

@PHALANO

STATE OF THE STATE

• Santa Gaha Magar

In January, Nepal's Election Commission recommended a date for the local elections for April. But the top political leadership of the governing coalition dilly-dallied, citing Omicron and the cost, to buy time.

After severe criticism from civil society and the media, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba reluctantly agreed to hold local elections on 13 May as scheduled. Because of their electoral alliance, coalition parties ended up faring well.

Fast forward to August, and the leaders of the Nepali Congress and

Maoists got cold feet again about facing the electorate in November's federal and provincial polls. There was lots of hemming-and hawing to the Election Commission's recommended poll date of 18 November. Coalition leaders let off trial balloons saying they need more time to align candidates.

However, following the meeting of the Council of Ministers on Thursday, the government has set the federal and provincial election date to 20 November. This followed an informal meeting of five main coalition partners a day before in Baluwater.

Nepal's law stipulates that election dates must be announced 120 days prior to polls, and there is

now only 110 days to go.

"That legal provision is not a joke," warns former Chief Election Commissioner Nilkantha Uprety, "The 120-day timeframe is set in stone in order to allow parties to prepare properly for polls."

The reason Deuba had been twiddling his thumbs is the same as it was back in January: he had yet to receive a green signal from Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal and other coalition partners.

Despite finally setting the date, the dread about facing voters has exposed the governing coalition's deep sense of insecurity about how Nepal's public perceives them — especially after the

DOG DAYS: Canines sun themselves on the dry pavement outside the main gate of Singha Darbar this week.

reinstatement this week of tainted Finance Minister Janardan Sharma (see Editorial, page 2). The surprise win of independent candidates in mayoral races in May was also a jolt.

Finance Minister Sharma's reinstatement is directly related to having someone close to Deuba and Dahal with access to state coffers in charge during campaigning.

One of the mysteries of Nepal's coalition politics is why Deuba is so beholden to Dahal when all indications are that the Nepali Congress (NC) may actually do quite well by itself in November.

"It is clear that the Prime Minister could not announce the election dates on time — even if he wanted to — unless Pushpa Kamal Dahal signed off on the decision," explains political analyst Purnanjan Acharya. "Deuba might be prime minister, but for all intents and purposes it is Dahal who is sitting on his chair."

Dahal has been trying to assuage Deuba by saying that he is happy for the Maoists to be the second biggest party after the NC.

The opposition UML has been trying to capitalise on these scandals, and took to the streets this week to stir up public support against corruption and inflation.

Dahal, meanwhile, had other reasons to want to hold off polls: the amendment to the 2014 Act on Commission on Investigation of Disappeared Persons, Truth and Reconciliation.

Conflict survivors, human rights lawyers, activists and civic groups are outraged that the amendment grants immunity to perpetrators of war crimes.

Dahal wants to have the amendment passed while his party and NC are in charge. Deuba was prime minister during the conflict years, and is also answerable to atrocities committed by state security.

MORALLY BANKRUPT
EDITORIAL
PAGE 2

Despite the vacillation, the coalition has been laying the groundwork for elections by passing an amendment to the 2006 Citizenship Act that still discriminates against women, but is meant to appease the Tarai vote bank.

Now that the dates are decided, coalition partners face the task of dividing up the tickets among themselves. Like in the local elections, it could again be acrimonious. 🇳🇵

WORLD'S BEST PIZZA OVEN

FOR BOOKING & INQUIRIES
+977 9848775343

18 YEARS

Outsource your Non-Core Staff through Suvidha Staffing

- licensed company by DoL, MoLESS
- 100% Labour Law Compliant

+977-9851247213
www.suvidhasewa.com.np

Suvidha Sewa

DHOKAIMA Cafe

Cakes worth the calories!
ORDER YOURS AT 5522113

eScan Anti-Virus

TOTAL PROTECTION
for Computers, Mobiles & Tablets

An ISO 27001 Certified Company

Contact no.: 01-4330980
www.escanav.com

LIGO JUICE

SalesBerry

THE X1

Sheer Driving Pleasure

Laxmi Premium Motors
(an entity of Laxmi Group)

Address
Tinkune, Kathmandu, Nepal

Email info@bmw-laxmi.com.np
Tel +977 1 4111776, 4111628

BMW



Morally bankrupt

When Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba teamed up with the Maoists to oust K P Oli last year, he justified it on grounds that his predecessor had acted unconstitutionally and flouted the rule of law.

But in the year that he has been prime minister (for the fifth time), Deuba has outdone Oli every step of the way, and actually made his predecessor smell like roses.

Latest proof is the reinstatement of Finance Minister Janardan Sharma on Sunday after a kangaroo Special Committee of Parliament cleared him of wrongdoing in allowing an unauthorised person access to the budget drafting process.

The committee said it found “no evidence” of the middleman with alleged links to a corporate crony of Deuba’s Nepali Congress — even though the relevant CCTV footage of the meeting with Minister Sharma appears to have mysteriously vanished.

Sharma was edged out last month after the *Annapurna Post* first reported the presence of a well-known corporate fixer at the budget meeting with Sharma the night before he presented it to Parliament in June.

That budget granted tax rebates and exemptions for a wide range of products designed to favour certain importers of electric vehicles, vegetable oil, and iron, while targeting rivals of those companies.

Sharma’s triumphant return to the finance ministry may have looked like a victory to him, but it was a defeat for the rule of law in Nepal, and underscored just how entrenched impunity has become.

Ever since his proximity to Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal earned him the finance minister’s post last year, Sharma has shown incompetence and deception — replacing experts at the ministry with his own yes-men, framing and sacking Rastra Bank governor Maha Prasad Adhikari when he tried to stop a \$35 million transfer flagged by US anti-money laundering regulators.

Investors would not have to disclose sources of money on big investments in industries, and there were other instances of cronies getting special treatment.

This sordid serial scandal is tied up

with coalition politics ahead of November elections — which the two top honchos Deuba and Dahal were scheming to postpone so as to buy time to lay a smokescreen on their many crimes and misdemeanours.

Dahal needs Deuba more than Deuba needs Dahal. But for some mysterious reason Deuba is besmirching his own Nepali Congress party by protecting and propping up Maoist leaders who are knee-deep in nepotism, corruption and unanswered war crimes.

In doing so, Deuba is treating popular leaders within his own party like Shekhar Koirala and Gagan Thapa as enemies — the very people who could ensure the Nepali Congress greater electoral success in November.

While all this may benefit those within and outside Nepal who want to see the

country’s Communist parties remaining divided, and especially prevent another electoral alliance between the Maoists and the opposition UML, Deuba now appears to be his party’s own worst enemy.

By absolving Janardan Sharma of all guilt, Deuba

and Dahal have exposed the unholy and unnatural alliance of left and right. With elections around the corner, it was imperative for both to have Sharma back at the finance ministry with his hands in the cash till.

By dry cleaning Sharma, Deuba and Dahal have also proven their connivance in all past wrongdoings at the finance ministry. They have also sent a loud and clear message to Nepalis — those in power can get away with murder and malfeasance.

This is just what we do not need if Nepal is to prevent its economy from going into free-fall like Sri Lanka. Last week, the IMF’s Nepal director told a conference in Kathmandu that the country’s macroeconomic position was still comfortable. However, she warned that monetary policy needed to be tighter and inflation reined in. To do that we need a finance minister who is competent and transparent, not someone who has been whitewashed out of political expediency.

The only way Nepalis can correct this is by delivering these superannuated politicians their own loud and clear message at the voting booth in November.



RABINDRA

Reinstatement of a tainted finance minister shows anything goes in Nepali politics

20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Climate Crisis and Parasites

Malaria eradication is one of the more successful public interventions in Nepal. But lately, there has been a re-emergence of several infectious diseases including malaria, dengue and encephalitis.

And these diseases are now found at higher altitudes and mountains because mosquitoes are living higher up due to the warmer temperatures.

To be sure, this phenomenon was already recorded in the early 2000s but the process is accelerating now – further proof that climate and public health are inextricably tied. Excerpts from a report published 20 years ago this week in issue #105 2-8 August 2002:



Forty years after a successful eradication campaign, malaria is fighting back. Both the mosquitoes and the parasites they carry are getting resistant to antidotes, and have returned to Nepal in an even more virulent form.

Malaria is combining forces with other mosquito-borne diseases like the deadly Japanese encephalitis, dengue fever, and kala azar in a compound epidemic across the Nepal Tarai. In addition, the effects of global warming could be

making it possible for malaria mosquitoes to move up the valleys to higher altitudes.

Officially, only 50 people die of malaria annually in Nepal and there are 10,000 reported cases, but the actual malaria incidents might be five to ten times more than officially recorded data.

The parasite is transmitted to humans through the bites of infected female anopheles mosquitoes. After spreading rapidly through the bloodstream to the liver, the parasite finally settles in the red blood cells, where it multiplies and bursts out in an explosion of baby parasites to damage the nervous system, liver, and kidney.

In young children and adults who have recently been infected, and have not therefore

developed natural immunity, this cycle can result in death within hours from cerebral malaria. Others die later of anaemia or liver and kidney failure. Untreated, up to one in five patients infected with the falciparum variety of malaria will die.

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

ONLINE PACKAGES



One of every three bites of food we take can be traced to bee pollination. It is not just the honey industry that depends on bees, but all our grain, vegetable and fruit production. But bees are disappearing around the world, including Nepal, due to disease and pesticides. Go online to watch the video of bees in action in Godavari. Read the stories about Nepal’s hallucinogenic wild honey and its hunters in Lamjung on *pages 6-7* and the story of Chepangs and their versatile *chiuri* tree on *pages 4-5*.

FIN MIN

Absolutely, anything goes ('Nepal minister's return shows anything goes', Editorial, *page 2*). Makes you wonder how many backs he scratched?

Stewie McLean

● 'The only way Nepalis can correct this is by delivering these superannuated politicians their own loud and clear message at the voting booth in November,' you say in your Editorial. Let's see what Nepalis do.

Avinash Prabhakar

● Unfortunately, people will vote for the same crooks. I hope I am wrong.

Raghu Shrestha

● They will squeeze as much out of people and their land while they can, and fill up Swiss Banks.

David Durkan

OIL EXPORT

It's a hopeless situation when traders collude with officials and directly undermine the national interest ('Nepal doesn't produce its 2 biggest export items', Ramesh Kumar, nepalitimes.com).

Avinash Sharma Ghimire

● There's only one thing Nepalis know how to make or produce, and it's truly synonymous and authentic to Nepal and Nepalis: Dalali of middlemen. We have minimum input, maximum gains, no research, no ingenuity, and no productivity.

SerChan Ro

● An important article that should be widely read.

Sam Cowan

● Main point: Nepali exporters who buy in dollars only to sell it in Indian rupees.

Dhirendra Kumar Shah

EVEREST TRAIL

So much love and respect to this man and his dedication ('The trail builder of Everest', Sarah Watson, nepalitimes.com)

Tamrakar Susmita

● Thanks to Pasang Lama and all Sherpas who maintain the trails for travellers. There is so much to learn from the people of the Himalaya.

Akku Chowdhury

● Lama Pasang and his wife have dedicated their lives to improving the trails in Khumbu above Namche.

Frances Klatzel

● Everyone who has been on a trek to Everest knows who Pasang is.

Nepal Trekking Information

● People like him build a country and sacrifice more than all the politicians put together. Politicians are forgotten almost as soon as you meet them, but Pasang Lama will live forever.

Paddy Singh

TIGER CONSERVATION

One of the things the Nepal government does get right, the protection of its tigers, and the world knows it ('Nepal's tiger conservation 'too successful?', Tufan Neupane, nepalitimes.com). Now, habitats need to be created so as to sustain the tiger population. Ultimately, I hope Nepal will be a wildlife haven which will also be a boon to the economy.

Alan Roadnight

● Great achievement, but what about the habitat management for this huge number of tigers?

Art DS

#CITIZENSHIP

● Obviously women are not ('Are women not Nepali enough?', Sahina Shrestha, #1122).

Shirley Blair

● Inappropriate and unacceptable. This bill must be changed to ensure equal rights.

Bishow Parajuli

● Great flow chart on the cover by Subin Mulmi. Arresting content.

Mark Turin

● Strong headline and the graph really made it powerful even though it is a short piece. Parbati's story also underscored the strength and role of Nepali women even though she is not in the category of women who are having to wage battles ('Life in a pickle', Sahina Shrestha, #1122).

Aunohita Mojumdar

Times.com

WHAT'S TRENDING



The Boy and the Boar

by Philip Holmes

In 2016, a 12-year-old Musahar boy was charged and gored by a wild boar. Read how the accident made this community at the margins start educating their children so that they would not be poaching in the forests. Go to nepalitimes.com

f Most reached and shared on Facebook



The geopolitics of Nepal's water and electricity

by Ramesh Kumar

In a few short years, Nepal will have surplus year-round electricity, and it will be better for the economy to use the power within Nepal to manufacture value-added products than to rely so heavily on selling power to India. An investigation into India's increasing investment in Nepal's hydropower aided by the Deuba government.

t Most popular on Twitter



Are women not Nepali enough?

by Sahina Shrestha

Last week, the Nepal Citizenship (First Amendment) Bill, 2022 was passed by the National Assembly. The Citizenship Act treats women as inferior to men, and views on citizenship are based on nationalist paranoia rather than evidence-based arguments. Join the online discussion.

66 Most commented

Life in a pickle

by Sahina Shrestha

Parbati has been preparing her brand of achar pickles for the past five years with her husband Bhesh Raj. What started as a last-ditch attempt at financial independence has grown into a booming business. Visit *Nepali Times* site for the full story.

7 Most visited online page

QUOTE TWEETS



Nepali Times @NepaliTimes

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. Are Women Not Nepali Enough? | @sahinashrestha



Damakant @damakant

The blatant injustice against Nepal's women continues. The same old, clueless, and patriarchal mindset rules. It tries a tweak here, and a twist there, and the Constitution/the laws get tied in knots but the result has been the same: women are not equal to men in Nepal. SHAME!



Nepali Times @NepaliTimes

In a few short years, #Nepal will have surplus year-round #electricity, and experts say it will be better for the #economy to use the power within Nepal to manufacture value-added products than to rely so heavily on selling power to #India.



Bijesh Mishra, Ph.D. @BijuBjs

#Nepal's electricity is clean hydroelectricity. When other countries were racing towards fossil energy, Nepal had electric transportation (rope way, electric trolley bus). But the global economy and lack of visionary leadership killed them. Now, Nepal must utilise its clean energy.

Times

Nepali Times on Facebook
Follow @nepalitimes on Twitter
Follow @nepalitimes on Instagram

Editor Online: **Sahina Shrestha** Executive Editor: **Sonia Awale** Layout: **Kiran Maharjan**

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





TURKISH AIRLINES

TIME TO MEET AGAIN: CLUJ

Have a healthy journey with all precautions taken down to the smallest detail for your in-flight safety.

01-4438363 | 01-4438436 | ktmsales@thy.com

ROMANIA

Chebang and their Chiuri

The accelerated destruction of native tree species has imperilled local traditions, culture and way of life

● **Bhadra Sharma**
in Makwanpur

The cultures of Indigenous peoples across the world have traditionally depended on native plants and animals. It is when these culturally significant species start disappearing that the ways of life of those communities are also threatened — as is happening with Nepal's semi-nomadic Chebang people.

The Chebang live along the Mahabharat sub-Himalayan belt, and their slash-and-burn lifestyle has always been inextricably linked to the versatile चिउरी Indian Butter Tree. But the accelerated destruction of the *chiuri* has imperilled Chebang traditions, culture and way of life.

Known by its scientific name *Diploknema butyracea*, the Indian Butter Tree is the source of food, fuel, pesticide, fertiliser, cosmetic lotions, and is even given as dowry.

Here in the rolling hills of Makwanpur district south of Kathmandu, Ramesh Praja remembers fondly the festive *chiuri* flowering season in winter, when the entire forest used to hum with bees to the blossoms.

Honey from hives of *chiuri* bees are especially delicious, and is said to have medicinal properties. Once they had the taste of *chiuri* honey, Praja remembers townspeople hiking up to Chebang villages to buy more.

By evening, it would be the bats that would fly in to sip the nectar, and pollinate the *chiuri* flowers. The Chebang also hunted the bats, and it is a tradition in winter for relatives to gather around in the village and feast on tasty barbecued bats, inviting honoured guests.

The trees fruit in spring, and it is another important food item

in the Chebang diet. The seeds are ground and turned into butter that used to be taken down to the market in Chitwan, where the Chebang bartered it for salt and clothing.

The hull from seeds are also used as organic pesticides and fertilisers on crops. Powered *chiuri* husk was also useful to sprinkle on water to drug fish and make them easier to catch.

The *chiuri* butter had antiseptic properties, and the Chebang rubbed it like a lotion on their chafed hands.

"We grew up with *chiuri* and in the company of bats," Praja recalls. "The trees are now disappearing, and the bats too are gone."

Ramesh Praja has given up his people's traditional forest life, and now runs a small shop by a new dirt road that has snaked up to the village. His family now cooks in oil bought at the market, and not anymore in *chiuri* butter.

There are many factors that are depleting the trees: the climate crisis has dried up perennial springs and lowered the water table, *chiuri* saplings do not take root in the forest as they used to, road construction and expansion of settlements have led to landslides that destroyed the trees that were

left. The Chebang themselves have felt that summers are unbearably hot even up in the mountains, and winters are milder. In the Chebang settlement of Silinge in Makwanpur, villagers say they now have never-before-seen mosquitos.

"Our village is almost as hot as Chitwan now," says Ramesh Praja.

There has been an effort to re-introduce beekeeping, and some Chebang families are in the honey business. But in the absence of the *chiuri* trees, the bees do not have the special *chiuri* flowers that gave the honey from here its special taste.

"If we could revive the *chiuri* forest, the honey would be like gold here," says Motiram Chebang of Silinge.

With the trees mostly gone, the Chebang of this area pack their hives into pickups and take them down to Chitwan or Hetauda to graze on flowers there. Besides the transport cost, they also have to pay a hefty rent per hive to let their bees out.

Ramesh Praja himself lost about 80 bee hives during the pandemic lockdown when he could not protect his hives that he had taken down to Chitwan from floods. He says, "I lost about Rs800,000. If there had been *chiuri* trees at home I would not have lost all those hives."



There was ample potential for the Chebang to promote homestay tourism, but with the trees gone the culture is not as vibrant and there is nothing to attract visitors.

Former ward chair of Raksirang of Makwanpur Singha Lal Chebang says his entire focus now is on protecting the *chiuri* that are left and to revive the former forests. He recalls that back in the Panchayat-era 50 years ago, the tree was registered as belonging to the Chebang, and people here even had certificates to prove their ownership.

Nepal's community forestry laws also protect the Chebang's right to the trees, but the *chiuri* is still disappearing from the forests of Makwanpur, Gorkha, Chitwan and Dhading, where about 50,000 Chebang people live.

The changing lifestyle of the Chebang has also damaged the *chiuri* stands. As villagers take to livestock rearing, their goats now

graze in the forest and eat up the undergrowth so there are no new trees to replace the old ones when they die.

"There used to be a time when each household could harvest up to 1,800kg of *chiuri* fruit and sell the butter in bulk," remembers Sancharaj Praja. "Now the trees are gone, there is no more demand for the butter, and people have stopped even picking the fruits anymore."

Some development organisations have tried to help revive the *chiuri* plant, tens of thousands of seedlings were planted to try to conserve Chebang culture, but the attempts have failed so far mainly because the goats have eaten them up.

The trees are not even given as dowry anymore. Says Motiram Chebang: "First off, there are no saplings to give away. But then the children also do not understand the value of their people's attachment to this tree anymore." 🇳🇵

prabhu BANK

Nepal Cardamom

Federation of Large Cardamom Entrepreneurs of Nepal (FLCEN) with the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Province 1 and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is launching the Wah! Alaichi campaign with chef Santosh Shah as the brand ambassador. The campaign aims to increase the use of Nepali large cardamom among domestic and commercial consumers. Globally Nepal is the largest producer of large cardamom and yet the import of the more expensive green cardamom is on an increasing trend.

Shop&Miles



Turkish Airlines has collaborated with new brands and renewed its online shopping store 'Shop&Miles'. Passengers can purchase coffee, a meal or use their miles for multiple products and gift cards. Says Ahmet Bolat, Chair of Turkish Airlines: "We have renewed our website both in terms of infrastructure and design in this the New Shop&Miles Experience.

We offer to our members Türkiye's most valuable brands in a way that provides opportunities and advantages in their daily lives."

Moru SCT

Moru digital wallet has launched a smart QR payment service with SCT for customers. All app users can scan the QR code and also access 15% or Rs300 in discount.



DishHome iTV

DishHome has launched an Internet protocol based television service in Nepal with the DishHome iTV service which will feature over 200 tv channels that can be accessed on desktops and mobiles.

Nabil Fellowship

Nabil Bank has started applications for the second cohort of their 2022 fellowship program under the Nabil School of Social Entrepreneurship. Candidates between 18-50 years can apply for the six-month program initiated by Tribhuvan University's School of Management with technical support from the School of Social Entrepreneurship in India.

USSEC Conference

The US Soybean Export Council (USSEC) Nepal this week held a conference on 'nutritional and health benefits of soy' emphasising its significance as a global crop. Soyabean is the largest oil seed crop and is rich in protein which helps strengthen bones and prevent osteoporosis. Soya oil is Nepal's biggest item of export.

Global FD scheme

Global IME has launched the Chakrabarti fixed deposit scheme where customers can get their deposits doubled, tripled and quadrupled in 7, 10.7 and 13.4 years respectively.

Casualty Vehicles

IME Motors has handed over 8 units of mass casualty vehicles to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority. The vehicles have 6-bed patient capacity and critical care facilities such as life



support devices, portable ventilators, patient monitors, syringe pumps, infusion pumps, defibrillators, oxygen concentrators, ECG machines, ultrasound machines, and other infectious disease control instruments.

Mangalam Biz Award

Mangalam Group's managing director Abhinav Churiwal has received the Corporate Business Excellence Award which honours the best in the business community for their significant contribution to industry.



Scooter for cops

IME Electric, the official dealer of Raft electric scooters in Nepal has handed over five of the battery-powered vehicles to the Lalitpur Metropolitan City this week for the use by the City Police.

Tata Guru

Tata Motors and Siprati recently organised a talent competition called Guru Conference for auto mechanics all over Nepal. Umesh Manandhar from Banepa, Ambar Gurung from Butwal and Dem Lama from Kathmandu came in first, second and third respectively. Meanwhile, Tata Motors saw a growth of 57% in its sales in India in July, having sold 47,505 units of cars. The Nexon compact SUV, Punch and Altroz are the best sellers in the domestic market, while Tata Tiago and Tigor also saw growth in sales.

Lumbini Cable Car

The Lumbini Cable Car from Rupandehi to Palpa will start its operation in January 2023. So far, a 400m access road, low station substructure, and eight towers have been completed for the cable car project.



PHOTOS: BHADRA SHARMA

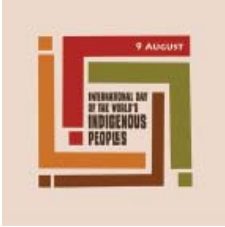
● Sonia Awale

Aryan Praja grew up hearing stories about the versatile *chiuri* tree that provided his Chepong community with food, honey, medicine, and was an intrinsic part of the culture. Paja's village of Raksirang north of the East-West Highway in the densely-forested mountains of Makwanpur district once used to be covered by the Indian Butter Tree. Today, not much is left of the *chiuri* and with it the

unique culture, cuisine and livelihood of the Chepong people. "Our parents and grandparents told us about the value of *chiuri* but we neglected it, and moved away from our culture. My generation knows little to nothing about the trees," says 26-year-old Praja, who then took it upon himself to save what was left of the all-purpose trees. Little did Praja realise what he was getting into. He tried to mobilise young Chepong like himself, and lobbied with the elders. But saving the tree was not a priority for a people marginalised and neglected by the state for so long that survival from day to day was a hurdle. Education, roads and migration were eroding the Chepong's semi-nomadic way of life. The climate crisis brought more intense floods, landslides and lightning, making the lives of villagers even more precarious. Aryan Praja and his young activist friends were ridiculed time and again by their peers for trying to save the trees when there are much more pressing concerns like finding jobs abroad or applying to colleges. Fortuitously, three years ago Praja attended a program on *chiuri* organised by the non-profit National Forum for Advocacy Nepal (NAFAN). Finally he came across like-minded people who understood the importance of saving the endangered tree and the culture it represented. Their activism won the group the moniker 'Chiuri Boys', and it has stuck. NAFAN works to improve food security among the upland Chepong and Tamang people across Central Nepal through sustainable community forestry, and is supported by the group Swallows of Finland. The Chiuri Boys are now registered as the Chepong Chiuri Youth Club and have

hundreds of members all over Makwanpur, actively engaging with young Chepong to revive the tree with plantations, door-to-door campaigning and training during its annual Chiuri conference. The group is working on a video, interviewing elders to document the many uses of the tree — as an antiseptic, the nutritional value of its butter, and its role in honey production and supporting the population of pollinating bats. The video also shows the tree's use as fuel, fertiliser and organic pesticide. NAFAN's Bhola Bhattarai remembers the first time he visited Raksirang five years ago, and being appalled by the depletion of the *chiuri*, and how it had changed the lives of the Chepong households for the worse. "Back then, I knew that if we are to garner positive response moving forward we need to take the ecology and economy side by side," recalls Bhattarai, explaining how reviving beekeeping was a way to bring the *chiuri* culture back. He lists the factors that led to the disappearance of *chiuri* trees: the Chepong's rights to *chiuri* was being challenged by the government's opposing forest ownership rules, the advent of modern lifestyles, especially in changing food habits (see page 4). The erosion of the cultural values of the Chepong, and the very association of *chiuri* with the community's impoverished status did not help matters. NAFAN is now working with the Nepal Chepong Association to change the government's policy of turning the former slash-and-burn range of the Chepong into

leasehold forests. They want the land to be formally handed over to the Chepong for protection and livelihood, and in the process bring back the *chiuri*. Also tied up with the importance of the *chiuri* tree is the revival of the Nwagi festival that has been in decline since so many Chepong have converted to Christianity. Restoring *chiuri* has also made locals realise the significance of traditional food items like *githa*, *bhyakur*, and *tarul* that are also a part of Chepong identity. There is a need to remove the association of those foods with poverty and 'backwardness'. The revival of Chepong culture, tradition, language and local products has gone hand-in-hand with initiatives to start homestays that will offer a unique experience to tourists and generate income. "Chiuri conservation has had a cascading impact here. The younger generation is now better-informed and identifies with our culture and tradition," says Kamana Praja, 22, a social mobiliser in Raksirang. "This has motivated us to conduct informal traditional classes where we have students ranging from 2-20 years," she adds. News about The Chiuri Boys of Raksirang has now spread to surrounding districts. Aryan Praja and his team are being invited to villages in Chitwan and Gorkha to launch similar activities to revive the Chepong ties with the land. Says Aryan Praja: "Some people still don't understand why we are prioritising *chiuri* and do not heed our request. Change takes time but every day we are gaining new believers, making our efforts worthwhile." 🇳🇵



BHAISEPATI THAKALI



Best Thakali Cuisine in Town

Make your reservation and enjoy with our Thakali delights.

REMEMBER US FOR



Call us at +977-01-5591284/ 9828021133

BHAISEPATITHAKALI
 www.bhaisepatithakali.com

BIRTHDAY CORPORATE EVENTS ANNIVERSARY
 CATERING FAMILY DINNER

TO BEE OR NOT TO BEE



A rise in demand for wild honey internationally has led to a steep decline in Himalayan giant honeybees

● Nabin Baral
in Lamjung

Ganga Bahadur Gurung is chanting prayers to the Water God, Earth God, Fire God, Wind God and Snake God for their blessings with the day's risky honey hunt.

Members of his group are about to climb down the 50m Kamcho cliff on a swaying handmade rope ladder to prise honeycombs, as the world's largest bees swarm all around.

"Wild honey bees make hives only on safe cliffs where the gods reside," explains Gurung, as he waves incense sticks at the sky. The Himalayan giant honeybee (*Apis laboriosa*) can be up to 3cm long, build large hives on south-facing cliffs, and forage up to 4,100m in upland meadows.

Harvesting wild honey is an ancient tradition among Nepal's Indigenous people who venture up twice a year in autumn and spring. The activity is deeply woven into their cultures.

Gurung is the leader of the 15-strong honey hunting group from Naiche, a village in Gandaki Province on the lap of Mt Himalchuli and near canyons created by the Ngadi River.

Ganga comes to the end of his puja, and the 48-year-old begs the bees for forgiveness for destroying their nests, and asks the gods to keep his companions safe.

With this, Ganga Gurung accompanies Bicche Man Gurung and Prabin Gurung, clambering down the Kamcho cliff to reach the nests, while the team below lights a smoky fire to drive the bees away.

Despite Gurung's prayers, the hunt is unsuccessful. Most of the honeycombs lowered down in the bucket are dry. In the past villagers here used to harvest up to 15 litres of honey from big hives on this cliff. Today, there is just a trickle.

This is the third time in the past 10 years that the group has had such a poor collection. At the end of the hunt, Gurung thanks the bees and blesses the colony so that they may flourish and spread to create 100 new colonies by next year.

Gurung says: "Nature is our god, we have to respect and harvest carefully as our ancestors did so that the bees can keep producing honey for centuries more."

Ratna Thapa, a senior bee scientist at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, estimates that there is a 70% decline in the Himalayan cliff honey bee population every year.

Surendra Raj Joshi, a livelihoods specialist at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) has a similar finding. He says, "The data

from Kaski and Lamjung districts suggest that there is a decrease both in the number of colonies per cliff and the total number of cliffs nested by bees."

Thapa and Joshi attribute this rapid decline to a range of factors: pesticide use, loss of habitat and food sources for bees, infrastructure development (*see box*), and attacks by pests and predators.

Another important driver they identify is destructive and unsustainable honey hunting practices driven by international demand for its psychotropic

properties (*see sidebar*).

Twenty years ago, the honey harvested by the villagers of Naiche sold for around Rs500 per litre. Today, it can fetch up to Rs2,500, but the price is much higher in Kathmandu and higher still in the international market.

Gurung says: "Two decades ago, the wax used to be more valuable than honey, so we used to harvest it after the bees had left the hive."

At that time, the wax was used for candles and the honey was turned into local alcohol or was mixed with tobacco, and there was

little demand for the actual honey itself.

Here in Lamjung, indigenous methods of wild honey collection were sustainable and were a part of the native culture. But with commercialisation, over-extraction is leading to a decline in bees and hives. Nevertheless, Arjun Gurung is chair of Marsyangdi Rural Municipality where Naiche is located, and refutes claims that wild bees are in decline: "We practice honey hunting in the traditional way, we do not want to disturb the local culture and

practices. We have not seen a decline in cliff honeycombs."

ICIMOD's Surendra Raj Joshi recommends a range of measures to make wild honey collection more sustainable: harvesting only a portion of the comb, raising awareness of the importance of forests and nesting sites, giving honey hunters ownership and management responsibilities of cliffs to incentivise their protection, and generating eco-tourism income from bee-watching. 🇳🇵

*This article was first published in
www.thethirdpole.net*



Wild honey harvests have declined in recent years due to over-collection, pesticides and habitat loss. Normally this honeycomb would be dripping with honey.



The 100m bamboo ladder for the honey hunt is carried to the top of Kamcho cliff, about an hour's walk from Naiche village.



ALL PHOTOS: NABIN BARAL / THE THIRD POLE



Dam the Bees

Over-harvesting is not the only threat to the Himalayan giant honeybee. Across the Nepal Himalaya, the use of dynamite to build highways and dams are disturbing the fragile mountain ecosystem.

There are five hydropower projects in operation or under construction along the Nyadi and its tributaries. Most cliff hives are located near rivers since the bees need water and minerals, but the dams have disturbed these water sources.

One of the main wild honeycomb sites near Naiche village is on a cliff face downstream of the 30MW Nyadi Khola hydropower project, work on which started in 2017. Wild honey harvester Ganga Gurung recalls that there used to be 22 nests on cliffs near the project site. Fewer than half remain. After the project is completed, water from the river will be diverted through a tunnel to generate electricity.

“When the river has no more water, wild bees find the location unsuitable for making hives,” says Gurung.

▲ An access road and tunnel being built for the 30MW Nyadi Khola hydropower project. There used to be a Himalayan giant honeybee nest on the cliff above the road before construction work began. The bees no longer nest there.

▲ Himalayan giant honey bee hives are tucked under an overhang in the Ngadi River gorge in central Nepal. Honey hunters dangle on flimsy rope ladders to prise the honeycombs into buckets which are then lowered to the base of the cliff. The smoke is meant to confuse the bees.



▲ Nepal's national flower, the rhododendron, contains a hallucinogenic compound called grayanotoxin which is carried by the bees to their honeycombs. The honey can have dangerous psychotropic effects on users. The demand means Naiche villagers can sell wild honey to middlemen for five times more than 20 years ago.

Mad Honey

Sanjay Kafle is chief executive and founder of Best Mad Honey, a Nepali company that exports 4 tonnes of cliff honey a year to countries around the world, and business is growing.

The rise in demand is driven by enthusiasm for its psychotropic effects. Known as 'mad honey', in small amounts it can cause lightheadedness and euphoria, and hallucination in larger doses.

It is believed to have medicinal properties, such as reducing cholesterol and helping against arthritis, but it can also be highly toxic, as an increasing number of people in Kathmandu are being hospitalised after taking it — especially in combination with alcohol.

“People have realised the medicinal value of this honey, and scientists may have proven it, that is why the price of wild honey has gone up,” explains Ganga Gurung, a harvester in Lamjung.

A 250 gram bottle of Himalayan cliff bee ‘mad honey’ sells for up to \$135 on Amazon.

But bee expert Ratna Thapa says there is no scientific evidence to prove that wild honey has medicinal value. He warns, “Instead, what I can say is that it has a chemical called grayanotoxin

that affects our nervous system.”

Grayanotoxin is found in the nectar of the rhododendron flower, of which Himalayan giant honeybees are major pollinators. Wild honey bees forage on flowers up to 4,100m altitude where there are no other bees, and many Himalayan flowering plants depend on them for pollination.

“The value of the honey collected from these bees is nothing in comparison to the ecosystem services that they provide to us in high-altitude biodiversity conservation,” says Thapa. “If Himalayan cliff honey bees go, all species of the rhododendron will likely follow.”



▲ The Himalayan giant honeybee builds hives in overhangs of cliffs up to 3,500m. They are the world's largest bees and adults can be up to 3cm long.

CHASING HONEY HUNTERS

The death-defying exploits of Nepal's cliff honey collectors was first made internationally famous by Éric Valli's 1988 book and video, *Honey Hunters of Nepal*, in which the French photographer and documentary film-maker depicted the villages in Lamjung.

In recent years, there have been many more international film-makers venturing to other parts of Nepal including Dolakha and Sankhuwasabha to hunt for honey hunters as the practice dwindles.

EVENTS



Bird Watching

To all the bird watchers and enthusiasts, Bird Conservation Nepal's upcoming bird watching is going to be held in Sankhu. 7am, 6 August, Tea Shop near Sali Nadi Temple, way to Nagarkot, 9801024777/9841330576

Whose land is it anyway?
What is the politics of the right to land – access, tenure, ownership – in Kathmandu? The session 'Private Lands, Public Aspirations' is open to only 25 participants. Visit Nepal Picture Library's Instagram to sign up for participation. 7 August, 9.45am-4pm, Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka

Mural of Chakrasamvara
An invitation of the residence of Satyamohan Joshi to observe the progress in painting the mural of Chakrasamvara. The program will begin with a classical musical performance by Dhrupad Gurukul and end with a Newa lunch. 12-2pm, 5 August, Bakhu Bahal, Lalitpur

Hiunko Prithvi Yatra
Head over to Shilpee Theater and watch the drama Hiunko Prithvi Yatra written and directed by Amjad Prawej and Ghimire Yubaraj which brings the climate crisis to the fore. 5-6 August, 5.30pm onwards



Labim Bazaar
Shop local at the Saturday Labim Bazaar. Buy baked goods, meals, handicrafts and clothes from over 80 vendors. 6 August, 10am-8pm, 9861119954

DINING



Dokdo Sarang

For Teok-bokki, Gimnap, Bibimbap and even the full set of Korean dishes, head to Dokdo Sarang now. Kupondole Heights, 9803472187

MUSIC



Jazz Fundraising

Love Jazz? Check out international blues artists Ashesh Dangol and Raj Man Maharjan on Dhimey and Tabala and help raise funds for Sneha's Care. 6 August, 10am-11.30am, Utpala Café

The Elements

Hang out with friends to the beats of the Elements performing live this Friday. 5 August, 8pm onwards, Club Fahrenheit

Dying World
Enjoy a great assembly of artists including Screaming Marionette, Krur and The Mid-Life Drill at Beers N'Cheers. 6 August, 2pm onwards, Rs500



Music Classes
Sign up to learn Bansuri, Madal, Tabla and Western interments like Piano, Guitar, Drum, Bass, Saxophone and Violin at Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory. Call for more details. (01)5443554, 9813556945

Rachana Dahal
Singer Rachana Dahal will be performing at the monsoon music festival with an opening act from The Adapters. 9 September, 7pm onwards, Dhokaima Café, Patan



Momotarou

Enjoy a hearty Japanese meal. Don't miss out on the soft tofu, pork cutlets, don varieties and the mouthwatering bento box. Sanepa Chowk, Lalitpur (01) 5537385

Pawan Sweets
Have a sweet tooth or just craving some delicacy? Pawan sweets has amazing dosas, naan, juju dhau and sweets! Baneshwor, Kathmandu, 9813538897

GETAWAY



Lake View Resort

The resort's private huts, featuring hand-crafted wooden furniture, a local stone exterior and a private veranda all point to a great weekend escape for anyone in need. Lake Side, Pokhara (061) 461477/463854

Bandipur Safari Lodge
Go beyond the temples and explore the jungles of the town with a stay at Bandipur Safari Lodge. Be one with nature. Bandipur, 9449597880, 08229-233001

Mystic Mountain
Situated amidst the forest of Nagarkot, the resort is exquisitely built with ultra-modern designs providing world-class comfort. Nagarkot, (01) 6200646

Hotel Heritage Bhaktapur
A Newa-style boutique hotel that incorporates the rich art and architecture of the ancient city of Bhaktapur. This hotel is a beautiful testament to culture. Suryabinayak, Bhaktapur, (01) 6611628



Jagatpur Lodge
Jagatpur Lodge's private tents will take one to the heart of the grassland in the comfort of luxury amenities. Jagatpur, Chitwan (01) 4221711

Honacha

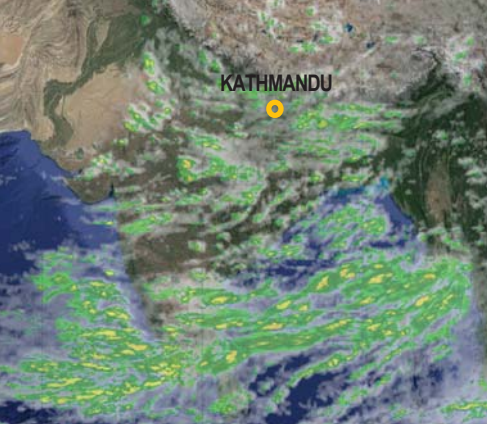
Originally set up in 1934 to feed hungry farmers, this family-owned restaurant now welcomes anyone hankering for spicy Newa food. Enjoy the welcoming spirit and warm dishes. Mangal Bazar, Patan



Chery's

Delicious New York style pizza with a myriad of toppings is now available at Chery's. Dine it or get it delivered. Kupondole, 9803666189

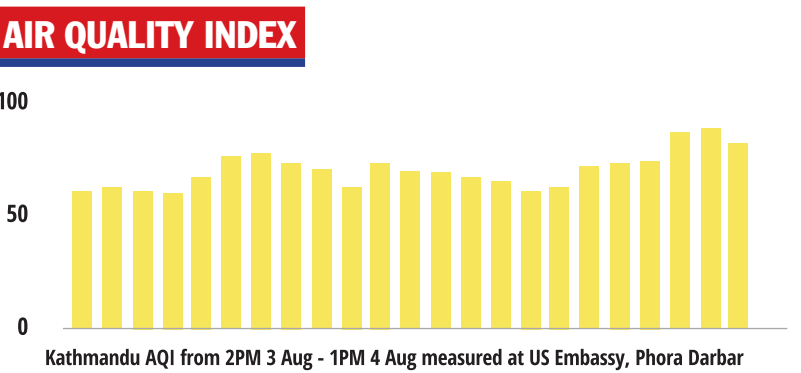
WEEKEND WEATHER



Another Monsoon Breather


The monsoon has been very active this past week, with parts of central and eastern Nepal receiving up to 300mm overnight, and in some places there have been cloudbursts of over 100mm in 4 hours. We have been lucky that there has only been one major flood so far with the Kosi changing course in Udaypur. We will see another respite this weekend, even though some heavy localised outbreaks are possible, especially in the mountains and mainly in the evenings and night.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
28° 20°	28° 20°	28° 20°



We can expect the Air Quality Index (AQI) in Kathmandu to deteriorate slightly this week as there could be fewer showers. AQI will likely peak in the morning and evening rush hours, will be worse along the eastern edges of Kathmandu Valley and along major intersections. Ironically, the high price of fuel has brought down traffic slightly, which could be contributing to slightly lower AQI levels. For hourly AQI measurements, go to www.nepalitimes.com

OUR PICK



Hong Kong, 1962: Chow Mo-wan and Su Li-zhen move into neighbouring apartments on the same day. Their encounters are formal and polite — until they discover that their spouses are cheating on them with each other. Slowly the desire to know what happened and how, an intimate bond develops between them. A delicate, delicious film, *In the Mood for Love* is a lingering portrait of fleeting moments that evoke visceral longing, both romantic and visual. Its aching soundtrack and abstract cinematography has been a major stylistic influence on the past decade of cinema, and is a milestone in auteur Wong Kar Wai's redoubtable career. Stars Maggie Cheung Man-yuk and Tony Leung Chiu-wai.

उत्पादन बढाऔं र औद्योगिकरणमा सहयोग गरौं


➤ देखासिकी नगरौं, आफ्नो आर्थिक क्षमताको पहिचान गरौं ।

➤ आर्थिक मितव्ययी बनौं; फजुल खर्च नगरौं ।


➤ बचत गरी बैंक तथा वित्तिय संस्थामा रकम जम्मा गरौं ।

➤ स्थानीय स्रोतको परिचालन गरी उत्पादनमा लगानी गरौं ।

➤ आर्थिक रुपमा सक्षम बनौं, राष्ट्रिय पुँजी निर्माणमा योगदान गरौं ।



**नेपाल सरकार
विज्ञापन बोर्ड**



#SERIOUSABOUTBEER

**THE VERY BEST OF GERMAN
BEERGINEERING.**



Drink responsibly

Nepal activists protest Burma executions

Nepali rights activists this week took to the streets of Kathmandu against the execution of Phyo Zeya Thaw, Kyaw Min Yu (Ko Jimmy), Hla Myo Aung, and Aung Thura Zaw by the Burmese military junta. The four democracy activists were accused of committing ‘terror acts’ and were sentenced to death in a closed-door trial.

In Nepal, National Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice (Human Rights Alliance) has strongly condemned the Burma Junta Military Government’s brutal torture of freedom fighters and their fight to restore liberties, and



SUMAN NEPALI

democracy. “This heinous activity of the military government has severely violated the fundamental values and principles of democracy in the country,” reads the statement by Human Rights Alliance.

Burma is a member state of the United Nations and as such must respect and honour the fundamental democratic values and norms, international humanitarian law, and human rights principles, say right activists. “We strongly demand that any type of torture, kidnapping, restriction on assembly and rally, intimidation, and cruel punishment must be immediately stopped ensuring the restoration

of democratic rights, and handing it over to the people of Myanmar,” states the Human Rights Alliance in the letter signed by the chair Min Bahadur Shahi who was formerly a member of the National Planning Commission.

It has further urged the international community and regional organisations including ASEAN, BIMSTEC and SAARC to take immediate action to protect and promote the democratic movement and pro-democratic activists.

Burma has been seeing violent crackdown on pro-democracy supporters following the military

coup d’état on 1 February 2021. Since then, over 2,000 people have been killed and nearly 15,000 have been arrested.

The Human Rights Alliance statement concludes: “We demand that the Junta military must be isolated and cut down from the global cooperation and partnership to restore and support the democratic movement, and campaigns in Myanmar.”

Last week, the Human Rights Organisation of Nepal (HURON) also held a rally in Kathmandu condemning the execution. Nepal’s rights groups have also been protesting impunity in Nepal itself, and a draft bill in Parliament that would allow immunity from prosecution of those accused of heinous crimes during the 1996-2006 Maoist conflict in Nepal. 🇳🇵

TATA MOTORS
Connecting Aspirations

ALL-NEW H5

POWER OF 170 PS & FUN OF AUTOMATIC

PANORAMIC SUNROOF

6 SPEED AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION

ESP TERRAIN RESPONSE MODES

BASED ON LAND ROVER'S LEGENDARY D8 PLATFORM

SIPRADI TRADING PVT. LTD., An ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 45001:2018 Certified Company
Thapathali +977 9802000757



SIPRADI

Designed for low water pressure.

The world-class locking mechanism of our Bathsense diverter gives you a strong water flow even at the top floor.

BEST-IN-CLASS DIVERTERS

HIGH-FLOW SYSTEM

Engineered to Delight.

For a free home visit, SMS 'BATH' to 36677 Find us on bathsense.asianpaintsnp

bathsense
by asianpaints

12 YEARS WARRANTY

Statues of the *deva* tugging on the great Vasuki *naga* on a bridge outside the Southern Gate in Angkor. Parallel to them on the other side would be the *daitya*.



ASHISH DHAKAL

● Ashish Dhakal
in Siem Reap

The National Museum of Cambodia in Phnom Penh is a vast complex. The red buildings with oblique roofs curve upwards at the edges like *naga* with a flourish, and the tall finials that decorate these roofs rise like elegant peaks.

Constructed between 1917 and 1924, the museum was officially inaugurated in 1920, and reopened after renovation in 1979 with the fall of the Khmer Rouge.

Inside, a giant Garuda welcomes visitors, and on either side the hall stretches out into two wings. One is the Hall of Thousand Buddhas: a four-cornered room set up like a shrine. Not quite thousand in number, but stunning nonetheless, the statues are arranged to evoke a serene and meditative atmosphere.

Three young Cambodian women walk to the table in the middle. There is a bowl with water and floating frangipani on it and on the table's either side sit kneeling statues. The women pick some more flowers from their bags, and set it next to the bowl, clasp their hands, and bow in prayer.

Then they move to an inner courtyard in the centre of which stands Yama, the Hindu god of the underworld. Under a pavilion, he sits with one raised knee and a smile on his face, and the group lights incense before him, placing a white lotus in his lap, folding hands in prayer.

Museums, as houses of *objets d'art*, often take on an inert air where visitors are welcome to interact with what they see, but from a distance. American arts crime professor Erin Thompson thinks most are modelled to accommodate tourists more than local people.

But that is not the case at the National Museum of Cambodia. Here, the building could very well be a monastery or a large shrine, where figures of the Buddha co-exist with Hindu iconographies, much like in the three cities of the Kathmandu valley.

“We want our museum space to be welcoming to the tourist visitors as much as to the locals,” says Chhay Visoth, the museum director. However, this is a slightly different expression of one’s belief which does not correspond directly to one’s religion.

For example Cambodia is predominantly Buddhist (97%), and the figures of Vishnu, Shiva, Skanda, Durga, Yama or even Bhim and Duryodhan are not so much physical manifestations of Hindu gods, but rather a link that connects Cambodia and its people to its past, and provides guidance — rather an anchor.

This is linked to the Khmer emphasis on ancestral and spirit worship, and perhaps intensified by the memories of Khmer Rouge, the reign of terror between 1975-1979 during which nearly 2 million Cambodians were systemically slaughtered — nearly one-fourth of Cambodia’s population then.

“In our local faith and belief,



The imposing Angkor Wat viewed from the front.

ASHISH DHAKAL

even music, we want to keep the spirits around us happy and help us,” adds Visoth. “When we look at the Hindu statues, we see our own ancestors who made them. So even though we may not be Hindu ourselves and may not recognise the iconography, the gods and goddesses have spiritual meaning for us, keeping us in

touch with our forebears.”

Hinduism made its way across the Bay of Bengal to what is now Indonesia and moved north to present-day Cambodia and Thailand some time in 1st century CE (*see map*). That was during the beginning of the Kingdom of Funan, the name given by ancient Chinese cartographers and writers to the

Indianised states of Southeast Asia.

Hinduism was the official religion of the Khmer Empire (9th-15th century) which saw the construction of over a thousand religious buildings of varied sizes in its capital Angkor, including the famous Angkor Wat.

The Khmers saw these temples as quite literally the home of gods

अब
मासिक हिमाल
१ साउनदेखि बजारमा



हिमालमिडिया प्रा. लि.
पाटनढोका, ललितपुर

Cambodia's past

Like Kathmandu, Angkor Wat and other shrines represent a faith moulded by a millennia of cultural history



The Hall of Thousand Buddhas at the National Museum of Cambodia in Phnom Penh.

ERIN L. THOMPSON



The red sandstone walls of the 10th century Banteay Srei accentuate its intricate carvings. Consecrated in April 967, it was the only temple in Angkor not built by a monarch.

ERIN L. THOMPSON

rather than merely a meeting place for the faithful, built to represent the towering Mount Meru where Hindu gods are believed to reside. Each Khmer king's legacy was set to stone, delicately carved and moulded like clay. The bas-reliefs depicted scenes from the myths, or Angkor daily life. At night, the temples closed to allow the deities

some restful sleep. Much of the glory and might of the Khmer Empire today lies in ruins, owing to time and looters. Large blocks of sandstone and laterite punctuate the otherwise green landscape with shades of grey and red. Many *deva* and *daitya* holding the great Vasuki *naga* on the bridges have their heads hacked

off, and most of them are in foreign collections. When the French 're-discovered' Angkor in the 19th century, it was already overtaken by the forest, with large constrictor-like Tetrameles rising from the cracks in the stones, their roots running along galleries and adding decorations to the doors. But Angkor was not

Temple Run

Expansion of Hinduism from the Indian subcontinent into the Indochinese peninsula by way of present-day Malaysia and Indonesia. The white lines represent modern boundaries.



'abandoned' as ancient sites and ruins are often portrayed.

Although the Hindu faith and practices declined around the 13th Century in Cambodia to be replaced by Theravada Buddhism as the dominant religion, locals had a long-standing spiritual relationship with the temple complex, and continue today.

Pilgrims burrow into stone tunnels laced with moss to pray to the gods, as well as to ancient kings and queens. And they throng to the sparsely populated region of Koh Ker, 120km away, which was briefly the capital of the Khmer Empire in 928-944 AD.

Among the over 180 sanctuaries there, many dedicated to Shiva (Lingapura or Chok Gargyar, as it was known in the past), perhaps none is as imposing as Prasat Prang, a 36m high seven-tiered stone pyramid built by King Jayavarman IV.

As the original stairs are in bad condition, a new wooden one has been constructed which takes the visitor all the way to the top. It is a long, hard walk, especially in the humid weather.

Originally the pyramid had a 4m tall Shiva linga at the top but is now lined with blocks of stones and a wooden fence surrounding the shaft at the centre. Even then, all the way up here and almost touching the sky, devotees light candles and incense, leave food and flowers to the spirits — perhaps even to Jayavarman IV, who would have come up here, prayed and then looked out to the horizon and his vast empire.

Back in Angkor Wat, the 5m tall statue of eight-armed Vishnu clad in golden robes stands at the western entrance. Devotees kneel before him holding incense and circling the figure, chanting prayers. On his left is a headless statue of Laxmi, similarly garbed in sapphire. Open cans of Coca Cola also sit on the altars as offerings.

"We pray to the god wishing for prosperity, and for goodness," says Noah who has come with his family to visit the shrine. "It doesn't matter whether we pray to the Hindu or a Buddhist god, because when we pray, we feel at peace with ourselves and those around us." 🇰🇲

TATA MOTORS
Connecting Aspirations

EVOLVE TO ELECTRIC

PRESENTING THE NEW **TIGOR EV**

POWERED BY

ZIPTRON
Advanced Electric Drive Experience

Price starts at NRs. 29,99,000/-

GLOBAL NCAP
★★★★ 4 STAR RATING





SalesBerry
DEPARTMENT STORE

OFFER VALID FROM 14TH TO 28TH SHRAWAN, 2079

HOME APPLIANCES & HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

SALE 10%-30%

BHANSAGHAR PREMIUM LONG GRAIN RICE 20KG was Rs. 2850 SAVE Rs. 100 Now Rs. 2750	AARATI PREMIUM RICE 20KG was Rs. 2970 SAVE Rs. 70 Now Rs. 2900	PEARL JEERA MASINO RICE 25KG was Rs. 1850 SAVE Rs. 50 Now Rs. 1800	NEWARI POKHARELI JEERA MASINO RICE 25KG was Rs. 1800 SAVE Rs. 40 Now Rs. 1760
AMRIT REFINED SUNFLOWER OIL 1LTR was Rs. 300 SAVE Rs. 15 Now Rs. 285	DHARA HEALTH SUNFLOWER OIL 1LTR PKT was Rs. 370 SAVE Rs. 20 Now Rs. 350	SUNFLOW SUNFLOWER OIL 1LTR was Rs. 325 SAVE Rs. 10 Now Rs. 315	SAFFOLA GOLD OIL 5LTR JAR was Rs. 2350 SAVE Rs. 250 Now Rs. 2100

Off-road signs

We in Nepal have to periodically remind motorists of traffic rules, and any revisions that have been made in regulations when they were not paying attention.

For example, a right signal used to mean that the tipper truck ahead on the highway was turning right. But suddenly, without warning, that rule was changed and a blinking yellow light now actually means you can safely overtake that truck.

Similarly, motorcycles are now allowed to drive on the right side of the centreline (which used to be the wrong side) and the left lane is reserved for sidewalk hawkers, and to park bricks, cement, steel rods.

In case you had not noticed, driving in rural Nepal is not for the fainthearted. So, to assist drivers, here are some new road signs and their explanations:

एभरेष्ट बैंक लि.
डिबेन्चर २०८५

निष्काशन तथा बिक्रि २०७८
आवण १८ गते बाट खुल्ला !

Apply online via:
MER SHARE

कुल निष्काशन
२ अर्ब

अवधि
६ वर्ष

प्रति कित्ता डिबेन्चर
रु. १०००/-

वार्षिक ब्याजदर
१०.५०%

त्रैमासिक ब्याज भुक्तानी

एभरेष्ट बैंक
EVEREST BANK

दिगो, दरिलो र विश्वासिलो