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DIWAKAR CHETTRI

Pulling the rug

This week's high drama for regime change appears to have fizzled out as the UML beat the Nepali Congress in its competition to woo the UCPN(M).

As this paper went to press on Thursday evening, there were indications that a 'coup' attempt by the NC to bring down the UML-UCPN(M) coalition, oust Prime Minister K P Oli and replace him with Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal had been foiled.

UML Vice-chairman Bam Dev Gautam went to meet Dahal at his home early Thursday morning and appears to have convinced him that Oli was ready to hand over the premiership to him if he

waited till after the budget is presented on 28 May. Later, when a delegation from the NC went to meet Dahal, the Maoist leader reportedly thanked them for their offer, but that he'd have to decline for now.


What this means is that the NC's attempt to register a vote of no confidence this week and form a government with the Maoists and the support of Madhesi parties has not been successful. But it firmly established the UCPN(M) as a kingmaker party since Dahal would be the next PM no matter which side won the power struggle.

The NC accused the Oli-led

coalition of being unsuccessful in ensuring earthquake relief delivery, in governance, resolving the Madhes crisis and curbing the black market. It proposed Dahal as prime minister in a new coalition that would include the NC. The UML managed to convince

Dahal that it would not press for the investigation of wartime atrocities.

As things stand now, the parties in the present

coalition will remain the same, but there will be a new prime minister (probably Dahal) and a new ministerial lineup after the budget is passed. 

Kunda Dixit

NOT SILENCED
 EDITORIAL
 PAGE 2



Little KOREA

Walk down the street in Darbar Marg, Thamel, Pokhara or Dharan and you can see Nepali youngsters riding the Korean Wave.



PAGE 8-9



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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

NOT SILENCED

What do you do when an Executive agency set up to stem the rot is itself rotten? Fall back on the Judiciary and Parliament.

After ten days of detention by the Commission for the Investigation of the Abuse of Authority (CIAA), the Supreme Court ordered the release of journalist and Himalmedia co-publisher Kanak Mani Dixit on Sunday. Acting on a petition for a writ of *habeas corpus*, the bench comprising Chief Justice Sushila Karki and Justice Jagadish Sharma Poudel -- in a landmark decision -- termed the detention unlawful and warned the CIAA not to take anyone into custody without furnishing sufficient and appropriate reason. A precedent has now been set, whereby the CIAA can no longer continue to act *ultra vires* with impunity.

The Supreme Court concluded that the CIAA had overreached its mandate, and raised serious questions about the watchdog's activities in the past. Before Dixit, the CIAA had filed cases against two lawyers, Sambhu Thapa and Jyoti Baniya, who had also opposed the appointment of Lok Man Singh Karki as CIAA chief in 2013. The CIAA coerced the Internal Revenue Service to raid Sambhu Thapa's law firm, and even then the Supreme Court had rebuked the CIAA because its behaviour was against the law. The court also dismissed the case against Baniya. So the decision in the Dixit case is the third time that the Supreme Court has found the CIAA's actions *ultra vires*.

Ever since the strategically premeditated appointment of Lok Man Singh Karki to head the CIAA, we have seen a gradual but far-reaching erosion of the freedoms guaranteed to us and enshrined in our Constitution. He has used intimidatory tactics, threats and improper rewards to persuade powerful institutions and individuals to do his bidding. A creeping counter-revolution is taking the country back to authoritarianism not by force of arms or mass arrests, but by the blatant and unchecked abuse of authority by the very institution created to curb it.

In the three years since his appointment, Karki has made the CIAA an extra-constitutional cradle of political power working hand-in-glove with business syndicates, political cartels and at the behest of external agencies. Kanak Mani Dixit was merely the latest pawn in Karki's chess board, but there are larger geopolitical forces moving the pieces for him. Many who had run afoul of Karki in the past have been



issued CIAA summons or been hauled over the coals.

On the pretext of investigating corruption, the CIAA has systematically targeted bureaucrats, police, politicians, professors, journalists, lawyers, civil society activists and campaigners for pluralism. The intimidation and threats

have instilled a culture of silence that has been destroying our democracy and rule of law. Most politicians, civil society and sections of the media were too afraid of the CIAA to publicly denounce Dixit's detention on 22 April.

They did not protest either when Dixit was denied access to his lawyers for a full 72 hours after his detention, a flagrant violation of Article 20 of the Constitution, which guarantees an arrested person the right to legal representation. The Federation of Nepalese Journalists issued a feeble statement signed by a junior functionary, but only after its global umbrella body, the International Federation of Journalists issued a strong statement. The Nepal Bar Association, which has always been at the forefront of the struggle for democracy in this country, refused to speak out.

To be sure, many among Nepal's politicians, civil servants, legislators, and even heads of sports bodies, are rotten to the core. The CIAA was set up precisely because organs of the state could be co-opted by organised criminals enjoying political protection. But today that very institution has been infiltrated and is controlled by a persona epitomising the collective scourges his office is tasked to investigate.

What do you do when an Executive agency set up to stem the rot is itself rotten? Or when politicians whose closets rattle with skeletons keep mum? To counter abuse of authority by a constitutional body we can only fall back on two other constitutional bodies: the Judiciary and Parliament. Sunday's Supreme Court verdict on Dixit's case is a refreshing and timely reminder that the Judiciary has not yet been silenced, and that Nepal's first female Chief Justice has defied pressure and acted without fear or favour to establish the rule of law. It remains to be seen if the Legislature will show the same fearlessness and stand up to this culture of silence. But then Parliament has plunged headlong into a political crisis this week.

We have been reminded that Nepal's democracy is still fragile, our freedoms need to be protected from authoritarians in our midst. Those who remained silent during this whole sordid episode might need to be reminded of the famous message: there may be no one left to speak out when they come for you.

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

BIJUKCCHHE'S BHAKTAPUR

I am not sure how accurate a description of the Nepal Worker's Peasants Party as 'communist' really is ('City of devotees dedicates itself to development', Seulki Lee, #806). They are an ultra-nationalist party largely in favour of Nepal remaining a unitary non-federal state. Their track record on ethnic pluralism and gender inclusion is closer to the far right (just look at their medieval views on citizenship). Indeed the strong community spirit and good governance is not restricted to Bhaktapur but most of the close knit Newar communities in the Kathmandu valley.

Political Analyst

Federalism is the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on this country. It does nothing but serves the divide-and-conquer plan of outsiders.

Latale

Mr Kumar Lingden of Limbuwan Rastriya Party and Mr Narayan Man Bijukchhe are two Janajati grassroots leaders. One is against quotas and the second against federalism.

Lord Cruzon

Mr Bijukchhe is a narrow minded, anti-change leader who has blockaded Bhaktapur from development.

Shiva Shrestha

Bhaktapur is the most resistant to e-governance initiatives. I know. I have been there. Trust me. It is just like North Korea.

Namah

What about all the starving people in North Korea, Mr Bijukchhe? Are you saying that's also propaganda?

Paul Ostrowski

The story paints Mr Bijukchhe in such a positive light that one forgets he is an autocratic leader whose guiding principle is North Korea's Juche Idea. That said his candour is much appreciated and refreshing to readers like me who is tired of political leaders saying safe things all the time.

Tim

CLAMPDOWN ON DISSENT

Kanak Mani Dixit is being threatened this way via CIAA and its chief Lok Man Singh Karki for incessantly exposing the Indian blockade of Nepal ('Clampdown

on dissent', Tapan Bose, #806). Anyone who knows anything in Nepal knows that the Karki family has lived and survived multiple political turmoil by acting as informants to the south block of Indian government.

Haldoe

The Dixit family is among the top ten rich families of Nepal. To accuse Kanak Mani Dixit of amassing wealth due to his position as CEO of Sajha is like accusing the Sun of stealing the moonlight.

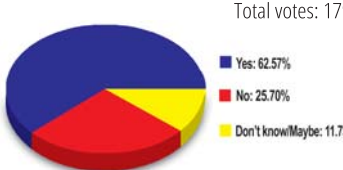
Namah



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Weekly Internet Poll #807

Q. Do you think local elections should precede federal demarcation?



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Q. Do you think Nepal as a state is growing more intolerant?



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Anthropomorphism and mythology



GOPEN RAI



Mythology meets cartoon characters and anthromorphic animals populate the works of street artist duo Shraddha Shrestha and Kiran Maharjan. They are intriguing images that compel the audience to contemplate human attributes from a fresh new transgenic perspective.

Shrestha's street name is Deadline, and her 'Holy Head Space' adorn the walls of the ground floor in Siddhartha Art Gallery. She tactfully traces the resemblances between science fiction portrayal of extra-terrestrial life and creatures from Hindu mythology.

Looking at features of Lord Shiva with his blue skin or Shesh Naga with multiple heads, Shrestha uses acrylic and paint to create bright coloured characters that force us to look at the figures in new light.

'Samundra Manthan' (*see above*) depicts the churning of the primordial ocean, a popular scene from Hindu mythology, with stark simplicity with minimal use of colors, the similitude of the gods and demons romp like cartoon characters. It is an arresting image that forces viewers to question iconic figures that they have come to take for


granted. Shrestha's nostalgia of her childhood intertwines beautifully with her fascination for her culture giving a fresh new perspective to Hindu mythos. Her portrait of 'Narsingha' is reminiscent of sketches seen in Japanese manga comics, and the 'Shesh Naaga' sketches also evoke a new modern avatar of the holy serpent.

Maharjan's street name is H11235 and his 'Life is' series uses both acrylic and aerosol paint on canvas, combining the physical features of humans and animals. We come away realising how we have much more in common than we think.

"Though we say we are different, in many ways we are similar to animals. It is this similarity that makes all us humans the same," Maharjan explains.

The two works in the series exquisitely display this sense of oneness. Maharjan's 'Beginning', (*see below*) of a human baby in the womb merged with parts of the body of an elephant foetus seems to imply that all creatures have a similar genesis and gestation. His other work, 'End', portraying a dead house fly with sickly human arms protruding from where its legs should be again underlines that whether it is an insect or a human being, death is a part of life.

Influences of deconstructivism and photo realism is seen throughout Maharjan's artwork and his use of calligraphy adds to its aesthetics. Juxtaposing various human and animal features in his other works like 'Envy' and 'The Kiss', they urge the audience to find equality in a world filled with divisions.

Displayed as part of the sixth series of works created by recipients of the Australian Himalayan Art Award, the artworks move away from the convention, perhaps an influence of their origins in street art. 

Smriti Basnet

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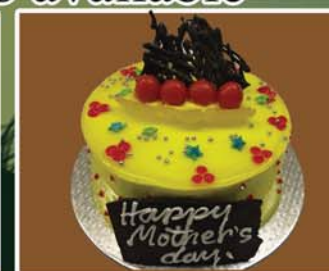
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Football in exile



TENZIN YONTEN

Each year football teams from Tibetan refugee settlements across India, Nepal, US and Canada come together to compete at the Gyalyum Chenmo Memorial Gold Cup (GCMGC) held in memory of the Dalai Lama’s mother who passed away in 1981.

The location for this year’s tournament, the 22nd, was a dusty football field of the Doeguling Tibetan Settlement in Mundgod of the state of Karnataka in India. There were 18 teams: 16 from India and two from Nepal.

Representing Kathmandu was the Boudha-based Team Choelsum United which

received financial support from community members and local business owners to pay for travel and participation.

The club’s manager, Rinzin Sherpa said that Choelsum’s aim is “to get more Tibetan youngsters into football”. He sees the sport as an alternative to drugs and alcohol abuse for young Tibetans in Kathmandu and elsewhere.

Competing in the GCMGC in 2013, Choelsum did not advance out of its group, and this year was no different. The club was placed in Group C with Dhargyaling Sports Club, from Tezu, Arunachal, Gulladhalla FC, from Bylakuppe, Karnataka, and Gangjong FC, from Shillong,

Meghalaya. Choelsum played to a draw in all three matches.

Choelsum played two scoreless draws with Gangjong FC and Gulladhalla FC in the final two contests. The Kathmandu club finished with a respectable three points, but it wasn’t good enough to advance, as Gangjong FC and Gulladhalla both picked up victories, finishing with 7 and 4 points respectively, to top the group.

The club from the Tibetan Dickey Larsoe settlement, in Bylakuppe, Karnataka, hoisted the Gold Cup defeating the Dhondupling Settlement Club from Clementown, Utrakhand, 1-1 (4-1) on penalty kicks in the final.

A Kathmandu team hoisted the Gold Cup in 2004, but no Valley club has won since. Choelsum United hopes it can change that next year.

Since 2003 the tournament has been organised by the Tibetan National Sports Association which aims to promote the game of football within the Tibetan Community and raise awareness about the Tibetan cause and issues.

Kelsang Dhondup, the executive secretary of the TNSA, worked closely with a local voluntary association, the Doeguling Youth Sports Association, to help organise this year’s tournament.

James Carsten

prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS



Glow in the dark

G.P. Trading Concern recently inaugurated the Oppl LED Lights showroom at Putalisadak, Kathmandu. With different varieties of LED lights, the brand boasts a patented flicker free technology and consumes 88% less energy than other lighting devices.

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Coming soon: M5

Gionee recently announced that the Marathon M5 Plus will be launched in Nepal soon. The latest addition to its big-battery Marathon series, M5 Plus comes with a 1.3 GHz Octa-core processor and reverse OTG charging. The phone will be available in champagne golden colour.



Growing CG,

Chaudhary Group’s CG HOLDINGS announced its acquisition of Tigerland Safari Resort & Lodge in Chitwan



recently. The 35 cottage resort at Jagatpur is located on the edge of the Chitwan National Park, near the Rapti river.

prabhu BANK

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The number of adults with diabetes worldwide has quadrupled in the past 35 years, according to a recent study, with most of the increase in Asian countries. Lifestyle changes, sugar-rich diets and genetic predisposition mean Nepal also faces an epidemic of the disease, researchers warn.

The study published last month in the journal *The Lancet* compared diabetes levels worldwide from 1980-2014 and found that low and middle-income countries had the biggest increase. The world average for diabetes prevalence is 9 per cent, and Nepal is nearly at the top of the list with incidence at 8.1 per cent.

"Rural to urban migration in Nepal has multiple impacts like decreased physical activity, shift to high energy diets leading to obesity and increasing the risk of diabetes," explained Sanjib Sharma of the B P Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS) in Dharan, and a contributor to the study.

The number of people suffering from Type 2 diabetes in Nepal, particularly in urban areas, is growing alarmingly with more than ten times the prevalence rate in cities as in villages -- mainly due to sugar-rich diets and reduced exercise.

Genetics plays a role, and early life conditions can also determine whether a person

will develop diabetes later in life, especially in countries with poor maternal and child healthcare.

"Inadequate nutrition during pregnancy and low birth weight of babies may increase diabetes prevalence in Nepal," Sharma told *Nepali Times* by email. His research has shown that the prevalence of diabetes in Nepal is 8.1 per cent, with 1 per cent in rural areas and up to 14 per cent in cities. There are an estimated 2.5 million people with Type 2 diabetes in Nepal.

India and China currently have the highest numbers of diabetic patients, and also show the sharpest rise in total numbers with the disease. Studies suggest that

South Asians are six times more likely to develop diabetes than the general population, with lifestyle and genetics the main factors.

Another contributor to the study, Daniel Ho of the University of Hong Kong, said the main culprits were sugar-rich soft drinks and carbohydrate-rich diets. "Soft drinks have very high calories, and people aren't even aware about the danger they pose," he said.

All those extra calories coupled with generally declining physical activity are cited among the main reasons for the sharp increase in diabetes in Asia.

An average Nepali consumes 30g of sugar per day in their diet, with a much higher consumption

SWEETING IT OUT



World average for diabetes prevalence **9%**



Nepal is nearly at the top of the list with incidence at **8.1%**

Rural **1%** | Urban **14%**



2.5 million people with diabetes in Nepal

South Asians are **6** times more likely to develop diabetes than others

passed an excise tax on sugar-sweetened beverages after it was found 72 per cent of the population was overweight. Just two years later, there was up to 12 per cent decline in the consumption of sweetened beverages in Mexico and a 17 per cent drop among poorer households, according to a recent study published in the *British Medical Journal*.

"We can draw parallels to tobacco control. Like tax on cigarettes, we can do something similar for sugary drinks like Mexico did," said Ho.

As Nepal's disease burden moves from infections to a greater prevalence of non-communicable diseases like diabetes, experts say it could use the proven effectiveness of community health programs by mobilising Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) to spread awareness about the dangers of energy-rich diets and a sedentary lifestyle.

"For diabetes, too, we need simple approach of empowering grassroots health care providers like FCHVs," said Sharma. "This will help detect and treat diabetes earlier, helping to prevent more serious complications that drain the country's resources."

For the first time ever, there are more obese people in the world than underweight. China now has overtaken both the US and UK in diabetes prevalence, with 9.4 per cent of its population diabetic. Even its overweight population is increasing, and has crossed 35 per cent. Similarly in Hong Kong, one third of people in the city are now overweight.

"People are moving to cities, consuming fast food and soft drinks, with minimum physical activity," explained Ho. "Any policy that can increase physical activity can be useful, anything we can do to reduce obesity will be useful to prevent diabetes." 🇳🇵

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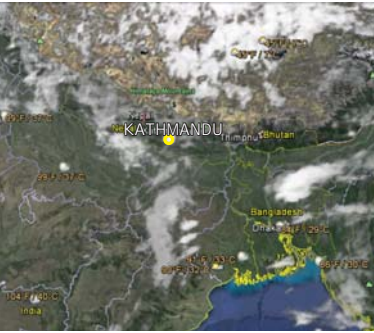
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Your weekly weather person now finally announces the start of the pre-monsoon storm season. The frontal system that brought much-needed atmospheric moisture on a westerly dumped rain and snow across the Nepal Himalaya, including the Tarai. Although the precipitation did not exceed 10mm, it brought a much needed respite from the drought and high temperatures. There is now enough residual water vapour to trigger afternoon convection systems into the weekend. Expect bright mornings giving way to buildup and thunderstorms across the mid hills and mountains. Maxima and minima will slide down 3 Celsius from last week.

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PATIENCE WITH PATIENTS

Nepal's most state-of-the-art hospital is reducing the number of patients going abroad for treatment

Seventeen floors up on the helipad of the Grande Hospital in Kathmandu, Chakra Pandey (*pictured, below*) sounds like the kind of person who has reached the pinnacle of his medical career. The doctor has reason to be proud of his achievement: the Grande International Hospital which Pandey built from the ground up with a consortium of investors has partially stemmed the exodus of Nepali patients for treatment abroad as well as established a new standard for state-of-the-art medical care in Nepal. "Our dream was to set up a world-class hospital in Nepal. But this is just the beginning. We have only completed 30 per cent of our dream, we still have 70 per cent left to do," Pandey said. Indeed, in the three years since its inception, Grande has overcome challenges that most institutions take decades to experience: there has been a bruising falling-out between some partners, last year's earthquake damaged the high-rise hospital in Dhapasi, and then there was the Indian blockade which affected services for five months. On 25 April last year, as the building swayed, hundreds of patients were carried down into the spacious parking lot which

was turned into a tent hospital for the next weeks, carrying out 122 major surgeries, treating more than 1,000 wounded and offering free medical care for four months. Many of the wounded of the Langtang and Everest Base Camp avalanches were also choppered here for emergency treatment. The hospital now carries out at least 100 hip and knee replacements a year, does ligament reconstruction, sophisticated cardiac and kidney procedures. Grande's pathology, MRI and CT diagnostics, individualised ICUs, Cathlab and 30 other departments all have modern equipments. Being an orthopaedic surgeon himself, Pandey has set up a well-equipped physiotherapy rehabilitation centre for post-op patients. "This place lacks nothing, there are very few hospitals like this even in India," said Ashok Vardhan, an Indian hospital consultant formerly with Fortis whose company is now managing Grande. "The trauma department here is the most comprehensive I have seen." It is this investment in quality that Pandey hopes will be an asset for Nepal's adventure tourism industry, since world class heli-rescue, ambulance service and trauma care is now available in Kathmandu. Grande is also hoping to serve the local expatriate population and promote medical tourism. The hospital is getting overseas Nepalis as well as their parents coming here for treatment. The checkup department of the hospital is separated from the rest, and people who come for tests are not mixed with other

sick patients. "We are beginning to see a growth of preventive health culture in Nepal, people are not waiting till they get sick to have a checkup," explained Archana Pradhan at the Grande's Wellness Centre. The hospital has a special ward for needy patients who only have to pay Rs 750 per day, but offers the same level of care and service. "Our philosophy is that healthcare cannot be purely commercial, and we use part of the revenue from well-to-do patients to subsidise poorer ones," Pandey explains. The doctor now wants to scale up that system to the national level by trying to convince the government to allow private hospitals to manage government hospitals in underserved areas of the country so they can offer affordable and accessible health care to rural populations. In return, the government would provide hospitals with soft credit for their city hospitals. Grande recently added to its roster Arjun Karki, formerly of Patan Hospital, to oversee its quality and ethical care and noted heart surgeon Bhagwan Koirala. Both are well known for their achievements in spreading the reach of government health services also to rural areas. For Chakra Pandey, the work has just begun. He said: "We are not trying to make money overnight, we are here for the long haul. This is not just our hospital, it is Nepal's property, no one can take it away from us." 🇳🇵



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LITTLE KAT

Walk down the street in Darbar Marg, Thamel, Pokhara or Dharan and you can see Nepali youngsters riding the Korean Wave

SEULKI LEE

Tight jeans and flat sneakers matched with outsized crop tops and a small sling bag. This is the new female fashion trend increasingly spottable on Darbar Marg, Thamel, Jhamsikhel and even Pokhara and Dharan. The young women wearing them also keep their natural skin tone, have minimal eye makeup with mascara, and are almost indistinguishable from the Korean

actresses they are trying to imitate. "It's great that I can style myself, the clothes are comfortable and stylish," says newly-married Mamta Gurung, 23, in front of Sherpa Mall in Darbar Marg. The references for her fashion coordination were South Korean TV serials. *Boys Over Flowers* (2009), *The Heirs* (2013) and *Descendants of the Sun* (2016) are the most popular hit Korean tv dramas amongst young Nepalis. And actor Lee Min-ho is the most famous name from South Korean showbiz, in Nepal as elsewhere

across China and Southeast Asia. "There are lots of cute boys, the serials are not too long and there are really stylish fashion and make-ups for us to follow," says Ria Tamang, 16, who just finished her SLC exams. Interestingly, random interviews in Kathmandu Valley revealed that it was usually Nepalis of Janajati origin like Tamang, Gurung, Sherpa or Newar mostly who were into Korean fashion and cosmetic products. In fact, many of the

young women could easily be mistaken for being Korean. Most of them said they watched DVDs of Korean serials, or tuned into Korea's KBS World channel. Even men seem to be buffeted by the Korean Wave. Two block cut hairdo and short sleeve T-shirts with flat slip-on shoes is the easiest way to spot Korean influence on men on Kathmandu's streets. "I didn't intentionally copy it from Korean drama, but I found it cool and stylish," says Tsewang





K-WAVE: Mamta Gurung, 23, (centre) with her friends at Darbar Marg on Tuesday. The three friends are avid fans of Korean drama and follow Korean fashion.



SEOUL TO SANEPA

With recent exposure to Korean soap opera on tv and the Internet, Nepali women have started seeking out Korean clothing and cosmetic products.

One such outlet in Kumaripati is called, simply, 'Korean Shop'. And although it displays clothing from China or Thailand, customers come here mainly for men and women's semi-leather boots and Korean fashion and cosmetics.

"These are all made in Korea," says Jeeban Raj Shrestha, 30, in Nepali-accented Korean, pointing to men's boxer underwear, shoes, sun glasses, and other fashion

accessories. Shrestha and his elder brother used to work in Korea and decided to open two shops upon their return four years ago.

He admits that most of the customers come to shop because of its sign name 'Korean Shop'. But the displayed female clothes in second floor have tags with incorrect Korean.

True to its name, the most popular items here and in another Korean shop in Kumaripati, Misumi, are Made in Korea cosmetic products for skin, nail and hair care.

"There are about 15-20 customers visiting our shop every

day. All of them know that we sell Korea's branded cosmetic products like Missha, The Face Shop and Etude House directly from Korea," says Misumi salesperson, Sujata Magar (pic, above).

The shop was opened two years ago by Tripti Thapa and is preparing for second branch in Nag Pokhari next month, and interestingly does a lot of its marketing through Instagram and Facebook. As the customers' needs are specifically targeted to Korean brand cosmetics, the shop is confident about its growth.

"The market is growing, the big sales factor of Korean cosmetic products is that customers think they will have the natural look of Korean actresses that they see on tv," explains Magar, "Korean cosmetics are designed for a natural skin tone according to individual's skin colour and type."

The top three best sellers of Misumi are 'BB cream', Sheet mask pack with anti-wrinkle effect, and 3-in-one type powder 'magic cushion'. A 50ml BB cream tube from Missha costs Rs 2,005 in Kathmandu - three times more than in Korea.

Says Magar: "The price is little bit high but still affordable compared to imported products from India or America."

Seulki Lee

THE KOREA IN KATHMANDU

Tamang from Baudha in his two-block cut hair.

The Korean fashion wave is not confined to the capital. Prabin Rai, 17, from Solokhumbu copies South Korean boy band style and is learning Korean language. His favourite Korean tv serial is *City Hunter* (2011) that had Lee Min-ho in a starring role.

Rai says most of his neighbours back in the village are up-to-date with latest Korean fashion trends because they watch tv serials on YouTube. Although English or Nepali subtitles are seldom available on

streamed video, it doesn't seem to matter to them.

Santa Maya BK in Grade 12 and Nisha Pariyar in Grade 6 from Lamjung district were introduced to Korean pop music and drama from Korean volunteers. Even though they live in a small town 140km from Kathmandu, they wear outfits that are identical to the teenagers on Seoul's high streets: tight jeans, short top with extra large t-shirt and a little sling bag.

Says Nisha Pariyar who lives in Besisahar: "It's fun, easy and fashionable just like we are in the city." 🇰🇷



ALL PICS: SEULKI LEE

THE HAIR WAVE

It is easy to spot the brightly coloured Korean Beauty Shop and Training Centre amidst a row of less decorated houses and restaurants along Bhaishapati in Lalitpur. Opened less than two months ago, the Korean salon is already a hit amongst the Valley's K-pop fans.

"Most of our customers come here because they want to look like the Korean stars they idolise," says owner Pinky Sherpa, 22, who herself follows Korean tele-drama religiously.

Sherpa says she saw a market for a Korean hair salon because of the Hallyu effect on the youth here, and a growing number of Korean expats living in the city.

For the venture Sherpa has teamed with a Korean

couple based in Kathmandu. Sherpa's business partner Kwon Kyung Sun runs a Korean language institute in Bhaishapati while his wife, Kim Song Ae, offers haircutting services to customers at the salon.

"Many girls come here demanding to get their hair cut like the Korean actress Kim Hye-soo while the boys ask for the two block cuts," says Song Ae who worked as a hair stylist in Korea. Song Ae travels to Korea twice a year to buy all necessary supplies for the salon, which exclusively uses Korean products.

On weekdays the salon receives around five customers, says Sherpa, and the number doubles during the weekends.

Smriti Basnet

EVENTS



Green film,

Screening of *Greening the Island of the Gods*, a short documentary about Bali's garbage crisis and its grassroots solutions.

7 May, 11am to 12pm, *Clean up Nepal, Tangel*, (01)4428633

Mother's Day, Celebrate the strong women who raised you. 6 May

Nonviolent communication,

A workshop on effective communication during stressful situations, conducted by Jeannine Suurmond, Civil Peace Service advisor.

6 May, 11am to 3pm, *COCAP Hall, Anamnagar*
RSVP at (01)4265143/ 4260498



Dancemandu,

The second edition of Dancemandu Music Festival celebrating the best of electronic music.

6 to 7 May, 2 to 10pm (Friday), 12 to 10pm (Saturday), Tickets: Rs 2,000 (presale), Rs 3,000 (door) *Norling Resort, Sankhu*



Gender Proud,

Celebrate diversity at this fashion show in support of the LGBTI community, with a performance by rock band Soul Ticklers.

Tickets: Rs 500
7 May, 7pm, *Trisara, Lajimpat, Kathmandu*

Earthbag building,

Owen Geiger discusses earthbag building technology and projects undertaken in Nepal.

10 May, 5 to 7pm, *Alliance Francaise, Teku*



Solidarity,

An art exhibition featuring veteran artist Kiran Manandhar celebrating his collaborations with budding artists as well as seasoned experts.

19 May, 5.30pm, *Alliance Francaise, Kathmandu*

Amar Panchhi,

Join Bollywood stars Sonakshi Sinha and Malaika Arora in a concert organised by the Nepal Army Wives Association to raise funds for earthquake victims.

Tickets: Rs 500 onwards,
www.ap.esewa.com.np
14 May, 6.30pm onwards, *Tundikhel, Kathmandu*

Design Workshop,

Pick up tips and tricks to curating an exhibition, as well as display techniques. Registration necessary.

15 to 18 May, 9am to 1pm, *Yalamaya Kendra, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur*, 9849519933/ 9818239744



Art market,

Buy, sell art pieces at this monthly event.

7 May, 12 to 4pm, *The Yellow House, Sanepa*

MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI



DINING



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Hotel Yak & Yeti,

Celebrate Mother's Day by pampering your mother with a decadent dinner at the Sunrise Restaurant.

May 6, 6.30pm onwards, *Sunrise Restaurant, Hotel Yak & Yeti*
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(20% discount for privilege card holders)

Hyatt Regency,

Put on your dancing shoes and groove to the beat of 80's tunes. Tasty finger foods like calzones, sushi rolls, deviled eggs and beer-battered fish and chips available.

May 6, 6.30pm onwards, *Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu*.



The Terrace Garden,

A BBQ-filled Friday and Saturday overlooking the cityscape, only at Radisson Hotel. Enjoy the meal with a selection of desserts.

6 to 10pm during weekends,
Radisson Hotel, Lajimpat, (01)4411818

Shambala Garden Café,

Unwind with Hotel Shangri-La and enjoy a live performance by Ciney Gurung every Friday.

7pm onwards, *Hotel Shangri-La, Lajimpat*, (01)4412999

MUSIC



Ankit Tiwari Live in Nepal,

Catch Bollywood sensation Ankit Tiwari, who was behind hits like Gallian and Sunn Raha Hai Na Tu, at this event.

21 May, 4pm onwards, *Jawalakhel Football Ground, Lalitpur*

Top of the World Festival,

Join the Top of the World Festival at Jiri with music and art, held in celebration of Buddha Jayanti. Tickets available at www.rocknrollnepal.com.

20 to 21 May, 11am onwards, *Jiri, Dolakha*



Nepathya Live,

Nepal's famed folk rock band performs live in the country after a long break.

14 May, 5pm onwards, *Jawalakhel Football Ground, Lalitpur*



Metal Monsters Tour,

Rock out with metal bands Crown of Thrones, Kamero, Human Dementia, and X-Mantra at Purple Haze.

14 May, 11am onwards, *Purple Haze, Thamel, Kathmandu*

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धोकैमा केकहरू प्रा. लि.
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Dhabas, the ubiquitous roadside restaurants that dot highways along northern India and Pakistan were once the exclusive domain of truck drivers. Today these eateries have transformed into something of a tourist attraction – a visit to one completes the India experience.

In hopes of recreating the roadside dining experience, Soaltee Crowne Plaza launched the second edition of its Dhaba Festival this month.

Upon entrance, milestones placed in prominent places in the premises guide you to ‘Happy Singh da Dhaba’. At the venue, fairy lights strung across the temporary bamboo structures, posters of old Bollywood hits plastered on the walls, and loud bhangra music playing in the background liven up the ambience.

My friend and I settled in a comfortable spot overlooking the entire dhaba and were promptly asked for our preferences. A round of drinks and a platter of snacks were then served by men in punjabi kurtas.

With three expansive menus of lassies, charcoal roasted meat, vegetable dishes, oven-fresh naans, parathas, and a wide variety of sweet dishes, the food festival hopes to recapture the essence of these small eateries.

The different yet delicious tasting Tadke wali lassi stood out with its rich spicy aftertaste. The drink paired well with the



PICS: YUWEI LIEW

delectable Pyaz Mutter Ki Potli, a deep fried dish consisting of onions and peas wrapped to resemble a momo, and Paneer Ki Sule, roasted yet soft paneer, served with tasty condiments.

Moreover, the succulence of the roasted mutton and the crispiness of the deep fried fish as snack items whetted our appetite for the mains.

For dinner we headed to a live station making Chole Bhature, a signature dish of dhabas. The fresh deep fried flour bread paired with spicy chickpeas balanced out tastes of both the dishes. The creamy Dal Makhani, whole black lentils and red kidney beans cooked in butter, added moistness to the otherwise dry combo of the Chole Bhature.

The dhaba also offered a



vegetarian and non-vegetarian buffet. Among the assorted menu, the Sarson Di Saag, a gravy of mustard leaves made in spices topped with butter stood out with its rich flavours. When eaten with the tava baked Maki Di Roti, bread made from corn flour, the taste of the gravy was even more

pronounced. In addition to the veggie delights, the piquant taste of the Gosht aur Ande ki Biryani, mutton and egg biryani, and the succulent Firoj Pur wale Murgh, gravy chicken, left us craving for more.

To round up the evening, a variety of appetising sweet dishes

was laid out on the counter. The savory Gajar ka Halwa, a carrot pudding, served hot provided a perfect end to a satisfying meal.

A food haven for vegetarians, non vegetarians, Punjabis and non Punjabis alike, the Dhaba Festival in Soaltee is a must visit. Attend not only from the flavoursome meal but also for the true Dhaba experience. 🇮🇳

Smriti Basnet

How to get there: Turn right Soalteemode chowk and go 200 metres until you see the Soaltee Crowne Plaza sign on the right. If you reach Grand Hotel, you've gone too far.

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THE WIND RISES

The 75-year-old Japanese animator, Hayao Miyazaki, is in the eyes of most discerning animation lovers, the undisputed maestro of that world. With his revered Studio Ghibli, Miyazaki has conceived, directed, and produced some of the most profound, sublime works,



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

master-pieces really, that make the 'Kung-Fu Pandas' of American studios look like fluffy cotton candy - delicious to eat but slightly sickening afterwards.

Miyazaki's films are gorgeous to look at, delightful, dark, full of magical creatures, and often with political undertones that obliquely or obviously refer to humankind's impact on the planet. Films like

Howl's Moving Castle (2004), my personal favourite, is an adventure that is absolutely captivating for a child, but exponentially more meaningful to adults, with complex character development, resounding anti-war messaging, and a whimsical, fantastical storyline that never fails to surprise.

While the aforementioned film, along with *My Neighbour Totoro* (1988), and his most famous Academy Award winning *Spirited Away* (2001), are all just fine for children, I would warn that *Princess Mononoke* - a fierce, captivating film about a warrior princess is very much a film for grownups, as is Miyazaki's last film before he retired (he has threatened to retire six times to date), *The Wind Rises* (2013).

This last film (of course one always hopes for more) is a quiet meditation on Japan's history leading up to its involvement

in World War II - a subject that weighs heavily in Miyazaki's mind. *The Wind Rises* follows the life of Jiro Horikoshi, the engineer who designed the Mitsubishi A5M aircraft, the precursor to the fighter planes that the Japanese used during the war. Jiro dreams of flying, a fascination reflected in Miyazaki as well (and is manifested in many of his films, *Howl's Castle* doesn't just move, it flies through the air), and therefore a fitting final film to cap such a distinguished career.

In many ways *The Wind Rises* is a classically formal film, following Jiro from childhood dreams of flying, through his training as an engineer, his struggles as a brilliant young visionary who longs to take flight himself, and his poignant love affair with a beautiful young woman with tuberculosis. There are not many surprises in this subtle film which is more a poetic meditation on life, love, loss, and the power of dreaming.

Perhaps Miyazaki's most beautiful film with its simple, elegant visuals, *The Wind Rises*, when it came out, broke all box office records within Japan, becoming the country's biggest film as people flocked to see it, even while Miyazaki was critiqued by the disgruntled few who accused him of being a traitor for daring to refer to Japan's role in the war; an unfortunate occurrence for a film that showcases the beauties of Japan and its culture with so much sensitivity. 🇯🇵

nepalitimes.com
■ Trailer

HAPPENINGS



BIKRAM RAI

NEXT MOVE: Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba in a meeting with leaders of Madhesi parties at the Parliament Building on Wednesday.



BIKRAM RAI

MY STORY: Actor Manisha Koirala speaks about her life experiences at the First National Adolescent Health and Development Conference at Hotel Yak & Yeti in Darbar Marg on Tuesday.



BIKRAM RAI

FREED: Journalist Kanak Mani Dixit with his wife Shanta Dixit after his release at the Supreme Court premises in Kathmandu on Monday.



RENSJE TEERINK/TWITTER

ON BREAK: Head of Delegation of the European Union to Nepal, Ambassador Rensje Teerink, at the Annapurna Base Camp on Sunday.



GOPEN RAI

FAKE PILOT: Bishakh Karki, a co-pilot of Goma Airlines, who was arrested earlier this week for submitting fake academic credentials is escorted by a Nepal Police personnel to a press conference at the Central Investigation Bureau Office in Maharajganj on Wednesday.

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Dinner dialogue

Naya Patrika, 4 May

गयाँ पत्रिका

After misunderstandings arose within the governing coalition, Prime Minister KP Oli called for a dinner meeting Tuesday night between his own UML party and leaders of the UCPN(M). Present were the UML's Oli, Madhav Nepal, Jhala Nath Khanal, Iswar Pokhrel, Bhim Rawal and Bidhnu Poudel, and from the Maoists there were Prachanda, Naryankaji Shrestha, Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Top Bahadur Rayamajhi, Barshaman Pun, Giriraj Mani Pokhrel and Haribol Gajurel. Even though the dinner spread included chicken, fish and mutton, the conversation didn't go very well. Here is what they said:

Prime Minister Oli: "We crafted this coalition at a very difficult time, but it gave the nation a new constitution and government. When we join in a coalition, there will be some achievements and some difficulties. Let's have a constructive discussion, I am prepared for any new alternative."

Prachanda: "There was danger that the differences between the parties would prevent a new constitution, but even in the aftermath of the earthquake we were able to get a new constitution and government. The challenge now is to implement the constitution, and this work hasn't proceeded as expected. Our coalition has not been adequate for this task. It is now necessary to bring in the NC

which is outside the government and the Madhesi Front which has rejected the constitution. Let's be ready to go forward together."

Madhav Nepal: "A coalition forged at a difficult time should be looking after the people's welfare, not its own. In this, it must be said that the government has failed. The government's reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts after the quake have not been satisfactory. The people have not experienced good governance either. The government should take this into consideration and reform itself, but this is not the time or place to talk about an alternative to the coalition."

Prachanda: "The peace process isn't over yet, we have to bring the Madhesi parties into the mainstream. There are delays in boundary demarcation that is affecting the implementation of federalism. Delays in reconstruction has prolonged the people's misery. The NC has asked me to take charge and bring all parties together. So what do we do now? We expect a conclusion from the prime minister to have a common solution."

Oli: "You have already given the conclusion. Let's eat."

After @robpenner

setopati.com, 3 May

सेतोपाठी

Canadian Robert Penner has been a prolific social media user, and showed a keen interest in Nepal's political process. The government on Tuesday gave him two days to leave the country. The Department of Immigration cancelled Penner's visa citing 'misuse of his work visa' and for showing 'unnecessary interest in Nepal's internal politics' and 'posting provocative comments' on Twitter.

Penner has been associated with Cloud Factory, a Nepal-based IT company for the past three years, and was picked up by police from his office in Lalitpur on Monday, 2 May. He broke the news of his own arrest via Twitter.

"If we find him guilty of being involved in suspicious activities that threaten Nepal's peace, security and interfere in our internal affairs we will cancel his visa," said Kedar Neupane, the chief of Immigration Department adding, "it's one thing to show general interest in Nepal's issues and make common observations, but Penner was found to be doing much more than that."

The order for Penner's arrest and investigation was reportedly issued by the Home Ministry because he had violated Immigration Law by 'participating in political activities'.

It is clear from his tweets that Penner had a deep interest in Nepal's political process and regularly commented on it.

Advocate Dipendra Jha who is representing Penner, says: "Even foreign nationals have freedom of expression which is why the government's action against Penner is wrong." He added that it was incorrect to say that Penner was involved in Nepal's political process.

Constitution expert Bipin Adhikari has a different opinion. "Of course an individual's freedom of expression should not be curbed, but there's a difference in the rights granted to a citizen and a foreigner," he says.

According to Adhikari, a citizen who partakes in activities that may affect the public interest can be exempted to a certain degree, but the same does not apply to a foreigner.

But Jha argued: "He didn't go to Singha Darbar and organise a rally, he only expressed his opinions on Twitter. Even we comment about Bangladesh or the US. Is that also illegal now?"

According to Jha sloganeering and taking part in rallies can be considered a political activity, but not writing or speaking about political issues. Adhikari's definition of 'involvement' is any activity that affects or has the possibility to affect politics.

Says Adhikari: "There's no country in the world that grants a foreigner the freedom to be so actively involved in its internal politics."

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A TIME TO EVERY

The Wheel of Life

For 72-year-old Lalit Prajapati, life literally revolves around his potter's wheel. Ever since he was 12, Prajapati has occupied a small space at the entrance of an alleyway that leads to Bhaktapur's famous Potter's Square, where he creates a variety of earthenware vases used in rituals or as piggybanks by children. This is a skill passed down from many generations. "My grandfather taught my

father, and when I turned 12 my father taught me, and when my sons were old enough I taught them," says Prajapati who started with small oil lamps and moved to more intricate clay vessels. One recent morning, Prajapati was deftly moulding a revolving lump of clay into a vase. He did it in three minutes, while simultaneously talking to a visiting reporter. Prajapati says pottery is not

just about controlling hand movements, it starts with the right selection of clay which has to be mined from a few metres below the topsoil. "The fine clay of the Valley gives us an advantage," he explains, "it makes stronger earthenware." In his childhood, Prajapati remembers good clay was plentiful and there was a lot of demand for earthenware. Today, clay is hard to come by and people are switching to plastic or metal utensils. There used to be a time when at least 100 families in Bhaktapur were potters. Today, there are only 30 households. Prajapati is the only potter who still uses the traditional wooden hand-operated wheel which he bought 50 years ago. Prajapati is now worried that the younger generation in his family doesn't want to continue with the profession. He says ruefully: "The newer generation is educated and doesn't want to be involved. Even my grandson isn't interested. The skill may die with us."

SAHINA SHRESTHA



Living off the Land



For the first time in 70 years, Krishna Awale is not planting corn this year. He is not readying his land for paddy seedlings, either. The 84-year-old stoops, and breathes heavily, but that is not the reason he is not tilling the land anymore — there is no more land to till. The farms he used to cultivate on the outskirts of Patan have now been turned into parking lots and malls. His own ancestral land was parcelled out long ago and sold off. This week when we met him in Chyasal, Awale was sitting near his

PURPOSE

When the phrase ‘heritage conservation’ is mentioned, most think of Kathmandu Valley’s temples and ancient monuments. But also critically endangered are Nepal’s intangible heritage like its festivals — and traditional occupations. As the younger generation moves away from the jobs of their forebears, many precious skills are on the verge of vanishing forever.



KUNDADIXIT

Mustard Man

Bhimlal Dangol, 77, remembers a different Kathmandu Valley from his childhood — one with narrow lanes and green farms, blue sky and clear air. He travelled across the Valley with his father, sometimes even to the Tarai to sell the mustard oil that his hometown of Khokana is famous for.

Dangol’s father worked for Juddha Shumsher Rana, and learnt to bake and press oil from mustard seeds at a young age. He used to hike down to Hetauda to buy mustard seeds, hauled it back to Khokana, made oil, sold it to clients in the Valley, walked back to Hetauda and traded the remaining oil for more seeds.

“Everything was manual in those days, even the oil mills,” recalls Dangol. “Since

most of the households here were involved in the same profession, the oil pressers were jointly owned.” Today, with competition from imported soya and sunflower oil, and farmers not growing mustard anymore, most of the pressing machines have shut down in Khokana.

Dangol (*left*) still sells mustard oil to his old clients, but buys it from a mill instead of processing it himself. “I am growing old,” he says, “local farmers don’t cultivate mustard because there is no land and the *sahus* only sell big quantity to the mills.”

None of Dangol’s three sons want to be in the mustard oil business. “It is okay, it’s a difficult job after all,” says Dangol philosophically, “but I will keep doing this as long as my body allows me to.”



home with his wife, Bhinmaya, 79, remembering old times (*above*). His gnarled fingers are a striking testimony to his ties with the land. They are still for the first time in his life as a farmer. This is the last generation of the Awale family that will plant paddy, their extraordinary knowledge of nature, the seasons and soil, seeds and weather, will vanish.

“I keep telling my son to work in the fields, but he doesn’t listen,” says Bhinmaya, pointing at her son Gopal, a bronzesmith, who is taking his grandson to

college in a scooter.

With no land of his own to farm, these days Krishna helps out other farmers in the area. They come to ask Krishna’s advice on when to plant, what seeds to use and what to do about a pesky pest destroying the potato crop.

Bhinmaya worries that even if she and her husband put everything they know down on paper with charts and tables, it still won’t do any good.

“There is no more land to farm,” she says simply.



Nail Clippings

Kanchi Napit, 40, unfolds a piece of cloth and takes out a shining steel blade — the *chhalancha* — that she uses to cut nails. Then she takes out a small brass bowl for water, and the red *alah* powder and small brush. These are the tools of the trade for Nepal’s endangered traditional nail-cutters.

Every day, Napit (*above*) travels to as far as Chobhar from her home in Bungamati to perform the *lusithikegu* — a purification ritual in which women cut their toenails, and colour their feet. She works for her *jajman*, the clans with whom her family has worked for generations to trim nails during birth, marriage, death and other life-cycle ceremonies.

Napit’s family have been professional nail cutters and barbers for as long she can remember. She learned the skills from her in-laws when she was 15, and her husband Bachhu has been a nail cutter and barber for the families of the priests of Rato Machendranath.

Traditionally, the payment for Napits is not cash, but rice from the *jajman* twice a year. But as

farmlands dwindle, the families pay them Rs 1,200 a year.

“These days, the amount of grain and the money we get from the traditional job is not enough to feed the family and send the children to school,” says Bacchu, who has opened his own barber shop near the bus park in Bungamati to augment income.

In the mornings he works for his *jajman* and runs the barber shop for the rest of the day. “I am the first generation in my family to have a shop, it is not sustainable to work just from home anymore,” he says.

But it looks like Bacchu and Kanchi will be the last in their generation to be barbers and nail-cutters. Education is one reason, and inter-caste marriages are another. There is also a stigma attached to what is regarded as a lowly profession.

“Children these days are educated and have the option to choose their career, we didn’t have that,” says Kanchi. “They say they are too embarrassed to touch someone’s feet.”





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In this day and age, it is impossible to verify every rumour so we don't bother anymore. We will just go ahead and print them all, and let the chips fall where they may. That is the way the cookie crumbles, folks, you have no choice.

For instance, rumour has it, that this is a newspaper of record. We break world records for gossip and hearsay, so it behooves us to respect the great faith and trust that you, our valued clients, have placed upon us for titillation and scandal.

We have it on good authority that readers these days also have short attention spans. Which

means most of you have already stopped reading this influential column, and are now all on your smartphones watching the video of the wardrobe malfunction of a member of the British royal family. I can, therefore, write just about anything here on forth, and it won't make an iota of difference to everyone in general and anyone in particular, because none of you Ass wholes are actually reading this.

As if the world wasn't depressing enough, we in the newspaper business are determined to make you more miserable by not allowing a single day to go by without news

of regime change, corruption in high places, petrol pumps committing adultery, or loot and plunder by public officials. We thought it was bad enough when fake doctors got busted, now there are engineers with counterfeit certificates, and this week they caught (kid you not) a fake co-pilot. Good thing we donkeys don't need certificates to write asinine columns like these otherwise we'd have to fake them too.

So, lucky for you, there is still one newspaper that brings us glad tidings, items of wholesome news that are uplifting, inspiring and tell tales of the triumph of the

human spirit. But it just folded due to lack of content material. To make up for that, here is some good news of the week:

This Government Useless: Govt

With its days numbered, the government this week came under blistering attack from itself in parliament. Senior ministers expressed dissatisfaction with their own performance, and said they no longer had the right to stay on in power.

"This government is useless," said the government spokesman Wednesday, "we demand that it should step down forthwith."

The criticism comes amidst growing calls from within the UML-Maoist coalition for it to be dismantled to make

way for a new NC-Maoist coalition for no other reason than to make things more interesting.

In answer to a question about whether or not there was any point in regime change at this point in time, the spokesman replied: "That is not the point. It was getting really boring seeing the same old faces every day, so we have decided to bring fresh new faeces."

Premier K P Oli also said it will be a relief to be relieved of his duties. He said he was glad there was an appropriately-named Prime Minister's Relief Fund which he could clean out before he left office to subsidise his retirement. "It has been a self-fulfilling tenure," he said, emitting a loud burp.

More Goodies from Qatar

The Government of Qatar has said it hopes that its gift of nine Mercedes Benzes to Nepal this week will help in earthquake reconstruction, and lift more Nepalis out of poverty. "Every small step counts," it said in a communique.



Saturday Brunch

Sit back, relax and enjoy a quality time with friends and family on Saturdays with complimentary access to the swimming pool. Relish sumptuous meal with spectacular spread of fresh salads, variety of cuisine ranging from Nepalese, Indian, Italian to PanAsian and Mediterranean.

The perfect end to a long week with good food and good company.

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Taking possession of the keys to the brand new limos, Foreign Minister Kamal Thapa thanked the Sheikhdom for the thoughtful gift and said he hoped the cars would assist in raising Nepal out of the under-developed country category by adding to our Gross Domestic Product. He also expressed the hope that there were more goodies for us in the pipeline. "It would be great if we could also get the gas to run the Mercks," Thapa said during the handing-over ceremony.

The Delhi Runs

Serial prime minister Brave Lion Deuba has once more proven that talk of regime change in Kathmandu starts soon after Nepal's leaders return from pilgrimages to the Dilli Durbar.

After getting his nose-job, Deuba started making his move to dislodge the Oligarchy and dangled a carrot in front of Chairman Awesome whose reflex action was, predictably, to start salivating.

Soon after, X-king-G also air-dashed for an overnight trip where he is reported to have laid out various options at the feet of the Big Bad Shah to rollback the republic. And following in his footsteps will be President Bhandari who is only going to India because she can't go to Kunming unless she first goes to the Kumbh Mela in Ujjain.