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OMASTHARA

Mr Province 2

In his plush and spacious office in the refurbished former Janakpur Cigarette Factory, Chief Minister Lalbabu Raut has his hands full meeting the backlog of demands for development. His mind is in large infrastructure projects and grand new schemes to empower women and "turn Province 2 to Nepal's number one province".

In an interview with *Nepali Times* last week, he said: "Kathmandu has devolved too much authority to municipalities and village councils, bypassing provincial governments."

Despite this, Raut's goal is to revive agriculture, promote technical education, improve health services and tackle gender inequality. He is allocating big money for his 'Save Daughters, Educate Daughters' campaign in the new budget on Friday.

Provincial MP Manish Suman says: "We cannot do

much with so little authority and resources."

The Constitution allows provincial governments to collect taxes from just entertainment, tourism and land registration, which is not enough. Finance Minister Yuba Raj Khatriwada allocated Rs16.19 billion for Province 2, which is just 7% of the total federal budget.

"The Centre collects 25% revenue from this province, but gives us back so little," says Suman. "We did not fight for this kind of federalism. The Centre needs to devolve all power to provinces, except printing currency, foreign affairs and defence."

During last year's monsoon, flash floods ravaged Province 2, devastating crops and roads. Relief and reconstruction would have been faster if the region had autonomy. Or would it?

This year, as the monsoon once again threatens Nepal's

southern plains, there are no visible signs that the eight districts are any better prepared, even though there are 136 new elected municipal and village councils.

As it is, there is a critical shortage of medicines in most health facilities in Janakpur. There won't even be oral rehydration salts when the floods arrive.

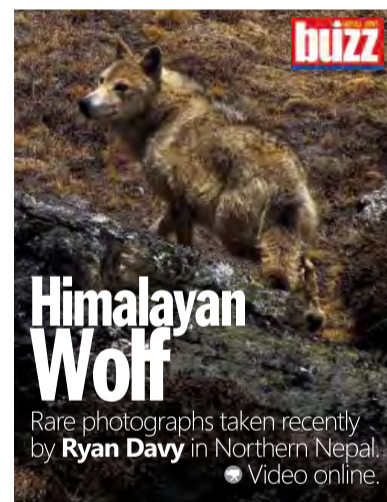
Across the country confusion over budgets and new procurement procedures in the new federal structure has led to a nationwide shortage of medicines.

Dip Narayan Yadav of Benga Health Post in Janakpur says: "We faced shortages even before, but it is more serious this time because we do not know where to complain."

After local elections, all District Public Health Offices were brought under self-governing local councils. Local governments now have the responsibility of buying and supplying drugs to health posts, but there have been delays.

Janakpur Sub-Metropolitan City was given Rs2.15 million to procure medicines for its health posts, but only put out a tender notice last month. Public Health Officer Mundrika Thakur says that would be too late for the expected epidemics during the monsoon.

Om Astha Rai in Janakpur



buzz

Himalayan Wolf

Rare photographs taken recently by **Ryan Davy** in Northern Nepal. Video online.



Anti-poaching raft patrol on the Karnali River

Mikel Dunham embeds himself with the Nepal Army as it tries to save the Ganges River Dolphin.

PAGE 8-9



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TOWARDS A POLICE STATE

Last week's edition of this paper carried a report on the Philippines under President Rodrigo Duterte. In it, investigative reporter Rameshwar Bohara painted a bleak picture of how a country known for its vibrant civil society and long struggle to restore and protect democracy is now threatened by a populist president who boasts about having shot people.

Duterte is among a new breed of elected despots who use populist slogans to get to power and proceed to dismantle the rule of law and democratic institutions. Bohara warns that the Philippines holds important lessons for Nepal where a retreat to authoritarianism is a real possibility.

Fed up with crime, corruption and the stranglehold on politics by an entrenched business elite, Filipinos voted overwhelmingly for Duterte. The president's preferred method of dealing with drugs and crime is through encounter killings. More than 5,000 people have been killed under Duterte so far, and human rights groups say most of them are innocent or minor offenders.

This is why it was ominous to hear Makwanpur police chief Lokendra Shrestha announce recently that he would use 'encounters' to rid his district of crime. He told businesspersons and media that he had a carte blanche from Home Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa to shoot on sight. Nepal Police's role in criminal investigation has now been taken over by the Home Ministry. On Monday, an alleged gangster was shot in an 'encounter' in broad daylight in the capital.

Indeed, Minister Thapa (a former Maoist guerrilla commander himself) has been going beyond his ministry's mandate to crack down on bus syndicates, lethargic road contractors, and even sidewalk vegetable and meat vendors. The criminal investigation and legal process are bypassed as suspects are taken straight to jail – presumed guilty until proven innocent. There may be some support for this from people sick of syndicates and swindlers, but it has eroded the rule of law, demoralised honest policemen, and flouted due process.

The Home Ministry's over-reach has been taken by many as yet another worrying sign of an authoritarian tendency in the united Communist government, which with its new Madhesi partner now has more than two-thirds majority in Parliament. Prime Minister Oli obviously has to balance his former party's democratic values with the Maoists who have never formally abandoned violence as a political tool, and never apologised for conflict-era excesses.

Gangamaya Adhikari, the mother of a teenager allegedly abducted, tortured and killed by the Maoists, is on the third week of her fast unto death at Bir Hospital. Her husband Nanda Prasad died three years ago during their prolonged hunger strike, and his body is still in the hospital's morgue. She resumed her fast on Republic Day, when the government got a presidential pardon for Bal Krishna Dhungel, a Maoist convicted of a murder during the war.

The Maoists are hoping that by merging with the relatively-clean

UML, they can wash the blood off their hands, and keep transitional justice in limbo. That plan may very well work. However, this has engrained a culture of impunity, and the idea that anyone can get away with anything. Thus, corruption in all three organs of government is eating away at the state structure from within, dashing hopes that last year's elections would ensure accountability and good governance.

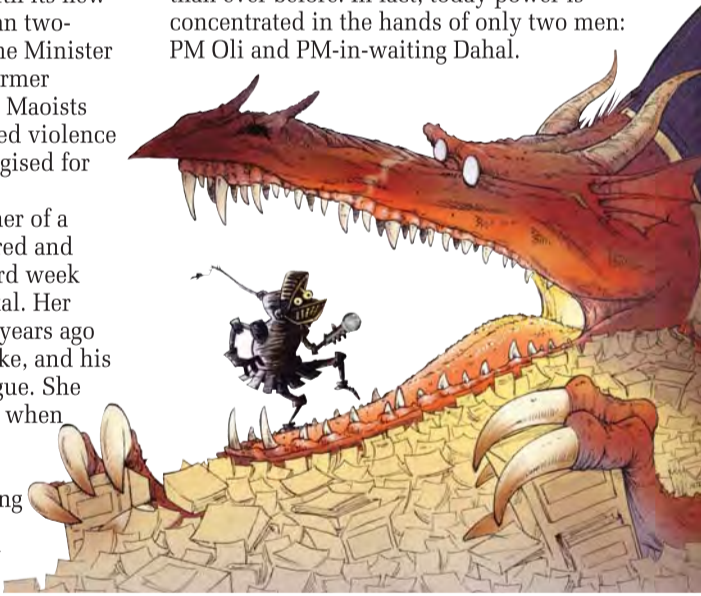
There are other examples this week of the Communist government bristling at free speech. Information Minister Gokul Banskota closed down a NTV program after the anchor grilled him about his asset declaration. And Pushpa Kamal Dahal, angry at media reports of his landlord being the main defaulter on road contracts, warned journalists they were getting too big for their boots.

The Nepal Communist Party's election promise of 'stability' is becoming synonymous with 'absolutism'. And 'prosperity' seems to apply only to office-bearers. We already see evidence of this at the municipality and rural levels where contractors elected to office are plundering natural resources. And in Kathmandu there is tendency to make high-profile populist crackdowns without due process, with no followup.

The Cabinet is expected to approve new guidelines under the National Integrity Policy which, as we reported here in a previous issue, sound draconian and so broadly worded that anyone can be taken in for anything. The code of conduct for INGOs, aid agencies and foreign missions appear to be intended for control rather than cooperation. All this is being justified in the name of stopping religious conversion, protecting national unity, and removing corruption.

A government really serious about controlling organised crime would go after the Biplab faction of the Maoists who tried to violently disrupt elections, and in the past months have been terrorising, extorting, and confiscating property throughout the land. The comrades are being allowed to do whatever they like by their erstwhile comrades in government.

As we report from Province 2 (*page 14-15*), it is an irony of our times that a federal state that was supposed to devolve power to local elected assemblies is now more centralised than ever before. In fact, today power is concentrated in the hands of only two men: PM Oli and PM-in-waiting Dahal.



10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

The front page image of Prachanda morphing into Stalin on #404 of *Nepali Times* dated 13-19 June 2008, said it all. Excerpt from the editorial that week:

Two weeks after the declaration of the republic, the debate over who should be the first president is deadlocked. Two months after the elections, the Maoists have still not been able to form a government.

History repeats itself as farce. We have voted to power a utopian ideology that the rest of the world paid for with the death of tens of millions. One could never accuse Nepali politicians of being ahead of the times, but we had never realised till now just what a bunch of dinosaurs they are.

There were socio-political reasons for the Maoist victory, of course. Perhaps contributing to it also was our collective blind spot for history and the deliberate airbrushing of atrocities of the past.'



ONLINE PACKAGES



HERD MENTALITY

Himalayan Wolves are indigenous to Tibet. They migrate across the border to Nepal attracted by abundant livestock on this side. Because of yak attacks, the wolves are in frequent conflict with humans, but perhaps this is nature's way of protecting the slopes from overgrazing. Watch a rare video clip of the elusive Himalayan Wolf in the wild mountains of Northern Nepal.



THE REBEL RULES

The Madhesi people have finally got what they fought for: an autonomous province. Chief Minister Raut is now aiming for rapid economic growth and development. To make Province 2 a successful example of federalism, he is launching programs to educate girls and has vowed to allocate 50% seats in the state police force to women. Go online and follow our reporter to Janakpur and see for yourself.



FREEDOM FROM RAIN

A pump invented by a Nepali engineer in the Netherlands has shown it can transform Nepal's farms. Barsha Pump uses the natural flow of rivers to lift water to irrigate fields. It does not need fuel, does not emit greenhouse gases, and costs nothing to operate. Watch this video to find out how it works.

DEMOCRACY AND FREE PRESS

Democracy is just a mask the Filipinos use ('The Struggle to save democracy and free press in the Philippines', Rameshwar Bohara, #913). From mayor to senators, the ones who hold these offices either belong to elite and prominent families or are heavily backed by them. Ordinary people rarely reach the top. The only difference between Duterte and his predecessors is he speaks openly about it.

Sudep

ANY PROGRESS?

I wonder why Aryaghat is a shit hole every time I go to pay my respects to my relatives' last rites ('Getting our shit together', Editorial, #913). And when I inquire, I usually get this response from fellow policy makers and bureaucrats: progress is being made (where is it?). I haven't seen a clean Bagmati for the last 20 years. When progress is not seen, trust between citizens and 'rulers' is broken, and each sets out to 'con' the other.

Ujwal Thapa

REBUILDING OURSELVES

How much of that 10million Euro from the German government would have gone to Consultant/Admin/Overhead fees and thus back into German coffers ('Clash of cultures in Bhaktapur', Sewa Bhattarai, #912)? In the long run, Nepal should be able to raise money internally and get the same reconstruction done at a fraction of that cost.

Abiral Shapit

WHAT'S TRENDING



Toilet Trained

by *Sonia Awale*

The rapid spread of household latrines in Nepal is an internationally recognised success story. But just declaring a district 'open defecation free' does not mean it is. Access to water supply, hygiene maintenance, and management of waste water and excreta all play a role. If you missed it, you can still read this most popular story from last week online, and watch an accompanying video.

Most reached and shared on Facebook

Most commented

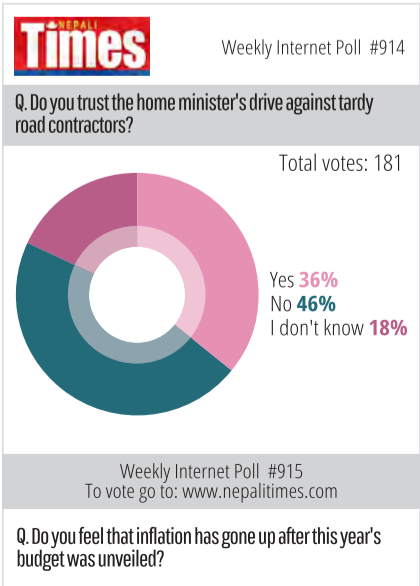
Most visited online page

Most popular on Twitter

QUOTE TWEETS

- Nepali Times** @nepalitimes
Editorial: A civilisation is judged by the way it manages and disposes of its waste, but we Nepalis are generally not given to maintaining high hygienic standards. What does that say about us? And how do we go about solving our waste problem?
- Tom Wingfield** @TomWingfield
Hard hitting @nepalitimes editorial "Dirty streets are a metaphor for dirty politics."
- Amir Joshi** @Amirjoshi
Nobody gives a #Shit about this but its high time to get our sh** together. @NepaliTimes
- KHORUNGA** @GuragainMohan
An incisive editorial on our national tendency to litter. Do have a look @nepalitimes
- Anil Bhattarai** @anilbhattarai
I must say, Nepali Times is the best media when it comes to reporting on issues that matter. Thank you.

- Nepali Times** @nepalitimes
A tribute to PraladYonzon. Remembering conservationist and bicycle transport pioneer PraladYonzon on #WorldBicycleDay
- BhushanTuladhar** @BhushanTuladhar
Cyclists painted a memorial at the spot where Dr. PraladYonzan was killed & have been demanding for safe cycle lanes on #RingRoad. But when the road was expanded, the wall was destroyed & the government forgot about its promise to construct a #CycleLane on this road. #WorldBicycleDay



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Next Kim-Trump Summit in Lumbini?

The birthplace of the Buddha can be an ideal venue for other peace talks to end conflicts

At long last, Kim Jong-un and Donald Trump had their summit in Singapore, and half of the locals interviewed on international tv were happy and excited, while the other half were angry.



½ FULL
Anil Chitrakar

The summit that may result in something or nothing cost Singaporean tax payers \$20 million (their dollars). But that was a small price to pay for peace. The Korean people suffered enough at the hands of the Japanese, the Americans, the Russians, the Chinese and their own rulers for a very long time. Hence the hopes for a lasting peace and ultimately unification of the Koreans.

However, the next time the world needs a venue for a summit of leaders to end a conflict, it could be Lumbini. There are, at any given moment, numerous wars going on around the world. They all get tired of fighting, and at some point wish to talk. If they need a venue, Lumbini is always there.

Cynics will scoff, but what better place than the birthplace of the Prince of Peace for this purpose? There are new hotels, soon an international airport, and there are plenty of Gurkhas to protect and guard the venue.

What we may need is a bit of



help from Singapore on how to organise, manage and pay for such an event. But Nepal's hospitality industry is gearing up for an expected boom in tourism. There are three new airports coming up and the existing one in Kathmandu is supposed to be upgraded. Luxury hotels and resorts are popping up all over the place: Kathmandu, Lumbini, Chitwan, Nepalganj.

Nepal has also just launched the Visit Nepal Year 2020. Maybe if Korean negotiations are protracted, we can convince South Korean

President Moon Jae-in, who has a soft spot for trekking in Nepal, to fly over on Korean Airlines for a North-South Summit.

It's not unthinkable. What will it take to get everyone to take this up? There are people who never believed the Maoists would join up with the UML, who would have thought power cuts would be a thing of the past?

After all, we have had celebrity visitors. Prince Harry visited Nepal, and Marvel Comics Dr Strange helped put Nepal back on the travel map after the 2015

earthquake, sending the message that Nepal was safe and secure.

OK, if we cannot convince the Koreans to come to Lumbini, how about an India-Pakistan Summit? Maybe we can even get President Putin of Russia to follow Siberian cranes on their annual winter migration to Lumbini -- Russian tourists and bird watchers from all over the world would follow. There is a need to sell Lumbini high, and having high profile peace talks there in full glare of the world media would do it.

Nepal has done what it can

to market its monuments, natural assets and biodiversity that are globally second to none. But we have done little else to put the destination on the world map. A few companies in Singapore, India and Bangladesh have begun to come to Nepal for corporate events. Businesspersons from Bihar and West Bengal would flock to cooler Dharan and Dhankuta if the physical facilities were there.

One challenge is the short-term thinking that prevails in Nepal. After PM Modi's visit last month, Indian pilgrims are flocking to Muktinath, but we are not offering them adequate facilities. After Modi left Janakpur, even the hastily constructed cement

wall in front of the Janaki Temple collapsed. King Bhumibol of Thailand wrote a book on Janakpur, but we couldn't get him to visit the place when he was alive. Maybe we can get his son, the new King.

The Ministry of Tourism needs to begin to focus big on high-end visitors and events, and stop selling Nepal cheap. The government has set a target of 2 million tourists by 2020, but the daily spending goal is only \$65 per tourist per day. We can do much better. 🇳🇵

Anil Chitrakar is President of Siddharthinc.

Dus Din Dilli Ke

As you walk through an entrance resembling India Gate accompanied by the strains of street music, you will be refreshed by a clay cup of Chaas or Lassi. Further in you will find a miniature version of Chandni Chowk, also famously known as the Street Food Capital of India.

Delhi's food culture is an amalgam of Mughlai, Persian, and North Indian cuisine and the 'Dus Din Dilli Ke' (Ten Days of Delhi) food festival does not miss any of these. The 10-day culinary extravaganza at The Cafe in Hyatt Regency Kathmandu that starts Friday offers an unlimited buffet of scrumptious delicacies from Delhi till 24 June.

Santosh Kumar Koradi, the Executive Chef at Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, was born in South India but was brought up in the North. While he openly admits to succumbing to the fusion side of Indian cuisine, Koradi always felt a sense of belonging towards the food on the streets of India. So when he got an opportunity to showcase Indian cuisine in Kathmandu, he passionately went for what he loves: Delhi's authentic street food.

Give yourself a royal treat, as you choose from the varieties of beloved paranthas brought straight from Delhi's famous Paranthi Wali Galli. Or if you want to feel like Bollywood actors who reportedly visit Old Delhi's narrow streets for spicy and crunchy treats, there will be a separate counter for chaats and golgappas as well.

"We have had numerous food festivals before on a monthly basis, but this one is completely different, and on a much larger scale. We have been planning it for six months and preparing the ingredients for 15 days prior to the event," says Koradi. "We have four hours of splendid buffet with more than 100 Indian dishes."

The festival brings together more than 100 masala-enriched and lip smacking food items from a city that



is a melting pot of ethnicities, with treasured recipes passed down through the centuries. Myth has it that butter chicken or *murgh makhani* in Hindi was accidentally created by the three founders of Moti Mahal in Delhi when they tossed Tandoori Chicken in tomato gravy, rich in butter and cream, by mistake.

But your encounter with the Butter Chicken here at the festival won't be accidental. The dish is Chef's favourite, and chances are he might make extra effort on it. Combine it with Rumali Roti, another favorite of the Chef, and you will end up with a hearty meal.

Kebabs and Biryani are an integral part of Delhi's Mughlai cuisine. If you are confused by the mind-boggling variety, Chef Koradi will give you a crash course on their history and preparation methods. It may make your decision even more difficult, but will surely make your indulgence more informed.

And vegetarians also have reason to cheer with dishes like Lal Paneer Tikka, Bhutte ke Kebab, Dal Makhani, Baigan ka Bharta, Mutter Paneer, etc. Delhi's renowned creamy, milky and nutty sweets like Kesar rasamalai, Phirni, Jalebi etc have a separate counter in the restaurant. Make sure you watch what you eat and leave some room for desserts.

With a team of 57 chefs from the Rox Restaurant, Banquet Team and The Cafe, Chef Koradi is commander-in-chief of what promises to be foodie heaven. For those who haven't yet been to Delhi, here is your chance to taste it. 🇳🇵

Sikuma Rai

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BIZ BRIEFS

Sixth gateway

Qatar Airways' first non-stop flight from Doha to Bodrum landed at Milas-Bodrum Airport on Tuesday, marking the airways' sixth gateway in Turkey and third new Turkish route in just nine months. Qatar Airways flight QR 317, operated by an Airbus A320, was welcomed by a traditional water canon salute.

World Cup in Nepali

Dish Home will be broadcasting games of the upcoming World Cup on its sister channel DH Action Sports, with live commentary in Nepali language by the veteran commentator Sanjeeb Shilpakar, along with many other sports related persons. The channel has also produced a promotional song and video to go with it.

Joining ventures

The signing ceremony of the joint venture between Turkish Airlines' Turkish Cargo, Chinese cargo ZTO Express and Hong Kong based PAL Air Ltd. took place in Istanbul on Monday. The Hong Kong based

Feel the game

Samsung Electronics has launched a new campaign 'Feel the Game', offering customers cash back up to 27%, 2 years warranty and 0% EMI service on Samsung TVs, with gift vouchers in the purchase of Smart TVs, till 15 July. Through a lucky draw customers can also win a Turkish Airlines ticket, Samsung 5in1 refrigerator, Galaxy S9, Galaxy A6+ and Galaxy J7 Duos.

Food and football

Foodmandu's freshly launched 'Cheer your team' World Cup campaign offers up to 40% discounts to customers who correctly predict the game while ordering combos, value meals or regular food. Points will also be awarded that customers can collect. The contestant with highest points at the end of the tournament will get a chance to win 43" Samsung FHD Smart TV. Stay tuned at www.foodmandu.com.

Stereotyping women as victims

Do Nepali women really need to be rescued from a Hindu patriarchal order?

Radha Adhikari and
Jeevan Sharma

Nepal has experienced a profound and impressive social change in just one generation with improvements in literacy, schooling, health and political participation.

There has been a shift from a deeply hierarchical social order, where gender differences were supported by a combination of ritual, law, political economy and state, to one where the call for women’s rights is widespread.

The tragedy of the young woman (*pictured, right*) who was killed in Achham this week by snakebite during her monthly banishment to a shed during menstruation reminds us again of the problems. Her family tried to keep her death under wraps because of the shame the media coverage would bring.

However, a stereotypical representation of Nepali women persists, one influenced primarily by the colonial discourses of Third World women needing protection, welfare and development which is pervasive in women’s activism, public policy, development programs, and the media.

More worryingly, there is a strong tendency to view Nepali women’s suffering mainly as a result of traditional Hindu religious and ritual practices. Positive developments in the lives of Nepali women remain largely invisible in dominant popular and scholarly representations.

These obscure the diversity of women’s experiences in favour of stereotypes, and paradoxically imply that any demeaning practices which subjugate Nepali women can be done away with by replacing traditional values with modern ones. While social changes are underway in Nepal, it is dangerous to assume that gender equalities will automatically prevail once traditional ritual and religious values are erased and replaced by modern ones.

It is vital that there is an appreciation of Nepali women’s dynamic and diverse experiences, perceptions, aspirations and achievements, and that these be viewed within the broader political-economic framework.

Gender relations are not just rooted in Hindu cultural and ritual sites as claimed, but equally embedded in political-economic structures and institutions, not only in Nepal but across the world. Discourses on Nepali women are created and sustained by an assemblage of activists, media, development professionals, and policy makers, all of whom draw exclusively on a widely critiqued colonial view.

The prevalence of stereotypical representation of Nepali women is reflective of lack of space for their voices. As such, these actors offer very little space for women’s own experiences, perceptions, aspirations and achievements, and Nepali women are automatically considered victims of an unchanging patriarchy, in particular due to dominant Hindu religious and ritual order.

This is most evident in the widespread representation of *chhaupadi*, dowry, gender and sexual violence, and son-preference, among others. The creation of a political space that allows women’s voices to be heard is key to understanding the diversity of women’s lives in Nepal.



Likewise, there is an awkward absence of men’s perceptions and experiences in almost all of the discussions on Nepali women. How do Nepali men articulate and appropriate ideas of gender hierarchies, masculinities and women in subordinate positions? Cultural, ethnic and class differences, in addition to changing gender ideologies, make it hard to generalise about Nepali men and how they view and treat women and negotiate their masculinities

with them. Given ample evidence of how caste, class, ethnicity, religion and political patronage shape power relations in Nepali society, it is critical that we acknowledge the differences and heterogeneity of women’s and men’s social experiences. Partly due to the overpowering image of Nepali women within religious and ritual practices that relegate them to domestic and reproductive spheres, there has

been very little acknowledgement of women’s actual contribution to the economy.

There are misguided and patronising initiatives aimed at bringing women into the so-called ‘mainstream economy’. If the overall aim of earning money and becoming wealthy is to improve our living standards, the contribution women and men make in the domestic sphere has more value than money. The problem does not lie in lack of women’s participation in the formal economy, but more importantly in the failure of development economists to value women’s labour in the domestic realm.

Inaccurate, inappropriate and generalised stereotypical representations can make people feel betrayed and excluded. International development actors, social activists and popular media can play critical roles in shaping mindsets.

It is critical to move beyond these traditional notions that women in developing countries lack agency and are controlled

within an unchanging patriarchal social order. Perhaps women (and men) in Nepal have some unexplored qualities and attributes, which can be learned and appreciated. Nepali women’s resilience and how women (and men) in Nepal negotiate power-relations within family, community and state could offer positive learning.

Perhaps, those who are in economically and politically privileged positions also should learn more about Nepali women and men, before venturing to rescue them from so-called dominant Hindu patriarchal social order.



Radha Adhikari is a Research Fellow at the University of Edinburgh in the UK.



Jeevan R Sharma is the author of Crossing the Border to India: Youth, Migration and Masculinities in Nepal (Temple University Press, 2018).



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Looking back from Sentosa

Away from the Kim-Trump summit, fiction is more accurate than fact in depicting the lives of North Koreans today



PHOTO: KUNDADIXIT

Kunda Dixit

The Kim-Trump Singapore summit this week is 'historic' in more ways than one. Both sides decided to jaw-jaw rather than war-war. But it also threw into sharp focus what kind of place North Korea is. And what the United States of America has become.

We don't have to say much about the Trump regime, just read POTUS tweets from 37,000ft to see how he has corroded a government of the people, for the people and by the people -- a nation that used to welcome the huddled masses yearning to be free.

However, we know much less about life inside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since the armistice 64 years ago. How and why did an anachronistic Stalinist state survive to this day? The deep scars of war and America's role in the suffering allowed the Kim Dynasty to deflect the people's attention to a permanent outside enemy. The competing interests of Japan, South Korea, China, Russia and the U.S. locked the regime and its geopolitics for decades.

The world doesn't know much about North Korea beyond impressive military parades, reports of famine and sibling rivalry

leading to executions. Aside from a few tantalising glimpses from within the country, there is not much to go on.

When we arrived in Pyongyang on a flight from Beijing five years ago, there was a feeling of déjà vu: the austere terminal looked and felt like the old Kathmandu airport. Since there was no official to receive me, the police took my passport and were about to put me on the same flight back when my hosts showed up: a driver, translator and minder.

The mandatory first stop for all arriving visitors is to the much-larger-than-life statues of The Great Leader and The Dear Leader, father and grandfather of president-for-life Kim Jong-un. Each bouquet of gladioli cost \$5. Then it is to the Great Kim's nativity site. In the car, driving along deserted streets and past empty high rises, we are reminded of the rules: no carrying local currency, no leaving the hotel unattended, no talking to people on the streets.

The apparatus of control looked similar to the GDR while it was behind the Iron Curtain, but the degree of social engineering and fear in the DPRK today are much more palpable. Even so, just like no one could have predicted the fall of the Berlin Wall,

dramatic changes may be afoot on the Korean Peninsula as well. Wonders never cease: meetings between South Korean President and former human rights activist Moon Jae-in and The Beloved Leader at the DMZ, and then the Sentosa Summit this week with Trump.

Cornered by sanctions, Kim knows his people cannot take it for much longer. He badly needs to put food on the table and goods in the shops, and has used nuclear blackmail effectively to attain that. But what has it been like for ordinary North Koreans to live for nearly three generations under totalitarianism?

When facts are scarce, one needs to turn to fiction. And a newly-translated collection of seven short stories by an author with the pseudonym Bandi which was smuggled out of the North is better than most travelogues in portraying the reality of every day life in Korea under the Kims.

The Accusation: Forbidden Stories from Inside North Korea takes us inside homes and factories where no foreigners are allowed. In page after page, we are taken to rundown communes in the countryside, to prefab flats away from Pyongyang's sanitised, sterilised streets where pedestrians in suits are said to be paid to walk all day. Where shoppers and

shopkeepers in well-stocked stores in the main squares are probably actors.

Bandi weaves the reality of life in North Korea into tales of families caught up in a surveillance state with spies everywhere, and everyone is watching everyone else. The smallest indiscretion or disrespect can get them convicted for anti-revolutionary crimes and sent off to the gulags. All the seven stories have the same plot: individuals made slaves to the state, everyone is an informer unless proven otherwise, even family members, they have to use flattery and favours to keep party sycophants happy – all the while trying to live lives with a modicum of human dignity, scrounging for basic necessities, just trying to survive from day to day keeping their heads down and trying not to be noticed.

It sounds like an Orwellian apocalyptic fiction, but it's all raw DPRK, without exaggeration and embellishment. The characters are the flipside of jubilant cutouts of smiling revolutionary workers and soldiers seen in Pyongyang (above). A woman is forced to act out her grief at the death of the Great Leader, but is taken to task by a commissar who thinks her sorrow is not convincing enough. Her

emotions are suspect because her husband is imprisoned for dissent.

In another story, Pyongyang runs out of flowers for The Great Leader and people are forced to march up to the mountains to gather wild blossoms. A mother tries to stop her baby from crying by scaring it with posters of Karl Marx and Kim Il-sung outside the window, but the baby gets even more spooked. The party suspects the family of being anti-revolutionary because they draw the curtains.

The handwritten manuscript was smuggled out of North Korea in 2013, and authenticated as having been written by a North Korean writer for state-owned media. Bandi in Korean means 'firefly', and the author says he chose the nom de plume because he is 'fated to shine only in a world of darkness'. It is an apt coincidence that 'Bandi' in Nepali means 'prisoner'. 🇳🇵



The Accusation: Forbidden Stories from Inside North Korea
By Bandi
Translated by Deborah Smith
Serpent's Tail, 2017
\$12.99 Hardcover
247 pages



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As predicted last week in this space, the monsoon is taking its time getting here from the Bay. It must be taking the overland route. The monsoon winds are fighting a tug-o-war with the residual jet-stream. It is only when the westerlies migrate north of the Himalaya, that the weaker moisture-bearing clouds can move in. The real rains could start in the Valley this weekend, till then expect night showers, sometimes heavy. Days will be hot and humid.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
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KANAK MANI DIXIT

Artivists at the Bank

An eclectic exhibition of Nepali art on the theme of social justice in Washington

In the lobby space surrounding the Preston Auditorium at the World Bank headquarters in Washington DC, a visitor will be surprised to see an exhibition of contemporary art from Nepal. Etchings, ceramics, acrylic on canvas and pencil sketches take the viewer into a personalised vision of Nepal.

‘Recovering Nepal’ is curated by Marina Galvani of the World Bank Art Programme and Mohini Malhotra, a micro-finance expert who left the World Bank in 2015 in part to pursue her passion for art. At the exhibit and elsewhere in the US capital, Malhotra is helping give Nepal’s artists international exposure, and the World Bank exhibition presents a representative sampling and up-to-date evaluation of contemporary Nepali art.

Mohini Malhotra is the daughter of the well-regarded former government secretary Ram Chandra Malhotra who died in 2001. Her interest in the fine arts was piqued early on due to the portrait of a ‘blue lady’ that went with the family around the world wherever he

was posted with the UN.

“The blue lady was a constant in my life, and led to my interest in the fine arts,” explains Malhotra, who found out much later that the portrait was by Bombay-based Laxman Shrestha, who she regards as the foremost among Nepali artists.

Malhotra joined the Bank in 1994 and as she travelled the globe on work, developed an interest in contemporary and folk art. “My special mission has become trying to bring exposure and the market to the high art of women artists of the developing world,” she says.

As an independent collector and curator, Malhotra is now expanding her personal collection which she loans to exhibitions. She also works to develop the market for women artists from countries like Nepal. In Washington DC where she lives, she volunteers with organisations supporting immigrant and minority youth through the arts.

Explaining her focus on women artists,

she says: “It is an attempt to correct an injustice. Only 5% of artists in the great collections of the West happen to be women. Less than 15% of solo art exhibitions are by women. Women artists are creating powerful visual stories, and the world needs to see and hear their stories – that call out social injustice, unequal voice and skewed power.”

In bringing Nepali artists to Washington and the World Bank’s permanent art collection, Malhotra collaborated with her elementary school friend Sangeeta Thapa of the Siddhartha Art Gallery in Kathmandu.

Says Malhotra, “I have found that the expression of Nepali artists, their use of cultural metaphors and their commitment to social justice, is unique. For an art world that is relatively small, the contemporary artists of Nepal are of high calibre.”

“Nepali artists are artivists, and played a large role in the earthquake recovery efforts, bringing art as therapy to children and adults in destroyed villages and in makeshift camps across Kathmandu,” she adds.

CANVASSING: Mohini Malhotra, who helped curate the ‘Recovering Nepal’ exhibition at the World Bank in Washington DC, says her mission is to bring exposure and the market to women artists from the developing world.

In ‘Recovering Nepal’, Malhotra values the traditional themes of Pancha Buddha renditions with modern interpretations by Seema Sharma Shah, Saurganga Darshandari’s fresh depictions of what it means to be a young woman in modern Nepal, and Ragini Upadhaya’s satirical take on contemporary themes. Other works are by Hit Man Gurung, Prithvi Shrestha, Gopal Kalapremi Shrestha and Sundar Lama.

The ‘Recovering Nepal’ exhibition was organised in response to the 2015 earthquake, and has led to a significant addition of Nepali art to the World Bank Art Collection. 🇳🇵

Kanak Mani Dixit in Washington DC



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CRYING WOLF

**Rather than a threat, the
Himalayan Wolf may be the
saviour of a fragile ecosystem**

Ryan Davy

After two months of trekking across the remote mountains of Northern Nepal in search of the elusive Himalayan Wolf, I was beginning to feel like I was chasing ghosts. But one cold morning, there they were on the ridge above me (*pictured*).

I was so happy I was crying. This is what I had waited so long for, and I quickly took pictures and video of the male wolf howling in the distance. I howled back, trying to talk to him. (*Video online*) Later, he was joined by a female and an

adolescent on the slope.

Himalayan Wolf sightings are rare. Zoologists say they are a distinct species from the smaller Grey Wolves found in North America and Europe. Indeed, they were different to wolves I had tracked in North America which had become somewhat accustomed to tourists along the trails, and were easier to follow.

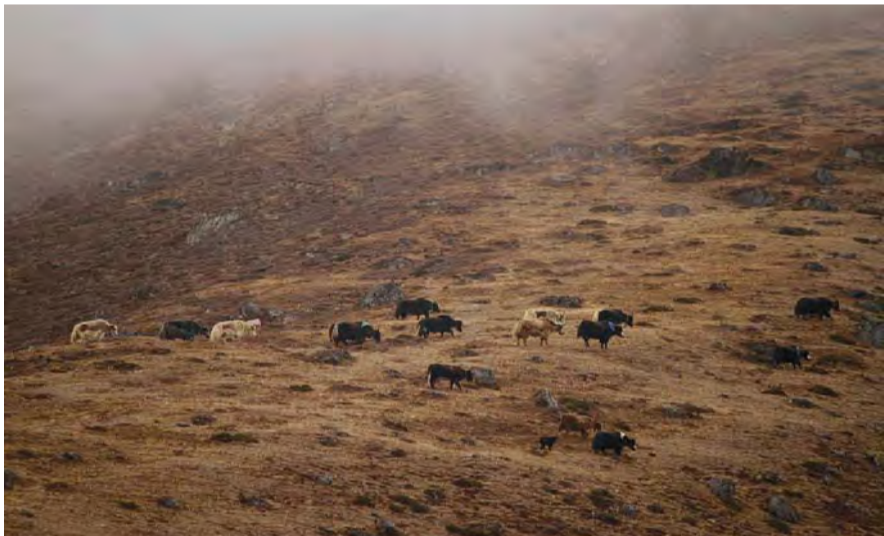
Himalayan Wolves are indigenous to Tibet and seem to migrate across the border to Nepal attracted by the abundant yak herds on this side. During my search, there wasn't one slope without the clanging of yak bells.

The wolves conduct yak attacks

and are in frequent conflict with humans. Perhaps this is nature's way of protecting the slopes from overgrazing, which leads to landslides and loss of topsoil.

The wolves of Nepal are much more mysterious than elsewhere, and probably the least understood carnivore. Villagers whispered the word 'wolf' (*bwaso* in Nepali, *bhang* in Tibetan) with awe and fear, as if the animal would take offence at being mentioned.

Nepali herders often replied to my question about wolves with a slight smirk. "Go higher up," they would say vaguely, pointing to the slopes. These shadowy animals which stalk the perimeter



The wellbeing of the

A Karnali river patrol shows how difficult it is to balance livelihoods with nature protection

Mikel Dunham
in Bardiya

The seven-man armed patrol in two jeeps drove along a dusty track high above the Karnali River following the southern flank of the Siwalik Hills. The swift-flowing waters of this glacier fed river was blue-green in the early morning light.

Lt Bikash Rayamajhi of the Shiva Dal Battalion led this river anti-poaching patrol. The gear was unloaded in the buffer zone near the Bardiya National Park boundary. The rubber dinghy was inflated on a sandy beach as herons watched from a distance.



IUCN



ALL PHOTOS: MIKEL DUNHAM



Bristling with paddles and firearms, the raft was a tight fit for eight men as it floated lazily downriver. The tranquility was misleading: a stretch of rapids awaited us.

Lt Rayamajhi explained that the guardianship of buffer zones is almost as crucial as protecting the interior of the parks. Overseen by the country's Buffer Zone Management Committee, the Nepal Army acts as its boots-on-the-ground steward.

Cooperation from local villagers is vital. Half the Department of National Parks and

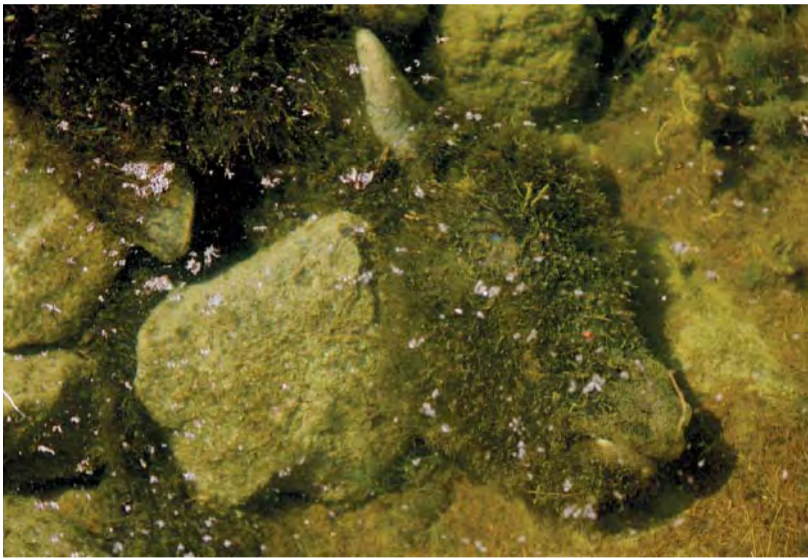
Wildlife Conservation's revenue comes from tourism, and some of this is distributed to buffer zone communities, so that villagers are not forced to enter the national parks to extract natural resources.

The primary purpose of the Army's raft patrol is to scout for clues of illegal fishing. Bunched-up nets hidden among riverbank boulders was one give-away. When the locals cast the nets, they not only capture golden mahseer (carp) and catfish, they may also catch endangered aquatic species. Top on that

list is the Ganges River Dolphin.

Once endemic to Nepal, India and Bangladesh, the population of the fresh water aquatic mammal has dwindled to fewer than 2,000 in the wild, out of which fewer than 100 dolphins still swim Nepal's rivers.

Much of the danger to the dolphin is from fishing gear, poaching for dolphin oil, damming of rivers, and pollution. The Karnali is Nepal's longest river and the only significant one that has not yet



WOLF CALL: Rare sightings of female and male wolves with an adolescent taken recently in Northern Nepal (*left*). Although indigenous to the Tibetan Plateau, the wolves are attracted by increasing numbers of yaks on the Nepal side of the border (*lower, left*).

A dead yak submerged in a stream, probably killed by a wolf during a routine afternoon water break (*above*), and overlapping hind and front paw prints of a Himalayan Wolf nearby (*left*).

ALL PHOTOS: RYAN DAVY



of livestock enclosures in search of a prey have a reputation that precedes them. They are seldom seen, except by their unfortunate victims.

In summer, yaks in Nepal roam

the high slopes, sharing territory with predators like snow leopards and wolves.

I came across a carcass of a half eaten yak that lay submerged in a stream. It was clear the wolves ambushed it during the herd's routine afternoon water stop. The wolf packs take no survivors.

Nature knows its limits, but humans do not. The limits are often only discovered when wildlife clash violently with humans, and the retaliation is in proportion to the damage done.

Villagers in Nepal are compensated for snow leopard attacks, but not for wolf attacks. Three cubs were smoked and killed

in their caves in Dolpo by yak herders two years ago.

Such conflict between wolves and humans is escalating along Nepal's northern border. The yak's importance as livestock and as pack animals for tourism means there is demand for them despite the spread of roads. The bigger herds attract wolves from across the border.

It is not the wolf's fault that it is a carnivore, nor the yak's that it is a herbivore. It is human activity that has created a need for nature to compensate for the over-abundance of yaks.

If yak numbers are limited, perhaps the predators would retreat to their homeland. If villagers have a stake in conservation, maybe they will not exterminate predators. Have the wolves been summoned by nature to take care of the problem of yak overpopulation?

If so, the wolf may not be the villain, but the saviour of a fragile Himalayan ecosystem. 🇳🇵

Ryan Davy is a South African filmmaker who began his wildlife career at 17 in an anti-poaching unit. After a controversial illegal attempt to climb Mt Everest last year, he is making amends by trying to help nature conservation in Nepal.

HERD MENTALITY



Watch rare video clips of the Himalayan Wolf captured recently in the remote mountains of Northern Nepal. The sightings came after nearly two months of painstaking search along the high mountains. The wolves are attracted to cross over from Tibet by the growing population of yaks.

nepalitimes.com

wilderness



EMBEDDED IN NATURE: (left to right)

The Karnali is Nepal's longest river, and one of the last remaining habitats for the Ganges River Dolphin.

The Nepal Army river patrol on the Karnali guard the Bardiya National Park.

Soldiers confiscate illegal fishing nets that can trap endangered Ganges River Dolphin.

The river patrol approaches the impressive Karnali Bridge.

The Karnali River as it cuts through the Siwalik Hills at Chisapani, where a major hydropower project is planned.



been dammed, but several large projects are planned on it and its tributaries.

The Army's raft criss-crossed the river, confiscating nets along and above the shorelines. At one point, two fishermen came rushing down from a steep bluff, punching their fists in the air and hurling insults because their nets had been confiscated. The armed patrol didn't seem unduly concerned. Across Nepal, there is a precarious balance that has to be struck between people's livelihoods and the need to protect nature.

The river flows slower and grows wider as we float downstream. Silence prevails except for the plunge of oars. No motorboats yet on the Karnali, but soon the 21st century intruded in the form of the magnificent steel suspension of the single-tower cable-stayed Karnali Bridge at Chisapani with its 500m span.

A dozen or so dugouts sculpted from single tea trunks bobbed in and out of the span's shadow. The juxtaposition of the lofty bridge and Stone Age dugouts was symbolic

of how despite modernity, Nepal remains harnessed to antiquity. It is the country's charm, though others could see it as a curse.

I was rooting for a Nepal that could develop without losing its cultural heritage and natural treasures. To what extent the economy can develop without damaging the ecology will be the challenge. The pace and parameters of that change will determine the well-being of Nepal's inherited wild kingdom.

A balance is possible, as the Nepal Army's river patrols showed. The military is

collaborating with conservationists, using technology to preserve nature in Bardiya, Chitwan and other nature sanctuaries in Nepal. 🇳🇵



American author **Mikel Dunham** was embedded with the Nepal Army's anti-poaching patrols in the Bardiya and Chitwan National Parks. More here: blog:www.mikeldunham.blogs.com

EVENTS



Dus Din Dilli Ke
Showcasing the rich culinary heritage of Delhi, *Dus Din Dilli Ke* presents 10 days of lip-smacking unlimited buffet of North Indian street food (*review on page 4*).
15-24 June, 6:30-10pm,
Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, Boudha,
Rs2,200 (excluding taxes), (01) 4217123

Namaste Eid

The exuberant culture of Muslim Community will be showcased in an Eid celebration. Come together with friends and family for the festival that will feature Halal food stalls, clothes designed by Muslim youths, live multicultural performances, and many more.
16 June, 1-7pm, Labim Mall, Pulchok, (01) 5529924

Property expo

7th edition of the NLHDA Property Expo hosts about 120 indoors and outdoors housing related exhibitors, expecting to attract more than 60,000 housing-related business visitors and home buyers.
15-19 June, 10am onwards, Bhrikutimandap Exhibition Hall, (01) 4262619/4262168



Improv theatre workshop

A 7-day workshop by Muneeb Ur Rehman, a Pakistani improv theatre practitioner. Participants of the workshop will give two improv theatre performances in Kunja Theatre.
17-23 June, 11am, International Center for Social Theater Nepal, Bhaktithapa Sadak, (01) 4494257

Workshop on Vitamin D

A call out for all parents and guardians to participate in the workshop by Sophia Uprety where she will elaborate on the importance of Vitamin D for children.
15 June, 2:30-4:30pm, Kids Care, Jhamsikhel, 9841421247

International Yoga Day

Level 1 of Sri Sri with Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and celebration of International Day of Yoga on the final day.
17-21 June, 6-7am, Art of Living, Shankhamul Centre, (01) 5242200

A talk on Goddess Svasthani

Jessica Vantine Birkenholtz, who studies Nepali goddess Svasthani and its archival texts to understand its role in the construction of Nepali Hindu identity and practice, gives a talk on Gender, Power, Place, and the Body in the Iconography of the Goddess Svasthani.
18 June, 3pm onwards, Fulbright Commission Auditorium, Gyaneshwor, (01) 4444780

Bake and taste

Learn how to make the Le roulé à la confiture, a special Génoise rolled cake filled with red fruit marmalade.
20 June, 10:30-11:30am, Alliance Française Kathmandu, Pulchok, Rs150 (students)/Rs200 (non-students), (01) 5009221



Open mic comedy

A weekly dose of fresh comedy brought to you by the Comedy Circle.
21 June, 6pm onwards, Samay Kathmandu, Kupondole, 9808897998

The StoryYellers

Session 19 of The StoryYellers with Ishan R. Onta, Mr.foodie_nepal, Prasansa Koirala and Neha Dhamala.
20 June, 5:30pm onwards, 25 Hours, Tangelwood, Rs200 (pre-sale)/Rs250 (door sale), 9851242128

Tim Gocher's venture talk

A venture talk with Tim Gocher, a private equity executive with a background in energy and technology, on exploring high potential industries and the investment landscape of Nepal.
21 June, 4:45-7pm, Nepal Tourism Board Hall, Pradarshani Marg, Rs200, (01) 5544879

MUSIC



Kta Haru

A local band performing and promoting original music with no genre limitations. Prasanna Shah, Milan Neupane and Prasong Rupacha in the line-up.
15 June, 4-7pm, Kar.ma Coffee, Gyan Mandala, Jhamsikhel, 9843767232

Kanta Dab Dab

A well-known trio band with sitar, percussion and bass playing some unique contemporary compositions, creating a soulful fusion, before heading for their exclusive Euro-tour.
16 June, 6-11:45pm, Shisha Lounge and Bar, Thamel, (01) 4701104



DJ Woody

Live flute and saxophone—electro-lounge music with DJ Woody from New Zealand.
15 June, 6:30 pm, Mulchowk, Baber Mahal Revisited, (01) 4259801

Marta del Grandi

A solo performance by Marta to help raise fund for an upcoming art, music and fashion festival that will showcase works of multiple emerging and renowned street artists from Nepal.
16 June, 7-9pm, Base Camp: Outdoor Lifestyle, Jhamsikhel, 9841226397

Pink Floyd tribute

On International Music Day, the finest musicians of Kathmandu will be delivering a special tribute to the most decorated psychedelic band in history, Pink Floyd. E-ticket only event.
21 June, 7pm onwards, Club DejaVu, Darbar Marg, digipay.cash

OUR PICK

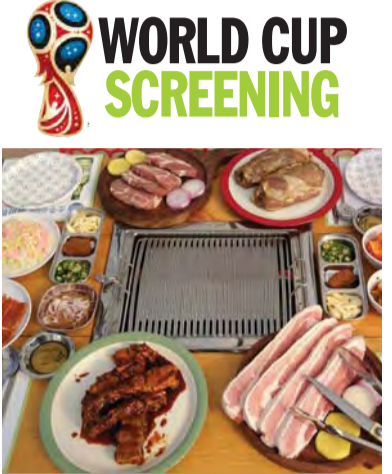
Opens in Kathmandu on 7 June

A sequel to the 2004 film The Incredibles, Incredibles 2 picks up the story from where it ended in the first one. With a sudden change of events, Elastigirl is offered a job that requires her to leave her family behind to put superheroes back in the spotlight. Meanwhile, Mr.-Incredible must stay at home and take care of their kids Dash, Violet and Jack-Jack. The movie, written and directed by Brad Bird, featuring Craig T. Nelson, Holly Hunter, Sarah Vowell, and Samuel L has received praises for its animation and humour.

DINING

The Dwarika's Hotel

Enjoy Friday dinner with a special Nepali BBQ and drinks at the Hotel with live cooking stations.
Every Friday, 6:30pm onwards, The Dwarika's Hotel Kathmandu, Battisputali, Rs1,800 (excluding taxes), For reservations: (01) 4479488



Gangnam Galbi Barbeque

Enjoy World Cup games with Korean barbecue, grill and stick food a.k.a. galbi, roasted in charcoal at high heat to add more softness, flavor and smoky scent to the meat.
Lal Colony Marg, Naxal, (01) 4434780

Kings Lounge

World Cup fever at Kings Lounge is strong. A highly recommended place to enjoy the games with friends and family with amazing food, drinks and superb sound.
Darbar Marg, (01) 4223110

Reef Restaurant and Lounge

Live music, lucky draw, surprise gifts, special cocktails and many more to watch the World Cup games with.
Thamel, (01) 4411523



Thistle Triangle

Witness this year's World Cup unfold in a pub like experience. Thistle's special Peri Peri wings or triple chicken feast or any item from its Eurasian menu make a great combo.
Matighar Mandala Bhawan, Matighar, (01) 4101740

Dhokaima

Large projectors and the TV at the bar will capture the excitement of the games for you, with awesome food and drinks.
Patan Dhoka, (01) 5522113

GETAWAY

Monsoon Madness

A 2-night, 3-days package at Shangri-La Village Resort returns with exciting offers on twin sharing basis with cash back coupons worth Rs3000.
Shangri-La Village Resort, Pokhara, Rs7,499, (01) 4412999 / 9861388277

Namo Buddha Resort

Constructed in traditional Newari style and surrounded by lush greenery, the resort is an oasis of peace and tranquility, offering spectacular views of the Himalayas on clear days. On Buddha Jayanti, a short trek to Namu Buddha and Thrangu Tashi Yangtze Monastery is sure to provide refreshment and relief from the city stress.
Namu Buddha, Phulbari, 9851106802



Hotel Yukhang

A new hotel built with Dachi e-ta, bricks from Malla era, and Bhaktapur's wooden crafts. Add a royal and medieval touch to your stay with unlimited buffet dinners at the hotel, that also screens world cup games.
Thamel, Rs2,500/3,500 (rooms), (01) 4267358

Movie Garden

Watch the World Cup games in the garden with a fully stocked bar, a kitchen serving pizza all night, and the perfect setting overlooking Fewa Lake.
North Lakeside, 9801022828



Mount Kailash Resort

Big screen projection of all the World Cup games with special offer on food and beverages, at the resort located 5 minutes away from the lake.
Pokhara, (061) 465703

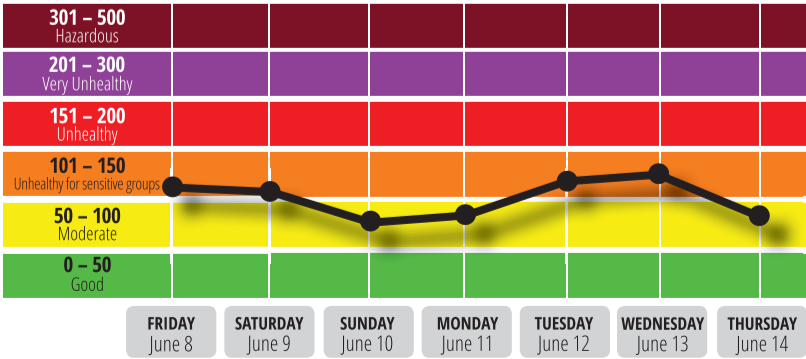
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AIR QUALITY INDEX

KATHMANDU, 8 - 14 June



There was a time on Monday morning when for the first time since *Nepali Times* started this alert, the Air Quality Index measurement from the US EPA monitoring station at Phora Darbar was on the Green 'normal' band. Readers can view the air pollution levels hour-by-hour on our website www.nepalitimes.com. This graph, however, shows the daily average during the past week. Because the concentration of small particles and surface ozone rises as vehicular traffic increases, the averages are not so great. Still, they have hovered in the 100 AQI range, and this is much better than it has been in the past few months.
<https://np.usembassy.gov/embassy/air-quality-monitor/>



PHOTO: ARJUN KHATRI

Sabina Devkota
in Dolakha

While growing up in Lele village in southern Lalitpur, Pratap Thapa watched his parents plant maize on their terrace farm and wait for the rains. He often wondered how much of their drudgery could be reduced if water could be brought up from a nearby river.

Thapa went on to study engineering at Delft University in The Netherlands, where he obsessed about how to solve the problem of irrigation for his family in the mountains of Nepal in a cheap and sustainable way.

With his Dutch classmate, he invented a unique pump that derived its energy from the kinetic energy of the flow of water, and used it to pump water up. Like all breakthroughs, it was the sheer simplicity of the technology that made it so applicable.

Called Barsha Pump (after the Nepali word for 'rain') Thapa's invention won him several awards, including the Phillips Innovation Award and Bearing Point Award. This was followed by the registration of the company aQysta in the Netherlands in 2013 to promote the pumps.

It quickly caught on in Europe, but despite success there, Thapa had designed it with Nepal in mind. So, six years ago he brought a couple of prototypes and successfully tested them to irrigate nearly 130 hectares of flats above the Indrawati, Trisuli and Tama Kosi rivers.

"It's ironic that almost two-thirds of Nepal's farms depend on the rains when we are a country of 6,000 rivers," says Thapa (pictured, below), who studied industrial engineering in India and did his Masters at the Institute of Engineering in Lalitpur.

Today, 131 Barsha Pumps have been deployed across 30 districts with subsidies to farmers from the government's Agriculture Engineering Directorate, District Agriculture Development Office, and international agencies. Depending on capacity, the pump costs between Rs160,000 - 280,000.

The beauty of the Barsha Pump is that it uses the natural flow of water and doesn't need fuel. Therefore it does not emit

greenhouse gases, and has zero operating cost.

The pump has a special spiral pipe where the water helps compress the air, which in turn lifts water up to a maximum height of 20m or a distance of 2km.

Yuvaraj Shrestha owns a one-hectare farm on a flat above the Tama Kosi River in Ramechhap, and used to make Rs500,000 a year selling vegetables. His main problem was dependance on the rains, even though a glacier-fed river flowed just below the farm. But in the year after he



Lifting livelihoods by lifting water

A pump invented by a young Nepali engineer has shown it can transform Nepal's farms

installed a subsidised Barsha Pump, he made more than Rs3 million in profit from his farm. The pump brings up 12,000 litres of water a day from the Tama Kosi. The flats along the Tama Kosi that used to be fallow in the dry season are now lush green all year round.

"It all started with this pump, this is the key to my success," said Shrestha.

In Sindhuli district, Arjun Kumar Khatri from the village of Ratomate was practicing subsistence rain-fed agriculture. Now, he is lifting water from Sun Kosi River, 14m below his farm, with a Barsha Pump. "I didn't believe a pump could lift water without electricity until I saw one myself, our lives are transformed," he says.

Barsha Pumps are now

bringing this miracle to 12 countries including Indonesia, Spain, Turkey and Zambia. Thapa keeps modifying the design with feedback from farmers. 🇳🇵



Barsha pump, powered by running water and requiring no electricity, lifts water up to fields from rivers flowing below. Visit fields of Nepal to watch how the pumps are installed and operated, and how farmers benefit from it.

nepalitimes.com



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It could not have been easy for Ava DuVernay to successfully adapt Madeleine L'Engle's beloved 1962 classic into a film. When it came out in theaters this year, children flocked to see this beloved story rendered on film. Determined to see what the fuss was all about, I read the book



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

before I watched the movie, finally understanding the draw of this special, fantastical, science-based tale about a peculiar family who love each other so fiercely that they transcend the natural laws of physics.

The story begins with the portrayal of a near perfect family. Not the boring kind we see onscreen sitting down for dinner together every night and bickering; albeit lovingly, but the kind that

deal with everything difficult with actual explanations, and above all, humour. Meg Murray (Storm Reid) is the eldest daughter of astro-physicists Alex (Chris Pine) and Kate Murray (Gugu Mbatha-Raw). While experimenting with travelling across the universe, Alex Murray disappears one fine day, when his son Charles Wallace is but an infant. With a strong intellect of her own, the cute precocious child Meg transforms into the teenage Meg over the four years that her father has been gone, and begins to fade into an oblivion of grief and resentment – a combination that is disastrous in a budding teenager. Her only real consolation is her six-year-old brother Charles Wallace (Deric McCabe), a prodigy who speaks in full sentences, has some uncanny precognitive abilities, and is essentially the family's protector.

As their mother mourns quietly, putting on a brave face for her children, and Meg buries her teenage self into a quagmire of despondency, Charles Wallace keeps everyone

going with his hot milk, deep empathy, and sandwich making abilities. When he appears one stormy night with an eccentric, bubbly, magical woman named Mrs Whatsit (played with such fun by Reese Witherspoon), it marks the beginning of the children's journey to find their father, hand in hand with Mrs Whatsit, Mrs Who (Mindy Kaling), Mrs Which (Oprah Winfrey), and a young boy named Calvin O'Keefe (Levi Miller) who sees Meg for who she really is: a bright, lovely, soul.

The children's journey in space, deemed unfilmable, is distilled and rendered quite beautifully through DuVernay's keen eyes, a feat that not everyone could have pulled off considering the level of abstract imagery in the original content. These visuals, together with the ensemble cast that work so well together, make for a rather extraordinary viewing experience, and a satisfying one for anyone who fell in love with the book.

Ava DuVernay is the first black woman to direct a Hollywood movie with a budget of over \$100 million, and she brings her unmistakable stamp to a film where the characters would otherwise most probably have been cast as white by default. Instead, by bringing in actors of many colours (Mindy Kaling, Oprah Winfrey, Storm Reid, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, and Deric McCabe), DuVernay lends a completeness to an already universal story about the power of love. *A Wrinkle In Time* is a must-see for your children, but also for yourselves. Of course, as always, you must read L'Engle's enchanting books first! *A Wrinkle in Time* is only the first of a quintet: I myself can't wait to dive into the remaining four books. 🇳🇵



Watch trailer online

nepalitimes.com

Tom, Dick and Hari

Hari, a name in the same league as Ram, Shyam or Sita in terms of originality, is nevertheless a resoundingly unique character. It is ironic that the writers, directors and producers in Nepal's film industry these days churn out such inventive names, only for the audiences to discover it is the same old formula. And bland ones at that.

Hari is a film about an eponymous character, a man as simple as his name, but it is a deceptively complex film and a rich, delicious treat. Hari is a manager at a cooperative in Kathmandu with three other employees. Even though he is their boss, he doesn't feel respected. Guarded, and a little wound up, he lives with his mother and follows her word to the tee.

He doesn't drink alcohol, and doesn't eat anything with onion, garlic or meat in it. He stops at every temple on his way to work and back, and is superstitious. One day, a bird shits on him. And that's when the story gains momentum. Was it a pigeon, or a crow? Was it good luck, or an omen? Good and bad things happen alternatively to Hari, but we cannot be sure.

This is a character-driven drama. Given the plot lines of Nepali cinema, Hari is a revelation – revolving perfectly around its central character. It is a story generated by the fault-lines in his psyche, the great divide of what he is and what he wants deep within him self. It is an existential film and every other character either pushes or pulls this

central thread. There are no extraneous characters, scenes, or dialogue.

A severe dearth of memorable cinematic experience in Nepal means that anything that comes close will demand great attention. And perhaps it is not a perfect film, but it features an expert use of cinematic tools. Its exquisite cinematography and minimalistic art direction brim with purpose. Full credit to director of photography Chintan Raj Bhandari, and the superb acting of the inimitable Bipin Karki, who continues to challenge every other actor in the industry to do better.

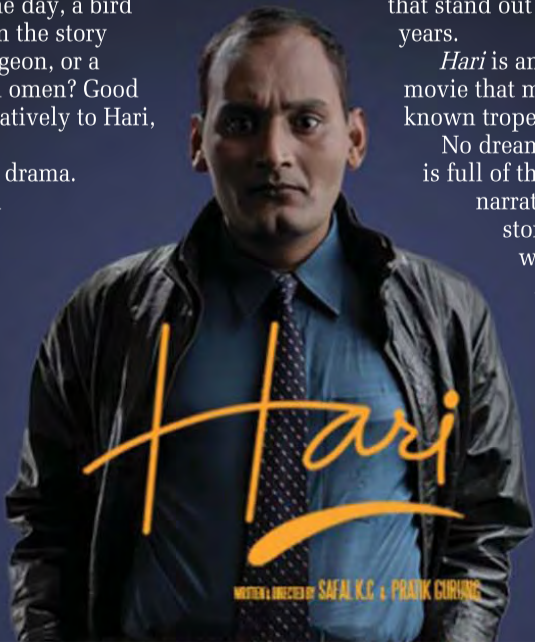
The open ending, however, is supposed to leave the audience with some questions. Instead, it falls flat. For a film as intricately crafted as this one, the need to meander into a needlessly convoluted plot is disappointing.

But eventually the viewer can forgive and forget. There are some moments in the film that stand out and will be remembered for years.

Hari is an engaging, and often hilarious movie that manages to subvert some well-known tropes of good filmmaking.

No dream sequences, they say? *Hari* is full of them. Show, don't tell? *Hari* narrates almost the entirety of his story. Be careful with that fourth wall! *Hari* breaks it like a boss. And yet, it comes out on the other side as a great film. It is somewhat sad that more than likely we won't be seeing something like this in Nepali cinema for a long time. *Hari* is a highly recommended movie, which you don't want to miss. 🇳🇵

Aayush Niroula



WORLD BANK

MONEY TALKS: World Bank Country Director for Nepal, Qimiao Fan and new Country Manager Faris Hadad-Zervos met Prime Minister Oli on Sunday and reaffirmed support for the new government's programs.



RABINDRAADHIKARI/TWITTER

WELL DONE: Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu (third from left) of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) hands over certification for Nepal's achievement in meeting aviation safety guidelines.



RATNA SHRESTHA/RSS

HAVING HIS CAKE: Former Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai celebrates the third anniversary of the establishment of his party Naya Shakti in Kathmandu on Wednesday.



SIKUMARAI

AND THE WINNER IS: Abdullah Tuncer Kecici of Turkish Airlines and Suresh Puri of Tranquility Spa hand over two round-trip tickets to a lucky winner.



ASIAN PAINTS

PILLAR OF NATION: Asian Paints announces the winners of this year's Architecture Students Design Competition in Kathmandu on Sunday. Nekesh Maharjan from Kathmandu Engineering College was chosen the winner.



AJIT BARAL

Khumbu wants its share

Rabin Giri in Khumjung,
Himal Khabarpatrika 3-10 June

हिमाल

Few places even in the Nepal Himalaya have such a scenic setting as Khumjung, the tranquil village nestled in a gently sloping valley in the lap of the holy peak of Khumbila, and flanked by some of the highest mountains in the world.

You might ask yourself: why did I not come here before? Stand at any point in this clean town of stone homes and chortens, and you have a 360 degree view of the surrounding peaks: Thamserku, Ama Dablam, Lhotse, Chomolungma, Kongde.

The local people are friendly and gracious, and the town is spared the throngs of trekkers and mountaineers on the Namche-Tengboche trail. There is a well-equipped hospital and school established by Edmund Hillary 60 years ago.

But the beauty and contentment belie the grievances of the local people against the government in Kathmandu. Despite the Khumbu having a much higher standard of living than the national average, people here have always felt neglected by the state. Now, even federalism has failed to satisfy their demand for more say.

Tenzing Tashi Sherpa of Khumjung says: "All that the government cares about is to make revenue from the mountains, not the people who live in the mountains."

Sherpa, who previously served as President of Khumjung Buffer Zone Committee of Sagarmatha National Park, adds: "The tourism budget allocated for Khumbu region is gobbled up by local politicians in the district headquarters -- it does not trickle up to Khumjung."

In 2015, the government decided to earmark at least 30% of tourism revenue for local people. The government collects about Rs350 million annually from Everest royalty fees alone, and an additional Rs70 million from other mountains of the Khumbu region.

Ang Tshering Sherpa, ex-President of Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA), who is from Khumjung, says: "If mountain revenue had been distributed justly, our village would have been much more developed by now."

Khumjung may be a victim of its own progress. Government authorities openly admit that Khumjung does not deserve a 30% share tourism revenue because it is already benefiting from Hillary's projects.

Krishna Prasad Sapkota,
Chief of Solu Khumbu District

Coordination Committee, says: "Villages like Khumjung may not get 30% of the revenue because other underdeveloped villages need more tourism budget."

After the three tiers of elections last year, National Natural Resources and Fiscal Commission has proposed allocating 50% of the revenue to the Centre and 25% each to provincial and local governments. But people in Khumjung are suspicious, and wonder if they will get even 25%.

Khumjung is reputed as a village of mountaineers including Ang Rita Sherpa who climbed the Everest without oxygen 10 times, Appa Sherpa and Phurba Tashi Shrepa both climbed the Everest 21 times. Their world record for most summits was broken by Kami Rita Sherpa, who reached the top of the world a record 22nd time this season. All these legendary Sherpas are from Khumjung, but this fabled village of mountaineers is no longer satisfied with just glory. Ngim Dorjee Sherpa, who was elected Khumjung village council Chair last year, says: "We need what we deserve, and I think they will not listen to us unless we make a really loud noise."

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From rebels to rulers

The leaders of Province 2 fought for autonomy, now they have to deliver

Om Astha Rai
in Janakpur

Dipak Yadav could not go home for months. He would spend the whole day shouting anti-Kathmandu slogans, burning tyres on the streets of Birgunj and clashing with police. As night fell, he was at the barricades on the Raxaul border, barring cargo trucks from crossing into Nepal.

Like thousands of other Madhesi youth alienated by mainstream parties and the new constitution, Yadav was a rebel during the 2015 agitation. Today, at age 29, he is one of the secretaries of Province 2 Chief Minister Lalbabu Raut, and at the centre of provincial power at the newly-refurbished building of Janakpur Cigarette Factory built by the Soviet Union 50 years ago (pictured, above).

The Constitution, however flawed, has given the Madhesi people almost what they fought for: an autonomous province. They have risen up against Kathmandu's perceived hegemony thrice in the past decade, and finally they have a chance to fix things themselves.

However, Yadav insists he is still a rebel, despite having free access to the corridors of power of Province 2. "My role has changed, but my core responsibility has not, it is still to serve the Madhesi people," he says.

Yadav essentially personifies Province 2. The province

government may rule the mid-eastern Tarai, but it still struggles against Kathmandu for more autonomy. Last month, when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Janakpur, Chief Minister Raut raised hackles in the national capital by complaining about Constitution amendments, and Kathmandu's continued reluctance to grant them.

Raut told *Nepali Times* in an interview in Janakpur last week: "I cannot forget what the people of the Madhes fought for just because I am now Chief Minister." (Overleaf)

Province 2 has been ground zero in the battle for federalism. After signing a peace accord in November 2006, the Maoists did not show much interest in the federalism they fought a war for. But the Madhesi people did, and they protested until the government agreed to institutionalise federalism through the Interim Constitution in 2007.

In 2015, the mainstream parties wanted to pass the new Constitution without determining the number and boundaries of provinces. As a result, protests broke throughout the southern plains, and more than 50 people were killed in violent clashes. Mainstream parties were eventually forced to carve out provincial boundaries before the promulgation of the Constitution.

The Madhes-based parties were still not satisfied, but they took part in last year's elections hoping to push for Constitution amendments at a later date. After two Madhes-based parties formed a coalition government in Province 2, Dipendra Jha, a lawyer critical of the



Naming Province 2

Two of Nepal's seven provinces have already named themselves: Province 6 is Karnali and Province 4 is Gandaki.

Of the remaining five, Provinces 1, 3, 5 and 7 are likely to name themselves after river basins like the Kosi or geographical regions like 'Far West'. The Nepal Communist Party (NCP) has an absolute majority in all these provinces, so naming them will not be contentious.

However, it will be trickier in Province 2 which is ruled by two Madhes-based parties. Their leaders are divided over whether to name it Madhes, Mithila or Bhojpur. Some are lobbying for the middle path by calling it either Mithila-Madhes or Mithila-Bhojpur.

Either way, they want to give the province a cultural identity rather than simply naming it after a river like the other provinces have done. Naming Province 2 is so sensitive that few in Janakpur want to risk belling the cat.

When probed, Chief Minister Lalbabu Raut told us: "This is the prerogative of our sovereign legislative assembly, and I don't want to infringe on their rights by lobbying for a name."

Constitution, left Kathmandu and settled down in Janakpur as Chief Attorney.

He says: "I was not lured by a top government post, but by the prospect of helping make federalism work. We now have a chance to deliver what we fought for on the streets with our own bureaucracy, police, and autonomy."

Indeed, Chief Minister Raut knows that the failure of federalism in Province 2 could be used as an excuse by status quoists in Kathmandu to cut back on regional autonomy. So he is aiming for rapid economic transformation of Province 2, and its development into Nepal's #1 province.

Janakpur-based analyst Surendra Labh says people in the Madhes care deeply about federalism, and want to make it work because they have suffered from Kathmandu's neglect.

"If federalism fails here, it will fail in the whole country," he says.

The capital of Province 2 was cleaned up for the Modi visit, but is now dusty and scruffy again. A \$19 million ADB project faces delays in expanding major roads and building a drainage system. Facades of houses are being bulldozed in the core city, and roads are dug up everywhere. But local people are patient, and hope the cradle of the Mithila Civilisation will get a much-needed facelift when the project is completed in 2020.

The railway service from Janakpur to Jayanagar in India will resume next year, linking Nepal

WORK IN PROGRESS: Workers lay tracks for the Janakpur-Jayanagar Railway connecting Province 2 with India (right).

Dipak Yadav at the forefront of street protests during the Madhes Movement in 2015 (above, left) and now at the office of the Chief Minister of Province 2 in Janakpur.

to India's vast rail network. This 32km narrow-gauge railroad track is being upgraded to broad-gauge, and it will be extended 30km north to Bardibas in the next phase.

Province 2 will also have better connectivity with the rest of the world when the proposed Kathmandu-Raxaul Railway, Kathmandu-Tarai Expressway, the East-West Electric Railway and Nijgad Airport are built. Chief Minister Raut says Province 2 can easily beat other provinces by capitalising on its geographical advantage, reviving agriculture and investing in health and education.

But some here are skeptical. Bhogendra Jha, a Janakpur-based analyst, says the provincial government has already failed to improve governance and expedite development. He says sarcastically: "If you believe PM KP Oli will turn Nepal into a Singapore in five years, then you can also believe Chief Minister Raut will turn Province 2 into the number one province." 🇳🇵



Watch this short video to find out how the rebel-rulers of Province 2 are passionately practicing federalism to deliver what they fought for.

nepalitimes.com

50% for Madhesi women



The government of Province 2 has identified gender inequality as the root cause of the region's problems.

Chief Attorney Dipendra Jha puts it this way: "Province 2 is poor and backward because half of its population stays home. If they come out, our human resources will simply double."

Unveiling its first policies and programs last week, the Province 2 government vowed to allocate half the seats in the state police force to women. Chief Minister Lalbabu Raut has publicly and repeatedly expressed a commitment to allocate 50% seats to women in all state-level structures.

Jha says: "When Madhesi women wear police uniforms and carry guns, it will raise their confidence. It will also help us fight dowry, rape and violence against women."

The Province 2 government is also developing a mobile app that Madhesi women can use to alert police about rape and domestic violence. If a woman is in trouble, all she has to do is to shake her phone to set off the police alarm.

At a time when the federal government has given just 33% seats to women, and the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) does not even have 33% women in its politburo and central committee, 50% presence of women in Province 2 police would be revolutionary, if it happened.

The Province 2 government has also launched a 'Save Our Daughters, Educate Our Daughters' campaign to reduce female foeticide and increase investment in girls' education. It has introduced a scheme to provide insurance for every Dalit girl child.

Critics say Chief Minister Raut has just copy-pasted Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Beti Bachhao, Beti Padhao' campaign, but women's rights activists have no problems with the imitation.

Sudha Karna, a Mithila art promoter in Janakpur, says: "Educating a son will benefit one household, but educating a daughter will benefit at least two households."



ALL PHOTOS: OMASTHARA

“Province 2 wants to be the #1 Province”



Chief Minister Lalbabu Raut spoke to *Nepali Times* forcefully about his vision for Province 2, even while he was observing a Ramadan fast.

Nepali Times : Where do you see Province 2 in the next five years?
Lalbabu Raut: Province 2 may lag behind the other six provinces in several socio-economic indicators, but it has the potential to emerge as Nepal’s number one province. We have enough fertile land to feed the entire country. And we are also blessed with geographical advantages which other hill provinces lack. Nijgad Airport, Kathmandu-Tarai fast-track highway, and several railway projects will complement our growth and prosperity.

What are your priorities?
 I have given priority to reviving agriculture. Encouraging young men to cultivate their lands rather than migrating to the Gulf will be key to transforming Province 2. This will be possible if we can provide them with irrigation, fertiliser, and subsidy. I have also given priority to good

governance, health, education and tourism.

What obstacles do you foresee?
 We did not have laws, by-laws and a provincial structure to hit the ground running. We are now in the process of passing our own laws and creating our own structure. There is still a reluctance to devolve power to the provinces.

How will your girls’ education program help?
 Social ills like caste-based discrimination, dowry and violence against women plague the entire country, but they are more rampant in Province 2. These problems will intensify in a society where female literacy rate is low. In the Madhes, daughters are still deemed to be a burden to their parents, which is why female foeticide is so rampant. Saving daughters will have a multi-dimensional impact.



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GOOOOAAAALLL !

After staying awake watching the World Cup opening ceremony, the Ass is writing this column while fast asleep. So, I would appreciate it if you didn't open the curtains.

After cricket, football is the most boring game on Earth. It is actually derived from an ancient Aztec sport in which one team kicked around the decapitated head of the enemy goalie in a blood-soaked arena. It has been downhill ever since in terms of excitement.

It does not help that the matches all happen in the wee hours, so called I am told, because that is when most boys in boarding school wet their beds. In contrast, ice hockey combines kick-boxing and sword-fighting while players are involved in a high speed chase. American football is another contact sport that thrills me to bits because it is a Greco-Roman Wrestling tournament with multiple contestants playing catch.

Essentially, football (or "soccer" to the Moms out there) entails 22 men in mohawks, tattoos, or blue hair, kicking each other in their gonads for 90 minutes without scoring, at the end of which they continue to play pointlessly on for another 30 minutes, and after that each side gets five target practice shots. They then strip in full view of 3 billion people and exchange jerseys.

How to make football more exciting? That question has bedeviled humankind ever since the collapse of the Aztec empire. The Ass has a few humble suggestions:

1. Move goalposts. Increase goal width to 25m from the present 9m. Then we can have scores like Germany 73 - Argentina 81.

2. Allow offsides. Strikers can loiter at enemy goal post waiting for a long pass.

3. Don't level the playing field. Incline it at 15° to allow one side to run downhill to score more goals, so more tv spots can be sold.

4. Allow hands. Let's use our god-given hands, let players grab the ball and run with it.

5. Permit fouls. Using Muay Thai and Ninjutsu techniques players can bring down rival team members, and the referee too if he doesn't behave himself.

6. Allow diving. Players who feign falls should not be given yellow cards anymore, they should be awarded Oscars in the Best Supporting Role Category.

7. No hands on crotches. Defenders setting up a wall to face a free kick at the penalty area will no longer be allowed to protect their crown jewels. It's a disgusting habit.

8. Why only one ball? Multiple balls in the field will make games much more unpredictable and exciting.

9. Why round balls? Americans took a dreary game, and changed the shape of the ball to resemble a near-earth asteroid so they bounce more crazily. And they have so much more fun.

10. Increase number of players. Each team must henceforth have 56 players, with a 33% quota for females. *All* members of winning team must mandatorily take off jerseys.

The Ass

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