

NEPALI Times

#678

25 - 31 October

20 pages



SUBHAS RAI

KNOCKOUT

Five years after the election of the first Constituent Assembly and 18 months after its unceremonious demise, the country will give it another try in three weeks. Despite general cynicism about repeating an exercise that failed to live up to its expectations, people are hopeful that the next CA will build on the work done so far to deliver a new constitution. But more than anything else, that hope hinges on the conduction of free, fair, and fear-free polls. But politicians no longer fear the people, have no shame, no scruples, no principles. Except for the UML, the other parties have packed their proportional representation lists with wives and relatives. Most of the same candidates are up for re-election in Round 2 of the direct ballot. Given the limitations of our democracy, the only difference people can make now is to vote for all new faces.



SNOW LEOPARDS
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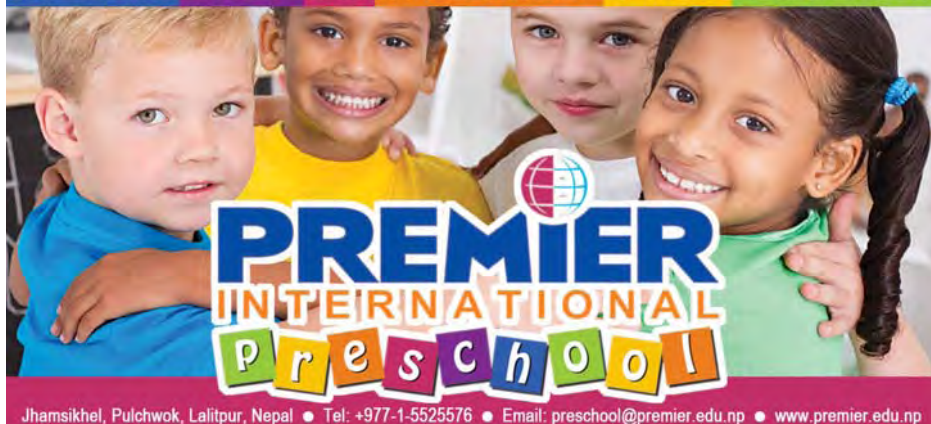
Numbers in the wild are increasing thanks to decades of conservation

THE MORNING AFTER
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THE MORNING AFTER

If the autumn festival season of Dasain, Tihar, Eid, and Chhat were supposed to lend a joyful air to election campaigning, it didn't happen. And that wasn't just because of the unseasonably wet weather. Most Nepalis in Nepal right now are still not sure the polls on 19 November will change anything for the better. Discredited candidates with inflated egos and enormous senses of entitlement travelled back to home districts they had abandoned for the last five years.

Ordinary Nepalis have a pretty good sense that this is an election foisted on the country. But the interesting thing is that they don't blame the outside world: the public sense is that foreigners are trying to save us from ourselves.

So, 12.3 million registered voters have no illusions about this election. They doubt it will resolve the knotty issues of the constitution or lead to better governance, better service delivery, better living standards. One reason is the process itself: so many rules have been broken to get a Chief Justice to head the interim election government, and a corruption watchdog headed by a character with shady dealings with spooks and godmen is on a political witch-hunt. The goals of a bloody revolution and the ideals that drove the 2006 People's Movement have been forgotten and abandoned. The mantras of secularism and federal republicanism have become meaningless buzzwords. The war was a needless killfest and the past five years have been wasted in endless political bickering.

Since all other options were exhausted, the powers that be decreed that there be elections again to cobble together another Constituent Assembly and let the chips fall where they may. The trouble is that we haven't learnt from recent history, haven't drawn any lessons from why the first CA failed in the first place, and are rushing headlong to elect a similar assembly with the same number of identical figures. The only difference is that it is going to be even less inclusive than before.

The 12.3 million Nepali voters have no illusions about an election that is being foisted on them

The electorate has reason to be confused. Proportional representation is a fantastic idea to give legislative power to historically excluded groups and balance the inordinate clout of the entrenched and privileged. But in the hands of the neo-elite of the Four Party Cartel, PR has become a formula for rigging the power arithmetic in the CA. Frequent and last-minute changes in the list announced Wednesday was a farce. Like the last election, there will be 335 indirectly nominated seats and they will far outnumber the 240 directly elected representatives. Most voters, if they ever figure out what to do with two complicated ballot sheets, have no idea who they are voting for in the PR, how they made it to the party lists, and there is no time to gauge their relative merits.

There are other undemocratic characteristics of this election. All four political forces are infested with internal dissent, rebel candidates are creating havoc. The party leaders are justifiably worried that they may be voted out. They needn't worry, since they have manipulated the process by standing in multiple electorates in constituencies with which they have no ties. Almost all the top leaders have become 'tourist candidates' in districts different than last time. Since they have done so little for their constituents since 2008, they didn't dare go back to their original voters.

There is justifiable fear about the removal of the separation of powers between the judiciary and the



executive, but what is more alarming is the removal of the separation of powers between big business and politics. Tycoons are PR candidates for the parties because the private sector figured out that if it is going to be extorted for campaign financing, it may as well get something in return.

International election observers have fanned out across the country and are filing reports about the ground situation. On election day they will be on the lookout for voting irregularities. Actually they needn't bother, the irregularities are already built into the process of conducting an election for the sake of elections.

DIWAKAR CHETTRI

ON THE WEB
www.nepalitimes.com

PULSE OF THE PEOPLE

This week's editorial is depressingly accurate in its forecast of the 19 November elections ('The pulse of the people', #677). The future assembly is going to be made up of the same 601 clowns that we saw in 2008 and they are going to run up against the same problems that led to the death of the previous CA. And whether or not we are able to draft a new constitution within the given deadline will once again rely on the bargaining powers of the top three-four parties. Long live democracy in Nepal.

Renu Shrestha

The editorial says, "If this was a truly fair and independent election ..." Has the writer already decided that the upcoming election is and will be a sham? If yes, he should be brave and just say that an iron fist is needed to rule Nepal. King Gyanendra could've been that person, but he lost that opportunity. Not that papers like Nepali Times are innocent. They never lent a helping hand either.

SS

Just like 'one person, one vote', there should be 'one candidate, one constituency'. Why give multiple constituencies or extra privileges to some at the cost of others? The election commission needs to stop this undemocratic practice.

Daniel Gajara

The leaders of our parties profess equality, fraternity, and liberty, but they want to make exceptions for themselves. Contesting elections in multiple constituencies not only shows a lack of confidence but also robs young party members of opportunities. And who will foot the extra cost of by-elections? The whole practice is against the spirits of democracy and must not be allowed.

Grimal

THE STATE

It's true that privileged Sri Lankans in general do not want to dig up the wounds of war ('Silenced by the state', Trishna Rana, #677). I have middle-class Tamil and Sinhalese friends from college and whenever there are discussions about the conflict, they are quick to point out the unprecedented economic growth that their country has made since 2009. They seem willing to give the Rajapaksa regime along with former LTTE combatants (some of whom are now in government) a clean chit as long as there is double digit progress. Unfortunately, like many in Nepal they fail to realise that wartime ghosts cannot be so easily expunged.

Sunny

ABOUT GIRLS

Despite making impressive progress in maternal mortality and female literacy, it's disheartening to see how many Nepali girls are still forced to marry at a young age ('Let's talk about girls', Aleksandra Percynska, #677).

And as a woman in her mid-20s who was born and raised in Kathmandu, I realise what a privilege it is to have the option of marrying when I want and who I want.

PR

The attitude of giving away daughters in marriage at a young age is prevalent in both rich and poor families in Nepal. The poor are forced by circumstances and the rich forced by greed. The problem exists, it's awful, and it's time we educate people about why marrying off young girls is wrong. But change also has to start from individuals. Don't force your sisters, daughters, or nieces to marry before they turn 20. Stand up, make a case, protect children.

Ajit Jung Gurung

It takes about two generations for lasting societal effect. Hence if we make girl child education compulsory and free for the next 50 years, I think there might be some relief. Easier said than done of course. Education does change attitudes, just takes a while, no easy short cuts here.

AP

ADUWAH

Well done Kabi Ram Thapa Magar and other ginger farmers in Surkhhet, your willingness to take a risk has literally 'paid off' ('Ayo A-du-wah', Tsering Dolker Gurung, #677). I love the taste of ginger in many food items. As a midwife here in Australia, we use ginger as a natural therapy for helping

ease morning sickness in pregnant women.

Amanda Mclean

Fantastic news. This is the kind of thing our so-called leaders are supposed to be concentrating on in order to raise the earning power and living standards of the masses.

Epacific

What pleasant news to hear farmers are cultivating crops like gingers and apples that have higher residual income. Hats off to the farmers, entrepreneurs, and SNV. I hope this story is an inspiration especially to Nepali youngsters so that they are persuaded to stay back and build a future for themselves by carrying out market-oriented cultivation.

Prashant

Congratulations to the warhorses of SNV and High Value Agriculture Project (HVP) for helping bring prosperity to ginger farmers in Surkhhet.

Meekha Tuladhar

I would go further and invest in small cottage industry enterprises in remote areas such as: jam, juices, ketchup, pickles, bakeries, etc. Products like these have increased shelf life, they reduce costs, boost employment, and can be exported to India from border towns.

AP

The author says: "Until recently,

the district's orchards used to be forced to let their apples rot because there was no access to markets. Only about 10 per cent of apples made it out ..." Is this actually true? 90 per cent were forced to rot? Surely this has a lot to do with viable roads and not just an NGO. Can someone please call the fact checker?

Koji

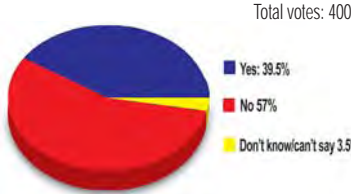
CLARIFICATION

There was a confusing discrepancy in the figures for total number of tourists who go trekking in Nepal in the illustration accompanying the article 'Selling ourselves short' #677. The entry totals of national parks add up to more than the number of people who tick 'trekking' in their arrival immigration forms. The approximate total number of trekkers last year was 163,370.



Weekly Internet Poll #678

Q. Will you be home for this year's Dasain and Tihar?



Weekly Internet Poll # 679. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. What do you think of Bhim Niroula's viral video on YouTube?



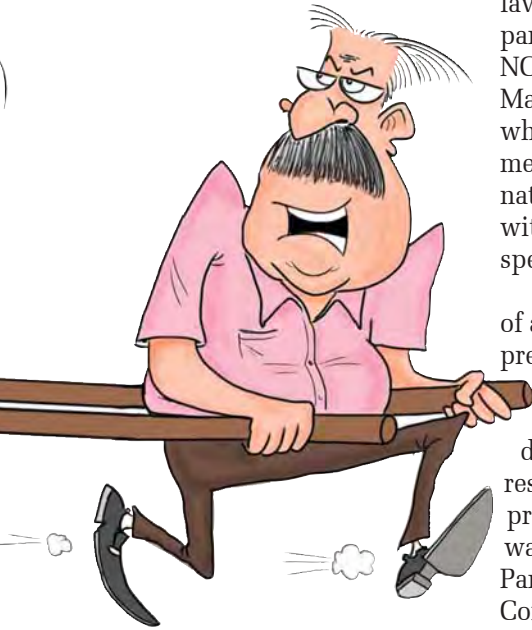
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Free, fair, and fear-free

High political stakes and polarised sentiment threaten to undermine electoral integrity and security



Five years after the election of the first Constituent Assembly and 18 months after its unceremonious demise, the country will give it another try in three weeks. Despite general cynicism about repeating an exercise that 'failed' to live up to its expectations, people are hopeful that the next CA will build on the work done so far to deliver a new constitution. But more than anything else, that hope hinges on conducting free, fair, and fear-free polls.



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

This week, all major parties including the Nepali Congress, UCPN-Maoist, CPN-UML, MJF-Nepal, and other Madhes-based parties unveiled their election manifestos. No surprise that each party has blamed the other for the CA's failure. UML dedicated only four pages in its manifesto to explaining its vision on the new constitution, which tells a lot about what the party has (or doesn't have) to offer. The UML is in favour of a directly-elected executive prime minister and a constitutional president, but is tight lipped on state restructuring.

The NC has gone a step ahead, but proposed a dubious 7-13 model, stating that it

is 'flexible' on both. On governance, the party is in favour of retaining the existing parliamentary model. Both the NC and UML fear Janajati and Madhesi backlash because of which their manifestos only mention multiple-identity, national-unity, and harmony without going into any specifics for restructuring.

The Maoists are in favour of a directly-elected executive president cohabiting with a parliament-elected prime minister to run day-to-day governance. On state restructuring, the Maoists have proposed the same model that was recommended by Madan Pariyar led State Restructuring Commission with addition of Kochila Pradesh in the East. Most Madhes based parties are in favour of two states in Madhes except for the Upendra Yadav led MJF-Nepal, which is still harping about 'one-Madhes', possibly to appease Madhesi voters as well as armed groups who have been targeting party leaders.

The last CA was dissolved due to dubious and rigid positions of the parties on issues like state structure and form of governance. Unless there is dramatic shift in that behaviour, the next CA will fare no better. However, it is interesting to note that the parties seem to be getting more flexible to accommodate the identity aspirations of various communities. Being a communist party, the Maoists would ideally prefer a centralised state and governance, however, along with the Madhesi parties, they seem to be the biggest advocates of federalism, which favours an empowered local government besides directly elected strong central leadership. At its best, this model could strengthen grassroots democracy as well as bring much needed political stability in the country. But unless there are strong checks and balances, it may also lead to totalitarianism.

Similarly, by acknowledging historical wrongs and calling for a change, the NC has taken a fresh departure from its earlier position that

parliamentary democracy was thriving until one party decided to wage war against it. But its insistence on the present model of parliamentary democracy is at odds with this understanding. Unlike the UML, Maoists, and the Madhesi parties, the NC opposes a directly elected executive at the centre and this hinges on a fear of one party, or one man, capturing state power.


A peaceful CA election could pave the way for closure of this long drawn peace process with a constitution. However, given the high political stakes and polarised sentiments, we had

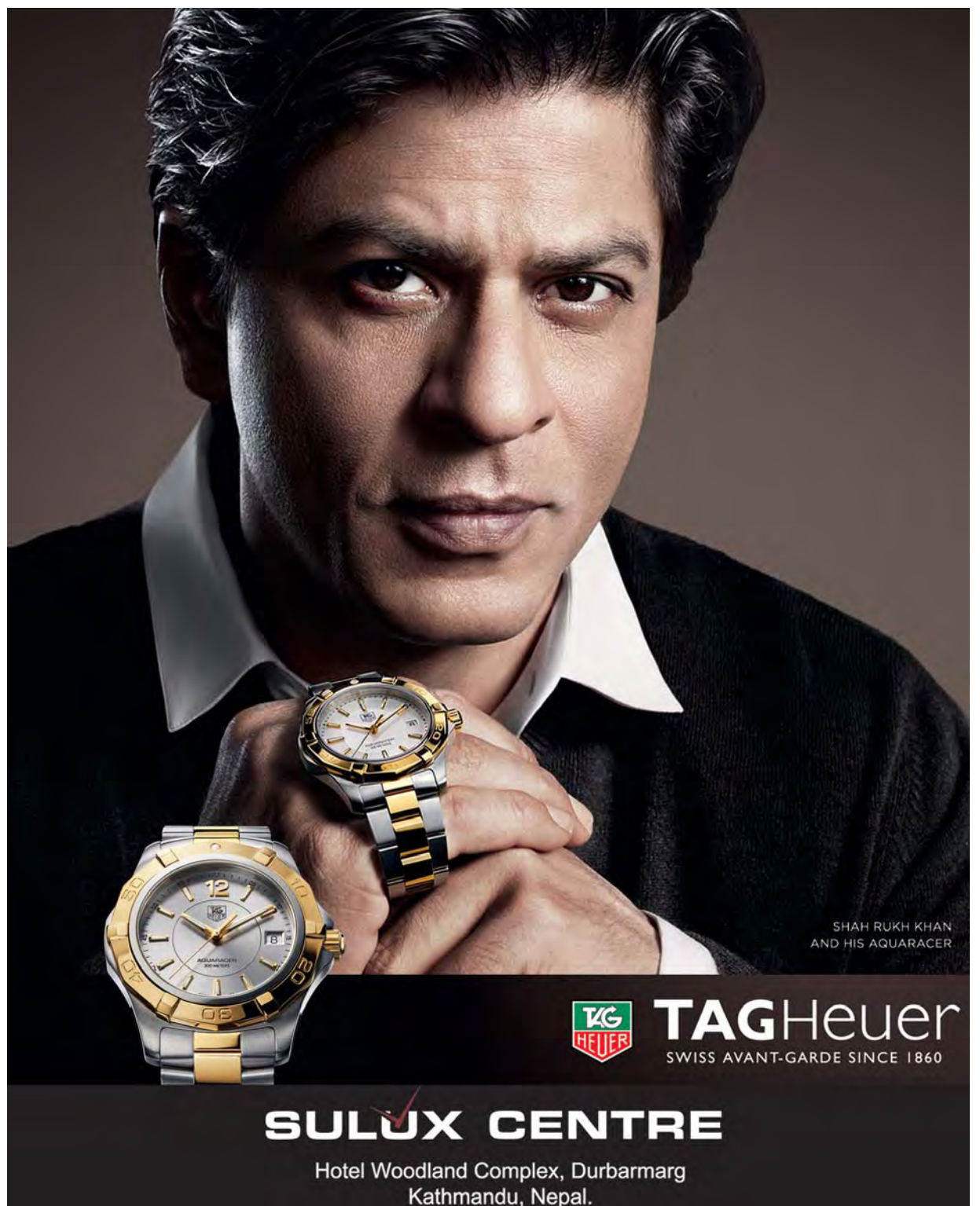
warned that there is imminent danger of an upsurge in violence in the weeks ahead.

There have been violent clashes among and between campaigning parties and agitating ones in several districts with the CPN-Maoists burning campaign material and vandalising vehicles. Dozens have been injured and many candidates don't feel safe campaigning. A UML candidate was shot dead in Bara on 4 October. The parties are also openly violating electoral codes of conduct during campaigning and the use of

unregistered Indian vehicles in border district has become commonplace.

The Election Commission has promised stronger monitoring and the mobilisation of Nepal Army is supposed to improve electoral security. But punitive measures are deterrents and do not inspire ethical behaviour in parties and candidates who are reducing a democratic exercise into a rat race where winner takes all.

The candidates and the parties seem to require the EC's education program more than the voters. 



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Oh, shit #673
Holding up half the district, #660

The fast and furious fall

DANI RODRIK

Most of today's advanced economies became what they are by travelling the well-worn path of industrialisation.

A progression of manufacturing industries – textiles, steel, automobiles – emerged from the ashes of the traditional craft and guild systems, transforming agrarian societies into urban ones. Peasants became factory workers, a process that underpinned not only an unprecedented rise in economic productivity, but also a wholesale revolution in social and political organisation. The labour movement led to mass politics and ultimately to political democracy.

Over time, manufacturing ceded its place to services, rich economies went through a cycle of industrialisation followed by deindustrialisation. Harvard University's Robert Lawrence argues that deindustrialisation predates the recent wave of economic globalisation.

Only a few developing countries, typically in East Asia, have been able to emulate this pattern. Thanks to export markets, South Korea industrialised exceptionally rapidly, undergoing in three decades a transformation that took a century or longer in the early industrialisers.

But the developing world's pattern of industrialisation has been different. Not only has the process been slow, but deindustrialisation has begun to set in much sooner. Consider Brazil and India, two emerging economies that have done comparatively well in the last decade or so. In Brazil, manufacturing's share of employment barely budged from 1950 to 1980, rising from 12 to 15 per cent. Since the late 1980's, Brazil has begun to deindustrialise, a process which recent growth has done little to stop or reverse. India presents an even more striking case: manufacturing

employment there peaked at a meagre 13 per cent in 2002 and has since trended down.

One obvious culprit may be globalisation and economic openness, which have made it difficult for countries like Brazil and India to compete with East Asia's manufacturing superstars. But even East Asian countries are subject to early-onset deindustrialisation.

Consider China. In view of its



status as the world's manufacturing powerhouse, it is surprising to discover that manufacturing's share of employment is not only low, but seems to have been declining for some time. While Chinese statistics are problematic, it appears that manufacturing employment peaked at around 15 per cent in the mid-1990's, generally remaining below that level since.

China is a very large country, of course, with much of its workforce still in rural areas. But most migrant workers now find jobs in services rather than in factories. Similarly, it is extremely unlikely that the new crop of manufacturing exporters, such as Vietnam and Cambodia, will ever reach the levels of industrialisation attained by the early industrialisers, such as Britain and Germany.

An immediate consequence is that developing countries are turning into service economies at substantially lower levels of income. Manufacturing has begun to shrink while per

capita incomes have been a fraction of that level: Brazil's deindustrialisation began at \$5,000, China's at \$3,000, and India's at \$2,000.

On the economic front, it is clear that early deindustrialisation impedes growth and delays convergence with the advanced economies. Manufacturing is an 'escalator industry': labour productivity in manufacturing has a tendency to converge to the frontier, even in economies where policies, institutions, and geography conspire to retard progress in other sectors of the economy. That is why rapid growth historically has always been associated with industrialisation. Less room for industrialisation will almost certainly mean fewer growth miracles in the future.

The social and political consequences are less fathomable, but could be equally momentous. Some of the building blocks of durable democracy have been byproducts of sustained industrialisation: an organised labour movement, disciplined political parties, and political competition organised around a right-left axis.

Given premature deindustrialisation, today's developing countries will have to travel different, as yet unknown, and possibly bumpier paths to democracy and good governance. ■

Dani Rodrik is Professor of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton.
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How's that

Soaltee Crowne Plaza is back with its popular annual corporate cricket tournament- the Super Sixes. The 15th edition of the game will be played between 25 corporate giants from 24-29 October at Tribhuvan University ground.

Old for new

Morang Auto Works, the authorised dealer of Yamaha two-wheelers in Nepal, is hosting the 'Yamaha Scooter Exchange Mahamela' at Bhrikutimandap on 24-26 October. If you want to exchange your old motorbike or scooter with a Yamaha Ray scooter then don't miss out on this mela.



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Fast cash

NMB Bank has extended its ATM services in the Valley with the operation of a new booth in the District Court premises at Babar Mahal. With the addition, the number of ATM outlets of the bank has now reached 27.

Winning numbers

Pashupati Paints announced the winners of its 2nd lucky draw under the 'Win a Home' contest. Under this contest, all customers who buy Pashupati Paints products worth Rs 20,000 will receive a scratch card with a unique lucky number.



Book your ticket

To celebrate its 10th anniversary, Etihad Airways is offering special prices on travel to 10 European and American destinations. Hurry up as the sale closes on 31 October.

New players

Allied Trade Link has released two new Karbonn smart phones in the market. Karbonn A5* and A26 boast of a myriad of new attractive smart features and are priced at Rs 9,906 and Rs 13,917 respectively.



Ferrying away

Himalayan Bank successfully ran a free Dasain shuttle service for clients of Himal Remit. The bank, which started this service last year, provided 18 buses which took hundreds of customers to different parts of the country for the holidays.

Lucky winners

Syakar has announced the winners of its Philips festive bonanza. Binod Ratna Tuladhar, Pratibha Kharel, and Krishna Gopal have each won Philips air fryer through the fortnightly lucky draw.



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Rooted in the grassroots

Communities take the lead in a more locally driven model of development

EVELYN HARTZ

Many, if not all, development agencies operating out of Kathmandu claim to value local participation and inclusion. Yet, donor priorities often prevent organisations from acting on community needs. But as residents of remote villages of Khotang and Solukhumbu districts are finding out for themselves, a bottom up approach to development is possible.

Working across seven VDCs, the dZi foundation collaborates with villagers to create community-defined projects that run the gamut from organic agriculture to toilet construction to establishing Parent Teacher Associations. Work begins only after locals send a formal invitation to the organisation.

“dZi didn’t just show up at our village and tell us what to do. They came here at our request and realising that we needed a formal means for local leadership, they started assisting us,” recalls Suka Ram Rai, president of Nayayug Ekata Bikas Samiti (NEBS), a local NGO in Cheskam VDC of Solukhumbu set up to serve as a dZi partner in implementing projects.

Projects are designed keeping in mind the existing infrastructure and strengths of



BEN AYERS

the community. The foundation then steps in by providing financial, technical, and training assistance. No one project can benefit an individual member or interest group exclusively.

With the 2015 deadline for Millennium Development Goals approaching, community-based models like the one practiced by dZi offer an alternative to the typical top-down approach. “We are 100 per cent committed to never letting donor demands trump community needs and have worked very hard and deliberately to build this model over time,” says country director Ben Ayers.

As partners and stakeholders, villagers contribute 20-75 per cent of funds or labour for any given project. In 2012, locals

donated the equivalent of over \$175,000 in material and labour, which was more than half of the foundation’s total project budget. “This fact challenges the notion of community members being ‘poor’. In fact, they are our single largest donor,” explains Ayers.

Nir Kumari Gautam, a teacher at a dZi supported school in Sotang, Solukhumbu says prior to the introduction of a PTA, her school like many other government schools rural in Nepal suffered from poor teacher performance, absenteeism, and disengaged parents. “Now the parents are involved and there has been a big change in how we run our classes,” admits Gautam.

dZi hopes that having a

number of complementary and inter-connected projects will help build a deeper sense of community and lead to much greater efficiency and impact. But not all agree. Says Mark Galpin, country director at United Mission to Nepal, “Smaller organisations have a real role to play in terms of their flexibility, speed to adapt and therefore often (but not always) innovation, and larger organisation are likely to have a wider impact. But issues of funding and project design are critical at the project level.”

Ultimately, the long-term success of Ayers and his team will depend on how well the villages sustain the projects following the organisation’s departure.

So as the final step in the ‘development process’, dZi trains youth in agricultural practices and teaches them to run small firms so they can become local leaders and provide employment to others in the community.

Says Chatur Kulung, a student from Cheskam who was trained by dZi in social mobilisation: “To change any community, the change has to come from oneself. I think the people of my village will become independent in the future.”

www.dzifoundation.org

nepalitimes.com

Making inroads, #663
Seeds of revolution, #652



CHATUR KULUNG

BY THE PEOPLE: Suka Ram Rai (pic, left), president of Nayayug Ekata Bikas Samiti, a local NGO in Cheskam, Solukhumbu presents a handmade map detailing how his village envisions its growth in the next 10 years. Chatur Kulung (pic, above) also from Cheskam works as a social mobiliser in his community.



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Against the current

Tribute to the white water rafting expert and tourism entrepreneur

BILLI BIERLING

It has been exactly six months since David Allardice (*pic, right*), one of the pioneers of river exploration and bungy jumping in Nepal, sadly passed away at 55 after battling cancer for years. With his work, enthusiasm, and never-seizing faith in creating the impossible, he left a lasting impact on Nepal's tourism and the people he worked with.

"There are only a few people in Nepal who have touched as many lives as David has. And I am certainly one of them," says close friend and filmmaker Dinesh Deokota, who worked with David as a freelancer.

Having been introduced to river rafting the hard way - he was literally thrown into the deep end by some hardcore kayakers in his native New Zealand in the early 90s - David was taken by Nepal's raging rivers when he first set foot into the Himalayan country. After attempting some of the high-volume rivers in monsoon, he found the perfect technical steep white water in the Bhote Kosi and set up

Ultimate Descents, which eventually led him to building a resort at its banks. Looking for a new challenge, David soon came up with an unprecedented project for Nepal. In 1997, he got together with business partner and friend Bishnu Neupane to set up Nepal's first bungy in Tatopani, Sindupalchok district.

"David told me he saw a deep gorge when he kayaked the Bhote Kosi and his gut feeling told him that this was the perfect place for a bungy," recalls Neupane. "I trusted him completely and felt whatever he envisioned, would work."

After a couple of years of building a suspension bridge across the 166m wide gorge - which at 160m became the second highest bungy in the world - sorting out paperwork, constructing cabins and tents, and creating a whole new economy in the surrounding villages, The Last Resort finally opened its doors in 1999. But, of course, not before David dared to do the first test jump off the bridge, which would become the second jump in his life.

Trying to quench his thirst for new



PICS: DINESH DEOKOTA

managing The Last Resort while setting up a blackcurrant farm back home. Today his projects Nepal employ and support hundreds of families.

"Nepal always had a special place in his heart. I guess it was because it was here where he started his business," says friend and business partner Patrick O'Keeffe.

David was enthusiastic, positive, gung-ho, and had a charisma that attracted people around him and encouraged them to get out of their comfort zones. Even when he was suffering from cancer, he never seemed to lose his energy or determination to scout new rivers across the globe. The man who had defied death on multiple occasions as he made his way through treacherous currents, however, lost his fight with cancer on April this year. "David seemed invincible and capable of coping with anything and was probably convinced that he would also overcome this challenge. The news of his death came as a complete shock," says Deokota.

David may not have been as big a name as fellow New Zealander Edmund Hillary, who first set foot atop of Mount Everest together with Tenzing Norgay, but he was close. "I always compared David to Hillary. He wanted to establish his name and make a first record as a Kiwi," says Neupane. "Had he lived for another 20 years, I'm sure he would have reached the same status." 🇳🇵

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18

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EVENTS

Nepal literature festival, attend the third edition of Nepal's literary festival and meet your favourite Nepali writers, and hear what international authors have to say about writing back home. *25 to 28 October, Nepal Academy Hall, Kamaladi*

TIHARAI AAYO

Nepal celebrates the festival of lights next week.

1 November, **Kag Tihar**, Dipawali kicks off with a puja for the bird of good tidings.



2 November, **Kukkur Tihar**, next up is a puja for man's best friend, woof!
3 November, **Gai Tihar**, celebrate Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, by paying your respects to the cow.

4 November, **Mha Puja**, Newars puja themselves in Kathmandu, and elsewhere people pay homage to Gobhardhan, an avatar of Lord Krishna.

5 November, **Bhai Tika**, sisters puja their brothers to protect them from Yama, the harbinger of death.



RETURN TO NATURE, on the spot water colour painting and exhibition. *29 October, 4-30pm, Park Gallery, Pulchowk, parkgallery11@gmail.com, (01)5522307*

Nhudaya Bhintuna, the Newari calendar turns a new leaf. *4 November*

Fashion photography workshop, interact with fashion designers, art directors, and makeup artists to learn the A to Z of fashion photography, only 10 seats. *Rs 5,000, 28 October to 2 November, 9841830748*

Expansion, an exhibition of paintings by Jaya Shankar Son Shrestha. *29 October to 20 November, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal, (01)4218048, www.siddharthaartgallery.com*

La.lit 2, the literary magazine releases its second issue. *25 October, 1 to 1.30pm, Nepal Academy, Kathmandu*

Critical mass, join hundreds of enthusiasts to spread awareness about the importance of cycling in a cramped city like Kathmandu. *25 October, 5-30pm, Tudikhel*

Halloween, the haunted house, don't dread the day of the dead, party instead. *26 October, 4pm onwards, International Club, Sanepa*

DINING

Kancha ko bhancha, the best of Nepali cuisine at this newly opened eatery. *Kupandol*

Dhokaima Cafe, exquisite ambience, friendly service, cosy bar, place to see and be seen at. *Patan Dhoka, (01)5522113*

Vootoo, the new home of Newari cuisine, as well as a continental menu for those who don't want a palatial adventure. *Lajimpat, (01)4005222*



SHANGRILA KITCHEN, try the majestic Gyakok and a wide variety of cocktails. *9 am to 10.30 pm, Hotel Tibet International, Boudha*

Boudha Stupa Restaurant and Cafe, bide your time with free wi-fi as you enjoy wood-fired pizzas, home-made pastas, and the Tibetan gyakok. *Boudha, (01)4485585*

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

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

Salt & Pepper Restro Lounge, espresso, mocha, latte, frappuccino, cocktails, liquor, beers and flavoured shishas, with an outdoor lake-view terrace. *Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)463484, 9846210568, www.saltandpeppernepal.com*

Yak Restaurant, serves authentic Chinese food, try the mala tofu, chicken with fungus, and spicy pork spare ribs. *Boudha, Kathmandu*

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

Public Cave, while its pizzas, sizzlers, and spring rolls are a hit among customers, the main attraction is karaoke. *Dihikopatan, Pokhara, 9856032958*



KOTETSU, authentic Japanese dishes that cater to your needs and taste buds. *Lajimpat*

MUSIC



KRIPA UNPLUGGED, young Nepali musicians give an acoustic rendition of their favourite songs. *http://www.youtube.com/user/KripaUnplugged*



SHASTRIYA SANGEET, let the magic of live Hindustani classical music overwhelm you. *30 October, 3pm onwards, Kirateswor, Pasupati; 3 November, 3pm onwards, Ram Mandir, Battispatali*

Jazzmandu, the Himalayan jazz fiesta is back for the 11th year running. *24 to 30 October, Kathmandu*

Live at Cafe 32, live music and delicious food every Friday. *6pm onwards*

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GETAWAYS

Charikot Panorama Resort, enjoy mountain views and local culture in the historic town of Charikot. Special packages on offer. *Charikot, Dolakha, (01)5529463, thapamaag@gmail.com*

Hotel Landmark, made entirely from traditional Nepali brick and woodcraft, this hotel is rich not only in heritage, but also in services and boasts an award winning restaurant, the Hungry Eye.
Pokhara, (61)462908/463096/464897, www.landmarkpokhara.com



WATERFRONT RESORT, the lakeside hotel invites you for special barbecue dinners on Friday and lunches on Saturday.
Sedi Height, Lakeside road, Pokhara, (061)466303/304, www.waterfronthotelnepal.com

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Gaurighat, Lakeside, (61)465819

Mango Tree Lodge, culture walks, rafting in Karnali, wildlife exploration, and jungle safari at the Bardia National Park.
Bhetani, Bardiya, info@mangotree lodge.com



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World Peace Pagoda, Pokhara, (61)692136, 9841382053

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Andrauli, West Chitwan, www.barahijunglelodge.com



JAZZ UP YOUR EVENINGS

Party with musicians Yaite Ramos Quartet (Brazil), Claudia Quintet (USA), Mike del Ferro (Netherlands), Nick Aggs (Australia), Eliane Amherd (Switzerland), Cadenza Collective (Nepal), and 4th Element (India) at the 11th Jazzmandu Festival.

Groovin at Upstairs, Cadenza and friends kick off the fest with a jam at the heart of Jazz in Nepal. *Rs 350, 24 October, 6pm onwards, Jazz Upstairs, Lajimpat*

Valley jams, venues in Kathmandu will feature performances by various Jazzmandu artists. Claudia Quintet at Jazz Upstairs, Lazimpat; Yatie Ramos Quartet at Moksh, Jawalakhel; Eliane Ahmerd Trio at House of Music, Thamel; 4th Element at Manny's Eatery & Tapas Bar, Ekantakuna /Jawalakhel; Mike del Ferro at Bhumi Restaurant, Lajimpat. *Rs 500, 25 October, 6pm onwards*

Jazz bazar, marathon of jazz and traditional Nepalese folk and classical music performed by international and Nepali musicians. *Rs 990, 26 October, 2.30pm to 10pm, Gokarna Forest Resort*

Red hot latin jazz, a night of Latin Jazz, featuring authentic Afro-Cuban sounds of the Caribbean. *Rs 1,099, 27 October, 7 to 9pm, Hotel Summit, Kupondole*

Jazzmandu master class, an opportunity for music students & jazz enthusiasts to interact with visiting musicians, share their experience and stories and learn different instrumental tips and techniques. *29 October, 1.30 to 3.30pm, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel*

Jazz at Patan, an evening of Nepali classical music fused with Jazz in a rich and soulful ambience. *Rs 1,299, 29 October, 6pm onwards, Dhokaima Cafe, Patan*

Jazzmandu Finale, musicians from different bands play their sets and later jam together, creating a high-energy, improvised musical treat. *Rs 990, 30 October, 6pm onwards, Alliance Francaise, Tripureswor*

www.jazzmandu.org

Solo life

As part of its montly lecture series, Cultural Studies Group of Nepal presents 'The plight of widows in Nepal' in October.

Lily Thapa, founder of Women for Human Rights, will reflect on her own experiences as a young widow and her organisation's efforts in promoting the survival of widows in Nepal. WHR now has a membership of 100,000 single women in 1550 VDCs in 73 districts of Nepal.



Through her work at WHR, Thapa has won cases at the Supreme Court to change many discriminatory laws against widows, including the rights of property and inheritance.

Thapa is a recognised leader among women and won the Praval Jan Sewa Padak medal from the President Ram Baran Yadav in September.

25 October 2013, 9.30am, Shankar Hotel, Lajimpat

Entry free for members, Rs 400 for non-members, half for students with IDs, tea/coffee included

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The comeback cats

Nepal’s success with snow leopard conservation is a case study for other countries in the region

KASHISH DAS SHRESTHA in BISHKEK

Twelve mountain nations of Asia have convened in the Kyrgyz capital this week to protect the snow leopard, one of the most elusive and endangered of the big cats in the world.

The presence of snow leopards is considered an indicator of overall health of the eco-system in its high-altitude habitat of the Himalaya, Hindu Kush, Pamirs, the Tibetan Plateau, and the Mongolian steppe. The snow leopard faces many dangers: poaching and retaliation by farmers whose livestock is preyed by the cats and more recently the threat of habitat destruction due to climate change.

Since the snow leopard’s range does not respect national boundaries, it is clear that conservation efforts have to be cross-border. Nepal, for its part, has reported success in its snow leopard conservation efforts. After a fall in population in the 1960s and 70s, the number of snow leopards has risen to as high as 500 in the wild, one-tenth of the world population. In fact, Nepal’s experience in snow leopard conservation, in DNA analysis, radio collaring, and community-based conservation is seen as a case study for other countries in the region.

Nepal has the highest density of snow leopards compared to other range countries and most are concentrated in Mugu, Humla, and Dolpo. Snow leopard expert Rodney Jackson and Karan Shah first radio-collared snow leopards



in 1985 in Dolpo to study their behaviour. It was this information that became critical in further conservation work.

“Now, the Kangchenjunga region offers the best possibility for successful conservation and study in Nepal because of its altitude and the chance to study climate impact,” Ghana Shyam Gurung of WWF Nepal told *Nepali Times* in Bishkek.

Snow leopards normally live at altitudes between 1,500-5,000m. In India, the cats have been found at higher altitudes than previously documented and in Pakistan there has been a worrying change in vegetation in prey populations due to climate change.

In Nepal, Stanford University professor Elizabeth Hadley’s team has been studying snow leopard prey and how climate change might be affecting them. “Pikas form a significant part of the snow leopard’s diet, which means that the changing climate and its impact on the little pika may exert an influence on snow leopard survival,” Hadley said.

In the Kyrgyz nature reserve Sarychat-Ertash established to protect the wild cats, it is the argali and ibex populations that ensured the survival and rise of snow leopard numbers. In Nepal, the blue sheep population plays a critical role.

Nepal’s snow leopard conservation plan is estimated to cost \$9 million, with the government committing to fund 25 per cent of the amount. Our terrain requires specific and costly logistics. Nepal’s Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation, Tek Bahadur Thapa Gharti told the Bishkek meeting this week that Nepal would use camera trapping, genetic studies, and collaring for snow leopard research.

A WWF Nepal team will be travelling to Kangchenjunga next month to radio collar snow leopards and Bhutanese officials this week expressed interest in coming along to watch the process to gain knowhow for their own conservation work.



Nepal has pioneered livestock insurance in Kangchenjunga, where farmers are compensated for livestock killed by snow leopards. This has reduced retaliatory killings by farmers.

Nepal’s community-based conservation program also promotes community scientists who are local villagers trained in setting up camera traps, collecting scat samples, and monitoring the snow leopard’s population and local ecology. Scat samples are used for DNA analysis to identify individual leopards and is an ideal method because the animal is so elusive and the terrain so difficult.

“This helps to create

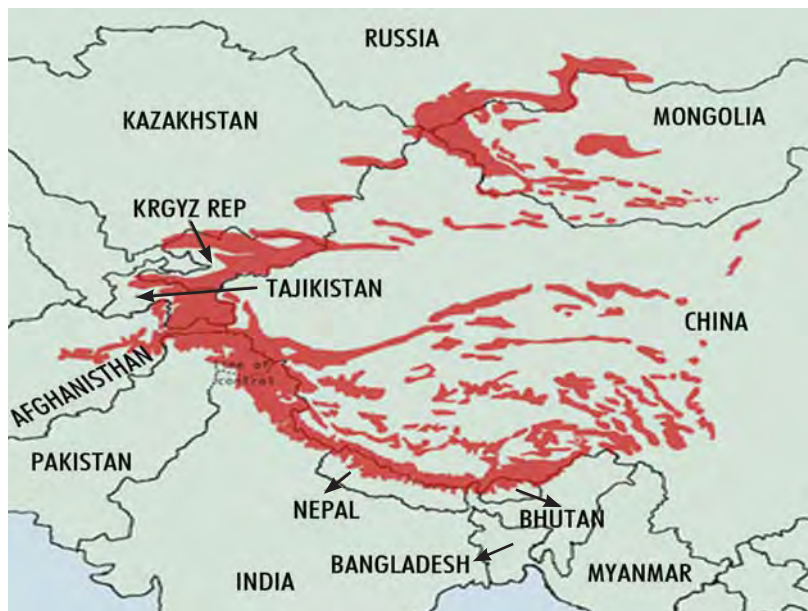


employment and skill development," Gurung explained, "and more importantly it gives villagers a better sense of ownership and makes the conservation process more transparent and accountable." 🇳🇵

Kashish Das Shrestha writes on environment and sustainability issues at SustainableNepal.org @kashishds

nepalitimes.com

Scat! #527
Worth more alive than dead, #22
Darla, Rodney, and snow leopards #110
Camera trap video of snow leopard 📹



KASHISH DAS SHRESTHA

The Bishkek Declaration

It all started at the Lina Bar, over drinks in 2011. As the president, vice president, and others from the Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU) reflected over the success of the Global Tiger Initiative, they wondered if a similar campaign could also help save Asia's endangered snow leopards. With experience and contacts in Central Asia for snow leopard conservation, NABU presented its proposal for a global forum on the mountain cats to the then-Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva.

By 2012, preparatory meetings had taken place in Bishkek, New Delhi, Bangkok, and Moscow. On Wednesday, 23 October those efforts culminated in Bishkek with the 12 snow leopard range countries (Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia,

Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) signing The Bishkek Declaration on the Conservation of Snow Leopards. Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev signed the declaration which was also signed by Nepal's Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation, Tek Bahadur Thapa Gharti.

After some initial debate, it was also agreed that the working secretariat to facilitate program development after the Global Snow Leopard Conservation Forum will be located in Bishkek. The declaration emphasises trans-boundary protection and is supported by other conservation agencies like the Global Environment Facility, Global Tiger Initiative, NABU, Snow Leopard Conservancy, Snow Leopard Trust, UNDP, USAID, the World Bank, and the World Wildlife Fund.

LEOPARD CENSUS



Approximate numbers of snow leopards in the world

Afghanistan	: 100-200
Bhutan	: 100-200
China	: 2,000-2,500
India	: 400-700
Mongolia	: 1000
Nepal	: 300-500
Pakistan	: 200-400

Estimated world population:

4,000-6,500



50% of China's snow leopard habitat is now protected area

Half of Mongolia's snow leopard habitat remains unexplored



It's been a very long time since I thoroughly enjoyed a summer blockbuster. But then again, *Pacific Rim* is directed by Guillermo Del Toro, the man who brought us the excellent *The Devil's Backbone* (1997), *Mimic* (2001), *Hellboy*



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

(2004), and my personal favourite *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006). *Pacific Rim* is just so good because of Del Toro's trademark attention to character development. So few action oriented directors care about fully rounded characters these days that it is a relief to watch the ensemble cast in this film, all of whom are particularly charming and interesting in their very own ways. While the film's premise is preposterous enough, chronicling the onslaught of the Kaijus

- monstrous, enormous creatures who have invaded the earth from a crack in the Pacific rim which leads to another galaxy - and the subsequent fight back by us humans who create gigantic Transformer type robots called Jaegers to retaliate, again, it is the characters who hook us so thoroughly to the film. The obligatory male lead is the very attractive Charlie Hunnam who plays Raleigh Becket, a former Jaeger fighter who lost his brother in an ugly brawl with a Kaiju. Since the Jaegers need to be piloted by two people, Raleigh goes off the grid after his brother's death, working on massive coastal walls designed to keep out the Kaiju. Five years later he is recruited back into the Jaeger team by his former boss Stacker Pentecost (the always great Idris Elba) to resuscitate and pilot his beloved Jaeger called Gipsy Danger when it becomes apparent that the Kaiju onslaught is in fact far from over as

was previously thought. Back at the Jaeger base in Hong Kong, Raleigh must find a new co-pilot and since the Jaeger's are piloted by the two hemisphere's of two different people's brains (don't ask, I can't explain it either), this task, usually performed by siblings, father-son duo's or lovers is not an easy one for which to find a partner. Enter Mako Mori (played by Rinko Kikuchi) - Pentecost's protégée and a highly skilled fighter in her own right. Mako and Stacker have a touching backstory that reveals itself over the course of the film in an incredibly well structured and well written script that avoids all the usual pitfalls of the summer money making machines, including the usually god-awful climactic (anti rather) showdown. So settle in for a great film, one that doesn't insult our intelligence and manages to combine affect with humour without sinking to a puerile level. You'll find yourself avidly watching the film and when it ends immediately wanting to rewind and re-watch some of the really juicy parts (most of them involve Hunnam's beautiful torso). And just for counterpoint, in case I have waxed a little too poetic about what is after all fairly superficial cinema, perhaps the only real criticism I have for *Pacific Rim* is that some of the Kaiju are just a little less scary because they happen to be designed as oversized amphibians. That is all.

nepalintimes.com

Watch trailer



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SHOE-A-HOLICS

Ground Floor, Mayalu Center
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Phone: 4225627

Ground Floor, Below Laxmi Bank
Harihar Bhavan, Pulchowk
Phone: 5524812

HAPPENINGS



BIKRAM RAI

EARLY LESSONS: School children take a tour of the Electoral Education and Information Centre at the Election Commission building in Kantipath on Wednesday.



DEVAKI BISTA

CLEAN CITIES: President Ram Baran Yadav attends the inaugural ceremony of the fifth South Asian Conference on Sanitation in Bhaktapur on Monday.



SHARMILA BUDATHOKI

OUR TURN: Women recruited for the temporary police force to be used during elections undergo training at Charikot, Dolakha on Tuesday.



BIKRAM RAI

FIELDS OF GOLD: Farmers in Kirtipur harvest paddy on Sunday morning.

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WORD UP

After the remarkable success of the previous two years' literary events, Ncell and The Bookworm Trust are back with the third edition of Nepal Literature Festival. Aiming to attract a wide cross-section of Nepali life – from the plebeian to the high-strung – the festival will feature 96 eminent writers from home and abroad. Meet your favourite men and women of letters and take part in lively discussions, poetry recitals, book launches, and signings.

25 OCTOBER

On Prayogshala, Jhalak Subedi, Yubaraj Ghimire, Mumaram Khanal, and Sudhir Sharma discuss Sharma's book *Prayogshala*, 1.30 to 3pm
The art of the short story, Rabi Thapa talks to international authors Prajwal Parajuly and Farah Ghuznavi, 3 to 4pm
The winning habit, banker Anil Shal talks to Prakash Iyer, author, motivational speaker, and leadership coach, 4 to 5pm
Writers on writers, Abhi Subedi and Khagendra Sangraula reflect inwardly, 4 to 5pm



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

26 OCTOBER

Second thoughts on stardust, society, and celebrity, Kunda Dixit in conversation with Shoba De, 11am to 12pm
Take the lead, Prakash Iyer and Anil Chitrakar discuss winning habits, 12 to 1pm
Talking cartoons, Dilbhusan Pathak talks to Durga Baral, Rajesh KC, and Guna Raj Luitel 3 to 4pm
Poets on poetry, Abhi Subedi talks to Indian poet, writer, and diplomat Abhay K , 4 to 5pm

The land where I flee, Colin Cooper in conversation with Prajwal Parajuly, 5 to 6pm

27 OCTOBER

Lively pair, Bijaya Kumar tickles Hari Bansha Acharya and Madan Krishna Shrestha, 11am to 12pm
Redefining nationality, Bisnu Sapkota questions CK Lal, Pratyush Onta, and Dambar Chemjong, 12 to 1pm

Talking love, Prateebha Tuladhar in conversation with Indian author and playwright Annie Zaidi, 12 to 1pm
I too had a love story, actress Nisha Adhikari in conversation with Indian writer Ravinder Singh, 2 to 3pm
The empire writes back, Sanjeev Upreti talks to Ned Beaman, Farah Ghuznavi, and Prajwal Parajuly, 3 to 4pm
Mushayara, the best of Nepali Urdu poetry from Abdul Latif Shauk and Abdul Waheed, 4 to 5pm

28 OCTOBER

Celebrating Rajesh Hamal, actor and theatre director Anup Baral talks to the most enduring Nepali actor, 11 to 12pm
Reporting from the unknown turf, Kashish Das Shrestha in conversation with Annie Zaidi, 12 to 1pm
Growing up with Granta, Rabi Thapa in conversation with British novelist and author Ned Beaman, 2 to 3pm
The future of print journalism, Rajneesh Bhandari puts editors Akhilesh Upadhyay, Amit Dhakal, Rajendra Dahal on the firing line, 4 to 5pm
Closing session, book launch, and poetry recitation, 4 to 6 pm

25 to 28 October,
Nepal Academy Hall, Kamaladi

Kilroy's of Kathmandu was quite a sensation when it opened in 1998. Thomas Kilroy, an Irish chef whose culinary skills pleased British royalties, the Clintons, and Margaret Thatcher, was equally successful in charming the palates of the Valley's residents.

SOMEPLACE ELSE

Once you negotiate the rather congested lanes of Thamel and enter Kilroy's, the view from the glass panel of the large, impeccably neat kitchen and the chefs at work is deeply reassuring. The main restaurant on the first floor reaches out to its terraces and the spacious open courtyard at the ground level is decked with green plants and a cascading water fall. The rustic decor is warm and pleasant and tables spaced at a respectable distance from the other invite congenial conversation. The tandoor baked bread, meat, and daal at the ground floor offer an excellent alternative, but Kilroy's reputation is built around its steaks, Anglo-European specialties, and a select collection of wines.

When we visited the restaurant

last Saturday, the place was brimming with eager diners. But a full house also means orders take a little longer to arrive. So to kill time we ordered a bottle of French Beaujour rouge 2010, at Rs 2,045 and the pleasant waiter offered a complimentary plate of pakodas. The light red wine gave the three of us good company throughout our meal; the unfortunate fourth had to sacrifice the vino in order to drive us home.

The starter, char-grilled vegetables drizzled with

olive oil and wine vinegar (Rs 285) could do with a more liberal 'drizzle' to go with the crusty crunch of warm bread that was marinated well with the baked 'tarte tatin' of tomato,

KILROY'S OF KATHMANDU

stuffed with naks cheese in mushroom sauce (Rs 395) accompanied by creamy spinach and potato rosti, lived up to its claim of being 'easily the most popular dish of the house'. But for our table of four the huge bowl of risotto (Rs 585) with a balanced mix of black trumpet mushrooms, white wine, and whipped cream, was by far the best choice. Robert Edward Desjardins, who now runs the restaurant in Kathmandu, told us that the Italian rice dish is a Thomas Kilroy specialty and it is prepared even now with utmost care and patience.

Satiated as we were, we simply could not resist the renowned lemon tart (Rs 250) and warm chocolate and orange fondant (Rs 250).

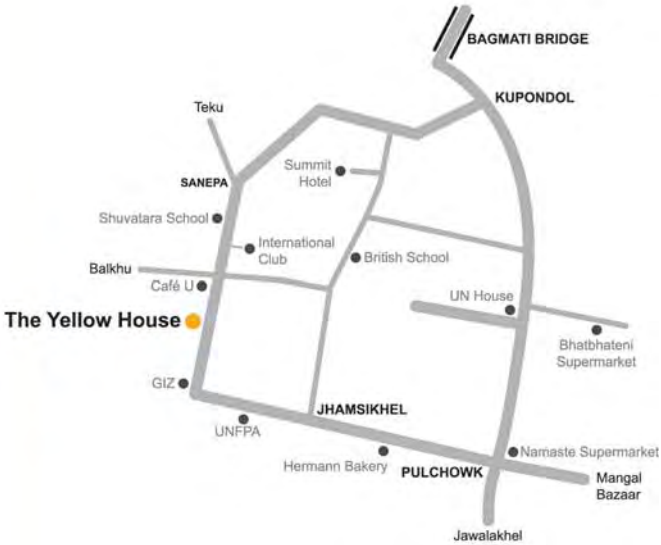
Kilroy's merits a repeat visit, especially during its wine festival season which lasts from June to September. 🇳🇵 *Rainbow Diner*

How to get there: from Tridevi Marg in Thamel turn left down Jyatha Marg. Kilroy's is down a well signposted alley on the left-hand side.

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Wheeze, wheeze



Thirty-year-old Suman Rai had an on and off history of cough and wheezing. Her cough got worse during the night and in winter. She occasionally suffered from stuffy nose and watery nasal discharge, but otherwise was healthy with no other problem. After a proper physical



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

examination and some simple tests, the doctor concluded that Rai had bronchial asthma. With winter around the corner, it is worthwhile to go over some new developments regarding this common ailment.

Bronchial asthma is basically a narrowing of the airways of the lungs. Bronchoconstriction as it is called, is caused by the tightening of the muscles around the airways. But inflammation of

the airways also plays an integral role in causing asthma attacks. The lungs of asthma patients make a whistling sound because the transmission of air through the narrowed passage is bumpy with plenty of ricocheting against the walls of the lumen.

If this narrowing continues unabated without proper treatment then the patient runs the risk of acquiring chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). COPD is definitely worse than asthma because it heralds irreversible obstruction and leads to many other complications whereas asthma is a reversible obstruction.

Interestingly, a relatively new finding about disease progression reveals that the overall severity of asthma does not vary significantly within a given patient. That is, individuals who have mild asthma continue to have mild asthma and those with more acute inflammation continue to have them. No one really

knows why some people are more susceptible to asthma than others, but many studies suggest a genetic predisposition via family history and genetic screenings. However, as with many other diseases, no single genetic profile has shown a positive predictive value.

The prevalence of asthma has leveled off in the last 30 years with a rate of about 15 per cent in children and 10 per cent in adults. Asthma deaths too have decreased in recent years. In the 1960s, deaths due to asthma in the West were on the rise because of the overuse of certain kinds of medicines called short-acting beta agonists. However, since the introduction of inhaled corticosteroids which counter inflammation, the main culprit in asthma, death rates have declined.

For those who are predisposed to asthma, there are many 'triggers' that can set off an attack. The common ones are: respiratory infections, cold air, exercise, emotional excitement etc. But people who are on maintenance therapy with steroid inhalers can be well protected from some of these bothersome triggers. Since inhaled steroids have significantly less side effects, they are far safer than ingesting oral steroids. What is far more important, however, is for patients to have the knowledge to inhale the steroids puffs properly and not to swallow them down the digestive tract, where the medicine serves no purpose. Asthma pathology is in the airways of the lungs and the inhaled steroids need to be deposited in the lungs. Proper hand mouth coordination is also vital for drug delivery. Unfortunately, many Nepali patients are prescribed inhalers without being properly taught to use this machine for optimal benefit.

Paradoxically, trekking in the Himalayas seems to inhibit asthma flare ups in many patients. Nonetheless, susceptible trekkers should carry adequate asthma medicines on high-altitude treks. 🇳🇵

GIZMO by YANTRICK

Numero uno

Recipient of *T3 Magazine's* coveted 'Phone of the Year' and 'Design of the Year' categories for 2013, it is easy to see why the HTC One is so highly rated by critics and users alike. Originally released in March this year, the HTC One is credited for single-handedly reversing the Taiwanese company's ailing fortunes in the smart phone market and is still highly desired even after the introduction of behemoths like Samsung's Galaxy S4 and Note 3 and Apple's iPhone 5S and 5C.

One is not only the best looking phone HTC has ever built, but arguably the best looking phone ever. The gadget is unbelievably thin yet reassuringly rigid and its sleek aluminium body beautifully melts into the 4.7-inch screen, without a single gap in sight. And speaking of the screen, it is eye-piercingly sharp, boasting a 1080p full HD resolution and making a mockery of Apple's Retina display, with a pixel density of 468ppi.

Running on Android's Mobile Operating System (version 4.2.2), the One's slightly-tweaked user interface is simple and smooth, with texts, pictures, videos, and games looking incredibly sharp, clear, and detailed on the device. Powered by a slightly outdated 1.7 GHz quad-core processor, it still feels blazingly fast when compared to the latest smart phones running on octa-core processors. The 2GB of RAM on board the One is capable of complimenting the strikingly beautiful screen with incredible performance, which can especially be observed while running graphics and memory intensive applications, games, videos, and websites.



Although a four-megapixel camera on a flagship device might seem like an unforgivable flaw, especially when top end smart phones boast cameras of 13-megapixel upwards, HTC in fact packs an Ultra Pixel sensor into the Ones' cameras, which means that your detailed image capturing needs are not compromised. As expected, the gadget is capable of capturing videos at full HD resolution and a mode to capture slow motion videos is a welcome and seriously fun addition.

One comes equipped with most standard connectivity options including LTE, NFC, DLNA, MHL, HSDPA, GPS, Wi-Fi, and Bluetooth to fulfill your internet and multimedia needs, while an infrared blaster on top of the phone is an extremely handy addition, which is to be used as a universal remote control.

Although the HTC One lets down with its non-expandable storage (max 64GB phone memory only) department and a non-removable 2,300mAh battery, it is too stunningly designed to ignore. 🇳🇵

Yantrick's verdict: the HTC One is capable of matching other smart phone giants pixel by pixel and at Rs 65,000 is a complete bargain.

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NOT AFRAID: Shazia Ilmi, the Aam Aadmi Party candidate for RK Puram constituency in Delhi, during a public meeting in a slum. To make Ilmi pull out from state elections, rival parties have been regularly threatening her team and slum residents.

Citizen candidate

Local elections in India's capital will be a litmus test for national polls

Readers of this newspaper are presumably English-speaking, middle-class, urbane Nepalis. Like their counterparts in India, they too wish the two M's (muscle and money) will not affect elections.



LOOK OUT
Ajaz Ashraf

And yet they are averse to wading into the muck of the political arena.

Defying this perception of politics is India's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) which has metamorphosed from being a band of civil activists into a political outfit and plunged

into the Delhi State Assembly election, due on 4 December. Its principal founders are middle-class, have no prior experience of contesting elections, and their initial agenda was to cleanse the country of corruption. Subsequently, their agenda and support base includes the underclass of India's vast federal capital.

As Nepal prepares for its own elections in November, there may be lessons from an AAP candidate who is middle-class, a media person, and has had no prior experience in politics. TV anchor Shazia Ilmi is contesting from the high-profile RK Puram constituency, which is a medley of posh colonies, residential blocs of bureaucrats, and slums. It was in this constituency that

the 23-year-old physiotherapist was raped last December, provoking apathetic Delhi-ites to pour out on the streets in protest. It was also here that some of the rapists worked and lived.

When the AAP declared it was fielding Ilmi from RK Puram, she found access to some slum-clusters denied to her team. In those locales where they held a gathering or showed a film on the electricity scam in the city, she said cops would arrive demanding to know whether or not they had taken permission from the authorities. "This was when no such prior permission was required," Ilmi told me.

To compel her team into submission, a car full of boys would arrive at her public meetings, then another, soon a

third, all of them shouting and abusing the AAP activists. The AAP team gamely carried on until some of its members were roughed up.

"We made a complaint to the police, not that we wanted protection, but to ensure nobody was beaten up," Ilmi said. Perhaps the rivals of AAP wouldn't have dared to resort to violence against her, as she is a readably recognisable TV face and RK Puram isn't outside the arc of media coverage.

Since such tactics didn't dissuade Ilmi and her team to pull out, the rivals took recourse to intimidating the residents of slums. Those who attended their rallies or helped them were later warned that they wouldn't be provided cards allowing them


access to subsidised government services or gas connections.

"It is as if people in slums are being watched all the time," Ilmi said. "For a third party, for a new entrant, things are very, very tough."

In posh colonies, Ilmi has found voters are cynical, argue a lot, and ask questions on water-harvesting and about India's image abroad. Some of them are even bothered about the quality of her pamphlets. Their worry is not the price of water and electricity, but the belief that the AAP, if voted to power, would reverse the privatisation of utilities and disrupt the regular supply they enjoy, albeit at a high price.

The best response Ilmi elicits is from colonies of bureaucrats, adequately informed of the issues in the election and the positions the contending parties have taken on them. What distinguishes middle-class voters from the ones in the slum is the degree of desperation. Next to the posh colonies in India's capital, Ilmi finds people in slums have to spend four hours a day to get water.

Those in slums constitute around 35 per cent of the electorate in her constituency. Political parties seek to control their votes because they traditionally turn out in large numbers on polling day – almost 70 per cent. By contrast, posh areas register just 10 to 20 per cent and government colonies anywhere between 30 to 40 per cent.

Nepalis, as also Indians, should know: cynicism doesn't lead to change. That is why every ballot is valuable. Ilmi's strategy is clear, she says: "Our challenge is to get the first-time voter, the non-voter, and the cynical voter to come out on polling day."  ashrafajaz3@gmail.com

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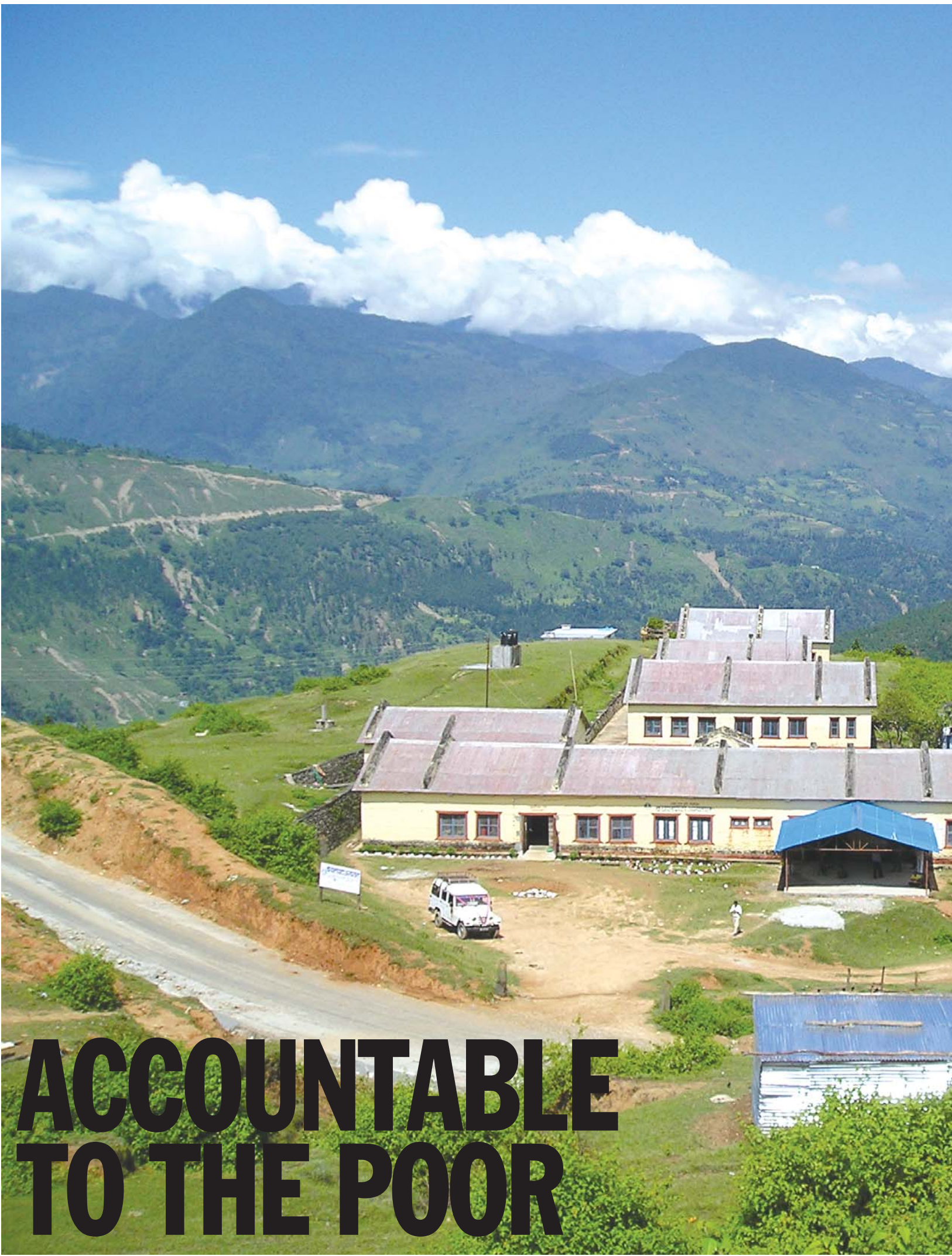
A central mandate of modern society is to protect its most vulnerable citizens from preventable and undue suffering. An election is a good time to remind political candidates about this fundamental aspect of democracy.

In the healthcare industry in particular, Nepal often falls short in responsive, patient-centred, and effective services. This is particularly true with government and non-profit sectors. Our own organisation, Nyaya Health (*pic, right and below*), which manages a government-owned facility in Achham that was recently awarded the ‘Best Hospital in Nepal’ title, struggles with such basics as unacceptable wait times, unclean toilets, stock outs of medications, unreliable electricity, and a lack of specialty services. Despite our every effort, it is rarely sufficient to meet our ambitious mission of providing evidence-based, dignified, effective care to some of Nepal’s most marginalised patients.

Nepal is at a critical and exciting moment in the possibility of making good on the promise of health to the poor. Enshrined in the recent interim constitutional law and policy have been some of the globe’s most progressive, pro-poor ideas. Yet we struggle to implement, to move from paper to patients, from declarations to actual lives saved. Simply put, when we in healthcare deliver substandard medical care, we should pay a price.

Recently, the Ministry of Health has tried to expand public-private partnerships and increase their accountability by tying funding to performance: linking a portion of funding contractually to how a hospital performs on pre-determined health metrics. These contracts have been used with some success in India, Brazil, Rwanda, Cambodia, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom.

Traditionally, hospitals and health institutions have been allotted funding



Despite achievements in healthcare, Nepal struggles to move from paper to patients, from declarations to actual lives saved

and are evaluated based on inputs or outputs. For example, a hospital may be given money to stock its pharmacy with medicines, to build a new surgical ward, or to buy a new ambulance. Outputs may include number of patients seen, given a certain intervention, provided a certain diagnostic test, and prescribed a certain antibiotic.

Though these volume-based metrics tell us something about the total number of patients an institution sees,



KUNDA DIXIT



NYAYA HEALTH

they reveal little about what actually matters to the public: public health impact. An important shift in thinking about healthcare facilities is to go from ‘volumes’ to ‘outcomes’ and to answer deeper questions about impact. Did patients actually get better? How deeply did the intervention penetrate a community? Did it do so equitably? Were patients sufficiently followed up with rather than given medicines and sent on their way?

In addition to providing a shift in thinking at the facility level, outcome based metrics serve to change the opinions of healthcare providers as well. Staff such as nurses and healthcare assistants take care of their patients on a case by case basis, but often cannot see how their work factors into a larger picture. By tying together funding with the well-being of a community, performance based financing will bring together teams of healthcare providers to give the best care for the area they serve.

For instance, while community health workers, doctors, and nurses

might not have much in common under the normal system of payment, when there is a common goal to achieve that both groups must strive for, their work will be more integrated. This will improve the quality of care for both individual patients and the community as a whole. The initiative set forth by the government is to be congratulated for its vision of incorporating evidence-based practice into public-private partnership contracting. We believe this vision will help move health services towards higher standards of clinical excellence and accountability. 🇳🇵

Duncan Maru, MD, PhD, is co-founder of Nyaya Health and Shree Ram Tiwari is Consultant Physician at Bayalpata Hospital in Achham. Greg Zhang of Tufts University helped with researching this article.

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NEPALI AMA

Nepal has managed to halve the number of women dying during childbirth in less than two decades. The number of deaths per 100,000 live births in Nepal dropped from 539 in 1996 to 229 in 2008 making it one of the very few countries on track to meet Millennium Development Goal 5 on maternal health before 2015. Researchers at the Overseas Development Institute have called this a case of ‘globally remarkable’ progress and have said it was possible because of a virtuous cycle of political commitment, financial resources, and household changes that helped overcome significant challenges posed by its unique terrain.

The reduction in maternal deaths happened despite a protracted insurgency and during a period when for the majority, household incomes did not increase substantially. The authors emphasise the role of high-level political commitment to maternal health, spurred on by a vocal advocacy community. Increased government expenditure and international aid dedicated to health, enabled widespread improvements in access to medical services, particularly in remote Nepal. This in turn contributed to a higher percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel and access to essential medicines such as antibiotics, which can help effectively treat infections that could otherwise prove fatal. Today, over 50 per cent of expectant

mothers seek the recommended four antenatal visits, a fivefold increase in the course of 15 years. Part of the reason for this progress is a 48 per cent increase in female literacy in the past five years alone and the reduction of poverty from 68 per cent to 25 per cent in 15 years. The fertility rate of Nepali women has dropped from six in the 1980s to 2.6 today.

While significant challenges remain - including addressing inequalities, increasing community mobilisation to improve accountability, and maintaining the political and financial commitment to safer motherhood - Nepal’s story of progress can provide important lessons for other countries struggling to address high levels of maternal mortality, especially within a context of difficult terrain, conflict, and high poverty rates.

“This is an astonishing example of social progress. What’s most remarkable is that the reduction in maternal mortality has been achieved in such a short space of time,” said Jonathan Glennie, Research Associate at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in London. “The combination of political commitment and financial resources, along with on-going changes at the household level, mean that thousands of lives are now being saved.”

[nepalitimes.com](#)

For full report

PROGRESS REPORT CARD

	1996	2012
MATERNAL MORTALITY (PER 100,000 LIVE BIRTHS)	539	200
POVERTY RATE	70%	25%
FEMALE LITERACY	25%	60%
FERTILITY RATE (AVERAGE #CHILDREN PER MOTHER)	5	2.6




NICK SIMONS INSTITUTE

MONEY MATTERS

Nagarik, 20 October

Highlights of the economic agendas of the three major parties from their election manifestos.



UCPN (M)

- Make Nepal a middle-income country in 20 years and high-income in 40 years
- Eradicate unemployment, extreme poverty, and trade deficit in 15 years
- Increase per capita income from current \$721 to \$1,400 by 5 years, \$3,300 by 10 years, \$10,700 by 20 years, \$40,000 by 40 years
- Increase growth rate at an average of 11.1 per cent for the next 40 years
- End load-shedding in three years and produce 10,000MW in 10 years, 25,000MW in 20 years, 45,000MW in 40 years, rural electrification in 10 years, establish a national energy trading company to trade surplus electricity with petroleum
- Construct mid-hill highway, electronic train service along the Mahendra Highway in Tarai, connect India and China via Nepal through north-south highways, take upcoming train service from Tibet to Lumbini
- Promote agriculture among the youth, establish farmers' pension, prohibit owners from keeping their lands untill, provide land to the landless under the 'tiller keeps property' land-reform policy
- Provide homes for 100,000 homeless in 10 years




NEPALI CONGRESS

- Make economic growth inclusive by providing benefits to isolated and marginalised communities and manage growth policy by reducing regional imbalance
- Maintain a growth rate of 8 to 10 per cent by creating conducive environment for investment
- Increase average income to Rs 100,000 in 5 years
- Reduce the country's dependency on agriculture from the current 68 per cent to 49 per cent and increase the industrial sector's contribution to GNP to 12 per cent in 5 years
- Guarantee 100 days of employment per year for each Nepali, discourage foreign employment by generating jobs at home, and reduce the number of migrant labourers
- Encourage more investment so that foreign remittance sent by Nepali workers does not go back


नागरिक

- out through the purchase of imported goods
- Construct reliable roads, rail, air, and telecom networks to India and China so Nepal can benefit from its neighbours
- Provide individuals the freedom to use private property as they desire
- End unhealthy competition, protect consumer rights as well as the right to start businesses, provide legal protection to labourers, intervene if market provides benefits to only one class
- Create secure environment for international investors and regulate monetary and stock market policies for long-term economic growth



UML

- Take Nepal from a least developed to developing nation within 5 years
- Provide 300,000 employment opportunities per year through government investment in agriculture, tourism, cottage industries, construction, and electricity
- Guarantee 100 days of employment per year and make foreign employment safe, dignified, and skill-oriented
- End load-shedding, connect all 75 districts to the national grid, and provide year-round access to black-topped roads within 5 years
- Produce 5,000MW hydroelectricity within 5 years and 10,000MW within 10 years
- Provide access to modern energy to all citizens within 5 years, free installation for the very poor, and free electricity for agricultural use
- Construct international airport in Bara and regional airports in Pokhara and Bhairawa
- Irrigate 75 per cent of agricultural land, start fish farming on unused river banks
- Give land to tillers and provide compensation to land-owners
- Provide homes to all citizens within 10 years
- Construct north-south road links along at least four river corridors, east-west rail links, and Kathmandu-Tarai access roads under public-private partnership
- Target arrival of two million tourists by 2018 and promote Nepal as a centre for the study of biological and social diversity, natural beauty, climate change, and forestry
- Define grounds for private and foreign investments and reduce trade deficit by encouraging domestic industries and giving special allowances to those who use local raw materials



‘Federalism not necessary’

Speaking at a press conference in Arghakhanchi on Friday, Chitra Bahadur KC, Chairman of Rastriya Janmorcha Nepal, said that the ethnic federalism model proposed by the UCPN (M) was unacceptable and that federalism is not necessary for Nepal. He added that the model was being forced upon the country by foreigners.



“The constitution could not be written last time because parties could not come to an agreement over forms of federalism. They should drop that demand completely,” said KC. “Although our party is against the current government, we are taking part in elections because it is the need of the hour.”

Asked about his views on the CPN-M boycotting polls, KC admitted there is no use rejecting elections because creating a new constituent assembly is the only way out of the stalemate. If elections don't take place on 19 November, he said the country would be pushed into unimaginable disaster and urged everyone to make polls a success, especially since royalists have been harping on reviving the 1990 constitution.

NEPALI TWEETS



Gagan Thapa
चुनावी अभियानबाट थकित भएर घर फर्केदा भीम निरौलाको Sunday Morning Love You गीत सुन्दा थकाइ विसँको महसुस भयो ।
Came back exhausted from a day of election campaigning, but after hearing Bhim Niroula's Sunday Morning Love You, my tiredness vanished.



रस.पि साय
नेपाल एउटा विचित्रको देश हो- बुढलाई नि यहाँ जन्मायो, वैश्यलाई नि यहाँ।
Nepal is an enigmatic country: Buddha was born here and so was Baidya.



प्रन्त माथि
नेपाल एकिकरणको काम पनि गोर्खाबाटै सुरु भयो र नेपाल दुख्खाउने काम पनि गोर्खा बाटै होला जस्तो छ
#पुर्चियनारनशाह#sबाउरे
The unification of Nepal started in Gorkha and looks like it's division will also begin in Gorkha. #PrithviNarayanShahVsBRB



किशोर कुमार
नेपाल कसैको बाउको सम्पत्ति होइन अंश भाग लगा हो गरी भाग लाउन नेपाल नेपालीको हो
Nepal isn't anyone's father's property that they can just split it and take their share. Nepal belongs to all Nepalis.



डुक्खाऽऽ
NRN का केहि दर्जन धलिहरूबाट आउने केहि करोडको आश गर्नु भन्दा खाडि मुलुकका नेपालीबाट आउने अर्बौ रुपियालाई लगानिमा ल्याउने नीतिको आवश्यकता छ
Rather than expecting a few million from a dozen or so rich NRNs, it is more important to create good investment policies so that the billions sent back by Nepali migrant labourers from the Gulf don't go to waste.



Sabita
दर्ती मनाउन घर गाको नेनालाई चिया खुवाउदा र उनीहरूले चिया खाको कप सफा गर्दै गर्दा ज्यान जाला तिनलाई मोट दिन्न जुन कप मझाउनेलाई
Went home for Dasain, spent my entire holidays serving tea to politicians and washing their cups. I will die but won't vote for those who made me wash their dirty cups.



के ! श्व श्रेष्ठ
NRN, "१७००० सारेर के पाउनु भो ?
पचन्ड " लाजिम्पाट को महल, रिसेर्भ को मोज-भोज, विदेश सैर, अर्बौ को स्पती लगाईरहने दिनु आको हो र ?
NRN: What did you get killing 17,000 Nepalis? Prachanda: Lajimpat palace, good times in fancy resorts, foreign trips, and billions in the bank. But none of that came from you.

“No fighting”

Nepal, 20 October
Interview with CPN-M Secretary Netra Bikram Chand

नेपाल

Nepal: Mohan Baidya said that CPN-M would boycott elections peacefully. Is this the party's policy?

Netra Bikram Chand: We will be active and strong during our boycott. We have a good plan in place to make our protest a success.

So what will your boycott be like?

It's not like we are declaring war right now. We just want to make polls unsuccessful, our protest is meant to be reactionary.

What will you do after the polls?

Former Chief Election Commissioner Bhoj Raj Pokhrel said the only reason to hold elections was to address the grievances from the people's war and other struggles and uprisings. How can the country write a new constitution or assemble a CA without the Maoists?



What about the UCPN (M)?
They are not Maoists, they have abandoned Maoist ideologies.

Nepalis seem eager to vote. By boycotting elections isn't the CPN-M isolating itself?
How can we be isolated when we are raising the people's voice? It's the media that makes it seem that everyone is excited about elections. In rural Nepal, people have already made plans to boycott polls.

Is there any possibility of further talks?
We're still open for discussions to thrash out an outline of the constitution. But why waste time if the talks are going to end inconclusively without any concrete solution.

What is your view of the army?
We fought a decade long war with the national army, but we don't want another conflict. We've talked to the security forces and recommended that they stay out of election areas. The army supported us during the overthrow of the monarchy, it took part in the peace process, and I think it will respect the desires of ordinary Nepalis this time too.

What about security personnel who are in charge of the ballot boxes?
The army must follow the government's directions and we don't want to fight them. But that doesn't mean we will remain silent, we will put up a fight against parties who are brokers of foreign powers.



Banner: Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRN) Conference
Dahal: “During the People’s War, we were also NRNs like you ...”

नागरिक Rabin Sayami in *Nagarik*, 24 October

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“I am ready to be hanged if the Truth and Reconciliation Commission finds me guilty of war crimes.”



UCPN (Maoist) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal speaking at a program organised by Non-Resident Nepalis in Kathmandu, *Nagarik*, 23 October

Voting with a vengeance

The political parties are busy coming up with manifestoes that promise to turn Nepal into a land of milk and honey. However, on the vexing question of federalism that caused the failure of the first Constituent Assembly, the manifestos are silent.

The agenda of federalisation suffers from major birth defects. The Maoists employed the slogan of ethnicity-based federalisation as a recruitment tactic among disadvantaged ethnic groups



GUEST COLUMN

Bihari K Shrestha

during the conflict. However, after spilling the blood of thousands of these simple folks and ascending to power, they are now confronted by increasingly strident resistance from the people of this densely multi-ethnic country. Both Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Baburam Bhattarai have gone on to opportunistically vacillate between ethnic and non-ethnic federalisation depending on their immediate audience.

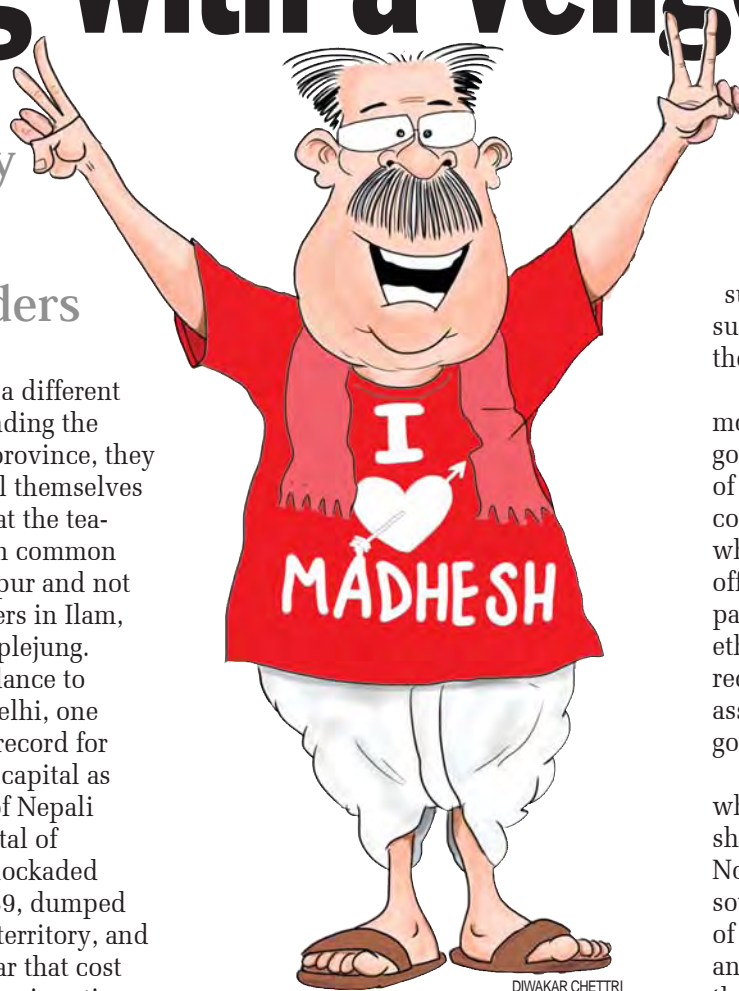
Then, there are the NC and UML, the twin champions of multiparty parliamentary democracy in 1990, who had never thought of the need to federalise the country. But after squandering the gains of the People's Movement and wasting a whole decade in partisan bickering, they have lost the people's trust. So, the only option for them was to tag on to Maoist coattails of federalisation. BP Koirala must be rolling his eyes in the other world.

Electing new faces is the only way to punish and push out discredited leaders

The Madhesi parties have a different view of federalism. By demanding the whole of the Tarai to be one province, they are enigmatically trying to tell themselves and the rest of the country that the tea-growers of Jhapa have more in common with rice farmers of Kanchanpur and not with their next door tea-farmers in Ilam, Panchthar, Dhankuta, and Taplejung.

While Nepali politicians dance to the snake charmers in New Delhi, one Madhesi leader at least is on record for having recognised the Indian capital as both the Mecca and Medina of Nepali politics and the political capital of Nepal too. Given that India blockaded us for nearly two years in 1989, dumped refugees from Bhutan on our territory, and supported the Maoists in a war that cost 17,000 Nepali lives, the Madhesi parties have some explaining to do. Exploiters of Sahani villagers in Mahottari are their own next door Rajput neighbours, not hill dwellers.

Given the serious implications and deep-seated contradictions of the federalisation project, the frivolity with which the parties in the CA treated it is shocking. For instance, in the then CA's 43-member Committee on State Restructuring and Distribution of State Power the two main antagonists, the



DIVAKAR CHETTRI

UCPN (M) and the NC, had agreed in a consensus up to its 126th meeting that two parallel proposals would be submitted to the CA full house. One proposed 14 provinces championed by UCPN (M) and the other for only six by the NC.

However, in the 127th meeting chair Dahal, who had 17 members in the committee, bought off the UML's seven-member panel by replacing four of its 14 provinces with new ones that included a Sherpa and a Mithila province to satisfy

the demands of two UML members. The 14-province model passed as the only proposal by majority decision to be presented to the CA. Dahal was able to humiliate the NC, but in doing so betrayed how lightly and for such short-term partisan gain, he handled such an important issue as the division of the country into autonomous provinces.

The attention of CA members was more focused on forming and felling governments in pursuit of the perks of power than in writing a viable constitution. There were other members who had side businesses of siphoning off funds meant for Maoist combatants, partaking of INGO money for inflaming ethnic tension, crossing the floor, selling red passports, or taking bribes under the assurance of getting things done in the government; just to name a few.

It is a farcical story of politicians who no longer fear the people, have no shame, no scruples, no principles. As 19 November draws near, the crisis for the sovereign people of Nepal is that most of these same faces are up for re-election and the people face the risk of reliving the same sordid history all over again. Therefore, given the limitations of the architecture of our democracy, the only difference people could make now is that they all vote for new faces.

That will give us a ray of hope that maybe the new lot will come with some fresh thinking and fresh commitment to deliver on their promise to the people. 🇳🇵

Bihari Krishna Shrestha is an anthropologist and was a senior official in the government.

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Dying to go to Nepal

Whatever it is we are doing in tourism, we are doing something right because Nepal tops the charts in just about every CNN survey of the 10 countries that people say they would like to visit before they drop dead. We also top the list of the most corrupt countries in Asia, we are right up there in the Grumpiness Index, and this week came news that Nepal shares the distinction of being among the countries where modern day slavery is most prevalent. These are well-deserved recognitions.

Let's look at it this way: in this day and age of global tourism, any publicity is good publicity. So when this great nation of ours (where the Buddha, I would like to emphatically reiterate, was born) is singled out after DNA analysis as the country of origin of the cholera epidemic in Haiti, it gives us invaluable international publicity and exposure. At last people can locate us on a map and know that we are a

sovereign independent nation that was never colonised by any alien power, including invaders from the Planet Voth.

Still, it is this humble scribe's submission that we haven't done enough to let the world know about what other nasty surprises we have in store. We have to ask ourselves: has this undertaker government (um, sorry, caretaker government) tapped all the resources at its disposal to proactively generate even more publicity to boost visitor numbers to this country ahead of Why Visit Nepal Year 2014 (Official Motto: 'Dying To Get There')?

As a voluntary service to the tourism industry, the Donkey is generously offering unsolicited advice to the Nepal Tourism Bored so that we can hit that magic 1 million tourist mark next year:

1 Make the line for tourists at immigration in Kathmandu airport even longer. At the moment, after a one hour fright from Delhi, visitors have to wait

for only two hours in the visa-on-arrival line. This just won't do. We should reduce the number of immigration officers handling the visa forms from two to one so that the queue snakes retroactively to the apron and right back into the plane. This would give tourists the positive impression that Nepal is a popular, much-sought after destination and they should be honoured to be allowed to visit.

2 Now that we are at the top of the Transparency International Corruption Index, it behooves the authorities to ensure that we maintain that coveted position and start fleecing visitors the moment they step out of the airport. Tourists must be able to experience first-hand all the tricks we have up our sleeves to shake them down, so that they will be encouraged to write home about it and spread the word.

3 Nepal is the only country in the world that charges tourists to enter a city. After Bhaktapur started this in the

1980s, the rival kingdoms of Kathmandu and Patan followed suit. But the fees are still too low since tourists now get to also take pictures of enormous piles of garbage on street corners, be attacked by wild urban dogs hunting in packs in dark alleys, and have near-death experience of multiple collisions with speeding motorcycles. Every effort has been made to make the Nepal experience as authentic and stimulating as possible, which means we can now charge premium rates.

4 Since Nepal has earned well-earned publicity as the world's top exporter of the cholera bacillus, there is huge potential for 'gastronomical tourism'. Our promotional brochures currently warn visitors not to drink water from the tap, whereas in actual fact we should be encouraging them to do so since that way Nepal's Gastro-enteritis Weight Loss Program (registered trade mark, patent pending) could be promoted as a tourist attraction. Slogan: 'Visit Nepal and Lose 10 kilos in 10 Days, Or Your Money Back'.

5 Nepalis love to whine and we are always complaining that it is the political instability that is keeping tourists away. What nonsense. We should instead be cashing in on the circus that is our politics and designate mid-November as the peak for an exciting season of jatras.

6 Political parties must immediately revoke their pledge not to declare bunds and reinstate frequent total lockdowns of the country as a great tourism product. We can design attractive new brochures, posters, and DVDs depicting violent street protests so that we can compete with demos and vandalism in rival destinations like Istanbul and Athens. We should aim for repeat customers so tourists keep coming back for more. In fact, the Dash Baddies have set a good example by declaring a bonanza 10-day shutdown smack in the middle of the tourist season next month. Nepal's unique selling point is its political turmoil and bunds, let's not spoil the fun by actually holding peaceful elections and passing a new constitution.




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