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Suresh Shakya (*right*) was sitting down for lunch with his family in his house in Itum Bahal four years ago when there was a terrifying, subterranean growl, and his building started shaking.

Shakya, 46, knew it was an earthquake, and while he was concerned the house could collapse, he was even more afraid that an adjacent 9-floor highrise that a neighbour had just built would topple on him.

An hour later, there was a big aftershock and the tall building swayed like a tree in a storm, creating deep gashes on his house.

Seismologists warn that the quake four years ago this month was just a warning, and that Nepal faces the risk of even bigger ones in future.

Experts say attention should now shift to retrofitting hospitals and schools across the country. Nearly 1,200 health facilities and 5,000 schools were completely destroyed in 2015, and tens of thousands of children could have been killed if the disaster had happened on a weekday.

While hospitals and schools are being rebuilt in areas affected by 2015, what about the rest of Nepal? A recent Ministry of Health (MoH) study showed that four hospitals in Western Nepal were structurally very weak, and one in Nepalgunj even needed to be demolished.

"The study is a warning. The condition of hospitals in the rest of Nepal is similar; we need to quickly retrofit them before the next disaster strikes," warns Chudamani Bhandari at the MoH. "Western Nepal is in greater danger, so we decided to focus there."

The next step is to carry out an inspection of medical centres around the country. The National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) plans a survey of schools and hospitals, but only after it is done with reconstruction of 2015.

With support from DFID, the National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET) is resuming the school retrofitting in Western Nepal that it had started before 2015. Says NSET's Surya Narayan Shrestha: "We need to concentrate on Western Nepal because the vulnerability of public buildings there is high."

Schools are community hubs and making them safer raises public awareness about sound construction practices. Deepak Sharma of the Ministry of Education explains: "The few schools that were retrofitted before 2015 suffered no damage, so we are trying to retrofit schools in all districts for future earthquakes."

Sewa Bhattarai and Prakriti Kandel

Lessons Unlearned
EDITORIAL
PAGE 2

Nepal Is Loved To Death
PAGE 4

Seismic Resistant Designs

Building Back Cheaper

PAGE 8-9

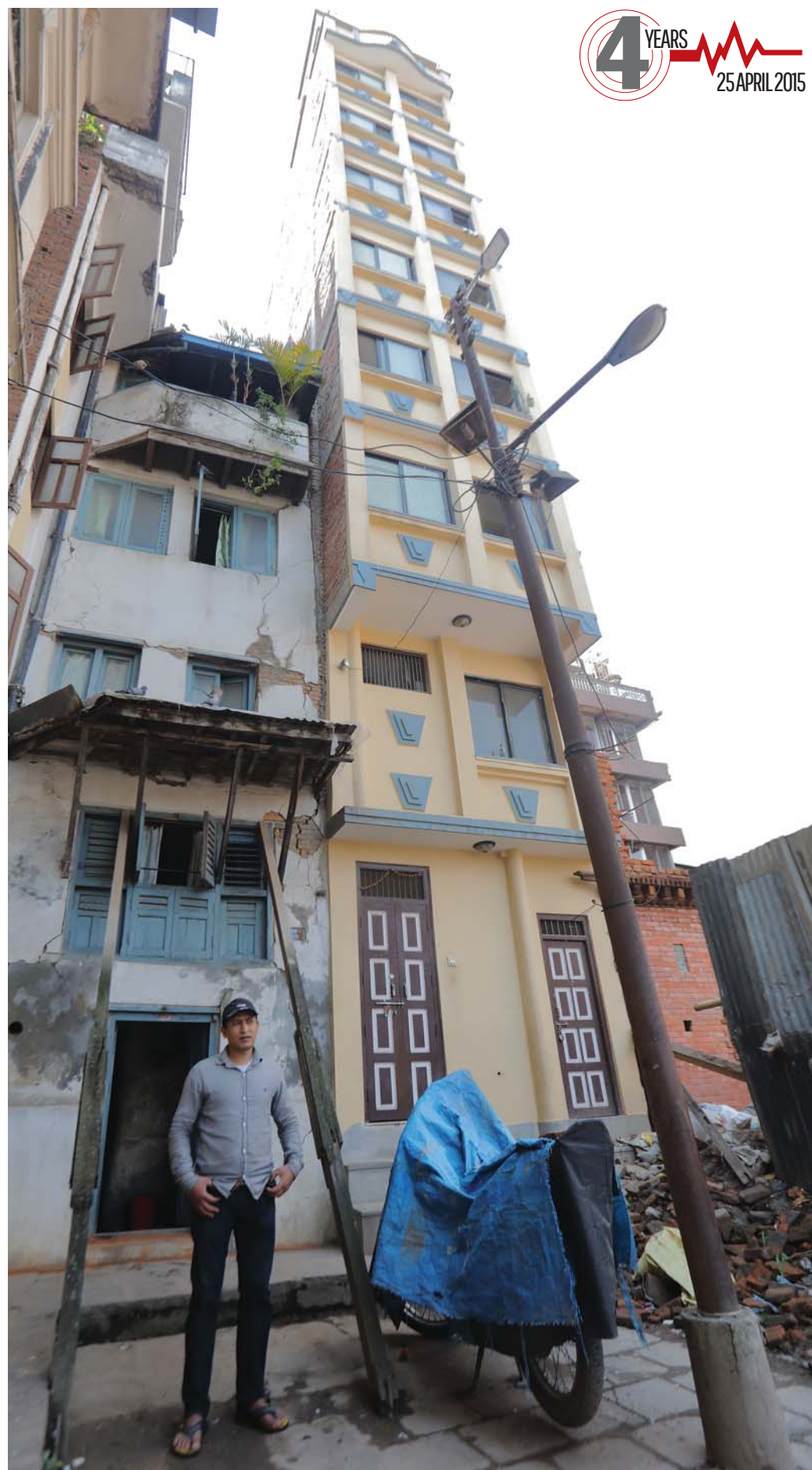
Nirmala Pariyar's 2nd Life
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Learning Experience for Nepal's Schools

Shaking Up the Health Sector
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TALL ORDER

4 YEARS
25 APRIL 2015



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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

LESSONS UNLEARNT

Another earthquake anniversary. Another occasion to mark lessons not learnt from 25 April 2015. Four years later, Central Nepal is still being rocked by aftershocks of 2015. That peculiar earthquake shook everything to the east of the epicentre, and inflicted almost no damage at all to its west. The release of tectonic energy appears to have travelled along a rupture zone from Gorkha and ground to a halt somewhere beneath the southern edge of the Kathmandu Valley. The stored tension of the 7.8 magnitude earthquake is only partially spent.



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For the first two years after the earthquake, memory was still fresh and we were careful about building back better. There was even talk of strictly enforcing the building code. Look at us now. The kinds of structures that are going up in Kathmandu prove that we have all but forgotten what an earthquake can do. There is still the unfinished business of 2015 beneath the Valley, and below western Nepal is the ticking time bomb of tension from the subduction of the Indian plate into the Eurasian landmass, which has not been released for nearly 700 years. We still don't seem to fathom how lucky we were that the 2015 earthquake occurred on a Saturday, did not happen at night, and that it was below 8 magnitude. April 25 was a warning to enforce seismic-resistant designs in private homes, but especially public buildings. Schools may not be so

lucky next time, and classrooms need to be strengthened. Our hospitals have poor construction, as the destruction of a newly-built district hospital in Chautara in 2015 proved. Pre-positioning supplies, digging equipment and designating open spaces for evacuation needs to happen now. Across Nepal, earthquake drills will be more important than singing the national anthem at assembly. While thinking and preparing ourselves for future shocks, there is also all the catching up we have to do to reach the most vulnerable survivors of the 2015 earthquake. It is not just about distributing the insufficient amount earmarked for rebuilding homes, but also rehabilitating families, providing skills training and finding jobs near home for them. The National Disaster Management Act has been passed, but where is the Authority? The NRA now needs to be phased out (it wasn't much help anyway) to prepare for the Next Big Ones. It is a feeble hope, but let us not get bogged down in turf battles and allow the Home Ministry to mess it up with political appointments and job distribution to party faithful again.



Under the federal structure, we have a new opportunity to decentralise disaster preparedness, planning and management. Every municipality now has to take responsibility from ward level up, so that there is a search, rescue and relief plan in place. But given that so many mayors and local elected officials are contractors who are awarding construction jobs to themselves, there is not much hope. We wish the incompetence of Kathmandu Municipality in earthquake rehabilitation of monuments was an exception, but it is the rule. The delays in rebuilding Rani Pokhari and Kastamandap are national disasters in themselves. It is hard to figure out who is more culpable — Mayor Shakya or the Department of Archaeology.

There are lessons to be learnt about how not to organise compensation for rebuilding. While a lot more of the grants have been cleared, there are many families who have found loopholes to build tiny cement sheds just to get their hands on the cash.

As our coverage this past month in the run-up to the fourth anniversary of the quake, and in this issue (pages 1, 4, 8-9, 14-15), indicate: it is now time to also turn our attention to the seismic risk in the rest of the country. For the past four years, we have been in rehab mode, picking up the pieces of the damage in Central Nepal's 14 districts. It bears repeating that the risk is now to the whole country from the massive slip that is bound to occur sooner or later in Western Nepal. There is no other way to put it: the death and destruction from it will be nationwide and catastrophic.

10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

This Editorial titled 'Half full' from issue #447 of 16-23 April 2009 tried to look at the bright side, but could not find much to be cheerful about. Not much has changed in Nepal in 10 years. Excerpt:

'Wonder if Pushpa Kamal Dahal, sitting in Baluwater and preparing for his China visit, has any clue about the rising frustrations of the people. The Maoists may have got three of the six seats in the by-elections, but that is not the real barometer. Ask people stuck inside buses for 24 hours because the government can't clear the week-long blockade of the country's main national highway by flood victims. Ask city-dwellers who have seen no respite from power and water shortages.

This coalition has spectacularly failed to deliver. There is no law and order, youth wings of ruling parties roam the streets and the police have no orders to intervene.'

Times.com

ONLINE PACKAGES

WHAT'S TRENDING

GLOCAL NEPALI ART

Take a video tour of the Nepal Art Now exhibition at the Weltmuseum Wien, and listen to artists and curators from Nepal and Austria discuss the significance of contemporary Nepali art on the global stage. Story: [page 6-7](#).

FOUR YEARS ON

The 2015 earthquake destroyed not just private homes, but also many public buildings like health and educational institutions. Rebuilding of schools and hospitals is proceeding at a rapid pace, incorporating new earthquake-resistant technologies. Follow our reporters to see just how this is happening. Stories: [page 13](#), [14-15](#).

A SECOND LIFE

Meet Nirmala Pariyar, 11, who lost her leg when she was trapped under a brick wall during the 2015 earthquake. Despite her trauma and long recovery, Nirmala is full of hope for the future and plans to do well in her studies and become a nurse. Story: [page 13](#).

Most reached and shared on Facebook

Most commented

Nepalis are drifting to digital media
by Madhu Acharya and Bhumiraj Chapagain
91% of Nepalis own phones, half of them are smartphones and almost all of those are used for the Internet, including 88% for Facebook. The most trusted source of news and information is not the media but neighbours, friends and family. For these and more revealing results from the Nepal media Survey 2019, with interactive infographics and maps, visit [nepalitimes.com](#).

Most popular on Twitter

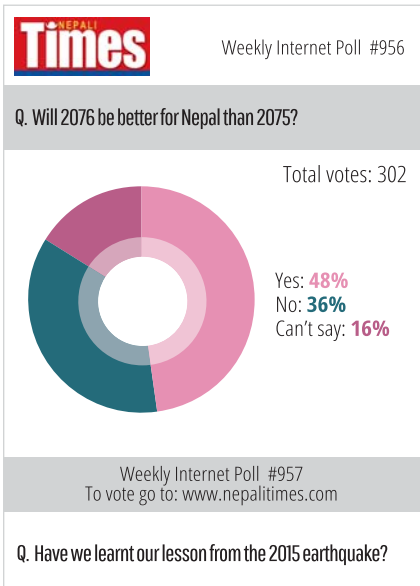


Nepal's naturalist elite
by Lisa Choegyal
Nepal's early naturalists guided celebrity guests ranging from Ringo Starr to Harpo the Clown, and were a vital link between the international stars and unfamiliar terrain. Many Indian boutique properties and wildlife operations celebrated throughout the subcontinent are today run by Nepali naturalists who cut their teeth in the jungles of Chitwan and Bardia.

Most visited online page

QUOTE TWEETS

- Nepali Times** @NepaliTimes
Instead of helping us communicate, the #Internet is making Nepalis lonelier, unhappy and unproductive. Sabina Devkota reports. More on #Nepal #Media Survey 2019 @SharecastNP only at <http://nepalitimes.com> #socialmedia #mentalhealth
- Pawan ShreStha** @pawanshrestha
Modern problems! FOMO (Fear of missing out) is the one of the root cause of it
- Pratik Thebe** @pratik_thebe
Hide this article otherwise wannabe authoritative government will ban internet
- Reena** @ReenaBurathoki
This real stuff I need to cure myself #productivityDownTheDrain
- Nepali Times** @NepaliTimes
Lightning strikes kill more people annually in Nepal than #floods and storms, yet do not get as much attention. @SoniaAwale reports on the impact of #lightning in different sectors in #Nepal
- Amrit Dangi** @AmritDangi9
Graphic or verbal awareness needed through national media (national television and radio) and local authority



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Nepal is being loved to death

Four years after the earthquake, we Nepalis have got really good at playing victim

Four years ago, on a Saturday just before noon, the earth below us began to move. The sense of helplessness overwhelmed us as we tried to hold on to something not moving, and quickly realised that everything was moving. Telephone poles swayed, buildings bobbed, ponds overflowed and birds took to the air as trees shook.



½ FULL
Anil Chitrakar

The Dharara Tower crumbled, killing at least 60, and 700 temples and monuments came down in clouds of dust. Over 1,400 health facilities, 700,000 homes and 32,000 classrooms were damaged, and nearly 9,000 people lost their lives across Central Nepal.

A month later, the Post Disaster Need Assessment (PDNA) put the cost of the damage at over \$8 billion. The earth kept moving in hundreds of aftershocks, some of them strong enough to be earthquakes in their own right. The whole world converged to rescue and help in the recovery process.

Four years on, thousands of Nepalis are not just still living in makeshift shelters, they are thoroughly confused. Where has the \$4 billion in aid pledges gone? Why is it so difficult to get Rs300,000 of relief money?

Many schools, hospitals and



BIKRAM RAI

private homes have been rebuilt. Monuments that had been in scaffolding are restored. We know recovery is going to be a long term process. Standards, guidelines, rules and regulations had to be made from scratch. Many villages on unsafe slopes have to be moved from the path of landslide. Houses along highways are in the 'right of way' -- Nepal is paying a huge price for past mismanagement.

Reality is never black and white, it is grey at best. The Indian foreign minister made a huge pledge at the reconstruction conference held in Kathmandu in July 2015 to help Nepal rebuild. It has taken four long years for some of the money to finally start trickling in for a consultant and geologist.

The business community in Patan said it did not want foreign

money, and would restore the Bhimsen Temple on its own. Many relief agencies and agents went into villages with Bibles rather than building material. Bhaktapur rejected €10 million reconstruction aid from Germany because there were too many strings attached. Many people from all over the



world who sent money and relief materials to Nepal cannot find any trace of it four years later. We have not seen any audit of the Prime Minister's Relief Fund, which is perceived to be a 'black hole' into which donations disappear.

While Rani Pokhari in Kathmandu is still in a pathetic state, the Darbar High School nearby proudly displays banners of China Aid ... putting many passersby to shame. If every graduate of the school gave a thousand rupees, how many schools could we build? What led politicians and the people who keep them in power to become so dependent on foreigners to rebuild our monuments when we rebuilt them ourselves after every earthquake in the past?

Many families broke up on paper after the earthquake, hoping they would get multiple tranches of relief provided by the global community. The NRA was formed in the absence of an elected government, heads changed with every new government, and the

authority hired technicians who are constantly campaigning for their own benefits. Nepal's *Forbes* billionaire got 15 min of fame posing in front of a temple in Bhaktapur he is not paying to rebuild.

Every Nepali knows that one day the free ride we are getting will come to an end. Till then we are all willing to play the victim, and we are getting really good at it too. From poor citizens to the rich communists in power, we know our lines in the Nepal recovery drama.

In the meantime, the energy is building up again below us. The earth will move again. And next time it may not happen on a Saturday or at noon when most people are in the corn fields. The chaotic response to the recent tornado in Bara and Parsa is a warning signal about how ill prepared we are. All the training, capacity building, study tours, technical assistance and technology, may only result in greater dependency.

Like garbage collection and the plight of the poor, we need to make disaster preparation a Nepali problem and not a White Man's Burden. The fire that destroyed the Notre Dame holds lessons for safeguarding our own monuments. Sadly, so many people have high-paying jobs, fancy cars and offices in the name of the vulnerable that a real objective conversation is not possible. Perhaps Nepal is being loved to death. 🇳🇵

Anil Chitrakar is President of Siddharthinc



Turkish's Great Move to new Istanbul airport

Turkish Airlines inaugurated flights from its new Istanbul Airport by flying to Marrakech on 6 April, the first destination to be added from the airline's new hub. This makes Marrakech Turkish's 308th destination globally, as the airline seeks to expand its fleet and add new destinations from the higher capacity airport.

The airline is working on a new strategy to utilise opportunities brought by Istanbul airport, which will be the world's biggest and is expected to serve 200 million passengers per year when it is fully completed by 2023. The airport has state-of-the-art equipment and is designed for passenger convenience, with self check-in kiosks and other amenities.

Over 90% of customers of Turkish Airlines between Kathmandu and Istanbul are transit passengers and the new airport is expected to make these transfers much smoother.

"The new airport was a must to accommodate Turkish Airlines'

growth plans, and we hope to give passengers to and from Nepal much more comfort and flexibility with better connectivity," Turkish's Nepal manager Abdullah Tuncer Kececi told *Nepali Times*.

At present, flights westward from Kathmandu have been affected by runway repair work, which closes the airport from 10PM till 8AM every day, as well as the closure of air routes across the India-Pakistan corridor.

On the weekend of 5 April, Turkish Airlines completed its 'Great Move' to Istanbul Airport from Atatürk Airport, which had been the airlines' home for 86 years. The TK54 flight to Singapore carrying 319 passengers and 18 cabin crew members was the farewell flight from Atatürk Airport.

Regarding the move to Istanbul airport, Turkish Airlines Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee, M. İlker Aycı, said, "Currently the biggest airport project of the world, this enormous facility will be the home of the resounding local and global growth of Turkish

Airlines, with its state-of-the-art physical capabilities and capacity."

The move to Istanbul Airport has been described as an important aviation milestone for Turkey, which has used its strategic location astride Europe and Asia as the 'New Silk Route' for better global connectivity. In addition, the new generation of longer-range aircraft like the Aribus 350 XWB and the Boeing 777 X, which can circle the world with just one stop, can use Istanbul as a hub.

One of the biggest projects in aviation history, the construction of Istanbul airport was initiated by Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and was supported by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, IGA Consortium, and various business partners. Equipment weighing roughly 47,300 tons was carried to Istanbul Airport from Atatürk Airport. From aircraft-towing apparatus weighing 44 tons to extremely sensitive materials, over 10,000 pieces of equipment to be transferred, the equivalent of the freight carried by 5,000 trucking rigs.

Turkish Airlines already flies to 124 countries, which is more than any other airline, and maintains a fleet of 336 aircraft. After relocating to the new aviation hub, the airlines' progress is set to accelerate, with an aim to maintain a fleet of 500 by 2023.

On the Kathmandu-Istanbul sector, Turkish is increasing its passenger capacity by 17% both ways this year. The airline is also offering city stopovers for transit passengers, and hopes that traffic to Istanbul will get a boost after the new airport is inaugurated.

Says Kececi: "We have increased capacity despite difficulties because we believe in working together with other companies to boost tourism ahead of Visit Nepal 2020." 🇳🇵

prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS

Qatar wins big

Qatar Airways received multiple awards in April for its in-flight service and charity work. The airline won a special award for 'Best Charitable Initiatives', which recognised the airline's breast cancer



awareness amenity kit. It also received the 'Trendsetter of the Year' award for its versatile Tasting Platter, an express dinner option aiming to optimise rest and sleep on overnight flights from Europe.

Sustainable flight

On Earth Day 2019, Etihad Airways will operate a flight without any single-use plastic onboard, to raise awareness about the harmful effects of plastic pollution.



The flight, EY484 from Abu Dhabi to Brisbane, is part of the UAE airline's larger commitment to the environment. The carrier is working to reduce single-use plastic by 80%, not just in-flight but across the organisation, by the end of 2022.

NIC for cancer

NIC Asia Bank and Nepal Cancer Hospital signed an agreement to provide up to 10% discount for the bank's employees and customers. The bank currently has 1.5 million clients across Nepal and 281 branches.



Jet Airways stops flights

The Jet Airways crisis is expected to hit Nepal hard as it was the 2nd largest



passenger carrier to Nepal with four daily flights from Kathmandu to Delhi and Mumbai. However, Nepal Airlines has announced it will add 3 more flights per week to Delhi to pick up the slack.

TVS on Daraz

TVS bikes and scooters are now available on the online shopping website Daraz, which is offering a sure shot discount of Rs10,000 for the first 100 buyers, to mark New Year 2076. The offer is only applicable if a purchase is made from Kathmandu.



prabhu BANK

Ncell ruling opens a can of worms

The Supreme Court verdict on Ncell last week left more questions unanswered

An extended full bench of the Supreme Court comprising of five judges, including Chief Justice Cholendra Shamsher Rana, after listing the case regarding taxation of Ncell at least 14 times for hearing announced its verdict through a written order this week.



GUEST HOUSE
Semanta Dahal

The judgment, though not devoid of reasoning, has placed reliance solely on Section 57(1) of the Income Tax Act to impose tax liability on Ncell and its current largest indirect owner the Axiata Berhad Malaysia. In its subsequent press release, Ncell stated that the Axiata Group Berhad was not party to the dispute decided by the Supreme Court, and that it is further reviewing the decision without prejudice to its remedial rights. The decision is considered non-appealable or open to review because it was delivered by an extended full bench of the Supreme Court.

The most important issue for the court to resolve was the tax implication in Nepal arising due to the sale of shares that consummated in St Kitts & Nevis, a Caribbean nation famously recognised as a tax haven. The ownership (shareholders) of Reynolds Holdings incorporated in St Kitts & Nevis and holding majority

shares of Ncell was changed from 'Telia Sonera Norway Holdings' to 'Axiata Investment Limited' (a company incorporated in the UK) under a Share Purchase Agreement executed outside Nepal.

'Telia Sonera Norway Holdings', as per the Supreme Court decision, is ultimately owned by 'Telia Sonera Sweden' and 'Axiata Investment Limited' is a conduit company of 'Axiata Berhad Malaysia'.

Section 57(1) of the Income Tax Act applies in situations where there is change of underlying ownership of 50% or more of an entity compared to its ownership in the last three years. The Supreme Court, after carefully interpreting each of these following expressions in Section 57(1) — 'entity', 'asset' and 'ownership' — concluded that Ncell is the 'entity', the license to provide telecommunication service is the 'asset' and ownership change from 'Telia Sonera Sweden' to 'Axiata Berhad Malaysia' as disposing of underlying assets of Ncell.

Since there has been disposal of assets, the Supreme Court further adds that the gains should be taxed at 15% in accordance with Section 95A(2)(b) of the Income Tax Act, and that the tax must be paid by Ncell and Axiata Berhad Malaysia.

The Supreme Court has directed the Large Taxpayers Office (LTO) to determine the exact tax amount within three months but has not clearly set a timeline for the payment of the outstanding



tax liability for Ncell and Axiata Berhad Malaysia. The outstanding tax liability, in addition to Rs21 billion that Ncell has already paid, can only be determined after tax assessment by the LTO. On Tuesday, the LTO ordered Ncell to pay an additional Rs39 billion in taxes by 22 April.

The decision of the Supreme Court, even though a pronounced assertion to ensure taxation of an offshore transaction in Nepal, has relied on Section 57(1) with marked intention to impose tax liability on Ncell, but it has left more questions unanswered than it settles.

An investor, especially a foreign investor, would seek more clarity on issues including:

- Will Section 57(1) get attracted even in cases where the change

of shareholding by selling of shares is less than 50%?

- What if the period of change of ownership is more than three years?
- Will the Company whose shares are being transferred be held liable to pay tax even in a situation where the seller pays the capital gains tax?
- Most importantly, will share sale transactions occurring outside Nepal having the effect of changing ownership of a company in Nepal be taxed?
- Lastly, will the taxation in Nepal of an offshore transaction be pursued under certain prescribed criteria?

During the entire episode of taxation of Ncell neither the

government nor Parliament took any substantive measures to reform laws to establish the principles and criteria of taxing an offshore transaction having implication in Nepal. Further, the evident wavering position of the government added to the conundrum. This is appalling, especially in light of entered Bilateral Investment Treaties, which require Nepal to provide fair and equitable treatment to foreign investors. Nepal has such a treaty with the UK and one of the current indirect shareholders of Ncell Axiata Investment Limited is a company incorporated in the UK.

The Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act, 2019, only imposes an obligation to notify the share transfer or sale of a foreign investment company occurring outside Nepal. A judicial remedy on taxation matters creates uncertainty and unpredictability about its implication for future offshore transactions, therefore it is time for the government and Parliament to take steps to pass legislative enactments that are predictable and follow established principles to cover offshore transactions.

An opportunity is forthcoming. The Finance Act 2019, to be promulgated in June, can make amendments to the Income Tax Act. 🇳🇵

Semanta Dahal is an advocate.
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Largest ever international
exhibition of contemporary Nepali
art opens at Weltmuseum Wien



"The hardest part of the exhibition was to select art works from more than

Even though some of the art works are rooted in Nepali culture and traditions,

CLAIRE BURKERT

The inaugural ceremony of the exhibition

at the Weltmuseum featured the Himalayan Quartet, led by Nepali composer Rupak Kumar Shahisamuda, which played several fusion pieces based on popular Nepali folk songs. The Weltmuseum is located in Vienna's Hofburg, the winter palace of the Hapsburgs that became infamous for a speech given by Adolf Hitler from one of its balconies after the *Anschluss* (forced unification of Germany and Austria) in 1938.

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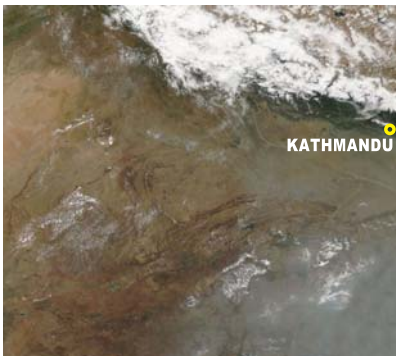
DORIS PRLIC

Nepal's traditional carvings and paintings by anonymous masters that adorn temples and monuments have been worshipped over the centuries, and are still regarded as embodiments of the divine. However, they came to be regarded as 'art' after being stolen and exhibited in museums in Europe and America, and were detached from their original spiritual value.

The contemporary Nepali art on exhibit here is defined not by its style, but by paintings, sculptures and installations that were created in the past 50 years, with diverse themes ranging from devotional, social commentary, abstract and modern.

Most of the artists have shunned 'Western' techniques, and gone global to develop a unique grammar of their own. Says Schicklgruber: "Modernism had Paris, London and New York as its traditional centres of art. In the postmodernist age other cities have joined this exclusive club. One of them is Kathmandu."

Before going to Vienna, Nepal Art Now was pre-exhibited at the Nepal Art Council in Kathmandu in December 2018. Most of the works on display are different from both traditional Nepali art and western postmodernism. You can see influences of Picasso, Matisse and Warhol, but almost as parody. Mona Lisa also appears in Manuj



We seem to be finally getting a respite from that unseasonal bout of unprecedented precipitation. For Friday and into the weekend, expect bright clear mornings with a fresh breeze from the northwest keeping temperatures four degrees lower than usual for this time of year. There will be some afternoon buildup over the mountains, but nothing serious. However, going into early next week another westerly system will bring moisture-laden clouds our way, which local convection will push up the mountains leading to more thunderstorms.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
24° 12°	23° 13°	23° 13°

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KUNDA DIXIT

Babu Mishra's famous 'selfie portrait'.

Manish Harijan's audacious renditions of deities duelling with modern cartoon characters are a critique of the commercialisation of religion, and got him into hot water with fundamentalists in 2012.

Asha Dangol's theme deals with disasters like earthquakes and environmental degradation.

One could say that Nepali artists are not influenced by the 'West' but by 'trans-continentalism', fusing Nepali religious and cultural visual metaphors with modern techniques giving our vernacular a new spin – turning the local into global. 🇳🇵

Nepal Art Now
Open daily except Wednesdays
10AM – 6PM
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Take a video tour of the Nepal Art Now exhibition at the Weltmuseum Wien, and listen to artists and curators from Nepal and Austria discuss the significance of contemporary Nepali art on the global stage.

nepalitimes.com



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DIRGHA MAN CHITRAKAR & GANESHMAN CHITRAKAR FOUNDATION

The Chitrakars of Kathmandu

Ever since Arniko travelled to the court of Kublai Khan in the 14th century, Nepali artists have ventured abroad, and picked up new techniques. Raj Man Chitrakar did sketches and watercolours with British resident and naturalist Brian Houghton Hodgson in the mid-19th century and Bhaju Man Chitrakar accompanied Jang Bahadur to Victorian England in 1850. It was Dirgha Man Chitrakar who travelled to England with Chandra Shumsher Rana in 1908, and there is a long line of Newa artists including Tej B Chitrakar right down to Lok Chitrakar in the present day, whose *pauba* of Vasudhara is among the exhibits in Vienna.

Coinciding with the Nepal Art Now exhibition was Preserving a Legacy, an exhibition of photographs by four generations of Chitrakars at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. The exhibition, which ended on 12 April, included prints by Dirgha Man Chitrakar, Ganesh Man Chitrakar, Kiran Man Chitrakar and Swaraj Man Chitrakar.



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Building back cheaper

Up-cycling Nepal's post-earthquake architecture with a model house

Sapana Shakya
and Aman Raj Khatakho

One of the lessons not learnt from the earthquake four years ago is the possibility to re-use and up-cycle bricks, metal and timber for reconstruction instead of buying expensive imported material. But it is still not too late.

Traditionally, Nepalis have reused building material for temples, or homes, salvaging and recycling them after every earthquake in the past. Nearly 700,000 houses went down in the 2015 quakes, leaving a huge amount of stone, bricks, useful mud mortar, timber and roof tiles.

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake on 25 April 2015, survivors quickly built temporary shelters made of bamboo, tarpaulins, planks, corrugated steel



sheets and anything else available. Relief agencies supplied

corrugated steel sheets, some of which were barely 0.2mm thick and could be bent into semi-circles to make shelters.

Soon, the temperature in the low valleys rose to 36°C, and the space under the metal became ovens. Temporary schools also overheated, and there were reports of children dehydrating and fainting. Once the monsoon came, the sound of rain on the tin roofs made teaching impossible. Strong winds tore the paper-thin steel sheets loose, turning them into flying guillotines.

Poor families had no other option than to stay in their temporary makeshift houses, turning a large part of Central Nepal into slums. These were not homes.

Our Sustainable Mountain Architecture (SMA) team came up with an alternative design for transitional homes, made from salvaged material and locally grown bamboo or thatch. The base of the single-storey



Nepal's traditional

Reviving flexible building methods can help reduce damage in future

Sheilin Teo

After the April 2015 earthquake, the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) released two manuals to address the repair and retrofit of masonry and reinforced concrete structures. Later, it added an updated guideline for masonry structures.

The NRA advisory is consistent with international approaches for earthquake-resistant houses, with a focus on using new, commercial products available in the construction market. But we can also learn a lot from Kathmandu Valley's historical building traditions about alternative designs.

There are many ways of building resilience into structures, but the most historically prevalent and still important today is flexibility. Strong but flexible jointing of ductile and appropriately-sized structural members that hold a building together allow it to sway with movement loads during an

earthquake, making it less likely to collapse.

Such design is seen in old timber-framed and intricately jointed buildings in Japan and China, and also in structures across Nepal. For example, roof rafters are jointed to ridge poles and wall plates to allow a pivoting motion that helps isolate the roof structure from the rest of the building in case of ground movement.

Traditionally, buildings in Nepal were constructed with timber and brick walls. Timber is now a scarce resource, and masonry has fallen out of favour in the face of the militant march of concrete. From the plains to the mountains, buildings were made of stone, timber, mud, bricks, thatch and tiles.

Just as the frames and jointing were made to be flexible, the walls were thick, rigid and robust, which is another stabilisation technique. These days, because building with concrete and bricks means walls are thinner and weaker, corner ties and banding can help keep flimsier walls intact.

Other earthquake-resilient building techniques include lightweight roofing, which in the past was done with wood and bamboo sub-structures to thatched roofs — especially in the Tarai — and triangulation, seen today in trusses and pitched forms, traditional Newari scroll capitals and decorated *tundaal* (struts).

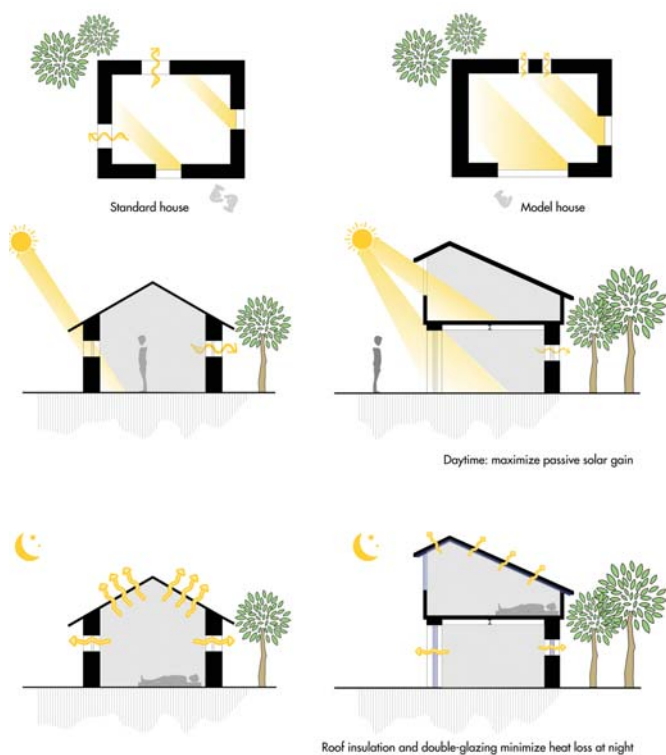
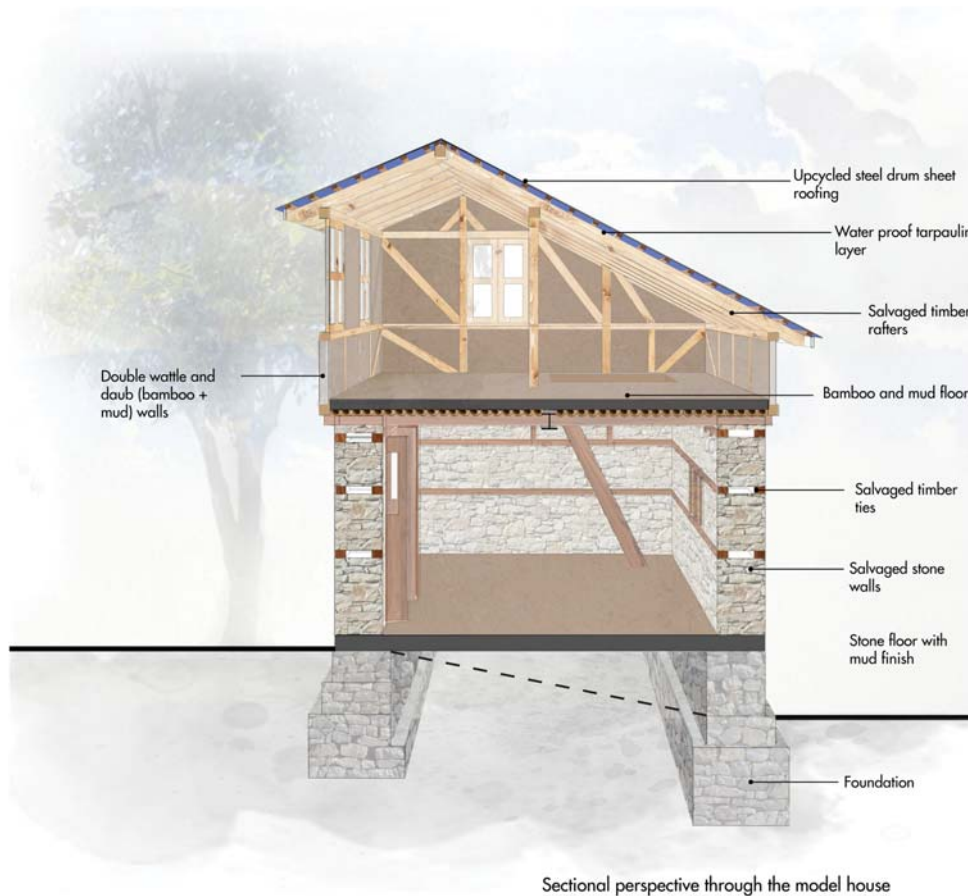
At a seminar this month on seismic risk organised by the National Society for Earthquake Technology and the United States Geological Survey, experts said Nepal had a strong tradition of resilient construction.

Modern skyscrapers in earthquake-prone places like Tokyo use base isolation to counter seismic movement. The Nyatapola Temple in Bhaktapur, Nepal's tallest, has similarly stood the test of time and two massive earthquakes by combining base isolation with triangulation.



PHOTOS: SHEILIN TEO

per and stronger



BEST USE IS REUSE

Post-earthquake most buildings tend to use reinforced concrete because of the misconception that houses built with traditional techniques and materials will not be strong.

However, with innovation and the right design, the non-profit Sustainable Mountain Architecture has built this model house that uses local material and style to build durable and eco-friendly homes.

This model house is easily replicable, uses local labour and technology, and salvaged material.

The windows and doors of the model house face south. The southern wall is taller, which means the house gets plenty of sun in winter. The passive solar energy that enters the house is trapped in the walls. Double glazing on windows prevents heat from escaping.

house is a thick, heavy stone wall; the main structure re-uses timber columns, beams and rafters of the family house that came down.

The top part of the walls and the roof are made of lighter material, the horizontal timber tie beams had new metal wires to act as stabilising cross-bracing so they were stronger. Salvaged planks or bamboo, and the compulsory involvement of family members in the building process guaranteed ownership of the transitional homes built for only Rs40,000 each.

However, after relief money was allocated for the removal of material from ruined houses excellent raw material that could have been used for construction were taken away. Once the government got its act together, it dictated the usage of concrete.

Heaps of local building material was wasted, while salvaged timber started to rot in the rain. Families who could afford it started building reinforced concrete houses. This has been a boom time for the cement and rebar industry. Brick infill walls were made in concrete structures, providing business to polluting brick kilns baking Kathmandu's fertile topsoil. All this new building material had to be transported by trucks spewing black soot.

A more permanent design by the SMA team used salvaged material from a collapsed building to make a two-storey model house at the ICIMOD Knowledge Park in Godavari, to demonstrate quake-resistance design for rural Nepal (*left*).

For retaining warmth in winter, the house — at 1,500m — uses a south-facing asymmetrical saddle roof for passive solar energy gain. While most buildings in Nepal are now using thin, 0.25mm corrugated steel sheet for the roof, we looked for a more robust solution, re-using bottoms of scrap tar drums 60cm in diameter and 1.2mm thick. The completed house rests on a concrete ring beam, the only place where cement is used.

The upper floor is lightweight with timber structure and double wattle and daub walls. These jut out slightly from the lower stone wall with timber tie reinforcements. The largest upper floor span of 6m is made by one steel I-beam, to conserve trees. 🇳🇵

Sapana Shakya and Aman Raj Khatakho are architects with Sustainable Mountain Architecture, a Nepali non-profit founded by Anne Feenstra, a Laureate of the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture 2012 (Paris) to promote innovative pro-people, pro-ecology, pro-local building techniques.

l seismic resistant designs

earthquakes

The ziggurat form that supports the five-storey timber and brick tower is essentially a robust plinth, separating the sacred relic and its towering housing from the shaking, while providing ample seating for the beautiful carved guardians of the venerated god.

But just as important as building resilience into a structure is caring for it. In the past, buildings lived and breathed within settlements, cared for on a daily basis, and would fall apart if neglected.

Ritual care, for example yearly renovations for Dasain, ensure that homes and community buildings are regularly maintained and kept intact, and thus less prone to falling apart in the event of a natural disaster.

In the old towns of the Kathmandu Valley, Newari dwellings and temples were built with both tensile and rigid elements — timber, bricks and clay clustered



Building resilience

Flexibility/shock absorbency (timber, steel, pinned joints, hydraulicised mud mortars)

Rigidity/integrity/banding/corner reinforcements/buttresses (thick masonry walls, rammed earth, interlocking blocks, corner reinforcements, symmetry, opening sizes + locations)

Base isolation (dampers, deep foundations, robust plinths)

Bracing/triangulation/shear walls/lateral loading/banding (struts, capitals, corbels, lintels, top plates, reinforced concrete or timber banding, metal ties, plywood bracing wall panels)

Lightweight Roofs (metal sheet, thatch, shingles, bituminous tiles)

ANASTYLOSIS: (*From far left*) Decorated resting platform (*pati*) in Kathmandu being rebuilt using traditional materials and methods.

The Nyatapola Temple, tallest in Nepal, has withstood many big earthquakes because of base isolation and triangulation.

Rafters inside the attic of an old Newa house show how the roof beams are joined with ridge poles and wall plates.

together in courtyard configuration, each courtyard effectively creating braced squares that are more capable of with standing shakes.

Similarly, communities in the high Himalaya build settlements one atop another into a hillside, or side by side on contours in maze-like configuration. These buildings, rising from the ground as an agglomerated system of dwellings, are a breathtaking symbol of communities leaning on one another, in a telling, enduring tradition of deep-rooted resilience. 🇳🇵

EVENTS



New Beginnings
Word Warriors are celebrating April, the month of poetry, with 11:11 poetry challenge. The program offers a list of poetry performances and a few open mic performances. You can also register to perform in the show via an online form available on Word Warriors' Facebook event page.
20 April, 2:30-5pm, Rs35, Metalwood Nepal, Saugal Chok, (01) 5536974

Escape Game
Use your brains, and the skills of each member of the team, to solve various puzzles so you can escape a room as quickly as possible! Play in a team of maximum four members in this game created by Alliance Francaise.
19 April, 2-4pm, Alliance Française Kathmandu, Pulchok, (01) 5009221

Around the Globe
Get ready to laugh and enjoy the international line-up with Aayush Shrestha from Nepal, Fedor Ikelaar from the Netherlands and Brian Aylward from Canada, also Winner of Stand Up Comedian of the Year 2019.
20 April, 7-9pm, Rs200, Sukrabar, Lazimpat, 9841794613



Spring Bouldering
The first climbing and bouldering competition of the season is here. There will be a qualifying round and the finals. This is a fun event where you can choose any route suitable for you and can have as many tries as you like in the qualifying round. Contact the organisers below for registration.
21 April, 12-6pm, Registration Rs200, Astrek Climbing Wall Pvt Ltd, Thamel (01) 4419265

East to West
Join the photo exhibition, along with video and storytelling session, of “Mission East to West”.
19 April, 6pm onwards, Evoke Bistro and Café, Jhamsikhel, 9851111051

Migration Talk
In this talk organised by Social Science Baha, Keiko Yamanaka will speak about the situation of Nepali migrant workers in Japan.
22 April, 5:30pm, Yala Maya Kendra, Patan, (01) 4472807 / 4480091

Khabardari
Khabardari (Beware!) rally against corruption. Join to voice your support to end all forms of corruption in Nepal.
20 April, 12pm onwards, Maitighar Mandala, 9851230012



Imagine Cycle
On the occasion of Heritage Ride, help create a cycle-friendly Nepal with cycle lanes and healthy people. Act locally, think globally.
20 April, Early morning, Basantapur

HUBTalk
Hear Ade Summers and his stories from expeditions in the landscapes of Pakistan & Afghanistan. Summers has been trekking in remotes parts of the world for the last 20 years and will reveal how adventurous and exciting these countries can be.
21 April, 6:30-8pm, Amrit Marg, Thamel, 9866273244

3D Printing
In the closing panel review and open house of American Arts Incubator, witness 3D printed projects created by 17 participants. They were a part of a month-long workshop on digital fabrication and 3D printing by Jennifer Berry.
25-27 April, 2-5pm, Nepal Communitere, Pulchok, 9801027964

ABOUT TOWN

MUSIC



KatJazz International Festival
An 18-member band from Germany and Switzerland, a classical orchestra from Spain, a classical piano duo from Germany and Mexico, and Harini, a classically trained Carnatic vocalist, have come to Nepal for this music festival. Don't miss the opportunity to enjoy and learn about range of good music.
Until 30 April, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel, (01) 5543554
Some Highlights:
Gerwig & Gonzales, Piano Duo Concert, from Germany/Mexico, 20 April, 7pm onwards
Classical Orchestra (Strings Workshop), from Spain, 21 April, 10am-2pm
Jam Session, Hosted by Jonas Winterhalter, 23 April, 8-10pm
Asim Lama, Recital, 24 April, 7-8pm
Prajolan Jung Thapa, Recital, 25 April, 7-8pm



Sunakothi Fest
The 3rd Sunakothi Fest will be a celebration of culture and music with Kutumba band. Other attractions include lakhe dance, bar tender stunts and more.
20 April, 2-7pm, Vingareswor Mahadev Mandir, Sunakothi

Heaven and Hell
Nepali deathcore band Anhur will release their new album *Man Made Disaster*. Other guest acts are Aakrosh, Shadow In Shade, Krur, Pshycopath, The Voices Unheard, Bloody RAGE.
20 April, 1-6pm, Rs250 (presale), Rs350 (door), 25 hours, Tangelwood, Naxal, 9801057602

DINING



Craft Draught
Dhokaima is now serving Sherpa on tap. Enjoy a tall, chilled glass with barbecue every summer evening in the biergarten.
Dhokaima cafe, (01) 5522113

Aperitivo
Aperitivo is the simple idea of meeting with friends for a drink and enjoying canapés. Hyatt brings a specially prepared menu to do exactly that with exciting choices like antipasti, varieties of bruschetta, vegetarian & non-vegetarian sliders, arancini, fried calamari, stuffed mushrooms, polenta onion rings and a sweet ending with zucotto.
Every Friday, 4-7pm, The Terrace, Hyatt Regency, Boudhha, (01) 5171234 / 4217123

The Workshop Eatery
Enjoy burgers, burritos, wraps, fries and a selection of waffles and other desserts. The restaurant has an open kitchen so you can see your food being prepared and subdue your concerns about hygiene. Their burritos are highly recommended.
11am - 6:30pm, Kupondole Height, 9860431504



Le Trio
If you visit Le Trio, don't miss its Momo Cha with Jhol Achar. The most famous dish of this place are the little dumplings that smell, taste and look delicious.
11am -10pm, Pulchok and Darbar Marg, (01) 5521674

Chi Chi Grills
A small heaven for chicken lovers. Chi Chi Grills is a chicken joint serving mouth-watering grilled items in three categories: Grilled Chicken pieces, Grilled Fish and Grilled Duck. Also, prepare to handle the chicken with your bare hands because there will be no cutlery.
11am- 8:30pm, Saugal, 9851232229

GETAWAY

Bandipur Safari Lodge
The town of Bandipur is famous not only for its cultural assets but for its wild terrain, with animals like elephants, deer and tigers. Bandipur Safari Lodge is the optimal gateway for this jungle experience. You can enjoy activities like Wildlife Safari, Bird Watching and Nature Walk.
Bandipur, 9449597880, 08229-233001



Dhulikhel Lodge Resort
The lodge is nestled amidst the beautiful terraced hills of Dhulikhel. It has a rooftop as well as the Stupa Restaurant, where Nepali, Continental, Chinese and Indian food are served. Services offered include spa, excursion and lounge and bar.
Dhulikhel, (11) 490114/490043/(01) 4991353/ 4992964

The Little House
A sanctuary in the middle of gorgeous and green rice fields. You can enjoy beautiful views from the terrace, a peaceful walk in the garden and relax in the cozy shared lounge.
Khokana, 9841370022

Club Himalaya
Located in Nagarkot, the hotel is a blend of natural and modern services. The accommodation is comfortable, cozy and the food is delicious. The famous sunrise and sunset can be viewed from the private balcony of each room.
Nagarkot, (01) 6680080/6680083/6680046



Gorkha Gaun Resort
Located in the district famous as the home to the king who united Nepal, the resort is a place to enjoy natural surroundings in comfortable cottages. Offering services like restaurant and bar, authentic local and continental food, short treks and guided tours of the nearby villages, it is a sustainable resort that generates 80% of its electricity from solar panels.
Gorkha, 9801010557, 9801077602

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OUR PICK

KALANK

Opened in Kathmandu on 18 April

A period drama set in the India-Pakistan partition era, *Kalank* is visually stunning, with opulent costumes and luxurious sets. A woman in a loveless marriage (Alia Bhatt) is attracted to a handsome stranger, but their love seems to be dangerous not just for themselves but their families as well. Folk music adds to the period flavour of this movie, directed by Abhishek Varman and also starring Varun Dhawan, Sonakshi Sinha, Aditya Roy Kapoor, Madhuri Dixit and Sanjay Dutt.

AIR QUALITY INDEX KATHMANDU, 12 - 18 April

Index	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
301 – 500 Hazardous							
201 – 300 Very Unhealthy							
151 – 200 Unhealthy							
101 – 150 Unhealthy for sensitive groups							
50 – 100 Moderate							
0 – 50 Good							

Legend: PM2.5 (black line), Ozone (grey line)

FRIDAY April 12, SATURDAY April 13, SUNDAY April 14, MONDAY April 15, TUESDAY April 16, WEDNESDAY April 17, THURSDAY April 18

We are rock-steady with our unhealthy air this week despite the rainstorms. Surprisingly, the Air Quality Index (AQI) consistently hovered in the ‘Unhealthy’ zone around 15-16 hours a day, though it was not as high as during peak pollution periods. The daily averages for this week (above) do not look very encouraging. The hourly measurements from the Phora Darbar monitoring station, which go live on www.nepalitimes.com, show that the PM2.5 concentration in the air is highest during rush hour traffic.
<https://np.usembassy.gov/embassy/air-quality-monitor/>

IMPACT FEATURE

Earthquake affected communities realize a holistic recovery with the support of Caritas Nepal

Looking back after four years, there are some good examples where earthquake affected households have learned from the earthquake of 2015, realized a holistic recovery by building back better, and are moving towards further development in a confident manner. These households and communities have constructed houses using local materials and earthquake resistant techniques; they have formed user groups and repaired or expanded drinking water systems; re-established livelihood assets; and are pursuing disaster risk reduction and social protection strategies to build resilient communities. Interested journalists have looked for examples of such communities and found quite a few of them in Caritas Nepal supported locations.

Bigu is a rural municipality in Dolakha. Ward number two of Bigu, Orang village, was first village to declare construction of all houses in the village (as per National Reconstruction Authority List at the time) in April of 2018 out of more than 700 similar villages affected by the 2015 earthquakes. There was happiness and joy in the faces of the households as they shared how they built their houses using local materials such as stone, mud and wood. Mrs. MithuThakuri, Ms. Kanchi B. K., Ms. Budha Maya Tamang are three of the 565 households in Orang village (Bigu-2, Dolakha) to realize a good recovery. They have earthquake resistant houses, toilets and access to drinking water systems and have re-established their livelihoods affected by the earthquake. Ms. Kanchi notes that having the toilet nearby is a luxury for now she does not have to go out in the dark at night. Similarly, having a drinking water tap nearby her house has saved her the journey of walking half an hour to a spring to fetch water. In this village, Caritas Nepal is providing support for recovery and reconstruction in shelter, WASH, livelihoods, and protection and psychosocial concerns. Following are examples from some more locations where earthquake recovery support was provided by Caritas Nepal.



*Ms. Belimai
Tamang, Bulung,
Dolakha.*



CSEB brick house, Thokarpa, Sindhupalchowk.

Caritas Nepal earthquake recovery locations

Orang and Bulung (Bigu 2,3) and Sailung 6,7 of **Dolakha**; Sunkoshi (1,2,3,4,5) of **Sindhupalchowk**; Panauti 11, Mandan Deupur-10, and Chaurideurali 1,2,3 of **Kavrepalanchowk**; Golanzor-6 and HariharpurGadhi 1 of **Sindhuli**; and Gorkha Municipality of **Gorkha** district.

Ms. Durga Devi Nepal says building house with Compressed Soil Earth Block (CESB) bricks has provided comfortable living space for her family. She also adds the structure is strong and earthquake resistant. She notes that, Caritas Nepal provided her villagers CSEB production machines, and trained local Masons to

construct houses using the bricks. In this way, all the 22 Dalit households of Dandagaun village along with 98 others households in Thokarpa, Sindhpalchowk now have new CSEB brick houses. Some dalit households in the village have also planted coffee and

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4,764

Full housing grant
supported households (Rs.
300,000 per household)

4,358

Houses completed with housing grant support

12,500

Shelter sector socio-technical supported households

20.900

Livelihood training
and input supported
households

7.200

(150 units)

Drinking water system
beneficiary households

35

Model houses for earthquake resistant technology awareness

1,393

(female 82)

Masons trained (Skilled Mason Training)

219

(57 female)

Masons trained
(Unskilled Trained)

7

School Building Blocks being constructed



Ms. Kanchhu
B.K., Orang,
Dolakha.

others have re-established their farming assets.

Shanti Damai, Shuntali Damai and Paheli Damai noted that they have not only built a new house, but worked with Caritas Nepal to build the Sukhekhola Bandari khop drinking water system. Now safe drinking water is accessible in their front yards. 150 households of their village dug pipes to 500 meters down-hill to the Sukhekhola river source (Thokarpa, Sunkoshi, Sindhupalchowk). The water is pumped to a reservoir above their village using solar technology. The use of solar technology means the villagers do not have to pay regular electricity charges for pumping water. For perennially water scarce area, the villagers say this is a notable change that has improved both their physical conditions and reduced mental stress.

79 households of Majhigaun are proud owners of newly built brick cement masonry houses. The households have constructed houses with two rooms. Majhigaun is a congested village of fisher-folks in the bank of river Indrawati that flows on the border of Chandanimandan village in Kavrepalanchowk district. The households have not only constructed houses, but also built toilets and are accessing drinking water from a solar lift drinking water system that pumps water from the Indrawati river. ■

Source: Manindra Malla, Programme Manager, Caritas Nepal

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Game of Thrones familiar to Nepalis

Every Monday morning for the next few months a lot of Nepalis young and old will be up early to watch tv. No, not for the Champions League, but for the latest episode of the final season of *Game of Thrones*.

Our own bloody history of palace intrigue and royal feuding perhaps make Nepalis familiar with the conspiracies, back-stabbing, violence and belief in the supernatural that are staple fare of the HBO series based on the novels of George RR Martin. Those who think there is too much blood-letting, gratuitous gore or an unrealistic plot only have to look back at Nepal's own history of massacres at Kot, Bhandarkhal and Narayanhiti to know that this is all too real.

The royal massacre of 2001 is still fresh in many minds, and would have made a great tv series to beat any melodrama that Bollywood or Hollywood could concoct. We in Nepal may lead the rest of the world in real-life bloodbaths, but are still behind in their artistic representation. That must be why we from the land of the erstwhile 24 Kingdoms take vicarious pleasure in bloody feuds in the 7 Kingdoms of Westeros.

There is nothing earth-shattering in the first episode of Season 8; in fact it leaves the viewer distinctly underwhelmed. There are some

predictable meetings that flash back to Season 1, Episode 1 almost 10 years ago. Sure, Jon gets on his dragon for the first time and flies off with Danaerys to romance in a mountain, and sure, Arya faces her captor The Hound, but there is nothing extra-dramatic or memorable, especially after a searing end to Season 7. That was perhaps to be expected, however, because the episode is only setting the scene for the finale.

The episode did have its moments, one of which was that Cersei, as usual, has a new lover, but this time her brother is not by her side. The fact that she orders her beloved (pun intended) brother Jaime killed is quite a shocker, even for Cersei. Meanwhile, the other queen, Danaerys, known to flirt with women, misses it badly this time as she comes across a battle-hardened Sansa Stark. The interaction between the two women, friendly up front but simmering with resentful sparks below, is something to behold.

And this brings us to the crux of the finale, which has been plaguing fans for two blank years: what is going to happen now? You know it is the beginning of the end when the episode goes back to the very beginning, with a huge retinue marching into Winterfell. Nothing seems changed, and yet, everything has changed. The

Starks are not the innocent fools they used to be, and yet, they continue to be noble fools.

Game of Thrones is famous for decapitations galore and moral ambiguity in a plot that is like a cross between Rana sibling infighting and *The Sopranos*. For the past few seasons, as the story focused on the threat of the Night King's Army of the White Walkers, there have been clearer heroes and anti-heroes. Everything is looking good for Jon Snow, and Danaerys Targaryen. Is the show moving towards a typical happy ending after all?

Viewers will also notice that the colour palette for this season is relatively muted: blacks, greys and the occasional white on Danaerys, but none of the vibrant blues of Margery or the flamboyant yellows of Ellaria. The colour range owes a lot to the fact that winter has come to the wintry north. But it also befits the sombre mood as the White Walkers' Army of the undead has finally broken through the magical ice wall. The costumes are stunning as usual, and there is much to enjoy visually, apart from the drama. The revamped title sequence, for one, includes new locations, new stories and interiors of the castles that we previously only saw from outside.

The big reveal of the episode, Jon Snow's lineage, was not a big surprise to viewers at all, who have known for quite some time who he is. But finally something has changed, and the next episode will hopefully see more action along these lines. All along Jon Snow knew nothing and now, he knows something. 🇳🇵

Sewa Bhattarai



U S EMBASSY

US-CHINA BREAKTHROUGH: US Ambassador Randy Berry and Chinese Ambassador Yu Hong during the Bheri-Babai Multipurpose Diversion project breakthrough ceremony in Surkhet on Tuesday.



GLOBAL GREEN GROWTH INSTITUTE NEPAL

SAY "ELECTRIC": Director General of Global Green Growth Institute, Frank Rijsberman, and Bhusan Tuladhar of Sajha Yatayat sign an agreement in Kathmandu last week.



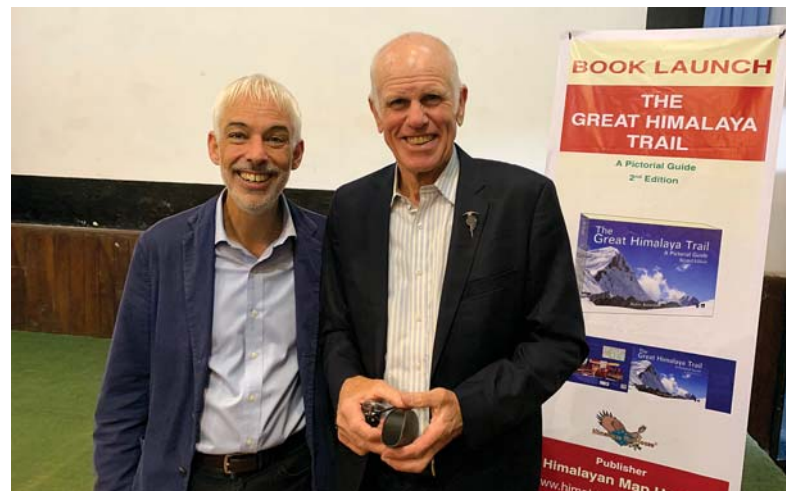
GERMAN EMBASSY

NO JOKE: Water Resource Minister Barshaman Pun, German Ambassador Roland Schaefer and Nepal Communist Party leader Jhal Nath Khanal during an inauguration of an exhibition on German's renewable energy plan at Pulchow Campus.



EU IN NEPAL

HERITAGE LIVE: Chargé d'affaires and Deputy Head of EU Delegation to Nepal, Zane Petre, visited Madhyapur Thimi with Mayor Madan Sundar Shrestha on Monday to observe Biskaa Jatra.



KUNDA DIXIT

HIMALAYAN FELLOWS: Author Robin Bousted (left) and Peter Hillary at the launch of a new edition of the book *The Great Himalayan Trail* in Kathmandu on Wednesday.



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MONIKA DEUPALA

Nirmala Pariyar's 2nd life

Nirmala Pariyar was seven and studying in Grade 2 in Okhaldhunga when she decided to accompany her mother to visit her father, Prem Bahadur Pariyar, who worked in a garment factory in Kathmandu. What was supposed to be a joyful holiday reunion turned into a traumatic event that turned her young life upside down.

Nirmala arrived in Kathmandu on 22 April 2015, and was supposed to take a bus back to Okhaldhunga on 26 April. She had gone to a friend's house on the 25th and was watching tv when, just before noon, the house started shaking. She rushed out with two friends, but a brick wall collapsed on them.

Passersby rescued two of her bruised friends right away, but did not see Nirmala under the rubble. Someone finally spotted the girl, pulled her out and rushed her to TU Teaching Hospital in Maharjanj, which was teeming with injured survivors. Her right leg had been so smashed that the hospital referred her to the Trauma Centre, where doctors decided to amputate her leg while she was still unconscious.

Nirmala's parents reached the hospital, and were at her side when she finally regained consciousness four days later. The girl did not realise she had lost her leg, but when she saw her bandaged stub she fainted again.

After four months at the hospital, Nirmala moved to a guest house in Sundhara, paid for by a charity that also helped her with an artificial leg. "It was really difficult to get used to the new leg, and it was painful," Nirmala, now 11, recalls. "But now I can move around without a crutch or

wheelchair. I can still play but only badminton and table tennis."

Despite her trauma, Nirmala (pictured above) is upbeat, self-confident and full of hope for the future. She is a fan of Nepali actress Rekha Thapa, and says she wants to be a heroine like her. "I want to take dance classes despite my leg, but cannot afford it," she says wistfully.

Although he got help from charities, Prem Bahadur has already spent Rs260,000 on his daughter's treatment, raising cash by selling some of his farm in Okhaldhunga. The government has promised to bear the cost of treatment of those wounded in the earthquake, but the family did not get any of that support. Her father says he was so preoccupied with saving his daughter's life that he did not keep the bills.

Ramu Sapkota



Meet Nirmala Pariyar, 11, who lost her leg when she was trapped under a brick wall during the 2015 earthquake. Despite her trauma and long recovery, Nirmala is full of hope for the future and plans to do well in her studies and become a nurse.

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Shaking up the health sector

Nepal’s hospitals have not even recovered from the 2015 earthquake, and now need to be ready for the Next Big One

Sewa Bhattarai

Nepal’s oldest maternity hospital is still recovering from the April 2015 earthquake: its main building had to be demolished after earning a red sticker because of its structural damage. Soon, it will move into a new seismic-resistant wing, designed to withstand future earthquakes.

For now, the hospital is working out of temporary cramped quarters offering only 375 beds out of the normal 415. But when the new building is inaugurated next month, the hospital will have more capacity, lecture rooms, an emergency ward, operating theatres and an ante-natal section.

Hospital director Jageshwor Gautam looks excited to show visitors around the construction site. “We expect our work to be much easier when the new building is completed and we can

use the new space,” he says.

The project is supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), built by consultant Hazama Ando and is expected to be handed over on 15 May.

The 2015 earthquake damaged 1,197 health facilities across Nepal, offering them a chance to rebuild so they can withstand future quakes. A survey done before the 2015 disaster had shown that of the 14 hospitals tested in Kathmandu, only 2 (Teaching Hospital and Patan Hospital, built by the Japanese) were seismic resistant. The situation in other parts of the country was even worse.

JICA is working to rebuild modern and safe hospital wings at Paropakar Maternity Hospital (pictured, right) and Bir Hospital, both in Kathmandu. They will enjoy advanced technologies like motion-sensor taps in order to reduce infections in washrooms, flush systems that reuse water from handwashing, handicapped-friendly toilets and treatment

plants for hospital waste.

Elsewhere in the quake-affected areas, however, reconstruction of health facilities is not going as well. Only 55% of the health posts and hospitals that were damaged or destroyed have been repaired, according to the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA).

“The construction of hospitals was delayed due to technical reasons, but now they are our top priority,” says Manohar Ghimire of the NRA. “Of the 643 structures built, most are pre-fab structures which have already been handed over to the communities. Now we are focusing on rebuilding the rest.”

The reconstruction of health facilities was delayed because the central government could not agree



on who should rebuild them. The Ministry of Health and Population had planned to do it, before passing it on to the NRA almost a year after the earthquake, where the plans faced further delays. That cost a total delay of two years, resulting in a reconstruction rate of only 53%,

when the target was 65%.

Even if the earthquake had not occurred, Nepal’s health sector needed a structural revamp. A survey two decades ago of 14 hospitals in Kathmandu by the National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET) showed that



Quake was a learning experience for Nepal’s schools

Post-disaster rebuilding has upgraded facilities, and improved the quality of instruction

Prakriti Kandel

in Kavre

At the edge of Tika Vidyashram School in Sanepa rises a new, three-storey building, much bigger than the one damaged in the earthquake. The classrooms are airy, bright and spacious, the staircases are wide and there is even a balcony that overlooks the grounds.

The government school was built 70 years ago with traditional mud mortar and bricks, and had to be demolished after the 2015 earthquake. The new blocks have been designed and built with reinforced concrete to be earthquake resistant, as well as to provide a child friendly, comfortable environment.

“The old school was dark, and the students looked gloomy. But the new classrooms provide a much better environment for children, and even the teachers are happy with the improved facilities, which means a better learning experience,” says principal Bimala Lamichhane. Like Tika School, many government schools in the earthquake areas have not only been rebuilt, but they have been built back better.

Tika School’s reconstruction is financed by loans from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to the Nepal government. The main academic block of the school now has nine rooms, a building for science practicals is being erected nearby with four large rooms spread over two floors that will house a library, science lab, computer room and music room.

Tika School is among 8,000 schools undergoing reconstruction after being damaged in the earthquake. A majority of them are government schools and follow similar earthquake-resistant designs created by the Central Level Project Implementation Unit under the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA).



FRESH START: Principal Sudarshan Timilsina of Bageswori School in Kavre is happy to have a new rammed-earth building after the old school was destroyed by the 2015 earthquake .

Prakriti Kandel

Engineers from the District Level Project Implementation Unit (DLPIU) oversee the construction and ensure that quality is maintained. The NRA says 4,201 of the damaged and destroyed schools have been rebuilt while 2,619 schools are under construction with help from various donors like JICA, USAID, and private groups.

One private group working to rebuild schools is Sustainable Future, which uses non-traditional building technologies that are said to be environmentally friendly and earthquake resistant. Two schools destroyed in the earthquake, Dwarpaleswor and Bageswori schools of Kavre district, are being rebuilt using rammed earth technology.

Sustainable Future is also involved in the project that is using the same technology

to expand Bayalpata Hospital in Achham, a facility run by the organisation Possible under a public-private-partnership with the central government. Sustainable Future collaborated with Namaste Nepal in building Bageswori school.

“Rammed earth uses locally available mud and minimal cement to construct the walls of the schools, making the buildings better suited for the local climate,” explains Narayan Acharya of Sustainable Future. Cement is used in the upper and lower tie beams so that the vertical and horizontal rods going within the mud walls are well connected. This makes the buildings stronger than traditional reinforced concrete structures.

“At first we thought ‘How can we build a school out of mud?’, but we realised that there

were huge benefits,” recalls Shiva Prasad Bajgai, chairperson of Dwarpaleswor School Management Committee. “It is hot here in the summers and very cold in winters, and the mud architecture has insulating properties.”

To the north in Sindhupalchok, the Bhote Namlang Secondary School was also completely destroyed during the earthquake and was reconstructed with the support of Helambu Education Livelihood Partnership (HELP). The school now has 22 rooms: 12 were newly constructed, 4 were retrofitted and 6 additional rooms were built by the DLPIU.

Bhote Namlang school serves as the education hub of its community, and it was the local people who took charge of the reconstruction, with help from New Zealand and UK-based organisations. The school was reconstructed using local skills and material without any contractors. Architects listened to the local people’s needs before submitting their design. The school’s frame structure ensures that it is earthquake resistant.

Bhote Namlang has 675 students, and faced a shortage of classrooms and furniture for four years after the earthquake. But today, there are bright modern classrooms, and the students are happy, says Jimmy Lama of HELP, adding that now new sections can be added to accommodate more students.

Apart from being earthquake resistant, many of the rebuilt schools now have much better infrastructure than they did before 2015, allowing them to focus on improving the quality of instruction.

The only problem is that with accelerated outmigration after the earthquake, the villages are being depopulated and there are fewer children. The hope is that with better schools, some of the families who have migrated to the cities may actually return.

Says Bajgai of Dwarpaleswor school, “Now that we no longer have to worry about infrastructure, we are thinking of expanding the school to Grade 10 and investing in better teachers and improved quality.” 🇳🇵



PHOTOS: BIKRAM RAI

only two of the facilities would be fully functional if hit by a high-intensity earthquake, and four would be partially operational. Survey leader Ramesh Guragain explains that quake intensity is not just measured in the Richter scale, but by many other factors

like depth, type of soil and distance from the epicentre. Which means that the intensity of the 2015 earthquake caused greater damage in districts around Kathmandu than nearer the epicentre. A subsequent NSET survey of five regional hospitals outside



Kathmandu also showed that Nepal's health care centres are structurally unprepared for future large-scale disasters. Although services and facilities in some of the hospitals have improved, the structures within which they are housed are weak and could collapse. Kathmandu's oldest medical centre, Bir Hospital, in the heart of the city, has no space for expansion. After the 2015 earthquake damaged its mortuary, the hospital is constructing a new building in its place, which will also house its nephrology, cardiology and gastrology departments, but it is still short of space. "Even after we start using our new facilities, we will need more space for the nursing campus, pediatric and maternity departments, organ transplant centre and many other services," says Bir's director Kedar Prasad Century, adding that there is no

option but to expand to Duwakot in Bhaktapur, outside of Kathmandu. Hospitals with large capacity will be much in demand after the next earthquake, and if they are knocked out of service, the injured will have nowhere to go. In 2015, many hospitals worked in the open or out of tents for months after the earthquake. "In order to avoid such a situation in future, it is imperative that the reconstruction and retrofitting of hospitals be carried out with the utmost priority," says NSET's Guragain. If this is the situation in Nepal's privileged capital, one can only imagine what it is like in district hospitals. Many of the buildings are in advanced stages of disrepair, lack hygiene and are overcrowded, even in normal times. During disasters, hospitals will have to cope with a large influx of patients but the medical centres themselves will have suffered damage. 🇳🇵

CATCHING UP: A new wing of Paropakar Maternity and Women's hospital under construction at Thapathali (left). Nepal's oldest maternity hospital is currently operating out of cramped quarters, forced to put some beds in corridors due to lack of space (above).



FOUR YEARS ON

The 2015 earthquake destroyed not just private homes, but also many public buildings like health and educational institutions. The rebuilding of schools and hospitals is going on at a rapid pace, incorporating new earthquake-resistant technologies. Follow our reporters to see just how this is happening. nepalitimes.com 🖱️

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Earth Day Resolutions

It's another Earth Day next week, and we are lucky we still have a Planet to observe it in with various activities like cutting back on fossil fuels by diluting our diesel with water.

Scientists recently announced in the journal Nature that trees do not only give off oxygen, but also methane, which is a greenhouse gas far more potent than carbon dioxide.

Being alert to the latest scientific discoveries, GONE has therefore launched a tree-felling campaign on a war-footing. The grabberment announced a target of mowing down forests the size of an average district in the forthcoming fiscal year. Cutting down 2.5 million trees to build the new airport in Nijgad alone will reduce the amount of methane we pump into the atmosphere and help cool the planet.

We may have been barking up the wrong trees all these years by trying to increase forest cover in this country. There is really no other option but to start destroying our forests all over again and not let them ever grow back. And we have no time to lose, so let's get cracking.

There are lots of other things we can do individually and collectively on Earth Day to save the Planet; here are 10 tips:

1. Immediately set a time limit on speeches by all Cabinet ministers to less than five minutes to reduce the emission of hot air.

2. Stop breathing. Every breath you take consumes precious

atmospheric oxygen and gives off harmful carbon dioxide. Remember, every molecule counts!

3. Stop farting around.

4. Besides 30 million Nepalis, there are 22 million cows and 17 million goats in Nepal and if all of them felt free to pass wind without let or hindrance imagine the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. And we're not even counting yaks, water buffaloes and Asses here, and we all know how embarrassing those three animules can be in polite company.

5. Organise maha yagya in Tundikhel for harmony in the universe and burn 15 tons of rice seeds, 400kg of ghee, and feed 108 Brahmins.

6. Immediately scrap the Community Forestry Program.

7. Create an artificial shortage of petrol and LPG to reduce Nepal's petroleum import bill and emission of carbon dioxide, but I notice the gonnerment has already thought of that.

8. Stop using plastic straws, pour the margarita straight into your mouth using a funnel. And while we are at it, we should also ban plastic surgery.

9. Nepal reduced its carbon footprint by closing down Kathmandu airport 10 hours a day. We can easily increase this to 20 hours a day and do our bit for The Planet.

10. Ask Pashupatinath one last time to protect us all.

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