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The Everest Café

PAGE 16-17

From war to peace, former guerrilla Comrade Manju struggles to build a life for her family [Watch video](#)



MOUNTAINSLIDE

Photo feature on the Bhoté Kosi disaster one month later.

BY **KANAK MANI DIXIT**

[Watch video](#)

PAGE 4-5

A FLOOD OF IMAGES

In a new column, On The Road, **Guna Raj Luitel** compares disaster preparedness in Japan and Nepal.

PAGE 6



THE ABSENT STATE

We haven't just failed to protect citizens within Nepal and abroad, we have abdicated our responsibility

BY **THE WAY**

BY **ANURAG ACHARYA**

PAGE 3

REMITTING KNOWHOW

Besides cash, returning migrants bring back positive social norms, better business practices and technical skills

CROSS CUTTING

BY **ASHUTOSH TIWARI**

PAGE 19

buzz AUTOCRACY

The 10th NADA Auto Show is on 3-8 September at Bhrikuti Mandap Exhibition Hall with 53 exhibitors and 100 stalls with cars, cars, cars.

PAGE 7, 10-11



A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

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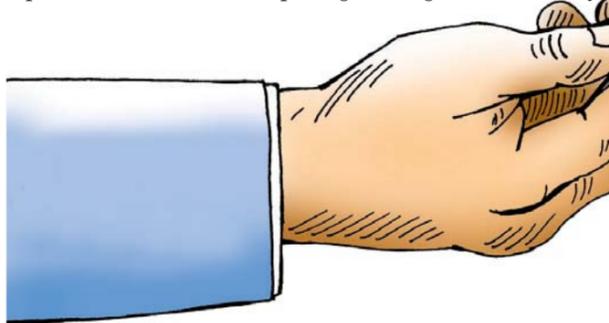
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AMONG BELIEVERS

It will soon be one year since Nepalis voted in the second CA elections, giving an overwhelming thumbs up to the NC and the UML. That was a much-needed self-correction by voters who perhaps realised they had been a bit too forgiving and gullible about the Maoist promise of equality and justice.

Having saved ourselves from Mao-fication, however, in the past year the ruling coalition has been trying to turn the clock back. The 1991 Constitution restored religion freedom, and allowed conversion as long as there was no coercion and inducement. The 2008 Interim constitution went further and declared Nepal a secular republic. The new CA though is trying to retain a provision from the previous draft of the constitution prohibiting conversion. While the clause is qualified with 'against his or her desire', in reality it could undermine the cause of religious freedom and go against the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of which Nepal is a signatory.

The new CA appears to be moving systematically to erode other gains in the 1991 and 2008 statutes, exhibiting a culturally intolerant and socially conservative streak. The clauses on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights, on citizenships of children of single mothers, are worrying signs of a democratic reversal, lack of recognition of under-represented minorities, an appalling lack of gender sensitivity.



We should protect the right to religious freedom in the new constitution

and unconcern about structural discrimination against the marginalised.

The growth in proselytisation since 1990 did not happen in a vacuum, many Dalits and Janjati groups willingly turned to Christianity because of the exclusion of their caste, or of their ethnic group, by a rigid and orthodox state. However, the public perception (fed, it must be said, by sensational coverage in the media) that there is an ongoing mass conversion of Hindus to Christianity does not bear out in the 2011 census. Although the total population of those who ticked 'Christian' in the census forms grew three fold since 2001, only 1.45 per cent of Nepalis are Christians.

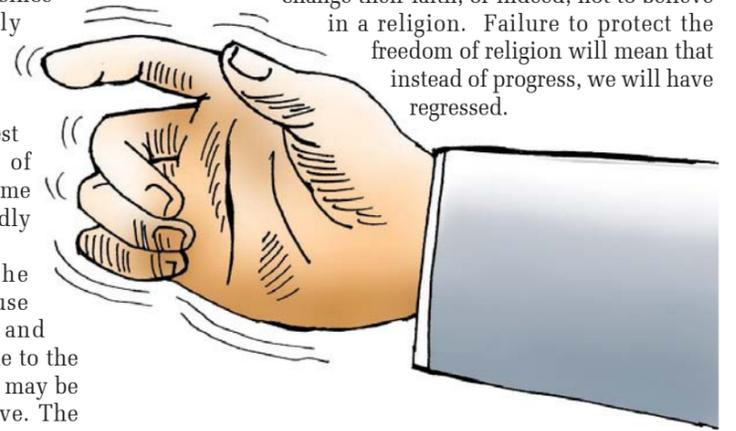
It must be said that there has been aggressive evangelism by well-endowed groups especially since 2006 among the economically desperate and victims of state neglect and discrimination. This has provoked a backlash from the Hindu right in whose interest it is to exaggerate the spread of Christianity for political gain. Some radical groups have even carried out deadly bombings of churches.

The fact that the RPP-N became the fourth-largest party in the CA mainly because of its stand in support of the Hindu state and against the activities of Christian groups, leads one to the anachronistic conclusion that while many Nepalis may be politically liberal, they are culturally conservative. The

RPP-N, it must be said, did not win a single seat in direct voting, but showed strong support in the PR ballot. Recent public opinions polls, including by Himalmedia, have consistently shown that while most people reject a return to the monarchy, support for a Hindu state has been above 60 per cent.

The ascent of Narendra Modi in India riding the crest of a Hindu wave has boosted the morale of Nepal's religious right. Although Modi did not explicitly back political Hinduism in his speech to the CA last month, it was replete with religious references. The vice-chairman of the BJP, Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, in a visit to Kathmandu in June suggested that Nepal should criminalise conversion. Soon after he left, Nepal's Social Welfare Minister Nilam KC echoed that view, and senior NC leaders have been publicly calling for Nepal to be declared a Hindu state.

A lot of what happens in Nepal will be affected by India's gravitational tug, but we have a chance to build on the past by writing a constitution that conforms to the ICCPR and guarantees the people's right to choose and change their faith, or indeed, not to believe in a religion. Failure to protect the freedom of religion will mean that instead of progress, we will have regressed.



YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

DISASTROUS MANAGEMENT

You hit the nail on the head. ('Disastrous management', Editorial, #722). Everything you've written on disaster preparedness is irrefutable. I'm just hoping no calamity of Pauranik proportion ever happens in Nepal in my lifetime. But, given the lack of preparedness, a major catastrophe is just waiting to occur.

Luv Nepal

■ Thanks for this valuable article. Without changing our attitude to relief and rehabilitation, the problem or the impact in future cannot be minimised. Scientists and engineers are available but hazard mapping has not started and even in areas already labelled hazard prone, the government has not banned settlement.

Radhakrishna Deo

■ The increase in landslides and floods is a result of soil rich in alluvium in the mid-mountains exacerbated by new poorly designed roads. ('The poorest hit hardest by floods', Naresh Newar, #722).

Himanshu Ghimire

■ Very informative, thank you NT.

Madhukar Upadhyaya

■ It's good to see the usage of mapbox and open street map in Nepali Times website.

Mukesh Subedee

WATCHING THE WATCHDOG

Corruption is corruption whether it's committed by a small fish or a big one ('Watching the watchdog', Binita Dahal, #722). The best part about

this whole anti-graft drive has been seeing government officials and staff reaching office on time. Corrupt local officials have been arrested. We cannot let even these small fries, who number in tens and thousands, go scot free. While it is crucial to crackdown on the most powerful, getting the small fish still counts. Give the CIAA some credit.

NashJ

■ Get one big fish and thousands will start behaving appropriately. Not only that, the CIAA might be able to force discipline temporarily, however for a paradigm shift in government to citizen service delivery, the top guns need to held accountable.

Namah

MISSING ANOTHER DEADLINE

The formation of HLPC should be opposed because it's an undemocratic practice and it'll create further burden on constitution making ('Missing another deadline', Damakant Jayshi, #722).

Anil Karki

■ Time to call PKD's bluff. Throw him out of every committee. Disagree with everything he says. That would guarantee that the nation is on the right track. He is not going back to the jungle, after all he's too used to living in his multi crore mansion with a pool.

N

■ Nepali Maoists are terrorists. Prachanda rejecting his election defeat, threatening to use force in a peaceful democracy, indulging in extortion and mayhem, resembles the acts of goons, not democratic leaders. Nepal needs a new force to move forward, and to usher true peace and prosperity.

Narayana Prasad

INSTEAD OF FEDERALISM

Re: 'Instead of federalism', David Seddon, #722. The writer has ignored the fact that federalism is not just about development, it is about inclusive development, and giving the political power to whom it belongs.

Pramod Bhagat

RETURN OF THE BAIDYAS

Treatment by baidyas is a centuries old tradition ('Return of the baidyas', Sonia Awale, #722). There are certainly no side effects and it does not claim to be an answer for complicated ailments.

Xevly

■ It is not the one or the other. Traditional ayurvedic medicine can be very useful and allopathic treatment can also be very effective, while western medicine can also be very aggressive or have severe side effects for some people.

Jo

WHOSE ART IS IT ANYWAY?

The rule book says we are not supposed to tinker with one hundred years old items of archaeological importance ('Whose art is it anyway?', Rabi Thapa, #722). But it conveniently forgets to mention what one is supposed to do for their preservation and most vitally, who bears the cost? Was this building ever 'listed'? It is quite unlikely that it was. That said, the zeal shown by the painter was an act of vandalism. Wonder if they would have dared to act so callously in their own country.

Armugam

■ If the government cared so much, it would provide funds for

restoration. We have no right to gripe about 'cultural insensitivity' when the buildings are becoming ruins, and the art has brought them back to life, or at least got them attention. Let's hope this will be the impetus for the government to act. Somehow I doubt it.

Sunbury girl

■ Can graffiti on temple walls be justified simply because it took place in a neglected area? This plays into the idea of the community as pre-existing raw material for foreigners and NGOs to "inspire" and 'collaborate' with. What could be more patronising? This is only the most egregious example. Let's not let other graffiti-entrepreneurs off the hook. They too operate under the same pretext, receiving massive donor funding in the name of 'art and culture' to whitewash and paint walls, many of which used to be spaces for political expression. It is astonishing that preservation remains underfunded while these cartoons are encouraged and facilitated.

Dinesh K

■ Why so much uproar over this one temple? Is it because some see every painted brick as a threat to the status quo and their culture? Whose culture is it anyway? This uproar and false consciousness is far more dangerous than apathy, it will sow the seed of cultural fascism. This visceral reaction will only reinforce the Kathmandu elite's idea of culture, art on the rest of us.

DBB

■ The real vandalism is the decrepit state of the temple due to government neglect.

Bir

Times WHAT'S TRENDING



SARTHAK KARKI

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Devotees line up at the Pasupatinath temple on the occasion of Teej on Thursday.

Most shared on Facebook
The poorest hit hardest by floods by Naresh Newar

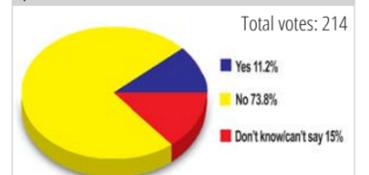
Most popular on Twitter
Mystical Dolpa in the mist by Hum Gurung

Most visited online page
Instead of federalism by David Seddon
Most commented

Most commented
Whose art is it anyway? by Rabi Thapa

Times nepalnews.com Weekly Internet Poll #723

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



Weekly Internet Poll #724
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Are you satisfied with the CA member nomination so far?



The absent state

We haven't just failed to protect citizens within Nepal and abroad, we have abdicated our responsibility



When an Indian journalist was travelling in the mountains of Nepal in the mid-1990s, she noticed that young women aged between 10-40 years were missing from the local demography. As she began to look for answers, she was confronted



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

with horrifying tales of modern day slavery which changed her life and career.

Ruchira Gupta travelled to villages across several districts in Nepal documenting how

middlemen lured young girls to India by offering families money and promise of good jobs for their daughters in Indian cities.

"There was an entire supply chain network involving procurers who handed over girls to transporters in cities and border-towns who would then smuggle them across the border. Wink-wink, nod-nod and the border guards did not even look in their direction," Gupta recalled at a program in Kathmandu this week.

That was 18 years ago, and Gupta's award-winning documentary *The Selling of Innocents* was screened all over the world. The UN Protocol against trafficking was passed in 2003 and forced signatory states to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking of persons, especially women and children. Nepal is not

yet a signatory.

Fast forward to 2014. Now, it is the young men who are missing from the hinterland. Young women are no longer being trafficked just to India, now it is brothels within Nepal that buy them. Nepali women going to the Gulf as domestic workers are being abused.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) report on human trafficking released this week puts the number of Nepali women trafficked between 2012 to 2013 at around 13,000. Nepal Police records for the same period show less than 200 reported cases. The real figure is much higher than both, and proof that you can't trust statistics.

The Centre for Investigative Journalism published two reports on human trafficking this year which expose the role of corrupt police officials aiding traffickers who forge their identities by using fake passports. When the families report a missing person, the

immigration records cannot trace them.

Often it is poverty and lack of opportunities that are blamed, but at the heart of it is the failure of the state to prevent criminals from running trafficking networks under various pretexts including foreign employment. When politicians protect these gangs, the circle is complete. Trafficking also undermines the rights of a woman to seek means of livelihood for the family and protection in a foreign land.

Nepal's Human Trafficking and Transportation Control Act with its vague clauses for prosecution provides several loopholes and is ineffective to deter traffickers. For instance, under Article 15 (1a), any person involved in selling or buying a human being is liable to 20 years imprisonment and a fine of Rs 200,000. But 1(f) of the same article provides for only a year or two of imprisonment for taking a person from one place within the country, and two years to five years of prison for taking them out of the country for the purpose of exploitation.

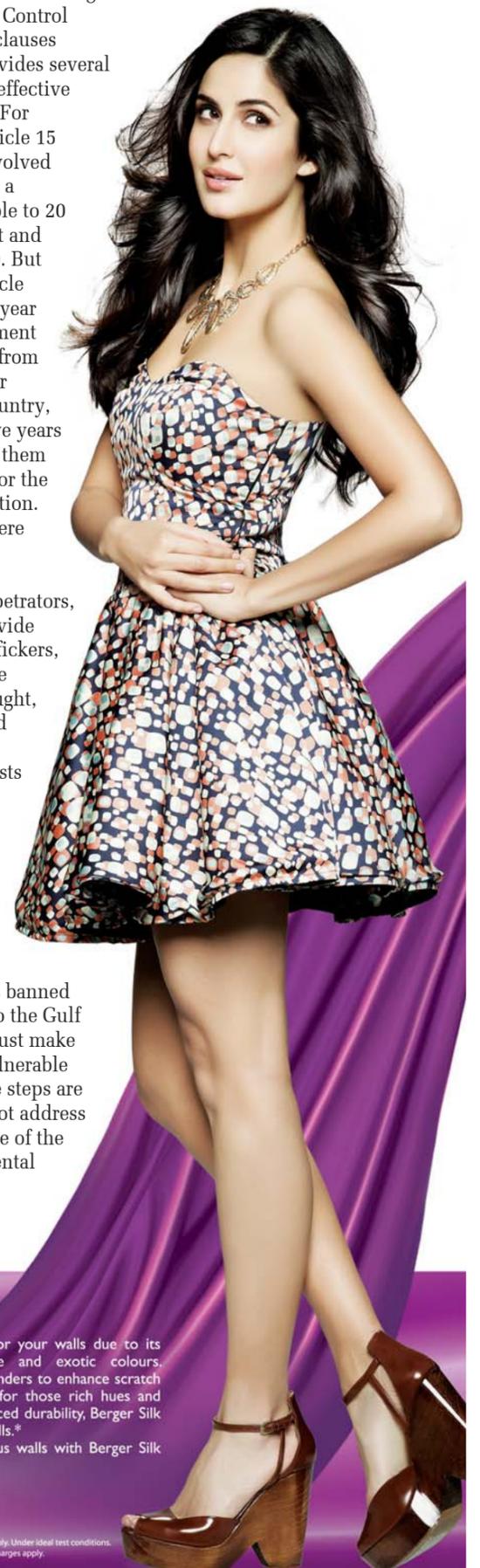
In a country where the judicial system is often found to be colluding with perpetrators, legal loopholes provide easy escape for traffickers, many of whom have been repeatedly caught, tried, sentenced and freed again.

Dozens of activists patrol the border, rescuing the girls, filing lawsuits on behalf of the victims and demanding prosecution of perpetrators. Now the government has banned women travelling to the Gulf for work, this will just make them even more vulnerable to traffickers. These steps are necessary, but do not address the structural failure of the state in its fundamental duty of protecting citizens.

It is a national shame that Nepal's primary export is its people. It is even more shameful if we tally the cost in human suffering and misery. Even if there are problems with implementation, the first thing the Nepali state should do is to sign and ratify the UN Protocol on trafficking. 

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■ To hell and back, #598
■ Watch Sale of the Innocents 



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One month after the



KANAK MANI DIXIT
in SINDHUPALCHOK

On the pre-dawn hours of 2 August exactly a month ago, a whole mountainside swept down on the village of Jure, burying at least 156 people (almost a third of them children) under tons of rock and rubble. The entire side of the hill on the western bank of the Sunkosi

between Mankha and Ramche VDCs fell off at 3 AM that morning, disappearing the old village on the slope as well as the settlement along the Arniko Highway further down. A government secondary school was wiped out. On the edges of the landslide one can observe only the devastation's periphery, because most of the people, livestock, houses and highway lie deep underneath.

On 30 August, in the company of Ani Choying Drolma, we visited the dammed up Sunkosi area where Jure village used to be. It was a numbing experience, to understand the scale of the landslip and the tragedy it brought the sleeping inhabitants of the village and roadside settlement.

We present here some photographs of the site of the 'mountain-slide'.



The landslide is about a km long and nearly as high. It buried both settlements and a stretch of Arniko Highway, blocked the Bhote Kosi, and created a lake stretching 3 km upstream. The excavator is part of the effort by those involved in the Nepal-China trade working with the Roads Department to cut a dangerous track across the landslide so that goods and passenger traffic can resume. The Nepal Army is building a longer track across the river.

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mountain fell



4



5



6



7

ALL PICS: KANAK MANI DIXIT

2 Gigantic rocks have come down from the mountain, the scale of which can be judged against the policeman at right.

that has quickly come up. Indian pilgrims headed for Kailas-Manasarover traverse the other way.

3 On the edges of the landslide, where some of the concrete houses are still standing, this orphaned CD collection has its leaf turned to Falguni Pathak.

5 The new Bhote Kosi lake and rapids have become a tourist attraction.

4 Chinese tourists are brought across the landslide area by porters/guides who are arranged by a network of 'facilitators'

6 A team of Nepal Army engineers has been working to develop an alternative channel and reduce the lake level. They use dynamite and excavators, one of them seen at the far side. The level of the lake is said to be steadily decreasing.

7 It is the end of the workday, police/ army personnel and civilians working at the disaster site head out. The boulders on either side were deposited here on the night of 2 August.

nepalitimes.com

Watch video from Jure

EVEREST BANK BIZ BRIEFS

IFC to invest \$3.8 million in agriculture

International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group announced it will invest \$3.8 million in feed manufacturer Probiotech Industries to enhance poultry farm productivity, and boost incomes in rural Nepal. This is IFC's first investment in Nepal's agribusiness sector. Probiotech will use the funding to finance manufacturing capacity for value-added products like soy flour, nuggets and refined oil.



Bon anniversaire

Turkish Airlines celebrated its 1st anniversary in Nepal at a program held at Hyatt Regency in Boudha. General Manager Celal Beykal in his speech talked about the airline's contribution to boost Turkish visitors in the country. "The airline will also act as a bridge between Nepal and Turkey in terms of business and trade," he said. Turkish Airlines flies daily from Kathmandu to Istanbul.

Black beauty

Johnie Walker unveiled a limited edition bottle design for Black Label which recalls icons of the 1930s. Created 80 years after the granting of the Royal Warrant in 1934, the limited edition bottle design is priced at Rs 4950.



Bumper win

Berger Paint announced the winners of its Silk Magic Offer on 30 August at Soaltee Crowne Plaza. Out of 200 participants, Babi Shrestha won the lucky draw and received Rs 500,000 in cash prize.

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A flood of images

Yet another lesson in disaster preparedness that will probably go unheeded

TOKYO – After seeing the aftermath of the Sindhupalchok and Bardiya floods, I flew to Japan where the country was reeling from the mudslide disaster in Hiroshima that killed 36 people. The Japanese media showed Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the ground, commiserating



ON THE ROAD
Guna Raj Luitel

with survivors and promising help. Even in Japan, despite its legendary preparedness, rescue and relief agencies were stretched to the limit.

If a country like Japan is challenged, one could expect Nepal's own response to not be up to mark, especially when struck by a once-in-a-lifetime flood as hit western Nepal last month. But we never saw senior

government officials, including Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, appearing to help.

One month after the Sindhupalchok landslide, only the bodies of 33 of the 156 missing have been found. The Jure survivors are thanking the gods for having narrow escapes, but their ordeal is just beginning. While donated food and clothing is being heaped in godowns, what they really need is cash to resettle and rebuild homes. Soon, the victims will be forgotten, the attention of the media and government will stray elsewhere and all that will remain will be the selfies of people who were there for disaster tourism.

Ramesh Karki hadn't been to the site for two weeks after the mountain killed both his parents and his sister-in-law. "What is there to see?" he told me as we walked together to where his home used to be. "There is nothing left." Now, the 22-year-old is the head of his family.

The ground fell away beneath their feet, the mountain crashed



GUNA RAJ LUITEL

on their home. The faces from the floods on the Bhote Kosi and Bardiya in the past month are etched in my mind as I negotiate the maze of stations of the Tokyo underground. Somehow, the images are devoid of emotion, they stare at me with shock and loss written in their eyes.

Smriti Khanal (*pic*) is 17 and a Grade 10 student from Bagnaha VDC of Bardiya. She was collecting shattered bricks embedded in the silt from the

spot where her home once stood. There is now a lake where her farm used to be. Family members saved themselves by clambering to higher ground, but their livestock didn't stand a chance.

"We couldn't save anything, money, citizenship papers are all gone," Smriti said, "we had to run for our lives. Only a baby buffalo survived."

Banke is where Prime Minister Sushil Koirala won his elections from. Deputy prime minister and Home Minister Bamdev Gautam comes from Bardiya and he is faulted with having forgotten his own district. "Our home minister saw us from the sky," said one dejected Bardiya survivor.

There is much we have to learn from Japan about disaster preparedness, rescue and relief. But even a country like Japan struggled to do a proper job after the Kobe earthquake of 1992

which killed 6,000, and the Earthquake-Tsunami of 2011 with 16,000 fatalities. The Japanese start early with preparedness, and emergency training begins in elementary school, but even they were caught unawares.

Still, it was heartening this time in Nepal to see the outpouring of support from telecom companies, the private sector, and students. But this was a drop in the ocean, where is the government? The challenge is of delivery because the poor and vulnerable are always the last to receive aid.

Recently a diplomat in Kathmandu told me he wanted to extend support to the Nepal government for the flood and landslide-hit regions. He found the official ill prepared to answer questions about the ground situation, he didn't have the specifics of what was needed in various parts of the country, and waffled about a response plan.

Since then, the government has appointed Information Minister Minendra Rijal to coordinate flood relief. But for most of the survivors, it is about three weeks too late. 🇳🇵

Former editor of Annapurna Post, Guna Raj Luitel, starts his fortnightly column On The Road from this week. Rubeena Mahato is on extended leave.

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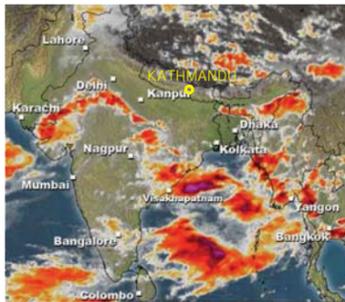
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This is the late summer when we should be seeing the retreat of the monsoon. And there are indications in the drier air, the slight nip in the air in the morning. However, this monsoon still has some steam left in it that will manifest itself in afternoon and night storms. The reverse tug-o-war between a westerly circulation and the moist wind from the Bay means that the clouds will come and go. There will be brief but sharp localised showers, sometimes with lightning, over the weekend while the monsoon tapers off.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
28°	29°	30°
18°	18°	17°

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NT ARCHIVE

NEPAL'S AUTONOMY

ELVIN L SHRESTHA

High taxes drive customers away

Vehicles in Nepal are taxed so heavily that the same car can cost up to three times more than in India. Excise, customs, spare parts, road, VAT add up to 241 per cent of the manufacturer's price tag for Indian imports, and a whopping 248 per cent on third country imports.

The Nepal Automobile Dealer's Association (NADA), currently represented by President Shekhar Golchha (*pic, right*), is convinced prices of vehicles should be reduced so they are more affordable to the Nepali middle class.

Says Golchha, "We have been constantly lobbying for at least 25 per cent reduction in taxes, but they just keep going up. A vehicle is no longer a luxury in Nepal, it is a necessity."

Yet, despite the sky-high taxes, automobile sales grew at 37 per cent in the past year.



The road to development

While the government says there are already too many vehicles in Kathmandu and some other urban centres, the market penetration of vehicles in Nepal is still among the lowest in the world. The reason for congestion is not that there are too many cars, but that there are too few roads. Also, the poor state of public transportation means there are too many two-wheelers and small passenger vans clogging up narrow city roads.

The government also claims - somewhat legitimately - that

it needs revenue from car taxes to expand and maintain roads and cannot reduce them. In just Kathmandu Valley, about Rs 7 billion was spent on road expansion and maintenance in the past two years. Only two of Nepal's 75 districts are yet to be connected with roads now, and this year's budget has allocated Rs 26 billion for the nationwide road network.

"Given the current circumstances and resources, the government has done a good job," says Golchha, "but the quality of roads leaves never to be desired." Past President of NADA Saurabh Jyoti agrees, and adds that it is not just the budget that is

the problem. He says: "There is poor coordination between the municipality and the Department of Roads, and just opening a track is not enough, roads need drainage, blacktopping and highway furniture to make them safe."

Green vehicles

More cars means more import of petroleum. The increase in trucks and buses as well as generators to cope with power cuts has meant that Nepal's import of diesel from India has grown three-fold in five years. The future would be electric

public transportation like trains, trolley buses and Light Rail Transit for cities. The cost and limited range of private electric vehicles have kept sales sluggish. Although the government reduced the duty on hybrids by 25 per cent this year, cars like the Toyota Prius and Honda Insight are still prohibitive. Saurabh Jyoti (*pic, left*) of Honda Nepal says the tax rebate will have minimal impact on sales: "There should have been at least 50 per cent tax reduction to make a significant dent on the price of vehicles."

Future prospects

Despite all the problems, everyone agrees that the automobile industry in Nepal has potential. Nepal could even be a centre for assembly of pickups and bus chassis for domestic sales as well as export. This would bring down costs and create employment. India's Tata, which was looking at an assembly plant, however, has decided against locating one in Nepal for the moment.

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HONDA

EVENTS

Jumping Frog,

A mask, puppet and musical play about the love story of a frog.
Until 21 September, 5.15 pm, Mandala Theatre, Anamnagar, (01)4249761

Newa film festival,

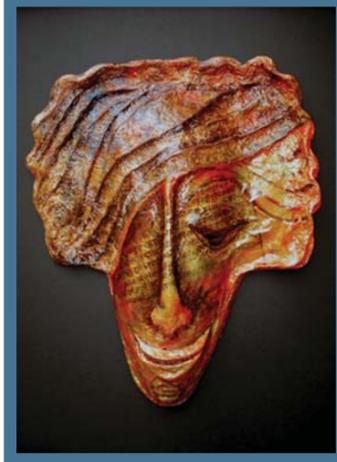
Support local filmmakers, skip the mall, and come enjoy an open-air film screening every evening for a week.
6 to 12 September, Janabahal, Kathmandu

20-year retrospective,

Asha Dangol's works on urbanisation, consumerism and ecological concerns on display.
3 to 15 September, City Museum Kathmandu, Darbar Marg, events@thecitymuseum.org

Face to Face,

A workshop with Rajesh Kumar Yadav on working with paper mache and mask making.
Rs 2000, 15 to 17 September, 4 to 7pm, Sattya, Jawalakhel, (01)5523486



Charya Nritya,

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

Creole Passion,

In the Red and Brown Water, an exuberant black drama filled with gospel and pop music, African drumming and dance that reveals a powerful spirituality.
Rs 500, 5 to 14 September, 5.30 pm, 6 & 13 September, 1.30 pm, The Village Theatre, Lajimpat, (01)4001089, theatrevillage.npl@gmail.com

Fashion showcase,

An exhibition of ethnic, contemporary and fusion wear for women and men by fashion designer Daljit Sudan.
6 to 7 September, 11am to 5.30pm, City Museum Kathmandu, Darbar Marg, events@thecitymuseum.org

Auto show,

The tenth edition of NADA Autoshow.
3 to 7 September, Bhrikuti Mandap Exhibition Hall

Artists unite,

A fundraising exhibition to support relief efforts for landslide and flood survivors in Western Nepal.
3 to 11 September, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited

Now and Then,

Inauguration of the permanent exhibition *Changu Narayan Now and Then*.
6 September, Living Traditions Museum, Changu Narayan

Media workshop,

Join Anup Ghimire in an extensive retouching and image enhancement workshop.
Rs 3500, 1 to 10 September, 11am to 1pm, Sattya, Jawalakhel



Vo'ye,

Celebrate Indra Jatra with a grand Newari Feast
Rs 1250, 9 September, 5.30pm, Jyatha, Thamel

DINING

Japanese goodness,

Enjoy a wide selection of Japanese cuisines- delights like sushi, tempura, udon soba, donburi and more on offer.
Garden Terrace Restaurant, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, (01)4273999



Trisara,

With dishes like flambeed prawns, crispy chicken, and khao soi, it would be a folly to ignore its aromas. *Lajimpat*



Indra Jatra,

Revel in an exhilarating evening of traditional dances, music and Newari cuisine on the occasion of Indra Jatra.
Rs 2800 (exclusive of 10% service charge and 13% VAT), 8 September, 6.30 pm, The Dwarika's Hotel, Battispatali, (01)4479488, sales@dwarikas.com

Embassy,

positioned on Lajimpat's embassy-laden lane, this restaurant has a menu with Nepali, Indian, Thai and Japanese dishes. *Lajimpat*

Downtown,

Go Indian at this restaurant, although it serves Chinese and Continental food too. Don't miss out on the biryani. *Pulchowk Road, Patan, (01)5010751*

Spanish offer,

50% off on all Spanish wines to enjoy with cheese platter, tapas and Sangrias. *Until 30 September, 12pm onwards, New Orleans, Thamel*

Ezer book cafe,

Cozy up with a good book over some Korean food.
Sanepa, Lalitpur, (01)5546578



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MUSIC



Live musical night,
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19 September, 7pm, The Société Lounge Bar, Hattisar



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, 1pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel

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, 10am to 5pm, Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal

Roots night,

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



Funky blues,

Join Rustynails in a lineup of soulful Funk, Blues, classic Rock N Roll and more.
Rs 200, 5 September, 7.30 pm, House of Music, Thamel

GETAWAYS



Pokhara Grande,

A swimming pool to escape from the tropic heat, a massage parlour and spa to loosen up and a gymnasium to release stress, great options all around.
Lakeside, Pokhara

Mango Tree Lodge,

Culture walks, rafting in the Karnali, wildlife exploration, and jungle safari at the Bardia National Park. *Bhetani, Bardia, info@mangotree lodge.com*

The Last Resort,

Test your limits with canyoning, hiking, rock climbing, rafting, mountain biking, bungee jumping. *Bhotekosi, Sindhupalchok, (01)4700525/1247*



Atithi Resort & Spa,

A quiet sanctuary that fuses Nepali tradition with modern amenities, complete with a fancy pool and a cosy restaurant. *Lakeside, Pokhara, www.atithiresort.com*

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Engine displacement: 1,497 cc
Mileage (ARAI): 15.6 kmpl
"A premium executive sedan; compact yet dynamic" - Saurabh Jyoti



CAR CARNIVAL

The 10th edition of Nepal Automobile Dealer's Association (NADA) Auto Show started on 3 September. The five-day event, organised in collaboration with Global Exposition and Management Service (GEMS), a showcase of automobiles, spare parts and accessories, is being held at Bhrikuti Mandap Exhibition Hall.

With 53 exhibitors displaying their best and latest, over 100 stalls have been opened for visitors. Daihatsu, Fiat, Ford, Honda, Hyundai, Kia, Nissan, Skoda, Suzuki, Tata, Volkswagen, Bajaj, Hero, KTM, Mahindra, Royal Enfield, UM Bikes and Yamaha are among the exhibitors at the autoshow.

The annual autoshow will also see launch of new models from Hero, Honda, Suzuki and Toyota.

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buzz

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Mileage: 8–9 kmpl



HYUNDAI TUCSON

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Engine displacement: 1,998 cc
Mileage: 10 kmpl



WHAT'S NEW?



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Mileage (ARAI): 23 kmpl



TOYOTA ETIOS CROSS

Price: Rs 4,145,000
Engine displacement: 1,496 cc
Mileage: 16.8 kmpl



HONDA MOBILIO

Engine displacement: 1,497 cc
Mileage: 17.3 kmpl
"A stylish seven seater" - Saurabh Jyoti

THE TOP SELLERS



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Mileage: 19 kmpl (petrol), 23.4 kmpl (diesel)



SKODA RAPID

Price range (petrol): Rs 3,325,000 – 4,295,000
Price range (diesel): Rs 3,755,000 – 4,295,000
Engine displacement: 1,600 cc
Mileage (ARAI): 15 kmpl (petrol), 20 kmpl (diesel)



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Engine displacement: 1,396 cc
Mileage: 14 kmpl

"A talented compact vehicle; very economy-oriented" - Ugendra Shrestha



TOYOTA COROLLA

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Engine displacement: 1,598 cc
Mileage: 13 kmpl



HERO XTREME

Price range: Rs 219,500 – 228,000
Engine displacement: 150 cc
Mileage: 50 kmpl



HONDA CB TWISTER

Price: Rs 180,900
Engine displacement: 109 cc
Mileage: 70 kmpl
"Great mileage, incredibly stylish and highly affordable" - Saurabh Jyoti

KIA SPORTAGE

Price range (petrol): Rs 6,550,000 – 7,550,000
Price range (diesel): Rs 7,250,000 – 8,350,000
Engine displacement: 1,995 cc
Mileage: 11-12 kmpl

Remark: *"An everlasting impression; spacious, well-priced and well-equipped"* - Ugendra Shrestha



DAIHATSU TERIOS

Price range: Rs 5,400,000 – 5,900,000
Engine displacement: 1,495 cc
Mileage: 13 kmpl



HERO PASSION PRO TR
Engine displacement: 97 cc
Mileage (ARAI): 72 kmpl



HONDA ACTIVA 125
Engine displacement: 125 cc
Mileage: 60 kmpl
"A deluxe powerful scooter" - Saurabh Jyoti

What do Nepalis look for when buying a new vehicle?

- **Price:** It is no surprise that Nepal is a price conscious market.
- **Mileage:** With the petrol and diesel prices at Rs 135 and Rs 105 respectively, topped with the constant fuel shortages and price hikes, mileage is an important factor.
- **Diesel versus petrol:** Diesel vehicles, especially SUVs, are popular for commercial use and travel that require long journeys. But for city driving, it's still petrol.
- **Ground clearance:** With all the potholes and roads without blacktop, buyers often look under cars before buying them to check the clearance.
- **Sturdiness:** Warranty, brand loyalty, comfort and safety features are also important.
- **Looks:** This is quite subjective, but most buyers are looking for a car that looks like a new model.
- **Resale value:** Car buyers also consider whether their car still fetches a good price after years of use.

Guardians of the Galaxy



A fair number of decent summer films were released this year, and the best among those have already been reviewed in this column. A late entry to this list is *Guardians*



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

of the Galaxy. Judging from its trailer, *Guardians* had a compelling premise and promised, if nothing else, mild entertainment. But on watching it, I must admit I was thoroughly delighted.

This is perhaps because James Gunn, the director, shares a writing

credit with Nicole Perlman, and both seem to have great affection for the original *Star Wars* films (I'm talking Hans Solo and not the now forgotten Hayden Christensen installments) that managed to combine science fiction and hokey comedy in perfect measures.

Even if you are not a comic book reader and therefore unfamiliar with the larger world of Marvel comics, you will still be pleased by the new range of characters you will meet in the *Guardians*.

The hitherto unfamiliar Chris Pratt who plays Peter Quill aka Star-Lord is a bit of a phenomenon in the film alternating between being an odd ball and adorable in a boyish way. Quill is kidnapped from Earth by the Ravagers and becomes a renegade under the space pirate Yondu Udonta (Michael

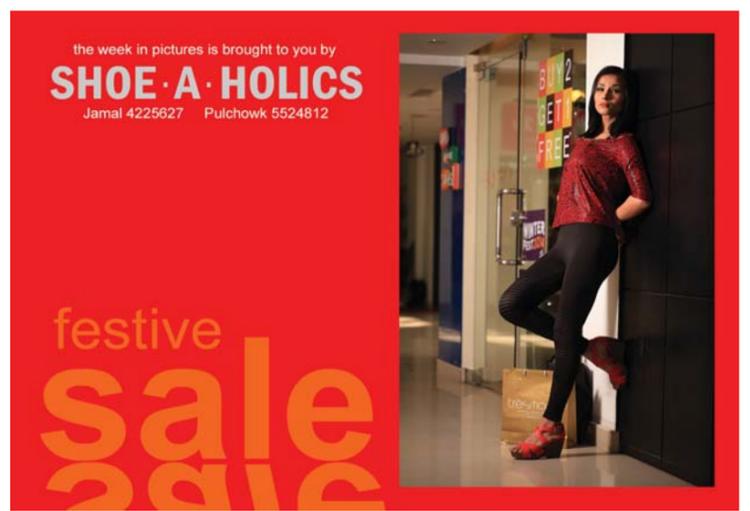
Rooker). When Quill steals a much desired but mysterious orb to sell to the highest bidder, he inadvertently sets off a series of events that take him, Gamora (Zoe Saldana) a ferocious assassin with a troubled past, Rocket (Bradley Cooper) a feisty genetically altered raccoon, Groot (Vin Diesel) a trusty tree like sidekick, and Drax the Destroyer (Dave Bautista) across the galaxy. As they try saving the world, albeit inadvertently, we get treated to some hilarious antics.

The great charm of an origin story when it is well written is watching the unexpected development of characters. It is gratifying to watch these goofy guardians come into their own just as the unlikely friendship between them blossoms into one that lifts your spirits and becomes the heart of a film that might perhaps otherwise have spun into something too light to engage non-comic book reading adults.

Having made \$553 million to date, *Guardians of the Galaxy* already has a sequel lined up for release in summer of 2017. In most cases I would be rolling my eyes and groaning at the usual Hollywood avarice, but this film made me feel the same kind of glee that I reserve only for the *Star Wars* films - the kind of happiness only the nerd-iest of us experience when we see space ships onscreen, hurtling across the starry sky set on an intergalactic adventure.

nepalitimes.com

■ Trailer



HAPPENINGS



DEVAKI BISTA

DEAL BREAKER: Deputy chairman of CPN-M CP Gajurel and party cadres take out a protest rally demanding the government scrap its agreement with GMR on the Upper Karnali Hydropower Project.



NARESH NEWAR

FISH FARM: A farmer is forced to fish in the waters where his farm used to be in Phattepur in Bardiya. More than 3,500 families have been affected by the flood of 14 August.



DEVAKI BISTA

DANCING SISTERS: A group of women perform the Deuda dance on the occasion of Gaura Parva at Tundikhel on Tuesday.



DEVAKI BISTA

MOVIE TIME: National poet Madhav Prasad Ghimire attends a special screening of *Thuli* with director Everest Surya Bohara at a cinema hall in Kathmandu.

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Taking responsibility

Three out of five citizens in Nepal are aged below 30. It is this demographic that has been migrating en masse for employment, education, and better living standards abroad.

Now, a group of young Nepalis worldwide are trying to reverse that trend with an initiative called Nepal ko Yuwa. Its Dayitwa: Nepal Public Service Fellowship has partnered 20 young individuals with CA members and public agencies for three months for its second edition.

"This is our attempt at producing a new generation of motivated change makers," says Pukar Malla, secretary general of Nepal Ko Yuwa. 'Dayitwa' in Nepali means 'responsibility'.

Abhinav Khanal, a 22-year-old student from Earlham College in USA was paired with MP Gagan Thapa as a legislative assistant. Khanal worked on Thapa's campaign 'Livable Kathmandu', which works to manage Kathmandu Valley's growth.

"I organised a debate competition for more than 100 youngsters to discuss Kathmandu's problems and also propose a series of innovative solutions," said Khanal. Topics like establishing a Bus Rapid Transit system in Kathmandu, and the necessity to privatise waste management were discussed. Khanal also created a web portal that allows



the public to take part in the project that aims to make Kathmandu more liveable.

Sabrina Singh, a senior at Swarthmore College in the US, was mentored by CA member Chitra Lekha Yadav and worked to assess women's representation in the legislative parliament and the impact of the Proportional Representation system.

She initiated a project of gendered

monitoring of the Constituent Assembly. The portal will disseminate direct voices of women CA members by showcasing their work, as well as trace bills in the parliament related to women and gender.

Sakar Pudasaini, founder of Karkhana, a think tank and education company in Kathmandu, focused on the issue of improving education through public private

partnerships. He visited 10 of 26 schools in Gagan Thapa's constituency and submitted a proposal to improve public education by strengthening management and changing teaching approaches.

"It's very important to understand that part of innovating is to fail. If you try 10 different things, 8 will lead nowhere and only 2 may work out. We need to create more space for bureaucracy to work and for innovation to thrive," says Pudasaini.

With the approval from Lava Deo Awasthi of the Department of Education and Gagan Thapa's strong advocacy, this year's budget made specific provisions for Public Private Partnerships in education.

"The public is normally biased against CA members. We need to change this, so a credible partnership such as the Dayitwa Fellowship allows more people to get on board and work collectively towards the same goal," said CA member Gagan Thapa.

This year, Nepal ko Yuwa partnered with seven public agencies: the Office of the President, Investment Board Nepal, Department of Education, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, Kathmandu Metropolitan City Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Other participants worked on topics like strengthening the role of the office of the president, mapping education trends, and improving Nepal's economic diplomacy.

Ayesha Shakya

www.hamrodayitwa.org

Long before there were restaurant lanes in Thamel and Jhameel was still known as Jhamsikhel there were bhattis in alleys in the inner cities of the Valley. Both the farmer class and royalty dined and made merry in these watering holes in the wall once the sun set.

Honacha in Patan is perhaps the most famous of them all. Opened during times when fine dining was unheard of, Honacha today enjoys the same popularity it did back when it was the only place serving meal and mead in the Darbar Square. The place gets buzzing in the evenings, and those who've frequented this iconic Newari bhatti still have a soft corner for the place. Nepalis who have lived abroad many years and are back on vacation make it a point to revisit Honacha.

There are however places that serve better Newari fare than Honacha. A young non-Newar cook in a nameless eatery in the alleys behind New Road whips up far more delicious baras. Harsiddhi Newa Suhlee in Godavari, run by an affable gentleman, wins hands down the Best Sukuti award. But it is the community-run Newa Lahana in Kirtipur that is fast becoming everyone's favourite Newari eatout, despite the distance. Why?

1. Leg room: you don't have to huddle with complete strangers at this open-air, multi-storeyed bhatti. There is enough space for

PICS: TSERING DOLKER GURUNG



Newa Lahana

everyone to enjoy the food and company without worrying about diners eavesdropping on your sweet nothings.

2. Buena vista: once seated at the top floor, the sights of Machhegaun and the towering Chandragiri above it whet the appetite.

3. The service: community women

dressed in traditional *haku patasi* who wait and smile while you place your orders serve with efficiency and unusual candour. Over-priced restaurants that populate Kathmandu would do well to ask these ladies to instruct their employees on hospitality.

4. The food: the dog eared menu lists more than 50 varieties of Newari specialities and if so far,

and Tishyo (Rs 120). Lahana's cooks do an incredible job with the more common Newari delights too. Mixed Wo or Bara (Rs 110), Choyala (Rs70) and Alu (Rs 35), Sukuti or Sukula Wala (Rs 140) are must-eats. Thwo (rice beer) brewed in a shed under the building costs Rs 35 per cup and nothing goes better with all spicie than a cup of home brew.

Newa Lahana might also be why youngsters from the city are flocking to Kirtipur like never before. And once here, you might as well wander around town and soak in the ambience of one of Kathmandu's oldest settlement. Just make sure your steps are steady on the way down.

Tsering Dolker Gurung

How to get there: In Kirtipur, walk past Bagh Bhairab temple and you'll see a gate with a signboard. Don't see the sign? Ask locals, everyone in Kirtipur knows where Newa Lahana is.

your taste of Newari cuisine has only been limited to baras, choyalas and sukutis, you definitely owe Lahana a visit.

Prepared by families of Thambahal, the food at Newa Lahana is the very picture of authenticity. "It's a pity we don't make these type of food at home anymore," a Newar friend commented before biting into a piece of Sapu Mhicha (Rs 110), a dish of leaf tripe bag stuffed with bonemarrow. Our plate of Me (Rs 120), boiled and fried slices of buffalo tongue, had us talking about rep-eats.

Some dishes were far too exotic for us, but the adventurous will want to try the Pangra (Rs 180)



Great Food Deserves Carlsberg

That calls for a Carlsberg

Gluten intolerant

A 24-year-old woman with a history of diffuse, crampy abdominal pain on and off for years saw a doctor after she recently started having diarrhoea once or twice a day. No weight loss was recorded and there was no blood in her stool.



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

Because of her age and long duration of symptoms, the doctor felt that this was probably not a malignancy. He asked her if drinking milk or eating dairy products made her symptoms

worse, in order to find out if she was lactose intolerant, a common problem in our part of the world. (Milk and milk product contain lactose, and many people in South Asia lack the enzyme, lactase, necessary for digesting milk and suffer from diarrhoea with crampy stomach pain). But she drank a glass of milk every day, and doing so did not exacerbate her problem.

A simple stool test was done and repeated three times to increase the result of finding ova and parasites which are common causes of diarrhoea here. But all tests showed negative for the usual suspects like giardia. In fact, she had already taken adequate treatment for giardia and that too had not helped

relieve her pain. The doctor then asked her if she had nocturnal diarrhoea or if the stool floated in the commode which would be an indication of fatty diarrhoea, termed steatorrhea. These too were absent.



When the doctor recommended a high fiber diet for possible irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), one of the most common problems that a doctor (especially a gastroenterologist, a bowel doctor) treats in his clinic in Nepal, she told him that she had been treated for this too. IBS is a clinical diagnosis: the doctor takes a careful history of the patient's

problems and does a simple physical exam. There are no special blood tests, scoping procedures of the bowel, or radiological tests to make the diagnosis of IBS.

Finally the doctor concluded her disease could be consistent with celiac disease, an affliction of the small intestine where the lining, which absorbs vital nutrients into the blood stream, is damaged and inflamed leading to pain and diarrhoea. This is triggered by the protein called gluten which is found in wheat, chapattis, bread, and in alcoholic beverages like beer and whisky. The doctor suggested she stop eating wheat and wheat products. When she returned to the clinic after a month, she said that her abdominal symptoms had completely subsided. She even mentioned that the problem seemed to return when she ate wheat products.

In all likelihood the patient had

celiac disease. Where facilities are available, a blood test called antiendomysial antibody test can be done. While this is a reliable test, a more complete diagnosis would involve biopsies of the small intestine where the problem lies. But this is an invasive procedure and for this patient, staying away from wheat appeared to be an easier solution.

Because IBS is common and may resemble celiac disease, it is important to ensure that celiac disease is not lumped together with IBS. One practical reason is that the treatment for celiac disease is specific (remove wheat from the diet) whereas treating IBS may be more challenging. Of course many diseases may have to be considered in a patient with long-standing abdominal pain and diarrhoea in Nepal but celiac disease which is eminently treatable has to be kept in mind while making the diagnosis.

GIZMO by YANTRICK

APP-EASING

What is a smartphone without apps? A smartphone without guile. Although the best apps will cost you money, there are a few gems available for free. Listed below are five of my favourites, in no particular order:

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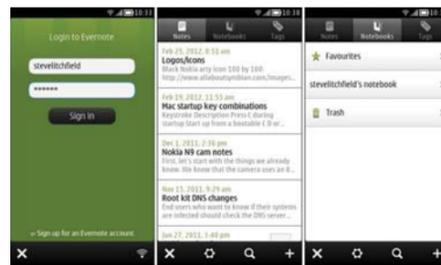
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AVI to WEBM, and every thing in between, MX is what you might remember Yantrick by.

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Don't know which camera app to choose? Tired of being unable to take that perfect selfie when the battery is down to red? Want a perfect filter to aptly reflect your mood? Go get Camera360. Quick to load and deploying a simple interface, Camera360 has replaced Samsung's stock camera app as Yantrick's default camera app. And with pre-loaded and downloadable cool effects and filters, a super quick camera, and the ability to take pictures with only 1 per cent battery remaining, Yantrick's pictures have never been better.



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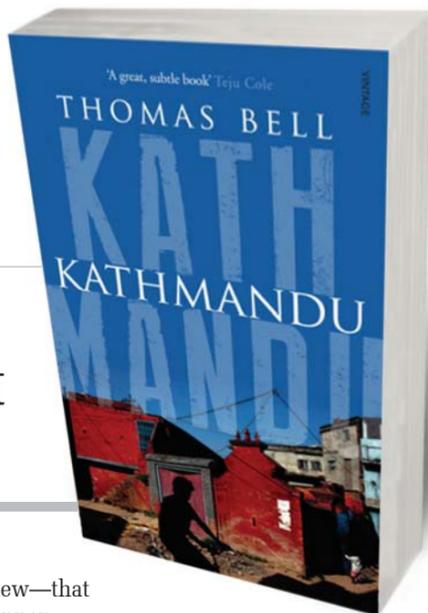
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1934

Released this week, Thomas Bell's *Kathmandu* follows his past decade in Nepal's capital.



'I had heard—everyone knew—that something was going to happen that day but nobody knew exactly what.'

'How did they know?'

'The astrologers had said. The nine planets were going to fight that day, they were coming towards the same place. The astrologers had said. We were wondering if the entire Valley would be flooded with water,' said Dhana Lakshmi. 'So my mother and I went around all the temples and we ended up at Tabahal, where the gatekeeper was my mother's friend, and she said "Panju, what's going to happen today?"'

'The panju said, "Anything could happen, I don't know what's going to happen."

'We walked up to Khumbeshwar. There's a small pati where they used to sell meat. I was leaning against it. They sell meat there to this day. My mother's friend came and she also asked, "What's going to happen today?" and my mother said, "I don't know. Everyone says something's going to happen . . ." and as I was leaning against that pati something pushed me and I went flying!'

As she was sitting in front of me Dhana Lakshmi pitched violently forward, with alarming force for such an old woman.

Kathmandu
by Thomas Bell
Random House India, 2014
NRs 960 400 pages

'Then something pulled me . . .'

She threw herself backwards as if she'd been shot in the chest.

' . . . and I went BANG against the pati!

'I said, "Mother, Mother, look!" The whole temple, the top, it swayed down and touched the ground then it went back up again. The whole earth twisted! It felt like it was twisting! The whole temple came all the way down again—then suddenly there was no road. But the pati didn't fall and that's how I survived.

'To go back home there was no road. How to go? What had happened to our house? The house where my grandmother lived had collapsed. And my grandmother had asked me to stay back!

Many people died!

After the earthquake there were mass cremations at Shankamul.

'I thought about the Mahabharat and all the people that died, and the river of blood that flowed. People died like that! There were

so many dead that all the men could do was carry the bodies and throw them at the cremation ground,' Dhana Lakshmi said. 'How many people? How many! In every house one or two. If I had stayed with my grandmother I would have died, but because it was not my time I was pulled away from the scene.

'It was on an aushi that it happened, so you must not have meat on an aushi.'

I checked the date in the moon charts. The great earthquake did happen on an aushi. The deep lakebed clays of the Valley floor were liquefied by the 8.1 magnitude shock. Some people heard a gurgling from the earth, which ran under the city in stormy waves. Houses imploded block by block into heaps of bricks and broken timber. Fountains of dust turned the day black. Tides rose in still ponds. Trees bent like in a hurricane. Within a minute many thousands of people were crushed to death.

On the other side of the river the young Himalaya Shamsher Rana was playing carom with his cousin in a room near where he was born, beside the great hall of the Thapathali Durbar. The first thing he noticed was that the striker did not run straight.

'The ladies were shouting "Ram! Ram!" and we ran outside to see the ground going like this,' he told me, and he waved his arms from side to side. 'Just near there Khadka Shamsher had built his Gol Baitak [a circular palace building] and it collapsed, just collapsed, and there was a cloud of dust like an atom bomb.'

That night Himalaya Shamsher's family camped in one of the palace gardens. Two weeks later they built wooden cottages there. They never moved back into the palace. The garden was divided between his father and his uncle and later it was further divided. Thapathali began to become the neighbourhood of bungalows that it was when I lived there. 'I was

so terrified of earthquakes, of being buried alive,' said Himalaya Shamsher, 'that even years later if I felt tremors I would flee the building, even leaving my wife and children inside. When I built the house I have now I made it earthquake resistant.' That awful January of 1934 the Tundikhel parade ground became a refugee camp for people fleeing the ruins of their homes. They must have been poorly dressed, and everyone agrees that Kathmandu was colder in those days than it is now.

The prime minister, Juddha Shamsher, built the street called New Road (Juddha Road, he called it) through the wreckage of eastern Kathmandu, to open a European boulevard into the Malla durbar square. The new shops that lined New Road had elaborate classical facades and he placed his own statue in the classical plaza at the end, between the earthquake memorial park and the theatre, which later became the first cinema hall, where the Bishal Bazar shopping centre now stands.

It was after the earthquake that residential areas began to spread in earnest beyond the boundaries of the old Malla cities. 'A lot of damage was done to the houses in the very tightly packed city, you see,' said Himalaya Shamsher. 'So then they started moving out.'

'To places like Maiti Devi, Naya Bazar, Putalisadak?' 'Yes. And the roads were not there. You needed roads to move. So the roads were constructed by Juddha Shamsher.'

The orientation towards streets instead of squares was a novelty in Kathmandu's planning. The houses along the new roads were built on the traditional scale, using the old structural methods of brick and timber. But they had stucco pediments with cherubs above the windows, string courses and cornices between the floors, and quoins and pilasters at the corners, in imitation of the fashion for European classicism introduced by the palaces of the Ranas.

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Comrade Manju's Everest Café

The story of the hope, sacrifice and struggle of a woman guerrilla



BIKRAM RAI

DEEPAK ADHIKARI

When photojournalist Bikas Rauniar took a picture of a Maoist guerrilla in 2006, he was told by his minders not to reveal who she was and where the picture was taken. The photograph of the fighter on the stairs was later included in nepa-aya's picture book of the conflict, *A People War*, curated by Kunda Dixit.

Eight years later, the woman in the picture, Sapana Maya Bajju ('Comrade Manju') is now in her late 20s, and is cleaning cups and tending tables at her Everest Café in Lainchaur. Rauniar remembers travelling with colleague Narendra Shrestha after a Maoist contact arranged a trip to the remote village of Bhaise of Rautahat district.

"It seemed to me then that the Maoists had forcibly recruited young men and women," Rauniar

remembers. But Sapana's story, like that of thousands of others like her, is a tale of idealism, the sacrifice of war, the struggle for survival in peacetime, and of hopes dashed.

Sapana was in Grade 5, part of a large family of 18, helping with the household work. She had an abusive father who used to scold and slap his daughters.



She had been impressed by a Maoist recruiter named Maila Lama who had come to perform a cultural program at her school, a four hour drive from Hetauda. Sapana's brother, Ratan Bajju, had already been recruited by the Maoists and at 11 she joined a Maoist cultural troupe as well, and was given the nom de guerre, Comrade Manju.

They were immediately caught

up in the war, narrowly evading capture by an army patrol as they headed to the hills. Sapana soon learnt to use weapons and was entrusted with expanding the Maoist women organisation. She rose up the ranks to be the vice-chairperson of Lalitpur district committee of All Nepal Women's Association (Revolutionary).

"I concluded that the path the Maoists had taken was the right one," she recalls, "I was not afraid to carry a gun and use it if



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NOW AND THEN:

(From l-r)
Sapana Maya Baju shows her son, Samar, her photograph in the book, *A People War*, at her rented room in Kathmandu.

Sapana at her Everest Cafe in Lainchaur this week. She feels let down by her party.

Bikas Rauniar's picture of Sapana in combat uniform when she was 'Comrade Manju' eight years ago in the remote village of Bhaise of Rautahat district.

Sapana aged 11 in her village of Raigaun near Hetauda, before she joined the revolution.

Sapana, her husband Krishna Pant and son Samar, on his first birthday in Chitwan in 2008.

Sapana and Krishna at their 'revolutionary wedding' in 2006.



BIKAS RAUNIAR



guard in Afghanistan. But he was cheated, got stranded in Dubai, lost most of the money he paid the middleman, and never got the promised job.

The family relocated to Kathmandu, and although Krishna worked briefly as a security guard in a mall in Kathmandu and moonlighted as a trekking guide, life was a struggle.

It was only after Everest Café that Sapana feels she finally has a foothold in Kathmandu. "Our primary concern is to earn enough to feed ourselves, and support our son's education," says Sapana, as she walked home this week after picking up her son, Samar, from school.

The war seems a long time ago. Sapana credits the Maoists with opening her eyes to the world, but is disappointed about how it has all turned out.

"We had dreamt of a bright future for a New Nepal," she says, "we gave up everything for the party, but it abandoned us. They said we fought for equality, but look at what we have now. It's the same old world." □

needed. It proved that women were no longer weak."

Once, her unit ran into a group of soldiers in Sindhuli. They hurled grenades, while the soldiers fired back and pinned them down behind rocks for the whole night. Luckily, none of her comrades was hurt.

In 2005, amidst the heat of battle, fellow-guerrilla Krishna Pant proposed to her. He was a war wounded, and although she liked his honesty and frankness, Sapana initially turned him down. He was a Brahmin, she a Tamang, and she remembered the way her family used to be insulted by Brahmins.

But their relationship grew, and Sapana and Krishna had a revolutionary marriage just as the ceasefire came into effect in 2006.

She joined Krishna at his home in Phujel of Gorkha district, and

had to switch from wearing jeans and t-shirts to kurta, bangles and touch her mother-in-law's feet with her forehead. She was prepared to observe these Brahmin practices, but Krishna's mother spurned her. Sapana decided to return to the UNMIN-

supervised camp in Shaktikhor where she gave birth to a baby boy in 2008. By then, the Maoists were locked in a confrontation with the Army, and women guerrillas with children were asked to leave because the Maoists saw them as a liability.

Life outside the cantonment was even harsher, and Sapana and Krishna were forced to hand over a portion of their meagre state stipend to the party. Krishna decided to pay Rs 600,000 to a recruiter who promised him a well-paying job as a security

nepalitimes.com

Gallery with more pictures

Watch Sapana on video

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Making billions from bags

Kanchan Adhikari in *Pahilopost.com*, 2 September

As a young boy living in Solukhumbu, Sonam Sherpa often saw his friends chase down foreigners. His friends carried their luggage up mountains, and then returned home with comfortable shoes, warm clothes and sturdy bags at the end of the trekking season. Even though Sonam wanted all the things that his friends had, he couldn't bring himself to work as a porter.

Sonam's father worked in construction and was away most of the time, his childhood was spent helping his mother run the house. When he was older, he began to sell apples.

At 14, Sonam left Solukhumbu for Kathmandu with less than Rs 500, and only a pair of clothes, slippers and a bag. Today, at 36, Sonam is the owner of Everest Hard Wear, that manufactures trekking goods and exports to Spain, England, America, Canada, Singapore and China.

"When I first came here, I had no skill or education," says Sonam who had initially planned to stay for only two weeks. After being charmed by the city life, Sonam began to work at an uncle's factory. "Because I was illiterate, I did any job that was given to me," he says. Jobs included cleaning the factory, making deliveries of goods around town.

It was during those rounds that he picked up the basics of the trade: where to sell products, what price to sell at. After five years, he left his uncle's factory to start his own. From buying materials to delivering products, collecting payment, Sonam did everything by himself. He began by retailing his products which included clothes, gears, and bags at few stores in Thamel.



"Once people knew about my products, many shopkeepers contacted me as they wanted cheap but quality products," says Sonam. Everest Hard Wear currently has 25 employees and produces 25 to 30 varieties of items including down jackets, down sleeping bag, gloves, shoes, suit, wind proof jackets, and trousers.

Foreign brands were expensive. One sleeping bag cost nearly Rs 60,000 and a down jacket didn't retail for less than Rs 20,000. With such heavy price tags, these products were out of reach for most Nepalis. Sonam wanted to change this and as a result sold his products using popular international brand names such as North Face, Lowe Alpine, Marmot.

While the sales were huge, Sonam felt the need to sell his products under a Nepali name. Five years after first beginning to sell his products, Sonam registered his company Everest Hardware in 2001. "I chose the name because it is related to our country's identity," he says. His friends in Namche often call him to tell that they saw foreigners wearing his brand, and that always makes the businessman happy.

What he is less happy about is the government's apathy towards the business community. "There's no electricity, workers lack discipline, and the environment is far from being investment friendly. It is discouraging for people like me who are trying to do stay and do something in the country," he says.

"Even if an American company likes my product and places an order for 1.5 million t-shirts, I won't be able to deliver," he says. Sonam says Nepali brands are no less than foreign brands. But because of political instability, it has been hard on businesses to deliver. "I can make my brand as popular as North Face in the next five years," he says "but that will be possible only when the political scene in Nepal improves and businesses are prioritised."



MISSING

Himalkhabar.com, 4 September

हिमाल
खबरपत्रिका

Two Nepali filmmakers, Krishna Upadhyay and Guna Dev Ghimire, have been reported missing from a hotel in Qatar since three days, according to their employers Norwegian organisation Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD).

Upadhyay and Ghimire, who hold British passports, were making a documentary about Nepali workers working in the construction of Qatar's World Cup stadia. According to the *The Independent*, GNRD suspects plainclothes policemen of apprehending them and possibly placing them under torture.

As they checked out from the Doha Grand Hotel to return to Norway on Sunday, Upadhyay and Ghimire saw an unusual high number of police personnel were gathered at the lobby. Immediately, they sent messages to their relatives and friends. The duo has been missing since then.

Earlier, the two had planned to take interviews at camps for labourers but felt this was endangering and chose instead to interview workers inside the Nepali Embassy in Doha. In another instance, officials from the Nepali Embassy had to intervene after Qatari security forces followed the filmmakers when they were travelling with Nepali diplomats.

GNRD has tried, without success, to get a response from the Qatar government. Qatar's embassy in London is also silent. A press statement released by GNRD says it will take legal actions against Qatar if their employees are tortured.

50-year-old Upadhyay, who holds a PhD from a British university and once led the Non-Residential Nepali Association in Britain, had only recently gone to Norway. There he met Ghimire, 36, who worked as a cameraperson for a Nepali diaspora tv channel.

Not a ransom note

Interview with Baburam Bhattarai, Annapurna Post, 31 August

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

Annapurna Post: Why should the UCPN(M)'s chairman lead a high level political committee?

Baburam Bhattarai: The peace process is still going on, so you need our participation in it because we are one of the main parties who signed the peace accord. Our Chairman Dahal is the one who signed the CPA, so it would be legitimate for him to head it. But this is not a ransom note.

How will this committee really help in constitution writing?

All the leaders will be in one place talking about the main issues.

But can't those talks be held in the CA's Political Dialogue and Consensus Committee that you are head of?

No. The PDCC is about constitution writing, not peace process completion. I chair that committee, but none of the other leaders are directly involved.

Will there be positions for Madhesi parties in the new HLPC?

We shouldn't forget that we're still guided by the 12-point agreement of 2006. The interim constitution formed on the basis of this agreement says there shall be consensus on all decisions. Until another constitution is written through a consensus, the CPA will still prevail. That is why we need to include everyone who took part in the peace accord.

So, when will the first draft of the

constitution be ready?
Our goal is mid-October.

Are you on track?

As of right now, there are some issues that need resolution. My committee has to finish its work before the second week of September. There are some contentious issues like state restructuring and form of governance, which we hope to finish in a few days.



Is there still a mood for a consensus among parties?

The parties in government don't seem to be interested.

Are you seeking revenge against the NC and UML for what they did to you when you were in power?

Not true. I don't know why everything in Nepal is interpreted through conspiracy theories. No one is blameless right now. The country needs everyone to respect the 2006 accord.



Sign: People's Poultry Farm
Egg: CA member nomination

कान्तिपुर

Batsyayan in *Kantipur*, 31 August

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“I'm not irrelevant because I'm the only living person to have signed the peace accord. I must have a special role.”

UCPN(M) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal speaking to NC and UML about constitution writing, *Annapurna Post*, 31 August



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Remitting knowhow

Returning migrants bring back positive social norms, better business practices, confident self-identities and technical skills

Of late, there has been a gradual backlash in the media against the social effects of a remittance economy.

Stories of families torn asunder when wives or husbands work abroad, tales of villages bereft of young men and women for road construction work and to run and manage small businesses, and photos of wide swathes



CROSS CUTTING
Ashutosh Tiwari

of agricultural land remaining uncared-for due to a shortage of farm hands add vivid details to the narrative.

The tone is often grudging: Yes, remittance has increased incomes in the village households and among migrants who work abroad, but such economic well-being has come at a huge social cost. And often the implication is that sooner or later the long-term social cost of remittances will outweigh any tangible short-term economic benefits.

But what if we do not limit our view of remittance to only the transfer of money? What if migrants also transfer or bring back positive social norms, better business practices, confident self-identities, technical know-how and skills, and



ASHUTOSH TIWARI

access to expert social networks? Dubbed 'social remittance' in 2001 by an American academic Peggy Levitt, two examples of these 'services over money' benefits of remittance were on display at a talk program on the subject hosted recently by GiZ's Centre of International Migration (CIM).

Shree Krishna Adhikari (pic, in blue shirt) from Hetauda was working as a health assistant in his 20s at a government-run health post near Kalanki when the

conflict forced his family members to find alternative sources of livelihood. He went to Israel where he almost broke his back working for a vegetable nursery for long hours in oppressive 50-degree heat.

"For the first two years, I saw the job as an opportunity to make money," Adhikari said. "But as time went on, I started thinking if the Israelis could grow such vegetables in such large quantities in the deserts by using practical techniques and useful

technologies, what was stopping us in Nepal, where we have plenty of water and arable land, to grow and sell vegetables ourselves?"

Adhikari, 33, stayed in Israel for six more years, working in different farms and acquiring skills and work experience to be an expert in installing drip-irrigation technology, which allows farmers to ensure that each plant receives only an optimal amount of water and nutrients so that yield is maximised and waste

is reduced. One additional benefit of such technology is that it uses fewer people to water large fields.

Adhikari returned to Nepal in 2011 to start his own firm, Shalom Agriculture, which has worked with 400 Nepali farmers in 33 districts. These farmers grow salad greens, tomatoes, cucumber, capsicum, pumpkins and the like. "I could not have imagined that I would someday own a business when I was working as a health assistant. Going abroad and mastering a skill gave me the confidence to return and work with farmers," Adhikari said.

Likewise, Bharat Regmi, 42, was an itinerant travel and trade professional whose source of revenue were European tourists who came to his village in Dhading for home-stays. But early in his career, he had been to coffee farms in Ethiopia, and had seen how agro-tourism had developed in Thailand and Vietnam.

Continuous exposure and foreign-acquired skills led him to think that perhaps he could start an organic coffee farm in his Nalang village, with a few rooms set aside for tourists. Started in 2010, Regmi's Himalayan Ontop Coffee Estate, spread over 300 ropani, is now producing for exports.

Money from foreign employment goes only so far. But ideas, know-how and networks brought from abroad have potential to change people and economy. This is one area in which government's attention and the media's interests need to be broadened. ■

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Lets legalise corruption

Let's face it, the Demographic Kleptocratic Republic of Nepal has failed miserably to control corruption. It is now time to bite the bullet, swallow the bitter pill, take the plunge, cross the Rubicon and burn our bridges by legalising corruption.

Just like lifting the ban on marijuana removes the drug mafia from the equation and adds revenue to the government's coffers through the hash tax, making bribery legal has been proven to provide many other advantages. For example, it would give Nepal's GDP a big boost by legitimising transactions that already form such an important segment of our economy.

to be able to afford international medical treatment for hundreds of ailing and aging top leaders, bringing corruption into the ambit of the tax net would be a hefty contribution to the national treasury. Of course, I know what the cynics among you are thinking. You are thinking: let them kick the bucket. It is precisely such negativity from you nabobs out there that is keeping this country backward. If Nepal is to rise out of the sub-continent and move to sub-Saharan levels of development, we must be more creative.

As it is, you may further say, more than half of Nepal's annual budget is unspent at the end of each fiscal year so what is the point

that will deduct 13 per cent of the amount at source and will be added to the tax payer's annual returns.

Corporate Graft Tax: Bribes paid by businesses and companies to get work done or expedited will be taxed according to a sliding rate based on a formula that will include income, capital gain, net worth and state-sanctioned extortion by militant unions.

Property Kickback Tax: Since bribes are also given in kind, and to prevent these from falling through the tax net, the Dept of Taxonomy will physically dis-assemble 13% of the body weight of the chassis of an SUV, or a villa in Bhaisepati, given in lieu of a bribe.

Inheritance Tax: Since a lot of officials have enriched themselves during their tenure as Director General of Customs and Culture, in the unlikely event of his/her demise, the state will repossess 50% of his/her ill-gotten wealth. Sorry lads, half of Daddy's moolah is ours.

Tax Deductions: Tax payers who handed over bribes intended for a charitable cause can claim refunds if they can establish that the payoff was for adopting a baby from Bal Mandir, donating zillions to an Indian Godman, or bribing TU officials for a permit to set up a private hospital.

Excise Tax: These taxes on bribes are hypothecated by keeping them very low in order to encourage corruption and contribute to growth. After all, if there was no corruption all transactions would stop and the economy would grind to a halt.

This being Nepal, there will be those who will try to evade paying the corruption tax by bribing the tax collector. Such bribes will be confiscated, and the perpetrator exiled to Azerbaijan.



The Ass



There would be some negative repercussions of this, to be sure, but let us not be deterred by a few minor irritants. For example, since no one will be breaking the law anymore by being on the take, Nepal would not figure anymore on the Transparency International Index. This is a pity because ever since records started being kept, Nepal's sole claim to fame and international recognition was that we consistently scored less than 3.0 points in the world corruption rankings and have been in the august company of such countries as Azerbaijan and Angola which have elevated national plunder to a fine art.

Since the Financed Ministry is looking for new ways to generate more revenue for the state in order

of generating more revenue? Good question. And I'm afraid I don't have an answer to that right now, let me get back to you.

So, the way it's going to work is this. Since bribery is an economic activity that generates income, a Corruption Tax would be calculated on net profit and net gains from business and computations thereof will be determined by a flat pay-as-you-earn rate. In other words, the briber has to hand over to the bribee, the agreed bribe amount under the table minus VAT. The Department of Death and Taxes has drawn up a list of various types of corruption levies that are applicable to citizens from the next fiscal year:

Bribe VAT: This is a flat rate on individual bribes great and small

PAST PRESENT FUTURE

DIWAKAR CHETTRI

Enough of small fishes...



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