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MONIKA DEUPALA

Manisha's new life

Rupa Joshi

The girl from Nepal was just 19 when she starred in her first Bollywood movie. Manisha Koirala (*left*) shone in the Indian film industry in the 1990s, winning many awards. At one point, she was doing a dozen movies a year, working exhausting 18-hour days. But after a string of unsuccessful romances and films, a failed marriage, and alcoholism, Manisha came face to face with death. In 2012, she was diagnosed with last-stage ovarian cancer. How she dealt with the crisis, and how she came out a survivor, extricating herself not just from the disease but also the rut her life had fallen into, is the theme of her new book *Healed*.

"Now that I am healed, I wish to help others," Manisha Koirala said ahead of the Nepal Literature Festival in Pokhara, where her parents will unveil the book on Saturday.

Manisha was among the lucky quintile of women who have been diagnosed with stage four ovarian cancer, but beaten the disease. She has now been cancer free for six years, and follows a 'reformed' regimen of meditation, prayer, yoga, *pranayama* and a vegetarian diet, with a huge dollop of mindfulness. She went back to Bollywood after a five year break, and is now focused on taking on fewer, yet more meaningful films.

Cancer treatment is expensive, she says, and wants the Nepal government to do more on prevention by checking toxic contamination of air, water and food, promote healthier lifestyles, and provide world class affordable cancer treatment for the needy. And the rest is up to individuals.


"Cancer is not a death sentence, so one should not lose hope," she says.

Manisha's tale is a roller coaster of fear, panic, pain, glimmers of hope and dark hopelessness. It is a book of self-discovery, where the author honestly and minutely analyses her own life, her decisions, her 'toxic relationships' and mistakes.

The fluid narrative borrows on memories of an actress who has starred in over 80 Bollywood movies, and lays bare the

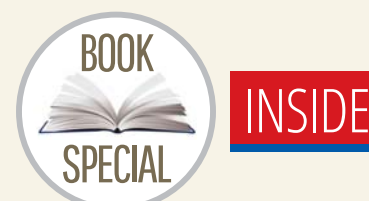
ordinary human being behind the trappings of glamour. Nothing is spared, the raw emotions are laid out in agonising detail: her 'ruthlessly stapled' abdomen, the 'guttural cry' she let out in the shower, or chemotherapy that unleashed '...dark, wild wolves, their mouths open, fangs bared, seeking out each vein of my body, tearing forward at great speed.'

We travel along with Manisha as she turns from a 'weak tree' to a 'deep-rooted banyan'. She shares tips and tricks about self-healing. She admits that cancer came into her life 'as a gift, that left her with many learnings, just like a flooded river that leaves behind rich deposits of silt'.

Manisha Koirala dissects her life choices, habits, and directs us to pay attention to everyone's 'inner compass', to embrace life and live in the moment just as she learnt to. 



Watch Manish Koirala in an interview on *Nepali Times Studio* where she speaks about her battle against cancer. Go online to also read the full review of her book, *Healed*.



Yearender

Books by Kesang Tseten, Lisa Choegyal, Nicola Streeten, Sam Cowan, Hemanta R Mishra, Sradha Ghale, Greta Rana, Mohammed Hanif, Kai-Fu Lee and Panos South Asia.


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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

TULSI GIRI, 93

The passing of Tulsi Giri, the doctor-turned-politician-turned-follower of the Jehovah's Witness sect, who died on 18 December aged 93, marked the end of an era in Nepal's recent political history.

Giri's close friend and colleague, Biswa Bandhu Thapa, is now one of the last remaining survivors of a period in Nepal's politics when it moved from feudalism to constitutional monarchy to absolute monarchy and back within the span of a few years. There are now few witnesses left of that era after the stalwarts of the Panchayat passed on in the past few years: Surya Bahadur Thapa, Kirti Nidhi Bista, and now Tulsi Giri.

The general elections of 1959 propelled the Nepali Congress to power in a landslide victory. B P Koirala has noticed Tulsi Giri's charismatic persona and considered him to be an unflinching democrat during campaigning. Giri became BP's blue-eyed boy to such an extent that top Congress leaders were turned off, and became suspicious of Giri's influence over the Prime Minister.

BP named Tulsi Giri Foreign Minister when he was just 34, made him a close adviser during a time of sensitive geopolitics as relations between India and China soured, and Nepal was opening up to the outside world.

But BP's trust in Giri did not last, as he found him increasingly demanding and a possible rival within the party. The ambitious Giri, for his part, felt that he could not go higher in government as long as BP was around in the Congress.

Tulsi Giri was also getting increasingly disenamoured with Western-style parliamentary democracy that Nepal inherited from Britain via India. And when he came across a paper written by Indian freedom fighter Jaya Prakash Naryan that rural India should have partyless elections and governance, Giri had a eureka moment.

"It was a very relevant document," he confided to a Nepali journalist much later in Sri Lanka where he was living with his wife Sarah Yonzon. Giri was convinced during campaigning for the 1959 elections, later as an MP in the national Parliament and a member of the Cabinet, that despite the strong majority that the Nepali Congress had, the western model of democracy would not work in Nepal. His reasonings were: Nepalis were too unaware to vote meaningfully so caste and ethnic vote banks made a mockery of majority rule, the strong monarchy would always be a destabilising factor, and all this would leave Nepal a playground for the proxy rivalries of

global and regional powers.

King Mahendra had been on the throne since 1955, and was not really happy sharing powers traditionally enjoyed by the royal palace with an elected Parliament. As distrust grew between King and Koirala (egged on, perhaps, by geopolitical meddling) Mahendra famously told BP: "Nepal is not big enough for the both of us."

BP was supposed to accompany Mahendra on a hunting trip to western Nepal, but sent Tulsi Giri instead. Mahendra was looking for a high-level defector from the Nepali Congress and sensed Giri's discontent. Giri broached his theory of a partyless system with the king, and this must have been music to Mahendra's ears. Historians say it was during this trip that King Mahendra hatched his plan for a coup, and the ideology of a partyless Panchayat system more suited to Nepal.

Till the night before the coup of 15 December 1960, Mahendra and BP were dining together, and the Prime Minister was

trying to work out the growing differences with the king. But the next day Mahendra suddenly dismissed government, dissolved Parliament, and put BP Koirala and his party leaders in jail.

Giri went on to serve thrice as Chairman of the council of minister during the 1960s, since it was

Mahendra's habit to keep reshuffling the Cabinet and have a revolving door prime ministership depending on the public mood, his mood, and whether the wind was blowing from the south or north.

Mahendra died in 1972 and was followed by Birendra, who was killed in the royal massacre of 2001, to be succeeded for four days by his comatose son, Dipendra,

and then his brother, Gyanendra. The Maoist war was nearing a peak, and Gyanendra tried to turn the clock back to the Panchayat. He staged a coup like his father did on 1 February 2005, bringing Giri back as a co-chair of the council of ministers.

Giri said later he agreed reluctantly, but what convinced him was his fervent belief that Nepal would do better under a partyless system of government. Whatever one may say about Tulsi Giri, he never wavered from that belief.

The monarchy and democracy were never compatible in Nepal, but it must be said that a decade after Nepal abolished the monarchy, and under a new federal republican constitution, many Nepalis feel things have not got any better.

Whatever one may say about Tulsi Giri, once he defected, he remained for 60 years firmly convinced that Western-style democracy did not suit Nepal, and we needed the stability of a partyless system.



ONLINE PACKAGES



IT'S RAINING BOOKS!

For the holiday season, *Nepali Times* brings you year-end book recommendations and a sneak peek into the Nepal Literature Festival 22-25 December in Pokhara. On our list: Manisha Koirala's *Healed*, Lisa Choegyal's making of *Kathmandu Valley Style*, Greta Rana, Shradha Ghale, British graphic novelist Nicola Streeten, Chinese AI pioneer Kai-Fu Lee, retired British Gurkha general Sam Cowan, conservationist Hemanta R Mishra, and Panos South Asia's new book on migration. *Reviews: pages 1, 6, 7, 8-9, 11 and 14-15.*



NT STUDIO WITH MANISHA KOIRALA

Don't miss this exclusive *Nepali Times Studio* conversation with Nepali Bollywood star Manisha Koirala where talks about her battle with cancer and her book *Healed*. *Profile: page 1.*

NEPALI ART TO VIENNA

We are very much looking forward to seeing those fantastic contemporary Nepali artists in Vienna ('Nepal Art Now in Vienna', #938)! *Weltmuseum Wien*

NEPALI AAMA

Great story, thanks. ('Aama's village', Broughton Coburn, #938). Nepal must make the transition into a modern state without losing the benefits and blessings of some of its old traditions and culture.

Johan De Meyere

Beautiful story, I read the books. Human hearts and emotions connected across cultures.

Michael Schreck

I met Brot in the early '80s and still have his book. So much has changed in Nepal since then.

Walter De Boeck

I grabbed *Nepali Aama* back when it first came out. That began a reawakening of my involvement with Nepal and culminated in coming back on a Fulbright in 2004. Thanks for sharing this.

Jeff Huestis

Great mother and son bonding made not by birth, but by heart.

Tirtha Kharel

MESSY AIRPORT

The Ass has forgotten to mention the sign towards the new parking lot which says NO TROLLEYS. ('Metal free ass', Backside, #938) So it seems that the Airport authority expects all passengers to carry suitcases down. There is no path assigned to get to the Parking Lot.

Stephan Kocher

AQ

Also Beyond IQ and EQ... we must embrace our AQ (Adaptability Quotient) ('The Science of Learning', Prakriti Kandel, #938). It may sound like another buzz word, but an ability to adopt and thrive in the fast-changing competitive world is vital for future job and career prospects.

Nabin Shrestha

WHAT'S TRENDING



Aama's village

by Broughton Coburn
Peace Corps volunteer Broughton Coburn revisited Kolma village in Syangja after 37 years to relive the memories of his adopted Nepali mother, and found much has changed. The story was the most popular last week. Go online to read it, and watch video.

Most reached and shared on Facebook

Most popular on Twitter

India watching from Nepal

by Rameshwar Bohara
Narendra Modi's BJP suffered a shocking defeat in assembly elections in five states, some of them in the Hindu heartland. What are its implications for Nepal? Read the analysis on nepalitimes.com and join the online discussion.

Most visited online page

Metal free Ass

by Ass
Many readers found this spoof on Kathmandu's airport tragi-comic, as is evident from the online feedback. Head over to the *Nepali Times* homepage. You will not know whether to laugh or cry.

Most commented

QUOTE TWEETS

Nepali Times @nepalitimes
नेपाली आमा Broughton Coburn goes back to the village of Kolma in Syangja after 35 years to relive the memories of his Nepali mother. Watch video and read story in @nepalitimes here

Kalyan Nemkul @Namecool
Best thing in the Internet today. Had tears in my eyes.

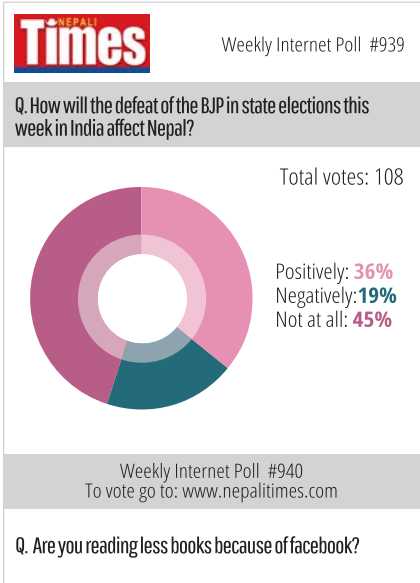
Rebecca @_Re_be_cca
I loved the fact that Coburn took Aama to America. I enjoyed reading the book too.

Nepali Times @nepalitimes
Our airport is not congested anymore. Grumblement's strategy to make terminal building inhospitable worked! People just stopped coming. And don't you dare come back: we don't want congestion at airport to give the world a bad impression about Nepal #Satire

Dr Mara Malagodi @RestlessMafalda Dec 15
Oh this @nepalitimes piece on #KathmanduAirport is amazing - so bitterly funny. Yes, I still haven't got the hang of the 'metal free zone' at Arrivals AFTER immigration and BEFORE baggage claim...

Nepali Times @nepalitimes
The @WeltmuseumWien, one of the most renowned ethnographic museums in the world, is organising a first-of-its kind exhibition to showcase the best works of Nepali contemporary & traditional art to a worldwide audience from 11 April–05 November 2019. #Nepal

Narendra Khadka @NKhadka
Massive congratulations to Nepali artists



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Publisher and Chief Editor: Kunda Dixit
Design: Kiran Maharjan
Published by Himalmedia Pvt Ltd | Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur | GPO Box 7251 Kathmandu
editors@nepalitimes.com | www.nepalitimes.com | www.himalmedia.com | Tel: 01-5005601-08 Fax: +977-1-5005518
Marketing: Arjun Karki, Surendra Sharma rachanas@himalmedia.com | Subscriptions: Santosh Aryal santosh@himalmedia.com
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Daraz finds Nepalis still shy to shop online

Despite modest success, 11.11 and 12.12 sales have been slow to pick up



Ruixue Zhang

Until Nepal works in IT in Kathmandu and has been buying provisions and necessities online for three years. But tech savvy as he is, he did not buy anything online on 12.12, Nepal's second online shopping day after 11.11 last month when hundreds of heavily discounted products were on sale online.

Nepal was not the only person who did not join in. There wasn't the usual buzz on social media about 12.12 that there is in Pakistan, the country where Daraz originated — or the publicity in China, the home base of Daraz's new owner Alibaba Group.

Managing Director Lino Ahlering of Daraz Nepal says the company has learnt from its lacklustre performance last month: "12.12 will not be as big as 11.11 but we have done a lot to improve our user experience so Nepali customers will not be shopping online only for one day in a year."

The first online shopping day in Nepal named '11.11 Sales Day' on 11 November offered up to 80% discount on some items for customers in Nepal over a 24-hour

period.

However, even 12.12 did not really take off because of negative publicity in social media about lack of real discounts, and botched deliveries.

Maybe the country is just not ready yet for e-commerce. It could be that without card payment and online transactions, cash on delivery alone is not enough to take cyber-shopping to a new level.

Nepal said he and his friends were excited about the 11.11 sales day before it happened because they had seen Black Friday and Cyber Monday Sales in other countries. He had bought a cleaning gel on Daraz in October, and when Sales Day came, he checked the app again and found a similar product was sold for 76% discount.

"That's a really good deal, but when I clicked the product it was a different story," said Nepal who bought the gel for Rs249 — only to find out that the same item could be bought for Rs245 in a shopping mall. "That was just ridiculous, it looked like the campaign was misleading."

Nepal posted his experiences on the Twitter and got hundreds of responses, and the negative publicity made it to the mainstream media as well. In response,

Daraz said Nepali buyers had the misconception that the company was a retailer.

Said Managing Director Lino Ahlering: "Daraz is more like a marketplace connecting local sellers with local customers, we have a safety mechanism which does not allow any price increases before the campaign."

Despite the downbeat comments, Ahlering said the 11.11 campaign broke all records for Sale Day, its first since Daraz was bought by China's e-commerce company, the Alibaba Group. The 11.11 event has been held in China for the last nine years, with more than \$30 billion in sales this year on 11 November, which in China is marked as Singles' Day — as opposed to Valentine's Day for couples.

Even though Nepalis were unaware of the concept of a Singles' Day and 11.11, Daraz's brand manager Salina Nakarmi said the portal sold 1,000 Poco phones in less than 30 minutes and almost 50,000 orders were received in 24 hours.

Daraz would not disclose daily sales figures, but Binod Krishna Shrestha of Kathmandu University said that the marketing site does not yet command enough of a brand loyalty yet because most people do not find online purchases trustworthy.

Sixit Bhatta, co-founder of the motorcycle ride-sharing app Tootle, says he is puzzled about why Daraz decided to replicate 11.11 in Nepal.

"When you run any campaign, it needs to be culturally contextual. So the first thing I felt was that 11.11 and 12.12 didn't connect with the Nepali public," Bhatta said.

Ahlering is aware of the need to be culturally aligned with the market, but said young Nepali customers are catching on to online shopping. He says Daraz will work on educating buyers through social media, video tutorials and media outreach.

He added: "I wouldn't say everything is perfect now. I think we have a great foundation, but there is still a lot to do."

Selected Online feedback:

- There is no nationwide address system in place. So how could it work?

Marc McConnell
- Having a reliable internet connection would help.

Aksel Lydersen
- We have very few Nepali brands that we can trust. We are not sure of the quality of products they sell. Who knows, we may find them at Mahaboudha.

Binija Dhital Goperma
- It is very important to gain trust for a new player in the market. If you work with short-term goals, you cannot create a reliable brand. Instead, your off-hand approach is likely to turn off potential customers, which can precipitate disaster for your business. This seems to be the case with poor Daraz.

Ben Gary
- Daraz charge sellers 15% commission on every transaction. This cost seems to be added to the retail price and passed on to the customer. So even after discounts, Daraz prices are still higher than market prices. It is not surprising that business is not exactly booming. With the additional difficulties of credit/debit card transactions, Nepal has a long way to go to catch up with the rest of the world.

Alex Ferguson
- We have all the time in the world to look around and use our bargaining power in the streets. Why be stupid and buy overpriced stuff online?

Santosh Adhikari
- Nepali buying culture is largely based on bargaining. If the 'mega discount' offers are actually meagre, why would a person buy from Daraz, especially if they can get it cheaper in New Road?


Kapil Shrestha

prabhu BANK

BIZ BRIEFS

Turkish now to Lusaka


Turkish Airlines has started biweekly flights to Lusaka, the capital of Zambia making it the 55th African destination of the airline



which now reaches 124 countries and 306 destinations worldwide. Victoria Falls, one of the seven wonders of the world, is located south-west of Lusaka and is a major tourist destination in Zambia.

Expanding Qatar


Qatar Airways group chief executive Akbar Al Baker conducted a media roundtable to discuss the airlines' expansion plans during Qatar's annual Doha Forum. Over the past 18 months, the airline added 23 new destinations, and during December, started flights to Mombasa in Kenya and Gothenburg in Sweden. The airways currently operates a fleet of over 200 aircraft.



at Soaltee Crown Plaza. Tourism industry reps, airport and government authorities attended to hear about the UAE airline's future plans.

Ford Getaway

In order to inform customers about the endurance and convenience of Ford vehicles, GO Automobiles organised a getaway at Hattiban Resort show-casing




the Raptor, Ranger, Freestyle, Ecosport and Ford Endeavour. They were taken for test drives on off-road tracks. Ford Nepal also launched the new Ranger Raptor priced at Rs12,500,000.

NMB's new products

NMB Bank has announced the launch of eight loan products in its Micro Finance portfolio under the umbrella of 'NMB Interest Subsidy Loans'. The loans range from Rs 300,000 to Rs 1,500,000. Seven of the loans are 'collateral free' and provide entrepreneurial opportunities to individuals under different categories such as women farmers, businesses to uplift underprivileged communities, employment projects for returnees from foreign countries.

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*Regular a la carte menu will also be available.

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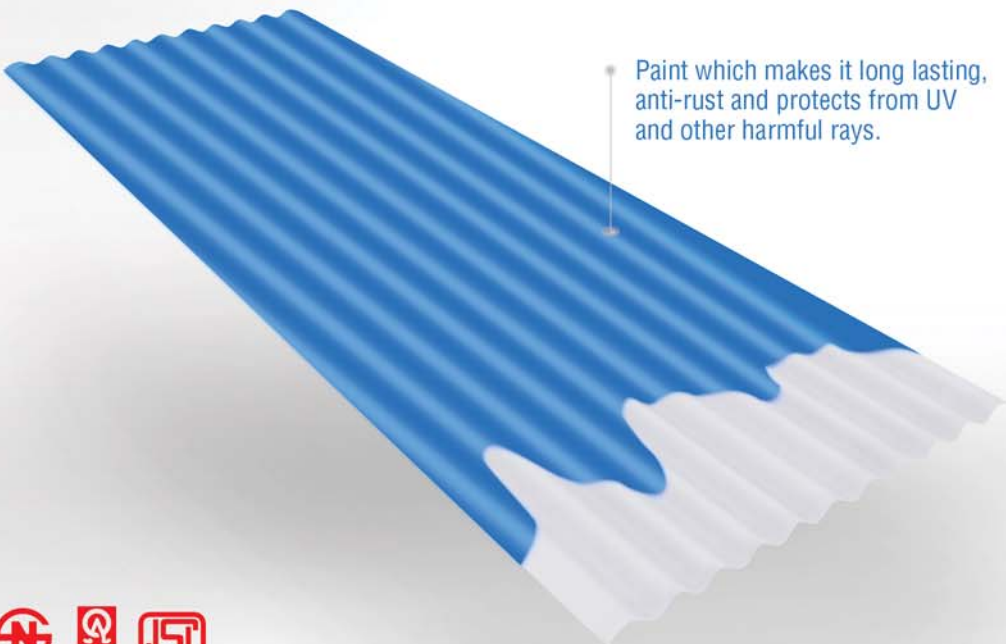
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Is there a Kathmandu Valley Style?

Yes, there is. But the book may not have convinced everyone to preserve the Valley's traditional architecture

“Actually, we are only photographing the house, if that's all right.” The chatelaine at the foot of the sweeping staircase beneath a massive chandelier had obviously gone to great trouble with her appearance, draped in a yellow sequinned chiffon sari and hair freshly coiffed. She smiled in disappointment, “Of course, of course! Do please come in.”



SO FAR SO GOOD
Lisa Choegyal

Our motley crew on the *Kathmandu Valley Style* photo shoot set to work. His lanky frame bent over the tripod, Craig Potton was a fast worker, better known as New Zealand's leading photographer of iconic nature and national park images, ubiquitous on Kiwi posters, calendars and postcards. His eager local assistants, Tino and Lothoto, my Tibetan nephew, wrestled with reflectors, unreliable lights, loose electric plugs and power cuts.

Gautam SJB Rana, mastermind of *Babar Mahal Revisited*, author of *Ranas of Nepal* and my collaborator, had arranged access to an array of rarefied interiors and private residences that had never before been glimpsed by the public. His volatile talent was knowing where to find exquisite examples of Nepali architectural adaptations and persuading homeowners, often his relatives, to allow us to reveal them in our book to celebrate the Valley's vernacular styles and artisan virtuosity.

Our aim was to showcase the lesser-known and more imaginative models of Malla Newar, Rana neo-classical and Tibetan architectural and decorative styles in new buildings and restored old ones around



PICTURING HERITAGE: Craig Potton, New Zealand's leading photographer and conservationist, at work in Dwarika's Hotel for the book *Kathmandu Valley Style* in 2007.

2007 – we both needed a change of pace and this project was an ideal opportunity, as well as a mutual passion. Being a climber and environmentalist, Craig had longstanding connections with the country – we trekked the same year to Mustang with his teenage son, who he claimed was conceived in Chitwan. Craig had startled me into our first book back in 1995, *Offerings from Nepal*, a largely forgotten collection of edgy images of real life in Nepal that was a refreshing change from the usual chocolate box coffee table tomes of the day.

Such is the wealth and variety of styles in the intoxicating intensity of the Kathmandu Valley, we decided to focus our mission and leave the wider Nepal and Himalaya to others. My list shows we covered nearly 50 houses, hotels, restaurants and gardens, in addition to historic palaces and world heritage sites – not all made the cut.

Gautam's punishing schedule had us covering several locations a day in all corners of the Valley. Royalty, Ranas, Newars, Tibetans, Ambassadors and Western expatriates were prevailed upon to open their doors to us and our speedy camerawork. More than one host remarked: “Are you finished already?” as we piled into the car and sped on to the next appointment, thanking them profusely.

Goetz Hagemuller's matchless *Kuthu Math* in Bhaktapur was always a first choice for the cover, that arbiter of style whose sure taste has powerfully pervaded so many Valley restorations, and Dwarika's, which still defines

the high bar of heritage hotels and master craftsmanship.

We appreciated the elegant intimacy of *Chino* and Elizabeth Roncoroni's farmhouse, another trendsetter of Nepali design, Gert-Matthias Wegner's music studio, and the precious jewel of Bal Krishna Sama's artist cottage.

One sunny afternoon found us on the Valley rim at Kakani where we took the liberty of rearranging furniture in the British Resident's

historic bungalow – dating from the mid-nineteenth century, and tragically it was destined not to survive the 2015

earthquakes. Quite a number of other properties have also gone missing – the James Giambrone's Indigo Gallery has moved, Janet Rockwell's Bansbari Bungalow has been encroached, Barbara Adams' Thapa House is changed forever, and Ian Baker's questionable collection had evaporated even before publication.

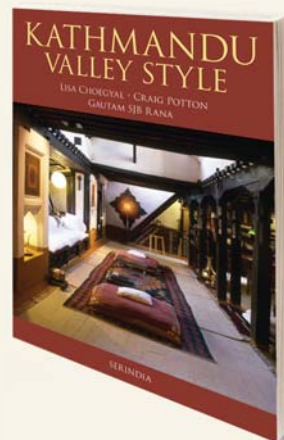
It is heartening that most of the Nepali and Tibetan homes are less transitory, with their carved woodwork, moulded bricks, gilded columns, art deco profusion, painted furniture, elaborate decoration and silk hangings. Many of the more glorious illustrations still endure as accessible spaces – Romi Khosla's Gorkarna Forest Hotel, Bharat Basnet's *Bhojan Griha* restaurant and Niels Gutschow's fanciful stupa-studded lobby at the Hyatt Regency hotel.

But did *Kathmandu Valley Style* succeed in convincing residents to commit to restore and reuse historic buildings, or adopt their incomparable and admired indigenous designs in new constructions? After a casual glance around Valley architecture, I think not. 🇳🇵



Thai Nepal glitterati at his Bangkok gallery.

I was lucky to find Craig in a spiritual frame of mind and persuadable to spend some weeks in Nepal over several visits in



Kathmandu Valley Style by Lisa Choegyal, Craig Potton and Gautam SJB Rana
Serindia Publications, 2008
Hardback \$67, 184 Pages

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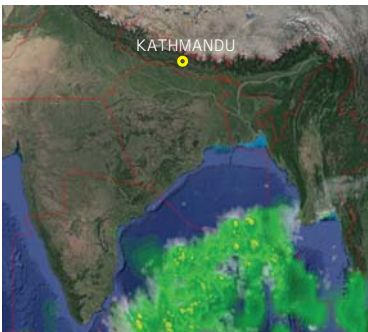


World's No.1 Sensitivity Toothpaste*

*Retail Value Sales data 12 months ending 30th April 2016.

CHBAN/CHSENSO0015/17

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Cloud cover associated with Cyclone Phethai grazed Nepal, dumping some snow at higher elevations in the east, but not much elsewhere this week. Kathmandu Valley remains under a dry spell, with no westerly disturbance on the horizon. Expect night-time inversion in the Valley, with smoggy mornings giving way to clearer, sunny afternoons. The minimum temperature will continue to drop to the low single digits.

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Women’s stories in pictures and words

Sewa Bhattarai

Nicola Streeten asked a roomful of people in Kathmandu who their heroines were. Most named their mothers and grandmothers. The reasons: strength, endurance, staying positive and struggling against adversity. To which the British graphic novelist and historian of women’s cartoons asked: “So how come they barely ever make it to print when it comes to heroic tales?”

Streeten was speaking at the British Council on Tuesday, and will be facilitating a three-day workshop for artists and illustrators on creating heroines at the Nepal Literature Festival in Pokhara this weekend.

“When we think of the word ‘hero’, it brings to the mind a conquering man, and historically, men’s autobiographies have fit into that mould. When women started writing about their lives, especially after the 1970s, their books were called ‘memoirs’, in a sort of lessening or trivialising manner. Women’s experiences do not fit into the mould of the ‘hero’, which is full of gender stereotypes,” she says.

Streeten was also in Nepal in February 2018 for a workshop for South Asian

illustrators. The result was a zine showcasing stereotype-free conceptualisations of heroines. The idea, eventually, is to have such standalone artworks develop into graphic novels and reach out to more people, including through school curricula.

“If more people can access stories of everyday heroines, it helps those who are going through similar experiences feel less alone, and more confident about speaking up about their own experiences,” Streeten says, accepting that graphic novels still struggle for acceptance.

When creating her graphic novel *Billy, Me and You* (2011) about the grief of losing a child, Streeten faced questions about why she wanted to use the format for such a

serious subject. Streeten’s response: for easy accessibility. Pictures with words are easier to understand than a long novel or modern art. That is the reason she conducts workshops for making simple sketches.

But many still associate graphic novels with children’s comic books, even after Holocaust story *Maus* (1986) won the Pulitzer prize and an Iran-born girl’s confessions *Persepolis* (2000) garnered critical acclaim. Women’s art in this genre is taken even less seriously.

This is not new. From the 18th century, women who worked at or owned printing presses, to the suffragist movements of 19th and 20th, British women were prolific cartoon makers. However, these cannot be found in most cartoon archives.

“Many early women cartoonists did so for a cause, and stopped after their cause succeeded. Most archiving is a masculine pursuit and it was not in their interest to document the feminist agenda,” Streeten explains. “Many women also wrote under gender neutral names or under last names only, so their contribution to this art form is not as well known as it should be.”

Streeten reckons this is a worldwide trend, conceding that things have changed for the better today. Women can now disseminate their artwork through the Internet even though it is not yet a level playing field.

Streeten now wants to work on a new book about the history of women’s cartoons all over the world, that will be an update to her previous book *Inking Woman*. She says: “At the end of the day, everything is political, whether a cartoon is about trauma, anxiety, or even lifestyle. Women’s cartoons and graphic novels depict our social and political scenario through women’s lives.”

Nicola Streeten’s sessions at the Nepal Literature Festival, Pokhara Workshop: Graphic Novel Your Life 19-21 Dec, Hotel Barahi Panel discussion with Kanchan Burathoki: The Art of the Graphic Memoir 3:00PM-4:00PM, 22 Dec, Taal Barahi Chowk



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Conflict and

Two new books that look at the history of Nepal's security and

A general's labyrinth

Sam Cowan's *Essays on Nepal: Past and Present* deserved a more creative title. But being a retired Colonel Commandant of the British Brigade of Gurkhas, the book's name seems to mix a Nepali's understatement with a laconic Brit. All 19 chapters are written with military precision in detail and accuracy, and are a *tour d'horizon* of recent (and not so recent) Nepali history with a special focus on security matters.

These pre-published articles range from the recruitment of Gurkha soldiers, how Chinese influence has changed the Tibetan rimlands in Nepal, a historic account of the visits of two of Nepal's rulers to London, treks, earthquakes, and a recent case study of blatant corruption.

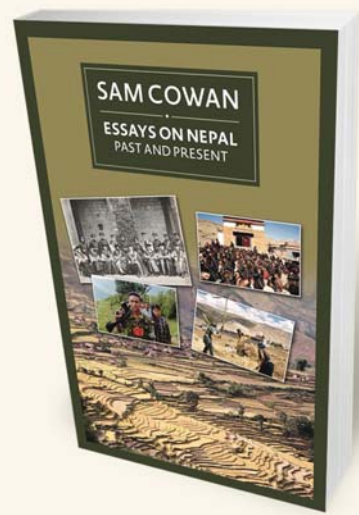
The most exciting essays in the book are the ones dealing with a Khampa raid from Tsum Valley on the Chinese army (*sidebar, right*) and a Chinese raid on a Nepali police unit in Mustang, the fate of Gurkhas in the Indian Army taken prisoner by the Chinese, and an account of the battles of Khara and Pili in western Nepal during the Maoist conflict.

Sam Cowan's in-depth understanding of Nepal stems from his long association with the British Gurkhas, his frequent visits not just to Kathmandu but to the hinterland. Being eye-witness to the changes Nepal has been through in its recent past, and because of his diverse interests, the book spans both time and space. Being an outsider gives Cowan the advantage most Nepalis may lack because they are too immersed in Nepal's day to day socio-political dynamics, and cannot see the forest for the trees. Cowan sees both.

The book begins with the start of Cowan's own career with the British Army in Malaya in the 1960s during which he got to know Gurkha soldiers up close and personal. He rose up the ranks to head the Brigade of the Gurkhas, and in that position visited Nepal many times, meeting kings and their subjects.

Cowan traces the genesis of Nepal as

the nation state expanded to increase revenue, and how it needed more territory to fund an ever-larger military. The Gorkha expansion brought Kathmandu in direct collision course with Calcutta, and the Anglo-Nepal War with the Sugauli Treaty of 1816 laid the basis of British India's influence in the royal court, fulfilled its strategic interest to confine Nepalis to the hills, and allowed the recruitment of Gurkhas into British Indian Army.



*Essays on Nepal
Past and Present*
by Sam Cowan
Himal Books, 2018
Rs 990, 362 pages

Feudalism persisted in Nepal, thus perpetuating the contradictions that lay at the roots of the Maoist uprising. Four of Cowan's chapters are about the 1996-2006 insurgency, and the General writes knowledgeably about the strengths and weaknesses of the guerrillas and the security forces. He dissects three specific battles which should be required

reading in military academies.

Cowan then turns his attention to the Nepal Police and Royal Nepal Army detailing how they fall into the classic trap of committing human rights violations during a guerrilla conflict. He says: 'It is the state and its security forces that must set a higher standard of behaviour based on operating within the law.'

Royal Nepal Army generals took this argument and his later writings on the iconic Maina Sunar rape-torture-murder at the Panchkhal Base to prove that Cowan was a Maoist sympathiser. For his part, Cowan believes that the lack of closure, the absence of truth and justice were some of the reasons for the state of impunity in Nepal today.

One crucial angle missing from this analysis and many other writings on the insurgency is the initial involvement of hardliners in the Royal Palace in supporting the Maoists to launch their armed struggle, and the later collusion of Indian intelligence in providing training and safe haven in India to rebel leaders so they could keep tabs on them. But perhaps that should be the subject of a whole another book.

In an addendum to one of the chapters, Cowan recounts his meeting with King Gyanendra in 2002 during which he told him that the monarchy was in peril in Nepal's triangular power struggle between the palace, the parties and the rebels: 'It was imperative that he form an alliance with one of them, preferably by a long way, the political parties, otherwise he would find himself isolated, as the other two parties would inevitably, at some stage, form their own alliance.'

Needless to say, King G did not heed this advice, and continued to consolidate power, leading up to the 1 February 2005 coup and the king's eventual capitulation in April 2006 after the People's Movement spearheaded by the seven parties plus the Maoists.

The general's essays are full of revelations and new interpretations that add important new perspective to the corpus of literature on Nepali history. 🇳🇵



Hit and

Sam Cowan's *Essays on Nepal* has a chapter devoted to the intriguing story of a British tv crew that organised and filmed a raid by Nepal-based Khampa guerrillas on a Chinese army convoy across the border in Tibet in July 1964. Cowan uses newly declassified Foreign Office documents from the UK National Archives to piece together the entire sordid saga. The account mentions a young Nepali student serving as liaison officer for the film crew.

That student turns out to be none other than Hemanta R Mishra, who was 19 at the time. Four of the chapters in Mishra's memoir *On His Majesty's Service* are about how the film-makers hoodwinked everyone in Kathmandu. This was similar to the story of another expedition in western Nepal in which British climbers were working for Indian intelligence.

The team consisted of pro-Tibet activist George Patterson, who had spent three years in Kham as a missionary and believed he had a divine mission as a Christian to stop the spread of Communism by the creation of a Himalayan Confederation of Bhutan, Nepal, Sikkim and Tibet. Cameraman Adrian Cowell went on to make other notable films such as the award-winning Amazon documentary, *The Tribe that Hides from Man*. And there was Chris Menges, who later won an Oscar for cinematography in the *The Killing Fields*.

The rest of the cast of characters included Mishra himself, Prime Minister Tulsī Giri (*see Editorial, page 2*), Foreign Minister Kirtinidhi Bista, Chief of Protocol Prakash C Thakur, Foreign Secretary Padam Bahadur Khatri, Narayan Banskota of the Department of Information, and King Mahendra.

Patterson had come to Nepal to join and film a Khampa raid in Tibet to re-ignite Western interest for the Tibetan cause. Much later he would tell an interviewer, "I was a spy for the Khampas". The CIA had been training Tibetan guerrillas and parachuting them into Tibet. The Americans were using Indian military bases to ferry supplies to Khampa camps in Nepal, and since the Brits did not get permission to go to Mustang, they opted for the Tsum Valley. The CIA operations were not going very well, and the Chinese were gaining an upper hand. Preoccupied with other crises, Washington was losing interest in Tibet.

Mishra had been deputed as interpreter as the crew filmed King Mahendra inaugurating various projects near Kathmandu. Patterson used his wife's connections to get Tulsī Giri's permission to make a documentary on Buddhism, arguing that the film would counter claims that the Buddha was born in India. Although Narayan Prasad Banskota did not trust Patterson, he had his orders and appointed the adventure-minded 19-year-old Hemanta Mishra to be liaison officer.

Mishra's book is a dramatic account of



AKASH CHETTRI

conservation

and conservation also overlap in accounts of a raid on Tibet

a Dixit



run film

the march up the Budi Gandaki River and the British film crew meeting mysterious Tibetans. In Chokang, the Brits slip away over the 6,000m Khojang Pass to the Dzongkha-Kerung highway. The head of the Khampa unit was Tendar, who helped with Chris Menges' Bolex camera for the 'shoot'. Finally a convoy of four Chinese lorries came down the highway and a brief firefight ensued in which a dozen Chinese soldiers were killed and two of the trucks were blown up.

The team trekked back to Kathmandu at the peak of the monsoon, evading detection of their precious film at the Indian checkpoint in Setibas. They got the film out on a flight to Dhaka in then East Pakistan.

In Kathmandu, Patterson decided to tell all to the new British Ambassador Antony Duff who then told King Mahendra about the film of the raid. King Mahendra's reaction to Ambassador Duff: "This film will be a big headache for us and for you."

Indeed, no one except hardcore Tibetan nationalists wanted the film out, not even the Dalai Lama who had instructed the Khampas to stop crossborder raids and take up farming. All hell broke loose in Kathmandu after Mahendra called Foreign Minister Bista to give him a dressing down. Bista hauled his foreign Secretary Khatri over the coals, who blamed everyone down the line. Two of the Brits and Mishra were arrested at Birganj while on their way to Calcutta and their harmless films confiscated. This was obviously delayed over-reaction in Nepal's feudal system to royal displeasure. Patterson himself was detained at Kathmandu airport, and later allowed to leave the country.

Raid Into Tibet was finally aired in Britain's ATV in May 1966, and although it won awards and was praised, it was no successful in getting the Americans and British to resume military support for the liberation of Tibet. 🇳🇵

RAID INTO TIBET



Go online to watch the documentary on the Khampa attack on a Chinese military convoy that created waves in 1966 when it was aired on British tv. The film also has rare footage of King Mahendra in Kathmandu inaugurating various projects.

nepalitimes.com

How did Nepal become a global success story for conservation? Despite its development challenges, how did the government manage to set aside one-fifth of the country's area for nature protection? How did one of the poorest countries in Asia become a model for innovative approaches in combining people's livelihoods with environmental protection?

Most of the answers can be found in Hemanta R Mishra's new memoir, *On His Majesty's Service* that recounts the early days when scientists began to understand the incredible biodiversity of the Nepal Himalaya and the need to protect it not just for Nepal, but as a world heritage.

A young forestry graduate, Mishra threw himself into the deep end, learning quickly to navigate Nepal's feudocracy, bureaucratic obstacles and turf battles. As the title of the book suggests, a large part of the credit for Nepal's environmental protection efforts went to hunter-turned-conservationist kings.

The subtitle of *On His Majesty's Service* is an unwieldy but revealing list of all the other protagonists that Mishra interacted with during his career: *Royals, Hippies & Hustlers, British Film Makers & Tibetan Khampa Guerrillas, United Nations and American Peace Corps, Mt Everest Summiteers and Battles for Conservation in the Himalayas*. Whew.

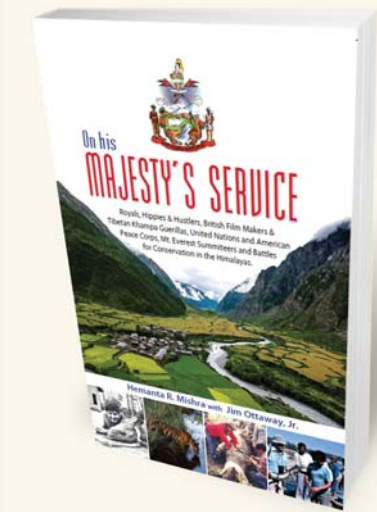
As with his previous books, *The Soul of the Rhino*, *The Bones of the Tiger* and *Nepal's Chitwan National Park: A Handbook*, Mishra has taken the editing help of his long-time publisher friend Jim Ottaway Jr who is credited with convincing Mishra during a trek to Mustang in 2010 to start working on this memoir.

Mishra's own family history evokes the stark reality of life in Nepal in the last century: his mother ('a prolific breeder') gave birth to her first daughter at age 13 and had 16 children by the time she was 36. Only seven survived, two of them boys.

Educated in a Jesuit school, Mishra's command of English landed him his first job as a liaison officer for a British film crew that actually turned out to be something else (*see box, left*). He then accompanied UN consultants to Langtang, the Khumbu, Chitwan, Bardia, Kosi Tappu and Sukla Phanta to explore their biodiversity. It was this research that led to all of them being declared national parks or nature reserves by 1976.

The book is full of anecdotes about each of the sanctuaries. How locals believe Sukla Panta to be jinxed because of the heart attack King Mahendra suffered during a hunt just as a tiger jumped out of the tall grass. King and tiger both lived. Then, the accidental near-fatal shooting of Queen Ratna by her son (we don't know which one) during another hunt.

We find out how it was King Bernhard of The Netherlands and also Chair of the



On His Majesty's Service
by Hemanta R Mishra
Vajra Books, 2018
Rs 900, 354 pages

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) who suggested that Nepal declare the Mt Everest region a national park at the Fund's conference in Bonn in 1973. Mishra accompanied Prince Gyanendra to Bonn where the widely-acclaimed announcement was made.

Mishra was sent to the Khumbu to find that local Sherpas were against the park. One angry Sherpani even told him to pack up and go back to Kathmandu, but he managed to elicit the help of the Tengboche abbott and Edmund Hillary.

Gurung villagers in the Annapurnas also opposed a national park, and the concept of 'conservation area' came up as a way to blend the needs of local people with environmental protection, and have eco-tourism income

pay to protect nature while improving livelihoods. The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) became a model for other inhabited nature reserves in Nepal and elsewhere.

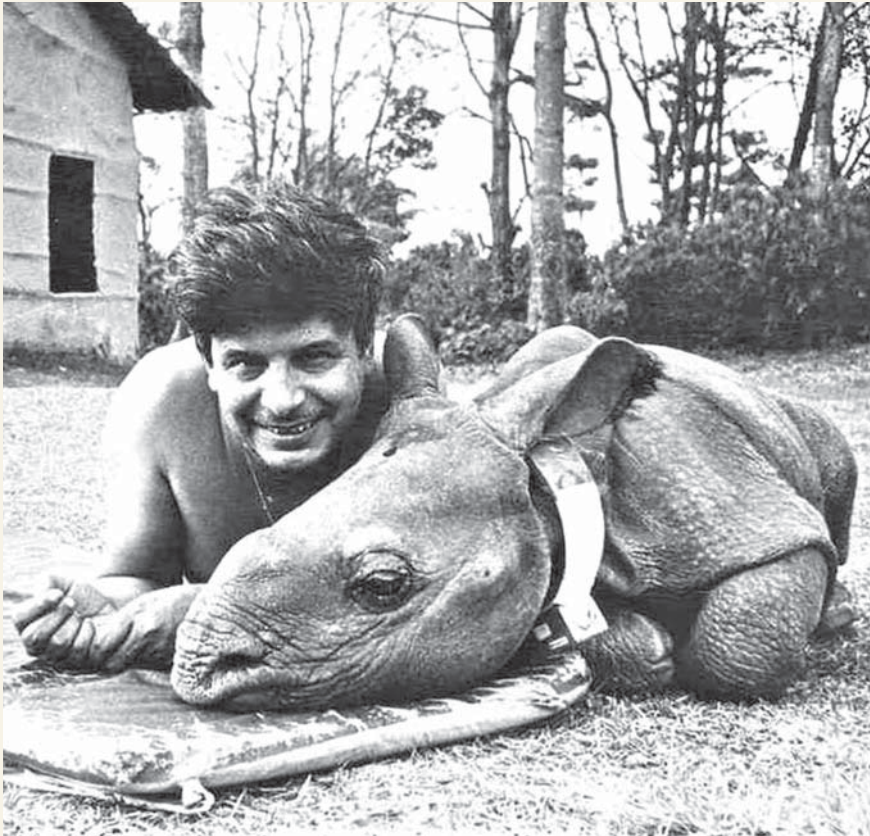
Mishra found a promising young student, Mingma Sherpa to head ACAP. During a trip to the East West Centre Hawaii, Prince Gyanendra met Chandra Gurung, and told Mishra: "Hire him. He is an excellent catch." Mingma Sherpa and Chandra Gurung were among 23 killed in the tragic helicopter crash in 2006 in Ghunsa that wiped out an entire generation of Nepal's conservation pioneers.

Among the sanctuaries he was instrumental in protecting, Mishra regards Chitwan National Park as his most important work. While doing a helicopter-borne census of rhinos in Chitwan in 1968, Mishra discovered that a jungle that teemed with 1,000 rhinos in 1950 had only 110 left. The prediction that rhinos could soon be extinct in Nepal led to hunter-king Mahendra passing an edict to declare Chitwan a national park so that the necessary laws could be passed. By then, Mishra had moved on to Kosi Tappu to protect the habitat of Nepal's last remaining herds of wild buffaloes.

Mishra worked with three kings: Mahendra, Birendra and Gyanendra and remembers getting a puzzling order in 1978 from the palace to kill a rhino. It turned out to be for a royal *tantric tarpan* ceremony to ensure peace and prosperity on the land. An elderly rhino was hunted, its innards removed, and Birendra sat inside the rhino's open abdomen to offer its organs up to his ancestors.

Mishra, a self-proclaimed monarchist, writes that in the end, the ritual did not save Birendra and his clan from the royal massacre of 2001, nor the monarchy from being abolished in 2008. Nepal became a republic, and the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation was changed to the National Trust Nature Conservation.

In an emotional epilogue, Mishra rues: 'Nepal's national parks were resurrected after the deadly civil war and the end of the monarchy ... now I wonder whether these protected areas will withstand the political gridlock of today's Nepal and survive in perpetuity.' 🇳🇵



EVENTS



Nepal Literature Festival

The festival in Pokhara this weekend will be a complete celebration of Nepali literature with book launches, conversations, music and thought-provoking panel discussions in the presence of national and international authors, journalists and artists.
22-25 December, Tal Barahi Chok, Lakeside Pokhara, (01) 4443263, info@nepalliteraturefestival.com

Healed: Book launch and discussion with Manisha Koirala and Rajesh Hamal
22 December, 1-2pm, Bhupi Kakchha

The art of a graphic memoir: Kanchan Burathoki in conversation with graphic artist Nicola Streeten.
22 December, 3-4pm, Bhupi Kakchha

Red Birds: Kunda Dixit in conversation with Mohammed Hanif
22 December, 4-5pm, Ali Miya Kakchha

The art of writing: Manjushree Thapa and Prajwal Parajuly, Moderator: Muna Gurung
23 December, 4-5pm, Bhupi Kakchha

#MeToo: Bhumika Shrestha, Richa Sharma, Suresh Dhakal, Moderator: Sabitri Gautam
23 December, 3-4pm, Ali Miya Kakchha

The writing journey: Prajwal Parajuly, Rabi Thapa and Pranaya SJB Rana, Moderator: Prateebha Tuladhar
24 December, 1-2pm, Ali Miya Kakchha

Journalism under fire: AS Panneerselvan, Kanak Mani Dixit and Sabrina Toppa, Moderator: Bhrikuti Rai
24 December, 3-4pm, Bhupi Kakchha

Women’s safety and security: Manisha Koirala, Ani Choying, Sangita Magar and Sima Basnet
Moderator: Yangesh
25 December, 11am-12pm, Bhupi Kakchha

The Wayward Daughter: A Kathmandu Story: Muna Gurung in conversation with Shradha Ghale
25 December, 2-3pm, Ali Miya Kakchha

Tell-Tales VIII
An immersive story-telling experience to share stories. Sign up to either tell your story or simply listen. There will also be a special game for the audience called *In the Wrong Room* where participants will be assigned a character and have to answer questions as that persona.
22 December, 12-3pm, Presidential Business School, Anamnagar, 9843537918, 9869097510



Forest Therapy
Relax in a refreshing, natural ambience and reconnect with yourself through meditation and nature walks.
22 December, Rs 750 (Nepali) and \$15 (Foreigners), Meeting point: Boudhanath Stupa Gate at 11pm, 9779862584054, gtm.diplove@gmail.com/, 77reminder@gmail.com

Christmas market
Chhaya centre is bringing a range of products including crafts, jewelleries, woolen products, custom print shops and many more to browse through and find the perfect gift for friends and family. There will also be live barbecue, food, drinks, games and live music.
22 December, 3-9pm, Chhaya center, Bhagwanbahal, Thamel, 9849377915

Open Mic Night
An occasion to celebrate all forms of expression in any language or genre. Present your poem, comic piece, song, dance, instrumental music, speech -- anything can imagine.
25 December, 6-9pm, NexUs Culture Nepal, Maitri Marg, Patan, (01) 5522393



Yoga for beginners
A 6-day course led by Vishal Mishra to introduce yoga postures, meditation and breathing techniques to beginners. Discover the transformative power of yoga.
23-28 December, 4:30-5:45pm, Rs4000, Soorya Wellness and Yoga centre, Lazimpat, (01)4001714

MUSIC



Come Away With Me
The trio band April Rush will perform the soothing tunes of Norah Jones, to be accompanied by a special Christmas menu. A perfect musical way to enjoy a wintry Saturday afternoon with good food.
22 December, 3pm, Rs200, The Yard, Sanepa, 9851095046, (01) 5532965

Jazz
Two Brazilian artists have come to Nepal with Jazz music. Listen to the live songs with Maria in the vocals and Daahoud in piano.
21 December, 7-10pm, Sun Cafe and Bar, Jhamsikhel, 9851213574

Full Moon Concert
Distinct Nepali music that includes devotional performances and classical melodies. Tabala, harmonium, tanpura. flute and vocals will provide a full range of traditional tunes.
22 December, 4-8pm, Kirateshwar Sangeetashram, kirateshwarsangeetashram@gmail.com



Bartika Eam Rai
Rai’s original voice and relatable lyrics have gained her widespread acclaim and this concert promises an enjoyable and refreshing evening.
21 December, 7-9pm, Rs1000(limited pre-sale tickets), Evoke cafe and bistro, Jhamsikhel, 9851111051

Deepak Bajracharya
Bajracharya has been a prominent singer in the Nepali music industry for many decades and is back with new hits like Man Magan, Wora Para and many more. He will be performing with the Rhythm band for a vibrant musical concert.
24 December, 6pm-2am, Kings Lounge, DurbarMarg, (01)4223110

OUR PICK



Opens in Kathmandu on 21 December

Superstar Shah Rukh Khan plays a character he has never attempted before: that of a dwarf, and Anushka Sharma ditches her glamorous image to play a wheelchair-bound quadriplegic. Khan had broken many boundaries of the ‘hero’ before, including by playing a patient of Asperger’s syndrome. At a time when he seems stuck in a commercial rut of stereotyped characters, will this unusual move succeed? Zero spotlights disabled people and presents many of their aspirations to live ‘normal’ lives. The movie tries to answer through their eyes what is normal, and what is equal.

DINING

Trisara
A picturesque outdoor restaurant which offers some mouth-watering dishes and drinks. There will also be a special concert by the band Arise on 24 December.
Lakeside, Pokhara, (061) 461301



Christmas dinner
Christmas at Pauline’s Garden will be a cosy and warm evening with high quality food chosen from a well thought-out menu -- a 4 course formula, with a drink and a special Christmas gift. Some delicacies are Tartiflette and Teryaki grilled salmon steak for the main course.
24 December to 1 January 2019, Rs2950 ++, Pauline’s garden, AaneK marg, 4221537, 9803919575

Hyatt festive menu
A festive indulgence package with special culinary delights in all restaurants. Christmas Eve dinner at The Cafe will offer a mixed antipasti selection, salads, assorted cold cut platters, seafood platters, sushi platter and many more hot selections, while at the Rox, the evening will be a delectable delight with a 4-course menu showcasing the best of Italian cuisine. Also a hearty buffet brunch with live music on Christmas day.
24 December, 6:30 - 10pm, The Cafe (Rs3200++) and Rox Restaurant (Rs3900++)
25 December, 12:30 - 4pm, Rs2800, The cafe, Hyatt Regency, Boudha, (01) 4217123



Roadhouse
Enjoy warm, palatable pizzas and other continental delicacies. The quaint ambience of the restaurant is a great place to catch up with friends and family.
Pokhara, (061) 467421

Lhakpa’s Chulo
Nepali dal bhat, Newari khaja, Swiss Rösti, Italian Risotto and Thai green curry. Lakpa’s Chulo has a variety of cuisines to offer. Garlic chilli prawn at this cosy restaurant is to die for.
Jhamsikhel, (01) 5542986

GETAWAY



Shangri-La Village Resort
Enjoy a luxurious stay in the serene ambience of the hotel which has a splendid garden and comfortable rooms. The view of the Himalayas on a clear day is absolutely breathtaking.
Gharipatan, Pokhara, (061) 462222

Park Village Resort
Yoga, detox and ayurveda treatment in a quiet corner of Kathmandu. Enjoy the services of Himalayan wellness centre - a one-stop centre to relax your mind and body.
Himalayan Peace and Wellness Center, Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha, (01) 4370286



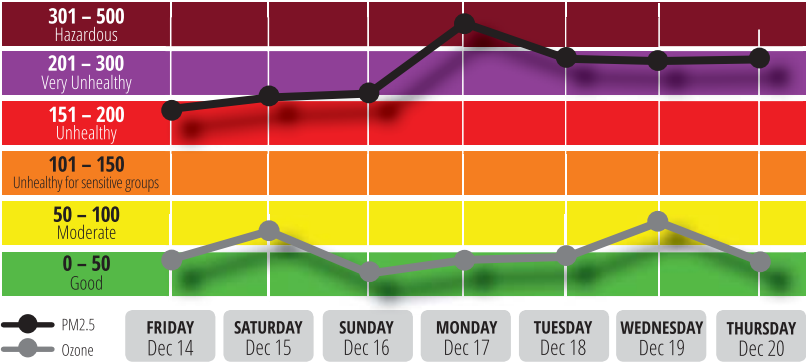
Atithi Resort & Spa
The resort is a quiet sanctuary that fuses Nepali tradition with modern amenities and has often been on TripAdvisor’s list of top ten hotels in Nepal.
Lakeside, Pokhara, (061) 1466760

Temple Tree Resort and Spa
A peaceful place to stay, complete with a swimming pool, massage parlour and sauna-- it’ll be hard to leave once you get here.
Gaurighat, Lakeside, Pokhara (061)465819



Lake View Resort
The resort’s private huts, featuring hand crafted wooden furniture, local stone exterior and a private veranda, offer a great weekend escape.
Lakeside, Pokhara (061) 461477/463854

AIR QUALITY INDEX KATHMANDU, 14 - 20 December



The Air Quality Index (AQI) in Kathmandu Valley this week spiked to a new high, touching 367 at 9pm on 17 December. The concentration of toxic particles below 2.5 microns continues to hover in the 'Very Unhealthy' Purple Band at morning and evening peaks this week when overcast skies made it more difficult for the pollution-trapping inversion layer to be burnt off by the sun. There is not much to cheer about with ozone either.
https://np.usembassy.gov/embassy/air-quality-monitor/

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Lab on Call All kinds of lab related work by professional lab technician.	Physiotherapy on Call Physio/Electro/Acupuncture therapy by qualified and experienced physiotherapist.
Elderly Care Assistant Fine and professional care by our qualified and experienced care giver.	Travel Support for Sick Clients Travel support for sick clients are provided by professional.
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Shared stories, shattered dreams

Sonia Awale

What is it about labour migration that keeps drawing hundreds of thousands of people every year away from their homes and families despite the evident risks?

Panos South Asia's new collection of reportage from the region, *Uncertain Journeys: Labour Migration from South Asia* seeks to answer this question through the eyes of 15 senior journalists who researched their stories in destination countries. Based on their interviews, they analyse various aspects of labour migration.

The first chapter on Nepal is by Upasana Khadka, who has reported widely on the issue of Nepali migrants in the Gulf and Malaysia for this newspaper. Khadka likens labour migration to a lottery, a culturally fatalistic view borne out of desperation to escape poverty back home. She narrates the stories of four individuals: Sharmila, Ramesh, Shama and Ram who are unlucky and are either caught, cheated, trafficked, or deported. Yet, even though they know the risks, thousands of others take same route to seek their fortunes.

'Individuals are often aware of the common risks of migration ... however, many continue to make risky decisions, not always because of lack of information, but despite it ... it is possibility of being lucky that encourages so many to take risks,' she writes.

Khadka also talks about the lack of bilateral agreements that have encouraged avenues for illegal migration. Case in point is the blanket ban on female domestic workers leaving Nepal, despite which migrants continue to risk unauthorised channels to make it to their destination, setting in motion the chain of trafficking.

Janak Raj Sapkota, author of the much-acclaimed book *Kahar*:



OMASTHARAI

Baideshi Rojgarile Bitholindo Samaj delves into human trafficking in Nepal under the guise of legal foreign employment, and the lack of laws that makes the connection between the two that has helped traffickers work behind the scenes.

He argues that the political protection enjoyed by the remittance industry has aided this form of modern-day slavery to flourish, and until the ambiguities in legal structures are cleared and stronger policies are in place, Nepalis abroad will continue to be duped, or worse, abused and maimed.

Filmmaker Kesang Tseten whose acclaimed 2007 documentary *In Search of Riyal* about four young Nepalis on journeys to the Gulf (*see below*) first bought the stark realities behind the remittances, also has a chapter about filming in Qatar and how he had to sneak behind aircraft crew to capture conversations with migrants inside the planes.

Eleven years later, he revisits characters from the first film for a

sequel. He found that Danvir Jogi is still in Qatar and making good money, Navin Rai returned to a broken marriage and left again for Dubai, Prem Bareilly is in Dharan working as a silversmith amidst stigma of being a Dalit and Bhojraj Darzi is now a successful pig farmer in Nepal. But none of these



Uncertain Journeys: Labour Migration from South Asia
Edited by A.S. Panneerselvan
Speaking Tiger, 2018
INR499, 200 pages

are representative stories, Tseten stresses, pointing out that it is vital to understand and sympathise with Nepalis opting to go abroad.

The chapters on other South Asian countries show that there are a lot of similarities between the tragic tales of Nepali workers and those from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India. The case of Zulfiqar Ali of Pakistan, who was charged with drug trafficking and consequently spent 13 years in death row in Indonesia, reminds one of conviction and incarceration of Govinda Mainali, who was falsely accused of the murder and robbery of a Japanese woman in Tokyo in 1997.

In a chapter appropriately titled *A Return to Nothingness*, narration of an everyday scene at Indian airports of the body bags being unloaded is not unlike Nepali migrants returning home in coffins at Kathmandu airport. The migration of Sri Lankan farmers to the Gulf because of droughts caused by climate change is similar to that of outmigration of people

from the mid-hills of Nepal. Bangladeshis overcharged and cheated of jobs in Singapore echo the plight of most Nepali migrants in Malaysia.

Amidst the poignant stories of loss, there are tiny rays of hope. Following the three decades of war in Sri Lanka, women were forced to leave as domestic workers and toil hard in the Gulf, but discovered themselves in the process as an individual with rights and freedom.

What ties all of these stories together are the shared stories of aspirations and shattered dreams. Meanwhile, all South Asian nations rely on the same destinations resulting in competition with each other, allowing employers to get away with little pay and exploitation in turn.

Each chapter is a raw portrayal of a migrant life, and the book gives significant understanding of the poverty and social injustice in South Asia. 🇳🇵

Riyal revisited

“The tidal wave of migration that began 20 years ago continues...”

That is how Kesang Tseten begins his documentary sequel to the 2008 film *In Search of the Riyal*. He tries to locate migrant workers he had filmed a decade ago, to find out what has become of them.

Were their dreams realised? Did the Nepali workers in Qatar and UAE find what they were looking for? Were the intervening years kind to them?

In *The Riyalists*, acclaimed film-maker Tseten (*pictured, right*) spends the first five minutes setting the stage for the journey ahead. We get to revisit young Nepalis on scaffolds whom we first met in the previous award-winning documentary.

Ten years ago Dhanvir Jogi, a lanky lad from Terathum left behind his three-month-old son and started training at an institute in Kathmandu. He was diligent and hopeful, but worried about falling sick in the hot desert.

In *In Search of the Riyal* Prem Bareilly who often faced the stigma of being a Dalit back home in Dharan, did not shy away from his fears: “They might be talking about killing me but I wouldn’t know... I won’t understand their language.”

Bhoj Darzi was fully aware of the risk he was putting himself into. He had heard of Nepalis returning home in coffins. Yet he took a loan in the hope of trading his job as a tailor in Jhapa for a more financially secure position in the Gulf.

Shy and awkward, Nabin Rai, has a sad story with a happy ending. Tseten narrates: “It was the image of Nabin in his crisp white



KATE RYAN

shirt and his newly married wife spotting a blue umbrella that remained etched in my mind from the earlier film.”

But after two years in Qatar, Nabin came back to find that his wife took off with another man and abandoned his twin daughters. Nabin remarried and left for Dubai. Today, he is a foreman at an offshore gas rig and earns a good salary. He gets to visit home every three months where he is building a new home for his family.

Dhanvir, who is with the same

construction company in Qatar, has managed to acquire some land, get his sisters married, send his son to school, but missed out on his upbringing. “I was thin and young when I came,” he says on camera, “I’ll go back old.”

Prem left Doha because he was not paid on time and mistreated by employers, and now works as a silversmith but faces stiff competition. He proudly shows the best worker certificate he received in Qatar and often regrets his decision to return. “I make

good enough living here but there is no saving for future,” he rues.

In Bhoj, there is no trace of a young man who once explained with wonder how the food tray inside planes worked. He was deported from Dubai for going on strike, framed by fellow workers. He left for Qatar next but returned shortly afterwards when his wife fell sick. His mother and wife run a local garment factory and he recently overtook his dead brother’s profitable piggery. He believes Nepalis can make it at home if they work hard.

The four men are just a few of the hundreds of thousands of Nepalis toiling abroad. Their lives are mostly fascinating, not tragic. But what draws audience to these individuals is Tseten’s simple but compelling storytelling, his poignant narration, flawless direction interwoven with clips from ten years ago. Viewers will be struck by his compassion for less fortunate compatriots.

There are moments of laughter, of camaraderie, of loss and farewells. Through it all, Tseten is with us, uncovering men’s lives, sharing their grief and intact hopes, bringing us an intimate portrayal of Nepali migrants away and at home.

The day this documentary will be launched, another 1,500 young Nepali men and women will fly off, forsaking their fields and families for the hopes of a better future. This film will help us understand why they leave despite real risks, and the need to create opportunities at home. 🇳🇵

Sonia Awale

The Riyalists
Directed by Kesang Tseten
Sunyata Film Productions, 2018
61 minutes



Art by Studio 7

Three best friends are at crossroads in their lives, trying to leave their carefree days behind and move to stability. For Anil the solution is investing in art, and he buys a completely white piece with faint diagonal lines across it, also white. When Mahesh laughs at him, Anil's ego is hurt and their friendship falls apart. The gentle Devashish tries to play peacemaker, but we won't spoil it for you by revealing whether it works in the stage play, *Art*.

Studio 7 has been staging plays for nearly 40 years at the Hotel Vajra, spanning most of the ups and downs of Nepal's recent history from the Panchayat monarchy to democracy, war and post-conflict transition. Its choice of adapted classics and original works all come with a sharp contemporary message. The latest offering, *Art* is no different. The original play by Yasmin Reza premiered in 1994 at the Comédie des Champs-Élysées in Paris, and made it to London and Broadway.

The play about three friends

starts rather slowly, with introductory scenes setting the characters. But soon, the plot thickens as the friends squabble not just about art, but each other and the very basis of their friendship. The blank canvas is not just a painting, but a symbol of their youthful bonding.

Each viewer can take what is important from the production. Some can see it as a satire on how modern, abstract art fetch huge prices but are not understood by anyone but the artist. What is the use of art that cannot communicate with the viewer? What is the rationale behind their high market value? And if they have such a high commercial value, is it necessary for them to be understood?

With very few characters *Art's* strength lies in how the characters react to each other and create comic scenes. Anil has turned into a pretentious art hoarder who buys things he may or may not understand, because they are deemed 'valuable'.

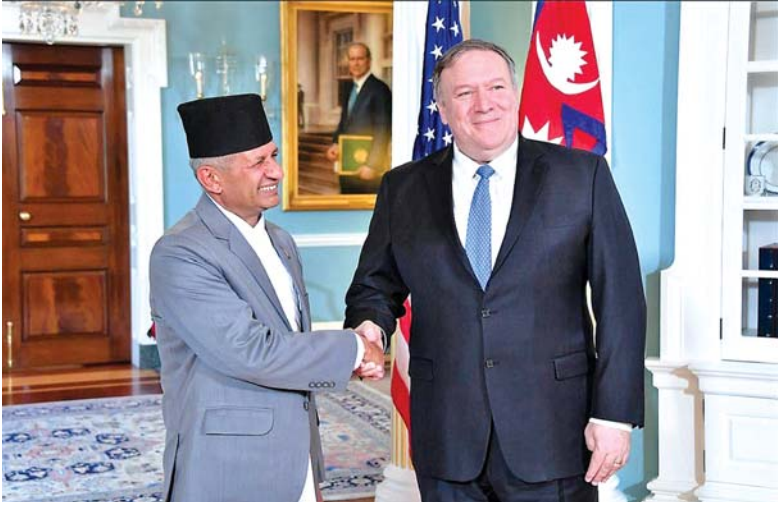
Mahesh, meanwhile, retains a youthful brashness, sneering at everything he does not understand and surprised that Anil has moved on. Trying to agree with them both, Devashish does not know who he is. This is an interesting interplay of characters and friendships that each of us can relate to: how friendships change with time as our tastes and economic status changes. The director is Studio 7 veteran Sabine Lehman who succeeds in creating a fast-paced performance that keeps the small audience at the Vajra engaged throughout.

Raymon Das Shrestha and Karma are not just convincing, but inhabit their roles as a pompous nouveau-riche dentist and a wannabe cool digital entrepreneur respectively. It is the energetic Kundoon who steals the show as an indecisive and uninspired Pashmina salesman. With an expressive face and on point comic timing, he creates the most realistic character of a Kathmandu Everyman -- a city boy struggling to make it big on the back of a rich heiress fiancée. Director Lehmann and set designer Ludmilla Hungerhuber make a cameo appearance with a satirical song about the 'ego and arrogance of the boys', which raises the play's comic pitch. Hungerhuber has designed a minimalist but pleasing set in which the same architecture is rearranged between acts. Aman Karna's lively music complements the production, building up to an abstract finale.

As the holiday season approaches, *Art* will be an evening well spent in Kathmandu. 🇳🇵

Sewa Bhattarai

Art
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THE U.S. AND US: Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali with US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo in Washington on Tuesday. The two discussed strengthening bilateral relation and economic ties.



LOOK NORTH: Foreign Secretary Shanker Das Bairagi met with Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing last week.



HAPPY LANDINGS: An emergency helipad recently constructed in Hidi of Mangala village, Mygadi. Helipads are cropping up all over the district after the local government came up with the concept of "one ward, one helipad."



RUNAWAY PROGRESS: The construction of Nepal's second international airport, Gautam Buddha International Airport, is progressing at a rapid pace after being in limbo for years. The Tourism Ministry aims to complete it by early 2019.



JINGLE BELLES: Children perform Christmas Carols during a tree lighting event organised by Radisson Hotel in Kathmandu on Monday.

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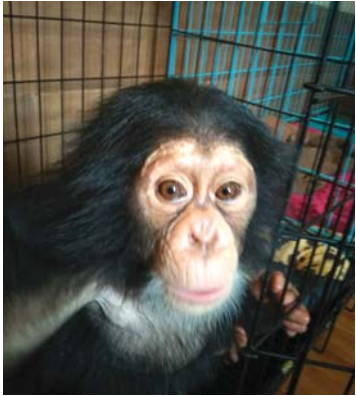
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Smuggled chimps wait it out in Kathmandu Zoo

Deepak Kharel in *NepalKhabar.com*, 16 December

Wildlife smugglers captured two young chimpanzees in Nigeria in 2017, put them in a woodeden crate and flew them 8,000km to Nepal via Istanbul. After landing in Kathmandu, the boxes were taken to Sanjeev Bhari’s house in Sallaghari, a hub for international wildlife smugglers using Nepal as a transit point. The plan was to take the chimps to India, but the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) discovered the animals before that. The chimps, as well as other exotic birds, have been waiting at the Central Zoo for translocation to their wild habitat.



Officials at Kathmandu airport customs and animal quarantine department had agreed with the smugglers to facilitate the transport of the chimps through Nepal. The CBI arrested Sanjeev Bhari and his accomplices, including nationals of India and Pakistan who are currently in jail in Sundhara.

CBI chief Puskar Karki said: “This is a huge international racket that exploits weak governance in countries like Nepal to smuggle contraband and wildlife. This particular case is being closely observed internationally.”

Customs agent Raj Kumar Tiwari and Chuda Mani Dahal played pivotal roles to aid and abet the wildlife traffickers. Animal quarantine officer Dhirendra Shah also readied the necessary documents without proper checks. Most of these corrupt officials were released after paying bail, which ranged from Rs250,000 to Rs500,000. Many others at the customs department were also pulled into investigation.

The Central Zoo in Jawalakhel has deputed several staff to take care of the animals which have been named Chimpu and Champa. The curators feed the animals and conduct regular health checks. In 14 months that they have been in Kathmandu, Chimpu and Champa have grown and are awaiting the verdict of the District Court about where they will go next.

“We cannot keep the chimps in Nepal, but official proceedings can only start after a verdict from the court.” Man Bahadur Khadka of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation said. “While they are with us, we are providing the best possible care.”

Animal rights activist from London had called the Prime Minister’s office and registered a verbal complaint about moves by international traffickers to free the indicted. After the message reached Prime Minister Oli, he instructed Attorney General Agni Kharel to take up the case. The final court hearing is on Friday at the Kathmandu District Court.



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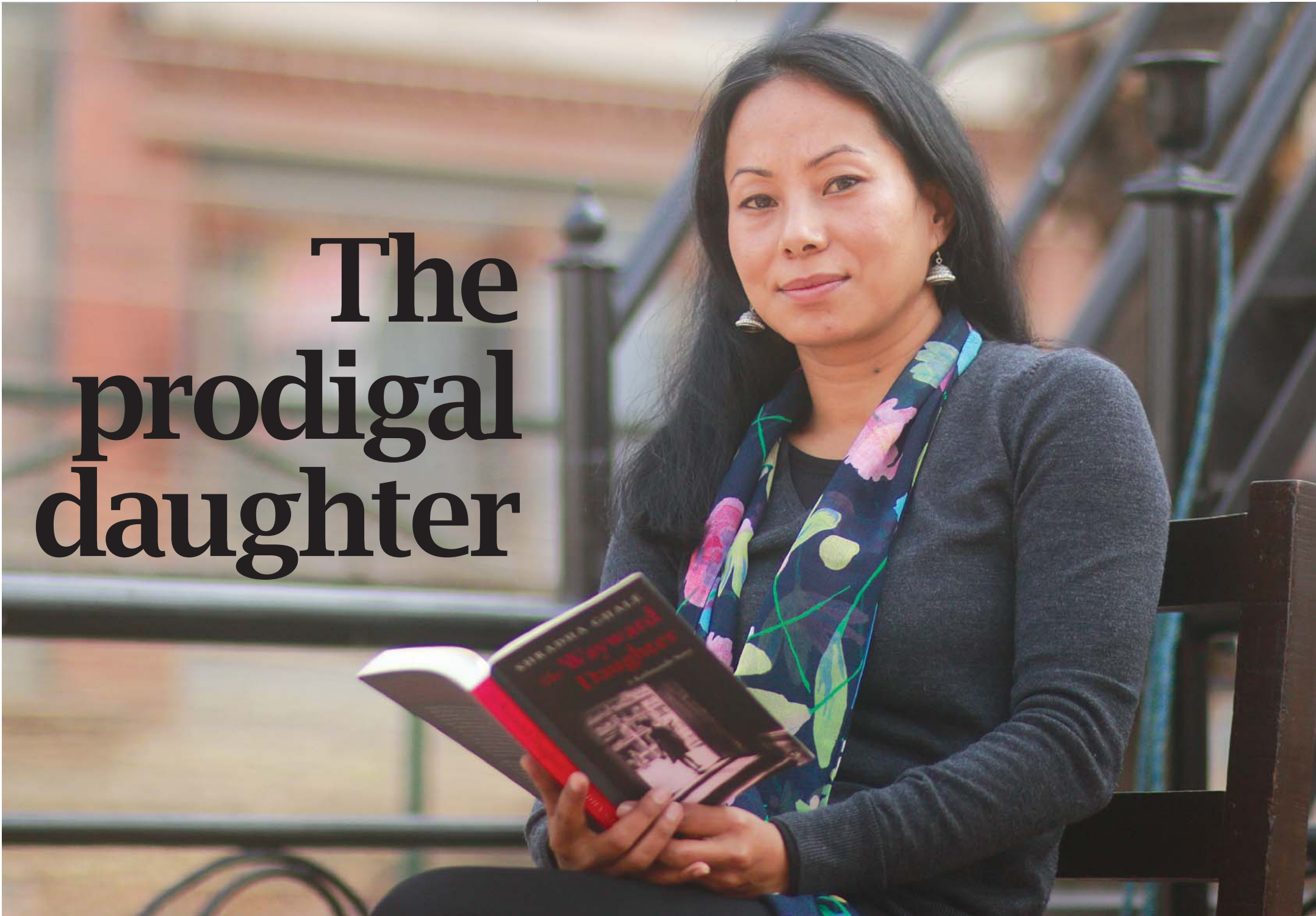
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BIKRAM RAI

The prodigal daughter

A hostage situation

Greta Rana's *Hostage* follows a simple Tharu man, Hari Prasad Mahato, in his journey for work in the Gulf. It is fiction, but might as well be fact – as we speak, these stories are happening to thousands of Nepali migrant workers.

Hari is a boatman on the Rapti River, but yearns for a future in Qatar so he can earn enough money to redeem his debt to the landlord, and pay for his children's school fees.

We are introduced to Siva Bahadur, a young Maoist and his story provides a backdrop of the insurgency to the book. Again, Siva's story was repeated many thousands of times during Nepal's ten-year war.

Multiple plot twists lead Siva to the Gulf as well, where Hari and Siva end up as roommates. Siva was a young, boisterous young man whose loquacity often annoyed Hari, who was focused on his goal of saving enough.

Three years pass by in one sentence, and one would have expected the author to dwell a little more on Siva and Hari's relationship after the energy she puts into developing both individual characters in the beginning.

Greta Rana employs an informal tone throughout the book, and lets the characters' thoughts and feelings propound the social injustices that drove them away from Nepal. Frustration about

corruption and exploitation burst through the pages, as characters dream of a better future for themselves, their families and the nation – all amidst the background of the dispiriting and unjust reality of home. The story line delves into the political ideologies of communism and extremism, and how individuals seek redress to inequality and discrimination.


Despite the strong plot and grim backdrop, the narration is passive, missing the passion that should be there to add depth and texture to the story. Crucial events like Hari's first job and his relationship with Shiva are described to us, rather than letting the protagonists show us through their actions.

Like all discussion on ideology, the paragraphs go on a bit and seem detached from the characters' experiences. The climax is frightening, but we do not quite get to the fears, terrors and significant tensions which arise.

The diversity of characters, however, is well-developed. Even though Hari and Siva's disconnect makes us wonder if their two stories had to be told in the same narrative, the counterpoint between a simple Tharu villager to a Maoist rebel, corrupt Nepali politicians and Arabian lawyers keeps the story taut.

The women are especially strong: Hari's soft-spoken wife

Jamuna, his intelligent and hard-working daughter Subhadra, or the politically progressive and astute Anjeli, Greta Rana's women demonstrate strength as well as wisdom.

Hari Prasad's trajectory does depart from the general experience of most Nepali migrant workers -- especially with the twist in the climax that gives *Hostage* a distinct fictional flavour. To readers familiar with the contemporary exodus of young Nepalis, *Hostage* reinforces familiar tales of injustice that drive them away and is a one-sit read that could be a modern English version of Lil Bahadur Chhetri's Nepali classic, *Basain*. 

Prakriti Kandel

The AI

Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain and Machine Learning are buzzwords we are going to hear a lot more in 2019.

The Third Revolution in information technology means the country further ahead in AI will be the new global superpower. Competition is fierce between China and the United States, with both using unconventional means to get back at each other – as seen by the arrest of Huawei's CFO in Canada under American pressure, the allegations that the security of iPhones are compromised by Chinese-made chips.

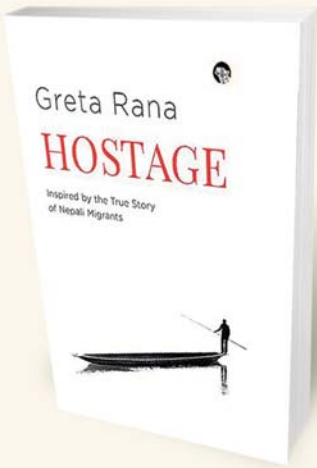
In his new book *AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World Order*, Beijing-based technology executive Kai-Fu Lee analyses the background of information technology advances in both counties, but concludes that China is moving faster on AI and could overtake Silicon Valley because of less strict privacy laws in its huge home market.

Lee warns that AI could entrench global inequalities as well as disparities within countries, taking jobs away from traditional sectors. While these issues are a source of worry because of what it means for humanity's future, China does not seem to be held back by any such fears. In fact, it is excited about catching up with the US on applications for AI in everyday life.

The book starts with the failure of world's best Go player, Ke Jie, to Google's AlphaGo in 2017. China's IT companies fast-tracked development by imitating Silicon Valley's most successful products



THE TULIP

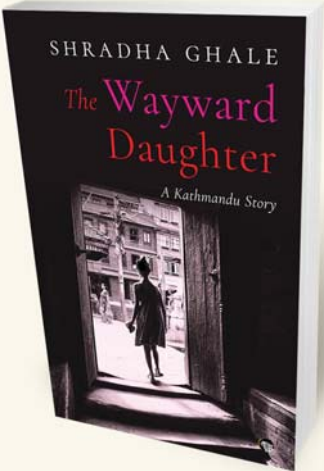


Hostage
by Greta Rana
Speaking Tiger, 2018
INR350, 223 pages

Sewa Bhattarai

The struggle with kerosene stoves, the relief when you move up to propane. The steady stream of uninvited guests from remote parts of the country, who live for months as they try to get a foothold in the capital. The graduation from outdoor squatting toilets to indoor commodores. Shradha Ghale’s novel *The Wayward Daughter* portrays a world familiar to many first generation migrants into Kathmandu, and much of it is autobiographical. “I took material from the experiences of my near and dear ones, but none of the characters exist in real life as they do in the book,” says Ghale (pictured, left). *The Wayward Daughter* offers aspects of life in a Janjati family that make it unique from most other Nepali writings in English. The Tamule family celebrates Udhauli and Ubhauli, takes offerings of millet liquor, dried fish and a rupee coin for a marriage proposal. Ghale admits she knew her story had to be about a family from an indigenous community, because she herself had read very few such stories. A smart Tamule child is complimented with “as clever as a Bahun’s son”. Some Tamules adopt Brahmin traditions, bow to priests, and look down upon other communities. The looking down is mutual because other communities also despise the “*chimse bahun*.” These nuggets from Ghale’s book are revelations even for Nepalis, and a reminder to readers about just

how diverse Nepal is. The greatest strength of Ghale’s debut novel is this no-nonsense, lean, almost journalistic prose. But who exactly are the Tamule? Ghale gives an enigmatic smile to reveal that she made up the Tamule: “Creating an entirely new indigenous community gave me the freedom to explore my ideas, free of established stereotypes about particular communities.” *The Wayward Daughter* succeeds in her deliberate attempt to portray a rich cross-section of Nepali society, showing how caste, class, and gender influence everyday life in Kathmandu. The story is about growing up in a multifarious, almost dystopian world that Nepal has become. Youngsters abandon traditions for modernity, as they prepare to go abroad for higher studies.



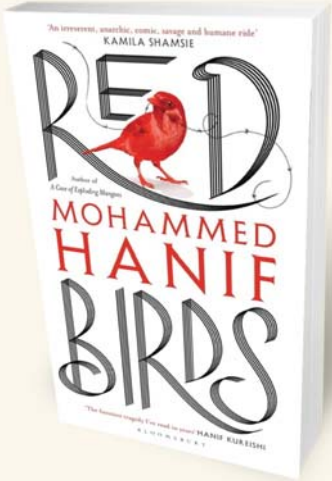
The Wayward Daughter
by Shradha Ghale
Speaking Tiger, 2018
Paperback Rs 560, 268 Pages

At the Rhododendron High School that the protagonist Sumnima attends, students are fined for speaking in Nepali. Some readers will remember ‘boarding’ schools in the 80s, the rise of FM radios and the craze for celebrity RJs that Sumnima adores. She confesses (only to herself) that she eats dal-bhat twice every day, and yet in friends’ auto books she writes that her favourite food is ‘pizza’. Youngsters these days do the same: leave behind rustic roots, pretend they were never there, and head out for sophisticated western horizons. The meandering story does not necessarily have a plot, even though every little sub-plot about the extended Tamule family offers fascinating nuggets of life. Ghale confesses that she did not start out with a clear plot in mind, but accumulated sections she wrote at different times, and had to cut out many parts that did not fit. The stories are a continuation of the bits of fiction Ghale penned in her college days, imagining herself to be in league with great writers. “I loved Gustave Flaubert and Virginia Woolf, I did not just want to write like them, but sound as good as them. Writing this book became an exercise in humility for me, when I realised my own limitations. Every day you wonder where your work is going, if you will ever finish it, and if it will ever be any good,” says Ghale. Hopefully, acclaim for her first novel will motivate Ghale to write a sequel, which many have already advised her to do. The novel ends just when things are getting more interesting, with the country about to plunge into a civil war. Ghale ends it there with a riveting epilogue that leaves you yearning for more. 🇳🇵



In Hanif’s crosshairs

If you enjoyed Mohammed Hanif’s *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, it will have prepared you for another scathing satire from the Pakistani novelist on the senselessness of war, the hypocrisy of those who wage them, and the bleeding heart humanitarian contractors who rake it in to mop things up. *Red Birds* brims with razor sharp verbiage and a plot embedded with glaring absurdities of the perpetual war machine of the military-industrial complex. There is a whiff of Heller in Hanif: the only difference with *Catch-22* is that the murderous technology of modern warfare is 60 years more advanced, and America is bombing mud huts in the desert with laser-guided smart ordnance, and not dropping dumb bombs from B-25s. As they turn the pages, readers fly through skies full of flak, eruptions of Hanifisms: ‘*First they bomb our house, then they take away my son, and now they are here to make us feel all right.*’ ‘*If I didn’t take out homes, who would provide shelter? If I didn’t obliterate cities, who would build refugee camps? Where would all the world’s empathy go?*’



‘*They bomb us from the skies, then they work hard to cure our stress ... I get PTSD, she gets a per diem in US dollars.*’ This is writing that forces the reader to confront the brutal reality of wars waged by remote control, linking the trigger on the joystick to guts spilling forth, bubbles in pools of blood of the dead and dying. All this far from the oval offices where policies are made, or even from the glass cockpits from which pilots launch video-game missiles at crosshairs on the screen.

Major Ellie is one such pilot who crashes in the desert of what sounds and smells like the Afpak border, and fortuitously right next to a ‘fugee camp’ where most of the action in the rest of the book takes place with protagonists like young Momo and his dog, Mutt. The other character (and what a character she is) is a caricature of a USAID worker Lady Flowerbody who is there to do good, and offer bandaids to people her own country has bombed to smithereens. Her developmentese is very similar to the lingo of the lords of poverty we are familiar with in Nepal as well: ‘I am conducting a survey on post-conflict resolution strategies that involve local histories and folklore ... to use this community as a laboratory for testing my hypothesis about how our collective memories are actually our cultural capital ... ’ While the backdrop in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* was about Gen Zia of Pakistan who was ostensibly killed by bombs hidden in a fruit crate in the cockpit of his C-130, the setting for *Red Birds* can be from Timbuktoo to Quetta and everywhere in between where the American military is waging Third World Wars against tiny white figures in real-time infrared satellite imagery. *Red Birds* lays bares the hypocrisy of not just America’s ‘war on terror’ and the obliteration of countries, peoples, societies. It is also a sad reminder of what the Russians have done in Syria, the Saudis in Yemen, or for that matter what conquerors have done throughout inhuman history. Hanif used to be an air force pilot, and shows us that it is not just history that is a farce. So is the unfolding present. 🇳🇵

Red Birds
by Mohammed Hanif
Bloomsbury, 2018
INR599, 283 pages

super powers

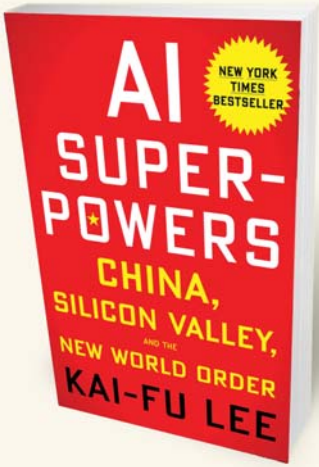


and outdid them in expanding user base and profits: Uber to Didi, Google to Baidu, or eBay to Taobao. Once a product was successful, thousands of mimetic companies were spawned in China, and the Americans suspect these companies had government protection. While some argue that restrictions in China stifle creativity, Lee writes that imitation is the first step in generating new ideas and products. In order to compete with many companies with similar products, Chinese entrepreneurs fight fiercely like hungry wolves. They continuously update products to please Chinese users, change marketing strategies to compete with opponents and build the special business models based on the unique user behaviour of the Chinese. China’s central government helps businesses by investing money and provides policy support

for AI research. Local governments are encouraged to build industrial parks for AI business, and the state works closely with technology companies to build new intelligent cities. On the other side of the Pacific, however, the US government is reducing its technology budget letting AI adapt to the current infrastructure. Lee says the AI algorithm is to computing what electricity was in the last technological revolution. China has the advantage of combining its huge data sets with AI applications. In the AI era, the country or company with more data can make more information decisions and thereby more profit. China’s digital infrastructure makes it possible to collect every movement of every citizen down to the last detail, erasing the boundary between online and offline. The advantage the Americans have, Lee writes, is that they can apply AI in businesses and the credit market because of its huge cache of structured trading data. Unlike American IT companies which prefer to establish a completely new product and sell it around the world, the Chinese buy local companies and support them with money, technology and marketing experience. Silicon Valley makes sure every product is perfect before launching, while the Chinese fix bugs on the go. Lee says no matter which model wins out in the next IT

revolution, it is time to examine the threats to human society from an omnipotent artificial intelligence as it replaces work that needs physical and mental inputs in medicine, accounting, translations, etc. But as people are freed up from repetitive chores, AI will also bring new job opportunities just like farmers became factory workers during the Industrial Revolution. Besides, Lee writes from his own experience with battling cancer, there are things like love and friendship that can never be replaced by a machine. Or, can it? 🇳🇵

Ruixue Zhang



AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World Order
by Kai-Fu Lee
Harcourt, 2018
Kindle \$15.99
Hardcover \$18.30



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The unfair sex

The news of a Nepali winning the International Bodybuilding Award in Bangkok last week warmed our cockles this winter, and brought good cheer at the start of the holiday season when most of the news about Nepal has been gloom and doom.

However, the Thais being monarchists, apparently played the royal ‘*Sri Man Gambhir*’ anthem at Mahesh Maharjan’s medal ceremony. But he didn’t seem to mind, and no one noticed, least of all the Ministry of Foreigner Affairs – probably because it is hard to tell whether Nepal is an absolute monarchy or federal republic these days.

This reminded the Ass about the Kazakh shooting gold medalist in Kuwait, who was surprised to hear the satirical national anthem of her country from the film *Borat* playing at her award ceremony.

Unlike Nepal, Kazakhstan lodged a strong complaint about Borat’s lyrics which went: ‘Kazakhstan, greatest country in the world / The number one exporter of potassium / Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan, you very nice place / Friend of all except Uzbekistan’. Or words to that effect.

Although the Bodybuilding Award warmed our aforementioned cockles, we as a nation are aghast at this crass commercialisation of the male body. Being myself the proud owner of a male body, the Ass takes umbrage at men being treated as little more than sex objects and not valued for the contributions we can make to society-at-large through voluntary men-only activities like, let’s say, attending to the call of nature, in full view of passersby, to water trees that line Tundikhel.

Imagine what it must feel like to be a man on the street going about your own business to irrigate the undergrowth whereupon every passing female thinks it is her god-given right to look you over, pass complimentary remarks about your proboscis, blow wolf-whistles and (if you are lucky) even say something obscene.

Think of the humiliation, the mortification, the ignominy that we men have to put up with such demeaning objectification. This adam-teasing has got to stop.

The only way those of us proud to call ourselves members of the unfair sex can fight back is to stage our own all-male beauty pageants and bodybuilding contests to show off our muscles, so that we can hold our heads high again, and go boldly forth where no hunk has gone before to freeze our asses off in the A-front Round of the Mr Universe Contest.



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