Female foeticide to football

From an unwanted daughter to Nepal’s national footballer

Dr. Srijana Singh Thakuri

My Dad wanted a son. I was the first daughter and after me came three younger sisters. My mother became pregnant three more times after that, all of them would have been girls. They were all terminated at illegal abortion clinics where parents can learn the gender of their baby and opt for an abortion if it is a girl. I knew now that the practice is called female foeticide and common in South Asia. My parents kept trying, hoping a son would eventually come along. I was already old enough to notice the sadness and worry in my mother’s eyes every time she found out she was carrying another girl. My mother was blamed for being cursed. Why was I not enough? Why were we daughters not enough? Eventually, our Dad abandoned us. One night, without a word, he disappeared, leaving us behind with a broken home, broken hearts, and a mound of debt collectors at our door at all hours of the day.

My mother’s health deteriorated. I hardly saw her smile. I began to work as a cook at a bus station trying to save my pain. We sold bananas, fruits, and tried our best to get by. I promised my mother that through her tears, I would be just as good as a son that she and my father so desperately wanted.

I do not blame my Dad. Acting on his every whim. A victim of patriarchy, he never knew any different. Society had convinced him that girls are never worth the investment, that all they do is get married and go off to someone else’s house, that families need sons to carry on the name and inherit ancestral property. But the irony is that we had no fund for anyone to inherit. We had nothing. While trying for a son our family had plummeted deeper into poverty, debt, and depression.

Eventually, things began to look up. I took an entrance exam for Kukila Valley School in Surkhet. The teachers came to know of my story, and by a stroke of luck I got one of the very few spots available to my age group. In the interview, I explained that with a chance at education, I could help my mother care for my three little sisters, and help educate them too. I tried to channel my sadness and anger into determination.

I wanted to be best at everything. Because of my Dad, I had something to prove. I became class captain, joined the girl’s empowerment club, took traditional dance lessons. I wrote poetry and participated in debate competitions. I checked out books from the library, studied late into night and completed all my assignments to catch up with my classmates. I grabbed every opportunity that came my way.

One day there was an announcement that the school was starting the first ever football team for girls. I showed up at that first practice on a dirt field without sneakers, sweat dripping down my forehead, ready to try something new. I had never seen a field before, watched a match, or even worn shorts. In my village every square inch of land is used to grow food, and sports were for boys on fellow terraces between growing seasons. I never knew football was for me.

I showed up every day to practice with Coach Gopi. He treated me as he would boys, yelling at me but also encouraging me. I remember my first match and what it felt like, putting on a uniform, chasing the ball. Over time I started to get good at football and our team began winning matches. I scored goals and was particularly strong at defence, head balls, and corner kicks. But I also kept up with my studies, and started to get noticed as a student and an athlete. I made it into bigger teams and got recruited for tournaments. Rumours followed. People gossip about me, saying I came home late or left early. I was selfish and I had my head in the clouds. It got worse when I got my periods. People telling me where I could go and where I could not, what I could and what I could not.

I was going against how girls in my village were expected to behave: stay quiet, keep your head down, try not to get noticed, and when it is time, be marriageable. I shook off criticism and kept my eyes on my dreams, and graduated. Top of my class. I was eligible for scholarships, and enrolled in a college in Kathmandu. I kept playing football and showing up at tournaments, training all day and night.

My story is not unique. It is what happens when girls and women are given a chance. I turned 20 when I made the final roster for Nepal’s national women’s football team. I signed a contract and my name was in the newspapers. I am now officially a professional football player representing my country.

I have never felt so proud to be a daughter of Nepal even though there were times when I did not feel my country was proud of me. I love putting on the red national jersey and walking into the stadium. I can still feel the thrill of kicking a ball, and a goal hitting the back of the net.

I love football because it makes me feel free and strong and powerful. My next big dream is to be the Nepal women’s team to play in the World Cup or the Olympics. After many years, my Dad came back to me. He said he would love to say that he had a big awakening and realised his mistake, but that was not the case. Instead, he tried again for a son, and finally my little brother was born.

I love my baby brother and hope he will get to grow up watching me play, so that he will have a different vision of what girls are capable of.

My Dad got what he always wanted and I achieved my dreams. I called him when I made the team, and I knew he was proud of me.

I do not have anything to prove to him anymore. My dreams are for my sisters and my mother. But most of all, my dreams are for me.
Swapping ambassadors midway

The Nepali Congress and the UML were fierce rivals in the 1990s that it was mandatory for one party to pounce and cancel the deal without and void all decisions made by the other. That tradition has not just carried on this day but has been honed into a fine art. The most recent instance of this was the axe that fell last week on 12 of Nepal’s ambassadors who were political appointments of K P Oli while prime minister. Among them were envoys to India, China, the United States, and Britain.

Among those being recalled are former finance minister Yuba Timilsina’s ambassador to Washington DC, Mohindersh Babbar Pandey in Beijing, Lok Dhani Regmi in London, and Nirmal Acharya in New Delhi.

Oli urged the system to reward loyalists, and the coalition government of Sher Bahadur Deuba did the same.

This is nothing new, of course, but it takes political vendetta to new levels. Deuba also needs dynamics diplomats to appease coalition partners who will not get the green light of his ministry, part of which they were singing for. Two months after he took over, Deuba’s offer to visa has still not been able to form a full Nepali team to help the diaspora within the coalition for key ministries.

Newspaper/BCF in Nepal in the United Nations Security Assembly. It is clear that the recall ambassadors will not be able to complete their career in Nepal, which is what the practice is.

Four of the 12 ambassadors are being recalled at a critical foreign policy juncture for Nepal. Nirmal Acharya has been in Delhi through the past four Prime Ministers’ visits and his contacts in the Indian government would have been useful when so many bilateral issues are pending. Recall our ambassador in China at this time sends the wrong message to Beijing as well. The move has been seen as a weak supporter of the American Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) project when he was the finance minister under K P Oli. Despite regime change in Nepal, Prime Minister Deuba would have to recall MCC back in Washington while the clock ticks on the project’s negotiation under Parliament.

Deuba has also removed Nepal’s ambassador in London just before he goes to Glasgow in November to attend the climate summit.

Prime Minister Deuba may have thought he could buttress criticism of his ambassadors recall because he called back his fixture-in-law Prativa Rana from Tokyo, but her term had run out, and she was not extending any. Among the 12 ambassadors being recalled are three other women ambassadors who have played important roles during the Covid-19 crisis, ensuring the welfare of Nepal abroad, mobilising aid for Nepal during the deadly second wave earlier this year and projecting the country’s image abroad.

A government so self-centred that it cannot appreciate the role of the ambassador does not deserve respect from its citizens.

New Editors

Nepal Times announced the appointment of Uddha Thapa, editor of Himal Magazine, and Satish Thapa, editor of Sunday Times, to enhance the publication’s coverage in Nepal and to reach out to the Nepali diaspora.

In the past 15 years since the end of the Maoist war and since the restoration of democracy, Nepal has seen a significant increase in the number of publications. The country has seen a new wave of publications, some newsworthy, some are simply there to make a buck. More than 300 newspapers and magazines are now being published in Nepal.

The pressure of the Nepali diaspora was not been heard or respected, including the Nepali diaspora. They have been calling for a Nepali presence in the diaspora. Nepal Times has now appointed two editors, one from the Nepali diaspora and one from Nepal, to enhance the publication’s coverage in Nepal and to reach out to the Nepali diaspora.

This is a good move of the publication.

Kunda Pandit, Publisher

20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Still Missing

It’s been 20 years since the disappearance of five of their children with the Bhadra. The family has never seen them since. Some believe the family have been kept safe, but they have never been able to locate their children.

In recent years, the family has been trying to find the remains of their children, who were missing for more than 20 years. The family has been searching for their children, who were missing for more than 20 years. The family has been searching for their children, who were missing for more than 20 years.

The family filed a report about their missing children on 15th September 2010. The family’s search for their children has been challenging.

From archives material of Nepal Times of the past 20 years, also search: www.nepaltimes.com

WHAT’S TRENDING

Filled your CCMM form?

Now that COVID-19 cases are on the rise, many are wondering how to fill out their CCMM forms. The CCMM form is required for all international travel and is used to track COVID-19 cases. It is an important tool for preventing the spread of the virus.

Most read and shared on Facebook

Remembering Harka Gurung

By Dolly Pradhan

The famous Gurung family from a small town in Nepal have always been known for their unique and memorable traditions. The Gurungs are known for their brave and adventurous spirit, which has been passed down through generations. In memory of Harka Gurung, the hero of the Gurungs, the family has organized various events and activities to honor his memory.

Most popular on Twitter

The Melancholi Project

By Rubina Timilsina

The Melancholi Project is a new collection of poems by the talented poet, Rubina Timilsina. The poems in this collection explore themes of love, loss, and the human experience.

Sino-Nepal relations in the ‘post-African’ era

The Sino-Nepal relations in the ‘post-African’ era have been characterized by a steady improvement in bilateral relations. Both countries have shown a commitment to strengthening their economic and political ties.

Most visited online page

The American University in Nepal and its 法国 AUPF nurture partnerships. With the support of the Chinese government, the universities have been collaborating on various projects and initiatives.

QUOTE & TWEETS

Nepal Times: “The Nepali people are resilient and have a strong spirit of recovery. We are working towards rebuilding our country and moving forward.

Kanti Prasad: “We are committed to working hard for the betterment of our country and the well-being of our people.

Nepal Times: “The Nepali people are kind and welcoming. We are always ready to help others.”

Kanti Prasad: “Our people are always willing to help others and make sure everyone is taken care of.

Nepal Times: “Nepal is a beautiful country with rich cultural heritage. We are proud of our rich history and our culture.

Kanti Prasad: “We are proud of our history and culture and always willing to share it with others.”

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WELCOME ON BOARD:
DALLAS-FORT WORTH

As of September 24th, Dallas-Fort Worth is the latest addition to our network. Fly safely with our extensive health measures.
Eight-year-old Birhan Kharal used to start his day with a glass of milk in bed brought to him by his father. Yadav Kharal would then prepare a lunch box for his son, dress him up and send him off to school. Amid the lockdown he brought his son back home.

Born in the Khareli couple in Panchkhali of Kavre district after 12 years of marriage, Yadav raised his son with care and affection. He used to carry the boy on his back to and from school every day. Birhan was equally attached to his dad, they were inseparable.

But on 2 June 2020, Birhan lost his father to COVID-19. Since then, the boy has withdrawn from friends and stopped going outdoors. He has lost his appetite and rarely speaks. The fourth grader at a school in Panchkhali was a class topper, but has now lost his enthusiasm for studies.

Birhan’s mother Latun Kharal has had a hard time putting the schooling of her son after the death of her husband.

“I used to revise his lessons every morning and evening with his dad. But without him, he has lost interest in everything,” says Latun, who is yet to pay Rs250,000 in hospital bills and another Rs250,000 she borrowed for the last rites of her husband.

Yadav wanted to see his son grow up with a good education but Latun is now struggling with schooling Birhan with limited income. She says, “How can a single mother without an income give her son a better future?”

Bishnu Tamang died of Covid-19 at Daltali Hospital on 14 days after giving birth to a son. His husband Bin Bahadur Tamang was then infected and in isolation. The couple’s daughters Anju, 12, and Aarti, 10, have now taken over themselves to raise their newborn brother.

“My eldest gets up at 7 in the morning to feed and clothes her brother, washes his diapers and looks after him until he sleeps at night,” says Mini Baburak.

“Since getting Covid, I haven’t been able to regain my health, and my own parents are old. These two daughters do everything to take care of the family,” Anju, who is in 8th grade, has not been able to touch her books for months. When her mother was alive, she and her sister helped their mother. Now they have to do everything themselves, and there is no time for online classes.

Min Bahadur knows he has to send his daughters back to school, but he has lost his job as a driver. He says, “I will probably take over a year for me to pay off my Covid treatment costs, how will I educate my children?”

At 20, Rajkumar BK is already the sole guardian of three younger siblings. First, he lost his mother to Covid in August 2020, then his father earlier this year. “My father was depressed after my mother passed away. One day when he was at home, he set himself on fire,” recalls Rajkumar.

Unable to raise them all, Rajkumar left his two older siblings in the care of a relative and got married at 20 to support his family.

He exchanged his dreams of higher studies for cheap labour and now works at a handicraft shop in Lalitpur’s Owarka earning Rs12,000 a month.

At 16-years-old brother Sambhu is undergoing training to repair mobile phones. Rajkumar is already deep in debt building the house after the fire from his father’s suicide and his mother’s hospital bills.

Adda Rajkumar “I couldn’t continue my studies, but I thought at least my siblings could go to school. But after losing also my father, I don’t think I can do it anymore.”

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**Helping Nepal’s Covid Vax**

An estimated 1,200 children who lost their parents to the pandemic struggle to get by.

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**Amita Bhetwal**

Kavre
Divindra Tamang died of Covid at Kathmandu Medical College in May. His two-and-a-half-year-old daughter Rubina still does not know that her father is gone. Every time she hears a car pass by, she rushes out of the house, looking for her father who was a driver.

“He always booked when he came back from work, so whenever she heard a sound, she thought he might have returned,” says Rubina’s mother Rupa, who had married Divindra only three years ago.

After their daughter was born, Diwendra had bought insurance for Rs 400,000 for Rubina’s higher studies, and wanted her to become a nurse. “It is time to pay the Rs 30,000 premium, but after buying food and paying rent there is no money,” says Rupa. 

Shilpina Kupa, Sarvita, Usha and Rupak Sunar range in age from 3 to 15. They lost their father to asthma and then mother to Covid in the last three years. With no one to take care of them, the children are now at the SOS Children’s Village in Kathmandu.

Over 11,000 Nepalis have lost their lives to Covid-19 since the outbreak began in January 2020, most of them in the age group 20-50, but there are also children under 18. Hundreds of children have become orphans in the wake of the pandemic.

There are no reliable statistics since the country does not have a proper child protection system at local government level. So far, data from only 34 out of 734 local municipalities have been recorded, where 244 children have lost their parents, seven of them lost both fathers and mothers.

“The rescue, assistance and protection of children without parents couldn’t be done on time because of the lack of data,” says Milan Raj Dharel, executive director of the National Child Rights Council (NCRC). “We estimate that we are missing more than a thousand children who have lost their parents.”

The NCRC says it is paying for the support of orphaned children at the recommendation of the local levels. But local wards and village councils have not come forward with records of children despite written letters to do so, adds Dharel.

Losing parents at a young age has left the children mentally vulnerable and at heightened risk of psychological illnesses, Bhuvan Kharel, 6, has taken to locking himself in his room and inflicting self-harm.

“He has four cuts on his hand,” says his worried mother, Lakshmi. She is too busy taking care of the family’s needs to attend to her son. Children are often most affected by conflicts, epidemics, accidents, and their young minds are highly vulnerable, which in turn affects their personality development,” says psychiatrist Pradip Ojha.

“The anxiety they show in their behaviour when a family loses a member is called a neurotic disorder. Orphaned children feel lonely, insecure, are scared and angry, and often unable to sleep and have panic attacks. Depending on their personality, some like to be alone while others become restless.

“The family should keep the children busy, play together, develop a routine and make them follow it,” says Arun Kunwar, a psychologist at Kanti Children’s Hospital in Kathmandu.

Child experts also recommend not telling children about financial stress in the family, or hiding the death of the parent. “If you lie to children, they will continue to wait for them causing further confusion and stress, which in turn can increase the risk of depression, running away, suicide attempts and addiction,” adds Ojha.

The First Republic Children 2018 has a provision of a child rights committee at every province and local level in addition to a child welfare officer. It also stipulates establishing a child fund for immediate rescue, relief, rehabilitation of and compensation for children.

But less than 1% of local governments have adopted the Act, which means there are no reliable records about the condition and the number of orphans, homeless and needy children who need rescue and protection.

Last year, NCSC formulated an action plan to protect and manage the children who have lost their parents to Covid-19 and came up with two strategies: for the 800-900 of children with relatives to provide a social security allowance of Rs 400,000, and to place children who have no one to care for them in shelters.

For this, the Council is re-examining and verifying the records of 284 orphaned children from 32 local municipalities and is planning to construct 30 alternative care centres for them. But despite the plan, the budget has not been allocated by the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens because it does not have a minister since Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is yet to expand his Cabinet more than two months after taking office.

However, spokesman Umesh Dhakal at the ministry says: “The program hasn’t stalled in lack of a minister. The cabinet will decide on the programs to ensure the protection and management of the children.”
Located at 3,800m above sea level, this iconic hotel is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. Established by noted Japanese-Nepali entrepreneur and politician Takashi Miyahara, Hotel Everest View put Nepal on the global map in the 1970s for high value tourism, offering world class lodging among the world’s highest peaks. Miyahara built his own set of facilities in Syangboche, so visitors could fly directly from Kathmandu in Pilatus Turbopropers. The hotel now only gets helicopters, and the hotel is an important stopover for trekkers and mountaineers.

Hotel Everest View is now offering attractive holiday packages for domestic tourists and expats. The most popular is the ‘Get Close To Everest’ 4 nights/5 days package that combines a flight to Lukla, a two-day trek up, hikes in the surrounding trails, and helicopter shuttle to Lukla to catch the flight to Kathmandu. The package costs Rs65,999 for Nepalis and Rs79,899 for expats, and includes one night in Lukla and all meals.

Hotel Everest View is also offering ‘Helicopter Breakfast at the Roof of the World’ which is a direct helicopter flight from Kathmandu to the hotel and back for breakfast on the terrace with an up-close view of Mt Everest. Price: Rs16,999 each for five passengers.

Rooms in this historic hotel offer a 360-degree view of Mt Everest, Lhotse, Ama Dablam, Thamserku, Kangte, and Khumbila. The hotel has supplementary oxygen available in case the view (and altitude) takes your breath away.

+977 61 096700
info@everestview.com.np
www.everestview.com.np

Everest View Hotel
Syangboche

The Pavilions Himalayas is Nepal’s leading eco-sustainable resort which operates two properties in Pokhara. It re-opened ‘The Farm’ resort in July after the lockdown, and offers exciting getaway packages for Nepalis. Its Lakeview will also reopen for Dusshera.

The Pavilions is a truly eco-sensitive luxury resort that sets aside a part of its revenue for the local community. It grows its own vegetables and has a farm with goats, free-ranging chicken, cows, and even paddy terraces. It collects minimise, recycles it, composts biodegradable, and uses biogas in the kitchen. It also generates its own solar power. The hotel is plastic free (even toothbrush is plastic free), and all shampoos and soaps are locally manufactured and chemical-free.

The 12 bungalows, built with local stones and slate roofs, were designed around the landscape’s contours with minimal handfiling. The villas are situated among farm houses, interspersed with corn fields and vegetable patches, and alongside paths farmers use. Employees are from nearby villages, and many would have otherwise migrated overseas for work.

The Lakeview satellite resort on the leafy southern slope of Phewa Lake has eight villas that mixes luxury with adventure. The glamping site offers stunning views of the lake, Machapuchhare, and the Annapurnas beyond.

A 2-night/3 day package is offered to couples for Rs32,000 and to singles for Rs18,000, and includes breakfast. The Lakeview is Rs24,888 for couples and includes breakfast, dinner, and airport/bust transfers plus jungle walks.

+977 61 096700
get@lakeviewcollection.com
www.lakeviewcollection.com

The Pavilions Himalayas
Pokhara

TOP DASAIN DESTINATIONS

Nepali Times picks 6 eclectic getaways for the discerning traveller this holiday season
Dwarika’s Resort
Dhulikhel

The resort takes its inspiration from ancient Vedic scriptures, Buddhist meditations, and traditional Himalayan knowledge. The philosophy here is to create a peaceful, healthy, and balanced lifestyle. The resort is a sanctuary where the visitor can set aside the busy modern-day life and reconnect with nature, mind, spirit, and earth for a peaceful, healthy, and balanced lifestyle.

The resort offers a serene atmosphere where you can engage in mindfulness exercises, just as the locals of Dhulikhel’s Resort is tranquil place to unwind this Dau.

++977/1/42872, 69007
sales@dwarikaresort.com
www.dwarikaresort.com

Meghauli Serai Lodge
Chitwan

Meghauli Serai is a part of India’s Taj Safari chain and offers its signature luxury accommodation on the fringe of Nepal’s most famous national park. Getting away from it all takes on a new meaning in Meghauli, the tiny village that became famous because of the grass airfield that once served the legendary Tiger Tops!

You do not have to be a wildlife enthusiast to enjoy this jungle resort, it is a retreat even if you just seek an solitude. But guests wanting to make the best of it can enjoy open jeep safaris, boat ride on the Rapti or guided jungle walks with wildlife guides. The area is home to 88 mammal species, gharial and crocodiles, and over 300 species of birds.

The lodge is offering ‘Feel the Wild’ package with boat safari, jeep trip, and poolside dinners.

+977/988308651
stacie@jagadri.com
www.meghauliseraii.com

The Terraces
Lakhuri

Perched on a high ridge below the high Khadikot at 2,200 m, a perfect destination for an escape from pollution and hustle and bustle of Kathmandu. The location is one of the best examples of green architecture in Nepal, with breathtaking views of the city below.

The hotel offers a serene atmosphere where you can reconnect with nature, mind, spirit, and earth for a peaceful, healthy, and balanced lifestyle.

+977/1/42872, 69007
sales@dwarikaresort.com
www.dwarikaresort.com

Chandragiri Hills Resort
Kathmandu

The Chandragiri Cable Car, now in operation after being closed during Covid, is not just a scenic means of travel, it is also a great idea to combine the cable car ride up to a hilltop view of the Chandragiri Hills Resort (1,600 m) and add to the many hill hikes. The resort is an excellent weekend escape with open views of Kathmandu valley, and the mountains beyond.

The resort offers a serene atmosphere where you can reconnect with nature, mind, spirit, and earth for a peaceful, healthy, and balanced lifestyle.

++977/1/42872, 69007
sales@dwarikaresort.com
www.dwarikaresort.com

The entire structure is built on an ancient temple site and is surrounded by natural beauty, providing a tranquil and serene environment.

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sales@dwarikaresort.com
www.dwarikaresort.com
**Events**

**Salsa Party**
Dusk to dawn dancing shoes and join Salsa Nepal’s 1st Latino party for an evening of salsa dancing. Safety guidelines apply.
1 October, House of Kzymea, 9808124925

**Space Apps Challenge**
Join over 26,000 coders, entrepreneurs, scientists, designers, storytellers, builders, artists, and technologists from nearly 150 countries for NASA’s virtual Space Apps hackathon.
2-4 October

**Digital Security Workshop**
Both & Eliza invite digital rights activists, artists, journalists and Madhoru women to apply for the Terminus Tech Exchange: Madhoru! Digital Security Workshop set to take place virtually from 24-17 October. Sign up at: https://bit.ly/3TVjQe3
(Urgent Application deadline: 5 October)

**Qatar Food Festival**
Enjoy an exceptional Qatar feast with a bird’s eye view of Katmandu’s Valley. Countdown the Days to World Cup 2022 with some Karon or Arabic coffee.
2-8 April, 8am-10pm, Chitwanhini Hill Resort

**Octoberfest in Nepal**
The Octoberfest is the world’s largest Volk Fest outside of Munich, Bavaria, Germany. It’s big in Nepal. Enjoy beers, food, local performances.
10th-6th October, Siddhikala Hotel Boudha

**Dining**

**Saigon Pho**
Experience ultra-Fresh Tastes at Vietnamese dishes, prepared by Vietnamese chefs. Try the Tafs summer rolls and the end noodles with 892 park. Look at the menu online for more.
Located @ 9803446630

**GETAWAY**

**The Little House**
A quaint stay in the middle of green farmlands. The Little House is a place where you can enjoy beautiful views, relaxing walk and succulent food.
Alabang, 9801750922

**Village Heritage and Resort**
Located on top of the hill, this humble hotel offers all of the best views of the breathtaking lake and the spectacular forests of Rara National Park. In the summer, visitors can ride horses along the lake and go on seeing boat rides.
Arms, Map: 077-4009523

**Saathee Westend Premier**
Experience the green plains of Nepal, this exquisite resort is one of Nepal’s most energy efficient and eco-friendly getaways.

**Meghauuri Serai**
Leave your worries behind and set out for a luxurious safari hotel at the heart of Chitwan National Park. Overlooking the Rapti River, the lodge not only offers serene views but also accommodation that integrates local culture and art.
Chitwan National Park, 060-337869

**Nepal Picture Library**
Look at archived photographs from throughout Nepal’s history and learn the stories behind them at www.nepalpicturelibrary.org.

**Project Apollo Archive**
The Project Apollo Archive, created by photographer Kips Turegau, is an online repository of more than 16,000 digital images of NASA’s manned lunar landing program from 1969 to 1972.

**Kalsee Ecododge**
This quaint collection of cottages in the midst of forest hills with a magnificent view of Annapurna and Machhapuchhare is located in Tansen, a ridge 15 km northwest of Pokhara off the Luane Highway. Nepal, 9805166677

**AIR QUALITY INDEX**

**OCTOBER 5-7**

**SAOTHEE WESTEND PREMIER**

**Meghauuri Serai**

**Kalsee Ecododge**

**AIR QUALITY INDEX**

16AM 29 September to 9AM 30 September measured at Uo Embark, Phoka Durbar
The AQI Index (KQ) in Kathmandu is showing signs of a change in traffic. Traffic building up ahead of the holidays, making it more hazardous to participate. AQI does go into the air, but with the same layering effect, the AQI index is seeing a change especially at rush hour. This is good news. The AQI index should continue to show a decrease in AQI, but it is not a smoking gun. It is not a cause to alarm or worry. It is a positive sign that things are improving.

**AIR QUALITY INDEX**

100
50
0

**OUR PICK**

In, The Khiladi Moksh, the eighth episode, 2019's best police procedural television series, net writer Kula is assigned an investigation after a man is stabbed to death in Naya Bazaar. As more people, seemingly unrelated to one another, turn up dead, Kula joins with a local detective. After 20 hours of conviction, the murderer is connected to a photograph of a group of boys and a now-defunct boy’s home known as Khiladi. The duo must unroll all the clues in the picture before it’s too late. Stars Nita Rana, Vishal Devkota, Bijay Ahire, Sitakar Shrestha, and Lekha Shrestha.

**Kोरोना लगाप्याँ न छूनु जाने, न रहेनु जाने राजस्वी कोरोना लागाऐर निदिन शीर्षभागामा नजारे**

**#SERIOUSABOUTBEER**

WE PUT SERIOUS HOURS IN YOUR HAPPY HOUR.
Having a Nepali passport is no fun

Every visa in a Nepali's travel document hides hours of paperwork filled with anxiety: my bank statement, proof of college or work, letters of invitation, hotel bookings, medical records, fee payment receipt from bank, and then the interview round.

Those privileged enough to be born in the West who can just get up and go to any country of their choice, whenever, will never understand that there is no such thing as spontaneous travel for us.

First, we cannot just buy a one-way ticket to anywhere, a return ticket is another requirement, and overstaying can mean being deported immediately or banned from the country.

A person just picking up a suitcase walking to the airport in a cab, buying a ticket over the counter, boarding their flight, and landing at their destination without a hitch - that only happens in movies.

Before I travelled internationally on my own, I thought everyone had to go through the same process, so I did not mind the extra work. I had no idea about all the excruciating paperwork that was needed.

One of my first experiences as a citizen literally from the 'shock' world was during a trip to Italy from Ireland with my American classmates. They all breezed through immigration at Rome, just showing the photo pages on their passports. I was pulled aside, while my friends looked on with concern, they could not understand why the trip was getting delayed because of me.

I had to hand the immigration officer a folder with my entire life history in it. He even wanted a letter from my school that said I was a student, and guaranteeing that I would promptly return to Nepal before my visa expired.

My friends quizzed me later about my ordeal, and I told them this was SOP for Nepal, and that I was used to it. They flipped through my passport, and found it so interesting that it was filled with colourful visa stickers and stamps from so many countries. Whenever my friends ask me if I want to go somewhere on a whim, I cannot say yes because travelling anywhere means weeks (sometimes months) of careful planning, laboriously filling online visa application forms, and an in-person interrogation with some stern looking person behind the glass. And even having a visa means more questions on arrival at the destination airport after an 18 hour flight.

And for a Nepali, especially a woman travelling alone, the hostile cross-examination starts even before we leave Nepal at Kathmandu airport immigration, with questions that are so irrelevant as to be farce. There are horror stories of people with legitimate travel documents being harassed and prevented from leaving by our own country.

I have been fortunate enough to travel, see places and meet many people, and am looking forward to doing more of it. However, it does not come without developing a thick skin, and being prepared to be treated degradingly like a third-class citizen from the third world every step of the way.

This is the reality of people in developing countries looking for a better chance at life, there are more hurdles than one can imagine. Most developed nations have become fortresses with moats and drawbridges - those who do get to be allowed in are made to feel fortunate. This situation is only set to get worse – just look at the images from under the bridge at the Mexican border, or Kabul airport.

Next time you see someone with a passport filled with stamps, try to look beyond just the exotic stickers to the untold hours of uncertainty and hope, and for the millions of people around the world who hopes for a better life are never fulfilled.

Even with so much experience of international travel over the years, I have never quite got used to being made to feel unwelcome everywhere I go. But I have made up my mind that if I enjoy seeing the world, I will have to jump through those hoops first.

That is a part of life, and the obstacle of entering a specific country comes with its challenges, we have no choice but to overcome them to get to do what we want.

I am not whining – travel is fun, having a Nepali passport is not.

Anjana Rajbhandary

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FROM NALAPANI TO KALAPANI

Beginning of the end of the Gurkha Regiment's existence in India

Alisha Sijapati

Nepali Times reporter Alisha Sijapati spent a month in India, retracing the Gurkha expansion beyond the Mahakali River more than 200 years ago. The goal was to extend up to Kashmir a new unified Himalayan nation by annexing Kumaon, Garhwal, and Punjab.

The Gurkha Empire was on a warpath, and the British East India Company saw it as a threat to its own expansion ambitions.

This five-part series looks back at the bravery of the Gurkha troops under its legendary generals to defend the newly-conquered territory, but also the historical memory of an oppressive rule.

O n 30 January 1815, Colonel Sir John Macdonnell was killed in a firefight along the Line of Control between India and Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir. When his body was brought to Delhi Cantonment for his cremation, his daughter Alka joined the crowd of mourners in crying out: "Jal Mahakali, Aye Gurkhal!

This ancient battle cry is now heard wherever soldiers from Nepal serve and fight in India, Britain, Singapore, Brunei, Oman, and in their own country. It harks back to the forces under the command of the descendants of Nepal’s founding king Prithvi Narayan Shah crossing the Mahakali River in their westward conquests.

Sadhu Shuklaji, the prince regent at Kathmandu, who in 1814 ordered his troops to be on a marching route, moving rapidly across what is now the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh to the Sutlej River, crossed the border with Punjab. The Gurkhas held the territory for less than 25 years before finally being defeated in the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-16.

The legacy of that occupation is still strong here: in Nepali soldiers still fighting and dying for India, in the collective memory of Gurkha rule remembered mostly for its pillage and plunder, and in migrant workers from western Nepal who can be seen waiting for day jobs in hill stations today.

Nepal lost one-third of its territory to the East India Company after the signature of the Sugauli Treaty in 1816, but even before that, Nepali soldiers (mainly conscripts from Kumaon and Garhwal) started defecting to the British side after the fall of the MalMac Fort. And after the war, more Nepali soldiers were recruited into the Naxerse Battalion, the first of many subsequent Gurkha brigades in the British Army, and later the Indian Army.

In the 1915 Gurkha Handbook for the Indian Army written by Lieutenant-Colonel Eden Vansittart, 2nd/70th Gurkha Rifles and reviewed by Major B.U. Nicoll of 1st/4th Gurkha Rifles, the authors note: "After the war of 1816, Sir D. Ochterlony expressed an opinion confidentially to Lord Francis Herries that the company’s soldiers then Hindustanis could never be brought to resist the stock of three energetic mountaineers on the ground."

In fact, it was David Ochterlony of the East India Company who was so impressed by the fighting spirit of his enemy during the Anglo-Nepalese war that he formed the 1st Naxerse Battalion on 24 April 1815, which is now the 1st/4th Gurkha Rifles of the Indian Army, also called the Khukuri Regiment.

The Battalion was named after Ochterlony who was also known as Nasser ud-Dowlah, the title of Nasser ud-Dowlah confirmed by Shah Alam II, the 17th Mughal emperor. "For us as non-Nepali origin, to be a part of the Khukuri regiment was a badge of honour, particularly, holding the Khukuri. That’s how the world knows that we are Gurkha," retired Indian Army Major Vijeet Singh Mankotia told Nepali Times in an interview in his comfortable home in Bharahampur. Mankotia was also a former union minister of Himachal Pradesh and recalls his fondness for the soldiers from Nepal.

Here in the mountains that were the farthest west that the Nepali forces had reached, the Gurkha connection is still so strong that till today even families who are not descendants of the soldiers celebrate Dusser, Tharu, and other Nepali festivals. Mankotia himself keeps his connection with his army colleagues and speaks affectionately about their camaraderie and friendship.

"I had always wanted to be part of the Gurkha regiment. From all the others, it was the 1/4 Gurkha Rifles that I was keen to enlist in because of its historic significance, and I was fortunate to have been selected. You don’t embrace the Gurkha, they embrace you," says Mankotia.

Indeed, the continued presence of Nepali nationals in the Indian Army, the atrocities committed by the occupying Nepali forces in this part of India, the presence of so many migrant workers from Nepal here, right up to the current border dispute over Kalapani—all feed into the love-hate relationship between India and Nepal, and complicate bilateral relations to this day.

After India’s independence in 1947 and under a Triangulation Agreement between Britain, Nepal, and India, the original Gurkha regiments consisting of 20 battalions before World War II were split between the British Army and the Indian Army.

Six Gurkha regiments were transferred to the post-independence Indian Army, while four remained with the British. It was decided that 1/4 Gurkha Rifles (the Malman Regiment) would go to India and the first British officers had to transfer or make a choice to join the Gurkha regiments, the 2nd, 3rd, 7th, or 10th Gurkha Rifles.

The Indian Army prefers to call its regiments with Nepali soldiers ‘Gurkha’, while the British have always referred to them as ‘Gurkha’. This term is derived from the historic town in central Nepal ruled by the Shah kings, and does not denote an ethnic group. By the 1960s, the Gurkha/Gurkha regiments used to consist mainly of Gurung, Magar, Rai, or Limbu recruits from Nepal, although that has now changed.

During the brief Gurkha occupation of Kumaon and Garhwal, Nepal was not yet called ‘Nepal’. Which is the reason why descendants of Nepali soldiers and even Indian Nepal here usually refer to themselves as ‘Gorkhals’, and those agitating for greater autonomy in Darjeeling call their territory ‘Gorkhaland’.

It was only after 1947 that Indian citizens were also allowed to join the Gurkha regiments. To this day, chiefs of the Nepal Army are honorary generals in the Indian Army, and vice versa. In 1953, King Tribhuvan was appointed the Honorary Colonel of the 1st Gurkha Rifles.

Jyoti Thapa Mani is herself a descendant of a warrior in the Gurkha army in 1790, and whose sons later served in the Malman Regiment. Her great-great-grandfather was the 166th Gorkhakair and her great-great-grandfather Kalsuwar Thapa belonged to the 1st Gurkha Rifles. Thapa Mani is the author of The Khukri Brave: that recounts extensively the history of the Gurkha conquests of which lost ancestors were a part. She writes their steps, and describes the battles of Kalapani, Khabalang, Jhylach, and Kangra—names that have been etched in modern Nepal’s history for the bravery of the soldiers who defended them against the East India Company.

The Gurkhalis who stayed back after the Anglo-Nepal war were like my forefathers associate themselves more with Gurkha, rather than being called Nepali, since ‘Nepal’ was not even a country’s name when the Gurkhalis crossed the
The Gorkha Empire

The Gorkha Empire refers to the period when Nepal was ruled by the Gorkha Kingdom, from the late 18th to the mid-19th century. The Gorkhas, a community from the mountains of modern-day northern India, rose to prominence under King Prithvi Narayan Shah of Nepal, who annexed various small kingdoms in the region, culminating in the unification of the Himalayan region under a single rule.

King Prithvi Narayan Shah, a military strategist and statesman, began his expansionary policies in the late 18th century. He invaded and subdued many of the smaller principalities in the region, including regions that were once part of the Malla and Thapa dynasties of the Newar Kingdom. The Gorkha Empire reached its peak under Shah’s son, Prithvi Narayan Shah II, who expanded the borders of the empire further.

The Gorkha armies were known for their discipline, military tactics, and loyalty to their king. They were able to conquer and subdue many of the smaller kingdoms and principalities in the region, which were often divided and weak. The Gorkha conquests were not just military victories, but also cultural and religious conquests, as the Gorkhas imposed their language, religion, and culture on the conquered territories.

The Gorkha Empire had a significant impact on the region, as it brought about a unification of the Himalayan region under a single rule, which had a lasting impact on the history of the area. The Gorkha Empire also had a lasting impact on the military tactics and strategies of the region, as other kingdoms had to adopt similar strategies to defend themselves against the Gorkha threat.

The Gorkha Empire was finally brought to an end by the British in the early 19th century. The British were able to successfully invade and conquer the Gorkha territories, bringing an end to the Gorkha Empire and establishing a British protectorate in Nepal.
Meddling with medals

Every year, Nepal honours people who have imparted noteworthy service to the nation so that things do not go from bad to worse. Thanks to the same, things are bound to get better day-by-day in this country.

However, the big story in Manali Town last week was of a woman refusing national medals conferred to her by the King. Ms. Mehak, who was rude and ungrateful, said she could have done it better. She then returned the decorations, pinned them on her pet dog, and posted the video on YouTube. Oh dear, next time.

Some of you will remember reading about how Jang Bahadar during this visit to Great Britain in 1840 at first refused to accept the Most Honorable Order of the Bath and the Most Noble Order of the Garter because he thought it meant he would have to take a cold outdoor shower clad only in his socks. When he was later told that those were Britain’s highest honours for gallantry, he accepted them from Queen Victoria.

Similarly, we must stress that this trend of boycotting medals that was recently witnessed must quickly come up with a cunning plan to make sure the interior decorations are treasured with the respect and honour they deserve.

Perhaps we can start by awarding next year’s medals to the brother of the daughter-in-law of an ex-prime minister who went beyond the call of duty to be the PM’s’ beggar. Who said we don’t adhere to the rule of law in this country? We must also decorate the incumbent prime minister who has strictly abided by the Constitution to pass and scrap ordinances to ensure his stability. Only if we test the limits of how far we can go to violate the laws of the land, can we make the Constitution stronger. Let’s also decorate the Wonder Chair who has built the most view towers in any rural municipality. The Mayor who has single-handedly mined all the sand from the Sun Bay in the last fiscal year must also be recognised. And the Highest Award for Gallantry must go to the man who broke all national and international records by being prime minister most frequently.

It is because of the courage, commitment and patriotism demonstrated by these women and women that The King reports that Nepalis are all hailing with optimism. Don’t know about you, but I have started seeing the glass as half full, mainly because I have already qualified the other half.

Everything looks upbeat under that silver lining in cloud cuckoo-land also because of the pathognomonic medals to the deceased for Lifetime Achievement in this year’s Constitution Day National Honour List.

It is when we start recognising every Nepali who has tirelessly worked in this and previous incarnations for the betterment of this country that we will set an example for future incarnates.

To Whom It May Concern: If confirmed the Quasi-National Service Medal II Classlist in next year’s Honours List, the Ass seemingly swears to accept it wholeheartedly.

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