworm, amoebas, or typhoid triggered by poor hygiene due to open defecation so debilitate the child

that the body has no strength left to power and develop vital growth. In other words, the child's body is so busy fighting infections and resulting inflammations that all the important nutrients are diverted away from the vital activity of physical and mental growth. Children are therefore stunted and malnourished. In fact, now there is evidence to show that malnourishment during childhood not only predisposes the child to infections, but as an adult the child will also be more susceptible to non-infectious diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and stroke - a double whammy.

But what is becoming clear is that just building new toilets may not be the answer. People's desire to defecate in the open is so strong in this part of the world that the government-built toilet outside become used for other "more useful" purposes like storing fodder for cattle. Clearly this is a cultural problem and it doesn't have a purely technical solution.

There is a parallel here with clean stoves. In order to decrease indoor air pollution which leads to many problems including lung and heart diseases, Nepal has for decades tried to introduce clean stoves to replace traditional firewood stoves for cooking purposes. Many of these smoke-free stoves are not used after installation as people revert to traditional chulos that emit soot and smoke inside homes. Cultural factors are at play here, too.

The Nepal government has a target to make all homes equipped with smoke-free stoves and latrines. But it may be important to also continually emphasise health education, and study the cultural reasons why just building a toilet or introducing a clean stove will not guarantee acceptance. 🇳🇵

GIZMO by YANTRICK

Dish doer

Ever since the new season of Masterchef Australia began on TV, Yantrick often finds himself experimenting more in the kitchen. But in his desperate attempt to perfect his culinary skills, Yantrick ends up creating more mess than food. The result- a counter topped with mountains of dirty utensils, which you and I both know, can be a huge pain in the behind.

So, when I was offered to try out LG's D1465 dish washer, I knew it was god-sent. I know, I know in the past, I have overlooked reviewing handy kitchen appliances for more 'fashionable' gadgets like smartphones and smart TVs, but after a trial of this one, I can't wait to explore the world of domestic electrical goodness.



Its sleek metallic silver finish lends the LG D1465 a premium feel, and will undoubtedly add a touch of modernity to any kitchen it's fitted in. A LCD display and soft-touch electronic control panel sits on top of the D1465's loading door. Most importantly though, the LG D1465 is spacious, big enough to clean all your dirty dishes in one go. The learning curve is, thankfully, not too steep, and you will get the hang of automatic dish washing in no time.

LG has kitted out the D1465 with a 'Smart Rack System,' meaning the loading mechanism of the D1465 is adjustable as per your dish washing needs; cutlery, glasses, plates, big pots and pans. The D1465 features a 'Smart Drawer,' which replaces the cutlery basket that traditional dish washers have, freeing even more space in the bottom basket.

Dishes are cleaned via LG's powerful 'TrueSteam' technology, which gently removes stains without the need for pre-rinsing, thus saving the hassle and time of having to manually soak the dishes first. The D1465 uses steam to clean, and this removes even stubborn marks like lipstick stains from your best wine glasses without leaving them streaky, scratched or damaged. The 'Dual Steam Spray' allows you to wash delicate glasses and dirty pots in a single steam cycle.

Two of the frequent complaints that dish washers generate are that they are noisy, and consume too much energy. The LG D1465 has tried to address these concerns. The D1465 is not loud at all, in fact it is hard to tell if it is even on. Also, by using the 'TrueSteam' technology rather than the traditional belt and pulley dish washer setup, the LG D1465 dishwasher is amongst the most energy efficient in the market today. 🇳🇵

Yantrick's Verdict: In a fast-paced society where time is everything, the LG D1465 dish washer is a god-sent for those who are tired of handwashing mountains of dishes every day.

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GOPAL GARTAULA
in MANCHESTER

For 42-year-old Prem Giri, life is finally back on track. After spending 19 years in a refugee camp in eastern Nepal, Giri's family was resettled in the UK in 2012 and today has a real home. He has a comfortable house, a good job, and a driving license -- things he could only dream of in his bamboo hut back in Jhapa.

"The life that I have now and the one that I lived in a refugee camp in Nepal is totally different," says Giri who lived in Samtse district in south Bhutan before being deported with 100,000 other Bhutanese of Nepali origin in 1991.

While living in the camp, Giri taught tuition to pay for his Bachelor's degree in commerce. When the money wasn't enough, he cut down on food, going to bed on empty stomach on numerous occasions. But that degree helped him with his enrollment

at the University of Sheffield where he studied accounting and finance.

Giri (pic, left with his daughter) currently works as a market risk analyst for an investment company while his wife Savitri is a stay-at-home mom. The couple have three children.

Like Giri, there are 358 Bhutanese refugees who have been resettled in the UK. Tara Niraula, 46, is one of them. As the only Hindu priest in Ashton, Manchester, Niraula makes a good income performing pujas at Nepali households in the area. Niraula spent 20 years in Morang's Sanischare Camp, Sector A-3 and lives with his family of five. "It didn't take us long to gel with the Nepali and Indian families here," says Niraula.

Five minutes away from Niraula's

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residence is Junakumar Rai's house. The 37-year-old moved here from the refugee camp in Beldangi a year and half ago with her family and is currently taking language classes.

The Rai family receives 212 pounds a month as welfare money. "Education is free for the children and you can easily feed one person with 80 pounds a month," she says, but she is looking for jobs and has already applied to three different places.

Twenty minutes away from Ashton, in Falkland Street is Ganga Bahadur Budathoki's house where he lives with his family of six. His son, Amit works at a clothing factory and has already managed to buy a car while rest of the members are dependent on welfare.



PICS: GOPAL GARTAULA

The Budathoki couple spent a lot of their time in their kitchen garden. "Because it's summer, we don't have our language classes so we like to keep busy," says Budhathoki.

Another Bhutanese refugee living on Washington Road is Kamal Kumar Gurung and his family. The Gurungs moved to the UK three years ago and Kamalkumar who works in the food industry earns 51 pounds a day. Gurung says his earnings are enough to pay for his family. "Life is good, we are eating good food and living without any worry."

After 15 rounds of failed talks between the Nepal and India government regarding repatriation of Bhutanese refugees, the third country settlement program was started in 2008. Along with the US, Europe has also been taking in Bhutanese refugees.

 nepalitimes.com

- Refugees-in-waiting, #712
- Living their dreams, #663





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The failure to prevent early marriages threatens the 1000-day mothers campaign

SUNIR PANDEY
in SINDHUPALCHOK

In the last 10 years, Nepal’s infant and maternal mortality rates dropped dramatically, and with it the proportion of children physically stunted due to lack of food also decreased from 58 per cent to 40 percent. And one of the reasons undernutrition still remains high is because of teenage pregnancy.

Public health experts have found that even in places where children have enough food, malnutrition remains unacceptably high (*see Dhanvantari, page 14*). In India and Nepal, for instance, there is a strong correlation between stunting and open defecation.

And here in Sindhupalchok district, northeast of Kathmandu, the lack of progress in stopping child marriages appears to be affecting the nutrition of both mothers and their babies.



PICS: SUNIR PANDEY

Having enough to eat is not

Poverty is not the only reason for malnutrition in Nepal

RASUWA -- Mina Lo was 14 when she was married off, and by 18 she had her first baby. Since her husband left for work in the Gulf immediately after birth, the 19-year-old has been taking care of the baby boy all by herself.

Growing up in a tiny village 120km north of Kathmandu, Mina has seen her fair share of children with development disorders



INTERESTING TIMES
Mallika Aryal

caused by malnutrition. “I worry that my baby might not develop to his full potential,” she says.

Nepal is among 10 countries with the highest prevalence of stunting and one of the top 20 countries with the highest number of stunted children, according to UNICEF. UNICEF explains stunting as chronic under-

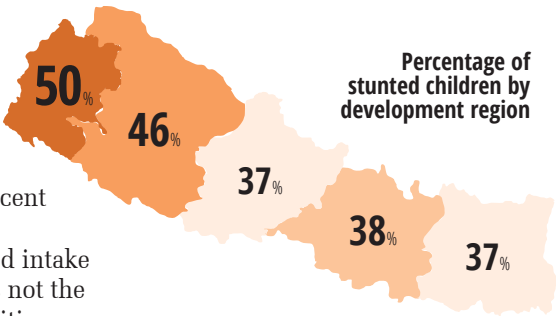
nutrition during critical periods of growth and development after till a child is 60 months. The consequences of stunting are irreversible and in Nepal the condition affects nearly half of all children under five.

Stunting is a measure of height to age of the child, but it is also indicative of how the child is growing cognitively. Experts believe Nepal’s ranking is worrying not just globally but also in South Asia. A 2013 progress report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) done by Nepal’s National Planning Commission (NPC) says that while the number of stunted children declined from 57 per cent in 2001 to 41 per cent in 2011, it is still far above the 30 per cent target set by the UN.

While inadequate food intake is related to poverty, it is not the sole indicator of malnutrition or increased stunting in Nepal. Since half of stunting happens during



MALLIKA ARYAL



SOURCE: MOHR, NEW ERA, & KF INTERNATIONAL, 2011

pregnancy, babies need nutrient rich food from their mothers while still in the womb.

Keen to learn more about nutrition and proper childcare, Mina took the help of Mohmaya Acharya, a Female Community Health Volunteer. Acharya told the new mother to eat the green leafy vegetables readily available in her garden and rear chicken for meat and eggs. She also breastfed her baby exclusively for

six months and continues to be careful about what she eats as she is still nursing her 14-month-old boy.

Acharya says teaching about nutrition to young mothers is not as difficult as teaching them about sanitation and hygiene. A common infection such as diarrhoea in the first two years of a child life can be very risky. And if children are suffering from infection due to poor sanitation they can have up to six diarrhoeal episodes per year. All the nutrients children are supposed to be using for development are then used to fight against the infection. Even if children recover, they are not as healthy as before.

Food insecurity is a contributing factor to stunting in Nepal, and the country’s central and far-western regions are the most food insecure and the prevalence of stunting in these areas are as high as 60 per cent. Realising that previous efforts to lessen stunting had not been

development

STARK DIFFERENCE: With the support of her parents-in-law, 21-year-old Anita Dulal Thapa (*pic, left*) and her baby have been so healthy for the last 11 months that the entire Thapa family was named ‘model family’ by health workers in Melamchi. In contrast, Sharmila Danuwar, 17, (*pic, right*) is soon to deliver her second child.

It takes all day for Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHV) to walk from one village to another, so health workers are training new mothers at the sub-health post at Ichok, 10 km from Melamchi bajar, to take care of themselves and their babies. “We keep talking about 1000-day mothers, but how does one arrive at the number?” Gyanendra Ghorasaini, a trainer, asks 21 young mothers who are attending with their babies. A hand goes up in the corner: “It’s 270 days of pregnancy plus the 730 days until our babies turn two.”

Ghorasaini is pleased with the correct answer, and other mothers nod with understanding. Studies have shown malnutrition in the mother during pregnancy and in the baby after birth hampers brain development, making children slow learners. If breastfeeding mothers and pregnant women don’t have access to the right nutrients, they are more likely to have children with inadequately developed brains.

To prevent this, new mothers in Ichok are taught to practice

“*Harek bar, khana char*” (four meals a day). These meals must comprise of vegetables, greens, grain, milk, meat, or eggs. But not everyone can afford to feed themselves and their livestock and poultry, and it is particularly more difficult for younger mothers without support at home.

Anu Lama worked as a nanny in Kuwait for two years, and at 19 is already a mother of a four-month-old daughter. The family farm hardly produces enough to feed her and her baby four meals a day and she can’t afford to buy feed for the chicken to make them grow faster. Her husband works in India, and his mother is an alcoholic. Her sister-in-law is pregnant, too, so Anu has to do all the house and farm work carrying her baby around.

Across the Indrawati River in Majhgaun, a village of the Danuwar ethnic group the situation is even more dire. Most mothers here are school dropouts, the result of early marriage. Their uneducated husbands barely earn enough as menial labourers to feed both mother and child.

Sharmila Danuwar (*pic, right*) was married at 15 and has a 15-month-old daughter. The delivery was complicated because Sharmila’s body wasn’t ready for childbirth. Two years later, she is eight months pregnant again.

Isha Danuwar, 17, has a one-month-old baby who was born with deformed feet. Sangeeta Danuwar was married at 16 and already has a six-month-old baby. Maya Danuwar is 21 and has two children, three and two. None of

these young mothers can afford four meals a day.

But with enough support at home, some young mothers are healthy and well-fed. Anita Dulal Thapa (*pic, left*) of Goregaun was married off at 18 and had her baby at 21. Her husband works in India but his parents treat her like their own daughter. She gets time off from housework to study. There is enough milk, grain, greens, and vegetables to feed mother and baby.

“Such cooperation is rare here, particularly when the sons are not at home,” says Bikash Shrestha of Suaahara Nepal which works with 1000-day mothers like Anita, whom he has named a ‘model mother’.

For families less fortunate, VDC Secretary Krishna Bahadur Gyawali has been allocating a part of the annual budget to train pregnant women and new mothers about growing their own greens. Over 200 thousand-day mothers are now growing tomatoes, beans, pumpkins, cucumbers, and spinach to augment their diet, and Gyawali believes other VDCs in the district could also take similar initiatives on their own.

Says Gyawali: “This money was previously spent on meetings and trainings where the usual suspects turned up. What we have tried to do is spend it on those who need it the most.”



nepalitimes.com

■ Underfed and underfunded, #256

■ Faulty feeding, #318

enough


too effective, the government conducted a Nutrition Assessment and Gap Analysis in 2009, which recommended building a multi-sector nutrition program to address the gaps in health and nutrition programs.

Nepal is also one of the first countries to commit to the global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, which recognises multiple causes of malnutrition and recommends that partners work across sectors to achieve nutritional goals.

In 2012, five ministries in Nepal came together with the NPC and development partners to form the Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan which offers interventions such as providing supplements to expectant mothers, increasing availability of food in the community, improving access to clean and cheap energy sources such as biogas etc. The plan has been implemented in six pilot districts to reduce the current prevalence of malnutrition by one-third.

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Agreeing to agree

Interview with Baburam Bhattarai, Chairman of the Political Consultation Committee on the Constitution in *Annapurna Post*, 4 August

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

Annapurna Post: There is only one month left for an agreement on the contentious issues in the constitution. In the current scenario, can that deadline be met?

Baburam Bhattarai: They say leave the difficult issues till the last, but before that we have to build trust between the various groups, understand their positions, find compromises. So, we are concentrating on areas in which an agreement had eluded us in the previous CA. We have agreed to find points of agreement.

How can there be an agreement when the parties haven't even started discussing state restructuring and form of government?

I have spoken to the top leaders and we have agreed to use Track Two channels to explore points of compromise on state restructuring, forms of governance and modalities for elections.

Have you seen any of the differences being narrowed?

All sides have to back down a bit, that is the only way we can find a solution. We also

have to realise what will happen if we don't meet an agreement. If no one gives an inch, the constitution will not be written, and if that happens everything we struggled for and attained will be lost.

Does this mean you are near agreeing to a mixed system as the middle points between parliamentary and presidential systems?

Difficult for me to say, but try to understand that an agreement will be different from everyone's present stand.

Who will have executive power, the president or prime minister?

I won't be able to answer that because that may affect an agreement. All I can say is that we will try to find a formula acceptable to all, and we can't go back to before the 12-point agreement to find that meeting point. Because if that happens there is a danger of another rebellion.

And what kind of federalism would be the most suitable?

This is the most crucial issue. In fact, a republic is just a political format, but political and economic transformation will happen through state restructuring. It was this issue on which the last CA had to be dissolved. I feel the parties have learnt their lessons from that and will try to find a compromise.

Which model is the committee closest to: the 7, 11 or 14-province formula?

The most suitable would be to use the recommendations of the previous State Restructuring and Sharing of State Power Committee and the State Restructuring High-level Commission as a starting point.

Will there be more or fewer provinces, then?

More than the number of provinces, the important point is on what basis we should form them. So far the consensus is to use the five criteria of identity (ethnic, community, linguistic, historic and geographic) and the four criteria of capacity (geographical continuity, administrative efficiency, natural resource base, and potential for economic growth) to demarcate provinces. The federal system will be based on these criteria, and the number of provinces will also be decided on that basis.

But the parties don't seem to be serious about meeting the deadline?

I have said we should work day and night to finish it. Modi's visit distracted the government for two weeks, hence the delay. Now, we will intensify our discussions.

It is said the last CA was dissolved because we didn't factor in the sensitivities of our neighbours. This time, some parties have made a U-turn, right?

I don't think our neighbours had a decisive role last time. State restructuring is our internal matter, and the neighbours will naturally be interested in how that will affect their national interest.

But isn't China worried about ethnic provinces along the north, and India about how many provinces there will be along the south?

Not at all. Both want stability in Nepal, and they will go along with whatever ensures stability. They haven't told us do this, or don't do that.



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कान्तिपुर

Abin in *Kantipur*, 5 August



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राजधानी

Uttam Nepal in *Rajdhani*, 5 August

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“Now we won't go for an armed struggle.”

CPN-M Secretary Netra Bikram Chand speaking the day after Narendra Modi visited Kathmandu, *freeneal.com.np*, 4 August

Come together

onlinekhabar.com, 4 August

onlinekhabar

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the Madhesi leaders from all parties together when he was in Kathmandu. But judging from their body language after the meeting, the leaders seem to have been disappointed with what he had to say.

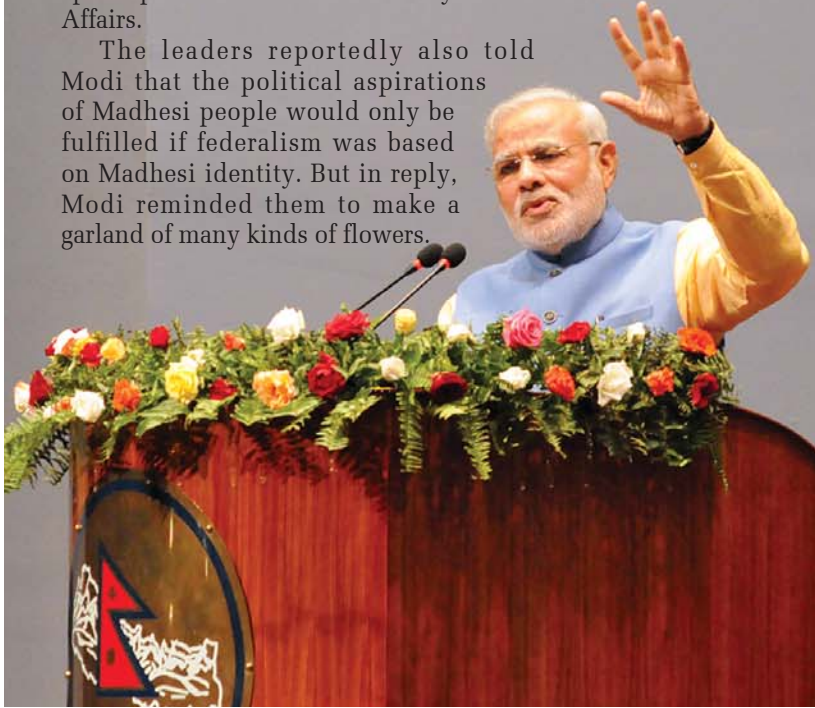
During the meeting, TMLP Chairman Mahantha Thakur and Sadbhavana Chairman Rajendra Mahato complained that they were discriminated against by the Nepali state. “But Modi told us we must attempt to join all regions together,” said Madhes Samata Party Chairman Meghraj Nishadh.

NC leader Amresh Kumar Singh reportedly asked Modi why he used the word ‘Tarai’ instead of ‘Madhes’ and why he talked only about projects in the hills. “There is poverty and unequal development, so I talked about developing the Madhes,” Singh told *onlinekhabar.com*.

During his speech to parliament, Modi talked about Nepal's mountains, hills and plains being one, and heaped praise on Gorkha soldiers. Normally, Nepal's Madhesi leaders don't even want to hear the word ‘Gorkhali’ and this, Singh confirms, is what bugged them.

“Modi told us India would help in the development of Madhes but requested us to rise above anti-hill sentiments,” one leader said afterwards. He added Modi said they should think of the country as a whole and not just specific regions. This stance was confirmed by messages released by Sayed Akbaruddin, the spokesperson for India's Ministry of External Affairs.

The leaders reportedly also told Modi that the political aspirations of Madhesi people would only be fulfilled if federalism was based on Madhesi identity. But in reply, Modi reminded them to make a garland of many kinds of flowers.



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Trafficking in Kathmandu

At most social gatherings in the post-Modi era of Nepali history, the conversation sooner or later turns to traffic in Mandu, and the state thereof. Now, with the frothcoming Shark Summit, traffic rules will be changed. It is hence mandatory in the interest of public safety for all road users to read these FAQs:

Q: Which side of the road do I generally drive on in Nepal?
A: Generally, we drive on the left, but generals can drive on either side. Being a democratic and inclusive federal republic, road dividers have now been removed so citizens can also drive on whichever side of the road they fancy, exercising their constitutionally guaranteed right to the Freedom of Movement upheld last week on the road outside the Supreme Court. Street centerlines have also been erased, they were just a humble suggestion anyway.

Q: What do I do if there is an escorted VVVVIP convoy trying to overtake me at Tribhuvan Salik?
A: Pull over, give the dirty finger while it passes, but immediately tail-gate the escort vehicle otherwise you'll be stuck at the Salik forever.

Q: What are the rules on the use of turn indicators?
A: In the city: a blinking right sidelight means vehicle is thinking of turning right but isn't sure, it could be left. On highways: blinking right signal means car behind can overtake even if there is a distinct possibility he will plunge into the Trisuli. While stationary: a right sidelight on Ringworm Road means I've parked in a no-parking zone, but I'm pretending I'm not parked, because I have dashed into Bajeko Sekuwa and Tass for a takeout.

Q: On the Jawalakhel Traffic Circle what are the rules on the right of way?
A: Four legs good, two

wheels bad. Give way to cattle approaching from the right, but if it is an incoming Maruti, accelerate immediately and beat him to the turn.

Q: Have the authorities made up their minds on the use of smart phones while driving?
A: Yes. The ban on the use of smart phones while driving has been revoked because the #\$\$%* thing never works anyway. Tweeting while driving is allowed because it may be your last tweet.



Q: Do I have to be careful about honking?
A: Can't hear you. Oh yes, anyone failing to honk incessantly while driving could have his/her/its license confiscated. Honking alerts road-users outside hospitals and schools about your presence, and failure to toot one's own trumpet is tantamount to reckless endangerment of pedestrians.

Q: Do I really need to wear a helmet?
A: Yes, wearing helmets is compulsory for pedestrians, especially if you are walking under the influence. Motorcycle drivers are also required to wear protective headgear, but the wife sitting behind is not. Their 5-year-old son sitting on the fuel tank doesn't need a helmet, but he can wear shades if he so wishes.

Q: What is the latest on parking?
A: Parallel parking in unparalleled situations is henceforth banned for private vehicles. Taxis, however, are allowed to park anywhere as long as they block junctions. A taxi that parks leaving ample room for through

traffic is liable to prosecution under the Waste of Public Space Act.

Q: Can I use an international driving license in Nepal?
A: A valid national driving license from places where driving conditions are similar to Nepal (Eritrea, Djibouti, Burkina Faso, the Far Side of the Moon) may be used. Expats from other countries need to sit for a written exam and a driving test. Fine print: Neither the driver nor the license should have expired.

Q: What is the point of zebra crossings?
A: My thoughts exactly. Pedestrians are heretofore banned during rush hour for their own safety and because they slow traffic movement. If a pedestrian does try to break the law by crossing a zebra with an ass, drivers should accelerate, flash and honk to warn them off. Livestock, dogs, rhesus monkeys, uncastrated goats, zoo elephants, wedding horses, water buffalos, leopards, chicken and other street fauna (except zebras) can cross the road at their own convenience as long as they can satisfactorily explain why it is that they want to get to the other side.

Q: Speaking of which, is it legal to carry stuffed animals on the rear window?
A: All cars must keep cute fluffly animals behind the back seat and on dashboard to make a car interior feel like home. Since we spend so much time in them, vehicles are also required by law to be retrofitted with the following accessories by January 1st: toilet with shower, small bar, gym with treadmill, broadband Internet. For emergencies, all cars must also be fitted with rocket-propelled ejection seats.

Q: Do I have to wear a seatbelt?
A: This is a trick question, right? In the interest of road safety, seat-belts are mandatory at all times, even if you have been waiting at the petrol station since 9:30 yesterday morning. This is to restrain drivers who want to get out and strangle someone.



The Ass

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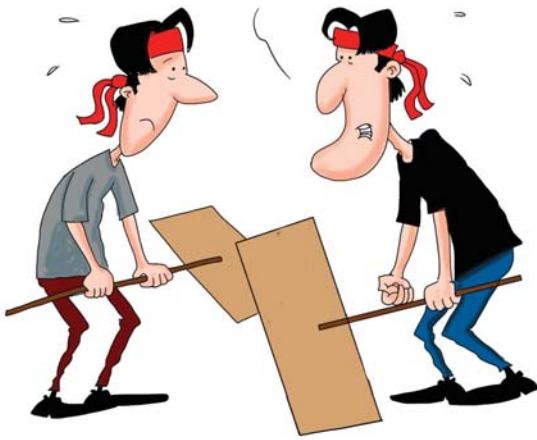


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