Deuba’s roadmap

In his fourth tenure as Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba has a chance to end what started when he first was in that post 29 years ago.

The seven priorities that Deuba listed on Wednesday for his new government largely deal with a crisis that began in his first stint and worsened during the other two times he was prime minister: the conflict. He has to deal with its legacy.

If he succeeds, Nepal will enter a new era of stability and prosperity. If he fails, the rocky political transition will continue to impact the economy.

Analysts are cautiously optimistic, but Deuba’s aides claim that he is now a man with a mission and a keen sense of how history will judge him. The signs are not encouraging: his choice of cabinet of cronies looks like old wine in an old bottle.

Here is Deuba’s checklist:

1. Deuba’s first order of business is to complete the process of reviving grassroots democracy by holding the second phase of local elections on 28 June. That will probably go without a hitch because the two Madhes-based parties voted for him and they will probably participate if cases against those arrested during the Madhes agitation are scrapped.
2. Holding provincial and parliamentary elections later this year will be more knotty. Madhesi parties will insist on a constitutional amendment beforehand. If Deuba fails, so will the Constitution and the country will be in a political void.
3. The mandate of the two transitional justice bodies will expire in nine months. Deuba must deliver justice to conflict victims, but he and his coalition partner Maoist Chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal, also face charges of wartime atrocities. How he deals with this will determine the future of the peace process.
4. The government is meeting nearly half the post-earthquake reconstruction budget from its own coffers. This gives the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) more flexibility, and can expedite reconstruction. Deuba must show he could do more for survivors than his two predecessors.
5. Nepal achieved an economic growth rate of 7% this past year. Deuba’s coalition needs to sustain it by boosting infrastructure, inviting more FDI and preventing looming power cuts this winter.

Deuba is said to be keen to visit India next month for local elections. At a time when Nepal has just signed a framework agreement on China’s Belt and Road Initiative, Deuba cannot afford to give less attention to Beijing.

FUSION OF POWERS
EDITORIAL
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bizz

BAGMATI! The proposed Bagmati River Park will give Kathmandu new breathing space and could lead to urban cultural renewal.

PAGE 8-9

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FUSION OF POWERS

Ever since the 18th century, a basic tenet of democracy has been the doctrine of separation of powers. The functions of the three branches of government (legislature, executive, and judiciary) are delineated so that they don’t step on each other’s toes. The aim is to have checks and balances and avoid the concentration of power in any one branch. Sometimes, we in the media are called the “fourth estate” as another layer of scrutiny to defend the citizens’ right to informationally guaranteed right to information. Democracy also requires specialised and independent constitutional bodies like the Supreme Court, the Election Commission, the Public Service Commission, etc. The Supreme Court is the institution of last resort, and can adjudicate in matters pertaining to all branches of government and even other constitutional bodies, including the Election Commission.

Nepal’s political evolution generally after the 1990 People’s Movement, and parallel to the conflict that ended in 2006, has seen the lines deliberately blurred between branches of government – with Blasting liberal interferences into constitutional organs. It has now become so common for one branch of the state to interpret the law as it sees fit, and even raise eyebrows anymore. Our greedy and semi-liberal rulers are directly responsible for the steady erosion of pluralism, a construction of freedoms and democratic decay. It is a basic trait of Nepal’s democratic parties that they fight long and hard for an open society with great personal sacrifices, courageously standing up again and again to dictators, endure incarceration, and then they go and repeatedly squander hard-won freedoms.

What we see in Nepal today is not a separation, but a fusion of powers. Most recently, it started with the appointment of Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi as caretaker prime minister to oversee elections in 2013. That fatal folly in mixing up branches of government led to even more objectionable appointments, like that of a royal housemate indicted for embezzlement and suppression of the pro-democracy movement of 2006 as the anti-corruption czar.

Since the end of the conflict, the Big Three parties have behaved like a political cartel, exploiting the democratic void to plunder local budgets and divide up the spoils of office. The Executive has essentially captured the Legislature and ruled it by whipping up processes. Politics now parliment to register an impeachment motion against the CAA chief last year, for his extortion and abuse of power, but because they suddenly became susceptible to his political ambitions. Then, last month the Maoist-NCP coalition got its MPs to file an impeachment motion against the Chief Justice Sushila Karki before she retired, just so that she would not be able to hear the PPP’s pending corruption cases against his canopy. Chief Justice Karki has spilled the beans in a scathing interview the Constitution states on page 196 which she accuses Prime Minister Deuba of pressuring her on sub judice cases. The reason for this interference was the Maoist-NCP arm-twisting of the Constitution to ordain a no-confidence in Ward 19 of Bhaktapur even after Maoist candidate tops ballot papers after they started trailing.

All does not seem well for the future of Nepal’s democracy, as Prime Minister Deuba has now been elected for the fourth time with old wins in an old battle.
DISCOVER EUROPE WITH EUROPE’S BEST AIRLINE
Bringing aid back to basics

Nepal’s foreign donors can now go directly to the people through elected local governments.

There is a widespread notion in Nepal that foreign aid in the last two decades has helped stoke social disarray and ethnic tensions. The government has brought this up with donors, pressuring them to channel aid away from sectors like democracy and human rights to infrastructure and development.

The agencies clarify that this is selfish cribbing of the traditional elite, and there is some truth in that. But huge amounts of funding can be traced to direct or indirect support for individuals or organisations working towards ethnic causes.

Whether this support is principally wrong, and whether donors had ulterior motives for such an approach is a matter of deeper debate later. But assuming that much of the Aid Industry should be driven by humanitarian impulses and enlightened moral self-interest, the time is apt to suggest a course correction in the way Nepal gets its aid and where it is disbursed.

The 2015 earthquake was a good opportunity to renew the Aid foreign aid to make it more respectable and acceptable to a wide spectrum of Nepali people, but that did not happen. Not only have most donor pledges for reconstruction fallen short, but instead of strengthening the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), donor agencies have been busy creating their own fiefdoms for short-term glory.

Bypassing the NRA could be the result of a lack of trust in our polity, but there are not too many other examples of phenomenal success in the last 70 years of aid involvement in Nepal. Considering the total amount of money poured into Nepal over those decades in the name of aid, this is an astonishing failure. Aid has abetted a corrupt eco-system dominated by a selected few who align with whatever opinion foreign donors in Nepal hold at that particular moment. The misconceptions thus created and reinforced in the echo chamber is one of the causes of failure of many initiatives.

Eugene Bramer Milhaly, after studying the first 12 years of the aid industry in Nepal, wrote in his book Foreign Aid and Politics in Nepal (1965) that foreign aid programs were not successful because they were based on faulty foundations. One of the first scholars to research aid as a political tool, he concluded after studying the results of the aid efforts by various countries like India, China, the US, Switzerland and Soviet Union between 1951-62 that the basic assumptions that guided aid-based interventions in Nepal were wrong.

Time and again, an apparent reason for a program’s failure was traceable to flaws in two conceptions that were the foundation and the framework of the majority of the aid programs,’ Milhaly wrote. The first of these was a belief in the readiness of Nepal for social, economic, and political change and the other was the donor’s assumption that “the Nepalese government was able and willing to administer development projects of considerable complexities”.

Milhaly proves his point by indicating the type of projects that were successful: the small and highly specialized projects of the Swiss like the dairy initiatives. His analysis that these efforts were effective because they did not depend on the Nepalese people and the government could, however, be hotly contested today. There are many examples of aid that has worked because the government, especially at the local level, was involved.

About people, Milhaly writes, ‘Nepal at that time was not in the grip of a revolution of rising expectations. The majority of its inhabitants were unaware that a way of life different from their own even existed.’ And about the state of the government, he says, ‘Most donors eventually learnt through harsh experience that the government lacked the administrative capacity and the political will to govern.’

Things have changed. The aid industry has altered prescriptions many times over in the years that followed, but the insights Milhaly came up still remain broadly valid. Globalisation has ensured that Nepal is now in the grip of a revolution of rising expectations and the new Constitution has created grounds for a local government which is compelled to deliver. This changed scenario brings governmental stability to the local level, thus making it possible to have long-term strategic partnerships between the municipalities and donor agencies.

The new local governments can now be the most effective vehicles to implement programs based on the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Most of the 17 goals fall under the rights and duties of local governments, which are best placed to implement development projects of their proximity to the resources and people at the grassroots.

What is needed is an immediate push for programs on governance, health, community empowerment and education in collaboration with the local governments. The technology and knowledge available to us today, the new system of local governance Nepal has entered into, and the fundamental change in Nepali society as a result of globalisation can be put to use for constructive transformation. This is a golden opportunity for the agencies to get back to the business of development assistance, especially to meet humanitarian needs.
Nepalis in Qatar worried

The Saudi-led blockade of Qatar has isolated the country and fanned fear about the future among Nepali migrant workers in the Gulf region because of a lack of information.

Ram Hari Nepane, a salesperson at a supermarket in Doha described the city as being normal, but said his compatriots were worried about what would happen. “Our managers haven’t told us anything yet. All the information we are getting is from social media. This has caused fear as to what will happen if the situation worsens,” he said. “People at my supermarket are stocking up on daily supplies. We get a lot of produce from Saudi Arabia and we are running out of them.”

For those planning trips to Qatar, the ban on flights has had an immediate impact on purchase of cheap air tickets. Even though there has been no direct effect on migrant workers in Doha yet, experts say there could be longterm impact.

“It all depends how the Qatari government responds. With the decline of oil prices, the number of Nepali migrants to the GCC was slowly decreasing but Qatar was the only country constantly accepting migrants as in previous years because of its construction boom,” said Ganesh Gurung, an expert on migrant issues. “But because of this ban, many Nepalis could lose their jobs and face remittances.”

Immediately after the diplomatic boycott was announced, the Philippines government declared that it would stop sending foreign workers to Qatar until further notice – citing food shortages as a major problem should the situation worsen.

“At hearing about the decision taken by the Philippine government, we are worried now about what will happen to the Nepali workers there because many of the Nepalis fell under the same category as Filipino migrant workers,” said Son Prasad Lamichhane, Secretary General at Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee, an organisation run by returnee migrant workers in Kathmandu. “We are all just waiting for the government to inform us about what next steps Nepalis in Qatar should take.”

Nepalis flying to Doha on Emirates-based airlines like Etihad, Air Arabia or fly Dubai have been affected and have to either switch to direct flights on Qatar Airways, Nepal Airlines, or take Oman Air via Muscat.

“Nepali migrant workers now have limited options to fly to Qatar,” said global Dhakal, President of the Nepali Association of Foreign Employment Agencies (NAFEA). “They will have to buy more expensive tickets.”

Currently, more than 600,000 Nepali migrant workers are in Qatar. Saudi Arabia now attracts more migrant workers, but it is also directly involved in the current crisis. Another 500,000 Nepalis work in Bahrain, UAE, Oman and Kuwait.

Karma Delma Gurung
I sounded more like a cough

Sou.

The tigers with a crooked

to me, but the rasping gasp

from the depths of the forest

was a tiger's mating call. In the
dawn stillness, the jungle seemed

to hold its breath in awe.

Chuck paused on the trail, listening

intently, “Bang Pola.” he

muttered softly, before hurrying

on silently through the trees in his

rubber thonged sandals, canvas

bag slung across his shoulder.

The tigers with a crooked

pointed toe was one of the

resident females around Tiger

Tops lodge whose habits Chuck

knew well. Bird song broke

the spell, and a distant langur

monkey signalled a grunt of alarm

at the tigers’ presence.

With trackers Krishna,

Sukum, Gaurav and eager

bilingual trainees in no less

less pursuit, the party was keen to

find pugmarks to identify the

courting male. Every morning

Chuck McDougall and his team

checked on the previous night’s

tiger activity, and on their newly

invented system of pressure-


SOFAR SO GOOD

Lisa Choegyal

onSilent through the trees in his

rubber thonged sandals, canvas

bag slung across his shoulder.

The tigers with a crooked

pointed toe was one of the

resident females around Tiger

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Chuck McDougall and his team

checked on the previous night’s

tiger activity, and on their newly

invented system of pressure-

plate camera trap photography

wherever tigers can be

recognised by its individual

pattern of stripes and facial

markings. A male tiger took the

very first picture of himself on the

ridge above Tiger Tops in 1974.

These morning walks were not

only part of Chuck’s tiger studies,

but also a chance to impart

first hand jungle lore to Tiger Tops’
cadre of young naturalists and

nature guides. Hard science

and no bullshit, was his creed.

Recruited from throughout Nepal

and India, this elite taskforce was

trained with introducing

visiting tourists to the intricacies

of the entire wildlife, and to

keep it safe in tiger terrain.

With Jim Edwards, Chuck had

taken over Tiger Tops in 1972 and

together their brand of business

soured mixed with his.

wildlife expertise melded

commercial with conservation,

putting Nepal on the map as an
eco-tourism pioneer before the

term was invented.

Ever sparring with words,

Chuck was a gifted raconteur,

generously sharing knowledge

and offering encouragement to

acolytes in his resilient draw.

I did not often accompany these

jungle excursions, being busy

with more mundane tasks, but

the names of my naturalist

colleagues echo down the decades:

Ashish, Bhum, Bir Bahadur, Balram,

Dekl, Dhan, Diresh, Gun Shehdu,

Hashim, Kaushal Ram, Kansu, KK,

Man, Pani, Pradeep, Rahul,

Raja, Wangdi, Yan, and others.

Although widely scattered, many

are still committed to the

tourism and conservation mantra that

we preached with a zealous passion.

When he was not counting

the jungle and training naturalists,

Chuck was writing up his notes

on tiger behaviour, attended

by his wife Margie. Published

in 1977, The Face of the Tiger

was the result of thousands

of hours of observation and

tracking, establishing this quiet

anthropologist from Colorado as a

leading expert on tigers.

Living deep within Chitwan,

Chuck was able to record the

lifetime reproduction of 35

females and followed many more

tigers throughout their

entire lives, applying his

anthropological training in

plotting their kinship systems.

The high rate of camera trap

success depended on his

intimate understanding of tigers

and their travel ways. When

challenged, he and Sukum

proved their mastery by correctly

identifying 31 out of 82 different

sets of tiger tracks – the one name

was a sub-adult they thought was

a new tiger.

Chuck’s tiger monitoring

reports are bound in the

Smithsonian Institute library,

and his work continues to inform

authorities concerned with

protecting these nocturnal cats as

the apex predator — in essence,

the preservation of habitat

with plentiful prey species and

minimal disturbance.

Nepal’s subsequent

conservation initiatives are

considered a major success.

That elusive brown-striped

sub-adult still thrills the soul of those

lucky enough to catch a glimpse

through the tangled grasslands

of Nepal’s green mosaic, as the

most majestic of beasts conducts

its secretive circuits.

Recent government reports

tell the story: the number of

calculated adult tigers has grown

3% to 198 individuals, protected

areas cover almost one-quarter

of the country, and 10,000 sq

km are potential tiger territory.

Nepal is better placed than

other tiger-range countries to reach

the pledged target of doubling

its wild tiger population by

2020. Regular tiger monitoring

continues, and counts are still

made by the tracking and camera

trapping techniques perfected in

Chitwan. Chuck McDougall

died a year ago, but his legacy

lives on.
Cat man do

Visitors to Nepal have often wondered why there are no cats in Kathmandu. There are dogs all over the place, but hardly any cats. In fact, the cats you hear the most about in Kathmandu are the leopards that frequently stray into the city, and have to be darted and relocated back to Shivapuri National Park.

“Afamily there are lots of cats in Kathmandu, but you don’t see them because they are all hiding from the dogs,” explains Norizah Ramli, a Singaporean married to a Nepali who has been living in Kathmandu for 14 years. “Dogs are worshiped once a year, but there is a superstition that cats are insidious.”

While canine is divine, there is no such veneration for felines. Kathmandu has many organisations working with stray dogs, but few that look after cats. Which is why Norizah Ramli’s (Richi) decided to set up her own cat rescue two years ago called Catmandu Lovers.

“I loved cats, I grew up with them, my grandmother, cousins and sisters all had cats,” says Richi, who pulled out five cats from the animal control she was volunteering in and set up Catmandu Lovers to take care of abandoned newly-born kittens, injured and diseased cats from the streets and rehome them.

The fact that cats can give birth four times a year and have eight kittens in each litter, means there are lots of abandoned kittens and not enough animal centres specialising in feline care.

Catmandu Lovers is a home-based care centre that gives personalised attention to abandoned, seriously malnourished as well as sickly and injured kittens.

“We are not an animal shelter, and we believe that kittens adjust better and injured cats heal faster in a family environment rather than in cages at a shelter,” says Richi who runs an adoption centre in Pulchok and a treatment facility in Bhaiensari together with her friend, Nebra Dangol.

In a penthouse apartment eight-stories above Patan with a stunning view of the Valley, Dangol looks after 12 mostly short-haired tabbies, Bengal and snowshoe kittens waiting for adoption, as well as three of her own pets. She says: “I grew up loving animals, but after I met Richi I developed a fondness for cats, and I also saw that they need help.”

When the cats are ready for adoption, Dangol “spreads the information through Facebook and can usually place pets almost immediately.” “We are blessed because we have a 100% adoption rate, even from families that have never had cats before,” says Richi.

Catmandu Lovers runs on personal contributions from adopters, supporters and rescuers. It also runs a Cat Hotel for people to board pets when they travel. Income pays for vet care and cat food for the 60 or so cats it takes care of every year.

Pema S Lima

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Kathmandu is one of the fastest growing cities in South Asia, and the rapid transformation of the metropolitan area of the Valley over the past decades has been dramatic—especially in the reduction of the green spaces. Nepal’s capital today ranks among the most congested cities in the world, bringing with it a slow of other environmental problems like air pollution, garbage, etc.

The most emblematic evidence of this decay is the Bagmati River. Along with its tributaries, the river is a key landmark, the artery of the Kathmandu Valley civilization. But what used to be a living river with clear water flowing across a sandy flood plain a few decades ago has been reduced to a smelly sewer.

The city’s citizens have spontaneously started a cleanup campaign. To add to the work of volunteers picking up solid waste dumped on the river, there needs to be a vision to transform the banks of the Bagmati, and give the river back to the citizens so they can bond through green, human and cultural connectivity.

A proposed masterplan to revitalise the Bagmati and the city includes building a green belt along the river banks from Manohara to Bishnumati to promote bicycle and pedestrian traffic which will reduce both congestion and air pollution, providing a completely new way of moving around the city for both commuting and recreational purposes.

A Bagmati River Park along a 5km stretch of the river separating Kathmandu and Patan will bring green public space to where the city needs it most. The unique area is carefully designed to include wilder areas inspired by Nepal’s biodiversity and vegetation types, as well as more traditional park space with promenades, intimate space to escape from the city’s bustle, as well as bigger places for cultural gatherings. There will be areas for both organised and spontaneous sports activities in the city’s new green lung.

Since the park area already has important temple complexes like Shankhamati, Thapathali and Teku which were once sacred to pilgrims, but have been neglected and allowed to decay, a heritage walkway along the Bagmati Park is proposed to reconnect the people with their temples and preserve festivals and the cultural heritage. Such a holistic approach to urban planning taking rivers into account have been seen in cities around the world. They

The Bagmati River Park

**DHOBIKHOLA**

The crossing bridge could follow the seasonal changes where the two rivers meet, providing visitors with the experience of wading in water. The garden can serve as a recreational space with a children.

**TEKU ROPEWAY PARK**

The former rope way terminal can be converted into a restored recreational area for skating, open air concerts, and for a viewpoint overlooking the park where the garbage embankment is today.

**BAGMATI SPORTS COMPLEX**

The green walkways, butter can be used for leisure and the quiet playing turned into a field for various sports. The water mirror is both for play and to cool things down in summer.

**THAPATHALI**

The banks there can have an attract wildlife and rest the water level will aim

The restored riverscape (left) can resurrect Kathmandu by giving the waterway back to the people. The Park will fill a void in the heart of a divided city and help reorganize the urban fabric of Kathmandu and Patan, becoming an anchor for the transformation of the twin towns.

The Park will create a new identity for Kathmandu, charting out a bold move towards a greener path to urban planning and development within its historical context.
Kathmandu is overbuilt, and the Park will offer calm areas where people can rest, relax and recharge. The banks will be filled with trees, shrubs and plants. The unused space can be turned into an air purification area. The rest of the riparian stretch will change from a wasteland to a recreation space.

The Park will use the river to reconnect citizens, connecting them to nature and their cultural heritage.

**KATHMANDU**

**BAGMATI RIVER BASIN**

The Bagmati and its tributaries as it flows through and out of Kathmandu Valley (above). The section of the river marked in red is highlighted in the plan (below) of the Bagmati River Park, proposed by Danish students Okar Frelin and Jens Hansen-Holm in their master’s thesis. Go online for an interactive multimedia version of the map.

**EBMULATION**

Looking downstream from the present Sankhahumit protest area bridge with the new bridge on the right, which will be defined by the new temple canal and the walkway.

**GREEN CONNECTIVITY**

The Park will make urban green areas along the river banks denser, and connect to existing open spaces so that the river becomes a green corridor. It re-establishes the natural aquatic habitat and the banks act as a green lung for the city.

**CULTURAL CONNECTIVITY**

The Bagmati and its tributaries are the site of many places of religious significance, ghats and temples which will be connected by the river with a cultural ‘temple walk’.

**HUMAN CONNECTIVITY**

The river and its banks can become the urban green infrastructure by promoting walking, bicycling, relieving the city of traffic pressure, giving streams a healthy transportation alternative and add new space for social interaction.

**UNHOLY RIVER**

Watch this, Nepal Times video that follows the Bagmati from a spring in Shiva Shankh Park, through the city, Captured over lots of re-use, re-planting, treatment plants, and efforts to clean up the river.
Empowering league,
Support your favorite basketball team at the Turkish Airlines EMU league. Organized to sustain physical and mental wellbeing of players with physical disabilities.
10 June, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, British School, Nirosha. 10 cards on mandatory. 9842399639, bhooti.english@gmail.com

Youth conclave,
Discover a unique platform to promote Nepali language currently. Young leaders from South Asian region will be sharing their experiences and discussing about a common forum to foster the regional cooperation.
10 to 11 June, 9 am to 6 pm, Nepali Tourism Board, Embankment Road. 4748689

World youth festival,
Apply to participate in world’s biggest youth and students festival in Belo, Russia. The online registration deadline for the festival is 10 June.

Laughter for life,
A part of fundraising event that is being organized to save cancer patients. Popular singer Chandra Prasad Sthai and comedian Sandip Chettri will be taking the stage.
14 June, 7 pm to 2 am, Karma Bar and Lounge, Tronglechek, 071-477148, karma.bangle@gmail.com

Mud fest,
Celebrate this rice-planting festival by getting soaked in the sun, playing in mud and mingling with locals. Includes a sumptuous Newari festival at the end of the day, June 13, 1 pm, Khokana, Rs. 1950 for adults, Rs. 999 for children, free for children below 4. Information: http://www.vocaltourism.com

Kora Cycling,
Join hundreds of cycling enthusiasts and ride 50, 100, or 150 km to raise funds for a cycling trail in the Bungmati area of Kathmandu Valley.
15 July, 7 am onwards Patan Durbar Square. https://facebook.com/KoraCycling

Blogger networking,
Sign up for a free networking event for Rising Junkie Aspiring bloggers and writers can participate too.
10 June, 2:30 pm, Tribhuvan Kathmandu, Woodland Complex, Dadabarram. Admission: Free for members, for more details: mousungkar@gmail.com

Acoustic Friday,
Top the acoustic sets of Woods band. Enjoy a bottle of free beer when you buy a tower beer.
June, 5 to 7 pm, Jhy Ate Khelo and Bar, 01 4202078

Utopia,
For a mixed ambiance and mouth watering food. Delivery services available. Khokana, 01 500558

Phat Kath,
Offering Frenchish food, a stir-fryable casserole, low tables and hookahs for diggins, tables and chairs for normal people, and a farmstirle hip hop soundtrack for everyone.
Thamel, 98495687

Coffee Pasal,
A place to lolly sip on a good cup of coffee while looking at the Rasbhari museum.
Durbar Marg, 01 440465

Jay Sean Live,
Book your tickets now to listen to British singer and songwriter Jay Sean perform live in Kathmandu.
28 June, 7 pm onwards, Black Region, Kathmandu.

Deja Vu,
Spend an evening at this budget restaurant that offers more than six types of mantras. Try chicken kurcha. Good music guaranteed.
Axton, 01 440268

1905,
Heritage boutique suites with garden dining. 1905 Suites and Restaurant is now open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Bookings open for four boutique suites with promotional rates and offers open till 14 June. Magadheshwar, Naxal. For more information: 98480/4460

Saigon Pho,
Spacious diiner with authentic Vietnamese dishes.
Lilanchet, 01 4453320

Soul Saturday,
Spend a musical evening with your friends and family. Bingo. This Saturday will be taking the stage with melodious Bollywood and Vocail tunes.
14 June, 7 pm to 11 pm, Imperial Restaurant and Bar, 9879007020.

Oriental Kitchen,
Delicious authentic Chinese and Indian food. this weekend. Tip: Try momos and dispay roti.
Bakhtat, 01 444170

The Bent Fork,
A charming European style restaurant offers best satvik and varieties of continental dishes.
Bikash Kumar, 01 5509888

Hotel Shangi-La,
Let the subtleties of Arabian cuisine tease your palate or sapar if pastas if you’re not too adventurous with food.
Every Saturday, 11 am to 7 pm, Shambhata Garden, Hotel Shangri-La, Rs 1500 per person. 01 4402999 (Ext. 726/720/728)

Monsorn madness,
Head down to Pahala and enjoy an exclusive two nights three days package with Shangri-La Villas & Resorts.
Pahala, Rs 52,900 per person (01) 4402657 / 580/100777 / 580/106577

Jhule mountain resort,
Resting 705m above sea level, the eco resort boasts a farm house that stretches acres/fi covered in fresh pine. Enjoy an organic home stay experience.
Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park. Lopsishahi-3, Jhule,(01) 7225993

Barahi Jungle Lodge,
The first eco-jungle lodge of ‘Chitwan directly offers the Chitwan National Park. Spa, boutique guest room, individual and two-in-one private villas, including a suite with a private swimming pool. Meguwa, Chitwan. 01 4402820

Neydo Monastery,
A monastic and guest house. Neydo is home to many significant religious sites of the great saddhus. Leave your troubles behind in this beautiful setting.
Pharping, Kathmandu. neydohotel.com

Kasara Resort,
A historic resort located in the heart of Chitwan National Park. For those who value their privacy and prefer a more secure stay, Kasara offers two-pulture suites with private pools.
Chitwan (01445/5/7-4484681, skasara.com)

Baltahi Village Resort,
A small, cozy retreat with a bird’s eye view of green terrace fields dined with rustic painted bamboo.
Baltahi, Kodari, 01 5507578

Dwarkai’s Resort,
A historical lifestyle retreat, drawing on ancient Himalayan knowledge and philosophy of care for nature and for oneself, set in magnificent natural surroundings.
Dhulikhel, (01) 7400627, dwarkaisresort@dhulikhel.com

Mango Tree Lodge,
Culture walker, rating in the Kathmandu, wildlife exploration and jungle safari at the Bardia National Park.
Dhulikhel. Bardo, vilage@ mangotree LODGE.com

Gokarna Forest Resort,
A picturesque paradise that relaxes you and encourages meditation, just a 20 minute drive away from Kathmandu. Gokarna, (01) 4455272, info@gokarna.net
Don’t wait for Melamchi

Even if there is water in your tap, it makes sense to harvest rainwater

TYLER MCMAHON

One question that I encounter a lot is “What will happen to rainwater harvesting after Melamchi comes?” Until recently, it was a question fairly easily ignored since Melamchi seemed like a literal pipe dream. Then as the years went on, Melamchi progressed very quickly including the equally necessary distribution pipe improvements. This means that the targeted 2018 completion date and delivery of water is likely.

Melamchi is a much-needed project for Kathmandu. Better municipal water means a healthier population and less groundwater extraction. One must applaud the progress of the project, although we would have wished for a little less dust.

But once snow melt from Melamchi starts flowing into our taps, does it mean rainwater harvesting is no longer necessary? No.

Melamchi is years late, it was originally forecast to meet the demand at the beginning of the new millennium. Now the demand is approaching 400 million liters per day, with a current wet season supply of 150MLD before leakage. That is a shortage of 250MLD, excluding leakages, which is more than Melamchi. Phase 1 will bring Rainwater harvesting for direct use is still needed to reduce continued groundwater extraction.

Even before 2000, groundwater over-extraction from deep wells in Kathmandu was already a problem. Additionally, shallow groundwater depletion is obvious with household and community wells, dhunge shares, and local pokharis going dry.

Before cities were made, stormwater infiltrated into the ground through farms, forests and grassland. Now stormwater washes pollutants off the roads and (sometimes) flows into wastewater treatment systems. In a monsoon climate, like Nepal where nearly 75 meters of rainfall is packed into six months, this creates an undue burden on wastewater treatment systems. It also makes a high risk for combined sewer overflows, where heavy rainfall causes untreated wastewater from working wastewater treatment systems to overflow into the river. Already, there are problems with the few existing, partially functional, systems in Kathmandu. Steamer flows make them worse.

Combined sewer overflows are a problem even in cities like New York and Philadelphia which are investing billions into natural retention and recharge systems (Green Infrastructure) to minimize wastewater costs and sewage spills. These interventions were chosen because of their cost-effectiveness, both in up-front capital and operation costs, and the many secondary benefits.

Green Infrastructure includes various technologies to trap and replenish rainwater, including green roofs, rainwater collection and recharge, bioswales, permeable pavement, rain gardens and more. Many of these technologies are attractive and cost-effective, and rainwater harvesting is already well-recognized and practiced in Kathmandu.

Kathmandu is blessed with an amazing network of historical water infrastructure, from stone spouts to pokharis to community wells. This infrastructure should be restored as well. One way to help do this, especially for many of the historical ponds and stone spouts, is increasing recharge again. This can be done in a combined way through modern green infrastructure like other cities are investing in, and restoring old, historical sites with a bit of creativity.

In addition, Green Infrastructure has many secondary benefits including carbon sequestration, urban heat island mitigation, and green spaces, reduced energy demand through shading from vegetation, improved air quality and quality of life. These are other good examples of rain gardens being used to offset areas for pedestrians and cyclists from the roads.

Kathmandu Valley has a good opportunity to do this right now, especially with newly elected Mayors and Ward Committees. All of them are talking about water, energy and sustainable transport and this can be one way to help clean up Kathmandu. Since everything is being dug up, the right time to invest in this infrastructure, instead of the large sewers which are coming later, is now.

Kathmandu has an advantage because rainwater harvesting (left) has gained momentum over the past decade and a growing body of data on groundwater and recharge potential is also becoming available. The only thing remaining is continued coordination between government agencies including the road, electricity and wastewater treatment works.

Five wastewater treatment plants are being built, an integrating stormwater planning, rainwater harvesting and other green infrastructure (including household incentives for their own systems, including already built ones), and historical water infrastructure planning with the future plans for wastewater treatment will be the next step.

Tyler McMahon is an activist at One Planet Solution and SmartPam.
Disney’s 1991 animation Beauty and the Beast, along with its other classics like The Little Mermaid (1989), and The Lion King (1994) still stand today as the go-to classics for kids, with equally delighted adults viewing these yummy morsels side by side. In recent years Disney has sought to revive its old classics in live action with the likes of the wonderful, biting Maleficent (2014), the quite charming Cinderella (2015), and most recently last year’s fun, fabulous The Jungle Book. This year’s Beauty and the Beast marks yet another enormous success for a classic production company and studio that has remade its old successes into pure box office gold — the film has grossed over $1.2 billion to date against a budget of $160 million.

For those who remember the cartoon, this live action remake is almost word for word, and yet it manages to take on a life of its own, mainly due to the absolutely convincing, heart-warming performance of Emma Watson, who plays Belle, quite literally the Beauty of the title. Filled with star power, the film is fortified by delightful performances from Ian McKellen, Emma Thompson, Ewan McGregor, and Stacey Tucci who appear (if do not want to spoil the guessing game) as the various staff in the palace that, along with the cursed Beast (Dan Stevens), have been turned into objects of furniture, decorative pieces, or crockery by a mysterious enchantress.

Dan Stevens himself, mainly of Downtown Abbey fame, is magnificent as the Beast, showing a range that I had not previously thought him capable of, to the extent that his reversion to a foot of handsome prince, was somewhat disappointing — the Beast was so much more interesting; humourous and grumpy, than the shiny haired, toothy Disney prince he reverts to that seems modeled for another generation when getting your happily ever after was the primary objective for little girls and young women.

Which brings me to Disney’s evolution from those classic tropes of princesses and princes to the more nuanced endings such as in the other smash hit Frozen (2013), and, of course Maleficent. In both these films, as well as in Beauty and the Beast, the main characters are tenacious women who have courage, brains, and more nuance than the usually sapphied, big-eyed characters who moan about hoping for salvation from handsome young men.

There is nothing wrong with wanting a good love story, but it just isn’t true that that is all there is in life, these days. Thankfully, it appears that some influential people realise the power of cinema in perpetuating certain tropes and with these new iterations of old beloveds, children, both boys and girls, can find so much more than just the love stories, songs and dances from before.

They are now given another lens into the world where things may not always be well, but courage, compassion, good will, and well, yes, love, do usually win the day.

MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

HAPPENINGS

BETTER HALS: First Lady Arno Rana after congratulating her Prime Minister husband Sher Bahadur Deuba during his swearing-in ceremony at Shital Niwas on Wednesday.

CREDENTIALS: Ambassador Sabir Oxford Tahirul of Turkey presents his letter of credential to President Bidya Bhandari at Shital Niwas on Monday.

KAMON AICHEN: Major General Pratima Bahadur Shival of Nepali Army welcomes Bangladesh Army Chief Gen Saleh Mohammad Shafiqul Huq at Kathmandu airport on Tuesday at the start of a five-day visit.

ROYAL PRAYERS: Former princess Aruna Shah and her son Indrayendra Shah on their way to family’s patron deity at the Gokarneshwari temple in Gokha on Tuesday.

BEAUTIES: The winners of this year’s Miss Nepal beauty pageant Nukha Gurung, Rajuna Shrestha, Nitya Shahr & Saihara Basnet after being crowned in Kathmandu on Saturday.
Yes, prime minister

A
fter serving as Prime Minister twice under the constitutional monarchy and once under an active monarch, NC President Sher Bahadur Deuba has become Prime Minister for a fourth time in a republic. Congratulations to Deuba, and we hope that Nepal finds a mature leader in the secessionist PM.

Deuba’s tenure this time could be relatively easier. The coalition that he is leading has already ruled the country for one year, and is unlikely to unravel for another year. Deuba is expected to hold all three elections before November, and the Maoists will certainly not pull out of this coalition before that.

Preparations for the second phase of local elections are in full swing, and Deuba will get due credit for holding them. But he would face bigger obstacles in holding provincial and parliamentary elections. Maoist parties are pushing for redrawing of federal boundaries before provincial elections. Persuading them to participate in all the elections will be his biggest test.

The country has just witnessed impressive GDP growth, the political transition is nearly over. Mega development projects are being completed. Nepal’s relations with neighbours have improved markedly. So it should be a smooth ride for Deuba compared to his previous two tumultuous tenures. He just needs to avoid repeating past mistakes, and focus on solving the present political crisis.

Deuba’s second challenge is to bring Madhesi dissidents on the board by amending the Constitution. The Madhes-based Rastriya Janata Party has threatened to disrupt local elections if the Constitution is not amended beforehand. Nearly two-thirds of MPs have voted for Deuba, and he just needs a few more to amend the Constitution. But it is not certain whether all the MPs who voted for him will also support the amendment bill. So securing a two-thirds majority for the amendment is still not as easy as it looks.

Deuba has other challenges. Of late, India and China have shown heightened interest in Nepal and Deuba will have to maintain equidistance. Deuba and his coalition partner Pushpa Kamal Dahal have a common position on transitional justice, but they have to respect international principles. The UML will not allow them to have their way on this issue.

Deuba’s party constantly criticised the UML government for delaying post-earthquake reconstruction. When it formed a new government with the Maoists, it sacrificed the CED (the National Reconstruction Authority) to make the UML appointee, Now the NC leads the government and its man is at the NRA’s helm. Deuba will face more criticism if reconstruction is not expedited.

CJ exposes PM

Chief Justice Sushila Karki in an interview with Nepal, 4 – 11 June

Nepal: How do you evaluate your term as Chief Justice? Sushila Karki: I could not complete all the week that I set out to do. There were too many obstacles along the way.

Did you anticipate the extent of political pressure you faced in the Supreme Court? I never thought the political leaders would go that far. Was it necessary for them to suddenly file an impeachment motion against me when I was in the middle of hearing a case? If they really needed to impeach me, was it not necessary for them to first have a public debate about my mis-deeds?

They said you refused to meet their emissary, Maoist leader Ram Prasad Pun. Why should I need to meet politicians? It is just not ethical for a judge to meet and consult politicians before hearing a case. Can Pun instruct me to do his bidding? Should I listen to him? If I do, what will society say?

How did you react when you heard about the charges against you? They accused me of lacking good conduct. How? There is no explanation. They accused me of not allocating cases to some justices. But I never excluded any justices from the case lists.

Could it be possible that some justices were interested in some particular cases, and you did not assign such cases to them? Cases are assigned to justices depending on their seniority, capacity and expertise. To decide which justices should which cases is within the jurisdiction of a Chief Justice. I must exercise my right. And none of the justices complained about it with me, so I don’t know where the politicians got the idea.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal publicly claimed several times that he had ‘a deal’ with Chief Justice. What really transpired during your meetings with him?

He called me over three times. I did not spend more than five minutes on any occasion. I saw it as a courtesy meeting between the heads of two state organs. But every time I met him, he told me the media that he had a deal with me. During a chance meeting at a party organized by the Army, he raised the issue of the case against Balkrishna Dhungel and sought my help. I told him straight to his face that I would not want to see him again. I was cautious about meeting him. This is why I refused to meet him the last time (just days before the impeachment motion in Parliament).

How did the PM want you to deal with the Lokman Singh Karki case?

Now that I am stepping down from the Supreme Court, I must tell people about it. A day after his return from India, the PM called me over. During his stay in New Delhi, I last ordered a review of the Supreme Court verdict on the writ against Karki’s appointment as the CICCA Chief. He told me: ‘You created problems by ordering a review of this case, Lokman has threatened me. I am in the PM’s vest only for seven more months now. Why don’t you postpone this case and deliver your verdict once I step down?’ I told him that the case was already set in motion, and it was not in my hands to stop it.

Did Lokman himself pressure you?

Those who knew me did not have the guts to be Lokman’s mediators. But lots of my own relatives tried to talk me out of this case. Some of them even wept in front of me.

Why do you think political leaders tried to impeach you? I was not the first justice to face impeachment. Justice Ananda Mohan Bhattarai had also faced it because he was an honest and competent justice. Why did they try to impeach him? To intimidate us. Our politicians think they are all powerful and everyone should fall in line. Just like the king. They accused me of overstressing my judicial

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HOW TO AVOID POWER CUTS THIS WINTER

Demand will outstrip supply and load-shedding will resume unless NEA can push its energy efficiency plan

SHEREJANA SHRESTHA

When Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) Chief Kulman Ghising boasted uninterrupted electricity supply seven months ago, his predecessor Mukeesh Raj Kulli challenged him to sustain it through the winter. Ghising not only did that, he ensured consumers did not suffer power cuts in the following dry season as well.

He accomplished that by managing distribution, stopping big companies from bribing NEA officials to ensure 24-hour power, and importing electricity from India to cover the shortfall. However, even Ghising now admits that he may not be able to prevent power cuts this winter.

It is the simple arithmetic of supply and demand: peak demand this winter can reach 1,500 MW but there will only be 1,000 MW of supply from domestic sources and imports from India (see graphic).

“Of course, we can manage power supply by generating more electricity from new NEA and private hydropower plants to end load-shedding in winter, but we also plan to reduce demand by promoting energy efficient programs and introducing solar net metering,” Ghising told Nepal Times in an interview this week.

Ghising’s strategy for this winter is to reduce demand by a mass nationwide replacement of 20 million incandescent bulbs with efficient light-emitting diode (LEDs). But when he announced this plan in April, there was an uproar in the media over alleged corruption in the government-to-government deal to import the bulbs from India.

NEA plans to sell 9 watt LED bulbs from Philips with a three-year warranty for Rs 140 each. The bulb’s market price is above Rs 50. Ghising hopes that when all 26 million bulbs are distributed, the grid will save up to 200 MW this winter.

“That is like adding an expensive new 200 MW hydropower plant that would take years to build,” said Ghising, who brushed aside criticism of the deal. “Look, I am not in the bulb business. People now understand that they were being ripped off buying expensive bulbs, so there was resistance from some quarters.”

NEA’s other plans are to further reduce demand by encouraging people to use energy efficient fans, tv sets and

GENERATING MORE POWER BY

With improved electricity supply and reduced load-shedding, the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) must be feeling like the victim of its own success.

ANALYSIS

Bishal Thapa

Booed by the improving reliability of grid electricity supply, consumers are accelerating purchases of appliances that they might have put off earlier because of power cuts. The gap that the state-owned electricity utility needs to fill is getting larger – the prospects of another winter with long hours of load-shedding suddenly looks hauntingly real.

To meet the challenges of ever-growing demand and consistently short supply, NEA must aggressively adopt what might seem a bit counter-intuitive to its business: get its customers to stop buying its electricity by saving more of it.

Electricity demand is increasing faster than anticipated after reliable electricity supply unsecked latent demand and encouraged the rapid spread of mechanisation. In Nepal, reliable electricity supply, just like economic growth, is a big driver of power demand on its own.

Studies commissioned by NEA and the Investment Board of Nepal (IBN) project that peak demand could increase between 8.3%–10% per year to reach 3,200 MW and 3,660 MW respectively by 2025–2026. Even at those growth rates, energy demand will be approximately 15.466 million units or 483 units-annual-per-capita, placing Nepal as one of the energy poorest countries in the world.

If NEA offers reliable supplies, if it allows demand to come on to the system, Nepal’s electricity demand will easily be double of what has been projected. From a vitiating perspective, Nepal’s energy demand must not be pegged to what we can supply but rather to our true aspirations and needs. One way to address Nepal’s energy challenge is to integrate energy efficiency centrally within the national strategy.

Energy efficiency can help address Nepal’s complex challenges. In developed countries where there is a demand-supply balance, energy efficiency is about reducing the overall energy (and environmental) footprint. Our goal for energy efficiency are different: 30% of Nepal’s population doesn’t yet have access to electricity. Seventy percent of our energy mix is still traditional biomass fuels. We are dependent on energy imports and our supply chains are vulnerable. These challenges all stem from one common constraint: we don’t
Total solar power from rooftop panels in Nepal’s urban areas that could be fed to the grid if NEA introduced net metering

200MW

unused electricity is exported to the public utility grid

Solar power cells convert sunlight into electricity

Electricity generated by the solar panels powers equipment and appliances

Inverter changes solar direct current (DC) power into alternating current (AC)

The meter measures electricity flowing in and out of the building

NATION POWER

Self-powered

The restoration of 24-hour electricity supply put many of Nepal’s solar-powered barns and water pumps back in business. They had seen their businesses decimated by the power cuts.

Now, there may be good news for solar panel installers and water pumps for the first time, NEA is going to implement its much-awaited net metering scheme which will allow households that generate more than 500kW of power to sell surplus electricity to the grid.

Under this scheme, if a household generates 330kW annually, it will be allowed to inject 90% of that energy (300kW) to the NEA grid. The households would be charged for only 10% (30kW) of its electricity use for the entire year.

“Solar net metering is a stable economy-saving and demand-driven wave that will be the next big thing in the country,” explained NEA Chief Rishi Pradhan, who’s responsible for net metering.

The NEA Board has given the green light for the trial on net metering, and is all set to call a tender for the solar supply and the scheme is expected to start in early 2022.

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Director Urjwala, who’s responsible for net metering, said that NEA is looking to implement a system that will allow people to earn from their solar panels.

Shreejana Shrestha

saving energy

have adequate energy supply. And that is exactly where energy efficiency plays a big role. Doing more with less through energy efficiency will enable us to transfer our savings to those that don’t have electricity. We will be able to reduce imports and the vulnerability to supply shocks. With energy efficiency, we may not be able to reduce our total energy usage but we will be able to make better use of our limited supply.

There are many opportunities for energy efficiency in Nepal that could deliver immediate impact. NEA’s program of 20 million LED bulbs could deliver immediate saving of 600MW. But why stop there? Why not import more LED bulbs? Why not completely ban incandescent bulbs?

There are similar opportunities across commercial and industrial establishments. In water-pumping, street lights, government procurement, better integration of distributed road-side solar. If pursued systematically, savings from energy efficiency could fully offset electricity imports and current levels of load shedding.

The unique thing about energy efficiency in Nepal is that it could unlock Nepal’s true hydro potential. We can get to 10,000 MW or 20,000 MW of hydro power faster if we first start by saving energy.

The single biggest constraint to adding new hydro plants in Nepal is the need for storage capacity. A reservoir hydropower plant that delivers electricity at peak periods would diversify the system and allow many more rain-off-River plants to come online. Storage hydro requires large reservoirs, which are expensive to build, hard to finance and have high social-environmental costs.

Could energy efficiency replace the need for a large reservoir based storage hydro plant? Absolutely. What is the difference between a storage plant that provides energy at peak hours versus a smart energy efficiency system that can reduce selected loads at the same peak hours? There is none.

An institutional approach to energy efficiency is urgently required. Enabled by today’s technologies and management systems, distributed energy efficiency can deliver the same system benefits as a reserved based storage hydro plant — and more. We have been intoxicated by the prospects of ‘bountiful’ hydro power potential for so long that we have cast energy efficiency as a ‘national anti-clause’.

But if adopted and implemented properly, energy efficiency can meaningfully help address Nepal’s challenges on energy access, security and import dependence.

Rishi Pradhan is Managing Director of Solar Utja Nepal, an energy services company.
The Ass

So, how many times have you been prime minister?

What a pathetic flag-waving Nepals want to know is what Prime Minister Oli is going to do about India ceasing war on our morale? Are we going to just sum the Indian Ambassador to hand him a diplomatic demarche and/or alienate him, and leave it at that? Do we have the guts to go as far as threatening to cut off diplomatic links unless dumpings are restored their rightful place in Kathmandu ever since? If you agree, tweet with hashtag momowasborninnepal.

In the wake of the letter he took before the President on Wednesday at Skitul, Nava, the prime minister swore to defend Nepal’s sovereignty and territorial ambitions, while safeguarding our glorious symbol of national identity — the red mango. No matter where in the world the lamps of meat are wrapped in forest to be stewed, mangoes have been and will always be an integral part of the Nepali way of life, and any attack anywhere on our dumping rights is an attack on us. We are even prepared to invoke it so as to defend our intellectual property right over the dumping recipe. And that’s a threat.

Soon after the swelling Prime Minister Oli was sworn again when he saw the news about the PM’s mango ban. So, he sat down with his new plucks and discussed priorities:

1. Holding three elections before January 2018 and making sure that all other relations of outgoing PM Oli are assured victories in municipal, mayoral or ward mafia positions. Candidates running in Lisan won courts will be given full authority by the Cottage Commission to tear up ballot papers to favours, and an avalanche of winning candidates will be crowned Sputnik Jeewon Pokhara awards on the next Republican Day or Durbar Day, whichever comes first.

2. Require all foreign mentors who send remittances to sign Provo of National Pride and Prejudice. Just before PhD graduation, stopped down to fork out additional monies to new entrants to realize the license.

3. In the interest of the smooth functioning of the state, uphold the grand tradition to promote junior unqualified police chiefs, arm-twist the Chief Justice and threaten the Election Commission if they don’t do as instructed.

4. Sign an executive order allowing prime ministerial ministers, and members of all 15 deputy prime ministers to sell their own homes and rent new down protections on obrazas.

5. Find bars mangoes, ban past purs in instalation.