Nepal’s baby export

A major discrepancy between Nepal government and foreign records of the number of Nepali children adopted in North America and Europe has exposed a trafficking ring that involves various child welfare agencies in Kathmandu. The Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens has records of only 84 children from Nepal sent for adoption to ten western countries from 2010 to 2019. However, a list submitted to the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) by the US Department of State and the nine other countries reveals that 242 Nepali children were taken for adoption in those nine years.

The ten countries are the United States, Denmark, France, Norway, Switzerland, Canada, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Sweden. These are 158 more Nepali children adopted internationally than the government has records for. Why the discrepancy?

“The data we have is authentic,” maintains Ministry spokesperson Gyaneendra Pasadel. “We have no idea how the details in other countries showed more numbers.”

But for Manju Khatriwa at the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), this is a clear case of child trafficking. She says: “The traffickers produce fake documents and influence both the government officials and parents to smuggle the children abroad.”

Official adoptions by foreign nationals have virtually stopped after reports of corruption and widespread publicized in the media ten years ago. But there is a high demand for adoption, especially in western countries, and a plentiful supply of poor Nepali parents who cannot support their children, and this differential drives trafficking. Some parents are also tricked by traffickers into giving up their children.

Manju and Bhumika Khadka from Sindhupalchok used to sell roasted corn by the roadside in Kathmandu. One day ten years ago, a neighbour named Sarita Shrestha and her husband took pity on their three boys, and offered to place two of them, Rajkumar and Balkrishna, aged 8 and 6, at a children’s shelter.

The parents agreed because they would relieve the burden of feeding and educating them. But once the children were taken from them, the shelter’s management repeatedly refused to allow Manju and Bhumika to visit them, and even started issuing threats. “I begged them to at least let me see my sons just once, but they said they would finish me off,” Manju Khadka recalls tearfully. The parents lodged a complaint at the NHRC, which started an investigation, and found that Rajkumar and Balkrishna had already been adopted in Italy. (See pictures, page 12.)

Says NHRC’s Khatiwada: “It is clear that the parents were tricked into thinking their sons would be educated, but they were instead stolen and sold by the shelter, which prepared original-looking fake documents at the Nepal Children’s Organisation in Nasal.”

The NHRC notified the government, saying Bal Mandir had sent the children to Italy for adoption, and recommending that Nepal’s adoption laws and policies be amended to plug the loopholes. It also said a public awareness campaign was necessary to warn parents about child trafficking.

Akash Chhetri
Centre for Investigative Journalism Nepal

Full Story: Data mismatch proves adoption bypasses Nepal law

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WHEN PANIC GOES VIRAL

The global public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 novel coronavirus has hospitalized tens of thousands and killed hundreds of people in the Asia-Pacific region, impacted civil aviation and slowed down the world economy.

An attempt by the Chinese authorities to impose first reports from Wuhan is blamed for the initial rise in case load, and its dissemination across China and the world. It is also clear that China’s willingness to see a substantial quantity of a proven virus that is spreading the virus’s spread globally.

The epidemic that is spreading the challenges to containment in the age of social media. Rumors and conspiracy theories, resulting in stigmatization and xenophobia have become the norm in a global village instantaneously by internet-based apps.

The media’s habit of magnifying the negative is no longer exacerbated by the split-second reach of individual posts, click-bait, fake news, and chain-reactions through shares and likes on social media platforms.

At present time, the virus has killed over 1,121 people from the Wuhan region, and over 57,000 were hospitalized. The virus is also seen spreading its domain down. Yet the media shows counter to where it has spread showed ominously on a worldwide map — giving the impression of a global pandemic.

There are very few mentions anywhere that the death toll is extremely low, and that the population on the face of the Earth still exists. Even though no one has yet died from the epidemic in the United States from this virus strain, there is a perception that this epidemic is the one to the one in the Hollywood thriller’s scariest. Few comparisons to common flu that killed nearly 35,000 people in the United States last winter.

The psychology of terror, irrationality of panic, and fear of diseases without cure are not new. What is new is the time mobile communication that allows panic about the virus to go viral.

In contrast, the media was the observed with the plight of 182 students trapped in Wuhan province. The issue was politicized by those opposed to Peking’s affiliated media’s government — both within its NCP and world. The incident’s prominence to fearful parents and highlighted a letter to the prime minister about his callousness and disregard. Under pressure already for months, the government found the evacuation of the students to a quarantine center. It developed a convenient way to show-case action.

If only the government reacted with similar efficiency to other, much more serious national emergencies like Nepal’s.

10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

A year ago in the number of the Nepal-led support group spread around in protest against a government-sanctioned land reform program. The government soon dispersed the crowd. (File photo)

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The Nepali Government supported the country’s government that Nepal-led support group was willing to help the people of Nepal. The government’s gesture included the formation of a special committee to deal with the pianos of the government-impacted area. Nepal-led support group’s donation was approved as per the government-impacted area.

The government-impacted area in 2001 followed evidence that support group was helping children for the thousands of families. Nepal-led support group’s donation was approved as per the government-impacted area.

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DISCOVER MORE: USA

with the airline that flies to more countries than any other
What next for Kathmandu, bottled air?

Something is not working if officials elected to protect the public only protect those who fund them

Nepal has reconstructed its prosperity and installed local, provincial and central governments. People have been promised economic prosperity and happiness by a Communist majority government at all three tiers of government.

Though there is confusion on the devolution of rights and responsibilities to local government, urban and rural municipalities have created plans for the benefit of the local populations.

Many elected representatives have also gone abroad and study tours to see how other municipalities around the world serve their people. There are examples of recognized good work: The mayor of Seoul and Prime Minister of their respective countries. And in the US a Democratic Party candidate for president has a sister. Many of Nepal’s local government leaders have travelled to a pillar of their economic development agenda. Tourism appears to be changing fast and before a deadly virus strike, reminding us of the risks of dependence on tourism, and how having a beautiful landscape and monuments is not enough.

Many municipalities are in a Catch 22 situation because the things that they must do are not popular with their voters. How can an elected official start taxing the informal economy, fraudulent businesses and not tax evaders when these very people are their voters or party funders? This is the democratic system that we have chosen. The right thing to do may not be the popular thing to do.

Local governments need to clean up the air and water, clear litter and manage waste if they are to make urban spaces more livable. And if they are to benefit the local population from tourism income.

There were simpler times when we could drink from the neighbourhood water spout, well or street-side tap. As water became polluted and spread disease, we were forced to buy and drink bottled water. We are not alone in this unfortunate trajectory. The world-famous brand Evian started selling bottled water in Switzerland in 1897 because of the fear of cholera.

So what will we do if the air is polluted? Breathe bottled air? That is already happening to some extent in places where the cost of living is high.

Governments were elected to ensure development that can sustain us in the face of environmental challenges. If not, irreversibly destroy it. We must all work together to get our elected governments to protect open spaces for the next disaster, our monuments and cultural heritage for the next generations, and plants, birds and animals for the sake of human life. In this context, the responsibilities of the local level are greater than at the central level.

Anil Chitrakar resident of Sidhuwa.

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Escape to, and from, Pokhara

Pokhara is changing before our eyes. Its lakeside area is packed with hotels and restaurants, and the muddy fields of the suburbs are filling up with concrete and tarmac. Innovative boaters are increasingly branching out into side valleys and up the surrounding hills.

One such hotel is Sunshine, which describes itself as ‘an oasis with 22 rooms looking up to the panoramas of the Annapurnas. What you have here instead of Lakeside is an ornithological paradise above the Phewa Kola, a tributary of the Seti on the southern rim of the Valley.

There are great walks to be had all around, and the fragrant air reminds us of the old Pokhara of little farms, grazing buffalos and fluttering butterflies. Sunshine is located exactly in the transition zone between the rock-strewn beaches that make up Pokhara’s valley floor and the hills that rise up from it.

Several hundred years ago, there was catastrophic glacial lake outburst that brought down a flood that deposited boulders and debris 15km deep along the Seti River. This is what made Pokhara’s uniquely flat terrain, which also backed up the Stapan rivulet to form Phewa Lake and the other lakes for which Pokhara is famous.

The city’s foundation is made up of boulders that, when eroded, give the gravelly beds that are Pokhara’s landmarks. Sunshine Resort sits on each such ledge and with a mountain range hiding behind it. Few in the tourism trade even know about this geological history of Pokhara, which is described in volumes with enthusiasm by Sunshine’s proprietor Rajendra Dibh Koiri.

A veteran of Nepal’s hospitality industry and once general manager of the Hotel Phulchoki. Koiri says, “I searched for a decade before locating a plot I thought would be best for the kind of small hotel with full facilities which I felt Pokhara deserved."

“I am on the lookout for assets that are exciting about small things,” says Koiri, as he takes visitors on a personalized tour on the trails. He stops at one place and points across the Phewa rivulet towards Mt Machapuchare, but he is directing the visitor’s attention not to the mountain but to an interesting collection of five giant simal trees in the foreground.

“You can see Machapuchare from any point in Pokhara, but those trees which were once common in Pokhara are now mostly gone except here."

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Mahindra and Mahindra (M&M) has recently announced to open 115 new dealerships in India. The company has set a target of increasing its dealership network to 500 by 2022.

Turkish Airlines, which has recently announced to launch more flights to different destinations, has also increased its flight frequency in the last few months.

Qatar Airways, which recently announced to start flights to and from the capital of the UAE, Abu Dhabi, has also increased its flight frequency.

The M-II MacBook Pro has achieved the US-based CNET’s Best Choice Award, an accolade only available to computers achieving the highest levels of safety performance for use in India. The MacBook Pro was able to score perfect in the Fraser Safety rating, which is the highest score under the campaign.

Samsung Exchange, the national distributor of Samsung Mobiles in Nepal, has announced Samsung Galaxy Fold is going most of the ME.

SAMSUNG

Smart, Samsung authorized Showroom.

BOSS Bank, at Kathmandu Limited, held a press meet on 19 February to mark its 25th anniversary. With Nepal Rastra Bank’s Governor Dr. Ornella Nembang in the chief guest, the bank’s board of directors, management, customer and other stakeholders presented a 25-year retrospective. As part of a CRTC campaign, the bank donated 15 million to Jhapa’s ‘Life of Po’ project under the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare for the construction of its ICU.

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What next for Kathmandu, bottled air?

Nepal has reconstructed its prosperity and installed local, provincial and central governments. People have been promised economic prosperity and happiness by a Communist majority government at all three tiers of government.

Though there is confusion on the devolution of rights and responsibilities to local government, urban and rural municipalities have created plans for the benefit of the local populations. Many elected representatives have also gone abroad and study tours to see how other ‘municipalities’ around the world serve their people. There are examples of recognized good work: The mayor of Seoul and Prime Minister of their respective countries. And in the US a Democratic Party candidate for presidential re-election has a twin sister.

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Anil Chitrakar resident of Sidhuwa.
Nepal media feels China’s wrath in coronavirus fallout

China’s secrecy has made coronavirus crisis much worse

The Chinese Ambassador to Nepal, Hu Yanqing, said that Nepal was facing a severe crisis due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, the Chinese embassy in Kathmandu has not taken any measures to address the situation despite Nepal being one of the countries with the highest number of coronavirus cases.

The Chinese embassy’s inaction has prompted a reaction from the Nepalese media. The Kathmandu Post, one of the country’s leading newspapers, has published an editorial criticising the Chinese embassy for its inaction. The editorial states that the Chinese embassy should have taken more proactive measures to address the crisis.

The editorial also criticises the Chinese government for its secrecy in handling the pandemic. The editorial states that the Chinese government’s secrecy has made the crisis much worse.

The Nepalese media has been critical of China’s handling of the pandemic. The country’s media has been critical of China’s handling of the pandemic, particularly in relation to the coronavirus. The media has pointed out that China has not shared enough information about the pandemic, which has made it difficult for other countries to respond effectively.

The Nepalese media has also been critical of China’s handling of the crisis in other countries. The media has pointed out that China has been slow to respond to the crisis in other countries, particularly in countries with a large Chinese population.

The Nepalese media’s criticism of China has been met with a backlash from some quarters. The Chinese embassy in Kathmandu has accused the Nepalese media of being biased against China. The embassy has also threatened legal action against the media for its criticism.

The Nepalese media has stood firm in its criticism of China. The media has stated that its criticism is based on facts and that it is not biased against China. The media has also stated that it is not afraid of legal action.

The Nepalese media’s criticism of China has been supported by the country’s civil society. The civil society has also called for China to be more transparent in handling the pandemic.

The Nepalese media’s criticism of China has also been supported by the country’s political leaders. The political leaders have also called for China to be more transparent in handling the pandemic.

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The Nepalese media’s criticism of China has been supported by the country’s women’s community. The women’s community has also called for China to be more transparent in handling the pandemic.

The Nepalese media’s criticism of China has been supported by the country’s people with disabilities. The people with disabilities have also called for China to be more transparent in handling the pandemic.

The Nepalese media’s criticism of China has been supported by the country’s people of colour. The people of colour have also called for China to be more transparent in handling the pandemic.

The Nepalese media’s criticism of China has been supported by the country’s people who have experienced discrimination. The people who have experienced discrimination have also called for China to be more transparent in handling the pandemic.

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The power of reading aloud

Sanghamitra Subba

Introducing a habit of reading children’s supplements—what they learn in school, but reading aloud to children by parents, teachers or even other children, is a way for them and adults to bond and to share experiences of wonder, joy, and discovery.

When children are able to turn the pages of a book but not yet to read words, they often tell stories from memory or make them up as they go along. These are all essential steps in the incipient formation of a reading habit. Following words on the page as a parent reads aloud helps children to understand the connectedness of the spoken and written word.

Reading aloud to and with children has benefits far beyond the development of language and literacy skills. A study in the journal Pediatrics found that shared reading and play between parents and children has long-lasting impact on the children’s social and emotional development, helping to curb hyperactivity, aggression, and difficulty with attention.

There is in fact a performance gap in schools between children who are readers and those who are not. Children who have books in their lives from before formal schooling have better vocabulary, comprehension, and communication skills, and these set them up for success in school, says early childhood development expert Monakshi Dahal.

“Parents who do not speak to their children in proper sentences hinder their child’s verbal fluency, communication skills and even reading skills,” says Dahal. “The lack of proper communication hinders a child’s reading ability and the lack of reading ability hinders the development of communication skills.”

A recent campaign by children’s publisher Rato Bangala Kirati (OkaReshow Kiratik) encourages parents to post videos on social media platforms reading aloud to children. Says Mentu Gurung of RKK: “We wanted reading to be a part of the family’s daily life and reading aloud is an easy and fun way to do that. The new generation of parents is aware of the benefits of reading to children, and the culture of reading is picking up.”

Pedagogues say there is a clear correlation between children’s reading habits and their performance in school. And the benefits to learning go beyond that. Reading helps children develop a love for literature, which results in the child becoming a reader.

“A good reader becomes a good writer and a person who can think deeply and see different perspectives. The child develops empathy and a stronger understanding of the world and becomes a life-long learner,” says Milan Dixit, principal of Rato Bangala School.

Children’s publishers have been publishing more books in Nepali so that there is more available for children and parents to read. Illustrated children’s books like Nadira Story by Dwivakar Chhibruti have been very popular, and 100 is releasing its first colour board books for very small children that can take rough handling at the Bal Sahitya Mahotsav on Saturday.

Read More Nepal’s Kartikya Chhetri says reading aloud to children not only arouses interest in books and language, but is an interactive experience. He adds: “Through reading parents can also impart values like compassion and empathy.”

As popular children’s author Bruce Coville says, “It’s easy, and overwhelming there are no negatives to reading aloud to children. There are only positives.”

Why read to children?

Kids, especially around the ages of three and four, have a sponge-brain for language. They will take as much as you can give them and if you show them of reading aloud, you store them of words that they need for the future. The way we impact the world as adults is mostly through words, whether spoken or written. If we do not have a mastery of language it will be much harder for us to convince and persuade and thereby change the world around us.

So you need to pour words into a child’s brain. Rich and creamy language. It needs to be early on. They need to hear their parent’s voices. It is also a great bonding experience for the parent and child, and sometimes a child will want to read the same book again and again and again. The fate of anybody who writes a well-written picture book is that parents will have read it 75 times a week.

As children grow older they are hungry for your time and attention. Reading to them is a great way to give that to them, and it gives them confidence in school with their own language. There are no negatives about reading aloud to children, only positives.

And stories teach ethics, morals, behaviour, and decision-making. Reading aloud shows children that you also value reading and value literature. If a child never sees you reading then they will never take it up themselves or see the importance of it.

Bruce Coville
This author is an alien

Bruce Coville describes his interest in firing the imagination of children with science-fiction books

Inspired by Dr. Seuss’s The Mushroom Planet series, Dr. Doolittle, C. S. Lewis, Tolkien, myths, legends, science fiction and fantasy at a young age, American author Bruce Coville writes stories about futuristic gimmics – quickly, fantastical and bizarre stories that are a favourite with children all over the world.

But not all his imaginary gadgets stay imaginary: he predicted the invention of smartphones and voice-recognition translators 20 years ago. In his My Teacher is an Alien series published in 1989, characters use a device called the URAT (Universal Reader and Translator), a powerful pocket computer that seems to belong to our world today. Nowadays, Coville writes about brain-stripping intelligence boosters and machine-based telepathy, which we may also see become reality in future.

Coville’s The Unicorn Chronicles series, Red Albright Alien Adventures, The Magic Shop series and other playfully-titled books show that the 69-year-old author has a child’s wide imagination, and an understanding of the way young minds work.

Coville is in Kathmandu for the Bal Sahitya Mahotsav children’s book festival on Saturday at Ratibung School and will be doing readings from his books there and in other schools.

One day when Coville was six in a cow country in upstate New York, his father, a travelling salesman, pulled out Victor Appleton’s Tom Swift in the City of Gold. It was a big, ugly book, and he put me on his lap and started reading aloud,” recalls Coville. “We read night after night and went on a journey together. In those times, for boys you almost needed permission from an adult male to read and I became a reader because of the model my father was.”

It was in Grade 6 that Coville realised he wanted to be a writer, among the multitude of other things that a child dreams of doing. His teacher encouraged him to do a long-term short-story project where he had the freedom to write whatever he wanted to, and the young Coville had produced an Ampers-and-
Dhampus Backpack  
(Yati Supply)

Dhampus 13L is a go-to backpack for city dwellers and spontaneous adventurers. It is lightweight and waterproof and it offers multiple spacious pockets. The smaller front pocket is easily accessible and the perfect place to keep your frequently used items. The larger pocket has a compartment to fit a 14" laptop and slots to keep your neck knapsack organised.

Price: Rs2,800  
Colours: Grey, Space Black

Makara USB  
(Allare)

Traditional Newari iconography meets the digital age in Allare’s Makara USB. The maker is a half-terrestrial, half-aquatic creature that is the vehicle of the water god Varuna and a guardian of gateways in Newa and other South Asian cultures. It features prominently in Kathmandu Valley’s traditional devotional art forms, including the stone water gushis and Tato Machhendranath’s chariot. Allare has engraved a makar on the wood that houses its USB.

Price: Rs2,800  
Specifications: 16GB, 3.0 USB

Planters  
(Kala Kathmandu)

Kala Kathmandu’s minimalist animal-shaped planters provide a cute home for small plants and succulents. The ceramic planters come in the form of setu-and-brown cats, tan capybaras, tan-and-grey elephants, and beige and white sheep. The company also sells a beautiful, earth-inspired espresso tea set, colourful vases and contemporary wall-hangs.

Price: Rs550

New Nepali brands are adding modern-day flair to tradition

Cold-Pressed Juice  
(Nochini)

Instead of guzzling sugary, additive-filled canned or boxed juices, try Nochini’s healthier, sugar-free and preservative-free cold-pressed nectars. They come in 13 different fruit and vegetable combinations, including the hydrator (watermelon and olive seeds), Bel (beet and apples), and Revitalise (carrot, cucumber and pomegranate). When the company started in 2011, the juices came in glass bottles, but they were later sold in BPA-free plastic. Now the customer-favourite 250 ml glass bottles are back, so you can drink Nochini without worrying about creating a rash of plastic pollution.

Nochini also offers a one- to three-day juice cleanse that comes with detailed instructions. Also try their yogurt-based smoothies, which will energize you for the day. If you’d like, Nochini will even create a dairy-free option for you.

The company will soon be launching ‘Jerfari’, a line of bottled water, and the Juicer Wala, a more affordable version of its flagship cold-pressed juices.

Price: Rs300 per bottle  
Juice Cleanse: Rs1800 (one day/three juices), Rs2500 (two days/12 juices), Rs5400 (three days/18 juices)

Sanghami

21 - 27 FEBRUARY

MADE IN

On the well-lit shelves of The Local Auchi Ko Pasal, shoppers encounter clothes, games, jewellery and more created by Nochini, among others. All these items have in common that they are handmade and/or crafted by hand. This week, Nepali Times celebrates these elegant designs.
Earrings
(Siry Sidhu Khairgoli)

SI presents bold, minimalist, and geometrical handcrafted silver jewellery. These earrings are a favourite of designer Sidhu Khairgoli, who sees them as embodying the refined simplicity and contemporary nature of the brand. All jewellery is made with genuine silver and sterling products and precious gems from Nepal, India and Thailand. Khairgoli also custom designs jewellery.
Price: Rs.6,800
Price Range: Rs.2,000-Rs.15,000

Payoo
(Kari Play)

Payoo Kari Payo’s latest card game, tests customers’ reflexes and knowledge of Nepal’s endangered animal species. Suitable for players of any age. Payoo is a great way to learn about wildlife while enjoying some friendly competition. It consists of 57 cards with colour illustration of animals like the Bengal tiger and the Himalayan tahr, and players must find the match between their card and the card on deck. Kari Payo also has board games like Samratya, which takes players on the journey of Prithvi Narayan Shah’s conquest of Kathmandu Valley, or Shuttal, a fun drinking game that can be an extension to Samratya.
Price: Rs.600

ود Woolen Hat
(Weather)

Lamu Wear’s beanie, scarves and mittens are featured with warm thick, the Double W/hood. Luhu Wear’s latest ‘Love is Live’ campaign features LGBTQ couples and friends wearing their winter wear — warmed by their love and the year. It is ready wear.
Price: Rs.500
Brown, leaf green, midnight black, beige, olive green, teal blue

Premium Dark Chocolate Mustang Apples and Roasted Pistachios
(Nana’s Delight)

Nana’s Delights Mustang Apples and Roasted Pistachios variety is the latest in its Premium Dark Chocolate line. While the cocoa is imported from the Philippines and India, the Mustang apples are from Jarvis and the nuts from around Nepal. The apples add a sweet, tangy bite and the roasted pistachios give a pleasing crunch to the 70% dark chocolate bar.
Price: Rs.90 (small)/ Rs.490 (large)

Skateboard Decks
(Amiko)

Amiko’s sleek, modern and custom decks are not just skateboards, but works of art. Kathmandu Valley artisans intricately engrave the Indian Apple and Eucalyptus finish of the Canadian maplewood boards. You can opt for the standard geometrical designs with Amiko insignia as ask for custom work. Amiko also makes trendy apparel, bags and furniture.
Price Range: Rs.4,000-9,000
Variations: Pointed, Curved

Modern touches to traditional concepts

Extra Subba

Art Projects, Timro Concept Store or tastefully arranged rows of bags, furniture and stationery designed and Nepali artisans.

that they are minimalist, refined traditional Nepali themes into handcrafts beyond their familiar the companies that produce them creatively place them in everyday platforms to promote a larger idea. sometimes profiles some of the new brands.
**GETAWAY**

Hotel Country Villa

From the top of Nagarkot Hill, this hotel provides spectacular views of all landmarks, sunrise and sunset, and showcases the mountain ranges on clear days. A meeting spot in nature for those wishing to escape the chaos of the city. (01) 4405025, 015792216.

Hattiban Resort

Hattiban Resort is the perfect place to get away for the weekend. Have breakfast at the hotel's buffet, lounge in the sunny courtyard overlooking the mountains, book a massage at the spa and tour nearby Swayambhunath, Chandpal Temple and Kothkana Village. (01) 4579620.

**MUSIC**

**Folk Rock Night**

Enjoy folk rock music from Trishna featuring an opening performance by Cam dạ erw. Stay for the all-night DJ session.

22 February, 7pm-11pm, UP Restaurant Lounge bar, Thamel (01) 4404168

**Tribute to Nirvana**

Celebrate rock legends Nirvana this Shivaratri with live performances by the bands Tom, Anta, and Bookyra.

27 February, 7pm onwards, Jatroo Restaurant, Khokana (01) 4407830.

**Acoustic Night**

Sakal and others perform original and cover songs live.

27 February, 9pm-1am, Fusion Planets & Café, Boudha, (01) 4507119

**Fridays’**

This place is go for all things food. Try their delicious ‘Fridays’ farm breakfast and leave with your bellies and hearts full.

18 February, 9am-1pm, Sakal Restaurant, Bhaktapur (01) 4370999.

**Sizzling Stizzler**

Give your taste buds a sizzling treat and make your weekend great. Enjoy soups, desert, and unlimited beer with your service every Friday and Saturday.

8pm-11pm, Price Rs 800, Kiva Restaurant, Thamel (01) 4471099.

**Shivarti at Moksh**

Celebrate Shivaratri with live reggae music from Paise (Jain),_QUARO AND Joint Family International.

27 February, 7pm-11pm, Hotel Rishi, Match沙龙 (01) 4528782.

**ECOLeCOGIC WITH MISS MOTI**

**Kripa Joshi**

**OUR PICK**

**The Call Wild**

Opens In Kathmandu 21 February

[Image]

**Air Quality Index**

Kathmandu, 14 - 20 February

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**RAW TEXT END**
Data mismatch proves adoption bypasses Nepal law

Akash Chhetri

A fter malpractices were uncovered in the 2000s, the Nepal government tightened laws on adoptions. According to the “Terms and Conditions and Process Required for Approving Adoption of a Nepali Child by an Alien – 2004,” prospective foreign parents cannot choose the child they want to adopt. Foreign couples wishing to adopt a Nepali child must apply through a registered international agency or their embassies in Nepal, filling out forms offering details about the age, gender and other particulars that they seek in a child. A joint secretory-led Family Matching Committee is then assigned to find the child from shelters. Clause 14 of the Terms and Conditions stipulates that these adoptions will take place on a first-come-first-serve basis.

However, the Hague Conference on Private International Law (“HCCH”) documents make clear that many adoptions have skipped the whole process. The documents show that Denmark received 20 Nepali children through adoption from Nepal in the last nine years. But government records in Kathmandu show only two children had paperwork to leave for that country. The mismatch is even starker for France, for which government records here show only one adopted Nepali child, while the HCCH records show 21 Nepali children adopted by French families. (See map, page 13)

Numerically, the United States shows the biggest discrepancy. The State Department report reveals that 1,993 children were adopted from Nepal in the last nine years, but the government’s records here show only 11.

According to the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the US Department of State, an American citizen wishing to adopt a child should be at least 25 years old, and in the case of couples both husband and wife should agree to adopt the child. Prospective parents should not have any criminal background and should meet the criteria of the country from which they seek to adopt. The fact that 1,993 Nepali children adopted by Americans have no records in Nepal prove that they were transported outside of legal channels. HCCH records show that Norway, Canada, Switzerland, Belgium, Sweden and Italy had similar inconsistencies with Nepal government records.

Care Homes 2013 says it is the state’s responsibility to look after children who have lost both parents, or the children of jobless parents, provided their kin cannot take care of them. The priority is for in-country adoption, and international adoption is only a last resort. The legal provisions make inter-country child adoption more difficult than adoption within the state. But the term of the state’s responsibility is only a last resort, and even the government itself is amenable to international adoption. Care Homes 2013 makes clear that many children are being trafficked abroad in the guise of adoption.

An NCRC report on Trafficking in Persons 2019 points to a nexus between orphanages, child-care centres and foreigners wishing to adopt children. The report says there are 14,861 children in 533 children’s homes all over the country. Nearly 80% of children in such centres are not orphans, and have either one or both parents.

The only government shelter for orphans is Bal Mandir and it is run by the Nepal Children’s Organisation (NCO), which provides care, nutrition and education to orphans all over the country. The NCO has been implicated in facilitating illegal inter-country adoption.

In August 2015, British national Donna Smith was accused at Kathmandu airport with a newborn baby she claimed was her daughter. Smith was carrying a birth certificate from Lalitpur Metropolitan City and the baby’s passport, issued by the British Embassy, carried her name as Ania Bella Laxmi Shrestha. Smith had written an email to the police seeking the identity of the baby’s father. police.

An investigation later found out that the baby’s real mother was a rape victim who gave birth to her at Panauti Maternity Hospital. Smith admitted to paying Bal Krishna Bangol, director of the NCO, Rs 450,000 for the baby and another Rs 20 million to procure the necessary documents to take her out of the country. Deputy Superintendent of Police Hohn Indra Bogati says Dangol was found to be involved in a larger child-trafficking network. Both Dangol and Smith are now in jail.
It is difficult to get western museums to return trafficked deities, so Nepalis are making copies of the missing statuary.

Alisha Sijapati

The discovery that the 12th-century deity stolen from his neighborhood had turned up in Dallas, Texas, was a blow to one for Bhai Raja Shreesta.

The statue of Laxmi-Narayan was stolen 30 years ago at a time when Kathmandu Valley was being plundered of gods and goddesses by western art collectors. It was recently tracked to the Dallas Museum of Art by American artist Joy Lynn Davis, who has documented Kathmandu’s missing deities through striking works of visual art.

The 700-year-old stone figure was once an integral part of the intangible heritage of Patan’s Farkotole neighborhood. After it was stolen in 1984 Shreesta says the community also started falling apart. “We are glad our god has been located in Dallas. We will try our best to bring it back, but we must also ask ourselves whether we are up to taking good care of it,” says Shreesta, 77, a social activist in the Farkotole neighborhood of Patan.

Shreesta recalls that the theft was a heart-wrenching moment for the community and especially for those for whom Laxmi-Narayan is a patron deity. “People used to come in large numbers every day to this temple for pujas, but after the god was stolen this changed. Now it is a whole generation later and the temple has suffered from the god’s absence.”

Even though the figure was replaced by a poor replica in 1993, and the temple itself renovated in 2006, the neighborhood does not attach the same importance to it. “God is god regardless of it being a replica or not. However, it does pinch you that the original piece is among foreigners who could not care less about its religious significance,” Shreesta adds.

After it was stolen, the rare androgynous composite deity was sold by the Sotheby’s auction house but was sighted in the Sotheby’s catalogue in 1990, and it was later leased for 30 years to the Dallas Museum of Art by a collector named David T. Owsley. After the figure on display at the museum was found to be the stolen Laxmi-Narayan, this was pointed out to the museum by art crime scholar Eric L. Thompson. In response, the Dallas Museum of Art tweeted on 30 November 2015, “The Dallas Museum of Art takes these matters very seriously and we are currently looking into this.” The deity has since been removed from display.

The figure, also called Vaishdeva,
Nepal’s stolen gods

It is difficult to get western museums to return trafficked statues, so Nepalis are making copies of the missing statuary. Get the first look of the Museum of Stolen Arts, set to open in 2022 and listen to its founder Rabindra Puri. Also from Bhai Raja Shrestha about the discovery of the 12th century deity stolen from his neighbourhood that has turned up in Dallas, Texas.

A museum of copies

Bhaira Shrestha stands before the 1993 replica of the Laxmi-Nayani this week in Patan.

A weekly Sunday market at Dhokaima, with new stalls and interesting local products added every week. Support Nepali small business owners and shop for organic produce as well as unique handicraft items at this special curated market. Shop at Aitabar!

Venue: Dhokaima Cafe/Yala Maya Kendra
Time: 8:30 am - 1:00 pm
Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur. Tel. 977-1-5553767/9803 228588
email: dhokaimacafe@yahoo.com

The Laxmi-Nayani figure is restored by Joy Lynn Jais in 2015.
Who will save Nepal’s poor

Rojita Adhikari in Bajura

Recently, four women lost their lives in childbirth here in Bajura district in remote Far-West Nepal. All of them died at local healthcare facilities. Although Nepal has made vast improvements in maternal health, with the maternal mortality ratio dropping by 55% per 100,000 live births 23 years ago to 230 today, tragic stories like that of Rojita Adhikari are still common. An estimated 1,200 women still die in childbirth in Nepal every year — mostly of them because health posts are not properly equipped or staffed.

According to the target set under the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, Nepal’s maternal mortality ratio (MMR) should drop to 79 per 100,000 in the next ten years. Nepal has already failed to meet the interim target of reducing MMR to 125 by this year.

Bajura District Hospital in Marand recorded two maternal deaths within a month. Rupchandra Biswokarma, the physician-in-charge of the government hospital, said both mothers could have been saved if the facility had an Intensive Care Unit and an ultrasound machine. The hospital delivered 1,500 deliveries last year, including 85 caesareans, and yet does not have these facilities.

“Most mothers brought here are in their last stages,” says Biswokarma. “First, they try to give birth at home. If they cannot, they go to the nearest health post, and if the health post cannot deal with the case, they are referred to us. Forget about a well-equipped maternal ward, an ICU or a gynaecologist. We do not even have a skilled birth attendant or trained doctor here. Actually, God is saving new mothers here, not us.”

Pandanus Health Post is a busy place. This hilltop village is six months’ journey from Kathmandu. The health worker had to go to the hospital in Syangja in 24 hours. She has checked out to go because she cannot afford the cost of travel. “What happens will happen,” she says.

Buddha Basnyat

In Bajura, a 25-year-old Battat Chaudhary has had no prenatal support and is returning a reason she partnered to make sure the he had at home would produce eggs. The eggs will be the main source of nutrition for mother and baby after delivery.

Krishna Nepali, 27, and her four-year-old son Amrit are missing Amrit’s mother Saraswati, who died in Bajura District Hospital three months ago.

Lali Nepali, 26, from Raul nagar village, is six months pregnant and is in constant pain. The health worker told her to go to the hospital in Syangja in 24 hours. She has checked out to go because she cannot afford the cost of travel. “What happens will happen,” she says.

attendant for ante-natal checkups. Even after childbirth, many new mothers and their children lack of proper diet and suffer from complications. A mother from Bajura, Basanti Bobha, 24, a mother of a one-month-old baby, had experienced terrible labour pain. She first went to Pandanus Health Post but the health worker told her to go to the district hospital, which is four hours’ drive away on a very bad road. When Basanti and her family got there, the nurse there told them to go to Syangja Hospital in Arughat, which is run by the non-profit Nepal Health. “All along the way I thought I would die. It is a miracle that the baby and I are both alive today,” she says, playing with her baby boy. This is not just the story of a handful of women, a few villages and one district. Conditions for women in childbirth are dire across Far-West Nepal, says Nikash Guha, Health Director of Bajura Rural Hospital, which delivers 900 babies every month. The mothers come from Auliya, Dilu, Rausi and Dali Khadi districts, mostly as referral cases from local health posts.

“If the case is seriously complicated we cannot even treat it here as we do not have a blood bank or an ICU,” says Guha. “The main problem is that most mothers do not go through proper checkups, like ultrasound exams.” But ultrasound machines are scarce.

Miracle drug to reduce maternal mortality

Buddha Basnyat

Transmucous acid (TXA) is a game-changer drug in the treatment of post-partum haemorrhage (PPH), the main cause of death in women immediately after giving birth. Unsurprisingly, 99% of these deaths occur in under-developed countries like Nepal because many patients cannot afford treatment. The good news is that TXA is inexpensive, and is widely available in South Asia. Mothers, especially those who work in emergency room settings, have certainly heard about this life-saving remedy. The drug is expensive and is widely available in South Asia. Mothers, especially those who work in emergency room settings, have certainly heard about this life-saving remedy. The drug's scope is clearly not limited to emergency rooms, although it is most often used in trauma victims to stem bleeding. However, many doctors, including obstetricians and gynaecologists, may not know exactly how this drug is known and often used in trauma victims to stem bleeding.

However, many doctors, including obstetricians and gynaecologists, may not know exactly how this drug is known and often used in trauma victims to stem bleeding.

It all had to do with the WOMAN study. In order to avoid unnecessary bias regarding drug recommendations, Western medicine is generally based on randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled trials called RCT (randomised controlled trials). These rigorous methods are applied so that the final results will have as little to do with chance as possible. In fact, this year’s Nobel Prize in economy went to a couple, Banerjee and Duflo, who used the RCT method to arrive at their conclusions on alleviating global poverty. For the TXA study, the investigators recruited women aged 16 years and older with a clinical diagnosis of post-partum haemorrhage after vaginal birth or cesarean section from 193 hospitals in 21 countries, including RIKHS and Rast Hospital in Dhanepal and Nepal Medical College in Kathmandu. Between March, 2017, and last week, 20,060 women were randomly assigned by the international panel of study investigators to receive either 1 gram of intravenous TXA or a matching placebo (a look-alike sugar pill) in addition to the usual care that included other drugs. The results were ground breaking. When given within three hours of birth of PPH, one in three maternal deaths were prevented with TXA. The study was published in the medical journal Lancet in May 2017. The World Health Organization (WHO) took note.

In fact, the WHO had already recommended the use of TXA in PPH back in 2012, but the recommendation at that time was to use TXA almost as a last resort after the uterine tone failed to control the bleeding. Neotone are drugs like oxytocin and prostaglandines that are commonly used to contract the uterus to stop haemorrhage. TXA does not work by lightening the uterus but by inhibiting the breakdown of blood clots (thrombin and fibrinogen), a completely different mechanism of action.

In 2017, based on the WOMAN trial (the World Maternal Antifibrinolytic/lytic System is in keeping with TXA’s mechanism of action), the WHO put out some new recommendations prioritising the use of TXA in the treatment of PPH to use as long as possible with the uterotonic and not to wait and watch.
pregnant women ... a government plan, or God?

Rejya Nepali, 31, was mother to three small children of Chitwan village. She died at a health post on 2 November after five hours of labor to give birth to a baby boy. When she went into painful labor at home, Rejya was taken to the nearest health post by her husband and relatives. There was no one at the health post, so Rejya’s family spent an hour going to the health post near her house and bringing her over. In the Meanwhile, Rejya had already given birth and the umbilical cord by which she was brought to the health post, and a few hours later she died. Rejya, 60-year-old mother-in-law Devra Nepali death struck the two-year-old child alongside Rejya’s children, Abh, 4, Sagar, 4 and Mana, 2. Devra said: “I am old, cannot see properly and cannot eat. My son has been driving a car since he lost his work. When Rejya was with us everything was better because now we have no milk for the baby and no food to eat.”

Jamuna Nepali is seven months pregnant with her fourth child in village in Lajura. At 22, she wanted a gap between her first child and her fourth child. Jamuna said, she could not afford to feed another mouth. She went to a health post in Lajura and was given some pills. But despite taking these, she became pregnant again. Her husband is working in India to feed the family.

At 42, Bhana Jaisi (Assam) giving birth, abuse from Adham in her last child by last year. Her oldest daughter was already 25 and had four children of her own. “My life will be complete if I give birth to a son,” Jaisi said faithfully. Her husband Raghu said: “We believe we will not go to heaven if we do not have a son.”

No conceivable reason for unwanted pregnancies

Kewara Koli, 34, is already mother to seven daughters and one son. Her oldest daughter, Lamia is in Limbu in a local school in Lushun. Lamia advised her mother to get an implant from a nearby health post. “My mother was giving birth every two years, and she became weaker after every baby,”

Sunita Gurung is 21, is already mother to four children aged three, five, three, and four months old. She gives birth to her first child was already 25, and had four children of her own.

This updated recommendation may not be known to many health care professionals on the frontline of post-partum hemorrhage treatment in Nepal. The use of TXA for a patient with PPH will only succeed if there is the political will to push it. Otherwise, this tremendous advancement in medical care will be relegated to the dustbin.

Fortunately, the Nepalese government may soon be endorsing new guidelines for the prompt use of TXA, especially in remote health facilities, to further reduce Nepal’s maternal mortality rate.

The prompt use of TXA can also decrease the financially-devastating helicopter rescues that poor Nepal’s poor in far-away districts have to resort to save the lives of relatives suffering from PPH. Most cannot afford to hire helicopters and bleed to death.

In most cases, TXA has to be given intravenously, and since many Nepal’s birth (and deaths) take place at home, this approach may not be feasible. Who is going to put in the intransitory line even if the drug is available and cheap? Amazingly, the table form of the drug is already easily available in Nepal, but more research is needed to find out if giving the drug orally will achieve the same result. If TXA tablets stop gest- birth bleeding as injections do, that would be very welcome news for Nepal mothers-to-be.

Buddha Basnyat, MD, is a professor at the Kathmandu University’s School of Medical Sciences in Nepal.

Kolika BK (left) is standing, with her sister in law on her lap. From Aham is being delivered at a hospital in Chitwan. She was delivered on 14. Now 24, she is the mother of seven children. Her oldest child is 10, and her youngest is a five-month-old baby.

“Has not been easy. Every time he (Aham) would cry, Kolika said, ‘Kolika of her pregnancies, and was unable to give birth to any child due to natural reasons. She has tried many times to get pregnant, but her doctor and the child is born of a son, and her youngest is five months old.

“Has not been easy. Every time he (Aham) would cry, Kolika said, ‘Kolika of her pregnancies, and was unable to give birth to any child due to natural reasons. She has tried many times to get pregnant, but her doctor and the child is born of a son, and her youngest is five months old.

The family is gathering the corn, waves, and enough food to eat only four months of the year. Kolika is not satisfied with this situation, and her 15-year-old sister Shinta (standing with baby sister) cannot wait to get married herself so she can manage the family’s growing poverty. The woman standing at the door is Jamuna, Kolika’s mother-in-law.

Watch a video that graphically demonstrates the tragedy of women dying unnecessarily in childbirth due to lack of TXA. There is a cheap and easily-available solution that is being called TXA, if only governments promoted it.

The situation has become more complicated that before with the new federal system. Global health needs are now the responsibility of both local and provincial governments, and this has led to increased wait times for these services. One of the interventions that has been successful in reducing maternal deaths is the use of a drug called TXA, which contains a pharmaceutical mixture of 10 milligrams of tranexamic acid, a compound that helps to reduce bleeding.

The intervention has been shown to be effective in reducing blood loss following delivery, and it has been recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF). In countries where TXA is readily available, maternal mortality rates have declined significantly.

In Nepal, however, the availability of TXA is limited, and its use is often delayed due to logistical and financial constraints. Lack of access to TXA can result in preventable maternal deaths, especially in remote and rural areas where maternal health services are limited.

This limitation highlights the need for ongoing advocacy efforts to promote the use of TXA and other interventions that can save lives. The government, with the support of international organizations and donors, should prioritize the availability of TXA and other necessary medical supplies to remote health facilities in Nepal.

In conclusion, the availability of TXA and other interventions is crucial in reducing maternal deaths. The government and other stakeholders must continue to support these initiatives to ensure that all women have access to timely and effective maternal health care.
Legal niceties

A copy of the controversial Media Consul Bill leaked exclusively to The Ans by a highly-placed authoritative source reveals that everything that happens in this country can henceforth and hereinafter only be divulged on a need-to-know basis. This means if there is a need to know anything then you’ll be told there is no need to know it. In other words, as they say in legal parlance, SIVU. Below is the leaked draft, which means that if is against the law to read the rest of this column. So, stop right here. DO NOT read any further.

WHEREAS you are already committing a crime by flouting the law by reading this redacted document, and are liable to face 5 years in jail and/or Rs 10,000 to be bailed, the government reserves the right to suspend freedom of expression until the Security Printing Press, Keckelb Scand, the Nepal Trust Scan, and the Baltawar land swindle blow over. The media will henceforth be referred to as a lopside and not a watchdog.

REASSURING that freedom comes with strings attached and even though the truth must be adhered to at all times, during extra-ordinary circumstances exceptions shall be made, such as when the news is:

(a) Boring
(b) Unremarkable
(c) What actually happened, or
(d) Hurts the feelings of a northern neighbour.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ALSO, that subject to provisions of Subsection (2) of Section 3 of the Constitution, every citizen shall have right of access to official information from the state media, the aforementioned shall cover all functions in a prominent manner and repeat the entire proceedings without engaging any visuals of the dignity pontificating ad nauseam. The dip shall be broadcast during three segments of the morning news:

(a) The Main Points of the News
(b) The News in Detail, and
(c) The Weather Forecast

PUSHER TO the entire unsung version being aired in its scintillating detail after the evening news broadcast, failure to do so will result in an immediate angry phone call from Ministry of Information to the incumbent director of the state media, henceforth referred to as ‘The Mouth Org’.  

NOTwithstanding the provisions of Subsection (2) the people’s right to information shall not be curtailed on any of the grounds therein, with the exception of the following categories:

(i) National security, which includes policies, economics, culture, history, geography, business, methods, spy/agents, named illegally, foreign affairs, or local domestic affairs.

(ii) Items that jeopardize Nepali’s territorial and national interests and relations with fellow-poor nations.

(iii) Freedom of thought is hereby banned, and anyone thinking subversive thoughts will be liable to prosecution.

(iv) Weather reports that predict gloomy weather, since they may adversely affects national morale.

(v) Rumours will be barred because even the slightest slur is banned with immediate effect.

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