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# Strongman rule

As Nepal's new Civil and Criminal Code Acts came into effect on Friday, fears were raised that Nepal's strongmen rulers could misuse clauses in it to crush political dissent, muzzle the media, or punish doctors.

Particularly worrying are clauses that are subject to interpretation and can be used by present and future authorities to send journalists to jail for breach of privacy or defamation, or punish doctors whose patients die during treatment.

People found guilty of unauthorised listening to or recording private conversations can be imprisoned up to two years or fined Rs20,000, or both. People found guilty of taking, selling or circulating pictures of a person without his or her consent can be imprisoned up to three years and/or fined Rs30,000.

Shiva Gaunle at the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) Nepal says the people's right to privacy must be respected, but there should

be exceptions if recordings and photos are of public figures for use in the media. "The new Criminal Code Act will prevent investigative journalists from doing their job," he says.

If these new laws had been enacted a few months ago, for instance, Prime Minister KP Oli and NCP co-chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal could have had put editors behind bars for publishing the picture in which they were seen eating lunch with Durga Prasain, the owner of B&C Hospital in Jhapa.

The private photo was posted on Facebook, but it was visual proof of a nexus between Nepal's two top leaders with a businessman lobbying for a bill that would have allowed him to run a private medical college.

Article 307 (1) of the Criminal Code Act also allows the court to imprison people guilty of character assassination for up to two years. But if the defamation is in the mass media, the journalist can be jailed for one more year. Senior Advocate Satish Krishna Kharel says: "This is

proof that the new laws can be used to restrain the media."

Doctors found guilty of negligence leading to the death of a patient can also now be sent to jail for up to five years. Kharel says the new laws are even more dangerous because government attorney can now file cases against any doctor. The accused will then be jailed until proven innocent.

The new law has also watered down some stringent provisions aimed at tackling violence against women. For example, a husband guilty of raping his wife used to have a 3-5 year jail term. Now, the law says he can be jailed for 'up to five years' – leaving a loophole for a lighter sentence.

The new Code will replace Nepal's 55-year-old Muluki Ain, and does have some positive points:

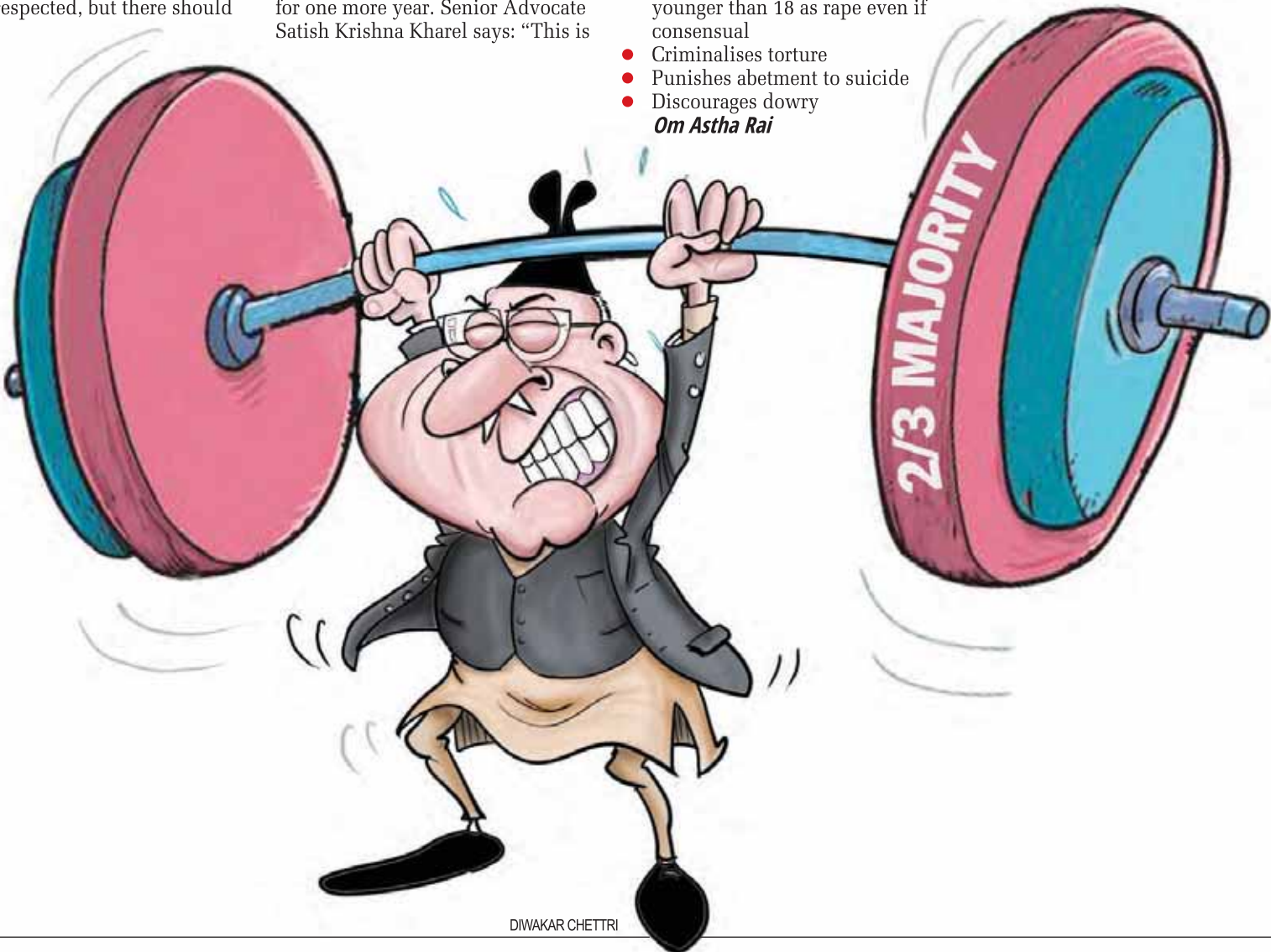
- Bans menstrual banishment
- Increases the minimum age of marriage to 20
- Interprets sex with persons younger than 18 as rape even if consensual
- Criminalises torture
- Punishes abetment to suicide
- Discourages dowry

Om Astha Rai



**Bijuli ko tar, tar, tar ...**

Why the capital is a tangle of overhead wires, and what can be done about it.



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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER



# STATESWOMANSHIP

Nepal's 2015 Constitution, we have been told, is work in progress. Indeed, given its ambiguity on gender, there is a lot of work left to be done.

Most of the controversy that followed its promulgation three years ago was about the demarcation of electoral constituencies and autonomy for provinces. The Left Alliance promised at election time that the Madhesi demand for amendments to the constitution would be looked into, but once it won a snug two-third majority, it has put that pledge in the back burner.

There is also simmering discontent over clauses pertaining to gender and citizenship. Although the drafters tried to address the need for equality in the Constitution, it purposely left many requirements for becoming a Nepali citizen vague and subject to interpretation.

Unfortunately, in Nepal, the local administration that interprets the spirit of the constitution is steeped in patriarchy. And barring a few exceptions where there are enlightened local officials, or mothers who have fought long and hard to get their offspring Nepali citizenship, many children have been forced to remain stateless.

Worse, the law designed to operationalise the citizenship provisions in the Constitution are so regressive, it actually takes us back decades. On page 14-15 in this edition, we look in detail at the draft Citizenship Bill being debated in Parliament. On Tuesday, MPs across the party lines called it unjust and unlawful.

The very first line of Chapter 2 of Nepal's Constitution grandiosely states: 'No citizen of Nepal may be deprived of the right to obtain citizenship.' It goes on to posit that a person whose father or mother (the fact that it is 'or', not 'and' makes a world of difference) was a citizen of Nepal at his or her birth can also be citizens of Nepal by descent.

But despite these clear provisions that guarantee equal citizenship rights, other clauses in the Constitution hem and haw, adding if's and but's and leaving many requirements for citizenship deliberately vague. The Constitution says a person whose father or mother is a Nepali citizen will get citizenship by descent, but this is not applicable if the mother is married to a foreign man.

The end result is that the mothers who give birth to sons whose fathers are absent, unknown, or who have disowned her, cannot automatically get citizenship for her children. Many Nepali women have traditionally been treated within their families, communities and by the state as lesser, this Constitution and the Bill it spawned instead of redressing a historical wrong, perpetuate the injustice.

There are two aspects on discrimination

in the debate over citizenship rights: the first is about Nepali women married to foreign men, and the second concerns Nepali mothers whose husbands are either unknown or estranged, and refuse to help their children get citizenship, or who have given birth out of wedlock.

The first is a manifestation of the misguided ultra-nationalism that has always plagued Nepal's main parties. It is surprising how many political leaders in the main parties, many of them with legal and human rights backgrounds (some of them women), harbour the paranoia that Nepal will engulfed by Indians who will pour across the open border to marry our women en masse. This misguided sense of insecurity should not be a logic to treat our mothers, daughters and sisters unequally.

The second exposes a patriarchal state that refuses to accept women as socially, politically and economically independent human beings. A father makes his children Nepali by waving his citizenship card. But the mother cannot automatically do so, she needs to make a declaration that her husband is "unknown" -- with all the stigma associated with such a public admission.

To put it bluntly, the male CDO will agree to grant citizenship to the children without a father only if their mother admits to sleeping around. This has allowed numerous district officers to ridicule, humiliate and even exploit women whose husbands are estranged.

The Nepal Communist Party (NCP) is composed of the Maoists who recruited women as guerrillas, promising to liberate them from their societal shackles. That same

party has now deceitfully misinterpreted the constitutional provision requiring all parties to ensure one-third membership for women in their executive committees. (See page 14-15)

The Election Commission was arm-twisted by the NCP to grant a grace period until its general convention. Our investigation shows that the NCP even threatened to investigate on trumped up charges EC members who demanded that the party give 33% seats to women right away.

Given how good politicians and bureaucrats are in distorting the laws to suit their interest, there should be no room for any misinterpretation in the law. The state should not be giving rights with one hand, then taking them away with another.

It should clearly state that the children of a Nepali woman will get citizenship even if she does not have or does not like to show her husband's citizenship. The mother's citizenship and the birth certificate of the children should be enough. CDOs have no right to ask who the father is.



Given how good politicians and bureaucrats are in distorting the laws to suit their interest, there should be no room for any misinterpretation in the law. The state should not be giving rights with one hand, then taking them away with another.

## ONLINE PACKAGES



YES, PRIME MINISTER

The popular teleserial *Singha Durbar* tackles real-life problems of ordinary people that our actual government ignores. Watch the producers and actors of the tv drama explain their roles and the possibilities of Nepali politics, while on the sets of a forthcoming episode. *Story: page 8.*



CLEAN UP KATHMANDU

A Nepali scientist returns home to help make Kathmandu air healthier to breathe. Meet Anobha Gurung, an environmental health scientist who says she felt an acute sense of responsibility to put her expertise to use back home. Listen to her speak about her passion and suggest small-scale activities that can help control air pollution. *Story: page 9.*



NOT YET WIRELESS

The Municipality is busy cleaning up unruly wires ahead of the BIMSTEC Summit in Kathmandu. Yet it will take a long time before the capital's streets can become wireless. Don't miss this video of the tangles of wires that web Kathmandu, and what is being done to regulate them. *Story: page 11.*



For more videos on health, environment, culture, heritage and Nepali politics, subscribe to the Nepali Times YouTube Channel.

### A LONG WAY TO GO

Canada has treated its indigenous peoples outrageously for hundreds of years ('Do Nepali attitudes need to be decolonised?', Mark Turin, #922). This era of reconciliation currently underway in Canada is a good start, but we in Canada are a long way off from preaching to others on how to make amends.

Kate Coffey

### THANK YOU

The *Nepali Times* has been covering psychological disorders a lot ('Raising children can be therapy', Ketan Dulal, #921). Such coverage will help reduce the social stigma associated with mental health. Thank you.

Amrita Shakya

### HELI TOURISM

The abuse of heli rescue for 'fake' injuries and sicknesses is creating a much bigger problem than the odd tourist flight (Choppers to ABC banned, Yuvaraj Shrestha, #922).

Sue Chamberlain

## WHAT'S TRENDING

### Do Nepali attitudes need to be decolonised?

by Mark Turin

'Canada is far ahead of Nepal in creating a just society in which indigenous voices are uplifted, their knowledge is woven into education system and their connection to traditional territory is respected.' The author's take on Canada's past treatment of its indigenous community and its implications for Nepal generated heated debate online. Log on to read feedback and join in the discussion.

Most reached and shared on Facebook

Most commented



### How many tigers in Nepal?

by Kunda Dixit

Nepal is committed to doubling its tiger numbers by 2022. But national parks may be getting too crowded, leading to a decrease in the tiger count. Will Nepal meet the target of doubling its tiger population in four years? Read full report at nepalitimes.com to find out.

Most popular on Twitter

### Family separation, Bhutan-style

by Jamie Piotrowski

The Trump-effect is preventing remaining Bhutanese refugees from reuniting with families in the US, much in the same way that children were taken away from migrants entering the United States illegally. Visit our website for the most read story of the week.

Most visited online page

## QUOTE TWEETS

**Nepali Times** @nepalitimes  
EDITORIAL No Constitution is complete by itself. Besides the laws, there is a need for a corpus of court judgements&commentaries which will accumulate over time. Nepal has to make up for lack of such archiving to understand & implement the Constitution.

**Cheryl Saunders** @CherylSaunders1  
On the importance of constitutional implementation underpinned by ownership. Absolutely right, @nepalitimes

**Nepali Times** @nepalitimes  
Three years after Nepal's constitution was promulgated, experts are gathering in Kathmandu for a 3-day conference to discuss progress in translating it into better governance, inclusion and due process, and challenges in agreeing to amendments.

**Dr Mara Malagodi** @RestlessMafalda  
Thank you @nepalitimes for the #NepalConstitutionConference shoutout in your latest issue - wonderful to be on board @KanakManiDixit@BipinLAW

**Nepali Times** @nepalitimes  
The army's image has been tarnished of late because of involvement in construction contracts. Will the new chief Lt Gen Purna Chandra Thapa be able to rebrand the army as a national security agency rather than a commercial company? @rambohara reports

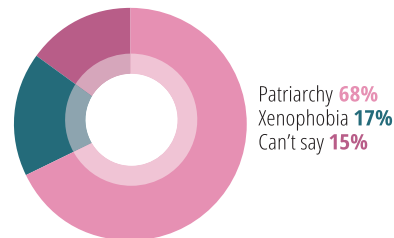
**Prakash C Joshi** @pcjoshi17  
Let us hope the new army chief will pull out army's involvement in business and construction contracts. A case in point is Military hospital where Army constructed top floors and had given the space on rent.



Weekly Internet Poll #923

Q. Why do women continue to face legal obstacles in passing on their citizenship to their offspring?

Total votes: 134



Weekly Internet Poll #924  
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. How do you compare the new Civil Code against the old Muluki Ain?

## 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

The Nepali Times edition #413 of 15-21 August 2008 featured Pushpa Kamal Dahal on the front page after he took office as prime minister after his party's victory in elections. Here is what Kanak Mani Dixit had to say about the guerrilla commander who went on to be sworn in as Nepal's elected leader:

*As the government finally gets formed via the Constituent Assembly, hope abounds: of a return to structured democratic governance, a conclusion to the peace process, drafting the new constitution, and the arrival of long-awaited political stability to trigger development and economic revival.*

*To be anti-violence is not to be anti-Maoist, but there is certainly the expectation that the Maoists, having been legitimised totally by the April elections, will convert into a fully democratic party, that they will respect the vote which has brought them to the helm of state affairs. As the new prime minister takes his seat at Singha Darbar, society must ask the Maoists to finally, formally and publicly renounce violence as a political tool.*



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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER





# Caring for those who cared

As the young migrate, a growing demand for home care for their parents reshapes health services in Nepal

Sikuma Rai

As a married, working woman with a child, it was impossible for Jasmine Bajracharya to take days off to care for her ailing parents. They needed physiotherapy, but her father refused to visit a hospital. So they had to get the physiotherapist at home. Both are recovering, thanks to home treatment.

Doctors on Call Nepal, which provided the service to Bajracharya's parents, is one of many new home care services that have come up in Nepal as the population ages, and their offspring are either abroad or busy at work.

"My father is very talkative, so I was worried that he might offend the doctor on call," Bajracharya says, "but the whole experience turned out to be very useful both for my parents and me, because of good communication and coordination. Now I know I have someone to turn to if my parents need care again."

Home health care has also helped provide jobs in Nepal for staff nurses and caregivers who may have otherwise have migrated abroad. In turn, as more and more young Nepalis go abroad to study or work, there is a growing demand for nurses who can take care of elderly parents at home, or take them to hospital for treatment.

Another service provider is Health at Home (*see box, below*) which was established in 2009 and



SHRADDHA SABURI HEALTH SERVICE

has now grown into a nationwide network with units in Pokhara, Chitwan and Biratnagar besides Kathmandu.

"In the West, every hospital has a home care unit. Its prospects in Nepal indicate that it is the future of medical care, which needs continuous innovation," says founder Bishal Dhakal.

Health at Home and others provide a range of services from nurses, doctors, physiotherapists and lab technicians on call to caretakers, travel support and

appointment management. Many provide full doctoral supervision, while a few outsource nurses and caregivers only.

The demand for care-givers is new in Nepal, and has grown exponentially to meet a growing demand. Their work includes non-professional assistance which nurses do not perform, and some families prefer male health assistants.

Heal Home Care and Shraddha Saburi Health Service outsource female nurses and caregivers,

employing more than a hundred trained personnel each, and one-third of them have been hired by Nepalis living abroad who want their parents cared for.

Along with improvements in physical health, many doctors and clients have also felt that such services have positive effects on the mindset of elderly people who prefer not go to a hospital. A simple follow up call or a quick visit brightens up the mood of elderly people who are often lonely, anxious or depressed because of

health issues and separation from children.

While the increasing demand has led to the mushrooming of home care in Kathmandu, health experts are worried that the quality of care may go down and put the health of the elderly at risk.

Ramesh Kadel, Nepal's first Geriatric Specialist, expresses concern over nurses trained in specialised care of the elderly. He says, "Service providers should keep hospitals and doctors in the loop. Our society is not fully geriatric friendly yet, and negligence of elderly people's health is still prevalent, we need to be more aware and careful."

For the first time in world history, the population of people above 60 has exceeded that of children below 5, and in 30 years more proper and holistic health care will be needed for the aging population.

"There has been a lot of research and experiment on child health care, but proper research is lacking in the field of geriatrics. What will the future look like for today's active population when they grow older?" asks Krishna Murari Gautam of Aging Nepal, which has started a week-long specialised training for care givers of elderly patients.

Doctors on Call Nepal and Health at Home also have a guided selection procedure and orientation program for nurses and caregivers, and a systematic recording of their patients to maintain quality. 🇳🇵

## Health care at more homes



HEALTH AT HOME

Home care for the elderly is a social enterprise that runs as a business, while providing a public service. One of the companies in this growing sector is Health at Home, which won the Surya Nepal Award in 2012 for a socially responsible business.

Nine years after its birth, Health at Home has grown into a nationwide network for home care service with centres in Pokhara, Kathmandu, Patan, Chitwan and Biratnagar providing much-needed care at home for Nepal's rapidly-aging population. With young men and women migrating abroad for work and studies and a growing demand from them to care for their elderly parents, Health at Home is planning to open four more centres and provide jobs in Nepal for staff nurses and medical personnel.

"When we started, it was a small idea. With innovation,

the idea turned into an industry and today we look forward to be an influencer that provides global standard health facility in the comfort of patient's own home," explains founder Bishal Dhakal.

As it grew, the company has corporatised its structure with four partners, and CEO Amit Shrestha. The idea is to serve people in their community by building care capacity through an accountable, transparent and predictable process.

"The concept of home care ten years ago was just to send nurses home to take care of the elderly. We are trying to constantly innovate and meet demands from patients for specialised care," says Dhakal.

Shrestha says Health at Home is poised to be a global player in virtual health care. The company is partnering with Samsung to invent a virtual platform for data management of home care

parameters. This means doctors and the health management team do not need to visit homes, and can monitor patients remotely, making visits only if intervention is required.

"We want to redefine health care for the new generation with new technology," says Shrestha.

Health at Home customers have requirements from postnatal to elderly care, patients with chronic diseases, the terminally ill, and dependent patients.

The company ties up with hospitals like Mediciti, Nidan, Nepal Cancer Hospital, Sumeru and Green City, and insurance companies like MetLife, Reliance and Citizen Life and various diagnostic labs and pathologies.

And there are additional services like Japanese massage therapy and nurse placements with home care specialisation. So far, Health at Home has built up a reputation for reliable and personalised care that is responsive to the needs to patients.

With Nepal's population expected to reach 33 million by 2030 with nearly 15% of them above 65, there will be an ever-greater need for elderly care. Combined with outmigration of the young, this means the field is wide open for innovation and expansion in home care services. 🇳🇵

Sikuma Rai

### prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS

#### July high for Turkish

Turkish Airlines has recorded the highest July load factor in its history with 85.3%. The total number of passengers carried went up by 4% reaching 7.8 million



passengers this year. Cargo/mail volume in July also continued its double digit growth trend and increased by 20%, compared to July 2017.

#### Smile with Qmiles

Just ahead of the festive Eid holiday season, Qatar Airways' Privilege Club is offering 50% discount for its members



while using their Qmiles on the new Summer Shopping Collection at Qatar Duty Free, both at Hamad International Airport and at Oryx Galleria in Doha, till 10 September.

#### Wallet in mobile

Prabhu Group has launched a new digital wallet Prabhu Pay for Nepalis



to transfer money from banks or any financial institutions, pay bills of electricity, water, shopping, recharge Prabhu TV and mobile, deposit NCHL, and other monetary transactions.

#### New Pulsar

Bajaj has launched its all-new Pulsar 150TD, featuring twin disc brakes and sharper design in three dual tone colors, at an introductory price of Rs255,900. The new motorbike also has split seats, split grab rails, longer wheelbase and a wider and fat 37mm front fork and wide 120mm rear tyre.

#### Canton to Kathmandu

China Southern Airlines has started using Airbus 330-200 on its Guangzhou-Kathmandu-Guangzhou route to keep



pace with rising passenger volume. The first trial flight was conducted this week, and widebody will fly regularly during the tourist season 29 September-27 October.

prabhu BANK





ALL PHOTOS: MONIKA DEUPALA

# Bijuli ko tar, tar, tar ...

It will take a long time before the capital's streets can become wireless

Monika Deupala

The jumble of wires above Kathmandu's streets may be an eyesore for residents, but they have become the city's latest tourist attraction. Instead of temple landmarks, visitors seem more intrigued by monkeys clambering on overhead wires above Kathmandu's intersections.

However, the tangle of transmission lines, phone wires, fibreoptic and tv cables that wrap the city in giant black spider webs have become dangerous because they are too heavy for the flimsy poles.

Several maintenance crew members have been electrocuted in the past two years, and there have been a rash of fires that could easily have gone out of control. The wires are so knotted up that repair teams often give up trying fix problems.

But just like potholes, polluted air and crumbling sidewalks, residents of the capital have given up expecting the elected city government to solve the problem.

Till now. This week, the government suddenly realised just how scruffy the city looked, and the Municipality sprang into action to streamline the wires and pave roads that have turned into muddy rivers this monsoon.

The reason for repairs on a war-footing is not public pressure, but the need to spruce up the streets ahead of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit later this month when the leaders of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand will descend on Kathmandu.

The stretch of roads from the



airport to Soaltee Hotel, and to the Hyatt Regency are getting facelifts, and unruly overhead wires are being tamed. Because the leaders of Buddhist countries like Burma, Sri Lanka and Thailand may also decide to visit Baudhha, the electricity poles and sidewalks along the road to the temple are also being cleaned up.

"What to do, we have to impress the important guests," said one supervisor, as his team tied wires into neat bundles atop a ladder at Chabahil intersection this week.

The poles are mostly owned by the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) which has a nominal charge for vendors who want to rent it. However, there is no regulation and no monitoring of who is actually hanging wires along the pylons.

"There is no oversight, that is why it looks like a jungle out there," says Dileep Agrawal of the internet service provider, Worldlink. "But it can easily be solved with better regulation and restriction on the number wires." Last week, in a belated attempt



to control the situation, the NEA announced a hefty tenfold increase in fees for those who want to rent poles to pull wires. Currently, ISPs pay Rs205 per year per pole. The new tariffs will calculate rental depending on per km distance, and the width of the wire used.

Even though they lobbied for regulation, the association of internet service providers (ISPs) and cable operators say the price increase is too much. ISPs that pay Rs2.5 million will be paying Rs25 million with the new tariffs.

The problem has been complicated because the NEA's poles are under the jurisdiction of the Energy Ministry, whereas the ISPs and cable operators come under the Communication Ministry. ISPs recently agreed with Communication Minister Mahesh Banskota to absorb the government's recent internet tax hike in return for a promise not to increase other fees.

Said one cable operator: "We were taken aback by the huge increase, it will not solve the

problem. Given the corruption, it will not reduce the number of wires, and the cost increase will not mean NEA will upgrade maintenance of its poles."

For its part, NEA blames private internet and cable companies for putting up wires haphazardly without permits, and has forced them to help with cleaning up the mess before BIMSTEC.

The NEA is negotiating with the Asian Development Bank to take wires underground, but costs are prohibitive. Even NEA's own engineer Laxmikeshar Aganja says underground wiring is not suitable for a city in which there are so many private buildings.

"It is very costly to take cables underground, it takes a long time, and can be dangerous with all the haphazard digging that goes on here," Aganja said.

Cities in Japan and Korea, where power utilities have to service private urban households have overhead wires, but they are strictly regulated. If it is any consolation to Kathmandu



residents, overhead wires in parts of Bangkok and Dhaka are even more unsightly.

Raising the price of pole rentals alone will not be the answer. ISPs and cable operators will simply pass the cost on to clients with a 10% increase in subscription rates.

Says Dileep Agrawal: "The wires are not a problem. They are a problem only if no one wants to do anything about it." 🇳🇵



Watch video of Kathmandu's wire-webbed streets, and how they are being streamlined as the capital prepares for the Summit of BIMSTEC countries 30-31 August. also watch other videos on the *Nepali Times* YouTube Channel.



# Sun striped shadows

Close encounters of a wild kind in Chitwan

Encountering a tiger in the wild is a privilege not to be taken lightly, and an experience never forgotten. Words cannot do justice to this most magnificent of all creatures, but many have tried to capture the instincts triggered by its terrible beauty, the reality of our inherent human frailty when confronted with nature’s most evolved predator.



Our consciousness is fully awakened by ‘Tiger tiger, burning bright’. Hairs rise, breath stills, time stops and the heart skips a beat as the sun striped shadows dissolve into the largest of the world’s cats, the sheer wonder of several hundred kilos of elegant muscle and striped intensity.

First arriving at Tiger Tops in the Chitwan National Park, I was told: “You can live your entire life in the jungle without ever seeing a tiger.” The king of the jungle is essentially nocturnal, solitary and adept at avoiding people and encounters, its lone survival depending on self-sufficiency.

For our guests, Chuck McDougal and his naturalists shortened the odds by reading the signals, identifying tracks and interpreting alarm calls – barking deer, grunting monkeys and coughing chital. Jungle excursions and elephant safaris took place early morning and late afternoon to maximise the probability.

In the bad old days, a young male buffalo was tethered in the same spot every night, watched over by a shikari who ran back on swept paths to summon us from the lodge bar or dinner table. Barefoot, breathlessly silent and peering through the small windows of the grass machan, a tiger could be discerned crouched over its kill, bones crunching, illuminated by a rudimentary searchlight powered by an old car battery.

Zbigniew Brzezinski (or Zbig Brzezinski) former USA national



**RELOCATED:** Former US National Security Adviser Zigniew Brezensky and his wife with hotelier Prabhakar Rana and tiger expert Hemanta Mishra after a man-eating tigress was tranquilised for translocation in 1985.

security adviser with his wife and Tiger Tops shikaris pose with Mrs Binda Shah, Jim Edwards and Prabhakar SJB Rana with the tranquillised man-eating tigress in Chitwan January, 1985

Despite such contrivances, tiger sightings in the wild are never certain. Even after we stopped baiting and depended on our naturalists skill, every year only one quarter of all Tiger Tops guests were fortunate enough to catch a precious glimpse of the planet’s largest cat.

And for me, every time was a

moment of magic and quiet respect that such splendour coexists on this earth.

Originally protected as a sanctuary for Nepal’s Greater One-horned Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), the fame of Chitwan was soon usurped by the tiger’s elusive glamour, the undisputed star of the show. Even the Latin name resonates with awe and mystery: *Panthera tigris*.

Chitwan’s rich habitat, watered by the Rapti and Narayani rivers with alluvial grasslands, mixed riverine forest and the sal-covered

Chure Hills, had long been set aside by ruling Ranas as prime hunting country, reserved as a refuge to impress a favoured few royals, viceroys and maharajahs. The Shah kings were required to prove their bravery with bagged tigers and perform obscure religious rites that included climbing inside the carcass of a slaughtered rhino.

During Queen Elizabeth’s visit in 1961, for which Meghauli airstrip was carved out of the jungle, Boris Lisanevitch catered an elaborate royal camp and 327 elephants were rallied for the game drive, Prince Philip famously refused to shoot. Yesterday’s hunters were evolving into today’s conservationists, and cameras were replacing guns.

Throughout its range, Asia’s apex predator had become critically endangered due to a combination of loss of habitat, depletion of prey species, human conflict, poaching and hunting. South Asian tigers drastically dwindled to less than 2,000 from an estimated population of 40,000 at the turn of the century, plummeting to less than 3,500 from 100,000 worldwide.

In response, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in 1973 launched Project Tiger throughout India, and the same year Chitwan’s 360-square-miles of undisturbed biodiversity were gazetted as Nepal’s first national park. Designated a natural World Heritage Site in 1984, and linked with adjacent reserves into the huge tiger conservation landscape of Chitwan-Parsa-Valmiki in 1998, Royal Chitwan National Park rapidly became renown as one of the best wildlife viewing experiences in Asia, especially for the increasingly rare Royal Bengal tiger.

At Tiger Tops, a treetop lodge deep in tiger country since 1964, we were inevitably entwined and engrossed with its protection. An ideal base for wildlife research and filming, Chuck pioneered camera trapping, and helped the Smithsonian Institute’s radio tracking and long-term tiger monitoring.

The government often asked help with logistics, and Jim

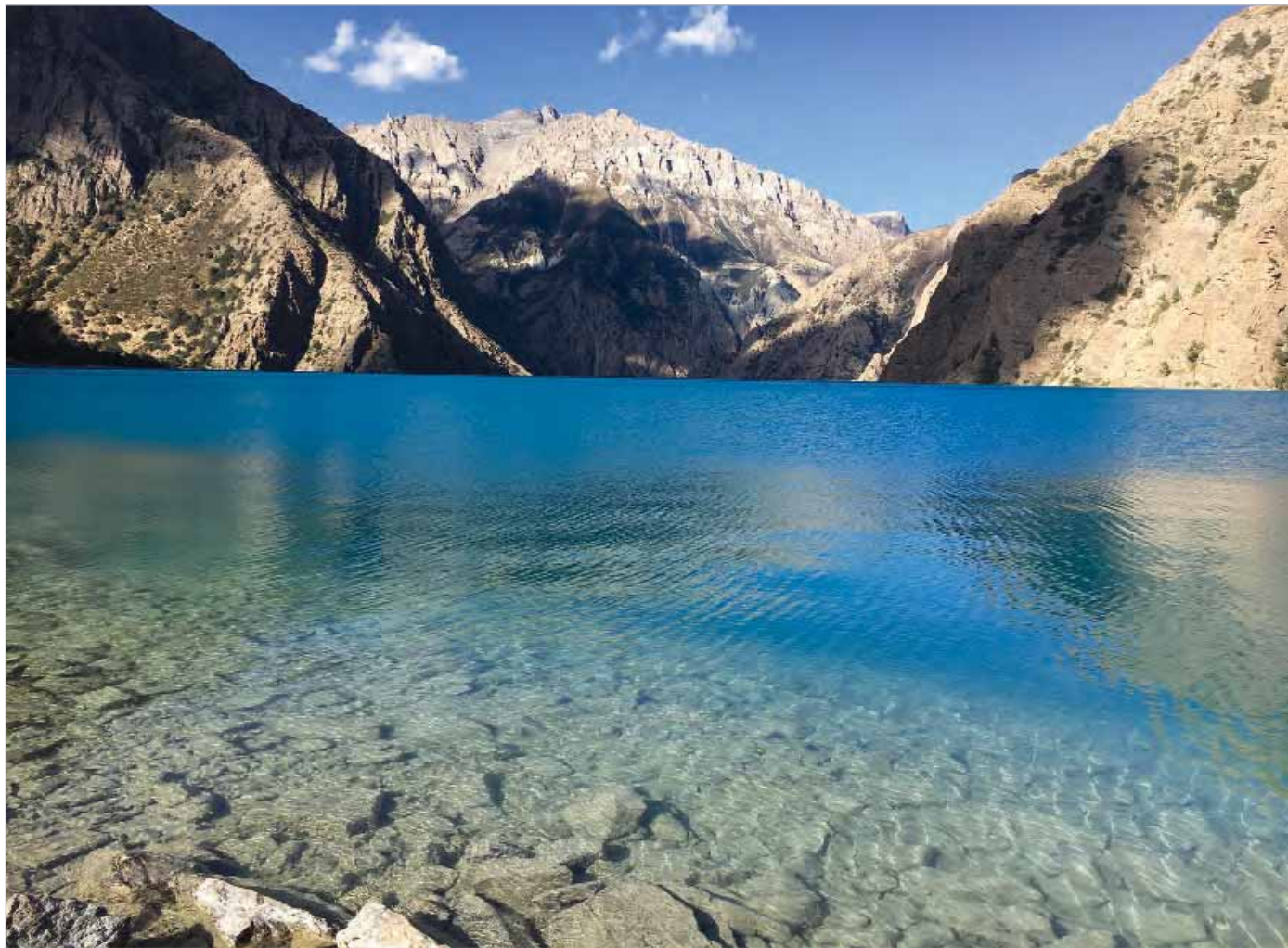
Edwards’s former hunting skills came in handy when Hemanta Mishra and the warden requested assistance with tranquillising a man-eater – after three attacks an aberrant tiger, usually old or injured, would be sentenced to life in Kathmandu Zoo. As the elephants fanned out through the hot dry grass, mahouts shouted to drive the aging tigress towards the waiting dart-gun and I clung nervously to the ropes of my elephant’s gaddi behind a tense driver – we knew she had terrorised villagers from across the river straying into the jungle to collect grass and firewood.

Nepal can be proud of its well-protected parks and successful conservation record, the envy of other tiger range countries with recovery of Nepal’s tigers well ahead of target. Nepali scientists have trained neighbours in scientific counting methods, we contributed sustainable tourism recommendations agreed by all tiger range countries (in Thimphu 2011), and naturalist guides have created conservation awareness with park visitors and celebrities.

Actor Bob Hoskins got too close for comfort during a tiger documentary in Bardia, and Leonardo DiCaprio’s passion for tiger conservation was first ignited at Tiger Tops Karnali, resulting in millions of dollars of WWF support.

In the 2010 St Petersburg Declaration, 13 countries endorsed the Global Tiger Recovery Plan to double the number of tigers worldwide by 2022, the next Chinese Year of the Tiger. Nepal committed to expand its tiger population from 121 to about 250. By 2013 we had already achieved 63% of this goal with 198 tigers resident mainly in Chitwan, but also Bardia, Shuklaphanta, Parsa and Banke protected areas.

No one should live in a world without wild tigers. We await the results of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation 2018 census, but Nepal’s tigers remain a powerful tourism icon and a potent symbol of Nepal’s conservation success. 🇳🇵



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SHREEJANA SHRESTHA

### Sewa Bhattarai

When 44 girls were rescued from sexual abuse and torture in a children’s home in Muzaffarpur in Bihar in May, it made headlines in India. What went unnoticed was that seven of children were Nepali.

The shelter run by Seva Sankalp Evam Vikas Samiti was raided after reports of abuse, and its head Brajesh Thakur arrested. After trying several times, Shailaja CM of the child charity Chora Chori was finally able to bring home to Nepal the three girls and four boys.

Now, safe in the Chora Chori shelter in Kathmandu the children are being treated for psychological trauma. They have difficulty in communicating because of their mental scars, are fearful of strangers, and the staff are still working to build trust with them.

“Some of the children were quite sullen, and their silence made communication difficult,” says Anila Dangol, counsellor at Chora Chori, which has been rescuing many Nepali children trafficked to India.

Dongol and Shailu Rajbhandari have been trying out a new way of rehabilitating the children with theraplay, after being trained by British therapist Debbie Mintz. Theraplay imitates the earliest intimate interactions between mother and child, trying to re-build emotional bonds with affection.

Says Mintz: “Many children who are traumatised will have missed this nurture, which is an important part of growing up. Without it, they have no history of a trustful and loving relationship with an adult. That makes them unwilling to form social bonds, and they become emotionally insecure.”

This method involves treating older children as though they were much younger, and giving them complete attention and affection in guided, hour-long sessions. It usually involves a lot of games with massages, a non-threatening way of encouraging healthy physical contact. The sessions usually involve fun games and storytelling where the therapist begins a story and the child ends it.

Many of the abused children feel threatened by any kind of physical contact.

In such cases, the therapist invites the child to touch them first, and maybe use objects like feathers instead of direct contact. At Chora Chori, the theraplay method was applied to 15 children, including children rescued from Muzaffarpur and other victims of sexual abuse.

The goal is for the children to be able to establish healthy, nurturing relationships with people. Though this therapy is often used for children with trauma, especially in case of adoption, it is now increasingly used on the elderly.

“A child who has been denied healthy relationships, bonds with the therapist. They need love, care, and trust, without which they cannot function as healthy adults,” Mintz explains.

Since privacy is critical in theraplay, its intimate nature also raises concerns about higher risk of child abuse. But Mintz believes it is no different from any other therapy session where you leave the therapist and child alone in a room, and trust is key.

It is too early to say whether this approach will help the rescued children grow up to be emotionally secure adults,

but for now Shailu Rajbhandari says it has worked wonders with children at Chora Chori.

She adds: “Many of the children came up with stories about their own past after a single session, some talked of abuses while some recalled being forced to work. After the therapy, it was much easier to communicate with children who had been defensive or excessively introverted before.”

Some 300 cases of human trafficking are reported to the police every year, but child welfare workers believe the number is much higher. An estimate by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) estimates that every year 23,000 Nepalis become victims of trafficking, and half of them are children. Some end up being taken across the border to India where police regularly round up unaccompanied children from railway stations and the streets and hand them over to shelters like the one in Muzzafarpur that was raided.

Says Shailaja CM: “Conditions of many children’s homes in India are deplorable. Not only are many of them lacking in basic facilities, abuse is also rampant.”

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# A reel prime minist

Sewa Bhattarai

A traffic policeman goes live on Facebook from the balcony of his Kathmandu home from where the snowy mountains used to be visible. He cannot even see Swayambhu because of the smog. His daughter gets a coughing fit, and the camera is abruptly turned off.

The policeman is reprimanded for embarrassing the government, and asked to delete the video. Instead, he resigns and files a writ petition demanding better pollution protection for traffic police. This is how the second episode of the teleserial *Singha Durbar - 2* starts.

The second season of *Singha Durbar* is like fantasy land: Nepal has a female prime minister who is not into wheeling-dealing and cronyism, but grapples with health and environmental issues. We keep being reminded rudely of reality as Prime Minister Asha Singh struggles to keep her coalition together while vested interest groups try to wreck her plans to solve air pollution.

She pushes through a bill forcing auto dealers to also import electric vehicles, asks the Ministry of Environment to come up with an action plan to clean up Kathmandu's filthy air, and provides traffic police with industrial grade masks. She even gives back the fired traffic policeman his job.

Reel life politicians in *Singha Durbar* are doing what Nepal's real life elected governments stubbornly refuse to do: protect the health of citizens. Viewers on tv and YouTube can learn how a government should function while being entertained – this is infotainment with a powerful contemporary message.

## Fictional female prime minister tackles air pollution in teleserial

As in American tv dramas *West Wing* or *Veep*, *Singha Durbar* recreates the corridors of power, while employing social themes often ignored by Nepal's politicians today. This is not comedy, nor is it an action thriller that makes you wait for every episode with bated breath, it is a sober and slow-moving drama.

However, one wonders if the plot grabs Nepali audiences more used to salacious fare on tv and the Net. But that is the whole point for director Nabin Subba, of *Numafung* fame: "Our politics today has not been able to address the ordinary people's concerns, whether it is air pollution, roads, or health. We are trying to show what is possible, something to be inspired by. How can Nepal achieve good governance? If leaders and government put people first, it can be done."

Gauri Malla, who plays Prime Minister Singh, says it may take another decade or so for Nepal to have a female prime minister, and adds that the serial is not trying to portray reality, but the aspirations of the people regarding politics.

"What would I want my prime minister to be like? I want her to be able, wise, charismatic, and want her to prioritise the people above everything. That is how I approach the PM's on-screen persona," Malla told us while on the sets of a forthcoming episode this week.

Prime Minister Singh is a civilised, soft spoken, almost demure, leader – a far cry from the chest-thumping alfa males who prowl the real *Singha Durbar*. Singh succeeds in finding solutions to knotty national crises like air pollution, food security, education, unemployment through behind-the-scenes lobbying. She even gets the Health Bill passed -- something Govinda KC has not been able to do in the actual Nepal.

*Singha Durbar* dares to dream of a democratic Nepal where leaders are answerable to the people and who believe in service and performance. Singh has to fight to keep her coalition intact, and in doing so proves that clinging to power can have a positive connotation when there is a mission to be accomplished.

The production (funded by USAID, UNDP and the Nepali diaspora) is unabashedly idealistic, but Singh is not averse to playing a few political games herself, bargaining here and compromising there. Her negotiation style is decent, however, and tame compared to the dog-eat-dog ways of her rivals. Nothing seems to corrupt Singh: when someone tells her that the party is greater than the individual, she replies that the country is greater than the party. Applause.

The script, cast and storyline all portray an inclusive Nepal. The Prime Minister's personal secretary is a Tharu, a Muslim woman is Speaker of Parliament, Madhesi leaders are Singh's staunchest supporters, a Sherpa minister is the voice of her conscience, and the Health Minister is a scientist who refuses funding from a pharmaceutical company.

Despite its sluggish storyline, *Singha Durbar* had an audience of 6.67 million in the first season and was the fifth most-watched tv show. Producer Prakash Luintel says the reason for the success is that it is provocatively positive: "There is widespread negativity and disillusionment towards and we are trying to show there are other ways to do politics."

The other reason for its popularity is the series' meticulous production values, the taut storyline is supported by excellent acting and direction. Compared to the last season, the plot is even more realistic and delves into the background of the characters. At Baluwatar, the prime minister herself grapples with issues that many working women face: the need to care for her family despite her hectic schedule, the overt jealousy of a less famous husband whom she calls '*timi*' and sometimes cooks for.

By the end of Episode 3, Prime Minister Singh brings together the leaders of South Asian countries to collectively pressure Gulf nations to treat migrant workers better. The message: nothing is impossible in actual day-to-day politics. More than the Nepali public, this is a must-see for the current political leadership. 🇳🇵

### YES, PRIME MINISTER



Watch the producers and actors behind the popular teleserial *Singha Durbar* explain why it can be an important part of real life politics in Nepal. The video also includes clips from the film, and the sets of a forthcoming episode. Go to YouTube to watch the full episodes from this and previous season.

[nepalitimes.com](https://www.nepalitimes.com)



# er and real scientist



KUNDA DIXIT

## Sonia Awale

Anobha Gurung could have had a distinguished international career in academia, but as an environmental health scientist and a Nepali, she felt an acute sense of responsibility to put her expertise to use back home in Kathmandu.

While conducting cutting-edge scientific research into air pollution in the United States and Africa, Gurung's mind would always dwell on the challenges in Nepal, where urban air quality has deteriorated dramatically in recent years.

"I was lucky to have the opportunity to go abroad, but I felt now it is time to give back to my own country. It comes with a sense of commitment, that I have to do something, even on a small scale," says Gurung.

Investigating air quality in Kathmandu Valley is much more challenging because of the wide range of emission sources: diesel vehicles, motorcycles, brick kilns, garbage burning, roadside construction and even transboundary pollution from northern India. It is also important to understand the factors that affect pollution concentration.

Just as important as finding technical solutions to reduce the harm from air pollution is to address the root causes: lack of accountability, poor governance and the absence of political will.

Even while in Budhanilkantha School, Gurung already knew she wanted to study environment science, even though many tried to dissuade her saying she should get into a better paying profession.

She went on to the University of Colorado in Denver, and then for a PhD at Yale University. Gurung has spent the last 12 years collecting air samples high in Rocky Mountains to determine the impact of nitrogen deposition on forest growth, specialised in Geographic Information Science (GIS), investigated the link between climate change and malaria in Tanzania, and travelled across Asia to study pollution exposure.

Her passion to investigate the correlation between air pollution and public health has brought her back a full circle to Kathmandu where particulate concentration in the air in winter is ten times higher than the WHO standard, and as bad as Beijing and Delhi.

Everyone knows dirty air is bad for health, but Gurung's research tries to pinpoint where and where it is most hazardous. For this, she correlates hospital admission records with average daily pollution levels.

Back in 2007, she conducted PM2.5 (concentration of particles below 2.5 microns in diameter) exposure analysis by location, occupation and proximity to roadways.

She found traffic police to have maximum exposure during morning rush hour. Shop-keepers

## Nepali scientist returns to pinpoint health hazards of dirty air

with sidewalk stores were subjected to pollutants at least three times higher than people working away from the main streets.

"Air quality measurement in itself doesn't mean anything, but when communicated with its impact on health, the data is so compelling that people are more ready to take action for its mitigation," explains Gurung, whose goal is to make public awareness lead to policy reform and better regulation.

One of Gurung's research in Kathmandu involved collecting patient records from six city hospitals and comparing it with a data base of air quality from 2002 to 2007, drawing a direct correlation

between hospital admissions and air pollution.

She found that every 10µg/m³ increase in the concentration of particles smaller than 10 microns elevated admissions for cardiovascular ailments by nearly 2.3% -- a higher rate than in any other part of the world. Rise in respiratory admissions was comparatively lower at 1.6%.

"This was a clear indication that we in Nepal are more susceptible to cardiovascular diseases due to pollution," says 35-year-old Gurung, who just completed her postdoctoral research with the University of Texas in Austin.

She used mobile monitoring of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) as a technique to reliably map patterns of air pollution to understand how nearby sources affect concentrations. She found that the presence of busy roads, built-up areas and industrial zones elevated (NO₂) concentrations.

There is now greater public awareness about the health risks of air pollution, but this has not triggered individual action mainly because people lack cleaner alternatives. There has also been little state response, with the Municipality and Environment Ministry slow to enforce existing vehicular emission laws. There are reports of people moving away from areas with high levels of pollution, leading to a fall in rental rates.

Gurung is in Kathmandu this time to conduct a workshop designed to use open air pollution

data to push public awareness and evidence-based policy making.

In a research paper last year that she co-authored, Gurung concluded that road expansion in Kathmandu had led to more cars, more congestion and more pollution. She wrote: "Today, non-motorised road users are more unsafe on the roads than ever before."

She advocates abandoning car-centric urban development, encouraging an efficient and reliable public transport network, bicycle lanes, pedestrian sidewalks and electric vehicles.

Says Gurung: "Individually, we can choose to use a public bus instead of a car, be more efficient about energy and waste management. Small-scale activities at community level can help control air pollution and if this is pushed by government support we can definitely have better air quality." 🇳🇵

### FOR A CLEANER KATHMANDU



Go online to watch interview with climate scientist Anobha Gurung in which she explains why she has come back to work in Nepal, and about her passion to make Kathmandu air healthier to breathe.

nepalitimes.com



EVENTS



**Bagh Bhairav Jatra**  
An idol of Bagh Bhairav, especially made for the festival, is carried through the streets of Kirtipur with traditional bands, followed by devotees chanting bhajans and kirtans and Lakhay dance. Circumambulate the Bagh Bhairab temple on this day with the devotees to know more.  
*17-18 August, 2pm onwards, Kirtipur,*

**Health Transformed by Art**  
A community art project bringing out the untapped therapeutic value of visual art in a hospital setting, providing psychological relief to patients, hospital staff, and general public. The exhibition marks the completion of the pilot project and displays the process and moments captured during the project.  
*17-19 August, 11am-5pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, (01) 4218048*

**Games evening**  
Friday night means grabbing a drink, some food and play games. Join in for wide range of games in different categories: family, strategy, role playing and skills.  
*17 August, 5:30-7:30pm, Alliance Française Kathmandu, Pulchok, (01) 5009221*



**Tshechu festival**  
An annual religious festival in Bhutan held in temples, monasteries and dzongs. Witness the religious mask dances and colorful Bhutanese dances, receive blessings and socialize, every Wednesday.  
*22 August- 24 October, 3pm onwards, Bhutan Vision, Chhauni, 9801077752*

**Healing the Himalayas**  
Fundraising for free health camp in Himalayan regions, Healing the Himalayas is organizing an eventful night full of music, poetry, dance performance and travel story.  
*17 August, 5pm onwards, Around the Corner, Bansbari, Rs800 (including snacks), 9843171278*

**Green Sherpa**  
Shopping, food, music, and a lot of DIY fun, join the sustainable party promoting sustainable living and ethical choices. This weekend engage in making more environmentally friendly decisions.  
*18 August, 11-6pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel, 9803537459*

**The Monologue Cascade**  
The Monologue Cascade: Mano Chetana focuses on the major and emerging concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) with speakers from My Emotions Matter.  
*18 August, 11am-3pm, Youth Thinker's Society Office, Kupondole, 9813942392*



**Teej Saree Mahotsav**  
Collection includes sarees from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Nepali handmade lehenga shawl and designer dresses, Jaipuri kurta set and Lucknowi chikankari collection.  
*17-18 August, 11am-6pm, Old French Embassy House, Naxal, 9844888116*

**Slave To The Grind**  
A documentary on a music genre Grindcore capturing its 35-year lifespan, takes you to Japan, the US, the UK, Australia, Singapore, Finland and Sweden to discuss why the genre has persisted and changed over time. Purple Haze and Underground Pokhara are screening it for free.  
*18 August, 3:30-6pm, The Purple Haze Rock Bar, Thamel, swapnil.purplehaze@gmail.com*

**Rooftop garden**  
Register by 22 August for a two-day training by experts on solid waste management and roof top garden, based on the practical demonstration and field visit.  
*23-24 August, 11am onwards, Global Peace Foundation Nepal, Dilibazar Height, Rs600 (early), Rs700 (late), (01) 4430042/ 4430043*

MUSIC



**Larry T Hill**  
Live vocal looping by the Australian hip hop artist at two venues.  
*17/18 August, 7:30-10:30pm/ 8-10pm, Bikalpa Art Centre, Pulchok/ Base Camp, Jhamsikhel 9851147776*

**Sun Down Affair 03**  
Best cocktails from Khukri Rum and musical performance from Indian artists Murthovic and Tuhin Mehta to help you get done with your weekend affairs.  
*18 August, 4pm onwards, Calm, Tangelwood, Naxal, (01) 4443904*

**Jazz night**  
Jazz music by Thugmento Trio with the restaurant's Vegan food and drinks.  
*17 August, 7pm onwards, Places Restaurant and Bar, Thamel, (01) 4700413*

**Rock Night 2**  
Live acts by Kamero, Cobweb, and Surakshya and the Band, with the launch of Kamero's new music video Nepenthes from their album Absence Paradox.  
*18 August, 5pm onwards, Rs 500, 25 Hours, Tangelwood, Naxal, 9801057602*



**Sabin Rai and the Pharaoh**  
Sabin Rai & The Pharaoh setting the room on fire with a supporting act by Pariwarta.  
*18 August, 8:30pm- 12am, Reggae Bar, Thamel, Rs 500*

**Kanta Dab Dab**  
A trio band with sitar, percussion and bass playing some contemporary and fusion compositions on the 12th anniversary of Shisha Lounge and Bar.  
*18 August, 8-11:45pm, Shisha Lounge and Bar, Thamel, (01) 4701104*

OUR PICK



Opens in Kathmandu on 17 August

During his first hunt, Keda (Kodi Smit-McPhee) is injured and left for dead after falling from a cliff. Separated from his family, he fights his way through the harsh wilderness, fends off wild animal attacks, and manages to tame a wolf, abandoned by his pack. Together, the two must return to the tribe before the deadly winter begins. The ice-age survival story, set 20,000 years ago, is directed by Albert Hughes and written by Daniele Sebastian Wiedenhaupt. Witness the origin of a relationship that changed the course of mankind.

DINING



Evoke Café & Bistro

The café and bistro is your doorway into a space that will induce smells, colors, sounds and shapes of your mind's world. Pick your favourite: pita bread, baguette and multigrain bread sandwich all served with homemade fries and salad on side.  
*Jhamsikhel, 9851111051*

Beer and Wings

Buffalo wings, lemon-pepper wings, garlic parmesan wings, honey BBQ wings, sweet and sour wings, chilly wings, buttermilk fried crispy wings or poleko (smoked) wings, take your pick at the hotel's food promo.  
*17-20 August, 11am-11pm, Piano Bar, Hotel Yak and Yeti, Darbar Marg, Rs2,550/Rs1,450/Rs850, (01) 4248999 extn: 2865*

Magic of mo:mo

Indulge in an array of mouth-watering momos available in various flavors and served with lip-smacking condiments.  
*17 August-16 September, 3-7pm, Lobby Lounge, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, Boudha, (01) 5171234*



Tex-Mex

Soaltee is hosting an authentic Texas Mexican cuisine festival featuring traditional Mexican food with a healthy twist, prepared by the hotel's chef.  
*17-20 August, 7-10pm, Soaltee Crown Plaza, Tahachal, (01) 4273999*

Durbar Restaurant

Get the feel of royalty while dining at the multi cuisine restaurant which is a reminiscent of ancient palaces. Walnut and spinach pie can bring you back to present.  
*6am-10pm, Gokarna Forest Resort, Thali, (01) 4451212*

Le Sherpa

With a focus on seasonal and local vegetables and fruits, sometimes grown in their own premises and other times from the local produce, Le Sherpa comes up with a delightful menu every season. Come here for healthy and fresh dining.  
*Maharajgunj, (01) 4428604*

GETAWAY



Heranya Yala

Get a genuine feel of authentic Newari heritage by living right in the middle of Maha Boudha and the Hiranya monastery. The hotel provides a complete tour package to immerse in the rich cultural heritage of Patan.  
*Gujibahal, Patan, \$90 per night, (01) 5523168, 9851067168, booking.com*

Hyatt Regency

Overlooking the Japanese garden, 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 lesson for a unique traditional therapeutic experience. Packages available: Mountain Path, River Path and Forest Path. *30% off for treatments between 9am-2pm, Club Oasis, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, Boudha, (01) 5171234*



The Famous Farm

The three-storey boutique hotel in the subtropical Middle Hills, west of Kathmandu, is Nuwakot's best kept secret along with the historical palace of the district. This little traditional house has a lot of rich cultural heritage to share.  
*Kuwapani, Nuwakot, (010) 413044*

Dwarika's Resort

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*Dhulikhel, (11) 490612*



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*Majeri Patan, Pokhara, (061) 521882*

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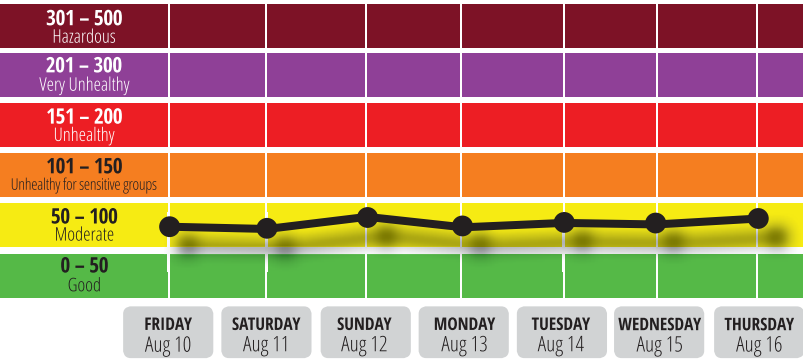
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AIR QUALITY INDEX

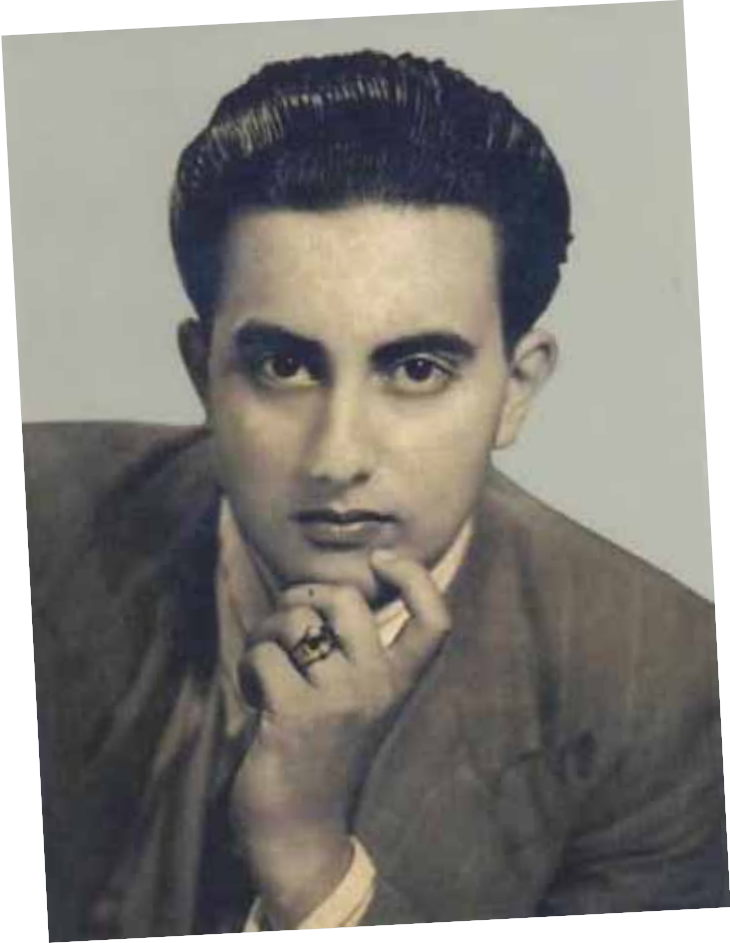
KATHMANDU, 10 - 16 August



The daily average for the concentration of PM2.5 (particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter) this week was in the moderate 'Yellow' band throughout. This was probably due to frequent rain showers hosing down the dirt from the air. In fact, the live hour-by-hour pollution measurements online [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com) this week showed a dramatic drop in PM2.5 after every shower, and it hit a record low on Tuesday morning because of the rumours of a shutdown which put many buses off the roads.  
<https://np.usembassy.gov/embassy/air-quality-monitor/>



# Bharat Shumsher, a brother's tribute



Sagar Rana

Bharat Shumsher was born at Singha Durbar 85 years ago as the first great grandson of Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher Rana. The birth of this future warrior for democracy was celebrated by Nepal’s absolutist rulers as a day of national rejoicing. When, in 1929, Chandra died and the family moved to Baber Mahal, Bharat was still a toddler. He grew up in the palaces, but the luxuries of most of the Rana households were curtailed by Baber Shumsher: he believed in austerity and a disciplined life style. ‘Leadership’ came naturally to Bharat and he was the domineering figure among his two sisters and four brothers – one of them me. Somehow, ‘rebellion’ was instilled early in him against the on going social mores and lifestyle, including religious rites. There was a small shrine of Bhimsen in the palace grounds venerated by all. Bharat used to hurl objects at it, saying if this be Bhimsen, I am Arjun. Bharat’s father Mrigendra strived to ensure the best possible education to his children. Bharat was admitted to St Xavier’s’ College, Bombay. Under a professor who was a left-leaning atheist, the angry young man of Baber Mahal

turned into an eternal rebel. Bharat’s letter of commitment to BP Koirala’s call in 1946 for a united force of Nepalis to bring down the Rana regime, was the natural reaction of a rebel. Circumstances altered this course and he returned to Kathmandu with excellent grades in BA Honours. Prime Minister Mohan quickly persuaded him to join the government as Minister of Agriculture. He served in that capacity, not with great enthusiasm, until the day of the fall of Rana oligarchy. For Bharat, the fall was not the end but beginning of his illustrious political career. In 1952-53 he joined and then guided and inspired the Gorkha Dal. In the 1958 general elections, the NC led by stalwarts such as BP Koirala, Subarna Shumsher, Ganeshman Singh and KP Bhattarai, won with 74 seats in Parliament. The Gorkha Dal secured 19 seats. When Chinese troops intruded into Nepal’s territory in Mustang, fired on an unarmed police sub-post killing one officer, BP shared the concern with Bharat outside of Parliament and evolved a common strategy that led China to accept the mistake and pay a token compensation of Rs 50,000. Bharat stayed firmly by the side of BP Koirala when King Mahendra dismissed the duly

elected government through the military backed coup in December 1960. Arrested and jailed along with leaders of NC, he contrived to get released after about six months, and then, as was his plan, slipped away to India. In September 1961 he issued a public statement merging Gorkha Parishad into NC, to wage a common fight to restore democracy in Nepal. He was co-opted by Subarna Shumsher the acting Chairman into the ‘High Command’ of NC. In the absence of BP, Bharat always supported and led the wing within NC that opted for armed struggle against the King, as opposed to Subarna’s conciliatory approach. When BP entered Nepal in December 1976, risking conviction for treason and capital punishment, Bharat followed in 1980. In May 1979, King Birendra announced a Referendum to decide between a multiparty democracy or ‘reformed’ Panchayat. The latter prevailed, with backing of the government and alleged large scale manipulation. BP felt that even in defeat, the door for canvassing and meetings with the people was now open, and opted to accept the verdict of the referendum. Bharat was convinced BP was right, and continued to actively support the party.

BP’s death in July 1982 was followed by a smooth transition of leadership to Ganeshman as the Supreme commander and KP Bhattarai continuing as Acting President of the party. Bharat was close to Ganeshman personally, admired his courage and grit, but found a great void in the intellectual content and commitment to the ‘social revolution’, that he shared with BP. He continued to visit Kathmandu after the restoration of democracy and during the formation and promulgation of the new constitution. Thereafter, he gradually moved out of national politics perhaps dismayed at the lack of sufficient interest of the party for a social ‘revolution’ against ‘injustice, discrimination, and prejudice’. In his last days, when he felt death approaching, he left a note for his family to follow: his body was not to be cremated but donated to a hospital, and his family would not to perform any rites and customs associated with such occasions or advised by priests or friends. He had walked his talk even in death. 🇳🇵

*Sagar Rana is the brother of Bharat Shumsher Rana, who died this week in Kolkata, and the author of the book, Singha Darbar: Rise and Fall of the Rana Regime in Nepal.*

# Manujbabu Mishra, 83

Manujbabu Mishra had lived the second half of his life in almost complete isolation, not going outside his leafy home on the outskirts of Kathmandu. His studio, crammed with books and painting equipment, suited his lifestyle and personality. His large writing desk was lined with containers, each holding tools of an unimaginable variety: hammers, wrenches, screwdrivers, scissors, brushes. He was skilled with his hands, and made his own bamboo pens, an improvised water jar to sip from, and even crafted his own chairs, benches and easels when younger. Before advancing age and ill health forced him indoors, Mishra lived a hermit’s life in an outhouse while his family lived nearby. The fiercely self-sufficient artist, who preferred expression to aesthetics, passed away in his sleep at the age of 83 on 8 August. Mishra’s residence, fittingly called ‘Hermitage’, reflected his artistic sensibilities: an old fashioned pulley bell instead of an electric one, sea shells adorned the slot for his letterbox, artistic pieces from all over the world. He disliked uniformity and conformity, and this is reflected in his studio decorated with multicolored warm rugs and a library beautifully age-worn. Everything is exactly where he left it, including a half-finished painting.



Mishra was known for a trademark grotesque style where his own face is seen in distorted forms, often accompanied by horns, tridents and rockets amidst tumultuous multi-coloured clouds swirling over transgenic animal forms. The trident is a symbol of power, of creation and destruction, which to him symbolised eastern philosophy. The horns are often seen growing out of his own self-portraits, and are emblematic of the beast in the man. He often bemoaned that modernity seemed to isolate people even further from each other. Even though he almost never left home, he painted portraits of our times with a deep understanding of the devastation outside: of nature, of humanity, of morality and goodness, of loneliness and the fear of isolation. “There is a lot of demand for a certain types of images from Nepal,” he would say. “Paintings of mountains or lifestyles. I would have been rich by now if I had painted those. Beauty is not everything in art. The scream of people who are injured in war, that makes a powerful piece of art too. And my art is expressive and emotive rather than aesthetic.” He sometimes described his paintings as “shit” -- an excretion produced when he got a great urge to empty his emotions. In his later period, Mishra was famous for his interpretations of Mona Lisa, often in Nepali costumes and jewelry, juxtaposed with Mishra’s own self-portraits. The rocket streaking across many of his paintings were a symbolic protest against the global dominance of Western civilisation. He was a lifelong seeker of original Nepali styles which he believed to be more vibrant than the ‘monochromic wash’ of the western palate. He opened an informal art school at his home where he would take in only *janajati* students, hoping they would create art that reflected their cultures. It seems ironic then that this seeker of Nepaliness in art himself used a western genre. After graduating from the College of Arts and Crafts in Dhaka in 1969, he was among the early pioneers of modernism in Nepali art. Asked to explain the contradiction, he once said he was forced to do so because it is not possible to paint in completely Nepali style today. However, he lovingly preserved a small painting of his father by the famed Nepali painter Anandamuni Shakya, which he would show as an example of Nepali style art to anyone who was interested. This week, it still hung on the wall outside his studio. 🇳🇵

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# Return to nature

From using leaf plates called tapari, and shikakai herbs as shampoo, to reusing bottles and containers in the kitchen, Nepalis have been practicing sustainability for years. But a modern consumer lifestyles have eroded these practices.

In order to revive these practices and make people more environmental-friendly, Where N Wear, an online ethical brands curator, is hosting a one-day sustainability fair in Kathmandu this weekend. It is an attempt to turn the culturally-embedded habits of Nepalis into an industrial movement.

“In the last few years we have encouraged organisations, businesses and individuals to take a more ethical and eco-conscious route. There is still a long way to go, but we want to showcase what we have accomplished so far,” says co-organiser Ishu Dhakras who manages the online site Where N Wear.

Dhakras teamed with Tulja Kedia, who has also worked in marketing various fashion brands and designers in India. The all day event on 18 August Saturday includes:

### 12pm: Creative installations

Manish Shrestha and students from Srijana School of Arts and DAV School will showcase art installations on the theme of sustainability.



KARGHA

### 1pm: Panel discussion

Journalist Bhrikuti Rai, Knot Craft founder Shyam Badan Shrestha, Director of Sustainability School at Digo Bikas Institute Shail Shrestha, Best Paani founder Sajal Pradhan, Doko Recyclers co-founder Raghavendra Mahto, environmental activist Silsila Acharya, Green Growth representative Samita Kapali, and Niu Scooters CEO Pranayna KC will talk about sustainable lifestyles.

### 2:15pm: Short film screening

The Rise of Sustainability by Joss Colchester explores how the concept has gone from the fringes to the mainstream within just a few decades. It explores the context of the Anthropocene and the requirement of

key economic transformations to achieve sustainability in the age of globalisation.

### 3pm: Panel discussion

TV presenter Supriya Shrestha, Sabah Nepal’s designer Bini Bajracharya, sustainable blogger Aditi Mayer, designer Bijay Gautam, entrepreneur Sarita Agarwal, Miss Nepal 2015 Ishani Shrestha and fashion blogger Rhea Pradhan will discuss sustainability in fashion.

### 4pm: Standup comedy

Shailee Basnet, a bilingual comedian, will perform a routine that ranges from feminism to current politics and the contrasts of ‘first world’ and ‘third world’. Live musical performance follows.

### Up-cycling station

Carry a white t-shirt, a black round-neck t-shirt, denim jacket, old jeans, slippers and any other boring and plain clothing you have. The up-cycling booth is there to add a touch of elegance or funk.

### Do It Yourself

A class from experts on planting and upcycling using plastic waste. Le Sucre patisserie and boulangerie will assist in adding toppings to the newest dessert in town -- cakesicles.

### Sustainable brands booth

More than 15 Nepali brands producing sustainable products, from lifestyle and clothing to recycled tyres, food, drinks and scooter that focus on empowerment, environment, and ethics.

Also introducing the new idea of Swapping Buddies: nominate a like-minded person, and swap anything with him or her every three months.

18 August, 11am-6pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel, 9803537459



BIKRAM RAI

**CONSTITUTION ABOVE ALL:** Prime Minister K P Oli at the concluding ceremony of an international conference on the Nepal Constitution in Kathmandu on Sunday marking three years of its promulgation.



EMBASSY OF INDIA, KATHMANDU

**FRIENDLY ROUTES:** Indian Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri handed over Rs470 million for the Postal Highway project to Minister of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, Madhusudan Adhikari, at Singha Darbar on Tuesday.



PRADEEP RAJ ONTA / RSS

**HOWZAT?:** President Bidya Bhandari poses with Nepal’s National Cricket Team in Kathmandu on Tuesday. The team registered its first One Day International win earlier this month against the Netherlands at Amstelveen.



ROSHAN SAPKOTA / RSS

**FOLLOWUP:** Prime Minister K P Oli and Govinda KC during a meeting in Baluwatar on Saturday, where the two discussed the implementation of the recent nine-point agreement on medical education reform.



BHASKAR KOIRALA

**SLURP:** Milkshake lovers throng the newest outlet of Keventers in Darbar Marg inaugurated last week. The famous Darjeeling dairy parlour also has outlets in Labim Mall, Civil Mall and Thamel.

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# Taxman cometh

Naya Patrika, 16 August

नयाँ पत्रिका

**New local government taxes have generated outrage over the rates and for hurting those with minimum wage occupations. Here are some items that have raised protests:**

■ **Tax to prove you are alive**  
People assumed to be dead AND found alive will have to pay back taxes to the municipality. Local administrations in East and West Rukum have imposed taxes on

council is preparing to give the responsibility of collecting the taxes to local contractors, at a minimum of Rs150,000.

■ **Rs20 per day from sidewalk barbers**

In Budhiganga municipality of Morang, barbers have to pay Rs20, *chana chatpate* sellers Rs30, *mehendi* applicers Rs10, and magicians Rs20 every day. In Katahari village, tea sellers have to pay Rs1,100 per year.

■ **Rs25 per month 'garbage tax'**

Butwal sub municipality is collecting garbage tax not just from landlords but also from tenants. The municipality used to collect Rs100 per house, but is now collecting Rs50 per family. There is a discount for students.

■ **Rs1,000 to declared bankruptcy**

Biratnagar metropolitan wants Rs1,000 to provide documents confirming the closure of a business.

documents to prove that someone is still alive. In Sisne village, the fee is Rs200 for the service. Kumari Baral of the village council of Sisne said: "Yes, if a person comes back to life, there is a tax on the document."

■ **Tax to prove you are poor**

People have to pay a Rs25 tax to prove their low economic status in Athbiskot municipality in Rukum. The local government has levied taxes not just for marriage registration, but also to prove whether one is married or single, which costs Rs1,000 in Athbiskot and Chaurjahari municipalities, and Rs200 in Sisne for the service.

■ **Tax on roasting corn and selling buffalo**

Tilottama municipality in Rupandehi has started collecting Rs45 from corn vendors at marketplaces. Ducks, chicken, and pigeons are taxed Rs16 apiece. Vegetable retailers need to pay Rs1,200, and fruit sellers with wheelbarrows, Rs1,500 per year. In Tripurasundari municipality of Dolpa, farmers need to pay a Rs1,000 tax if they sell a buffalo and Rs150 if they sell a goat.

■ **Vegetable vendors are not spared**

Siddhartha municipality of Rupandehi has not only imposed a tax of Rs2,000 on vegetable retailers, but also started collecting Rs35 from farmers who take vegetables and greens to the market in dokos. Butwal sub municipality also collects Rs20 per trip.

■ **Tax on fishing**

Yangwarak village of Panchthar is preparing to tax people for fishing in the district's rivers. Village council head Lekhnath Ghimire said that the money was needed to protect natural resources. The

# Back to Hindu monarchy

BBC Nepali, 15 August

BBC नेपाली

**The new Civil Code has sparked a lot of debate. Anyone involved in proselytising will face a five year jail term and Rs50,000 fine. The BBC's Sharad KC spoke to KB Rokaya, a pioneer Christian and former member of the National Human Rights Commission, but got an unexpected response.**

**BBC Nepali: The new Civil Code restricts religious conversion. What is your take?**

**K B Rokaya:** Nepal's accepted secularism without really understanding what it meant. Even we Christians took to the streets demanding a secular nation. But after the election of the second Constituent Assembly and before the new constitution was drafted, I realised it was a mistake. We had blindly supported it without understanding the implications. Secularism must be abolished from the constitution because the state cannot be indifferent to religion. In the context of Nepal, it means going back to a Hindu Kingdom.

**As a pioneer of Christianity in Nepal, you want the country to revert back to a Hindu Kingdom?**

I am for all religions. The new law will apply to people of all faiths, not just to Christians. So it restricts people of all religions. According to the new law, no one can hurt another's faith in any manner: through words, or writing, or symbols.

Secularism makes society immoral and corrupt. The government has restricted religious activities. Religious communities do not have a voice. Religious leaders are not allowed to speak. The actions or laws of the government cannot be challenged on the basis of religion or religious texts.



**You converted to Christianity during your school days. But now you sound more like a diehard Hindu. Is it old age?**

I'm still a Christian and my only faith is in Jesus Christ. Three years ago I started thinking seriously about our country, and I figured out that only three things give Nepal its identity: the founding Shah Dynasty, the Nepal Army and Hinduism. If we are to save this country and if future generations are to live as Nepalis in Nepal, we have to reinstate the monarchy and give up secularism. And the Nepal Army should help achieve this.

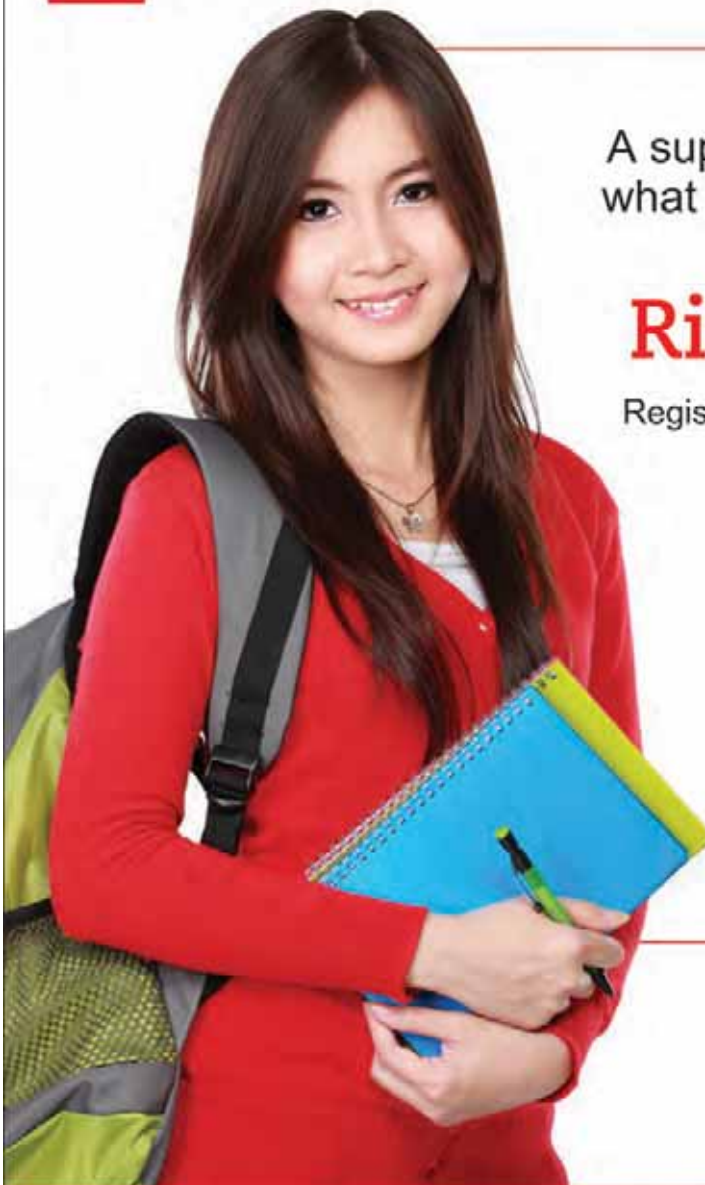
**You were a Maoist, and now you want the monarchy back?**

Yes, I do. The secularism agenda was pushed by western countries and I worked as their agent in the past. But I am confessing now, I did it without understanding. It is not impossible to bring back the Hindu monarchy. Nothing is impossible in this world, especially for people who have faith, like us.

**Are you saying we need a referendum?**

No, we cannot have a referendum, how can you put Nepal's basic identity to a vote? Even leaders like Sushil Koirala and Girija Koirala later confessed that they did not know how secularism got included in the constitution. Secularism, republicanism and federalism are not in Nepal's interest, and today we are facing its consequences.

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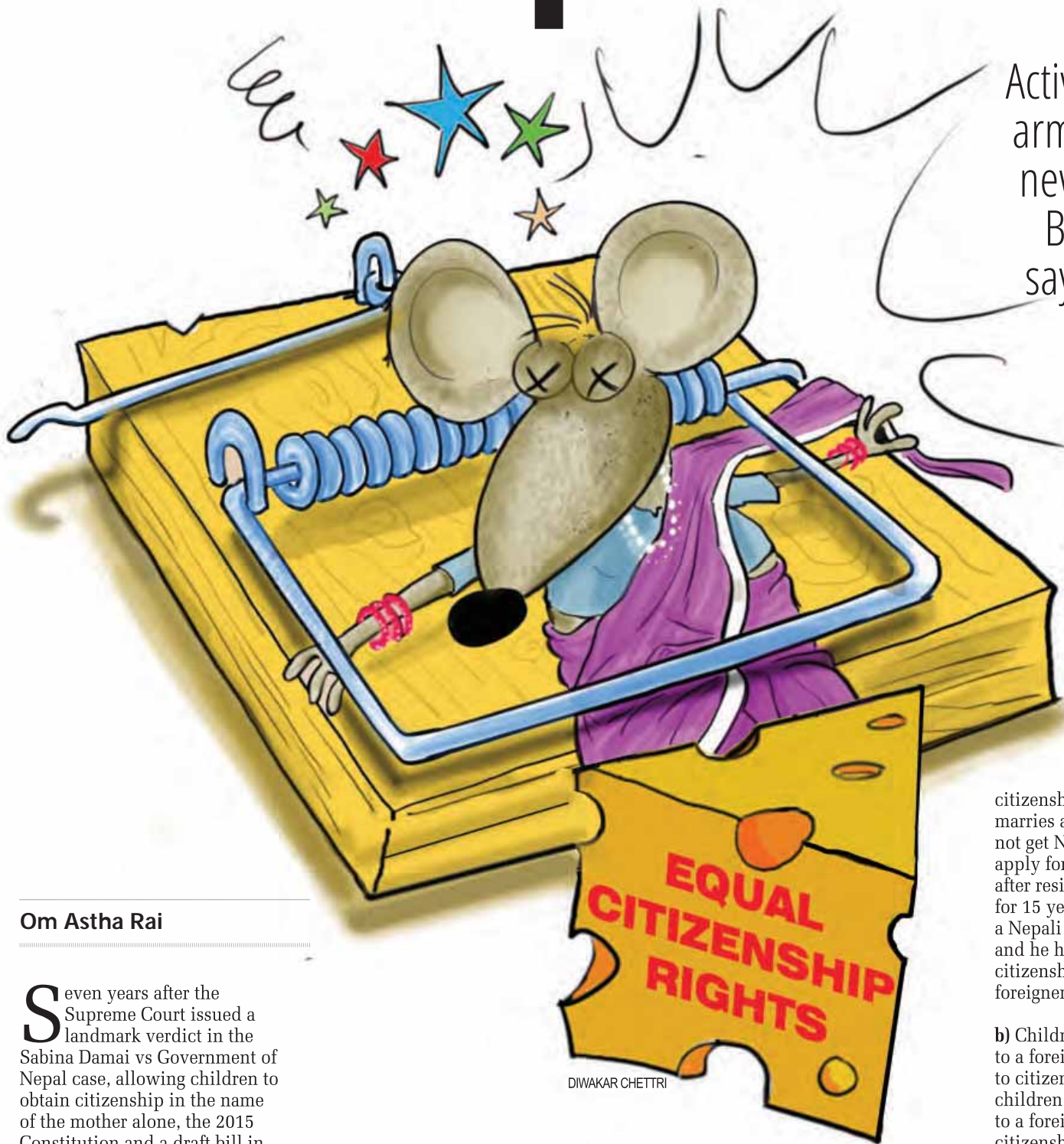
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# Nepal's suffragette



Om Astha Rai

Seven years after the Supreme Court issued a landmark verdict in the Sabina Damai vs Government of Nepal case, allowing children to obtain citizenship in the name of the mother alone, the 2015 Constitution and a draft bill in Parliament have set the clock back. Activists say the 2015 Constitution which was drafted, debated and promulgated mainly

by men, denies equal citizenship rights to women, and the draft bill further entrenches Nepal's patriarchal culture. The three main objectionable provisions are:

a) A foreign woman married to a Nepali man can get naturalised citizenship right away, and is given six months to furnish proof that she has renounced her original

Activists are up in arms against the new Citizenship Bill that they say entrenches patriarchy

citizenship. But if a foreign man marries a Nepali woman, he will not get Nepali citizenship. He can apply for naturalised citizenship after residing in Nepal continuously for 15 years. But his marriage to a Nepali woman will not count, and he has to apply for naturalised citizenship just like any other foreigner.

b) Children of a Nepali man married to a foreign woman are entitled to citizenship by descent. But the children of a Nepali woman married to a foreign man will get naturalised citizenship, and that too only after producing proof they aren't already citizens of their father's country. They can get citizenship by descent only if the father has naturalised Nepali citizenship.

c) Children above 18 can easily get citizenship if their fathers are Nepali, but it is much more difficult if they only have their mother's citizenship. If the father is unknown, is estranged, or refuses to accept them, their mother will have to 'declare' to authorities that she does not know who the father of the child is.

"The constitution and the citizenship bill perpetuate the male notion that their semen is superior, and women are not equal to men," says former Supreme Court Justice Balram KC.

KC was one of two justices who ordered the Dolakha district administration in 2011 to grant citizenship to Sabina Damai through her mother's name. Sabina's father was not known, and Dolakha's Chief District Officer had refused to grant her citizenship unless her father's identity was established.

The Supreme Court not only directed the Dolakha administration to grant Sabina citizenship without asking about her father, it also ruled that women would henceforth be able to pass on citizenship to their children even without their husbands.

"That verdict was not just for Sabina Damai, but for every person whose father is unknown and who wants citizenship through his or her mother's name," KC says.

Barring a few exceptions, male-dominated district administration offices have defied the precedent set by *Damai vs GoN* and continue to deny citizenship to offspring of single mothers.

In 2013, Shanti Nagarkoti filed a petition at Supreme Court after she was denied citizenship by the Kathmandu district administration unless

## All political parties are technically

In May, the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) faced a dilemma. The Election Commission (EC) was throwing the book at the ruling party for not meeting the constitutional requirement to have women make up at least one-third of its executive committee.

Made up after the union of the UML with the Maoists, NCP had just 16% women in its 441-member Central Working Committee. And it did not have a single woman in its nine-member top executive body.

The EC refused to register the NCP, asking the party to first reserve 33% seats for women. Women leaders within the NCP also urged Prime Minister Oli, and NCP Chair, to induct more women into the executive committee.

However, sources told *Nepali Times* that instead of meeting the constitutional requirement senior party cadre tried to intimidate and threaten Election Commission members.

Oli and his acolytes argued that the executive committees of the UML and the Maoists were elected before the Political



Parties Registration Act 2017, and therefore would not have to abide by the one-third women rule. Election Commissioners who did not agree were threatened with being framed for corruption.

In a face-saving measure, the EC asked all political parties to ensure 33% women in their executive committees within 30 days. The deadline expired last month, but no party has yet

inducted more women into their executive committees. They have just informed the EC that they will do so when they hold their General Conventions.

MP Binda Pandey says: "In

a way, all political parties have now already lost their legitimacy because they have not abided by the law even in the 30-day grace period given by the EC."

Within his own party, Oli shut



# moment

she provided her father’s name. Two years later, the Supreme Court ordered the Kathmandu administration to grant her citizenship despite her father being unknown.

Thanks to the judiciary, a handful of other mothers have been successful in getting citizenship for their children in their name only, but it is not yet the norm. Only the most determined mothers and those willing to fight a long legal case have managed to get Nepali citizenship for their children.

When the Constituent Assembly passed the new Constitution in September 2015, fewer than 30% of the 601 member House were female, and none of them were in decisive positions. Their voices were easily suppressed by a cartel of male leaders from the hill upper caste community.

As a result, the Constitution, which is progressive in many ways, embarrasses even its staunchest supporters. Former top United Nations official Kul Gautam has always defended the statute, but he too believes it discriminates against women. At a conference on Nepal’s constitution in Kathmandu this week, he admitted that gender discrimination in citizenship is the only fundamental flaw in the charter.

But Parliament is unlikely to amend the Constitution and the draft Citizenship Bill to grant equal rights to women. When women MPs demanded equal citizenship rights in the Parliament this week, Home Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa fell back on the nationalist argument that citizenship was a matter of national security.

Nepal’s main parties have always held the view that granting equal citizenship to women will encourage more foreign men, especially Indians,

to marry Nepali women. They have spread the fear that Nepal will become “another Fiji”, where Melanesians were outnumbered by descendants of migrants from India due to a liberal citizenship law.

Krishna Bhakta Pokharel, a ruling party MP who was a member of the Constitution drafting committee, says: “Our constitution is shaped by the idea that women go to live in their husband’s homes after marriage, and not vice versa. This is the reality, and we cannot ignore it while drafting the citizenship law.”

NCP MP Binda Pande says the citizenship provisions in the Constitution not just violate international treaties to which Nepal is signatory, but also contradict the statute’s guiding principles and election manifestos of all political parties.

The Constitution stipulates that a person whose father ‘or’ (not ‘and’) mother is a Nepali citizen at birth is entitled to citizenship, but this provision is rendered ineffective by other clauses that bar citizenship for offspring of Nepali women married to foreign men.

“All Nepali citizens should be able to pass on citizenship to their children irrespective of their gender,” she says. “It should be as simple as this. Why do we pretend to grant equal citizenship rights through one clause, only to take it back by enacting many other clauses?”

Women have slammed discriminatory citizenship provisions by writing articles and speaking out in public. Some have added *Dosro Darjaki* (Second Class) before their names on their Twitter handles.

Says Election Commissioner Ila Shamra: “This is my way of non-violently protesting against a patriarchal state that wants to treat us as unequal citizens.”

The way the NCP and other parties tried to bamboozle the EC doesn’t just prove the level of impunity and the erosion of the rule of law, but also indicates just how entrenched patriarchy is in the political leadership.

Given this, it is not surprising that they are trying to push a discriminatory Citizenship Bill that would make Nepali women second class citizens.

Ex Supreme Court Justice Balram KC, who delivered a landmark verdict on the Sabina Damai vs Government of Nepal case (*see main story, above*), says the Constitution and the law have not overtly denied citizenship rights to women, but there are many cunningly ambiguous clauses that can be manipulated by the authorities to humiliate, harass or even exploit single women seeking citizenship for their children.

Says KC: “Since most authorities are steeped in patriarchy, they deliberately misread and misinterpret ambiguous clauses just like how political parties have manipulated the Political Party Act.”

Om Astha Rai

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BIKRAM RAI

his women members by ordering them not to “keep babbling with Westernised rights activists”. Oli immediately was slammed on social media for belittling women and their political contributions.



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# Tax Heaven

The donkey has to think twice before braying, since as of today (17th of August in the 2,018<sup>th</sup> year of our lord) he can be hauled over the coals for poking fun at the local grabberments trying to turn Nepal into a Tax Heaven.

Local elected officials have learnt well from national leaders who have become experts at spreading the wealth around by using tax-payer money to finance brain transplants in Singapore, because they don't trust donor brains available in Nepal.

Already, local governments have announced bullock cart taxes with separate annual fees for both bullocks, as well as a road cess for the cart. Bicycles will be taxed in Province 2, and Province 4 has announced a special tax for crossing rivers.

Chicken, goats, ducks, buffalos, and other sacrificial animals will henceforth have to pay a retroactive tax after they are ritually decapitated. And there is a hair cut tax in Province 6. (*Editor's Note: None of the taxable items up to this point are made up. See page 13.*)

However, it saddens the Ass to see that local governments are forfeiting mucho dinero by not being imaginative enough to widen the tax bracket. And with due permission from the Board of Sensors, here are some bright new ideas:

**1 Facebook Tax:** 8 million Nepalis are on Facebook, and the country is losing billions in revenue to Senor Zuckerberg which should

rightfully stay in the country. FB users will henceforth be taxed hourly, and for posting foto albums of holidays in Thailand.

**2 Loo Tax:** Districts declared Open Defecation Free will tax all dumps great and small. Urinals and arsenals throughout the land will henceforth need to be registered.

**3 Corruption Tax:** All bribes, kickbacks, commissions, cuts, baksheesh, hush money, will heretofore come under the tax umbrella. Rebates for all bribes between Rs1 Corrode and Rs 10 Arabs. In order to avoid double taxation, extortion amounts above Rs 1 Kharab on FDI will be tax deductible.

**4 Laughter Tax:** To show it is serious about taxes, the government has instituted a new Levity Levy. Anyone found guffawing, chuckling, giggling, or even snorting while reading this column will be taxed an amount calculated on the basis of duration and intensity of mirth. Said amount will be automatically deducted from reader's safety deposit box. Who is laughing now?

**5 Death Tax:** All Nepalis will have to posthumously pay a death tax to the state at the successful completion of their current lives. Future incarnations will be taxed on a pre-paid basis.

Let us bray.

The Ass



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