



Chanda Chaudhary
Loktantrik Samajwadi Party



Anjana Bishankhe
Maoist Centre



Jayanti Devi Rai
Unified Socialists

WHERE ARE WOMEN?

• Shristi Karki

As provincial and federal elections near, and with the presence of women in local government less than optimal, Nepal's female politicians have come together across party lines to demand better representation.

In municipal elections in May, there were fewer mayors and deputy mayors due to the coalition alliance.

"The statistics might show an increase in elected female local representatives, but it is disheartening that not enough women have been elected to top decision-making positions," says National Assembly member Parvati Rawal Thapa of the UML.

Other women politicians agree that their parties should give more election tickets under the direct First Past the Post mechanism rather than the Proportional Representation system with a women's quota in the polls on 20 November.

The first Nepali federal election for the 275-member Parliament in 2017 saw only six female leaders directly elected to the House of Representatives, and 84 women elected through the Proportional Representation system. This was reflected in provincial elections as well.

Nepal's political leadership tends to overlook female leaders when fielding candidates for direct elections, primarily because of a belief that they are unable

to raise campaign financing from corporate donors, unlike powerful male politicians, many of whom are in the pockets of Nepal's wealthiest businessmen.

Many women are therefore elected to office under the Proportional Representation system, which has led to them being discriminated against in Parliament by powerful directly-elected male leaders. This directly affects planning and budgeting for the communities that proportionally elected women are supposed to stand up for in the legislature.

"We sit alongside each other, we were elected to do the same job," says MP Chanda Chaudhary of the Loktantrik Samajwadi Party about directly elected lawmakers, "but we have been given second-class status because we did not directly contest the elections as they did."

Female lawmakers say that women are ready and willing to contest direct First Past the Post elections, adding that they are pressuring the mainly-male leadership of their parties to ensure better representation of women in forthcoming elections.

"Our electoral system is flawed and costly," says National Assembly member Jayanti Devi Rai of the CPN (Unified Socialists). "We need to look at financing protocols so that everyone representing their community can stand for election regardless of their financial status."



Parvati Rawal Thapa
CPN-UML



Mahalaxmi Upadhyay
Nepali Congress



Binda Pandey
CPN-UML

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The power of her-story PAGE 4-5

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Affirmative inaction

Nepali Congress Joint General Secretary Mahalaxmi Upadhyay recalls how she missed a call from a journalist because she was attending an event.

When she called back later, the reporter replied, "I couldn't reach the party vice-president, so I called you."

Another time, Upadhyay was meeting the press with other women in leadership. One editor said he always listened to women: he called up a politician's wife for inside information.

Chanda Chaudhary, an MP from the Loktantrik Samajwadi Party, recalls a well-regarded tv anchor telling her without a hint of regret that there were no women politicians worth inviting to his talk show.

Binda Pandey of the UML sees Nepali politics as a revolving door of ageing politicians — mostly male, and some female who behave like men — who are always given office as if there were no one else in the party who deserved it.

Nepal's women politicians have had enough. They feel so strongly about being excluded that they have banded together across party lines to share these experiences with the media. They have been galvanised into action by their parties once more trying to short-circuit affirmative action policies in the Constitution allowing greater women's representation in provincial and federal elections on 20 November.

Women politicians are on the list, but they are not given tickets to stand for direct elections and are confined to proportional representation registers.

In the 2017 elections, 41% of locally elected representatives were female, whereas there was 34% women's representation in provincial elections. At the federal level, the Upper House has 37% female representatives, while 33.1% of MPs in the House of Representatives are women.

Nepalis like to tout positive statistics, and the fact that we have a female president and once had a female Speaker and Chief Justice finds its way into every discourse about gender equality. While these numbers are encouraging, the ground reality of Nepali women politicians is starkly different.

After the May local elections, only 69 out of 753 municipalities and metropolitan cities are led by female chiefs, with most women getting tickets for deputy chief positions because Nepal's Local Government Act requires at least one female candidate between the chief and deputy chief.

Out of the 91 women in Parliament (exactly 33% as per the Constitutional requirement) only seven were directly elected, and the rest through the proportional representation system.

Getting elected is half the battle. Even in office, women are not given decision-making executive roles. Female leaders recount how those nominated through proportional representation are seen by male counterparts as less deserving.

This means women in political leadership, just like many Nepali women at home or in the workplace, are expected to be grateful that they were even allowed to enter the Parliament premises.

Elected women face gendered condescension on a daily basis. They are second choices when it comes to interviews, opinions and media representation. Male leaders are addressed simply by their full names,

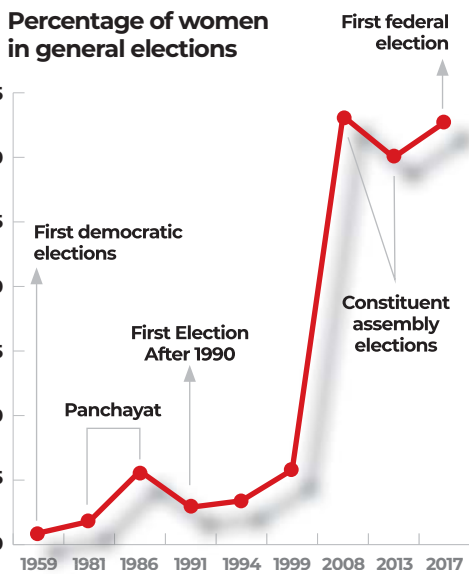
or by adding 'जी' at the end of their names, while female politicians get addressed as 'दिदी' or 'बहिनौ'.

All this has forced many women aspiring to political leadership to speak and behave like their male counterparts, often at the expense of their femininity and identity.

Maoist Centre MP Anjana Bishankhe is fed up with women trying to make it to the top presenting themselves in a masculine way just to be considered seriously for leadership roles. "Why do I need to change to conform to the patriarchy?" she asks.

Women leaders are actively campaigning to compete directly in the November election with 50% seats. But they are up against a formidable party patriarchy. While voters need to be informed about capable female leaders, parties need to nominate them first. After that it will be up to the Nepali people to vote more women to office come November.

Shristi Karki



Party patriarchy sidelines women aspirants to office, and gives bare minimum representation.

20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Free and Unfair

Two decades ago, Nepalis were also worried about whether or not wartime elections would be held on schedule and if it was to be fair. Top bureaucrats of the home and defence ministries were issuing conflicting statements, it looked like the choice was between having a flawed election or none at all.

Fast forward to 2022. Nepal is gearing up for general and provincial elections. While the political parties are busy forming alliances and the government busy amending laws to illegally extend the terms of the House of Representatives and provincial assemblies until the first meetings of the elected representatives after the 20 November polls, women lawmakers have voiced concern that fewer females are getting tickets for direct elections.

Excerpts from Puskar Bhusal's piece from issue #110, 6-12 September 2002.

Will the elections be held on schedule? It sounds like politicians, journalists and civil libertarians are the ones asking that question the most. We have good reason. Our jobs will be on the line first if democracy was to disappear



Poll vault

It's hard defending democracy when those who want polls aren't nearly as fired up as those who don't.

It's hard defending democracy when those who want polls aren't nearly as fired up as those who don't. The current situation across the country is a mix of hope and despair. The government is trying to hold elections, but the opposition is not ready to accept the results. The situation is a mess, and the people are suffering. The government is not doing enough to protect the rights of the people. The opposition is not doing enough to protect the rights of the people. The situation is a mess, and the people are suffering. The government is not doing enough to protect the rights of the people. The opposition is not doing enough to protect the rights of the people. The situation is a mess, and the people are suffering.

on a technicality. But we aren't being entirely selfish. There is a lag time before people start suffocating. Once they do, they'll start blaming the parties, papers and pressure groups for not properly warning the rest of the country.

The security situation across the countryside is not stable. In most insurgency-torn areas, the government barely has a presence beyond the district headquarters.

But the omens aren't that bad. Under the latest delimitation of constituencies, the district-wise breakdown of House of Representatives seats goes against the Maoists. The

places sending most of the MPs have terrain inhospitable to hit-and-run raids. Security officials believe polls can go ahead in about 155 of the country's 205 constituencies. That's almost three-quarters of the House membership. It would be akin to having a third of the 155 MPs elected from two constituencies. By-elections can be held later in any number of phases.

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

ONLINE PACKAGES



INDRA JATRA

Join Anil Chitrakar on the journey to understand the relationship between nature and festivals as he tells the story of Indra Jatra through the two exotic flowers found in Kathmandu Valley. Watch the video on our YouTube channel.



In Kathmandu Valley's historic towns, communities have revived age-old traditions and craftsmanship to rebuild after the earthquake just like their ancestors did after every previous disaster. Be a part of the reconstruction of Patan Darbar Square's temples and monuments after the 2015 earthquake and discover how the wood carvers, metal craft artists, masons and architects, all hard at work, revived the traditional temples and heritage. Watch the video on YouTube.

SAND MINING

The rife corruption is enabled by the laws of the country ('A nation built in sand', Ramesh Kumar, #1127). Ultimately citizens in the Tarai will pay the price for the greed of these contractors.

Mahendra Bhujel

- Voice was raised through media few years ago when only one part of the hill was excavated. Now the range of hills has been brutally destroyed, it has been covered in media again, and still no concerned agency has taken any action. Shameful! Corruption! Crime!

Sabitri Gurung

- Congratulations to the government for constructing road in the region and excavating so much materials for use in other infrastructure projects. Exactly the kind of development our degenerate leaders want!

Anuj Sharma

- It is a sad reflection of their thinking and culture. In Buddhism, we are taught to respect surrounding and nature. Unfortunately too many corrupt people at the top have destroyed the whole system. Such short-sighted and greedy people have destroyed the whole ecosystem. Sad, but true.

Gyurme Dondup

- Perhaps a better title "Selling Nepal to India, one truckful at a time"

Stephanie Suhowsky

- What a progress.

Chris Kunwar

- Greed.

Ashish Gurung

- Except the nation is not getting built. It is not getting anything.

Shirin Barakzai

- Good Editorial. Right to the point and a sad commentary on what is happening in Nepal ('Need and Greed', Editorial, #1127).

Roger Ray

- My hope is that conservationists will win ultimately, younger politicians do not condone the old fashioned corrupt politicians one bit.

Alan Roadnight

CHITRAKARS

Nepal, and all who love it, are lucky that 3 generations of Chitrakars produced and preserved such volumes of visual images across the years! ('The way we were', Kunda Dixit, #1127)

Darlene Foote

HIMALAYAS

When are Nepalis going to start protecting their environment? I mean how about starting with cleaning up and, under the threat of big fines, stopping to litter everywhere ("We have not respected the fragility of the Himalaya", #1127)?

Pitta Rath Powa

HOMECOMING

Salute to Mr Tanka, the country needs such soul ('Don't give up on Nepal, it has lots to offer', Sahina Shrestha, #1126).

Desh Ratna

MELTING SNOW

It is coming and we know it already for decades, but the puppet politicians all over the world are to stupid and the people are brainwashed and manipulated by the puppet main stream media ("If the ice is gone, we are done", Ramesh Bhusal, nepalitimes.com).

Jean Kern

Times.com

WHAT'S TRENDING



Sisters carry on slain brother's fight

by Anita Bhewal

Dilip Mahato was killed by the sand mafia in 2020 near his home in Dhanusha, crushed beneath the wheels of a tipper truck for raising his voice against illegal sand mining. Two years later, the perpetrators are walking free and the extraction continues unabated. But Dilip's two sisters Sangam and Laxmi are continuing his fight. Read their story on our website.

f Most reached and shared on Facebook

Nepal sees dengue outbreak

by Anita Shrestha

Inner city Patan, the Valley's outskirts and many districts are reeling under a dengue epidemic with almost every household affected. The number of dengue patients in hospitals has now exceeded those suffering from Covid. Thousands more are recovering at home. Read the full story at nepalitimes.com.

t Most popular on Twitter

A nation built in Sand

by Ramesh Kumar

As Nepal's wealthiest businessmen and politicians, contractors and middlemen collude to reap rewards from sand mining and quarries, local communities are left to deal with floods, landslides, dust and smoke on their own. Share your thoughts with our online community.

💬 Most commented



The way we were

by Kunda Dixit

Nepal Remembered is an exquisitely produced book and curated exhibition of photographs taken by the pioneer father-son photographers Dirgha Man Chitrakar and Ganesh Man Chitrakar. It is a photo album that captures the history of Nepal as camera technology evolved. Go online to see the snippets of the book and exhibition.

🔍 Most visited online page

QUOTE TWEETS



Nepali Times @NepaliTimes
Dirty air is reducing the lifespan of Nepalis by nearly 7 years in the #Tarai, by 3 years in #Kathmandu Valley, and Nepal has the highest #lungdisease death rate in the world, new research papers warn.



Prashanta Khanal @theprashanta
Need to take note that who and how many vying for upcoming election put air pollution as their prioritised election agenda.



marina Colby @marinacolby
Brick kilns burning coal 24 hours a day doesn't help in #Kathmandu valley.



Nepali Times @NepaliTimes
How did a Nepali ritual altar end up in Berlin? A Nepali filmmaker's search for the origin of a Buddhist shrine brings him from #Berlin to #Kathmandu. <https://www.nepalitimes.com/banner/nepali-ritual-altar-in-berlin/>



ND @kevimeo2011
People sold it for money.



Nepali Times @NepaliTimes
"review What makes the artworks distinct is the voice trying to bridge the vast realm of possibilities with the much harsher reality. Where does tradition fit in the belief systems of today? <https://www.nepalitimes.com/banner/the-dreamscape-of-mithila-art/>



Nimbus | #savesoil @nimbus1
We are not the society made from belief systems. We seek, we do not believe. Other parts of the world believe, dharmic society seeks.



Nepali Times @NepaliTimes
"#Dengue causes severe body aches, so people look for strong medications for this. We have been giving cetamol for fever, which sometimes does not alleviate pain like other painkillers. However, using Brufen, Flexzone, Nims can be very harmful."



Terhi Teiskonlahti @teiskonlahti
There is a dengue wave going on in Nepal. After a couple of weeks, I can go back to work tomorrow. I had the worst fever in my adult life, even though I survived in home care. The cases of the disease seem to continue into October until the temperatures start to drop for winter.

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The power to have a say in

As the November elections approach, Nepal's male-dominated parties are loath to let women contest

● Shristi Karki

Nepal's provincial and federal elections are due on 20 November, but the political parties seem reluctant to allow their women colleagues to directly contest elections.

Prime Minister Deuba of the Nepali Congress (NC) is having a difficult time balancing the conflicting demands from four other parties in the coalition, as well as allowing female candidates to fulfil a Constitutional provision.

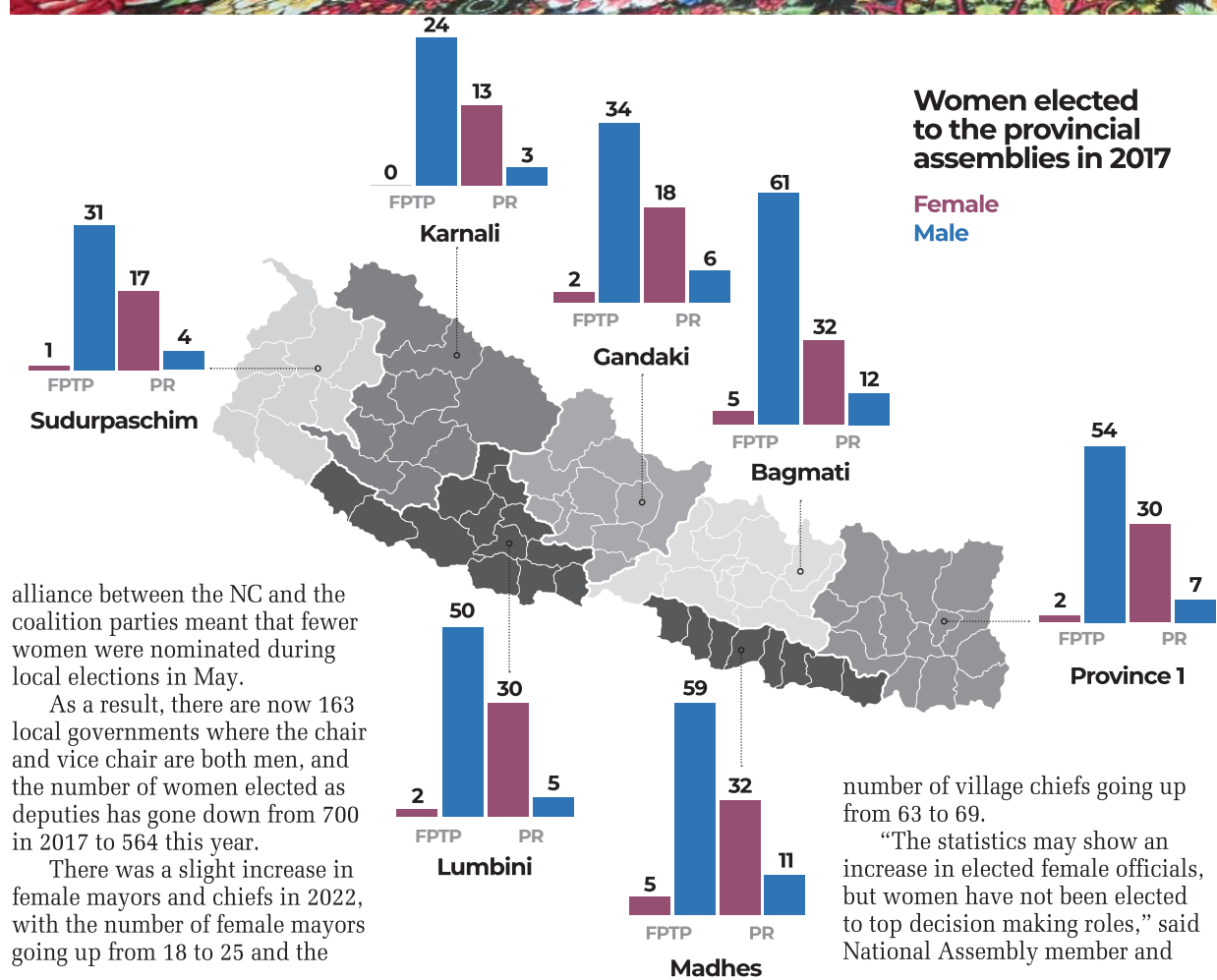
For K P Oli of the opposition UML, it is all about winning back the House majority even if it is just to thumb his nose at the coalition that ousted him last year.

Both the coalition and the opposition are also wary of the crop of young independent candidates and public figures who are in the running because they are aware of public disenchantment with their non-performance. The victory of several independent candidates as mayors of Kathmandu and several other cities has also spooked them.

There is much at stake for Deuba and his alliance, for K P Oli and opposition, as well as for the young, independent candidates that hold the attention and scrutiny of much of the Nepali public.

All this male politicking has left the women in senior leadership positions to fear that they will be sidelined in violation of Constitutional quotas for female representation.

Nepal's Local Level Election Act requires every party to nominate one male and one female candidate to the head and deputy of municipalities. But the election



alliance between the NC and the coalition parties meant that fewer women were nominated during local elections in May.

As a result, there are now 163 local governments where the chair and vice chair are both men, and the number of women elected as deputies has gone down from 700 in 2017 to 564 this year.

There was a slight increase in female mayors and chiefs in 2022, with the number of female mayors going up from 18 to 25 and the

number of village chiefs going up from 63 to 69.

"The statistics may show an increase in elected female officials, but women have not been elected to top decision making roles," said National Assembly member and

UML leader Parvati Rawal Thapa. "This is disheartening."

In a rare show of solidarity, Thapa and female leaders from across the political spectrum came together to jointly register objections against their own parties for not meeting the constitutional mandate for increased female participation and candidacy in the November election.

They want their parties to field more female leaders under the direct (FPTP) election mechanism over the proportional representation (PR) system.

There are 550 provincial assembly seats across Nepal's seven provinces, out of which 330 will be elected through the direct system and 220 through proportional representation. Meanwhile, out of the 275 members to the House of Representatives, 165 will be elected directly, and 110 through proportional representation.

Nepal's male-dominated parties tend not to give tickets to female candidates for the direct election system, and instead field women in large numbers under the proportional system.

prabhu BANK

Courtesy call

Chief of Army Staff of Indian Army General Manoj Pande paid a courtesy visit to Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Tuesday. During the meeting, Pande briefed Deuba on his engagements in Kathmandu and exchanged views on the



extensive bilateral partnership between India and Nepal. He also reaffirmed his position to further strengthen the defence cooperation between the two countries.

Pande also visited Nepali Army Command and Staff College at Shivapuri and addressed the students and staff there.

NIU in Bhaktapur

Eco infinity, the authorised distributor of NIU electric scooters for Nepal, has opened a new showroom in Bhaktapur. NIU also has showrooms in Butwal, Birtamod and Pokhara and plans to open flagship stores in Teku, Bouddha and Itahari within a month.

IME Bhandara milk

Global IME Bank and Bhandara Milk have partnered to increase access of small farmers to agricultural subsidy loans. The bank will provide concessional loans to dairy farmers in Bhandara in Chitwan, and Bhandara Milk will arrange trainings for the farmers.

Turkish with UEFA

Turkish Airlines has become the official sponsor of the UEFA Champions League. The finals of the sporting event will be held in Istanbul's Atatürk Olympic Stadium on 10 June 2023.



"With this sponsorship, we will carry the Turkish Airlines brand to four corners of the world and bring the whole world together in Istanbul on June 10, 2023," said Ahmet Bolat, Turkish Airlines Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee.

Sherpa x Rye vodka



Yeti Distillery has launched a limited edition of 8848 Rye vodka featuring the artwork of artist Tsherin Sherpa, the first Nepali artist to represent Nepal at the Venice Biennale. The new product limited to 30,000 bottles will be available in select stores from Friday.

"We wanted to do something different and meaningful," said Abhishek Shrestha, managing director of Yeti Distillery. "We decided to showcase the Nepali artist to bring attention to the evolving fine arts scene of our country."

Hyundai winners

Laxmi Intercontinental, the authorised distributor of Hyundai motors in Nepal has handed over the Hyundai i10 Magna to the lucky winner of the 2078 Hyundai festive delight offer, Lokesh Bajracharya.



Nabil Daraz Dashain

Nabil Bank and Daraz will allow customers of the bank to get 15% discount or up to Rs2000 under the 'Daraz Dashain Dhamaka' offer when paying using the bank's debit card. Customers paying with their credit cards can get up to 20% discount or Rs2500.

Khukri Rum Gurkha

Khukri Rum sponsored the premier of 'Gurkha: Beneath the Bravery', a film based on life events of



rifleman Kulbir Thapa, the first Nepali to receive the Victoria Cross. The film was screened in the UK, the USA, Brunei, Singapore, Australia and Nepal.

Ncell VoLTE

Ncell has launched its voice over long term evolution service (VoLTE) this week. Customers can now access the high definition voice calls made on 4G network. The service is available in select Samsung, Vivo and Huawei handsets.

her-story



SUMAN NEPALI

Nepal held its first democratic elections in 1959, as a result of which Dwarika Devi Thakurani of the NC became the country's first female parliamentarian. Thakurani served as deputy minister of health and local governance in the council of ministers led by B P Koirala, Nepal's first female Cabinet member.

In subsequent years, the number of female MPs increased steadily (*see graph*) mainly because the interim constitution after 2008 stipulated that women make up one-third of the total candidates.

But after 2008 the party brass changed the rules to 33% women required to win the election, as opposed to running for office. This removed any stipulation concerning direct elections, which prompted them to field women in large numbers under the proportional system in 2017.

Indeed, Article 38 (4) of the Constitution stipulates that women have the right to participate in all bodies of the state based on the principle of proportional inclusion. Additionally, Article 84 (8) requires that at least one-third of the members elected from each political party represented in the federal Parliament should be women.

This is reflected in the provincial election result of 2017 as well. 189 women were elected to provincial assemblies — 17 of those leaders through direct elections and 172 through the proportional representation system. So while 34% of women won in the provincial elections, fulfilling the constitutional provision, only 5% of the candidates elected under the FPTP system were women.

Women MPs complain that the national and provincial halls of power have been such that leaders elected under the proportional system are seen by their directly-elected colleagues in parliament as less qualified and less deserving to be there. This has created a chasm between lawmakers elected under different systems.

This discrimination directly affects women, who are mostly elected through the PR system, as planning and budget distribution are directed towards constituencies that have powerful, directly elected leaders.

"We sit alongside each other, and we have been elected to do the same job, but we have been given second-class status because we were not elected directly like they were," says Chanda Chaudhary, a Loktantrik Samajwadi Party MP.

Political parties also sideline women leaders for their perceived inability to ensure campaign financing. Politics of patronage means that powerful businessmen and contractors donate to the campaigns of leaders. Election Observation Committee reports have shown that campaigning expenses were vastly underreported in 2017.

"It is taken for granted that men will be able to run while we are asked about our ability to raise money," says National Assembly member Jayanti Devi Rai of the CPN Unified Socialists. "The electoral system is flawed and costly. We

need to look at financing protocols such that candidates can stand regardless of their financial status."

All these hurdles have forced Nepal's female leaders to re-evaluate the way they present themselves, and the kind of message they put across.

"Nepal's centres of power are patriarchal, so that women are forced to act like men to be noticed and to rise up the ranks," says Maoist Centre MP Anjana Bishankhe. "Why can't I contest elections on women's agenda and women's issues as my foremost priority?"

Nepal's female elected officials gathered last week to demand 50% election participation, up from the current requirement of 33%.

"There is no shortage of smart, capable female leaders ready to directly compete in elections," says Joint General Secretary of the NC Mahalaxmi Upadhyay. "All the women considering election runs can and should demand constituencies within their parties to contest the upcoming elections." 🇳🇵



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Divine attendants or soldiers in the mural inside the 55-Window Darbar in Bhaktapur.



A fragment of mural defaced by years of limewash and neglect inside Patan Darbar.



The central figure in the Bhaktapur Darbar mural is of Vishwaroop, in the image of King Bhupatindra Malla. On the coiffure of the queen are letters spelling 'Shree Bhupatindra'.

MALLA MURALS

The walls of ancient royal palaces of Kathmandu Valley are preserved like poetry in fragments

● Ashish Dhakal

The noise and dust from busy traffic at the Mangal Bazar intersection filters in through the lattice window at a corner of Patan Museum. Inside, along the walls of the dark, cool corridor are a series of half-erased murals.

These 17th–18th century wall paintings are largely indecipherable. But, as the eyes get used to the dim interior, the ancient 50cm high wall paintings faintly take shape: a musical procession marches across the passage from faint two-tiered temples amidst depictions of animals and gods.

Only fragments remain. The murals are also defaced by scratches, including what looks like a cross between the Devanagari letter ञ and a human figure with one arm on the hip, giving the Malla-era artwork a feral touch. After the Shah conquest of Patan, the palace complex was repurposed by the police, with one wing even used to house prisoners, and the walls with the paintings were regularly whitewashed.

In 1995, the loose lime layer peeled away revealing a patch of colours. Four years later, UNESCO started to unveil and conserve what

remained of the murals, and train staff from the Department of Archaeology. French conservator Sabine Cotte retouched some of the murals, filled the gaps using gypsum, and applied a coating of acrylic resin on the north-wall mural for protection.

It was decided that the paintings would be conserved *in situ* without detaching them from the walls. Following the initial treatment, the Institute of Conservation in 2013 conducted the first investigation of the murals and found that the brick walls were first rendered with a layer of plaster of mainly ‘sheet silicates, quartz and plant fibres’.

Then, this layer was topped with a smooth layer of fine mud mixed with plant fibres, over which several paint layers were directly applied. Carbon black, orpiment and red ochre were the original pigments, and animal glue added with drying oil was used as a binding medium.

There was over-painting done over the centuries, using synthetic cinnabar and ultramarine which were not produced in the 17th century. The paintings were already in bad condition in the 90s and some of the retouching done did not hold well, as their consistency with the original materials did not match. Conservation efforts after the 2015 earthquake sought to prevent the paintings from further deterioration by removing the later harmful additions, cleaning, and sealing the cracks.

Barbara Ranki of the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, who arrived in Nepal two weeks ago to work on the wall, explains that an important conservation ethic is to not introduce any new material as far as possible.

The mural in Bhaktapur on the walls of the 55-Window Darbar is in better shape: a vast celebration of colours and shapes, casting a glorious and imposing sense of grandeur.

Divided into five horizontal panels, the 18th century mural is largely intact despite the years of stove smoke from a police kitchen. Ram Govinda Shrestha of Bhaktapur Heritage Conservation points out the unique figure of Vishwaroop with each head sporting a moustache. The face of the god is the image of King Bhupatindra Malla himself, and in his hands he holds the chariots of Ram and Ravan before their final battle.

In the deity’s other arm sits his divine consort who is modelled after Bhupatindra Malla’s queen Vishwa Laxmi, on whose coiffure in the painting the name ‘Shree Bhupatindra’ is clearly written.

On either side of the painting are scenes from Hindu mythology. It is a vast narrative, capturing the many stages of motion and plot: the same faces appear several times in different locations, doing different things, on the same two-dimensional stretch – an art style of the Subcontinent which feels almost like a precursor to cinema itself.

Artist Madan Chitrakar believes that the methods of its creation are similar to the paintings in Patan. Efforts to conserve this mural began in 1998, and the wall was not damaged during the 2015 earthquake.

However, among the scratch marks are cracks and fading, illegible sections. While it is apparent that the story depicted is from *Krishna-leela*, several individual scenes are obscure. In recent years, a small section showing a young Krishna with the *gopini* has been discoloured by direct sunlight.

These murals provide a unique look into the art of the Valley influenced by Buddhist traditions, says artist Chitrakar, and are just as important as stone sculptures and wood carvings as a part of the Valley’s cultural civilisation.

“Wall paintings most likely started as instruments for religious and spiritual expressions, meditation, than to be simply admired,” Chitrakar explains, “so that when one is in the room for worship, nothing else comes to mind except the image of the god before them.”

Most wall-paintings in the Valley are from the Malla period, during which the kings enjoyed a time of cultural and economic prosperity.

“This is not to say that the Malla era was always peaceful. for that was not the case,” Chitrakar says. “But the Valley’s kingdoms were wealthy, and the kings were competing with one another to build more temples and create more art.” There is also a recently discovered mural at Hanumandhoka Palace in Kathmandu so badly damaged that the paint layers are mostly all abraded, leaving behind glaring lesions across confused shapes in red and gold.


A dancing figure can be seen, and a bull before him. Chitrakar believes that this painting was contemporaneous with the murals in Patan and Bhaktapur, most likely commissioned by King Pratap Malla.

Back in Patan, Ranki’s team are working with fine-tipped brushes, and recently reduced a new layer of lime wash. Her team works undeterred by the passing visitors who stop to watch.

Much has been lost to time, but the approach now is to try and preserve everything that is visible. Says Ranki: “We try to keep the object’s history intact as much as possible.” 🇳🇵



EVENTS



Spirit of Friendship
An exhibition of contemporary Bangladeshi artworks to celebrate the 50 years of Nepal-Bangladesh diplomatic relations and highlight the rich cultural heritage of our South Asian neighbour.
Till 12 September, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited

Kitab Jatra
Head over to enjoy new releases, talk to authors, and be part of activities at Kitab Jatra book festival.
9-10 September, Kamaladi Pragna Pratishan, Kathmandu

Mithila art session
Enjoy a fun art session and learn about Mithila art with friends and family. Call for more details.
10 September, Rs3000, Kyampa The Social Hub, Sanepa, 9818659805



Kalki
Spend the evening viewing the works of abstract and neo expressionist artist Priyam Pradhan in his solo exhibition 'Kalki'.
Till 16 September, Gallery MCube, Chakupat

DINING



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

MUSIC



Wangden Sherpa
Enjoy a musical night with a live concert by Wangden Sherpa at Ai-la lounge.
9 September, 7pm onwards, Ai-la lounge, Kumaripati

Nanashi
Head over for a good Friday night with post-modern Nepali tunes by Nanashi.
9 September, 7pm onwards, Moksh, Jhamsikhel

Musical night
Clear the schedule for a day gig of bands Bigraha, Tape and Space this week.
10 September, 2pm onwards, Beers N' Cheers, Jhamsikhel



KidsandHeroes
Mark your calendars, for KidsandHeroes are in town. Catch them live at Beers N' Cheers for a nice evening.
16 September, Rs300, Beers N' Cheers, Jhamsikhel

Tumbleweed Inc
Grab a drink and celebrate the 10th anniversary of Tumbleweed Inc at Beers N' Cheers.
17 September, 3pm-5pm, Ticket: Rs500, Beers N' Cheers, Jhamsikhel

Utpala Café
Located within a Buddhist monastery in Boudha, Utpala Café offers an all-vegetarian menu. They feature locally grown produce and their mushroom dishes are a must-try!
Boudha, 9801978106



Jimbu Thakali
Not in the mood to cook? Head over to Jimbu and enjoy a healthy, tasty and traditional Thakali meal.
Jhamsikhel (01) 5544011

GETAWAY


Hotel Barahi
Located just across the banks of Phewa Lake, Hotel Barahi offers stunning views and luxury rooms in the city of lakes.
Lakeside, Pokhara (61) 460617

Summit River Lodge
An expansive 16-lodge property boasts an infinity pool, semi-tropical vegetation and authentic Nepali cuisine made from local organic produce.
Kurintar, Dhading (01) 4371397



Mystic Mountain
Situating among the forests of Nagarkot, the resort is exquisitely built using ultra modern designs and world-class comfort.
Nagarkot (01) 6200646

Marriott Kathmandu
Escape the humdrum of Kathmandu without having to venture beyond its borders at this five-star deluxe hotel.
Naxal (01) 4443040



Dwarika's Resort
A holistic retreat, drawing on ancient Himalayan knowledge and philosophy of care for nature and for oneself, set in magnificent natural surroundings.
Dhulikhel (11) 490612





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 are simply delectable.
Jhamsikhel, 9860431504

Tip Top
In the mood for something South Asian, sweets and snacks? Maybe some Samosas and Chola Bhatuta? Tip Top is the place.
New Road (01) 4240470

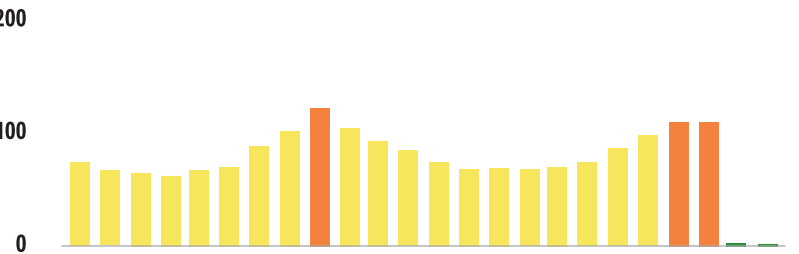
WEEKEND WEATHER



Going out with a Bang
Looks like this year's monsoon is going out with a bang, with a resurgent pulse coming in from the Bay of Bengal with fresh moisture. Climate change and higher atmospheric temperature means that the air can carry more moisture, and when this collides with the mountains, it rises, condenses and falls as precipitation. The monsoon has been active longer than the usual mid-September in recent years, and this year it might be the same. The weekend looks wet, especially on Saturday, with spells of hot sunshine.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
 28° 19°	 29° 19°	 28° 19°

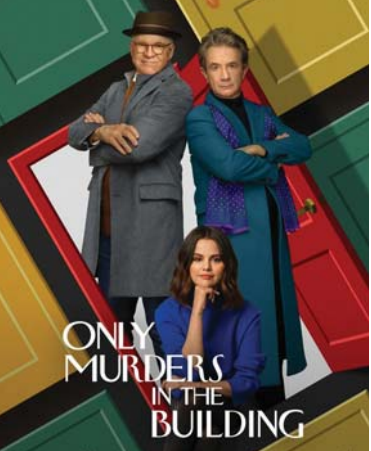
AIR QUALITY INDEX



Kathmandu AQI from 1PM 7 September - 10AM 8 September measured at US Embassy, Phora Darbar

The Air Quality Index as measured at the US Embassy station in Phora Darbar shows an increasing trend as the rains taper off. The good news is that the longer the monsoon lingers, the better it is for air quality. Watch out for rush hour spike in suspended particulates and toxic gases, and keep on masks if on the sidewalk or with the windows down. Press the knob to turn off outside air circulation if in vehicles. It is also a good idea to invest in an air purifier before winter inversion sets in.

OUR PICK




What happens when three strangers obsessed with true crime suddenly find themselves in the middle of one when a murder occurs in their Upper West Side apartment building? As Martin Short's Oliver, Steve Martin's Charles and Selena Gomez's Mabel embark on a journey to decipher clues and investigate the case at hand, the trio comes to realise that the killer may be living among them. A clever, humorous whodunnit with guest appearances from Sting in season 1 and Shirley MacLaine and Amy Schumer in season 2.

कोभिड-१९ को जोखिम पुनः देखापरेको छ


यसबाट बच्न र बचाउन:

- सही तरिकाले मास्क लगाऔं ।
- भेटघाट र जमघटमा कम्तीमा दुई मिटरको दूरी कायम राखौं ।
- समय-समयमा साबुनपानीले हात धुने वा सेनिटाइजर प्रयोग गरौं ।
- खोक्दा वा हाच्छिउँ गर्दा नाकमुख छोप्ने गरौं ।
- आफू बस्ने घर तथा कार्यालय लगायत स्थानमा नियमित सेनिटाइज गरौं ।
- अनावश्यक भीडभाड नगरौं ।
- हावा ओहोरदोहोर नगर्ने स्थान र भीडभाडमा नजाऔं ।
- कोभिड-१९ विरुद्ध खोप लगाउन बाँकी भए तत्काल लगाऔं ।
- कोभिडको लक्षण देखिएमा अरूलाई सर्न नदिनका लागि समयमा नै परीक्षण गरौं ।

समयमा नै सतर्क र सचेत बनौं ।




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Exit visas for Nepalis

Nepalis are the most experienced people when it comes to having their visa applications rejected. Except for São Tomé and Príncipe and India, we need a visa stamp for just about every country in the known Universe.

Still, this hardly deters Nepalis from migrating abroad in droves. This has become such a serious problem that to stem the outflow, the Grownment of Nepal has come up with a clever plan. Nepalis will henceforth need exit visas to leave the country. This is so that they can stay home and defend the country from foreign invasion.

For most of modern history, Nepal kept out expansionist neighbours with our dreaded Mozzie Army. Our heroic malaria-carrying female anopheles were the true bravehearts, risking lives and limbs to inject East India Company Sepoys with the *Plasmodium falciparum* parasite.

We should erect enormous concrete statues of the insects at all major intersections along the East-West Highway to honour them.

It is because of the Mosquito Militia's supreme sacrifice that Nepal was never colonised by aliens. But since the eradication of malaria in the Tarai, we have no forward line of defence, and need to find new strategic depth.

Fortunately, the Nepal Army's clandestine Bio Warfare Drone Division has lately deployed genetically-modified *Aedes aegypti* to inject dengue on all suspected fifth columnists in society.

They augment bio-engineered *Vibrio cholerae* and *Giardia lamblia* which have successfully blown up the gastro-intestinal tubes of Nepal's sworn enemies.

The two bacteria have already foiled a tourist invasion of Nepal. Covertly infiltrated into the endoplasmic reticulum, the germs wreak havoc on the digestive tract of potential conquerors and make them think twice about re-entering Nepal's Toilet-Free Buffer Zone.

Advances in genetic engineering means these microorganisms can be cloned to keep Nepal's native population safe from weapons of ass destruction.

Last week, the Minister for Tourism, Uncivil Aviation and Vermiculture bravely defended Nepal's honour from a security guard while being finger-printed for a Canadian visa. His message was loud and clear: a Nepali will not take such insults lying down anymore, we will take it standing up with our hands outstretched. Our national slogan henceforth will be 'Canada, Go Home! And Take Us With You On Junkets!'

The visa fracas exposed another insult to Nepal's sovereignty: Nepali passports have to go to Delhi to be stamped. As a self-respecting oldest nation state in South Asia that was never colonised, we should retaliate.


The Department of Irritation would cancel visas on arrival and require Canadians to get their Nepali visas from Honduras. Australians will have to apply in Tonga, and Italians will have to go to the Nepal Embassy in Addis. What's that? Nepal does not have an embassy in Addis? Good point. Serves the Italians right. And the French who want to travel to Nepal should apply in São Tomé and Príncipe.



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POPULISM VS PLURALISM

Translated excerpts of the panel **Unmasking Populism** marking the 25th anniversary of the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) Nepal

Moderator Sewa Bhattarai: There are many terms in Nepali for 'populism', but in essence they capture the negative connotation of public figures taking a shortcut to popularity. Populism is considered to be damaging to democracy around the world, and in Nepal as well. In the panel today, we will look into how populism impacts on pluralism and how to unmask it.



ALL PHOTOS: CIJ NEPAL

CK Lal, Columnist, Kantipur and Kathmandu Post

This is almost a philosophical proposition. Populism is nothing new, it goes back to Greco-Roman times and the dawn of what we know today as democracy. We can look at populism in two ways: the first as a tendency, and the second as a method.

When populism was limited to individual behaviour it was not so damaging to society. It is when populism becomes a method that it becomes an 'ism' and unleashes a slew of other problems.

Populism also has several dimensions. It can be used as a means for domination by one group in society to use self-appropriated divine right against rivals. Populism can be fanned by one group of an elite against another to mobilise the masses by portraying it as being



made up of crooks who exploit them to get to power.

Populism appears as demagoguery in politics, and in economics it manifests itself in nepotism. Populism can also be used as a strategy to aid and abet a

political group in garnering public support to compete against rivals.

Culturally, populism can exhort the public with tales of historical glory to establish the narrative that things have deteriorated because of outsiders who corrupt society.

The reason populism has become the preferred method for dominance by political groups in different parts of the world today is because all the others 'isms' and ideologies have been discredited one way or another.

Communism bit the dust in 1989, there was hope that at least Fabian socialism and the welfare state would replace it but that did not happen. Capitalism failed to deliver because of its excesses.

The inability of these ideologies to work in the public interest for equity and justice increased disillusionment in society, and clever politicians exploited populist ideology to use it as a strategy to channel public support.

Cultural entrepreneurs used populism to promote religious, literary or linguistic agendas. Also, there is the difficulty that while unmasking one sort of populism we replace it with another.

All these factors have led to the spread of populism around the globe. What makes it dangerous is that there does not seem to be any way to stop this trend because social networks now magnify populist ideologies so effectively. Without media gatekeepers, these networks add fuel to the fire with instant outrage and emotion.

Populism can also be positive. At one point in history, America had progressive populism with leaders who drove socio-economic reform. A Nepali leader calling for the abolition of untouchability would also be called a populist.

Arvind Kejriwal of the AAP in Delhi is a welfare populist when he tries to raise the quality of education or medical care to make

it more equitable.

Radical populism can take on an ultra-reformist agenda like, for example, the call to abolish Nepal's army because we do not really have an enemy to fight.

The problem is with negative populism. Demagogic populism tries to drive home the majoritarian agenda. In Nepal, that would be fear mongering over giving citizenship to the husbands of Nepali women because that would mean we will be inundated with Indians, and this would lead to the country's 'Fijification' or 'Sikkimisation'.

Then there is charismatic populism, exemplified by Kathmandu's Mayor Balen. There is no ideology attached, it is not ultra-reformist, or radical. It is just his personality that is driving a public service agenda through a partyless candidacy. Narendra Modi or Donald Trump could also be described as charismatic populists.

To overcome populism with

Investing in investigative journalism

● **Kunda Dixit**

The freedom of press is like a rubber band, you have to stretch it to make it work. Likewise, an independent media can only be protected by its maximum application.

That is why we have to make a distinction between day-to-day reporting and investigative journalism. In-depth coverage requires patience, difficult and dangerous work, time and resources.

Attending a press conference or transcribing a media release alone will not protect press freedom. It also cannot be defended if the media is partisan or also succumbs to clickbaits.

An investigative journalist's job is to expose wrongdoing, after that the other institutions in a democracy are supposed to take over: law enforcement, the court system, elected leaders.

In Nepal and across the world, even in countries with long traditions of pluralism, tolerance and rule of law, democracy is in retreat. When all three pillars of democracy (legislature, judiciary and the executive) are tottering, it is up to the fourth estate to prop up the superstructure of the state.

It does this by being impartial and fair, and shining a torch in the darkness where those in power are hiding secrets that are in the public's interest. Freedom of press is not just the freedom of a journalist, we in the media are just custodians of the freedom of citizens' right to information.

The best test that investigative



CIJ NEPAL

journalism is impactful is when it speaks truth to power, and it rattles them. Presidents have been forced to resign after exposés by investigative journalists in the United States and the Philippines.

In the past 25 years, the Centre for Investigative Journalism - Nepal may not have ousted a prime minister, but it has constantly rocked the boat, exposed wrongdoing and injustice, and afflicted the comfortable.

It is not easy doing investigative journalism in Nepal. The country may not be small, but it has a small elite in which the centres of power, businesses and media owners overlap. Everyone knows everyone

else, and they often scratch each other's backs. This is why the art of media questioning is not as developed in Nepal.

Already suffering from the shrinking readership due to the proliferation of social networking platforms, the legacy media was hit by the Covid pandemic, and lately by the rise in fuel and food prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The media's advertising and sales revenue has been hit.

The collapse of the media's business model has

coincided with the crisis of democracy in our neighbouring countries and around the world — at a time when investigative journalism is needed more than ever to widen the media's independence.

Nepal's broadsheets do not compete with each other, but with Facebook. Television channels should not be thinking in terms of TRP anymore because their actual revenue rival is TikTok.

We have seen from the world's biggest and oldest democracies that treat the rule of law as sacrosanct, that by manipulating the internet with troll armies and bot factories, demagogues have managed to get themselves

elected. Fanning populism, ultra-nationalism, racism and hate speech make an explosive potion to mobilise masses disenchanted with traditional politics.

Trump may have been defeated, but Trumpism is alive and well. In the Philippines, history has come a full circle with Bong Bong Marcos getting himself elected by weaponising the social web.

About India, the less said the better. It is a lesson for us in Nepal not to take our freedoms for granted. One of the last remaining independent television channels, NDTV was bought by a Modi crony and the world's third-richest man, Gautam Adani.

The legacy press must become much more savvy in using internet platforms, and if necessary, even borrow some of the tricks of the trade. The mainstream media must be in the business of immediately correcting falsehoods, rumours and 'alternative facts'.

Newsrooms must have the digital visual skills so that investigative stories are not just told, but shown. Journalism has a new role and responsibility: to analyse, interpret and explain the raw, live information on the net, and to offer solutions at a time of spreading cynicism and despair worldwide.

The old media is not dead yet, and we need it more than ever to tame a wild new media that is reaching adolescence. 🇳🇵

Kunda Dixit is publisher of Nepali Times. Excerpt from a keynote presentation at the 25th Anniversary function of the Centre for Investigative Journalism Nepal on 2 September 2022.

pluralism, political parties have to believe and compete in the marketplace of ideas. For this, the institutions of democracy have to be strengthened to counter negative populism. Leaders should have the statesmanship to speak up for minorities even if they are from a majority community.

If a Nepali from the mountains supports representation and justice for the Madhesi people, it will be more effective than a Madhesi person saying the same thing.

Yubaraj Ghimire,
Deshsansar.com

When mainstream political parties cannot deliver to the electorate and offer solutions, the public is naturally disenchanted. Our democracies are all about how to use the election system to drum up public support from voters so as to get to power. They use slogans to propel their agenda, and they know the limits of how much they can promise so that citizens will believe them, even though they may not be able to implement those promises for economic or other reasons.

When I was working as a journalist in India, for example, Prime Minister Morarji Desai was asked by his Janata Party to travel to the south to canvas for elections. He met farmers, who had a list of demands. He told them that even if he came to power, he would not be able to fulfil them. This was a rare example of a politician who was not tempted by populist rhetoric, and had the courage to tell it like it is. But he was an exception.

When Morarji was not in government, he opposed India's annexation of Sikkim. But after he became prime minister he had to go along with it. So, populism is a tool of power. Even if they cannot fool all the people all the time, populists



will keep trying.

Populism also manifests itself at election time when political parties are not rational in their character and articulation, when they can raise such issues and get away with it. The reason the media is not as effective as it can be to counter this is that owners of media have other business interests which they try to protect, and to bring down rivals through their content.

Populism was fostered when the basic tenets of the Constitution were passed without much debate in Parliament, elected representatives just signed off on it without accountability. This is detrimental to pluralism, encourages populism and further discredits credibility of the leadership, and by extension society's own collective credibility.

Rajendra Dahal,
Sikshyak

It is quite natural for politicians to follow a populist agenda. They will argue that it is not possible to win in elections by telling people

the unvarnished truth. They have to spout populist slogans, promise populist programs.

What is more, we in the media, academics and others have taken this as a normal state of things. This acceptance of populism is one of the biggest challenges of our democracy. And the reason it is a problem is that the press has decided to ignore populism, and does not see it as a problem. So, when politicians, elected representatives and even the judiciary choose a populist path, journalists begin to take that as a given, and not look at the trend critically.

Our reality today in the media is that journalists are not able to see through the fog to gauge what is really happening in the country. There are good papers and magazines, they are designed and printed well, but when I asked one journalist how about going deeper into the real state of the country. The answer was: "No way we can report on that."

The challenge for the media is to develop a deeper understanding of the processes of populism that



are at work. And this is happening at a time when the entire state mechanism seems to be intent on blunting the influence of the media with easy public money. This commercialises the media, eroding its public service role.

The instant gratification that comes with populism hypnotises society. Populism now has Nepali society and our political mechanism in its grip. It also is proof of just how weak and unpopular Nepal's leaders have become that they have to resort to these tricks. They have such low confidence in themselves and are so afraid of the public reaction that they cannot even face voters by themselves, they go in groups. The rise of Balen and the independents has really spooked them.

Mohna Ansari,
Human rights defender

Looking at the world today, we see the rise of Modi in India, Erdogan in Turkey, Trump in America, Bolsanaro in Brazil, Duterte and now Marcos in the Philippines. Compared to all of these countries, Nepal can be considered one of the more progressive ones. Yet, what touches the people of Nepal is religion. And I have a deep personal connection to that since the religious strife I witnessed as a child in Nepalganj, and even lately.

Our political parties, be they Congress, UML or Maoists, may sound very progressive, but the drafting of the 2015 Constitution showed that they were not able to adequately address the concerns of the minorities, and we thought that some of the aspirations would be filled in as we went along. However, what we find



is that the majoritarian narrative is still dominant, and the media tends to black out content that challenges the status quo, or the voices of the minorities. On the citizenship debate, for example, we still discriminate between male and female Nepalis.

Nepal still has a long list of challenges, but I think we are now equipped to address them. During the Constitution drafting process, there was a populist belief that federalism would divide the country. But I was always deeply convinced that it would actually unite Nepal.

Across the world populism and politics can obstruct the pursuit of human rights and rule of law. For example, with a rise in heinous crimes there is a populist push, even in media headlines, for capital punishment even though that is against the Constitution. Imagine if someone is falsely accused based on a phone complaint of rape, what kind of situation would we be in? Imagine the kind of message that would send to the world that Nepal is a violent country. 🇳🇵

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