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CLASS STRUGGLE

With only 1,000 days to go for developing countries to meet their Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets, Nepal gets a high pass. Except for sanitation and hospital birthing, Nepal is likely to meet all other targets for parameters like male-female parity in education, infant mortality rate, forest cover, and reduction in HIV and malaria etc by 2015.

Although going to school, these students of a primary school in Dumja of Kavre district (pic, right) lack even the basic facilities. The quality of education is below national standards. Enrolment is nearly 100 per cent, but the dropout rate among girls is high.

As experts look ahead at post-MDG Sustainable Development Goals, they see the need to strengthen local capacity to deal with development and not be continually dependent on aid.

MDG:
THE NEXT 1000 DAYS PAGE 4

WEAK STATES,
STRONG SOCIETIES PAGE 5



Get out your mats as Ashtanga, one of the most celebrated styles of yoga, comes to town.

PAGE 11



MY SCHOOL: Students in Dumja, Kavre attend classes. This primary school only has 15 students and there are about three other schools in a five kilometre periphery because of the scattered settlements in the district.

AMIR JOSHI

Mahindra RODEO RZ
LET'S DO MORE

PERSONAL INFO
name: Shital Moktan
age group: 25 - 27
hobby: Singing, Dancing & Travelling
profession: Singer/Music Arranger/Director

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WATCHING THE WATCHDOG

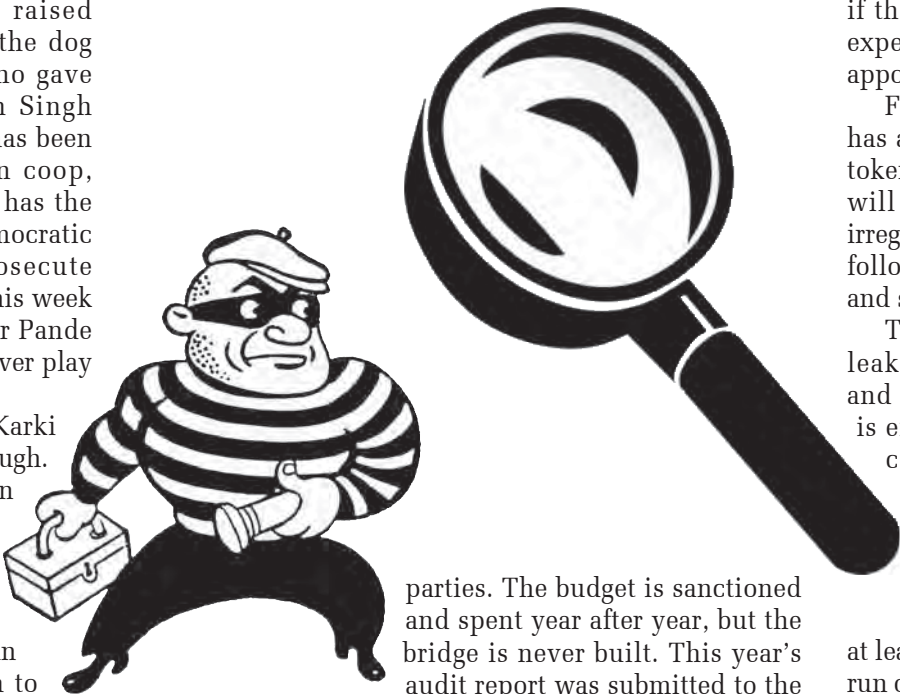
Even the staunchest critics of the appointment of the chief justice to head the government have now decided to go along with that violation of the fundamental democratic tenet of the separation of powers. We can live with it as long as it ensures another basic democratic exercise: elections.

However, the inability of the Khil Raj Regmi regime to even announce a date for elections has raised questions about whether the tail is wagging the dog because he is so beholden to the Maoists who gave him the post. The appointment of Lok Man Singh Karki as the head of the corruption watchdog has been compared to letting a fox guard the chicken coop, but it is actually much worse than that. Karki has the propensity to short-circuit what remains of democratic checks and balances by threatening to prosecute political rivals. The troubling contempt charge this week against *Kantipur* and its columnist Vijay Kumar Pande also illustrates just why a sitting judge should never play prime minister.

The unseemly political barter deal that let Karki head the CIAA did yield one desirable result though. For the first time in six years we actually have an auditor general and the NC's nominee couldn't have been a better candidate. Bhanu Prasad Acharya is a soft-spoken, seasoned bureaucrat known for his competence, integrity, and no-nonsense style. What a contrast to Karki, the man that the AG's office is supposed to work with to control endemic corruption.

To be sure, Acharya has huge challenges ahead of him. In the absence of oversight, the four-party syndicate has made looting the budget standard operating procedure from Singha Darbar to Musikot Khalanga. Allocations for infrastructure have become slush funds for political

The new auditor general can counter balance the controversial appointment of a new CIAA head



parties. The budget is sanctioned and spent year after year, but the bridge is never built. This year's audit report was submitted to the president on 16 April, but hasn't even been printed. The veracity of the government's accounts with the Rastra Bank hasn't been reconciled for three years. Lack of internal controls even for donor-assisted projects is missing. Money meant for former combatants in the cantonments were just handed over to

a minister who never had to account for it. The auditor general's office is an essential part of a four-pillar oversight mechanism for public financial management that also includes the executive, the parliamentary accounts committee, and the Financial Comptroller General of Accounts. The extended political transition has meant that all four pillars, even if they exist, are tottering. Maybe it is too much to expect just one person to stem the rot. But Acharya's appointment is a start.

Firstly, he can counterbalance the CIAA, which has already shown signs that it will be an agency for tokenism and political vendetta. The auditor general will have to move rapidly to address the backlog of irregularities in spending: some inadvertent failures to follow financial procedures, but most of them blatant and systematic violations of budgetary discipline.

The auditor general's job is not just to pinpoint leakage, but to retroactively rectify irregularities and conduct performance audits to make sure there is efficiency in the system. And in a country where conflict and fluid politics have disrupted the delivery of basic services, it essentially means not wasting scarce resources and getting the biggest bang for the development buck.

The auditor general doesn't just serve the government of the day, he serves the people. And at least we now have a sentry in place to see there is no run on the budget, that rules are followed, and systemic deficiencies are addressed until we have a transparent, accountable government.

And if Acharya is not allowed to work, or if the CIAA under Karki starts a political witch-hunt, civil society may be forced to set up a conscience-keeping body.

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

DOCTOR WHO?

I don't know what is more pathetic: greedy Yeshe Lodoe Lama ripping off foreign donors and maltreating unsuspecting patients in Humla or an institute like Nepal Medical Council (NMC) saying it is not possible to check the authenticity of a suspected doctor's licence ('Doctor who?', Bhrikuti Rai, #654). Demands for fake certificates are so high, 'degree mills' work day and night to produce certificates that look very authentic. Yet there is no established mechanism to distinguish genuine certificates from fake ones.

Luv Nepal

As a fundraiser for Citta and a frequent visitor to Nepal, I am disappointed by what happened to the community hospital in Humla. There are many of us here in Canada who've given a lot of time and energy to fundraise for Lama only to discover he has betrayed our trust. I hope the Nepali government does the right thing and returns the land to those who are genuinely interested in improving the lives of Humlis, not line their own pockets.

Wanda Vivequin

As the person who came up with the HEED acronym and someone who has supported Citta for over 10 years, I find Lama's thievery and corruption criminal. He should be arrested and tried for fraud. What's worse, he has made a cheap mockery of people's good faith and efforts to improve other's lives. Despite his treachery, I will continue to support Citta.

George M Carter

This is such a sad story, but poverty and suffering often result in unwholesome conduct. However, let's not allow one man to discourage all of us from contributing to organisations like Citta and continuing to care and serve those in need.

Enkyo

Michael Daube, the main donor, is also at fault here because he completely ignored early warning signs. Also as a professional artist who does not have much knowledge about medicine, Daube should have put a few doctors on the board as partners or mentors. It looks like the fake doctor milked the donor and his friends for their foolishness.

Ram Lal

PREYING

The brutal murder of a leopard by locals of Gothatar is beyond comprehension and only confirms my belief that we as a nation have lost all sense of direction ('Preying on the predator', Priya Joshi, #654). We let dangerous animals rule us and kill harmless ones. The parading of the carcass was especially gruesome.

Abhishek

The officials at central zoo and the police are to be blamed for this. It was their job to ensure the safety of the animal and yet 10-20 policemen just watched on as silent bystanders. What's more unfortunate is that no arrests have been made and the government hasn't formed a panel to investigate the incident. The state

really needs to prioritise the protection of wildlife.

Ram Prasad

I think this is a question of class and money and not humanity. If you are wealthy, you are likely to have pets and support animal rights and affiliated organisations. But if you are poor, jobless, and apparently future-less with lots of time on your hands, you are more likely to attack and kill a helpless animal because, well, in a perverse way, it's fun to do so. I suspect the author and most commentators here make up Nepal's top one per cent and their horror is an expression of the class they belong to.

'Chituwa lover'

DISTANT NORMALISATION

Reading this editorial, it is clear that the author knows a lot more than he chooses to disclose ('Distant normalisation', #654). He might have some compulsions, commercial or otherwise, to not give names and bare it all in public, hence elects to hide behind ambiguous terms like 'crony capitalism', 'piranha investors', and everyone's favourite, 'foreign hand'. That is totally understandable, after all we have to survive in the 'system'. The people who proposed Lok Man Singh Karki for the head of CIAA too might have some similar 'compulsions'.

Krishna S

THE HYBRIDS

Car companies don't care about saving the environment they just want to make a profit out of being green ('Here come the hybrids', Kunda Dixit, #654).

Ram Prasad

The Toyota Prius Hybrid costs approximately Rs 4 million in Australia. I don't understand why Nepalis are buying the same car for Rs 13 million.

Kumar

INSURANCE SCAM

Helicopter rescues among trekkers is carried out for a variety of conditions: altitude sickness, musculoskeletal injuries, severe diarrhoea, vomiting, chest pain etc ('Insurance scam hits helicopter rescue', #654). Deaths due to altitude illness from 1999 to 2006 was 7.7 per 100,000 persons. But timely helicopter rescue still saves hundreds of lives. Most trekkers want to successfully finish their trek and don't want to rely on being rescued by helicopters. The solution to keep the system honest requires eliminating kickbacks at all levels and greater involvement of insurance industry by only endorsing those helicopter companies that comply with certain standards.

Prativa Pandey
Medical Director, CIWEC Clinic
Travel Medicine Centre

Q OF THE WEEK

How can we control corruption in Nepal ?

facebook

Sabian Shrestha: The most difficult question I've seen in my life.

Wangdoo Fungsook: It's a national disease that cannot be cured.

John Mitchell: Transparency, checks and balances in government, and a free press.

Ange Nilu: Providing education and care.

Yashoda Aryal: Social securities like health insurance and care in old age.

Chautari Ma Gaff: Unbiased media that takes no sides.

Prasad Pakhreen: Need another Lok Man.

Masayo Kiyota: Establish solid legislative measures.

twitter

@NYPinNY: Corruption can only be controlled if people get civilised and the civil society doesn't promote it.

@Kamred_Hulaki: You must be kidding. It's here to stay.

@sameermidixit: With CIAA under complete political control, it is hard to answer this.

This week's Question of the Week: 'What are two things you cannot live without?' Go to www.facebook.com/nepalitimes or www.twitter.com/nepalitimes

TOYOTA PRIUS 2013

CORRECTION: The figures for Toyota Prius and Honda Insight listed in 'Here come the hybrids' (#654) were incorrect. The table on the right contains the accurate data.

HONDA INSIGHT 2013

7.1 l/100km	Mileage (city)	5 l/100km
6.1 l/100km	Mileage (highway)	6.6 l/100km
800km	Range on tank	600km
2.9 tons/year	CO2 emission	4.5 tons/year
1.6 l	Engine size	1.3 l
Rs 13 million	Price with taxes	Rs 7.5 million

In contempt of the republic

Nepal's judiciary must lead the country out of the political morass it helped create



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

Two weeks have passed since the controversial appointments to vacant constitutional bodies were ratified by the president's office on the recommendation of the Constitutional Council, but the blame game between political parties, Singha Darbar, and Shital Niwas continues.

The top political leaders see nothing wrong with a tainted individual like Lok Man Singh Karki heading the anti-corruption watchdog, while Khil Raj Regmi and his band of merry ex-bureaucrats say the appointment was done by political consensus. Even President Ram Baran Yadav, who had stood firm against several controversial ordinances forwarded by the former Baburam Bhattarai government, changed his mind overnight and signed Karki in.

The political parties, under pressure from within their own ranks, have been passing the buck to 'The Hidden Hand'. They know that we know that such a decision could not have been taken without a settlement of mutual interests. In fact, we have it on a reliable source that it was a four-bags-full deal.

So when the NC and UML leadership claim that they got played by the Maoists and Madhesis who wanted Karki to cover their corruption while in government, it reeks of political opportunism because there are pending cases of corruption against every major political

party and its leaders in the anti-graft body.

Nepalis should be worried, if they aren't already, that the affairs of this sovereign state are in the hands of individuals who are capable of selling the national interest to the highest bidder. But they have their hands tied, they can't throw these leaders out until there are elections.

Last year's decision of the Supreme Court to order the dissolution of the legislature without guaranteeing elections closed all constitutional doors for the people to hold the executive accountable. Now, the court has issued a contempt charge against *Kantipur's* editor, publisher, and columnist. But assuming that we still live in a democracy, no organ of the state is above public scrutiny, not even the judiciary since it has been deployed to play the executive role.

Rather than picking on the fourth estate, the court should have provided the country with a constitutional remedy to get us out of the mess it helped create in the first place.

On Wednesday the Supreme Court issued a show cause notice on Karki's appointment and ordered the Regmi-led interim election council to provide reasons within 15 days as to why it took the decision.

Meanwhile, the Karki affair has been a welcome distraction for those who want to postpone elections indefinitely and exacerbate instability in the country to undermine the achievements of the 2006 movement. Recent public opinion polls (including in this paper) that show strong disapproval of ethnicity-based



BIKRAM RAI

federalism have encouraged these forces, which have been raking-up nationalist sentiments against the core values of the Interim Constitution.

There is no doubt the parties who were championing the agenda for change have let the people down, which is why they are reluctant to face them in a vote. But Nepalis aren't disillusioned enough to give up, they still hold the government and leaders accountable for six wasted years.

At a time when the legislature lies unceremoniously dissolved and the judiciary is

playing the role of the executive, it is up to the media and civil society to galvanise public support for elections. They must also create positive pressure on the political leadership as a warning that they can't stand in the shadows and make ad hoc appointments to constitutional bodies.

If Nepal's fractured civil society wants to build a united movement, its members must take off their multi-coloured political hats and hold everyone equally responsible for Karki's appointment. It's their own legacy of the 2006 movement

UNACCEPTABLE: Human rights activists protest outside Singha Darbar on Wednesday against the appointment of Lok Man Singh Karki as chief of the CIAA.

that they are protecting.

Given complex caste and class interests, it looks unlikely that Kathmandu's powerful players can put aside their internal differences to lodge a united movement to reclaim the republic. As for the citizens, sooner or later when given the chance to vote freely, they will throw this whole lot out of power. 🇳🇵



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MDG

Fragile states show signs of progress in meeting development targets by 2015

The Next 1000 Days

JOE HITCHON in WASHINGTON

Twenty of the world’s most fragile states, including those currently affected by conflict, have achieved one or more of the development targets outlined under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the World Bank has said.

In a new paper, bank researchers offer findings that six more states are on track to meet individual development targets ahead of the MDG’s 2015 deadline.

“This should be a wake-up call to the global community not to dismiss these countries as lost causes. These signs of progress do signal that development can and is being achieved, even amid fragility and violence,” World Bank President Jim Yong Kim said last week.

The findings indicate significant improvements from a 2011 World Bank report that suggested that no low-income, fragile or conflict-affected country had achieved a single MDG, the eight international development goals, established in 2000 to which all 193 United Nations member states agreed to a deadline for achievement by 2015.

According to the new report, the greatest progress has been on gender parity in education, the ratio of girls’ to boys’ enrolment in school. The analysis finds that eight fragile and conflict-affected states (including Guinea, Nepal, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Timor-Leste) have already met the goal to halve ‘extreme poverty’, those living on less than \$1.25 a day.

“The message that we feel these findings send is that these nations can achieve and make progress in many of the areas associated with the MDGs,” said Joel Hellman, director of conflict and fragile states at the World Bank. He adds that the new numbers reflect both progress and better data-gathering and analysis on the part of the World Bank and the United Nations.

“We can’t make policies without information and the MDGs have really galvanised countries and the international communities to support getting information to assess what is happening on the ground,” he says.

Still, Hellman cautions that there is a long way for these countries to go, noting that few of them will accomplish many more of the MDGs, with just 1,000 days left until the deadline passes. Further, these signs of success are in volatile countries, meaning that this progress

could quickly be reversed.

Others suggest that this data could inadvertently paint an unduly rosy picture – and one that may not be filtering down to all of a country’s inhabitants.

“Countries are now in the midst of this global recession, facing really desperate conditions, so even in places where you have growth, this growth is coming primarily from extractive industries, particularly oil, gas, and mining,” says Emira Woods, co-director of Foreign Policy in Focus at the Institute for Policy Studies, a think tank here.

“So the successes on this list only represent the ‘one percent’, the elites who are benefiting. For the World Bank to highlight that these countries are meeting at least one of the MDGs seems a bit superficial – remember, there are eight goals.”

Woods notes that countries of the global South need a role for government to determine their paths towards development and she worries that the foreign direct investment-focused development model pushed by multilateral lenders has been shown to be detrimental to many developing economies.

“Foreign direct investment is mainly directed at extractive industries and does not take into account environmental

damage, worker’s health and rights, and the long-term cost for future generations,” she says.

“What we have seen is that this model for development continues to concentrate wealth in very few hands – often local elites – while large multinational oil, gas, and mining companies benefit from an unregulated market where the role of government is kept out. Unless you change the fundamentals of those policies, countries will not be able to cut poverty in half.”

The alternative, she says, would create the space for national governments in developing countries to more actively choose their own development paths. This would include ensuring that those countries maintain the ability to protect particularly valuable sectors.

Countries with large rural populations and agriculture potential, for instance, need to be able to focus on creating opportunities for smallholder farmers to maintain their livelihoods. 🇳🇵

IPS

nepalitimes.com

Text of World Bank Paper

TARGETS THAT WILL BE MET



Proportion of population living on less than US\$ 1.25 per day %

25 17



Under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births

54 54



Area under forest cover %

40 40



Net enrolment rate in primary education %

92 100



Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births

230 213



Ratio of girls to boys at primary level

0.9 1



HIV prevalence among population aged 15–49 years %

0.5 0.35

TARGETS THAT WON'T BE MET



Proportion of births with skilled birth attendants %

36 60



Proportion using toilets %

40 53

Nepal's MDG Exam

HIGH PASS

Weak states, strong societies

What after the Millennium Development Goals?



DANIEL NELSON in LONDON

It has started life with the worst name ever dreamt up for a pressure group – Independent Expert Group for Least Developed Countries on Sustainable Development Goals Post-2015 – but its aim is to be a nuisance.

“If you don’t have a nuisance value you won’t be listened to,” says Dipak Gyawali, former hydropower minister and researcher. “But being a nuisance is not enough, you need substance, too.”

Substance is what the 12-strong group hopes to inject into the slow-rolling UN process that is negotiating a successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Specifically, the group wants to ensure that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflect the perspectives

and priorities of the 50 least developed countries. And no, that doesn’t simply mean more aid.

“The age of aid is over,” Gyawali told a handful of journalists at a briefing after the group’s first meeting, in London last week. “After 50 years, development has failed much of the South and least developed countries in particular. Shortage of money is not the problem, most have tons of money but it’s being spent in all the wrong places, self-reliance is what we want. We are conventionally seen as weak states, but we are strong societies.”

Such a view will not endear him or the group to the developing country representatives charged with teasing out a list of SDGs at the UN. As in almost all international negotiations, they will be fighting for what

they perceive as their national interests and that is most easily defined in terms of aid and finance. Even Gyawali’s fellow group member, Youba Sokona from Mali, says more cautiously, “We are not against aid. But let us start with what is in our pocket.”

The expert group is not bound by national government positions. It is made up of individuals, not government representatives, though many have worked in government and the co-chair, one of five women in the group, is a former prime minister of Haiti. Its members also include Farah Kabir (Action Aid, Bangladesh), Chime P Wangdi (secretary general of Tarayana Foundation, Bhutan) and Saleemul Huq of the International Institute of Environment Development (IIED).

Huq of IIED which hosted the London meeting, cites as achievements the two funds established by Bangladesh, one of them funded with its own money to tackle climate change. Huq said it is “an example of a country not waiting for others to help”.

Nepal, for example, spends 125 per cent of its foreign exchange earnings on the import of fossil fuels.

“One action we’ve debated,” adds Huq, “is solidarity, part of which is the poor helping the rich to live better, without drawing down on resources.”

A third point will be the responsibilities of countries such as India and China, which may be urged to play a bigger role in helping move the world towards sustainability. A fourth area of focus, Huq indicated, will be greater involvement of local governments, mayors, and districts in the drive to sustainability, rather than leaving it to central government ministers. The group aims to publish its first paper in June. 🇳🇵

BIZ BRIEFS

Vroom vroom

Laxmi InterContinental, distributor of Hyundai vehicles in Nepal, has distributed three Hyundai Eons to the winners of Hyundai Dasain-Tihar offer. Bishnu Poudel, Rabindra Rajbhandari, and Raju Shrestha were handed their cars on 15 May.



Seeing purple

Purple Saturday and the 10th Darbar Marg Street Festival organised by Ncell were held last Saturday. Thousands of Kathmandu residents thronged Darbar Marg and enjoyed games and food stalls along with musical concert and cultural performances.

Winning shot

Shivaram Shrestha won the 20th edition of the Surya Nepal Masters 2013 which concluded on 11 May. Shrestha became the second professional golfer after Deepak Thapa Magar (2007 winner) to win the biggest golf tournament in the country.



Raining goodies

Naresh Pradhan, winner of Yamaha Triple Scratch sure prize scheme, took home a brand new iPhone 5 along with cash prizes. MAW Enterprises, the sole distributor of Yamaha Motorcycles in Nepal, had introduced the scheme on the occasion of Nepali New Year 2070.



Stylish move

Ethiad Airways announced the move of its Dubai City Check-in terminal to the new Ethiad travel mall. The new facility is located adjacent to Interchange 3 on Sheikh Zayed Road in Dubai. According to the press release, guests can purchase tickets, check-in for a flight, drop off baggage and board an Ethiad Express luxury coach bound for Abu Dhabi International Airport at the travel mall.



Strong bond

Bank of Kathmandu has announced successful subscription of 400,000 units of bonds. The bank had issued BOK Bond 2076 raising Rs 400 million. The bond carries a coupon interest rate of eight per cent per annum.



Tech triumph

Standard Chartered will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the first ascent of Mount Everest by a unique expedition to Sagarmatha. During the expedition, climbers will attempt to make the world’s highest banking transaction with Standard Chartered’s Breeze suite of mobile banking apps as well as assist in the recovery of debris left behind at the peak said the press statement.



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TSERING DOLKER
and JUANITA MALAGON

When Krishna Gurung, Rameshwar Singh, and Marianna Grosspietch started a leprosy clinic at Pashupati in 1992, patients from across Nepal came to the shelter seeking refuge from society’s stigmatisation. Over the next two decades, Shanti Sewa Griha became a home not just for leprosy patients but for the disadvantaged and destitute.

The charity Shanti Leprahilfe raised over \$7 million from individuals and the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in Germany to build three centres in Kathmandu Valley: a school and orphanage in Budhanilkantha, an organic farm in Sundarijal, and a rehabilitation centre in Tilganga. It trained thousands of inmates in carpet and quilt making, tailoring, painting, and organic farming so they could stand on their own feet.

The facility in Tilganga built four years ago, is the biggest and most impressive, housing more than 400 patients and with a wing for textile, paper, and carpentry workshops where



SALLY BIERMAN

BE THE CHANGE: A woman with leprosy weaves a straw mat at Shanti Sewa Griha.

of recommendations to Shanti Sewa to correct their mistakes. There was no reason for Grosspietch to leave the country or pull out.”

Grosspietch’s lawyer Shanta Sedhain confirms the German charity terminated its contract because of a deep rift with its Nepali counterpart. But this isn’t the first time Shanti Sewa has run into trouble. Three years ago, 172 allegedly terminated employees filed a case against the organisation, proceedings of which is still ongoing at the Supreme Court, but Grosspietsch continued raising funds in Germany and brought volunteers to Nepal.

Raj Kumar, 52, is a leprosy patient who has been working at the Budanilkantha centre for 15 years and says he has no idea what is going on behind the scenes. But he is worried that he and his friends might lose their only source of income and a place they call home.

This is not a new phenomenon that a well-meaning foreign charity has come into conflict with Nepali partners. While the foreign philanthropists may have been naïve and interfering, the Nepali partners have tended to be acquisitive and threatened the foreigners with physical violence. The SWC, which is supposed to mediate, has often not been able to resolve the dispute.

In the case of Shanti Sewa Griha, it will be hundreds of patients like Raj Kumar who will lose their only source of support. 🇳🇵

Out on a limb

Bitter dispute between a German charity and its Nepali partner threatens sustainable model for patient care

both patients and their families produce handicrafts to be sold in Europe for the centre’s upkeep. The interior is painted in Maithili art to make many of the patients from the Tarai feel at home. An outpatient clinic and pharmacy provides medicines free of charge. Shanti

Sewa Griha had become a model for the rehabilitation of leprosy patients and the handicapped.

But all this, it seems, was too good to last. The German charity has fallen out with its Nepali partners and Grosspietch has returned to Germany frightened and dismayed by intimidation and threats. Shanti Sewa Griha is struggling to pay bills and the future of its 700 patients hangs in the balance.

Founder and director of Shanti Leprahilfe, Grosspietch had agreed with Gurung and Singh to help raise funds in Germany while a Nepali management would run the centres. Nepali managers, however, accuse Grosspietch

of interfering in day-to-day management and exploiting patients. Grosspietch, on the other hand, says it was all part of the managers’ plan to edge her out and accuses them of threatening her and her son.

“I would have loved to see the Shanti Sewa model duplicated in other parts of Nepal so that more and more poor people could become socially and financially independent,” she said in an email interview after leaving Nepal last month, “but greed, politicisation, aggression, and non-cooperation from the Social Welfare Council left us with no other option.”

After the Nepali managers filed a complaint at the Social Welfare Council (SWC) last year, the NGO regulator investigated the dispute and forwarded a list of recommendations. Kul Bahadur Chhetri, current director of Shanti Sewa, was not available for comment despite repeated attempts to reach him.

Madan Prasad Rimal, director of SWC, says: “We just sent a list

Leaving leprosy behind

Along with HIV/AIDS, leprosy is a largely misunderstood and feared disease. Since biblical times, the bacterial infection was believed to be a curse of God and incurable. A combination of illiteracy, superstition, and lack of medical facilities meant that Nepal had one of the highest prevalence of leprosy in the world during the 1960s. But the incidence declined steadily and by 2012 the country had officially eliminated the disease by achieving a prevalence rate of 0.89 per 10,000 cases. While Nepal’s leprosy control has been a success story, fighting the social stigma attached with the infection still remains a challenge.

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After that long dry spell looked like it was going on forever, here comes Cyclone Mahasen from the Bay of Bengal. The formation has already changed wind direction slightly and blown away the haze that had enveloped Nepal. The moisture associated with the system has brought widespread thunder storms across the mountains. Climbers on Mt Everest will experience strong winds and storms. Mornings will start out fine and we will see a three degree drop in maximum temperature over the weekend.



FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
25°	27°	27°
15°	17°	18°

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SANTA GAHA MAGAR

It was a warm sunny day in Somerset, a village in northwest Bermuda, which was hosting the opening match of the World Cricket League Division Three championship on 28 April. Everyone expected pre-tournament favourites Nepal to trounce USA. Instead they lost by 94 runs. A day later the team was defeated by Uganda and fans back home started losing hope.

Consistent performances in the next three matches and a little bit of luck sent Nepal into the finals and also helped it earn a place in ICC's World Cup Qualifier in New Zealand next year. Winning the championship was the ultimate icing on the cake. While tight bowling restricted old rivals Uganda to a modest total of 151, half centuries from Pradeep Airee and Sharad Vesawkar ensured a comfortable win with more than 10 overs to spare.

When the team took a victory lap through Kathmandu earlier this month, players were greeted by boisterous cheers from thousands of fans who had thronged the sidewalks. But as the euphoria of their outstanding success slowly wears off, the team must capitalise on the momentum and focus on the future.

Up against vastly experienced and tougher opponents than the ones they faced in division three, the qualifying matches will be a hard battle for Nepal. However, the present infrastructure is simply not enough to train our cricketers to compete with world class players. And for all the hard work they put in, players earn a nominal salary of Rs 5,000.

Says General Secretary of Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) Ashok Nath Pyakurel, "CAN does not have the resources to build a team that can compete with stronger nations. The Nepali government must come forward



CHAMPIONS IN THE MAKING: Spin bowler Basanta Regmi during a match with USA on 28 April and Pradeep Airee runs in to field the ball during the finals with Uganda on 5 May (below).

HOWZ THAT!



PICS: ICC/KAGEAKI

and support the team." When asked why CAN does not increase player remuneration, Pyakurel explains that all the money that the association receives is spent on organising tournaments.

With training camps and friendly matches against India and Sri Lanka lined up, the national

team has a busy eight months ahead as it prepares to take on nine other teams including Canada, Hong Kong, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, and Uganda for the qualifiers. The top two teams from this tournament will then advance to the 2015 World Cup in Australia and New Zealand. 🇳🇵

Yes we can

Interview with the captain of the national cricket team, Paras Khadka.



How did you feel when the team lost the first two matches of the tournament?

All the teams in division three were very similar, but we didn't play well and lost two matches. We knew that every match after that was a do or die situation for us so we played with a lot of determination and with the country's pride in mind.

Can Nepal make it to the 2015 World Cup?

I feel we are capable of making it to the World Cup, but it will all depend on our preparation.

What kind of preparation will the team require?

We won this tournament and received a lot of admiration and love from the public, but that is not going to be enough to win the next tournament. The players have always given their 100 per cent and are fully committed. But to make it to the World Cup, we need regular training, play friendly matches with higher ranked countries, better facilities, and a strong management. CAN has to get behind us with all its energy and resources.

How do you assess your opponents in the qualifying round?

The teams that we will play against in 2014 are much stronger and better trained than those we met in division three. We can still win, but we will have to work and train very hard in these eight months.

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EVENTS



THE GOD OF CARNAGE, all civility recedes into corners in this play as two middle-class couples from Kathmandu attempt to mediate their sons' fight. *Rs 800, 4 to 19 May, Fridays to Sundays, 7.15pm, Studio 7, Hotel Vajra, (01)4271545, info@hotelvajra.com*

Chintan Chautari, meet people from different walks of life and share your ideas on a collectively chosen theme. *17 May, 5pm onwards, Sattya Media Arts Collective, Jawalakhel, (01)5523486*



FRENCH FILM SHOWCASE, three days, three award winning French films, opening by four amazing Nepali short-films and discussion

with professionals from the Nepali film industry. *17 to 19 May, 4 to 7 pm, Alliance Francaise of Kathmandu, Tripureshwor, (01)4242832/4241163, www.alliancefrancaise.org.np*

Chakati Guff, talk and presentation on Art of Yoga by guru Ravindra Gopal Vaidya. *17 May, 4 to 6pm, MCUBE Gallery, Chakapat, Lalitpur, (01)5260110, www.gallerymcube.com*

The British School and Circus Kathmandu, a photo exhibition that is a culmination of creative projects done by class 7 and 8 students. Enjoy a performance by Circus Kathmandu on the opening day. *Opening 17 May, 5.30pm, Runs till 31 May, Image Ark Gallery, Kulimha Tole, Patan, (01)5006665*

Travels and ideas, a photo exhibition showcasing the works of Italian photographer Nicola Zolin and Nepali photographer Samir Jung Thapa, produced during their travels. *18 May, 6.30 to 8pm, The Yellow House, Sanepa, (01)5553869*

Himalayan Film Festival, West coasters get ready for your fix of Nepali culture, society, politics, and food at the first annual Himalayan Film Festival. Featuring documentaries and films like *The Sari Soldiers, Himalayan Gold Rush, The Desert Eats Us, Road to Peace, Soongava*, and *Highway*, the festival will explore issues that Nepal is trying to grapple with at the moment. *15-19 May, Berkeley, Oakland and San Francisco. www.himalayanfilmfest.com*



SEQUENTIAL DISSONANCE, an exhibition of paintings by Mekha Bahadur Limbu Subba. *Runs until 30 May, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal Revisited.*

Italian Food and Film Festival, watch famous Italian movies while feasting on authentic Italian food. *Rs 950, Runs until 28 May, 6 pm onwards, Black Pepper Cafe and Pub, Jhamsikhel, Patan*

ICIMOD Digital Photo Contest, submit your photographs on the

theme "Water and Life" and be a part of United Nations International Year of Water Cooperation 2013. *Deadline 20 May, www.icimod.org*



FREE HIT, watch the Indian Premier League every day. *3pm, Bagaicha Restaurant, Jawalakhel, (01)5548148*

Thai Festival, enjoy everything Thai from the food to performances to products. *25 May, 10am to 5 pm, Hotel Himalaya, Lalitpur, (01)5523909*

Writing Nepal, write your story and get an opportunity to get published and win cash prizes, a short story competition by La.Lit Magazine. *Deadline 25 May, LA.Lit www.lalitmag.com*

Graphic Guff, the second installment of the popular series is here. Learn more about fonts types that exist today. *18 May, 3 to 5pm, Sattya Media Arts Collective, Jawalakhel*

THREEFOLD, an exhibition of paintings by three emerging artists reflecting Nepali culture, their personal scientific evolution and scientific wisdom. *19 May to 2 June, 10.30am to 5.30pm, Park Gallery, Pulchok, (01)5522307*



DINING

Everest Steak House, an old-school joint for everything steak, indeed a sanctuary for meat lovers. *Thamel, Chhetrapati Chok, (01)4260471*

Japanese Crepe Station, try the unique Nepali khuwa crepe for a quick fix. *Khichapokhari and Basantapur, (01)4256655*

New Tushita Restaurant, relaxing ambience and good food. Don't miss out on its penne with creamy bacon and mushroom sauce. *Lajimpat, (01)44432957*



BHUMI RESTAURANT & BAR, savor delicious Newari, Nepali, and Indian cuisine in a welcoming environment. *Lajimpat, (01)4412193*



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FALCHA, give yourself away to the twin pleasures of lemon jeera chicken and mutton handi kabab. *Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur*

Tass and Tawa, savour a wide variety of Nepali meat dishes and reserve your palate for the heavenly Chusta. *Pulchowk, Kathmandu*

MUSIC



LIVE MUSIC AT JAZZABELL, drink, eat, and enjoy live music with old friends every Wednesday and Friday, *Jazzabell Cafe, Patan, (01)2114075*

Earthwatch, live music over dinner every Friday. *Rs 1,299, Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha, (01)4375280*



LIVE AT CAFE 32, live music and delicious food every Friday. *6pm onwards, Cafe 32, Battisputali, (01)4244231*

GETAWAYS

Himalayan Peace and Wellness Centre, yoga, detox, and Ayurveda treatments and retreats every day. Get 10 per cent discount on all Ayurvedic treatments. *Park Village, Budhanilkantha, 980106661, peace@wellness.com.np*



TEMPLE TREE RESORT AND SPA, a peaceful place to unwind, complete with a swimming pool, massage parlour and sauna, it'll be hard to leave the premises once you enter. *Gaurighat, Lakeside, Pokhara (061)465819*



GLACIER HOTEL, a lovely place to stay complete with a waterfront terrace, free wi-fi, children's playground, and probably the best spa in town. *Gaurighat, Lakeside, Pokhara, (61)463722*

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Incredible Israel



On 21 May, there will be a screening of *By Summer's End* for invited guests. The public screening will begin from 22 May onwards and two films will be screened everyday for three days.

Free passes are available at the Embassy gate or you can get one on the day of screening from the Russian Culture Centre.

1. **Out of Sight** - 22 May at 3pm
2. **By Summer's End** - 22 May at 5.30pm
3. **To Be A Star** - 23 May at 3pm
4. **Love and Dance** - 23 May at 5.30 pm
5. **Bonjour Monsieur Shlomi** - 24 May at 3pm
6. **Gei Oni** (Valley of Strength) - 24 May at 5.30pm

Venue: The Russian Culture Centre, Kamalpokhari, Kathmandu
Date: 21 to 24 May
Entrance: Free

The Embassy of Israel invites you to the 8th Israeli Film Festival running from 21 to 24 May. Six incredible films that revolve around youth and relationship between Israeli parents and children will be screened at the Russian Culture Centre in Kamalpokhari from 1pm onwards.



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Rising through the cracks

A local organisation in Pokhara is giving disadvantaged women vital life skills and making them self-sufficient

SAHINA SHRESTHA

Illiterate and unable to walk because of polio, Chu Maya Purja (*pic, above*) from Myagdi was falling through the cracks and seemed destined to end up as another statistic in the lengthening list of poor Nepalis neglected by the state. A visit to Women's Skills Development Organisation (WSDO)

in 2003, however, turned her life around.

After hearing about the organisation from her relatives, Purja came to WSDO office in Pokhara and began learning to sew and make handicrafts. Today, the 39-year-old trains other poor women like herself and helps them overcome personal and social obstacles. "WSDO helped me

become financially independent. I am happy to have the skills to support myself and not rely on anyone else," she says. In 2011, Purja travelled to Kenya as part of a two women team from Nepal to participate in WEIGO's (Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising) meeting.

Like Chu Maya, Laxmi Poudel of Parbat too faced a lot of discrimination for being physically disabled and joined WSDO in hopes of improving her life. "Although I can't read or write, WSDO has given me the skills needed to survive independently," she explains. The 25-year-old has been with the organisation for little over a year now and earns a reasonable income.

WSDO was started in 1975 by the government to train poor, illiterate women in vital life skills so that they could earn an income. When the change in government

in 1989 forced the organisation to shut down due to a lack of funding, many employees lost their only source of earning and were pushed back into poverty. Devastated by the loss, Ramkali Khadka, a former employee and currently the executive director, got together three friends, collected Rs 10,000, and put the company back on its feet.

Today WSDO with two branches in Rithepani and Banjhpattan of Pokhara, provides a source of income for more than 300 women who would otherwise be completely dependent on their husbands or fathers. After trainees complete a short one week or three month long training in handicraft making, they have a choice of either staying on and working for the company or using their skills elsewhere.

WSDO is self-sustaining through income generated from

sales of handcraft products like bags, dolls, laptop and camera covers, backpacks etc. As a member of Fair Trade Organisation, the company uses only local raw materials and eco-friendly dyes. While it has a retail shop in Pokhara, in Kathmandu WSDO products are sold at Sana Hasthakala, Dhukuti, and Maha Guthi and even exported as far as Europe and Australia.

Apart from training, the company also provides its employees with free health check-up, clothing allowance, and 60 day paid maternity leave and conducts social and environment awareness programs. It also has its own saving and credit program where members get loans at nominal interest.

"WSDO is like a family and I want to work here for as long as I can," says Purja. www.wsdonepal.org



PICS: ANUP KHADKA



RELEASE THE POWER WITHIN

A vigorous fitness-based yoga, power yoga provides the perfect stimulation for the body and mind and has become immensely popular among Kathmandu residents. Sam Voolstra caught up with Roshani Adhikary, a certified yoga instructor, who teaches power yoga at the new studios in Kantipath and Patan.

What is power Yoga?

What sets power Yoga apart from the traditional style of yoga is its emphasis on strength and flexibility instead of the gentle stretching and meditation. The term power yoga became popular in the mid 1990s, when several yoga teachers were looking for a way to make Ashtanga yoga more accessible for western students. Unlike Ashtanga, power yoga does not follow a set series of poses. There is a different focus in each session, classes are usually physically more challenging and intense, and the body heat you generate helps detoxify the body.

Is power yoga for everybody?

The moves are not complex and there are adjustments for different levels, so anyone can join. However, power yoga will most likely appeal to people who enjoy exercising and want minimal amount of chanting and meditation. As students gain strength through practice they can progress to more advance versions of the different poses.

Does power yoga help in weight loss?

It makes practitioners more aware of the magical workings of their bodies, helps them develop greater acceptance of their physical self, and makes them want to adopt and maintain a healthier lifestyle.

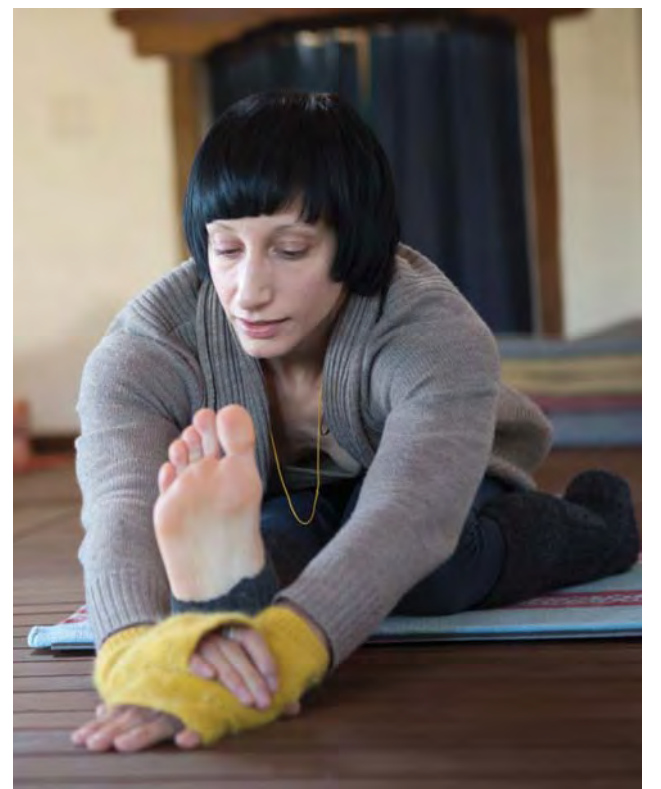
Regular practice definitely trims and increases muscles. But a balanced diet and daily exercise are also essential for permanent weight loss. For those who work behind the computer all day, power yoga is a great way to relieve back and neck pains, release stress, and lift energy levels.



Into the Zen zone

Ashtanga, one of the most celebrated styles of yoga, has arrived in Kathmandu

JESSICA O'NEILL



There is good news for fitness enthusiasts who want to follow in the footsteps of celebrities like Madonna and Sting and embark on an Ashtanga (Sanskrit for eight limbed) journey. Popular studio Pranamaya Yoga, recently began offering Ashtanga classes at its brand new centre in Boudha.

The program introduces the fluid movements of Ashtanga yoga and is specially designed to teach beginners techniques of breathing alignment along with strenuous physical movements to ensure a fit body and calm mind. Students train under American yoga instructor Shannon Rose Chmelar 'Sati' (pic, right) whose confident, calm demeanor and 12 years of experience puts even the most nervous novice at ease.

Founded and popularised by

Indian yoga guru Krishna Pattabhi Jois in the 1940s in Mysore, Ashtanga is a more dynamic yoga form with precise sequence of movements (or asanas). Inspired by his teacher Krishnamacharya and a long line of yoga practitioners, Jois developed a 'vinyasa' practice that combines traditional yoga asanas with breathing exercises and smooth transitional movements. There are six levels of Ashtanga and as students reach - and then master - a level they move up to the next.

Sati admits disliking the demanding yoga form after her first Ashtanga class. But despite her initial reservations, she found herself called to the practice again and again and began studying Ashtanga seriously in 2005 after attending a workshop led by Jois in Florida.

"It's one of the most challenging

forms of yoga, so students naturally have a very hard time in the beginning," she admits, "but after a few classes they start noticing major changes in all aspects of their lives."

Sati hopes that the Pranamaya studio in Boudha can inspire individuals the way she was inspired by her guru. "A sense of community is very important on this spiritual journey," she says, "and that is what I want to provide my students."

With classes held almost everyday of the week for all levels, there is no excuse not to enrol. So visit Pranamaya and begin your quest for inner peace today. 🧘

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IRON MAN 3


MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

As with every successful franchise, *Iron Man 3*'s appeal lies in the immense charm of its main character, Tony Stark, aka Iron Man himself.

As with the Tom Cruises and Julia Roberts of this world, Robert Downey Jr almost always plays a version of himself and since Downey's character Tony Stark insists that he IS Iron Man then, since Downey is Tony Stark and Stark is Iron Man, well then, Downey is therefore Iron Man, and so without him, there would be no *Iron Man*. I am making this needlessly complicated point only to ensure that people realise how much these Hollywood blockbusters rely on the attached star, without whom, there would be no film, sequel, and successive

franchise.

In this third installment however, while Downey is clearly indispensable, Jon Favreau, the director of the first two films is not. Although he made a voluntary decision to step down, Favreau is not particularly missed, this is partly because, while the two previous *Iron Man* films have been great fun, they are not particularly noteworthy in originality or skill, greatly relying, as I have hammered into you, on the attractiveness of the staple characters. Favreau is present, however, on scene, as Happy Hogan, Stark's bodyguard and best friend, making up for his absence behind the camera. Also, reprising their roles are Don Cheadle as Col James Rhodes, and, of course, Gwyneth Paltrow as Pepper Potts, Tony Stark's long suffering girlfriend.

Perhaps what is most interesting about *Iron Man 3* is the evolution of Pepper's character. Paltrow's Pepper Potts has always left me cold up until this film where she finally

comes into her own, the writer's having generously (and wisely) made her the moral and emotional core of the film. Unlike most other woefully superficial Hollywood heroines, it is always worthwhile to see a girl actually worth saving, who is also funny, clever, and gorgeous at the same time.

The plot of the film is fairly straightforward. At some point in the past, Tony Stark, in the process of pursuing a love interest, Dr Maya Hansen (Rebecca Hall), proceeds to humiliate and ignore a crippled Aldrich Killian (Guy Pearce), who wants to include Stark in Advanced Idea Mechanics, a company he is on the verge of founding. Maya Hansen, in turn, is on the verge of perfecting Extremis, a virus that can regenerate parts of the human body, providing it with superhuman strength.

Fast forward over a decade later: Tony Stark is dealing with the aftermath of an alien invasion and other events from the *The Avengers* (2012) film, puttering around creating numerous versions of the original Iron Man model and driving Pepper crazy, when a series of bombings wracks the western world. A shadowy figure called The Mandarin (played to perfection by Ben Kingsley), claims responsibility, Happy is hurt in one of the bombings, a newly invigorated Killian re-enters the scene (he is also, incidentally, in love with Pepper) and off we go on a 130 minute long adventure, where, Iron Man inevitably will save the world, himself, and Pepper.

While not the most cerebral of films, *Iron Man* is thoroughly enjoyable, a tiny bit silly, and unabashedly relies on Downey's innate insouciant charm. Go and see it for pure distraction: there is a preposterous but thoroughly riveting scene that must not be missed when Iron Man jumps out of an exploding plane and rescues a dozen odd people who are hurtling through the air by creating a human chain of sorts. Even while you're rolling your eyes, your mouth will be grinning at Tony Stark's witticisms and Iron Man's prowess over the course of that memorable sequence.

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer


GIZMO by YANTRICK

The gifted cook

With a new smart phone popping up every few months, it is difficult to spot innovation that has been taking place elsewhere. And the kitchen is probably the last place Nepalis look for technological breakthroughs. But while the multitude of apps on our IQ-high phones have made our lives easier connectivity wise, at the end of a long tiring day when hunger kicks in, not even the smartest of phones, tablets or phablets can do what a wired, microchip installed pressure cooker can.

After a disappointing foray into mobile phones and computers, Philips has turned its attention to the good old home appliance range and with the HD 2139 electric pressure cooker, it aims to not only revolutionise the contraption but also make it a must have in every Nepali home.

The sturdy cooker with its shiny metallic body is a crossover between the basic rice cooker and microwave with multifunction programs for a variety of cooking options. It steams rice, bakes fabulous cakes, and even roasts frozen meat taking a fraction of the time of conventional ovens ensuring that every cut of meat is served fork-tender sealing in all the flavours. For the health conscious,



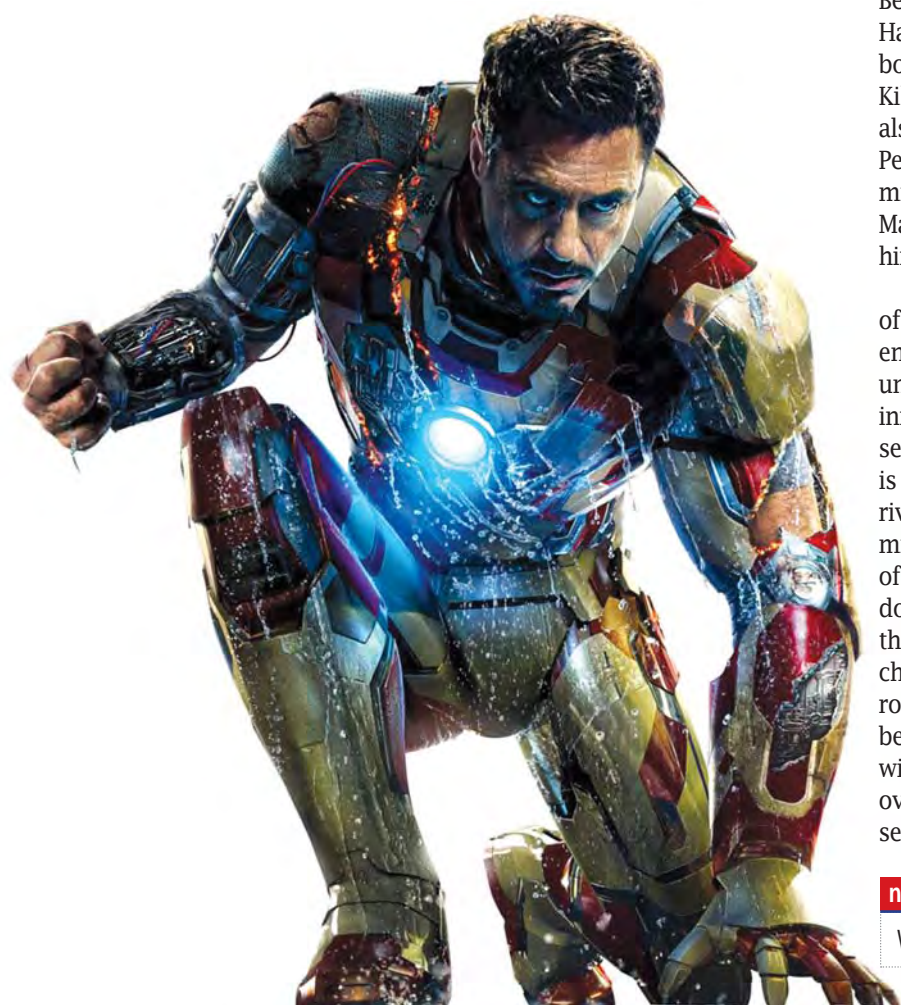
2139's nutritional baking feature brings a crispy taste to even the blandest, we mean healthiest, of dishes.

The extra thick, non-stick inner pot ensures even result and keeps rice fresh for 12 hours that is if your inverter is able to power the 1000 watt cooker for that long. High pressure cooking of meat bones makes a flavourful soup stock and with a six litre capacity, stocking up on gravies and soups is never going to be a problem. And the best deal is that the appliance's rapid cooking in means you use less energy use.

Priced at Rs 10,900, this smart cooker from Philips comes with a large LCD with clock and timer display. Too bad there is no Siri like feature (yet) that would act on voice command, as you still need to set the time and pressure manually. But the results are worth the walk. A spatula, measuring cup, and ladle are also included in the box.

Given the Nepali palate that craves food laden with masala and dripping in oil, chances are the Philips HD 2139 might just end up becoming a mere showpiece that is used only for heating purposes but if you are looking to let go off your old habits, this cooker is a good place to start.

Yantrick's verdict: This multi-purpose, hi-tech giant offers a wide range of cooking options and is a great time and energy saver. However, since old habits die hard, the loud whistles of its humble cousin will probably continue to signal meal time in Nepali homes for at least a few more years.



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REVIEW

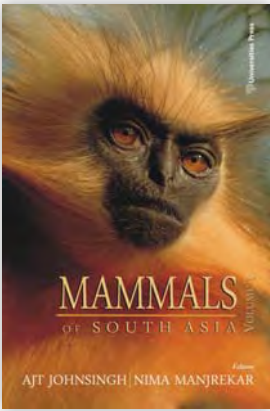
“What use is this,” a friend remarked, flipping through the 614 pages that comprise Volume 1 of *Mammals of South Asia*. “What can I get here that I can’t get on the Internet?” George B Schaller’s foreword duly came to the rescue.

The world’s preeminent field biologist notes that his early research into mammals in India revealed “interesting anecdotes, unsubstantiated generalisations, and frequent observations along the barrel of a rifle, but all too little dependable information about animals leading natural lives.” He then declares that *Mammals of South Asia* represents “a milestone in the natural history of the subcontinent, an indispensable detailed source of information of value to everyone interested in mammals, whether layperson or scientist.” My friend nodded in acknowledgement.

This labour of love will leave many similarly satisfied. Volume I and II (forthcoming) cover 574 mammal species in considerable detail, under such categories as description, taxonomy, distribution, ecology, behaviour, and conservation. The text, lucid and thoroughly accessible to laypersons, is supplemented by 125 black and white and 207 colour photos. The publication may be too hefty to lug around a national park, but will surely occupy a place of honour on the shelves of conservationists across the subcontinent.



RODNEY JACKSON/ SNOW LEOPARD CONSERVANCY



Mammals of South Asia, Volume 1, AJT Johnsingh and Nima Manjrekar (eds), 614 pages, Universities Press, 2013

Mammal mania



JAYANTH SHARMA

Rightly so, for *Mammals of South Asia* represents the combined efforts of the region’s finest field biologists. These include Nepal’s sadly missed red panda expert Pralad Yonzon, who I was reminded of during a recent hike through Langtang National Park, where he conducted much of his research. His contribution to the series informs us that the red panda is liable to emit squeals, twitters, and quack-snorts (!), but the lush rhododendron and bamboo forests retained their mysteries this time around.

Until the amateurs amongst us grow adept

at identifying and describing our co-species, we ought to be thankful for this series. It is the culmination of a methodological shift as far as South Asian wildlife research is concerned – detailed quantitative studies as opposed to the hunting and museum collecting of yore. The sheer level of information provided will prove key to conservation efforts for years to come, yet the detail never overwhelms. What we have here instead, as Schaller puts it, are “intimate and enduring portraits of other beings”. Indeed, the book proves that it’s worth our while to look up from our urban obsessions every now and again and acquaint ourselves a little better with Mother Nature. 🇳🇵

RabiThapa

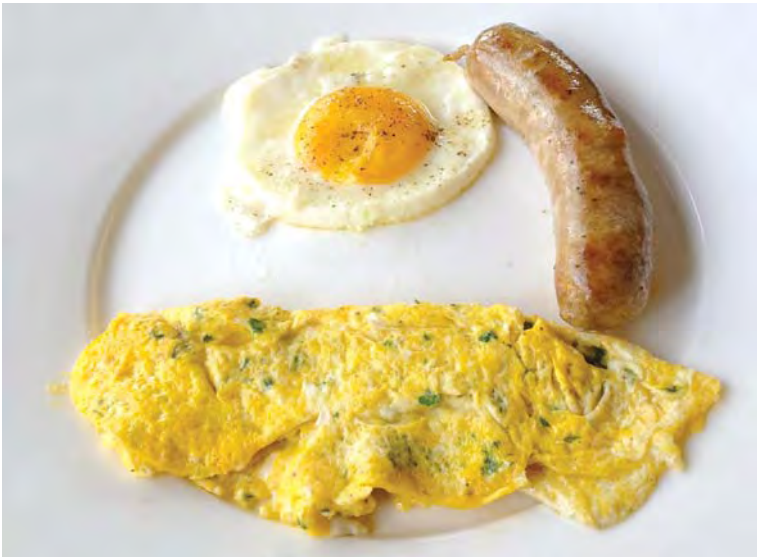


SOMEPLACE ELSE

Along with a place to stay for the night, The Yellow House in Sanepa offers sumptuous breakfasts, probably one of the best morning meal you can find in town. And with ingredients organically sourced and delivered from farms just outside of Kathmandu, the food is not only good for your belly but also your conscience.

Take a seat on the spacious patio and the waiter will bring you a slip of paper that serves as a menu, just indicate which items you want and how many of each dish. Although there is the usual fare of bread, sausages, eggs, and salads, you can opt for slightly more exotic selections like sautéed mushrooms or quail’s eggs.

The base of every good breakfast is the bread and The



Yellow House can take pride in baking some of the freshest loaves this side of Patan. At Rs 60, the light and crunchy baguette is a steal and goes well with the butter provided. The two slices of whole seed toast (Rs 85) is heavier and more filling, but excellent with marmalade.

The Yellow House also does a range of eggs, prepared in every style imaginable. The French omelette (Rs 120) was tasty,

although it could have used a dash of pepper and the fried egg (Rs 50) wasn’t runny, the way some lesser-skilled chefs might have prepared them. The menu says eggs are free-range and organic, which goes to show that you can have a ‘green’ meal without forking out thousands of rupees.

For under Rs 200 you can indulge in smoked bacon or ham, or cold cut sausages. Those looking to try something different should

sample the spiced lamb sausage (Rs 190) which the management says is so popular that sometimes the kitchen runs out of stock half way through the morning.

If you could have only one dish from the menu, however, pick the mushrooms. Grilled and cut into thin slices, they are a delicious complement to your main meal. And at just Rs 90, you might want to order another bowl.

With a cup of coffee or a

mango smoothie (Rs 110) to wash everything down and the day’s newspapers by your side, brunch at The Yellow House is the perfect way to spend a lazy weekend morning. 🇳🇵

Sulaiman Daud

How to get there: from Pulchok walk towards Sanepa chok, turn right, and walk down the road until you see the yellow sign of Yellow House on the right.



PICS: SULAIMAN DAUD



Comes around, goes around




DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

suddenly try to stand up after sitting or lying down.

However, dizziness which is often described as a sensation of light-headedness is different from vertigo. If patients with diarrhoea or excessive sweating drink

enough fluid, their dizziness subsides. But fluid intake does not solve the problem for vertigo patients. The confusion arises because people often use terms like dizziness and vertigo interchangeably.

The patient who visited us is suffering from a very common, but often alarming problem called benign positional vertigo (BPV). But as the name suggests the condition is not too serious. When a patient with BPV turns his head to the right or left, tilts it to look up, or lies down, he usually feels like the room is spinning.

The pathology lies in what is called the labyrinth (passage) inside our ears. The labyrinth of the ear is responsible for processing information in regards to position and movement. Inside the labyrinth are calcium carbonate crystals that have been displaced leading to BPV. Amazingly a simple procedure called the Epley manoeuvre can reposition the crystals to their normal state. After a diagnosis is made, healthcare professionals who know this technique can carry it out in the examining room and provide prompt relief to their patients. 



AMIR JOSHI

A 48-year-old man arrived at our clinic complaining of dizziness and vertigo that had lasted for more than a week. When we questioned him further, he said that several times during the day he felt like the room was spinning and these symptoms became apparent when he made certain head movements. The man exercises regularly, leads a healthy lifestyle, and has no other medical problem. His physical examination was normal too.

Dizziness is a common complaint especially during the summer when people are dehydrated due to excessive sweating and inadequate fluid replenishment. Drinking sufficient fluid should take care of this common cause of dizziness.

People are also more prone to diarrhoeal diseases in summer. Those suffering from excessive diarrhoea often feel weak because of the decreased blood flow to the brain (due to fluid loss) especially when they

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BIKRAM RAI

LEAVE US ALONE: Human rights activists are detained by police while protesting outside Singha Darbar on Wednesday against the appointment of Lok Man Singh Karki as chief of the CIAA.



AMIR JOSHI

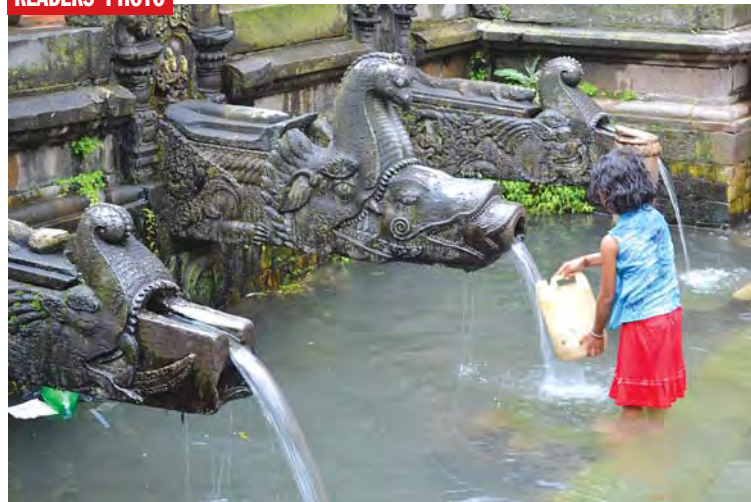
FESTIVE MOOD: Locals of Kavre celebrate the second day of Mahalaxmi Jatra in Nala on Tuesday afternoon.



CINDREY LIU

POKHARA HEIGHTS: A boy leaps off from a cliff as he practices controlling a parachute in Pokhara on Friday.

READERS' PHOTO



AYUSH MAN BAIRACHARYA

HOMEWORK: A young girl fills an old jerrycan from a public tap at Patan.



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Disaster with gender bias

SUVENDRINI KAKUCHI
in DHAKA

Last month, 18-year-old Shapla was just another among thousands of garment workers employed in a factory in Savar, a suburb of Bangladesh's capital Dhaka. Today she is a handicapped survivor of one of the worst industrial accidents in history: the collapse on 24 April of the massive Rana Plaza, a building housing five factories, that buried scores of workers under a mountain of concrete and glass. The final death toll crossed 1,000 this week.

"I am desperate about the future," Shapla said, echoing the sentiments of hundreds of female apparel workers like her who lost their limbs on that fateful day.

The young mother is now recovering in a hospital in Dhaka after her hand was amputated. Shapla is considered one of 'the lucky ones', but she is loath to see the bright side, as her handicap will almost certainly prevent her from finding work.

Women, who make up 80 per cent of the workforce in this country's booming garment industry, have borne the brunt of this tragedy.

"They are now socially and economically heavily disadvantaged," said Mashud Khatun Shefali, founder



NARI UDDUNG KENDRA

of Nari Uddung Kendra (Centre for Women's Initiatives) which has lobbied for better conditions such as safe housing for workers, but is now focused on helping female survivors overcome the trauma of the accident.

Some of the workers are so traumatised they say they never want to work in factories again. They need long-term physical and mental rehabilitation and acceptance as disabled persons by their families and society.

Nazma Begum's legs were amputated as a result of her injuries, she told a local television station this week that she worried about how she would handle her disability, until her husband assured her of his continued support and love.

Bangladesh, a country of 150 million of which 49 per cent live below the poverty line, has become a crucial player in the international apparel trade by providing a vast supply of cheap labour. Bangladesh is now the third largest exporter of readymade garments after China and Vietnam, bringing in \$20 billion, 80 per cent of the country's annual foreign exchange.

Mass-produced and bargain clothes that include labels such as Gap, Primark, HMV, Walmart, Sears, and American Apparel are all manufactured here for export. More than 5,000 factories employing over 3.5 million workers are packed into high-rise buildings in Dhaka, operating round the clock.

Female garment workers bear the brunt of the world's worst factory collapse

FUTURE IMPERFECT: Eighteen-year-old Shapla, a garment worker who survived the 24 April factory collapse, recovers in a hospital in Dhaka

The workers are almost all women from rural areas, who migrate to the cities to earn enough to upkeep their families. They often live together in close quarters, sharing bathrooms and food.


Uneducated and illiterate, the women have few means by which to earn a steady income, their vulnerability makes them easy prey for manufacturers who claim that in order to remain competitive on the world market, they must hire the cheapest possible workforce.

Young women often start off as interns, not receiving a wage but work for a 'stipend' that can be as low as a dollar per month. Within a year, they move on to operating more

sophisticated machinery and earn up to \$40 a month, working a daily average of 10 hours, seven days a week. In contrast, men tend to be hired for high-level positions, such as quality control and management.

Last November, over 100 garment workers perished in a fire in the Tazreen Fashion Factory on the outskirts of Dhaka. Survivors of that tragedy claim they tried to escape, but were locked in by the factory managers. Similarly, on 24 April employees were threatened with dismissal if they failed to come to work, despite warnings that the eight-storey building was unsafe. A week before the incident large cracks had begun to appear on the ceilings, prompting engineers to issue warnings that a collapse might be inevitable.

Sharmin Huq, a retired professor at the Dhaka University who specialises on the handicapped sector, fears that social discrimination will make life harder for women than ever before. Those who survived the tragedy will likely lose their jobs, as their injuries will prevent them from performing at the level demanded by factory owners.

Donations are pouring in and these could help female workers restart their lives with artificial limbs and counseling to deal with the tragedy.  *IPS*

Secularism gone wrong



LOOK OUT
Ajaz Ashraf

Unusual things are happening in India, but it can't get more bizarre than this: a lieutenant general heading a central university in India.

The Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) is now presided over by renowned army commander, Lt Gen (ret'd) Zameeruddin Shah. The historic university now resembles the headquarters of a military formation: the pro-vice-chancellor is a retired brigadier

Case study of a university in India which has become a playground of the Islamic right

and the registrar a former group captain.

Army officers aren't the only non-academic VCs to descend upon AMU and Jamia Millia, which are popularly but erroneously called 'Muslim' universities. From the time Jamia became a central university in 1988, it has had six VCs of whom three belonged to either the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) or the Army.

Since 1980 the AMU has had eight VCs of whom six belonged to the IAS, Indian Foreign Service (IFS) or the Army. By contrast, most central universities of the same vintage and eminence as AMU and Jamia have rarely had a non-academic heading it.

What explains the surfeit of non-academic VCs in the so-

called Muslim universities? The Indian state invoked a warped notion of secularism to appease Muslim community leaders who assert that it is their right to determine the working of these two universities, particularly AMU. The Aligarh Muslim University Act was amended in 1981, replacing the existing procedure for the appointment of AMU's VC with a new system.

Until 1981, a three-member search committee would list three names as possible candidates to the university visitor, who is the president of India, who then chose the VC. Under the amended Act, however, a 27-member

Executive Council of AMU prepares a list of five names as possible candidates for VC. This list is sent to the 183-member University Court, which whittles down the list of five to three, with each member casting three votes. The visitor of AMU usually appoints the candidate with the highest number of votes as VC.


There are differences between VCs who are academics and those who are not. AMU's experience testifies that the former demonstrated a propensity to plan for its educational enhancement and are more accepting of student politics and dissent. By contrast, non-academics tend to stress on the development of physical infrastructure and put undue emphasis on order and

discipline.

More worryingly, this process has turned AMU into a playground of community leaders who are Sunnis, often illiberal, having foggy ideas of modern education. Thus, for the post of VC, count out Hindu or Shia professors, however brilliant. Leftists, atheists, liberals, or women? You got to be joking. It isn't surprising that AMU has become a playground of Islamic Right following the 1981 amendment.

Nevertheless, AMU's flawed system can't absolve the Indian state of playing games in the shadow. For instance, Jamia follows the system of the search committee, yet 50 per cent of its VCs have been non-academics in its 24 years of being a central university. This hints to the manipulative powers of the state and the susceptibilities of Muslim academics to play its game.

AMU's tragedy is greater, lulled as it is into believing it has elected its VC. It's a classic case of the state applying gloss to its intent of controlling politically conscious AMU through conservative community leaders who are willing to do its bidding.

AMU and Jamia need to introspect. Hopefully, their introspection will lead them to understand that their plight is directly linked to that idea of secularism which empowers community leaders whose notions of education lack the imagination befitting the 21st century. Indian Muslims should not want this sort of secularism, good neither for their education nor for the country.  *ashrafajaz3@gmail.com*

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MINISTRY OF FORESTS

Broom brings boom

How one remote Nepali village has found the road to harmony and prosperity



NARESH NEWAR in PALPA

In the remote and bucolic Magar settlement of Jhirubas of Palpa district, time stands still. A wrenching seven hour ride from Tansen, the region's Magar culture has been protected till now because of its remoteness: the language, dress, architecture, farming methods, and food. The Thakuri residents speak Magar more fluently than Nepali and the men and women converse across ethnic lines in the local lingua franca as they settle down for chyang in the evenings. Magars have married

Thakuris and vice versa. If Jhirubas was Nepal, the harmony and co-existence here would give us all hope for the country's peaceful future. Magar, Thakuri, and Dalit farmers all trade farm produce among themselves and with their Brahmin and Newar neighbours. The road has now arrived in Jhirubas and with it has come change. There are now Christian churches next to Hindu shrines and Buddhist prayer flags. The children go to school where they learn in Nepali and not Magar, their mother-tongue. The village is still not connected to the grid even

though Palpa has the country's largest hydropower plant on the Kali Gandaki. Residents have all graduated from traditional tuki to solar lights. There is great hope that the road will open access to markets for local produce and bring down the price of food and other essentials. There is also potential for tourism: a chance for visitors to trek or bike to an area of Nepal which is still the way Nepal used to be with its quaintly cylindrical red mud houses with thatch roofs. Magar culture could be a draw, since the traditional farming lifestyle is largely intact. This region of central Nepal used to depend almost solely on the money sent home by men working in India. But Jhirubas now has another claim to fame: it is a showcase of how



GRASS IS GOLD: Brooms being readied for market in Jhirubas (top), and the barren slopes which have been converted into plantations for broom grass (above, left).

Both men and women broom farmers participate equally in the forest leasehold meetings.

A Magar woman and Thakuri woman in Jhirubas have married men from each other's ethnic groups and say they are sick of politics (left).

ALL PICS: NARESH NEWAR

community leasehold forestry can alleviate poverty.

With help from the District Forest Office, villagers have converted degraded pastures into plantations of grass used for commercial broom-making.

In just three short years, Jhirubas is where the country's largest broom farm is located.

With support from the Nepali and Finnish governments along with the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation, the farm has become a model for other villages on how to turn leasehold land into a sustainable income generator.

"It just took the locals here three years to prove that they can achieve anything and they have done the impossible," says Narayan Bhattarai from District Forest Office, who was instrumental in convincing villagers to lease denuded slopes for broom farming. Being a local who spoke fluent Magar helped and Bhattarai became a catalyst in convincing villagers to work together for the common good.

Since it was set up three years ago, the 227 households have supplemented their income by producing 3.3 million grass brooms to be sold across Nepal.

"We believe in working and not talking," says Narayan Thapa Magar, who explains that staying away from politics has unified the people. That is also why the corrosive identity politics found elsewhere in Nepal hasn't taken hold here and in fact locals get irked

when the subject is brought up.

"Identity is important, but let's not politicise it and divide up the country," says Bir Bahadur Pata, "we did not prosper here because of our identity, but because of our hard work."

Next morning, the children are awake at dawn helping around the household before going off to school. Everyone is busy from dawn till dusk. The men work on the road, women on farms while their children are down at the village school.

Laxmi Magar, who chairs the local cooperative, agrees. "Everyone in the village is equal no matter what position they have," she says, "that is why we have no need for politicians here."

Others nod their heads, murmuring that they can see through the lies and games politicians play. "We have our own resources here and share it equally among ourselves," says Hasti Maya Beyambu, who leads the local forestry user group.

PALPA

POKHARA

TANSEN

JHIRUBAS

KATHMANDU

Off road

You realise half-way to Jhirubas that this is no road for the faint-hearted. And once you are here, there is no turning back because there is not even room for a U-turn.

This stretch of road leads to the remotest corners of Palpa and is carved out of sheer cliff sides by Magar villagers who seem to have put their traditional quarrying skills to good use.

From time to time, the road is not just dangerously steep, it is also so tilted to one side you can see through the side window into the valley below. If this is how difficult it is to drive here in the dry season, imagine what it will be like when the monsoon arrives next month.

On the map, the road is officially designated as 'motorable' and that is a euphemism in Nepal for those suicidal enough to test their off-road driving skills. There is little time to admire the breathtaking beauty of this rugged land.

On the road from Tansen to Siluwa few have heard of Jhirubas. Locals who ride motorcycles up and down these roads were not sure whether this Suzuki Samurai could make it.

"Test it and see," said one district forest official who said he had fallen off many times from his motorcycle, "find out if your car can make it and let us know." So this is what being a guinea pig feels like.

Thirty km from Tansen, the first road begins in Siluwa which is surprisingly full of Newars who were banished here from Bhaktapur in the 18th century and all have the surname, Shrestha. They are all farmers and, unlike Newars in Tansen, they all speak Newari. Even the Brahmins in Siluwa speak Newari.

It wasn't before I nearly fell off the edge of the road that I wondered if I hadn't let my adrenaline rush get the better of my common sense. The car banked on the tilted road and I had to lunge to the other side like on a boat to keep the its balance.

Locals are always more than glad to help, moving rocks or pushing the car when it stalled. No outsiders ever come here except forestry officials or evangelical groups.

After seven hours of this, I was finally in Palpa's remotest village of Jhirubas on the border with Nawalparasi.

A villager welcomed me: "So you have proved it is possible to drive a car here. Now, you have to return the same way you came."



When the subject drifts to local elections, there isn't much enthusiasm. "If politicians want to win, they better start convincing us why we should vote for them," says Mukta Bahadur Singh.

Bir Bahadur Patta, who has been listening intently, chips in: "But if any politician comes here to play ethnic politics, we will chase them out." 🇳🇵

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Dorje Gurung's story



Dorje Gurung in *Setopati*, 14 May

ALKA SHRESTHA

सेतोपाटी

I used to teach high school students at the Qatar Academy in Doha. Because of my long hair and Mongolian features students often taunted me, calling me 'Chink' or 'Jackie Chan'.

They repeatedly ignored my requests to stop the teasing. So I started ignoring their snide remarks. On 16 April, three students from Grade 7 started calling me names again. "I am not Chinese so stop calling me that," I told them, but they didn't stop. I asked them how they would feel if I called them 'terrorists'. They misinterpreted the statement and complained to their parents. One of them filed a complaint against me in the school saying, "Dorje accused my son and his friends of being terrorists." The school administration then asked me to leave on 21 April.

My contract was about to end in June, anyway, so it wasn't a big deal for me to return to Nepal a month earlier than planned and had booked my ticket for 3 May. I was determined to go back and start a charity to help schools in rural Nepal.

On 1 May the local police arrested me and took me to a Doha jail. One of the parents had filed a case against me. The next day I was interrogated by public prosecutors. I told them that I hadn't done anything

HOMEcoming: Dorje Gurung hugs his mother at Tribhuvan International Airport on Monday after being released from detention in Qatar.

wrong, but was jailed for an entire week. Finally on 9 May, they took me to court for a hearing. After the preliminary hearing I was to appear for another hearing in two weeks. If found guilty I'd have to stay in jail for five years and I thought I would die in jail.

On 12 May, I told my friends to come to visit me with few books and clothes as they allowed visitors only on Sundays. But to my surprise one of the wardens informed me that I was being released. "Good news for you, you're out," he said. I was amazed, shocked, and happy at the same time. When I asked a Nepali inmate about the details, he congratulated me on my release. When I came out of the jail, I met my friends who had come to visit me. I learnt that the students' parents had withdrawn their case.

It was only after I reached Kathmandu on Monday that I learnt how I was released. My father had immediately reported the case at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kathmandu asking for my release. The ministry then contacted the embassy in Qatar. I also found how my friends from St Xavier's scattered around the world came together and created a Facebook campaign 'Release Innocent Dorje' to demand my immediate release.

Had it not been for the immense support from tens of thousands of friends around the globe which created a pressure on the Qatar government, it would have been a long wait for me in Doha. I would like to thank all of them from the bottom of my heart. The success in my case has given hope for many other innocent Nepalis who are incarcerated under false accusations. I met 20 or so Nepalis in jail in Doha. There are another 300 who have been wrongly accused like me.

I have lived abroad for too long and for the first time since I went to Doha I could speak Nepali. Now I want to stay back and work for my country. Since I am a teacher I will start by improving the government school near my village of Tembe in Mustang and contribute to the education of Nepalis.

(As told to Manoj Dahal.)



The discipliner

Interview with the newly appointed auditor general Bhanu Prasad Acharya, *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 12 May

हिमाल

What are your priorities?
Ensuring accountability and transparency in the mobilisation of public resources is a top priority so that the administration can function more smoothly.

There is a lot of unaccounted expenditure, how will you tackle this problem?

The prolonged transition period along with unstable politics and interference from trade unions have led to an increase in unaccounted expenditure. As an auditor general I will take strong action to maintain fiscal discipline and bring the country's unruly financial system under control. While there are strong laws to tackle these discrepancies, action hasn't been taken against the guilty. Although it doesn't fall under my jurisdiction to bring them to book, I will make sure that I remind concerned authorities to implement the law.

Can you take action against those who use unauthorised expenditure as a means for corruption?

It is important to thoroughly investigate corruption cases and I will make sure that authorities take action against those who are involved in unauthorised expenditure.

NEPALI TWEETS



Bhasha Sharma

फेरि आज अर्को दल खुलेछ, जागिर छाडेकाहरूको ।
नेपाल दलको दलदल देश हुने भो ।

Another political party was started today by those who quit their jobs. Nepal is turning into a swamp of parties.



BINU SUBEDI

राष्ट्रपतिको बरिष्ठ सल्लाहकार दक्षिणतिरै छन ।
हृयाकाले राजिनामा देर केही लछारपाटी लाग्छन ।
#राजनीतिक सल्लाहकारको राजिनामा

The president's senior advisors are in the south. A hacker making political advisors resign won't make much of a difference.



Gyawali dinesh raj

कान्तिपुरले सजाए पाउने भो । अब अन्तपूर्णको पुरस्कार हुने पाउने होला .))

Kantipur is getting punished, maybe it's time for *Annapurna Post* to get awarded.



Rabi अर्याल

बन्द फिताको लड्ड घनेछ । हेन वैध्याको भतिजको विहा पनि भोलीने रैचकि कसो

Looks like withdrawing bandas is the new fad. Is it Baidya's nephew's wedding tomorrow?

WEEKLY BAZAR POLL #13

In weekly polls conducted with the support of The Asia Foundation, *Himal Khabarpatrika* asks 375 respondents in 12 cities across Nepal every Monday for their opinion on contemporary issue. This week's result of interviews about people's preference of leaders.

1. Which of the following political leaders do you trust the most?

- Can't say: 14.8%
Sushil Koirala: 11.6%
Pushpa Kamal Dahal: 7.9%
Baburam Bhattarai: 6.3%
KP Sharma: 5.8%
Kamal Thapa: 5.6%
Sher Bahadur Deuba: 5.0%
Jhulanath Khanal: 4.8%
Madhav Kumar Nepal: 4.5%
Ram Chandra Poudel: 2.9%
Mohan Baidya: 2.4%
Mahanta Thakur: 2.4%
Upendra Yadav: 1.9%
Bijay Kumar Gacchadhar: 1.1%

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The HITT programme, aims to contribute to sustainable, scalable, pro-poor economic growth in 4 Sub-Saharan countries (Benin, Mali, Ghana and Mozambique) and 3 countries in Asia (Cambodia, Nepal and Vietnam) through the development and implementation of an integrated, market-driven tourism TVET system targeting the informal economy. More specifically, the HITT programme aims to expand access for disadvantaged groups (in particular women, youth, unskilled and semi-skilled) to practical and market-oriented vocational training and facilitate direct links with the tourism industry to maximise opportunities for production, income and employment for participants.

SNV Nepal requires professional and experienced International Associate Advisor for the following position:

International Associate Advisor for the implementation HITT Programme, Nepal-Vacancy Code: 2013-08

Requirements:

- Master degree + minimum 5 years of professional experience;
- Minimum 5 years' experience of progressively responsible work in the tourism, education, human resource development sector;
- Proven experience of working with business member associations;
- Proven experience of working with private sector;
- Experience in monitoring and evaluation and data base management;
- Hands on experience in developing (writing) high quality reports and publications and documenting lessons learned and best practices;
- Proficiency in word processing, power-point, excel and database management;
- Experience in organising and coordinating trainings;
- Experience of working with workers from the informal sector will be an added advantage.

Interested candidates are requested to visit: www.hitt-initiative.org to review the Terms of Reference before applying. Only international applicants holding a valid non-tourist visa in Nepal will be considered in the selection process.

Your application should include a motivation letter and CV. Applications need to be received in electronic copy latest by **29 May 2013** at nepal@snvworld.org stating the vacancy code **2013-08** in the subject line.



SNV Netherlands Development Organisation Nepal
Bakhundole, Lalitpur
P.O. Box 1966, Kathmandu, Nepal
nepal@snvworld.org
www.snvworld.org



Caption: Swearing in ceremony

Lok Man Singh Karki's document: CIAA chief

कान्तिपुर

Batsayan in *Kantipur*, 10 May

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“The upcoming CA election is a ploy to Sikkimise Nepal.”

Ram Bahadur Thapa, general secretary of CPN-M, *Naya Patrika*, 15 May

DIPAK GYAWALI in BUTWAL

In the middle of the Tinau River that separates the two sections of Butwal, the river itself bifurcates. The island is a slum area called Majhuwa, which means 'middle'. There was a shantytown here that was washed away in a great flood 15 years ago in which hundreds were killed, but a year later the squatters were back.

As is the case elsewhere, it is the poorest of the poor who live in such a vulnerable spot. But the families here are not just susceptible to natural disasters, Majhuwa is also a hotbed for child traffickers. In the midst of all this squalour is the neat little Suryodaya Primary School. Students here have been busy for the past month, creating what is probably Nepal's biggest mural on their school wall.

The artists are hearing impaired, handicapped children as well as children rescued from the clutches of traffickers who had taken them to work as slaves in circuses in India. The group cooperated with the UK-based charity, Freedom Matters, which has been rescuing and rehabilitating children trafficked to India, mainly to dance and perform in circuses. It also teaches them skills so they can be financially independent when they grow up.

"We hope the mural will inspire students to have fun in school, work and study together, and to raise awareness about the dangers of being trafficked in an area where selling children is rife," says Abha Karki of the group, Sano Paila.

The mosaic is made up of pieces of coloured marble and tiles and consists of 21 panels that measure a total of 18.2m long and 3m high. Instructing the children is Sunita Tamang (*pic, right*) who is implementing a design created by British artist which depicts greenery, children having fun in school, the village becoming prosperous, and visual elements that warn of the dangers of trafficking.

"In the beginning it was very difficult to communicate with the hearing-impaired children, but working on this mural has brought us together and we understand each other very well," says Tamang.

The parents of most of the school children in Majhuwa are away working in India or



BIG AND BEAUTIFUL: Sunita Tamang holds up the design of the mosaic (*below*), while school children in Suryodaya School in Butwal last week put finishing touches on the art work that hopes to raise awareness about the dangers of trafficking (*above*).

One small step against trafficking

Nepal's largest mosaic in Butwal is part of a drive against child slavery and exploitation

the Gulf and besides the mural, Freedom Matters supports the school academically. The young students, who have seen the mural being gradually completed, often stand around looking at the colourful images and putting together their own stories.

Says Suryodaya's principal, Urmila Aryal: "We don't have to tell them what the message in the mural is, they understand right away. And quite unexpectedly, the mural has improved the classroom attendance and enrolment rate."

With Sano Paila, Freedom Matters takes an arts-based focus to its anti-trafficking and rehabilitation work among marginalised and vulnerable children. The organisation also works in vocational training in social circus and silver jewelry to raise income.

Says Freedom Matters founder, Philip Holmes: "Education, particularly for girls, seems to be a key way ahead."

www.freedommatters.org.uk

nepalitimes.com

Nepal's circus champs, #595
A long journey home, #573
A far-away rescue, #571



PICS: DIPAK GYAWALI



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AMIR JOSHI

Let's have a date

Visa black-listing didn't work, civil resistance had no effect, the police were useless, in the end it took divine intervention to stop a bund. Last week, the Dash Baddies called for a shutdown on the day Rato Machhendranath was to be pulled. The chariot has four wheels, so would be affected by a chukka jam. However, there was so much pressure from Patan constituents on Comrade Pampa that the strike was called off. Moral of the story: only the gods can save this secular republic.

ॐ

Not only is the Justice-in-Chief govt not able to announce a date for elections, it can't even agree on a date on which to announce

the poll date. The government spokesman said this week: "Today's cabinet meeting was successful in agreeing on a final date by which we will come to a consensus about the date on which we will announce the date in November when we will hold an election." Whew. That clears things up.

ॐ

This Unjustified cabinet was formed because the Big Four weren't able to come up with a consensus on an election government. But the judicious government still can't agree on an election date because, guess what, the Big Four can't come up with a consensus on the modalities for elections. Let's face it, the Chief Justice as Chief

Executive isn't working. They should have just appointed a donkey PM.

ॐ

PKD is the most indiscreet comrade around even when sober, but it is after a couple of swigs of Old Smuggler that he invariably blurts out what is really in his mind. Which is what he did at a recent boozeup with business cronies and party faithful during which the Ass was (in a manner of speaking) a fly on the wall. My plan (hic!), he is reported to have said, is to get Big Plop and gang to keep putting a spanner in the works so that elections can't be held in November on one pretext or another. We will then sack the Regmi regiment and install

myself as prime minister. Or words to that effect. You may say it was the whiskey talking, but PKD let out his game plan. He is telling all and sundry he has the green signal from both North and South to go ahead with the plan. He hopes to buy time to bring Baidya back into the fold, give the Madhesis time to cobble together an electoral alliance, and then shoot for elections under himself.

ॐ

And PKD might just pull it off, not because he is so smart or his electoral calculations are so accurate, but because the Kangresis and Eh-maleys are in such a state of utter disarray. What, after all, can you deduct from Jhusil Da's statement that appointing LMSK as the Station Chief of the CIAA was "a mistake" and that agreeing to the CJ as PM was a "compulsion". Can't get any more anal than that.

ॐ

The past month it was Jhoos' turn to lead the High Level Political Committee, but it barely met once. PKD's strategy is to boycott all Mechanism meetings unless he is chairing

it himself. At a noisy Balu Water meeting recently where the Big Four nearly came to blows, Sushil Da put it meekly to Awesome that he had changed his mind about Loktantra Man. The Fierce One blew a gasket and gave him such a tongue-lashing, SK didn't dare speak up again. Also under pressure from his party for having pocketed 10 corrodes for agreeing to Corrupt Man Sing's appointment to the CIAA was our very own Jhol Gnat and he too put up a feeble fight at the H LPC. The long and short of it is that Awesome got away with KRR and now MLSK, so he thinks he is even more Awesome than he was.

ॐ

LMSK supporters say appointing a certified crook to head the CIAA is like recruiting hackers to fight cybercrime.

ॐ

Stats of the week:

- Amount BRB spent on his wedding with Comrade Hasiya in India: INR 11
- Amount BRB's personal assistant, Comrade Light of the World, spent on his wedding this week: NPR 10 million



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