

NEPALI Times

#732

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20 pages

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PAUL-HENRY DE BAÈRE

IN FREE FALL

A new extreme sport takes off in Nepal: the Everest Skydive. Falling from the sky alongside the highest mountain on Earth is the thrill of a lifetime. The more alive you are the more the risks, writes Ted Atkins, and it doesn't just apply to skydiving -- it is true for everything we do.

nepalitimes.com

See picture gallery and video

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MODI'S SECOND COMING

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has demonstrated his soft corner for Nepal, but for future stability we cannot turn back the political clock.

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LAND-LOCKED TO LAND-LINKED

The SAARC Summit could inspire a sense of what might be achieved if South Asian economies collaborate.

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TRAFFIC TIPS DURING SAARC

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THE SECOND COMING

Listening to the discourse in Kathmandu's corridors of power these days, it doesn't seem like it is a SAARC Summit that we are preparing for later this month but a Nepal-India Summit. In fact, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's second coming to Nepal has dominated the run-up, and is being looked upon as a followup to his game-changing bilateral visit in August. That was the first time an Indian leader had visited Nepal in 17 years, which itself was an indication of just how far the two neighbours had allowed ties to lapse.

Literally overnight, Prime Minister Modi engineered a paradigm shift in relations. It took just one speech to Nepal's parliament, broadcast live in both countries, to reboot bilateral relations. Modi systematically removed the emotional, psychological, economic and political baggage that had allowed mutual suspicions and distrust to fester. By speaking in Nepali for the first five minutes and coming across as meaning every word he said, he had Nepalis eating out of his hands. Finally, here was an Indian leader who was not patronising, overbearing or preachy. In the public perception, therefore, India was no longer a bullying Big Brother, but a benign *Thulo Dai* who seemed to care about our welfare.

After the visit, the joke in Kathmandu was that if Modi ever decided to stand for elections here we'd all vote for him. The fallout of the visit on Nepali public opinion was that some of our flag-waving nationalistic leaders couldn't indulge in their traditional pastime of India-bashing anymore.

Modi didn't just make empty promises, he followed up with his bureaucracy to ensure that they delivered on his checklist. The bilateral power trade agreement has sailed through without major hiccups, the Upper Karnali development agreement with GMR was signed, Arun is finally getting the green light after 20 years, Pancheswor has made progress on very favourable terms for Nepal, telephone



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has demonstrated his soft spot for Nepal, but for our future stability we cannot turn the clock back

calls between Nepal and India will be cheaper, the Raxaul-Amlekhganj oil pipeline is getting a go-ahead.

It's as if a log-jam has been removed, and projects that had been pending for decades are suddenly being unleashed. Nepali negotiators we spoke to said they have never seen the Indian side so flexible, even magnanimous. This, in

turn, has improved the overall investment climate and there is optimism that infrastructure will get a major boost.

So far so good. But Modi's second visit during the SAARC Summit seems to aim for a different kind of symbolism. By travelling overland to Janakpur and doing the round of Buddhist and Hindu pilgrimage sites he is underlining our common cultural heritage. In August, Modi steadfastly avoided references to Nepal being secular, but he did not lobby for a Hindu state either. This time, the visit coincides with our Constituent Assembly dotting the i's and crossing the t's on the constitution, and there is an expectation in some quarters that Modi may push to dilute its secular and federal content.

The reason is that various BJP and RSS emissaries who have visited Nepal in the past months have openly told their Nepali interlocutors that federalism and secularism may not be suitable for Nepal, and have blamed their own intelligence agency for foisting them on us. By pointedly referring to "Himal Pahad Tarai" in his parliament speech in August, Modi hinted at his own preference for territorial, and not ethnic, devolution. His message to Madhesi leaders during one-to-ones were also quite direct. Modi's proposed public address in Janakpur on 25 November may be an attempt to address the Madhesi public directly, and undo some of the damage.

The Indian prime minister has amply demonstrated his soft spot for Nepal, and reinforced it by citing our peace process in his Republic Day address in Delhi's Red Fort, and even during his speech to the UN General Assembly. But if he genuinely wants stability and prosperity in Nepal, it may be better not to play to the gallery back home by lobbying for the reinstatement of a Hindu monarchy.

Nepalis have moved on from the divisive issue of monarchy, we are committed to addressing our diversity and redressing past injustices. It would be better if we didn't have to import the insecurities of our neighbours.

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

WATCHING WATCHDOGS

The time to play blame game is over ('Watching the watchdog', Editorial, #731). It was shocking to see how little Nepalis reacted to the appointment of Lokman Singh Karki as the head of CIAA. What's the point of criticising this publicly disgraced man now?

Hari Prasad Wagle

Take out watch from watchdog and you are left with dog. During the royal regime Lokman Singh Karki served as Gyanendra's lapdog, today he is used as a pawn by political leaders to do their dirty work. Until this rotten group of corrupted political bosses gets replaced, the country will not change. Too bad, honest leaders don't have it in them to take down these criminals.

Mahesh

KEEP TALKING

Having a Sherpa last name does not guarantee that MPs will be of any use to that community ("Keep talking", Anurag Acharya, #731). It is a zero-sum game, which reminds me of the 33 per cent reserved seats for women in the Indian Parliament. Guess what happened? Most of those female appointees were related to male politicians of the ruling party. Were they really able to achieve much for gender equality? Maybe yes, maybe no. However, I am sure that if India had invested in balancing gender discrimination, equality in education, right to equal pay things would be much different for their women

folk. Also, creating cultural/linguistic/political islands is dangerous. Labeling certain monuments as national heritage sites is ok, but anything more focused will cause some serious law and order problems. Lastly, what grudge do the Madhesi have against Kathmandu? Most of them are doing very well in the Valley. If their main cause of dissatisfaction is racist jokes, then they need thicker skins.

Namah

THE GATE

We common folks with no political affiliations, the non-source-force wallahs, become victims to the harassment at Kathmandu Airport which has become a hub of corruption. ("The gate", Ted Atkins, #731). It is not just the foreigners who get harassed, Nepali migrant workers or people with 'ethnic' looks get it too. The airport is filled with a bunch of extortionists. During my travels, I often hear the silly questions the immigration officers ask foreigners and it always make me hide my Nepali passport in shame.

Norkyel Tseten

Ted Atkins, thank you for your time and effort in writing this comment. I wish more honoured guests of Nepal would write to expose the pernicious, criminal and corrupted character of Nepali leaders. I went to Nepal to celebrate Dasain and Tihar with my family and had a miserable experience at the airport. Three big jets landed at the same time as my flight, and the result was

more than three hours wait in the horrid TIA terminal. It was hot and humid, the visa processing system seems designed to give more trouble to visitors. First, you had to stand in one line to pay the fee (\$40), and then move to the next line to get the visa. Why can't you just have one line to finish the entire thing? Even before you get out of the airport, you have suffered so much that the mindset while entering the country is not a very positive one.

Niru Nepali

I flew in from New Delhi on Sunday on Indigo, it was a one hour flight and we waited two hours for the luggage. The baggage area was a zoo, literally, because there were 3,000 chirping poultry chicks that had just arrived on a flight from Malaysia. Shouldn't these be unloaded in the cargo terminal? Even the Nizamuddin Railway Station in Delhi is better organised. Nepal better get its main gateway sorted out otherwise many will just bypass the country.

Rahul

Couldn't agree with you more, Ted Atkins.

Ashok Pokharel

Nepalis have to live in disgrace and shame, thanks to criminal and corrupted politicians of Nepal. The stench from the bath room at TIA best describes how Nepalis are living today. There is nothing more to say.

Mahesh

How can Kathmandu airport be an island of cleanliness and integrity

when all around there is nothing but squalour and corruption? Clean up Nepali politics and TIA will automatically become clean also.

Kumar Acharya

SIMPLY ELEGANT

An excellent precedent ('Simplicity, elegance, taste', Sophia Pande, #731). Nepal is a small country and it would be better to have more of these small, comfortable and aesthetically pleasing houses, hotels and restaurants than big, ugly concrete buildings covered in signs and hoarding boards as we do in present.

R Rai

FEDERAL EXPRESS

Cutting-edge political satire ("Federal express", Ass, #731). Politicians must be fuming, but that would pre-suppose that they have the sophistication to understand this such high grade humour. I would like to nominate His Highness the Ass to chair both the HLP and the CPDCC.

Mule's mole

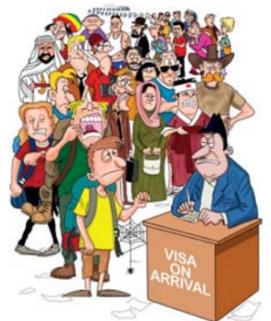
The Maoist do not have the guts to undo what was unleashed as a short time strategy to fan ethnic tension. Having relegated to the third position, ballot wise, they are at loss as to how to proceed. It would not at all be surprising if the parties eventually come up with the same old and discarded constitution by just replacing 'King' and 'kingdom' with the appropriate 'republican' word.

Anupama

Times

THIS WEEK

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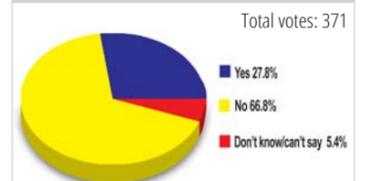
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Times nepalnews.com
Weekly Internet Poll #732

Q. Do you think the CIAA is overstepping its jurisdiction?



Weekly Internet Poll #733
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Was it necessary to declare two days public holiday for the SAARC summit?



Land-locked to land-linked

The SAARC Summit could inspire a sense of what might be achieved if South Asian economies collaborate

In its preparations for the forthcoming meeting of SAARC in Kathmandu, the government is necessarily, and rightly, concerned about making a good impression. It is planting trees, painting walls and buildings, cleaning the streets and surfacing roads that should have been rehabilitated years ago. It is ensuring that conference venues are up to scratch, and preparing the agenda for the discussions that will take place over several days.



THE GADFLY
David Seddon

As the host, Nepal has already prepared a 31-point draft declaration. Three agreements on SAARC motor vehicles, railway services and energy cooperation aimed at building infrastructure and promoting regional connectivity are likely to be signed at the summit. This is important, and it is to be hoped that the delegates will urge the effective implementation of the many past declarations, resolutions and decisions as well as those proposed this time. All of this inevitably focuses attention on Nepal's important relationship with its southern neighbours – and particularly on improving transport and communications links.

But a wider pan-Asian vision is also required. Prithivi Narayan Shah is often quoted as saying that Nepal was like 'a yam between two boulders' and its physical location between China/Tibet to the north and the Sub-continent to the south remains the same. But the political and economic geography of Nepal has changed a great deal over the last 200 years, and particularly in the last few decades as both India and China have emerged as regional and even potentially global powers.



HIMAL SOUTHASIAN / WWW.HIMALMAG.COM

Nepal still lies between these two economic giants, but today it needs to see itself not so much as land-locked and trapped, even crushed between two 'boulders', but as land-linked and needs to take advantage of its position and its resources (both natural and human) to build its exports, attract inward capital investment, welcome foreign skills and technologies, make maximum use of the flow of remittances and harness new skills of its own foreign workers across Asia.

Nepal's future economy and society will take shape in part as a result of the development of its internal capacity, but also because of its relationships with all of its neighbours and the world beyond. The focus during the SAARC summit will inevitably be on links to the south and the potential for developing a more dynamic and integrated, and peaceful South Asia. But it is essential that political leaders, government officials and businessmen also

recognise the importance to Nepal of also forging positive relationships with the countries of Central and South East Asia and, above all, with China. The MoU signed on 24 October in Beijing to establish an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a major step towards supporting future growth not only of the larger Asian economies that have helped found the bank to the tune of \$50 billion, but also of the 20 or so Asian countries – including

Nepal -- that are its anticipated beneficiaries. It is estimated that \$8 trillion will need to be invested in infrastructure over the next decade if the Asian countries are to maintain current economic growth rates.

Infrastructure development is a government priority and some steps have been taken with recent agreements with India in the domain of hydro-electricity generation and distribution. Much more needs to be done, and there are indications that many crucial projects are delayed or discredited. Government disbursement remains well below the available funds for infrastructural (and other) capital projects, and implementation lags terribly. Even as regards the approval of projects by the National Planning Commission, there is a striking under-achievement of anticipated targets.

Nepal's balance of trade, already deep in deficit, has deteriorated still further as the volume and value of exports are far outpaced by those of imports, notably fuel and energy. Remittance flows, which owe much more to individual enterprise and lack of employment alternatives than to government facilitation, cannot be relied upon to support the rest of the economy and the growing demands of the new consumer middle class. Investment in better infrastructure, to reduce the costs of travel and transport and of communication both within the country and across the borders is urgently needed.

Let us hope that at the SAARC Summit there will be heightened awareness both of the emerging opportunities and of the urgent need to make the most of them, through private and public investment, the cutting of red tape and speeding up of bureaucratic processes, the mobilisation of enthusiasm and enterprise in all the relevant sectors of economy and society. The future of Nepal, and of the other Asian countries, does not of course depend on this or other similar meetings, but the summit could do much to set an agenda to be followed and inspire a sense of what might be achieved if the major Asian economies collaborate with their smaller neighbours and together create a new litter of Asian tigers. @pigreen

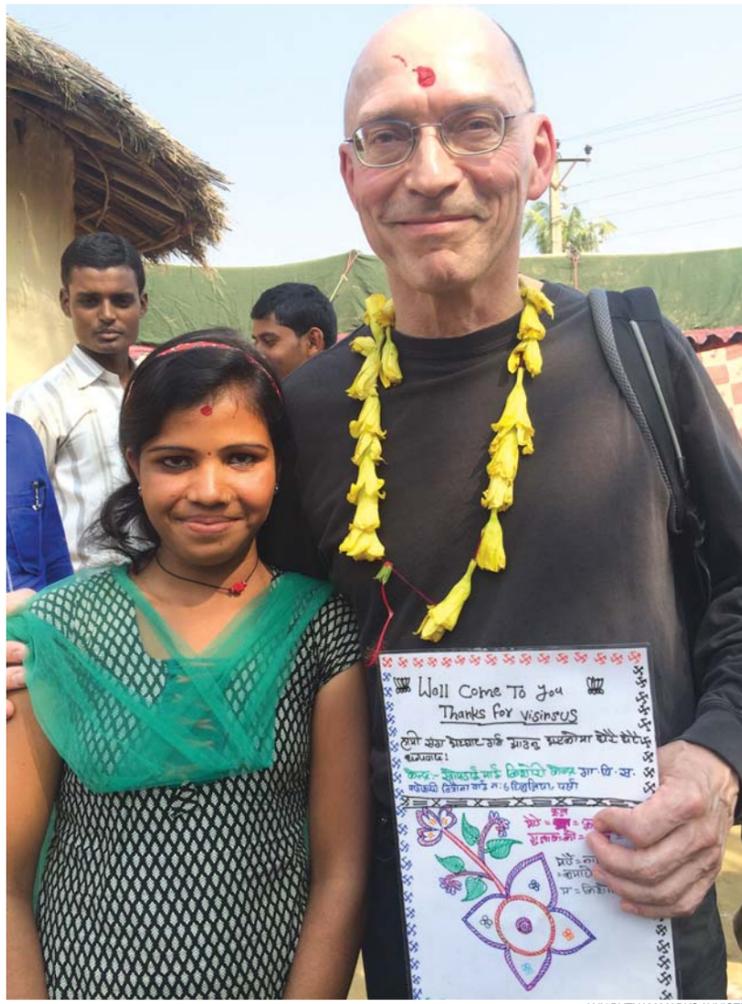
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GATE TO THE FUTURE: An illiterate school girl in Parsa who learnt how to read and write as a result of UNICEF's Girls Access To Education program (GATE) supported by Stefan Findel and his wife, Susan. The Findels are the largest individual donors to UNICEF.

similar changes in adolescent girls in Achham and Parsa (see picture).

Ann Putnam Marks of UNICEF USA, who accompanied the Findels on their field trip to Nepal, says it is very unique to have philanthropists like them. "It is rare to see donors who are so committed to seeing things first-hand, and who provide support for long-term initiatives like education," says Marks.

Indeed, most individual donors tend to prefer assistance for emergency relief because it is more visible, and many also want credit for it. The Findels say they chose UNICEF precisely because it works at all levels, doesn't abandon a country when crises like ebola in Liberia hit, and invests in sustainable, long-term projects and hands them over to the government.

"There are different ways to give," says Susan Findel, "some do it for status, some for fame, for us it is to learn by being involved."

Stefan Findel adds: "You watch the news, and realise there is so much to do. The gap between countries and people is getting bigger. Many want to do philanthropy, but they don't know where to start. For us the greatest satisfaction is to see that our money is helping build a better future for children, I saw that on this visit. The greatest reward is to see the smiles on the faces of children." 

Kunda Dixit

The reward of giving

"The greatest satisfaction is to see the smile on the faces of children."

When Susan Findel was 10 and growing up in an orphanage in Korea she got a vaccination provided by UNICEF. In the past 20 years, Susan and her German husband, Stefan, have given away \$26 million to UNICEF's work to educate children in five countries around the world, including Nepal.

The Findels are the largest individual donors in UNICEF's history, and have said they plan to donate all their wealth to the organisation to support an initiative to educate children in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Liberia, Madagascar and Nepal.

"You are born alone and you die alone," Susan Findel said during a visit to Nepal this week, "how much can you buy and

spend? It is a moral issue, when the time comes I want to be able to say I have done the best I could to help."

Stefan Findel agrees. "Since we do not have children, we are not worrying about what to leave our kids," he said in an interview. "So we can give it to other kids. When our lives end, why should we have anything left over?"

For years, the Findels were anonymous donors, but UNICEF convinced them that by coming out they could inspire others to also help underprivileged children around the world. The couple try to make frequent field trips to look at the work they fund, and had a meeting in Kathmandu this week of their partners from the countries they support.

"We decided to work on education because it is the most basic thing you can do to build a future," explains Stefan Findel, "educating children is cost-effective, you are averting lot of other problems by educating children. And education is one thing no one can take away from you after you receive it."

The Findels worked with UNICEF to select the five countries, and regions within them that were the most underserved. In Nepal, their initiative to ensure equality in education is being implemented in Parsa, Achham and four other districts.

Despite progress in literacy, especially among girls, there are over 1 million children in Nepal who do not go to school. Even in districts where there is

high enrollment, nearly half the children (mostly girls) drop out before Grade 5. Literacy among children of Dalits and other sidelined groups is much lower than the national average.

"Illiteracy and caste discrimination mean isolation and relegate children to insignificance, I know what it feels like to be an outcast," says Susan Findel who experienced stigmatisation and ostracisation first-hand when she was required to wear the colour-coded white handkerchief of an orphan.

The Findels have seen teenage girls in the West Point slum of Monrovia who used to be so shy they couldn't even speak completely transformed after UNICEF's girls empowerment program. They have observed



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Is Nepal really open for investment?

The Infrastructure Summit was all well and good, but the devil is in the details



BIKRAM RAI

Earlier this week the Confederation of Nepali Industries (CNI) together with the government hosted the first-ever Infrastructure Summit in Kathmandu. Coming just ahead of the SAARC Summit, the conference's main message was: Nepal is open for international investment in infrastructure.



CROSS CUTTING

Ashutosh Tiwari

Throughout the two-day summit, the government repeatedly reinforced that message. Citing a list of policies that have been reformed to ease the flow of investments, the Finance Minister, present and former vice chair of National Planning Commission, parliamentarians, and ex-energy and ex-finance ministers all talked optimistically about Nepal's potential and readiness for infrastructure development.

All this headline-level policy stuff was all well and good, but the devil is in the details.

Working in a messy democracy: The only way to get infrastructure development going, some participants said, is by allowing the bulldozers and the cranes to go where they need to go to build bridges, electrical transmission lines, dams and highways. For this to happen, they almost yearned for a well-obeyed state. That is, an all-powerful government that can shut up various social, environmental and cultural critics of large projects.

Tempting though this particular idea was to some, it was a way of denying reality. If the political experiences of post-2006 Nepal have taught us anything, it is that more Nepalis, of all ethnic, geographic, religious and political stripes, want to have more voice in what happens to and in their lives and localities. Indeed, the bulk of our present political contention is about representation and inclusion.

Given this, the only way for the Nepali private sector to push for infrastructure development is to not to try to wish the critics

away but to learn deliberate process of building trust by engagement. Doing that will not be easy, but it is important to signal that the Nepali private sector is developing the maturity to work with the expectations of its wider stakeholders.

Idiosyncrasies versus standardisation: When our private sector representatives say that they can, if given a chance, handle complex projects, they are referring to a few idiosyncratic successes. Yes, a handful of firms have done very well, be it because of luck, connections, market forces or competence. But most have not.

As most are family-owned firms, they have long faced little incentive to put in systems to standardise ways of doing businesses so that professionals may come and go, but standardisation and practices continue to provide consistency, reliability and predictability about business processes, which are what investors look for in their partners. Saying that one is ready is one thing. Taking up the challenge of copying and adapting to international practices now for future readiness is what matters for seamless transactions.

Migrating manpower: Infrastructure works, once you get going, to provide jobs to many. But that's in the future. Meantime, even long-established firms are finding that most of their young workers do leave the country anyway -- to work in the Gulf countries or to migrate to the developed ones. Cultural reasons and social pressure are increasingly figuring in on young workers' decisions to go abroad. Given this reality, how is the private sector going to persuade Nepalis to either stay and work in Nepal or return from abroad?

To be sure, the Infrastructure Summit struck all the right notes at the headline level: That Nepal's social indicators are good, that it is now time to build the needed infrastructure, and that investment from abroad is needed, for which policies have been revised, and the mindset is being changed.

These were all needed assurances. For the next Summit, however, the assurances need to go one level down to account for the 'software' that powers investment: democracy, standardisation and manpower. 🇳🇵

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Ncell App Camp

Ncell organised yet another seminar for participants of its App Camp this week. A panel of corporate experts

shared their knowledge of the market at the seminar which aimed to help app developers for the 'corporate solutions' category of the contest.

Ncell CEO Erim Taylanlar in his keynote address said that the speed of app development was getting amazingly faster in the world and pointed out that smart phones penetration was still one of the major challenges in for app development in Nepal. "We need to increase smart phone penetration to increase the app penetration," said Taylanlar.

Speakers suggested the developers to understand the business before thinking of building any app. Highlighting the growth of smart phones penetration in Nepal, Saurabh Jyoti, director of Jyoti Group and chairman of Syakar Trading said, "Future of mobile is the future of everything. When you talk about mobile apps, it is something that enhances mobility."

Qatar Airways joins hands with INTERPOL

Qatar Airways has signed an agreement with INTERPOL to use the world police body's I-Checkit system to screen the passports of its passengers against INTERPOL's Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) database. With the agreement, Qatar Airways becomes the first full-service airline to use I-Checkit.



Annual meet

Laxmi Bank held its 14th Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 11 November, wherein it discussed and approved the Directors' Report and the Financial Statements, the proposed 20 per cent bonus shares and 1.05 per cent cash dividend for the financial year 2013-2014. The AGM also approved 30 per cent right issue on the capital after issuance of the bonus shares.

Gen next

Laxmi Intercontinental, the sole distributor of Hyundai Vehicles for Nepal, introduced Next Gen i10 on Monday, 10 November. The new i10 1.1L sports an innovative design, and boasts n efficient mileage of 19.81 kmpl and an array of contemporary features.



Donation drive

Etihad Airways organised a donation drive for the sick and elderly living in three organisations- Jeevan Utthan Kendra, Pashupati Bridha Ashram and Prayas Nepal- on 7 and 8 November. Under its iVolunteer campaign, employees of the airlines donated food and blankets to the residents.

Art support

The Danish Centre for Culture and Development (CKU) organised a program to celebrate and support the importance of art and culture on 10 November. Six organisations from the new Cultural and Development Programme participated in the event. CKU in association with the Danish Embassy has been supporting various art and social ventures in Nepal including Karkhana, Photo.circle, Art Lab and Word Warriors.



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Overkill in Gadhimai

Two divergent perspectives on the mass sacrifice of animals at Gadhimai on 27 November

LUCIA DE VRIES

DEEPAK ADHIKARI

On 28 November the eyes of the world will once more turn to Nepal for all the wrong reasons. A temple enclosure in a small, obscure village in the Tarai will once more make headlines with gruesome images of the Gadhimai sacrifices.

Many already dread the visuals coming from Gadhimai this year. The 2009 festival left us with some of the world's worst images of animal suffering -- a knife-wielding young man grabbing the tail of a terrified buffalo, an emaciated buffalo calf, the last one standing it seems, looking at the camera with pleading eyes, another trying to find comfort at the side of its mothers' decapitated body.

There are other images even more cruel that couldn't be published. There is a series of photographs of a family torturing a piglet with a small knife, peeling its neck like an apple. What the participants do not realise is the impact the images have on the public at large.

When campaigners showed Tassia Kobylinska's film on the festival at the Animals for Asia conference a few years ago, many participants left the hall and were seen weeping in the corridor. This was in sharp contrast to a scene from the film where a young woman near enclosure is saying: "This festival is so much fun."

The first time I learnt about Gadhimai was in the early 1994 from a write up by Bara resident Jagdish Aarohi in *Himal* magazine who had visited the festival thinking it would be exciting. But the mass sacrifices left him stunned and nauseated.

"I never knew such cruelty existed in this world," he recalled later. Aarohi's writeup led to a campaign, first conducted in 1999 by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty against Animals, Nepal, then by Animal Nepal, and later by Animal Welfare Network Nepal.

The movement became Nepal's second animal rights campaign to be picked up by the international community (the Stop Monkey Business campaign created so much pressure that the export of rhesus macaques to US research labs was banned in 2009). Celebrities like Brigitte Bardot and Joanna Lumley have taken to the streets to lend their support, and the European Union has written to the Nepal authorities.

Supporters of the festival point to religious freedom, and note that international campaigners should instead focus on Bakr Id and America's nationwide turkey killing at Thanksgiving. They have a point, but these issues are already being addressed by international campaigners. Turkey slaughter is regulated by law, and religious sacrifices, although exempt in many places, are increasingly being regulated. Denmark and Holland have banned religious sacrifices, and other European countries are debating on doing the same.

One important question for us in Nepal is to what extent should Gadhimai be regarded as a religious event, since people have to pay to watch the buffaloes being massacred, which means it resembles a spectacle, rather than a ritual. Much money is also made from paid recreational services and selling hides.

Indian animal rights activist Maneka Gandhi argues that all sacrifices are propelled by commercial interests, and propagated by feudal leaders to increase their own status and earnings. Villagers start borrowing money from moneylenders to buy animals, indebtedness increases, as

does dependency and social disharmony.

In economic terms, the sacrifice of tens of thousands of livestock does indeed mean a great loss to individual livelihoods. At a cost of Rs 10-20,000 per goat or buffalo, the sacrifice of 50,000 animals comes with a huge price tag in an impoverished region.

The campaign against the mass sacrifice at Gadhimai cannot be imported, it has to grow from within. This is true for any social movement, be it against human sacrifice in the past, rape, domestic violence or discrimination based on gender, caste and sexual orientation.

Judging from reactions on social media, more and more Nepalis seem repulsed by Gadhimai. The former royal family no longer sends animals to Bariyarpur. This year, the Indian authorities will stop devotees without a license, and campaigners are ready for a border vigil. Although the Nepal government will

If postings on Facebook and Twitter could be heard, the decibel level of #Gadhimai and #stopanimalsacrifice is reaching a crescendo. Online petitions, email letters to the Nepal government have become a deluge.

The non-descript border village of Bariyarpur in Bara district in the Tarai is suddenly in the international spotlight again. This is where tens of thousands of buffalos, goats, pigs, chickens and pigeons are sacrificed every five years during the month of Mangsir (mid-November to mid-December) to appease the Goddess Kali.

Those who have the temerity to defend the ritual are assaulted on cyberspace by activists. My tweet about western hypocrisy in condemning the mass sacrifices in Nepal while condoning the slaughter of animals in carnivorous Europe and the North America has earned me an avalanche of hate mail.

actress known in Nepal for supporting the equal rights movement of British-Gurkha soldiers.

The media loves the images, and there are few more dramatic than a man surrounded by hundreds of decapitated buffalos. The pictures are amplified by the intensity and relentlessness of social media and goes viral. Animal rights activists worry that the sacrifices have an adverse impact on the psyche of Nepali children who watch the killings. But what about the images that they themselves circulate over the Internet? For arm-chair Western activists and local collaborators, the sacrifices represent their own festival of righteous indignation. It's telling how the websites of these groups, while issuing red alerts on the festival and running a countdown as if it was doomsday, also urge supporters to donate generously.

While the drumbeat against animal sacrifice in 'Hindu' Nepal peaks, animal slaughter goes on uninterrupted in meat-eating Britain. Some of these activists should picket beef and chicken suppliers for KFC, McDonalds and Burger King, or launch a campaign against the massacre of turkeys next week.

Except Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam all have elements of animal sacrifice. Moreover, there are numerous belief systems, cults and sects within Hinduism and animism where some form of animal sacrifice is required. The issue here should be a gradual reform of this tradition, not an immediate and outright ban. The majority who live in the Gadhimai region are subsistence farmers for whom eating meat is an annual luxury. The animal sacrifice is deeply rooted in their belief system.

Perhaps they are appeasing supernatural powers to rescue themselves from their hardscrabble lives. They may be poor, but they have aspirations. It is easy to condemn something as wrong, but it takes huge efforts to understand it and change the mind-set.

There are a host of issues associated with the festival: the management of the waste, the commercialisation, the growing market for livestock trade which are rarely discussed in these anti-sacrifice platforms. As Chandrakishore writes in *Kantipur* (see page 18) the festival is an opportunity for locals to reconnect with relatives across the border. The priest of Gadhimai temple is a Tharu, Chandrakishore points out, and most devotees are Hajams, Lohars, Malis, Telis, Kumhars, who are at the bottom of hierarchical and caste-segregated Madhesi society.

But such nuances are lost in the outrage over the sacrifices. For elite international activists, the problem seems to be that the animals are decapitated en masse in full public view. So, it's OK to decapitate them en masse inside a slaughterhouse?

As some tweeters have pointed out, only a vegetarian has the moral high ground to condemn the killings of any animal for religion, sport or food. 🇳🇵



SPARE A THOUGHT FOR THE LIVING: A butcher waits for killing time at the Gadhimai Mela in Bariyarpur, Bara.

not financially support the festival this year, the authorities are yet to speak out against it.

Indian historian Nanditha Krishna once noted that it suits governments to let the common people "amuse" themselves with sacrifice so that they will not notice more important problems such as corruption and mis-governance.

Is Nepal ready to heed the countless pleas and prayers to stop this cruelty that tarnishes the country's international reputation as a land of peace and non-violence?

I, for one, pray it is. 🇳🇵



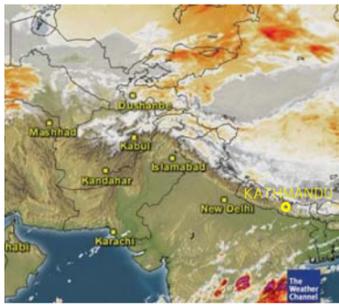
Lucia De Vries is Volunteer Director at Animal Nepal. www.animalnepal.wordpress.com

Full disclosure: I am a non-vegetarian but am against religious animal sacrifices. What troubles me is the vocabulary of the anti-Gadhimai festival: 'barbaric', 'cruel', and 'inhuman'. It's described as the world's 'biggest' and 'scariest' animal sacrifice. The inside of an industrial scale abattoir in Europe is probably just as scary, and the only difference between Gadhimai and Thanksgiving (which both fall on 27 November this year) is that in America tens of millions of turkeys are slaughtered.

In this battle between local organisers and powerful animal rights activists backed by international celebrity supporters, the issue of its cultural importance to people in India and Nepal is lost. In 2009, French actress Brigitte Bardot lent support to the campaign against the festival. This time she has been joined by Joanna Lumley, the British



Deepak Adhikari is a freelance journalist based in Kathmandu. @DeepakAdk



The wind circulation around a disturbance in the Bay of Bengal has changed the direction of prevailing winds, wiping out the Indo-Gangetic haze, bringing down the temperature and improving visibility. But this is a temporary phenomenon and the smog will be back before long. The weekend should be party-cloudy in Kathmandu Valley with chilly and misty mornings and afternoon in-and-out sunshine. For the higher mountains, it will be perfect trekking weather into early next week. Enjoy it before it gets colder.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
24° 10°	24° 9°	25° 9°

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THE ART OF TECHNOLOGY

STÉPHANE HUËT

Nepali artists have been creating interactive artwork for sometime now, but only a few have succeeded. Finally, Yantra 3.0 has brought art, technology and science together in a seamless and fascinating amalgam.

The exhibition at Nepal Art Council that started last Saturday and will be on until 15 November is organised by Karkhana, Robotics Association Nepal (RAN) and Siddhartha Art Foundation's Education Initiative.

Yantra 3.0 displayed eight exhibits that deal with issues of identity, education and cultural

heritage.

In 'Revisiting Kathmandu's Lost Sculptures', computer engineer Roshan Bhatta and Californian artist Joy Lynn Davis explored the theme of stolen Kathmandu Valley artwork. Visitors were invited to put their hand in 14 empty niches (*pic, bottom*) embedded in a brick wall containing sensors. By reaching inside each empty niche, a corresponding animation was projected on an adjacent wall to show a stolen sculpture, its original location and information about it. The animations were based on the artist's amazingly realistic paintings of sites where sculptures



PICS: NISCHAL OLI

were stolen from.

Davis started her research on stolen sculptures of the Kathmandu Valley in 2010, and believes it is the artist's responsibility to remind people of the beauty in the world.

Raising awareness was also the intention of Bidhata KC in her art which delved into the objectification of women in Nepali society. "I don't understand how we can worship goddesses, but mistreat women in real life," explained KC, whose 'Jigsaw' installation was an interactive puzzle on the theme of dowry. "Like the different parts needed

to complete a puzzle, the varied identities of a woman make who she is," she said.

Art and technology was also used to awaken the curiosity of children in Yantra 3.0. The 'Mané' (*pic, top*) at the entrance showed how children can implement what they learn in classrooms. When turned, the mane acted like a dynamo to supply with energy the two video projectors that screen the images. Karkhana and Artree conceived this work to re-purpose, both in form and function, a prayer wheel to deliver a contemporary message.

Modernity and tradition

also meet in 'Galaincha', which was conceived 15 years ago by Alternative Technology as a software to generate carpet patterns by the movement of hands over a sensor. "Our product is the illustration of how modern technology can sustain traditional arts," said designer Sanim Shrestha.

The other installations included Art Lab's 'Prasad', 'Scan Me' by Mahima Singh using QR codes to display images and videos on the theme of urbanisation. International artists Hayes, Las, and Scotti constructed 'Strange Fascination', an ontological portal allowing the viewers to examine their identity and how it relates to others.

"For Yantra 3.0, we wanted to create a dialogue between artists and technologists," said Sunoj Shrestha, president of RAN. "The exhibition was designed to deepen a mutual understanding of how each works and creates." 🇳🇵

Yantra 3.0
Until 15 November, 9am to 6pm
Nepal Art Council, Babar Mahal

nepalitimes.com

- Lost and found in Kathmandu, #682
- Silicon Valley to Kathmandu Valley, #180

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EVENTS

Plast Nepal 2014,

The first edition of an exclusive exhibition on plastic in Nepal with international and local exhibitors.
14 to 16 November, Bhrikuti Mandap Exhibition Hall, www.plastnepal2014.com

In memoriam,

Screening of acclaimed Nepali film Sano Sansaar in memory of filmmaker Alok Nembang
14 November, 4pm, Nepal-Bharat Library, Nepal Airlines building, New Road

Nature in flux,

An exhibition of renowned artist KG Ranjit's paintings, with performance by Ashmina Ranjit.
Till 15 November, 10am to 7pm, City Museum Kathmandu, Darbar Marg

Paper moon,

A six-day inaugural unveiling and exhibition of drawings, pictures, adornments and notes portraying Nepali traditions and landscapes, to celebrate the rebranding of Marina Paper as Marina Vaptzarov.
15 to 20 November, Paper Moon boutique, Babar Mahal Revisited



Bliss,

Photographer Charles O'Rear, known for his famous photo, 'Bliss', that appears every time you open the Microsoft Windows XP, talks about his photography career.
14 November, 9am onwards, Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka

Oman's message,

An international exhibition initiative of Oman's Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs to promote interfaith dialogue, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.
Till 17 November, Patan Museum

Art+Tech,

Art meets technology at this unique exhibition.

Till 15 November, 10am to 5pm, Nepal Art Council, Babar Mahal, www.karkhana.asia/yantra

Jaar,

Watch actors bring to life the story of love, relation, society and dilemma of a village in eastern Nepal, in the play directed by Sunil Pokharel.
Rs 200(general)/ Rs 100(students), until 16 November, 5pm, Mandala Theatre, Anamnagar, www.mandalatheatre.com, (01)424967, 9841605535

Russian culture,

A cultural event organised by The Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, and the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal.
Till 19 November, Rastriya Nach Ghar, Kantipath

Restoring Mustang,

An exhibition of photographs by Luigi Fieni, taken during his stay in Mustang for restoration works.
Until 15 November, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, sthapa@mos.com.np, (01)4218048

DINING



Koto,

Japanese cuisine of the highest quality, served with meticulous attention; food fanatics will find themselves in a haven sashimi and tempura. *Lakeside or Pulchowk or Darbar Marg*

Chopstix,

Savory Asian food cooked in true Chinese fashion sure to charm and impress. Try the famous drums of heaven. *Kumaripati, (01)5551118*

Fire and Ice,

Most popular Italian restaurant in town, book table early
Thamel (01) 44250210

Boudha Stupa Restaurant,

Bide your time in the free wi-fi zone as you enjoy wood fired pizzas, home-made pastas and Tibetan gyakok.
Boudha, 9841484408

Busy Bee,

Head over for live rock and pop performances in English, Nepali and Hindi, indulge in their beer and pizzas to waste the night away in good fashion.
Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)462640

The Heritage,

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



Chapter 9,

Enjoy sumptuous food that takes you back to the regal India, or explore the wide range of Chinese, Thai and Italian cuisines. *Jhamsikhel*

Natsul,

A Korean restaurant for all things barbeque, from succulent pork to crunchy vegetables; you can have delicacies cooked right at your own table or partake of the dedicated barbeque pit. *Lakeside, (061)229198*

Yin Yang Restaurant,

East meets west as you choose from a variety of Thai and continental dishes. Add a little spice to your life with the pad thai or green curry. If you can't handle the heat, fall into the safety net of its western dishes. *Thamel, (01)4701510*

Aalishan,

For mouth watering kebabs, flavourful curries and delicious biryanis. Live music on Fridays.
Jhamsikhel, 5521897, 5536926

Photo Annapurna,

Join and learn from Ariel Estulin and Louis Au on a unique opportunity to experience the pristine beauty of Annapurna mountain ranges through the eyes of professional photographers.
\$1,775, 21 to 30 November, full itinerary on www.outdoorphotojourney.com



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MUSIC



Music Fest,

A culture and music festival with performances by Nepali and international bands like The Edge band, X-Mantra, Steve Iko (Denmark), and Thermal And A Quarter (India).

13 December, 12pm onwards, Bhrikuti Mandap, www.nepalmusicfestival.org

Blues night,

Sink into the Blues rhythm and spend your Friday evening with the Blues Peg. 14 November, 6.30pm onwards, Loud and Live, Jhamsikhel



Tribute to rock,

A tribute to legendary hard rock band, Guns n Roses by Destruction, a Nepali project band.

15 November, 3 to 6pm, Purple Haze Rock Bar, Thamel

Good vibes,

Put on your dancing shoes and join in on some reggae performances by Joint Family Internationale. 14 November, 8pm onwards, House of Music, Thamel

Deathfest,

Accomplished local and international Extreme Metal bands come together to celebrate the glorious genre.

9 and 10 January, venue to be announced

Himalayan Blues,

Australian band Kniki and Mike Beale Project opens the Himalayan Blues Festival in Nepal.

15 November, 6pm Manny's Eatery and Bar, (1)5536919, mannystapas@gmail.com



GETAWAYS



Neydo Monastery,

A monastery and guest house, Neydo is home to many significant religious sites of the great siddhas. Leave your troubles behind and book a room. Pharping, Kathmandu www.neydohotel.com

Atithi Resort,

A perfect place to stay, nearby pool, massage, sauna, and delicious food of your choice. Shantipatan, Lakeside, Pokhara. (061)466760/400207, info@atithiresort.com

Temple Tree Resort and Spa,

A peaceful place to stay, complete with a swimming pool, massage parlour, and sauna, it'll be hard to leave once you go in. Gaurighat, Lakeside, (061)465819

Barahi Jungle Lodge,

The first eco-jungle lodge of Chitwan directly overlooks the Chitwan National Park, spa, boutique guest room, individual and two-in –one private villas, including a suite with a private swimming pool. Andrauli, West Chitwan, www.barahijunglelodge.com

Waterfront Resort,

The lakeside hotel invites you for special barbeque dinners on Friday and lunches on Saturday. Sedi Height, Lakeside road, Pokhara, (061)466303/304, www.waterfronthotelnepal.com

Rally for those unable

On Saturday more than 50 battery-powered cars will take part in the fifth annual Electric Car Rally from Kathmandu to Sanga in aid of the Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre (SIRC) which provides rehabilitation and physio-therapy for patients recovering from back injuries.

The rally will start at Mandala Chok and travel to the rehab centre at Sanga, and 20 of the EVs will be sponsored by their host companies for a total of Rs 25,000 each. The remaining 30 or so will be run by individuals. Mahindra, the makers of the Reva cars will be matching every km travelled by non-corporately owned cars, with Rs 100 per km.

Upon arrival at SIRC, the estimated 125 participants will receive a tour of the centre, and have an opportunity to visit the gift centre which has souvenirs made by the patients. From there they will travel to the world's largest Shiva statue where they will enjoy lunch and a live performance by Kutumba. Last year, more than Rs 300,000 was raised for patients who cannot afford treatment.



"Healthy air is important for all of us, and also for spinally injured people," says SIRC's Esha Thapa, "We have to think about how we can create a healthy environment for our present and future generations."

Since its establishment in 2002 the SIRC has cared for 1,280 injured people from all across Nepal, and can treat 51 patients at a time. Says Thapa: "Without proper rehab, spinal cord injury tends to paralyse patients and drastically reduce the quality of life of the injured."

Most patients at SIRC are poor women who have fallen off trees and cliffs while gathering fodder, or grazing livestock. There are now also many who are paralysed in highway accidents.

Luke Pender



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COME FLY WITH ME

Nepal's latest extreme adventure product: The Everest Skydive

TED ATKINS

In the Royal Air Force parachutes used to be our 'safety nets'. If everything went wrong, your chute was the last resort. So why would anyone want to jump out of a perfectly serviceable plane? Because it can be done.

'There is always a certain element of risk in being alive, but the more alive you are the greater the risk,' goes the saying, and it doesn't just apply to skydiving, it is true for all walks of life. If you don't take any risks, you don't make any gain.

In skydiving this takes an added dimension: the greater the risk the greater the return. I have done many things in my life, and I did not think anything could ever beat the moment I stood on the summit of Mt Everest. But perched on the skids of a helicopter at 8,500m with Himalayan peaks around knowing you are going to launch into space is hard to beat. I hope I never get used to it. I want to feel that moment every time, all my senses alive, the fear, the rush of life.

Not so many people will ever know this feeling, but one Nepali

does: the Deputy Director General of the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal, Sanjiv Gautam. This week, he jumped as a tandem attached to my colleague Tom Noonan (*pic, above*) who is a professional skydiver and Tandem Master. My job is to supply the oxygen systems that kept these people conscious as they fall through the atmosphere.

Skydiving is an interesting business model for Nepal and has been tried in Pokhara (*right*) and near Everest. Parachuting has evolved from being a lifesaver to a sport. Chutes evolved from huge round ones to tiny, highly technical



THE EVOLUTION OF FALLING



1 PARACHUTE
Used as a life saver.



2 SPORTS PARACHUTE
Pure recreation

devices. Parachuting was not enough, the fun was in the freefall. But just tracking a chute was not enough, so we moved onto the wingsuit (*far right*) -- now that's real flying.

Of course even this is not enough. To fly longer we have to go higher. To go higher we need oxygen. And where in the world can you fly higher than in Nepal? There is only one Mt Everest, and to fly alongside the Goddess Mother you need to be in Nepal.

Suman Pandey of Explore Himalaya had the vision to see the business of skydiving in Nepal. He knew how the sport would evolve, helped facilitate The Everest Skydive, bringing tourists to Nepal to experience its newest extreme adventure product. CAAN also saw the potential, and people

like Gautam went up there to experience the thrill for himself.

Another group of tourists will leave Nepal this week having spent considerable sums of money, happy and thrilled with their accomplishment. When they are happy, they will tell others. And that is how it works. Simple business plan: make people happy, get them to spread the word and boost Nepal's image and tourism income. 🇳🇵

Ted Atkins is a former RAF Chief Engineering Officer and runs a company specialising in oxygen equipment.

nepalitimes.com

Watch video of Everest Skydive





PAUL-HENRY DE BAËRE

Killing the goose

Nepal's mountaineering industry risks being like the story of the farmer who killed the goose that laid golden eggs because one golden egg a day wasn't good enough for him.

With the Everest avalanche and the Annapurna blizzard, this has been a terrible year for Nepal's tourism. The deaths in the mountains have changed the lives of many, and there have been cancellations of booked trips.

Being in the heart of the climbing industry, I get a lot of feedback from visitors to Nepal. Even before these disasters, people had started saying they would not visit Nepal again for various reasons.

Mt Everest is a goldmine, and like the goose, it has to be kept alive. A permit to climb Mt Everest from the Nepal side costs \$10,000, and it will go up to \$11,000 from the next season. This is much more than what it costs to climb from the Tibet side to the same summit.



From the Chinese side, the \$7,200 permit gets you: all jeep transport for team and support, trucks for your gear to Base Camp, yaks to Advance Base Camp, all food and accommodation up to Advance Base Camp. A Nepali Everest permit for \$11,000 is just a piece of paper with your name on it.

Further, climbers who paid the permit fee last season and never got to climb the mountain because of the avalanche have not got extensions or refunds. The government is reportedly offering a deal whereby they can come back to climb again and not pay, but only against one permit. So, if there are 10 names on a permit and only one person comes back to climb next year then the permit is closed for the other nine people.

This is not easily confirmed, and even the industry does not know what is happening, but it is unfair and the climbers feel cheated. In fact, they are so outraged some are saying that they will never return. This can be fixed so easily: every person who paid the government is registered as having paid. They can come back any time and redeem the permit that they paid for and climb the mountain. That would be the honest thing to do.

The final losses in revenue to the state and in wages and sustenance to the people in the industry will be huge. Climbers are making plans for the next season now, and now is the time to set this right. Nepal can still win the day by making a clear and unambiguous statement that these mountaineers are honoured guests who have paid and are welcome.

It just takes one smart person with some vision to say let's do this. There has been changes in the ministry, and hopefully it will fix the situation for these guests and for the honour of Nepal.

Ted Atkins
www.topout.co.uk



3 PARAGLIDING
 Controlled parachuting



4 SKYDIVING
 Tracking down from plane until it's time to pull the chute



5 WINGSUIT
 Extends your legs and arms to form a flying bat---



PAUL-HENRY DE BAËRE



PAUL-HENRY DE BAËRE



DEEPAK JUNG RANA



Over time it has become increasingly more difficult for me to watch violence on film, wondering how it could possibly be good for the psyche to silently cheer on humans shooting each other regardless of the fact that the good guys must needs do so in order to triumph over the bad guys. Cinema is inherently voyeuristic, but in the mainstream these days, even though I am



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

all for a good action movie, explosions and all, that voyeurism involves a tacit complicity with violence that is difficult for a thinking person to condone - especially in oneself.

David Ayer, a talented writer director, has broken that usual

FURY

mould with his astonishingly realistic and searing new war film, *Fury* which tells the story of a team of five men who operate a M4A3E8 Sherman tank in the last push to win the war in Nazi Germany.

These five, very human, very flawed men are played by Brad Pitt as Don Wardaddy Collier, a hardened but fatherly man with hidden depths who commands the Sherman tank. His team is completed by a religious gunner, the aptly named "Bible" Swan played by a perpetually moist eyed Shia LaBeouf; Jon Bernthal plays the rough edged Grady "Coon-Ass", a gun loader, and the always great Michael Peña plays Trini "Gordo" Garcia, the driver. Late to this tight crew of four who have just lost their assistant driver is the wide

eyed, baby faced Norman (Logan Lerman), an army typist who has never seen battle but soon learns, the hardest possible way, that in war, one must either kill or be killed.

Fury is not easy viewing. It begins slowly, settling us into the bleak war torn world where the Allied Forces are winning but losing hundreds of men daily in the process of finishing off the still fighting German army. As we become familiar with the characters and the tiny insides of the Sherman tank commanded by Wardaddy, we begin to understand why the tank is named Fury; these men have been severely traumatised by the extreme violence of war, barely functioning in tight quarters without cigarettes and alcohol, destined to become dysfunctional members of society if they survive, incapacitated by the violence they have witnessed and been forced to participate in.

There are very few war films that can justify displaying such levels of violence. Personally, I feel that watching these films should make viewers understand the horrors of war, to the extent that one never wishes for that kind of horror to be repeated in history, ever. In my opinion, *Fury* achieves this aim standing alongside Terrence Mallik's brilliant *The Thin Red Line* (1998), another film that makes you feel the horrors of war without inadvertently celebrating in it. 🇺🇸

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Trailer

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HAPPENINGS



DEVAKI BISTA

OUR SAY: Prime Minister Sushil Koirala greets UML Chair KP Oli at the joint press conference called by the Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, Rastriya Prajatantra Party, and the Bahujan Shakti Party on Sunday.



NEPAL ARMY

COURTESY CALL: Dr. Sarah Sewall, Under Secretary of State of Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights call in a meeting with COAS General Gaurav Rana on Monday.



INDIAN EMBASSY

TALKING LITERATURE: Founder-director of the Jaipur Film Festival Namita Gokhale (right) with Abhay Kumar from the Indian Embassy and author Narayan Wagle after a talk at the Nepal-Bharat Kendra in Kathmandu on Monday.



RSS

BUILDING BLOCKS: Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat addresses participants at the Nepal Infrastructure Summit at Hyatt Hotel in Boudha on Tuesday.

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The seeds of war

Who owns the genetic code? Can a company patent nature? Who decides? These are some questions that will have a major impact on global food security in the 21st century.

French television journalist and director Clément Montfort tries to tackle this issue in his documentary *The Seed War* that was screened last week at the Planet Nepal event organised by the Alliance Française in Kathmandu's Tundikhel, and followed by a panel discussion with agronomist Madan Rai, Ram Bahadur Rana from Pokhara-based LIBIRD and moderated by Kunda Dixit of *Nepali Times*.

The documentary doesn't try to be journalistically neutral about the debate on genetically-modified crops, and may end up preaching only to the converted. But even for those who know little about the globalisation

of agriculture, the facts presented are overwhelmingly convincing.

Like: six multinational corporations own seeds of 6,000 types of foodgrains that are steadily replacing crop diversity around the world. Not surprisingly, seed corporations are subsidiaries of pesticide and chemical companies. Cabbages grown in the EU are bred to be all alike in size, colour and taste.

REVIEW

Wheat, rice and maize seeds sold by corporations cannot be reseeded. European law does not allow traditional seeds to be sold.

The price of these patented seeds have grown three times in the last 15 years.

Seeds of staple crops serve two functions: they are food, but they are also tiny motherboards with the genetic codes necessary to grow the next harvest. Farmers know not to eat all their seeds, and keep some for sowing. Traditional agriculture

works with a variety of seeds that are suited for their microclimates and soils.

European food activist Philippe Lambert says in the film: "Why do cabbages have to be the same size? Why do we all have to eat the same thing?"

Indian activist and crop diversity campaigner Vandana Shiva is even more vocal. She peppers her sentences with phrases like "seed freedom", "food slavery", or "disobedient seeds". Dressed in a trademark homespun sari and big red bindi on her forehead, Shiva speaks forcefully at a hearing in the European Parliament against seed patents and a EU law seeking to impose food uniformity. The visitor's gallery which is filled with activists, breaks into applause.

"We need to fight the monopoly of monoculture, we have to free our seeds and ourselves from slavery," she says. The film cites the well-known cases of suicides by

Indian farmers growing genetically-modified crops who killed themselves after not being able to pay back loans.

For Shiva, this is the extension of the 'Chipko' movement by village women in her native Garhwal to protect Himalayan forests. In her nursery near Dehradun, she demonstrates how organic farming can actually lead to better health and better harvests.

The film ends with a trip to the Norwegian island of Spitzbergen north of Arctic Circle where seeds from all over the world are stored in ultra low temperature, so that if there is a global catastrophe future generations can still grow food. The exercise is ostensibly to protect the genetic diversity of our food plants, but activists see a sinister motive behind it: control over our food future by controlling the seeds.

The most convincing part of the documentary is when farmers are allowed to speak. A French farming family rebels against the EU law, and finds a loophole to protect the diversity of its maize crop. For many skeptical viewers, farmers interviewed in the film will be more persuasive than activists with their moral outrage and media savvy soundbites.

Kunda Dixit

Le Guerre des Graines (The Seed War)
Directed by Clément Montfort and Stenka Quillet, produced by John Paul Lepers, 53min



Nanglo Café and Pub

Nanglo needs no introduction. An institution since 1976, it is rare to find someone who hasn't eaten there or at one of their bakery cafés that dot the city at some time or the other. But the new buzz surrounding it these days is that they've started serving ostrich steaks- supposedly the finest in the city. And I wanted to go sample them for myself.

Ostrich meat is said to be low in cholesterol and fat and, despite being a bird, the meat is red. Also said to be very low in calories, there appears to be a lot to love about ostrich meat. At Nanglo, they serve two varieties of the fastest bird on earth - Grilled ostrich steak (Rs 650) and Charcoal ostrich Steak (Rs 650 too, but this is served only after 5.30 in the evening). The meat is sourced from the one and only ostrich farm in Nepal in Rupandehi.

Since I was there for lunch, I only had the one option - the grilled version. It comes with two



potato patties, steamed vegetables and a chunky mushroom sauce. It looks like a beef steak and surprisingly tastes like it too. It has a quite distinct, almost gamey flavour that might prove to be too pungent for those hoping to use it as a ready substitute for chicken. The beauty of chicken lies a large part in its blandness which

makes it easy for us to pair it with practically everything.

Options are limited if you try to create Nepali-tasting dishes with ostrich meat. Sekuwa would probably work well, and I think it would hold its own in a nice wintery stew, but I don't know whether it would hold up to the rigours of frying, pressure-

cooking, and masala inundation we inflict on our curries. Ostrich meat is being hyped as the new 'healthy' meat and it is really lean. Overcooking would turn it rubbery and chewy.

The steak we were served was decently sized and wasn't as dry as it looked. What I like about Nanglo is their homogeneity with the

flavours. The sauce on all three dishes we ordered - roasted buff slices with mashed potatoes and Italian steak were the other two - tasted the same. The vegetable portions with all three meats were decent and the mashed potatoes were warm and creamy. And the potato patties that came with the ostrich steak were just deep fried versions of the same mashed potatoes.

Nanglo is so conveniently located and so deeply entrenched in the Nepali psyche as being a worthy dining experience that you feel an air of complacency. They know we will return, forgetting that the food won't be quite as tasty as it was during the last visit, that the waiter dais (many of whom have been there since the 70s and deserve your respect) are a little snarlier these days, that there are way too many cats than are acceptable at any restaurant. And as for the ostrich, maybe I won't bury my head in the sand and return one day for steak served at dinner.

Ruby Tuesday

How to get there: Nanglo is in Durbar Marg near the roundabout, next to KFC.



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Transgenic foods

Earlier this year, protests against Monsanto led to Nepal's Supreme Court to ban its GM (Genetically Modified) products in Nepal. This is justifiable given Monsanto's past notoriety, but it skewed public perception on the biotechnology



SCIENCE BYTES
Roshan Karki

behind GM foods deemed to be products of 'evil' corporations that impose serious health risks.

While the debate on GM food safety has raged on for decades, the current consensus of major scientific and medical bodies is clear: GM foods are safe to consume. These organisations include WHO, FAO, European Commission, national academies

of Sciences from USA, France, Brazil, Mexico, China, and India. The most comprehensive meta-analysis of 1783 peer-reviewed publications on GM crops did not demonstrate any health risk and posited little evidence of environmental damage.

Conversely, 30 years of data reviewed in annals of internal medicine, suggest organic food isn't much nutritious or healthier than GM foods. Despite multiple scientific articles clearing the misinformation about GM food, it continues to evoke both fear and fury.

The fear stems from the idea that GM foods are made by 'tampering with nature'. Humans have been genetically modifying every food we plant and eat today for thousands of years. Selective breeding has been deemed natural, but the action of myriad genes swapped during the process is difficult to predict. GM technology involves extracting a piece of DNA-



usually a single gene- from an organism, modifying it as needed, and incorporating into the DNA of same or unrelated species.

The process is fast, efficient, and allows precise assessment of the modified gene aiding in development of many useful traits: plants that resist pests, herbicides, severe diseases or ones that produce vitamins, like the Golden Rice. In medicine, GM technology has been used to develop safer and cheaper vaccines, insulin for diabetic patients, and gene therapy- a treatment option for cancer.

The impact of GM foods on ecology, environment, and

agriculture are legitimate concerns. The growing use of pesticides/ herbicides that may result in superweeds and resistance against pests is alarming. The effects of GM foods on sustainable farming,

monoculture practices, and farmers-corporations dynamics are noteworthy. However, these issues are even more telling in conventional and organic farming.

For example, GM plants that are able to generate their own toxins to fend off pests would require far less pesticide/ herbicide than conventional crops. These contentious issues of environmental and agricultural concerns are thus direct consequence of the methods of deploying technology and farming practices, not the GM technology per se.

In Nepal, we need to be wary of corporate interests who want to

profit by hyping their products. But instead of debating the use of GM technology, we require the cooperation of scientists, environmentalists, farmers, and policy makers to implement biotechnology in an efficient manner so as to improve yield, quality, and nutrition of crops at a lower cost, promote sustainability and reduce waste, minimise damage to environment, and most importantly, secure rights, equity, and livelihood of our farmers.

While GM foods may not solve all of Nepal's food problems, they are a vital tool to address the food security challenges of our country, where more than half the population live in poverty. In this context, the potential of GM technology food has far-reaching implications, and its safety should be extrapolated from scientific evidence, not from culturally popular opinions. 🇳🇵

@roshankarkey

Roshan Karki is a PhD in Experimental Pathology from Yale University and this is the first of his monthly Science Bytes column in Nepali Times.

GIZMO by YANTRICK

SLIMMER and BETTER

Think of a tablet, and inevitably the Apple iPad comes to mind. Having set the gold standard in the tablet market with its past iterations, Apple is back to dominate with its latest, the iPad Air 2. Boasting a bevy of tweaks, enhancements, a much faster processor than the iPad Air, Version 2 feels pretty close to perfection.

The iPad Air 2 weighs under a pound, and at 6.1 mm inches thick, is slimmer than even the iPhone 6. An expert blend of solid metal and glass gives the iPad Air 2 the look and feel of an expensive product (which it is).

The 9.7-inch Retina display and the pixel resolution of 2,048 x 1,536 remain



the same. The screen looks brilliant owing to the fingerprint-resistant and anti-reflective coating, and the fully laminated display. Stereo sound still pipes out from two speakers on either side of the Lightning port at the bottom. With the iPad Air 2, Apple introduces a Touch ID fingerprint sensor on the home button, first seen on the iPhone 5S, while the front and rear-facing cameras retain their places.

Under the hood, the iPad Air 2 has undergone slight upgrades. The iPad Air 2 now boasts a 64-bit A8X chip with a M8 motion co-processor, which runs Apple's spanking new iOS 8, resulting in a lightning quick device, capable of handling even the most graphics and memory-intensive games like Modern Combat 5 with ease.

One of the major upgrades is the Touch ID sensor which makes it easier to log in to Apps, such as Evernote, and several password

managers, saving Yantrick from remembering yet another lengthy password. Both the front and rear-facing cameras have been bumped up, with the rear iSight camera now notably better at 8 megapixels (up from 5), and with features such as slow-mo, time lapse, better face detection, and videos at full HD resolutions. Battery life is still great at 10 hours, and Apple's App Store is still the best mobile application store, and storage space of upto 128GB amounts to more of everything.

The iPad Air 2 is available in silver, gold and space gray. The base 16GB model costs around Rs 65,000 and can be found at gadget shops across the valley. 🇳🇵

Yantrick's Verdict: If you already own an iPad Air, it may not be such a wise decision to buy the iPad Air 2, but for those who wanting to own an Apple tab, this is the one to get.

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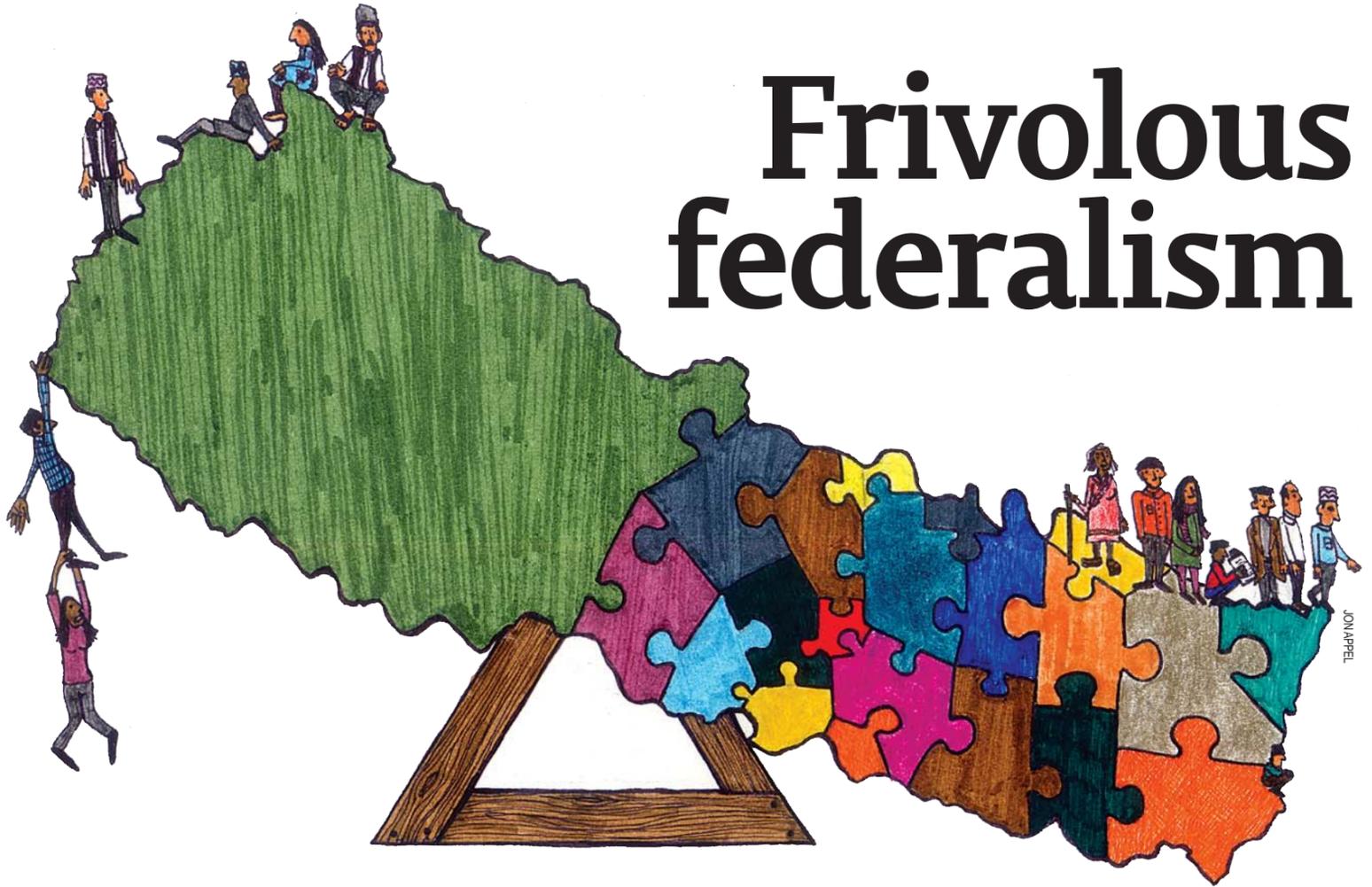
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Frivolous federalism



For the past several years Nepal's political class has sidestepped the fundamental question about Nepal going federal: Why federalise at all?

Instead, it has busied itself in an interminable merry-go-round about how many provinces, ethnic or non-ethnic, horizontal for one or more Madhes province or vertical to include all geographical regions, and so on. It has ignored past successes with decentralisation.

"In the UK, we have bad apples in our politics, but in Nepal almost all apples are rotten."



GUEST COLUMN
Bihari K Shrestha

The exercise reminds us of the saying: 'If you do not know where you are going, any road will take you there'. The latest Nepali politician to try to sell snake oil is UML vice president Bhim Rawal who seems to want federalism just for the heck of it.

Writing in *Kantipur* on 5 November, *Samridhi ko lagi Sanghiyata* (federalisation for prosperity) he says: 'Federalisation will strengthen national unity, integrity, social harmony, and patriotism and thereby create conducive conditions to demonstrate to the world with pride that it is playing its due role in improving country and society.'

He further assumed, 'It would

steadily end the present poverty, lack of education, unemployment, external dependence, and other factors hurting the self-respect and sense of sovereignty of the Nepali people.'

Clearly, Rawal is doing what a Nepali politician does best: dole out delusional assurances and paranoid panaceas. His assumptions about federalism make it sound like a magic wand. What is more worrying is that Rawal has been known for pragmatism and a rational approach to politics.

So, if this is what Rawal thinks, wonder what misconceptions other politicians have. In his op-ed, Rawal also conspicuously stops short of explaining how his brand of federalism would work – its distinctive attributes and processes -- to ensure the attainment of the lofty goals of better governance and development.

In the first Constituent

Assembly, the 43-member State Restructuring Committee that included 17 Maoists and seven UML members, its chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal had agreed that they would present two competing proposals to the full house of the CA to choose from: the Maoists' 14-province model against NC-UML's six province idea.

However, during its 127th meeting Dahal bought off the UML members by awarding a Sherpa Province to a Sherpa member of the committee and a Mithila province to a Mithila member, and adopted by majority vote his party's 14-province proposal as the sole recommendation of the committee.

While these two new provinces replaced two existing ones, he also changed two more of the pre-existing 14-province proposal, and Dahal accomplished these somersaults within a 30 minute timeframe. To add to the utter ad hocism and opportunism, the 14-province

proposal incidentally also included one curiously named 'Jadaan' province.

In the second CA, the Maoists continue to insist on the same 14-province proposal as one of the two options including one for 10 provinces, while the UML now supports NC's seven-province approach, except that its newly elected president, KP Oli, threw a cat among the pigeons by floating a four-province model, which his own party quickly shot down.

Dahal is not a politician known for consistency. In CA1, he had the numbers to depart from the agreed consensus and go for majority voting in the State Restructuring Committee to humiliate his archrival, the NC. But now that his party has been cut down to size in CA2, and humiliatingly stands only as a remote third behind the UML, he is insisting that consensus alone has to be the basis for state restructuring.

These developments tell a lot about our political class: frivolous to the extreme, hypocritical, myopic, mindless, unprincipled, irresponsible, and of course, corrupt. Nepal may have had political parties and elections for a long time, but we haven't instilled a democratic culture.

One English visitor to Kathmandu recently remarked, "We too have bad apples in our politics, but in Nepal almost all apples seem to be rotten." In most other countries, the sovereign conscience of the state kicks in when the politics gets too pervert.

In India, major change occurred democratically with PM Modi emerging with extraordinary majority in the Lok Sabha. There have been changes in Egypt and Thailand in the recent past, albeit extra-democratically. But in Nepal such change does not seem to be in sight, at least, not yet. 🇳🇵

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SOLVING A BURNING PROBLEM

Kathmandu Valley will have to wait till August next year for its much-delayed first electric crematorium

SUNIR PANDEY

It is believed that anyone who is cremated in Pashupati bypasses Baitarni – a deep and treacherous mythological river of purgatory seething with blood and pus and inhabited by crocodiles and flesh-eating birds – and goes straight to paradise.

So, when the city authorities revived the idea of building an electric crematorium, it made perfect sense to locate it along the banks of the holy Bagmati, just south of where the funeral pyres currently are. An earlier municipality plan 30 years ago to place it at Teku didn't work out because of local opposition, and the imported furnaces are rusting in a warehouse.

The Pashupati Area Development Trust (PADT) was given the task in 2009, and construction was supposed to finish three years ago. There are further delays, and officials say electric funeral services will take

at least till August next year.

"Our team was always on schedule but we faced delays because of problems with various contractors," PADT's Govinda Tandon told us this week.

The Trust has faced delays not just from contractors. In 2011, the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO objected to various new construction around Pashupati, which is a World Heritage Site.

One of these developments cited by a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) review of Nepal's world heritage sites was the electric crematorium.

LAST REST: The new electric crematorium with Pashupati in the background with the Bagmati alongside (right). The two furnaces are being readied for opening by August next year (below).





SUNIR PANDEY



Electric funeral

Like in traditional funerals, electric cremation burns bodies by the process of incineration, but instead of wooden pyres the combustion is through an electric furnace.

The body is placed on a trolley which moves it into the combustion chamber. It is laid out on a shallow bed lined with refractory bricks that can withstand high temperatures. The chamber has holes at the bottom, through which the flames shoot into the chamber. The vault is closed before cremation starts.

Since traditional funerals are unhurried and relatives of the dead need time carry out necessary rituals, all the facilities of the ghat will also be present inside the crematorium. When the body is being cremated, smoke is piped out of the chamber to a venturi scrubber that filters out particulates before being released by through chimney. The water used in cleaning the smoke is piped into the sewage drains.

Cremation takes between 60 and 90 minutes based on body mass. After it is fully burnt, the ash is collected and handed over to relatives to carry on with remaining funeral rites.

CREMATION TIME

FIREWOOD	ELECTRIC
3	1
hours	hour

ENERGY CONSUMED

FIREWOOD	ELECTRIC
250kg of wood for one cremation	1800 KWh for 40 cremations per day
Per funeral cost: Rs 3,000	Per funeral cost: Rs 570

THE PRICE OF DEATH

FOR TRADITIONAL CREMATION

FIREWOOD	Rs 3,000
GHEE	Rs 900
STRAW	Rs 1,200
BAMBOO	Rs 200
SANDALWOOD (optional)	Rs 2,000
LABOUR	Rs 1,600
REGISTRATION	Rs 100
TOTAL (with sandalwood)	Rs 9,000

“The HIA was produced too late in the process to affect the position, design and layout of the facility and this procedural omission must be rectified in the future. It is clear that the 30m chimney will have a severe visual impact upon the property,” the committee concluded.

Since then, UNESCO’s position has softened after PADT sought to allay fears that the crematorium would be an eyesore. Tandon doesn’t expect any major objections at the committee’s next meeting.

UNESCO’s representative in Nepal, Christian Manhart, says he is satisfied with PADT’s efforts. “We think the visual impact of the chimney will not be as severe because it is located at the periphery of the Pashupati monument area and PADT have agreed to paint it brown or leave the original metal colour and plant trees around the crematorium, which will not make it too prominent.”

Still, when observed from Tilganga the crematorium does look foreboding and industrial, even with its temple-themed architecture. The chimney stands three times taller than the building itself, dominates the gilded roof of Pashupati in the distance, and reminds one of Bhaktapur’s smoking brick factory.

But engineers at the PADT say there will be complete combustion in the chambers and the amount of smoke emitted from the chimney will be much less than from the traditional wooden funeral pyres at the ghats.

Manhart, too, says UNESCO is positive about the electric crematorium for ecological reasons. Each funeral consumes up to 250kg of firewood and there are at least 35 cremations a day at Pasupati alone. Most of the firewood comes from community forests in Dhading, and the electric crematorium will save more than 9,000 kg of firewood a day.

Electric funerals will also keep the Bagmati cleaner, which at the moment is severely polluted downstream because of the ash, charred logs, and clothes of mourners are all ritually thrown into the river. In addition to drainage pipes to divert sewage, PADT engineers say the crematorium will restore the Bagmati.

For Kathmandu residents, the crematorium will mean cheaper funerals in future. It can cost up to Rs 9,000 for a traditional firewood cremation, but an electric cremation could be done for as little as Rs 2,500, and could be reduced further with subsidies. Relatives will also spend less time with one hour per electric cremation, whereas they have to spend up to three hours for traditional funerals at present.

The Rs 130 million crematorium will have two electric furnaces and a third will be added to meet future demand. Kathmandu’s population has risen by 2 million since the first plan for electric crematoria was mooted three decades ago.

PADT believes that Nepalis are culturally ready to accept electric crematoria, and it has also become an environmental necessity for a Valley of 3 million people.



When Banke burned

The lesson of the communal riots of 2006 in Nepalganj is that politics and religion can be a volatile mixture

BASANTA UPADHYAY
in BANKE

Leaders of Nepal's Muslim community have repeatedly said that they don't want to be a part of a future Madhesi province. There is tension just under the surface between Muslims and Madhesis, and the state is mainly to blame for playing divide and rule.

Ekrar Ahmed of the Nepalganj Dhamboji Masjid says, "All riots here are politically instigated, building on simmering tensions on the ground."

An investigation into the background of the worst flareup of communal tension here in December 2006 reveals a pattern of a volatile mixture of politics and religion taken to combustion point.

Banke district is home to people Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Shikhs, Christians who have always lived in harmony. But in the last few years the conflict between Pahade and Madhesi peoples as well as between Hindus

with looting and vandalism.

Despite the curfew, civil society organised a solidarity rally Nepalganj which reduced tension somewhat. But the violence has important lessons because such politically-instigated riots could easily happen again.

The NSP (Anandadevi) was among the seven main parties back then. It had played an important role during all the major political agreements including signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the 12- point understanding with UCPN (Maoists). The party demanded that the Interim Constitution have provision for electoral constituencies based on population, geography and culture.

But the Interim Constitution maintained the existing provision of 205 electoral constituencies. The party therefore called for the Tarai shutdown. What started out as an anti-Pahade agitation soon took on an anti-Muslim character.

Communal riots were unheard of in Banke until the early 1990s. After the demolition of Babri Masjid across the border in Uttar

Pradesh in 1990 by the BJP, there was some animosity brewing between Nepalganj's Muslims and their Hindu neighbours. Current Prime Minister Sushil Koirala's house in Nepalganj had been vandalized by local Muslims at the time. The communal tension in India had an effect in Nepali border towns as well.

Hindu extremism has also grown in Banke as it has across the border. There were representative from Banke at the central level of the World Hindu Federation's international committee. Furthermore, India's RSS also established an office in Banke to mobilise Hindu youth. This had the effect of radicalising the Muslim community as well, and both try to have shows of strength on the streets. These rival groups were the most active in December 2006. Most of the organised arson and looting was targeted at Muslim neighbourhoods with fruit carts, shops and factories vandalized. Mosques were also attacked, and even the Sikh Gurudwara was not spared.

Some human rights activists and locals were shared video clips of the arson and looting through social media, which spread terror outside Nepalganj. Some of the photos that were being shared through social media and mobiles further aggravated the violence.

The police patrolling around the town couldn't stop what was happening and had to ultimately resort to using force. While the shops at BP Chok were being vandalised, Banke's Chief District Officer (CDO) Tilakram Sharma and the district police chief Ramesh Bhattarai stood by watching the city burn from the municipality office. When the police did act, it made things worse. The arrest of some Madhesi activists further escalated the riots.



and Muslims have turned violent. They are all an extension of the political disputes, where local leaders have stoked tension to get or show power.

In the winter of 2006, the Madhes movement was at its peak, and there was rift between the hill and plains dwellers. Local politicians poured oil into the fire.

Nepal Sadhbhawana Party (Anandadevi) had announced a Tarai shutdown on 25 December and party cadre armed with iron rods forced businesses to shut down. Four small lodges around Nepalganj Nursing Home on Surkhet Road remained open because they were used by patients. The party cadre vandalised all four hotels which happened to be run by people of hill origin.

There was retaliation against the party cadre, and turned violent by evening. Anul Jeda Salmani was among the many people who were caught up in the riot. "They attacked me because I am a Muslim man from Madhes," he recalls, "there were Pahade journalists who were taking pictures of me being attacked but none tried to stop it."

Politicians then seized the opportunity to promote it as a 'Hind-Muslim' riot, thus encouraging extremists on both sides to escalate the violence.

A curfew was announced on the morning of 26 December, but the violence continued unabated

Pradesh in 1990 by the BJP, there was some animosity brewing between Nepalganj's Muslims and their Hindu neighbours. Current Prime Minister Sushil Koirala's house in Nepalganj had been vandalized by local Muslims at the time. The communal tension in India had an effect in Nepali border towns as well.

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The police patrolling around the town couldn't stop what was happening and had to

Nadir Kha, Ramdulare Baisya, Raju Barma were told they would be provided with support for treatment. Some 52 houses were destroyed and looted. Eight years later, no one has got any compensation.

The locals had demanded action against the CDO and police chief for their reckless decisions. Mohammed Nadir Kha of Nepalgunj identified sub-inspector Pramod Chhetri at the district police office as the person who shot him. He was never punished. The politicians who sparked off the violence are still indulging in identity and communal politics.

The government formed a probe committee under the leadership of Purushottam Parajuli that investigated the riots. The committee submitted its report, which just gathered dust. The committee's coordinator, advocate Shalikram Sapkota says: "Local leaders from political parties were responsible for the riot. The failure of the local administration to understand the seriousness of the situation contributed to the tragedy."

The government's apathy has meant that the anger and revenge simmers just under the surface. A small spark can set off another conflagration in Nepalganj.  Centre for Investigative Journalism

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3 वर्षे



ग्राहक शुल्क रु २५०० मा
मगद छुट रु २५०
TITAN नाडी घडी

2 वर्षे



ग्राहक शुल्क रु ३५०० मा
मगद छुट रु १५०
गोल्ड स्टार शू को
रु.१००० बराबरको गिफ्ट भौचर
र साथमा पाइलट पेन सेट

5 वर्षे



ग्राहक शुल्क रु १०५०० मा
मगद छुट रु ५०
स्वीटजरल्याण्डको
आकर्षक उपहार

हिमाल
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विस्तृत जानकारीको लागि
हिमालमिडिया प्रा.लि.
पाटनढोका, ललितपुर, मोबाईल: ९८४१ २४८ ८९४, ९८५१० ५४ ७२९
फोन: ५००५६०१-०५/फ्याक्स: ९७७-१-५००५५१८
विराटनगर: ०२१ ४६३ ६६१, पोखरा: ०६१ ५३८ ९१३, नेपालगन्ज: ०८१ ५५१ ६४८



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SAARC traffic tips

A lot has been written about the traffic problem in Kathmandu, but if you thought there was nothing left to say, you are dead wrong. There is still lots to moan and groan about, especially with the forthcoming Shark Summit.

The government has left no stone overturned to embark upon an anti-trafficking campaign to ensure that vehicular movement is smooth on 25-27 November by declaring a dawn to dusk curfew. Drivers are advised to exercise extreme caution even if they do venture out, and that they may be shot on sight if they obstruct intersections when South Asian Heads of Government and States (HOGS) are passing by. Fine

print: Management will not be responsible for the consequences.

Gubberment has issued a stern warning that all traffic rules will be strictly implemented during the Summit. However, drivers can get back to their normal behaviour after 28 November onwards so that motorcycles can once more drive like they are partaking in a trail race, bus drivers can park in the middle of the road once more, private cars can overspeed if they so desire, and the governing coalition can make an illegal U-turn on the constitution.

The more observant among you will have discerned that street lights and cat's-eye lane markers have been installed along roads to be used by HOGS. For those who don't live along those

streets, tough luck.

You will also have noticed that road dividers have been removed and replaced by painted centerlines – this is just a suggestion. Feel free to drive on the wrong side of the road at any time, just make sure Prime Minister Tobgay isn't anywhere nearby.

New traffic signs have also been installed, and since it has been so long since we had them in Kathmandu, drivers may need to brush up on what they mean. As a public service, the Ass presents below common street signs so drivers, and pedestrians who haven't yet been run over, can use it as a tear sheet for easy reference during an emergency:



Make three orbits around Bhadrakali to find exit to new bypass that cuts through Army HQ to Maiti Ghar.



Caught using mobile while driving? Pay baksheesh not exceeding this amount to officer on duty.



No urinating here.



Warning: Garbage being thrown from fourth-floor balcony.



Look for outrider accompanying Prime Minister Tobgay's motorcade and race him.



Bank robbery in progress. Medium-built male with suitcase full of cash with possibly-armed female perpetrator running to getaway car. Give way.



Road recently repaved for SAARC. Drive like a maniac if you like.



Falling into Tukucha allowed only between 1030-1530hrs, and on public holidays. Drive slow, avoid turnover.



Cross street here during Sharks' Summit. Cross anywhere you like when it's over.



Sign at entrance to Tribhuvan International Airport.



Abandoned bra on road. Alert Police.



Drop whatever you are doing, Grovelment has declared 2-day holiday during SAARC.

The Ass



PAST PRESENT FUTURE

DIWAKAR CHETTRI

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...the greater benefits of regional cooperation...



He's just excited about the summit holidays.



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