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## The wheels of life

A man sacrificing a lamb at the wheels of the Rato Machendranath chariot on Thursday in Lalitpur. Every 12 years, the structure and wheels of the chariot of the rain god are constructed from new timber. The pre-monsoon festival begins next month.

## JUST JUSTICE



It is important to remember not to forget atrocities committed during the conflict. Not to pursue justice may send a message that perpetrators can get away with mass murder again. Only

the relatives of the victims have the right to forgive, but we as a nation should never forget.

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## THE TRUTH

Seeking justice in Nepal, the UK and South Africa

**THE GADFLY**  
BY **DAVID SEDDON**

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[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com) ■ Watch video by S. Dillon Ripley

**buzz**

## THE LIMO LUGGERS OF CHITLANG

The five surviving porters who carried cars they never got to ride.

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## WHEN WE WERE YOUNG

Child survivors of wars and natural disasters in Nepal carry their trauma into adulthood

**ANJANA RAJBHANDRY AND MALLIKA ARYAL**

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JAN MÖLLER HANSEN



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# JUST JUSTICE

Last month, the Supreme Court ruled on a writ rejecting provisions in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act that would have allowed pardons in cases of heinous crimes committed during the conflict, and those already being heard in the civil courts.

The bloody 10-year Maoist insurgency was accompanied by massive human rights violations by both sides. State security forces perpetrated most of them (summary executions, torture, rape, and forced disappearances) many on innocent civilians suspected to be Maoist sympathisers.

The Maoists, too, carried out public executions of so-called ‘class enemies’ after extremely brutal torture that included dismemberment, disembowelment, crushing bones of victims with boulders and logs, gouging out eyes, burning and burying people alive. There were also many murders that had nothing to do with the war, as the conflict became a convenient excuse to settle personal scores.

The Truth and Reconciliation Act would have allowed many of these crimes to be classified as conflict-related and under the purview of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission on Forced Disappearances. Neither side lost the war, and after 2006 both the parliamentary parties and the Maoists became part of the Nepali state.

While this has made many elements of the peace process (like the integration of the armies) easier to resolve than in other post-conflict countries, it has also pushed the two sides to collude to let bygones be bygones so that they don’t have to be accountable for their crimes against humanity.

The latest egregious example of this was that while the ruling NC-UML coalition and the opposition Maoist-Madhesi alliance can’t agree on anything to do with the constitution, they were in complete agreement in dividing between them up the leadership of the TRC and the Commission on Forced Disappearances (CFD).

Both former-ambassador Surya Kiran Gurung in the TRC and former justice of the appellate court, Lokendra Mallik, at the CFD are decent people who may not blatantly flout the

Reconciliation is not possible without truth and justice for the relatives of those murdered and disappeared ten years ago.

principles of transitional justice and contravene Supreme Court verdicts. Even so, the way the two have been going door-to-door calling on their political godfathers and the chiefs of the security forces since their appointment doesn’t send a very encouraging signal about their independence.

The Supreme Court verdict of 26 February has shaken up the political establishment, and the brass of the Nepal Army and Nepal Police. Their carefully laid plans to evade the long arm of the law has suddenly unravelled. While the army and police are not saying much, the verdict seems to have sent shock waves through the Maoists. Their six factions came together this week to warn that the Supreme Court decision goes against “the spirit of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement” and they threaten that it could “take the country back to war”. And just so the message is clear, they have decided to terrorise the people with successive nationwide shutdowns in April unless they have political guarantees against prosecution for war crimes.

The main agenda of the Maoist-led 30 party alliance is ethnicity-based federalism, but it is clear that for the rump Maoists the alliance is just a useful way to magnify its enfeebled voice. Also mystifying is why the Madhesi parties haven’t seen through this, and are helping protect the Maoists from being answerable to wartime excesses. After all, it is not their fight.

The other mystery is the curious hush from the internationals who, as erstwhile champions of transitional justice, pumped millions into NGOs looking at wartime human rights violations. Inconsistency, insincerity and geopolitical expediency seems to have silenced them all. The need to protect the process has become more important than doing the right thing.



Even if the top parties come to an agreement on federalism and on the five disputed districts, therefore, it is unlikely that there will be a consensus on the constitution because the real issue here is transitional justice. Proof of this is how UCPN(M) Chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal has repeatedly sabotaged efforts by the Madhesi Front leader Bijay Gachhadar to push what should have been a perfectly reasonable compromise formula to break the deadlock on the constitution.

By putting a spanner in the works of the transitional justice mechanism, Dahal is letting down tens of thousands of his own cadre and their relatives as well as ordinary civilians who were executed or disappeared by the Royal Nepal Army, Armed Police Force and the Nepal Police between 1996-2006.

It is important to remember not to forget our past because if we do we may repeat the horrors. Not to pursue justice may send a message in future to misguided revolutionaries and a brutal state that they can get away with mass murder again. Only the relatives of the victims have the right to forgive, but we as a nation should never forget.

## YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

### CONSTITUTION

Lets cut to the chase. The NC and UML and the Maoists, none of them want a Constitution. (‘Delete interim’, Editorial, #750). Stop the lies and betrayal. The leaders will take us to the gutter and keep us in the gutter.

Nabin Shrestha

■ If the interim constitution is our new constitution then why on earth did we conduct elections not once but twice? We spent billions and now you are suggesting that simply deleting the word ‘interim’ is ok? You are abusing the intelligence of Nepali readers.

Sushil Sharma

■ It’s the politicians, stupid. Delete the criminal politicians.

Shree Ramesh Adihikari

■ It’s time to banish the dirty politicians who are abusing poor Nepalis and looting their wealth. (‘A temporary constitution’, by Damakant Jayshi, #750) They can’t write a constitution in eight years, these disgraceful and miserable men that have only brought shame and dishonour to Nepal.

Sunil Shrestha

### BLEEDING LEADS

If a dog bites a man it doesn’t make a news, but if a man bites a dog that makes the news because it is not natural. (‘If it bleeds, it still leads, by Tsering Dolker Gurung, #750). On the other hand most of today’s

journalism is ‘churnalism’ thanks to sensationalism.

Whatever

■ ‘When a tree falls it resounds with a thundering crash; and yet a whole forest grows in silence.’ — Jocelyn Murray

Khagendra

■ Excellent critique of the international media’s emphasis on a pre-set agenda. But this is nothing new, the wire services and international TV channels have been operating on this principle for decades.

Jens

### PILGRIM TOURISM

Nepal can bring half million pilgrims easily. (‘Half-a-million pilgrims by 2024’, #750) Just let Dalai Lama perform his Kalachakra in Lumbini. Install a Buddhist as Chief of Lumbini Trust Fund. Why do we need a non-Buddhist to lead Lumbini? Prachanda can lead his own party.

Parikrama

■ Although South Asia once had great saints, now we have lost most of it. So, what are we trying to sell foreigners? It is fake spiritualism. The important thing is to keep holy places holy, not to turn them into Disneyland. It is sad that even religious people in Nepal no longer know the meaning of spiritualism. Just can’t take the development of Lumbini seriously when it is led by a war criminal.

Ramesh

■ It is a disgrace to have a war criminals control the Lumbini Development Trust. Simply pathetic. But what we must do, without losing true spirituality, is help people who are poor. But in Nepal, with rent seeking narrow minded bigots, this looks pretty hopeless.

Shalav

### THE FOREIGN HAND

This is one of the best and most insightful articles I have read for a long time. (‘The Consensus Ruse, by the Foreign Hand #750) Frankly, a lot of us are just losing interest in the constitution writing process because of the issues covered in this article, which are making the process into a hopeless cause.

Steve Keeling

■ Mass murderers cannot be leaders or rulers of Nepal. Politicians that have sold their name, honour and even their souls to unseen powers or remote controls cannot be allowed to lead us. Above criminals should not be in power.

Hari P Sharma

■ These misguided communists have to be driven out of Nepal, if we are to

regain our past glory and live in peace. There is no other option.

Aditya Rana

### THE ASS

Ass, you deserve a hearty kick in the ass for this one. (‘Face-saving on FB’, Backside, by the Ass) Hee-haw!

She Ass

■ The Ass was just brilliant. Superb!

Tika P Dhakal

■ Is the FB spoof going to be a regular feature in the Ass’ column?

Tara

■ The three idiots in President Ram Baran Yadav’s fake Facebook post look pregnant. Hilarious.

@BulMHaldouni

President Ram Baran Yadav shared a photo.

OK, if you can't reach a consensus, let's have a football match and whoever wins gets to write the constitution.



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## THIS WEEK



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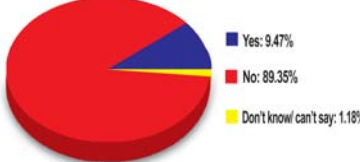
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Weekly Internet Poll #751

Q. Will you support the general strikes called by the Maoist-Madhesi alliance?

Total votes: 169



Weekly Internet Poll #752  
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Is chemical castration an option to deter rapists?



# Elusive truth and justice

The quest goes on in Nepal, the UK and South Africa

Eight years after the Comprehensive Peace Accord, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission on Enforced Disappearances (CED) have now been finally formed, its chair and members appointed. But serious concerns remain as to how they will operate, despite the decision of the Supreme Court on 26 February, in the light of existing legislation or the lack of it.



**THE GADFLY**  
David Seddon

Nepal has still not criminalised torture, nor has it defined extra-judicial killings as crimes against humanity. This places those responsible for torture and killings at an advantage in any legal procedure. There has been no revision of the 1959 Army Act, which required a court of inquiry board and a court martial for any violations of the Act but contained no provisions regarding the obligations of the army to release full and complete details of court-martial proceedings and any judgments arising therefrom.

The Army has already manipulated the provisions calling for army inquiries and courts martial in order to avoid accountability before civilian courts, and the Government of Nepal has made use of this in representations to the British authorities in the last two years to prevent the trial in the UK of Colonel Kumar Lama. He is currently charged by the Crown Prosecution Service for alleged torture of at least two prisoners during the Maoist insurgency while officer-in-command at the Goringhale Barracks on Kapilvastu in 2005.

The Army has also obstructed police investigation into alleged extrajudicial executions and other abuses. In the case of Maina Sunuwar, the army refused to share the results of the court martial with the police and her family, despite a court directive. The Public Security Act of 1989 Section 22 also provides immunity for any acts committed by State officials in good faith during the course of duty.

There is a real risk that these protective laws in favour of the police and the army will play a significant role in thwarting the truth and reconciliation process, even if the TRC adopts a robust position as regards its mandate, which must be in question. The most likely outcome is not a confrontation with the Army, government and the Maoists but a continuing delay in addressing specific cases.

The trial of Lieutenant Colonel Lama, already delayed for two years as a result of efforts by the Government of Nepal to have the matter settled out of court, began eventually on 24 February at the Central Criminal Court (the Old Bailey) before a judge and jury.

The opening statements by both the prosecution and the defence were heard, as was my own evidence as an expert witness on the political and security situation during the conflict and on human rights in Nepal. On 18 March, however, the trial was halted and the jury discharged, on the extraordinary grounds that despite strenuous efforts ‘a reliable qualified interpreter could not be found’.

It would seem that this was not so much for Colonel Lama as for the two prosecution witnesses and alleged victims of torture – Janak Raut and Karam Hussein (both Madhesis and one a Muslim) whose command of Nepali was presumably considered insufficient for the usual corps of interpreters. The significance that the victims, although Nepali, speak a different language from the man they accuse of having ordered and overseen their torture has yet to be considered by the court and all concerned.

The two men had already begun to give evidence and Raut, whom the Prosecutor Bobbie Cheema QC had previously explained was a medic who worked in a private health clinic and was not a Maoist, had told the jury that while in detention his hands were tied with rope, he was blindfolded, and his head was repeatedly hit against a concrete wall. He also said he was beaten so hard with a bamboo cane that it snapped in two. On one occasion, Lama allegedly told his men to keep beating Raut otherwise they would be sacked. They were also told to replace the bamboo canes with an iron bar. Raut broke down while giving evidence.

There is to be a court hearing on 10 April at which a new trial date will be set, likely in the summer. Yet another delay in the pursuit of truth and justice, let alone the wider objective of reconciliation.

If those seeking truth, justice and reconciliation in Nepal hope to find inspiration in the archetypal example of South Africa, they must recognise that 20 years on the TRC experience is very mixed. There are no apartheid politicians from the 1980s in jail in South Africa, and Dr Wouter Basson, known as ‘Dr Death’, who ran the apartheid government’s chemical and biological warfare program has continued to practice in Cape Town and only now faces being struck off the medical register, having been found guilty in 2013 of ‘unprofessional conduct’.

Eugene de Kock, commander of a notorious death squad in the 1980s who was sentenced in 1996 to 212 years in jail and two life sentences for 87 crimes and is one of very few apartheid figures to have served time - is now being considered for release and a possible presidential pardon. It is perhaps significant, however, that those calling for his release are not died-in-the-wool right-wing White Afrikaansers but largely the widows of his Black victims and other relatives.

From his cell, Eugene de Kock has tried to atone by volunteering information to families of victims, and has also helped to find the bodies of missing anti-apartheid activists. Twice last year he

accompanied investigators to a river bank near Zeerust, north-west of Johannesburg, to locate the shallow grave of Phelemo Ntehelang, a young ANC fighter who was captured, turned into

a police informer, beaten with a snooker cue and then smothered, at the instigation of Eugene de Kock.

Perhaps, in the long run, there is room for truth, justice and eventually reconciliation. Let us hope so.

*The Gadfly recently spent three weeks in South Africa, where he writes for the monthly magazine, Amandla, and works with the Alternative Information & Development Centre (AIDC).*



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# An ailing nation

Should Nepalis just die because the government is too busy trying to draft a constitution?

At a clinic in the largest hospital in the country, a doctor is bedridden for the last six days. No, he was not taken ill by long queues of patients at the overcrowded hospital. Govinda KC has seemingly superhuman strength and motivation not just



**BY THE WAY**  
Anurag Acharya

to treat hundreds of patients at his hospital, but also to travel across districts, countries and continents at his own expense to attend to the sick. His compassion knows no boundary.

But earlier this week, the senior orthopaedic surgeon (*pictured*) went on an indefinite hunger strike, his fifth, because no one in government was trying to treat the rot of corruption that has infected Nepal's health sector. In fact, they were all profiting from it.

When I met UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli this week, I asked him if he was satisfied, as a coalition partner, with the way the government is functioning (*see interview, below*). Oli said yes, and added: "There are lapses in the governance, but our priority is to draft the constitution."



DEVAKI BISTA

His remarks reminded me of former Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai who told me something similar in 2012, when I pointed out rampant corruption in his government. Oli's deputy Bam Dev Gautam told a newspaper on Thursday: "Rapes do happen during political transitions..."

We have spent eight years, elected two constituent assemblies and seen six governments that have said their priority is the constitution. How long will this country have

to endure the burden of this transition?

Nanda Prasad Adhikari starved himself to death to protest a legal system that failed to bring those who killed his son to justice. His corpse is still in Refrigerator Locker# 4 at the Bir Hospital morgue. Another father from Nawalparasi is now threatening to immolate himself, because he has no faith that the police will catch the murderers of his son. A critically injured ten-year-old boy from Jhapa, who

was sent away from a private hospital because his family had no money to treat him, is asking the government: should I just die because my family has no money for my treatment? A subsistence farmer last month fed flour poisoned with pesticide to his hungry family.

Stories of families committing suicide under the burden of debt are largely under-reported and so are the vulnerabilities of poor migrant labourers who die in distant deserts every day trying

to save mortgaged land back home.

How long must people of this country live and die in desperation, waiting for the new constitution of the 'New Nepal'? Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Baburam Bhattarai, Sushil Koirala, Sher Bahadur Deuba, KP Sharma Oli, Madhav Nepal, the Nepali people are waiting for your answer. You have been preoccupied with political squabbling, too blind to the suffering of its people dying of hunger and lack of basic health care. The spending in health and education are at an all time high, yet a weak and corrupt government has looked the other way as greedy bureaucrats and politicians feast on public money.

Meanwhile, the opposition alliance has called for a second round of protest starting next week and Home Minister Gautam has decided to mobilise 62,000 security personnel to quell it. The Prime Minister is bedridden in Baluwatar, Maoist Chair Dahal is in China, the UML's Oli is ailing, and Bhattarai has instructed his cadre to take state security head-on.

The people can only ration supplies, hunker down and hope to survive. But everything has a tipping point, and we may be nearing one here. 🇳🇵

## “Himal, Pahad, Tarai need each other”



**CPN-UML Chairman KP Oli is juggling the constitution with an internal feud within his party. Oli spoke to Anurag Acharya this week, packing a few punches despite ill health.**

**Nepali Times: Your party colleagues seem unhappy with you?**

**KP Oli:** For a long time, the party was being run by a few as their fiefdom. Now that situation has changed. So, they are bound to be upset but that doesn't mean we are divided. We are a big party we cannot satisfy everybody's ambition.

**How do you evaluate the performance of PM Sushil Koirala?**

The NC hasn't paid enough attention to governance, true. But we are now concentrating on constitution drafting and we missed the deadline because the constitutional dialogue committee, which was supposed to resolve the deadlock, was being headed by someone who was responsible for dissolving the last CA.

**Was there an agreement that the UML would lead the government after the January deadline.**

If we had wanted to, we could have made government leadership an issue after January. But we chose not to because our priority for now is constitution drafting and we want to concentrate on that. We are a big party with a big heart. We don't squabble for political appointments. We have five priorities: ensuring peace, establishing democratic systems, ensuring equity and social justice, establishing social harmony and fighting poverty. It is not important who comes to power, as long as these priorities are addressed.

**The UML stood for directly-elected executive Prime Minister in the constitution which was mentioned in your election manifesto. Has that position changed?**

Sometimes, decisions within the party are taken without sufficient homework, at other times we compromise for consensus. As long as our priorities are met, we are ready to compromise on any issue. Our decisions are dynamic and evolving. The UML is open for negotiation and willing to compromise on any contentious issue, including models of federalism.

**When it comes to defining nationalism and identity, the opposition and the ruling coalition have widely different views. How will you find a compromise?**

There is an internationally accepted definition of identity. It does not permit discord and disharmony in its name. A person's identity is not independent but a part of his/her national identity. The question is: whose identity needs to be protected more?

**How is the issue of the five disputed districts going to be resolved?**

Our task is to federate 75 districts of the country into a number of provinces that are feasible for governance. Nobody should make the number an issue for their egos. The purpose of federalism is to devolve power, empower the people and protect their rights. It is for the direct participation of the people in their governance process. This is a country of Himal, Pahad and Tarai, a multi-lingual and multi-cultural society. We must maintain this character.

**But there are also demands for geographical autonomy, particularly in the Madhes. Don't you think these are legitimate demands?**

We have a President and a Vice-President from the Madhes, the Chief-Justice is a Madhesi. So many of the CA representatives are from the Madhes. Is there a demand for Himal province? We must take decisions based on our national interest. Nepal's Himal and Pahad have water resources, the Tarai has agriculture. All three need each other.

**But, we are not talking of separation.**

Some leaders are saying they want freedom from 'colonialism'. You must understand they are using the words very carefully. Before, they were talking about autonomous regions, after that they were talking about freedom from internal colonialism. Now they are talking about independence from colonial rule.

### prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS



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#### Flagship store

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#### New Flavour

Hajmola, the hugely popular digestive brand has launched its new variant Lassi in Nepal. It will be available in Re 1 sachet and Rs 40 bottle.

#### New destination

Qatar Airways has announced new flights to Zanzibar from 1 July. The five times a week flights will operate via Kilimanjaro.



#### Chic member

Colors Mobile has introduced a new model Pearl Black K20 Droid, in the Pearl Black series. Droid boasts a super sleek, beautifully crafted body, and a 5 inch HD screen. It runs on 4.4 Kitkat OS and 1.4 GHz Octa-core processor.





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AMSHU DALI

# Privileged freedom

Progressive families send girls abroad for education so they come back and readjust to traditional gender roles.

ANJANA RAJBHANDARY

Many of us in urban Nepal today are born in traditional-modern families. The parents usually provide us with all the basics and a few extras to make our lives more comfortable than necessary for which we are grateful. But this comes at a price. We are encouraged to study hard in school so we can get into a good college to have a career, and be strong women. We are taught to fight against injustice, for our rights and to prove our equality in politics and other fields of life. Most of us go abroad to the three generic countries: the US, the UK or Australia for further education and some exciting ones

go to Canada and Germany. We are encouraged to travel, meet people, and see the world. Then we come back to Nepal, and this is where logic collides with reality. We go from being free birds to 10PM curfew in adult life. Having a social night life becomes synonymous with having a 'loose' character and a reputation for not being raised right. We move on from mismatched cushion covers to four dozen matching china and silverware with initials carved in cursive. We go from paying for everything ourselves to having someone else fold our laundry. Heck, we don't even know where the laundry detergent is anymore. We go from working hard without the tag of the family name, to the next potential

bride whose life is considered incomplete without a lavish wedding -- a strange coming together of two families who try to one up the last relative's wedding by adding one extra day to their already two week-long jamboree. How can we preserve our culture and tradition by forgetting our values and moral code? Extravagant weddings have overshadowed the simplicity of permanently wanting to be with someone you love. We are reminded that without a husband who will take care of us, we are the black sheep of the society who failed in all aspects of life. Who cares about a Masters degree or even a PhD? Of course there is the constant manipulation by relatives stating how we are responsible for their health issues due to our 'poor' life choices. How far will they go to make us do what they want without questioning what we deserve? Some of us give in after burying our dreams under another layer of an unnecessarily expensive diamond necklace, while some of us fight to stay true to who we are: and dear god, I must admit it is so hard. Do I give in to social pressure at 31 (considered dangerously going downhill, eye cream ladies) and marry someone to become a Mrs. so I can spend my days at gyms and spas, adding vanity to my collective resume of Louis Vuittons and Jimmy Choos? People will stare. Society can hate. Relatives will judge. Strangers will create new stories every kitty party. But I cannot insult life by being just another traditional modern woman. I choose not to live my life based on irrational social norms that do not care how I feel. Above everything I choose happiness, I choose freedom. I choose the uncertainty that is leading me to my serendipity. (This wedding season should be fun.)

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# CREATING THE NEPALI PAST

Prof Theodore Riccardi presents historical material to enrich our lives.

KANAK MANI DIXIT

Nepal has evolved, sadly, as a country where history and archaeology are far down in everyone's priority. Throughout his career, the Indologist and pioneer Himalayanist Theodore Riccardi has sought to highlight aspects of Nepal's past in the expectation that his excitement will be catching. Riccardi's latest offering is *The Dictionary of the Newari Language*, published by Vajra Books, which was inaugurated and commented upon by the linguist Tej Ratna Kansakar on Sunday. The dictionary was prepared in 1792 by Capuchin monks even as they were

thrown out of the Valley by the invading Gorkhalis, and the text ended up at the Vatican archives in Rome. Riccardi spent considerable energy extracting the text from the papal administration, to present us this beautifully crafted volume. As Riccardi's spouse Ellen Coon stated at the launch ceremony, his career has been devoted to generating students rather than publishing tomes. He has been guru to an entire brigade of scholars on Nepal and the Himalaya, including Bruce Owens, Todd Lewis, Bill Fisher, Lynn Bennet and Gabriel Campbell. The contemporaries whose life and work has been enriched by Prof. Riccardi include Prayag Raj Sharma, Mohan Khanal, Ramesh Dhungel and Nirmal Man Tuladhar. Conversation with Riccardi sparkles with names of the constellation of personages who have added scholarly texture to the study of Nepal: A.W. Macdonald, Harka Gurung, Khem and Dor Bahadur Bista, Fuhrer von Hamiendorf, Fr. Marshal Moran, L.S. Baral, Kamal Prakash Malla, Lain Singh Bangdel and David Snellgrove. The first challenge for this Philadelphia boy who arrived in Kathmandu in October 1965 via SOAS in London as a student



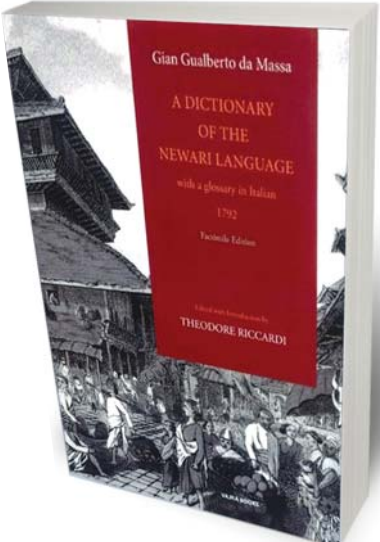
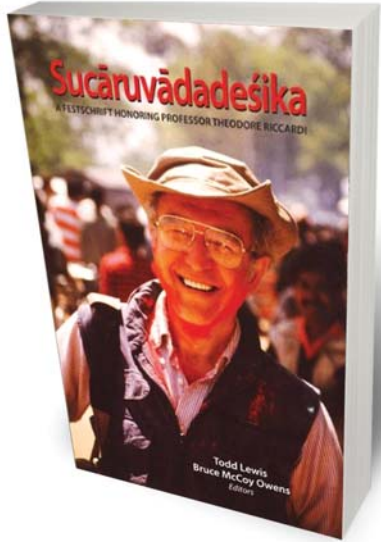
VAJRA BOOKS

of the Nepali language, was to decipher the distinction between 'haina kyarey' and 'haina byaray' (approximate translation by writer: 'no that's probably not true' vs. 'you don't say!') Even at the book launch, while having a bit of a difficulty due to the Parkinsons affliction, Riccardi was indulgently admonishing one acolyte given to profuse admiration: 'Haina byaray!' Riccardi is an excitable humanist and polymath. He

teamed up with Khanal to excavate a sixth century site below Changu Narayan. He was a founding editor of *Kailash*, co-edited the *Himalayan Research Bulletin* (now *Himalaya, The Journal of Nepal and Himalayan Studies*) with Owens and Fisher, and together with Lewis and others, prepared a syllabus and bibliography on Himalayan Studies (now digitally available). Riccardi has written about the Manadev inscription at Changu Narayan and picked up ancient writings being sold as food wrapping in the Asan market. There is a bronze statue of our social democrat statesman

BP Koirala, made by a Bulgarian sculptor, that Riccardi rescued from the dumpster. Today, the statue stands at the corner of a quiet field in the backwoods of Virginia, safe for the time when the world wakes up to take custody. It is time Nepal woke up to organise the return of religious iconography stolen from our living culture that today adorns the museums and private collections of the West. Riccardi was in Kathmandu when the looting was gaining momentum in the 1970s, and watched livid from the sidelines as the idols departed, with the complicity of a line of thugs from the local goonda to Panchayat power-brokers, 'Asian art historians', aid workers, plenipotentiaries with access to diplomatic courier bags, and private collectors and museum executives overseas. His fictional account of the idol theft industry in *Himal Southasian* magazine provides grist for when we wake up to demand a return of the stolen pieces in their thousands to Nepal and to the original sites. In 2014, his students and admirers came out with a 'festschrift' honouring Riccardi, titled *Sucāruvādadeśika*, which could be translated as 'the beloved teacher whose speech is delightful'. The contributions to the volume (Himal Books) themselves indicate the breadth of scholarship and thinking that this 'citizen of the Himalaya' has triggered in the course of his academic journey, so vibrant, wide-ranging and empathetic.

Due to the push and pull of today's ultra-populist discourse, Kathmandu's intelligentsia is undergoing a bout of historical denial, hopefully temporary. When we are ready to take on our history, Riccardi's output will help us to use the existing but neglected material to - in his own words - "create the Nepali past". This is also how we must accept the gift of *The Dictionary of the Newari Language*, with the terms in Prachalit script and the meaning given in Italian, of Newa Bhae in its 'original' form. Like so much else that Riccardi has gifted Nepali society, this is his '*naaso*', to hold in trust till such time that we are ready to acknowledge, appreciate and utilise. 🇳🇵



📖 A Dictionary of the Newari Language  
With glossary in Italian 1792  
By Gian Gualberto da Massa  
Facsimile Edition  
Edited with Translation by Theodore Riccardi  
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## EVENTS



### Smile

Qatar Airways organises 'Giving reasons to smile', a charity event to support the fundraisers for Early Childhood Development Centre and to help build their 'Butterfly Home' supported by Pushpa Basnet, CNN Hero Award Winner 2012.  
From Rs4000, 8 April, 6.30pm to 11.30pm, Soaltee Crown Plaza, Tahachal, (01)4440722, info@periwinkletns.com

### Kids' camp,

A 10-day camp where children have the opportunity to attend musical and drama trainings as well as participate in outdoor activities.  
31 March to 10 April, 10.30am to 4.30pm, (01)5013554, info@katjazz.com.np

### Art Confluence,

An event creating space for artists to share their passion of poetry, music, film, paintings, sculpture, animation, installation art and prose.  
28 March, 3pm, Amu Café, Krishna Galli, Pulchowk, (01)5520886, 9818150495

### Me and the Other,

A show combining physical theatre, classic and contemporary dance, focusing on how cultural heritage influences our perception that may often lead to strong judgements.  
Rs300, Rs 200 for students, 2 to 4 April, 5.15 pm, Mandala Theatre Kathmandu, Anamnagar, (01)6924269, info@mandalatheatre.com, www.mandalatheatre.com

### Critical Mass,

The monthly gathering where cyclists go for a short ride in Kathmandu to reclaim the streets.  
27 March, 5.30pm, Kathmandu Durbar Square, 9802024586, info@cyclecity.org.np

### A retrospective,

An exhibition of the works of Nepali draftsman, Birendra Pratap Singh, from 1971 to 2015.  
Inauguration on 27 March, 5.30pm, exhibition till 26 April, Nepal Art Council Gallery, Baber Mahal, (01)4218048, sthapa@mos.com.np, www.siddharthaartgallery.com

### A Botanical Art Exhibition,

An exhibition of Botanical artwork by artists from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and Nepal.  
Inauguration on 31 March, 5pm, exhibition till 2 April, Park Gallery, Pulchowk, (01)5522307, contact@parkgallery.com.np, www.parkgallery.com.np

### Understanding economics,

Talk by Chandan Sapkota, Economics Officer at Asian Development Bank, to explain the economic problems of Nepal. The talk will be followed by a Q&A session.  
4 April, 10.45am to 1pm, Café & Shop Mitini, Lazimpat, 9803097951, info@cleanupnepal.org.np, cleanupnepal.org.np

### Study in Australia,

Presentation of different Australian universities with on spot admission.  
18 April, 10am to 6pm, Everest Hotel, Baneshwor, (01)4100667, 981809941, info@blueskyconsultancy.com.au

### KCM Girls on Wheels,

A fun filled event where participants will have to find their way through specified routes of Kathmandu to solve different clues and puzzles.  
Rs1500, 25 April, 9am, 9841428434, 9841939895, 9860028983

### Creative rendezvous,

A workshop on 3D artwork using papier mache, clay, cloth and more.  
Rs3600, 25 to 29 May, 10am to 2pm, Sattya Media Arts Collective, Jawalakhel, (01)5523486, collective@sattya.org



### Vote Red Panda,

Vote for Red Panda Network, which is participating in an online voting competition. Funded through the European Outdoor Conservation Association (EOCA) to secure protection for their habitat.  
Vote till 30 March on outdoorconservation.eu/project-voting-category.cfm?catid=1

## DINING



### Kasi,

Sit and relax in a large terrace overlooking Phora Durbar. Kasi offers a delectable plate of Newari delicacies.  
Durbar Marg, 9851039748



### Barista Lavazza,

The Valley's best European inspired coffee-culture cafe serves excellent mochas and lattes, don't forget to try their grilled chicken sandwich.  
Jawalakhel, (01)4005123, barista.nepal@gmail.com

### Lal Durbar Restaurant,

Authentic Nepali dinner with cultural shows.  
Hotel Yak & Yeti, Durbar Marg, (01)4248999, reservation@laldurbar.com

### Natssul,

Reminiscent of the establishments in Seoul's Hong dae district, this eatery strives to be the best Korean restaurant in town.  
Pokhara, (61)229198

### Newa Lahana,

Authentic Newari flavours with killer views of surrounding Macchegaun and towering Chandragiri hill.  
Kirtipur, 9813849358



### Vootoo,

The new home of Newari cuisine that also has a safe continental menu for those who are not yet ready to experiment with new dishes.  
Lazimpath, (01)4005222

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१ जनालाई

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## MUSIC

## March of Pigs,

Progressive rock metal band, Kamero, pre-launches their debut album The Absence Paradox with friends, Tumbleweed Inc, Vomiting Snake, Social Nerve and Horny Monks.  
28 March, Purple Haze Rock Bar, Thamel, 98032719781

## Sundance,

An electronic dance music event with DJs from Nepal and Dubai.  
4 April, 1pm onwards, 1905, Kantipath, 9803298511



## Underside live,

The metal band celebrates 'Satan's Night in Hell'.  
Rs400 (pre-sale only), 28 March, 6pm, Club 25 Hours, Tangal, 9843664132

## Rock for soul,

Majipa, the hard rock band from Kathmandu, will be playing your favourite rock covers and some of their original singles.  
Rs200, 27 March, 8pm, House of Music, Thamel, 9851075172, sanzey@hotmail.com

## Blues night,

A live concert by Mukti and the Revival.  
27 March, 7pm, Base Camp, Arun Thapa Chowk, 9841226397

## GETAWAYS

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Limited offer on two new promotional packages including lavish buffets, spa sessions and stay in their deluxe rooms.  
From \$100, 5 to 9 April, Gokarna Forest Resort, (01)4451212, sales4@gokarna.net, www.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, 9801033109, info@ktmgh.com

## Pokhara Grande,

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

## Milla Guesthouse,

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



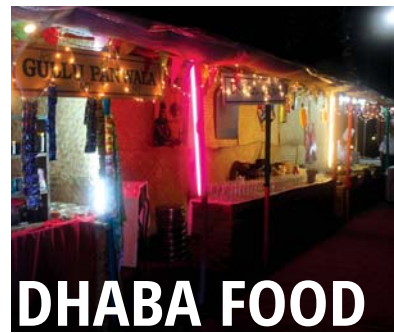
## Mum's Garden Resort,

Head out to Pokhara for a peaceful and comfortable stay in their 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



## Last Resort,

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Bhotekosi, Sindhupalchok, (01)4700525/1247



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The Chef-made special menu consists of cold Indian Kesar Lassi, and an array of appetisers like Bhatti ka Murgh and Surkh Khumb. This mains consist of delicacies such as Makki ki Roti and Sarson da Saag. The perfect ending is desserts like Falooda and Jalebi.



Experience an authentic Indian meal in this beautifully created rural India with a little paan shop.  
Soaltee Crowne Plaza, Rs.1700 per person and Rs.999 per child, plus taxes. 630pm to 1045pm. 20March to 3April, 9801067070, reservation@scp.com.np

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# Surviving porters of the Bhimphedi-Thankot trail remember carrying cars they never got to ride

**CHANDRA KUMAR HATUWALI**  
in MAKWANPUR



Dhan Bahadur Gole



Jukta Bahadur Waiba

## CARS DIDN'T CARRY PEOPLE

them on) had to be physically carried over the mountains from Bhimphedi to Thankot by porters.

Cars would be stripped of their wheels and seats, and hundreds of young men from the villages of Makwanpur were hired to do the heavy lifting. Only in 1957, when the Tribhuvan Highway was finally opened, did the era of cars on human shoulders finally come to an end.

Of the many car porters, we tracked down five surviving ones in Makwanpur. One of them is Dhan Bahadur Gole, 87, who remembers being among at least 100 porters lifting the cars across rivers, and up and down two high passes on the eight-day journey.

"These days vehicles get paid to carry people, back then we were paid to carry vehicles," recalls Gole, who helped ferry the first limousine, a Daimler, when he was only 17 in 1949. He would

Legend has it that the first ever car was driven in Nepal in 1922, when Britain's Prince Edward (later King Edward VIII) rode across the border to hunt tigers in Kasara of Chitwan.

After that, Nepal's Rana rulers got hooked to cars. They couldn't have enough of them, but there were no roads to Kathmandu so cars (and the petrol to run



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Pote Ghale



Hira Bahadur Ghalan



Iman Singh Rumba

PICS: CHANDRA KUMAR HATUWALI

# LE, PEOPLE CARRIED CARS



be paid five aana (less than a rupee) as payment, so despite his name, Dhan Bahadur did not get rich carrying cars for rich people. The cars were secured on long bamboo poles and would be called by the number of people it took to carry them, usually multiples of twelve: 32, 64 or 96.

Before they started carrying cars, porters like 86-year-old Iman Singh Rumba used to ferry luggage for royal entourages going up and down to Kathmandu from the Indian border. Rumba even helped carry Sita Maharani (Bhim Sumsher's wife) on a palanquin when he was 15.

Hira Bahadur Ghalan, now 85, has lost count of the number of cars he helped carry over the mountains. Sometimes, cars had to be carried out of Kathmandu back to Bhimphedi, like when Bahadur Sumsher left Nepal

and wanted to take his car with him. Till last year, Ghalan even kept the bamboo poles used for ferrying, as a souvenir.

"Last winter, we decided there was no use for it anymore, so we cut it up and burned it in the fireplace," he says.

Jukta Bahadur Waiba, 85, has an exact count of the number of cars he ferried to Kathmandu: 40 between 1946 to 1951. Today, despite his advanced age, he still makes a living running a water mill in Tasar.

Out of the five remaining porters, 81-year-old Pote Ghale of Sarbang is the youngest and is the only surviving car carrier out of the 23 from his village who did the job. "When the Ranas left Nepal in 1951, I was one of the porters carrying them and their luggage to India," Waiba remembers, "some would be crying inside

the palanquins."

The porters got a bonus if they went faster, and Waiba was once paid extra for carrying a heavy-set Rana from Bhimphedi to Thankot in one day. Since lugging limos paid more, he switched from carrying people to carrying cars.

"We had to take bamboo poles, walking sticks and straw from home. The cars were fastened onto the poles and the straw was used to make slippers," recalls Gole who still uses the palanquin from those days to carry patients to the health post.

Dhan Bahadur is living happily with his granddaughter in Chitlang, not far from the trail where he helped carry cars 60 years ago as one of the last car carriers of Nepal.

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)

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It is no secret that Hollywood has run out of stories these days and therefore resorted to making either endless sequels to blockbusters, or revamp tried and tested fairy tales. This trajectory has yielded horrors such as the never-ending *Transformers*

**MUST SEE**  
Sophia Pande

franchise, as well as the immensely watchable *X-Men* films, with plenty of mediocrity in between. Taking on a veteran like Kenneth Branagh to direct a classic and a writer like Chris Waits to rewrite a well-known almost clich  , is a stroke of genius from Walt Disney Pictures, which owns the

original rights to the very lovely, very classic, older animated *Cinderella* (1950). In addition to some very good casting, in this new live action iteration of *Cinderella*, Branagh has also succeeded in revamping the best of that old Disney spirit, keeping the friendly mice, the pumpkin turned coach, and the ‘bibbedibobbedi’ fairy godmother, but also adding roundness (well, as much as possible in an archetypal good triumphs over evil tale) to the characters and their relationships. There are no real surprises in this *Cinderella*, the delights lie in rediscovering an old tale that reverberates with the age old hurrahs and gasps that are part and parcel of a story that encapsulates the injustices inherent in life, and has (in most cases, unfortunately) perpetuated the myth of the wicked stepmother.

Cinderella herself, played by the lovely Lily James, is a true English Rose, a creature almost from myth with her sweetness and beauty, but thankfully tempered with just the right amount of sass because of Weitz’s usual full of verve dialogue (though some of the sweetness does, almost cause an overdose). The evil stepmother is given a measure of humanity by the formidable Cate Blanchett, the poor prince (Richard Madden) is finally given some good lines (though he could have done with more), and as usual, the show is stolen by the wonderful, terrific (I could add more superlatives) Helena Bonham Carter who plays a certain, magical, godmother. As with most fairy tales, this is one for the children, with a few hilarious extras thrown in for us poor adults who yearn for those days when we actually believed in happy endings, fairy godmothers, goodness and kindness, and courage conquering all. Your children will be delighted (I can testify to this, I watched the film with a six year old who whooped with joy), and you yourself, well, you’ll be happy too. The film is slow to start, but if you suspend your disbelief, you’ll find yourself caught up in Cinderella’s blue ball gown just as much as anyone else. For once, the filmmakers got it right, Lily James as Cinderella is truly a heroine to melt your heart.

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■ Trailer

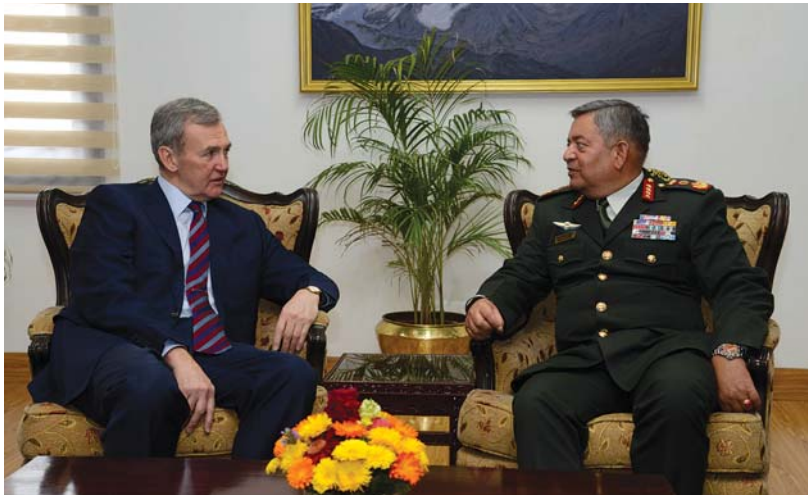
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**HAPPENINGS**



**SOLDIER-TO-SOLDIER:** Chief of Army Staff (CoAS) Gaurav Shamsher Rana meets British Armed Force’s Chief of Defence General Staff Sir Nicholas Houghton at Nepal Army headquarters on Tuesday. Britain and Nepal mark the 200th anniversary of the recruitment of Gurkhas into the British Army.



**ALL THE PRESIDENT’S MEN:** President Ram Baran Yadav with the top leaders of political parties during a meeting at Shital Niwas on Sunday to discuss his trip to China.



**FAILING HEALTH:** This Friday will mark the sixth day since Govinda KC started his fast-unto-death, demanding an end to corruption in granting licenses to new medical schools.



**TUBERCULOSIS DAY:** Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) attend a program organised in Kathmandu on Tuesday to mark World Tuberculosis Day 2015.

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Returning from a three year hiatus, Nepali rock band Monkey Temple has just released their self-titled third album last month. They debuted in 2002 with the album *Black Bee and the Flower*, and came out with their second record *Shades of Grey*, ten years later.

Founded in the corridors of St. Xavier's

School in 1998, the third album *Monkey Temple* consists of nine songs with seven new tracks.

The new and improved Monkey Temple has a new drummer and bassist, and a fresh sound that is more refined compared to the first two albums. Their new songs are calmer sounding with a catchy rhythm.

## MONKEY TEMPLE: GRUNGE TO SLOW ROCK

The opening track *Awaj Malai Deuna* (Give me your voice) is sung by Sareen Deoja. Loyal fans of the band might notice that Deoja's voice is raspier, and that he also has better control over it now.

*Sadhai Bhari* is a surprising mix of Post-Britpop and grunge of the pre-Monkey Temple days. This song is a good step towards the evolution from *Shades of Grey* to their new album. Songs like *In the Blue* and *Samaya* give Monkey Temple a slow rock vibe where there is more emphasis on lyrics and melody, than the constant beat of hard rock.

Monkey Temple has abandoned distorted elements for their eponymous album. Still the solos and riffs of guitarist, Prajwol Bhattarai, are reminiscent of 90s sound of Seattle: even in the most sentimental songs like *Sangai*.

In this third record, Monkey Temple reuses two old songs, *Sangai Bachauna* and *Acoustic 11*. The band wanted to refine their music as they had created a niche in the Nepali market when their first album was released. "In 2002, we couldn't do much in terms of studio production," says Deoja, "so the sound quality was not up to par."

On *Shades of Grey*, the band unveiled percussive rhythms supported by the groovy bass of Samrat Shah. In this respect, early fans of Monkey Temple might pine for the original grungy touch, which is how they first introduced the band.

However, despite the gradual change of style, the band continues to create and develop its authentic style.

"In a country like Nepal, the more you sound like your influences, the more hits you make," said Deoja regretfully.

In Kathmandu's rock music scene, where most bands are either metal or pop-rock, this third album makes Monkey Temple an eclectic band that cannot be classified into just one category.

"I guess we are in between," said Deoja.

The band is set to play in the Golden Bear Rock Festival in Columbus, Ohio on 25 April. ■

# Tasneem's King's Kitchen

Tasneem King's Kitchen is the place to go for a family dinner on a weekend. Named after the owner, Tasneem and her husband greeted every table throughout the evening. Their charming disposition instantly made us feel at home.

In addition, Tasneem makes it a point to change their menu every two weeks, so there are always new and exciting dishes for your family to try.

My family and I started the meal with Chicken Timur Tikka (Rs. 475). The chicken does melt in your mouth and was spicy, just the way I like it. For my vegetarian mother, we got vegetarian cutlets (Rs.300). This cutlet was fried till crisp on the outside, a nice compliment to the soft creamy mashed vegetables on the inside. Both appetisers were served with a side of mint dipping sauce.

Tasneem's provides a variety of beer, wine and liquor, and you



PICS: JITENDRA RAJBHANDARY



can also bring your own for Rs. 1000 per bottle. Although my father's order of hot lemon with ginger came with sugar and honey that he did not want, Tasneem's husband personally got the replacement himself.

We moved on to the (Boneless) Chicken Sheekh Biryani (Rs. 600), which was mildly spiced with generous pieces of chicken. It had just the right amount of spice

for my friend, but I would have preferred it with a touch more chilli powder.

This 'Nepali' friendly dishes were not over spiced or too greasy like most Indian foods, and they said they never use any food colouring. My favourite was the Butter Garlic Naan (Rs.100), probably the best naan in the area. We ordered extra. It went perfectly with Dal Tadka (Rs. 250), with a good consistency to have as a soup or to dip naan in. Everyone loved this.

My mother liked the Paneer Makhani (Rs. 350) that was slightly sweet and creamy. Our final main dish was Chicken Korma (Rs. 450), that looked homemade and was cooked to the liking of my father and friend. It tasted a little bland for me.

I think it is an insult to a lovely dinner if you do not order dessert. Tasneem recommended Kheer (Rs. 175) made Bombay-style, served chilled with sprinkles of almonds. It tasted like a piece of heaven with a hint of saffron. I suppose people could share it but I do not like

having more than one spoon in one dessert.

Tasneem's also serves vegetarian and non-vegetarian combo lunches priced from Rs.250 to Rs350. Takeaways are also provided for an order for a minimum of 10 persons, allowing you to enjoy Tasneem's food with some friends if you do not feel like cooking.

My only pet peeve about the restaurant was the location of the restroom. It was by the outdoor seating and you had to walk past a number of diners to get there, meaning everyone would know where you were headed. It also did not have separate facilities for men and women.

The food, however, will still make dining at Tasneem an amazing experience. Indeed, the Bohra Muslim's motto rings true: "A family that eats together stays together". ■

Anjana Rajbhandary

How to get there: Tasneem's is located in Jhamsikhel, right next to the fire department.

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# The human connection

**Hi again,**  
Many of us love the sound of our own voice, but to really know people, we need to stop and listen. We need to pay attention to their



**ASK ANJANA ANYTHING**  
Anjana Rajbhandary

words, actions and how they are (or aren't) looking at you. In today's world, we are just so self-absorbed and selfish that we have stopped

appreciating other people, maybe we are taking the 'each man for himself' concept a bit too far. People are quite transparent actually, it's not hard to tell the real from the fake, as long as we take the time to really look, observe and learn. You can read anyone if you make a little effort and think beyond yourself. Keep your questions coming.

I am available at  
askanjanaanything@nepalitimes.com or  
@AnjyRajy

**How do I develop my communication skills since I cannot communicate properly**

**with others? Is there something wrong with me?**  
-R34

**AR:** A combination of leadership skills and ability to communicate are correlated with success. Think of people you look up to, I am sure they have impressive communication skills.

Communication is more than just talking, it has a lot to do with listening, asking questions, paying attention to details such as body language, tone of voice and the environment. You have to understand that communication is a two-way street, and that you will have to

learn to adapt and be patient.

To be a good communicator, you have to let go of your ego and be empathetic, try to understand the other person. It is paying attention to the details of the other person such as sensing their mood, attitude and values instead of just hearing the sound of their voice. It is necessary to make the other person feel important to really communicate.

It also helps to be personal, it makes you more human and relatable. People don't really care how much you know till they know how much you care, learn to make the other person

feel validated by focusing on the subject at hand. Have a balance in the exchange of information. When delivering your own message, try to be specific and consistent. It is a skill that we need in both our personal and professional life.

The good news is that we can all practise and better our communication skills. Good luck. 🇳🇵

*Anjana is a certified mental health rehabilitation technician and has four years of experience in adult mental health in Maine, USA.*

*Blog: anjyrajy.wordpress.com*

**GIZMO by YANTRICK**



**W**ith its success in the Indian market, the Godrej Pizza and Kebab Maker Microwave Oven (GME25GP1MKM), a stylish and convenient appliance is set to find its place in Nepali kitchens as well. Godrej Appliances have managed to put together a beautifully designed microwave oven that is made to last with its stainless steel cavity. It also makes it much easier to clean – something we would all be grateful for right after having a sumptuous meal.

From the simple controls with a digital display to the 201 preinstalled InstaCook Menus, users

can immediately start cooking without having to meddle with the settings. This newly launched product by its sole authorised distributor here in Nepal, EOL Pvt. Ltd, also has an Express Cooking option, which allows you to start the cooking process with a single press of a button. A neat feature that will certainly quicken the process for simple reheating tasks when you're in a hurry.

## EASY COOKING WITH STYLE

If you are in the mood for some pizzas or kebabs, go ahead and take advantage of the stainless steel Grill Rack that not only cooks faster because it's placed closer to the grill, it also ensures uniform cooking.

The Godrej Pizza and Kebab Maker Microwave Oven also has a Multistage Cooking function, which is one of the most important and useful features consumers should look out for while choosing a microwave oven. It enables users to choose from five different power settings for three stages of cooking process. This way, you can continue cooking other dishes or entertain your guests, while this oven does its job.

The microwave oven also allows users to thaw food quickly, either through defrosting based on the weight of the food item or setting

the timer and using the Jet Defrost function.

Godrej Appliances also has included an array of safety precautionary features such as Auto Protection that automatically shuts down the microwave oven when it detects a possible malfunction. In addition, the Child Lock system function is a useful feature as it prevents unintended operations of the appliance, ensuring the safety of children at home.

Together with the Godrej Pizza and Kebab Maker Microwave Oven (GME25GP1MKM), the company has also launched three other models: Solo, Grill, and Convection. 🇳🇵

**YANTRICK'S VERDICT:** Priced at Rs. 27,290.00, the top of the line Godrej Pizza and Kebab Maker Microwave Oven is a great product that offers well thought out features aimed at encouraging a hassle-free experience to make cooking a truly enjoyable experience.

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# Smart farmers practice smart farming

Wise farmers in Surkhet find solutions to save water and boost harvests

STÉPHANE HUËT  
in SURKHET

It is spring, but the snow in the mountains has not started melting and it hasn't rained for a while, so the Bheri River is almost dry. But looking down at the banks of the river from the highway, the vegetable fields are lush and green.

This semi-arid district in western Nepal gets half the average annual rainfall of Kathmandu, and water is a precious commodity. But farmers have realised that irrigation can reduce their dependence on rain-fed agriculture, and cushion them against erratic weather.

"When I was a boy, the rains came on time, and there was enough in the dry season," says Lal Bahadur Saru, 41, of Kunathari. "But as I grew up, water became more and more scarce and we could only grow one crop a year."

Lal Bahadur's neighbour, Bhabi Lal, also faces the same predicament. He has seen a dramatic change in weather in the past 15 years. "Sometimes, a whole year's rain falls in one day, and our crops are washed away in floods, and sometimes it doesn't rain for months," he says.

A deadly flashflood in August last year was the worst in living



DEVAKI BISTA

memory, killed hundreds and displaced tens of thousands of farmers in Surkhet and adjoining districts. In addition, the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides has destroyed the soil.

Desperate, farmers like Lal Bahadur and Bhabi Lal of Badichaur of Surkhet turned to the Surkhet-based Beautiful

Nepal Association (BNA), which is involved with improving the resilience and livelihoods of farmers in western Nepal. With support from the Dutch group, SNV, the group has been helping apple farmers in Jumla and farmers in western Nepal to practice 'smart agriculture'.

This means community

irrigation lessens the dependence on rain, building ponds for groundwater recharge and to store rain, and putting up greenhouses to plant early vegetables. The farmers contribute a third of the outlay while SNV helps out with the rest.

The idea is to conserve water and use it judiciously. The pond

is a life-saver because last year's floods washed away water pipes to Badichaur. The farmers here have also seen the benefits of drip irrigation which doesn't waste a single drop of water. With composting, mulch is replenishing nutrients into the soil and reviving it from chemicals used in the past.

Twenty six-year-old Nirmala Darlami (*left*) says her plastic greenhouse makes a big difference. "We can now plant off-season vegetables, eat and sell them, and with drip irrigation we need only half the water we needed previously and there is less labour needed."

Smart agriculture practices are now making Surkhet farmers grow more food for their families and sell surplus vegetables in the market.

Saru saw his parents struggling but he's more confident now about his children's future. "My 21-year-old daughter attends training and practices in our farm," he says. "Last season, she earned Rs 7,000 just selling green chillies in the market."

For farmers like Lal, Sinjali and Saru, these new practices have provided an alternative solution when there is either too much or too little water, and protected them from the future effects of erratic weather caused by global climate change. 🇳🇵



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# Child survivors of disasters

The country's capacity to deal with increasing numbers of child victims of natural disasters is woefully inadequate



**INTERESTING TIMES**  
Mallika Aryal

**SURKHET:** Relief worker Santoshi Singh has been visiting Pagma since the village was ravaged by deadly flash floods in August 2014 but she doesn't come with food and medicine, she is a local psychosocial counselor and her job is to talk to the children who survived the disaster.

Excavators are working full-time to clear roads that lead up to Pagma, but they still have a

long way to go. On the three-hour walk to the village, we spot empty homes and an abandoned school. The classrooms are filled with sand, which covers damaged furniture, torn books and papers strewn around the classroom. Blackboards are cracked and doors have been washed away.

10-year-old Hari Karki used to go to a nearby school. On



## WHEN WE

Child survivors of wars and natural disasters carry their trauma into adulthood

**ANJANA RAJBHANDARY**

Children who witness and grow up in war zones, and survive natural disasters in which they lose family members are less likely to develop healthy and strong attachments in relationships when they grow up, studies have shown. They have difficulty controlling or expressing emotion, act violently or inappropriately, and the trauma scars them for life.

There is no accurate count of how many young adults today were children who witnessed violence during the conflict, but they can be found in every school and workplace. And every year more children are being added who have survived natural disasters and need counseling.

"It is important to educate society about the importance of psychological therapy for children affected by conflict," says Erik Bouchard of See Change Foundation, who works in Lamjung. "People need to openly discuss the impact loss of a family can have on a child, and how it needs ongoing psychosocial support."



JAN MÖLLER HANSEN

Purnima was 13 when her father was taken away, his leg cut off and finally shot dead. Her brother was also severely tortured, and is disabled. Purnima herself was forced to become a child soldier. Today 23-year-old, Purnima earns Rs 3,000 a month and supports her remaining family. She has got no support from the government. Here she is holding a picture of her murdered father.

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MALLIKA ARYAL

the night of 14 August last year he was woken up by his grandfather, who grabbed him and his older sister and rushed to the door. The Karki family waded through knee-deep water in their living room and ran through the jungle in the dark to higher ground.

When the rain subsided and the water level went down, Hari's home was gone, his school had been washed away, his family's livestock and some of his neighbours and friends were dead.

It has been an extremely difficult five months for Hari. He still lives in a small tent with his family and walks to school which is a temporary bamboo structure (*pictured, left*). His grades have slipped, and he can't concentrate in class. He complains of nightmares and has been sleepwalking.

The August floods and landslides in Surkhet affected more than 24,000 people, nearly half of whom were children.

For them, the horrors of disaster and the memory of the night do not just go away. Mental health experts say that this kind of trauma has to be dealt with early on so that the consequences are not long-term.

United Mission to Nepal (UMN) that works on mental health estimates that approximately 20-25 per cent of all outpatients attending primary health care services in Nepal show some kind of mental or behavioural disorder.

The biggest challenge that health professionals deal with is still that that mental illness is not seen as a health issue at all. The country spends less than two per cent of its \$334 million health budget on mental health services. There are only 70 psychiatrists in Nepal, and just one of them, Arun Raj Kunwar, specialises in counseling children.

"Children need special kind of attention and trained specialists to deal with mental

trauma," Kunwar says. Mental health needs of children are different from adults, and children who have gone through the trauma of war (see adjoining article) need a different kind of help from those who have survived disasters.

2014 was the worst in Nepal's recent history, and there are signs that floods, landslides and earthquakes are going to be the norm. With challenges that Nepal faces in early warning and preparedness, the number of people affected, especially children, is going to increase.

In Hari's village, psychosocial counsellor Singh will work with him but she worries that her training and preparation may not be enough to help the boy.

As she walks back from the village she asks, "I know about Hari now, but there must be so many other children who are silently suffering, how do I reach them and who do I ask for help?"

@mikaness

# WERE YOUNG

Although the government has addressed the needs of those physically wounded during the conflict, compensated others who have lost property, the psychosocial impact, especially on children, remains largely unaddressed.

Bouchard partners closely with an orphanage in Nepal. "I advocate local Nepali volunteering. Orphans are children of the community and it the biggest responsibly falls on community," says Bouchard.

In many orphanages and children's organisations in Nepal, there is focus on food, shelter and education but only minimal attention is given to the mental well being of a child. The children tend to engage more in self-harm and excessive risk taking behavior, and are more likely to enter the juvenile justice system.

Children who experience mental trauma may dissociate from real life. They say they feel detached from their bodies and that they are watching themselves from the outside. After witnessing war or the violence of natural disasters, children cannot unsee it. The children are more likely to have problems thinking clearly, reasoning and problem solving or planning their future.

Self-worth and self-esteem can be severely affected by trauma. Children can develop a sense of worthlessness and tend to blame themselves. They feel shame, guilt and suffer from poor self-image, which tends to carry itself to adulthood.

War and military conflict studies show the traumatic events of the war lead to the development of post-traumatic stress

## Kids still not all right

Srijana was 12 when the Army took her father away from their village in Palung of Makwanpur in 2002 and killed him. After the initial shock, she pulled herself together for a while and out of a sense of revenge, joined a Maoist cultural troupe in Kathmandu.

But her mental state deteriorated as she relived the horror of losing her father one more time. She was taunted by the guerrillas for being "weak". Her mother said that when she came back, she was depressed again.

When *Nepali Times* met Srijana recently, she had gone through with an inter-ethnic marriage with a non-Tamang and her family had ostracised her. She was on medication. Her brother refused to let us talk to her in

depth, and Srijana held her head down while her brother threw a tantrum and asked our photographer to delete all the pictures. The trauma of war affects not just Srijana, but her family.

"We don't want the world to feel sorry for us," Srijana's brother said, "thousands of people saw my family's grief in film and photos, pitied on our sad lives, which only made me more angry and humiliated."

Srijana is now 25, and among thousands of young Nepali men and women whose childhood trauma continues to disturb them into adulthood.

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)

■ Post-conflict stress syndrome, #715

disorder (PTSD) in children and need psychological intervention. Seeing bodies, especially of relatives, hearing exploding artillery shells or the sound of helicopters are known to have long term effects such as depression and panic attacks in young Nepali survivors of the war.

It is possible to treat PTSD, and cognitive behavioral therapy is helpful. Medication can also help temporarily to treat symptoms such as anxiety, sleeplessness but not the condition. Social

support from family and community is the most helpful, and individuals with a strong and reliable support system have a better chance of getting better.

Huma Gurung of the Ideal Women and Children Development Centre says, "We have children who have witnessed their parents being killed during the conflict. They are actually doing well. We have a family setting so we all live together and support each other."

The older ones look out for the younger

ones at the Centre, which also tries to get the children adopted by relatives. Gurung says the children do get depressed, but they pick themselves up as they have psychosocial support from each other.

Trauma survivors need well-trained psychosocial workers to help them. Mental health workers need to acknowledge the severity of trauma. It is important to convey an expectation of full recovery. Do not make assumptions and do provide a consistent pattern in support. Pay attention to signs, triggers and what upsets them.

Nagendra Luitel of Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation in Kathmandu had conducted a randomised control study among conflict affected children in 2007 to evaluate effectiveness of school-based psychosocial intervention.

"It showed no significant impact because there was same level of reduction in PTSD in both groups," says Luitel, "our finding was that PTSD reduces with time but further studies need to be conducted to generate more evidence."

Psychological distress in children includes extreme shock, sadness, impaired concentration and social reluctance. There is hope that they can get better with the right support, medication and time.

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)

■ The children of war, #726



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Mr. Jayaraj Bajracharya (Artist) with his Art Work - Statue of Padmasambhav



# BJP on Nepal



ratopati.com, 17 March

India’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has asked its leaders to refrain from making irresponsible comments about Nepal and said ruling party politicians should not visit Nepal without prior approval.

The move comes after controversial political comments by some BJP leaders who recently visited Nepal. In February, the BJP’s Vice Chair Renu Devi (*see picture above*) on a visit to Kathmandu

warned that ethnic federalism would lead to Nepal’s disintegration. A few days later, the BJP’s General Secretary Ram Madhav had to clarify that Renu Devi’s statement was her personal opinion, and it did not reflect the party’s view.

Earlier in July, BJP leader Vijay Jolly had expressed dissatisfaction over Nepal adopting secularism without a referendum. Jolly has visited Nepal and held meetings with Nepali leaders several times in the recent past. BJP leader Bhagat Singh Koshyari had also visited Nepal to lobby for north-south federal provinces. Sources say the BJP has particularly instructed Jolly and Koshyari not to visit Nepal without the party’s approval.

The most damaging comment was by Dr Dinesh Upadhyay, co-convenor of the BJP’s medical cell. Claiming to be a BJP delegate in Kathmandu, he not only advocated the revival of the monarchy but also disclosed that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had met former king Gyanendra Shah and claimed to have been present during that meeting. During his visit to Nepal, Indian minister Nitin Gadkari rubbished Upadhyay’s statements.

The BJP has also dismissed Nalini Gyawali as its Nepal representative. Gyawali was Nepal convener of Overseas Friends of BJP. BJP General Secretary Madhav himself will be overseeing Nepal affairs for the time being. Prime Minister Modi and BJP Chair Amit Shah have formed a panel to prepare the party’s new Nepal policy, which sources say will include a special chapter on the Madhes. This is why three of the seven members of the BJP team tasked with preparing new Nepal policy are from Bihar.

Fast Unto Death  
Ear Plug: [Medical] Mafia

कान्तिपुर

Batsayan in Kantipur, 16 March

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Rapes do happen during a political transition but the government is committed to control them.”

Deputy Prime Minister Bam Dev Gautam in Women, Children, Elderly Citizens and Social Welfare Committee of Parliament, *Annapurna Post*, 26 March

“Since we don’t have a law for death penalty, we can legalise chemical castration to deter rapists.”

Ranju Jha, Chair of Women, Children, Elderly Citizens and Social Welfare Committee of the parliament, on [www.onlinekhabar.com](http://www.onlinekhabar.com)

# Striking down tourism



Kedar Dahal in *Karobar*, 24 March

Strikes called by the opposition parties in April have led to cancellations by tour groups at the start of the spring peak season.

The Maoist-Madhesi parties have called a four-day general strike beginning 6 April, coinciding with the onset of the trekking and tourism season. Fear and uncertainty have led to cancellations in bookings of hotel rooms, tours and treks.

“At least 90 per cent of hotel rooms should have been booked by this month,” said Binayak Shah of the Hotel Association Nepal (HAN). “But only 70 per cent of hotel rooms are booked so far

this year. Strikes and shutdowns look set to deal a blow to tourism industry.”

The Maoist-Madhesi parties have warned an indefinite nationwide shutdown to protest the deadlock in the constitution making process and the attempt by the ruling coalition to push through with a vote in the Constituent Assembly, where they have a majority.

Weeks of protests, strikes and shutdowns have been called at a time when Nepal’s tourism industry is just beginning to make a comeback. New investments in tourism infrastructure are being made, with 20 new five-star hotels and casinos coming up. More than half a dozen new airlines are

starting flights to Kathmandu but political instability is likely to deter investors from stepping into Nepal’s tourism sector.

“Political parties talk of economic revolution but often call strikes and shutdowns,” said tourism entrepreneur Yogendra Shakya.

As recently as in 2011, when Nepal Tourism Year was celebrated, political parties put it in writing that they would not call for strikes in the future. But they never kept their promise. As a result, the flow of tourists into Nepal has been declining since 2011 and numbers were down 5 percent to 588,000 in 2014 compared to 2013. The number of tourists is expected to decrease further in 2015.

The HAN’s Executive Director Pravesh Aryal says political instability is causing further damage to Nepal’s tourism industry that was already hit hard by the European Union’s black-listing of Nepali airlines. “This year’s crisis could affect tourism sector till next year,” he said.

Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA)’s president Ang Tsering Sherpa urged political parties to understand the economic cost of strikes and shutdowns. He said: “The timing is wrong, the strike come during the peak trekking and mountaineering season.”



# Dress Nepali

Himal Khabarpatrika, 22-28 March

NEW YORK -- Nilima Sharma Tamang, 37, does not believe only Nepalis should wear traditional Nepali clothes. She wants to see people all over the world wearing them. She is now in the US exploring an international market for traditional Nepali attire.

After graduating from a fashion school in Kathmandu, she set up Nilima Fashion Studio and designed wardrobes for several Nepali films. She also won the best costume designer award for two consecutive years (2013-2014) from the Nepal Film Technical Association.

Encouraged by success in Nepal, Nilima now wants to establish herself in the international fashion market, but she knows it will not be easy. She toured Manhattan boutiques with samples and the response was encouraging enough for her to organise an exclusive fashion show of Nepali clothes soon in the US.

“Out ethnic diversity is reflected in the range of traditional attire, we just have to tweak them a bit for a western taste,” says Tamang. “Nepali clothes are exotic and if they become popular, it will revive the folk fabric market back home.”

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# “I am happy I tormented my tormentors”

**M**an Bahadur Biswokarma, 52, runs a small tea shop at New Road’s Pipalbot, once a popular spot for Kathmandu’s poets, writers, journalists and revolutionaries.

Today, Pipalbot no longer represents Nepal’s public sphere, and Nepalis like Man Bahadur are too busy trying to make a living to think about the larger issues of politics or societal transformation.



**ON THE ROAD**  
Guna Raj Luitel

Man Bahadur (*pictured, right*) came to Kathmandu with his wife, Nanu Maya, three sons and two daughters 13 years ago to break free from entrenched discrimination against the Dalit community in his village in Ramechhap. They thought Kathmandu would give them their desired freedom, opportunity and dignity. Man Bahadur worked at construction sites and tried to save as much as he could.

His second son Jiban was a bright student, and worked for a well-off family in Kupundole which sent him to school. He did well in his SLC and dreamt of either joining the police or the civil service.

Despite the hardships, the Biswakarma family somehow managed to survive from day-to-day and build a future. The elder daughter and son did not go to school, and Jiwan and his siblings were the hope of the family. Man Bahadur invested in his small tea shop three years ago, and it was doing well.

The Biswakarmas lived in a



PRAKASH LAMA/SETOPATI

rented room downstairs from the family of Sangita Pulami Magar in Jhochhen. The two families got along well, and Jiban started tutoring Sangita and her brother Santosh in her studies. Jiban and Sangita were attracted to each other, and when Santosh found out, police said he started blackmailing Jiban to earn money to sustain his drug habit.

One day, Sangita saw Jiban’s ID card, and from his surname found out he was a Dalit. From then on, she turned against him and according to Jiban’s testimony to the police, her family started taunting him. Sangita and her father even physically assaulted Jiban last year, a case was filed and the police forced them to settle the matter.

But even after that the Pulami Magars allegedly kept tormenting the Biswakarma

family for being Dalits. “They used to kick on our door and shout abuse at us when we went to fetch water,” Manju told me this week.

Ever since, Jiban seethed with revenge against Sangita, her brother Santosh and their father. He paid Rs 50,000 to a recruiter who promised him a job in the Indian Army, but after going to

Sikkim Jiban found out he had been duped. While there, he watched a tv show depicting an acid attack and he plotted a similar revenge when he returned to Nepal.

He got the opportunity on the morning of 22 February when he followed Sangita to her tuition centre in Basantapur. Jiban put on a mask, entered the room and emptied the bottle of acid on Sangita and her two classmates. The Biswokarma family was not aware about the attack and Jiban’s arrest last week, since he was not living with them.

“He was always very gentle and he was the hope of our family,” Jiban’s sister Manju said, already using the past tense. “He told me he’d get me married once he got a job.”

Police took more than two weeks to track down Jiban because they said the Pulami Magar family were not sharing any information. But they suspected that there must have been a history between the two families. Jiban, an educated young man, was having mental issues and was taking medication from a psychiatrist at the Teaching Hospital, and was increasingly obsessed and consumed by a sense of revenge.

When caught, the Police were surprised that Jiban readily admitted to attacking Sangita. He told them: “I am happy that I tormented my tormentors.”

Jiban told the police how he first thought of attacking Sangita and her family with an iron rod, but his hands trembled too much.

At his tea shop, Man Bahadur’s dreams are shattered and he has a sad and forlorn look on his face. Manju has had suicidal tendencies since her brother started appearing on tv and has been visiting the police station to try to meet him.

Jiban’s family had pinned its hopes on him, and now he is in a prison cell facing charges of attempted murder. There is no provision to examine the motive of a crime in our judicial system.

After a wave of sympathy for Sangita, the lines between victim and perpetrator have got blurred. There are deeper questions now of when an individual is justified in using violence when discrimination and ostracisation become too much to bear. But one thing this acid attack case has brought out is just how deeply ingrained the caste system still is in Nepali society. @gunaraj

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# Glad to be sad

Another one of those international surveys by Gallup this week decided that Nepalis are among the **Top Ten Unhappiest People** on the surface of the planet.

So far so good. We are right up there with the Sudanese, Bosnians and Herzegovinians, and Afghans as some of the truly most hopeless humans ever to have the misfortune of being born.

This is a great honour and recognition of the effort that successive national **gobarments** in Kathmandu have put in to ensure that we are consistently miserable. And so, to celebrate this momentous and historic accomplishment of making it to the list of the saddest countries in the world, the Cabinet should declare three days of national jubilation forthwith. And we can use the commemoration to mope, brood, sulk and figure out ways to be even sadder than we already are in the next fiscal year.

At the rate we are going, it will be easy for Nepal to beat the Herzegovenese and their wretched Bosnianite comrades in next year's **Global Gallup Happiness Poll**. We are a nation that takes our unhappiness seriously. Let's face it, we'd be really miserable if we stopped being miserable. How would we ever spend our days if we suddenly had a clean and competent grovelment, electricity 24 hours a day, no garbage on the streets, all the water you could drink straight off the tap, and luggage that arrives 10 minutes after you land at **Triceratops International Airport**? There would be no reason to whine? And what would your dear Ass write about?

Happily, Nepalis are a cheerful lot. We are happy to just sit around and complain about how unhappy we are. If the glass is half-full, for instance, we don't wallow in our sorrow, we just toss it down neat. If there is a light at the end of the tunnel, we



are convinced it's a locomotive headed our way. Before we toss a coin, we say: "Heads you win, tails I lose." And we see a dark cloud behind every silver lining.

We need to maintain our lead in the **World Sadness Index**, for which we need a national 8-point strategy to overtake Serbia in the Sadness World Cup next year:

- 1 Reduce the tax on booze, cigarettes and morphine. This is a great way for us to anaesthetise the general populace from pain in this life so that in our next incarnation we will be born in Bhutan, the world's happiest place. To give credit where it's due, the original idea of measuring national bliss emanated from none other than **King Jigme the Glad** who reigned over a country that has achieved one of the highest per capita happiness on earth, a feat accomplished by making 100,000 Bhutanese sad.
- 2 Legalise marijuana and ecstasy. This is already happening in some US states. Speaking of which, America takes its national motto ('**Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness**') very seriously indeed and it has been doing this by making

people in the rest of the world consistently miserable for about half a century now. We in Nepal are not so selfish: we take pride in being able to make others happy even if it means being temporarily sad ourselves.

3 Nepal may score somewhat low on the **Gross Domestic Glee Index**, but look at it this way, we are now so used to hardships that we will survive anywhere in the world.

4 Expedite setting up a **National Commission on Happiness**, which has been delayed because some political parties are unhappy about the selection of a pre-paid political appointee as Chief Commissioner.

5 We must find other indices that will more accurately measure our well-being, if any. For example, the **Toilet Seat Index** is a precise gauge of our burgeoning standard of living and tracks Nepal's transition from a squatting to a sitting position.

6 The **Bagmati Olfactory Ratio (BOR)**: The intensity of vapours emanating from the river in a nation's capital indicates how satisfied a citizenry is. There is a strong correlation between the NEPSE Index and the BOR. In other words, if the smell at the bridge is really bad you can be sure the stock market has gone up.

7 **Casino Coefficient**: When it comes to risk-taking and gambling on our future no other country comes close to Nepal in the game of National Russian Roulette.

8 **Instant Noodle Quotient**: In terms instant noodle consumption per head, Nepal has now easily overtaken its closest rival, Thailand. Combined with the **Beer Belly Composite Index**, it will make us ponder: what's there to be happy about?



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