

*Back in Stock* HIGH QUALITY SOFAS FROM THAILAND



Leather



Fabric



Recliners

**Furniture Land Store**  
www.furnitureland.com.np  
Showrooms: Tripureshwar : 4224797 | Maitighar : 4266372 | Maharajung : 4016277 | Pokhara : 61- 536596

**LAVAZZA**  
ITALY'S FAVOURITE COFFEE



Soattee Crowne Plaza - Thachal  
Platinum Hotel - Thachal  
lavazza@ssinepal.com

CREATE YOUR "OWN" ENVIRONMENT

**Divine Wines**



For Trade Inquiry | Ph.: 01-4032624 | Mob.: 9801215111

**AMBIENCE LIFESTYLE PVT. LTD.**  
Bijuli Bazar, Naya Baneshwor, Kathmandu  
Ph: 4781 071, 4781 072  
Email: ambiencestyle@gmail.com

**ISO/IEC 27001**

We facilitate you in implementing and maintaining your Information Security Management System



greentick  
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

t : +977-1-4620741  
w : www.gtn.com.np  
e : info@gtn.com.np

**TRANQUILITY SPA**  
"Relaxing Body, Refreshing Mind"

BRING THIS CUTOUT TO GET

**30% OFF**

Applicable in all services in any of our outlets  
www.tranquilityspa.com.np



KUNDA DIXIT

## The right path

It is easy to be disappointed by Lumbini. Scruffy, dusty and unbearably hot this time of year, it looks from the outside like a desolate construction site.

More than 1.5 million pilgrims from all over the world will visit Buddha's nativity site this year, honouring his teachings of compassion and impermanence. This figure is likely to grow as the new Gautam Buddha International Airport nearby brings direct flights from Asian cities from next year.

Buddha Jayanti, on Saturday 18 May, is an annual reminder of the decades of political neglect and corruption that have prevented Nepal from taking full advantage of its most important pilgrimage site.

There are few signs showing the way, visitors have take long, hot walks, there are few facilities, and lots of ugly construction along the new highway.

But crass commercialisation, greed and abandonment of nature are all reminders of why Buddhist philosophy is still relevant today, and why it is necessary to practice and strive for.

Despite everything, the plan of the 23-hectare park designed by Japanese architect Kenzō Tange in 1972 is more or less being followed, the open spaces have *sal* and *simal* forests, the wetlands in between teem with birdlife. The World Heritage Site has a strong spiritual presence and provides corners

of solitude, along with dozens of temples in the monastic zone built by Asian Buddhist countries.

Lumbini has been a place of pilgrimage for more than 2,000 years, ever since Emperor Ashoka visited and erected his famous nativity pillar. With Visit Nepal Year 2020 and the airport, Lumbini is poised to be an international destination like never before.

To prepare for it, roads are being upgraded and new hotels are coming up outside the sacred garden area. The Lumbini Museum is being re-imagined, transforming Tange's vaulted brick cylinders into a world-class example of heritage preservation and display.

As in life, in Lumbini you see what you look for. A flower only sees flowers and a thorn sees thorns, as the song goes. There are plenty of signs of neglect and ugliness, but looking deeper we remember what the Buddha himself said: "You only lose what you cling to."

### BUDDHA JAYANTI SPECIAL

U Thant, Kenzō Tange and Lumbini

The New Lumbini Museum

Interview with Thant Myint-U

PAGE 8-9



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

Go online to watch video



Experience the world like never before

Find yourself in a world you have only ever imagined, amidst the charm and unique history of diverse cultures. Fly with us to more than 160 destinations worldwide.

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

oneworld

**QATAR AIRWAYS** القطرية

GOING PLACES TOGETHER



# A CREEPING COUP

Whether Nepal was ruled by a monarchy-military dictatorship, an elected coalition or a communist regime, its leaders have often tried and ultimately failed to suppress the press.

After the royal-military coup of 1 February 2005, the Royal Nepal Army invaded newsrooms. At *Nepali Times*, two soldiers in military fatigues peered at the monitor, forcing the designer to expunge columns and cartoons. Kathmandu-based papers, including this one, went to press with white holes — so readers got the message that the edition had been censored. We wrote metaphorical editorials comparing democracy to trees, and

- A bill in Parliament sought to prohibit journalists from publishing personal information of public officials, ostensibly to protect their privacy.
- Editors were summoned to the Press Council for intimidating interrogations.
- Three journalists in the English language service of the state news agency RSS are being investigated for putting out a story that the Dalai Lama was out of hospital in New Delhi. Their crime: transmitting the item while President Bidya Devi Bhandari was on a visit to Beijing.
- Last week, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology slipped a draconian Media Council Bill into Parliament with excessive secrecy. It stipulates hefty fines on journalists.



played cat-and-mouse with the authorities.

Radio stations were told to broadcast only music, no news or current affairs. Some news readers got so fed up they started singing the news, broadcasting bulletins in duets. In the districts, radio stations were closed down, journalists jailed, some tortured and forced into solitary confinement for a year.

After the ceasefire and the 2008 elections, in which the Maoist party won a landslide, many breathed a sigh of relief. The war was over, and it looked like our freedoms had been restored. We were mistaken. The ruling Communists retaliated against critical content in the media throughout 2008-9 by burning newspaper distribution vans, instigating militant unions or vandalising and assaulting journalists in their newsrooms.

Ever since the united Nepal Communist Party came to power, it has been taking incremental steps to gag the media. Not with a sudden, swift crackdown but softly, in instalments. Like frogs in a pot of water above a fire, we are not supposed to notice that the water is starting to boil until it is too late. Just a short recap:

- In August 2018, Nepal's new Penal Code criminalised photography (Section 295), slapped on heavy fines and jail terms for recording conversations (Section 293) and announced strict punishment for sending, receiving or using online data (Section 298). It banned ridiculing of government officials by Photoshop-ing their images.

Ever since the united Nepal Communist Party came to power it has been taking incremental steps to gag the media.

Taken together, this is a creeping coup. Nepal seems to be following the roadmap of elected despots worldwide who are cracking down on the free press. Our leaders appear to have got hold of the manual from the one-party states they have been visiting of late.

The Media Council Bill was introduced in Parliament last week without stakeholder consultation as is customary, and smacks of ill intention. Members of the Council can now be appointed or sacked at will by the Ministry of Communication. Publishers, editors or reporters can be fined up to Rs1 million for tarnishing someone's reputation.

To be sure, sections of Nepal's media can also be faulted for yellow journalism, character assassination, extortion, corruption and politically-sponsored content. The media cannot be an island of integrity when the nation is afflicted by a pandemic of graft. Members of the media-industrial complex have at times behaved like power brokers.

Respondents in a recent nationwide public opinion poll gave low marks to the media: 57% said they did not trust journalists much. The outrage over a live studio interview during which Deputy Prime Minister Uppendra Yadav walked out on the anchor (*page 13*) showed that the public sees journalists as getting too big for their boots.

One reason the media could have fallen in the public's esteem is that most citizens do not make a distinction between the mainstream press and unfiltered content on social media. But the government cannot use this as an excuse to gag the media. Press freedom is a vital part of the check and balance in a democracy, and the Communist government must realise that one day when it is back in the opposition it will need the very press that it is trying to undermine now.

But if it goes ahead and passes the Media Council Bill, this may be the last time we will be free to say in this space why it goes against the letter and spirit of our Constitution.

Times.com

ONLINE PACKAGES

WHAT'S TRENDING



Lumbini was relatively neglected until UN Secretary-General U Thant visited in 1967 and was moved to tears. A Japanese architect designed the master plan to turn the sacred site into an international centre for peace. Today, 41 years later, the grand vision is finally being realised. The Lumbini Museum will be an integral part of the cultural experience of the Buddha's birthplace. Watch our video. Story: *page 8-9*.



Boudhanath has always been sacred to Nepal's Buddhists, whether the Newa of the Valley, Tibetan Buddhists from the mountains or from China. Go to our YouTube channel to watch video about Boudha, and how the heritage site combines a lively cosmopolitan ambience with the original sanctity and tranquility.

## WOMEN POWER

Dream big, follow your dreams, work hard and you will achieve ('Women of substance', #959). Well done.

**Sue Chamberlain**

■ It is so good to see that the way is now open for women with ambition to achieve.

**Alan Roadnight**

■ Why do we not know about them?

**Gyanendra Banks**

## LABOUR COST

Expecting the government to supply jobs is a dangerous step toward Socialism.

**Sigmund Stengel**

■ The main export from many villages is labour. We visited villages where there were few working age men left, inhabited mostly by women, the old and young children. The men had gone off to foreign countries to work and send money back home. Often, not always, these men are cheated and treated unfairly.

**Michael Larson**

## PRESS FREEDOM

Are you worried about your online activities being restricted under the government's increasing surveillance? Not an easy Yes/No question. On the one hand I worry about being fined and/or jailed for speaking truth to power and the consequences it would have on my family. On the other hand I would relish my day in court and the International media stint that could be mobilised. Sadly 'No' is my most likely answer as the judiciary system here is so corrupt that 'a day in court' would most likely never happen.

**Badam V Dhunga**

**SANGITA MAGAR**  
You are a strong, kind and beautiful young lady ('Sangita Magar: from survivor to champion', Animesh Shrestha, #957).

**Sue Everall**

## Good as old after two earthquakes

by *Kabita Maharjan*  
The three-tier pagoda temple Bhaidega was destroyed in the 1934 earthquake and quickly rebuilt, but in the Moghul stucco dome style. Now, 85 years later, Patan's historic temple is not just being rebuilt but restored to its pre-1934 look. Read full story online and take a video tour of the restoration site.

**Most reached and shared on Facebook**

## Survey is wake-up call for Nepal government

by *Rameshwar Bohora*  
There was great hope among Nepalis that the first local elections in two decades, in 2017, would finally improve accountability and help raise living standards, but a recent public opinion poll shows that their optimism has faded. Visit [nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com) for complete results and analysis.

**Most popular on Twitter**

## Women of substance

These women battled gender discrimination to enter their profession of choice. Today, they inspire many younger women. Meet Ranjana Biswokarma, Sabitra Biswokarma, Sulochana Poudel and Maya Gurung, who are helping reinvent gender roles in Nepal.

**Most commented**

## Nepal's Grand Trek Road

by *Kunda Dixit*  
There will be very few who will not want to pack their gear and head off to do at least one part of The Great Himalayan Trail after leafing through this guidebook for the cross-Himalayan trek, which is just out in its second, updated edition. Read the review on our website.

**Most visited online page**

## QUOTE TWEETS

- Times

**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**  
To contest the Rs39.06 billion tax imposed on @Ncell, @axiata initiated an investment treaty arbitration, bypassing other statutory remedies, raising questions on the use of investment treaty arbitration. @the3rdbranch and Vikas Mahendra explain how
- rahul chapagain @RahulChapagain2**  
Correctly highlighted, the action to bypass Nepalese legal jurisdiction and invoke international treaty law a method of gaining legal legitimacy. A corrective decision is now expected from the full bench.
- Times

**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**  
The perfect guidebook for a cross-Himalayan trek is just out in its second updated edition. @kundadixit reviews @RobinBoustead's The Great Himalayan Trail, which has more recent photographs and excellent new maps for both first timers and return trekkers.
- Utsav Shakya @utsavshakya**  
Important perspective on roads vs. trekking trails. Roads do make "new" trails more accessible. #Nepal #VisitNepal2020
- Times

**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**  
More than 26% of #Nepali households have someone working abroad, a nationwide survey by @SharecastNP shows. While 41% of Nepalis feel the country is headed in the right direction, over 50% do not trust political leaders and the parties. #Nepal #migrants
- Narendra Khadk @NKhadka May 11**  
Very interesting statistics 60%of remittances are still used for basic amenities which indicates that the living standard is not moving upward fast enough but 35% on education is a breath of fresh air to future generations

## 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

*Nepali Times* edition #451 of 15- 21 May 2009 had an editorial titled 'There they go again' that could have been written about current Nepali politics. Excerpt:

*Countries in fragile political transition have to be governed differently than stable democracies. Transitional politics require a unity of purpose. It calls for political parties to never lose sight of the goal: preserving the peace, writing the Constitution and keeping citizens content.*

*Unfortunately, consensus has become the first casualty in the conflict of interest between the Maoists and the rest. Chairman Dahal erroneously thought that being the biggest party in the CA gave him the right to decide things on his own. The Maoists are now following the example that the NC set. The controversy over unilateral dismissal and subsequent reinstatement of the army chief was a consequence rather than cause of the crisis of confidence between the main political parties.*

*Our politicians, too, have forgotten why they got the people's mandate. It wasn't to bicker endlessly in Kathmandu over power.*




**Nepali Times on Facebook**  
**Follow @nepalitimes on Twitter**  
**Follow @nepalitimes on Instagram**

Publisher and Chief Editor: **Kunda Dixit**  
Digital Producer: **Sonia Awale**, Design: **Kiran Maharjan**  
Published by **Himalmedia Pvt Ltd** | Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur | GPO Box 7251 Kathmandu  
editors@nepalitimes.com | [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com) | [www.himalmedia.com](http://www.himalmedia.com) | Tel: 01-5005601-08 Fax: +977-1-5005518  
Marketing: **Arjun Karki, Surendra Sharma** [rachanas@himalmedia.com](mailto:rachanas@himalmedia.com) | Subscriptions: **Santosh Aryal** [santosh@himalmedia.com](mailto:santosh@himalmedia.com)  
Printed at Jagadamba Press | Production Plant: 01-5250017-18 | City Office: 01-5529210-11 | [www.jagadambapress.com](http://www.jagadambapress.com) | [sales@jppl.com.np](mailto:sales@jppl.com.np)





A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

# FLY MORE

with the airline that flies to  
more countries than any other



CAIRO - JOHANNESBURG - BAKU - MOSCOW - ERCAN - CAPETOWN

Fares starting from  
**NPR 30000\***

**Sales:**  
OPEN-30 JUN 2019

**Travel period:**  
OPEN-31 DEC 2019



**TURKISH AIRLINES**  
WIDEN YOUR WORLD

\*Taxes not included.



# Dozers and Nepal's development

Building infrastructure must be seen as an investment, not expenditure

One of the most prominent changes we see while travelling across Nepal these days is the presence of earth movers, bulldozers, tipper trucks and excavators. They dominate the highways, gouge out riverbeds, claw at mountainsides and rip through forests.



**½ FULL**  
Anil Chitrakar

There may be many planners in Singha Darbar who claim to be the drivers of development. But out in the hinterland, we know who is really making development 'happen'.

Ask Nepalis in the districts what they want the most, and the answer will be "a road". For them 'road' is synonymous with 'development', and they are going to get them by any means possible. If anyone still had any doubts, Kathmandu is no longer in charge, thanks largely to the devolution of decision-making in the new Constitution.

The road-building spree is now fuelled by local governments, which get to spend money quite indiscriminately. Yet, with three-fourths of the population now having access to some kind of road, public demand for any old road is now being superseded by an insistence on black-topped roads that will not be washed away in the next monsoon. Quality is slowly taking precedence over quantity.

Roads are a two-way street. They may be designed and built to take local produce to market, but roads also bring the market to remote villages. This can have a huge negative impact on the local economy if competitiveness is lost. Roads can also become an incentive to produce more, or disincentive to pack up and leave for the city or go abroad.

Socio-economic and environmental studies are conducted before a road is built, but there is little to show that these recommendations have been studied, much less implemented. Roads may take local trout, strawberries and vegetables to the market, but they also enable human trafficking and the spread of HIV, and push land prices beyond the reach of the poor.

On 13 May, Himalayan TV, Dooshan, Facts and V-chitra gave out excellence awards to projects that met new, higher standards. One surprise award went to the restoration of the historic Pim Bahal neighbourhood of Patan.

The second surprise was that no one was awarded in the large project category: sending a message that there was plenty of room for improvement. Such due

diligence to select winners will in future ensure that the quality of construction will improve. As the saying goes, when everyone stays average, the average goes down – this is what has long plagued the infrastructure sector in Nepal.

Dozers are literally changing the face of Nepal. Mountains are no longer the barriers they were, which may be the necessary first step toward prosperity through

connectivity. However, this process must ultimately deliver the kind of prosperity that can come with easier movement of value added goods and services. The cost of transport must go down over time.

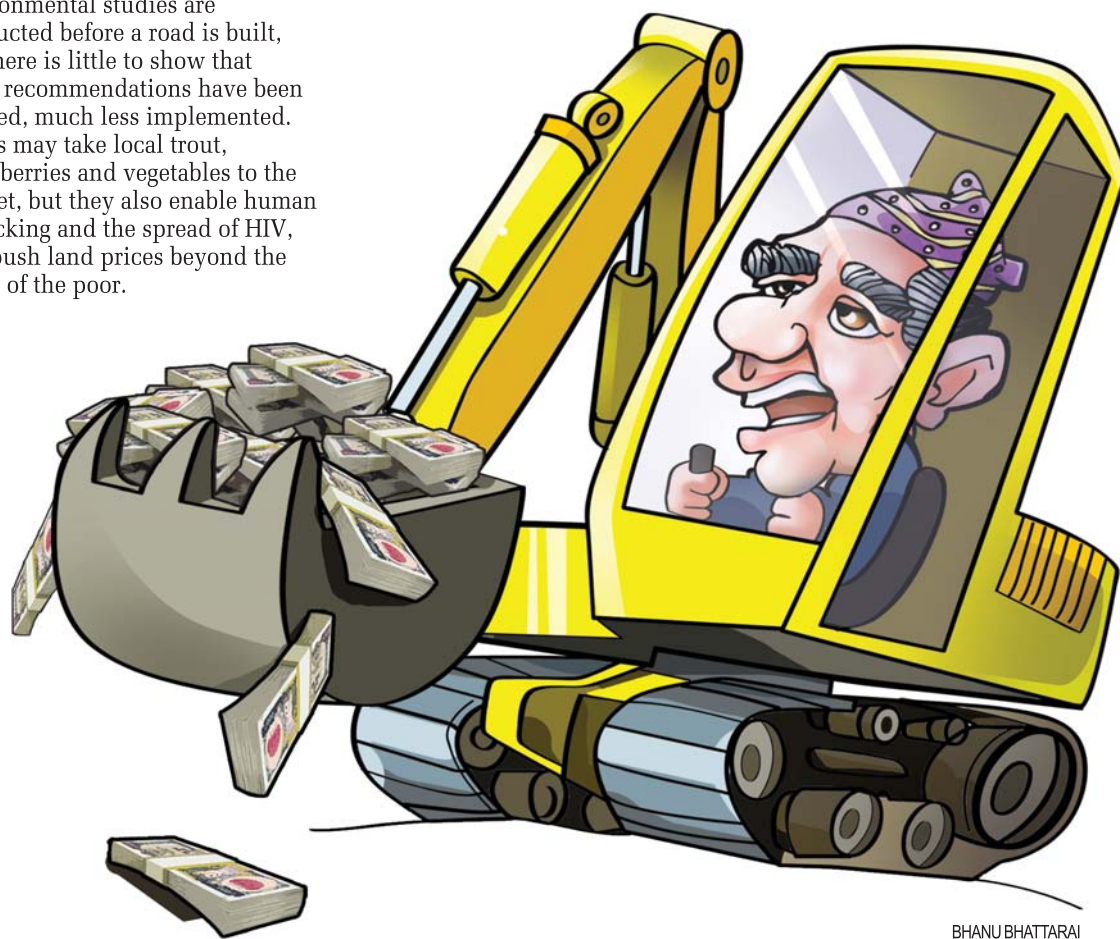
To attain such results, maintenance, management and upgrading of infrastructure must be a continuous process. Roads can not only pay for themselves, they can generate huge revenue in the longer term. Building infrastructure is not expenditure, as is currently perceived, but an investment.

Many construction projects today are undertaken through a flawed public procurement regulation that awards the contract to the lowest bidder. This has resulted in many destructive projects and a waste of taxpayers' money. In future, many projects will be designed, resourced and implemented by the private sector. Competition will help improve things in general.

The government can collaborate with the private sector, as we are seeing in hydropower, hotels, schools and hospitals. There could even come a time when development partners will buy back well constructed social infrastructure built by the private sector as their contribution to Nepal's development.

During a recent trip up the Trisuli River, it was heart-warming to see dozers expanding the road to Kerung. Dozers are for development, it just depends on who is driving them. 🇳🇵

**Anil Chitrakar** is President of Siddharthinc



BHANU BHATTARAI

## Turkish Airlines Golf Cup



Babu Sherpa won the 7th Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup at Gokarna Forest Resort on 11 May and will represent Kathmandu in the Grand Finale in Antalya.

Sherpa (*middle in photo, above*) won the tournament on the count back system after being tied at 42 points with Ola Tenzing. With a 10 handicap, Sherpa scored 23 on the back nine compared to 18 for Tenzing. The 15-handicap Tenzing finished runner-up in the tournament, out of 102 amateur players from clubs all over Nepal.

The Kathmandu event was the 19th of 103 tournaments in this year's global event, which is sponsored by Turkish Airlines in 76 countries. Winners will play in the Grand Finals and the Turkish Airlines Open pro-am, where previous winners have teed up alongside the likes of Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy.

The Nearest the Pin

competition was won by Mithun Rai (men) and Rekha Ghimire (women). Tashi Tsering won the lowest gross score with -2, along with a special trophy in the memory of the late Ang Tshiring Sherpa. With 38 points, Tashi also won the gross score award.

"We warmly thank all of our guests who made the Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup here in Kathmandu a huge success," said Abdullah Tuncer Kecici, General Manager for Turkish Airlines Nepal (*at right in photo, above*). "The tournament puts Kathmandu on the international golf map, and shows that Nepal is not just about mountains."

All Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup finalists will fly to Turkey in the luxury of Turkish Airlines' Business Class. Events such as the Turkish Airlines Open and TAWGC have made Turkish Airlines' support essential to Antalya, with its outstanding

facilities, being recognised as a premium international destination for golfers.

British PGA Professional and Director of Golf based in Istanbul, Andrew McNabola, who was at Gokarna this week told *Nepali Times*: "Gokarna is a world-class course, challenging because of its long and narrow fairways but spectacular because of the forest and wildlife."

The Golf Cup event in Gokarna this year selected the best participants from membership clubs all over Nepal, including the Nepal Army Golf Club, Pokhara and Dharan.

"We wanted to treat this like a Nepal qualifier, and tried to be inclusive by bringing in players from across Nepal, and also to include more women," said Deepak Acharya of Gokarna Forest Resort and one of the organisers.

Pemba N Sherpa finished second runner-up on the count back with 41 points. Rajat Rana and Lt. Gen. KNS Thapa also scored 41 points. Pemba and Rajat had 19 each on the back nine but Gen Thapa scored 17. On the last six holes scored, Pemba scored 14 against 13 for Rajat to secure third place.

Mithun Rai was the closest to the pin among men, his tee shot resting two feet and one inch from the pin, and Rekha Ghimire got the closest among ladies after hitting a shot about 10 feet from the pin on the tenth hole.

Added Abdullah Tuncer Kecici of Turkish Airlines: "The Turkish Airlines Golf Cup is not just a global golf tournament with an event in Kathmandu, but a shout-out to the world that Nepal is a golfing destination." 🇳🇵

### prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS

#### Qatar feeds the needy

Qatar Airways, in partnership with Qatar Charity, marked the holy month of Ramadan by providing food for



Kathmandu's underprivileged at an event on 11 May at CW Party Palace in Kamaladi. Country manager Mohamed El Emam (*pictured above, left*) handed over the packets to the families.

#### Travellers' SIM

Ncell has introduced the Travellers' SIM, which provides exclusive telecommunication services to foreigners visiting Nepal. The starter pack is just Rs110 and includes a main balance of Rs30 for calls within the Ncell network, and 300MB data, valid for three days. After finishing the starter pack, users can buy a combo pack ranging in price from Rs490 to Rs1,960.

#### White Walker Whiskey

Johnnie Walker has launched the new White Walker Whiskey, made in collaboration with HBO and *Game of Thrones* (GoT). The limited-edition Scotch

Whiskey is inspired by GoT characters, the White Walkers. Fans can enjoy this special whiskey that evokes the icy world of White Walkers as anticipation builds for the final episodes of *Game of Thrones*.

#### Red Russian

Red Russian, a clear spirit by Jawalakhel Group of Industries, has been launched in Kathmandu. The drink is made from the finest grains and pure Himalayan water using state-of-the art distillation, fermentation and filtration technologies from Russia. Prices range from Rs1,000-2,500, depending on quantity.

#### Let's move beyond

Cathay Pacific is on a campaign to enhance its service by introducing new seats, WiFi across its long-haul fleet of aircraft,



enhanced food and beverage offerings in all classes, and upgraded digital platform. The airline will be introducing a wealth of in-flight content in the next few months, giving the Cathay group the greatest range and volume of movies, TV and audio programmes of any Asian airline.

prabhu BANK



# Constitutional guardianship in Nepal

Rule of law and the irreplaceable role of the judiciary in the federal project

George Varughese  
and Iain Payne

Nepal's judiciary has an irreplaceable role in instilling a commitment to the rule of law and encouraging a new way of doing politics in the new federal system. But can this role be more public beyond the confines of courtrooms in Kathmandu and the provinces?

In addition to requiring a proper and substantive account from other branches of government, can the judiciary be instrumental in shaping norms and values in the New Nepal in a constitutional guardianship role?

The judiciary's relationship to other branches of government shapes its ability to play a role in protecting the Constitution. While historically Nepal's judiciary has, with a few notable exceptions, been cautious to confront or overrule executive action, more recent diffidence suggests additional losses in stature as well as in independence.

Successive governments of all political stripes have colluded in shackling the judiciary and relegating it to subservient status. Judicial sackings, impeachments, forced retirements and politicised appointments are some of the methods used. There is also a consistent pattern of governments and politicians impugning and defying court orders.

Leaders and functionaries of the judicial branch have also invited opprobrium on several occasions, leading to public criticism sometimes exceeding that levelled at executive and legislative branches.

The judiciary has an existential dilemma: how to regain public trust not only as an institution of restraint on government but also as a trusted guardian of justice.

While the Constitution seeks to bring government closer to citizens through a polycentric federal structure, serious concern can be raised of obduracy and procrastination on the part of the federal government to meaningfully devolve power.

The future of inter-governmental relations will be shaped by the ability of the federation's 761 governments to converse as coequals. Legitimate and credible dispute resolution will be critical for constitutionally-mandated cooperation and coordination among and between governments.

The Constitution creates several institutions to support and supervise inter-governmental relations. At the national level these include the Inter-Provincial Council, which brings provinces and federations together to settle political disputes, the National Natural Resource and Fiscal Commission, the constitutionally-mandated authority to oversee the allocation of the country's resources derived from revenues and royalties, and the Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court.

The Constitutional Bench is tasked with interpreting the Constitution, particularly for settling inter-governmental disputes and providing clarity and coherence to federated governance. However, internal politics have prevented the bench from functioning properly.

More than three years after the adoption of the Constitution, the Court has yet to embrace one of its most important roles: framing and shaping the course of constitutional federalism, particularly regarding intergovernmental relations. This has contributed to ongoing legal and jurisdictional paralysis, which hampers effective functioning of provincial and local



KRISHNA PAUDEL

governments.

The Constitution's schedules, which delineate the division of constitutional power among the governments, are ambiguous. Disaster management, for example, is listed as both an exclusive responsibility of local government and as a concurrent power of the federation, provinces and local governments.

Whereas effects of disaster are manifested locally, the incoherence in disaster management begins with

ambiguous delineation of responsibility in the law.

The ongoing dispute between Province 2 and Kathmandu over the establishment and governance of police forces is another example. This is likely to fester and grow across all provinces in the absence of legal clarity on who does what in a federation.

Such legal uncertainty has stymied lawmaking at the sub-national level. Apprehensive about their legislation being nullified by the courts or contradicted at

the federal level, most local assemblies have restricted themselves to passing only procedural laws. One elected local representative recently stated: "Initially, we were very excited to make laws. Later we realised that our laws could be overruled by the court or even by the federal or provincial governments. Now we are confused, as we have to be very careful."

The Constitutional Bench can provide decisive guidance in Nepal's federation by, for example, supplying a constitutionally

robust mechanism for sub-national governments to debate and contest laws that harm their constituents' interests. The formal resolution of disputes by the Bench will require governments, particularly the federal government, to publicly justify the direction in which they are steering the federation.

For federalism to work, Nepal's judiciary and the judges who lead it must embrace a culture of learning. This is perhaps most important for the Constitutional Bench, as its task to help navigate the complex jurisprudential issues that will arise in the newly federated system of governance will not be easy.

Like the rest of the country, the judiciary does not have institutional memory of federal governance. Judges, like the functionaries of the other executive and legislative branches, must learn on the job without the luxury of prior experience or preparation. Fortunately, there are quite a few respectable judges who give us hope. May those best suited to learning be given the chance to guide.

May the judicial branch have the confidence, courage and creativity needed to take on the role of constitutional guardianship, leading to a culture that is based on the principled exercise and accountability of governmental power. 🇳🇵

*This is the second of a three-part series by George Varughese and Iain Payne, who are associated with Niti Foundation.*

# RAISING THE BAR

Nepal's BEST VODKAS

Nepal's Most Loved #1 Vodka

Nepal's Ultra Premium Vodka

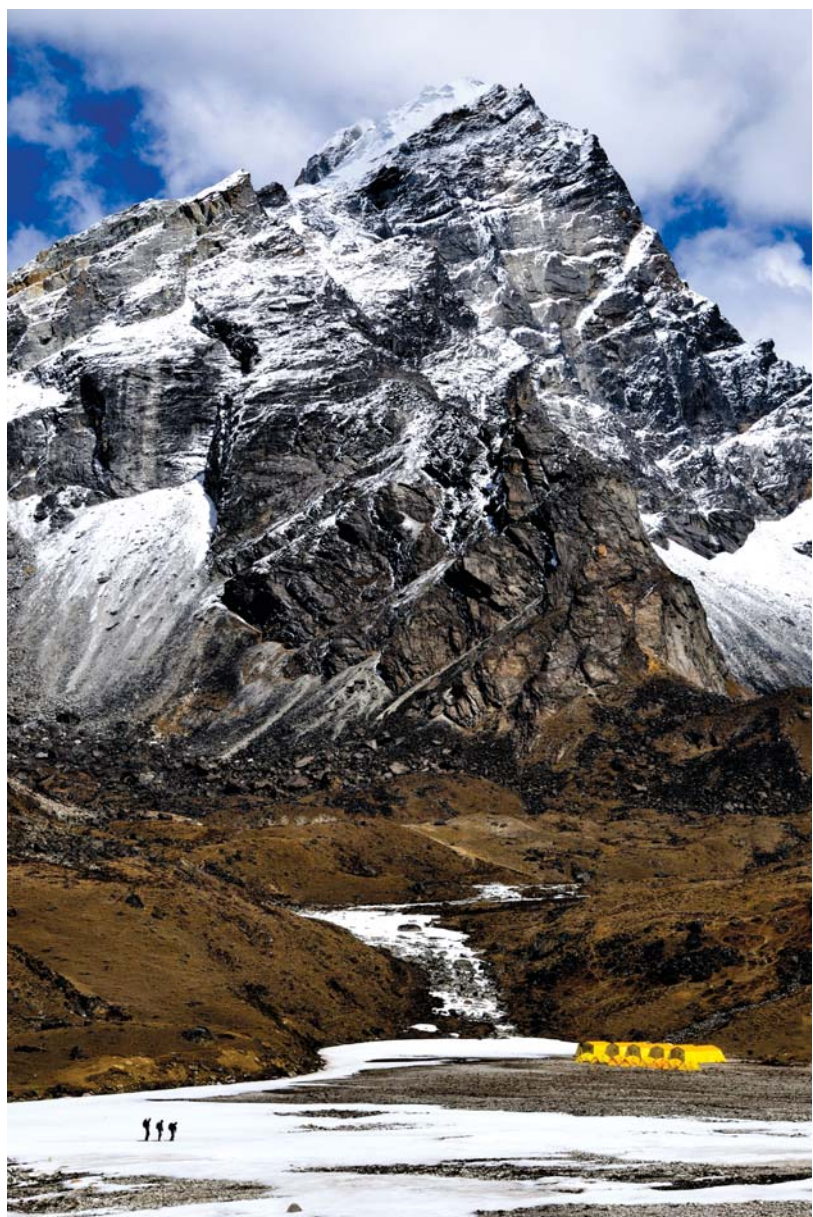
Nepal's First Gold Infused Premium Vodka

CELEBRATE RESPONSIBLY



# Not just another book on Everest

Fresh light on the transformation of the land and people of Solu Khumbu



It is perfect that *Everest: Reflections on the Solu Khumbu* should come out this year, the centenary of Edmund Hillary's birth. The book is a tribute to the contribution made by one of the first two people to climb Mt Everest to the Sherpa people who live in the sacred valleys below the world's highest mountain.

The large-format photo book has stunning images of the Solu Khumbu, by photographer and travel writer Sujoy Das, and chapters by Lisa Choegyal, who has lived and worked in Nepal since 1974, is New Zealand's honorary consul to Nepal, and writes a fortnightly column in this paper.

Both have a deep connection to the Sherpa people, and an admiration bordering on reverence of the mountains that they live amongst. Das has been visiting

the Khumbu since 1978, trekking, writing and photographing. The book shows why he keeps coming back: the photographs reflect his mastery of the camera and a Tagorean ability to capture the beauty of nature in words and pictures.

The portraits of mountains and people are simultaneously stark and sublime, their rugged beauty etched by the light of the Khumbu sky. Das peers beyond the usual touristy postcard images of the Khumbu to reveal faces and forests, rivers and ridges in strikingly memorable imagery.

Afraid of being grounded in Lukla by weather last year, he decided to walk down to Phaplu as the monsoon broke over the Himalaya. The photographs of the less-travelled trail with mule trains, school children and porters carrying enormous loads of corrugated sheets

along shiny rain-soaked stone paths take us back to a pre-tourism Solu Khumbu.

Das' photography is as lyrical as his writing: 'Waves of mist funnelled up the valley, abruptly blanketing out the entire trail. The rain was as fine as spray can be, so soft and delicate it was hardly there. The trees were ghost-like apparitions, and round a bend an unexpected mule caravan materialised out of dense fog, revealed only by tinkling bells.'

Lisa Choegyal retraces the life and times of the unassuming Edmund Hillary after Everest made him a celebrity — how he transformed a potato field in Lukla into an airfield in 1964, 'short-circuiting' trekking and transforming the region.

'The people of Solu Khumbu are cited as the best example of

remote communities who have not only prospered from tourism, but have grown wealthy from it. Without sacrificing their Buddhist ethos, they have been able to harness the benefits of tourism whilst modifying the worst of its influences and defending their traditional values,' she writes, crediting Hillary's selective and sensible approach to ensure quality health, education and infrastructure to his beloved land.

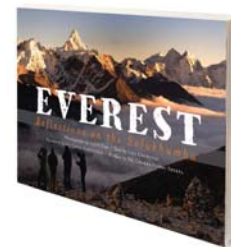
The Sherpas are no strangers to change, tragedy and disasters, but a strong sense of community has provided a robust coping mechanism. They adapted an agrarian, pastoral lifestyle seamlessly into tourism. When trading routes to Tibet closed in the 1950s, they made the mountain-guide profession synonymous with their surname. And when India and China went to war in the 1960s, Sherpas switched from mountaineering to trekking. Namche today has a per capita income five times Nepal's national average.

Even bigger changes are coming. Nepal's road network has reached Phaplu and it is possible to drive to Kathmandu in 12 hours. Global warming is melting the mountains,

increasing the danger of glacial lake outburst floods. The Sherpas, and indeed the people of the rest of the Himalaya, will need their legendary resilience to deal with these changes.

British climber Chris Bonington hints at this in his Foreword to the book: 'This is not just one more book about Everest, but a special celebration of the haunting beauty of Solu Khumbu and its people. Civilisation depends on the health of our high places, and I wish my Sherpa friends all the best with successfully navigating their future course.'

**Kunda Dixit**



*Everest: Reflections on the Solu Khumbu*  
Photographs by Sujoy Das  
Text by Lisa Choegyal  
Vajra Books, Kathmandu 2019  
www.vajrabooks.com.np  
141 pages



ALL PHOTOS: SUJOY DAS



**SUBISU**  
INTERNET

## Internet and Digital TV

**clear tv**

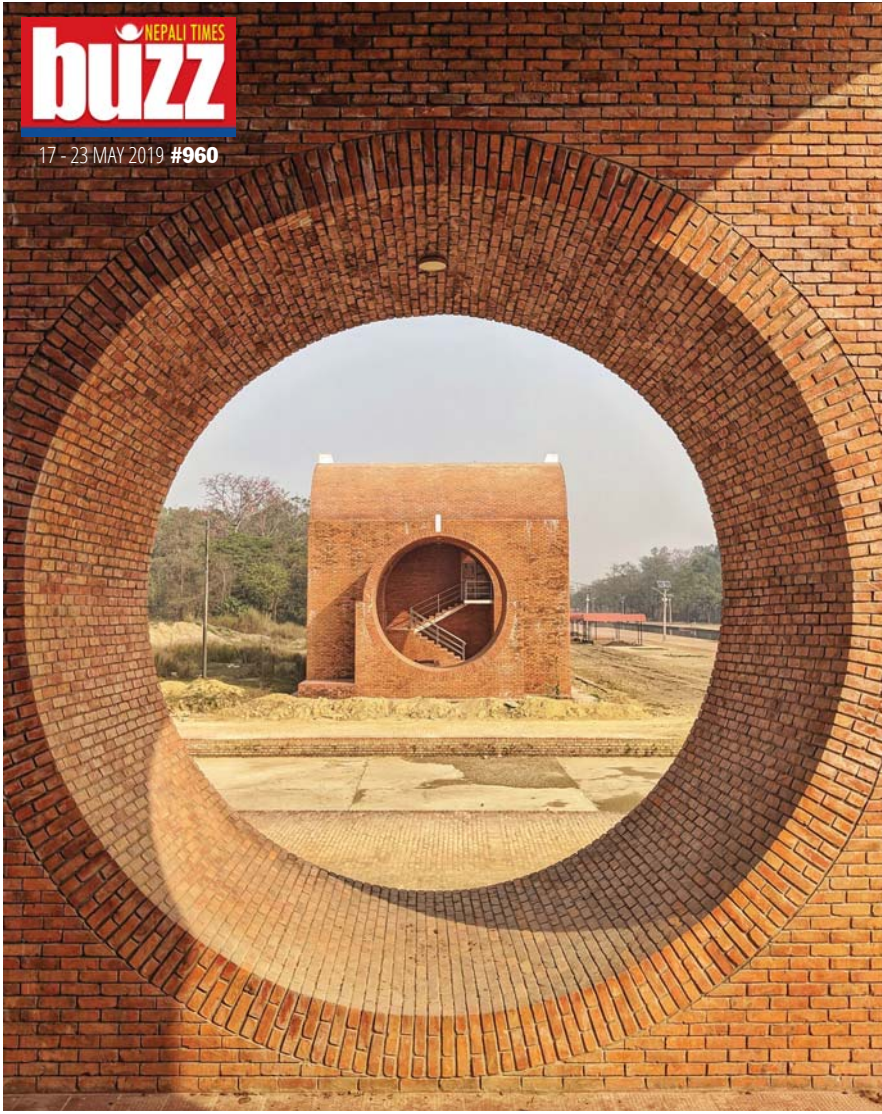


01-4235888 www.subisu.net.np | www.clear.tv.com.np

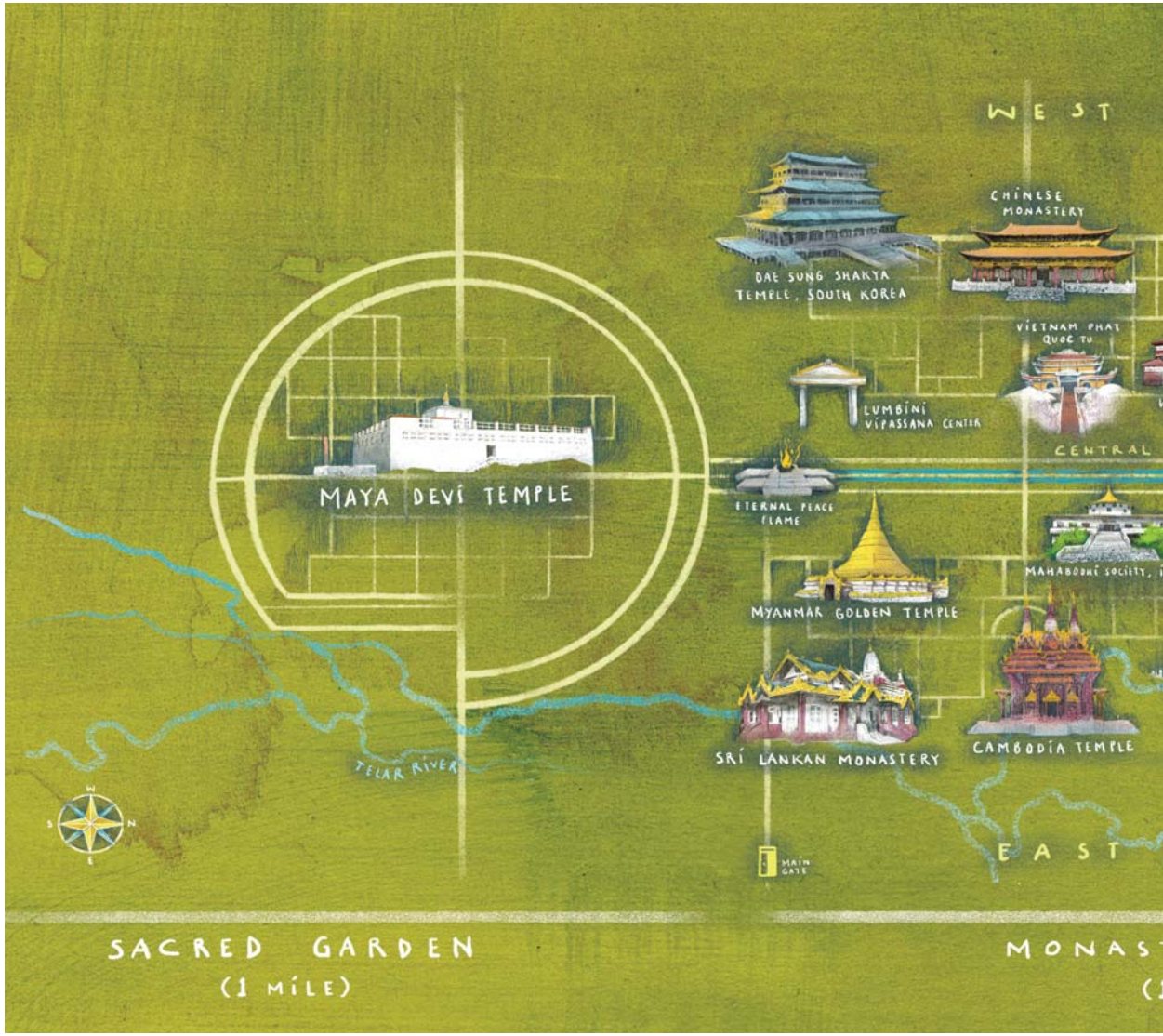








MIKU DIXIT



# U Thant, Kenzō Tange

Kunda Dixit

When the Burmese Buddhist Secretary-General of the United Nations, U Thant, visited Nepal in 1967 he flew to Lumbini for a pilgrimage and said: “This is the most important day of my life.” Then, he wept.

Many years later, he said he was touched by the visit to the sacred site, and even his grandson Thant Myint-U tells us in an interview (*right*) that his grandfather was ‘incredibly moved’ in Lumbini. U Thant might have been spiritually stirred to be at the birthplace of the Buddha, but he was also distressed by the condition of the desolate and featureless spot near the Nepal-India border.

Back in Kathmandu, he met King Mahendra and discussed restoring Lumbini’s sanctity. And on return to New York, U Thant set up a UN committee to turn the nativity site into an international centre for peace.

Both UNDP and UNESCO got involved and the Japanese architect famous for designing the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, Kenzō Tange, was hired to draw up a master plan. Tange visited Lumbini, and his firm submitted the design in 1978.

The project to preserve Lumbini and landscape the sacred garden and surrounding

park was to have been finished by 1985, but Tange died in 2005 without seeing the completion of his master plan.

The choice of Kenzō Tange for the design was influenced by his stature in post-war Japan. While he was part of the ‘Metabolist’ movement of Japanese architects, his work did not incorporate any obviously traditional Japanese, or even Asian, elements. Neither was he a devout Buddhist. Metabolists sought to experiment with structures that were inspired by biological processes of growth and aggregation.

In fact, Tange joined architecture school after seeing the work of the Swiss-French architect and urban planner Le Corbusier, and he admired the functionality of Soviet architecture of the 1930s. This penchant for raw, concrete mega-structures that shunned decorative elements earned Kenzō Tange a place in the ‘brutalist’ school of mid-20th century architectural modernism.

Tange’s monumental master plan for Lumbini governed by its north-south axis (*above*) of a canal that bisects the site, and is straddled by a series of amphitheatres and vast spaces for public meetings. The museum anchors the north, while the concentric circles of the sanctum sanctorum: the sacred garden surrounding the Mayadevi Temple is situated at the south end. The plan includes a monastic zone, a library and Lumbini

Village for visitors.

The eastern monastic zone was set aside for Theravada Buddhism, while the western zone is for Mahayana Buddhism. The master plan is still being broadly followed, but the masonry structures are falling apart due to poor maintenance, and not all the temples in the monastic zone conform to the overall harmony and scale the architect had in mind.

Lumbini did not develop into a major Buddhist pilgrimage destination like Bodhi Gaya, Sarnath or Kushinagar, mainly because it was discovered to be the Buddha’s birthplace relatively late — in the early 20th century. It suffered neglect due to its remoteness and because Nepal was closed to foreigners till the 1950s.

Even after U Thant’s visit, the Buddha’s birthplace was never accorded the priority it deserved by rulers in Kathmandu who wanted to have it both ways: push Nepal’s identity as the world’s only Hindu kingdom while simultaneously using Lumbini as a symbol of nationalism. The fact that Lumbini is today surrounded mainly by Muslim villages has also diminished local interest.

After U Thant’s death in 1974, the UN’s focus and fund-raising for the project also waned. Although Nepal’s royal family attended numerous meetings of the International Committee for the

Development of Lumbini, and gave patronage to the Lumbini Development Trust, the master plan languished. After 1990, corruption, poor governance and conflict took their toll.

The government’s weak commitment to Lumbini and lack of transparency meant that over the years, vested interest groups tried to cash in on Lumbini’s fame. Those with resources and geopolitical clout got away with unregulated construction in the monastic zone.

One murky affair was an initiative in 2012 by the Asia-Pacific Exchange Cooperation Foundation (APECF), which claimed it would invest \$3 billion in Lumbini. The foundation got the backing of Pushpa Kamal Dahal, but soon became embroiled in controversy because it planned to scrap Tange’s master plan. APECF’s scheme is now on hold.

On Saturday, 18 May President Bidya Devi Bhandari, Prime Minister K P Oli, other government ministers and ambassadors of Buddhist countries in the region will be in Lumbini to give new impetus to developing the Buddhist circuit in Nepal as an international pilgrimage and tourism destination.

The time is ripe, as the new international airport nearby (called Gautam Buddha International Airport) will be in operation by next year, allowing direct flights from Asian cities, the road linking Lumbini to the Indian border and the East-West Highway is being upgraded, new hotels are coming up and Kenzō

## Reimagining and renovating The

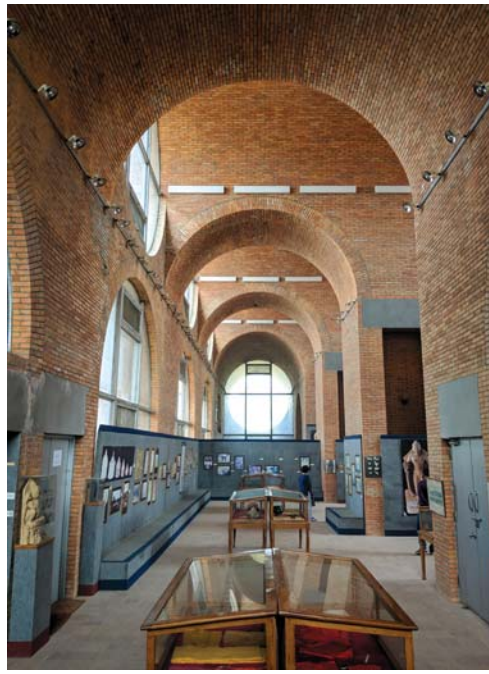
Near the sal tree under which Queen Maya, the consort of King Suddhodana, gave birth to Gautam Buddha, a well-conceived museum dedicated to inspiring people the world over with the Buddha’s life and teachings is being restored.

The state-of-the-art museum will set a new standard for how heritage and art are preserved and promoted in Nepal, transforming Lumbini into a major spiritual and cultural centre to share with the world the Buddha’s teachings of compassion, openness and truth.

Located inside the Sacred Garden Area, The Lumbini Museum is an integral part of the architectural landscape and cultural experience of the Buddha’s birthplace.

For decades, the cylindrical modules of the museum building designed by Pritzker Prize-winning Japanese architect Kenzō Tange as part of his ambitious master plan languished in neglect.

Now, The Lumbini Museum has brought together a pool of talent from within Nepal



MIKU DIXIT

and beyond to re-imagine, renovate and expand the centre as a true cultural and spiritual oasis within Lumbini.

The museum has a rich history rooted in the vision of the Buddha’s nativity site as a universal centre for peace, and the new phase of development will further the original vision of the master plan and the museum. Besides the spiritual value of the Buddha’s birthplace, the modernist heritage of Tange’s refurbished structures will be an additional attraction for international visitors.

“When we travel to Lumbini we hope to find peace, solace and serenity as part of the Buddha’s teachings, so the re-imagination of the Lumbini Museum is going to be a very special milestone,” says Vice Chair Ven Metteyya Sakyaputta of the Lumbini Development Trust (LDT).

In addition to being the birthplace of the Buddha, the Greater Lumbini Area has more than 200 historical sites including Kapilvastu (the ancient capital of the Sakya Kingdom where Prince Siddhārtha lived until age

29), Devdaha (his maternal hometown) and Ramagrama (the only stupa still containing corporal relics of the Buddha).

“Lumbini is a very special place where you see all the vehicles come together — Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana — in a big Buddhist spiritual junction ... and at long last a dedicated Buddhist Museum is happening,” says Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche of Bhutan.

The structure is currently being restored and refurbished by Asia’s leading architect, Kris Yao, and the redesigned museum will re-open in late 2020. Conservation and



**HOLY RELICS:** Terracotta relics dating back to the 3rd century BCE, the Greater Lumbini Museum Collection. The present museum is to be entirely revamped.





# e and Lumbini



Tange's modular barrel vaulted structures are being revamped into a world-class museum of Buddhism (*see below*).

Despite all the setbacks over the decades, Tange's vast park is now visible on Google Earth and from planes flying at 35,000ft westbound from Kathmandu. The vegetation has grown back, the cranes are nesting again in the Sacred Garden, and despite noisy picnickers taking selfies on weekends, the site



has retained its spiritual significance.

The Lumbini Development Trust is now led by the energetic 33-year-old monk, Venerable Metteyya Sakyaputta, who is committed to following Kenzō Tange's master plan. He told *Nepali Times* recently: "We have an obligation to preserve Lumbini's environment and its tranquility for future generations, and this is only possible if everyone joins the effort." 🇳🇵



**MOVERS AND SHAKERS:** (Left to right) U Thant with King Mahendra in Kathmandu in 1967. Kenzō Tange (centre with Gauri Nath Rimal from the government) on an elephant back inspection of Lumbini in 1972. U Thant with his newly-born grandson Thant Myint-U in New York in 1966.

# Lumbini Museum



evaluation of display possibilities for priceless archaeological artefacts from the Greater Lumbini Area dating back 2,500 years are underway, with Thai interpretive planner Albert Paravi Wongchirachai curating, designing and fabricating a world-class gallery space. Says monk and writer Matthieu Ricard, "In our troubled world facing human and environmental challenges, the wisdom of Buddha Shakyamuni's compassionate heritage is more relevant than ever. The Lumbini Museum will offer a unique and inspiring insight

on the Buddha's teachings, a most precious legacy that Nepal can be proud of." Contemporary fine art, audio-visual shows, dioramas and interactive exhibits will enhance storytelling for a truly modern and powerful experience of the Buddha's life and message. The Lumbini Museum team is busy fundraising, curating art and mobilising national and international donors, partners, experts and visionaries. Says The Lumbini Museum Director Sumnima Udas: "It is not often that one is given an opportunity to participate in such a momentous undertaking that can have a transformative impact on the identity of Nepal and its people. The Lumbini Museum is not a project, this is our common mission." 🇳🇵 [www.lumbinimuseum.org](http://www.lumbinimuseum.org)



Lumbini was relatively neglected until UN Secretary-General U Thant visited in 1967 and was moved to tears. A Japanese architect designed the master plan to turn the sacred site into an international centre for peace. Today, 41 years, later the grand vision is finally being realised.

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

## “Lumbini could be a magnet”

Thant Myint-U is the grandson of former United Nations Secretary-General U Thant, was an adviser to the president of Burma, and is the author of *The River of Lost Footsteps: A Personal History of Burma*. He is in Nepal this week for the Buddha Jayanti celebration in Lumbini, and spoke to *Nepali Times* about his recollections of his grandfather, and the future development of Lumbini.

**Nepali Times: What are some of your earliest memories of your grandfather?**

**Thant Myint-U:** I was eight years old when he died in 1974. We lived together in New York, and so I remember him well: coming home from work in his black Cadillac in a dark overcoat and fedora, puffing on Burmese cigars in his study, his desk piled with books and papers, a photo of Mahatma Gandhi at his spinning wheel behind him, swimming with me in our pool at home, relaxing in a Burmese longyi, enjoying my grandmother's curries or reading the latest news in the *New York Times*.

**NT: What was the reason behind his determination to get the UN involved in preserving Lumbini?**

In those days, the biggest conflict was of course the Cold War and the ideological conflict between communism and capitalist democracy. My grandfather believed that religion could be an ally in the cause of

peace. In 1965, Pope Paul came to New York at his invitation, the first Pontiff ever to set foot in the new world, and spoke to a special meeting of the UN General Assembly, calling for an end to war.

It was not long after that he came to Nepal and visited Lumbini. He was incredibly moved, saying it was one of "the most important days in my life". I think it was only then that he had this particular vision, as a Buddhist but also as the UN Secretary-

General, not only to preserve Lumbini but to connect the development of Lumbini as a global centre, representing values of tolerance and non-violence, with the broader cause of world peace.

**NT: You yourself have spent some time in Nepal. What would be some suggestions about how to preserve the sanctity of Lumbini.**

Yes, I have very fond memories of my year in Kathmandu in 2008. I was not however able to travel to Lumbini, and so have no particular insights on what should be done. I would however say that, as is the case for any of the world's greatest places, any development should weigh carefully the interests of local people, to ensure they benefit too.

**NT: Many people from Burma travel to Buddhist sites in India on pilgrimage. What should be done to attract more of them to the Buddhist circuit in Nepal?**

I think the most important thing at this point is simply transport. There are no direct flights from Yangon to Kathmandu, which is really a shame. Our two countries, with so much in the way of shared culture, history and even political experience, can benefit immensely from greater contact. I am sure Lumbini could become a magnet, but I hope the Burmese would then take the opportunity to explore Nepal more generally.



EVENTS



Horns and Bones

Join this fun carving and crafting workshop on horns and bones. Learn basic skills of the trade to make souvenirs like buttons, pendants and other objects you can bring home. You will be driven to the venue, where you will meet the artists and learn stories of up-cycling. *Every Sunday, 1-4pm, \$15, PATANsquared by SherpaShah near Pulchok (pickup/drop) 9818975527*

Trans Studio Project 4.0

An exhibition featuring a mixed-medium installation, video art, performance and video projections from five artists on social, environmental and political issues facing Nepal. *17-24 May, 6-11pm, Bikalpa Art Cafe, Pulchok 9851147776*

Art for Menstruation

Break taboos with art. Rato Pari is calling participants to create a piece of art on the theme of menstruation. Join their initiative against menstrual taboos. *24 May, 11-1pm, Rato Pari, Bagdol 984 1356283*



Moving meditation

A complete relaxation of body and mind, moving meditation and passive stretch. The 90-min session will help you to manage stress through hormonal balance, release of toxins and impurities, and opening of energy blockages. *24 May, 8-9:30am, Rs1,000, Sooriya Wellness and Yoga Centre, Lazimpat (01) 4001714*

The BIG Quiz

Test how smart you are! Base Camp hosts a fun quiz every other Wednesday that you can play with your friends and family or join a table. Groups of 6 will be tested in 10 rounds with a wide range of topics. The collected registration charges will be awarded to the winners. *22 May, 7-8:30pm, Rs200, Base Camp, Jhamsikhel 9841226397*

Brief Candle

Presented by One World Theatre, the play Brief Candle, by Mahesh Dattani and directed by Rose Schwietz, will open in different theatres of Kathmandu. *May 17-19, Ullens School Theatre; May 21-27, Mandala Theatre, Rs1000/500/300, 5:30pm (daily shows), 1pm (Saturday) 9841329322*



Rhythm In Roots

This solo exhibition by Umesh Shah reflects his childhood in Sarlahi, where he observed his grandmother paint traditional Mithila Art with natural pigments and clay. See his collection of paintings and etchings that translates the rhythm in the repetition of chores and the beauty he finds in his roots and in nature. *5-30 May, 10-5pm, Image Ark, Patan (01) 5006665*

Sustainable Market

Visit the Sustainable Millennial Pop Up Market, where various local ventures and entrepreneurs will be displaying their products. Join the market and start your contribution towards living a sustainable life. *18 May, 3-6pm, Gyanbodhi, Thapathali 9802049888*

Monsoon Bike Maintenance

Get your hands dirty and learn from experts the specialist tools and techniques to prepare your bike for the monsoon. Bring your bike for the training. *18-19 May, 11-3pm, Nepal Communitere, Pulchok 9851236547*

MUSIC



Nabin K Bhattarai

Witness this amazing icon perform live and relive his decade-long musical journey. The band Atripta will also take the stage. *17 May, 7pm onwards, Rs1,000, Jungle Lounge & Bar, Thamel 9851238374*

Lucky Lion

An epic live show. Lucky Lion from Austria will be performing at Mauri. Indulge in the music while tasting mouth-watering food. *17 May, 6-11pm, Mauri, Lazimpat (01) 4005300*

Kanta Dab Dab

Through sitar, bass and percussion, the band blends ethnic, traditional, Nepali classical and various western musical influences to create soulful music. Have a great Friday evening while watching the band perform. *17 May, 8-10pm, Jazz Upstairs, Lazimpat (01) 4416983*



Geography of the moon

Groove to the tunes of geography of the moon and enjoy delicious food with special offers and discounts at Rockin'Jokers. *17 May, 7pm onwards, Rockin'Jokers, Jhamsikhel 9813967542*

Musical Friday

Join Musical Friday at Hardik Lounge. You can watch the The Queers perform and partake of food and entertainment. *17 May, 6pm onwards, Hardik Lounge, Sanepa 9847687537*

DINING



Black Water Restro Pizzeria

A go-to place for pizza and organic coffee, Black Water serves from breakfast to dinner with special Arabica Coffee from Western Nepal. *Thamel (01) 4701477*

Mughal Empire Restaurant

If you are looking for Mughal Indian Cuisine or Middle Eastern tastes, this is your place. The Biryani and skewer items are highlights. *Lazimpat (01) 4411567*



Koto Restaurant

With a wide range of Japanese dishes from cold soba noodles and mackerel dishes to sukiyaki and bento boxes, the restaurant is also a star in hygiene and presentation. It has three branches in Kathmandu. *Pulchok and Darbar Marg (01) 4220346*

Ventures Café

The cafe brings Asian and continental food to the thriving Nepalese food scene. Stop by for the best fusion menu and enjoy the breezy outdoor seating. A great venue for beer connoisseurs. *Baluwatar, 9851228014*



The Vesper Café

Drop by if you are craving Italian cuisine. The food reflects the Italian lifestyle — simple, vibrant, yet subtle and beautifully presented. *Pulchok (01) 5548179*

GETAWAY



Hotel Shanker

A residence for the rulers of Nepal from 1894 until 1964, this heritage hotel offers an intact facade and other traditional features along with a redesigned interior for a comfortable feel. *Lazimpat (01) 4410151*



Baber Mahal Vilas

An oasis in the heart of the city, this boutique hotel is set in the existing architectural haven of Baber Mahal Revisited. It features 3 distinct styles of Nepal's architectural heritage, where you can relax in luxury and savour exquisite cuisine. *Tanka Prasad Ghumti Sadak (01) 4257655/4248747*

Dwarika's Resort

A holistic retreat drawing on ancient Himalayan knowledge and philosophy of care for nature and for oneself, the resort is set in magnificent natural surroundings and founded on a philosophy of respecting nature and the self. *Dhulikhel (11) 490612*



Waterfront Resort Hotel

Located on the northern shore of Phewa Lake, the hotel is a perfect place for your travelling needs. It is near the airport, the tourist hub and has a free shuttle service to lakeside. *Pokhara (61) 420004*

Pataleban Vineyard Resort

A venue for those who enjoy peace, simplicity and quiet. An eco-resort with great views, jungle walks and picnics to take a break and rejuvenate after your tedious routine. *Chisapani (01) 4316377, 9841679364*



Heranya | Heranya Yala | Heranya Laku  
Uttar Dhoka, Lazimpat | 12<sup>th</sup> Century Courtyard, Patan | Durbar Square, Patan

Tel: 01-4412716, 98510 67168

info@hotelheranya.com | www.hotelheranya.com

OUR PICK

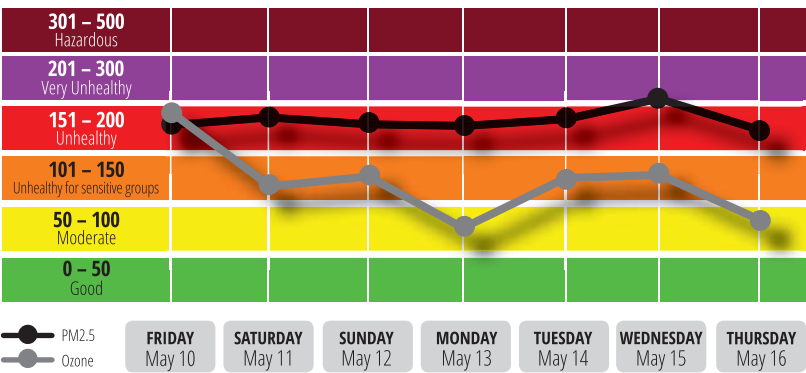


Opened in Kathmandu on 17 May

If you are tired of angry dragons going on fiery rampages, here are some cutesy benevolent dragons for you. The Dreamworks franchise returns for a third edition and as usual, the film contains lush visuals that are bound to be a treat for the eyes. Follow Hiccup on his journey to discover a dragon utopia, in this animated feature directed by Dean DeBlois with voiceovers by Jay Baruchel, America Ferrera and Cate Blanchett.

AIR QUALITY INDEX

KATHMANDU, 10 - 16 May



This has been not a very good week in terms of air quality in Kathmandu. The AQI daily average stayed in the 'Unhealthy' zone, except for a few hours after showers and afternoon storms. Sometimes, it spiked at odd hours, like on Wednesday night at 11pm, when the AQI peaked at 219. No other explanation for that but stagnant air on the Valley floor that accumulated vehicular emissions. See daily averages for this week in the graph above, and log on to [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com) for live hourly AQI updates from the US Embassy monitoring station at Phora Darbar. <https://np.usembassy.gov/embassy/air-quality-monitor/>



Sonia Awale

Nepal is situated at the crossroads of four eco-biological domains to the north, south, east and west. The country's great altitudinal range endows it with biodiversity that is the richest in the world in such a small area.

Nepal is also the most densely inhabited mountain country in the world, and is squeezed between two of the planet's most populous nations. Now, climate change has been added to the threats to the endangered life forms that inhabit Nepal's fragile ecosystems.

The United Nations released an apocalyptic report in Paris last week warning that one million animal and plant species across the planet are on the verge of extinction. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment concluded that besides charismatic mammals, insects, fish and microorganisms, 75% of crops will vanish.

Here in Nepal, despite successes in nature conservation, species are threatened by new infrastructure projects like the proposed Nijgad Airport and the East-West Railway, which are expected to wipe out 200,000ha of forests. Human encroachment of natural habitats, rampant pesticide use, poisoning of rivers and wildlife trafficking were bad enough, but climate change now adds a whole new dimension to the threat.



ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY  
17 MAY 2019

"In Nepal, we have usually focussed on big mammals. Those are important but the attention should shift to other species that are vital to maintain the ecological balance," explains naturalist Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha. Indeed, the country may be losing insects and reptile species that have not even been discovered yet.

For example, there has been little study of the impact of wetland destruction and the pollution of water bodies on insects and amphibians. A new dragonfly species discovered above Pokhara's Phewa Lake last year has not been spotted again. Bee populations have been declining at an alarming rate due to the spread of pesticides, leading to a loss of farm productivity. The disappearance of insects and aquatic fauna has had a cascade effect on indigenous and migratory birds wintering in Nepal.

"There is a crucial need of public awareness about less well-known species — they may have important roles for the ecosystem that we don't even know about yet," says Sagar Dahal of the Small Mammal Conservation and Research Foundation.

Extreme weather caused by global warming has also led to a serious water shortage across Nepal, which in turn is profoundly affecting wildlife, medicinal plants, rare orchids and the insects that depend on them.

The last major mass extinction on Earth 65 million years ago wiped out not only dinosaurs, but 75% of all species. It took the planet 10 million years to recover. But unlike previous extinctions that were caused by natural catastrophes, this



# Between existence and extinction in Nepal

## The coming mass extinction will seriously affect the biodiversity of the Himalaya



TULSHI LAXMI SUWAL



KAREN CONNIFF

time human activity is the cause. The loss of biodiversity and destruction of nature and its impact cited in the IPBES report are felt more acutely in Nepal due to the vulnerability of the Himalaya to climate change, deforestation, pollution and poaching.

"Global environmental degradation will affect countries like Nepal more because of our sensitive topography," writes IBPES researcher from Nepal, Uttam Babu Shrestha in a *Kantipur* op-ed this week. "Proposed large infrastructure projects will have

lasting negative impacts on the environment." Nepal has been successful in curbing domestic poaching, but it is a major transit point for wildlife contraband en route to China. The presence of smugglers means the country needs to be vigilant

about a revival in poaching. It is a conduit for tiger and leopard pelts, rhino horns and other endangered species. Earlier this year, 200kg of pangolin scales bound for China were found at Kathmandu airport.

"Nepal may be landlocked in every other aspect but it is land-linked when it comes to smuggling," Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha told *Nepali Times*.

The good news is that Nepal's conservationists, planners and the government know what the problems are, as well as the solutions. The country also has vast experience in balancing nature conservation with meeting human needs. It just needs a long-term strategy and all stakeholders to work towards protecting our abundant biodiversity. 🇳🇵

# SWIMMING POOL SEASON

WITH A COMPLEMENTARY PIZZA 🍕 OF YOUR CHOICE

**NRS.1899** NETT  
Per Person  
(INCLUSIVE OF TAXES)

**SHANGRI-LA**  
KATHMANDU

Hotel Shangri-La, Kathmandu  
Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Phone: +977-14412999  
Email: [fnb@hotelshangrila.com](mailto:fnb@hotelshangrila.com)  
[www.hotelshangrila.com](http://www.hotelshangrila.com)



# Norway–Nepal, a love story



When Krishna Shumshere Rana, then stationed at the Royal Nepalese Embassy in London, decided to visit Norway in 1938, war clouds were gathering over Europe. The embassy sent a letter to the Norwegian Foreign Ministry in Oslo saying this was a private visit, but reminded the Norwegians that the diplomat was also the son of Nepal’s prime minister, Chandra Shumshere.

Always accommodating, the Norwegians offered to set up an audience with King Haakon. The embassy replied that Krishna Shumshere and his wife were visiting Norway as tourists and ‘did not want any fuss’. However, the letter went on to hint that the couple could be invited to dinner with the king, reminding the Norwegians that the diplomat and his wife would only eat food prepared by their own chef.

Cited in the book *Across Borders: A Story of Norway-Nepal Relationships*, by Marit Bakke, the reader doesn’t learn if the dinner eventually happened, or even if the visit took place, but the condition could have been prompted by the Rana couple trying to ensure that no beef would be served at the royal table.

Bakke’s book is being released to mark 40 years since

establishment of diplomatic relations between Norway and Nepal, and contains many such interesting anecdotes. The first recorded trip by a Norwegian to Nepal was by Robert Bergsaker, who travelled to Tansen in 1949 to set up the hospital there with Robert Fleming, the missionary and famous birder.

Other noted Norwegians who travelled to Nepal include the climber and environmentalist Sigmund Kvaløy Setreng, who did work in Rolwaling, the philosopher of ‘deep ecology’ Arne Naess, peace activist Johan Galtung and mountaineer-turned-conservationist Jan Gangdal.

Among those who stayed longest was Odd Hoftung and his wife Tullis, who helped set up the Butwal Power Company to scale up hydropower capacity in Nepal through bigger and bigger projects, starting with Tinau, Andhikhola with its first underground powerhouse, then Jhimruk and Khimti. If the Nepal government had not bungled its energy planning so completely, Norway’s Staatskraft and later SN Power would have built on Hoftung’s experience and completed the 600MW Tama Kosi 3 project by now.

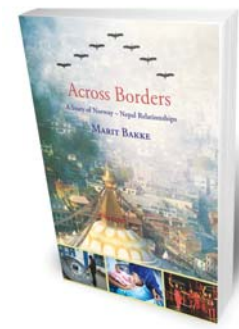
Hoftung’s lifelong engagement

with Nepal was also accompanied by tragedy when his son Martin Hoftung died in the Thai Airbus crash in 1992. Odd Hoftung donated the compensation from the airline to his son’s co-workers in Nepal to continue his work on democracy and debate through Martin Chautari.

The subtext of Bakke’s book is that unlike Nepal’s other big donors, there has been no geostrategic interest behind Norway’s development assistance to this country over the years. It started out with Christian missionary work, but even that was a benign and altruistic involvement. As in their own country, the Norwegians saw hydroelectricity as a driver of development and progress in Nepal, although later its aid branched out in other sectors like health, education and peace-building.

Norwegian photographer Ane Haaland, who worked with UNICEF in Nepal in the 1970s, asks in the book: ‘What is it about the Nepali people that make them so lovable, and make us connect with them for life?’ Haaland leaves the question open-ended, permitting us in Nepal and Norway to ponder the answer.

**Kunda Dixit**



Across Borders: A Story of Norway-Nepal Relationships  
by Marit Bakke  
Vajra Books, Kathmandu 2019  
100 pages, Rs1,200



AJAY KUMAR SAHRSS

**PROVINCIAL WELCOME:** Chief Minister of Province 2, Lalbabu Raut, welcomes President Bidya Devi Bhandari in Janakpur on Monday. Bhandari was visiting to perform special rituals at the Janaki Temple.



DIPENDRA ADHIKARI/RSS

**COMRADESHIP:** Prime Minister KP Oli with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen at the Independence Monument in Phnom Penh on Monday. An agreement on trade and investment was signed between the two countries during the visit.



RAJAN MAHARJAN

**BRAVISSIMO:** Italian Honorary Consul Pratima Pande felicitates violinist Domenico Nordio after a concert at the Yak & Yeti Hotel on Wednesday to mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Italy and Nepal.



HEMANTA KC/RSS

**CODE RED:** Marcia Bernicat of the US Bureau of Oceans and International Environment and Scientific Affairs meets Minister of Forest and Environment Shakti Basnet in Kathmandu on Tuesday.



BIKRAM RAI

**EVER-GREEN:** Writer and historian Satyamohan Joshi was honoured on his 100th birthday by the mayors of Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Thimi on Monday.



**माट-भटेनी सुपर मार्केट**  
अब सातदोबाटो, ललितपुरमा



लोकेशन ग्याप



यहाँहरुको स्नेह र शुभेच्छाले माट-भटेनीको १६औँ स्टोर ललितपुरको सातदोबाटोमा सुरु भइसकेको छ । उक्त स्टोरमा पाल्नुभई हाम्रो हौसला बढाइदिनुहुन विनम्र अनुरोध गर्दछौं ।

माट-भटेनी सुपर मार्केट परिवार

90% छुट

किचन वेयर, रेडियो, गार्मेन्ट, सारी, कुर्ता, जुता, चप्पल, इलेक्ट्रोनिक्स, कस्मेटिक्सका सामानहरुमा 90% छुट । मदिरा तथा सुर्तौजन्त्र पदार्थमा छुट लाग्दैन ।

कानून बमोजिम लिनुपर्ने इजाजत नलिई वा इजाजत पत्र नवीकरण नगराई वा इजाजत प्राप्त व्यक्तिको मृत्यु पश्चात हकवालाको नाममा नामसारी नगराई वा अन्य जुनसुकै तरिकाले नेपाल राज्यभित्र कोही कसैले अवैध हतियार र खरखजाना राखेको भए यो सूचना प्रकाशित भएको मितिले ३५ (पैंतीस) दिनभित्र नजिकको प्रहरी चौकी, जिल्ला प्रहरी कार्यालय वा नेपाली सेनाको व्यारेकमा अनिवार्य रूपमा बुझाउनु हुन नेपाल सरकार (मन्त्रिपरिषद्) को मिति २०७५/११/१८ को निर्णय अनुसार यो सूचना प्रकाशित गरिएको छ ।

यसरी हातहतियार र खरखजाना बुझाउन ल्याएमा यसअघि ती अवैध हातहतियार र खरखजाना राखेको कारणले मात्र त्यस्ता व्यक्तिलाई कुनै कानूनी कारवाही नचलाइने हुँदा तोकिएको समयभित्र अवैध हातहतियार तथा खरखजाना अनिवार्य रूपमा बुझाउनुहुन सम्बन्धित सबैमा जानकारी गराइन्छ । यदि इजाजत प्राप्त नगरी आफूसँग रहेका हातहतियार तथा खरखजाना तोकिएको अवधिभित्र स्वेच्छाले नबुझाएमा त्यस्ता व्यक्ति उपर प्रचलित कानून बमोजिम कारवाही हुने व्यहोरा समेत सूचित गरिन्छ ।



नेपाल सरकार  
सञ्चार तथा सूचना प्रविधि मन्त्रालय  
सूचना तथा प्रसारण विभाग



# The minister and the anchor

The 12 May episode of Avenues TV talk show Sakas Rajniti, in which host Sushil Pandey got into a fiery exchange with Deputy Prime Minister and Health Minister Upendra Yadav, generated an equally heated debate on social media.



**Baburam Bhattarai** @brb1954 · 5h

समाजवादी पार्टी, नेपालका अध्यक्ष तथा मा.उपप्रधानमन्त्री उपेन्द्र यादवप्रति एक संचारकर्मीद्वारा गरिएको दुर्य्यवहारको पार्टीद्वारा भर्त्सना! संचारकर्मीका नाउँमा रहेका यस्ता कुप्रात्रहरूलाई वेलैमा नग्याऊँ र स्वतन्त्र प्रेसको मर्यादा जोगाऊँ!

**Baburam Bhattarai** @brb1954

The arrogant, undisciplined, rude and bullish behaviour of a media person is making things difficult for those who oppose the government's Media Bill, designed to drag down the press like a stone tied to the neck. This is serious and despicable. An individual's impacts on the whole profession. Gatekeepers should pay attention.



**sudarshan kumar** @lotus2007akumar · 11h

को बहि को पाला भने दुइटा मिलेर बस्न थोरै पनि परिचितिलाई चुल्हा अलुभन्दा गरी लाग्न मको या ठुला बडालाई चर्पेट्न भन्दा प्रश्न सोध्ने नुहो हो भने केरी को पकडनिरा किन???

**sudarshan kumar** @lotus2007akumar

To understand who is guilty and who is innocent let us try to be neutral. If ministers and people in high positions cannot be questioned, what is the need for journalism?

**Other commentators blamed both the minister and the journalist in equal measure.**



**binod giri** @binodgiri993

म live हेर्दै थिएँ पहिलो पटक मन्त्री बाट बकवास भन्ने शब्द उच्चारण भएकै हो ?रहो कुरो पत्रकार को प्रश्न सोध्ने शैली को त्यो आज सम्म सबैलाई यहि सेलिमा सोधिदै आएको थियो चाहें त्यो जुनसुकै क्षेत्र को महान होस् !

10:36 AM · 13 May 2019

**binod giri** @binodgiri993

I was watching this show live. It was the minister who first told the journalist not to talk nonsense. As for the reporter's way of asking questions, that is the way he is, no matter how important the studio guest.



**khulla aakash** @KhullaAakaash · 9h

केस भएपछि हामी आफ्नै भाषामा भनिन्छ कुनैकै भ्याडवादा जस्ताको कसै लाग्नु गर्नु थिएँ पछि पछि अतिरिक्त शब्द पत्रकारको मुखाट पनि सिकनै थिएँ कि

10:36 AM · 13 May 2019

**khulla aakash** @KhullaAakaash

If political leaders had fulfilled their promises, maybe journalists would not be so rude?

**Rajendra Dahal** @RDahal62

The Communication Ministry should invest in training and educating journalists like these and giving them exposure, not intimidate and reprimand them.



**Rajendra Dahal** @RDahal62 · 10h

सञ्चार मन्त्रालयले १४/५० कुनैकै बढी सञ्चाली भन्दा पछि पत्रकारलाई तालिम दिन अनि उनले कसो काम गर्नु पर्ने देखाउनु जस्ताको कसैको पनि कुरा नभएको देखिन्छ । अन्ततः नेपाली पत्रकारलाई राम्रो र पक्की होइन, तालिम, शिक्षा र बाईको अनुभव हल्लेकोटोत्र पाईएको हो ।

**Ram Rawal** @rawalram

पत्रकार र 'जगदी' जस्तो बस्तुको 'प्रकार'मा

पत्रकारलाई 'पुछाछिन्ने' गर्नुको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए

पुछाछिन्ने भन्ने शब्दको अर्थ हो कि उनीहरूको काम 'पुछाछिन्ने' होइन । 'समाज'को पछाडि नभए



**Umesh Chauhan** @Umesh\_Chauhan

अन्तर्वाताका नाममा बोलाएर अतिथिलाई चिथोर्ने, कोपर्ने र घायल बनाउने पत्रकार नै अब्बल र उदाहरणीय मानिएकाले त्यस्तो प्रवृत्ति नयाँ पुस्तामा पनि महामारीजस्तै फैलिएको हो ।

साना प्रश्न, ठूलो स्वरमा सोध्ने संक्रामक प्रवृत्तिबाट पत्रकारलाई बचाउन समाजले खबरदारी गरीरहनु पर्छ ।

3:58 PM · 13 May 2019

72 Retweets 280 Likes

**Umesh Chauhan** @Umesh\_Chauhan

A reporter that claws at and injures guests under the pretext of an interview is held up as being capable and a model for others. This culture has lead to young reporters behaving in the same way. Society has to save the press from itself.

**Yadav accused Thapa of being rude and abusive, and walked out of the studio. Later, supporters from his Nepal Samajbad Party vandalised the Avenues TV office.**



**Manavi Paudel** @ManaviPaudel

Replying to @binu3 and @anilkathmandu

अन्तरवाताको लागि स्टुडियोमा बोलाएर पटक पटक तपाईं बाहिर जान सक्नुहुन्छ भन्दै धमक्याएर जबर्जस्ती बाहिरिन बाध्य पार्ने। अनि बाहिर पठाइसकेपछि जवाफ दिन नसकेर भाग्यो भन्ने आरोप लगाउने। बिषयबस्तुमा प्रष्ट नभई टिभीमा अन्तर्वाता भनेपछि हुरुकै हुने नेताहरूको पनि चेत खुल्ला नि अब।

Translate Tweet

09:08 · 5/13/19 · Twitter for iPhone

1 Retweet 14 Likes

**Manavi Paudel** @ManaviPaudel

First you invite him for an interview, and you force him to leave the show by repeating “you can walk out”. And after the guest leaves, you blame it on him for not being able to answer the question. Maybe this is a warning to others who jump at the chance to be on TV not to go without knowing the context.



**Bhushan Yadav**

पत्रकार आफैले मन्त्रीलाई जानुस भने, बकवास नगर्नुस भन्ने! अनि TRP बढाउन प्रश्न दिन नसकेर भगेको भन्ने ! पत्रकारले सोमत् र शिष्टता सिक्नु पर्दैन ! ?

See Translation



123K Views

**Bhushan Yadav**

The journalist tells the minister he can walk out, and not to talk nonsense. And then to increase TRP, the channel announces that the minister walked out because he couldn't answer a question. Journalists need to mind their manners and learn etiquette.



**Rita Thapa** @bheribas · 12h

Replying to @brb1954  
बिर्तामोड कि सर्बिमोडि सर्बिमोडि Media Training Center ले तालिम दिएको हो? सर्बिमोडि अडिवाउनुई बकवासिना बार्न सेलि सेला अर्वा र दुइ जनायोःबाट अडिवाउने कथ भएर र नया नया मा सेला अडिवाउने कथो पाईयोः सर्बिमोडि सर्बिमोडि Avenues TV channel सेलो गरी गइयोः दुई जना सेला जनायोः।

1 Retweet 4 Likes

**Rita Thapa** @bheribas

Who trained this journalist? I am shocked and saddened by his arrogance, and lack of manners and self-control. Tough questions, if asked in a civil and polite manner, would have been more effective and earned Avenues TV respect. Hope this raises awareness.

**However, there were others who urged viewers to look at the entire video and not just the part where the minister walks out. They said it was clearly Minister Yadav who had stonewalled on the tough questions from the host, and tried to evade them, after which the tension escalated.**



**Kritika Tharu** (नेपाली मन)

यस्ता मन्त्रीज्यूहरूको दम्भले नेपाललाई कहाँ पुर्याउने हो ? सामान्य प्रश्नको उत्तर दिनलाई पनि किन यस्तो कुण्ठा !



8:48 AM · 13 May 2019

7 Retweets 26 Likes

**Kritika Tharu** (नेपाली मन) @NepaliMaan8

Where will the ego of ministers like these take Nepal? Why such a fuss over a simple question?



**स्वामी श्री हापुसानन्द** @AwasthiTirtha

Replying to @Umesh\_Chauhan @brb1954

पत्रकारले जनताको प्रश्न सोध्ने हो, त्यो ठाडो तेर्सो जस्तो पनि हुन सक्छ जि हजुरो जसरी छैन, प्रश्नको उत्तर दिने हैसियत र क्षमता नभएसी असली ओकात देखाएर गए, एकातर्फ बाब्रामलाई अध्यक्ष मान्नु परेको कुठ्ठा र आक्रोश पनि होला, अर्कोतर्फ जनताबाट तिरस्कृतको पिडा, त्यो भन्दा माथि कसैको निर्देशन

5:04 PM · 13 May 2019

**स्वामी श्री हापुसानन्द** @AwasthiTirtha



# Child marriage in Nepal: eloped at

But former child brides are turning into activists to prevent others from marrying early

**Sewa Bhattarai**  
in Surkhet

Sita Pariyar is now 45, she has been married 30 years. Pabitra Nepali married as a teen and is now 26. Asha Magar was married at 13, became a mother at 17 and is now 20 years old.

All three women are from Surkhet, one of the districts in Nepal where despite a sharp rise in female literacy, the average age of child marriage is still low. The women say it was a mistake to get married so young, and they are determined to convince like them others to wait till they are older.

“I endured such hardship because I got married young, but back then I didn’t know any better,” says Pariyar who married at 15 and had four children by the time she was 20. “I tell my children they should not make the mistake I did.”

Pariyar’s husband eloped with another woman and abandoned her with the children when she was only 20. “There were days when I had nothing to feed my children. Fathers may ignore their children, but mothers cannot,” says the woman, who broke stones by the river to earn money to buy food for her four children.

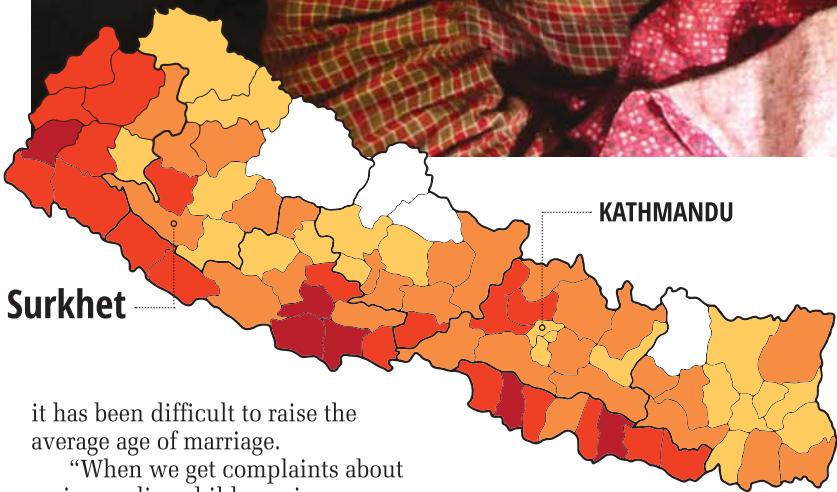
Pariyar has got over years of physical and sexual abuse and the heavy burden of motherhood at a young age. Two of her sons got married after age 20, and her 17-year-old daughter is preparing for her Grade 10 exams with no intention of getting married yet.

Despite improved literacy, Nepal still has the third highest rate of child marriage in South Asia, and is among the world’s top 10 countries for the practice (*see map, overleaf*). The country has committed to end child marriage by 2030 and raised the minimum age of marriage to 20 in the 2018 Civil Code. Yet more than 36% of girls continue to marry before they are 18.

Surkhet is among the country’s top 15 districts for child marriage (*map, right*), and Manju Chaudhary at the Women’s Division of the District Police Office here admits



**YOUNG LIVES:** Rita BK of Udaypur got married at 18 to Kamal BK who was 16. Both are now activists against child marriage.  
Shanti BK of Surkhet (*below*) eloped at 17 with a man five years older, but she and two children are back with her parents because of abuse by her husband.



it has been difficult to raise the average age of marriage.

“When we get complaints about an impending child marriage, we stop them by separating the children and taking legal action against the parents,” says Chaudhary. “But if a couple is already married, then there is nothing we can do, since it is socially unacceptable for the girl to go back to her single life.”

A child marriage is legally void,

- 30-40%
- 40-50%
- 50-60%
- 60-70%
- 70-80%

SOURCE: NATIONAL POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS 2011, 2014

## Percentage of women married before the age of 19, in 2011

but adolescents often elope because of lack of education. Sharmila BK, a counsellor in Surkhet, says that easy access to Facebook today has increased interaction among boys and girls, leading to teen marriages. “Though both young men and women are involved in



SEWA BHATTARAI

# हिमाल पढौं, चन्द्रागिरि चढौं

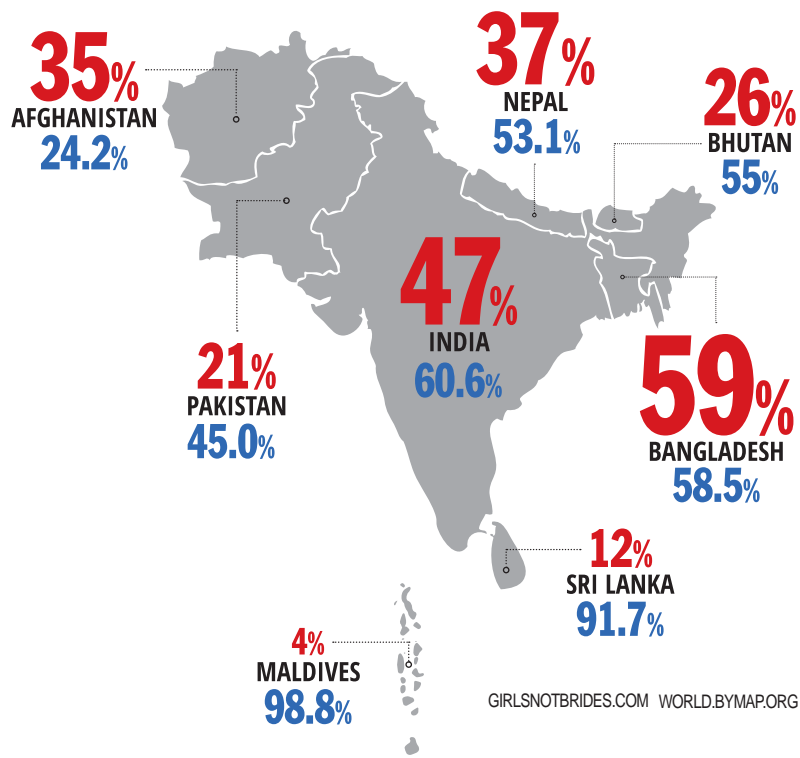
हिमालको ग्राहक बन्नुहोस् र केवलकारको दुईतर्फी टिकट लिनुहोस्

पाटनढोका, ललितपुर, मोबाइल: ९८४९२४८८९४, ९८५९०५४७२९, फोन: ५००५६०९-०५, फ्याक्स: ९७७-९-५००५५९८, पोखरा: ९८५६०४५८६३



# 13, mother by 17

Child marriage and female literacy rates in South Asia



child marriages, it is often the girl who ends up facing the unequal burden,” she says.

Take 26-year-old Pabitra Nepali, who eloped at 17 to a man five years older. She was back in her parent’s home at 22 because her husband drank a lot, beat her regularly, had affairs and neglected their children. Today, the young mother of two is taking a beautician’s course so she can support her children.

“It is very difficult for my parents, since they have to look after me and my two children. Now I want to stand on my own feet,” says Nepali.

She rues dropping out of school, and speaks wistfully of friends who graduated to get jobs in the government or NGOs. Nepali has registered her children in a private school, but admits she has no money to pay for it. She would like to get a divorce, but does not have the Rs10,000 required.

With education and

employment prospects cut short by early marriage, many women are trapped — facing heavy responsibilities but with little money. Asha Magar, 20, looks like a college student but her youthful demeanour belies her burden. Having eloped at 13, she became a mother at 17. The fifth-grade dropout was unable to register her child’s birth because her underage marriage was illegal.

Magar doesn’t even have a citizenship certificate because she married before she was eligible for it, and now her husband thinks she doesn’t need it. “Citizenship is required for everything: voting, bank accounts and even to register for skills training,” says Magar, who is learning to weave so she can earn money.

Magar got unwillingly pregnant because of social pressure, and most married underage girls do not have access to contraceptives and no control over when to have children. Since adolescent bodies are not fully prepared for

childbirth, many teenage women have maternity complications and lasting health issues. They are also more vulnerable to domestic violence and sexual abuse, and isolation means that they are denied medical and legal help.

“Child marriage is a human right violation. It denies child brides the right to life and health and non-discrimination and equality, including the right to consent to marriage and the right to determine the number, spacing and timing of children,” says reproductive rights activist Sonali Regmi.

While the police office in Surkhet receives barely five child marriage complaints every year, there are dozens against polygamy and hundreds against domestic abuse. All are linked, say social workers.

“Surkhet is a melting pot where people from the mountain districts settle temporarily before moving on. Men often migrate to India for work, and after such separation it is normal for both men and women to find other partners, leading to conflict and domestic abuse,” says Roshna Kafle of the Kopila Valley School, adding that child marriage, polygamy and domestic abuse are all related.

Child brides like Sita Pariyar have now turned into activists. Research by the group Girls not Brides found that more than 60% of child brides later felt that they married too young, while more than 70% of those who married after 18 felt that it had been the right time. It found that education and jobs can reduce the practice.

The solutions are clear: increase school enrolment of girls, create a girl-friendly school environment and empower women and girls economically. Girls already married need to learn about reproductive health and contraception.

Says Ananda Tamang of Girls not Brides: “Just focusing on girls is not enough. We need to involve men and boys as well in child marriage prevention strategies, improve the security of girls in public spaces, and enforce the laws and policies against child marriage.”

*Some names have been changed.*



Prakash Singh

## The curse of being new mothers

Prakash Singh in Bajura

Dharma Budha of Wai village of Bajura district (above) gave birth to a baby three weeks ago inside a cowshed. She will stay in the dark, windowless outhouse with the cattle for another week. Her neighbour Surindra Kathayat was taken to a health post when she went into labour, but after she gave birth was banished to a cowshed with her baby.

“There are 300 families living in Wai. Five women gave birth this month, and all five are living in cowsheds with their cattle,” says village leader Jandevi Budha, without much indication that she thinks this is unsafe for mothers and newborns.

Nandasara Sarki of nearby Bandhu village gave birth to her fifth child and like all the other babies, this one was also delivered in an outhouse. Two of her earlier babies died due to the cold and damp within a week of being born.

Sarki’s husband thinks the gods will be angry if a mother is allowed into the house with her newborn baby – a superstition that is entrenched throughout conservative northeastern Bajura, where female literacy is low and there are few health facilities.

Female Community Health Volunteer Chandrakala Budha says such banishment is the cause of most postnatal and even maternal mortality death, with babies dying of exposure and infections. Staff nurse Mandevi Jaisi at Bajura District Hospital says most mothers end up with health problems like uterus issues, anaemia, night blindness and infections in the mouth and tongue.

Dhan Bahadur Fadera, the health assistant at Rugin Health Post, says that the plight of women in Humla, Mugu, Jumla,

Kalikot and Dolpa districts of northwestern Nepal is the same. “I estimate that 80% of the women here deliver their babies in cowsheds, which is why the infant and maternal mortality rates have not gone down like in the rest of the country,” says Fadera, who has worked all over Karnali Province.

Chinkala Chadara of Hyanglu village of Mugu delivered her baby in her cowshed this month despite living next door to a health post. “We do not go to health posts; none of the women I know are taken there,” she says simply. Even if the mothers deliver in a health facility, they have to go to the shed when they come home with the baby.

“We tell them that it is not right to stay in cowsheds, but they don’t listen to us,” says Chiranjivi Shahi, head of Swamikartik Khapar Rural Municipality.

Most women believe the superstition that they are impure after menstruation or childbirth, and prefer to not bring down the wrath of the gods on their families. Dhanrupa Jaisi of Maila village of Humla says the rules are very strict: no nutritious milk or meat, no comforts, no touching the public tap. But there is no taboo on working in the fields, so the new mothers are also overworked. By the time they leave the shed after a month, both mother and baby are malnourished or have infections.

In Dhim village of Bajura, Rela Rokaya’s newborn baby passed away in a shed this month. Dudhari Dhimi of Maila village has given birth to three children, two of whom died in the cowshed. District Health Office records show that there were about 20 infant deaths in Bajura in the past year, most of them in cowsheds within 28 days of birth. Health Assistant Yadav believes the number is vastly underestimated, since many deaths are unreported.

Cambridge Assessment International Education  
Cambridge International School

Admission Forms are available from the Admissions Office 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

**ADMISSIONS OPEN**

**A Levels**

Trade Tower, Thapathali, Kathmandu  
T : +977 (1) 5970003  
www.britishmodelcollege.edu.np

**Scholarships Available**

**Intake June 2019**

British Model College (BMC)  
is a sister organisation of





# Kissing Ass

*(The following content has been vetted for veracity and is certified by the Media Council as fit for human consumption. However, the Ministry of Information and Communism takes no responsibility if the baggage in the overhead bins have shifted during flight without express consent of the management.)*

It is a self-evident truth that the mass media plays an important role in our respective democracies, so we can present the news without fear or favour, and let the microchips fall where they may. We take our adversarial role seriously to comfort the afflicted, afflict the comfortable, hold power to account and publish every hearsay that is fit to print.

However, we should not take for granted the freedom guaranteed to us in the Constitution. It was irresponsible on the part of a talk show host to hound Deputy Prime Minister Upadro Yadav until he staged a walkout during a live studio interview. If he was serious about defending press freedom, the anchor in question should have challenged him to a swordfight before cameras.

We hear the government has decided not to blame messengers anymore. It has decided to arrest them. From now on, Nepali journalists don't have to think twice about saying how awesome Comrade Awesome is. They only have to think once. (Thank goodness 40% of the public can't read or write, otherwise you might actually believe the news.)

There is a rumour going around that we journos aren't free to be sycophantic and hypocritical liars anymore. It is true that there is complete freedom of press in Nepal, it's just that we don't have freedom after press. The grovelment is not stopping anyone from singing hosannas at the top of their voices at any given time. Just surf the tv news channels: our aforementioned freedoms are perfectly intact and us hacks have never been freer to lick or kiss ass, and be kicked in the Ass.

Yet, we must not be complacent and rest on our laurels. We must not forget to kowtow when asked only to bow. We must always be prepared to print handouts in exchange for handouts. But unlike some other professions, we are not the type to take the envelope and run. Our journalistic code of ethics does not allow that — we take the cash out, return the envelope, and only after that, run.

There are no curbs on vowel movements in Nepal, we are free to report any and all official pronunciations without let or hindrance, except when it pertains to the Dalai Lama's health bulletin. Thanks to the Ministry of Misinformation and Newspeak, the media today is more self-reliant, self-important, self-righteous and self-censored than ever before.

If we have hurt anyone's feelings, forgive us our press passes. Tough luck.



The Ass

