A 3-PARTY STATE

The verdict is out. The UML is the largest party after the second phase of local elections. Only Province 2 now remains without elected local governments. The big question is: Will the UML become even more unilateral in rejecting any amendment to the constitution? How will the Nepal Congress make up in Province 2?

How the UML reads this success will largely determine Nepal’s future political course. Madhes-based analyst Chandra Khadka says: “The UML should not get too comfortable or become even more nationalistic. If it keeps being arrogant, the current crisis will drag on.”

After defeating the NC by 21 seats and the Maoists by 79 seats in the first phase of local elections in May, the UML has widened its lead over the two ruling parties in the second phase last week (see chart, above) to lead 267 out of 744 local councils. At press time Thursday evening, the UML was leading in 8 out of 15 constituencies still being counted.

The Maoist-Centre and NC, which supplied the KP Oli government last year are unlikely to catch up with the UML even after the final phase of polls in the remaining 127 municipal and village councils of Province 2 in September.

What is surprising is that the UML pulled off astonishing victories even in some Madhesi constituencies. In Tikapur, where Madhesi leaders had instigated Tharu protests against hill-based parties, the UML’s Tapendra Rawal became Mayor. In Province 5, where the Madhes-based RJP cadres had contested elections as independents, the UML swept 11 councils.

The UML’s electoral success is due to its popularity among the elderly for its social security program. Being the best-organised party has given it grassroots reach. But it is the UML’s nationalist line against the Indian blockade which has resonated well in the mountain districts.

Upendra Yadav’s FNPP and Biju Gyawali’s MJP, the two Tarai-based parties that broke ranks and contested the polls, have won in only 7 and 6 places respectively so far. Yet, both are expected to get berths in the Deuba government.

The RJP’s independent cadres have won in two constituencies, and is seeing rifts as it decides to register at the Election Commission—a first step towards participating in Province 2 polls.

Says Chandra Khadka: “The RJP is showing flexibility. So should the UML. Otherwise there will be polls but no political stability.”

Buddhakha在世界中的虚拟现实

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DEVELOPMENT REVOLUTION

One of the striking features of Nepal’s newly-minted 1990 Constitution was that it devolved power to local government units like DCs, VDCs and municipalities. The Decentralisation and Local Self-Governance Act of 1999 turned this concept into law. Much of the success of the community forestry program, the national network of Female Community Health Volunteers, mothers’ and farmers’ groups, and the extraordinary progress in literacy and education in the past two decades were in large part because decision-making was handed over to elected district and village councils.

Unfortunately, it has been downhill ever since. First, the Madhesis bombarded VDC infrastructure out of existence. They killed or clashed away local elected officials, mainly from the Nepali Congress (the same party, ironically, that the rump Madhesis are in the coalition government with today).

What was still intact was dismantled by King Gyanendra, who got current Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to call off the 2012 local elections, using the Maoist war as an excuse. Nepal never really got to test the peace dividend after 2006 because the two warring sides became part of a political cartel that took turns in government. They consigned local government units to political ‘mechanisms’, a euphemism for micro-management.

Finally, two decades later, we are in the process of installing bigger and more empowered, elected village and municipal councils. The new Constitution has ensured that elections to these local governments are inclusive, and that the participation of the two main parties of local elections have put unprecedented numbers of women and the marginalised into local policy- and decision-making positions. Despite misgivings and grievances among sections of Tani-based parties about the Constitution which still need to be addressed, we are finally seeing the light at the end of this long, dark tunnel.

But there is a fly in the ointment. The political cartel suddenly realised it gave away too much to local governments and is trying to back pedal on devolution with a draft bill in Parliament that would essentially cut off the money supply to new village and municipal councils. This is treachery. It goes against the spirit of a Constitution that sought a revolution through devolution. By limiting the share of revenue from mining, hydro-power, natural resource extraction, monetisation and other fees to 5%, the cartel is trying to strangle these newly-elected local councils.

(Same Guest Editorial below by Khim Lal Devkota)

Be argument is that DCs and VDCs had indiscriminately licensed the environmentally unsustainable extraction of natural resources through sand and Boulder mining of rivers, logging of local forests and plunder of the Chaur. But this plunder was actually made possible because district and village councils were armed by unelected political syndicates and centrally-appointed bureaucrats.

After the recent local elections, they have been replaced with elected councils more accountable to their constituencies.

(Same Report on page 11.)

Elected mayors and local councilors met in Dillikothi this week to strongly reject this move to set the clock back. They want to have their rights to raise revenue, implement the Constitution. That voice must be heard because it represents the true voice of the people to ensure development for the people and by the people.

GUEST EDITORIAL

KHIM LAL DEVKOTA

Function without finance

The prevailing principle of federal fiscalisation is the finance follows function. But just when power hierarchy centred in Singh Durbar is being devolved to local governments, a draft bill in Parliament seems to reverse that.

Federalism aims at enabling people to easily access government services at door steps. For this, truly elected municipal, village and ward councilors need to be not just powerful but also adequately resourced, financially speaking.

The federal constitution has empowered local levels with various sectoral functional areas, giving them 22 percent share of total tax revenue. These included local tax collection to provide economic and social services like education, health, drinking water, roads, agriculture, irrigation, livestock, caspereilles, environment, hydropower, wild life, minerals, language, culture, energy, disaster management, etc. In addition, there are powers of functional rights designed to the local levels, around 30-40% of functional rights.

In terms of revenues, 85-94% is assigned to the federal government, and nominal rights to provincial and local levels. Theory and international practice reveal that this gap should be filled via fiscal transfers. However, the inability in Parliament to ratify the proposed Fiscal Management Act, proposes that local levels receive only a few financial rights (fiscal transfers). Without revenue, the councils would be powerless as the State bodies in the new constitution will be meaningless.

For example, the bill proposes that 85% of revenues generated from hydropower, tourism, forests, mines and minerals go to the Centre and 10% is set aside for provincial government, leaving only 5% for local governments. This is regressive because the local Self-Governance Act (LSG) provides a bigger slice of revenue from natural resources to local levels, including 50% of royalties from hydroelectricity, mining and 80% from mining.

The bill seeks to newly elect local representatives and against the spirit of the Constitution. Instead of revenue, local levels will be dependent on handouts from Kathmandu. The bill also purports that 70% of VAT and excise go to the Centre, to provinces and 10% to local councils. So, what is the rate of the Natural Resources and Fiscal Commission that is proposed in the Constitution to decide on distribution of revenue?

If passed, the bill will defeat the purpose of federalisation. Without fiscal freedom, local governments will fail to deliver, and the current certitude of transference is at risk as well.

Khim Lal Devkota, PhD, an expert on federalisation and local governance.

ONLINE PACKAGES

WHAT’S TRENDING

On location with Kesang Teeten

by Arjun Thapa

Join thousands of Times online users to watch this month’s special issue of Kesang Teeten as he returns to the location of this 2004 documentary Life of Corey Popuga’s film attached along with the images of this one remote village where he grew with new hydropower projects in the Himalayas.

Most reached on Facebook (10,716 people reached)

Most visited online page

Remembering what we’ve lost

by Anish Choudhary

As a ‘promissory inventory, the new edition of Tar Prasad’s second volume continues to attend the work and legacy of Kathmandu’s architectural heritage like few after him. Go online to tap into untold and other images.

Most popular on Twitter (318 retweets, 58 likes)

Most commented

National Paddy Day

The vibe of farmers in Kathmandu Valley planning, not on the concept of the Office Holidays Day was most shared on social media. Visit Nationalpaddy.com to visit their online and the page with songs, stories, and must watching.

Most shared on Facebook (374 shares)

QUOTE TWEETS

Times.com

The base line in my hike doesn’t have much meaning... it’s just a line that marks the lower end of my hike (126 retweets, 58 likes)

Sanjay Pant SG, (national Chief of Nepal’s prime minister’s advisor. Unrelying unattributed)

Weekly internet traffic 984k

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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

United Kingdom
Breath of fresh air in Syangja

Visionary local leadership will be the catalysts to allow Nepal to pick itself up

In a recent Guest Editorial in this newspaper National Planning Commission economist Swarnim Wagle, laid out a positive outlook for Nepal’s economy (#661). The reason for his optimism was the successful conduct of local elections with 70% turnout. What also made him upbeat was that Nepal had exceeded its annual economic growth target this year, making it the country with the third-highest growth rate in the world.

The economist presented the Five Ds (Distance, Democracy, Digitisation and Diaspora) as a national strategy to take advantage of the prevailing tailwind. Unlike many other and doomsday-ers among Nepal’s international development partners, Wagle was confident that if this growth was sustained, Nepal could double the size of its economy in 10 years and turn itself into a “vibrant, enterprise-friendly, middle-income nation by 2030”.

In a reaction to Wagle’s buoyant forecast, British anthropologist-turned-consultant David Seddon wrote in the same space a week later (#662) that he believed experts like Wagle might have got a bit carried away by the first local election in 20 years. Seddon feared that there was a greater chance that the Five Ds may have quite an opposite effect on Nepal. Rather disparagingly, Seddon wrote that he had “confidence in the ordinary people of Nepal, but much less in those who preside over them”.

Wagle and Seddon were both educated at the London School of Economics, but the way they evaluate Nepal’s future is poles apart. The reason for Wagle’s optimism is the enthusiasm with which Nepalis have come out overwhelmingly to vote for local governments, and the fact that the 2017 Budget had made a transformative departure by transferring hundreds of billions of rupees to local government coffers for the first time.

Seddon was skeptical that just throwing money at the problem would allow Nepal to leapfrog development. The sheer disruption and expense of entirely new local government units and provincial administrations, he wrote, would far outweigh any potential benefits.

After having read these two viewpoints, I got a chance to test them at the grassroots during a three-day seminar to discuss ways to develop my hometown of Waling in Syangja as a ‘smart city’. This is where Wagle’s Five Ds are being played out on the ground.

As a welcome departure from an administrative system which works on directions and funds from Kathmandu, the seminar was an initiative of the newly-elected Mayor Dilip Pratap Khand. That in itself showed that there are changes afoot in municipalities—they have actually started thinking and acting like governments and not like local agents of Singh Darbar, or of political syndicates.

A 21-year-old entrepreneur from Waling who is running an e-commerce company from his own district, employing a dozen or so locals, shared his experience at the seminar. This was a breath of fresh air: young entrepreneurial talent that had decided not to emigrate but to stay back just in Nepal, but return to his hometown use information technology for a startup and create jobs. There is hope after all.

To be sure, many other things need to happen for such commitment to be replicated and scaled up. Newly elected local governments and Kathmandu to devolve power and give them the wherewithal to function (see Guest Editorial, page 21), elected local leaders need to have vision and the ability for teamwork.

In order not to make Seddon’s prophecy self-fulfilling, we need to connect the dots and get ready for the devolution that is coming. There will be pockets in Nepal with stable local politics and able leaders which can show dramatic progress in the near future.

People want change, and visionary local leadership will be the catalysts to allow the country to pick itself up by the bootstraps.
For leaders in Nepal, India and the US, fanning hate seems to be a universal strategy.

The betting is being exported. In the US last year, Labour Party MP Jo Cox, a ‘Stay’ supporter in the Brexit referendum, was shot and stabbed to death by a man who shouted ‘Britain First’.

There is a purpose to Trump’s reckless tweeting; keep his base of ardent supporters in a permanent state of agitation and insecurity against imaginary enemies. That Trump has so outrageously and openly that he is called America’s most-deceitful president comes as no surprise.

All these leaders have understood that there is a significant chunk of the population in their country that will vote for their nationalist pitch, no matter how outrageous the remark. In fact, the more outrageous, the better. It doesn’t work everywhere, as we have seen in France, the Netherlands and Austria recently, but hate is contagious. It can fray the social fabric, create divisions in society, and even foment racial violence, but that doesn’t bother the people for whom it is all about power at any cost, by any means.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba’s performance during a BBC Sahla Sawal discussion on Sunday is an example. Visibly irritated by aggressive questioning from the floor, Deuba lost his cool and lashed out in his less-bamboozle, articulate fashion with threats like “Who are you to ask me that?”, “Don’t cross the line”, or “Why should I tell you?” The video went viral, at considerable cost to the prime minister’s support at elections this fall.

Former UML prime minister KP Oli is infamous for his confrontational and provocative comments. While some of his phrases attributed to him are doable, or have been taken out of context, he has ambitiously positioned himself as a tough-talking nationalist who can protect Nepal’s geopolitical interest.

He blamed India for his forced resignation as prime minister, and has often indicated that Madhesi party leaders are pre-India. His words have angered those leaders, as well as people in the Tarai who feel isolated. Oli’s strategy is to brand himself and his party as the sole guarantor of an undivided Nepal, and he has used this strategy in those elections.

Two years ago, leaders from the Madhes, Nepal Congress, and a fringe party made inflammatory remarks, which, according to a parliamentary body, were responsible for violence in Tikanpur of Kailali district in August 2015. The leaders themselves blamed the then coalition partners in the government, the NC and the UML, for the violence. There has been no introspection from any of the major or minor political parties as to how their public statements lead directly to the deaths of over 50 people, most of them in the Tarai in 2015.

However, the provocative rhetoric of Nepal leaders pales in significance compared to what is happening across the border in BJP-ruled India today.

The ruling party has been whipping up public anger mainly against Muslims, which has translated into an epidemic of vigilante violence on the streets. Examples are BJP MP Ananth Kumar Hegde’s disparaging remarks on Islam, and Giritjl Singh, a leader of BJP’s Bihar unit, saying that the opposition to Modi should leave India. Leaders from the ruling party and like-minded ones from Shiv Sena and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) often speak ill of Muslims in India.

It is hard to say whether it is Modi’s India that is neutralizing Trump’s America, or vice versa. Donal Trump has been known to make unfiltered, intentionally offensive remarks and even some of his Republican supporters see logic. Their steadfast support for the “political outsider” who espouses political correctness is starting to wane.

There are numerous instances when Trump’s ‘America First’ slogan has led to violence. In Kansas, a White gunman shot at least three people, including two Indians, in a bar earlier this year. From the opposite side, another man led up with Trump shout Republican Congressmen during a baseball practice in Washington DC last month. Not a day goes by without reports of racist-related violence or threats in Trump’s America.
Little Buddha comes to town

When Kathmandu Valley became the location for a Bertolucci film

LAWRENCE

A n old man taps the grey head of the carved lion in final conclusion. It had not been born last week, and only the hollow ring distinguishes it from the twin stone sculptures guarding the temple entrance. We are on the set of the movie Little Buddha in Bhaktapur’s main square, and the crew have worked their magic to blend the real monuments with identical fibreglass painted copies, transforming the space into an ornate, 9th-century BC Shaky palace. No wonder the local residents are confused – only by touching can those recreated marvels be differentiated from the real thing.

Dozens of other locations around the Kathmandu Valley are under preparation for the film shoot. French money, British designers and Italian plasterers apply their wizardry to recorded clarion squares, adapt medieval palaces, create ancient colonnades and even extend tree roots in Gokarna forest so that Keams Reeves, cast as Prince Siddhartha, can achieve enlightenment under a Bodhi tree. Deep within Hanuman Dhoka, a courtyard becomes the room in which Queen Maya Devi dreams that a white elephant descended from heaven and entered her womb – a little Indian dancer inhabits the exquisitely painted elephant whose eyes, mouth and trunk are radio controlled. With special effects engineered in a London studio, the baby Buddha’s first seven years blossom into lotus flowers, terrible temptations taunt him, and a small formation of marching Royal Nepal Army soldiers on a hillside near the airport appear on screen as the demon Mara’s fierce phalanxes storming through the underworld.

It is 1992, and many Nepali colleagues cut their teeth on what at that time was the most ambitious movie to be made in the country. On the location recce, the team were enchanted. We occur the Valley for suitable world heritage sites, then to Lumbini and the Tarai, piling into wooden river boats and bumping down mud roads to open jeeps. Passing through remote Tharu villages with ladies in multicoloured sari, tattooed ankles and heavy jewellery, the costume designer cries in delight: “Look, everyone is dressed and ready to shoot!”

Directed by the laconic Bernardo Bertolucci, the multinational film crew boasts no less than 13 Oscar, many of whom had worked on The Last Emperor, after which visitors to China jumped by 25%. Nepal’s new prime minister, G P Koirala, realises the film’s tourism potential and deputes representatives from his office to help smooth the way. As a result, permits are expedited, not a single day’s shooting is lost, and expenditure from the film contributed one-tenth of that year’s tourism revenue to Nepal’s coffers.

Jeremy Thomas, the veteran British producer, called me from London, his voice reverberating down the line in rapid fire staccato: “For children of all ages, it is a modern story seeking a reincarnation with flashbacks to the life of Lord Buddha. I would like you to do the logistics and permissions.” He knew me through his showbiz parents who had come to Nepal on holiday – his uncle had produced all the Carry On Films. Large, curly-haired, and with the reassuring demeanour of a teddy bear, Jeremy never has time to waste. With confidence drawn from long experience, he dared to bring a crew of hundreds to Nepal. “Once the filming begins it’s a like a huge taxi metre ticking away. We can’t afford for anything to go wrong.”

Inevitably, things do. Bernardo demands a sweeping rewrite of set to be dressed at his whim, and large-format cameras require technicians from Los Angeles to keep them running. Advisers include Rinpoches, monks and Buddhist scholars, but still there are objections to the sacred story.

Sleepwalkers around the squares insist on compensation for their closures, and hundreds of extra demand higher pay. Legions of accountants throw money at difficulties to make them go away. In Bhaktur, we have problems with the permit, but Little Buddha remains the only major film filmed within the bellowed courtyards of Pano Dzong.

The script needed several rewrite. The skilled American screenwriter contrived a private prank for the Chogyal family – Bridget Pinda’s role is called Liss, and Tenzin is the name of a lama. Both our boys, Sanglay and Rinchen, were supposed to appear, but the kid selected does not look Tibetan enough so ends up as Raju.

On the last day of the shoot, as the Valley returns to normal and the elaborate sets are dismantled, Jeremy sits heavily on the sofa in his Yak & Yeti hotel suite, basking mystically in the dim light. Bernardo leans back with relief into the velvet cushions drawing on one of his special cigarettes and favours me with a rare smile. Both of them have been presented with a painted copy of the unfinished mandala from the walls of Sintoza Dzong, so powerful that it features in the film’s opening sequence. We had pulled it off.

nepalitimes.com

More pictures Online
For the last 10 years, Deepika Bhushal has followed the same daily routine. After waking up, she bashes her employer, prepares her food, gives her medications, takes her out for a walk, puts her to bed at night, and then goes to sleep herself. The monotony is only broken when she has to take Malka Cohen, a 78-year-old Israeli woman with Parkinson’s disease, to a doctor’s appointment.

“The work is fairly easy, and I enjoy looking after Ami,” says Bhushal, using the Nepali word for mother. “But it can get pretty lonely here.”

Like most Nepali women in Israel, 32-year-old Bhushal works as a live-in caregiver, a job that requires her to be on call at all hours, leaving no time for social life. The only friend she meets regularly is Uma Chhetri, another caregiver in her neighborhood of the town of Holon. The two usually arrange to go grocery shopping together. And since they cannot leave their charges at home, they push them along in their wheelchairs.

Of the 60,000 foreign caregivers in Israel, 13 percent are from Nepal, according to KavLaOved, an Israeli NGO that provides advice and legal aid to workers in Israel. Israeli labor laws guarantee workers one day off in a week, but many Nepali caregivers choose to work seven days in return for extra cash.

“I am here to earn, so I try to work as much as I can,” says Bhushal, a single mother who left behind her two daughters, now 17 and 15, in her sister’s care in Kathmandu to come here 13 years ago. She paid a recruitment agency $4,000 to find her a job in Israel and arrange her work visa. Her first job was caring for an elderly couple in Ramleh, and after the couple moved into a nursing home, Bhushal started taking care of Cohen, earning $4,000 a month, most of which she sends home to pay for her daughters’ education.

“Yes, there are days I feel sad thinking about how I have missed out on watching my daughters grow up,” says Bhushal, “but then I remind myself I am here for them.”

Uma Chhetri, 43, is from Biratnagar and had to leave behind her husband and two children, which was the hardest part of working overseas. “Even learning Hebrew was not that hard,” she jokes. Israeli law doesn’t allow foreign workers to bring any immediate family members, and if they got married while in Israel their visas are immediately revoked.

Despite the isolation, both women said they felt lucky to be in Israel, a much sought after destination by Nepali workers because of its relatively high wages, safe working conditions and strong labor laws. Until 2009, it was fairly easy for Nepali workers to go to Israel. Then the Israeli government banned hiring Nepali migrant workers, citing corrupt practices of recruitment agencies that were charging workers exorbitant fees. The number of Nepalis working in Israel dropped from 7,450 in 2010 to 4,115 in 2015, but the number of undocumented Nepalis in Israel rose in the same period from 5% to 35%.

A report by KavLaOved says most Nepalis end up becoming illegal because their recruitment agents fail to arrange visas as required by Israel’s Ministry of Interior. Foreign workers cannot come back after their contracts expire, and Israel is strict about work permit renewals.

Foreign caregiver work permits are valid for four years and three months, and can only be extended if they have been with current employers for over a year. In that case, employers have to request an extension of the caregiver’s visa.

Two years ago, Israel lifted the ban on Nepali workers and signed an agreement to bring in 300 female Nepali caregivers to Israel without recruitment agencies as a pilot project. However, this hasn’t deterred Nepalis from coming illegally. Many came to Israel with fake Indian passports when the ban was in place.

So far, only 59 women have gone to Israel through the official government program. Nepal’s ambassador to Israel, Niranjana Kumar Thapa told us, “The Israelis are very satisfied with the performance of Nepali caregivers, and we hope for an increase in the quota for Nepali caregivers.”

nepaltimes.com
SAHINA SHRESTHA

Growing up at a time when all the answers weren’t available at the click of a button, Sahina Shrestha was fascinated with physics. The boy used to spend days in his room dismantling radios and old televisions and putting them together again just to understand how they worked. There was no Google, so he sought answers in books about how the laws of physics governed everything from electrons to galaxies.

Before long, Shrestha found science too confining.

“I needed a more creative process to communicate my emotions.” After finishing school, he enrolled in Sirjana Art College, where he learned traditional arts, honed his skills in acrylic and oil paintings and clay modeling and perfected his brush strokes.

Shrestha enjoyed playing with colours and textures, but ever curious and questioning, he sought more. He started dabbling in digital art secretly after class because he was unsure how receptive the college and his family would be. Then, working as a computer teacher, he started experimenting with digital painting.

“Digital art gave me the freedom to express my creativity and emotion in a short span of time and that is what drew me to it,” he says. It was uncharted territory, and he was rejected for various graphic design jobs because he didn’t have a strong portfolio. “Most of them judged me on the basis of my tools rather than the content of my art.”

But instead of being disheartened, he worked on smaller projects to strengthen his portfolio and finally landed a job as a graphic designer, Photoshop expert and, until recently, an art director at the advertising agency Thompson Nepal.
As a self-taught digital artist, Shalja takes a completely original approach to his work. He brings his skills for traditional brush strokes and textures to the digital screen, making them look more like paintings on a canvas. Born and brought up in Kathmandu, Shalja sees the city as his muse, drawing inspiration from its rich history, culture, architecture and its dystopian urbanisation.

He received a lot of attention on social media after the earthquake and subsequent blockade for his surrealistic digital images: animated temples floating above a valley shrouded in smoke and dust, fantastic manifestations of anthropomorphic gods and goddesses, Newari house facades turned into string instruments. Pressure, the first painting in the blockade series, shows the entire city burning just to cook one meal. He tries to match the colour tones with the mood of the time using dark hues, and lots of reds.

“I pour my feelings into my art, and I also try to put the hopes and fears of the people in Kathmandu into them, which is probably why they have been received so well,” says Shalja, who is currently busy converting his digital art into ‘hardcopy’ canvas and wants to hold an exhibition. “No matter what form of art you want to pursue, having a strong foundation in traditional art is a must,” he says. “There is a lot to learn from it.”

When he isn’t juggling easels with computer monitors, Shalja composes music in his bedroom, which also doubles as his studio, linking everything he has learned via photography, calligraphy and music into composite art. “Each element is a backbone to the other,” he explains. “One needs to find the inspiration from within and not run after materialistic things.”

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**EVENTS**

**Inviting submissions,**  
Submit your documentaries to the 11th edition of Film Southasia, to be held in Kathmandu, 2 to 5 November. Deadline 15 July.  

**Kids camp,**  
Children from 7 to 12 years old can join this five-day camp to learn music theory, games, guitar workshop, yoga and meditation, wall climbing, photography and much more. 
17 to 22 July and 23 to 27 July, 10 am to 2 pm, Kathmandu Zoo Conservatory. [www.kathmanduzoo.com](http://www.kathmanduzoo.com)  
(19) 2813544

**City Images,**  
Lens maestro Mani Lama has back after 10 years with a black and white exhibition “Images of the City.”  
3-15 July. Jole Mandala, Jaton. (01) 5516659

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**MUSIC**

**Bootcamp,**  
Participate in readings and discussions on different sociological areas, theories and methodologies in a workshop led by Nikunj Rana.  
1-7 July. Gokarna, Cee, Jawnloike. Rs 2,500. [015529914](015529914)

**Samishran,**  
The unique convergence of the art works of a collective made up of Bhawata KC, Chirag Bangal and Kajal Mini Dixit.  
2-11 July. 10 am-5 pm, Smashan Complex, Jawalikot. (01) 556619

**School of Rock,**  
Mark your calendar to watch School of Rock, an adaptation of the Broadway Musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber, performed by students of Multi-International School.  
3-11 July, 3.30 pm, Nepal Academy Hall, Hetauda. (01) 440880

**Arbitrary live,**  
If July, 4 pm onwards, Club Deja Vu, Dobarsag, Rs 500. [015544414](015544414)

**Musical tribute,**  
Karma will be playing rap metal, rap rock and alternative metal songs as a tribute to Rage Against the Machine & Tool.  
8.25 pm. Purple Rose Rock Bar, Thamel. [9847539393](9847539393)

**Zephyrtone,**  
The Zephyrtone duo “Thiara Sari” will be rocking the stage with their exceptional vocal style, a unique combination of cavers and their original tunes. 
24 July, 8 pm onwards, Karuna lounge and Bar, Tripureswor. Rs 1,000. [015511741](015511741)

**Nepali fusion,**  
Tap to fusion beats with Tarang Nepal this weekend.  
6-8 pm onwards, Loopy Newbar Karma, Pashupati. [015549967](015549967)

**LAST DAY**

**The Bent Fork,**  
This European style restaurant offers the bare essentials and varieties of continental dishes. Enjoy evenings with family and friends.  
Bikash Khadgi, [9863306888](9863306888)

**Shangri-La,**  
Cash off with ice cream (Rs 450) and smoothies (Rs 350).  
Every day, from 10 am onwards, Cafe Deja Vu, Dobarsag, Rs 500. [015544414](015544414)

**Café Jireh,**  
Escape the hustle bustle of the city and enjoy fine-dining grill.  
Alia SR, [985797020](985797020)

**Royal Saino Restaurant & Bar,**  
Feast your garlic cheese mamus at this friendly restaurant.  
Dobarsag, [01435509](01435509)

**Himalayan Java,**  
This Thunder establishment, renowned for its caffeine and southwinds. Tripureswor, [9842251519](9842251519)

**Last Friday Bar & Grill,**  
Indian cuisine, anyone? Tip: try the kukhur.  
Jampol, [014027170](014027170)

**Lahaka’s Chulo,**  
[985242868](985242868)

**Koto,**  
Japanese cuisine served with traditional attention to detail in the sashimi and tempura plates.  
Jole Deuba, [9848955784](9848955784)

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**GETAWAY**

**Barahi Jungle Lodge,**  
The first eco jungle lodge in Chitwan directly overlooks Chitwan National Park. Spa, kid-friendly games, nature, individual and two-to-three private villas, including a suite with a private swimming pool.  
Maghu, Chitwan. [01447563](01447563)

**Hatiban Resort,**  
Climb up Champa Peak in the morning for a rare view of the Kathmandu Valley and glide down to the hotel for a relaxed evening.  
Pharping, Kathmandu. [014371517](014371517)

**Last Resort,**  
Embrace nature and test your limbs with canyoning, yoga, rock climbing, ziplining, mountain biking and bungee jumping.  
Bhaktapur, Sindhupalchok. [0143708563](0143708563)

**Buddha Maya Gardens Hotel,**  
Add value to your travel in Lumbini with a stay at one of the best hotels in the area.  
Lumbini, [015589203, 986735720](015589203, 986735720)

**Club Himalaya,**  
For amazing mountain views through gaps in mountain clouds.  
Kagankot, [01668090](01668090)

**Gokarna Forest Resort,**  
A forest sanctuary to help you relax, browse and meditate. Just a 20-minute drive from Kathmandu.  
[9841421212, info@gokarna.net](9841421212, info@gokarna.net)

**Patalabhan Vineyard Resort,**  
Just 16 km west of Kathmandu, this resort is perfect for wine lovers with food and wine. Offers astounding sunset views through misty mountain clouds and the mountains beyond.  
Chhayapur, Kathmandu, [9846179364, patalabhan@gmail.com](9846179364, patalabhan@gmail.com)

**Park Village Resort,**  
Yoga, diner and ayurvedic treatment in a quiet corner of Kathmandu.  
[www.parkvillagewestern.com](http://www.parkvillagewestern.com)

**Monsorin madness,**  
A two-day, three-night exclusive package. Rs 6,299 net per person on a twin sharing basis.  
Sharang Deo Village Resort, Pokhara. [014640350, 9813567779, 9804116579, sharanideolodge@gmail.com](014640350, 9813567779, 9804116579, sharanideolodge@gmail.com)
OM ASTHA RAI

A fter the first phase of local polls in May, then Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal had said that the people had replaced the Singh Darbar in Kathmandu with “their own local Singh Darbar”. Now that the second phase of local elections have also been held with a massive 73% turnout and the remaining Province 2 is next, there is hope that the powers of Kathmandu are finally being devolved to locally-elected municipal and village councils.

Indeed, the 744 local governments being elected in these polls are not just local units of the central government. They are empowered to govern fully with executive, legislative and judicial powers.

But a draft Inter-governmental Fiscal Transfers Bill in Parliament aims to retain Kathmandu’s centralised power by cutting off the money supply to newly elected local governments so that they will have little money to exercise their constitutionally mandated authority.

“It is like throwing a man into the river with his hands and legs tied,” says Krishna Prasad Sapkota, former DDC Chair of Kavre and decentralisation activist. “It is a conspiracy to centralise power, keeping people reliant on Kathmandu for everything.”

Sapkota says the bill is so regressive as it takes back rights already given to local government bodies by the Local Self Governance Act of 1999, which allowed IDDCs and VDCs to use half the revenue from hydropower, mines and minerals to IDDCs, VDCs and municipalities. From tourism and hydropower, they got 30% and 10% of revenue respectively. But the new bill proposes that municipalities and village councils will now get just 3% of revenue from natural resource extractions, allotting the largest slice of 80% for the Centre and 10% for Provincial governments.

One of the highlights of the constitution 2015 is that it has given 22 exclusive rights to municipal and village councils, which will also share other duties and responsibilities with provincial governments and the Centre. Municipal and village councils will be responsible for more than half of the government workload, so they need the revenue source to be able to deliver services.

“More workload means more expenses. Municipal and village councils have been given rights, duties and responsibilities, but very little money,” explains Khim Lal Devkota, an expert on fiscal federalisation (see his Guest Editorial, page 2).

Nepal’s federal constitution allows the Centre to provide conditional grants to local governments that cannot generate enough revenue from natural resources. But the draft bill proposes distributing 78% of VAT and excise to the Centre and 7% to provinces, leaving just 15% for local councils. Devkota argues that the bill violates a constitutional provision to set up the Natural Resources and Fiscal Commission.

Another bill that is also before Parliament requires municipal and village councils to deposit all housing, entertainment, vehicle registration and other local taxes in a fund managed by the provincial government which would need the provincial government’s approval to spend.

The bill goes against Article 81 of the constitution, which states that local people will have preferential rights over benefits from local natural resources.

Bimal Pokharel, Executive Director of the National Association of VDCs in Nepal, says the fiscal transfers bill and other recent government directives reflect the mind-set of the political establishment which does not want to relinquish control over power and money.

Last month, the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development issued a list of do’s and don’ts for newly-elected local representatives. While most were justifiable, some of the directives clip the wings of new mayors, village chiefs and other elected representatives. One of them directs the local government secretary, instead of the mayor or village chief, to inspect, monitor, control and regulate all schools, health posts, government and nongovernment organisations in their area.

“If the municipality secretary does all this, what will the mayor do?” asks Pokharel. “Mayors or village chiefs are executive, not ceremonial. But it looks like Kathmandu is not ready to see powerful executives in villages.”

In the first two phases of elections, 617 municipal and village councils have been elected in six of Nepal’s seven provinces.

But the new Mayors, Deputy Mayors and heads of village councils have started to mobilise against the draft bill on fiscal transfers.

Ishwar Pandey, newly elected village council chief of Bhimsen Municipality of Gorkha district, says: “This bill takes us backwards and needs to be redrafted. This election was the result of our long struggle for decentralisation. We are not going to give up.”
GET OUT

While you may never have heard of Get Out, it is one of the craziest, scariest, funniest, and cleverest films of the year. A bizarre mixture of satire, flat out comedy, chilling horror, and biting social commentary, Get Out made its debut at the fiercely competitive Sundance Film Festival in January this year and was promptly bought by Universal Pictures, which saw its immense genre bending potential and released it the very next month. The film has grossed $251.8 million to date against a budget of $4.5 million making it a smash hit and perhaps a harbinger of the kind of films to come. Written and directed by Jordan Peele, Get Out's storyline is twisty, keeping you on edge till the end. Rose Armitage (Allison Williams) and Chris Washington (Daniel Kaluuya) are a lovely young inter-racial couple who appear to be unfazed by the fact that they are about to visit Rose’s very white parents. Chris voices his slight nervousness which Rose immediately shoots down, firmly but playfully saying that her father would have voted for Obama a third time if he could have.

When the couple arrive at the stately family home, Rose’s parents, Dean and Missy Armitage, played by Bradley Cooper and Catherine Keener, two of the indie greats, are nothing short of warm and wonderful, allaying Chris’s anxiety at first. Things quickly start to creep out of the seemingly perfect veneer, though, starting with the extremely odd behaviour of the Armitage’s black household staff, who they apologise for immediately, seemingly mortified about how it might look to Chris. Chris, disturbed by increasingly erratic, almost violent actions on the part of the groundskeeper Walter (Marcus Henderson) and housekeeper Georgina (Etty Gabrieli) quickly realises that things are not what they seem but his fears are repeatedly allayed by the charming Rose whose ingenuous warmth keep him from fleeing the progressively frightening house.

When Chris is lured into Missy’s den (she is a psychologist) and hypnotised against his own will on the first night of their stay, we begin to realise the horror and the hatred racism that is just beneath the surface of this seemingly loving family home. Get Out is an indictment of the underlying ugly racism prevalent in America, and in the rest of the world, a problem that is ignored and denied as just as other ubiquitous problems such as sexism and rampant sexual harassment are casually discounted the world over to acknowledge these grievous sins would be to look fully into the worst face of humanity. The reason why this film is so powerful is because it has so much warmth in the face of waved dehumanisation personified by the incredible humour of Chris’s loyal friend Rod Williams (Gill Rel Howery), the black man at the heart of the film who is not afraid to state things as they are in the face of adversity, leading to a final reckoning that can only come from immense courage.

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EPSON
EXCEED YOUR VISION

COOL STUFF: A visitor at a painting exhibition at the Music Art Gallery, Chhauni, on Saturday.

CO-BRANDING: Turkish Airlines Country Manager Abdulah Tuncer (left) and Anand Gurung of Himalayan Java after signing an agreement for joint branding at Laben Mall on Tuesday.

STEEPING STONES: Pedestrians negotiate a flooded overhead footbridge in Kathmandu after a heavy monsoon downpour on Tuesday.

SHARE: Indian Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj with Nepal’s Foreign Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara in New Delhi on Monday where they planned for Prime Minister Deuba’s India visit.

Watch trailer online
nepaltimes.com

YES, Sir: Election Commissioners meet Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Friday to advise the government to hold provincial elections by September.

BHAIRAHAN

Pema Sherpa

Pema Sherpa
“Don’t cross the line”

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba in BBC Sify’s Sathu Street, 2 July

BBC Nepal: How will you garner a two-thirds majority to amend the Constitution? Sher Bahadur Deuba: I cannot guarantee that but will try. Will it not be difficult to hold the third phase of local elections in Province 2 if the Constitution is not amended? The deal (with the Madhes-based RPP) is that the polls will be held in Province 2 with or without the amendment. So there will be local elections in Province 2 even without the amendment? Where do you get a two-thirds majority? Can I force them to support the amendment? The deal is to move towards the amendment bill. There is no guarantee that it will be passed. Why was an impeachment motion filed against Chief Justice Sushila Karki? I do not want to say anything about it because the motion has already been withdrawn. Why was the motion withdrawn? There must be some reason, I do not want to discuss that now. That’s all.

BBC humillates PM

Screeps of Khiron’s Nepal’s comment on www.palmoil.com, 4 July

If the UK government owned BBC humillates Nepal’s political leadership in a program funded by the Swiss government, it is not foreign interference? Will our Foreign Ministry grill the British and Swiss ambassadors to Nepal about this issue? The BBC planted 65 people in the audience and led them questions aimed at embarrassing Nepal’s PM. The BBC has done it before when it provided a platform for ex-Chief Justice Sushila Karki to seek her ire. A fraction of the media’s own NC party, Kathmandu’s elite and the UN were not happy with the PM, so they got the BBC to do a hatchet job. BBC Media Action that produces Sajan Sawai is registered in Nepal as a foreign company.

So the charges against Karki were baseless? The accusations... some things are best left under wraps. There was a deal before the impeachment motion was withdrawn. What deal? I do not want to reveal it. Tell us, please? No. Just a little bit may be? Can you force me? Not forcing you, just a request. Forget it, I am not saying anything.

In the last 70 years, all British prime ministers have had Oxford educated. When will we get a prime minister who cares for us? Look, we will go to all schools we have in Nepal. I am not just talking about... You are crossing the line... where do I go looking for an Oxford in Nepal? Why can’t those who cannot go to Oxford become Nepal’s Prime Minister? People elected me. Someone with a majority cannot become Prime Minister, who can? You? Why are you not answering the questions? Where can I go looking for an Oxford educated Prime Minister? You are just trying to provoke me. 

“I’ll fly even higher”

Paraswanath Tamang

Flight attendant Pragya Mahajan survived the Gosa Air crash in Lukla on 27 May and is in a hospital bed with a fractured right leg, palms and spine. But her willpower is intact and she is determined to fly again. She took the inspiration of another flight attendant Vesna Valicovic, who was the sole survivor of a Yugoslavian Airlines DC-9 crash in the Czech Republic in 1973. The plane plunged to the ground from 30,000 feet and was found in a coma. She died a natural death last year.

Fragya Mahajan says there is no reason for her to change her profession. “I met with an accident, why should I change my aim in life? I am lucky!’’ She got another opportunity to accomplish many things, and I will fly even higher.”

The 24-year-old is undergoing treatment at Grande International Hospital, where surgeons are still operating on her. She can’t walk yet, but the young woman already wants to fly.

The flight attendant was inspired by her friend’s sister, Minna Mahajan, to join the aviation sector. Minna herself was killed in the Nepal Airlines Twin Otter crash in Annapurna in 2012.

“Minna encouraged me to become a flight attendant. She is still my role model,” says Mahajan from her hospital bed. As soon as Pragya completed her higher education she took aviation training, and has been with Gosa for the last two years.

Both Pilots Purna Kumar Rai and Co-pilot Shreejan Manandhar were killed in the crash of the cargo plane while landing at Tribhuvan Internationl Airport in Lukla to poor visibility. Mahajan was rescued and flown to Kathmandu a day after the crash.

Her parents are thankful she survived, and have given their full support to her future plans. Says father Shivjee Man Mahajan: “Life should be lived to the fullest.” Death is feared. You could fall on the street and die.”

First Phase Polls

Placid: Boycott

Kathmandu: 2 July

Second Phase Polls

Third Phase Polls

Bureaucratic hurdles

Nepal is an example of how weak political leaderships result in bureaucratic obstructions. Many government employees create hurdles to influence the government’s program and policies. It is the malpractices Nepal has learnt from its southern neighbour, India. Most of the time, employees don’t want to work until it benefits them personally. And it is because of this negative culture that Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) Karmi Ghising is not getting support from the government.

Ghising ended years of load shedding, a feat deemed almost impossible. NEA has increased electricity exports and mental generation during his tenure. However, these are not the sole reasons for the uplifted power supply in Kathmandu Valley. Reforms in demand and supply side management, and reduction in power leakage facilitated the process, but credit goes to the incumbent NEA Chief. He persuaded a strategy to reduce electricity demand in this winter by replacing incandescent bulbs with efficient light emitting diodes (LEDs). The NEA estimates up to 200MW energy could be saved if 20 million such bulbs were swapped.

The proposal to buy LEDs under the government-to-government deal dragged Ghising into controversy instead of generating government support. He has said he “larger care” for the LED replacement scheme. High ranking government officials might have sabotaged this idea by discouraging an already hampered and competent employees like Ghising, someone who is rare to find in the government mechanism, but the state can be blamed. These employees are as capable and sincere as Ghising has also fallen prey to such manipulations in the past. People are aware about such conspiracies because of information technology, and awareness.

It is not easy to encourage dutiful staff despite continuous plans to make them fail. LED bulbs are available in Nepal but they cost double the price of the bulbs Rs 100 wants to import. This means customers can buy an LED bulb for just Rs 50 if they are paying Rs 200 now. All this also shows that people who are making healthy profit from the LED bulb business are resistant to NEA’s plan. These syndicates must have ganged up with the bureaucracy to foil Ghising’s mission.

Manufacturers of political leaders are tested in situations like these. It is the government’s duty to understand the complexities of bureaucracy and help NEA Chief Ghising. If NEA was allowed to import LEDs last month, we could have started replacing them already. If Ghising is found to be involved in corruption, he could be punished when caught. But unless there is a proof, he should be allowed to work without any hurdles.
Taking the lead on lead

Nepali children are exposed to alarmingly high levels of lead, which is slowing their intellectual development

SONIA AWALE

Concerns about air pollution and unsafe drinking water have overshadowed another health hazard with a pernicious long-term impact on Nepali children: the alarmingly high concentration of lead within homes, schools and outdoors.

Two recent studies that surveyed high- and low-income children in Kathmandu and Birganj showed most of them had a Blood Lead Level (BLL) several times the threshold deemed safe by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In Kathmandu, 66.4% of children aged 6 months to 3 years had a BLL above the danger mark of 50 μg/dl (micrograms per deciliter). Children aged 6 months to 3 years had a BLL of above 10 μg/dl, with 84% showing levels in blood greater than 5 μg/dl. This is a frightening scenario indicating that two in three children in the Valley will grow up to be individuals with limited mental and intellectual capacity,” said Dr. Manasi Pant, a pediatrician at Fatu Hospital. “Imagine what this will do to our country.”

Scientists have found a strong correlation between elevated BLL and decreased IQ. A survey of primary school children in Kathmandu in 2013 estimated every additional 10 μg/dl lead concentration in blood resulted in a drop in IQ of 2.38 points.

“The situation is particularly serious because lead gets bio-accumulated in the human body and is rarely discarded, and when pregnant women are exposed to lead it can affect the unborn child,” said Sejan Raj Pant, a child nutritionist at the Nepal office of the World Health Organization (WHO), which commissioned one of the studies. “Our major concern is that the sources of lead are easily accessible to children, in paint in the school and household, in dust and in shiny, colourful toys.”

Although lead is no longer an additive in petrol sold in Nepal, it is still widely used in enamel paint and toys, plumbing joints, batteries, ceramics and cable. Effective June 2015, Nepal set the standard for maximum lead concentration at 0.05 ppm, however, paints sold here still have lead levels much higher than the limit, some with concentrations several thousand times more than the safety threshold.

Multinational paint companies in Nepal comply with international standards for lead, but poor enforcement means many local and Indian brands float the laws (see box, page 58). Nepal’s toxic chemical standards for toys, including lead, come into effect on 15 July. However, there are few facilities for routine testing, kits are not available, and warning labels are not enforced.

Many households and schools surveyed in Kathmandu recently were found to have unacceptable concentrations of lead indoors. Dust pollution and post-quake debris containing chipped old paint (right) are just two reasons why it can be hazardous for children to play outdoors as well.

“Lead contamination is not a priority because it doesn’t have immediate impact, but in the long-term it can have damaging consequences. We need more test kits and screen children regularly,” said biochemist Keshaba Malla at the Panjika Institute of Health Sciences in Bharatpur. Imran Ansari at Fatu Hospital agrees that more testing kits and regular nationwide lead inspections are needed. His clinic gets children with abdominal pain every day and although he suspects lead toxicity, the hospital lacks kits for proper diagnosis. “Lead toxicity doesn’t have a definite symptom, but we don’t have pre-defined diagnostic tools for follow-up,” Ansari said.

Experts stressed public awareness about lead in the environment will not do the job when the overall environment is full of lead paint and paint dust. Existing regulations on lead content in paint, disposal of batteries must be monitored for compliance.

UNICEF Nepal representative Tomo Huchimi said: “Lead can cause permanent adverse effects on children’s health, cognitive functions, even academic performance, impacting on the nation’s human resource. To prevent this silent calamity national regulatory frameworks need to be urgently established to strip lead paint and products coated with lead paints in Nepal.”

CHILDOOD LEAD POISONING

A Blood Lead Level (BLL) study this year of children aged 6 months to 18 months in three Kathmandu hospitals showed that 64.6% had BLLs greater than or equal to 5 μg/dl (micrograms per deciliter). Even at low levels, lead exposure can cause learning and behavioural difficulties. Children with BLL equal to or more than 5 μg/dl can suffer irreversible neurological disorders.

Results published last month in the journal PLoS ONE indicated children from poor and Dalit families were most susceptible because they slept and played in rooms with high levels of enamel or chipped paint. Children who regularly played outdoors had BLLs 4.5 times higher than those who didn’t.

Risk Factors

- Living near high traffic
- Living with high-lead enamel paint
- Chipped paint
- "Fol" powders and dyes
- Dust of demolished buildings
- Discarded batteries
- Socially disadvantaged families
- Boys more at risk than girls
- Children with worms
- Undernourished babies

Prevention

- Enforce laws on lead level in paint
- Lead information label on paint cans
- Proper disposal of lead batteries
- School public awareness
- Decline schools lead-free areas
- Unlead substituted paints

- Children aged 13-24 months were most likely to have BLLS >5 μg/dl
- Children of literate parents from the same socio-economic class had more lead exposure
- Parents of babies with BLL >5 μg/dl said their children stood and walked later than others
T for toxic

Even at low levels, exposure to lead is known to affect intelligence quotient (IQ), and cause learning and behavioural difficulties in children. Most paint products in Nepal have more than the legal 90 ppm of lead, according to recent surveys by the Centre for Public Health and Environmental Development (CPHED). Another study, by the Society for Legal and Environmental Analysis and Development Research (LEADERS), found one paint brand with lead concentration as high as 200,000 ppm.

Some paint companies sell products with lead levels below 90 ppm outside of Nepal, but bring the same brand with higher concentrations in the domestic market, a 2011 CPHED inspection showed. When Nepal set its 90 ppm standard for lead in paint in 2015, it stipulated each product should include a label stating the amount of lead it contained along with safety information. But the government’s own report last year revealed many Nepali companies do not comply.

“Most paint brands imported, produced, marketed and used in Nepal still contain above 90 ppm lead,” Rama Gurung Sub of CPHED and LEADERS told Nepal Times. “It is very important that there is effective implementation of the standard and regular monitoring of paint companies.”

Multinational paint companies have more than 70% market share in Nepal, which means most paint, sold by volume, is below the 90 ppm requirement. But the remaining brands, mostly Nepali, are flouting the rule. (See below)

Asian Paints, which has a manufacturing base in Nepal and 40% market share, says the lead concentration in its products is much below the government requirement.

“We are happy that the government of Nepal has brought in a statute for maximum lead content of below 90ppm in paints,” said Buddhadev Mukherjee of Asian Paints, “but we also need a wide campaign of stringent market monitoring, a punishment mechanism, and the rule should be applicable for import as well as local manufacturing.”

Most bright paints contain lead-based pigment, but some companies also add lead for more gloss and texture and to make paints dry faster, spread more evenly and last longer. Paint cannot be completely lead-free, but unlead substitutes are now available to bring down toxic concentrations.

Says Dhinaj Pokhrel of LEADERS: “Children are most vulnerable to lead exposure and yet our schools and hospitals use lead-rich enamel colours which can poison them.”

Lead levels are consistently high in toys and cosmetics. In June 2015, the government stipulated the 90ppm threshold in paints, and has set a toxic chemical standard for lead in children’s toys from this month.

Painting a grim picture

Results of a survey of selected paint colours in the market conducted for the Ministry of Population and Environment last year showed that even after the government set the upper limit of 90ppm in paint in 2015, many brands that have sold at higher than the permissible concentration.

Note: lead concentration in a paint brand differs widely depending on its colour.
Not remotely possible

Many of you would be forgiven in the guarantee for wanting to control the remote to change the channel. FM of neighboring country giving a densely thicketing tree thump a bear hag (Switzerland). DMK launches an ICDM but no one has any idea where it hit (Twit) Bella Nadii suffer a wardrobe malfunction on a catwalk (Twit). PM Dusko loses it on Sofia Sawai (Watt, wait, walk away!)

Finally there was something worth watching in Comrade Brain (a dimmerboobed juyan on national television). It was even more scaring than all the other scared beerthoתפוing MR. CNN down to the ground. Nadii should learn from SBO that the 2016 is as vain as ambiguously that no one can understand what you are saying, and it they can't understand what you are saying then you can say anything you want.

A long, long time ago, when the world was still young, and our forefathers had just learnt to walk erect, with their tails between their legs, they discovered that one needed actually to get up and physically transport oneself to the tu set in order to change channels. One could do it from the comfort of one's pillow and sofa while balancing a vicky macedonian formi one on one's belly. Necessity being the mother of all inventions, the wireless wand was discovered. The rest is history. This gyma has had profound impact evolution and the current average mobile diameter of the male hipposid.

The possession of a remote control was a symbol of a remote control authority actually resided among our cave-dwelling forebears. In our patriarchal society it was the Alpha Male who held the laser serpents. As his grandchildren had been taught to respect elders so they continued this for a while, but soon realized that the only way to change such a remedial fudicial system was to rise up and watch what they wanted on Youtube. Which is what they did, little realizing that Sofia Sawai was on Youtube too.

But thanks to advances in modern science and our new federal secular constitution, remote are no longer restricted to for sets. There are now remotes to control the home aircon, the microwave, laundry machine, garage door, dishwasher, vacuum cleaner and even the remote controlled toilet seat in that one needs to be present in the bathroom while attending to call of nature anymore. Come to think of it, there was really no need for remote control to be able to control the remote's in the house. It is getting out of control, and finding the right remote to the right gadget is a challenge for the expanded human brain here are some ideas:

Mother of All Remotes: This device allow you to control all your remotes so you can turn on your remote toothbrush while having a remote shave.

Husband Remote: Modern wives can use this like a laser to zap their husbands in their vital when they fail to get up in the morning.

Remote Remote: Even when in Bajura, you can use your phone to court votes in Bhumipur Municipality.

Geopolitical Remote: Allows the Foreign hand to control nepali politicians remotely.