The country is closing down for the Dasain holidays, which will be followed by Tihar and Chhat, then there is the SAARC Summit in November. It would have been tight even if it was just a question of crossing t’s and dotting i’s on the draft of the new constitution, but there are still some fundamental differences over the kind of federalism. Delays in constitution-writing and an effective transitional justice mechanism cost Nanda Prasad Adhikari his life. In this special Dasain issue we remember the abandoned victims of the conflict. Dasain is said to mark the victory of good over evil. In Nepal, it looks like evil still has the upper hand.

Nepali Times wishes its readers and partners a joyful Dasain holiday. The paper will take its annual break next week, so the next hardcopy edition will come to you on Friday, 10 October. However, you can follow us online wherever and whenever.

nepalitimes.com
Nepal’s conflict ended eight years ago. But the war is not finished as long as the pain of bereavement of the survivors remains, those whose relatives were disappeared still grieve, the wounded and displaced are left to fend for themselves.

The feudal Nepali state was a perpetrator of structural violence. The Maoists, however misguided in their pursuit of an obsolete ideology, believed that only revolutionary violence could counter it. Had they tried to learn from history, they would have known that violence is never the answer, that it breeds a cycle of violence. So it is that today, the disgraced revolutionaries have no answer to the question: “What was it all for?”

Nepal’s conflict had no victors and no vanquished. Neither side won, the Nepali people lost and the country’s development was pushed back decades. And we are left with a legacy of violence and lawlessness during this prolonged transition. Going from monarchy to republic prevents us from being more inclusive and taking a step towards human rights and democracy.

The country was unilaterally declared ‘ secular’ without the people’s consent. Federalism, touted as the biggest accomplishment of the revolution, is just a slogan and has stipped meaningful power to the people, a true devolution and autonomy. Instead it threatens to fragment an already divided country. Whatever political progress was credited to a war fought in the name of the people was not worth the blood that was shed and the sacrifices made.

Now, a state composed of war mongers from both sides that visited such misery on the nation wants us to let bygones be bygones. Not only do they not want to say sorry, they are forcing Nepal to forget the past. Forget who executed your innocent father, don’t ask who raped your daughter, disregard the commissar or captain who disappeared your brother, don’t you dare name those who tortured families. Because if you don’t, we will let the peace process collapse. So, they blackmail us with the threat of violence while the internationals look on. They vitriol human rights defenders and those who seek justice, accusing them of being in the payroll of ‘foreigners’. They insult, even in death, a father who suffered untold pain by refusing to eat for nearly a year demanding that those who murdered his teenage son be brought to justice.

The death of Nanda Prasad Adhikari this week has seriously smeared Nepal’s democratic credentials. It has exposed the activist societies, a deceitful state, and an uncontrollable international community which mysteriously refused to speak and act on a human rights issue that they were so passionate about till recently. How did protecting the ‘process’ suddenly become more important than protecting ‘justice’?

In this special issue of Nepal Times which should be marking the festive season, we have tried to remind ourselves of those forgotten and abandoned victims of the conflict (See pages 6, 16-17, 19) Many are still waiting for justice, minors who witnessed horrific violence are now troubled and destitute adolescents, no one hears the silent cry of rape victims, and there are hundreds of families of the disappeared for whom every day without closure is an occasion for fresh mourning.

This is said to mark the victory of good over evil in Nepal, it looks like evil still has the upper hand.
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The Madhes has never been more integrated with the rest of the country

The plains-dwelling Madhesi people have always felt excluded by Kathmandu, and have demanded greater recognition and respect. The demand for dignity and acceptance of the region’s distinctive identity fuelled the Madhes Movement of 2007, which has now graduated to outright secession. Most of the fractious Madhesi parties in the Constituent Assembly have persisted with their demand for a single province to be turned into a ‘right to self-determination’ in the new federal setup. The pro-federal forces have not presented enough convincing arguments about the new province’s economic and political viability, and most other residents of the plains, including the aboriginal Tharu people, contest the advisability of this proposition. They find no socio-economic or developmental rationale behind it, and, therefore, view it as being insidious in its intent. The suspicion is fuelled by other antecedents. The ten-year Maoist insurgency was followed in 2007 by the call for Madhesi ‘liberation’, the defining feature of which was the anti-Hill cleansing of the Tarai. It led to a mass out-migration of people of Hill descent from Morang, Mahottari, Rautahat and other districts.

On one occasion, the leader of a Madhesi party threatened an embargo against Kathmandu at Birganj, reminding the people of the protracted Indian blockade of Nepal in 1989-90. Lately, the same politician tried to drag India in by describing the drubbing of Madhesi parties in the Tarai in last year’s elections as “India’s defeat”. Earlier, a Birganj-based Indian diplomat egged Madhesi politicians to “make the Tarai burn”. The irony is that all this is happening at a time when the Madhes has never been more integrated with the rest of the country, socially, economically and emotionally. The Madhes has a distinctive identity, with its own languages (Maithili, Bhojpuri and Avadhí), an agrarian economy, an entrenched caste system and an extended relationship with kindred across the border. Even so, hill-plain interaction has intensified to such an extent in recent decades that Kathmandu has emerged as the centre of gravity for the Madhesi people too.

Noted columnist Chandra Kishore wrote recently that the Madhesi people are now “inclined to embrace Kathmandu more than the traditional destinations of Darbhanga, Madhubani, Sitamadi, Bettiah, Patna, Gokulpur, Baharai or Lucknow”. He continued: ‘While living in Kathmandu still involves some struggle, for the most part, it has now become one of coexistence.’ Madhesi scholar, Ram Narayan Dev, writing about the ‘extreme exploitation’ in the region, says high caste people in the Madhesh-Tarai have always ‘forced over the people of the lower caste who are virtually landless’. He asks Tarai leaders, ‘How justified is it to provide reservation to all caste groups under the pressure of the Madhesi parties?’. He is against government reservation policy mentioning Madhesi as a category because it would exclude deprived groups like the Dalit, Mushahars, Chamars and Chaudharis. The Constituent Assembly must take a closer look at the diversity in the Madhes-Tarai and address this exclusion within the Madhes. The demand of a few loud politicians for a single Madhes province will not address this exclusion within the Madhes. The Tarai stands to gain the most from irrigation and electricity benefits from hydroelectric projects located in the valleys upstream. This would open up a can of worms. Why should the land in the upper riparian province be submerged to irrigate farms downstream?

Nepal’s diverse geography is so unique that its comparative advantage can be best exploited by respecting its integrity, not by breaking it up. So, the challenge for the framers of the new constitution is to rise above their political careers to look at the long-term interest of all Nepalis.

Will we learn from the Scottish referendum last week? The ‘No’ vote prevailed only after Westminster promised extensive constitutional reform in taxation and welfare. The Constituent Assembly could push back a decision on federalisation to a future time, and instead make provisions to address the need for decentralisation, local self-governance and empowerment of the deprived minorities within the excluded and neglected sections of the Tarai.

Bihari K Shrestha is an anthropologist and a former civil servant.
Electric delight
Agni Incorporated, the sole distributor of Mahindra vehicles has unveiled an upgraded version of its fully electric e2o model. The zero emission car is priced at Rs 2,435,000.

Expanding services
Dish Home has opened two new service centers in Biramul and Biramager. With the latest additions, the total number of Dish Home service centers in Nepal has now reached five.

Fly and win
For the festive season of Dusain and Tihar, Etihad Airways is offering passengers a complimentary gift voucher for American Tourister luggage. Vouchers can be redeemed at Samsonite and American Tourister showrooms in Kathmandu.

Golf kings
Norbu Sherpa and Lobsang Tashi were declared the nett and gross champions of Carlsberg Golf Series. Managing Director of Gorkha Brewery, Philip Bofley, gave away the prizes to the winners.

Join the club
Qatar Airways has announced a new social media competition, ‘Join the Club’. Facebook fans stand a chance to win a number of prizes like return tickets, signed football shirts and more. The contest runs until 7 October.

Dolma Impact Fund
Dolma Impact Fund, Nepal’s first international private equity fund was launched last week to invest in renewable energy, healthcare, education, agriculture and financial inclusion. The fund particularly targets sustainable job creation.

In the fund, investors include development finance institutions from the Netherlands, Finland and Austria (FMO, Finnfund and Austrian Development Bank - OeEB) as well as private individuals. The fund has a minimum capital of over $20 million.

Tim Gocher, the fund’s founder says: “Nepal suffers from a chronic shortage of local employment. The good news is that remittances from industrious Nepali migrant workers flow disproportionately to poorer rural families. This gives them the ability to purchase essential goods and services for the first time.”

However, due to a lack of available investment in local companies, most of this additional demand is met by increasing imports from India and China, and the money Nepal earns from remittances flows right back out.

Dolma plans to help scale up local companies to meet this demand, and create employment. “It is not aid, but socially responsible, risk-sharing equity investment,” explains Gocher.

Gail Marzetti, head of DFID Nepal said: “We are encouraged that our support to the not-for-profit Dolma Development Fund has helped to launch the first impact investment fund dedicated to Nepal. Investments that Dolma Impact Fund will make in local enterprises will complement the UK government’s existing private sector development work in Nepal and support growth and creation of jobs.”

She said the legal and regulatory analysis conducted by Dolma would also be helpful for other future investors in Nepal.
The sad saga of the Adhikari family

Nanda Prasad Adhikari did not die while staging fast-unto-death seeking justice for his son murdered allegedly by Maoist cadres in 2004. He was murdered, by an insensitive State and political parties that want to bury the past.

A day after Nanda Prasad’s death, the government tried to absolve itself of all responsibility and in a show of cowardice laid the blame on the man who cannot challenge them anymore. ‘Since Nanda Prasad rejected food and medicines prescribed by the doctors, he passed away,’ was the limp explanation. The statement went on to argue that he ‘fast-unto-death’ was irrelevant since the murder case of his son Krishna Prasad Adhikari ‘has already been registered at the Chitwan District Court.’

This was an utterly shameful and insensitive response which only added to the humiliation of the Adhikari family in its pursuit of justice. The government explanation fails to acknowledge why the insensitive response which only added to the humiliation of the Adhikari family in its pursuit of justice. The government explanation fails to acknowledge why the insensitive response which only added to the humiliation of the Adhikari family in its pursuit of justice.

It was murder, not a fast-unto-death

The law and the media

BINTA DHAL

For the past year, the judiciary has often been mired in controversy. There was the decision in 2013 to appoint the Chief Justice as a caretaker prime minister to conduct elections, and the controvertial move to appoint senior judges to the Supreme Court.

Most of the criticisms came from the legal fraternity and the media. But despite the hubbub, the appointments were approved by a parliamentary hearing. Stung by the uproar, the Supreme Court decided to strike back and make an example of Kantipur, Nepal’s widest circulated daily newspaper.

The parliamentary hearing of the Supreme Court judges recommended by the judicial Council was sharply critical of most media, starting with the popular digital portal, Tempal. Kantipur then took up the subject by investigating the background of all the appointed justices. Even when the paper was slapped with a contempt of court against its group chairman, director, editor-in-chief and reporter, it continued its exposé.

During the first hearing of that case, Justice Chhadendra Shrestha Rana, who was one of the targets of the exposés, reviewed the sub-judice contempt case filed against Kantipur Group. In its second hearing Justice Gopal Prasad Parajuli, whose past judgments and personal details were investigated by Kantipur, ordered publishers and editorial staff of Kantipur to appear in the Sub-judice contempt case filed against Kantipur Group.

In its third hearing Justice Cholendra Shamser Rana, who was also one of the targets of the exposés, reviewed the contempt case filed against Kantipur Group. In its fourth hearing Justice Cholendra Shamser Rana, who was also one of the targets of the exposés, reviewed the contempt case filed against Kantipur Group.

It was apparent that the Supreme Court was flexing its muscles and warning that the powerful media on the dock. Kantipur itself has reported the case against itself with great attention. Last week, on the day of the hearing, it gathered 50 members of its staff, politicians and industrialists in the Supreme Court premises as a show of force.

It was as if the Group wanted to influence the court decision by a demonstration of solidarity. It has now become a prestigious issue for both the Supreme Court and Kantipur. The paper has reported the case against itself with prominence on the front pages, providing maximum national and international coverage. The importance of the paper’s publication was that the court started its final hearing with the same justices who had previously looked into the case.

Although the group’s lawyers were putting forward a valid legal point, this was a clear breach of provisions of coverage of cases that are sub-judice. According to universal jurisprudence, one should not try to influence the court directly or indirectly during the period of a case being heard. The media cannot appeal to the wrongs of the court, not to stage a demonstration in the court premises during a hearing.

Whatever the partial wrongs of the court, the media should also be equally responsible not to undermine the dignity of the independent judiciary. The media cannot appear to be a law unto itself, and not required to abide by it. The aggressive and prominent reporting of the case against itself is also a misuse of media responsibility.

To be sure, the Judicial Committee bypassed the media with integrity and proven track record for those with questionable pasts, to say the least, when appointing some Supreme Court justices. The media did its job by exposing this, but to exact revenge through this contempt case the Supreme Court has gone after the largest target to thin the red of the media to behave itself.

It is hard to say which the verdict will go next week. In the past, the Court has been liberal in contempt cases and journalists have just been slapped on the wrist and cautioned about the law on sub-judice cases. This time, positions have hardened, and by its aggressive stance, the court may have exceeded the media’s accepted boundary in a country that is supposed to respect the rule of law.
The monsoon is taking its time retreating from the central Himalaya, although it has tapered off over northeastern India. This situation is caused by a low pressure trough bringing in a fresh autumn circulation from the Bay with an infusion of moisture. Due to lower temperature, the condensation has dumped copious rain in the past week. There won’t be much change in this situation into the new year, with 80 per cent chance of rain with localised evening thunderstorms.

STÉPHANE HUËT

Like everyone else, Suraj Shrestha was aware of the massive outmigration of young people from Nepal and was worried about this haemorrhage of talent. After graduating from university in the United States and returning to Nepal, he also noticed that those who hadn’t left were forever complaining about the state of the country. He got fed up listening to them, and decided to do something about it.

“We were only talking about what the government should do, I thought there were many problems we could solve ourselves,” says the 27-year-old CEO of Anthropose (from Greek, ‘Anthropos’ meaning ‘human being’).

Thinking about possible ways of impacting positively on the community, Suraj found out that he had two choices: the private sector or the development model. In a country where ‘profit’ is almost a bad word, most have come to rely on aid from donor organisations to fund development.

Anthropose joins both worlds and tries to short circuit the development process by setting up a for-profit company. Its first venture is to provide free cataract surgery in rural Nepal by selling sunglasses.

“We decided to help people see because there are many in rural areas suffering from cataract,” explains Suraj. While there are other charities doing cataracts, Suraj will fund the operations by selling sunglasses to better off Nepalis. Selling ten shades funds one cataract surgery, which literally makes the blind see.

By giving these people back the ability to see properly, they also regain the ability to work and become independent,” says Suraj.

Suraj says his model for cataract care is based on entrepreneurship, not aid. Funding healthcare through handouts is not sustainable, and he says the profit motive can be directed to help finance social work.

“Nepalis tend to be too donor-focused,” says Suraj, “we have to be less dependent on them.”

Suraj Shrestha is among a new breed of young Nepalis with creative ideas who wants a clean break with the past, and introduce new approaches. International exposure gives people like him a fresh new outlook, but he is a bit disappointed by the lack of self-esteem among his generation.

“I hear a lot of brilliant ideas, but many young Nepalis are demoralised and want to leave the country,” he says.

In a society known for the inability of people to work together and a chronic lack of coordination, Suraj wants to work with existing institutions on his cataract project. So, the surgeries are done at Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology and although Anthropose’s sunglasses are made in China, the company will assemble its own glasses in future which will generate employment as well.

Suraj has given himself two years to get the cataract project off and running. After that, he wants to tackle another social issue which will probably have to do with education.

“We are already working on it, but it’s too early to talk about it now,” he says coyly.

SHADES FOR SIGHT: Suraj Shrestha’s unique project aims to fund cataract operations by assembling and selling sunglasses in Nepal.
Dasain aayo,

Dasain, the longest and the most auspicious festival in Nepali culture, is celebrated by worshipping goddess Durga in all her manifestations through various pujas and offerings.

25 September, Ghastapatana: Jor (barley) is planted in a khet (vessel) filled with holy water to produce jamara (malt sapling), which is used on the seventh day.

1 October, Fulpati: Seventh day when Tulsi (sage) and banana stalks are brought to Kathmandu from Gorkha. Generally, families bring tulantis to their prayer rooms.

2 October, Maha Asamti: The day of Kalashini pujas to worship kali, a demonic avatar of Goddess Durga.

3 October, Maha Navami and Chhath: The day marks the victory of goddess Durga over the demons. The Taleju temple at Hanuman Dhoka is opened for public only once a year on this day.

7 October, Kojagrat Purnima: Tika goes on till this day and Dasain finally concludes.

Dasain Dhamaka,

A chilled afternoon with kite-flying followed by a screening of a film by Hayao Miyazaki.

1 to 4 October, Maha Astami: Pre-Dasain, a celebration for families and friends with music by S.O.S.

1 October, Fulpati: Dasain party, a party with friends and families in an open, comfortable space with live acoustic music.

27 September, 4 to 10 pm, The Organic Village, Babarmahal

Carnival:

An event amid Dasain packed with food stalls, children activities, shows and displays.

Entry: Rs 100, 27 September, 10 am onwards.

Hotel Platinum, Soaltee Mode, 9851085623

Dasain Dhamaka,

A chilled afternoon with kite-flying followed by a screening of a film by Hayao Miyazaki.

1 to 4 October, Maha Astami: Let’s write,

An hour-long writing workshop hosted by the editors of literary magazine Let’s work.

Register: editor@lalitmag.com

27 September, 1 to 7 pm, Sattya, Jawalakhel

Yin Yang Restaurant,

East meets west as you choose from a variety of Thai and continental dishes.

Thamel, (01)4703050

Open throughout Dasain

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Open throughout Dasain
Mango Tree Lodge,
Culture walks, rafting in the Karnali, wildlife exploration, and jungle safari at the Bardia National Park. Bhetani, Bardia, info@mangotreelodge.com

Fullbari Resort,
Enjoy the scenic view of Pokhara as you pamper yourself with tennis, golf, drinks, and dinners. Pokhara, (09)4461918

Karaoke,
Don’t be shy and sing it out at a karaoke event with live bands.
26 September, Red Mandolin, Jhamsikhel
27 September, Tamasalaya, Naxal
28 September, Bourbon Room, Durbarmarg, 6 pm onwards

Parichaya,
Join the official release gig of Tumbleweed Inc.’s debut album, Parichaya.
Rs 300 (CD inclusive), 30 September, 7pm, Moteli, Jhamsikhel

Blues N’ Tonic,
Blues N’ Tonic will be playing live.
26 September, 7pm onwards, Brian’s Grill House, Dillibajar

Hatemalo Saanjh,
A charity programme for education in Nepal with performances by Ashish Ghising, Bharat Satyal, Megh Lama, Shreya Sotang, Sumea Sangrula and more.
28 September, 6.30pm onwards, Madhushala, Durbar Marg

Jazz extravaganza,
The 12th edition of jazzmandu festival will feature a series of jazz concerts in various venues of the valley, and masterclasses will be run by visiting artists. 16 to 22 October, 9803516450

Soul shakedown,
Before closing down for Dasain, House of Music is organising one last party with Joint Family Internationale.
26 September, 7.30pm onwards, House of Music, Thamel

Kutumba live,
Live music by Kutumba in a charity show for children of Nepal.
Rs 800, 26 September, 6pm onwards, Alliance française, Trnaveshwar

Wildfire,
For the first time ever, catch Bipul Chettri live in Kathmandu.
11 October, 6pm onwards, Rs 1000, 25 hours club, Tangal

Blue’s N’ Tonic,
Blue’s N’ Tonic will be playing live.
26 September, 7pm onwards, Brian’s Grill House, Dillibajar

Culinary Extravaganza,
The 12th edition of Jazzmandu festival will feature a series of jazz concerts in various venues of the valley, and masterclasses will be run by visiting artists. 16 to 22 October, 9803516450

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Hotel Yak & Yeti
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Email - reservation@lalbarbara.com
After going on a female-only vacation to Thailand last year, a friend’s sister returned with an entirely new wardrobe and a question: “Do you know what a ping pong show is?”

It sounded dirty, and it definitely wasn’t table tennis. We gave up, and asked: “What is it?”

“Watch The Hangover 2,” she replied. I didn’t, but just googled it. Can the girls really do that? Despite my curiosity about the ‘show’, it was one thing that didn’t feature on my itinerary when I visited Thailand earlier this year.

Instead, I saw The Extravaganza Show by Thai Alankarn Theatre in Pattaya. Yes, culture in Pattaya. Who knew? The hour long production is an elaborate visual retelling of Thai history. Warriors ride elephants onto the stage, acrobats swing through the air, dancers in flowing robes glide across. Never was a crash course in history this much fun.

Unfortunately, the theatre is struggling to stay open. The 2,000 seater auditorium was only half filled during our visit. “We need to start attracting tourists of all nationalities to survive,” the theatre director said as we sat down for a preshow meal in the theatre’s restaurant. The menu as the audience were largely Chinese.

The next stop in Pattaya was the Sanctuary of Truth. A dream project of Thai businessman Lek Viriyaphant who died in 2000 leaving his son in-charge,
this Klamr styled building is an architectural marvel. It is made entirely of wood and uses traditional Thai building methods without nails. The temple is festooned with carved Buddhist and Hindu sculptures. Although construction started in 1988, work is still ongoing.

Pattaya as it turned out was not all about Walking Street. While the infamous red light district continues to attract most of Pattaya’s tourists, for us the chance of getting a mani-pedi at the beach was more appealing. At 400baht, it is a surprisingly affordable luxury if you need some pampering. If Pattaya was a pleasant departure from a sleazy stereotype, Doi Suthep, the most famous of the wats here sits and feels like Kathmandu minus the pollution. Doi Suthep, the northern city looks surprisingly affordable luxury if you need some pampering. If Pattaya was a pleasant departure from a sleazy stereotype, Doi Suthep, the most famous of the wats here sits and feels like Kathmandu minus the pollution. Doi Suthep, the northern city looks

Nakhon Si Thammarat

As the travel hub of Southeast Asia, Thailand has emerged as the most popular outbound destination for Nepalis after India. With its rich Buddhist culture, immaculate white-sand beaches, memorable cuisine and a world-renowned hospitality, there is something for everybody.

Yet, most visitors flock to the popular trio in the north: Bangkok, Pattaya and Phuket. While there’s no denying the allure of these cities, it pays to go off the beaten path. To discover a Thailand not yet encroached by hordes of tourists, head over to Nakhon Si Thammarat, the second largest province in southern Thailand. Although not quintessentially picturesque as the other parts, travellers can immerse themselves in the culture in this historic town. The capital city of Nakhon Si Thammarat was the historical centre of Buddhism in ancient Thailand and, to this day, boasts a flourishing Buddhist culture.

Buddhism is an integral part of daily life here, with a temple or a shrine scattered in every corner. The locals are devout Buddhists and collectively celebrate Buddhist festivals such as the Hae Pha Kheen That Festival in February. Celebrated at the Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan temple, and unique to the southern province, locals take part in the parade holding a religious cloth, called Phra Bot, which depicts various aspects of Buddha’s life. They continue the procession to the temple to wrap the cloth around the pagoda for good fortune and success.

The entire town comes out dressed in white for the procession and portions of the city centre are entirely blocked for pedestrians. Although religious, the processions are also light-hearted as locals play music and dance along as they make their way to the temple. Closer to the temple, street vendors sell flowers and incense sticks and Pali chants singing ‘Buddham Saranam Gachhami’ reverberate throughout the complex. With the ambiance and music, walking in the procession is reminiscent of taking part in a jatra in Nepal.

The festival is held twice a year, on Makha Bucha Day in mid-February, and Visakha Bucha Day during mid-May. For those interested in learning more about how Buddhism travelled from Nepal and India to Thailand via Java, Nakhon Si Thammarat should be on the culture part of your Thai itinerary.
Recent complex and tragic events that have occurred in Israel and Palestine has generated dissent and concern all over the world. In opinion pieces, in newspapers, and at dinner tables, conversations can often turn into shouting matches because of strong opinions on either side. The issues involving the creation of Israel, the horrific events that led to it, its continuing struggle to exist, and the plight of the Palestinian people is a subject most fiction writers choose to stay away from due to fear of backlash from various parties.

Which is why, this week I have chosen to write about The Honourable Woman, a BBC commissioned 8-part miniseries that dives straight into these issues unafraid, bringing up very real controversies. While I strongly believe that the best way to understand complex issues is by reading widely, and wisely, on the matter, I also feel that sometimes the best way to bring difficult subjects to a wider viewership is through popular methods – television in this case.

Maggie Gyllenhaal plays the titular honourable woman, Baroness Nessa Stein, and now faithful but enigmatic Palestinian friend Atika (Lubna Azabal).

Why then are the Steins so intent on continuing efforts towards improving life on the West Bank? Are their motives largely financial, or perhaps even more nefarious, cleverly masked by their humanitarian façade? What happened to Nessa when she and Atika were imprisoned for months on end? Why did Ephra, the older brother, step down as head of the Stein Group right after Nessa was liberated by the Mossad?

These are just a few of the questions that you will find yourself asking over the course of this tightly wrought series that involves a number of byzantine games played by every single character, and is further convoluted by the meddling of the American, British, Palestinian and Israeli intelligence services.

Why then should you watch this sometimes histrionic but compelling spy thriller? Because the series is about an extraordinary woman who manages to hold on to her humanity despite being buffeted by the stormiest weather, personally and politically. This well written, well researched saga will move you but also leave you disturbed.
Feline shrewdness

A balance Française of Kathmandu has been organising Les jeudis du cinéma (The Thursdays of Cinema) during September and for three weeks, movie buffs enjoyed an eclectic selection. From teenage comedy (The French Kiss) to classics (The Big Day by Jacques Tati, from drama (Violetta by Martin Provost) to documentary (The Shuhatts of Yemen by Axel Salvatori-Sinz), it was an exhibition of French cinema at its piquant best.

Although the Thursdays of Cinema ended on 25 September, viewers will get the chance to watch more movies in the coming months. This time around, the finale featured Joann Sfar's The Rabbi's Cat. Sfar, who is a cartoonist, became famous after directing a live-action movie in 2010. In Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life, he portrayed French singer Serge Gainsbourg.

The following year, Sfar collaborated with producer Antoine Delesvaux to adapt his own comics series, The Rabbi's Cat, into an animated film.

The story takes place in the 1920s Alger, before Algeria's independence, a time Jews and Muslims seemed to live peacefully together, but were despised by some French colonists. At the beginning, a rabbit's cat starts speaking after he eats his master's parrot. As a result, the animal then becomes an astute and sarcastic observer of religion, and exposes some inherent incoherences when it wants its own bar-mitzvah to become "a real Jew". The quiet life of the rabbi and his cat gets further disturbed by the arrival of a strange Russian Jew who fled the anti-Jewish pogroms taking place in his country in order to reach Ethiopia, the "African Jerusalem." A hectic road trip across Africa starts instantly, and the two Jews are joined by a shik, an alcoholic, a painter, a donkey and the cat. This adventure, beset with fear and violence, turns out to be an enlightening voyage.

In his second movie, Joann Sfar also makes two implied references. First, he fools around with Tintin, Hergé's famous comics character, who is portrayed as an arrogant, colonialist hunter. Then he invites in a fellow cartoonist, Ivorian Marguerite Abouet (author of the brilliant Aya of Yop City) to play the voice of the 'African girl'.

The film's script might seem disjointed at times as different characters wander in and out. Perhaps, this is because Joann Sfar adapted only three out of five volumes of his comics series. Still, the film is a sequence of short pleasant stories, all of which address religious issues with humour. Sfar notes the complexity of multicultural dialogue and the absurdity of religious fanaticism.

With the bright colours of the 1920s Algiers and the Arabesque music from the Maghreb that remind you of hookah scents, The Rabbi's Cat is purring for your presence.

Stéphane Huët
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Samurai

A mong things that remind us of Japan – cameras, cars, and quality electronics – nothing is as romantic as the samurai. The odd thing about the restaurant Samurai is that nothing here hints at the land of the rising sun:

The walls here are painted mostly orange. Profiles of Nepali musicians – not wood block prints of geishas, emperors or tidal waves – hang above each table. And the menu doesn’t stray beyond the Nepal-India-China axis. No wasabi in sight. Forced to play it safe, we ordered the least fancy stuff. Our only vegetarian dish Crispy Potato (Rs 130) looked interesting, but that’s where its merits end. It looked like potato but tasted like pastrty, thanks to the over-zalous coating of breadcrumbs. A better sauce would have salvaged this appetizer, but only ketchup and momo ko achar were available.

The Mixed Thai-style Chow mein (Rs 195), an 'exotic' dish we’ve savoured previously, was also disappointing today. Did the cook leave home for Dasain so soon? If it wasn’t for the crumbled peanuts, this dish would have been forgettable. Also, it didn’t help that they’ve been petitioned by patrons to go easy on the chili that set it apart from normal chow mein.

We recommend the chicken variety (Rs 170) with extra spice.

The less we write about the Fish Cutlet (Rs 220) the better. Dry and crust-dominant, we had trouble finding the flesh. Again, we recommend opting for chicken (Rs 260), because it is done superb. Don’t bother with Veg Cutlet either, because that’s simply being euphemistic about Alu Chop /Tikni.

The 15 minutes it took to prepare Chicken Biryani (Rs 220) suggests you Samurai is not a dedicated Curry and Kebab hole. But by no means is that a waste. Spiced with the usual cinnamon, cardamom and bay leaves, it comes with generous portions of proper, tender chicken. Keep this for the days you want rice, but not dal bhat.

To wash down the residues of oil and starch, we chose some ‘safe for work’ drinks. Banana Lassi (Rs 95) is a dense concoction of banana and milk, while Sweet Lassi (Rs 85), not as dense but tastier, came scented with familiar vanilla. Other beverages – alcoholic, carbonated or caffeinated – are also available.

The deal about places like Samurai is that you don’t go there with high expectations, because that way you can be surprised. That’s why we avoided anything out of the ordinary, like the distinctly suspect entries on the Chinese menu. If you find yourself hungry in Patan or simply want your office lunch prepared with tender loving care, you could do a lot worse than eating at Samurai. -

Stipur

How to get there: Right next to the Institute of Engineering gate on the Patan Dhoka-Kapanedal lane, marked by a huge red board.
Step by step

Now that the trekking season is here, it may be worthwhile to go over some important points about Diamox, the most commonly used drug for prevention of acute mountain sickness (AMS). Trekkers and high-altitude pilgrims take Diamox for both prevention and treatment of AMS.

DHAJNATARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

AMS is a common problem at high altitude (> 2500m) and usually presents with headache, nausea, tiredness, and malaise. Many travellers like high altitude pilgrims take Diamox for prevention of acute mountain sickness (AMS). The best way to prevent acute mountain sickness is thus by planning an itinerary that allows for gradual acclimatization.

As far as possible, it is best to avoid use of drugs while in the mountains. The Himalayan Rescue Association strongly recommends trekkers to make gradual ascent without using any drugs. However, there are situations where it may not be possible to ascend slowly. Recruits are required to go up rapidly to high altitudes. For logistic reasons, it may not be possible for trekkers and climbers to spend the night at an optimal altitude. Furthermore, airports in places like Lhasa, Tibet (3,490 m), La Paz, Bolivia (4,058m), Leh-Ladakh (3500 m) may cause travellers to arrive at a high altitude without the chance to acclimatize on route. In case of such circumstances, travellers who do not take diamox before the trip, are susceptible to AMS which can sometimes progress to life-threatening high altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE) or high altitude cerebral edema (HACE). Many travellers like pilgrims often forget to ascend gradually in their fervour of reaching ‘the divine land’.

Sudden military deployment to high altitude regions of the world, such as the Himalkush in Afghanistan, may necessitate drug prophylaxis for prevention of AMS. A fast-growing population of climbers are also incorrectly being advised by physicians to use prophylactic medicine to both improve performance and achieve their summit dream.

In a publication in the British Medical Journal in 2000, Dumont and colleagues had stated that only 750 mg/day of Diamox (acetazolamide) would prevent AMS. However, recent articles, which include studies done after 2000 (many of which were conducted in the Himalayas), have shown that a much lower dose (250 mg/day) of diamox is adequate.

For travellers without sulphate allergy, it is recommended to take Diamox a day before the trip at a dosage of 125 mg in the morning and evening and continue for 2 to 3 days in the mountains. Other drugs including Gingko Biloba and Ibuprofen have been found to be effective, but no many are very bothersome. It also makes carbonated beverages taste flat.

Diamox also helps prevent periodic breathing (literally, trying to “catch your breath” while sleeping) at high altitude. This is a very common problem which sometimes triggers anxiety attacks. Diamox decreases the hypoxic (low oxygen) spells during sleep and successfully treats this problem.

In conclusion, trekkers to altitudes need to be encouraged to go up gradually without the use of drugs, including Diamox to enhance acclimatization. However, in certain instances, chemoprophylaxis may be useful. In those cases, low-dose (250 mg/day) of Diamox is the drug of choice.

GIZMO by YANTRICK

AN ELECTRICAL RIDE

Electric scooters may fall low on the ‘hip’ meter compared to their fossil-fuelled counterparts, but in a country where riders have to regularly queue up to fill their tanks and deal with constant rises in fuel price, investing in a battery-powered two wheeler may not be such a bad idea.

One of the problems is that these eco-friendly scooters often receive flak for being unattractive. A relatively new entrant into the e-scooter market, Terra Motor Corps of Japan, aims to shake off that myth with its launch of its stylish A4000i e-scooter. The scooter boasts a Japanese build and design. Available in a white-and-blue colour scheme, the 118 kg A4000 looks classy and feels comfortable and balanced under your feet. Undoubtedly, the A4000’s USP is the iPhone functionality, which it integrates into its heads-up-display. While smartphone integration in cars is nothing new, Terra has come up with an innovative way to utilise your iPhone (3GS onwards) with constant rises in fuel consumption. Further, all of the recorded data which for many is very bothersome.

Yantrick’s Verdict: An attractive bike that will have you hitting the road while everyone else is lining up for petrol. Ranging from Rs 150,000 to 400,000.
SNEH RANA IS A PROFESSIONAL MAKE-UP ARTIST BASED IN KATHMANDU.

A good hair day can make you feel confident and super attractive. Everyone desires and envies shiny and strong hair. Hair is an important aspect of not only one’s physical appearance, but also of one’s overall personality.

But when winter comes creeping in, it becomes even more difficult to manage your tresses. From flat hair to dull locks, split ends to frizz, the cold brings with it all sorts of hair trouble that may last an entire season if not taken care of.

Here are some basic tips to fight bad hair and keep the locks glossy this winter.

**Invest in a good-quality, expert-based shampoo**

Shampoos tailored to the needs of your hair, but don’t use it as much as you would during summer as your hair and scalp are drier in winter. Opt for shampoos with nutrients that protect the hair against UV rays and have moisturising benefits. Applying oil can be a time-consuming, and at times, a messy process, but it is beneficial and needed, especially in the dry season. A good hair oil massage stimulates blood supply to surface of the skin. This will condition the scalp and enhance the strength of the hair roots. You can use almond oil, olive oil, mustard oil or coconut oil.

**Always remember to rub the conditioner on the body of the hair, keep it on for at least a minute before rinsing off.**

Your hair suffers from daily wear and tear just like your skin, and it’s affected by environmental factors like cold temperature, wind and sunlight. So once a week you should go for intense deep penetrating conditioning treatment to keep your hair shiny and lustrous. Heat styling tends to deprive your hair of all the moisture and shine so it’s better to avoid blow drying, straightening and curling as much as possible. When on occasions you really need to style your hair, don’t forget to use a heat protecting serum or oil to reduce the damage.

**Never wash your hair with hot water as it gets rid of the hair’s natural hair. Always use lukewarm water for your first rinse, shampoo and condition your hair as usual, and then rinse with cold water at the end.** This is a good tip that everyone should follow. Wet hair is prone to breakage so handle them very carefully to avoid unnecessary hair loss. Rubbing your wet hair with a towel causes them to break. Always wrap your hair gently in a towel and let it absorb some of the moisture. Doing this also avoids the formation of split ends.

**Head to the parlour every six to eight weeks for a trim.** A regular trim helps avoid split ends and helps your hair to stay healthy and strong.

**Use a wide tooth comb instead of a hair brush to detangle your hair and avoid breakage or static in your hair.** If you do want to use a brush, use a paddle brush, but never on wet hair.

**Wet hair is prone to breakage so handle them very carefully to avoid unnecessary hair loss. Rubbing your wet hair with a towel causes them to break. Always wrap your hair gently in a towel and let it absorb some of the moisture. Doing this also avoids the formation of split ends.**

**Static hair is everyone’s worst nightmare. To prevent static, use satin pillow cases as they minimise static, unlike the cotton ones.**

**Let your fingers glide smoothly to score a 10**

**Perfect hair scale 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

**SNEH RANA IS A PROFESSIONAL MAKE-UP ARTIST BASED IN KATHMANDU.**
The death this week of Nanda Prasad Adhikari after nearly a year-long hunger strike demanding justice for the torture and murder of his son in 2004 has thrown into sharp focus the violent legacy of the conflict.

Adhikari’s death exposed the apathy of the state, the collusion between former enemies to forget past atrocities, and the unfinished business of setting up commissions to look at truth and reconciliation and enforced disappearances. The state, under successive governments since 2006, would like to conveniently forget gross violations of human rights during the war.

Now, there is concern about the health of Nanda Prasad’s wife, Ganga Maya. Women and children witnessed unimaginable cruelty during the conflict, and they have been forgotten during the peace process. Many of the children are now young adults, and besides the physical wounds they also carry emotional scars. Some wounded got artificial limbs, but we largely forgot the psychological injuries suffered by children.

The state now pretends the war is finished business. But as long as the physical and mental trauma of the survivors remain, it will not be over. The government says the emphasis is now on repairing bridges and building highways; it wants to move on. There are just too many loose ends to do that.

Post-traumatic stress is still rife among women and children who witnessed and suffered brutal violence, and it afflicts young combatants too. Many lost their homes and property and haven’t been able to go back. Thousands of others were internally displaced, or migrated to India with their entire families, never to return.

Many of them never received any support from the government. Resources earmarked by donors through the Peace Ministry and distributed through local Peace Committees have often been siphoned off by party faithful and fake victors.

Among all the victims, the most vulnerable are still those who were children during the war: whole-timers who became child soldiers, students force-marched to reeducation camps, the wounded, and orphans. Many thousands of others were victims of gender-based violence, sexual abuse, unlawful recruitment by armed groups.

Even after the war ended, it is the children who have been killed or have lost limbs to unexploded ordnances.

Eight years after the war ended, at least 740 children are still residing in childcare homes across Nepal and waiting to be reintegrated with their families. No one knows the real figures, but it is accepted that the official statistics grossly underestimate the numbers of war-affected children in the country. After the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Accord, the emphasis was on identifying, reintegrating and supporting children associated with armed forces and groups.

Some verified minors below 18 and late recruits got support for reintegration. The government endorsed a ‘National Plan of Action for Reintegration of Conflict Affected Children’ in 2010, but not much has happened. The international conventions on rights of children that Nepal has ratified not much has happened. The government has spent all his savings on their treatment. The state has not helped.

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The parents of the older girl disappeared during the conflict when she was just a baby. An ex-Maoist guerrilla commander now looks after her. She is 10 years old. The father of the younger girl also disappeared during the conflict, and she now lives with her 75-year-old grandfather. She is 10 years old. The father of the younger girl also disappeared during the conflict, and she now lives with her 75-year-old grandfather. She has received no other support.

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Rukmali is a 12-year-old seventh grader from Rolpa district. Rukmali and her sister stepped on a land mine, and lost her right hand and partially her sight. Her father has spent all his savings on their treatment. The state has not helped.

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Purnima was 13 when the Maoists took her father in 2004. They tortured him by cutting off his leg, then shot him. Her brother was also severely tortured, and is now disabled. Purnima herself was forced to become a child soldier. Today 23 years old, Purnima earns Rs 3,000 a month and supports her remaining family including her cancer-ridden mother. She didn’t get any support from the government. Here she is holding the last picture of her father.
When Nepal passed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Act back in May, it ruled out amnesty for war-era rapes. It was considered a step in the right direction. However, Nepal’s Muluki Ain still retains a 35-day statute of limitation on reporting rape, which blocks investigation as well as prosecution of rapes that happened during the conflict that ended eight years ago.

There are over 100 cases of sexual violence documented by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Advocacy Forum alone has over 200 cases. Rights workers say they haven’t even started to scratch the surface when it comes to investigating instances of rape and sexual violence during the conflict.

The TRC Act may rule out amnesty for those accused of rape but the provision in the Muluki Ain gives de facto amnesty to perpetrators, with impunity for those who killed, abducted, tortured, internally displaced, among others. But rape and sexual violence survivors were not on the list, and never received the Interim Relief Package. Rights activists urge the government to amend the Package and provide reparations to the survivors of sexual violence and rape.

Reparations are especially important to victims of sexual violence because that is as close to justice as they will have seen. Many want an apology or acknowledgement of wrongdoings, but that is not what they need immediately. What is important is to have their day-to-day lives, and take care of themselves and their families.

The state has systematically forgotten this group of women who have been living in pain for the last decade. In 2013 Nepal’s Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction formed guidelines for psychosocial counseling. But rape and sexual violence survivors are not mentioned anywhere in the document. Counseling is imperative for the survivors but also for their families. Access to these services has been denied to the survivors and their families, forcing them to live in fear and pain.

The clause in the TRC that rules out amnesty for rape is a half-hearted attempt to silence survivors. If that silence was broken, many names would come forward and seek justice.

When the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) was signed in 2006, one of the provisions was to provide relief, including financial assistance to the conflict-affected. This group included family members of those who were killed, abducted, tortured, internally displaced, among others. But rape and sexual violence survivors were not on the list, and never received the Interim Relief Package. A Human Rights Watch report released this week in Kathmandu strongly urges the government to amend the Package and provide reparations to the survivors of sexual violence and rape.

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The clause in the TRC that rules out amnesty for rape is a half-hearted attempt to silence survivors. If that silence was broken, many names would come forward. And those names would include officers of the security forces, armed police, Nepal Army, as well as Maoist leaders who have thus far enjoyed impunity. The state will not be able to keep them safe if there are repercussions.

Rights activists say that the statue of limitation may be extended to six months but there is no official word on this. Since May, a group of women’s rights activists has been standing in a busy corner next to the CA building, demanding that rape laws be changed. Many leaders have met with members, many promises have been made, but there has been no movement.

Dad

Lenin Banjade in his blog, www.leninai.wordpress.com

26 November 1983. My parents had $22,000 with them when we moved from Arkhaykhanchi to Dang. Dad opened a tea-shop in front of the District Administration Office and the court. Mum and my sister stayed back in the village. Dad sold tea and samosas, I studied. Every time I brought paan and cigarettes for his customers from the bazaar 15 minutes away, I got a rupee as payment. In that hut Dad and I leaned on each other. He kept his arms around me when we slept in our only bed, and I found the smell of his ammos soothing and pleasant.

When officials from the court and office came for tea at our shop, I used to curse them under my breath for their lavish lifestyle. Dad used to say, “You could also come for tea here if you become a lawyer.”

And my mind played out fantasies: I would be wearing a black coat when I came for tea, I would pay for my tea with my own money and steal it back from him in the evening.

Every Friday, Dad and I travelled 26 km to our village, where my mother, sister, and younger brother stayed. When I went home on Fridays with Dad, I used to feel like I had the world in my hands. You could hear our Philips radio blaring from quite a distance, and my siblings would come running to receive us.

We didn’t have a tv at home and I grew restless. Dad said a tv would ruin us, but I understood that we really couldn’t afford one. Day and night we sat together listening to the radio.

The corner of our tea-but was our home. One day it caught fire and Dad was almost burnt alive as he tried to save me. I took this half-burnt parent of mine to the hospital, and guide him back home. I was his only support. He had become an obedient son, I his Dad.

People are born twice during their lives: first for their parents, later for their children. After our shop burnt down, I felt my father was born a second time for me. We sold our tea shop and bought one that sold clothes. My mother and siblings came to live with us in the city. Every month Dad went to Kathmandu for supplies. Those monthly trips to the capital were what I dreamt about all the time. I was dying to see the escalator at Bishal Bazar, my friends talked about.

Every time Dad packed his bags for Kathmandu, I sat in front of him and asked. He used to look at me and then invariably say, “Okay, bring your own clothes.”

In Kathmandu my own mission was to go to Bishal Bazar and ride the escalator and search for empty matchboxes wherever we went. These I could sell for five rupees in Dang, and colourful ones even fetched twice the price. On the bus back home, with pockets filled with matchboxes, I often sat listening to sermons by people I didn’t know. One went like this: “Friends are always more loyal than life-partners, don’t you ever give them your gift?”

Our shop was far from where we stayed and we took turns carrying Dad’s lunch. In the evenings, my sister would cook the dishes and I washed them. Dad used to tell us that he was children of communists so we had to do the chores. Maybe that is where I go my name: Lenin. If he was in the Nepali Congress, perhaps my name would have been ‘Bip’.

We sold our clothes shop and bought a guest house. Instead of clothing people, we started lodging them. Dad had his own ideals about this. When we were younger he never sold cigarettes and alcohol, but times were different now and he was compelled to stock both.

Twenty-six years passed, and it took me all those years to really get to know my father. But by then he had become a grandfather and I had left Dang for Kathmandu.

Back then, even Dad came home from the shop, the radio in his hands blaring away, we used to be ecstatic. These days, when we call him from Kalanki before heading home, it’s his turn to be delighted. Back then, I used to be so happy when he bought me new clothes during Dasain. These days, he is overjoyed when I buy him new clothes.

MURDER

Special Page 1 Editorial, Annapurna Post, 23 September 2014

Repeatedly cheated of justice by successive governments, Nanda Prasad Adhikari has died. That is the polite way of putting it. In reality he was murdered.

He was murdered by an apathetic state, and would have been alive if governments one after another hadn’t gone back on their promises that they would find and try those responsible for the murder of his son in Gorkha in 2004. His wife, Ganga Maya, would not be in danger of dying herself if there had been a genuine attempt to find justice.

Adhikari has become the first Nepali to give his life for justice for a war crime in this country, sacrificing his own life after 322 days without food. It was the government’s responsibility to save his life by dispensing justice but it failed shamefully.

If a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) had been set up as agreed to eight years ago between Girija Prasad Koirala and Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Adhikari would not have to sacrifice his life. After Sushil Koirala came to power, the deadline for setting up the TRC kept being put off, prompting the Adhikari couple to continue with their hunger strike. The government can stoop low to continue with their hunger strike.

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Adhikari was murdered on 23 September 2014, a date on which the government had not delivered on promises of justice.

I told the husband very clearly what was happening, and what we had decided to do. He told me they already had four children and implored us to save the mother’s life. Still I didn’t want to take any chances so I made him sign a letter.

A colleague and I prepared the equipment. Because the baby had swelled a lot of its toes, it could have choked on it. The baby’s blood pressure had dropped to 90/60 so we gave it intravenous saline solution. Meanwhile, I instructed the mother to push hard. I had to save the mother’s life no matter what, but I also was concerned for the child.

When she pushed, you could see the umbilical cord emerging and it was important that it wasn’t squeezed. So I held the baby’s head firmly with one hand and tried to manoeuvre the cord safely. The medical officer helped me out, making sure her pressure didn’t drop. After some time, both the baby’s head and cord emerged. I urged her to give a final push and the baby was born.

I immediately injected the mother with sphenisol and focused on reviving the choking baby whose condition steadily improved. We also saved the mother, and we congratulated the mother and ourselves. I was very happy because I found out you learn more from practice than from books. I will remember for a long time, the day I dared to deliver.
Kamal Prasad Tharu had been working in India, and in 2005 was on his way home for a break to meet his wife and children in Rupandehi. He never made it home.

He was detained by the Army although he had no political affiliations. His wife, Dhana, made the rounds of the district police and army base. She even went to Kathmandu, carrying her baby daughter, but couldn’t find him.

Relatives and villagers convinced her to conduct the last rites of her husband. It has been 11 years since Kamal Prasad’s disappearance, but Dhana still holds hope that her husband will return one day. “Until I see his body with my own eyes, I will not think of him in the past,” she says.

Since her husband’s disappearance Dhana has been living in her parents’ house with her two children. Her in-laws constantly blame her for his disappearance, and this only adds salt to her wound. The 600,000 rupees that she received from the state as compensation ran out long ago, and Dhana admits it has been a struggle to raise her children without a father. “I feel that the only way to ensure such crimes are not repeated is to punish the guilty,” she says.

Eight years after the conflict ended most families of the estimated 1,400 disappeared still have no information about their relatives. While some have given up, others cling on to a sliver of hope.

Three days before Kamala Rijal’s husband, Gopal Rijal, was to go to Malaysia to work in 2003, he went to inquire about a missing villager at the police station. Instead, he was handed over to the Army, and was never seen again. Few hours after his capture, villagers had heard a gunshot in the nearby jungle but Gopal’s body was never found. Kamala was pressured to perform her husband’s funeral. Soon after, Kamala herself went to the Gulf to work to support her family, but didn’t like it there and returned. She spent her Rs 300,000 compensation to repay the loan she took to pay her recruiters. She regrets not educating her five-year-old son. “The government should provide livelihood training so that others like me can take care of our children,” says Kamala.

Wives of the disappeared are not considered widows and are not entitled to the widows allowance.

The state’s plan to provide Rs 300,000 as compensation to families of disappeared and schooled fees up to Rs 16,000 annually to children of the missing under 18 is stuck due to the absence of a Disappearance Commission.

The CPA required the status of the disappeared be made public within 60 days. The Interim Constitution lists it as the state’s duty to search for the disappeared. Responding to 80 writ petitions filed by Advocacy Forum and other rights organisations, the Supreme Court in 2007 issued directives to the state to address the cases of enforced disappearances, to treat it as a crime, and provide compensation to the family of the disappeared.

A High Level Commission of Inquiry on the Disappeared was formed but received flak for not including any family members of the disappeared, forcing the government to backtrack. War Victims Society Rupandehi’s Kedar Nath Kafle says not knowing what has happened to relatives has forced them to live in fear, suspicion and sorrow.

That is usual for families, says academic Shri Prasad Gaudel who has studied the condition of war affected. Families of the disappeared are forced to fend for themselves, suffer trauma and mental stress.

He adds: “The Commission on the Disappeared once formed can provide compensation and social counselling to families to help cope up with their loss.”

1,350 (ICRC)
836 (National Human Rights Commission)

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He adds: “The Commission on the Disappeared once formed can provide compensation and social counselling to families to help cope up with their loss.”

Still missing them

WHERE TO GO: The husbands of Dhana Kumari Thapa (left) and Kamala Rijal (right) were disappeared during the war. Tulsa Pandey (middle) lost her son.

WHERE TO GO: The husbands of Dhana Kumari Thapa (left) and Kamala Rijal (right) were disappeared during the war. Tulsa Pandey (middle) lost her son.
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