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DEVAKI BISTA

OUTSIDE IN

In order to improve their bargaining positions when negotiations resume, the opposition Maoist-Madhesi alliance has announced a street movement focused in the plains, while the ruling NC-UML has set in motion a process to put disputed elements of the constitution to the vote in the CA. Both sides are waiting for the other to blink first. We are very close to an agreement on the constitution. It's just power-sharing that needs to be sorted out. In the coming weeks the leaders need to delink day-to-day politicking for power from reasoned bargaining on the constitution. They need to press the reset button, and settle their disputes across the table and not on the streets.

LENGTHENING THE FUSE

EDITORIAL PAGE 2

BULLET AND/OR BALLOT

BY THE WAY
BY ANURAG ACHARYA

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SAVING LIVES

Achham's Bayalpata Hospital expands to cope with demand, and five years after a deadly cholera epidemic, Jajarkot is declared open defecation free.

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DESTINATION NEPAL

This month's theme:
Adventure Tourism
PAGE 19-20

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LENGTHENING THE FUSE



Nepal's leaders need to settle their disputes across the table and not on the streets.

In all the daily blow-by-blow coverage of the intricacies of the constitution debate, we don't see the forest for the trees. So, to recap, here is the story so far: ever since a decade-long insurgency ended in 2006 with an India-brokered process and the country turned from monarchy to republic, from war to peace, the former Maoist rebels and other political parties have been trying to write a new constitution. There have been two elections to Constituent Assemblies, coalition governments have come and gone, deadlines have been missed and extended.

Today, except for the extreme left Baidya and Biplab factions of the Maoists (that boycotted elections and are not represented in the Assembly) and extreme right (that wants to restore a Hindu monarchy), there is broad agreement that Nepal should be a federal, secular republic.

What ostensibly is holding things up is the kind of federalism. The Maoists and their allies want 8-10 provinces named after Nepal's main ethnic groups, whereas the centrist governing coalition proposes only 6 provinces with more neutral, geographical names. But even here, the two sides have narrowed down their differences.

Lately a new dispute has come up about whether three districts in the eastern Tarai and two in the west should be part of the Madhes or hill provinces. Since this is tangled up with the political ambitions of wannabe political warlords and geo-strategic interests over future high dams on the Kosi and Karnali, it is more intractable. But even here there are workable compromises proposed.

Which means the real reason for the delay in the constitution is not the constitution at all, but a dispute about how the top leaders of the main four political forces will divide up the spoils after the constitution.

There are two elephants in the room: India and China. As the architect of Nepal's peace process, India prefers autonomous federal units including those along the border plains. China, on the other hand, takes a dim view of ethnic provinces in the mountains because of sensitivities about

Tibetan nationalism. Despite this, both countries share a common strategic interest in ending Nepal's prolonged transition so that the buffer state they share is stable.

On the 22 January deadline, a push by the NC-UML ruling coalition to put the constitution to a vote was met with vandalism by members of the Maoists-Madhesi opposition alliance. Since then, talks have been stalled and the constitution is in limbo.

In order to improve their bargaining positions when negotiations resume, the opposition Maoist-Madhesi alliance has announced a street movement focused in the plains,

while the ruling NC-UML has set in motion a process to put disputed elements of the constitution to the vote in the CA. Both sides are waiting for the other to blink first.

In the past week cracks have appeared within the opposition alliance (*see page 6*). The controversial appointment by the UCPN(M) on Monday of infamous floor-crosser Lahr Kyal Lama to a nominated proportional representation seat in the CA has raised hackles among some of the Maoists' Madhesi partners.

The Madhesi parties themselves are distancing themselves from the Front's leader, Bijaya Kumar Gachhadar who appears more accommodative and proposed a last-ditch formula to save the constitution which was rejected by his partners. They suspect he has been enticed with a senior government position if negotiations succeed.

The Maoists themselves have been considerably weakened by the double mutiny within their party, which is why they need to piggy back on the Janajati and Tarai-based parties. The revolution has now turned from a class struggle into an identity-based one. The party has rightly calculated that with more than half of Nepal's 30 million people now living in the plains, the Tarai will be the new epicentre. And since political change in Nepal over the past 50 years has come through street movements and not elections, the opposition is looking at mobilising in the plains.

On Thursday, the parties informally agreed to postpone the CA meeting until further notice to give time for back-room negotiations. That will lengthen the fuse to buy time for a compromise, but risks prolonging the uncertainty and testing the public's patience.

So, in summary, we were (and are) very close to an agreement on the constitution. It's just power-sharing that needs to be sorted out. In the coming weeks the leaders need to delink day-to-day politicking for power from reasoned bargaining on the constitution. They need to press the reset button, and settle their disputes across the table and not on the streets.

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

RENSJE TEERINK

Well done Ms Rensje Teerink. ("We should have waited for a less sensitive moment", # 745). You say meeting CK Raut was a human rights issue and that he was not convicted of any crime yet. Can I ask you how many victims of the Maoists people's war you have met since you have been in Nepal? They also have human rights issues, do they not? Yet, you chose to meet someone who you knew was an agitator. Perhaps you can make amends and give some psychological comfort to the victims of the conflict by taking war criminals to the ICC in the Hague.

Poudyal

■ Nepali politicians are scared of CK Raut because they are ignorant and uneducated and he is educated and intelligent ("We should have waited for a less sensitive moment", # 745). If they muzzle or jail one Raut, a thousand Rauts will take his place. So watch it, you old, senile and morally bankrupt Nepali leaders, a new generation is on the rise, a better generation, that is smart and savvy to tackle the problems facing Nepal. Ambassador Rensje, I support your decision to meet with Raut. In Nepal, we only have ruthless dictators and kleptocrats, a license to steal from the poor and deposit billions in HSBC accounts.

Mahesh

■ Why are Nepali politicians so defensive? ("We should have waited for a less sensitive moment", #

745). Because they know they broke international law for arresting someone without charges for his words alone. It is shocking to see countries with so little respect for freedom of speech. And when the international community brings 21st century ideals to this medieval society, they must reach out and condemn instead of getting on with their job of creating an inclusive and stable country that improves the daily lives and opportunities for all citizens.

Parr

■ Can't forget what Norway did in Sri Lanka. ("We should have waited for a less sensitive moment", # 745). These so called diplomats need to prove that they are important, so they have nothing to do if there is no war. They ignite mistrust and conflict and then pretend to be facilitators of peace-making. That is what Norway did in Sri Lanka, and they are here to do the same.

Ram

■ The EU should be kicked out of the country. ("We should have waited for a less sensitive moment", # 745). They are nothing but trouble, unwanted guests meddling in the host country. Try to solve your own Greek problem, the French and Italian debt issues before lecturing us on how to solve our problem.

Binod

■ So, the EU wants us to believe that meeting with CK Raut was as unpolitical as the meeting they had with ■ LTTE in 2006? ("We should have waited for a

less sensitive moment", # 745).

Avaran

■ Please don't run your politics in a small and weak nation in the name of human rights. ("We should have waited for a less sensitive moment", # 745).

SP

THE 'F' WORD

World Bank's 2011 World Development Report which focused on the nexus of conflict, security, and development found, amongst other things that on average, a country that experienced major violence over the period from 1981 to 2005 has a poverty rate 21 percentage points higher than a country that saw no violence. (Editorial, 'The 'F' Word', #745) In other words, a major episode of violence, unlike natural disasters or economic cycles, can wipe out an entire generation of economic progress. Our conflict wiped out at least 20 years of progress. Are we just muddling through or heading for another civil war? It looks like the Maoist do not care as long as they can have power and inflict their defunct ideology of Marx and Lenin.

Samjhana

■ Pushpa Kamal Dahal is trying to save face and the only thing he knows how to do is to issue threats of terror and violence. (Editorial, 'The 'F' Word', #745). Someone please remind him that the Maoists have split five times already. Dahal is a weak and divided man, no one really believes anything he says anymore. And he is counting on the Morcha (which is equally divided as

he is) to help him. NC and UML are in a powerful position and they need to push their agenda. Mr Dahal, there is nothing you can do, Oli will play you like a fiddle. So, the Dahal/Bhattarai combo better wake up soon or you will be reduced to nothing. That is how things are playing out today.

Harihar Bhattarai

RULERS AND THE RULED

Corrupted leaders, without any prestige or honour, common thieves that have stolen billions from the treasury, do you really believe even for one fleeting second that they will do any good for the people or the country? You are sadly mistaken. ('Rulers and the ruled' by Damakant Jayshi, #745) These men, who have lost their character and their honour, they are not fit to be our leaders. If Nepalis want a better life and a peaceful Nepal, the first thing we can do is remove these leeches that are sucking our blood dry. There is no democracy, there was no Jana Andolan, no people's war, there is only a criminal gang that has been plundering us for the past 24 years. CA 1 and CA 2, billions of rupees down the toilet, what else can one say? We are cowards to allow such pathetic men to rule over us.

Nirmala Basnyat

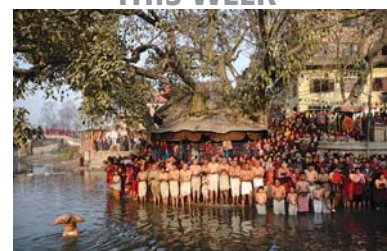
ASS

I never had any doubts that the Ass is always deadly serious. ('Backside, Deadly serious', #745) But what is the poor donkey to do when the politicians are funnier.

Dikshya

Times

THIS WEEK



KENJI KWOK (38 LIKES)

Most liked on Facebook

A Hindu devotee takes a dip in the holy water at the Hanuman Ghat in Bhaktapur on the last day of the month-long Swasthani festival on Tuesday.

Most shared on Facebook

A day in the life of a Kathmandu wedding band by Tsering Dolker Gurung and Cynthia Choo

Most popular on Twitter

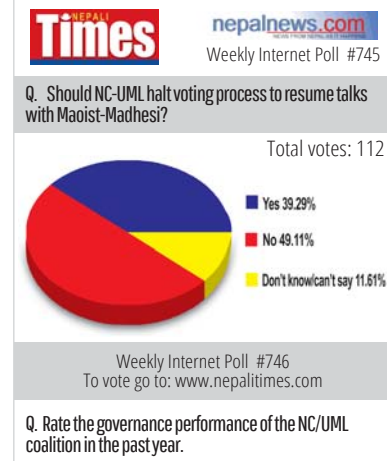
Putting wind in the map by Bishal Gurung (39 retweets, 26 favourites)

Most visited online page

End pain, not lives by Anjana Rajbhandary (577 views)

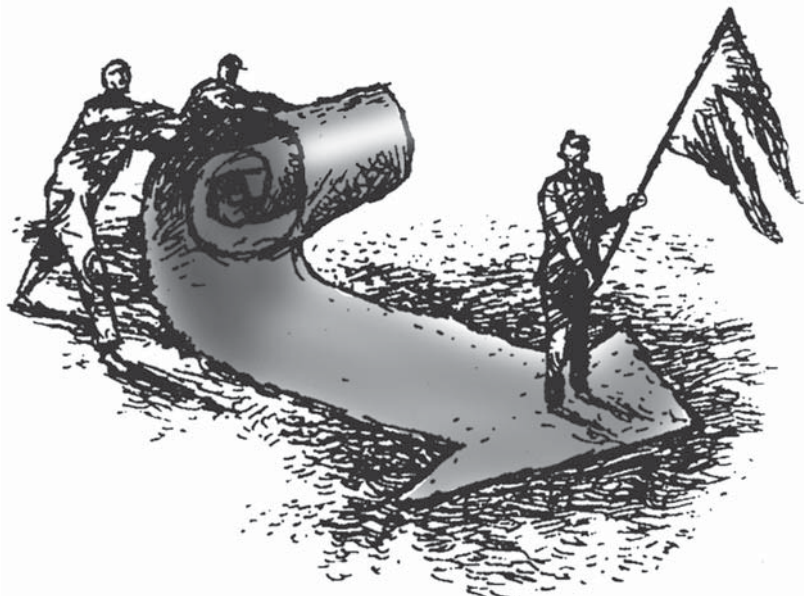
Most commented

"We should have probably waited for a less sensitive moment." (14 comments)



Bullet and/or ballot

Despite taking to the streets, Nepal's Maoists will stick to democracy to institutionalise the gains for which they took up arms



On 16 June 2006, when the Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal met Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala in Baluwatar, he was a leader of a party that had taken up arms against the Nepali state.

The Maoists had joined forces with their erstwhile class enemies to lead a street movement that transformed a monolithic kingdom into a secular federal



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

republic. Two years later in 2008, Dahal led 229 of his party comrades to occupy 38 per cent of the first Constituent Assembly that was tasked with drafting of Nepal's new constitution. History awaited, the world was a witness and the people that had overwhelmingly voted his party to power were in anticipation. The numbers and the sentiments were both on his side.

Seven years later, reduced to an opposition leader with less than 18 per cent in the same assembly, the Maoist Chairman is

a bitter man who has nobody but himself to blame for allowing the history to pass him by.

Aditya Adhikari's recently published book, *The Bullet and the Ballot Box: The Story of a Maoist Revolution*, chronicling the days and nights of Nepal's decade-long conflict, their dramatic ascendance to power and equally dramatic downfall, couldn't have been more appositely timed.

Adhikari weaves a subjective account of the personal journeys of young men and women who participated in the war to give us a microscopic understanding of the Maoist movement as it happened, and the way it spread

across the rural countryside.

Based on a mass of available literature on the Maoist People's War including diaries, memoirs, interviews, articles, reports, poems and fiction writings, the author describes the backdrop of Nepal's bloody civil war, its socio-political implications and its humanitarian consequences, on a population on the receiving end.

Many of the personal memoirs, essays, poems and stories sourced in the book were published at the peak of the 'people's war', which also help us gauge commitment and confusion of young men and women who joined out of sheer conviction, curiosity, and sometimes also out of fear.


The excerpt from an essay by a Maoist activist about his brief encounter with the city and its dwellers, reveals his disappointment and anger at their selfishness and lack of empathy for the suffering of fellow citizens. Similarly, a letter from a young rebel assigned in Kathmandu portrays his fear and confusion during the final years of war when the state forces arrested senior leaders, forcing others into hiding for several months.

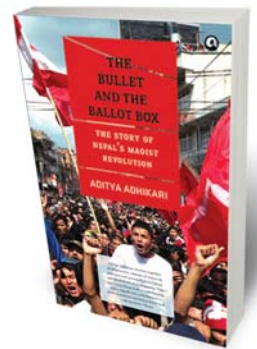
But where Adhikari's book stands out (and the reason it will also be judged) from the rest of the books written on Nepal's conflict is where it deliberately refrains from contending narratives of the war, revealing to us the human face of those who fought and died for a dream of more equal and less discriminatory society, without passing any judgment on their beliefs.

In the final chapter, Adhikari recaps the parliamentary journey of the Maoists after the ceasefire, their historic win in 2008 and demoralising defeat in 2013, which for him marks their ultimate transformation into a mainstream party that goes through 'regular cycles of electoral victory and defeat'.

For a party that believed that political power flowed from

the barrel of the gun and whose ultimate aim was to capture the state power through violent means, the Maoist decision to join competitive politics was not just a strategic move but a revolutionary transformation. In some ways, this may have been too sudden because it did not allow them sufficient time to inculcate a democratic ethos among the militant rank and file. The parliamentary exercise was built on negotiations and compromise which the party was not used to, and this unfamiliarity cost it dearly when more dogmatic rank and file parted ways.


Nepal's Maoists have lost the electoral mandate in the present CA, but their contribution in stirring Nepal's socio-political transformation is undeniable. Their political contention on certain issues in the ongoing statute drafting may take them to the streets along with other opposition forces. But the historical task of institutionalising gains for which they braved bullets will keep them tied to the ballot. 




The Bullet and the Ballot Box: The Story of Nepal's Maoist Revolution

Aditya Adhikari, Aleph, 2015, Rs 472



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Start-ups need staying power

Finding paying customers is more important than pitching to investors

In the last six years, there has been an explosive growth in the number of new Nepalis entrepreneurs influenced by the spread of the Internet and sustained by committed Nepali organisations and networks.

Entrepreneurs for Nepal (E4N) is a Facebook networking page with 38,000 members that

and women have brought many individuals together to launch their own tech-driven companies 'in 54 hours' and have also won prizes.

Idea Studio, a brainchild of UNICEF and Kathmandu University, supports selected entrepreneurs, turn their ideas into marketable products and services. One to Watch, a Dutch-Nepali investment firm, recently launched Rockstart that remains Nepal's first-ever accelerator. It works intensively with 10 selected companies, whose services range from providing clean water to selling organic fertilisers, to refining business models and sales pitches in ways customers and investors find sensible.

Meantime, Microsoft Innovation Center Nepal and Nepal Young Entrepreneurs' Forum (NYEF) have recently opened up their own selection processes: meaning more start-ups are going to receive necessary training, resources, as well as local and international support in the upcoming months. On one level, it does seem encouraging.

At a time when 1,500 young people are leaving the country every day to work overseas, any emphasis on entrepreneurship that may potentially lead to more jobs should be appreciated. But what if we get, as it seems to be the case, forever stuck in the first phase of the start-up work?


The initial excitement is starting to have two visible effects. First,

they have unwittingly led most to think that launching start-ups is easy, fun and akin to supervised group work. Else, why would so many launch start-ups and almost immediately win donor-funded prizes? Second, the dominant focus in the start-up scene has been on rehearsing pitches for investors without understanding what is really needed.

Running even established businesses is hard: and start-ups from the moment they are born do not do much but continue to swim in uncertainties. Coming up with a business idea is easy but developing it into a money-making business is the hard part.

Building a team that continuously works well together demands skills that can't be mastered in one go.

Investors like a good pitch, but they do not base their decision solely on it. Nepal's investment market is not developed enough where a variety of investors are willing to take risks on unproven ideas. First investors check to see if the new entrepreneurs already have a loyal following. If not, the pitch may win over the organisers, but not the investors' confidence.

Looking ahead, there is challenge for those involved in nurturing the start-up scene in Nepal: it is necessary to mentor entrepreneurs to have a consistent money-making following before pitching their ideas to big time investors. 



CROSS CUTTING
Ashutosh Tiwari

organises the Last Thursdays program which connects aspiring entrepreneurs with established ones. E4N has chapters in Pokhara and Biratnagar, where local businessmen run their own monthly networking sessions.

Biruwa Ventures provides working space, guidance and market linkages. ChangeFusion Nepal supports women entrepreneurs from rural Nepal to sell products or provide services that have demonstrable social impact. Sambriddhi Foundation runs Arthalaya, which teaches college students how entrepreneurship flourishes in a competitive market. Likewise, several well-attended sessions of Startup Weekend (Kathmandu and Pokhara), for men

prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS



Cash back

On the occasion of ICC World Cup Cricket 2015, TLC has introduced the Cash Back Cricket Offer. The offer is valid on the purchase of TCL 4K UHD, Smart, LED and LCD TV.

Flying High

In the event of Qatar's 4th National Sports Day, Qatar Airways has announced a four-day sale. Customers can save up to 40 percent on their tickets till 13 February.



Flip n enjoy

Gionee has launched three entry level smartphones P2S, P4S and P6 in Nepal. The new line of phones are aimed at students, homemakers and anyone wanting to upgrade to budget-friendly smartphones.

Service Centre

DishHome inaugurated its 8th service center at Dang. New service centers are also to be opened at other major cities including Butwal, Janakpur, Mahendranagar, and Birgunj.



Partners

DFID Sakcham announced the partnership with Global IME Bank and Bank of Kathmandu to introduce innovations for rural farmer communities in the Mid and Far-western regions of Nepal. The finance program is in joint collaboration with Gyan Agri and Mahakali Sugar Mills.

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DIVAKAR CHETTRI

OM ASTHA RAI

The UCPN (Maoist)’s decision to appoint a controversial figure as a Constituent Assembly (CA) member has angered its Madhesi allies, potentially weakening the hope for a strong anti-government movement in the Madhes.

Two days after the Maoists named Lahr Kyal Lama as a CA member, an influential Maoist from the Tarai, Prabhu Sah, came down heavily on his own party accusing it of forging signatures of central committee members to appoint a “rich but tainted” person as a CA member in a quota meant for a Madhesi-Dalit.

A stir within

The Maoists anger their Madhesi allies by nominating a controversial floor-crosser as CA member

“Let alone seeking our consent, the party leadership did not even inform us about it,” said Sah. “They must correct this decision.”

Lama was appointed to a post that was lying vacant after Shambhu Paswan’s CA membership was scrapped because it was found he was holding another position. Lama was formerly with the Nepali Congress, and chaired the Monastery Management Committee. He then defected and was even appointed State Minister for Finance by a UML government, but had to step down after it was found that he simultaneously held a Nepali citizenship certificate, a Tibetan identity card and an Indian passport.

“By naming a tainted person like Lama for a CA post meant for a Madhesi-Dalit, our party has made mockery of its own commitment to the poor, Madhesi

and Dalits,” said Sah. “It will also have a negative impact on our movement.”

After Sah stood against his party’s decision, the UCPN (Maoist) went into damage control mode on Tuesday and issued a press statement defending its decision to recommend Lama as a CA member. Spokesperson Dinanath Sharma said Lama was an “expert” and representative of the minority Buddhist community. This seems to have added fuel to the fire because Lama’s controversial past is a matter of public knowledge.

UCPN (Maoist) Vice Chair Narayan Kaji Shrestha tweeted that he was against his party’s decision. Another Vice Chair Baburam Bhattarai defended party’s decision on Twitter but his confidante Debendra Poudel criticized Lama’s appointment.

Analysts say Sah’s criticism of Lama’s appointment could reverberate across the Madhes, which is where the UCPN (M) is expecting to see the strongest street agitation about the constitution.

After Mohan Baidya’s split, the UCPN (M) does not hold as much influence in the hills as it used to in the past. Baidya’s CPN-Maoist and Netra Bikram Chanda’s breakaway faction have more cadre in leadership roles

than the UCPN (M). This is why Pushpa Kamal Dahal has come to rely heavily on support from the Madhesi Front for his anti-government movement.

Cracks have begun to appear in the Madhesi Front, too. Upendra Yadav, who emerged as a leader in the wake of the Madhes Movement of 2007, does not miss any opportunity to belittle Bijaya Gachhadar, the leader of the Madhesi Front.

Gachhadar’s reluctance to launch an anti-government movement at the present time is clear. Devendra Patel, a Maoist leader who rose to fame after defeating UML leader Madhav Nepal in the first CA polls in Rautahat, said: “Gachhadar’s cadres are as committed to the anti-government movement as us, but we are suspicious of him.”

The Maoist-Madhesi alliance’s announcement of street movement is intended to put pressure on the ruling NC-UML coalition to call off its vote in the CA on the constitution and acquiesce to the demand for consensus.

But with fissures within the Madhesi Front and the fallout of the Lama appointment, the movement has been weakened even before it started.

The biggest blow is Sah’s assertion that his own party is “anti-Madhesi”.

Sah and Poudel both are close to Maoist second-man Baburam Bhattarai, and his criticism of the Lama appointment may also have something to do with the internal power dynamics between Chairman Dahal and Bhattarai.

Added up, all this could be why Dahal this week softened his tone, asking Prime Minister Sushil Koirala to send him another invitation letter for talks. 🇳🇵



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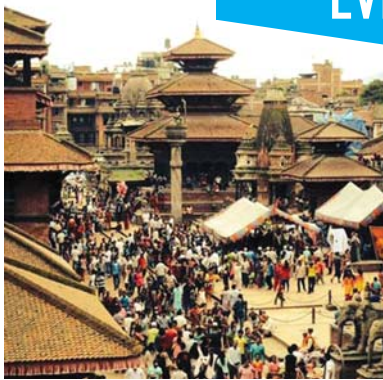


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EVENTS

**Old Patan Yoga,**

Explore the less travelled paths of old Patan and learn its history which has influenced the modern practices of Yoga with an expert in Newari culture. The walk includes a Newari lunch.

Rs1500, 980-204 5484,
info@pranamaya-yoga.com,
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Journeying for art,

Painting exhibition by a promising young artist-Dhwoj Gurung.
Till 12 April, Park Gallery, Pulchowk, Lalitpur,
(01)5522307, www.parkgallery.com.np

Losar beats,

Enjoy Losar with the thumping beats of DJ Rey 1.
Rs499, 19 February, Music Lounge & Bar,
Durbar Marg, 981-317-1198

Nippon cinema,

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

27 and 28 February, Tribhuvan Army Officer's Club, Tundikhel, (01)4426680,
cultural-emb@km.mofa.go.jp

Bal Sahitya Mahotsav,

The first ever Children's Literature Festival in Nepal, aiming at providing an interactive opportunity for families to appreciate the power of reading.

28 February to 1 March, 9am to 5pm, Rato Bangala School, Patan Dhoka, (01) 5534318,
www.ratobangala.edu.np

Photography grant,

Nepali photographers are invited to apply for a Rs.100,000 grant to produce an in-depth work on social, political, and other issues related to climate change.

Deadline 28 February, photocircle.com.np,
(01)5013501, mail@photocircle.com.np

Indo-Nepal,

A joint exhibition by Nepali artists from Banaras Hindu University
Till 18 February, 11am to 5pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited,
(01)4218048, sthapa@mos.com.np

**Tibetan Losar,**

Tibetans celebrate the Year of the Goat with various rituals performed in the country. Bodnath becomes a livelier place as many flock to worship at the stupa.

19 February, Bodnath, Boudha

Curation 101,

A workshop with curator Veerangana Solanki to discuss the role of a curator through dedicated material on exhibition design and documentation.

20 to 24 February, Siddhartha Arts Foundation, 984-951-9933,
nischal.oli@gmail.com

10 minutes drama,

An innovative concept giving an opportunity to theatre aficionados and people with no theatrical backgrounds to showcase their artistic potential.

22 to 28 February, Sarwanam Theater, Kalikasthan, (01)4011027,
10minutesdrama@gmail.com

Laramie Project,

A docudrama telling the story of Matthew Shepard, an American student who was beaten, tortured and left to die, near Laramie, Wyoming because he was gay.

Rs500, 28 February to 15 March, Theatre Village, Lazimpat, 980-804-1124,
oneworldtheatreinnepal@gmail.com

DINING

**Dragon Chinese Restaurant,**

Try the Kung Pao Pork if alone and the Mai Cao if with company.
Lakeside, Pokhara

Happy Hours,

Buy one, get one free on regular spirits, house wines & domestic liquors with live band.

Every day, 4pm to 7pm, The Corner Bar, Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat, (01)4411818,
outlets@radkat.com.np

Barista Lavazza,

The Valley's best European inspired coffee-culture cafes serves excellent mochas and lattes, don't forget to try their grilled chicken sandwich.

Jawalakhel, (01)4005123, barista.
nepal@gmail.com

Fuji Bakery,

Tucked in Chakupat, this bakery offers homemade goodies like apple pie, pain au chocolat and banana cake.

Chakupat, Lalitpur, (01)5543678

**Rainbow trout,**

Enjoy a savory fresh cold-water Rainbow trout with a glass of house wine and a steamy bowl of hot soup.

4pm to 10.30pm, The Olive Garden, Radisson Hotel, (01)4411818, outlets@radkat.com.np

Kasi,

Spread out over a large terrace overlooking Phora Darbar, Kasi offers a delectable plate of Newari delicacies.

Durbar Marg, 985-103-9748

Fire&Ice,

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Thamel, (01)4250210

**Manny's coffee**

Try delicious coffee blends at Manny's coffee lounge.

Manny's Eatery and Tapas Bar, Jawalakhel, (01)5536919, mannystapas@gmail.com

**Vive le cinéma,**

Three French movies around an eclectic program for children and adults.

21 February, 10.30am, Alliance française of Kathmandu, Tripureshwar, (01)4241163,
general.afk@gmail.com

Valentine's Day Celebration



Happy
Valentine's Day



This Valentine's eve melt your beloved's heart with an invitation at The Lost Horizon Cafe for a Delightful romantic dinner with live performance by popular singer Ciney Gurung.

Date: 14th February, 2015
Venue: The Lost Horizon Cafe, Hotel Shangri-La
Time: 7:00 pm onwards
Rate: Rs. 1800 nett for single
Rs. 3500 nett for couple
(Includes a glass of Kir Royal or Valentine Love Mocktail)

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fnbmanager@hotelshangrila.com

MUSIC

Bob Dylan night,

Prominent band of the late nineties, Flower Generation, comes back to pay tribute to one great figure of music, Bob Dylan.

25 February, 7.30pm, La Grange, Thamel, 981-825-8855



Album launch,

The Nepali rock band, Monkey Temple, launches its third self-titled album during a live concert.

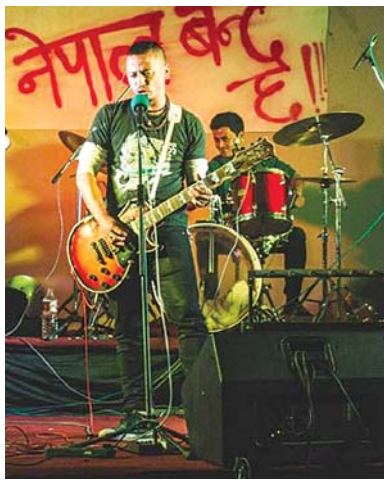
27 February, 7pm, La Grange, Thamel, 981-825-8855



Afro-Caribbean grooves,

Cadenza Collective celebrates the Black History Month 2015. There will also be a special West African drumming session in between the sets.

Rs300, House of Music, Thamel, 985-107-5172, sanzey@hotmail.com



Newaz live,

One of oldest bands from Kathmandu mixes blues, punk and grunge to rock the night.

20 February, 7.30pm, La Grange, Thamel, 981-8258855

GETAWAYS

Gokarna Forest Resort,

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Gokarna, (01)4451212, info@gokarna.net

Buddha Maya Gardens Hotel,

Add value to your travel in Lumbini with a stay at probably the best hotel in the area.

Lumbini, (71)580220, 980-103-3109, info@ktmgh.com



Last Resort,

Canyoning, hiking, rock climbing, rafting, mountain biking, bungee jumping – test your limits at the Last Resort.

Bhotekosi, Sindhupalchok, (01)4700525, info@thelastresort.com.np

Mango Tree Lodge,

Culture walks, rafting in the Karnali, wildlife exploration, and jungle safari at the Bardia National Park.

Bhetani, Bardia, (084)402008, info@mangotreelodge.com

Mum's Garden Resort,

Head out to Pokhara for a peaceful and comfortable stay in these beautifully designed cottages surrounded by a lush green garden with great views of Phewa Lake and the Annapurna range.

Lake Side, Pokhara, (061)463468, www.mumsgardenresort.com



VALENTINE'S DAY

Hyatt Regency's Package,

A lineup of promotional romance packages, spa experiences, and dining options to celebrate the Month of Romance.

Hyatt Regency Hotel, Boudha, (01)4491234, kathmandu.regency@hyatt.com, http://kathmandu.regency.hyatt.com

Radisson's Valentine,

Romantic candle lit BBQ dinner amidst crackling bon fire at the Terrace Garden with love songs or join The Corner Bar's party with DJ playing the most romantic numbers.

Rs2999 / Rs1499, 14 February, 6.30pm, Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat, (01)4411818, outlets@radkat.com.np



Fall in love again,

Embark on a romantic 2 nights' stay at the Deluxe Villa for two into the lushness of Chitwan in the heart of the jungle to rekindle that spark. The package includes a 30-minute couple's massage.

Rs24999 per couple full pension, 13 to 15 February, Kasara Resort, (01)4437571, info@kasararesort.com

Soul food,

A 5-course meal for couples with complementary drinks, with a live band Pat & His mates lightening up your gastronomic senses.

14 February, The Tulip, Tangal, 01-4413933, thetulipnepal@gmail.com

Shangri-La's Valentine,

Melt your beloved's heart with a delightful romantic dinner, including a glass of Kir Royal or Valentine Love Mocktail, with a live performance by Ciney Gurung.

Rs1800 for singles, Rs3500 for couples, 14 February, 7 pm, the Last Horizon Café, Hotel Shangri-La, Lazimpat, (01)4412999, /booking@hotelshangrila.com

Selfie Contest,

Take a picture with your beloved and send it to Kartmandap. Couple with the most likes will win two movie tickets with dinner at Cine de Chef.

Till 14 February, 984-103-4179, info@kartmandap.com, www.kartmandap.com

Spirited cocktails,

Live gig by Spirit-X and buy one get one free on cocktails for couples.

14 February, 7.30pm, La Grange, Thamel, 981-825-8855



Acoustic Valentine,

Canadian singer-songwriter, Piper Hayes, will set the amorous mood with her soulful acoustic numbers.

14 February, 8pm, House of Music, Thamel, 985-107-5172, sanzey@hotmail.com

Valentine's rose,

A free rose and a free glass of hot mulled wine followed by a free Irish coffee on Valentine's Day in a balloon-filled dining room.

14 February, K-too Beer and Steakhouse, Thamel, (01)4700043.



Valentine's Cake,

Choose a token of love for your valentine from the selection of exquisite cakes.

The Pastry Shop, Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat, (01)4411818, outlets@radkat.com.np

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RUNNING ALL

Mira Rai goes from being a Maoist guerilla to an international marathon champion

NARESH NEWAR



GLORY FOR NEPAL: Mira Rai (*above*) and Samir Tamang after they were first in the female and male categories in the 50km Asia Sky-running Ultra Championship in Hong Kong on Saturday.

Rai sets the pace in the Vertical Five Km marathon in Hong Kong in October last year, which she won (*right*).

Rai at age 16 (*far right*) at a Maoist training camp in 2006 learning to fire a machine gun.



PICS: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP



HER LIFE



NARESH NEWAR

It seems Mira Rai has been running all her life. Growing up in a remote village of Bhojpur district, she ran up and down mountains carrying sacks of rice. She joined the Maoist militia at age 14, and had to run to keep fit. Today, she is a multiple ultramarathon champion.

Life was a struggle for survival for Mira's family, and when Maoists came to her village to offer her a chance to fight for a better life, she readily joined. The conflict had just ended, but the Maoists were still recruiting child soldiers to pad up their numbers in the UN-supervised camps.

"I believed I was going to be fighting for a better future," Rai recalled.

But after she got the weapons training, Mira was disqualified by the UN for being a minor when recruited. She was so dejected that the party had abandoned her that she decided to head to Kathmandu, instead of returning to her village.

Her best friend, Anupama Magar, was a national karate champion who persuaded and helped her to come to Kathmandu to start a new life. In 2013, she started training to run and was encouraged after winning the 50km Pulchoki ultra marathon in which she beat all the male athletes and came first.

Last year, she went to Sellaonda in Italy for an international ultra run with the help of Trail Running Nepal when she came first



PEACE
BUILDING

again, and broke a new record. Two months later, she won another international race in Hong Kong and broke another record in the 50km uphill marathon.

"I haven't forgotten my past but thanks to my friends, I have moved on and I want to win a lot more international marathons," Rai told *Nepali Times* after winning the Asian Sky-running Ultra Championship in Hong Kong last week.

Rai lives with friends in a modest rented apartment in Balaju, and lives off the interest of loaning her prize money to friends. She is still supporting her parents in Bhojpur and the education of her siblings, so her economic situation is precarious.

"I am struggling now but I know I will be successful one day. I just hope it happens soon," she said with a forced smile.

As happy as Rai is about her latest win in Hong Kong is her mentor, Richard Bull of Trail Running Nepal, who has been helping her organise her participation in the international races.

On the phone from Hong Kong, Bull told *Nepali Times*: "This latest win proves Mira has reached world class standard, as she is beating male marathoners from sponsored professional teams." 🇳🇵



nepalitimes.com

■ The inspiration of a long-distance runner, #731



GIANNI "GURKHA" SUBBA

Half-Nepali mixed martial arts fighter explains the Gurkha influence in his fighting style

CYNTHIA CHOO

He might be on a different playing field, but whenever Gianni Subba stands in the octagonal Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) ring, the Gurkha motto "it is better to die, than to be a coward" resounds loudly in his head.

"My grandpa used to serve as a Gurkha in the British Army, so whenever I practice, my Gurkha instincts take over," said Gianni.

In fact, this quintessential Gurkha bravery was what helped him get back in the ring after a disappointing loss in May last year to Eugene Toquero after a unanimous decision by the judges.

"It was disappointing as it was a fight I knew I was capable of winning," said the 22-year-old. "However, after that, I realized that MMA is as much a mental sport as it is physical."

His never-say-die attitude saw him back into the ring a little over a month after the loss, overcoming his opponent Ruel Catalan with a convincing choke.

"I fixed the technical mistakes, jumped on another fight on short notice, and was able to win that helped me get over the loss," he said.

Despite the convincing win, the eager fighter says being relatively healthy is a challenge.

"Injuries are difficult to avoid as

MMA is a contact sport that requires great intensity and athleticism, sometimes I get hurt in trainings and recovering from these injuries – minor or major – takes time," Gianni said.

The 22-year-old has been attending school, training and competing all around the world since he was a child.

"I consider it an achievement to be able to train as much as I do," he added.

Gianni did his early primary and secondary schooling in Malaysia, finished high school and attended university in the United States.

During his off season, the half-Malaysian trains in his hometown gym Klinch MMA in Kuala Lumpur and is currently training in Bali for the upcoming ONE Championship in Malaysia on 13 March.

His training regime is a combination of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and Muay Thai in the mornings, with striking, wrestling and sparring every other day.

"On average, I train up to three to five hours a day, six days a week," he says.

"I always try to train and learn from the best. In order to do that sometimes I travel out of Malaysia to train with better training partners," he said.

Gianni trains with the Leone Brothers – international MMA superstars who are

contenders for the Bellator and ONE FC World Title.

Financing the cost of overseas training is a challenge for this young and relatively inexperienced fighter.

"The cost of living in another country is not cheap but I think it is necessary in order to become a better fighter," Gianni said.

His growth as a fighter is evident with a 4-1-0 Win Loss-Draw record and a knockout of veteran MMA fighter Bruce Loh during his debut match.

Despite his good streak, Gianni has remained humble, both in and outside of the ring.

"MMA is sport that practices honour, chivalry, respect, discipline, hard work and skills," he said.

And though the half-Nepali has been making significant strides in competitions around Asia, he brings his traditional Nepali values with him everywhere.

He said: "Respect, humility and appreciation are important. I always honour my family and friends and even my opponents." 🇳🇵



nepalitimes.com

■ Watch Gianni Subba's duel with Ruel Catalan





MAGIC IN THE MOONLIGHT

It has been a while since I watched a Woody Allen film without cringing. While his previous classics like *Annie Hall* (1977), *Manhattan* (1979), and *Stardust Memories* (1980) have stayed with me forever, since watching the unspeakably



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

bad *Scoop* (2006) in which he insisted on starring himself taking down a usually charming Scarlett Johansson in the process, I have avoided his films with determination. Never wanting to feel that slightly sick feeling in my stomach again – especially in the

theatre.
So it is not with a small amount of concern that I started *Magic in the Moonlight* having been told by a few fairly rigorous people that it was ‘okay’. Well, surprisingly it is. While the plot line and the conclusions are all easy peasy to guess, in their intense clichés, it is the setting and ease of the talented ensemble cast that kept me happily distracted for the duration. It prompted me to write a review on a film maker that is clearly still making films because he loves to, even though he has very little to actually say.
So this latest Woody Allen confection (which is exactly that, sweet and fluffy) is set in the French Riviera, which practically glows with a romantic haze aided by Darius Khondji’s lighting and golden filters. It is here, at a beautiful home owned by rich

American expatriates, that the grumpy sceptical.
Colin Firth is brought in to debunk a young mystic named Sophie Baker (played by Emma Stone) who claims she can commune with the dead through séances and has spot-on moments of psychic accuracy that are admittedly uncanny. Firth’s character, the very British Stanley Crawford, is actually the world famous magician, Wei Ling Soo, and this being the late 1920s, his illusionism is astonishingly effective. His scepticism, though, when it comes to the otherworldly is hard to match.
As Sophie plays her tricks and adorably starts to wrap Stanley around her finger, dressed in charming flapper dresses and little hats, the film begins to remind you of one those cosy old Agatha Christie mysteries, cleverly set up in an old picturesque house by the sea, peopled by characters straight out of these fictional whodunits.
“Magic in the Moonlight” is not a film if you’re in a cynical mood, or your tolerance levels are somewhat low for whatever reason. I would say watch it if you just want some pleasurable distraction. Colin Firth and Emma Stone will charm you thoroughly, but perhaps some of their quick witted dialogue might even grate a little on nervous ears. After all there is always a bit of a trade-off when one opts for the superficial over the profound, however enjoyable it may be. 🇳🇵

■ Trailer



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HAPPENINGS



BIKRAM RAI

ANTI-CORRUPTION: Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, President Ram Baran Yadav and Chief of CIAA Lokman Singh Karki attend a program to mark the 24th anniversary of Centre for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority(CIAA) at Police Club, Kathmandu on Wednesday.



DEVAKI BISTA

LITERATURE CULTURE: Writer-critic Abhi Subedi (second from left) at Kamal Prasad Malla's book *Literature Culture* at Yala Maya Kendra on Tuesday.



KENJI KWOK

CLICK: Dutch Photographer Jan Banning, winner of 2004 World Press Photo Award, interacts with Nepali photojournalists during an event jointly organised by *Nepali Times* and the National Forum of Photojournalists (NFPJ) at the Yala Maya Kendra in Patan Dhoka on Tuesday.



BIKRAM RAI

NEW RIDE: Siprardi Trading's executive chairman Siddhartha SJB Rana (left) and TATA Motors' Johnny Oommen jointly launch the new ZEST model, at Soaltee Crown Plaza on Friday.

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Since its creation in 2009, Eleven11 Production has been bringing international acts to Nepal while supporting the local music scene as well. Last year, this artist management and booking agency launched Dance Valley at 1905 in an attempt to create an electronic music movement in Kathmandu.

Despite being a first-of-its-kind, this first edition had an ambitious line up with the talented Nepali producers Kichaa M Chitrakar and Nishan Manandhar, along with acclaimed Indian DJ, Dualist Inquiry.

After the first hit, Eleven11 Production organised their second Dance Valley last Saturday 7 February in the newly opened venue, Club 25 Hours in Tangal.

The Nepali electronic music producer, Ranzen Jha warmed up the audience that evening with a live set. His well-polished melodies intertwined with breakbeat patches set a buoyant ambience in the basement of Club 25 Hours.

Raban Rana, a.k.a. DJ RabbiT, continued the evening by alternating between Glitch hop and heavy Drum & Bass. Planning to compose his own songs from this year, Rana's deck techniques on Saturday gave a



PRABHAT JHA

hint of what his productions might sound like.

The much-awaited guest of Dance Valley 2 was Nucleya, former member of Indian electronic fusion collective, The Bandish Projekt. Known for his Moombahton sound, the producer from Ahmedabad was playing in Kathmandu for the first time.

Nucleya's set had lengthy passages with somehow astonishing mixes, spinning a few of his productions, as well as elements

of Reggae, Dirty South and even the incongruous Dance tunes.

Some beautiful elements of classical Indian music spiced up his set as well. The DJ from India had a lively and energetic stage performance, conveying much enthusiasm to the crowd.

Visual artist C4 is another Nepali performer who deserves praise. During the DJ sets, he screened hypnotic patterns along

with Lindy Hop choreographies from the movie *Hellzapoppin* and extracts of the animated film, *Asterix and Cleopatra* on the back wall of the stage.

Like its first edition, Dance Valley 2 exposed talents of electronic music scene of Kathmandu who deserve as much attention as the foreign acts. Unfortunately the quality of the sound system at Club 25 Hours, with the trebles set too loud, didn't allow for a full appreciation of these skilful acts.

Organisers and artists of Dance Valley were satisfied by the event but expected a better response from the public. "It would have been nicer if people had come earlier to support the local artists too," commented DJ RabbiT, on the fact that most of the audience came only for Nucleya.

"People always look out for last minute chance to grab tickets," says Spandan Mocktan, from Eleven11 Production. "They need to understand that organisers spend ample time looking for artists to bring to Nepal or else the entertainment business won't last long."

Dance Valley 2 also revealed Club 25 Hours as an elegant location full of potential in Kathmandu. It is surely a quality alternative to Thamel's scene, but some work can still be done for the sound quality. Stéphane Huët

Durbar Marg is well-known for its array of restaurants from little family owned businesses to high end fine dining eateries. This has not stopped new restaurants from sprouting like mushrooms on both sides of this fancy street. If you are one to experiment and eager to have a fantastic culinary experience, look no further than Durbar Marg.

Red Carpet Restro & Bar is situated on this busy street, on the top floor of Sherpa Mall. Claiming to serve the best of Indian, Thai, Chinese, Continental and French cuisine, it is also a Mecca for seafood lovers in this landlocked country.

The restaurant was pretty empty during lunch so we could choose to sit at the bar, their little café, or on the balcony under the sun. We chose to sit outside.

We first noticed the promotional lunch specials. From 11am to 3pm every weekday, you could pick something Continental like Grilled Chicken or be patriotic by choosing the Nepali Thali Set for Rs 275.

For this lunch meal however, my dining partner and I decided to go for the Pad Thai with Prawn (Rs. 449) as we both have a soft spot



PICS: CYNTHIA CHOO

for Thai food. Served beautifully with a side of cucumbers, crushed red pepper and peanuts, the bean sprouts that were fried with the dish provided a nice crunch to the soft yet flavourful noodles.

Being a fan of hot and spicy food, I loved that the Pad Thai had a little kick to it. Plus I could feel a bit of Thailand as I tasted the fish sauce.

My dining partner who is not a big fan of spicy food, admitted to the heat but liked that it was less

oily than other Pad Thais she tried. This dish is big enough to share among two or more people.

We went with the Club Sandwich (Rs. 299) as our second option. The bread tower of fried egg, bacon, chicken, cheese and fresh lettuce, came with a side of delicious fries. Given that it is almost impossible to find decent fries in Kathmandu - the fries were heavenly. They were crunchy on the outside while remaining soft and warm on the inside.

Our experience with the club sandwich was satisfying without it being too overpowering. They even offered us a side of chilli sauce, my favorite with everything.

No meal is complete without having something sweet. We had our eye on the Chocolate Mikado (Rs. 200) a luxurious and decadent chocolate cake with soft chocolate mousse over a crunchy cookie layer. Sadly, our potential love affair with the cake ended when they said they did not have it.



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Thus we went for the Lemon Yogurt Cheese Cake (Rs. 239). With a strong lemon and yoghurt taste, this cheese cake with a sweet crust would be perfect if it was made with a richer version of cream cheese.

In addition, the colorful lampshades hovering over the bar made the ambience warm and comfortable. The staff was also welcoming and polite, and the food was good. We were satisfied at the end of the meal but will definitely be going back again to get a coveted piece of the Chocolate Mikado.

Then the experience will be complete. Anjana Rajbhandary

How to get there: Red Carpet Restro and Bar is located in Durbar Marg, on the top floor of Sherpa Mall.



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The brain is a sex organ

Love is in the air again: on cable television, in social media, and through peer pressure. Popular songs, poems, and books about love state that love is deeply rooted in the heart. It's not.



SCIENCE BYTES
Roshan Karki

Decades of research have shown that it is our master organ, the brain, which orchestrates the feeling of love by secreting the special chemicals that make romance possible.

This cocktail of love includes brain hormones that have specific roles to play during different stages of love. When one begins to fall in love, the level of adrenaline in the body spikes up making your heart beat faster, the mouth drier, and the body starts to sweat. There

is a surge in dopamine levels that triggers intense pleasure, increases energy, and decreases need for food and sleep.

Finally, the level of the neurotransmitter serotonin drops, leading the subject to start obsessing about a new-found partner which is also observed in people with obsessive-compulsive disorder. In the next phase, the hormones oxytocin and vasopressin are released which bonds partners and are released during sex. Oxytocin, known as the "love hormone", is also released in mothers during childbirth or is triggered by the sound of a baby crying.

The release of these brain hormones is exquisitely controlled, and not secreted at the sight of just any stranger, thus preventing love catastrophes. There are elaborate mechanisms in place to allow the brain to evaluate if the partner is deemed attractive and worthy of a shot at love. These ingrained evolutionary laws of attraction are exceedingly complex and may rely on sensory cues of sight, sound,



KENJI KWOK

and smell.

Psychologists have discovered that both males and females are attracted to certain physical traits. Males tend to find women with a waist narrower than hips (0.7 waist hip ratio) and high-pitched voice more desirable. Women tend to find males with broad shoulders, some facial hair, and deeper voice more attractive. But women also rate non-physical qualities such as intelligence, emotional stability, and friendliness very highly,

throwing any supposed laws of attraction into disarray.

Body odour (due to pheromones) of a partner is known to play a critical role in love, attraction, and subsequent bonding. While sniffing a partner may be deemed creepy, many double-blinded studies have shown that both males and females are attracted to partners with an MHC (Major Histocompatibility Complex) – a cluster of genes that determine body odour different

from their own. There is evidence that many long-lasting couples have vastly different MHC genes suggesting that the biological compatibility of love may hinge subconsciously on the partner's smell.

The brain integrates this complex array of conscious and subconscious cues to help people fall in love. But why do we have such vast, multi-layered checkpoints? Perhaps because of the subconscious probability of having a healthy offspring. For example, fertility in women is associated with the same waist-hip ratio that men find desirable. The difference of MHCs between parents may ensure a healthy immune system in children. It is plausible that through the blend of love chemicals and attraction cues, the brain may be tricking us into falling in love to ensure reproduction. And what better way to assure a healthy offspring than from two people in love and committed to one another?

Thus, it is clear that love isn't blind. Perhaps the peculiar and dramatic behavior seen in love-struck couples may simply be a manifestation of their brains. But wouldn't it also be nice if someone strummed a song or two about the brain rather than just the heart?

GIZMO by YANTRICK

NOT JUST BIGGER

One are the days when we're in a store just looking for a bigger screen: We now demand higher resolution, better audio quality, and more than what a television basically does. The Toshiba's Pro Theatre L5400 arrives with looks and hardware capabilities that make you question if there's anything a television can't do.

Powered with Android's version 4.4.2 KitKat, you are instantly treated to an array of applications available on the Google Play Store, that allows you to play your mobile games on a beautiful 40" LED display, capable of displaying up to 1080p Full HD quality.

You may now sit back on your couch to enjoy your favourite videos since the Pro Theatre L5400 has enabled streaming from YouTube, and an

integrated USB connection that supports up to 28 video formats. Toshiba has also decided to pair these features with the new dual core CEVOTM Engine Premium to enhance the audio, visual and gaming performances.

The redesigned compact speakers, which use the Labyrinth Speaker System together with other audio-enhancement capabilities like the Power Bass Booster, now offer a 50%

improvement in sound performance from its predecessor.

What will really entice sports fans, on top of the Intelligent Auto View, is the Football/Cricket mode that promises you will catch all the live action in crisp clear display. It does this effectively by minimising the loss of details as a result of

spotlights or glare, bringing the game to you with richer colours and sharper details.

The biggest hurdle to wireless connectivity is the speed of our internet broadband connection, as well as the distance between our devices to the wireless router. With a built-in Wi-Fi, there's no need to worry about tangled wires and a temperamental internet connection. The Screen Mirroring feature works flawlessly to project mobile content onto the screen so the compatibility of file formats no longer matter.

The Toshiba's Pro Theatre L5400's sleek narrow bezel design is a real charmer with all these features, giving you the job of explaining to your guests how beautiful it looks and how well it works.

YANTRICK'S VERDICT: An easy decision to make for those looking for a seamless entertainment experience from a beautifully designed Smart TV, with connection options so good you wouldn't ever need to leave the couch.



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Love in the time of Facebook

This just in: Too much time on social networking sites may end romantic relationships

ANJANA RAJBHANDARY

Partners are cheating more since Facebook came along. They are stalking each other and their exes. Too much time networking on social media strains relationships, and may end them.

Sobering reflections on Valentines Day, 2015. But all is not lost: if a relationship respects loyalty and honesty, being on any social networking should not matter.

“My girlfriend said I had not gotten over my ex because we were still Facebook friends,” said 31-year-old computer engineer, Karan. “She said I had to unfriend her for us to work. It’s ridiculous.”

Shreya is a 23-year-old graduate who has been in a relationship for seven months, and has disagreements regarding Facebook posts. "The solution was to be less active on social media," she said.

It is not rare to hear of people in relationships like Karan and Shreya having disagreements regarding the social media posts and who they are 'friends' with. People fighting over their status updates is becoming common.

“Virtual means of communication especially about relationships in public as opposed to private can create problems and impact key values of



healthy relationships,” said Krista Rajkarnikar a Kathmandu-based psychologist. “If they use social media openly to talk about their relationships, they will need to be open to criticism.”

Many Facebook users engage in 'partner surveillance' which leads to excessive checking of the activity of partners. The more they check, the more jealous they become.

Social Media Specialist Aakar Anil agrees: “If partners meet each other via social networking sites, they become overly possessive.” He says many Nepali parents are now treating Facebook as a matrimonial sites. Which is why, Anil says, maintaining one’s privacy is paramount, and passwords should

never be shared.

Stalking can be addictive, and can cause anxiety among partners and their exes. The more people use Facebook, the more likely they are to connect with previous partners or meet new ones, which can lead to emotional and physical cheating.

Vivek, 27, is unemployed and obsesses about his girlfriend being on her smartphone all the time. Facebook-induced jealousy can lead to arguments, and it happens to be more common in newer couples of three years or less.

Ken Hill, professor of psychology at the College of the Atlantic in the US says many people use social media to “shop” for other relationships while in an

existing one. "People tend to flirt more online than they ever would in person," Hill told *Nepali Times*. "And they rate their relationship based on how many likes they get."

Some of the do's and don'ts about safe Facebook use are universal, and it doesn't seem to matter whether a person is in the US or in Nepal. For example, Puja, 24 said her last relationship ended because of Facebook: "One day, my boyfriend did not log out so I got curious and read all the messages exchanged with his ex-girlfriend. I trusted him but he blamed me for invading his privacy."

Academics across the world are studying the sociology of social networking and how it is changing

our cultures. People do not think anything is real or official, till it is posted on social media. They make important life announcements, display disagreements and hatred, and judge self-worth through words or pictures that scroll up every second.


Indra Dhoj Kshetri, a social media researcher, says social media is just a new tool of communication. “Technology is neutral,” Kshetri told us, “positive and negative effects depend on how we use them.”

'Facebook creeping' is another new phenomenon where one goes through someone else's social media to learn more about them, mostly for possible romantic connection. But what people forget is that a person's online behaviour does not always resemble their offline persona.

"I like attractive women, who doesn't? But too many selfies come across as vain with low self-esteem," said Akash, 29, "she might be a smart girl but her pictures give her away."

Keeping relationships off Facebook could be the smart way to make sure a romantic relationship stays strong.

Kathmandu-based psychologist Lisa A Gautschi summed it up: "If social media makes you more prone to cheat, what does it say about the quality of your relationship? If one is going against what the couple has decided as a couple, online or offline, and there is still cheating then it shows lack of integrity and respect."

People take risks on Facebook because it doesn't feel real, they forget that you haven't *met* until you *meet*.  *Some names have been changed.*



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Boy walked eight days to

“Unlike other hospitals we want fewer patients, not more.”

S P Kalaunee of
Bayalpata Hospital

TSERING DOLKER GURUNG
in ACHHAM

When his eight-year old son Dharmaraj broke his hand while grazing cattle in the remote mountains of Humla, Mansingh Thapa took him to a private clinic in Simkot. It cost Rs 4,500 just to get Dharmaraj’s hand in a cast. But the pain in the boy’s arm did not subside. Unable to afford a second visit to the clinic, Mansingh packed his belongings, slung Dharmaraj on his shoulders and set off on an eight-day walk to Bayalpata Hospital in Achham district.

“What could we do? We didn’t have any other choice,” said Mansingh who had heard about Bayalpata from friends who had received free treatment here. Dharmaraj had surgery and the boy is getting better. The father and son (*pictured, right*) have been staying at the hospital because it is too far to go back to Humla and return for a followup.

For Bikash Gauchan, who was among South Asian doctors to receive the Jyoti Ramnik Pareskh Award this week in Dhaka

for his work as a GP in Bayalpata, this case is unremarkable. There are many patients like Dharmaraj from faraway districts that he has to treat every day in these roadless hills of mid-western Nepal.

“Many of them can’t afford treatment and stay on, so the hospital provides accommodation to the patient and caregiver because it is not possible to ask them to keep going back and forth,” Gauchan told us.

The nearby Sanfebagar airfield hasn’t been in operation since the Maoists destroyed it during the conflict 12 years ago. It takes a rugged day-long bus ride from Surkhet to reach the hospital. But although Bayalpata may feel like it is in the middle of nowhere, the patients here come from even more remote and unserved parts of Nepal.

Word that Bayalpata offers free treatment and medicines has spread far and wide, and although there are government-run hospitals in surrounding districts, most families prefer to bring members here.

“The obstacles to rural health care are accessibility and trust,” explains S P Kalaunee, operations director at Bayalpata. “Patients don’t have access to proper medical care, and don’t trust the government health posts.”

Bayalpata is actually a government hospital that has been managed since 2009 by the US-based charity, Possible (formerly known as Nyaya Health). The hospital receives 200 patients from Achham, but more and more from surrounding districts like Bajura, Doti, Mugu and even as far away as Humla and Dolpo. In the past six years, Bayalpata has treated 200,000 patients, some 70,000 of them last year alone.

Orthopedic injuries, mental health disorders and lung infection are some of the most common ailments. Last year the hospital also started much-needed



Learning the hard way



PICS: KHIM DEVKOTA

Five years after its deadly cholera epidemic, western Nepal tries to prevent a repeat

SAHINA SHRESTHA
in JAJARKOT

Hari Bahadur Kami of Jajarkot (*left*) was taking his wife, Gauri, and six-year-old daughter, Kalika, to a health post in the village of Panchkatiya when night fell during a three-hour climb up the mountain.

The family took shelter from the rain in a roadside shed. Kalika was retching, and her frail body became weaker. The little girl died at midnight. The next morning, Gauri was also dead. Four days later, her 14-year-old son, Dhan Bahadur, also died on the way to the health post.

It was July 2009, and a cholera epidemic was raging in this mid-western hill district. Kalika, Gauri and Dhan became just statistics: among the 400 who were killed in one of the deadliest outbreaks of cholera in Nepal’s recent history.

“We knew it was cholera. That is why we tried to take them to the health post instead of the shaman,” says 51-year-old Hari Bahadur the grief still etched on his face. “But the nearest health post was too far.”

Five years after the epidemic that was caused by drinking water contaminated with human faeces, Jajarkot has taken

treat broken arm



TSERING DOLKER GURUNG



measures to prevent a similar outbreak. Last month, the district was the latest to be declared open defecation free.

Most homes in Jajarkot now have latrines, there is safe-drinking water in the village, and in school children are taught to wash their hands with soap. “Now, no one needs to die of cholera anymore,” Hari Bahadur says. “But it is too late for my family.”

Hari Bahadur remembers the dusty trail leading to his village of Dhime (*pictured above*) would be littered with human waste. Today, this trail and others in the district are clean. Water sources are covered, and there are newly-constructed latrines outside most homes. In 2009, only four out of 10 households in Jajarkot had toilets. In the past four years, 20,000 new

latrines have been built.

“This is a landmark achievement for Jajarkot,” says Siddhi Shrestha of UNICEF. “And it was possible because everyone involved including the local communities and the government joined hands.”

The loss of life in 2009 was so shocking that it galvanised everyone to act, and more importantly, to coordinate activities. A district sanitation plan was introduced in 2011 and Jajarkot became the first district in Bheri Zone to be declared open defecation free, and the 20th out of 75 districts.

The National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan was launched by the President in 2011, which aims at universal sanitation coverage in all districts by 2017.

“What worked for Jajarkot was that

dental services. Its Community Health Program serves 30 village health posts with equipment and training for birthing centres and works with Female Community Health Volunteers to followup on chronic diseases.

Possible gets support from the Ministry of Health, from donors around the world, and also crowdsources funding for the treatment of individual patients through sites like Watsi and Kangu.

In 2014, Bayalpata raised enough money for 30 operations and referrals of patients to hospitals in Nepalganj or Kathmandu. Patients are identified and their stories put up online for funding from around the world overnight.

Mark Arnoldy, CEO of Possible, says, “By 2018, we are targeting philanthropy to be less than 25% of our total funding model in Nepal and will be utilising government investment, research funding, and teaching fees. We’re trying to build something better, and philanthropy plays a role, but we aren’t dependent on it.”

(*See interview, right*)

Possible is now working with the government to expand its services from the present 15-beds to 50, for which it has got a grant of Rs 100 million. It is expanding its current training programs and converting Bayalpata into a rural teaching hospital.

Bayalpata already gets rural placements from medical schools in Kathmandu, but the teaching hospital would allow locals to get medical training within the district and help retain them there.

Says Kalaunee: “Unlike other hospitals in Nepal, our goal is not to get more patients, but to reduce them through prevention measures and upgrading primary care in health posts.”

 nepalitimes.com

■ Crowd-funding globally, acting locally, #660

the DDCs and VDCs took the initiative, the external agencies just facilitated the process,” said Madan Raj Bhatta of Water Resources Management Program, Helvetas.


The village mother’s groups, political parties, students, all played a role, recalls Ghaman Man Singh of Rokaya Gaun, where the first cholera casualty was detected in 2009.

Sanitation cards were distributed to villagers having home latrines so they could get other incentives from the district. Students having toilets were given bonus points in their report cards. Women’s groups and volunteers played an important role in awareness raising.

“It was important for people to realise that using toilets and maintaining proper sanitation was for their own benefit,” says Shova Shahi, who was active in raising awareness in the district capital of Khalanga. “But changing the public mindset was the hardest part.”

Moti Ram KC of Jagatipur recalls having to dig the toilet pit himself when a homeowner couldn’t be convinced to build a latrine. “It wasn’t that he couldn’t afford it, he just didn’t want to build one. So we called up the police and started constructing one by ourselves,” KC recalls.

Now, that Jajarkot has been declared open defecation free, there are challenges of ensuring adequate and safe water supply in the outlying villages. At Jagatipur one recent morning, health post staff were gathered to discuss what to do because the tap had gone dry.

Maybe building latrines is only the first step. 

Fee or free?

Nepali Times spoke to Mark Arnoldy, the CEO of Possible, the non-profit that manages Bayalpata Hospital during his visit to Achham this week.



Nepali Times: What are the challenges to expand Bayalpata Hospital’s services?

Mark Arnoldy: The challenges are immense, but I’m confident we can overcome them thanks to the determination and ingenuity of our team and a wonderful set of partners. We have to meet a very quickly-growing patient demand. In 2012, we treated 21,585 patients and in 2014, 56,106. This year, the numbers continue to climb. When you are seeing numbers climb that quickly it means there is a real genuine need, patients are at least somewhat satisfied with the care provided, and it means we need to do our best to make strategic investments in expanded clinical space, housing, and team members to meet demand projections for the future. That’s why we are investing alongside the Nepal government to build Bayalpata Hospital as a teaching hospital. Another key challenge is supporting primary care at health post facilities and through Female Community Health Volunteers so that the demand on the hospital decreases -- hospital aren’t the best place to be delivering primary care in a well-functioning health system.

Is depending on charity a sustainable model for the future?

I would challenge the idea that we are dependent on charity. There is nothing about our business model and plans for the future that suggests we intend to be dependent. Instead, what we actually want to see happen is a public-private partnership where the government funds and regulates healthcare and allows nonprofit organisations like ours to deliver care within their infrastructure. We believe deeply we should only get funded by the government if we get results, and we are working hard on establishing this performance-based model with our partners in the Ministry of Health and Population and Ministry of Finance. But because it’s the early days, we do utilise philanthropy. However, I’m completely comfortable with that. Philanthropy is the type of capital we should be using to try bold, risky things to serve the poor and pry open other revenue options. By 2018, we are targeting philanthropy to be less than 25 per cent of our total funding model in Nepal and will be utilising government investment, research funding, and teaching fees. It would be our dream to have health insurance up and running in the country so that could be integrated as well, but that’s not in our direct control. The bottom line is we need a healthcare business model that realigns revenue with care. Fee-for-service models don’t serve the rural poor in Nepal well and they incentivise excess care. We’re trying to build something better, and philanthropy plays a role, but we aren’t dependent on it.

How confident are you that the teaching hospital will help in retaining doctors in Bayalpata?

I’m confident that this is a great investment for the Government of Nepal and our funders from outside the country. We know from studies by great organisations like the Nick Simons Institute what keeps doctors happy and working hard in rural environments. We’ve put every single one of those learnings we can into practice with our plans for the expanded Bayalpata Hospital. There will be great housing, fast internet, and most important for our clinical team members, the proper equipment and management system to ensure that high-performing individuals will be able to do their job effectively while being offered growth opportunities through coaching and mentorship. We’ve learned that the best performers and most dedicated people really want the ability to practice their craft of clinical care without politics and distractions created by bad management. We want this to be a place where remarkable people can reliably produce remarkable results for our patients.

Unbecoming of a diplomat

Surendra Poudyal in *Nagarik*, 9 February

नागरिक

As political parties become more polarised, Kathmandu-based ambassadors are busy meddling in Nepal’s internal affairs, violating the Vienna Convention and diplomatic code of conduct.

They are not only just prescribing the political course the country should take, but also meeting a person charged with treason on the pretext of safeguarding human rights.

Why are ambassadors acting like politicians? Why are they giving unsolicited political advice in their host country? Will their political activity help Nepal’s constitution making process?

Nepali officials say political activity by foreigners will increase political instability rather than help Nepal’s peace.



BHASWOR OJHA/KANTIPUR

“Nepal is turning into a playground for foreigners,” said Surya Kiran Gurung, former Nepali ambassador to Russia. “They want political instability in Nepal to serve their own interests. It is a result of our own weakness.”

Dinesh Bhattarai, foreign affairs adviser to Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, does not completely dismiss the allegation that foreigners may want political instability in Nepal. He believes that unwarranted suggestions by ambassadors at a politically sensitive time may not go down well.

“It would have been better if ambassadors had stayed away from giving unwarranted suggestions at a sensitive time like this,” said Bhattarai.

UCPN (Maoist) Vice Chair Narayan Kaji Shrestha, who has also served as Foreign Affairs Minister, is wary of the heightened activities by Kathmandu-based ambassadors. “It would not be appropriate for ambassadors to meet with a person charged with treason.”

CPN (UML) lawmaker Rajan Bhattarai, who served as a member of his party’s foreign affairs department in the past, believes that one of the reasons behind

Nepal’s political instability is foreign interference. “It seems that foreigners want to cash in on our issues that have created divisions among us,” he said.

Lok Raj Baral, former Nepali ambassador to India, also believes that Nepal’s politicians are themselves responsible for foreign meddling in Nepal’s international affairs. “Foreigners have space to play in Nepal because our leaders tend to support and protect them based on their own convenience,” said Baral.

According to Baral, the Europeans are trying to win over religious (Christian) and ethnic communities by emphasising inclusion. He believes that the EU’s ulterior motive is to promote Christianity and spearhead anti-communist activities in Nepal.

Gurung believes that the US’ interest in Nepal is to maintain its global power, check and balance China’s influence and Free Tibet activities in Nepal. “The US’s real intent is to increase political instability in

Nepal and disturb China,” he said.

Gurung believes that the EU is also interested in the issue of Tibetan refugees. Unlike the US and the EU, China wants political stability in Nepal to curb anti-China Tibetan activities.

Before Narendra Modi became India’s Prime Minister, India’s interest was restricted to keeping all political parties in size and increasing its own bargaining power. India’s motive was guided by fear of Chinese influence in Nepal.

“Earlier, India would protest against China’s investment in Nepal. Now, Modi has himself invited China to invest in India,” said Gurung. “The West is not happy with the growing India-China relations.”

India also has an interest in Nepal’s federalism. It is strongly opposed to many federal provinces in the Tarai. UML lawmaker Bhattarai believes what is most dangerous is India’s opposition to North-South federal provinces linking the Tarai with the Hills.

“The cold war has ended but new world orders have started to emerge, and we need to end political transition at the earliest to stay safe from all this,” said Bhattarai, PM Koirala’s foreign affairs adviser.

April Uprising alumni

Editorial in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 8-14 February

हिमाल खबरपत्रिका

At a time when the constitution should already have been written and done with either through consensus or voting, two of the four major political forces in the Constituent Assembly (the UCPN (M) and the Madhesi Front) are gearing up for street agitation. The opposition alliance wants to build pressure against the NC-UML’s effort to vote on the disputed clauses in the new constitution.

This polarisation between the alumni of the 2006 April Uprising has delayed the constitution. No matter how different they were in their political backgrounds and ideologies, they came together in 2006 to restore democracy and peace in the country. But their very ideologies are now becoming a barrier in the constitution writing process. The acrimony and bad blood between them is at its worst.

The polarisation between the ruling and opposition parties has

cleft society vertically down the middle. The April Uprising that they jointly spearheaded was a response to Maoist violence and King Gyanendra’s hunger for power. The people’s movement simultaneously defeated Gyanendra’s ultra-rightist as well as the Maoist’s ultra-leftist views. In the ensuing political trajectory, the country embraced republicanism, federalism, secularism and an inclusive policy. These political agendas, which have been legitimised by the two CA polls, are foundations of the new constitution. There is no dispute whatsoever on these issues among the major political parties.

The current discord seems to be caused by a deep sense of insecurity that some political leaders have about their political future in the post-constitution period. The NC and the UML are not opposed to federalism, the main agenda for the opposition’s agitation. The current deadlock is partly caused by the self-obsession and the need by some NC-UML

politicians to preserve a foothold in their constituencies.

The NC and the UML have more than sufficient lawmakers to pass the new constitution. But, there is a growing voice within the ruling parties to reach a consensus with the opposition. They know that it will be difficult to implement the constitution if it is boycotted by the UCPN (M) and Madhesi parties. On a positive note the opposition, too, has not completely abandoned negotiations. By delaying their protests, they have still kept the doors open for communication.

Some political leaders are actively helping both sides resume talks. If discord between agents of political change persists, it will benefit those who do not want these changes at all. So, the ruling and opposition parties must stop blaming each other and try to reach a consensus. If they want to ensure the country’s prosperity through an inclusive political system, there are no alternatives to talks and consensus.



नागरिक

Dewen in *Nagarik*, 9 February

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“Consensus on all points is not possible. So, let’s write a new constitution by agreeing on as many points as we can. Street agitation is not the right way.”

Madhesi Front leader Bijaya Gachhadar in *Annapurna Post*, 12 February

Political personalities

Naya Patrika, 31 January

नयाँ पत्रिका

Meetings of top political leaders have often ended inconclusively not because of their ideological differences but because of the way they put forth their arguments. Here is an insight into how top leaders conduct themselves during negotiations.



Sushil Koirala, Prime Minister/NC president

Rambles, fails to understand most of the points raised by other interlocutors. Often talks about ‘give and take’ and ‘win-win’ but never explains how to achieve that and what Plan B could be. Listens attentively but rarely counters their argument with his own logic, does not grasp technicalities, and has a short temper. But is always taking the initiative to clear the air.

KP Oli, UML Chair

Often turns up late at meeting, talks clearly and counters arguments of other leaders logically. Prone to breaking into proverbs and parables to get point across sharply and hurting the feelings of other leaders. Rarely backtracks from statements and decisions.



Pushpa Kamal Dahal, UCPN (Maoist) Chair

Begins softly, always harps on the 12-point agreement, peace accord and spirit of the Interim Constitution. Tries his best to convince other leaders with the force of argument. Takes on a strong posture when arguments get heated.

Sher Bahadur Deuba, NC leader

A listener. Tries to calm things down when discussions get heated. Simplifies complicated political issues and talks in a clear and concise way.



Madhav Nepal, UML leader

Fancies himself as a mediator and middle-of-the-roader. Comes up with alternatives when negotiations get stuck. Speaks to other leaders and understands their points of view well before meetings begin, and always arrives promptly.

Baburam Bhattarai, UCPN (Maoist) leader

Seconds Dahal and spends much of his time explaining his party’s ideology on key issues. Often gives examples to explain his party’s concept and Dahal’s point of view and rarely breaks from the party line.



Jhalnath Khanal, UML leader

Arguments are always roundabout, never straight or concise. Digresses from the matter at hand, and goes into elaborate analyses of historical political events. Although no longer party chairman, often presents the UML’s stance on key issues.

Ramchandra Poudel, NC leader

Sticks to the partyline, speaks bluntly and sometimes ignores or bypasses his party president.



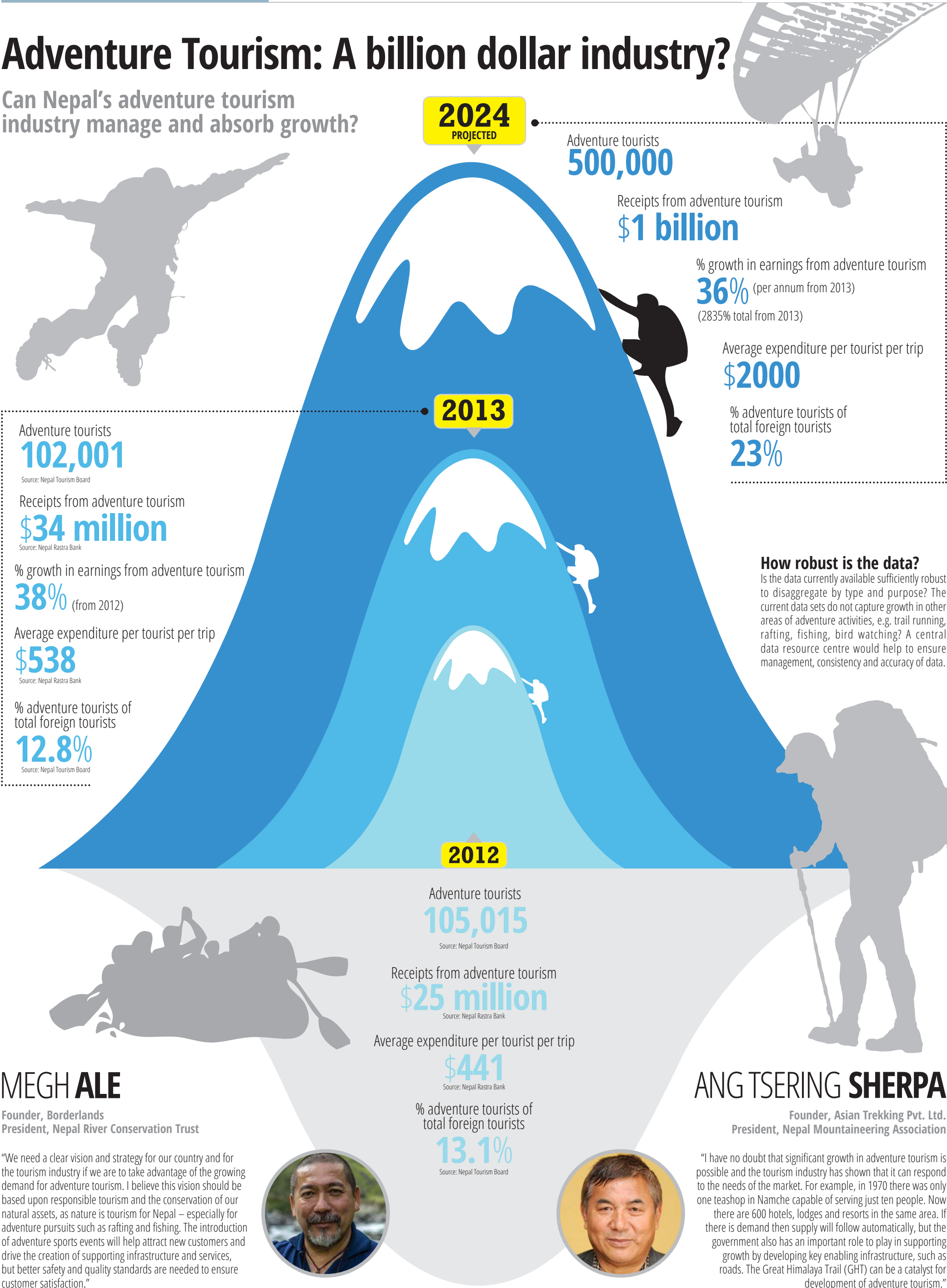
Narayan Kaji Shrestha, UCPN (Maoist) leader

First to arrive at meetings. Presents himself differently than Dahal and Bhattarai, and is willing to be a free thinker to get negotiations unstuck. Exhorts other leaders to show flexibility for a consensus.

We believe that knowledge is the starting point to generate a conversation. This monthly knowledge series has been initiated in order to raise important questions and stimulate debate within Nepal’s tourism industry. It is hoped that structuring the conversation based on new knowledge and developing an open platform to share ideas will lead to action, positive growth and impact in both the public and private sector.

Adventure Tourism: A billion dollar industry?

Can Nepal’s adventure tourism industry manage and absorb growth?



Half a million adventure tourists per year by 2024

Nepal's adventure tourism market has not experienced the same rapid growth identified at a global level despite the positive image it has amongst the adventure community and its unique and numerous adventure assets. In 2009, a high of 132,929 foreign tourists (26.1% of all tourists) visited Nepal for trekking and mountaineering. However, the numbers subsequently dropped to 102,001 in 2013 (13% of total foreign visitors).

But what about the future? The National Tourism Strategic Plan has set a target of attracting

2,147,000 foreign tourists by 2024. Using this number as a starting point it is possible to draw two lines of growth. Between 2000 and 2013, an average of 16% of all foreign visitors came for trekking and mountaineering. However, during the same period, the highest recorded percentage in a single year was 28% in 2001. Assuming that in 2024 16% of foreign visitors will come for trekking and mountaineering, the total number of adventurers could get up to 343,520. Taking a more ambitious rate of 25% of the total (based on previous highs) the

PROJECTED ARRIVAL NUMBERS, 2024

	Assuming 16% of national target	Assuming 25% of national target
Total number visiting Nepal in 2024	2,147,000	2,147,000
Number of tourists visiting for trekking and mountaineering in 2024	343,520	536,750
% growth from 2013	236%	425%

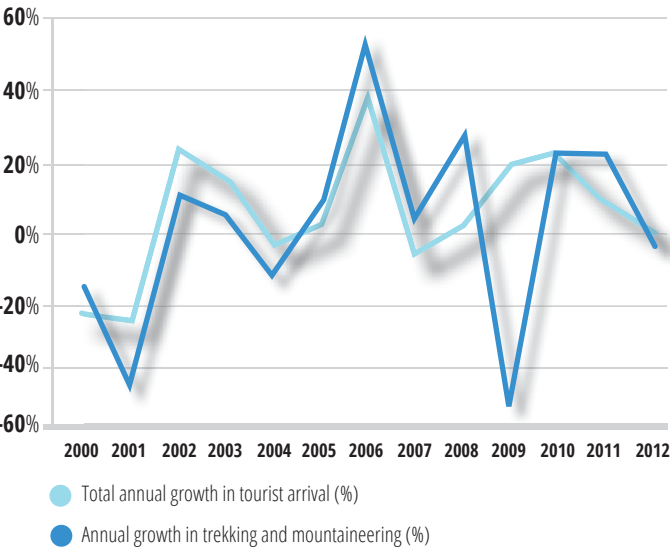
number of foreign visitors coming to Nepal per year for trekking and mountaineering could reach as high as 536,750.

It is therefore possible to imagine that 500,000 adventurers visiting each year from 2024. This would require year-on-year growth of approximately 9%, which could be seen as ambitious given the historic growth rate. More importantly, it would mean a growth from the current position of anywhere between 236-425%. This raises an important question; is the industry ready to absorb and manage this growth?

A stimulant or product of market success?

There is a strong correlation between Nepal's adventure market and the general trends seen in the tourism sector. When the general market does well, the adventure market outperforms. Likewise, when the general market does not do so well the adventure market suffers a greater fall. This could suggest that a robust tourism market is required to support adventure tourism. Conversely it could be argued that it is the adventure tourism market that stimulates the rest of the tourism market in Nepal.

MOUNTAINS AND VALLEYS



Source: Nepal Tourism Statistics, 2012 Nepal Tourism Board



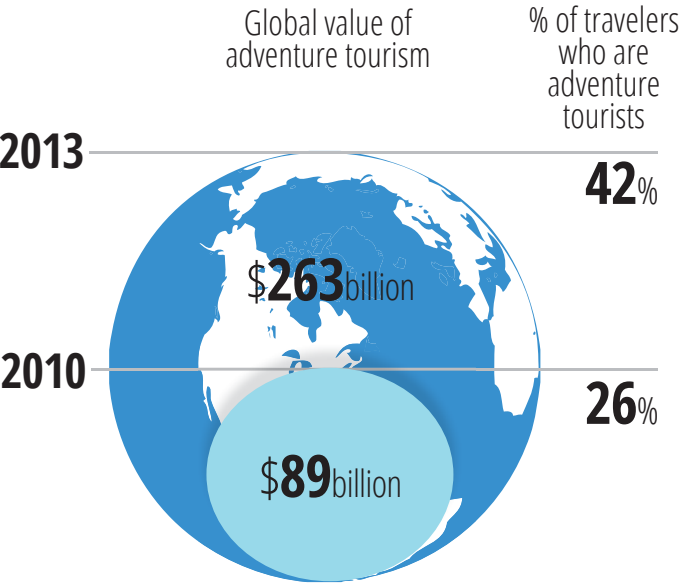
NEPAL ON THE WORLD MAP

- ▲ Khumbu, Nepal among the Top 10 regions to travel to by Lonely Planet in 2015
- ▲ Nepal ranked among Top 10 coolest places to visit in 2015 by Forbes
- ▲ Great Himalayan Trail ranked among the top 10 long distance trails in the world by CNN

Nepal is widely regarded as a playground for soft and hard adventure. In fact, Global Adventure Tourism Index consistently ranks Nepal in the top five adventure locations based on image and appeal. Nepal has also recently attracted strong press coverage in western markets (see left).

Huge growth in adventure tourism globally

TOURISM IS AN ADVENTURE WORLDWIDE

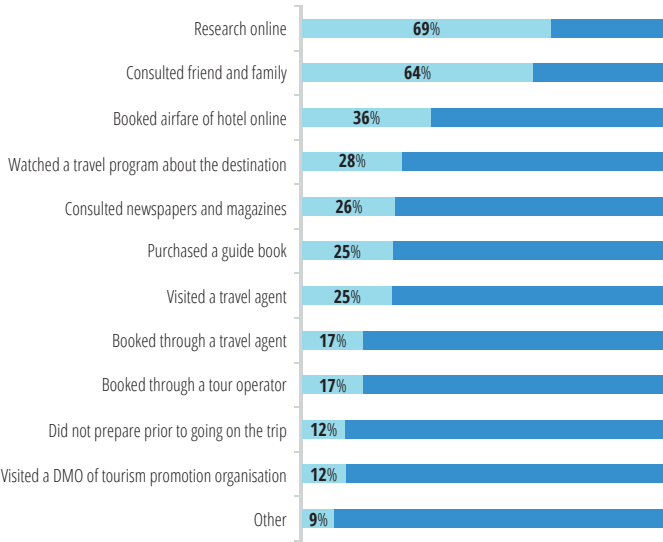


Adventure tourism is one of the fastest growing areas in the tourism sector globally, attracting high value customers, supporting local economies and encouraging sustainable practices, according to the Global Report on Adventure Tourism by the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). Some key highlights of this rapid and recent growth include:

- Increase in the global value of adventure tourism from \$89 billion in 2010 to \$263 billion in 2013, equating to growth of 195% in two years. This compares to a growth of approximately 5% per annum across the tourism sector in general (see chart, left)
- Increase in the percentage of international travelers engaging in adventure travel activities worldwide from 26% in 2010 to 42% in 2013. (see chart, left)
- Increase in average expenditure per adventure trip globally from \$2710 in 2012 to \$3000 in 2013.

This trend is expected to continue as the whole of the tourism sector continues to grow. According to the UNWTO's *Tourism Trends 2030* the number of international tourist arrivals worldwide is expected to increase by an average of 3.3% a year between 2010-2030, generating 1.4 billion tourist arrivals in 2020 and 1.8 billion by the year 2030, an increase from 1,087 million in 2013. Significantly, the market share of emerging economies increased from 30% in 1980 to 47% in 2013, and is expected to reach 57% by 2030, equivalent to over 1bn international tourist arrivals.

HOW ADVENTURE TRAVELERS WORLDWIDE BOOK HOLIDAYS



Source: ATTA Market Study 2013



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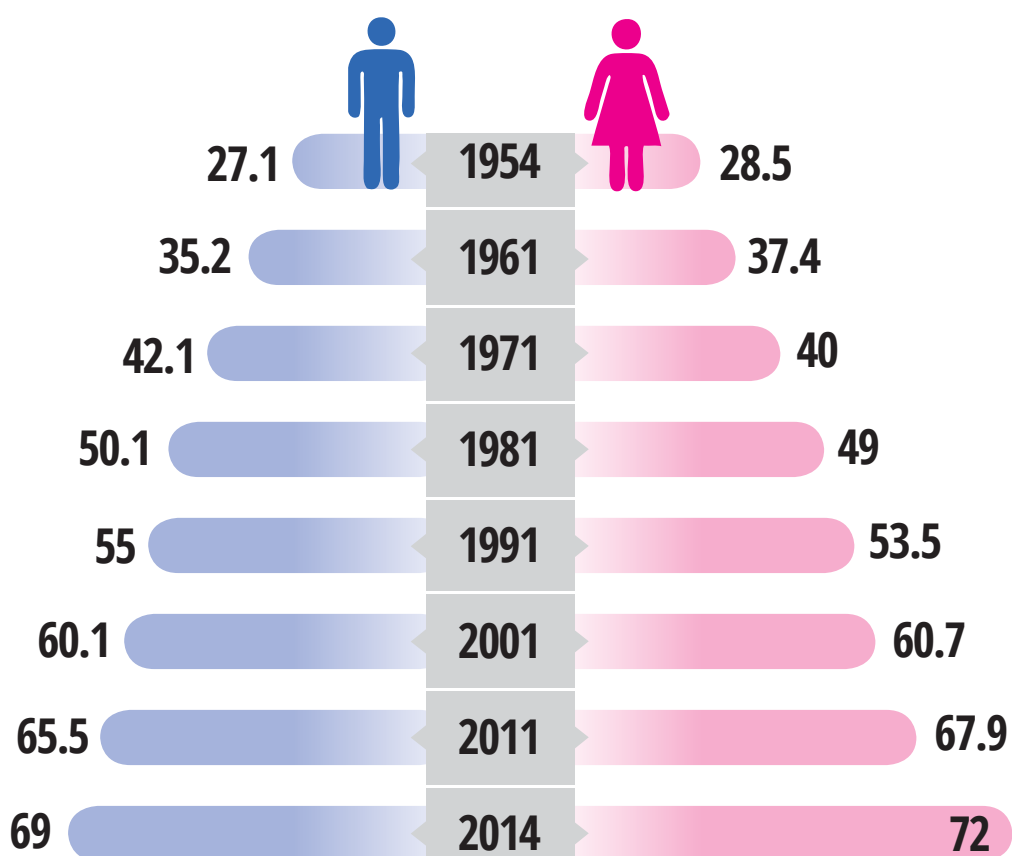

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Nepalis are living longer

AVERAGE LIFESPAN



Santa Gaha Magar and Ramesh Kumar
in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 8-14 February

हिमाल
खबरपत्रिका

Latest research shows that Nepal has made dramatic progress in increasing the average life-expectancy of its citizens – mainly due to a sharp drop in maternal and child mortality.

Nepal has now overtaken other South Asian countries and has the second highest life expectancy after Sri Lanka, according to a paper published in a recent issue of the British medical journal, *Lancet*.

The average lifespan of a Nepali is now 71, while Sri Lankans live longer to be 76. Bhutanese at 69, Indians and Pakistanis are both at 66 and Afghanis have the lowest life expectancy at 56.

What is remarkable is how quickly the average lifespan of Nepalis has increased – going up by 12.3 years between 1991 and 2011. Back in 1954, due to high infant mortality, an average Nepali lived to be 27.8 years. Out of 188 countries studied by the *Lancet*, Nepal is among the top ten countries to have dramatically improved life expectancy.

Life expectancy grows if the mortality rate decreases in proportion with birth rate, which is what has been happening in Nepal. Other factors include better access to health care, education, nutrition and immunisation. “The rise in life expectancy of Nepalis is a result of decreasing child and maternal mortality,” explains statistician Bhim Prasad Subedi.

Subedi says improved public health services and women literacy has contributed to higher life expectancy of women than men. “The government now needs to have plans for our rapidly aging population,” says Subedi.

Nepal has achieved two key Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by lowering maternal and under-five mortality rates. Today, 170 in every 100,000 mothers die while delivering babies – down from 880 per 100,000 compared to 20 years ago. Similarly, 54 in every 1,000 children die before they reach five years of age whereas this figure was 150 only two decades ago. Nepal has achieved these targets two years before the 2015 MDG deadline.

Swarnim Wagle of the National Planning Commission (NPC) says curbing preventable deaths is effective for developing countries like Nepal to increase their average life expectancy. “Growth in life expectancy is an outcome of investment made by the government in health and education sectors over the last two decades,” he explains.

After 1990, Nepal allocated just 19.2 and 7.21 per cent of its budget for education and health respectively. Today, the figures have risen to 25.5 and 13 per cent respectively. The increase in the health budget has allowed the country to decrease the number of deaths caused by diseases like diarrhea, tuberculosis and pneumonia.

The growth in life expectancy is also a result of Nepal’s dramatically decreasing fertility rate, which is now at just 2.5 – down from nearly 6 in 1990. Yogendra Gurung of Tribhuvan University says people tend to have fewer children when they see higher prospect of their children’s survival, and fewer births mean fewer deaths.

In the last two decades, due to the increase in per capita income, Nepalis can buy healthier food and afford medical care. All this means the proportion of elderly people in the country has gone up.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, 295,459 Nepalis were more than 75 years old in 2001 and it went up to 437,981 in 2011.

Economist Keshav Acharya says the state now needs to spend more on pension and medical care of the elderly population. Better management of the aging population will also have a positive impact on the country’s economy.

Anthropologist Suresh Dakhal says: “The elderly are a big source of knowledge, we must encourage them to share what they know with the new generation,” Dakhal says, adding that the state and the health sector have been lagging behind in geriatric care.

Kashi Raj Dahal of the Administration Reforms Suggestion Committee argues the government now needs to increase the retirement age of civil servants. “If it is increased from 58 to 60, experienced civil servants will have two more years to serve the country.”



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Doctorate in Dacoitry

Of the many opportunities that Nepal is wasting, like its unnatural resources and our vast store of inhuman capital, none is more glaring than the way we have squandered every opportunity to be an international educational hub.

We have a lot we can teach the world, and after all, the present world could do with some improvement. So, it is the responsibility of each and everyone of us to kill two birds with one stone, since a bird in the hand is worth two in a Swiss bank account. Being a country of dollar millionaires who are now rubbing shoulders with the world's most prestigious arms dealers, smugglers and money laundromats, it behooves us to share our expertise in corporate fraud and malfeasance at the upper echelons of government with the world out there.

It is clear that our existing institutes of higher learning, which are steeped in old-fashioned values like ethics, integrity, hard work, do not prepare young Nepalis to survive in the rough-and-tumble world of todofod, bandfand, kutakut, lutpat, and last but not least, chorchar. We need new institutions of higher learning that move with the times to teach students to be street smart so they get vocational training in burning tyres, vandalising shops and cremating motrocycles in order to stop a vote in parliament.

This is why it is heartening to note that the region's first School for Scoundrels (affiliated to the Charlatan Heston University in Texas, USA) has just opened its gates to all wannabe crooks desirous of pursuing higher studies in hooliganism. Everyone wants to be a ruffian these days, so competition is stiff. But the institute has a strict screening policy that shortlists only the scum of the earth, and from that group carefully selects outstandingly evil geniuses with a demonstrated potential for lawless behaviour who will be eligible for scholarships. Seats are limited, however, so only those who can threaten and/or bribe the registrar will gain admission.

Once accepted, freshers immediately get down to serious academics with a special undergraduate curriculum for young thugs that prepares them for a rigorous four-year graduate degree course under a special Rascals-in-Residence program. This is followed by an interdisciplinary immersion course in pursuance of a Doctorate in Dacoitry. Then, and only then, can we truly say that we have separated the chaff from the wheat and begin teaching future crooks how to make lots of dough. Once graduated,



students will have to do a compulsory one-year internship in a hotbed of corruption of their choice to garner practical experience in white-collar crime.

Full descriptions of the courses offered at the University of Banditry School for Rogues and Scalawags may be found under the following appropriate disciplines:

Introductory Course for Smugglers
Course guide: Prof Dr Tusker
Semester: Fall
Level: Intermediate
Nepal has an open border with India that is under-utilised, leading to an alarming drop in informal bilateral trade. This course allows students to explore creative new ways to go to-and-fro across the border and line up tremendous job opportunities along no-man's-land. Students can specialise in the illicit trade in tiger spare parts, weapons import and export, counterfeit currency, girl trafficking and crossborder goon renting.

Extortion as a Force in Nation-Building Practicum
Faculty Supervisor: Comrade Johnny Cash
Semester: Fall
Level: Junior
This course offers students an extensive and intensive on-the-job internship with the Dash Baddies in all kinds of extortion, including purloining, kidnapping for ransom, graft, and blackmail. It is also an expensive course, which in itself is an illustration of extortion. Partial scholarships available for deserving candidates who have experience sabotaging transmission lines and holding hydropower projects to ransom. Free firearms training for early bird applicants.

Unaccountability: How to How to Plunder the Public in Public
Adjutant Professor: Dean Con Man, PhD
Semester: Year
Level: Advanced
The theory of wealth transfer from the poor in rich countries to the rich in poor countries. Essentials of behaviour dynamics that makes people willingly hand over all their savings to a complete stranger. Is greed hereditary? Are atheists more corrupt? Advanced course in amassing ill-gotten wealth by stealing the allowances of ex-guerrillas.



The Ass

PAST PRESENT FUTURE

DIWAKAR CHETTRI

Questionnaire Committee, bah!



I'm sure all kinds of questions will be entertained but not the main one:



"Where is the new constitution?"



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