At 100, Sher Bahadur Gurung has seen it all: two world wars, two great earthquakes. He fought and nearly died in the battle of Kohima fighting against the invading Japanese Army. Then the Gorkha Earthquake of 25 April nearly killed him. The old soldier of Kerabari is urging his sons to rebuild their house and plant paddy. He knows what it means to be knocked down and rise again.

FULL PROFILE: PAGE 7
T

Two months after the devastating earthquake, we now have some reason to rejoice: the much-awaited new constitution’s first draft is finally ready and the Constituent Assembly (CA) aims to pass it later this month.

Nearly 60 years ago, the Nepali Congress had demanded an elected assembly to write a people’s constitution. And nearly 20 years ago, the Maoists launched a war to bring transformational change through a new inclusive constitution. That conflict ended in 2006, we are now entering the last lap in the nearly decade-long marathon that has been the peace process.

It has been a long, drawn-out affair. Seven years after the first CA elections and almost two years after we finally have a draft of the constitution. It may not have the full backing of all the parties in the assembly, but it is impossible to have one that will satisfy everyone. Besides, the whole point about having an elected assembly to write the constitution is that the body more or less reflects the wishes of the Nepali people.

As expected, the RPP-N and some Madhesi and Janajati parties have rejected the draft. As soon as a first draft was presented in a late night CA session on Tuesday, Madhesi lawmakers tore it up and walked out of the hall. RPP-N lawmakers shouted slogans and disrupted the CA proceedings. Even some NC lawmakers opposed the draft.

We agree that the draft is seriously regressive on many counts: citizenship, gender and inclusiveness. But we have to take into account the context in which it is being drafted. The CA was not an agenda of the parties that now dominate it. They have taken time to end a vicious conflict through the Indian-brokered 12-point deal. Now, there is a new political leadership in India itself that takes a dim view of federalism, secularism and some democratic tenets.

The 2013 elections were a test of the Maoist agenda for the constitution. Their defeat proved that the people didn’t think much of it. The Madhesi torch-bearers of federalism lost in their own region. Janajati parties could not convince voters that identity was important. So, expecting a more progressive constitution from an assembly dominated by status quoist forces may have been unrealistic.

Given the process, the new constitution will by definition be a document of compromise. Everyone has made compromises. The NC and the UML accepted more federal units than they wanted, identity as one basis for federalism, and a constitutional court to settle disputes between future provinces. The Maoists accepted the Westminster model and agreed to a ‘armed struggle’ instead of their preferred ‘people’s war’ in the preamble. As with all compromises, no one is happy with the final document. But they agreed to sign it because that is the best they could do for now.

We feel, however, that the drafters should have been more receptive to the agenda of other opposition forces, particularly the Madhesi. The draft acknowledges all people’s movements, armed conflict and sacrifices, but does not mention the Madhesi Movement of 2007. This is an oversight that has hurt Madhesi sentiments.

On citizenship, gender, freedom and other issues, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp. On citizenship, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp.

We do not mention the Madhesi Movement of 2007. This is an oversight that has hurt Madhesi sentiments.

On citizenship, gender, freedom and other issues, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp. On citizenship, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp.

On citizenship, gender, freedom and other issues, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp. On citizenship, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp.

On citizenship, gender, freedom and other issues, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp. On citizenship, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp.

On citizenship, gender, freedom and other issues, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp. On citizenship, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp.

On citizenship, gender, freedom and other issues, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp. On citizenship, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp.

On citizenship, gender, freedom and other issues, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp. On citizenship, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp.

On citizenship, gender, freedom and other issues, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp. On citizenship, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp.

On citizenship, gender, freedom and other issues, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp. On citizenship, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp.

On citizenship, gender, freedom and other issues, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp. On citizenship, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp.

On citizenship, gender, freedom and other issues, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp. On citizenship, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp.

On citizenship, gender, freedom and other issues, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp. On citizenship, the draft shows that our political leaders are in a time warp.
A demonstration against the constitution drafting committee’s decision to keep a controversial clause in the Citizenship Act that requires both mother and father of a child to be Nepali citizens to have citizenship by descent was attended by hardly 200 participants. Netizens hit back at the change with the hashtag #citizenshipthroughmothers on Twitter and rights activists lambasted the government calling it ‘regressive’. But on the street, rallies demanding an amendment to the new provision were lackluster, had low turnout and unimaginative protest techniques.

Do we really believe we can convert leaders’ apathy into concern, get them to listen and act by forming a human chain? Or by collecting thousands of signatures? The group we have the (dis)pleasure of calling our leaders are seasoned misogynist megalomaniacs who will just ignore them.

As with most social media campaigns, all the likes and support displayed online for the citizenship through mothers campaign has unfortunately not translated into on-the-ground involvement. “It’s sad because this is not just a women’s issue. It affects each and everyone of us,” said a friend who has been attending those rallies for the past two years.

One problem is that it has been framed as a women’s issue. Presenting the provisional change as being unfair to women when Article 12(a) of Part 2 of the new draft reads: ‘Both father and mother must be Nepali citizens in order for a child to receive citizenship through descent,’ doesn’t fully justify the claim.

One may naively argue that the new law will create as much hassles for single Nepali fathers to get a citizenship for his child as would single Nepali mothers. But this is Nepal where things don’t always follow a legal course, where a constitution that has been stuck in writing for eight years gets easily endorsed in a night, and where unwed mothers are treated as social pariahs.

This is why despite the Interim Constitution of 2006 providing for citizenship under the mother’s name, it remained largely unimplemented, leaving thousands of children of single mothers stateless.

Deepti Gurung’s daughters are two of them. The tourism entrepreneur has been fighting a long, hard battle against a political, bureaucratic and legal system that is weighted against women. Her case was personally heard by ex-PM Baburam Bhattarai in 2013 who directed officials to look into the matter. They looked the other way.

“Men sitting behind desks have reminded me that my husband’s identity is a must if my children are to be citizens of my country,” wrote Gurung in a column for this paper. The consequence: Gurung’s 18-year-old daughter Neha had to opt to study Law because admission to a MBBS program required proof of citizenship. Her younger daughter was almost denied permission to sit for her board exams but Gurung took the case to the courts which ruled in her favour.

When a written law cannot guarantee a woman to pass on citizenship to her children, how much more damaging will the new provision be. And how many more Neshas will have to sacrifice their choice of study because of this flawed law?

Even more blatantly discriminatory is the provision on citizenship through marriage which requires a foreign man married to a Nepali woman to have lived in the country for 15 years and renounced citizenship of his native country before being eligible to apply for a Nepali citizenship. On the other hand, a foreign woman married to a Nepali man can immediately apply for Nepali citizenship once she has started procedure to renounce the citizenship of her birth. All this seems to be the result of a xenophobic fear that Indian men will all stream across the border to marry our women and become Nepalis. It is this misguided pseudo-nationalism that leaves thousands of Nepali children stateless. And mind you, dear leaders they are both male and female.

@Chenreyang
The sun to the rescue

Rural solar systems will not just help quake survivors meet immediate power needs, but also help us build a renewable energy future

KISHOR RIMAL

Two months after the devastating earthquake, Nepal has proved to the world that despite the death and destruction it can rise up with the energy of youth volunteers, politicians and government to promote innovative approaches to cooperation in relief delivery. The 2.5 million affected people are all trying to get back to normal life. As with housing, education, health, in energy too we need to think about building back better. Access to energy for lighting and heating is an immediate requirement for many families living in shelters. National-level hydropower plants were damaged and some will be delayed, most micro-hydro plants in the 15 affected districts were destroyed. Here is where local entrepreneurs can step in with village grids and other renewable energy sources like solar and wind.

After basic needs like food and shelter are taken care of, earthquake survivors need energy. This doesn’t just help them get back to normal life, but can also boost the economy. Access to national grid was always a question even before the earthquake happened. However, this void opens up opportunities for another source of energy: solar power, which is free and reliable at least during the daytime.

Solar electricity can be used for Productive End Use systems that are stand alone photo-voltaic arrays designed to power specific equipments. They can power grinding mills, dairy chilling units, vaccine Fridges or water pumps. Local entrepreneurs can privately own these systems for businesses and serve local communities.

Nano Grids are centralised DC system typically set up to power clusters of communities for lights, mobile chargers and tv. A typical community consists of 20-25 households and each pays a monthly charge. In northern India, MeraGao Power has successfully implemented Nano Grid models. Although its service is limited to lights and we have more demand here, the concept is somewhat the same. Access to energy at household and community level at affordable prices that are cheaper fossil fuels should be the main goal.

Productive End Use systems and Nano Grids help entrepreneurs to scale up their businesses and side-by-side serve the local community to expand the economy. Agro-processing mills, water pumps, and water purifiers benefit entrepreneurs as well as serve the entire community. The plan for sustainable energy is an immediate need at this point of time. We can’t afford to buy fossil fuel and diesel generators again to serve the needs of people in rural areas.

We have many challenges to implement these systems for local business and communities. We first need to encourage demand-driven markets rather than the donor-driven ones. For the moment, the solar industry cannot move away from considered amounts of bids. Government line agencies and aid agencies must realise that a subsidy driven market cannot achieve sustainability. Donors can provide funds to pilot sustainable models that can be scaled up. If they need to be perpetually bank-rolled, they will not be feasible.

The next challenge here is to develop effective financial models to deploy the systems in remote areas who have the most pressing needs for lighting and energy. They will not be able to afford the solar systems, and it is crucial for banks and micro finance institutes to come to the rescue.

Longer-term financing for Nano Grids and Productive End Use system will encourage people to switch to renewable, enabling them to not just deal with their short-term rehabilitation but wean themselves away from diesel generators in the longer term.

When people start making money from generating solar energy, then sustainability takes care of itself. We focused so much on lighting from solar panels that we forgot to demonstrate that solar energy is more than LEDs and mobile chargers. A centralised fund to finance Productive End Use and Nano Grid System could take Nepal on a path to sustainable energy development.

This article is part of a monthly series prepared jointly with the Energy Development Council of which Kishor Rimal is a member. www.edcnepal.org
HAVE BOLD TASTE AND INTENSE CHARACTER

KEEP WALKING

The Johnnie Walker, Black Label and Double Black logos, this striking figure device and associated logos are trade marks. Johnnie Walker & Sons 2014. Please drink responsibly.

Global Trading Concern (P) Ltd.
The legitimacy and ownership of the draft constitution will be seriously tested in the coming weeks.

BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

Instead, the document was torn to pieces inside the CA and torched in several districts around the country. Going through the 120 pages divided into 36 chapters and 296 articles, one can safely say this is not a badly written draft. But it has some really dubious, if not objectionable provisions that reek of paranoia and xenophobia.

The good stuff first. There are elaborate directive principles of state policy which guarantee high quality in public education, but first things first. Article 36 makes basic education compulsory, while provisioning free secondary education for all. This must be matched by an equally bold education policy that guarantees high quality in public education, but first things first.

Sadly, the draft falls short on guaranteeing free quality state health care for all, escaping with the platitude of free primary health care. It is no secret that some of those involved in statute drafting are among the biggest investors in the country’s hospitals. The conflict of interest clearly shows. But it is the second part of the constitution that lays out citizenship provisions that exposes the full paranoia of the drafters. For long women and the Madhesis have been treated as second class Nepalis, deemed unfit to acquire or unconditionally pass on citizenship to their children, because men in power cannot get over their obsession about the ‘purity of the Nepali male blood’. A third class citizenship provision that denies children of Nepali mothers married to a foreign national (read: Indians) from exercising equal rights in this land defeats the very purpose of the sovereign exercise.

The missing puzzle to Nepal’s citizenship debate is tied to the uncomfortable question of the open border, which even the victims of these provisions dare not raise. Ultimately, it is the state’s responsibility to identify and confer citizenship to those qualified and not punish legitimate citizens. A stateless Madhesi citizen is disqualified from accessing public services including water, electricity, education, banking, etc. They are neither qualified for formal employment, nor can they apply for business loans or have land rights. The only thing they pass on to their children is their statelessness. The numbers may be debatable, but there are many stateless citizens in this country who are vulnerable to all kinds of exploitation including political, and their number will grow if and when this draft comes into effect.

Then, there is the contentious Article 60, which threatens to indefinitely postpone the full exercise of the new constitution. By deferring federal demarcation to a future commission, the drafters are dragging the nation into a new interim order since most of the provisions of the constitution will remain dysfunctional in its absence. For seven years, we endured a protracted transition, only to be pushed back into another transition which has no time frame.

When I met lawyer Dipendra Jha few days back, he was preparing to lodge a contempt case against 601 CA members, Speaker and the Chair of Draft Committee for violating the Supreme Court verdict that had stayed implementing the 16-point agreement that served as a basis for statute drafting. Article 138 of the Interim Constitution clearly mandates this Constituent Assembly with the task of taking final decision on state restructuring. Jha told me. But the 16-point agreement outsources this decision to the legislature parliament. But the UML’s Agni Kharel, who is among the drafters, dismisses such charges and says the four parties will try to vacate any legal charges.

Meanwhile, all Madhes-based parties except Bijay Gachadar’s MJF-Loktantrik have taken to the streets. As the copies of the draft constitution were being torched by small group of Madhesi leaders and activists at Babar Mahal on Wednesday, Sadhbhavana leader Laxman Lal Karna warned that if the big parties try to bulldoze through the constitution in its present state he would disown it.

In the coming weeks, the Constituent Assembly will deliberate upon the draft and take it to the public for opinion. The drafters must listen carefully to what the people have to say and take it to the Constituent Assembly with the task of taking final decision on state restructuring, Jha told me. But the 16-point agreement outsources this decision to the legislature parliament. But the UML’s Agni Kharel, who is among the drafters, dismisses such charges and says the four parties will try to vacate any legal charges.
The monsoon seems to be taking a breather after a weak start. Although this is good news for landslide-prone areas of the 15 earthquake districts, for farmers across Nepal especially in the rain-fed fields of the central eastern Tarai this is a bad news. The monsoon reached northwestern India a week ahead of schedule but tapered off elsewhere. But forecasters in India say the monsoon will gather strength over in the coming week.

Indian Army in 1943. After a brief training stint in Peshawar, he was sent to the Burma border where British, Indian and Nepali soldiers turned the tide against the Japanese in the bloody battles of Kohima and Imphal 70 years ago.

“We were fighting the Japanese, but I looked like one,” chuckles Gurung, enjoying the joke. “The British officers in my unit called me ‘Jap’.”

The Allied forces lost more than 15,000 men in Burma, and 53,000 Japanese soldiers were killed. “We fought for each other,” Gurung says simply. “It had to be done.”

Today, having survived the collapse of his home in the April earthquake epicentered close to his village, Gurung lives in a temporary shelter with tin walls. Children come to him to hear stories, and their parents come for advice. He chats easily, a smile lighting up his face now and again.

“He used to be the most handsome man in the village,” his granddaughter says with a laugh. Gurung has aged gracefully. Slowed by arthritis and failing eyesight, he still smokes, and his favourite nightcap is raksi mixed with Mountain Dew.

Gurung is now urging his sons to rebuild the house and plant paddy to get things back to normal. He says quietly: “It has to be done.”
LANDSLIDE REFUGEES

OM ASTHA RAI

A few months after a 7.8 magnitude earthquake flattened his house, Muku Tamang, a 35-year-old farmer from the remote Sertung village of northern Dhading district, built a temporary shelter with a tarpaulin sheet dropped by a helicopter. Tamang considered himself lucky because all of his five family members survived the earthquake that killed 13 people in Sertung alone. “I thought the earthquake just destroyed my house, and I was certain I would rebuild it sooner than later,” he says.

But the earthquake turned out to be just the beginning of his hardships. Monsoon rains have started triggering landslides on the unstable slopes, burying cropped terraces and houses that had withstood the jolt. Tamang lost most of his farm in a landslide on 15 June.

“There is no way relief supplies would reach my village, so we decided to walk down,” he says. “I was hoping I could feed my family with maize and potatoes that grew on my field but the landslide left me with nothing.”

MONSOON FEARS

PEREGRINE FRISSELL
in RASUWA

The road to recovery in Rasuwa is growing muddy. The slippery highway from Trisuli clings precariously to the mountainside, with a sheer drop down to the river. The craters on the road grow bigger with each monsoon shower. Relief trucks are stuck, their tyres spinning in the brown puddles.

Alongside the road, the terraced slopes with transplanted paddy sparkle like mirrors, reflecting the clouds. In between there is corn and millet. And in village after village, stone and brick houses have gaping holes and collapsed roofs. Brightly coloured tarpaulin tents stand nearby, with salvaged family belongings crammed inside.

ROAD CLEARANCE:

Residents in four VDCs have all received 14 corrugated iron sheets per household supplied by the group, Association for International Solidarity in Asia. The military has helped in the distribution.

The home of Tarkhuman Moktan is made out of the corrugated iron sheets, some of the only aid to make it to Saramthali. Though he lives alone, he received the same number of sheets as a family of seven.

Both schools in the area were destroyed, and over 300 children are now attending classes in six A-frame tents all in a row made of bamboo posts and white canvas. Volunteers have begun to rebuild the school in the same site of the old one, and they are using the government’s earthquake-resistant building guidelines.

Though the school is not yet done, when completed it will be far sturdier than the homes in the areas. Many villagers have resigned themselves to a cold acceptance and crowded into the homes that provide the most cover from the rains. They have neither the money nor the means to get down to Bidur, the nearest town in Nuwakot district. They just wait for relief workers to get there.

Kihkuman Moktan has moved his family into his sister’s home, which is far smaller, because they are too scared to stay in his damaged one. The roofing material has reached his sister’s neighbourhood, but not his own which is just across the street.

The trucks and tractors may soon not be able to ply this road as the rains make it impossible to traverse. On a good day it takes two hours from Bidur to Saramthali, with landslides and mud it can take up to 11 hours, if at all.

When the road gets blocked, as it soon will, villagers will have to walk down the steep mountains to retrieve their aid, and back again with the heavy loads coiled across their back. It will take longer, be harder for the elderly and those with children, and villagers risk getting caught in the rain and landslides.

The new pickup point is in Nuwakot, and residents of Nuwakot are not receiving the same aid. Rasuwa villagers will have to trek with heavy loads through an area where the locals also desperately need help they have not yet received.

TWO MONTHS LATER AT THE EPICENTRE

GORKHA – In the hours after a devastating earthquake hit his home country, a Nepali NGO worker in Kabul met his supervisor to announce that he was going home to help.

Sudip Joshi, 26, worked for the Czech non-profit, People in Need, in Afghanistan. He knew he’d have to start from scratch, but was determined to make a difference. Within 48 hours, Joshi had hit the ground running in Gorkha to organise an emergency relief effort.

He put together a team of 18 young volunteers to first assess needs and deliver food, tarp, blankets and mattresses. Power lines were down, roads and trails destroyed by landslides and aftershocks continued, but they worked non-stop.

“For the first month, we didn’t take a day off. We were showering after four or five days, we slept in sleeping bags out in the open,” Joshi recalled.

People in Need is a mid-sized organisation based in Prague, but here in Gorkha it was big, working quietly and resolutely in 15 VDCs completing its initial response in less than 10 days, filling the gaps left by bigger NGOs.

In order to avoid overlap and boost efficiency, local government agencies implemented a cluster approach: assigning relief groups to focus on specific sectors, such as shelter, food or water and sanitation.

With an on-the-ground team of just over 30, including volunteers, People in Need focused on food and shelter in Gorkha and Sindhupalchok. Mukesh Singh

YOUTHFUL ENERGY: Sudip Joshi was working in Afghanistan when the earthquake struck his homeland. He packed his bags and came to Gorkha to help out.
The earthquake and landslides destroyed not only our houses but also schools, health posts, water taps and water mills. The government must show us a safe place to relocate. Life is not easy here, the tents leak and the wind blows them off.

Landslides are now emerging as the next big disaster in the 15 mountain districts worst affected by the earthquakes of 25 April and 12 May. International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) says the earthquakes caused more than 5,000 landslides in central Nepal.

Apart from Dhading, districts like Sindhpulchok, Rasuwa, Gorkha, Dolakha and Kavre are at a high risk of landslides this monsoon. Thousands of families have abandoned their villages and have moved to wherever they can live safely.

In Rasuwa, an earthquake-triggered avalanche on 25 April buried the whole village of Langtang, killing at least 200 people. Entire villages have been abandoned. More than 750 families from Hukus are now living in temporary shelters in Dhunche and Betrawati. Rasuwa CDO Uddhav Prasad Bhattarai says six villages need to be relocated, but families have no alternatives.

Sinthupulchok, where the earthquakes killed nearly 4,000 people, is probably the most vulnerable to landslides and many have moved to Kathmandu. As many as 54 of the total 68 VDCs are at risk. Lawmakers representing the district have visited many landslide-prone villages and asked people living there to move to safer places. But unlike other districts, most people in northern Gorkha have not abandoned their villages.

We’ve identified some safe places where people from the landslide-prone areas can be relocated, but they don’t want to move out of their villages, says Gorkha assistant CDO Narendra Joshi. We’re asking people to be alert particularly during and after heavy rains through local FM radios.

In northern Gorkha, the epicentre of the 25 April earthquake, as many as 12 VDCs are at risk of landslides. Lawmakers representing the district have visited many landslide-prone villages and asked people living there to move to safer places. But unlike other districts, most people in northern Gorkha have not abandoned their villages.

FROM ICELAND WITH LOVE

When the earthquake struck Nepal in April, the faculty and students of the University of Iceland in Reykjavik immediately empathised. The mid-Atlantic Nordic island nation is no stranger to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, the latest in 2010 of Eyjafjallajökull caused widespread destruction and also disruption of flights all over Europe.

Led by Nepali computer engineer Anil Thapa (pic: right) who is Team Leader of the Nordic High Performance Computing centre in Reykjavik, volcanologists, geophysicists, researchers, lecturers, professors and staff at the university immediately started a fund-raising drive called Earthquake Victims Support for Nepal.

Thapa, who has been an active fundraiser for the Help Nepal Network (HeNN) took a part of his summer leave and with the money raised bought tin sheets, food and other relief items in Kathmandu and took them to his native district. While researching the relief so far, he found that the remote villages of northern Dhading had not received any help. So he set off for Sertung and Borlang beyond Ganges Himal.

“We didn’t know what we were getting into,” Thapa recalls of the trip last month. “It was an extremely rough 45km road from Dhading Besi and it took us two days to reach Borlang, with six hours drive on a very rough road and another seven hours trek past dangerous landslides.”

Nine people had died in Borlang, yet 50 villagers carried the 300 tin sheets, 500 tents, 100 blankets, sleeping mats and medical supplies to the village. Thapa was helped by a group of young volunteers from Kathmandu who rebuilt classrooms of the local school, two community toilets and 10 temporary shelters for villagers.

Two school children who were living in a village were killed, the health post was destroyed, and needs to be rebuilt and stocked with medicines.

Times caught up with Thapa before he flew back to Iceland, and he said: “We were a drop in the ocean, the need is vast, but I am happy to have at least done something for my motherland from so far away.”

Prasad Gyawali: “The earthquakes killed nearly 6,000 people. Entire villages have been abandoned. More than 750 families from Hukus are now living in temporary shelters in Dhunche and Betrawati. Rasuwa CDO Uddhav Prasad Bhattarai says six villages need to be relocated, but families have no alternatives.

Sinthupulchok, where the earthquakes killed nearly 4,000 people, is probably the most vulnerable to landslides and many have moved to Kathmandu. As many as 54 of the total 68 VDCs are at risk. Lawmakers representing the district have visited many landslide-prone villages and asked people living there to move to safer places. But unlike other districts, most people in northern Gorkha have not abandoned their villages.

We’ve identified some safe places where people from the landslide-prone areas can be relocated, but they don’t want to move out of their villages, says Gorkha assistant CDO Dipendra Pandey. People are living in tents like water, toilets, electricity, hospitals, schools and means of livelihood discourages people to move out of their ancestral land.

All district administration offices have stockpiled relief materials and Nepal Army, Armed Police Force and Nepal Police have been on high-alert, but organised relocation of vulnerable villages is not happening.

Says Dolakha CDO Lamichhane says, “Geologists from Kathmandu are still preparing their report on which villages need to be relocated.”

Uddhab Prasad Bhattarai says, “Geologists from Kathmandu are still preparing their report on which villages need to be relocated.”

PICS: JANA AŠENBRENNEROVÁ

For People In Need focused on remote villages and marginalised communities bypassed by others. It mapped out villages that were cut off, and even within those found Dalit neighbourhoods usually excluded from services. We showed that with the right planning and dedication, you don’t have to be a massive organisation to make a difference,” said Joshi. “The best part of all this is that we are all in our 20s and we are taking responsibility.”

The three-month grace period to newly registered NGOs is about to end, and bureaucratic hassles are delaying relief work. The confusion at policy level is also discouraging potential donors.

Constantly changing guidelines about relief supplies and operational standards haven’t helped. “We want to follow the country standards, but we would like a consistent set of standards,” said a senior official of an INGO on condition of anonymity.

Says People In Need’s Maciej Peryczynski: “If funds become available, we would like to move out of our villages, and to help people rebuild their livelihoods.”

PICS: JANA AŠENBRENNEROVÁ

Tamang’s wife and three children joined an exodus of people displaced by the earthquake and ensuing landslides. They walked down for two days, finally boarded a bus and arrived at the district capital of Dhading Besi.

According to Dhading CDO Basudeb Chhimire, villages in Sertung, Tiplung, Bhaflang, Ri and Lapa are threatened by landslides and need urgent evacuation. More than 550 people from 68 families from northern Dhading have arrived and are living in a tented settlement outside town to wait out the rains.

“Saving people from landslides in this monsoon is a huge challenge,” he says. Tok Tamang, 29, also left Sertung because it was impossible to live there: “The earthquake and landslides destroyed not only our houses but also schools, health posts, water taps and water mills. The government must show us a safe place to relocate. Life is not easy here, the tents leak and the wind blows them off.”

Landslides are now emerging as the next big disaster in the 15 mountain districts worst affected by the earthquakes of 25 April and 12 May. International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) says the earthquakes have caused more than 5,000 landslides in central Nepal.

Apart from Dhading, districts like Sindhpulchok, Rasuwa, Gorkha, Dolakha and Kavre are at a high risk of landslides this monsoon. Thousands of families have abandoned their villages and have moved to wherever they can live safely.

In Rasuwa, an earthquake-triggered avalanche on 25 April buried the whole village of Langtang, killing at least 200 people. Entire villages have been abandoned. More than 750 families from Hukus are now living in temporary shelters in Dhunche and Betrawati. Rasuwa CDO Uddhav Prasad Bhattarai says six villages need to be relocated, but families have no alternatives.

Sinthupulchok, where the earthquakes killed nearly 4,000 people, is probably the most vulnerable to landslides and many have moved to Kathmandu. As many as 54 of the total 68 VDCs are at risk. Lawmakers representing the district have visited many landslide-prone villages and asked people living there to move to safer places. But unlike other districts, most people in northern Gorkha have not abandoned their villages.

We’ve identified some safe places where people from the landslide-prone areas can be relocated, but they don’t want to move out of their villages, says Gorkha assistant CDO Dipendra Pandey. Lack of water, toilets, electricity, hospitals, schools and means of livelihood discourages people to move out of their ancestral land.

All district administration offices have stockpiled relief materials and Nepal Army, Armed Police Force and Nepal Police have been on high-alert, but organised relocation of vulnerable villages is not happening.

Says Dolakha CDO Lamichhane says, “Geologists from Kathmandu are still preparing their report on which villages need to be relocated.”

When the earthquake struck Nepal in April, the faculty and students of the University of Iceland in Reykjavik immediately empathised. The mid-Atlantic Nordic island nation is no stranger to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, the latest in 2010 of Eyjafjallajökull caused widespread destruction and also disruption of flights all over Europe.

Led by Nepali computer engineer Anil Thapa (pic: right) who is Team Leader of the Nordic High Performance Computing centre in Reykjavik, volcanologists, geophysicists, researchers, lecturers, professors and staff at the university immediately started a fund-raising drive called Earthquake Victims Support for Nepal.

Thapa, who has been an active fundraiser for the Help Nepal Network (HeNN) took a part of his summer leave and with the money raised bought tin sheets, food and other relief items in Kathmandu and took them to his native district. While researching the relief so far, he found that the remote villages of northern Dhading had not received any help. So he set off for Sertung and Borlang beyond Ganges Himal.

“We didn’t know what we were getting into,” Thapa recalls of the trip last month. “It was an extremely rough 45km road from Dhading Besi and it took us two days to reach Borlang, with six hours drive on a very rough road and another seven hours trek past dangerous landslides.”

Nine people had died in Borlang, yet 50 villagers carried the 300 tin sheets, 500 tents, 100 blankets, sleeping mats and medical supplies to the village. Thapa was helped by a group of young volunteers from Kathmandu who rebuilt classrooms of the local school, two community toilets and 10 temporary shelters for villagers.

Two school children who were living in a village were killed, the health post was destroyed, and needs to be rebuilt and stocked with medicines.

Times caught up with Thapa before he flew back to Iceland, and he said: “We were a drop in the ocean, the need is vast, but I am happy to have at least done something for my motherland from so far away.”
Himalayan Brewery has recently introduced Kathmandu Premium Lager, which is also available in draught.

Draught beer is said to be best consumed within three-four days or up to a week of brewing. If it is maintained at the right temperature of 28°, it can stay fresh till 30-40 days as well. Beer connoisseurs in Kathmandu have been increasing by five to ten per cent every year.

Ashish Pradhan, Brand Head at Himalayan Brewery says, “If you have the option to drink fresh beer, why would you drink the bottled beer?” Draught beer has a clean, crisp yet authentic taste.

Made with 100% 2-row malt, which is preferred by European Brewers, it gives the beer a bolder and better taste on the palate.

Draught beer skips the final process of pasteurisation unlike bottled or canned beers. The freshness gives it a shorter shelf life. However, it provides a more bona fide taste for those who appreciate a good beer.

Pradhan adds, “Beer drinking has become more of a lifestyle and consumers have understood the significance of draught. An average beer consumer today has more diversified knowledge about beers.”

Pradhan predicts microbrewing and homebrewing may be the next thing to look towards for diversification. An average beer consumer today has more diversified knowledge about beers. The microbrewing scene in Kathmandu has been increasing by five to ten per cent every year.

Pradhan predicts microbrewing and homebrewing may be the next thing to look towards for diversification. An average beer consumer today has more diversified knowledge about beers. The microbrewing scene in Kathmandu has been increasing by five to ten per cent every year.

Pradhan predicts microbrewing and homebrewing may be the next thing to look towards for diversification. An average beer consumer today has more diversified knowledge about beers. The microbrewing scene in Kathmandu has been increasing by five to ten per cent every year.

Pradhan predicts microbrewing and homebrewing may be the next thing to look towards for diversification. An average beer consumer today has more diversified knowledge about beers. The microbrewing scene in Kathmandu has been increasing by five to ten per cent every year.
Fixing tourism

Earthquake brings chance to set right
concerns about quality decline and safety

KARMA GURUNG

A
dozen international tour operators bringing tourists to Nepal say bookings for treks and holidays in Nepal will be affected till next year and have urged the government to look into intrinsic problems of quality and safety that predate April’s earthquake.

Travel advisories by western embassies in Kathmandu and high liability insurance in the past two months have affected holiday reservations till the start of 2016, but Nepal’s tourism was in decline even before the earthquake said participants at a three-day conference, “Touring Points in Tourism” organized by Samarth.

“It took an earthquake for all of us to come and talk together. This says something about the lack of communication that exists in this market,” said Mike Chapman of Himalyan Guides UK and Australia.

More than a dozen international tour operators from UK, US, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, along with their Nepali partners, attended the conference. However, the Nepal Tourism Board and government were conspicuous by their absence. The Board’s Run Awanik had one panel discussion on Monday even before the floor discussion began.

“The international tour companies can only do so much, we need to hear from policy makers who can actually bring a significant change to the tourism industry,” said Surendra KC, a tour operator based in Kathmandu.

Indeed, a panel on travel advisories was attended by a sprinkling of Kathmandu-based diplomats, but what participants heard was not very reassuring. The only silver lining was the relaxation by New Zealand this week of its travel advisory. “We have lowered our risk level for Nepal, which was raised in the immediate aftermath of the 7.8 magnitude earthquake in April,” stated the updated advisory traced by the country’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

While travel advisories, insurance premiums and safety were of immediate concern, many participants also raised grave concerns about the quality and professionalism of tourism services. Infrastructure bottlenecks and bureaucratic hassles were already affecting tourism from Europe, US, Australia and Japan.

Most governments said they were waiting for credible third-party risk assessment reports on trekking trails and heritage towns in Nepal before easing their travel advisories. The United States still issues a Travel Warning, which was last updated two months ago. The warning states: “The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the risks of travel to Nepal and recommends that they defer non-essential travel there following the 7.8 magnitude earthquake on April 25.”

While embassies from India and China were compensating for the numbers, tourist spending, length of stay and the number of repeat visitors were already in serious decline even before April. Nepal was losing out to competitive destinations in a globalised industry.

Although tourism had rebounded somewhat after the royal massacre and the conflict, political disarray and the poor condition of Kathmandu airport, expensive flights, the Everest avalanche has raised concerns about retaining and the handling of future tourists.

Nepal’s tourism sector has seen a significant shift in its main clientele from traditional European markets to a more Asia-focused with an increase in Chinese tourists in the past few years. But the product range travel services remain the same.

“We are in the industry can’t just say Nepal is safe,” Chaffer said, “insurance companies want a third-party assessment report that is credible and has quality data sources.”

Some private companies have sent their own trekking guides to survey routes and assess safety, but this may not be enough to convince embassies and insurance companies.

The report commissioned by Samarth and carried out by Khimkho International to access the Annapurna and Khumbu routes is expected to be released this week. Meanwhile, the entire tourism industry does not only bear the brunt of the short-term losses due to the earthquake but also improving the quality of its tourism infrastructure and services.

The Third Eye

The Third Eye, a trendy Indian and continental restaurant in Thamel, exudes a confidence that is fitting of its name. From its ambitious low-season remodeling plans to its Wi-Fi password (“since1989”), this is a dinner date worth the price in Thamel.

The restaurant is no hole-in-the-wall. Amongst its floors include two large dining rooms, a comfortable indoor smoking room, group dining room that can be reserved for parties, and rooftop adorned with well-watered blooming flora. The rooftop has no cover, but that’s ok.

Filled with traditional lanterns and beautiful mahogany bars, the lower floors would be a wonderful way to weather any rainstorm.

The menu is mid-sized but basic, with recommendations from the wait staff circling around popular choices such as the Chicken Tandoori and Chicken Tikka Masala.

The lack of a happy hour deal on beverages is somewhat made up for by as good a beer selection as you will find in the area alongside a cocktail menu that allows you to substitute domestic spirits to save some rupees and contribute to the local economy as well.

The dishes average a good 100-200 rupees more than what you’ll pay for the same thing at other nearby Indian places. There is also a crippling 10 percent service charge and a 13 per cent VAT tacked on to your bill at the end.

The true gem of our meal was the Bharwan Kulcha (Rs 195). This bread-like flour-based flatbread is stuffed with spicy cottage cheese, potato, and spices. Best of all, it is cooked fresh to order and comes steaming in a basket. It’s nice and thick, and as such remained warm and soft throughout our meal. It pairs excellently with the Mixed Vegetable Korma (Rs 595), which was beautifully seasoned. The vegetables were a bit unevenly cooked, but that were carefully rendered so as to not overpower the cashew gravy and also allow you to maintain full appreciation for the quality of the Bharwan Kulcha.

The Chicken Tikka Masala (Rs 575) was a bit rich for our taste. The chicken was tender and boneless as claimed, but the nuanced taste of the spices was lost in the pervasive power of the tomato sauce. We tried it with the Third Eye Special Naan (Rs 215), which was covered in roasted nuts for a robust and filling accompaniment, but wasn’t as fresh as it could have been.

The pot of green tea (Rs 170) we ordered was not strong, but had a delicious, deep flavour. The complementary poppadum with mango chutney was a nice addition, and made us feel a little better about that inflated bill.

The final prognosis? No need to rush out, though you should keep it on your radar for future dinner dates particularly business-related ones. This is partly because they are taking some time in the coming two months to remodel their (admittedly huge) kitchen. They plan to reopen beginning of September and serve better food than ever. That’s good, because just a tad more quality on that end and this could become a juggernaut well worth the price in Thamel.

Peregrine Frissell

How to get there: Walk south from Kathmandu Guesthouse and The Third Eye is located on your right, opposite Roadhouse Café.
When I first read about the Outlander series I was sceptical to say the least. Based on the seven beloved novels (plus a few novellas in-between) written by Diana Gabaldon, a scientist turned historical fiction writer (Gabaldon has a Ph.D. in Behavioural Ecology), the highly anticipated television series was already a smash hit by the time I had caught on.

So why was I hesitant? Well, here’s a summary: the plot is based on a World War II nurse, Claire Randall (Caitriona Balfe) who travels to Scotland just after the war with her historian husband, Frank (Tobias Menzies), who is due to begin his tenure as a professor at Oxford after serving in the war. Sounds steady enough, right? Imagine my surprise when good old intrepid, outspoken Claire manages to get herself transported back in time to 1743 A.D. through an ancient circle of stones in Craigh na Dun (think a mini Stonehenge) when she goes off walking on her own in the Scottish highlands while her husband is caught up in some dusty old historical records. As Claire struggles to process her very drastic change in circumstances, she gets by due to her wits and her knowledge of modern medicine which makes her a valuable asset in a rural, very feudal Scotland that would otherwise have rendered a lone English woman helpless.

By the time she gets well and truly caught up (pretty much emboled really) in the politics of the MacKenzie clan, and the arms of Jamie Fraser (the terribly dashing Sam Heughan) I was pretty much wrapped up in this odd concoction of historical fiction, fierce fighting, magic, and romance. A part of me did feel just a bit sorry for poor old Frank, who is looking frantically for Claire in the 20th Century. If this all sounds just a bit too much, I can’t really blame you. However, the writing (both in the novel and the TV series) is excellent, made so with intensive research and a precise blend of adventure and practicality with minute attention to period, that it is hard not to be swept away into the mid-18th century, with its intrigues, dashing kilted Scots, scheming Jacobites, and other mysteriously intentioned characters.

Claire and Jamie too are also one of the most romantic couples in recent literature, well matched in wit, doomed to perhaps be separated by uncontrollable circumstances. Perhaps this is why the series has been so long lived on paper, after all, how better to keep people hooked than to create two feisty, highly attractive, brainy young lovers who might be kept apart by an essentially existential conflict?

MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

OUTLANDER

Get the most ECONOMIC B/W PRINTERS ever

Best for Office and Commercial purpose

M-Series Printers

Just 25 PAISA per print

Just 12 WATTS 
POWER CONSUMPTION

8000 PAGES 
with initial starter ink

USAID. PRINT

TOO PRINT

IN OPPOSITION: Parliamentarians from Madhesh-based parties walk out of a CA meeting opposing the draft constitution on Tuesday.

THE ‘C’ BOOK: Members of the CA’s constitution drafting committee speak to media after endorsing the final draft of the constitution on Sunday.

LET IT GO: People wait to release balloons at a memorial for earthquake victims at Basantapur in Kathmandu on Saturday.

FAITH HEALING: Volunteers of the Tzu Chi Foundation participate in a prayer ceremony at a relief distribution program in Kathmandu on Sunday.

GOLD RUSH: Hundreds of yarsagumba pickers set on to collect the valuable fungus at Moli in Dolpo.

IN OPPOSITION: Parliamentarians from Madhesh-based parties walk out of a CA meeting opposing the draft constitution on Tuesday.

THE ‘C’ BOOK: Members of the CA’s constitution drafting committee speak to media after endorsing the final draft of the constitution on Sunday.

LET IT GO: People wait to release balloons at a memorial for earthquake victims at Basantapur in Kathmandu on Saturday.

FAITH HEALING: Volunteers of the Tzu Chi Foundation participate in a prayer ceremony at a relief distribution program in Kathmandu on Sunday.

GOLD RUSH: Hundreds of yarsagumba pickers set on to collect the valuable fungus at Moli in Dolpo.
Ethical challenges to advertising

Hazel Henderson

Challenges to advertisers and marketers arose in the past century. Critics deplored the role of cigarette marketers who exploited the aspirations of women by associating smoking with liberation. Such manipulations were explored by Vance Packard in The Hidden Persuaders (1957), along with Marshall McLuhan, The Medium is the Message (1967) and Stuart Ewen’s Captains and the Dehumanizing of America (1992), Message (1967) and Stuart Ewen’s Captains and Hidden Persuaders (1957), along with Lewis in The Buying of the President (1996) in the 1970s and summarised by Charles likened to selling toothpaste as it emerged challenges.

Unreality Industry (1989), followed by of Consciousness (1974). The use of such financial bonanzas during elections. and their TV channels have come to rely on their TV sets in disgust. Media corporations ads that lead millions of voters to turn off led to the well-financed blizzard of attack restrictions on money in U.S. elections has explored by Vance Packard in The and James Fallows in Breaking the Death (2005). Fast forward to today’s ethical Klein’s No Logo (1999) and challenges to advertisers and marketers arose in the past century. Critics deplored the role of cigarette marketers who exploited the aspirations of women by associating smoking with liberation. Such manipulations were explored by Vance Packard in The Hidden Persuaders (1957), along with Marshall McLuhan, The Medium is the Message (1967) and Stuart Ewen’s Captains and the Dehumanizing of America (1992), Message (1967) and Stuart Ewen’s Captains and Hidden Persuaders (1957), along with Lewis in The Buying of the President (1996) in the 1970s and summarised by Charles likened to selling toothpaste as it emerged challenges.

Unreality Industry (1989), followed by of Consciousness (1974). The use of such financial bonanzas during elections. and their TV channels have come to rely on their TV sets in disgust. Media corporations ads that lead millions of voters to turn off led to the well-financed blizzard of attack restrictions on money in U.S. elections has explored by Vance Packard in The and James Fallows in Breaking the

Warren Bennis described the deliberate manufacturing of falsehood in The

Many new media business models which no longer rely on advertising are debated in The Death of Big Media (2013) by Robert McChesney and John Nichols who compare media access policies in many countries which subsidise investigative journalism, such as the BBC. In the United States, foundations support news organisations such as the National Geographic, the Center for Public Integrity and ProPublica, and media outlets such as the Columbia Journalism Review. The American Prospect and the Nation are largely funded by subscribers as well as PBS and NPR in broadcasting, along with many internet-based media such as The Real News Network. Google banned ad-blocking apps in 2013, yet alternative web-browsers such as UC Browser already claims 500 million users, mostly in China and India, and Eyro launched its ad-blocking browser available for mobile devices running Google and Android. These battles will rage on until legal systems always lag behind technology catch up. Two reports from the Aspen Institute’s Communications and Society Program led by Charles Firestone Navigating Continual Disruption and The Atomic Age of Data discuss the digitisation of over ever more sectors of industrial societies and the internet of things (IoT).

In the United States, the monopolising of internet access by Comcast, AT&T and Verizon has restricted broadband access to millions in less affluent, rural communities, and prevented small towns from competing with public broadband systems, as reported by the Center for Public Integrity and Susan Crawford in Captive Audience(2013). The good news follows the analysis and proposals of Kunda Dock in Databite Earth: Journalism as if the Planet Materned(IPI, 2013) and includes Dan Gillmor’s A for the Media (2004) on grassroots journalism; David Bollier’s In Search of the Public Interest in the New Media (2002); Democratizing Global Media (2005); Making the Net Work: Sustainable Development in a Digital Society (2003) from Britain’s Forum for the Future; and Jason Laurier’s Who Owns the Forum? (2013).

Hazel Henderson is president of Ethical Markets Media (UK and Brazil) and author of Mapping the Global Transition to the Solar Age and other books.

Customer care made easier

For Technical Support

Cable & FTH Internet

SMS your support related issues with the following details: Type Username or Subscription ID Type Service Type Problem Type and send SMS to 9801158999

e.g ramiktom Cable Internet No Connection & Send SMS to 9801158999

TV

SMS your support related issues with the following details: Type Registered Name or Subscription ID Type Service Type Problem Type and send SMS to 9801158999

e.g Ram Thapa Clear TV Channel Missing & Send SMS to 9801158999

OR

Send us an email at support@subisu.net.jp

For New Queries

Internet & TV

SMS your queries with the following details:

Type Your Name Type Location Type Service Required and send SMS to 9801116552

e.g Ram Thapa Maitidevi Clear TV & Send SMS to 9801116552

OR

Send us an email at consumer.sales@subisu.net.jp

For Sales Support

Cable & FTH Internet

SMS your sales related issues with the following details:

Type Username or Subscription ID Type Service Type Problem Type and send SMS to 9801116553

e.g ramiktom Cable Internet Renewal & Send SMS to 9801116553

TV

SMS your sales related issues with the following details:

Type Registered Name or Subscription ID Type Location Type Service Type Problem Type and send SMS to 9801116553

e.g Ram Thapa Clear TV Renewal & Send SMS to 9801116553

OR

Send us an email at sales@subisu.net.jp

*Service Type=Cable Internet, FTHM, Cable TV and Clear TV

Follow us on: facebook.com/subisu twitter.com/subisu

Please note these three numbers for future reference: 9801158999, 9801116552, 9801116553
Cheating hearts

Hello everyone,

In most extramarital cases, husbands stray while wives stay. It appears that most men feel having an extramarital affair does not endanger their marriage as they believe the affair is acceptable to their wives, since they are the caregivers and their mothers had to find respect and trust.

Anjana Rajbhandary

to their wives, since they are the providers. However, men tend to be less tolerant and forgiving when the wife has an extramarital affair. Cheating breaks a relationship and worse it permanently affects the child/ren who are caught up in it. How can someone grow up with the affair is acceptable and knowing that this has been going on for a while. Personally, I don’t see any excuses for cheating: once you break someone’s trust, it’s done. It’s easy to say, let go and move on but in our society it is much harder for women to bounce back even when it is not their doing. The embarrassment of what people will say will probably haunt you, but remember this is your family issue and it is not society’s business. Your father is clearly very selfish as he did not think of your mother or you when he decided to cheat, and it is sadly impressive how he managed to hide it for so long. I actually feel sorry for him because he was not able to see what he has lost in this process, and it is your respect and trust.

I can understand the pros and cons of why you may want them back together or not, but in the end it is between your parents. I would suggest try to be supportive of your mother because right now, she needs you. Try to stay strong for yourself because it cannot be easy to see your main male role model fall from the pedestal, but remember not to let this affect how you see men in general. This will be hard for sometime but trust me, with time it will get easier and you will overcome this. It is okay to be upset and angry, but remember that there are good people out there who will appreciate and value you and will never do anything to hurt you, and that is something to always look forward to. Sadly, your father is not one of them and it is his loss. Stay strong for yourself and your mother, this too will pass. See a counsellor if needed. I will be thinking of you. Good Luck.

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

GIZMO by YANTRICK

The 25 April earthquake killed over 8,000 people and reminded millions of Nepalis just how seismically active Nepal is. Although the damage from the 7.8 quake was far lower than predicted it would be unwise to forget the dangers of quakes.

In the long-term, we must focus on retro-fitting old houses to make them more earthquake-resistant and implementing tougher building codes so that the newer structures are more capable of withstanding a jolt. And even as our ministers and government officials turn their attention from earthquake relief to constitution drafting, it is worth remembering that even something as basic as investing in early warning systems like quake alarms will help save lives and limbs.

Manufactured by JOS Products, an American company with more than two decades worth of experience in the safety products market, the Quake Alarm is a simple, yet extremely effective device. Weighing in at just over 900 grams and a mere eight inches in size, the alarm is extremely easy to mount to wall. The white casing houses a nine volt battery (with five years warranty) and powers the device. But it’s the reverse pendulum detection system which endows the device with life saving powers.

When an earthquake strikes, two types of waves emanate from its epicentre: P waves (compression waves) and S waves (shear waves). While the P waves travel faster, the S waves, although slower, carry the quakes destructive power. When the Quake Alarm’s pendulum detects the speedier P waves originating from hundreds of kilometres away, it produces a loud, distinctive sound warning residents of the impending quake. Depending on how close and deep the epicentre is, the gadget can provide up to 30 precious seconds for its owners to flee to safety.

Although you can’t really put a price on the valuable seconds the device gives you by eliminating the guesswork involved in detecting an earthquake, Quake Alarm can be ordered from Amazon or Harilo.com for approximately Rs 6,000 (including VAT, service charge, and shipping). A small investment today will go a long way in protecting hundreds of lives tomorrow.

So prepare your earthquake survival kits, practice your safety drills, and when the alarm goes off, gather your loved ones and head to safety.

Yantrick’s Verdict: With fault lines along the Himalayas ready to snap any time, the Quake Alarm is an absolute must for every school, office, and home in the Valley.
When girls hit puberty, it is a time of much excitement and significant trauma resulting from the amount of changes that take place.

Opposite (and/or same) sex start to look more attractive, irrespective of their actual appearance for which one can blame the hormones. Here we will discuss what unique situation puberty puts girls in. Different cultures have different customs and perhaps a more or less, ‘traditional’ view on the subject.

It is politely called ‘that time of the month’ or ‘period’ and more scientifically called ‘menstruation’. I will not assume men have much knowledge on the topic as recently a 25-year old male friend asked how often this “incident” that makes women more emotional occurs.

Mahinabari (menstruation in Nepali) happens once a month, on average.

First for those who are more informed, when women get their period, they don’t want to twirl, they don’t want to go swimming in white bathing suits or play competitive field hockey with a huge grin on their faces.

An aunt once told me, “You are lucky because in the past, when chaupadi was widely practised, women had to sleep outside in the shed with cows.”

In Kathmandu even in present day, most households don’t allow women having periods into kitchens, temples, or let them eat with the family, touch the tap or sleep on their beds.

Mitini, an initiative of Mitra Samaj, started with a vision to break these taboos. In February 2015, the organisation found more than 20% of female students missed four days of classes in a month during their menstrual period. Almost 98% of the students said they would go to school if sanitary napkins were provided.

Shreyana Shrestha of Mitini said, “Across the hard hit earthquake areas, the need for sanitary napkins was highly prevalent. We provided a month’s supply of sanitary napkins.” Mitini is now entering the second phase of its distribution program.

Lack of proper hygiene and privacy during periods is one of the main concerns for women living in tent shelters. In some rural parts of Nepal (and certain parts of Kathmandu), girls are not allowed to touch books during and after their period for three to seven days. This leads to them falling behind in school and ultimately dropping out.

A modern 24-year-old educated woman said she is not allowed to touch plants during her period.

Another educated professional was emotionally coerced into going to a cousin’s wedding to show her respect yet not allowed to participate in the ceremony. “I just sat there on a plastic chair 50 feet away watching it all happen, and my entire family and their friends knew I was having my period.”

Girls and women are made to feel ashamed for this natural process and then treated like an outcast in home or social setting. Isn’t this a form of discrimination in the name of religion? They say, God will be upset.

This is not meant to disrespect any culture or tradition, but to address the levels of awkwardness and discomfort experienced by women. Haven’t we moved forward enough in the world to not scrutinise women who may be having their period?

The other side is that if a girl or woman, never gets her period, she is considered ‘barren’ which also does not have a positive connotation. You just cannot win.

It’s important to teach young girls that having periods are natural, and it is nothing to be embarrassed about. Society will always find a way to test you and make you uncomfortable, so it’s up to you how much power you let society have over you. We have a long way to go for this to apply in rural areas, but in cities like Kathmandu this obsolete treatment needs to go.

We have learned to live and dress like the Western world, shouldn’t we at least try attempting to treat women the same way too?

@AnjyRajy
Sweat trickling down her face, brow furrowed in concentration, Sabita Chaudhary steers her power transplanter with precision, seeding paddy in neat rows on a flooded field. The seedlings are stacked in trays at the back of the machine which plants them over 1.5 hectare land in one hour, a job that would have earlier taken 25 people two days to do.

Even as Nepal’s annual rice production keeps dropping due to the shortage of farmland, fragmentation of holdings, labour shortage and falling productivity due to government neglect, here in the plains of eastern Nepal there is a quiet green revolution happening.

“I was scared of the machine in the beginning but now I can’t imagine planting with my hands,” said Chaudhary, while she took a break on Tuesday, observed as rice planting day. She was among 25 women trained to drive power tillers and transplanters by the Birtanagar-based Nepal Krishi Company which is working with farmers’ groups to mechanise and improve productivity.

Nepal’s average annual paddy harvest is 6 million tons, and another 600,000 tons is imported from India. However, cheaper Indian rice is a disincentive for many farmers. Harvets are also stagnant because arable land is shrinking: Morang district alone lost 10 per cent of its area under rice cultivation to urban sprawl in the last ten years.

“If we can increase average production by one ton per hectare, we will not have to import from India, and we have proved that Nepal farmers can achieve that,” said Rajendra Uperty at the District Agriculture Office in Morang, who has convinced farmers to switch to System of Rice Intensification (SRI), a technique which allows farmers to double crop yields with half the amount of seeds.

Combining SRI with mechanisation and setting up farmers’ cooperatives, boosts productivity, creates jobs and empowers many women like Sabita Chaudhary. If what is happening here can be scaled up to the national level, Nepal could even export rice again.

“We are aiming at a paradigm shift in the way we do agriculture,” said Birendra Basnet, founder of Buddha Air whose interest in farming led him to set up Nepal Krishi Company which now helps four cooperatives in Sunsari and Morang to upgrade management and mechanise agriculture.

Using power tillers to level fields, transplanters for seeding, weeders and harvesters makes SRI even more viable by saving time and cutting waste. SRI plants 10-day old seedlings one row at a time so that weeders can be used. This system needs less water, and individual seedlings can grow up to 27 tillers (see box).

While Nepal’s average rice production is 2.8 tons/hectare, mechanised SRI in cooperatives here yield up to 9 tons/hectare, using half the amount of seeds and slashing costs. But even with this, farmers cannot compete with cheap Indian rice, so Nepal Krishi Company is moving into premium Basmati varieties.

**BEST JOB IN THE WORLD:** Sabita Chaudhary, 25, drives a transplanter seeding a rice field in Morang on Tuesday (above). Twenty-five farmers would have spent two days to transplant rice in this 1.5 hectare field that she finished in just one hour.

**Trays with 10-day-old seedlings at the back of the automatic transplanter (below).** Mechanising rice farming boosts productivity.

Nageswor Majhi and Raju Singh Chaudhary (right) of the Samyanka and Samuhik cooperatives in Sunsari have transformed agriculture in the district.
Best of both worlds

Girinda Dhakal walks into his field of evergreen rice in Godawari of Morang district to gather 27 tillers that have grown from a single rice seedling he planted in April. Dhakal (pic, above) is a well-known farmer in Nepal. In the past year, he has helped other farmers to adopt System of Rice Intensification (SRI) on their fields. Since he started using SRI in 2012, he has doubled his rice harvest. SRI can be used for local or hybrid varieties alike, and it needs to be planted in seed rows to allow weeding machines to pass, and further apart (20cm) so seeds don’t have to compete for nutrients and light. The downside of SRI is that it can be more labour intensive if weeding machines are not readily available, and it needs knowledge of timely drainage and careful planting. But the benefits in greater harvests far outweigh these shortcomings. In Morang, SRI produces up to 9 tons per hectare, compared to Nepal’s national average of less than 3 tons per hectare, and it does so using 35 per cent less water, less than half the seed and fertilizer.

SRI farmer Premendra Upadhyay says combining SRI with mechanization can increase benefits even more. “Using power tillers, transplanters and weeder makes SRI even more productive, it is the best of both worlds,” he explained. “Indeed, even with partial SRI farmers in Morang have doubled their harvests and reduced their costs by half.”

With agriculture contributing 80 per cent of the GDP, there should be more research and newer technologies to increase productivity,” said Hari Dahal, former secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture. “That could be achieved by mechanizing agriculture.

Outside the all-Tharu village of Simariya, transplanters have been at work all day seeding rice in the flooded fields of members of Samjhana Cooperative. Visitors to a nearby greenhouse are greeted by the sweet, distinctive aroma of Basmati seedlings growing in trays. Vivekananda Jha of the Nepal Krishi Company hopes Basmam will be the cash crop to make the cooperatives prosper.

“Growing Basmati with mechanised SRI in cooperatives is a win-win-win,” explained Jha. “It will bypass the problem of cheap Indian rice and increase income.” Jha is now helping farmers with working capital loans, storage facilities and even setting up their own rice mill in future.

Nepal’s agriculture is caught in a vicious cycle: young men don’t have jobs so they migrate, and the shortage of men affects farm output. From Simariya alone, 1,200 young men have migrated to Qatar and Malaysia in the past year.

But Raju Singh Chaudhary, 30, wasn’t one of them. He decided he wouldn’t allow himself to be cheated by muddlemen to go and work in 45 degrees heat in the Arabian desert. He got together with five other young men to set up Samuhli Cooperative in his village of Aranib. Family income has gone up, the women drive power tillers and transplanters, and the group has created jobs.

“Look, there, they are all working, not a single person has gone abroad. They don’t even go to Biratnagar to look for jobs anymore.” Raju Sinha Chaudhary said.

One would think that as CEO of Nepal’s largest private airline, Birendra Basnet would be more at home in an air-conditioned office in Kathmandu. But he is in his element here, sweating in the mud. “We are still in the pilot phase, but word will spread when the harvests come in,” he said. “Farming is my passion, you are dealing with lives and you are making things grow.”

nepalitimes.com

You eat what you sow

Malnutrition among children was a public health emergency in Nepal even before the earthquake struck in April. Now, with rains blocking road access and with erratic nutrition intake in shelters children are especially vulnerable.

Following the earthquake, 70,000 children under five are at risk of malnutrition in the 15 affected districts and require urgent humanitarian support, according to UNICEF. A recent survey of the nutritional status of children in Nepal had seen an improvement in the past five years, there is a danger of backsliding post-earthquake. Higher malnutrition leads to a higher mortality rate.

“Before the earthquake, we were making relatively good progress in terms of reducing child mortality. Now there is a fear of sliding back to higher mortality again,” said Stanley Chitekwe, Nutrition Chief at UNICEF.

Chitekwe stressed the need to maintain dietary diversity for children over the age of seven months to avoid malnutrition. “If you feed a child you must give him food from four out of the seven main groups of food,” he said.

To ensure child nutrition, UNICEF and partner agencies are focusing on five areas: breastfeeding, complementary feeding, therapeutic feeding and care, supplementary feeding and providing micronutrients to children and women.

“Nutrition is a major concern after a natural disaster like this, because farmers resort to coping mechanisms, including reducing the number of meals they eat and the diversity of their food,” said Somsak Pipoppinyo, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Representative in Nepal.

Disease and deficient dietary intake can cause malnutrition, but lack of access to health services can be an underlining cause. Post earthquake, although the damage to standing crops was not extensive, stored grain was buried, and the loss of livestock was high.

The Agricultural Livelihood Impact Appraisal conducted by Nepal Food Security cluster in six of the hardest hit districts of Sindhupalchok, Dolakha, Dhading, Gorkha, Nuwakot and Rasuwa found that there had been a significant drop in the consumption of animal products. Kitchen gardens were destroyed and there is a shortage of food. One in four households in the affected districts are female-headed, and these were found to be more vulnerable. With landslides cutting off access to many areas, malnutrition is expected to persist.

Nutrition experts are worried about the effect junk food and micronutrient powders distributed by aid agencies may have in children’s health. “Most food distributed as relief is packaged junk food. The government is distributing micronutrient powder and plum peanuts when it should be ensuring children get proper local grain and vegetables,” said nutritionist Aruna Uprety.

While the disruption in agriculture in the affected districts has not affected the whole country, it has put families dependent, and they stop growing their own food.

“To improve the nutrition of the most vulnerable farming families, we must continue to provide seeds for vegetables, wheat and other staples crops and food supplements for animal feed,” said Somsak Pipoppinyo. “We also need to build more resilient livelihoods and support rehabilitation projects looking at landslides and irrigation systems.”

The government has worked with FAO to distribute 423 tons of rice seeds. FAO has also distributed 20,000 airtight grain storage bags, with 20,000 more to follow, nearly 20,000 bags (25kg) of animal feed, and 50,000 packets of mixed vegetable seeds.

But experts say this is hardly enough. “Nutrition and food security go hand in hand,” says Hari Dahal, former secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture. “It is imperative that the government continues emergency food supplies to the affected districts for some more time, and plan to ensure long-term food security.”

Sahina Shrestha
Man in a hurry

Tulcan Neupane in Himal Khubapatrika, 28 June-4 July

Chief Justice Ram Kumar Prasad Shah is retiring on 6 July, and he is being replaced by Supreme Court’s senior most Justice Kalyan Shrestha.

But Shah looks like a man in a hurry. After acquitting fake doctor Yoshe Lama from Humla who had embezzled $1 million from an American charity earlier this year, he is now embroiled in a scam to purchase computer equipment in violation of the Public Procurement Act 2007, and hiring employees on two-year contract against the SC’s own recruitment process.

On 24 December 2014, the apex court’s Information Technology Committee (ITC), also headed by Shah, had called a tender to buy 375 desktop computers. International Electronic Computers (IEC), a Kathmandu-based supplier, submitted a proposal to sell desktop computers per piece at Rs 60,650 (excluding VAT). But the ITC rejected the IEC’s lowest-price bid and accepted another proposal by World Distribution Nepal (WDN), which quoted much higher price of Rs 71,400 per piece (excluding VAT).

The ITC had to pay Rs 4.38 million more to purchase 475 desktop computers from the WDN. The IEC moved the court, arguing the ITC violated the article 47 (6) of the act, which says the lowest bidder’s proposal should be accepted. But the SC quashed the IEC’s petition, dubbing it ‘baseless’ on 5 May.

Article 25 (3) of the same act stipulates that the price at which goods are procured should not be 15 per cent higher than the lowest bidder’s proposal. But the ITC cunningly disqualified the IEC, and other low-price bidders by adding a line in its tender notice: ‘data security and chassis intelligent management tool’.

Computers of all brands with operating system windows -8.1% have this tool but ‘chassis intelligent management tool’ is mentioned only in Dell computers, and the WDN supplies Dells.

Observers close to the investigation say the tender was tailor made only for Dell. The Act says particular details, signs and words cannot be mentioned in tender notices to make only a few bidders eligible without justifying the reasons.

Shah was ITC chief even when he was not Chief Justice. He was dismissed as the ITC chief by former Chief Justice Ram Prasad Shrestha, but was later reappointed by Chief Justice Damodar Sharma. Chief Justices usually do not head any SC committees, but Shah did not resign from the post even after becoming Chief Justice.

Shah also seems desperate to hire 75 employees, including information technology director, managers and maintenance officers, on two-year contracts before his exit. On 21 April, the SC published a vacancy notice and 472 candidates submitted their applications.

The SC follows a long process of written exam, interview and technical exam to hire contract employees. But this time, the SC short-listed 279 applicants for interview without taking their written exam. Several associations of the SC employees say the recruitment process was cut short to hire specific people before Shah’s retirement.

Interestingly, the ITC’s System Network Administrator Bidwax Khadivasa, who is a member of the SC’s recruitment committee, is among the short-listed 279 applicants and is ready to be interviewed for the post of manager. Interestingly, the ITC had purchased desktop computers from the WDN based on an evaluation report prepared by Khadivasa.

Forgotten Tappleung

Sita Nirmal in Annapurna Post, 28 June

Sabin Khan’s family have been searching for him for the past two months, but yet to find him. Sabin, a 27-year-old soldier from the Nepal Army, was missing since the 25 April earthquake.

Sabin Khan, 27, a Captain in the Nepal Army was posted at Langtang National Park when the earthquake struck. Ten other soldiers are also missing after an avalanche wiped out the entire area. Only the body of Keshav Bista was later recovered.

Devaki Bista was bedridden with fever when the news of Sabin going missing reached the family. The family immediately packed his bags and left for Dhunche to search for his son. Unable to get any information, Khadivasa returned home dejected.

But Rai knew what she was dealing with. “Many people questioned my professional choice. Why do you have to raise cattle when you have a nursing degree they asked,” says Rai.

But Rai knew what she was doing. She had seen how effective farm houses were in treatment of dementia patients. In countries like Japan and the Netherlands there are model villages being opened especially for dementia patients.

“With the income collected from the farm, I hope to open a treatment facility with international standards for dementia patients,” says Rai who has seen how badly they are treated here.

Majority of elderly who suffer from dementia lose their learning ability and start behaving like children. Instead of being given proper treatment, doctors and relatives in Kathmandu Rai notes give dementia patients sleeping pills and lock them up in their rooms.

Rai’s farm in Bhaktapur’s Bode is spread over 3 ropanis. Presently she makes Rs 1200 to Rs 2000 a day selling eggs.

Farmer nurse

Sajana Baral in Himal Khubapatrika, 28 June-4 July

After working as a health professional at Nepalganj Medical College, Rovita Rai from Bhisupur went to London where she studied Nursing in Health and Social Care at Thames College. Upon completing her degree, Rai worked with dementia patients for five years.

Her dream was to open a dementia research centre in Nepal on her return in 2011. But things didn’t go as planned. Despite her passion Rai couldn’t find any investors to fund the project.

The 42-year-old then turned to animal farming.

—“Many people questioned my career choice. Why do you have to raise cattle when you have a nursing degree they asked,” says Rai.

But Rai knew what she was doing. She had seen how effective farm houses were in treatment of dementia patients. In countries like Japan and the Netherlands there are model villages being opened
“Nepal Airlines can be world class”

Sugat Ratta Kansakar, the new Managing Director of Nepal Airlines, interviewed by Karobar, 2 July

Karobar: Why did you return to Nepal Airlines as Managing Director after serving as Executive Chair?

Sugat Ratta Kansakar: After Nepal Airlines Managing Director Mukesh Kharel resigned, my former colleagues requested me to step into his shoes. I was hesitant, but they argued: if Vladimir Putin can become President after serving as Prime Minister, why can’t you work as MD? I thought they were right, and I also felt that I could turn the airline around.

How are you going to do that?

I want to transform Nepal Airlines into a world-class airline. I can’t do it all by myself so we are hiring top consultants. We aim to introduce online ticketing from next year. People, whether they are abroad or in Nepali villages, should be able to buy our tickets online.

Is Nepal Airlines heading towards bankruptcy because of the flawed deal on the recently-acquired Chinese planes?

I don’t think so. Yes, we have been incurring more loss after we imported the Chinese planes because of their high insurance cost and load-penalty. But we will solve this problem soon. We have asked the Chinese to come to get over the cost of operation. It is also an issue of Nepal-China diplomacy, but we cannot operate the planes at a loss.

Do you think Nepal Airlines needs strategic partners?

Strategic partner means privatising the airline, making it easier for Nepal Airlines to operate. For this, we need to add at least one new plane every year. I have convinced all board members about this. I feel we can do it as easily. Before we sign a deal with Lufthansa, we want to have a better system like the ones developed by Thai or Singapore Airlines so that no plane needs to get grounded here.

You say Nepal Airlines will increase competition and force other airlines to lower their ticket prices. How?

We have now just four planes for domestic routes, and need to add at least one new plane every year. I have convinced all board members about this. I feel we can do it as easily. Before we sign a deal with Lufthansa, we want to have a better system like the ones developed by Thai or Singapore Airlines so that no plane needs to get grounded here.

You say that the Chinese planes are not suitable for Nepal. Why are they not suitable?

Chinese aircraft. That is why we imported the Chinese planes. This will not grow if Nepal Airlines fails to develop into a world class airline.

Strategic partner means privatising the airline, making it easier for Nepal Airlines to operate. For this, we need to add at least one new plane every year. I have convinced all board members about this. I feel we can do it as easily. Before we sign a deal with Lufthansa, we want to have a better system like the ones developed by Thai or Singapore Airlines so that no plane needs to get grounded here.

Are you phasing out the two Boeing 757s?

We have already decided on our new destinations. We are flying to Bangalore and Mumbai from September first week and then to Guangzhou, Dubai and Dammam. Only when we add two more planes to our fleet will we decide on what to do with the 757s. But replacing the 757s may not be feasible for the time being.

Nepal Airlines does not have enough planes to serve remote rural areas of Nepal. A foreigner once told me: it is a big thing that a small country like Nepal has 52 airports.

Unfortunately, we are not able to fly our planes to just 22 of them. We do not have sufficient planes to fly to all the destinations. We did not add a single plane to our domestic fleet for 45 years until we bought the Chinese aircraft. That is why we are unable to provide service to all Nepali villages. We should not just look at profits. We are eyeing lucrative markets so we can subsidise the loss-making flights to inaccessible areas within Nepal. For this, we need to add at least six more planes.

ALL IN ONE:
Nepal Airlines’ entire international fleet of two brand new Airbus 320s and two 30-year-old Boeing 737s in a rare photo taken last month. The Chinese MA60 turboprop is also seen.

Stuck in Syria

Sabitri Magar of Mavergun gets phone calls on her mobile everyday from abroad, and every time she picks it up hopefully in the hope that it has something to do with her daughter, Sunita, who is in war-torn Syria. Before she can say hello, Sunita plods: “Mom, they’ll kill me and throw my body somewhere. If you don’t do something, I won’t be back alive.”

Sabitri blames the recruiters for sending her daughter to such a hell. Sunita had separated from her husband, and left her young children in the care of her parents before she left to work abroad to be able to pay for their education. But she got duped by a middleman named Raju Dhunagana of Pokhara and was abandoned in Syria, for which Nepal does not even issue labour permits. Dhunagana got her a job with a family in Syria.

She later learnt that the middleman had already taken her income of amount $5,000 from the employer as advance even before she started working.

“Her children keep asking for her and Sunita herself cries everyday on phone, but what can an old woman like me do?” asks a tearful Sabitri. “He has duped many young women and is currently hiding out in India.”

In a phone conversation Sunita told us she was treated fairly well in the beginning but when she asked for her salary, she was told it had already been given to Dhunagana. She was beaten, denied food and not allowed to make phone calls. Sunita ran away from her employer and is staying with her agent, who is trying to pressure her to take another job. She had already worked for 2 years and should have earned $2000. The employer has her passport and is demanding Sunita return the $3,000 of the advance to get it back.

After finding out about Sunita, NRN Finland’s Balkrishna Shrestha is trying to bring Sunita back to Nepal. “We sent her tickets, but now they want the $3,000.” Sabitri has appealed to the Safe Migration Project but the Nepal Embassy in Israel isn’t showing much interest.

Subhrajit Mani in Annapurna Post, 2 July

ANNAPURNA POST
Nepali by descent

As the members of the august house put finishing touches to the new constitution of the Patriarchal Demographic Republic of Nepal, we are glad to see that great care has been taken to prevent people from unnecessarily becoming citizens of this country. It’s already crowded here. Go away. Our rulers have decided that even babies born wholly within Nepali territory to Nepali mothers cannot be Nepalis by descent. In this day and age, this is a vital precaution to conserve the Nepali Y-chromosome so that it is not contaminated by any foreign bodies.

One can’t be too careful about ascertaining the purity of our race when millions of men are queuing up at the open border to race when millions of men are ascertaining the purity of our foreign bodies that it is not contaminated by any in the Nepali Y-chromosome so vital precaution to conserve the Nepali territory to Nepali mothers even babies born wholly within cannot be Nepalis by descent.

In this day and age, this is a constitutional responsibility to conserve the Nepali Y-chromosome so that it is not contaminated by any foreign bodies.

There are many advantages to being a proud Nepali citizen, and I enumerate some of them below:

1. Nepal was never colonised, and this proud fact we cannot quantify in dollars and cents or in per capita GDP.
2. Nepal has the potential to generate 73,000 megawatts of electricity, living proof of the world class quality of life that we enjoy here.
3. The world’s tallest dwarf is a Nepali citizen.
4. Because we believe in reincarnation there is a fat chance that you will also be reborn a Nepali citizen, but only if your mother did not marry a foreigner in her previous life.
5. Buddha was born in Nepal to a father and mother both of whom had Nepali citizenship papers rubber stamped in triplicate by the VDC secretary.
6. Arniko’s father and mother were both Nepalis. Unfortunately he went on to become a Chinese citizen. But, hey, once a Nepali man always a Nepali.
7. Bhrikuti married a Tibetan king, and we rightly denied their offspring Nepali citizenship, and later invaded Lhasa.
8. Tensing Norgay became an Indian and that’s all I have to say about that.
9. If you like mud, be a Nepali citizen, we have turned the whole country into a mighty waste-ground. In Glastonbury.
10. Live in Nepal and reduce your carbon footprint to zero. Save the planet by moving to Kathmandu.
11. Relocate to Nepal and develop chronic gastro-enteritis. The world’s most effective weight-loss program. Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back.
12. Emigrate to Kathmandu, it’s still dark at night. The only capital in the world from which the Milky Way is visible. This week’s attraction: Venus and Jupiter tight and bright in the western sky.
13. Experience the joys of living in a patriarchy and former monarchy.
14. Look at the bright side: no one chops off your hand for stealing.
15. ... or executes you for corruption.
16. In fact, there is always a way to get a citizenship card. Post, call me.

A lot of valued clients have been asked to get a citizenship card. This week’s attraction: the 33-member opposition alliance have signed in to stop the misuse of laughter in all its forms, and they will start with the live broadcast of CA proceedings which is the source of much mirth all over the country. It is extremely detrimental for our national morale, our territorial imperatives and sovereignty that the entire nation breaks into gales of laughter while watching the Minister of Agriculture trying to plant his seedlings. It’s not funny, OK. Agriculture makes up 80% of Nepal’s GDP.

I don’t speak in jest when I assert that the mouth organs of government lack a certain gravitas. They will therefore be forced to refrain from outright comedy while slogging mud at each other, to wit: they will be forced to look and sound more crest-fallen as befitting the times.

Political parties (motto: “He who laughs last is history”) also need to be disciplined since they don’t seem to realise that there are limits to the average per capita duration that an adult Nepali can break into paroxysms of laughter on any given day. Spate a thought for those compatriots who just can laugh no more. Journalists also need to be reminded that the draft of the constitution will curtail their freedom to laugh at themselves since this will have a negative impact on our sense of national self-esteem, self-importance, self-aggrandizement and ultimately erode our self-defence. After all, we are all Nepalis in descent.