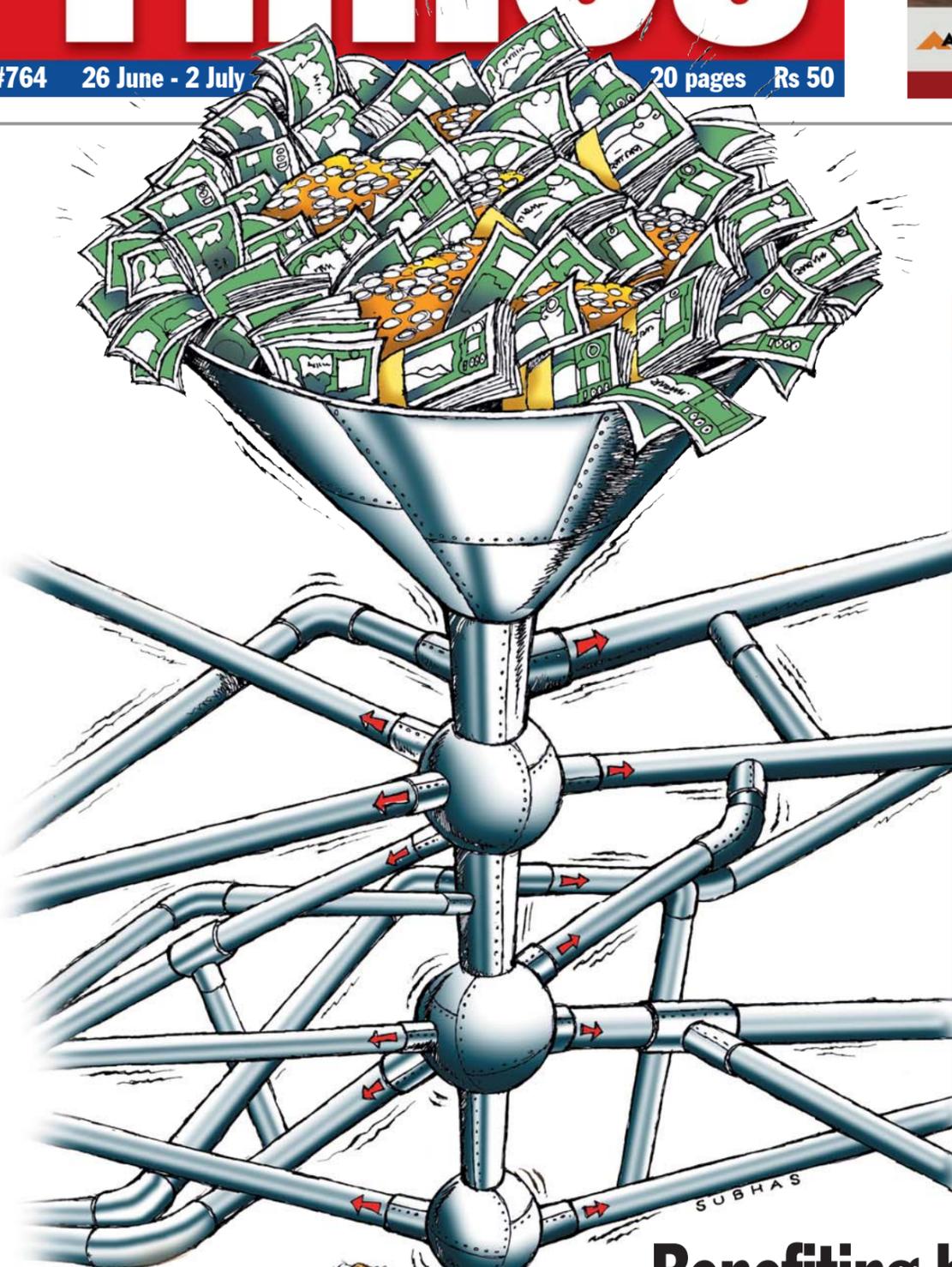


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Delegates to the International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction in Kathmandu on Thursday pledged more than \$3.5 billion in earthquake rehabilitation. But exactly two months after the disaster, we also got a sobering reminder about unmet needs:

- 1 million people require emergency food
- 800,000 homes destroyed and damaged
- 50,000 households have got no help at all

Even in accessible areas, many families haven't got the emergency cash grant of Rs 15,000 the government announced right after the quake. This raises questions about how support for housing reconstruction will be disbursed.

There are also concerns about how much of the money pledged on Thursday

will actually come to Nepal, and whether it will evaporate en route in contracts, consultancies and overheads for foreign agencies.

IN THIS ISSUE:

David Seddon assesses the Post-Disaster needs Assessment Report of the National Planning Commission **page 15**

Emily Troutman investigates how less than 1% of disaster relief gets to Nepali groups **page 16**



REBUILDING OURSELVES

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2 MONTH FLASHBACK
Interactive digital timeline of the aftermath of the 25 April Earthquake

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REBUILDING OURSELVES

More than aid, we need help to boost tourism, investment, trade and to create jobs in reconstruction

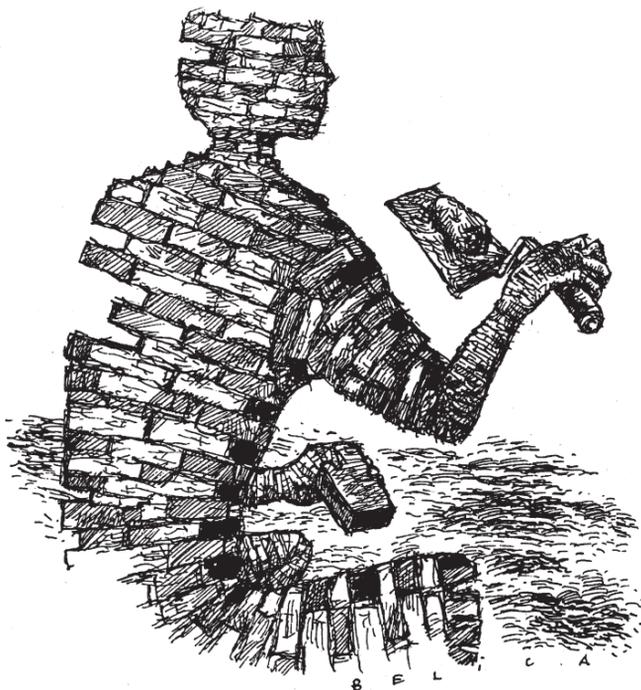
The headlines in the media about this week's International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction were scripted: donors pledges fell short of assistance needed for long-term rehabilitation because they are concerned about accountability and delivery in distribution. Aid agencies and governments have reason to be worried, given reports of emergency supplies piling up in warehouses, the politicisation of relief and government disarray. Despite billions pledged, hundreds of thousands of survivors haven't even received the Rs 15,000 emergency grants yet.

But, as Emily Troutman argues in this edition ('Subcontracting kindness', page 16) a lot of the money raised for disasters around the world is also heavily skewed in favour of the donor. The colossal mismanagement of aid after Haiti's earthquake has become the stuff of legend. Seeing the way Nepal relief is going, it doesn't look like the aid industry has learnt its lesson. 'In Nepal, I found patterns in the humanitarian response that persist in every disaster,' Troutman writes. 'Money will be wasted, aid will arrive too late. As in Haiti, local organisations with the expertise and commitment to really make a difference will be left out.'

A disaster is an opportunity for humanitarian organisations to replenish their coffers and cover overheads. Lot of the bilateral aid pledged on Thursday is already earmarked for donor agencies. A recent investigation by the group Disaster Accountability also confirms that charities often fudge where donations go, hide overheads, and even blatantly misrepresent the actual assistance they provide.

To be sure, the destruction from the earthquake has been overwhelming, and the monsoon is set to move the mountains again. Nepal's need for long-term reconstruction is so enormous that the country cannot go at it alone. There is need for funding, logistics and the human resource to manage it all efficiently. Now is the time for targeted interventions, to do things less wastefully so that beneficiaries benefit.

We have argued in this space before that relying on



crowdsourced funding for private relief work has filled the gap left by the state's delayed and patchy response. But such aid lets the government off the hook and allows it to abdicate its responsibility. Piecemeal relief can never match the scale of operation needed, which only a national government has at its disposal. The Nepal government's concern about aid dependency among survivors in parts of some districts is, however, valid. While farmers in remote areas will need help with food for the medium term, many living near roads who have paddy seeds are not planting them this season because there is so much free rice being doled out. We should be careful emergency food aid doesn't crowd out long-term food security.

Nepal has been labeled 'aid dependent' because about

three-quarters of our annual budget for health, education and infrastructure comes from overseas development assistance even at the best of times. This has given foreigners and Nepalis alike the impression that this country will grind to a halt if aid was stopped. This may be the right time, then, for us to look beyond aid to trade, tourism, investment and job creation as better alternatives for self-sustained growth, and to build a prosperous future.

For the kind of natural and cultural assets Nepal possesses, we haven't even begun to scratch the surface of tourism's true potential for revenue and employment. Visitors who choose to visit Nepal do so because our mountains, heritage and biodiversity are such powerful draws, not because there has been any strategic marketing. We seem to excel at making it as difficult as possible for tourists to visit. Nepal should scrap visas, revamp our national airline, streamline entry points, encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more (*Destination Nepal*, page 17-18).

If they really want to help, donor governments should drop their inaccurate and outdated travel advisories, and the irrational ban on domestic air travel for nationals. High insurance costs are also dissuading tourists from visiting Nepal, especially after the earthquake. Distorted international media coverage that only shows destruction, and alarmist fundraising billboards of aid agencies in public places in Europe have frightened off potential visitors.

Instead of more aid, we should ask donor governments to facilitate more trade. For this we don't have to look beyond our immediate neighbours. India and China are the locomotives that Nepal should hitch its wagon to. Europe and the United States can help by lifting tariffs, redeploying aid agencies to help promote Nepali products in their countries, as GIZ has done with Nepali tea. Nepal's private sector is more than capable of stepping in if governments open their doors.

The path ahead for Nepal is clear: we need to invest in infrastructure and encourage post-quake reconstruction through grants and soft credit for massive job creation. The only obstacles are weak political willpower, poor delivery, and a culture of aid dependency.

YOUR SAY

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TROUBLE IN THE RUBBLE

The government's handling of offers of help from the international community has been a public relations disaster (Trouble in the rubble, Editorial #763). Even if it wanted to control the aid, there would have been a way to politely turn it down. Instead, the Nepali government was downright rude. The donors were also arrogant, but that's not new. In the end it is the Nepali people who are suffering from delayed and inappropriate aid.

The mood of the Nepali people at this juncture is against the time proven failure called the political party men. This is most important factor to take into account. Engage those whom the people have good will, faith and belief on.

Jim Morgan

It may be an 'elected' government, but it hasn't really acted like one for most of the last seven years, has it? Most key decisions are taken by a dozen or so top leaders of the three (or four) main parties behind closed doors. Even this 'syndicate', unwholesome as it is, may have been a bit acceptable had the parties had some internal democracy. But no, it appears it is the interests and whims of the top bosses that really drives decision-

making of this syndicate. Hence, we may have gone through the motions of electing a government, but it is a far cry from being a truly representative, democratic and therefore trustworthy one.

Abhishek B

MONEY FOR CAPACITY BUILDING?

The word 'donor' is a curse for Nepal. They actually take all their donations back to support their own staff (How not to reinvent the wheel, Bihari K Shrestha #763). Otherwise, after 50 years and millions of dollars, why is Nepal still stuck in a rut and Nepalis dirt poor? Look at those who made a pledge to donate in Haiti. They never did, or if they did, it was a small percentage of what they pledged. This will repeat itself in Nepal. Nepalis will have to rebuild themselves. Foreign aid will just make Nepali neta haru even richer than they are now.

Alex Shrestha

It's the government and the elite of Nepal who should abandon rent seeking attitudes and fund massive technical schools nationwide.

Nirmal Ghimire

I disagree. Reconstruction is specific and justified, vague 'capacity building' cannot and has been the worst form of aid. Building schools is

not the priority - it is improving access to education and ensuring trained teachers that are at school.

David Seddon

OUT OF DARKNESS

Well said Dr Sanduk Ruit. ('Moving out of darkness together', Sanduk Ruit #763) Your incisive assessment reflects your decades of track record of making things happen.

Stahl

Dr Ruit and Dr KC, both true Nepali heroes that dedicated their lives to the service of the needy. Thanks to both these men. But it is wishful thinking to believe that the cold blooded Maoists, or the corrupt NC and UML can help. Nepali Congress netas have been implicated in the abuse and theft of tin roofing. No one trusts these men anymore. So it will be a tall order for unity among these thieves. They do not care about anyone but themselves. Nepalis have wasted 25 years on losers and criminals. Now, let's rebuild with some honest men in charge. We need a political quake to shake things for the future of Nepalis. As for the constitution, let's not hold our breath.

Hem Bahadur Thapa

KEEP LEARNING

Absolutely, this time can be used to

make positive changes within schools and the education system and bringing it more up to date and with better resources ('Lessons still to be learnt', Sonia Awale #763). Lets hope the Education Minister revolutionises it in a way which helps Nepal and its people in the best way.

Allison

Agreed. This is a chance to restructure education from the ground up.

Utpal

After showing continuous progress for five straight years, Nepal's Education Index ranking has stagnated last three years. Why?

Pratik

GURKHAS

Brave Gurkhas! I respect *Nepali Times* and David Seddon for highlighting the forgotten heroes of the world war ('The Gurkhas of Gallipoli', #463). I am looking forward to reading more articles on Second World War and the Burma campaign as well. It is one of the less documented and researched part of World War II.

Pradhan Kiran

The Gurkhas, one of the few things, we Nepalis, can be proud of.

Airline Guy

Times

THIS WEEK



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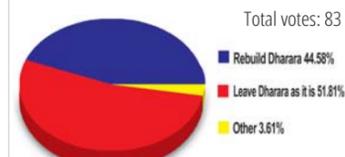
Most popular on Twitter
Lessons still to be learnt by Sonia Awale (87 retweets, 80 favourites)

Most visited online page
Stories of Nepal (1,144 views)

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How not to reinvent the wheel by Bihari K Shrestha (15 comments)

Times nepalnews.com
Weekly Internet Poll #764

Q. Should Dharara be rebuilt or left as it is?



Weekly Internet Poll #765
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Do you think the Supreme Court overstepped its jurisdiction with its order on the 16-point agreement?

Hold it right there

Because a super fast-track constitution is unacceptable, let's hold local elections

After 8 June, many people, even if just for a minute, saw a glimmer of hope for a constitution in the making. Only two weeks later, the light at the end of that long dark tunnel is rapidly dimming again.



ONE TO MANY
Bidushi Dhungel

Instead, naysayers to the 16-point deal seem to be winning in this political arm-wrestling. The latest Supreme Court stay order couldn't be more welcome for them -- proof that indeed the deal was illogical, and not to mention, unconstitutional. The Court's foray into political waters be damned, again.

Everyone already knows that we all voted in November 2013 while the Chief Justice was the Premier of the country after the SC dissolved the CA -1 by not allowing an extension. There were a few cries over the muddling of the separation of powers, but only silence had followed the former dissolution order in May 2012 when, for a moment, it seemed a deal was imminent. But the Court thought not. And, three years later, it has happened again.



Political parties claim they will continue with the constitution-writing process regardless. But amidst criticism from certain quarters over how the 16-point agreement has dealt with the citizenship issue, relegated the responsibility of federalism, abandoned the inclusion agenda and fast-tracked the process to earn a quick buck, the SC decision certainly adds to the agreement's already-apparent legitimacy crisis.

However, it is worth pointing out that SC stay orders in Nepal are usually taken less than seriously, especially when the Court meanders into perceived

political territory. Many court orders remain unimplemented over allegations that the justices have overstepped their bounds. Maoist leader Bal Krishna Dhungel who was found guilty of killing Ujjain Kumar Shrestha in 2002 and against whom there is a SC order for life imprisonment, is the first which comes to mind. The latest Supreme Court order is less a threat to the will of the political leadership to do whatsoever it pleases and more a decision, which could further aggravate polarisation in society if left unaddressed and bypassed.

It's obvious that those on the bench when SC orders are given

matter a lot. In hyper-sensitive times, the latest decision made by a single bench of Justice Girish Chandra Lal was not going to be spared an ethnic colouring. In 2012, when CA-1 was dissolved, the decision was made by a single bench of the then-Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi. It's probably not pure coincidence that Regmi's decision benefitted him and the political forces, which better represented his point of view.

The same goes for Justice Lal's decision. Quite frankly, the 16-point agreement is unacceptable to major Madhesi parties and activists whose politics is fundamentally rooted in the demand for identity-based federalism.

Even if that weren't the case, however, one cannot discount that it is absolutely deplorable for a leadership to be incapable of addressing the difficult situations, which it has consciously put itself in. That too, by bypassing an existing constitution in order to forge the political consensus needed to write a new one.

Federalism still remains

the most difficult aspect of constitution writing and that is why the leadership, which chose to take on the challenge now has no choice but to rise up to it. A super-fast-track constitution, which not only relieves the political class of its responsibility, but denies equal rights to women and is unaccountable to the people is no better than the Interim one. And we've already got one of those.

A more effective approach would be to call for local elections as soon as possible while taking more time for the constitution-drafting process. The urgency for local accountability is the most palpable necessity throughout Nepal, and especially in the earthquake-hit districts. It is not a ploy to forgo the federal agenda, either. It is simply a measure to jump-start grassroots development in the absence of federal and decentralised structures. Every group and volunteer who worked to distribute relief in the aftermath of the earthquake has felt the absence of local accountability.

If local elections can be held before the year is out, the constitution, federalism and all, can come after. Parties should effectively use what time the CA tenure has left to produce the kind of document most -- if not all -- Nepalis will be willing to accept as the new constitution. That was what was promised. By then, it will already be time for new local elections to be held under the new federal set up. 

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Carving out a niche

Rebuilding temples won't just restore our heritage, but also create jobs by reviving the woodcarving industry

SONIA AWALE

The 600-year old Kasthamandap, the iconic nine-storey Basantapur Palace, the Hari Shankar temple in Patan, and the Machhindranath temple in Bungamati were some of the Valley's historic shrines that were destroyed on 25 April. Although the earthquake razed ancient towns, it also offered a chance to revive traditional wood carving and create new jobs.

Nearly 500 temples and monuments in Kathmandu Valley were damaged. Historic towns like Sankhu, Bungamati and Khokana were badly hit. Wood carvings are essential architectural elements in Newari architecture and many carved eaves, columns and struts were crushed under falling masonry.

"There is definitely a need to rebuild these structures accurately, and it could revive the wood carving industry and boost sales of handicrafts also," says Upendra Rana of Nepal Traditional Crafts, an established exporter of Nepali handicrafts.

The hub of wood carving in Kathmandu is the town of Bungamati, which was almost completely destroyed on 25 April (See page 10-11). Most of the town's inhabitants are busy clearing the debris, living in temporary shelters, and haven't had the time to think about their traditional occupation of wood carving.

"I hope government will use our ancestral skills of carving wood to rebuild our temples. This way, the monuments get rebuilt and the people here get jobs," says Manik Raj Shakya, 49, who started wood carving when he was only 12 and has been to Thailand and Japan to build Nepali temple replicas. His son, Naresh (left), is also in the family business.



PICS: GOPEN RAI



WORKS OF ART: Although her home was destroyed, Santa Bajracharya resumes carving picture frames, and hopes that business will return as tourism picks up (above).

Naresh Raj Shakya, 26, follows his ancestral profession of wood carving in Bungamati, which many hope will be revived during reconstruction of temples destroyed in the earthquake (left).

Despite the toll the earthquake took on the people of Bungamati, there are signs of hope and inspiration. Santa Bajracharya's neighbourhood was destroyed, but she has gone back to her hammer and chisel to carve photo frames for sale to tourists. She is optimistic that sales of carved curios will pick up once tourists return.

"It will take time to go back to how it used to be, but we have to work like before," says Bajracharya who works alongside her husband amidst a stack of carved frames.

At the Patan Industrial Estate, the wood carving workshops look quiet. Many workers have not returned from their home districts, and showroom sales are down.

But Srijana Silpakar who runs Nepal's pioneering wood carving company, Wood Carving Industries, sees an opportunity to resurrect the tradition and train new apprentices.

"Reconstruction will start soon, the temples have to be rebuilt, and we will need more skilled carvers. When handicraft sales went into decline a lot of wood carvers got other jobs, now they could come back," says Silpakar.

Remaking some of the intricately carved windows and columns will not be easy, though, it will need patience,

precision and practice. The skills and tradition are still alive, and need to be passed down to a new generation.

"If we want to rebuild our temples exactly the way they were, we don't even need tourists to boost the wood carving industry, there will be enough work for us," says Silpakar.

Even so, the handicrafts industry has ups and downs that correlate with figures for tourist arrivals. So, just as sales of wood and metal artefacts went down during the conflict, there has been a similar slump in business after the earthquake.

"If the government makes concrete plans to revive tourism with promotion abroad, it will automatically help boost the wood

carving industry," says Milan Silpakar of Newa Wood Carving in Patan.

Besides tourism, Nepal's wood carving industry also has great export potential, which is only partially tapped. For example, Walt Disney Animal

Kingdom in Florida has been buying Newari and Tibetan motifs from Wood Carving Industries to create Tibetan City in its popular Expedition Everest exhibit that opened in 2006. The earthquake showed that there is immense goodwill for Nepal abroad, and if promoted right, this could translate into increased exports of Nepali wood art.

Says Srijana Silpakar: "This is a big chance for us to conserve traditional wood carving. If we don't use this opportunity, future generations of Nepalis will not know about our own cultural heritage."



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Needless drama

Like killing Caesar to prevent an anticipated misadventure

We should all thank Supreme Court (SC) Justice Girish Chandra Lal for exposing all the forces stacked against a new constitution for the past seven years. It has also exposed the hypocrisy of our political class.

Acting on a writ petition against the 16-point agreement between four major political parties because it ostensibly

Sure enough, they lashed back at Justice Lal's interim order, terming it an overreach of the judiciary and intruding on the exclusive preserve of the assembly and ruling on a 'political' issue. Some even suggested that Lal could be impeached. Some parties opposed to an independent judiciary saw this as a great opportunity to clip the wings of the apex court.

The irony of political leaders citing the separation of powers and an independent judiciary was not lost on the small proportion of Nepalis still following the endless saga of Kathmandu politics. But this is not to say that Justice Lal's interim order is not full of contradictions. The 16-point pact was reached by four political parties, but Lal issued the interim order in the name of the government and the CA. It is preemptive in that it aims to stop the CA from acting on the 16-point agreement.

The biggest contradiction is that the order purportedly sets out to protect the CA from political interference but, in doing so, the single bench blatantly interferes in the exclusive domain of the CA. Justice Lal based his order, among others, on Article 138 of the Interim Constitution. Here's what Clause 3 of the same Article says: 'The final settlement on the matters relating to the restructuring of the State and the form of federal system of governance shall be as determined by the CA.'

The SC has neither authority nor role in instructing the CA to act in a certain way. It can, of course, determine whether a

final product of the assembly is as per the provisions of the Interim Constitution. So the question arises: Why the haste?

The most unfortunate consequence is that the interim order lent credence to calls to rein in the SC's independence. Justice Lal's order was aimed against a political decision. In the past, the SC has refused to entertain writs because they dealt with political issues: for example when Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi was named the head of the interim government, the SC refused to deal with it.

The SC's May 2012 order refusing any further extension of the first CA has been compared to Justice Lal's interim order. The argument goes that if the 2012 decision was acceptable, this one should have been as well. The first CA, elected for two years in 2008 was extended four times – first by a year, then by three months twice and finally in November 2011 as a last and final extension of six months. At the time of approving the last extension, the SC had said that the CA would be automatically dissolved after the end of the 'last' extension even if the parties fail to draft a constitution within the extended period. It suggested either a referendum or a new election. There is simply no comparison, in spirit or content, between May 2012 and June 2015.

That order of 25 November, 2011 had this to say: 'Whether to deliver the constitution within the next six months or to go for a referendum or a fresh mandate or any other option is purely an issue to be decided politically, as 'these are not supposed to be managed judicially'. Was Justice Lal aware of this?

The larger bench could decide on Lal's interim order, but this was such a needless drama and a waste of time. 

@damakant



THE DEADLINE
Damakant Jayshi

violated the Interim Constitution's provisions on state restructuring, Justice Lal issued an interim order on 19 June, directing the government and the Constituent Assembly (CA) to halt the constitution drafting exercise until further order. He cited violations of Articles 1, 82 and 138 of the Interim Constitution.

Justice Lal justified it further by saying that the new constitution would invite controversy, impact the law and order situation and cause conflict if it violated the Interim Constitution. Whoa! Killing Caesar to prevent him from some anticipated future misadventure? Can justice be based on what might happen?

To be sure, the political parties that engineered the 16-point deal on 15 June did so not out of a vision for the country but out of pure political calculus.

prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS



Won it

Turkish Airlines has been named the 'Best Airline in Europe' in the Skytrax World Airline Awards for the fifth time. The airline has also been chosen as the 'Best Airline in Southern Europe', 'World's Best Business Class Airline Lounge', and 'World's Best Business Class Lounge Dining'.

Double initiative

Laxmi InterContinental, authorised distributor of Hyundai vehicles, introduced its 'Hyundai Inspiration' initiative. The company will contribute Rs 100,000 from sale of all Hyundai vehicles until 21 July to rebuilding quake-affected areas. It has also launched 'Hyundai Nava Yatra' scheme under which consumers can get cash discounts up to Rs 72,000.



New color

Colors Mobile recently launched its Color X111 QUAD 1.1 dual sim smartphone. The phone comes equipped with Android KitKat 4.4 OS and 1.2 GHz Quad Core processor. It has a 1450 mAh battery and a 4-inch capacitive WVGA IPS touchscreen.



What a TV!

CG electronics has launched the new Toshiba 32P2400VL TV in the Nepali market. The TV features built-in sound bar and 10-bit CEVO engine for high quality sound and visuals. It also has a game mode, 3D colour management and continuous viewing timer.



Discounted fare

Etihad Airways has announced special discount on economy and business class fares to Europe. The offer is valid till 30 June and travel period is between 19 June and 30 December.



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QUAKE FAMILY: Nabina Jamkattel (right) gave birth to her baby in the lawn of the maternity hospital. Her husband, Bhawanath (left, with daughter Namuna on his lap) carried her down from the delivery room when it started shaking.



DEVAKI BISTA

Two months old

Babies born during the quake remind parents of the dreadful day, but also give them strength to face the future

OM ASTHA RAI

It was just before noon that Saturday at the Paropakar Maternity Hospital in Kathmandu. Pregnant women were waiting to be admitted, their families were busy filling out forms, paying the cashier and buying necessary medicines.

Nabina Jamkattel, 25, had been admitted that morning and wheeled into the delivery room with labour pains. Just as the contractions started, the room began to shake violently. The wobbly bed was bouncing, the midwife ran for her life, and a nurse held on to Nabina's bed.

As panic-stricken doctors, nurses and patients scrambled out

of the hospital, Nabina's husband Bhawanath ran in, staggering through the swaying corridors looking for his wife. He found her in the delivery room, swept her up in his arms, and tried to escape. But a part of the ceiling had fallen and the door was jammed. He knelt down, laying his wife on the floor and looked around for another exit.

"Big cracks opened up in the walls, window panes shattered and there was broken glass everywhere. I thought we were all going to die," Bhawanath recalls.

As the main shock subsided, a man kicked open the door from outside and Jamkattel carried his wife down the stairs to the safety of the lawn, which was already crowded with patients lying on the grass. The nurses brought a mattress and screened Nabina with bedsheets as her labour pains continued.

Bhawanath watched as the Nepal Rastra Bank building nearby crumbled, and he worried about his five-year-old daughter and mother in their rented room in Gongabu. He left his wife there and drove at breakneck speed to his flat.

When he reached home, Bhawanath was happy to find his daughter and mother alive. But seeing him alone, they started to weep thinking Nabina had been killed.

By the time Bhawanath returned to the hospital in Thapathali, his wife had delivered a baby boy. Nabina recalls she was struggling to deliver even as aftershocks came one after another. "I felt one big jolt on my back from the ground below me, and I pushed the baby out," she recalls.

The Jamkattel family's house in Dhading was destroyed in the quake. Their rented room is intact, but they were too scared to stay inside. For the first two weeks, the family slept in Bhawanath's delivery van, then

moved to a temporary shelter. They are now back in their rented room in Kathmandu.

Altogether 39 babies were born at Paropakar Maternity Hospital on the day of the earthquake. Two women had Caesareans, and doctors were stitching back the uterus of one of them after removing a dead baby when the quake struck.

The other was Sunita Sunuwar, 19, who had just been anaesthetised when the operation theatre started shaking. Doctors and nurses ran outside leaving her alone, but they went back in immediately after the main shock and continued with the operation despite aftershocks. The baby was taken out at 12:21PM, 26 minutes after the main quake.

When Sunita reached her village in Ramechhap district, she did not find her house. The earthquake had flattened it. She told *Nepali Times* on the phone from her village: "When I came out alive from the operation theatre, I felt like I had conquered death. I don't think I will die now."

After she gave birth in the hospital lawn, people told Nabina Jamkattel to name her baby 'Bhukampa' (Earthquake), but the parents have decided to call him 'Vision', for the hope of the future that he brought to their lives.

"We were expecting just one new life," says Nabina, kissing her baby. "But I feel we were all reborn that day." 🇳🇵



REBUILDING OURSELVES

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सांग्रिला भिलेज रिसोर्ट पोखरामा तपाईंलाई स्वागत छ ।

दुई रात र तीन दिनको मात्र रु ४९९९/-

तपाईंबाट प्राप्त कुल रकमको १० प्रतिशत रकम भुकम्प पिडितको सहयोगार्थ जानेछ ।

विस्तृत जानकारीका लागि : ९८४१४४९८५६, ९८१८७२१४९२ मा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोला ।

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That has been a pretty late and weak start to the monsoon. The Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea arms of the southwest monsoon have low pressure troughs that are clashing over northern India, keeping the region sweltering and humid. The Arabian Sea depression is moving northeast and the Bay monsoon is turning northwest over Bhutan. Ultimately the Bay will hold sway and that is when we expect the monsoon to begin in real earnest. That we expect is still two weeks away, till then it will be partly cloudy days with night rain, heavy in places.

| | | |
|------------|------------|------------|
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SAHINA SHRESTHA



THE BABY WHO LIVED

Two months on, the Awal family is homeless but happy that both their children survived the earthquake

SAHINA SHRESTHA

It is an iconic image of the Nepal Earthquake: a baby, caked in dust, held up by rescuers on being dug out after 22 hours from under the rubble of a house in Bhaktapur.

Sonish Awal was just five months old, and the story of

his miraculous survival made cover stories in newspapers and magazines in Nepal and around the world. Two months on, after countless interviews to reporters, the Awal family is still homeless but feels blessed that both children are alive.

"Sonish is a happy child," says his mother, Rashmila, as she leads us to the ground floor

of a friend's house in Bhaktapur where the family is staying. "He has started to recognise me now." The baby, now seven months old, looks up at his mother and smiles almost on cue.

After their building collapsed on 25 April, neighbours and Nepal Army rescuers tried frantically to look for survivors under the rubble. They rescued Rashmila's

daughter Sonia, but gave up as night fell. The next morning, Rashmila heard a faint cry from the ruins of their four-storey home and the soldiers returned to dig him out.

Today Sonish shows no sign of the ordeal except for a scar on his left thigh. He coos and gurgles as he tries to crawl on the floor of the unfurnished room. "Everything was stolen from the house including the gas cylinder and cooking utensils," says Rashmila. "All I could salvage were a few clothes."

The family was living in a tent at a school, but had to vacate when classes resumed last month. Sonish fell ill and lost a lot of weight, and with the rains coming Rashmila didn't want to take any chances. Unable to afford a room to rent, Rashmila's friend agreed to let her live in a room in their house.

"My husband is out of work, we don't even have enough money to buy furniture," she says, looking at the bare room. "For now we are sharing a room

and kitchen with my friend. But you cannot depend on others forever."

Shyam Awal is a driver, but with construction stopped by a government ban till mid-July he can't find a job. "They have told him there may be no work till Dasain," says Rashmila, who had to borrow money from her sister for Sonia's school uniform. The only reason she can go to school is because someone paid her fees.

Rashmila used to knit sweaters and socks to earn money, but she has her hands full with little Sonish who starts crying the moment he is left alone. After what she went through, Rashmila can't let her baby out of her sight.

Still glad that the family is alive, Rashmila can't help worrying about the future. The little money they had saved is all used up, the house and property is co-owned by Shyam's brothers.

Says Rashmila: "Both my children are miraculously alive, and that means more than all the money in the world." 🇳🇵



SAHINA SHRESTHA

HAPPY FAMILY:

Rashmila Awal with her seven-month baby, Sonish, who was pulled out of the rubble of their home in Bhaktapur after 22 hours (above). Sonia Awal was also rescued alive and now baby sits her sbrother when she is home from school (left).

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EVENTS



Unite for Changu Narayan,

Support the locals of Changu Narayan to clean the temple complex damaged by the earthquake. 27 June, 7am, Changu Narayan Temple, 9849303601, donatenepeople@gmail.com, www.dormnepal.com

Sindhupalchok Trail Races,

Three trail races of 29km, 15km and a shorter 1km in Thulo Sirubari, Sindhupalchok, about three hours drive from Kathmandu to the East to raise money for quake survivors. 27 June, 7.30am, Sindhupalchok, info@trailrunningnepal.org, ultratrailkathmandu.com



Inferno: A Monologue

An art exhibition by Deepmala Maharjan. Inauguration on 26 June, 3pm, exhibition till 30 June, Gallery Mcube, Chakupat, 9851170110, gallerymcube@gmail.com



Ropain

An event to play with mud, and mingle with the locals while planting rice. Accompany this with a Newari feast of sorts, and this makes for an excellent day out. Rs 1,999 per adult, Rs 999 per child, 27 June, 9am to 3pm, Bajrabarahi, (01)4412508, 9801123401, ropain@socialtours.com, ropain.eventbrite.com

Kathmandu Kora,

Join hundreds of cycling enthusiasts and ride for 50, 75, or 100km to raise money for a birthing centre in Pyutar, Lalitpur. 18 July, 6.45am to 4.45pm, ride@kathmandukora.net, www.kathmandukora.net

Prasad,

An urban art show to inspire the youth by reminding them of the heroes Nepalis share in common, with music, beat boxing, live art and video mapping. 26 June, 5pm, Irish Pub, Lakeside, Pokhara, 9813462106, 9846613584, www.facebook.com/projectprasad

UWC Nepal

United World College's annual gathering for UWC alums and current students to meet up and catch up with drinks and snacks. Rs 1000, 27 June, 4 to 7pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel, (01)5528362

DINING

Black Pepper Café & Pub,
Cosmopolitan dining and fancy beverages in a traditional style courtyard. Try the apple sauce pork chops and enjoy the good service. Kopundole Height, Lalitpur, (01)5521897, (01)5536926

Fire & Ice Pizzeria,
For the best Italian pizzas in town. Thamel, (01)4250210



Dan Ran,
The best Japanese food this side of Bagmati. Try one of the bento boxes with a fresh lemonade. Jhamsikhel, (01)5521027

Dhokaima Café,
Enjoy the summer and chill with indigenous cocktails at the Rukhmuni Bar. Patan Dhoka, (01)5522113, dhokaimacafe@yahoo.com

The Vesper House,
Stop by for the best in Italian and all local favourites, in their breezy outdoors seating. Also a great venue for wine connoisseurs. Jhamsikhel, (01) 5548179, www.vespercafe.com

Draught beer,
Enjoy a draught's flavour concentration from a glass, not a can or a bottle. Kathmandu Draught now available at House of Music, 9851075172, Irish Pub, 01-4416027, and Bunker's Hill 015533571.



Dechenling,
The place to head to for Bhutanese and Tibetan cuisine, pleasant and spacious garden is also ideal for big gatherings. Thamel, (01)4412158

MUSIC



Back to school,
A fundraiser to provide educational support to the students of Seti Devi Lower Secondary School, Listi, Sindhupalchok. Live concert by Kutumba. Rs 350, 27 June, 3.30pm, Trisara, Lajimpat, (01)4442568, info@gennep.org



Blues night,
Rustynails plays some of your favorite blues and soul music. 26 June, House of Music, Thamel, 9851075172, sanzey@hotmail.com

Music for healing,
A musical fundraiser by Hamro Sahayog in support of Jalpa Devi Mahabidyalaya, Bhotechaur, Sindhupalchok which was destroyed in the quake. 27 June, 1 to 8pm, Ai-La Restaurant, Kumariapati, Patan, 980840081324, 9808400813

GETAWAYS

Park Village Resort,
Far away from the madding crowd, yet so close to the city. Budhanilkantha, (01)4375280, pvh@wlink.com.np



Gokarna Forest Resort,
A forest sanctuary to help you relax and breathe, and also encourages meditation, just a 20-minute drive away from Kathmandu. Gokarna, (01)4451212, info@gokarna.net

Mum's Garden Resort,
Head out to Pokhara for a peaceful and comfortable stay in beautifully designed cottages at 50% off, surrounded by a lush green garden with great views of Phewa Lake and the Annapurna range. Lake Side, Pokhara, (06)1463468, www.mumsgardenresort.com



The Yellow House,
Bed and breakfast for the light traveller. Sanepa, (01)5553869/5522078, www.theyellowhouse.com.np

ALL IS WELL IN JHAMEL

Jhamsikhel aka JhameL may not be as popular with foreign tourists as Thamel, but it is precisely why it has escaped the ghost town vibe that inhabits the tourist hot spot post quake.

As evening sets in and children make their way home from school, people and cars start crowding this bustling area. 'Restaurant Row', as the street with several higher-end restaurants, bars, and grocers has been unofficially dubbed, slowly starts filling

up with people looking for a fun night out in town.

The popular Moksh Bar fills up every night of the week, with its calm backyard patio seating packed with Nepalis and foreigners from around the neighbourhood

and far.

The Backyard Grill Joint and Pub is a pleasant stop too. Though it doesn't consistently overfill as Moksh, the prices are more wallet-friendly and the ambience is more casual and easy-going.

One of the biggest complaints of the local patrons these days is the unreliable closing times. If a bar has no customers, they often close earlier than stated. While this is a common phenomenon in Kathmandu in general, it is becoming more frequent since the earthquake. Due to the steady stream of their loyal clientele, places in JhameL are less likely to abruptly close compared to restaurants in other parts of the valley.

The popular Italian eatery Vesper Café and Restaurant had to shut down due to damages to its building. But within days, they started serving their delectable cuisine just next door at the Vesper House.

Suraj Missra, a chef at Bakers bakery, said the frequency of local office goers for lunch has gone down since the quake. They are still selling many cakes, but mostly to locals.

Though the heart of JhameL beats with more gusto than much of the city, many of the residents' experiences since the quake add to the somber echo chamber that has infiltrated daily life for Nepalis. *Peregrine Frissell*



Landless before, landless after



DOUBLE TROUBLE: A shanty settlement near Boudha (left). Sita Tamang, 35, used to make a living from a small snack shop. But business is down since the quake.

PICS: KARMA GURUNG

KARMA GURUNG

Unlike hundreds of thousands made homeless by the earthquake, Sita Tamang (pic, right) didn't have a home even before 25 April. Her family has been living in a riverside shanty settlement in Sinamangal for the past ten years struggling to survive from day-to-day. The earthquake just added another layer of hardship.

Tamang, 35, used to make a living from a small shop where children from a neighbourhood school used to stop by to buy snacks and sweets. But business is down because the school was closed.

"The shop did well because of the school, but now no one seems to have money to buy anything anymore," she said, with her grandchild in her lap. Her daughter is out in the city looking for a job.

Much of the assistance is going to earthquake survivors in the mountains, and Kathmandu's already-poor urban homeless have fallen between the cracks. Some help has come from Actionaid Nepal and Lumanti



but it isn't enough for the 2,000 households in the capital's 22 shanty settlements.

Although they were not directly affected by the earthquake, Kathmandu's slum-dwellers who are mainly daily wage earners have been hit hard by the lack of

employment. Most of the women here in Sinamangal, like Tamang's daughter, were domestic helpers in apartments and homes around the city. Tamang lost her job, and despite going out every day hasn't found a new one.

"Many of the big houses that we used to work in are either damaged or the residents don't live there anymore," said Devika Dhungel, who also worked as a domestic help. But despite that, amidst the squalid surroundings there is a mood of surprising optimism.

Many families here hope that once reconstruction starts when the government's ban on new buildings is lifted in mid-July, there will be a lot more jobs coming up.

An immediate worry for residents here is of flooding as the rivers swell with monsoon rains. Because the families do not own the property they occupy, they are not eligible for municipality services.

"They just ignore us, and the only time they acknowledge our presence is when they give us an eviction threat," says Dharmavir, who lives in a shanty near Boudha.

Now, the women in Kathmandu's shantytowns have decided to get organised and help each other. The Nepal Mahila Ekta Samaj women's group started running savings and loans cooperatives so they could help women with microcredit. The women contribute to their savings scheme, and have meetings to give out loans to women who need the cash most urgently.

The society's Bimala Lama, a slum dweller herself said: "Because we do not own any land and don't have proper documents, we have to help our community and ourselves with what we have." Most women who borrow, repay their loans on time.

Like Hira Lama, who lives in a shanty in Kapan. She is lucky that she has found a job for several days in a row and has managed to deposit Rs 500 in her neighbourhood cooperative, which is almost like an insurance premium for a loan that she may need in a future emergency. Her husband is a wood carver, but the family has to cut back on expenses to send money home to her family in Gorkha.

Like the women, the young people living in the shanties have also set up their own organisation to distribute food to those who don't have enough, and are also organising camps for children and paying their tuition. 🇳🇵

Love > Distance

Hi all,

People think long distance relationships (LDR) don't generally work, but this doesn't mean living in the same city as your partner guarantees a happily ever after.



ASK ANJANA ANYTHING

Anjana Rajbhandary

Nowadays, love is quite underrated so you have to see something in the other person to even consider making an effort. Some can wait, most don't. If you have a partner you can trust, someone who you

value, can communicate with, have a strong friendship with, and selfless love- then the bond is definitely stronger than many. If you truly love someone, being loyal is easy.

In all honesty in the long run, a LDR can be inconvenient and frustrating but it shouldn't be a dealbreaker. If the two people, are able to see the distance as a temporary test than a permanent relationship challenge, and both want it to work and believe in it: it is very likely that the relationship will thrive. Of course, there has to be a plan to see each other regularly with a strong potential that at some point, sooner than later, the two people will be in the same place.

Please send questions to: askanjanaanything@nepalitimes.com or @AnjyRajy



Hello, I'm trying to make a long distance relationship work. We live on opposite sides of the world but I love him. People say it won't work but I also know some couples who have managed to stay together despite the distance. Can our love survive the distance?

-B

AR: I feel it is possible for two people to be in two different parts of the world and make their relationship work, that being said, there also needs to be some confirmation that eventually there is a possibility of the two people being in the same city or within acceptable distance.

Communication, optimism and trust are key to make a LDR work. Are you and your partner on the same page with similar expectations and working equally hard to make this work? People in LDR tend to be more forthcoming about their feelings. Be more honest, acknowledge that it will be hard and you will want to give up at times, so ask yourself if you are ready to do this. Can you and your partner wait for each other till there is a possibility to be with each other

more permanently than just on a vacation or trip back home?

Not having enough physical interaction can put a strain on any relationship. Is it possible for both of you to be a supportive part of each other's lives?

If you cannot imagine being without the person, try not to give up on your partner. It really doesn't matter what other people say, because it is your life and your relationship.

Both should want to be together and both should be willing to work together. I believe when two people want to make a relationship work, they find a way and when they don't, they find an excuse. Only time can tell what will happen, but it is rare to find someone who makes you want to put in the extra effort. Good luck. 🇳🇵

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

1 **CHANGU NARAYAN****BARELY
STANDING**

Stone inscriptions at Changu Narayan reveal that this hilltop shrine is the oldest known settlement in Kathmandu Valley. With a history going back to the Lichhavi Period more than 1,000 years ago, archaeologists say the settlement is built upon several layers of ruins of buildings destroyed in previous earthquakes.

The latest quake this year once more damaged one of Kathmandu's holiest, most historic sites. The main temple is now propped up by wooden beams. Weakened by aftershocks, the temple's corners are crumbling and the walls have cracks.

"Although the earthquake did not destroy the main temple completely, a lot of damage was done. But before we begin to renovate the temple, we must take precautions to ensure that the structure is not further damaged," says Aruna Nakarmi of Department of Archaeology.

The plan now is to analyse the soil, strengthen the slopes below the temple to prevent landslides, study the impact of vibration from a nearby road, and only then carry out the renovation, she adds. However, some urgent repair work is being carried out on the outer walls to make the temple complex safe for visitors in future.

"Rebuilding the temple from scratch is not feasible. At the

moment, we are focusing on the structure's stability so that further renovation can be done on the outside in the near future," Nakarmi told *Nepali Times*.

Around the temple, the four sattals housing the recently-opened Living Traditions Museum has been razed to the ground by the Nepal Army which is guarding the temple complex round the clock. Artefacts from the temple

and the museum is currently being housed separately.

"There are plans to rebuild the south section of the museum so that historical objects can all be stored there," says Sunita Bhadel of the Living Traditions Museum. The army, police and local volunteers have been helping out to clear and sort the debris, but with the rice planting season around the corner help is in short supply.

A Changu resident who lost his family home sums up the mood here: "The earthquake destroyed our houses, but at least the temple is still standing and that gives us some solace."  *Ayesha Shakya*

 nepalitimes.com

■ Changu Narayan
■ Return of the past #682 



GOPEN RAI

**After t**

From Changu to Sankhu the y

3 **BUNGAMATI****YOUNG
HELPERS**

From afar, visitors could be forgiven for mistaking the ridge-top village of Bungamati with its russet brick houses and a scenic backdrop of rolling hills as one of those historic towns in Tuscany.

Indeed, Bungamati's charm lies in its architecture, its vibrant festivals and a close-knit Newar community that is proud of its heritage. A large part of that cultural wealth is related to the Machindranath temple and the chariot festival of the rain god. This April, the festival was an important 12-year event and the people of Bungamati were in the midst of celebrating the jatra when the earthquake struck.

Many of the historic mud and brick houses went down along with the large white sikhara-style temple of the red rain god. The chariot had already been pulled up to Chasikot where it stopped on its tracks. And that is where it still is, leaning to one side.

Relief workers reached Bungamati immediately with food and shelter but many villagers are worried about the rains. Two



GOPEN RAI

months after the quake, the locals have cleared a lot of the debris and have built temporary shelters. But many damaged houses still need to be demolished.

"We want to bring down our house and clear up the space but the road up ahead has been blocked by the houses that collapsed, so the pick-ups to transport the debris cannot reach this place," says Amar Raj Shakya who has been living with his family in a temporary shelter.

As elsewhere in Kathmandu Valley, Bungamati's youth have stepped in. Every morning for the past few days members of Bhintuna Pucha have started clearing the rubble in collaboration with the house owners and the community. The group is getting help from the Ganesh Man Singh Foundation and Umesh Shrestha, chairman of Prime Bank.

Naresh Man Shakya of Bhintuna Pucha said: "With the monsoon approaching, it

became clear we needed to act urgently. The challenge is to involve the community while working on houses that are not their own." The group members are given Rs 200 as incentive, even though they are volunteers.

For people like Sakali Mali (*pic, above*), whose three-storey house went down the youngsters are a big help. "We didn't know where to start but with their help we are almost done in a week," she says.  *Sahina Shrestha*

2 SANKHU

HISTORIC AND SAFE

The ancient settlement of Sankhu in the eastern edge of Kathmandu Valley was being considered by UNESCO for inclusion into its list of World Heritage Sites. In January 2008, the Department of Archaeology submitted its application for Sankhu. Then came the 25 April earthquake and the historic Newar town lost most of its ancient temples and houses.

The people of Sankhu are proud

of their heritage and started picking up the pieces soon after the quake. They cleared the debris themselves, and are now trying to see if they can raise money for rebuilding.

"Waiting for the government isn't a solution," said Suresh Pradhan, a social worker who founded the Sankhu Reconstruction Committee. "We will rebuild ourselves."

The assessment was initiated

two weeks after the earthquake by Sakwo Vintuna Pucha, a youth organisation founded in 2013 to preserve and promote the cultural traditions of Sankhu. There are now 20 volunteers between 18-26 years old protecting the artefacts, bricks and timber in the ruined town.

Some 55 historical houses, many more than 100 years old, have been damaged in the earthquake. Amrit Shrestha, 23, a civil engineering student has been inspecting the buildings and deciding whether some of them are safe enough to be repaired, or have to be torn down. Volunteers are also collecting artefacts from damaged buildings to store safely.

However, Sakwo Vintuna Pucha is facing challenges, some locals have already sold their *sajhyas*, the intricately carved wooden windows. "People need money to rebuild their houses," Shrestha said. "But we have to explain to why they shouldn't sell them."

In a meeting with social workers, English teacher Birendra Prasad insisted that safety was more important than preserving old buildings. "We want houses that are resistant," he said.

Christian Manhart, Director

of UNESCO Nepal, who was at the meeting, explained that houses could be rebuilt in traditional style and still be safe. "Living in a historic city and being safe from earthquakes isn't a contradiction," he added.

Archaeologist David Andolfatto accompanied Manhart to Sankhu earlier this week and he was impressed by the work already achieved by Sakwo Vintuna Pucha, especially because they hadn't been trained in heritage conservation.



REBUILDING OURSELVES

Two volunteers of Sakwo Vintuna Pucha trained by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) have been sifting carefully through the ruins. Manhart also suggested they could

learn how to use KLL Collect app to transmit information on status of damaged monuments.

The Sankhu Reconstruction Committee carried out an inventory of all the historic buildings in the town 10 years ago. But Pradhan says: "The plan isn't a problem, we need a rebuilding policy to ensure the style and safety of our houses".

Stéphane Huët

nepalitimes.com

- Interview with Amrit Shrestha
- Interview with Suresh Pradhan



ANU SHRESTHA

The aftershocks

Youth are pitching in to help rebuild Kathmandu Valley's historic towns



STÉPHANE HUËT

4 HARSIDDHI

UNDER THE SHADOW

After the 25 April earthquake brought down 90 per cent of the houses in Harsiddhi, locals using tarpaulin sheets and bamboo poles, built a big makeshift tent at Tafa Khala (pic), the town's largest open space. More than 150 residents camped in this communal tent in the first ten days after the quake.

Two months later, Tafa Khala is filled with dozens of similar looking

shelters. Some families have set up tents, others have built shelters using corrugated zinc sheets while 80 remain in the original makeshift tent.

"More people came to Tafa Khala after 12 May as 15 additional houses collapsed in the aftershock," says Ajay Maharjan, 31, from Jyako Tole who lost his house in the first quake. "Two elderly men also died that day."

An open kitchen has been set up at

the open grounds where every day a group of five prepare meals for the 250 people living there. Food is not much of a problem for locals, most of who work as farmers. What they need they say are safer shelters that will protect them from the rain and wind.

"Few of the shelters have already been damaged by the rains this week," says Maharjan who is a teacher.

As devotees head to the Trishakti Bhawani Temple at the break of dawn, things look pretty normal in Harsiddhi. But walk down 20m and the sight of uncleared debris greet you.

"Some are traumatised by this scenery and are afraid to leave their shelters," says temple priest, Dhana Bahadur. "We need vehicles to transport these rubble away."

Harsiddhi residents are thinking of reconstruction, but they want to ensure it is planned properly. After the earthquake, locals realised the alleys were too narrow for ambulances to drive through. "More lives could have been saved had the lanes been wider," says Maharjan. "The plan now is to make the alleys three feet wider."

Adds Maharjan: "Even if we are close to Kathmandu, we haven't received aid from the government. We have fallen under the shadow of the light as a saying in Nepali goes."

Stéphane Huët



Jurassic World

As a fourth film in a Hollywood franchise, a creation whose inception started in the mind of the late, (arguably) great sci-fi writer Michael Crichton, and was perpetuated into cinematic glory



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

in the first *Jurassic Park* (1993) by none other than Steven Spielberg, *Jurassic World* already had a lot to live up to considering its rather splendid roots.

For those of you who are already scoffing at my description, well, don't even bother to go see this latest

installment. It has none of the wonder and awe of the first film, which fearlessly pioneered and used jaw dropping CGI to recreate the Jurassic era brimming with the gamut of wondrous dinosaurs that held people spellbound, young or old.

Unlike the Crichton novel, *Jurassic Park* wasn't really all that sophisticated, it just had all the elements of a Spielberg film that put it above par: the crazy science fiction, the blithenaiveté of the characters, the obligatory kids who are adorable but also intrepid, and finally, technology to match the vision.

Unfortunately, 22 years later, none of the above continue to hold true for poor Colin Trevorrow, the romantically named, clearly competent director of *Jurassic World* who, in his defense was probably never really allowed full rein.

Jurassic World exists as an oft-visited park on the infamous Isla Nublar where so many dinosaurs had run rampant in the past films. It is now a declining attraction where not even the dinosaurs are really that exciting any longer (neither to us, nor to the parkgoers). Hence, the creation of the Indominus Rex, an aberration conceived by the park's money hungry administrators and board members among whom all are pretty much insufferable due to terrible cardboard cutout characters that not even the likes of Irrfan Khan (who plays Simon Masrani, the owner of the park) can save.

Really, the only reason that you should watch this particular, bizarrely boring film (how can you go wrong with the likes of velociraptors and t-rexes at your disposal?) is to see if you can forget all the silliness of what ought to be clever characters, and perhaps do some person watching in the form of Chris Pratt (who plays Owen Grady, an animal trainer), an actor who made his breakthrough with Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014). Pratt, a talented but struggling actor for decades, who is now, finally, getting his due, pulls this slight film together out of sheer will and force of persona. In the words of one of the characters in the film, Pratt is the real badass, not the dinosaurs. ❏

nepalitimes.com
Trailer

HAPPENINGS



NEW FLIGHT: Prime Minister Sushil Koirala inaugurates two MI-17V helicopters acquired by the Nepal Army at Tribhuvan International Airport on Monday.



CURTAIN RAISER: Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mahendra Bahadur Pandey brief the media on the International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction on Tuesday. Govinda Raj Pokharel of the National Planning Commission is on right.



PRANAYAM: Vice President Parmananda Jha and actress Manisha Koirala participate in International Yoga Day celebrations at the Indian Embassy on Sunday.



SIGHTSEEING: Delegates to the International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction tour the Hanuman Dhoka area on Wednesday ahead of their meeting.



RAMADAN KAREEM: Nepali Muslims attend the first Friday prayer of the month of Ramadan at a mosque in Kathmandu.

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Should Dharara be rebuilt?

After the 25 April earthquake, Nepalis were shocked to hear that the iconic Dharara tower in Kathmandu came down, killing at least 70 people. It gave the first indication of just how serious the quake was, and also took away an important landmark that many had an emotional attachment to.

Prime Minister Bhimsen Thapa built two towers in the 19th century both of which went down in the 1833 quake. Only one was rebuilt, and it was destroyed again in 1934 and rebuilt once more. Now, some are saying that since it had gone down twice previously, maybe Dharara should not be rebuilt, but the ruins kept as a memorial to the 2015 earthquake.

Rohit Ranjitkar of the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust thinks rebuilding Dharara shouldn't be a priority. "We can leave it as a memorial of the 25 April earthquake," he said. "It will also remind us of the risk of building high and unsafe constructions."

Artist Bhishan Rajbhandari, who advocates for the reconstruction of all monuments of Kathmandu, doesn't agree. He says the Moghul-style tower was part of Kathmandu's identity. "It symbolised our acceptance of other cultures," he said. "We



STÉPHANE HUËT

must rebuild it by making sure it is earthquake resistant."

There are many examples from around the world of destroyed monuments being left as a reminder of the disaster that caused it. For example, the Hiroshima monument has preserved a building, and parts of the World Trade Centre building have been kept at Ground Zero in New York. The concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau is now a museum

to remember human cruelty. In Sichuan, some of the ruined buildings in Wenchuan commemorate the 2008 earthquake and the loss of life.

Entrepreneur Amar Jyoti Ranjit, who undertook the building of a 2.30-metre cement replica (pic, left) of the tower costing Rs 250,000 on a traffic island in Sundhara, said rebuilding the fallen tower will be symbolic of Nepal rising from the debris.

Ranjit understands concerns about safety, but he thinks there must be a way to construct a stronger Dharara. 🇳🇵

Stéphane Huët



REBUILDING OURSELVES

YOUR SAY

After an earlier version of this article on Dharara was posted online, many readers tweeted to @nepalitimes with their views.

@RupSunar
This is an unprecedented event and therefore we can leave the ruins as was done with Qutub Minar in Delhi. Attracts more tourists as well.

@regmi_ujjwal
It should be rebuilt but made earthquake resistant.

@sakyagm123
Had Bhimsen Thapa built schools instead of towers, millions more would have been educated by now.

@ManuelSintubin
It was rebuilt after the 1934 earthquake, so rebuild it as symbol of the resilience of Nepal.

@saragam111
It should be built again but the life of people climbing it should not be in danger again.

@ReachAshHere
Heritages are called so because they are history, building new ones wouldn't separate it from any normal buildings.

@PrabirRana
If the Nepalis can build the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, why not the Dharara?

@pbogati99p
Leave it as it is. It should serve as a reminder to politicians of their inefficiency to protect heritage sites.

The Vesper House

Vesper Café and Restaurant has carved a soft spot in the hearts of Nepali and foreign patrons in the heart of Jhamsikhel, unfortunately the 25 April earthquake took down the beautiful red mud-brick building the restaurant was located in. Within days, the Vesper House next door reopened for business- catering to their loyal fans and providing a relaxing environment for people to unwind and enjoy a good meal.

It was a perfect move. Most restaurants in Jhamsikhel were still closed and people needed a place to unwind. Adding the original Vesper Café's food menu brought in a new group of customers to the Vesper House, which earlier catered to wine and cheese lovers.

Set in a beautiful yellow bungalow, which was once a garage, the Vesper House specialises in wines from all over the world and provides a significantly sized wine cellar where you can buy wines to take home or enjoy with a pasta dish.

Claiming to be a fusion restaurant of Italian and Mexican, with a selection of sandwiches (Rs 340-570), Nepali staples such as



chicken chilli (Rs 370) and some continental inspired entrees (Rs 350-2100): The Vesper House offers a selection of appetisers and entrees to suit various pallets and wallets.

We started our meal with a generic popular Mexican appetiser: Nachos (Rs 370), a delightful combination of tortilla chips covered in beans, chilli, cheese, olives and fresca salsa with a side of sour cream. The combination of

the crunchy chips with fresh salsa was refreshing and the flavour was accentuated by the sour cream. This dish may appear small but

is enough for 2-3 people. While satisfying, we all agreed it could have used a bit more cheese. Our first entrée was the Smoked Chicken and Jalapeno Pepper pizza (Rs 695). This thin crust pizza came with generous chunks of sliced smoked chicken, lots of little pieces of olives and a sufficient amount of jalapeno peppers to give it just the right

kick. The pizza was delicious and a reminder of the pizzas near a corner restaurant in a piazza in Italy. The thinness of the crust balanced the amount of toppings on it.

Our second entrée was Ravioli di Pollo (Rs 415), beautifully layered in a dish with a strong aroma of the white sauce. These little raviolis with chicken was covered with the most mouthwatering creamy sauce. It was rich and tasty, and the small portion was just enough to not overwhelm any food lover. The ravioli was impressive with the shell a tad bit al dente for our liking, but may be perfect for many.

The filling meal did not leave room for dessert but the Vesper House has a selection of homemade desserts ranging from raspberry cheese cake to panna cotta (both Rs 280), which will guarantee a trip back for most. 🇳🇵

How to get there: Located on the restaurant row between DanRan and previous Vesper Café and Restaurant.

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The Indifferent Republic

Even a massive earthquake can't shake the concerned authorities into actually being concerned

My first clue that the governing elite in this country don't really give a damn came way back in the 1980s when *The Rising Nepal* newspaper was my only English language link to the world. Its front page invariably featured the royal family, international news was sparse and the liveliest section was often Letters to the Editor.

Diligent citizens wrote eloquent complaints about the lack of water in the pipes and trash piling up uncollected (some things never change) and frequently signed off with the hopeful phrase 'we trust the concerned authorities will look into this matter.'



MOVING TARGET Foreign Hand

As the garbage piled higher and water-taps stayed dry it dawned on me the concerned authorities everyone pinned their hopes on were simply not concerned, about the trash, water or anything else. Thus began the Hand's journey of discovery into Bureaucratic Apathy on a Himalayan scale, delving deep into the mindset of those in positions of authority.

The Nepalis I knew and worked with were generous of spirit and caring, my first question was how could these



BIKRAM RAI

bureaucrats be so different? It seems, in short, whoever joins the civil service somehow mutates into a lower, more cynical breed.

My second question was why none of these jokers ever got fired. 'If only it were that simple,' came the mysterious response from between the lines. Most government staff need family networks before even getting hired (or they'd never get the job) and spend the rest of their careers building a web of contacts and strategic alliances that's more important (to them) than the state they're supposed to serve. Liaisons are forged and mutual benefit societies established that grow more intricate with time. If all this wasn't so time-consuming (and financially rewarding) the bureaucrat might find time for other matters, like work. I eventually realised it's not that the authorities aren't concerned, rather they're concerned about all the wrong things.

A mutually agreed impunity combined with exceptionally

low expectations encourages this indifference to flourish. Plus, let's not forget that inept official ignoring the water supply or diverting funds might be the uncle of someone you owe favours to, making your best course of action obvious: do nothing.

The fact that some poor villagers in far-flung districts were swindled out of the promised irrigation canal, road or health-post is far less compelling than protecting uncle. The village is remote, uncle isn't, and next time it could be your future threatened by dismissal. You'd surely count on your co-workers to cover your back and do nothing then.

But somebody must have cared in the past, I mused, thinking of the beautifully laid-out old quarters of the valley's towns and cities. Public spouts that delivered water for centuries must have been maintained or they'd dry up, as they have now. Communal areas were incorporated in the planning of every neighbourhood, spaces that would likely be sold on the sly by the concerned authorities

these days.

As my journey of discovery degenerated into a morbid muse, overwhelmed by examples to ponder, I couldn't help noticing this negligent bureaucracy is dominated by Brahmins and Chhetris. Coincidence? The higher castes have always used their religiously sanctioned status to lord it over ordinary citizens and gain access to the treasury. As a fallen Catholic, I'm no stranger to chicanery in divine guise but am still impressed by such a devious system that preaches the low castes deserve their poverty and suffering because of sins committed in previous lives. It certainly makes it easy for the elite to shrug their shoulders and pretend they'd like to help, but who can argue with fate?

This high caste sense of entitlement continues to be abused by all the party leaders and their coteries. The Maoist luminaries may be atheist and pretend to be egalitarian but are quick to use the perks of their Brahmin caste, which include the

right to pontificate endlessly, act holier-than-thou, and threaten people with hell-fire if they dare disobey.

Whatever caste or party bureaucrats belongs to, they usually adopt the habits of the old feudal elite. This was never more painfully exposed than in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. As aid poured in, the concerned authorities froze, alarmed they were suddenly expected to act swiftly and give away valuable emergency goods to people they don't care about. Just when the country desperately needed leadership, all party leaders disappeared for a couple of weeks, probably to hide their clue-less faces while plotting to steal a share of the windfall.

The government's crude attempt to extort customs tax on free donations displays a level of short-sighted greed insulting to both the donors and those waiting for help. Two months on, aid still litters the tarmac at Tribulation Int'l Airport as Customs officials haggle over duty rates. Despite being an old Hand, I must admit this profound level of indifference to fellow countrymen in desperate straits is difficult to fully comprehend, especially when contrasted to the dynamic young Nepalis who threw themselves wholeheartedly into helping those in need.

Some dreamt this disaster would sweep away the old ways and galvanise the politicians into action but all evidence indicates otherwise. Even a massive earthquake can't shake the concerned authorities into actually being concerned. 🇳🇵

Interim order and interim constitution

By delving into politics, the Supreme Court verdict on the 16-point deal has once again blurred the separation of powers

The interim order issued by the single bench of the Supreme Court this week on the 16-point agreement between the four biggest political parties to 'fast-track' the constitution with a power-sharing compromise has become mired in controversy over the separation of powers.

This is not new, there was a similar debate with the installation of the election government headed by Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi in 2013. The fact that those who approved of that decision are against it this time just shows how opportunistic politics can be.



LEGALESE Binita Dahal

The two-page court decision clearly shows that the judiciary has entered into the political realm even though it has mentioned that Article 1, 82 and 138 of Interim Constitution are challenged by the recent agreement between the parties.

The political leaders decided that the disputed issue of federalism would be settled by a two-thirds majority in Parliament based on the report of a Federal Commission to demarcate the borders of the provinces.

The Supreme Court, however, issued the interim order to not promulgate constitution without solving the issue of federalism first. But what the honourable justice



seems to have forgotten is that this is precisely where everything has been stuck for the past seven years, and the 16-point agreement represents the first hope in untangling the knot.

The interim order doesn't mean that the Constituent Assembly has to stop work on drafting the constitution, and it is clear that the judiciary is over-stepping its bounds by interfering in a sovereign elected assembly.

The major parties which signed the agreement held an emergency meeting on the same day that the Supreme Court issued the interim order declaring that they will not stop work in drafting the constitution. Chairman of the CA Subhas Nembang has also been vocally critical of not just the court this week, but also of President Ram Baran Yadav for seeming to side with the court. Actually, the Supreme Court order only alerted CA that according to Article 138, the issue of federalism must be included in the new constitution

prior to its dissolution.

The court maintained that according to the provision of Article 138 of Interim Constitution the Constituent Assembly should decide the borders, number, names, structures and headquarters as well as a detailed list of these provinces, their resources and the sharing of rights. Based on this the court said that federalism should be decided by the CA itself and not by a future commission.

It is not normal practice for the Supreme Court to entertain this kind of writ petition, and it was in fact rejected by the Supreme Court administration. This writ was filed by Vijay Kant Karna, former editor and ambassador to Denmark, and the hearing was conducted by Justice Girish Chandra Lal, who is retiring in the first week of January. The recent 16-point agreement had sprung hope among Nepalis that there was finally a breakthrough on the constitution so that the country could focus on post-quake reconstruction.

But the court order has dampened those hopes somewhat.

The four parties are putting on a brave face, and have said nothing will stop their agreement from being implemented. Their resolve comes from the fact that the UML, CPN(M) and the MJF(L) will all get berths in a new national unity government after the constitution is written. They are all pinning their hopes that the division bench of the Supreme Court will overturn the single bench verdict on the petition.

Justice Girish Chandra Lal's decision has also opened him up to allegations of a Madhesi tilt in a decision that favours disgruntled members of the opposition alliance which did not agree with the 16-point deal. Numerous op-eds in the Nepali media have remarked that it is not a coincidence that the writ petitioner, lawyers, and Justice are all Madhesis who have been against the constitution compromise. 🇳🇵 @binitadahal

The disaster is not over

Assessing the National Planning Commission's Post-disaster Needs Assessment report

The National Planning Commission (NPC) conducted fieldwork between 22 May-10 June to assess Nepal's 'post-disaster' needs and produced a report with an 18-page executive summary. The Health and Population Sector also submitted its findings to



THE GADFLY
David Seddon

the PDNA (Post-disaster Needs Assessment) Secretariat. The key findings are being considered at the International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction (ICNR) on 25 June.

The reports were produced with speed and professional skill, and have pulled together a range of information and provide a valuable overview and synthesis of the scope and scale of the earthquakes.

The collaboration between local communities, NGOs, government and international agencies at this stage is clearly far better than it was at the outset, despite continuing issues. It is essential if effective reconstruction is to take place that all parties work together, complementing rather than overlapping or duplicating each

other's efforts.

It is important to recognise the overall dimensions of the disaster in time as well as in space. Thirty-one of 75 districts are affected, with 14 declared 'crisis-hit', and the geological movement continues as the monsoon looms, threatening further landslides and flooding over several months is of critical significance.

The needs assessment, however, is largely retrospective and does not really begin to address the implications of the cumulative effect of a series of earthquakes followed by months of monsoon rain. A realistic strategy and program for reconstruction will need to include an assessment of likely needs going forward, not only the damage that needs

to be repaired as of now. It should not really be a 'post-disaster' needs assessment, but rather an assessment of short, medium, and long-term requirements and priorities as the needs emerge.

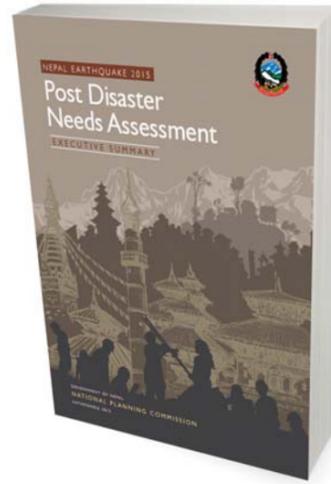
Two months after the first earthquake, tens of thousands of people, many of them in remote areas, are still living in temporary or transitional shelters. Many have lost crucial assets as well as

family members and neighbours, and damage to property and injury to persons is widespread. But perhaps more important still is the damage done to livelihoods, on which hundreds of thousands of people rely absolutely for survival.

The report recognises that 'subsistence-based households are badly affected in rural areas as the earthquake hit Nepal only a few weeks prior to the start of the paddy planting season'. But the key consideration is not only the capacity to engage in activities that will bear fruit later in the year, but arguably even more critically people's ability (or lack of ability) to sustain themselves through a continuing income stream both in Nepal and abroad. Ensuring that continuing flow of income will be crucial.

Yet the focus of the report is on the damage done to buildings: it points out that almost half of what it calls 'the destruction and production decline' was in the housing sector and that

'the environment, education, finance and agriculture sectors represent between 4 and 5 per cent each of the total disaster effects'. It concludes, to my mind misguidedly, on this basis that 49 per cent of 'needs' are



grassroots derived model.

Finally, any 'needs assessment' worth its salt should consider not only the 'needs' (derived I suggest from more than an assessment that concentrates on damage and destruction of assets) but also the resources and capabilities, and the institutional and other mechanisms, available to meet those needs. Clearly there will be a role for foreign aid and assistance in the immense task of recovery and reconstruction, and also for the deployment at a national and regional level of government resources of all kinds (human, technical, financial, etc). An integrated overall strategy for infrastructural, economic and social – and political – reconstruction will be crucial.

But if there is one thing that has been revealed during the on-going disaster over the last two months, it is the absolutely crucial role of ordinary Nepali people (in local communities and through a variety of local initiatives, informal organisations and NGOs, supported by the actions of local government officials, the police and the army) working together at the grassroots, in any effective assessment of what is needed going forward by way of response and of the ways in which priorities should be established.

@pigreen



REBUILDING OURSELVES

रहनुहोस् सधैं कनेक्टेड, एनसेल कनेक्टको साथ

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Mission far from accomplished

RICHARD RAGAN

Discovering Maurice Herzog's book *Annapurna* as a boy growing up in the flatlands of the Mississippi Delta, I dreamt of the Himalaya. My heroes were the mountaineers. Much later, I had the privilege to work as the World Food Programme (WFP) Country Director to Nepal when I, also, had the opportunity to explore Nepal's mountains and experience the sublime beauty of this unique country.

Three days after the 7.8 magnitude earthquake that ripped through Nepal on 25 April, I was back there leading WFP's massive response to the disaster. It is a big challenge. In the breathtaking Langtang Valley, the quake had triggered an avalanche that buried an entire village under thick layers of ice and rock.

Life in Nepal's mountains and plains have always been difficult. But now, hundreds of thousands of family homes are shattered, their food stocks wiped out, their cows, goats and poultry killed, while precious seeds for the current planting season are caked in mud. Had the earthquake struck at night rather than at noon on a holiday, the death toll would have been much higher.

Alongside many other organisations, big and small, Nepali and international, we at WFP have been bringing life-saving food to almost two million people, using roads where possible, porters where necessary, and by flying heavy-lift helicopters where no other option exists.

Nepal's splendour is also its curse: home to eight of the 14 highest peaks in the world, with affected communities nested in isolated valleys or perched precariously on steep cliffs, the logistical challenges may be the worst I have encountered in my long humanitarian career.

The mountains also brought us exceptional allies. My childhood hero, Yuichiro Miura, the first person ever to ski down Mount Everest and at the age of 80 and the oldest person to reach its summit, is now leading efforts to raise funds for Nepal in his native Japan.

Five of the brave Nepali women of the Seven Summits Women's Team are among my colleagues at WFP. One of them is Nimdoma Sherpa, born in Rolwaling, who as a child had received school meals from WFP and became, at 16, the youngest person to climb Mt Everest. Her parents' house was destroyed, and she is now part of the team making sure that food reaches the most remote places.



REBUILDING OURSELVES

The first emergency may be over, but the work of rehabilitating lives is only beginning

Other renowned mountaineers and a group of paragliders, who had been in the country exploring the Himalayas, spontaneously joined WFP's relief efforts, bringing their intimate knowledge of a dangerous terrain. Pilots flying food, medicine and construction materials on WFP helicopters include Madan KC who rescued two climbers on Mt Everest in 1996 -- the highest-ever helicopter landing at the time.

Our mission is far from accomplished. Flying over the worst-affected areas recently, I spotted six plumes of dust rising from the ground in just one hour. Landslides have always plagued Nepal but with the earth unsettled by the earthquake and aftershocks, they are more frequent. With the monsoon upon us, more villages are at risk of being cut off or hit by slides. Much agricultural land has been lost, and almost 70 per cent of households in the mountain areas face poor or borderline food consumption.

The first emergency may be over, but the work is only beginning. Shelters must be rebuilt, livelihoods must be restored, and crops must be planted and harvested. Otherwise, what is now a difficult food situation will get worse.

On 25 June, exactly two months since the first earthquake, high-level representatives of donor countries met in Kathmandu at the invitation of the Government of Nepal. It's important that donors continue their generous effort beyond the relief phase, allowing the millions of survivors to recover and rebuild their lives.

We at WFP have already started distributing cash to thousands of families with access to markets, helping them restart agricultural activities and build temporary shelters, while revitalising the local economy. Many more will benefit from this program in the coming months. We have hired thousands of porters, who had lost their jobs because of the abrupt end of the trekking season, to bring food to the most inaccessible villages. As they climb, they restore vital economic trails that had been blocked by landslides. Our logistics services are also being used by the wider humanitarian community to reach communities in need.

As I reflect on the last two months of emergency relief efforts, and look towards this next phase of recovery, I know that WFP will work tirelessly with the government and people of Nepal to help rebuild this magnificent country. 



Richard Ragan is Emergency Coordinator for the World Food Programme in Nepal.

Subcontracting kindness

Less than 1 per cent of global funding for earthquake relief will go directly to groups in Nepal

EMILY TROUTMAN

When the second earthquake struck on 12 May, I was in an antique store in Thamel. The shopkeeper was showing me a Nepali toy from the 1950s. Ten tiny people carved of wood and standing in a line. They had no faces, only bodies covered in miniature saris and the accumulated dust of decades. When I moved one arm, all of their arms moved, giving the impression they were begging.

For the past ten years, I've travelled around the world to disaster zones, reporting on humanitarian aid. Disaster victims are often portrayed like the figures in the toy: faceless, powerless and all alike. But I see them differently. I lived in Haiti from 2010 to 2012 and reported extensively on the earthquake recovery. In my work, I see a reality few will ever glimpse. I visit victims' homes. I ask about their lives. I try to push beyond the headlines.

Over and over again, people ask me, where does the money go? It doesn't go where donors think it does. In Nepal, I found patterns in the humanitarian response that persist in every disaster. Money will be wasted, aid will arrive too late. As in Haiti, local organisations with the expertise and commitment to really make a difference will be left out.

Only a few days after the earthquake, the international aid community began calculating the cost of the humanitarian response. Led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), they put together a proposal to spend more than \$422 million on emergency needs in Nepal. Called a 'Flash Appeal', it happens in every disaster. The collective appeal is made up of dozens of individual project outlines, submitted by any aid organisation that wants to apply. The appeal is like a wish list presented by the UN to donor countries. My analysis shows that only a few Nepali organisations applied for funding: they asked for \$3.5 million, just 0.8 per cent of the total.

Many Nepali groups I spoke to had never heard of the Flash Appeal. Even if they did know about it, they would have been hard-pressed to apply on time. The online application system is cumbersome, built for insiders and it requires technical English-language skills. It's a shame because to-date, aid organisations have received \$131 million of their requests.

There is no disaster response without locals to do the work on the ground. Nowhere is this more true than in Nepal, where the geography alone is a huge challenge for foreigners. But instead of receiving funds directly, local organisations are being hired by foreign organisations as subcontractors. The aid industry calls them 'implementing partners'. In the Flash Appeal, international organisations identified more than 80 local 'implementing partners'. Why not just fund them directly? It's not a question of experience. Leaving locals out is a systemic bias and it happens every time.

The earthquake response will be much more expensive because of this cascading funding structure. Big organisations will take their cut for 'administrative fees', followed by each organisation in the chain. The aid response will also be less effective, utilising local experts as

little more than hired help. In Sindhupalchok, Asaman Tamang's extended family of 23 is sleeping under corrugated sheets. Asaman has a lot of theories about why he hasn't received any substantive aid. At the top of his list, he blames the government for stealing the money. It makes sense. But the problem isn't theft. It's that aid is much more expensive than people think it is.

Aid organisations are to blame for this misunderstanding. I looked at the claims of 45 major groups operating in Nepal on their websites. They say they've provided shelter to more than three million people, the real number is 762,000 people, which is calculated by UNOCHA. When organisations collaborate on a project, they all claim the aid as their own accomplishment. For example, USAID, the IOM (International Organisation for Migration) and ACTED, a French-NGO, have collectively claimed to 'provide' 570,000 people with shelter.

They are actually taking credit for the same aid. USAID donated plastic sheeting. IOM received it at the airport. ACTED worked with local groups to pass it out. There is no way for donors to know how many groups are taking credit for the same aid. That means there's no way to know what it really costs. By the time the big aid organisations subcontract everything, pass around the tarps and then implement a thousand other temporary fixes, the money will be gone.

Like Haiti, the victims of the Nepal earthquake were already the most vulnerable people in the country. They've been faceless and voiceless for decades. A recent survey of the quake-impacted area in Nepal found that 99 per cent of mud houses collapsed, while only 3 per cent of cement houses were damaged.

Five years after the earthquake in Haiti, the international community has rebuilt only 9 per cent of the houses that were destroyed. It will happen in Nepal too, and it is happening now. Like the wooden toy in the antique store, the people who really need help will be left with their hands out, just waiting, frozen in time, subject to the whims of the truly powerful. 



Emily Troutman is an independent writer and photographer. For a longer version of this report, see 'What Happened to the Aid? Nepal Earthquake Response Echoes Haiti.' www.aid.works

DESTINATION NEPAL

26 JUNE - 2 JULY 2015



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.

An opportunity for all: Nepal is open to visitors

Taking a leisure holiday is a choice – and most tourists, even adventure tourists, will select destinations where they feel safe and secure. April 25th shook (among so many other things) the confidence of potential tourists to Nepal. One of the key tasks the Nepali tourism industry now faces is rebuilding that confidence.

This is done primarily through marketing, but also through the creation of new products and mechanisms to ensure safety wherever possible. This requires a clear, cohesive plan jointly implemented by the government of Nepal, tourism entrepreneurs and trade associations in Nepal and abroad. It should also be done by thinking of the revival process as an opportunity.

An opportunity to 'Build Back Better'

The process of rebuilding, rebranding and redefining Nepal's infrastructure, products and services creates a significant and rare opportunity for the tourism industry to reposition and reconnect itself. Improved services in hygiene, safety, water management, use and interaction with natural resources, and transport management can be delivered alongside rebuilding efforts. This may be the perfect time train to staff, porters and managers in the industry.

An opportunity for foreign visitors

Tourists can support Nepal at a time of need, to witness reconstruction efforts first hand and directly support communities affected by the disaster. The money foreign visitors will bring in with them will help to rebuild Nepal in a positive and sustainable way.



EVENTS

Habitat for Humanity's 32nd annual Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project is bringing around 2000 volunteers to Pokhara in November. Can we encourage large tourist groups to visit Nepal by hosting sporting events, religious events and international conferences?

CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT

Post earthquake, Nepal has been able to leverage the endorsement and support of many famous personalities who have recently visited Nepal including Susan Sarandon, Oscar winning Hollywood actress, and Michelle Yeoh, Malaysian actress of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Which celebrity do you think would help raise the most awareness about tourism in Nepal? Tweet your answer using **#TourismNepal**



GREAT MARKETING

Great Marketing inspires tourists and convinces them to take their next holiday in Nepal. Globally, Nepal is top of mind – the tourism industry can capitalize on this awareness through honest, meaningful messaging that portrays a true picture of post-earthquake Nepal and invites tourists to support the country by visiting.



HOLISTIC IMAGE

Promotion efforts for international tourists, estimated at NRs. 5.25 billion by the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) will have to portray a holistic image of Nepal. This is because average growth rate in 'holiday pleasure' tourists from 2000-2013 was 11%, while that for trekkers and mountaineers was under 3%. Promoting unaffected areas, such as Lumbini, Chitwan, Pokhara, etc. will also have to be prioritised.

INDIAN MARKET

The twin-city projects to link Janakpur to Ayodhya, Kathmandu to Varanasi, and Lumbini to Bodh Gaya should be furthered when directly promoting to Indian markets.



WHAT IS OUR NEXT CAMPAIGN?

- Find peace in Nepal
- Nepal – a place of wonder
- Nepal – discover yourself

Adventure Travel Trade Association, a global trade network supporting sustainable adventure travel markets worldwide.

IMPROVE SAFETY MECHANISMS

Doing safety audits of trails and tourist sites is vitally important to build assurances and to counteract the negative publicity Nepal has received.

Now Nepal is safe. So help Nepal by sending your nationals if you want to help Nepal in the real sense.

Kripashur Sherpa, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation

BUILDING ASSESSMENT

More extensive damage assessments and safety audits are required to encourage tour operators in source markets to regain confidence in Nepal's tourism sector. Hotels, home-stays, trails, etc. were damaged, but many establishments were unaffected and are still running.



SAFE SYSTEMS



Inspiring confidence not only requires checking hotels and restaurants for safety, but also seismic assessments of trekking regions. Trekkers and mountaineers will require assurances of safe routes. This will require geological surveys, and information systems to track people and the weather. It will also require an inventory and certification system for infrastructure. Better safety assessment and assurance schemes will encourage insurance brokers to review listing of Nepal. Importantly, it will also encourage countries who have warned their citizens from visiting Nepal to relax their messaging.

Before we announce that the earthquake-hit areas are safe as tourist destinations, we are determined to get an assessment report from international geologists and experts who will be visiting the ground.

Ramesh Dhamala, president of Trekking Agents' Association of Nepal (TAAN).



Safety audits and restoration of cultural sites is also a priority. Almost 743 monuments were damaged in the earthquake, but many are still standing.

SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURS

More targeted support is required to help entrepreneurs to recover.

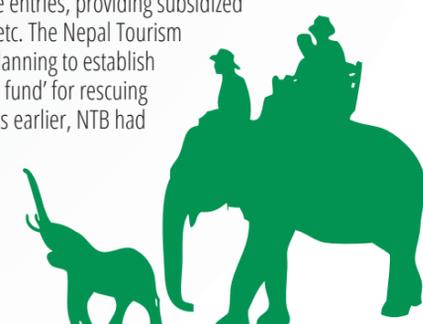
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) should introduce special provisions for enterprises, especially in the tourism sector. Their own research suggests that Nepal can accommodate 7.44 million tourists annually with the current infrastructure (around 0.8 million tourists visited Nepal in 2013). They need to introduce a mechanism for entrepreneurs to get subsidized credit, allow rescheduling of loans and tax breaks. These provisions should be conditioned on build back better principles, i.e. entrepreneurs get subsidies only if they improve their service and product. Detailed damage assessments of tourism enterprises are required first to assess the specific needs.



COORDINATED EFFORTS

The government and the private sector have issued a 51-point declaration on June 22nd to revive the tourism industry. The declaration calls for lowering trekking permit fees, allowing tourists with single-entry visas to enjoy multiple entries, providing subsidized loans to enterprises, etc. The Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) is also planning to establish an 'emergency rescue fund' for rescuing tourists. Several weeks earlier, NTB had also decided to establish a tourism recovery fund to support enterprises, with their initial contribution of NRs. 100 million.



Prasidha Panday, Managing Director of the luxury Shangri-La Hotel in Kathmandu.

If you just look at the last couple of weeks, all the cafes, clubs, restaurants, everything, it has all come to life. Once people are here, they will realize, impact is not as it has been projected.

Focus on innovations Augmented reality

To create a unique and award winning experience for tourists



Restoring damaged UNESCO heritage structures is estimated to cost \$18 million. While restoring the combined 743 damaged monuments can cost \$117m. The restoring and rebuilding of all these cultural sites will take years. However,

tourists can be offered new experiences to attract them to the cultural heritage sites.

With loss of our heritage assets, the challenge is how to keep tourists in Kathmandu for longer. Exhibitions or murals in front of heritage sites showing

before and after images could help attract more tourists to the heritage sites.

An augmented reality application could also allow smart phone users to see pictures of what the square would have looked like before the earthquake when the camera is

at a certain space or area. There could also be narration by famous actors, information and interactive tools to create a world class and award winning multi-media experience that is promoted in Nepal and abroad. The disaster could be a new beginning.

Training

During the off season to deliver better services

Comprehensive retraining of staff laid off and unemployed at this time (porters, waiters, hoteliers, managers, etc.) could be the ideal next step for the tourism sector to bounce back. In many ways it could be the perfect time. After good management training programs, staff and laid off employees will be ready to provide better services when the tourist season starts again after the monsoon.

Training programs will have to focus on helping entrepreneurs and employees provide newer services/products and identifying newer markets. Programs could focus on management, marketing, hygiene, customer care, etc. They could be delivered directly to affected workers as part of a revival package.



MAN LAMA

“Ninety percent of the tour guides are unemployed, they have no work, they are jobless. There is insecurity among the tour guides [about] what to do. I have [asked] my colleagues, just wait for one year.”

Hare Ram Baral, head of the Tourist Guide Association of Nepal



Safe Trekking Systems

To inspire confidence

Design idea for a Himalayan mountain hut/Safe Trekking System courtesy of HMM architecture competition initiated by Samarth-NMDP.

As Nepal seeks assurances from international geologists and consultants on its popular trekking routes, especially the Everest and Annapurna regions that attract around 70 per cent of trekkers, the PDNA suggests creating a Safe Trekking System with standards and regulations for the quality of the product and how to manage it. Classifying trails will go a long way in enabling visitors and the industry to assess the risks associated with certain treks and areas based on altitude, length, facilities, location etc.

A Safe Trekking System requires a product that allows

good communication along the trail, a monitoring system that tracks the location of visitors & staff during the trek, a responsive rescue system, appropriate shelter along the way, enterprises that offer good basic services and quality infrastructure including bridges and drinking water provisions. The Safe Trekking System also requires an effective management system that looks after classification, promotion, maintenance & investment and staff skills. During the slow monsoon season, the Samarth-NMDP programme is taking the lead towards the establishment of the Sate Trekking System with funds from UK AID/DFID.

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Nepali songs at the Royal Albert

Himal Khabarpatrika, 21-27 June

हिमाल

On 28 June, the Royal Albert Hall in London is all set to be resonant with melodies from Nepal. For the first time, 17 Nepali singers and musicians will be performing at the prestigious venue for the charity show 'An Evening for Gorkha, Charity for the Earthquake Victims of Nepal' organised by Help Nepal Network UK (HeNN).

Artists including Jems Pradhan, Om Bikram Bista, Deep Shrestha, Trishna Gurung, Sujil Karmacharya and Yogeshwor Amatya will be performing. HeNN's founder Rabindra Mishra says the charity show will create history not just because of the venue but also because it will have so many luminaries on stage at

the same time. Although a concert by Nepali artists at the hall had been planned since last year, Mishra says the earthquake forced them to bring the date forward as well as made it easier for the organisers to lease the world famous concert hall. Organisers are expecting Nepalis from all over Europe to attend the event.

"We believe that both Nepalis and foreigners will come and show their support for Nepal," says singer Yogeshwor Amatya.

Since its opening in 1871, world's leading artists including Frank Sinatra, The Beatles, Led Zepplin, Eric Clapton and Elton John have performed at the Royal Albert Hall.

The concert tickets are available at Royal Albert Hall's website.



Road sign: Fast track
Vehicle: 16-point agreement

कान्तिपुर
Batsyayan in Kantipur, 22 June



LOST ALL: Asha Tamang, 50, of Mailung escaped miraculously but lost his wife, son, daughter-in-law, and nine other relatives when a rockfall buried his house.

it unbearably hot here in the lowland. The children have no school to go to and just play in the dirt. There is rice, but no vegetables to eat it with because no one can afford it.

There were 17 people in Asha Tamang's house when the earthquake struck. They heard the landslide before the rocks started falling, it sounded like a big storm approaching. In an instant, the rocks buried the house and Asha lost his wife, son and daughter-in-law and nine other relatives. Asha barely survived, his head wound has been stitched up and has two broken ribs.

Sanumaya Tamang of Karumrang had gone to gather fodder in the forest when the quake struck. Her brother and sister-in-law were buried by a rockfall. She is now taking care of her four-year-old nephew and eight-month-old niece who have been orphaned. "They keep asking about their parents, where will I find them?" asked Sanumaya.

Subi Tamang of Gogane was also in the forest on the slope above the village, and was buried by a rockfall. Her husband Kaman has brought their eight-year-old daughter Karma Dolma, two-year-old Nur Maya and one-year-old son Anurag to a shelter in Betrawati.

The biggest fear of the displaced here is that landslides will wipe out what remains of their villages during the monsoon. The question is where will the survivors live?

MOVE US

Phurpa Tamang in Himal Khabarpatrika, 21-27 June

हिमाल

Santaram Tamang had toiled for ten years in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia and built a house in Chipleti of Rasuwa with his hard-earned savings. Tamang was near his village when the earthquake struck on 25 April and his eyes tear up as he recounts how his house and the entire village was buried in a huge rockslide. It was impossible to rescue his nine neighbours. His house is buried under the mountain. Today, Tamang lives in a tent in the grounds of the Trisuli 3A Project in Shantibazar of

Nuwakot, and he has only one request from the government: relocate our village. "Our village was always at risk from landslide, and three years ago we had lobbied with district politicians and the CDO," Tamang said. "No one listened to us, and now this happened."

Govinda Bahadur Thapa is a Nepal Army guard and barely escaped with his life after huge boulders started falling on the project site. One soldier was killed in front of him, and he gave the orders to the others to cross the Bhothe Kosi to the other side, where they stayed for four days while rocks fell all around. They were finally rescued when a helicopter spotted them. Thapa's team is now involved in demolishing and rebuilding homes in Thulogaun. Many dozens of people working on the highway in Mailung were buried by rockfalls, and their bodies haven't been found.

Life in the shelter at Shantibazar is chaotic. Villager from the mountains find

Give and take

Editorial in Annapurna Post, 25 June

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

Following the devastation caused by the earthquake in Nepal, the international community and donor agencies have pledged to support reconstruction and rehabilitation. But the government needs to be clear in its policies and programs on rehabilitation to reassure them about transparency and delivery.

Donors have major reservations about the lack of accountability of the government and the widespread corruption. It is not that the donors themselves are a 100 per cent clean since the amount they pledge for Nepal comes from taxpayers, and provided with evidence any dishonesty will and should be investigated.

Unfortunately, the government failed to show necessary diplomatic skills even when inviting heads of delegations from our two neighbours. Why didn't anyone go to invite the Chinese, when we sent the Finance Minister to

invite the Indian Prime Minister? While we may interpret it differently, the question of how China views this lapse remains.

In the midst of all this, there is criticism that the rehabilitation agency to be headed by the Prime Minister is dominated by political expediency. During the donor conference, the government needs to present clear plans and

policies, and assure them that they will be implemented transparently with clear lists of expenditures. With the government and political leadership coming under severe criticism time and again about relief delivery, it is imperative that the government explains the reason why the prime minister had to head the new agency.

Calling on the donors doesn't mean we go begging. No affluent country has become poor by giving and no poor country has become rich by receiving. Nepal should be able to convince the international communities that we are dependable and competent to change and develop our nation and all we are looking for is humanitarian assistance and soft loans.



Basu Kshitiz/ANNAPURNA POST
Prime Minister to head Reconstruction Authority

First draft ready

Rajdhani, 24 June

राजधानी

A task force under the Constitution Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly (CA) has prepared the first draft of Nepal's new constitution. The task force, led by the committee's president and Nepali Congress (NC) leader Krishna Prasad Sitaula, had started its work on 18 June following a 16-point constitution deal struck by four major political parties.

The draft of Nepal's new constitution, finalised on Wednesday night despite a Supreme Court order against the 16-point deal, contains 35 parts and 312 articles. The number of parts in the new constitution is unlikely to change but there might be more articles when issues of pluralism, right to self-determination and local government bodies are sorted out.

Most parts and articles of the new constitution look like they were cut and pasted from the Interim Constitution-2007. But the new constitution has some parts and articles about federalism. For example, part-8 has articles about federal provincial councils and part-12 has articles about power of executive chiefs of federal units, their appointments and formation of provincial councils. Similarly, part-14 contains articles about relations between federal provinces and part-15 dwells on economic systems of these provinces.

Sitaula has already briefed top political leaders about the first draft. And when they sort out minor disputes like pluralism and local government bodies, it will be presented in the CA for approval.



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What's so funny?



DIVAKAR CHETTRI

One collateral damage from the earthquakes (aftershocks ongoing even as we speak) is that some Nepalis seem to have lost their famous sense of humour. Seriously, we've stopped laughing at people slipping on banana peels. It's no joke. Slapstick humour that used to make us LOL and ROFL till as recently as 24 April instead makes us feel like puncturing someone's gizzard.

For example, I fail to see the humour in this alleged joke:

Q: What is the difference between an astrologer and a geologist?

A: An astrologer can predict the exact time and date of the next earthquake. But a geologist can only give you a 100-year time frame.

Don't laugh. The Federation of Nepalese Astrologists (Locktantrick) finds it absolutely unfunny because it's true: Nepal's astrologers can't just forecast aftershocks to the exact minute and second next Tuesday afternoon, they can even predict its epicentre and Rectal Scale to the nearest decimal point.

BTW, geology and geopolitics have more in common than we realised. Geologists have now proven what some Nepali politicians had been warning us all along: that India is pushy. In fact, it seems that the Indian landmass has had expansionist tendencies for over 75 million years ever since it broke away from Gondwanaland, shed Madagascar and Mauritius along the way, and sailed northwards, ramming headlong into China. And this is where geo-tectonics and geo-politics converge because, as Founding Father of the Nation Prithvi Narayan Shah recognised long ago: "Nepal is a Bazooka Bubblegum between two large molar."

The result of the Indian plate pushing us relentlessly against the Eurasian plate is that we've had no recourse but to go up. This was fine as long as it gave us the highest mountains in the world which we could climb 22 times without artificial oxygen, without underwear, and wearing only flip-flops in order to land ourselves regularly in the Guinness Book of World Records. But at the rate we are being shoved around, in another couple of million years, Nepal will be flattened to a thin zigzag wall about 5,000km long, 25km high and a 100m at its widest point.

This is already starting to happen. As India and China come closer, we have already lost Lipu Lekh. Along the Tarai, border pillars have been sometimes known to move northwards by as much as 50m in the course of one night. Nowhere else on the planet is continental drift happening at such a rapid pace. At this rate, Buddha will have been born more and more inside Nepal each passing year, and we will have to adjust our time zone to make it 37 minutes ahead of Indian Standard Time instead of the current 15 minutes. The other piece of good news is that the earthquake moved Mt Everest 1m to the south, which means the world's highest mountain is now wholly in Nepali territory. Lose some, win some.

Political anal-yeasts in the capital are currently divided between those who favour a national unity government and those who don't. Most of us couldn't give a rat's posterior. National or anti-national, either way they will purloin tarpaulin. In fact, instead of setting up a national government maybe we should have got together with Nepal's donors this week and set up an

international government.

The real question preoccupying our lameduck ultra-national leaders about reconstruction is: who will head the body? Dr BRB, who is currently headless, would have been the perfect candidate, but his arch-rival Comrade Awestruck feared @brb_laldhwoj would gain too much political capital and pulled the rug from under him. KPO suspected BRB would outshine and outlive him. And Kangresis were afraid the Doc would actually help the millions of people living out in the open and make the NC look like idiots. Now that KPO and PKD have both joined the Yellow Hat Sect, their only worry is that Jhusil Da will get too comfy and prolong his stint, or that the Prez will throw a spanner in the works by siding with the Supremo Court.

So, this is what the gobblement means by being "accountable": kleptocrats keep careful accounts of the cuts they get from the arabs and kharabs that have been donated for earthquake relief. And since no internationals had any confidence in the Prime Minister Relieves Fund, the PMO hit on a cunning plan: get the Nepal Army, the APF, the Nepal Oil Corruption and the Nepal Electrified Authority to donate to it. So what if it's like one hand giving to the other? At least there is now a fat amount sitting there ready to be misappropriated.

There has been a lot of criticism that GONE is indecisive. Far from it. Jhusil Da has proven himself to be a resolute and speedy decision-maker. It is under his watch that the government moved quickly to ban relief for quake victims after June 3, imposed a 30% import duty on water purification units, told Chinooks to go home, declared a one-year state of emergency in Kathmandu to attract tourists, and inaugurated buses with toilets on the Kathmandu-Pokhara route thus declaring road transportation to be open-defecation free. He also decided on lifetime car and chaufferus to ex-PMs. Besides the Education Cluster or Logistics Cluster, he may decisively decide on a Cluster on Cluster Bombs. (Oops, alleged joke.)



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