





YOUNG SCRIBE: A girl writes on the wall of a temple in Swayambhu on the occasion of Saraswati Puja on Sunday honouring the goddess of learning.

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No other option but to negotiate. After destroying parliamentary furniture as a pressure tactic, the opposition Maoist-Madhesi alliance has decided not to boycott the CA and its delayed-action street stir is half-hearted. The ruling coalition led by the UML's KP Oli is pressing for a vote not necessarily because they want to carry through with it, but as a deterrent to force a consensus. The coming week will tell if all this brinkmanship will finally yield a constitution.

SOLUTIONS **FROM WITHIN** EDITORIAL PAGE 2





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### EDITORIAL

# SOLUTIONS FROM WITHIN

o, the sky did not fall on 22 January. But, as expected, the blame game this week went into high ear as top leaders tried to deflect public anger at their opponents.

It is now accepted by even the more hardline opposition leaders that from a technical standpoint the constitution is ready to go. Of the four points of disagreement on the judiciary, electoral formulae, form of government and federalism, there is some gap remaining only in the demarcation of the five Tarai districts in eastern and western Nepal. But even here, ideas for reconciliation have been put forward: declare them union territories, adjust district borders, or leave this issue to be sorted out later.

Rajendra Mahato, Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Baburam Bhattarai, it is now clear, are putting a spanner in the works for whatever reason. Narayan Kaji Shrestha of the Maoists, and Bijaya Gachhadar of the MDF-D have tried to play mediatory roles, but have been sidelined and ridiculed by their own parties for their

troubles.

Something good came out of the vandalism on the floor of the CA on the night of 22 January it was a vivid demonstration to Nepalis watching it all unfold on tv of the kind of anarchy we are up against. It was also a demonstration of the desperation of the opposition alliance and proof of how much they have been weakened. The Maoists, especially Bhattarai, have blundered by launching a coordinated political and media attack to paint Chairman Subhas Nembang as a villain. The fairminded Nembang is so respected for his moderate stance that the move has already backfired on the Maoists.

Dahal, Bhattarai, et al know that they have no other option but to come back to negotiations. After venting their anger as a pressure tactic, they have decided not to boycott the CA and the delayed-action street stir they have announced is half-hearted. So, let's take

#### A new constitution still looks iffy, but in Nepal the unexpected is also to be expected.

comfort in the fact that our leaders are still on speaking terms.

A day after Nembang began the process of passing the new constitution through a vote in the House by forming the Proposal Drafting Committee (PDC) earlier this week, Prime Minister Sushil Koirala telephoned Dahal to smoke the peace pipe. Both sides are playing political brinkmanship, trying to push the other as close to the edge as possible without falling off. The Maoist-Madhesi alliance demolished a few chairs and announced protests, and the ruling coalition led by the UML's KP Oli is pressing for a vote not necessarily because he wants to carry through with it but as a deterrent to force a consensus.

So, what is really holding things up? It seems that all the top leaders have their own interests in the post-constitution political course. PM Koirala will get credit for delivering the new constitution, but if so, he will have to step down to let Oli have a go at PMship. Which is why Oli is a man in a hurry.

Dahal feels left out, and he wants credit for the new constitution and be rewarded with presidentship. He will block the constitution until everyone agrees to give him what he wants: that is what he means by 'consensus'. Baburam Bhattarai and Dahal are surprisingly on the same page now because if Dahal becomes president, Bhattarai will have a stab at chairmanship of the party. Bijaya Gachhadar of the MDF-D is eying the Home Ministry in a post-constitution government.

For everyone, except perhaps Oli, it looks like delaying constitution writing is better than passing it right now. They are trying to resist pressure from domestic public opinion and from the international community as long as possible until the timing is right.

What is needed now is a credible mediator acceptable to all sides. It could be Nembang, but the Maoists have demonised him. The president could step in, but he also seems cosy enough staying on in Shital Nibas. The Europeans have squandered their influence by unnecessarily antagonising the government.

Surprisingly, two former prime ministers waiting in the wings have by default become possible negotiators: the NC's Sher Bahadur Deuba and the UML's Madhav Kumar Nepal. They appear more accommodative to the opposition and are capable of bringing the Maoists back to talk.

A new constitution still looks iffy, but in Nepal the unexpected is also to be expected.

#### CONSTITUTION

The blame for the failure of CA1 and CA2 should be shared equally by Nepali leaders and foreign powers who supported the Maoist terrorists to run the country in the first place ('The Anti-Climax', Editorial, #742). How many more years do we have to wait to see a constitution?

#### Nita Sharma

 Nepalis should try looking at themselves in the mirror first. Every time a monkey shouts 'bandh' they cower at home and won't come out. It is you who have allowed these monkeys to rule. Stop bleating about what you have brought upon yourself and do something.

A bandh is terrorism, pure

#### the first CA ('Pass the preamble', Damakant Jayshi, #742). And that was the only reason speaker Subhas Nembang did not bother to call the

YOUR SAY

in life? There is only one law which contravenes all social, moral, ethical, civil, and legal tenets of human rights and well being and that is Nepal's citizenship law.

Namah

DIWAKAR CHETTR

 David Seddon doesn't seem to know what he is talking about. There are troops protecting mosques in France as well. So your assumption that only synagogues are protected is false.

French secularism applies to everyone living in France and not just to Muslims. But it is Muslims who try to drag their religion into the state. They demand that the canteens in public schools provide Halal meat, they demand separate hours for women in public swimming pools. Radical Muslims demand that their wives be checked only by female doctors. And when they are reminded of separation of state and religion, in other words, of secularism in French society, they feel targeted.

medical sector to self-regulate. Short term greed among doctors and pharmacists will end up killing a lot of people, including them.

#### Dr Joshi

Each strip needs to have a pin code which must be SMS'ed back to a central repository matching it with a doctor's prescription. There will be a cost overhead (5 %?), but I am sure a simple dispensing mechanism in which there is a consequence can be worked out. Nam

#### **CA CHAIR**

When the monkeys in parliament were busy turning the house into a circus, we saw Nembang sit there in his dignified manner. He is truly irreplaceable ('Maoists target Nembang', eSpecial, www. nepalitimes.com). If the UCPN(M) had only five per cent of what Subhas Nembang is made of, the party would have been totally different.



Times

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will have the chance to move forward

and simple. It is enforced by fear and terror. Yet, the international community thinks these are progressive forces fighting for inclusion and equality. Wake up and smell the coffee. Of course, the centrist parties are no saints, but they are harmless boy scouts compared to the Maoists.

Jay

Simon

 When these criminals speak of consensus, what they mean is that everyone must agree with their view or else they will obstruct, destruct and destroy until you do. Socrates

The Maoists did have the support of more than 420 lawmakers in

our trust. They have used us and abused us. These leaders are only focused on their personal ambitions. If they cared about Nepal or the Nepali people, we would have had a constitution by now.

assembly to initiate the voting process

because he knew that a good number

of lawmakers from NC and UML were

stance. The speaker was influenced by

the partisan interest. Now, the situation

has reversed. The ruling parties have

the required number but cannot draft a

constitution as the opposition is playing

the same card game. To only blame

the opposition parties for failure is

solely a partisan view of the writer.

All current leaders have failed us

miserably ('Better late than never', Om

Astha Rai, #742). They have betrayed

going to vote against their parties'

Geeta Rai

Nepali Mann

#### TOLERANCE

Nepali Muslims are not as marginalised as you would like to believe ('Limits to toleration in a secular state'. David Seddon, #742). Nor are they that oppressed, if at all. The truly marginalised section of society are those without any citizenship documents that is necessary to get a driver's license, education, utilities among others. Who would you rather be: A Bahun with no papers or a Muslim who is a legal citizen? Who

Hurray

#### **ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE**

Excellent summary of the looming threat of multi-drug resistant TB among Nepalis ('Patients are impatient', Sonia Awale, #742). We are staring at a health crisis of immense proportions that will potentially take us back to the preantibiotic era where you can die from an ordinary infection. The government needs to immediately act to preserve the efficacy of existing antibiotics, especially the ones used in the anti-TB DOTS program, force the private

Sushma Karki

Nembang: The one, and only true patriot in this nation. Salute to you, sir. You truly are carrying on the traditions of the fearless Gurkha. May your tribe increase, and may other craven leaders learn from you.

Namo

 The CA Chair needs to bring these clowns under control and give 30 million Nepalis the constitution they deserve.

Kamal





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### 4 NATION

# The statute of liberty

The Indian experience with constitution drafting post-independence holds valuable lessons for Nepal

This week, the world's largest democracy celebrated the 66th year of promulgating its constitution, the longest written guiding principle of any nation on earth.

The celebration that showcased the military might and cultural richness of this emerging power was witnessed by the



Anurag Acharya

most powerful man in the world -- indicating India's rise to the global pedestal. We in India's backyard watched with envy.

The Indian constitution took 165 days of intense debate spread over 11 grueling sessions in the Constituent Assembly (*pic, right*), out of which 114 were devoted to discussion on the draft constitution. Today, 65 years later, the Indian Constitution contains 448 articles in 25 parts, 12 schedules and 5 appendices with 98 amendments made so far.

Despite huge differences in size, economy and political history we in Nepal can learn some lessons (and pitfalls) from the Indian constitutional exercise. After all, the Indian union (they deliberately didn't want to call it 'federation') has been grappling with its own share of constitutional fault lines.

In its final session before the promulgation, the chief architect of the Indian constitution BR Ambedkar had warned: "On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognising the principle of 'one man one vote and one vote one value'. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of 'one man one value'. If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril."

Over the years, these fissures widened as the Indian union faced identity movements in its southern states demanding linguistic rights, while nationalist insurgencies in Telengana, Assam, Manipur and Nagaland dragged New Delhi to war against its own people.

Ambedkar saw it coming. In his view, without social democracy at its base political democracy has little chance of succeeding. If anything, the custodians of the Indian constitution seem to have ignored the words of this Dalit intellectual who had no illusions about the limitations of the document he



had penned.

Making a scathing critique of patriotic nationalism, Ambedkar had warned: "I am of opinion that in believing that we are a nation, we are cherishing a great delusion. How can people divided into several thousands of castes be a nation? The sooner we realise that we are not as yet a nation in the social and psychological sense of the world, the better for us. For then only we shall realise the necessity of becoming a nation and seriously think of ways and means of realising the goal."

The Indian experience and Ambedkar's words hold valuable lessons for Nepal's Constituent Assembly which is also grappling with federalism, nationalism and minority rights. For the last seven years, the political parties have been at loggerheads over these issues, making their own petty electoral calculations, ignoring the fact that they are only political stakeholders to the process and not the ultimate beneficiaries. Their narrow partisan and personal interests have overridden the interest of Nepal's diverse population and its divergent aspirations.

After consensus among parties became impossible, CA Chair Nembang took a controversial decision earlier this week by forming a Proposal Drafting Committee amid opposition protests, allowing it ten days to prepare a questionnaire on disputed issues. This signals the initiation of the 'process' that is supposed to kick-start the stalled constitution drafting.

To its credit, the UCPN(M)led opposition alliance isn't boycotting the CA and has kept the doors for talks open. They claim the NC and UML aren't showing the same commitment to consensus that they did when they commanded the majority. But they must also understand that the constitution is a work in progress, and they can always go back to the people for a new mandate in the next elections. The ruling coalition, on the other hand, must know that a constitution is only as good as it serves the people who grant it legitimacy.

In the final years of his life, Ambedkar was thoroughly disillusioned with the document he had so passionately drafted. He was sad that despite constitutional safeguards including the reservation policy, there was no qualitative change in the lives of Indian Dalits because the existing sociopolitical structure severely impeded their capacity to access those safeguards.

In one of his speeches he said: "My friends tell me that I drafted the constitution, but I am quite prepared to say that I will be the first person to burn it." Nevertheless, his lifelong belief that a constitution should not be a mere legal document, but a vehicle of life that reflects the spirit of the age, holds a valuable lesson for our own drafters when they sit to finalise the statute in the coming days.

# **Lessons from Belgium**

A former Belgian Prime Minister gives his take on Nepal's constitution writing processes

#### CYNTHIA CHOO

olitical power games need to take a back seat when debating the constitution because one is governed by personal short-term ambition, and the other is of long-term national importance. Former Belgian Prime Minister Yves Leterme has first-hand experience of this because he had to resign in 2008 after being unable to pass constitutional reforms for greater autonomy of Flemishspeaking areas in his country. "Side agendas like scoring political points, enhancing electoral value and finding face-saving strategies hamper the rational approach needed in a process for constitutional change," said Leterme, who was in Kathmandu this week as the new head of the Stockholm-based International IDEA. He also visited Burma before coming to Nepal. Although no two countries are alike, Leterme drew parallels between the constitution drafting in Belgium and Nepal. For instance, filibustering is common in both legislatures – while in Nepal CA members destroyed furniture last week, Leterme himself once gave a seven-hour speech as a delaying tactic in parliament. Belgium also had a polarised polity that resulted in a deadlock. "Many of the words and concepts on federalism I heard in Nepal during my visit like constituencies, districts, autonomy, transfer of competencies were the same as we used in Belgium," he added.



wants to practice the tyranny of the majority. Leterme said this is where civil society and the media have a role to play as a check and balance.

"And leaders will need to have a very strong backbone and willingness to go to their people and defend their interests, knowing that in a compromise not everyone will be happy," he said. Leterme also understands the sensitivity of the Nepal government to foreigners giving unsolicited advice. In his meetings with top leaders in Kathmandu this week, he highlighted some of the mistakes that Belgium had made which Nepal could avoid. "Ultimately, these are the problems of Nepal and Nepalis have to solve them," he said, adding that he was hopeful that the leaders would find a compromise because despite differences their "inter-personal relations" were still good. International IDEA has been working in Nepal to put on the table various solutions, resources and best practices to ensure an inclusive and democratic constitution. Leterme said it was his firm belief in people power that has helped him make a smooth transition from being a politician to an international advocate of democracy. He wants Nepal to focus on ensuring better overall governance through democracy: "It is crucial to set in place programs that allow people to demand accountability and empower them to keep checks on the government. Democracy is not only about elections, the quality of democracy is also important." 💟

However, with 103 ethnic groups in Nepal and only three in Belgium, Leterme conceded that "the sheer number of religions, languages and ethnic groups in Nepal should not be underestimated, and are important challenges to consider".

With the politics of identity being the single most contentious issue that Nepal is facing right now, Leterme suggested that lasting inclusive, consensus-based solutions would have to be sought.

Citing lessons from the Belgium experience, he said everything hinges on the art of negotiation. "While negotiating you have to be prepared with lots of issues so that when you strike a deal on, say, a territorial constituency the one that makes a concession has another issue on which he can win."

Being creative, thinking in terms of what is in it for the other side, is a means to achieving consensus. However, reaching a compromise is only half the solution, execution of agreements is the hardest part.

"Coming to an agreement represents a historic breakthrough, but implementing the constitutional change is also difficult, especially in Nepal where the changes are so monumental," he said.

There is always the danger that populism will lead to the democratic process being hijacked by a group that

# **Saving Nepal Airlines**



wenty-five years of decline has left Nepal Airlines a shadow of its former self, but the country's national carrier is now poised for growth with fleet and route expansion drives. The ailing airline, however, needs to streamline its management before adding new planes, aviation sources say.

The trajectory of an airline that used to be considered one of the best in South Asia correlates closely with the country's recent history. The slide began soon after the restoration of democracy in 1990 as politicians interfered with management for kickbacks and patronage.

But it was after 2008, after the 'Royal' was dropped from its name when Nepal became a republic, that things went from bad to worse. An airline that once proudly flew the Nepali flag to destinations from Gatwick to Kansai was serving only a handful of destinations.

In 1990 Nepal Airlines had four medium-haul jets flying to 12 international destinations and seven turboprops servicing 20 domestic airfields. Today there are only two 30-year-old Boeing 757s and two airworthy Twin Otters left. The airline doesn't fly to any point in India anymore, and connects only five airports within the country

The airline is now preparing to add the first of its two new generation Airbus 320s next month and expand its domestic fleet with six Chinese aircrafts. "But the airline's management style is out of sync with what is needed to run a modern airline company," said an aviation consultant who has advised Nepal Airlines in the past. "How can you run an airline like you manage the Food Corporation?"

Airline insiders say politicians, bureaucrats and senior airline management seem to be abnormally eager to sell off the airline's two Boeing 757s. They fear it will be a repeat of the shady deal by the then Nepali Congress government to dispose of two 727s at below market prices in 1991 amidst widespread allegations of kickbacks.

The airline is also facing a crippling shortage of pilots. At present it has only 25 pilots for its 757s, and five of them are retiring. Six pilots have gone for simulator training for Airbus 320s in Toulouse, and six more will be leaving next month. When they return, rules won't allow them to fly 757s. Three of the pilots returned this week after finding the conversion to A320s "too difficult", airline sources confirmed. The A320 cockpit is much more computerised and its control systems are radically different from the 757s, but there are reports the pilots were sent to France without adequate preparation.

#### **TAKEOFF CHECKLIST**

Immediate four steps Nepal Airlines needs to take to become viable:

- Implement a Public-Private 0 Partnership and delink ownership from government
- **2** Bring in an international management consultant
- 6 Move headquarters, use present premises for revenue
- 4 Urgently resolve shortage of pilots

Twin Otter captains can also be sent to China immediately for conversion training so the 757s can keep flying.

G

The 757s are of the 'combi' variety with a forward cargo hatch and have

**NEW JET:** The Airbus 320-233SL of Nepal Airlines (9N-AKW Sagarmatha) with sharklets, the first of two that will augment the fleet this year. The plane will arrive in Kathmandu on 8 Feburary and will start flying the daily New Delhi route.

a resale value of at least \$18 million each, airline sources say. They are fully depreciated and the company could still use them for budget routes or cargo.

The airline has been hamstrung with a deal pushed by politicians for six Chinese aircraft for domestic operations. The first MA-60 turboprop has barely flown 40 hours in the past six months on trunk routes, and has become such a drain on the airline's coffers that this week management wrote to the government saying it didn't want the remaining four planes.

But by far the biggest problem is that Nepal Airlines is run like a third-rate government corporation, experts say, and doesn't have the management expertise and transparent decision-making needed to operate an international airline. 💟

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#### **Colors' Windows** COLOFS

Teletalk, the authorised distributor of Colors Mobile in Nepal will be launching its first ever Windows Phone during the CAN InfoTech 2015. Bookings for the phone are now open.

#### Livestock finance

Laxmi Bank in partnership with Sujal Dairy is offering livestock financing under the government's Youth



BUSINESS

Agriculture Loan Scheme. The bank will extend loans Laxmi Bank to farmers affiliated with various milk cooperatives in Nawalparasi, Tanahun, Chitwan and Rupandehi districts.



#### **Gionee P6**

Gionee has announced its latest device-the Gionee P6. The device powered by a 1.3GHz quad-core processor, 1GB RAMS and 8GB ROM, will have a 5-inch LCD display. The P6 will be available in the Nepali market from the first week of February.

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"There will be no one left to fly international routes by next month," one senior 757 captain warned, on condition of anonymity.

The first Airbus 320 is expected to resume the airline's Kathmandu-Delhi route which at the moment is operated by five Indian and one Bhutanese airline.

One reason for the shortage is the exodus of 757 pilots in the last decade. A senior captain at Nepal Airlines earns only \$1,500 a month, whereas a pilot with as many flying hours in an international airline has an average monthly salary of \$16,000. The airline management and officials

are using the lack of pilots as an excuse to rush the sale of the 757s, even though many ex-Nepal Airlines pilots would gladly return to Nepal if offered \$6,000 a month.



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### 6 NATION



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### Left in the cold

Five months later, the survivors of west Nepal's monsoon floods wait out the winter for government relief

SURKHET -- Srijana BK, 23, emerges from inside an orangecoloured tent carrying a threeyear-old son to prepare supper for the family.



Mallika Aryal

She is eight months into her second pregnancy which she has spent in a cold tent crammed with a bed and other essentials she has managed to salvage from the flood that devastated western Nepal last August. The pungent blue smoke from the stove fills the inside of the tent, and her son coughs as he wipes off tears from reddened eyes.

EPSON

At least 96 people were killed and tens of thousands displaced in Surkhet, Dang, Bardiya and Banke districts in the August floods. More than 500 mm of rain fell overnight on 14 August 2014, and rivers burst their banks with little warning.

Nearly 200 families have been sheltering in Girighat camp since floods washed away their homes that night. The camp is set in an open space by the Karnali Highway and close to a community forest.

Floodwaters rose dramatically and the BK family didn't have time to gather their belongings as the water washed their homes away. "We had a two storey house, now we have nothing," says Srijana.

Her husband, Jay BK, grabbed his pregnant wife, his 70-year-old mother and their young son and ran to higher ground in the dark. They spent the whole night in the jungle in pouring rain, racing with the rising waters.

Although the camp is right next to the highway and close to town, the neglect is visible. The displaced have been living there for the last five months and say that the government has been largely absent. They were provided some money during Dasain with some rice, salt and oil but the supplies have long run out. "No one has come from thegovernment to see whether we are still alive," says Jay, "except for some charities, no one has been here."

When natural disasters strike, children are the most vulnerable because they can't take care of themselves. "They can't go to school, they're susceptible to health problems, infections, violence," says Manoj Basnet, child protection officer with Save the Children, Nepal.

Although there is a sense of helplessness amongst the displaced families, the children of Girighat camp spend their time at the temporary learning center, some ten minutes walk from their camp which is supported by Save the Children.

"The only way to ensure a normal life for children is to see to it that there is minimal disruption from their regular routine, and these centres attempt to provide that," says Basnet.

Children like Srijana's threeyear-old are safe in the learning centre for now, but the BK family's troubles are far from over. Jay, who used to work in India cannot go back there and leave his displaced family alone with no money or support.

"We can't depend on handouts forever, how long can they support us, how long can they keep running these temporary schools?" asks Jay.

It's not that there has been no relief, but the government's disaster relief mechanism is only activated during the monsoon to deal with the immediate aftermath. The focus now should be on long-term rehabilitation, to organise resettlement so they can get their lives in order again.

The government needs to move away from thinking that response only means rescue and relief. As natural disasters become the norm, disaster management should be a 12-month process.

The BK family, and most of those who were displaced can't plan for the future because they

have lost their farms.

Dilisara Bhandari, Jay BK's neighbor in the camp, sums up her disappointment: "It hurts us that the government has no plan for us, that they have forgotten that we have lost everything, that our children can't have the same hopes and dreams and that we shiver every night in these tents."







The whole country is experiencing a cold snap and this under-normal minima will continue in Kathmandu into the weekend. Clear nights and north-westerly wind direction is bringing cold dry air from the Tibetan plateau. The temperature is in the minus teens in the trekking trails for anyone up there in this season. Kathmandu's outskirts will see frost. But the temperature will climb only to 18 during the daytime due to some cloud cover, with a brisk breeze in the afternoon sweeping the pollution away.

SATURDAY

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# THE ROOT NAAN

Little-known artist turns root cleaning hobby into artistic passion

#### CYNTHIA CHOO

**F**orty-four year old Narendra Dangol (*pic*) started collecting gnarled roots of holy trees just so his mother would stop calling him lazy. Narendra, who is unemployed, stumbled upon this hobby when he found some discarded roots by the roadside.

"I decided to clean it up and put it at home. To my surprise, after dusting the mud off [the root], it was beautiful," he said.

When cleaned and propped upright, the snaking roots resemble artistic installations, and it is easy to let your imagination run wild amidst Narendra's roots.

These rare and delicate roots require ample patience to handle and clean. A metre long root can take between two hours to three days to clean. The biggest root in his collection took Narendra half a year. "These installations can be anything to anyone, I don't want to restrict anyone's imganination of what it should be," said Narendra.





a acked to awhibit his wor

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PICS: KENJI KWOK

don't understand its importance anymore. Now, they just treat them as waste and throw them out," he said.

His determination to spread awareness about the Jyapuswan roots further spurred his passion for the unique art of root sculpting. Unfortunately, this passion might be short-lived. The roots which are only planted during the Shivaratri festival are disappearing due to constant road expansion projects and urbanisation.

This makes Narendra even more passionate about protecting the rare trees that give him the roots of his art. Without the roots, Narendra knows there will be no art or hobby for him to continue. This is perhaps why the humble Nepali doesn't go by the title of a sculptor, or an artist.

He said: "I don't wish to have

Since beginning his collection six years ago, the collector's roots now occupy four rooms in his house.

In January this year, Narendra

was asked to exhibit his work at the courtyard of Patan Museum by the Kathmandu Contemporary Arts Museum. The exhibition (*pic*, *above*), free for visitors inside the museum, ironically cost Narendra Rs 5000 instead, as he had to rent a vehicle to transport the roots to the museum.

For Dangol, whose only source

of income is rent money from tenants, this has been an expensive hobby. Besides not getting any financial return from his art, Narendra also had to sacrifice extra income by using empty rooms for storage rather than subletting to tenants.

The lack of sponsors willing to invest in art – and artists – in Nepal

taxing.

So, why continue?

In addition to the aesthetic beauty of the root collection, Narendra says he feels the need to preserve roots of the Jyapuswan tree.

"It used to be treated as a holy plant in Nepal, people a status or a title. I am just happy admiring the complexity of the intertwined roots after I clean them."







#### **EVENTS**



#### Nippon cinema,

A two-day Japanese film fest organised by the Embassy of Japan in association with Japanese Language Teachers' Association of Nepal.

30 and 31 January, Pokhara, (01)4426680, cultural-emb@km.mofa.go.jp

#### CAN 2015,

The 15th edition of Computer Association of Nepal (CAN)'s annual IT show promises to be bigger and better than ever. *Till 2 February, Bhrikuti Mandap, Exhibition Road, (01)5532586, sunil@ebizlinks.com.np* 

#### Street fest,

Residents and revellers come together to celebrate Losar on the streets of Boudha. *Boudha, 31 January, 10.45am onwards, 981-3836319* 

#### Pedal power,

A cycle rally to mark World Cancer Day organised by Nepal Cancer Relief Society. *31 January, 8am, Patan Darbar Square, for registrations www.eventbrite.com* 

#### Indo-Nepal,

Inauguration of a joint exhibition by Nepali artists from Banaras Hindu University 1 February, 5.30pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, (01)4218048, sthapa@mos.com.np

#### Rugby in Nepal,

The first-ever National Rugby 7s Championship is here. Organised by the Nepal Rugby Association, the competition will feature five teams from all across the country. Selected players will represent Nepal in international competitions. *31 January, 10am, Dasarath Rangasala Stadium, Tripureshwor, 9851120717* 

#### Art market,

A place to sell and buy paintings, prints, posters and design products. 7 February, 12 to 3pm, The Yellow House, Sanepa, (01)5006665, contact@image-ark.com

> When words fail,

urvivor, Sara Atzmon, displays

her paintings to commemorate

Till 4 February, Alliance française

of Kathmandu, (01)4241163,

general.afk@gmail.com

70th anniversary of the



#### Pulse,

A photographic exhibition by Päivi Maria Wells and the launch of collection of wearable arts designed by Naila Sattar, featuring Päivi Wells' images. *Till 8 February, 10am to 5pm, Image Ark, Kulimha Tole, Lalitpur, (01)5006665, contact@image-ark.com* 

#### Galli Run,

A race through the historical alleys and world heritage sites. *31 January, 7.30am, Patan Durbar Square, gallirun.com* 

#### Ma Nepali,

Nine Nepali personalities including actor Rajesh Hamal, and slam poets Ujjwala Maharjan and Yukta Bajracharya share their life stories. *Rs150, 4 February, 1.30 to 3pm, Nepal Academy Hall, Kamaldi, 9843324333* 

#### Curation 101,

A workshop with curator Veerangana Solanki. 20 to 24 February, Siddhartha Arts Foundation, 984-9519933, nischal.oli@gmail.com

#### Journeying for art,

Painting exhibition by a promising young artist-Dhwoj Gurung. *Till 12 April, Park Gallery, Pulchowk, Lalitpur, www.parkgallery.com.np* 



**Chez Caroline,** Authentic ambience, exquisite French food, glorious sunshine and more. *Babar Mahal Revisited, (01)4263070* 

**Downtown,** Go Indian at this restaurant, we suggest biryani. *Pulchowk Road, Patan, (01)5010751* 



#### Newa Lahana,

Authentic Newari flavours with killer views of surrounding Macchegaun and towering Chandragiri hill. *Kirtipur* 



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#### Valentine night,

A free rose and a free glass of hot mulled wine followed by a free Irish coffee on Valentine's Day in a balloonfilled dining room. *14 February, K-too Beer and Steakhouse, Thamel, (01)4700043.* 



#### **MUSIC**



Uglyz live, Hits FM Music Award for the Best New Artist is back in action. 7 February, Trisara, Lajimpat, (01)4410200, trisara.restaurant@gmail.com

#### Wave tour,

Wave Magazine celebrates its 20th anniversary with a series of concerts. Rs100, 31 January in Kathmandu and 7 February in Pokhara, (01)5010773, info@wavemag.com.np

#### Underground,

Local metal bands get together to celebrate Underground Nepal's fifth anniversary. Rs300 (door sale), Rs 250 (pre-sale), 7 February, Purple Haze, Thamel, 981-8405754, mail@nepalunderground.com

#### **GETAWAYS**

#### Atithi Resort & Spa,

A quiet sanctuary that fuses Nepali tradition with modern amenities, complete with a fancy pool and a cosy restaurant. Lakeside, Pokhara, (06)1466760, info@atithiresort.com

#### Pokhara Grande,

A swimming pool to escape from the tropic heat, a massage parlour and spa to loosen up and a gymnasium to release stress, great options all around. Lakeside, Pokhara, (06)1460210, dosm@pokharagrande.com

#### Milla Guesthouse,

If you prefer the quiet, and admire a mix of old and new, this is the perfect place to stay. Not too far away from the city, yet miles apart. Bhaktapur, 9851024137



#### Yoga weekend.

Calm the mind and filter your thought process in a yoga retreat with instructor Sati at the scenic Namo Buddha resort. Rs 13,500, 31 January to 1 February, Namo Buddha, 980-2045484, info@pranamaya-yoga.com



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aya Raj Bajracharya grew up in a family of stone carvers. As a child, Jaya Raj often woke up to the sound of his father and grandfather chipping away at a stone sculpture in their workshop. When he turned 15, he was handed his first chisel

and mallet. After six years of apprenticeship, Jaya Raj was allowed to join the family business. Today, he is passing on the traditional occupation to his 11-year-old daughter.

"From my great grandfather to my daughter, the art of stone carving has been in the family for five generations now," says the 38year-old.

On the wall of his showroom at Babar Mahal Revisited are pictures, one of his late grandfather, Buddha Ratna Bajracharya, receiving the Indra Rajya Laxmi Award from King Birendra in 1973. Buddha Ratna had made many stone sculptures for the Royal Palace.

Statues carved by the Bajracharya family can be seen in hotels and monasteries all over the country. Jaya Raj is most proud of the eight-foot Milarepa statue he carved for a monastery in Manang.

**ROCK FORMATIONS:** (*Clockwise, from left*) A worker from Jaya Raj Bajracharya's stone carving studio in Gwarko working on a Buddha sculpture.

Inspired by international exhibitions that he has been invited to, Jaya Raj's collection now also includes modern sculptures amidst his traditional religious ones.

The stone carving showroom at Babar Mahal Revisited showcases Jaya Raj's work.

Jaya Raj with a 8-foot Guru Rinpoche he took three years to sculpt.

His current project is a concept for a 10m Guru Rinpoche stone figure for Namrung in the Manaslu region. "After I finish the sketch, I'll have to carve the stone at the site," says Jaya Raj, who usually works in his studio in Gwarko in Patan.

Jaya Raj's stone figures have also found places outside Nepal. He has recently finished working on a life-size replica of the sumptuous royal bath of the Sundari Chok in Patan Darbar Square. The whole piece is now ready to be shipped to Germany for assembly. About two-third of his clients are foreigners, mostly from the USA, Germany and Japan.

Bajracharya started striking out to the international market after exhibiting in the 23rd Osaka International Trade Fair in 1997. The exposure encouraged him to learn new techniques and forms, and Jaya Raj now also makes modern sculptures.

When he returned from the Foire de Paris in France in 2001, he made two identical sculptures of a woman holding a jar, which reminds him of Ingres' *The Spring.* "While visiting The Musée du Louvre, I was amazed by the marble sculptures," he says. "So when I came back home, I reproduced them in Nepali stones."

The two statues of the women have a distinct Hellenistic look as they guard the entrance to Jaya Raj's showroom. "Many clients are interested in the statues but they are not for sale," he says.

The same curiosity led Jaya Raj to experiment with new tools. During his visit to Vermont in the USA, a state famous for skilled stonecutters, he learned how to use the air chisel. "It's convenient for sculpting rough outlines, but I still use traditional Nepali tools for the finishing," he says.

More recently, Jaya Raj was initiated to AutoCAD by a French architect, and uses the software to make 3-D designs of his sculptures on a computer. Jaya Raj shares his interest with many Nepalis and international sculptors, and he teaches stone carving to Japanese, Germans Americans, Italians and French apprentices. Stone carving in Nepal has a 2,000 year history. The earliest sculpture is a Yaksha Bodhisattva figure from the 1st century AD at the National Museum. Even though the number of people eking out a living making sculptures is decreasing year by year, Jaya Raj Bajracharya is keeping the art alive by giving free training to anyone interested. He says: "If you have the passion to learn stone scultpures, I will teach you so that the tradition carries on." 💟

### A piece of Nepal in Switzerland

When Alain Bordier, founder of Alain Bordier Foundation wanted to build a Nepali-style Lichchhavi chaitya within the premises of the Tibet Museum in Gruyères in Switzerland, he contacted Nepali art connoisseur, Ulrich von Schroeder.

Bordier couldn't afford to build an elaborate stupa, and an exact replica would invite unnecessary legal hassles, so Schroeder suggested getting a Nepali artist to improvise a new Purna Chaitya in Kathmandu and take it to Switzerland.

Architect Rajan Shrestha from Bhaktapur integrated the designs of the hemispherical dome of a chaitya outside Kuthubaha and Chabahil for the base of Kinnari Statue. Enshrined with precious gems, the sculpture's base was to be carved with Nepali and Newari inscriptions.

With the design part complete, they went around Patan looking for a sculptor. They finally met Santalal Dyahkhah Jyapu in Khokana, an artist whose skills, perseverance, passion and humility far outweighed his lack of a formal degree in sculpture.

Shrestha and von Schroeder then started looking for an appropriate stone for the chaitya, and that took longer than the search for the sculptor. After seven months they found a stone in a quarry 4km west of Pharping that was the perfect size and texture.

Although the chaitya was carved in four months, finding a way to smoothen the surface with sand-blasting the surface took some time. The completed chaitya was finally flown to Switzerland and installed according to Buddhist rituals by a Tibetan Kagyu Lama last year.



**CHIPPING AWAY:** Santalal Dyahkhah Jyapu hard at work on a stone chaitya (*above*) commissioned by Alain Bordier and Ulrich von Schroeder (*below*) for the Tibet Museum in Gruyères in Switzerland.









KENJI KWO

ave any of you ever felt a faint niggling paranoia when typing words like "Islamic Art", "Quran", "Islamic State", or other equally innocuous but potentially flag raising words into search engines just because you want to bring up a Wikipedia page to get more information about what's in the news?



Well, even if you have heard of Edward Snowden and his shocking exposure of the extent of the American NSA (National Security Agency)'s surveillance network, mostly of ordinary citizens, you may not fully understand the impact of those revelations until you watch Laura Poitras's chilling documentary Citizenfour. The film is named after the pseudonym Snowden used when he first contacted Poitras via a highly encrypted communication.

Perhaps you have already read a few in-depth profiles of Poitras (there are two particularly penetrating pieces by the New Yorker) which will give you



### Citizenfour

an indication of this woman's tenacity in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, namely her own government's subterfuges regarding complicity at the highest levels (yes, we are talking about POTUS - the President of the United States) regarding the NSA's transgressions in violating people's privacy.

Though the film dwells more on Snowden's extreme acts of determination (some might call it courage) in exposing the United States' vast surveillance networks, it is clear these facts could only have been exposed in conjunction with the likes of Poitras, and Glenn Greenwald, another valiant

American journalist based out of Brazil.

Whatever you may think of Snowden, a narcissist with delusions of grandeur or a heroic fighter for the freedom of speech and the basic laws of privacy that democracy defends, remember this, we live in a world where everything we do: our mobile phone calls, internet searches, debit cards, even theater tickets, can be tracked should someone be so inclined to do so. Does that make vou comfortable?

Citizenfour is a wellmade, extremely well shot, sophisticated documentary, no doubt, but it is also the best kind of documentary in that it creates discussion, raising questions that must be answered in today's digital age.

Of course we want to be safe, but do we want our governments making unilateral decisions regarding our supposed safety and then lying to us about it? Why tap millions of people's phones (including Angela Merkel's by the way) and then deny it? Shouldn't we know what is happening and either be able to discuss it and/or disagree with it? Is fighting terrorism an excuse for monitoring the ordinary citizen at extraordinary levels? What is the cost of that kind of invasion of privacy? Poitras's troubling documentary will make you ask all these questions and more. 💟

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HAPPENINGS



EVAKI BISTA

EASE SUPPLY: Members of ANNISU(R) stage a sit-in protest infront of Nepal Oil Corporation, Babar Mahal demanding timely supply of gas cylinders on Wednesday



HAPPY REPUBLIC DAY: Acclaimed Kathak dancer Moumala Nayak and troupe perform at a program to mark the 66th Republic Day of India at Nepal Army Officers' Club on Sunday.





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HOW'S THAT: Nepali national cricket team pose for the media on arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport following their participation in the ICC World Cricket League Division on Monday.



SURVIVOR STORY: Holocaust survivor Sara Atzmon talks about her time in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp during the launch of her art exhibition When Words Fail at Alliance Française on Tuesday.



For details Nepal Republic Media Pvt. Ltd. JDA Complex, Bag Durbar, Kathmandu Ph: 01-4268656, 4265100 (ext. 208/210) Nepal Republic Media Email: circulation@nagariknews.com

# Sharing tolerance

Sara Atzmon was sent to the Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp in Germany during the Nazi regime when she was 10. Atzmon survived the Holocaust but 60 of her family members did not.

It was only forty five years later, aged 55, that Atzmon started documenting her harrowing experiences through paintings.

She has never looked back since.

On Tuesday the 82-year-old launched her exhibition, *When words fail*, at Alliance Française of Kathmandu (AfK) in line with the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

Describing the dozen paintings on display at AfK's auditorium, she said they aren't paintings. "This is an outcry," she told *Nepali Times.* 

Some of these paintings do not exactly have an aesthetic appeal. You can feel the pain in Atzmon's brushstrokes. The confused forms remind you of a child's fuzzy and traumatic souvenirs.

Rails and chimneys, sinister factors that ring in memories of the Holocaust, are a recurrent theme in Atzmon's work. In the powerful *From the red carpet to the chimneys*, the rail directly leads to an open flame that rises in the form of a



Hanukkah menorah.

*Hair* is an upsetting piece where black dots represent prisoners agglutinated near a house with a high chimney. The only colour is a red cross in the front that probably represents blood. "Some people saw Hitler's face on the chimney," said the painter, "but that wasn't my intention."

During the weeklong exhibition, documentaries will be screened and Atzmon

will share her memories of the Holocaust with various groups of students.

For the past 20 years, she has been travelling around the world talking about her experience. She decided to stop in Nepal after visiting India, Burma and Hong Kong.

"Back home, some friends wondered if Nepalis would care about the Holocaust," adding, "but I was sure they would be receptive." Atzmon has always received positive feedback in Asian countries. "It's unbelievable how the young people in Asia know a lot about the Holocaust," she said, "and they are eager to learn more."

Though the holocaust is not a common topic of discussion in Nepal, Yehonathan Lebel, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Israel, stated that this event is a protest against any kind of hatred.

Sara Atzmon said that the lessons of the Holocaust are universal. "It's sad to know that there have been conflicts in Nepal," she said. "We need to know where hatred can lead human beings."

When words fail is the first major event organised in Nepal to commemorate the Holocaust. The event was a joint collaboration between the Israeli, German, French and American embassies, and the United Nations.

When words fail Alliance française of Kathmandu Till 4 February 10am to 5pm (01)4241163 general.afk@gmail.com



Though the coffee menu boasts of strong cuppas like a ristretto (Rs 85) and piccolo latte (Rs 115), my dining partner and I chose to go with milder options such as cafe latte (Rs 210) and flat white (Rs 210) instead. The latte had a slight hint of sweetness which I personally liked, while the flat white was robust and retained an impressive finish.

Equally impressive was Coffee Pasal's all-day breakfast menu which included classic English



# **Coffee Pasal**

throw away from the café — was a breakfast fit for a king. Akin to a Nepali-Mediterranean style big breakfast, it had halloumi (a type of cheese) on rosti, black Benedict when it first arrived on the table. The hollandaise sauce looked a little too thick but



décor. The cafe is surrounded by vintage wooden shelves filled with books, magazines and specialty ingredients like red wine vinaigrette and organic pasta transforming the humble café into a bookstore, grocer and a coffee house, all in one place.

In addition, the free wifi at Coffee Pasal also makes it an

breakfast dishes like Eggs Benedict (Rs 395) and French Toast (Rs 375).

Because we wanted to try something commonly not found in cafes here we opted for the Eggs Benedict and Narayanhiti breakfast (Rs 525).

The Narayanhiti breakfast — named after the Narayanhiti palace just a stone's eyed beans, chicken sausage and two eggs cooked according to preference with the usual sides of grilled tomatoes, sautéed mushrooms, spinach and buttery toast. Everything on the plate tasted absolutely divine and ticked all boxes for the perfect savoury first meal.

I wasn't sure about the Eggs

it was surprisingly

decadent. A good hollandaise should not be oily nor should it taste like an "almost-there" mayonnaise.

And, Coffee Pasal's hollandaise nailed the balance. Neither greasy nor overly creamy and perfectly seasoned, it was an ideal companion to the crunchy toasted English muffin and mouthwatering bacon and elevated the dish beautifully. I specially loved the unusual addition of diced tomatoes to the rich dish which brought a hint of freshness to the dish. The eggs were also perfectly poached. Adding to the whole dining

experience is the warm wooden

ultimate place for an afternoon to work, study or just idly sip on a good cup of coffee while looking at the Narayanhiti museum.

Cynthia Choo

How to get there: Coffee Pasal is located in Darbar Marg, above Arrow store.



### **Breathe**

Bronchial asthma, also known as asthma, is a persistent inflammatory disease of the body's airways that causes episodic 'attacks' of coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and chest tightness. The rampant exposure to pollution and the temperature



inversion in Kathmandu may tend to cause bronchial asthma to exacerbate.

Suman Rai, 30, visited a medical clinic to report a long standing history of cough, shortness of breath often accompanied by 'whistling' sounds from her chest. Her cough got worse at night and more so in winter. She also suffered from

#### **GIZMO** by **YANTRICK**

occasional stuffy and runny nose. Other than those symptoms, she was a healthy young woman.

After a proper medical exam and running some tests, she was diagnosed with bronchial asthma. Bronchial asthma can be effectively treated with the right medication. Change in lifestyle may also help by avoiding the 'triggers'.

In many individuals, the breathlessness and tightness of the chest is the result of an inflammation. Some may only feel the symptoms when they exercise, or due to pollutants in the air, perfumes, food additives and change in weather among others.

In bronchial asthma, the airways to the lungs tend to narrow due to muscles tightening or inflammation caused by allergens or respiratory illness. It is uncertain how some people are prone to develop asthma. If allowed to worsen without



treatment, bronchial asthma can lead to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Recent edition of medical text books like Harrison's clearly indicate that the severity of asthma does not significantly change over time. People with mild asthma tend to continue to have it mild for life and ones with severe asthma may have it severe as long as they live.

Studies have shown that one may have a genetic disposition to asthma but like most health concerns no genetic profile can confirm the possibility.

Prevalence of asthma is between 1% and 18% with more cases of asthma in developed countries rather than developing ones. Asthma-related death has decreased over the past years due to awareness and treatment.

Being conscious of the cause of one's asthma and avoiding the trigger is key. Depending on the causes of asthma, one can be prescribed anti-inflammatory drugs or inhalers. Inhalers are the most commonly prescribed and effective way to get lifesaving medication to people with asthma.

However, many people do not get the right instructions to use the inhaler and may use it incorrectly. For example the patients need to know how to inhale the steroids puffs properly and not to swallow them down the digestive tract, where it serves no function. Asthma pathology is in the airways of the lungs and the inhaled steroids needs to be deposited in the lungs. Proper hand to mouth coordination is also important for drug delivery. Many Nepali patients are prescribed inhalers without properly being taught how to use this machine for optimal benefit.

Paradoxically trekking in the Himalayas seems to inhibit asthma flare ups in many people, but nonetheless for the asthmatic trekker, it is important to carry adequate asthma medicines on high altitude treks.

Knowledge, awareness and early prognosis of asthma can prevent it from getting worse and save lives.

# Seamless streaming

A n HD media player and streamer adds another layer of convenience to your home entertainment system. If you are tired of having to connect your laptop to your television every time, then maybe you should start giving this media player some thought.

iXtreamer is one such media player and streamer that is a worthy addition to your home theater setup, one that is easy to install, affordable, and plays almost any media format that you can think of from multiple sources. It can connect to ipad, iphone, ipod and it is not just limited to apple products.

Although the iXtreamer's design is minimalistic and compact, a stunning design is not what it sets out to achieve. In essence, the iXtreamer is a black and silver plastic box with a sliding panel on the top to accommodate your iDevice, and connectivity inputs in the rear.



The iXtreamer comes to the fore once powered on. It is a very flexible multimedia player that sits on your network, connects to your PC, and streams media to any networked or AV device via AV, USB and LAN connectivity options.The video performance is quite phenomenal.

The iXtreamer does not have a hard drive included, but it is possible to fit a 3.5 inch SATA hard drive with storage capacities of upto a mammoth 3TB, meaning you have lots of space to play with. You can also play media by connecting a USB stick, or your home network by using a wired network connection. An optional extra is a Wi-Fi USB antenna kit, so you can stream media

wirelessly using your home Wi-Fi. If you own an iDevice, the iXtreamer can also be used as a dock to access photos, video and music stored on your Apple hardware. The iXtreamer also supports streaming media via the internet, with YouTube proving particularly useful. Further, the iXtreamer also allows composite and component audio/video inputs, and optical/coaxial digital audio outputs.

The iXtreamer runs on a customised version of Andriod OS, and the user interface is simple and easy to get used to via the bundled remote control. Navigating through the menu can be a pain. HDD is necessary for xtreaming. The upside of the iXtreamer is definitely its ability to play almost media format you can think of including, but not limited to, MPEG-1/-2/-4, VOB, MKV, FLV, XviD, MP3, WAV, WMA, and FLAC. The iXtreamer's firmware is also regularly upgraded to add more media formats and applications. For that home theater experience, the iXtreamer supports DTS and Dolby decoding, so you can enjoy your movies in full surround sound. 💟

Yantrick's Verdict: Retailing for around the NPR 20K mark and available in most of the tech shops that litter Kathmandu, the iXtreamer is an affordable way to stream your home media on your HDTV.



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and then see if the residue left has a bad odour



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BA GOOD

t's not very pleasant to have to cover your mouth while speaking to another person for fear of bad breath. This is one of the major reasons we think twice before getting closer with someone we like. And, if you have to do

that often, it may be time to look for a more permanent remedy to bring back that confidence and cosy upto that special someone, this Valentine's season.

based toothpastes are known to keep away the bad breath for longer hours. The monofluorophospate found in such toothpastes, makes the entire tooth structure more resistant to delay. It also strengthens teeth, which aids in repairing early delay before the damage can seen.

Flossing not only helps remove food and bacteria buildup from between your teeth but also prevents gum disease. Also, brushing teeth with long lasting toothpaste can give you freshness up to 12 hours. Gum disease can be a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Always rinse your mouth after a meal to keep it clean. Brushing your teeth with baking soda has shown to reduce acidity in your mouth as well.

Mouthwash is very useful wherever you go. In addition to giving you fresh breath, antiseptic and anti-plague mouthwash can kill the bacteria that can cause cavities, gingivitis, tooth decay and bad breath. You can gargle with mouthwash 2-3 times a day. Avoid mouthwash with alcohol as it tends to dry your mouth and some research shows that alcohol in mouthwash could also be carcinogenic.

Another way to maintain decent breath

cause your mouth to smell foul. Hydration is important for many bodily functions including oral health.

Increase your intake of food rich in vitamin C as it helps to restrain the formation of plaque and tarter. Live active cultures in some yogurt can also reduce bad breath.

Another big contributor of bad breath is cigarettes. If you smoke, it's very likely that your breath will smell like stale cigarettes. Smoking increases your risk of getting gum diseases, in addition to cancer of the mouth, which is another cause of bad breath. It's a new year, so why not just quit smoking- it has not done anyone any good.

Have a healthy diet. Foods like apples, celery and carrots are convenient to clean vour teeth, naturally.

Make sure to see a dentist at least once a year, better if it is twice. Regular cleaning and follow-up will help your oral health.



Whiter teeth

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Here are some ways to get you fresh breath that lasts.

Make sure to brush your teeth twice a day and try to floss every night. Gel is to drink four glasses of warm water in the morning. In addition to keeping you hydrated, it will also improve your digestion, cleanses toxins from your body and prevents dry mouth that can cause bad breath. Keep your tongue clean with a tongue scraper to remove the tongue plague which can also

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

# UP TO 12 HOURS LASTING FRESH BREATH

### **16** NATION



Commercial surrogate motherhood is moving to Nepal because of restrictions in India

#### **BINITA DAHAL**



fter India tightened rules on commercial surrogacy two years ago, foreigners seeking such services have started trickling into Nepal where rules are murky and regulation weak.

Nepal's cabinet decided recently to allow foreigners to have surrogate babies as long as the mother is also a foreigner, arguing that this would promote medical tourism in the country. Since then the Department of Immigration records show that many foreigners, including 20 Israelis, have had surrogate babies in private hospitals in Nepal. Senior Advocate and Activist

Sapana Pradhan Malla says many Nepali parents seek her legal advice on surrogacy. "I have no answer for them because there are no laws," she told Nepali Times. "But I find it really suspicious that foreigners are allowed to have surrogate babies here when there is no provision for Nepalis."

Activists are worried that in the absence of laws, the cabinet decision on surrogate babies can easily be circumvented. Nepali



#### **TWO SURROGACY METHODS**



#### 2 **IN-VITRO** FERTILISATION

#### STEP 1

Multiple eggs are retrieved from the woman's ovaries.



#### STEP 2

Sperm is collected and concentrated separately.





The eggs are mixed with the sperm for fertilisation to occur.





STEP 4

fertilises an egg and forms an embryo.



women could be exploited by unscrupulous middlemen and male relatives to carry and deliver babies for foreigners.

Compensated surrogacy is a process under which a woman rents her womb to another couple to have their baby delivered. There are two methods: one where the sperm is artificially inseminated into a surrogate mother, and in the other the sperm and egg from the parents first go through in-vitro fertilisation and the embryo is inserted into the uterus of the surrogate mother. *(See chart.)* 

Doctors say both methods are done in fertility clinics in Nepal, but they don't want to be quoted saying it. The lack of laws haven't deterred many Nepali parents without children to secretly use surrogacy to have children in hospitals in Nepal and India, while Indian mothers routinely come to Nepal to give birth *(see adjoining* box). After cases of fraud and exploitation, India's Assisted Reproductive Technology Bill is now in parliament and will allow surrogacy only for married, infertile and Indian Origin couples.



"Many people think the act of surrogacy involves sexual intercourse so they are hesitant to talk about it," says advocate Sadeep Kharel. "Doctors and hospitals keep quiet because surrogacy is illegal for Nepalis."

The cabinet decision makes it easy for foreigners to be surrogate parents by processing exit permits for their babies born in Nepal: the Health Ministry writes a recommendation based on the birth certificate with DNA proof issued by hospitals to apply for a passport at the resident embassy.

According to sources, the cabinet hurriedly decided last year on a draft on surrogacy prepared by the Health Ministry. Cabinet decisions are supposed to be in the public domain, but lawyers say the Health Ministry is reluctant to divulge details and provide a copy of the decision. previous government when the draft first came up for debate, and remembers facing intense political pressure to pass it. Mishra and Minister Bidhyadhar Mallik stood their ground, but with the new government the cabinet quickly approved it last August.

Sources say surrogacy in India and Nepal are managed by middlemen working with political protection, and there is a nexus between them and private hospitals. It is a question of supply and demand: there is a demand in rich countries for babies, and there is a supply of poor families in developing countries willing, and sometimes forcing, their women to become surrogate mothers.

Many European countries have banned surrogacy and it is strictly regulated and expensive in the United States. While it can cost up to \$150,000 to have a surrogate baby in the West, in India and Nepal it can cost as little at \$6,000 with the surrogate mother often not getting the money that her husband is paid as fee.

Commercialisation of motherhood through surrogacy is lucrative, but raises cultural, social, economic and political questions which are probably why Nepal's private hospitals and the government are so hush-hush about it.

"We must be careful not to allow surrogate mothers to be exploited as baby producers," Sapana Pradhan Malla warns, "there must be laws in case mothers don't want to give babies to parents, if babies are disabled, and about the legal status of the baby."

There is one case of surrogacy which is subjudice in the Supreme Court in a dispute about whether the baby born from a Nepali surrogate mother will get the parent's property or not. This could be a landmark case in which the Court may direct the government to pass a new law for Nepali surrogate mothers.

But till then it will be women who will be more vulnerable to exploitation.

"Surrogacy is needed," says Renu Adhikari of WOREC (Women's Rehabilitation Centre), "but in the absence of proper laws it can lead to trafficking and women can be

### Nargis' baby

Twenty-seven year old Nargis came to Nepal six months ago from the slums of Mumbai. Her husband had left her after she gave birth to their first child after which she moved in with her parents. After her father died, she had to take care of the whole family.

"We were so poor there was no money to even feed my baby," Nargis remembers. One day, her mother told her that she could make money renting her womb for nine months. She was introduced to a middleman who assured her there was no sexual intercourse involved, and she would earn \$6,000 carrying and giving birth to someone else's baby.

After she was convinced to go through with the procedure, she stayed in a Mumbai hospital for a month for her insemination procedure, and was discharged after she got pregnant. She was paid INR 6,000 per month for the duration of the pregnancy.

Nargis came to Nepal in her fourth month of pregnancy along with her own first born. She stayed at a hotel in Thamel with other surrogates like her who had come to give birth in Nepal because of restrictions in India.

Their agent advised them not to get emotionally attached to their babies as they had to be given away. Nargis gave birth via caesarean in a private hospital in Kathmandu, and was paid only \$3,000. Still, she told us she will go through it again so she can send her own child to school.

Middlemen look for women between 25-30 in Mumbai's slums, and convince their families to go through with surrogacy. The Indian agents get a \$1,000 fee for every successful birth in Nepal.

"I don't care if surrogacy is legal or illegal in India, but it is easier for a woman like me to deliver a baby in Nepal so no one finds out in Mumbai," Nargis admitted. "Sometimes when I am alone, I look at the baby's picture that the agent gave me. I never had the chance to be with him or breastfeed him. Still, I have less of an attachment to this baby than my own first child."

*Binita Dahal Nargis is a pseudonym.* 

### "I'll have your baby"

Radha and Rajesh moved into a new apartment in Gongabu. Radha was seven months pregnant, and since Rajesh had to travel frequently for work he got Radha's mother to stay with her. They hired a nurse named Urmila to look after Radha.

Urmila had worked with pregnant women before but this one did not seem quite right. She told us Radha was not as careful or cautious about her diet or health. The mother and daughter had strange dynamics, it was as if they had been forced to be together.



Nurse Urmila commented on Radha's strange habit of eating chalk and Radha's response was, "It's not like the baby is mine."

Urmila had heard of surrogacy but never met a surrogate mother. As it turned out, the husband was actually an agent who recruited Radha, and the mother was a hired caretaker.

"I don't pay for anything and soon I will have more money," Radha would tell Urmila.

Radha went into labour in her eighth month and was rushed to hospital where her 'husband' reminded the doctor several times that Radha should have a baby via caesarean because she was too weak to give birth naturally. When the baby was born, Urmila was shocked to see that it was fair-skinned with lightgrey eyes.

Radha is among many surrogate mothers in Nepal who were induced or forced to have surrogate babies for foreign parents. Shristi Pradhan of the National Alliance of Women Human Rights Defenders (NAWHRD) who has researched the subject said: "We know commercial surrogacy is practiced but no one wants to talk." *Anjana Rajbhandary* 

Radha, Rajesh and Urmila are pseudonyms.



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Praveen Mishra was secretary at the Ministry of Health in the

STEP 5

The embryo is implanted in the woman's uterus.

forced to go through with it for the money."

After nine months, the surrogate gives birth to the baby and receives her payment.

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### **18** FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

### **Federalism revisited**

Chaitanya Mishra in *setopati.com*, 27 January

सेतोपाटी

There is now a debate over whether the CA can pass the new constitution through a two-thirds majority. Obviously, that is not the best option. It would be much better if a new constitution is passed by consensus. If that can't be done, there should be unanimous agreement on as many key issues as possible. But we can't wait forever if a consensus is impossible.

The opposition alliance led by the UCPN (Maoist) reject idea of using a two-thirds majority, saying this is not a numbers game. But the question arises: why then was a majority vote written into our Interim Constitution 2007? A two-thirds majority is an adequate mandate to write a constitution, and if the opposition wins a future election it can use a two-thirds to amend any article it deems to be against people's aspirations. It is a democratic process, and we should embrace it.

The political parties say federalism is holding up the constitution. We need to understand that federalism is meant to create a just and equal society, not for the sake of emphasising our differnces. A



democratic state is always expected to ensure equality of all its citizens. The notion that a person is unequal just because he is born to a 'low-caste' is not acceptable in a democracy. If the state cannot immediately eliminate this inequality, it must come up with a timeframe to do it.

It is true that some castes in Nepal are underprivileged. Are they seeking federalism to eliminate this caste-based inequality? Are they demanding ethnicity-based federal states because they think we used to be different, are different, and will always be different? Then why do they not demand prior rights in their ethnicity-based federal states? Why do they not demand rights for only their people to become Chief Minister for the first two consecutive terms? If we all are fundamentally different from each other, we will never co-exist in one state and may need separate ones.

If we had looked deeper into national security, we would have gone for north-south federal units. We cannot expect our two giant neighbours to always be friends as they are now. If our federal units will have threats from any one, it will be from neighbours and north-south units would provide a degree of security.

The State Restructuring Committee suggested that federal states be created on the basis of ethnicity, language, culture, geography and history. But, ethnicity means language, culture, geography and history and if it is separated it will be regressive and undemocratic. Issues of language, culture, geography and history can be addressed in district or local level of future federal units. We should honour the rich linguistic characteristics of the Nepali society, but not divisive ethnicity.

It is true that the Hill people have suppressed the Madhesi, and the high-caste has dominated Nepal's politics but we do not need to create federal units along ethnic lines to address these issues. If federal states are named after ethnic groups, there will only be more demands and complications.



हलो !... उता काठमाडौँतिर ग्यास दिइर'छ रे !... भट्टै सिलिन्डर बोकेर आइहाल त !

Kathmandu 80 km "Hello! They are distributing gas in Kathmandu. Bring the cylinder over."

Abin Shrestha in Kantipur,

"Mr. Minister needs gas? Is tear gas ok? That's all we have left."

मन्त्रीज्युलाई ग्यास चाहियो रे ?

'टीयर ग्यास' मात्र बाँकी छ,

पठाइदिउँ ?!

अव्नपूर्ण पोष्ट Basu Kshitij in *Annapurna Post,* 29 January

#### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

28 January



I have already alerted Chairman Dahal that Nepal's federalism won't last ten years even if it is adopted by the new constitution.

UCPN(M) leader Krishna Bahadur Mahara quoted telling UML leaders in *Jana Aastha*, 28 January

# International meddling



Editorial, Nagarik, 23 January

#### नागरिक

Some foreign powers in Nepal seem to be interested in dispensing dubious advice that will only prolong this country's political instability. It may be because they want to make sure that their interests lie in a poor and weak Nepal, or that if Nepal prospers their utility here will come to an end. International powers in Nepal seem to not want to irritate any of the political forces here, and they want none of them to be too weak. This does not help Nepal. a laughable conundrum that democratic countries for whom election results are sacrosanct mandate would try to pamper a political force in Nepal that openly defies the people's verdict in an election. If a foreign country encourages the rejection of an election mandate it violates diplomatic norms and can be said to be engaging in a conspiracy against the people. The international community may not like the outcome of an election, but if Nepal is a sovereign state they are obliged to respect the verdict. If, as the foreign friends are saying, we have to abandon democratic principles and agree on everything through consensus then the US, UK and Japan may as well not hold elections either. What if outsiders dispensed similar advice about election mandates, would they accept it?

Maybe our government doesn't dare tell the international community that it doesn't want their advice. If the foreigners stick to their stance of not respecting a two-thirds majority you cannot fault the government for rejecting all other options. Not respecting the people's mandate will extend the instability in Nepal and may serve the national interest of some foreign powers, but it will not serve the Nepali people's desire for peace, progress and stability. It doesn't behoove the international community to go against the people's mandate and overstep diplomatic norms to pressure the government.

### No Prachanda, no constitution

Surya Khadka in *mysansar.com* 27 January

#### mमेरो संसार

My father was branded a traitor by Maoist rebels during the war. His life was threatened and he was forced to leave the village. The Maoists also tortured my brother repeatedly on false allegations. I resent the Maoists for all the suffering they brought upon my family. And I know there are many others who feel the same. But as a level-headed person, I don't agree with the NC and UML's decision to sideline the Maoists from the constitution-writing process. Despite performing poorly in the CA2 elections. the UCPN(M) is still the third largest party. The fact that the ruling government had to appease the Maoist leader Prachanda who lost in the elections also speaks of his influence. Prachanda is one of my favourite political leaders, and I appreciate Girja Prasad Koirala's efforts to bring him into mainstream politics. Drafting



a constitution by pushing him aside is not wise. Even if it is promulgated, a constitution which is not based on consensus will not last long.

Nepal's political stagnancy can only end when the contentious issues are addressed. A logical conclusion is possible only with Prachanda's participation. Keeping him out could invite a new conflict which will breed more extremists like Raut and Biplab. It is in everybody's best interest if the peace process is concluded by writing the new constitution by including opposition voices.

The very bilateral agencies that supported the elections financially because they said it would bring stability are now pressuring the state to ignore the very outcome of those elections. It is indeed



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भारतीय राजदूत, काठमाण्डू AMBASSADOR OF INDIA KATHMANDU





On the auspicious occasion of the  $66^{\rm th}$  Republic Day of India, I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to the Indian community and our friends in Nepal.

On this day, we recall the great contributions made by our founding fathers who drafted the Constitution of India. Our Constitution embodies the aspirations of our people for democracy, peace and development. It has evolved and developed over the years to meet the changing needs of the people

India and Nepal share ancient civilisational bonds and a common heritage. Our contemporary relations are multifaceted covering diverse aspects of human endeavour. The historical visits of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Nepal last year, have brought about a seminal improvement in our mutually beneficial ties. India stands shoulder to shoulder with Nepal in its quest for peace, stability and development. We strongly support Nepal's goal of graduating from LDC status to a middle income country by 2022

We wish the people of Nepal every possible success as they engage in completing the historic task of drafting a new Constitution that reflects the needs and aspirations of the

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF INDIA-NEPAL** PARTNERSHIP

<u>KEPUB</u> Day of In

A multi-layered programme comprising more than 500 completed and ongoing projects at a cost over NRs. 75 billion in key economic sectors based on the priorities of the Government of Nepal.

#### **FLAGSHIP COMPLETED** PROJECTS

- · Five-storied OPD complex of Bir Hospital, Kathmandu
- BPKIHS, Dharan · Manmohan Memorial Polytechnic,
- Biratnagar · 807 KM of the East - West Highway
- · 22 bridges over Kohalpur Mahakali section of the East - West highway
- · 904 KM Optical Fiber along the East - West Highway
- · 8 storied National Trauma Centre, Kathmandu

#### **MAJOR ON GOING** PROJECTS

- · Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) at 4 points on the India-Nepal Border
- · Cross-Border railway links · 26 KM long Dakshinakali - Kulekhani
- road/upgradation · Installation of 2700 Shallow Tube Wells
- · Construction of National Police Academy
- · Construction of Nepal Bharat Maitri Pashupati Dharmashala
- SMALL DEVELOPMENT **PROJECTS (SDPs)**
- Ongoing and completed
- · 237 school/campus building projects
- · 42 health related projects
- · Work on 23 roads/4 bridges · Projects on drinking water, cold storage,
- river training, tube wells, electrification and capacity building · 442 ambulances and 86 buses presented
- · 317 Eye Care Camps organised by Nepal

- · Pancheshwar Development Authority constituted for implementation of the 6000 MW project
- · Power Trade Agreement signed
- · Extended NRs. 3 billion for embankment construction on Kamala, Lalbakeya, Bagmati and Khando Rivers
- · Power Development Agreement for Arun III and Upper Karnali Hydropower Projects (900 MWs each) signed
- · Tourism and Traditional Systems of Medicine agreements were signed. Mobile soil testing van presented to Govt. of Nepal
- · Extended NRs. 48 million to landslide and flood victims of Nepal

#### **ECONOMIC RELATIONS**

- · Direct bus service, Kathmandu Delhi
- · Motor Vehicle agreement signed
- · Training imparted to officers of Government of Nepal in Customs, Excise and Narcotics control

#### **EDUCATIONAL COOPERATIONS**

- · 3000 scholarships to Nepalese students every year
- · 250 slots for ITEC courses every year Nepal-Bharat Maitri Shiksha Karyakram
- launched

#### CULTURAL COOPERATION

- · Kathmandu-Varanasi, Janakpur-Ayodhya and Lumbini-Bodhgaya became sister cities
- · Regular classes of Hindustani Classical Music, Tabla, Bharatnatyam Dance and Yoga at Indian Cultural Centre
- · 'Festival of India' in 2015-16 to be organised









Sister Cities

Cities



- Lumbini & Bodh Gaya

Janakpur &

Avodhv

people and guarantees them a peaceful and prosperous future.

On this very special day, I wish our fellow citizens and our friends in Nepal happiness and success in all their endeavours



BRIER BORSON

I A ALL IN FIGURE AND

- Netra Jyoti Sangh
- · 30,800 diabetes tests to be conducted in association with Gandhi Global Family Nepal
- · Goitre Control Programme ongoing since 1973, NRs. 686 million spent

#### **BILATERAL TRADE &** INVESTMENT

- India-Nepal Bilateral Trade NRs. 543.15 billion
- · 38% of total approved FDI in Nepal from India
- · USD 1 billion concessional Line of Credit

#### INDIAN EX-SERVICEMEN WELFARE

- · Pension to ex-servicemen NRs. 20 billion per year
- · 'Other Than Pension (OTP)' payments worth NRs. 47 million
- · Army Group Insurance grants and Medical **Benefit Schemes**
- · 17 Solar Projects implemented
- 1049 Drinking Water Projects implemented
- · Three ECHS polyclinics at Kathmandu, Pokhara and Dharan providing cashless medical facility

### 20 BACK SID



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# Washing dirty Lenin in public



ecause of a single-minded determination to take the bull by the horns of a dilemma, and after six years of can-do attitude to write a new constitution, our legislators have finally propelled Nepal into the world headlines – something that had eluded us even though we tried waging a bloody civil war, a mass massacre of water buffalos every five years, and breaking the world record in making the largest human flag.

We only have The Respectable Member of the August HouseComrade Umesh Yadav to thank for finally getting Nepal an honourbale mention in the Bill Maher Show. This is the kind of international publicity that the Nepal Bored of Tourism wouldn't be able to buy even for a million bucks. Suddenly, Nepal is not just the land of brave Gurkhas and sure-footed Sherpas, but also of members of parliament who dismember parliament. Type chair+parliament and suddenly it is Nepal all over Google image search. #EjectedChair is trending on twitter, overtaking #ElectricChair.

Such international recognition doesn't come by every day in the history of a nation, which is all the more reason for us to strategise about how we can take this achievement and build on it. We have to make hay while the sun shines and aggressively push Nepal as an adventure destination. For too long, Nepal has been known as a land of peaceloving people where the Buddha was reportedly born, but in this modern age where might is right this docile brand image needs to be changed so that we are taken more seriously by the international commune.

The Ministry of Firanghi Affairs has been quick off the mark to drive home the message that we can't be pushed around anymore by summoning European ambassadors to warn of retaliatory action. In the spirit of diplomatic reciprocity and in accordance to the Vienna Convention, Nepal is planning to take the following actions with immediate effect:

violation of various international human rights covenants that the UK is signatory to.

- Get the Nepal Embassy in Washignton DC to issue a travel advisory for parts of the United States recently affected by race riots, and advise Nepalis to exercise extreme caution, cancel all non-essential travel, and to be fully armed if they have to visit affected areas. While he's at it Dr Karki may also want to strongly lobby Congress to declare new federal provinces for African-Americans and Hispanics along the Mexican border.
- Nepal will take the lead in getting a consortium of South Asian embassies at the EU to urge its member states to exercise restraint and work in a spirit of consensus to protect unity and racial harmony in Europe.

CA Chair Name Bang, being a stout Marxist-Leninist himself, is a devotee of the teachings of two European philosophers, so we don't understand why fellow comrades from the Maoist persuasion have their knickers in knots over his keeping options open by taking the House forward for a vote, thus buying time for negotiations.

The UML is a party that excels in the art of improvisation by sitting on the fence in flip-flops and letting the chips fall where they may. After all, it was Marx (Groucho, not Karl) who once said: "If you come to a fork on the road, take it". And the UML also follows very seriously what its other guru, Vladimir Ilyich, preached in his heydays: "Learn. Learn. Learn. Wash your dirty Lenin in public."

In the love triangle within the **Cash Mao** between PKD, BRB and NKS, the not-so-Baddie Comrade Qazi has suddenly found himself in the doghouse after BRB declared war on him on FB. Buttrai himself is suddenly lovey-dovey with Lotus Flower and has outmaneuvered everyone who dared to push the constitution to the drafting committee. Bijay the Gutch also tried his best to come up with a compromise after negotiations failed, but PKD got a call and went outside to take it. He came back in and all deals were off. Our moles at NT have traced the call. In future, why don't they just wear bluetooth earpieces which can, transmit live audio and receive instructions discretely while seated at the table?

The Ass

#### PAST PRESENT FUTURE

**DIWAKAR CHETTRI** 





**NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK** 



- Instruct our Brussels-based ambassador to take a tourist bus to Flanders to meet with Flemish separatist leaders and have a couple of De Konincks off the tap.
- Ask our Plenipotentiary in the Court of St James to issue a press statement questioning why the British Monarch can only be from a certain sect and whether this isn't a



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