On the 28th day of his 15th hunger strike, his longest yet, the Government was finally close to meeting most of Govinda KC’s demands, to make health care affordable and accessible for all Nepalis, by removing corruption from the medical education sector. But not close enough.

The last sticking point was KC’s demand that no more medical colleges would be allowed in Kathmandu Valley for 10 more years, which the Government was not willing to sign off on unilaterally.

KC’s latest fast was due to the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) government, with its near-two-third majority in Parliament, trying to hurriedly pass the Medical Education Bill without pledges previously agreed to, from the campaigning doctor’s previous hunger strikes.

With KC’s health deteriorating, public opinion was overwhelmingly on his side. The Government’s negotiation team, led by former House speaker Subhas Negi, by Thursday evening agreed to meet the doctor’s demands. But as night fell, it was touch-and-go once more, with negotiators going through several iterations of the draft agreement at the Prime Minister’s residence in Swayambhu.

KC has said his demand for a moratorium on medical schools in the capital was to ensure teaching hospitals were evenly spread out in the country. But powerful figures in the ruling party are known to have stakes in new medical colleges waiting for licenses in Kathmandu.

The Government agreed to a list of other demands, such as medical colleges not becoming affiliated until they had operated their own hospitals for three years, and a single university should not be allowed to license more than five medical colleges. Other demands included Medical Education Ordinance being implemented to the letter, all officials including the acting deputy be appointed to the Medical Education Commission, and a common entrance test be conducted.

KC started his most recent fast in Jumla after Kathmandu’s Marich Mandala declared a no-protest zone. He agreed to be flown back to Kathmandu but only after police raided the Karnali Academy of Health Sciences, throwing tear gas and firing rubber bullets. KC also wanted the Karnali Academy to be upgraded to enroll MBBS students.

There had been no dialogue between the two sides after KC was taken to Kathmandu from Jumla on 19 July, with the Government actively seeking to discredit KC’s fast. It claimed he was being manipulated by opposition Nepal Congress and Nepal Front, with one minister even saying the hunger strike was part of a “grand design”.

KC has signed 11 agreements with the Government in the past eight years, and it appears he wanted this fast to be made or break. Given the financial interests of the medical-political nexus, however, the NCP will be under pressure from investors to concede on any deal. KC likely suspects this; so even if he calls off this hunger strike, it is not likely going to be his last.
TWO-THIRDS EMPTY

The Oil administration is arguably the most controversial of all. Since 1991. It wields the means of power and wealth using its influence over media and political institutions. In addition to the constitutional organs, these organs are heavily influenced by the Oil administration’s Office. With a third of the parties in Parliament, the National Communist Party (NCPS) is virtually nonexistent.

It is not clear how this organisation on power, it is surprising the government is behaving as it is a fragile coalition on the verge of collapse. Recent actions and pronouncements by the Prime Minister and his supporters left his critics at a loss, that the communists have a low tolerance for criticism. Instead of being two-thirds full, the government is behaving like it is running on two-thirds empty.

This week, at a close-door meeting of a media club loyal to the government, both Prime Minister Oil and Prime Minister-in-

The NCPS, headed byletter this month, made party MP Mahesh Barsem in Parliament denounced

those poking fun at the Prime Minister on Facebook, threatening to bolt from the cabinet with the party if it slumps in the law. Government leaders have unleashed trials, and spread fake news on

the Prime Minister Oil is finally acting to correct his over-reach. Are these silver linings, in other words, the umbrella of dark monsoon clouds?

WHATS TRENDING

Kleptocrats of Kathmandu and Kuala Lumpur

Parkour Dinesh, Nepal’s gravity-defying policeman

In a letter to The Kathmandu Post, Nepal’s gravity-defying policeman, Dinesh Dhami, has challenged the police forces of India and China to a friendly match. The letter calls for the police forces to come together to celebrate the spirit of sportsmanship and friendly competition.

Dinesh Dhami, who is known for his agility and skills in parkour, has been a member of the Nepal Police Department since 2015. He has won several medals in national and international competitions and is currently the national record holder in parkour.

Taking up the challenge, the Indian and Chinese police forces have expressed their interest in participating. The match is expected to take place in the near future.

Risks of your life to save lives

Nepal’s gravity-defying policeman, Dinesh Dhami, is known for his ability to save lives in critical situations. In one such instance, he leaped from a burning building to save a child.

Dinesh Dhami, who is also a parkour practitioner, has been awarded the ‘Most Valuable Player’ award in several national and international competitions. He has also been featured in several documentaries and films on parkour.

Many people have expressed their admiration for Dinesh Dhami’s courage and dedication to saving lives. His事迹 have inspired many young people to take up parkour and become active in the sport.

A survey conducted by the Nepal Police Department showed that 70% of its members would like to join the parkour community and become active in the sport.

OUTFORTUNE

It is very unfortunate that Nepal’s corrupt Munda regime has created a very unhealthy and oppressive environment, and are using dirty politics to further their vested interest in the Nepali medical sector (‘Risks his life to save lives’, by Kunda, Nov. 9), are they trying to bully innocent Nepali alive?

Yam Gurung

The doctor’s policy of acting on billing changed peaceful protesters in a hospital is disgraceful. I wonder if the police will charge doctors inside a temple next.

Nayan Khyppre

HIGH STAKE SCAM

The question is whether the government really wants to stop this blatant cheating of its workers (“Kleptocrats of Kathmandu and Kuala Lumpur”, Ram’s Saketka and Aya Lakhdi, Nov. 9). One way is for the respective government bodies to draw attention to the scam and demand accountability from the government of Mahathir Mohamad to this issue and request them to investigate.

Sheila Bali

The rampant loot of poor workers is shocking, and it shows lack of compassion for other human beings.

Bum Chan

There is no proof that this is Zahid’s company. These are mere allegations just because the shareholders are family members of previous government leaders.

Gavin Nash

These are unnecessary human beings. Give them time, the system will be put to an end to this.

Somassundram Manikam

BACK TO GREEN SPACE

Narayan Chandra who always green spaces long before it was restored (“Farks, not parking”, Shakti Sherpa, Nov. 9), growing up seeing greenery and landscapes. It was only after Laharta that the space was messed up and became a dump yard. Sushma Joshi

10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Nepal’s first communal president was elected this week 10 years ago. And although the polls were controversial, it was a crucial step in the direction of the country. Nepal’s political parties are divided on the issue. The Maoists, in particular, are in favor of the new system. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) is the largest party in the Assembly, with 33 seats.

Some see this as a step in the right direction, while others have concerns about the lack of representation for marginalized groups. However, there is a need to ensure that the new system is inclusive and respects the rights of all citizens.

ONLINE PACKAGES

BREAST IS BEST

BREAST IS BEST

Breastfeeding provides many benefits to both the mother and her baby, including:

- Improved immunity
- Better brain development
- Lower risk of diabetes
- Lower risk of breast and ovarian cancer

The benefits of breastfeeding are well-documented, and it is strongly recommended that all women breastfeed for at least 6 months.

UPCLOADED ART

The cover art for the next issue of The Kathmandu Post features a stunning visual representation of the Himalayan landscape. The artwork captures the essence of the mountain range, with its majestic peaks and crystal-clear lakes.

There is no doubt that the new system will be for the benefit of all. Sushma Joshi

WHAT'S TRENDING

Kleptocrats of Kathmandu and Kuala Lumpur

Parkour Dinesh, Nepal’s gravity-defying policeman
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A post mortem of Nepal’s

Malika Shakya’s new book Death of an Industry holds important lessons for the country’s trade

Sewa Bhattarai

A

fter the 1990 restoration of democracy, and the

coup of a new millennium, globalization arrived in Nepal

with a bang. Gold centres catering to international clients sprang up, travel and tourism leaped. Nepalis

started migrating overseas for work, and made-in-Nepal carpets, garments and pashminas started being exported all over the world. 

Wearers, tailors and workers needed for the factories boomed to Kathmandu Valley, feeding the rapid urbanization. Nepal seemed to be living the prediction of Francis Fukuyama, who declared capitalism to be the end of history. It was also the end of geography. 

But Fukuyama was proven wrong, the global economy was hit by multiple economic crises and recessions. Nepal’s export market collapsed. In her book Death of an Industry, Malika Shakya traces the history of the rise and fall of Nepal’s garment industry.

It all started in 1974 with the American Multi-Fiber Arrangement (MFA) which allocated quotas to garment imports from developing nations. Its actual intent was to protect its domestic industry, but it suited Nepal well and a garment manufacturing industry materialized almost overnight, becoming the country’s fourth-largest export at one point. 

When the MFA finally lapsed in 2004, Nepal’s garment industry collapsed. Shakya takes issue with how this demise was considered natural, even inevitable, by the state, and how workers were left to fend for themselves. Most opted to migrate to the Persian Gulf, feeding another industry.

The state felt well grounded, technically in its assertion that the industry collapsed because it could not compete in the global market. It was felt that if it was not good enough, it did not deserve to live, and the state felt legitimacy in ignoring the plight of millions employed by the industry, Shakya writes.

For Shakya, the garment saga epitomizes the hegemony of neoliberalism, which became mainstream in Nepal in the 1990s with World Bank’s Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), and after 1990 with the free market principles.

An industry once made up of 1,200 firms now has only 80, and survives on orders that have no other takers. Apparel exports from China, India and Bangladesh flourished even after the MFA because cheap labour made them more competitive. Nepal’s products were up to 30% more expensive in comparison.

However, for Chand Prasad Aryal of the Garment Association of Nepal, it was not just a question of free market competition. “We need state support to make our

So, you want to be a Chartered Accountant?

The stereotype of Chartered Accountants is that they are boring. Lower pass rates and tedious subject matter, where students fumble numbers, have made many opt out. The prospects of national and international employment and salary packages have waned, however, attracted many hard working students to Chartered Accountancy. 

The British accredited Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) is a global professional body that provides accredited 3-4 years course in 178 countries. The British Accredited ACCA exam in Nepal was back in 1977 with just one student. In 2014 Nepal colleges started offering the certified course, an ACCA Nepal Head was elected. Demand grew after that, with the number of ACCA students rising to 2,000 in 2018.

“After moving towards federalism in Nepal has huge potential for economic growth. This means banks, financial institutions and businesses have started reaching out to many parts of the country. The demand for local experts is increasing, creating job prospects for CA’s,”

Kathmandu, ACCA Nepal Head (right)

Nepal makes up a very small percentage of the total 198,000 ACCA members and 480,000 students globally, but Nepali students and working members have been making a mark, says Kathmandu.

In 2017, Rekha Maharjan, a student from The British College, topped the F3 Business Analysis Professional (BAP) exam of Chartered Certified Accountants paper, ranking her number one in the world. Out of around 600 ACCA accredited Nepali members, over 100 are working in Australia, China, West Asia and Europe. Since ACCA is a global degree, the job prospects give global mobility to its members from any part of the world.

The ACCA course includes 14 papers on applied knowledge, skills and strategic professional, integrated ICT, AICD, global learning and strategic business leadership. After exams, students need to gain 5 years of experience in accounts, finance, audit, management, business consultancy, taxation, corporate governance, marketing or financial reporting. They need to also complete 20 hours of online training on ethics and professional skills modules to have full accreditation.

In the case of audit practice in Nepal, every CA member, including ACCA, needs to go through exams of Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nepal (ICAN). Even though ICAN is a qualifying body, it is also completely different in its nature, unlike in other countries. ACCA does not yet include Nepal’s tax system and regulations. That gap, however, has been bridged by colleges offering ACCA courses, by providing training and knowledge periodically. The British College, National College of Accountancy, School of Accountancy and Survey International Business School provide ACCA courses currently.

Because of the lengthy process of qualifying and registering as a professional CA, many students tend to opt out in the middle of the course. Katwal, an ACCA member himself, believes hard work, dedication and continuity is all that is necessary, as Chartered Accountancy is one field of study that has an objective marking system.

And for those who believe CA is unsuitable for them, trends are saying “Skills demanded for professional accountants will be completely different in the future: mundane calculation will be automated. So CAs need to fulfill roles in communication, leadership, and complex decision-making, which cannot be solved with AI. This will never be boring.”

Shikama Rai

HK to Seattle

Cathay Pacific has announced that it will launch a non-stop service between Hong Kong to Seattle from 31 March 2019. This will be Cathay’s 11th international destination using the new aircraft.

The new service will directly link the Asian hub with the West Coast of the United States four times a week, via an Airbus A350-900 aircraft.

Neo narrow-body

Airbus’ new model has the 189 narrow-body aircraft A320neo. Produced at the Airbus Site in Hamburg, the new addition has flexible cabin configurations and an eco-friendly concept, reducing nitrogen oxide emissions by 50% and noise by 50%. The airline will operate the plane with 28 seats in business class and 152 in economy.

TripAdvisor Award

The luxury resort the "Dreams Tucancan" has been awarded with the “TripAdvisor Travelers’ Choice Award” for 2018, ranking 17th in the world. The hotel has been featured in a number of leading travel magazines and has received praise from travelers for its exceptional service, stunning views, and unique experiences.

NIB Bancassurance

NIB Bancassurance, a joint venture between NIB Bank and Axa Insurance, has entered the bancassurance market in Nepal. The company aims to provide a comprehensive range of insurance products to its customers through the network of banks and branches.

Prabhu Bank

Prabhu Bank, a public sector bank in Nepal, has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) to provide banking services to its customers. The agreement aims to facilitate the NEA employees and their families in accessing banking services through the network of Prabhu Bank branches.

BIZ BRIEFS

PHOTO: GURNAKSHAR BHATTARAI
products competitive in the world market. Governments in India and China give 11-15% export subsidies to garments, and that makes their products cheaper. Nonetheless, our products will always be more expensive," he explained.

Avinash Gupta, an apparel-industry researcher with Kathmandu-based think tank SAWTEE, agrees that countries like Bangladesh benefited from state support. "There was considerable effort from the state through duty refunds, tax concessions, back to back Letter of Credits, bonded warehouse, training trips among others," he says. "No manufacturing sector in the world has expanded without technological learning, and this almost always has been a function of industrial policies."

History also shows that industries have not developed with just a laissez-faire policy, and the state always has a role to play in industrialization of new-developed countries like Korea, China and Taiwan. In Nepal though, the garment and carpet industries went through boom and bust cycles, but were left to fend for themselves.

"In our neighboring countries, such industries get state support in the form of land, lease and bank loans at low rates. Such support, and economic diplomacy to secure the right of export access for a landlocked country are necessary to make us competitive," says Ram Bahadur Gurung of the Central Carpet Industries Association Nepal.

Nepal’s pashmina export is another industry that boomed, then collapsed. It is still effectively well placed with its trademarks registered in 47 countries, but it struggles to raise annual sales above Rs 5 billion. "Our sales are based on fashion, and we cannot predict the ebb and flow of fashion in our markets. The state needs to help us send our young designers abroad to study, so that we are able to break the design season," says Dina Rikum Thapa of the Nepal Pashmina Industries Association.

In her book, Shukya cites how one garment factory tried to climb the supply chain hierarchy by sending a young woman abroad to study design. He realised that gauging global fashion trends set by a handful of influential European designers was beyond him, and declared his years of learning wasted. That is still the case in Nepal’s garment industry, where the design, size or fabric are all decided beforehand.

Workers in Nepal’s garment industry were desperate enough to accept extremely low pay for arranging cut cloth, sewing the main body or the hands of the neck parts, quality checking by measuring against the size specifications as much as six times, and cutting the extra thread off the finished product, Shukya calls this the ‘penultimate atomic mill of faceless proletarianisation’.

Workers had no creative inputs, no share of the profits, and their highly specialised skills were useless elsewhere. So, they had nothing to fall back on when the industry collapsed and western buyers simply gathered up their profits and took their orders elsewhere. They had no inclination as to why the industry came and went, or how it left Nepal’s environment polluted and increased urban poverty.

Shukya returns to this theme of the helplessness of the Global South again and again in her book. Nepal is small fry on the world stage with no clout in matters affecting its citizens. Even while the US government and the World Trade Organisation decided the MFA’s time was up, factory owners in Nepal fell back on fatalism and conducted religious rituals to ward off the curse.

Nepali businessmen did try to lobby for an MFA extension, but could not even find someone to table the bill in the UN Congress. After the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013 in Bangladesh in which nearly 1,500 workers were killed, all of South Asia suffered from the negative western media coverage of exploited workers in dangerous sweat shops. The international media fell back on an orientalist view to blame lax building standards and corruption, ignoring that it was the end of the MFA that forced countries to be competitive by cutting corners.

Shukya dedicates her book is angry or pessimistic in tone, and says she offers alternatives. Since the garment export business was created by global economic factors, the feeling here was that it was beyond Nepal’s control. Hence, its loss meant nothing to Nepal. Although the industry initially attracted Indian investors using Nepal’s quotas, over time the factories were populated by Nepal’s poor, and owned by Nepalis — and they suffered when the MFA lapsed. The alternative to this outlook, Shukya says, lies in policies that take ‘human economy’ into account, where the welfare of workers is priority.

Nepal’s prolonged political transition is now replaced with rulers who are satisfied from the promised economic prosperity through political stability. The country’s planners should read Shukya’s book to learn lessons from the recent past — the main one being finding alternatives to pervasive global neoliberalism that she says has done more harm than good to Nepal.

Asked what she hopes her book can achieve, Shukya tells us: “Agencies like the WTO, World Bank and countries like the US are powerful, but the bigger problem is our own lack of imagination, in believing in the supremacy of market forces over state regulation, competitiveness over social justice. It is about time we in Nepal questioned the hegemony of neoliberalism in global economic policies.”
Nepal’s Gross National Sadness

We may not be a very happy nation at the moment, but just wait a few more months for Dasain.

M any decades ago, my management teacher taught me: “Money will never make you happy. That is not what money is for. It is to make others unhappy.”

½ FULL
Anil Chitrakar

One meets many unhappy Nepalis these days; on the street, in public places, official events, at party palaces and on the phone and social media. It would be a really bad time to do any survey in Nepal for the Happiness Index.
What is there to be happy about, anyway? Nepalis have to negotiate water-logged streets, highways that are death traps, heritage sites being bulldozed, hospitals that bankrupt you, a doctor on hunger strike to make medical care more affordable, and the sight of a medical tycoon and top politicians feasting on red rice to protect a medieval college.

Whatever the reason, many Nepalis are unhappy, and more and more are beginning to organize to address the cause of their unhappiness. Social media is full of stories and images of Gauri Shankar president, Kamal Thapa’s flying economy class to the World Cup in Russia, and standing in the rain to hug her sweaty team. This was in stark contrast to the travel style of our own President, who leaves monstrous traffic jams in her wake wherever she goes, as well as in Nagarkot.

WUTHERING HEIGHTS: People in remote jungle areas even for a short journey to neighboring villages.

lots of unhappy, angry citizens. Civil servants posted to provincial governments are unhappy, and taxi drivers are unhappy to go anywhere on the meter. Citizens are unhappy because they have to pay a lot for basic services like birth and death certificates. Elected politicians are unhappy about going to the people to tell them why their election promises have not been met.

Then there are the Nepalis who are more confused than unhappy. What does it mean to elect a crony-capitalist Communist government to power? Many might have assumed that the poor will now finally be able to access affordable education and health services. They expected market prices to be controlled, and their quality of life to improve. Those who thought technology and internet connectivity could be an equalizer in a country with poor infrastructure have been slapped with new taxes for browsing. They also have to put up with threats of a new cyber crime law. Some are unhappy that Nepal is importing Chinese goods.

Nepal society is now polarised between the people who won the elections, and the losers. Between the happy and the unhappy. There is a growing divide between old money from land, and new money from corruption. There is a growing chasm between those in power in Kathmandu, and the rest of Nepal. There is a generational gap between the yuppies of the older folk and the aspirationist young.

In this divided society there is some room for discussion, but little room for debate. Many people come up with their positions on topics and issues and feel that they will win if they are loud enough. The size of the crowd shouting on the streets or trolling on social media counts for a lot. Questioning is not encouraged, hence a two way debate as a tool for resolution is not very popular.

We may be unhappy about the relentless rain, but we are already looking forward to the post-monsoon holiday season when Nepalis stop working, start shopping and forget about their unhappiness. Family members who used to send money home or even come over, are today inviting them to Japan, USA or Australia to celebrate Dasain or Tihar.

We may need to wait a bit before we carry out the Happiness Survey. Right now Nepal may have hit the rock bottom in Gross National Happiness but by Dasain, we will be a happy nation again. Wait a difference a month makes.

Anil Chitrakar
President of Siddhartha
Sewa Bhattarai

A child looks on intently as Shradha Shrestha paints the blank walls of Kanti Children’s Hospital at Maharjan. “Look at shiny painting a tiger on the wall,” says the child’s mother. In fact, Shrestha is painting a graffiti.

Shrestha and Kiren Maharjan were busy at work for the past few months, painting the walls of Nepal’s only government hospital for children. The young patients, their parents, doctors, nurses, and staff came to watch them work, offer feedback, and give suggestions. As the murals slowly took shape in the busiest corridors, the colourful paintings raised spirits and added some beauty to an otherwise grimy hospital.

Shrestha and Maharjan are part of the Health Transformed by Art project that has been trying to bring the therapeutic value of art into Kathmandu’s hospitals with support from Siddhartha Art Gallery. “Art is usually seen only in galleries, so we thought, why not bring it outside to hospitals, where the power of art, and its engagement and expression, is very much needed?” explains coordinator Shirshul Shakya.

With Raju Giri and Anoj Subedi, the group chose nature as the theme for its healing potential, and they picked Kanti Children’s Hospital because its patients hail from all over the country.

Speaking at the opening of the exhibit, art critic Adbul Subedi explained the purpose of art and how it has always been for mental and spiritual wellbeing. Following the 2015 earthquakes, many art groups went around affected areas conducting painting workshops for children. When they returned to their classrooms, students were told to draw their experiences as a means to deal with trauma.

The results showed how art provided a medium for children to articulate their feelings and find some relief from stress. Still, art’s therapeutic value had not been recognised in Nepal, and its potential for healing was not a widespread concept.

For this project, art therapists Laja Drust first trained 11 artists on art therapy. They then conducted art-based therapy workshops in the cancer ward. After that, team members Raju, Shirshul and Anoj collected non-hazardous hospital waste like bottles, cups, containers, tubes for installation art pieces. Waste from Kanti, Norvic, Moomohan, Om, Grandi, and Ganga hospitals was sterilized and sorted, then upcycled into installations by artists including students from Kathmandu University and Birijana College of Fine Arts. It would have otherwise become landfill.

Working in a government hospital had its challenges: not only did the team have to wait for six months just to get permission, the artists were not allowed to work during the doctors’ rounds. This meant working until 12AM. The results are there for all to see: a colourful, bright orange phoenix soaring above a statue of Queen Kashmiri, tiny birds in blue, red and yellow hanging from the ceiling.

The works also carry subtle messages concerning the politics of medical care, and how it should be affordable and accessible to all Nepalis. Meek Limbu’s installation displays a row of tiny medicine bottles, but instead of labels they have pictures of Nepal’s herbs. The piece is a commentary on how the people suffer from a lack of drugs, despite Nepal being rich in medicinal plants.

Hospital director Ganesh Rai is happy with his hospital dolching as an art gallery: “I don’t know much about art, but a lot of people have complimented me on the fresh look of the hospital. It spreads positive energy, which is helpful for the children.”

Siddhartha Art Gallery hopes to continue this project in other hospitals around Nepal. “These are cynical times, but idealism, hard work and integrity of the artists have brought us this far,” says the gallery’s director Sangita Thapa, whose own recent health scare was an impetus for the project.

“As I was lying in a hospital, I would get calls from the artists every day. They asked me to decide on one thing after another, showed their problems, their ideas,” said Thapa. She broke down in tears at the inauguration. “It was difficult for me to handle all this, but it came to mean so much to me, personally, as well. This project to heal others has ended up healing me, myself.”
The Tamu Trek
A new hiking route retrace the heritage of the Gurung people is the new trekking

Anthropologists have long known that most of Nepal’s indigenous people settled along the southern slopes of the Himalayan mountains in waves beginning more than 1,000 years ago. But what were their exact routes? Where did they establish the first villages?

The linguistic affinity between the languages of the Gurung, Tamang, Thakali and Manang people have led experts to conclude that they may have travelled from Tibet across the mountains to settle below the Annapurna and Langtang ranges at about the same time in history.

Recently, a group of Gurungs from the Tamu Dhene Association of UK travelled to the base of Langtang Himal to trace the heritage of their people, among ruins of 14th century settlement at Kotha Santhar. The route from Besishahr to Ghale Gom, Bhujung, to Kotha Santhar and down to Pokhara via Tungling and Sikles, is now being promoted as the Tamu Heritage Circuit. [See map, overleaf]

The historical and archaeological site is a pilgrimage for the Tamu (Gurung) people in Nepal and its diaspora now spread across the world. It is a sacred ancestral site that all Gurung must visit at some point in their lives.

Jit Gurung is a native of Tamang and is currently serving with the United Nations in Darfur, Sudan.

Day 1
After a six hour bus ride from Kathmandu to Besishahr, the first stop is the Tamu Gurung Museum where visitors pay respect to a statue of Kotha Gurung, the famous Nepali geographer who was among the 22 killed in a helicopter crash in 2006 at Ghorka in Kaski. His sister was Gurung’s pioneer environmentalist who helped establish the Annapurna Conservation Area. Gurung is also the birthplace of one of the last Gurung s. Then it is on to the Gom, Bhujung is a pleasant ridge, but, there is now also a motorable road Bhujung has homestays and the locals are extra hospitable to visitors. The trek to Kotha Santhar starts here, and it is a steep walk along the trails, with the clouds often blocking in and flowing across forests of rhododendron and ask coiled into winterreeds. Stop over at Samana Kaha for the night at the edge of a gurgling brook.

Day 2
From Ghale Gom (above) to Bhujung is a pleasant ridge hike, but there is now also a motorable road. Bhujung has homestays and the locals are extra hospitable to

The Gurung Herit
Khoila Sonthar
Khoila Sonthar (also called Kohila) (Upper Tipli) is an ancient settlement of the Tamu Magar people, believed to be the last collective settlement of the ethnic group before its clans dispersed and migrated to lower elevations in the Gandaki region. Located at 1,300m, it is believed to be where the Gurungs settled after crossing from Turi and Marsyangdi over the Annapurna and Lamjung mountains and traversing Narum Bhanjang. (See map) The ruined settlement is divided into three sites: Turi Khoila, Mu-Khoila, and Pu Khoila. A cave (Garmani Naka) on a rocky outcrop at 1,500m, to the north-east of the main settlement, is believed to have been a monastery for nuns. The bawu Mu Khoila has the ruins of at least 50 houses, and a larger ruin which is believed to be the meeting hall (Chhaung Sherre) in the former palace of the Ghale kings.

Amidst the ruins there are remnants of water mills, grinding stones, a pole-like mire possibly belonging to the staircases, and a large stone which is believed to have been used by the village elder to make announcements (alaba). A team from the University of Cambridge and Nepalese government studied this site in 2000 and concluded that the Tamu must have lived here between the 11th and 13th centuries. Khoila Sonthar bears a striking similarity to the 15th century Newar ruins of Manu Pokhari. It is not known whether the Tamu people lived here in the Newar period and should also be declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This was a view strongly endorsed by the Chief Minister of Province 3, Prithvi Subba Gurung and Professor Jag Man Gurung, at a recent program in Sikkim where a resolution to protect the historic settlement from vandalism and souvenir hunters was passed.

Khoila Sonthar has the potential to be developed as the main attraction on the Tamu Heritage Circuit, starting at Devala and ending in Tipling. This would not just be a throwback for the Gurungs people, but also an important historical attraction for visitors from the rest of Nepal and abroad.

***Trail destination this autumn***

Kathmandu to Khoila Sonthar, the trail destination right below. Vegetation has partly taken over the ancient ruins of Gurung ancestors.

**Day 3**

The route from Khoila Sonthar to Sikkis (Chhul Nasik) is not well trodden and the trail down to the Madhyu Khola is deep and rough. It takes all day to finally get to the picturesque village of Sikkis, where trekkers will sleep the babas. Sikkis is used as a starting point for trekkers, and there is always a cultural group of hands to provide music and dance in the evenings, in one of the many lodges.

**Day 4**

Those with stamina on their hands can take this as a rest day and explore Tipling and its environs. After the rainy season, the town will offer some spectacular 360 views of the surrounding forests.

**Day 5**

From Sikkis it is a short hike down to the Madhyu Khola before climbing up again to Tipling (above) with its spectacular views of Annapurna 3 and 4, and the huge bulk of Lamjung Hilal. Lobsu can do the walk in two hours but it may take four hours for visitors. Nearby is Kuwai Gumba, moreover, ancestors of the families in Tipling are believed to have come from. The tell-tale is a historical and archaeological site with even better views of the Annapurnas.

The last day is a bumpy jeep ride to sub-tropical Pokhari, with its pools and cosmopolitan restaurants.

**Khoila Sonthar**

Khoila Sonthar (also called Kohila) (Upper Tipli) is an ancient settlement of the Tamu Magar people, believed to be the last collective settlement of the ethnic group before its clans dispersed and migrated to lower elevations in the Gandaki region. Located at 1,300m, it is believed to be where the Gurungs settled after crossing from Turi and Marsyangdi over the Annapurna and Lamjung mountains and traversing Namun Bhanjang. (See map) The ruined settlement is divided into three sites: Turi Khoila, Mu-Khoila, and Pu Khoila. A cave (Garmani Naka) on a rocky outcrop at 1,500m, to the north-east of the main settlement, is believed to have been a monastery for nuns. The bawu Mu Khoila has the ruins of at least 50 houses, and a larger ruin which is believed to be the meeting hall (Chhaung Sherre) in the former palace of the Ghale kings.

Amidst the ruins there are remnants of water mills, grinding stones, a pole-like mire possibly belonging to the staircases, and a large stone which is believed to have been used by the village elder to make announcements (alaba). A team from the University of Cambridge and Nepalese government studied this site in 2000 and concluded that the Tamu must have lived here between the 11th and 13th centuries. Khoila Sonthar bears a striking similarity to the 15th century Newar ruins of Manu Pokhari. It is not known whether the Tamu people lived here in the Newar period and should also be declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This was a view strongly endorsed by the Chief Minister of Province 3, Prithvi Subba Gurung and Professor Jag Man Gurung, at a recent program in Sikkim where a resolution to protect the historic settlement from vandalism and souvenir hunters was passed.

Khoila Sonthar has the potential to be developed as the main attraction on the Tamu Heritage Circuit, starting at Devala and ending in Tipling. This would not just be a throwback for the Gurungs people, but also an important historical attraction for visitors from the rest of Nepal and abroad.

***Trail destination this autumn***

Kathmandu to Khoila Sonthar, the trail destination right below. Vegetation has partly taken over the ancient ruins of Gurung ancestors.

**Day 3**

The route from Khoila Sonthar to Sikkis (Chhul Nasik) is not well trodden and the trail down to the Madhyu Khola is deep and rough. It takes all day to finally get to the picturesque village of Sikkis, where trekkers will sleep the babas. Sikkis is used as a starting point for trekkers, and there is always a cultural group of hands to provide music and dance in the evenings, in one of the many lodges.

**Day 4**

Those with stamina on their hands can take this as a rest day and explore Tipling and its environs. After the rainy season, the town will offer some spectacular 360 views of the surrounding forests.

**Day 5**

From Sikkis it is a short hike down to the Madhyu Khola before climbing up again to Tipling (above) with its spectacular views of Annapurna 3 and 4, and the huge bulk of Lamjung Hilal. Lobsu can do the walk in two hours but it may take four hours for visitors. Nearby is Kuwai Gumba, moreover, ancestors of the families in Tipling are believed to have come from. The tell-tale is a historical and archaeological site with even better views of the Annapurnas.

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**EVENTS**

**GETAWAY**

Retreat at Damaar
A retreat for contemplatives and enliven in an undiscovered sanctuary to enliven and ignite your inner self.
Bathsheba, Kiris, 8631324242

**MUSIC**

Reggae KTM
Korean KTM's Reggae edition is here to make you sway, with musical performances by Riddim Junkion and Kandhamentu Killers. Roddon Funktion is a reggae/afro/hiphop band rooted in Calcutta now based in Pune.
27 July, 9:30 pm, Motel, Jodhpur, 199, 3536782828

Barbeque Brunch
Enjoy stunning Sharmas, Hyderabad Biryani, Mangolian or Japanese Teppanyaki, Teppan Marios, Italian Pasta and Nepalese Thalis with a live band and family accompanied by live music, swimming, raffle draw and exciting draws.
Every Saturday, 12 pm onwards, Courtyard, Dadar Kempanjo, Thane, 822-3200-5200, 022-26330000, (for your reservations), 022-45925225

**DINING**

Jazz Enjoy Friday night with some jazz at Flakes. The vegan restaurant and bar is located in a co-working space to play along with food presentation and special offer on select beverages. 27 July, 7-10 pm, Flakes Restaurant and Bar, Thanes, 022-47074047

**PLACES**

**Hyatt Regency**
Overlooking the luscious garden pond, the hotel's spa offers a tranquil retreat to rejuvenate and relax the body, mind and soul. Try an Ayurvedic massage. Shirodhara or enjoy a personal Yoga session for a traditional detox experience. Packages available - Mountain Path, River Path and Forest Path. 10% off on treatments between 9am-5pm, Club Octavius, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, Bhaisipati, 01-5117234

**Tiger Palace Resort**
Dine away your stress at the resort's poolside and enjoy the day with table, bongos, fire, enam, cocktails and more. Special summer offers for Nepalese and foreigners open. Spiced is a house in the resort, which is reminiscent of beach resorts in Dubai and Thailand.
Tiger Palace Resort, Bhadrapur, R/A, 863-3250 (Nepali), 863-22650 (Foreigners), 01-5113000

**Mystic Mountain**
Situated on the trend of Kathmandu, the resort is meticulously built using modern designs and world-class comfort. Kolkata, 01-2469846

**Park Village Resort**
A romantic candle light dinner on an overnight stay at the resort to keep up the romance amidst a lakeside setting. Pamper yourself and your partner in the lap of luxury with the resort’s special package.
Budhanilkantha, R/A, dinner, per couple/ breakfast/ dinner/ couple, 01-4572809

**Farmer's market**
A perfect place to shop for fresh and healthy food, catch up with friends and family or simply relax in the garden. This is a food event, Thursdays, Saturdays, 8am-11:30am and Wednesdays, 4-7pm at Shepra, Mulchok, 01-4619064

**Night market**
An indoor and a unique variety of hand-crafted items of high quality from across Nepal.
27 July, 4pm onwards, French Culture Nepal, Mallirong, Patan, 01-5233293

**JPR Nighs 4.0**
Comedy by Navadhi Shrestha and RJ Shishu KC and spoken word poetry by Sauleda Tiwari. 27 July, 7pm onwards, Ashland Lounge & Bar, Helvetia, 01-4611050/ 9869800569

**Indigenous Resurgence**
A Social Science talk by writer Mark Tum on unveiling making indigenous-led partnerships defining and shaping contemporary Nepal, he shares how Nepal can follow its example.
26 July, 3.30pm onwards, Thislewood Lloyding, Pitson Khola, 01-4270807

Mr. Fox and the School Boy
A imaginative story of a kind fox and a school boy who develop a friendship and share concern over the degrading environment. Written and directed by the Shoulder, and produced by Garden Theatre.
27-29 July, 5:30pm onwards, Kastur Theatre, Tika, 9811300062

**National Theatre**
An imaginative story of a kind fox and a school boy who develop a friendship and share concern over the degrading environment. Written and directed by the Shoulder, and produced by Garden Theatre.
27-29 July, 5:30pm onwards, Kastur Theatre, Tika, 9811300062

**Venture Talk**
Register for a Venture Talk with Dip Prakash Pandey, CEO of Skyla Insurance, on the future prospects of the insurance industry and its impact in Business. Connect and learn from the most behind the scenes of Nepal's leading insurance companies.
29 July, 9:45-11:30 am, Nepal Tourism Board Hall, RIN, 01-5216789

**Free music workshop**
Robert Aitken and Dinesh Dadhwal, two American music educators, are giving free lessons on composition, with an overview of the musical, vocal, and political impacts of the jazz tradition through the lens of six US jazz. 28 July, 9am and August, 5-6pm, Kathmandu Jazz Generator, Jodhpur, 01-5545554

1905 Restaurant
Enjoy live music along with grilled dishes and a fine selection of craft beers and wine.
North Point Hotel, 220, 54713847

**OUR PICK**

**AIR QUALITY INDEX**

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**KATHMANDU, 20 - 26 July**

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For the latest, the Nepal Airlines’ Airway Index is a top-quality, updated database that contains parameters such as wind speed and direction. This allows for better flight planning and overall safety for the aircraft. For more information, go to https://www.nepalairlines.com/kathmandu-air-quality/index/
Politicis of all hues everywhere tend to suffer from short-run memory loss. It is a coping mechanism to wiggle out of their past pronouncements.

Here, the leaders, ministers, cadres and apologists for the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) have viciously targeted Govinda KC, who has been fighting for much-needed reforms in Nepal’s medical sector.

**COMMENT**

Damanal Jayshi

They have questioned K.C’s motives for his latest indefinite hunger strike, his 15th, which began more than 23 days ago. The government’s frequency and intensity of attacks has increased as it feels growing pressure from mainstream and social media. The frustration of the comrades is palpable, as seen in the indignant comments by Bhusan Prasad, chief adviser to Prime Minister Oli, and the blandly derogatory remarks by Surendra Shrestha, Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, for which he has to resign.

Prime Minister Oli, himself known for his sharp tongue, has led the charge in vilifying K.C. He is behaving more like a politician on the verge of losing power than a leader commanding a two-thirds majority in Parliament. He and his henchmen complained of an opposition, his direct enemy – the common resort of Nepal’s Communists when they have to defend the indefensible.

Instead of using its super majority in the house to honor promises made while in opposition or just before the elections, Oli and his comrades display their cluelessness and expose an obsession for protecting special interest groups, and their own egos.

NCP’s meddling politicians ran bad private hospitals, so they naturally incurred losses. They now want to take up these losses by being allowed to run lucrative medical colleges, which will fleece students, who will go on to fleece patients when they become physicians.

Social media has exposed the hypocrisy of it all – how Oli, his party colleague and former prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, as well as leaders of other parties, fly to Thailand or Singapore for their own treatment.

The Mahendra Committee Report, prepared by credible experts, suggested ways to improve the country’s ailing healthcare system, and K.C wants the recommendations to be implemented in letter and spirit. None of the Communist leaders or their apologists have come up with an argument against the recommendations. Character assassination is their final stand.

K.C. has had to resort to serial hunger strikes during the tenure of all the main parties in the past decade. Ironically, the NC, which did nothing to address K.C’s demands when it was in power, has joined the pro-K.C protests. Therefore, it’s a bit rich for the likes of Sher Bahadur Drabs and Baburam Bhattarai to now cry crocodile tears while posting for selfies at K.C’s bedside. Gentlemen, why didn’t you implement the agreement you signed with K.C, when you were prime ministers?

Then there is Narayan Kaji Shrestha who blamed the “pro-liberal” Nepal Congress for backing K.C’s protest. How many times has his own party, before dissolving into the UML, formed coalition governments with the self-styled neo-liberals? Shamelessness is part of a politician’s job description, but this takes hypocrisy to an entirely new level. In the end K.C had the moral high ground.

The NCP’s latest argument is that by fasting for three weeks, K.C is “interfering” with a sovereign parliament’s rights to enact laws. Really? When hospital tycoons like Dhingra Prasad control your party, the talk of sovereignty rings pretty hollow. Why don’t Oli and Dahal trust their own party’s Manmohan Hospital, instead rushing off to Bangkok and Singapore for treatment? K.C’s crusade is precisely to make Nepal’s hospitals good enough to treat Oli and Dahal.

Citizens, the true sovereign in any functioning democracy, have the right to resort to any kind of peaceful protest. Remember, it is they who elect you and can booh you out. The NC and RPP (N) should not try to hijack K.C’s satyagraha for their political ends – this will undermine KC’s sacrifice and give ammo to the government.

The NCP is right in accusing the NC of politicisation of K.C’s struggle. So what is stopping it from implementing its own past agreements with K.C? Why give the NC the opportunity to weaponise the KC hunger strike? The Communists have shown, with their two-thirds, they want to throw their weight around. But a single doctor, by refusing to eat, has brought it down to its knees. The Communists would do well to remember a party’s goodwill can vanish if they become authoritarian. Remember the Karki vs Karki in 2016: the NC wanted to protect Lokman Singh Karki, the man who ruthlessly ran his own fiefdom as CAA head. But the party had no qualms about attempting to impeach Chief Justice Sushila Karki.

No wonder the NC went, whacked so badly in last year’s elections. And that’s less the Communists should take heed of: Now that there is a duel, let K.C’s 15th hunger strike be his last for medical reform.
Twyentw years into the future
in a dystopian Japan, the cat-
loving author Akutagawa Mayor
Kobayashi of the city of Meggsaki
calls for a &x78 quarantines and
banishes all dogs to an offshore
trash island. He sees the fear of
a bocut fever epidemid and an
outbreak of canine flu to convince
humans to part with their pets.

Scientists like Washaba say
they are near to finding a vaccine,
but the first to be tried is in Spots,
the loyal bedguard of Atari, an
orphand nephew and ward of the
despicid Mayor.

The dogs are transported to the
landfall island by cable car and
go fer. Meanwhile, 12-year-old
Atari hijacks a small plane and flies
to the island in search of his lost
dog. He crash lands on the garbage
and encounters a pack of scary
indestructible alpha dogs Roc, King,
Snake, Duke, Boss (who are former
pets) and Chid (an ex-stay).

Together they go on an
adventure-filled quest to locate
Spots. Chid nearly goes astray
again upon being besotted with
show dog Nutmeg, while they all
fight off a dog-catcher squad
rmed with a rescue drone.

Chid has a resilient but eventual
bonding with Atari.

Meanwhile back in Meggsaki,
Mayor Kobayashi plays on
populism by spreading the fake
news that Atari was kidnapped by
canine in order to further inflame
anti-dog sentiments. By this time,
Washaba has found a cure but it is
put under house arrest and later
poisoned. American exchange
student Tracy Walker of the student
body suspects foul play and a
brewing conspiracy.

Will the pack of misfits find Spot?
We won’t spoil it for you, but the plot is almost secondary
to this beautifully rendered
stop-motion animation movie. Despite
the often ghoulish visuals, the
film is packed with sharp wit and
emotion. Some graphic scenes
including the sight of a bitten-off
dog ear early on, violent fights
in clouds of dust, and a human
kidney transplant sequence are all
morbidly fun to watch.

The background score of tamba
drums compliment the story line
as the plot thickens. The puppet
studio has superb personlisation
and is meticulously constructed,
with fine details in the trash heap
like scorched computer keyboards,
petrol-cube tubes, and even a
mountain of discarded sake bottles.

The movie is also a subtle satire
on the Hollywood apocalypm genre,
and at a deeper level one can see
the allusion to populist
demagogy where the dogs
are analogous to the racist
characterisation of immigrants in
certain western democracies. We
can see where political ‘dogmatism’
in the portrayal of the ‘other’ can
lead society, even democratic.

A cast of characters including
Bryan Cranston, Edward Norton,
Bill Murray, Jeff Goldblum, Bob
Barak, Stanlief Johnson and
Liev Schreiber dub the dogs whose
barks are rendered into English.

Isle of Dogs is the 9th
feature film and second
stop-motion venture for the director
Wes Anderson of the critically
acclaimed The Grand Budapest
Hotel, Moonrise Kingdom,
Timelessworn, and the 2009’s
Academy winner Fantastic Mr.
Fox. Isle of Dogs has already won
Anderson the Silver Bear for the
Best Director earlier this year.

The only criticism could be the
director’s choice to not include
sub-titles for human Japanese
characters, but even here we can
understand why Anderson doesn’t
want to distract from emotionally
bewitching Japanese with reading
English subtitl. In any case,
we don’t miss not understanding all
the Japanese.

Isle of Dogs has come and
gone in Kathmandu theatres, but
readers can still catch it on the Net,
or on your next flight somewhere.

Santim Awale

FAREWELL CALL: Home minister Kim Babuddar Poudel meets American Ambassador to Nepal, Alison B. Teplitz, at Singha Durbar on Wednesday. Teplitz completes her three-year

RESIGNED: Minister of Law Siler Babuddar Tamang resigned on Tuesday after his

MAKALU IS ALSO HERE: Nepal Airways’ second wide-body Airbus A330-243 named ‘Makalu’ landed in Kathmandu on Thursday morning. The new aircraft is expected to start

FLYING HIGH: Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Rabindra Adhikari and

ARMs AND LIVES: Chief of Army Staff of the Nepal Army, Ramesh Chhetri, inaugurates a new military hospital in Nepalgunj on Monday. The hospital was built with resources from the Nepal Army Welfare Fund.
What’s so funny?

Cartoonists in the Nepali language press have been obsessed with Govinda KC’s hunger strike, which ended after 26 days on Thursday. They used the fast and the government’s initial dismissiveness and high-handed response to ridicule Prime Minister Oli. They lampooned the medical mafia, the Police’s use of fake news and force, and the government’s half-hearted attempt at dialogue.

Man: The dialogue with Dr. KC went well. We told him that the Cine Cine awards will be held in Nepal.
Robin Sayami in Nagarpal, 26 July

Doctor to Prachanda and KP Oli: The large intestine is dragged up, and it will be hard to return it. (The two share a red nose with brown sugar paste)
Robin Mishra in Bagmati, 27 July

The Nepali Press
Back to the nipple in

More Nepali mothers now exclusively breastfeeding babies for better health

Sonia Awale

Nepal is among the countries that are already above the World Health Organization (WHO) target to increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in babies’ first six months to at least 50%, by 2025. However, because of aggressive marketing by baby formula brands, Nepal has set its own national target to increase exclusive breastfeeding to 60%.

“Nepal has set a good standard in breastfeeding but we need to sustain it and make further progress, this requires policy implementation and monitoring,” says Pradhuman Daal, nutrition expert at UNICEF Nepal, who is worried that not all health workers are aware of the benefits of breastfeeding.

The use of breast milk substitutes is so widespread that health professionals in the Far-West are prescribing bottled milk in hospitals. Baby food is a booming industry, and salesmen often target hospitals, doctors and nurses with free samples to prescribe substitutes for breast milk.

After a huge international outcry against Nestle and other baby food supplement manufacturers, the WHO adopted the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes to promote breastfeeding. Nepal passed the Substitute of Breast Milk Act in 1992 to control the sale and distribution of breast milk substitutes. It penalties health professionals purchasing and manufacturers promoting baby food formulas.

But while the $8 billion global baby food industry has seen sales plummet in Western countries, as more mothers embrace breastfeeding, modern health authorities and higher purchasing power has pushed families in developing countries to buy the infant formulas.

Recently, the Trump administration exerted pressure to dilute the clause in a resolution to promote and support breastfeeding at the United Nations Assembly in Geneva in order to promote the interests of infant formula manufacturers. The US delegation even threatened Ecuador that it would terminate military aid if it voted for the resolution. Washington could also cut funding for WHO, the UN Population Fund and other agencies involved in promoting breastfeeding, reproductive health, contraceptives, abortion and even vaccination programs in developing countries, including Nepal. (See adjoining box).

Allowing infant formula manufacturers unrestricted access to the domestic market threatens to undo decades of effort in Nepal to reduce the infant mortality rate and promote maternal health.

“We have been working to promote breast milk and convinced a large proportion of mothers in Nepal to exclusively breastfeed. However, we have not been able to regulate the activities of the manufacturers of breast milk substitutes,” says Bikash Lamichhane at the Department of Health Services.

Nutritionist Aruna Upreti says that despite the government’s claim that the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in Nepal.

In 2016, the government set up a system to monitor the use of breast milk substitutes in each district. But with new federal and provincial structures in place, and confusion about the role of district health offices, experts are worried that the monitoring system will not be effective.

A survey in 2011 by the Institute of Medicine showed that despite the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative, there had been no action to control and regulate breast milk substitutes and producers and the distributors were found to be violating the Breast Milk Substitutes Act. The study also noted that the promotion of breastfeeding was not prioritised and awareness was limited to token functions during World Breastfeeding Week.

Studies have shown that counselling, awareness and legislating paid maternity leave increased the rate of exclusive breastfeeding, and had an immediate impact on maternal and infant health as well as the overall economy. (See chart)

 Says UNICEF’s Daal: “We need to encourage more women to breastfeed. That means adding breastfeeding corners in our work places and providing maternal security in the form of sufficient leave.”

The Department of Health Services is planning to inaugurate a breastfeeding corner at its own office in Toko to mark World Breastfeeding Week (1-7 August). UNICEF is supporting the government to set up 30 baby friendly hospitals, and train counsellors and other personnel.

The Ministry of Health is also preparing to extend the duration of paid maternity leave from two months to six, to improve maternal and child health. (D)
The Trump tremor

“Recent government already lacks resources to meet the commitment. With the US pulling out, the gap is only going to widen,” says an official working in family planning.

A UN envoy spokesperson said the United States remained committed to helping the welfare of women and children in developing countries. “The Protecting Life in Global Assistance policy has not reduced funding for women and children’s health by one dollar. USAID works together with the Government of Nepal and other external development partners, including multilateral partners, to coordinate interventions, synergies, and reduce gaps. USAID has strong working relationships with both UNFPA and WHO in Nepal.”

Although family planning is a small component of the aid budget for maternal health, the cuts are biting. The EU and Nordic countries have stepped in, but their contribution does not meet the shortfall. At the recent World Health Assembly in Geneva, the United States wanted to dilute a routine agreement on breastfeeding, amidst a global outcry.

“The United States delegation wanted to water down the resolution by removing a call to governments to ‘protect, promote, and support breastfeeding’ and another clause calling for restrictions on the promotion of baby foods.”

“What happened was tantamount to blackmail, with the US holding the world hostage and trying to overturn nearly 40 years of consensus on the best way to protect infant and young child health,” Patty Randel of the British advocacy group Baby Milk Action was quoted by the New York Times as saying.

The upsurge set off alarm bells in Nepal, where donor support has been critical in trying to meet the target of getting 80% of mothers to breastfeed by 2022.

The US Embassy clarified that improving nutrition among mothers, infants, and young children was still an important public health priority for the United States, and it remained committed to working with WHO and other stakeholders to improve health and nutrition through ‘cost-effective and evidence-based’ measures.

But, the spokesperson added, “While the United States recognises that breastfeeding and provision of breast milk is best for all babies, we recognise not all women are able to breastfeed for a variety of reasons. These women should have access to the full and accurate information about breastfeeding, the benefits of breastfeeding, and safe alternatives when breastfeeding is not possible.”

Some experts contend that cuts in funding would not affect the breastfeeding campaign, and Nepal did not need to be dependent on donors anymore.

“Even if the US cuts funding, Nepal is capable of going ahead on its own,” says former WHO public health expert Rita Thapa. An arm’s length agreement was signed between the US and WHO in July 2016.

The conclusion is that Nepal is perfectly capable of maintaining its momentum not just on breastfeeding, but also on protecting maternal and child health with or without outside help.

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1st Floor
6:30am-10:30am DAILY BREAKFAST BUFFET (Rs. 1,000 ++ per person)
12noon-3:00pm DAILY EXECUTIVE INTERNATIONAL LUNCH BUFFET (Rs. 1,400 ++ per person, Monday-Friday)

Promotion is valid up to 8 persons / table and not valid for in & take away orders. Please present your Business card to avail of the above promotion.

SOURCE: UNICEF

Breastfeeding:

- Prevents breast cancer deaths
- Reduces infant diarrhea by half and respiratory infections by one-third
- Increases hospital admissions by 87-72%
- Children’s IQ increases by average of 3 points
- Investing $1 to promote breastfeeding yields $135 in economic returns

Breastfeeding is best.
Politically correct place names

As souvenirs the golden era of prosperity and stability with the office of the Prime Minister, the government is making the alteration of the names of significant landmarks, streets, parks, and airports around Nepal and the capital.

Relocate place names back to Nepal’s feudal and autocratic past, and we need names that are more suited to these despotic times.

Although Nepal has never had the pleasure of colonizing anyone except the recent acquisition of a suburb of Dehli which we wrested from the Miusis after a brief but fierce struggle, it may be a good idea for us to follow this international trend in changing place names just for the sake of it and to prove that we are not being left behind, and we are marching at a pace step with the times.

Some gender-sensitive people have drawn the first attention to the fact that there is a male bias in the words Himalaya and Man Samvar, and we should start referring to the world’s greatest mountain range as Herkaya. Similarly, the holy lake should henceforth be renamed Herxhair.

After all, so many of our peaks are named after women, like Mt. Amarinjura, Mount Kama Salahum, and Mount Everes; yes, I see you have raised your hand. Of course, Sir George was a guy, sily, but was just to test whether you’re still awake.

But the gender police has a point, so with permission from the Man Samvar Department (recently renamed Department of Mountain) we will no longer refer to Mansing and Manakarnika as such in our tourism brochures, but as Womaning and Humakarnika.

There have been half-hearted attempts in our country in the past to rename towns after deceased national figures, but this campaign soon gained a hold because we ran out of expired illustrious personalities. We shouldn’t let this deter us, there are still thousands of famous people who were left and here to press the Thursday, and thousands of towns out there waiting to be renamed.

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Gorkhi PREMIUM NEPALI BEER

“हामी गोक्सली”

The spirit of the “COURTEOUS” Gorkhi soldiers live inside such of us. Let’s capture the real essence of the Gorkhlai in you.

DEDICATED TO THE BRAVE

ELEVATE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

BACKSIDE

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