A belated monsoon resurgence dumped nearly 100 mm of rain on central Nepal over 24 hours on Thursday. While it was just another inconvenience for the residents of the capital, there was alarm on the Sun Kosi downstream from the landslide that blocked the river two weeks ago.
The proportion of children in Nepal who are physically stunted due to the lack of food decreased from 58 per cent to 40 per cent in the last ten years putting them on track to meet the 30 per cent target. But those are national averages, and in the mountains of western Nepal and in the eastern Tarai, especially among Dalit and other marginalised families, the malnutrition rate is still an acceptably high 60 per cent. It is a moral outrage that more than half the children in some parts of the country are hungry and stunted.

In another report from Rasuwa last week, Mallick Aryan wrote that even having enough to eat is not enough to ensure adequate nutrition. Indeed, now researchers on public health in India show that even when they had enough to eat children were stunted because poor sanitation and open defecation led to chronic gastric infections affecting the body’s nutrient uptake. Although low density of ‘Modi visit must halt a new era of trust and friendship between the two countries. Nepal wants to upgrade its status to a ‘developing country’ by 2022. It’s high-time for Nepal to seek economic and development partnership with India. Efforts should be made by Nepalese and Indian leaders to build trust and confidence and open up new development prospects for mutual benefit.

Hem B

Anil Karki

Nevi has many great strides in improving maternal and child health in the past 10 years. In his lectures in Kathmandu last week, Swedish medical statistician Hans Rosling described Nepal as a “champion” — the only poor country in the world that has made such dramatic improvements. We all deserve a pat on our backs. But imagine how much further ahead we would have been if we didn’t have to suffer a ruinous ten-year war. If we had stabilised our politics by now, if we had better governance, if...

However, there are two Millennium Development Goals in which we haven’t fared as well: gender equality and eliminating extreme hunger. The two may seem unrelated, but gender equality is fundamental to reducing child hunger.

The primary reason for hunger, however, is still the chronic and pervasive lack of food caused by low farm productivity, or staples being unaffordable to the poor. In the mid- and far-western mountainous areas of Nepal, rainfed small-hold farms produce enough food for last families only for 160 days in a year — forcing more than half the male population to migrate to India to work.

The government tries to boost agriculture production through subsidies, incentives and support for cash crop producers or commercial farms supplying produce for the urban market. This is lopsided because 80 per cent of Nepal’s food production comes from small-hold farms. Because they are poor and are scattered across remote regions of Nepal, family farmers are ignored. Yet, small-hold agriculture is sustainable, doesn’t need expensive inputs, and has decent productivity despite the lack of irrigation, extension and support from the state.

We need a paradigm shift in the way we look at hunger in this country by not just addressing food security, but nutrition security. This means looking at three aspects of nutrition: calorie hunger, protein hunger and the hunger hidden by deficiency of micronutrients like iron, zinc, and vitamin A. The state’s (mis)treatment of family farmers is keeping rural Nepal poor, which is why all three types of hunger linger. As men migrate, family-run small farms are also increasingly falling apart. Gender imbalance and poor sanitation stunt children, impairing their physical and mental development.

At an international conference on family farming in Chennai last week, green revolution guru M S Swaminathan said increasing calorie intake is not good enough, we need nutritional security by aligning our priority to support family farmers. Stunted children today will stunt the country’s future development.

The state’s (mis)treatment of small-hold family farmers keeps rural Nepal poor, which is why hunger lingers.
Nepali politicians are too busy protecting gangsters to prepare for future Bhote Kosis

But now, we have to factor in one more danger: climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its 5th Assessment Report in Islamabad last week with this dire warning: ‘The impacts of climate change will influence flooding of settlements and infrastructure, heat-related deaths, and food and water shortages in South Asia.’

Indeed, the tragedy is a wake-up call and a reminder of the dangers of living and building in the Himalaya. Settlements along river banks, on steep and fragile slopes are at risk even during a year with scanty rains as this monsoon season. Building highways and hydropower projects that factor in the danger of flashfloods will make them more expensive than they already are, and even then, they will not be fully protected.

The weather has gone crazy is a familiar refrain. Older people in Tarai shake their heads about never-before cold, the trans-Himalayan district are abnormally snowless in winter, or there are erratic monsoons like this year. Photographs of the glaciers below Mt Everest taken 80 years apart show lakes where there used to be ice, and are stark reminders of the creeping catastrophe of climate change. These lakes can burst because of their fragile moraine dams, and during a major earthquake there could be multiple bursts of several lakes simultaneously.

Unfortunately, while the tragedy unfolded in Jure and the Bhote Kosi timebomb ticked away, the state’s attention was divided between the Narendra Modi visit and the alleged encounter killing of a UML-affiliated gangster. This week, UML lawmakers raised a ruckus in parliament alleging that the police killed the mafioso in cold blood. The debate in parliament was final vivid proof - if proof was still needed - about the criminalisation of Nepali politics. The idiocy of the UML MPs is astounding: they don’t even realise how they have foolishly incriminated themselves. Or maybe they don’t care about what the public thinks. And that is even more worrying.

With the priorities of the media and the politicians on gangland killings, there was little attention on the plight of the survivors of Bhote Kosi. The danger of a dam collapse is not yet over, and the Kodari Highway is still cut off. This time it was a landslide. Next time, it could be a glacial outburst flood or an earthquake. Bhote Kosi was a test case for a national level response, which (except for the Army) was woefully slow and inadequate. Both the political parties and the government need to have their priorities right: the protection and welfare of citizens. This week we saw living proof that the state’s priority is elsewhere.

Adrift
Workers in exile

International spotlight on mistreatment of Nepali workers is leading to labour reform, but much needs to be done

CLARE HENNIG

B uttered Aims Upseti emptied a beer and excitedly divulged that he was leaving for Qatar the next day. He had impressed the recruiters with his bartending résumé and had been promised a job in a five-star hotel in Doha.

That night, his last working in Thamel, Upseti danced and sang along to the music as he served customers and poured drinks. He couldn’t wait to start his new life.

Each month, 16,000 Nepalis leave the country to work in the Gulf. One in every three families in Nepal has someone working abroad and sending money home.

Remittances form nearly a quarter of Nepal's GDP. However, recent international exposés have revealed harsh conditions many workers face abroad. It has been called ‘modern-day slavery’: workers, especially those in construction, live in cramped, insect-infested housing with poor access to both sanitation and cooking facilities.

They often work long hours in gruelling conditions – sometimes up to 16 hours a day for paychecks that are frequently late. In Qatar alone, 400 Nepali workers have died in the past three years.

The responsibility for ensuring labour conditions and workers’ rights lies on the shoulders of the country of employment. The exploitation, however, begins at home, in the recruiting agencies in Nepal.

Everyone is looking for money,” said Sona Prasad Lamichhane, general secretary of Pravasi Nepal Co-ordination Committee which works for the rights of migrant workers. “Recruiting agencies take fees from workers and send them abroad where their contract may be different than promised,” he said. “This is a huge problem.”

According to government regulations, a recruiting agency may only charge up to Rs 80,000. But some charge more than double that, and Lamichhane said workers will sometimes sign contracts in Nepal only to find on arrival at the host country airport that there is no job, or that the pay and job description is not what was agreed.

There are 791 manpower agencies in Nepal but only about 400 of them are registered,” said Lamichhane. “The monitoring system is very weak even among the registered ones. Our government needs to take more responsibility.

Mujahid Sattar from the Asians in Middle East which recruits Nepali workers, agreed. The Labour Department must approve all his foreign employment contracts, but most of the follow-up monitoring is left to recruiting agencies.

“The monitoring system is not effective,” explained Sattar. “Recruiting agencies are just the middlemen. It’s up to the government to solve the problems, we cannot do anything.”

There is nothing stopping recruiters to make immediate changes to ensure better working conditions abroad, but the problem is a lack of incentives, explained Kathmandu-based journalist Pete Pattison who has written the original story in The Guardian about Nepalis in Qatar earlier this year.

“First of all, they could only deal with recognised, trustworthy brokers. That itself is a massive step,” said Pattison. “They need to be more rigorous in vetting the companies that they do business with.”

Other improvements would be to formalise the relationship between the agencies and local brokers abroad, charge appropriate recruiting fees and guarantee minimum wages in all contracts.

Recent coverage in the international press, and with spotlight on construction related to the 2022 World Cup, there are signs the Qatar government is taking notice. The Qatari Attorney General was in Kathmandu last month to meet senior officials.

Nepali officials are aware of the problems and the need to protect its citizens, but are reluctant to give a higher profile to the issue for fear of retaliation from the Qatars.

Said Pattison: “The Nepal government also knows that people are looking at them for answers. The question is whether it will deliver.”

nepalitimes.com

Sudden death

PETE PATTISON

O n a recent visit to Qatar, I was given a tour of the accommodation housing the workers building the first venue for the 2022 World Cup, the Al Wakrah Stadium. It was immaculate. Tidy bedrooms, clean toilets, social areas with flat-screen tvs and even a games room with table football.

It was in stark contrast to any other workers’ accommodation I had seen in Qatar, and it was not too good to be true. It was. A few days later I went back to interview the workers. Some of them told me they were treating the workers on the campus well. Others were earning as little as Rs 77 an hour for overtime work.

I left feeling despondent. How could workers building a showcase World Cup venue, in one of the richest countries in the world, be paid so little? Is the committee organising the World Cup incompetent, or just indifferent?

On the same trip, I met a group of workers from India, Sri Lanka and Nepal who had fitted out two floors of lavish offices in the Al Bidda tower in Doha.

The offices are finished in glossy white stone and feature marble floors, carved etched glass, but the workers are living six to a room in cramped, insect-infested housing with poor access to both sanitation and cooking facilities.

Some leading figures in Qatar seem to be in denial about the problems facing migrant workers.

In a recent interview the head of Qatar’s elite Aspire sports foundation, Khalid Al Sulaiteen, claimed migrant workers were being paid well, denied the country was involved in abuse and assured that the workers were provided with housing and food.

Others have said the accommodation the workers were provided in Qatar was better than promised in their employment contract.

“Migrant workers are living in 20 square metres in four-person rooms,” an official for the Qatar World Cup organising committee said. “This is not in compliance with the ILO laws.”

He couldn’t wait to start his new life. The New Guard

A glimmer of hope

International media attention on construction workers from South Asia that has gripped the Middle East preparing for the 2022 World Cup, the completion of the New York University (NYU) Abu Dhabi campus, and the Louvre and Guggenheim museums being built.

The impetus for change is largely external, international criticism and widespread scrutiny is creating pressure for change from the governments involved.

On 20 July, Qatar announced plans to improve labour laws with tighter regulations and a ban on working under excessive temperatures and increased fines for employers who confiscate workers’ passports, and a new system of electronic payments directly to employers’ bank accounts.

Amendments were also proposed to the current kafala system, where workers are tied to their employer and can neither change jobs nor leave the country without permission. However, no time frame was given for the implementation of these reforms.

In June, with the completion of NYU Abu Dhabi’s controversial new campus on Saadiyat Island, an email was sent by the university’s Vice Chancellor in New York to the student body announcing an investigation into allegations of labour standard violations.

Before construction of the campus began, NYU had announced a Statement of Labour Values regarding wages, conditions and working hours and were assured the contractors were upholding the standards, but violations were exposed by The New York Times shortly before completion of the campus. The international investigation firm Nardello & Co is heading the inquiry but has not yet published its findings.

In Nepal, the Department of Foreign Employment has promised to tighten the regulation of recruiting agencies in the coming months. It hopes to impede fraudulent agencies by making it compulsory for all contracts between migrant workers and agencies to be signed in the presence of a government official. At the moment, the provision would only apply to those going to Oman, but plans are underway to expand it to other Gulf countries as well.

Such reforms, both from nations sending and receiving workers, is just the beginning. And the world is watching because high-profile football tournaments, famous universities and museums are involved. But more importantly, workers’ rights need to be respected by both the home and host countries.

Clare Hennig in Abu Dhabi

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Tested across Nepal from East to West; Tried successfully with sample size reaching 50,000; Trusted by over a dozen institutions.
A gender-blind and victim insensitive Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be a futile exercise

The blast left her youngest son disabled. “If our husbands were alive, they would have gone to any length to provide for and educate the children, now the state has to take guardianship.”

The blatant impunity that both the security forces and rebel forces enjoyed during the war engendered widespread and systematic abuse of women. Rape, sexual abuse, pretend marriages, cases of abandoned wives, and children born from rape were not uncommon. The TRC Act included two provisions that can be seen as small victories for women victims. Rape and sexual violence are defined as “serious violation of human rights” and the commission cannot recommend rape cases for amnesty. However, those accused of committing sexual violence (ie forced prostitution, sexual slavery, strip searches) can be recommended for amnesty or reconciliation with victims.

The effectiveness of the commission in providing justice to rape and sexual violence survivors is also curtailed by anachronistic laws. First, the 35-day statute of limitation for reporting rape is still in effect despite the Supreme Court’s verdict in January 2014 demanding that this clause be removed. Second, since domestic law defines rape as non-consensual penetration by sexual organs, other acts that count as rape in international law are rendered invalid. Third, in the absence of forensic or medical evidence, it’s unclear how the state envisions going about verifying statements. But the larger concern here is given the immense social stigma attached to rape and sexual violence and the culture of victim blaming, how many women will want to risk ‘dishonouring’ their families and jeopardising the life that they have so painstakingly rebuilt over the past decade by sharing stories of their abuse? Even those who are willing to open up might not have much trust and confidence in the state because it has done so little for them in the eight years since the end of the conflict.

The Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation has records of the number of killed, disabled, and injured, but rape and sexual violence survivors became the invisible victims of war. When the government distributed interim relief package in 2008, this demographic was completely left out.

If the government had set up health camps or counseling centres in targeted VDCs, women would have had a space to talk and gotten time to heal and much of the documentation would have been completed by the time a TRC was formed. Some might have then felt comfortable sharing their stories in front of a commission or a hearing,” explains Rajbhandari. “Now if we ask survivors to testify or come out in the open, we will be revictimising them.”

Mandira Sharma of Advocacy Forum also sees the failure of media and human rights groups for not recognising and respecting survivors of sexual violence. “If we had treated the women like national heroes, provided them medical care, and shown our support, it would have helped to get rid of the stigma and they would have felt encouraged to tell their stories,” she says.

While human rights activists admit that the TRC Act in its present form is neither victim-centric nor female-centric, they still see scope to make the process gender-friendly without drawing up the working procedures for the commission by including more women and establishing clear guidelines for confidentiality.

“As a society we don’t talk about personal issues with the opposite sex. So when a woman who has been a victim of sexual violence finds herself in front of male lawyers, male judges, male officers it is very not comfortable and creates a lot of suspicion about her presence,” says lawyer and former CA member Sapana Pradhan Mahato.

One way of building confidence and creating an enabling environment for survivors is by bringing women on board who have not only experienced the war first hand, but can also advocate on behalf of their sisters. And there are plenty of potential candidates: previous legislators like Purnimaya Lama to Devi Sunuwar whose daughter was killed by the Army in 2005, and Sarbisti Shrestha, who lost two of her brothers and her niece to the conflict.

Currently, the TRC Act stipulates a minimum quota of one woman in the five-member recommendation committee as well as the commission. Rajbhandari recommends having a female majority at every level from commissioners to experts to officials to lawyers to make the process truly inclusive. She says: “Women won’t neglect human rights issues like extra-judicial killings or disappearances, but with men there is a tendency of leaving out ‘soft’ women-centric issues like rape and sexual violence.”

The Act and the commission are a result of blood and sacrifice of thousands of Nepalis. While not all cases can be investigated or prosecuted, the state and political parties should at least follow sound procedures and make sure that they are making a genuine effort towards providing justice. But can the commission ever-seek, investigate, and prosecute, the commission should also look into the very nature of women’s access to justice and addressing the inherent inequalities in our legal and social set up that added to the exploitation in the first place. A gender-blind and victim insensitive TRC will be a futile exercise.
What we have this week is called a monsoon “pulse” a low pressure area within the general flow of moisture-laden air. These periods of intense rain over several days is also what a “normal” monsoon looks and feels like. Central Nepal is in a zone of convergence of the two arms of the southwest monsoon: one from the Bay of Bengal and the other from the Arabian Sea. To cut a long story short: expect incessant rain for Friday and part of Saturday, with the precipitation easing off only on Sunday.

KATHMANDU

Teacher Mala Kharel was on her morning walk around Patan Durbar square a decade ago when she came across a crowd—a young girl who lived on the street had been raped by a priest. According to bystanders, she was lured with the promise of a five rupee note.

The story affected Mala deeply and motivated her to do something for the street children of Kathmandu. She started out with four girls, all victims of abuse, and began educating them, but soon realised the problem was much bigger than she had imagined.

“I couldn’t sleep knowing there were many other vulnerable children on the streets,” she says.

So, in 2005, Mala, (pictured, sitting front row, above) opened Bal Sarathi Academy, which provides free education to street children who also get one meal a day, textbooks, stationery and uniforms, all free of cost. Initially, Mala paid for everything herself, but later got help from an American sponsor for 75 students. The school also gets support from Action Aid to rent its building and has eight volunteer teachers.

When the money ran out, Mala thought she may have to shut down the school. But a chance meeting with RJ Rita Limbu with Image FM at a program changed that. Limbu came up with the idea of the Rs 1 campaign which asks donors to pledge to give one rupee a day to the school.

Limbu began the campaign from her own home, collecting Rs 1 a day from family members. The number of contributors has now grown to 85 and the school raises up to Rs 13,000 a month from this initiative.

Before joining Bal Sarathi Academy, six-year-old Sanjay Giri would spend his entire day begging around at Pasupati, where his parents also begged for a living. Today, Sanjay spends his day at the school and says he loves it.

Four-year-old Manoj Shrestha, who lost one of his feet to cancer, started at the school two years ago and would have nowhere else to go if the school wasn’t there.

The students love being in class so much that they even come on weekends and public holidays. “One of the reasons why they attend school regularly is because of the free meal, which they wouldn’t be getting if they were out on the streets,” says Mala.

After they pass their Grade Five exams, the students are sent to Sharada Higher Secondary School in Tilganga and Baba Vatika Secondary School, both of which have agreed to educate the children free of cost.

Donate a rupee a day and educate a child

DEVAKI BISTA
BFF,
Adopt a dog from Animal Nepal’s shelter – the local mixed breeds are healthier and better adjusted to local conditions than pedigrees. Rs 150, animalnepal.org, (01)5538068, 9841334537

Cultural fair,
A charity program for the visually impaired cricket team of Nepal, concert by Kutumba, exhibitions and food stalls. Rs 50, 16 August, 10am to 12pm, Jawalakhel Ground

Free press,
A public lecture by Indian lawyer and International Commission of Jurists Commissioner Rajeev Dhavan on the constraints news media face in emerging democracies. Free entry, 15 August, 4pm, Kamini Hall, Hotel Annapurna, Darbar Marg, (01)4472807

Food fiesta,
Enjoy multi-cuisine food with live music from 1974 AD, Anuprastha, Albatross, Cobweb, and more bands, in the Umanga NATHM Food Fiesta 2014. Noon to 5.30pm, Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management, Rani Bhawan, (01)4464822, 9849819663

Charya Nritya,
Experience Kathmandu’s version of dance meditation under the tutelage of Prajwal Ratna Vajracharya and immerse yourself in nature, consciousness and compassion. Rs 1,600, 7 to 14 September, 12.15pm, inneradventuretravel.com

Embassy,
Away from the hustle bustle of the streets, enjoy the variety of multi-cuisine foods at a place ideal for business meets and casual rendezvous. Embasy Restaurant and Bar, Patan Dhokai, Mulchowk

Dhokai Cafe,
Enjoy the delicious food and atmosphere, live music, and don’t miss the chocolate cake. Patan Dhokai

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

Ghure-kabab,
Serving the best of north Indian cuisine, with live Sarod recitals on some days. Hotel Annapurna, Darbar Marg

Mulchowk,
The blend of culinary expertise and charms of a bygone era. Babarmahal

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

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DINING

Flagbearers,
Join hands in attempting to break the Guinness World Record for the ‘Largest Human National Flag’ by bringing together more than 10,000 participants and breaking the previously held record of 28,957 participants. Rs 100, 23 August, 6 to 9am, Tundikhel, Kathmandu, (01)3021888, 9815370024

Kick off,
The world cup may be long over, but the new football season is already upon us: can Manchester City defend their EPL crown? 16 August onwards, Star Sports

Art conversation,
Visual Artist Sujan Chitrakar will be talking about ‘Mural Arts’. 29 August, 4.30pm, Tangann Maxmun, Bouddha, (01)446786

Anything can happen,
Kush Bihari Safai Hizo, a play about a journey to stardom, with Anupam Kher. 22 August, 5 pm onwards, Army Officers Club, 9810744820

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

Charya Nritya,
Experience Kathmandu’s version of dance meditation under the tutelage of Prajwal Ratna Vajracharya and immerse yourself in nature, consciousness and compassion. Rs 1,600, 7 to 14 September, 12.15pm, inneradventuretravel.com

Newa film festival,
support local filmmakers, skip the mall, and come enjoy an open-air film screening every evening for a week. 6 to 13 September, Janabahal, Kathmandu
**GETAWAYS**

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

**Monsoon Madness**, get out of Kathmandu and take advantage of this seasonal offer until the monsoon lasts.
Rs 5,555 per person for 2 nights/3 days, Shangri-La Village Resort, Pokhara, (01)4410851, (61) 462222

**Jhule mountain resort**, resting 2050m above sea level, the eco-resort boasts a farmhouse that stretches across a hill covered in pine. Enjoy an organic homestay experience.
Shekawali-Neogajjung National Park, Lappippeda-3, Jhule, (061) 467299

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**House of Music**, For five days a week, this bar and restaurant is packed with musical events that include open mics, karaoke and jam sessions. Open Tuesdays to Saturdays, 4pm to 11pm, Anil Marg, Thamel. 9851075712

**Unplugged Battle**, An unplugged music competition with exciting prizes.
15 August, 7am, Pop’s Restro and Bar

**Lipan conjuring**, Local musicians Kamero will be performing a tribute show to legendary prog-rockers Tool.
Rs 300/500, 23 August, 6pm onwards, Purple Haze Rock Bar, Thamel, 9851075172

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

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**Water-front**, Head to this serene, eco-friendly resort right in front of Phewa Lake.
Waterfront Hotel, Sedi Height, Pokhara, (061) 466303/304, 9801166311, sales@waterfronthotelnepal.com

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**Not a usual resort............ ****refresh yourself**
Padam Bahadur Tamang has started on a clean slate by reviving an age-old art form

SARTHAK KARKI

For over two millennia, Swayambu has been a holy place visited by pilgrims. Today, tourists throng the curio shops and handicraft galleries that encircle the temple on the hill. Among the puppets, thankas, and bronze wares, one form of art stands out: carved stone tablets.

Most of Nepal’s history is literally written in stone: inscriptions hewn on slabs of granite or slate found in ancient temples and archaeological sites. The practice of carving letters and drawings on stone is centuries old, and has found a new lease on life due to the tourist industry.

Unlike sculptors who carve stone into three-dimensional figures, Padam Bahadur Tamang etches intricate designs on stone tablets, finely hewing gracious curves, sharp angles, and elaborate calligraphy. It is called ‘Kila Lekh’ (writing on stone) and is heavily influenced by Buddhist and Hindu religious motifs.

The smooth dark slate on which Tamang carves is from quarries in Dhading, and its texture makes it ideal for engraving.

Tamang starts work on a clean slate, as it were, with a small chisel and mallet, and slowly the stone comes alive with intricate details. Once the work starts, there is no margin of error, mistakes once made cannot be erased or corrected.

Tamang has been working on his craft for over a decade and started selling his work nine years ago when he opened a shop at the base of Swayambhu. Three years later, he started the Top Stupa Stone Art Gallery near the temple itself and this is where he spends most of his time now.

Tamang’s wife, Man Kumari, who is a student of the art herself, believes that many forms of local and indigenous art are dying because of lack of local patronage. Luckily, sales to tourists and pilgrims keep them alive.

“It is mostly the tourists who buy our work, they are attracted by its originality and uniqueness,” Tamang says, looking up from a piece of slate on which he has just started to carve.
Occasionally a studio gets the usual summer confection just right. While Edge of Tomorrow is clearly not in any way a film that aspires to do more than rake in the millions, unlike the hideously awful and barely watchable Transformers: Age of Extinction (reviewed previously in this column), this one, is a surprisingly good action movie that really does keep you at the edge of your seat.

It goes without saying that Tom Cruise is a very strange man. But regardless of his supposed arranged marriages and his devotion to the possibly quite nefarious Church of Scientology, the man is a mega star. Cruise is likeable even while he’s cocky, a trait that has served him well in the infinite variations of the (usually same) persona he portrays onscreen.

In Edge of Tomorrow he does not stray far as General Bill Cage, a smarmy but quick to learn army officer who has never been in a battle, this in a world where yes, of course, aliens have invaded and humanity is on the brink of extinction. When Cage’s witty quips land him smack dab in the middle of the main offensive on the “mimics” (the rather terrifying and very speedy octopi like aliens who can also control and manipulate time), he finds himself dead - efficiently offed by an “alpha” mimic who spatters black bodily fluid all over him as he dies. Thus begins the slightly preposterous central refrain of the film, a time loop. Cage finds that the mimics have inadvertently transferred to him (via blood, albeit black) the ability to reset time every time he dies, giving him an opportunity to live longer each time as he teaches himself which pitfalls to avoid on the battlefield? Sound tedious? Well, I promise you, the film livens up the moment he meets the luminous Emily Blunt. Ridiculously named Rita Vrataski, Blunt is a special forces warrior who has been made a poster child for her fighting skills, and while this charming, delicate British actor may seem like an odd choice for an all out action movie, you will soon begin to see the genius behind the casting.

It is fair to say that in addition to having very high production value, scary aliens, and some pretty stellar action sequences, the main draw is the camaraderie that develops between Cruise and Blunt, two stars who have clear chemistry, leavened by a script touched with humour. So forget all the alarm bells that may go off in your head trying to figure out the time loop dynamics and enjoy a perfect summer distraction.

MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

in this column, this one, is a surprisingly good action movie that really does keep you at the edge of your seat.

It goes without saying that Tom Cruise is a very strange man.
When Bipul Chettri released his first song Wildfire/Dadako on the online audio platform Soundcloud, it spread among Nepalis (and Nepali-speakers) like flames. We heard hinting at a forest fire tearing through the Darjeeling hills, but what really tore him apart were the pent-up dreams... such a frantic speed that before the song was over, we had it on repeat.

Chettri followed up his blazing hit with a song about the monsoon. In Asar, he managed to douse the flames of Wildfire and sang sagely about the need to balance life and love. On the outside, the song was about the rainy season in his hometown Kalebung, but mind wandering among rain clouds and unending mist seeping through town, it was also an evocation of a beloved.

This week, Chettri released Sketches of Darjeeling, an EP that features three other songs in addition to the three we already knew. From forest fires to the smell of the first monsoon rain, from the meditative chanting of Om Mani Padme Hum to the choo-choo of the famous Toy Train, Sketches paints a nostalgic picture of life around the Darjeeling hills.

In Deervali Darah, Chettri reminisces about a childhood in the hills, and wishes he could still casually walk around the windswept town. He is now living in Delhi, having taken the train away. Ram Sailer is Chettri’s tribute to his father, the late Nirendra Mohan Chettri who also wrote the song long ago and is still regarded as a pioneer of folk music in Kalebung.

No portrait of Darjeeling would be complete without mentioning its famous Toy Train. The upbeat march of Rail Garee takes us past local landmarks while Chettri sings about eventually taking the same train to seek work outside the hills. “I’m going away, choo choo,” Chettri sings without regret, joyfully closing the album.

Besides making music and performing at select charity concerts, Chettri currently heads the arts department at the Vasant Valley School in New Delhi. The songs he released on Soundcloud have received over 450,000 hits and been played numerous times on radios in Nepal, India, and UK.

When Diwas Gurung recreated much-loved Nepali folk songs on his excellent album Kato Mao, he gave us a taste of what was possible with the vocabulary of folk music. With Sketches of Darjeeling, Bipul Chettri has taken it further and established a place for himself in our growing neo-folk scene.

The masterful blend of earthy tones and unmistakably Western harmonies, layered around Chettri’s melancholy singing makes Sketches essential listening, despite the brevity. What everyone is dying to know is how long will we have to keep pressing repeat before we get to see him live, in Kathmandu.

Sunir Pandey

Sketches of Darjeeling, ‘21 5’, is available on iTunes.

nepaltimes.com
EBOLA

D o we need to worry about Ebola in Nepal? To recap, the first patient with the disease lived near the Ebola River in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1976 and hence the name.

It was originally called Ebola Hemorrhagic Disease, but now it is known as Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) because not all patients had a bleeding problem (hemorrhage). A complication of dengue in the Nepal Tarai also got a recent name change from dengue hemorrhagic fever to simply severe dengue for the same reason.

Ebola victims, where mourners come in direct contact with the corpse, led to infections.

The symptoms and signs of this disease are non-specific and could be mistaken for many common Nepali ailments. Patients present with fever, malaise, sore throat which may gradually progress to the liver and the kidneys and also may lead to internal and external bleeding. In Nepal there are many common diseases such as typhoid, mumps, typhus, hepatitis, and leptospirosis to name just a few that could mimic EVD. The crucial difference is a history of travel to areas of Africa where Ebola is endemic.

Anyone who comes to see a doctor in Nepal with fever and other non-specific complaints needs to have one important question asked: has he or she been to Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria or surrounding regions. Perhaps it may be easier to first ask for a simple travel history to Africa in the recent past, and then if necessary, ask for details about specific countries in the region the patient might have been to. Most importantly, the suspected patient must be immediately brought to the attention of the health authorities.

The incubation period (the time from which the organism enters the human host to when the symptoms are first noticed) is said to be from 2 days to 3 weeks. So it may not matter if the person was in Sierra Leone five or six weeks ago and now comes with flu-like illness, because this will be past the incubation period.

At present there is no vaccine or proven drug therapy to treat the illness. However an interesting ethical problem has risen, about treatment with the 'experimental' drug ZMapp. Apparently two American aid workers (working in Liberia, now in Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, USA) received this drug and are thought to be improving.

Some activists have asked why two white American aid workers received the drug while hundreds of Africans are dying from EVD. But, unlike this experimental drug, which has not even gone through typical animal testing for side effects, had been used on Africans? The headlines would have screamed that Africans were being used as guinea pigs.

In Nepal there is probably no need to consider an EVD diagnosis unless a patient with flu-like symptoms has a travel history to Ebola-affected areas in the past month. Our immigration authorities have to watch out for such passengers.

R U trying to buy/invest or sell your property ???

R U looking for a tenant or property to rent out ???

R U searching for a property management ???

R U planning to make your own house ???

R U looking for interior designer & architect. ???

R U looking for realstate legal solutions ???

R U looking for plumbers, masons, electricians, carpenters ???

Boasting dimensions of 23.6 inches x 29.7 inches x 33.5 inches, the machine is heavy at 64 kg. The width, however, is adjustable from 17.7 inches to 21.7 inches, making it convenient to fit into households with limited space.

The maximum washing capacity of the machine is 7 kilos. The best part about this product is the numerous options it offers to cater to your washing needs. Features like Quick Wash, Easy Iron, Rinse Hold, Pre-wash, Intensive Wash options, along with the options to select water temperature from 20°C to 95°C, and washing spin speed up to 1,200 RPM, makes the WF700BORBKWQ a highly customisable machine.

The Samsung WF700BORBKWQ has a brushless digital inverter motor designed to run at a cooler temperature than conventional washing machine motors, consequently using less energy while lasting longer as well. Samsung offers a 10-year warranty on the product, another reason to feel at ease over the investment.

Its new streamlined ‘Diamond Drum’, with small water-exit holes, enables delicate handling of even the softest of fabrics, while preventing them from sticking out and being damaged.

Samsung has also packed the WF700BORBKWQ with Volt Control, a feature that safeguards the machine from high and low voltage levels, much needed during erratic power outages.

Yantrick’s Verdict: Retailing for almost Rs 70K at Samsung outlets across the country, the Samsung WF700BORBKWQ Front-loading Washing Machine is a top-of-the-line washing machine that will soon find a home in Yantrick’s home.

GIZMO by YANTRICK

One click wash

If there is one thing that Yantrick absolutely detests, and I am sure many of you do too, is doing laundry. The thought of having to wash stacks of Baby towel linen is enough to send this one on a procrastination overdrive. But the truth is nobody can avoid laundry day, not even the sartorial connoisseurs amongst us.

Now, you, like many of my friends, might be thinking, “Wouldn’t it have been easier to just get a washing machine or give it to a drycleaner?” Believe me, I thought about both. My experience with a drycleaner wasn’t very pleasing and I didn’t think a washing machine was a good idea, given the long hours of road sheding we suffer from, besides the once-in-10-days water supply.

So when Yantrick was asked to try the Samsung WF700BORBKWQ, a front-loader, he had his doubts. Even though the product might be amazing, he felt it wouldn’t be good enough to make him switch to automated washing. The Samsung WF700BORBKWQ is available in white, with a chrome loading door decorating its face. An LED display bar is located at the top-right corner, the detergent tray on the top-left, with a control panel of dials and buttons in between.

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Kirtipur, Kathmandu
Tel: 977 143 7101A/977 9413/977 8409
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Samsung WF700BORBKWQ

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HIGHLIGHTS OF INDIA-NEPAL PARTNERSHIP

A multi-layered program comprising 494 ongoing and completed projects at the cost of over NRs. 65 billion in almost all key economic sectors based on the priorities of the Government of Nepal. Prime Minister of India Sri Narendra Modi has announced a concessional Line of Credit of US$ 1 billion (approx. NRs. 100 billion).

INDIA-NEPAL BILATERAL TRADE

- Total Bilateral Trade between India and Nepal (increased to NRs. 148.65 billion in 2012-13 from NRs. 349 billion in 2011-12).
- 40% of total approved foreign direct investment from India.
- The India-Nepal Transit Treaty was renewed for a period of seven years until 5th January 2020.
- In 2016-2017, Government of India extended US$ 100 million Line of Credit (LOC) to Nepal to develop hydroelectric, power transmission lines, roads and infrastructure projects.
- Commerce Secretary level meeting held in Kathmandu on 21-22nd December 2013 and the meeting focused on trade, tourism and cooperation to curb unauthorised trade besides discussing new mechanisms for international economic cooperation.
- Aid to construct embankment of Karnali, Labkabhi, Bangtoli and Khando River. Till date NRs. 3.28 billion has been disbursed to Government of Nepal.

CULTURAL COOPERATION

- MoU signed between Decontamination and Nepal Television for exchange of programmes.
- MoU between Nepal Academy of Fine Arts and Lalit Kala Akademi, Nepal Academy of Music and Drama and Surjeet Namak Akademi, Press Council of India and Press Council of Nepal are ready to be signed soon.
- ICCR Chair functioning at Kathmandu University and now ICCR Chair to be set up at Tribhuvan University and Kathmandu University.
- Indian Cultural Centre conducts regular programmes for Yoga, dance and music.
- Festival of India held in May 2014.
- An art magazine Initiative: Galleri’s special issue on Nepal to be launched this month.

SMALL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (SDPS)

- Cover wide ranging infrastructure development and capacity building projects each worth NRs. 50 million.
- 128 school campus projects ongoing or completed.
- 24 hospital projects in 19 districts under completion.
- Work on 18 roads/4 bridges ongoing or completed.
- Other projects are in critical areas of drinking water, cold storage, river mining, lab wells, electrification and capacity building.
- Since 1994, India has gifted 422 ambulances and 83 school buses covering 72 districts of Nepal.
- Eye care camps organised by Nepal Vira Jyoti Sangh through funding by the Government of India since 2001, a total assistance of NRs. 311 million extended by the Government of India.
- More than 1,070,000 surgeries performed, more than 37,000 students have been provided with optical devices under School Eye Health Care Programme launched in 2007. Govt. of India is providing NRs. 35.96 million to NSSN for eye care programme during the year 2014-15.
- Govt. Control Office, Kathmandu - Since 1971, it has provided assistance of NRs. 688.2 million for Govt. Control Officers in Nepal under the Government of India's programme to 69 million to Govt. of Nepal for Govt. and Other Auditors Detailed Disclaimers Control Programme during the year 2004-2013.
- India is providing funds amounting to NRs. 36 million to Gandaki Global Family Nepal for conducting 36,800 free diagnostic lab test and for providing free medicines to 1,690 diabetic patients for 6 months and free advance diagnostic test to 4,400 diabetic patients.

MAGJOR ONGOING PROJECTS

- Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) are being built at 4 points on the Indian-Nepalese border. Indian assistance of NRs. 4.32 billion for the segment falling in Nepal.
- First phase of Trans Himalayan Road Projects cover 198 km in 13 Terai Districts worth NRs. 1 billion.
- 380 km long rail will be covered.
- Super Speciality Trauma Centre in Kathmandu and 200 bed facility with an estimated cost of 1.68 billion.
- Govt. of India assistance to NRs. 236 million for development of 270 Mahadev Tirtha Wells in various districts of Nepal. Govt has been signed during the visit of Vice President of Nepal’s Government.
- 100 bed size Institutional Health Care Complex has been established in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Bhairahawa.

EX-SERVICEMEN WELFARE ACTIVITIES

- Disbursement of pension worth NRs. 15.70 billion in the FY 2013-14 to ex-servicemen.
- Disbursement of other than pension (OTP) payments amounting NRs. 4.90 billion in the FY 2013-14.
- Disbursement of AGIMBS amounting NRs. 151.50 million.
- Welfare Schemes amounting to more than NRs. 15.9 million endowed every year.
- NRs. 230.08 million was spent on educational scholarships for 205 students.
- NRs. 27,000 million worth of medical equipment supplied to Nepal.
- NRs. 12,000,000 packets worth NRs. 32.50 million are under consideration for 2013-14 as part of Medicine Packet Scheme.
- 300 dialysis units being provided to Nepal.
- 1049 drinking water projects are implemented so far.
- 140 projects worth NRs. 489.0 million benefiting 1,01,000 people are under consideration.
- Various ex-servicemen Community Health Schemes (ECS) have started functioning in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Bhairahawa.

15 August 2014

Randir Rai
Most of those killed in the Bhote Kosi landslide were women and children

NARESH NEWAR
in SINDUPALCHOK

Ram Thami, 50, was overjoyed at being a grandfather twice over. It was just before midnight when his daughter gave birth to twin sons, and he called relatives and friends on their mobiles to tell them the good news. Four hours later, the mountain fell on their village. Thami, his daughter and the newly-born twins were taken away in their sleep.

The Thamis were among 145 people killed in the Bhote Kosi landslide on 2 August that swept away the villages of Jure, Itini and Kaguni, and blocked the river. More than half the victims were women – the result of the outmigration from Nepal’s mountain districts of men in search of work.

Among the dead were 50 children, 28 of whom were students at the Bansagu Secondary School, which was well known as a model for other schools in the area. Scattered half-buried amidst the rubble of the landslide are bits of the distinctive green-painted exterior wall of the school building.

Nearly two weeks after the disaster, the stench of rotting flesh is overpowering. The rescuers have stopped looking for bodies, and their attention has turned to rehabilitation, draining the lake that threatens the valley downstream, and trying to re-open the Kodari Highway to Tibet.

“It is painful, but we have to move on from this tragedy,” says Balaram Timilsina, 55, principal of Bansagu School, which had dedicated teachers and one of the best SLC results in the district. Timilsina’s eyes tear up when he talks about the students who are never coming back.

“I remember their innocent faces, many had shared their dreams of a bright future,” says the school principal, breaking down into sobs. Two surviving students, Iswor and Ayush Nepal, comfort their teacher even though they are grieving the loss of their own classmates.

“I lost six of my best friends, and now I have to live with this for the rest of my life,” says 16-year-old student Babita Parajuli, wiping tears. Her family home was destroyed, and only two houses in Kaguni remain intact.

The school has been trying to resume classes in temporary structures scattered across the area, but it hasn’t been easy because the children are so traumatised.

“Many of them had close shaves, and were witness to death and destruction, they lost relatives and friends, we are worried about them,” says Sanjana Shrestha of Save the Children, which is helping the District Education Office start temporary learning centres.

It is a four-hour walk from where the highway ends abruptly to the village of Dabi that clings precariously to the side of a steep mountainside above the Bhote Kosi.

Local villagers and rescue teams from the APF and the Nepal Army wear masks which does little to keep away the smell of buried bodies.

Dahi is the best view of both the landslide and the lake, and curious onlookers, some of them Chinese tourists from across the border, have to be kept away as they try to take pictures with their mobiles. Ironically, the disaster tourism has helped the local economy as grocery stores have sprung up along the trail.

“We earn Rs 3,000 a day now, the visitors are good for business,” says 15-year-old Elina Shrestha forcing a smile. She had a narrow escape when a huge rock crashed through the main door of her house that morning. Elina’s family and nine others now live in tents.

Landslide survivors struggle
For communities downstream there is still fear that the rocks and boulders damming the Bhote Kosi (left) will suddenly burst, and unleash a flood.

The government has been trying to assure the public that the water level is going down, but contradictory reports in the media has spread confusion.

“...The Army's controlled blasts have limited effect because the blockage is made up of huge boulders and rocks. The Army is trying to ensure that the outflow of water is greater than the inflow, but with heavy rains in the catchment area this week, it is a race against time. On 12 August, the outflow of water was 210 cubic metres per second, barely more than the inflow of 205 cubic metres upstream.

“There is less danger of the water level rising further or the dam bursting,” says Karki. The obstruction of landslide debris is 300 m wide and 100 m high. In similar disasters elsewhere, water is siphoned off through huge pipes, but Nepal does not have the technology.

The challenge for the government now is to relocate, rehabilitate and support the displaced and vulnerable population. Other urgent tasks include restoring the vital trade route to China, and repairing transmission lines that provided 55MW of power to the grid from three hydropower stations on the river. An alternative route via the Jiri Highway has been opened to Kodari, but the road is rough.

“This is a major disaster and while we are very committed, but we are overburdened by demands from the affected population,” says Sindhupalchok LDO, Yubaraj Katel. Relocation of families will be a huge task, and one in which the national government will have to be involved, he says.

Seventy-year-old Lankaman Tamang lost his home, and is living in a tent with three other families from Itini. He says: “We can work and earn money to buy food, but we need to rebuild our homes to resume our normal lives.”
15 - 21 AUGUST 2014

FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

When Tamang met Lama

Bhumijar Panjafuli in djijasto.com, 9 August

Nine years ago, Kabiram Tamang went to work in Malaysia. Last year, his wife, who was living in Kathmandu with their son, ran away with another man. For the first two years Tamang says he was close to his wife, and sent her money regularly. “Even though we were physically apart, our hearts were still together,” he recalls. But their relationship began to sour when Tamang started getting calls from his relatives about his wifeirting with other men. Tamang came to Kathmandu last year only to find that his wife had eloped with another man. “I returned to Malaysia with a heavy heart,” he says.

Prima Lama of Sindhupalchok went through a similar experience. She was married to a man who worked in Kathmandu and made regular trips home. Soon, Lama found out her husband was living with another woman in Kathmandu. “I was shocked but I stayed, accepting it as my fate,” says Lama. She got a share of her husband’s property, but it wasn’t enough to raise her daughters. With support from her sisters Lama set up a tea shop in Kathmandu which did not run very well. So Lama joined thousands of Nepali women to work as domestic helpers in Kuwait, and later in Malaysia. Lama and Tamang were introduced to each other in Malaysia by a mutual friend. They connected instantly, and it was love at first meeting.

“We understood each other perfectly because of what we had been through,” says Tamang, who works in Port Klang, near where Lama also works. Last week, the two got married in Malaysia. They plan to eventually return to Nepal with their savings to start a business, and also raise their children together.

CA on track

Naryan Kafle in Naya Patrika, 13 August

The CA is still on schedule to finish writing the constitution by 22 January, but important and complicated subjects are yet to be discussed. The political dialogue committee of the CA has agreed on 48 points passed by the first CA and 18 former contentious points. One dispute about compulsory military training was resolved after the House agreed that the government could make it mandatory if the country needed it. There has also been agreements on the president’s role in removing obstacles, and about having two-tiered federal and central legislatures named ‘state parliament’ and ‘house of representatives’.

Although the UML raised objections in November 2013 to President Ram Baran Yadav continuing in office, the House also voted to extend the terms of President and Vice-President until elections under the new constitution are held. Of the 78 contentious issues that could not be agreed on in the first CA, only 25 remain.

The CA’s timeline:

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BIKRAM RAI

Anonymous UCPN(M) leader speaking about Baburam Bhattarai, Nepal Samacharpatra, 13 August

During meetings he says there are no conflicts, but once outside he starts shooting his mouth off.

Abin Shrestha in Kantipur, 6 August

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BIKRAM RAI
The body of Dinesh Adhikari (left) has not been claimed by his relatives 17 days after he was killed in an encounter with the police. Kathmandu’s other infamous gangsters (right) are either in jail or protected by politicians.

When I visited Charkhal Jail in 2008 for an investigative story on organised crime, I saw a group of young, attractive women enter the prison. They swayed over to the corner where a good-looking inmate was sitting. Like fan girls swooning around a favourite rock star, the young women seemed to be in complete awe of the man.

He was Dinesh Adhikari, already gaining notoriety for being the local boss of organised criminals, and known to law enforcement officials and politicians as ‘Chari’ (bird). Even in jail six years ago, you could see he commanded a certain following, if not respect, even though he didn’t yet look like a gangster.

Last week, Chari was killed in a movie-style police encounter in Samakhusi, an incident which prompted the UML Chairman KP Oli to criticise his own government. Chari is said to have the protection of politicians, including Oli. The news spread like wildfires in the media because it had all the ingredients of a thriller: crime, blood and politics. The public may have been relieved that a criminal was killed, but Chari’s end does not mean an end to the criminalisation of politics and the politicisation of crime.

We have seen elsewhere that criminal groups grow in number and influence whenever a gangster is killed encounter-style. It proves that our steps to manage crime are inherently flawed. Maybe it is time to consider alternatives and reach out to marginalised communities where crime is a form of protest against the status quo. People like Chari and his band of followers are symptoms of our societal malaise. It is wishful thinking to say that killing one Chari will prevent another from taking his place.

Dipesh KC is working on a doctorate on cross-border crime at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi.
Upholding Nepali manhood

As a bonafide Ass, I can say with reasonable conviction that some people are complete manholes. And there is one day in the year when Nepali alfa males can make even bigger manholes of themselves than they would on other days in the year. And that day was last Monday, when the government thoughtfully declared a horriday in Kathmandu so us guys could make Jack asses of ourselves. It is an indication of Nepal’s improving gender parity and inclusiveness that this year, you gals out there also went out of your way to make Jenny asses of yourselves.

But the question troubling all able-bodied Nepali males of reproductive age is this: did we fully use the opportunity provided to us during this year’s Guy Jatra to stoop to an even lower level of debauchery than we usually do? Can we in our heart of hearts say, with full self-assurance, that our level of idiocy meets international standards?

Unfortunately, the answer to both questions is: Yes and no. It is only now becoming clear that we have been seriously lax on the irreverence front since the promulgation of the Interim Constitution, we take ourselves far too seriously, and must make up for this deficit in the current fiscal year by stooping even lower to be insufferable. Why do only snowmen have the right to be abominable?

Guy Jatra was a day we gais could have made up for lost time by taking rapid strides in the arena of farce and buffoonery, forgetting our cares and worries, letting our hair down, and casting aspersions about the gender, if any, of the Rt Hon Prime Minister and members of his and/or her cabinet.

Why exactly this particular festival ended up getting the sex of our rulers mixed up has a long and glorious history which I will tell you about in the run up to next year’s Guy Jatra. Suffice it to say that this week us macho mensfolk of the new federified republic got temporary license to make even bigger oxymorons of ourselves than we usually do by carrying out the grooming rituals of Nepali manhood, including:

- As a civil serpent in the Ministry of Commerce and Surprise it is in your job description to put your hand in your pocket and vigorously attend to a subterranean itch in full public view when the occasion so demands. As a member of the male species, you can do this whenever and wherever you want, especially when someone is looking. After all, it’s a free country.

- As a microbus driver, you can take a break as passengers alight to admire yourself in the rearview mirror and squeeze blackheads from your nose cone. (Government Health Warning: Zits may be larger than they appear in the mirror.)

- Sharpen the non-flammable end of a matchstick and use it like the robotic arm of the Mars Explorer to reach hitherto unexplored and remote caverns in your mouth cavity containing fossilised remains of last year’s Dasain goat, and dispatch the specimen for further olfactory inspection and ingestion. The above habit is in full display among the male clientele of the Red Cock BBQ outlet in Naxal.

- One of the easiest ways to tell if people are still alive is to ascertain if they are still breathing. Therefore it is of paramount importance that we keep our pulmonary tubes clear of obstruction and in good working order. The art of dislodging phlegm accumulation at regular intervals by setting off controlled explosions has been passed down from one generation of Nepalis to another, right to the present day. This is done by a sharp intake of air through the nostril which propels said glob from the nasal cavity into the oral cavity whence it can either be expertly defenestrated with a smart pthoo onto the street below, or inducted into the alimentary canal as a protein-rich nutrient. At first, badly aimed ooze may land on the head of a passing policeman, but with practice most Nepali men are capable of winning gold medals if Throat Clearing is ever included in the Asian Games.

- Who said press freedom in Nepal has been curtailed? This column proves we can get away with writing any disgusting rubbish.