

The country is closing down for the Dasain holidays, which will be followed by Tihar and Chhat, then there is the SAARC Summit in November. It would have been tight even if it was just a question of crossing t's and dotting i's on the draft of the new constitution, but there are still some fundamental differences over the kind of federalism. Delays in constitution-writing and an effective transitional justice mechanism cost Nanda Prasad Adhikari his life. In this special Dasain issue we remember the abandoned victims of the conflict. Dasain is said to mark the victory of good over evil. In Nepal, it looks like evil still has the upper hand.

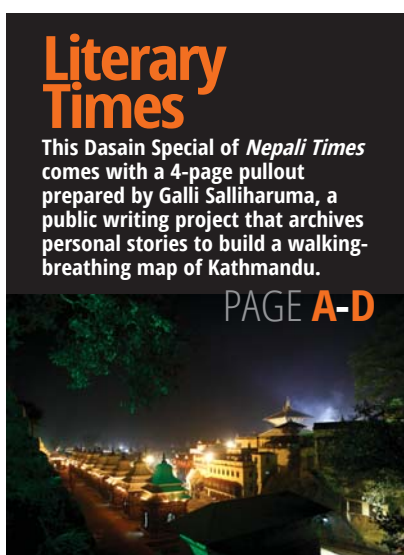
EDITORIAL
PAGE 2

BY **KUNDA DIXIT**
PAGE 16-17

Literary Times

This Dasain Special of *Nepali Times* comes with a 4-page pullout prepared by Galli Salliharuma, a public writing project that archives personal stories to build a walking-breathing map of Kathmandu.

PAGE **A-D**



जय होस

Nepali Times wishes its readers and partners a joyful Dasain holiday. The paper will take its annual break next week, so the next hardcopy edition will come to you on

Friday, 10 October.

However, you can follow us online wherever and whenever.



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A white ceramic cup filled with a latte, featuring a smiley face design created with dark coffee foam on a lighter background. The cup sits on a white saucer. The background is a dark, textured surface.

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In Nepal, it looks like evil still has the

THE DEATH OF JUSTICE

EDITORIAL
PAGE 2



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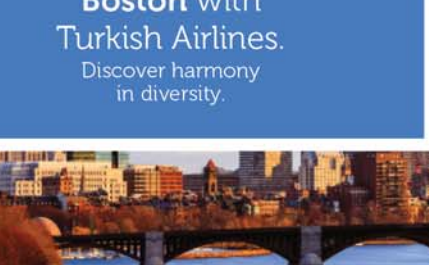




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DEATH OF JUSTICE

Nepal's conflict ended eight years ago. But the war is not finished as long as the pain of bereavement of the survivors remains, those whose relatives were disappeared still grieve, the wounded and displaced are left to fend for themselves.

The feudal Nepali state was a perpetrator of structural violence. The Maoists, however misguided in their pursuit of an obsolete ideology, believed that only revolutionary violence could counter it. Had they tried to learn from history, they would have known that violence is never the answer, that it breeds a cycle of vengeance. So it is that today, the disgraced revolutionaries have no answer when posed with the question: "What was it all for?"

Nepal's conflict had no victors and no vanquished. Neither side won, the Nepali people lost and the country's development was pushed back decades. And we are left with a legacy of violence and lawlessness during this prolonged transition. Going from monarchy to republic cannot be called 'progress' if it doesn't make a difference to the people's living standards, doesn't create jobs, or prevents us from being more inclusive and taking a great leap in development. The country was unilaterally declared 'secular' without the people's consent. Federalism, touted as the biggest accomplishment of the revolution, is just a slogan and has stopped meaning true devolution and autonomy. Instead it threatens to fragment an already disunited country. Whatever political progress was credited to a war fought in the name of the people was not worth the blood that was shed and the sacrifices made.

Now, a state composed of war mongers from both sides that visited such misery on the nation wants us to let bygones be bygones. Not only do they not want to say sorry, they are forcing Nepalis to forget the past, or else. Forget who executed your innocent father, don't ask who

If the perpetrators and the state showed even the slightest sign of remorse for wartime atrocities, survivors may be willing to forgive. But they will never forget.



JAN MÖLLER HANSEN

raped your daughter, disregard the commissar or captain who disappeared your brother, don't you dare name those who ran torture chambers. Because if you don't, we will let the peace process collapse. So, they blackmail us with the threat of violence while the internationals look on. They vilify human rights defenders and those who seek justice, accusing them of being in the payroll of 'foreigners'. They insult, even in death, a father who suffered untold pain by refusing to eat for nearly a year demanding that those who murdered his teenage son be brought to justice.

The death of Nanda Prasad Adhikari this week has seriously smeared Nepal's democratic credentials. It has exposed the selective activists, a deceitful state, and an undependable international community which mysteriously refused to speak and act on a human rights issue that they were so passionate about till recently. How did protecting the 'process' suddenly become more important than protecting 'justice'?

In this special issue of *Nepali Times* which should be marking the festive season, we have tried to remind ourselves of those forgotten and abandoned victims of the war. (See pages 6, 16-17, 19) Many are still waiting for justice, minors who witnessed horrific violence are now troubled and destitute adolescents, no one hears the silent cry of rape victims, and there are hundreds of families of the disappeared for whom every day without closure is an occasion for fresh mourning.

If the perpetrators and the state showed even the slightest sign of remorse, if they took concrete steps to set up a meaningful Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a Commission on Enforced Disappearances, there is a chance that the relatives of the victims and survivors would be willing to forgive. But they will never forget.

Dasain is said to mark the victory of good over evil. In Nepal, it looks like evil still has the upper hand.

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

POLITICAL VACUUM

The various ills of Indian society will be practiced unchecked and unfettered if we give any autonomy to the Tarai regions ('Politics in a vacuum', Editorial, #725). As of now it is already infested with bride burning, dowry seekers, ISI sympathisers, and all kinds of unsavory elements. I don't believe the Madhesi people in the Tarai have any loyalty to their leaders who practice divisive politics. However, demonising the region will only help to drive them into the trap Mr Raut has laid out for his people. We are in need of a national leader who can bring us together.

Namah

■ Criminals are in charge of Nepali politics. Men without integrity or honour hold high level positions in government. I wonder why the honest men and women of the three major parties are so meek and silent. By keeping quiet, they are also being seen as the same corrupt officials they are in the company of. Just look at Pushpa Kamal Dahal. He has been acting like the junkyard bully ever since he lost his significance.

Mahesh

■ Social networking sites are full of reaction to Nanda Prasad Adhikari's death. There were social networking sites even before his death, but we were in a different world.

Dharma

EXTREMISTS

We need a new force, a group of Nepali women and men, with morals and ethics and above all pride and

integrity, to lead us ('Extreme at both ends,' Anurag Acharya, #725). We have no future under these corrupted leaders.

M

■ As a person with DNA and cultural ties to both sides of the border, I am fed up of Madhesi groups and leaders. They are pursuing a very dangerous political agenda (just like our PKD did). They have no sense of social justice and building democratic institutions in the Tarai. The era of identity politics is over. It has been rejected by everyone, including those who professed it or voted for it a few years ago.

N

SELF-RELIANCE

Anyone who thinks that NGOs can fix problems is a fool ('Relying on self-reliance', Ashutosh Tiwari, #725). NGO-wallahs are here to create jobs for themselves and profit in the name of the poor. If all Nepalis were lined up and handed over the equivalent of the money received in their name by all NGOs till date, no one would be poor anymore. Of course that'd never happen because keeping them poor is what keeps the funds coming in.

Chi

■ Ashutosh Tiwari replies: *We live in a (mostly) free country, and you are free to bash the NGOs for all the imagined and the perceived sins and failures. That's your prerogative. But the verifiable evidence does not support your point that NGOs (as a collective entity) want poverty to perpetuate. According to an Oxford*

study, Nepal made the "fastest progress" in reducing multidimensional poverty. The (hated) NGOs' work, especially on education and health, was actually key to making aspects of that poverty reduction possible. Sure, NGOs cannot solve all the problems of development, and some NGOs out there are indeed bad. But these limitations do not mean that it's all right to smear all NGOs with the same black paint, saying that they are all alike. The larger point is: For the development 'eco-system' to thrive and flourish, it needs NGOs as much as it needs the government, private sector, media, academia, youth groups and other such 'species'.

JAGANNATH ADHIKARI

Looks like Jagannath Adhikari, a developmental consultant has written partial truths on Nepal's Maoist movement ('Under the shadow of the red flag', David Seddon, #725). That the Maoist movement ended without a conclusion is a correct observation. This is for two reasons: not a single of the 40 points demand were taken into account by the Nepali state, and the idea of the CA and end of monarchy was never the real demand of the Maoists, it was simply to capture state power.

Pavan Patel

MADAN PURASKAR

People living in the hills and mountains of Western Nepal are perhaps the poorest and most deprived in the whole world ('Nurse's book wins Madan Prize', Kunda Dixit, #725). The Human Development Index indicators support this. The army of volunteers

who go to the remotest parts of the country for little or no pay to deliver basic services are the real heroes of Nepal. They are the driving force behind Nepal's impressive gains in health and education.

Avishek Adhikari

MUDDLE THROUGH

Excellent editorial ('Muddle-through economics', Editorial, #724). Inflation is the real threat, we can live with a delayed constitution.

A Rawal

■ The key issue, I think, is lack of investment, which is why there is excess liquidity. Cutting interest rates will not help increase investment, as the NRB seems to believe, because the reason there is no investment is prolonging political instability and uncertainty, not high interest rates. Sorry to be a wet blanket, but it does go back to writing the constitution on time and creating an atmosphere of political certainty.

Satya Nepali

LAMJUNG

For many people, the scars of the conflict remain unhealed ('Lamjung's ghost village', Yubaraj Shrestha, #725). Any decent government would have long since set up a genuine TRC.

David Seddon

■ I am a Fiji-Nepali and my forefathers were from Lamjung, I was in Nepal this year, but I need more family background information. If this is their story then I when I do find my family saga, it could be very sad.

Aneesh Singh

Times

THIS WEEK



BIKRAM RAI

JUSTICE DENIED: Nanda Prasad Adhikari, who had been on hunger strike for 11 months with wife Ganga Maya to demand justice for the murder of their son, died in Bir Hospital on Monday.



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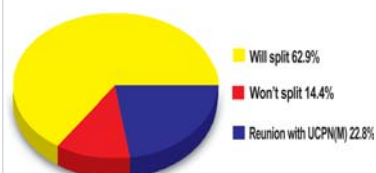
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Q. Who was responsible for the death of Nanda Prasad Adhikari?




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Nepal's soft underbelly

The Madhes has never been more integrated with the rest of the country

Ever since British India days right through the Rana period till today, the Nepal Tarai has been this landlocked nation's soft underbelly.



GUEST COLUMN
Bihari K Shrestha

The plains-dwelling Madhesi people have always felt excluded by Kathmandu, and have demanded greater recognition and

respect.

The demand for dignity and acceptance of the region's distinctive identity fuelled the Madhes Movement of 2007, which has now graduated to calls for greater autonomy and even outright secession. Most of the fractious Madhesi parties in the Constituent Assembly have persisted with their demand for the whole of the Tarai to be turned into a single province with a 'right to self-determination' in the new federal setup.

The pro-federal forces have not presented enough convincing arguments about

the new province's economic and political viability, and most other residents of the plains, including the aboriginal Tharu people, contest the advisability of this proposition. They find no socio-economic or developmental rationale behind it, and, therefore, view it as being insidious in its intent.

The suspicion is fuelled by other antecedents. The ten-year Maoist insurgency was followed in 2007 by the call for Madhesi 'liberation', the defining feature of which was the anti-Hill cleansing of the Tarai. It led to a mass out-migration of people of Hill

descent from Morang, Mahottari, Rautahat and other districts.

On one occasion, the leader of a Madhesi party threatened an embargo against Kathmandu at Birganj, reminding the people of the protracted Indian blockade of Nepal in 1989-90. Lately, the same politician tried to drag India in by describing the drubbing of Madhesi parties in the Tarai in last year's elections as "India's defeat". Earlier, a Birganj-based Indian diplomat egged Madhesi politicians to "make the Tarai burn".

The irony is that all this is happening at a time when the

Madhes has never been more integrated with the rest of the country, socially, economically and emotionally. The Madhes has a distinctive identity, with its own languages (Maithili, Bhojpuri and Avadhi), an agrarian economy, an entrenched caste system and an extended relationship with kindred across the border. Even so, hill-plain interaction has intensified to such an extent in recent decades that Kathmandu has now emerged as the centre of gravity for the Madhesi people too.

Noted columnist Chandra Kishore wrote recently that the Madhesi people are now 'inclined to embrace Kathmandu more than the traditional destinations of Darbhanga, Madhubani, Sitamadi, Bettiah, Patna, Gorakhpur, Baharaich or Lucknow'. He continued: 'While living in Kathmandu still involves some struggle, for the most part, it has now become one of coexistence.'

Madhesi scholar, Ram Narayan Dev, writing about the 'extreme exploitation' in the region, says high caste people in the Madhesh-Tarai have always 'lorded over the people of the lower caste who are virtually landless'. He asks Tarai leaders, 'How justified is it to provide reservation to all caste groups under the pressure of the Madhesbadi parties?' He is against government reservation policy mentioning Madhesi as a category because it would exclude deprived groups like the Dalit, Mushahars, Chamars. Traditionally privileged Jhas, Misras, Thakurs, Yadavs, Sahs and Chaudharis would end up grabbing reserved opportunities.

The Constituent Assembly must take a closer look at the diversity within the Madhes. The demand of a few loud politicians for a single Madhes province will not address this exclusion within the Madhes. The Tarai stands to gain the most from irrigation and electricity benefits from future hydropower projects located in the valleys upstream. This would open up a can of worms. Why should the land in the upper riparian province be submerged to irrigate farms downstream?

Nepal's diverse geography is so unique that its comparative advantage can be best exploited by respecting its integrity, not by breaking it up. So, the challenge for the framers of the new constitution is to rise above their political careers to look at the long-term interest of all Nepalis. Will we learn from the Scottish referendum last week? The 'No' vote prevailed only after Westminster promised extensive constitutional reform in taxation and welfare.

The Constituent Assembly could push back a decision on federalisation to a future time, and instead make provisions to address the need for decentralisation, local self-governance and empowerment of the deprived minorities within the excluded and neglected sections of the Tarai. 🇳🇵

Bihari Shrestha is an anthropologist and a former civil servant.

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Electric delight
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Expanding services

Dish Home has opened two new service centers in Birtamod and Biratnagar. With the latest additions, the total number of Dish Home service centers in Nepal has now reached five.



Fly and win

For the festive season of Dasain and Tihar, Etihad Airways is offering passengers a complimentary gift voucher for American Tourister luggage. Vouchers can be redeemed at Samsonite and American Tourister showrooms in Kathmandu.

Golf kings

Norbu Sherpa and Lobsang Tashi were declared the nett and gross champions of Carlsberg Golf Series. Managing Director of Gorkha Brewery, Philip Norley, gave away the prizes to the winners.



Join the club



Qatar Airways has announced a new social media competition, 'Join the Club'. Facebook fans stand a chance to win a number of prizes like return tickets, signed football shirts and more. The contest runs until 7 October.

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Dolma Impact Fund

Dolma Impact Fund, Nepal's first international private equity fund was launched last week to invest in renewable energy, healthcare, education, agriculture and financial inclusion. The fund particularly targets sustainable job creation. Investors in Dolma include development finance institutions from the Netherlands, Finland and Austria (FMO, Finnfund and Austrian Development Bank –OeEB) as well as private individuals. The fund has a minimum capital of over \$20 million.

Tim Gocher, the fund's founder says: "Nepal suffers from a chronic shortage of local employment. The good news is that remittances from industrious Nepali migrant workers flow disproportionately to poorer rural families. This gives them the ability to purchase essential goods and services for the first time."

However, due to a lack of available investment in local companies, most of this additional demand is met by increasing imports from India and China, and the money Nepal earns from remittances flows right back out.

Dolma plans to help scale up local companies to meet this demand, and create employment. "It is not aid, but

socially responsible, risk-sharing equity investment," explains Gocher.

Gail Marzetti, head of DFID Nepal said: "We are encouraged that our support to the not-for-profit Dolma Development Fund has helped to launch the first impact investment fund dedicated to Nepal. Investments that Dolma

Impact Fund will make in local enterprises will complement the UK government's existing private sector development work in Nepal and support growth and creation of jobs."

She said the legal and regulatory analysis conducted by Dolma would also be helpful for other future investors in Nepal.

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Samriddha Pahad
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The sad saga of the Adhikari family

Nanda Prasad Adhikari did not die while staging fast-unto-death seeking justice for his son murdered allegedly by Maoist cadre in 2004. He was murdered, by an insensitive State and political parties that want to bury the past.



THE DEADLINE
Damakant Jayshi

A day after Nanda Prasad's death, the government tried to absolve itself of all responsibility and in a show of cowardice laid the blame on the man who cannot challenge them anymore. 'Since Nanda Prasad rejected food and medicines prescribed by the doctors, he passed away,' was the limp explanation. The statement went on to argue that his 'fast-unto-death' was irrelevant since the murder case of his son Krishna Prasad Adhikari 'has already been registered at the Chitwan District Court'.

This was an utterly shameful and insensitive response which only added to the humiliation of the Adhikari family in its pursuit of justice. The government explanation fails to acknowledge why the Adhikari couple was compelled to carry on with their indefinite hunger strike. Under pressure from UCPN (Maoist), and in particular from Baburam Bhattarai, the

government could only offer hollow and insincere assurances of prosecuting those named in the FIR. The state therefore failed in one of its primary responsibilities: protecting citizens and punishing the takers of human life.

The latest indefinite hunger strike by Nanda Prasad and his wife Ganga Maya (who is continuing with her fast and is in a critical state) started on 24 October last year. Their struggle has been going on for 10 years ever since Krishna Prasad was tortured and murdered in Chitwan in 2004. None of the 14 people named by the Adhikaris in an FIR has been tried.

The National Human Rights Commission blames the Maoists for murdering Krishna Prasad, who had gone from his home in Gorkha to meet his grandparents in Chitwan soon after his

SLC exams. After the murder, the Maoists, in their standard operating procedure, tried to give the crime a political colour, as if that would absolve their guilt. The Adhikaris have maintained that the murder was related to a family land dispute with the accused in Phujel.

The Adhikari couple first began their hunger strike in front of Prime Minister's official residence at Baluwatar in January 2013. Bhattarai, who won the election from Gorkha, was prime minister at the time. The couple was arrested and kept in police custody for over a month. Then, in June, when Supreme Court Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi was head of interim government, the Adhikaris were detained again and taken to a mental hospital in Lagankhel. Only a media expose forced their release.

They launched their second hunger

strike the following month and ended it on 47th day after an agreement with the government, which included action on the FIR. Police arrested some accused, but after Bhattarai and his comrades issued threats, they were released. Let down, the Adhikaris resumed their hunger strike on 24 October 2014. When police arrested Parshuram Poudel, Bhattarai, went berserk on Twitter, issuing more threats. The police again released Poudel, citing lack of evidence.

Nanda Prasad was standing up against the powerful protectors of criminals and their shameless apologists and sycophants. "These things happen during times of war, what's the big deal?" has been the the Maoist refrain throughout. The pain and trauma of survivors of the conflict and tens of thousands others who lost family members can never be understood by those who have been citing Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA), and want to move on.

The CPA spoke about setting up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to try conflict-era cases. But the parties, with tacit support from Nepal Army, have been dragging their feet. A TRC Act which would give general amnesty has been passed by parliament. It does not aim to provide justice, but deny it.

But even in death Nanda Prasad has not been spared. Social media is riddled with venomous posts accusing him of being lured to sacrifice his life at the behest of donor-funded groups. Some have blamed the couple's other son, Noor Prasad, for allegedly egging his parents on. This is a cynical attempt to muddy the waters and take attention away from the murderers of both 18-year old Krishna Prasad and his father, Nanda Prasad. 🇳🇵

Twitter: @damakant

It was murder, not a fast-unto-death



SETO PATI

The law and the media

BINITA DAHAL

For the past year, the judiciary has often been mired in controversy. There was the decision in 2013 to appoint the Chief Justice as a caretaker prime minister to conduct elections, and the controversial move to appoint tainted judges to the Supreme Court.

Most of the criticism came from the legal fraternity and the media. But despite

the hullabaloo, the appointments were approved by a parliamentary hearing. Stung by the uproar, the Supreme Court decided to strike back and make an example of *Kantipur*, Nepal's widest circulated daily newspaper.

The parliamentary hearing of the Supreme Court judges recommended by the Judicial Council was sharply criticised by most media, starting with by the popular digital portal, *Setopati*. *Kantipur* then took up the subject by investigating

the background of all the appointed justices. Even when the paper was slapped with a contempt of court against its group chairman, director, editor-in-chief and reporter, it continued its exposes.

During the first hearing of that case, Justice Cholendra Shamsher Rana, who was one of the targets of the exposes, reviewed the sub-judice contempt case filed against *Kantipur* Group. In its second hearing Justice Gopal Prasad Parajuli, whose past judgments and personal details were

investigated by *Kantipur*, ordered publishers and editorial staff of *Kantipur* to appear in person to explain why they shouldn't be convicted in contempt of court case.

Most rulings by the courts are not more than two pages, but Parajuli delivered a 11-page tome that tried to prove that *Kantipur* was on a deliberate crusade to tarnish the image of the independent judiciary.

It was apparent that the Supreme Court was flexing its muscles and warning all journalists by putting Nepal's most

powerful media on the dock. *Kantipur* itself used the occasion to project its own profile as a champion of press freedom. Last week, on the day of the hearing, it gathered 50 members of its staff, politicians and industrialists in the Supreme Court premises as a show of force.

It was as if the group wanted to influence the court decision by a demonstration of solidarity. It has now become a prestige issue for both the Supreme Court and *Kantipur*. The paper has reported the case against itself with prominence on the front pages, providing maximum national exposure of its own importance. The publication's main argument was that the court started its final hearing with the same justices who had previously looked at the case.

Although the group's lawyers were putting forward a valid legal point, this was a clear breach of provisions of coverage of cases that are subjudice. According to universal juridical principles, one should not try to influence the court directly or indirectly during the period that a case is being heard. The media's role is to point out the wrongdoings of court, not to stage a demonstration in the court premises during a hearing.

Whatever the past wrongs of the court, the media should also be equally responsible not to undermine the dignity of the independent judiciary. The media cannot appear to be a law unto itself, and not required to abide by it. The aggressive and prominent reporting of the case against itself is also a misuse of media responsibility.

To be sure, the Judicial Committee bypassed candidates with integrity and proven track record for those with questionable pasts, to say the least, when appointing Supreme Court justices. The media did its job by exposing this, but to exact revenge through this contempt case the Supreme Court has gone after the largest target to threaten the rest of the media to behave itself.

It is hard to say which way the verdict will go next week. In the past, the Court has been liberal in contempt cases and journalists have just been slapped on the wrist and cautioned about the law on subjudice cases. This time, positions have hardened, and by its aggressive taunts *Kantipur* may have exceeded the media's accepted behaviour in a country that is supposed to respect the rule of law. 🇳🇵

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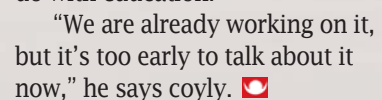
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WORLDLINK

STÉPHANE HUËT

Suraj Shrestha is among a new breed of young Nepalis with creative ideas who wants a clean break with the past, and introduce new approaches. International exposure gives people like him a fresh new outlook, but he is a bit disappointed by the lack of self-esteem among his generation.



SHADES FOR SIGHT: Suraj Shrestha's unique project aims to fund cataract operations by assembling and selling sunglasses in Nepal.

EVENTS



Yoga,
A workshop tailored to help trekkers to prepare, restore and learn through yoga.
Rs 1,350, 28 September, 2 to 5pm, Pranamaya Yoga Studio, Thamel

Festive night,
An evening with live music, scrumptious dinner and exciting games.
Rs 1,500, 26 September, Greenwich Hotel, Sanepa, 98010082092

Dasain aayo,

Dasain, the longest and the most auspicious festival in Nepali culture, is celebrated by worshipping goddess Durga in all her manifestations with various pujas and offerings.

25 September, Ghatastapana: *Jau* (barley) is planted in a *kalash* (vessel) filled with holy water to produce *jamara* (malt sapling) that is used on the seventh day.

1 October, Fulpati: Seventh day when *fulpati* (*jamara*, different types of flowers and banana stalks) is brought to Kathmandu from Gorkha. Generally families bring fulpatis to their prayer rooms.



2 October, Maha Astami: The day of Kaalratri puja to worship Kali, a demonic avatar of Goddess Durga.

3 October, Maha Nawami and

Dashami: The day marks the victory of goddess Durga over the demon. The Taleju temple at Hanuman Dhoka is opened for public only once a year on this day. Factories, machineries and vehicles are worshipped. People take *tikas*, *jamaras* and blessings from their elders.

7 October, Kojagrat Purnima: Tika goes on till this day and Dasain finally concludes.



Retrospective exhibition,

An exhibition of artist and social worker Jan Salter's art works.

23 to 30 September & 4 to 8 October, 10am to 5pm, Nepal Art Council, Babar Mahal

Dasain Dhamaka,

A chilled afternoon with kite-flying followed by a screening of a film by Hayao Miyazaki.

27 September, 1 to 7pm, Sattya, Jawalakhel

Let's write,

An hour-long writing workshop hosted by editors of literary magazine *La.Lit*.

26 September, Quixote's Cove, Ekantakuna, Register: editor@lalitmag.com, www.facebook.com/lalitmag

Changa Fiesta,

Bring out your spool, join the kite-flying competition and enjoy barbeque, bingo and music.

Entry: Rs 500, 27 September, 2pm onwards, Hotel Snowman, Nagarkot

Changa-Chait,

Join the enjoyment in a kite-flying competition on an open ground.

Rs 100, 27 September, 1pm onwards, Nepal Cricket Stadium, Mulpani

OPEN FOR DASAIN

Chez Caroline,

Authentic ambience, exquisite food, glorious sunshine and French fusion delicacies, *Babar Mahal Revisited*, (01)4263070

Open throughout Dasain

Vesper Café,

Has a quaint outdoor patio, great for leisurely dining, serves diverse foods that reflect Italian lifestyle. *Jhamsikhel*, (01)5548179

Open throughout Dashain, 2 to 10pm on 30 September to 2 October, 5 to 10pm on 3 October

Little Italy,

Go vegetarian at this Italian food chain that sticks to truly authentic flavours and textures. *Darbar Marg*
Open throughout Dasain

Mezze by Roadhouse,

Dine at this place with smart, modern interior and chic terrace, and imbibe the Italian culture. *Darbar Marg*
Open throughout Dasain, (4pm onwards on 3 October)

Grill Me,

A haven for meat lovers, the restaurant stays true to its name. *Jhamsikhel*
Open on all days except 1 to 4 October

Vootoo,

A delectable selection of Newari food, don't miss out on the sukuti. *Lajimpat*
Open on all days except 30 September to 4 October



Yin Yang Restaurant,

East meets west as you choose from a variety of Thai and continental dishes. *Thamel*, (01)4701510

Open throughout Dashain, (6pm onwards on 3 October)

Barista lavazza,

The newest addition to the Valley's European inspired coffee-culture cafes serves excellent mochas and lattes, don't forget to try their grilled chicken sandwich. *Jawalakhel*

Open on all days except 1 to 4 October

Embassy,

Positioned on Lajimpat's embassy-laden lane but away from the hustle and bustle of the main road, this restaurant has a menu with Nepali, Indian, Italian, Thai and Japanese dishes on offer. *Lajimpat*, *open on all days except 1 to 4 October*



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MUSIC



Wildfire

For the first time ever, catch Bipul Chettri live in Kathmandu.
11 October, 6pm onwards, Rs 1000, 25 hours club, Tangal

Karaoke,

Don't be shy and sing it out at a karaoke event with live bands.
26 September, Red Mandolin, Jhamsikhel
27 September, Tamasalaya, Naxal
28 September, Bourbon Room, Durbar marg, 6 pm onwards

Parichaya,

Join the official release gig of Tumbleweed Inc.'s debut album, Parichaya.
Rs 300 (CD inclusive), 30 September, 7pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel

Jazz extravaganza,

The 12th edition of Jazzmandu festival will feature a series of jazz concerts in various venues of the valley, and masterclasses will be run by visiting artists. 16 to 22 October, 9803516450

Soul shakedown,

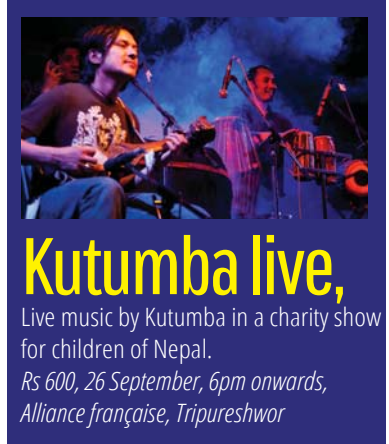
Before closing down for Dasain, House of Music is organising one last party with Joint Family Internationale. 26 September, 7.30pm onwards, House of Music, Thamel

Blues N' Tonic,

Blues N' Tonic will be playing live. 26 September, 7pm onwards, Brian's Grill House, Dillibajar

Hatemalo Saanjh,

A charity programme for education in Nepal with performances by Avinash Ghising, Bharat Sitaula, Megh Lama, Shreya Sotang, Seema Sangraula and more. 28 September, 6.30pm onwards, Madhushala, Darbar Marg



Kutumba live,

Live music by Kutumba in a charity show for children of Nepal. Rs 600, 26 September, 6pm onwards, Alliance française, Tripureshwor

GETAWAYS

Mango Tree Lodge,

Culture walks, rafting in the Karnali, wildlife exploration, and jungle safari at the Bardia National Park. Bhetani, Bardia, info@mangotree lodge.com

Fulbari Resort,

Enjoy the scenic view of Pokhara as you pamper yourself with tennis, golf, drinks, and dinners. Pokhara, (01)4461918



Waterfront Resort,

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

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Buddha Maya Gardens Hotel,

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EAT, PRAY, SHOP

There's more to do in Thailand than watch a girl display her flexibility

TSERING DOLKER GURUNG
in BANGKOK

After going on a female-only vacation to Thailand last year, a friend's sister returned with an entirely new wardrobe and a question: "Do you know what a ping pong show is?" It sounded dirty, and it definitely wasn't table tennis. We gave up, and asked: "What is it?" "Watch *The Hangover 2*," she replied.

I didn't, but just googled it. Can the girls really do that? Despite my curiosity about the 'show', it was one thing that didn't feature on my itinerary when I visited Thailand earlier this year.

Instead, I saw *The Extravaganza*

Show by Thai Alangkarn Theatre in Pattaya. Yes, culture in Pattaya. Who knew? The hour long production is an elaborate visual retelling of Thai history. Warriors ride elephants onto the stage, acrobats swing through the air, dancers in flowing robes glide across. Never was a crash course in history this much fun.

Unfortunately, the theatre is struggling to stay open. The 2,000 seater auditorium was only half filled during our visit. "We need to start attracting tourists of all nationalities to survive," the theatre director said as we sat down for a preshow meal in the theatre's restaurant. The menu as the audience were largely Chinese.

The next stop in Pattaya was the Sanctuary of Truth. A dream project of Thai businessman Lek Viriyaphant who died in 2000 leaving his son in-charge,

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this Khmer styled building is an architectural marvel. It is made entirely of wood and uses traditional Thai building methods without nails. The temple is festooned with carved Buddhist and Hindu sculptures. Although construction started in 1988, work is still ongoing.

Pattaya as it turned out was not all about Walking Street. While the infamous red light district continues to attract most of Pattaya's tourists, for us the chance of getting a mani-pedi at the beach was more appealing. At 400baht, it is a suprisingly affordable luxury if you need some pampering.

If Pattaya was a pleasant departure from a sleazy stereotype, Chiang Mai makes Nepalis think of home. The northern city looks and feels like Kathmandu minus the pollution. Doi Suthep, the most famous of the wats here sits peacefully on a hillock and as it's lit up at night, the image of Swayambu during full moon comes to mind. Temple-hopping is the popular past-time for visitors, so are visits to the

three national parks in the vicinity.

Chiang Mai's best food is the street variety. A 40 baht braised pork meal whipped up by a sidewalk cook in a cowboy hat was a much more intense treat for the taste buds than the 1,000 baht dinner at a posh new restaurant.

Shopping in Chiangmai is best done in the night bazars, and the best place to pick up knick knacks for folks back home. A student bazar set up by university students has the best prices but less variety (in terms of sizes). But you can always head over to Central World where the international fashion retailers have their boutiques. Compared to Bangkok's Central World, this one is easier to navigate.

Back in Bangkok, it was raining so a visit to the Art in Paradise interactive art gallery was in order. It encourages visitors to be their goofy self by posing for paintings. Great place to spend a couple of hours making for more than a dozen instagram posts.

Khao San Road is a hipster haven. Imagine chairs and tables of bars in Thamel all pulled out on streets, revelers dancing the night away, size 6 hostesses for waiters and you have it. Shop, dance, eat, get massages all on this one street that is usually filled with young Europeans. You can try the fish spa, and get a foot massage right after. Rates are half the prices back home. I tried both and more all in a day. After all, I had to make the most of my last day of a Thailand holiday. 🇹🇭

www.alangkarnthailand.com
www.sanctuaryoftruth.com
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PICS: TSERING DOLKER GURUNG



and dance along as they make their way to the temple. Closer to the temple, street vendors sell flowers and incense sticks and Pali chants singing 'Buddham Saranam Gachhami' reverberates throughout the complex. With the ambience and music, walking in the procession is reminiscent of taking part in a jatra in Nepal.

The festival is held twice a year, on Makha Bucha Day in mid-February, and Visakha Bucha Day during mid-May. For those interested in learning more about how Buddhism travelled from Nepal and India to Thailand via Java, Nakhon Si Thammarat should be on the culture part of your Thai itinerary. 🇹🇭

Ayesha Shakya

Nakhon Si Thammarat

As the travel hub of Southeast Asia, Thailand has emerged as the most popular outbound destination for Nepalis after India. With its rich Buddhist culture, immaculate white-sand beaches, memorable cuisine and a world-renowned hospitality, there is something for everybody.

Yet, most visitors flock to the popular trio in the north: Bangkok, Pattaya and Phuket. While there's no denying the allure of these cities, it pays to go off the beaten path. To discover a Thailand not yet encroached by hordes of tourists, head over to Nakhon Si Thammarat, the second largest province in southern Thailand. Although not quintessentially picturesque as the other parts, travellers can immerse themselves in the culture in this historic town. The capital city of Nakhon Si Thammarat was the historical center of Buddhism in ancient Thailand and, to this day, boasts a flourishing Buddhist culture.

Buddhism is an integral part of daily life here, with a temple or a shrine scattered in every corner.

The locals are devout Buddhists and collectively celebrate Buddhist festivals such as the Hae Pha Khuen That Festival in February. Celebrated at the Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan temple, and unique to the southern province, locals take part in the parade holding a religious cloth, called Phra Bot, which depicts various aspects of Buddha's life. They continue the procession to the temple to wrap the cloth around the pagoda for good fortune and success.

The entire town comes out dressed in white for the procession and portions of the city centre are entirely blocked for pedestrians. Although religious, the processions are also light-hearted as locals play music



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THE HONOURABLE WOMAN

Recent complex and tragic events that have occurred in Israel and Palestine has generated dissent and concern all over the world. In opinion pieces, in newspapers, and at dinner



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande



turn into shouting matches because of strong opinions on either side. The issues involving the creation of Israel, the horrific events that led to it, its continuing struggle to exist, and the plight of the Palestinian people is a subject most fiction writers choose to stay away from due to fear of backlash from various parties.

Which is why, this week I have chosen to write about *The Honourable Woman*, a BBC

commissioned 8-part miniseries that dives straight into these issues unafraid, bringing up very real controversies. While I strongly believe that the best way to understand complex issues is by reading widely, and wisely, on the matter, I also feel that sometimes the best way to bring difficult subjects to a wider viewership is through popular methods – television in this case.

Maggie Gyllenhaal plays the titular honourable woman, Baroness Nessa Stein, an

enormously wealthy, sensitive, but steely business woman who is determined to not let her violent past history (her father was garroted before her eyes) mar her philanthropic efforts on the West Bank. Here is some crucial context: Nessa and her brother Ephra (Andrew Buchan) are Jewish, their father was killed by a Palestinian terrorist, and Nessa was once kidnapped while visiting the West Bank with her then translator

and now faithful but enigmatic Palestinian friend Atika (Lubna Azabal).

Why then are the Steins so intent on continuing efforts towards improving life on the West Bank? Are their motives largely financial, or perhaps even more nefarious, cleverly masked by their humanitarian façade? What happened to Nessa when she and Atika were imprisoned for months on end? Why did Ephra, the older brother, step down as head of the Stein Group right after Nessa was liberated by the Mossad?

These are just a few of the questions that you will find yourself asking over the course of this tightly wrought series that involves a number of byzantine games played by every single character, and is further convoluted by the meddling of the American, British, Palestinian and Israeli intelligence services.

Why then should you watch this sometimes histrionic but compelling spy thriller? Because the series is about an extraordinary woman who manages to hold on to her humanity despite being buffeted by the stormiest weather, personally and politically. This well written, well researched saga will move you but also leave you disturbed.

nepalitimes.com

■ Trailer

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HAPPENINGS



RSS

NORTH BOUND: Vice President Parmananda Jha waves to media before leaving for China on a six-day visit on Wednesday.



BIKRAM RAI

JUSTICE DENIED: Nanda Prasad Adhikari, who had been on hunger strike for 11 months with wife Ganga Maya to demand justice for the murder of their son, died in Bir Hospital on Monday.



DEVAKI BISTA

LAST RESPECT: UML Chairman KP Oli attends the funeral of senior leader Sapana Pradhan at the party headquarters in Balkhu on Tuesday.



DEVAKI BISTA

IN ARMS: Women take part in a rally against rape in Bhadrakali on the occasion of International Day of Peace on Sunday.

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Feline shrewdness

Alliance Française of Kathmandu has been organising Les jeudis du cinéma (The Thursdays of Cinema) during September and for three weeks, movie buffs enjoyed an eclectic selection. From teenage comedy (*The French Kisses*) to classics (*The Big Day* by Jacques Tati), from drama (*Violette* by Martin Provost) to documentary (*The Shebabs of Yarmouk* by Axel Salvatori-Sinz), it was an exhibition of French cinema at its piquant best.

Although the Thursdays of Cinema ended on 25 September, viewers will get the chance to watch more movies in the coming months. This time around, the finale featured Joann Sfar's *The Rabbi's Cat*.

Sfar, who is a cartoonist, became famous after directing a live-action movie in 2010. In *Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life*, he portrayed French singer Serge Gainsbourg. The following year, Sfar collaborated with producer Antoine Delesvaux to adapt his own comics series, *The Rabbi's Cat*, into an animated film.

The story takes place in the 1920s Algiers, before Algeria's independence, a time Jews and Muslims seemed to live peacefully together, but were despised by some French colonists. At the beginning, a



rabbi's cat starts speaking after he eats his master's parrot. As a result, the animal then becomes an astute and sarcastic observer of religion, and exposes some inherent incoherences when it wants its own bar-mitzvah to become "a real Jew".

The quiet life of the rabbi and his cat gets further disturbed by the arrival of a

strange Russian Jew who fled the anti-Jewish pogroms taking place in his country in order to reach Ethiopia, the "African Jerusalem." A hectic road-trip across Africa starts instantly, and the two Jews are joined by a sheik, an alcoholic, a painter, a donkey and the cat. This adventure, beset with fear and violence,

turns out to be an enlightening voyage.

In his second movie, Joann Sfar also makes two implied references. First, he fools around with Tintin, Hergé's famous comics character, who is portrayed as an arrogant, colonialist hunter. Then he invites in a fellow cartoonist, Ivorian Marguerite Abouet (author of the brilliant *Aya of Yop City*) to play the voice of the 'African girl'.

The film's script might seem disjointed at times as different characters wander in and out. Perhaps, this is because Joann Sfar adapted only three out of five volumes of his comics series. Still, the film is a sequence of short pleasant stories, all of which address religious issues with humour. Sfar notes the complexity of multicultural dialogue and the absurdity of religious fanaticism.

With the bright colours of the 1920s Algiers and the Arabesque music from the Maghreb that remind you of hookah scents, *The Rabbi's Cat* is purring for your presence. 🇲🇵

Stéphane Huët

www.facebook.com/afktm
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Samurai

Among things that remind us of Japan - cameras, cars, and quality electronics - nothing is as romantic as the samurai. The odd thing about the restaurant Samurai is that nothing here hints at the land of the rising sun.

The walls here are painted mostly orange. Profiles of Nepali musicians - not wood block prints of geishas, emperors or tidal waves - hang above each table. And the menu doesn't stray beyond the Nepal-India-China axis. No wasabi in sight.

Forced to play it safe, we ordered the least fancy stuff. Our only vegetarian dish Crispy Potato (Rs 130) looked interesting, but that's where its merits end. It looked like potato but tasted like pastry, thanks to the over-zealous

coating of breadcrumbs. A better sauce would have salvaged this appetiser, but only ketchup and momo ko achar were available.

The Mixed Thai-style Chow mein (Rs 195), an 'exotic' dish we've savoured previously, was also disappointing today. Did the cook leave home for Dasain so soon? If it wasn't for the crumbled peanuts, this dish would have been forgettable. Also, it didn't help that they've been petitioned by patrons to go easy on the chili that set it apart from normal chow mein. We recommend the chicken variety (Rs 170) with extra spice.

The less we write about the Fish Cutlet (Rs 220) the better. Dry and crust-dominant, we had trouble finding the flesh. Again, we recommend opting for chicken (Rs 260), because it is done superb. Don't bother with Veg Cutlet either, because that's simply being euphemistic about Alu Chop /Tiki.

The 15 minutes it took to prepare Chicken Biryani (Rs 220) suggests you Samurai is not a dedicated Curry and Kebab hole. But by no means is that a waste. Spiced with the usual cinnamon, cardamom and bay leaves, it comes with generous portions of proper, tender chicken. Keep this for the days you want rice, but not dal bhat.

To wash down the residues of oil and starch, we chose some

'safe for work' drinks. Banana Lassi (Rs95) is a dense concoction of banana and milk, while Sweet Lassi (85), not as dense but tastier, came scented with familiar vanilla. Other beverages - alcoholic, carbonated or caffeinated - are also available.

The deal about places like Samurai is that you don't go there with high expectations, because that way you can be surprised. That's why we avoided anything out of the ordinary, like the distinctly suspect entries on the Chinese menu. If you find yourself hungry in Patan or simply want your office lunch prepared with tender loving care, you could do a lot worse than eating at Samurai. 🇲🇵

Sisupal

How to get there: Right next to the Institute of Engineering gate on the Patan Dhoka-Kupandol lane, marked by a huge red board.



Great Food Deserves Carlsberg

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Step by step

Now that the trekking season is here, it may be worthwhile to go over some important points about Diamox, the most commonly used drug for prevention of acute mountain sickness (AMS). Trekkers and high-altitude pilgrims take Diamox for both prevention and treatment of AMS.



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

AMS is a common problem at high altitude (> 2500m) and usually presents with headache, nausea tiredness, and fatigue. More than altitude, it is the speed at which travellers

make their ascents that determine the severeness of AMS. The best way to prevent acute mountain sickness is thus by planning an itinerary that allows for gradual acclimatisation.

As far as possible, it is best to avoid use of drugs while in the mountains. The Himalayan Rescue Association strongly recommends travellers to make gradual ascent without using any drugs. However there are situations where it may not be possible to ascend slowly.

Rescuers are required to go up rapidly to high altitudes. For logistic reasons, it may not be possible for trekkers and climbers to spend the night at an optimal altitude. Furthermore, airports in places like Lhasa, Tibet (3,490 m),



La Paz, Bolivia (4,058m), Leh, Ladak (3500m) may cause travellers to arrive at a high altitude without the chance to acclimatise en route.

In case of such circumstances, travellers who do not take diamox before the trip, are susceptible to AMS which can sometimes progress to life-threatening high altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE) or high altitude cerebral edema (HACE). Many travellers like pilgrims often forget to ascend gradually in their fervour of reaching the 'divine land'.

Sudden military deployment

to high altitude regions of the world, such as the Hindu Kush in Afghanistan, may necessitate drug prophylaxis for prevention of AMS. A fast-growing population of climbers are also incorrectly being advised by physicians to use prophylactic medicine to both improve performance and achieve their summit dream.

In a publication in the British Medical Journal in 2000, Dumont and colleagues had stated that only 750 mg/day of Diamox (acetazolamide) would prevent AMS. However, recent articles, which include studies done after 2000 (many of which were conducted in the Himalayas), have shown that a much lower dose (250 mg/day) of diamox is adequate.

For travellers without sulpha allergy, it is recommended to take Diamox a day before the trip at a dosage of 125 mg in the morning and evening and continue for 2 to 3 days in the mountains. Other drugs including Gingko Biloba and Ibuprofen have been found to

prevent AMS. But due to its proven efficacy over the years in a large number of trials with an acceptable side-effect profile, Diamox continues to be the most commonly used drug.

Diamox causes a tingling sensation of the fingers and toes, which for many is very bothersome. It also makes carbonated beverages taste flat.

Diamox also helps prevent periodic breathing (literally, trying to "catch your breath" while sleeping) at high altitude. This is a very common problem which sometimes triggers anxiety attacks. Diamox decreases the hypoxemic (low oxygen) spells during sleep and successfully treats this problem.

In conclusion, travellers to altitudes need to be encouraged to go up gradually without the use of drugs, including Diamox to enhance acclimatisation. However, in certain instances, chemoprophylaxis may be useful. In those cases, low-dose (250 mg/day) of Diamox is the drug of choice.

GIZMO by YANTRICK

AN ELECTRICAL RIDE



Electric scooters may fall low on the 'hip' meter compared to their fossil-fuelled counterparts, but in a country where riders have to regularly queue up to fill their tanks and deal with constant rises in fuel price, investing in a battery-powered two wheeler may not be such a bad idea.

One of the problems is that these eco-friendly scooters often receive flak for being unattractive. A relatively new entrant into the e-scooter market, Terra Motor Corps of Japan, aims to shake off that myth with its launch of its stylish A4000i e-scooter. The scooter boasts a Japanese

build and design. Available in a white-and-blue colour scheme, the 118 kg A4000i looks classy and feels comfortable and balanced under your feet. Undoubtedly, the A4000i's USP is the iPhone functionality, which it integrates into its heads-up-display. While smartphone integration in cars is nothing new, Terra has come up with an innovative way to utilise your iPhone (3GS - 5) while you are up and about on your two-wheeler.

The two-passenger scooter features a small LCD display on its console, and most of the space is occupied by an iPhone dock. The rider places their iPhone in that receptacle, in landscape mode, and Terra's proprietary app is then able to provide real-time information, such as power consumption and remaining battery life, along with trip statistics such as duration, distance, average/maximum speed, and power

consumption. Further, all of the recorded data can be monitored through the web. The smart phone application is updated regularly by Terra, to ensure that it is ahead of the pack.

The A4000i runs on a rear in-wheel motor which is powered by a removable 48-volt/40-Ah lithium battery. Once fully charged - this takes 4.5 hours - the A4000i is able to operate for over 60 km at a maximum of 60 km/h. This is perfect for getting around the city. It boasts both front and rear disc brakes, should you need to stop at once. Terra has also built its battery to last. With a life of approximately 50,000 km, it goes five times the distance as most e-scooters.

Yantrick's Verdict: An attractive bike that will have you hitting the road while everyone else is lining up for petrol. Ranging from Rs 150,000 to 400,000.

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Never wash your hair with hot water as it gets rid of the hair's natural hair. Always use lukewarm water for your first rinse, shampoo and condition your hair as usual, and then rinse with cold water at the end. This is a good tip that everyone should follow.



Use a wide tooth comb instead of a hair brush to detangle your hair and avoid breakage or static in your hair. If you do want to use a brush, use a paddle brush, but never on wet hair.



KEEPING IT SHINY THIS WINTER

A good hair day can make you feel confident and super attractive. Everyone desires and envies shiny and strong hair. Hair is an important aspect of not only one's physical appearance, but also of one's overall personality. But when winter comes creeping in, it becomes even more difficult to manage your tresses. From flat hair to dull locks, split ends to frizz, the cold brings with it all sorts of hair trouble that may last an entire season if not taken care of. Here are some basic tips to fight bad hair and keep the locks glossy this winter. Invest in a good-quality, expert-based shampoo tailored to the needs of your hair, but don't use it as much as you would during summer as your hair and scalp are drier in winter. Opt for shampoos with nutrients that

protect the hair against UV rays and have moisturising benefits. Applying oil can be a time-consuming, and at times, a messy process, but it is beneficial and needed, especially in the dry season. A good hair oil massage stimulates blood supply to surface of the skin. This will condition the scalp and enhance the strength of the hair roots. You can use almond oil, olive oil, mustard oil or coconut oil. This doesn't mean you skip the use of conditioner. Just as your skin needs moisturising, your hair does too. This is especially important for people with really dry hair. A conditioner provides shine to your hair and prevents them from breakage. It also gives hair the bounce that we all want. Many people make the mistake of applying conditioner to the scalp instead of

WINTER HAIR CARE

Head to the parlour every six to eight weeks for a trim. A regular trim helps avoid split ends and helps your hair to stay healthy and strong.



the hair ends, which is completely wrong. Always remember to rub the conditioner on the body of the hair, keep it on for at least a minute before rinsing off. Your hair suffers from daily wear and tear just like your skin, and it's affected by environmental factors like cold temperature, wind and sunlight. So once a week you should go for intense deep penetrating conditioning treatment to keep your hair shiny and lustrous. Heat styling tends to deprive your hair of all the moisture and shine so it's better to avoid blow drying, straightening and curling as much as possible. When on occasions you really need to style your hair, don't forget to use a heat protecting serum or oil to reduce the damage. I feel that it's a myth that when you use a particular shampoo and conditioner for a long time, your hair gets used to it that it doesn't work well anymore. It is true that product buildups occur in your hair, but it can be removed in a simple way: just mix a little bit of baking soda with your favourite shampoo every two months and then continue using that shampoo and conditioner again... I do that all the time...



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Wet hair is prone to breakage so handle them very carefully to avoid unnecessary hair loss. Rubbing your wet hair with a towel causes them to break. Always wrap your hair gently in a towel and let it absorb some of the moisture. Doing this also avoids the formation of split ends.



Static hair is everyone's worst nightmare. To prevent static, use satin pillow cases as they minimise static, unlike the cotton ones.

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KUNDA DIXIT

PHOTOGRAPHS by
JAN MØLLER HANSEN

The death this week of Nanda Prasad Adhikari after nearly a year-long hunger strike demanding justice for the torture and murder of his son in 2004 has thrown into sharp focus the violent legacy of the conflict.

Adhikari's death exposed the apathy of the state, the collusion between former enemies to forget past atrocities, and the unfinished business of setting up commissions to look at truth and reconciliation and enforced disappearances. The state, under successive governments since 2006, would like to conveniently forget gross violations of human rights during the war.

Now, there is concern about the health of Nanda Prasad's wife, Ganga Maya. Women and children witnessed unimaginable cruelty during the conflict, and they have been forgotten during the peace process. Many of the children are now young adults, and besides the physical wounds they also carry emotional scars. Some wounded got artificial limbs, but we largely forgot the psychological injuries suffered by children.

The state now pretends the war is finished business. But as long as the physical and mental trauma of the survivors remain, it will not be over. The government says the emphasis is now on repairing bridges and building highways, it wants to move on. There are just too many loose ends to do that.


Post-traumatic stress is still rife among women and children who witnessed and suffered brutal violence, and it afflicts young combatants too. Many lost their homes and property and haven't been able to go back. Thousands of others were internally displaced, or migrated to India with their

entire families, never to return. Many of them never received any support from the government. Resources earmarked by donors through the Peace Ministry and distributed through local Peace Committees have often been siphoned off by party faithful and fake victims.

Among all the victims, the most vulnerable are still those who were children during the war: whole-timers who became child soldiers, students force-marched to reeducation camps, the wounded, and orphans. Many thousands of others were victims of gender-based violence, sexual abuse, unlawful recruitment by armed groups. Even after the war ended, it is the children who have been killed or have lost limbs to unexploded ordnances.

Eight years after the war ended, at least 740 children are still residing in childcare homes across Nepal and waiting to be reintegrated with their families. No one knows the real figures, but it is accepted that the official statistics grossly underestimate the numbers of war-affected children in the country.

After the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Accord, the emphasis was on identifying, reintegrating and supporting children associated with armed forces and groups. Some verified minors below 18 and late recruits got support for reintegration. The government endorsed a 'National Plan of Action for Reintegration of Conflict Affected Children' in 2010, but not much has happened. The international conventions on rights of children that Nepal has ratified do not make any difference for those who were minors during the war.

nepalitimes.com

■ Watch video clip from Kesang Tseten's *Frames of War*

■ Photo Gallery

TOLL ON CHILDREN

Official tally of children affected by the 1996-2006 conflict.

500
Killed

40,000
Displaced

8,000
Orphaned

Thousands
Wounded

SOURCE: NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Niraj's father was murdered during the conflict, and his mother left him to marry another man. An uncle (*left*) adopted him, and he is now in Grade 6. They applied to the local Peace Committee for state compensation, but nothing happened.



CHILDREN OF WAR

Rukmali is a 12-year-old seventh grader from Rolpa district. Rukmali and her sister stepped on a land mine, and lost her right hand and partially her sight. Her father has spent all his savings on their treatment. The state has not helped.

The parents of the older girl disappeared during the conflict when she was just a baby. An ex-Maoist guerrilla commander now looks after her. She is 10 years old. The father of the younger girl also disappeared during the conflict, and she now lives with her 75-year-old grandfather. She has received no other support.



Purnima was 13 when the Maoists took her father in 2004. They tortured him by cutting off his leg, then shot him. Her brother was also severely tortured, and is now disabled. Purnima herself was forced to become a child soldier. Today 23 years old, Purnima earns Rs 3,000 a month and supports her remaining family including her cancer-ridden mother. She didn't get any support from the government. Here she is holding the last picture of her father.



Statute of denial



INTERESTING TIMES
Mallika Aryal

When Nepal passed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Act back in May, it ruled out amnesty for war-era rapes. It was considered a step in the right direction. However, Nepal's Muluki Ain still retains a 35-day statute of limitation on reporting rape, which blocks investigation as well as prosecution of rapes that happened during the conflict that ended eight years ago.

There are over 100 cases of sexual violence documented by the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR). Advocacy Forum alone has over 200 cases. Rights workers say they haven't even started to scratch the surface when it comes to investigating instances of rape and sexual violence during the conflict.

The TRC Act may rule out amnesty for those accused of rape but the provision in the Muluki Ain gives de facto amnesty to perpetrators. Up until now, not a single wartime rape or sexual violence case has been investigated. No survivor feels safe enough to come forward and seek justice.

When the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) was signed in 2006, one of the provisions was to provide relief, including financial assistance to the conflict affected. This group included family members of those who were killed, abducted, widowed, internally displaced, among others. But rape and sexual violence survivors were not on the list, and never received the Interim Relief Package. A Human Rights Watch report released this week in Kathmandu strongly urges the government to amend the Package and provide reparations to the survivors of sexual violence and rape.

Reparations are especially important to victims of sexual violence because that is as close to justice as they will have seen. Many want an apology or acknowledgement of wrongdoings, but

that is not what they need immediately. What is important is a way to live their day-to-day lives, and take care of themselves and their families.

The state has systematically forgotten this group of women who have been living in pain for the last decade. In 2013 Nepal's Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction formed guidelines for psycho-social counseling. But rape and sexual violence survivors are not mentioned anywhere in the document. Counseling is imperative for the survivors but also for their families. Access to those services has been denied to the survivors and their families, forcing them to live in fear and pain.

The clause in the TRC that rules out amnesty for rape is a half-hearted attempt to silence survivors. If that silence was broken, many names would come forward. And those names would include officers of the security forces, armed police, Nepal Army, as well as Maoist leaders who have thus far enjoyed impunity. The state will not be able to keep them safe if there are repercussions.

Rights activists say that the statue of limitation may be extended to six months but there is no official word on this. Since May, a group of women's rights activists has been standing in a busy corner next to the CA building, demanding that rape laws be changed. Many leaders have met with members, many promises have been made, but there has been no movement.

Nepal's limitation for filing rape complaints is absurd and archaic, this barbaric law should be changed. If changing the Muluki Ain is going to take time, make special provisions for war-era rapes so that at least those cases are not stuck by this statue of denial. Quash impunity, take responsibility for the past, and don't forget the women who have been silenced into suffering. 🇳🇵

Nepal's archaic laws put a deadline on reporting sex crimes

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Dad

Lenin Banjade in his blog, www.lendaai.wordpress.com



26 Novmber 1983. My parents had Rs2,000 with them when we moved from Arghakhanchi to Dang. Dad opened a tea-shop in front of the District Administration Office and the court. Mum and my sister stayed back in the village.

Dad sold tea and samosas, I studied. Every time I brought paan and cigarettes for his customers from the bajar 15 minutes away, I got a rupee as payment. In that hut Dad and I leaned on each other. He kept his arms around me when we slept in our only bed, and I found the smell of his armpits soothing and pleasant.

When officials from the court and offices came for tea at our shop, I used to curse them under my breath for their lavish lifestyle. Dad used to say, “You could also come for tea here if you become a lawyer.”

And my mind played out fantasies: I would be wearing a black coat when I came for tea, I would pay my Dad with my own money and steal it back from him in the evening.

Every Friday, Dad and I travelled 26 km to our village, where my mother, sister, and younger brother stayed. When I went home on Fridays with Dad, I used to feel like I had the world in my hands. You could hear our Philips radio blaring from quite a distance, and my siblings would come running to receive us.

We didn’t have a tv at home and I grew restless. Dad said a tv would ruin us, but I understood that we really couldn’t afford one. Day and night we sat together listening to the radio.

The corner of our tea-hut was our home. One day it caught fire and Dad was almost burnt alive as he tried to save me. I took this half-burnt parent of mine to the hospital, and guide him back home. I was his only support. He had become an obedient son, I his Dad.

People are born twice during their lives: first for their parents, later for their children. After our shop burnt down, I felt my father was born a second time for me.

We sold our tea shop and bought one that sold clothes. My mother and siblings came to live with us in the city. Every month Dad went to Kathmandu for supplies. Those monthly trips to the capital were what I dreamt about all the time. I was dying to see the escalator at Bishal Bazar my friends talked about.

Every time Dad packed his bags for Kathmandu, I sat in front of him and sulked. He used to look at me and then invariably say, “Okay, bring your clothes.”

In Kathmandu my only mission was to go to Bishal Bazar and ride the escalator and search for empty matchboxes wherever we went. These I could sell for a lot of money in Dang, and colourful ones even fetched twice the price. On the bus back home, with pockets filled with matchboxes, I often sat listening to sermons by people I didn’t know. One went like this: “Friends are always more loyal than life-partners, don’t you ever give them grief.”

Our shop was far from where we stayed and we took turns carrying Dad’s lunch. In the evenings, my sister soaped the dishes and I washed them. Dad used to tell us we were children of communists so we had to do the chores. Maybe that is where I go my name: Lenin. If he was in the Nepali Congress, perhaps my name would have been ‘BP’.

We sold our clothes shop and bought a guest house. Instead of clothing people, we started lodging them. Dad had his own ideals about this. When we were younger he never sold cigarettes and alcohol, but times were different now and he was compelled to stock both.

Twenty-six years passed, and it took me all those years to really get to know my father. But by then he had become a grandfather and I had left Dang for Kathmandu.

Back then, when Dad came home from the shop, the radio in his hands blaring away, we used to be ecstatic. These days, when we call him from Kalanki before heading home, it’s his turn to be delighted. Back then, I used to be so happy when he bought me new clothes during Dasain, These days, he is overhoyed when I buy him new clothes.

MURDER

Special Page 1 Editorial, *Annapurna Post*, 23 September

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

Repeatedly cheated of justice by successive governments, Nanda Prasad Adhikari has ‘died’. That is the polite way of putting it. In reality he was murdered.

He was murdered by an apathetic state, and would have been alive if governments one after other hadn’t gone back on their promises that they would find and try those responsible for the murder of his son in Gorkha in 2004. His wife, Ganga Maya, would not be in danger of dying herself if there had been a genuine attempt to find justice.



Adhikari has become the first Nepali to give his life for justice for a war crime in this country, sacrificing his own life after 332 days without food. It was the government’s responsibility to save his life by dispensing justice but it failed shamefully.

If a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) had been set up as agreed to eight years ago between Giriya Prasad Koirala and Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Adhikari would not have to sacrifice his life. After Sushil Koirala came to power, the deadline for setting up the TRC kept being put off, prompting the Adhikari couple to continue with their hunger strike. The government can stoop low and blame donor-funded activists, but that is only a feeble attempt to absolve themselves of the crime.

The late Nanda Prasad Adhikari and his semi-conscious wife Ganga Maya have exposed the government’s criminal inability to dispense justice in the eyes of Nepalis and international public opinion. This has put a question mark over the government’s seriousness about setting up a TRC, as well as exposing its role in the death of morality in this country. A state’s primary responsibility is the protection of the life of its citizens, this government has lost the confidence of its people by its inability to fulfill that role.



Daring to deliver

Pramika Maharjan in *Swasthyakarmiko Awaj*, September 2014



As a staff nurse at Doti Hospital, I had gone to bed after dinner after my all-day shift. Just after midnight, my phone rang, it could only mean one thing. I rushed to the maternity ward and found that a health post in Baglekh had referred a pregnant woman to us.

Her uterus was wide open and the amniotic fluid was leaking out. The baby’s umbilical cord was already showing, but it was choking on the muconium. The heart beat was 138 when I checked the pulse on the cord. The baby was still alive.

Because this was going to be a complicated case, I got someone to inform the medical officer what was happening. He came at once. Our GP, Srijana Gauchan was on holiday, so there was no question of surgery. We decided it would be ideal if we could somehow get her to a better equipped hospital. But she had already been pregnant six times, had aborted once. She could die on the highway.

I called Srijana, and she advised us to stay put. I had studied about these complicated pregnancies in medical books but nothing prepared me for the real case. I knew it would be very difficult if she gave birth here, but I also knew if I didn’t do anything, something worse might happen. We decided to go for it.

I told the husband very clearly what was happening, and what we had decided to do. He told me they already had four children and implored us to save the mother’s life. Still I didn’t want to take any chances so I made him sign a letter.

A colleague and I prepared the equipment. Because the baby had swallowed a lot of its stool, it could have choked on it. The baby’s blood pressure had dropped to 90/60 so we gave it intravenous lactate solution. Meanwhile, I instructed the mother to push hard. I had to save the mother’s life no matter what, but I also was concerned for the child.

When she pushed, you could see the umbilical cord emerging and it was important that it wasn’t squeezed. So I held the baby’s head firmly with one hand and tried to manœuvre the cord safely. The medical officer helped me out, making sure her perineum didn’t tear. After some time, both the baby’s head and cord emerged. I urged her to give a final push and the baby was born.

I immediately injected the mother with syntocin and focused on reviving the choking baby whose condition steadily improved. We also saved the mother, and we congratulated the mother and ourselves. I was very happy because I found out you learn more from practice than from books. I will remember for a long time, the day I dared to deliver.



Sign: Teaching Hospital
Tag: Nanda Prasad Adhikari

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

Suman in *Annapurna Post*, 25 September

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“I want to include everyone who signed up for the peace process. Whether I chair the HLPC or not is secondary.”

UCPN(M) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Janadharana, 18 September



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DEEPAK GYAWALI
in BUTWAL

Kamal Prasad Tharu had been working in India, and in 2005 was on his way home for a break to meet his wife and children in Rupandehi. He never made it home.

He was detained by the Army although he had no political affiliations. His wife, Dhana, made the rounds of the district police and army base. She even went to Kathmandu, carrying her baby daughter, but couldn't find him.

Relatives and villagers convinced her to conduct the last rites of her husband. It has been 11 years since Kamal Prasad's disappearance, but Dhana still holds hope that her husband will return one day. "Until I see his body with my own eyes, I will not think of him in the past," she says.

Since her husband's disappearance Dhana has been living in her parents' house with her two children. Her in-laws constantly blame her for his disappearance, and this only adds salt to her wound.

The 600,000 rupees that she received from the state as compensation ran out long ago, and Dhana admits it has been a struggle to raise her children without a father. "I feel that the only way to ensure such crimes are



WHERE TO GO: The husbands of Dhana Kumari Thapa (*left*) and Kamala Rijal (*right*) were disappeared during the war. Tulsia Pandey (*middle*) lost her son.



not repeated is to punish the guilty," she says.

Eight years after the conflict ended most families of the estimated 1,400 disappeared still have no information

about their relatives. While some have given up, others cling on to a sliver of hope.

Three days before Kamala Rijal's husband, Gopal Rijal, was to go to Malaysia to work in 2003, he went to inquire about a missing villager at the police station.

Instead, he was handed over to the Army, and was never seen again. Few hours after his capture, villagers had heard a gunshot in the nearby jungle but Gopal's body was never found. Kamala was pressured to perform her husband's funeral.

Soon after, Kamala herself went to the Gulf to work to support her family, but didn't like it there and returned. She

DIFFERING
NUMBERS

1,350
(ICRC)

836

(National Human Rights Commission)

spent her Rs 300,000 compensation to repay the loan she took to pay her recruiters. She regrets not educating her five-year-old son. "The government should provide livelihood training so that others like me can take care of our children," says Kamala.

Wives of the disappeared are not considered widows and are not entitled to the widows allowance.

The state's plan to provide Rs 300,000 as compensation to families of disappeared and school fees up to Rs 16,000 annually to children of the missing under 18 is stuck due to the absence of a Disappearance Commission.

The CPA required the status of the disappeared be made public within 60 days. The Interim Constitution lists it as the state's duty to search for the disappeared. Responding to 80 writ petitions filed by Advocacy Forum and other rights organisations, the Supreme Court in 2007 issued directives to the state to address the cases of enforced disappearances, to treat it as a crime, and provide compensation to the family of the disappeared.

A High Level Commission of Inquiry on the Disappeared was formed but received flak for not including any family members of the disappeared, forcing the government to backtrack. War Victims Society Rupendehi's Kedar Nath Kafle says not knowing what has happened to relatives has forced them to live in fear, suspicion and sorrow.

That is usual for families, says academic Shiv Prasad Gaudel who has studied the condition of war affected. Families of the disappeared are forced to fend for themselves, suffer trauma and mental stress.

He adds: "The Commission on the Disappeared once formed can provide compensation and social counselling to families to help cope up with their loss." 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

■ Watch video clip from Kesang Tseten's *Frames of War*



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