

# NEPALI Times

#691

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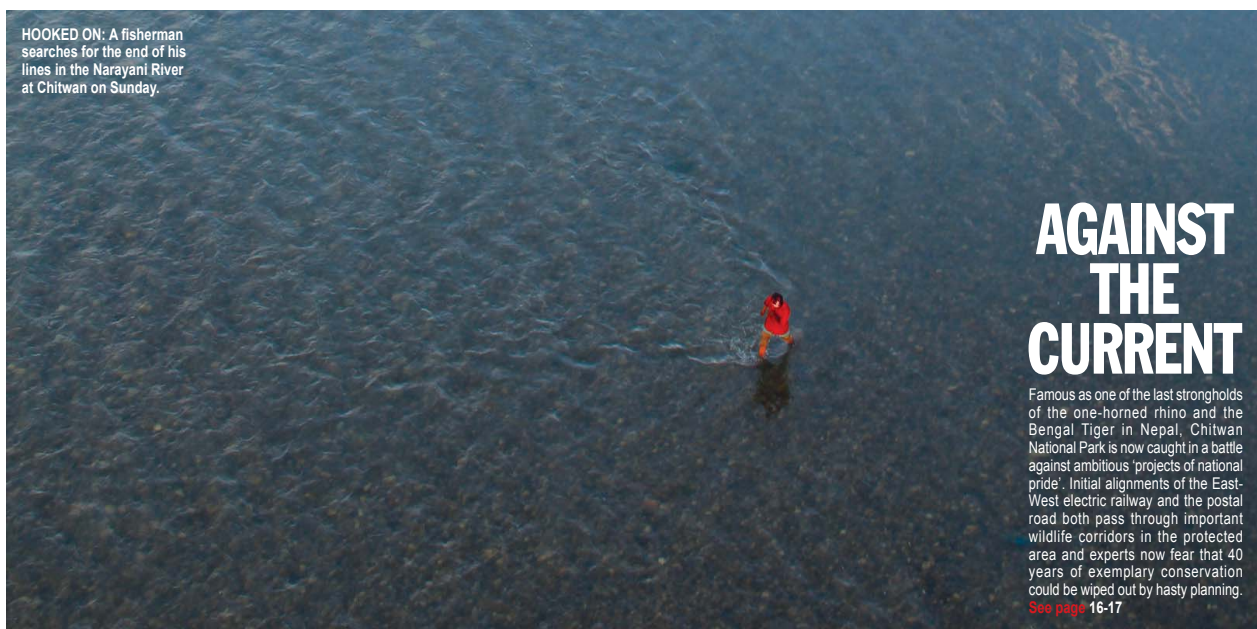
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**HOOKED ON:** A fisherman searches for the end of his lines in the Narayani River at Chitwan on Sunday.



SUNIR PANDEY

## AGAINST THE CURRENT

Famous as one of the last strongholds of the one-horned rhino and the Bengal Tiger in Nepal, Chitwan National Park is now caught in a battle against ambitious 'projects of national pride'. Initial alignments of the East-West electric railway and the postal road both pass through important wildlife corridors in the protected area and experts now fear that 40 years of exemplary conservation could be wiped out by hasty planning.

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**WE, THE PEOPLE**  
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**DOCTORS' ORDERS**  
BY SANTA GAHA MAGAR PAGE 3

**HEROES ON EVEREST** PAGE 7

At age 50, pilot Vijay Lama makes his Hollywood debut in *Everest*, a film based on Jon Krakauer's book *Into Thin Air*



Dear readers, China Daily will not be published on 31 January because of the Chinese New Year.

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# WE, THE PEOPLE

During the last Constituent Assembly, members tasked with framing the country's new constitution were taken by donors on study tours to various places around the world. They amassed air miles on junkets to South Africa, Switzerland, the United States, Ireland, even Ethiopia. The only place they really needed to go was to a next door country which Nepalis don't even need a passport to visit: India.

Indian voters had been allowed to indirectly elect a CA even before independence from Britain in 1947. The process was driven mainly by the Congress Party led by Nehru and Gandhi who tried to ensure caste, ethnic, and linguistic diversity from within its own ranks by, for example, making BR Ambedkar the chairman of the drafting committee. The Indian CA, therefore, preceded the breakup of India into Pakistan and later Bangladesh. The assembly was partitioned just as India itself was partitioned.

India's constitution came into effect on 26 January 1950. On Sunday, as India marks its 64th Republic Day, cynics there will again cite the country's subsequent fragmentation, the corruption, and poverty. But the document has survived and served the country remarkably well.

The framers of the Indian constitution enshrined the new nation's core values and charted a path to achieving them. The ideals were national unity and equitable

## The new CA has to base its exercise on accepted ideals of national unity, integrity, and equity

development and the path was through democracy and the rule of law. As Granville Austin wrote in *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation*, 'No founding document can contain solutions to every situation and leaders in the future should find, within the constitution's principles, their own way out of difficulties.'

India opted for a centralised form of federalism to safeguard its national unity. The drafters chose not to call their country a 'federal' state because of the fissiparous connotation of the word and used the term 'union'. The other lesson for us here in Nepal may be that no foreigners were involved in drafting the document, it was a constitution for Indians by Indians.

The Indian constitution tried to address entrenched exclusion and social injustice by affirmative action in schools and jobs. The appalling violence of partition led to the adoption of secularism almost as a state ideology. But secularism in India did not have the negative anti-religious connotation of the word's translation in Nepali ('dharma niripekshya'), but meant freedom of religion.



JOHN APPEL

To be sure, the Indian Constitution failed to prepare democratic institutions for eventualities like the Emergency of 1975-77, the over-centralisation of democratic institutions, the chronic inability of the Union government to resolve problems like insurgencies, entrenched poverty, inequality, and morbid corruption. India's federal model was always fraught, but the recent breakups of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar or Uttar Pradesh states have more to do with the failure of regional leaders to accommodate dissent than with a failure of the constitution.

Here in Nepal, as elected members of the new Constituent Assembly sit down one more time to try to draft the constitution, there are hopes and doubts about whether this lot will be able to do within one year what the previous assembly could not despite four tenure extensions.

Learning from India, it would be useful for our CA to base its exercise on accepted ideals of national unity, integrity, and equity. The way to national unity is by making Nepal more of a 'union' than a 'federal' state. At the same time, we will safeguard the country's integrity by making it less unitary and by dismantling the Kathmandu centralism that led to neglect and exclusion. And the path to equity and equality is through meaningful democracy, strengthening democratic institutions, enshrining the separation of powers and the rule of law.

As Austin wrote in a 1999 preface to his book: 'Constitutions do not 'work', they are inert, dependent upon being 'worked' by citizens and elected and appointed leaders.'

The constitution is a working document, a work in progress, that can be improved as we go along. We don't have to foresee all contingencies, just defend our agreed core values.

### ON THE WEB

www.nepaltimes.com

#### THE CONSTITUTION

The fundamental problem with Nepal's political culture is our inability to compromise ('It's the constitution, stupid', Editorial, #690). Everyone wants everything, it's a winner-takes-all concept. There is no attempt to strike a pragmatic win-win formula.

Tarun

- Constitution, constitution, constitution, big deal. For a country that is embarking on drafting its seventh constitution in 60 years, that makes, on an average one constitution every 10 years. I wonder, how long this new constitution is going to last. Our political leaders are bound to display their incompetence sooner or later.

KK Sharma

- 570 newly elected members were finally sworn in on Tuesday afternoon at BiCC, which is no doubt good news. But 26 members are yet to be elected and I can only imagine the horse trading that is going among top leaders to get their 'aafno maanche' on the assembly floor. Also the parties still haven't decided who among them is going to lead the next government and whether or not they want a new president/Vice-president. I don't expect Nepali politics to return to 'normal' (relatively speaking of course) until the beginning of March.

Gayoo

#### DISTRESS CALL

This is not the first time a group of Nepalis have been stranded in a foreign land with little to no

help ('Distress call', Dambar Krishna Shrestha, #690). This week it's our students in Malaysia, last month it was our labourers in Qatar. We need to stop this never ending cycle of pain and poverty and the only way to do it, is by getting our politics and economy back on track. As long as there are enough jobs in the country for our youth, the 26 million Nepalis don't care whether the impending constitution is democratic, socialist, communist or even a royalist one. The question is: are the 601 CA members listening?

Renu Shrestha

- I completely empathise with the plight of Nepalis stuck in Malaysia, but if things sound too good to be true, they are worth double checking. We hear about education agencies and foreign employment consultancies swindling their clients everyday in the news. The onus is, therefore, on us to be cautious to a fault.

Kavita

- After Malaysia, another distress call will soon come from Australia where a few thousand Nepalis have come to study under the Special Purpose Visa. The average college fee here is \$25,000 per year and most Nepali students have paid around \$8,500 for three months, after which they will transfer to cheaper colleges. But authorities here are saying that under the SPV, it's illegal to move from one institution to another. Just last week, hundreds of Nepalis received letters from the immigration department warning them that their visa will be cancelled. I beg my brothers and sisters

to not come to Australia unless they can pay their full fees, or at least go through good agents. There is no way they can earn the required \$25,000/year. It's better to apply for 'technical and further education' (which is also under SPV), but the fee is still around \$10,000 per year.

Rosi

#### CHURPI

I am so happy that a local product like churpi is being sold in the international market as dog chew; just shows what a little bit of ingenuity can do ('Who moved the chewing cheese', Hariz Baharudin, #690). If the state could provide a small boost to the yak owners and help regulate the industry, hundreds of young Nepalis like Nima Fungju Sherpa could make a good living out of churpis and wouldn't have to line up outside Kathmandu airport everyday.

Nodup

- Churpis are a favourite of both my husband as well as our pet dogs. We first came across these chewy delights during our trek in the Annapurna region. When we came back home to Los Angeles, I found the same churpis, but as chews shaped like bones in department stores. I wish some company in the US begins importing made-for-humans durkhas.

Anna Songer

#### APPLE OF HIS EYES

I had never heard of yacon before reading this piece, but I must admit I'm impressed by this fruit which was originally imported from Peru ('Apple

of his eyes', Meghna Bali, #690). Yacon not only has numerous health benefits, but it can transform the economies of the mountain and hill regions of Nepal. Anything that makes the country self-sustainable should be encouraged. I hope the fruit is able to garner more attention from the public.

Bikesh Rana

- What a coincidence, I tasted a yacon for the first time in my life today and well it is definitely an acquired taste, somewhere between a pear and an apple. Now I am tempted to buy a few kgs and distribute it among my friends and family and get their reaction. If more farmers like Sudarshan Karki adopt the fruit, the price will go down and common Nepalis can begin buying yacóns. Currently, a kg cost me almost Rs 500.

Anil Sapkota

#### IT'S A BOY

While it's a joy to watch a newborn elephant coming into this world, the way he was handled by the mahouts looked very cruel ('It's a boy', Bhrikuti Rai, #690). The mother's feet are chained and the mahouts are using stone age tactics to separate and care for the baby. Let's hope for the best and glad to hear the baby boy is doing well.

Daughettry

Why are the mahouts trying so hard to take away the newborn from his mother? Shouldn't Srijana have first right to her child and shouldn't the

two be left in peace for a few hours at least?

Elena

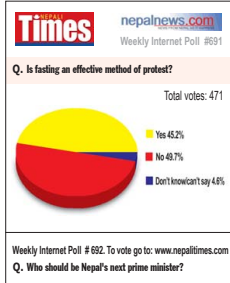
- Excellent photos, Bikram Rai. You were at the right place at the right time and got the opportunity to click some wonderful pictures of an event that people would pay thousands of dollars just to witness.

Swati Manandhar

#### WARM AND SAFE

I have read a lot on how firewood or charcoal burning or kerosene heaters can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning, but what about electric or halogen heaters ('Be warm and safe', Buddha Basnet, #690)? Are these equipment completely safe to be lit inside a closed room because they don't consume atmospheric oxygen to burn or produce heat? I hope Dr Basnet will give us some insight in his future columns.

Amit





# Doctors' orders

SANTA GAHA MAGAR

Govinda KC, a physician at the Tribhuvan University Institute of Medicine (IOM) in Kathmandu has a reputation for integrity and service, especially to underserved people not just in Nepal but all over the world.

He is unmarried, lives frugally in the staff quarter at the Teaching Hospital and unlike most doctors in Nepal, doesn't have a parallel private practice. Whenever disaster strikes in the country or any corner of the world, like the earthquake in Haiti or the tsunami in Southeast Asia, he packs his bags and flies off at his own expense to treat survivors.

Last year, when the government tried to install a political appointee as the dean of IOM, Govinda KC went on hunger strike for two weeks until physician Prakash Sayami was appointed. It is a lucrative position since the institute has a direct say in inspections of existing private hospitals and also granting coveted affiliations to new medical colleges.

Last month, Sayami rejected the affiliation application of four new teaching hospitals: National Medical College, People's Dental College, Manmohan Medical College, and Nepal Police Medical

There is a long and sordid story of corruption and greed in the health sector that is behind Govinda KC's hunger strike



BIKRAM RAJ

College. Sayami, also a doctor known for his professionalism and integrity, rejected the applications on grounds that the new colleges did not meet the IOM's criteria even though they had been approved by the institute's designated inspectors.

The corruption and rampant commercialisation in the medical sector has raised the price of healthcare in Nepal and affected the quality of treatment. There is also a far more dangerous and far-reaching impact: many of the doctors who graduate from these medical colleges just don't have the quality of training in medicine and healthcare that is needed. And since students have to pay up to Rs 4 million fee just for admission into school, the practice feeds a vicious cycle of profiteering at the expense of the poor.

After Sayami became dean, he expelled 20 MBBS second semester students who had failed their exams four times. Most of them were from the Janaki Medical College in Janakpur, which like other private medical colleges, has been investigated by the corruption watchdog, CIAA, for not meeting stipulated standards.

Nepal's 19 existing private medical colleges need an investment of at least Rs 10 billion each and by taking shortcuts, not keeping the required number of hospital beds, over-charging and providing deficient care, they can recoup their investment within a few years.

Most existing and new hospitals have powerful backers, many have political protection from the four main political forces in the country. Most of the four new hospitals that applied for affiliation, for example, are said to be close to UML politicians.

Sayami was sacked last month for rejecting the applications and this was probably because money had already exchanged hands for the affiliations. As soon as Sayami was forced out, Govinda KC once more went into hunger strike, saying the government, political parties, and Tribhuvan University were colluding to establish new teaching hospitals and cheat the public of affordable healthcare.

KC has been on his fast-on-to-death for 13 days now and his condition is said to be deteriorating. The Chairman of the Interim Electoral Council, Khil Raj Regmi, visited the doctor on Wednesday and ordered Shashi Sharma, who succeeded Sayami, to step down. He has so far refused, apparently under pressure from IOM staffers. Sharma himself has a notorious reputation and is still under investigation for irregularities while he was in the Nepal Medical Council.

In what appears to be a reprisal, IOM has refused to accept the resignation over this affair of Teaching Hospital Director Bhagwan Koirala, another doctor with a reputation for courageously standing up for integrity and good management. IOM has said it is also investigating Koirala on unspecified charges.

Before he resigned, Koirala had been battling corruption and commercialism in medical education in Nepal. He told us: "We need a clear policy on how many doctors we need in this country and we need to have a strict policy of inspections and supervision." □

SHAH RUKH KHAN AND HIS AQUARACER

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# COFFEE WITH GAGAN

An entrepreneur who turned his passion for the beans into a successful franchise



ALL PICS: BIKRAM RAI

When Himalayan Java opened for business in 2000, coffee culture was almost non-existent in Nepal. While the Valley was littered with chiya pasals, even in the narrowest of gullies, a search for a freshly brewed cup of joe meant taking a trip to one of the five star hotels around town, a luxury few could afford to indulge in.

Gagan Pradhan, whose love affair with the beans began while he was a student in Australia, sought to change that. The small, independent coffee shops that he frequented while pursuing his bachelor's degree in hospitality management at William Blue International School in Sydney, became the model and inspiration for his own franchise.

**MR BEANS:** Founder and owner of Himalayan Java, Gagan Pradhan, at the chain's outlet in Civil Mall, Sundhara.



With Himalayan Java, the first of its kind coffee house in the city, Pradhan brought coffee within the reach of the middle-class and demystified this once foreign sounding drink. But the 38-year old admits the initial days were far from smooth. Convincing natives who enjoyed their sugar and milk laden tea to switch to a steamy brew, not of the instant variety, took time and patience.

Pradhan had opened his first outlet at Heritage Plaza in Kamaladi to attract office-goers. But the outlet was later shifted to its current location in Thamel, a move that proved to be utterly fruitful.

Once in the tourist hotspot, the foot traffic increased, but few Nepalis left satisfied recalls Pradhan. Once in the tourist hotspot, the foot traffic increased, but few Nepalis left satisfied recalls Pradhan. Many a time, customers simply refused to pay because they didn't like their 'bitter' beverage. "I know I had taken a huge risk by trying to offer something that Nepalis were not necessarily ready for," he says.

But that was 14 years ago and the risk has clearly paid off. Himalayan Java is now the most recognised coffee house in the city. Growing demand and surging popularity paved the way for expansion and today, it is the largest Nepali coffee chain with eight outlets in the country. And with outlets in Toronto and Lhasa, also the only coffee business to expand beyond borders. But Pradhan shows no signs of slowing down. This year alone, the coffee connoisseur has plans to expand to four more locations within the country which include tourist favourites Pokhara, Jomsom, Lukla, and Namche and add a few more international locations.



## Making baristas

Himalayan Java Barista Coffee School opened in January last year at Civil Mall in Sundhara. Since then, the school has trained more than 2,000 students in the art of coffee-making. Program director Madhav Devkota says the course has been specifically designed for individuals who are planning to go abroad. Besides foreign employment seekers, the course also caters to those who are looking to enter specialty coffee business. The 10-day course, which costs Rs 25,000, includes classes on history of coffee, espresso equipment, steaming and foaming milk, cleaning and roasting and blending techniques, safety and maintenance, customer service, occupational health and safety.

From its humble beginnings, Himalayan Java has grown into a 'coffee institution'. Other than the fact that it only uses locally grown coffee, the organisation is also involved in bringing in high-quality machines such as roasters, grinders, espresso machines, and commercial urns through Mokka Trading, an arm of the company that also exports Nepali coffee to other countries.

Pradhan, who made a conscious decision to use only organic beans at his shops since the start, says the government should develop programs that would encourage more farmers to plant this cash crop. Nepal's climatic conditions is said to be particularly suitable for growing the Arabica variety. Although coffee plantation has taken off in places like Kavre, Nuwakot, Palpa, and Syangja, studies show only three per cent of the total cultivable land for coffee is currently in use, thus limiting the production output. Of the 600 tonnes produced annually, 70 per cent is consumed in the country leaving little to export to the foreign market.

"The amount of coffee that we produce is miniscule, we need to boost our production to make our presence felt outside the domestic market," he explains.

Ramjee Dahal  
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Our reason for bean, #135  
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# Inequality by the click

ADAI TUNER

In many emerging countries, rapid economic growth has raised living standards to at least some degree for almost everyone, but the share of the rich and ultra-rich is increasing dramatically. Once these countries approach the average income levels of developed economies and their growth slows to typical rich-country rates, their future may look like America today.

The bottom quarter of US households have received almost no increase in real (inflation-adjusted) income for the last 25 years. They are no longer sharing the fruits of their country's growth. The top one

output with fewer employees, and because innovation creates new products and services. Successful new technologies always cause job losses in some sectors, which are offset by new jobs elsewhere. Tractors destroyed millions of agricultural jobs, for example, but tractor, truck, and car manufacturers created millions of new ones.

But new technologies come in subtly different forms, with inherently different economic consequences. Today's new technologies may have far more troubling distributional effects than those of the electromechanical age.


Information and communication technology is not costless magic; but

100,000 people worldwide, Google employs 50,000, and Facebook employs just 5,000 (*pic, centre*). These are mere drops in the ocean of the global labour market, replacing very few of the jobs that information technology has automated away.

But increased unemployment is not inevitable. There is no limit to the number of service jobs that we can create in retail, restaurants and catering, hotels, and an enormous variety of personal services.

However, the wages that the market will set for these jobs may result in yet greater inequality. And there is no reason to believe that politicians' all-purpose answer to the problem – 'increase workforce skills' – will offset this tendency. However many people learn superior IT skills, Facebook will never need more than a few thousand employees. And access to high-paid jobs is likely to be determined not by absolute skill level, but by relative skill in a winner-take-all world.

At least, however, IT products and services are very cheap, so even the relatively poor can afford them. That might make very unequal societies more stable than many fear. In his recent book *Average is Over*, the economist Tyler Cowen makes the deliberately provocative argument that while new technology will produce extreme inequality, the relative losers, satiated by computer games and Internet entertainment, and provided with the basics of a minimally acceptable life, will be too docile to revolt.

Cowen may be right; the poor may not rebel. But extreme inequality should still concern us. Beyond a certain point, unequal outcomes inevitably fuel greater inequality of opportunity; and extreme inequality of either outcomes or opportunity can undermine the idea that we should all be equal as citizens, if not in material standard of living. 

[www.project-syndicate.org](http://www.project-syndicate.org)



per cent of Americans, however, have seen their real incomes almost triple during this period, with their share of national income reaching 20 per cent, a figure not seen since the 1920's.

Globalisation explains some of the bottom-quarter income stagnation in the US and other developed economies. Competition from lower-paid Chinese workers has driven down US wages. But technological change may be a more fundamental factor – and one with consequences for all countries.

Technological change is the essence of economic growth. We get richer because we figure out how to maintain or increase

it is closer to it than were the innovations of the electromechanical age. The cost of computing hardware collapses over time in line with Moore's law of relentlessly increasing processing power. And once software has been developed, the marginal cost of copying it is effectively zero.

The consumer benefits of this technology are large relative to its price: the cost of each year's latest computer, tablet, or smartphone is trivial compared to the cost of a new car in 1950. But the number of jobs created is trivial, too.

In 1979, General Motors employed 850,000 workers. Today, Microsoft employs only

## EVEREST बैंक BIZ BRIEFS



### Drive safe

Johnie Walker is organising a one-day driving extravaganza to celebrate the success of its 'Join the Pact' campaign in Nepal. Two-time Formula One World champion and Johnnie Walker responsible drinking ambassador, Mika Hakkinen, will drive at the Syakar Safety Riding Centre in Gwarko on 25 January.

### Dream home

Asian Paints has announced the top 10 finalists of its 'Dream Home Contest'. Singer Nima Rumba, actor Karishma Manandhar, and Rabi Dongol will now visit each of the homes to pick the final winners.



### Quick wash

EOL, the sole authorised distributor of Godrej appliances in Nepal, has introduced the Godrej Eon Glitz washing machine in the market. Currently available in two models - WT EON 7000 PFDE and WT EON 7000 PFE - the machines are priced at Rs 33,890 and Rs 32,390 respectively.

### Holy addition

Everest Bank inaugurated its latest ATM machine inside the Pasupatinath temple premises. During the event, the bank also distributed clothes to around 250 elderly people at the old age home. Under the bank's 'customer-top management meet' program which was launched at the start of the year, top management officials of the bank have visited 10 branches in an effort to reach out directly to customers.



### Discounted flight

Qatar Airways offered up to 30 per cent discount on economy class and premium cabin fares to a wide variety of destinations as a part of its 'new year-new destinations' scheme. The three-day global sale lasted from 20 to 22 January.

### Hot wheels

Shrestha Company launched Wolf Sb150Ni, a new model from SYM, the Taiwanese two-wheeler company at a program on Sunday. The 150cc bike is priced at Rs 299,900.



### Speaking tourism

Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Nepal Chapter organised a two-day workshop on marketing management and writing proposals with Bert Van Walbeek. PATA's student chapter and Friends of PATA Media Pool were also launched simultaneously at the event.

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# No boomlet babies in the east

China's one-child policy lifted living standards, but set a hard-to-reverse trend of demographic decline

JOSEPH CHAMIE

In an attempt to mitigate a near-certain demographic future of rapid ageing, shrinking labour force, and critical gender imbalance, the Chinese government has adjusted its one-child policy. The decision demonstrates that, irrespective of a nation's politico-economic system, governments cannot avoid demography's juggernaut consequences. This mid-course correction in population policy will have marginal effect as China is ageing at a much faster pace than occurred in other countries.

The new policy, set at the provincial level, will permit couples to have two children if either the husband or wife is an only child. Under the previous policy, two children were allowed for ethnic minorities, rural families whose firstborn is a daughter, and couples with both spouses as only children.

China instituted its one-child policy in the late 1970s because it feared that its rapidly growing population placed an untenable burden on economic growth and improving standards of living. At the start of the 1970s, China's fertility rate was above five children per couple and its population was growing at more than two percent



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per year, adding more than 20 million Chinese annually. If the demographic growth of the 1970s had persisted, China would perhaps have added 400 million people more to its current population of 1.39 billion.

As a result of rapid declines in birth and death rates over the past four decades, China's life expectancy at birth has increased by more than 10 years to 75 years. With steep declines in fertility and increasing longevity, China's population has aged rapidly over the past 40 years, with the median age nearly doubling from 19 to 35 years. The adoption of the one-child policy also accelerated the decline in the proportion of China's children, falling precipitously from 40 per cent in 1970 to 18 per cent today.

In contrast, the working-age population aged 15 to 64 years jumped from 56 to 73 per cent, higher than the 62 per cent average for more developed countries. The extraordinary age-structure transformation allowed China to benefit from the demographic dividend, a short-term productive advantage due to a large labour force relative to small numbers of dependent young

and old.

Also, before the one-child policy, China's sex ratio at birth averaged around 107 boys for every 100 girls. Ten years after the policy's adoption, the ratio reached 115 boys for 100 girls and may exceed 125 in some provinces, reflecting the strong preference for sons, especially in rural farming areas. China's unusually high sex ratio at birth indicates extensive use of sex-selective abortion. The number of young males unable to find brides is estimated at more than 25 million.

Estimates by Chinese officials and some scholars suggest the relaxation in policy may lead to an increase of up to two births per year, possibly a 10 per cent increase – increasing China's fertility rate from the current 1.6 births per woman to about 1.8 births per woman.

If China decided to further relax to a 'two-child policy', the number of additional births might reach five million annually, with the fertility rate perhaps rising to replacement level. Under the instant replacement scenario, China's future population does not decline, but stabilises around 1.6 billion by mid-century. The Chinese population, however, would still age, with the proportion of elderly

**GOING STRONG:** Senior citizens exercise in a park in Beijing. Fourteen per cent of China's population, 194 million people, is now above 60.

increasing to a fifth and the potential support ratio falling to three working-age persons per retiree.

If China ended the one-child policy altogether, future fertility could, although improbable, exceed the replacement level. For example, if Chinese fertility increased to a quarter-child above replacement, the high variant, China's population by the close of the century would be nearly 1.8 billion. China's population would not attain stabilisation, but would continue growing at about 0.5 per cent per year, an annual addition of eight million Chinese.

In addition to increasing fertility, the relaxation of the one-child policy may improve China's gender imbalance at least at birth. With more couples allowed to have a second child, the effects of the son preference on the sex ratio at birth should, in principle, be reduced. But the overall gender imbalance will persist for generations.

Even if China were to experience a baby 'boomlet', the country would continue to age, its labour force shrink and its gender imbalance carry on for decades. Also, while a rise in the birthrate would increase the demands for housing, education, food, care and related services, at least two decades would pass before the boomlet babies entered the workforce and paid taxes.

Finally, irrespective of China's decisions to relax its one-child policy, fertility is not likely to increase markedly in the foreseeable future. Major forces pointing to continuation of low Chinese fertility include increasing urbanisation, smaller and costly housing, expanding higher education and career opportunities for women, high financial costs and time pressures for childrearing, and changing attitudes and lifestyles. China may soon discover, as many countries have concluded, raising low fertility rates is more challenging than reducing high fertility.

[www.yaleglobal.yale.edu](http://www.yaleglobal.yale.edu)

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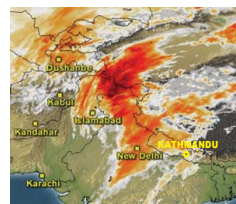


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We had another westerly front on Thursday in hot pursuit of the one that dumped 5mm of rain on Kathmandu Valley last Saturday (see last week's forecast) and quite a bit of snow in the western and central mountains. Central Nepal will continue to see the after effects of this second system over the weekend in terms of some hail on Friday, but no more precipitation. The weekend will see misty mornings mixed with inversion smog in Kathmandu Valley, brightening up towards afternoon. The temperatures will remain within the normal 17 Celsius variation for this time of year between day maxima and night minima.

# Heroes on Everest

With role in new Hollywood film, pilot-actor Vijay Lama's life comes a full circle

At age 50, Vijay Lama feels his two careers are merging again. When he acted in his first Nepali movie, *Adarsha Nari*, at the age of 17 he had the role of a pilot. From reel he went on to become a real-life airline pilot, flying Twin Otters to remote mountain airfields, and later, Boeing 757s. Now, he has got the role of a rescue pilot in the new Hollywood film, *Everest*, based on the Jon Krakauer's book, *Into Thin Air*.

When he was a boy, Vijay Lama used to tell his mother he wanted to be an actor in a Hollywood movie. It nearly happened with a major role in Bernardo Bertolucci's 1993 film, *Little Buddha*, but it took another 20 years before he finally fulfilled his childhood dream.

"I feel really humbled," Lama told *Nepali Times* while filming on location at the Army Golf Course near the airport on Tuesday, "I am proud as a Nepali, and hope I can be an inspiration and a catalyst for young Nepalis everywhere."

Directed by Baltasar Kormákur who made *The Deep* and *Contraband*, and starring movie stars Jake Gyllenhaal, Jason Clarke, John Hawkes and Josh Brolin, the film is based on the tragedy on Mt Everest in 1996 in which eight climbers died near the summit after a storm.

The story revolves around Beck Weathers, the American climber who miraculously survived two nights above 8,000m, and was rescued, together with a Taiwanese climber, by Nepali Army rescue pilot, Col Madan KC from Camp II. The risky rescue was the highest-ever helicopter landing in history at the time, and Col KC was commended for his confidence and flying skills.

Vijay Lama called up Madan KC recently for a pilot-to-pilot talk to understand exactly what was going through his mind 18 years



ON LOCATION: Capt Vijay Lama at the Nepal Army Golf Course (above) in Kathmandu on Tuesday preparing for the shoot of *Everest*. Lama with Josh Brolin (in black) and Martin Henderson.

ago when he decided to try once more after a failed first rescue. Col KC emptied his Ecureuil of all unnecessary equipment to make the aircraft lighter, and flew solo up the Khumbu Ice Fall.

In Tuesday's shoot, Vijay Lama plays Col KC as he is approached by a US Embassy diplomat and an expedition member on the golf course. He is asked if he can fly up to 6,500m on Mt Everest to rescue injured climbers. Lama delivers his

line like the laconic aviator that he is: "I don't know if it can or can't be done. All I know is that it has never been done."

This week, Lama and a group of 12 real-life Sherpas are off to Val Paradiso in Italy to do the outdoor part of the shoot in a make-believe Mt Everest. After that Lama will go to Pinewood Studios near London to film his role of the rescue inside a Ecureuil simulator.

Gyllenhaal is playing Scott

Fischer, the American guide from Mountain Madness who died on Everest, while Jason Clarke plays Rob Hall, the New Zealand climber from Adventure Consultants who made the poignant last phone call from the South Summit to his pregnant wife in New Zealand just before he died.

The part of Beck Weathers, who lost his right arm to frostbite, is played by Josh Brolin. This movie should not be confused with another feature film about George Mallory being released in 2014, which is also called *Everest*.

Vijay Lama is impressed by the professionalism of the cast

and crew of Kormákur's team in Kathmandu, and says Nepali film-makers can learn a lot from them. Lama has convinced the director to have the cockpit conversation between Madan KC and his co-pilot to be in Nepali with subtitles, and Lama's producer at *Black & White*, Ranjit Acharya, is working on the lines.

Says Lama: "It is an honour to be honouring the true heroes of 1996, the pilot and the heroic Sherpas who risked their lives to save the lives of others."

Kunda Dixit

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)

Trail of IMAX documentary, *Everest*

Extract from *High Exposure: An Enduring Passion for Everest and Other Unforgiving Places* by David Breashears

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## EVENTS



**FRAME BY FRAME**, a two-week workshop for photographers who want to take their digital photography to the next level; participants will work on aesthetics, ethics, editing, and digital workflow and produce stories on the issues of climate change, sustainable living, migration and themes related to the ongoing Climate+Change exhibition. Rs 4,000 ex. VAT, 4 to 18 February, 2 to 6pm, Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal, [learning@photocircle.com.np](mailto:learning@photocircle.com.np), apply by 5pm, 28 January

**Easel work**, learn the basics of painting landscapes in water colour. 25 January, seats limited, Park Gallery, Pulchowk

**Climate+Change**, an awe-inspiring educational science exhibition about climate change and Nepal's Himalaya. Runs till April, Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal

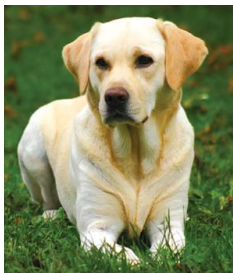
**Of the young**, listen to Anil Chitrakar expand on entrepreneurship opportunities for engaging the youth. 9 February, 4pm, free entry, Nepal Bharat Library, New Road

**Salut**, be one of over 550,000 students all over the world to learn French.

Session starting on 27 January, Alliance Francaise Centre, Teku

**Jai Ho**, watch Bollywood's favourite muscle-man Salman Khan send villains packing to hospital beds; with proceeds going to Bhaktapur Animal Welfare Society and Poor and Helpless Girls Home. 24 January, 6.30pm onwards, Kumari Cinema, Hall 1

**Trading paint**, an exhibition of the work by artist Julian Parker-Burns. Runs to 21 February, 10am to 5pm, Image Ark Gallery, Kulimha Tol, Patan Darbar Area



**WOOF!**, if you think your dog's the best, enter it into competition with all of K-town's hounds at the 4th Grand Dog Show. 25 January, Satdobato Swimming Complex, 10am onwards

**Swasthani fast**, a month of reading the pilgrims' tale of the Kathmandu Valley of yore, plenty of photo

opportunities at Pasupati and Sali Nadi.

Runs to 14 February

**Made in Nepal**, join over 150 makers and sellers of quality Nepali products and services. 13 to 16 February, 10am onwards, Bhrikuti Mandap, 9843578957, [nyef@fncci.org](mailto:nyef@fncci.org)

**Singalong**, enjoy an evening of music and entrepreneurship with Bihani Social Venture. Rs 500, 27 January, 5 to 7pm, Namlo Restaurant, Bakhundol, 9813228579

**Heritage and pride**, an exhibition of the paintings of Lal Kaji Lama. 20 January to 3 February, Sarwanam Art Gallery, Kalikasthan

**Parallel journeys**, an exhibition of the works of artists Binod Pradhan, Sunila Bajracharya, and Asha Dangol. Runs till 8 February, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal

**Birdwatch**, spot a bird that has migrated from Siberia to Kathmandu for the winter. 1 February, 7am, Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park, 9843330576

**Art attack**, revisit the highlights of the 2nd Kathmandu International Art Festival. 25 to 31 January, 10am to 4pm, Patan Museum, (01)4218048

**The public sphere**, join an informal discussion with veteran Indian journalist Bharat Bhushan on 'Media ethics and changing structure of media'. 24 January, 3pm, Hotel Annapurna, Darbar Marg, entry free of cost

## DINING



**HOTEL SHANGRI-LA**, traditional Nepali cuisine with cultural show. Rs 999, every Thursday, 7pm onwards, (01)4412999 ext 7520/7515

**Lal Durbar Restaurant**, authentic Nepali dinner with cultural shows. Hotel Yak & Yeti, Darbar Marg, (01)4248999, [reservation@laldurbar.com](mailto:reservation@laldurbar.com)

**K-too**, if you're tired of the cold, go in for the best steak in Thamel, a warm dining room, live sports on TV, and free Irish coffee with every main course and seasonal specials. Thamel, (01)4700043

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

**Little Italy**, go vegetarian at this new Italian food chain and don't forget to end your meal with the chef's special, chocolate bomb. Darbar Marg

**Trisara**, with dishes like flambeed prawns, crispy chicken, and khao soi, it would be a folly to ignore its aromas. Lajimpat

## MUSIC

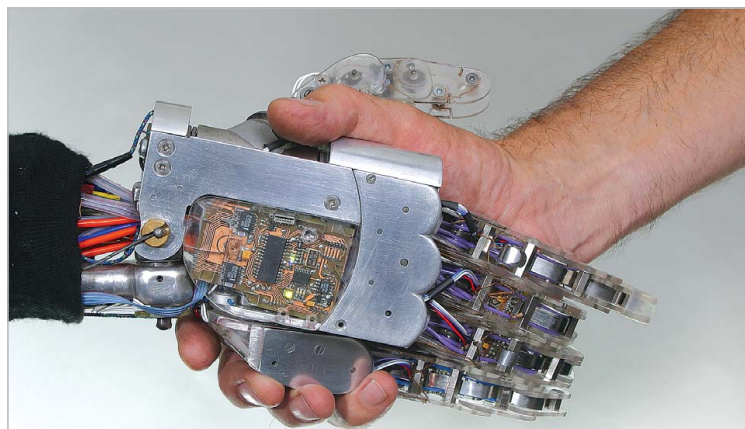
**Shastriya Sangeet**, dabble in the magic of Hindustani classical music every new moon night. 30 January, 3.30pm, Ram Mandir, Battisputali

**Starry nights**, munch on the tenderloin with Ciney Gurung performing live. Rs 1,499, 24 January, 7pm onwards, Shambala Garden Cafe, Hotel Shangri-La, (01)4412999, Ext. 7520/7515

**Nabe Radio #3**, party with Gianni Denitto, Bzzt! Bzzt! Bzzt!, and Tsering Sherpa. Rs 100, 24 January, Places Restaurant and Bar



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



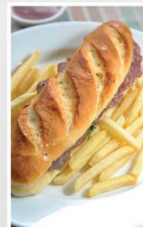
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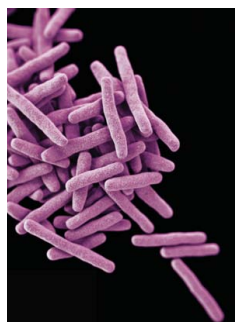
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## TB or not TB

For its January edition of the monthly lecture series, Cultural Studies Group of Nepal presents a lecture with Italian doctor Giampaolo Mezzabota, who has been working in tuberculosis control for the past 20 years in East Africa, East Asia and the Pacific.

An estimated 1.4 million people die annually from tuberculosis even though a 100 per cent effective cure was found in the 1960s. But why is it so difficult to root it out or control its spread? Mezzabota shares his experience.

29 January, 6pm,  
Shanker Hotel, Lajimpat  
Rs 400 for non-members, Rs 100  
for members, tea/coffee included  
csgnepal@yahoo.com  
facebook.com/  
CulturalStudiesGroupOfNepal

## Noodling

Feel like you could do a better job than most of Nepal's graphic designers? Well, here's a chance to stake your claim among contemporaries in the first ever annual graphics art competition. Submissions may be in one of the following categories: graphic design, hand lettering and/or typography, poster art, comic art, illustrations, collage, and altered photographs.

Judging the competition will be Nepali designers Sahara Shrestha and Prachin Siddhi, British designer Sam Hodges and American illustrator Gabriella Cetrulo. Selected submissions will be exhibited and the winners will get up to Rs 25,000 in cash.

Send your entries by 20 February to  
events@thecitymuseum.org



## Meltdown

The ongoing Climate+Change exhibition brings exciting programmes this week.

25 January, animals of the Hindu Kush region, workshop for children to learn about and create, from junk, toys of wild animals.

18 January, 12 to 2pm, Nepal Art

Council, Babarmahal,  
nischal@photocircle.com.np  
26 January, journalist Kunda Dixit gives a guided tour of the entire exhibition to print, radio, and tv journalists from Nepal to link them to scientists and experts.

26 January, 3 to 5pm,  
Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal  
27 January, a talk by Bernard Amadei, a professor of civil

engineering at the University of Colorado, about engineering for the 'other 90 per cent'.

Entry and participation are free of charge

Climate+Change  
Runs till April, Nepal Art Council  
9849519933,  
nischal@photocircle.com.np

## Mushi mushi

Learn more about the culture of the land of the rising sun at the Japanese Film Festival.

24 January  
3pm, *Always sunset on third street*, dir. Takashi Yamazaki, 142"

25 January  
11am, *Brave story*, dir. Koichi Chigira, 111"  
1.15pm, *Waterboys*, dir. Shinobu Yaguchi, 91"  
3pm, *A midsummer's Okinawa dream*, dir. Nakae Yuji, 105"

26 January  
11am, *Rail truck*, dir. Hirofumi Kawaguchi, 116"  
1.15pm, *The chef of south polar*, dir. Shuichi Okita, 125"  
3.30pm, *Ballad*, dir. Takashi Yamazaki, 132"

1 February  
11am, *Chibimaruko-chan*, 94"  
12.45am, *Three for the road*, dir. Hideyuki Hirayama, 108"  
2.45pm, *Osaka hamlet*, dir. Fujiro Mitsuishi, 107"

Japanese Film Festival  
24 to 26 January, Rastriya Nachghar, Kathmandu  
1 February, Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Pokhara  
(01)4426680, np.emb-japan.go.jp

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**HARIZ BAHARUDIN and TOH EE MING**

**A**fter he received the USA-Nepal Humanitarian award from Ambassador Peter W Bodde in front of a packed Ashok Hall in Patan on 10 January, Dayaram Maharjan went to the back of the auditorium and sat with his students so that they could collectively partake in the celebrations.

"I am happy that the award has encouraged more people to visit the school and support us," said the 49-year-old, who teaches children with physical and mental disabilities at Adarsha Shaulah Yuwak Higher Secondary School in Bungmati.


Maharjan along with Dhurba Bahadur Raut, Hari Man Shrestha, Uttam Sanjel, Rotaract Club of Dharan, and Chunumunu Publications were recognised for their perseverance and significant contribution in the fields of health, education, and youth leadership.

In a country where disability is seen as a curse and schools have no resources to work with them, Dayaram has helped integrate hundreds of handicapped students into mainstream school environment. He started out 24 years ago when he saw a blind student at Adarsha struggling in class, because the teachers were not equipped to teach visually handicapped children.

Maharjan learnt braille and then painstakingly translated textbooks, word for word, so that the visually impaired could study alongside their peers. When deaf children were admitted into the school, he started learning sign language too.

Having been abandoned by their families because of their handicap, many of the children that Maharjan taught had nowhere to call home. So in 1997, he established the Disabled Services Association, a hostel adjacent to the school, which now houses more than 40 children. Besides quality education and art and music classes, the school also provides vocational training in basket-weaving, coffee making, and massage therapy, so students can earn a living for themselves and become self-reliant.

But Maharjan admits his work is far from over. As the number of children that he takes in is always increasing, the living quarters are getting rather crowded. With the savings and donations he has accumulated over the years, the teacher is currently building a new hostel that is going to be completely disabled-friendly.

Through all these years, Maharjan has refused to let society's prejudice against children with disabilities define them, hoping that his school will change the prevalent mindset. "Earlier people would look at our students and call them unlucky. Now they see the children living and working as equal and active members of society and their attitude is slowly improving," he says. 

Dayaram Maharjan can be contacted at 9841490490


# DAYARAM'S ADARSHA

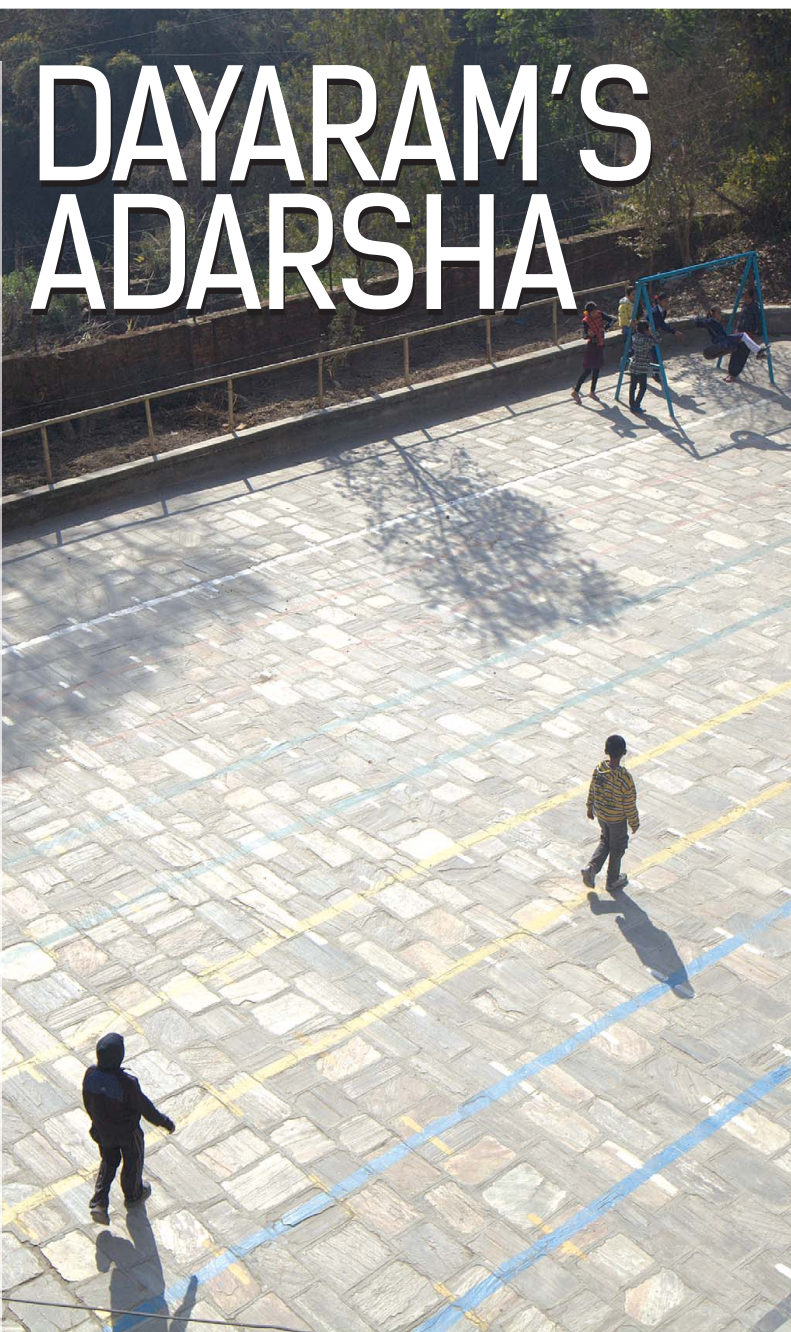
**A teacher helps integrate hundreds of handicapped students back into the community**

[nepalimes.com](http://nepalimes.com)

Different but able, #574

Photo gallery

Audio slideshow 



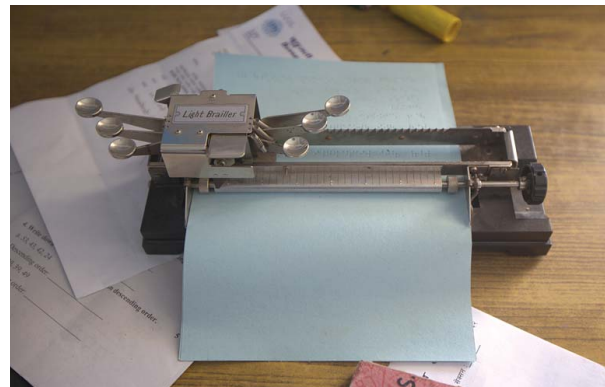




**(L-R) UTMOST IMPORTANCE:** In addition to vocational lessons, children at Adarsha Shaulah Yuwak Higher Secondary School in Bungmati, also receive regular education with the help of braille books that their teacher, Dayaram Maharjan, makes himself. Currently, the children live in three different buildings, moving from one to another has been a safety concern. There are plans to build a new residence and equip it with proper facilities for disabled children. Maharjan does a soundcheck on a newly donated computer, which is installed with special software to help the visually-impaired students.



**STRONGER NOW:** Gyalsen Lama was brought to Maharjan at the age of two with a severe case of cerebral palsy. Now, with therapy, Gyalsen's limbs have grown stronger and he communicates through gestures.



**WORD FOR WORD:** Maharjan translates textbooks into braille with the help of a machine, one word at a time, so that visually impaired children in his school can study together with their peers.



**FULL-TIME JOB:** Maharjan enjoys reading to the children at school. He also conducts classes on his own whenever time permits.





The awards season has started again and with it come the real contenders, those heavy weight films that are built to win that ultimate golden statue. This year has been a disappointing year for me personally. Up to now, I still hadn't seen anything that I thought was exceptional, that one film that I could root for and that might persuade me to watch a certain deathly boring three-hour long ceremony.



#### MUST SEE

Sophia Pande

I will certainly try to review all of the nine nominees this year, but I will say that aside from Alfonso Cuarón's *Gravity* (reviewed earlier) which I very much admired, I cannot think that any of them will compare, at least in my mind, with Spike Jonze's latest film - the sublime *Her* starring Joaquin Phoenix as the loveable, fumbling Theodore Twombly who falls in love with his operating system called Samantha

# HER

(played beautifully by the voice of Scarlett Johansson).

Jonze started his career directing gimmicky music videos for people like the Beastie Boys, but it was 2009's adaptation of *Where The Wild Things Are* - Maurice Sendak's beloved children's book that made us all sit up and notice. Here was a new voice worth listening too, possibly not fully formed, but beautifully sensitive and with a kooky but finely attuned imagination.

With *Her* Jonze has very much come into his own, writing and directing a film that is both hilarious and heartbreaking - a film about human loneliness, our growing relationship with the now ubiquitous and encroaching smart technologies, and about our deepest and sometimes our darkest desires.

Almost everything about *Her* is perfect: the film is beautifully shot, the casting impeccable, with Phoenix playing against type as a stumbling mumbling lovable goofball who has just had his heart broken by his wife Catherine (Rooney Mara), his childhood love who leaves him because he cannot deal with the harder issues.

Twombly works at a company that composes 'beautiful, handwritten' letters for people who cannot do it themselves; unsurprisingly he is extraordinarily good at it. We get an aching sense of the loneliness of Twombly's life in this not too distant future in a scene where Twombly seeks company in the middle of the night in a virtual chatroom full of strange, needy women.

So when he meets Samantha, an artificially intelligent operating system that gets smarter the longer she exists, we root for their relationship. Samantha is lovely, intuitive, obviously prodigiously smart (she is a computer), and has a great sense of humour. She also adores Theodore, and soon he adores her too.

I cannot tell you how this film ends, watch it, and discover its pleasures for yourself. All I can say is that as the end grew close and I started to panic about how things would be resolved, I realised that I was in the hands of a thoughtful, intuitive storyteller who had somehow figured out the perfect, subtle ending.

[nepalintimes.com](http://nepalintimes.com)

Watch trailer



#### HAPPENINGS



BIKRAM RAI

**BACK TO BUSINESS:** Newly elected Constituent Assembly members attend the first meeting at International Convention Centre in Baneswor on Wednesday.



PRAKASH SINGH

**TRAFFIC JAM:** Mules carry goods across Dahakot in Bajura district on Monday. Much of western Nepal has experienced heavy snowfall this week.



DEVAKI BISTA

**SORRY, CLOSED:** A notice outside Teaching Hospital in Maharajganj informs patients about the shut down on Monday. Hospitals across the country have halted services in support of Dr Govinda KC, who is on a fast-unto-death.



BIKRAM RAI

**HOLY DIP:** Hindu women take a bath in the Shali River to celebrate the month-long Swasthani festival in Sankhu, Kathmandu on Friday.

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**I**t's not every day that someone claims they have the future in their hands, but Dr Sameer Maskey says just that. After 14 years of studying and researching natural language processing (NLP), an area of computer science, artificial intelligence, and linguistics concerned with the interactions between machines and human languages, Maskey has developed state of the art software that responds, learns, and grows with every human interaction.

Straight after graduating from school in Nepal, Maskey left for the United States in 1999 where he was to complete his undergraduate, masters, and finally a PhD degree from Columbia University, New York in 2008. He has worked for IBM as part of Transtech, a team chosen by the US government to develop a speech synthesiser which can recognise, translate, and respond to languages like Pashto, Dari, and Arabic.

"The instrument was greatly beneficial to the Americans during their occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan," recalls Maskey.

After years of studying and working abroad, the 33-year-old researcher wanted to start a project that could benefit his home country. In 2013, Maskey opened a company

called Fuse Machines that would produce, market, and sell conversation systems

The software he is currently developing allows people to text or web-chat a company with a query or complaint and the system will respond with an answer or solution straight away. "Think of it like a cross between Apple's Siri and IBM's Watson," explains the native of Thamel, "the software completely eradicates human effort."

In laymen's term, data analysts from Fuse Machines and analysts from their respective clients exchange information based on what kind of services and complaints individual consumers demand of them. This data is catalogued in the system, so when a customer asks a question from within this inventory in any language, the software is able to give the answer. If a consumer asks a question the system does not have the answer to, within 24 hours with the help of an analyst, it will



**BIONIC MAN:** Sameer Maskey has created state of the art technology that will allow individuals to have access to customer service support 24/7 through the web.

product and cater to a Nepali market.

Says Maskey: "Everyone told me there was no talent in Nepal for this kind of technology. But the entire interface of the system was built by a young and incredibly skilled group of local engineers."

The reason behind not hiring senior software engineers, explains Maskey, is because the kind of experience needed for

this level of work is so remote from what is being taught in local colleges, that it was better to hire fresh graduates, who would have a clean slate. Fuse Machines already has an array of e-commerce clients in the US and

Maskey says in the coming months a lot of firms based in Nepal will also be using the software.

In a country where the most successful companies do not have adequate face-to-face customer service centres, Maskey is hopeful that his conversation systems based on web chats and artificial intelligence will take off and improve the way organisations handle queries and complaints. "Once in a while technology does leapfrog in Nepal, here's hoping this is one of those times," says the professor. 📞

*Meahna Bali*

There is perhaps no sweeter note to the ears of a homesick Singaporean than to hear of a restaurant that specialises in its cuisine, thousands of miles away from home. After multiple recommendations from friends, this writer visited the popular Sing-Ma Food Court in Jhamsikhel in hopes of washing some of the blues away.

In true Singaporean fashion, this medium-sized eatery doesn't concern itself with fancy frills. The interior is clean and simply furnished and seats a dozen tables, most of which were occupied even after lunch hours on a lazy Sunday afternoon.



Our first order, the chicken tom yum gai (Rs 310), was quick to arrive, its aroma setting the perfect mood for a trip back home gastronomically. The piping hot tom yum had just the right blend of coconut milk and lemongrass to give its characteristic tangy spiciness. The portion of mushrooms and chewy chicken chunks just enough to whet up an appetite.

For a dish that's featured on the best-selling menu, the

hokkien mee (Rs 390) was a huge letdown though. Drowned clumsily in thick, brown gravy, the noodles didn't appeal to the eyes. The chewy prawns and stir-fried vegetables that seemed meagerly thrown in did little to salvage the overpowering taste of dark soya sauce thus failing to impress the taste buds too. Ingredients like shallots, fish cake slices, and bean sprouts, which made generous appearances in the noodles back home was

dearly missed. We had a similar luck with the *mápó* tofu (Rs 230), which lacked the usual zing and spiciness that one comes to expect of this Sichuan favourite.

As I and a fellow Singaporean sat contemplating whether the restaurant really deserved to boast about serving authentic Singaporean-Malay cuisine, in came the nasi lemak set with chicken rendang (Rs 430). With succulent chicken pieces cooked in a delicious curry and accompanied

with a bowl of fluffy basmati rice, I finally felt I was home. The sides, which included a fried egg, cucumbers, and ikan bilis (fried anchovies), crisped to perfection made this the dish of the day.

Our mixed luck continued with our order of desserts. Tau huay (Rs115), a soy-based bean curd that is renowned for its silky texture was grainy at Sing-Ma's and simply refused to melt away. But we ended our lunch on a right note with the goreng pisang (Rs 140). These banana fritters, which came in a plate of four, were deep fried to a rich golden brown and tasted sinfully delicious.

Although this popular eatery failed to live upto its expectations, I know I will be returning to Sing-Ma because one, I have yet to taste its signature cheesecake, which patrons swear by, and two, it did satiate my hunger for a taste of home, albeit in the smallest of way. 🍷

Toh Ee Ming

www.sinamafoodcourt.com

*How to get there: past the fire engine station on Jhamsikhel's Restaurant Lane, opposite New Orleans.*

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## Live long, look good

A question that is frequently asked to doctors during medical exams is: which one preventive intervention leads to the largest average increase in life expectancy in a target population?

a) A regular exercise program  
b) Quit smoking  
c) Mammogram (breast cancer prevention screening) for women  
d) Pap smear (cervical cancer prevention screening) for women  
e) Prostate gland cancer screening for men



**DHANVANTARI**  
Buddha Basnyat, MD

The answer is B. For a targeted population, more than all the other choices listed above, quitting smoking will add three to five years. Regular exercise program will add one to two years and the rest will each add a couple of months. This question illustrates the importance of quitting cigarettes and exercising. Does this mean that options C, D, and E are not worth

pursuing? Possibly not.

Predicted increases in life expectancy are average numbers that apply to populations and not individuals. For example, mammograms may increase the overall life expectancy by only two to three months, but for an individual at risk of breast cancer (patients with a family history of breast cancer, smoking etc), the screening may add many years by detecting the disease earlier. This holds true for those at risk of cervical and prostate cancer too.

Importantly, many of us do not know if we are at risk for common diseases because they may not be obvious, like family history. So while carrying out recommended screening tests like the ones in the question above, it is important to assume that we are average Joes (or Ram Bahadurs and Sita Devis if you wish) who may be at risk.

In a country like Nepal where day to day existence is so difficult for so many people, it may be hard to understand the concept of 'wellness', which the above medical question evokes. But this idea of wellness is in our interest

because prevention is better than cure. And crucially, cure is more expensive. Therefore, not only quitting smoking and exercise, but tests like breast and cervical cancer screening may help a great deal in promoting wellness. So raising awareness about the importance of some screening tests (not all) in the community is a very good public health practice.

And for those looking to quit smoking, there is another reason to do so right away: smoking ages you prematurely. A study published in the *Journal of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons* in January this year corroborates this statement.

For the study, 79 pairs of adult identical twins were categorised in three groups: a group in which one was a smoker and the other a non-smoker; another group consisted of pairs in which both were smokers; a third group consisted of pairs of smokers with at least five years difference in the duration of their smoking. The researchers photographed them and had an independent panel of judges, who were oblivious to the smoking history of the individuals, rate the pictures which were arranged side by side.

The rating was done on the basis of elements like wrinkles, crow's feet, jowls, bags under the eyes, creases around the nose, and lines around the lips and other general appearance of skin aging. It was important to 'control' for other confounding or misleading factors such as stress at work, alcohol consumption which could be invoked for premature skin aging. Indeed, the differences between the twins regarding these confounding factors were found to be insignificant.

Amazingly, the panel's decision on which twin looked older completely matched their smoking histories; that is, the longer you smoked the worse you looked. So clearly smoking affects not only your longevity, but also how you look while you live. ☐

**GIZMO by YANTRICK**

## Time to play

Having defined and subsequently dominated the console gaming industry with the PS1, PS2, and PS3, Sony unleashed the latest iteration of its popular PlayStation consoles, the PS4, in November last year. While console and PC gaming have always drawn the more serious gamers amongst us, the convenience of mobile gaming has seen a large demographic lean more towards casual gaming on mobile devices. However, with the PS4, console gaming is back with a big bang.

Straight out of the box, the PS4 looks the part, while packing a lot of power under the hood. Black with sharp, angular edges and a blend of matte and high-gloss plastic, it truly appears next-gen. Also included in the box are a power cable, a game controller, a micro-USB charger cable, a HDMI cable, and a mono earphone. The PS4 runs on a x86-64 AMD Jaguar right-core chip CPU, with graphics powered by a 1.84 TFLOPS AMD Radeon engine, and is backed up by 8GB of DDR5 RAM, which might seem like incoherent technical jargon, but suffice it to say, the PS4's specs are in line with a mid- to high-end gaming PC.



All those specs allow for a visually striking user interface which is quick, smooth and simple to navigate around. The real fun starts when you boot up your first PS4 game. All devices now ship with 500GB of on-board storage, which will be utilised mainly to store game data. All games now require a one-time installation, whilst an addition hassle to gamers, is forgivable as this installation allows for quicker game loading times.

Post installation, the games looks stunning, the Helghast city in Killzone: Shadowfall looks enormous, the Nou Camp stadium in FIFA14 feels positively gigantic, with stunning details which has to be seen to be believed. The PS4's controller, the DualShock 4, has also been tweaked from the DualShock 3, for the better, which allows for easier controls and comfortable gameplay. The built-in audio speaker and the headset jack on the controller now make for more immersive gameplay, with particularly the option to plug-in headphones for game audio proving to be quite handy, especially during night-gaming.

Selling for around \$500 in the US, the PS4 console is grossly overpriced in the Nepali market at Rs 70,000. Local gamers, it's time to butter your aafno maanche in bidesh. ☐

**Yantrick's verdict:** The PS4 makes a strong case in favour of console gaming and is a machine excellently backed up by great specs, killer graphics, and with the gaming library set to expand in the coming months, Sony's console is set to be the home of gaming once again.



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Even as politics in Kathmandu looks to simmer down with the first session of the second Constituent Assembly commencing on Wednesday, the Indian capital found itself in the grips of high drama this week. Delhi's newly-elected Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) sat on *dharna* for 33 hours, protesting against the reluctance of the state police to raid a place



LOOK OUT

Ajaz Ashraf

allegedly running prostitute and drug rackets.

The uproar came at a time when heavy criticism is being leveled against top AAP leaders. The shrill denunciation of lawyer Prashant Bhushan for his remarks on Kashmir and then, subsequently, Delhi law minister Somnath Bharti for his alleged vigilantism, are illustrative of the pressure on the party to abandon concepts forged in its ideational foundry and embrace those not its own.

Partly, the pressure on the AAP arises from the sheer momentum it has gathered, goading its rivals into attempting to cage the political fledgling insistent on flying in the General Elections and spraying its droppings all around. This is precisely why the existing political formations have been taunting the AAP for its lack of a national vision. Partly, their criticisms arise from their keenness to ensure that the mainstream consensus over what constitutes national politics isn't broken.



**THE ENDING:** Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal (centre) ended his *dharna* against the police on Tuesday after violence broke out between his followers and the security force.

controversy underscores the perils of responding to the agendas of political rivals whose endeavour would be to reduce the AAP to a poor imitation of them.

This is why the AAP will have to sharply portray its attributes about which have the Indian voter is visibly excited. Its uniqueness stems from according primacy to what is local and immediate, namely, the provision of water, electricity, health, education and security through transparent, responsive, and clean governance; of promising to vest the oversight of local development in the inhabitants who stand to gain from it.

Ironically, it was in response to the pressure from his constituency that Somnath Bharti mounted pressure on the Delhi Police to carry out a raid, triggering a crisis underlying which is the issue of whether or not an elected government should control the city police. The AAP wants police officers to be suspended. No, says the central government, which controls Delhi Police.

In the emerging conflicting narratives, Bharati's enthusiasm does seem to have an echo of vigilantism, endorsed though it has been in his constituency. But it also points to the patronage the police provide to dubious and powerful interests. AAP's politics of making governance count at the local will bring it into conflict with the existing arrangement and trigger controversies. Nevertheless, the party must not forget that the local is also the site for fostering democratic spirit, for the local is where India resides. □

## All about roots

Aam Aadmi Party's national vision must be refracted through the prism of the local

Thus, the BJP projects the AAP as a disparate group of secessionist sympathisers, closet communists opposed to the market, and misguided activists wishing to diminish the Indian state's prestige. The BJP fears Kejriwal's party could become a seductive alternative idea to its pitch on economic growth.

The Congress, until the Delhi shock, portrayed the AAP as a lightweight having the temerity to fight in the heavyweight category. Now chastened, it hopes the AAP will gather heft to produce a badly hung Lok Sabha and check BJP's rise, but will trip and fall in wielding power. The Congress fears its base among the urban poor the AAP could cannibalise.

The Left smugly lectures the AAP for not perceiving the link between corruption and neo-liberal economic policies, for not firing booming volleys against Modi. Kejriwal's men and women threaten the Left's status of being the lodestar of alternative politics.

It is with this backdrop that the controversy over Bhushan's remark on Kashmir was stoked, even though his was a measured shift from his earlier position. Two years ago, he had favoured a referendum to determine whether or not Kashmir should stay with India. By contrast, he now wanted the deployment of security forces in the northern state to have the people's consent.

A pressing need to generate headlines can only prompt a journalist to ask Bhushan a question on Kashmir, for his stance is too well-known to believe he would echo, parrot-like, the mainstream consensus on it. Perhaps such a question was asked to gauge whether his

radicalism has been tempered because his party governs Delhi and nurses national ambitions. Implicit in this expectation is that a person in power should speak contrary to his belief. This is what TV voices in primetime shows meant as they cautioned Bhushan to speak with responsibility.

Momentarily, a rattled AAP seemed inclined to echoing the national consensus on security, but then quickly turned to insisting on the democratic right of individuals to voice their opinion. It couldn't have taken another line considering it propagates participatory democracy and emphasises conscionable political conduct. Nevertheless, the Bhushan

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# TRESSPASSING INTO

**BHRIKUTI RAI** and  
**SUNIR PANDEY** in CHITWAN

When Finance Minister Shankar Koirala presented the annual budget last July, he highlighted “projects of national pride” that he said would be the “lifeline for the economy”.

Besides hydropower and irrigation projects, he unveiled the East-West Electric Railway and the Tarai Hulaki Highway. No one would argue against more efficient mass transit along the Tarai, but the proposed route of the two projects cut through Chitwan National Park, threatening tourism and decades of conservation that has rescued the tiger and rhino from the brink of extinction.

On paper, the idea of upgrading the East-West Highway completed 30 years ago makes sense, since more than half the country's population now lives in the Tarai and the plains provide easier connectivity than the mountains.

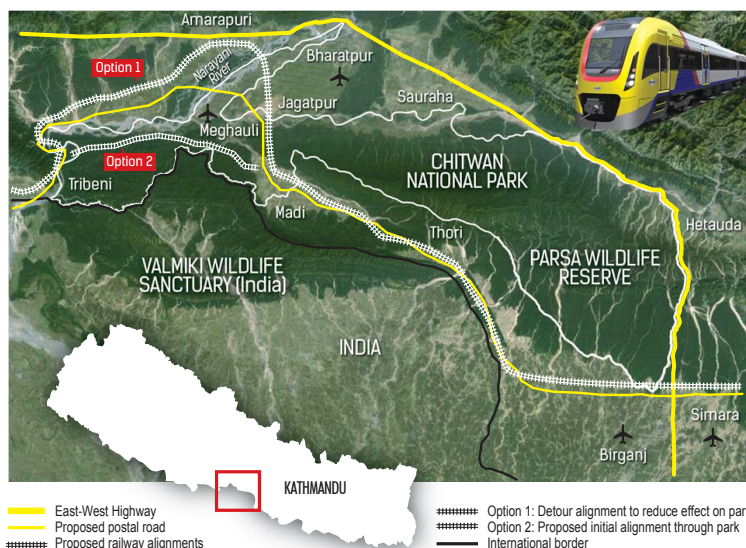
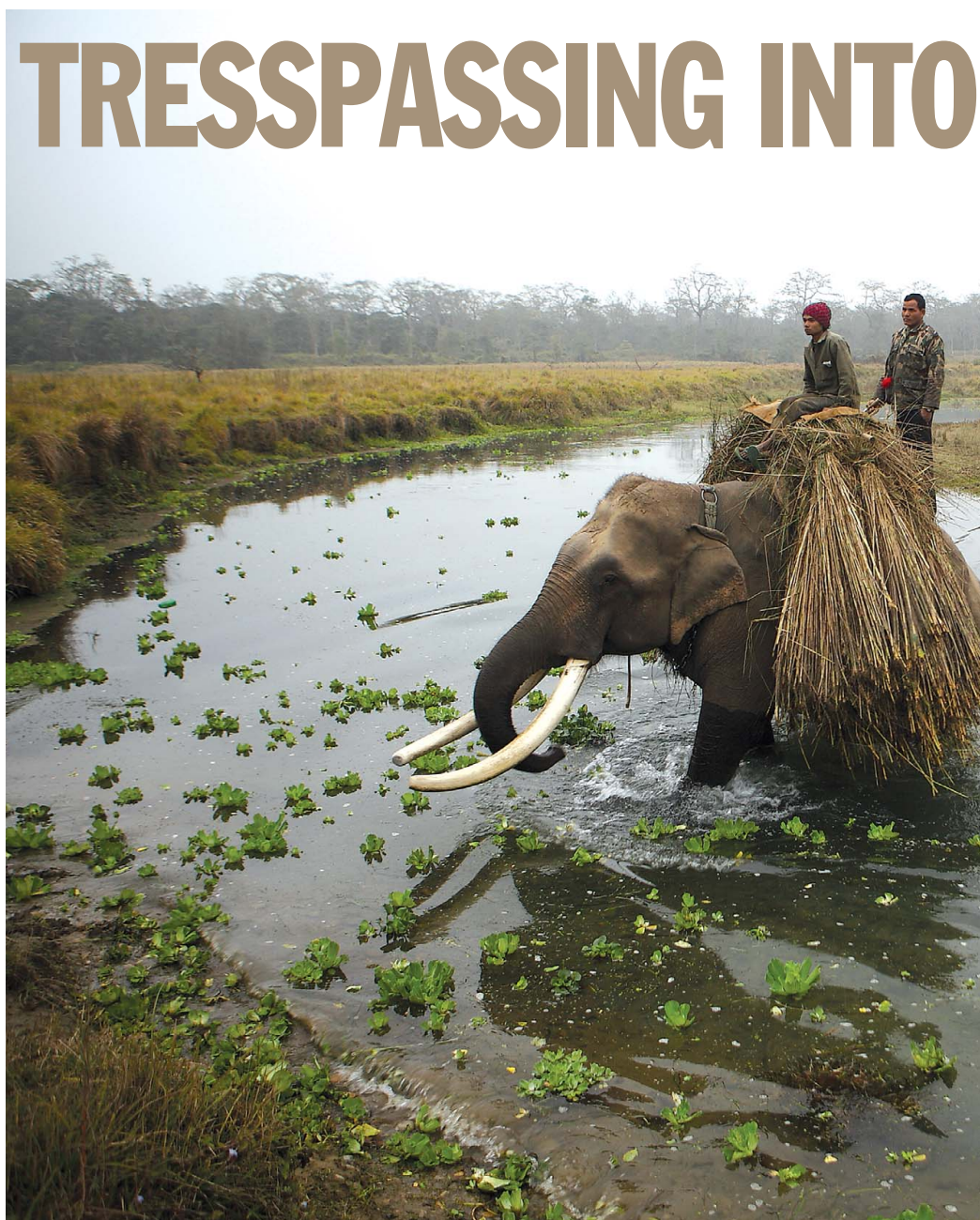
All proposed alignments of the new railway, however, would slice through the sanctuary. Chitwan Valley lies in the Inner Tarai and unlike other parts of southern Nepal, does not have plains bordering India to its south. The national park and its buffer zones therefore lay astride the proposed railroad alignments.

“What will remain of the national park when we have trains passing across the protected areas in 10 years?” rues Chief Warden Kamal Jung Kunwar of Chitwan National Park.

A feasibility study prepared in 2010 for the East-West Railway first took the tracks along the foot of the Someswar Hills near the famous Tiger Tops Resort in Meghauli. But that region is an important corridor for wildlife migration and the national park objected to it, proposing that the railway alignment follow the current Hetauda-Bharatpur road which skirts the park.

“There is no rationale for building a road or railway through one of the world's most outstanding and successfully operating national parks,” says Hemanta Mishra, Nepal's foremost tiger and rhino conservationist and architect of the Chitwan National Park in 1973. “A railway line and a road through the park without a comprehensive environmental and social impact assessment would undo 40 years of investment by the government, private sector, and the local community.”

A leaked detailed project report (DPR) prepared by the Department of Railways and obtained by *Nepali Times* shows various routes have been proposed, all of which cut through the sanctuary (see online). One of the routes involves digging two tunnels 14km and 11km long, but has been abandoned because of





# NATURE

## Planned new east-west railroad and Hulaki highway threaten the Chitwan National Park



SUNAR PANDEY

## The balancing act

Jhamak Karki, former chief warden of Chitwan National Park, was labelled 'anti-development' when he protested the construction of the bridge connecting Ghailaghari and Kasara in 2001. Two years later, the Rapti River flooded the bordering Jagatpur VDC killing nine and destroying 10km of canal, 180 metres embankment transmission line, and 10km of National Park fencing.

"If it wasn't for the short-sightedness of the planners, people wouldn't have lost their lives. The bridge should have been built five kilometres downstream," explains Karki. "The state cannot afford to neglect the well-being of

local communities and the environment when building infrastructure."

Ramiya Chaudhary (*pic, above*) of Ghailaghari is among the hundreds who lost their land and property in the 2003 disaster. "The river destroyed everything and I lived at make shift tents after the flood," she says. "It took me more than year to build a new house."

The current chief warden of the park, Kamal Jung Kunwar, now worries that bridges being built for roads and railways might overlook social costs in the name of reducing construction costs and there might be a repeat of the Ghailaghari tragedy.



OPEN HIGHWAY: A local bus coming from Madi to Bharatpur inside the Chitwan National Park.

SABITA SHRESTHA

## Passing the buck

It is not just the prospect of trains roaring through the Chitwan National Park that is giving conservationists nightmares, it is the construction of feeder roads that will soon crisscross the sanctuary in eight locations (*see map*). The Ministry of Infrastructure Development awarded a contract for a bridge across the Narayani inside the reserve for the road, but after the park objected, the bridge was shifted further upstream.

"Upgrading the feeder roads around Chitwan and Narayani River will cut through the national park and the government is trying to circumvent the Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environment Assessment despite our constant reminders," says Chief Warden Kamal Jung Kunwar.

The Hulaki Road network is an Indian-assisted project launched in 2006 and entails upgrading old postal and feeder roads, totalling over 1,450km across the Tarai. The Rail India Technical and Economic Services (RITES) is involved in the Rs 11 billion project that is designed to improve connectivity in the Tarai.

Project chief Bijendra Bade Shrestha insists that the proposed route of the feeder roads in Chitwan National Park can be changed based on an Environment Impact Assessment. Shrestha says his office has asked the park to conduct the study, while Kunwar says he has received no such request.

cost. The report most favours an alignment that will take the railway south along the Madi to Jagatpur track, across the Narayani in Amarapuri, then south-west across the Chure Hills to Tribeni (*see map, left*).

Chief Warden Kunwar doesn't understand why the railway has to go through the park at all when it could easily follow the existing East-West Highway. He says the impact of the road and railway would be what has been seen on the Tikauli jungle corridor where traffic has seriously disturbed wildlife. "If we cut the national park into pieces with road and rail, it will discourage animals from breeding and reduce the number of tigers and rhinos," he says.


Eco-tourism activists are also worried about the potential impact of a reduction of wildlife and drop in visitor numbers to Chitwan. More than 150,000

people visited the national park in 2013, bringing in revenue of over Rs 177 million in entry fees alone.

Director General of the Department of Railways Rajeswar Man Singh, however, says it is too early to say with certainty if the railway will go through the park. "We still haven't prepared a final report and we will recommend the contractor to take all precautions to make sure the national park is not disturbed."

The department doesn't seem to want to follow the existing East-West Highway because it will add about 30km to the length and prefers a shortcut through the park. If that happens, the question will be which route would be the least harmful to the reserve. In the future, Bharatpur will be a strategic hub for not just east-west transportation, but also

the shortest rail connection between Uttar Pradesh in India and Kerung in Tibet. Already five km of railtrack has been commissioned westward from Simara and the department is requisitioning land along the proposed route and five border links to Indian railways.

Some conservationists think a railway cutting through Chitwan is inevitable and are proposing underpasses for wildlife and fencing to reduce disturbances. Says former Chief Warden Jhamak Karki: "There are examples from around the world of roads and trains cutting through protected areas and there are ways to ease friction between conservation and development." 

nepalTIMES.com

Hemanta's home in the wild, #689  
Quality control in tourism, #659



# Try, try again

Editorials in three mainstream Nepali dailies about the new Constituent Assembly

Kantipur, 22 January

कान्तिपुर

More than 80 per cent of the members in the new CA are newly elected, and this has given the assembly new energy. However, the political parties that govern them are the same. Hence, the parties should learn a lesson or two from the past and not make the same mistakes again. This time, they can't use any excuse to delay the writing of a new constitution. Their commitment to write a new constitution within a year should not be consigned to just being a slogan.

There has been a fundamental shift in the composition of the new CA, however it is still dominated by the three main parties: NC, UML and the Maoists. Therefore, it should be difficult to continue with the existing work on the constitution. However, the RPP-N has emerged as a new party and its views have to be taken into account to work on the basis of a two-thirds majority.

Even though the first CA was unsuccessful, it had some positive accomplishments which



need to be built upon. The issues that were agreed upon can form the basis of its work, and there has been enough debate on issues like federalism, state structure and other issues. The new CA has the opportunity to learn lessons from that debate and incorporate views based on the new mandate after the elections to come up with a long-term document.

If they fail again, they must know that the voters will not forgive them and reactionary powers can stage a comeback.

Annapurna Post, 22 January

अन्नपूर्ण पोस्ट

Nepal has the dubious distinction of being the only country in world history that has conducted two elections to form a Constituent Assembly. The House is meeting two months after the election results were announced. The first as its first epoch-making decision voted to turn the country into a republic, but that CA itself was unfortunately dissolved. This time, there wasn't even an agenda for the first day of the CA meeting on Wednesday.

Despite all this, the pronouncements of the new members have been positive, and the political parties can also learn a lot from the experience of the past. They have also got a message from enthusiastic voters to work for peace, constitution and progress. They have a lot of doubts about whether these will be fulfilled because of past behavior. The public is now aware and alert, they can't be fooled all the time anymore.

Nagarik, 22 January

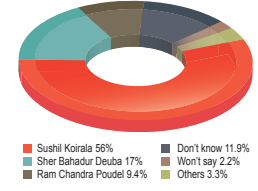
नागरिक

Although the CA that is meeting two months and four days after the election results has tenure of four years, it is supposed to finish writing the constitution in a year. After the first year the CA will serve as a parliament. There are plenty of reasons to doubt whether the CA will be successful in finishing the constitution in one year, but if they fail again the people will not forgive them. And if the elected members can't write a democratic constitution, we can't dismiss the possibility of the rise of dictatorship. The main obstacle to a democratic constitution is the disagreement over the kind of federalism. The reality is that no one part of the country is dominated by any one ethnic group or caste. This is why there is no basis for carving the country up along ethnic lines. While demarcating federal units, let's not let that be the basis for future conflict. The other two obstacles are state structure and election process. The Proportional Representation provision, though well-intentioned has been misused in this CA, and in future could be used by autocratic leaders. There are good and bad example of parliamentary and presidential systems around the world. The members have to decide what is best for Nepal and under Nepali conditions.

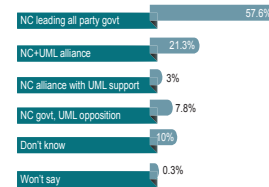
## Weekly bazar poll

In weekly polls conducted with the support of The Asia Foundation, *Himal Khabarpatrika* asks 361 respondents in 12 cities across Nepal every Monday for their opinion on contemporary issues. This week's question was on the politics and state restructuring.

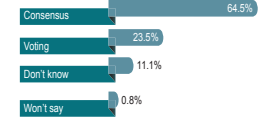
Which NC leader should be Prime Minister?



Who do you think should lead the government?



How should the indecision within NC be decided?



## Connecting people

Interview with Anuprjan Bhattarai, the newly appointed Managing Director at Nepal Telecom, *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 19 January

हिमाल

**What do you plan to achieve during your term as the Managing Director?**

We will focus our attention towards expanding mobile internet. We want to improve the quality of our network and tie up with handset companies to make smartphones accessible to more users.

**Why hasn't Nepal Telecom's quality improved over the years?**

We have formed committees to look into the quality improvement of GSM mobile service. People in Kathmandu will notice a significant improvement in our network's quality within a month.

**Is it true that Nepal Telecom is incurring heavy losses like other government owned enterprises?**

Nepal Telecom is a brand recognised across Nepal. I will tap into its brand name to make the company stronger. The only path now for us is to move forward.

**Why hasn't Nepal Telecom brought about aggressive expansion strategies and new programs for its long term benefit?**

We are a government enterprise so bringing new services takes longer time through the public procurement. By the time we introduce a new service, the technology is too old for the users. We are working with Public Procurement Monitoring Office to ease the process so we can introduce our new services faster. 3G internet will be expanded across different districts and home- to- fiber technology for those who want higher internet bandwidth will soon be made available.



## In retrospect

UCPN(M) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal's speech to party members, *Nepal*, 19 January

नेपाल

The results of the second CA election may have been unprecedented for our party, but this is a result of both internal weakness and opportunism of external elements. Even though conspiracies, irregularities and downright fraud characterised this year's elections, it is important also to reflect where we as a party went wrong. I have prepared this draft with the hope of correcting past mistakes and for a historical rebuilding of our party.

### External reasons for our loss

- Long-standing status-quoist pro-monarchy forces became prevalent against the change proposed and brought about by the Peoples' War and the 19-day historical uprising
- Many of our own supporters were denied the right to vote because their names were removed from the voters' lists
- Since the 2006 uprising, many of our rural supporters have gone abroad
- Anti-change media tampered with our

messages of identity and federalism thus misinforming the people of our true agendas

- Our party's split divided our own supporters against each other, and other opposition parties like NC and UML took this opportunity to buy votes in bulk
- Because the last CA failed to draft a constitution, people paid more attention to candidates proposing development plans
- Surprising and unlimited spending by reactionaries and opportunists
- Widespread vote fraud

### Internal reasons

- We were the largest party, but still the people never warmed to our ideals
- We couldn't take a stand regarding who should lead an electoral government and we made a suicidal move by trusting the bureaucracy by overlooking its conservatism
- Internal squabbles made both our government and party ineffective.
- Working-class values were lost and the centralist policy of the party did not allow for sharing of responsibilities. We tried to reform our party's structure at the Hetauda convention but instead

had to accept a short-term goal of going into elections under the chairman's leadership, instead of divesting powers

- Our party could not play a leading role in conserving the country's sovereignty, as shaped by the uprising, and weaknesses led to compromises in the name of balancing diplomacy
- We fell into the trap of overestimating ourselves and underestimating rivals
- We didn't pay attention to the technical details of campaigning for an election and we failed to mobilize the YCL like we did in 2008
- Our inability to maintain a standard while selecting and balancing FPTP and PR candidates is a sign of factionalism, egotist thinking, and liberal leadership
- Party ranks were maintained on money instead of party spirit
- Members took money from reactionaries and worked against their own party
- We failed to distinguish identity and federalism from caste-based conflicts and convince people that our agendas were central to removing the prevalent class divide in our society

The party's chairman is to blame for all these shortcomings. Because of liberalism at the top, our party was transformed from being the representative of the working class into a characterless, morally unsound, and corrupt collection of lumpen proletarians.



अन्नपूर्ण पोस्ट Suman in Annapurna Post, 19 January

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Solve your party's internal conflict, Sushil because it is blocking the way for consensus.”



UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal to Nepali Congress President Sushil Koirala, Rajdhani, 23 January



# Illiterate literates of Bajhang

Basanta Pratap Singh,  
Annapurna Post, 20 January

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

If government records are to be believed, 21 VDCs of the remote hill district of Bajhang in western Nepal boast near 100 per cent literacy. And district education officer, Jagannath Upadhyay, claims the remaining 26 VDCs will become fully literate within a year.

Volunteers and monitors, however, are skeptical about the scope and effectiveness of the literacy drives. More than Rs 80 million – from state coffers and donor agencies – has been splurged on the campaign in Bajhang so far, out of which nearly Rs 30 million was spent in the past two years alone. For the fiscal year 2012/13, the District Education Office's (DEO) report states Rs 1.95 million was spent on training 791 volunteers and 45 inspectors, an additional Rs 6 million was earmarked as 'volunteer encouragement allowance', Rs 750,000 was used for inspecting classes, Rs 2 million on stationery, and Rs 1.8 million on transportation and textbooks.

For a person to be considered literate, she must be able to read and write short and simple sentences in Nepali, perform simple mathematical calculations, and know how



USELESS: Forms, textbooks, and materials meant for adult literacy classes in Bajhang lie in a pile of waste at a teacher's home

to use the internet and cell phones. However, almost all the villagers we talked to, were infuriated when they found out what was going on behind their backs. Leave alone operating mobiles, they say they cannot even sign their own names and have to still rely on fingerprints.

According to official documents, 555 women and 236 men participated in adult literacy classes for Deulek VDC in the previous fiscal year. But long time resident, Birma Devi Kami, says she has never heard about such classes. Another local, Khiru Khadka, said: "We are illiterate, not ignorant. We know that officials are lying about the

literacy campaign and siphoning off money in our name." Both their names are listed in the 'literate' roster.

Similarly, the DEO report from Hemantawada VDC shows 871 individuals were taught to read and write last year for which 58 female volunteer teachers were mobilised. The village is considered '100 per cent literate'. However, resident Parvati Oli claims most volunteers did not even conduct a single class.

Speaking anonymously, a volunteer admitted that she has been receiving a stipend without teaching for the last three years. "Everybody does the same, so why should I bother?" she added

without hesitation. Most of the textbooks that she was given to distribute to students have either been sold or have piled up in a corner of her house.

Other teachers argue that locals are simply not interested in learning. Pushpa Jethara, a volunteer in Kailash-9, says she waited fruitlessly for two weeks before cancelling classes. Sharmila Singh, a volunteer from Kailash-7, claims she went door-to-door asking people to join the literacy class, but all of them turned her down. "Villagers told me they had no time for lessons because they had to work and some even said there is no point in learning to read and write. I lost my enthusiasm after a week," states Singh.

In Kailash, another VDC listed as fully literate, 657 participants are shown to have attended classes conducted by 43 volunteers. But according to former head of Kailash, Surat Bahadur Singh, while a few women took classes, most locals are still illiterate. District education officer Upadhyay, on the other hand, says it does not matter if 'a few locals' did not participate. "It is internationally established that a VDC with 95 per cent literacy is fully literate," he claims.

The literacy campaigns are being conducted through

various high schools, community learning centres, and NGOs in the district. These institutions were supposed to provide five-day orientation to their volunteer teachers, but cut short the training to only two days. Volunteers and inspectors complain that they got less than their promised salary, but no one lodged a formal complaint because they had been found short of performing their duties as well. "What do we protest against when we have been pocketing money for work we have not been doing," says one, grinning.

None of the schools have completed the full duration of the program: one hour classes daily for three months. Most wrapped up lessons up within 15 days and pocketed rest of the budget.

The monitoring mechanism of the program required inspectors to fill up evaluation forms for each centre before the District Education Office could disburse the stipends. Volunteers too had to submit similar forms for their students. However, the DEO violated the guidelines and as a result, millions were embezzled.

The government has allocated nearly Rs 20 million for literacy campaigns in Bajhang this year, targeting 28,117 women and 6,285 men in 26 VDCs. The same 26 organisations have been assigned the task.

Translated by Centre for Investigative Journalism

nepalintimes.com

For longer version



## Hero

प्रस्तुत गर्दछ

नेपालको पहिलो पटक

तर्फको

**वारेन्टी\***

सबै बाइकहरुमा

### हाम्रा बाइकहरु टिकाउ छन् र अब वारेन्टी पनि त्यस्तै

तपाईं चाहनु हुन्छ आफ्नो जीवनमा हरेक चीज बढी प्राप्त होस् - हियो पूरा गर्छ त्यस्तो चाहनालाई आफ्नो विश्वस्तरीय गुणस्तरको आधारमा । अब हियो पेश गर्दछ ५ वर्ष वारेन्टी, नेपालमै पहिलो पटक । यस्तो प्रस्तुति सम्भव छ मात्र हियो जस्तो कम्पनीबाट जस्का ५ करोड बाइक विश्व सडकमा गुडी रहेका छन् ।



**अद्वितीय माइलेज**

**भरपर्दो विश्वसनीयता**

**बेजोड तथा आकर्षक बनावट**

**किफायती संचालन र रेखदेख**

**उच्चतम पुनर्वित्री मूल्य**

\*शर्तहरू छन् । वारेन्टी अवधि: ५ वर्ष वा मोटरसाईकलको लागि ७०,००० कि.मी./स्कूटरको लागि ५०,००० कि.मी. जुनसुकै पहिलो हुन्छ । १० जनवरी तथा त्यसपछि बिक्री भएका सबै नयाँ हियो बाइकहरुमा यो वारेन्टी लागू हुनेछ । हियो मोटो-कर्पका अधिकृत विक्रेता नेपाल जेनरल मार्केटिङ प्रा. लि. तथा NGM का अधिकृत डिलरहरु मार्फत मात्र यो वारेन्टी प्रदान हुनेछ ।

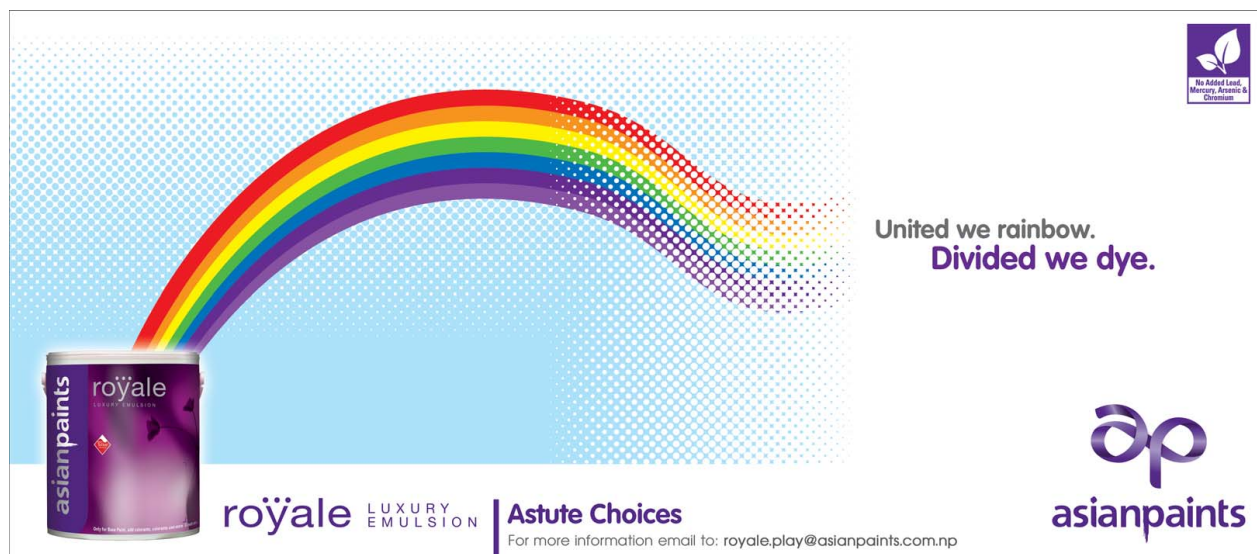
रजिस्टर्ड कार्यालय: हियो मोटो-कर्प लिमिटेड, ३४, कम्पुनिटी सेटर वसन्त लोक, वसन्त विहार, नयाँ दिल्ली - ११००५७, भारत, वेबसाइट: [www.heromotocorp.com](http://www.heromotocorp.com)

अधिकृत विक्रेता: नेपाल जेनरल मार्केटिङ प्राइभेट लिमिटेड, ज्योति भवन, १९१९, कान्तिपथ, जी.पी.ओ. बक्स नं. १३३, काठमाडौं, नेपाल

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# Living to eat



The reason the CIAA has such a difficult time controlling graft and corruption in Nepal is not, as you might expect, because it has a soft spot for beetle nuts. The real reason is linguistic and religious. In Nepal we don't eat to live, we live to eat. We also love to eat. In this country, we will eat anything that moves, even if it not strictly fit for human consumption.

The crux of the biscuit is the verb in Nepali for 'eat' ('khanu'), which is used for a lot more than ingesting dal bhat and tarkari. We don't smoke cigarettes, for example, we eat them ('churot khanu'). Beer is a liquid, but we never drink it, we eat it ('beer khanu'). We don't shoot the breeze, we eat it ('hawa khanu'). When Nepalis greet you with "Khanu bho?" they don't really want a detailed listing of your lunch in the order that you ate it, they are just saying "How's it hangin, bro?" or words to that effect. When students fail their SLC, believe it or not they have to eat their report cards ('fail khayou'). The great thing about kissing someone in Nepali

is that you can also get to eat that person ('moi khanu').

And when they got elected to power, the Maobadis came to be known as 'Khaobadis' because they ate up other people's money. On Tuesday, the new Constipation Assembly members didn't take their oaths of office, they ate them ('sapat khanu'). Which is why, to cut a long story short, here in Nepal, we don't take bribes, we eat them ('ghoos khanu'). So when someone like Dr Govinda KC wants to protest the medical mafia feeding up to 60 corodes in ghos for new hospital affiliations, he stops eating in symbolic protest. If Messrs Loktantra Man & Co over at the CIAA really wants to get to the bottom, as it were, of endemic corruption in this country he could start by reducing his personal daily intake of supari and go on a diet.

When actress Rekha Thapa ate a kiss on the cheek of a Raute Chieftain two months ago, she had expected the man to be eternally grateful. He probably was,

but the rest of the tribe took serious umbrage at this insult to their hunter-gatherer slash-and-burn cultural way of life and refused the sacks of rice she gifted them. Now, the Rekha Thapa Foundation has donated three goats to the clan as compensation for the emotional stress she put them through by attempting oral rehydration therapy with the chief in full view of the national media. She has also offered a scholarship to a boy who was playing around in the dirt as a sign of goodwill. Slight problem: the boy, it turns out, isn't a Raute at all.

ॐ

One has to be impressed with the can-do attitude of the Newpal Police. No problem is too small for them, no detail too slight. They are leaving no stone overturned in their effort to make Kathmandu a safer place to live in. Break-ins are on the rise, there are armed robberies on buses, half of Kathmandu now suffers from asthma because of the dust we have eaten over the last two-and-half years in Lajimpat because of road-widening, and in response the Nepal Police has launched a drive against jaywalking. In an effort to show just how serious they are about stopping people from crossing the road anywhere they jolly well please, police have started arresting this latest threat to national security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. Perpetrators are detained and inflicted 40 lashes with a wet rattan cane on their buttocks ('kutai khanu').

The Ass



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