

NEPALI Times

#609

15 - 21 June 2012

16 pages

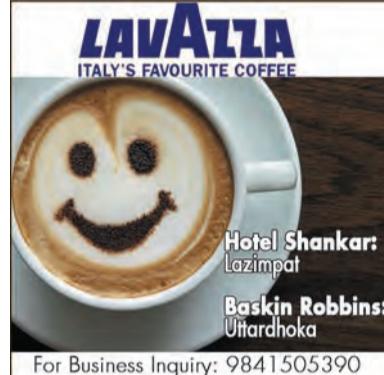
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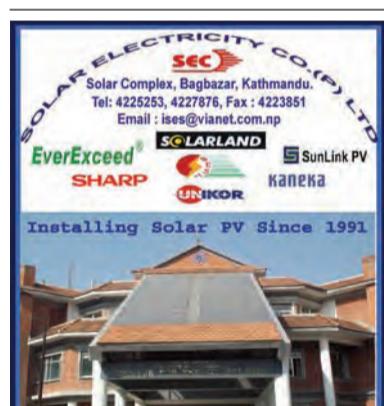


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Reflecting reality

Hope and despair in Dolpo

by Dewan Rai

nepalitimes.com

Photo gallery of Dolpo

More than 150,000 people from all over Nepal have been in the mountains of Dolpo for the past two months, scouring the high meadows for yarsagumba. They had no time to enjoy the unearthly beauty of Phoksundo Lake (below), and many wondered which federal province they would belong to when they got back home. Others didn't care. Their much more pressing concern was that they would have to return heavily indebted because of slim yarsa pickings this year.



DEWAN RAI

The assassin creed

The recent spate of murders and terrorist attacks in Nepal has been reported in the media as individual events, few try to connect the dots. These were targeted killings and political assassinations. But most commentators have shied away from the subject.

Editorial page 2

Paradigm shift

When a media company becomes financially weak, it soon loses its political independence and is vulnerable to advertising pressure and cash-rich politicians eager to buy influence.

THIS IS IT page 3
by Rubeena Mahato

The messenger is to blame

If the media becomes an extension of the propaganda arm of political parties, it undermines both democracy and the free press.

BY THE WAY page 11
by Anurag Acharya

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THE ASSASSIN CREED



The unsolved murders of Ranju Jha and her colleagues as well as that of Justice Rana Bahadur Bam will aggravate impunity and weaken the state.

which was to insist on multiple identities of Nepal's Tarai-Madhes.

Exactly a month later, on 31 May, Justice Rana Bahadur Bam was ambushed and assassinated while on his way from a temple to his Supreme Court chamber in Kathmandu. The killing was meant to send a message because the two gunmen pursued not only the fleeing

Justice Bam, but also his bodyguard and friend.

Until investigations are successful in catching those who ordered the killing, the best we can do is come up with an educated guess as to who would have the motive. The choice of Justice Bam as victim could have been calibrated, given that he was under the cloud of a possible impeachment. This meant that the public's mind would be diverted from the possibility of an assassination to one of an individual crime arising possibly out of some ethical lapse on the part of the departed judge.

This would camouflage the real motive: to make the justice system feel vulnerable and weakened. There is no question that the Supreme Court in particular has held on to the ideals of rule of law and due process in a country where there are by now radical right and left forces bent on dismantling institutions of the state one by one to build their own base.

According to this logic, Justice Bam's assassination would also send a message to all involved in the law and justice machinery: judges in the central and district courts to administrators, police, lawyers and human rights activists.

The unsolved murders of Ranju Jha and her colleagues as well as that of Justice Rana Bahadur Bam will aggravate impunity and weaken the state. To halt this tragic drift, the first step would be to analyse these two tragedies and come to our own conclusions on what they portend, and who was responsible.

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

MOTHER COUNTRY

Thank you NT for continuing to publicise this critical issue ('Mother country', editorial, #608). The entire debate over citizenship has been driven not by common sense or on-the-ground research, but by xenophobia and pseudo-nationalism. And people who try to engage in sensible debate about citizenship, are branded as "foreigners", or accused of "bowing down to foreign/NGOs interests". This kind of discourse on citizenship is restricted to far-right in most countries, but here so called leftist and progressive parties are advocating state-sanctioned exclusion based on parent's national origins.

Making it a pre-requisite that both mother and father are Nepali citizens will have a devastating impact in the Tarai. I have worked for years in the plains and there are villages where a majority of households has one Indian parent, just as there are an equal number of mixed nationality households across the border. The state seems to be implying that if one of your parents is a foreigner then you are somehow impure and can never be considered a 'true' Nepali. But in today's multicultural and fluid world, such reactionary and atavistic attitudes are quite shocking.

JS

- If a man fails his fatherly duties, nobody cares. But if a mother fails, she is criticised and punished and yet she does not have the right to pass on her citizenship to her children. The problem in Nepal is that our men have big egos, they talk too much, work too little, but love to boss others around. We really need a woman PM to set things straight.

Rekha Sharma

- This is a poorly researched and written editorial. Rather than asking for blanket citizenship to legalise

illegal immigrants who drain the nation's resources, the article should have highlighted specific cases where someone is genuinely discriminated, treated unfairly, and robbed of citizenship. Besides if a Nepali woman marries a foreigner, she will qualify for citizenship of her husband's country, just like a foreigner woman who marries a Nepali man is entitled to Nepali citizenship. So why should she be forced to maintain her Nepali citizenship?

Gurkha

STATELESS

Thank you George Varughese and Pema Abrahams for reminding us just how ridiculously close-minded we were when we were writing our new constitution ('Stateless in New Nepal', #608). Our leaders and lawmakers were so engrossed with petty politics and 'ethnic federalism', we almost sowed the seeds for future conflict. As I see it anyone whose mother OR father is Nepali, anyone who was born in Nepal (regardless of parent's nationality) and anyone who wishes to naturalise say after 10-15 years of living here are all Nepalis. And dual citizenship is also a good thing. The world would be a better place if there are more people with mixed nationalities and a wider sense of belonging.

Anita Khadka

- My mother is a foreigner, and my father a Nepali. I consider myself a Nepali, hold a Nepali passport and citizenship card with pride and wouldn't give them up for anything. But if our politicians had their way, they would turn "both mother and father" clause into law and leave thousands like myself stateless. It's time they opened their eyes, brains and hearts, moved beyond politics and made rules and regulations in the interest of the people and the nation.

Jai Nepal

- As it is, Nepal has a bad track record of respecting women's rights, if this law is passed, it will further institutionalise gender discrimination into our constitution. What I found particularly surprising during the constitution and federalism debate is that while many groups were occupied with ethnic demands, talks about of women empowerment were absent. Women are marginalised in every ethnic group and in many cases they face double discrimination because of their sex and ethnicity/caste. Are there no parties or leaders to rally behind this cause?

Anuj Gurung

- Although exclusion from citizenship is not a Tarai-specific problem, it is most acutely felt in that region. The idea of hoards of Indians queuing up at Nepal's southern border to take up Nepali citizenship is completely absurd and shows how the political class is entirely out of touch with the dynamics of life in the border regions. Providing citizenship through either parent is not even debated in most countries, because it is such a fundamental human right. Nepali leaders need to follow international norms and replicate successful practices of other countries.

Leguwa

- There is no need to fear an influx of foreigners (in particular Indians) on Nepali soil. Why would any foreigner want to become a citizen of a country where there are no jobs, where thousands of young people are desperate to flee to the Gulf, and where women are exploited, abused and sold off by one of their own?

Kiran L

SLAVES ARE TREATED BETTER

I cannot even begin to imagine the circumstances that force so many of our women to go to the Gulf, despite knowing how badly domestic workers are treated ('Even slaves are treated

better', Sushila Budathoki and Meena Sharma, #608). We can keep playing the blame-game, but until there are real alternatives, people will continue risking their lives to earn a few thousand rupees and to secure a better future for themselves and their families.

Abhishek Bhandari

- Most women who go to the Gulf for employment are from uneducated and poor families, have difficult relations with their in-laws or stuck with drunk or irresponsible husbands or widowed or have too many children to look after. If we are serious about tackling this crisis, we must first look towards reducing these push factors.

SL

- I think foreign-employment agents in Nepal are actually far worse than the employers in the Gulf. Recruiters know the situation in host countries very well, but they give women false hopes and push them into a hell hole for pure financial gain. These criminals need to be punished.

Shyam

- If the Nepali women (and men) who go to Gulf countries are fully aware of the risks and the wretched conditions in which foreign workers are made to toil in, then they have to be willing to face the consequences as well. It's not the tax payer or the government's responsibility to rescue them.

Anil

NOT BREAKING NEWS
The situation in Aurhi, Siraha is truly heart-breaking ('Not breaking news', Anurag Acharya, #608). I wish we had a more empathetic and responsive state. I read about yet another calamity in some part of Nepal yesterday. Can the citizens

expect nothing from the government at times of trouble? Do we have to do everything by ourselves all the time?

Ushat

DIRTY SNOW

Thank you Bhrikuti Rai for your timely and interesting article ('Dirty snow is melting our mountains faster', #608). Apart from the standard monitoring procedures, we should develop a framework to observe the long-term and historical changes of black carbon deposition in the Himalaya, identify the tipping point, and set a benchmark to reduce the current level of pollution.

K Hill

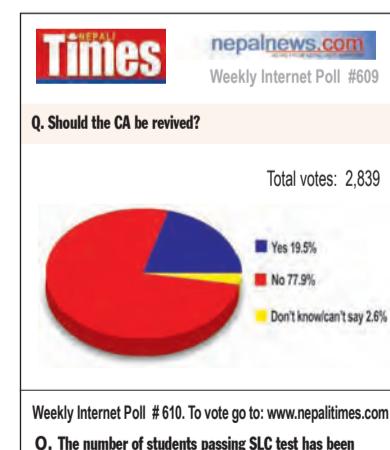
WASHING DIRTY LENIN

I nearly fell off my chair reading this week's backside ('Washing dirty Lenin in public', #608). I can just visualise Bhattarai in thongs on Rio beach dancing samba with comrade Yummy. But the question in every Nepali's mind: is the PM travelling economy class this time as well?

Juju Bhai

- Another great piece by Ass. Have you thought of doing stand-up comedy Ass? You would be an instant hit.

Sanjay Thapa



Paradigm shift



THIS IS IT

Rubeena Mahato

Nepali media is in crisis, and the main reason is that it has become financially unviable as a business. There has been a sharp decline in advertising revenue, production costs have shot up, and there is fierce competition for audience and advertising. Journalists haven't been paid for months, and publishers face huge debts.

When a media company becomes financially weak, it soon loses its political independence and is vulnerable to advertising pressure and cash-rich politicians eager to buy influence. This does not bode well for editorial freedom and journalistic integrity in Nepal when the country is at a crossroads and press freedom is needed to defend democracy. The enemies of press freedom don't need to vandalise delivery vans, burn presses or beat up journalists anymore, they just buy off media that is critical of them.

Nepal's politics is in limbo, and the transition will probably drag on indefinitely. The media's role at times like these should be to make sense of the confusion, interpret and explain events objectively and offer solutions. Instead, sponsored news and manufactured stories have become the order of the day. A paper or tv station's coverage depends on which party boss just bought shares in it.

Media loses its political independence when it becomes unviable as a business

The crisis offers us an opportunity for introspection, to rethink our priorities. What is the direction that we want this country to take, what are the core values we want to protect, and what is our vision for society? How has our stance on certain issues shaped the country's present state? Has our unquestioning acceptance of a political ideology clearly averse to economic growth, democratic values and open society made us a part of the problem?

It is the media's obsession with the day-to-day, who-said-what brand of political reporting that lends itself to manipulation of content by political spin masters. The tendency to tar all politicians, ex-CA members, police and the bureaucracy with the same brush has spread cynicism and hopelessness. It is time, perhaps, to profile the honest cop, or second generation politicians who show vision and integrity, or the ministry secretary who sticks to her principles. We would have been much better off investigating and highlighting

the political background that leads to the neglect of agriculture, the corruption that keeps us poor, and the exploitation of our migrant workforce by our own.

By now, readers have learnt to take everything with a pinch of salt and don't trust the news, especially tabloid tv and opinionated political op-eds, at face value. Which is why the eye-balls have swung over to social media. Readers are attracted by its dynamic content, interactivity and immediacy.

But new media has its own limitations, its raw content can't yet completely replace conventional media because of the digital divide as well as credibility issues. The internet also has a tendency of locking people in their own little worlds of self-held beliefs and values. People surf pages whose content they approve of, interact with people who hold same opinions and prefer not to engage with opposing views, unless it is to personally, and anonymously, abuse someone they don't agree with. This ghettoisation does little to foster

dialogue and debate. Lately, the ethnic polarisation of Nepali society has turned social media into a platform for extreme hate speech.

The onus is on the mainstream media to reclaim its credibility, extend its internet reach through robust online presence, and focus on content that will heal society instead of dividing it. The Nepali media is either event-driven, or opinion-heavy. There is almost no middle ground where we follow-up on events, analyse and investigate economic and development issues. What happened in the aftermath of the Seti flood, or for that matter the Kosi flood? How are those who survived the earthquake in eastern Nepal last year faring?

There has been no follow-up on the bomb blast in Janakpur that killed Ranju Jha. The alleged culprits were caught, but were they really responsible? Who are the big fish who masterminded the attack? Who ordered the killing of Justice Rana Bahadur Bam last week and why? Bam has already dropped off the headlines.

Journalism today needs a paradigm shift to relentlessly pursue such stories, instead of idle and endless speculation over whether or not the Maoists, or the UML or the NC are going to finally split. ☑

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NEPAL ONE
Amrit Gurung

Following Siddhicharan Shrestha's footsteps to his beloved Okhaldhunga

Here I am amidst the rolling hills of Okhaldhunga after walking along the scenic Sun Kosi. We left the political tumult of Kathmandu two weeks ago, and the capital seems far away: not just in terms of distance, but also in the everyday concerns of ordinary Nepalis.

Every village we pass through, every fellow traveller we meet on the trails, the concerns are about day to day needs: food, fodder, firewood. This is the essence of real Nepal, here in these hills that were made famous by the lyrics of Siddhicharan Shrestha, my revered guru.

Among my favourite songs is the famous poem written 50 years ago by Siddhicharan (*Kyaru yo desh ko nimitta kyaru*) that has been rendered

to music by the very talented Nhyoo Bajracharya and sung with passion and verve by Yogeshwar Amatya. The simple music video by Bhusan Dahal makes it a creation that gives me goose pimples every time I watch it. Siddhicharan was inspired by these hills, forests and rivers of eastern Nepal by uncomplicated people with simple needs, but with a burning desire to contribute to society and make the country strong.

Every step I take on the ups and downs of the trails as we cross over from Okhaldhunga into Bhojpur, Siddhicharan's words resonate in my head, making me long for an idyllic, peaceful and socially just Nepal that he yearned for, a Nepal where everyone has an equal opportunity to excel, and

think it is everyone's song.

Among my more recent songs is *Mero Desh* written by Bikram Subba, and it is the title song of Nepathy's eighth album. *Mero Desh* was later turned into a video also by Bhusan Dahal. The video featured artist David Douglas painting a flag of Nepal in his studio.

His name may sound European, but David is a Nepali through and through.

When we were shooting the video it was the day of Saraswati Puja, and David was reluctant to paint on a day that is dedicated to the Goddess of Knowledge, whom he respects.

In the studio, poet Bikram Subba's poetry came alive with the music and the artist's brush that accompanied it. It was also an amalgam of the melting pot that is Nepal: a Limbu, a Gurung and a Chhetri working with a Nepali with a western name.

In my two decades of being the leader of the folk rock band, Nepathy, I have composed and sung songs written by a Gaine, a Damai, a Lepcha, a Rai, a Brahmin, a Magar, a Chhetri, a Newar, a Tamang, a Gurung and many more. No one discriminated against me because of my ethnicity, and I didn't say I only wanted to sing songs from my particular ethnic group.



If Bikram Subba had written his poem in Limbu, I would not have been able to sing it. What brings us, binds us, and give us identity is the Nepali language. We can communicate across Nepal's incredible diversity because of this language. This is not to undermine the importance of our rich linguistic and cultural heritages, but to celebrate both our motherland's tongue as well as our mother tongues.

But suddenly 'unity' and 'nationalism' have become bad words. Who benefits from undermining Nepali nationalism and unity? Not us Nepalis. My songs have always looked for those links that bind us together as a nation, across ethnic and linguistic lines, whether we live in the Himal, Pahad or Tarai. I use subtle lyrics by poets from Nepal's diverse ethnicities, melding them with the melodies representing the nation's

cultures and the heartbeat of our drums.

There are two types of nationalistic songs in Nepal. The first in which we celebrate a hollow, insecure nationalism that praises the bravery and sacrifices of our ancestors and extols the virtues of the land of the danphe and monal, Everest and Lumbini. Then there are the songs that evoke a deep emotional attachment to our roots, and the land of our birth.

I tend to sing the second type of songs. Ones in which up on stage I do not have to prove I am Nepali and I do not need to drape myself in the double triangle. I am singing for Nepal, and Nepal sings with me. nepathy@nepalaya.com.np

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Siddhicharan Shrestha's song by Yogeshwar Amatya, rendered by Bhusan Dahal

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MY TWO PAISA
Paavan Mathema

If the objective of Nepal Investment Year 2012-13 is to attract investments, then it does not seem to be working.

According to the Department of Industry, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) commitments to Nepal declined by 31.03 per cent during the first nine months of the current fiscal year. The money coming in has slumped to Rs 5 billion from Rs 7.25 billion during the same period in the last fiscal year. The number of inquiries made by potential investors has also declined. According to the latest UNCTAD's World Investment Report, Nepal ranks 134th in the FDI Inflow Index. Even among the least developed countries, we are at the bottom of the heap in attracting foreign capital.

This is hardly surprising. Growing political uncertainty, militancy of trade unions, crippling power shortages and absence of rule of law do not exactly make Nepal a prime spot for investment. Let's face

it, how can we attract investors when our officials shamelessly demand hefty sums simply to move a file from one table to another.

Last week, two oil exploring companies suspended their Nepal operations. Cairn Energy, a Scottish company and Texana from the US, which hold potential petroleum sites in the Tarai belt, both cited force majeure and blamed political instability along with bureaucratic hurdles for their decision to pull out. The frustrated companies decided to shelve their plans after months of running from one minister to another trying to make changes that were already permitted by the original contract. Why would they risk investing in a country that refuses to take any step to secure their interests?

Lack of apathy shown by political leaders does not help either. Nepal once again faces the risk of being blacklisted by Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global anti-money laundering watchdog, for not endorsing three bills against money laundering. The FATF plenary takes place on 18 June and if the bills are not passed through an ordinance by then, Nepal will be blacklisted, and

the consequences will be dire for our financial system and economy.

Foreign investment is likely to plummet further if FATF takes action. Yet, opposition leaders are protesting, arguing that a caretaker government has no mandate to enact laws through ordinance. A timely budget is also in limbo for the same reason. Political polarisation and internal bickering are holding our economy hostage.

If we are serious about inviting foreign investors or keeping the ones we already have, we have to mend our ways. However, there has been slight progress in the past few months. Nepal climbed up three places to 107 out of 183 economies on ease of conducting business in Doing Business 2012.

Relaxing property registration process, enacting policies to protect investors and ensuring contracts have helped. But they won't be enough. As long as we tolerate political interference in economic matters, the numbers will keep dropping. ☐

nepaltimes.com

Last chance on FATF, #605

BIZ BRIEFS



LET THERE BE LIGHT: Solar street lamps light up the Bagmati bridge in Thapathali, under the 'Ujjyal Abhiyaan' campaign of Laxmi Cares, as social initiative started by employees of Laxmi Bank. Ujjyal Abhiyaan began last year by installing solar lights at Patan Darbar Square, Three Star Club office and Mangal Bajar Police Station with funds raised from Laxmi Cares Annual Mountain Bike Rally. This year's rally in April saw over 300 cyclists pedal 14 km from Patan Darbar Square to St Xavier's Godavari to raise money to install solar lamps at Bagmati Bridge, Thapathali and offices in St Xavier's School, Godavari.

Summer on wheels

Pepsi has announced the first winners of its Drink and Drive summer offer. The winning number for the Bajaj Discover bike is 42885865. The scheme will last until 29 July and the grand prize is a Suzuki Alto car.

Click click

Canon has released EOS 650 D packed with 18 megapixel, powerful processor and intuitive touch screen. The model offers greater speed and is ideal for capturing fast-paced sports. Canon is also releasing two new EF lenses to compliment the EOS 650D.

Picture perfect

Qatar Airways has launched a social media photo contest, Reflections, offering photography enthusiasts an opportunity to win exciting prizes. Contestants can submit their entries online: qatarairways.com/reflections until 30 June 2012.

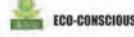
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A roving ambassador for

American ambassador Scott DeLisi has reconciled himself to leaving Nepal without a new constitution, and he would have been happier if there had been more progress in making Kathmandu better prepared for future earthquakes. But what would have made him really sad is if he had not spotted the spiny babbler before he left Nepal later this month.

An avid birder, DeLisi finally fulfilled his wish to spot and photograph the bird species found only in Nepal at Nalang of Dhading last month. After years of doggedly pursuing this elusive bird on Phulchoki and elsewhere, he finally tracked it down pushing his "life list" to 1,084 bird species, 193 of them from Nepal. A life list is a tally of birds spotted and identified for the first time by a birder.

"We would have felt very bad to leave Nepal without seeing the spiny babbler, and we'd have had to come back for it," DeLisi said as he prepared to leave Kathmandu to take up his new assignment as US ambassador to Uganda.

The bird bug bit DeLisi and his wife, Leija, when he was posted to Botswana in 1997 and he found that while big animals like lions and giraffes



were sometimes hard to see, birds were always around. Nepal has 871 species of birds, eight per cent of the total found in the world, and 130 of them are threatened because of habitat destruction and the disappearance of water bodies. Ten species of birds that were recorded here in the past are either extinct or have been extirpated, according to Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN).

DeLisi says that is what fascinated him about birdwatching: the intellectual

challenge of finding and recording individual species, their unique markings, their calls, and the way they change their behaviours at different times of the year. "The more you look at birds, the more you are taken in by their incredible variation and the impact they have on the ecology, and how fragile their existence has become," DeLisi says, holding a computer printout of his life list.

DeLisi and Leija are very strict on themselves about

recording a new species on their list. They don't tick off a bird if they have just heard its call, or caught a glimpse as it flies by, especially if it is one of those "LBJs" (little brown jobs). "We are very picky, we don't list a ruby-throated singing thrush just because we heard it. If we can't be sure, we don't tick it."

Most ambassadors play golf, others like to trek, and there was even an American ambassador in Kathmandu who was an avid mountaineer.

Outgoing US envoy is ecstatic that he could spot and photograph the elusive spiny babbler

BIRD DIP: Scott DeLisi in Dhading last month, when he spotted and photographed a rare spiny babbler, (pic, right) the bird species found only in Nepal.

DeLisi's other hobby, incredibly, is cross-stitching. But what really drew him to birding was the ease with which you could just pick up your field guide, binoculars and go to Chitwan, Shivapuri, Phulchoki, or Dhulikhel. Sometimes months go by before a new species is added to the list, but then they find a new species of barn owl right in their own garden in Kamaladi in the centre of Kathmandu.

We ask Leija DeLisi if their hobby has made her



बर्मपर उपहार

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लाखीका उपहार



रजिस्टर गर्नका लागि CIR टाइप गरी खरेदी मा एस.एम.एस. गनुहोला ।
गो सेवा नेपाल टेलिकममा मात्र उपलब्ध ।

नोट : वार्षिक ग्राहक यी सबै योजनामा सहभागी हुन पाउनेछन् ।
अधिवार्षिक ग्राहक बम्परवाहेक अन्य योजनामा सहभागी हुन पाउनेछन् ।
त्रैमासिक ग्राहक भने हरेक दिन र हरेक क्षण योजनामा मात्र सहभागी हुन पाउनेछन् ।

*सर्वाधिक लागू हुनेछ

the birds



husband more easy-going. "He is already a very calm, composed person," she answers diplomatically, "birding gives him a chance to forget about the office for a few hours here and there and scouting about for new birds to add to our life list is quite a satisfying way to soothe the mind."

Although DeLisi's life list is respectable, he doesn't even come close to another US diplomat, Peter Kaestner, whose list has 8,200 of the world's 10,000 or so bird species. DeLisi dismisses with a laugh any link between his hobby, and his recent postings to countries which are rich in birdlife.

"The best part of birding in Nepal is the terrain," he

says, "in Africa you spot birds from the back of jeeps because there are animals around that could eat you. But here you are always climbing mountains looking for birds. And it is the tremendous backdrop that gives birdwatching in Nepal its distinctive edge."

DeLisi is a life member of BCN, and has been a roving ambassador for birds during his three-year tenure here in Nepal. "My main worry is whether my grandchildren will ever see the Bengal florican which is on the verge of extinction," says DeLisi, "but I am really happy that many young Nepalis are birdwatching, and they are aware of the urgent need for conservation." ☺

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EVENTS

NATURE SPEAKS, an art exhibition by renowned artist Ragini Upadhyay Grela about the need to protect nature and the neglect it suffers. *19 May to 18 June, 11am to 7pm (closed on Saturdays), Solace International Designs, Lazimpat*

Collision, artist Binod Pradhan presents a series of paintings which depict nature fused into urban landscapes. *5 June to 30 June, 5.30 pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, Babar Mahal*

Exhibition on Everest, a photography exhibition by Jeff Botz which showcases Mt Everest in its true glory. *6 June to 6 July, 9.30 am to 5pm, Image Ark Studio, Kulimha Tole, Patan, 9813186573*

Women in Concert, enjoy spectacular performances by 15 women ranging from jazz, motown, rock, disco and contemporary songs *Rs 1500, 16 June, 6.45 pm, Hotel De l'Annapurna, Durbarmarg*

Artists in the City, keep yourself busy this weekend with musical performances, documentary screenings and art workshops. *15 June, 3pm onwards, Patan Museum and 16 to 17 June, 11am onwards, Maru Tole*

Maya, produced by M. Art Theatre, Sarvanam bring you *Maya*, a drama written by Hari Maya Bhetwal.

Rs 100 (50 per cent off for students), 15 June to 29 June, 5.30 pm, Sarvanam Theater, 4438947, www.sarvanam.org

Football Mania, enjoy the Euro Cup semi-finals at Le Sherpa with DJ KD and drinks to last the entire game. *Rs 1000 (two complimentary drinks), 29 June, 8.30 pm onwards, le Sherpa, Pani Pokhari*

The Master Grind 2012, b-boying, fashion shows and DJs to keep you entertained. If that's not enough, there is water polo, cocktails and plenty of other games to go around. *16 June, 1pm onwards, Aroma Restro Bar, Sanepa*

Gazaab Social Ventures, a five-day competition and workshop where participants will get to network with prominent Nepali entrepreneurs. The winners of the competition will receive Rs 500,000 to start their own venture. *Deadline to submit applications is 24 June, 2 July to 6 July, 9am to 6pm*

MUSIC

NEPFEST IV, Nepfest is set to return to delight of all music enthusiasts with Decapitated this September. *8 September, 12.45 pm, Fun Park, Bhrikuti Mandap*

SIGN, Live music by SIGN band every week except Tuesdays and Wednesdays. *7.30 pm onwards, Corner Bar, Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat.*

Live music at Jazzabella Café, every Wednesday and Friday 6pm onwards. *Jazzabella café, Jhamsikhel, Patan, call 2114075*

DINING

CHA CHA CAFÉ, this Japanese restaurant is popular for its spaghetti and burger steaks. *Thamel*



GHANGRI CAFÉ, a quiet place with comfortable sofas and charming courtyard, perfect for those sunny afternoons. Although famous for its open sui mai, the cafe also offers other great dishes. *Pulchowk*

Dechenling, the place to head for Bhutanese and Tibetan cuisines, their pleasant and spacious garden is ideal for big gatherings. *Thamel*

Sol Delicatessen, a range of gourmet food to satiate even the most refined palates. *10am to 6pm (closed on Mondays), Babar Mahal Revisited, 4216433, Soldelicatessen@gmail.com*



NEW DISH, you will be in for a treat here as they serve one of the best pork momo in town. *Khichapokhari*



THE YELLOW CHILI, Sanjeev Kapoor's restaurant which serves Indian cuisine along with local delicacies. *Bluebird Complex, Thapathali*



MAKO'S, an elegant fine dining Japanese restaurant at Dwarika's Hotel which serves authentic Japanese cuisine. *Timings are 11.30 to 14.30 and 18pm to 22pm. Dwarika Hotel, Battisputali, 4479488*

Buddha Bar, offers a warm and cozy space for intimate conversations over a large selection of drinks. *Thamel, 9851053235*

Tandoori Nights, enjoy tandoori at Splash Bar and Grill, Radisson Hotel Kathmandu. *Rs 1200 (excluding taxes), every Friday, 6pm to 10pm, contact 4411818 Ext. 1301/1321*

Dhokaima Café, exquisite ambience, friendly service, cozy bar, place to see and be seen at. *Patan Dhoka, Yala Maya Kendra, 5522113*

Rum Doodle, a hodgepodge of flavours and a must for trekkers and mountaineers. *Thamel*



DRAGON CAFÉ, try your favourite snacks at a reasonable price. *Kumarihati*



BRONCO BILLY, a restaurant in town offering Tex-Mex and Indian dishes. They make their own corn tortillas, which gets a big thumbs-up. But you should also try their margaritas. *Pulchowk, opposite Namaste Supermarket*

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JOHN PLAYERS

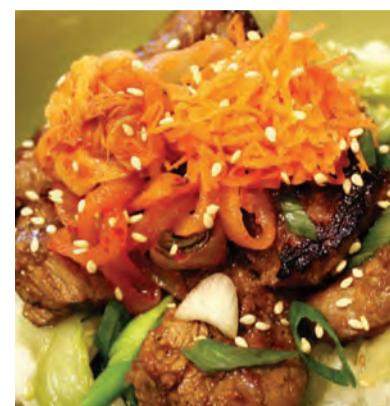
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Eastern platter is delicious and the cocktails are to die for. *Mandala Street, Thamel, 4422097*

Black Pepper Café & Pub, cosmopolitan dining and drinking in a traditional style courtyard, try the apple sauce pork chops and enjoy the good service. *Kopundole Height, Lalitpur, 5521897, 5536926*

Irish Pub, for the simple reason that the place actually feels like a bar. Don't miss out on the Irish coffee. *Lazimpat, Ananda Bhawan, 4416027*



KOTETSU, high quality Japanese dishes that cater to your needs and taste buds. *Lazimpat*

Tama, an assortment of traditional delicacies and old classics at an affordable price. *Gairidhara*

CAFE U, a homely ambiance with a fusion of Japanese and Filipino delights. *Closed on Tuesdays, Sanepa*

Lazy Gringo, one of the best places in town to sample Mexican cuisine. Free refills of refreshing lemonades won our hearts, but the food is mighty fine too. *Jawalakhel*



MAGIC BEANS, coffee, cakes and sandwiches with a magical touch and taste. *Sherpa Mall, Durbar Marg, 4230914*

OR2K, one of the few vegetarian restaurants in the Valley, their Middle

GETAWAYS



RANIBAN RETREAT, located next to the Peace Pagoda the retreat overlooks the city and Phewa Lake, and offers a sweeping panorama from Dhaulagiri in the west to Himalchuli in the east. *World Peace Pagoda, Pokhara, 977-61-692136, 9841382053*

Hotel Landmark, made entirely from traditional Nepali brick and woodcraft, this hotel is rich not only in heritage but also in services and boasts an award winning restaurant, the Hungry Eye. *00977-061-462908/463096/464897, www.landmarkpokhara.com*

Water Front Resort, this eco-friendly resort has it all whether it be birdwatching, paragliding, horse riding, mountain biking or boating. *Overnight package at Rs 1900 (single) and Rs 2400 (double). Sedi Height, Lakeside, 977-1-4434705, 9841558545, www.waterfronthotelnepal.com*

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grilled fish with tofu and sweet radish. The strong smoked flavour of the fish lifted the entire dish to beyond ordinary. But my favourite was the Okra Salad (Rs 135), one of the simplest dishes made of slices of steamed and cooled okra with wasabi and soya sauce. Okra aka the humble lady's fingers- the veggie that most of us detested as children for its unforgiving sliminess- managed to pleasantly surprise me.

Besides the food, Alice is super family-friendly. Not only is there a supervised playing area for children, but also a diaper changing table. It's these kinds of details that make me think Alice is in this for the long haul. While I was there, there was a steady flow of customers, which was pleasing because I have been to many restaurants where I have been the only customer. The patrons ranged from large, boisterous Nepali families with grandparents, toddlers and maids in tow, to expats to a group of Ducati riders who swore by Alice's Crispy Potato Chili.

The interiors merge and flow with the greenery and give a feeling of openness. The bar is well-stocked, the staff obliging and prices very reasonable. The wasabi hits the spot, the coffee is well-brewed and there are many dishes I still need to try. In addition to these great features, Alice is comforting and comfortable. I love its serenity and understated charm. Although it's very new, I hope the Sherchans maintain its quality and ethos.

Ruby Tuesday



ALICE



Alice offers Chinese, Continental, Thakali and Japanese cuisines. Thakali because the proprietors are Thakalis, Japanese because Sherchan worked at a owned restaurants in Japan and knows the dishes, and Chinese and Continental because, as the owner put it very pragmatically, he found excellent chefs

The Katohn (Rs 145), the Thakali version of blood sausage, is delicious. The Baby Corn Chili (Rs 175) was a revelation. I normally don't eat baby corn because I find it faintly disturbing to consume corn foetuses, but thankfully these were more adolescent in size. The crispiness of the batter and the pungency of the chili, onion, tomato sauce perfectly complemented the sweetness of the corn. I have to confess, I ate most of the dish



and have decided to give a second chance to other vegetables that I usually cringe at.

The Kappa Maki (Rs 220) was adequate and the miso soup accompanying it was delightful. We also ordered the Saba Siyo Yaki (Rs 285),



SOMEPLACE ELSE

When Nakul Sherchan returned to Nepal after living in Japan for 14 years, he had a clear vision of what he wanted. He dreamt of setting up a restaurant that was family-oriented and child-friendly and when he stumbled upon the site that previously housed Le Restaurant in Gairidhara, he knew his dreams were about to come true.

Alice Restaurant opened a couple of months ago, but word of mouth and good quality food are already luring new customers and making patrons return for their second and third bites. Sherchan could not have chosen a more ideal location because the Naxal-Gairidhara stretch desperately needs more eateries which cater to a more diverse palate than sekuwa, taas and momo.

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MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

A delightful name for a delightful film - based on an equally captivating book written by the late great Roald Dahl who has invented stories to both terrify and enrapture children in equal parts. It is no wonder, therefore, that the film adaptation of *Fantastic Mr Fox* is by Wes Anderson - the director of tragic-comedic dramas that dwell nostalgically on the beauty and horrors of childhood.

For anyone familiar with the Wes Anderson film prototype, *Fantastic Mr Fox* (2009) will come as a welcome but slightly different addition to his already beloved collection of films. While it does contain elements of *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001) such as the hyper-articulate, uber-neurotic, winsome and whimsical Tenenbaum children emulated in the animated forms of Mr and Mrs Fox's son Ash and their nephew Kristofferson - it is a much less angst filled reworking of the usual Anderson themes of sibling rivalry, the indescribably strong, and sometimes warped, bonds between brother and brother (or sister), and parental absence.

As with every amazing animated feature (e.g. *Up*, *The Incredibles*), *Fantastic Mr Fox* is as much for adults as for children, though in this particular case the adults might enjoy the wry, fast talking humour more than children under 10. For anyone unfamiliar with the book, the film revolves around the family of Mr and Mrs Fox played by George Clooney and Meryl Streep. If you think things can't get any better than the aforementioned pairing, we also have the voices of Michael Gambon as Franklin Bean (of Boggis, Bunce and Bean from whom Mr Fox decides to steal chickens, ducks and apple

cider as a last hurrah to his days of thievery before he married Mrs Fox), Willem Dafoe as "Rat", the terrifying, blade carrying creature that guards one of the warehouses, Bill Murray as "Badger", Mr Fox's cautious friend and lawyer, Owen Wilson as "Coach Skip" who teaches the boys to play the incredibly complicated game of "Whack Bat" which comes in handy later during one of the Fox family escapades, Jason Schwartzman as "Ash", the pouty, misunderstood son of the glorious Mr Fox, and last but not least Jarvis Cocker as "Petey" the folk singing (of course) character whose puppet was sketched entirely around the real Jarvis Cocker's physical attributes.

The technical aspect of making stop motion animation film is mind-boggling: the puppets, the sets, the frame by frame detail, the fun in being able to make the smoke from a fire out of cotton wool and manipulate it so that it looks like anything but cotton wool. This is a kind of film that is made with such loving care and detail that one hopes there could be a weekly installation of the (mis)-adventures of the Fantastic Fox family complete with all the idiosyncratic gestures that each of these characters have, their sounds, their teeth, the hair, the perfect little costumes etc.

Watching the film with its wonderfully detailed sets and the hilariously entertaining cast of characters and their antics is just one of the rewards of *Mr Fox*. It is more than just an entertaining film (though it is that) because it has the special ability to bring even hardened, grumpy, work-addled adults back to their days of marching off with just a tiffin box and their unruly younger brothers or sisters in tow in search of a great adventure with only their imaginations as guides. ☺

All DVDs reviewed in this column are available at:
Music and Expression, Thamel, Phone # 014700092

nepalitimes.com Watch trailer

WEIRD psychology

DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

In a 2010 article in *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, Joseph Heinrich and colleagues showed that many important studies in psychology were based on questionnaire surveys conducted on a WEIRD (western, educated, industrial, rich, and democratic) sample made up mostly of American undergraduate students who are the most cost-effective and readily available demographic.

Dr Heinrich from the University of British Columbia in Canada and his colleagues concluded that while undergraduates made good guinea pigs, extrapolating the findings to rest of humanity was a convenient leap in faith and not related to science.

Such unempirical practice would have continued if psychology had not embraced a new method called crowdsourcing. Crowdsourcing involves online workers who answer survey questions for a minimum remuneration. Workers come from diverse backgrounds and belong to 100 countries. 40 per cent of the participants are still Americans, but almost one third are Indians, since there are many online workers in India who are fluent in English.

Although this survey population is still not totally representative of all humans, findings from this new cosmopolitan online cohort have the ability to alter widely trusted concepts about human psyche and behaviour. Here is an example.

Does the end justify the means? For example, can we kill someone to achieve

a universal good? This is a question that is very relevant for us Nepalis. But answers would vary significantly based on the composition of the study group. People around the world hold very different views about morality than American undergraduate students.

Many researchers in psychology are excited about this new method of studying the way humans think and react. Indeed many believe that this is the dawn of a new era in psychology.

Two scholars would have been especially excited by this turn of events. The German psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin and the Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud. Although Kraepelin dealt with drugs and pathophysiological pathways in the brain and Freud studied repressed emotions as a cause of mental illnesses, these early investigators would have been attracted to the crowdsourcing method of collecting accurate data. They both realised that unlike physical ailments where the pathology is often clear, psychology is more challenging and a better set of data and conclusions is the first step to helping patients. ☺



WEEKEND WEATHER

There is no need to panic yet about the monsoon. It's not really late, since the due date is usually 15 June. But the monsoon has been breaking a week later than usual on average for the past ten years. This year, after hitting the Kerala and Goa coasts on 5 June, the monsoon sort of fizzled out. The Bay of Bengal arm of the monsoon has also been struggling to gather some critical mass of moisture before marching westwards along the Himalaya to where we are. As this satellite radar composite taken on Wednesday midnight shows, there is a high pressure system over central and western Nepal that is keeping the massing monsoon trough confined to the east. It's the same story every year: when will the warm moist wind from the Bay become strong enough to advance westwards. We may have to wait till next week for the westerly jet stream to migrate north as it is supposed to clear the path for the monsoon. Expect night lightning and thunder in the Valley over the weekend, which are the fireworks before the real thing.



FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

31-19 31-19 31-19



DINESH SHRESTHA

LEFT RIGHT LEFT: PM Baburam Bhattarai inspects construction at the tunnel of Melamchi drinking water project in Sindhupalchok on Monday.



KRISHNA SINJAL

FATAL WOUNDS: A baby elephant was found dead with axe marks on its body in Bahundangi, a village in Jhapa on Tuesday morning. The village is troubled by transborder migration of wild elephants, and it is suspected that the calf lost its way and was attacked by locals.



BIKRAM RAI

CASHING IN: A local boy sells mineral water at Khula Manch, while crowd gathers on Saturday afternoon for a mass meeting organised by RPP-N.



BIKRAM RAI

DIVINE DANCE: The Pachali Bhairav Jatra underway in Lagan tole, Kathmandu, on Tuesday. The festival is held every 12 years.

The messenger is to blame



BY THE WAY

Anurag Acharya

Being a journalist in this country has its moments. You hobnob among Kathmandu's power elite, you get to see up close just how narrow their world is and how it is defined by one-upmanship.

And what a contrast it is when you then travel to Nepal's outback mired in its dusty, grimy poverty, and see the stark difference between daily lives of the rulers and the ruled.

And that is also where you experience the glaring disconnect between the obsession of capital-centric national media and the everyday concerns of rural Nepalis. This contradiction has seeped into the public consciousness.

In the oppressive heat of the Tarai summer in Lahan last week I approached an elderly man in a tea shop. "Go back to Kathmandu and talk to your netas," he told me gruffly, "don't pretend you need my opinion, as if it matters."

The people are so fed up with political posturing and slogans that they are now blaming the messengers, the media, for giving so much space to them. They also think the media is partisan, dominated by biased opinions, and driving a wedge between Nepalis instead of pulling them together.

Recently a newspaper published a list of journalists and editors who had 'sold out' to the ruling coalition



ANURAG ACHARYA

The platform for debating national problems has itself become a part of the problem

partners, the Maoists and the Madhesis. The news also stated that the Nepali Congress is now preparing to 'buy' its own media house. It is hard to say which is more absurd: a newspaper printing a list of 'pro-government' editors, or the Kangresis thinking they need a media house to lift their sagging fortunes.

Indeed, editorial positions have hardened as the stakes get higher in the political vacuum left by the dissolution of the CA. Editorials and prime time news sound like smear campaigns between the rivals. The corporate media is openly taking sides depending on their business and political

stakes, viewers and readers are subjected to stilted and barely-concealed propaganda.

Last week, there was a Panchayat-style warning to a tv station from the Ministry of Information (under direct orders from the PMO) for daring to broadcast news critical of the government.

But the threat to press freedom does not only stem from the state or from commercial interests beholden to politicians, eroding journalistic ethic among the messengers is equally to blame. Into this throw is a society that is now polarised by ethnicity, where a volatile mixture of hate speech, outright racism and maliced opinions

are taking precedence over journalism.

It is neither realistic nor fair to expect 100 per cent objectivity from journalists. In a society divided by class, caste, ethnicity and gender, viewpoints become even more pronounced. Journalists can vote for their favourite party inside the secrecy of the polling booth and therefore needn't be apologetic about their political standpoints. The point is to be critical, give due regard to dissenting voices, play the adversarial role and balance personal bias with professional integrity. It is when journalists cross the line and start sounding like party whole timers that the media's

credibility is hurt. Let that be the job of politicians who now seem to be monopolising more and more of the op-ed space in the mainstream media.

Today, the Nepali media's credibility is in question, not just from readers and viewers, but also from within. Sub-national, socio-economic issues are sidelined in favour of Kathmandu politics, often blurring the lines between information and disinformation.

Picture this: the opposition parties are on a national campaign against the ruling coalition and protest against everything they do or say. The prime minister and his coalition partners, on the other hand, blame the opposition for behaving irresponsibly. Both get media attention, but to make overall sense of what is happening the reader now has to buy a whole spectrum of newspapers to filter out the bias.

Jaya Ram Shrestha has run a sidewalk newspaper stand at the New Baneshwor intersection for nearly 20 years. "They have been coming here, drinking tea and scanning the headlines," he says of the freeloaders, "but I have never seen them as disillusioned and confused as they are today."

Protracted transition and post-27 May void have taken their toll on the fourth estate, as well. The platform for debating national problems has today become a part of the problem. As the corporate media looks to secure its long-term interests by taking political positions, journalists now have even more of a responsibility to make sense of national issues, bring up the concerns of ordinary Nepalis, and help bridge the gap between the rulers and ruled.

If the media becomes an extension of the propaganda arm of political parties, it undermines both democracy and the free press. ☎

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Despair and hope in Dolpo



"Politics is only for the leaders. We never expected anything from the constitution."



COMMENT
Dewan Rai

When the debate on federalism and constitution was at its peak in the capital last month I was in remote and rugged Dolpo, Nepal's biggest district in area and one of the last without a road connection.

It seemed the entire population of not just Dolpo, but the whole of mid-western Nepal was on the move: trekking up to the high valleys to pick yarsagumba, the caterpillar fungus that is also known as Himalayan viagra and fetches astronomical prices in traditional Chinese medicine.

Yarsagumba has now become the main source of income for a majority of Nepal's Himalayan dwellers. Houses were all padlocked, and entire families had gone off on the annual two-month yarsa exodus. The last thing on the minds of these people was the fast approaching constitution deadline. Others wondered which federal province they would belong to when they returned from the mountains.

More than 150,000 people from Baitadi to Ramechhap, including four-year-old children to 64-year-olds, are still up there scouring the high meadows for the fungus. None of them had proper clothes to ward off the biting cold at 5,200m. Most wore rubber flipflops, and had no time to enjoy the unearthly beauty of Phoksundo Lake. The middlemen who buy the yarsa, on the other hand, wore fancy down jackets and shades.

The pickers crawl on the ground like four-legged animals looking out for tiny yarsa stems sticking out of the ground. They had to carry in all their food and fuel to last two months. Most survived on raw instant noodles.

These are the refugees of Nepal's development: fleeing joblessness and lack of opportunities in their home districts in a desperate search for income. There is no government where they come from, the VDC secretary is always absent and villagers have to walk up to three days just to get documents signed. The land is dry, there has been no investment in irrigation, and the meager harvest of corn or buckwheat cannot feed families.

Most people from Dailekh, Jajarkot or Rukum here do not know which parties were in the Constituent Assembly, they had little idea about federalism, ethnic or otherwise. They gave blank stares when asked if they preferred a parliamentary system or a presidential one.

Local community groups are doing more for health

and education in their villages than the government ever did. Some mistake the UN's World Food Program which distributes food to build roads as a government entity.

Federalism may set all this right. Or it might not. But if it is going to be the same leaders from the same parties, the people know instinctively that nothing is going to change. One of them is Motilal Buda of Sarmi VDC, who has seen governments come and go with no difference in his life. "Politics is only for the leaders," he says, "not for us. We never expected anything from the constitution."

Buda and other pickers who were slightly more aware said they didn't really care how the federal units would be demarcated. Their much more pressing concern is immediate: returning to their villages even deeper in debt because of such slim pickings of yarsa this year.

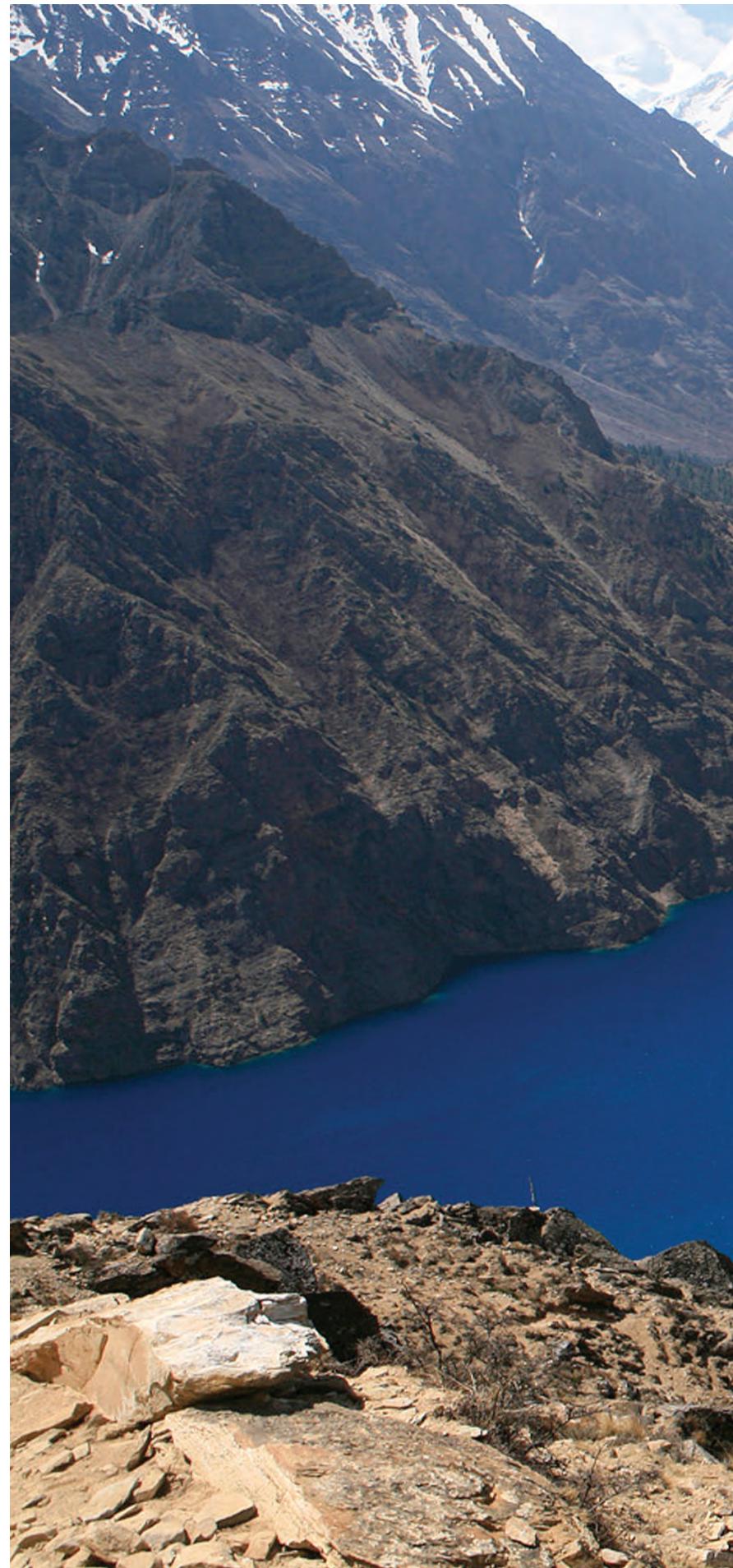
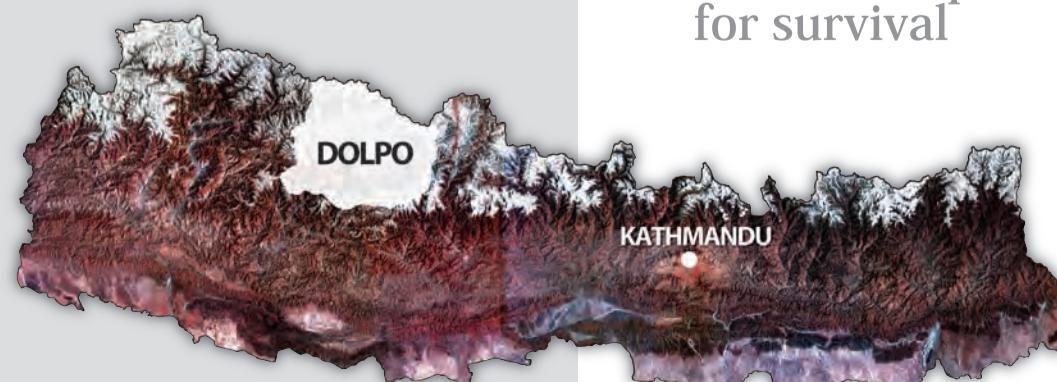
Debendra Thapa of Rukum, who hadn't found a single yarsa stem in two days, told me in a worried tone: "How do I show my face to my family? I should have never quit my job in India."

The yarsa pickers here are from all ethnic communities. They are all downtrodden, discriminated against, socially, economically and politically excluded. They represent Nepal in a microcosm. But just because they don't seem to care about federalism, doesn't mean their concerns should be discounted by those in for whom federalism is just political football.

What the people really need and never got is quality, affordable education, and to use that to rise up and be heard. They just want to be treated equally, have a chance to improve their lives.

Over the decades, successive governments in over-centralised Kathmandu failed to address these concerns. Federalism would share governance between national and provincial governments, and bring well-being and prosperity because equal citizens would enjoy rights that come with responsibility.

Sitting around a camp fire one evening after a day of fruitless yarsa picking, Krishna Rokaya of Jumla was hopeful that federalism would make life better. He was convinced Nepal would be better governed that way. I could only nod. ☺



YARSA

Over-harvesting and lack of regulation have ruined the cash crop on which Nepal's Himalayan dwellers depend for survival

DEWAN RAI in DOLPO

It's eight in the morning and more than 20 groups of yarsagumba collectors have already passed Reiky. Pema Tsering who owns a tea shop is too busy to even chat with customers. Like her neighbours, she is in a hurry to send her brother off on his two month yarsa-picking trip.

Mid-June to August is the prime picking season in Dolpo for yarsagumba, the Himalayan caterpillar-fungus prized in China as an aphrodisiac. But over-harvesting in past years has depleted the crop, and across the Himalaya from Rasuwa to Humla, this year's yarsa season has been a disastrous failure.

Shops, schools, government



PICS: DEWAN RAI

LAND

offices are closed during this season and the 29 km stretch between Lake Phoksundo and Sulligard is teeming with tens of thousands of mules and their owners. It is like the gold rush in the American outback, but many this year are returning disappointed.

Not just the people of Dolpo, but entire families from the lower valleys of mid-western Nepal have trekked up here to collect the big, bright yellow yarsagumba. A middleman here will buy the harvest for Rs 30,000 per kg and sell for

up to Rs 2.5 million across the border in Tibet, and by the time it gets to pharmacies in Shanghai it can be worth \$100 apiece. But this year, the low harvest is sure to raise prices.

Krishna Rokaya and his family, made the six day trek from Rukum to Sulligard in hopes of harvesting yarsa and repaying their debts. He had to take a loan to pay for the journey, but it looks like this year he will be even more indebted. "I am going to keep trying," he said, "even if I collect half a kg this season, I can feed my family for a few months."

Pushpalal Pun of Jajarkot shares a similar story. He left his BA classes, and is hoping to make a big collection this season so that his family



can scratch out a living for rest of the year. But seeing the yarsa pickers coming back down the high valleys empty-handed, he fears the trip may be in vain.

Not everyone agrees that yarsa harvests are down. Ram Prasad Mahat, chairman of the Shey Phoksundo National Park and Buffer Zone Management Committee says: "Since there are more pickers, the average collection per person has

gone down, but yarsas are still plentiful." He sees the increase in yarsagumba pickers as a positive sign. This year the committee collected Rs 10 million as entry fee up from Rs 6 million in 2011 and Mahat says the national park could earn up to Rs 100 million if there are stricter regulations. People from outside the district are charged Rs 1,100 while Dolpo residents pay Rs 600.

The yarsagumba picked in Dolpo go straight north to Tibet via the border points at Mamu Chhohra and Kyate Chhohra.

nepaltimes.com

Travel with the
yarsagumba collectors

Yarsa-land, #559
Gold-rush in Dolpa, #151



All eyes on Shital Niwas

Dhruba Shimkhada, Kantipur,
9 June

कान्तिपुर

Since the dissolution of the CA on 27 May, President Ram Baran Yadav's residence in Shital Niwas has seen an influx of visitors including heads of political parties, civil society members and foreign diplomats. Yadav has been offered five proposals so far: sacking the prime minister, reviving the CA, re-electing the CA, conducting parliamentary elections, or endorsing the draft constitution prepared by the commission. The interim constitution,



however, doesn't give the President the right to sack the prime minister or revive the CA. Yadav has remained largely free of controversy during his tenure in office. His commitment to preserving the nation's integrity has been well-appreciated and has helped reinforce his image as Nepal's guardian. However, during this time of crisis the Nepali people are expecting him to untangle the deadlock. Therefore the most appropriate action for the President would be to encourage the parties to work towards a consensus.

Doctors reach out

Sharada Pokhrel, Rajdhani,
10 June

राजधानी

Most MBBS graduates have only one dream: migrating to a developed country and getting rich. But students from the Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS) are different.

PAHS has a strict rule which requires students to travel to rural villages and live there for two weeks after each semester and for six months after completing their degrees. They are allowed to take toothpastes, brushes and towels with them,

but they have to eat whatever the farmers offer them and sleep on the floor. Students are given their MBBS certificates, only after they successfully complete the trip.

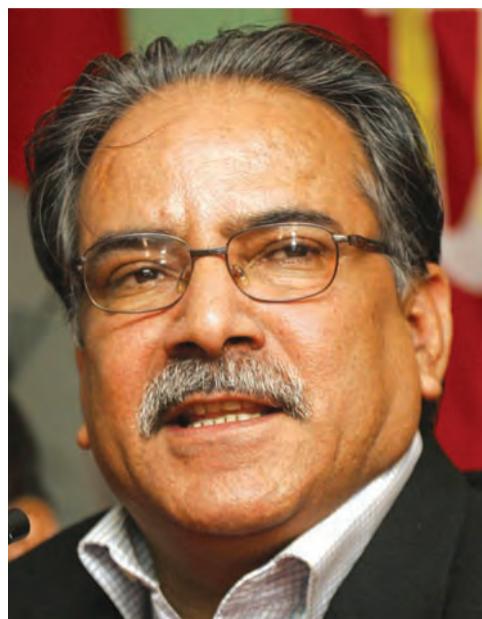
Vice chancellor Arjun Karki says this policy was created so that students have a better understanding of the harsh realities of life outside the Valley. In addition to the trips, students who are on full scholarships must work for four years in rural areas and those on partial scholarships must complete a minimum of two years.

"Urban students who have grown up with privilege don't go to rural areas once they become doctors. However, we believe those students who are willing to work in villages go on to become good healthcare providers and be committed to improving the health of Nepalis living in remote corners of the country," explains Karki.

PAHS is also unique because it is the only MBBS college specialising in surgery which gives priority to women, Dalits, students from remote areas, and backward or indigenous communities during admissions.

"NA is now a Maoist army"

onlinekhabar, excerpts from Pushpa Kamal Dahal's speech, 9 June



I think there was a planned conspiracy to prevent the CA from declaring the constitution. Earlier too, the parties wanted to issue the statute through a commission, but we won't let them betray the Nepali people. No matter how long it takes or how many times we have to conduct CA elections, we will make sure the constitution is declared only through the CA.

For the last four years we have insisted on working on the peace process and constitution side by side. But leaders of the NC and UML didn't

take constitution writing seriously. They made grand statements about completing the constitution within a few days after we handed over our arms to the Nepal Army (NA). But even after that they continued to hinder consensus and refused to compromise.

The other parties are most likely conspiring to get the President to oust Bhattarai's government. But the NA won't support them. The Army is now a fully democratic body with republican values. Why would it follow the orders of the NC? A Nepali Congress leader recently said they were fools to believe the Maoists had handed over their arms to the Army and that we owned the NA. He is correct. If we had not been so clever, would we have reached the position that we are in today?

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Board: National consensus

Blindfold (left): Stick to power

Blindfold(right): Get to power

अन्तर्मुखी पोष्ट Basu Kshitiz in Annapurna Post, 10 June

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



Is state power the NC and UML's personal inheritance? We will rule for another 500 years now.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal during a program organised by Tamang Rastriya Mukti Morcha on 9 June

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National unity grovelment

It's a myth that the Maobaddies have two factions, they actually have at least five. Let's see: MBK is numerically the biggest sub-group, PKD is the richest cuz he has mucho moolah, BRB is the most powerful since he is in power, then there is NKS who is literally a pain in the neck, followed closely by Comrade Cloudy who has longterm ambitions to start his own firm. But by now the commie buddies have cried wolf so often about an imminent split that no one will believe them until it actually happens. The tilt in the 'Prachanda Press' does suggest that an effort is now on to isolate BRB and there is a drift back towards the MBK Faxon, with PKD egging the hardie boys to call for the prime minister's resignation. We know there are no permanent friends or foes in politics, but all this habitual partner-swapping is getting to look a bit too promiscuous even by Nepali standards.

Joke: All four political parties are splitting, but that doesn't stop them from trying to form a national unity grovelment.



Tongues are wagging about whether **Awesome Junior** actually climbed Everest. The reason suspicions have surfaced is because the usually prolific

Prime Minister's Office has an ace in hole

Standing committee sitting on names

PM's party fails to decide on ministers

On matters of screwing
More varsities should be opened under the 'Umbrella Act'

Facebook user has not posted a single summit picture on his wall. If anyone climbs Everest, the first thing they usually do is take a picture of themselves on top and upload it as soon as they can, right? Well, not the ultra-modest Dear Leader Prakash. What we do know from other members of the flamboyantly named Lumbini-Everest Peace Expedition is that Comrade Prakash and his 'liaison' officer Comrade Bina (the two shared a co-ed tent throughout the expedition) were strolling hand-in-hand on the southeast ridge at 7AM on 24 May. So we know it for a fact that

Prakash and his comrade-in-arms at least made it to the South Col. But did they get any further? Speculation is further fuelled by the fact that as soon as he got back to terra firma, The Fruit-of-Prachanda's-Loins has been using his Facebook status updates not to upload his summit album, as one would expect, but to hurl expletives and abuse at **Kiran Kaka** and the other dude, **Big Plop**.



The talk of the town is Chairman Max's speech at the Tamsaling the other day where he told the audience

"the Nepal Army is now our army" and that the Maoists had already completed state capture. The surprising thing is that General COAS seems to agree whole heartedly. PKD's party is on the verge of a split, but instead of working on keeping it together, he is spending all his energy on getting Janajati UML and NC to break away. He is also busy dividing and ruling the army, this time using the ethnic card. Only a scheming **Arya Khas Aboriginal Bahun** could come up with a cunning plan like that.

What a lot of people didn't notice was that sitting next to PKD at the Tamang meet was none other than Ugly Sapkota, the Caucasian Comrade accused of masterminding the execution during the war of Arjun Lama, a Tamang resident of Dolakha. Comrade Fire has been trying desperately to rehabilitate himself, and even has a Wikipedia page that has no mention of Lama's extra-judicial killing.



Meanwhile, all we hear from the **spinless babblers** at the NC and UML is the same old mumbo jumbo about BRB's resignation with no credible succession plan. The NC and UML are determined to sabotage BRB's vision of turning this country into a

Greater Nepal Co-prosperity Sphere, because that means he will rule forever. Hence the opposition to prime minister passing the anti-money laundering legislation by ordinance before the absolutely final 18 June deadline. Ehmaleys and Kangresis are just holding the country hostage so they can bargain for top slots in a new national unity grovelment.



The war of the texts is not taking any prisoners anymore, and has moved far beyond Nepalis fondly calling each other "**Chuchhe**" and "**Chimse**". Com Ang Qazi who threatened to huff and puff and blow down media houses at the Rapporteur's Club last month is at it again, SMSing fellow non-Janai Jati leaders who are not mutinying against their parent parties terms of endearment like: "I will play marbles with your eyeballs", or "I will pull your tongue out". Poetic.



This just in: Banks and businesses in Kathmandu are getting letters from the Kiran Kaka Faxon of the Buddies this week, strongly urging them to "donate generously to split the Maoist party".



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