

**STEPPING UP:** Prime Minister KP Oli at Tiananmen Square on Wednesday, where he laid a wreath at the Mao mausoleum.



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# WHAT CHINA REALLY WANTS

Within two months of assuming office to lead the most powerful government in Nepal’s democratic history, Prime Minister K P Oli has visited India, and is now in China.

The last time Oli was in China in early 2016, Nepal was just coming out of the ruinous Indian Blockade, and he was heading a coalition that would soon collapse as the Maoists suddenly switched sides.

At that time, Oli’s main agenda was to thumb his nose at India and send the message that Nepal could, if pushed into a corner, lean on China. He agreed with Chinese leaders on a trade and transit arrangement and alternate routes to the sea through Chinese sea ports as part of the Belt Road Initiative. They also talked about petroleum storage facilities along the northern border to diversify Nepal’s energy imports. The extension of the Tibet Railroad from Kerung to Kathmandu and Lumbini were broached.

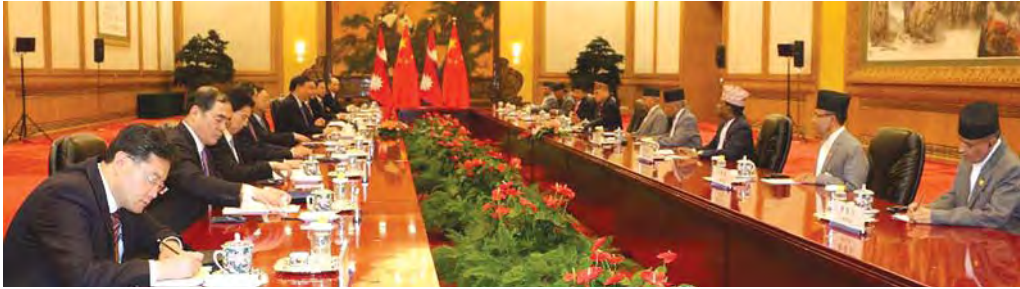
Even though they were largely symbolic, the deals were designed to set alarm bells ringing in the Indian media. It worked. The New Delhi press and establishment went into predictable paroxysms over ‘Chinese inroads into Nepal’.

Modi’s visit to Janakpur, Kathmandu and Muktinath may have had a domestic electoral component, but it was designed to charm the Nepali public again and reset India-Nepal relations so the Chinese wouldn’t get too close.

Despite this, Beijing has not wavered from its long-term strategic blueprint to keep the disputed sections of the Himalayan Arc in deep freeze. Doklam was an unexpected flashpoint, but neither India nor China want their mutual border disputes to flare up, and both want a status quo in the buffer states of Nepal and Bhutan.

It was a message Mao gave to King Mahendra in the 1960s, and that same message was conveyed by President Xi to Oli on Wednesday: we have no problem with your relations with anyone else, and no one else should have any problems with your relations with us. The reference is obviously to India-Nepal relations. India’s biggest source of imports is China, and Beijing does not want to jeopardise its deepening trade ties with New Delhi over Nepal.

If there is just one thing Prime Minister Oli should look to accomplish during his meeting with Chinese leaders, it is to re-establish their trust. He will find that their confidence on



HARI LAMICHHANE

Back home, Oli’s flag-waving bolstered the perception that he had stood up to India, for which he was handsomely rewarded in last year’s elections. But he also learnt his lesson: never again to allow a weak coalition to be dismantled by outsiders.

And that is the other reason this visit is historic and unprecedented: the meeting between K P Oli and Xi Jinping on Wednesday was not just a handshake between Nepal and China, it was between two monolithic Communist parties that now enjoy near-unchallenged rule over their countries.

One shadow hanging over this visit is that Oli is now seen in Beijing to be a bit fickle and erratic. Back home, Oli’s nationalist lustre has been somewhat tarnished – he is seen to have bent over backwards to please an India he once portrayed as a monstrous bully.

For the past two centuries, Nepal has always walked a tight-rope, trying to balance relations with its two gigantic neighbours. Successive rulers of Nepal have tried to play India off against China, and although that worked in the 1960s, it hadn’t since – until 2016. Beijing tried to press home the advantage of strong anti-Indian feeling in the Nepali public post-Blockade on investment, trade and Tibet.

**The handshake between K P Oli and Xi Jinping on Wednesday was not just between Nepal and China, it was between two monolithic Communist parties that now enjoy near-unchallenged rule over their countries.**

Nepal is frayed somewhat at the moment, and it has nothing to do with the perception that he has swung over to befriend India. It is the feeling in the Beijing establishment that the Nepalis do not do their homework, they don’t implement agreements, and they go back on their word.

The flipflop over a Chinese contract to build the \$2 billion Budi Gandaki high dam project, and the Oli government’s removal of the China Three Gorges Corporation from the West Seti contract have stained Nepal’s reputation as a trustworthy partner in Beijing. The Chinese also feel Nepal has dragged its feet over the draft of the Trade and Transit Treaty, and not done much homework on the petroleum storage facilities.

Let’s face it, Nepal does not figure high in the scheme of things in China – neither geo-strategically nor economically. Beijing’s main worry about Nepal is not that it will go over to the Indian sphere of influence, but that it will allow Tibetan nationalist activities. It wants Nepal to be politically stable and predictable so that it can plan for trade, investment and connectivity through Tibet.

Oli went to China with a wishlist of energy and infrastructure projects, many of which were signed. But the most important thing the Chinese are looking for is stability and trust.

## 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

The front page of *Nepali Times* ten years ago this week (#405, 20-27 June 2008) carried the headline: **Same old Nepal**. And the Editorial in that issue echoed the nation’s impatience:

*Enough is enough. If it takes two months after an election verdict to form a government and three weeks after the declaration of a republic to replace the head of state, we wonder how long it will take to agree on a cabinet. And after that, how much longer for 601 assembly members to draft a new constitution?*

*Every time we bring up the subject of this endless obsession with politics at the expense of development, our leaders keep telling us to be patient. Once politics falls into place, they say, everything will be sorted out. We’ve waited 15 years. Remove the feudal monarchy, we are told, and there will be a golden future. It is a blessing our transition to a republic hasn’t been messier and more brutal. But our leaders are so busy running in circles round trees, they can’t see the forest.’*



## ONLINE PACKAGES



CLEANING THE AIR

Air pollution expert Christa Hasenkopf speaks with Sonia Awale in *Nepali Times Studio*. Co-founder of OpenAQ, the world’s first real time air pollution data platform, Hasenkopf was in Nepal this week for workshops on open data for policy formulation and decision making to solve the pollution crisis. Go online to watch Hasenkopf talk about the impact of live and easily accessible air quality data as an advocacy tool. *Story on page 4.*



WORLD CUP FEVER

2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia has united the world once again, as more than 3 billion people across the globe tune into the matches. But the teams have also divided up the world into rival territories. Watch this short video to see how Nepal is in the grip of World Cup fever. *Story on page 5.*

### GREAT LOSS

Dr Upendra Devkota was a legend in the world of health. It is a great loss to the people of Nepal and to his lovely family.

Wilda Campbell

■ A great doctor, perfect gentleman and a wonderful human being. Will miss him.

Siddhanth Pandey

■ His life and death both have left an impression in the minds of Nepali people. We’ve lost a visionary, a man of unparalleled talent. May his soul rest in peace.

Aakriti Karki

### CLEAN ENERGY

I remember seeing much smaller versions of these pumps being used in Pyuthan many years ago (‘Lifting livelihoods by lifting water’, Sabina Devkota, #914). A farmer technology centre was testing them along with other ingenious gadgets. Great to see a more advanced version!

Gaia Allison

### AMAZING WOLVES

Wow! What an amazing find and thanks Ryan for doing this (‘Crying wolf’, Ryan Davis, #914). It’s going to be a treasure for us to share with our children and make them understand the creatures with whom we share our Himalaya.

Reshu Aryal

### VISIT NEPAL?

With persistence, optimism, and integrity in leadership, Nepal can be a soft power utilising its historical spiritual advantages (‘Next Kim- Trump Summit in Lumbini?’ Anil Chitrakar in 1/2 Full, #914).

Ujwal Thapa

### WOMEN IN MADHES

Sorry, but it will take more than 50% reservation in the police force to change the status of women in the Tarai (‘Mr Province 2’, Om Astha Rai, #914). Those posts will most likely be filled by Pahadis because very few Madhesi women will be allowed to join the force, let’s face it.

Sushma Joshi

## WHAT'S TRENDING



### Lifting livelihoods by lifting water

by Sabina Devkota

What started as an obsession to solve the problem of irrigation for his family in the mountains has led to a worldwide farming revolution. Pratap Thapa’s Barsha pump uses natural flow of rivers to lift water, doesn’t need fuel, and has zero operating cost. The response to the story in the past week has been phenomenal. Visit our website to find out more about this simple gadget that could transform farming in Nepal.

Most reached and shared on Facebook

Most popular on Twitter

### Lost Village of Nepalis in Thailand

by Ramesh Khadka

Forgotten by the world, there is a Nepali village called Pilok on the Thai-Burma border, holding on to their unique heritage. Neither the Nepali nor Thai governments knew of its existence till recently. The story was posted online last week, and has been widely discussed. It appears in print this week. *Story on page 7.*

Most commented

Most visited online page

## QUOTE TWEETS

**Nepali Times @nepalitimes**  
A pump invented by a young Nepali engineer has shown it can transform Nepal’s farms. The Barsha pump needs no electricity, generates no greenhouse gases, and costs nothing to operate. @Devkota\_Sabina reports from Dolakha.

**Perturbation @duradanda5**  
Grant him a patent and offer all kinds of support to commercialise this machine. @PM\_Nepal @BishnuRimal

**Sandesh Singh Hamal @sandeshhamal1**  
Rare proud moment for engineers! Most of the time ashamed due to low quality infrastructures and high level of corruption.

**Sanjay Golchha @sanjay**  
Simple innovations like these change the country. We don’t need talking robots!!

**Ninadini Shrestha @ninanepal**  
It’s a really innovative invention. Great Job Mr Pratap Thapa

**Nepali Times @nepalitimes**  
Province 2 has the autonomy it fought for. Or does it? Find out how it plans to become the number one Province, and the issue it is still grappling with, in @omastharai’s report from Janakpur.

**pigreen @pigreen1**  
Province 2 must increase its own revenues, improve tourist appeal - better transport links to capital and rest of terai, better local facilities, make most of the railway for enthusiasts and travellers, harness the various ‘clean up campaigns’ - especially for Janakpur itself

**Nepali Times @nepalitimes**  
There is a village in Thailand, created and settled by the Nepalis after the end of World War II, that neither the Nepali nor Thai governments knew existed till recently. Ramesh Khadka reports from Thailand.

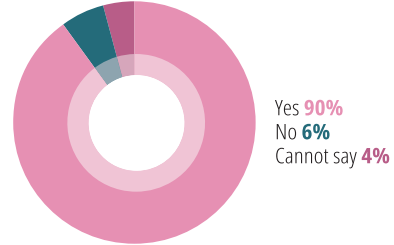
**Narayan P Bhattarai @narayanchampa**  
Interesting! Nepali settlements in Thailand since World War II. Thanks to the reporter @nepalitimes



Weekly Internet Poll #915

Q. Do you feel that inflation has gone up after this year’s budget was unveiled?

Total votes: 78



Weekly Internet Poll #916  
To vote go to: [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com)

Q. Do you think PM KP Oli delivered on Nepali people’s expectations from his China trip?



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Sonia Awale

999: that was the reading in air pollution monitoring stations in New Delhi on 15 June. Adding to the city’s usual vehicular emission pollution was a sand storm blowing in from the Thar Desert. Usually, even on bad air days, the Indian capital’s Air Quality Index (AQI) is less than 160 – so last weekend was literally off the charts.

The dust was blown over by westerly winds into Nepal, where residents of Kathmandu saw trees, plants, parked cars and houses all covered in the muddy rain that fell for three days over the weekend.

This was proof that trans-boundary air pollution from India is a serious concern for Nepal. Fortunately the dust particles are bigger and are relatively less harmful than the more toxic smog blanketing the north Indian plains that also gets blown over.

Atmospheric scientists say more than a third of Nepal’s pollution in winter is blown in from across the border. The rest is local dust, vehicular exhaust, soot particles from brick kilns and open garbage burning in Nepal itself. Air pollution is the reason for 250 out of every 100,000 deaths in Nepal.

# OPEN AIR

The first step in reducing air pollution is letting the public and governments know how bad it is

Christa Hasenkopf  
OpenAQ

Data this winter showed that Nepal’s mountain cities and the Tarai had some of the worst air quality in the world – sometimes dirtier than Beijing and Delhi. On 23 April this year, the AQI for Kathmandu was nearly double that in Beijing (153) and New Delhi (167) measured at the same time.

Christa Hasenkopf, atmosphere scientist and co-founder of OpenAQ, world’s first real time air pollution data platform, was in Nepal this week for a series of workshops on ensuring that air pollution measurements has an impact on policy formulation and decision-making by raising public awareness and sensitising government officials.

Hasenkopf had previously worked in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, which also has high levels of pollution, and says making real-

time pollution data available to the public can move governments to act.

“Nepal has had more political will for air pollution than many places I’ve visited before,” she told *Nepali Times* in an interview. “By no means has the issue been solved, but what’s happening here in terms of engagement and passion for air quality and how it has evolved is phenomenal.”

For the past two winters Kathmandu has been blanketed in dust raised by post-earthquake reconstruction, endless road widening, and pipe-laying work for the Melamchi project. This added to vehicular pollution and smog from the Indian plains that also included heavy smoke from crop residue burning this year.

Kathmandu was shrouded in a perpetual pall of dust and smoke.

Hospitals reported record numbers of patients with respiratory illness including Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases, bronchitis, asthma, emphysema and lung cancer.

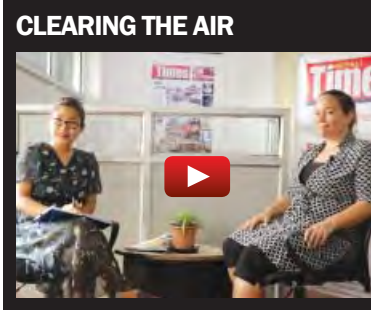
Moreover, findings from a study conducted by the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago last year showed that worsening air pollution is decreasing life expectancy of South Asians, and of Nepalis by up to four years.

All this has provoked a public outcry and increased awareness about health implications of poor air, but the government has been slow to act. It just revoked a law banning vehicles more than 20 years old, and emission tests and green stickers can be easily bypassed. Even so, change is in the air since local governments were

elected last year after 20 years. “There has been a very visible change since last year’s local elections,” noted Sara Litke, Science, Technology and Health Officer for South Asia based at the US Embassy in Kathmandu, “people in cities like Kathmandu and Pokhara are well aware of the hazards of air pollution and are speaking out.”

While public awareness has spurred private institution and the government to monitor air quality, battling pollution requires a long-term effort along with public engagement and political will, and Nepal lags far behind on the policy front, unlike neighbouring China that is switching to electric vehicles and green energy.

“Nepal has limited access to air quality data. This gap in information is a major problem when advocating for policy change,” said Hasenkopf, adding that while access to open data and its dissemination to the community through media, academic papers on public health, and social networking sites can have a huge impact, the next step is to ensure clean air at the policy level. 🇳🇵



Go online to tune into *Nepali Times Studio* which this week features air pollution data expert Christa Hasenkopf of OpenAQ talking about the impact of live and easily-accessible air quality data as an environmental advocacy tool.

nepalitimes.com

# Food and football

It is a great downer when you have to be in the kitchen during a much anticipated World Cup match. You want to watch the exciting game, but you also want a nice spread of snacks to enjoy the games along with. This is the perfect time when a food delivery system comes handy. Making the lives of football fanatics a little easier, Foodmandu recently launched a World Cup campaign, ‘*Cheer Your Team*’ with discounts of up to 40%. The campaign allows customers to predict the results of a game after ordering a meal. If your prediction is right,

you win a 10% discount voucher along with some points. The contestant with highest number of points at the end of the tournament will get a chance to win a 43” Samsung FHD Smart TV.

“Through this campaign we not only wish to be a part of the football experience, but also offer our customers great deals,” says Manohar Adhikari, Founder of Foodmandu.

Besides the *Order. Predict. Win!* campaign, Foodmandu also has combo meals and discounted food items. Orders can be placed until 9:30pm. The system currently

is cash-on-delivery, but in a few months, online wallet and card systems will be introduced.

Back in 2010, Foodmandu was working hard to get five orders a day. After eight years it now gets more than 400 orders daily for more than 220 client restaurants, and timely delivery has made it reliable.

The total sales of Foodmandu increased by 30% since the World Cup started, and customers have made more than 200 predictions already. The online food site is soon planning to expand its operations in Pokhara.

Sikuma Rai

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Non Veg Combo



1 Chicken Tandoori, 3 Chicken Rolls, 2 Chicken Biryani, 1 Chicken Chilly  
Rs2,000  
Veg Combo  
1 Bawarchi fry, 1 Harabhara Kabab, 1 Veg Biryani, 2 Veg Rolls, 1 Chips Chilly  
Rs1,600

Vootoo (Save 23%)  
Newari Meat Platter large  
Rs999

The Crust Pizza (Save 40%)  
12” pizza + 8” pizza (pizza varieties available)  
Rs491-584

Bricks (Save 23%)  
50 pieces Chicken Steam mo:mo  
Rs1,000

KFC (Save 18%)  
Super six offer combo  
4 Hot & Crispy, 6 Hot Wings, 8 Boneless Strips Chicken  
Rs1,350



Lazy Gringo (Save 12%)  
3 Nachos  
Rs725

BEVERAGES OFFER  
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Rs5,905  
Chivas Regal (Save 6%)  
Rs5,913  
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Rs5,382  
Khukuri Rum (Save 10%)  
Rs1,179

AMAZING OFFERS  
Empire (Save 10%)  
Ostrich Chhoila /Sekuwa/  
Timur- 250gm  
Rs720

Grilled Ostrich mo:mo  
Rs450

Spanish Veg mo:mo  
Rs144

Genesis (Save 20%)  
Chicken Schnitzel Burger  
Chicken, Tomato, Guacamole, Lettuce, Wasabi Mayonnaise & Fried Egg  
Rs424  
Twice Cooked Pork Belly,

Cauliflower Mash, Wild Rocket, Cabbage Relish, & Juniper Jus  
Rs688

French House Restaurant (Save 20%)  
Grilled Lamb Chop  
Served with saute veg with red wine sauce or cream sauce with sides  
Rs1,068



Special Veggie Dish  
Served with pesto, zucchini, capsicum, egg plant bread crumb & parmesan cheese, sitake mushroom  
Rs276

For more offers visit  
foodmandu.com/worldcup.

prabhu BANKBIZ BRIEFS

### Budding bilateral trade

Nepal Pashmina Industries Association and China’s OBOR International Trade and Investment Platform signed a deal on Wednesday at the 2018 Nepal-China Business Forum in Beijing. Up to 500,000 pashmina shawls will be exported. Seven other agreements were signed between the government and private companies during the visit by PM Oli.



from 18 June. The flights to the agro and floriculture rich island will operate via Seychelles. Visit [www.turkishairlines.com](http://www.turkishairlines.com).

### Swift car

CG Motocorp, distributor of Suzuki Four wheelers in Nepal, has launched the third generation of its iconic Swift brand, which comes with a new design, enhanced performance, and advanced passenger, pedestrian and child safety. Built on Suzuki’s innovative 5th generation HEARTECT platform, the all-new Swift runs 22 km/l and has an introductory price starting at Rs2,899,000.



### Futuristic lubricant

Bharat Petroleum launched a new packaging range for its flagship brand MAK Lubricant. Designed by M/S Tata Elxsi, the packs featuring futuristic Gen-X profiles, tamper evident caps, two-handle grips and anti-gurgle features at the neck, come in 4 colours: red, gold, blue-grey and green.



For more offers visit [foodmandu.com/worldcup](http://foodmandu.com/worldcup).



# Nepal in grip of World Cup fever

Monika Deupala  
in Bhaktapur

The Football World Cup 2018 happening in Russia this month has united the world, as more than 3 billion people across the globe tune in to the matches.

The greatest soccer showpiece may have united the world, but the teams have divided it up into rival territories. People in some areas of Kathmandu Valley are ardent supporters of Latin American teams like Brazil and Argentina, while others are rooting for European giants like Germany, Spain and England because of the popularity of celebrity league players.

The fan base is even segregated by neighbourhoods here in Bhaktapur, with some festooned with Brazil flags and people wearing *Selecao* jerseys, while people in an adjacent locality are fierce Argentina loyalists.

Devendra Oli of Jhapa, who now lives in Kathmandu, posted on his Facebook wall a video of himself performing a puja and chanting a Sanskrit mantra, praying for Argentina's win. His wife and little daughter, both wearing Argentinian jerseys just like him, also sat cross-legged devotedly throughout the ritual. But Messi failed to convert a penalty, and the Argentinians were frustrated by Iceland, a World Cup first-timer with just 300,000 people and amateur footballers.

Two football fans -- one supporting Brazil and the other rooting for Argentina, have released a duet on YouTube in which they praise their own favourites.

Large flags of Argentina and Brazil hang over Bhaktapur's alleys, and have themselves become as much of a tourist attraction as the temples, with foreigners taking selfies in front of them. In Kathmandu, small flags of Germany have gone on sale after the team lost 1-0 to Mexico and dropped to the bottom of the group ranking.

Anmol Bhandari of Dhading is a huge fan of Argentina and its star striker Lionel Messi. For the World Cup, he modified his bike with *La Albiceleste* flag and a picture of Messi. Many people are posting screenshots of games on their social media pages, trolling losing teams and celebrating victories.

Schools in Kathmandu have had to deal with students wearing Messi or Ronaldo jerseys inside their uniforms. Some schools have even allowed students to wear their favourite teams' jerseys instead of uniforms. After school, impromptu matches take place in the *bahals* and in any open space.

For many, the timing of World Cup 2018 is just right, with families settling down with snacks and drinks by 5:45pm and watching all three matches till two in the morning. Cafes and restaurants across the capital advertise special screenings on large screens. Attendance at schools and offices have fallen, and many arrive at work with bleary eyes, wearing jerseys of favourite players. During meetings, many are scrolling through phones to see who is playing next and what the scores are.

There are a lot of people betting on the games and scores, and this has added passion and excitement to an already gripping



MONIKA DEUPALA

game. Anil Thakur who runs a salon in Sitapaila is doing brisk business, giving dozens of fans special World Cup haircuts. Even those who don't need a haircut are getting shaves or mohawks.

"Customers tell me about their

favorite players and their haircuts, and I run my scissors," says Thakur. A normal haircut costs Rs100, but Thakur can charge up to Rs 1,000 for the really special ones. The photo of Jeevan Giri whose haircut spells the name of Portuguese soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo,



by EPA photographer Narendra Shrestha, lined the newsfeed of many social sites.

"Coke Kham, Russia Jaam" promotional campaign of Coca-Cola has sent 40 lucky winners to witness the game live in Russia this year. The games are being broadcast




live on NTV, NTV PLUS, KANTIPUR, and DH ACTION SPORTS every day. Says Hari Maharjan, a satellite dish installer: "Business has never been better, I installed TVs for 12 new customers just today, and many want to upgrade to HD. Some even inquire about illegal Indian dishes that have the games on 4K."



Like the rest of the world, Nepal is in the grip of World Cup fever. Watch this short video to see how different localities in the Valley are cheering for their teams: from students purchasing football jerseys to large flags of competing nations hanging over alleys, and special screening on large screens.

nepalintimes.com



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# The cantankerous conservationist

Humans took breakfast in a cage on Billy Arjan Singh’s veranda while tigers roamed free

Maybe it was the only way to save tigers, but Billy Arjan Singh had a fearsome reputation for being crusty, cantankerous, and unwilling to compromise when it came to the protection of the wild places he loved and championed. Possibly India’s fiercest conservation activist, intimidating, impatient with ignorance and contemptuous of bureaucracy, his life was one long battle to save India’s wildlife from extinction.



SO FAR SO GOOD  
Lisa Choegy

An aging rattling typewriter was Billy’s chosen weapon, barraging politicians, haranguing the forest department, and firing volleys of vehement advocacy in articles and books. He wrote: ‘Some natural resources are simply irreplaceable. It is imperative that man should learn to live with other species on this planet, as these other forms of life must be allowed to exist as part of nature’s evolutionary plan.’

Billy’s campaign headquarters was Tiger Haven, a farmhouse on the edge of Dudhwa forest from where he waged war on the authorities in defence of India’s wild places. He believed that as long as the big cats flourished as apex predators, a healthy jungle would be secured – he advocated for Dudhwa to become a sanctuary, and led a controversial experiment to supplement its depleting leopard and tiger population by rehabilitating captive cats back into the wild.

I first met Billy when we crossed the Nepal border and visited Tiger Haven in the western Indian Tarai with the Survival Anglia film crew in 1975. He had heard of Tiger Tops but was deeply distrustful of tourism and the media as relevant to his conservation struggle. He told us later he only agreed to meeting because the telegram announcing our arrival read ‘Gin’ Edwards instead of Jim



**LAST CROSSING:** Billy Arjan Singh the passionate Indian wildlife conservationist helps Harriet and her cubs across a river and back into the jungles of Dudhwa in 1977.

Billy used this photo of him and Tara on the front cover of his book *Tiger Haven*.

-- Billy loved his martinis and the typo melted the ice. Like many on a mission, Billy was hard to approach but once accepted he became a loyal friend with his acerbic humour and shy charm.

Staying with Billy on the edge of the national park, wild animals had undisputed priority. Humans took breakfast in a cage on the veranda whilst the increasingly boisterous big cats roamed free – a precious privilege to be in such close proximity, with our roles reversed. As we sipped hot milky tea behind bars, Billy’s leopard Harriet and her sister Juliette played in the dust with the brown dog Eelie. The python, Monty, snoozed in the granary rafters, and a passing troupe of rhesus monkeys coughed nearby.



The clink of Billy’s weight-training regime penetrated the early morning mist -- he kept himself fighting fit. Spruce in shorts, long socks and leather boots, his biceps bulged and he could lift the growing cats into his old green jeep for a drive to acquaint them with

their natural prey. He built machan tree platforms deep in the jungle to familiarise the leopards with their new terrain and hone their hunting instincts.

Harriet gave birth to two cubs, fathered by Prince, and during the heavy monsoon of 1976 Billy

was anxious to bring her safely home from the flooding jungle. Jim Edwards tells how the river was a raging brown torrent, eddying and overflowing its dense tangle-rooted banks. “It was almost impossible for anyone to have controlled the boat against the current to a safe landing, but he wouldn’t allow us to help due to Harriet’s sensitivity. We were all spellbound watching Billy complete this manoeuvre. A few hours later he came back with Harriet and her cubs in the punt, again a tremendously dangerous journey.”

Billy’s crusade was tireless, adamant and inflexible, but often ended in despair and disappointment. None of the leopard reintroductions - Prince, Harriet, Juliette and Mameena - ended happily. Stories are told of him banging heads together when he encountered jungle poachers and shouting at negligent wardens. Disgruntled forest officials and villagers united against him, accusing him of creating man-eaters and laying down poison.

Billy himself had an extraordinary rapport with the semi-wild cats and warned others to stay away, but they had no real fear of humans, and as they reached maturity there were too many domestic animal casualties and human near-misses – a young English guest was scratched in the shower, there were attacks on Billy’s staff, and then on two occasions tragedy struck when a local child was accidentally killed straying too close to the farm.

But Billy’s dogged persistence won successes and influential admirers. Prime minister Indira Gandhi launched Project Tiger in 1973, writing to the Uttar Pradesh chief minister: ‘It is easy to come by armchair conservationists, but rare indeed to find a man with the dedication and perseverance to act in support of a cause he loves.’

I accompanied Billy to World Wildlife Fund’s 1976 annual conference in San Francisco where he was awarded the WWF gold medal and a heavy gold watch. It was Billy’s only visit to the States. With Sunil Roy, India’s tourism director general, and Leo Le Bon, founder of Mountain Travel USA, we travelled to Yosemite National Park. Billy was unmoved by the soaring scenery and spectacular sheer rock, complained petulantly of the lack of wildlife, and was only appeased when he spotted a single deer in a meadow. Powerful friends were also useful when Billy lost the keys to his Godrej-brand safe -- he called on his supporter the Godrej conglomerate chairman in Mumbai to solve the problem.

Our trust supported Tiger Haven for many years, and when the time came to try reintroducing tigers to Dudhwa, John Aspinall sourced a zoo-born cub in England. With Pan Am colleagues we helped Billy ship a young tigress named Tara in a steel crate from Twycross Zoo, arriving securely strapped onto the back of his elephant Sitara. We were full of hope and optimism as Dieter Plage filmed Billy crossing the river in the small wooden boat giving Tara her first uncertain glimpse of freedom.

On Billy’s death at Tiger Haven aged 92 on 1 January 2010, his relative Rohit Brijnath remembered: “Legacy is not easily defined. But we can say of Billy that he was a first and an original, a tiger explorer who built an entire life around a single cause.” 🇳🇵



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We don't have to start worrying yet about the monsoon, with it taking a well-deserved breather in the last few days. This was due to a high-pressure system holding sway over north India that had whipped up strong winds over the Thar Desert and brought us last weekend's muddy rain. But the heat and humidity will not last, as the southwest monsoon is reasserting itself starting Friday, and will get well underway again next week in time for paddy planting. At least that is the hope.

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# Lost Nepali village in Thailand

Forgotten by the world, a Nepali village on the Thai-Burma border clings to its heritage

**Ramesh Khadka**  
in Pilok, Thailand

There is a village in Thailand, created and settled by the Nepalis after the end of World War II, that neither the Nepali nor Thai governments knew existed till recently.

The tiny, isolated village of Pilok is situated amidst the thick forested hills along the Burma border 261km west of Bangkok, near where the legendary River Kwai railway prisoner-of-war camp was once located. Pilok is situated near the border town of Kanchanaburi, and the scenic mountains here must have reminded the early Nepalis who settled here of home.

The Nepalis were serving with the British Army in Burma, and migrated here with their families after 1945 to work in the tin mines. And some of them are still here – forgotten by their motherland and the world.

Shanta Raj Rai was born in Burma and had a reputation for being an experienced miner. Legend has it he could detect tin and other underground minerals just by smelling the earth. Rai was certain the jungles were rich in ore, and decided to settle here. Once the word spread, the Thai government sent officials to look for Pilok, and asked Rai to work for the state.

As the mines grew, Pilok attracted more families from Burma and it became a proper Nepali town. But in the 1980's, the mines ran out of ore and closed down one by one. The Nepalis gradually left, the jungles were cleared, but there are still some who stayed on, clinging to what remains of Pilok.

Most Nepalis moved to Bangkok and the tourist resort towns in Thailand in search of jobs, but because they did not have legal papers, they were treated as outsiders. Some opened tailoring shops, while the women



PHOTOS: RAMESH KHADKA

worked as housemaids in Bangkok.

Maila Acharya, 68, left Pilok in 1984 and moved to Bangkok, and remembers having to evade detection by police. He finally reached the city, but while attending a Nepali puja he and others were all caught in an immigration raid and detained.

It was only after this incident that the Thai government became aware of the Nepali settlement in Pilok, and of their unique history with Thailand. The Nepal Embassy in Bangkok also got involved and helped the Nepalis get proper documents.

The past chairman of the Thai Nepali Association, Rituraj Pandey says that Thai Nepalis have a deep rooted attachment with Pilok, and that their lives are still deeply connected to their first settlement in Thailand.

In 1985, Nepalis here took advantage of King Birendra's visit to take up the matter with Thailand's revered late King Bhumibol. The king helped, and the Nepalis got their legal papers. Most descendants of the Pilok Nepalis today have Thai citizenship, but they still consider themselves Nepali.

**THEN AND NOW:** Nepali workers at a tin mine in Pilok of Thailand in the 1950s, and a memorial to pioneer miner Shanta Raj Rai who was the first to move here from Burma after World War II (*above*).

Kaili Rana and her husband, and what remains of Pilok village today (*left*).

Kaili Rana, now 75, was born in Pilok Number 1 and still lives there with her husband (*left*). The village was organised into neighbourhoods known by numbers from 1 to 12.

"It used to be a mini Nepal," Rana remembers. "We celebrated Dasain, Tij, and Sankranti and the Nepalis would all get together to enjoy the festivals. Today they have all gone, it is all forgotten."

Kancha Rana, 62, moved to Bangkok, but has now returned to Pilok. "My heart didn't allow me to leave the place that was created by my forefathers," says Rana.

But there are those for whom Pilok now feels distant. Purkharam Rai, 60, moved to Bangkok when it was not even a big city, and has lived there ever since. Laxman Khatri left Pilok 22 years ago and revisited the village last year to search for the house he was born in. But it was in ruins, and the jungle was taking over.

There are 80,000 Thais of Nepali descent, and the Thai Nepali Association works to preserve the language and culture. "Although it has been several generations since we left Nepal, we make sure each generation of Nepalis here stays true to the culture and values," says David Khanal.

Indeed, the Nepalis here value their heritage even if they are third or fourth generation and have never been to Nepal.

Says Maila Acharya: "We always thought of ourselves as Nepali, no matter where we were situated. We will continue to live as Nepalis, wherever we are." 🇳🇵





# Rebirth

Survivors of the suicide attack in Kabul two years ago are still trying to come to terms with the pain

**‘I Came Home After Facing Death ...’** reads Amrit Rokaya’s lyrics to the YouTube music video *Punarjanma* (Rebirth) about the attack on the Canadian Embassy in Kabul two years ago on 20 June, 2016 in which 13 Nepali security guards were killed.



**COMMENT**  
Upasana Khadka

The unguarded minibus was attacked en-route from the camp to the embassy. The Nepalis sitting in front of Rokaya and one behind were killed when the suicide bomber blew himself up.

Amrit still tries to make sense of what happened, often racked by survivor’s guilt. He suffers from bouts of depression, and his doctor suggested that he keep busy to deal with it and Amrit has found solace in writing songs.



BIKRAM RAI

Amrit’s colleague in Kabul, Madhusudan Koirala, had lost his son and daughter in Nuwakot in the 2015 earthquake. During a trip to Nepal a month before the Kabul attack, he had released his own song *‘Niko Nahune Ghau’* (The Wound That Does Not Heal) in memory of his children. A month later, he himself died in the Kabul attack.

Says B B Anuragi who sang Koirala’s song: “Madhusudan was crushed by the loss of his children. Writing lyrics was the only way he could cope with it.”

Ganga Subedi, the wife of Bidur Subedi who was among the 13 Nepali killed, has not recovered from the loss. “The night before the attack, he had stayed up late to Skype with me and our two sons. The next morning, when a neighbour asked me if I had heard about the Kabul attack, I just brushed it off,” she recalls. Later she got a call from the Foreign Ministry to confirm Bidur was among the dead.

“In addition to the loneliness, the difficulties of being a single parent and the financial problems, we widows are also treated differently in the family,” she says.

Anil was waiting with colleagues from G4S for his own bus to take him to their job guarding the British Embassy when he heard the blast nearby. Despite the loss of so many of their friends, he and others had to continue with their security duties.

“We had to protect ourselves for the few short minutes between our camp and the embassy so that we could protect our client for the next twelve hours every day,” says Anil. The attack exposed the double standards of security companies and embassies in Kabul, and their putting ‘Goras before Gurkhas’. The Nepalis, including the vocal Anil, put up two demands for better security for themselves, and a \$250 increase in pay to at least \$1,000. However, the sense of unity among the Nepalis gave way to bickering because some were desperate enough to work for less.

The security company immediately terminated those who resisted and sent them back, including Anil. They were woken up in the camp at 5:30 and escorted to the airport under armed guard.

“There was no dignity in the way our 13 friends died. There was no dignity in the way we were sent back after years of service,” says Anil, with bitterness in his voice.

His friends Hari and Krishna decided Kabul was too dangerous and resigned from their jobs citing ‘family reasons’. Unlike Hari and Krishna who took a few weeks to leave, a handful of workers resigned immediately and came back to Kathmandu in the same Nepal Airlines aircraft that was sent to Kabul to bring the bodies of their dead friends home.

“We were already considering moving back to Nepal but seeing our friends being sent home in boxes convinced us it was not worth the risk,” says Hari.

After the attack, the Nepal government made it mandatory for contractors to pay a minimum of \$1,000 per month and provide better security for Nepali guards. But the attack and its aftermath are a reminder that the needs of returnee migrants (be they security guards or other workers) have to be accommodated.

Under the current system, Nepal’s overseas migration machinery is built to address the needs of those who return in coffins but not of those who return alive and need either psycho-social or financial support.

Two years later, Anil is still trying to find a proper footing in Nepal as a civilian having worked in the army all his life. He has started his own security company that supplies guards to offices in Kathmandu. Like his friends who were terminated, Anil has considered re-migrating many times, but he keeps himself busy so he does not slide into depression.

Two of the survivors of the Kabul attack still have shrapnel in their bodies, and need heavy doses of painkillers.

Says Rokaya: “I was also going to write about my experience to mark the second anniversary of the attack, but never got around to it. But there is always next year.”

*Some names have been changed. Go online to Nepali Times (#814 24-30 June 2016) for coverage of the Kabul attack.*



Watch Amrit Rokaya’s music video *Punarjanma* on YouTube. He wrote songs about his experience to help deal with Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. Also watch the music video of *Niko Nahune Ghau* by Madhusudan Koirala who lost two children in the 2015 earthquake and was himself killed in the Kabul attack.

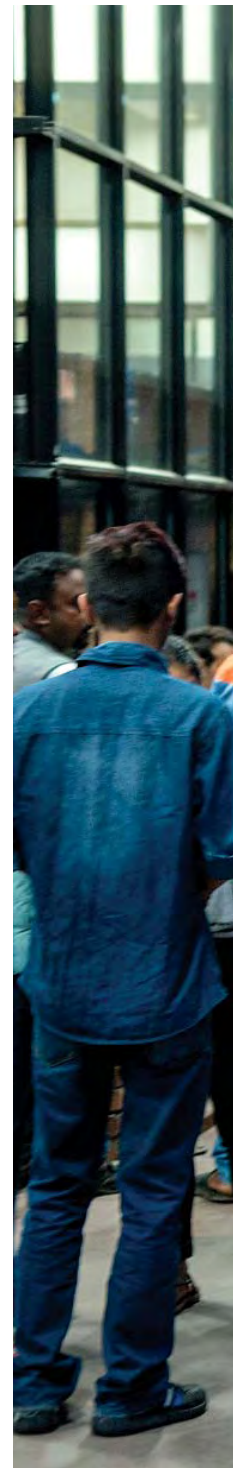
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22 - 28 JUNE 2018 #915



The family of a migrant security worker who is back home in Pokhara for a month from his security job in Afghanistan. Since private security pays well, the family can dream of other alternatives rather than military service for their son.



A security worker from Pokhara

## A military-

### Families of ex-Gurkhas make th

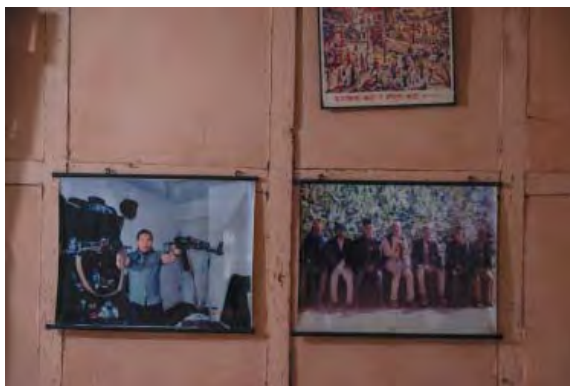
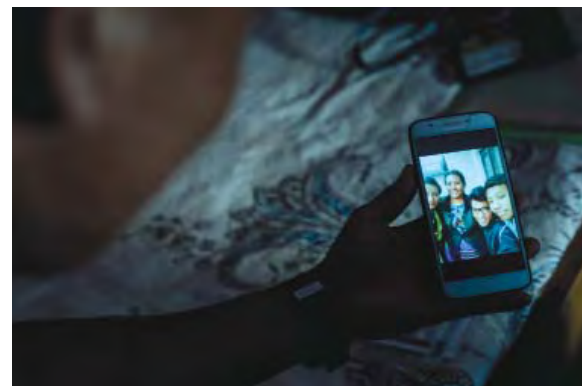


Photo frames on the wall of a migrant security worker in Itahari. He is seen posing with two AK-47s at his workplace in Afghanistan.



A security worker shows the photo of his family back home. He is in a guest house in Gongabu, waiting for his flight to Kabul the next day.



A mother shows the photo of her children. She hopes both her sons will return home.

#### Amanda Chisholm in Sunsari

**T**he martial history and reputation of Gurkhas is well known in Britain and Nepal. The public is aware of their unacknowledged contributions to local communities in Nepal, the broader political views of Gurkhas, and inter-generational dynamics that motivate young men to become Gurkhas.

It is these very aspects of Gurkhas that make them so desirable for the global private security industry. Recently, with the British Gurkhas’ right to remain in the UK, Nepalis retired from the Indian Army have been moving from the military to private security contractors in Afghanistan and

elsewhere.

Yet, it is more than just the martial reputation that enables such a migration to be desirable and possible. To understand this type of migration, we need to also take into account the Gurkha household. Military scholars focusing on the US, Canadian and UK militaries have shown how families are called upon to support and sustain broader military objectives.

Gurkha families also take on the same necessary household work that enable broader global security deployments to take place. These include the necessary life sustaining work of cooking, cleaning and caring for both children and elderly parents and grandparents, but also the emotional and intellectual labour that reproduces security work as desirable, if not necessary.

Gurkha households have for well over 200 years provided

the necessary, yet largely unacknowledged, work of caring for the family and offering an emotional lifeline to Gurkhas when they are working abroad.

Taking care of the family back home is a fundamental part of what allows the security industry to function and sustain recruitment, even if the industry does not recognise this. The household enables security work to be desirable in the first place. Just as young boys are raised to believe that being a Gurkha is honourable and important, especially if you do not excel at formal education, young girls are raised to believe that being a wife of a Gurkha is a good life — and a good decision to make.

Young boys turn into young men who, with the encouragement of their families, invest emotionally, financially





before boarding his flight to Afghanistan. He is back on duty after a month-long holiday, spending time with his loved ones. He will not see them for a year.

ALL PHOTOS: ROBIC UPADHYAY

# Canada sued

Widows of the 13 Nepalis killed in the 2016 Kabul attack and five survivors this week sued the Canadian government for neglecting the safety of the Gurkhas it hired to guard its embassy in Afghanistan.

A lawsuit was filed at the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in Toronto on Tuesday, on the eve of the second anniversary of the suicide attack. The defendants are the Canadian government and Sabre International, the private security contractor that hired the Nepali guards to protect the embassy.

On 20 June 2016, 13 Nepali guards were killed and five injured when they were travelling to the Canadian embassy on an unarmored and unguarded bus from their camp to the embassy. A lone suicide bomber detonated himself near the bus. (*See 'Rebirth' overleaf.*)

Sabre International made the guards live in a camp, and they had to make a risky journey to their duty station every day. The plaintiffs have asked the Canadian government what measures it had taken to protect the Nepalis guarding its people and property in Kabul.

They have sought \$20.4 million in compensation and damages from the Canadian government and Sabre International. Widows of the victims and survivors have claimed Sabre International owes each family \$300,000 in compensation, but they have received only a fraction of it. They have asked Ottawa to pay the due amount.

Sabre International terminated its contract with the Canadian Embassy after the attack, and shut down all its contact offices in Afghanistan and in Nepal. Sabre is no longer in operation and a legal notice has yet to be served to it.

Canadian lawyer Joe Fiorante, who is representing the Nepali plaintiffs, told CBC: "These men died in the service of our country and have basically been cast aside ... They were abandoned by our government and we thought that was dishonourable and frankly unacceptable."

# -migrant economy

## their continued recruitment globally as private security possible



the photo of her son who is an unarmed security guard in Qatar. Her sons will return so she can spend her old age with them.



Photos at the home of a former Indian Army soldier, who is now working as a security guard in Afghanistan.



After completing service in the Nepal, Indian or British armies, security workers are forced to take risky jobs in war zones for lack of alternative employment.

and physically into the dream of becoming a Gurkha. Young girls turn into young women who make career choices based on the ability to have flexible employment that might take them to the UK or enable them to be 'good wives' in Nepal. The social fabric of these communities is centred around foreign security work. The household is the physical space where youth who desire to be Gurkhas materialise.

The household is also where the life sustaining labour that keeps families alive exists, providing recruits with important emotional wellbeing. This labour is largely performed by the wives, mothers and daughters in the Gurkha family. This involves ensuring basic needs are met but also that children learn to know and to love their absent Gurkha fathers. They learn that the work

their father does, despite him not being physically present, is for their future. They ensure that the Gurkha father is included in the everyday of family life through social media, and encourage the children to maintain relations. Without this household labour, Gurkhas could not be away on foreign security employment for 12-24 months at a time and still maintain vital family obligations back home.

The Gurkha family household is part of a well-established community and all participants appear to know and value each other's roles. This is no surprise since these families have been set up for foreign military work for over two centuries. Consequently, the private security industry does not need to 'sell' security work to these communities the way it might do to other communities across Asia. These men and their families are

already intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically set up for foreign security work.

In interviews with Gurkhas and their families, there is a strong intellectual and emotional reinforcement for the military as honourable and necessary work, but still one of sacrifice. They repeatedly say that it is "for a better future."

To be sure, this future does mean a continuation of Gurkha military service for the next generation. However, many families also look to a future where their children may not have to go into military service, where they might get a good education and start a business and live close to their families.

Looking at the Gurkhas and their family members not just as revered soldiers and martial communities, but as migrant

families, enables us to locate how the broader infrastructure of these households makes exporting Gurkhas for security services possible globally.

It also shows us the profound ways in which family is shaping, but also shaped by broader foreign security migration patterns. To understand why Gurkhas continue to be an 'easy sell' and desirable in global security we need to look beyond the martial myth of these men. We need to also zoom in on the Gurkha household back in Nepal that enables this pattern of security migration. 🇳🇵

**Amanda Chisholm**, PhD, is Lecturer in International Politics at Newcastle University. Her research is sponsored by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council. <https://blogs.ncl.ac.uk/militarytomarket>

# We are family

Basanta and I sit with Sonika and her husband Bhim in their living area above the kitchen of their home outside Itahari. It is a quiet two street community, mostly made up of Gurkha families.

Children are playing outside. One of the neighbours, a wife of an Indian Gorkha soldier, comes to visit. Bhim shows family photos and his Indian military medals, while Sonika is attentive and ensures visitors are well fed and looked after.

Bhim has been working in private security in Afghanistan for just over two years, and he is home on leave. Sonika takes care of their two children and Bhim's deceased brother's 2 children while he is away. It is a big responsibility ensuring they go to school and do well. Bhim is there to assist in any major decisions. Bhim keeps his Facebook messenger always on in case Sonika needs to message him with something urgent.

Asked why he decided to take up a job as a private security, Bhim answers: "The pay is very good, and I have to send my children to boarding school."

*Excerpt from Amanda Chisholm's fieldnotes.*



EVENTS



Giving Tree

Opening performance of Katha Ghera: an adaptation of Shel Silverstein's heartwarming story 'Giving Tree' in the form of theatrical play, directed by Akanchha Karki.  
22 June- 8 July, 5:30pm (except Tuesday, 2pm as well on Saturdays), Kausi Theater, Teku, Rs200-500, 9818709302

Monsoon sale

Indulge in an adventurous find in the monsoon sale of up to 50% on your beloved adventure gear Sherpa.  
22-30 June, 9:30am-7:30pm, Sherpa Adventure Gear, Lal Durbar, (01) 4443638

Bakery class

Enroll in a class to have a cheerful baking experience with Shivani. Six exotic desserts on Wednesday, six varieties of cupcakes with icings on Thursday, and chocolate making on Friday.  
27/28/29 June, 11am onwards, Bake My Wish by Shivani, Balbhadra Marg, 9801022339



Chhaya screens World Cup

The newly opened QFX centre now provides free screenings of the World Cup in its 10,000 sq.ft courtyard, day or night. Get the theatre experience while watching the matches.  
22 June- 15 July, Chhaya Centre, Thamel, 9841876696

Comedy Tuk Tuk Show

Book your tickets for a night of laughter by three amazing stand-up comedians in K-Town, Mayur Goyal, Shraddha Verma, Yojana Thapa.  
23 June, 7:30pm onwards, SukraBar, Lazimpat, Rs100, 9841784613/ 9841014005

RJ Ripper screening

A film on the story of a young Nepali rider Rajesh (RJ) Magar who went from riding a homemade scrap bike to being one of Asia's fastest racers. The evening includes free screening of the movie, and a happy hour of socializing with cash bar and yummy food from Moksh's kitchen.  
23 June, 4:30-6:30pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel, (01) 5528362



Death of an Industry

Diepak Elmer, Krishna Gyawali, Mallika Shakya and Sumana Shrestha discuss the book 'Death of an Industry: The Cultural Politics of Garment Manufacturing During the Maoist Revolution'.  
25 June, 4-6pm, Yalamaya Kendra, Patan, (01) 5548400

International Food Tasting

Get a taste of American, Japanese, British, Spanish and Sri Lankan cuisine prepared by students of culinary arts and hospitality at the International Food Tasting event.  
23 June, 11am-5pm, Academy of Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management, Rs350, 9801104804

Home discussion

Interested in learning about housing and construction industry? HomeYug is hosting an event, where you will get to learn all about it.  
24 June, 4-6pm, Kaffee Codes, Thapathali, (01) 4101669

Open mic comedy

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

MUSIC



DJ Woody

Live flute and saxophone—Funk Hiphop with DJ Woody from New Zealand.  
22 June, 8pm onwards, House of Music, Thamel, Rs200, 9849377915

Music day

Let the good times roll with grand performances by The Midnight Riders, The Gentlemen and The Alchemist, on World Music Day.  
22 June, 6pm onwards, Wicked Spoon Fork and Rock, Jhamsikhel, 9843471625



Hiranya night

Yuvash Vaidya, a piano student at KM College of Music and Technology, Chennai, who was mentored by world famous composers like A.R Rahman, is in town for a stirring performance. Don't miss out.  
23 June, 6-8pm, Hiranya Guest House, Patan, Rs300, (01) 5535857

Fête de la Musique

Kathmandu hosts the annual Fête de la Musique with professional and amateur bands, and music of all genres from electronic to folklore. It's free entry, come and celebrate World Music Day.  
22 June, 3-9pm, Alliance Française de Katmandou, Pulchok, 9843067788

OUR PICK



Opens in Kathmandu on 22 June

An American heist comedy film directed by Gary Ross, Ocean's 8 is a spin-off of Steven Soderbergh's Ocean's trilogy. The movie follows a group of women, led by Debbie Ocean (Sandra Bullock) who is the sister of the unstoppable conman Ocean from the trilogy, as they plan to rob a necklace worth more than \$150 million at the Met Gala in New York City. Featuring Cate Blanchett, Anne Hathaway, Mindy Kaling, Sarah Paulson, Rihanna, Helena Bonham Carter, and Awkwafina, the movie is an enjoyable watch.

DINING



Fun Café

Get a bite of the lavish buffet dinner at the Café along with sips of beer while you watch the exciting games. The hotel is offering 5 beers at the price of 3.  
11 June-15 July, Radisson Hotel Kathmandu, Lazimpat, (01) 4411818

Jatra Café and Bar

Watch the 2018 FIFA World Cup matches projected live on big screen, with great ambience and chilled beer or cocktails and delicious food to go along.  
Thamel, www.jatracafebar.com

Piano Bar

A night of delectable dinner and World Cup high. And if you are lucky, a round trip ticket to any of Qatar Airlines' destinations, original FIFA merchandise with compliments, or a dinner voucher for two. Just predict a game or three.  
22 June- 15 July, Hotel Yak and Yeti, Durbar Marg, (01) 4248999, 9818986660

The Diplomat

Experience luxurious culinary delights at the hotel's Indian and Continental restaurant, without compromising on comfort.  
Hotel Ambassador, Lazimpat, (01) 4410432



Mezze by Roadhouse

Smart interiors and a chic terrace with a view of the palace provide a great atmosphere to enjoy dinner with friends. Recommending the chef's special - Blackened Striploin Steak.  
Mercantile Plaza, Darbarmarg, (01) 4223087

Capital Grill

This American style diner offers a large assortment of appetisers and entrees to suit everyone's tastes. Present 3 Capital Grill bills paid in the same month and get a privilege membership for discounts and seasonal offers.  
Bhatbhateni, (01) 4428426

GETAWAY



Raniban Retreat

Situated at the other end of the Phewa Lake and nestled inside Raniban forest close to the World Peace Stupa, this retreat has one of the best views of the Annapurna range.  
Raniban Hill, Pokhara, (01) 5185435

Retreat at Damaar

A retreat for contemplators and creators in an undisturbed sanctuary to enrich and enlighten your inner self.  
Bethanchowk, Kavre, 9851052442



The Famous Farm

Discover one of the Nepal's best kept secrets, Nuwakot Durbar, a delightful and unusually interesting royal palace. A stay at The Famous Farm makes it a great retreat. Visit their website for a descriptive booklet.  
Nuwakot, (01) 4422617, www.thefamousfarm.com

Tiger Palace Resort

Cheer for your favourite team from a fun filled getaway at Bhairahawa. The resort's big screen at Cabana avenue is open for all.  
Rupandehi, Bhairahawa, (071) 512050



Mango Tree Lodge

Culture walks, rafting in the Karnali, wildlife exploration, and jungle safari at the Bardia National Park.  
Bhetani, Bardia, (084) 402008

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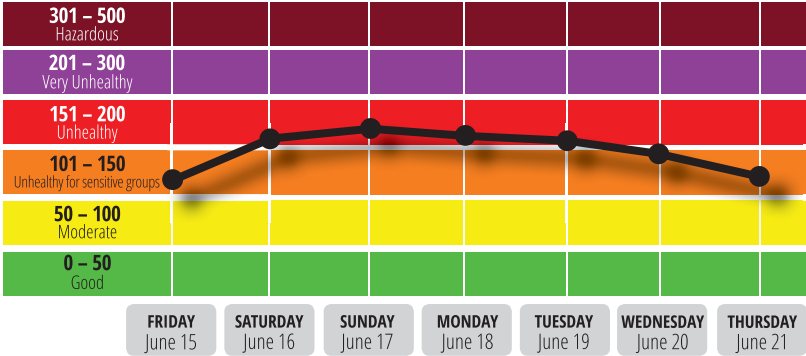
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AIR QUALITY INDEX

KATHMANDU, 15 - 21 June



The rain lets up for a few days, and look at what happens. The Air Quality Index (AQI) measured at Phora Darbar near the Darbar Marg intersection was consistently in the Unhealthy band for most of the week. This proves that emission levels from vehicles is the reason for AQI being so poor along Kathmandu's most upscale business boulevard, making the air there unbreathable most of the time. These figures represent the daily averages for last week. For hourly live updates go to: <https://np.usembassy.gov/embassy/air-quality-monitor/>



# Upendra Devkota's lives

A great neurosurgeon and a great Nepali leaves, ahead of all the people he saved

Kunda Dixit

Upendra Devkota knew the end was near. He returned from London after doctors at the King's College Hospital where he was being treated for five months since November gave up hope of curing his cancer of the bile duct.

He said he wanted to die in his own motherland, and he touched the tarmac with his forehead after landing in Kathmandu airport last month to pay respect to the Nepal he held dear. He showed signs of recovery immediately after being admitted to his own Neuro Hospital in Bansbari.

"I returned because I wanted to live my last in my country among my friends," he said.

However, the cancer proved too powerful, and even Devkota's iron will could not battle it. He asked one last time two weeks ago to be taken to his parents' village in Gorkha to drink water from the spring next to the house where he was born.

Being a doctor, Devkota seemed to know exactly when his time was up, and asked to be put on sedatives two days ago. He did not want his family to suffer on seeing him suffer. He never regained consciousness and the end came at 5:35 pm on Monday at age 64.

Devkota was a brilliant student at the missionary school in Gorkha where he was classmate and rival of Baburam Bhattarai, the Maoist ideologue.

It was 1983 when Devkota, straight out of medical college, went to the renowned Glasgow Neuroscience Institute to fulfil his lifelong dream of becoming a neurosurgeon. Not just any surgeon, Upendra Devkota wanted to be the best neurosurgeon in the world.

Under the guidance of professor Graham Teasdale, and with the dint of hard work and fierce ambition, Devkota soon proved himself.

But even as he learnt the craft, Devkota dreamt big -- of building a hospital as good as the one in Glasgow some day in Nepal. He returned to Kathmandu 20 years ago, and set about making his dream come true.

The National Institute of Neurological and Allied Sciences



was opened in 2006, and he brought Prof Teasdale to Kathmandu to inaugurate it. Asked then by this newspaper why he returned to Nepal, Devkota had replied: "My philosophy is that it is more satisfying to grow vegetables in your own garden than to buy them at Sainsbury."

Pioneering British neurosurgeon Henry Marsh, a colleague of Devkota from his London days, writes in his book,

*Admissions:* 'Dev does almost all the major operating himself. In six weeks working in Kathmandu I saw more major operations than I would have done in six months in London ... in the outpatient clinic he is like a king surrounded by courtiers and petitioners.'

Among Devkota's more famous patients were Ganga and Jamuna, the conjoined twins whom he operated on in 2002 before they were taken to Singapore. He saved Editor Kanak Mani Dixit from being

a quadriplegic after a spinal injury during a trekking fall in 2000 by performing a seven hour operation in the neurosurgery ward he had created at the government-run Bir Hospital.

Devkota served briefly as Health Minister in the Gyanendra government in 2005. His pet project of setting up a national insurance scheme could not be realised after Gyanendra was sidelined in a street uprising in April 2006. But he did establish the National Academy of



**REFLECTIONS ON A LIFE:** Upendra Devkota photographed in front of the Neuro Hospital in Bansbari in 2006 just before the inauguration of his dream project (left).

His eye-witness report of the scene at the Chhauni military hospital after the royal massacre on the front page of *Nepali Times* of 22 June 2001 (above).

Medical Sciences at Bir Hospital during his tenure.

Devkota was one of the few who got to witness up close the aftermath of the royal massacre of 1 June 2001, when Crown Prince Dipendra killed nine members of his family and then himself. At a time when the truth was unbelievable and unpalatable to many, Devkota wrote a forthright piece in this paper, recounting what he saw that horrific night at Chhauni military hospital (above).

He wrote about seeing the lifeless body of King Birendra, a monarch he admired, at the hospital amidst a row of corpses: 'I had flashes of memory of having met him during a big international neurosurgical conference in Kathmandu three years ago: he was a perfect gentleman, and he felt deeply for the country. It was difficult to accept that he was gone, it was as big a loss for me as when I lost my father and mother.'

And now the great neurosurgeon and great Nepali, Upendra Devkota, is himself gone — ahead of all the lives he saved. 🇳🇵

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It had been a while since I'd seen a decent horror movie, so I jumped at the chance to go and watch *A Quiet Place* in theaters. The John Krasinski directed film stars his wife, the super-talented Emily Blunt, giving us all the more




**MUST SEE**  
Sophia Pande

reason to see this unusual film that cleverly wields the tool of quietness to uncanny effect. The film feels initially quite odd in that it is more a lyrical, rather beautiful, tale about a family unit that has to survive a horrific circumstance than a formulaic horror movie. That serves as the

film's main strength today when where we are fed up with gross horror movies that disgust rather than terrify. The world has been taken over by blind, but gigantic, vicious insect-like creatures (clearly inspired by the original extra-terrestrials from Ridley Scott's *Alien* films) that operate through their keen sense of hearing. They attack at any significant noise, reducing the central characters, the Abbot family, to using sign language, something they are skilled at because the eldest daughter, Regan (Millicent Simmonds), was born deaf. Due to this inadvertent survival skill, the Abbots, led by two exceptional parents, Lee and Evelyn (Krasinski and Blunt) are able to continue an idyllic life on their farm in the American country-side, albeit very,

very silently, cut off from the rest of humanity. While the film's strength is its break from the dull formula of horror, the stupid mistakes made in horror films seem ingrained in the genre. Without giving too much away, it seems safe to say that at some point in the narrative the Abbot family loses a child, and then Evelyn becomes pregnant again. Just around the time that she is due, Lee insists on leaving her, and taking their timid son Marcus (Noah Jupe) into the wild to show him some survival skills. Never mind the inherent gender bias in this decision, it seems demented to leave one's wife alone to deal with a process which is painful, messy, and as anyone with half a brain knows, extremely LOUD. There are twists and surprises here, but small ones, and for the most part, the film was not as scary as I had expected, nor as deeply original as I might have liked. That being said, the performance of the Abbot children, and Blunt, are exceptional. Krasinski's direction is remarkably subtle for a horror movie, although his character is slightly too silent and macho for my taste. In general this is an interesting film and quite an accomplishment for someone who is known for his acting rather than directing credentials. As for breaking the boundaries of horror, well, we'll have to wait for another film to do that. This is to be enjoyed, screeched at, and applauded for not falling into the sinkhole of gore and trite delivery. What a shame it couldn't go that extra mile. 🇺🇸



Watch trailer online

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)



HARI LAMICHAANE/ RSS

**RED NATION LEADERS:** Prime Minister KP Oli meets Chinese President Xi Jinping at Great Hall of People in Beijing on Wednesday. The two countries signed agreements on construction of Kathmandu-Kerung railway and energy cooperation.



CAAN

**FRIENDLY ROUTES:** The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal and the Airports Authority of India signed an agreement on Saturday to open new two-way air routes between Nepal and India.



RUPA JOSHI

**BRAVEHEART:** British Ambassador to Nepal Richard Morris pays his final respects to the late Upendra Devkota at Neuro Hospital in Kathmandu on Tuesday. The neurosurgeon passed away at 5:35 pm on Monday, six months after he was diagnosed with cancer of the bile duct.



INDIAN EMBASSY

**TAKING YOGA TO NEWER HEIGHTS:** Monks and locals celebrate fourth International Day of Yoga at Muktinath at 12500 feet above sea level.



PRABHU GROUP

**SMART TV:** Devi Prakash Bhattachan of Prabhu Group launches Nepal's first wireless digital terrestrial television based on DVB-T2 broadcasting technology in Kathmandu on Sunday.

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## Mugu footballers to go to Spain

Prakash Kandel in *Naya Patrika*

नयाँ पत्रिका

At a time when football frenzy has gripped the entire world, a group of Nepali teenagers from remote Mugu have been invited to Spain to participate in the Donosti Cup, a tournament for youth sports. The girls from the mountainous district, who do not even have a football ground to practice on, are going to get their first experience of international sports.



BHOJRAJ BHAT

The girls will leave for San Sebastian in Spain on 28 June for the tournament which will be held from 1-7 July and they will play four games. Their own struggle and love for football has led them to this tournament where 33 teams from 30 countries will be competing.

"Apart from the competition, the journey from Nepal's remote hills to Europe itself is a great experience," says coach Bhagwati Rana. After the game, the players will also get to visit world famous football clubs like Real Madrid and Barcelona.

In 2015, filmmaker Bhojraj Bhat made a documentary *Sunakali* based on the story of Mugu teenagers who struggled to play football in the snow. The documentary was shown in 137 film festivals across Europe, and it also won 23 awards.

After that, FIFA shot a 12 minute documentary called *Meet the Himalayan Messi* which also attracted notice and led to Mugu teenagers getting international opportunities. The organisers of Donosti cup in Spain invited *Sunakali's* team to participate, paying for their costs. Though the original characters of the documentary are not in the team anymore, another team was created with younger players.

Last January, 17 players were selected from more than 135 teenagers and they have been rehearsing in the All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) complex at Satdobato in Kathmandu. ANFA does not even have a district association in Mugu because the mountain district does not have a standard football ground.

"Their journey from Bama of Mugu to Spain is nothing less than a dream," says Bhojraj Bhat, who worked on the final selection of players.

In an area where girls get married off early, parents were not really happy that their daughters wanted to play football instead.

"It was a challenge to make the parents agree to let their daughters go for this international opportunity," Bhat says.

The girls have found even the journey to Kathmandu challenging, and were surprised by the artificial turf at Satdobato. "We had never been outside Mugu, and the heat of Nepalganj and Kathmandu's crowds really shocked us," says captain Rita Rokaya. "Still, it feels like a dream."

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# Four-fold increase in

The lack of justice for rape, and its social stigma combine to breed impunity

Sewa Bhattarai

Shalini Kumari, 15, was coming home from a wedding when she saw a man waiting at her gate. Before she could resist, he had tied her shawl around her mouth and dragged her to the fields behind her house. Her muffled screams were drowned out by the music of the nearby wedding.

Her parents were away, and there was no one to rescue her. But such is the stigma of rape in Nepali society that, like many others, Shalini was forced to agree to marry the rapist. In addition, her father had to pay a dowry demand of Rs 500,000. He was landless, and Shailini's grandfather sold his farm in Morang to be able to afford it.

"How could I say no to the decision of respected elders?" says Shalini, who was saved from the marriage after her rapist and his family ran away on the eve of the wedding, after which the case was brought to the notice of social activists. They helped her register a police complaint and brought her to the ChoraChori shelter in Kathmandu.

Shalini's case is just one in a dramatic increase in reported rape

cases throughout Nepal in the past decade. Police records show that instances of rape and attempted rape have grown almost four fold (*see chart*) since 2008. Alarming, more than half of them are minors.

"Children and handicapped women are more at risk, because they are more vulnerable," says Bimala Khadka at the Women's Commission. "Minors are more at risk because they don't realise what is happening, cannot resist, and may be easily convinced or threatened to keep quiet."

Khadka says there is abuse in

child-protection centres or shelters, where lonely children may take physical intimacy as a sign of affection, and do not realise that they are being abused.

A breakdown of the Police rape data reveals disturbing clusters in the Tarai: with district like Morang, Jhapa, Rupandehi, Sunsari, Banke, Chitwan, and Dang recording the most cases of reported rape and attempted rape. Mountain districts Jumla and Humla reported no cases at all last year. (*See map*)

After the 2015 earthquake destroyed 700,000 homes, districts worst affected by the earthquake recorded a spike in reported rape. Young women and girls living in temporary shelters are more at risk from predators in the neighbourhood, or even family members. Last year, Dhading recorded 31 cases of rape and attempted rape. Gorkha, Kavre and Sindhupalchok had 29 cases each.

Nepal's conservative society often faults the victims: saying young women wear scanty outfits or stay out late. Changing modern value systems are blamed. However, the fact that so many

are young rural women, minors, or even infants who are abused disprove this argument. Recently, ChoraChori documented the case of an eight-month-old baby raped by her father. Police figures show that females in all age groups have been assaulted, from infants to grandmothers. One in every five victims is a child below 10.

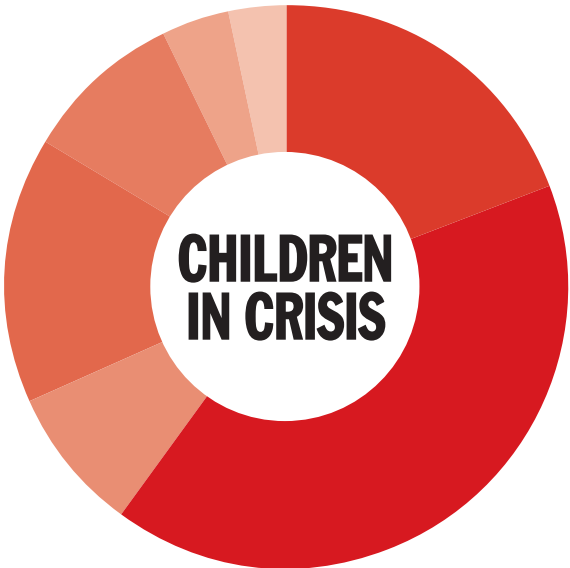
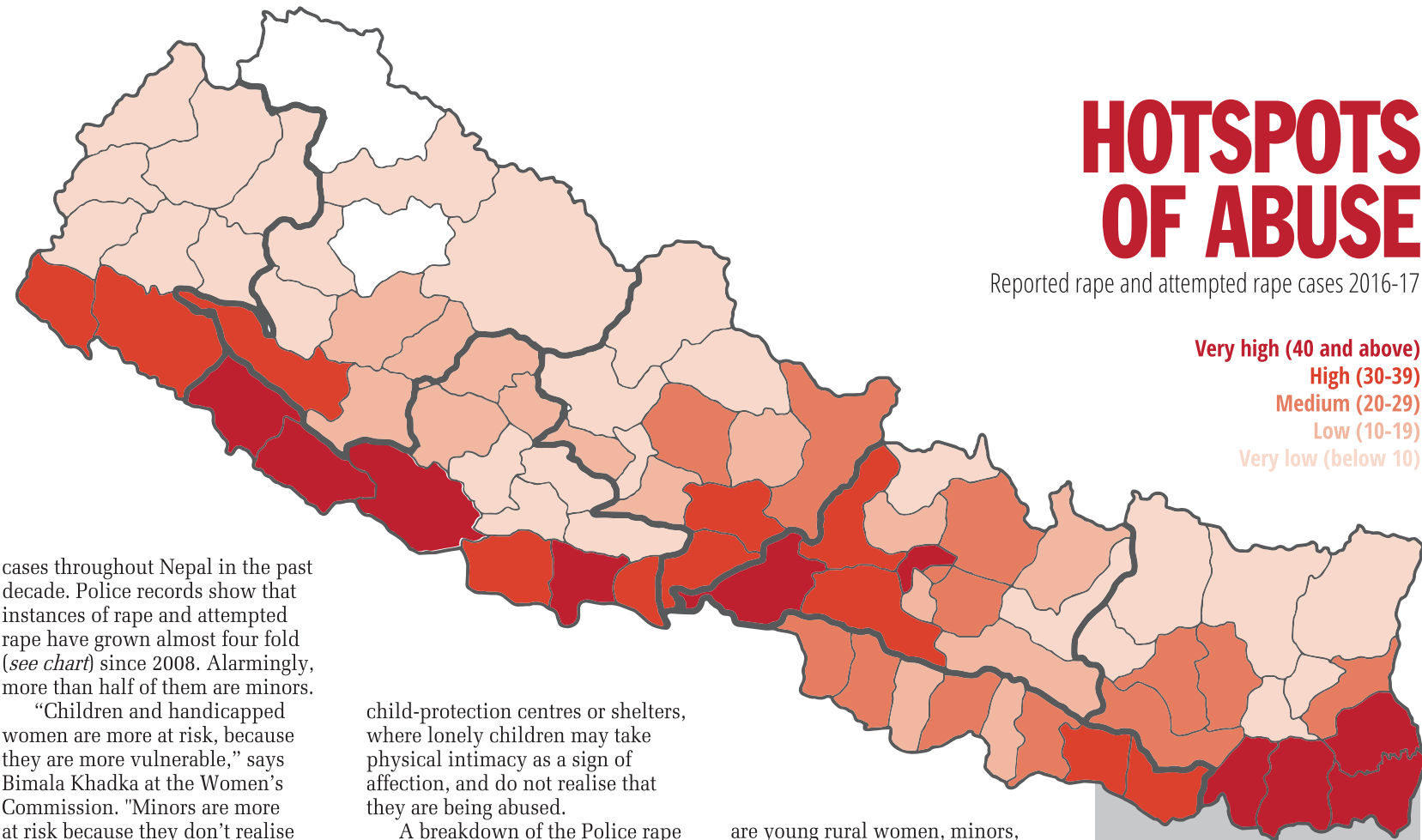
Many also point to easy access to pornography through the Internet as a cause. And while it has created new forms of abuse, from child pornography to blackmail, the basic nature of rape remains the same: nearly half of them happen behind closed doors at homes, and 80% of offenders are known to their victims.

It is entrenched patriarchy that encourages rape, explains gender studies professor Chandra Bhadra. "Rape happens when men feel entitled to women's bodies, when they feel they have the right to violate it. Our social and legal systems encourage such behaviour

## HOTSPOTS OF ABUSE

Reported rape and attempted rape cases 2016-17

Very high (40 and above)  
High (30-39)  
Medium (20-29)  
Low (10-19)  
Very low (below 10)



Minors make up more than half of the victims. And while even infants are victimised, most are adolescents aged 11-16.

Below 10	19%
11-16	40%
17-18	8%
19-25	15%
26-35	9%
36-45	4%
Above 46	3%

## TOP TEN

Districts with the highest numbers of reported rape and attempted rape cases. Figures do not represent proportion to the population of the districts.

Kathmandu 130		
Morang 99	Jhapa 75	Rupandehi 73
Sunsari 71	Banke 66	Chitwan 54
Dang 47	Ilam 45	Bardiya 45

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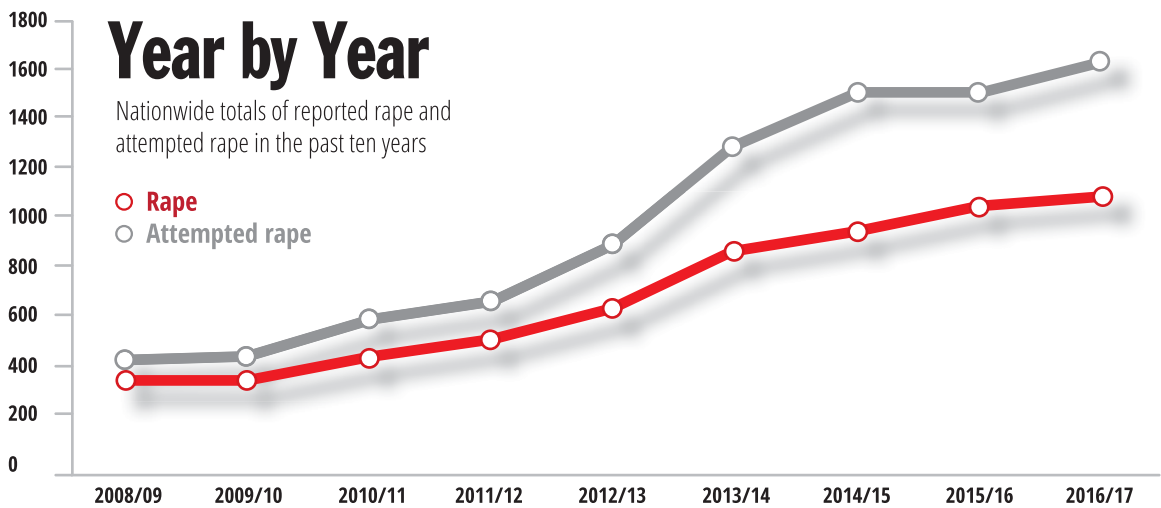
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# reported rape in 10 years



by protecting impunity,” she says.

In the case of Shalini Kumari in Morang, the social and legal system converged in the local milieu, where male elders decided she marry the offender to keep the peace in the village. The family, because of its lower class and caste, was forced to agree.

The rise in cases like this would have been buried in social ‘compromises’ had it not been for activists working with the Women’s Cell in police stations, volunteers from shelters like ChoraChori, and the helpline of the Women’s Commission. Since it was hooked up six months ago, the helpline has received over 25,000 calls, and registered 436 cases. Previously, the Commisison used to only get about 350 complaints a year.

Shailesh Thapa Chhetri of the Nepal Police agrees that the reports have only brought to the surface what was always there. “Rape is not new in society. But due to the social stigma attached to it, few people ever spoke about it openly, let alone complain to the police,” says Chhetri. “But now the awareness of legal options is rising and reporting has increased.”

The police now even get rape complaints from closely-knit communities who rarely went to them before, like the Musahar in eastern Tarai. However, even though families are more aware of legal remedy, justice is still a distant dream. The statutory

limit to report rape used to be 35 days, and an amendment in 2015 increased it to 6 months. But even that does not help victims because they take years to open up about traumatic abuses.

Survivors also face intrusive and cursory medical tests that look for physical injuries, and if such signs are absent, risk losing credibility. “This is called rape stereotyping, and often happens to adolescents,” explains Binita Pandey at the Women’s Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC). “Adolescents may be lured into intercourse with the promise of marriage, which is considered rape by law. But lawyers and defendanats try to claim the opposite if there is delay in reporting, or if the victim did not protest during the act.”

While the laws concerning rape have become progressively broader in Nepal, such nuances of the victim’s side of the story are still ignored. According to the Supreme Court’s annual report 2016/17, district and high courts gave verdicts on only 60% of rape cases, and it was only 8% at the Supreme Court, leaving victims with little hope for justice.

Even if a decision is reached, perpetrators often walk free. According to reports from the Office of the Attorney General, in 2015/16 only 44% of offenders were convicted among the cases closed, and the rest were either

acquitted or the cases withdrawn. This means only around 20-25% of rape victims in the districts who file a complaint can hope for justice, and the figure is only 6% at the central level. The lack of justice for rape, and its social stigma combine to breed impunity.

“The laws may be strong but the implementation is so weak that offenders know they can get away with it,” says Chandra Bhadra. “To really deter rapists, we need naming and shaming, and physical punishment like chemical castration.”

There was hope that education, economic prosperity, and empowerment would automatically reduce violence against women. However, as women become more educated and aware, they tolerate less abuse and some end up suffering a male backlash. An example is Muna Adhikari, who despite being deputy mayor of Godavari, became a victim of domestic violence herself recently.

Says Bhadra: “Through education, we need to also bring men into the fold and make them aware, too. Only then can we hope that violence against women will go down.”

Back at the ChoraChori shelter, Shalini Kumari is tearful as she tells us that there is no one now to take care of her ill mother back in the village.

She is doubtful about ever getting justice. Yet, through her sobs, she tells a visitor: “I want him to rot in jail forever.”

*Some names have been changed.*



DARNAL AWARD FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

## A case of cash and caste

Activist Saraswati Nepali was recently awarded the ‘Darnal Award for Social Justice’ in recognition of her contribution to justice for the Dalit community. Among her many cases was the conviction of a rapist for the multiple rapes of 14-year-old Sudha, with mental disability.

Durgadutta Bhatta, 57, used to rape her frequently and offer her chocolates afterwards, sometimes also threaten her. Her family found out only when she got pregnant, and Bhatta had given her abortion pills. Excessive bleeding led her mother to track down the perpetrator. Bhatta first offered money to keep her quiet, then spread rumours that she was pimping for her daughter.

Recalls Saraswati Nepali: “There was no one to speak for the girl at the police station, none of the lawyers wanted to take her statement because she was Dalit and the accused was a rich and powerful person.”

Sudha’s parents are former Haliya, or bonded laborers, and make a living by daily wage labour.

The crime highlighted many factors that make girls and women more vulnerable: caste, class, minor, disadvantaged groups, and people with disabilities.

Even though only one in every five rapists is convicted, Bhatta was sentenced to 11 years in prison. But social justice is something else: Sudha quit school, rarely leaves home, does not talk to anyone, and is mortally scared of men.

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# Marxists-cum-Leninists

If there is one thing we cannot fault the ruling Communist Party for, it is thinking small. 'Big is beautiful' is the slogan, and the comrades toe the party line, insisting that size matters.

And thank the Engels in heaven for that because otherwise Nepal would still be wallowing with water buffaloes. All hail to the Glorious Party led by the Dear Helmsperson because of whose foresight we can now dream of graduating from makers of potatochips to microchips. Nepal has shown the world that it has the audacity to take giant strides in the conservation of the endangered Asiatic White Elephant.

During the first tenure in office of Messrs CPN-UML (Pvt Ltd) in the mid-nineties, which some of you may remember was in the last century, it was the Right Honourable Makuney who led a coalition of Marxists-cum-Leninists and promised stability and prosperity.

He was removed in a no-confidence vote nine months later, but not before presenting his roadmap to prosperity: Nepal would get rich by exporting electricity to China "via satellite".

It is that kind of vision for the future that has allowed Nepal to take a Big Leap Forward towards being a Federal Democratic Republic of Utopia. Prime Minister Oli in a rousing speech before departing for his China visit last week said

Nepal could balance its trade deficit by planting trees and "exporting oxygen". He had obviously got a solid briefing from his advisers on carbon trading. He also had the idea of arresting Nepal's falling birthrate: stop eating imported fish that contain impotence-causing formalin.

The Minister of Communism and Information has also tried to keep up with the wisdom of his higher-up authority when he demonstrated his smarts by boasting on live national tv that he was in possession of a "Samsung i-Phone".

Nepal's deft diplomacy with the southern neighbour has also yielded immediate results. India has agreed to allow three new two-way air routes, although one of them in Mahendranagar is only for kites and low-flying drones. Things are also moving ahead literally at breakneck speed on the Arun III project, so much so that some tunnel workers this week nearly broke their necks in a rockfall.

India also gifted millions of tons of its territory to Nepal last weekend, transporting it by air and delivering it directly to farms across Nepal. The economic value of replenishing Nepal's topsoil is incalculable and compensates for all land we have lost to self-moving border pillars. Stay tuned.



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