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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

CENSURING CENSORSHIP

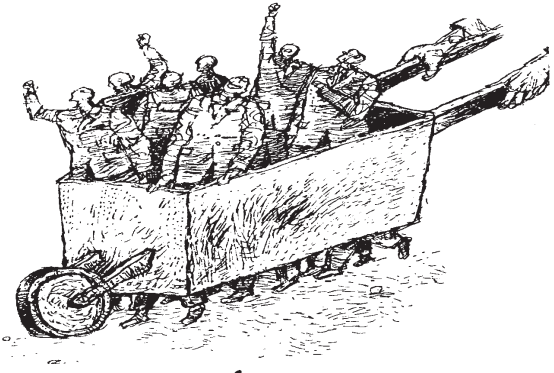
Now that all three festivals are over, it is time to remind ourselves of where we left off before the holidays. Lest we forget, in late September we saw a series of crackdowns on freedom of expression that had a dampening effect, especially on Internet content.

Elected demagogues worldwide learn fast: they have discovered that there is no need to kill journalists anymore — it is much more effective to kill journalism.

By destroying the credibility of the media, citizens are no longer able to tell the difference between truths and lies, allowing rulers to get on (and get away) with wrongdoing. In this post-truth, fake news universe, the social web allows instantaneous spread of falsehood, rumours and manipulated information. This creates an environment for self-censorship, and the silencing of independent voices.

One would have thought that with its landslide victory in the 2017 elections, the ruling Nepal Communist Party would be able to perform, deliver services and upgrade infrastructure. The media would have automatically heaped praises. But since it has not been able to deliver on its promises, the party with the thickest majority in Nepal's democratic history has the thinnest skin.

In the past year, the NCP has taken incremental steps to suppress the press. There has not been any sudden, swift crackdown — the pressure has mounted in instalments. The intention seems to be to take our freedoms away bit by bit so that we won't even notice when they are all gone — rather like the traditional Chinese practice of torture and execution known as *lingchi*, death by a thousand cuts.



The party with the thickest majority in Nepal's democratic history has the thinnest skin.

After each of these arrests social media exploded with virulent criticism of the government. Ordinary citizens poured scorn on the state for 'jailing rappers but letting rapists to go free'.

Politicians seem confident they can handle criticism in the legacy media, but are afraid of the free-for-all on the Internet. The high profile arrests for posting on social media are meant to warn the public, and any infraction is so loosely defined that just about anyone can be hauled in for anything.

The government's intolerance for criticism seems to be a reflection of worries about Prime Minister Oli's health, which has led to jostling for succession within the NCP. The former UML component of the NCP, which at least paid lip service to liberal democracy, is being subsumed by more authoritarian comrades in the party with erstwhile Maoist credentials.

The emperor does not like it when it is pointed out that he is naked. Power does not like it when you speak truth to it. So, the knee-jerk reaction is to harm the messenger. The threat to freedom of expression today is not from despots, but elected leaders who have co-opted the legislature, judiciary and the security apparatus.

The crackdowns in Nepal are not as bad as in the rest of the region. But that is not saying much, and it is hardly a consolation. Our goal must be to strengthen the four pillars of democracy, separating their powers and fortifying them to be more transparent and accountable.

- Information Technology is backing a draconian Media Council Bill through Parliament, which would criminalise speech on vague grounds.
- In June, vlogger Pranesh Gautam was jailed by police for five days for an irreverent review of a new Nepali movie.
- Satire singer Pashupati Sharma was threatened by ruling party toughies to take down a music video ridiculing the culture of corruption in high places.
- A person was tracked down and arrested earlier this year for poking fun at the Prime Minister on Facebook.
- The Information Technology Act can sentence people for 5 years in jail and levy a fine of up to Rs150,000 for 'improper' social media posts. What constitutes 'improper' is so broad that anyone can be hauled in on any pretext.
- Gyanendra Shahi, who posted a video on Facebook of Tourism Minister Yogesh Bhattarai being berated by passengers for delaying a flight in Nepalganj, was so badly beaten up he had to be hospitalised.
- Last month, rapper VTen was arrested for a music video deemed obscene.

The story so far:

- Nepal's new penal code last year criminalised the use of images deemed derogatory (section 295), slapped hefty fines and jail terms for recording conversations (section 293) and announced strict punishment for sending, receiving or using online data (section 298). It even banned Photoshopped images for the purpose of satire.
- Parliament introduced a bill to prohibit journalists from publishing personal information of public officials, ostensibly to protect officials' privacy.
- Editors of mainstream newspapers were unceremoniously summoned to the Press Council for intimidating interrogations.
- Journalists at the RSS news agency were questioned for filing a story on the Dalai Lama being discharged from hospital in New Delhi while President Bidya Devi Bhandari was on a visit to Beijing.
- The Ministry of Communication and

10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

A front page analysis in #475 of Nepali Times, 6-12 November 2009, shows that nothing much has changed in the Indian media's depiction of Nepal:

'Nepal and China suddenly loom large in the Indian media, and often both are mentioned together in jingoistic coverage that is said to be fed by leaks from hawks. After an incident on a border lake in Ladakh in mid-September, TV news channels aired alarmist coverage titled 'Enter the Dragon'. Another channel labelled Nepal the 'Number Three Enemy' of India after China and Pakistan. The main reason for the suspicion is the belief that Nepal's Maoist government is getting too cosy with China.

"Silently but speedily China is spreading its wings in the erstwhile Hindu kingdom, mainly to unleash anti-India propaganda," wrote the *Times of India* last week.

Several factors have contributed to a new cold war across the Himalaya: the recent geopolitical alignment between India and the US, Beijing's insecurity about Tibetan nationalism and competition between the two countries over water from Himalayan rivers.



ONLINE PACKAGES



Join our reporters on a visit to the Central Zoo in the heart of Jawalakhel. Watch young people exploring the digital Education Centre to learn about nature and conservation, take a tour of the zoo to get a rare look at the animals being fed, and meet rescued wildlife. Story: [page 8-9](#).



This week we introduce Made in Nepal, a new fortnightly multimedia column that deals with success stories of small and medium-scale entrepreneurs in Nepal. In this first installment, we meet Bishnu Bhujel and his wife Sanu, who found returning to Nepal to run a farm more rewarding than their previous initiatives. Story: [page 4](#).



British Doctor and head of the Wellcome Trust, Sir Jeremy Farrar, is featured in the new edition of *Nepali Times Studio*. Farrar, who has over 30 years of experience in tropical medicine and infectious diseases, has been frequenting Nepal since the late 1980s. Listen to what he has to say about Kathmandu's dengue epidemic, and more. Story: [page 12](#).

TASHI'S DAUGHTER

So proud to have the great Tashi's last remaining daughter as one of my fur babies ('A dog with altitude', Sonam Choeyski Lama, #982). She is an amazing Mastiff, just like her father Tashi Sir — intelligent, warm and very loving.

Eliza Sthapit

NIMS PURJA

Mindless sensationalism! Hollow Glory! ('Nims Purja fans react to criticism of climb', [nepalitimes.com/page 13](#)). It is only Mr Nims Purja's name as the sole record holder of this feat of Glory with non-existent Sherpa team who made it all possible.

Vairochana Sherpa

- It could be possible that Purja used a selection of different support staff at different mountains, and that no one individual, other than himself, did all 14 — just a thought — so please give credit where credit is due.

Sue Chamberlain

- It's a fact that whoever climbs a mountain in Nepal gets help from local Sherpas, as Nims has said as well and he owes them.

Robin Magar

- The Sherpa brothers were superb. This is a proud moment for all Nepalis.

Raj Ghale

- Something of this calibre is phenomenal. It's not for some everyday guys to achieve such a feat. Well done, Nirmal!

Bud Grg

WHAT'S TRENDING



From heads to toes

by [Sanghamitra Subba](#)
Traditional dhaka fabric has been part of Nepal's unofficial national dress for decades, and is now becoming a fashion item. Read about dhaka's journey from its inception to its entry into contemporary fashion, and watch the video at [nepalitimes.com](#)

Most reached and shared on Facebook

A dog with altitude

by [Sonma Choeyski Lama](#)
Tibetan Mastiffs are the descendants of the first wolves to be domesticated by early humans. And just like the physiology of Nepal's ethnic groups and Tibetans who live in the mountains, the Mastiff has also evolved for high altitude. Don't miss out this feature, which was our most read story over the festivals.

Most popular on Twitter

Nims Purja fans react to criticism of climb

Some mountaineering experts and climbers downplayed Nirmal Purja's record-breaking climb of 14 of the world's highest peaks in 6 months, saying he used supplemental oxygen, had a team to fix ropes and did not give his team enough credit. The piece generated heated debate online, with Purja's fans defending his feat. Story on [page 13](#).

Most commented

Can Nepal be the powerhouse of Asia?

by [Anil Chitrakar](#)
Nepal can and should position itself as the source of clean hydropower for the Asian century. For that, the country needs to start making Nepal investment-friendly.

Most visited online page

QUOTE TWEETS

Nepali Times @NepaliTimes
Wherever the dhaka weave originated, it is now quintessentially Nepali, and designers are experimenting with modern styles. Find out more in this multimedia feature by Sanghamitra Subba and @DeupalaMonika in @NepaliTimes

Aakriti Karki @karki_aakriti
As a Nepali, I've gifted Dhaka topi as a souvenir to quite a number of Bangladeshi friends. But I'd be dumbfounded when they questioned whether the cloth was named after the city Dhaka. I now have all the answers I needed. So thankful for this article from @NepaliTimes

Nepali Times @NepaliTimes
Nims Purja fans react angrily to criticism of his record-shattering climb of the world's 14th highest peaks this week.

Andrew Menotti @APMC1985
First ascents without oxygen are the only real style of mountaineering? I like to go out and have fun with friends. Guess I should hang up my boots. It's not like Nims lied about what he did.

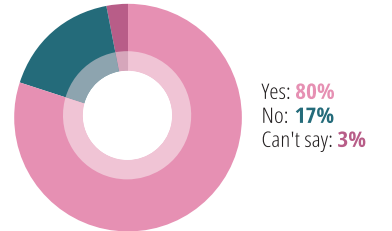
Ed Douglas @calmandfearless
If you're going to chalk off ascents for using oxygen, then that's pretty much everyone who's climbed Everest. Alpine-style ascents on super-hard routes with small teams are cool. But that's still a beast of a challenge, even with the gas. I don't think many thought he'd do it.



Weekly Internet Poll #982

Q. Is it wrong to worship animals one day of the year and mistreat them on the others?

Total votes: 329



Weekly Internet Poll #983
To vote go to: [www.nepalitimes.com](#)

Q. Should the private sector be involved in fighting malnutrition?



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Migrant worker finds farming in Nepal more rewarding

Bishnu Bhujel has returned home to farm and rescue his family from bankruptcy

Farm entrepreneur Bishnu Bhujel did everything to not be a farmer like his parents in Sarlahi. Subsistence agriculture had ruined them, so they could not even send their children to school.



MADE IN NEPAL
Naresh Newar

Bishnu migrated to India for work when he turned 20 so he could support the education of his young siblings. He worked as a carpet machine operator in Banaras, a mechanic in a furniture factory in Rajasthan, and then repaired diesel generators for a living.

Confident of his hands-on technical skills, Bishnu returned to Nepal to start his own furniture shop in Kathmandu. But running a business was tougher than he expected — operating costs were high due to long power cuts, staff salaries and high rent, and the furniture market was highly competitive. Profits were marginal and Bishnu lost all his savings.

He then joined a local handicraft factory, where he made wooden buttons for shirts and tools for singing bowls. The salary was so low he could not even afford rent, so he started a bicycle shop, bought a taxi and ran a vegetable store. But after piling up debts, he sold all his businesses.

Desperate, Bishnu decided to go back to farming as a last resort, even though he knew the pitfalls. “It



LIVING OFF THE LAND:

Farmer Bishnu Bhujel abandoned his ancestral farm in Sindhuli to become a migrant worker in India, but has returned to build a successful farm in Lalitpur with his wife and business partner, Sanu.



PHOTOS: NARESH NEWAR

was risky. We had heard stories of how small farmers struggled, but we went ahead because we had run out of options,” recalls Bishnu, now 49. He scouted around Kathmandu Valley and finally found an unused farm in Jharuwarasi, 20km outside the Ring Road in Thaiba Municipality. He and his wife Sanu leased 0.3 hectares of it for Rs100,000 a year.

They first built a small tin house and tomato greenhouses. But the 2015 earthquake struck, and there was no irrigation and no electricity. “All we had were candles and the moon for light — and this was just a few kilometres from Kathmandu,” Sanu recalls.

“Sanu and I are hard-working, and we were forced to be creative to survive. This was a big test for both of us,” says Bishnu, who then lobbied endlessly with the local ward office to get the electricity they needed to pump water for irrigation. Today, the family has electricity, a sufficient supply of water and a dirt road, which they built themselves so buyers have access to their vegetables.

“Finally, it has worked. We are not rich but we have now enough income to sustain our lives, educate our children and have a decent life,” says Bishnu, whose family also opened a small grocery to generate additional income.

The success of the Bhujels has been an inspiration to many local residents, a majority of whom are not using their land for commercial farming but prefer to lease it to migrant families.

Bishnu notes the irony of it all: “I abandoned farming, but it is farming that has saved my family from poverty.”

Last year, the family was able to earn Rs400,000 from the tomato patch, double the initial investment. “Farming can be profitable, but you need patience and hard work. It takes time but it is well worth it,” explains Bishnu, who hopes more Nepalis will choose to remain in the country rather than migrate to toil in the desert, far away from home.

Sanu agrees: “The young generation is restless, and wants to make quick cash. They need to be entrepreneurial so that they don’t have to migrate abroad and suffer hardship and financial risks.”

Journalist-turned-former Naresh Newar is starting this fortnightly multimedia column, Made in Nepal, in Nepali Times with this first instalment. The columns will deal with success stories of small entrepreneurs in Nepal.



Meet farmer Bishnu Bhujel and his wife Sanu who run a successful farm outside the Ring Road. He explains show he worked in India for nearly 30 years, and found working the land in his own country to be much more rewarding.

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prabhu BANK
BIZ BRIEFS

Turkish Photos

The winners of the Skylife Photography Contest organised by Turkish Airlines were awarded on 31 October at the Zorlu Performing Arts Centre, Istanbul. Organised

for the third time, the contest theme this year was ‘Discover’. Fei Xie of China was the winner of the Turkish Airlines Grand Prize.

Dining with Cathay

Cathay Pacific is introducing a new menu for economy class in collaboration with Hong Kong’s food and hospitality group, Black Sheep Restaurants. The menu includes the return of Cathay’s signature locally brewed craft beer, Betsy Beer.

Laxmi Golf

Laxmi Bank will host the Laxmi Bank Open Golf Tournament 2019 at Gokarna Golf Club on Saturday, 9 November 2019. The

6th edition of the annual tournament will be played on Stableford format with ¾ handicap allowance. A brand new Hyundai KONA will be awarded to any golfer who makes a hole-in-one on the 10th hole.

Qatar-Sky Express

Qatar Airways and Sky Express have signed an agreement that provides Qatar Airways

passengers with a seamless connection between Greece and Doha and onwards to destinations in Asia, the Middle East and Australasia on Sky Express (pictured).

US pushes international religious freedom alliance

During the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September, US President Trump devoted much more time to a conference on his new International Religious Freedom Alliance than to the Climate Summit.

The alliance is supposed to bring together ‘like-minded countries... to defend the unalienable rights of all human beings to believe, or not to believe, whatever it is that they choose’.

The person Trump handpicked to be Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, former Kansas Governor Sam Brownback, was in Kathmandu last weekend to meet government officials and religious leaders, and to inspect the US Embassy-funded repairs on the Krishna Mandir, damaged in the 2015 earthquake.

Given the increasing polarisation between the US and China, *Nepali Times* asked Brownback in an interview if his trip was more about Tibet and less about Nepal.

“This visit is about Nepal. It has Tibet ties, because Nepal is a major transit point for Tibetan refugees and Nepal has historically been very good about letting them come and transit,” Brownback replied. “Some of that has slowed under pressure from the Chinese, and I had some discussions with the Foreign Minister and others about it.”

Isn’t US criticism of religious persecution in rival powers like China harsher than on geopolitical allies? Brownback makes a distinction between state-sponsored persecution of minorities in some countries like China, and rising communal tensions, as in India. Besides, he added, the US is critical of religious persecution in Saudi Arabia despite it being a key ally.

“We are sensitive to the criticism, and we try to make all our calls in this area factually based,” says Brownback, who was on a tour



SAM BROWNBACK / TWITTER

HAMMER OF FREEDOM: (l-r) US Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback, US Ambassador to Nepal Randy Berry, Mayor of Patan Chiribabu Maharjan and Director of Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust Rohit Ranjitkar at Krishna Mandir in Patan last week.

of the region that included Kathmandu, Dharmashala and Bangkok. “That is why we want to get the International Religious Freedom Alliance up, because we would like a much larger group internationally that would push and establish some basic standards.”

However, is it not a bit awkward for an American official to be going around the world preaching religious tolerance given what is happening back home?

“I usually raise it myself,” replied Brownback, who was governor of Kansas when two Indians were shot in his state. “I have had Jewish people killed, or white supremacists

come after Somalis, but in each case I went out of my way to assure those communities that this does not represent American values. Religious freedom is in our DNA — we were founded by successive waves of people fleeing religious persecution.”

Brownback stressed that the US is serious about protecting religious freedom, learning lessons from its own history: “We are an example of how difficult this is to do. We have our own tragic past, in the way we treated minorities. And if you get it wrong, religious differences are a real rocket fuel to propel angry mobs.”

A recent international Pew survey showed that 80% of the world’s population lived in a religiously restricted environment. Religious persecution and intolerance, as well as manipulation of religion, are on the rise globally.

“We believe that everybody everywhere is entitled to do with their own soul what they want to do. This is their fundamental right,” Brownback said, “and a government’s role is to protect religious freedom not to manipulate religion.”

Brownback was appreciative of Nepal being an open society compared to other countries in the region. “I want to really tip my hat to the Nepali people, who have fought to maintain this openness.”

However he added: “The erosion of the practice (of the Constitution) is concerning to us. You want religious freedom, but also social harmony. Religion is a fundamental human right — if you are qualifying it, that is when I start raising questions. This is not a long-term sustainable path given how much integration is taking place in the world.”

Brownback does not like the word ‘secularism’ and being a person of faith, says he prefers to work for a society where there is the freedom to practice all religions peacefully.

He also has no patience with conversion using coercion and inducements, and says he has told officials in India and Nepal that bribing people to convert is a no-no. “If you know of groups doing that, I hope you will tell us about it,” he said.

But what Brownback said he is most worried about is when those in power use religion to fan populism. “Faith can be wonderful, but it can be manipulated, and that can be very dangerous. Religion has not declined as a flashpoint, in fact it has increased.” 🇺🇸

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Champions of Nepal’s conservation movement

Nepal’s royals were successful in saving the country’s wildlife, but not its monarchy

It was the most splendid of glittering weddings. Fairy lights threaded through the bushes, candles glowed on the ivy-wrapped tables, oil lamps marked the stone flagged paths, and white cushions padded the benches arranged around the low garden walls.



SO FAR SO GOOD
Lisa Choegyal

The stage setting enhanced the sequined saris, embroidered gowns, bare midriffs and gossamer shawls of the women, and men strutted in finest silk, high collars and gilded long jackets — an ambassador and husband in impossibly well-cut Italian suits. The diamonds dazzled, emeralds reflected the under-lit swimming pool and sapphires caught the blue of the fading sky. A thin sliver of moon hung suspended above the tiled and tiered rooftops as waiters glided by with laden platters and silver trays of drinks.

Ministers and politicians mixed comfortably with the assembled aristocrats, generals, entrepreneurs and diplomats. Everyone was here. I spotted political party leaders, retired Ranas, an eminent surgeon, a son of Tenzing Norgay and daughter of Toni Hagen.

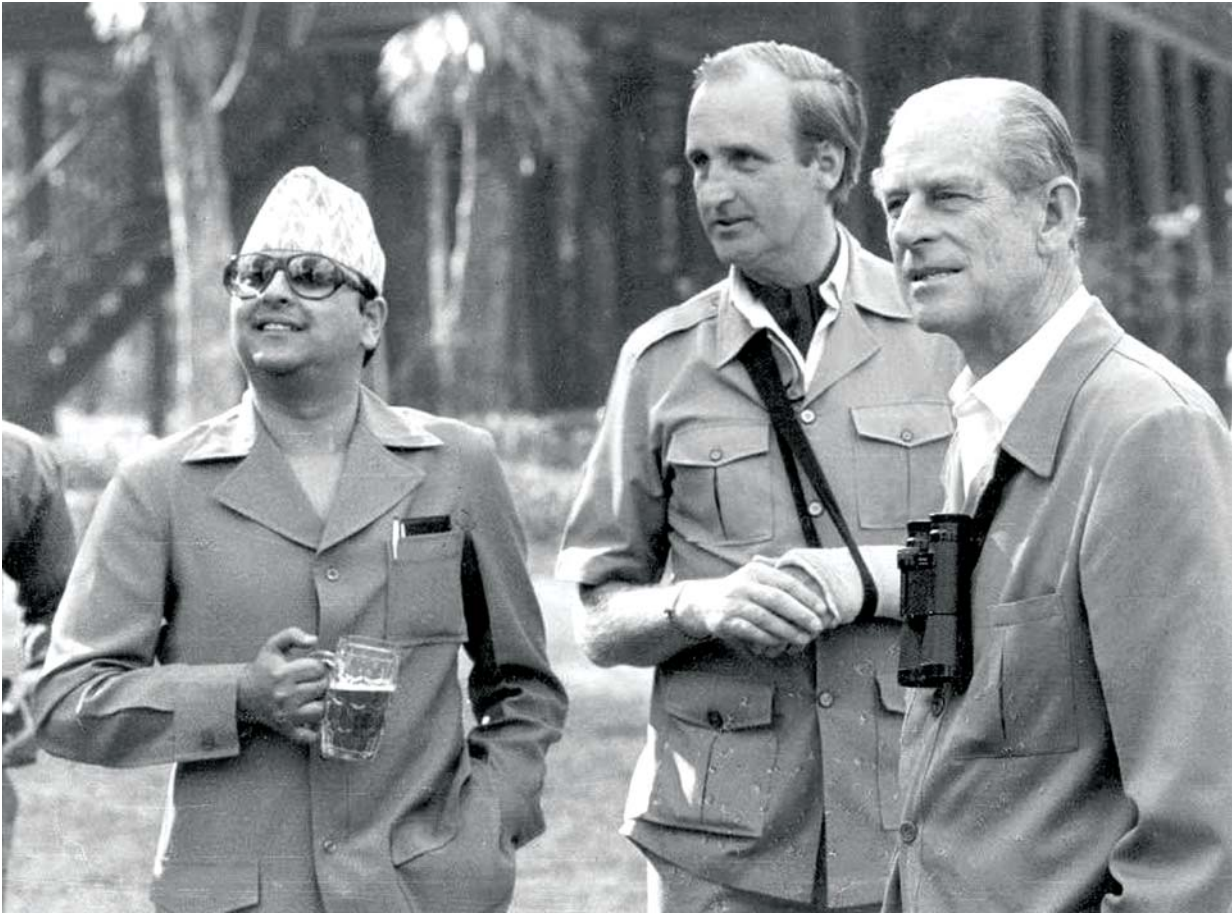
“The king is here!” A whisper rustled through the crowd.

The pavilion door was guarded with Rottweiler zeal: only the chosen few guests were allowed in to meet their ex-majesties. The former queen appeared unusually animated, her greying hair drawn back from her pointed chin. Through the glass windows, we could see much deferential nodding, submissive bows and polite conversation with the dethroned Mr and Mrs Shah.

Later, when Gyanendra came to leave, the chattering crowd parted, backing away spontaneously from the entourage with former feudal respect, but the royal couple were in relaxed and festive mode. Spotting me in the throng, he broke away and came over with a wide smile to shake my hand and exchange a few words before moving on with a light laugh.

“Amazing, what a changed personality,” observed a seasoned guest. “Wow, what a smile — I have never seen his teeth before!”

Amidst the wedding reception hubbub, we reflected that in recent years he had not had much to laugh about. The personal cost of losing so many immediate family in the 2001 massacre, and the public price of losing a kingdom as the monarchy became a federal



ROYAL TREATMENT: Then Prince Gyanendra with Jim Edwards of Tiger Tops and Britain's Prince Philip in Chitwan in 1986 (above).

There was always a buzz of excitement when King Birendra and Queen Aiswarya (left) visited Tiger Tops. Most royals were hunters-turned-conservationists.

cleared, the ground levelled and lime-marked with a big ‘H’. Our big boss, Jim Edwards, would arrive from Kathmandu to host the visit, taking advantage of the opportunity for a little politicking on the side.

Jim had started life in Nepal with a hunting company before turning conservationist when environmental conditions changed. The depletion of Nepal’s tiger, leopard, gaur and rhino populations was the result of their wild habitat shrinking to unsustainable levels with encroachment, disturbance and poaching.

Jim appreciated the proclivity for hunting that ran deep through the veins of Nepal’s rulers, a culture of maharaja and vice-regal hunts testified by the volumes of trophy photographs stored in the Kaiser Library and displayed in Rana homes.

Like many former hunters with a passion for the world’s wild places, the royal family spearheaded the conservation movement in Nepal. Under royal rule, Nepal’s exemplary protected

area network was first established, encompassing landscapes in the high mountains, middle hills and Tarai plains, and preserving Nepal’s vast biodiversity in Palearctic and Indomalayan ecozones. Previously a prized royal hunting reserve, Chitwan was the country’s first national park, declared in 1973, and South Asia’s first World Heritage Site, in 1984.

As the king’s younger brother, Gyanendra led His Majesty’s Government’s conservation efforts and served on the World Wildlife Fund international board. In 1982 he founded King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation as a non-governmental and non-profit organisation, now the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), with innovative environmental and community-based solutions such as the Annapurna Conservation Area. Today protected areas cover over 20% of Nepal.

Based in their rural palaces at Kasara park headquarters or on the river near Narayanghat, King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya would stop by for some quick refreshments as part of their jungle progression. But it was Prince Gyanendra who came most often. Hosting Prince Bernhard and the elite WWF 1001 Club for several days in Chitwan in 1977, we launched gharial crocodiles with Peter Scott, discussed tiger distribution with Chuck McDougal and arranged a private dinner for the group one perfect October evening in Jim’s private bungalow, resonant with night sounds vibrating in the surrounding forest.

Not long after, Gyanendra brought the Indian Prime Minister’s son to stay. Rajiv Gandhi was still a quiet dedicated airline pilot before family pressure forced him into politics. In 1986 Gyanendra escorted Prince Philip to Tiger Tops during Queen Elizabeth’s state visit. Scratchy and acerbic, Philip growled at the press corps but was captivated by Chitwan’s wildlife and Nepal’s conservation gains.

Hosting David Attenborough in Nirmal Niwas during the filming of a BBC nature series, we marvelled at Gyanendra’s collection of mounted hunting trophies. “Looks like this rhino charged through the wall then got stuck,” giggled Sir David as we were ushered through the entrance hall.

So perhaps not “old friends”, but in a radically changed world, certainly old acquaintances with an enduring jungle connection. 🇳🇵

Go online for more photographs, and to read the Nepali Times interview with then Prince Gyanendra during the World Wildlife Fund Annual Meeting in Kathmandu in November 2000.



democratic republic — albeit with minimal fuss or strife when the moment came to vacate his palace and relinquish his privileges.

A quick-draw friend sent me a snapshot with the caption: ‘Taken in the heat of the moment. Picture of you and your old friend’ and a quizzical emoji.


The royals and their guests were indeed frequent visitors to Tiger Tops in the formerly ‘Royal’ Chitwan and Bardia National Parks when I was working there in the early days. With fanfare and formality, they would arrive with the usual trappings of jeepfuls

of wardens, wildlife department and palace officials and security guards. Nepal’s absolute monarch was never referred to except as ‘His Majesty’ in the most hushed and venerated tone, even in private.

A frisson of excitement would reverberate through the camp at the news of a royal visit. The lodge and bar would be swept and spruced, the wood oiled and the brass polished. Tablecloths would be replaced, chick blinds repaired, petromaxes primed, white stones repainted and green uniforms tidied. Helicopter arrivals were a rare event, so grass would be

बालबालिका माथि हुने हिंसा, दुर्व्यवहार, शोषण भएको, जोखिमपूर्ण अवस्थामा रहेको वा बालअधिकारको उल्लंघन भएको छ भने बाल हेल्पलाइनको पैसा नलाग्ने

फोन: नं. १०९८ मा खबर गरौं ।



नेपाल सरकार
सञ्चार तथा सूचना प्रविधि मन्त्रालय
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After Cyclone Kyarr barrelled into Oman, it is Cyclone Maha that has been loitering over the Arabian Sea for the past week. It hit the Gujarat coast on Thursday, then disintegrated into a depression. But some of the tentacles of this system are being wafted in the direction of Nepal as we speak. Maha and another depression over the Bay of Bengal will bring cloud cover, the season's first snowfalls in the central Himalaya, and passing showers into Saturday. The rain could douse the smoke from stubble burning in India, and temporarily wash away air pollution.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
 22° 13°	 23° 12°	 23° 12°



Early Nepal drawings come full circle

Decades later, sketches and maps by European researchers are returned to Nepal

Sheilin Teo

For decades, Franz Frei's drawings used for adult literacy classes in Dolakha sat in his late mother's attic in Switzerland. Now, 43 years later, the former Swiss Development Cooperation employee has brought the drawings back to Nepal.

As students, Ulrich Burtscher, Thomas Türtcher and Raimund Wulz made meticulous colour-coded architectural drawings of Ghyaru village in Manang, detailing elevation, water supply, building use and shop density. After 30 years, the trio has returned to Nepal the sectional drawings of the slope and scale of the buildings and their relationships to each other, along with sketches and photographs.

After decades of being scattered across Europe, such archival material that provides valuable insight into Nepal's culture is being brought back by former researchers and students. This return of knowledge is an initiative of Niels Gutschow, an architectural historian and adviser at the Saraf Foundation, who himself worked at the Bhaktapur Development Project in the 1980s.

It was Gutschow who convinced Frei to dust off the metal canister he had custom-made in Patan to carry his original drawings when he left Nepal in 1977. The zinc cylinder, which resembles a time capsule, is now in the Taragaon Museum with its decades-old Swissair baggage tag and the drawings still intact. The canister is spot-lit at the centre of Frei's exhibited works, surrounded by the artefacts it held in safekeeping for over 40 years.

The Saraf Foundation is working to procure, exhibit, archive and digitise such research material of foreign artists, photographers, architects and anthropologists who worked in Nepal in the second half of the 20th century.

Frei came to Nepal in 1976 as staff of the Swiss-funded Integrated Hill Development Project in Dandapakhar village of Dolakha, to conduct adult literacy classes for Tamangs in the area. He made black ink sketches to illustrate Devnagari words, but soon realised the villagers did not 'see' images in a way Western experts took for granted. Lines in the pictures and perspective reduction were not understood, and Frei's sketches were utterly confusing to his grown-up students, some of whom looked at them upside-down.

This reminds Frei of the story of how pygmies from dense Congolese rainforest, when brought to the open savanna in Kenya, mistook a distant herd of buffaloes for insects. Having never looked that far before, the vast



KUNDA DIXIT



depth of field that people in the plains took for granted was magic to the pygmy — as they approached the buffalo, the 'insects' grew bigger and bigger.

Similarly, a malaria prevention initiative projected images of mosquitoes on the wall to illustrate to villagers how the disease is transmitted. After the slideshow, the people were glad they would never be afflicted with malaria because "we don't have such big mosquitoes here".

Frei uses the anecdotes to critique his own work in Nepal, and how he found out how

pictorial literacy is learnt. Later, he started using stylised depictions of everyday objects using the drawing techniques of local thangka painters as reference.

In Manang, architecture students Burtscher, Türtcher and Wulz had no common language to communicate with the Manang-pa, and drew the physical environment with only a compass and tape measure. Nearly 30 years later, they are valuable records of the 'anonymous architecture' of a Manang village before tourists and the road arrived.

TIME CAPSULE: After he ended his adult literacy work in Dolakha in 1976, Franz Frei took his drawings back with him in this metal cylinder he had made in Patan (above).

Frei is back in Nepal after 43 years, and his sketches, including this one (left) are on display at Taragaon Museum till 14 November.

Gutschow had to use all his powers of persuasion to get Burtscher to part with his drawings and bring them back to Nepal. Eventually, recognising how their work has developed a cultural significance, the trio agreed to surrender their drawings for safekeeping — admittedly keeping their favourites.

Klaus Kette worked on several survey missions in Mustang as an artist and his work is striking, allowing visitors to grasp the feeling of a place, recognition of a face, even if the lines that make the impressions are imprecise, gnarly whirls of movement. We journey through city streets, stop at landmarks, experience unknown interiors, survey remote landscapes, and come face to face with strangers.

In Kette's swirling hand, in the Austrian trio's maps, or in Frei's Dolakha drawings we see what we know. Beyond that, when our eyes open there is magic and wonder. These young scholars depicted a hidden world — and whether we see it as magic depends on the rules and lines of perception behind our own ways of seeing.

At the very least, the works have come home. 🇳🇵

*The Taragaon Museum Lecture Series-7 Exhibition
Till 14 November at Taragaon Museum
<http://taragaonmuseum.com/>
The Saraf Foundation*



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Reeti KC

There used to be a time when the Central Zoo in Jawalakhel was a menagerie for caged animals that looked miserable. But with help from conservation groups in Nepal and abroad, the zoo has now become a centre for conservation education in Kathmandu and a shelter for rescued wildlife.

Every year, more than 1 million people visit the lush 6-hectare park in the middle of Jawalakhel's built-up neighbourhood to observe its 942 mammals, birds and fish and

Chitwan is venue for World Ranger Congress

Around the world, rangers in protected areas are at the frontlines of wildlife conservation, yet they receive little recognition for putting their lives at risk. That is set to change with a major international conference of rangers in Nepal's Chitwan National Park next week.

Some 550 rangers from 70 countries will be in Sauraha for the 9th World Ranger Congress organised by the International Ranger Federation with the Ministry of Forest and Environment of Nepal and Wildlife Conservation Association Nepal (WildCan).

"Hosting this congress in Nepal is a milestone and an opportunity to showcase Nepal's achievements in biodiversity conservation, as well as to learn from good practices around the world," says Maheswar Dhakal at the Ministry of Forests and Environment. "It will recognise the contribution of rangers in protecting nature in Nepal and around the world."

The Congress is held every three years, this year being the first time it has been organised in Asia at a moment when wildlife is under increasing threat in national parks around the world, putting rangers at increasing risk. More than 1,000 rangers have been killed in the line of duty in the past 10 years, with 149 killed by poachers in the past year alone — mostly



in Africa. A survey in 2016 showed that nearly three-fourths of rangers had faced life-threatening situations on patrols.

"This time it was Asia's turn to host the Congress, and Nepal was the most serious proposal received," said Sean Wilmore, President of the International Ranger Federation. "Nepal has proven itself as an example to follow having achieved Zero Poaching of rhinos."

Africa is losing more than

three rhinos a day to poachers. Botswana's population of 160,000 wild elephants were till recently regarded as safe from ivory smugglers, but there has been a 10-fold increase in poaching in the past five years.

"The Congress will look at strategies to get more women involved as rangers and also ensure they are protected while protecting wildlife, and help them cope with the threats," says former ranger Thorunn

Sighthorsdottir from Snæfellsjökull National Park in Iceland who is taking part. "Having the Congress in Nepal is recognition of Nepal's achievements in conservation."

The main themes at the Congress will be the safety and welfare of rangers, most of whom do not have life insurance policies and lack proper equipment. In addition, the specific challenges faced by female rangers will be discussed at a time when only six percent of rangers worldwide are women.

There are also panels to look into the important role members of indigenous communities can play as rangers. National park staff belonging to Australian aboriginal groups, Maoris from New Zealand, Andean indigenous communities in Peru, local rangers from Masai Mara in Kenya as well as Nepal's own Tharus will be represented. Among prominent participants will be Angola's Minister of Environment Min Fatima Jardim, herself a former ranger.

There are also panels on technology with rangers showcasing use of drones as well as other satellite-based GPS tracking techniques that rangers can use to combat poachers.

Wilmore listed the most serious challenges faced by rangers worldwide: "Safety at work and equipment of rangers who must deal with poachers and wildlife traffickers, under-representation of women in the ranger workforce, climate change." 🇳🇵



IT'S A ZOO OUT THERE

Fast running out of space for rescued wildlife, the Central Zoo wants to expand to Bhaktapur



Catching them young

A procession of uniformed school children walked into the Field Marshal Sir John Chapple Education Centre in the Central Zoo one recent morning giggling and pointing. A nearby monitor showed them transformed — alongside a dancing chimp or submerged in an underwater world. The jostling children filed ahead to eight digital kiosks, huddling in small groups to answer a nature quiz and playing online games to learn about the animals in the zoo.

Making conservation learning fun and interactive is the purpose of the centre, which was set up in February. It is named after a former British Army officer, who worked to conserve Nepal's biodiversity for more than 30 years after his retirement, and is Chair of the UK National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC).

"To pay a modest tribute to a man who has devoted most of his energy to conservation and wildlife seemed like an excellent idea, and with support of the UK NTNC we came up with the idea of the education centre," says Amita Sen (pictured above), the only Nepali trustee of the UK chapter of NTNC.

The Education Centre at the Central Zoo was funded by the Nepal Investment Bank. Sen says its goal is to try and make information about nature and conservation accessible to today's young people, so-called 'digital natives', through state-of-the-art interactive displays.

The digital kiosks will soon be updated with Nepali and English language options and with virtual reality glasses that will provide a virtual tour of the zoo.

127 species of reptiles. Most of them are students.

Much of the credit for upgrading the facility goes to Friends of Zoo. In the past 20 years it has built up a network of 200 schools and 6,000 members that actively involves students in activities like cultural and educational tours to Annapurna Conservation Area Project and Chitwan National Park, a Night Guided Tour, Animal Feeding program and Zoo Clean-up Campaign to teach young people the importance of conservation.

In February, the zoo opened a digital interactive audiovisual centre to share information about the animals through multimedia.

"Conservation education is the only means through which we can educate the general public and students about nature and its importance. It is an important component — that is why we are focusing on digital education as well," says Chiranjibi Prasad Pokheral, Project Manager of the Central Zoo.

Zoo officials are often called to dart leopards or other wildlife in the outskirts of Kathmandu, and many of these animals are brought to the zoo for safety and treatment before being released back into the wild. Others, like a man eating Royal Bengal Tiger named Maharaja rescued from Chitwan National Park, are permanent residents.

Other long-term guests are pangolins that have been rescued from smugglers, and even a pair of chimpanzees that were seized last year while being smuggled from Africa via Kathmandu to India. There are also rhinos, jungle cats, red pandas, barking deer, rhesus macaques and birds like barn owls, budgerigars, golden pheasants, owlets and the Eurasian eagle owl.

In fact, so many wild animals are brought to the zoo that it is running out of space. To address the problem, 15 hectares of land at the National Zoological Garden in Surya Binayak of Bhaktapur have been set aside for a Wildlife Rescue Centre. The idea is to relocate the zoo itself

to Bhaktapur, but a decision to that effect taken in 2015 has still not been implemented due to turf battles between different government agencies.

"We are hopeful because the government has allocated the budget for a detailed project report for the relocation, but it is a big project and it will take time," says Pokheral. "We plan on shifting bigger animals to Bhaktapur while keeping the birds, reptiles and butterflies here in Jawalakhel, which we will turn into a research education centre."

Once the new space is operational, there will be a shuttle bus to carry visitors between Jawalakhel and the zoological garden 23km away in Surya Binayak. 🇳🇵

IT'S A ZOO



Join our reporters on a visit to the Central Zoo in the heart of Jawalakhel and watch children explore the Education Centre to learn about nature and conservation. Then take a tour of the zoo to get a rare glimpse of the animals being fed, and meet rescued wildlife.

nepalitimes.com



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EVENTS



Film South Asia

FSA 2019 kicks off this week with films from Nepal to Bangladesh. Catch the screening of some of the best documentaries from South Asia. For schedule: filmsouthasia.org
14-17 November, Various locations
(01) 5552141

Prayas

The Precious Art Class presents, 'Prayas', which means "to try". In this exhibition, Nepali artists express their creativity and emotions through various mediums.
10 November, 10am-6pm, Nepal Art Council, Babar Mahal, 9849950808

Beyond the Object

Artist Narayan Bohaju looks beyond the objects that we see everyday. In his exhibition, Bohaju reflects on the human aspects, the stories and the abstract nature of everyday objects.
1-28 November, 11am-6pm, Dalail-La Art Space, Thamel (01) 4701436

ArtAfternoons

Children can spend the weekend learning how to build castles, squishing materials in sensory bins and letting their creativity run wild. All materials will be provided.
Every weekend, 1-4pm (drop-in), Rs350 per hour, Children's Art Museum, Hattisar, 9801087072



Today

For a mesmerising performance, watch Laurence Yadi and Nicolas Cantillon's FuittFuitt, a dance style created by the dancers and choreographers themselves. The dance involves waves and weaves of the body to create hypnotic movements.
13 November, Mandala Theatre, Anamnagar (01) 5705761

Cube of Truth

An amalgamation of a peaceful static demonstration and an art performance, The Cube of Truth aims to demonstrate animal exploitation to viewers in promotion of veganism.
9 November, 3pm onwards, Patan Darbar Square



OccupyTudikhel

Described as the "lungs of Kathmandu", Tudikhel is one of the largest free public spaces in the city. But the people are tired of misuse of the space and are gathering to protest for its better management. Join the movement on Saturday.
9 November, 8-10am, Khula Manch, Tudikhel



Free Solo

OAC Film Series presents *Free Solo*, a National Geographic documentary featuring renowned climber Alex Honnold as he becomes the first person to free solo climb Yosemite's El Capitan wall. Climbing without safety harnesses or ropes, Honnold's journey is gripping and bound to leave you on the edge of your seat.
8 November, 5:15pm onwards, Outdoor Adventure Centre, Thamel (01) 4433515

Beyond Bounds

Sushila Singh's exhibition of ceramic paintings and pen and ink drawings depicts Nepal in an abstract and enchanting manner. Exhibition opens 8 November at 5:30pm.
8-22 November, 12pm-7pm (Except Saturday, 9am-4pm), Kathmandu Art Gallery, Le Sherpa, Lazimpat, 9869366335

MUSIC



Jazz After Dark

Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory's weekly jam sessions are open to all and KJC invites new bands to perform alongside its students and instructors. Listen to the best and brightest of the Nepali music scene here.
Every Thursday, 7:30pm onwards, Moksh, Jhamsikhel (01) 5528362

Imogen Harper

Australian singer Imogen Harper's sound is reminiscent of Joni Mitchell and Leonard Cohen. After a long hiatus, Harper is back to move the audience with her powerful voice and indie-rock tunes.
14 November, 6:30pm onwards, Tickets: Rs350, HUB, Thamel, 9866273244

Places Jazz Night

For old school jazz music, unforgettable performances and some of the best jazz bands in Nepal, Places is the place to be.
8 November, 7pm onwards, Places Restaurant & Bar, Thamel (01) 4700413



1974AD Album Launch

Nepal's beloved rock band, 1974AD, is back and better than ever. The band is launching its first album after their much awaited reunion earlier this year.
8 November, Prive Nepal, Tickets: Rs1,500, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, Kalimati, 9801090111

Meghna and Pranav

Listen to the soothing sounds of this acoustic duo. Meghna Gewali is a musician from Australia and Pranav Pachhai is one of the up and coming Nepali musicians to watch.
8 November, 6pm onwards, Tickets: Rs300, Tito's Pub & Lounge, 9841647747

DINING



Achaar Ghar

Nothing beats a home-cooked meal flavoured with an assortment of pickles prepared from recipes that have been passed down from generations.
12pm-9pm, Pulchok (01) 5541952

Unlimited Dosas

Thin, crisp, savoury dosas filled with spices and potatoes are the ideal afternoon meal. Don't miss Executive Chef Vikram Kumar's innovative take on this delicious South Indian dish!
5-21 November, Weekdays only, 12pm-5pm, Shangri-La Hotel, Lazimpat (01) 4412999



Winter Barbeque

Indulge in Teppanyaki style barbeque offering dishes from Herb Garlic Tenderloin Steaks to Shrimp Kebabs, Orange & Dill scented Fish Fillet, Honey Soy Pork and Cajun Spiced Sausages. The sweet, savory, umami and spicy flavours are sure to leave your taste buds tingling.
Every Friday, 6pm onwards, Rs1,666++, Poolside, Hyatt Regency, Boudha, 9802050429

Fusion Wednesdays

Why wait for the weekend when you can kick back on Wednesdays? Enjoy an evening of live music, kebabs and refreshing beverages in the middle of the work week.
Every Wednesday, 6:30pm-10:30pm, Terrace Garden, Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat (01) 4411818



Erma Restaurant

Erma Restaurant offers an upscale fine-dining experience with chef curated continental dishes. With a farm-to-table approach and an assortment of wines, Erma turns every meal into an experience.
11am-10pm, Hotel Shambala, Chakrapath (01) 4650351

GETAWAY



Jagatpur Lodge

Jagatpur Lodge's 5-star tents and rooms with private viewing decks offer two special experiences. While the former bring you closer to nature, the latter provide a breathtaking view to relish.
Jagatpur, Chitwan (01) 4221711

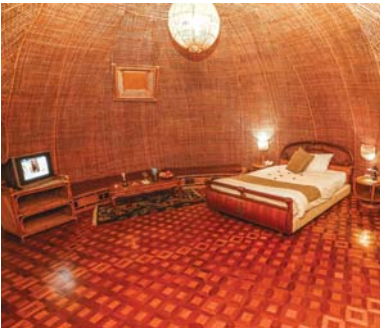
Hotel Barahi

Located just beyond the banks of Phewa Lake, Hotel Barahi offers stunning views and luxury rooms. The rooms are decorated with rustic pieces, earthy tones and a clean design that will leave you feeling relaxed.
Lakeside, Pokhara (61) 460617



Balthali Village Resort

A small, cosy retreat with a bird's eye view of green terrace fields dotted with ochre painted houses.
Panauti, Kavre, 9851087772



Grand Norling

Take a trip to the outskirts of busy Kathmandu to the scenic nature of Gokarna. A stay at the Grand Norling, with its spacious bedrooms, eclectic huts, golf course and garden, will leave you feeling brand new.
Gokarna (01) 4910193

Temple Tree Resort and Spa

For a luxury stay, Temple Tree Resort and Spa is the place to be. Surrounded by majestic peaks, serene foothills and a lake, Temple Tree offers a relaxing stay alongside amazing spa amenities.
Gaurighat, Lakeside, Pokhara (61) 465819





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OUR PICK



Opened in Kathmandu on 8 November

Jhamak Ghimire was born with cerebral palsy, and never learnt to speak or walk. But she figured out how to read and write on her own, and went on to win the Madan Puraskar, Nepal's famous prize for literature. *Jeevan Kada ki Phool* is a bio-pic based on her life. Directed by Binod Bista, it stars Avastha Thapa, Rojita Buddachary, and Kishan Sunar.

AIR QUALITY INDEX

KATHMANDU, 1 - 7 November

301 – 500 Hazardous							
201 – 300 Very Unhealthy							
151 – 200 Unhealthy							
101 – 150 Unhealthy for sensitive groups							
50 – 100 Moderate							
0 – 50 Good							

PM2.5

Ozone

FRIDAY
Nov 1

SATURDAY
Nov 2

SUNDAY
Nov 3

MONDAY
Nov 4

TUESDAY
Nov 5

WEDNESDAY
Nov 6

THURSDAY
Nov 7

To be honest, we were expecting the Air Quality Index in Kathmandu to be much worse this past week. The smoke from stubble burning and industrial pollution in northern India reached such a dangerously high level that schools were closed. However, prevailing winds from the northwest swept the pollution away, although it did affect Chitwan and the western Tarai. Noida in Delhi had an AQI for particles measuring 2.5 microns of an incredible 1,900. Kathmandu's AQI was still a maximum of a hazardous 230, but much better than in Delhi.
<https://np.usembassy.gov/embassy/air-quality-monitor/>

Film Southasia 2019

Documentary festival spotlights free expression just when it is under threat across South Asia

WHERE
THE MIND
IS FREE...

FILM
SOUTHASIA
2019
14-17 NOV
KATHMANDU



Sewa Bhattarai

Film Southasia is held every two years, and in 2019 the theme of the documentary film festival says it all: 'Where the Mind Is Free'. Indeed, since the last edition of Film Southasia, the space for free expression has been increasingly constricted throughout the region.

From 14 to 17 November, 64 documentaries from the Subcontinent will be shown at Yalamaya Kendra, Patan — many of them films unlikely to have a public screening anywhere else in South Asia.

"In the region's increasingly cloistered space, exclusion seems to be a common concern of the documentaries," says festival director Mitu Varma. "The films focus on the marginalised, like growing up in Ladakh, transgender love, and the crisis of Rohingyas and Dalits. Many of the films focus on people who have little in terms of resources but a huge store of empathy and compassion for all living creatures, that marks them out as more human than many in the so-called mainstream. There are five films on Kashmir, and several films on migration and

education."

By its very definition, the documentary is a genre that takes time to dwell on social injustices and delve in depth into the structural reasons for discrimination, inequality and exploitation. Filmmakers tend to give voice to the voiceless and spotlight the plight of neglected or abused people whom the mainstream media ignores.

With the space for dissent and the marketplace of ideas shrinking across the region, Nepal remains the last bastion of free speech. This year also, Film Southasia will showcase films that could not be screened elsewhere.

The focus of the festival this year is Pakistan, and the opening film *Indus Blues* profiles the country's disappearing musical instruments and folk art, given the rightward movement of the state. Other films on Pakistan investigate scavenging ships on the Arabian Sea beaches and the murder of an activist who sought to provide a cultural space called 'The Second Floor' in Karachi, where all art forms could be shared and different issues could be freely debated and discussed.


With most of South Asia living under similar social-political conditions, the subject matter of the films focus on concerns common

to all countries. However, there is a lot of experimentation in the form of filmmaking.

Film Southasia includes a documentary shot mostly at night with striking visuals (*And What Is the Summer Saying*) and another that simply records conversations that swirl inside a tea shop at the centre of a heated religious debate (*Chai Darbari*). A documentary about old Delhi, with a 400-strong cast of actors, straddles the line between fiction and nonfiction (*Ghode ko Jalebi Khilane Le Ja Riya Hoon*).

"There are quiet films with little dialogue, where the story is told with visual imagery, or with the neutral eye of a fly on the wall," explains FSA organiser Alok Adhikari. "The filmmaker takes a backseat with these observational techniques and lets the story tell itself."

This year the festival is going digital for the first time: it accepted submissions online instead of asking for DVDs to be couriered to Kathmandu. The number of submissions soared to more than 2,500, testimony to the rising interest in this form of storytelling.

Pakistani actress Sania Saeed will be chief guest at the festival, whose jury comprises filmmakers Sumathy Sivamohan from Sri Lanka and Ayisha Abraham from India, and Nepali journalist Kunda Dixit. 

8 FILMS from 8 COUNTRIES



PARIAH DOGS

Jesse Alk, India

A group of people, themselves outcast, poor and living in slums, take care of street dogs in Kolkata, India.



KABUL, CITY IN THE WIND

Aboozar Amini, Afghanistan

A glimpse into the strained, tenuous life in Kabul, where violence is a constant backdrop to daily life.



SCRATCHES ON CELLULOID

Vindhya Buttpitiya & Timothy PA Cooper, Pakistan/Sri Lanka/United Kingdom

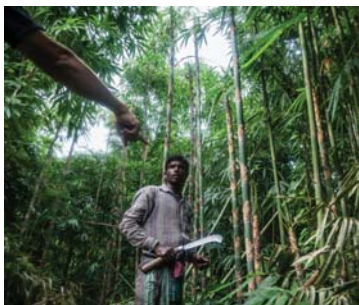
With the rise in multiplexes and home entertainment, days are numbered for traditional matinee theatres.



AFTER SABEEN

Schokofeh Kamiz, Pakistan

Human rights activist Sabeen Mahmud was shot dead in her car. This film captures the aftermath of the tragedy.



BAMBOO STORIES

Shaheen Dill-Riaz, Bangladesh

The use of bamboo is dying out, but there are still many people whose lives depend on the bamboo trade, who continue to float bamboo rafts. downriver.



OPIUM WARS

John La Raw, Myanmar

Jade miners who work under dangerous circumstances are being sucked into the opium trade, while the state turns a blind eye to issues of minorities.



THE NEXT GUARDIAN

Arun Bhattarai & Dorottya Zurbo, Bhutan

A priest in rapidly modernising Bhutan wants his son to inherit the profession, but the boy would rather play football and look at Facebook.

THE WINTER TAP

Aashish Limbu & Debin Rai, Nepal

The story of a project to build a water supply in a remote Himalayan village, which is not as simple as it seems.



NEPAL
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SONIAAWALE

“Nepal is a microcosm of all of the changes in world health”

Sir Jeremy Farrar is a British medical doctor and researcher with 30 years of experience in tropical and infectious diseases. In 2013, he was appointed director of the Wellcome Trust, one of the biggest global charities working in medical research. *Nepali Times* caught up with Farrar this week in Kathmandu, a place he visits often. Excerpts from the conversation:

Nepali Times: What explains your interest in Nepal?

Jeremy Farrar: I first came to Nepal in about 1989 or 1990. Since then, I have been working mostly on infectious diseases but increasingly on non-infectious diseases. I spent 18 years in Vietnam and moved back to London 6 years ago. I’m interested in where there are inequitable challenges of health, which I can see getting worse than better, and I think science as part of society can make a difference, and all of that is true in Nepal.

You were with Oxford University collaborating with Patan Hospital.

Most of my work was based on typhoid in Vietnam and Dr Buddha Basnyat of Patan Hospital quite rightly termed South Asia as the ‘capital of typhoid’. The burden of typhoid in this part of the world is massive. So in 2004 I came here and started a partnership that has been ongoing for the last 15 years. It started with typhoid, but now it has branched out to include other infections particularly important in Nepal.

Since you started coming to Nepal how has the health situation here changed?

In some ways Nepal is a microcosm of all of the changes that are happening in low and low-middle-income countries. Nepal is still struggling with the burden of infectious diseases but it is now also having to deal with the double whammy of infectious diseases that have not disappeared and the increasing burden posed by non-communicable diseases. The real problem for countries such as Nepal is dealing with both at the same time, and those require quite different public health measures, and require governments to make informed, evidence-based policy decisions.

We just suffered an unprecedented dengue epidemic in Kathmandu. Dengue is the infectious disease of the 21st century because it is

driven by all of the changes we are going to see: environment change, climate change, urbanisation, travel and movement of people and therefore vectors. Cities like Kathmandu are perfect breeding grounds for the Aedes mosquito. Kathmandu’s climate is changing, the city is growing exponentially in a haphazard way and the mosquito loves highly dense populations of people. If you put together environmental and climate change and the mosquitoes gradually spreading further north from India into the Tarai and increasingly into Nepal, it’s inevitable that Kathmandu and the lower lands of Nepal will suffer from dengue outbreaks.

On top of these, we still have TB and leprosy.

In my professional career of 35 years I have never been more optimistic about tuberculosis. If you take the big three infectious diseases of the world (TB, HIV, malaria), in 30 years HIV has gone from being a death sentence in a few week after diagnosis to a difficult disease but one you can manage long term. In the last 20 years there has been amazing progress in malaria with insecticide-laced bed nets and the Chinese herbal drug called Artemisinin, the most important malaria drug ever invented.

TB has not made that much progress. We are still using a diagnostic test invented in the 19th century. There has been no new tuberculosis drug since the last 40 years. We have not really understood how it transfers from one person to another. But that is being transformed. With the coming of a new pipeline of drugs that are now being used in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, the treatment period will shorten, making it much easier. But perhaps more important than that, for the first time there is the possibility of a tuberculosis vaccine that will prevent infection and disease. We have to make sure that it gets developed properly,

then manufactured and made accessible in an equitable way at a price that is affordable for everybody.

Wellcome Trust is also involved with snakebite research. What are the real problems tackling this?

Snakebite is the biggest disease nobody has heard of. It affects mostly impoverished people in rural communities who have no political voice. Snakebite treatment is still using 19th century or early 20th century interventions, which are expensive to produce, difficult to access and not available to those who really need them. If people are bitten in low or low-middle income countries, chances are they will never get treated. We are interested in bringing in technologies that have been used in cancer and infectious diseases to produce a treatment that counteracts the snake venom.

Is mental health an area you are working on?

In addition to funding discovery science, we have a small number of focused areas, where there has been little progress in the past. Mental health is the next one we are launching. Mental health has not attracted much investment or young people interested in working on it, and it’s often placed into different parts of the health system, with separate hospitals. Mental health still carries enormous stigma everywhere in the world. So we’ve not had the investment in science, public health and in clinical care of people, and we haven’t had the advances in prevention and treatment. This is not only a health issue but also of social justice and economy. Working in collaboration with various partners we are trying to transform mental health from being an issue of stigma and no progress to one that people are willing to talk about, that becomes a normal part of society and where we make scientific and health progress that will reduce the burden of this massive problem.



MOFA

IN SYNC: Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali and Norway’s Minister for International Development Dag Inge Ulstein oversee signing of an MOU to establish a joint commission. Norwegian Ambassador Lasse Bjørn Johannessen is signing the document.



HENRIETTA H. FORE/TWITTER

THE RIGHT FOOD: UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta H. Fore inspects a community nutrition program and learns about local women’s knowledge of healthy diets for children during a visit to Nepal this week.



MONIKA DEUPALA

BEING TERRITORIAL: Political activists gather at Maitighar Mandala on Wednesday to protest India’s apparent inclusion of the Lipulek Valley, which is claimed by Nepal and India, in the latest map of its territory.



RICHARD MORRIS/TWITTER

GOOD SPORTS: Outgoing British Ambassador Richard Morris and Japanese Ambassador Masamichi Saigo enjoy a live telecast of the Rugby World Cup 2019 final in Kathmandu.



DARAZ NEPAL

ON SALE: Daraz Nepal announces the second edition of 11.11, world's biggest on sale day. Managing Director of Daraz Nepal Lino Ahlering, and banker Anil Shah were present at the event.

Nims Purja fans react to criticism of climb



NIMS PURJA / FACEBOOK

Fans of Nirmal Purja, who last month completed his goal of climbing the world’s 14 highest mountains in a record-shattering 6 months, have reacted strongly to those belittling his feat. Purja climbed Mt Xixapangma (8,027m) in China on 29 October, his last eight thousander in a record-shattering 190 days. The previous record was set by Korean climber Kim Chang-ho, who took nearly eight years to perform the same feat. He was killed in an avalanche in Gurja Himal in Nepal last year.

Yet some mountaineering experts and climbers have downplayed the achievement, saying Purja used supplemental oxygen above 7,500m on all his climbs, had Sherpas fix ropes and did not give members of his team enough credit.

The *Times* newspaper quoted Chris Bonington, the noted British climber famous for the first ascent in 1975 of the southwest face of Mt Everest, as saying: ‘What he has done is quite extraordinary, but it isn’t mountaineering. Real mountaineering is exploratory — finding new routes up to big peaks... I don’t see this as a major event.’

German mountaineer Ralf Dujmovits told an adventure magazine: ‘It is completely ignored that Nirmal Purja is using bottled oxygen. It’s a performance that looks spectacular, but is not spectacular.’

The first Briton to climb Mt Everest without oxygen, Stephen Venables, also told the paper: ‘The fact that he used supplementary oxygen detracts from the feat. I know he also used fixed ropes. It isn’t exactly alpinism as I understand it... It will certainly make it into the *Guinness Book of Records*, but in the history of mountaineering it will only be a footnote.’

The unkindest cut of all came from Amit Chowdhury, the head of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation in New Delhi, who called the climbs ‘mindless sensationalism’. He told *The Times*: ‘We don’t support this kind of gimmick. If you have 20 people supporting you, of course you can achieve this. But you are putting so many people’s lives at risk, including your own. What for? We want people to climb safely.’

Reacting in a Facebook post, a retired general from the British Army, Sam Cowan, wrote: ‘The quoted reaction from some of “mountaineering’s old guard” is no real surprise but the remarks of the vice-president of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation are particularly crass — and wrong!’

The *Dainik Bhaskar*, a Hindi newspaper in India, chose to headline that Purja was educated in India, and highlighted the fact that his family had taken him to India when he was five and he got his early schooling there.

Critics have said that the Korean climber Kim deserves more acclaim because he climbed all 14 peaks without bottled oxygen, even though he took 7 years and 11 months to complete the feat.

There was sharp and swift reaction on social media from Nims Purja’s fans, who said the criticism of his feat reeked of ‘colonialism’, and that ‘westerners could not bear to see Nepalis succeed’. Others said that Nepalis were now setting the bar in Himalayan mountaineering, and were ‘finally getting the recognition they deserve’.

Another post said that Nepal’s mountain guides and porters had never got the credit for putting westerners on the tops of the world’s highest mountains, and Purja’s feat had changed that forever.

However, there has also been much praise for Purja’s climbs from other western climbers and mountaineering journals. In a report titled ‘Climber Nims Purja Didn’t Break Anyone’s Record—He Smashed a Barrier’, the *Adventure Journal* wrote this week: ‘It was a barrier-breaking testament to human potential, and a powerful demonstration of teamwork.’

Tyrolean Reinhold Messner, 75, who first climbed Mt Everest without oxygen and went on to climb all 14 eight thousanders over a period of 16 years, said Purja’s climbs are a ‘unique mountaineering achievement’.

Purja has been consistently thanking his team of guides from Nepal saying his feat would not have been possible without them. Members of his team themselves broke climbing records left and right: 30-year-old Mingma David Sherpa climbed nine peaks



PEAK POSE: Nims Purja and team members on the summit of Mt Xixapangma (8,027m) on 28 October, after shattering the world record to climb 14 of the world’s highest peaks in 6 months.

(Above) Hindi paper *Dainik Bhaskar* highlighted that Purja was educated in India.

above 8,000m with Purja this year. Another team member, Gesman Tamang, summited seven of the world highest mountains with Purja this spring.

In a recent Facebook post Purja wrote: ‘United we conquer! Here is to The A-team: Mingma David Sherpa, Gesman Tamang, Galjen Sherpa, Lakpa Dendi Sherpa and Halung Dorchi Sherpa. The journey of 14/7 has tested us all the way though at many levels. Together we have been through so much, we climbed not only as a team but as brothers with one sole goal to make the impossible possible, pushing the human limitations to next level. Now, the BROTHERHOOD that we share

between us is even STRONGER!’

Writing in Purja’s support, many on social media aid his team was not given enough credit for rescuing stranded mountaineers on Annapurna and Kangchenjunga, even if it meant it would slow down the expeditions. Purja’s team made heroic rescues at high altitude in poor weather.

Reacting in *The Times*, British multiple Everest summiteers Kenton Cool said: ‘I’m eating a lot of humble pie because what Purja has done is super, super-impressive. I’m the first to say I didn’t think he was going to do it. His ambition was so high, I thought he needed a dollop of realism.’ 🇳🇵

YETI AIRLINES' JOURNEY TO CARBON NEUTRALITY

MEASURE

Using GHG inventory tool, the calculated carbon emission was 19,665 tonnes of CO₂e. Our aircraft operations were responsible for nearly 19,648 tonnes of CO₂e emissions, with our vehicle and facility operations producing only 17 tonnes of CO₂e.

OUR MAIN EMISSION SOURCES

AIRCRAFT

VEHICLES

FACILITIES

TOTAL FOOTPRINT IN 2018

19,665 tonnes CO₂e

- THIS IS EQUIVALENT TO PLANTING -

325,165 TREES

TO GROW OVER 10 YEARS

REDUCE

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

OUR STRATEGY FOR REDUCING EMISSIONS

FLEET & EQUIPMENT UPGRADES

MORE EFFICIENT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

STREAMLINED GROUND PROCEDURES

IMPROVED AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

PUBLIC AWARENESS & STAFF TRAINING

OFFSET

We have embarked journey of carbon neutrality by purchasing certified emission reduction equivalent to 2018 emission through UNFCCC Carbon Neutral Now platform.

As an airline industry highly depend on fossil fuels, we seek to offset any unavoidable emissions through feasible technological replacements and carefully selected projects from credible and certified sources.

CREDIBLE & CERTIFIED (CERs)

We source carbon credits from UNFCCC - certified Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Projects

OFFERS SDG CO-BENEFITS

We support projects that offer win-win situations by contributing to broader SDGs in Nepal.

REPORT

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

CLIMATE NEUTRAL

MEASURE REDUCE OFFSET

NOW

Yeti Airlines

You come first

UNDP

Empowered lives. Resilient nations.

REPORT

MEASURE

REDUCE

OFFSET

CLIMATE NEUTRALITY

(tonnes of CO₂e)

Year	Total	gram CO ₂ e Per kilometre
2016	14580	171
2017	18113	159
2018	19648	127

Comparison of carbon emission per kilometre

Nearly half of Nepali



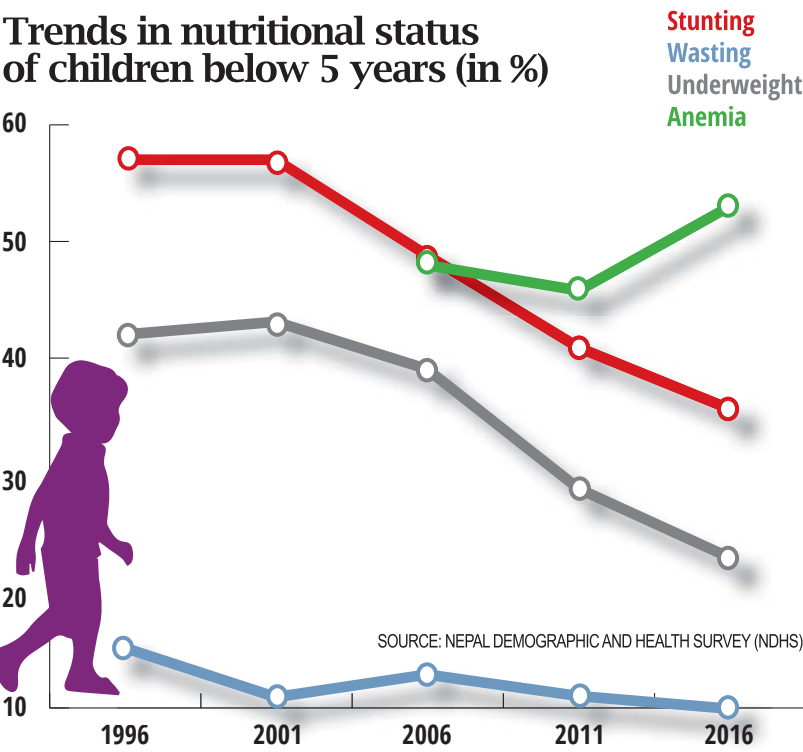
Progress in reducing malnutrition has stalled. What can be done to ensure enough of the right food for all?

Sonia Awale

For the first two decades after 1990, Nepal took great strides in reducing malnutrition. But progress has stalled. Nepal registered one of the most dramatic reductions in undernourishment among children and women after the government and international agencies took action in recent decades to reverse shocking statistics that showed half of under-5 mortality in the country was due to insufficient nourishment. “Nepal is the best country to showcase how political will can implement a multisectoral nutrition program,” says Brenda Kellen, director of Scaling Up Nutrition

(SUN), which is holding a global nutrition conference in Kathmandu this week. “From being one of the countries with the highest malnutrition in the 1990s, with stunting at 57%, to have reduced it to 36% — Nepal can offer lessons for the rest of the world and its model can be replicated elsewhere,” says Kellen, who added that holding the fifth SUN global gathering in Kathmandu was recognition of the country’s achievements. Over 1,000 delegates from 61 countries are attending the conference to discuss the progress, challenges and priorities in ending malnutrition by 2030, a target set by the United Nations World Health Assembly. However despite initial progress, figures for stunting, wasting and anaemia in Nepal have plateaued. UNICEF’s report, *State of the World’s Children 2019*, released last month, stated that 43% of children under five in Nepal were malnourished. “Malnutrition is still very much prevalent in Nepal, mainly among young children, adolescents and new mothers. We are not satisfied with the progress and there is still much to do,” says Anirudra Sharma at UNICEF Nepal. According to the 2016 Demographic and Health Survey

(DHS) wasting (low weight for height) among Nepali children under 5 still hovers at 10% — a mere 1% decrease from 8 years ago. The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) require Nepal to reduce wasting to less than 5% by 2030. Stunting needs to be well below 15% in 10 years to meet the global target — it is about 36% now. Says Swarnim Waglé, former vice-chair of the National Planning Commission who helped draw up Nepal’s Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan: “While a 20% reduction of chronic malnutrition in two decades is quite impressive, 36% stunting is still very high and unacceptable in this day and age. Conventional approaches will not help achieve targets.” Anaemia among Nepali women has always been very high, but instead of declining it actually increased from 35% to 41% between 2011 and 2016. Anaemia in children below 5 rose dangerously in that period: from 46% to 53%. Exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months also declined, and is now 65% against a target of greater than 90%. There has been no significant change in low birth weight either, which declined only 2%, to 27%, in five years. The SDG target is below 5%.



WHAT THE TERMS MEAN

Malnutrition: Lack of nutrition, either due to not having enough to eat, or not eating enough of the right foods.
Stunting: (also known as chronic malnutrition) A child who is too short for his/her age.
Wasting: Low weight for height.
Anaemia: Deficiency of red blood cells or haemoglobin in the blood caused by iron-deficient food.
Low birth weight: An infant born weighing 2,500 grams or less.
Childhood obesity: Children above the average weight for their age and height.
Exclusive breastfeeding: Feeding infants breast milk only until the first 6 months.

children still malnourished



EATING RIGHT: A mothers group in Achham collectively feed home-cooked meals to their children in 2018.

MARTY LOGAN

“Improvements in nutrition levels are stagnant because we have not reached the most vulnerable communities such as Dalits and people in remote far western Nepal,” says public health expert Aruna Uprety. “I see no reason to boast about our past achievements when the present level of chronic malnutrition is so serious.”

Nutrition levels are affected not just by food intake, but access to safe drinking water and education about the right selection of food. Underweight children in cities and the rise in obesity are a result of the proliferation of junk food replacing traditional nutrient-rich grains. Childhood obesity has decreased from 1.4% in 2011 to 1.2% but the figure needs to drop below 1% to meet the SDGs target.

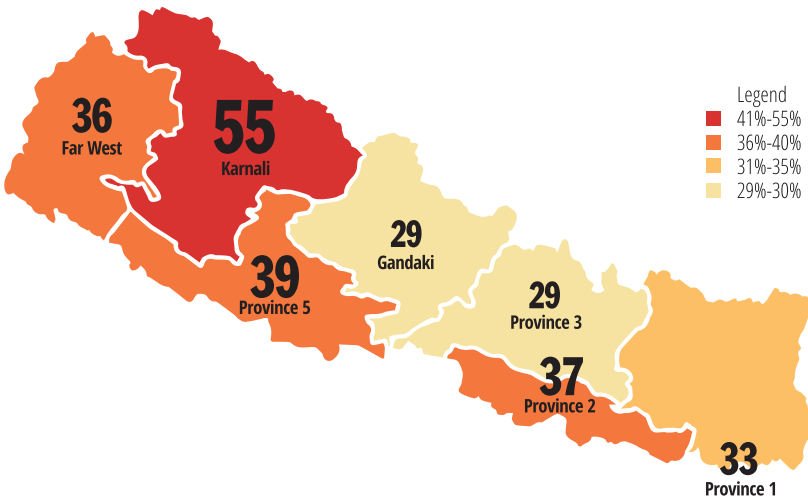
An article in *The Journal of Nutrition* earlier this year found that infants in Kathmandu were getting 25% of their calories from junk food and instead of being fat, those who consumed the most junk food were on average shorter than their peers.

Brenda Kellen agrees that while there is a lot of concern about hunger and food security, there is not as much awareness about whether food is nourishing or not.

“Let’s look at all the tools available to reduce malnutrition. Fortifying foods can mean that

Stunting in children by province (in %)

Percentage of children under 5 who are stunted due to malnourishment



people get micronutrients but it should go hand in hand with promotion of locally produced foods,” Kellen says.

Nutritionists believe that Nepal is on the right track, but it needs to make nutrition a political priority, scale up its programs throughout the country and target groups susceptible to malnutrition.

UNICEF’s Sharma says: “Nutrition should be universal, households should not be left behind. The government has to increase national investment on raising nutrition standards.”

THE RIGHT FOOD



Hear from health experts about the benefits of traditional whole foods, which are readily and locally available, and of the dangers of seemingly healthy processed junk.

nepalitimes.com



Private sector for nutrition?

Do the private sector and nonprofits have a role to play in reducing malnutrition? Does their involvement allow the government to shirk its responsibility of ensuring equitable nutrition for all?

The issue arose this week at a global conference on nutrition in Kathmandu. Among the 1,000 delegates attending the gathering were representatives of Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network, which tries to build strong alliances between the private sector and government to reduce malnutrition around the world.

nourishment. It is 100% the government’s job to reduce malnutrition.”

Uporey last week quit the Baliyo Nepal Nutrition Initiative, which is supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMFG), because it would mobilise Nepal’s private-sector food companies to raise nutrition levels among Nepalis. Baliyo Nepal was launched by President Bidya Devi Bhandari on 1 November (pictured above).

Baliyo Nepal’s Chair Swarnim Waglé, former vice-chair of the National Planning Commission, says the

organisation is not trying to take the place of the government but complement its efforts precisely because of the persistence of chronic malnutrition in the country.

Baliyo Nepal was dragged into controversy recently after one of its backers, the Chaudhary Foundation, told *The Kathmandu*



“There are many small-scale enterprises that are looking for opportunities to provide local solutions to nutrition-related challenges,” says Brenda Kellen (pictured above) of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, which organised the global gathering in Kathmandu, 4-7 November.

In fact, Nepal’s Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan 2018-2022 underlines the need for government to partner with business. Experts say that while it makes sense to involve food manufacturers and traders to improve nutrition, there is an inherent contradiction between businesses that are out to maximise profits, and the need to ensure nutrition for communities that cannot afford adequate food.

Nutrition activist Aruna Uprety is against private sector involvement in ensuring proper nutrition for all. “If you involve businesses they will look first for profit, not adequate


Post that BMFG funding would be used to fortify its popular instant noodle brand Wai Wai. BMFG did test instant noodle fortification, but Waglé says the initiative was not taken any further.

He told *Nepali Times*: “We are not touching any junk food. We want to make nutrition affordable for all Nepalis and collaborate with companies to meet the demand. We are creating a sustainable and independent approach to meet malnutrition targets.”

Some experts argue that nutrient fortification of food brands has been successful in Nepal in the past. Iodisation of the Ayo Noon brand of salt helped eradicate goitre and cretinism in Nepal in the 1990s.

Whatever the merits of involving the private sector in ensuring nutrition for all, the real scandal is that one in three Nepali children are still malnourished.

ELEVATE
YOUR EXPECTATIONS



OLD
DURBAR



BLEND OF ENGLISH GRAIN SPIRIT AND 8 YEARS OLD PEATED SCOTCH WHISKY WITH SPRING WATER FROM THE HIMALAYAS
FINISHED IN OROBORO SHERRY BARRELS IN NEPAL

BLACK CHIMNEY

FIRST BARREL

SECOND BARREL

750ml 75cl e

42.8%alc/vol



CHARRED OAK BARRELS
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INTENSE CHARACTER



<http://www.facebook.com/olddurbar>

Quid pro quo

Now that all 3 festivals are over and done with, let's all sit back, relax and recuperate from the exertion to prepare for the next holiday.

After consuming all those water buffaloes, it is time now to burn their bones for fertiliser and spread the aroma through the city. If air pollution is an index of a country's rising per capita GDP, then Delhi and Kathmandu are both steaming ahead to an affluent future in our co-prosperity sphere.

Those watching the body language of our politicians at various political tea parties after asain last month couldn't help wonder why these back-slapping, jovial leaders observed laughing their heads off at each other's off-colour jokes, can't seem to agree on anything during closed-door meetings? And why, if the struggle for succession to replace the ailing prime minister is heating up so much, were they not stealing each other's biscuits? Why haven't they strangled each other yet?

In any other country, a self-respecting Communist Party never allows a power struggle go waste. The dominant faction physically exterminates the dissident faction in an internal purge long before it can even think about breaking away. Could it be that our totalitarians are less totalitarian than other totalitarians?

Those of you following the news from Washington DC these days will have noticed that political pundits have had to resort to Latin to explain the byzantine world of Trumpland. The English language just does not suffice to describe what transpired in the phone conversation about the threat to withhold US military aid unless the Ukrainians handed over dirt on Biden, Jr.

The Ass fails to see what is so noteworthy or objectionable about a quid pro quo. In fact, in Nepal quid pro quo is the modus operandi and habeus corpus of our status quo and, it goes without saying, the quo vadis, ipso facto, cum laude, and ad nauseum. We have been handing out quids for quos for centuries, and without such palm greasing, our system of government, and indeed the whole state super structure, would collapse in no time.

Take Kalapani. It was a quid pro quo between Nepal's rulers, who wanted to curry favour with the hegemonic successors of the British Raj. We got the quid, they got the quo. Carving out chunks of Tundikhel to the Army was also a similar give-and-take to keep the generals happy.

Our landlinked Himalayan ex-kingdom where the Buddha was born, to which Kalapani belongs, and which has never been colonised by aliens had a nice long vacation and now, fully rested, we once more plunge head-first into the task of de facto prolonging the political mea culpa and sine qua non, not to mention the quid pro quo and rigor mortis.

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NOV 2019 INTAKE

हिमाल

साप्ताहिक खबरपत्रिका

बार्षिक ग्राहक योजना !



हिमालको ग्राहक बन्नुहोस् र चन्द्रागिरी केवल कारको दुई वटा टिकट
अथवा
रु. १०००/- बराबरको क्यालिवर सूजको गिफ्ट भौचर लिनुहोस् ।



पाटनढोका, ललितपुर, मोबाइल: ९८४१२४८८९४, ९८५१०५४७२९,
फोन: ५००५६०९-०५, फ्याक्स: ९७७-९-५००५५९८, पोखरा: ९८५६०४५८६३

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