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TAKING AIM: The Maoist conflict (*above*) began 27 years ago this week. The former Maoist commander is Nepal's prime minister for the third time, and politics has been in disarray ever since the war ended 17 years ago. The RSP's Rabi Lamichhane held a press conference on 5 February (*below*) after his party quit the coalition in which he threatened the media.



MANISH JHA / TWITTER

ARMED CONFLICT,

CONFLICT OF

INTEREST

EDITORIAL

PAGE 2

GHOSTS OF WAR

Sonia Awale

his week marks 27 years since the start of the Maoist conflict that claimed the lives of 17,000 Nepalis. A whole new generation has grown up without any memory or knowledge of the insurgency, and how it has shaped Nepali society and politics (see page 3).

The fact that Chairman
Prachanda who admitted to being
responsible for "only" 5,000 of the
deaths during his insurgency is
now Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal
Dahal for the third time has left
many (including his own former
guerrillas and comrades) wondering
what it was all for.

When heinous war crimes including summary executions, torture, disappearances and war rape by both sides go unaddressed and unpunished, the sense of impunity makes Rabi Lamichhane's citizenship debacle just a procedural lapse (editorial, page 2).

"A society that doesn't know its history or doesn't learn from it is bound to repeat the same mistakes," warns Mohan Mainali, a film-maker who documented the conflict. "As it is, we are already seeing public disenchantment with the established parties turning into support for newer parties and their populist leaders."

The question now is: are the new parties that emerged from the November federal elections really that different? The way Lamichhane got himself appointed Home Minister in the 7-party coalition showed a clear conflict of

interest, where power trumped ethics. And the prolonged tirade against the media during his press conference was seen by many as a blatant attempt to divert attention from his transgressions by blaming the messenger.

In a way, Lamichhane is latching on to a mass yearning for change, much in the same way that the Maoist parties swept the 2008 Constituent Assembly elections by promising societal transformation through the democratic process. Overwhelming numbers of Nepalis voted for the Maoists then, not necessarily because they supported them, but because they did not want them to go back into the jungle.

The peace process that followed the conflict may not have made Nepali society more egalitarian, but there is now more inclusion in politics, the job market, education-with women and excluded groups having found space they previously lacked. Nepal went from a Hindu monarchy to being a secular federal republic, and the Madhes movement would likely not have happened without the insurgency making people aware of their rights.

"But the question is, did we need to kill a whole lot of people to achieve that?" asks Rajendra Dahal, editor of *Shikshak* monthly. "We have matured as a society, but just about everything else is worse than before the insurgency: development, economy, education, and most of all, our politics." (*See page 4-5*)

Even so, Nepal is considered a model for post-conflict reconciliation with the former rebels transitioning into mainstream politics in the past 17 years. Dahal is Prime Minister for the third time with the UML in the coalition, and Sher Bahadur Deuba of the Nepali Congress a close ally despite being in the opposition. The former enemies are now in government together, but Dahal incongruously heads a coalition made up of anti-secular, anti-federal and promonarchy forces.

"The war led to notable political and social reforms but the very political decline that led to the conflict is more evident, the fact that the behaviour of our leaders haven't changed makes all other achievements of the revolution meaningless," says Mainali.

The former enemies do not want to rake up war crimes and want the atrocities their forces committed to be forgotten. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission on the Investigation of Enforced

Disappearances (CIED) have turned transitional justice into a farce.

Adds Mohan Mainali: "There is not much hope for transitional justice

given the very perpetrators are now the state, but we as a society must remember to remember the insurgency and people who have blood on their hands, at the very least to prevent another war."













Times

Armed Conflict, Conflict of Interest

Rabi Lamichhane's tirade was

Trumpian populism, an anti-media

'drain the swamp' whataboutery.

This week marks 27 years since the Maoists launched their armed struggle. And 17 years after it ended, the leader of the revolution is prime minister for the

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal (aka Prachanda) shares power in a coalition with openly anti-secular, royalist and anti-federal parties -- everything he fought against.

Former enemies are now the state. This means neither side has to answer for heinous crimes committed during the conflict.

The former antagonists have made sure that the two commissions mandated to deliver transitional justice remain toothless. Social science and history textbooks make no mention of the violent conflict that left 17,000 Nepalis dead. A whole generation

of Nepalis has grown up with no knowledge of what happened between 1996 and 2006. (See page 1, 3, 4-5) Many of

the survivors and families of victims have lost faith in ever getting justice. Time is erasing memory. And that suits the perpetrators of war crimes just fine, since they want us to forget what happened.

As they watch the way the country has been run, however, the hundreds of thousands of Nepali civilians and fighters who suffered, were tortured, wounded, displaced or bereaved, are thinking: what was

On 4 February 1996 at Singha Darbar, Maoist ideologue Baburam Bhattarai presented to Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba (yes, his first of five tenures in office) 40 demands. The Maoists did not even wait for the government's response, and on 13 Feburary 1996 launched simultaneous attacks on police stations across the country.

The conflict was not about a 'revolution'. The war was just politics by other (violent) means. The behaviour of their leaders in government today probably gives little comfort to former guerrillas and comrades. In fact, like in any other party, Pushpa Kamal Dahal has purged all potential rivals from the Maoist Centre.

Just like K P Oli of the UML, and to a certain extent the NC's Sher Bahadur Deuba, Dahal's conduct is based on the principle of 'I am the party, the party is me.'

The tragedy is that the leader of the brand new alternative party professing integrity and good governance which came out of nowhere to be the fourth largest entity in Parliament after the November election, showed himself this week to be of the same ilk.

Having got the coalition to appoint himself Home Minister, in charge of the very Police that was investigating his citizenship, he showed poor judgement and elastic ethics. Lamichhane behaved like the very politicians he was rebelling against.

His RSP won 20 seats in the House because of protest votes – a rejection by many young Nepalis of same old politics by same old politicians. But Rabi Lamichhane's stream of consciousness rant the other day after he was refused to be reinstated as Home Minister was reminiscent of Trumpian populism the same anti-media 'drain the swamp'

whataboutery.

Lamichhane served as tv anchor in the established media after returning from the United States and later renouncing his citizenship, but understood the true power of social media after tens of thousands of followers showed up at a support rally when he was arrested after

being accused of abetting the suicide of someone investigated by his tv program.

The press conference on 5 February was a demonstration of the clash between new and old media, between new and old politics.

Nepal's established media is not spotless. It would be surprising if it was an island of uprightness when there is rot all around. Most tycoon owners are in cahoots with politicians and contractors. If we are honest with ourselves, some of Lamichhane's supporters have a valid reason for calling journalists पत्रुकार, loosely translated as 'presstitutes'.

But it is easy to see why Lamichhane came out with all guns blazing against the media, and not the prime minister who had just refused to hand him back the home ministership. It was to divert attention from the investigation into his dual citizenship that is hanging like a sword over his head.

But let who is without sin cast the first stone. Most leaders in the established parties either have dirt, or blood (or both) in their hands for which they have never faced justice. Lamichhane's citizenship transgression was procedural – not murder or corruption which is what many in power have gotten away

ONLINE PACKAGES



Watch videos of village life in Gautala, where there are only the elderly parents and grandparents of Sherpa mountaineering guides. They fear for the safety of their sons doing the dangerous work on Himalayan peaks. Read the story on page 6-7.



27 years since the beginning of Nepal's decade-long armed conflict, Nepali college students speak about their knowledge of the war, and the need for Nepal's education sector to incorporate the conflict in our curriculum so that young people might learn about our history. Watch the video on our YouTube Channel, and read the full story on page 3.

BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURE

I hope this spreads fast ('Biodynamic agripreneurs', Sanjib Chaudhary, #1147), not only for the sake of reviving our soil, but also as a motivation to use our agricultural land. Too much land is lying fallow. I realise the issue is bigger than just better soil, but hopefully this is a good incentive.

Kalps Para

CLIMATE CRISIS

Climate change in the Hlmalaya is an important issue that needs immediate attention ('From the North Pole to the Third Pole', Erica Wu, nepalitimes.com).

Akku Chowdhury

NEPAL TIMELAPSE

This is the Nepal I grew up in ('Back to Manang after 43 years', nepalitimes.com). I lived there from the beginning of 1976 until mid-1979. I have been back many times. There is a lot of change, much for the better. Nepalis are still the same friendly people Ben-Erik Ness

ROAD NETWORKS

All these old decisions, were they endorsed by "experts" ('On the fast lane to expressways', Chandra B Shrestha, #1146)?

Alan Roadnight

■ We cannot even maintain simple roads, how are we going to maintain the railroads and who will do it? And how will we pay

Lal Bahadur

TRAVEL SAFETY

Are the buses safely maintained? Are the drivers qualified to drive

NaranKlyphree

Kudos to these women ('Vacant homes become homestays in nepal' Bhadra Sharma, nepalitimes.com)!

Neesha Panta

■ Yes, such is the power of women. They are fabulous.

Renate Schwarz

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

This looks like an interesting read ('Adventures of a little dumpling named Momo', Sahina Shrestha, #1146).

Ben D. Wilshire

Times.com

WHAT'S TRENDING

The Wait

Ever wondered why growing old is such a relief? Because it lets us know that the worst has passed and that we are more prepared because of our familiarity with sadness and that even the worst will be lived through, writes Pratibha Tuladhar

Most reached and shared on Facebook

Biodynamic agripreneurs

Across Nepal, the organic matter content of the soil is falling due to poor farming practices, erratic weather and overuse of agrochemicals, but a farm in Saptari is working to revive soil fertility and improve yields. Read the story on our website.



Most popular on Twitter



Armed Conflict and Conflict of Interest

RSP chair Rabi Lamichhane's rant during his press conference after leaving Pushpa Kamal Dahal's government was Trumpian populism, an anti-media 'drain the swamp' whataboutery. Join

Most commented

When art unites what divides us

Two exhibitions in Kathmandu: Collected Expressions and Monsoon Printmaking, tune into dialogue between nature and life through experiments in contemporary art. Read the reviews at nepalitimes.com

Most visited online page

QUOTE > TWEETS



Nepal Times @NepaliTimes Women's rights groups and union organisations protest against the government's and opposition's silence after CAN lifted the bar on Sandeep Lamichhane, accused of sexual assault on a 17-yearold. CAN also included him in the national team camp on Thursday.



This decision shows that all of us, and our children are unsafe. The criminal should be punished.



Nepali Times @NepaliTimes

Turkey's deadly earthquake was the same intensity as Nepal's 2015 disaster, but has killed and destroyed many more people. There are lessons for Nepal's concrete structures in the next Big One



HarshManRai @harshmanrai Scary stuff, and lessons not only for Nepal



Nepali Times @NepaliTimes It is Friday! Have you read this week's Nepali Times? Grab a copy or visit http://nepalitimes.com.



Amod Pyakuryal @AmPyakuryal I like puns but dunno how I feel about this cheeky headline at expense of real homeless, especially when street vendors & marginalized are pushed to brink of homelessness everyday! Mockery of politician at the expense of actual pain & suffering! @NepaliTimes can do better!

20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Forgetting to remember

This week on 13th February Nepal will mark 27 years since the Maoists launched an armed conflict. It has also been 17 years since the war ended, and a whole new generation has grown up without the knowledge of the decade-long conflict. Maoist Supremo Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' is now

Prime Minister once again in a fragile alliance with former enemies. No one wants to rake up past war crimes, but we must remember and learn from atrocities committed to prevent another

violent uprising in the future. Excerpts from a report published 20 years ago this week in issue #131 17-13 February 2003:

What does peace mean when the country is in shambles? All we are left with is mangled infrastructure, ruin and misery for millions of Nepalis, including the orphans,

widows and displaced. And nearly 8,000 lives lost.

What does peace mean when the mandarins of multiparty, who did everything they could to sabotage the very freedoms they themselves fought so tenaciously to obtain, and for which they had suffered years of exile, imprisonment, and the anonymity of underground life, feel left out of the peace process? The rift between the king and the political parties has been widening, and each is trying to outsmart the other.

Let the talks begin

Geo-historically speaking, there is no easy road to peace in Nepal. The Maoists, the palace and the parties have to look at themselves in the mirror and demonstrate extraordinary moral courage when crucial points of disagreement emerge. Such examples are not impossible, only rare in history

Why did the Maoist insurgency begin in the first place? Certainly not just because a Baburam Bhattarai or a Pushpa Kamal Dahal decided that Nepal needed some bloodshed to propel their party to power? If there was no Maoist movement (which has at least mingled the blood of Nepali ethnicities for a common cause), there would have been other sectarian and regional conflicts. The 1990 Constitution paid only

lip service to ethnic injustice and regional imbalance. The statutes did not clearly lay out the structural blueprint for righting centuries of wrongs. Nor did the leaders of the parties conduct themselves in ways that would throw up new solutions for emerging, though long anticipated, problems.

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

1.000 WORDS



SUMAN NEPALI

TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN: USAID Administrator Samantha Power on a trail run in Jagdole with Nepali ulta marathoner Mira Rai (to her left). Power announced \$58.5 million USAID grant to support Nepal's democracy and civil society.



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Times

Delay, dilute, deny

A whole generation of Nepalis has grown up with no knowledge of the decade-long war

Shristi Karki

imamsha Dhungel was barely 8 when Nepal's Larmed conflict ended, and she has vague memories of clutching a packet of cheese balls in her hands on 24 April 2006 being part of a victory rally from Thankot to Kalanki to celebrate the restoration of Parliament and the

"My grandfather was martyred in the conflict," Dhungel, now a 22-year-old student, says. "That was a part of Nepal's history that we cannot forget."

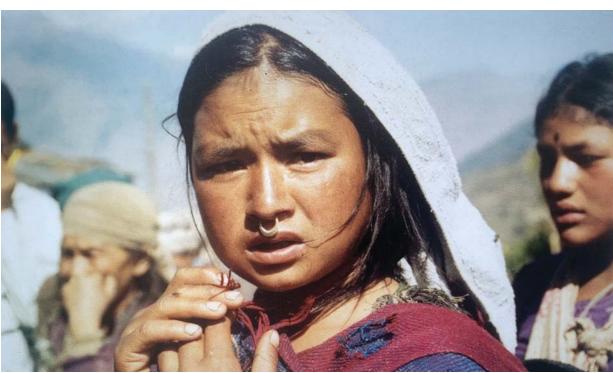
Monday, 13 February will mark 27 years since the Maoists took up arms against the state, and almost 17 years since Nepal's current Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal of the Maoist and then Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala of the Nepali Congress (NC) signed the Comprehensive Peace Accord that marked the end of the conflict that left 17,000 Nepalis dead.

Yet, even as relatives of victims demand justice, Nepal's political mechanism and leadership which is made up of former enemies, has ensured that no one is held accountable for war crimes.

Suman Adhikari's father Muktinath Adhikari was a science teacher in a school in Duradanda of Lamjung. In January 2002, he was taken away by Maoists while in class, and later executed because he refused to donate a share of his salary to fund their cause.

"To be reminded that it has been 27 years since the war began, and almost 17 years since the peace accord was signed is painful, but it is also worrying that the society at large has stopped talking about it," says Suman Adhikari. "Whichever government it is, the strategy has been to delay, dilute, and deny victims truth and justice.'

Not only have Nepalis begun to forget, but there is also now an



MOHAN MAINALI / A PEOPLE WAR

LONG SUFFERING: Gaura Rokaya mourns eight family members killed by soldiers in Pandusen of Bajura in 2002 on suspicion of being Maoists. Mohan Maniali's page 1 story in Nepali Times in 2002 (right) of two 17-year-olds widowed after the Army mistakenly killed 18 young men of Jogimara.

entire generation of young people who were either not born or were too young to remember what it was like to live in fear of the soldiers, police or guerrillas.

The political leadership and governments have refused to let Nepalis learn from history by keeping the conflict out of the school history books.

A textbook published by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) reduces the $\hat{d}ecade$ -long war into just a mention.

Textbooks put out by private publishers are better, but still offer few details: reducing the war to brief sentences that mention the massacre of King Birendra's family, and the 12-point peace agreement.

A Grade 12 textbook published by the CDC has dedicated just three sentences to the start of the war, and three sentences to the peace accord.

They make no mention of the cost (or achievements) of the conflict.

Bhuwan Raj Shrestha who teaches higher-secondary Social Studies in Kathmandu says he tried to bridge the gap: "I try to provide context when I teach my students, and a few bright students show an interest, but the others don't bother."

Shrestha himself was a school principal in Nawalparasi during war and fled to Kathmandu for safety after running afoul of the Maoists.

Pranjal Pokharel grew up with a father who is a police officer. So he has some experience of the war, but knows little else.

"Our political stability and impunity now is rooted in whatever happened back then, so it is important for us to learn about what happened," says the 22-year-old student. "Our curriculum doesn't go in-depth at all."

"The situation is even more alarming..."

Aarati Ray, 19, also admits she does not know much about the conflict because it is not taught very well in high school.

'There is so much about World War I and World War II in our textbooks, but there is nothing about the Maoist war," says Ray.

But veteran journalist Rajendra

Dahal, editor of Sikshak monthly magazine for teachers, notes that the absence of information about the war is part of a larger problem with Nepal's learning system and education sector (see page 4-5).

"Young people's lack of knowledge is not limited to the armed conflict, most Nepali students are literate but do not have understanding that is applicable in the real world," says Dahal. "We have become modern and educated, but we have also become ignorant and intolerant.'

Journalist Mohan Mainali reported from across Nepal about the human cost of the war and is concerned that almost three decades later, there is so little knowledge about the conflict.

"A society that doesn't know its history risks repeating it," he says. "Once more, we are seeing an obsession for populism because of disillusionment with the establishment. This could once more take a violent turn."

But Mainali adds that it is not enough to rely solely on textbooks. Indeed, students actually needed to answer questions about the conflict in exams before the peace accord was signed, but the curriculum changed after the war ended and there are no more exam questions about it anymore.

Conflict victim organisations have repeatedly submitted guidelines to political leaders pushing for the war to be included in the curriculum. But they are reluctant because they will have to answer the people about why they were made to suffer.

Says Adhikari: "The reality of the conflict is our history, and it must not be hidden. We as a nation need to acknowledge the mistakes of our past so that we might move on, and also so that Nepalis do not ever have to go through something like this ever again."

Additional reporting by Swapnil KC.

Photographic memory of war

Following a young boy's life from war to peace, 20 years later

uring the Maoist conflict, Hemanta Bista was an 8-year-old student at a school in Motipur in Kailali District by the East-West Highway. A police station next to the school had been attacked by Maoist guerrillas in 2002, killing most of its 10 personnel.

The building was in ruins, and the children never ventured close because they were told it was haunted. One afternoon, they saw a man with a ponytail and moustache, camera slung around his shoulder, taking pictures of the building.

He was none other than Amrit Gurung, Nepal's popular folk-rock singer who was on a peace concert tour of western Nepal.

Gurung is also an avid photographer, and specialises in portraits. He remembers: "I was taking some slides with an old-fashioned analog camera when I saw two boys peer out of a hole in the wall made by a mortar shell."

The colour slides had to be sent to a studio in Kathmandu to be processed, and when he got them back Gurung found one of them to be a striking image.

That photograph of Hemanta and Aman really touched me, the hole in the wall looked like an outline of Nepal, and it was symbolic of the kind of Nepal we are leaving for the next generation. A land in ruins.'

In 2006, after the ceasefire, the photograph was chosen as the cover image for the first volume, A People War लडाईँमा जनता, of Kunda Dixit's trilogy of photo books on the



KUNDA DIXIT



KIRAN K SHRESTHA/PEOPLE AFTER WAR

conflict published by nepa~laya.

When Amrit Gurung passed Motipur again in 2007 on another concert tour, he invited Hemanta, who was now 13, to present the boy with a copy of the book posing in front of the same hole in the wall of the police station.

Hemanta now has an MBA and works as a customer relations officer in an automobile dealership in Kathmandu. Hemanta remembers the night of the raid on the police station, and helicopters arriving the next morning to take the bodies away.

The war was always close during his childhood because his father was in the Nepal Police and several uncles and an aunt were Maoist guerrillas.

presenting a copy of A People War in 2007 to Hemanta Bista at the same spot where the photo was taken five years previously.

Hemanta Bista (far left) now 28, in Kathmandu this week, remembers the war years, and says the Maoist revolution did not bring about "any big change" for people like him.

Hemanta remembers his mother being worried all the time and fainting whenever she heard of a police station being attacked. Hemanta's father rarely came home for holidays for fear of being found

out, but when he did he used to sleep in the paddy fields nearby in case the Maoists targetted him.

"We saw so much violence and death during our childhood, but today we see no big change for the better in Nepal, all those lives were lost in vain," says Ĥemanta, now 28. "It is because of our parents that we got a good education, so now we can take care of

Kunda Dixit



n 13 February 1996 the Maoist party decided to take a shortcut to power.

and the democratic system, and

They did get to power, but at an immense cost to the people.

Over 17,000 Nepalis were killed, thousands of children orphaned, women widowed. The 1990 Constitution failed.

democracy was threatened. The violence propelled the

victory in the 2008 Constituent

came out the barrel of a gun.

2008, the party got fewer and

political future is bleak at best. The 1990 Constitution

empowered Nepalis, and monarchy had to relinquish its absolute powers. The elected legislature was supreme, and it was alive and vibrant. The judiciary and the Supreme Court were many times

more dignified than they are today. The Nepali Congress (NC) emerged as the biggest party in the 1991 general election, while Unified

Marxist-Leninist (UML), back then

The United People's Front of

Nepal (UPFN) chaired by Baburam

two of them were Krishna Bahadur

going to take a long time to defeat

Inspired by Mao Zedong, they felt

the NC and UML through elections.

The UPFN realised that it was

Bhattarai won only nine seats --

Mahara and Lila Mani Pokhrel.

only called Marxist-Leninist, also

established itself as a formidable

GUEST COLUMN Rajendra Dahal

Times



All is fair in war (and peace)

Retelling the Maoist conflict, and its impact on Nepali society and politics

Communists must wage an armed

In the intervening years, the party split and a militant faction led by 'Prachanda' led the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) to launch the armed struggle on 13 February 1996 against 'feudal forces'.

They were ambitious, and the armed conflict was a quick way to power by playing into contradictions between the NC, UML and the Palace. Police high handedness in cracking down

against the rebels drove more people into the Maoist fold.

I was the editor of *Deshantar* weekly, and from day one had no sympathy for Maoist violence. Many of the 40 demands in the ultimatum Bhattarai presented to Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on 1 February 1996 were impractical and populist.

But the Maoists had found the right time to strike while the iron was hot. The Palace, which had ruled for 30 years, had been forced to give up its absolute power in 1990, and there were hardliners unhappy about it. The UML was not clear about its ideology, either.

Then there was India. While the Maoists played the nationalist card by voicing anti-Indian sentiments in Nepal, across the border they got support and weapons training, the Maoists felt special and they now had to prove themselves.

The use of ruthless violence in a society that had not witnessed such bloodshed was a rude shock. The

Maoists did not just kill people, they made them suffer and circulated the news widely. Terror was used as a weapon to terrify people.

I remember one case in Sindhuli, where they accused a man of exploitation and killed him by crushing his knees with boulders. Such brutality worked because it had a multiplier effect in instilling fear. They robbed banks which increased their resource base.

Their main target was the NC, especially its grassroots leaders.

NMB BANK



USAID partnership
USAID has announced a \$58.5 million grant to advance

democratic progress in Nepal, during the visit this week of Administrator Samantha Powers. 'The investment will help strengthen financial management, independent civil society and media, democratic processes and institutions, rule of law and private sector development and to counter human trafficking,' USAID said in a statement.

Asian Paints

Asian paints launched the SmartCare Hydroloc in the Nepali market. The product has a waterproofing penetrating solution and combats efflorescence. It comes with a three year warranty.

IFRC

The Geneva-based International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has released its 'World Disasters Report' during the visit to Kathmandu of Secretary General Jagan Chapagain this week. Chapagain, who is a Nepali, pledged more disaster prevention and relief assistance to Nepal.

Pashmina export Nepal launched the National Pashmina Export Strategy to

increase exports to \$75 million by 2026. The target was set in discussions between the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Trade and export Promotion Centre and Nepal Pashmina Industries Association. The strategy received technical assistance from the EU-funded Nepal Trade and



Investment Program. The foundation stone to the planned Pashmina Fibre Processing Centre was also laid in Lalitpur and the Centre is expected to link chyangra (mountain goat) farmers and traders for better fibre quality.

JICA leadership

JICA, with Tribhuvan University, co-hosted JICA Chair, an academic seminar on 'Politics in Nepal and Japan: Political parties and periodic elections' this week. The initiative



was launched with an aim to develop future leaders of developing countries within JICA partner countries. The keynote speaker for the seminar in Nepal was Professor lokibe Kaoru from Tokyo University, an expert on the political and diplomatic history of Japan. The seminar included other panelists and a round table discussion.

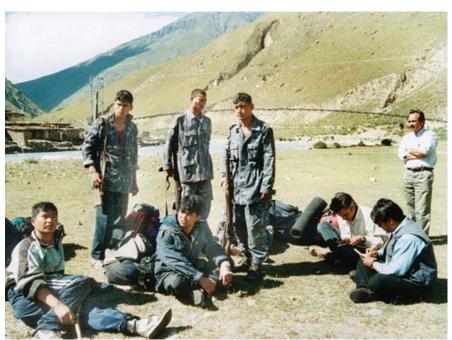
Yamaha Valentine's

With Valentine's day coming up Yamaha has released the scheme 'Key to the Golden Heart' offering cashback up to Rs100,000 and a gold pendant and other key prizes. The winners will be declared through a weekly lucky draw.



Nepal aid for Turkey

Nepal is sending a medical team with relief material to the deadly 7.8M earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria this week. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authrity is coordinating the effort with the Prime Minister's Office. Tukrey has helped with a search and rescue team during the 2015 Nepal earthquake. The death toll has risen to above 15,000 and more than a million survivors are now trying to cope with blizzard



NARENDRA SHRESTHA / A PEOPLE WAR



A PEOPLE WAR

They initially did not harm the UML, which they regarded as fraternal Communists. This gave Maoists more access, since the UML was leading many local VDCs.

The 1997 by-election also benefited the Maoists since it was a hung Parliament and the NC and UML got Surya Bahadur Thapa and Lokendra Chanda Thapa of the rightwing RPP to take turns being prime minister, and gave people the feeling nothing had changed.

But NC won the majority in the 1999 election, which was a major setback for the Maoists. Girija Prasad Koirala, a staunch anti-Communist, became Prime Minister. By this point, the Maoists had started attacking the UML too, because of their local support.

The Maoist tactics were straight out of Mao's Red Book: start by capturing remote parts of the country, and cut them off. They extorted villagers and raised levies, and those who did not pay were made examples of: either killed, tortured or publicly humiliated.

One of the most tragic examples of this was the case of Muktinath Adhikari, a teacher from Lamjung who was executed in 2002 by the Maoists. In Okhaldhunga, where I come from, another teacher was dragged around the village and tortured until he died, and his body was hung from a tree next to his school.

In another case, bank staff transporting money were looted. I wrote an editorial in *Deshantar* saying this was not a revolution but daylight robbery. In response, *Janadesh*, a mouthpiece of the Maoists, carried an interview with Baburam Bhattarai in which he said I should be buried alive in the same hole dug up to bury Girija Prasad Koirala.

Later, as editor of *Himal*Khabarpatrika, we were clear about



SORROW OF WAR: Maoist child soldiers in a corn field in the Tarai in 2004 (*far left*). Yubaraj Ghimire of *Kantipur* with reporters in

Dunai in 2000.

A Maoist executed by the Army in Doramba in 2003. *Himal Khabarpatrika* cover of Muktinath Adhikari's murder in 2002.

our support for democracy, nonviolence and pluralism. And we never used the word 'terrorist' to describe the Maoists.

When the Maoists attacked Dunai in 2000, the first raid on a district capital, Yubaraj Ghimire, editor of *Kantipur*, chartered a helicopter to the site before even the state could do a proper survey. The next morning, pictures and testimonials of terrified villagers made it to the front pages in Kathmandu.

This became a trend. The attack on Naumule in 2002, and images of piles of dead bodies got similar coverage. I also used to assign photographers who were going with the dailies. But we were still not getting the real story, we were just counting the bodies. We felt we needed more independent reports, not propaganda from both sides.

For example, we bought 7 photographs of the Dunai attack in which it was clear that the Maoists were using child soldiers. The young boy was carrying a light machine gun. After it was published, the Maoists for the first time were defensive before the international community. They had previously denied ever recruiting children.

But we needed to do more, and especially to show how the conflict was affecting ordinary people. So we kept up with as much field reporting as possible when the Maoist attacks escalated. Other media were also doing in-depth coverage from the war zones.

The Maoists then started

countering this with their own perspective in the same newspapers. They sponsored trips for journalists to their 'base areas'. After the Royal Nepal Army entered the war in 2002, it started doing the same.

In 2004, the Maoists had taken a group of journalists to one of their mass meetings. The news and photographs were published in all major dailies, they all said 15,000 people had come to listen to the Maoist leaders.

Because we were a fortnightly magazine, we had a few more days to verify, so we went with 10,000. That evening before the magazine went to press, the reporter asked me to change it back to 15,000 because of the fear of repercussions from the Maoists. We went with 15,000, but after that we stopped accepting conducted tours.

By the peak of the war in 2000, the Maoist ambition was to oust both the NC and UML and ally with the Palace such that the king would head Narayanhiti and the queen Singha Darbar. This in turn heightened the ambition of the Palace, and its direct impact was on its reluctance to deploy the Army against the Maoists despite Girija Prasad Koirala pushing for it.

Koirala and other leaders asked the palace to mobilise the Army, but the palace would not budge. Nepal Police had only 25,000 personnel armed with 303 S. They were no match for the politically motivated and battle-hardened guerrillas.

But as the conflict escalated, the political parties were unable to circumvent the Constitutional provision that required the king to mobilise the army, and set up the Armed Police Force (AFP). The Maoists continued their offensive, and attacked the AFP, even killing its first chief Krishna Mohan Shrestha. Yet, the Army would still not intervene or even equip the AFP with proper weaponry.

No one knows how things would have turned out if the Royal Massacre of 2001 had not taken place, and the entire family of King Birendra wiped out. In the beginning, King Gyanendra continued the same policy, but then in 2002 he went a step further, declared political parties incapable, and took absolute power.

The Maoists were encouraged by this move, it brought them closer to their power-sharing deal with the Palace by excluding the democratic parties. The NC split over the decision to call a state emergency, and the UML was also divided.

Through all this, New Delhi still supported the monarchy, which gave Gyanendra the confidence to consolidate his authoritarian moves. But the Europeans and Americans entered into the picture, and given the strategic value of Nepal, saw the India-monarchy tie-up to their detriment. So when the West showed its hand, India backed off, and that was the downfall of Nepal's monarchy as well.

The Maoists could not take over the country with the force of arms, which was why there was a ceasefire in 2006. The insurgency did make Nepalis more aware of their rights, and the Maoists provided a platform for suppressed groups who were easy recruits. Doors did open for women, Dalits and excluded ethnicities, but in a real sense class, caste and ethnic divisions still exist.

In every other sense, the conflict ravaged Nepal and its people. It destroyed dreams and lives, it set back development. We would have achieved better results and sooner with peaceful democratic evolution.

After the 1990 People's Movement, Nepal's economy grew and there had been real hope for the future. Local elections had started to bring up accountable leaders. If this had been allowed to continue, Nepal would have been a different (and better) place today. The Comprehensive Peace Accord in 2006 was not an agreement, but a compromise.

But perhaps the biggest impact of the conflict was on the politics that followed. Today, Parliament is a farce, the Supreme Court has no dignity, and there is no real federalism. The younger generation is growing up with no knowledge of the Maoist conflict. Impunity is rife because those who committed atrocities have gotten away with it. As a society, we have become more intolerant.

Transitional justice is now synonymous with hypocrisy. The commissions mandated with delivering it have been taken over by politicians. The Maoist conflict has eroded not just democratic institutions, but the state itself. We must not forget to remember what the war did to Nepal and its people.

In the last 30 years we have made dramatic progress in some areas, but did we need a Maoist conflict for that?

It is easier to look at the positive aspects, and move on from painful memories. Ask the survivors and the relatives of the victims. If we must say there were some achievements of ten years of war, then we must also admit that there were bigger losses that are still being felt.

Rajendra Dahal used to be editor of Deshantar and Himal Khabarpatrika, and is now editor of Shikshak magazine.



KATHMANDU

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SCAN ME

VILLAGE **OFTHE** CLIMBERS

Only elderly farmers are left in a deserted Himalayan hamlet of Sherpa mountaineers

■ Text and Photo by Monika Deupala in Sankhuwasabha

he rooster starts crowing even before the craggy horizon to the east is silhouetted by a new dawn. The forested flanks of this isolated Himalayan hamlet emerges from the darkness. Wisps of blue smoke waft up from gaps in the corrugated roofs of houses, and there is a clatter of buckets as the villagers walk, coughing, to milk their cows. The frost on the grass shines briefly, to melt as the suns peers up from behind the ridgeline.

This is the little Sherpa village of Gautala in eastern Nepal. Its 14 households are composed mainly of elderly men and women. Most of the young men are high altitude guides, and are away preparing for the spring mountaineering expeditions on various Himalayan peaks.

Karchung Futi Sherpa, 64, takes off her gumboots and starts to prepare a breakfast of tsampa porridge. But before that, she lights a butter lamp in front of a photo of the Guru Rinpoche and bows to pray.

In the kitchen, the kettle is steaming and she pours the water to make suchya, the fortifying salty butter tea, for her husband, Tsering Dorje Sherpa, who walks in with a bucketful of milk. They plan on making sarkam, cottage cheese from the milk later in the day.

The two are alone. There is only a cat sitting under a sun beam slanting in through the window, licking its paw.

Karchung Futi and Tsering Dorje (pictured milking, right) are one of the few people left in Gautala. Most of the houses here are locked up, with only grandparents like them remaining. There is no sound of children in the village, they are all away at schools in the city with their mothers, while their fathers are on expeditions.

The only primary school in the area is closed, and the building now houses the rural municipality office. The nearest school is two hours away, the local health post only has a nurse. The district capital of Khandbari is a 5-hour lurching jeep ride away. Unlike the Khumbu, Gautala is too remote to beneefit from tourism income.

At 85, Tsering Dorje's father is the oldest man in the village, and d to be evacuated by helicopter last year for hospital treatment for asthma. He could only afford it because his grandson has a seasonal job with mountaineering expeditions.

But the same occupation has also brought tragedy to most families in Gautala. Phurtemba, one of Tsering Dorje's sons was only 27 when he was killed in the avalanche on the Khumbu Icefall in 2014. He had climbed Mt Everest ten times, and also summited Manaslu, Kangchenjunga and Ama Dablam.

When Tsering Dorje heard the news, he rushed to Kathmandu, and was in such shock that he has only a faint memory of the helicopter bringing his son in a body bag. Now, he and his wife fear for their eldest son who is preparing for another expedition this spring.

Almost every house in this village has at least one family member involved in mountaineering or trekking. And each of them has someone who has died on the job.

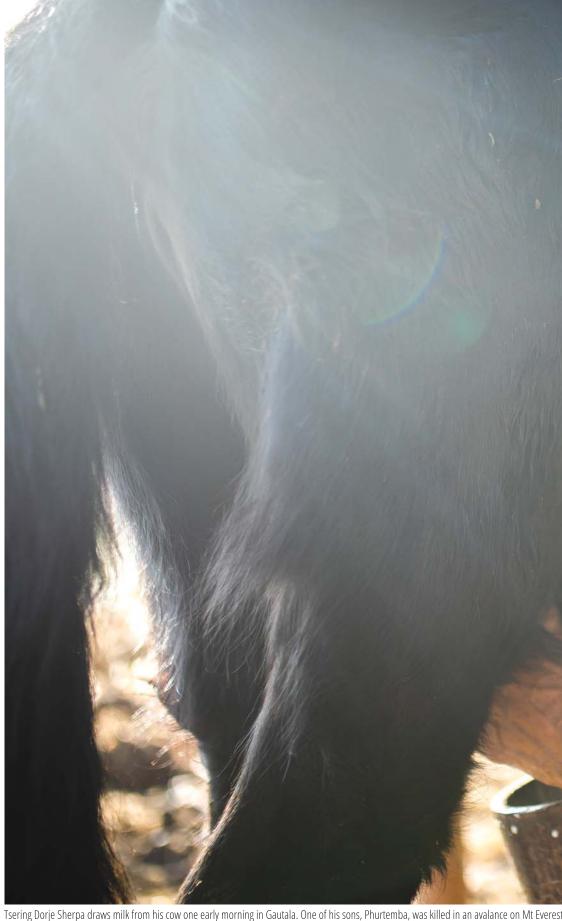
Mingma Tashi Sherpa, 63, recalls the last phone call he had with one of his two sons Pemba when he called from Everest Base Camp after summiting in 2019. "Pala, I just got back down, but I have to go up again guiding another group. Í will call in four days when I return to Base Camp," Mingma Tashi remembers his son telling him.

At 28, Pemba Tashi had already climbed Mt Everest three times, been on top of Lhotse and Manaslu and Himlung. But on the second ascent, he fell in the Khumbu Ice Fall, and his body was flown to Gautala for cremation two days later.

"I still cannot control my tears," says Mingma Tashi, wiping his cheek. "It feels like just yesterday we were talking on the phone. But he is gone.'

Mingma Tashi himself used to be a trekking guide in his younger days, and is now an amchi traditional healer. "But I cannot find a treatment for my deep pain inside," he says, eyes downcast. His son was a source not just of pride, but also status and money. He does not want to hear any more about the mountaineering business.

"The mountains might have given us good money, but nothing is greater than life. Can money buy life?" he asks.





The prayers stone memorial dedicated to Phurtemba Sherpa, who was killed in an avalanche on the Khumbu Icefall in 2014



Nima Sherpa poses in traditional attire. Her husband and children live in Kathmandu, she has stayed behind to care for her yaks.



verest in 2014.



Villagers gather for a meeting about an upcoming hydropower plant. Mountain Dew is the beverage for special occassions like this.

Mingma Tashi and his wife, Dolma, have a few cows and a small vegetable patch. Their elder son makes occasional visits. The daughters live in Kathmandu, and want the parents to move to the city. But the elderly couple do not like the noise and pollution there.

Tse Chi Bhute, 63, and Pasang Tharke Sherpa, 54, live in one of the houses above the village. The couple has five children who are well-settled in Kathmandu. Some are married and others are with expeditions. Their younger son broke his leg last year after he fell into a crevasse below Mt Everest.

"I fainted after I got the news. I heard the choppers were trying to rescue him but failed multiple times. I calmed down a bit after I heard that he was airlifted to hospital," says his mother Pasang Tharke.

After two surgeries in Kathmandu, the son can now walk on his own and tells his parents in video chats that he wants to be

back in the mountains as soon as he is able to – a prospect that terrifies his mother.

One of the couple's daughters works in Korea, and they sold their cows to buy a ticket to fly there to stay with her for two years. But they felt miserable, and returned.

"We like the air and water here, we may go for short visits to Kathmandu or abroad, but we always return," Pasang Tharke says. "And thanks to mobile phones we can be in touch with our children." Nima Sherpa (above) also lives alone, taking care of the family livestock. Her husband Mingma Tenzi Sherpa is a famous climber and he lives in Kathmandu with their daughter and son. She chose to stay back because someone had to take care of the in-laws and the yaks.

Nima is happy the children are attending good schools in Kathmandu, but misses them terribly. And she prays every climbing season for her husband's health and safe return.

"I have asked my husband multiple times to leave the mountaineering job, but he says he will stop when he turns 60," Nima says. "These days he has proper gear and training, so I am not as worried as before."

It has been only 70 years since people from Khumbu migrated and settled in Gautala because of its better climate and possibility of farming.

Ang Norbu Sherpa remembers how he tagged along with his father and brothers from the nearest village of Dobatak to Gautala when he was a teenager.

"Our grandparents cleared the forest and settled here to raise sheep, cows, yaks, and dzo. They made a living selling the wool down the valley," Ang Norbu says.

Riku Dorje Sherpa is said to be the first person from Gautala to become a mountaineering guide, but he was killed in 1991 after climbing Kanchenjunga. His body was never found. His brother Prem Lakpa Sherpa is now 55, and he stopped climbing after he broke his arm during an expedition.

On the way to Dobatak there is a memorial *mane* wall with Buddhist mantra dedicated to Riku Dorje.

As dusk fell, Nimfuti Sherpa, 24, called out to her cattle grazing on the slopes above the village. A *dzo* and a cows hear her, and clamber down to the shed. Her mother helps set up the cowshed for the night.

While many young people have left the village for better opportunities, Nimfuti has stayed, serving also as an auxiliary health worker in Gautala.

"I really like it here, the air is pure, and I like living with my family, taking care of them and helping with their daily chores," says Nimfuti, adding that her mother was also a health volunteer, and was her inspiration.

"I grew up watching my mother on home visits and make the sick better with medicines," she recalls. "I am happy to follow in her footsteps, treat patients, or refer them to Khandbari Hospital if they are in a more serious condition."

KATHMANDU

Sankhuwasabha

Mt Everest

Gautala

Nimfuti now hopes to turn her temporary job into a permanent one, for which she has been preparing for exams. For her, the village has been a communal space that she never found in any other part of the country. She dreams of working for her village and her family.

Her father Furtemba Sherpa, 51, has also dedicated his life to the village. He lost his brother and father in a mountaineering accident, after that he quit his own expedition job and settled in Gautala with the family.

He is helping Gautala build its own hydropower plant for electricity, and gets help to build and maintain trails and bridges

"My job may not seem important or earn lots of money, but it is important for us younger people in the village to take such responsibilities," he says, smiling.



Watch videos of village life in Gautala, where there are only the elderly parents and grandparents of Sherpa mountaineering guides. They fear for the safety of their sons doing the dangerous work on Himalayan peaks. More photos online.

EVENTS



Milano runway

View designs from Nepal's ten brands and designers at the Milano Runway Vol 2. 11 February, 7pm onwards, Club Farenheit,

Cottage festival

Municipality Ground, Pulchok

Shop local at the cottage festival and splurge on local handicrafts products, clothes and taste local delicacies Fridays and Saturdays, 11am-7pm, Lalitpur

Cave hike

Leave the troubles in the city and enjoy a six-hour hike to Aura cave and back 11 February, Rs700, 98510146161/9841178536

Walk for heritage

Mark the dates for the heritage walkathon to raise funds for rebuilding Bhaidega temple in Patan Darbar square.

18 February, 7am onwards, Rs700, Rotaract Club of Patan Heritage



Children's literature festival

DINING

A day of food, games and books at the children's literature festival. 12 February, 10am-3pm, Akshara School

Akari & Koko

Ihamsikhel (01) 5525002

Vivanta Hotel's Asian-inspired fusion

twists. Try their sushi and pad thai.

restaurant and bar serves an impressive

assortment of East Asian dishes with modern

MUSIC

Ser O Jooni

Spend the weekend with Ser O Jooni and enjoy original compositions and arrangements inspired by jazz, world music, Latin-American folklore, rock and experimental music.

11 February, 8pm onwards, Rs300-500, Beers N' Cheers, Jawalakhel



Valentine's live

An evening with pop singer Nabin K Bhattarai and the rhythm band this week. 14 February, 6pm-10pm, Vinoliva Restaurant and Bar, Lazimpat

Swoopna's songs

Celebrate Valentine's Day with live performance by Swoopna Suman. 14 February, 6pm onwards, Uptown Jhamsikhel



Evening with Migma

Be sure to have a wonderful evening with Nepal Idol Season 3 contestant Migma Lama 14 February, 6pm onwards, Ai-la Lounge, Kumaripati

Love night

Baker's Den

bread. Place orders here.

(01) 4416560 (01) 4411886

9869188070, 9848997461

Doko Deli

Feel the magic of music with live performances by Meghna Gewali and Anoop Shahi.

14 February, 6pm onwards, The Shot Station, Thamel

Is a loved one's birthday coming up, or need

a just-because cake? Order from Baker's Den.

Or get freshly baked doughnut, muffins, and

Take a pick from a variety appetisers, pizzas,

and pasta. Try the Mustang ko Piro Aloo.

GETAWAY



Barahi Jungle Lodge

The first eco-jungle lodge in Chitwan directly overlooks Chitwan National Park. Spa, boutique guest rooms, individual and twoin-one private villas, including a suite with a private swimming pool. Megauli, Chitwan (01) 4429820

Raniban Retreat

Located on a hillock of Raniban forest, this environmentally-friendly boutique hotel offers a spectacular view of the mountains. Pokhara (01) 5185435

Milla Guesthouse

If one prefers the quiet and admire a mix of old and new, this is the perfect place to stay. Not too far from the city, yet worlds apart. Bhaktapur, 9851024137

Soaltee Westend Premier

Located in the green plains of Nepalgunj, this expansive resort is one of Nepal's more energy efficient and eco-friendly getaways. Nepalganj, (081) 551145



Gokarna Forest Resort

The resort is a paradise, thick with century old trees rustling out natural tunes and great restaurants for fine dining. Golf anyone? Gokarna, (01) 4450002

Mitraan Da Dhaba

In the mood for something Indian? Head over to Mitraan and try out their delicious harabhara kebab, chicken Qorma and other Punjabi dishes. Hariharbhawan(01) 5539845



Roadhouse With every

Valentino Pizza enjoy a complimentary red velvet cake sponsored by Urja Jewels this Valentine's in all the Roadhouse outlets. Until 28th February

WEEKEND WEATHER











TUESDAY

Warmer, no rain

As expected in early February, things are beginning to warm up in Kathmandu, but with no end in sight to the 5-month drought. Both the minimum and maximum temperatures are picking up, even though the nights will still be on the chilly side at 6°C. Forest fires along the Himalayan foothills in Central Nepal are blowing smoke our way, which (combined with Kathmandu's own pollution) is keeping things hazy and filtering the sun. The ground fog in the Tarai is easing up, and usually is burned off by the sun by mid-day. There is a westerly system moving in from West Asia, and there is a 30% chance of rain midweek next week. Traditional belief is that it should rain on Shivaratri, which this year falls on 18

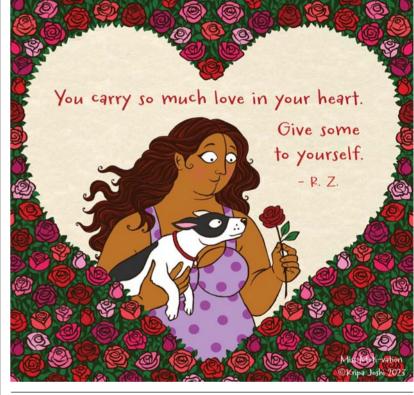
OUR PICK

In Martin McDonagh's critically acclaimed 2022 black comedy The Banshees of Inisherin set in the fictional Irish town of Inisherin, Pádraic Súilleabháin is blindsided when his lifelong friend Colm Doherty abruptly ends their friendship, cutting him out of his life. Heartbroken, Pádraic sets out to repair their relationship by any means necessary, but is shocked when Colm — who is determined to see their relationship end— delivers an ultimatum that could lead to devastating consequences. Stars Colin Farrell, Brendan Gleeson, Jerry Condon and Barry Keoghan.



MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI



सामाजिक सञ्जाल प्रयोगमा सचेतता अपनाऔं

- सामाजिक सञ्जालमा अपरिचित व्यक्तिको साथी बन्ने अनुरोधलाई विश्वस्त भएर मात्र प्रतिक्रिया जनाओं।
- अपरिचित व्यक्तिलाई जथाभावी साथी बन्न अनुरोध नपठाओं।
- सामाजिक सञ्जाल तथा अन्य विद्युतीय माध्यमबाट चिठ्ठा पुरस्कार जस्ता आर्थिक प्रलोभनका प्रस्तावको भरमा नपरौं।
- आफूले प्रवाह गरेका सन्देश वा सूचनाबाट समाजमा पर्नसक्ने नकारात्मक प्रभावको ख्याल गरौं।
- आफ्नो सन्देशले कुनै व्यक्ति वा अन्य कुनै समुदायको आत्मसम्मानमा चोट



#SERIOUSABOUTBEER WE PUT SERIOUS HOURS IN Warsteiner YOUR HAPPY HOUR.

Giving prayer wheels an arty spin

Taragaon Next exhibition features Bidhata KC's vision of healing in modern times

Ashish Dhakal

¬aragaon Next's 'Object in Focus' is a unique series that brings one object by one artist addressing one big idea.

Envisioned by curator Roshan Mishra to invite contemplation of contemporary art in Nepal, the series also featured the works of visual artists Koka Vashakidze from Georgia and Alicia Junissaliyeva from Kazakhstan about the origins of Boudhanath next door in a symbolic reprise.

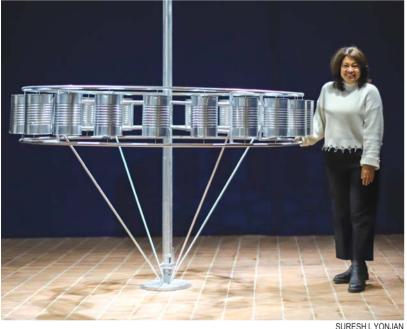
Now, Kathmandu's own Bidhata KC takes centre stage to depict the interconnectedness between daily life, consumerism, globalisation and spirituality.

A single installation connects heaven and earth through a metallic pole, like a bridge for elementary particles to commute. Two circular bars spread out, between which are the unmistakable mani prayer wheels.

other cans of worms (as it were). The use of tinplate cans, steel coated with a thin layer of tin, is climate-conscious art since steel cans are the most recycled closedloop packaging material. These increase the shelf-lives of products, protect them from damage by light, oxidation, extremes of temperature and contamination, safeguarding flavour, appearance and quality from factory to consumer.

Now, transform this thought on to KC's artwork: this striking marriage of generations-long spiritual traditions and a corrosionresistant symbol of consumerism with an ecological meaning gives one pause. What is KC trying to say here? One does not arrive at a conclusion, and that may be KC's

Instead, the viewer is asked to think outside the box - or cans. The tug-of-war between history and traditional values, practices, and modern politics, luxury, hunger, etc is often indispensable in



Auspiciously and coincidentally 21 in number, something is different about these wheels - they in fact look like tin cans, with corrugated bands an abstraction for the mantra that traditionally decorate the wheels. For support, oblique rods slant out from the circumference to the base of the pole.

'Object in Focus #6: Out of emptiness' has a myriad figures in addition to the mani wheels: a slightly open upside down umbrella, a downward arrow, or maybe a funnel. Such inversion may come naturally, especially with the overall and immediate image of things pointing towards the ground. Yet, the longer one looks, there is a sense of calm, an echo or reflection of shifting perspectives.

The viewer may even rotate the wheels and reproduce for themselves the feeling of walking through a sacred shrine, participating in the great cosmic churning of consciousness. One of the many theories behind the mani wheel, after all, is that rotating mantra relate to vogic or Tantric practices whereby practitioners visualise the mantra revolving around their *nadi*. It is doubly symbolic to consider that the rotations also indicate reading or chanting.

The exercise in abstraction does not end there. When we consider the material design of KC's artwork, it opens several

Nepali contemporary art. Aptly so, considering the unique position of the country's many living cultures.

KC's work gives this a little spin: not so much of a tug-of-war here, but something more fluid. Rather than being at opposing ends, KC invites us to consider how culture and modern life may in fac be informing each other, especially among the Himalaya, and people are not so much rejecting one in favour of another, but building practices and lifestyles that incorporate both ideas.

"The artwork is inspired by my own experience as a traveller, through my observations and memories," says KC, who also wanted to see what reaction would bringing a mani wheel to a gallery space evoke. "How does a wheel embossed with prayers compare to a simple tin can?"

KC believes that adding embellishment and confounding jargon would limit the art experience. Viewers also take a leap of faith when engaging with the piece, which itself necessitates the act of letting go, without which the boundlessness of a prayer wheel may never be reckoned with.

Object in Focus #6: Out of emptiness Curated by Roshan Mishra With support from Aakar Kalaghar and Contemporary Art of Nepal Foundation Taragaon Next, Boudha Till 15 February 2023, 10:00am - 5:00pm







VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

WWF Nepal, the global conservation organization leading international efforts for a living planet, seeks applications from qualified Nepali candidates for the following full-time position. If you think you are an achiever and are willing to work within a diverse team in a multicultural environment with commitment and passion for what you believe in, you are highly encouraged to apply.

The 2015 Paris Agreement put forward a new "Enhanced Transparency Framework" (ETF) to monitor, report and review information relevant to the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Each country is required to formulate and implement the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to achieve the worldwide goal of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. The purpose of the ETF is to provide a clear understanding of climate change actions and track progress towards achieving Parties' NDCs. Each Party is required to provide a **national inventory** report of human generated **emissions** by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases, information necessary to track progress made in implementing and achieving its NDCs and information on climate change impacts and adaptation. To support the Parties to meet the transparency requirement, the Paris Decisions established a Capacitybuilding Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) Fund with Global Environment Facility (GEF) as the operating entity. The objectives of CBIT are to strengthen national institutions for transparency-related activities in line with national priorities, provide relevant tools, training and assistance for meeting the provisions stipulated in Article 13 of the Agreement and assist in the improvement of transparency over time.

Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) through the GEF CBIT Fund aims to build Nepal's capacity to meet the transparency requirements. The Climate Change Management Division (CCMD) of MoFE will be executing the project in close coordination with key sectoral ministries (Federal and Provincial). A Project Management Unit (PMU) will be established under the CCMD at Federal level that will be responsible for planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the project.

NATIONAL PROJECT MANAGER

Major Responsibilities: The National Project Manager will be responsible for the overall project planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting, management, administration, and technical supervision of the project, on behalf of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and in coordination with the Project Executive Committee (PEC). S/he works in close coordination with implementing partners and other stakeholders. The position requires travel to different provinces of Nepal.

Qualifications: A Master's degree in Environment Science/Management, Forestry, Climate Change, or a related field with at least 6 years of working experience in the field of climate change mitigation and adaptation, including managerial level. Understanding of IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories and Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) is highly required. Engagement in UNFCCC processes, ETF related projects, national climate change policy and program discourse including Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plans, and climate finance is desirable. Experience in delivering technical and financial reports to donor agencies, project planning, monitoring and evaluation is required. Proven experience of working closely with governments, aid agencies, academia, and civil society. Demonstrated experience in integration and monitoring of gender and social inclusion in projects. Knowledge/experience with GEF Projects will be a strong advantage.

SENIOR FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

Major Responsibilities: The Senior F&A Officer will be responsible for all financial and accounting aspects of the Project including project budgeting, contracting, subrecipient monitoring and evaluations, and financial tracking and reporting in line with GEF and WWF GEF Agency requirements. The position requires travel to different provinces of Nepal.

Qualifications: A Bachelor's (Master's preferred) degree in Finance, Accounting, Business Administration, or related field with at least 5 years of relevant working experience including demonstrated engagement in any grant management, project budgeting, procurement, sub-recipient monitoring, donor reporting and proven experience of working closely with government of Nepal. Should have thorough knowledge of computerized accounting systems. Working knowledge of software like Adaptive Insight, SAGE, Workday, Smart Simple is preferable. This position requires attention to detail, the ability to keep accurate financial records and the ability to effectively prioritize and work accurately under time constraints. Knowledge/experience with GEF Projects will be a strong advantage.

PROJECT OFFICER

Major Responsibilities: The Project Officer will support in overall implementation of the project with special focus on monitoring and evaluation (M&E). S/he will provide technical support to the National Project Manager and other PMU staff in adaptive management practices and knowledge management and communications. This position requires travel at the national, provincial, and local level for meetings, data collection and verification.

Qualifications: A Masters' degree in Environment Science/Management, Forestry, Natural Resource management, Climate Change, or related field with at least 3 years of experience in project implementation of which at least 2 years must be in climate change related projects. Knowledge on IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories and/or Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) is highly desirable. Experience in Climate Change sector is required mainly related to ETF, climate negotiation, capacity building, climate mitigation etc. with proven experience in monitoring, analysis and report writing. Knowledge/ experience with GEF Projects will be a strong advantage.

Interested applicants are requested to download the application form from the website mentioned below and send the same with an application letter to the email address also listed below by 17:00 hours on 15th February 2023. Please mention the position you are applying for clearly in the subject line. Emails without an application letter and completed application form will not be entertained. Only shortlisted candidates will be informed. Detailed TOR for the above-mentioned position can be downloaded from our website.

Website: https://www.wwfnepal.org/get_involved/careers/

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Times

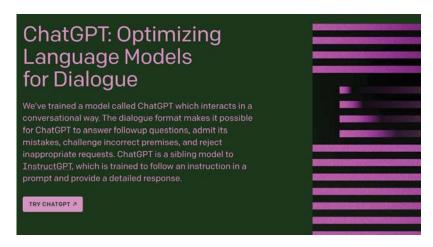
Nepali Times experiments with the new chatbot to generate news stories, with mixed results

Ince its launch ChatGPT has been a hot topic on the Internet. From writing poems to newspaper articles, completing MBA exams and medical licensing, the AI chatbot developed by OpenAI reached its 100 millionth user merely two months after its launch in November 2022.

To be sure, big tech companies like Google and Meta have also developed their own large language model tools. What set OpenAI apart was that its creators developed a user interface which lets the public interact with it directly. But schools and universities cannot decide whether it is a research tool, or a method for cheating in homework. Colleges have banned its use, and others are instructing teachers to redesign the syllabus and homework. In Nepal, people already have a nickname for it: 'ChatJPT'.

To address concerns about plagiarism, OpenAI itself came up with a new tool to detect if a text is written by AI or a human.

With international publications looking to use AI to generate news stories, *Nepali Times* simulated news stories with ChatGPT. Some prompts worked better than others and some of the generated texts also have outdated information, inaccuracies and biases. Here are the ChatGPT texts, even a poem and a back page Ass column:



Write a news story about the current ruling coalition in Nepal

KATHMANDU, NEPÁL – The current ruling coalition in Nepal is led by the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN-UML) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) (CPN-MC). The coalition was formed following the 2017 legislative elections and has been in power since October 2018.

The coalition, which holds a majority in the Federal Parliament, has been focused on addressing several key issues facing the country, including economic development, political stability, and the reconstruction effort following the 2015 earthquake. The government has implemented a number of reforms aimed at boosting economic growth, including the simplification of business regulations and the promotion of investment in key industries.

The coalition has also made progress in improving the country's political stability. It has successfully passed several important bills in Parliament, including the National Natural Resources and Fiscal Regulation Bill, which seeks to better manage the country's natural resources, and the Federal Civil Servants Adjustment Bill, which seeks to streamline the country's civil service.

However, the coalition has faced criticism from opposition parties and civil society groups over its handling of certain issues, such as human rights and press freedom. Some groups have expressed concerns that the government's focus on economic development has come at the expense of civil liberties and the protection of minority rights.

Despite these challenges, the coalition remains committed to pursuing its goals and continues to work towards a more stable and prosperous Nepal. The government has outlined a number of ambitious plans for the future, including the creation of new jobs and the expansion of infrastructure, which are aimed at improving the lives of Nepali citizens. The current ruling coalition in Nepal has been praised by some as a positive step forward for the country, while others have criticized it for not doing enough to address the country's many challenges. Regardless of these differing perspectives, the coalition remains focused on working towards a brighter future for Nepal and its people.

Write a news story on Rabi Lamichhane's citizenship debate

KATHMANDU, NEPAL — The citizenship status of popular Nepali television personality Rabi Lamichhane has been a topic of heated debate in recent weeks. Lamichhane, who hosts one of Nepal's most popular talk shows, has been accused of holding dual citizenship, which is prohibited by Nepali law.

Lamichhane, who has been a prominent voice in Nepali media for several years, has vehemently denied the accusations, claiming that he only holds Nepali citizenship. The controversy took a new twist when Lamichhane announced that he had been approached by the Ministry of Home Affairs to serve as the country's Home Minister.

The announcement has sparked a new round of debates and discussions, with some Nepali citizens questioning Lamichhane's suitability for the position given the ongoing controversy surrounding his citizenship. Lamichhane, however, has defended his claim to the position, saying that he has the experience and the qualifications needed to serve as the country's top law enforcement official

The Ministry of Home Affairs has yet to comment on Lamichhane's claim, and it remains unclear whether he will actually be appointed to the position. However, the debate over his citizenship status is likely to continue until the matter is officially resolved.

The controversy surrounding Lamichhane's citizenship is a reminder of the importance of clarity and transparency in matters of public importance. Nepali citizens have a right to know the truth about the citizenship status of those who serve in positions of power and influence, and it is crucial that the matter be resolved as soon as possible.

This story is developing and more information will be provided as it becomes available.

Write a profile of Pushpa Kamal Dahal, 'Prachanda'

Pushpa Kamal Dahal, widely known by his nom de guerre "Prachanda", is a Nepali politician and former rebel leader. He is best known for his role as the chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), which led a ten-year armed insurgency against the Nepali state in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Born in 1954 in the Kaski district of western Nepal, Prachanda became involved in leftist politics at an early age. He rose to prominence as a leader of the Maoist insurgency, which sought to overthrow the Nepali monarchy and establish a communist republic. The conflict resulted in the deaths of thousands of Nepali citizens, but also led to significant political and social changes in the country.

Following the end of the conflict and the establishment of a democratic republic in Nepal, Prachanda became a prominent political figure. He served as the country's Prime Minister from 2008 to 2009 and has been a key player in Nepali politics ever since.

Prachanda is known for his strong political beliefs and his commitment to leftist ideals. He has been a vocal advocate for the rights of marginalized communities, including indigenous groups and women, and has pushed for reforms aimed at improving the lives of Nepali citizens.

Despite his controversial past, Prachanda has been widely praised for his efforts to bring about peace and stability in Nepal. He has been instrumental in negotiations between the Nepali government and various political factions, and has played a key role in the country's transition from a monarchy to a republic.

Overall, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, better known as Prachanda, is a complex figure in Nepali

PASSAGES



imalaya Shumsher Rana, first governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, first finance secretary and international civil servant, died age 95 on 5 February.

A witness to political and seismic upheavals in Nepal and abroad during the last nearly 100 years, he was one of Nepal's 'progressive Ranas' who worked to institutionalise democracy before and after the

The liberal Rana Himalaya Shumsher Rana, 95

changes in 1951.

After a brief stint with Subarna Shumsher and the democracy movement, Rana did not get into politics, preferring to lay foundations to professionalise Nepal's nascent financial and banking system.

As secretary in the Ministry of Finance, he established the Department of Customs, set up the Auditor General's office, and started the tradition of announcing the annual budget. New bank notes of various denominations were issued in 1959.

Later, as the first governor of Nepal's central bank which was established in 1957, Rana began the three-year long process of replacing the double currency in use in the country at the time with solely the Nepali rupee as legal tender.

Also as Rastra Bank governor, Rana fixed

the exchange rate between the Indian and Nepali rupees, removing the fluctuating value determined arbitrarily by businessmen. The central bank fixed the exchange rate at Rs1.6 for an Indian rupee — which has remained constant for the past nearly 70 years.

"He always cautioned against tampering with the INR-NPR currency exchange rate," recalls Krishna Bahadur Manandhar, the former deputy governor of Nepal Rastra Bank. "There was an attempt later to bring the two currencies to 1:1 parity, but that did not last long. It shows just how far-sighted he was."

After King Mahendra's coup in 1960 when Nepal's first elected Parliament was dissolved, Prime Minister B P Koirala removed and jailed, Rana was sacked. The Palace had always been suspicious of his professionalism, independent views, and

liberal democratic values.

Rana then joined the United Nations and served for the next four decades in Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Pakistan, living through political turmoil in those countries — all recounted with personalised details in his memoir.

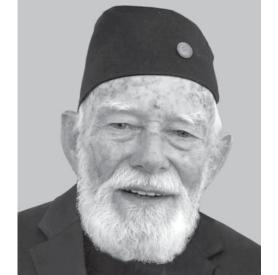
A second updated edition of his book *Reminiscences and Reflections* is due to be published later this year. He was also working on an insider look at the Rana family.

Rana returned to Nepal in 1993, and established Himalayan Bank in partnership with Pakistan's Habib Bank. Even in retirement he oversaw the signing of its merger agreement with Civil Bank last year.

He was also conferred Japan's Order of the Rising Sun by the Japanese Ambassador to Nepal in May 2022 in recognition of the Rastra Bank opening its first foreign account in the Bank of Japan in 1957.

Rana helped set up Gorkha Brewery to produce Tuborg and Carlsberg in Nepal under license from its Danish owners.

He used his considerable diplomatic skills to try to broker a peace deal between the government and Maoist rebels during the insurgency in 2004.



"Mero Pyaro Nepal" Cap Miller, SJ, 90

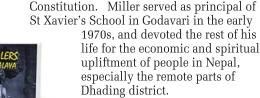
Jesuit priest and scholar Casper J Miller, who taught hundreds of students at St Xavier's School died on 15 January in Lalitpur after a career spanning 60 years in Nepal.

Miller, known affectionately to his students as 'Fr Cap' was 90, and had been bed-ridden for a month. He was cremated at Teku after a funeral service at Assumption Church, Jawalakhel.

Miller was born in 1933 in Cleveland, Ohio, and joined the Jesuit order when he was just 19, and first came to Nepal in 1958. Besides teaching and mentoring students,

Miller is best known for his classic book on Himalayan shamans, Faith-healers in the Himalaya, first published in

He also wrote *Decision Making in Village Nepal* in 1990,
long before political devolution
and decentralisation were
institutionalised in the new



According to colleague attending to him at the St Xavier's Jesuit Community in Jawalakhel, Miller's last words were: "मेरो प्यारो नेपाल" (My beloved Nepal). Nation

on 11

ChatGPT

politics. Despite his controversial past, he remains a powerful and influential voice in the country and a passionate advocate for the rights of Nepali citizens.

Write a poem on time and youth

®

Time, a river that flows, never to slow, A reminder of the years, slipping away as we grow.

Youth, a flame that burns bright, A precious gift, full of life, promise, and might.

Together, they dance, a symphony grand, Youth with energy, and time with its hand.

But as the pages turn and youth starts to fade, Time creeps in, with wisdom and age.

So hold on tight to the moments so fleet, And let youth guide you, as time you meet.

For youth will soon be but a distant dream, And time, the only constant, a silent stream.

So cherish each day, and make the most of your youth, For time is a thief, and it won't wait for the truth.

So live with passion, love with all your heart, And keep the fire of youth, forever a part.

Was the Buddha born in Nepal?

Yes, the Buddha, whose name was Prince Siddhartha Gautama, was born in Lumbini, Nepal, in approximately 563 BCE. Lumbini is considered one of the most important pilgrimage sites for Buddhists, as it marks the birthplace of the Buddha and is considered the birthplace of Buddhism.

Buddhism is a major world religion that originated in ancient India and has since spread throughout the world. It is based on the teachings and life of the Buddha, who taught that the path to enlightenment and the end of suffering is through the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.

Lumbini is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is visited by thousands of tourists and pilgrims each year. It is considered a sacred place for Buddhists and holds great significance in the history of Buddhism and the life of the Buddha.

Write an analysis on the new government of Nepal

The new government of Nepal took office in February 2018, following the successful passage of a new constitution in 2015. The government is led by Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist). Oli has established a cabinet of 22 ministers, the majority of which are

from the UML party, with the remainder from the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Center) and the Nepal Congress Party.

The new government has set about making a number of changes to the country's economic, social and political landscape. In terms of economic policy, the government has implemented a number of measures to stimulate and diversify the economy, such as introducing new taxes and tariffs, increasing public investment, and promoting foreign investment. In terms of social policy, the government has implemented a number of initiatives to promote gender equality, improve access to education, and increase access to health care. In terms of political policy, the government has emphasized the importance of decentralization and has made efforts to ensure that all citizens are represented fairly in the government.

Overall, the new government of Nepal has made a number of positive changes that have the potential to improve the lives of its citizens. However, it is still too early.

Write an analysis on Rabi Lamichhane and Rastriya Swatantra Party

Rabi Lamichhane and the Rastriya Swatantrata Party (RSP) have been a vocal advocate for democracy and human rights in Nepal. As a leader of the RSP, Lamichhane has highlighted the need for an inclusive government that respects the rights of all citizens and respects the rule of law. He has spoken out against the authoritarianism of the Nepalese government, which has led to human rights abuses and a lack of accountability. Lamichhane has also raised the need for economic and social reforms that can help create a more equitable and just society. He has also been vocal in advocating for the rights of marginalized communities, such as those in the Terai region, which is known for its underdevelopment.

The RSP has been a key player in the Nepalese political landscape since its inception in 2009. The party promotes a democratic, secular, and federal Nepal, and has consistently pushed for progressive reforms in the country. Under Lamichhane's leadership, the RSP has been active in the protests that have taken place in Nepal since the 2008 People's Movement. The party has also been instrumental in the formation of a new constitution in 2015, which has helped to bring greater stability to the country.

What did you think of Rabi Lamichhane's press conference?

As an Al language model, I don't have personal opinions or emotions, but I can tell you that Rabi Lamichhane is a Nepalese journalist, television presenter, and media personality. I don't have information on a specific press conference by him, so I cannot comment on it.

Write a news story on how climate change is affecting Nepal's mountains

Climate change is having a major impact on Nepal's majestic mountains, according to a new study. The study, conducted by researchers from the University of California, Davis, found that Nepal's Himalayan glaciers are melting at an alarming rate due to climate change.

The researchers found that the glaciers in Nepal's Himalayan range are melting

at a rate of up to nine percent per year, a rate much higher than the global average. This is causing significant disruption to the region's water supply, as the melting glaciers feed into rivers, streams and lakes.

The study also noted that the melting glaciers are leading to increased flooding in the region, as well as an increased risk of landslides and avalanches. This is making life increasingly difficult for the people who live in the mountains, as their homes and livelihoods are at risk.

The researchers also noted that the melting glaciers are leading to an increase in the area's temperature, which is likely to have further impacts on the region's ecology. The findings of the study are a stark reminder of the urgency of tackling climate

change, and the need for governments to take action to reduce emissions and mitigate the im pacts of climate change.

The newly elected government in Nepal has promised to make tackling climate change a priority. It has pledged to focus on renewable energy, energy efficiency and

reforestation in order to reduce emissions and increase the resilience of the country's communities.

These efforts, combined with increased international support, could help to slow the rate of glacier melting and protect the country from the worst effects of climate

change. However, much more needs to be done in order for the government to make

Write a funny Ass column on the back page of Nepali Times.

Here is a sample funny column for the back page of a Nepali Times publication:

"The Light Side: Laughing Our Way Through Life in Nepal Welcome to the lighter side of life in Nepal! In a world that can often be filled with stress and serious news, it's important to take a step back and enjoy a good laugh. So, sit back, relax, and let's have a giggle together.

meaningful progress in tackling climate change.

Have you ever tried to hail a taxi in Kathmandu? It's like trying to flag down a unicorn in the Himalayas! The drivers always seem to be in a rush, even when they're not going anywhere. And don't even get me started on the traffic. It's like everyone forgot how to drive as soon as they got behind the wheel.

But it's not just the roads that can make us chuckle. Have you ever tried to understand a Nepali accent? It's like trying to decipher ancient Sanskrit. One minute you think you know what they're saying, the next minute you're lost in a maze of vowels and consonants. And let's not forget about the quirky customs and traditions of Nepal. Did you know it's considered good luck to whistle at night? I mean, who needs a dog when you've got a Nepali friend to scare away the ghosts?

So, there you have it, just a few of the many reasons to find humor in life in Nepal. Remember, laughter is the best medicine, and in Nepal, there's always a reason to smile."

DISCLAIMER: The above samples were generated by ChatGPT just as an example of the capability and limitations of the platform. They are not actual Nepali Times reports.



Netherlands to Nepal by bicycle

Low to high country, cyclist sees hope in how people along the way are adapting to the climate crisis

Ashish Dhakal

t international climate conferences, delegates from the Netherlands and Nepal always sit alphabetically next to each other. Now, a Dutch cyclist has pedalled all the way from his country to ours to highlight how climate collapse is affecting lands below sea level to the world's highest mountains.

Dutch-national Guido van Enckevort, 33, (at Thorung La last month, right) believes that refusing to own a car or fly reduces our ecological footprint, and he is putting that into practice by bicycling everywhere.

"The entire system should change, not just individuals," he says. "People like me who do not have to worry about our next meal also have a moral responsibility to change our behaviour."

In March 2021, van Enckevort started out on his bicycle named 'Ziggy Two-Shoes' travelling from the Netherlands, through the Balkans, Turkey, Armenia, and across Iran, Pakistan, and India. He was in Kathmandu last week before pedalling on to Bhutan.

Along the way, he is collecting stories of how communities are adapting to the impact of climate change. Back home, van Enckevort was working as a policy adviser for the Ministry of the Interior to find ways to transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

He arrived in Nepal three months ago, and says slow travel by bicycle means he sees more,



PHOTO COURTESY: GUIDO VAN ENCKEVORT

and it makes him more considerate of others. The notions of time, home, nationality blur while propelling himself on two wheels.

As he was crossing over from Pakistan to India, van Enckevort noticed that the only thing different about the people on two sides of the border was religion. Everything else

"One starts to see how similar people are on both sides of borders, how food and culture influence each other. You understand the world a little better," he muses.

And as soon as van Enckevort

crossed over from India, he knew there was something unique about Nepal. In a village outside Bardia National Park he played football with local youngsters at the edge of the jungle, as a golden

"During my nine-month cycling journey across Europe and Asia, I had played football in a dozen countries, but Nepal was different," recalls van Enckevort, pointing out how the children passed the ball among themselves, and worked as a team, not as individuals. "Scoring didn't matter and, most peculiar of all, the team's possession of the ball was paramount, not scoring."

He noticed that community bonds were tighter in Nepal, and gestures of affection he saw among Nepalis suggested to him that they mattered to each other. Van Enckevorth had not planned to use up all three months of his tourist visa, but ended up pedalling up and down Nepal.

He stayed with communities with their own organic system for doing things efficiently, wasting nothing. Every twig, every branch had a role as he helped farmers repair thatched roofs.

"In the West, we are messing everything up with consumerism and capitalism," adds van Enckevort. "Our ecological footprint is ten times more than Nepal. A warming planet disproportionately impacts developing countries, even though they are low emitters."

"We are also used to a certain

kind of lifestyle where everything is available," he adds. "Changes have to be made, but often these are perceived in the West as privileges being taken away. There is a more positive way to look at this, people are in fact getting things that are cleaner and better."

What makes him optimistic about the future is that Nepal can learn from mistakes made by the West. Different priorities call for different approaches, and the sense of community based on trust which he found in Nepal is important to build a sustainable future. Progress cannot always be measured in money, he says.

Western countries, for the most part, are more prepared for the impact of the climate crisis than those in South Asia. They therefore have a moral responsibility to helping countries like Nepal to adapt, he

Van Enckevort followed the pledges made at recent international climate summits, but laments the lack of trust and political will among countries. The West has an ethical responsibility, but it is also worried that money they pledge will be wasted by corruption.

After 14,000km, this pedalling Dutchman says a more harmonious planet is possible: "Nepal and the Nepali people made me optimistic, as long as you work together like those children playing as a team in Bardia, things can change for the better, and in a big way."

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