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SHOW OF HANDS

After a process that has lasted seven years since the first election to the Constituent Assembly in 2008, the new constitution is finally ready. In clause-by-clause voting this week, 85% of members like Rita Rawal of the UML (*below*) voted with a show of hands for provisions that included a discriminatory article on citizenship for children of Nepali mothers. On Sunday 20 September at 5PM CA Chair Subhas Nembang will endorse the document, President Ram

Baran Yadav will promulgate it and hand it over to the Prime Minister Sushil Koirala. UML Chair K P Oli is expected to take over as prime minister after Koirala returns from the United Nations General Assembly next week. The CA will convert into parliament with a new speaker. A new President will be elected a month later. The new Constitution will be immediately tested by the ability of the new regime to address the demands of various Tarai-based groups.

**MAKING
THE BEST OF IT**
EDITORIAL
PAGE 2

**A CONSTITUTION,
LIKE IT OR NOT**
ONE TO MANY
BY BIDUSHI DHUNGEL
PAGE 4



BIKRAM RAI

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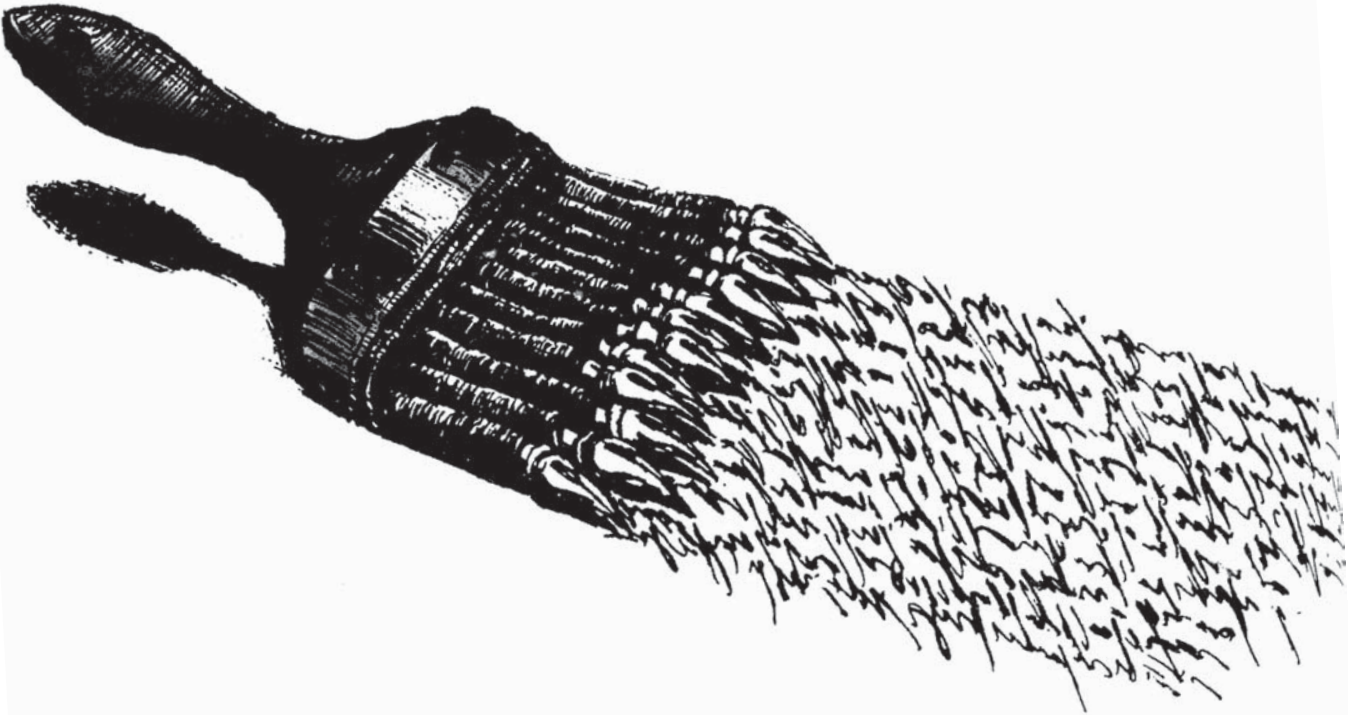
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MAKING THE BEST OF IT

The 1992 constitution was supposed to be ‘the best in the world’, this one is probably ‘the best we can do’

Nearly ten years after the end of the conflict, two elections to an Assembly to write a new constitution later, and after a month of violence that has threatened to tear apart the ethnic fabric of this country, we are finally on the cusp of passing a new constitution.

Barring a last-minute hitch, the Constituent Assembly is set to promulgate the new constitution in the presence of the President of the Republic on Sunday, 20 September. The journey has been a roller-coaster: rising to the euphoria and hope of the ceasefire to despair at the violence and prolonged deadlock.

Finally, the three main parties have cobbled together a document that they say is the best compromise that could be agreed upon in the present scenario. A fourth member of the alliance that worked on this ‘fast-track’ post-earthquake project, the MJF(D) led by Bijaya Gachhadar, is not fully back on board. Then, the parties that claim to represent Madhesi and Janajati interests have boycotted this latest move to push through the constitution, often leading to violence.

The document is controversial, to say the least. The three

main parties, desperate to prove to voters that they have fulfilled their mandate to write a new constitution and in a hurry to form a joint government, have done a rush job. Especially on the sensitive issue of federal demarcations, they have tried to bulldoze a formula that serves their own immediate political interests rather than have an inclusive, sustainable solution that can bring stability to the country. The seemingly arbitrary boundaries of the six province model were engineered by the Big Three for their own electoral benefits. When violent protests broke out in the Karnali in early-August, those were addressed but not the demands of the Tarai.

In the past month we have seen an eruption of a level of brutality not witnessed since the war. Indeed, many of the lynchings and murders seem to have been perpetrated by ex-combatants. The only difference was that while the conflict was a class revolution, this had a dangerous ethnic edge to it. Played out with graphic images on social media, the violence has disturbed communal harmony and deepened the polarisation between the hill and plains.

The constitution that is going to be passed on Sunday will meet many of the demands that came out of the 2006 Democracy Movement and the Madhes Movement after that. Federalism has been accepted, although the demarcation and names of future provinces have proved too hot to handle for now, and have been left to a commission. There is an attempt to make Nepali politics more inclusive, just and focused on the welfare of the underprivileged and excluded. The citizenship issue has still not been satisfactorily addressed, and various groups are not happy with the proportional representation quota in future elections.

The document is flawed, but not fatally so. It is a text that is flexible enough to be improved and amended, as most constitutions are supposed to be. The important thing is to keep the channels of communication open with the groups that have opted to stay out of the process. Much of the damage was done by the insensitivity of the Kathmandu establishment to the need for recognition, representation and respect on the part of the Tarai community.

The Madhesi people may be disenchanted with their leadership, but there is genuine public anger about the way Kathmandu has historically treated people from the plains, and they don’t see that having changed much. This manifests itself in the everyday behaviour of bureaucrats and security forces, or in the structural discrimination through citizenship rules, and lack of local autonomy.

After the violence erupted last month, not a single national level leader bothered to make even a token photo-op trip to the Tarai. They did not seem to comprehend that the region is not just five Madhesi leaders, it includes nearly half the country’s population (many of them not even Madhesis) who have been reeling under a crippling strike and violence for a month now.

The open border and the links between the Tarai districts and India make New Delhi a player that cannot be ignored in this crisis. In fact, India’s good offices are going to be essential in returning the region to normalcy in the coming months. The statement by India’s Ministry of External Affairs, while welcoming the finalisation of the constitution on Wednesday, does warn that India is ‘duty-bound’ to ‘stand by’ Nepal in times of natural and political adversity in Nepal.

There has to be an independent inquiry into the horrific violence in the past month perpetrated by the agitators using human shields to provoke police backlash. The security forces often over-reacted using excessive and needless violence, alienating Madhesis further.

There is no point getting into a blame game about who started it first, and why. That will lead us nowhere. It is now time to de-escalate, heal the communal wounds and address through the new constitution some of the grievances that were at the root of these protests.

Times
THIS WEEK



GOPEN RAI (14 SHARES)

Most shared on Facebook
A devotee performs rituals on the occasion of Kuse Aunsi or Father’s Day at the Bagmati River in Gokarna Temple on Sunday. People who have lost their fathers come to the temple for worship and to present offerings.

Most reached on Facebook
Back with babies by *Rajita Adhikari* (5,343 reached)

Most visited online page
Back with babies by *Rajita Adhikari* (1,133 views)

Most popular on Twitter
Just hanging on by *David Seddon* (27 retweets, 35 favourites)

Most commented
Masochism in the Madhes by *Jivesh Jha* (27 comments)

YOUR SAY
www.nepalitimes.com

LETTER
In contrast to many other columnists of Madhes origin, Jivesh Jha has been professionally candid while referring to the ‘crowd-funding’ of hired goons from across the border (‘Masochism in the Madhes’, Jivesh Jha, #775). Given the chronic lawlessness in the adjoining states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the root of this subversive support may not go all the way to New Delhi. But it is not only the Madhesis but all of the people all across the country who are up in arms. This nationwide frustration essentially results from the country’s failure to make any difference in the lives of the people during the last quarter century of democratic restoration in which the current bunch of Madhesi politicians have been as complicit as their hill counterparts. Therefore, unless our national polity is redefined in a manner that empowers people of all regions to manage their own development and destiny, constitution or no constitution, it is highly unlikely that there would be any end to this vicious cycle of violence.

Bihari K Shrestha

MASOCHISM IN THE MADHES
Nepal is burning and Indian leaders are clapping gleefully.

Sushil

■ Don’t blame India for this mess. These Madhesi parties have no connection to India. India doesn’t want an unstable Nepal.

Elbot

■ That is a lie, Nepali leaders are cowards and they are controlled by RAW. Every one knows that, even the Chinese.

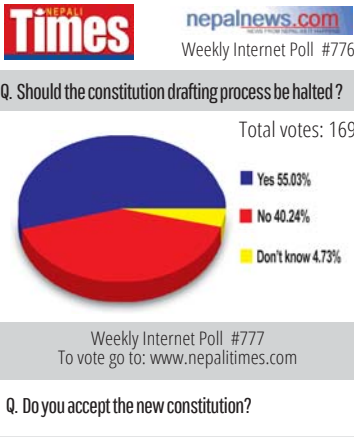
Sushil

■ If Indian goons as the author claims are the ones leading the movement then why would they be willing to break curfew and take bullets for Madheshis of Nepal? As far as I know all the protestors who were shot dead by the police were Nepali citizens and so were all who were injured and arrested. Your article is missing the evidence part which can be found in the citizenship cards of all those arrested, injured and dead.

Ravi

MANUFACTURING FAKE DOCTORS
There is no hope for Nepal if these allegations are true (Manufacturing fake doctors, #775). Both the chief justice and the chief of the highest anti-corruption agency are alleged to be corrupt. Where do we go from here? We already know most of the political leaders and bureaucrats are in the take too. And instead of fighting this cancer of corruption, we are fighting among ourselves about "identity".

BNS



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A constitution, like it or

We are so desperate to move on, we are willing to pass a constitution that won't guarantee a majority of citizens equality and freedom

The past few weeks have spared no one: cops have been hacked, babies and children killed, teenagers gunned down, grandson and grandfather killed and women shot dead. The violence that erupted in the western Tarai over the unjust demarcation of federal provinces shifted to the east. The petty electoral interests of a few undeserving politicians



ONE TO MANY
Bidushi Dhungel

have cost the country dearly. The demands of the Tharus in the west were blatantly ignored in favour of a province that favoured a few honchos in the NC-UML-UCPN(M) trinity and their largely Bahun-Chettri constituencies. In response, a Tharu agitation began and culminated in the Tikapur killings of 24 August which claimed the lives of eight people, including a two-year-old baby. Kathmandu remains wilfully aloof, and those with interest have been denied any detail into the happenings of the fateful day. So, I guess we'll never



BIKRAM RAI

really know the truth: whether the Indians or Baburam Bhattarai were involved or whether Madhesi and Tharu leaders incited the violence. Or whether it was just one of those ghastly bloody days with no specific reason. Either way, that was just the beginning. Most unfortunately, by now the demands of the Tharus

have been completely eclipsed by the demands of Madhesi party leaders and activists in the eastern plains. While the Tharus have called off their agitation, the violence rages in Jankpur, Birganj, Siraha. The state continues to be relentless in its use of force to meet what seems to be a sporadically-violent agitating mass. More than 40 people

had been killed till press time Thursday. Meanwhile, in Kathmandu the supreme leaders are hammering through a constitution – like it or not. To them, it's all about finally reaping that peace dividend which never actually came and seemingly never will for most Nepalis. A constitution, as the culmination of the peace process,

will deliver the following to the following: cemented hall of fame credit to Sushil Da for finally getting it done, PMship for Mr oh-so-wonderful K P Oli, and along with the nationalist supremo tag. Perhaps even a stint at President for our loving comrade Prachanda. As for the Madhes-based parties, they are hard at work to cash in politically on the ignorance of the government in Kathmandu. They are equally to blame for the collapse in the process and it is outlandish for the Madhesi leaders to now attempt to wash their hands clean after eight long years of shared ineptitude. Even now, as protests continue to be violent, there seems to be little effort on their part to ensure peaceful agitation. The mood among the political elite seems to be more-or-less the same: violence, death and destruction hold little significance when what is at stake are political and economic benefits. To call for retreat now, in the eyes of both the state and agitating parties would be defeat. For the ordinary folk, there is nothing to gain: no power, no money, no leverage, nothing. The constitution has little to do with the wishes of the people. Even the voting process has

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been deliberately made mechanical, rushed and translucent at best. People watching at home are denied the ability to be able to easily follow what clauses are being voted on. The process is so ritualistic that even those proposing amendments are not allowed to speak, unless they wish to revoke the proposal.

Perhaps the most foolish-looking in this charade have been the women CA members who individually and collectively took part in rendering themselves, their mothers, daughters and all other Nepali women unequal and second-class citizens for what one can only imagine is proximity to power. It is not only a matter of shame, it is a blot on our history that will be a black day in Nepal's feminist movement.

Not much can be done now. This constitution process has wasted the political struggles of the past couple of decades, including the lives they cost. And yet, people are eerily quiet. It seems that the very idea of a constitution, regardless of what is in it or what it might beckon is more welcome than continued political wrangling. Even in the midst of violence and curfews, and with a constitution which won't guarantee the majority of the citizens' equality and freedom, the sheer desperation for a final end to this drawn out process is winning out. If nothing else, we must ensure at least the violence subsides before the constitution is promulgated.  @bidush

PAST PRESENT FUTURE

DIWAKAR CHETTRI

Stop fighting! We now have a brand new constitution!



Stop fighting! We now have a brand new constitution!



Stop fighting! We now have a brand new constitution!



Fishtail flies

Pokhara's Fishtail Air has resumed its regular ultra flights, which were halted because of the monsoon. Fishtail has also announced a special discount on tickets for its 15, 30 or 60 minutes flights.



WorldLink turns 20

WorldLink recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. The company has been offering fast internet of up to 10 mbps. Mobile applications and digital TV, IPTV, online gaming can also be used from its internet.

Suzuki's new scheme

Suzuki's authorised distributor, CG MotoCorp, has announced its Dashain-Tihar 'Chamatkar' scheme, under which customers may receive its bumper prize, the Suzuki S-Cross to be launched at the NADA Auto Show. They may also receive discounts of up to Rs 750,000 as part of the bumper prize.



Qatar expands

Qatar Airways has announced an increase in its flight frequencies in routes across Europe. Flights from Doha to Stockholm, Copenhagen and Brussels will be increased from December 2015 until March 2016 as part of a seasonal increase.

Toyota's Etios arrives

Toyota has announced the arrival of its upgraded version of Etios Cross-Diesel. It is being presented at the NADA auto show. The new Etios was launched by Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat and Suraj Vaidya of United Traders, Toyota's sole distributor in Nepal.



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MADELINE ZUTT

“Everest is another beast, another beast altogether.” That is New Zealander climber Rob Hall’s character in *Everest* telling his clients in Kathmandu before heading off to the mountain in 1996.

Director Baltasar Kormakur’s latest Himalayan adventure epic that premiered Wednesday night in Kathmandu is based on Jon Krakauer’s first person

account of the deadly 1996 climbing season, *Into Thin Air*. That tragedy left eight mountaineers dead, including Hall, below the summit of the world’s highest mountain.

Jason Clarke’s brilliant portrayal of Rob Hall and the movie’s stunning cinematography and digital studio work makes the story come to life and one gets a realistic feel of the raw violence of the mountain’s Death Zone.

We begin with Hall’s departure from Christchurch for Kathmandu. The scenes

Hollywood Himalaya

Adventure epic has stunning digital scenery of Everest, but downplays role of Nepali climbers in the 1996 tragedy

of the overflowing chaos of Kathmandu airport and the crowded streets of Thamel are in stark contrast to the surreal beauty of the trek to Base Camp through gorges and across prayer flag -festooned suspension bridges.

At Base Camp we meet Helen Wilton the maternal figure who is a conduit for relaying the tragedies that are soon to unfold on top of the mountain. Wilton is portrayed by Emily Watson who also gives a truly powerful performance.

The other climbers in Hall’s group include Jon Krakauer (played by Michael Kelly), the Texan Beck Weathers (Josh Brolin) who believes his machismo

is enough to get him to the top and a seasoned Japanese climber Yasuko Namba (Naoko Mori) who has climbed six summits, hoping to make Everest her seventh.

Also joining the group is the sweet-natured, humble mailman Doug Hansen (played beautifully by John Hawkes) who, having worked three jobs to finance his expedition, is returning for a third time in the hope this time he will finally make it to the top.

Jake Gyllenhaal appears as Scott Fischer, unruly and reckless, who seems to be drunk way too often for a climber responsible for a team of clients.

Gyllenhaal is unimpressive in his peripheral role. In fact, all the actors seem subdued compared to Clarke’s leading performance as the charming, level-headed, disciplined guide who risks his life to help the ailing Doug Hansen fulfill his dream.

Sadly, Kormakur’s film entirely overlooks the crucial roles of Nepali mountaineers. Ang Dorje who was Hall’s sirdar during the expedition and has a formidable role in Krakauer’s book has as much screen time as Sandy Pittman, the socialite climber who is only famous in Krakauer’s book for having insisted on bringing her espresso with her to Base Camp. Vijay Lama, who portrays Col Madan KC’s daring helicopter rescue from Camp II, also had a larger role which seems to have been discarded in the final cut.

As we follow the climbers on the trek up to Tengboche, it is the overpowering majesty of the Himalaya that stuns viewers. And if that was the impression on the screen at Jai Nepal Cinema, imagine what it will be like on IMAX. That alone is worth millions in publicity to revive post-earthquake trekking tourism in Nepal.

The parts from Kathmandu to Khumbu were filmed last year in Nepal, Base Camp was shot on location in the Dolomites of northeastern Italy and the digital backdrops and helicopter simulators were filmed in a London studio.

The terrifying traverse over the deep crevasses of the Khumbu Icefall followed by the precariously narrow and steep climb up the Hillary Step are hair-raising.

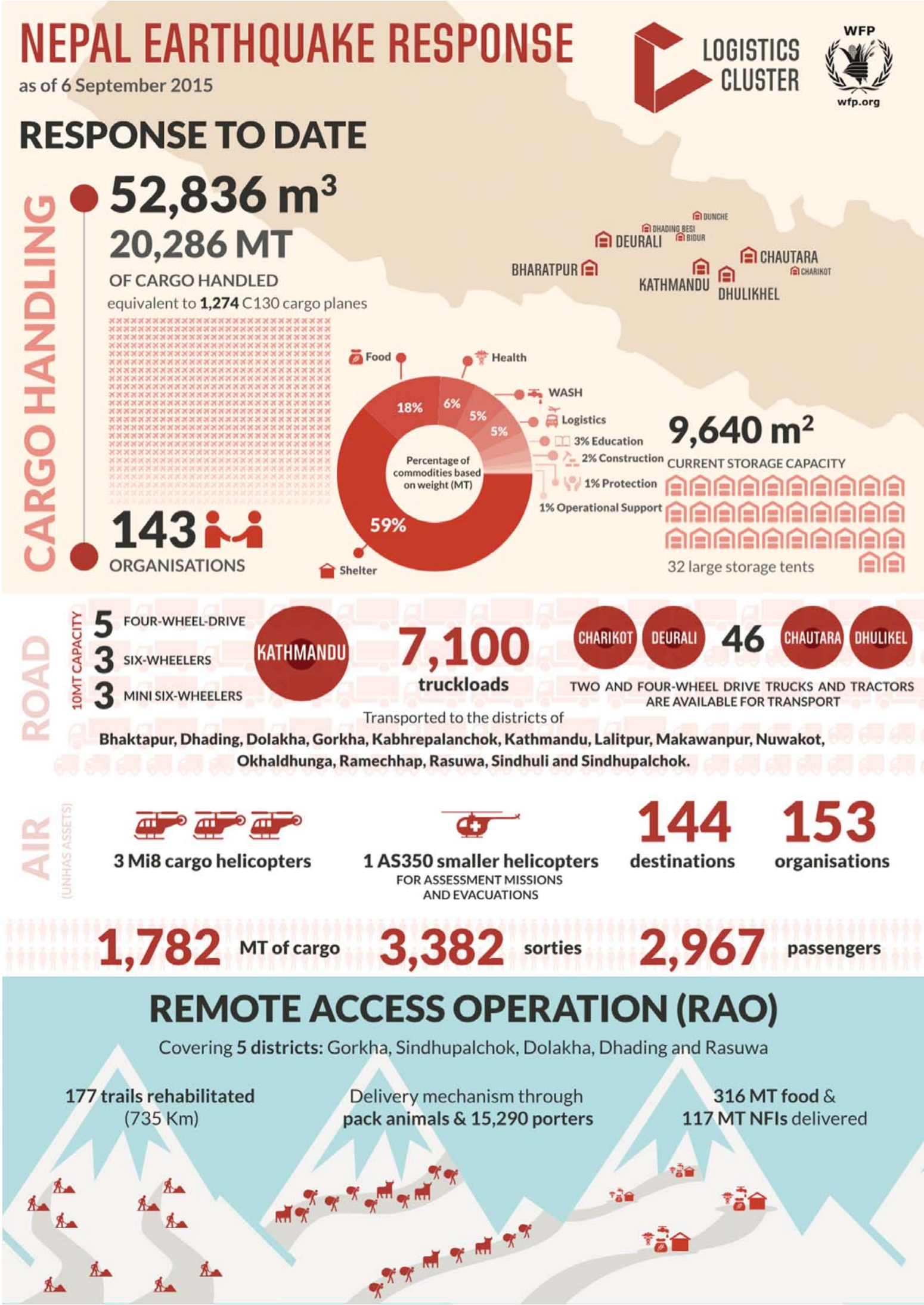
By the time the climbers summit, we too are relieved and utterly exhausted from having battled the bitter cold and winds together. You can see a touch of David Breshears in the hyper-real digital panoramas of the summit.

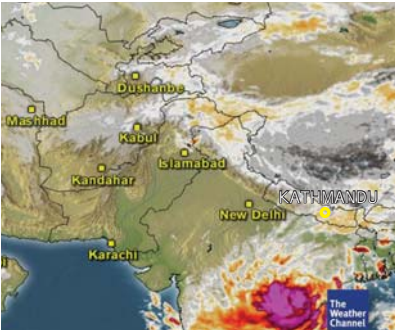
In the wake of the deadly avalanches of 2014 and 2015 on Everest, some would criticise Kormakur’s film for recounting the wrong disaster from 20 years ago that lacks relevance. That is like asking why a film about the Abraham Lincoln assassination was made in 2012 when there have been three American presidents assassinated since 1885.

In fact, Kormakur’s film and Krakauer’s book are both about the commercialisation of Everest expeditions and how that became a factor in the deaths in 1996. The fistfight on Camp III in 2013 was related to commercial rope-fixing for expeditions, and the Nepali guides who died in the avalanche in 2014 were hired by commercial expeditions and disproportionately exposed to the objective dangers on the Icefall.

And as Hall tells his clients before the climb: “The last word always belongs to the mountain.” 🇳🇵

Everest opens in theatres worldwide September 25th.





Just as it looked like the monsoon was on the retreat a massive low pressure circulation entered central India this week. This increased cloud cover over Central Nepal, and brought the first snow to the higher mountains. By the time we see its effect, there will not be much precipitation left in this system. Still, expect overcast skies, some thunder and light night rain into the weekend. After this system passes early next week, we will see much more autumnal weather with misty mornings with low clouds in Kathmandu Valley as well as dip in the minimum temperature. Maxima will remain in the high 20s with some humidity to make things sticky.

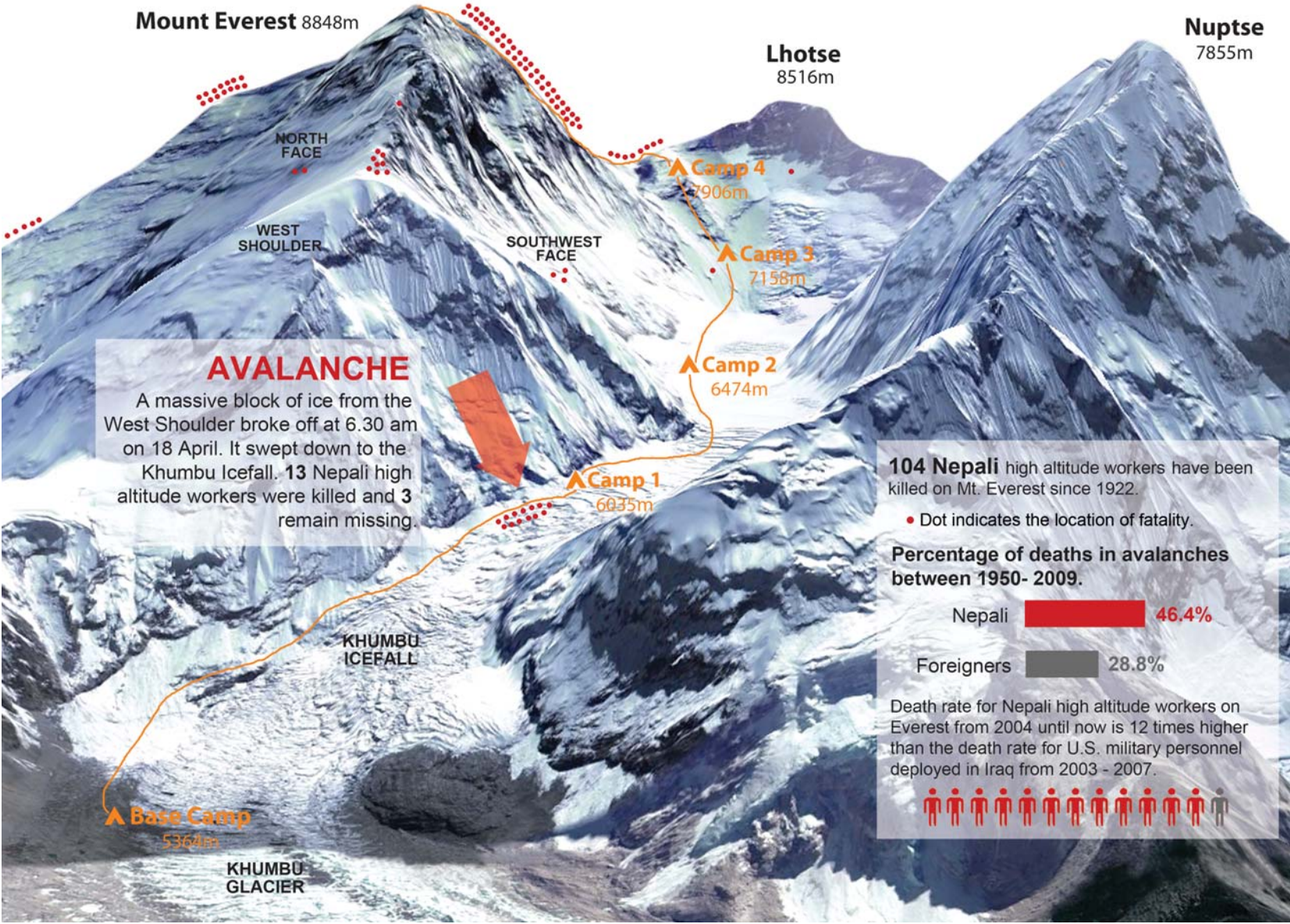
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- workers.
- Here are some examples of costs that are not refunded due to cancellations:
- Oxygen not used (\$4,000 per client)
 - Load-ferrying to four altitude camps that never took place (workers were never paid)
 - A full month of supplies (not purchased, not transported)

In 2014, the average price of an Everest expedition was between \$40-45,000 per person, and in 2015 it increased to between \$45- 55,000 per person. Yet, when cancellations occur operators claim that all the money has been spent already and, as a result, refunds are not possible. Hence, this means that commercial outfitters make next to no profit. It's hard to believe.

There are some clients, however, who have, due to cancellations in 2014, managed to get a discount on the 2015 expedition for which the price had already been raised by operators as early as May 2014. Some companies made it easier for clients to come back in 2015 by charging affordable rates while others, especially at the start of the 2015 autumn season, have substantially raised expedition prices and have blamed this dramatic increase in price on the difficult logistical situation in Nepal.

As clients, we cannot claim anything from anyone. Operators will tell you to go look somewhere else for your refunds. Neither the Nepal government nor the operators' association is any help, and you certainly cannot go to the courts. As climbers, we are spread all over the world speaking different languages and belonging to different cultures, but in Nepal's mountains we are all treated as walking ATMs. 🇳🇵

Damien François is a climber and author of The Holy Mountains of Nepal.

PROFITING FROM TRAGEDY

Expedition operators are using the avalanche tragedies on Everest to extort climbers

DAMIEN FRANÇOIS

After the avalanches on Everest last year (see *infographic*) in the spring, and the subsequent cancellations of expeditions, the refusal of operators to refund their clients may keep mountaineers away from the world's highest mountain.

It is important to remember that not all Everest clients are wealthy. Many have patiently saved for a long time and have sacrificed a

lot for the chance to summit the world's highest mountain. But it's not just about money, it is also about commitment. Doug Hansen who worked two jobs to support his dream to climb, a dream that ultimately cost him his marriage, is an example of someone who embodied both the patience and dedication needed to climb Everest. Tragically, the Seattle mailman was one of several who died in the 1996 Everest expedition chronicled in Jon Krakauer's book, *Into Thin Air* (see

article alongside). When I was in Lukla, coming out of the Khumbu in April 2014, I met a Norwegian who had sold his house to pay for his Everest expedition.

More recently, a new category of clients, mainly from countries like Malaysia, Singapore and India, have been seen on the mountain, some of whom are not qualified enough to climb Everest. They often lack a sense of mountaineering culture, and are not yet representative of the average Everest climber.

But no matter our level of

expertise, all expedition clients have one thing in common: we are tired of being used as cash-machines by greedy operators, locals and foreigners, who use the terrible tragedies of 2014 and 2015 to substantially increase their profits. They do this simply by calling off expeditions and refusing to reimburse a single rupee to their clients who are the ones who make the whole commercial climbing industry possible. Without clients there are no operators and without operators there are no jobs for the

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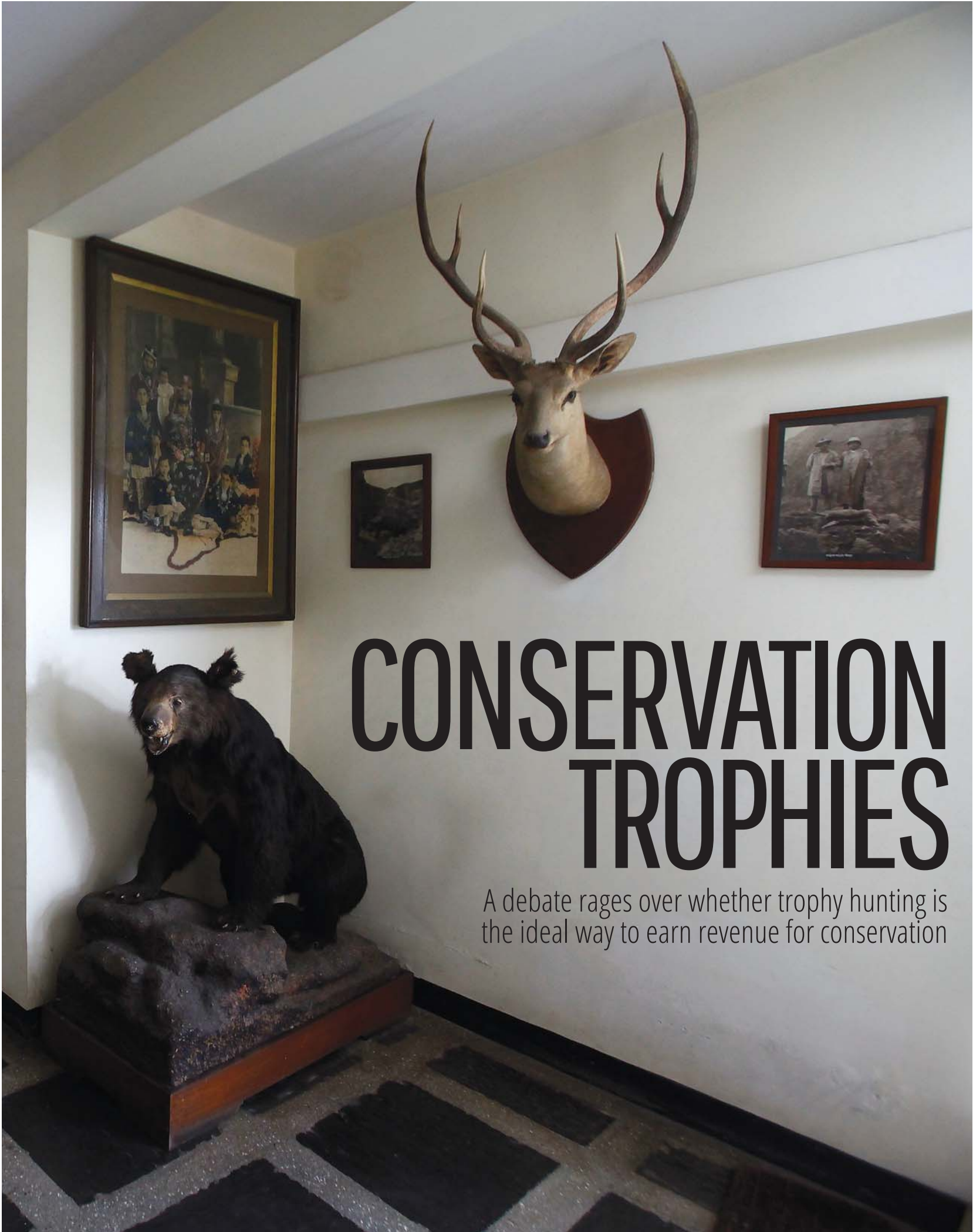
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CONSERVATION TROPHIES

A debate rages over whether trophy hunting is the ideal way to earn revenue for conservation

SARTHAK MANI SHARMA

International outrage over an American dentist's recent killing of a celebrity lion named Cecil in Zimbabwe has set off a parallel debate here in Nepal about whether trophy hunting should be used to generate revenue for conservation.

Every year before the hunting seasons in February and August foreign hunters, mainly from Russia and the United States, scramble to bid for the limited licenses to hunt for blue sheep and Himalayan Tahr in Dhorpatan, one of the world's highest hunting reserves.

"We have seen a dramatic increase in the number of hunters applying for licenses," says Amrit Thapa of Nepal Wildlife Safari, a travel agency. The licenses are auctioned off, and this year there are 26 permits for blue sheep and



Imitating nature

Nepal's most modern printing facility, Jagadamba Press, now makes natural colours come alive with its state-of-the-art equipment.





KEYSTONE/GETTY IMAGES

Royal hunts

These days they may play golf but in the early 20th century, Nepal's Anglophile Rana rulers often invited their trusted allies, the British, to big game hunts in the Tarai. In just one safari to Chitwan in 1911, King George V and his son Edward VIII killed 39 tigers and 18 rhinos. Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria Hungary (whose assassination later triggered World War I) is believed to have made 300,000 game kills in his lifetime. He wrote about a trophy hunt in Chitwan: "At this moment I see a second tiger emerge from a tunnel of reeds, shouted "rok" and fired. To my joy, this tiger lay dying in front of me too." He brought down 18 tigers during that hunt.

For the Shah royalty, too, Chitwan was a favourite hunting spot during winter. King Mahendra, his son Gyanendra and Queen Ratna made several game kills. Mahendra died in Chitwan during a hunting retreat. In 1973, King Birendra pushed for Chitwan to be turned into a national park. After malaria eradication peasants from the hills moved to Chitwan and cleared the jungle to make space for farmland. As a result, poaching increased. But animal numbers which had started to decline rose again when the Royal Nepal Army guarded the national park.

11 for Himalayan Tahr for the two seasons.

A blue sheep license can cost as much as Rs 1 million, nearly ten times as much as it did two decades ago. Last year, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation earned Rs 20 million from trophy hunters. Hunters have to hire helicopters, local guides and also pay Rs 100,000 per animal killed to the local administration, and a hunting trip can cost as much as Rs 3 million.

Trophy hunting has a long history in Nepal, where Rana and Shah rulers, who were avid hunters often invited the British royalty to the Nepal Tarai, where they went on big game hunting expeditions. In 1911, Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher invited King George V to a hunt in Chitwan in which 39 tigers, 18 rhinos and 4 bears were killed from elephant back. In 1893, Prime Minister Bir Shamsher herded 415 animals into an enclosure for Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary and the British resident in Kathmandu, who bagged 18 tigers and dozens of rhinos and

other animals (*see box*).

While hunting on such an enormous scale is no longer allowed, Nepal has allowed trophy hunting in Dhorpatan, the only conservation area set aside specially for hunting two species of mountain goat. Although snow leopards and other rare animals are also found in Dhorpatan, those are not allowed to be hunted.

"Dhorpatan is truly a special hunting spot," explains Deepak Rana, a professional trophy hunter. "Its remoteness and rugged terrain make it challenging and unique in the world."

Other wealthy Nepalis, who did not want to be identified for this story, said they have hunted in Dhorpatan but prefer Tanzania and, till recently, Botswana. Some of their homes have walls festooned with trophy heads.

Given Dhorpatan's popularity and potential to generate revenue for conservation, Rana wonders why the government has not expanded hunting to other parts of Nepal like the Kanchanjanga Conservation Area.

"The government isn't



bothered about using hunting as a source of income for funding nature conservation in Nepal," frets Rana.

However, environmental and animal rights activists claim that the government may be endangering rare species with its need to meet the cost of maintaining national parks and conservation areas, which make up almost a fifth of Nepal's total area.

"It's wrong on so many levels," says Pramada Shah of Animal Welfare Network Nepal. "Since blue sheep are the main food of snow leopards, hunters are responsible

for disrupting the food chain. And why can't we just promote eco-tourism in Dhorpatan if we want to generate revenue?"

Ever since the illegal killing of Cecil the lion, many have actively opposed hunting. Hundreds of thousands of activists have signed online petitions in order to press big airlines to stop carrying trophies as cargo. Some companies like United, Delta and British Airways have already obliged.

But around the world, trophy hunting has also accrued benefits, particularly to local communities. In Botswana, locals built toilets and standpipes from the income trophy hunting generated. That incentivised them to protect wild animals as a source of revenue, experts say.

Here in Nepal, there is also an argument that hunting quotas are fixed scientifically after much research, and they are actually necessary to protect the ecosystem.

"The hunting quotas aren't so high for the animals to be endangered," says Bishwa Babu Shrestha, Conservation Officer of Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve.

"If we don't cull the animals, their population could expand so rapidly that it will endanger other species and their own habitats."

But Shrestha is worried there has been an increase in poaching by locals. Because Dhorpatan is on the border of Rukum, Myagdi and Baglung, districts at the center of Nepal's decade-long conflict, there are still lots of guns in the hands of locals.

Around the world, it is hunters who have become effective conservationists. In Nepal, some in the Shah and Rana dynasties who were prolific hunters went on to become staunch conservationists. The King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation was headed for more than 20 years by Prince (later King) Gyanendra.

It is not surprising that conservationists like Shrestha and hunters like Rana agree that Nepal's tourism industry could inject cash and revive the economy if the country were promoted as a top international hunting destination. Shrestha says: "We're more than just a land of pretty mountains." 🇳🇵



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EVENTS



Images of Nepal,

An exhibition of black and white images taken by Jan Møller Hansen before and after the 25 April earthquake.
Till 22 September, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, (01)4218048

Public speaking,

Kathmandu School of Speaking is conducting a workshop to teach public speaking and effective communication.
11am to 2pm, 19 September, Kathmandu Rs 100. Register: 9841439617



Ncell App camp,

Call for mobile app developers to submit their ideas to compete at the second edition of Ncell App Camp (see story, below).
Application deadline 20 September, 9802772267, www.ncellappcamp.com

Art criticism,

Siddhartha Arts Foundation Education is hosting an art criticism workshop for writers.
19 September, Kathmandu 9818239744, sgamatya@gmail.com

Photography workshop,

Artudio is organising its 53rd photography workshop for beginners.
7am to 9am, 18-30 September, Artudio, Chhauni Hospital Road, Swayambhu Rs 4,000. Register: 9851182100, 9803779777

En 'Vogue 2015,

House of Fashion reveals the next top model in the town's biggest fashion event.
19 September, 6pm onwards, Hotel Radisson, Rs 1000 (includes complimentary drink) Tickets available at House of Fashion store, Nagpokhari, (01)4420964

Empowering women,

Sambhawana and Youth Legend invite applications from women aged 18-25 for a four-day workshop on 'empowering

women's leadership for democracy' Send your CV to info@youthlegend.com or info@sambhawana.org.np by 21 September (01)4478042, (01)4435838

Climate + Change,

A dynamic exhibition exploring the effects of climate change on the Hindu Kush Himalayan region.
Till 30 September, 9am to 5pm, International Mountain Museum, Ghari Patan, Pokhara, (061)460742, immprkr@fewamail.com.np, www.internationalmountainmuseum.org

Help rebuild,

A special fund-raising print sale to contribute towards the rebuilding of heritage sites in Patan by Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust (KVPT) www.photoktm.com/#support

Walkathon

Walkathon, "Together For Hope", to raise awareness on breast cancer and breast self-examination. Free t-shirts and water

included.
10 October, 7am, Patan Durbar Square to Ideal Model School, 9841467697

Quake photobook,

Nepal425 launches a crowd-sourcing drive for printing a coffee table book featuring 700 pictures of the earthquake. All proceeds from the sales will go to the quake-affected.
www.nepal425.com



Biking in Nagarkot,

A 30-km mountain biking challenge from Nagarkot to Sallaghari.
26 September, Meet Nepal Travel, 9841205366, Rs 1000 (includes breakfast, lunch and refreshments)

Wholeness,

Artist Pura Khadka whose work is a meditative abstraction full of spiritual awakening exhibits his paintings.
Till 30 October, Park Gallery, Pulchok, (01)5522307, contact@parkgallery.com.np



The Yeti Run,

Test your strength, stamina and teamwork at Nepal's first obstacle race.
26 September, St Xavier's School, Godavari, 9841226397, pareshkshrestha@gmail.com



Nepal Cup 2015,

A charity football tournament to raise funds to rebuild quake-affected schools in Nepal and promote the country as a tourist attraction.
2 to 4 October, Dasarath Rangasala Stadium, Tripureshwar, info@nepalcup2015.com, www.nepalcup2015.com

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"Try new innovation in the sandwich @ Dhokaima Cafe."

Finding a homegrown Nepali app for your smartphone is no longer an arduous task. In recent years, Nepali app developers have become prolific. Considering Nepal now has 23.95 million mobile phone subscribers and 10.48 million mobile internet users, the growth in the potential market is huge.

Hoping to tap into the market, Ncell introduced its app camp in 2014. As part of the camp, 457 teams submitted their ideas in four categories - agriculture, education, tourism and corporate. The teams that were selected were offered a chance to attend seminars and coaching sessions with local and global experts.

"It was unlike other events where anyone with a business idea can enter. This one specially focused on mobile app developers. And for recent college graduates like myself, it provided a platform and a push to launch my own startup," says Chandan Goopta. His team, SentiNep, that competed with other corporate teams and won with its Opinio app in its category.

The bilingual app gathers feedback about a product or business from the web and categorises it as either positive, negative or neutral, which helps businesses know what customers think of their products.

"Before we entered the competition, we hardly knew about product buildup, marketing or pricing. But the mentorship we received at the app camp helped us learn about these and more," says Goopta.

Sibjan Chaulagain adds, "When we entered the competition we had just an idea but by the end of it we had a potential business idea". His team's app ICT Agriculture beat out all other apps, winning the competition. The app informs farmers about the various diseases in crops and livestock, the market prices of different produce, the best methods for cultivation as well as weather patterns. Chaulagain's team



Creating app entrepreneurs

has used their app to successfully connect farmers to traders and have created the ASK Foundation, an agro-information enterprise which they hope to use to develop and improve the app even further.

Manish Shrestha, whose team's educational app Ritirwaj beat out other competitors in its category, says that it was the "mentors, platform and prize money" that offered the biggest incentives to enter the competition. For many developers like Shrestha, the prize money helps cover the initial cost incurred when trying to kick-start their apps.

The winners also highly value the sessions led by mentors because they allow them the opportunity to network. "What we learnt during the five months at app camp was equivalent to a year at college," says Goopta, who is currently working on adding new features to his Opinio app before it goes public.

"After the app camp, we had many venture capitalists who were willing to fund us," says Shrestha. His app, Ritirwaj,

features photos and videos of festivals and already has over 800 users. "But we haven't agreed to anyone yet because we want to do this on our own," he adds. The team is working on a business plan that will expand access to reach more users.

"The app camp helped us get noticed and that has made it easier for us to approach various sectors now," says Chaulagain of ICT Agriculture which currently has over a thousand users and has attracted the attention of national and international organisations including USAID and ICIMOD.

Given last year's success, Ncell will launch its second app camp, this time calling for entrepreneurs in Games and Entertainment, Tourism, Health, and Utilities. The deadline for the application is 20 September. As Shrestha says, "For any aspiring app developer to understand the essence of entrepreneurship, the app camp is a must. The valuable inputs from the mentors are irreplaceable". Sahina Shrestha

DINING



Tasneem's Kings Kitchen,

A charming restaurant proposing the unique flavours of distinctive Bohra Muslim Food.
Jhamsikhel, 9801282727, (01) 2239532

Taza,

An excellent new Middle-Eastern restaurant with a Syrian chef. Offers free deliveries within Patan (see review, below)
Pulchowk, (01)5541592, 9860960177



Starry night BBQ,

Come Friday 7pm onwards and enjoy the town's best barbecues to a live performance by singer Ciney Gurung.
Rs 1799 nett, Shangri-La Hotel, Kathmandu, (01)4420252



Vootoo,

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

Dechenling,

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

MUSIC



Jazzmandu,

K-town's 13th jazz music festival
4 to 10 November
www.jazzmandu.org

Baula Jatra,

Put on your shoes, gather your energy, and get ready for the 'Slamming brutal death metal' bands.
26 September, 1pm to 6pm,
Purple Haze, Thamel, 9843695278,

Gharana Music Festival

Don't miss out on this one-of-a-kind international classical music festival organised by the Gharana Music Foundation.
5.30 pm to 8.30 pm, October 8 to 11
Hotel Yak and Yeti, Darbarmarg,
www.gharanamusicfoundation.org



Chill Bump Live,

This English-speaking, French-made rap duo will make you jump with their unique and powerful beats.
18 September, 7.30pm, Alliance française of Kathmandu, (01)4241163, (01)4242832,
www.alliancefrancaise.org.np

GETAWAYS



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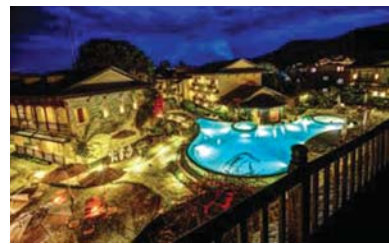
Gokarna Forest Resort,

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



Milla Guesthouse,

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



Temple Tree Resort and Spa,

A peaceful place to stay, complete with a swimming pool, massage parlour and sauna. It'll be hard to leave once you go in.
Gaurighat, Lakeside, (061)465819



Few restaurants have satiated your writer's gastronomic cravings, and Taza is certainly one of them. The new restaurant recently opened in Pulchowk, bringing a bit of Middle-Eastern flare to Kathmandu. Eager to check it out, we visited this unassuming eatery with the aim of enjoying a relaxed and tasty meal, with no review in mind. However, given how excellent the food was, we felt it would be a gross disservice to our readers if we didn't write about it.

"It doesn't feel like we're in Nepal," mused a friend, and she was right: it didn't. The owner and the chef, who warmly greeted us at the door, are both Syrians. The owner, Bassel Shreiqi, married to a Nepali woman, had been coming to Nepal for treks in Annapurna when he "fell in love with Nepal". "I wanted to settle here and start a business," he says.

The Arabic background music



AYESHA SHAKYA

at Taza not only creates a lively atmosphere but also adds to the restaurant's authenticity, making one's experience more enjoyable. In what little time we spent waiting for our food to arrive (the service is impeccable) we began to sing along to the Arabic song playing, which seemed to amuse the owner.

With an expansive menu

featuring many popular Middle-Eastern dishes, like hummus and chicken shawarma, it was difficult to decide on what to order first. We finally agreed to start with the falafel plate (Rs 150), a favourite at the restaurant, which certainly did not disappoint. The falafels were cooked to perfection and were well complemented by the dish's tahini sauce, made from ground sesame

TAZA

seeds.

One of the restaurant's most revered dishes is the chicken toshka (Rs 350) and as such we decided that we needed to get an order for the table. This was by far the best dish. With thinly sliced layers of spicy chicken and cheese in between two pieces of grilled flatbread, the chicken toshka achieves the perfect balance of flavour.

While one may be led to believe that the shawarma with cheese (Rs 250), another signature dish, is similar to the toshka, the two dishes are in fact quite different. The shawarma's chicken is delicately spiced and the fresh vegetables and sauces added to the dish help bring out the full flavour of the chicken, without overpowering the taste of the

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spices. As a bonus, the chef adds a generous portion of French fries to every main dish.

Upon the recommendation of a friend who had been to Taza and insisted we try the dessert, we ordered the only dessert dish offered by the restaurant - the suksseh (Rs 100). With its cold chocolate core that includes tiny bits of biscuit to add a bit of crunch, this mouthwatering Arabic dessert was the perfect way to end our meal.

Given that there are hardly any Middle-Eastern restaurants in town, some readers may argue that there is no benchmark against which to measure Taza's food. But with its tasty dishes, lively atmosphere and most reasonable prices, Taza will itself become the benchmark for future Middle-Eastern restaurants that may pop up in Kathmandu. Sarthak Mani Sharma

How to get there: Taza is located on the Pulchowk lane, next to the Himalayan Bank in what previously used to be Firewood Pizza.

KATHMANDU
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Beer Lover: "My man at the bar,
Which is the freshest beer in Nepal?"

Bar Man: "The MOST Fresh?
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HERO

Athug falls in love with a woman, who sparks in him newfound feelings of kindness and empathy. But the girl's parents don't warm up to this relationship. In the end, though, their love conquers all.

If this storyline of *Hero*, a new Bollywood movie, sounds familiar, it should. In the 1980s, a film of the same name with a similar storyline starring Jacky Shroff and Meenakshi Sheshadri was made. But then *Hero* could just as well be a remake of any other Bollywood film, for this worn-out plot is a favourite among less creative writers.

What's more, *Hero* abounds with unrealistic dialogues and actions. You need only go through the first few minutes to reach this conclusion. In one of the scenes, a man at a disco misbehaves with his girlfriend, the heroine Radha (Athyia Shetty) to whose dramatic rescue comes the movie's protagonist Sooraj (Sooraj Pancholi). The goon is inevitably flanked by his comic gang-mates.

Radha's father, a policeman, is fighting a case against an accused murderer named Pasha,




and it so happens that Sooraj is Pasha's protégé. Talk about contrivances. Sooraj obliges when Pasha asks him to abduct Radha. In the guise of a policeman, he tells her that she is in danger and takes her away. Eventually, the two fall in love while Radha is held in captivity at a small house in Kashmir. Radha still doesn't know that Sooraj is a goon, not a policeman. It is only later that she finds out but is seemingly unbothered by this fact.

Meanwhile, Radha's family wishes for her to be married to another man, but entangled as she in a web of lies, she avoids

getting married. All softened up, Sooraj opens a gym and starts a fresh life away from the *gundas*, but so far, he is still unappreciated by Radha's family.

For much of the movie, we fail to feel what the characters feel. Athya Shetty is most expressionless, even as she is asked to leave her boyfriend behind in jail and go to Paris. Nor does the movie go into any depth into the complexities of its characters. The pair almost always have a good time, drinking and looking at starry skies. What else?

To be fair, in his debut movie, Sooraj Pancholi does bring into his dialogues and expressions the poignancy that different situations call for. He evokes sympathy from us, caught as he is between his loyalty to his Baba (Pasha) and his girlfriend. The movie does well in its decision not to dramatise this conflict, though: Radha seems not to be asking him to make any sort of difficult choices. That gives this movie a (brief) breath of fresh air.

Besides these, there is not much else to look forward to in the movie. *Hero* is strikingly familiar and fails to give its audience anything new at all, except its debutant stars, Pancholi and Shetty.  **Sarthak Mani Sharma**

 **nepalitimes.com**
■ Trailer 

HAPPENINGS



BIKRAM RAI

YES/NO: Constituent Assembly members vote on the article-by-article process in passing the new constitution on Sunday.



GOPEN RAI

SISTERHOOD: Nepali women take part in Teej festivities at Pasupati in Kathmandu on Wednesday.



YETI AIRLINES

BACK AGAIN: Japanese mountaineer Junko Tabei, the first woman to summit Mt Everest in 1975, with the Yeti Airlines crew at arrival in Lukla on Sunday.



GOPEN RAI

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE: A model poses next to the newly launched TATA Storme at the NADA Auto Show at Bhrikuti Mandap on Tuesday.



RSS

TACKLING HARD: Players from the Armed Police Force (in blue) and Three Star Club vie for the ball during a match of the National Football League on Tuesday.

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Money matters

Hello everyone,
Most of us work hard all our lives so we can make enough money to pay for our basic needs, put some in the savings and spend some to enjoy the little things in life. We often hear people say that if only they had more money, they would have been happier as they would be able to indulge more. But having money doesn't always equate to being happy.



ASK ANJANA ANYTHING

Anjana Rajbhandary

There have been studies that show people who won lotteries, immediately grew happier but their happiness did not last forever. After about six months, those who



were happy-go-lucky before the lottery stayed similar and those who were miserable before getting more money, remained somewhat miserable but with more money. The secret to happiness is in being able to savour each moment. So it's not exactly how much or how little you have but how you are able to appreciate its value.

Send me more questions to askanjanaanything@nepalitimes.com or @AnjyRajy


Dear Anjana,
Of late I have been so consumed by the urge to make more and more money that I feel I am not really living my life. I don't like hanging out with friends at fancy places because I feel that's a waste of money and I'd rather just stay home and do nothing. I have become so careful with my finances that my mind is always doing calculations. It's such a contrast from the way I used to be before. I guess with age people grow more careful with money but I feel like I am not able to maintain the right balance between spending and saving.
SR

AR: I am glad to see that you are aware that being overly obsessed with money is definitely not helping you mentally or socially. I agree that with age, we grow to value money and tend to have a savings account as you never know when you might have an urgent need, but secluding yourself from all interactions to save money will do you more harm than good in the long run. Yes, it is important to save but it is

also important to reward yourself or do something you like with the money you make. This shows appreciation for self. Humans are social beings and it is not natural for us to stay alone and avoid people. I do agree that with more money you may have more social pressure to live a certain lifestyle, which is a different yet manageable issue. Is there a reason why you are so obsessed with money? Are you saving to buy something extravagant? Did the recent earthquake scare you about how you might urgently need money?

One thing I can guarantee is that being obsessed with money will bring you more unhappiness as you will not be able to enjoy anything. There is a correlation between a person's wealth and decreased ability to enjoy life experiences, so how far are you willing to go for that? Beyond a certain amount, money cannot buy happiness. Otherwise the richest people would be the happiest but they aren't.

It is your life and your money, save some for a rainy day but do not be so obsessed with it that you are not able to enjoy life. You will regret it in the end. If it helps, talk to a financial advisor who can help you save, invest and enjoy what you make. Good luck. 🍀



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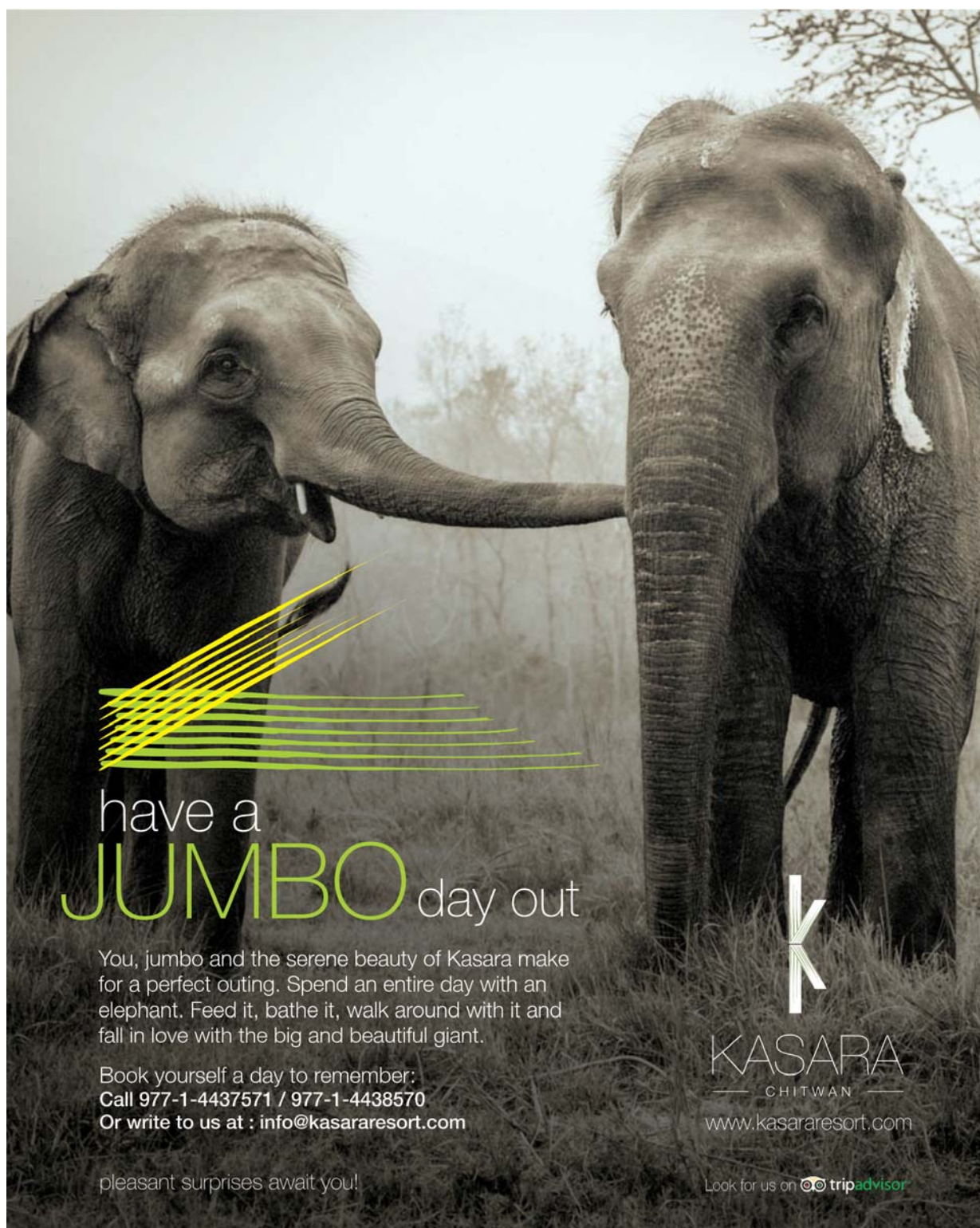
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“An observer, not a participant”

Outgoing US ambassador to Nepal Peter W Bodde spoke to *Nepali Times* before leaving this week.



BIKRAM RAI

Nepali Times: As you come to the end of your third posting in Nepal, what are your thoughts about the changes that the country has seen in the past two decades?

Peter W Bodde: One can get overwhelmed by the amount of change that has happened in Nepal. But as you know, I tend to be optimistic and focus on the positive changes that have happened. The fact is, Nepal has gone through a terrible insurgency, and you came out with a peace process that worked. You integrated hundreds of former combatants into the Nepal Army and although the first round of constitution drafting didn't work as planned, the current one is nearing completion. And you also had an election 18 months ago that was a model for countries in terms of being free, fair and inclusive with almost 80% voter turnout and over 2.6 million new voters out of 13 million total voters. There is a lot of work left to be done, but I am encouraged by the power trade agreement with India and the renewed interest in hydro development here in Nepal. Bottom line: All the ingredients are here for economic development and continued democratic maturation. I believe Nepalis have to ensure that this tremendous opportunity is not squandered.

So, would you agree that the political transformation has been so dramatic that

we have been a bit impatient that things would quickly fall into place?

To some extent, yes, I would. As I mentioned already, don't forget all the progress that has been made. I've spent my career working in nascent democracies, and Nepal should be proud of where it is--realising there is much left to be done.

Were there times when you were frustrated with the pace of decision-making?

Any old friend of Nepal who has lived here for as long as I have sometimes gets frustrated with the pace of progress in economic and political development. It often feels as though progress just shouldn't be this hard to achieve. But as you've heard me say often, these are Nepali tasks for Nepalis to do, and will be done in Nepali time. My role, as an old friend of Nepal representing a major donor, is to provide support and some of the tools.

International diplomats and leaders are often accused of meddling in Nepal's affairs. What do you have to say about that?

I have been an observer in the Nepali political scene for three decades. The first reflex when things are not going well in Nepal is to look for blame outside. I have even been the victim of that sometimes. Instead of looking to blame someone outside, anywhere, now should be the time

to look inside and see what can be done to make things better. It took America 13 years to write its constitution. What we learnt during our process was we all have to give up a little to get a lot and if we don't we'll never be successful. The same applies to Nepal today. It's also time for people to stop thinking about their personal political agendas and put the needs of the nation first.

What would you say have been the most memorable events of the past four years as Ambassador?

Certainly the elections and everything that led up to them. I know I keep raising the elections, but in a nascent democracy like Nepal, such a successful election and such a peaceful transfer of power after the election are no small feats. I think similar progress has been made with the power trade agreement. And if you look at Nepal's progress on the development goals, it has been equally striking.

Your Embassy had taken the lead in getting Nepal prepared for a big earthquake. How much of that work paid off during the April Earthquake, do you think?

It all paid off. We have been working with the government of Nepal and the Nepal Army for years to ensure we would be prepared if and when an earthquake happened. As a result, we were

immediately able to put our plans in place and provide timely and appropriate assistance to our Nepali friends.

I am especially proud of what the entire international community did in coming to Nepal's aid in its time of need. One of the most important aspects of all of our preparation in years past is that it enabled us to play a leading role in the overall earthquake response.

And your assessment of the post-earthquake relief and response so far?

I believe the immediate rescue and relief efforts were extremely successful. Reconstruction is much harder and takes time. That said, like everyone in Nepal, I believe more progress could be made more quickly. But what struck me the most was how the youth reacted, not just to personal or human needs. They weren't only taking care of the injured but they were taking care of the country's soul, guarding temples and cultural relics that lay in rubble. I think this energy, this new spark in Nepali youth is going to turn into a new positive political force.

But, most youth today prefer to study abroad and settle there. How can we lure them back home?

I disagree. I don't think Nepalis want to stay outside their country. In fact, I believe all Nepalis want to come home. They may live overseas for sometime but eventually they return. People will come home if they are given opportunities. Besides hundreds of thousands of students studying abroad, there are also millions of Nepalis who work outside, who have been exposed to the world and who on their return will have a higher expectation of what life should be like. If their expectations are fulfilled by the state, there's no reason why Nepalis won't stay here.

You have often spoken publicly about Nepal's untapped potential in investment, hydropower, trade and tourism. What would you say are the main reasons why those potentials have not been fulfilled?

In order for foreign investment to come to any country, that country has to set the conditions to make any investments attractive and profitable. People won't invest where it is hard to do business or where they don't believe they can make appropriate profits. It also requires creating a level of trust on all sides of the equation. This did not happen in the past, but I believe is happening now.

Finally, on your next visit to Nepal in a few years what would you like to see here?

I would like to see Nepal reap the benefits of the hard work it has put into creating a democratic society. I would like also to see Nepal develop economically at a much faster rate that would allow for its people to prosper and enjoy the benefits of this nation's untapped wealth.

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PICS: GOPEN RAI

AYESHA SHAKYA
in MUSTANG

Tucked behind towering cliffs and deep canyons, in a remote corner of Upper Mustang, Samzong appears abandoned from a distance. Houses look deserted and farms look dry. The river alongside the village has been reduced to a trickle.

Enter the village, and it is clear why: there is simply no water. People line up at the village's only tap, carrying their empty buckets.

"This is the only water tap working here. The other one went dry a few days ago so everyone has to come here instead," says Nima Gurung.

In a trans-Himalayan region

that receives less than 200mm of rain a year, erratic rain and snowfall have led to a deepening water crisis.

"The rain never arrives on time anymore. When it rains, it rains extremely heavily for a short period but it is not enough to sustain the village," says Topke Gurung (*pic, right*), one of the village chiefs.

The level of water in the river is largely dependent on the amount of winter snowfall which also varies every year. When the rains do come, they fall in huge torrents that trigger landslides on the barren slopes. As a result,



they wash away channels that bring irrigation water into the village, leading to a decrease in the productivity of farmlands.

"Thirty years ago, the area opposite this village was all used for farming, now we don't even have enough water to irrigate the remaining farms," adds Gurung.

In the village of Yara, it is the same story. Irregular rain and a lack of reliable irrigation systems have affected crops.

"We used to harvest wheat, buckwheat and mustard twice a year. Since there is not enough water now, we just grow wheat

once a year. It is still a problem since the fields get dry before it's time to harvest," says Karsang Gurung of the Aama Samuha in Yara.

In contrast to Samzong, there are five water taps within Yara. Built by CARE Nepal, the pipes are wide, so they are able to bring enough water to the village. But seasonal flooding has rusted the pipes and damaged the canals which bring water into the village. To avoid conflict, Yara has a system in which each household is given a day to irrigate its fields.

On the other hand, Samzong residents requested that the king of Mustang relocate to Namashung near Lo Manthang after the flashfloods of 1985 and 1987 left the area empty.


"There was not much use of the barren land after the floods and with donations, we built 18 houses," says Lama Ngawang Kunga Bista, who organised the relocation. Only the irrigation channel is left to be built, and it is expected to be completed by next year.

Residents are happy to move to Namashung, to be closer to Lo Manthang. Another village affected by water shortage, Dheye, is moving to Thangchung. Much to the dismay of its residents, Yara doesn't have an alternative location to move to.

While Thangchung is located in an isolated area with ample water supply, the village of Namashung's proximity to neighbouring Nenyol is stirring up concern for water sharing and contamination in the future.


There isn't enough evidence for any correlation between Mustang's water stress and climate change in Nepal's most arid region. What local farmers do know is that the weather has become unpredictable, offering either too much or too little rain. 🇳🇵


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THE LAST DROP

In Mustang, a trans-Himalayan region that receives less than 200 mm of rain a year, erratic rain and snowfall have led to an acute water crisis. Amidst the dramatic scenery, remote villages like Samzong and Yara are literally drying up. Rivers are a trickle, taps are dry and crops are dessicated. Life was already difficult, now it has become a lot harder.

nepalitimes.com

- Watch video of Samzong and Yara
- Multimedia feature with photo gallery, map and graphs



TWO BOYS PLAY AT A DRIED WATER TAP WITH MAOIST GRAFFITI IN YARA.



A WOMAN WALKS WITH TWO CHILDREN AS THEY MAKE THEIR WAY FROM SAMZONG TO LO MANTHANG.





MORNING LIGHT SLOWLY CREEPS ONTO THE ARID CLIFFS BEHIND SAMZONG.



VILLAGERS WAIT FOR THEIR TURN TO USE THE ONLY WATER TAP IN SAMZONG.



A WOMAN COLLECTS FODDER IN A DOKO.



AFTER SAMZONG RAN OUT OF WATER, 18 FAMILIES ARE BEING RELOCATED TO THESE NEW HOUSES IN NAMASHUNG.



KARMA GURUNG BRINGS HIS HORSES BACK HOME AFTER A DRINK IN THE RIVER.

Constitution editorials

Naya Patrika, 17 September, नयाँ पत्रिका

The new constitution may not have fulfilled all the expectations of opposing voices but it has met many of the protesters' demands. This is why rather than entirely rejecting the bill, the opposition should welcome the articles endorsed and work on amending other contentious issues at a latter date.

Since an ordinance has already been issued and the constitution will be promulgated soon, it is not possible for any dissenting voices to take the constitution on a different course altogether.

Like the opposition, the leaders who spearheaded this new constitution also have responsibilities towards the people. Many districts outside Kathmandu still remain tense and gripped by violence. Families in Tarai areas have lost loved ones, and live in constant fear of being abused by state forces. The leaders should heed the pleas of the minorities who have routinely been excluded by the state. They should also work to bring the opposition back into the process so that the end result is more inclusive and just.

If the top leaders do these and stick to their assurance that contentious articles will be amended, this constitution will receive the support of many more.



BIKRAM RAI

Kantipur, 17 September क्रान्तिपुर

The Constituent Assembly (CA) has passed the new constitution with an overwhelming majority, fulfilling the historic wishes of the Nepali people. On Wednesday, 507 members – 85 per cent of the total members – voted for and 25 against the constitution.

It is unfortunate that the

Madhes-based leaders were not present for this momentous event. Initiatives for consensus failed not only because the Madhes leaders were unwilling to sit for talks but also because the three major parties decided not to wait for them and rushed through the drafting process. But the political leadership must continue their efforts until the last minute to include all groups in the process and ensure their sense of ownership of the new

constitution.

Instead of showing arrogance, the political leaders must immediately and sincerely address the grievances of those groups that have been left behind in the process. At the same time, in a democracy, only those demands which are raised in a peaceful way can have any legitimacy. The agitating groups must not therefore resort to violence, they must be willing to sit for talks and find a way

out of this stalemate. Even though the constitution will be promulgated, the political leaders must always make efforts to ensure that there is a sense of belonging of the constitution among all groups. Only then can the constitution be implemented without problems.

Annapurna Post, 17 September अन्नपूर्णपोष्ट

Amidst hope and skepticism, the new constitution of Nepal is finally being promulgated on Sunday. The Constituent Assembly will then be converted to Parliament and the current president, prime minister and constituent assembly chairman will all be replaced. How the new officials get appointed will be the first indicator of the effectiveness and acceptance of the document.

But going by the conduct of its creators, it seems unlikely that the promulgation will take place as planned. President Ram Baran Yadav is said to be miffed at CA Chair Subhas Nembang for deciding the date without his consultation. Nembang had announced the date and time at the Constituent Assembly on Tuesday.

The CA Chair's insensitivity and ego clash has resulted in a senseless tiff between the two, creating unnecessary hurdles.





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Footnotes from the Far-west

Tikapur has been left with an open scar which will take a long time to heal

ANURAG ACHARYA
in KAILALI

Three weeks after a violent clash between protestors and police in Tikapur killed nine including a two-year-old child, there is a sense of palpable fear along the curfew-bound streets. People speak in hushed tones, peer from behind closed doors if strangers approach.

The streets are empty even when the curfew is briefly lifted in the mornings. Dozens of villagers have been arrested and 21 charged for participation in the deadly clashes on 24 August. Many others have fled fearing arrests. Families of the arrested say they have been threatened, abused and manhandled by Police. Some said they were forcibly made to sign documents they couldn't read while others had their houses raided.

"We did not even participate in the protests, why are we being threatened?" questioned a young Tharu woman whose husband works in India.

Another said: "The policemen come drunk, abuse and threaten my children saying if you don't reveal your father's whereabouts we will shoot your mother."

So far no human rights group or journalists have visited the Manuwa village which has seen its entire young male population disappear after 24 August. An elderly man whose 18-year-old son was arrested says dejectedly, "My son took care of me and my wife. He is a good kid, never even speaks loudly. Why would they arrest him?"

His son, the father says, was encouraged to join the protests after seeing his friends participate. "We all thought it would be a peaceful protest and was intended for welfare of the Tharus," admits the father.

According to eye-witnesses, that afternoon thousands of Tharu activists tried to enter Tikapur town from neighbouring Pashuhat. The plan was to paint signboards over Nepal Government on various municipal office buildings with the words 'Tharuhat Government'.

The administration, worried about the possibility of violence, had requested Tharu leaders not to enter the 'restricted' municipal area in a meeting a day before. The leaders replied they would enter but peacefully. The crowd grew violent after they were barred from moving into the town.

"A senior police officer tried to talk to the crowd but they started to punch him and he began



PICS: ANURAG ACHARYA

bleeding," recalls a 15-year-old boy who saw the initial standoff from his terrace.

While around 700 APF and 200 Nepal Police personnel are based in Tikapur, only 25-30 policemen, mostly armed with sticks and tear-gas launchers, were at the site of the protests at Pashuhat Bazar.

The police tried to fire tear-gas canisters and rubber bullets at the crowd but were vastly outnumbered. Some fled into nearby paddy fields where some protestors lynched them. Among the dead was SSP Laxman Neupane who was dragged out of a house he was hiding in, and beaten to death. A few meters further, APF officer Ram Bihari Tharu was burned alive. Another five policemen were killed in the nearby paddy fields.

APF officer Netra Saud, was at the APF base two kms away when he heard about the clash and rushed home. He saw many injured officers hiding in the fields and called them and gave them water after which they were taken to hospital. "Around 3PM, I was on the phone when I heard a gunshot. I was aware somebody had tried to shoot me. The bullet hit my son instead," Saud recounts.

Worried by the deteriorating security condition, the local administration imposed a curfew at 4PM. But an angry mob led by some of the families of the police victims went around torching and vandalising Tharu homes. An FM station belonging to Tharu activist Resham Chaudhary was also attacked.

Contrary to reports, most people interviewed said Tharu protestors had not been coerced into joining the demonstration. "Nobody from my family went that day, and yet I have not paid any fine," confirmed one woman from Manuwa Village. Villagers also say most protestors were carrying flags and placards distributed by unnamed

'organisers'.

Eye-witnesses said most of the men who killed the police chief had covered their faces with masks and were wearing helmets. The police may have hard evidence against some they have arrested, but when the number of people arrested and charged gets larger, there are chances some of

them will be innocent.

"The warning signs of a confrontation at Tikapur were visible," says Suman Dhital who took charge of Tikapur regional administration office a month ago. He says the situation in the area is still volatile and the local administration is finding it difficult to defuse tension between

the Tharus and 'Undivided Far-west Movement' activists.

Nepal will get its constitution written in the next few days and there will be celebrations in Kathmandu and elsewhere. But here in Tikapur and the neighbouring villages there is too much bad blood and horrific memories of 24 August. 🇳🇵



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A shotgun constitution

When it's been a long wait but well worth it for PKD, BRB, KPO, KPS, RCP and SBD. Now that a shotgun constitution is going to be promulgated on Sunday, we are finally going to get confirmation of what all the fun and games were all about for the sheesh netas: band-fand and lane-dane to be in grumblement.

However, it is sad that we have to now bid adieu to the reign of PM Jhusil Da. We have to remember with gratitude all his accomplishments, the most major of which was to keep awake for at least a part of his two-year tenure. And since he is such a modest man, we will enumerate those achievements for you as soon as we find out what they were. It's going to take some digging, but we have unleashed our best investigative reporters so we should have some results for you by the time you finish reading this column.

While we wait, the Ass has to commend the Energetic Ministry for having made the bold announcement that this winter, load-shedding will be slashed to 12 hours a day. This is a major

accomplishment. I know, some of you are grumbling and saying that means we will be without electricity for half a day. But look at the bright side, be optimistic, consider that we will have electricity for half a day. It's a miracle that the gobblement has managed to defy the laws of supply and demand, and ensure that power cuts decrease even though demand has gone up and supply has gone down. How was this possible?

Nepal's energy czars came up with a cunning plan which is top secret and is only published here if you promise not to Tweet it. Management will not be responsible for the consequences if you are arrested for violating both the Electronic Transactions Act 2069 and the Official Secrets Act 2072. It is a 10-point strategy that will eliminate load-shedding completely in the unpredictable future:

1. The new Constriction has been so crafted that someone somewhere is sure to be disgruntled sometime. Which means kranti-curries of every hue

will be enforcing shutdowns, strikes, hurt-alls and bunds in at least one-third of Nepal's land area at any given time. The industrial corridors in the Tarai, which are the biggest consumers of electricity, will be especially targeted for strikes. Cumulatively, this will cut peak hour electricity demand on the national grid by half.

2. The grubberment will declare four-day weekends nationwide this winter to slash energy demand and make winter hibernation mandatory for all karmacharis.

3. And to prevent from staying home and burning precious electricity to watch tv, the government has banned cable and satellite channels with immediate effect thereby eliminating a major source of power consumption. People will be encouraged to watch music videos of Bhim Niraula on YouTube on their phones.

4. Nepal's population will be reduced by 3 million in the coming fiscal year by giving people free passports and paying for one-way tickets to the Gulf. That's another 17.8% off peak energy demand.

5. Crack down on hookers. No, not a crackdown on the red light district, but dismantling wires hooked to

transmission lines that are responsible for one third of the power loss in this country. (This, for once, is a deadly serious suggestion.)

6. There are 5,000 treadmills in Nepal, installing dynamos in all of them will turn gyms into generators and add another 10 megawatts to the grid.

7. About mid-January ask every loyal citizen of this country to go attend to a particular call of nature on the banks of the Kulekhani Reservoir in order to augment its generation capacity. This will increase peak energy capacity by 5 million kWh in winter. Free beer will be provided as diuretic.

8. Ask the Japanese to donate us one of their decommissioned nuclear power plants.

9. Put Nepal Airlines' two 757s out of their misery and permanently ground them at TIA to rig up their four Rolls Royce RB211 jet engines as powerplants to generate 28 extra megawatts.

10. Store and use hot air emitted during meetings of sheesh netas to generate steam to power turbines as a source of limitless geo-thermal energy.

Sorry, came up with zilch on Jhusil Da. Nada. Nothing.



The Ass



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