

Eligibility for Nepali Citizenship

by Subin Mulmi

ARE WOMEN NOT NEPALI ENOUGH?

*This does not include the process for foundlings and children of stateless persons.

NT ARCHIVE/AMIT MACHAMASI

● Sahina Shrestha

Last Friday, The House of Representatives, through a majority vote, endorsed the amendment to the Citizenship Act 2063 (2006), and on Monday the Nepal Citizenship (First Amendment) Bill, 2022 was tabled at the National Assembly.

Since the Citizenship Act came into effect before the promulgation of the Constitution of Nepal in 2015, it was necessary to amend it to make it compliant with the provisions regarding citizenship in the Constitution.

While a bill to amend the Act was registered in the Parliament back in 2018, it never moved ahead as the State Affairs Committee could not build a consensus among parties. The government then withdrew the amendment earlier this month, and registered a new one. The new bill clears the way for the thousands of children of parents who got citizenship by birth to become citizens by descent, and allows Non-Resident Nepalis to acquire citizenship. However, legal experts and activists say that it is blatantly discriminatory towards women.

"It still pushes the notion that men are the supreme beings and women are merely second-class citizens," says senior advocate Meera Dhungana.

Nepal citizenship is based on the principles of *jus sanguinis* or bloodline. While there are neither clauses attached or self-declaration needed when conferring citizenship by descent to a child of a Nepali man, the same is not true in case of a child born to a Nepali woman.

A Nepali man does not even have to mention the name or nationality of the mother for their child to get citizenship. But the mother still needs to navigate the loops of the legal system to ensure their child can obtain Nepali citizenship.

The bill does pave the way for a child born to a Nepali woman in Nepal whose father is unidentified, to get citizenship by descent. But there is a catch: the woman must make a self-declaration that the father cannot be identified and if the claim turns out to be false, she can be jailed and/or fined.

"The provision itself is an insult," says senior advocate Satish Krishna Kharel. "In a

society like ours where children whose fathers are not identified often face stigma and abuse, that requirement is demeaning."

Likewise, a foreign woman married to a Nepali man can easily obtain naturalised citizenship once she starts the process of renouncing the citizenship of her country of origin. However, there is no such provision for foreign men married to Nepali women to get Nepali citizenship.

Granting naturalised citizenship to foreign women married to Nepali men has been highly politicised, with the UML along with the Maoist Centre and other fringe parties demanding an interval of a few years before foreign women married to Nepali men are eligible for naturalised citizenship. But the Maoists backtracked, and supported the Nepali Congress and Madhes-based parties to remove that interval period.

To be sure, ever since the first Citizenship Act in 1964 and the others that followed, foreign men married to Nepali women have not been able to obtain Nepali citizenship through their wives. The bill simply continues that tradition.

"Whatever the decision,

whether to have a wait-period or not, shouldn't it be the same for the spouses of both Nepali men and women? When a Nepali man can ensure citizenship for their spouse, why can't the same be true for Nepali women?" asks Dhungana.

Moreover, a child born to a Nepali man married to a foreign woman can obtain citizenship by descent, but a child born to Nepali mother and a foreign father will only be eligible for naturalised citizenship — that too at the discretion of the state.

"It is more or less like saying that only a father is a true parent, and the role of a mother does not matter," she adds. The argument against providing naturalised citizenship

to foreign men married to Nepali women has always been that if it is allowed, Indian men will flood into Nepal. But that nationalist reasoning is dismissed as absurd by most experts.

Says Kharel: "Rather than evidence-based arguments, views on citizenship are based on nationalist paranoia." 🇳🇵

CLASS DIFFERENCES
EDITORIAL
PAGE 2

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HYUNDAI

Class differences

Nepalis are proud to have never been colonised, and being South Asia's oldest nation state. Keeping out the world may have preserved the sovereignty of a feudal state, but it meant that Nepal had a lot of catching up to do in terms of governance, consolidating democratic institutions, infrastructure, health and education.

For example, we have been talking about the sorry state of the education system in the country for the past decades. Writing 52 years ago in an article titled 'Education: the Road to Nowhere', Prof Kamal Prakash Malla bemoaned the fact that ministers of education were in the habit of boasting that Nepal's education system went from having just one college pre-1950 to 36 colleges and a university.

Malla pointed out that this showed selective use of statistics to distort the truth, and ignore the poor quality of instruction in schools and colleges.

Five decades later, after major political changes and many trials and errors in education, the substance of the debate on the need to improve the education system is still the same. Bureaucrats and politicians still cite statistics to prove progress in education, and like Malla wrote all those years ago, we are still on a journey without a destination.

If statistics are so important, then these tell a different story: there are still 770,000 children below 12 who are not in school, 29% of primary school students drop out halfway, 43% of secondary school students do not complete Grade 10, and government school pupils have a pass rate of only 20%.

Why is it that successive governments have not fixed the serious flaws in a system that allows 80% of students in public schools to waste time in classrooms in the name of 'education'? It is not that Nepal's rulers are not aware of the disgraceful quality of education in government schools.

The Minister of Education's own surveys show shocking inequity in Nepal's education system. Among well-off families, 65% of children are educated, whereas the figure is only 12% for poorer households. Money for education is flowing into a black hole.

The federal government has been cutting its education budget every year, but

the investment is not being transferred to provincial ministries of education. This is widening the equity gap in education, and leading to a steady decline in the quality of instruction. Instead of leveling the playing field, education is entrenching class differences.

The privileged get a world-class education and fit into the world's best universities, whereas the rest migrate to the Gulf for jobs. Those who stay behind are swallowed by a corrupt bureaucracy and contaminated politics.

The main reason Nepal still lags behind in development is our distorted and inappropriate system of education that is churning out deficient human resources. The blame game is heaped on private schools. There are regulatory issues with for-profit schools, but private school enrollment is low in districts where public schools offer quality education. Private schools and colleges are providing much-needed education in Nepal, and reducing the numbers of Nepalis who used to have to go abroad.

Punishing private schools to improve government schools never worked, and will be a backward step. The best way to reduce the commercialisation of education is to improve the standard of public schools. Government schools have a lot to learn from private ones

about curriculum, instruction, management and facilities, and some PPP models have demonstrated this.

As with everything else, the main blame goes to a political class that forgets when it gets to power the very values enshrined in the Constitution, the manifestos of their parties, and promises to voters. In fact, leftist politicians are the most prominent investors in the private school sector, and eagerly pass legislation that unfairly benefits them.

The new generation will reject politicians who thrive on hollow nationalism but neglect education, forcing them to migrate overseas for work.

We have to take politics out of education, reward good public schools and their teachers, invest in teacher training and facilities of government schools. That is the only way to prevent Nepal from becoming a failed state.

Rabin Giri



KUNDA DIXIT

Instead of leveling the playing field, a flawed education system is entrenching social inequity

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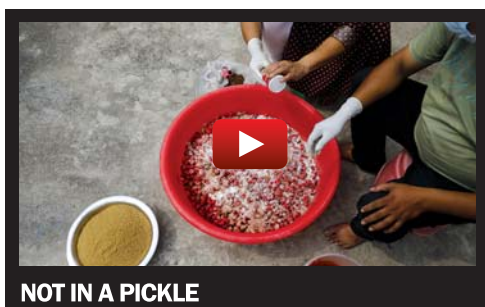
Rabin Giri

ONLINE PACKAGES



THE KOSI STORY

Accompany Kanak Mani Dixit on a trip down from the source of the Kosi near Melamchi to the Chattara and to the Kosi barrage on the Indian border. Learn about the geography, history and arithmetic of Nepal's biggest river. Watch videos on our YouTube channel. Story on Nepal's rivers, *pages 10-11*.



NOT IN A PICKLE

Parvati Giri from Tiltotama in Rupandehi married husband Bheshe Raj at the age of 14. But at 37 she went back to school and now runs LaKaC pickles and makes Rs75,000 a month. She is also training others in pickle-making. Get to know her success story. Watch the video on our YouTube channel. Read profile: *pages 6-7*.

LANGTANG WASTE

I have seen plastic garbage in many places, also outside Nepal ('Cleaning up high places', Sunita Chaudhary and Finu Shrestha, nepalitimes.com)

Gunnar Terje Lysemose

• The first time I was in Crete, we drove from the airport to the hotel in a beautiful landscape, where tons of trash was thrown down the mountain sides.

Elna Lindenberg Jensen

PICKLES

Such a nice story of resilience and perseverance, thanks for sharing ('Life in a pickle', Sahina Shrestha, *page 9*)

Stephanie Suhowsky

KORA CYCLING

It's great to see the elderly and even sick Nepalis living to the fullest ('Pedaling for life', Sarah Watson, #1121).

Samyuk Shrestha

• A very good initiative for promoting healthy living and sport.

Shrikrishna Upadhyay

NEPALI GEOPOLITICS

China wants our help on matters related to Tibet, and we expect them to reciprocate by redressing what they did in backstabbing us by ganging up with India on Limpiyadhura. ('Geopolitical tug-o-war over Nepal', Editorial, #1121).

Hemanta Arjyal

BURMA EXECUTIONS

Deeply sad day in Myanmar. The world must strongly condemn the executions of the four pro-democracy activists. Myanmar will better progress with democracy and open society. Salute to the democratic heroes.

Bishow Parajuli

PEOPLE FIRST

Education and healthcare should be a right as it is in many countries. This is why citizens pay high taxes. In Nepal, I don't know where the taxes go, not even on roads, I guess.

Paris_Kathmandu

GOVERNOR

There was no question about the qualifications of the Rastra Bank governor when he was appointed ('Central role of the Central bank', Editorial, #1120). His competence was questioned only when he stopped illegal money of Maoists from coming into Nepal. Why?

Yogish Krishna

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

This is what this fraud government does by blanket amnesty for war crimes ('Impunity through immunity', Ram Prasad Chapagain, #1121). What else did we expect?

Khadga Prasad Acharya

DEUBA GOVERNMENT

One more year of proven incompetency ('Deuba's mixed report card,' Editorial, #1118).

Lal Bahadur

• The so-called leaders who are bent on taking control of the government have looted the state's coffers. Now they dare to destroy the beauty and very existence of the country by handing over valuable government-owned land and heritage of historical importance to the mafia and middlemen.

Gokarna Ghimire

• What have they achieved but adding one more black chapter in the history of Nepal—like all other so-called democratic governments?

Resham Bahadur Shah

HARD WORK

This is proof that hard work pays ('Milking it for all it's worth', Maheshwar Acharya, *page 7*). Must-read for present-day youths who want it all easy.

Seema Chaudhari

Times.com

WHAT'S TRENDING



Sketching the chariot of the rain god

by Ashish Dhakal

For 19 days in May, artist Sushila Singh followed the Rato Machindranath chariot, sketching its construction in real time. Now, 16 of her *Bunga Dyo* drawings are on display at the Museum of Nepali Art (MoNA). Details on our website.

f Most reached and shared on Facebook



Pedalling for life

by Sarah Watson

Former Chief of Army Staff of Nepal Army, Gen Gaurav Rana, 66, participated in the gruelling 50km Kathmandu Kora Cycle Jatra this year just after his latest chemotherapy session. Inspiring profile, and background on the annual bicycling event that is gaining popularity. nepalitimes.com

t Most popular on Twitter



Off the beaten trek in Nepal

by Ramesh Shrestha

In this travelogue, the author treks the Mundum Trail, a hidden treasure of the Himalaya that offers wilderness adventures for post-monsoon hiking. Story and photo gallery online.

“ ” Most commented



Eco-tourism in Gadi-Siraichuli

by Carol Inskip and Prem Thapa

Designating the Gadi-Siraichuli as a Watershed and Bird Sanctuary and promoting eco-tourism can help protect the last home of the Spiny Babbler in the world. Photo feature online.

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QUOTE TWEETS



Nepali Times @NepaliTimes

Time to shift our conservation priority from protecting not just rhinos and tigers but also neglected mammals like the gaur. Protecting Nepal's endangered wild cattle, @1baburam writes: ...



Terai Fishing Cat @iRamaMishra

This time gaur.



Nepali Times @NepaliTimes

Former Nepal Army chief participates in the gruelling Kathmandu Kora to inspire a spirit of adventure. Pedalling for Life | Sarah Watson



Samar S J B Rana @samarsjbrana

A real trooper! @gauravshumsher

20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Disaster Unpreparedness

Twenty years ago this week, floods and landslides devastated Makwanpur district, killing at least 150 people. Much of the blame was placed on the government's dysfunctional information system with the Maoists having destroyed phone lines in one-third of all districts. This was made worse by the absence of local governments following the Deuba government's dissolution of elected councils earlier that year.

Two decades down the line, Nepal might be better connected, but it is still as unprepared. Nepalis continue to lose their lives and homes every monsoon. Rescue and relief are ad hoc, and too little too late.

Excerpt from the report published 20 years ago this week in issue #104 26 July- 4 August 2002:

Officials say that we suffered a natural disaster. But just like everything else in this country, it was a largely man-made disaster. Monsoon cloudbursts and earthquakes have been happening in the Himalaya even before humans started settling in these hills. But rains and quakes don't kill people, buildings and the sites of settlements do.

Urban sprawl and social inequities send squatters to live on, and farm, vulnerable flood plains. Badly-designed roads, bridges and embankments exacerbate floods. As long as we seek only engineering solutions that do not treat river basins as drainage systems and obstruct their flow, we will keep having man-made disasters. Let's not pass the buck and blame nature. This week's floods over central and eastern Nepal were much worse because we have, through our own misjudgement and incompetence, lost the first line of defence in times of calamity: Nepal's efficient and reliable telephone system. More than 20 of our 75 districts have been without phones for most of this year thanks to the revolutionary zeal of our comrades who have blown up telecom towers as part of their effort to build a new Nepal. Without rapid information, there will not be much relief to coordinate. Four days after the deluge, we still do not have an accurate picture of the true extent of the damage to life and property.

From archive material of *Nepali Times* of the past 20 years, site search: www.nepalitimes.com



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Editor Online: Sahina Shrestha

Executive Editor: Sonia Awale

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Publisher: Kunda Dixit, Himalmedia Pvt Ltd | Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur | GPO Box 7251 Kathmandu

editors@nepalitimes.com | www.nepalitimes.com | www.himalmedia.com | Tel: +977 1 5005601-08 Fax: +977 1 5005518



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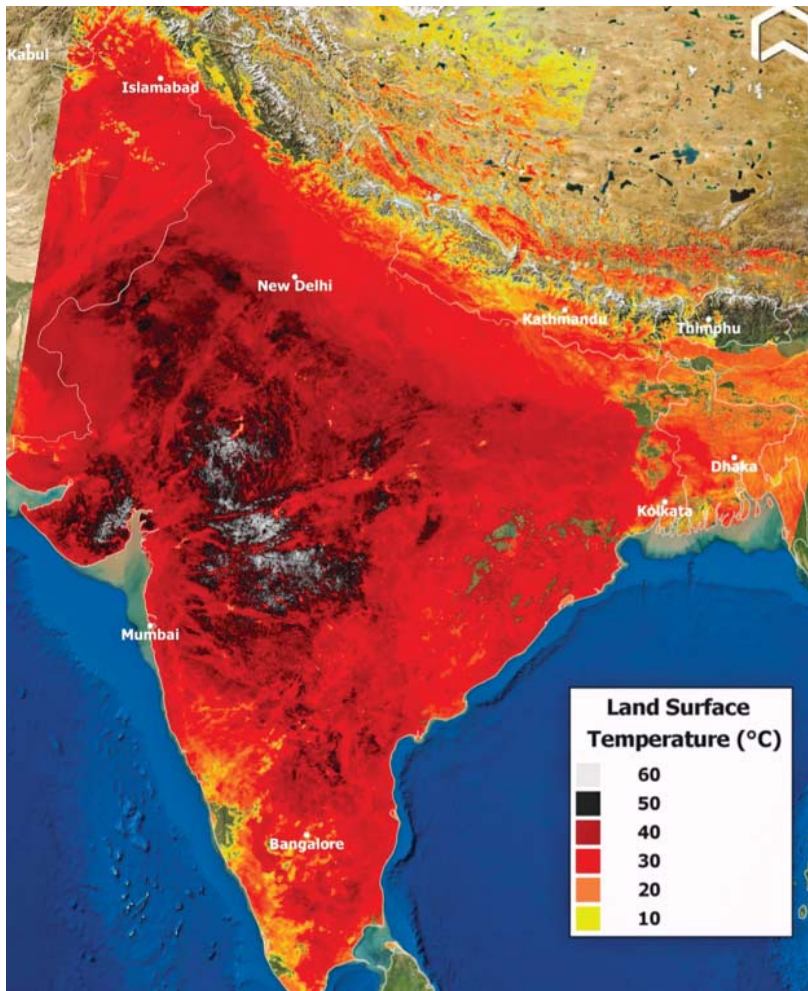
I start every day scrolling through my phone for updates on climate change. My email has become a landing zone for climate newsletters and Google alerts. Once I am done catching up on the world, my day job which also has to do with climate change starts.

The majority of my day is spent talking and working on the climate crisis. Sports, pubs, conversations everything somehow leads back to this global crisis. Everyone I meet during the day seems interested in my take on it. This is often gratifying, but I also live with climate anxiety.

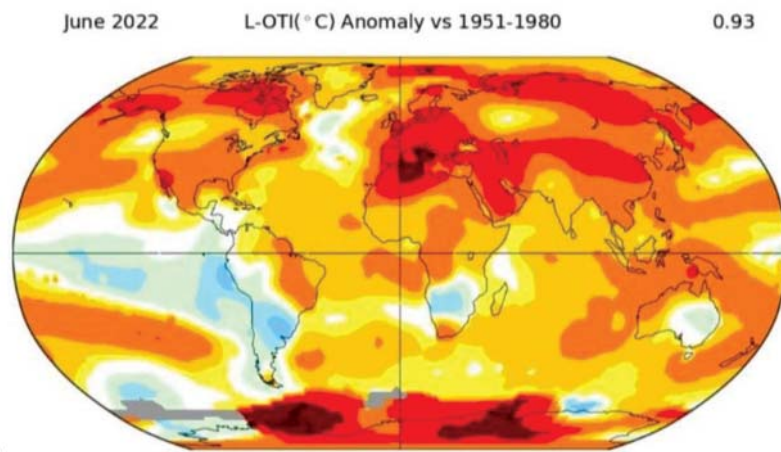
Climate anxiety, or eco-anxiety, is a chronic fear of environmental doom and is becoming a global mental health crisis. Climate projections are getting more alarming with the release of new scientific reports even as wildfires, record-breaking heat waves, unprecedented floods, and extreme weather fill the news cycle. The impact is felt locally, nationally, regionally, and globally.

On the other hand, the seeming progress on climate action is unscientific and unsubstantiated, marketed as communication strategies with big promises and little action, and often decided by the same elite group of people, mostly old men, who for some reason are our saviours for every pressing issue — from climate change to abortion rights and outdated laws against sexual violence.

So it is no surprise that many of us live with climate anxiety, on top of a myriad of other mental health conditions our generation is facing.



Temperature map of South Asia on 29 April, showing extreme unseasonal heat wave conditions.



Global temperature anomaly in June 2022.

In a landmark survey of 10,000 young people in 10 countries, nearly 60% of respondents said that they felt 'very worried' or 'extremely worried' when asked about climate change and government responses.

Earlier this year, I visited Abu Dhabi and met up with a friend

whose climate activism had slowed down in recent years. She told me that her climate anxiety had got so bad she had to distance herself from anything that had to do with the subject. It was her only way of avoiding panic attacks and inflicting self-harm.

Living with climate anxiety

Coming to terms with climate inaction and hypocrisy, while working professionally to avert a global emergency

I asked other young people, and quickly learned that many had switched careers or taken a step back from climate activism because they felt hopeless and powerless. They are preventing further deterioration of their mental well-being.

Is this an unhealthy coping mechanism, or the only way to cope with climate anxiety? What does that imply for the state of the planet, and the world we are headed towards?

Young people are responding to climate change in different ways. It is not uncommon among youth to not want to have children because of what the world will be like in coming decades. Many have anxiety attacks from climate inaction. Young people feel ignored, unheard, and ridiculed.

The mental repercussions of the climate crisis on young people across the world is far-reaching, and it is absurd that the future of humanity is in the hands of the few powerful groups who still make up 70% of global emissions.

Yet, many young people continue to fight. They do this despite the mental and physical toll that comes with their activism on the streets, fighting for a better future when they should be

enjoying their lives to the fullest.

I don't consider myself a climate activist. Despite dedicating my career to climate action, I also live with climate hypocrisy as, despite my largely sustainable lifestyle, I travel the world and have benefitted from the largesse provided by fossil fuels.

Deep within me, I know the carbon credits I purchase to offset my emissions are trivial: representing self-gratitude and a pat-in-the-back gesture for myself. My climate hypocrisy probably fuels my climate anxiety even more in a vicious circle.

My climate anxiety is here to stay. And until there are structural changes to the way our economies transition, my climate hypocrisy is here to stay as well.

If you have gone this far with reading this, you are not alone. Talking about it and regularly writing and working on climate, connecting with like-minded people, admitting dual standards in response to the climate emergency, and spending time in nature help me come to terms with my anxiety, and keep my hope for the future alive. 🇳🇵

Rastraraj Bhandari contributes regularly to Nepali Times on climate change.

prabhu BANK

Turkish awarded

Turkish Airlines CEO Bilal Ekşi has received the Executive Leadership Award at the 2022 Airline Strategy Awards organised by FlightGlobal's Airline Business with the civil aviation practice of Korn Ferry. Said Ekşi: "During the



pandemic process, which may be the most challenging time ever experienced in aviation history, we have distinguished ourselves from our competitors by not disrupting our operations as much as possible, while overcoming the difficulties with innovative approaches."

NADA show

NADA Automobile Dealers Association has postponed its 2022 auto show exhibition indefinitely due to a government ban on the import of automobiles. The restriction has been further tightened with the restriction in the import of two-wheelers with capacity above 150cc.

Tata's green batteries

Dealer Syakar Trading Company has launched Tata Green Batteries for two-wheelers in Nepal.

Liquor Ban

The Liquor Importers Association of Nepal has said that the government's extension of the ban on imported liquor till 30 August will reduce state revenue because of the rise in smuggled alcohol. The government also extended the prohibition on imports of cars, alcohol, tobacco and other luxury items. Nepal imports alcoholic beverages worth \$12 million a year, but taxes on imported liquor also generates Rs3.3 billion a year.

Daraz Shopping

Daraz has launched Mahabachat bazaar that features lucrative deals on smartphones, home appliances, fashion, utensils and gadgets. Customers can get up to 60% off on online payments in the purchase of items worth more



than Rs1,500, discount vouchers of Rs7,000, free shipping and also round trip couples tickets to Turkiye. With prepayment, customers can get up to 10% discounts or Rs1,000 and 12% or Rs1500 for debit payments. Prepayment with Nepal Electronic Payment systems.

JICA scholarship

JICA and Nepal government has signed a grant agreement on the assistance of Rs350 million where



22 Nepali civil servants will get a scholarship to study in Japanese universities. The scholarship that started in 2016 has had 80 graduates so far. Nepal and Japan are also celebrating the 120th anniversary of international student exchange between the two countries.

Herald Graduation

Herald College Kathmandu affiliated with the University of Wolverhampton conducted a graduation ceremony for 481 computer science and international business management students of batch 2019/20 and 2020/21 this week. The college that was set up in 2017 also awarded a full scholarship to 49 students during the event.

Exchange Week

SPG automobiles, the authorised distributor for Chery cars, is hosting an exchange week till 31 August where customers can receive discounts up to Rs400,000, an exchange bonus of Rs100,000 and free 1-year insurance and road tax.

Industry Figures

The Confederation of Nepalese Industries in its 19th general meeting this week themed 'Investment, Production and Export' launched a new report saying the manufacturing industry paid 10.86% interest having borrowed 31% of their working capital and the service sector 10.92%. On the other hand, the industry used only 66.8% of its production capacity, but its income grew by 27.1% in the second quarter and 12.82% in the third. Prime Minister Deuba inaugurated the meeting.

Nexon EV is 1

Tata Motors and Sipradi are celebrating the first anniversary of the launch of the Tata Nexon EV, Nepal's best-selling battery-operated car with more than 2,000 bookings. The Nexon EV comes with both fast and slow charging modes, has low operational costs and features ZIPTRON technology. The company has also set up more than 120 charging points in various public areas. Sipradi Trading has also launched 'Loconav' in Nepal, an India-based startup that helps drivers and fleet owners run their vehicles more efficiently and save money

Civil Fixed Deposit

Civil Bank has launched new fixed deposit schemes Dobbar+ and Tebbar+ where clients can double their deposit money in 6 years, 3 months and 24 days and triple in 10 years and 2 days. FD account holders can also receive Rs1 Million life insurance protection and accidental insurance.

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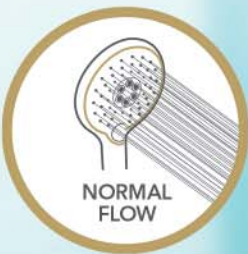
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● **Sahina Shrestha**
in Rupandehi

The tangy aroma of spices pervades the small house of Parbati and Bhesh Giri in the town of Tilottama, welcoming visitors.

The discerning can detect *timmur* pepper, Himalayan black salt, myrobalan, asafoetida and a mix of other exotic spices, and the aroma gets stronger up the stairs to the terrace where there are barrels filled to the brim with chilli, lime, raw mangoes and other fruits and vegetables.

For the past five years, this is where Parbati, 40, has been preparing her brand of *achar* pickles with her husband Bhesh Raj.

What started as a last-ditch attempt at financial independence has now grown into a booming business, earning the couple a profit of Rs75,000 a month.

Parbati's special recipe for homemade pickles provide steady income for the family, allowed the couple to send their children to school and even convince her husband to return from the UAE.

"What I have learned from my experience is that not everyone is going to be helpful, but with the right support anything is possible provided you put in some hard work," says Parbati.

Parbati was only 14 when she fell in love with Bhesh Raj, who was seven years older than her. She was a Grade 9 student and he was working in India when the two eloped to India. They stayed there for the first six months. When they came back, she was three months pregnant with her daughter Rekha.

Having grown up as the youngest daughter in a large and affluent joint family, Parbati had never had to work in her life. But at the in-laws, she was the oldest daughter-in-law. Societal norms dictated that she was responsible for the entire household.

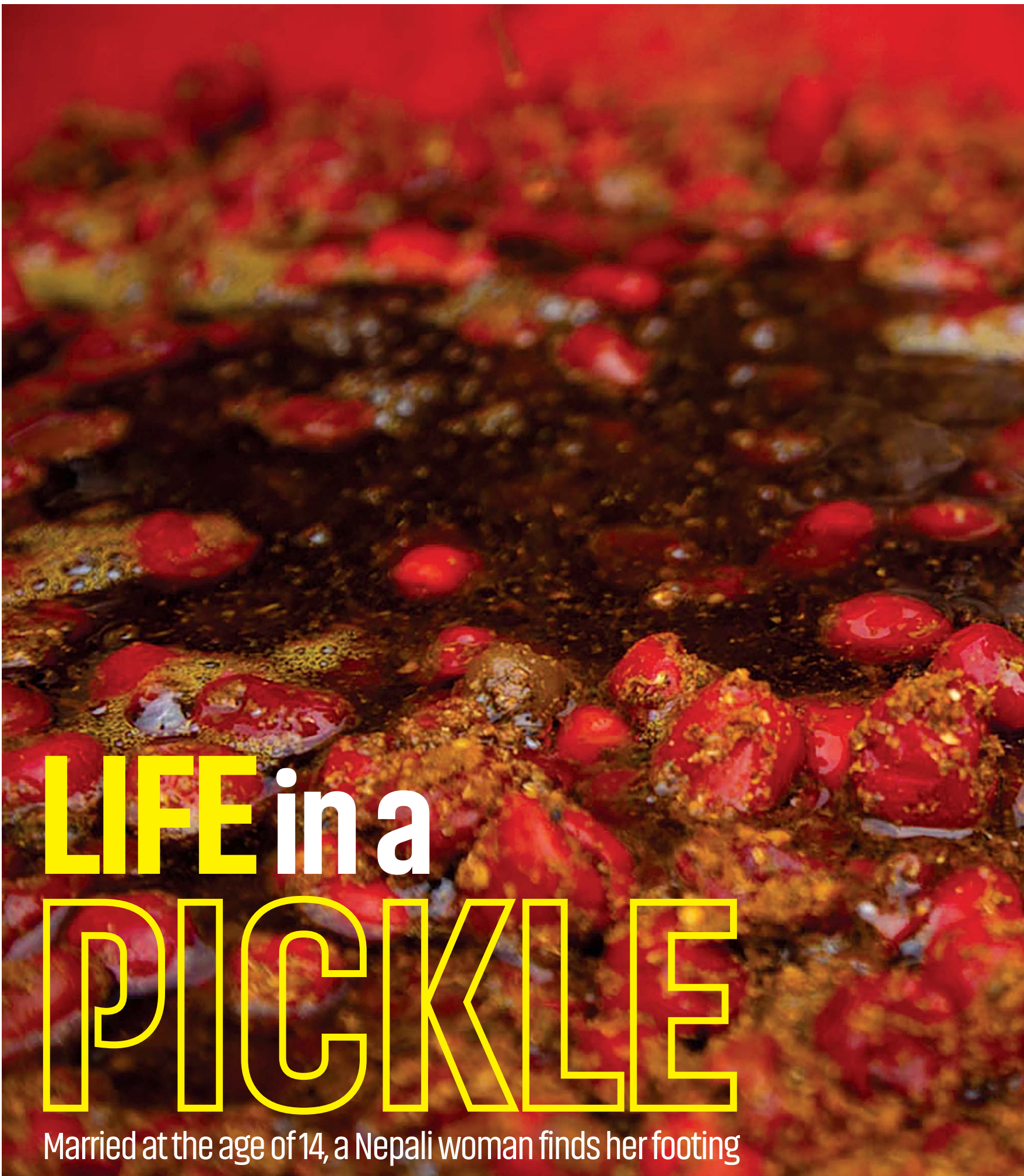
Her husband's earnings in India were not enough to support the family and the couple was also constantly pressured to have a son. It got to the point where the in-laws threatened a second marriage for Bhesh Raj.

"We did not want another child because we felt we did not have the means to take care of two children," recalls Parbati. "But for the sake of the family and society we decided to try again, and our son was born."

For the next few years, things got better. Bhesh Raj left his job in India and went to Dubai. Although he was earning more, Parbati wanted him to return.

It was not easy living in a joint family of in-laws. Bearing the stigma of elopement, she did not have anyone to confide with. When she finally decided to move out and live separately, her husband in the UAE supported her decision.

"I never told him anything about the house, whatever he knew



Married at the age of 14, a Nepali woman finds her footing



was through his own observations, but he was always very supportive of me and that is all that mattered," she remembers.

In 2017, Parbati joined a two-day pickle-making training organised by a local cooperative after which she joined six of her fellow trainees to start the Subhalabha Pickles venture with an

initial investment of Rs5,000 from each member.

During this time Parbati learnt the basics of procuring produce, market prices, as well as bookkeeping and rate lists.

A year later in 2018, she struck out on her own to establish her own pickle brand LaKaC. The business took off, and she called her husband

home from Dubai.

Initially, Bhesh Raj admits he was embarrassed to be involved in the business. When they set up stalls in the local market fairs, he would stand in a corner and watch his wife. Five years on, he is the one out in front, taking the pickles to market and planning business expansion.

"I was a migrant worker for 22 years and all I knew was how to do 12-hour shifts, go back to the dorm and repeat that daily cycle. Once I saw how much customers appreciated our pickles, it motivated me to be more involved," says Bhesh Raj, who gives full credit to his wife for motivating him and giving him the opportunity to learn.

LaKaC has a range of 21 varieties of sweet and savoury pickles, including that of *akbare*, lime, mangoes, and mushrooms. The business has grown and the couple has rented a shop along the highway and delivers the products to Palpa, Bhairawa, Butwal and further afield. The monthly turnover now exceeds Rs300,000.

What sets this business apart to other pickle ventures is that the Giris also make sure that the spices and raw materials used are of good quality and maintain hygienic standards. Those visiting the shop in Shankarnagar have the option to taste the pickles before buying.

In 2019, Parbati was nominated in the top five of the Mayor-Daayitwa Rural Enterprise Acceleration Program and won a Rs50,000 award. LaKaC also won an award from a local cooperative.

She credits Daayitwa with training to make business plans and strategy, as well as to communicate with the community.

When the Covid lockdown started in 2020, Parbati worried that



PHOTOS: AMIT MACHAMASI

her pickles would go to waste. So she called up her customers to see if they were willing to still buy the pickles, and negotiated with the ward chair to allow deliveries following health safety protocols.

Parbati considers the social and political activist Devi Wagle, who encouraged her to start her business and go back to school, as her mentor. Wagle has noticed that Parbati has become more confident over the years.

“There are people who just talk about doing things, and then there are people like Parbati who go on to actually do things. That is what sets her apart from others,” Wagle says. “Everyone can learn from her industriousness, hard work, and persistence.”

Parbati now also trains other women in pickle-making and is involved in social work. “One way that women can be independent is through entrepreneurship and I want to help other women like me to stand on their own feet,” she says.

Having married at an early age, Parbati did not get to finish school. But as her children grew up and her business got bigger, she decided to go back to school at age 37.

She admits she was a little shy in the beginning to be in a classroom with fellow students who were the age of her children. But she overcame the shyness to enroll in an open school to finish

her SEE.

Getting back to classroom work however, was not easy since she had been out of school for two decades. The coursework had changed and she especially struggled with Maths and English. Not one to give up, she set aside time from 8pm to 12am every day to self-study after long days at work.

“In open schools you often see students who come for the sake of getting a certificate but with Parbati, she really wanted to learn and that stood out the most about her. She never hesitated to ask questions or learn from her peers,” says Narayan Subedi, who taught her mathematics in Grade 10. “It was her dedication that earned her a higher than expected grade in SEE.”

Recently Parbati appeared for her Grade 12 exam with a major in sociology and journalism, and wants to go on to get an undergraduate education as well.

While Parbati is busy at school, Bhesh Raj looks after the household. Their 16-year-old son Rohan describes the partnership as inspiring: “My mother is inspirational and works hard but it wouldn’t have been possible without the support of my father.” His goal is to beat his mother’s grade in SEE.

Bhesh Raj is happy with where they are today. “I toiled in foreign countries for half of my life, but

now I understand that if we work hard, we can grow gold in Nepal itself,” he says.

The couple is now looking to expand their market to Kathmandu and rent out a space for a warehouse in their hometown so that they can stock raw materials for pickles.

For all that Parbati has achieved, she remains true to her roots and wants to continue helping and encouraging other women in her community. Says Parbati: “I want them to look at me and think that if she can do it, I can too. Whether it is starting a business or going to school at an older age, I hope my journey inspires them.” 🇳🇵

This is the second in the series Striking Roots, where we feature the stories of entrepreneurs from across the country. If you know someone whose story needs to be shared, email us as editors@nepaltimes.com



Parvati Giri from Tilottama in Rupandehi married husband Bhesh Raj at the age of 14. But at 37 she went back to school and now runs LaKaC pickles and makes Rs75,000 a month. She is also training others in pickle-making. Get to know her success story.

Milking it for all it’s worth

A Nepali dairy farmer who started a popular shop reflects on the ingredients of his success

● Maheswar Acharya

Gokarna Bastola never went to school, did not know how to read or write, and followed his parent’s footsteps to become a dairy farmer in Pharping, 20km south of Kathmandu.

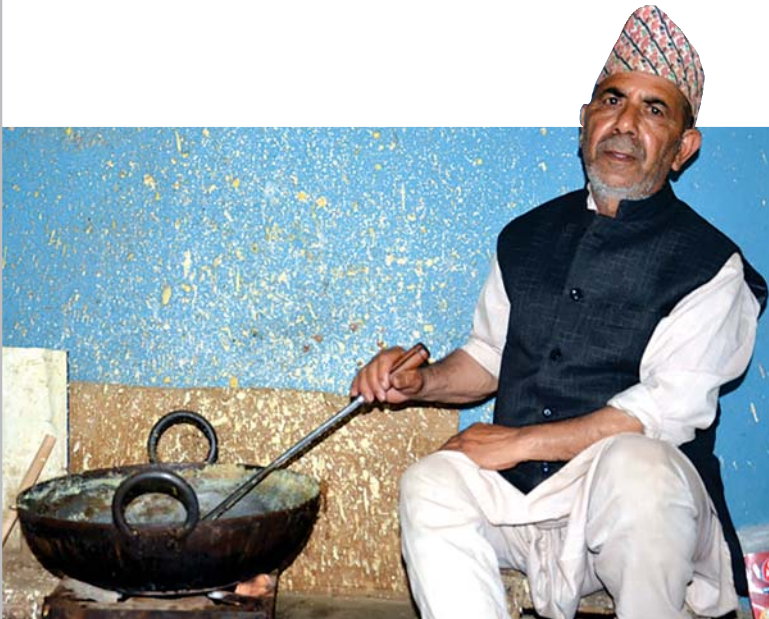
The family made a decent living selling milk, but was not well-to-do. The fact that there was only a rough road to the capital meant that milk could not easily be taken to the Kathmandu market.

Which is why the young Gokarna hit upon the idea of turning the milk into *khuwa*, a traditional sweetened concentrated solid milk product that would not spoil. Since he was the only dairy farmer in the area who was making *khuwa*, business just took off.

The Kali Khuwa Udyog started in Pharping 40 years ago with an initial investment of only Rs255. Today, it is a thriving industry and it has made Gokarna Bastola a prosperous man able to afford top education for all four of his children, who are now based around the world.

“The milk would not keep, so we preserved it as *khuwa*, I never thought it would be such a big business one day,” Bastola reflects.

In the early days, customers were limited to pilgrims who thronged to Dakshinkali temple from Kathmandu and beyond. After their puja, families bought packets of the dairy product to take home. Word of its quality spread by word of mouth, and Bastola got many repeat customers.



RAMRAJ SHRESTHA

It takes 300 litres of milk to make 15kg of *khuwa* which can sell for up to Rs1,000. Bastola’s shop also sells 200 litres of milk and endless cups of tea every day to pilgrims.

After his initial investment, Kali Khuwa Udhog expanded with a loan of just Rs2,000 from the Nepal Agricultural Development Bank. Business was slow in the beginning, and Bastola even had moments of doubt about whether it would work.

But he bought 14 goats, six cows and two buffaloes, and started the business from his rented room. Slowly, by ensuring strict quality control of the product, business picked up and the dairy farm had to expand into a larger space.

“My measure of success is not the money I have made, but the hurdles I overcame, and the fact that my children are all well educated and doing well for themselves,” he says.

It has not been easy. At one point, Bastola toiled 18 hours a day tending to his livestock and farm. He tried other dairy products, but nothing sold as well as *khuwa*, so he stuck to it.

Pharping is now a busy town after the highway to Hetauda started bringing more traffic. And Bastola’s shop now sells more dairy not just to pilgrims but also bus passengers.

Despite being a successful farmer, Bastola is a humble man because he remembers his humble beginnings. He also recognises that it is hard work, determination and a steadfast refusal to cut corners that made him successful.

“The value of a person cannot just be measured in money, their worth comes from integrity and industriousness,” he says, reminding Nepali youth thinking of migrating abroad that prosperity is possible in Nepal itself.

The fact that the younger generation is moving away from the land worries him, especially the misconception that agriculture is for the poor and uneducated, when in fact livestock farming can lift Nepalis out of poverty.

“Of course you will not do well if you are lazy, it is hard work that brings achievement and fulfilment, and a sense of having contributed to society,” he says.

With four decades of experience, Bastola has words of wisdom for everyone. He finds in milk a reflection of Nepal itself – the thicker it is the more honest society is, and when it is adulterated it means the community is morally bankrupt.

Says Bastola: “What is today may not be there tomorrow, what there will be tomorrow may not yet exist. But we control our own destiny.” 🇳🇵

EVENTS



Urban History

The opening of ‘Quick time, old river and a sky full of dreams’, a Kathmandu Valley urban history project exhibition will be discourse on urbanisation, the commons, and imaginations for the future.
29 July, 4pm onwards, Patan House, Dhaugal

Boudha market

Buy fresh and organic fruits and vegetables, baked goods, and other delicious goodies. Support local products and businesses.
Saturdays, 7am-5pm, Utpala Cafe, Boudha

Tiger Book

Rato Bangla Kitab is announcing *The House of Tiger* on the World Tiger Day with the digital launch of the book’s poster.
29 July



Aerial Yoga

Take part in this beginners friendly aerial yoga workshop. Build balance and strength with aro yoga swings.
30 July, 4pm-6pm, Rs1500, Avata Wellness Center

Poetry Reading

Poets Mahesh Prasai, Avaya Shrestha, Bishwa Sigdel and Nirvik Jung Rayamajhee will be reciting their work this Friday.
29 July, 4pm-6pm, White Lotus Book Shop, Kupondole

DINING



The Workshop Eatery

Forget about calories and indulge in an assortment of doughnuts, fries and burgers. The Nutella Doughnut and the Workshop BBQ Chicken Burger is a must.
Bakhundole, 9860431504

MUSIC

Mt8848

Relive classical Nepali rock music as MT.8848 goes live this Friday with opening act from Shree kings Nepal.
29 July, 6pm onwards, Club Fahrenheit, 9841726830



Two Tone

Enjoy a musical evening to the tune of Two Tone at Ai-La lounge. Reserve seats now.
29 July, 5pm onwards, Ai-La Lounge, 9801018681

The Alchemist

Take a break, meet up with friends and check out the Alchemist and Cobweb at Purple Haze Rock Bar.
30 July, 7pm onwards, Thamel



Kutumba

Spend time with your family this weekend, treat them to a show by Kutumba. Book tickets now.
30 July, Rs500, Beers N’ Cheers, Jhamsikhel

Dying World

Save the date for live performances from Screaming marionette, Krur and the mid life drill at Beers N’ Cheers.
6 August, 2pm onwards, Jhamiskhel



Bricks Café

A multi cuisine restaurant in the heart of Kathmandu offering flavourful dishes in a pleasant corner. Their lasagna is a must-try.
Kupondole (01) 5521756

Utpala Cafe

Anyone looking for healthy vegetarian options, look no further from this monastery restaurant with scrumptious buffet lunch, fresh produce and mouth-watering baked goods.
Boudha, 9801052333

About Town

GETAWAY



The Pavilions Himalayas

Nepal’s first lake-side tented luxury eco-villas that offer every amenity that one could possibly need. The hotel spa also has some of the best treatments to relax you.
Chisapani, Pokhara, 9856027997

Kasara Resort

Immerse yourself into the lush greenery at the heart of Chitwan National Park. Partake in activities including cycling and wildlife viewing at this fantastic family getaway.
Patihani, Chitwan National Park (01) 4437571

Hotel Baha

Explore the cultural heritage of old town Bhaktapur while enjoying the peaceful ambience of the hotel surrounded by temples.
Bhaktapur (01) 6616810

Dom Himalaya

Dom Himalaya offers a space for visitors to indulge in traditional Nepali cuisine, relax with Tibetan singing bowls and bask in the vibrant chaos of Thamel.
Thamel (01) 4263554



Namo Buddha Resort

Constructed in traditional Newa style and surrounded by lush greenery, the resort is an oasis of peace and tranquility, offering spectacular views of the Himalayas on clear days.
Namo Buddha, Phulbari, 9851106802

Bawarchi

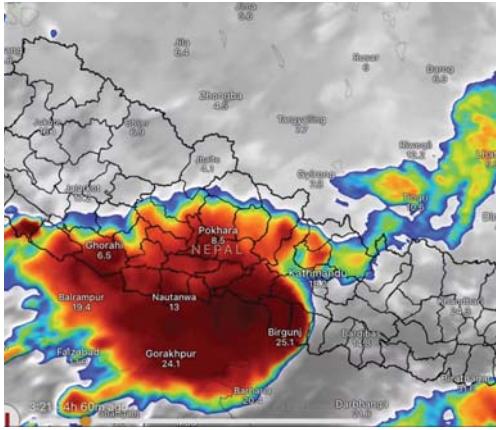
Try the mouth-watering Kolkata Katti Rolls and other fusion Indian dishes at Bawarchi.
Jawalakhel (01) 5526244



Taza

Taza brings a bit of Middle-Eastern flare to Kathmandu with its all Syrian items. Shawarma, falafel, hummus, kebab—everything is fresh and finger lickingly good.
Jhamsikhel, 9860960177

WEEKEND WEATHER

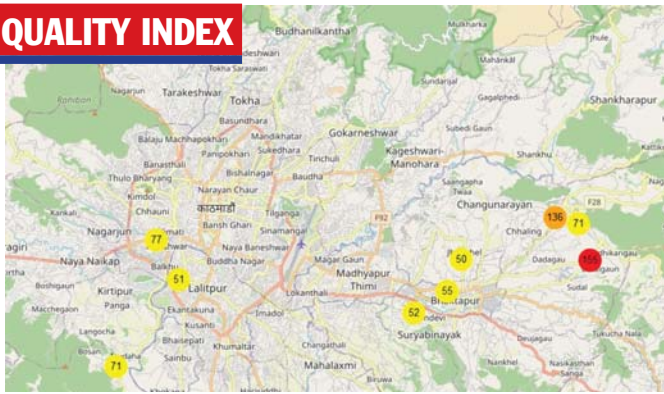


Monsoon Revival

The monsoon is re-asserting itself with renewed vigour, after that brief hiatus. The weather trough that was lingering over central India has now moved north and is massing up over the Mahabharat Range from the east and gradually moving westward. Some of the rain on Friday and the weekend will be heavy downpours, with the consequent danger of mudslides and debris flow on rivers. Take care while travelling.



AIR QUALITY INDEX



The Air Quality Index (AQI) will continue to improve this weekend as the rains return to Kathmandu Valley. Most brick kilns shut down during the monsoon, but still, the ones that operate in the Bhaktapur area means that AQI is in the Hazardous Orange Level at the eastern edge of the Valley even when the city centre is only in the moderate Yellow range. (See image from @DisasterNepal).

OUR PICK

Releasing on streaming platform Hulu this Friday, American satirical dark comedy *Not Okay* directed by Quinn Shephard is a commentary on the new-age influencer culture. The film follows ambitious influencer wannabe Danni Sanders, played by Zoey Deutch, who fakes a trip to Paris to gain followers—only to be mistakenly assumed as one of the survivors of a terrorist attack in the city. Caught up in a web of dangerous lies and fame, Danni soon realises online notoriety comes with a terrible price. Also stars Dylan O’Brien, Mia Isaac and Embeth Davidtz.

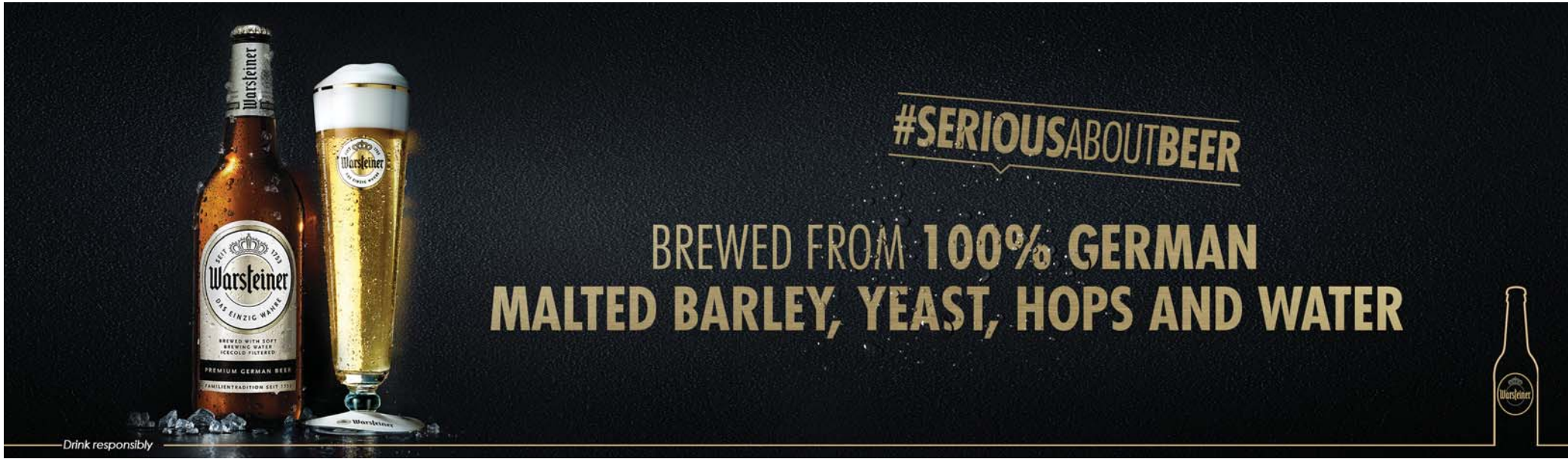


बाढीपहिरोबाट जोगिन

- जथाभावी सडक निर्माण र वन विनाशले बाढीपहिरो निम्त्याउछ।
 - वृक्षारोपण गरौं, वनजंगल जोगाऔं, बाढीपहिरो नियन्त्रण गरौं।
 - पहिरोको जोखिम भएका क्षेत्र तथा नदी किनारमा रुख, बाँस, निगालोजस्ता भु-क्षय रोक्ने खालका विरुवा रोपौं र संरक्षण गरौं।
 - आफ्नो बस्ती तथा समुदायको रक्षा गरौं।
 - बाढी तथा पहिरो गएको सूचना तल्लो तटीय क्षेत्रमा दिऔं।
- आफु पनि बचौं अरुलाई पनि बचाऔं।



नेपाल सरकार
विज्ञापन बोर्ड



● Philip Holmes in Janakpur

Last week, as I was enjoying lunch with my soft-spoken colleague Dev Narayan Mandal, he said something in passing that caused me to down my cutlery. It was one of those run-that-past-me-again moments.

In the two-and-a-half years that I have known Dev he had never shared this remarkable story from six years ago.

In 2012, Dev returned to his home in Dhanusha district after working on animal rescue for ten years in Delhi. Coincidentally, this was soon after I myself returned home to live in the UK after eight years in Nepal.

We never met then, but it is easy to see how our paths could have crossed in India. I was heading up operations to rescue Nepali child slaves who had been trafficked to perform in Indian circuses. The last operation was to free little girls from the dangerous Great Apollo Circus in Dehradun. Dev himself had been involved at that time in a raid on the same circus to free some bears.

After returning to Nepal, Dev set up the Mithila Wildlife Trust (MWT) to try to reverse the environmental damage in the beloved local woodlands from his childhood. Forests that were supposed to be protected were being illegally logged.

He got retired forestry workers to volunteer, and with the collaboration of 13 villages set out to protect the Dhanushadham Forest. Today, the rewilding program is a success and is being replicated elsewhere in Nepal.

The forest had another problem, the poaching of wildlife by the local Musahar community that traditionally hunted for game meat on behalf of higher castes, and because they were not allowed to eat what they killed, they were only permitted to eat rat meat, hence their name.

Times have changed, yet this centuries-old tradition survived in another form – illegal hunting of wildlife. Dev was convinced that the way to tackle this might be to set up a Community Learning Centre (CLC) for the education of Musahar children, and those from other excluded communities.

Dev's rationale was that, aside from the edifying impact of education on young minds, at least if the children were in class they would not be poaching in the forests.

He made a start by supporting extra tuition for the first batch of 28 Musahar children at the home of a



ALL PHOTOS: PHILIP HOLMES

The Boy and the Boar

How an accident of fate made a Musahar community start educating its children

EDUCATION FOR ALL: (clockwise) A Community Learning Centre for Musahar children built by the Mithila Wildlife Trust in Dhanusha. Bishnu Sada with his family. Dev Naryan Mandal with Bishnu Sada who was gored by a wild boar, and recovered.



college student, Jit Narayan Sada, who was paid a small allowance by the MWT so he himself could complete college studies. The response from the Musahar community was cool, but three years later a boost was to come from the unlikely quarter.

One day in 2016, a 12-year-old Musahar boy named Bishnu Sada was charged and gored by a wild boar. He was knocked off his feet, partially disembowelled, and lost consciousness. The group chased off the boar and carried Bishnu

back to the village, traumatised and fearing the worst.

Dev sprang into action, and took Bishnu to Janakpur Hospital, about 45 minutes away, where surgeons said Bishnu was beyond saving. To attempt to do so would be a total waste of money.

Undeterred, Dev contacted Biratnagar Hospital, 200km to the east, sending surgeons there pictures of the gaping wound and exposed intestines. They agreed to attempt to save Bishnu's life. Against the odds, they were

successful.

Using his persuasive skills, Dev encouraged the impoverished Musahar community to contribute Rs400,000 to meet Bishnu's medical bills and then sat down with the community leaders and asked them to quantify the annual financial return from their hunting activities, illicit or otherwise.

After a great deal of discussion and number-crunching, they concluded that these were worth Rs300,000. Dev then pointed out that for this past year, they had effectively been in deficit. He suggested to the village elders that they would have been better off investing in their children's education rather than poaching wildlife.

They agreed, and each household made a contribution at the very least of a piece of timber towards the set-up of the first Community Learning Centre -- a simple construction of wood, clay and thatch.

Since then, the CLC has grown from strength to strength, the original centre replaced by a brick house through a grant provided by the McGough Foundation (UK).

This year, the number of students has increased to 286, with extra tutors being provided by the non-profit, SAATH. The teaching model is innovative. Jit Narayan Sada himself has left and enlisted in the Nepal Army, the first from the Musahar community. Funds permitting, better qualified new CLCs will be set up for other communities.

I met Bishnu this week, he is a shy, slightly built lad, with a ready grin. He has every reason to smile having passed his 10th Grade SEE test, a rare achievement in his under-served community, and is now enrolled in his first year of a Diploma in Engineering course.

I will follow Bishnu's academic progress with admiration for him, and for the man who saved his life. 🇳🇵

Lt Col (retd) **Philip Holmes** is founder and CEO of Pipal Tree Foundation www.pipaltree.org.uk

To support Dev Narayan Mandal's Community Learning Centres, visit the 'Big Give' summer appeal. Donations until the 4th August are automatically doubled in value: <https://pipaltree.info/summer>

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The geopolitics of Nepal's

Efforts to harness Nepal's rivers are getting inextricably tangled with geopolitics and the climate crisis

● Ramesh Kumar

A rapidly warming atmosphere is melting Himalayan glaciers, changing the seasonal flow of water in Nepal's rivers, and increasing the interest of downstream India in regulating water and generating electricity.

For Nepal, this is an opportunity to finally tap the potential of the country's 'white gold' to meet growing demand for electricity domestically, as well as redress its trade deficit with India by selling surplus power.

New Delhi's priority has been to try to regulate the flow of the Ganges by storing monsoon runoff in its Himalayan tributaries in Nepal, which is why it has lately started showing an interest in building large reservoir projects in Nepal.

"There is no doubt that India's real interest is in Nepal's water resources rather than hydroelectricity," says Sheetal Babu Regmi, formerly head of the Water and Energy Commission. "And water is going to be an even more critical commodity with the climate crisis."

Almost two-thirds of the water in the Ganges that flows through some of the most densely-populated regions in the world comes from the rivers of Nepal. And most of that flows down in the four monsoon months between June-September.

In the rainy season, there are destructive floods in the plains, and for nine months in a year, the rivers have low flow. Storage dams in Nepal would even this out, reducing flood damage during the monsoon, and make adequate water available the rest of the year.

Climate change means that there will be even less water flowing in the Ganges and its tributaries in the dry season in the coming decades.

A recent report by India's NITI Ayog showed that nearly 600 million Indians are facing a shortage of water for irrigation and household use, and singled out 21 cities, including New Delhi, as potentially facing groundwater depletion by 2030.

In a 2019 report, ICIMOD (the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development) warned that failure to reduce carbon emissions would lead to the Himalaya losing up to two-thirds of its remaining glaciers during this century.



The Kulekhani Dam opened in 1982 is still the only large reservoir project in Nepal.

It is therefore strategically important for India to ensure regulated year-round water on the Ganges, and for this it needs a government in Kathmandu that is willing to allow it to build large reservoirs on Nepal's rivers.

However, given the historical asymmetry of past Indian projects on the Kosi and Gandaki, river projects are political hot potatoes in Nepal. Governments in the past have fallen because incumbents signed off on river treaties with India that were deemed to disproportionately benefit India.

Which is what makes the timing of announcements of a slew of new Indian investment in river projects in Nepal after Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba-led coalition came

to power last year so significant.

On 14 June, Nepal's cabinet gave permission to India's state-owned NHPC Limited (formerly the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation) to build the 750MW West Seti hydropower project. The China Three Gorges International Corp (CTG) had in 2018 been edged out of the reservoir project with a 194m high dam in western Nepal.

The NHPC had made a proposal to Nepal's Investment Board in May for the construction of the project following promises made by Prime Minister Deuba during his visit to India in March. And while on the campaign trail in Dadeldhura in May, Deuba had revealed that construction of the West Seti would have to be given to India because

otherwise New Delhi would not buy electricity off projects with Chinese investment.

But experts have raised serious issues with the way such a large project has been handed over to Indian companies without the requisite competitive bidding process, and using a legal loophole to circumvent Nepal's Public Private Partnership and Investment Act.

An agreement to hand over a 51% stake in the construction of the Arun-4 hydropower project to another Indian state-owned company, Sutlej Hydropower Corporation, was also made in June during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Lumbini.

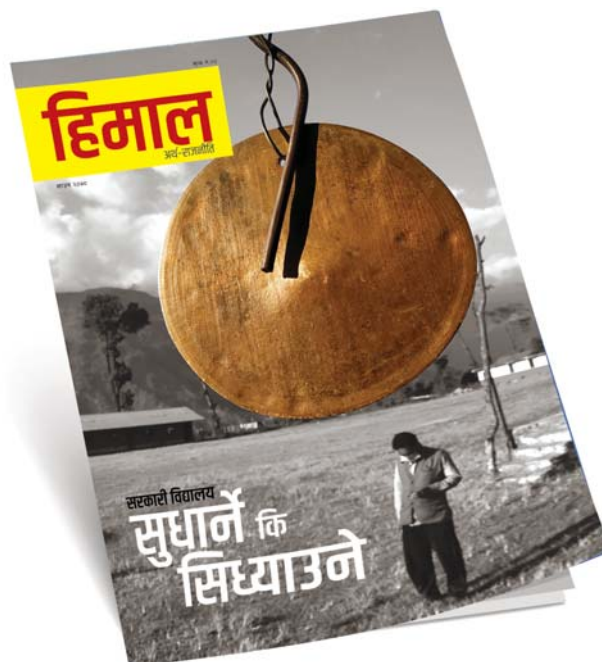
Arun-4 follows Sutlej's joint

venture on the upstream Arun-3 project in eastern Nepal, and the government was so secretive about the deal that Nepalis came to know about it only after Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) executive director Kulman Ghising signed the agreement in Lumbini with Sutlej Hydropower chair Nand Lal Sharma.

Sutlej Hydropower earlier acquired the 679MW Lower Arun project construction rights under former prime minister K P Sharma Oli. The cascade of Indian projects on the Arun River will generate 2,000MW of electricity in eastern Nepal.

And with West Seti and Upper Karnali projects, Indian companies will be generating another

अब
मासिक हिमाल
१ साउनदेखि बजारमा



हिमालमिडिया प्रा. लि.
पाटनढोका, ललितपुर

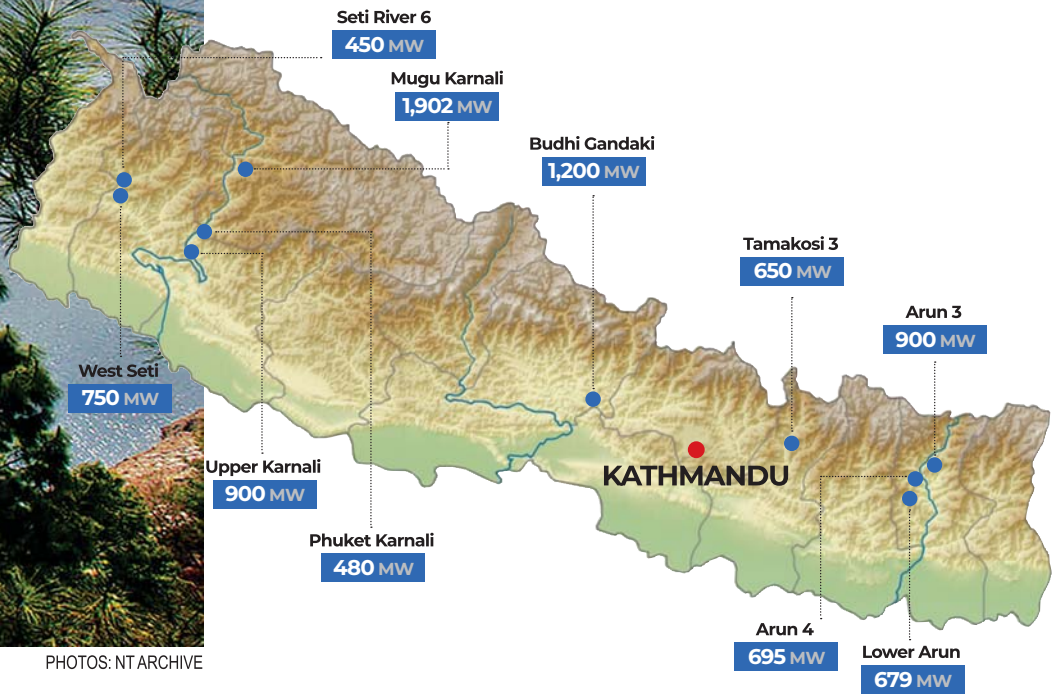
water and electricity



PHOTOS: NT ARCHIVE



The Kosi Barrage diverts water for irrigation in Bihar, and disgorges the river's excess silt-laden water during the monsoon.



2,000MW of electricity from western Nepal for export to India. Additionally, the government is also planning to award the 450MW Seti River-6 project to NHPC. Sources at the Investment Board Nepal say that the Indian company is taking most of the electricity, and offering only 3% of free electricity to Nepal. The NHPC has also submitted a proposal for the 480MW Phukot Karnali and the 1,902MW Mugu Karnali projects in north-western Nepal. The fact that all these projects have been announced only after Deuba replaced K P Oli as prime minister last year indicates that his coalition partners have been friendlier to Indian proposals on river projects than previous

governments. Indeed, the 900MW Upper Karnali hydroelectric project which was awarded in 2014 to the Indian private company GMR was given a two-year extension despite its failure to finalise investment. "Nepal is playing a geopolitical game with hydropower, flouting the Constitution and prevailing laws," says former water resource minister Dipak Gyawali. Nepal's Constitution stipulates that treaties or agreements related to the distribution of natural resources and their use must be approved by a two-third majority in the Federal Parliament. Other experts however, say that Nepal cannot just sit on its rivers, it must harness them for economic

progress, and for this it has to cooperate with India on an equal footing for mutual benefit. "Indian investment in the hydropower sector will benefit Nepal, it will mean the electricity we generate will find a ready market in India and reduce our trade deficit," says NEA director Kulman Ghising. However, it is the fear that India will derive disproportionate benefit from these joint projects that worries Nepali experts, especially since there is historical precedent for that. India has also put pressure on Nepal by refusing to buy electricity from projects built with investment or contractors from China. India refused to buy surplus power from

Nepal this monsoon, wasting 500MW of electricity. Chinese investors are presently involved in building hydropower plants with a total capacity of 1,000MW. Deuba reached an energy-sharing agreement during his India visit in March, under which the Central Electricity Authority of India approved 364MW of electricity imports from six hydropower projects not built by the Chinese. Foreign policy experts have seen a clear departure on the part of Prime Minister Deuba towards India on river basin projects, with Indian companies being favoured over Chinese ones. In March, the Deuba-led government decided to revoke the license issued to the China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC) to develop the mammoth \$2.5 billion Budi Gandaki hydropower project, and to build the 263m high dam to generate 1,200MW on its own. The Budi Gandaki has been a victim of geopolitical pingpong for the past five years. In 2017, Maoist Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's government awarded the project to CGGC, but the subsequent Deuba government reversed the decision, angering the Chinese. In 2018, K P Oli's government restored the contract, only to have Deuba cancel it again this year. Chinese Ambassador Hou Yanqi stated in May that it was "wrong to change policy (on Budi Gandaki) with every change of government and ... such actions killed the

investment climate". "It is not diplomatically mature to repeatedly undo decisions of preceding governments every time power changes hands," says foreign affairs expert Dinesh Bhattarai. Experts say that India's policy on energy imports will not only just discourage future Chinese investments in Nepal as is its goal, but also other investors, besides also throwing Nepal's policy of equidistance between China and India off balance. Australia's Snowy Mountain Engineering Company (SMEC) pulled out of the West Seti project in 2010 after India showed no interest in buying its electricity. Then the Norwegian company SN Power pulled out of the 650MW Tamakosi 3 after not getting the green light from India to buy its power. Most of Nepal's power projects so far are on run-of-river schemes where generation capacity falls during the dry season. This means Nepal has a power deficit in winter when it needs to import from India, and has a surplus in the monsoon when it can export to India. Having reservoir projects would change that, and give Nepal a more year-round generation capacity, while also regulating water on rivers as a bonus. "India considers water a strategic resource, and is cleverly trying to keep Nepal's energy system under its influence," explains Dipak Gyawali, the former minister. Clearly, Nepal needs to prioritise domestic consumption of electricity over its export and channel it into electrification of transport, industries and homes. All of this will automatically cut down on petroleum imports, reducing its increasing trade deficit. Selling raw electricity to India is not as beneficial, experts point out, because Nepal is selling its power at a much cheaper rate to India than to domestic consumers. Switching to electric vehicles to reduce Nepal's petroleum import bill by just 10% would save the country over Rs30 billion a year. The combined capacity of Nepal's hydropower projects has now exceeded 2,100MW even as average domestic demand stands at just 1,550 MW. Another 2,500MW of electricity will be added to the grid in the next two years, while 3,000MW of new projects are in the pipeline. In a few short years, Nepal will have surplus year-round electricity, and experts say it will be a mistake to rely so heavily on selling power to India. Instead, Nepal needs to rework its energy needs so as to increase domestic consumption, and reduce petroleum imports to cut its widening trade deficit with India. 🇳🇵

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Turning Nepal into Singapore

During the Panchayat, Nepal's absolute rulers promised to lift the country to 'Asian Standards'. What they forgot to spell out was whether they meant the GDP per capita of Afghans or Singaporeans.

After the rustication of democracy, a prime minister who shall remain nameless promised to turn Nepal into Singapore. The PM must be congratulated for overshooting his target. Nepal's average per capita income is now three times higher than Singhapur (population: 738) in Udaypur district.

Now, if anyone can turn Kathmandu into a 'fine' city like Singapore, it will be Mayor Balen.

Having once had to nearly pay a fine for trying to hide a glob of chewing gum under a bench on Orchard Road (SG\$500 for chewing contraband and SG\$1,000 for littering, making a total of SG\$1,500 plus 10% GST), The Ass has on all subsequent trips to the Pearl of the Orient made it a point to look out for any hidden CCTV cameras before committing a similar heinous crimes. And, I'm proud to say, I've never since been caught.

The other thing hygiene-challenged Nepalīs heading to the City State must peruse is the Singapore government's booklet: 'Rules and Regulations for Those Attending To Calls of Nature in Our Fine City'.

I have no idea how the Singaporean authorities ever find out people who have not flushed toilets, but they can present evidence of perpetrators of this felony and slap SG\$100 fines. Not to put too fine a point on it, but keeping our collective asses clean is, in hindsight, a sign of civilisational progress. If we are serious about one day being filthy crazy rich Asians, too, we need to give sanitation a bottoms-up priority.

Mayor Balen is off to a glorious start: he is emulating the Singapore model by instituting stiff fines for all major and minor misdemeanours, and turning Kathmandu into a penal colony.

Let's be realistic, though, do we have enough CCTV cameras in working order at the Ministry of Finance to check if any unauthorised person is sneaking in to take a dump? Also, we in Turd World countries like Nepal will never become a Singapore because there is no water in our flush tanks.

While we must not underestimate the power of deterrence to instill good behaviour in citizens, we may also need to use positive reinforcement by rewarding those who do things right. Instead of taking money away from those who litter, maybe give money to those who don't. Prizes work better than penalties. For example:

- Cash prize of Rs 2,000 for the only pedestrian who actually used the overhead walkway at Jamal in the last fiscal year.
- The Honest Cop Award in Cash or Kind for police at the metal-free x-ray in Tribhuvan Intercontinental Ballistic Airport who refuses to 'confiscate' your whiskey.
- A cash bribe to the officer at the Land Transportation Office who turns down a back-sheesh to expedite your driving license.
- The columnist adhering to highest standard of personal hygiene by not grooming nostrils in full view of staff while writing above column.

The Ass

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