



JUST FREE
EDITORIAL
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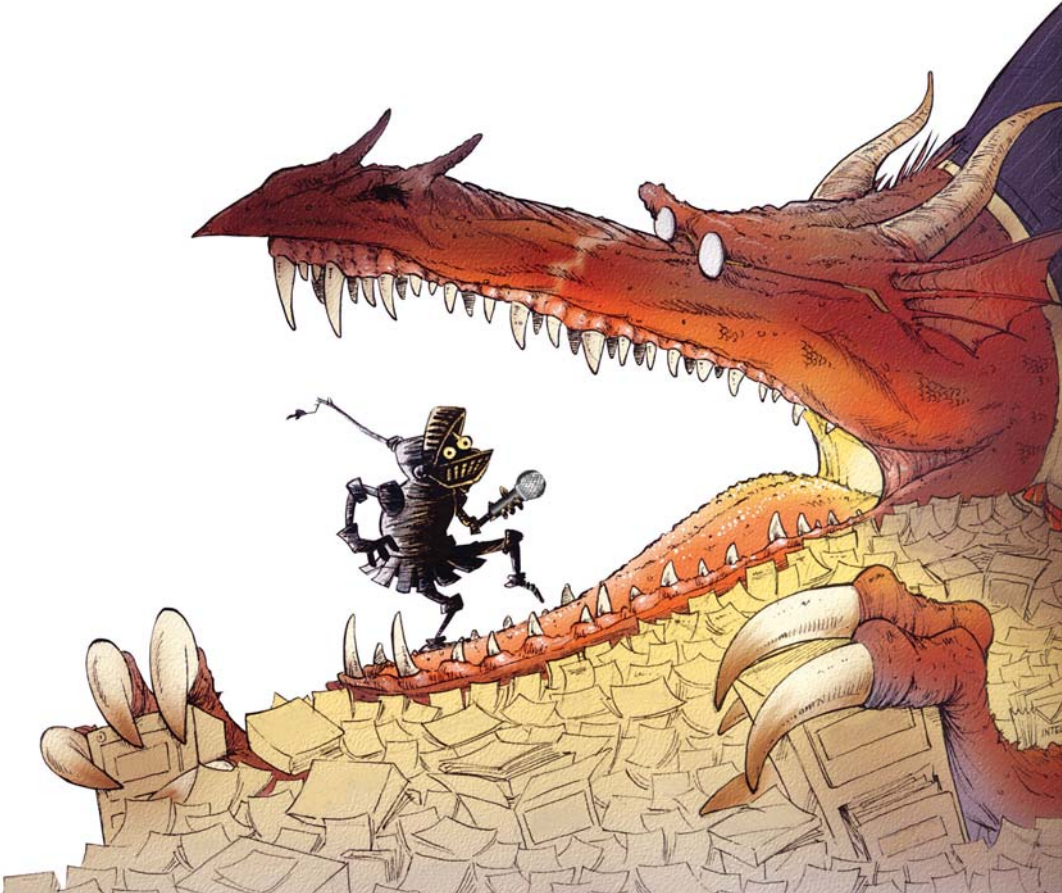
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JUST FREE

World Press Freedom Day is a timely reminder for us in the Nepali media to protect the freedom to be fair.

On 3 May the world will mark Press Freedom Day. Although dedicated to journalists who struggle for the freedom to uncover the truth, the day actually commemorates the citizen’s right to know. Journalists are only defending that right to information every individual must have to allow the system of democracy to function as designed.

Democracy needs participation of the people to vote so as to stimulate collective action for societal betterment. But participation is not possible without free and open communication. For the Nepali media it has been one long struggle to create an open society and defend press freedom.

From the Rana period to 30 years of the partyless Panchayat system, through the post-1990 democracy years and the decade of conflict, the return of an autocratic king and the past seven

years of the peace process, the media has repeatedly struggled to protect not just its own freedom, but also the political rights of citizens.

Many times over the past 60 years, the media has been at the forefront of successive pro-democracy movements in Nepal. We in the media have often been singled out for attacks by both the extreme left and the extreme right for this activist role. These two poles of the political spectrum are by nature pro-populism and anti-pluralism, for control and against transparency. We have seen in our own recent history how both the radical right and left are in cahoots to squeeze the middle democratic space.

Whatever Freedom House may say, one can’t be ‘partly free’. Freedom is an absolute. The fourth estate’s role is to be a part of the checks and balance in a democracy, the necessity of playing an adversarial (but not partisan) role to the power of the state. At times of prolonged post-war political transition like the one we are going through now, battered democratic institutions are trying to get back on their feet. The legislature struggles with performance legitimacy, the executive is rent with contradictions and infighting, the independence of the judiciary (as we are seeing in the Supreme Court drama this week) itself is compromised by politicians.

It is at times like these, when the three pillars of democracy are fragile, that the media’s fourth pillar must help buttress the system. Unfortunately, despite its long history of struggle

and constitutionally guaranteed freedoms, we see an inexplicable erosion of commitment to healthy public debate. There is an attempt to justify controls, excuse the use of political violence, and instead of being a check on abuse of power the press allows itself to be a part of state-sponsored witch-hunts.

Willingly or unwittingly, it plays cheerleader to the state. It becomes an enthusiastic ally in deflecting debate away from human rights to foreign investment in the media. The past weeks offer lessons to the proponents of a free press that constitutional guarantees are not enough to protect freedom of expression. Freedom is like a rubber band, you have to stretch it to make it work. Press freedom must be defended by its maximum application.

A society that doesn’t stand up for justice for survivors and relatives of victims of the conflict cannot guarantee social justice either. If the voice of conflict victims can be silenced, what hope is there for journalists to be heard? When transitional mechanisms do not respect international laws, foreign investors will lose their confidence in the rule of law. A media that deliberately misuses freedoms to sow confusion and disinformation cannot be a defender of fairness and justice. As we have seen elsewhere in region and the world, xenophobia and ultra-nationalism is then the last refuge of scoundrels.

In a society cursed by inequality, discrimination and exclusion, it is not as important for the media to be objective as it is to be fair. To be fair is to give more weightage to those who don’t have a voice, the downtrodden and the left out. For tens of thousands of Nepali families who can’t yet have closure, the war never ended. And if it hasn’t ended for them, it hasn’t ended for the rest of us either.

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

THE EVEREST SAGA

What does it mean if you summit a mountain by passing all the risk onto someone else (“Taking chances on Chomolungma”, David Durkan, #704)? If the high altitude workers set up all the ladders for you, are you really a “mountaineer” in the traditional sense? I recognise that “Instant Everest” brings Nepal, the Solo Khumbu region, and high altitude workers much needed income but I feel that a real re-assessment of value for the work and risk that these high altitude workers carry will only happen when they get much more recognition for the support they provide to visitors who flock to Nepal with Everest in their eyes.

Sangita S

■ This Everest tragedy must in the same way not be blamed on – as some writers have done – solely on pay scales or financial inequities or job responsibilities or financial greed or inhumane selfishness by foreign climbers or incompetent bureaucracy or incoherent expedition planning by government and so on. All of these elements may have had a part to play and, therefore, any solutions for mitigating the effects of future disasters must address all stakeholders and all potentially contributing factors as a whole—a system, and not as individual aspects to be dealt with by diverse departments, agencies and other stakeholders in an uncoordinated fashion.

If, indeed, a coordinated mechanism for change could be accepted and supported, it must determine priorities in consideration of work opportunities and long-term environmental effects before engaging in more focused deliberations about pay scales, pay equity, fees, expedition staff roles and responsibilities, insurance, limitations on the number of climbers, scheduling, vetting of climbing companies and other aspects. I cannot stress enough that without a trans-stakeholder approach, engaging multiple stakeholders in reasoned, patient deliberations leading to coherent policy formulation and – essentially – implementation, improvements in the mountaineering context will remain wanting.

IGS

■ We have not realised the appalling conditions the Nepali people have to endure on the world’s highest mountain so others can earn great money. The writer is right to challenge injustice.

Punya

■ There are a lot of good points made by David Durkan. But the points would have been better made if the author had kept the sarcasm, cynicism and hate out of his writing and presented it more objectively.

Paul Krugman

■ The joint demands from Everest Base Camp had many operators and owners as some of the signatories, and this brings an absolute conflict of

interest. Unless the demands come from strictly ‘climbing Sherpa guides’ without any influence from trekking operators and owners, we won’t be finding a decent solution for climbing Sherpa guides.

Karsang Sherpa

■ David Durkan’s enthusiasm is vital to raise important questions in this serious matter of people losing their lives at work and families being left behind. At the same time, the tourism industry is vital to Nepal. It is easy for us westerners to say “take the mountain back to us climbers”. What right do we have? And what would that mean to the people who work in the tourist industry and to the sons, daughters and wives who need food, shelter and education. It’s time for action, not retraction. It is time to address safety and mountain workers rights, such as education, payment and insurance.

Randi Skaug

■ There would be no “Instant Everest” if the government did not want it. It is the government’s duty to ensure that Nepali parties i.e. high altitude workers are compensated fairly and are not abused by richer, cleverer foreign parties.

Satya Nepali

■ There is no need to run down other climbers with this judgmental, holier-than-thou attitude. Toning down the rhetoric would have made your points much more persuasive: better work conditions for the Nepali staff,

higher peak fees to reduce crowding, reducing the number of expeditions and climbers allowed on the mountain, and required pre-expedition experience of clients.

Tenzing

■ The only good thing that the officials of Nepali government are good at is corruption (“A dangerous place to work,” Jon Gangal, #704). All Sherpas should unite and go on strike and cancel all future expeditions. This is the only way to teach a lesson to Nepali officials.

The recent disaster on Everest that saw more than a dozen Sherpas killed is a grim reminder of the tremendous risks these people face on expeditions. (“Dangerous business,” Editorial, #704). Over the years, even amateurs have climbed the peak, thanks to the Sherpas.

It’s said that the Sherpas literally carry most of the mountaineers from abroad on their shoulders to the top. Yet for all the hard work, they’re not adequately paid. Therefore, in light of the grave risks they face on the slope of the peak, it’s only right that they ought to be adequately compensated.

Hari Prasad Wagle

■ The relationship between climbers and porters must change, formally (employment conditions and insurance) and informally (“Instant Everest,” Bhrikuti Rai and Matt Miller, #704).

@pigreen

WOUNDS OF WAR

Has anyone compiled a list of all known human rights abuses during the civil war (“Haunted by ghosts of the past”, Rubeena Mahato, #704)? Which leads to the deeper question: Was it a civil war, or are we calling it the ‘conflict’?

Namah

■ Compensation of human loss by money is not a remedy for victim.

@raj_srn

MUSEUM REVISITED

After reading this and seeing the photos I can’t wait to pay a visit to the Patan Museum (“Patan’s living museum, Hariz Baharudin and Toh Ee Ming, #704). It’s been a while.

Saroj Shrestha

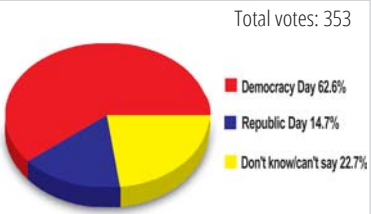
■ From what I have seen, it’s gorgeous.

Stuti Basnyat



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DHANUSHA -- While 50,000 plus students who gave their SLC examinations last month anxiously await their results, 1,070 students from three centres in Dhanusha district still have their Social Studies paper to complete.



HERE WE GO
Trishna Rana

On the early morning of 25 March, during a quotidian security check at centre 'Kha' in Yadukoha, parents became unnerved when police frisked their children, which then led to a heated argument and scuffle between the guardians and a female police. The tension spread to the other two centres and, unable to control the belligerent crowd, security personnel opened fire at the exam hall in nearby Dhabauli injuring two students.

Seeking to defuse the crisis, officials from the CDO, District Education Office, and the police assured students and parents that there would be a retest and convinced them to let the remaining exams proceed peacefully.

However, more than a month after the event, the future of the students remains in limbo. In the



SURESH YADAV/NAGARIK

A Tarai test case

Police firing at an exam centre in the Tarai and apathy of politicians make slogans about uplifting marginalised groups ring hollow

past weeks, student unions have shut down schools in the district and announced a general strike to pressurise the government to take quick action.

A three-member probe committee set up by the Ministry of Education arrived in Janakpur on Wednesday to assess the situation and prepare a report. It is baffling that an examination

board with decades of experience does not seem to have a clear action plan or guideline in the case of an emergency when exams are disrupted and questions are released early like in Dhanusha.

"We didn't make any promises of retest that day because we don't have the authority to make such decisions. We told guardians that we would recommend

the Office of the Controller of Examinations in Kathmandu to let the students retake their Social Studies exam," says CDO Hari Prasad Mainali. "Now it is up to the SLC board to decide."

The state's lackadaisical attitude and sluggish response have disheartened students and guardians. According to student leader and youth activist

Saroj Mishra, the minister of education Chitrlekha Yadav wasn't even aware of the confrontation until very recently when she came on an official visit to Janakpur.

The NC's Ram Krishna Yadav, who won 2013 elections from Dhanusha-2, did raise the issue on the CA floor, but most Tarai-based parties and politicians have remained shockingly mum. The future of thousands of students is at stake, many of whom see passing their SLC exam as a way to break out of the cycle of poverty despite the staggeringly low pass rates.

It is at times like these when political parties' grandiose promises of promoting the Madhesi identity and bringing the concerns of historically marginalised groups into the national mainstream ring hollow.

The unfortunate event at Yadukoha and Dhabauli once again highlight unwarranted police brutality and impunity in the region. The police could have fired tear gas or used rubber bullets to disperse the crowd. Instead they resorted to firing live rounds into an unarmed group of agitated parents and students.

"Yes, parents and students were also at fault, but so far nobody has even bothered to find out who was responsible for the shooting. The state is trying to cover up the police's misdeeds" says Mishra.

The government needs to move swiftly and make a decision not only on the fate of the 1,070 students, but also prosecute the police personnel who pulled the trigger. 🇳🇵

Justifying the justices

BINITA DAHAL

After a three-year delay, the Judicial Council finally recommended eight names for positions in the Supreme Court last week, and immediately plunged into a huge row over its choice of disputed figures.

The Judicial Council led by Chief Justice Damodar Prasad Sharma, included Law Minister Narahari Acharya, Justice Ram Kumar Prasad Shah, and two lawyers Upendra Keshari Neupane and Khem Narayan Dhungana. All had reportedly pushed their own candidates for the vacant positions in the Supreme Court.

The appointment of the controversial judges have raised questions of accountability of the Judicial Council itself, with blistering attacks from the Nepal Bar Association, the second largest party in parliament the UML, former chief justices, and the legal community at large.

Analysts have pointed out that at a time when the performance of the executive and the legislature leave much to be desired during the constitution-writing process, the role of an independent judiciary becomes even more important. However, they say, the new appointments will raise questions about the integrity and independence of the Supreme Court itself.

Former Chief Justices Min Bahadur Rayamajhi and Anup Raj Sharma have been sharply critical of the appointments, questioning the motives of the Judicial Council in bypassing temporary justices of the Supreme Court, who have been at their jobs for the last five years and distinguished themselves with some landmark rulings.

One of the judges from the Appellate Court recommended by the Judicial Council is Cholendra Samsher Rana, who was named for action by three divisional benches, including one of former Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi. Rana was accused of giving a clean chit to many corrupt figures when he was in the Supreme Court.

The choice of Gopal Prasad Parajuli, Jagadish Sharma Poudel and other judges over serving temporary Supreme Court justices who have performed well in the past three to five years has raised eye brows. Temporary justices bypassed by the Judicial Council were endorsed twice in past parliamentary hearings.

And while there are two vacant posts remaining for permanent and almost ten posts for temporary justices, the Judicial Council has recommended only eight career judges. The remaining two permanent posts have apparently been left vacant for two members recommended by the then Nepali Congress-led Nepal Bar Association and the Jhalanath Khanal cabinet respectively.

Initially, the Judicial Council had asked Nepal Bar Association and Legal Department to recommend ten and five figures respectively to be justices. In the end, the Judicial Council ignored those names and chose controversial career judges, paving the way for them to be ultimately named Chief Justice.

The Judicial Council has been embroiled in controversy in the past for appointing justices with political affiliations. There was an infamous case two years ago of some judges appointed to the appellate court immediately going to the UML headquarters to thank party leaders.

The recent retirement of five temporary Supreme Court justices had left only five serving justices including the Chief Justice resulting in a massive backlog of 17,000 cases.

Chief Justice Sharma and other members of the Judicial Council are under heavy pressure to clarify the criteria for their appointments. The controversy means that the ratification of the nominations by parliament will also run into trouble. 🇳🇵

The Judicial Council and the Law Minister have come under fire for their Supreme Court nominations



To go or not to go



If Nepalis can't go to UK colleges, it seems UK colleges will come to Nepal

More than 3,000 Nepali students went to UK for higher studies last year, and although student visa rules have been tightened, Britain is still a much sought after destination for education. All that may change with the establishment of insitutions like The British College in Kathmandu.

If Nepalis can't go to UK colleges, it seems UK colleges will come to Nepal. The British College is offering a British education through its fully franchised partnership with UK-Leeds Metropolitan University and University of West England at its campus in Kathmandu.

"I wanted to create an opportunity for the normal Nepalis who still want to get the UK qualification, but in a much more affordable way," said Rajen Kandel of The British College. Nepali born Kandel speaks with a British accent and it is his job

to convince Nepali applicants that it is 10 times cheaper to get a UK education in Nepal than in UK.

Kandel went to the University of Greenwich in the UK 15 years ago when he was just 18. After establishing the South London College in Britain and dabbling in various other businesses, this is his first venture in Nepal. "I wanted to do something for the country that I was born in," he said.

However, people still prefer a degree from UK even if it is

more expensive. It is a matter of perception that a UK degree is more internationally recognised. The British College tries to change that by being practical, affordable, and ensuring the same quality of instruction, says Kandel.

The Nepali faculty is screened by university officials prior to ever teaching a class to meet UK standards. There are guest and visiting professors from UK as well. The British College currently started offering A-level, undergraduate and postgraduate level studies at its glaringly large building in Thapatali two years ago.

Many Nepali students go to UK because it is easier to get a student visa and stay behind. Some don't even bother to enroll when they get to London and stay on illegally. But with Britain tightening the loophole, the number has come down to 3,000 from a peak of 20,000 in 2009.

"I personally have seen many students who went to the UK to study but actually wound up getting nothing. They wasted their time and they couldn't get work," said Kandel. "If I had the option of getting a UK degree in Nepal I would have done it myself."

Kandel has his sights on not just Nepali students, but ensuring that his college is a centre of excellence that can also attract foreign students. At present there are six foreign students in a student body of 530.

Matt Miller

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Alice is a quintessential family restaurant because of the fact that one can spend quality time in a peaceful environment and well facilitated dining destination. Secluded from the hustle and bustle of busy streets, the location was cautiously thought of considering the fact that the restaurant was set up not too long ago.

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Awesome twosome
After a 7-year hiatus, Tuborg is back with its Maha Jatra gala celebration. Headlining the festivities will be well-loved comedy duo Madan Krishna Shrestha and Hari Bansha Acharya. The Jatra starts on 26 May at Nepal Pragya Pratishtan in Kathmandu.



Gear up
United Traders Syndicate is organising a test drive week for those who want to experience the feel of driving the 11th Generation Toyota Corolla. Those interested can head over to Vaidya's Organisation of Industries and Trading Houses in Tinkune, Kathmandu for the free trial which lasts until 4 May.

Winning streak
Qatar Duty Free (QDF) has been named Travel Retailer of The Year for the third consecutive year, at the 2014 DFNI (Duty Free News International) Global Awards for Travel Retail Excellence. "QDF is totally committed to providing travelers with the highest quality of service," said Senior Vice President Keith Hunter.



KUNAL Living Décor Sale!
Kunal furnishing is offering discount up to 50 per cent on a range of furnishing items including curtains, rugs, furnitures and other selected items. The sale began from the New Year.

Shoot all
Triveni Byapar, the authorised distributor of Panasonic Appliances for Nepal launched Panasonic HC-MDH2 video camera recently. according to the company, the camera is suited for shooting all events including weddings, seminars, documentaries and sports events.



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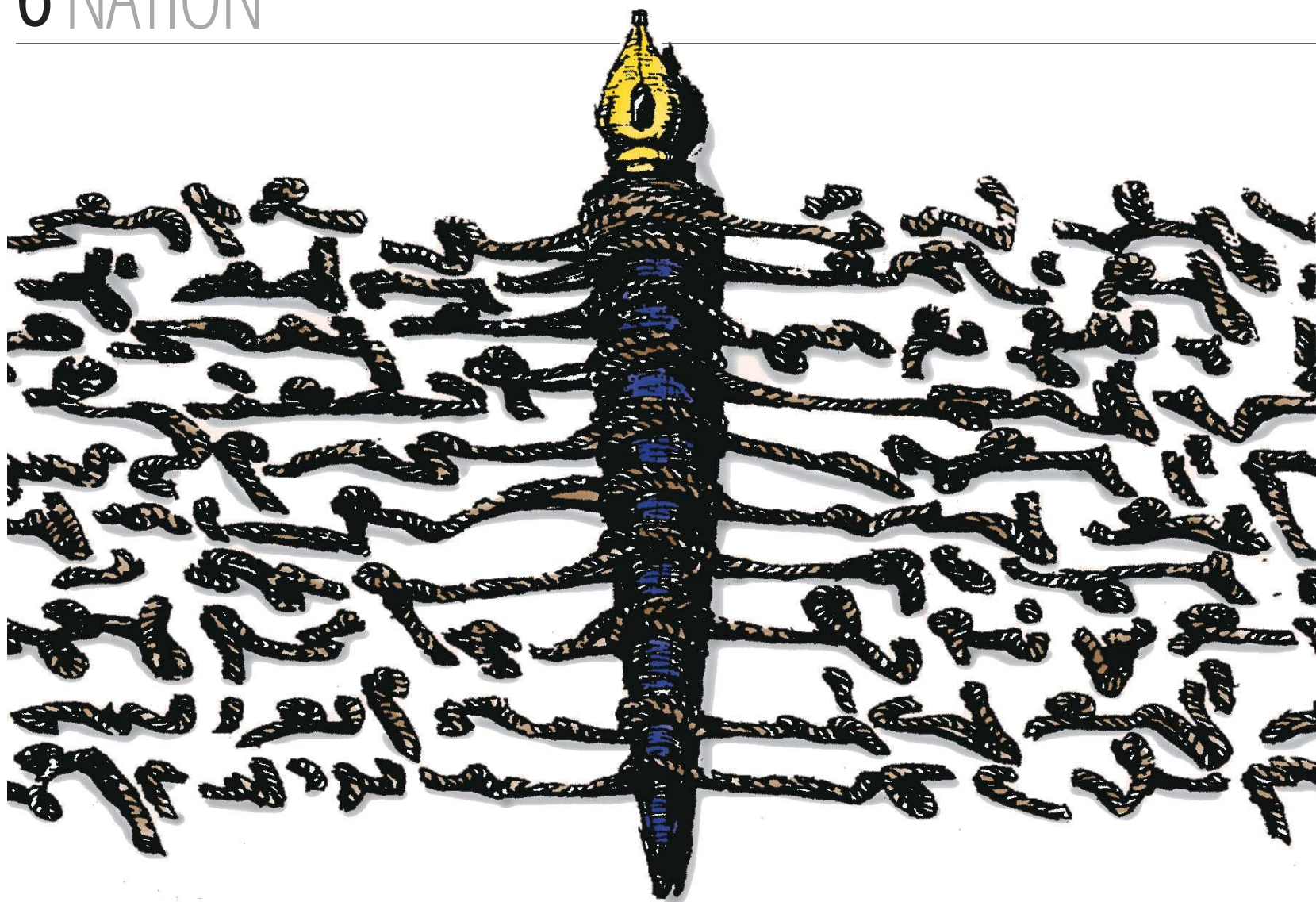
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Bypassing the bosses

On World Press Freedom Day, there are more reasons to be optimistic than pessimistic about the Nepali media

On 3 May, we mark World Press Freedom Day. The week will be replete with self-praise by journalists, owners of big media patting themselves on the backs for upholding



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

democracy and defending people's right to information.

Editorials will be written and newly elected functionaries at the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) will reprint last years'

statement, making familiar pledges. The next day, we will go back to doing what we do best: making the most dim-witted look grand in overblown profiles, reprinting press releases and being satisfied with the shallow, superficial and puerile.

Two-and-one-half decades into the free market, news has become another commodity to be bought and sold, and what seems to matter increasingly is not its content but how it is packaged.

Two months ago, the Centre for Investigative Journalism where I am program manager exposed a politician for his explicit role in a terror attack which killed five and injured scores of innocent people in Janakpur. Since then, the mainstream media has brought out bits and pieces of

the ex-minister's past criminal record. But not with the same prominence as it earlier printed his garlanded picture after he won the CA elections riding from Dhanusha on money and muscle power. Both were news, packaged differently but sold to the same public.

When the Khil Raj government proposed Lok Man Singh Karki as CIAA chief last year, apart from a fringe section, the entire media fraternity was up in arms against the appointment of a man with questionable integrity in a constitutional body. A year later, all is forgotten and the same media is highlighting his preachy remarks on good governance, his past record air brushed over.

An investigative report on the plunder of the Chure forests that

forced the Ministry of Forests to take immediate action against illegal sand mining and stone crushing industries doesn't make headlines anymore. That's not because all illegal industries have been shut, just that the country has moved on and so has the media.

The beauty of 21st century corporate media is that it cashes in on tales of glory as well as heart wrenching tragedies. Celebrating movers and shakers then becomes as necessary as getting the poor to enact their misery on camera. Revenue is governed by page views, hits and news stand sales, so media creates its own celebrities to perpetuate itself. The public service role of media is sidelined as it serves corporate interests.

To be sure, media in Nepal has grown from strength to strength since 1990. It survived the absolute monarchy, and was always at the forefront of the struggle for democracy and press freedom. It outlasted autocratic regimes that tried to stifle the people's voice. It has exposed wrongdoing in high places, exposed human rights violations during the conflict and kept the issue alive afterwards.

After King Gyanendra's information blackout and censorship, media fought back with blank op-eds and empty editorials. The Nepali media has played its adversarial role, standing firm against powerful regimes. Today, the media is free from state censorship and journalists do not face an overt threat from the government.

However, a weak law and order situation, insecurity, the political-economic interests of media bosses have turned many journalists from watchdogs into lapdogs. When reporters do get their salaries, they are too low to motivate them to do a better job.

The Internet now provides a platform to bypass official controls, self-censorship and corporate influence. The news of VAT-evading business houses and shoddy government deals may not find headlines in the squeamish mainstream media, but journalists are blowing the whistle online. The content is shared and magnified through social networking sites. As the internet and smartphone penetration rates go up, the information revolution will transform the country, strengthen the Nepali media and with it democracy.

In her recently published book *The Past as Present: Forging Contemporary Identities Through History*, prominent Indian historian Romila Thapar points towards the need for multiple interpretations of historic events, since what has been documented as history in the mainstream and academic writings thus far is at best a perspective and at worst an incomplete narrative.

The powerful of society may have been privileged in creating a selective history as Thapar claims, but their days of privilege over public memory are over. 🇳🇵

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At 21, Sakil Kunwar is Kathmandu's most eligible bachelor. Every girl in town wants this talented hair and makeup artist.

Not to get married to, but to paint them pretty on their wedding day. Photo features of models look incomplete without crediting him. There isn't any 'IT girl' who hasn't called him for a word of advice or two.

The Singapore-educated Sakil, however, remains unfazed by all the attention. In all modesty, he doesn't even believe he's all that great. But top models, actors, happy brides and bridesmaids all think so.

“I am grateful that people appreciate my work but I am not sure if I am that good as of

yet," says Sakil who is currently busy mentoring the 20 contestants of the Miss Nepal pageant which is all set to take place on 2 May.

This doesn't sound like the Sakil people told me about. I'd heard Sakil was loud, opinionated, and extremely critical of everything in front of his eyes. I was even warned by friends to clean up a little before my interview with this makeup guru. A few minutes into the interview I did notice him studying my face. Thankfully he decided to keep his comments to himself and I was saved from the embarrassment of hearing him go on about my amateur attempt at caking my face.

Is diplomacy something being in this trade has taught him? "Yes, and no," he answers. "I had rubbed many people the wrong way, very early on in my career so I have learnt to be careful with my words," he admits.

Sakil always dreamt of becoming a beauty pageant trainer. That dream



materialised in 2009 when Miss Nepal Zenisha Moktan asked him to be her mentor for her Miss World Cup bid. He was 17 and self-taught.

But this was not his first job. In Singapore, where he was born and stayed until the completion of middle school, he earned pocket money putting henna on women in his neighbourhood and waiting

tables at Pizza Hut.

"Growing up in Singapore taught me to be forward looking and independent at a young age. I haven't asked for money from you since I turned 17, *hai* daddy," he says looking to his father, an ex-Gurkha officer, who is seated nearby.

Since the start, his family was supportive of everything he did. His father even accompanied him to India for a makeup course. After graduating high school in 2011 from Rato Bangala School, while his friends went to universities abroad, his parents didn't question his decision to work fulltime in Nepal.

“They know that I am a focused person and don’t do things just on a whim,” he says. “Also, one is never too old to study so I thought college could wait,” he adds.

Although, the pageantry world is his first love, today Sakil is known more as a MUA guy.

"He is a thorough professional," says one happy client who recently booked him for a cousin's wedding.

Besides making brides happy on their wedding day, Sakil also freelances as a stylist. He recently styled Odhani boutique's collection for the TGIF fashion week and has a weekly column in *M&S*.

“Sakil has grown into an amazing artist, he knows how to work on different faces, keeps himself in tune with the global makeup trends and is extremely hardworking,” says Malvika Subba (*pic, bottom right*), former Miss Nepal.

Sakil also worked with Miss Nepal 2011 Shristi Shrestha, who became the first to make it to the top 30 at the Miss World pageant. "I believe I may have played a hand in that," he says. 🇳🇵

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EVENTS



Buddha Jayanti,
celebrate the birth of the great philosopher in the country of his birth. *14 May*

Retrospective,
a look back at the oeuvre of senior artist and cubism enthusiast Surendra Pradhan. *Runs till 18 July, Park Gallery, Pulchok, parkgallery.com.np*

Ubhauli,
celebrate the arrival of summer with the Kirat people of Nepal. *14 May*



Rampwalk,
graduates from Design Academy Mitini will showcase their work at a fashion show. *3 May, 12.30 to 13.30pm, SEA Centre, Lajimpat*

Cha cha cha,
learn one month's worth of salsa in four days. *Rs 1,000 for singles, Rs 1,500 for couples, 28 April onwards, Monday to Thursday, 7.30 to 8.30am/5 to 6pm/6 to 7pm, Salsa Dance Academy, Bhatbhateni*

Open house,
featuring the work of artists Arpita Shakya, Ashuram Khaiju, and Palpasa Manandhar. *Runs till 7 July, 11am to 6pm, Gallery MCube Chakupat*

Film Lab,
learn film history, storytelling, scriptwriting, cinematography, editing, project handling and network with professionals. *Runs to 15 May, Docskool, Gaurighat, register at (01)4251335*

Women water seeds,
an exhibition of oil paintings by Australian artist Fern York. *2 to 8 May, 10am to 4pm, Kathmandu Contemporary Arts Centre, Patan Museum, kathmanduarts.org, (01)5544880*



Scooter Diva Cup,
safely race fellow female scooter riders and win the Scooter Diva Cup 2014. *3 May, 10am, Monster Bash, Kupandol*



Life is flow,
an exhibition by photographer Susanna Ferran and poet Frederic Hoffman accompanied by sound healer Chaitanyashree. *Runs to 22 May, Image Ark Gallery, Kulimha, Patan Darbar Square*

By winds and tides,
an art exhibition. *Runs to 12 May, Alliance Francaise, Teku*

Rashomon,
watch the Nepali stage adaptation of one of cinema's greatest whodunits. *Rs 200, runs to 10 May, 5.15pm, Mandala Theatre except Mondays*

People of Karnali,
the Gallery Mitini opens to the public with an exhibition of photographs of the Karnali region by Jiban Bhai Images. *4 May onwards, SEA Centre, Lajimpat*

In search of education,
screening of a documentary on the difficulties of getting a good education in Karnali. *3 May, 4 to 6pm, SEA Centre, Lajimpat*

Open bazaar,
new and old entrepreneurs share their experiences. *3 May, 11am to 3pm, SEA Centre, Lajimpat*

Support the cause,
gather with like-minded fans to declare your love and support for the Nepali cricket team. *1 May, 10am, Basantapur*



Motherland across the sky,
a solo exhibition of the works of poet and artist Sandhya Regmi. *Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal*



Capital Grill,
this American style diner offers a large assortment of appetisers and entrees to suit everyone's tastes. *Bhatbhateni*

Chez Caroline,
exquisite food, glorious sunshine and more. *9am to 10pm, Baber Mahal Revisited, (01)4263070/4187*

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

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

Fuji Bakery,
tucked in Chakupat this bakery offers homemade goodies like apple pie, pain du chocolat, and banana cake. *Chakupat, Lalitpur*

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MUSIC

Byanjan Grill,

its open patio is a great place to sit, enjoy a book, take in the view, and gorge on delicious cuisine as hunger kicks in.

Barahi Chok, Lakeside-6, Pokhara, (061)466271

Saigon Pho,

spacious interior with authentic Vietnamese dishes. *Lajimpat*

Chopstix,

savory Asian food cooked in true Chinese fashion sure to charm and impress. Try the famous drums of heaven. *Kumaripati, (01)5551118*

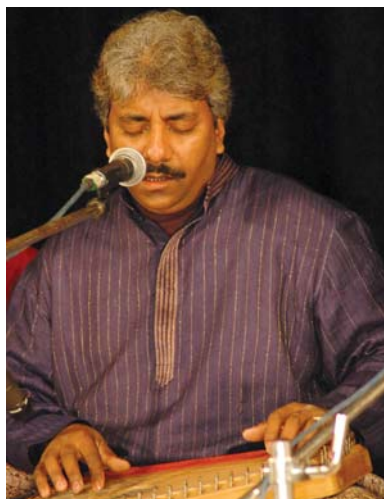
**Little Italy,**

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*

**Lal Durbar Restaurant,**

authentic Nepali dinner with cultural shows.

Hotel Yak & Yeti, Darbar Marg, (01)4248999, reservation@laldurbar.com

**Rashid in Kathmandu,**

go watch the great Indian vocal maestro Ustad Rashid Khan live, accompanied by Jyoti Goho, Satyajit Talwalkar, Murad Ali Khan, Yaswanth Golcha, Manoj Gautam, and Salikram Ghimire.

Rs 1,000/2,000/3,000/5,000, 23 May, 5.45pm onwards, Royal Academy Hall

Dance-mandu,

party with 20 sets of performers from Nepal and India, with other attractions like cocktail bar, children's play area, djembe jamming, and a fire juggling show. *17 May, 10am onwards, Norling Restaurant, Darbar Marg*

Kripa Unplugged,

young aspiring musicians give their own renditions of classics.

youtube.com/user/KripaUnplugged

Starry Night BBQ,

catch Ciney Gurung live as you chomp on your meat stick.

Rs 1,499, 7pm onwards, Fridays, Shambala Garden Café, Hotel Shangri-La, (01)4412999 (Ext. 7520/7515)

GETAWAYS

Barahi Jungle Lodge,

the first eco-jungle lodge of Chitwan directly overlooks the Chitwan National Park, spa, boutique guest room, individual and two-in-one private villas, including a suite with a private swimming pool. *Andrauli, West Chitwan, www.barahijunglelodge.com*

Atithi Resort,

a perfect place to stay, nearby pool, massage, sauna, and delicious food of your choice.

Shantipatan, Lakeside, Pokhara, (61)466760, (01)4002077

Glacier Hotel,

good value and friendly service for travelers on the lap of Lake Phewa.

Gaurighat, Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)-463722, www.glacienepal.com

**Buddha Maya Gardens Hotel,**

add value to your travel in Lumbini with a stay at probably the best hotel in the area.

Lumbini, (71)580220, 9801033109, info@ktmgh.com



BOL

Celebrate the resistance poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz with renowned Pakistani singer Tina Sani. Discover Faiz as the writer of romantic poetry, and the staunch advocate of liberty, equality and justice in the left political tradition. His 'nuskhae wafa' or 'prescription for love' will transport you into a world where peace is possible.

Tina Sani has been singing professionally since 1979 and has trained with Ustad Nizamuddin Khan Sahib of the Delhi gharana, and later followed in the

footsteps of Khan Sahib Mehdi Hasan, Begum Akhtar, Mukhtar Begum and Farida Khanum. In 2003, she received the 'President's Pride of Performance' award from Pakistan, and India decorated her with the President of India's award for 'Outstanding Contribution to Music'.

7 May, 6 to 8pm, Yala Maya Kendra, Patan

Featuring Iqbal Hussain on harmonium, Shyam Nepali on sarangi, Nagendra Rai on flute and Pramod Upadhaya on table.

Stockholm travelling

Stopping by Kathmandu on their Asian tour of Thailand, Malaysia, and China are Postiljonen, an electronic dream pop trio from Stockholm. Featuring Norwegian vocalist Mia B're alongside Swedish multi-instrumentalists Daniel Sjörs and Joel Nyström Holm, the band released their debut album 'Skyer' in 2013 to critical acclaim. Don't miss out a chance to catch them live.

May 9, 7.30pm, House of Music, Thamel www.postiljonenmusic.com

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The Inked Zone

PHOTOS:
JAN MØLLER HANSEN

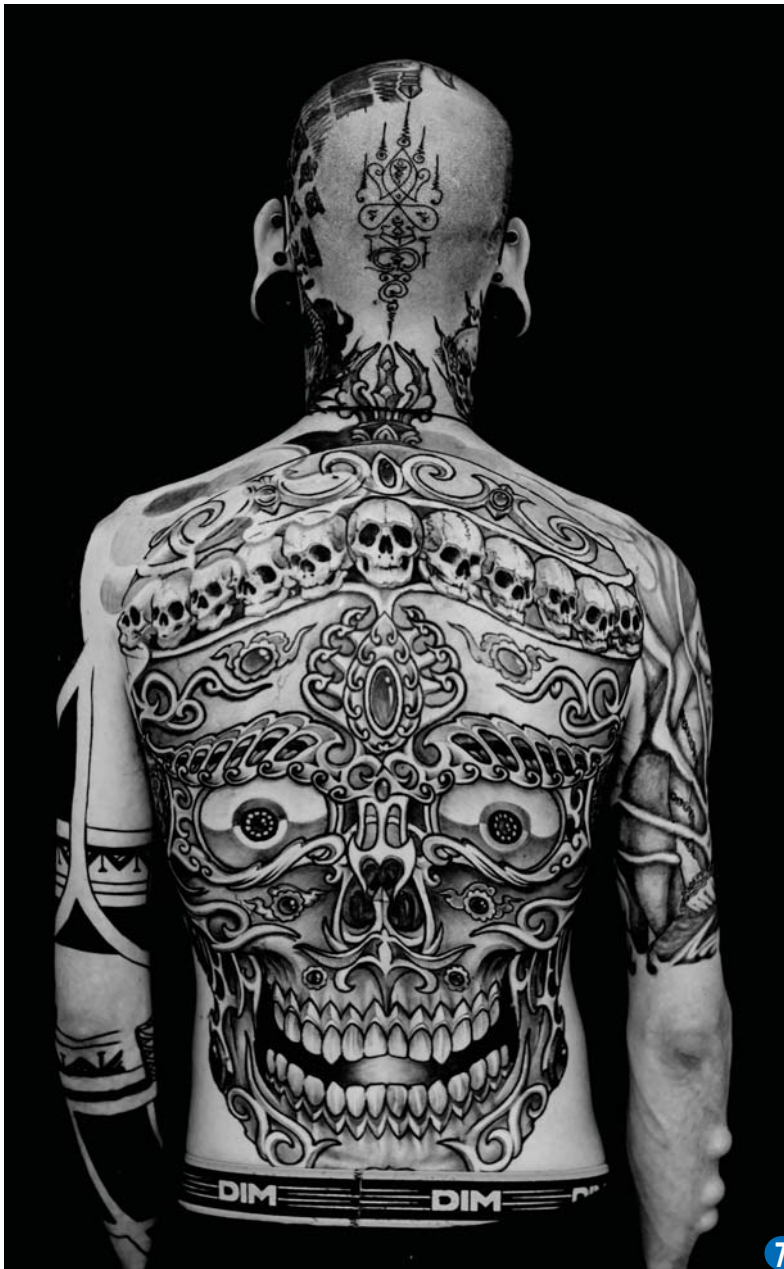
Intricate, snaking tattoos, tongue piercings, mohawks and body modifications of all kinds were on full display at the 4th International Nepal Tattoo Convention that concluded on 27 April.

More than 80 tattoo artists from all over the world, including Japan, Thailand, India, Australia, and UK participated in the three-day event, which saw hundreds of tattoo enthusiasts in attendance.

Before even stepping in, visitors were greeted by the distinctly audible, low buzz of the tattoo needle as it danced across these human canvases. All around, customers were splayed out in various positions at tattoo booths patiently waiting for the designs to be etched permanently onto their skin. The mood was generally festive, with many customers lapping up the attention as they showed off their body tats, and one even gamely winking for the camera.

One of the highlights was a body suspension show performed by a group of artists from North Team Suspension and Indigenak Modification Industries from Spain. Aptly titled 'Tolerance of Pain', attendees were left gasping visibly in shock during the show when artists were hoisted up into mid-air via hooks pierced into their bare backs.

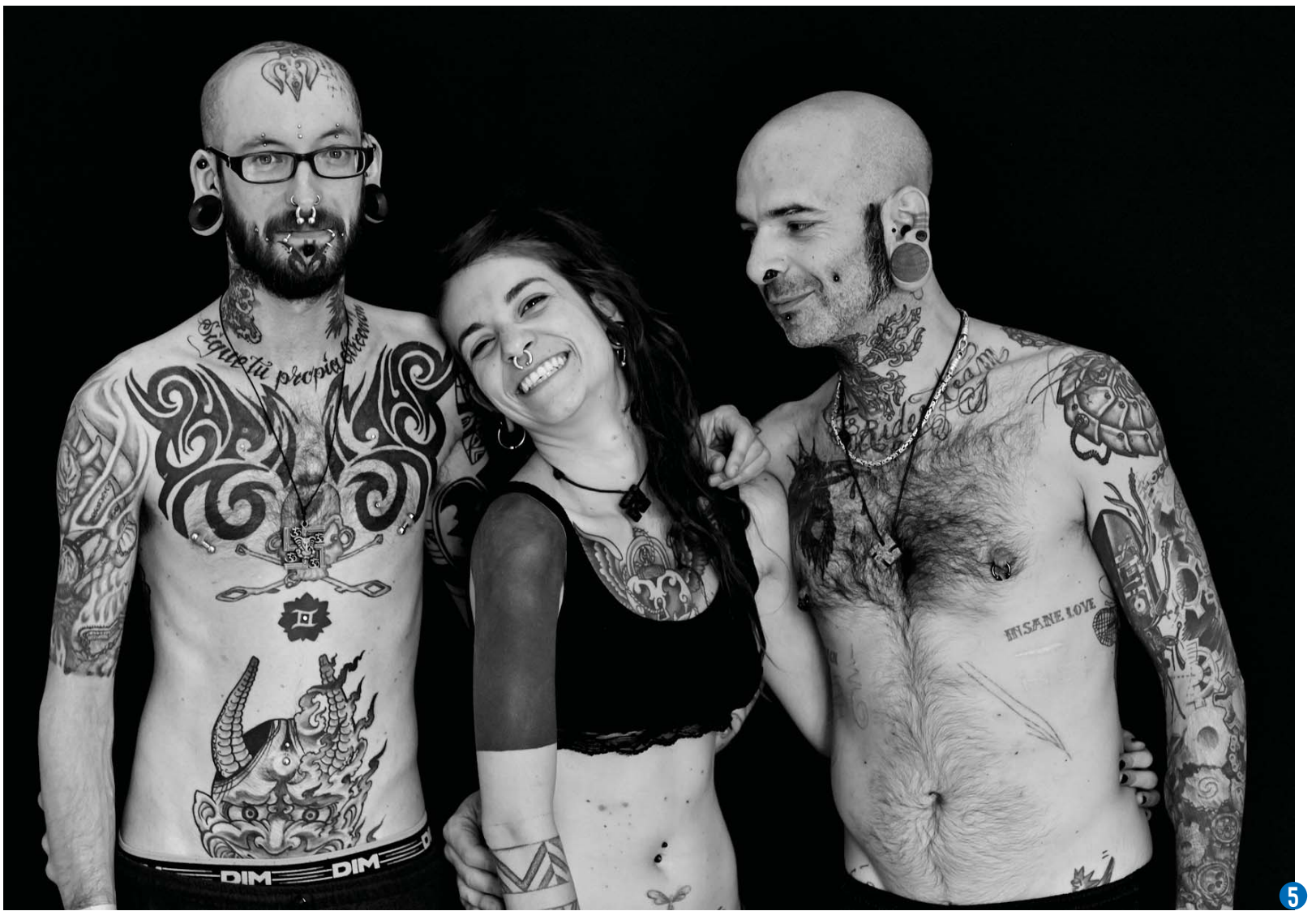
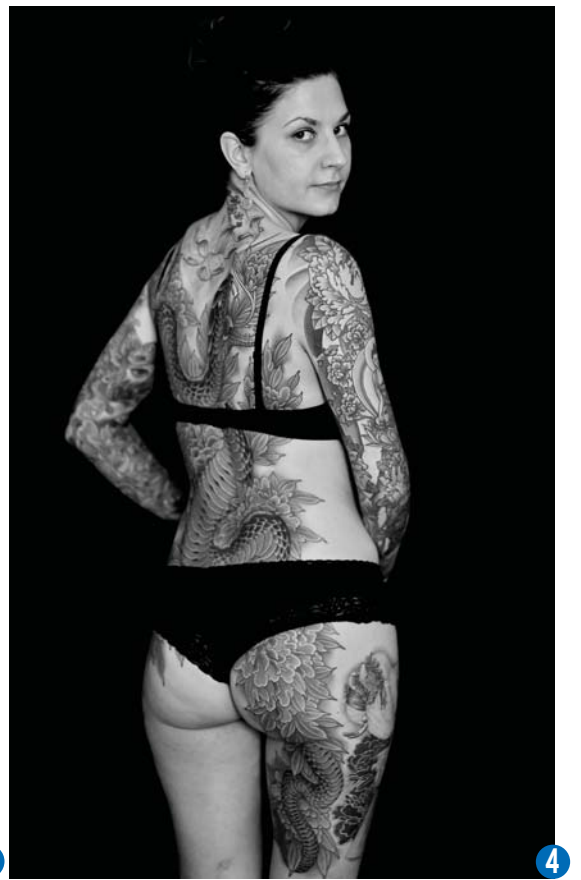
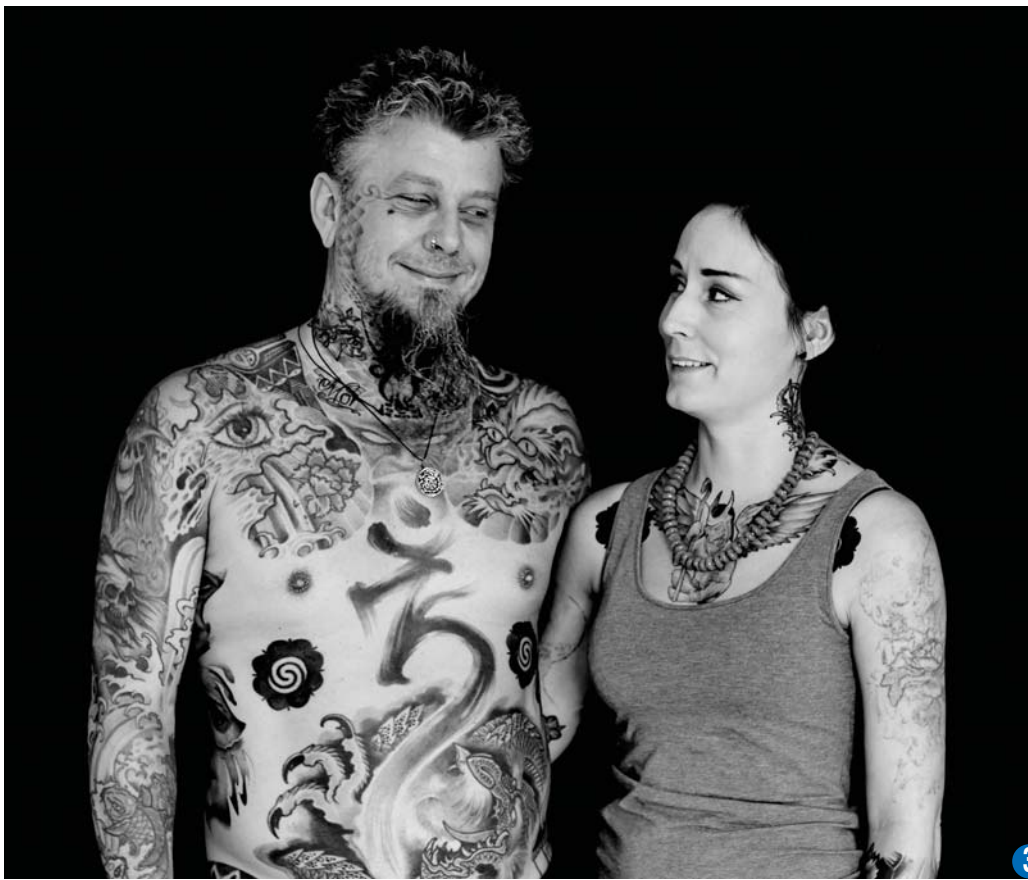
Organised by Nepal Tattoo and supported by Mu'az Entertainment and Mohan's Tattoo Inn, the convention was truly a great celebration of the art form that is both appreciated and shunned in equal measures.



ART ON BODY:

- 1 A tattoo artist works on an intricate face tattoo.
- 2 A Japanese tourist gets her first tattoo at the convention.
- 3 Jocke and his wife from Sweden are both tattoo enthusiasts.
- 4 Elin is an internationally acclaimed tattoo artist from Sweden.
- 5 Raul, Alex and his wife from Spain strike a pose for the camera.
- 6 A woman adds a new tattoo to her collection.
- 7 Raul from Spain shows his full back tattoo.






It is precisely Rai's cocksure but stumbling misfit of a hero that drives Ram Babu Gurung's new film *Kabaddi*. Kaji (played by Rai) is a 30-year-old good for nothing son of the village chieftain who needs help from friends to chase Maiyya (Rishma Gurung). For her part, she is trying to avoid marriage with Kaji and wants to leave Mustang for Kathmandu to study. The arrival of a relatively sophisticated city boy Bibek (played by *Loot* director Nischal

Ram Babu Gurung, who also wrote this film, invests a lot of screen time to make us laugh, and as a result other aspects of

MUST SEE

But like its predecessor *Loot*, *Kabaddi* will succeed in theatres despite its flaws because Nepali audiences crave a good laugh, especially when it comes in their own language. 

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer



HAPPENINGS



BIKASH DWAR

DEVAKI BIST

BIKRAM RA

DEVAKI BIST

HEAR US: Women's rights activists shout slogans at a rally in Anamnagar on Monday demanding stern actions against perpetrators of violence against women.



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The face of faceless art

If you need a break from the hustle and bustle of waterless and powerless Kathmandu, you may want to duck into the retrospective of artist Surendra Pradhan at the Park Gallery at Pulchok. The relaxing exhibit is a window into the world you just left. On the street outside, the chariot of Machendranath is getting its finishing touches, and a long queue of motorcycles is waiting for fuel at a petrol pump down the road.

Surendra Pradhan is one of Nepal's greatest modern artists and the exhibition showcases some of his most striking creations from the past 30 years. Influenced by cubist greats such as Pablo Picasso and Henry Matisse, it is Pradhan's obvious Nepali influences and emphasis that distinguish his work.

'Surendra Pradhan - A Retrospective' begins with his early watercolours and woodcuts made when he was a young student at the JJ School of Art in Mumbai. Scenes of an ocean or a clean city street betray his European influences.

The people depicted in these predominantly pastoral scenes are not the focus however, nor are they European. They are like the people you see everyday in your peripheral vision, but hardly notice. They are carrying water across a green field, two friends chatting outside a storefront in the town square. They are identifiable by their familiar setting, but they are faceless.

This faceless theme carries over to the main portion of the exhibit. Walk through the tasteful open-air courtyard to experience the *Aha* moment. It is obvious these paintings are



TOH EEMING

REVIEW

what Pradhan is known for. A musical band wearing Nepali topis with drums hanging at their waists, and a spattering of tika on the forehead of the subjects are just the obvious examples of the influence and expression of Nepal in his work.

Displayed in a two floor exhibit, the works resemble mosaics or stained glass windows. A combination of bright colours and earth tones, along with broad sweeping curves meeting sharp points, characterises each painting. Where the figure of a mother ends and her baby begins is inseparable. But the faceless subjects are the most unifying and powerful theme. The identity of the mother and baby is not important.

They are familiar, and even without a face depicted on their head, or only a single eye, we know who they are.

Together, the 40 pieces of Pradhan's art paint the picture of Nepal. Each painting is a window, and what it frames stands on its own. Each parade scene and gossiping neighbours stands alone. Each is a window into life in Surendra Pradhan's native land, and his identity. ■

Matt Miller

Surendra Pradhan - A Retrospective
Park Gallery, Pulchok
Sunday to Friday, 10.30AM to 6PM

For a place that claims to be the shopping and eating centre of Kathmandu, Darbar Marg is seriously lacking in good restaurants. There are many places but the quality of their food and service, barring a few notable exceptions (Koto anyone?), are usually sub-par.

So it was with great trepidation that I agreed to go to The Zanzibar Restaurant. Do not, like me, be misled by the name for if 'Zanzibar' conjures up images of exotic African dishes lush with the aroma of a thousand different spices, you will be in for quite a rude awakening.

In fact, Zanzibar serves Chinese food of a distinctly Nepalicised variety. There is nothing authentic about the cuisine here. And because they are so unapologetic about it, admitting that they cater to Nepalis and their dishes are designed to suit our palate, the dishes weirdly enough work okay.

We decided to go with our server's recommendation and ordered the cold pork salad (Rs 310) and spicy crispy cauliflower (Rs 190) as appetisers. The pork was well-spiced and cooked to just the right texture. The batter for the cauliflower had received liberal



PICS: RUBY TUESDAY

THE ZANZIBAR RESTAURANT



lashings of cumin and coriander and should have been tagged as cauliflower pakora for that is what it was.

I want to take a minute to talk about the dipping sauces that our

appetisers came with. The one accompanying the meat had fish sauce and garlic and chillies and was just perfect, for it added so many layers to the boiled meat that it was elevated to so much

more than just a plain platter of cold meat. The tomato sauce with the cauliflower was bursting with flavors, tangy sweet and slightly spicy all at once.

We decided to play it safe and stick to foolproof dishes and got the mixed chowmein and mixed fried rice (Rs 260 each). The chowmein was delicious. This stir fried noodle dish in its many avatars is one of our beloved fast food staples that surprisingly most of the renowned restaurants in Kathmandu manage to muck up, and the best versions are usually to be found in the little *khajaghars* tucked all over our valley.

The folk at Zanzibar know their clientele and cater to those taste buds. The noodles are an improved version of that humble favorite - greasiness and all. The rice was dependable enough and

served as a decent base for the mapo tofu (Rs 330).

The mapo tofu, with pork mince and tofu in a flavorsome aromatic sauce, is a satisfying dish and one that I'd go back for. The same cannot be said about the fish in hot garlic sauce (Rs 360) though. These tasteless overcooked fish balls were dunked in a sauce whose main ingredient was unmistakably cheap tomato ketchup. In a word- terrible!

The verdict: Located in the Sherpa Mall at Darbar Marg, Zanzibar is a convenient spot to meet up with friends or for a quick lunch. Also head here when you want to seek comfort in Chinese food of the type that we grew up with- the South Asian hybrid kind. ■

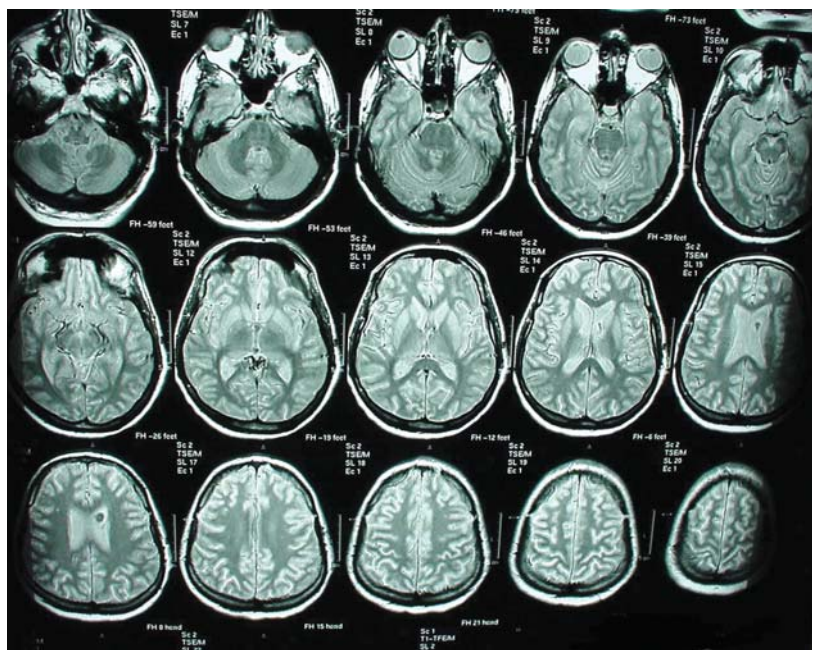
Ruby Tuesday

How to get there: The Zanzibar Restaurant is in the Sherpa Mall Complex, right above Magic Beans Coffee Shop in Darbar Marg.



Great Food Deserves Carlsberg

That calls for a 



Multiple Meningitis

Acute meningitis (swelling of the covering of the brain) is a life threatening illness and is in the news this week because UML leader KP Oli has been admitted to hospital for its treatment.

But imagine suffering from meningitis 14 times and surviving to tell the story. That is exactly what happened to



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

50-year-old Palden Lama (name changed) from Samagaon in the Budi Gandaki Valley. He had come to Kathmandu when he suddenly suffered severe headache, fever and vomiting

After a series of laboratory tests including a spinal tap to test the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) which bathes the brain, he was diagnosed with meningitis and

was subsequently treated with antibiotics.

His treating physician, Buddhi Paudyal, noted that the bacteria (Neisseriae meningitides) was well known for causing meningitis. Fortunately, the patient improved rapidly and went home.

But he returned with similar complaints again and again. In fact, it became an annual ritual for Palden to come to Patan Hospital and be treated with antibiotics. Amazingly, he was cured of his illness each time, without any medical complications such as stroke and deafness.

Palden then went to South Korea as a migrant worker. He was wise enough to have a legible note in English from his Nepali doctor stating clearly that he suffered from recurrent meningitis which responded well to a set of antibiotics. He had two bouts of meningitis in South Korea.

The doctors there had to perform so many spinal taps that he decided to return to Nepal. The spinal tap is an invasive procedure, and for many, a painful one; but the procedure is

absolutely essential to make the diagnosis. Perhaps the South Korean doctors wanted to monitor him more closely, resulting in more spinal taps than he wanted.

When he returned to Kathmandu, he again met Paudyal at Patan Hospital who strongly advised a special high resolution CT scan of his head to detect any leakage of the CSF fluid to account for repeated meningitis. Sure enough, a tiny break (dehiscence) at the base of his skull was detected which communicated directly with the back of his nose (nasopharynx). So, bacteria from the back of his nose in all likelihood travelled to the brain through the gap to cause these repeated bouts of meningitis.

As though confirming this, Palden again went to Patan Hospital with headache and fever, as well as what he termed “mineral water” like discharge from only one side of his nose. His wife told him that this was indeed very strange, that without catching a cold he had this colorless discharge from his nose. Paudyal promptly sent the nasal discharge to the laboratory.

A simple microscopic study of the material revealed that the discharge was CSF fluid tracking down from the hole in the base of his skull to his nose. He was referred to eminent neurosurgeon Upendra Devkota, who skillfully repaired the dehiscence at the base of the skull. Palden recovered safely and has been meningitis free for many years now.

Stories like this are probably common in Nepal, where an astute clinician and a competent surgeon work together to help a patient in need. Many years ago, this level of diagnostic sophistication and treatment was unavailable here.

But suffering from meningitis 14 times must be a world record good enough for the Guinness book to consider. 🇳🇵

GIZMO by YANTRICK

KEEP COOL

Nepalese summers are synonymous with unbearable heat and unending load-shedding hours. Add the now-defunct refrigerators unable to keep food fresh or a drop of revitalising beverage cold in, and you have a stuffy summer right down to a ‘T.’

Reputed home appliance manufacturers LG have come to the rescue with their new range of Evercool refrigerators, which guarantee up to 7 hours of cooling after the NEA-man has cut-off the power.

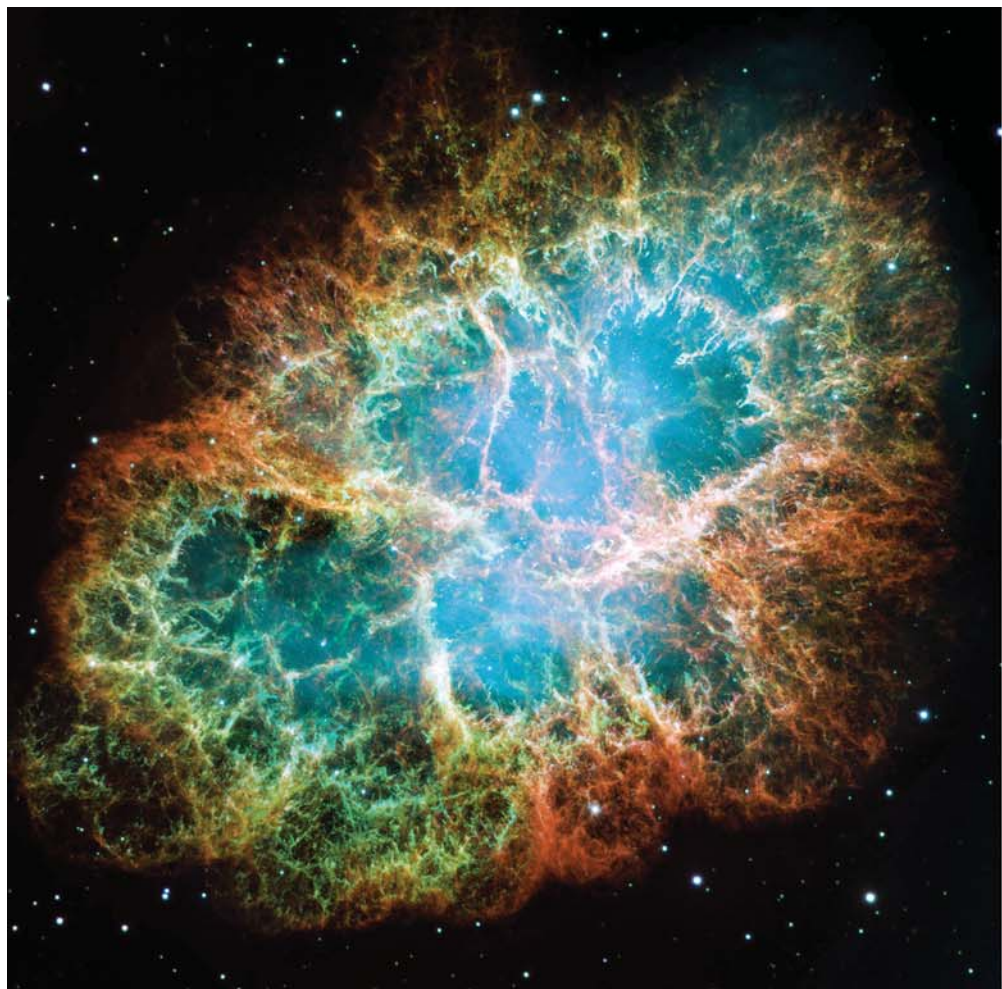
Available in 310, 285, 190 and 185 litre variants, the Evercool refrigerators are designed for Nepali conditions. They are available in a variety of eye-catching colours, with the 310 and 285 litre models available in Platinum Silver and Velvet Gardenia, the 190 litre model available in Sparkle Pine and Blush Eden, and the 180 litre model available in Neo Inox. The unique colour combinations lend the Evercool refrigerator models a distinctive premium feel, which would not look out of place in any modern kitchen.

All 4 Evercool models ship with transparent interiors, toughened glass shelves, low voltage startability, and 10 year compressor warranty. The top-of-the-range 310 and the 285 litre Evercool models boast Multi Air Flow technology, module LED lighting, humidity controllers, deodorisers, 2-time twist icers and electronic temperature controls. The 310 litre model also packs in a convertible box, which allows for independent temperatures to be set for that box. The lower-end 190 and 185 litre Evercool models, on the other hand, compromise on some of the high-end features. That being the case, they do boast anti-bacterial gaskets, load bearing wire shelves and fast ice-making capabilities.

The USP of the Evercool refrigerators range undoubtedly is its 7-hour cool air retention ability. For most refrigerators, stored food starts getting spoilt within 2 hours after a power cut. But the ‘Power Cut EverCool’ technology incorporated by LG ensures that the ultra-chilled air of the refrigerator is retained and the freshness of the food is preserved for up to 7 hours. Although most rival brands’ refrigerators are equipped with cooling retention technology, the offer is limited only in the freezer sections.

However, the Evercool refrigerators also provide cool air retention in the refrigerator section, resulting in your food staying fresh and edible for longer. Tests have concluded that in an average fridge, the refrigerator section temperature rises from 0°C to 20°C, 6 hours after a power cut, while the Evercool refrigerators recorded air temperature is 10°C in the refrigerator section after the same amount of time. 🇳🇵

Yantrick’s Verdict: It’s the beginning of May, and the Nepali summer is already in full swing. With the weather expected to be no less forgiving in the coming months LG’s Evercool range seems perfectly suited for the Nepali household. At least Yantrick can enjoy a cold beer, if nothing else.



Out of this world

As Nepal’s most-modern printing facility, Jagadamba Press ensures reliability, precision and speed with its state-of-the-art Mitsubishi Diamond 3000 press that can print five colours in 40” format with inline coating.



Nepal has no laws for unmanned aerial vehicles but drones have enormous potential for conservation and tourism. And surveillance.

SUNIR PANDEY

Let Col Chakra Shah of the Nandabaksh Battalion inside Chitwan National Park has been on daily jungle patrol guarding the endangered species inside Nepal’s most famous nature sanctuary. The work of Shah and his fellow soldiers has paid off: not a single tiger or rhino was poached in the park in the past 12 months. But his work in Chitwan and the army’s support for conservation could get a huge boost if it could deploy drones to replace the drudgery of foot patrols. In fact, Shah has seen for himself how effective drones can be by serving as the eye in the sky.

From mid-2012 onwards, he has been part of an effort by the World Wildlife fund (WWF) and Chitwan National Park to try out unmanned aerial vehicles to help in conservation. The results were so encouraging that the National Park is keen to start using the devices as soon as possible. “The long-term future of national park protection lies in the replacement of patrols with drones,” says Shah. Currently, the army can only assemble and fly the vehicles but can’t maintain or repair them if they crash. Co-founded by Singaporean ecologist Lian Pin Koh and Dutch primate biologist Serge Wich, the organisation Conservation Drones (CD) has been training national park and army officials to fly drones and analyse data from them. From the feedback they received, CD has selected the particular drone that would be most suitable for Chitwan.

Based on a drone named after a potent Brazilian cocktail called Caipirinha, the ‘Caipy’ is capable of flying for 25 minutes sweeping 20 sq km area at a speed of 13 km/h. Weighing only 630g fully loaded with fuel and a GoPro camera on board, the craft can be controlled with an Android app on a phone or tablet to launch the drone as well as log into check points across the surveillance area. Koh says the possibilities for drone use in conservation are unlimited: 3D mapping of forests, monitoring deforestation rates, using heat-seeking cameras to detect poachers or illegal loggers, using WiFi to download images from camera traps, tracking radio-collared animals. Conservation is not the only area where drones can provide help. A drone was used in the production of a spoof video of the Game of Thrones shot on location in Nepal through stunning aerial shots. Fixing a camera on a drone gives photographers and filmmakers a unique travelling vantage point while trekking or mountaineering. Drones can also be useful



PICS: CONSERVATIONDRONES.ORG

EYE IN THE SKY: Two rhinos crossing a stream (*zoomed, inset*) in Chitwan National Park in an image captured by a camera on a drone. Conservationist Rupak Maharjan (*left*) launches the drone for a test flight over Chitwan.



in future disasters like floods and earthquakes, and help in search and rescue efforts. When seasonal roads get wiped away by landslides, drones could deliver small packets of high energy food, medicines, cell phones and other essentials to remote areas. Even journalists could use drones for investigative reports. But Nepal’s laws don’t spell out the legality of drones, which is why the Chitwan initiative is stuck. Article 2(d) of Nepal’s Civil Aviation Act, 1996, defines aircraft as “any machine which can derive support in the atmosphere from reactions of the air, and this term also includes balloons, whether fixed

or not fixed with land airships, helicopters, kites, gliders, hang gliders, microlight, balloons and any other flying machines.” The most recent annual report of the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal too doesn’t mention a single drone being licensed for private, public, or commercial use in the past year. Just like Nepalis are flying radio-controlled fixed-wing model planes without any permission, drones will

also be here with our without government regulations. Yet there is ample evidence on Youtube that people have already brought in drones and are using them. Don’t be surprised next time you hear a high-pitched whine above Patan Darbar Square. 🇳🇵

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Anatomy of a Himalayan tsunami

KUNDA DIXIT

It was a bright and sunny Saturday morning on 5 May, 2012 and many people from Pokhara had come to cool off in the Seti River, or were taking a dip in the scalding hot springs on its banks.

High above them, Captain Alexander Maximov was piloting a two-seater plane on his second tourist sight-seeing flight of the morning. Suddenly, Maximov noticed a billowing brown cloud below Annapurna 4. Minutes later, he saw that the normally white Seti River below him had turned turbid brown. A wall of water carrying mud, boulders and tree trunks was surging down the Seti gorge. Maximov turned his plane around and raced the flood, radioing ahead a warning to Pokhara airport.

At Sardi Khola on the banks of the Seti, 13-year-old Chahana Pun and her family were among hundreds bathing in the river when they heard what sounded like thunder. There were screams as people climbed to higher ground. Chahana and a sibling were lucky, but the angry river washed away their parents and a baby brother. At least 72 people were killed that morning, including three Ukrainian tourists. Many of the bodies were never found.

Maximov downloaded the video from his wingtip camera and was astounded to see the brown cloud, providing first proof to scientists that the flood was not a result of a glacial lake outburst as originally thought, but caused by huge rockfall on Annapurna 4.

Halfway around the world at Columbia University’s Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory in New York state, scientists had detected a 4.3 magnitude earthquake triggered by the rockfall at 03:24:56 GMT (09:09:56 Nepal time) on 5 May and precisely calculated the volume and direction of the slope failure on Annapurna.

In the two years since, the Seti flood has been closely analysed by Nepali and international experts. Two studies published recently on NASA’s Earth Observatory website by University of Arizona hydrologist Jeffrey Kargel and in the *Journal of the Nepal Geological Society* by a team led by German geologist Jörg Hanisch conclude that a chunk of the south ridge of Annapurna 4 broke off and tumbled down to the Seti gorge unleashing the flood either by causing an impounded lake to burst, or from the melting of falling ice.

Kargel teamed up with ICIMOD scientist Sharad Joshi, helicoptered up the Seti gorge, interviewed locals, pored over satellite imagery, analysed silt and rocks downstream. Hanisch worked with Nepali geologist Achyuata Koirala and Netra P Bhandary of Ehime University in Japan and used satellite imagery to conclude that the disaster was caused by a ‘struzstrom’, a rock-ice

avalanche that fell into the Seti.

Farmers told Kargel’s team that two weeks before the flood, the Seti had suddenly stopped flowing. They concluded that the river must have been dammed by a small landslide that can be seen in aerial photographs.

Both groups of scientists have pieced together the probable sequence of events. A gigantic wedge of the south ridge of Annapurna 4 estimated at 15 million cubic metres fell nearly 3,000m vertically on an ice shelf pulverising itself and releasing the cloud of dust that Maximov saw. Within two minutes, the mixture of rock, ice, debris fell another 2,000m along a 2km swathe to the Seti gorge below, creating shockwaves that flattened forests.

Landslide expert Dave Petley of Durham University thinks the rock and ice went straight across the plateau falling into the Seti’s gully system.

“The debris flow consisted of ice, water and sediment from the main collapse event, so there was no need for another landslide to create the flood,” Petley explained.

Whatever the origin of the water, the flood roared downstream at 50km/h and within 30 minutes had arrived at Kharapani where villagers didn’t stand a chance.

The Seti has seen catastrophic floods before. One was 12,000 years ago, and another probably in 1255 AD when an earthquake could have blocked the river with a landslide, and the lake located in the Sabche Cirque subsequently burst. Both caused cataclysmic floods downstream, depositing debris 60m thick where Pokhara city is located today.

In his paper titled *The Pokhara May 5th Flood Disaster: A Last Warning Sign Sent By Nature?* Hanisch warns that a flood like the one 750 years ago would have an apocalyptic impact: about half a million people live in Pokhara Valley today.

Experts want a detailed investigation of the reasons for the 5 May flood and the possibility that global warming could have triggered the rockfall. Both previous Seti floods happened as the earth warmed naturally at the end of ice ages.

Capt Maximov possibly saved hundreds of lives by radioing the



STRUZSTROM

At 9:10am on 5 May 2012, a huge rock wedge tore off the south ridge of Annapurna 4, triggering a dust cloud that was witnessed by the pilot of a sightseeing plane. The debris tumbled 5,000m down to the gorge of the Seti River sending a wall of water and boulders racing downstream, killing 72 people. Two years later, we haven’t learnt any lessons from the Seti flood, which was nature’s warning of cataclysmic events in future as global warming melts the Himalaya.

warning, and the lesson for the future is to have permanent early warning systems on Himalayan rivers vulnerable to flashfloods especially after earthquakes. It is also a warning not to have large settlements and not locate many big projects along the same river. 🇳🇵

[nepalitimes.com](#)
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12 An aerial photograph of Annapurna 4 and the Sabche Cirque last week shows everything to be quiet with recent snowfall covering the dust and debris field. The calm is deceptive, and scientists say the event two years ago was nature’s warning of cataclysmic floods in future.

OLAV MYRHOLT



MILAN THAPA



OLAV MYRHOLT

11 A photograph from the morning of 5 May as the angry river destroyed the village of Kharapani (left). The time imprint on the photo shows 9:38, just half an hour after the initial rockfall on Annapurna 4. Photograph of the Seti flowing past Kharapani last week (right) with the damaged bridge visible. Two years later, one can still make out the water level and the extent of devastation. See video of flood arriving in Kharapani.



ALEXANDER MAXIMOV / AVIA CLUB NEPAL

10 The flood as it approached crushers collecting boulders on the river bed as the flood arrived at the Pokhara-Baglung Highway near Hyangja.



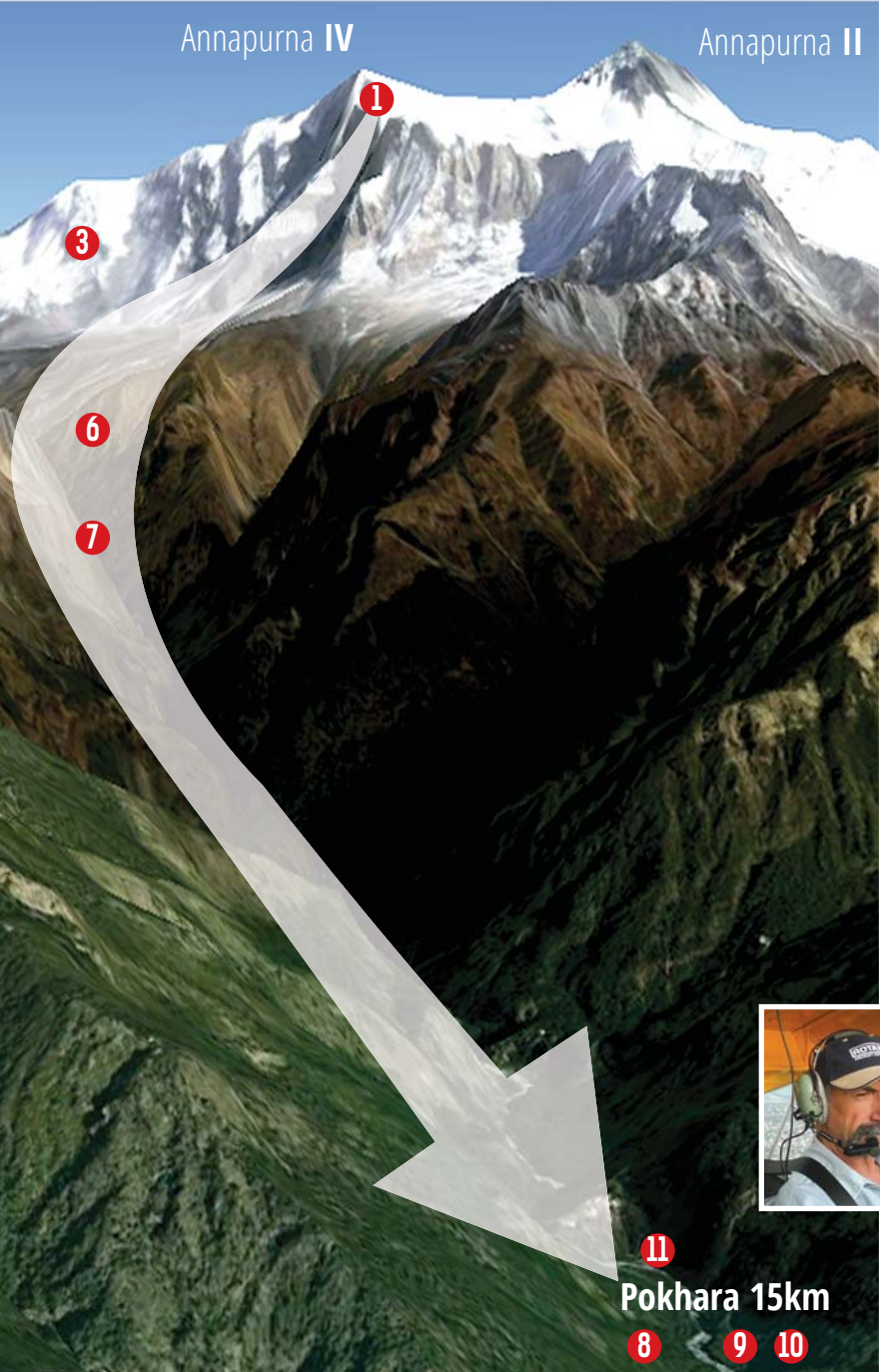
ALEXANDER MAXIMOV / AVIA CLUB NEPAL

9 The leading edge of the flood was filled with floating logs as it surged towards Pokhara at 50km/h. Capt Maximov’s warning was broadcast over radio and helped save many lives.



ALEXANDER MAXIMOV / AVIA CLUB NEPAL

8 Capt Maximov caught up with the flood above Tatopani, where Ukrainian tourists were being swept away even as this picture was being taken.



JEFFREY KARGEL / UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1 Point where a huge wedge of rock broke off the south ridge of Annapurna 4 and fell nearly 3,000m vertically on the ice shelf below. The rock face is made up of tilted sedimentary rock strata metamorphosed during mountain formation. When this photo was taken 6 months after the event, there was a dust cloud from smaller rockfalls.



ALEXANDER MAXIMOV / AVIA CLUB NEPAL

2 The dust cloud captured by the wingtip video camera of a small sight-seeing plane piloted by Capt Alexander Maximov (inset) over the Seti on the morning of 5 May. See video: [icon]



KUNDA DIXIT



MIKE SEARLE

4 Close-up of the eroded sediments of a former lake bed in the Sabche Cirque. This huge lake was formed when the Seti was blocked probably by an earthquake-induced landslide about 750 years ago after the mini ice age. When it burst it set off a huge Himalayan tsunami that deposited debris 60m thick where Pokhara city is located today. Scientists say there is geological evidence that another lake in the cirque at the end of the previous ice age 12,000 years ago also burst.



OLAV MYRHOLT

3 The huge brown scar below Annapurna 4 taken a month after the event from 9,000m above Pokhara out of the window of a Kathmandu to Delhi flight. The Sabche Cirque is still covered in dust from the 15 million cubic metres of pulverised rock. The rocky peak on the right is Annapurna 2.

5 The Seti gully system is so narrow, even the bottom is not visible. Avalanches and rockfalls from the steep slopes of Machapuchre and Annapurna on either side frequently block the river. The ice and rock from the event two years ago sent debris plunging into the river at very high speed.



JEFFREY KARGEL / UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

7 A waterfall plunges into the Seti gorge which is still covered in ash-coloured dust and debris six months after the rock and ice avalanche.



JEFFREY KARGEL / UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

6 Forests in the slope above the Seti gorge were flattened by the shockwave from the struzstrom on 5 May 2012.

The winter of our spring

The amorality of the market plays out on Everest, the laws of profit and price determine the ultimate success of an expedition

TASHI SHERPA

My last name is an accident of birth and not an achievement. But in the past two weeks I am even more convinced who my heroes are.

The continuous outpouring of emotion from around the world hasn't stopped since 18 April. They call because of my ownership to a last name and brand that has dedicated itself to honouring the unsung heroes of the Himalaya.

I have always been close to my idols Ang Thargay, Da Namgyal, Tenzing, Ngawang Gombu – names from an era almost forgotten, now precious as rare coins. I read their stories, reveled in the borrowed glory of being next to them. I stood in awe of their indomitable spirit and the easy humility of wisdom that signify everything the world knows as 'Sherpa'.

In the 1980s we boasted about a new generation of super Sherpas: our Pertemba, Ang Rita, Sundare, Babu Chiri and the biggest little man, Apa. And the women, too. World, please meet Pasang Lhamu and Pemba Doma. Their total summit counts began to feel like a stock index. They were feted and paraded, and then filed away as footnotes to someone else's glory on Mt Everest.

We didn't know how to brag, so when the first 'saabs' came, they became our 'sathis'. Even ordinary Nepalis took pride in the brief dispatches in the media about summiteers. There was a



sense of purpose and pure passion. But the Khumbuley didn't care who was on top first as long as they could get them to peak their summit and enjoy their day in the sun.

The Sherpa got his quota of khadas, precious new down gear and money to last till next Losar. Meanwhile, the client went on lecture circuits becoming the motivational toast of the month featured in interviews, cover stories and reaping in the benefits of having tasted thin air on the peak of peaks.

But then some sathis discovered troves of trophy seekers with easy money. Socialites, investment bankers, rich retirees, software moguls, wealthy Arabs, spoilt Asians, scions of big money, all came to Everest Base Camp which became a jamboree of high profile expeditions with even higher profile clients craving the ultimate high. No previous experience needed, just high altitude training for six months, bring your pack and Amex or Visa, and we'll do the rest. Those in the know knew what to charge and share with their partners in Nepal, but someone forgot to send the memo to the actual Sherpa climbers, the ones who were supposed to 'take care of it all'.

The Sherpas watched in bemusement and in the quintessential Buddhist way of accepting what life throws at you, went about doing what they do best. Grateful that they at least had work for the season, they never thought to question the specious generosity of being employed. As Nepalis we have a built-in resourcefulness to the mixed vicissitudes of life. Few of us plan for the future, the distant horizon is too far, we focus on the next hill.

The amorality of the market plays out on Everest, the laws of profit and price determine the ultimate success of an expedition. Those who take the most risk are assigned the lowest value in this bizarre equation. The Nepal Government rakes in millions of dollars in fees from Mt Everest, western and Nepali expedition agencies eagerly calculate the spring months to be their breakout revenue season. And every year, the queue for Everest gets longer while the proportion for the Sherpa remains woefully stagnant in the risk-to-reward math.

So, skilled Sherpas are roped in to do the dirtiest and most dangerous work. They fix ropes, lay ladders, carry the heaviest loads and face the brunt of the mountain's treacherous moods. On 18 April an angry goddess avenged herself, entombing 16 climbers in ice.

The media weighed in with the poignancy of grief, fury against the unfair deck stacked against the Sherpa. There has been a universal condemnation of the status quo but I am more sad than furious because in the end we let ourselves down. Nothing is ever going to be the same again.

Why does it take a national tragedy for us to reexamine our bearings? Why could we not have foreseen that such a day would come and prepared ourselves for it? We do not blame anybody for the shifting of the mountain, that is the risk inherent in venture. What we cannot accept is the furtive manipulation and complicit acceptance of taking more and giving less to those who risk their lives for you.

Summer is upon us, but the mountain blows cold. The chill we feel is not the wind but the desolation of families whose fathers and husbands and brothers will not be coming home. As a Buddhist, I will pray that the next realm bring them better fortune and as a Sherpa, I ask the Mother Goddess Chomolungma to be merciful and understanding.

Om Mani Padme Hum. [icon]



Tashi Sherpa is the founder and CEO of Sherpa Adventure Gear.



BIKRM RAI

Incomplete house

Editorial, *Kantipur*, 29 April

कान्तिपुर

The second Constituent Assembly (CA) election took place six months ago, and it has been four months since the first meeting of the CA took place. But 26 members

still remain to be nominated. In their absence, there are many doubts about the legitimacy of CA decisions.

The Khilraj Regmi-led government should have initiated consultations with political parties regarding the 26 before the first CA

meeting. But it did not and even after nearly 100 days in office, the Sushil Koirala-led coalition has also failed to come up with names.

Nepali politics has always been a victim of the indecisiveness of the political leadership. Prime Minister Koirala has been criticised for his lacklustre performance, and his inability to take swift decisions not just from the opposition but also his party’s own lawmakers.

Delaying the nomination of the remaining 26 members raises questions over the political parties’ commitment to the drafting of the constitution within a year.

The cabinet will decide on the nominations, but this requires cooperation from all the parties. It will not be fair if the 26 seats are divided among the parties based on power, money and influence. If it becomes a bargaining tool, then many candidates who lost the election will try to redeem themselves or buy their way to the parliament through the remaining 26 seats.

The government should pay special attention to nominating only those who can actually contribute to the constitution writing process.



“Mother”
Tombstone: Insurgency victims

नागरिक

Rabin Sayami, in *Nagarik*, 29 April

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“These days the going rate for appointment at appellate courts is Rs 1 million. And those who want Supreme Court positions have to start bidding from ten times that amount.”

Anonymous source at the Bar Association, *Sanghu*, 30 April



Himalkhabar.com, 27 April

हिमाल
खबर

Families of conflict victims have raised concerns regarding the possible effects of the amnesty provision for serious human rights violations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission on Enforced Disappearances (CED) bills passed by the legislature

No to amnesty

parliament. The two bills were passed on Friday after making several amendments to the initial draft. Fourteen organisations consisting of families of conflict victims released a joint statement on Sunday, requesting that the political parties reconsider some of the contentious provisions in the bills.

“We strongly object to the provision regarding amnesty and reconciliation that don’t require the consent of the victims,” reads the statement.

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court released a decision prohibiting grants of amnesty for serious human rights violations committed during the armed conflict. The court found that grants of amnesties, limitations on criminal prosecutions, and the 35-day time limit on filing cases do not conform to the standards established by the Nepalese Constitution and international law

FEMALE POLICE WOES

Surendra Subedi, *Sancharika*
21 April,

संचारिका
विचार

Assistant sub-inspector Radhika BK has to stand at Thapathali for hours on end, trying to direct traffic at one of the busiest intersections in Kathmandu. She has no time for toilet break. Recently, during a medical checkup, BK discovered she had kidney stones. Doctors told her this was because she worked for long stretches without relieving herself.

“Whether it’s hot, cold, or raining, we have to do our job. The lack of toilets is our biggest concern when we are posted on duty,” says BK. However, her male colleagues do not face that problem. BK says she and her female colleagues have to work without breaks even when they



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

have their periods.

Asha Singh, who works at the police hospital, says there is a greater chance of infection if women do not go to the toilet for long stretches. “It can lead to kidney stones and even renal failure,” says Singh. Inspector Chanchal Shrestha, who works at the Metropolitan Traffic Police Department, says many of her juniors have spoken to her about their predicament.

There are 155 female traffic police in the country, 90 of whom

are stationed in Kathmandu. Other than the regular paid leave, which runs to 10 per cent of total work days, a two-month maternity leave, and emergency sick leaves, there are no other special facilities at work.

MTPD spokesperson Basanta Pantu says it is difficult to relax duties just for female traffic police because facilities for both men and women are equal in the force. “The men will complain if we give special treatment to the women,” says Pantu.



Sikkim to Mumbai

Nepal, 27 April

नेपाल

Interview with Nepali-Indian actress Geetanjali Thapa, 25, after she won India’s National Film Award for Best Actress for her role in the 2014 film *Liar’s Dice*.

Nepal: What led you to acting?

Geetanjali Thapa: I used to act in school plays, but I never wanted to become a professional actor. When I was studying in Kolkata, some friends suggested that I start modelling. One thing led to another and I was cast in Prashant Rasaily’s film *Myth*. After that acting just kind of took off.

How did you land the role in *Liar’s Dice*?

I was in a film called *ID*. Rajeev Ravi, the cinematographer of the film, recommended my name to his wife Githu Mohandas, who is the director of *Liar’s Dice*. She then cast me in the film.

What are your plans now?

I am excited about receiving the award from the President of India. From now, on it’s going to be a bigger challenge as more people have come to know of my work. Offers have also come pouring in but I am being selective with my scripts.

What kind of scripts attract you?

I prefer to act in films that raise socio-economic issues rather than in musicals. If song-and-dance films are

done in a new way, I wouldn’t mind heading to Bollywood right away. But for me, a good script is the most important thing.

What projects are you currently involved in?

I have been cast in a film by Oscar winning Serbian filmmaker Danis Tanovich called *White Lies*, alongside Emran Hashmi. The funny thing is I went for the audition just hoping to meet the director, didn’t really think I would get selected.

Have you faced any trouble in the industry because of your Nepali roots?

There have been times when I have been rejected because of my non-typical Indian looks. But this is to be expected because filmmakers are under a lot of pressure to cast Indian faces. Still, I am happy with the number of films I get.

Are you familiar with Nepali films and filmmakers?

I watched *Darpan Chhaya* when I was very small. The recent movies I’ve seen are *Acharya*, *Katha*, and *Sungava*. Among the directors I only know Prashant Rasaily and Subarna Thapa, whom I met at a film festival.

Do you have any plans to work or stay in Nepal?

I’d like to work in Nepali films as long as the filmmakers like my work and I like their scripts. I’ve never been there, and my friends in Kathmandu always ask me to visit, so maybe I will go once the shooting for *White Lies* ends.

The Everest spring season is over



PICS: ANG JANGBU, IMG

Mt Everest is officially still open, but functionally closed due to factors, only one of which is the mountain

Ascent's founder. "Emotionally, mountain workers were being pulled from all angles to make a choice: respect for the dead, alliance to the better rights cause, company loyalty, government and association pressure to continue, family pressure and their own safety" he said in a blog post.

The last straw for those still at Base Camp was a series of smaller avalanches that dropped on the same section of the Khumbu Icefall that was hit on 18 April.

Rainier Mountaineering Inc (RMI) guide and 15-time Everest summiteer Dave Hahn summed it up in a blog: "For now, suffice to say that the risks outweigh the possibility of success." 🇳🇵

MATT MILLER

Climbing for the 2014 Mt Everest spring season now seems to be over. The final decision was due to a combination of factors that led to large commercial expeditions and their hired high altitude workers leaving Everest Base Camp last week after the devastating avalanche on 18 April that killed 16 climbers on the Khumbu Icefall.

Mountaineer Alan Arnette tracks activity on Everest, and in a blog declared the mountain 'functionally closed' for the season. As of Monday morning, all large expeditions on the southern Nepali side of the mountains have abandoned their climbs.

Arnette reports that three teams are rumored to still be at Base Camp including a Russian, Chinese and American science team. Science team member John All said in a post Wednesday that the non-profit team would collect data on Himlung, a 7200m peak on the border of Nepal and Tibet, rather than 8848m Mount Everest. At least 10 expeditions from the northern Chinese side are currently in the acclimatising phase and are proceeding as planned.

Large expeditions were allowed by the government to collaborate in chartering helicopters to retrieve supplies already stored at Camps 1 and 2. Supplies are being allowed to be stored under locked mesh coverings on the Western Cwm until the next season.

As the majority of climbers from large expeditions return to Kathmandu via Lukla, more detailed accounts of their experiences following the 18 April tragedy have started being posted on the Internet. There is talk of a small group of Nepalis who are bullying and harassing those, who still wanted to climb the mountain.

The Nepal government, for its part, says the mountain is still open. It has said climbing will not be refunded, but an official told expeditions at Base Camp last week that their season's permits will be valid for the next five years. It is unclear whether this applies to individual climbers, or only to the teams as constituted in spring 2014.

Large commercial expeditions, like Himalayan Experience and Asian Trekking, employ most of the Nepali high altitude workers who do most of the rope fixing, ladder setting and ferrying loads to higher camps.

WINTER ISLAND: A few tents remained on Monday (right) at the normally crowded Everest Base Camp. The same place earlier in the day before the tents were dismantled by expeditions leaving the mountain.

A commercial expedition cannot get through the Khumbu Icefall, and eventually to the Summit, without the help of high altitude workers. Smaller groups could still go, but without fixed ropes and ladders, they will find it much more difficult and costly. The cost of negotiating the Icefall is usually shared by all expeditions.

Nepali workers at Base Camp, most of them Sherpas, felt the avalanche was a bad omen and decided not to climb the mountain out of respect for their friends and family who are dead or missing. However, as anger rose at Base Camp, some younger Nepali staff of various expeditions ratcheted up their agenda and issued a 13-point list of demands that included higher compensation and political demands of representation in parliament in Kathmandu.

Senior Editor at Outside Magazine Grayson Shaffer quoted Base Camp sources to say that the group had threatened anyone still wishing to climb. The mindset to call it quits for the season is not shared by everyone, but the threats

and intimidation became too dangerous to ignore.

Others such as British guide Tim Mosedale and John All overtly tied the threats to Maoists who have hijacked the tragedy for their political agenda.

For Western clients and Nepali high altitude workers, the decision was not an easy one explained Nepali Sumit Joshi, Himalayan

nepalitimes.com

Taking chances on Chomolungma, #704
A dangerous place to work, #704
Working in high places, #704
"I still call him everyday", #704
Extreme Everest, #704
Dangerous business, #704

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In Gods we trust

Those of you who think that Nepal's politicians have made a mess of things and that there is no hope for this country -- you are wrong. What you don't know is that our rulers are a god-fearing bunch and they have a special hotline to the Almighty who advises them on important matters of state. In fact, those who oppose this government's recent decisions are all godless atheists and disciples of the Devil.



Chairman Sri Sri Sri Prachandacharya set the tone soon after he was elected PM in 2008 when he propitiated the gods by publicly worshipping Yamaraj's vehicle, the water buffalo. In a departure from his predecessor, Sri Sri Sri



Sri Sri Gyanendra, PKD did not decapitate the animal. Comrade Awesome must have had a hunch that if sacrificing five species of livestock, domestic fowl and household rodent in a Tantrick ritual couldn't save the monarchy, he needed a different

modus operandi to protect the First Republic.



It is understandable that Nepal's secular rulers think they are gods because most are named after Him. Take Comrade Bum

Dev, the terrible infant of the current cabinet who thinks he is God's left hand man, just because that is what his name means. His Holiness the Tourism Minister must have realised that sacrificing black goats and sprinkling their blood over the nose landing gears of Twin Otters has not saved them from mishaps over the past three decades, which must be why he ordered a strictly vegan welcome for the new Chinese MA60 plane in Kathmandu this week.



Our theocrats aren't worried because their High Level Political Mechanism can refer any pending matters to an Even Higher-up Authority in Heaven and take guidance from Him. According to our special correspondent at the Pearly Gates, the workload there has expanded so much that God has had to set up a Special Task Force of Researchers and Analyeasts to deal exclusively with Nepal and doubled the number of His Handlers down here. Even so, from time to time the entire Mechanism has to go to the Kumbha Mela in Chhatara for a direct briefing with the Omniscient Being, or troop off for a meeting with God's roving ambassador, Swami Kamalnayanacharya and other visiting Godmen in Pashupati. It must have suddenly dawned on those who killed, tortured and pillaged that even if they get temporal amnesty for past sins, they will still be sent to Purgatory. Unless they bribe the Gods.



Even Dash leader, Commiesar CP Gajurel, has been dashing about touring holy sites around the country after sacking his Dalit driver, because he was an untouchable. (That last bit is true, swear to God.) His hopes about a future for the Dash must have got dashed because the Group of 99 fought pitched battles last week in Kirtipore, throwing chairs and desks at a rival faction. Good thing we took away their guns otherwise there would have been a bloodbath between Comrade Cloudburst and Comrade Big Plop.



It may appear to the casual outside observer that the government is stuck, because constitution writing is still in limbo, 26 new CA members have yet to be appointed and the new Minister for Vodoo and Black Magic has still not been named.

PAST PRESENT FUTURE

DIWAKAR CHETTRI



Nothing could be further from the truth. Insider sources tell us that hectic behind-the-scenes negotiations are going on even as we speak. No, not within High Level Political Mechanism, but between the High Level Political Mechanism and God. A breakthrough is expected soon, God willing.



God Himself is understandably worried about His status after Nepal declared itself an Atheist Federal Republic and whether He will still be allowed to rain thunderbolts down from heaven when he gets the urge. Through this column, we would like to reassure God on that score. As a God-fearing people, we would like to retain Him and his Pantheon as a tourist attraction. So no need for Him to panic just yet.



The Ass

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