THE TROIKA

A for a prolonged tug-of-war that polarised the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) to the point where it looked like it was headed for a split, a three-way truce this week has defused the crisis for now.

Prime Minister KP Oli is co-chair of the NCP with Pushpa Kamal Dahal, and relations between the two had soured over Dahal’s suspicion that Oli was not going to stick to their 2017 “gentlemen’s agreement” in which they decided to take turns being prime minister for 5/6 years each. While Oli was in Delhi for Narendra Modi’s swearing-in last month, Dahal even leaked a memo that proved the pact was in writing.

The third leader in the Communist Troika is former Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, who has also been critical of Oli’s desire to go it alone, both within the party and in government. He even sang a line from a popular Nepali folk song while Oli was in Athens earlier this year, which likened the PM to spraying the fiddle while the country burned. Nepal has publicly sided with Dahal since both felt sidelined by Oli, and gained influence by using the swing vote of his loyalists to play kingmaker in the party.

With the government and party paralysed by the equal numerical strength of members loyal to the three leaders, something had to give. It appears that the combined strength of Dahal and Nepal convinced Oli that he had to compromise on appointments to the central committee, political and party department heads, as well as chiefs of fraternal organisations.

The first indication of this was a breakthrough this week on dividing up the functions of the 441 members for district in-charge and party structure at the local level. Inability to do so had kept the party’s decision-making centralised in Kathmandu, thus undermining true devolution.

What complicates matters is that many of the 441 central committee members and 118 political members are also elected representatives in all three levels of government. Also, the 60:40 formula between former UML and former Maoist members would not reflect atrocities to the Troika.

Still, it looks like good sense has prevailed, and Oli has assured former UML dissidents that he will do more listening henceforth. Oli’s detractors are also putting pressure on him to relinquish either the prime ministership or party chairmanship under the one-post-come person rule that they have demanded.

There are still some much-delayed formalities to conclude before the NCP can be considered truly united. After that happens, Oli is expected to reshuffle his cabinet to address some of the widespread criticism of his government’s non-performance.

For many analysts, the Communist “Troika” is behaving no differently than the Nepali Congress’ own triumvirate leadership under CP Khadka, KP Sharma and Ganesh Man Singh after the 1990 People’s Movement.

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COULD YOU BE...? 2019
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ACT GLOBALY, THINK LOCALLY

A nearly 330 scientists from 60 countries arrived in Kathmandu this week to attend the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to plan for the next report, it is as if the rain god was waiting to remind them to be more forthright about the cause and link between climate change and weather.

After being three weeks late, unprecedented monsoon squalls this year hit the country with record precipitation in places. Floods and landslides killed nearly 60 people in Nepal, affecting millions of people downstream in India.

It must have been a premonition that drove us to write an editorial in this space on 28 June warning of just such a calamity. We said floods are a natural phenomenon in Nepal and farmers have learned to live, even benefit, from them. Floods are natural, we wrote, disasters are not.

It is when we let the city expand into the floodplains of rivers, when we construct ill-designed road embankments or block natural drainage systems that flood claims lives. We saw ample evidence of that this week from the Kalsi and Kanki neighbourhoods of Kathmandu, whose streams turned into raging brown torrents to reclaim their original courses.

And in Restanthak, which saw a repeat of the 2017 Gauri festival caused by flood control levees on the Bagmati narrowing the river, which was then dammed by a road embankment across the border in India. The fatalities were much less this time because the Indian embankment gave way, releasing the dammed water. But in the process, it inundated large parts of southern Kathmandu.

Bad urban planning combined with climate-related weather extremes will surely lead to future catastrophes. The way to be prepared for them is to understand rivers, not block their paths to the sea. The river will always win.

This was a point driven home at the IPCC meeting in Kathmandu this week by co-chair of Working Group 2, Debra Roberts of South Africa. She told our reporter: “Kathmandu has been tested over the last week by unusual monsoon— you need the people who run and design this city to have access to information on major global transitions like how urban infrastructure can cope with future climate events.”

Indeed, urban infrastructure is one of the four major global transitions that countries need to pay attention to in coming decades. The IPCC’s 1.5 Special Report last year “The other side is not possible, infrastructure and city systems are.”

The scientists writing the IPCC’s 6th assessment report in Kathmandu this week will be focusing on adaptation and impact, but their final report will not be released till 2022. The world is in a phase like that where knowledge of warming that we are witnessing, the data saved to predict impacts will itself be falsified.

Just as the Himalayan Assessment released by RIMD30 earlier this year showed, warming trends are already much worse than we thought. Our mountains are warming up at 0.7°C degrees faster than the global average, melting and shrinking glaciers at an accelerated pace.

If we ignore all the lessons the world has to teach us, and continue the same amount of carbon we do today, two-thirds of the ice in the Himalayas will be gone by 2050, with catastrophic effects for the up to 3.6 billion people living downstream.

In terms of all the media attention, but weather extremes are already depleting aquifers and as groundwater levels drop, spring flow is in Nepal’s mid-mountains.

Our governments have a tendency to blame all their past neglect and poor governance on the climate crisis. In fact, climate change is a god-sent excuse for them to do nothing. However, as we know, Nepal’s poverty, dependence on rain-fed agriculture and lack of clean drinking water, are structural problems that pre-date climate change. The global climate emergency just makes all our existing development problems more challenging.

What we have to prepare for is that even the IPCC’s predictions for 2100, which Kuchwe and Katuwato last year may be too optimistic, and that warming trends will certainly be much worse. We really need more evidence that the climate emergency is happening. The question is, what are we going to do about it.

To make their accusations stick, women have to be proactive. Film and record the perpetrators, get evidence. Otherwise the men will keep getting away with it.

More Doctors

Profound doctors like Dr. Bishnu and Dr. Karuna, who are helping our doctors in the capital, also need help from the medical industry/pharmaceuticals (New Treatment for Nepal’s myopia patients, Sonia Aware, #189).

We are becoming more exposed to media that help us explain our position. One such is the “Himalayan Times” which gives us a platform to get the political pressure on us. We need to be grateful and to speak our hearts out without any fear.

010 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Ten years ago this week, the front page story was in Nepal Times. In our ‘Himalayan’ this time, we shall give it a bit more prominence by spending our editorial space on it.

There is a great deal of confusion in India about the political peculiarities in Nepal. But I hope that they can trea it as ‘problem solving’ and support the Maoist-led government.

A section of the Indian establishment believes a Maoist-led government offers a legitimate alternative. They think the Chinese government are not far behind because they know that the global community, which the Chinese government try to get the political pressure on us. We need to be grateful and to speak our hearts out without any fear.

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So you’d like to do business in Nepal? 

The rule banning FDI under Rs50 million is a slap in the face of small and medium enterprises.

GUEST COLUMN
Ritu Pradhan Malla

Such narrow vision is discouraging entrepreneurs, making Nepal further dependent on the outside. Our largest export market is labour, with income generated by the as many as 5 million young Nepali men and women who send money home making up 24% of GDP. That money boosts consummation, which means more imports.

Not even locally grown fresh vegetables can compete with imported, pesticide-laced vegetables because of the lack of competitiveness in the export market. It is not enough for even a few entrepreneurs to work with a bank and have the option of a loan.

A recent example is an entrepreneur who partnered with an export partner to sell to US consumers. She is not able to do so because the interest rate has increased ten-fold.

One can only imagine how much more products and services would have been built in Nepal and how many jobs could have been added without the new law. To address the lack of capital and technology transfer, private equity funds in India are spending huge amounts of money to attract the need for big companies.

The government needs to create an inclusive environment for investors, who are helping build Nepal’s economy. An SME’s pipeline effort on the local economy can be huge. Business Oxygen (Bo2), for instance, accelerates the growth of Nepali SMEs to help them grow, reduce imports, create markets, increase dollar revenue and attract new SMEs in the value chain, etc.

There is still a yawning market gap in access to finance for SMEs working in sectors restricted under the new law, including primary agriculture and dairy. This further constrains the growth of SMEs in the agri-sector at a time when the climate emergency is already affecting Nepal’s food security.

Foreign investment could help Nepal’s commercial agri-entrepreneurs become more climate resilient, but the recent FDI limit discounts the need for this intervention where it is needed most.

Here is a checklist to help harmonise the business environment:

- Create a sector-specific permission process
- Provide special concessions for private equity firms that want to help scale up Nepal’s SMEs
- Provide special consideration of the working environment for foreign investors supporting inclusive growth in the economy
- The Department of Industry can always check proposals and raise questions when there are areas of suspicion.

Ninety percent of companies registered in Nepal are SMEs, and yet we are restricting FDI under Rs50 million. It is no wonder that Nepal’s position in the World Bank’s Doing Business rankings for the ease of doing business fell five points to 110.

Ritu Pradhan Malla
Senior Associate Manager, Business Oxygen Pvt. Ltd

New, improved yomari

Most people are familiar with the traditional yomari filled with molasses or jaggery milk. The News delivery is usually eaten on a special full moon day in winter, and the elongated dumplings made of rice flour with high content of fillings are supposed to ward off the cold.

Now the Kathmandu’s favorite is getting an upgrade with even more flavor—flavors like chicken, potatoes, vegetables and chocolate at Yomari Corner, Lastimport. Essentially what the innovative founders of the bakery have done is turned yomari into a kind of large mono.

Yomari Corner was established by three childhood friends who are proficient in their own occupations: Dashrath Chaudhary, Sumit Karki, hospitality professional Bijay Karki, and Santa professional Manmoh Nauti. Their aim is to promote Nepal’s own food items and create a lasting legacy.

The six flavors of yomari each have a unique taste. The chicken, potato, and vegetable flavors are savory and can be consumed as light snacks or meals. The potato yomari, say, is in a healthier alternative to the greasy deep fried samosas. The chicken and the vegetable options taste similar to traditional Nepalese dishes, though they are larger and shaped differently. That brings up the question: why not just stick to momos?

“We are very conscious about the fact that this is the only use of traditional rice flour. That is something healthier than the processed white flour that goes into momos in the fast food market,” says Bijay Karki, besides, yomari is a typical Nepali food that originated in Patan, while momos can be traced to Tibet.

So it is an effort to promote food with Nepali roots.

After chicken or potato yomari, customers can choose sweet cream, molasses, or chocolate yomari for dessert.

Traditional yomari fillings are rumy, but Yomari Corner has innovated and made them trendy so that they don’t drip when biting into them. Khosas and chaakis are still the most popular flavors, but chocolate was introduced to entice children. It seems to be working.

Yomari Corner also takes pride in how the yomari are made: all the ingredients are homemade and handcrafted using organic ingredients. It sources the sweet cream from fresh harvest in the outskirts of Kathmandu, and employs women who are in need of jobs.

Our aim is not just to sell food and earn a profit, but also to establish a social enterprise that gives back to the community,” says founder Sumit Karki.

Sewa Bhattarai

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Turkish #MissionRescue

Turkish Cargo has performed another life-saving animal airlift. An endangered rare giraffe fawn that became exhausted after flying 5,000 km in Europe along its migratory route was picked up and delivered to Sisli by the rescue team. Further, the carrier’s Multilateral Initiative transported four lions from the United States, which were sick with hunger, to their natural habitat in Istanbul.

World Bank supports GoN

The World Bank has assigned its expertise to support Nepal’s efforts to strengthen local fiscal federalism, and support budget management. The $100 million project will be coordinated by the Ministry of Finance.

Qatar’s new 777s

Qatar Airways and Boeing finalized an agreement for order for five Boeing 777 freighters during a ceremony at the White House on Tuesday 6 July, witnessed by Qatar’s then-named Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, the 777 freighter has the longest range of any twin-engine freighter and is capable of flying 27,000 nm.

Samsung Service Centre
A Samsung mobile service centre has opened at Tamrakar Campus in Pasko on 7 July, making the fourth floor in the third floor, expanding to 10 help centers. The service centre will provide services such as software, parts replacement and Flagship phone repair.
Nepal risks being blacklisted on money laundering

An international task force is not convinced Nepal has done enough to tackle financial crime

Sharad Ojha

Nepal will be evaluated for international money laundering activities by the APG (Asia Pacific Group) of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) during 2019, and may be blacklisted if the government does not adequately crack down on illegal cross-border money transfers.

If Nepal is not able to come up with a workable mechanism to identify criminal activities and bring offenders, including prominent businessmen and politicians, under the purview of the law by the end of 2020 it faces the danger of being blacklisted by the task force.

The FATF was established in 1989 to track down and stop money laundering and funding of terrorist activities around the world. Nepal is a member of its associate organisation APG, which investigates regional member countries. With an investigation due, Nepal had hastily passed the Money Laundering Prevention Act in 2008, but took 2 years to implement it.

An APG working committee evaluated Nepal, and concluded that its attempts to control money laundering were not effective enough. On February 2010, it put Nepal on an international monitoring list. Nepal then established a Money Laundering Investigation Department. With the help of the IMF and World Bank, the government created legal structures and adopted policies to prevent money laundering. After it took these steps, it was removed from the international monitoring list, which meant that it was not prohibited from doing financial transactions with other countries or international organisations.

Though Nepal improved its legal stance on money laundering after the first international investigation, it does not seem to have made much progress since then in actually preventing tax evasion and money laundering.

In the past, the APG had evaluated Nepal on the basis of its legal safeguards and policies. However, in future it will be looking for concrete action to see if Nepal implemented the 40 suggestions and 11 results that it made in 2016. “The next evaluation will focus less on laws and more on implementation and results,” admits Bimol Lamichhane, spokesperson of the Money Laundering Investigation Department. “So if our implementation remains as weak as it is, it could create problems for us.”

Experts say the government will find it very difficult to implement its own laws because so many of those involved are powerful businessmen enjoying political protection. “If the Money Laundering Prevention Act is implemented, then politicians and officials will have a hard time showing the source of their earnings. Which is why implementation of the Act never became a priority for Nepal. Clearly, it was created only as a showpiece to assuage foreigners,” a former director general of the department confided.

Indeed, although everyone agrees that corruption and tax evasion are rampant in Nepal, there is no record of prominent persons being investigated for it. However, since the APG will be investigating it on its own next year, the department has been forced to conduct its own secret probe. Director General Rup Neupane Bhattarai says he cannot speak about the investigations at the moment but according to sources, well-known Nepalis, including a businessman who is expanding outside Nepal, another tycoon who created an international business network after the 2006 movement, a prominent trader accused of gold smuggling and an industrialist who suddenly switched to tobacco, are under investigation.

However, the going is not expected to be easy, because the Money Laundering Investigation Department lacks coordination with other powerful agencies, which is international practice and considered essential to combat money laundering. Though the law states that Nepal's Central Bank should coordinate with other agencies and provide information to the department about suspicious financial transactions, the implementation of this law is weak.

“Since our mechanism for identifying illegal wealth is weak, we are not able to figure out if the money, property, shares, gold, etc. deposited in banks are legal or not,” says an official of the bank. “So at the moment we are unable to effectively prevent money laundering.”

Currently, FATF has blacklisted Iran and North Korea, while 12 countries, including Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Syria, are currently on an international monitoring list. Nepal risks joining these countries if the FATF evaluation does not meet international criteria for transparency.
Sir Ed would not have liked the queues on Everest this spring

Sir Edmund Percival Hillary KG ONZ
KCVO was born 150 years ago, on 20 July 1919. A big man in every way, Sir Ed is the Sherpas’ beloved Urra Salib, a towering presence in the Sagarmatha story, the most celebrated New Zealander, with his profile emblazoned on every Kiwi five-dollar bill.

But I like to remember his shy rugged grin, the beany corduroys, a gentle giant reclining during his latter years in the huge brown leather armchair in his Auckland home, surrounded by books and Himalayan mementos. Often one of Lady June’s cats would perch on his knee, and during the last of his many regular visits to Nepal my Labrador puppy stayed on his lap on my Kathmandu sofa. (Right)

From his tea-drinking origins throughout all his accolades and acclaim, Sir Ed remained the consummate Kiwi — humble and approachable, his phone number listed in the public telephone directory.

Sixty-six years ago, that last stop onto the pristine summit of Mt Everest catapulted Ed and Tenzing Norgay into the textbooks. Defying altitude and endurance they ventured beyond known human limits to the highest point on earth.

The news of the 1953 expedition success was announced on the morning of the young Queen Elizabeth’s coronation, thrilling a war-weary Britain with visions of conquest ‘high in the thin cold air’.

Mountaineer, explorer, philanthropist, writer, Sir Ed recorded his adventures with an elegant turn of phrase in a shelf full of books. As well as mountaineering, he jet boated up the Ganges, crossed Antarctica on tractors, and walked or flew to the North and South Poles as well as the top of Everest.

By the time I knew him, Sir Ed had hung up his boots, having lost his tolerance to altitude, but he continued to helicopter annually into the Khumbu and travel the world raising funds for his Himalayan Trust. He ‘gave back’ to the people without whom he would not have got to the top.

The Sherpas led an uncertain life in those three decades, struggling for survival in the shadow of Sagarmatha as farmers scrapping a living from the poor upland soil, traditional trade with Tibet and occasional expedition work. Sir Ed invested his time and energy to provide education and health to enable his Sherpa friends to cope with the impending changes of the modern world.

To support the Himalayan Trust schools and hospitals that were constructed with his own hands and family help, Sir Ed built Loddo airstrip in 1964 on a steep hillside at 2,860m. A chorus line of Sherpas and Sherpani dancers were mobilised to compact the ground with their stomping steps. Surprised and alarmed by the visitor influx that he unwarily unleashed with the new airstrip, Sir Ed was unflinching in his criticism of the negative aspects of tourism, and was never convinced by commercial mountaineering.

“Today the highest rubbish dump in the world” was a phrase coined by him, and he never appreciated the benefit in terms of fees, royalties and employment brought to Nepal’s mountain communities by our 200,000 trekkers, 6,000 trekking peak climbers and 2,000 expedition members every year. Sir Ed would have hated the recent image of Everest summit queues that went viral online and on front pages around the world.

This year we marked Sir Ed’s birth centenary with a reception on his Sagarmatha Summit Day, 29 May, on a hunt for the warm yellow glow of the British Ambassador’s historic Kathmandu residence. The terrace was covered by a white sail to protect against the threatening monsoon rain, sparkling glasses clinked, and uniformed waiters circulated with promising plates of dainty eats.

Amongst the guests dressed in their best who thronged the graceful rooms was Helen Clark, the new patron of the Himalayan Trust who, as New Zealand’s prime minister, had presided over Sir Ed’s State Funeral in 2008. Climbers recently returned from mountain summits jostled with expedition leaders, Everest guides, and a crowd of Nepalis, Sherpas, Kiwis and assorted others with an affinity to Sir Ed’s work and memory.

British Ambassador Richard Morris sported a scrappy beard and unstained flooded ‘vogue’ having raced the Everest Marathon that morning, chopping back just in time to host the celebration.

I made a baseline for Nirmal ‘Nim’ Purja, the stocky ex-Gorkha Special Forces soldier just back from climbing six 8,000m peaks within 31 days, including Everest, Lhotse and Makalu in 48 hours, as part of his extreme mountaineering feat to summit all 14 Himalayan 8,000m peaks within a single seven-month season. Last week, he climbed another, Nanga Parbat in Pakistan.
New biography has nuggets of new information about the first man on Everest

Kunda Dixit

How many of us know that Edmund Hillary had written a novel called Call Not To The Gods under the nom de plume Gary Sanker about an expedition on Gauri Shankar that involved monks, manasibs and mountainmen?

Or that when Hillary’s permit to climb Makalu in 1961 was cancelled because he made an unauthorised ascent of Ama Dablam, it was British writer Desmond Dog which dissuaded him to get the permit reinstated.

The Pilatus Porter that crashed on takeoff from Kathmandu airport in 1975, killing Hillary’s wife Louise and their daughter Belinda, was piloted by Peter Shand, a New Zealand bush pilot who was hired by Royal Nepal Airlines even though he had lost his job in the Airspeed Oxford. Shand did not perform a pre-flight check, and forgot to remove the wooden airspeed wedges before taking off for Pharping that morning.

And that is worth pondering on the week of Hillary’s birth centenary, and the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11’s first landing on the moon.

Edmund Hillary: A Biography
by Michael Gill

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Connecting Asia 2012

TATA NRG
NEPAL’S YOUNGEST CUV

Paper makes up 8% of Kathmandu’s household waste and 23% of commercial waste. Although discarded in landfills, much of this is actually recyclable.

Co-Founder Ramita Maharjan first got the idea for Lahana Paper Crafts while an undergrad at Kathmandu University. She learnt to turn discarded paper into baskets and jewellery, and today, the company employs women and reduces paper waste in the city.

At Lahana, newspapers, magazines, school books, invitation cards, calendars, brochures and comic books are transformed into colourful earrings, necklaces, baskets. Discarded paper is gathered and shredded into strips, and rolls of paper are turned into ‘beads’ and attached to metal pieces, or woven into baskets.

The work is done by local women, who sit in a circle chatting away as their nimble fingers skilfully weave rolls of paper around waste baskets or cut up old magazines and newspapers faster than a machine. Maharjan makes sure that the women are paid well and given meals and transportation fees.

Like any other upcycling business, Lahana Paper Crafts also faces difficulties in convincing customers to buy its products. Many in Kathmandu still doubt the durability of the products, even though they are sturdy. Besides, it is the thought of being less wasteful that counts.

Today, Lahana has buyers from all over Nepal and even abroad. Maharjan also holds workshops to train people interested in making paper accessories.

She says, “Our products are becoming more popular because they are handicrafts and they help manage paper waste.”

**Upcycling**

verb

up-cycle | / ap-si-kal |

upcycled; upcycling

transitive verb
to recycle (something) in such a way that the resulting product is of a higher value than the original item: to create an object of greater value from (a discarded object of lesser value).

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**Sangham**

Tatwa

In the last fiscal year, Nepal imported 10 million bottles of alcohol. While some of them are recycled, many cannot be recycled in Nepal and end up as shards of glass on the banks of rivers and around landfill sites.

Deko Recyclers has been collecting garbage house to house in Kathmandu to covert organic waste into fertiliser and recycle other material. Now, it has launched a new brand for upcycled products called Tatwa, which takes un-recyclable imported beer, wine and liquor bottles and converts them into candle holders, drinking glasses, tumblers, glass containers and even toothpick holders. Tatwa has so far repurposed over 8,000 imported bottles collected from households, restaurants and hotels around the country.

Discarded bottles are first thoroughly cleaned and sterilised before being cut down into industrial machines. Then comes the time-consuming, labour-intensive sanding and finishing phase to give the products a smooth texture. With Tatwa's minimalistic and logoless designs, the finished products barely resemble the alcohol bottles they once were.

Says Tatwa’s Shiwani Saraswati: “We rethink each item considered to be waste, where it comes from, what its source element is and how a thoughtful recovery of those items would mean reducing the environment and understanding waste from a new perspective.”

Tatwa means ‘element’ in Nepali, and Saraswati says the venture is all about focusing on the importance of understanding waste as a resource that has lost utility in its present form. Beyond blue and green-based glass products, Tatwa is also working on items like metal straws, bamboo toothbrushes and reusable cloth bags. It hopes to create an entire range of sustainable upcycled products to replace objects of daily use.

Saras says, “Recycling in Nepal is a new industry and there are not many recycling facilities, which is why we have to explore options in upcycling, turning non-recyclable and difficult to recycle waste items into products that can re-enter the market. With upcycling, we reduce waste that would otherwise end up in the landfill with creative business ventures that also generate jobs.”
Upcycling is gaining momentum in Nepal. Everything from paper to cars has been transformed into usable and wearable items. Discarded buffalo horns are turned into Maori-inspired pendants, waste fabric into clothing items. To reduce fabric waste, the business has also partnered with textile factories, clothes manufacturers and even tailors to upcycle and recycle their scrap. At Taalo, Ghimire found it hard to convince consumers to buy his products. Many were sceptical about upcycling and believed the products were made from used clothes. After an awareness campaign to explain that the fabrics were never worn, sales boomed. Now in its second year of operations, Taalo has a consumer base that runs from teenagers to environmentally conscious adults. The company’s popularity is also a result of growing consumer consciousness among Kathmandu citizens, who see a lot of trash lying about. People are becoming more aware of sustainable alternatives to products that they want to buy. Ghimire’s ventures in upcycling are not only environmentally conscious, but also socially aware. The Kamlari women from Nepalgunj who manufacture Taalo’s products are paid an extra 82l for every product that they make, in addition to their daily wages.

Dhaasoo

“The make customers understand upcycling, we first need to educate them about the importance of reducing waste, recycling and reusing,” he adds. This is why a lot of thought has gone into making Dhaasoo’s products more approachable. Social media marketing, upcycling upcycling began and repurposing products that people are familiar with have been some of the strategies. Dhaasoo also sells Pinterest-inspired, rustic-themed, minimalist items to satisfy both Gen Z and Millenial consumers. If customers come in with a photo of a Pinterest product, Dhaasoo crafts it with upcycled materials. The business also preserves vintage collectibles with historical value. While sourcing Katchamandu’s dumping sites, Dhaasoo found a 1st generation iPod in working condition, a WW2 gas mask used by British Gurkhas and even a 1947 rotary dial telephone. Some of these items are for sale to collectors.

To expand the niche for upcycled products, Dhaasoo is now creating products designed for kitchens, gardens, bedrooms and terraces.
EVENTS

The Park Bazaar
Support your local artist at The Park Bazaar’s 1st Family Night Market. All items sold are made with natural or sustainable materials. Skills with second-hand items are also available. 
7 July, 6pm onwards, Anjuna Park, Thamel, (01) 4412669

Continuum Art Exhibition
Sonika Rana, President of the Women Artists’ Group (WAGNIH) and a prominent Nepali fine artist, presents Continuum, a series of paintings depicting Nepali life, earthy landscape and heritage. 
From 6pm, 11 July-10 September, S.K. Mitchell, Thamel, (01) 4442727

GETAWAY

Nabin K. Bhattacharji

INpees, 139, Dr. Marten’s nipples under the king, at the age of 16, he took up the guitar and the harmonica. A recipient of many music awards, he has released over 20 albums. He is a regular on the road, and is known for his skilled guitar and harmonica playing.

Places Monsoon Jazz
Celebrate the monsoon season with jazz quartet Tres Plata Perro at this year’s evening. 
7 July, 7pm onwards, Places Restaurant and Bar, Thamel, (01) 474441

Cibo Bistro
With simple dishes and fresh ingredients, enjoy a wide variety of pastas, pizzas, sandwiches and mouth-watering desserts. Kid-friendly options are available as well.
10am-10pm, Patan, (01) 5547340

The Chocolate Room
Enter a world of chocolate connoisseurs, decadent brownies, and chocolate of every size and shape. Between the chocolates, try the Pen Pen fries and milkshake. 
Same time, Thamel, (01) 5540656

Kebabi Village Restaurant & Bar
Kebabi Village offers some of the best and largest variety of Kebabi in Katmandu. From Hara’s Salli Kebabi to Kebabi 1-Sabiyan, this restaurant serves all.
7:30am-9:30pm, Kado, (01) 4421777

Lhakpa’s Chulo
Tucked away in a hidden part of Thamel, Lhakpa’s Chulo offers a variety of delicious Nepali and Continental cuisines. With a menu spanning both of Asia and Europe, enjoy dishes like salmon and diverse mantras. This red curry and even Chicken Parmigiana, 10am-10pm (except Mondays), Jhumkheti, (01) 5542998

Hotel Heritage
Wine lovers’ visit the rich culture and heritage of the ancient city of Bhaktapur in this Newar-style boutique hotel. Hotel heritage also offers some of the best authority-style food in Bhaktapur.
Sanghiyong, Bhaktapur, (01) 5511318

Hotel Annapurna View
Suskut at a 1,200m steep Sangpheer, this boutique hotel offers breathtaking views of the snow-capped mountains and Phewa Lake, Carter a glimpse of the pink-cream scene of the Annapurnas from the dining area.
Sanghichok, Pokhara, (01) 44566

Buddha Maya Garden Hotel
Just beyond the Historical Maya Devi Temple and near the heart of Lumbini, stay in the beautiful Buddha Maya Garden Hotel. Take a morning stroll in the Lumbini World Heritage garden while listening to the spiritual hymns of nearby prayer.
Lumbini, (01) 5540760, 5540317

Village Heritage and Resort
Located at the top of Bura Hill, this Nubra hotel offers one of the best views of the breathtaking Bura Hill and the spectacular landscape of Bara National Park. In the summer, ride horses along the lake and go on scenic boat rides that run last as long as a couple of hours.
Rath Z, Mugo, Bura, 5520759

Marriott Kathmandu
Enjoy in the specially designed rooms of Marriott without venturing beyond the valley at this new five-star deluxe hotel. Enjoy the luxury amenities of this global landmark, stay in any one of these 220 rooms and dine at their Tulim Kitchen, Edamame or Kaku Music Bar.
Kado, (01) 4445980
African Americans in Cold War Nepal

Black aid workers in the 1950s found themselves in the middle of a changing Kathmandu

Tom Robertson

African Americans, in the 1950s, were working as volunteer aid workers in Nepal, a country that was transitioning from a traditional monarchy to a republic. The involvement of African Americans in Nepal was significant not only because of their direct contributions to the country but also because of the wider international context in which they operated.

The presence of African Americans in Nepal was seen as a strategic move by the United States to counter the influence of the Soviet Union and other communist countries. The US government provided financial and logistical support to the African Americans who worked in Nepal, as a way to create a network of supporters within the country who could be used to influence the political landscape.

One of the key figures in this movement was Tom Robertson, who worked as a volunteer with the US Information Service in Nepal. Robertson was part of a larger group of African Americans who were involved in international aid efforts during this period. Their work was often seen as a means of spreading the values of Western democracy and capitalism.

The involvement of African Americans in Nepal was not without its challenges. The country was undergoing significant political changes, and the aid workers often found themselves at the center of political debates. Despite these challenges, the work of the African Americans in Nepal was seen as an important part of the US strategy to counter the spread of communism.

The legacy of the African American volunteers in Nepal continues to be studied and debated, with some scholars arguing that their work was instrumental in shaping the political landscape of the country. Others, however, have pointed out that the involvement of African Americans in Nepal was part of a larger global strategy that had broader implications for US foreign policy.
Hulk Bahadur and Barbie Maicha

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iquely a venue for contemporary Nepali art, the latest exhibition at the Siddhartha Art Gallery in Lasser Mara is laid out in an unusual format and form of substance. The exhibits are digital prints depicting characters from Marvel and DC Comics, while designer Disney shows Nepal costumes in the story’s landmarks, and there is even a Balabri and Meso wearing shikha tops.

aly international characters because they are globally recognised icons, and I wanted to showcase Nepal’s cultural heritage icons,” explained artist Sunny Shahya, who started out as a sculptor, but switched to photography, combining text and photography. He got the idea when he took a picture of his key rings with the background of Bhaktapur.

People liked his work and he came up with more ideas and more settings, combining his photography skills with knowledge of culture and sculpting.

This is an unusual way to feature Nepal culture — taking photographs of Barbie dolls draped in Nepalese, super heroes in Nepali caps, and the Joker playing the traditional Nepali string instrument, the udla.

The photographs divide the exhibition into sections: Superman and Batman fly over with Spyder’s web in place of string in the section with a comic theme. There is a Hulk and Batman series with a little story of an alien love triangle: Captain Jack Sparrow from Pirates of the Caribbean plays on a bead in Phewa Lake, where he is the Pirate of Phewa. Superman villain Tharnor carries a zoka-coloured grass in Chandrik and is obviously again trying to eliminate half the world’s population. Aquaman protects the Guleri hill in front of Ron Folk and there is Spiderman in front of Rishikesh University.

“I try to make pictures meaningful,” Shahya explains, pointing to a photo of Hulk wearing a Nepali cap and waving the national flag with a background of people demonstrating against the Guleri hill in the Mandala recently.

Shahya also used names such as Hulk Bahadur or Hulk Chiki, Barbie maicha, Wonder Woman & Wonder Kathi, Captain America is Captain Nepal. Thor holds a tipu instead of his hammer.

“I have been sculpting for 15 years, but the last eight months working on these photographs is the happiest I have been, and I have gained much more recognition,” says Shahya, adding that he plans to do more photo stories to promote Nepali artists and music.

Photography by Sunny Shahya
Siddhartha Art Gallery, Lasser Mara, Inaugurated 1st July

ALL SMILES: Prime Minister KP Oli, with Japanese Ambassador Masamichi Saijo, inaugurates the new building of the Pardapok Maternity and Women’s Hospital in Kathmandu on Friday.

DEAL SEALED: World Bank Country Manager I Sebi Haddad Jonas signs a $100 million project to renew the bank’s support to the Government of Nepal to strengthen fiscal Federation and public financial management.

KHUDA HAFIZ: Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali on Thursday seeing off a Nepali Muslim pilgrim who was leaving for the Hajj in Mecca.

LIVING LEGEND: Harihar Prasad Prasad Shrestha and his spouse Mansi are honoured with a chariot procession on the occasion of the 100th birth anniversary of Bhaktapur Shikha Acranya.

DAZZLING: Actress Srishti Khadka receives the National Film Award from President Biju Deuba Bhandari for her performance in the critically acclaimed movie Boblu.
Development = Destruction

Editorials in three Nepali language dailies about the destruction caused by floods and landslides nationwide last week

Naya Patrika, 17 July

Nationally, there are problems with landslides and floods. People have been killed, made homeless, crops destroyed, fisheries and farms submerged and factories flooded. This annual calamity is related to Nepal’s topography and the nature of our rivers, which is why human settlement and construction have to follow nature’s laws. If we don’t, the people who ignored these laws will have to suffer.

Disasters also have a class aspect. The people affected are mostly poor. Tusal families affected by floods are mostly those who live in huts in high-risk areas. In the cities, it is the urban poor settled along the floodplains of rivers or those residing on the ground floor who are worst affected. People living in fragile and steep slopes are exposed to landslide risk. Villages and settlements downstream from the Chauri are also disproportionately affected.

Lastly, the activities of excavators and builders have made slowly fragile slopes even more precarious. This has increased the risk for those living in villages near these roads. The construction spree in the cities has increased demand for construction materials, which are unscrupulously mined from river beds, making them prone to more destructive floods. The destruction of the Chauri is symbolic of the negative development model we have adopted. The country is threatened with desertification, and in the monsoon, the floods are becoming more catastrophic in the Mahabharan.

We have to rescue our country from the corruption and cruel capitalism that is driving this destruction.

Annapurna Post, 15 July

This year, rivers and streams in the all federal capital have overflowed and flooded neighbourhoods. The congested rivers could no longer hold the water, not because there was more rainfall than previous years but because we have narrowed the rivers. Collusion between government agencies and the land mafia has squandered rivers until the water has nowhere to go. That is why this year many residents had to be rescued by boats.

The capital’s rivers were turned into canals and we replaced the canals with roads. We have built over the floodplains of rivers. This year’s destruction was not caused by rainfall but by greed. Local governments finish their budgets building embankments, get their kickbacks, then capture the land along the river banks. These have been turned into landfill sites, where raw sewage empties into the water. In other countries, property along the river is more expensive; in Nepal it is the lowest.

We must restore the river’s freedom to flow naturally, even if it means building illegal structures and taking action against the guilty. Including government officials if need be. As it is not done, future floods will be much worse.

Nagarik, 16 July

Damage from monsoon floods is increasing every year as rivers and water bodies can no longer contain the water. But we can no longer call these natural disasters – they are manmade. Rivers have been narrowed by embankments and other construction in Nepal, and across the border in India, which submerges villages on the Nepal side of the border. Every year Nepal faces this issue with its neighbour, but after the rains everyone forgets about it.

As in previous years, Rashtriya was flooded again because of an embankment in India. The problem was discussed in Parliament and MPs concluded that the cause was lack of preparedness. People on both sides of the border, Nepali and Indians, both suffer from the poorly designed embankments that cause flooding, yet the problem has not been resolved. The two countries must get together and fix this issue before more destructive future floods hit both countries.

YETI AIRLINES’ JOURNEY TO CARBON NEUTRALITY

MEASURE

Using GHG inventory tool, the calculated carbon emission was 19,665 tonnes of CO₂e. Our aircraft operations were responsible for nearly 10,648 tonnes of CO₂e emissions, with our vehicle and facility operations producing only 7173 tonnes of CO₂e.

REDUCE

From 2017, we reduced our emissions through fleet upgrades and reduced fuel use. In future, we will initiate to reduce emissions from our main source of emissions, i.e. aircraft operations and build private-public partnerships to make greater impact together as per the Government of Nepal in the 2013 Action Plan on CO₂ Emission Reduction.

OFFSET

We have embarked journey of carbon neutrality by purchasing certified emission reduction equivalent to 2019 emission through UNFCCC Carbon Neutral Now platform. As an airline industry highly depend on fossil fuels, we seek to offset any unavoidable emissions through feasible technological replacements and carefully selected projects from credible and certified sources.

REPORT

Based on the baseline set by GHG inventory, we ensure transparent and detailed reporting, inform strategic and technical decision-making, and raise ambition since 2018 and in the years to come to contribute further to achieve broader sustainable development goals.
Weathers warning for

Scientists gathered in Kathmandu to discuss climate change this week just as Nepal experienced a freak monsoon

Sonia Awale

More than 280 scientists from 60 countries were in Kathmandu this week to start work on their next climate report, just as a delayed monsoon unleashed storms killing nearly 80 people in Nepal, and affecting millions downstream in India.

The Second Lead Author Meeting of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II will put together its 6th Assessment Report. Due out in 2023, the report will examine impact, adaptation, and vulnerability to climate change.

“The climate change exactly because of the growing recognition of the impact of climate change on Himalayan weather. There are more frequent heat waves and heat stress as we have had in Kathmandu this monsoon,” said Philippus Wester, climate scientist at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), co-hosts with Nepal’s Ministry of Forests and Environment of the event.

“The scientists got a ringside seat for climate-induced extreme weather this week. Parts of Central Nepal got nearly 700mm of rain last weekend, nearly the monthly average for July, after the monsoon finally arrived three weeks late. The flights of many of the delegations had to be rerouted because Kathmandu airport was closed for the whole day on 12 July (see box, opposite).

“It is difficult to attribute a single weather event to climate change, but there is now growing evidence that there is a correlation,” said chair of Working Group II. “We know that many natural systems have already reached the limits in coping with these unprecedented transformations.”

Besides the monsoon, an ICIMOD assessment of the impact of global warming on the Himalayas this year showed the mountains are melting 0.9-1.2°C faster than the global average. Even in the best-case scenario, the Himalayas will lose more than one-third of its glaciers this century, said the report. At the current rate of carbon emissions, two-thirds of Himalayan ice will be gone by 2100, with devastating consequences for the more than 1.6 billion people living downstream.

Scientists said predictions in a previous IPCC report presented at the Paris climate conference in 2015 underestimated the rise in average temperatures and the impact on weather patterns, sea level rise and melting of the polar ice caps. Another meeting in Poland last December predicted more heat waves, flash floods, storms and snowfall – which the world already witnessed this summer.

“The timing of the Kathmandu meeting is significant because it happened when unprecedented rain triggered floods and landslides across the country,” said climate expert Manoj Dhakal. “This

The cost of peace in post–

Dilrukshi Handunnetti

The advent of peace in four countries that experienced wars has not been kind to the environment, with a new study showing greater rates of deforestation during peacetime than during conflict.

The paper, published in the journal Land Use Policy, shows how Nepal, Sri Lanka, Peru and Ivory Coast experienced ‘alarming forest loss’ in the years immediately after the end of their wars. The study analysed satellite forest-cover data to show that even though the deforestation rates were not as high in Nepal as in the other three countries, there were higher levels of erosion, flooding and landslides after the war ended in 2006.

“Rates of deforestation in war zones show a dramatic increase once a peace is declared, and except for Nepal, it is significantly high for the other three countries we studied,” said co-author Nelson Grima of the University of the Kalasatama, School of Environment and Natural Resources in the US.

The nature and duration of the conflict in each country differed, from two brief civil wars fought between 2002 and 2011 in Ivory Coast, to two simultaneous conflicts in the north and south of Sri Lanka that lasted 25 years. In Nepal and Peru, communist uprisings ran for 15 and 30 years respectively.

What the four countries do share, however, is loss of forest cover. The average rate of deforestation in the five years after the end of the respective conflicts was 66% higher than in the last five years of the conflicts, according to the study. The data, based on analysis of Landsat satellite imagery, gave the global
climate meeting

The nearly 200 climate scientists from 60 countries attending the big IPCC conference in Kathmandu this week are aware that most of them will have emitted between 1.5 to 4.5 tons of carbon flying to and from Nepal. Civil aviation contributes more than 2% of the carbon emissions that are warming the atmosphere.

But it's the year's frequent monsoon poorly caused by climate change, and feared by many of the scientists, that is drawing them.

It was to help battle the dry air, or to be cleared, further worsening the carbon footprint.

Many in media are asking if flying 300 scientists frequently across the planet is not carbon to the point that government agencies are carbon to the climate.

We can't; they just fly.

Do individuals try to reduce travel as much as we can using Skype, but given the complex nature of the issue and how fast it's changing, some things we just have to do in real time,” says Brown, known toward who few from New Zealand, but continued his trio with a final finding that is community forestry are groups in fakir and Sarangkot.

“Nepal is also one of the few countries of Nepal and New Zealand,” she added.

Some scientists say they regularly buy carbon offsets for flights to their conferences, while others say decisions taken at these conferences are too important to be on Facebook. According to the report, the group continues to support the forest work for the next of the world.

The Oceans and Cryosphere Special Report that IPCC is publishing in September will have a full chapter on mountain ecosystems, and a corresponding paper in the IPCC’s sixth assessment will further describe the impacts of climate change in the Himalayas.

Said Wiberg: “We want to present our research findings with a sense of urgency in such a way that it is not alien to people, based on the knowledge that we have. It is up to governments and societies to decide what to do with it but we are already starting to see a shift.”

“These mountains are a climate change hotspot, and having the IPCC meeting in Nepal as the world is paying attention to the Himalaya,” added David Meldan, Director General of ICMC.

conflict countries: forest cover

average rate of increase in deforestation at 7.2%.

“We don’t want people to think we support armed violence in any way. But our findings show that when the fighting stops, a number of factors led to an increased rate of deforestation,” said Simon Singh, co-author and a researcher at the University of Waterloo, Canada.

Forests are used as cover for guerrilla warfare, and as such, they become danger zones that few people are likely to enter. This often means the forests are less likely to be logged or haunted in.

remote sensing: A NASA satellite image of Nepal taken in 2002 at the height of the conflict (left) shows extent of green cover. Image right from a recent paper in the journal Land for Polity shows the average annual loss of forest cover in the last five years of the Nepal conflict, and the first five years after the war ended in 2006 with a peak in 2009.

Once the fighting ends, the forests are no longer seen as dangerous.

Often post-war reconstruction demands resources, and forests offer the raw materials to help rebuild an economy and society. The period is usually marked by political instability and weak policy implementation, allowing rampant exploitation of natural resources.

The researchers say the negative effects are derived from a mixture of red rustion of construction activities due to security concerns and diversion of international aid resources to peacekeeping. But they also note positive effects, such as release of pressure on ecosystems and on natural resources due to netless new. creation of buffer zones, and reduction or suppression of certain economic activities.

For Sri Lanka, which boasts the highest biodiversity in Asia and high endemism, the post-war forest cover has been dramatic. Nepal’s success with community forests saw a gain in canopy cover in the mountains, but pressure on forests increased in the Tarai plains where 92% of the population lives.

Nepal saw 33% post-war deforestation and Sri Lanka 32%, although the respective duration of the conflicts was 10 years and 26 years.

There were also similarities in the problems experienced in the two countries: higher levels of eviction, flooding, landslides and other natural disasters post-war, due to increased deforestation.

The issues for all surveyed countries are similar: corruption at different scales, lack of funding for the entities in charge of forest and environmental management, inadequate policies and their poor implementation,” Grima said.

Para’s conflict saw for more than 50 years, with the rate of deforestation in the first years after the end of major fighting in 2011 up 58% from the five years before. Ivory Coast’s post-war deforestation rate was 62% higher than in the last five years of conflict.

For all four countries, Grima said the solution is community-based forest management to get around the limitations of the central government.

The study concludes that former war zones need support for ecosystems, which in turn could reduce the probability of areas becoming the focus of future conflict.
The Ass

Slime with a Smile

Nepal’s tourism planners have always called the monsoon the ‘off season’, which has kept visitors away from country during the rainy season since the Lichhavi Period. It is time to change that and trademark the new slogan: ‘Off to Nepal in the Off Season’.

The monsoon is the best time to visit Nepal — we just have to do some creative marketing to turn what is considered a liability into an asset. We should swear over our monsoon, sing in the rain: have you ever seen the rain, or a hard rain’s gonna fall?

Everywhere else in the world, it rains cats and dogs, but in Kathmandu it rains kippas and buffalos. This is a meteorological oddity, which climate scientists have not been able to satisfactorily explain, and should be our UDF.

The rain opens up endless possibilities for re-branding Nepal as an adventure destination, and we should hire the public relations firm that put up all those posters in the London Underground last week, and do a whole new series with a catchy jingle like, “It’s Never Rains in Southern Kathmandu, It Pours.”

Three months a year, we turn Kathmandu from a dust bowl to a mud bath, opening up a great new opportunity to launch an ad campaign. After all, if the historic village in England called Glastonbury can sell its mud, there is no reason why Gonga Bhau can’t do it — the stuff is oozing all over the place. Here are some catchy slogans for which The Ass, in the national interest, waives copyright:

- Visit Kathmandu for a Summer Course in Political Mud-slinging
- Chobahi: Our Name is Mud
- Try Walking in Rain
- Mud-raking internships
- In the Himalayan
- Nepal: Slime with a Smile

The monsoon is also a time for gastrointestinal issues, but this need not be a deterrent. We can in fact promote diarrhoea; we just have to simplify the spelling of the word so we can use it in tv commercials to be aired on BBC and CNN:

- Learn to Spell Diah in 5 Easy Steps
- Have Your Rain in the Rain
- Visit Nepal and Lose 10kg in 10 Days,
  or Your Money Back
- Camp with a Cam poon at the Kampoong
- Nepal: Have a Gut Feeling
- Go To Nepal, Be Part of a Valiant Uprising

Kathmandu’s flooded streets can also be turned to our advantage as we show Nepal to be a Two-in-One Venice and Las Vegas of the East Rolled into One, where you have to take a gondola from the airport to the casino. Or, visitors can go white water rafting, and shoot the rapids in an adventure-filled ride to their hotels. Even flights delayed by bad weather can be turned into a tourist attraction:

- Come to Nepal and Start an Umpire Movement
- Stuck in Kathmandu? How about a Rain-cheque?