Cruelty and compassion

Rambhu Paswan was among 100 men hired by the Godlima Temple this week to kill animals on behalf of at least 2 million devotees from India and Nepal who thronged to the shrine in Bara district to give thanks for wishes fulfilled. At least 15,000 buffaloes, goats and fowl were slaughtered on 3-4 December. Paswan himself despatched at least 48 buffaloes, receiving Rs6,000 per day to kill the corralled animals one by one.

“Toward dawn, we started cutting the tendons of the dead animals to bleed them dry, and this is how we kill them,” he said. “They are already dead so this is not cruelty.”

Ram, who sold 30 buffaloes on the first day, not all of them with one blow. He killed another 100 or so goats and chickens the next day. Both Paswan and Ram have performed the ritual slaughter at Godlima before, and use earnings to support their families.

The killings were ahead this year despite outrage and outcry in Nepal and worldwide. Nepal’s Supreme Court had in 2016 directed authorities not to allow the slaughter. India’s apex court also ruled in 2014 against transporting animals across the border to be killed at Gadimai.

The court decisions and strong lobbying by activists on both sides of the border led to the number of sacrifices this year. Volunteers from Friends of Animal Welfare Nepal (FAWN) patrolled the Nepal-India border in the weeks before the festival, and activists met district officials to seek them to heed the Supreme Court ruling.

“Despite our effort to make this festival bloodless, the sacrificial went ahead with blind faith in the tradition,” said FAWN’s Suna Shrestha, whose team was feeding and tending to the animals till the end. “We did everything to save the innocent lives. The temple committee and the COO did not keep their promise.”

Bara’s Chief District Officer Phanindra Mani Pokhrel said last week his administration was trying its best to discourage the killings. Temple lead priest Mangal Chaudhary told Nepal Times: “You can just sacrifice a coconut, or offer flowers and sweets to the goddess.”

KILLING FIELDS: Animal rights advocates, India Shrestha (left) and Cecilia Żydek, fight to save the right before the slaughter. Activists tried strenuously to stop the mass killings on 3-4 December in Bara.

But neither the government nor the temple appeared willing, or able, to stand up to public pressure for the mass killings. Unlike religious sacrifice, the animals at Gadimai are not slaughtered to be eaten later, but left to rot.

nepalitimes.com

Watch video of preparations for the Gadimai Mela, the arrival of the estimated 2 million devotees from India and Nepal and partially sanitised visuals of the slaughter.

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MIGRATION MITIGATION

In the strict laissez-faire that the United Nations is accustomed to, the Madrid Climate Summit is called the 25th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). We will call it COP25 for short. After riots escalatedaged in Chile, the venue was shifted to Madrid — just as well because that reduced the carbon footprint of the gathering. COP25 is being called at a time when scientists have warned that the goals of the Paris Agreement of 2015 are outdated and that the targets for curbing carbon emissions need to be raised. Recent extreme weather, the melting of polar ice caps, glaciers shrinking to the Himalayas and other climate-induced changes that scientists expected to happen in 2019 are already taking place.

The reason: carbon emissions are going up. In the atmosphere, CO2 concentrations in 400 parts per million last month — several orders of magnitude higher than before the industrial revolution, when it never rose above 300.

Just to put in perspective, all the changes we see happening around the world, due to global warming, have been set off by a temperature rise of less than 1°C. A human society started burning fossil fuels back in coal. Yet, in the best-case scenario global average temperature is set to rise by at least 2°C in the next 50 years.

In its Emissions Gap Report 2019 last week, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) warned that countries need to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 7.6% a year between 2018 and 2030 in order to cap temperature increases at 1.5°C as agreed in Paris in 2015. Lest we forget, the Paris Agreement was not just about cutting out of the Paris Agreement, and major emitters of carbon dioxide have not reduced their emissions as agreed. To meet the Paris targets, greenhouse gas emissions need to be cut by 60% by 2030 and countries need to become carbon neutral by 2050. COP25’s motto is "Time To Act," and it is hoped the 50 heads of state attending the meeting will do just that. Environmental activists are holding a parallel "Social Justice for Climate" to pressure governments to not back down on climate commitments. Yet, conspicuous by their absence in Madrid are US President Donald Trump, Russia’s Vladimir Putin, India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Israel’s new Prime Minister. Together they represent more than half the total emissions of greenhouse gases worldwide.

So what has been painted on our apocalyptic picture of what will happen if the world falls apart. Rising global temperatures will lead to heat stress, falling food production, continental-scale forest fires, receding icecaps and rising sea levels. All these slow-

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OTHER TOPICS THIS YEAR

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GADAIM

Nepal seems to be 10 years away from that happiest state of general awareness found in modern education regarding issues related to the country. It is an awareness of avoidance of violence and violence against women.

Nirmal Ghimire Sharma

1. respect religious traditions, but Gadaimi is sending out false impression of Nepal worldwide before visit Nepal year 2020
2. female role in society is increasing partly due to climate change. With the men gone, women are left to cope with the impacts of the climate change without support.
3. Nepal also needs to do much more to reduce petroleum demand — reducing carbon emissions and air pollution and the planet but also to save its own economy.
4. In the end, it all boils down to vision and governance to recognise the climatic crisis and be ready for its effects. Being unprepared will be much more costly in the long run.

10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

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10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

As world leaders gather in Addis Ababa, it is a fitting note to the nearly 30 years ago when the newly-formed UN Women's Centre called the International Women's Conference in Addis Ababa on 4 October 1990.

The people in the mountains of Nepal do not fear that the future of their children and grandchildren are tied up with how the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change meeting this week in Copenhagen goes.

Will the rich nations agree to cut back on 1990 emissions? In the next 10 years, set for is an effort to help the average global warming temperature to appear at least 5°C, which is already occurring as a result of higher emissions than can be cut by 1%.

COP25, the meeting in Paris, will focus on whether its social and civil rights are still protected as they are in the rest of the world. Women are still denied the right to vote, and whether they will help in a just adaptation measures in the world's poor will cop up in the next decade.
DISCOVER MORE: TALLINN

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TURKISH AIRLINES
Lighting up her darkness

Sita Tamang dropped out of school in Rolpa, but that did not stop her from making success of her life.

I thought this is how my life would end — collecting grass. But I still held some hope that life had something better in store for me,” recounts Sita, who learnt to knit from neighbours and won a prize for her skill in a handicraft show in Rolpa’s main town of Libang.

Sita was gaining confidence, but soon the Maoist conflict engulfed the district. She was 16, an age when many of her peers were either being recruited by the Maoists or harassed by security forces. She escaped to the safety of Kathmandu in 2002, after getting married.

The city was new to her, and she did not know anyone. She and her husband rented a small place, but Kathmandu was too expensive to survive in. One day she bumped into local women in Bhasmapuri who had formed a women’s cooperative to make candles — taking advantage of the 12-hour daily power cuts.

“The timing was perfect to make and sell candles,” recalls Sita, who got help from the Business Service Centre, run by women social entrepreneurs who offered vocational training for women who wanted to start their own businesses.

Sita started with a small investment of Rs45,000 and took a Rs10,000 loan from the women’s group. She bought the candle-making moulds and raw materials, and started making candles in her small one-room apartment, using her own cooking stove and utensils to make candles from molten wax. The next big challenge was to find buyers.

“I went on foot to find the right market and potential clients, carrying hundreds of candles. I did not sell too many in the beginning, but I was determined to make it work,” remembers Sita.

The candle business was competitive, and most buyers already had their own manufacturers. Sita explored the market further by visiting hotels, restaurants, shops and department stores. It was her participation in farmers’ markets and handicraft events that finally brought her exposure — getting noticed by big hotels, restaurants, retailers, companies and rich individuals.

Sita’s sales increased and her income skyrocketed, from Rs10,000 per month to Rs30,000, rising to Rs100,000 during festivals. She says she learned a big lesson: even someone without education could run a business and make a living.

Today, Sita is involved in business seminars to share her ideas, and even got to showcase her candles at an international fair in Thailand. Her advice to other aspiring entrepreneurs is to research the market first, make quality products and establish a network.

“Usually, there are a lot of well educated people during these seminars and meetings, but I don’t feel threatened as I believe I have created a good brand that is well liked by many buyers,” says Sita, who now takes orders by phones and even makes custom-designed candles.

In the last four years, she has produced more than 80,000 candles for clients like Hyatt, Radisson and Dwarika’s hotel, as well as shopping centres. Her tiny factory in Bhaisepati struggles to keep up with orders.

Despite her busy schedule, Sita also mentors other women in candle production and marketing.

“Starting a business is not easy. It is full of risk and you need a lot of family support,” explains Sita, who appreciates the help she gets from her young children, siblings and especially her husband.

Sita Tamang saw a glimmer of hope while collecting grass that day in remote Rolpa. The hope turned into a dream, which she has now realised as a successful entrepreneur in the capital.
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I’d like this one please.” A loud voice in the peaceful garden café “But no salami, only the cheese, and be sure not to put in any salt, chili or onion. And make sure the French fries are cooked brown and

SO FAR SO GOOD  
Lisa Choegyal

**Writing about writing**

Learning the craft in the fertile spiritual atmosphere of the Himalayan Writers Workshop

his Himalayan Writers Workshop attracts a wide range of overseas students, from aspiring to arrived, from young to not-so-young. What we all have in common is a desire to write more or write better, inspired by the unique Himalayan ambience.

This October course is prominently titled Wild Writing, Calm Mind, and our guest teacher is Laurie Wagner, who brings Californian insatiables and restless honesty to our literary efforts. With hunching curls, penetrating gaze and ferocity grin, Laurie challenges us beyond our comfort zone to push our penned limits, to face our deepest yearnings, to break through barriers, and to throw down words onto that daunting blank page.

Grilled within her carefully woven safety net, tears are not unusual as emotions are unleashed and nerves touched. Laurie stimulates us with selected verses and witty techniques. "The story’s reason is a spontaneous moment in time, and ‘wild writing’, where the fun does not leave the page for 15 unattended minutes, ‘conjuring up stories that are waiting to be written’.

James embodies the power of poetry, though he has lost the blood greying ponytail. The designer stubble, zen clothing and energetic charm remain. “I’m not as nice as you think I am.” But I disagree. He organises a local baking village to sew cotton quilts to educate their children, and his deaf-mute waitress friend joins us all for dinner, gesturing in distress at the fast-moving conversation.

“I’ll tell you everything later,” he signified his back, his hands flying. Yellow potatos float in a brass bowl. “I bought the roses around the steps this morning — why are they being written?”

During James’ early morning meditation sessions, we calm and awaken our writing senses. He helps us understand how Rinpoche teachings and Buddhist detachment can reveal unexpected truths — just be aware, let go and listen. Tempered with: “We all need a dose of chaos.” Circling Boudhanath steps at dusk we follow him in silence, focusing on sounds or smells. No wonder ears dropped café conversations become so vivid.

The rest of the workshop days are spent between walking to assaulted the senses, guest lecturers to recite contemporary spiritual and structured exercises to write, read, listen, edit, prune,nuance, share and trust. “Connecting our wild voices,” as Laurie calls it. We continue the conversation in libraries, penned by teasheaps, gathered on temple steps, around sunny outdoor tables and on cane chairs in gardens full of marigolds.

We participants inhabit hotels near the densely divided centre of Swayambhunath and Boudhanath, before progressing to the open grassy and stary skies of Namobuddha. Sipping lemon grass tea amidst winds in waves of blue and grey, the local Namobuddha cottages are too small to swing a cat or form a downward dog — I know because I tried. But the unadorned hilltop resort is perfectly chosen for meditating and writing purposes.

During a group walk through the back alleys of Patan secured by the incomparable fellow columnist in this paper, Anil Chitrakar, I reflected on the value of seeing familiar sights with fresh eyes, and embracing unanticipated outcomes with courage. My first Himalayan Writers Workshop was with travel writer Eric Weir three years ago, and the inexorably crafted piece I read out on our final night resulted in the first of these Nepal Times So Far So Good pieces. That was 72 fortnightly columns ago.

But I’m still trying to get started on that memoir. Singer songwriter Patt Smith wrote an entire book, mainly in a café drinking coffee, I don’t know how hard she found it to write a book. How many times have I been told: “You have such an interesting life, a disposable seat at early conservation and tourism events, what challenges you have endured and seen over 45 years in Nepal, all those historic people you met, and so many entertaining stories. You simply must write it all down into a book. What?”

Lisa Choegyal 2017

**Above the clouds with Yeti Airlines**

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"The atom bomb saved my life"

British Gurkha POW relives his incarceration and survival during the Second World War

Laxmi Basnet

They ate rats with rotten rice, were plagued by malaria and beaten by their Japanese captors. Only four of the 300 Nepali prisoners of war captured in Singapore and transported to camps in Indonesia survived. Bal Baburam Basnet, now 88, was one of them.

The British Gurkha defending Burma from Japanese invasion during the Second World War had to flee to Malaya, and were captured as Singapore fell. Those who refused to surrender were executed.

First they were taken to Java, where the white soldiers were put in one camp, while the Indian and Nepalese were kept in dirty, insect-infested cells with little food.

"On empty stomachs we were made to work carrying heavy loads, and had to bury the bodies of our friends," Basnet recalls, adding that punishment for disobedience was to have nails hammered into their foreheads in front of fellow prisoners.

Soon, the Japanese crammed the soldiers into vehicles and ships and took them to Java, then five months later to camps in New Guinea, where hundreds of prisoners survived eating coconut and even grass. Many contracted malaria, while others died with painful boils all over their body.

Only four Gurkhas who were brought to New Guinea survived.

"The dead were the lucky ones, those who were alive worried that there would be no one to bury them after they died," remembers Basnet.

Basnet (pictured, left, and with a knife that survived the war, above) was good with scissors, so the Japanese made him the camp barber. He talked to his captors in broken English while he cut their hair, and remembers the Japanese were confident they would win the war.

"They told me they would conquer the world, and Nepal would soon be a part of Japan. But one day there was panic in the camp, the Japanese started melting away," Basnet remembers. He found out only later that the Americans had bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.


Basnet's platoon had 1,300 members at the start of the war, but only 300 remained when they were captured. Among them, 200 were wounded and couldn't walk, another 200 were left behind to die. Only 150 made it to New Guinea at the end of the war, and only four were Nepalis.

A month after the Japanese left in 1945, Australian soldiers arrived and took the POWs to Darwin, where they were given Australian Army uniforms and $20 each for their trip to Bombay. After that it was a long train journey to Giokhpur, where they were reunited with other Gurkhas who had survived the war.

Basnet hiked over the mountains to his home in Gorkha of Baglung. After four years, his family and friends had given up on finding him. It was a surprise homecoming, and everyone was ecstatic.

But peace did not last. The Gurkhas were given a choice to join the British or Indian Armies. Basnet opted for the Indian Army, to be closer to home. And soon, India was at war with Pakistan and Basnet's platoon had to go to Ambala from Dehradun. Again, Bal Baburam Basnet lost many friends from the Gurkha brigade in the battles in Kashmir.

After that war, the Gurkhas who had served more than 15 years were given a choice to stay or retire with pension. Basnet says he raised his hand and quit the army.

"By then, I was pretty tired of fighting other people's wars." 

PHOTOS: MANISH RAI

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Nepalis open doors to a better life

Community homestay empowers women, uplifts communities and provides tourists a close-up of life in Nepal

Sanghamitra Subba

in Kavre

Shila Amaty (left) was already running a beauty parlour in her house in Panauti when a group of women in her community asked if she could help them start homestay as well. She agreed, and they set up their homes.

Then the women approached Royal Mountain Treks (RMT) to ask if the company would help them find clients for their community of homestays. Seven years later, what started as a corporate social responsibility initiative in a town in Kavre has expanded into a full-blended social enterprise called Community Homestay Network (CHIN) with chapters in 21 locations nationwide.

Guests from around the world can book rooms in homes of Nepali families that belong to the network, from high mountain settlements to the Taxi plains. While the price, activities and accommodations depend on where the homestay is located, the network ensures that local tourism is promoted and communities benefit.

For a chapter to join the network, it must gather 10 homes, agree to follow guidelines and elect a leader. In turn, members are given access to English language classes, a crash course on cleanliness and hygiene, and are informed about the types of activities they should offer guests from various cultures.

Families who wish to join a homestay program need to pay a yearly membership fee of Rs10,000 but are given loans from the network’s Community Development Fund (CDF) which also helps support member families facing an unexpected financial emergency.

The chapters work like cooperatives; from every guest booking, 85% goes back to the community, with most of the revenue staying with the host family, and 15% to the CDF. The remaining 15% goes to the network office in Kathmandu.

While other homestay programs in the network are slowly gathering traction, at the flagship chapter in Panauti, business is booming. Once unsure of how to act around visitors, women homestay managers now confidently greet tourists in trekking clothes, arriving their destinations as diverse as Denmark and Japan.

The Panauti chapter has 17 families and Amaty is currently community president. Demands are so great that they have to turn away new members.

As much as we want to let everyone be a part of the homestay network, we have to consider whether they would be a good fit to host guests,” she explains.

“We have to be stricter with our standards, and to continue having guests leave satisfied, we have to limit membership.”

These high standards are not

Guests at a Homestay in Panauti: practice making roti in a broad kitchen.

Homestays keep former

Mukesh Pokhrel

in Chitwan

Har Bahadur Pun from Medi Valley in Chitwan returned from Malaysia three years ago, and has been running his own homestay since then. He is thankful he made that decision, and spends his day welcoming guests into his home.

“The rooms are never empty because guests keep coming and I spend my time taking care of them. This is good work for myself, and good income for the village.”

The boundary of Chitwan National Park is 2km north of Ayodhya village and the Indian border is to the south. An ongoing problem for the village is wildlife from the park raiding crops, which is why most young people have migrated overseas for employment.

But today, homestays have given jobs to villagers. The guests are visitors from Nepal and abroad, attracted by the rustic lifestyle, and wildlife tourism in Chitwan.

Ward Chief Krishna Raj Adhikari says there is no shortage of guests, especially from October to May. Bookings need to be made by July, or visitors won’t find a room. Says homestay operator Om Bahadur Pun Magar.

“Many times, we have had to send tourists to hotels after serving them meals but we don’t like it when we have to do that. It spoils the whole homestay experience.”

Many people from the area who had migrated abroad for work have returned to open their own homestays, attracted by the income that can be made in their own houses. Many earn about Rs35,000 per month. The benefits go beyond individual houses. Previously there was no electricity in the village, and streets were filled with mud during the monsoon and dust in winter. Today, roads are paved, and in the evenings the village lights up because of new solar-powered street lamps.

The locals are less dependent on Chitwan National Park as well. “Before the homestay was established, everyone owned cows and buffaloes, and when we went into the jungle for grass we used to have run-ins with army ranges guarding the park,” says Som Maya Pun.

“Now, people have stopped raising livestocks or still feed them, and are busy with running their homestays.”

The homestays have also allowed locals to reconnect with their culture. Years ago, Dambar Bahadur Pun, who migrated from his home in Myagdi in the mountains, joined the Indian Army like many of his forebears. He used to return home every year for 45 days of vacation, travelling from Kausani through Surma. But that trip took at least a month. Tried of spending most of his holiday
A well-kept museum with historical and cultural artifacts is walking distance from a river where ducks paddle away the day. Guests can take a five-hour hike through up-country Tamang villages led by a local guide, enjoy cultural dance performances, learn about the rich traditions of one of the oldest towns in Nepal, and marvel at temples and stupas, while having access to well, western style bathrooms, homemade cooked meals and cafes.

Kumari Tamang (above) is equally thrilled to be a part of the Panauti chapter. “I really enjoy having conversations with the guests. They love hearing our life stories and are fascinated by how we live in a joint family,” she says. Puspan Gupta, impact manager at GET, gets emotional just thinking about how people’s lives have changed because of the network, including that of that of her family. A local of Panauti, Gupta became interested in tourism when she began hosting her mother with homestay guests. She started acting as a translator and tour guide, and was then offered the job at GET. “I have experienced firsthand the impact of homestay tourism on my community,” she tells us. The benefits spread beyond individual homestays in the community. When homestay owners buy more produce from local vendors and guests shop from local stores, tourism income is injected directly into the grassroots. Says Shila Amatya: “I am happy knowing that other women in my community and in homestay networks all over Nepal have the chance to earn money, send children to good schools, improve their homes, get involved in the community and most importantly, do something themselves.”

Jini, Sani, Lahmun, Jeff, was a single mother raising two daughters and caring for her in-laws with the little income she made in the shop on the ground floor of her home in Panauti. Things were difficult, but she made ends meet. After she joined the network, she had enough money to send her daughters to a good school.

“At first, I was scared because I didn’t know much about it. I had to attend the English classes and felt nervous,” says Sani, recounting how she has learned Italian words like papa noel and amano to make it easier for her guests from Italy to follow her cooking classes.

“Joining the network has changed my life and my daughters’ lives,” Sani says.

Guests earn how to wear women from homestay cooperative members in Panauti.

migrants in Nepal

travelling, he moved to Ayodhya, which is just three hours from his Indian Army base.

“We didn’t know much about our culture because we had not seen much of it,” says Kishal Sahaidur Pun, also from Myagdi. “But after we started our homestay, everyone was interested in the Magar culture again. We reconnected with our roots, and discovered our songs, dances and festivals.

To perform for guests, locals learnt Maruni and Sorri, traditional Magar dances. Now a ‘cultural home’ has been set up so homestay visitors can gather for performances.

Supporting homesteays can be a way of helping not only local economies but also conservation. People who live near national parks like Chitwan are often poor and rely on farming and livestock. Wild animals put livelihoods at risk. But by providing income from tourism, national parks can ease the burdens on those living around them.

Through the Terai Arc Landscape program, the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) Nepal supported buffer zone communities to set up homestays, and the Magar Cooperative is one of them. The 13 houses have hosted 11,000 visitors in the last three years, and the homesteads are marketed by the adventure travel company Intrepid Travel.

Tul Bahadur Pun Magar, the secretary of the cooperative and operator of one of the homestays, himself used to work as a driver and a construction supervisor in Bahrain, earning $70,000 a month. He is happy to be back near nature, and planning for the future.

“Through the homestays, we have learned to live with wild animals. Our guests love to see them and we have realized that they are precious,” he says. With the 13 homestays fairly well-established, Pun Magar has plans to create a bird sanctuary near his village.

Many operators of Ayodhya’s homestays are women, who have been empowered by the income and exposure. “We never used to deal with people from outside the household,” says homestay operator Sharmila Rai. “Now we are confident, engaging with anyone.”

While only a few of Ayodhya’s households host homestays, they generate income beyond lodging fees. All vegetables needed for feeding tourists is grown organically in the village, dairy products are made locally, and the fish and poultry are also raised by the village.

The growth of economic disparities within the village is a problem for the homestay programs, particularly in places where for reasons of caste or religion is already a socio-economic gap. In Ayodhya, at least, the distribution of income-generating activities as well as the level of one homestay per operator, seems to be keeping these disparities in check.
**Sunday Social**

Hang out with new people, grab a drink or two, listen to live music and join the merriment.
- 8 December, 4pm-5pm, Musizz Café, Kathmandu, 9861092087

**Yomari Purni**

Yomari Purni is a Newa festival that celebrates the end of the rice harvest. On this full moon day, devotees worship Annapurna, the Goddess of Grains and make yomari, a delicacy cooked from rice flour filled with chaulkai khware.
- 12 December

**South Asian Games**

The 1st SA Games, which started this week with 7 countries competing across 26 games. Catch the best of athletes from South Asia in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Janakpur. For more information: www.sag2019.com
- 1-10 December, Timings and locations vary

**Making Natural Earrings**

Get creative and crafty with Tulia’s Workshop’s workshops on DIY eco-friendly accessories. Turn orange peels into cute earrings. Participants will get to take their creations home. Pre-registration required: t.d.y@tulia.com
- 8 December, 5pm-6pm, Stock Point, Sushy Media Arts Collecting, Dhangeti (9811171652)

**Bhaktapur Heritage Walk**

In celebration of the Yomari Purni Festival, take a guided walk in Bhaktapur. You’ll have the chance to view the temples and learn about the history and rich culture of the Old Town, while enjoying shopping and the local cuisine.
- 12 December, 8am onwards, Clysmonning Cafe, Bhaktapur

**KIMFF 2019**

The 19th Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival will screen documentaries and experimental films about mountains, nature, and related subjects, their influence on human life and fight against climate change. Catch panel discussions, interviews with filmmakers and some of the best documentaries from around the world.
For more information: kimff.org
- 19-22 December, Innares Locations (9801136692)

**South Asian Games**

The 1st SA Games, which started this week with 7 countries competing across 26 games. Catch the best of athletes from South Asia in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Janakpur. For more information: www.sag2019.com
- 1-10 December, Timings and locations vary

**Handicraft Market**

Brave stalls lined with local handicrafts, Nepali arts and crafts, and support some of small businesses.
- 7 December, 10am-7pm, Chhoppati Center,lamatre

**Interactive Storytelling**

As part of KIMFF, join three Nepali conservationists for Tracking the Ghosts of the Mountain, an interactive storytelling session about researching and collecting snow research, and the story behind it all.
- 11 December, 4pm-5pm, Chhoppati, Kathmandu (9810044663)

**Ester Queveto Trio**

Ester Queveto, Zimbabwean vocalist who has studied classical and jazz music, will be performing alongside Nepali bassist Siddhi Maharatna and drummer Kanishka. There’ll be a fusion of rock, classical and jazz music.
- 6 December, 4pm-5pm, House of Music, Thamel (9842940737)

**Kathmandu’s Holiday Concert**

Kathmandu’s Holiday Concert will keep you in the holiday spirit. And with Christmas just around the corner, special joy to those in need by donating to local charities selected by the organizers.
- 7 December, 6pm-9pm, The British School, Chinchapokhari (9801787677)

**Haopin Hotpot**

If you plan on eating Haopin Hotpot anytime soon, make sure to take a couple of friends because hotpot is best shared with a side of good, and hungry, company. This place offers a wide variety of meats and vegetables to dip in flavoured soups and delicious sides to keep you satisfied while it cooks.
- 10:30pm-11pm, Ninyon Shop, 9810964999

**Tamarind**

If you’re looking for a restaurant with great food and drinks, Tamarind is the place to go. And if you’re in the mood to discover some (just as passionate) mixes at the end of the regulars, stop by on Tuesday evenings.
- Homeshool, (9802066706)

**Sam’s One Tree Cafe**

The menu of this cafe has appeared in the background of many social media posts and stories. Customers rave about the estão’s lively atmosphere, tempting cooking and quiet serenity.
- 11am-6:30pm, Basantapur (9822902906)

**Barah Jungle Lodge**

The first eco-friendly lodge in Chitwan, the lodge directly overlooks Chitwan National Park. Includes a spa, boutique guest rooms, individual and two-bedroom private villas, and a suite with a private swimming pool.
- Melpathu, Chitwan (9814026060)

**Eleni Jungle Resort**

Just beyond the reserve that houses elephants, with its lush landscape and a variety of flora and fauna, Eleni Jungle Resort is a getaway surrounded by wildlife and greenery.
- Saptari, (9866406507)

**Chola**

Chola is a local Nepali restaurant with traditional Nepali cuisine in Chitwan. They offer a variety of dishes that cater to every taste. The restaurant is located in the heart of Chitwan, making it an ideal place to stop by during your visit.
- 8pm-10pm, Chhingpati (9892047037)

**Sealine Crowne Plaza**

Wear off the winter chill by enjoying lunch under the warm sun at Sealine Crowne Plaza’s outdoor restaurant or the indoor Garden Terrace.
- Hotelphone (9814276589)

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**KATHMANDU, 29 November – 5 December**

**AIR QUALITY INDEX**

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For the latest air quality index, the daily average for the **Kathmandu Valley (KMC)** in Kathmandu is monitored in the KMC area, which measures 2.5 kilometers across the city. The AQI is a number between 0 and 500, and is divided into six categories, with a score of 500 being the worst, and 0 being the best. The AQI for the Kathmandu Valley is expected to be in the good range during this period.
“Menstruation is not private business, it is everyone’s business”

Nepali activists mark 8 December as the Day for Dignified Menstruation

Reeti K.C.

Menstruation in Nepal has become synonymous with ‘chhaepaki’, the tradition of humilitating women to cowboys for five days during their periods. The practice is infamous in western Nepal — where another segregated woman died in Achham district this week — but the belief that a menstruating woman is dirty, impure and unsuitable is pervasive country-wide.

Nepal is one among many countries globally to consider menstruation a taboo. The topic is spoken about in hush-hush tones and only among women who are on intimate terms — but one activist is fighting such attitudes.

“Menstruation is not private business, it is everyone’s business,” says Radha Paudel, who has been working to abolish the menstrual taboo for almost 40 years.

Paudel started to speak publicly about menstruation at age 15, when she was studying to become a nurse, and quickly realized that the taboo was due to lack of education. She vowed to teach people what she was learning, and her parents were her first students.

During her childhood, Paudel had seen her older sisters being mistreated by neighbours and other villages when they stayed in the cowshed during these periods. It scared and angered her. Traumatized, the nine-year-old left her home in Chitwan to commit suicide because she did not want to live as a girl.

Paudel obviously failed to kill herself, but the young girl never stopped dreaming about being a man in a patriarchal society, where the odds were always against women. Now as a grown woman, she helps young girls accept and not be ashamed of the natural process.

“Out of 30 days, when 5 days of menstruation make no difference in the daily lives of women, that will be dignified menstruation,” says Paudel. She believes that excluding a woman from any daily activity amounts to destroying her dignity, whether it is barring her from a religious task or excluding her from a certain part of the house.

Paudel tells Nepal Times that upholding women’s dignity during menstruation should be activists’ priority, ahead of other issues like accessibility of sanitary products.

The menstrual taboo, she argues, encourages men to be powerful and women to be powerless.

Two years ago, the Nepali government drafted a policy on dignified menstruation. This year, the Radha Paudel Foundation and its partners are taking the initiative to mark 8 December as the Day for Dignified Menstruation. It will also be marked globally, by friends and partners of the Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation.

An international workshop is scheduled to take place in May, 2020. Menstruation activism has created a global solidarity of sisterhood. One example is the 2019 Oscar-winning documentary Period. End of Sentence by Iranian-American Director Rayka Zehtabchi. It focuses on women in India who fight the stigma of menstruation by opening a sanitary pad manufacturing company. It is evident in the film that their voices are being heard and the veil of ignorance is ripping apart.

But Paudel thinks the documentary’s approach is insufficient. “It talks only about a sanitary pad company and doesn’t talk about dignity.” Likewise, she does not support the idea of period poverty, labelling it a foreign concept. “It focuses on accessibility of sanitary products but not the taboo attached to them. Distributing pads without providing this information promotes the idea that sanitary pads are dirtied must be hidden, which creates a negative impression.”

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Don’t ignore Tooth sensitivity

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- Dr. Subir Banerji, dentist practising in the UK.

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“उसे उसकी ताकत वाले वातावरण में देख सकते हैं।”
“उसे उसका संस्कार किया।”

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"सुबह नतीज के साथ दिन की शुरुआत।"
WELCOME TO NEPAL: Incoming British Ambassador to Nepal, Nepal Pali (left), on her way in a ceremonial horse-drawn carriage to present credentials to President Bidya Devi Bhandari at her residence in Siddha Pokhari on Wednesday.

GOAL: Nepal’s women’s team made a winning start at the ongoing South Asian Games on Wednesday by defeating their Sri Lankan rivals.

WHOOOSH: Nima Ghutungmar wins the 50th gold medal for Nepal in Wushu on Thursday at the South Asian Games, where Nepal dominated martial arts.

FINE MOVE: A Nepal team strikes on action during a match against Sri Lanka on Wednesday. The hosts had to content themselves with a 1-1 draw after a thunderous 4-5 victory over Bhutan in the first match.

FINISHING LINE: Soni Guting won the gold in women’s marathon at the South Asian Games in Faridpur on Monday, completing the race in 2 hours 13 minutes and 45 seconds.

Sewa Bhattarai

The 17th edition of the Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival (KIMFF) next week will not just feature documentaries and experimental films, but also movies from all over the world dealing with mountains.

The festival coincides this year with mountain-related events and anniversaries, including the centenary of Edmund Hillary and 60 years of Swiss cooperation in Nepal. This year too, the festival has an international competition, a non-competitive section and a Nepal Panorama with more than 70 films in a wide range of genres.

The international competition has films about mountain communities in Asia, Europe and the Americas. Quite a few films are about adventure, climbing, trekking, paragliding and other mountain sports like rafting and canoeing.

Many of the entries examine the impact of modernity, big business, and migration on traditional lifestyles. Ethnographic portrayals from communities as for sport as Basa New and Mustang take a close look at mountain communities.

“Filmmakers have worked on a variety of subjects. Development, gender, geography and culture are recurrent themes,” says festival coordinator Ramrata Limbu. “Together, the films show how difficult life on mountains is all over the world, and how the traditional way of life is disappearing everywhere."

In Nepal, the filmmakers seem interested in how the mountain terrain is connected with society. Many filmmakers have portrayed migration, economy and the hardships of mountain lifestyles. Social struggles and changes are also in focus, with films on Kamali women, patriarchy and childbirth. Another popular theme is love and relationships, with films on polyandry, teenage relationships and infidelity.

KIMFF 2019
Festival of mountain films from around the world

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HIGHLIGHTS

Edmund Hillary’s Centenary
The first man on Everest would have been 100 this year, and this is an important year for mountaineering. KIFF brings together diverse films about the Kiwi mountaineer, opening with the remake of Everest. Directed by Antonella Padovana, the film has a voiceover by Hillary himself, as he reflects and remembers key moments of the journey. Order to Sky, a film by Michael Dillon, reminds us that though Hillary was known for his heroic adventure, that was not the only achievement. Dillon’s film takes us into other adventures with Hillary.

60 years of Swiss Cooperation in Nepal
Being another landlocked mountainous country, Switzerland has always tried to make Nepal its image. This year marks 60 years of Swiss diplomatic presence in Nepal, and KIFF will focus on classic films from Switzerland. A re-adaptation of Heimat, a classic novel about a young girl who lives with her grandfather, will have a special screening. Together with Der Alpinausflug, the films show a lifestyle similar to Nepal in the Swiss kind of way.

Parikkarinit Nepal
Every year KIFF holds a short film competition for films under 3 minutes. This year’s theme, Parikkarinit Nepal (changed Nepal), focuses on the transformations Nepal has gone through in recent times. The poetic changes, the constitution to natural ones for the earthquake. The theme has received submissions in a wide variety of styles and promises to be an interesting reveal of Nepal’s recent history.

Climate is key
Many films in KIFF are about the climate crisis. In Malaysia, a project uses puzzles by farmers to inform the Caledon Forest in Columbia beyond commercial representations. In Nepal, traditional farmers struggle to save their farms from newcomers and big businesses. During the eve of Everest in Patagonia, a herder finds his way of life under threat. The film ends upon a changing journey (Sumi and Duncan). Nepal films are about how the changing climate forces young people to migrate away from their mountain homes.

Presentations and panel discussions

KIFF features several discussions on topics related to mountains.

Snow leopards
In this interactive session, individuals who have worked to conserve snow leopards will share their experiences. It also includes songs about snow leopards, and will interest nature and wildlife enthusiasts.
2 PM, 11 Dec

Rethinking our history
Plan International’s global campaign, Girls Get Equal, kicks off its Nepal iteration at KIFF. The discussion will focus on issues like girls’ freedom of speech including online harassment, discrimination, and damaging gender stereotyping in media, aiming at truthful representation of girls and boys in media.
130 PM, 12 Dec

17th Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival
11-15 December
City Hall and Nepal Tourism Board

Nepal wherever you are.

KiAFF
National Academy of Fine Arts
Kathmandu, Nepal
Nepal must

The climate emergency makes all of the country’s other crises pale in comparison

Sonia Awale

In the past, Nepal has migrated to India for seasonal labour and military recruitment. Today they fly overseas for work. Tomorrow they may have to migrate in increasing numbers because of climate-induced disasters.

But the reasons for migrating remain the same: relations of Nepal’s farmers on rain-fed agriculture, which leaves them vulnerable to erratic monsoons. And as extreme weather events become more frequent due to the climate emergency, more and more Nepalis may be forced to move out.

“Already, climate change is causing more frequent droughts, flash floods and rising temperatures, reducing crop yields across Nepal. Climate change has lowered the water table and dried natural springs, the snowline has receded across the Himalayas, and glaciers are retreating dramatically.

The shortage of water is already forcing entire villages to relocate, and the situation is expected to worsen in the next few decades as the dry season flow from snow-fed rivers declines because little ice remains to melt. Nepalis have been migrating for centuries to escape poverty, indebtedness and monsoon failures. All these push factors have now been magnified by climate-related hazards, and are already resulting in increased migration.”

“We are witnessing a rapid rise in temperature and a resulting climate shift. But people in rural mountainous and coastal areas may not be able to adapt to these changes, forcing them to move,” explained climate expert Manoj Shakal, who is in Madrid for the United Nations climate summit, COP25, citing the example of pastoralists relocating in Mustang district because of prolonged drought.

Scientists have had to revise estimates of the rate of global warming because the impact is being felt much earlier than expected, with heat waves, larger forest fires, more intense storms, unusual snowfalls and extreme rainfall events. The past decade was the hottest ever on record, Europe saw its hottest ever June this year, sub-Saharan Africa experienced unprecedented drought, while Cyclone Fani triggered the evacuation and displacement of 3.5 million people in Bangladesh and India in May.

Here in Nepal, over 80,000 people were infected with dengue this monsoon in an unprecedented outbreak that scientists said was exacerbated by a warming climate. Bara district recorded a rare tornado that killed 80 people, and razed villages. Floods in the Tami are getting worse every year.

“There are many reasons for people to migrate, but the additional stress from the risks of increased floods and droughts, or changes in farming or water supply, may just push people’s

Women in climate hot

Migration of men, poverty and poor working conditions diminish women’s power to act

Marty Logan

Women in Asia and Africa hurdle kit by climate change may have a tough time adapting to the climate emergency, even with support from family or state, finds a new study.

The results raise questions for global agreements designed to help people adapt to the climate emergency.

The findings are based on 28 case studies in three agro-ecological regions on the two continents: 14 in semi-arid locales, 6 in mountain and glaciated river basins (including one in Nepal) and 8 in delta. The main livelihoods in these natural resource-dependent areas include agriculture, livestock rearing and fishing, supplemented by wage labour, petty trade and income from remittances.

Clock starts ticking at COP25

Josie Wang

Climate change has not reached the “point of no return,” warned UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (above) ahead of the United Nations climate conference, COP25, which started this week in Madrid and will focus on implementing targets agreed in the Paris Agreement four years ago.

In 2015, governments committed to limit average global temperature rise to only 1.5°C above pre-industrial temperatures. This meant countries had to implement effective climate crisis solutions by the end of 2020, but that has not happened. In fact, some countries, like the US, have pulled out of the Paris Agreement altogether, and others have not been ambitious enough.

Anyway, a leader in cutting emissions, continues to produce oil and gas. China too has taken action to reduce emissions, but failed to meet its targets, and might now even be increasing emissions. Despite moves towards renewable energy, India is investing in new coal-fired plants.

“China’s proposed coal expansion is far out of alignment with the Paris Agreement that it would put the necessary reductions in coal out of reach,” said Christine Shearer, an analyst from Global Energy Monitor, quoted in the Guardian.

As the Paris Agreement approaches its deadline, the main discussion at COP25 is Article 6, which focuses on providing financial support to developing countries to reduce emissions and on cutting emissions by using global carbon markets.

Carbon markets, which have existed since 1997, aim to limit greenhouse gas emissions by trading in carbon credits. The UN provides carbon credits to developing countries for emission reduction projects. Buyers (other countries) can use the credits to fulfill their own reduction targets and sellers can use the money to pave their way to carbon neutrality.

Under current trends, achieving the Paris target will be much more difficult than when the deal was finalised. “Ten years ago, if countries had acted on the science they would have needed to reduce emissions by 3.3% each year,” Guterres said. “Today, we need to reduce emissions by 7.6% each year.”

David Maddison, Director of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) told New Times: “A 1.5 degree temperature rise is already too hot for mountains, and it is already a state of emergency for many mountain people who are on the front line of climate change.”

There are ominous signs of the climate emergency as COP25 delegates met in Madrid. Ongoing wildfires in Australia have forced more than 600 families from their homes, sea levels reached a record high in Venice and higher temperatures affected this year’s monsoon in South Asia, resulting in deadly floods.

Cyclones have hit more frequently, including Cyclone Bulbul and Fani, which battered coastal areas of Bangladesh and India this year.

In the next 12 months, said Guterres, “it is essential that we move more ambitious national commitments — particularly from the main emitters — to immediately start reducing greenhouse gas emissions at a pace consistent with reaching carbon neutrality by 2050.”

ICIMOD’s Maddison said his organisation “would like to work closely with our member countries and other allies to make sure that the voice of the mountains is heard, and to build momentum for more ambitious climate action, critical for mountain people.”
spots face challenges adapting

SHOULDERING THE BURDEN: The world’s heavy on the climate crisis, and women are often the first to feel the impact. Environmental risks include droughts, floods, and other natural disasters, which can have a significant impact on women’s health and safety.

In some countries, women are more likely to face climate-related health issues, such as reproductive health problems due to changes in rainfall patterns. Women may also be more vulnerable to violence and other forms of abuse in the face of climate change.

Moreover, women are often responsible for managing household chores and caring for children, which can make them more vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

The carbon footprint of tourism

Transport-related emissions from tourism are expected to increase to 9.3% of all man-made CO2 emissions in the next 10 years, according to a landmark report from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). As tourism numbers rise, and awareness grows about low-carbon travel, emissions per passenger kilometre are expected to drop.

Launched at a side-event during the UN Climate Summit COP25, in Madrid this week, the report, "Transport Related CO2 Emissions of the Tourism Sector, greenhouse emissions produced by different modes of tourism transport.

It is time for the tourism sector, especially tourism policymakers, to use data in this report effectively, and ensure the sector plays a leading role in addressing the climate emergency," said UNWTO Executive Director, Michael Buerli at the launch.

Ovais Sarmad, deputy secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), added: "While tourism is mentioned in many nationally determined contributions as a big concern, not enough has yet been done. Industry must do more, but governments must also align their policies, so that at the international level we can collectively work to achieve ambitious goals."

Some of the main conclusions of the research include:

- Against the current ambition scenario, transport-related CO2 emissions from tourism are projected to increase from 1.397 million tonnes to 1.998 million tonnes between 2020 and 2030, a 25% rise.
- During the same period, international and domestic arrivals are expected to grow from 20 billion to 37 billion, mainly driven by domestic tourism from 18.8 billion to 35.6 billion, followed by international arrivals (12.2 billion to 1.8 billion).
- Transport-related emissions from tourism represented 5% of all man-made emissions in 2016, and will increase to 5.3% by 2030.
- Tourism-related transport emissions represented 2.2% of all transport emissions in 2016 and will account for 3% in 2030.

High and dry

Village in Mustang

One of the increasing number of settlements that have been abandoned because of water shortages caused by climate change.

will have to relocate because of rising sea levels.

A recent Oxford report named climate change-fuelled disasters as the single most important driver of internal displacement over the last decade, having forced more than 20 million people to leave their homes annually.

Of the current development pathway and governance forests, human mobility, spheres, will have huge humanitarian and social costs. We in Nepal may not remain immune to this disruption even though we are landlocked," says water expert Ajaya Dixit.

From the Paris Agreement, the executive committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism established a task force on displacement to develop recommendations to prevent, minimize and address displacement due to climate change. Agencies, including the International Organisation for Migration, are building support for the second phase of the task force in Madrid this week.

Climate migration is also being discussed in global forums and events at COP25. With a rising backlash against migrants and refugees worldwide, it is likely that climate change impacts will escalate, stretching national capacity and governance and increasing the cost of responding. More people move out of other people’s land, political confrontation and conflict between native populations and migrants can result.

Government representatives in Madrid need to devise policies not just to reduce emissions, but to deal with the political, cultural and economic aftermath of climate migration.

Says Dixit: “The climate crisis poses an existential threat. Let us hope humanity and collective wisdom prevail to begin much needed transformative action.”

SHOULDERING THE BURDEN: The world’s heavy on the climate crisis, and women are often the first to feel the impact. Environmental risks include droughts, floods, heat waves and cyclones, all of which negatively affect livelihoods. The study, A Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Women’s Agency and Adaptive Capacity in Climate Change Hotspots in Asia and Africa was published in the journal Nature Climate Change.

It found that when households take steps to adapt to the impact of climate change, the result is that the strategies place increasing responsibilities and burdens on women, especially those who are young, less educated and belong to lower classes or marginal castes and ethnicities. This occurred even in cases where support appeared to be available in the form of families, communities or via state support. Examples include when women migrate to find work because of climate change-induced impacts at home. While the money they earn can boost family incomes, women are aware that women must shoulder a larger burden. As a result, women reported reduced leisure time, with negative consequences on their wellbeing, including the health and nutrition of themselves and their households, says the report. In other cases, governments stopped to offer support but during floods or droughts, for example, men dominated state-provided aid and relief facilities, making women reliant on their male relatives to receive support. “In a sense, women do have voice and agency, yet this is not contributing to strengthening longer-term adaptive capacities,” concludes the report.

But in three examples in the study, one in Nepal, women showed adapt to the increased burdens delivered by climate change. In Chharghan, Nepal, a district support from a well-established cooperative enabled many women — excluding widow women — to switch from mixing buffalo and cattle to vegetable farming, which adapted better to growing rain scarcity. By enhancing women’s agency, we need to understand the role we play in creating an enabling environment where a woman’s right to make decisions about her own life is recognised, where women are economically empowered and free from all forms of discrimination and violence,” said Anil Puikah, who worked on the case study for the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). Poverty is the main factor in the declining decision making power of women in some hot spots, says the report, as even when women share responsibilities in the family and work outside of the home. In city, Kenya, for example, women of female-headed households sell alcohol to earn money to pay for children’s schooling, but this exposes them to health risks, such as engaging in sexual activities with their clients. A 35-year-old woman told researcher, “Despite our efforts, there is a high level of malnutrition here. We can’t afford meat, we just eat rice and potatoes, but even for this, the quantity is not enough.”

The study notes that international agreements, such as the gender action plans of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) people important about the contribution of adaptive capacity of women, and men, so that agreements can support sustainable, equitable and effective adaptation.

It suggests that effective protection, like the universal public distribution system for cereals in India, or pensions and social grants in Namibia, could contribute to reducing immediate pressures on survival.

“The human chain will always be the cheapest,” investments are needed to enable better and more sustainable management of resources. Women’s self-help groups are often presented as solutions, yet they are confronted by the lack of resources, skills and capacity to help their members effectively meet the challenges they confront,” the report adds.
Erratum

As a newspaper of world records, we tell the tooth, the whole tooth and nothing but the tooth. However, reporters are also human, and we sometimes knowingly tweak the truth. And when we do, our strict Media Code of Ethics requires us to be low and hope no one noticed. Just kidding. Actually, we issue a clarification to say that we were right to get it wrong.

Be it a tiny typo, a glaring grammatical gaffe, a huge factual blunder, or an alternative truth, the important thing is to alert innocent bystanders about howlers and learn from our mistakes so that we can make even bigger ones in the future. Before we are hoisted by our own petard, some critical self-examination is called for. If caught with our pants down, we rectify our errorum with a corrigendum. It is SOP in our profession to issue corrections like these:

- We apologize to Comrade Madhav Kumar Nepal for triggering a major international incident with our bold headline on the Sports Page yesterday: ‘India Mauls Nepal’. The reportage pertained to the table tennis finals of the ongoing 13th SAG. In no way did we imply that Comrade Nepal was seriously injured by Indians during his ongoing ping pong diplomacy over Kathmandu.

- Due to a bitter argument in the newsroom, the prime minister was incorrectly identified in yesterday’s Editorial as Pushpa Kamal Oli. The present premier is in fact the Right Honourable KP Oli. We apologize to both prime ministers for the faux pas.

- A page 1 report by Chicken Little detailed Madrid about COFPs gave the erroneous impression that the world is ending. We are happy to report that the world is still very much around, according to a higher up authority. “We’ll let you know if and when we decide to terminate the world,” The Almighty said in a statement, read out by a heavenly spokesperson. Sorry about the boa con.

- Comrade Lalbaj of the Socialists Party has informed us that a news item in yesterday’s edition announcing the launch of a nationwide agitation was a huge mistake. The party shouldn’t have done it.

- A small typo crept into an article last Friday about Kathmandu being developed as an International Humour Centre. Heh-heh, Sorry about that hilarious goofup. In actual fact, the city is turning into an International Tourism Centre.

- Due to a fact-checking slipup, an Obituary yesterday announcing the death of Mr Mark Twin was exaggerated. Air pollution in Kathmandu had actually made Mr Twain feel only half-dead.

The Asos