Creatures of culture

As befitting a country whose patron deity is the Lord of Animals, Nepal’s autumn festival cycle is about offering buffaloes, goats and fowl to the goddesses, and worshipping cows, dogs and even cranes. But our reverence for animals does not carry over into our day-to-day treatment of the animals in our midst. Owners are unmindful of how fireworks frighten pets, municipalities lunch dogs, abandoned cattle roam the highways, buffalo calves die of suffocation in the backs of lorries, and the ultimate in cruelty: Gyalimela. How a country treats its animals tells us a lot about its culture.

All this despicable brutality burdens us as a society, and translates into abuses of fellow human beings. State neglect condemns many to die due to lack of health care, and decrepit roads kill 2,000 people every year. No one has joined the war crimes committed during the war. For a decade, Mahamad Ajah Alum got away with burning eight people alive in a brick kiln. An excavator driver in Bhaktapur last week swung his boom at people, injuring eight.

For festivals to be really about the triumph of good over evil, we have to fall back on what all religions teach us: compassion, tolerance, non-violence against sentient beings, and a reverence for nature.

Waiting till the cows come home
Saving Nepal’s last wild dogs
A dog with altitude

Immerse yourself in the USA
Create your own adventure by travelling to the United States, one of the world’s most iconic countries. From the breathtaking city backdrops in New York City and the remarkable architectural highlights in Chicago to the rocky red formations that shape the Grand Canyon, the United States has something special for every kind of traveller.
G eorge Orwell wrote 1984 to warn us about tyranny perpetrated by big and Animal Farm to tell an allegorical tale of defy of communists. As history steps into the new decade of the 2020s, it looks frighteningly like 1984 has already arrived in the postmodern world. Animal Farm may have been a parody of Stalin’s Soviet Union but it has many parallels today, perhaps nowhere more so than post-revolutionary Nepal, where just about every character from the book has a corresponding political figure. Just fill in the blanks. Farmer Jones (…….)…Nepal’s pig (…….)…Boar the home (…….)…Moses the raven (…….)…The 9 Dogs (…….)…and Benjamin the donkey (…….)…History is repeating itself.

**ONLINE PACKAGES**

**CATS AND DOGS**

Why should future generations remember only a war? Watch a pair of fallow deer, Gorgeous the stag and Winter the hind, while being watched over by their favourite treats. Don’t miss this special edition only on a Nepali channel.

**DHAKA FASHION**

Notable Bangladeshis have put their products on display for the first time ever, and now it’s becoming a fashion trend. The boys in the scene are reaping the rewards.

**SUICIDES IN KOREA**

Absolutely heart-wrenching account of the plight of migrant workers in Korea (‘Dead end of the Korean Dream’). This ought to be a subject for the governments of Nepal, Korea and the UN and joint commission to find short-term relief and long-term solutions. It will be important to avoid a similar situation arising in the future in Japan on more Nepali workers are going there.

**NEW HIGH WAY TO DOLPO**

Nepal is grappling with how to balance road access with traffic and congestion issues, as seen in the trip to the Jomsom-Muktinath route, the last bastion in the north that connects to the tourism network. Local lodge owners and trekkers are not happy with the current situation and are in search of alternatives.

**10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK**

**WE LOVE OUR ANIMALS TO DEATH.**

Animals are accorded godlike qualities, only to be tortured and killed. All this comes into sharp focus during Dashain and the upcoming Tihar festivals. You cannot exist without killing an animal — we get that. But why kill in such a cruel way? Take a peak at the buffaloes that transport the animals to Kathmandu’s slaughterhouses. It is guaranteed to put you all but remorse for good. See how gory are unloading at the Bisket mark, or how a dozen children tied to the backs of motorcycles are taken to the butchers with their backs scraping the sides.

When faced with criticism about blood sacrifices, Nepalis get defensive and go on the offensive, pointing at factory farms and assembly line abattoirs in industrialized countries. True, the west has perfected the art of mass dying of animals for food. But look here: has it brought a backlash to the animal rights movement? Has it not? Does it not ensure that we see the meat industry as a disease state? is it not a way of scapegoating different sections of the society in the name of tradition, looking for the sake of killing just so we can boast of those the killing we now grant? In 1996, the Supreme Court ruled that the Government was needed to end the slaughterhouse’s unspeakable cruelty, but now months organised once more expect 6 million villagers to take shelter in the temple and mehr kaal round the 28th.“It is worth pondering whether all this moral brutality hardens us as a society. Forget animals — look at how we treat fellow humans. State neglect, the proletariat mothers and infantile to disease unnecessarily, corruption in the medical sector is a death sentence to our rural villages as a system of unforgivable irreliability.

In 10 years 17,000 Nepalis were killed at the hands of fellow Nepali, and no one has stood for the unspoken crimes against humanity committed then in the word. Mahatm Karim Amin Awad got away with ordering eight supports to be burnt alive in a brick kiln to destroy evidence of bomb-making in the 2006 elections. This video emerged of an executioner in Jallalat swinging his axe, 1,000 people, singing and cheering.

For festivals to really represent the triumph of good over evil, we have to go back to the basics of what all religions teach us: compassion, tolerance, non-violence against unkind beings and a reverence for nature.

**10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK**

The Amperage of Nepal Times No. 0323-25 October 2009 noted that it could have been the week of November.

At times when Indian China tensions are rising to new Cold War levels, the Masala have been trying to tip Nepal’s war on ignoring the war of others. Having won a round in the most recent round, the Chinese need to be formidable governments in May, Mao’s chairman Prithvi Kami Dahal has been courting China’s Xi Jinping, who is keen to do well in the West. The Chinese ex-PM seems to be only happy to play along. Nepal is the key time among the leaders, but he has not been friendly to him, nor has been friendly to him, and the situation is tense.

We don’t know what message is being sent, but sure enough being sent the need to today’s Nepal and China in the world, and to do so to get his leg out of Kathmandu. What China’s view seems to have done is made the Indians even more paranoid, and result that the Masala could not be read.

**GIVE ME 10 YEARS AND I’LL TAKE OVER THE WORLD!**

UN做好了准备。

**NEW HIGH WAY TO DOLPO**

Nepal is grappling with how to balance road access with traffic and congestion issues, as seen in the trip to the Jomsom-Muktinath route, the last bastion in the north that connects to the tourism network. Local lodge owners and trekkers are not happy with the current situation and are in search of alternatives.
HAPPY TIHAR

We wish you and your family a happy Tihar filled with happiness, peace and prosperity.
Can Nepal be the powerhouse of Asia?

Yes, by creating an environment for investment in renewable energy to meet domestic and regional demand.

resources and give us access to technology and finance but at the end of the day, Nepalis will have to do the heavy lifting. Nearly nine in ten Nepalis are now working, earning and sending money home from all parts of the globe. The spending power of Nepalis can be felt during these weeks of festivities. Cash and kind remain the preferred investments for people who still do not trust the market, businesses or the government. Hydro power is perhaps the one sector that is now able to draw public investment. We just have to remind people that investing in it is a good idea, and then protect the money that small and big investors put into energy by expanding domestic and regional demand for the electricity generated.

The next step would be for Nepal to wean itself from imported LPG, petrol and diesel. The energy sector can create hundreds of thousands of new jobs and help keep our young professionals at home. Along the way, we have to learn how to better negotiate with our neighbours and respond to their economic demands.

We are not fooling anyone by taking our aim with flower pots and dressing cloth banners to disguise our dirty rivers for a couple of days. Ensuring the prosperity of 30 million people is hard work, but powering the Asian economy is our historic opportunity.

Anil Chitrakar
President of SolarKraft

Turkish to Hanoi

Turkish Airlines is launching direct flights to Hanoi this fortnight and to Chiang Mai City, after previously operating the routes as

corresponded flights. The flag carrier will have daily flights to Hanoi and will fly to Hanoi six days a week (except Sunday) for the next seven days with flights starting in April 2020. Lamki Bank winner

Terence Shrestha has won the My Card loyalty competition organized by Lamki Bank. The first ever Visa credit card design contest, the competition aimed at finding the best design and collaboration with current and potential customers of the bank. Shrestha will receive Rs350,000 for her winning design.

Qatar football 2019

As official airline partner of the FIFA Club World Cup Qatar 2019, Qatar Airways invites customers to book flights and receive many

tickets to see the stars of world football in action at the FIFA Club World Cup Qatar 2019, 11–21 December. Passengers who have already booked tickets for the period can add stopovers inJohn and get much more

Carlsberg Golf

Maj Noohudh Rayamajhi scored 77 points to top the Carlsberg Golf Series, leapfrogging to number 1 in the points table. He earned a full paid trip to Malaysia to participate in the Carlsberg Golf Classic during the first week of November 2019.

INi Cinema

The first outlet of INi Cinema has opened in the Kathmandu City, Ghantaghati. With two screens, it has an installation capacity of 335, the complex features nutrition food and ultimate comfort, a projector from Sony 200 and the Crest 3D desire to assure optimum resolution.
Six months after an overnight shift from Istanbul’s old airport to its new one in a carefully choreographed ‘Great Move’, airlines and passengers appear to be getting used to the sheer size of the international hub, an airport bigger than the area of Kathmandu.

With three of its six runways and four of the five concourses compete, the airport at the edge of the Black Sea is well on its way to becoming the world’s busiest. Taking advantage of the airport’s location, Turkey’s flag carrier will have a 500-aircraft fleet serving 400 cities around the world by 2025.

Most passengers flying Turkish Airlines to and from Kathmandu transit this 72 million-square-metre terminal with five piers and 143 boarding gates. Disembarking at gates F17 and connecting to a flight out of A14, for example, means taking into account walking time between the two ramps and also a security check.

But once upstairs in the transit lounge, there is plenty of help — including from a friendly multilingual robot with a perpetual smile that can help passengers find gates and facilities in the main terminal. Family-friendly lounges and snooze rooms make it easy to pass the time.

“The new airport was a must to accommodate Turkish Airlines’ growth plans, and we hope to give passengers to and from Nepal much more comfort and flexibility with better connectivity during Visit Nepal 2020,” says Turkish’s Nepal Manager Abdullah Tuner Kercel.

Istanbul airport’s architects have ensured it is different from other modern airports by giving it a Turkish ambience. The duty-free area is laid out to resemble the Mistra Carlesi spice market in the city, with stalls selling baklava, cheeses, dried fruits and other delights. Turkey being a gastronomic superpower, the transit lounge has a enormous range of Ottoman-style eateries, from cafes to dumpling kiosks.

Even through transit passengers can get city tours or even layovers if the time between flights is more than 8 hours for business and 12 hours for economy, there is a case to be made for just staying at the airport since the city is a good 45-minute ride away. Passengers with a round-trip ticket and connection time of over 30 hours can get Stopover privilege of a free one-night stay in a 4-star hotel (economy class passengers) or two nights in a 5-star hotel (business class passengers) in the city.

Turkish Airlines has upgraded its business lounge and the emphasis, again, is on food. There is Turkish coffee and an elaborate tea room built in traditional style. You can watch chefs prepare your orders, and the lounge is a case study on how a country should project its attractions to turn transit passengers into future tourists. In fact, like the airport, the MelasMillennium business lounge is a destination in itself — almost making you wish the layover was longer.

Some people set to fly, and others fly to eat. Turkish Airlines does not confine its culinary attractions to its lounges, but also takes it up in the air. The food is prepared in an enormous gourmet kitchen in Istanbul managed by Turkish Delight and staffed with internationally-trained chefs, some 500 of whom actually fly as part of the crew and prepare dishes onboard. The flight kitchen has 2,500 staff preparing 200,000 meals a day. The menu changes on a weekly basis and differs according to inbound or outbound flights. It has been called ‘The New Silk Road’ and Turkish Airlines is exploiting Istanbul’s strategic location between Africa, Europe and Asia to connect non-stop flights to anywhere in the world. There are 60 capital cities within a 3,5-hour flying distance of Istanbul, most of which are among Turkey’s current 306 destinations in 125 countries. Passengers from these cities can connect to anywhere in the world through Istanbul on long haul flights.

Turkish’s Vice-President Sales for Asia and the Far East, Tuncay Eminoglu, told Nepali Times in an interview: “Istanbul is really at the aviation crossroads of the world, and with our fleet of medium and long-range aircraft we can connect any point in the world to any other point through this hub, especially in Asia, where the growth in passenger traffic is higher.”

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Adieu, Jazzmandu till next year

Another big mishmash of human improv

Sheelin Teo

Playing slowly and masterfully, the tabla makes a sound like plump water drops falling into a deep well. The lilting, conventional sound of Nepal tabla maestro Rabin Lal Shrestha was sorely missed this year. Having performed at the Surya Nepal Kathmandu Jazz Festival for the last 16 years, Shrestha passed away recently. This year’s festival held at the Jazz Banar in Cokarna Forest Resort were introduced to his son, Bijay Shrestha, alongside an ensemble of his father’s students, all seated in white, low on the stage floor sounding out melodious, plaintive repetitive chants. They played in unison, down to each tabla beat, as though a single spirit enlivened them as they played.

Nepal banarzi flute and satangi strings also feature in the music presented by Blue Peacock’s Jee Loo Blues. A walk down memory lane: a friendly toe-tapping tune with an undercurrent of nostalgia and longing. The skylark of the banarzi’s notes the satangi tease out strains of yearning. Also there was the German band 888T, helmed by keyboardist and electroacoustic manipulator Roman Schuler with a breezy mix of music styles in seamless transition, such vibe layered over another, tickling at nostalgia one moment, setting the ground zero with groove the next, somehow sounding jazzy to the bone.

Udo Kluh’s intimate baritone transformed into a sophisticated sound arena replete with Tihar lights and Latin Jazz aficionados milling about or sitting transfixed by the opening set of French songstress Faby Medina (above, left). Some in the audience were sufficiently transported to a Caribbean ambience not just with her sound but by the heat and smell of grilled seafood being flambéed.

Median’s style is laid back, and her mellow mellifluous voice Irish of emotion, wick and weight of her songs perfectly. She jinxes up and down the singer’s vocal register. Blackbird with panning poignance, stings the sweet, sad, cheeky souls of good-time girls in jazz classic Love for Sale and a French tune, Non Mimi. She is just as at ease playing with sassy transitions to her bandmate’s solos, sounding witty, jazzy boasts and graps, to working her lyrics with measured, precise and well-tuned enunciation. And when she let loose her native twangy French in a creole take, it is transportative, and her song took the audience from a balmy Jazzmandu evening to the balmy salt-sprinkled islands of her birth.

Joining the soirée is Adriana Crociskaa, joined on stage by Gudran Guichard’s drummer, Nabin Ghimire: duelling on Forro vocals, and Gudran bandmate, guitarist Rafael San. Together, the trio drew eager waves of dancers toward the stage with their Panambe Forro Experience infecting the crowd with frantic, rustling pace of Brazilian street music, reminiscent of troubadours and wandering gypsy bands, sometimes wintrine and far too easy to dance to.

Returning to Jazzmandu this year was Tropic Queen from Singapore. There was a particular thrill to hear house Salsa in unison across a movement, then split off individually for a moment, melting into the other strain being played, only to regroup again with synchronised gusto. The band is obviously well formed and well practiced. They know their parts and work beautifully together, and it is like listening to one big friendly conversation.

Also returning was Paul Tynon with Jake Hamlin. Tynon lit on stage in Cokarna and the Finals with his edgy take on Coki’s crowd-pleasing Rasta Gang anthem. Finishing to a giddy encore, he delivered on the VakyYeti stage during the festival finale. Tynon’s muted trumpet and Hamlin’s emotive guitar notes had echoing humility and sheer beauty. This was the kind of music you could lock yourself away from the world with and escape into, sitting alone by the fire, whisker in hand.

In the week that brought the Valley’s jazz lovers together, visiting musicians also held free masterclasses at the Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory. Considering its long run since 2002, it is no surprise that the events were well timed, well run, and world class. Through its 17 years, Jazzmandu has kept the festival fresh with talent and enthused audiences with quality music. Jazzmandu reminded us that we are one big mishmash of human improv.

Jazzmandu 2020 will take place from November 4th to November 9nd. Details will be announced on their website. http://jazzmandu.org/

nepaltimes.com

बालबालीको माथि हुने हिस्सा, दुर्दिवस, शोषण समेत, जोखिमपूर्ण अवस्थामा रहेको वा बालअधिकारको उल्लंघन समेत छ भने बाल हेल्थलाइनको पैसा नलागे।

फोन: न. ९०९८  मा खबर गर्न।

नेता सम्बन्ध सरकार तथा विभाग प्रदीप मनाली

सूचना तथा प्रसारण विभाग
Nepal’s premier jazz band released its fourth album, Himalayan Sanglinsi: Cadenza Collective, on 16 October with a roaring performance at Jazz Upstairs, Lazimpal. In the cozy, warm interior with graffiti walls, unpolished wooden tables and music enthusiasts holding glasses of forlorn beer, Cadenza delivered its new fusion numbers.

The album is another iteration of the band’s signature blending western classical instruments like saxophone, drums and guitar, with infusion of Nepali sounds. The foot-tapping first song, the popular Lai Bari Lai, starts with a saxophone melody, is carried over by enthusiastic drumming and fades off into eternity with a hum.

“This song is about how life has been for us after our last album, growing up, having fun and moving on with life in Nepal,” says the group’s founder Navin Chhoti.

The next song, Banajung Tun, is about Chhoti’s memories of that little piece of Nepal in India. The easy number is fast moving, and brought some in the audience to the floor to twirl and twist. With fewer melodies, more drumming, and quite a bit of respect, this is an effervescent number.

Pari Gau is reminiscent of naughty memories of youth, with a mix of melody and rhythm. Khayal has a thoughtful and contemplative song, with a slow, liltting melody that makes you want to close your eyes and sway in your seat. The saxophone is prominent here, and the band’s gentle singing about love adds to its dreamy charm.

A surprise is Dilevole, whichMixing Nepali folk with jazz

Similarly, the song “Ghum Gham” – starting instrument prominent in solo using modern guitars, and goes on to play Tamang Dempala rhythms on snare drum. The song introduces jazz listeners to Nepali folk music, and also updates and broadens the scope of Tamang solo. The song increases in tempo and ends on a loud jubilant note, bringing wild applause and whoops from the audience.

Cadenza’s latest album, with some short and some long numbers, is a treat for jazz lovers, and its cosmopolitan sound is not restricted to Nepal. It has improvisation, introducing many facets of Nepali folk to an international jazz audience. Cadenza has made a niche for itself in Nepal’s jazz history due to its cultural amalgamation in music, and its latest album cements that reputation. Sona Bhattachary
From heads

Nepal’s traditional dhaka fabric makes a subtle entry into contemporary fashion

Sanghamitra Subba

KING Mahendra made it mandatory for government officials to don the dhaka topi to work 60 years ago, giving the traditional weave state sanction. The fabric had been part of Nepal’s unofficial national dress long before that royal nod, and is today becoming a fashion item.

Dhaka fabric is no longer restricted to the ubiquitous topi — today it is used in saris, shawls, wedding jackets, cushion covers, tote bags and even shoes. In recent years, Nepali designers have experimented with the traditional cloth, transforming both its conventional geometric patterns and colours.

Dochas, a Nepali shoe brand, has curated a line of minimalistic tie-up sneakers with a patch of traditional Nepali fabric woven in (see photo). Their flagship shoe, The Bunu Dochas (bunu means woven) comes in maroon and grey dhaka and is woven in looms in Bhanku, Taudhum, Palpa, Kathmandu and Lalitpur.

“We wanted to connect urban and semi-urban Nepal with traditional dhaka fabric,” says co-founder Watsal Rajbhandari. “Fabric from different parts of the country have distinctive weaves, so we wanted to create a contemporary footwear with that fabric as it would be appealing to our customers, who shy away from ‘glammed’ and glittery use of dhaka.”

Dochas has chosen to be understated, but other designers have been more audacious with their use of dhaka. Actress

Info age boost for

Open data applications could revive the once booming export

Aakriti Shrestha

Although one of Nepal’s best-known exports, the success of the pashmina industry unravelled in recent years. From a peak of Rs.8 billion in 2000-1, exports fell to Rs.4.8 billion in 2004-5 because of a surge in cheap counterfeit, lack of processing facilities, shortage of skilled labour, over production and under-cutting.

The launch of the ‘Chyangra Pashmina’ brand has helped the industry recover slightly, with exports earning Rs.2.3 billion in 2017-18. But there is another tool that could revive Nepal’s fine wool product and boost exports: open data.

Information that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone for any purpose is called open data. It can be used to innovate, improve business efficiencies and performance. In Nepal, the availability and use of open data has been restricted because it relies heavily on government websites. Still, private businesses have already started using open data to identify customers, calculate pricing and assist in product development.

Yet most businesses involved in the pashmina industry still restrict themselves to using internal data, for example, analysing past years’ revenues and expenses to set targets for following years, when they could be doing much more.

Producers could use data on imports of processed raw materials and exports of finished goods to set specific financial targets. Through data released by the Department of

Nepal’s Largest Overseas Export Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Value (billion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pashmina</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicraft woollen</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicraft cotton</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Trade and Export Promotion Centre

Chyangra Pashmina

©
Traditional dhaka fabric has been part of Nepal's national dress, and is now becoming a fashion item. Watch in video.

“Is dhaka from Dhaka?”

Although the dhaka fabric is now emblematic of Nepal’s national dress, it did not originate here. As its name suggests, it actually came from southeast Asia, via then East Bengal during the British days. In fact, experts have traced the patterns and colours of Nepal dhaka to the Bangladeshi jamdani dhakai.

While the patterns vary, simply because each piece is a unique creation of the maker, the Nepali dhaka and the jamdani dhakai are both made with cotton, and mainly in bandannos.

“The geometric flower designs of Bengal’s faded woven aar or jamdani textiles have been skillfully interpreted by the Nepali weaver and block-printed to create the dhaka textile,” writes Emma Martin, curator and lecturer in museology at the University of Manchester.

Martin could have been referring to Jessie Brown (1888–1983), a British woman who came to Nepal in the 20th century as a nurse of Princess Nani, the granddaughter of Chandra Shamsher. Brown produced a design that was “basically influenced by jamdani and dhaka textile motifs”, says Martin in her sketchbook.

Mohan Riji Sharma of Pulpali Dhakai in Maldivi, who has been in the dhaka business for more than 50 years, says that most Nepali traders believe that the Nepali dhakai was inspired by fabric brought from Dhaka in East Bengal, which became Bangladesh in 1971.

But how did Pulpa become famous for dhakai weaves? Sharma says that in the late 1950s, Ganesh Man Maharjan from Pulpa travelled to Dhaka (then in East Pakistan) and encountered beautiful saris made from the delicate muslin jamdani dhakai.

After learning the process from weavers, Maharjan set up his own factory in Tansen, the Swarathm, Tumakot, Pulpali Dhakai, establishing an industry worth more than Rs200 million a year today, according to the Micro Enterprise Development Program.

Indeed, Bangladesh jamdani dhakai closely resembles the Pulpali dhakai with its thinner threads, unlike the thicker Purbeli dhaka fabric, and seems to have inspired the Nepali dhakai weave.

According to Sharma, Nepali weavers had to minimise costs as well as geometrical patterns that were more convenient to design and print, and a sturdier weave to withstand the mountain cold.

**Nepal’s pashmina**

Pashmina Product Experts (in M Rs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2001/02</th>
<th>FY 2017/18</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.8 billion</td>
<td>2.2 billion</td>
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</table>

68% of businesses in Nepal believe that better access to government data could help them identify new customers. Likewise, 41% believed data could help them do market research. 59% said the information could be used to develop new products, and 49% said it would aid in making better pricing decisions.

A sustained commitment is required from businesses that wish to profit fully from open data. Despite demonstrable benefits of investment in data sharing, stakeholders in Nepal’s pashmina industry are not investing in awareness and application. It is time to change that.

Aakriti Shrestha is a researcher at FACTS Research & Analysis.
**Kag Tihar**
On the first day of Tihar, cows are worshipped. They are believed to be the messengers of the gods, in particular Yama, the God of Death. The day is also referred to as Yamantal.
26 October

**Laxmi Puja/Gai Tihar**
In the morning, the symbol of wealth and motherhood in Hinduism, is given garlands and treats. In the evening, Laxmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth, fortune and prosperity, is worshipped with a puja. Homes are decorated with colourful mandalas and Laxmi’s footprints are painted on floors.
27 October

**32 Hours in Kirtipur**
On the auspicious occasion of Nakti Tihar, visit Kirtipur, celebrate the Neway Year, immerse yourself in the Neway culture, experience the Enjoyable adventure of an authentic Neway trip, and feel the culture and history of the “City of Reality”. Pre-registration required.
26-28 October, Kirtipur, Rs. 1,200 (depending on the package).

**Thaipu Festival**
Get up for a Tihar with an evening of musical performances. Enjoy true spirit of the festival, you can also enjoy a cultural dance performances and ethnic foods.
6 October, teen aawors, Mithat, Jonkotha, (315) 2558802

**Com Cap Con**
The year, ComCapCon is back and better than ever. You can choose to dress up as a character from your favorite anime, manga, comic or video game, but it’s not mandatory.
2-3 November, Rosedale, New City, Lalitpur

**Paleti with Sunman Thapa**
This edition of Paleti brings you Dr. Sunman Thapa, a renowned gastronome and musician. Thapa will be playing his rendition of Songs of Nepali music created by Dad Suman Kunwar and Madan Sumala.
25-26 October, Open aawors, Rs. 1,000, Neway Lux, Kohkotha, 315973934

**Coffee Gip**
Various Jazz Clubs in Nepal present Coffee Gip, an afternoon of good coffee, acoustic music and stimulating conversations.
28-October, Jon aawors, Rs. 300, Bodhi Art Cafe, Patan, 315984722

**Reminiscing Adole**
Listen to Subhadev and the Kudir band cover songs by award winning artist Adole. Subhadev’s tribute on Adole’s heart-wrenching lyrics and the band’s musical rendition will have you wanting more.
28 October, Jon aawors, The Fort, Sompé, (315) 2559205

**Annapurna 100**
A part of the Golden Trail World Series, The Annapurna 100 is Nepal’s premiere ultra trail race. Runners will be passing beautiful mountains, forests, Nepal’s villages and locals cheering them on during the 55km race.
25 October, Jon aawors, Dhampus, Palpa, info@annapurna100.com

**Baked N Fresh**
Known for its scrumptious chicken patties, this bakery offers some of the best baked goods in Kathmandu. Everything is made fresh in the morning and is gone by the evening. To enjoy the cakes on your next visit: Asopunder (315) 2544687.

**Seashells on the Mountain**
Spend the weekend toing & froing to the mountain to join the music performances by local and international artists, visit an art installation, food and market stalls, Douglas Kaur, Roberto Fern Mat, Kishorab. Cellos - Lina Massara and Maria Del Grando are just a few of the artists who will be joining us.
25 October (open aawors), 20 October (from 8am onwards), Rs. 300-1,000, Hotel Viki, Dallay

**Southern Comfort**
If you’re looking for juicy pork ribs, mac & cheese and a taste of America’s southern culture, Southern Comfort is the place to be.
(315) 5527144

**Kristnhanupur Restaurant**
The Kristnhanupur Nepalese Restaurant is one of the fine dining restaurants in Bhaktapur’s Hotel. Enjoy an a, 6, 9, 12 of 22 course meal served by waiters dressed in traditional Magar, Newar, Gurung, Chepali and Sherpa clothes. The meal offers dishes from Nepal’s different ethnic groups, from the Newar sample bajo to the sinu soup.
The Bhaktapur Hotel, Dallay, (315) 4574488

**Community Homestay**
For non locals looking to get a real taste of Nepali, community homestays are the way to go. If you’re looking for a safe and reliable place to stay, Community Homestay, a Kathmandu-based start-up offers homestay in Panauti, Patan, Lamos, Nuwakot, Bardia and 14 more locations. Not only will you experience the local lifestyle, but also the food, culture and history of that place.
Locations vary, Prices start at $17 per night, (315) 981930722

**The Last Resort**
The Last Resort’s variety of thrilling activities is perfect for adrenaline junkies. You can do the canopy swing (the highest one in the world, bungee jumping, rafting in swift rivers, tandem winging and explore hidden canyons. But if you’re looking for a relaxing getaway, you can stay at Bhal Ko Tirth, Riverside resort and take in the beautiful scenery. Bhal Ko River, Sindupalchok, (315) 4784025
The mental scars of violence

A world apart, Nepal and Colombia struggle with the mental health burden of conflict

Sewa Bhattacharjee

Children sit in a circle experimenting with different colours on palettes at a shelter in Godawari one morning this week. Some design flowers in bright colours, others draw bushes nestled below mountains. Many of the children were rescued from traffickers or domestic violence, from villages in India where they worked like slaves, or from sexual abuse. The one thing they have in common is mental trauma.

For Colombian painter Dario Vargas (pictured above with students of Kristi College who is coaching them and other Nepali children), the situation is very familiar to that of his own country. Vargas himself suffered depression as a teenager, and believes art can be a great healer in a country wrecked by war.

"When I was depressed, I could not focus on anything. But when I start painting, I am able to concentrate on what I am creating. That gives me a sense of calm, and slowly helped me overcome depression," says Vargas, who now helps others like him around the world. Nepal and Colombia share the common burden of war trauma—people in both countries today struggle with the violence of their past, and seek closure. Nepal signed a peace accord with the Maoists in 2006, and Colombia made peace with the FARC rebel group 19 years later, ending a conflict that killed over 230,000 people and displaced 7 million.

While many victims and their families have received compensation for physical wounds or loss in Nepal, mental trauma has been largely ignored. Likewise, various studies indicate that up to 46% of the population in Colombia suffer from mental illness at some point, and lifetime prevalence may be up to 20%. There too, the Ministry of Health has recognised that the issue is under-reported and inadequately addressed. Vargas works with former FARC guerrillas and others in Colombia who suffer post-traumatic stress, but finds it hard. "Of course the guerrillas have many mental health issues, but they are not happy to do anything about it at the moment. Also, they have made so many enemies in society that reintegrating them is very difficult," he says.

Vargas is attempting to bring his own experience in Colombia to fill this gap in Nepal. His mission is to spread awareness about mental illness, and make painting more accessible to traumatised people through his movement #TheArtListens. He is using the technique with children at the Chitra Chori shelter for rescued children in Godawari, where they paint, sketch and draw.

As in Colombia, mental health is still a stigma in Nepal, especially for families of the disappeared, children who witnessed violence and victims of war rape. These survivors rarely seek help, even though a 2012 study showed 80% of conflict-affected people suffer anxiety and depression, 50% have PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), and former child soldiers are far more likely (40-50%) to suffer from these symptoms than children never conscripted (20-30%). Social reintegration continues to be a challenge, and many former combatants and relatives suffer stigma.

Sunny Kotecha of TPO (Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation) has surveyed and convinced many conflict-affected Nepalis, and says the most common problems are depression, anxiety and PTSD.

"Children and women have suffered the most, and it is prolonged for victims of sexual abuse and family members of the disappeared," says Kotecha.

One of them is Bhagwan Chandray of the Conflict Victims’ Common Platform, whose brother and sister-in-law were disappeared during the conflict, but who has never sought counselling or therapy. "If I see anyone who looks like my brother, I still take a second look, wondering if it is him," he says. "We are unable to perform his last rites, because we don’t know if he is still out there. Not having closure means that we are still undecided about how to take our life forward."

Gita Rastelli of the Conflict Victims’ National Network was 13 when she saw soldiers taking away her sister. Her family later found the decomposed remains of her body. After that, Rastelli’s mother used to hint often and was unable to perform household chores. After years of therapy, she did get better. "There are many war victims like me who suffer from mental health crisis, but we do not recognise it and never seek help," says Rastelli. "If you go to a mental hospital people think you are mad. A lot more needs to be done for the nation to heal."

Like Rastelli, other war survivors suffer from symptoms like lack of sleep and concentration, inability to focus, disruptive memories and depression. The biggest concern is that these problems could transcend generations.

"If parents are unable to deal with trauma and express their mental state in unfortunate ways, their children could be impacted as well," says Kotecha of TPO. "Social reintegration is already difficult for combatants, and this could create another generation of outcasts."

As in Colombia, some victims of the conflict and the 2015 earthquake in Nepal have found ways to express themselves through art. Rastelli keeps a journal, saying it helps her find relief from stress, and she knows others who paint and sketch. But they all found these outlets through personal effort — there is no systematic approach to artistic therapy in Nepal.

Says Vargas ‘Transmised people often cannot express their suffering to other people, and art is a space where they can free themselves. Completing a piece of art also helps the brain make connections, and gives a sense of achievement and confidence.'
Nepal–Norway orchestra finds harmonies

Rajkumar Shrestha picked this button, musicians raised their instruments, and the audience in the Academy Hall in Kathmandu stood up for Nepal’s national anthem grandly rendered with violins, viola, cello, sitar and flute by a 60-member orchestra. The lyrics of ‘Sapana Dhung Phool Ke Hami, Eitai Mala Nepal! (We are different flowers of the same garden)’ evoke Nepal’s cultural diversity, but last Wednesday they also defined the diversity of the musicians from Norway and Nepal, of various ages and ethnicities.

And because this was a project of the Nepal-Norwegian Orchestra, the soothing tones of the Norwegian national anthem came next. In the centre of the orchestra, surrounded by violinists, was Stine Roosbach Heier from the string quartet Kvartr/Kvartet on the viola, alongside her father who played the violin. Raised in a musical family with his mother, a cellist, and his sister a violinist, Heier first came to Nepal in 2015 as an instructor with 3 other tutors and 15 young people through a youth orchestra in Norway. Their goal was to teach Nepali musicians classical music in order to establish orchestras in the country.

The Annapurna Chamber Orchestra met the Norwegian musicians from Kvartr/Kvartet through the World Federation of Amateur Orchestras. The project trains Nepali students for a week and organises performances in different venues of Kathmandu. Ten Nepali musicians also go to Norway for the week-long annual Orchestra Summer Gourne to interact and exchange music with their Norwegian counterparts. During the course, Nepali and Norwegian musicians play music from both countries even though they sound completely different.

Says Heier, “Despite their differences, the appreciation of music is universal. Nepali music has more melodies but not many harmonies, which is the biggest difference from Western music. But it is the language of music that brings us together.”

The exchange has also helped the musicians learn about Nepal through music and share a commonality. “It was interesting that after we heard the translated titles of the Nepali songs, we were reminded of patriotic songs from Norway as well,” said music instructor Ole Raasmo Nyberg.

In the last five years of the project, the instructors as well as the young musicians know that their music has improved. “I used to play in the junior orchestra, and now I play with the seniors. I can feel the difference and my confidence building up,” says 18-year-old Nipkup Singh Dixit.

The number of Nepali musicians has also doubled since 2015, from 30 to 60, and is projected to expand in coming years. They range in age from 10 to 50.

“The future of the Nepali orchestra is bright. It is growing through these programs,” says Rajkumar Shrestha, conductor and chairman of the Annapurna Chamber Orchestra. “The only challenge is that most students leave the country after Grade 12 for higher studies and we lose good musicians.”

Reeti K.C.
Getting away with murder

The Aftab Alam case is a litmus test of impunity vs the rule of law in Nepal

Kiran Nepal

R

Aftab Alam, MP, was killed in Kathmandu. The police said it was the result of a political feud. The murder has sparked wider concerns about the state of justice in Nepal.

The police said it was the result of a political feud. The murder has sparked wider concerns about the state of justice in Nepal.
Waiting till the cows come

This Gai Tihar, spare a thought for hundreds of stranded cattle on Nepal’s highways

Kunda Dixit
in Kailali

The first thing one notices these days while travelling by road in the Tarai are hundreds of cattle blocking the East-West Highway, mostly at intersections like Atariya or Kohalpur. The ‘cow emergency’ hit the headlines in September, when 24 cows were found dead beside the highway in Surskhet and hundreds of others were wandering in the jungle. Police investigation revealed the cattle were being transported from Nepalganj to Dalbokh as part of an effort by the municipality to reduce the population of street livestock.

What few people know is that dozens of cattle had died earlier this year when Sukla Phanta Municipality near Dhangadi spent Rs 5.5 million to round up cattle and put them in shelters, where most of them died of starvation and lack of care.

There is no estimate of the number of cattle on the highways near border towns of the western Tarai, but on a recent trip reporters counted hundreds just on the stretch between Dhangadi and Atariya. Locals said there were a lot more street cattle previously, and the numbers had actually gone down.

Saving Nepal’s last wild dogs

Protecting the endangered ancestors of the domesticated dog from its wild reputation

Yadav Ghimirey

Wild dogs get a bad press in Nepal, almost as bad as hyenas. The fact that the Nepali word for the wild dog (bwanu) is also used to refer to the wolf is part of the problem.

Bwanu is used to describe a ruthless or evil human being. However, the Asian Wild Dog (also called Wild Dog in India) is a wildlife species on the endangered list, because of habitat loss and a reduction in primary prey like sambar and chital deer. This has led the dogs to attack livestock, so that farmers are now poisoning prey carcasses to kill dogs.

The wild dog belongs to the same family as the domestic dog, Canidae, and like the wolf is a pack-forming animal. It has a rather gory way of hunting — it tears away bits of the flesh of its prey during a chase before finally killing it.

This could be one reason the wild dog has a PR issue with the public in rural Nepal. In any case, there has been a sharp decline in the population of wild dogs in the densely populated midhills, while they are still present in the Tarai national parks.

Like most canine species, the Asiatic Wild Dog is known to form social packs of up to 15 individuals, providing them a distinct advantage over larger carnivores like the leopard or tiger, which have superior hunting skills but stalk prey alone.

The Gurung people in the Sikles region of the Annapurna Conservation Area compare the bwanu to an untamed wind — it can be anywhere at any time, but is difficult to control. Elders who used to see wild dogs in abundance today report very few sightings, including in the Annapurna Conservation Area, Chitwan National Park, Dhangadhi, Satageh and Kanchanjunga Conservation Area, Parsa National Park and Tikapur.

It is estimated that only 500 individuals survive, and even this figure could be inflated. Globally the species is estimated to number only up to 2,200, and negative public perception means it is difficult to mount a campaign to conserve the wild dog. The only way to save the animal from extinction therefore, is to reintroduce it into protected areas where it was once found in abundance.

Yadav Ghimirey is a conservation biologist at Friends of Nature.

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Local officials said the main reason for the cattle crisis was the ban on beef in north Indian states, especially after the election of high priest and Hindu nationalist politician Yogi Adityanath as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in 2017. Media reports of lynching by religious extremists of Muslim truckers suspected to be transporting cows put a stop to the unofficial ‘export’ of cattle from Nepal to India.

There used to be a thriving cross-border trade in aged oxen and cows that had stopped giving milk. Not surprisingly cattle slaughter in India after the rise of the BJP, as well as the new border fence on the India-Bangladesh border, has meant that the cattle are abandoned on the streets.

Nepali youngster Bhim Lamsal thought he had solved the problem by founding a cow-farming entity in the mountain village of Tarai. There are other factors at play: increased mechanisation of agriculture and the use of breeding machines, disc ploughs and the replacement of ox cart with tractors means that bullocks are no longer in high demand in the Tarai.

Two years ago I sold my bull for Rs5,000 — now there are no buyers. I can’t even pay someone to take the bulls away,” says Biru Ram Ghaidhari of Lalipur village of Kailali.

The outmigrant of Nepali youth to India, the Gulf and Malaysia has meant that agriculture in general has seen a downturn, and there are fewer households keeping water buffaloes and cattle at home. The urban expansion of Bhungadi and Nepali municipality has also forced households to abandon home duties.

The stray cattle are now grazing in jungles by the highways, munching away at the undergrowth. Forest patrols for flood control have also been affected. Sugar cane and paddy farmers have lost their entire crops as the cattle move through the fertile farms of the western Tarai.

Says local farmer Gagan Ghaidhari: “It used to be elephants and wild animals that destroyed our crops, now it is the cattle. In Mohanpur they lost 8 big hogs (1.5 hectares) of sugarcane to stray cows.”

In Ati Vati, police say there has been an increase in highway accidents and fatalities because of collisions of vehicles with stray cows at night. They say the only solution is to tag cows so that they can be traced back to their owners, who will then be forced to be more responsible.

A dog with altitude

The large, lanky dog with a great mane, thoughtful droopy eyes and a deep bark that echoes across Himalayan crevices is not just a breed much sought after by guard keepers. The Tibetan Mastiff, scientists say, is one of the oldest species to be domesticated, evolving from wolves to live alongside human beings.

Found in Himalayan settlements in Nepal and in Tibetan Plateau right up to the upper limits of human habitation at 4,500m, the dog’s body is so adapted to low oxygen levels in the thin air that its blood is 30% more efficient at carrying oxygen than that of most living in the plains.

Latest genetic studies have shown that domestic dogs remeved from two types of wolves found in the eastern and western edges of Eurasia 15,000 years ago. Analysis of the mitochondrial DNA of early dogs shows that the eastern branch of canines on the Tibetan Plateau may have been the first dogs to be domesticated by early humans.

The modern dog that most resembles early canines after they split from wolves, researchers say, is the Tibetan Mastiff. The German Shepherd could be the descendant of early dogs that evolved in Europe, while Huskies are said to be a mixture of both.

Look at the physiology of Nepal’s ethnic groups and Tibetans who live at high altitude who have adapted to living in the cold, thin air. The Tibetan Mastiff has also evolved for high altitude — with its lower oxygen concentration — and became a professional guard dog some 3,000 years ago in the Himalayas.

Scientists have now found why, unlike canines up to 14kg, are so hardy, they carry a rare gene that gives them a higher blood volume. This gene, which has been found in the Caucasus, is responsible for the mastiff interspersed with the Himalayan grey wolf, picking up mutations that gave its blood a greater ability to transport oxygen.

Taking Shyapa, 65, from Salleri, Khotang, accompanying his father on trips to India to sell Tibetan Mastiff puppies. They trained the dogs for half a year and back home, waiting up to three weeks to the Indian border. The puppies were in high demand in India as guard dogs because of the mastiff’s reputation for ferocity, but most died from the heat in the plains.

“They used to be loyal and vigilant, guarding not sheep, goats and yaks from wolves and leopards,” recalls Shyapa, lamenting that there are very few mastiffs left in Khotang as the number of namdroling sheep has declined.

In Delhi’s Shyapa normally a Tibetan Mastiff guard the mansion, looking fiercely at intruders when night descends. Tibetan Mastiff puppies can fetch as much as Rs300,000, although half finalises or less.

In 2011, Salleri-based Shyapa earned the story of a Tibetan Mastiff named Ishaq, which he sold to Delhi from a village in Narayanghat, his adapted home, back to Kathmandu to find his canine friends and Japanese owner in a Yatsun neighborhood.

Former Nepal army veteran in Delhi, Del Maraninikori, has been studying Tibetan Mastiffs since the 1980s and authored a book on Del and the Himalayan: A Personal Journey. He has nothing but admiration for these noble dogs.

He wrote this tribute in 1983 on the picture: "Kangchenni. Against the predatory desires of the large, and a faithful and kind companion, the Tibetan Mastiff has few if any peers. It is a grand and noble animal, a bivouac of man and beast, and a symbol of man’s taming of the world.

Suman Cheekhup Lama
Guy Puja

It would not be an exaggeration to say that animals have it better than people in the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. In fact, this country is only fit for animals. Proof of the high regard we have for all creatures great and small is the ongoing Tihar festival, during which they are dedicated a day each to be worshipped.

Lota to Crow About

Saturday is when we honour our feathered friend by getting up as the cock crows to pay homage to the neighbourhood roven flock. We get to worship at the feet of Yamaraj’s Roving Ambassador and Fleipetroleum here on Planet Earth, and honour the bird’s remarkable contribution to recycling and upcycling Kathmandu’s garbage. Without the contribution of His Excellency the Crow to solid waste management in the capital, Kathmandu Valley would have long ago been buried under buffalo wings, chicken drumsticks and goat chops.

Praying to the Pooch

Sunday is the day we give due recognition to man’s best friend in this dog-eat-dog world of contemporary Nepal for being such excellent security guards that they enforce a night-time curfew in most neighbourhoods. The sons of bitchness are so good at their job that they do not even let dog’s best friends get back into their own homes, and when they do, they will continue to yowl all night to real and imaginary enemies of the people and anti-nationalists. It would not be an exaggeration to state that this country is going to the dogs, and thank dog for that because otherwise it would have gone to the hyenas in government. Sunday is when you can get away with saying “Oh my dog!” because dogs are gods for 24 hours.

Holy Cow

It is proof of the high regard secular Nepal continues to accord our erstwhile national animal that we allow them right of way on major thoroughfares and highway arteries. Imagine the chaos that would ensue if these tax-eating traffic islands did not regulate the flow of vehicles by their very presence, chewing the cud along the faded control lines. Not even President Xi’s motorcade is accorded as much priority on Kathmandu’s roads as the city’s cattle herds. The street fauna feed on yummy plastic bags in the neighbourhood garbage heap, and are allowed to deposit bullshit anywhere, even in open-defecation-free districts where we higher primates are not allowed by law to take a dump anymore. That is why on Sunday, we will take the bull by the horns and feed it marigold garlands and recognise their contribution to the national economy by buying our favourite cash cows.

Day of the Donkey

The public hereby notified that kicking and licking Ass is henceforth allowed any day of the current fiscal year.