

BALANCE OF POWER

■ Sonia Awale

Probably the best thing to happen to Nepal's economy lately is India's refusal to buy more electricity. It could eventually force the government to expedite transmission infrastructure and increase domestic demand.

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) is losing billions in spilled power this monsoon because it cannot evacuate power. Some private producers have actually stopped generating altogether.

Installed hydropower capacity is touching 3,000MW this monsoon, and projects for a further 3,300MW are under construction. But domestic consumption is stuck at 1,800MW.

Nepal could export electricity, but India has agreed to buy only 452MW from projects with no Chinese involvement. Even if the full quota was exported, Nepal would only earn Rs20 billion, whereas the trade deficit with India is at Rs840 billion and growing. In fact, Nepal imported Rs20 billion worth of power from India last year to cover its dry season deficit.

"At the current rate, if we do not put up transmission lines in time, by 2025 we will be losing electricity worth Rs120 million every day in winter and Rs170 million during the monsoon," warned Kathmandu University engineering professor Bishal Silwal at a recent seminar.

NEA blames delays in substations and transmission lines on locals blocking construction. Kathmandu Valley therefore faces frequent power outages due to tripping even though there is enough power in the grid.

"The problem right now is not of supply but infrastructure," former NEA head Hitendra Shakya explained at the seminar. "It is a result of poor planning."

There is also lack of coordination between various agencies of the government to encourage domestic consumption with tax rebates for industries, battery-powered vehicles and household appliances. An average Nepali household consumes 325kWh of electricity, much lower than the global figure of 3,180kWh.

Former energy secretary Dwarika Nath Dhungel, who is the author of a new compendium on the political economy of hydropower, says:

"Exporting electricity should be the last thing on our list. We might be generating a surplus but we still import power from India during winter, let's first try to use the surplus to replace that import."

Indeed, while some 95% of Nepal's population is said to have access to electricity, districts like Bajhang, Dolpa, Bajura, Jumla and Mugu are not yet connected to the grid. Nepal's wetter eastern half has most of the hydropower generation capacity, while the more arid west does not have enough.

Surplus power could also jumpstart Nepal's struggling industries, the tourism sector and agriculture. This in turn would create jobs so Nepalis are not forced to migrate abroad.

"Hydroelectricity should be a crucial element of our national development strategy so we make

its maximum use domestically and for employment. Only then should we be exporting power," adds Dhungel.

Using electricity to slash Nepal's petroleum import bill by just 10% would save the country at least Rs30 billion a year, and be a faster way to decrease the trade deficit with India. Improving public health by cutting pollution would be a bonus.

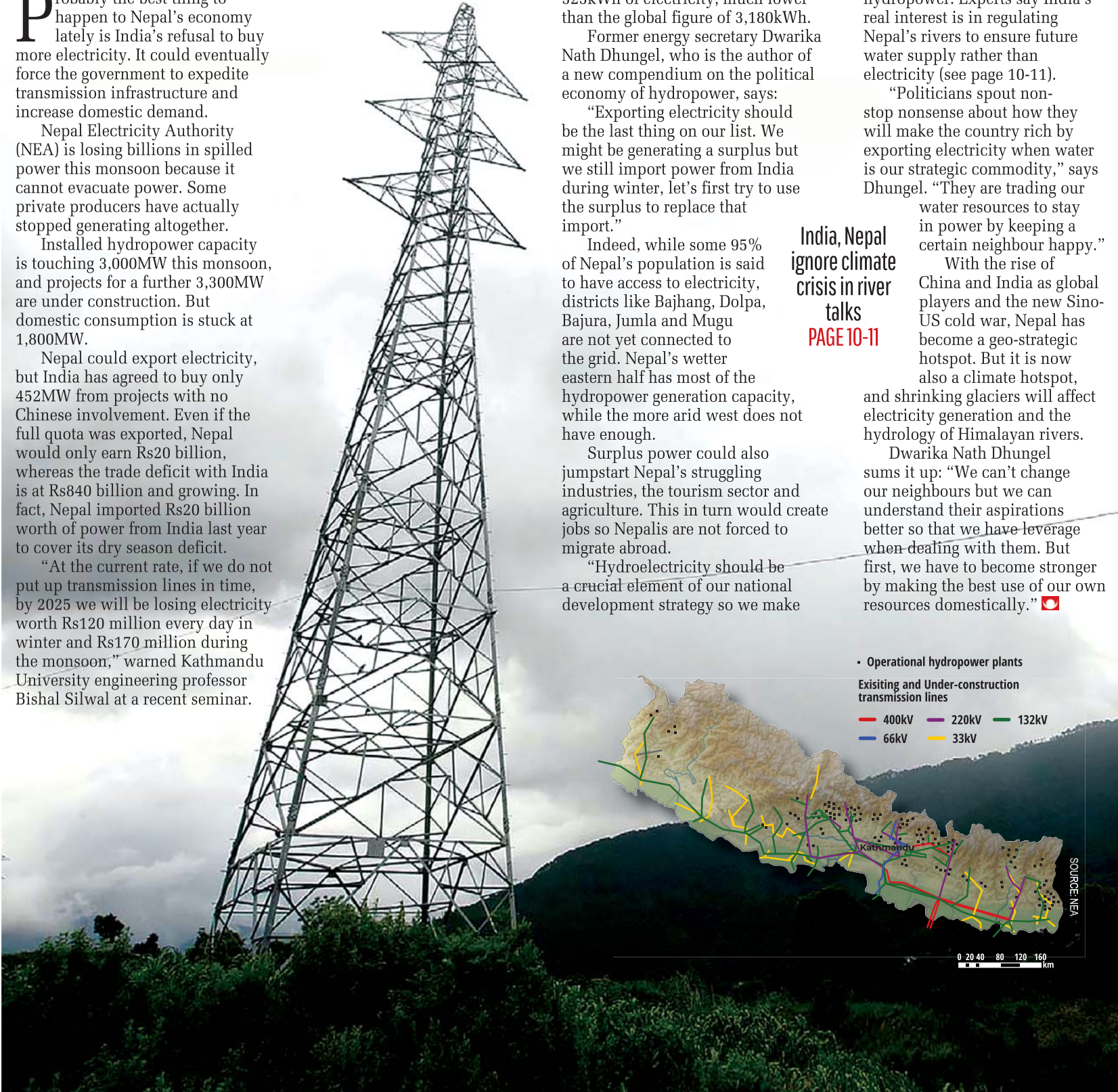
Nepal's balance of power with its two neighbours is also getting skewed with a tilt towards India, as New Delhi leans on politicians here to systematically cancel Chinese investments in hydropower. Experts say India's real interest is in regulating Nepal's rivers to ensure future water supply rather than electricity (see page 10-11).

"Politicians spout non-stop nonsense about how they will make the country rich by exporting electricity when water is our strategic commodity," says Dhungel. "They are trading our water resources to stay in power by keeping a certain neighbour happy."

With the rise of China and India as global players and the new Sino-US cold war, Nepal has become a geo-strategic hotspot. But it is now also a climate hotspot, and shrinking glaciers will affect electricity generation and the hydrology of Himalayan rivers.

Dwarika Nath Dhungel sums it up: "We can't change our neighbours but we can understand their aspirations better so that we have leverage when dealing with them. But first, we have to become stronger by making the best use of our own resources domestically."

India, Nepal ignore climate crisis in river talks
PAGE 10-11



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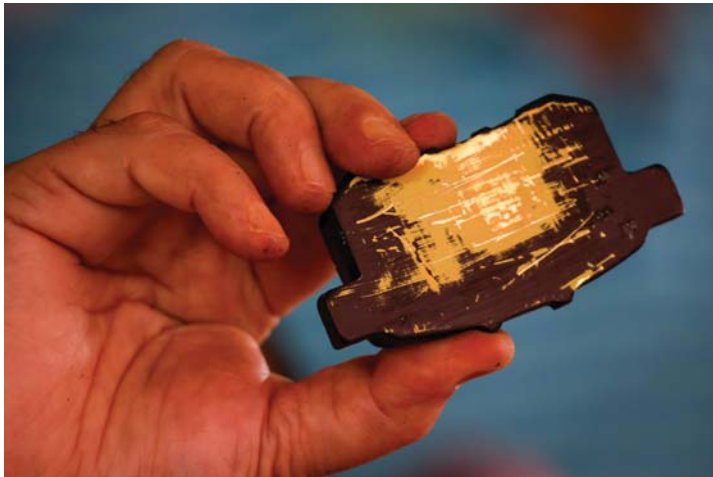
T & C APPLY

Gold Medal for corruption

On 18 July, the Department of Revenue raided the cargo terminal at Kathmandu airport and seized 61kg of gold being smuggled in from Hong Kong hidden inside brake shoes of two-wheelers. Although this was the biggest haul of contraband gold in the country’s sordid history, it emerged that the smugglers had already carried out similar jobs dozens of times before.

In the days following the raid, Nepal Police arrested 21 individuals involved, including customs officials, Chinese and Indian nationals, and middlemen. Top politicians and their cronies who were the alleged masterminds were not touched.

The names included former Maoist minister Barshaman Pun, former speaker Onsari Gharti Magar, the family of former vice-president Nanda Kishor Pun, and Maoist Centre vice-chair Krishna Bahadur Mahara and his son. Mahara was also said to be involved in another gold smuggling operation in December 2022 in which a Chinese national was found to have brought in gold concealed inside e-cigarettes at the airport.



GOPEN RAI

Investigative journalists then uncovered Mahara & Son trying to pressure officials to release the gold for auction. The Maoist leader has denied being involved, but police have phone records to prove otherwise. Meanwhile, the gold itself has vanished from storage.

The stench from scam after scam this year has become unbearable. If this was an international tournament, Nepal should get the Gold Medal for corruption. And these are just the scandals that we know about, away from the spotlight there is rampant extortion by politicians and bureaucrats of businesses throughout the land.

Interestingly, not a single politician from the Maoist party of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Home Minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha is behind bars. Nepali Congress (NC), opposition UML and Maoist defectors are in jail for the fake Bhutanese refugee scandal. The Lalita Niwas real estate scam has implicated just about everyone, even those who bought the property. But no Maoists.

Since senior figures from all three main

parties are now entangled in one scandal or the other, a devious effort is afoot to protect each other from prosecution. It seems Nepal’s feuding politicians can only agree to scratching each other’s backs. Case in point: the three-party meetings to discuss the UML obstruction of the house over the gold smuggling case.

NC president Sher Bahadur Deuba has continuously and blatantly blocked attempts to investigate his wife Arzoo Rana in the refugee scam, and pressured Prime Minister Dahal this week to transfer Kathmandu Valley police chief AIG Shyam Gyawali, SSP Manoj KC of the Kathmandu Valley Crime Investigation Office, and Chief of Kathmandu Police SSP Dan Bahadur Karki. Dahal was only too happy to oblige since his comrades were also knee-deep in scandals.

As it stands, Nepal’s jumbo coalition government is held together only by mutual distrust. Deuba and other parties of the coalition are keeping close watch so Dahal does not direct ongoing investigations towards their own leadership in retaliation. And Dahal needs Deuba so he can remain in power to continue to loot in cahoots with cronies.

Nepal’s Supreme Court also ordered investigations into CPN (Unified Socialist) chair Madhav Kumar Nepal and Nepal Socialist Party head Baburam Bhattarai in the Lalita Niwas scam, but that has not gone anywhere. Both parties are in the coalition.

Meanwhile, the government has concluded that the Gaur Massacre does not need an investigation. Dozens of Maoist cadres were brutally massacred in a 2007 confrontation. But since Upendra Yadav who was said to have masterminded it is now a key member of the ruling coalition, Dahal is willing to let bygones be bygones.

While scandals are erupting thick and fast, the Maoists are mum about their own embezzlement 15 years ago of billions meant

for their former guerrillas in UN-supervised demobilisation camps whose numbers they have admitted to inflating.

Even as the Prime Minister and the Home Minister keep giving speeches saying the rule of law applies to all equally, it looks like some are more equal than others. With a few exceptions, none of the big fish have been netted, and even those who have could now be let go because investigating officers have been removed and replaced with yes men.

Early on, it really did look like Home Minister Shrestha, the CIB and the Police were going after the big crooks, and that this would deter thievery. Alas, that was wishful thinking. The politicisation of crime and criminalisation of politics is now complete.

Shristi Karki

There is national consensus among politicians only when it comes to protecting each other from prosecution

20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Child soldiers

Eighteen years after the ceasefire and 28 years after the Maoist launched their armed struggle, Nepal is still discussing transitional justice for war crimes. The Supreme Court has ruled on transitional justice that includes the case of child soldiers.

Maoist leaders like Pushpa Kamal Dahal and former leaders like Baburam Bhattarai have maintained that conflict era cases should be the responsibility of the transitional justice mechanism and not the regular court system.

Former child soldiers have filed a case in the Supreme Court against Dahal and Bhattarai demanding punitive damages for recruiting them as child combatants.

Even 20 years ago this week, correspondent Naresh Newar had this page 1 report on child soldiers on Nepali Times issue #159 22-28 August 2003. Excerpts:

Children bear the brunt of war, but they don't even figure in peace talks. Worried about the neglect shown by the government and the Maoists to the plight of children in conflict, more than 24 child rights groups in Nepal have united for their protection and welfare.

Of the 226 children killed in the conflict since 1996,



more than half were under 15. According to the rights group, INSEC, the Maoists were responsible for 75 killed while security forces killed 151. In the third round of peace talks in Nepalganj this week, neither side thought it important to regret, apologise

or even mention this fact.

In 2002, the Maoists beheaded 14-year-old Raju Tharu in Bhimapur in Bardia. They left a note on his body warning other 'spies' would meet the same fate. In the village of Guthu in Surkhet, 14-year-old Prem Jaini was shot dead by the army in his classroom. No one knows why. Even after the January ceasefire, 14 children have been killed: three by the army, four by the Maoists and five from booby traps or abandoned ammunition.

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

ONLINE PACKAGES



THE MONK AND THE SARUS

Lumbini is not only the birthplace of the Buddha, but also home to the sacred Sarus crane. However, the birds' wetland habitat is threatened by plans to build hotels. Watch the story of one monk's struggle to preserve the birds and the sanctity of Lumbini. Go to nepalitimes.com for video.



INDRA JATRA

Locally known as Yenyā, Indra Jatra dedicated to the rain god Indra is marked with much enthusiasm and devotion by Hindus and Buddhists alike in Kathmandu Valley. Watch heritage conservationist Anil Chitrakar's retelling of the festival. Follow Nepali Times YouTube channel for more original multimedia content.

FLOODS

Disastrous neglect, greed, graft, and incompetence have resulted in Kathmandu becoming, as it has been for many years now, unliveable ('Kathmandu's Polycrisis', Sonia Awale, #1174).

Roger Ray

■ Kathmandu's rivers that once nurtured now threaten. Urban expansion leaves them confined, unable to handle even moderate rains. The time for action is now.

Raz Tuladhar

■ As in regions like Greenland, global warming is taking its toll up there in upper Mustang as well.

Bijay Punmagar

NEPALIS IN INDIA

Don't forget that Nepalis migrating for employment within Nepal or remaining at home also face many issues at work ('Love thy neighbour', Shrijan Pandey, #1174).

David Seddon

EQUIVALENCY

This is a terrible situation ('False equivalence in Nepal academia', Aastha Dahal, #1175). Clearly, the system is run by individuals guarding their turf, rather than those keen to find solutions and bring competence into the country's development. They all need to be replaced with new energy, positive and innovative leadership.

Bishow Parajuli

DR ISHIDIA

What a great inspiration ('The barefoot doctor of Rolpa', Pinki Sris Rana, #1175). Thank you Dr Ishida for your dedication and service to the people of Rolpa. I had an opportunity to also meet Dr Noboru Iwamura, who worked many years at the Tansen Mission Hospital in Palpa. Dr Iwamura inspired a new generation of health professionals and physicians for Nepal.

Devendra Pant

NIUGAD

We don't need this airport ('Fight or Flight', Editorial, #1173). The budget for this project can be used for other infrastructure of greater value to the economy and the ecology. Three underperforming international airports are enough for Nepal.

Gaurav

■ This has nothing to do with aviation, it is all about forest clearing and plotting land.

Dipak Gwayali

Times.com

WHAT'S TRENDING

Patan in Patna

by Swosti Rajbhandari Kayastha
A centuries-old tradition of cultural exchange between northern India and Kathmandu Valley got continuity recently with Nepal Art Council exhibiting ancient and contemporary art at the Bihar Museum Biennale in Patna. The arts of Nepal have blended engineering with art to create structures that incorporate style and substance. Review on our website.

Most reached and shared on Facebook

The barefoot doctor of Rolpa

by Pinki Sris Rana
Japanese surgeon Ryukichi Ishida has been working at Rolpa's Jaljala Health Post since 2011, a place so remote that even Nepali health workers are reluctant to be posted there. Ishida has made it his life's mission to serve in Nepal's remotest district. Visit nepalitimes.com for his profile.

Most popular on Twitter

Nepalis in the Russian Army want to quit

by Bhadra Sharma
In May videos of Nepalis in camouflage fatigues in Russian training camps began to circulate on social media. Other clips of Nepalis in the Russian Army followed. Now, they call home from the battlefield to say they were not trained, and have not got the salaries promised. Join discussion online and watch video on Nepali Times YouTube channel.

Most commented

Wine, women and song

by Daniel W Edwards
Young, wealthy and English-educated, Bishnu Shumsher found the conservative and austere atmosphere of the Rana court intolerable. He secreted his money out of Nepal, obtained a passport by fraudulent means and then, in violation of all caste restrictions, slipped out of the country and set sail from Bombay for the high life of Europe. Read full story on www.nepalitimes.com.

Most visited online page

QUOTE TWEETS

- **Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**
A Nepali returnee from #Russia, whose friends joined the Russian army and now want to come back, speaks on camera to tell to other Nepalis that the pay is not as promised, there is no training, and the #UkraineRussiaWar is brutal.
- **Aunohita Mojumdar @Aunohita**
A much less known dimension of the #UkraineRussiaWar : Nepalis, some who are students, joining the Russia-Ukraine war without adequate training or compensation, trapped in a desperate situation. @NepaliTimes #Nepal

- **Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**
Government wasting money on construction of view towers on already lofty peaks.
Myopic view tower building spree | Sarita Dahal
- **Forester @kuenvmgt504**
Viewtowers all those billion rupees wasted could have saved millions food medicines homes n jobs

- **Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**
#GuestEditorial Tribhuvan University gives Nepali graduates of foreign universities the runaround. False equivalence in Nepal academia | Aastha Dahal
- **प्र.अ. @SwatantraAatma**
EDUCATIONAL SYNDICATE
TU needs to change but no hope !!@SumanaShrestha @shisir @thapagk @RabindraMishra

1,000 WORDS



PRADEEP RAJ ONTA/RSS

ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL: Amidst scandals involving their leaders that has disrupted Parliament, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal held an all-party meeting at Singha Darbar on Monday.



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MYOPIC VIEW TOWER BUILDING SPREE

Government wasting money on construction of view towers on already lofty peaks



View tower at Thini village in Mustang.

RSS



The first-ever view tower built on the newly-opened Tribhuvan Rajpath in Daman. Photo taken in 1970.



Futuristic looking view towers in Toplang of Dhading and Kakani of Nuwakot.



Now that Nepal's local governments have run out of roads to bulldoze, they are building view towers on every mountaintop they can find.

It is hard to pinpoint where this fetish to construct towers on top of already very high peaks originates, but the trend could have been set by the first one built at Sim Bhanjyang on the Tribhuvan Rajpath in the 1960s.

But the view tower pandemic really started in the last ten years and accelerated after the election of local governments in 2017, when rural municipalities vied with each other to build concrete structures on mountain tops in the mistaken belief that it enhances the view and helps attract tourists.

In actual fact, they are eyesores and a colossal waste of money that could have been spent on health, education or repairing existing roads.

"Elected officials are trying to mask their failure to address the true needs of their people by wasting taxpayers' money on non-functional construction," Purshottam Nepal, formerly at the Ministry of Federal Affairs told Nepali Times.

Bagmati Province alone has built a view tower in nine of its 13 districts at a total cost of Rs238 million. Other provinces are trying to catch up. Gandaki Province set aside Rs180 million to build view towers on peaks that are already

very lofty. Kosi Province is spending Rs10 billion on view towers in 16 sites.

Even Sudur Paschim Province, which is behind other parts of the country in development, is afflicted with the edifice complex and set aside Rs2.5 billion which it can ill afford to build a view tower in Kailali district.

Except for the Valley's three districts and Chitwan, Bagmati

Province's Makwanpur, Nuwakot, Sindhupalchok, Kavre, Ramechhap, Sindhuli, Nuwakot, Dhading and Dolakha are all proud owners of at least one view tower each.

Because view towers have become so common, local governments are calling them 'hill stations', with some of them having conference centres, public toilets and other facilities to attract visitors. However, the structures

will only be handed over to local rural municipalities after their terms of reference for sustainable tourism are prepared, says Roshan Srivastav of Bagmati's Tourism, Industries and Cooperative Ministry.

If the municipalities cannot manage the facilities, they can be managed by local community forest user groups and can charge visitors' fees, Srivastav said.

Perhaps the most egregious

symbol of the view tower craze is the new SkyWalk tower in Kathmandu's Kamaladi neighbourhood. The hourglass shaped steel and glass structure cost Rs2 billion and has been criticised for being a jarring monolith that violates the Valley's traditional architectural style.

The 80m high tower has a glass floor on its top deck and has already become a 'selfie spot' for visitors, although the Rs1,000 entry fee is regarded as being exorbitant.

Barely 200m away, another 29-storey Kathmandu View Tower has been under construction now for 8 years, and has been embroiled in allegations of massive corruption. The half-complete Rs7 billion structure is currently being used as a car park.

Last year, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal inaugurated a view tower in Rolpa district at a cost of Rs600 million when the district does not even have an adequately staffed district hospital and its roads are in a permanent state of disrepair.

Not to be outdone, K P Oli of the opposition UML inaugurated another 12-storey view tower in Rupandehi district. Oli was Prime Minister when he allocated Rs1.5 billion to construct a 15-storey view tower in his constituency in Jhapa district.

Critics of these structures have poured scorn on social media, saying they are just manifestations of megalomania and a way for local politicians to award construction contracts to their cronies. Others said that since there were no more highways to be built, governments were on a view tower and airfield building spree without proper environmental and ecological impact studies.

Says Khemraj Nepal who used to be secretary in the Ministry of Local Development: "The need is for skills development, income generation, education and health, but none of the three levels of government are fulfilling this responsibility." 🇳🇵

Sarita Dahal



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NMB for health

NMB Bank is investing in quality healthcare at the local level by donating medical equipment to Dhulikhel Hospital, including a neo-natal incubator, anesthesia machine, and therapeutic hypothermia unit. Awarded Bank of the Year Asia 2021 by The Banker Magazine, NMB has 201 branches and 12 extension counters across Nepal.

BYD bao 5

Chinese auto giant BYD has introduced a new professional personalised sub-brand FANGCHENGBAO as well as Dual Mode Off-road (DMO) Super Hybrid Platform which strikes a balance between vehicle safety, powerful off-roading, and energy consumption. The first model of the new brand BAO 5, a super hybrid off-road SUV, was also launched during the event as well as a concept car BAO 8 and BAO 3.

The Case Challenge

Kathmandu University School of Management has won Golyan Group's Case Challenge Chapter One, where participants had to solve real-life problems in the agribusiness sector. Presidential Business School was runner-up. The Case Challenge is the first of four chapters by the Golyan Group, upcoming instalments will include manufacturing, tourism, and industry.



CMO Asia 2023

Ujaya Shakya, Founder of Outreach Nepal has been recognised with Asia's Most Admired Marketing Leader at the CMO Asia Awards 2023 in Singapore. Shakya has over 20 years in strategic communication and branding and has led impactful SBCC campaigns. The Awards recognised 40+ CMOs from esteemed companies.

Flights to Dammam

Nepal Airlines will begin direct flights from Kathmandu to Saudi Arabia's Dammam on 6 September at Rs35,000. This



adds to Nepal Airlines' 11 international destinations, but with only four Airbus aircraft there are fears the carrier is over-extending itself.

Global IME Capital

Global IME Capital Ltd. and Bank of Kathmandu Ltd. have merged to form Global IME Capital Ltd. The unified operation was inaugurated by Ramesh Kumar Hamal, Chair of the Nepal Stock Exchange Board. The integration combines merchant banking, issuance, sales management, custodial services, and institutional responsibilities.

Inflation nearly 8%

According to Nepal Rastra Bank's new report, consumer inflation for FY 2079/80 is at 7.74%, surpassing the previous year's 6.32% and the target set by monetary



policy at 7%. Sector-wise, transport saw a hike of 13.50%, entertainment 10.18%, health 10.01%, education 8.79% and household goods 8.65%. Kathmandu recorded an overall hike of 7.55%, Tarai 8%, hills 7.56% and the mountains 7.12%.

Imports decline

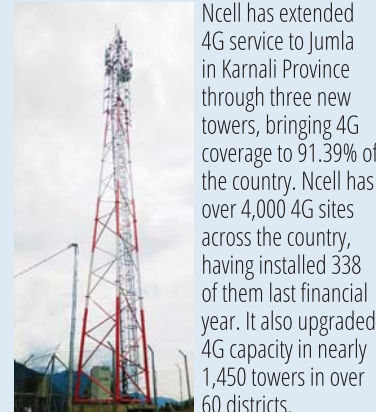
Nepal saw imports worth Rs1.611 trillion and exports of Rs157.1 billion in the last financial year, a drop of 16.1% in imports and 21.4% in exports compared to the previous year. Imports of sponge iron and chemicals saw an increase, while that of vehicle parts, medicine and oil declined. On the export side, zinc sheets and cardamom recorded a rise, but soybean oil and jewellery saw a decline. The trade volume also fell by 15.5%, leading to a deficit of Rs1.454 trillion.



Nepal-UN tie-up

President Ram Chandra Paudel met the United Nations Resident Coordinator Hanaa Singer-Hamdy this week where the two discussed Nepal's graduation from the least developed countries, sustainable development goals and the peace keeping operations as well as UN's five-year plan to support Nepal in inclusive economic growth, social development, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

4G in Jumla



Ncell has extended 4G service to Jumla in Karnali Province through three new towers, bringing 4G coverage to 91.39% of the country. Ncell has over 4,000 4G sites across the country, having installed 338 of them last financial year. It also upgraded 4G capacity in nearly 1,450 towers in over 60 districts.

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WHERE WILD THINGS ARE

Just a short drive from the Ring Road is Pulchoki, Kathmandu Valley’s biodiversity treasure trove

■ Mahendra Singh Limbu

Denizens of Kathmandu need to know that there is a wilderness area of super rich biodiversity just a 30-minute drive from the Ring Road. The 2,750m high Pulchoki is the highest point on the Valley rim, and a favourite picnic spot for the citizens of Kathmandu. Every weekend and on holidays hundreds of noisy picnickers flood the forest of Pulchoki in Godavari, and the blaring music and shouting scares the animals away. They also leave piles of trash. Unlike national parks like Shivapuri or Chitwan, Pulchoki is not guarded by the army. Yet its forests have been largely protected because of its steep slopes and community forestry groups lower down. And despite the destruction of trees by charcoal burners in the past, Pulchoki still shelters a wide variety of interesting mammals, rodents and reptiles. Though these denizens are not as large or outstanding as their relatives in national parks, they are still fascinating for wildlife spotters. The slopes are steep, some rocky cliffs, thickets, ravines, all cloaked in a cloud forest of oak and rhododendron covered in orchids and lichen and an undergrowth

thick with ferns. This makes it nearly impossible to see the animals, which is why any fleeting glimpse is so rewarding. The motorable road that meanders to the telecommunication tower at the summit is convenient for walking along, but that is not where the wildlife are. It is a matter of being at the right place, so the wildlife goes unnoticed as a result. But they are all there in the green shadows. **Friends of the Forest** I have been fortunate over the years to spot some of these friends of our forest, and here they are: If you hear a dog-like bark in the middle of Pulchoki forest

(regardless of the hours), it is a harmless **Barking Deer** (*Muntiacus muntjac*) that is voicing an alarm. This small deer is very shy and is more often heard than seen. The only species of the deer family in this forest, it frequents wild bamboo thickets (*Arundinaria sp.*), especially when they sprout young shoots with the pre-monsoon rains. It travels along ravines and steep slopes, an instinctive precaution in avoiding danger from its predator, the only large resident carnivore (aside from human poachers), the **Hill Leopard** (*Panthera pardus*). Its grating raspy call during the mating season (generally in the summer and winter) often



Green Pit Viper

becomes the only indication that a leopard is lurking nearby. They prey on Barking Deer, and will occasionally lift a dog, a goat or a cow. It is only when a female is tutoring her young in the art of a ‘clean kill’ that the action seems irrational. Some years ago, three cows were killed in a single night in a village at the edge of

the forest but were not eaten at all. They rarely harm humans, and do not deserve their blood-thirsty reputation. But one that is by definition blood-thirsty is the leech, which erupt from the undergrowth during the monsoon months. The **Yellow-throated Marten** (*Martes flavigula*) is slightly larger



Barking Deer



Yellow-throated Marten



Mongoose

The Malayan rainforest and its

The Rafflesia is the largest flower in the world, growing in the jungles where Gurkhas fought a guerrilla war

■ Hum Gurung in Perak, Malaysia

The Royal Belum State Park in Perak is the last remaining and largest continuous rainforest in Peninsular Malaysia, and these jungles were also where Nepali soldiers helped the British Army fight Maoist guerrillas from 1948-1960. With some 185,000 species of fauna and 12,500 species of flowering plants, Malaysia is one of the 12 megadiverse countries in the world, and a biodiversity hotspot. The jungle of Royal Belum has existed for over 130 million years, making the park the world’s oldest rainforest. It has a high concentration of large mammals including Asian elephants and Malayan tigers. The park also hosts the endangered helmeted hornbill and all 10 Malaysian hornbill species.



The author with a rare sighting of the Rafflesia flower in the Royal Belum State Park in Malaysia recently.

What protected the forest was also the insurgent activity when Malaya was under British colonial rule. The armed wing of Chin Peng’s Mao-inspired Communist Party Of Malaya (CPM) had launched a guerrilla campaign to end British rule.

The British Army fought back, and on the frontlines were its Gurkha commandos recruited from the mountains of Nepal, battle-hardened during World War II against the Japanese in these same forests. Tim I Gurung in his book The Gurkhas:

A True Story writes, ‘In order to protect those British interests of the early fifties in Southeast Asia (Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei in Borneo), the first battle the Gurkhas had to fight was the Malayan Emergency and it was a long, nasty and costly

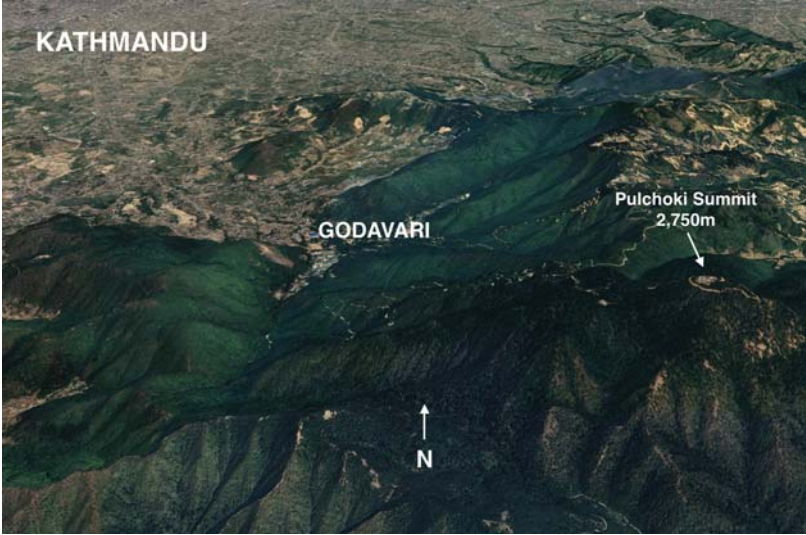


ALL PHOTOS: MAHENDRA SINGH LIMBU

than a rabbit with a black face, black feet and a long bushy black tail. This animal almost always hunts in pairs, both at night and in the day. This is a smart animal, which can open the hole of a bee hive with its sharp teeth, insert its tail, wriggle it around and pull it out along with angry but tasty bees. It also hunts the **Indian Hare**



Pangolin



Orange-bellied Squirrel

(*Lepus sp.*) and this is where working in pairs yields results as they zigzag to zero in on the quarry. The Marten also raids chicken coops in villages, to kill as many as it can with a clean bite through the head.

The nocturnal **Gray Himalayan Palm Civet** (*Paguma larvata*) likes cherry-berries of the painu (*Prunus sp.*) when it ripens in April. The tree is tall, and the animal defecates just before its descent, which it does head first with utmost caution.

The **Indian Civet** (*Viverra zibetha*) is comical in appearance, looking like a cross between the zebra and the raccoon. It visits the outer fringes of the villages and occasionally falls victim to dogs. It dines on smaller animals and likes to scavenge kitchen waste.

The **Jackal** (*Canis aureus*) hunts chickens, stranded goats, insects and anything that hops, skips, jumps or flies is in its eat-if-you-can-catch menu. Its howls are like a saxophone "Boo-bah, booah, boooha..." and local people believe hearing it is inauspicious. It definitely is eerie, but what makes it even more eerie is the superstitious belief of the local people. The author has heard this call on six different occasions and this belief has come to pass in five of them.

The **Jungle Cat** (*Felis chaus*) is much larger than the domestic house cat and its coat has a brownish dirty tint. Besides hunting rodents, wild cats have been known to make off with goat kids from the village.

The **Otter** (*Lutra sp.*) has a plump dark-brown body but very few people have seen this animal

colloquially known as "Oat".

The **Mongoose** (*Herpestes sp.*) is very cautious and keeps a safe distance from humans but can frequently be seen around settlements. Though this agile creature is noted for its skill in killing snakes, this activity has not been reported by any locals. Young chicken do fall prey.

Among the snakes on Pulchoki is the **Himalayan Pit Viper** (*Agkistrodon himalayanas*) which is quite common and is most active during the night. Brownish with black patterns on its body makes it easy to spot as a poisonous one but its venom is not usually fatal.

The other poisonous snake is the **Green Pit Viper** (*Trimeresurus albolabris*) with striking iridescent green scales that camouflages it well in the foliage while it waits for prey, and is as poisonous as the Pit Viper.

The **King Cobra** is a newcomer, though old texts mention it has been recorded in this area. A male and a female have been sighted on different occasions, both in and around ICIMOD Living Mountain Lab. Hibernation is in holes, under rocks, and sometimes in piles of rotting vegetation (including compost heaps).

The **Himalayan Black Bear** (*Selenarctos thibetanus*) can be dangerous if startled and can charge. There have been no reports of such attacks on Pulchoki, but it is prudent to be cautious. They climb trees to get at the acorns, leaving claw marks on the bark.

The rare **Pangolin** (*Manis sp.*), the Giant Flying Squirrel (*Petaurista petaurista*), the **Orange-bellied Squirrel** (*Dremomys lokriah*) and the **Indian Porcupine** (*Hystrix indica*) are all harmless and have their homes in the forest. The last known **Himalayan Tahr** (*Hemitragus jemlahicus*) of Pulchoki was wiped out by poachers some years ago but the **Wild Boar** (*Sus scrofa*) has made a successful comeback. Actually, too successful because it has multiplied prolifically and raids farms.

Pulchoki is also a birder's paradise, with 360 of the 890 species of birds found in Nepal spotted here. It is also a refuge for a vast variety of butterflies, dragonflies and other insects. There are very few places in Nepal that have such a rich repository of wildlife in such a small area. 🇳🇵

rare flower



Gurkha soldiers of the British Army in the Malayan jungles during the anti-Communist insurgency in the 1950s.

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guerrilla war that lasted from 1948 until 1960'. Although the insurgency was crushed with a scorched earth policy as well as the spraying of Agent Orange herbicides on the jungles, the guerrilla presence persisted

till 1989 and was under tight security. Even today, security posts stop travellers for inspection along the East-West Highway which traverses the jungle. The Royal Belum State Park was set up in 2007 with a 300,000-hectare forest complex

near the Malaysia-Thailand border, and is now a hub for research and eco-tourism. The Park is home to Rafflesia, the world's rarest and most threatened species. A *Rafflesia azlanii* blossom is featured on the Malaysian 10 Ringgit banknote and was named after the British founder of Singapore, Stamford Raffles. What makes Rafflesia so unique is that it takes nine months to blossom into a flower up to 1.2m in diameter with the smell of rotting meat, but dies within a week after pollination which makes it difficult for anyone to see it. David Attenborough featured the flower for a BBC Earth telecast and called it a "corpse flower" because of its extraordinarily foul odour. Given that the Gurkhas were deployed extensively in these jungles, one cannot help but wonder if the Nepalis saw and marvelled at this enormous flower with a stench strong enough to put off all enemies. Gau Lal Gurung, 96, is a Gurkha veteran of the Malayan campaign and a composer of the traditional Ghatu folk songs of his people. He spent much of his youth in Malaya, travelling for months through the remoter parts of the jungle hunting for insurgents. "We found plenty of guerrillas, but never came across a Rafflesia flower," Gurung says. Since the Rafflesia flower

blooms for a day or two, it is a rare sight indeed. One has to be lucky, and be at the right place at the right time. The Malaysian Nature Society set up over eight decades ago has been collaborating with the government for biodiversity conservation and environmental education. Programs including the BirdLife-led forest governance project and forest condition are under operation with the engagement of indigenous people Orang Asli. The Royal Belum State Park itself was recognised as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area in 2004 by BirdLife International. It is also the first to receive CA I TS (Conservation Assured Tiger Standards) in Southeast Asia. In 2019, it was also shortlisted on the UNESCO World Heritage Site list. But Malaysia is also one of the world's largest producers and exporters of palm oil. The multi-billion dollar industry has cost the country much of its rainforest to make way for palm plantations. A win-win plan is needed to safeguard the ecology and green economy — much like in Nepal where planners want to clear 80 sq km of native hardwood forest in the eastern Tarai to build Nijgad airport. 🇳🇵

Hum Gurung is the Asia Partnership Manager and Former Regional Project Manager of Asia Pacific Forest Governance Project, BirdLife International.

EVENTS



Prakriti
'Prakriti-Where The Gods Reside', is an artistic odyssey showcasing unseen paintings, abstract art, and digital animations.
Until 26 August, 12-6pm, Bodhisattva Gallery, Kupondole, 9851091255

Teej Mela
Discover the perfect blend of style and affordability at the Teej Mela, the destination for top-notch fashion finds.
Until 27 August, 10am-6pm, World Trade Centre, Tripureshwar



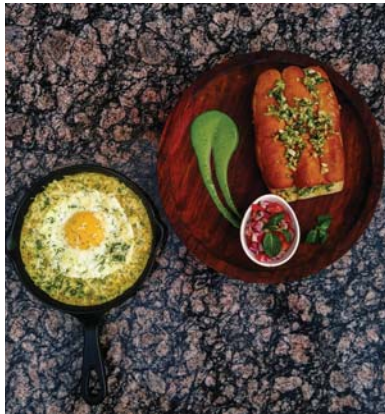
Gai Jatra Tour
Immerse in the vibrant tapestry of Newari culture during this full-day tour of the spirited Gai Jatra festival, and dance through the heart of Bhaktapur. Also includes a feast comprising of local cuisine.
31 August, 12pm onwards, Bhaktapur Darbar Square

Bird watching
Bird Conservation Nepal is organising a bird watching event this Saturday at Bajrabarahi Forest in Lalitpur. Do not forget to pack an umbrella or a raincoat. Call for details.
26 August, 6:30am, 9841653962



Photography Exhibition
Explore Nepal and its resilience, culture, and connections through the lens of six emerging photographers at the exhibition A Way of Telling opening this Friday.
25 August, 5pm, Patan House, Dhaugal

DINING



House of Eggs
Egg lovers can rejoice at this egg-themed restaurant. Try the savoury Amritsari Egg Chole, Potato Egg Rosti or even an Egg Sizzler.
Gahanapokhari (01) 4445330

MUSIC

Sukul Sessions
An evening of acoustic music awaits at Sukul Sessions: Volume II, where music students will grace the stage and showcase their talents.
25 August, 3pm onwards, Three by Four, Jhamsikhel



Kaleidoscope launch
The grand launch of Pokhara's Kaleidoscope Music Academy is set to be headlined by Nabin K Bhattarai and the Atripta Band. Book tickets at www.ticketsanjal.com
25 August, 6pm, Rs500-1000, Paradise, Lakeside, Pokhara



Maili
Join musician Ankita Pun for a musical evening this weekend as she unveils her debut album 'Maili' in Pokhara.
26 August, 8pm Rs500-1000, Paradise, Pokhara



Pahenlo Batti Muni
Experience an evening of experimental rock with Pahenlo Batti Muni. Free entry for all.
1 September, 7pm, Hard Rock Cafe

Monsoon Reggae
Groove to the rhythm of rain and reggae at Monsoon Reggae: A Tropical Delight, featuring Wind Pawan and Riddim Sons.
26 August, 3pm onwards, Rs500, Moksh, Jhamsikhel



Casa Mexicana
Enjoy a taste of Mexico with an assortment of tacos, quesadillas and burritos. From vegetarian to meat options, there is a lot to chose from.
Bakhundol, 9803624067

Olive Garden
Experience Italian cuisine with a carefully crafted menu and premium wine selection at Olive Garden. Call to make dinner reservations.
6pm-10:30pm, Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat, (01) 4511818 / 9851048331

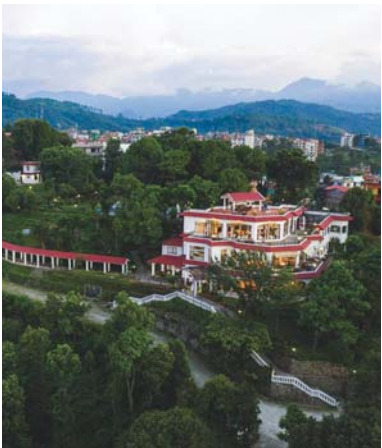
About Town

GETAWAY



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

Maruni Sanctuary Lodge
Take a peek at the wandering wildlife and lush nature of the Chitwan National Park From the comfort of the cabins and cottages of Maruni.
Sauraha (01) 4700632



Mirabel Resort
Perfect for families, Mirabel Resort offers comfort, continental cuisines and expansive views of Kathmandu Valley. Take a walk around Dhulikhel before trying out the mouth-watering barbecue.
Dhulikhel (01) 490972

Retreat at Damaar
A humble stay within the forestry of Kavre, Retreat at Damaar is ideal for those seeking peace of mind and a home away from home.
Bethanchowk, Kavre, 9851052442



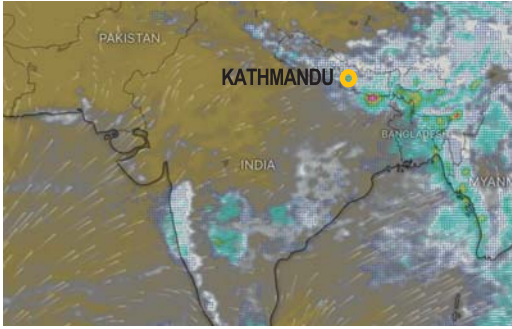
Gorkha Gaun Resort
Ideally located in the lush green hills of Gorkha and facing Manaslu in the north Gorkha Gaun Resort is just a four-hour drive away from Kathmandu. Settle into their homey rooms and try the local cuisine.
Gorkha, 9801001166

Buingal
With a variety of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options, Buingal has something for everyone. Give the vegetarian sekuwa a try.
Maitidevi (01) 4421393



Hermann Helmers
Get a variety of cakes, pastries, muffins, pie, bread, and other baked goods at Hermann Helmers German Bakery.
Pulchok (01) 5424900

WEEKEND WEATHER



FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
24° 21°	26° 20°	26° 20°	26° 20°	26° 20°

Relentless rain
The monsoon is going to get vigorous again before it starts its retreat in September. The Department of Meteorology and Hydrology is predicting a continuation of this week's rains although not quite as heavy as some of the downpours we have seen in Kathmandu. Still we are looking at nearly 20mm of rain daily over the weekend and into the next week. Thankfully this means the maximum temperature will hover in the mid-20s.

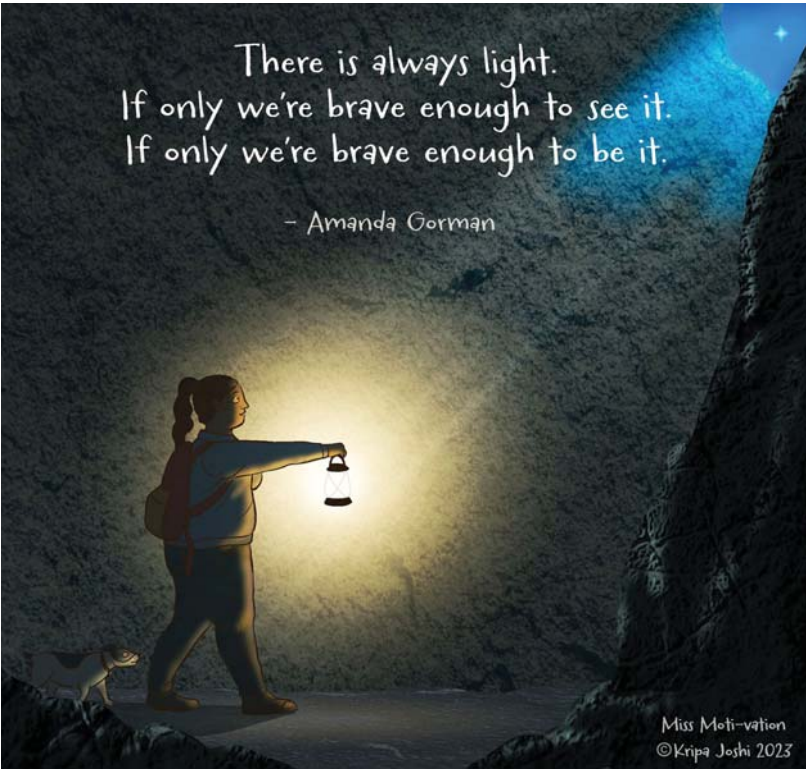
OUR PICK

The latest Cinderella adaptation, a 2021 romantic musical, is a modern take that uses the famous fairy tale to talk about women empowerment, pursuing one's dreams, gender fluidity, racism, and more. Ella is still a poor orphan who lives with a mean stepmother, except she gets a solid backstory this time. But this Ella wants to become a dressmaker, not a princess. There is Prince Robert, who has to make a rather tough decision about how he wants to live his life. And it is his sister Gwendolyn who has the real knack for leadership. Stars Camila Cabello, Idina Menzel, Minnie Driver, Nicholas Galitzine, Billy Porter and Pierce Brosnan.



MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI



गर्मी मौसममा संक्रामक रोगबाट बचाउँ र बचाऔं

- गर्मी मौसममा मलेरिया, कालाजार, डेंगी, हैजालगायतका विभिन्न संक्रामक रोगहरू फैलिन सक्छन् ।
- संक्रामक रोग फैलाउने झिँगा, लामखुट्टे, भुसुना आदिको नियन्त्रण गरौं ।
- संक्रामक रोगबाट बच्न शुद्ध र उमालेको पानी पिऔं ।
- बासी तथा सडेगलेका खाना नखाऔं ।
- घरभित्र र वरपरको सरसफाइमा ध्यान दिऔं ।



नेपाल सरकार
विज्ञापन बोर्ड

Remembering Pat Guru

New Zealand professor Patrick Devlin taught a whole generation of Nepali conservationists

■ **Shailendra Thakali**

Patrick Devlin who taught a whole generation of Nepali environmentalists at Lincoln University in Christchurch died on 16 August at age 86.

Many of us Nepali students in New Zealand knew him as 'Pat Guru', a name that was a mark of our deep respect as well as the closeness we felt to him. For five decades, he was involved in training professionals in his home country as well as Nepal and other Asian countries.

Pat's students now shoulder the responsibility of continuing his legacy in training national park wardens and professionals managing nature reserves.

When the history of the evolution of national park management is written, Pat will be remembered for his immense contribution to professionalising national park and reserve service in his home country as well as in Nepal and South East Asia.

Among more than 50 of Pat Devlin's Nepali students were Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa who helped establish the Qomolangma Nature Preserve in Tibet which shares its border with three national parks on the Nepal side, making it one of the largest protected areas in Asia.

Other students also hold important positions in international conservation organisations: Ghana Gurung heads WWF Nepal, Ang Phuri Sherpa is Executive Director of Red Panda Network International,



Patrick Devlin 1937-2023.

and Hum Gurung is Asia Partnership Manager for BirdLife International.

Other Nepali Lincoln alumni that Pat tutored include Shankar Koirala, who had a long stint with the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation and other ministries. Gopal Upadhaya, Megh Pandey and Phanindra Raj Kharel went on to head the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, and Mingma Norbu Sherpa was the head of WWF's Asia Pacific Program.

Mingma Sherpa was among the dozen prominent Nepali and international conservationists, officials and journalists who were killed in a helicopter crash at Ghunsa in 2006 during the

inauguration of the 2,035 sq km
Kanchenjunga Conservation Area.

Prof David Simmons, another of Pat's distinguished students, played a central role in establishing Lincoln University's Mingma Norbu Sherpa Memorial Scholarship with support from Pat Devlin, Mingma's family, WWF Nepal, and New Zealand. Ten Nepali students who got the scholarship have so far graduated with master degrees from Lincoln.

All national parks and reserves in New Zealand, and almost 70% of protected areas in Nepal were once managed by graduates from Lincoln University, Pat's base camp to educate and train conservation professionals. He was the main supervisor for the majority of

Nepali graduate and undergraduate students from 1970 onwards.

As a supervisor, Pat was very supportive but non-compromising when it came to the quality of work. Pat inspired his students to produce the best. I had the honour to be the last student he supervised when I went back to Lincoln University to pursue a doctoral program in environmental management in 2008.

Pat Guru
was more than a
supervisor to me.
Besides constant

encouragement and support, he and his wife, Maureen, were great hosts. They were kind to me and my family as they had been to a generation of Nepali students, made sure we were comfortable and enjoyed our time and experience in New Zealand.

During the 1970s and 80s, the majority of rangers working for national parks and reserves in New Zealand had no formal degrees or training. They chose the career out of a love for nature and the great outdoors, and were happy to take remote postings. As national parks and reserves started to become popular, park management grew more challenging and complex.

Pat was quick to realise this and devoted his entire life to developing

and teaching parks and recreation courses at Lincoln University, and most importantly grooming and mentoring the next generation of managers.

He was key to the design of 'Parks and Recreation' courses at Lincoln and also condensed the Parks and Recreation syllabus into six-week block courses for in-service park rangers that professionalised New Zealand's national park and reserve services and management.

Lincoln University under Pat also offered block courses to the Park and Forests service in Kuching in Malaysia. Pat also wanted to roll out his block courses in Nepal, but it did not materialise. There is an urgent need in Nepal to include multidisciplinary teams to effectively manage emerging challenges related to tourism, buffer zone management, climate change, human-wildlife conflicts, and local aspirations.

Pat was modest and generous to a fault. Despite his accomplishments, he was not one to brag about them or seek the limelight. Always calm and composed, he took all challenges in his stride.

My last meeting with Pat was in April this year. Despite failing health, he stood up, shook hands, smiled, tossed a drink, and made us feel at ease. He took immense pride in the achievements of his students, and kept in touch with them as much as possible right till the end.

Patrick Devlin's life work lives on in New Zealand, Nepal, Sarawak and around the world. His funeral was held in Christchurch on 23 August. 

Shailendra Thakali, PhD is a freelance consultant in environmental conservation, tourism and livelihoods.

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**SIPRADI**

India, Nepal ignore climate crisis

Bilateral negotiations disregard impact of the climate crisis in new hydropower deals

■ Ramesh Bhushal

This June, monsoon rains brought freak floods to the mountains of Nepal while parts of the plains reeled from a severe water shortage.

This has always been the story of the Himalaya: either too much water or too little. This contrast is now aggravated by the impact of the climate crisis.

While flash floods ravaged eastern Nepal, destroying hydropower plants, wells dried out in the Tarai on the border with India amidst a prolonged drought affecting rice planting.

The water table on both sides of the border has been going down due to over-extraction by deep tube wells as well as the destruction of the groundwater recharge areas of the Chure Range, the southernmost foothills of the Himalaya. The Chure is being ravaged by quarries, deforestation and population growth.

However, this transboundary water crisis is absent from bilateral negotiations on river sharing between India and Nepal.

Nepali Times columnist Chandra Kishore was the first to draw attention to the seriousness of the water crisis. He wrote in a page 1 report in this newspaper on 28 July: ‘The climate crisis is a water crisis, and access to water used to be determined by who bore deep wells for water. But even those with pumps do not have water, and the worst hit are the poorest families.’

Chandra Kishore has taken to social media to express his frustration that these important issues never seem to be on the political agenda in India or Nepal, and even less in conversations between the two governments.

“Kathmandu listens a bit but doesn’t act, since the leadership is too busy dealing with India on how to stay on in power,” he says. “And Bihar’s voice rarely reaches Delhi.” The Indian state is currently governed by a party opposed to the BJP that rules India.

Chandra Kishore’s frustration speaks to a wider failure by the Nepali government to prioritise domestic problems — from changes in the Himalayan water cycle and ecological destruction to a shortage of electricity grids – if they complicate or threaten economic ties with India.

Up to 70% of the annual water flow in the Ganges River comes down from tributaries in Nepal — most of that in the four monsoon months. These Himalayan rivers are central to the lives and livelihoods of millions of citizens in India and Nepal.

Poor water management in both countries with poorly designed flood control embankments and infrastructure, insufficient groundwater recharge, and over-pumping have worsened the effect of weather extremes due to the climate crisis.

Despite these factors, high-profile bilateral discussions between India and Nepal usually overlook climate change and



A drone shot of Arughat Bazar, one of the biggest settlements on the Budi Gandaki River valley bordering Gorkha and Dhading districts.



Dam site of Upper Karnali hydropower (900MW) in Daab in Dailekh district. The Indian company GMR is in the final stage to start construction of the project.

other environmental concerns. In 2014, the countries jointly issued a 35-point press release on Narendra Modi’s first prime ministerial visit to Nepal that did not even mention climate change. During the next four visits Modi has made, the climate crisis has never come up.

Rather than talking about the

vulnerabilities of their shared river systems, India and Nepal use these meetings solely to explore the potential to generate hydropower. Hydro-electricity makes up 96% of Nepal’s installed electricity capacity, and exporting power to India could help Nepal reduce its trade deficit.

During Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal’s visit to India in June, a long-term energy trade agreement was finalised. Prime Minister Modi confirmed in a joint press conference that India would import 10,000MW of electricity in the next decade.

Experts say that India’s main

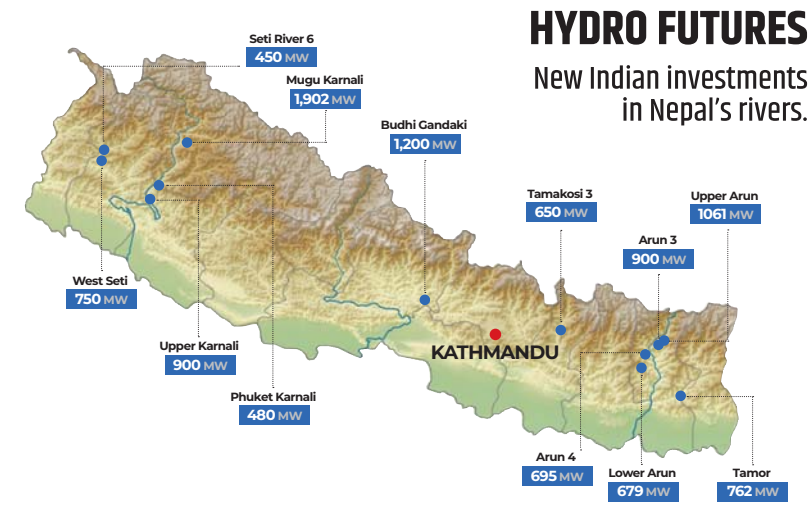
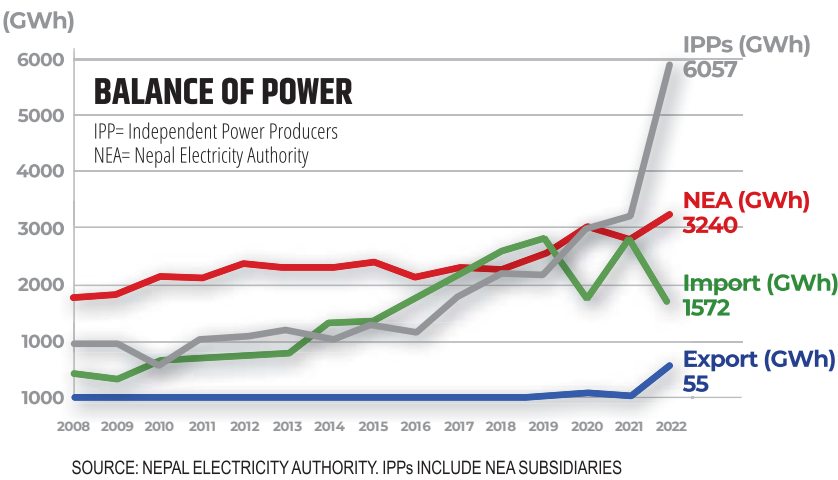
concern is not electricity but water, and its planners are fully aware of the impact climate change will have on future water availability. But Indian officials hide the real agenda by talking only about electricity.

Nepal’s former water resources minister Dipak Gyawali told The Third Pole: “To India, climate change is a foreign agenda and for Nepal, it’s something to talk about to be nice, especially with western countries.”

While Nepal negotiates with India to try to export more hydroelectricity, many within Nepal do not have adequate or reliable supply of power. The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has been trying to unsuccessfully increase domestic consumption, and one reason is frequent power cuts even during the monsoon.

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) spokesperson Suresh Bahadur Bhattarai says the installed hydropower generation in the rainy season is 2,800MW, while peak demand hovers at 1,800MW. There is surplus power, but there are not enough transmission lines to evacuate power (see page 1).

Energy experts say there has been too much focus on electricity



s in river talks



PHOTOS: NABIN BARAL

generation and not enough on transmission lines. Says former head of NEA Mukesh Kafle: “As a result, several hydro projects haven’t been able to dispatch generated energy to the grid and, with increasing demand, local distributions systems aren’t able to handle the load.”

Most of Nepal’s hydropower is generated by private investors, and one such is the Super Dordi in Lamjung district. The Dordi River is in full spate because of heavy rains this month, but the scheme with an installed capacity of 54MW is only generating 10MW.

Says Super Dordi’s Ganesh Karki: “If we had a transmission line, we could run at full capacity.”

The reason for power outages this monsoon is not because there is not enough electricity, but because inadequate transmission lines means the power generated cannot be distributed to the load centres, leading to frequent tripping.

Addition of vital transmission lines was held up because of the delays in the ratification of the US-funded MCC scheme, as well as local obstruction to putting up poles and obtaining necessary permits to clear forests.

“The outages are going to get worse if things remain the same,” the NEA’s Bhattarai warned.

The Independent Power Producers Association of Nepal (IPPAN) would prefer to sell power domestically, but since it is difficult to increase power demand within Nepal and meet it with enough transmission lines, exporting to India is the only option.

Nepal’s Department of Electricity Development has issued 241 construction licenses for generating more than 8,820MW. And there are hydropower construction applications awaiting approval that would generate more than 8,680MW.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of

Water Resources, Energy and Irrigation is working on a 10-year national hydropower strategy, but says it is not yet ready to share details.

Not everybody is as excited about selling electricity to India. Gyawali thinks such interest in Nepali hydropower is being driven not by market forces, but by the Indian government’s wish to exercise strategic control over Nepal.

India only imports hydroelectricity from Nepal that does not have Chinese investment or involvement. Indian companies have replaced China as the country’s principal investors in the hydropower sector. India is now involved in projects generating 4,000MW and a further 1,100MW was signed off between Dahal and Modi in June.

River conservationists are also worried about the domestic cost of developing hydroelectricity for India.

Megh Ale, president of the Nepal River Conservation Trust, says: “Imagine what will happen to these rivers if you just think about electricity. In the last two decades, we have dammed almost all our major river systems except the Karnali. We should also think about ecology and ecosystems while not undermining the need for electricity. The current madness will be costly.”

Several studies have warned that Nepal’s dams have already impacted aquatic biodiversity. A study by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 2018 says: ‘Damming of rivers has had huge environmental costs with serious and irreversible impacts, including a rapid decline in the population of many fish species.’

Basanta Raj Adhikari, the director of Tribhuvan University’s Centre for Disaster Studies says that Indian investment in Nepali hydropower is reason enough to take climate change into account: “It is going to impact India’s own investment. Extreme rainfall in June in the hills of eastern Nepal washed away several hydro projects.”

The Institute for Social and Environmental Transition (ISET) in Kathmandu released a report in June on transboundary rivers that originate in the Chure Range. It highlights that the various Nepali-Indian agreements governing these rivers are obsolete and do not cover sustainable water management, participation, or recognise emerging risks.

“It’s basically an underestimation of the scale of the problem,” says Ajaya Dixit of ISET.

A June 2023 study by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Kathmandu says the availability of water in the Himalaya is expected to peak in mid-century, driven by accelerated glacial melt, after which it is projected to decline.

It is not just Nepal, where the impacts of the climate crisis are being felt. This month’s devastating floods in northern India could also be a sign of worse to come.

Climate change is going to have a geo-strategic impact because of how it will affect our rivers. But so far, the concern of experts and scientists is not reflected in bilateral and regional consultations on river sharing. 🇳🇵

This version of the piece was originally published on The Third Pole under the Creative Commons license, and was written by Ramesh Bhushal, Nepal Editor at The Third Pole.

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खोजमुलक पत्रकारिता फेलोसिप -२०२४

भ्रष्टाचारमा शून्य सहनशिलता र शुशासनयुक्त विधिको राज्यका पक्षमा खबरदारी गर्न यही सरोकारमा जोडिएका बिषय रोजेर खोजमुलक समाचार-सामग्री उत्पादन गर्न बारबरा फाउण्डेसनले पत्रकारिता फेलोसिपको घोषणा गरेको छ । जनही २ लाख ५० हजार रुपैयाका चारवटा फेलोसिपबारेको प्रस्ताव भदौ मसान्त, २०८० भित्रमा आइसक्नुपर्नेछ । असोजको पहिलो साताभित्रैमा प्रस्ताव स्वीकृतिको सूचना आवेदकलाई गरिनेछ ।

शुशासन र भ्रष्टाचार, वातावरणीय परिवर्तनको मुद्दा, स्वास्थ्य र शिक्षा सरोकारका बिषयमा आउने प्रस्ताव स्वीकृत भएपछि आगामी चैत मसान्त (२०८०) सम्ममा तो किएको बिषयमा सोध र अनुसन्धानका समाचार/सामग्री प्रकाशित भैसकेको हुनुपर्नेछ ।

फेलोसिप प्रकृत्यामा सम्पर्क निकाय सचिवालयका रुपमा बालुवाटारस्थित बारबरा फाउण्डेसनको कार्यालयलाई तोकिनेछ ।

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