GLOBAL HEATING: Mt. Cho Oyu (8,188m) and Mt. Gurla Mandhata (7,694m) as seen from a mountain sightseeing flight. The week, the Lhotse, Nepal’s largest glacier, is nearly devoid of surface ice.

A new alarming report released this week for the UN Climate Summit in Madrid warns of catastrophic melting of the ice on the world’s mountains ranges that will imperil nearly one-fourth of humanity living downstream. Global heating has affected the world’s water towers, reducing the dry season flow of rivers that originate at those peaks. Of the rivers most at risk are the Indus, Ganges and their tributaries, which carry water from the roof of the world to nearly 1.6 billion people in northern India, China, Pakistan and south east Asia. Scientists assessed 78 mountain glacier-based sources of rivers around the world and for the first time ranked them in order of their importance to downstream populations. The mountainous glaciers are called ‘water towers’ because they store water in the form of ice, which melts when glaciers transport it to warmer, lower altitudes. But with the climate crisis, snowlines are receding and glaciers are shrinking at a faster rate than previously forecast. This means less ice to melt in spring, reducing the dry season flow of rivers when the water is needed most for irrigation and human consumption downstream. Asia’s high mountains are warming faster than the world average, and in the Himalayas average temperatures have crept up nearly 2°C since the beginning of the century, which is double the planetary average. A report earlier this year, ‘Himalayan Assessment: Climate Change, Sustainability and People,’ by the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) predicted that if current emission trends continue, the world will be hotter by 4.2-6.5°C in 2100 — which means two-thirds of Himalayan glaciers will be gone.

Mt Everest Base Camp is 50m below where it used to be when Hillary and Tenzing first climbed the world’s highest mountain in 1953, because the Khumbu Glacier has melted. This week’s study was authored by 32 scientists led by Walter Immerzel and Arthur Lutz, of Utrecht University. Said Immertil: “We assessed the water towers’ importance not only by looking at how much water they store, but also how much mountain water is needed downstream, and how vulnerable these systems and communities are to a number of likely changes in the next few decades.” Lutz added, “By assessing all glaciers, global water towers on Earth, we identified the key basins that should be on top of regional and global political agendas.” The scientists urge world governments to develop cross-border conservation and climate change adaptation policies and strategies to safeguard both mountain ecosystems and people downstream.

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POOR HEALTH MAKES NEPALESE POORER

Types of diabetes are 8%, research has shown that 14% of people in Dharan suffer from the disease. Tapping into where many have migrated to Dharan, a rate of only 1%. The reason is clear: increased intake of carbohydrates and a more western lifestyle when people move to cities.

To meet these challenges, Nepal desperately needs affordable and accessible health care. At the moment, hospital treatment is not.

The poor in remote, underserved areas of the country are disproporionately vulnerable. As our report from Bajura (page 14-15) shows, the problem is further complicated by disease confusion over federalism, budget and jurisdiction has lost most rural government hospitals underfunded and inaccessible for a majority of the population. In fact, poor health is making Nepal poor.

Also, communicable diseases have not been completely overcome. Diarrheal and water-borne and other water-borne infections are still major killers. One of the reasons Nepal’s progress in reducing child mortality has been slowed is because the state’s failure to ensure adequate and safe drinking water in remote regions. In this paper we have also reported on sanitation and water-borne among children due to malnutrition.

In addition, smog and air pollution has caused an epidemic of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which has led to lung infections in all age brackets and causing terminal pneumonia and other complications in the elderly. At current levels of PM2.5 concentration in the air, studies show, the average lifespan of city dwellers in Nepal could be reduced by up to four years. Nepal’s burden of non-communicable diseases and injuries has doubled in the last 25 years, with nearly 35% caused by road traffic accidents or natural disasters. Traffic accidents are now the second biggest killer of young Nepalis. Just in the past three years, 90 people have been killed on highways due to poor road conditions or carelessness.

A vivid indication of the threat of non- communicable diseases and injuries and the need for action. South Asians are generally more susceptible to communicable diseases and diseases, but are now new risk factors caused by increasing rural to urban migration. While the world prevalence average for both

The government can no longer keep passing the buck on providing universal insurance for its citizens.

LITERATURE FESTIVAL

I thoroughly enjoyed being at the Nepal Literature Festival (Nepali and International) Literature Festival, Sewa Bharti, page 15-15. It was such a great gathering of art, literature and politics, and offered a platform for diverse views and open discussion. Thank you for launching my book "Khusai Khusai".

Manisha Koirala

WORLD WARS

I just finished World War history ("The atom bomb saved my life", LaxmiBebani, "697")! But don’t read without reading in history books about Nepal’s contribution to the world war. Salute to the brave and forgotten Nepal soldiers.

Pradeep Krala

GADJIMAN

I have always wanted to travel to Nepal (Cruelty and compassion", Sushma Dalal, "697). Not any more. It’s my bucket list.

Nicola Vernon

There are some of us who are so preoccupied with tourism that we forget about the human rights. And we really should be concerned with tourism. We should care about human rights.

Carroll Dumban

WHAT’S TRENDING

The atom bomb saved my life

I am a 10-year-old girl who was born in 1980. I was 10 years old when the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. I was very little at the time, but I still remember the moment vividly. It was a terrible sight, and I was scared. I remember my parents telling me that the world would never be the same again.

I was scared, I didn’t understand what was happening, but I knew that it was something terrible. I remember looking out the window and seeing the smoke rise into the air. It was a dark, gray smoke that seemed to go on forever. I remember thinking that it must be a terrible thing that had happened.

I was very young at the time, and I didn’t understand what was happening. But I do remember the fear and the sadness that I felt. I remember thinking that the world was a dangerous place, and that I didn’t want to be there anymore.

I remember my parents telling me that we had to stay inside and not go out. I remember feeling scared and alone. I remember thinking that I was going to die, and that nobody was going to save me.

I remember thinking that I didn’t want to be alive anymore. I remember thinking that I just wanted to disappear. I remember thinking that I was a burden.

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Let Tundikhel be what Tundikhel was

Since the government is too slow to act, it is the public that need to be vigilant

The earthquakes of April 2015 literally shook all of us out of our complacency, and forced us to understand the value of open spaces — just as after the 1934 earthquake, when tens of thousands of Kathmandu residents moved to the open spaces of Tundikhel, or to Lagankhel in Patan.

But memories of disasters are short-lived, and in the past five years instead of protecting the last remaining spaces in Kathmandu Valley, we have allowed them to be encroached upon. At the heart of Kathmandu, Tundikhel represents in a microcosm what is happening across urban Nepal as people move into the cities and real estate prices soar.

The land mafia, with its political protection, has infiltrated school management committees of urban areas and are taking over playgrounds located on prime real estate. The government created a green corridor near Sing Buri — now it is bulging down the chasing the last remaining lacunae. The vehicle lobby has placed a stronghold on the tree lobby.

This newspaper has been covering the shrinking Tundikhel since 2002, and for the first time printed maps showing Nepal Army’s steady encroachment into the open space. Since the government seems to be too slow to act, it is the public and communities that need to be vigilant — which is why the current OccupyTundikhel campaign is so important.

One good way to begin protecting open spaces like Tundikhel would be to have every local government across the country make an inventory of such spaces in its jurisdiction. There should then be added to a national open space protected list, and legislation passed to ensure no one who eyes them can actually get their hands on these invaluable areas.

Former Patan mayor Buddhi Raj Bhakta says a good example by protecting community spaces during his tenure. A national database could be created and made available online so that no one dares to buy, sell or encroach on these open spaces.

National parks can be important reasons to save many of Kathmandu Valley’s open spaces from encroachment. Tundikhel hosts annual festivals like the feeling of the Gai Jatra, Ghoda Jatra, Shivaratri and, more recently, the New Year’s Day showcase of numerous ethnic groups from across Nepal.

A published calendar of such events could help enhance Nepal’s feeling of ownership of open spaces across the country. Disaster preparedness drills in the Kathmandu Gai Jatra 2019 could be another reason to invest in saving open spaces. Tundikhel can be dedicated to all future Nepal gold medallists at the Olympics, World Cups and Asian Games. The names of all those who won medals for Nepal could be inscribed on the special monument. "With only temporary structures allowed, sports could provide an effective incentive to care for these spaces.

At one time when many Nepalis believe the way to prosperity is not through legitimate businesses but politics, open spaces could be protected as places where Nepalis gather and practice free speech.

The name Krishna Munch, which means ‘open stage’, has always held a Hyde Park-like connotation in Kathmandu Kshetra. During the days of absolute monarchy. It is a place where anyone can say anything and be protected against prosecution of any kind. The country should designate Kishna Munch(s) in all 753 municipalities, inspired by the first one at Tundikhel.

The real tradition of the Kathmandu Valley tells us that Tundikhel (Titikhyai) was land bought for wealthy 3-light traders who needed space to unload and load goods and as a camping ground for porters and pack animals. After the Sagarmatha treaty of 1816, Muktiyay Thapa NATHI remarried to paree the Nepal Army, in a bid to impress the British of Nepal’s military might.

This great open space has shrunk over time. Rana rulers built a Hill Hospital and the military hospital and Punchayet leaders constructed the post office, the RNAC building, NRA and City Hall. These were all within the boundaries of greater Tundikhel. The road around it was widened during the state visit of Queen Elizabeth II in 1961.

From changing ground water to improving the British area and from hosting ancient chitai to Nepal’s New Year’s Day celebrations, Tundikhel has served us well. The temporary bus terminal and school has to be moved immediately and the army has to relocate because it rightfully belongs to them. After the next emergency, the army will not be forced to say “I told you so.”

And let us not listen to economists and finance experts who tell us we need to monetise everything. Not every open space should be valued in cash. Let Tundikhel be what Tundikhel was. End of the debate.

Anil Chitrakar
President of Sathikhet

Canadian’s missionary zeal for Nepali

Kedar Sharma

On the morning of 31 October 1949, 28-year-old William Burke stepped on a red-gold carpet of fallen maple leaves outside his brother’s house in Westfield, Massachusetts. He was on his way to the nearest post office, where his family and friends had gathered to bid him farewell. A 33-day sea journey to faraway India.

None of them, not even the young railing Burke waving from the ship’s deck, would have guessed that he would never return to his native Canada. Or that he would go on to devote his life to a language few had heard of — Nepali.

Born in 1925, Burke decided to become a Jesuit when he was just 15. Eight years later, he set off to Montreal to study philosophy, then graduated and left for North Nepal, a mission first started by Belgian Jesuits in 1936.

After sailing for seven weeks to Calcutta, then travelling overland, Burke reached Saint Joseph’s School in Northpark, Darjeeling a year before it opened. Before a week he was enrolled in Nepali language classes at St Mary’s in Kunwong, and within a month he was teaching Nepali to other students. He also continued his postgraduate in theology lessons and attained the priesthood in 1959.

Between 1960 and 1961, Burke worked with renowned Hindi language scholar and lexicographer Pather Kamal Bulke, who seems to have inspired in the Canadian priest his passion for the Nepali language.

Under Bulke’s tutelage, Burke quickly learned Hindi and was able to tutor in Hindi-medium schools. But he felt he lacked a basic knowledge of pedagogy, and at age 38 went back to school for a B.Ed in Cuttack. By the time he was 35, Burke had also mastered Bengali, and became the principal of Saint Roberts School.

In 1990, Burke’s desire to work on a Nepali corpus finally took shape, culminating in Sahi Sabde (The Right Word) which later won him the prestigious Madan Puraskar prize.

“We have to address the young generation with the right words so that Nepali culture and language thrive,” said Burke during his acceptance speech in Kathmandu in 2006. In 2006, he published the Raghujan-Nepali book Ukhani Amri (Arise! Come Today) in collaboration with PK Chhetri. “Even if Burke was not Nepali, he can be acclaimed as a champion of the Nepali language not his own, which is why his work primarily is a value addition to the language by documenting its use,” recalled Rajan Regmi, a teacher at St Joseph’s.

Burke is also credited with completing what is now known as the ‘Red Bible’, after Father Francis Tomi died while working on a Nepali Catholic bible. The book was published in 1999.

Back in the day when the principal of Darjeeling’s St Roberts High School, Father John Pindregant, went to Canada to give talks, the young Burke was responsible for setting up the projector during the lectures. When he was later, Pindregant would ask him to set up the slides quickly. “Chalo chalo” was the first Nepali world Burke learned, while still in Canada.

Burke’s world well sums up his life too. He learnt language quickly, and worked under many projects. On 29 November, after a full life, William J Burke had a funeral in Darjeeling. He died a few days later, aged 94.

The Canadian Jesuit was as much a campaigning force for the Nepali language as he was a missionary. A true tribute to him would be for the Nepali-speaking world to be inspired by his life.

Canadian’s missionary zeal for Nepali

Qatar Live

Three of the Middle East’s most popular singers — Boustn, Natu M Khaiee and Omar Al Maxi — entertained the Qatar Live series of concerts on 7 December after performing together at Doha Eil Convention and Exhibition Centre (DICEC) in front of hundreds of residents and visitors.

Turkish to Romanieni

Turkish Airlines has added Tel Aviv, a popular destination in Israel to see

TURKISH AIRLINES

The northern lights, its extensive flight network (Stavanger 7 December); seventeen flights will operate three times a week from tomorrow.

Himalaya Airlines

Himalaya Airlines now flies to 15 countries and its network to Australia has introduced Street 750 and Street Rod 750.

BIZ BRIEFS

Datsun Redi Go

Pioneer Mario Capp, the sole authorized dealer of Datsun & Datsun in Nepal, in association with Himalaya ‘on-the-road’ campaign presented a Datsun Redi Go. 2015 to Kurt Allen, the winner of Senator 7. (The winner of Senator 7.)

Harley Davidson

MV Enterprises, authorized distributor of Harley Davidson of Nepal has introduced Street 750 and Street Rod 750.

Himalaya Airlines

Himalaya Airlines now flies to 15 countries and its network to Australia has introduced Street 750 and Street Rod 750.

The bikes have liquid-cooled revolution 4 engines, 6-spoke transmission, a low-maintenance belt drive and are designed for enhanced grip and optional ABS and HID-LED security system.

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रच्दै नयाँ इतिहास
छूँदै नयाँ उचाई

ज्योतिर्मय बैंक लिमिटेड र जनता बैंक नेपाल लिमिटेड
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हाद्दो एकीकृत क्षमता

- १४ अर्ब + प्राप्ति पुर्जी
- १४३ अर्ब + लिप्तत संकरकल
- १४४ अर्ब + कर्ज लागाउनी
- ८४० + सेवा छेँडः
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- ३ अर्ब + सरकारी नियुक्तिका जोन्दाल
- १४९ अटॉमिस्ट संकरकल
- ९५ संस्थाहरू संकरकलित
When Belmaya Nepali undertook her first public speaking engagement, at the WOW (Woman of the World) Festival in Kathmandu in January 2018, she said: “I feel proud because, despite coming from a Dalit family, where I was discriminated against in my own village, I have come so far today.”

In the year since, Belmaya has come further than she could ever have imagined. Fresh from speaking at WOW Madhlos in June, and last week, on 14 December, she will attend the Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival (KIMFF), where the film I Am Belmaya, of which she is the subject and co-director, will be shown.

The sixth and youngest child of a poor family, Belmaya was orphaned at age nine. She missed her early schooling, ending up in a girls’ home in Pokhara. That is where I met her in 2006, when I led a photo project to encourage self-expression. Belmaya, then 13, used to eagerly grab the camera. She wanted to be a photographer, she said, to expose injustice. Just as Belmaya loved the camera, the camera loved her. Unlike many of her friends, who adopted the sweet, submissive front expected of adolescent girls, Belmaya couldn’t conceal her feelings. I amassed a trove of footage that revealed her fiery spirit, her spiky humour, her joy when dancing, her vulnerability the day she started menstruating.

My videotapes stayed on my shelf, giggling away at me to be used in a film that would shine a light on the reality of life for so many girls and women in Nepal. It was not until 2014 that I returned to Nepal and tracked down Belmaya — and was dismayed to find the youthful spark gone. Now 25, she was living in poverty with a husband and baby daughter and desperate for an opportunity to rise out of the life of servitude.

Belmaya grasped the chance to pick up the camera again and learn how to make films. I had been seeking a way of documenting her life without casting her as the passive subject of my film. And so, I set out to follow the journey of an unlikely filmmaker, and as Belmaya gained camera skills, she would play an active role in her portrayal.

She met opposition from her conservative husband and family as she strived for an independent voice. As she took charge of her camera, the power balance shifted in ever-so-slight ways to her. As well as making her own graduation film, she has recorded much of the footage for my documentary, giving private, tender and eye-opening glimpses of her domestic life. Together with the teenage tapes, the result is an extraordinarily intimate window into Belmaya’s world, spanning 13 years.

Domestic strife and the 2015 earthquakes threatened to derail her ambitions. But she persisted, and in 2017 her first film, Educate Our Daughters, a personal take on the importance of education for girls, was selected for KIMFF, along with a second movie about beat women’s struggles in Pokhara.

Educate Our Daughters went on to be selected for prestigious festivals in Toronto, Chicago and the UK.

I Am Belmaya screens at 7pm on Saturday, 14 December at KIMFF. 
Discussion with Sue Carpenter and Belmaya Nepali. 
www.belmaya.com

DHOKAIMA CAFE FARMER’S MARKET THIS SATURDAY (8–12)

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Lalitpur
8am - 12 noon

Contact: Susan Shrestha
Cell: +977 9843553223
timesnepal.comина

DHOKAIMA CAFE FARMER’S MARKET THIS SATURDAY (8–12)
Prabal Gurung by Prabal Gurung

Book by internationally-famous Nepali designer who created a luxury fashion brand with a soul

Singapore-born Nepali American designer Prabal Gurung has brought out a pictorial autobiography of his life and career in a hefty coffee table book that lets us understand his passion.

Because it is a book by and of Prabal Gurung, the volume is itself a work of art. Beautifully printed, elegantly designed and with sparse text, it allows us to understand his approach to life: tolerance, compassion, style, originality, activism and a kinship to the land of his forebears.

The very first, two-page spread of fold upon fold of Himalayan ridges folding into lighter and lighter shades of blue up to the horizon includes this dedication: “To my mother, Durga Rana, who always made sure I had the correct shade of lipstick.”

Gurung exposes his innate feminism and femininity with a fresh style that combines the exotic east with the practical couture of the west. It is this iconic blend that has made Prabal Gurung a much sought after luxury brand in the U.S. Indeed, Gurung describes his designs as “femininity with a bite... she wants to look feminine but doesn’t want to look over girly.”

Many celebrities have donned Prabal Gurung, including Michelle Obama when she was first lady, Oprah Winfrey, who Gurung says has always been his personal hero, and the actress Jennifer Lawrence.

Gurung’s activism goes beyond feminism. He has spoken against social injustice and exclusion, and has been a campaigner against bullying. He talks about this in a conversation with Hanya Yanagihara, editor of 7 Magazine, at the start of the book.

In Nepal... I went to an all-boys’ Catholic school, and that’s where I realized how different I was — because I was constantly told I was different. I was bullied constantly. Sketching became a way to find some peace.”

Gurung recalls his American teacher in Kathmandu, who wore a beautiful cotton dress. “I remember I was completely transfixed, transformed,” he says.

In his twenties, Gurung went to New York. The freedoms there allowed him to come out about being gay for the first time. He used to go to gay bars, and felt like a misfit because he did not fit the perception of a masculine white gay. Gurung remembers telling himself: “The world hasn’t taught up to my worth, damn I’m beautiful.”

Gurung has set up a foundation that is now helping more than 300 Nepali children, as well as female prisoners. Asked about his future plans, he says he wants to open an art museum in which Nepali artists will get global exposure.

In spring 2015, inspired by a trek in Nepal, Gurung showcased new designs that used Nepali motifs with underdog American sportswear. They were hits. But then tragedy struck — Nepal was hit by an earthquake that killed 9,000 people.

Feeling so far away, Gurung organised a fundraiser in New York dedicated to the land of his mother. He writes about that show: “My heritage is my identity, and I want to share a piece of myself with our community... the devastating experience was a rebirth, a shedding of a layer to step into a new role, paving the way for even greater advocacy, social responsibility and activism.”

The book starts with the designs from his 2009 show at the FLAG Art Foundation in New York, which launched Gurung’s career and his “real American dream.” Soon, he was being noticed by the fashion industry and, notably, designed the我省的 read dress that Michelle Obama wore to the White House correspondents’ dinner.

The book includes a closeup of the floral prints on the fabric of the dresses that Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton wore in Singapore in 2012. It also features blow-up images of Kirsten Stewart, Deepika Padukone, Gigi Hadid and many other beautiful people.

Gurung designed Kate Perry’s gown for the last Hillary Clinton rally during the 2016 presidential election campaign, with sequined letters down the back that read “I’m with Madame President.” The designer admits feeling “devastated” following the elections, and adds in the caption: “Looking back, I try to believe that it has only made some of us stronger, and more active citizens.”

One of Gurung’s avid admirers is the actress Sarah Jessica Parker. She writes in her foreword: “Prabal is a social activist. He has used his voice for good in the world — speaking out on diversity, women’s rights and body positivity — and embedded meaning into each of his pieces. He has created not just any brand, but a luxury brand with a soul.”

Kunda Dixit

Prabal Gurung by Prabal Gurung

Arrons, New York 2010
221 pages, B5
ISBN 978-345139104

Internet and Digital TV
Kunda Dixit

Heinrich Meyer came to Nepal in 1975 to work on the German government-supported Bhaktapur Development Project to restore the old town and its glorious architectural heritage. As a cultural conservationist, his job was to rescue some of the magnificent but crumbling buildings of the historical kingdom, as well as the traditional art that decorated them: mainly carved wooden struts, windows, doors and eaves.

Between 1975 and 1979, Meyer worked to set up a cooperative to revive woodcarving and to make the profession sustainable again. He worked with the Shilpakar clan, the traditional woodcarving family of Bhaktapur, in which the craft had been passed down through generations. By the time he left, the Shilpakers had revived the skills they had nearly lost.

After the 2015 earthquake, which devastated Bhaktapur, in his hometown in Germany, Meyer took out boxes of slides from his time in Nepal and found photographs taken 40 years ago of the woodcarvings of Bhaktapur.

"The photos were unique because many of them cannot be photographed in the same setting again, and that prompted me to start this book project," Meyer writes in his preface to Kathmandu: The Art of Nepalese Woodcarving. Many of the valuable historical carvings in Nepal had been lost over time through neglect, decay, earthquakes and theft.

Indeed, the book is an imagery-rich documentation of what has been lost, and what is still left of this priceless facet of Nepali heritage. The book is a treasure trove of detailed information of the art of woodcarving, its complexity and aesthetic beauty.

Meyer gives full credit to the Shilpakars for setting up the Kathmandu Solo Foundation, which is promoting the art and is working to bring it back to the community.

Among the lost are carvings of the Siva-Shaktie temples, the temples of Patan, and carvings of the Dashain, the festival that celebrates the mosque.

The book is a testament to the rich history of woodcarving in Nepal, and the dedication of the Shilpakers to preserving this ancient art form.

"I have never thought about it," Indra Prasad Shilpaker, "I have never thought about it.

Indra Prasad, 38, cannot see himself in any profession besides wood carving, despite having a degree in fine arts and a masters in contemporary sculpture from Thithivan University.

Not only is wood carving a passion for Shilpaker, his family has been into the craft since the 6th century, and their surname is derived from 'woodworker'.

"I grew up seeing my father's woodwork and his dedication to keeping our traditional craft alive. It inspired me to follow in the footsteps of my ancestors and continue what the Shilpakars have always been known for," he adds.

The Shilpakers have built and restored windows, doors and struts of temples and palaces in Kathmandu and Patan Durbar Squares. All their work is purely handmade and reflects traditional Nepalese craftsmanship.

Crafting a heritage

For the famed Shilpakar family of Bhaktapur, wood carving requires more than a deft hand...

Shriluna Shrestha

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golden years of wood carving were during the Malla period (1482-1776), when the most elaborate winged lions in the roof struts, along with the lattice windows and doorways of Bhaktapur, were carved. No book on the wood carvings of Kathmandu would be complete without a discussion of the eroticism depicted there. This one explains how the carvings of figures copulating in twin or in groups became bolder after the 18th century as Tantricism took hold. There are scenes of scrobicile intercourse, oral sex and even bestiality. As Meyer’s co-author Wolfgang Korns explains in his book, Erotic Carvings Of The Kathmandu Valley Found On Struts Of Newar Temples (Ratna Purak, 2019), the explicit carvings were supposed to be too shocking even for evil spirits, and so helped ward off their wrathful manifestations like lightning and earthquakes. However, could it be that they were just an early method of sex education?

Kasthakal is magnificently produced, with page after page of exquisitely detailed photography. The most amazing section displays intricately carved windows (the Nepali word Ayala comes from the Neva ayala, in Kathmandu Valley, which seems to have witnessed an explosion of lattice windows, each more elaborately carved than the next. The photos were taken in the 1970s and the captions, which are simple enough for the lay reader, remind us that many of the carvings no longer exist in the original space. The book is in English and German, but with a little extra effort it could have easily been published in Nepali as a trilingual offering.

Overall, this is a helpful book that shows how traditional wood carving now has a sustainable future thanks to the 800 or so artisans of Bhaktapur who are training others in Patan and Panauti through the cooperative set up in the 1970s. They can make a living because many of the carvings are meant for post-earthquake reconstruction, or have an export market among collectors abroad and the Nepali diaspora.

"There are some rules for carving the designs onto wood. We cannot just randomly chisel away — every object or creature seen in the tarang has its precise significance that cannot be changed. That is why understanding the meaning is highly important," says Indra Kaji. Both father and son want traditional Newa wood carving taught as a discipline in universities in order to preserve its values and techniques for the future. Otherwise, the father and son may be the last generations of master carvers in Bhaktapur.

"The young generation today is more drawn towards technology and machines. "They are in a hurry," says Indra Prasad. "I cannot guarantee my 9-month son or 3-year-old daughter will be woodcarvers, but I am hopeful they will have new avenues to preserve and promote what my family has been doing for so long."

Indra Prasad has carved 12 Newa masterpieces in the past 18 years, mostly sculptural and traditional windows. He held his first solo exhibition at the Tarang Museum earlier this year, and plans another one in Germany next year. It will include carved deities and spirits, dragons and Tantric struts, based on themes of fertility, wisdom, compassion, meditation and music. For both father and son, wood carving means more than using a chisel and designing. It is a detail-oriented process that requires an understanding of traditions, norms and values.
**Getaway**

Temple Tree Resort

Temple Tree is a boutique hotel that promises world-class services, a relaxing atmosphere, comfortable accommodations and great food. The roofs are designed with Nepali culture and architecture in mind, with modern touches at the forefront.

Jalebi, Pokhara (833) 460879

Tiger Mountain Resort

The lodges at this resort are designed with birds, rustic accents and woody undertones. The private rooms are tucked away in greeneries while the common buildings are located on decks overlooking the Annapurna range.

Korches Danda, Pokhara (470) 538870

Himalayan Front Hotel

Sit atop Sarangkot Hill, this modern hostel will give you the best view of the mountains and Phewa Lake. Visit here if you’re looking for a place to stay or just a quick stop to grab a cup of Nepali tea or chat on the viewing deck for a sight to behold.

Sarangkot, Pokhara 8871180870

**Kathmandu**

YMI Kongde

Looking to indulge in a sumptuous breakfast at 15,000 feet a few paces away from the Himalayas? Then book a mountain flight to this ten Mountain House in Kongde valley.

Kongde, Kathmandu (471) 854874

**Kirtipur**

Kingjala Spa

Kingjala Spa was established as a healing center in 2015. In a small but traditional constriction, it offers a variety of spa treatments like massages and facials alongside therapeutic treatments. While they have locations nationwide, the main spa in Kathmandu offers the best and most dedicated services.

15pm, Jhumel (833) 5536830

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**Music**

Song Review

Mandali 2

After a successful debut as a stylish pole dancer, Kamalay returns again in the enigmatic Mandali. This time she dons a burning passion for its Asial visual style. When Shiva Royi is arrested by a serial killer who rapes and murders young women, the movie is directed by Capi Pithoni.

Opened in Kathmandu on 13 December

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**Events**

Christmas Market

Shop for a loved one, drink some wine with friends, sample some bamboo satchels and watch French Christmas movies like ‘Félicité au grenier’ and ‘La Minute de l’Aventure’ in the holiday spirit.

14 December, 10am-7pm, Alliance Française Kathmandu, Jhumel (833) 5580227

**Dining**

**ATMOSPHERE**

**Our Services**

Massages

Foot care

Nail art care

Spa & Jacuzzi

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**About Town**

Chakra Yoga

Rejuvenate your mind and body with a relaxing yoga session with Laelia Amos, a yoga and Maruan sound healer. The yoga class will incorporate Tibetan singing bowls, meditation and intermedie poses.

Every Friday, 4pm-5pm per class, Jhumel (833) 5580227

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KIMF-2019

Catch some of the best documentaries and films about migration, economy, the hardships of mountain living, patriarchy and childhood.

11-15 December, timings and venue vary (833) 446035

Growing Footprints

In Nepal during the last 100 years, the underground metal scene was a way for artists and the audience to escape the violence that had gripped the nation. Catch the screening and a question-answer session with the directors of the documentary.

11 December, 6pm-8pm, Jhumel, Jhumel (833) 5580227

**Mongolian Heart**

This Nepali Folk music band has toured the world performing in groups like Herd of Instinct and Zelik. For this special performance, they will be playing both their old and new tunes.

15 December, Ayaan concert, London, 8pm, District, Jhumel (833) 5580227

**Sunday Social**

Enjoy an evening of Christmas cards and mulled wine at this hot holiday day of Sunday Social.

25 December, 4pm-7pm, Manodrg, Jhumel (833) 5580227

Cultivation & Lo End

The grooves of Nepali’s premiere reggae group and former top-tean footballer will leave you in the weekend mood. Limited seats available.

31 December, 6pm onwards, Thanes Restaurant, Sengals (833) 5548783

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**The Art Party**

Meet renowned Nepali artists, see their work and get an insight into the inspiration behind their paintings, sculptures and plates. Proceeds from the event will go to future conservation projects.

14 December, 11am-6pm, Talents, Rs. 300, NepalArtCouncil, BaluBhairav (833) 5580227

**Farmer’s Market**

If you’re looking for ethically produced, fresh and organic vegetables and fruits, Farmer’s Market is the place to be. Buy from Vertical Farms and help farmer rural employment, support the promotion of Nepal’s incredible eatables and biodiversity, and fuel your body with healthy food.

14 December, 10am-1pm, Thapali Lake, Patan (833) 5580227

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**Narayan Gopal Tribute**

Prashanna Band will be playing the late Narayan Gopal’s greatest hits. Gopal is considered to be one of the greatest singers of his generation.

25 December, 4pm onwards, Lomnor Lake, French Diner, Patan (833) 5580227

Sake Party

Celebrate the end of the year with a Sake variety and temperature tasting party. Sample all the types of sake and kick back at the Sake Party.

15 December, 8pm onwards, Sapporo Japanese Restaurant, Bhartimali (833) 5544455

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**Our Pick**

**Relaxation & Rejuvenation**
In her Lightroom Conversation column this month, Muna Gurung speaks with writer Usha Sherchan about the importance of telling stories that may not always be our own, creating alternate realities through fiction and the process of writing.

**USHA SHERCHAN**

Mona Gurung: In today’s big writers and poets, Saru Bhattacharjee, who was just Shaista Sher Khan, was there, and so was Turba Sherpa, Pradip Ghora, Sunita Nair, Aryan Thapa, Binod Ghimire... the characters I must say and I remember telling him that I wasn’t so sure about him, but a buzz in town about him being a writer. Even in our times, life is full of ups and downs. It is a part of writing, to be honest, even now, my parents, including my kids, know I wrote.

Mona Gurung: In the previous issue, you wrote about some everyday spaces available to women in your community. Usha: I’ve been making a mistake in telling this story with such a high level, but in our community, it is a part of our lives.

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A photojournalist’s powerful portrait from a Bangladesh prison

Sakina Abidi

On Day of the Imprisoned Writer 2016, Indian author Arundhati Roy penned an open letter to Shahidul Alam, the renowned Bangladeshi photojournalist who had been incarcerated for over 100 days. ‘Dear Shahidul, Roy wrote, I believe the tide will turn. It will. It must. This foolish, shortighted cruelty will give way to something kinder and more visionary. Shahidul Alam replies in his book, ‘The Tide Will Turn, a photography and text collection notes, sketches, a mural and even a radio made by inmates who were concerned that Alam’s ‘an journalist, did not have access to news’. The chapter can almost be read as a standalone, poignant reflection on his 107-day incarceration. The longest section of the book provides a detailed historical commentary on Bengali photography, teaching artists who have captured some of the most striking images to come out of Bangladesh, as well as on Alam’s own work. It includes one of his earliest series, focused on former sex worker Hanza Beagum.

The photographs show Beagum first in 1996 and then in 2014, now running her own orphanage and ensuring that all the children receives an education. With photographic and iconic images, the chapter also makes for a stunning collection of Bangladesh art over a century. The third section of ‘The Tide Will Turn’ centres entirely on Bangladesh politics. Alam uses the 1971 Liberation War as a starting point to discuss identity, secularism and the failures of the government, detailing his own experience with the 2013 Dhaka garment factory collapse and the killing of Bangladesh American secular blogger Avijit Roy. There is an underlying critique of autocracy running through the book, but it is in this chapter that really reveals to us Ala’s commitment to free speech and democracy. The Tide Will Turn is best summed up by Alam himself in his letter to Arundhati Roy: ‘The tide will turn, and the nameless, faceless people will rise. They will rise against the entire state machinery’. This deep conviction, which underlies his stunning photography, makes for a book that provides readers much to ponder.

The Tide Will Turn

Gütersloh, Germany, Seel, 2019
194 pages, 111 images
€28.00
ISBN: 978-3-95939-437-0
www.seel.de
Nepal (International)

Literature Festival

Tal Barahi Chok, Lakeside Pokhara 13-16 December

Selected Sessions for International Audiences

Gunnerup in the air

The Younger Nepal writer Manoranjan Rayapu shares a sensitive portrayal of his mining background and loss of formal education. Social activist Dusha Kuol to talk on climate change and urban-rural plunders upon social and economic gape.

Writing home and the homeland

Janmol Rij Rijal, a writer of Habitat articles, will speak on his new writing and what the Kilchu festival is doing in the Himalayan country. Exiled poet Subhashini Shrestha shares her experience of exile in Europe.

Poetry读sustainability

As Nepal's UNEP report grows and the climate crisis deepens, we need to take a new journey. Author Tulsi Paudel and poet Subhas Bhatta will contribute.

Translating South Asia

Most South Asian authors still write in their regional languages, but not many recognize their color in English. When Amrit Rai will discuss the issues with translation in South Asia.

Writing in the age of populism

The battle for truth and justice in the age of populism will be debated by Ameek Bhaegi.

Nepal in the international media

With the rise of Nepal journalists into international media, Nepal's name is slowly spreading through the western lens. Now the Western media is more interested in Nepal's history and heritage.

Writing the past

The theme of Amritshar Rai's novel, containing the memories of the 1950s, will be discussed in continuation with senior writer for The Times of India, Kishore Muniyandi.

The DSC Prize

The 9th DSC Prize for South Asian Literature will be awarded for its 10th year during the closing ceremony of the IME Nepal Literature Festival (NLF) on 16 December.

The award will be shared by six books, half the Night is Gone by Anis Atwari Bageti, 89 Nights in Jibigan by Jan Mekhola, The Fabled by Mathab Mati, There is Gunpowder in the Air by Monoranjan Bajrang, The City and the Sea by Raj Kuma Raju, and The Empty Room by Sudha Bhaskar.

The $20,000 Prize, now in its ninth year, is one of the most prestigious international literary awards specifically focused on South Asian fiction. The jury for DSC Prize Nepal is chaired by Ruma Kalariya and other members include Nalini Mathur, Kiran Desai, and Ahmad Yousif.

The shortlisted writers in the event are half the Night is Gone and The Empty Room. —Nepali Times

Last year’s winner was Nanjum Mirza. This year’s winner will be announced during the festival on 16 December.

The DSC Prize for South Asian Literature

The $20,000 DSC Prize for South Asian Literature is awarded by the DSC, The Times of London, the British Council, and the Ministry of Culture, Nepal, to a book first published in any South Asian language or translated into English. The book must have been published in the last five years.

For more information, please visit dscprize.com and timesoflondon.co.uk.
Federalism leaves Nepal’s doctors and hospital staff use the adjustment policy to move out of remote, underserved regions

Sewa Bhattarai in Bajura

Federalism was supposed to bring the government closer to the people, ensure better medical care and improve public health at the grassroots. But the new three-tier administrative structure threatens to undo Nepal’s gains in improving health services.

The government’s “adjustment policy” in the medical sector, which is set to pick up their preferred tier of work, has led many to choose the federal level, leaving provinces and municipalities underserved. The biggest losers are the areas already incurring in services: Province 6 (Karnali) and the Far Western Province.

At the Koli’s Primary Health Care Centre in Bajura, there is no doctor, after the one serving here chose to be transferred to Kathmandu. Bajura District Hospital has five doctors but they are two of them will soon expire.

“I have not been informed of my new hospital yet, but I am about to be transferred. In two months, there will be a shortage of doctors here,” predicts Chief Medical Officer Rajendra Shrestha, adding that all teaching hospitals in the country, including a radiologist and health assistant, have been transferred or will be soon.

With a population of 135,000 people, Bajura has no private hospitals and only one government hospital, a primary health care centre and 26 health posts. WHO recommends a doctor-patient ratio of 1:1,000, but here it is 1:35,000, while Kathmandu has a ratio of 1:905.

This is nothing new; Far Western Province has long faced medical staff shortages. According to the Department of Health Services Report 2018, only 88% of positions in health facilities were filled, and only 86 of the 142 sanctioned doctor positions were staffed. That number will decrease further after adjustment.

According to a list of adjustments of 6th level general practitioners (GP) by the ministry of health, 36 doctors were serving in Far Western Province, but only 3 of them have chosen to remain. From the 631 doctors at this level, as many as 328 chose the federal level, which means they are concentrated in Province 3. It is the same story in all other provinces. There are only 19 doctors in Province 6.

“Far Western Province has always faced a shortage of doctors. We have a lot of nurses, assistants, and technicians, and even if they are transferred there are others to replace them. But specialist doctors earn a lot in the cities and a government hospital cannot offer them as much. No wonder they do not want to stay here if they have a choice,” says Ramesh Kumar at the ministry of social welfare in the province.

The Government Doctors’ Association of Nepal (GODAN) is also unhappy. “From the beginning we have argued that the medical sector is different from others and adjustment would result in neglect of underserved regions and migration of doctors to the cities, and we were right,” says Dipendra Punyey, president of GODAN.

“We proposed that a federal bridge should be created, so that medical professionals working at the federal level can be sent back to their previous working area.” Ironically, physician Govinda KC had to call off his 17th fast until death in Dadeldhura because the district hospital did not have proper facilities in case his health deteriorated. KC has been protesting the commercialisation of medical education, which forces doctors to work in the cities to recoup their investments.

“If the government does not replace those who are leaving the province, there is going to be a problem,”

Henry Marsh: a pioneering English neurosurgeon and a colleague and friend of the late Upendra Devkota. Nepali Times caught up with Marsh at the Upendra Devkota Memorial National Institute of Neurological And Allied Sciences in Kathmandu, where he teaches post-retirement.

What are the challenges of specialisation in Nepal? It’s not unique to Nepal by any way, but the problem is that if you have a relatively impoverished government and if people are reluctant to pay taxes, it’s very hard for the government to be able to afford good quality healthcare.

Therefore, doctors working in expensive specialist areas like neurosurgery end up setting up their own private hospitals.

This has happened in India, in Sudan, which I know well; it’s happening in Ukraine and it’s happening here. You don’t end up with all those separate private hospitals which are basically locked in economic competition against each other. They all professed to be all working happily together for the greater good but it’s very difficult — they have to make a profit to survive and this sets doctors against each other.

If you look at what’s happening in Europe and America, it’s the same specialisation is the game. I trained along with Professor Devkota in what is called clinical neurosurgery — I could do everything. But in recent years, we became more and more specialised. That is not happening in Nepal.

Could you teach on the ever commercialisation of healthcare in Nepal? With all medicine, there is a problem: is medicine a vocation or is it business? This judgement is easily distorted, unconsciously, and if you know you’re going to make a lot of money by treating the patient, or if you know your hospital needs to make money to survive, that’s probably on an unconscious level going to distort your judgement of whether to operate or not.

Ultimately, with commercial healthcare, the patient becomes the means to the end of making money. With the other extreme, if doctors are only paid fixed salaries in a state system, then at least, the end of everything you’re doing is for the wellbeing of the patient and making the patient well.

How do we implement affordable and accessible healthcare in rural areas in Nepal? Nepal has many problems. If you wanted to design a country with different problems, Nepal is that. One major problem, apart from the poverty, is poor infrastructure. You have to have more peripheral small hospitals out in the rural communities than you would in wealthier countries with more favourable terrain.

Sakina Abid and Sanghamitra Subba


In the latest instalment of the Nepali Times Studio, nothing you’re witnessing English neurosurgeon Henry Marsh, a lifelong and friend of the late Dr. Upendra Devkota. Watch Marsh speak about his connection to Nepal, new contemplative in the health sector and affordable health care in rural Nepal.

nepalitimes.com
great crises in healthcare in the Far West,” says Gunesar Aweash, chief of the Far West Regional Health Directorate in Dipayal. “It should immediately reestablish those medical professionals on contract service.”

Neglect kills mothers

Lalti Sapkota, 25, was nine months pregnant when her husband helped her from her third-floor flat to Bajura District Hospital to deliver her baby earlier this year. The staff told her she had complicated pregnancy and there were no doctors to perform a caesarean section.

Bajura was lucky — many other mothers are in no position to walk to the district hospital. In Nepal, 239 women still die per 100,000 childbirths, and the country is far from reaching its target of 125 by 2020. The problem is more severe in remote, underserved regions. Follow our reporters to the district hospital in Bajura to see for yourself how difficult childbirth is for mothers there.

**The ordeal of childbirth**

Bajura Hospital is constructing a new building, but it still operates out of an old, poorly demolished building, where the operation theatre is a tin shed and there is irregular water supply and electricity.

“We upped machines to the power supply during complicated operations, and the electricity suddenly goes off — we have to improvise a lot here,” says sergeant Deepak Kami, who has delivered 150 babies during birth used to be the biggest cause of maternal mortality in the 1990s, now it is home–hospital infections like sepsis. Many older women still think birth should be kept at home and dissemble their daughters in law from giving birth at a health facility.

“There is still the idea that childbirth is a normal, natural thing, and not something you need to visit a hospital for,” says Lalti Monkey at the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

Only 45% of women in Bajura go for all four of the antenatal checkups, while the average for the Far West Region is 55%, and nationally it is still a high 44%. Because settlements are scattered and remote, Bajura Health Department, the government has focused on basic health facilities and birthing centres instead of large well-equipped hospitals, explains Punyat Poudel at the Nepal Bajura District Health Management program in the ministry of health.

“We have a roadmap to reduce MMR to 70 by 2030 by focusing on postnatal checkups, midwives will be trained for delivery and all hospitals will be equipped with equipments to help women give birth at home during ante and postnatal periods,” says Poudel.

However, many of the new birthing centres are near bigger health facilities, which makes them less useful. There is a concern among health professionals that popular agendas have fueled constructions everywhere, and that the birthing centres are not always staffed and ready to provide care.

“Simply building birthing centres is not the solution. They should be properly constructed and located where they will be most effective. They should be functional so that at least one person is available 24 hours a day to provide simple delivery services,” says P pastor Arayal at Bhayat Hospital in nearby Achham district.

Netra Shrestha of UNFPA says reproductive health should not be limited to Treatment of birth as an event. She says, “To improve maternal health, we need to focus on sex education, build family planning knowledge and methods, anti and postnatal care, and address cultural barriers.”

Nepali Times

Is free health care possible in Nepal?

...yes it is, and a hospital in Achham has shown how it is done

**S P Kalanee**

Around the world, in rich countries and poor, financing healthcare is one of the great challenges. In poor countries, it becomes a life-or-death issue. Over 43% of global healthcare resources are still owned by patients and their families, and more than half of the world’s population spends on essential health services. Medical bills push 100 million people into extreme poverty every year. Nepal has taken remarkable strides in healthcare in past decades despite internal conflict and instability, but health care is still inadequate in remote areas.

Nepal has taken tremendous strides in healthcare in past decades despite internal conflict and instability, but health care is still inadequate in remote areas. The country has now 9,142 hospitals, more than 138,300 health institutions, more than 10,766 laboratories and nearly 26,000 doctors.

In Nepal, 239 women still die per 100,000 childbirths, and the country is far from reaching its target of 125 by 2020. The problem is more severe in remote, underserved regions. Follow our reporters to the district hospital in Bajura to see for yourself how difficult childbirth is for mothers there.

**Nepali Times**

Bayalpatra Hospital in Nepal wins global design award

N epal’s Bayalpatra Hospital has won an international award in the health category at the Global Architecture Festival held in Netherlands.

The hospital in Nepal’s Achham district is a public-private partnership between the group Naya Health and the Nepal government, and is built around a clinic using sustainably designed technology, which makes locally available materials with an ambitious zero-carbon construction model.

“A common example of architecture provides more than a building. Although modern in size and architectural expression, it serves a unique role in the healthcare sector in a region with scarce resources,” say members of the Global Architecture Panel who visited the Naya Health Bayalpatra Regional Health Centre.

A great example of an architect thinking deeply and regarding materials and its use.

The building’s structural design makes it the envy of all others and has a reputation of greener-ing the larger complex and has the potential to set a trend for the healthcare sector worldwide.

Bayalpatra Hospital is the first hospital in Nepal to be built around mountainous terrain. Funded mostly by crowdfunding, the $4 million, three-phase expansion of Bayalpatra Hospital, which started construction in 2015, was finished earlier this year.

Our views were on local materials as much as possible, keeping energy costs low and import the local content,” explains Reit, a Nepali architect with the US-based Board of Structural Design (USB). “The serene nature lends local and farm from the new, the typical grey earthy hues for furniture and the balance between sunlight and ventilation.”

Reliance on local material turned out to be a huge advantage because the project faced unforeseen logistical problems following the 2015 earthquake and landslide at the border with India.

However, the two year constriction was delayed by 14 months because the project site was quite much of bare, steel, and other imported material.

The facility has a state-of-the-art emergency operating room, a hospital with a network of grease-in-greased mirrors and biowaste to control infection and reduce the trauma of a Wolf mine on the Red Team runs the hospital’s critical system, powering the facility’s only air conditioning unit, in the surgical ward.

“Ideas are derived designs based on work with the natural environment and local as possible and use locally available resources,” says Piyu Mathur from Silence Design in New York, who also consulted the unique Women’s Opportunity Center in Rwanda, “we have built it for a different kind of hospital, the first of its kind, providing spaces.”

The hospital has 100 patients a year from the Kailali region, and a staff of 10 people to staff the facility.

Bajalpatra Hospital provides basic and referral care, and its low-cost construction can be split into the three government tiers, with the federal government providing support for the infrastructure and power, the state government and local governments building the walls.

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In Nepal, 239 women still die per 100,000 childbirths, and the country is far from reaching its target of 125 by 2020. The problem is more severe in remote, underserved regions. Follow our reporters to the district hospital in Bajura to see for yourself how difficult childbirth is for mothers there.

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**Nepali Times**
ELEVATE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

#SAG2019 ➡️ #VNY2020

Even the most cynical among us will have to grudgingly give credit to the organisers of #SAG2019 for having pulled off a major event in Kathmandu without a hitch, and shown the way for #VNY2020. Timing the games in the dead of winter when Nepali teams had an edge because we were acclimatised to the cold, pollution and altitude was a masterstroke. If SAG went so well, Visit Nepal 2020 will be a picnic.

Folks at the Ministry of Tourism and Sadim can now sit back and twiddle their collective thumbs because Nepal has hit the target for #VNY2020 ahead of schedule. Two million Indian tourists have already visited Nepal in just one week during the Gadhimai Mela earlier this month. In fact, if you count the number of water buffaloes, goats and other feathered friends that also entered Nepal, we exceeded the target by another million or so visitors. What’s more, many of these inbound pax never went back, which means the average duration of stay of tourists also shot up.

The organisers of #SAG2019 spent a lot of money on the Black Buck mascot and designing memorabilia for every game. It would be a waste of resources to abandon the cute antelope now that the games are over. How about now recycling them to promote Visit Nepal 2020? They would nicely complement the squashing Yeti defeating openly at major landmarks.

Not that anyone asks the Asa for advice these days, but loffer below some ideas about upcycling the Black Buck mascot for Nepal’s tourism promotion in 2020:

http://www.facebook.com/olddurbar

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