Referendum for elections

The first two phases of local polls, with their high turnout of 60-80%, in six provinces were essentially a referendum on elections – reflecting the strong desire among Nepalis to vote for local governments. This will put pressure on the ruling coalition, opposition and the Madhes-based RJPN alliance to get Province 2 to go for voting soon.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, who is often blamed for sabotaging democracy by calling off parliamentary and local elections during his second tenure, has taken one step toward redeeming his past. But it ain’t over until Deuba successfully holds local polls in the eight Tarai districts of Province 2, and provincial and parliamentary elections soon after. There isn’t much time left.

The constitution requires the existing Constituent Assembly-turned-legislature to be replaced by a new federal Parliament before 21 January 2018. But some constituencies will be snowbound by November, and then there are the Dasain, Tihar Chhat festival before that – leaving a narrow window for two big elections.

The constitution has envisioned three levels of elections to be conducted in ascending order, or even simultaneously. This is because representatives of local and provincial councils will form the Electoral College that elects the Upper House of the federal Parliament.

Ex-Chief Election Commissioner Neel Panda argues that provincial and parliamentary elections can be held simultaneously during October (see Guest Editorial, page 2). The government needs to form a commission to delineate new constituencies right away and finish its task by the end of monsoon to pave the way for provincial elections. The Election Commission needs to publish a timetable, and stick firmly to it without political interference.

All these are huge technical challenges, but even more difficult will be bring the RJPN onboard. Local polls were postponed four times in Province 2 just for them, and they have major issues with provincial boundaries as they stand. The RJPN boycotted the first two phases of local elections, and it is threatening to disrupt the remaining elections if their demand for a constitutional amendment is not met. But Madhesi voters turned out in large numbers this week even in the Tarai districts of Province 5, where the RJPN believes it has a hold.

Sociologist Chaitanyak Mishra says: “Taking its cue from the large turnout of Madhesi people in the second phase, the RJPN must take part in Province 2 elections, or it will simply vanish.”

Mishra says the high turnout in the plains of Province 5 busted a few myths: the RJPN is the only force in the Tarai, Madhesi people consider the party as their saviour, and have rejected the constitution.

However, Mishra warns: “It is too early to write an obituary for the RJPN. We will have to wait for Province 2 elections for that.”

Om Ashta Rai
WEDNESDAY'S SECOND PHASE OF LOCAL ELECTIONS IN PROVINCE 1, 7, 10 TO BE HELD ON 30 JUNE - 6 JULY 2017

GUEST EDITORIAL
NEEL KANTHA UPRETY

 Voting in the rain

This is not the first time Nepal is holding local elections in phases: the previous two local polls were also held in two rounds. But both the past and the current elections are different, as the poll dates have been extended due to the ongoing election crisis. The second phase of the elections is expected to be held on 30 June – 5 July, and the final phase on 6 – 12 July. Despite the ongoing political crisis, the Election Commission (EC) has decided to hold the elections on schedule. The commission is also taking all necessary precautions to ensure the security of voters and election officials. The EC has already issued guidelines to polling stations, including the use of face masks and hand sanitizers. Despite the ongoing political crisis, the EC has decided to hold the elections on schedule. The commission is also taking all necessary precautions to ensure the security of voters and election officials. The EC has already issued guidelines to polling stations, including the use of face masks and hand sanitizers.
BEST PART OF THE JOURNEY
STOPOVER IN ISTANBUL

During long transits, all our Nepalese passengers can now apply for e-VISA to Turkey at our sales office and get hotel accommodations or free tours.*

*Terms and Conditions apply. For further information, please contact: 443 63 34-4439436-4439856 | KMISALES@THY.COM | TURKISHAIRLINES.COM

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 20 YEARS
Salute to the people

These elections were proof that the public got wise to the attempt to pit plains people against hill people

A

Again and again, Nepal’s citizens saw the day. When politicians turn craven, civil society loses humanitarian spine, and academia fails to stand up for reason and democracy, it is the people who rise and reject autocrats who conduct coups.

ON THE WAY UP
Kanak Mani Dixit

They show resilience when blockades are implemented, and refuse to turn ‘communal’ when all kinds of forces national and international seek to stir up communities against each other.

Indeed, the God of Mischief living in the netherworld would be exasperated with the population category known as ‘citizens of Nepal’, of mountains, hill and plain. This cohort refuses to succumb to radical populism even as the politicians and intelligentsia fall like ninepins, see things crystal clear when the lenses of the consultant-scholars are clouded with biases, prejudice and prejudice.

So, the Madhesi-badi leaders may shout from the rooftops that it war they who shut down the southern border in 2015. But no one except a few befuddled satirical bemused the nearest narrative, that the Madhesi citizens were blockading the montane (Pahadiya and Himal) population. The Kathmandu state has a lot to answer for when it comes to the marginalised Madhesi, but let us also be clear that the plains people were not the blockaders.

A ‘people’s movement’ is not possible to mount with regularity, so the people do look forward to elections to express their orientation. After doing so in 2013 for Constituent Assembly it, they waited for local government elections to happen, which had been hanging fire for two decades. The people all over wanted these polls — only some politicians thought otherwise, and were aided by the positioning of certain embassies and donor entities who are required at this time to go into deep introspection.

The local elections were finally announced, but then many sought to help the Madhesi-badi leadership by forcing the breakup of announced local polls first into two, and then three phases. All along, they sought to buttress those plains-origin leaders who had lost in the 2013 elections and suffered from a severe case of bullet phobia — they would prefer provincial elections and forget about local government in toto.

Meanwhile, big party politicians had milked the exchequer for years through the ‘all-party mechanism’ and its divide-the-spoils corruption. To their heart of hearts they too disliked the local polls, but they knew that they had stretched the public’s patience too far. And yet, they prevailed.

What happened was travesty.

Elections were not only into three phases, with the danger of dividing the country by ‘altitude-communalism’, the Election Commission allowed the results of one phase to be counted and announced before the conduct of the next phase. Many principles of democratic elections were thrown out of the window as the Commission stooped to the whims of the ruling regime — best

seen in the call for re-elections in one Chitwan poll centre where Maoist goons tore up some ballot papers.

But the Nepal voters are capable of over-riding the unaccountability of the politicians, bureaucrats and commissioners. Even as everyone and his cousin tried to sabotage the polls, the people unmistakably accepted the first phase and delivered 73 percent participation on 14 May. They bided their time, and went in for the second phase of elections on 28 June, delivering 70.5 percent. The ‘altitude communists’ were most distressed as Wednesday dawned, and more so as the Madhesi, Tharu, Muslim and Pahadiya of the plains participated with enthusiasm. The self-belief of the Nepali people there and elsewhere had once again overcome odds presented not only by our own but also by the naysayers in the international community, who supported agitators and provocateurs.

One can expect that the long-suffering public of Province 2 will go to vote as did the people of Provinces 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

They will reject the attempt to leave them as second-class, neo-voting citizens and cannon fodder for politicians and parties, this embassy or that ‘consultant service’, and they will come forth to the elections on 18 September.

The people have shown that they are willing to go to polls in the middle of the monsoon and amidst patchy planting, and this has itself been an amazing breakthrough that allows more flexibility in future elections. Using the precedence of 28 June, and given the unfairness of pushing Province 2 elections to faraway September, one may ask the powers that be to consider bringing the date forward.

With the three phases of local elections over, Nepal will finally be on its way to implementing the Constitution, with provincial and national elections to happen in rapid succession by January 2018. The goal is the full post-conflict, post-transformational governance of Nepal politics, which can only happen when we have a new Parliament rather than the extended Constituent Assembly that is the House of today.

The new Parliament will allow us to focus on a world beyond politics, and more than the politicians it is the will of the people that we will see through.
End the wait

MEENAKSHI GANGULY

The office of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Nepal is located next to the Peace and Reconstruction ministry. The massage and optics seem appropriate to achieve lasting peace after a decade-long brutal conflict, truth and justice is key. The promise of justice evaporation in the last decade, regardless of the political party in power. The commitment to justice appears to end with setting up an office, and arranging photo ops with dignitaries.

Even as a new prime minister takes office in Kathmandu, there is little indication of political will to ensure justice. The commission faces the fact that Supreme Court orders setting out its powers. Conflict victims are not quite sure what they can hope for.

In 2002, Sunam Adhikari’s father, a school headmaster who refused to submit to extortion, was picked up by Maoist fighters in front of students, then stabbed, shot and his body left hanging from a tree. Adhikari is now part of a victims group seeking justice and says they have waited long enough for the truth commission. Now they are disappointed.

None of the political parties—nor the military—have responded to police complaints or court orders seeking investigations and prosecutions. Even in cases where courts have ordered arrests or convicted people, the accused have refused to submit. The political leadership often refers to war-time cases as “politically motivated” and says they should be handled by the TRC instead. The law specifically recommends amnesty, in contravention of international practice.

In April 2017, the Supreme Court ordered the Inspector General of Nepal Police to arrest Maoist leader Bal Krishna Dhungel, who was convicted for murder in a district court in 2004. Although the ruling was confirmed by the Supreme Court in 2018, Dhungel, an MP, has evaded arrest thanks to political protection. While the Supreme Court said the failure to arrest Dhungel can be treated as contempt, Maoist leaders insist the party leader is a “political case” and handled by the TRC.

The military too, routinely ignores the court, refusing to produce suspects before judges, or ensure that those convicted are arrested. On 16 April 2017, the Katre district court sentenced three officers to life imprisonment for the murder of Malna Semawar, a 10-year-old girl, who was tortured and killed in army custody in February 2004. The trial took place in the absence of any of the four accused, despite repeated court summonses. An arrest warrant in 2008 was never enforced, with the police unable to trace the accused. The three officers are no longer in the army and are believed to have fled abroad.

Pratima Sherpa to US
Nepal’s promising young female golfer, Pratima Sherpa, 19, left for the United States this week for a training camp and to participate in tournaments in Ventura, California, accompanied by her coach Sachin Bhattrai. Their roundtrip tickets are provided by Qatar Airways, and Galanz Golf Smart.

Busy Qatar
Qatar Airways and Hamad International Airport reported an exceptionally high volume of traffic during the FIFA World Cup holiday period despite the on-going travel ban on the country. The airline also announced 10 years of service to the US this week by illuminating the Empire State Building in its signature burgundy and white colors.

Meenakshi Ganguly’s South Asia Director, Human Rights Watch
Giving in to Gorkhaland

New Delhi grapples with trying to find a solution once and for all that will satisfy Darjeeling's demand for autonomy

The indefinite strike called by the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) in the hills of Darjeeling has entered its third week and its supporters show no signs of relenting or relenting. Under its fiery leader Bimal Gurung, the GJM has quit the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), the quasi-autonomous administrative council formed in July 2011. The GJM was heading that body till recently, and now wants to push for a Gorkhaland state separate from Bengal.

The demand is a century old, dating back to British India. This time, emotions boiled over when the Bengal government decided to make the Bengali language mandatory in schools in the moutains, where most people are Nepali-speaking. Three people were killed when paramilitary forces fired on protesters, and there has been much property damage.

The region bordering Nepal's Sikkim and Kumaon districts appears to be headed for prolonged unrest given the conflicting interests of the major political stakeholders. This is the BJP government in New Delhi, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) in Bengal and the GJM itself.

The BJP is wary of the Gorkhaland demand primarily because of the experience of Telangana. It was carved out of Andhra Pradesh in 2014 and the United Progressive Alliance government paid a heavy price in elections that followed.

Although the BJP has a history of supporting state bifurcations, and as the National Democratic Alliance presided over the formation of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand in 2000, it is cautious about a repeat of the Telangana experience in Gorkhaland, especially at a time when it is making great efforts to dislodge TMC leader Manmata Banerjee in Kolkata.

Bengal has 42 Lok Sabha seats and the BJP may not be willing to risk its political ambitions in such a large state. Although it is tempted to back the agitation in Darjeeling to needle Banerjee, it knows that splitting off Gorkhaland would be deeply unpopular among Bengalis in the plains.

BJP leaders have pointed out that they never included statehood for Gorkhas in 2009 or 2014 election manifests. Union Minister and Darjeeling MP SS Ahirwal has blamed Banerjee's divisive policies for the current crisis. "Gorkhaland is an old demand and a solution cannot be delivered overnight," he said.

The BJP's general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya has also said that the BJP "cannot support a separate Gorkhaland state".

Banerjee has stood firm against Gorkhaland, treating it as a low and order problem, and turning the issue into one of Bengal's pride and sub-nationalism. She has called GJM supporters "insurgents", even after withdrawing the decision to make Bengali compulsory. Despite escalating tensions in the hills, she went on a tour of the Netherlands just to show her disclaim for the demand.

Although the agitation has united disparate Gorkha groups, Bimal Gurung distorts the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) and the Jan Adhikar Party. He said last week: "There is no guarantee that they will not ditch the Gorkhaland demand midway."

Gurung rose to the GJM after falling out with his mentor and GNLF chief Subhash Ghisingh, who spearheaded the Gorkha agitation in the 1980s that claimed 1,200 lives.

India's national media has carried extensive event-based reporting of the agitation, and tried to be balanced. A few strong op-eds in favour of Gorkhaland have also been published, but the GJM blame the media for " siding with the state and the centre" and also for misquoting Gurung.

What makes the agitation sensitive from a security perspective is that many Gorkha veterans from the Indian Army have spoken out on social media in support of Gorkhaland autonomy and denounced the suppression of the protests.

Military sources say it is an emotive issue that could cause problems for the Indian establishment.

There are 40,000 Gorkhas in 40 battalions of seven regiments of the Indian Army. Forty percent of them are Indian Nepalis from Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, the North-East, Sikkim and Darjeeling, and the rest Nepali nationals.

The agitation therefore needs to be handled with care not just because of the sentiments of Nepal-speakers in India but also for bilateral relations with Nepal.

For decision makers in New Delhi, the Gorkhaland demand is one of inadequate autonomy, and thus the focus will now shift to further financial and political devolution to the GTA. Besides the political implications for the BJP in West Bengal, there are also security concerns because of the strategic location of the Darjeeling hills and its geopolitical ramifications.

Akanshya Shah is a Nepali journalist and resident based in New Delhi.

---

Andrew Lloyd Webber's hit musical comes to Kathmandu! A spectacular musical experience!
SHREJANA SHRESTHA

Everyone in her family pitied Tina Maharjan when she was afflicted with polio. But the thought that disability is a burden only, she established herself as an accomplished basketball player. “Living with polio was a curse, but it is not anymore,” says the 26-year-old, who has had polio since she was one. She couldn’t crawl properly, but her parents took her to shamans instead of a hospital. That delay made her infantile paralysis worse.

Ashish KC, a child health specialist at UNICEF, says: “Although polio cannot be treated, correction of polynemelitis can be done if treated timely and it helps in improving deformities.”

Tina Maharjan is herself mother to an eight-year-old boy, and never gave up. She started playing basketball a year ago, and says that she no longer feels disabled: “I feel I can do anything when I play basketball in a wheelchair.”

She is one of eight polio-afflicted players among 40 female athletes playing in the wheelchair basketball league organised by ENGAGE, a Kathmandu-based NGO, supported by Turkish Airlines and the Swiss Embassy. The finals are slated for 1 July at the Nepal Army in Lagankhel. (See box.)

Tina is already captain of the Wheelchair Sports Association females club, and to date has won five gold medals. She credits her husband for his encouragement. “I am the only person with a disability in my family, but that doesn’t make any difference,” she says with a bright smile. Nepal was declared polio-free in 2014, and 90% of children are vaccinated against the disease every year.

Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria are the only countries where new cases of polio are still being found.

Sarita Thulung was also infected with the poliovirus when she was three, and crawled back and forth to school even though her parents discouraged her. She completed college and started a handicraft business.

Today she is a national basketball player. “Polio deformed my right leg, but not my will,” says Sarita, now 32, who is playing for Jawalakhel wheelchair Sports Club.

An avid sports junkie, she took basketball training here and in Bangkok for 10 months before the league began and says participating in the wheelchair basketball tournament is a dream come true: “Playing basketball is not just a game for me, it is the best way to de-stress. Others play running on legs, I play sitting on a wheelchair.”

Born and raised in Sainali, Sarita was ostracised by her family and relatives for having the disease, which they believed was the curse of an evil spirit. But after finishing studies, she came to Kathmandu and ran her own business to support her family in the Tarai.

Simone Galimberti of ENGAGE says his group wants to raise awareness about disability through sports, and hopes to improve the standard of wheelchair basketball in Nepal with the championship. Most of the 129 players stem from trees while gathering fodder, or were injured in accidents. A third of the players are polio-afflicted. They are the last generation of Nepal with polio. (See box.)

BASKETBALL ON WHEELS

Wheelchair basketball is gathering pace in Nepal thanks to a tournament organised by a non-profit that promotes social inclusion.

The second ENGAGE Empowering League is being held at schools in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Sankhu and four female, are paying for a soon in the finals to be held at The Army Physical and Sports Training Centre on July 1. Jawalakhel Wheelchair Sports Club and British Army Club will play for the men’s title on Saturday, and Wheelchair Sports Association and Nepal Signal Cadet Injury Sports Association will face-off in the women’s category.

The league has been taken place at different venues, like the Bagmati School, St. Aton School and The British School, to raise awareness that people with disabilities who participate in sports. ENGAGE intends to make more physically disabled in sports, building skills, and providing job training for jobs. Says Simone Galimberti of ENGAGE: “We hope will help shape young adults into confident leaders of a more inclusive society.”

Ashish KC
On location with Kesang Tseten

KATE RYAN
in NEPAL

Kesang Tseten whistles as he hikes up the steep mountainside. Sweat pours down his back, but he keeps a steady pace, leaning on his long umbrella turned hiking pole. He stops occasionally to comment on the changing landscape, or simply to marvel at the scenery.

“Sometimes I wonder if this is a job,” he says, taking in the sight of the Bhote Kosi Valley and the forested slopes beyond.

Tseten has the curiosity of a young student, and his hunger to understand humanity propels the documentarian into each film. Last week he pulled him back to the villages of Tetangche and Simbu, the site of his 2006 film, ‘We Corner People’, about villagers who sought help to build a suspension bridge.

As a young man, Tseten wanted to be a writer and earned a journalism degree from Columbia University. His strong sense of narrative eventually led him to film, and Tseten is now one of Nepal’s best known documentarians, with award-winning films including ‘Who Will Be a Goat?’, ‘In Search of the Royal, and Castaway Man’.

People often ask Tseten who his target audience is. His answer is simple: himself.

“You’re not saying I’m doing this because it might look good. You’re going there, driven, compelled to go there, because how do they braint the mountain-top? How do they work? How do they get up mountains? How do they eat dinner? How do they do whatever they do, you know?”

Tseten has to satisfy a self-interest first, to work from the inside-out. “My sense of meaning of film is to understand and then to illuminate or carry understanding to others, not to give answers,” he added.

He is interested in people, their situations, discovering what makes them tick. But he tries to walk a fine line in the relationships he forms with his subjects. In order to prompt spontaneity, he needs to maintain distance, an edge. He does not want people to expect him to help the community beyond sharing its stories.

Still, Tseten visits the family of a 12-year-old girl whose vision is severely impaired. She requires photophoria glasses, so Tseten delivers two pairs special-ordered from Switzerland.

“You help because you are a human being first,” he explains. “You run the risk that this will affect how they talk to you, but you feel compelled to do it. It’s an imperfect thing.”

Perhaps Tseten does cross the line he has drawn for himself, but when you are in the business of illustrating the human condition it is easy to fall into the trap of caring about people.

It is likely due to his calm and generous approach to others that Tseten’s crew comes back to work with him again and again. Reuben Khijit is a sought-after cinematographer who works for news organisations like Al Jazeera, but he chooses to leap across rivers and run his cameras up mountains to work with Tseten. And Shyam Karki is a fiercely loyal shooter, manager, jack of all trades who works for Tseten’s company and has assisted on three of his films.

The trio eat, sleep, work, and joke together with ease. They will return three more times this year to film here. Their challenge is to represent, in one film, how the passage of time and rapid development affects an entire community.

“To me, film is like mine,” says Tseten. “You reduce big gestures to small ones.” Capturing a village over an entire year to create a 60-minute film is just that: minute details that evoke something larger about that community.

After a long day of interviews, Tseten props himself up on his elbow in a small wooden bed. “At the end, your film is a reflection of your experience and making sense of that experience. It is the illumination,” he says. “Happiness is absorption.”

SONG OF LOSS: A still from Kesang Tseten’s 2009 documentary ‘We Corner People’ that shows Dukpa, whose young wife was swept away by the river, and who will appear again in the film’s sequel.

A BRIDGE NOT TOO FAR: Documentary filmmaker Kesang Tseten revisits the village in Rasuwa where, 11 years ago, he shot ‘We Corner People’, in which the villagers built this bridge (left). The new film will deal with the transformation of this once-rural part of Nepal.

NEPAL WHEREVER YOU ARE. Times.com
Revisiting the Corner People

When Kesang Tseten produced We Corner People in 2006, there were no roads, no shops, no infrastructure in the remote village home in Rasuwa, near the Chinese border. The journey to sell woven baskets in the nearest town took days and cost money. And people feared the river.

A flood on the steep stream near Tetangcho and Simbu had just taken a young girl’s life, and the village wanted a bridge. The aid group Helvetas commissioned Tseten to make a film about the construction process and people who felt confined to a corner of Nepal.

Tseten returned last week to document how much the place and people have changed.

Among the most visible transformations along the Ibho Keoli gorge are the new hydropower projects and the busy new road, the only highway to China after the earthquake destroyed Kodari.

“I think the first film resonated with Nepalis, who identified with being small,” said Tseten. “In fact, Nepal is not small with 28 million people. But beside China and India, and economically not being very well developed, people have a sense that they’re nobodies, or people in the corner. Development is passing them by.”

Today, the Ibbo Keoli Valley reverberates with the sound of dynamite and heavy vehicles. Workers drill tunnels and build new roads and more bridges. Chinese contractors at the hydropower project left after the earthquake, and the bulk of the work now is done by Nepali builders, some from nearby villages.

The river that once took a life is being harnessed for 57 megawatts of energy. And a region with no previous economic viability is a boon for Nepal’s development.

Such dramatic change creates an interesting opportunity for Tseten. His first documentary is now archival footage, and the construction along the river acts as a timeline for the people living in it.

Babies were born into a village that now has roads, phones and cash exchange. Elders died. Earthquakes tore down homes. Buddhists converted to Christianity and back again. And the corner people have direct links to the rest of the country and the world.

“It’s hard to show exactly how much a person has changed,” Tseten said. “But measured against the physical changes of the hydropower, it becomes much clearer.”

Tseten and Simbu may have evolved since We Corner People but so, it seems, has the director. Tseten has turned to an observational approach to film in recent years. He looks to filmmakers like Frederick Weisman and the Maysel Brothers for inspiration, and puts more thought into the role of the camera. To whom is the subject speaking, really? By focusing more on interperson conversations, Tseten finds his subjects more natural and dynamic.

This is essential, given that most of the characters will know Tseten from last time, and it is hard for them not to act too friendly on camera. Such character has only 4-5 minutes of screen time, so Tseten must represent a full and complicated human being in less than 420 seconds. In a documentary, the viewer needs a character and makes or breaks a story, Tseten said. Despite knowing the characters, he cannot say yet for sure what this film will be.

“Of course you have your preconceived notions,” Tseten explained. “I think the first film I came ostensibly for ‘What is the bridge for? That was the starting point. But as it happens, people are more complex.”

This time, the director is wide open to the possibility that the story will be something unpredictable. He is revisiting people, but also rediscovering Tetangcho.

The last film was about a community afraid of the river. This time the story will be about the community controlling it.

Kate Ryan

REVISITING RASUWA

Follow Kesang Tseten as he revisits his home in Upper Rasuwa, to revive the subjects featured in his 2006 documentary We Corner People and film about his approach to the project.

UWS - UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

Apply now for 2018

One of the world's top 200 universities

5th in the world’s top 50 univ. under 50 years.

In SA's most student city

In Australia's safest city

No.3

World University Rankings

www.pacasia.org

C/o Three Sixty Education Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

Phone: 01 4254104 / 4220244

info@360education.com.np
Grand finale,

Don’t miss the opportunity to support your favourite team at the grand finale of the Turkish Airlines ENGAGE! Empowering 10. 7 July, 3 p.m to 4.30 p.m. Amy Physical and Training Centre, Lingshi. Tel: 86454959, 071 905063.

Kumar Sanu,

Book your tickets to watch renowned singer Kumar Sanu live in concert. 7 July, 6 p.m onwards, Hotel Himalaya. Rs 5,000

Café Jireh,

For a peaceful evening and the best firewood pizza in town. @ (030) 5560760

Ventures Café,

Stop by for the best fusion menu and all local favourites in their breezy outdoor seating. A great venue for beer connoisseurs.

Bhaktakot, 9811239614

Coffee Pasali,

A place to sip a good cup of coffee while gazing at the Narayanhiti museum. Budhanilkantha, (01) 4648013

Moosoon madness,

A 2-day, 3-night package exclusively for Nepalis and expatriates. Rs 3,000 per person on a twin sharing basis.

Shangri-la Village Resort, Pokhara. (01) 5452322, 9810070864. shangrilavillageresortnepal@gmail.com

Glacier Hotel,

Go upscale and fancy home for travellers on the shores of Lake Phewa. Ghangandung, Lakeside, Pokhara. (083) 4679322, www.gluacehotel.com

Famous Farm,

Wake up to the sounds of chirping birds and a fresh morning breeze wafting in through the air. Naubise, (074) 4706504, nvlpharunfe@hotedge.com

Kasara Resort,

A lovely resort located in the lush setting of Chitwan National Park. For those who value their privacy and prefer a more secluded stay, Kasara offers fine private villas with private pools. Chitwan, (014) 4352709, kasaranest.com

Haatibhan Resort,

Climb up to Champadevi in the morning for a royal view of Kathmandu Valley and jog down to the farm for a relaxed evening.

Phooling, Kathmandu, (0147) 2715376

Transquility Spa,

De-stress and pamper yourself with a wide range of massages at any of the spa’s nine branches in Nepal. www.transquilityspa.com

Hotel Landmark Pokhara,

For the best views of Phewa Lake. Enrich your stay with cultural performances every evening.

Lakeside, Pokhara, (083) 466208, 981059096

Shivapuri Heights Cottage,

Book a walk and lunch among Budhanilkantha to escape the hustle of the city. Enjoy some quiet family time or a massage or opt to stay overnight at this cottage. Budhanilkantha, 9814277097/9802017248, sivpuresheightscottage@gmail.com

‘Grand finale, Don’t miss the opportunity to support your favourite team at the grand finale of the Turkish Airlines ENGAGE! Empowering 10. 7 July, 3 p.m to 4.30 p.m. Amy Physical and Training Centre, Lingshi. Tel: 86454959, 071 905063.

Kumar Sanu,

Book your tickets to watch renowned singer Kumar Sanu live in concert. 7 July, 6 p.m onwards, Hotel Himalaya. Rs 5,000

Café Jireh,

For a peaceful evening and the best firewood pizza in town. @ (030) 5560760

Ventures Café,

Stop by for the best fusion menu and all local favourites in their breezy outdoor seating. A great venue for beer connoisseurs.

Bhaktakot, 9811239614

Coffee Pasali,

A place to sip a good cup of coffee while gazing at the Narayanhiti museum. Budhanilkantha, (01) 4648013

Moosoon madness,

A 2-day, 3-night package exclusively for Nepalis and expatriates. Rs 3,000 per person on a twin sharing basis.

Shangri-la Village Resort, Pokhara. (01) 5452322, 9810070864. shangrilavillageresortnepal@gmail.com

Glacier Hotel,

Go upscale and fancy home for travellers on the shores of Lake Phewa. Ghangandung, Lakeside, Pokhara. (083) 4679322, www.gluacehotel.com

Famous Farm,

Wake up to the sounds of chirping birds and a fresh morning breeze wafting in through the air. Naubise, (074) 4706504, nvlpharunfe@hotedge.com

Kasara Resort,

A lovely resort located in the lush setting of Chitwan National Park. For those who value their privacy and prefer a more secluded stay, Kasara offers fine private villas with private pools. Chitwan, (014) 4352709, kasaranest.com

Haatibhan Resort,

Climb up to Champadevi in the morning for a royal view of Kathmandu Valley and jog down to the farm for a relaxed evening.

Phooling, Kathmandu, (0147) 2715376

Transquility Spa,

De-stress and pamper yourself with a wide range of massages at any of the spa’s nine branches in Nepal. www.transquilityspa.com

Hotel Landmark Pokhara,

For the best views of Phewa Lake. Enrich your stay with cultural performances every evening.

Lakeside, Pokhara, (083) 466208, 981059096

Shivapuri Heights Cottage,

Book a walk and lunch among Budhanilkantha to escape the hustle of the city. Enjoy some quiet family time or a massage or opt to stay overnight at this cottage. Budhanilkantha, 9814277097/9802017248, sivpuresheightscottage@gmail.com

### Bootcamp,

Celebrating death metal,

Metalheads, head your tails to the sheet brute force technical death metal of Desolation all the way from Japan. Chensimana from Sikame and home-grown bands Akhran, Nihility Nepal, Calumintara and Wargpare will be performing too.

6 July, Regal Bar, Thamel, Rs 500 (50% June, Rs 300)

### Becoming a photographer,

Regard to participate in a 10-day entry level photography workshop. It is mandatory to bring a DSLR, compact or mobile camera. Registration deadline is 10 June.

7 to 10 July, 7 to 10 am, Antalya, Sengsengbu, Rs 5,500, 9811371777/9815249300

### Kathmandu kora,

Join hundreds of cycling enthusiasts and ride 50, 75 or 100 km to raise funds for a cycling trail in the Bungamati area of the Kathmandu Valley. 13 July, 7 am onwards, Patan Durbar Square.

https://www.facebook.com/FilmSouthasia

### Inviting submissions,

Submit your documentary for the 11th edition of Film Southasia to be held in Kathmandu, 2-5 November 2017. Deadline is 15 July, http://www.filmouthasia.org/timou/chaasia

### Jay Sean live,

Show your talent: how to win a ticket to watch singer and songwriter Jay Sean perform live in Kathmandu, 12 July, 7 pm onwards, Depo Club, Basantapur.

Rs 2,000/00, 9801344642

### Musical tribute,

Kumares will be playing metal, rap rock and alternative metal songs as a tribute to RAGE Against the Machine & Tool.

8 July, 2.30 pm, People House Rock Bar, Thamel: 9841333002

### European Bakery,

For pastries, éclairs, Swiss rolls, cookies and many more. Don’t miss their Saturday special doughnuts.

Chunle, (01) 4622547

### Shivapuri Heights Cottage,

Book a walk and lunch among Budhanilkantha to escape the hustle of the city. Enjoy some quiet family time or a massage or opt to stay overnight at this cottage.

Budhanilkantha, 9814277097/9802017248, sivpuresheightscottage@gmail.com

### Miss Motivation,

Buy the ticket, take the ride.

Kripa Joshi

### Passagi live,

Warm up your weekend with music by the Pasagi band and authentic Bihari cuisines.

7 July, 3 to 6 pm, Kripa Joshi, (01) 436710

### La Bella Cafe,

Let Italian cuisine tease your palette this weekend. A place to go for good portions of food.

Chobhan Marg, Thamel, (01) 4700007

### Barista Lavazzza,

The valley’s best European-inspired coffee culture serves excellent mochas and lattes. Don’t forget to try their grilled chickens sandwich.

Juwelkik, (01) 5584597, barista.nepal@gmail.com
Remembering what we've lost

Carl Pruscha’s two-volume compendium, the second edition of the work first published in 1973, is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in the architectural and urban history of Nepal’s capital. Kathmandu Valley 1 and 2 contains a comprehensive inventory of over 800 monuments, each building exquisitely mapped in its urban context by Ram Rana Bajracharya with information-packed description by Prayag Rai Shumra. And to give it some perspective, the first volume also zooms out with the detailed aerial photography of Erwin Schneider.

The consistency and quality of the research produced over 10 years by staff within the Department of Housing and Planning of the Government of Nepal is extraordinary. While preservationists and students of the Kathmandu Valley’s historic architecture may look elsewhere for more detailed drawings and descriptions of individual buildings (such as the work of Wolfgang Koen, Niles Getachew and Bijil Banakar, among others) Kathmandu Valley 1 and 2 stand out as an all-inclusive survey of the Valley’s built environment as a whole.

In addition to its importance as an archive, the book is also a fascinating record of a moment in which international architects played a critical role in shaping the development discourse in the Third World. In 1964, the Austrian architect Carl Pruscha was 50 and had just completed his postgraduate studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, when he was sent to Nepal by the UN to serve as an expert consultant to the government.

His assignment was initially limited to 1 year, but was extended to 10, during which he worked as Project Coordinator at the National Planning Commission. The first edition in 1975 of this publication is the outcome of a decade of work undertaken during Pruscha’s involvement with the then His Majesty’s Government. During his time in Nepal, Pruscha also practiced as an architect, completing notable structures including the CEQA building in Kathmandu, the Tarapun Hotel in Boudha, and a housing project for Tibetan refugees, all of which forged a modern architectural idiom using local brick construction techniques.

A comprehensive inventory, the two volumes attest to the diversity and density of Kathmandu’s architectural heritage like few other books have. While documenting the iconic “monument zones” within the Valley, they even include more modest artefacts such as alis and chaityas, not to mention several Rana-era structures that have received very little attention from architectural historians. Given that most Rana-Shah palaces, unlike those of the Malla-era, are still inaccessible to the general public, many will find this section of the book particularly revealing. Rana palaces, like Singh Darbar, are also shown.

In addition to a “protective inventory” of cultural heritage sites, the book also includes a physical development plan for the Valley. This is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the book, since it goes beyond the mere selection of cultural heritage sites to project a vision for the future of the Valley around a “main revitalised growth pattern”, in which urbanisation is pushed towards the outer edges, allowing fertile agricultural land to be utilised.

The planning strategies outlined in this section of the book may be contentious and outdated, but nonetheless serve to enrich our understanding of the Valley. Given that the task of planning has never been more urgent in a Valley that is suffering from the adverse impacts of unregulated urbanisation, this is a timely publication that alerts us to what has been lost, and what can still be recovered.


PROTECTIVE INVENTORY
Glimpses of the photographs and maps of places of cultural significance from Carl Pruscha’s Kathmandu Valley, with pictures taken today of the same location. Unlike thesesites, most others in the original book are gone.

Radha Krishna Temple
This 19th century Shiva-Jagannath temple is located on the banks of the Bagmati. It was in a good condition even in 1975, and has not been repaired.

Ganesha Temple
This temple was once in Tansen’s Khadigaon town but was moved to Sindhuli in 1813 and was then re-established in place of temple.

Singha Darbar
Not by Horan and Inder Naught for Chandra Shrestha in 1903. The palace was destroyed in the 1934 fire, but was only heavily damaged in the 2015 earthquake.

Aki Bahar
19th century palace in Narendra's Palace that was remodeled in 1862, it has now doubled in size and concrete structures.
The Zookeeper’s Wife

The Zookeeper’s Wife is one of those films, which, while far from perfect, is still memorable and worth watching despite its mostly minor faults. The film came and went in Nepali cinemas earlier this spring almost unnoticed, an unusual release for theatres that are used only to screening big Bollywood and Hollywood films to make ends meet, a business model that is inevitable across the globe where smaller films get less play than blockbusters, sometimes regardless of quality (think of the Transformers films) due to the laws of supply and demand.

Starring the dazzling Jessica Chastain, one of the finest, if not the finest, actors of her generation, the film tells the true story of a brave couple in Warsaw, Poland who, at the advent of the Second World War, stick to their beloved zoo even as they see the animals they care for and nurtured killed in air strikes and for sport by the Germans who invade Poland very early on.

Chastain plays Antonina Zubikowska, the wife of zookeeper Jan (Johann Heldenbergh), the central character around whom the film revolves. Antonina is a bleeding heart, she loves animals, and she is brave, articulate and determined to stick it out at the zoo, their home, no matter what. As havoc ensues around them, the Zubikowska salvage what they can, infuse their young son (who also loves animals) into their schemes, and begin an incredibly dangerous arrangement that involves housing Jews in their own home, smuggling them out of the horrifying Warsaw ghettos where they have been relocated, and transporting them out of Poland when possible.

Chastain struggles sometimes with a weak script that is saved by her performance and that of Heldenbergh, who plays a quiet scholarly zoologist turned resistance fighter, aided by the wonderful little Timothy Rasford as their small son, Ryszard, who learns quickly to guide the Jews secretly into his home. There a number of plot twists, including the Zubikowska’s relationship with the talented Daniel Brühl, a German zoologist turned megalomaniac Nazi officer who haunts the Warsaw zoo and gravitates towards Antonina’s warmth. Unfortunately, despite the riveting story at work here, there is almost not quite enough for a feature film, and the story falters as it tries to create a dramatic arc out of sometimes nebulous plot points.

This is a movie to watch if you love animals, love Chastain, and are not too big a stickler for plot, preferring atmosphere over drama. It is also an important story that I am glad I am now acquainted with: a story that tries to tell of the horror of war and the cruelty that human beings can unleash on fellow humans and helpless animals. Niki Caro, the director of 2002’s magical Whale Rider is hindered here by the patchy script but her instinct for bringing out the warmth in characters hits home, guiding the film to a conclusion that rings even more true because it all tragically, happily, actually happened.

MUST SEE - Sophia Pande

HAPPENINGS

GETTING CARRIED AWAY: Villagers carry a happy Khant Kamari Tamang, 43, to the polling station in Sahajamati on Wednesday. People in Pharakres 13 and 14 cast votes for local representatives in the Second Phase of local polls.

MORE CITY BUSES: Kathmandu Mayor Bijaya Sundar Shrestha hands over a cheque for Rs 50 million to Sajha Yatayat Chairman Khurki Mani Dalal in Kathmandu on Tuesday so it can acquire 13 more buses, including wheelchair friendly ones.

BUILDING A FUTURE: Comedian duo Siyam Karki and Kuruna Chettri, founders of the Shramsho-Samaj Foundation, are awarded the Modan Bhadra-ranjan Pandit Jyoti by UML Chair KP Oli (right) in Kathmandu on Wednesday. Also pictured: Ramesh Bhattarai and Nargyam Kati Thapa (row left).

EARNING SMILES: Pasiona Sherpa receives her roundtrip ticket to Los Angeles from Qatar Airways Nepal Manager Jyapal Kahi Lah. The caddie-turned-golfer is going to California for training and tournaments.

PADDY DAY: Women prepare paddy sappings while visitors look on during the 14th National Paddy Day in Pokhara on Thursday organized by the Tourism Council.
Shuttered schools

Neer Darbar Marg is the dormitory for the Tin Dha Ra Pathasha Sanskrit School. The institution has a glorious socio-political history because this is where students first raised slogans against the Rana regime. The tradition of government support for free food and lodging for students of Sanskrit is continuing. Yet, when you see it today from the street, it looks less like a school and more like a shopping centre. Its location near the business hub of Darbar Marg has been a curse for the school.

The April 2015 earthquake badly damaged the historic Darbar School in the heart of Kathmandu near to Rani Pokhari. The school was opened by the Ranas to educate their relatives, but eventually others also got the chance. It was the first-ever community school in Nepal but despite its cultural importance, it is still in ruins two years after the earthquake.

At a recent meeting about replacing the building, someone reportedly said: “Let’s build a shopping centre here and allow the school to run in a small corner from the income.” It may make business sense to put forth a proposal like that, but what are the views of society, the community, the education sector and the state about this? What should they be thinking?

Another historic institution of learning is Juddhodiya High School in Thamel. Because the neighbourhood is now Kathmandu’s tourist centre, it has been converted into a business centre. Even if you were right outside of it, you wouldn’t know that a school is there.

Tribhuvan University has had much of its property converted to commercial use, other buildings are in the process of being turned into shopping areas. This is a gross misuse of land that we given to the University by the government and other donors for higher education.

These are just a few examples of how property owned by government schools has become prime real estate. The schools have been reduced to a tiny portion of the property, and the rest of the land turned into malls. We have to ask ourselves: who do a school’s assets belong to? Is it for the school committee to do as it likes? Is it for the students? Is it for the teachers? If there are no students what will the teachers do?

A school should not just be classrooms. It should include extra-curricular activities in playgrounds for physical activities. A school should not sell off its property at the expense of the educational or physical development of its students. The school grounds in the city centre provided shelter for thousands of families. It is time for the school management committees to think about how to reconstruct schools after the earthquake while retaining the open spaces.
GORPAL GARTAULA
in JHAPA

Despite lack of conviction that local elections will improve lives, people cross swollen rivers to vote

centre at Pashupati Primary School. Others waited in hour-long queues. She has a different kind of problem: not being paid by the tea estate that employs her. “Our wages have stayed the same for eight years, and we don’t ever get that on time,” says the mother of two.

It took Magar two more hours

GETTING TO

The Marchwari region of Rupandehi district is adjacent to the Budha’s birthplace of Lumbini, but those lawsless days are far behind. People near the Indian border now see much bloodshed during the conflict.

Even after the war, the region has frequently seen violence. CK Rai, a Marchwari, fears exploding separatism, often comes here to train cadres. The Machhre-based RJPN sees Rupandehi as its main stronghold after Province 2. Last December, when the UML led in the provincial council elections against the government’s proposal to upgrade Province 5 to appease the RJPN, Machhre leaders met here to chalk out a strategy for retaliation.

RJPN appealed to people here to boycott Wednesday’s local polls, yet voters turned out in large numbers anyway to elect local representatives despite threats of violence. The Marchwari saw a record 80% turnout, much higher than the national average of 76%. The booths opened at 8am, but people had begun lining up from 4am in spite of the darkness and rain.

Sapana Khatri, 28, was voting for the first time in her life after finally getting her citizenship last year after a long struggle. “The Indians easily bribe their way through to get citizenship certificates, but Nepals and women like me have to fight for it,” she said through her veil. “I hope our suffering will end once we have elected representatives.”

Locals here were so fed up with political instability and lack of development that they defined the RJPN’s boycott call, and so did some party cadres. As many as 171 RJPN members stood as independent candidates.

Thabang village in the mountains of Rolpa is also in Province 5, and is a stronghold of the new Maoist faction led by Nepal Bharat (Blipav). It is the group that tried to disrupt elections by setting off explosions. But the people of Thabang, who had boycotted the CA elections in 2013, this time came out in large numbers to vote.

Like RJPN cadres in the Marchwari, Blipav’s cadres also stood as independent candidates. Interestingly, they formed an informal alliance with the Nepali Congress – a party Blipav views as its ultimate class enemy.

But both in Thabang in the mountains and Marchwari in the plains of Province 5, people are angry with Kathmandu for robbing them of their right to practice democracy and good governance at the grassroots. The polls gave them a chance to vent their ire via the ballot paper.

“Thabang is only one takeway from these elections, and this is that people just want political stability and economic prosperity,” says Mahendra Yadav, a local leader of the Federal Socialist Forum Nepal (FSFN).

In Kotalmali village council of Rupandehi, Bul Khume Tiwari was always at the forefront of the RJPN agitation. He followed every order from party leaders, but he disobeyed the boycott call, and even contested the polls independently for the village council chair. “People want elections, and I cannot go against them,” he told us.

Many RJPN cadres who contested elections without their party’s backing are sure they were defeated in Province 5, and even beyond. Ironically, even if they win, their party will be the biggest loser.

After boycotting Phase One in Provinces 3, 4 and 6 and Phase Two in Provinces 1, 5 and 7, the RJPN is now restricted to Province 2, where Phase Three is scheduled for 18 September, though it is still not clear if the RJPN will participate even there.

The enthusiasm with which people turned out to vote in the 11 Tarai districts in Phase Two is a clear sign that RJPN cadres cannot go against the people’s support for elections. It is still to be seen if the main party leaders will understand which way the wind is blowing.

DIPAK GYAWALI
in RUPANDEHI

A carnival like election

Here in Pratapnagar Sher Bahadur Deuba’s home district, people were unsure whether they would really get to vote on 28 June. Deuba had two postponed polls during his previous tenure, and he had also deferred polls announced by his predecessor. So when it finally happened this week, people looked euphoric. Polling on Wednesday was a festive look.

Bhaktapur Deuba, 76, shaved his beard and wore his best dhoti-sauri as he walked to the polling booth. “Never have I missed an election,” he said. “I am happy to vote again.”

The septuagenarian who introduced himself as the PM’s distant uncle added: “Sher Bahadur always wants to do something good, but ends up doing the wrong thing. I trusted him when he said he wanted to hold elections, but I was afraid he might end up calling it off once again.”

The uncertainty was not just confined to Dabadhura, but was felt throughout Province 5. Rumours swirled a few days ago that their prime minister in Kathmandu might suddenly postpone polls, fearing a poor showing by his party due to internal disputes in the district. But the PM spent a week in Dabadhura, solving intra-party wrangles and instilling confidence in people that elections would happen.

Deuba took 2000 miles to reach polling stations, brazen monsoon rains and postponing rice planting.

“I can plant paddies later, but I can’t vote whenever I want,” said Ram Saran Chauhan, who cast his vote in Kalali in the plains.

In Tikapur of Kalali, Tharu protesters in 2015 lynched eight policeman and shot one child dead during a violent protest against the ruling parties’ decision to graft the district onto Province 7. Tharus wanted the two Far-Western plains districts of Kalali and Kanchanpur in a separate province. The Tikapur tragedy poisoned relations between Tharus and hill settlers, but now people of both communities have come together to elect local councils.

One of the factors that helped reconciliation between the two communities was the space given to Tharus by political parties dominated by hill settlers. As many as 28 Tharu candidates were fielded by various parties for mayor/village chief and deputy mayor/village deputy in Kalali and Kanchanpur, where they constitute roughly 40% of the population. Tharu voters therefore turned out in huge numbers.

As in the first phase, there were a significant number of Dalit and women candidates. In the remote Far-Western hills of Bahadur, this discrimination against Dalits is entrenched, Naresh BK, a mayoral candidate for the UML, said: “Finally, so-called high-caste people are seeing us Dalits as people.”

Bhakatpur 2017-2018
the other side

FLOOD OF VOTERS: Swimming waiting in line to vote for
the residents of Sivasari Municipality in Jhapa cross
a tunnel on the Kharai River to vote in the second phase of local elections on
Wednesday.

in the swirling sun, and later under pouring rain, to stamp her
ballot. Afterwards, she did not sound very hopeful that her vote
would make a difference.

The Ward Committee candidates from the NC, UML
and Maoists all say they talked to the tea estate management during
the campaign, who assured them that pickers’ families will get
free education for their children, clothing and food allowances,
and bicycles for college-going daughters.

Mangar says she would be
happy even if just one or two of
these promises were kept, but is
not too hopeful: “Politics is for a
certain class of people, our lives
ever change. I often wonder
who benefits from my vote; it is
definitely not people like us.”

Paradoxically, even though
there isn’t a lot of confidence
among voters that local elections
will improve their lives, they
have come out overwhelmingly to
voting booths. Unlike in previous
years, there wasn’t much violence
during campaigning in a district
that has produced many leaders of
national stature like Krishna
Prasad Sitaula of the NC and KP
Oli of the UML. The presence
here of the RJPN is negligible. Police detained anti-election
activists from the CK Rast and
Netu Bilram Chand groups who
wanted to disrupt elections. The
split in the Left have also
lessened their impact on voting
in the eastern mountains.

“The enthusiasm for elections and the high turnout now
increases the responsibility of elected local leaders to meet
their campaign promises for development,” says Gopal
Acharya of the Jhapa District Election Office.

Surbati Rajbansi is Chief
of the Gurungji Campus and
one of few from the aboriginal
community in that position.
He says Nepal would have
moved forward much faster
politically and economically if
narrow-minded politicians had
not created problems between
Madhesi and indigenous people in the Tarai.

Rajbansi told us: “We used
to have to go to Kathmandu to
beg to have a bridge built—
that was absurd. This election
brings hope.”

New Milestones of unmatched service
We’ve raised the bars of our service quality.

New Service Timing 7 am to 6 pm | Road Side Assistance | Pick up & Drop Service
Reduced Spare Parts cost | German Service comes to Nepal
(Our customer service team is now led by Mr. Abhishek K.C.,
with over 4 years of hands on experience at Volkswagen Germany.)

24x7 Hotline 9801344298

Volkswagen

Volkswagen.com/nep

POCSIA INTERNATIONAL Nepal Pvt. Ltd. [An ISO 9001:2008 certified company] Volkswagen Authorised Importer: Tharuhaal Showroom – Phone: +977-3-4004909/498, Mobile: Kiren (9801344201), Shyam (9841452489), Bijaya (9801344207); Paraspaniel Shopowr – Phone: 01-4503645/92, Nishal (9801346384), Anil (9801346215), Key (9801342267); Branch: Biratnagar: 023-3033331, Janakpur (9801346287) Kosi, (9801346215); Dealers – Polabir:
A fine place

All of you out there who never seem to get tired of writing Letters to the Editor whining about how Nepal is always breaking the rules, should understand once and for all that the reason we make laws in this country is to order to break them. How can we engage in the national past-time of breaking rules if there are no rules to break in the first place?

Nepal’s leaders promised 30 years ago that they would turn Kathmandu into Singapore within 10 years. Cynics, as is their wont, scoffed. Well, we are getting there. Just like Singapore, Kathmandu has come to be known lately as a “fine city”. We would never have earned that appellation if there were no rules worth violating and being fined for.

Nepal now has some splendid laws. The world’s best, in fact. But there is a long way to go if we want to be a Middleman Income Country by 2030, and overtake the Pearl of the Orient by banning bubble gum and taxing people who don’t flush the toilet. Never understood how they find out; are there hidden CCTV cameras in the throne room? Is there a motion detector in the biometric chips embedded in their buttocks? Being a Third World country, Nepal doesn’t have to be so high tech; we can just fine everyone for not flushing in Kathmandu because there is never any water anyway. The Loo Cops can fine everyone on the spot.

The reason we Nepalis break rules is because of the belief that our current passage through the worldly realm and our conditioned existence is transient, evanescent and insconstant. So the only way to bring us down to earth is to fine us here and now. If people pee on street corners they need to cough up a fine there and then (after using hand sanitiser) not in their affairs.

It was foolish on the part of the Stay-at-Home Ministry to rescind the ban on jay-walking for human pedestrians. This means a huge revenue shortfall for the goldembet. We will have to make up for that by devising new fines as a deterrent against those who want to play by the rules. Here is a list of suggestions:

1. Fine the Secretary of the Election Commission for refusing to accept kickbacks for brand new vehicles when there were plenty of 51s.
2. Fine the hussar cop at the Kathmandu International Balfor Airport who doesn’t ask passengers to open their wallets to see if there are any explosives inside.
3. Fine a weekly Sturt Ass for calling me, a guy wearing his Latin non de guerre, fupus jusus, for no good reason.

The Ass

Dr. Keyoor Gautam
Samyak Diagnostic