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# POLITICS AS A SPECTATOR SPORT

Some say politics is the world's oldest spectator sport. But it's not quite as simple as just sitting back and enjoying the show.

In Nepal, the most obvious interpretation is that of politics as a farce akin to professional wrestling, which the public got a taste of last Saturday with the staging of the Professional Wrestling Show 2011 at the National Stadium in Kathmandu. Inexplicably, Maoist Chairman Dahal showed up at the event to welcome the participants. Never short on wit, he declared Nepali politics 'even more unruly than wrestling'. He has a point. With 17 elections to elect a prime minister, seven months of a caretaker government, and now a month of the current unministered dispensation, 'farce' is perhaps too weak a term.

Politics is also a spectator sport in the sense that the audience – in this case the public – is often partisan to the extent that they exult when the other side fails, even if it is a loss for the country as a whole. Arguably the current crisis began with the fall of the Maoist-led government in May 2009. Chairman Dahal may indeed have



SUNDER SHRESTHA/KANTIPUR

overstepped his bounds and no longer deserved to lead a government, but most of his detractors could not hide their glee when he ran into the Katawal affair, whatever the consequences. Similar emotions are now at play while PM Khanal thrashes about, notably within his own party. Everybody loves to see a good downfall, but who really bears the brunt?

But perhaps the most worrying aspect of politics as a spectator sport is the fact of spectatorship. Instead of encouraging participation, our politicians are already backtracking on their commitment to take the draft constitution to the public. It's not just the public who are not privy to their indecisive 'decisive meetings'. The smaller parties have long bemoaned the tendency of the Big Three to monopolise decision-making, and even party cadres are forced to watch as their leaders jockey for power. And when one party chairman signs a secret agreement with another, it becomes clear that Nepali politicians perceive that participation and transparency constitutes, as Noam Chomsky says, an 'excess of democracy'.

We may not have much respect for any of those at the helms of our political parties. But these are the people who will eventually sign off on our new constitution and complete the peace process. In the coming days, the Nepali public must raise its voice to guide national politics. It must also seek to rise above partisanship and encourage positive developments towards the objectives of constitution-writing and the peace process – whoever deserves the credit for it.

## ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

### COME AGAIN?

Your optimism is infectious Hans ('Nepal Guest Year, Hans Hofer, #542). When I saw your note, the first reaction was good, I smiled. Then I came back to reality.

No, there is no other industry which has the same (immediate) potential as tourism in Nepal, but there is also no hope that this will ever become reality. This is all down to the fact that intelligence, planning, single mindedness, and execution are among qualities that are not this country's leadership's strong points. I do, however, recognise that there are centres of excellence in Nepal which actually do what you suggest they should.

Meanwhile, taking this whole thing to another plane, I don't even think that having to depend on tourism is such a hot idea for Nepal. I would rather have several smaller, more sustainable and less intrusive industries contribute to this country's (moderate) prosperity. This could include tourism, but the economy can't be dependent on it. I don't see why Nepalis should be the world's curiosity. But that's just me.

Over the longer term, (and this is only because you talk of a generation and since we are in the realm of dewy-eyed optimism) I believe there is more potential (and better margins) in value-added industries that fill the gap for both China and India.

Soni (Slarti)

- A very thoughtful and pragmatic

piece and Mr. Hofer should be thanked for his sage advice. He hit the nail right on the head: we Nepalis see tourists as money trees and, worse, actually look down upon them with a certain amount of cynicism as in, "Oh, here comes another kuire idiot tourist for me to milk dry and tease." We should take a page from Thailand: tourists are not only guests, they are royalty. Treat them well, make it a lifetime experience for them, and, as Mr. Hofer has pointed out, this will pay dividends in and of itself via word of mouth. What goes around, comes around: if we treat tourist like idiots, we're simply being idiots ourselves.

hange

### STAY AWAY!

NTB, the Tours and Travel Agents Association and the Nepalese government should be focusing on their PR strategy and less on the formal travel advice of all the different foreign governments. Here in the Netherlands there are many experienced travellers who advise positively on travelling to Nepal. The impact of this unofficial advice should not be underestimated.

Glenn Mitrasing

- Aubrey Caroline Sacco mysteriously disappeared along the Langtang trail in April 2010. Nepal hopes we have forgotten that Aubrey is still missing 10 months later. NTB is hoping everyone has forgotten about Aubrey and all the other tourists and trekkers that have disappeared in Nepal (like Julianne Wynne, Celine Henry, Gareth Koch, Kushagra Vasant Singh to name only a few). There is a reason for the travel warnings – to protect the foreign traveler.

Connie Sacco

### ART OF WAR

There are some things for which there are no words - and the children have captured it. Very sad ('Art of war', #542).

CT

### NEPAL AND THE UN

Now this is pathetic ('UN-Kul', Prashant Jha, #542). Gautam is one of the best candidates around. And yes, he praised Upendra Yadav in Los Angeles, Prachanda in New York, but they were all meant to be gracious. At his heart, he has always been a democrat and the most patriotic and professional person I have ever seen.

Chandra Gurung

- A very well pondered analysis of the topic as a whole. Well, I don't think Prashant is being less patriotic with this analysis. Obviously, Kul Chandra Gautam has experience in goodwill ambassadorship, but I think the kind of explicit support he gave to the President's move speaks of a lack of political vision that the disputed post demands. Even if he won there is little he can give in return though there is no doubt about his good intentions.

Nirmal

- Prashant, I don't know whether it's the way you present your arguments or the way you beat around the bush, but you end up misunderstood.

The criticism in this article is against: 1. the justification for KCG's election with Nepal's 'contribution' to the UN; 2. the implication that KCG's election will tangibly be beneficial to Nepal. There's nothing wrong

in critically analysing public figures. As for talking about how the election will affect Nepal's peace process and what the benefits will be, I don't see the point of such speculative and hypothetical thinking.

Gargi Sharma

- I think Prashant made an error in this article by focusing on Kul ji. Whether it was Kul ji or any other person, the main point is that Nepal made a mistake by competing for the position without having an idea what kind of diplomatic maneuvering is required to be successful. That's been a problem with Nepal in many areas, like passing laws just for the sake of passing laws, without knowing full impact or how to implement them. So it's not Kul ji's problem, but a problem with Nepal's diplomats, leaders and the bureaucracy in not understanding the gravity of the situation.

Sagar Onta

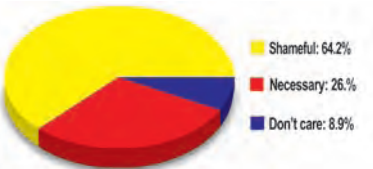
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Q. Rs 1000 tickets for quick access to Pashupati on Shiva Ratri?

Total votes: 2,717



Weekly Internet Poll # 544. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Should marijuana be legal for those above 18?



# The next Nepali revolt

GUEST COLUMN

Sagar Onta

The current turmoil in the Arab world and the uprising of the young and the angry surely roils the blood of many young Nepalis. It brings back memories of Nepal's many uprisings. But where have they left us?

We are still where we were in the 1950s, when Nepal's modern revolutions began. We are ruled by morally depraved, unethical leaders who legitimise their rule by claiming to represent the people and their interests. The lessons learned from our own history and that of the wider world is that we should not be fighting for or against a system of governance, but for a value system in society that rewards honest and ethical individuals. Even authoritarianism can beget positive outcomes if the leader is ethical and genuinely committed to the country, like Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, and the



KIRAN PANDAY

Nepal's many political changes have come to nothing because nothing changes with the politicians that we have

same goes for other forms of political governance such as a constitutional monarchy, socialism, or capitalism. The common thread tying together successful instances of such fundamentally disparate ideological systems of governance is a value system that allows honest people to make a living and realise their dreams.

Nepal's many revolutions have not been able to produce positive results for the poor because all our leaders are born and raised in the same

corrupt system that they claim to be fighting against. Should we genuinely expect them to bite the hand that feeds them? Whether they are communists, democrats or monarchists, they all received their political inculcation on the campuses of Nepal.

Youth politics is one of the main reasons why our revolutions have ultimately failed, even though at the outset of these movements the youth have been seen as torch bearers. Youth politics in Nepal has bred new

generations of leaders all of whom have been trained in coercive power politics. This perpetuates polarisation as a norm. It strengthens a power structure that is held together by force and with the help of the criminal elements of our society. This is hardly a basis on which to produce honest and ethical leaders for our future.

The next Nepali revolt should not be about one dictator, one political party, or one ruling class. It should be against a dysfunctional political system that has given birth to a generation of dishonest and unethical leaders. This will not be easy, given that the current leaders are in positions of power because of the support they have received from the politicised youth of Nepal. But if we really want Nepal's next revolution to succeed, we must hit where it hurts the most. We must de-politicise our society.

Recently, there was talk of tech-savvy youths joining hands to organise themselves. Whether they will succeed in energising their peers to act is a different matter. There have

been slogans about the need to free Nepalis from greedy leaders, about preserving the dignity and freedom of Nepali citizens, and the like. But for the common man, slogans don't mean anything tangible. They are just slogans, used to rile up the masses. For a real revolution, we need to liberate both our students and our unions from politics. We need to improve the efficiency of our government by reducing its size and bureaucracy. We need to implement strict accountability, transparency, and rule of law. Only then can honest men and women make a decent living without harassment from the government or political parties; only then will honest and ethical Nepalis earn the respect they deserve.

The next Nepali revolution will be as deceitful as the Maoist revolution if we do not address the core of our society's problems. If we want to be the next Tunisia or Egypt, we have to make our revolutions count. We need to have the courage to gut the system that has produced our political leaders. 🇳🇵

THIS WEEK

## Cabinet expansion

The UCPN (Maoist) standing committee meeting on Wednesday decided to join the UML-led government and named Krishna Bahadur Mahara as its leader in the cabinet. It has been claimed that the cabinet will be finalised Thursday following consultations with Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal. With the agreement between the Maoist leadership and PM Khanal that the home ministry will remain with the latter for the time being, it is hoped that the month-long delay in government formation is at an end.

## Bicameral parliament


The sub-committee under the Constitutional Committee on Tuesday reached an agreement to adopt a bicameral parliament, with the Maoists backing off from their previous demand for a unicameral legislative system at the centre. The parties have reached an agreement to have a bicameral legislature at the federal centre and unicameral legislatures in the provinces. However, the sizes of the legislatures and the basis on which they will be constituted are yet to be finalised.

## Home from Libya

The government on Tuesday decided to rescue all stranded Nepali workers in Libya, while bearing all their expenses including food and accommodation, at the earliest. The cabinet decided to initiate the process of rescuing the 1,961 Nepalis currently stranded in different parts of Libya following the mass protests against the government. More than 600 Nepalis have already returned home. The government has also issued an alert to humanitarian organisations to report to Nepali officials if they come across Nepalis in Libya.

## Kansakar jailed, hospitalised

Suspended chairman of Nepal Airlines Corporation, Sugat Ratna Kansakar, was taken to prison after he failed to submit the Rs 60 million bail sought by the Special Court Sunday. But he was subsequently taken to Kathmandu Hospital following complaints of chest pains. The court had earlier concluded that Kansakar had illegally proceeded with a deal to purchase aircraft worth Rs 10 billion, and sent the non-refundable lock-up money to European Airbus without making any arrangements for the budget.



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# Online incline

Giving 'window shopping' a whole new meaning

PAAVAN MATHEMA

Imagine visiting an online site instead of a shopping mall and browsing through pages instead of racks for the items on your shopping list, any time of the day or night. Can't locate that brand of jeans you're looking for? The search button will help you find it, and in your preferred size. No need to stand in a queue to pay for your purchases either, a few clicks and it's yours. Yes, it's possible – in Nepal, too.

Until a few years ago, the local 'online shopping industry' simply meant portals that helped the Nepali diaspora send gifts to Nepal. Now, businesses here are using the internet to reach out to more customers and expand sales. You can purchase groceries, clothes, accessories, electronic goods, air tickets...the choices are (almost) unlimited. You can even pay your utility bills.

"When we started out 10 years ago with an online extension of Muncha House, the support system for online shopping was almost nil," says Amrit Tuladhar of muncha.com. "But slowly, internet accessibility is increasing, and this is prompting businesses to go online."

Businesses as well as customers can reap the benefits of online shopping. Having an online showroom allows a business to cut costs on a real-life store and the manpower needed to operate it. "The number or kind of products a business wants to sell shouldn't be restricted by what can be displayed in a physical space," says Manohar Adhikari of foodmandu.com, which allows customers to view restaurant menus and get orders delivered to their homes.

An online shop also means many more customers can shop simultaneously, and it erases the need for a prime location. "Our store is not centrally located and having an online branch increases accessibility," says Ajit Baral of bookwormonline.com, an online bookstore.

Banu Poudel, Head of Operations at Bhat Bhateni, explains the rationale behind the online purchase-and-home delivery bhatbhateni.com: "Lifestyle changes mean that people find it more difficult to set aside time to come to our stores. An online space will make their shopping experience faster, easier and hassle-free."

Of course, with internet penetration across the country at just nine per cent, it will take some time for Nepali online shopping sites to replicate e-commerce models in widespread use abroad. The prevalent form of online payment, credit cards, is still not accepted in Nepal. "Credit card payments online are not yet an option," says Ujwol Manandhar, deputy IT head at Nepal Investment Bank. "Credit card companies demand very high collateral for the facility and the banks here do not have the capital structure to put up that risk."

Although some sites take cash on delivery, e-banking services and local payment portals such as e-sewa and payway are pioneering channels of online payment. The fact that e-sewa has conducted transactions worth Rs 110 million in its first year of operations says a lot about the potential for e-commerce here.

Says Bal Joshi of thamel.com: "The market will open up, the need now is to build the payment and delivery infrastructure that will help this industry progress."

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# Economy 101



**STRICTLY BUSINESS**  
**Ashutosh Tiwari**

On the trekking trails and in the small towns in Nepal, if you talk to young people about what they think of the market as a concept, there is only one word that sums up their feeling: bad.

And they have good reason to feel that way. They see middlemen making more money than, say, hardworking small-scale milk producers. They see traders jacking up prices and paying only a fraction to farmers who spend months growing the vegetables. They see transport cartels shutting down highways to stamp out any hint of competition. The list goes on.

If the market as a concept is bad, what then is the solution? Almost all young people respond that the government must do something...anything to



keep a leash on middlemen, traders, cartels and the like.

But when you ask them to list the achievements of the government in which they invest their hopes, they are stumped. Beyond pointing to the highway, assuming that one exists near their village, most have a hard time coming up with just what the government, both national and local, has delivered. Confronted with this, many young people then have doubts about the wisdom of the government reigning in the market. But they are unable to articulate why.

To help such young

people understand the role of an open competitive market in a democratic society, the organisation Samriddhi: The Prosperity Foundation has been running six-day residential Arthalaya camps since January 2009. This January, Samriddhi completed its eleventh camp and turned out its 264th graduate.

The way Arthalaya works is like this: young college students, drawn from both inside and outside of Kathmandu, are selected from among hundreds of applicants. Twenty-four students attend debates

Understanding how the market economy works could help young people work it for the good of all

and discussions led by entrepreneurs, policymakers and free-market thinkers on topics such as economic freedom, voluntary exchange, rule of law, morality of markets, enterprise building and economic policymaking. (Disclosure: the author is one of the lecturers).

Outside of classes, the participants are divided into groups of make-believe entrepreneurs, government officers, and the public. Over six days, each group plays its role: the entrepreneurs try to produce and sell goods to customers by competing with one another

on price, quality and service; government officers come up with tax rates, policies and (arbitrary) regulations that the entrepreneurs may not like; and some vocal members of the public call for bandas, making life difficult for both entrepreneurs and the government.

By the end of the camp, what the participants get is a vivid feel for how market actors and the government interact, disagree, compete or even collude in the real world. They often emerge with a new appreciation for the market, where open and free competition is more likely to ensure lower prices and higher quality.

The participants come away with new respect for the rule of law as a system that ensures that the same set of laws is equally applicable to all. They also learn that bandas and cartels impose real costs on people struggling to make a living.

Thus challenged to think differently, young people in Nepal start looking at the world with a lot more subtlety and skepticism. For far too long, they've been exposed to narrow, ideological thinking. If only there were a way to scale up Arthalaya's reach, Nepal's economy might finally be allowed to prosper. ■



**Green light**  
United Syndicate of Vaidya's Organisation of Industries and Trading Houses (VOITH) organised a traffic awareness program for over 60 drivers. The program

focused on proper parking and easing misunderstandings between the traffic police and drivers.

## Lucky cash

Moti Lama from Okhaldhunga has won Nagmani International's cash back scheme. The company had run a campaign to provide a 100 per cent refund to a buyer of a laptop at CAN Infotech 2011. Nagmani International is the authorised distributor for Asus, Transcend and Gigabyte.

## Anniversary bash

Partynepal, an event management company, celebrated its eighth anniversary recently. On the occasion, Partynepal Outdoors, a subsidiary company, was launched. The company now has three subsidiaries including Shreesti Multimedia and U-Turn Marketing.



## Imported beans

Milk Coffee n Cocktail Café has opened in Woodland Complex, Darbar Marg. The café serves two coffee brands – Boncafe and Starbucks, along with a selection of cocktails and snacks. Prices for a cup of coffee start at Rs 80.

## Birthday cookie

Cookie Man, an Australian franchise for cookies, celebrated its first anniversary with offers to customers. Located on the ground floor of NLIC City Centre, the store serves cookies, muffins and other baked products.

## Golf champ

Samir Acharya won the Himalayan Bank Open Golf Tournament held at the Tribhuvan Army Officers Golf Club. A total of 100 players participated in the event.

## Two in one

Everest Bank inaugurated branches in Krishna Nagar and Lumbini. The bank now has 41 branches across Nepal.

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GREEN SCENE

Saving vultures

In the last 20 years, the South Asian vulture population has gone down by 97 per cent. Even in Nepal, hailed for its work in vulture conservation, they are declining at the average rate of 17 per cent per year. The decline, attributed mainly to poisoning caused by the residue of the veterinary drug Diclofenac in carrion, has been so bad that three of eight vulture species found in Nepal are now critically endangered. Nepal recently launched a



ten-year program titled Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction (SAVE). The SAVE consortium brings together the Nepal government, NGOs working in wildlife conservation, and organisations in India and the UK to revive the dwindling vulture population. "It is not possible to protect

vultures through the efforts of a single country. A trans-boundary partnership is necessary to put policies in place that will displace Diclofenac across the region," says Hum Gurung, CEO of Bird Conservation Nepal. Recognising the devastating effect of Diclofenac on the vulture population, governments in India,

Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan banned its sale in 2006. But the use of the drug to treat livestock continues unabated. The problem has been compounded by the use of human diclofenac, which is still legal. SAVE is now working to replace the drug with Meloxicam, a much safer option, and also to protect vulture habitat and run a breeding centre for endangered vulture species. Six 'vulture restaurants' that provide Diclofenac-free meat and a breeding centre are already in operation in the country. Diclofenac-free zones have been declared in eleven districts. With SAVE, experts hope to raise funds and awareness and get countries to implement vulture-safe zones across Nepal's borders.

# उज्यालो 90 नेटवर्कमा

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\*शर्तहरू लागू हुनेछ





# Rolling back home

MICHAEL COX

Peter Donnelly's motorbike accident restricted him to a wheelchair, but compelled him to travel the world

After buying a one-way ticket to Bangladesh, paraplegic Peter Donnelly decided to 'roll back home' to the UK, quite literally. For the 24-year-old, this means travelling by bus and train across two continents, 14 countries, and over 5,000 miles in a wheelchair. "I want people to rethink what is possible when you have a disability," he says.

After a week in Nepal, and about a month on the road, Donnelly had raised Rs 350,000. Across the globe, people have been following his journey through his twitter updates, and they have been donating through his website, Just Giving.

Donnelly's aim is to raise Rs 600,000 to build a new rehabilitation centre in Moulvibazar,

in the Sylhet district of Bangladesh. Any excess money raised will go towards building more rehabilitation centres in Bangladesh. He dreams of building a network of centres across every district in the country.

After spending four months in Dhaka, Bangladesh, volunteering at a spinal injury rehabilitation centre, Donnelly decided to 'roll back home' because it was a good opportunity to raise awareness about spinal injuries. "It seemed like an adventure and it was something I wanted to do for a long time," he says.

Donnelly's itinerary in Nepal was certainly an adventure. He arrived in Kathmandu after a two-day bus trip from the Indian border, and his first stop was the SIRC spinal rehabilitation centre in Sangha. At

SIRC he spoke to patients about what is still possible from a wheelchair. As he explains on the Just Giving website: "Four years ago I sustained a T6 spinal cord injury (paraplegia) following a motorbike accident... Sure, things are more difficult than they used to be...I probably won't qualify for the Olympic high jump team but there is still a world of opportunity out there."

It's no secret that Nepal is under-resourced, but things are getting better for people with spinal injuries. "While Nepal doesn't have all the technology that some of the hospitals in the West do, they do have health professionals who know how to rehabilitate spinal injuries and that is the most important factor for patients," he says.

His wheelchair footrest broke on day one in Kathmandu. His twitter post read: "Footplate has been fixed after a couple of hours at the garage. Welding it failed, so stuck a couple of screws in it instead."

In Pokhara he got his first taste of paragliding and visited another rehabilitation centre, Green Pastures. He even managed to squeeze in an elephant ride in Chitwan National Park, despite the misgivings of the camp representative. "Outside the cities, the districts are not wheelchair friendly at all," he says, perhaps referring to bathrooms through which his wheelchair would not fit. "But I really like Nepal, the people have been very kind."

Melissa and Sunny donated to Just Giving, and posted the following on the website: "Good luck on your journey. We'll be thinking of you. God bless." 🇮🇳

To follow Donnelly (and check out videos of him on elephant and in the air) visit <http://twitter.com/RollingBackHome>. To make a donation to Peter Donnelly's foundation log on to <http://justgiving.com/rollingbackhome>.





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पनि हुँदैन । चोरेर, ढाँटेर, छलेर, लुटेर खान  
पो लजाउनुपर्छ । जो जहाँ रहेर जुन काम गर्छ ऊ  
त्यसैमा रमाउनुपर्छ गौरव गर्नुपर्छ र समर्पित  
भएर गर्नुपर्छ । काम नै शक्ति हो, भक्ति हो र  
मुक्ति हो । कामको इज्जत गरौं,  
पसिनाको सम्मान गरौं ।

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स्वचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय  
स्वचना विभाग

EVENTS



**New season of Katha Mitho Sarangi ko**, BBC's hugely popular radio drama. *Starts 4 March, 8.15pm on BBC 103 FM*

**Avatars and Interpretations**, an exhibition of mixed media works by Erina Tamrakar and Asha Dongol. *Till 10 March, opening at 5.30pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, 4218048, 4438979*

**Retrospective**, 1970 to 2011, selected works by Birendra Pratap Singh. *Till 24 March, Chai Chai Gallery and Cafe, Pulchok, 9808580436, 5528258*

**Disguised Harmony 2**, exhibition of paintings by Vijaya Maharjan. *Till 11 March, 4pm, Park Gallery, Pulchok, Gallery hours: 10.30am to 5.30pm, closed on Saturdays, 5522307, parkgallery@wlink.com.np*

**Call for entries for Film Southasia**, a festival of South Asian documentaries. 29 September to 2 October, early submission deadline: 31 May 2011, final submission deadline (for films made after April 2010): 31 June 2011. *Film Southasia Secretariat, Patan Dhoka, 5552141, www.filmsouthasia.org, fsa@filmsouthasia.org*

MUSIC

**Sunday Jazz Brunch**, enjoy a relaxing Sunday in The Terrace at Hyatt Regency Kathmandu with barbeque and live jazz music by Inner Groove. *12pm to 3.30pm, Hyatt Regency, Boudha, 4491234, 4489362*

**Absolute Live Music**, by Rashmi & Kitcha Band every Friday and performances by Shabnam & Cannabiz Band every Wednesday. *7.30pm onwards. Absolute Bar, Hotel Narayani Complex, Pulchok, Lalitpur, 5521408, 5549504, abar@wlink.com.np*



**Wax tailor in Kathmandu**, Alliance Française and 1905 bring the French hip-hop band to town. *7 March, 7pm onwards, 1905, Kantipath, Tickets: Rs 400*

DINING

**Milk Coffee 'n Cocktail Cafe**, coffee house during the day and a cozy lounge serving cocktails at night, try their yarchagumba and molecular cocktails along with the famous Starbucks. *Woodland Complex, Darbar Marg*

**Organic Café and Salad Bar**, hearty breakfasts and healthy salads while you catch up with your reading or emails in the heart of Thamel. *Chakshibari Road, Thamel 4215726*



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**Krishnarpan**, a specialty Nepali Restaurant at The Dwarika's Hotel, 6 to 22 courses, an authentic Nepali meal. *The Dwarika's Hotel, Battisputali, 4479488*

**The Great Kebab Factory at the Grand Hotel**, enjoy an exquisite range of kebabs. *Till 5 March, 3pm onwards, Tahachal*

**The Factory**, a trendy restobar with great food and drinks and zesty music. *Mandala Street, Thamel*

**Sandwiches and Crepes promotion at The Lounge** everyday from 11am to 6pm, **Vegetarian Buffet at The Café** every Tuesday from 6.30pm, and **Arabian Nights at The Café** every Friday from 6.30pm at *Hyatt Regency, Boudha, 4491234, 4489362*

**Lazy Gringo**, fail-safe Mexican restaurant. The lemonade with refills is what won us over, but the food is mighty fine. *Jawalakhel*

**Station BBQ**, don the chef's hat, make your own BBQ. *Jhamsikhel, 5522083*




**Singma Food Court**, for the best Singaporean and Malaysian cuisine in town. *Pulchok, 5009092 and Bhatbhateni, 4411078, foodcourt@wlink.com.np, www.singma.foodcourt.com*

GETAWAYS

**Overnight Package at The Dwarika's Himalayan Shangri-La Village Resort**, for local residents, package includes accommodation in Himalayan room, dinner and breakfast. *Dhulikhel, Rs 4,000 (Single), Rs 5,700 (Double). The package rates are subject to a 10% Service charge. For more information/reservations call 4479488 Dwarika's Hotel, Sales & Marketing Department.*

**Weekends Treks Out Package**, for expat and locals, 3 Days Kathmandu Valley Cultural Trek (Kathmandu/Lankuri/Balthali/Namobuddha/Kathmandu), includes 2 overnight stays in Lankuri and Balthali with meals, guide and drop & pick-up services. *Hima Nepal Tours and Treks, Lazimpat, info@himanepaladventures.com, 9841766561, 012081099*





*The Life of Food in Nepal*  
2010  
The United Nations World Food Programme Nepal

# From earth to plate

Whether in celebration, mourning or the everyday, food plays a central role in a Nepali's life. Last July, the World Food Programme staged a unique photo exhibition called 'The Life of Food in Nepal', showcasing a collection of 46 photographs by 18 photographers across the country. The photos have now been compiled into a coffee-table book that reflects the rich food culture of Nepal.

A family walks through a golden field of wheat, a line of mules carrying food marches up a mountain, a woman arranges fresh white yomari on a plate. The 'Life of Food' encompasses the lifecycles of foods Nepalis live on, from cultivation and production to transportation and consumption. It also communicates the hardships faced by farming families to put food on their plates – and ours – in the terrain of Nepal. The image of a farmer leading his oxen through a field, for example, reminds us just

how much we are still dependent on traditional agricultural methods. But amidst the hardship is hope, as symbolised by the image of a green oasis surrounding a homestead in the midst of brown, barren slopes.

Each section is introduced by short paeans to Nepal's food culture (including a few from environmental entrepreneur Anil Chitrakar), and personal accounts of struggle add to the book's value. But it's the pictures that speak volumes. 🇳🇵

*Paavan Mathema*



**SOMEPLACE ELSE**

Riding Kathmandu's organic bump is Sanepa's Bú Kebá, and if you imagine that means a convenient marriage of the rustic and the comfy for the expatriate crowd, you're half there. Bú Kebá is all thatched roofs and wooden platforms for semi-alfresco seating shaded by translucent white curtains, but the clientele is surprisingly diverse.

# Bú Kebá

Perhaps this has something to do with the welcome expansion of its menu, which now ranges over continental (meat mains, pizza, pasta) and Indian fare and includes a few intriguing originals. We paired the Anda Kebab (eggs marinated with tandoori masala, stuffed with minced chicken and served with achari gravy), with Nashilo Chyau ko Ras (oyster mushrooms flambeed with vodka and cooked with cheese, cream and fresh sage). Eggs-cellently imaginative, and the soup was the perfect consistency – just enough to remind you it's mushrooms and not powder

you're indulging in. We also tried a Vegetable Bruschetta, the dull toppings of which we thought wasted on the buckwheat, corn and millet bread. A salad drowned in dressing (albeit tasty) didn't help. But the buckwheat spinach pancake was impeccable. Kudos for making the most of 'local' ingredients and endeavouring to liberate us from the tyranny of rice and wheat! Though we didn't venture into our own 'selezione di pasta' by combining whole wheat and buckwheat pastas (sourced from Fab India Organics) with meat and veg



saucers, we did try a Goat Cheese Pizza with herbs. Good. But not good enough yet to be competitive with the likes of Roadhouse or F&I. As for the mains, we ordered mutton chops w/mash and local chicken stuffed with spinach and grilled mushroom w/tarul mash. They were both very well presented and portioned, and the chops in particular (curvy ribs inclusive) would impress any Nepali accustomed to fatty blobs of overdone khasi in curry. But the sauces were not as different as the menu made them out to be, and we couldn't tell the tarul from the potato mash. We ended with another of Chef Khatri's innovations – the Intercaste dessert, a cute

combo of orange and cream liqueurs that while distinct, eventually flow together. Bu Keba has a vision, with a knowledgeable, personable staff worth ingratiating yourself with; don't wait for the summer rush to get your table. 🇳🇵

*Nepalikukur*

Heading south from Hotel Summit, pass Hotel Greenwich, turn left and keep going until you pass the signage for SNV. Bú Kebá's on the left.



Space	★★★★★
Bread 'n water	★★★★
Service	★★★★
Deal-icious	★★★★
Rep-eat?	★★★★



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# Everest fever

**DHANVANTARI**  
**Buddha Basnyat, MD**

The onset of spring signals the start of a veritable onslaught on Everest. Gone are the days when climbing was limited to explorers and adventurers, the likes of Eric Shipton, Ed Hillary, Doug Scott, and Tenzing Sherpa. Now many climbers who aim to conquer Everest are ‘office workers’ affluent enough to use the services of a commercial guide to help them up the mountain.

Delving into the psychology of this new breed of climbers reveals much about human nature. Many climb out of interest and a sense of excitement. Others, however, may want to climb because of a midlife crisis. Intellectually, they may have peaked in their professions; but physically they may perceive themselves as wanting. What could be better for the morale than an Everest feather in their

caps? Except these days, every Tom, Dick and Harry (and Jane and Kanchi Maya) also appear to have done Everest. Today’s climbers may not always have adequate time either. Indeed, some years ago, an elderly Japanese team (all the members of the expedition were over 55 and were senior board members) decided that they wanted to climb Everest as quickly as possible, without acclimatising the old-fashioned way. So they brought plenty of oxygen cylinders, and used supplemental oxygen right from Base Camp. They successfully ascended the mountain in just over three weeks and reported back to work in Japan a week after their climb! The acclimatisation period, which may take about two months, demands patience. Acclimatisation means allowing the body’s physiological functions to adapt to the decreased oxygen level (hypoxia) of high-altitude terrain. So climbers have to wait it out in the inhospitable Everest Base Camp or higher to acclimatise to altitude over six to eight weeks before they finally make their bid for the summit.

As Peter Hackett, altitude illness expert and Everest summiteer says, “People can live for months at 6,000m, weeks at 7,000m but only days at 8,000m.” Heading to the potential ‘death zone’ of 8,000m you’re well-advised to understand that at that altitude, the human body is unable to acclimatise further. Good luck to those who’ve caught Everest summit fever this spring. 🇳🇵



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**HI-YA!** Students from Birendra Sainik Residential Higher Secondary School perform martial art stunts at a program organised to celebrate Army Day on Wednesday, in Tundikhel.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**CASHING IN:** Two housewives help a local painter meet the demand for painted number plates. Paint shops have been getting hundreds of orders daily after Valley Traffic Police started penalising digital number plates.



BIKRAM RAI

**GLOBAL FESTIVAL:** An Indian sadhu, a Nepali sadhu and a foreigner at Pashupati on Shivaratri, Wednesday.

## GUFFADI

# The King’s Speech

No...I am not talking about Gyanu Uncle’s last speech as the ‘last King’ of Nepal! The movie is about Prince Albert and later King George VI of them British Empire and his ‘stammering’ and the Australian guy who helped him to speak without bhak-bhaka-ing! I do hope...someday...our Nepali film-makers will also do a movie about our ‘House of Shah’. I really want to see the last 24 hours before ‘King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev’ threw in the towel and finished his last cigarette inside ‘Narayanhiti Palace’ and said ‘#\$\$@ it...I am leaving...for now.’ If only them King’s men read some books about them ‘British Monarchy’ or them ‘Pad Thai’ monarchy then things would have turned out for better hola ni! Some day...if we ever make a movie about ‘Gyanu’ Uncle...we need to get Geoffrey Rush, he can play anybody. Don’t worry...he is them actor’s actor ki kay bhancha ni. He will probably learn Nepali in 3 weeks, wear them daura-surwal and do them ‘Namaste’ too! The movie is about the man who went on to become a King but along

the way...he got some help with his ‘stammering’ from a failed actor and speech therapist! In the end...a common man helps the ‘Raja’ ... so let us all be thankful to them ‘little’ people who have made them so-called ‘great’ people...great, by either helping them to overcome their stammer or cook for them or wash their clothes or clean their rooms...lastuh ma ga-re-ruh...we all do our part ni! So our great civil servants are now planning to climb Everest rey! And them expedition ko kharcha is around Rs 3 crores rey! And who is footing the bill? As always, it’s us... the ‘poor’ taxpayers ni! I think we should have the ‘Everest’ clause in our new constitution! What? Like...if you want to be the Prime-Monster then you will have to climb Everest first... or something like that...I think Baburam could do it! And since Kamal Thapa is a big-tyam fitness freak...he could also finish the ‘Everest’ race hola! Maybe they can do them joint expedition hola ni...a little bit of Left and a little bit of Right... we better

find someone who follows them middle path or something like that or else...we are doomed forever hola! And our great President is having fun in Kuwait with them military parades and what not! Hope he gets some medal sedal from the Sheiks...something like ‘El-Amir Great Wanderer of the East’ title sitle! What the @\$#! is he doing in Kuwait? Them Kuwaitis even sent them private plane for our Prezzi rey! I think it’s about tyam our President had his own ‘Air Force One’ like Obama! We could give him one of them NAC ko old twin-otters...heheh! Or maybe he just wants some tyam off... before the ‘President’s Rule’ begins! And what’s up with our netas visiting them schools in Lalitpur ko gau sau and using them helicopters? Yestai ho...spend our money like it’s your bau ko dhukuti ni! Kuirey lay bhanchan ni... ‘Make them Hay say while them Sun Shines’...the sun is shining on them netas while the rest of us are caught in the middle of them freaking tornado sornado! 🇳🇵 <http://guffadi.blogspot.com/>

**WEEKEND WEATHER**  
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

In the Himalaya, the onset of spring means a gradual change in the wind direction, from northwesterly to westerly, in response to the northward movement of the sun. Satellite images of Thursday afternoon show fresh westerly fronts bringing clouds but with inadequate moisture to generate rain. Expect passing clouds, cooler nights and chilly mornings with single digit temperatures through the weekend ahead. The western and central hills are likely to get sporadic rains along with thunderstorms.

FRI	SAT	SUN
28-6	25-7	26-9

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**KALAM**  
Rabi Thapa

What makes Satyajit Ray so special as to warrant a mini-festival in Kathmandu that ended with the kind of rush you'd only expect at the premiere of a 21st century blockbuster? Ray was not, as a local broadsheet seemed to imply, a 'towering figure in the world of cinema' simply because he was 6'4". My hunch is that it's because he made artistic, realist movies set not in post-war Europe, nor even in medieval Japan, but in a Bengali reality that many of us in South Asia can readily identify with.

It was also the sheer range of human themes that he touched upon that makes Ray so beloved of amateur film connoisseurs such as those of us who trimmed work and pushed back dinner to catch back-to-back features last week. No wonder then that the fest was titled 'Diversity of Vision'. There were successful Bengali babus, fraudulent sadhus, heros, anti-heroes, and lonely wives, all discovering in their own way that the world is not quite to be taken for granted. And that they'd do well to be as wide-eyed as Apu is in *Pather Panchali*, Ray's debut feature.

Watching Ray's masterpieces – with their portrayal of bustling metropolises such as Calcutta, where individuals struggle to keep their footing against the backdrop of revolution, as well as bucolic settings on the cusp of change – you can't help but compare them unfavourably with Bollywood's all-singing all-dancing dhamakas. Experience the luminous Sharmila Tagore (*above*,



# Rays of light

in *Aranyer Din Ratri*) in any of Ray's movies. Then observe her undoubtedly talented son, Saif Ali Khan, prance about in today's choreographed emptiness, and you may begin to wonder what the movies are really meant to offer us. Escape from humanity, or knowledge of it?

The argument goes that Bollywood (and Kollywood) fantasy does so well because their primary audience is composed of dirt-poor rickshaw-wallahs (or those in similar penury), for whom a couple of hours of singing and dancing comes as a blessed relief from the daily grind. Of course, this doesn't explain Bollywood's grip

on the other classes. But it does seem that more realist fare is the preserve of those whose lives are somewhat fantastical, and could do with some grounding.

Ray's realism also means that he has portrayed a past for us. This past is either painstakingly recreated, or in articulating a present down to the last detail, is preserved for future generations. Whether it's an antique radio that hums on a few seconds after someone changes a fuse, or the interactions of an English-speaking strata of Bengali society not so far removed from the colonial era, Ray's worlds will be enjoyed by generations to come.

## Wanted: talented filmmaker to chart our changing times

Who is doing the same for us in these rapidly changing times? Naturally there will be some period detail in Nepali productions from a couple of decades back, if only in the way actors dress and the backdrops they use. Granted,

filmi themes evolve, too, and however crudely presented do portray to an extent the socio-cultural mores of their time. But this is hardly adequate. Our material past is disappearing before our eyes; only this morning I walked past a compound in Naxal and noted that the building inside which I spent some part of my childhood had been razed to the ground. Our culture is being outsourced; bottles of achar, packets of titaura, and pre-ordered wedding saipatas are just some examples of how tradition declines in the face of the modern economy. We may not be able to stop these changes, even if it were desirable, but surely there is some value in knowing the earth we sprouted out of? A challenge, then, for novelists, artists, and especially filmmakers, to chart our remembrance of things past. 🇳🇵








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# Home safe home

We've all heard stories of burglaries in our neighbourhoods, too close for comfort. Tales of poisoned dogs and bribed guards are rife. But you can do much more than just employing a German Shepherd or a watchman to keep vigil at night. Enter the electronic security system for your home and office.


There are now companies in Nepal that specialise in providing high-tech security systems for homes and offices that will not only alert the owners in the event of forced entry, but also detect smoke and gas leakage and provide round-the-clock live

visuals of activities in your vicinity. "It's only natural for people to turn towards such services when the state is unable to provide a sense of security," Keyur Krishna Shrestha of Bipassana International says.

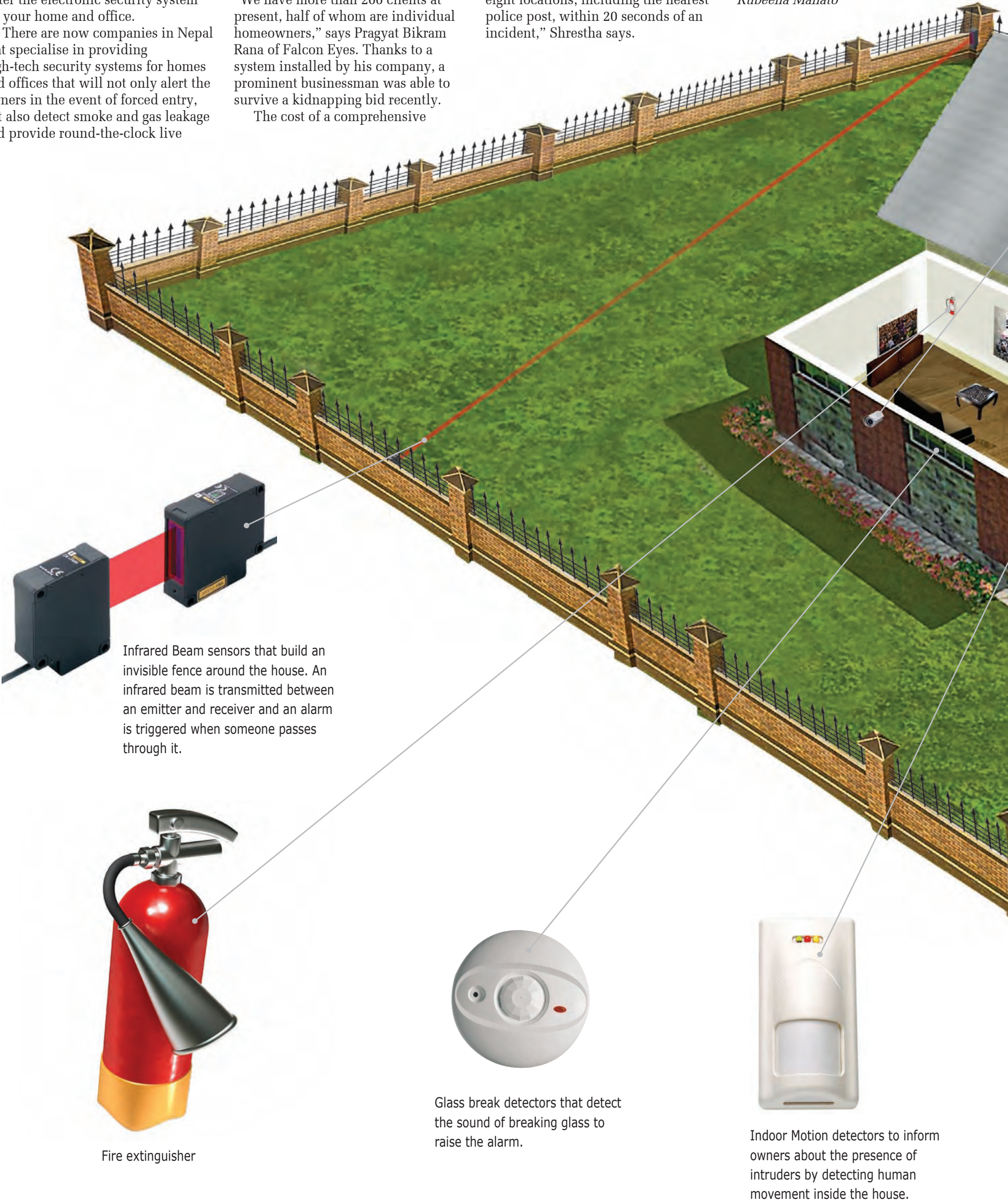
Banks, offices and hotels are the most obvious clients but there has been a spike in interest from people concerned about home security. "We have more than 200 clients at present, half of whom are individual homeowners," says Pragyat Bikram Rana of Falcon Eyes. Thanks to a system installed by his company, a prominent businessman was able to survive a kidnapping bid recently.

The cost of a comprehensive

security and home automation system can run into the hundreds of thousands, but a basic dialer system comprising a few door sensors and motion detectors can be purchased for just Rs 35,000. The system not only alerts the owners of break-ins or emergencies but also automatically calls pre-specified locations within seconds for help. "Calls are made to eight locations, including the nearest police post, within 20 seconds of an incident," Shrestha says.

With a bigger budget, homeowners can purchase any number of security devices, including CCTV, but even a more limited system can do wonders. According to Shrestha, "A few door sensors and motion detectors alone will greatly decrease the likelihood of a robbery in a home. They are also more cost effective than traditional security options." 

Rubeena Mahato



Infrared Beam sensors that build an invisible fence around the house. An infrared beam is transmitted between an emitter and receiver and an alarm is triggered when someone passes through it.



Fire extinguisher



Glass break detectors that detect the sound of breaking glass to raise the alarm.



Indoor Motion detectors to inform owners about the presence of intruders by detecting human movement inside the house.



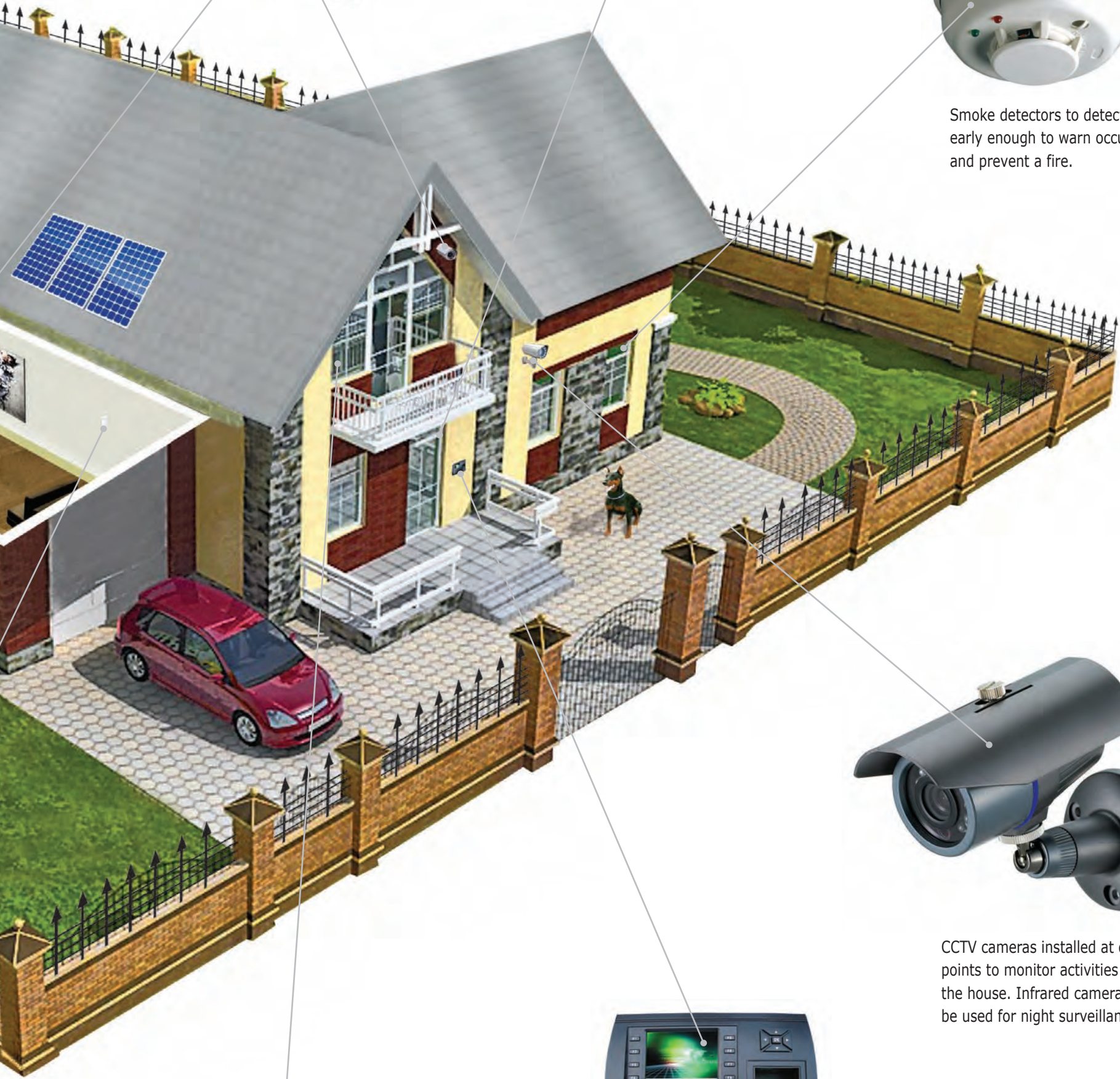
Remote video systems to allow owners to watch over the house from their cell phones and computers even when they are away.



Door sensors that use wireless magnetic sensors to notify owners when someone opens the door without their knowledge.



Smoke detectors to detect smoke early enough to warn occupants and prevent a fire.



CCTV cameras installed at different points to monitor activities around the house. Infrared cameras can be used for night surveillance.



Access control system (card, biometric, retina, palm) installed in the main door to prevent unauthorised access.

Gas leak detectors to detect the presence of dangerous gas inside the house and warn occupants.







# Medical marijuana

Kantipur, 24 February

कान्तिपुर

Campaigners have demanded that the use of marijuana for medical purposes be legalised.

The Marijuana Medical Society, in a press meet on Thursday, announced a campaign to push for the legalisation of marijuana, also known as *Cannabis sativa*. The society is organising its first national conference to coincide with the festival of Maha Shivaratri in the capital.

The society says the campaign is aimed to pressurise the government to make marijuana available through doctors' prescriptions, as it works as a painkiller and enzyme that stimulates the appetite. People living with HIV/AIDS suffer a lack of appetite, muscular spasms, and other complications, and the consumption of marijuana could improve their quality of living, said

society representative Shibu Giri, who himself is HIV-positive. Further, he claimed, as marijuana is native to Nepal, it could substitute for expensive imported drugs.

A provision of the Drug Act 1975 states that marijuana can be consumed through prescription, but does not specify who is entitled to it and how it should be administered. Giri demanded that the government come up with clear provisions regarding this law.

Basanta Kshitij, secretary of the Confederation of HIV/AIDS, said that marijuana is helpful for patients of chronic conditions like HIV/AIDS and cancer as it stimulates the appetite and works as a painkiller. He demanded the government open access to cannabis. Nikhil Gurung of Recovery Nepal pointed out that marijuana is used to wean people off hard drugs, and has the further benefit of avoiding the risks involved in syringe exchange.

# Save what you have

Rajdhani, 2 March

राजधानी

The water from the stone spouts in Alkohiti, Patan, does not go to waste. On the initiation of local Sushil Shrestha, residents have begun collecting water and distributing it to all the houses in the area. "We no longer have severe shortage of water," says Naresh Shakya of Alkohiti Conservation and Drinking Water Distribution Consumer Committee. "We don't have to wait for water from the state supply lines now that we save the water from the spouts."

Water from the spouts is first collected in a tank, then pumped into an overhead tank. It is then distributed to 215 families in Alkohiti, Ekade and Nalkhutol. It cost Rs 2.5 million to build the water collection and distribution infrastructure, and each house contributed Rs 4,000. A 22,000-litre tank has been installed as up to 20,000 litres of water are collected during the monsoon, and 3,000 in the winter. In exchange for the services, the locals pay Rs 200 to the committee every month.

Their success story has inspired the locals of Emukhel, Amrithiti and Bashiti to replicate the system.

There are 389 stone spouts in the Kathmandu Valley, and the natural sources of 225 spouts have dried up. It is estimated that these spouts provide a total of about 2.9 million litres of water every day.

# Back to paint

Kedar Ojha in Kantipur, 1 March

कान्तिपुर

Valley traffic police have been stopping drivers and fining them for having digital number plates. As per the law, vehicles are required to display painted number plates.

The 1993 transport management law did not even consider digital plates a possibility, though it is estimated 90 per cent of vehicles have already made the switch. Previously, there was no objection from the authorities, and even the traffic police flashed new digital number plates on their vehicles.

Drivers complain that the very idea of trying to reverse this trend for so many vehicles is foolish. But police spokesperson SP Jagat Man Shrestha defends the decision, saying, "We are trying to implement the law. These number plates reflect light, so it is hard to read them."

In reality, digital number plates appear easier to read than painted plates, day or night. But even if what the police claim is true, it's time they introduced new technology to monitor vehicles. Govinda Kusum, secretary at the Home Ministry, has a digital number plate – Ba 7 Cha 2316 – on his vehicle. The majority of government and police vehicles, including those in the traffic police headquarters, have digital number plates. But the traffic police have been instructed to confiscate the licenses of drivers with digital plates. No wonder that vehicle owners were caught by surprise when, without issuing a public notice, traffic police started fining them for installing digital number plates.



Snake on Pashupatinath: Hail Shiva's night  
Oli on Jhala Nath: Hail dark night

नागरिक Robin Sayami in Nagarik, 2 March

# Genes lost to darkness

Rajesh Barma in Annapurna Post, 21 February

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

The country's only gene bank is in danger of closing down because of power shortages. The government invested Rs 80 million to set up a state-of-the-art gene bank under the Nepal Agriculture Research Centre (NARC), Khumaltar. It was inaugurated only last September by the president. Says bank chief Madan Bhatta, "Although a lot of investment went into the bank, loadshedding has meant it is not operational."

Bhatta explains that the bank was set up to support Nepal's long-term food security by preserving samples of the seeds of various species of grain, fruit, lentils, and other vegetables. But without an uninterrupted power supply, the tissue preservation section, the DNA test section, the seed test and refinement section, and other sections have all been gathering dust.

"Without a stable power supply, this gene bank may have to close down," says bank director Bharatendru Mishra. The preservation room needs a total of 400 units of electricity daily in order to maintain temperatures. The seeds stored in the short-term preservation room, which has the capacity to house 15,000 species, can be cultivated for up to five years. "We have asked the ministries of finance, energy and agriculture for help, but in vain," says Mishra. Various organisations are now trying to come up with the Rs 2.4 million needed to power the bank through a different feeder line.





# Cholera choler

SAMEER DIXIT

Last year's outbreak of cholera in Haiti shows how the perceived lack of expertise in a developing county can be wrongly exploited by experts in developed countries. This particular outbreak led to a large number of deaths. *Vibrio cholera*, the known causative bacterial species in most cases of cholera, was blamed for the spread of the disease. The 'source' of the outbreak was narrowed down to an area inhabited by the UN Nepali peacekeeping battalion, leading to inevitable finger-pointing. The resulting riots fuelled further unrest and turmoil in Haiti, a country already embroiled in political crisis.

Scientists such as John Mekalanos, a prominent molecular biologist at Harvard Medical School in Boston, have suggested that the strain may have come from Nepal. But there has been no conclusive evidence to justify the claim, and the scientific community is still unsure about the origin of this strain.

The available evidence does indicate that the strain is a South Asian one, but Nepal is not the only South Asian country to have soldiers stationed in Haiti. Nepal is, however, the only country that witnessed a major cholera outbreak in 2009. This combination of factors seems to have been enough for many to conclude that Nepal is guilty as charged.

Rita Colwell, a veteran cholera scientist and former head of the US National Science Foundation, puts forward a different view. She notes that *Vibrio cholera* is present in coastal waters worldwide, and given the right environment (such as a rise in temperature), can turn deadly.

Nepal got the blame, but we still don't know where Haiti's cholera came from

Colwell cites the example of the cholera outbreak in Peru in 1991, which killed over 2,000 people. At the time, suspicion first fell on ships coming in from the Asian subcontinent. However, it was soon ascertained that Peru's own coastal waters

had warmed up due to El Nino, activating the cholera bacteria present. The origins of the strain were never established.

Although the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in the US has stated that the origin was most likely South Asia (without categorically mentioning Nepal), there are still questions regarding the method used to investigate the strain similarities. Crucially, no organisation has published any findings on *Vibrio cholera* isolated from cholera patients from the 2009 outbreak in Nepal, making it impossible to link the Nepali outbreak to Haiti.

Significantly, the samples and expertise required to establish such a link (or not) exist in Nepal itself. The governmental laboratory (NPHL) has bacterial strains from the outbreak areas in Nepal and the Center for Molecular Dynamics Nepal (CMDN) affiliated Molecular Laboratory has the DNA. Molecular biotechnology could have been used to determine whether the Nepali peacekeeping contingent in Haiti deserved the blame heaped upon it, through evidence-based findings, but it has not been.

Nepal needs to open up to the inevitable possibility of linking biotechnology to address public health concerns. In a globalised world, we cannot afford to be the weakest link as far as medical intervention is concerned.

The writer is the Senior Research Scientist and the Country Director of Centre for Molecular Dynamics Nepal.

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# The 7-point disagreement



The Ass, as many fans know, is partial to grass. And this Shivaratri will be remembered in history as the festival that legalised weed once more. The irony of it all was that while Kathmandu’s finest were rounding up the Babas and their Bhang Stash this week, over on the other side of Pashupati delegates were firing up the **First National Marijuana Convention**. Nepal’s parliament, having proven that it is the most liberal in South Asia by legalising gay marriage and allowing daughters inheritance, should now follow up by also legalising pot for medicinal use and giving back Nepal’s farmers the cash crop they need. As loyal readers will have gleaned, the Ass is firmly on the side of correcting the retrogressive 1973 decision to

ban marijuana. The delegates at the 1st All-Over-Nepal Grassy Convention discussed the medical uses of marijuana, as a painkiller, and as one of the only ways to keep one’s sanity in these depressing times. Instead of a tea break, delegates had a pot break and all felt much better after that.



Hard to understand the hoo-hah over the prime minister’s new Range Rover. Would it have been ok if it was a Pajero or a Land Cruiser? Wouldn’t be surprised if the whole uproar was engineered by the Japanese SUV lobby to sabotage the major inroad made by the Tata-owned SUV company to give our PM new four-wheel traction. Even so, a brilliant move by Land Rover to go viral on the net to generate all that free

publicity worth karods in sales. Now everyone will want one. But then, the PM can’t be seen in a car that every Tom, Dick and Hari has, so we hereby propose that Jhola Nath be allowed by Act of Parliament to have a stretched Humvee. How else is he ever going to have the confidence to complete his cabinet? Actually what we should really be worried about is why ex-Homeward Minister was allowed to put a private red plate on his Land Cruiser and take it home with him. Give it back, Bhim Bro. Be a sport.



The first and only contender for the Only in Nepal Headline of the Week Contest for this Friday is: **‘Decisive Meeting Indecisive’**. The Makunay Sarkar had to carry on taking care for seven

months after resigning, and the Jhallu Sarkar can’t form a cabinet a month after being sworn in. And the reason is the same: the Battle for the Home Ministry is not between UML and the Maobaddies, but within those two parties. In the latest of many decisive meetings to seek a Final Solution this week, Chairman Fierceness told the UML folks: “Why can’t you propose any other name besides Bishnu Poudel for Griha Muntri?” To which a frustrated and tired eh-Maley leader (probably Com Oily) muttered: “It would be better to give Griha to the Baddies than give it to Bum Dev.” An attending Baddie whispered back in his ear: “And all this is to prevent Laldhoj from being anywhere in the new coalishun.” Anyway, now that Komred Fearsome has his man as PM, and sees there’s no way his party is getting the home portfolio, on instructions from his Baddie Master he’s got Khanal Sir to propose the **Leftist God** as a compromise candidate. At press time, the lobbying by the Maley faction within the eh-Maley for the Left-leaning God had become pretty intense.



Meanwhile, Fearsome has all the time in the world to attend Wrestling Matches and

deliver another fiery tirade warning of The Apocalypse at the headquarters of the YCL Jackboots at Khanna Garments in Gwarko. However, Maoist factions loyal to Dr Kiran and Com Red Flag were conspicuous by their absence. Psst: the row is all over who gets to keep the casino loot.



This brings us to the Donk’s Headline Forecast, containing a list of headlines we are sure to see in the papers (including this one) in the coming week:

‘Constitution Will Not Be Written On Time: Deuba’  
‘Who Says Constitution Will Not Be Written On Time? Khanal’  
‘Congress Should Join Govt: Sujata’  
‘Congress Shouldn’t Join Govt: Sushil’  
UML Must Join Govt: Bharat Mohan’  
‘UML Mustn’t Join Govt: Nepal’  
‘7-pt Agreement Was Treason: Oli’  
‘7-pt Agreement Was, Like, Great: Prachanda’  
‘7-pt Agreement Was the Best Thing That Happened to Me: PM’



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