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While the rest of Nepal suffered massive landslides and floods this month, in the trans-Himalayan rain shadow the country's largest and most remote district remained in splendid isolation. Dolpa's jewel is Phoksundo (*above*) a lapis lazuli-coloured lake, Nepal's deepest and second-biggest. The district is the last two among Nepal's 75 that doesn't yet have a road connection. Noted conservationist Hum Gurung travelled to Shey Phoksundo National Park recently to study the region's spiritual tradition of protecting nature, and examine how the sanctuary may be affected by a new road that will connect Dolpa to the rest of Nepal.

PAGE **16-17** nepalitimes.com

[See photo gallery](#) 

The UCPN(M) threatens to delay the constitution if it is not allowed to lead a parallel government

THE DEADLINE
BY **DAMAKANT JAYSHI**

PAGE 4

The CIAA's recent sting operations go after small fry

LEGALESE
BY **BINITA DAHAL**



The World Wildlife Fund appoints Miss Nepal Subin Limbu as its Young Conservation Ambassador.

PAGE 7



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DISASTROUS MANAGEMENT

We call them ‘natural disasters’: earthquakes, floods, landslides. Yet, earthquakes don’t kill people, unsafe buildings do. Our ancestors instinctively knew not to live along river banks, settlements were located along ridges. Countries exposed to seismic and tsunami risk, like Japan, have detailed prevention and rescue plans in place. Most disasters may be natural, but the casualties are largely manmade.

In 2010, two earthquakes struck the Americas. The one in Haiti killed more than 300,000 people, but a much greater earthquake in Chile a few months later killed less than 600 people. The Chileans were better prepared, had stricter building codes and had trained rescue teams. Nepal has Chile-like earthquakes and Haiti-like preparedness and rescue planning.

The Himalayan arc is the planet’s highest and youngest mountain range, and it is still rising. The bedrock is on the move with the top soil clinging precariously to steep slopes. The mountains act as a rain barrier, too, giving the Himalayan foothills some of the heaviest precipitation rates in the world. In this naturally unstable terrain is situated the most-densely populated country in the world. Now, add to this mix a prolonged state of flux in which criminalised politicians recklessly resettle people for vote banks and plunder natural resources and you have a recipe for manmade human catastrophes.

Nepal’s location makes natural calamities a given. We have to learn to live with them occurring at regular intervals, we should not be taken by surprise when they happen. Yet, when they do we blame god (*‘daibi prakop’*) even though most of the casualties are a result of bad planning,

Nepal is woefully unprepared for calamities which are made even more deadly because of bad planning and poor response

lack of hazard mapping, the non-enforcement of zoning and building codes.

Let’s start calling them ‘unnatural disasters’ because most of the damage is preventable. The Kosi embankment did not breach by itself in 2008, quarrying of the boulders on the levee had weakened it. This was repeated on the Kamala this month. The Siraha bridge did not just collapse, it was caused by illegal sand-mining upstream. The highest death toll in the mid-west on the night of 12 August was among people recently resettled along riverbanks. Indiscriminate mining of river beds along the Seti, Trisuli, Narayani and the Tarai rivers increases water velocity, making even a normal river run amok.

However, there are extreme weather events or catastrophic once-in-a-lifetime floods that happen without

warning, but are not all that unexpected. The last three issues of this paper have flood stories on page 1 (*below*).

In 2008, the government, after much prodding from a consortium of donors, set up a Central Disaster Relief Committee under the Home Ministry which drew up a ‘conceptual framework’ for response management. The focus has been to decentralise disaster preparedness and relief to the district level. The aftermath of the Bhote Kosi landslide showed that decentralised response do work well. The Sindhupalchok district administration organised rescue, relief and rehabilitation of survivors. First response is always by local communities, and the lesson learnt from the landslide was to further strengthen local capacity to deal with calamity. The Nepal Army acted promptly, but by being slow to accept an offer of help from Chinese engineers with experience in unblocking a river after the Yunnan earthquake on 3 August, may have unnecessarily prolonged the crisis.

The flashflood in the mid-west showed that central disaster management and coordination is still woefully inadequate. Three weeks later, relief hasn’t reached many villages, as Naresh Newar’s report on page 19 prove.

A disproportionate number of the dead and displaced in both disasters were women and children. This is a result of male outmigration, but it carries a valuable lesson for future disaster planning: that the most vulnerable segment of our society will be even more vulnerable in future disasters.

 nepalitimes.com

 Interactive map of floods and landslides this monsoon.



YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

‘F’ WORD
Federalism (Nepali style) reminds me of the Balkan states (‘Reckless federification’, Editorial, #721). We are ensuring long term conflict. No wonder India balked at it - especially with its own states based on language model. Just ‘including’ minorities is not going to change society. Ensure education for all. That is the only way to emancipation.

Namah

■ The struggle for federalism may be misguided to the development in the opposite direction and make the society regressive.

Anil Karki

■ Sobering analysis from an authoritative academic who knows Nepal very well (‘Federalism for the sake of it’, David Seddon, #721). I used to read and re-read *Nepal in Crisis* in my student days, and almost everything Seddon predicted in the book has come true. None of the problems he pointed out have been resolved. But, as Seddon writes, pushing federalism as a solution to exclusion in Nepal is like a medicine that is worse than the disease.

Harald

■ Whenever I read opinion pieces on federalism in Nepali newspapers, the writers sound like know-it-alls. Many nations went for federal system to defuse political, economic and social unrest, but today they are functioning relatively well. Why? These countries

were able to translate the theories of federalism by decentralising political power from the centre to local and regional governance. But with all the corruption, criminals and mediocrity among top leaders, federalism is doomed to fail here.

Nirmal

■ The slogan of federalism which was used to recruit foot soldiers now has a life of its own and the Maoist leaders have exploited it to the core for their own personal gains (‘Federal fundamentalism’, Bihari Krishna Shrestha, #721).

Incompetent NC and UML along with other parties have been complicit to remain relevant in Nepali politics, while our international ‘friends’ have been only too happy to stoke the fire. We must pare down the giant assembly, task a sub-group to draft the constitution, while the parliament focuses on making laws and keeping government of the day in check. Only then will we have an inclusive constitution and form of government which decentralises power to the grassroots without dividing people along ethnic lines. Let’s bring back elected local governments and ensure services reach the grassroots. Investments in education, infrastructure, economic development, law and order and reform of the Nepali bureaucracy are long overdue.

Prithvi Raj

■ The 21st century will see the growth of alternate metropolitan regions across Nepal (‘Inclusion by any other name,’ Anurag Acharya, #721). With heterogeneous urban centers, the entire federal model that Anuragji postulates will fall flat on its face. Having lived

in India and other countries with full blown ethnic struggles, I am most concerned that federalism has become the ‘F’ word that few have understood. Politicians are pushing the envelope to see how far they can go so when the country implodes, they can douse the same fire they ignited.

Let’s first enfranchise the millions who are stateless, provide education to everyone, and allow them an opportunity to earn their own livelihood. That would be the greatest achievement for Nepal in the coming decades.

N

■ We’ll have to be content if the new statute incorporates federalism, identity and inclusion in its preamble: Nepal shall be a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-cultural, sovereign, secular, inclusive, federal democratic republican state. There shall be five provinces and their nomenclature shall be determined by the majority of each province assembly, and no effort shall be spared to institutionalise the federal setup. Predictably, there’ll be opposition to the new statute. Radical ethnic outfits will describe it as tokenism. Rightwing forces will call it a ploy to fragment the nation. But if we don’t incorporate inclusion, we are doomed.

AK

DEKENDRA THAPA
Every crime committed during civil war should be investigated and those who perpetuated them should be jailed. (‘Justice under threat,’ Tufan Neupane, #721)

Hurray

NEW AIRLINES
Great news (‘Expanding air links’, #721) and I wish both new airlines well. But it is sad to see how Nepal Airlines has been used by politicians as their private property and driven into the gutter. NA should be flying all over the world, instead foreign airlines are taking away the hard earned money of our workers abroad.

Bikas Thapa

■ Given the uncertainty all around, I wonder what exactly the investors see in this constricted Nepali aviation market with too many players to bring in a 50 seater jet to start with. We had Cosmic with 100 seat F-100 in the past, and banks and leasing companies are still counting their losses.

Armugam

D DEFICIENCY
Doctors now prescribe Vitamin D3 to patients living in not so hot countries, which is to be taken every 3 months of interval to help improve metabolism to cope with osteoporosis, a bone disease that afflicts especially the old (‘Vitamin D Deficiency,’ Dhanvantari, #721). It has become a must for every health conscious person.

Whatever

ASS
This is the craziest, most hilarious thing I have ever read (‘Wanted: Prime Minister (1),’ Ass, #721). Of all the politicians we have on offer, I think Assji should apply for the job.

Donkey for PM

■ You made my day, Ass. You are a great satirist. Carry on, we love it.

W

Times WHAT’S TRENDING



BIKRAM RAI

Most liked on Facebook
Participants attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the largest human national flag at Tundikhel on Saturday.

Most shared on Facebook
Wanted: Prime Minister (1) by Ass

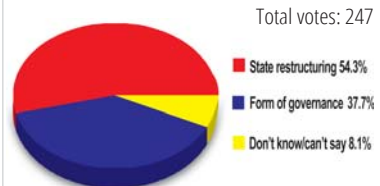
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Marriages made in Facebook by Merlin Pipuu

Most commented
Federalism for the sake of it by David Seddon

Times nepalnews.com Weekly Internet Poll #722

Q. Which should not be compromised?



Weekly Internet Poll #722
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Is the government taking enough precautions to prevent an Ebola outbreak?



Instead of federalism

Last week I argued against federalism ('Federalism for the sake of it', #721) suggesting that it was a bad response to legitimate concerns (particularly among those who feel that the status quo gives too much power to what is already a dominant group in the political system) to ensure that the new Nepal had a system of democracy that accepted the will of the majority while defending and indeed promoting the interests of minority groups.



GUEST COLUMN
David Seddon

I am a democrat, and a socialist, and recognise those feelings of marginalisation and lack of real 'voice' among disadvantaged groups. The problem with federalism is that it will not give voice, let alone power, to the truly disadvantaged and marginalised, but only to those who claim to speak in their name and who are among the relatively better off, better educated and least disadvantaged and marginalised of the groups whom they claim to represent.

It is not too late to reconsider the positive alternatives to federalism

In the name of caste and ethnic marginalisation, the rich and powerful will claim the right to a state of 'their' own. There will be no voice, let alone power, for women, dalits, religious minorities, the disabled and other social groups, nor even for the poor and disadvantaged among the Janjati and the Madhesi, in the new federal states -- just more relatively well-off men from privileged backgrounds gaining more power and wealth from their new positions.

An alternative might be to consider in more detail the proposal, which it seems Pushpa Kamal Dahal of the UCPN(M) now favours, for proportional representation. This could be the sole system of political representation, offering an alternative to the first-past-the-post system, or else it could be combined with first-past-the-post, as it was in the elections to the singularly broad and representative first Constituent Assembly.

This would favour smaller parties and help reduce the dismal dominance of the three main parties, whose leaders at present seem to feel they can ignore the other parties, dissent from public opinion, and make policy virtually on their own terms.

Another option is to look to the districts (elected DDCs) to provide the basis for an elected second house, if such is considered of value. If each District Council

(whose members would be themselves democratically elected to the DDC) elected a representative to a national House of Representatives, they might -- or might not (that would be their prerogative as representatives rather than mandated delegates) -- decide to form regional blocs to argue the case for their region.

They may feel impelled to do this according to whether they come from the hills or from the Tarai, whether they come from the Far-West, the Mid-West or the East, or according to any other of a number of possible cross-cutting alliances and associations. They may form blocs or alliances according to the predominant caste or ethnic group in their district, but they may unite on entirely different bases altogether. This, however, would give an additional democratic set of voices, from the local DDCs to add to the voices in the National Assembly.

If it is sincerely felt that Nepal needs a new mechanism to recognise the distinctive characteristics of particular regions, there are already five so-called 'development regions', on the basis of which comparisons are often made: the Far-West, Mid-West, the West, the Centre, and the East. In the 1970s and 1980s these were regarded as the basis for development, ideally with major roads linking the mountains, hills and Tarai in each and highways linking them all from west to east.

They could again be recognised as a valid framework, not for federalisation but for a coherent unified national effort to reduce the inequalities between them. They could also be linked in a renewed and comprehensive effort to promote both development and national unity, while at the same time, separately recognising the diversity of Nepal's economy and society. The very urgent need to promote positive or affirmative action to improve the situation of people living in disadvantaged regions, as well as those disadvantaged by class, gender, caste or ethnicity, religion or other cultural features, age and/or disability could also be addressed.

There are so many alternatives to consider as ways to transform the status quo and give those who are disadvantaged and marginalised a voice and real power. Why waste time on 'federalism', whose real advantages have never been explained by their advocates and which has become a 'sacred cow' -- if the use of this term is not too offensive -- in public discourse, simply because it was 'adopted' with virtually no prior or subsequent discussion at the first Constituent Assembly in 2008.

It is not too late to reconsider the positive alternatives to federalism. 🇳🇵

David Seddon is author of Nepal in Crisis: Growth and Stagnation in the Periphery and The Struggle for Basic Needs in Nepal, Nepal - A State of Poverty, and co-author of The People's War.

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Watching the watchdog

In recent months, the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) has started taking its transparency watchdog role seriously, and gone on a detention spree.

Operatives have carried out sting operations and caught officials in flagrante as they accepted bribes. Among those caught red-handed recently have been the Joint Secretary of the Higher Secondary Education Board, officials of National Investigation Authority, the vice chancellor of Mid-Western University and 14 other officials who are now in custody while investigations are underway.



LEGALESE
Binita Dahal

With the campaign of arrests, suspensions and filing corruption charges in the Special Court, CIAA has not

been this active since the appointment of Chief Commissioner Lok Man Singh Karki last year. When he was recommended for CIAA chief, many legal eagles and civil society activists had criticised the decision of the Chief Justice-led Interim Election Government to appoint him.

They compared the appointment to getting a fox to guard the chicken coop because of Karki's alleged involvement in graft for which he was investigated by the very agency he was nominated to head. He was also faulted for his role in the crackdown on pro-democracy protestors in April 2006 under the Gyanendra regime. Despite the opposition, Karki's appointment was endorsed last year by President Ram Baran Yadav for a tenure of six years.

Missing another deadline

Pushpa Kamal Dahal is threatening to delay the constitution if he is not allowed to head a parallel government



BIKRAM RAI

Despite the CIAA's recent sting operations, the agency is charged with going after small fry or waging political witch-hunts

Karki hit the ground running, investigating corruption and directing government agencies to expedite pending appointments. However, the CIAA's actions have also been criticised for being arbitrary, ad hoc, restricted to catching only the small fish, or reeking of political vendetta.

The high profile arrests have also spooked civil servants, who are now reluctant to take major decisions for fear of being scapegoated. The tendency to detain alleged culprits under the full glare of the media, and the presumption of guilt until proven innocent has negatively impacted governance and service delivery by government agencies.

The legal procedures being followed are also questionable: when the CIAA files a case against anyone in the Special Court, the accused are immediately suspended from their jobs. This results in defamation of officials, some of whom may have been arrested without evidence, who are innocent, or who are ultimately acquitted by the court. In most cases, the damage is already done, because of the trial by media.

The CIAA has repeatedly admitted that it lacks the personnel to investigate all petitions that are filed. Many who are arrested haven't yet had a case filed against them. Such delays are inexcusable, especially if the accused may actually be innocent or framed. The CIAA must either file cases and begin prosecution in the courts, or it shouldn't arrest people: after all, justice delayed is justice denied.

Transparency International, the global corruption watchdog, says political parties top the list of the corrupt among a dozen institutions in Nepal. The bureaucracy, police, legislature/parliament, the judiciary, the private sector, military, educational institutions, non-governmental organisations, medical and health services are all below politicians on the corruption hall of fame.

An even more serious charge against the CIAA is that it is only going after selected small fry, while the big fish in the Transparency International list seem immune to prosecution. None of the top political leaders are being investigated, and the former politicians who have been arrested and sentenced tend to be from the NC or Madhesi parties. This has made the CIAA open to charges of waging a political witch-hunt.

As long as top political leaders, senior bureaucrats, Nepal Police, judiciary and Nepal Army personnel are out of bounds, the CIAA's attempts to clean up Nepal's governance system will lack credibility. 🇳🇵

@binitadahal

Five months to go. That's the self-imposed deadline the parties have set this week to deliver the new constitution. There are other sub-deadlines before 22 January 2015. The parties have to reach an agreement on the disagreements by the first week of September, and the first draft of the statute is to be readied by mid-October to get the people's feedback.



THE DEADLINE
Damakant Jayshi

The political parties were serial violators of the earlier timetable before the last Constituent Assembly (CA). By the looks of it, CA2 is on a similar trajectory. Except for settling some minor issues, the Assembly is yet to find a breakthrough on issues that ultimately led to the failure of the last one: state restructuring, system of governance, judiciary and electoral system.

The biggest hurdle was, and still is, state restructuring aka federalism. The parties have stuck to their positions. The NC and the CPN-UML want no more than five or seven provinces at the most, the UCPN (Maoist) want to go for double that number. The Madhes-based parties are batting for a single east-to-west Madhes Pradesh in the Tarai, but may settle for at the most, two.

Baburam Bhattarai, who heads the Political Dialogue and Consensus Committee – the all-important body in the second assembly – has now suggested

going back to the 15 May, 2012 agreement between the NC, the UML, the UCPN (M) and the former Madhesi Morcha. That agreement had proposed 11 multi-identity states, including five in the Tarai and left the naming of the provinces to state legislatures. It had also proposed a mixed model of governance: a directly elected president and a House-elected prime minister as well as a mixed electoral system.

Bhattarai would like to forget that it was he, as prime minister, and his party with its Madhesi coalition partner, who opposed that very same proposal. Twelve days later, the CA was dissolved by Bhattarai after rejecting every single alternative proposed by the NC and the UML. That ensured he continued to be the prime minister and the prospect of Mohan Baidya-led CPN-Maoist supporting an NC-UML no-confidence motion against him never materialised. Had that agreement been honoured, we would have had a constitution by now and a jumbo 11-state federal republic.

Why this change of heart? Bhattarai, as is his wont, does not care to explain. His running feud with party Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, may have forced him to now say that he is in favour of a deal that he had so vehemently opposed and killed. Dahal, out of power, and likely to be out of any leadership role that oversees far-reaching agreements or breakthroughs, would gladly torpedo any deal unless he has a role in it.

Given his impressive record for sabotage, Dahal would repeat the feat even by force of habit. It is not for nothing that of late he has been insisting on a permanent leadership of a

high-level political committee for himself. This would be an extra-constitutional umbrella body that would effectively serve as a parallel government, and continue where it left off during the tenure of the unelected technocratic government last year. Dahal has threatened to bring the House to a standstill if the NC and UML don't agree. And if that happens, we can kiss a timely constitution goodbye.

Dahal and Bhattarai conveniently ignore the fact that the November 2013 election was actually a referendum on federalism. Those supporting multiple states, states carved on the basis of ethnicity, and a single Madhes province were routed in the polls. Top UCPN (M), the Madhes-based and Janjati parties lost, or barely scraped through. Stunned by the sheer scale of the defeat, sympathetic analysts split hairs about "public opinion" and "mandate".

What next? Some bruised egos need to be massaged, including those of Madhes-based party leaders, else they have the capacity to derail any progress. But there is a difference between appeasement and meaningful accommodation.

The Constitution's validity is guaranteed if there is consensus over its contents or at least major acceptability. The reality is that the final draft will be a compromise that will leave everyone dissatisfied.

Let the Constituent Assembly do its work without any diktat from outside. It has enough in-built mechanisms to find compromises and consensus, and if they can't find either, follow the Interim Constitution. 🇳🇵

@damakant

Moving with the eyeballs

Like the rest of the media, the advertising industry is also confronted by the challenge of the migration of eyeballs away from print and screen to the Internet.

Because advertising is the lifeblood of newspapers and helps sustain journalism, the era of direct e-retail, social network marketing, and native advertising have presented challenges to the whole media industry. Not only is the volume of advertising in traditional media going down internationally, but advertisers now do not necessarily have to rely on advertisers to reach consumers anymore.

“We have to hold on to the fundamentals of marketing, but also focus on end-to-end brand experience right up to delivery and concluding the sale,” says Colvyn Harris (pic), CEO of J W Thomson South Asia based in Mumbai.

A Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) projection shows that while print and tv advertising India-wide is expected to grow by 15 per cent between 2011–2016, digital advertising in all platforms will grow by 30 per cent.

Clients of ad agencies are also trying to ‘disintermediate’ and deal directly with customers by paying for views on social networking sites or negotiate with publishers on sponsored content.

Advertising companies like JWT have tried to innovate and devise solutions to keep up margins. And their acquisition of stakes in Hungama Digital Services, Social Wavelength and Encompass is an indication that they expect an upheaval.

Harris knows the region well, having served in JWT Sri Lanka and on a recent visit to

As Indian readers migrate to digital platforms, the advertising industry struggles to adjust



Nepal, talked about the changing landscape in advertising that will affect journalism: paid stories, native advertising, and treaties.

With treaties, the media gets free shares in a startup and pays back in planted stories in the paper, masquerading as news. Harris explains how it works: “It is a barter, the currency is paper, goods and services are exchanged.” The lines between news and advertising gets blurred, and newspapers have to learn to do this without hurting their credibility, he adds.

The fundamental principles of advertising, however, has not changed, Harris says: “It is still about ideas, the challenge is to improve the quality of our ideas.”

There is still growth in traditional media advertising by

telecom, two-wheeler, FMCG or real estate clients, but brand recall is falling. Harris often gives a test in which he asks clients to tell him what was the front page ad in that morning’s *Times of India*. Most can’t.

“In the old way of advertising there is overkill and wastage,” he says, “the new way is to seamlessly be a part of the public’s conversation without interrupting them.”

Which is why JWT has bought into digital companies which specialise in connecting clients directly with customers through social media.

Increasing numbers of Nepali companies are now advertising through Facebook and Google, and this trend is expected to pick up. However, for Nepal a lot will depend on investment picking up. *Kunda Dixit*

EVEREST BANK BIZ BRIEFS

Qatar Airways honours top partners



Qatar Airways awarded four of its top travel trade partners at the airline’s Agents Award Night held last week in the capital. The night’s

top honour, the Platinum award, went to Osho World Travel. Yeti Travels, Ace Express Travel Services and President Travel and Tours were the other winners. Qatar Ambassador Ahmed Jasem Al Hamar presented the award to the winners. Seventeen other travel agencies were given certificate of appreciation.

Farmer friendly

Bank of Kathmandu and NIMBUS have signed an agreement to launch ‘BOK Kissan Credit Card Scheme’ targeted towards small scale farmers. The scheme hopes to provide small scale farmers easy access to credit facilities which can be used to purchase agricultural products at NIMBUS Krishi Kendra.



Festive offer

MAHINDRA TWO WHEELERS

Mahindra Two Wheelers has announced its Dasain-Tihar scheme ‘Dui Duna Chaar’, under which customers will get cash discounts ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 100,000 while buying of Mahindra bikes. The bumper prize is a Mahindra Bolero. The offer is valid until 30 October.

Card union

Himalayan Bank together with UnionPay International, a subsidiary of China UnionPay, has launched the HBL UnionPay International Prepaid card. The bank will now issue UnionPay branded USD prepaid cards to customers travelling to China and other countries.



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A backlash against expensive and invasive healthcare sends patients to the traditional ayurvedic healers of Kathmandu



PICS: SONIA AWALE

The return of the baidyas

SONIA AWALE

Maya Thapa had been suffering stomach pains for five years. The 65-year-old roamed between private clinics and hospitals in Patan, and spent a fortune on prescriptions. When the pain persisted, she visited her friendly neighbourhood *baidya* who gave her a dark brown powder wrapped in paper. Now, after two

doses, her stomach pain is gone.

With the rapid spread of hospitals and modern medicine in Nepal over the past 50 years, one would have thought that *baidyas* would have become extinct. Yet, these traditional healers who diagnose and treat common ailments like gout, ulcers, jaundice or asthma with herb-based potions are more popular than ever.

“Allopathic treatment is expensive, and it has side effects

which is why there has been no decline in the number of patients who come here,” says Yogendra Raj Baidya, 51, who comes from a long line of traditional healers and runs the Siddhi Ayurveda Ausadhalaya in Sankhamul.

Ratna Shri Shrestha concurs. She helps her husband, Birendra, whose father and grandfather were all *baidyas*. “Most of our patients used to be the elderly, but now we also see younger people coming to consult us,” says Ratna Shri.

Misdiagnosis at private clinics is common, and patients are prescribed costly medicines which are sometimes the wrong treatment. The drugs are also very strong, and have serious side-effects that complicate the original ailment. Many patients visiting *baidyas* say they have been given the runaround by doctors in private hospitals and clinics, and come there as a last resort.

Besides this, patients with jaundice and other diseases for which modern medicine has no real cure, also come to ayurvedic clinics for traditional herbal formulas. A *baidya* treatment is slower, but the herbs work in harmony with the body, detoxifying it and restoring the immune system and the patient's own healing mechanism.

“There is a growing backlash against modern medicine in the cities,” says Rishi Raj Regmi at the state-run Singha Darbar Baidyakhana, whose interior has a pungent-sweet aroma from a multitude of herbs stacked on wooden shelves. The Baidyakhana had been steadily losing its relevance, but in the past decade has become a busy place again.

Rup Krishna Shrestha, 54, was one of the first to start a pharmacy solely for ayurvedic medicines in Patan. He owns the Dekha Herbal Factory, stocks herbs, grinds and mixes his own medications. In most *baidya* families the younger generation has not completely abandoned the medical profession. Rup Krishna's daughter, for example, is a dentist. Yogendra Raj Bajracharya is 51, and his family has balanced modern and traditional: his older son is doing an MBBS while his younger son is pursuing a bachelors degree in ayurvedic medicine.

In old days, *baidyas* were also astrologers and shamans. Dip Bharat Bajracharya's grandfather was the legendary Bhindyo Guraju of Patan, and at 38 is carrying on the grand tradition of his ancestors along with four other brothers, who are all *baidyas*.

Among the women *baidyas* of Patan, the most respected is Nirtha Kumari Shakya, who is

THE HEALING TOUCH: Nirtha Kumari Shakya (*above, left*) is one of few female *baidyas* and her family have been ayurvedic healers for five generations. At 77, she is busier than ever. Rup Krishna Shrestha (*above, right*) has his own ayurvedic pharmacy in Patan. His daughter is a dentist.

unmarried at 77 and is continuing her ancestral profession of mixing ayurvedic potions that her family has been doing for at least five generations. Shakya is busier than ever, as demand grows.

The Singha Darbar Baidyakhana announces tenders every year for the supply of raw material such as asuro, salaipatti, harro barro aala, jatamasi, saragandha, charieto, ashogandha, jwano, tulsi, neem, bark of pomegranate, sukumel, etc. The Nepal Himalaya is a treasure house of medicinal plants used in both ayurvedic and Tibetan medicine, and Regmi at the centre believes that cultivating some of these herbs instead of harvesting them from the wild would be more sustainable, and also provide livelihoods to more people.

Piyush Bajracharya, 62, says the tradition of ayurvedic medicine is inextricably linked to Hindu and Buddhist practices that have co-evolved in Kathmandu Valley. *Baidyas* mainly come from the Shakya, Baidya and Bajracharya families, and combine Hindu Ayurveda knowledge with Buddha's teachings about holistic mind-body healing.

Ayurvedic remedies seem to work best with diseases like jaundice and stomach ailments, and it is not just the old who trust traditional treatment. Twenty-nine-year old Madan Dangol was taking modern medicine for his ailment, but his condition never improved.

He says: “I went to all the hospitals but never got better. Everyone told me to visit the *baidya*, and I have been coming here for two months. I am feeling much better now, and am going to continue this treatment.”

nepalitimes.com

■ Medicine Man, #679
■ Watch video interview

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१ भदौदेखि

हिमालको साथमा

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३ वर्षे
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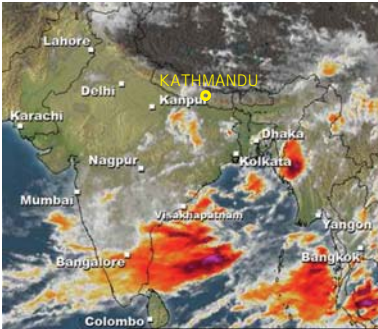
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It's only a month to go for Dasain, believe it or not, and the monsoon is just getting started. The trend this past decade is that the monsoon is starting late and ending late, and this being an El Nino year meteorologists expect more localised extreme rainfall events in the coming month. The soil is saturated, so heavy rainfall will trigger landslides. Expect the night thunderstorms with rain to continue into the weekend, with the sky clearing up in the day time.

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MISS
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NEPAL

ELVIN L SHRESTHA

While many would expect a Miss Nepal to be a celebrity too swamped with appointments to sit down for a long conversation and too diplomatic to give candid responses, Miss Nepal 2014 Subin Limbu turned out to be relaxed, frank and open.

The 23-year old native of Dharan is articulate, grounded and refreshingly genuine. Even when she speaks about her goals to work for the betterment of the education sector, there is little of the pre-rehearsed beauty pageant answer tone in her voice. She sounds like she means it.

“Participating in Miss Nepal was something that had been on my mind ever since I came to Kathmandu,” says Subin, who came here in 2009 to go to college. “But, it wasn’t until this year that I felt completely ready.”

However, this is not the first time that Subin has won a crown. In 2010, she was named the first runner up in Miss Mongol, a competition that she believes helped her while preparing for Miss Nepal. “During both the pageants, I enjoyed the

training sessions the most as that is when the transition takes place,” she added.

Last month, Subin was appointed Young Conservation Ambassador by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Nepal. She will be involved with the WWF’s Education Conservation program which works to create awareness on protection of flora and fauna and sustainable development. She will also be engaged in The Generation Green, an ambitious, five-year campaign that mentors Nepali youth.

“Since young people make up a very large part of Nepal’s population, they have a major role to play in conservation,” says Subin. As part of The Generation Green project, 50 well-known mentors are assigned to different youth groups who can join the campaign after pledging to support the values of the green initiative.

“All of us have heard about global warming, globalisation and environment deterioration, I now want to see the impact first hand and disseminate that knowledge to the youth,” she says.

Subin is currently busy with preparations for the Miss World pageant to be held in London on 14 December. The contest requires every contestant to select a project for its ‘beauty with a purpose’ segment. Former Miss Nepal Ishani Shrestha had won in the same category for her dental health camp project in rural Nepal.

When asked what her project is and if she thinks she can bring the international title home, Subin doesn’t want to reveal it. “You will know once the announcement is made,” she says coyly, “but it is related to education.”

PICS: BIKRAM RAI

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Visual Artist Sujan Chitrakar will be talking about Mural Arts.
29 August, 4.30pm, Taragaon Museum,
Boudha, (01)4481786

A lecture by Dr Dinesh Prasain and
Dhan Kumari Sunar on Nepal's caste
system.
*29 August, 9.30 am, Shanker Hotel,
Lajimpat*

Celebrate an array of festivals in this month of Bhadra: Tiji, Ganesh Chaturthi, Rishi Panchami, Indra Jatra, Bal diwas

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Bollywood setting and music.
*Rs 2500, September 13, 7 pm,
Soaltee Crowne Plaza Kathmandu*



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*Rs 1250, 9 September, 5.30pm, Jyatha,
Thamel*



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for a week.
*6 to 12 September, Janabahal,
Kathmandu*



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Rs 1,600, 1 to 14 September, 12.15pm,
inneradventuretravel.com

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MUSIC



Music for relief,

a fundraiser for the flood survivors with performances by Mukti and Revival, Cobweb, Albatross, 1974 AD and more.
Rs 250, 6 September, 1 pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel

Gopalaya,

A repertoire of Gopal Yonjan's musical works performed by singers like Uday Sotang, Reema Gurung Hoda, Manoj Raj and Banika Pradhan.
30 August, 4.30 to 7pm, Army Officer's Club

Keeping it classic,

Painting exhibition of classical music, color and art by artist Sapna Poudel Maharjan, along with a lineup of classical music performances.
6 to 12 September, 10 am to 5pm, Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal



Rock of Ages,

A series of energetic tributes to rock legends like Van Halen, Nirvana and Tool by bands like The Maze, Newaz and Quintinterval
30 August, 1pm to 6pm, Purple Haze Rock Bar, Thamel

Under-ground Gig,

Where anyone can perform to keep rock alive.
Rs 150, 30 August, 1 to 6 pm, Rhapsody Hall, Kumaripati

Roots night,

Step up to the futuristic tunes and yet, go ol' school Jamaican Style
19 September, 7pm onwards, Places Restaurant & Bar, Thamel

The great Duo,

A fundraising show for flood survivors, performed by Alon and Brittany
Rs 200, 30 August, Zibro Restro & Bar, Thamel

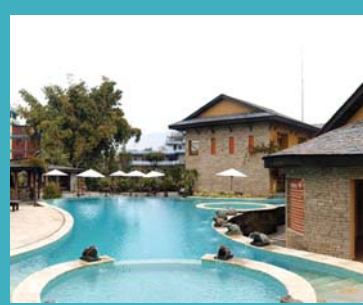
House Day,

A gig show with live performances by bands like The Last Source, Edwardian, False Autopsy
Rs 250, 30 August, 3pm onwards, House of Music, Thamel

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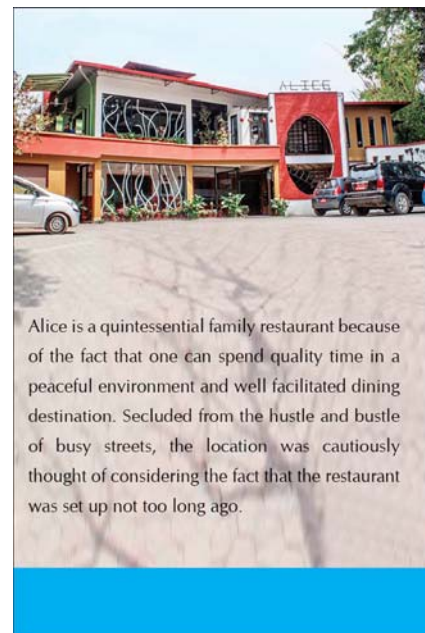
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WHOSE ART IS

RABI THAPA

This May, Seb Toussaint and Spag of Outside Krew visited the Bhaishighat slum on the banks of the Bagmati at Teku and asked residents to choose words to be painted in their neighbourhood of ragged brick, banged-up wooden planks and corrugated tin. Toussaint was in Nepal with Share the Word, the project he has been taking to urban settlements around the world. Many locals allowed him to spruce up the walls of their ramshackle settlements with such uplifting words as 'Welcome' and 'Dhanyabad', and some even joined in the fun.

At some point, Toussaint decided to make an exception to his unwritten rule of not painting temples and churches. He wrapped up the project by spray-painting the façade of the sattal of the 19th century

Shiva temple in Purohitghat, overlooking Bhaishighat. This is the same structure, dating from 1883, praised so wholeheartedly by art historians for the extraordinary design of its windows. By any standards, the Purohitghat sattal would qualify as heritage worthy of preservation. Yet Toussaint and Spag saw fit to distract from this remarkable window frame by framing it in technicolor cartoons. Why?

According to Toussaint, he was approached by the sadhu who looks after the temple. According to the Nepal Children's Art Museum (which facilitated Toussaint and Spag's stay here), the locals welcomed the change. The sadhu, meanwhile, admits he asked for the home improvements not just because it looked nice, but because after years of asking the authorities to restore the sagging, dilapidated façade, he wanted to grab their attention.

It took a while, but he has everyone's attention now. When photos of Toussaint's handiwork appeared on *nepalnews.com* last Sunday, Nepali social media imploded with indignation. Sujan Chitrakar of KU Art+Design spoke for many when he praised Toussaint on Facebook for his work in the community but



The *sattal* at Purohitghat by the Bagmati river is located on a long stretch of stepped embankment that did not start to be architecturally articulated before the 1790s. The *sattal* at Purohitghat was one of the smaller endowments, but probably the most fascinating one. The baluster columns and the cusped arches of the arcade follow early 19th century prototypes, but the first floor windows went beyond the scope of carved window frames ... The frames of the side openings add to the stunning design, contributing to a move that culminates in the flower motifs that crown the central opening. In a playful manner, curled appendages frame the entire window, flush with the wall.

Architecture of the Newars, Volume III, Niels Gutschow



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S IT ANYWAY?



BIKRAM RAI

lambasted him for cultural insensitivity and a lack of foresight in painting the sattal:

"The Shiva Temple, though not on the World Heritage Site List, has something to contribute to the remarkable cultural heritage and legacy of Nepal. Any kind of intruding and defacing it would be overlooking history of the place and hurting sentiments of my people. You have given wrong message to people and you will defame the entire artist community. There are many emerging Nepali artists who see hope in the streets and street art. Your 'one wrong' move can severely sabotage their dreams."

Other commentators defended Toussaint's aesthetic and his collaborative work with the otherwise neglected Bhaishghat community, and privileged their right to determine the development of their surroundings. They also wondered why it had taken so long for anyone to notice the supposedly sacrilegious act - surely that suggested a broader national apathy towards heritage? The subtext of the outrage, they implied, was elitist hostility towards the idea that slum-dwellers should be able to claim national heritage as their own and, in doing so, dispose of it as they saw fit. For his part, Toussaint expressed surprise at the delayed reaction, so unlike the instantaneous delight of the local community. He maintained that he was glad that a debate was taking place.

Yet neither belated awareness nor the fact of Purohitghat's neglect can justify Toussaint's act. And surely a single community

cannot have exclusive say over the treatment of a public monument, a distinct part of our heritage and one that predates Bhaishghat by at least a century?

At an animated discussion at the City Museum Kathmandu on Monday, Sujan Chitrakar and Sangeeta Thapa warned that if individual artists did not exercise due care, they could face a backlash from extremist elements and the state. The artists present, including Dishebh Shrestha and Aditya Aryal, agreed they would never consider painting over a temple as they 'knew their limits'; it was crucial however for visiting artists to consult with local artists. Karl Knapp and Taka Otsu pointed out the difficulties in containing such art forms as graffiti. What if newer artists did not possess the requisite 'common sense'? The consensus was that a negative act should be transmuted into something positive: research was needed to find a way to restore the façade of the sattal, to be documented in a way to raise awareness about the nature of cultural heritage, our attitudes towards it, and the role of public art.

When the story broke on social media Monday morning, several people responded to my frenetic posts with a shocked 'Yikes!' If indeed the sight of Toussaint's work offended so many, one can only hope that it was an eye-opener in the best possible way. The message is clear: if we wait for others to take care of what we claim as our own, we should not be surprised if they do just that. 📺

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TV's biggest stars

At this year's Emmy Awards (which honour the best American prime-time shows) - all the usual suspects shored up well-deserved plaudits. We look back (with a bias for drama and comedy) at last year in American television and anticipate what might be worth waiting for in the next 12 months.

No one was surprised when *Breaking Bad* pipped every other show to the coveted 'Outstanding Drama Series'



award. For the last five years we have been empathising with its unsympathetic hero/villain Walter White (Bryan Cranston), a chemistry professor who, after being diagnosed with cancer, makes meth to support his family. In White's mundane existence we see ourselves and long to 'break bad' when he is compelled to go rogue. The only downer - our tacit approval of drug-making will likely end this year as the series ended

after five successful seasons. Thankfully, there is no end in sight for *Game of Thrones*, the HBO series that has made the English of yore cool again and given weddings a bad name. Last season, we saw Tyrion, Arya and all the other sorry underdogs get the better of their circumstances, while queen superior and moral compass Daenerys faced uncountable ethical dilemmas that beset rulers. The bad guys may have lost this round, but they'll be back next

year with more conspiracy and deceit. In the meantime, winter is coming, so better start reading George RR Martin's magnum opus and continue the guess game: who really is Jon Snow's mother? The detective genre has been done to death, but *True Detective* creator Nic Pizzolatto heads a revival with his slow, cinematic and intensely detailed production. The post-Katrina landscape of Louisiana, where the

series is set, looms large as the two heroes Woody Harrelson and Matthew McConaughey roam around and witness America unravel. More please. When Season 1 of *Orange is the new black* was released last year to much fanfare and adulation, many doubted if its creators had it in them to last longer than a year. To our pleasure, we were proved wrong. Season 2 turned out to be funnier and more engaging. While the first season introduced us to life inside prison, Season 2 steps up from being more than just a guide to prison life: we are treated to intriguing character development as more back-stories are revealed through flashbacks. Orange is here to stay, because just before the Emmys its makers announced there would indeed be Season 3. After watching her husband make a mess out of his time in power (corruption, sex, the usual stuff), it falls to Alicia Florrick (Julianna Margulies) to take charge of things in *The Good Wife*. For 13 years, she'd been a good housewife (hence the name) but will now happily go back to being a lawyer to make ends meet. Infidelity may have been tough to digest, but it also implies reciprocation for Alicia. So far she has trod carefully through a minefield of money, scandal, and sex. But, now on a quest to replicate her ex-husband's career, can Alicia dodge all the bullets?

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HAPPENINGS



ALL TALK: Baburam Bhattarai chairs a meeting of the CA Dialogue Committee at Singha Darbar on Monday.



CHILD LIKE: Qatar's Ambassador to Nepal Ahmad Jasim Mohammed Ali Al Hamar plays with a child during the Qatar Airways Agents Awards Night held last week in Kathmandu.



SOLO ACT: Indian actor Anupam Kher talks about his play *Kuch bhi ho sakta hai* at a press conference in Kathmandu.



BUCKET FULL: Students in Kathmandu on Wednesday ready buckets with food and other essentials for delivery to families affected by floods in mid-western Nepal.

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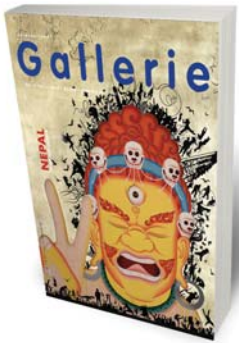
BIKRAM PAI

Nepal art special

International Gallerie, the award-winning Mumbai-based bi-annual art magazine’s special issue dedicated to Nepal was launched in Kathmandu on Wednesday. Editor and Publisher Bina Sarkar Ellias (*pic*) was on hand for the launch as well as a discussion program attended by Nepali artists, writers, musicians and the media and moderated by Kunda Dixit.

“I was really inspired by the vibrant art scene in Nepal on a previous visit and decided to do a Nepal special,” Ellias said, “it is true what they say that countries in ferment and political transition seem to witness a burst of creativity. Certainly, we see that happening with Nepal’s art, music, theatre and literature.”

The bi-annual *International Gallerie* has done country specials on Burma, Italy and Central Asia, among others and also published on thematic issues like ‘Rain’ and ‘Conflict’. “We have tried to be a platform to look at universal socio-political and cultural issues interpreted through the arts and ideas,” Ellias explained, “but I have always tried to ensure that the arts are also accessible to the



wider public.”

The discussion on Tuesday at the Himalayan Bank Auditorium was organised by the BP Koirala Foundation and the Siddhartha Art Foundation, which is trying to build the capacity of Nepali writers to review art, and to encourage better design and visual material. “We are very happy to have Bina Sarkar Ellias here, and it is a great recognition and promotion for Nepali art that that *International Gallerie* has dedicated a special edition to Nepal,” said Sangita Thapa, director and curator at Siddhartha Art Foundation.

The Nepal edition has a painting by Ang Tsherin Sherpa on the cover, and profiles artists including Asha Dangol, Ashmita Ranjit, Erina Tamrakar, Hitman Gurung, Jupiter Pradhan, Kiran Manandhar, Lok Chitrakar, Manish Harijan, Ragini Upadhyaya Grela, as well as painter-cartoonist Durga Baral. Also featured are photographers Nayantara Gurung Kakshapati, Laxmi Ngakhushi, Uma Bista and musicians Ani Choying Drolma and Salil Subedi. 🇳🇵

For those looking to brunch their Saturdays away amidst lush green surroundings, the Bar-Be-Que Brunch Bazaar at the Gokarna Forest Resort might just be the place for you.

Every Saturday for the whole of August, the resort known for its pristine environ and beautiful golf course, has been preparing a lavish buffet of Hyderabadi and Panjabi cuisine. Take a chance this Saturday before the month ends, and sample what’s on offer between 12 to 2.30pm.

From Macchi Amritsari to crowd favourite tandoori chicken, visitors are spoilt for choices at this meat-dominant fare. The spread is truly a celebration for the carnivorous. The chef’s recommendations have a lot of mutton dishes - Kunna Ghost, Rara Ghost and Mutton Chapli Kebabs to name a few. Amidst all the finger-licking good Indian cuisine, it was next to impossible to set aside a favourite.

Apart from the buffet, the BBQ bazaar also has a separate barbeque stall that prepares typical Punjabi kebabs. It was as joyful watching the mouth watering meat being grilled on the hot skewer as it was eating them.

For those seeking a change in taste, the Mongolian barbeque comprising of noodles, rice, vegetables and, of course, chicken, lamb or seafood is worth a sample.

Vegetarians, fret not. The buffet also has a smaller, yet delicious, selection of vegetarian



PICS: SARTHAK KARKI



Bourdain once famously said good food and good eating were all about taking risks. Risk missing this out out at your own loss. 🇳🇵
Ayesha Shakya

How to get there: The gorgeous Gokarna Forest Resort is a 10km drive from Kathmandu’s airport and is located inside the Gokarna Forest Reserve in Thali.

Rs 2499 (adult), Rs 1799 (child) with swimming, Rs 1999 (a), Rs 1299 (c) without.

Gokarna’s BBQ Bazaar



dishes. A handful of subtle selections that balanced the mishmash of flavours like Makkai Tikka, Palak Wadi and Paneer Kadai stood out.

And for those who need to have a little bit of Nepali in their diet, there’s also a Newari counter, which serves the popular set Samay Baji.

With a delightful assortment of salads, traditional Panjabi dishes

and a scrumptious variety of desserts, it is easy to spend your entire time sampling everything on offer. But, do take the time to venture around this gorgeous property and well, if the appetite builds up, there’s always more on the table.

Along with the buffet, guests can enjoy a swim and take a swing at golf. Take your kids along too.

Acclaimed chef Anthony



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Aches and pains

Sita, a 38-year-old Nepali bank teller, came to her doctor's office with diffuse pain throughout the body, saying she had difficulty concentrating since the last three months. She said she was also irritable, easily fatigued, and was becoming insomniac. The pain was difficult to localise but was not relieved by taking Ibuprofen. Sita admitted she had a long history of being anxious about the smallest things. On examination she



DHANVANTARI

Buddha Basnyat, MD

had generalised pain when the muscles of her neck, back, arms and legs were pressed. Laboratory tests, which included a complete blood count, thyroid, liver, and kidney function tests showed everything else was completely normal.

Patients with non-localised aches and pains are difficult for the doctor to

diagnose, and often become a source of impatience. The patients then leave the doctor's office with a handful of vitamins and paracetamol.

However the problem Sita presents is common throughout the world, and is also regularly seen in Nepal. In medical school we were unaware about what is now called fibromyalgia.

Up to 5-10 per cent of visitors to a general practitioner are fibromyalgia patients. It is not confined to any particular geographical region, ethnicity or climate. So it is possible to come across many patients like Sita whether in the Tarai, Kathmandu or the mountains.

Patients like Sita will do the usual rounds of different doctors without really being properly diagnosed. In the past, we would strongly consider sending them to the "bone" doctor (orthopedic surgeon) due to the extensive aches and pains. But the orthopedic surgeon who is very adept at fixing broken bones would find the vague aches and pains a real challenge to treat.

The mechanism of the disease is unclear, but it occurs in a skewed 9:1 female-to-male ratio, and it is associated with disturbed



sleep and abnormal pain perception. Unfortunately, there is no specific blood test for this and diagnosis of fibromyalgia remains limited to patients' history and physical examination. Basic blood tests are only done to rule out other diseases which may present in a similar fashion.

It is traditionally said the focus of treatment should not be on eliminating pain but rather improving quality of life through multifaceted exercise programs that include aerobics, strength training, and relaxation techniques like yoga and Tai Chi. Drug therapy is available for fibromyalgia, but drugs like ibuprofen generally have no role.

Importantly, antidepressants like amitriptyline which can also double up as pain and sleep medicines have shown some efficacy. In medicine it is important to avoid unnecessary drugs as it is to identify effective ones. Many doctors will not know about fibromyalgia, and due to the diffuse aches and pain, may prescribe painkillers, which are most useful when fibromyalgia is triggered by a long-standing disease like rheumatoid arthritis.

Fibromyalgia is so common that although it was required to demonstrate pain on palpation at 11 to 18 tender pre-determined points (back of neck, arm, hip, etc), this was abandoned in the updated criteria by the American College of Rheumatology because strict application of threshold of pain led to under-diagnosis of this common condition. Although general internists should be able to help patients with fibromyalgia, rheumatologists like Buddhi Paudyal from Patan Hospital are the specialists in this field. 🇳🇵

GIZMO by YANTRICK

BEAT THAT



Two years ago Beats forayed into the already competitive portable, wireless speakers market by launching its Pill wireless speaker. While the speaker was (as expected) appreciated by brand loyalists for its small size, easy pairing, and speedy rhythm, critics weren't impressed with its thin and weak sound, and termed the product more 'style than substance'.

In March 2014, the company released the Pill's supersized version-

the Beats Pill XL. Unlike its predecessor, the XL may not fit into the side of your bag, but it successfully overcomes many of the loopholes that the original had.

Like every other Beats products, the XL is well-designed. A metallic grille houses its four speakers, while Beats' iconic logo, that acts as a combination of Play/Pause Track and Call Answer/End button (a built-in microphone gives the XL speakerphone functionality), sits on the front. The rear of the Pill is

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entirely made of black glossy plastic, and contains rest of the controls and ports.

Power, volume controls and battery indicator LEDs are on the right, with a pair of 3.5mm input/output sockets, a USB socket and a Bluetooth LED light over on the left. Another Beats logo at the back marks the NFC area used for pairing NFC-enabled devices.

Pairing the XL with Bluetooth-enabled devices is quick and painless,

as the speakers automatically show on your device's Bluetooth pairing list. For devices that do not support Bluetooth, connection via a traditional auxiliary cable (included in package) is available.

As with all Beats products, the sound is bass-heavy, so the Pill is at its best when pumping out hip-hop, electronic and all bass-heavy tracks. The true test of a device like this is at the loudest volumes - the Pill XL passes with flying colours for the impressive sound it generates with only the tiniest hints of distortion. Equally impressive is its battery life - up to 15 hours of continuous use on a full charge.

Priced at almost Rs 40,000, the Pill XL doesn't come cheap, particularly when weighed against cheaper options. But for an audiophile and a purist like Yantrick, this is sound investment. 🇳🇵

Yantrick's Verdict: Better than all its competitors, the Pill XL is tailor-made for a large repertoire.

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CLEANSE, TONE, MOISTURISE

Spending time outdoors in the summer is great but when you do so without taking the necessary care of your skin, it can lead to lasting damages. Sun burn, sun tan and dryness are some of the problems that will trouble you when you forget to put on your sun screen before soaking up the sun.

In my previous columns, I have written about different homemade remedies to cure sun burn. This one will thus focus on following a daily beauty regimen that will help you with common skin problems faced during summer.

One of the most common skin problems people have this season is skin dryness. As the summer tan wears out, the skin loses its glow and ends up looking dull.

Cleansing is one of the easiest and most effective ways to restore the lost radiance, and should be an essential part of your skin care routine. Cleansing helps remove not just makeup but also the large amount

of impurities the skin collects during the day, and given the pollution in the city, it would be sinful if you didn't cleanse your skin morning and night. But be careful not to wash your face with a soap. Doing so will leave the skin dry and tight. Use a deep cleansing face wash that not just moisturises your skin but also breaks into the tan to let fresh cells emerge, hence ensuring radiant skin.

The next important step is to use a toner. The toner restores the skin's natural pH balance, which is distorted after a wash. Toners also help exfoliate the skin.

Summer heat and humidity, with strong UV rays, are also main causes for ageing skin. Moisturising your skin day and night with the right cream will go a long way in maintaining skin's youthful glow. Choose a cream that has 'anti-ageing' quality and use it generously over your face, neck and hands. Many in their 20s may wonder why they need to use 'anti-ageing' creams, but this depends more on skin quality than age. Some people in their 30s have better skin than those in



their 20s, and this is because of the difference in lifestyle. But because 'anti-ageing' creams for all age groups are widely available today, the choice has become much easier.

A common misconception about moisturising is that people with oily skin can skip this step. This is totally misfounded. If you count on nature to moisturise your skin, the body will produce too much natural oil, which clogs the pores and results in blemishes. Use a light lotion over cream.



SNEH RANA IS A PROFESSIONAL MAKE-UP ARTIST BASED IN KATHMANDU.

WHAT IS YOUR SKIN TYPE?

BEFORE CHOOSING SKIN CARE PRODUCTS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHAT SKIN TYPE YOU ARE

Similar to oily skin, Acne-prone skin is the result of excess sebum in the follicles of your face, which causes the clogs to pore and cause pimples. Search for cleansers that contain four per cent benzoyl peroxide.



ACNE PRONE

Normal skin is the most preferred skin type. Not too oily or not too dry, those with normal skin have minimal enlarged pores and look radiant and healthy most of the time. Choose cleansers containing antioxidants, hydroxy acid, botanical anti-inflammatory agents and retinol.

NORMAL



OILY

Oily skin is the result of overactive sebaceous glands that produce too much sebum or natural oil. While this skin type is prone to acne, it is less prone to wrinkling. Cleansers with the same ingredients as normal skin can be used but avoid products containing natural or synthetic oils, perfumes, or additives.

People with dry skin should use cleaners with rich moisturising properties. Cleansers should contain antioxidants, anti-inflammatory agents and barrier-repair moisturising ingredients which helps prevent dryness. Liquid or foaming cleansers are also great as they don't remove natural oil.

DRY



SENSITIVE

Sensitive skin reacts quickly to products that contain harsh ingredients. Use cleansers with mild, natural ingredients like aloe, cucumber, anti-inflammatory agents and antioxidants in lower concentrations. Avoid alcohol-based products.



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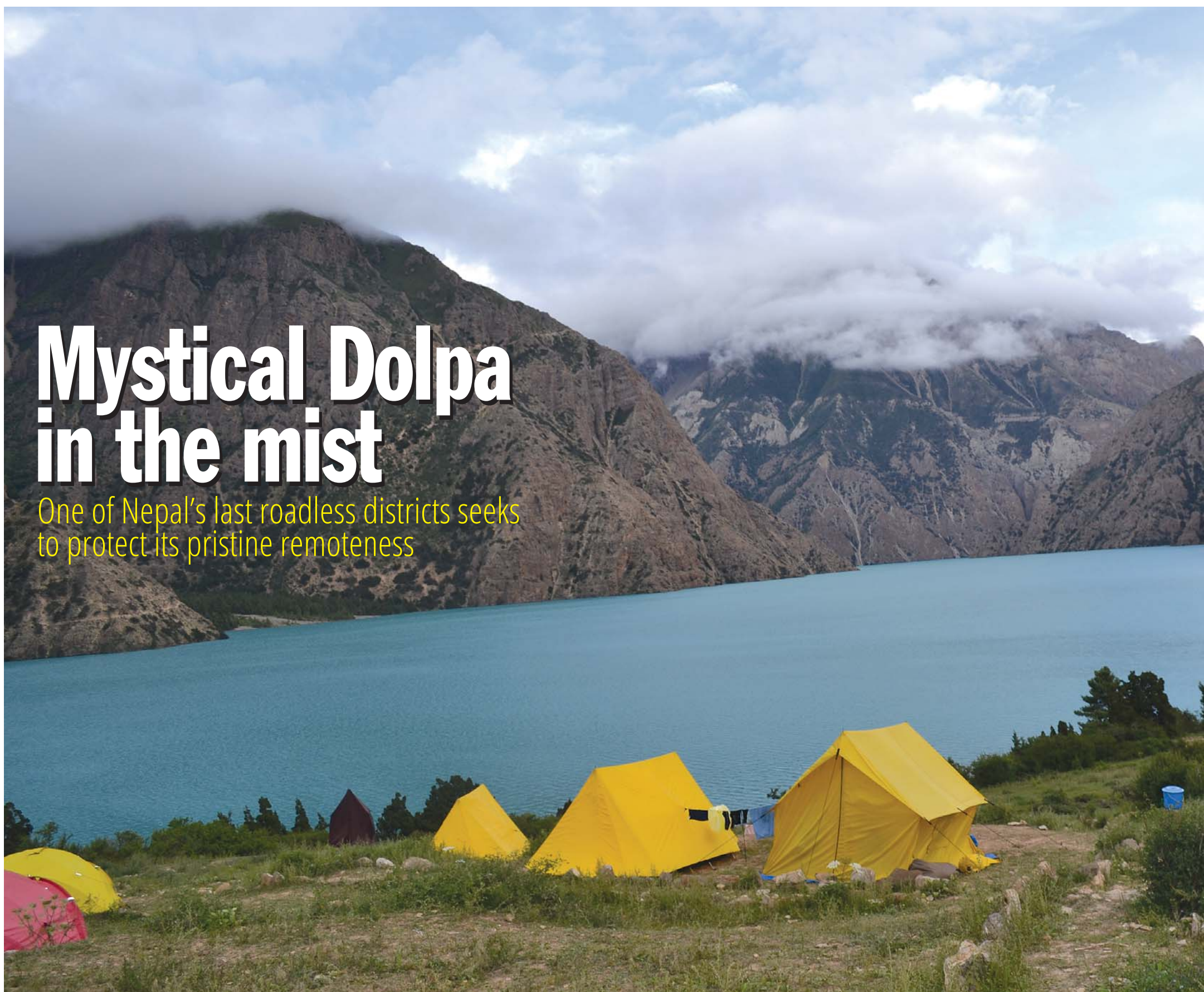


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Mystical Dolpa in the mist

One of Nepal's last roadless districts seeks to protect its pristine remoteness



ALL PICS: HUM GURUNG



HUM GURUNG in Dolpa

While the rest of Nepal suffered massive landslides and floods, in the trans-Himalayan rain shadow the country's largest and most remote district remained high and dry, in splendid isolation.

Dolpa is one of the last two among Nepal's 75 districts that doesn't yet have a road connection. Although a new highway from Jajarkot is under construction, for now the only access is on foot or flying to Jufal airport near the district capital of Dunai. For the rest of Nepal, the monsoon is the 'off season', but for Dolpa it is the peak time for trekking.

The district is tucked away behind the Dhaulagiri range and is topographically a part of the Tibetan Plateau. It has always remained cut off and secluded from the rest of Nepal because of its inaccessibility.

With the establishment of the Shey Phoksundo National Park (SPNP) in 1984, Dolpa opened up to limited tourism. As the largest and only trans-Himalayan national park in Nepal, SPNP ranks among the most spectacular and



scenic destinations in the world. Eric Valli's Oscar-nominated documentary, *Caravan*, gave Dolpa added publicity. It is one of those last places on Earth that is truly remote, where humans seem to be able to survive only because of their deep spiritualism.

Along with its rugged treeless terrain, Dolpa's jewel is Phoksundo Lake, a lapis lazuli-coloured body of water, it is Nepal's deepest and second-largest lake. It was designated as a protected Ramsar site in 2007.

The Park consists of trans-Himalayan flora, fauna and ecosystems supporting prime habitats for rare and endangered species of plants and animals including the elusive snow leopard, musk deer and blue

sheep.

The National Park contains numerous monasteries and religious sites, many of which have been renovated. Shey Gumpa, the most famous one, was established in the 11th century. Thashung Gumpa located near Phoksundo Lake was built 900 years ago and has played a role in conserving wildlife and preserving the proto-Buddhist Bonpo religion.

Conservation in this 1,350 sq km trans-Himalayan national park is a challenging task due to its size and remoteness, and because three VDCs Phoksundo, Vijer and Saldang are located inside the core area. Nine other VDCs are in the buffer zone. These have given rise to conservation problems such as over-exploitation of



DOLPA DELIGHT: Trekkers camp at a site managed by locals with an out-of-this-world view of Phoksundo Lake (*top*).

A pastel-coloured confluence of Pugmoh and Chhawa from the trail to Phoksundo (*right*).

A woman walks on the trail near Dunai, the district capital of Dolpa and the under-construction Jajarkot-Dolpa road has arrived in Lower Dolpa (*above*).




natural resources including illicit harvesting of medicinal plants and illegal hunting.

The government permitted the collection of yarsagumba inside the Park this year, allowing thousands of people from surrounding districts to over-run the Park every spring. This year, SPNP collected over Rs 23 million in fees. Management and conservation of the precious caterpillar fungus, and waste disposal have become critical issues.

Remoteness, lack of effective park management, limited human resources and the arrival of the road may give rise to overexploitation and haphazard extraction of valuable park resources.

Trekking tourism has become popular in recent years and over

600 trekkers visited Dolpa last year on special permits, and the growing popularity of the region has brought challenges and opportunities as traditional and modern worlds come together.

The local communities struggle to make a sustainable living while preserving their ancient heritage and environment. Fortunately, there is a culture of conservation among the people of Nepal's most pristine area. 



*Hum Gurung,
PhD, is with
the Himalayan
Sustainable Future
Foundation.*

हावासँग कुरा, तूफानसँग टक्कर



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Investing in investment

Interview with Radhesh Pant, CEO of Nepal Investment Board on Tough Talk, News24, 24 August



Dil Bhusan Pathak: What is the Investment Board's current priority?

Radhesh Pant: Nepal signed a lot of agreements and contracts in the last 40 years, but nothing substantial happened. Our objective is to come up with a transparent process, change the way the government signs these deals, and also compete with other countries who are looking for similar investments. We feel we are close to achieving this. It takes a lot of time to finalise projects that cost more than \$100 million in minute details. It might look like we are doing nothing, but I want to assure everyone that we are working hard behind the scenes.

What would you say are your main accomplishments since the Board was set up?

We have almost finalised the Project Development Agreement for hydropower development. We have drafted a nine-point principle to ensure the PDA doesn't go against Nepal's interests. Third, we have calculated risks against opportunities so that projects here are bankable, meaning investors can get loans to develop them. Fourth, we are trying to compete with other countries to see how we can best attract investors. There are three or four projects which, if we sign agreements in the next 12 months, will be built successfully in the next seven years.

Which are those?

There are five hydropower projects: Upper Karnali, Arun III, West Seti, Upper Marsyangdi, Tamakoshi III that are almost final totalling 5,000 MW. A project for waste-management is also underway. We have started studies for a chemical fertiliser plant, which will have a large impact on Nepal's agriculture. The problem here is that even feasibility studies take at least a few years, construction comes much later.

Which investors have actually signed on the dotted line so far?

There have been investments. But these projects are so costly that

investors want some sort of guarantee before taking the plunge. A major obstacle is that we don't have political consensus about these projects. I don't mean to say stability automatically brings in money, but even during this transition we could have stabilised policies. Now that there is an elected government with a majority in the house, everyone feels we musn't squander the opportunity.

Aren't you afraid that politicians will never come to consensus because they want their cuts from these projects?

For Nepal's sake, we must stop talking like that because these 'expenses' will also be added to project costs. Second, we must realise the companies that come to Nepal will not be the best ones in the world. If you look back 40 years, you will see what I mean. If we are to bring in the best, we must also be transparent.

It is said the Board doesn't see eye-to-eye with the line ministries. True?

Totally untrue. If we didn't have their support, we wouldn't be where we are today. We are a new department in the government, so at first people were a bit apprehensive about what our actual work was. But these are small problems and should not distract from the final goal: bringing in investments. It doesn't matter who does this – the board, the ministry, or some other agency – but it has to happen.

Have you been able to explain to politicians the kind of opportunities you see for Nepal?

Yes, we have a political dialogue group that holds regular meetings with senior leaders. Our politicians get a lot of information through various sources, including people with vested interests. We are too emotional and ideological about our resources and investment opportunities. It is time to get real. There is a definite deficit of trust, but we have been trying hard to teach everyone what Nepal stands to gain from consensus.

nepalitimes.com

Watch video of interview

Turning grief into hope

Gokarna Gautam in Nepal, 24-31 August

नेपाल

On 24 August 2010, an Agni Air flight bound for Lukla was returning to Kathmandu in poor weather with a technical malfunction. It crashed 30km south of Kathmandu in the village of Bastipur in Makwanpur district. Fourteen people on board were killed, including flight attendant Sarah Sherpa.

Her parents, aviation entrepreneur Dorji Tsering Sherpa and Anju Sherpa made it to Bastipur a few months later and burst into tears when they saw the crater where the Dornier fell to the ground. Seeing the couple in such a state of grief, locals who had gathered around also started weeping.

The Sherpas were so touched by their emotion, they decided to spend the money from their daughter's insurance and wedding budget on the development of Bastipur village.

They started with the nearby Bakiya Thakur Primary School, which the plane narrowly missed. The school was in a dilapidated state, enrollment was falling, and few children studied beyond Grade 5 since the middle school was a 45-minute walk away.

The couple renovated the school building, and started working on upgrading it to a middle school, hiring teachers and paying for their salaries. The school now has 100 per cent enrollment and students have scholarships, and get free stationery and uniforms.

But there was a lot more to be done. Dorji got in touch with families of other victims and set up the Sky Memorial Foundation, named after three young victims: Sarah, Kendra Fallon (US), and Yuki Hayashi (Japan). The foundation now manages the development work in Bastipur and its surroundings. Dorji says that his 30-year career in aviation has earned him a lot of friends, who have contributed in fundraising.

One of his Japanese friends helped build a health clinic in nearby Sikhapur in memory of his wife, which means local villagers do not have to make a two-hour ride to Phaparbari to see a doctor.

Some money also went to reviving the local school, which was on the verge of being shut down. In consultation with the villagers and with help from local CA member Indra Baniya, the Foundation has just finished construction of a 6km road



ROAD TO REMEMBER: The 6km road built (above) by Dorji Tsering Sherpa (left) and his SKY Memorial Foundation in memory of his daughter, Sarah, and others killed in the Agni Air crash in Makwanpur exactly four years ago this week. Dorji Tsering Sherpa at Bastipur's school and stupa.

connecting Bastipur with Hattisunde where locals were ecstatic when the first jeep arrived recently.

Now, farm produce from the area can be taken to market. "Our bananas, cucumber, mango and pineapple won't go to waste anymore," says farmer Prem Bahadur Ghale.

Says Dorji: "More than infrastructure development, our biggest achievement has been the change our work has brought in the mindset of the villagers who now seem positive and hopeful about the future." Dorji is already planning ahead. He thinks a homestay program can bring

tourists to the area and boost local income.

After his wife passed away last year, Dorji is even more determined to continue the work they started together. He says: "I think of Sikharpur as my daughter and wife's home."

SKY Memorial Foundation: 9851018820, dtsherpa@ntc.net.np www.facebook.com/SkyMemorialFoundation

nepalitimes.com

- Immortal memorial, #566
- Hotel Echo's last moments, #518
- For Nepali original



"Haven't eaten in six days? Don't worry. We'll form a committee this week. You'll get relief next week."

कान्तिपुर
Durga Baral in Kantipur, 23 August

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“Lots of ups and downs in India Nepal relations, but at the moment it is up, up, up. It's on a high.”

Indian Ambassador Ranjit Rae speaking at the launch of International Gallerie magazine, 27 August



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The poorest hit hardest

The true extent of human suffering from western Nepal floods is belatedly apparent

NARESH NEWAR
in BANKE

Homeless and landless, Mankumari Tharu (*pic*) sobs silently as she relates how the flood on the Rapti River two weeks ago swept away her home and farms in the village of Phattepur.

This is the first outsider she has seen since that fateful day; no disaster relief team, no government, no media has been here even though the village is just 30km east of Nepalganj.

“We have nothing left,” she says, gesturing feebly at the ruins of her home. “I just don’t know how we can start our lives again.”

The road to Phattepur was washed away by the raging Rapti, and only motorcycles take the risk to negotiate muddy side-roads. The nearest relief camp is a five hour walk away, but most survivors are too exhausted from lack of food, dehydration and rebuilding homes to make the trek.

Phattepur’s inhabitants are mostly Tharu, the proud and self-sufficient indigenous people of the Tarai who have learnt to live with monsoon floods. In fact, they benefit from annual floods that replenish nutrients in their fertile farms.

But, even old-timers here



NARESH NEWAR

don’t remember a deluge of this scale. When the local police station got a warning call from Nepalganj at midnight on 14 August, they set off the siren for so long that it broke down. It woke everyone up and they climbed trees and stayed atop roofs. When the flood didn’t arrive, at daybreak the villagers returned to their homes. But suddenly at 9:30 AM, the water started rising and engulfed their homes.

“It happened so quickly, there

was no time to save our food store and valuables,” recalls 25-year-old Bighani Chaudhary, a mother of two small children. She lost all her belongings, her crops and all she has left now is a damaged home.

The VDC is the only sign of government presence, but it, too, is overwhelmed by the emergency. Six people were killed in Phattepur, and although this is much lower than the devastation upstream, the victims

are completely destitute and left to fend for themselves.

Trucks can only come up to Rapti Bridge, and relief will have to be carried on foot the rest of the way. Over 3,500 families are in need of immediate food, water and shelter in Phattepur. The ground water is polluted, and there is a need for longer-term rehabilitation.

“The Nepalganj office and aid agencies are trying to help, but the roads have been washed away,”

HOMELESS: Mankumari Tharu and her husband in their ruined home in Phattepur of Banke district.

says VDC member, Ram Naresh Dubey.

INGOs are stepping in because the government has been overwhelmed. “We are starting a recovery program in Phattepur very soon,” says Dhruva Debkota of Save the Children. The Banke CDO office says 10 per cent of the district’s farmlands have been submerged.

Some farmers can be seen fishing in the water where their paddy crops used to be. “This used to be my farm but I can’t wait for government help,” says 42-year-old Ram Chander Yadav, who was born on the day the last big flood hit the village.

With the Rapti flowing over their farms, many villagers have moved into the forests along the banks because they have nowhere else to go. Thirty-year-old Mankumari Tharu clutches her two-month old son in the shade of the forest with 10 other members of her family.

She says: “We have relatives but they are also poor and we are just a burden for them.”

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More glad tidings

As if the world wasn't already a depressing enough place, we in the newspaper business are determined to make you even more miserable by not allowing a single day to go by without news of genocides, terrorism, bat-borne viral epidemics out of Africa, melting ice-caps, floods, and people pouring ice water over their heads for no discernible reason.

But, too bad, that is the way the cookie crumbles. However, the good news is that you consumers now have the option of skipping these off-putting news items, and turning straight to the back page to read about glad tidings and inspiring tales of the triumph of the human spirit. So, here are the main points in this News Bulletin to uplift your sagging spirits:



Nepal Breaks Human Flag Record

FROM A NEWSPAPER OF RECORDS

Former prime minister, the Rt Hon Ma Ku Nepal has entered the Guinness Book of World Records by being the biggest human flag in human history. Nepal performed the feat at Tundikhel on Saturday (pictured above) amidst a crowd of cheering onlookers by climbing up a flag pole and unfurling himself, while a helicopter hovered overhead for aerial shots of the event.

"As a person whose country is his namesake, I thought it was my pious duty to fly the flag of a nation I am proud to call my own," said the visibly exhausted, but exhilarated, ex-PM.

No Oil Price Hike This Week

BY OUR CRUDE REPORTER

Breaking from its usual tradition, Nepal Oily Corporation (NOC) failed to announce its weekly increase in petroleum prices this

Friday, saying it hadn't finished distributing kickbacks and payoffs to crooks who never got caught for last week's pilferage and adultery.

"But not to worry, we'll make up for this lapse with a double digit increase next week," a senior NOC official assured reporters, adding that the price increase was good news for those stealing diesel from tankers and those committing adultery at the pumps because every increase represented a heftier profit margin.

Consumers were also quick to see a silver lining. "The price hike means I now have to hike to work, which must be good for my health," said one motorcycle rider.

Nepal Has Failed Successfully: Experts

KATHMANDU (IRIN) - The Organisation of Failed States (OFS) has finally decided to grant permanent membership to Nepal in recognition of the country's laudable efforts in showing the rest of the world the way backward.

Delegates from all countries that are proud to call themselves 'failed' are arriving in Kathmandu next week to take part in a three-day international seminar titled 'How To Ruin Your Motherland in Five Easy Steps'. The conference is expected to formally approve Nepal's accession to the OFS, which brings with it many benefits such as donors pouring more good money after bad.

"This is indeed a great achievement, we have snatched defeat from the jaws of victory," said Prime Minister Jhusil Koirala. "But we can't rest on our laurels, we must rest on our pillows and go back to sleep."

The conference is also expected to pick Kathmandu as the venue for the soon to be set-up Research Institute for Failing Spectacularly (RIFS), since it already hosts the secretariat of its sister organisation, SAARC.

CPN(UML), NC, UCPN(M) OK HLCP

SPY AGENCIES

KATHMANDU – The top leaders of the three main parties Thursday held a meeting, their fifth in as many days, and were able to break the deadlock on the High Level Political Committee (HLPC) by deciding to locate it at Lobuje below Mt Everest.

Disagreement on an agreement to agree to disagree on the location had been holding up the decision for many weeks, raising fears of a further delay in the constitution-writing timetable.

"The agreement on the HLPC paves the way for a consensus on contentious issues in the constitution," said a high-level source speaking through an oxygen mask. "We hope the rarified atmosphere will expedite decision-making since some leaders will have stopped breathing at some point."

Nepal, India To Swap Prime Ministers

PRESS TRUST IN INDIA

As a further step in cementing the close age-old ties and improving bilateral relations between India and Nepal, the two countries have decided to trade their prime ministers.

An MoU to this effect was signed this week between the Trade Ministers of the two countries, with officials describing it as "mutually beneficial barter agreement".

"Modiji is so popular in Nepal that he would actually be elected if he stood for elections there," a MoEA spokesman said, "and taking over as prime minister of India would wake up Mr Koirala."



World's Largest Ass Discovered in Nepal

KATHMANDU (Animal Planet) – Among the three news species of mammals discovered in Mustang this month is the world's largest donkey (pic, above), the National Trust for Nature Conservation announced today.

Besides new species of Steppe Polecat (*Mustela evermanni*) and the Tibetan Wolf (*Canis lupus chanco*) caught accidentally last week on camera traps for tracking snow leopards was the Nepali Ass (*Equus nepalensis asinus*).

The images proved beyond doubt that Nepali asses are some of the biggest asses in the world, said zoologist Dr Robert Schnell. "Donkeys are usually small and stocky but these asses have stature, they are humungous."



The Ass

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