Borderline disorder

When Nepal signed the Sugauli Treaty with British India in 1816, part of the demarcated border followed the courses of rivers. Since then, the sediment-heavy rivers flowing down from the mountains have changed course many times. The Kule, itself now flows 120km west of where it was in 2010 when the treaty was signed two centuries ago.

Since 1984, India and Nepal have decided to follow the Fixed Boundary Doctrine, meaning the border line does not change even if the river alters course. Though survey teams from the two sides are supposed to work together to keep track of the border, it is a difficult task during the monsoon flood season.

This year has been no different. Many pillars along the 1,808km Indo-Nepal border have either been washed away or are submerged. Of the 8,554 border pillars, 2,305 are actually located within rivers, and more are along floodplains that are submerged in the monsoon. Among them, 452 pillars have either been removed or lost—half of them because of floods.

The big flood of 13 July washed away many of the remaining pillars. Among them were four that were reinstalled just last year in Bajhang of Kailali district (one of them, pictured below). Survey Department staff themselves admit that the design of pillars located on riverbeds must be changed from cement to steel structures bolted to concrete foundations to withstand floods. Nepal has deployed 15,000 Armed Police along the Indian border, with outposts every 20–30 km. These bases are supposed to keep track of the state of the pillars and keep the Home Ministry updated on their condition.

However, experts say that increased sedimentation in Tarai streams due to deforestation and quarrying in the Churia Range, as well as poorly-designed roads and embankments, will make floods worse in coming years. “The solution is for India and Nepal to work jointly not just to repair border pillars, but also to stop blaming each other for floods every monsoon and forget about it after the rains,” Mongol-based writer Chandra Kistere says. “Nationalism is not going to prevent future disasters.”

Meanwhile, all along the India-Nepal border this rainy season the state of the border pillars are a stick reminder of the inability of the two countries to work together to reduce their mutual risk from floods. Ramo Sapkota with Nepal National

Updated
EDIFICE COMPLEX

MARTIAL BLISS

A passion for the military and the dream of becoming a soldier in the British Army guided the Camden-born Martello to pursue a military career.

REVIVING THE WAR

Sangita Karki used to be an underground journalist in her early years, and she got her first real glimpse of the war when she was a little girl.

ONLINE PACKAGES

WHAT'S TRENDSING

Hillary Century

So you’d like to do business in Nepal?

Weather warning for climate meeting

Nepal risks being blacklisted on money laundering

QUOTE TWEETS

Nepal Times

مارتيل برلين

You can’t just drop a bomb in the world without understanding the consequences of that bomb, and you’re going to have to understand the consequences of that bomb.

Gaurav Bista

Finally an article talks about the Doing Business Index. The primary job of the government is to reform policies and ease financial flows to support SMEs. Bringing down our ranking in the index below 100 would be a positive, measurable target.

Khem Lal

So you’d like to do business in Nepal?

10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Nepal Times Issue #116 of 30th April 2009 looked at global politics and why Nepal’s foreign policy need not be a tall and agile deal with regional powers.

Mr. President, Nepal described Nepal is a country that is between two. Azia analysed Nepal in the current situation and said that it is a country that is between two.

We need more health posts, affordable medical care and quality schools. Not more statues of mythical figures, and view towers.

Nepal Times

"I understand the danger in the world, and I understand the consequences of that danger.

Jefferson Anderson

This analysis is weak, confining superficial coincidences with inception of causality.

Aroojul Sulathe

What is being done to prevent the climate crisis (Weather warning for climate meeting, Soru Khatiwada, 9690). What viable alternative energy sources are there? How will a country manage its energy requirements? We can’t depend on handouts for ever.

Khun Yee

So you’d like to do business in Nepal?

Nepal will be evaluated for international money laundering conventions through the Global Group of the Financial Action Task Force in 2019, and may be blacklisted if the government does not immediately direct the Financial Crimes Investigation and Tax collection department to move on, cross-sectoral money laundering.

Online edition

"It’s a complete fall in global value, and I don’t think this is a reaction to the global value.

Ramesh (Sarojini) Bhakta

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Khem Lal
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Nepal must keep water on its land

Our ancestors knew how to store monsoon runoff for year-round use, we must learn from them

The News Civilization maintained ponds for lotus flowers, ducks, and irrigation. These ponds collected groundwater, allowing the soil to filter the water that could then be extracted from wells. Rainwater washed the streets of waste, which flowed down to terraced fields, fertilizing them.

Along ridges and mountain serpentine across Nepal, there are still some ponds left in which buffalos wallow. These stone reservoirs, allowing it to slowly steep into the topsoil and keep the slopes below moist.

The best examples of the Valley’s ponds were in Lagankhel and Pulchok. They took in all the rain and stored it underground for use year-round in the Valley’s ancient wells. Today, both have been encroached upon and filled over to make way for a concrete municipality building, an army base, a petrol pump, schools, shopping mall and a tourist bus park.

Now, when the monsoon rain fails, as it did last week in bucket, the water has nowhere to go but down the streets, turning them into muddy torrents that carry away children and livestock.

Deprived of rainwater recharging, the town’s wells and ponds run dry shortly after the monsoon. The ancient water sources are reduced to a trickle. Open fields that allowed water to seep into the soil are now covered by asphalt roads, cement terraces and tarmac roofs. The water rushes down into rivers already constrained by embankments, where water velocity increases, causing destruction downstream.

Gravity is Nepal’s great source of energy. Falling water is a renewable source Nepal has in abundance, but it needs to be harnessed properly. Once water has flowed downhill, we need pumps to get it up again. Our ancestors understood this well, and stored water at high points the shriveling lotus ponds in Chisapani and historical ponds like Ramni Pokhari, Pokhara Pokhari and Kichi Pokhari.

Pulchok, however, is now a belated realization about the importance of ponds. Bhumkaup, Kirtipur and Bharatpur are reviving their ancient water storage and exchange systems. Citizens have risen up against land grabbers who try to engulf ponds, it is stupid to think that land will be worth anything without water.

The Himalayas are not just Asia’s water tower; it is a gigantic sponge. We must keep the sponge wet by allowing indigenous tree species to allow seepage through their root. Roads should be designed so they do not destroy natural recharge systems. Pulchok and the holy Nau Dhara, and Punch Dhara at its base, in Godavari have year-round flow because of the well preserved reservoir. After it was protected, Shivapuri National Park gives the valley residence 30 million litres of fresh water every day.

Each ecosystem services are not available elsewhere in the Valley. In the Mahabharat and Churia mid-hills rainwater springs have gone dry because of indiscriminate road construction, sand mining, quarrying and sand logging. This is why Tarsu tanks are either flooded from monsoon or face acute drought the rest of the year.

Last week, the Supreme Court ruled that the ancient pond around the South Stakes of Ashtok at Lagankhel should be restored. This will bring a huge change to the lives of the people of Patan, by preventing annual flooding and recharging the ground water year round. Every urban and rural municipality across Nepal should be mandated to law to legally protect one major watershed and dig tanks and ponds on high ground. Given our love for earth movers, this should be an attractive proposition for masons.

It is one thing to attend conferences on climate change and spout words like “vulnerability” and “resilience”, but another to act. Visit the community around Pilkhaha in Patan to learn how local action can revive ancient water storage systems, while contributing to tourism and local wellbeing. Our goal should be to ensure that as much water as possible is harvested and stored in Kathmandu Valley and across Nepal. Let’s keep the water on our land.

Anil Chitrakar, President of Sholidhar

Cycle challenge and win

More than 3,000 riders took part in the Kathmandu Kora Cycling Challenge on Saturday 20 July, riding 50km, 75km or 100km routes around the Valley. The rally raised money for various education, reconstruction and youth training causes, with participants earning a suggested Rs 50 per km from family and friends. In conjunction with the video, airliners partner Turkish Airlines organised the Click2Win contest for photo enthusiasts, with

FLAG OFF: The Kathmandu Kora 2013 flagged off at Babarmahal by chief minister Dr Baburam Bhattarai. PHOTO: SUNITA GHIMIRE

the winner getting a return ticket to any destination in Europe.

The shortest of the three rides was designed for amateurs but offered challenges including brick climbs and narrow alleys. The Good to Expect 75km circuit involved some arduous cycling, with steeper climbs and mountain on route to Budhanilkantha and Chobhar. The most challenging Expert To 100-km circuit occupied an entire day of cycling along hills on the Valley rim.

Participants in the Click2Win contest have till 28 help to submit their photos. A set of finalists will be selected and the one whose photo earns the most likes on social media will win a a round trip ticket to a destination in Europe.

Reet KC

NRM targets 8.5% growth

The economic growth target of 8.75-9.25% annually, to be pursued through a monetary policy, can be achieved by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRM) on Wednesday. The policy focuses on promoting credit growth and addressing liquidity problems in the private sector. Domestic credit growth is projected to be 24%. Bank mergers will be optional, says the policy, which offered two options for banks: restricted dealers for those in the agriculture, energy and tourism sectors and no approval required before adding new branches.

Cathay Pacific lounge

Cathay Pacific reopens its newly renovated Shanghai-Pudong Cathay Pacific lounge on 5 July, marking the introduction of the airline’s lounge design to mainland China for the first time. Cathay Pacific’s lounge is the first in China to have an independent Hong Kong Express Airways (HK Express) lounge, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Cathay Pacific.

NM Bank campaign

NM Bank has launched its new corporate campaign with the theme: ‘We are endless opportunities’. The campaign seeks to reinforce the bank’s

values and beliefs to assure all Nepal that opportunities exist in country and that they can and will help make them happen, succeed.

Nepal in world debate

The Nepali national debate team is representing the country in the World Schools Debate Championship in Bangkok. The team of debaters, a team manager and two judges left Nepal for Thailand on 24 July. Team members were announced by national debate organization Debate Nepal recruits Nepal recently. This was followed by an open parliamentary game for the event, which includes 63 nations.

Seat selection by Thai

Thai Airways is increasing preferred seat selection on all international flights. Economy Class and Royal Silk passengers can now select their seats up to 27 days in advance. The preferred seat fee is based on actual flight distance. See www.thai.com for details.

Photo by SUBAS Kandel

Click2Win contest photos can be emailed to click2win@flyturkish.com.
Finding the nexus between water, food and energy

New book delves into why silo-ed thinking has stymied development in Nepal and elsewhere

Nexis has become a word with a negative connotation in Nepal, used in conjunction with collusion or complicity; 'government-business nexus', or 'nexus of politicians with the medieval mafia'. 'Nexis' is also used to describe the corrupt conspiracies that are hatched in the corridors of power between the political leadership and the captains of industry, giving democracy itself a bad ed thinking, turf rushes and narrow departmental horizons embedded in our political structures. How to come out of the confines of such flawed development planning is the theme of this book, and thanks to the authors, these things have gone wrong, and how they could have been set right.

Chapters by former Minister of Water Resources and energy economist Dipak

Given this example, one could say that nexus thinking is alive and kicking in Nepal - but only when it comes to corruption, extortion and inter-departmental plunder. The authors argue that inter-sectoral planning needs to be visionary, and political will of rulers to look at water-food-energy from diverse viewpoints. This is even more important now because the structural problems Nepal has had to grapple with are made more urgent

Silo-ed Thinking: The Melamchi Project is penned by authors as an example of ten nexus thinking. By planning it only as a drinking water project, Kathmandu’s residents will have to pay for expensive water. If it was designed as a multipurpose energy-water supply-irrigation scheme, it would have been much more cost effective and sustainable.
Dreams and nightmares of the Nepal conflict

One book eulogises a Maoist ideologue and another tells the story of a family he destroyed

Ramesh Khatry

The Greek word ‘aigoi’ means ‘holy’. A hagiography is therefore an admiring book about people who are praised for being much better than they are in real life.

Abiram Baburam (Non-stop Baburam) by journalist Amil Thapa fits the definition of a hagiography perfectly. It follows the tradition of heroic Pantayak-shers portrayed in the Srijan, praising them to high heaven.

Thapa begins with this brilliant PhD graduate who chose the ‘hard’ life of politics while he led a Nepali students’ union in India. Baburam Bhattarai says he was inspired to enter politics after he saw Nepalis washing dishes in India, and wanted to start an armed class struggle back home for their salvation.

When he returned to Nepal he adopted a mixture of Marxism and BP Koalala socialism as a means towards that end, joining various communist parties, even contesting elections, and ending up with the Maoists.

As chief ideologue he was the architect of the revolution with Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Mohan Baliya that was to rage for 10 years. After the ceasefire, and after serving as an elected prime minister (2011-2013) Bhattarai set up his own Naya Shakti party, which won only one seat in Parliament (his own). This year he joined former comrade Upendra Yadav to form the Nepal Socialist Party.

Most of Thapa’s book dwells on the ups and downs of the Maoist party, recounting how it persecuted Bhattarai, accusing him of being an Indian agent and putting him and his wife Hita Yami under house arrest in India for several months.

The last chapter of Thapa’s book lays out Bhattarai’s blueprint for a prosperous Nepal in which he thinks a new era has dawned after the 2015 Constitution.

Now 65, Bhattarai dreams of abolishing poverty and unemployment within a decade. He still does not think he has done anything wrong, and has nothing to repent. But Bhattarai does concede that he is ‘not a god’ and may have some weaknesses. It does not look like Thapa talked to any victims of Maoist violence or their families. It is also clear that neither he nor his relatives suffered from violence during the conflict. His conclusion is that Bhattarai cannot be called a ‘terrorist’.

To hear about the horror of war, we need to turn to another book: Ayyako Abasan (The End of Justice) written and edited by Kantipur journalist Chathrasya Khadka in collaboration with Gunagnamya Adhikari, who with his husband Needa Prasad, embarked upon multiple fast-auto death campaigns to pressure the government to punish the Maoists who tortured and murdered their younger son, Prabhu, in 2004.

After the ceasefire, the Adhikaris came to Kathmandu to meet politicians, only to be told to wait till after the elections in April 2008. When Pushpa Kamal Dahal was re-elected prime minister, he was naturally going to listen to the Adhikari couple, not other victims of the conflict. The next PM, Madhav Kumar Nepal, was no better.

Meanwhile, a local cadre kept threatening the Adhikari couple to give up their campaign for justice. Bhattarai and his wife Hita Yami asked the couple’s landlords to evict them, Khadka writes, and after some harrowing events the Adhikaris end up at the old-age home run by social worker Dikshya Shrestha. The author recounts how Yami did not leave the Adhikari stone even there.

Bhattarai could not have not known of the cruelty, and when he became prime minister in 2019 he had police arrest the couple from the gates of Balkuwara. On hunger strike, they were taken to Bir Hospital, where they broke their fast upon government assurances — promises that were repeatedly broken. Bhattarai added salt to their wounds by sarcastically claiming that he himself had killed their son, and the government should arrest him if it could. Needa Prasad died in 2016, and his body is still in the Bir Hospital mortuary.

The Maoist war took 17,000 lives in battles, executions and retaliatory state violence, pushing Nepal’s progress back by at least a decade. The movement spawned the Biplav faction, which is now hell bent on taking the country back to war.

There has been no closure for relatives of the disappeared and victims. War crimes went unpunished, and the culture of violence and impunity continues to plague Nepali society to this day.

Thapa’s book does not address that side of the story, and is likely to have little historical value. Khadka’s book is searing in the description of pain and suffering of the innocent, and an indictment of those culpable.

Ramesh Khatry teaches theology in colleges in Nepal.
Sewa Bhattarai

Sange Khadka was so stirred by the Maoist ideal of social change that she joined the party while still in school at 15.

Good at writing, she felt she could help the cause by communicating the need for armed struggle and documenting the sacrifices of her comrades through the party’s underground newspapers and clandestine radio stations.

Today, 13 years after the war ended, Khadka is still committed to the cause, and thinks recounting the history of the conflict is important at a time when the public, and even Maoist leaders, have forgotten what it was they fought for.


Born and brought up in Kathmandu, she started out as a naive teenager, and travelled all over the country with the Maoists, hiding from the security forces, broadcasting from secret portals radio stations high on mountains. Life was hard, and her comrades struggled to light fires in the mason, resistant to eating contaminated food, all the while trying to evade army patrols.

Khadka was captured, and spent 10 months in detention, where she was physically abused by willows and police. Her mouth bled from kicks, her body swelled up from beatings, and she often had fever from sleeping on cold floors. Along the way, she met fellow Maoists who suffered similar torture, and throughout it all she says it was the ideal of a more just Nepal that kept her going.

“I wanted to write this book because I did not want people to forget,” says Khadka, who is back to doing journalism in present times. “Our leaders forgot the human toll of the war, the dedication of the rank and file. Some minimise the sacrifices we made, pretend it did not happen. This book tells it like it was, so future generations know the truth.”

Sewa Bhattarai

Need to remember

Sange Khadka, author of a book that recounts her war experience as a Maoist journalist (above), and in a camp showing photos she took to female guerillas. (At center, right.)

Khadka recounts how the radio stations were rudimentary backpack transmitters, her motley group had no security, operated with limited resources and had to change location often to avoid detection.

The book records acts of kindness amidst the violence of conflict, like a police guard who risked punishment to give her biscuits, villagers who voluntarily warned her group of the movement of security patrols. The book recounts how it was ordinary Nepalis who showed extraordinary courage to deal with war, not the leaders who started it.

“I am glad I was able to contribute to a movement that brought so many positive changes to the country,” Khadka says. “But I don’t think the party stayed true to its ideals. It has been afflicted by the same greed and crave for power as every other party in Nepal.”

The distillation speaks in the book, even though Khadka does not dwell on the years after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006. She also avoids the atrocities committed by her party, even while documenting heinous crimes committed by state security. She defends this saying that as an underground journalist she had limited access to information.

“Now that it is all over, there are grievances on both sides that need to be addressed,” admits Khadka, who also omits from the book her parents’ attempts to talk her out of joining the revolution. It was more difficult for them than for her, as the Army and police constantly harassed Khadka’s parents about her whereabouts, while neighbours shunned them.

Sang Khadka: “I don’t regret what I did, but I do regret what happened to my family. I can never make up for what they went through because of me.”

Ambush & Rana by Dhanasad Nyagpeng (far left) and Anamika by Manoj Jhalak. Journalist Nyagpeng recounts his war time experience, weaving it with stories and telling encounters in Garhwa and Jharkhand in a reportage.

Chhaupadma Chhore by Madhul Tripathi. A journalist of 26 years, set during the conflict, Shah’s novel won the Porter Prize in 2004.

Khalganam Namlo by Bishnu Bhusan Paudel. The novel of an idealistic health worker Rahudh Poudel measures the intensity of the conflict when the Maoists attacked the district headquarters. His book won the 2013 Sunila Memari Award.

Randa Farhashi Dikha Kha Naash Kamma by Uma Shrestha. A novel of war, written in English, it is a story of the war for those who lived in the mountainous region of Western Nepal.

Chhaupadma Tewa Bhikhu Diwar by Surya Koirala (Diary of a Female Guerilla). Tewa Koirala’s diaries of fighting as a teenage female guerilla, and the socio-political changes in the times.

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Deepa Ghisingh remembers being fascinated by how smoothly soldiers of the Nepal Army handled clashes during the 2017 elections, and decided the situation. She decided there and then on a military career.

"Their uniforms, bearing and the way they conducted themselves was so impressive I decided that I would also become a soldier one day," the 20-year-old recalls.

So, when the UK Defence Ministry announced in 2018 that the Gurkha Brigade would start recruiting Nepali women for the first time, Ghisingh was among the 500 young women across Nepal who started training in private centres.

Nepali men have been serving in the elite Gurkhas since 1815, earning an unparalleled reputation for bravery in battle. Every year, thousands of young Nepali men still sign up for arduous physical tests to join the legendary force, in hopes of embarking on an adventurous career that includes a solid income, pension and the possibility of settling in the UK.

It is only natural that young women would also

Nepal Gurkha veterans have long been demanding that they receive the same compensation as their British counterparts, both during active duty and after retirement. Britain recently increased Gurkha pensions 56-44%, but some veterans continue advocating for an even better deal.

The British Gurkha base in Kathmandu says it continues to discuss the treatment of veterans with the Nepal Government, along with future recruitment, of both men and women.

Retired British Gurkha soldier Prem Kumar Rai believes that all recruitment under current conditions should end. "If the UK government is treating British Gurkhas unfairly, and the Nepal Government accepts that, then this is colonialism in a new form," he said. "Recruitment of Nepalis by a foreign army is not a solution for unemployment. Even male recruitment must be stopped."

Prime Minister Oli proposed to the UK government during his visit to London last month to replace the trilateral treaty between India, Britain and Nepal on Gurkha recruitment with a bilateral
A passion for the military and the dream of becoming a soldier in the British Army’s Brigade of Gurkhas is pushing many young Nepali women to train. But there is a snag.

Srestika Rana, 20, joined a training centre after the news that the Gurkha Brigade would take 800 female soldiers. “I was in high school and had to skip morning classes for the training,” she said.

Boxing champion Alisha Tamang, 18, started training more than a year ago, and remembers how bad she felt when a Parliament Committee in March decided not to allow Nepali women to be recruited by the British Army.

“The news of cancellation made us all feel really low, but the training was not in vain. We have built up our self-confidence, we now know what army training is like, and we can now take the tests for the Nepal Army too,” Tamang said.

Among the private companies specialising in preparing recruits is Salute Gurkha Training Centre in Kathmandu, which warned the women that it was not yet confirmed that the British Army would be recruiting Nepali women.

“After Parliament cancelled it, we saw many young girls in tears, but at the same time most of them were determined to be in the Army. They were physically and mentally capable to handle the news,” recalls Ramsh Pandey, a trainer at Salute.

Parliament’s International Solutions Committee announced the cancellation in a press release in March. Committee Chairman Palitra Niraula told Nepal Times this week: “The timing was not right. Both governments are still working on resolving the issues of ex-Gurkhas.”

Niraula added: “We still are addressing former Gurkha soldiers’ demands for justice and equality, and to solve their problems first. At such a critical period we can’t just set off females and let them face the same problems.”

Nepal’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also firm on not discussing female recruitment into the Brigade of Gurkhas until the pension issue has been satisfactorily settled. Spokesman Suresh Adhikary told us: “There is very little chance that the women’s recruitment issue will be resolved until the other broader issues have been sorted out.”

However, that position is obviously not supported by the thousands of young Nepali men and women who continue to throng training centres to prepare for the gruelling annual physical tests and interviews to be among the chosen few in the British Army.

The British Government had in the past recruited Nepali women for the Gurkhas Brigade. In the 1960s a small number were taken in as nurses, and in 2007 it was announced that the Brigade would recruit women soldiers, but that did not materialise.

Gliding, Rana and Tamang have not given up hope. They are still waiting for the Nepal government to lift the ban on Nepali women joining the British Army this year.
Urban Sketching
Josh Amelia Lembard, an American artist, for a 2-day urban sketching workshop in Patan Durbar Square. Learn how to choose colours, perspectives, compositions and motion styles to enhance the perfect urban scene.
26 July, 20-26 July, 8:00 am to 10:00 am. Durbar Square, Patan.
(01) 5270207

Bagmati Promenade
Bagmati Promenade, a part of the Dream City campaign established by the British Council and the Dream City, is a heritage walk designed to experience the Bagmati River. Self-guided digital and offline “tourist trail” maps of the area are available to guide your walk.
26 July, 20-26 July, 8:00 am to 10:00 am.
Thapathali Chowk, Patan.
(01) 5482007

Open Mic Drop
Enjoy a night of flight-hearted comedy as a stand-up artist or a spectator.
26 July, 20-26 July, 8:00 pm. The Bagh Restaurant and Bar, Lalitpur.
(01) 5287738

BCN Fundraiser
BCN, an advocate for bird conservation in Nepal, presents a fundraiser requesting support for their work. Contributors have a chance to win prizes like a birding tour to South Asian countries, birdcons and special gift hampers.
Conservation Nepal, Lalitpur.
(01) 470705

History Presentation
Discover the rich history of France and Nepal, from the historic Paris to Lhasa and the beautiful town to Kathmandu, compare poetic leaders, iconic monuments and more of the two nations.
26 July, 20-26 July, 10:00 am. Almora Institute (Bhagwati), Joukante.
(01) 5280233

Butterfly Watching
Siddhastus Research and Conservation Society presents a butterfly watching program. Marvel at the beautiful creatures as you study their intricate features and colourful wings.
26 July, 20-26 July, 8:00 am to 10:00 am.
Almora Institute (Bhagwati), Joukante.
(01) 5280233

Haamro Prithvi
The People’s Alliance for Nature Nepal presents Haamro Prithvi, a youth-centered event that advocates for nature conservation, sustainability and youth leadership. There will be vendors, artists, theatre performances and more.
26 July, 20-26 July, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.
Almora Institute (Bhagwati), Joukante.
(01) 5280233

Pizza Making Session
Learn the art of making a pizza with your friends and family this weekend. Eat anything you make and experiment as much as you want with the toppings.
26 July, 20-26 July, 8:00 pm.
Revana Restaurant, Theme: Umbrella.
(01) 5287738

Umbrella Painting
Make the decor theme fun for kids as they paint and decorate their own umbrellas. All art supplies will be provided for kids aged 5-10.
26 July, 20-26 July, 8:00 am. Giggles, Island, Lalitpur.
(01) 470705

Resonance of Roots
Pit-Drop Volites presents Volume 7: Resonance of Roots, a Nepali band that brings Nepali raas and western sounds.
27 July, 20-27 July, 8:00 am.
Almora Institute (Bhagwati), Joukante.
(01) 5280233

Anuprastha
Enjoy Rock & Roll Night VII with Anuprastha tonight! Listen to a fusion of Nepali folk tunes and rock music.
26 July, 20-26 July, 8:00 pm. Hemlo Lounge & Bar, Bikaspatan.
(01) 5287738

Legend Band
Los Escobar’s presents Legends with Legend Band featuring Sanjay Shrestha, Shubin Mehrotra, Ashwin Tuladhar and more.
26 July, 20-26 July, 8:00 pm.
Almora Institute (Bhagwati), Joukante.
(01) 5280233

PIC GALLERY

The Workshop Eatery
Celebrate women and the tried and tested recipes that have been passed down through generations, with Chef Tasnami Sahari.
26 July, 20-26 July, 8:00 pm. Kitchen, Dharahara Square.
(01) 5287738

Food Festival
Celebrate women and the tried and tested recipes that have been passed down through generations, with Chef Tasnami Sahari.
26 July, 20-26 July, 8:00 pm. Kitchen, Dharahara Square.
(01) 5287738

Captain Egg
Egg lunch can be enjoyed at the egg-themed restaurant. Have a creamy Ambrosia egg Chaat, Patata Egg and more on Egg Sunday.
26 July, 20-26 July, 8:00 pm.
Gompoeshri, (01) 5287738

Evenfresh
Perfect for brunch and breakfast lovers, Evenfresh offers the best-ever avocado toast, fluffy pancakes, toasty French toast and breakfast croissants.
26 July, 20-26 July, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.
Janapurna, croissants

Whiskey and Blues
Indulge in BBQ, just whisky and a cigar while you listen to a collection of blues music.
26 July, 20-26 July, 8:00 pm.
The Workers Club, Lalitpur.
(01) 5287738

Rain Restaurant
With a great view of Patan and Jawalakhel, grab a “Tuskan art” inspired pork belly and an assortment of dishes at this newly opened restaurant.
Jawalakhel.
(01) 5584958

Megaflai Serai
Leave your worries behind as you enter this luxurious safari lodge at the heart of Chitwan National Park. Overlooking the Rapti River, this lodge not only offers scenic views but accommodation that integrates local culture and art.
Chitwan National Park.
(01) 5584958

AIR QUALITY INDEX

KATHMANDU, 19 – 25 July

This day is fairly clear for normal traffic and Kathmandu AQI reaches to moderate level. Yellow polka dot警戒 level is a 10. This day is clear to moderate level. The air is clear to moderate level. The air is clear to moderate level.

Kathmandu’s Air Quality Index (AQI) average remained in the acceptable to good range on most days, although as diurnal traffic built up there were occasional spikes up to 40-50 on the worst days. None of the towns exceeded the 60-mark in a day.

http://www.epa.gov.np/airqualitymonitoring/
Could junk food be making Nepali children shorter?

Surprisingly, study found infants raised on biscuits and noodles were shorter, not fatter

Marty Logan

The publication of a paper last week in The Journal of Nutrition that infants in Kathmandu were getting 25% of their calories from junk food shocked many. But what is also worrying is that instead of being fat, those who consumed the most junk food were shorter than average, or stunted.

Stunting is a vital measure of malnutrition. It is also one of the indicators used to track a country’s path to development. Infants who are short for their age can have impaired brain development and increase the risk of developing nutrition-related chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity. It causes include poor access to nutrient-dense foods and lack of dietary diversity.

Nepal has done well at reducing stunting in recent years, cutting it from 57% in 1996 to 36% in 2016. However, the country is still not on track to reach the World Health Assembly stunting target of 24% by 2025, or the Sustainable Development Goal target of 15%.

The current average annual rate of reduction of stunting needs to accelerate to meet these targets, points out a 2018 report of Nepal’s National Planning Commission, Towards Zero Hunger. Addressing inadequate maternal, infant and young child feeding practices, untreated episodes of acute malnutrition, infections, and deficiencies in micronutrients, all of which constitute immediate and underlying causes of stunting in Nepal, is of critical importance.

Looking at the findings of the recent junk food study, carried out by researchers from Heinz Keller International and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, raises the question of whether growing junk food consumption is contributing to the proportion of stunted children.

Our results suggest that rapidly changing food environments and subsequent dietary patterns in LMICs (low and mid income countries) might curtail recent achievements in the reduction of childhood stunting,” says the study. However, the authors note that their result do not prove a direct link between eating junk food and the children’s growth but “present a plausible biological pathway for this relationship.”

The survey, which set out to study links between junk food consumption and nutritional health, looked at 700+ children aged 12-23 months, in Kathmandu Valley. The group that consumed the most unhealthy food and beverages—excluding breast milk—got nearly half (46.9%) of their total calories from those items, compared to 3.2% for the group that ate the least.

Researchers found that those who ate most junk food were at risk of having inadequate levels of eight nutrients: calcium, zinc, vitamin A, thiamine, riboflavin, vitamin B-6, vitamin B-12, and folate. "Our dietary results suggest that 1-2-year-old children living in the Kathmandu Valley are at high risk of multiple micronutrient deficiencies, which are further exacerbated by high intakes of junk food," the report concludes.

The study also warned about other long-term impacts of eating junk food: In Nepal, the prevalence of adult obesity and diabetes is increasing, which indicates that these unhealthy eating patterns in young urban Nepali children urgently need to be addressed.

Researchers noted that although some of the junk foods had been fortified, the high amounts of sugar and sodium that were also added to the processed foods made them overall unhealthy.
Family-friendly Hyatt brunch

When you think of brunch, you think of sizzling bacon, fluffy pancakes, steamy frittatas and even a live omelette station. But at Hyatt Regency’s Weekend Breakfast, the meal takes a new form, with baby drinks, desserts galore, barbecues and a buffet that spans multiple continents.

Hyatt Regency offers a sanctuary away from the dust, road and Kathmandu’s monsoon blues every weekend till October. The Weekend Breakfast includes an all-you-can-eat buffet and swimming package for just Rs 2,099 with children under 12 getting in for half.

The menu changes every week, and offers transcontinental Indian, Nepali, Italian and Mediterranean foods. With made-to-order pasta and showarma stations, the brunch offers both paneer manchaur and shredded rotisserie roast. The buffet also includes sweet and spicy Puri Bhaji, healthy salads, chatamari and quiches.

With vegetarian and non-vegetarian options, the barbecue offers grilled meats, seafood and veggies. This week, the Weekend Brunch offered Mongolian BBQ. The highlight: grilled chicken with hints of sweetness and spice, mingling with stir-fried noodles and vegetables.

Children can gobble up as much mini hotdogs, onion rings, French fries and chicken nuggets as they want. So while parents enjoy cocktails, the offspring can eat, run around, jump in the bouncy castle, swim in any one of the three kiddie pools and even get their faces painted.

The dessert selection will leave the parents feeling like kids in a candy store. They please the sweet tooth of adults and tempt even the strongest dessert sayayers. From quickly hanging donut boards, a berry fumble with ice cream, profiteroles of every flavour and pies of various flours to cakes that satisfy your chocolate dreams, you just have to surrender. On Saturdays, you can both marvel at, and tuck into, a glorious flowing chocolate fountain, into which both the young and the old can dip, with marshmallows, fruits and more.

Beyond the drinks, the food and the pool, the Hyatt has attentive waiters who make sure the plates are immediately cleared for more food. So why laze about at home when you can spend lazy weekend mornings at the Hyatt?

Sanghamitra Subba

VISIONARY: WHO Country Representative for Nepal Dr. Vandeur presents letter Gurung of Tribhuvan Hospital with a certificate recognizing the institute as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Ophthalmology in Kathmandu on Monday.

YEN FOR DEVELOPMENT: Japanese Ambassador Masanori Sakai and Ministry of Finance officials ink an agreement for Japan to provide grants worth Rs 59.9 million and Rs 86.7 million for human resource and road sector development.

FRANCE-NEPAL SUMMIT: Former Miss Nepal Shrinkhala Khatiwada and legendary alpinist Anshul Bhandary summit the highest peak in Western Europe, Mont Blanc, on Tuesday to mark the 70th anniversary of Nepal-France diplomatic relations.

HAVE FAITH: A female devotee worships Lord Shiva at Pashupatinath in Kathmandu on the auspicious first Monday of Sawan, the fourth month of the Nepali calendar.

RIDING FOR A CAUSE: Cancer survivors from the Richa Bajracharya Memorial Foundation raising money for cancer screening at the Kathmandu Kora Cycling Challenge on Saturday.

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Banned pesticides are widely used in Nepal

Hinal Khabapati, 20-26 July

At a time when pesticides found in vegetables imported from India are causing a ruckus in Nepal, several recent reports have revealed that Nepali vegetables are also heavily laced with pesticide residue.

One survey by Wageningen University in The Netherlands, with the NGO's Phase Nepal and Progressive Sustainable Developers Nepal, found that pesticides were used excessively in vegetables produced in Gairidhara rural municipality of Rupandehi district.

Conducted in December 2017, the study found toxic residue in 86 samples of tomatoes, chilies, and eggplants. While all of the tomatoes and chilies were contaminated, 83% of eggplants had pesticide residues of 14 different kinds. The concentration was four times higher than the threshold permitted by the European Union (100) in eggplant, 17 times higher in tomatoes and an incredible 40 times in chilies. The chemicals included organophosphates, organochlorines, triazines, amitrole, chlorpyrifos, and carbendazim, most of which are banned in Europe.

Govinda Blinkee of Wageningen University said farmers used the anti-fungal carbendazim 23 times on the same crop, which is in Europe in all along a serious public health concern. Triazines and chlorpyrifos in vegetables damage human skin, nervous system, reproductive organs, eyes and kidneys, may cause cancer, and affect the fetus. The two pesticides are banned in Europe and the US, and they have caused blindness, hair loss and cancer in the past.

Nepal banned dichlorvos and triazines five months ago, but they continue to be used freely. Bibek Acharya of the Oncology Department at Bir Hospital says, “Such chemicals affect our nervous system and can lead to malignancy.”

Out of 183 households surveyed in Gairidhara, researchers found that 44.5% used chlorpyrifos on vegetable while 79% used cypermethrin. Excessive use of cypermethrin harms not just human health but also kills useful insects, fish and life.

Even though the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development says Nepal’s pesticide use is in 96Kg per hectare, the Wageningen University research shows that pesticide use is many times higher (2.8Kg per hectare) in vegetable patches. Research by ICIMOD 10 years ago agrees with the latter finding, concluding that 3.27Kg of anti-fungal chemicals and 1.6Kg of pesticides were used per hectare in Lalitpur.

The government has not set limits for the use of pesticides on various crops. Some farmers have been trained in IPM (Integrated Pest Management) which controls pests and other plant diseases by deploying their natural enemies, but the practice has not spread.

The research also found that farmers did not know about safety gear required while spraying, the safe period required after spraying and dosage. The study revealed that 90% of farmers knew nothing about the colour code for toxicity on pesticide containers.

Through Rapid Pesticide Residue Analysis Labs have been set up in seven places across the country, their data is incomplete and not all of them are fully functional. Only the Food Technology and Quality Control Department has the equipment to test pesticide residue. But since the government has not set the maximum level, such tests are not done, says Keshav Wansapure at the lab.

There are 132 types of pesticides registered for use in Nepal, most of which are among the 655 tons of active ingredients imported in 2018 alone.

On 17 June, the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies ordered that vegetables and fruits imported from India should be tested at the border for pesticide residue, but the government withdrew the decision, claiming lack of infrastructure. Then on 10 July, the Supreme Court overturned the decision on a public interest litigation ruling, leaving a short-term interim order to not halt the testing of pesticide residues.

Ramu Sapkota

Rs 40 billion outflow by Nepali students

Naya Patrika, 23 July

नया पत्रिका

Nepali students going abroad for higher studies spent 7.87% more in the past year than during the previous one, reaching Rs40.09 billion.

Australia was the destination for 60% of the 63,259 students who took no objection letters from the Ministry of Education in 36.5% Five years ago, only 25,033 Nepali students went abroad to study, spending Rs15.12 billion.

India, the main destination for students, is Japan, Cyprus, India, China, Canada, United States, New Zealand, South Korea and UAE. However, since students going to India do not need no objection certificates, the proportion going to India is likely to be higher.

Records show Nepali students went to 69 countries to study, even to destinations where the standard of education is not as high as Nepal. Some of the relatively obscure countries are Malta, Bosnia Herzegovina, Slovenia, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Costa Rica, Armenia and even Antiqua & Barbuda.

“The reason most students are going abroad is that they know they can also work while enrolled,” explained Maheshwor Sharms of the MoE office that distributes no objection certificates.

However, Cyprus has emerged as the number 3 destination for Nepali students, with its numbers growing three-fold in the past year to 2,362. MoE officials said the reason for the increase could be that it is relatively easier to get admission into colleges there, and students hold the hope of going from there to Europe. The UAE also saw an increase and now ranks 10, with 2,193 students there last year.

Ran Sham Sapkota at the Moll lists some reasons why Nepali students are going abroad in ever-increasing numbers: “They want to earn money while studying, it is prestigious and there is peer pressure to go abroad, to come back to Nepal with better prospects, and because of the lack of quality higher education in Nepal.”

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Implant service providers take

If women can't come to contraceptives, then contraceptives go to women in Nepal's underserved villages

Rojita Adhikari in Baitadi

Two nurses visiting distant Mahauru Health Post in Baitadi had packed up, said goodbye to staff and started down the road when two local women waved down their jeep. "We want to have an implant," they said.

The nurses told the women they would be back next week, but they insisted: "We have walked three hours, leaving our beached babies to get our implants." The nurses relented, the jeep turned around and returned to the health post.

The local women were lucky. Only half of health facilities in Nepal provide all five major contraceptives as part of their regular services. Implants and long acting reversible contraceptives (LARC) are not easily available, mainly due to lack of trained staff. Filling that gap are visiting service providers at remote health posts like this one in Baitadi.

Only 4.9% of all married women of reproductive age in Nepal have access to modern contraceptives, according to the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) 2016 report. Although it was only 26% in 1996, there is still a huge unmet need for family planning.

Nepal's population churn will touch 30 million next month, but the country's falling fertility rate means that population will stop growing in three decades after it reaches 37 million. A Nepali woman on average had 6 babies in the 1960s, now she has 2, which is below the population replacement level.

The two women who stopped the nurses were Hass Sakti, 23, and her sister Harina, 20 (pictured, right): Hass already has four children, and Harina has two. The sisters live in the same house in Lakhuala village, about three hours walk from the health post.

"When we heard the implant nurses were here, we took off, leaving our food and shouting to my husband to take care of the baby," said Harina.

The sisters are Dalits from a community of subsistence farmers. Hass was married at 15 and already has three daughters and a son. The land does not provide food for the family, so Hass's husband goes to India six months a year.

"My husband and I decided to have five years' pregnancy prevention as we can't afford to have any more children. I am so happy that today I will be safe for five years," added Hass.

One of the nurses, Rinda Saud, says the number of women requesting contraceptives even in these remote areas is growing, but the one medic trained in inserting implants was transferred and there is no one to do it in the health post. Which is why the government has mobilised 63 visiting service providers (VSP) in 14 districts across Nepal to promote implants and LUCs, with support from the UN Population Fund and British agency DFID.

"Lack of personnel trained in implants is just one barrier in remote villages, where many people still believe that birth control is against god's wishes. As a result, women give birth annually and many are anemic, malnourished and some die.

"One of the worst cases I have faced is that of a woman who had seven children who told me she wanted five years' protection, but when I started the process of putting an implant into her arm she started shaking and saying god will not forgive her; she changed her mind," recalled the other auxiliary nursing midwife, Madhavi Bhatta.

There are families in these remote mountains where mothers and their daughters in law give birth together. Laxmi BK, 37, and...
TIMELY ADVICE: After providing implants at a remote health post in Butwal recently, visiting senior providers Mahila Aabha and Abhishek Bhojraj were seen at Hina and Hima Saini (seated), left, of possible side effects.

The sisters live in Lakaduka village in Rupandehi’s rugged and remote mountains (below, left). It is a three-hour walk to the health post, where the implant procedure is carried out.

Her daughter-in-law Puspa BK, 19, gave birth within months of each other. Lakshmi was married when she was 14, and now has 8 children, including the youngest who is 18 months. Puspa got married when she was 16, and gave birth to her first child a year ago.

“Don’t know much about contraception. I used an injection once but it led to bleeding and I thought I would die, so I decided never to use it again,” Lakshmi said.

The VSP approach was piloted by the government in Ramechhap district in 2015, and after positive results was expanded in 2018. “It is a cost-effective way to substantially increase the uptake of long-acting family planning methods in areas of low use and high unmet demand for contraception, explained Amrit Dhungel of UNFPA Nepal.

The government is also encouraged by the success of the initiative, especially for delivery of family planning. “VSPs travel to remote areas which are difficult for the government to reach,” said Keshab Amat, at the Department of Health in Kathmandu. “That fills the gap in health facilities and health workers.”

Getting the right contraception in the right place at the right time can change a Nepali woman’s life. That hope could be seen in the smiles on the faces of Hana and Harina Saini’s last month as they hurried home to their families with their new implants.

Happier now

Kulwant Chaudhary (31), from Butwal’s village in Baladi (below) received an implant at a VSP camp two years ago, and says it is a big relief not to be worried about getting pregnant.

“I already had two abortions, and I used to get pregnant every year, which means I was not able to focus on my children and even the farm. This had led to discord in the family,” Kulwant said. “But now I have more time for my children, husband and to go to the fields. We are happier now.”

Sunita Mahata, 26, (below) was walking at Udayapur Health Post in Baladi, a 1.5 hour walk from her home recently. The mother of two had been taking pills, but she heard that a VSP is coming and wanted to get a 5-year contraceptive implant.

“I am really happy that the nurse comes here, otherwise I would have to spend two days going to another health post, and that would be expensive,” she said.

DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND

Nepal’s population growth rates and total fertility rate (average number of babies per mother) has declined dramatically. But there is still a big unmet demand for contraceptives in remote rural areas among mothers in the margins.

ISP's

Call them ISPs, (implant service providers) these nurses are at the forefront of reducing Nepal’s birth rate. The visiting service providers are female staff nurses or auxiliary nursing midwives (ANMs) trained to use long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARC) and provide family planning services, especially in hard to reach areas and for minority groups. They also coach and support existing health workers to deliver quality, comprehensive family planning services.

“I have been working as a VSP since the start and I have travelled to all 69 health facilities of Butwal district. We have provided more than 2,100 LUCs and implants in this district alone,” says ANM Mahaveer Bhatta.

Traveling in one of Nepal’s remotest and most rugged districts is not easy. Bhatta sometimes has to walk nine hours a day to reach health posts. What motivates her is the smile she sees on the faces of the women once they get their implants.

“Can see the happiness, relief and satisfaction on their faces. It makes me forget all the hardship of getting to them,” says Bhatta.
Daru Pipeline

Some of you this week sent The Ass highly confidential email messages with both need ends encrypted asking:

- What is the Crown Prince of Venetia doing in Kathmandu at this juncture in our nation’s history?
- Why the hush-hush meeting between Co-Supreme Lotus Flower and the newly-appointed intelligent-in-Chief of Ockercock?
- How come Nepal and Georgia signed a no-visa agreement, and does this mean Nepal’s can now visit at Hartfield Jackson International Airport in Atlanta and get visas on arrival?

These are all valid concerns, and my answer to the all of them has been: “Next question, please.”

This was also the week that India launched Chandrayaan-2, the space probe that is landing itself in Earth orbit as we speak to gain escape velocity and land on the South Pole of the heavenly body. Even though the moon is on our national flag, we in Nepal need not be overly concerned about the southern neighbour sending an unmanned lunar probe, since we have already installed manned lunar space cadets in government. In spite of post-launch Laxmi Prasad Devkota’s exhortation that Nepal aim for the moon, we do not really need a lunar mission since the Rastha-Rapati road already accurately simulates conditions on the lunar surface with more craters than on the moon’s far side. Similar to the moon, parts of Bhaisepati also never had water.

Speaking of water, although it recently declared itself dry, the Indian state of Bihar is all wet this monsoon. Ever since Nepal and Bihar established bilateral relations the two have shared cordial ties based on the age-old custom of not having customs. This has facilitated mutually beneficial two-way trade. Nepal conducts tariff-free export of gold biscuits to India, and imports Britain’s Thin Arrowroot biscuits. Nepal exports river water to West Bengal, and imports water buffalo to meet our domestic demand for yokes.

Now that the Baranasi-Amlekhganj Oil Pipeline is in the pipeline, it can further enhance two-way trade. Diesel has now started being pumped to Nepal, and the pipe can be used to export the same diesel back to Bihar since there is a price differential between Nepal and India. Re-exporting imported petroleum to India can help Nepal balance its growing trade deficit, and the two-way pipeline would be much more efficient than the diesel currently being smuggled by bicycle across no-man’s land in jikiris.

Nepal can even have a trade surplus with India if we use the pipeline to send our best moonshine to bootleggers in Bihar. The beauty of it is that we don’t even need to pump the alcohol down — gravity will do it for us, thus reducing overheads.

Biharita get beere, we got gas.

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