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To save lives in disasters or clean up Kathmandu airport we first have to clean up Nepal's politics. A timely and inclusive constitution would be a start.

# BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

EDITORIAL PAGE 2

KLINDA DIXIT

MEETS  
REDEFINED **ERGONOMICS**



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# BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

What do the mostly avoidable loss of life in the Annapurna blizzard this month, the death of 75 people in highway accidents over the Dasain-Tihar holidays, and Tribhuvan International Airport being voted the third worst airport in the world have in common?

Anthropologists who have studied Nepali culture point out that the lack of preparedness and sloppy, slow response to disasters stem from our national trait of not doing today what we can do tomorrow. We sit around hoping for the best, demonstrate a complete lack of understanding of modern technology, and exhibit a fatalistic, lackadaisical *ke garne* attitude. We can't do anything about whatever misfortune may befall us in this life, it seems, because it was all preordained by our behaviour in a previous one. Most Nepalis find it hard to understand that one must craft one's own destiny, that nothing is predetermined.

This festival season, at least 75 people were killed when overloaded buses and micros fell off rough mountain roads that are euphemistically called 'highways'. Police in Nuwakot who were supposed to be on alert to prevent overloading were quoted by a radio station blaming overloading, and didn't see the irony in that statement. In Okhaldhunga, a jeep that can carry only six passengers was carrying 25. Some had brake failures, one couldn't negotiate a steep incline and rolled backwards into a precipice. No accident has just a single cause, but overloading was a factor in most of the six mishaps in the past three weeks.

Road traffic accidents have now become one of the biggest killers of children and young men and women in Nepal. More than 6,000 people were killed on Nepal's roads between 2010 to 2013, the casualty rate far surpassing the annual fatalities during the conflict. Nepal's highways are the most dangerous in the world with nearly 1,700 deaths per year for every 100,000 vehicles. The chance of a crash here is 100 times higher than in Japan, and 10 times higher than even India.



NUWAKOT FM

## To clean up Kathmandu airport we first have to clean up Nepal's politics

We have analysed the blizzard disaster in the Annapurnas in this space in the last two issues, and the consensus is that an early weather warning system would have saved lives. Trekking and mountaineering groups with satellite phones took proper precautions, others who didn't know of the approaching storm were caught off guard or underestimated its ferocity. Simple measures like marking trails with sticks, building shelters and erecting mobile phone towers along trekking routes don't cost much and can save lives. It has just come to light that the nine porters who died on Niwas Pass in Dolpo on 14 October probably had carbon monoxide poisoning as they slept inside their tents in the blizzard.

The government, in typical kneejerk and reactive fashion to cover up its omissions, has done precisely what we said it shouldn't: make more rules that are virtually unenforceable. Insisting on every group having guides when there is no program to train them is tokenism, and requiring trekkers to

have GPS systems is overkill. Like the TIMS card, this will add another layer of futile rules.

It should instead expedite ratification by parliament of the bill to form a Commission on Disaster Management which has been languishing for five years because of turf battles between ministries. Setting up a Commission will not prevent fatalities in future disasters, but it is a first step. This is especially necessary because we need to be prepared for something that can't be prevented and will one day surely come: a great earthquake in central Nepal. Let's not blame nature, the real disaster here is the lack of political will to be prepared before and provide prompt relief after.

The other item of news which was a source of national embarrassment was that Kathmandu airport has been voted the third worst airport in the world. The Internet is full of silly and unverifiable lists like that, and of course it went viral in social media. But there is no denying that Nepal's international gateway is a shameful symbol of everything that is wrong with this country. It is a hotbed of smuggling, trafficking and corruption. Bureaucrats and police are known to hand over fat pre-paid stashes of cash to be posted there. The last thing in the mind of the Authority which manages the airport is to keep the airport's toilets clean, its luggage carousels in working order, or its immigration lines short. Waiting two hours after a plane lands to get out of an airport, as many passengers did this week, is a national embarrassment and gives a very poor first impression.

Like disasters that can be prevented, a filthy airport is a symptom of governance failure, institutionalised corruption and a culture of fatalism. To clean up Kathmandu airport we first have to clean up Nepal's politics.

**nepalitimes.com**

- Nepal's highways of death #666
- Road kill #666

### YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

#### TRAGEDY ANALYSIS

Thank you, you are the only media in Nepal that is writing consistently and intelligently about this tragedy ('Post-mortem of a tragedy', Editorial, #729). But is anyone in the government listening?

Hugh

■ The most important point made in the editorial was: "The wrong response to last week's tragedy would be for the government to make even more regulations that will add yet another layer of bureaucracy and corruption."

Steve K

■ The Rs 20 million allocated for Prachanda's son to 'climb Everest' would have been better spent on safety of trekkers.

Bibek Bhatta

#### GORKHALI WOES

Singapore grants permanent residence to many from India and China, and others undeservedly ('Where to be a Gurkha?', Kunda Dixit, #729). Cases of fake documentation have also surfaced recently. What's more shameful is many of these do not assimilate into our culture and have been belligerent. I am a Singaporean and I support granting PR to Gurkhas and their children.

Gerald-Fernando Heng

■ Compared to the British Gurkha, the Singaporean Gurkhas enjoy very little rights. It's a shame that a country that considers itself one

of the most modern in the world isn't doing anything to treat the Gurkhas better.

Hangyam Kumar Thebe Anil

■ The review does not mention the actual reason why Singaporean Gurkhas are not permitted to stay back on completion of their service. The Gurkha force in Singapore was set up primarily to quell racial tension between Malays and Chinese communities. Gurkhas were perfect for the job since they were complete outsiders, and had no vested interest in either one of these ethnicities. Allowing Gurkha ex-servicemen to settle in Singapore would directly undermine the very reason the Gurkhas were brought into Singapore in the first place.

Jyaure

■ March 2015 will mark 200 years of Gurkha recruitment in the British Army. But it is very sad and unfortunate that the Gurkhas are still struggling to find their 'status' and 'dignity' in the 21st century. While the British government preaches 'human rights' and 'rule of law' to the whole world, despite their sacrifices to the British Empire, Gurkhas are still barred from their basic rights.

Yam Gurung

#### FEDERALISM FOR PEOPLE

The writer refers to the possible federalisation of Nepal as 'an opportunity to address the grievances of the genuinely marginalised' without saying how such a pious objective would be attained ('Off the people,

for the people', Anurag Acharya, #729). Those of us who oppose any federalisation of the country do so on grounds that Nepal remains an essentially feudal country where high caste and economic status ascriptively define the leadership at all levels of governance whose distinctive features include extraction of resources without accountability to go with it. This is the reason why just about every single politician is corrupt to the core in this country. The only level where democracy has worked for the benefit of all including the 'genuinely marginalised' is at the grassroots in situations where authority has been devolved to the users themselves and where the inalienable right of all to participate in decision making has ensured transparency of management and accountability of leaders. This is how we have been able to make a distinctive name for our country in the world by reviving our forests through forest user groups and by emerging as the foremost in achieving MDGs in child survival and maternal mortality rate reduction through mothers' groups. For all practical purposes Anurag's prescription would only send Nepal back to the Baise and Chaubise days.

Bihari Krishna Shrestha

#### ABUSE OF POWER

Nepal copied the Indian police system, many of our officers were trained in India. Nepali Police should be re-educated to suit the democratic administration. ('Good cop, bad cop', Guna Raj Luitel, #729). The new generation will then be capable and

become citizen friendly.

Chirikazi

■ The image of police is the reflection of society in large. So please refrain from blaming the police in general.

Dalbhat

■ This piece is incomplete, misleading, one sided and biased. Cops are people too, and they represent the society they work for. Law and order isn't possible unless there is a partnership between the police and citizens. Don't blame the police unless you have walked in their shoes.

SMH

#### MADI MEMORIES

The wounds of the war are yet to heal for many who continue to suffer while those who initiated these acts of terror are enjoying power and prosperity ('Memories of terror in Madi', #729). All the responsible culprits of the Madi blast and all other war crimes should be punished.

Tashi Lama

■ Dear NT, Does anyone from the government contact you after you publish these articles? When an ordinary citizen like myself gets riled up enough to walk into the concerned department, I would hope that some conscientious officer would take it upon themselves to come forth and offer the assistance which these fellow Nepalis deserve.

Namah

### THIS WEEK



BIKRAM RAI

**Most liked on Facebook**  
Policemen decorate a police dog with vermilion powder and flower garlands during Kukur Tihar celebrations at a police kennel division at Maharajgunj last week.

**Most shared on Facebook**  
Where to be a Gurkha? by Kunda Dixit

**Most popular on Twitter**  
"Great sense of satisfaction"

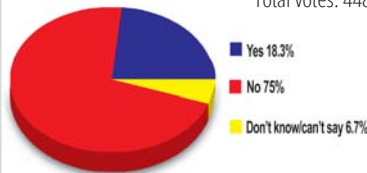
**Most visited online page**  
Where to be a Gurkha? by Kunda Dixit

**Most commented**  
Off the people, for the people by Anurag Acharya

### Times nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll #730

Q. Will we have a constitution by January 2015?



Weekly Internet Poll #731  
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Should state restructuring be kept for later if it obstructs constitution writing?





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# World champion country

Nepal’s astounding progress in saving lives of babies is not matched by looking after them when they grow into adults



ALEX TREADWAY/NSI

When experts talk positively about Nepal’s development, they refer to social indicators, not to economic and political realities. And by any measure, with each passing year, our social indicators do look impressive.

Nepal’s population growth rate, for instance, used to be among the highest in the world at 2.6 per cent per year in the early 1990s. It is now down to 1.2 per cent. Even the rural poor are having fewer children, partly because our infant mortality rate, which used to be almost 150 per 1,000 live births 20 years ago, presently stands at 36 and is declining further.

We are living longer: the average life expectancy at birth is just shy of 70 – unimaginable only two generations ago.



## CROSS CUTTING Ashutosh Tiwari

A little more than one-third of our population is 14 or younger, and more kids go to school all across Nepal these days than ever in history, though poverty continues to keep some children out of school. Even in the Constituent Assembly-II, women hold nearly one-third of the seats, higher than what most parliaments around the world can boast.

All these are remarkable social achievements indeed made possible by the continuous, if underappreciated, hard work of the legions of female community health volunteers, women’s groups, community organisations, civil society institutions, NGOs and international development agencies, all of them, depending on what you look at, working either together with or in spite of the government.

But as statistician Hans Rosling pointed out at a public lecture in Kathmandu last August, what is even more remarkable is that Nepal has been able to amass an enviable list of social achievements at too low an income, which stands at about \$600 per person per year. Rosling marvelled at the enormous gap that exists between Nepal’s

social progress and economic development. He brought puzzled smiles on the faces of his audience when he asserted that in combining a low rate of income growth with a high rate of social progress, Nepal must surely be the world’s champion country.

Indeed, our paradoxical reality these days is that we now raise millions of healthy and semi-educated young Nepalis, most of whom, on reaching adulthood, have little option but to head abroad for a salary because their own country is unable to provide them with jobs that sustain lives at home. It’s the sheer lack of income that makes life unjust and depressing for many in Nepal.

This is why the question all our representatives should be asking is: how are we to raise incomes for all in Nepal? For answers, they do not have to invent new solutions. There are examples of what have worked well in other countries.

Make it easier for Nepalis to start, run and grow businesses that sell goods and services. Lower policy and logistical hurdles to attract investment from outside to complement the domestic resources that can be used to pay for infrastructure works on roads and highways, water and sewer lines, electrical grids and telephone networks, schools and hospitals, and the like.

Put in enforceable mechanisms to monitor quality and against unfair practices. With more people thus working and earning, tax revenues will increase, and use them to sustain the gains made in the social sector, thereby gradually reducing that sector’s dependence on foreign aid.

Urban elites and the media outlets love to bash I/NGOs for all sorts of perceived and imagined social sins. But in a country where NGO-driven social development has verifiably outpaced the rate of economic progress and political stability, it’s time they asked the state and the political parties: for a socially advanced nation like ours, why do you insist on keeping us in poverty? 

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

- First the good news, #651
- Save the children, #635

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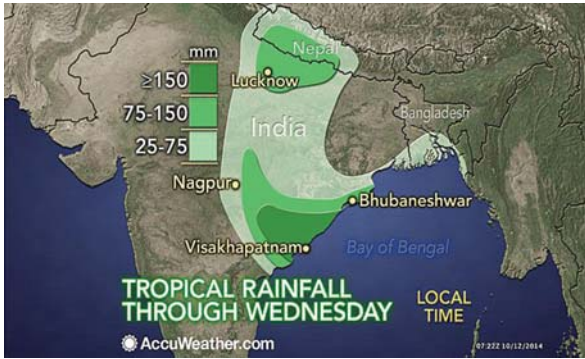


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# Hudhud and the Himalaya

This is an abridged version of the quick deficiencies analysis by Project Himalaya

A huge and powerful cyclone with a 2000 km diameter hit the east coast of India on 12 October and then travelled inland, dumping huge quantities of rains and snow on the Himalaya, trashing the Annapurna area in particular. About 50 people died directly as a result, a third of them foreign trekkers and the rest local guides, porters and trekking crew. All these deaths should have been prevented, but here are some lessons learnt about why they weren't.

- There was significant forewarning (free, readily available info) and enough time to act
- There are offices capable of advising/controlling trekkers and guides either side of Thorung La
- There was a rehearsal for Hudhud last year with Cyclone Phailin on the exact same dates

- Few Nepalis know what a cyclone is or understand the implications
- The culture is more reactive/fatalistic rather than proactive
- The Thorung La trail is not marked with poles
- Partial failure of the Thuraya satellite SMS-email network under disaster load

- Deaths were caused by:**
- avalanches (don't trek while it is snowing hard)
  - hypothermia (take shelter or huddle protectively)
  - carbon monoxide poisoning (don't run trekking stoves without ventilation)
  - an unmarked route (the most popular teahouse alpine pass trekking routes should be marked, at minimum)
  - inexperienced guides
  - bad advice from lodge managers
  - lack of info given to guides, porters and solo trekkers

- What should be done?**
- At minimum, Nepal desperately needs
- a new style of three day weather forecasts, farmer focused
  - a severe weather warning mechanism
  - education on lightning strike deaths
  - daily updated weather forecasts and trail conditions on conservation area and national park notice boards
  - reopen national park sub-offices (for wildlife protection and info) and boost morale
  - durable, comprehensive marking of popular alpine trails, particularly passes
  - labelling of trails junctions in all conservation and national park areas
  - relax low power walkie talkie rules
  - Ncell to work out SMS message service with Thuraya service

- Graded trek guide training with basic and advanced, up to mountain leader standard
- Reliable government weather forecasting, and early warning to trekkers
- ACAP to provide any advice whatsoever despite having checkpoints
- TAAN to do anything useful in early warning
- TIMS permit system to be of any use whatsoever before or after
- Many on the Thorung La route between the top of the pass and the first lodges from both avalanches and hypothermia
- Near the Niwas La, seven of the trek crew died of carbon monoxide poisoning in kitchen tent
- Others near the same route from Upper Dolpo to Jomsom
- At Dhaulagiri BC while on climbing expedition
- Langtang region from avalanche

**Where did people die?**

- Four died when an avalanche hit them near Phu in Manang

Extracted with permission from Project Himalaya. [www.project-himalaya.com](http://www.project-himalaya.com)

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### Tiwari joins Sherpa

Ashutosh Tiwari has been appointed CEO for Nepal of Sherpa Adventure Gear, the Seattle-based company that manufactures outdoor wear and trekking gear. Sherpa Adventure Gear does business in 21 countries with made-in-Nepal products. Tiwari started his career as an anti-bonded labour activist in rural Nepal. Early in his career, he worked for GiZ Nepal and International Finance Corporation in Dhaka. He was the CEO of Himalmedia where he led a corporate turnaround. A co-founder of Entrepreneurs for Nepal, Tiwari was until recently the Country Representative at WaterAid-Nepal. He also has a fortnightly column, Cross-Cutting in *Nepali Times*.

### Double luxury

In celebration of its first anniversary of joining the oneworld global alliance, Qatar Airways is offering customers in Doha 'Double the Luxury' offer. Passengers booking a Business Class ticket will receive a second Business Class ticket for free, for their travelling companion. The promotion runs until 31 October 2014 and is valid for travel until 31 March 2015 to select destinations across Europe, Africa, Asia Pacific and the Americas.

### Celebrating together

Himalayan Bank, as part of its CSR activity donated clothes and food to the New Children's Home during Tihar. Currently, 37 children from all over the country are staying at the orphanage in Kathmandu.

### Mobile Hub

Allied Trade Link International has opened its first multi brand showroom 'Allied Mobile Hub' at Kamaladi in Kathmandu. The showroom features mobile brands like Karbonn, Panasonic, Samsung and is offering special opening discount on all models available at the hub. The offer is valid until 3 November.

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TASHI NIMA

MUSTANG

Horses are not just seen as a means of transport but also serve as a potent symbol of speed, certitude and good fortune in Mustang. But with the arrival of the road from the south, horses are of less use these days.



TODD KEATING

KHOPRA

This photo was taken in 2013 on a family trek to the Annapurna Dhaulagiri Community Eco Trek. Here, I am posing with Soul, one of the yak farmers who works at a community yak farm in Khopra. The trail to Khopra Ridge is one of the less busy trails of the Annapurna region.

TOP 10 TREKS

Nepali Times asked readers to submit their best trekking pictures from Nepal. From among hundreds of entries, we chose the following images:



MAHENDRA SINGH LIMBU

SIKLIS

Also known as the ‘royal trek’ due to Prince Charles having walked it in 1980, the Siklis trek is one of the easier and more popular routes in the Annapurna region. We built our camp at an abandoned pasture high above the Gurung village from where we enjoyed the sun rise over Annapurna IV, II, and Lamjung Himal.



SIMA GURUNG

RARA

The jewel in the crown of Nepal’s lakes is this remote lake in Mugu district. This picture is from one of the surrounding peaks in the Rara National Park that can be reached after a four hour walk from the Danphe Lodge on the shore of the lake. Watch the lake change colour with every passing hour in the day.



MERILIN PIIPUU

MANANG

The ABC of trekking is Annapurna Base Camp, one of the most popular treks in the Annapurna region but this is slowly changing because of road connectivity. Side treks like this one from Tilicho to Yak Kharka in Manang are seeing more tourists who want to avoid crowds without missing out on the views.



CARSTEN NEBEL

UPPER DOLPO

The trail from Ringmo to Shey Gumpa high above the Phoksundo Lake is one of the most spectacular hiking routes on earth. With glittering turquoise water below and puffy clouds above, it feels as though you are walking between heaven and earth. The lake also has deep spiritual significance for people of Dolpa district.



BIBEK SHRESTHA

TILICHO

Most people on the Annapurna Circuit head to Thorung La and cross over from Manang into Mustang. But if you are a little more adventurous, you can climb up to Tilicho Lake, the highest big lake in Nepal which is fed directly by ice blocks calving off the glacier from the mountain above. You can descend to the other side to Jomsom via the wild and steep Meso Kanto Pass.

GHANDRUK-GHOREPANI

The two-day walk between Ghandruk and Ghorepani is a leisurely hike through rhododendron forests with unparalleled views of the Annapurnas and Machapuchre. This time of year, the trail is full of a cosmopolitan crowd of trekkers from all over the world.



S THAPA

MUKTINATH

The awe that some places inspire remind you of the many crossroads reached in life. Muktinath is one such place. One understands why this temple at the base of Thorung La is so holy to people of so many faiths. One feels imbued with energy as you take a holy wash in the icy cold spring water and see the eternal flame.



SARTHAK KARKI

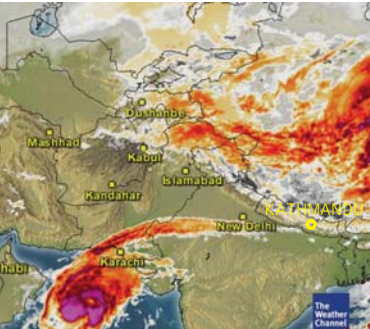


MARIT BAKKE

LANGTANG

Besides the landscape, animals, and people, I enjoy trekking in Nepal for the many pit stops. Having lunch, outdoors at a nice café, and reaching your lodge for the night are two highlights of trekking for me. This lunch at the appropriately named Landslide Village in Langtang was equally enjoyable.





The feared destruction by Cyclone Nilofar this week got a lot of prominence, mainly because of the death and devastation wrought by Hudhud three weeks earlier. However, aside from high winds and stormy seas, Nilofar is not going to have a big bang. Cyclones are rare in the Arabian Sea, and especially ones that head east from there which was why we had reason to be wary. Central Nepal will see afternoon buildup due to the backwash from the cyclone. Mornings will be misty along the river valleys and in Kathmandu it will be inversion smog.

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# "I WOULD LIKE TO HELP NEPAL IN A PRACTICAL WAY"

Nepali Times speaks to Kumud Dhital, the world's first surgeon to perform a dead heart transplant.

**Nepali Times: Your dead heart transplant has been described as a 'breakthrough', just how much of it is a standard transplant and which parts are new?**  
**Kumud Dhital:** The actual transplant procedure in the recipient is the same. The new element is in the way the donor heart was obtained. The majority of conventional organ donors are Brain Dead Donors (BDD). These patients have been confirmed by appropriate tests to have no brain-stem reflexes. The patient is considered legally dead because there is no hope of survival if the patient in this condition is taken off the ventilator. So, the donor is kept on the ventilator, which means that oxygen is being delivered and this is sufficient

for the heart to function thereby protecting all other organs (except the brain). The organ retrieval process is therefore very controlled and this pathway remains the preferred route to maximise the number of organs that can be transplanted.  
A DCD (Donation after Circulatory Death) happens when brain-stem tests cannot be wholly positive due to the presence of some measurable brain function and therefore the patient cannot be deemed to be brain dead. Knowing that there might be no underlying respiratory function the doctors and relatives agree to withdraw support (the ventilator) and see if there is any intrinsic respiratory drive. In some cases the patient continues to breathe and so is

returned to the medical unit they were being treated in. Others will stop to breathe. The heart then stops and there is no circulation, nothing flows in the blood vessels. This moment is followed by 2-5 minutes (as per local regulations) of a stand-off period when no intervention can be made.  
Death is then certified and now the deceased donor with a still heart is rushed to the operating room where we have to hastily open the chest and infuse a solution which protects the heart. This buys sufficient time for us to then put the heart inside a special portable resuscitating machine. The heart usually starts to beat, because it is now receiving blood, oxygen and nutrients. We then travel back to our hospital continuously resuscitating the heart which is beating in the device. Once and if we are satisfied that the heart function is sufficiently good to sustain a body, we prepare the recipient and then proceed with the transplant procedure. The act of taking out a still heart, reanimating it in a machine and then successfully transplanting it inside someone else has not been done before.

**What are the implications for Nepal, India and South Asia where cardio-vascular diseases are more common than in the rest of the world?**  
The implications are simply that a new pool of donors becomes available for transplantable hearts. Liver, lungs and kidneys from DCDs have been used successfully for some years, but so far not the heart. It means a potential reduced waiting time for those on the transplant wait-list and potentially stop them from dying whilst waiting for a suitable heart. It also allows us to better serve the altruistic wishes of the donor or family to facilitate the retrieval of a maximum number of transplantable organs. I hope this generates more understanding about transplantation and organ donation amongst the public. It should give some weight to expand the number of transplant centres in these countries.

**Isn't it better to pay attention to diet and other preventive measures, so such interventions are not needed?**  
Prevention is always better, but many people have inborn, familial reasons for such heart diseases.

**What are the challenges ahead for transplants, what is the next frontier?**  
That we see more centres take up DCD heart transplantation. That we have better drugs for immunosuppression, that is, better drugs to keep the transplanted organ from disease. That we will over the next decade, see further novel therapies emerging including the ability to print cells and therefore consider man made muscle tissue for repairing the heart.  
**How early in your life did you know that you'd one day be a cardio-thoracic surgeon and perform dead heart transplants?**  
I went into medical school desperately wanting to be a neurosurgeon. However, my

that complete strangers might live longer with a better quality of life.  
**You are an "international Nepali", how much is Nepal still a part of your life?**  
Nepal remains very much part of my personal life. My mother and extended family live in Nepal. I continue to harbour a desire to help Nepal in a practical manner, but the opportunity for that has not materialised to date. I am a little disturbed by all this debate about where I belong. I did hear that an Indian newspaper claimed me. But I must say I have not had a single negative comment out of India. Total strangers from everyday persons to company CEOs have simply said "we are proud of you" and the Indian medical community has been



**GROUNDBREAKING (right to left):** Kumud Dhital with Michelle Gribilas, the first transplant patient, transplant coordinator Angela Smith and cardiologist Peter Macdonald at St Vincent's Hospital in Australia.

aspirations changed immediately on seeing cardiothoracic surgery for the first time in 1994. The challenge of doing DCD heart transplantation came from being inspired by Dr Stephen Large, one of my mentors at Papworth Hospital in Cambridge. I knew that one day I would be doing it. What I had not anticipated was that I would be the first surgeon to do so.  
**Anyone in particular that you credit for inspiring you the most?**  
My late-father Vishnu Prasad Dhital, who told me to have a dream and work hard to realise it. Also, the sheer resilience of our patients with end-stage and disabling heart failure. And the selfless and altruistic wish of the donor and family to donate organs for transplantation so

very enthusiastic, and I am being invited to give keynote addresses.  
**Your phone must be ringing off the hook.**  
The response has been quite humbling with good wishes from strangers all over the globe and even the resurrection of long lost friends. I am seriously shell shocked and surprised by the extent of interest in what is an important milestone in heart transplantation, but it is hardly the stuff of miracles. The interest from the Nepali media has been unremitting and I am left wondering why anyone would still be interested after all the hype. I have been praying that you, the media, can direct the interest to some other deserving story in Nepal itself. Fame, after all, is only meant to last 15 minutes.

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## EVENTS



### Photo Annapurna,

Join Ariel Estulin and Louis Au for a unique opportunity to experience the pristine beauty of Annapurna mountain ranges through the eyes of professional photographers.  
\$1,775, 21 to 30 November, full itinerary on [www.outdoorphotojourney.com](http://www.outdoorphotojourney.com)

### Murals of Mustang,

Restoring the Murals of Mustang: A Journey through Body, Soul and Heart by Luigi Fieni.  
Runs till 15 November, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal

### Plastic beauty,

The first plastic exhibition in Nepal with international and local exhibitors.  
14 to 16 November, Bhrikuti Mandap

### Entrepreneurs meet,

A platform to help entrepreneurs expand their professional network and to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration.  
12 November, 5 to 7pm, King's College, 9813393561, [www.udhyamibhetghat.com](http://www.udhyamibhetghat.com)

### Move and groove,

The first international dance conference in Nepal.  
4 November, 4pm onwards, Sandhya International Dance Academy



### Like a beast,

Another excuse to have fun on a Friday night and it happens to be Halloween. Music by Like a beast featuring Joint Family Internationale, and plenty of surprises.  
Friday 31 October, 7 pm, House of Music, Thamel, Free entry with Halloween costumes, Rs.300 (without)

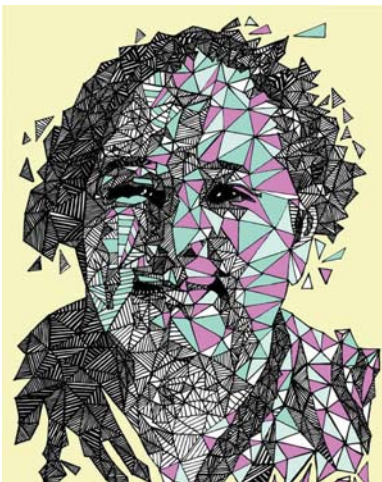


## Planet Nepal,

A two-day art and environment festival, with performances, exhibitions, debates, discussions, screenings and concerts.  
31 October & 1 November, Tundikhel, (01)4241163, [www.planetnepal.org.np](http://www.planetnepal.org.np)

### Walk with the writers,

share your experiences with young writers, activists, and personalities on a walk through the Shivapuri National Park.  
Rs 100, Budhanilkantha, 10am onwards



### Underrated urban myths,

An exhibition of street artist Aditya Aryal, a.k.a Sadhu – X's finest works.  
Until 5 November, 10am to 7pm, The City Museum Kathmandu, [www.thecitymuseum.org](http://www.thecitymuseum.org)

## DINING

### Café Swotha

An intimate setting in the heart of Patan, provides an atmosphere of sophisticated, romantic warmth.  
Patan, (01)5551184, [info@traditionalhomes.com.np](mailto:info@traditionalhomes.com.np)

### Dan Ran

A variety of good quality Japanese dishes, quietly prepared.  
Jhamsikhel, (01)5521027



### Alice restaurant,

Step in for scrumptious Thakali, Chinese, Continental and Japanese cuisine.  
Gairidhara, (01)4429207

### Lal Durbar Restaurant,

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

### Red Carpet,

Look down at the busy and happening Darbar Marg while dining at a lavish, cozy place that serves delightful cuisines.  
Darbar Marg, (01)4257705

### Bricks Café,

A cozy and warm dining experience in a restored Rana building.  
Kupondole, (01)5521756



### Hyderabad House,

Dine like the famous Nizams of old Hyderabad.  
Bhatbhateni, (01)4443839

### Old House,

A beautifully renovated neo-colonial building, which houses an adventurous restaurant dedicated to the art of French cooking.  
Darbar Marg, (01)4250931



## Mike's breakfast,

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Baluwatar, (01)4413788

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## MUSIC



## Roots Night,

Celebrate good music instead of Halloween. No costume needed, just come with your dance moves.  
Places Restaurant & Bar, Thamel, (01)4700413



## Starry Night BBQ,

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

Rs 1,299, 7pm onwards, Fridays, Shambala Garden Café. Hotel Shangri-La, (01)4412999

## Deathfest 2015,

Accomplished local and international Extreme Metal bands come together to celebrate the glorious genre.

9 & 10 January 2015, venue to be announced

## Music mania,

Performances by Nepali bands The Edge Band, X-Mantra, and international bands Steve Iko (Denmark), and Thermal And A Quarter (India).

13 December, 12pm onwards, Bhrikuti Mandap, [www.nepalmusicfestival.org](http://www.nepalmusicfestival.org)



## Rock tribute,

A tribute to legendary hard rock band, Guns n Roses by Nepali project band Destruction.

15 November, 3 to 6pm, Purple Haze Rock Bar, Thamel

## GETAWAYS

## Temple Tree Resort and Spa,

A peaceful place to stay, complete with a swimming pool, massage parlour, and sauna, it'll be hard to leave once you go in. *Gaurighat, Lakeside, (61)465819*

## 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](http://www.barahijunglelodge.com)



## Atithi Resort,

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

Shantipatan, Lakeside, Pokhara. (061)466760/400207, [info@atithiresort.com](mailto:info@atithiresort.com)

## Neydo Monastery,

A monastery and guest house, Neydo is home to many significant religious sites of the great siddhas. Leave your troubles behind and book a room. *Pharping, Kathmandu* [www.neydohotel.com](http://www.neydohotel.com)

## 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](http://www.waterfronthotelnepal.com)

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नगद छुट रु २५०  
TITAN नाडी घडी



+



२ वर्षे  
ग्राहक शुल्क रु ३५०० मा  
नगद छुट रु १५०  
गोल्ड स्टार शू को  
रु.१००० बराबरको गिफ्ट भौचर  
र साथमा पाइलट पेन सेट



१ वर्षे  
ग्राहक शुल्क रु १०५० मा  
नगद छुट रु ५०  
स्वीटजरल्याण्डको  
आकर्षक उपहार

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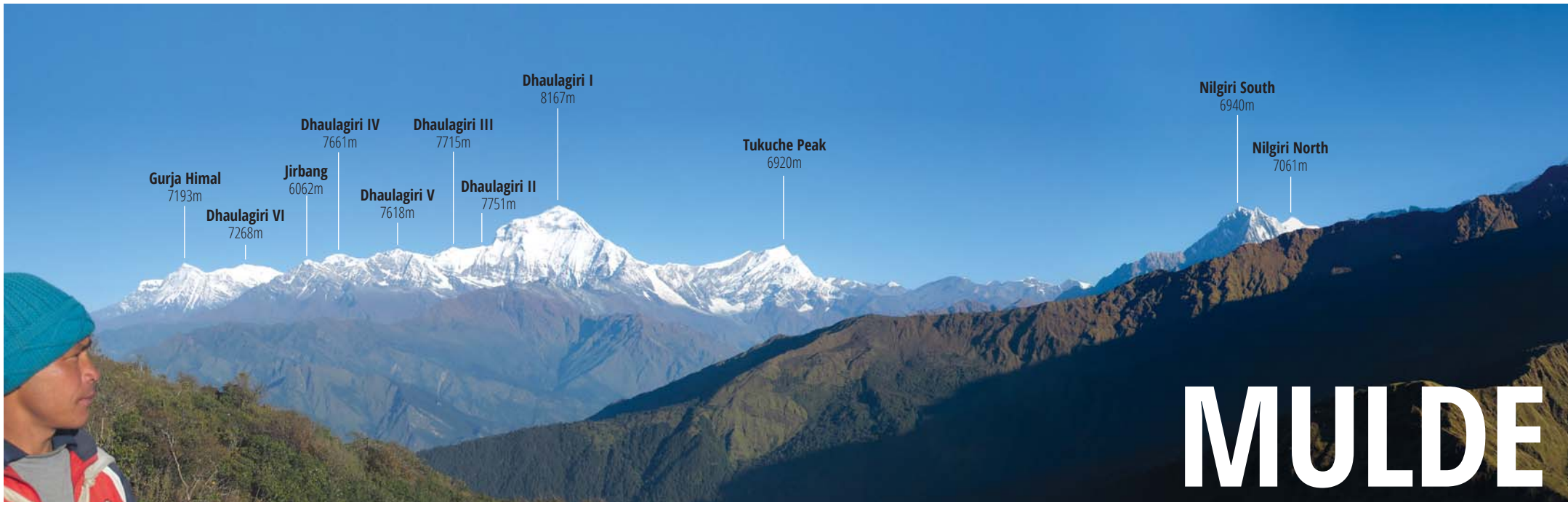


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# MULDE

When Rajman Gurung (*above, left*) tried to convince his friends to open a new trek trail in the Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) 15 years ago, they all thought he had lost it. The conflict was at its height, the ACAP office in Ghandruk had just been bombed, and they convinced him instead to go

abroad. Gurung went to Dubai and worked as an electrician for five years. But this dream of a new Annapurna trail never died. After returning five years ago, Gurung picked up where he left off to get ACAP permission for the trail to Dobato and Khopra. Today, the route is catching on among trekkers who want to get away from the crowds on the main Ghorepani-

Ghandruk trail, and Gurung is adding rooms to his Mt Lucky Lodge in Dobato. Half-an-hour up from the lodge is Mulde Peak, which commands a majestic sweep of the central Himalaya from its 3,650m perch. This is Poon Hill minus the crowds, higher and closer to the Annapurnas. From Dobato it is a one-day trek on to Khopra on the ridge overlooking the Kali

Gandaki and face-to-face to Dhaulagiri.(*see map*) And if your thirst of adventure hasn't been quenched, there are the holy lakes and glaciers that camps up the side of Annapurna South. Gurung has collected money from lodge owners along the Khopra trail to improve the track and accommodation. He says: "This will reduce the tourism pressure on the main trails, and help save

## Value-added hiking

Nepal's trekking is at a cross-road, in need of a quality upgrade

In 1983, in my early 20s, I trekked in the Annapurnas. It was a land of very basic food and lodging, and relatively few tourists except fellow hippy wannabes.



**GUEST COLUMN**  
Donatella Lorch

This month, I returned to the Annapurna Conservation Area for a week's trek with my nine-year-old son and got out before the blizzards hit. The mountains are still an awe-inspiring accompanying panorama, but trekking in Nepal had changed unrecognisably.



**THAMEL ON THE RIDGE:** Trekkers throng the curio shops at Deurali on the Ghorepani-Ghandruk trail last week.

LUCAS ZUTT

ACAP was established in 1992 with a total area of 7,629 sq km. Last year, 90,000 trekking permits were issued, bringing ACAP about Rs 250 million from visitor fees and other incomes. This season, Ghandruk, Ghorepani and Annapurna Base Camp routes are jammed with hiker hordes, a large number of them Chinese groups, many Israelis and a collection of Americans and Europeans some with guides, others soloing. Even young Nepali city slickers were joining in. The tea-houses and lodges are packed. Hikers have to share the stone steps with Nepal tourism's unsung heroes: the unending series of mule convoys, loaded down with everything from water and food to cooking propane, kerosene, mattresses, stones and bags of

## Walking with the times

**KUNDA DIXIT**  
in POKHARA

Experts at a recent seminar here said trekking needed to change with the times because of the expansion of Nepal's road network, outmigration of men from rural areas, and demands of Chinese, Indian and domestic trekkers for better facilities and shorter treks. "Market demand from Chinese, Malaysian or Hong Kong tourists is changing," said Wouter Schalken of the group Samarth, "people don't have time for 21-day circuit treks anymore."

This shift in the country of origin of visitors and a drop in the average duration of their treks

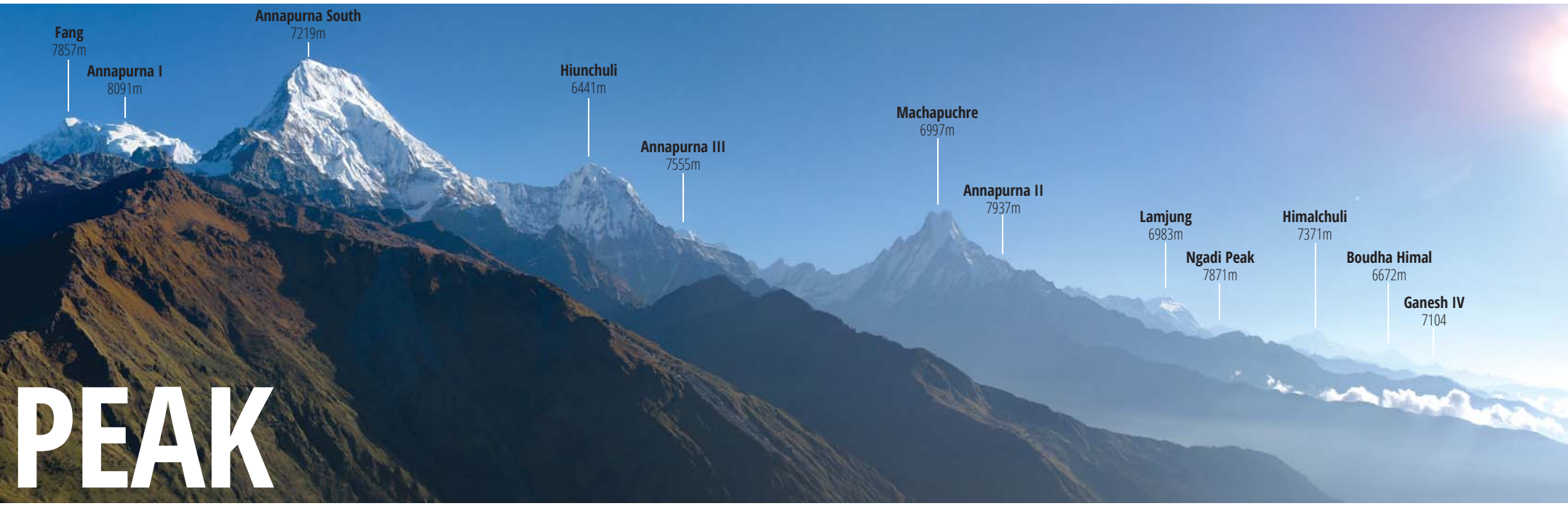
coincides with new motorable roads snaking up valleys where there used to be trekking trails. The number of trekkers to Nepal in 2014 is expected to cross 130,000, a 15 per cent growth over the previous year - and with most of the increase made up of hikers from southeast Asia and mainland China. The Pokhara seminar focused on access routes for tourism, and speakers discussed ways trekking tourism could benefit from better accessibility. Nowhere is the incursion of roads into trekking routes as visible as in the Annapurna area. The road from Besisahar is now jeepable up to Manang village, and right up to Muktinath on the other side. This has increased the

numbers climbing to Thorung La, and some of them were caught in the blizzard on 14 October. Ghandruk will be connected to Naya Pul next year, and trekkers descending from Ghorepani can now take a jeep to Pokhara from Hile. "Not all roads are bad, there are plenty of corners of Nepal where trekking is now possible because of better access, and this can enhance community development," said Schalken whose organisation works to brand sections of the Great Himalayan Trail. Heritage trails along historical and cultural routes (the salt trade route in Dolpa and Mustang, the sites of the Anglo-Nepal and Nepal-Tibet wars) could now be developed. A start has already

been made with trying to promote the Guerrilla Trail in Dhorpatan, however the trails and lodges along the way need to be upgraded. "It's not an either-or, roads and trails can complement each other to develop heritage routes like the Swiss have done in the Alps," said Chandra Shrestha of the non-government Nepal Transportation and Development Research Centre (NTDRC). "It isn't just walking, it is educating, learning history in living form" Ancient trade routes to Tibet can be revived for poverty reduction, sustainable development and heritage conservation by promoting their use for tourism, Shrestha said. Developing trails, lodgings,







KUNDA DIXIT

the environment by spreading the tourists around.” Indeed, once word gets around that Khopra and Mulde Peak have better views than Poon Hill, there are bound to be more people here.

ACAP was reluctant to give Gurung permission for the Khopra Trek, but he persevered and used all the arguments he could muster. “I understand you

have to balance development and the environment,” Gurung says he told ACAP, “but keeping people poor and in a museum will not save nature.”

Dobato and the Khopra Trek need just 25 trekkers a day passing through to break even, and that is a small fraction of the hundreds that come to Ghorepani every

day. Perhaps Gurung has hit upon the future model of eco-tourism in Nepal: 5-7 day off-grid treks from roadheads, with guides and porters, living in local lodges and homestays, eating local food and getting up close and personal with villagers.

Says Gurung: “I could have stayed

in Dubai, but it is much more fulfilling to contribute to your own place. We must not wait for the government to do things for us, we must do it ourselves.”

Kunda Dixit

**nepalitimes.com**

 Photo gallery



cement to feed the mountain region’s lodge construction boom.

All these earnings are good for the local communities, but Nepal’s trekking is also visibly at a cross-road, in need of a quality upgrade. ACAP’s successful eco-tourism model may be famous worldwide for its leadership in standardisation methods from food menus to bed styles, and its successful involvement of local communities in protecting natural resources, but these rules were instituted decades ago. Nepal trekking needs a face-lift.

ACAP faces socio-economic, ecological and political challenges. New roads have jeeps and trucks competing with trekkers and brings with it increased risk of landslides. There is little variety as the vast majority of trekkers stick to a small number of routes that are at times crowded walking highways, their identical corrugated roof lodges interspersed with banquettes of knick knacks, jewellery, woollen shawls

and hats.

Getting off the main route can be challenging because maps are unreliable and other trails, mostly buffalo tracks, are not marked. But the lodges along these paths just don’t exist on trekking maps sold in Pokhara and Kathmandu. Many trekking companies find it easier to just keep their clients on the main trails.

It is a challenge to experience Nepali culture on these main routes. Take Tadapani, a heavily frequented collection of three guesthouses with a new one under construction from where you can head downhill to join the Annapurna Base Camp route. We stayed crammed in a two-storey guesthouse with 50 other trekkers and their guides and porters. There were only two toilets.

The view was surreally beautiful and ever-changing, but the food was served in a Chaplinesque Nepali version of *Modern Times* in a tiny dining room. Night time was a mixture of loud trekkers playing loud music, and the kitchen cleaning crew starting up at 3AM.



There is little effort to reroute the traffic to newer routes and this unequal tourism wealth distribution has fed inequality, illiteracy and unemployment in villages without tourism opportunities. The area’s energy problems have also grown due to haphazard building of lodges and

hotels along the main trail.

Many trekkers along the route are willing to pay more for a more Nepali experience, and were in search of less crowded trails. A map I had bought in Kathmandu showed a dotted line away from the big place names, we followed this and walked for over five hours

without encountering another tourist through Harry Potter forests, along pristine streams in rock chasms above the tree line, pulling ourselves up a sheer hillside.

We arrived at the Mt Lucky Lodge in thick cloaking fog, and were mesmerised for two days by the many faces of Annapurna, Dhaulagiri and Machhapuchhre. We visited a nearby mountain goat herd, met baby buffalos, watched grandpa carve a wooden buttermilk churner. His 12-year-old grandson taught my son how to make chapatis on an open fire. Many hours during afternoon hailstorms were spent talking about the owner’s efforts to convince ACAP to allow him to build his tiny lodge. We were truly in Nepal.

*Donatella Lorch is a former New York Times foreign correspondent and East Africa Bureau Chief as well as NBCNews and Newsweek correspondent. She lives in Kathmandu.*



KUNDA DIXIT

**MY WAY OR THE HIGHWAY:** The construction of the Kali Gandaki Highway has displaced mule trains, porters and trekkers.

museums with maps and guides can promote eco-tourism along heritage routes and add value to trekking.

However, some heritage trails have already been ruined by ill-planned road construction. In the Kali Gandaki, the trade route from Kyirong in Tibet to Kathmandu, or the pilgrimage trail to Mt Kailash through Humla, the valleys are so narrow that new roads have just widened previous walking trails.

“In the Tsum Valley, the road alignment goes right through monasteries and sacred sites,” said Sonam Lama of the Nepal Engineering College. “The priority should have been to preserve the pilgrimage route and the emotional attachment of the people.”

Narendra Lama of the ACAP agreed that not all roads are harmful, but some them were not

planned properly.

“They now want to build roads to Tilicho Lake and Thorung. That is insanity,” he said. The construction mafia made up of local politicians and excavator owners are believed to be responsible for poor roads.

Former head of the National Planning Commission, Jagadish C Pokhrel, said there were plenty of examples of how roads have preserved heritage and helped tourism, citing the case of Lete and Marpha which were bypassed by the Kali Gandaki Highway but benefited from access.

“At first local people were angry that the road did not touch their town, but now they see the benefits,” Pokhrel said. “Better access means more tourists who come to admire the heritage of these trading towns.”

**nepalitimes.com**

 The last trek to Jomsom, #383

 You take the high road, #429

 Road from nowhere to nowhere, #663





# Manakamana

In 2014 director duo Stephanie Spray and Pacho Velez released a rather interesting, structurally formal, but in its own way groundbreaking, documentary titled *Manakamana*. For those of us living in Nepal, we immediately associate this name with the wish granting temple in Gorkha. In the past, people have had to hike



**MUST SEE**  
Sophia Pande

upto the Durga temple high up on a hill, but now there is a cable car that takes you to the top in 10-11 minutes. Interestingly, it is this new mechanised ascent and descent to the temple that these ethnographically inclined

filmmakers have decided to document.  
The final version of the documentary consists of 11 unbroken segments. The film is reliant on a rather fortuitous coincidence in that the filmmakers were shooting with a 16 mm camera in which a standard 400' roll lasts just about the same time it takes for the cable car to pick up its passengers and deposit them either at the temple or at the origin.  
The documentary is uniquely entirely observational. There are no tricks, and a great deal of patience is required on the viewer's part. If you do manage to fall into the rhythm of the film you will be richly rewarded by the tiny but resonating pay offs.  
Each segment documents some unforgettable faces, a woman dressed up in a traditional red sari clutching her devotional offerings reluctantly smiling at the camera

just the once, an aged grandfather and young grandson who are awed by the view from the cable car but resolutely look away from the camera, three long haired t-shirted youths who almost preen at being filmed, these faces will stay with you.  
*Manakamana* shares the same ethos as *Into Great Silence* (2005) a brilliant observational documentary by Philip Gröning that chronicles the daily lives of Carthusian monks of the Grand Chartreuse monastery in the French Alps. Both films are difficult to watch, a struggle even, requiring an almost meditative spirit (in the theater where I watched *Into Great Silence* more than half of the viewers fell asleep), and yet these films are important to bring to the general public, for they chronicle what we rarely see, a real human experience, bringing film as close to verisimilitude as is possible.  
These type of films may not be your cup of tea; a family member of mine (who shall remain unnamed) actually fast-forwarded through *The Artist* (2011) the charming homage to black and white silent films that won the Best Picture Oscar that season. I cannot blame him for his impatience, yet I can't help but wish that more of us would be willing to risk boredom for the inevitable state of grace that such films can ultimately give the attentive viewer.

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■ Trailer

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**HAPPENINGS**



**MORE DIALOGUE:** Chairman of Dialogue and Consensus Committee Baburam Bhattarai speaks to the media after the end of a HLPC meeting on Wednesday.



**INTERNATIONAL TIES:** Italian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Benedetto Della Vedova, meets the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly Subas Nembang at his office in Singha Durbar on Tuesday.



**THANKS-GIVING:** A woman performs a ritual to thank the sun on the occasion of Chhath Parba, at Thapathali on Wednesday.



**PAINT IT BLACK:** Workers rest as they repair a section of the Pulchok road on Wednesday.

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# THE STONE AMIDST THE WOOD

Kathmandu Valley's temples are divided into two types: the indigenous design composed of wood and bricks and the stone shikhara temple design that came from India. The latest in a series of books by architectural historian Niels Gutschow and his team to document Kathmandu Valley's built heritage is *Towers in Stone*, a book that brings together the work of artist and draughtsman, Bijay Basukala from Bhaktapur, and photographer Kishor Kayastha from Bhaktapur. And the focus here is on the stone shikhara temples.

The documentation of the unique architectural heritage of the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley by measured drawings began only as recently as the early 1970s - in contrast to almost all the other rich urban cultures of the world. Even when seven sites of the Kathmandu Valley were inscribed in the list of World Heritage by UNESCO in 1979, the Department of Archaeology of the government was not able to attach to the



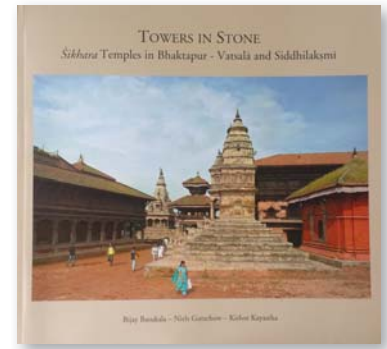
document of inscription more than mere lists of monuments. A lot of the techniques and plans were just passed down from one generation of builders to the next either verbally or by apprenticeships.

With the documentation of quite a number of Bhaktapur's monuments by the Bhaktapur Development Project (1974-86), the research team of Niels Gutschow (Gorkha, Nuwakot, Chaityas of the Valley,

Mustang, Mugu) and the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust (since 1990) has since 1980 documented hundreds of temples, shrines and palaces. However, much more work remains to be done to arrive eventually at a complete inventory that presents more than a photograph. One gap has been in the study of the Valley's stone temples.

The documentation of two temples in Bhaktapur in this book intends to contribute to that inventory. After all, in view of future earthquakes or simply neglect, a perfect documentation is possibly the best way of preserving the architectural heritage of the Valley. The present documentation of two shikhara temples on Bhaktapur's Darbar Square transcends earlier efforts. The book presents not just a handful of pictures, but hundreds of photographs and drawings of the temples. Not one lion at the threshold but all of them, not one door frame, but all of them are meticulously recorded for posterity in case something should happen to them. The book's illustrations force us to appreciate the enormous variety in the carvings of details. The stone carvers of Kathmandu Valley must have sketches at hand, but no templates. The carvers in fact enjoyed a considerable freedom to bring well-known features such as a makara or nagaraja into the preferred shape.

The documentation was sponsored by the Gerda Henkel Foundation, which was founded in 1976 as a private, non-profit organisation to promote specific projects in the field of the humanities, mainly history, archaeology and history of art. The



## Towers in Stone

Bijay Basukala, Niels Gutschow, Kishor Kayastha  
Published by Himal Kitab, November 2014

foundation already supported Gutschow's documentation of tiered temples such as the Indreshvara temple at Panauti and keeps supporting at present the documentation of 14th to 16th century temple portals such as the one of the Krishna temple on Bhaktapur's Darbar Square.

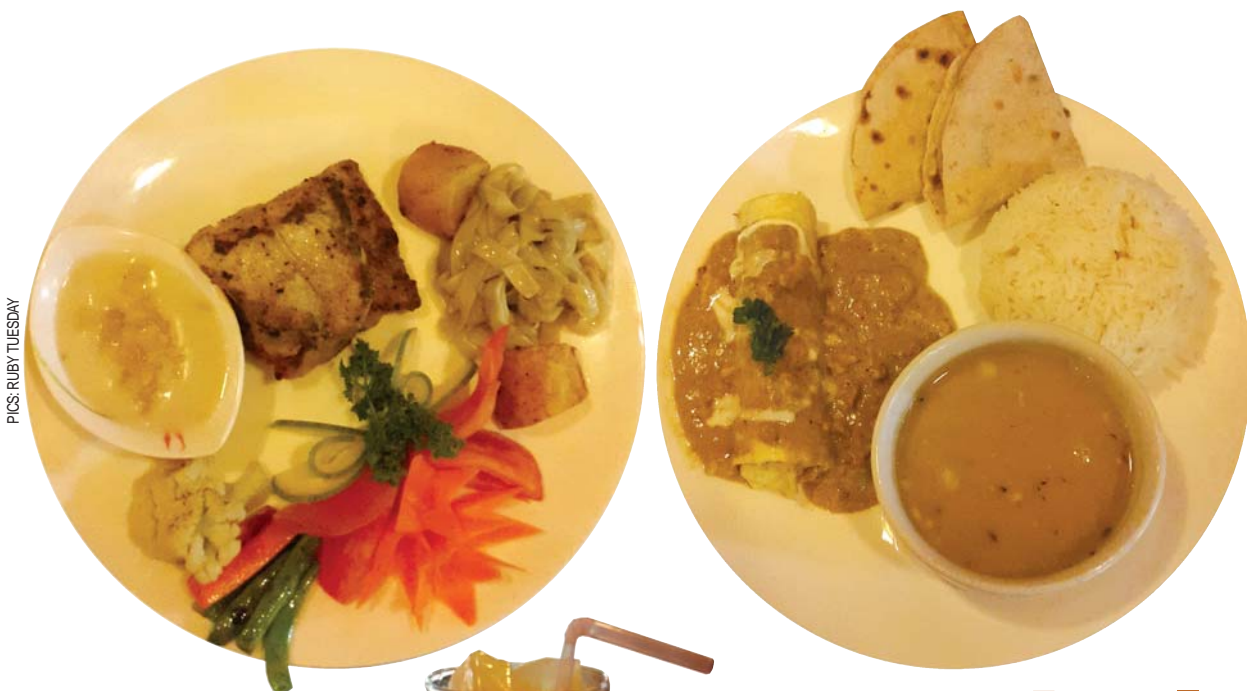
The Saraf Foundation for Himalayan Traditions and Culture joined in supporting the publication of this third volume of Himal Book's Himalayan Tradition and Culture series. 🇳🇵

Kunda Dixit

The book is being launched on 14 November at the Taragaon Museum, Boudha.

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

- Palazzos decorated with pilasters, #629
- The valley from the air, #685



Walking through Thamel can best be described as venturing through an obstacle course riddled with dangerous potholes, mad motorists, honking taxis and crazy bikers for whom traffic laws, basic courtesy and civic sense are concepts that are pointless and deserving of complete and willful disregard. Adding to this chaos are the touts and the drug peddlers and the vendors that take up half of the street - just trying to navigate through this nebula of



vehicles and people is exhausting. And yet we venture forth, not because we are gluttons to punishment but just gluttons tempted by a friend's recommendation of where good food

## Dabali Restaurant

can be had. Enter Dabali. Opened about a year ago in Mandala Street, Dabali provides a peek into what Thamel could be like if the authorities actually managed to ban vehicles in the area. Adjacent to The Last Resort's Sales Office,

the restaurant is reminiscent of outdoor cafes and provides a respite from the traffic noises outside.

We started this foodie exploration with pork tawa (Rs 280), griddle-grilled strips of meat charred slightly on the outside and yet succulent and flavoursome on the inside. Iced Mint tea (Rs 165), a thick slushy of green goodness, and Cool me Cool (Rs 275), a mocktail with a mix of fruit juices, accompanied our tasty starter.

Moving straight onto the mains, we ordered the Bungy Jumper's Chicken (Rs 565), just the sight of which will have you squealing with delight. and the Rafter's Fish (both Rs 565 each), two of many other dishes named after adrenalin-fuelled activity.

Just the sight of the bungy jumper's chicken will have you squealing with delight. A thick strip of omelette is skewered onto the chicken breasts rolled with ham and cheese that are set upright on the plate to mimic the pillars of the bridge. Not just fun and quirky but also very tasty. At other restaurants chicken breast is usually dry and tasteless, but at Dabali they cook it really thin and fast so it retains its moistness.

Another dish named after

adrenalin pumping activities is the Rafter's Fish (Rs 565): steaks of basa fish sandwiching a thick slice of pineapple. The tart of the fruit seeps into the flaky fish, creating a dish replete in deliciousness. The accompanying vegetables were steamed just right- retaining crunch, freshness and taste.

On learning that the restaurant also serves some excellent Indian dishes, we succumbed to temptation and ordered their specialty: the Chicken Patyala meal (Rs 520). Coarsely minced chicken was encased in a thin egg roll covered with a thick cashew nut sauce, and came with a mound of rice, two chappatis, and a bowl of tadka dal at a bargain price.

Considering the size of the kitchen they work out of, Dabali will surprise you with the quality and variety of food, including an impressive vegetarian menu. The owner is friendly and is behind the bar herself concocting juices and coffees to meet her patrons' demands. The prices on the menu are inclusive of all taxes, the staff is friendly, the coffee freshly brewed and strong. Rep-eat guaranteed. 🇳🇵 Ruby Tuesday

How to get there: Dabali is right next to The Last Resort's sales office in Mandala Street, Thamel.



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# Ebola in Asia

There is no question that an Ebola outbreak in South Asia will be very difficult to handle considering the region's poor health infrastructure. In the past too, there have been cases



of people returning to Nepal with infectious diseases from Africa and succumbing to it due to misdiagnosis.

The life-threatening falciparum malaria is one such example. A returning soldier from his peace keeping duties in Africa may be incubating this dangerous form of malaria but a visit to a doctor may not result in right treatment.



This is because as in the case of Ebola, the symptoms are similar to common flu.

The good news is that Ebola is nowhere as common as malaria. Furthermore, the governments have been alerted to the possibility of travellers from West Africa

carrying the virus and have tried to take the necessary steps to prevent an outbreak.

Because of their experience with the SARS outbreak in 2003, Hong Kong is probably the most prepared region to deal with an Ebola outbreak in Asia. However,

the big difference between SARS and Ebola is that Ebola is not spread through aerosol. In Hong Kong, after the SARS outbreak many intensive care units (ICU) were instituted with negative pressure rooms to keep the organisms away from circulating in the atmosphere. Anterooms in were also instituted in these ICUs for the safe donning and removal of personal protection equipment, a matter of vital importance in controlling an Ebola outbreak.

China is another country that will be able deal with an Ebola outbreak better than most Asian countries. Their history of dealing with outbreaks like SARS and other influenza pandemics have helped them in this regard. In addition, it helps that China's health care spending per person is five times that of India.

There is another important factor that will come into play if we have to deal with an Ebola outbreak. That is our mindset. We are not a country that likes to follow directions even at the cost of endangering ourselves. We know

overcrowding causes accidents, but we still continue to travel that way. With this kind of a psychological impasse, it will be hard to deal with a disease where following directions (for example in disposing of dead bodies) is key to its prevention. In this context it is sobering to read that even in the mid-16th century London during King Henry the eighth's reign, when plague struck, common people followed directions and burnt all the beds and mattresses of patients who died of the disease.

Nepal is still faltering in its preventive measures against more common and preventable (and treatable) diseases like tuberculosis. We clearly need to revitalise our efforts to control and treat diseases.

Whether the Ebola virus will successfully propagate to this part of the world or not, and how effective these governmental steps will be, only time will tell. But in general the consensus amongst experts is that there is only a slim chance that the virus will come here. 🇳🇵

## GIZMO by YANTRICK



# It's got curves

Samsung's flagship TV for 2014, the HU9000 Curved Ultra HD TV is without a doubt one of the best looking tvs in the market today. From its silver brushed metal of the base stand, to its thin bezel, to the ribbon of chrome around the edge, the HU9000 is a metallic beauty and with its curved screen, one with curves.

Though not as prominent as you'd expect, the curved screen is there for a reason (no, it's not just an eye candy). The curved screen helps deflect reflection. The expansive 65 inch screen is gorgeous, and will have any gadget-aficionado lusting over it. The screen resolution of 3,840 x 2,160 pixels equates to an eye-popping Ultra HD (UHD) viewing experience, where the old adage of 'seeing is believing' is proven, once again. Even

if you do not currently have UHD content to play, the HU9000's UHD Upscaling feature seamlessly converts standard definition content to UHD. I watched the Matrix trilogy and had a ball when the action sequences came into play.


The HU9000 is packed with proprietary Samsung technologies like Auto Depth Enhancer, UHD Dimming, PurColor, Wide Color Enhancer Plus, which all result in a great tv watching experience that makes it hard to turn this thing off once you have switched it on.

The HU9000 is powered by a Quad Core Plus processor which ensures seamless switching between TV, apps, web-browsing, streaming content and enables faster multi-tasking. Samsung's Smart Hub interface greets you when you turn on the TV, and it clubs everything you love into one place. The interface is clean and simple, and you should be whizzing around it in no time. The HU9000 takes on next-generation multi-tasking with its Quad Screen feature, transforming your TV into four screens, while the Screen Mirroring feature allows for your laptop or mobile device's screen to be projected on to

the TV. The HU9000 comes with a pair of remotes (a standard Samsung TV remote and a touchpad-equipped motion-sensitive remote), four pairs of 3D glasses, a built-in pop-up camera (for Skype and gesture-recognition), and a OneConnect box. The OneConnect box is Samsung's solution to future-proofing the HU9000, with buyers able to enjoy future UHD and Smart TV advancements without having to buy a new TV by simply upgrading or replacing the OneConnect box with a new one.



Your media connectivity needs are taken care via a myriad of options including 4 HDMI connections, 3 USB connections, Built-in Wi-Fi, 2 AV Composite ins, and 1 Optical out. 🇳🇵

**Yantrick's Verdict: Beautifully designed with stunning picture quality and a host of features that makes it almost impossible to turn it off, Samsung's HU9000 Curved TV is a gadget that we all want but, at Rs 900,000, one that only a few can have.**

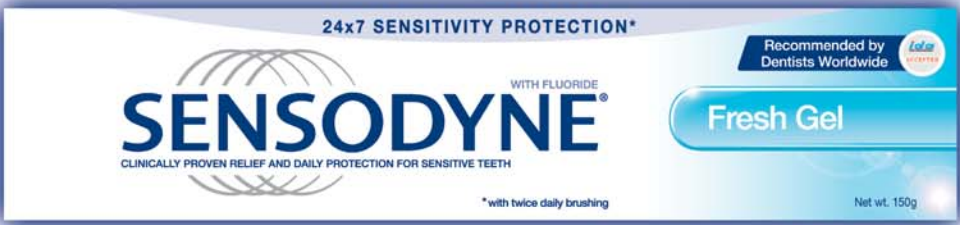


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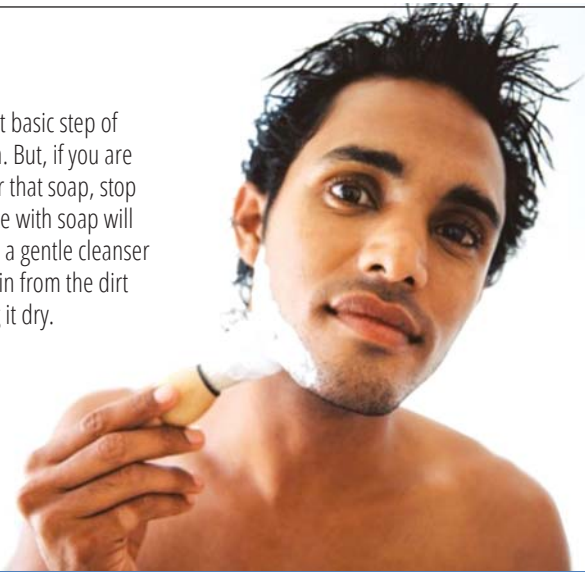
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Cleanse

Cleansing is the most basic step of a skin care regimen. But, if you are thinking of reaching for that soap, stop now. Washing your face with soap will only leave it dryer. Use a gentle cleanser that will cleanse the skin from the dirt and oil without leaving it dry.



Use after shave

Most men are guilty of skipping this step. After-shaves are a must because it hydrates and soothes the skin. Go for an alcohol-free after-shave as alcohol dries your skin.

5

STEP ROUTINE

If your skincare mantra has been 'wash and go', it's time for a change. Follow these 5 simple steps for softer, smoother and better skin.

Moisturise

Facial hair can be sexy on a guy, but not when the skin feels as rough as sandpaper. Moisturising daily will get you soft, kissable skin.

No more cheap razors

It is important to choose a quality razor, considering the fact that on average a man shaves four times a week. Use one that fits your skin sensitivity and beard coarseness. Also, opt for a moisturising shaving gel that will provide a barrier of protection while shaving. The best time for shaves are during shower or immediately afterwards as the hairs tend to be much softer.

HOW TO HANDLE SKIN PROBLEMS LIKE A MAN

Keeping a fresh and favourable look can be a challenging task for men, especially when the day is packed with numerous activities – outdoors or indoors. It is worth taking up this challenge, as sustaining a fresh look can increase confidence and charm, and make significant improvements in daily life.

With winter around the corner, we can expect pollution to be trapped in the air for a longer duration, therefore all the more reason to take care of one's skin, starting now.

Here are some tips to make your choice from the numerous products available in the market:

It is commendable to have a single product for daily use that will have multiple protection properties for male skin – this will save time and money from buying more than one product for daily use. A product such as Fair and Lovely MAX Fairness for Men fits the bill as it takes care of oily skin,

acne as well as dullness at a single go.

Due to its unique texture, male skin requires creams that will absorb quickly and have sun-screen and spot-control properties. Sun-screen properties will protect the skin from UVA and UVB rays from the sun which are more enhanced during the winter season. Spot-control properties on the other hand, will help prevent heat and dirt from building up in skin pores. The Fair and Lovely MAX Fairness for Men will assure you MAX Sun Protection and MAX Spot Reduction to fight these skin problems with minimal effort.

Another possibility in the lives of 21st century men is excessive time spent on computers, air-conditioned spaces and harsh outdoors environments. This can cause the skin to lose its vitality. Male facial skin is also compromised every time one consumes junk food. However, this process of losing youthful suppleness and vitality can be reversed with products that focus on making the skin naturally bright. The Fair and Lovely MAX Fairness for Men has properties that assure MAX Skin Lightening to prevent dullness that results from stress and unhealthy food.

Men's skin also secretes a lot of natural oils. Pollution, heat and stress can cause

these oils to accumulate dirt and stay stubbornly within skin pores, resulting in acne. It is commendable to ensure that one's natural oils are regularly cleansed to prevent this. The best kind of product would be one that will keep the skin oil-free and soft, and Fair and Lovely MAX Fairness does exactly this.

Men's skin requires equal amount of care as a women's while living busy lives. Keeping one's skin healthy and fresh goes a long way in living well. With an informed choice of a multipurpose product such as Fair and Lovely MAX Fairness for Men, skin care, confidence, will be the least of your concerns.



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3

BENEFITS OF MAX FAIRNESS FOR MEN

1

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Visible spot reduction

2

3

Triple sunscreen UV protection



Sun protection

It's best to get a moisturiser that contains SPF 30 or higher. Else, you should have a sunscreen ready.

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MAX Fairness for MAX Impression



# Married to the military

TRISHNA RANA

In 2001, Bhumika Adhikari (Gautam) of Hetauda was studying in Grade 9 when her younger sister and classmates were forcibly recruited into the Maoist militia. After the abduction, security forces regularly harassed Bhumika and her family and took her on patrols to help capture her sibling.

During one search operation, Bhumika was taken to Simara of Bara district by a major from the Suparitar Barrack and raped. After receiving treatment at a hospital in Narayanghat, she followed the soldier to his home.

"We felt trapped from both sides. The Maoists would intimidate families into supporting them and then the army would blame us for sending a daughter to join the rebels and retaliate with force. We lived in constant fear," Bhumika recalls.

"During the conflict, the Army ruled like kings and could do anything. My rapist was taking advantage of his unlimited powers," she says. "But I refused to let him off the hook so easily. As an unmarried young woman my only option was to get him to marry me."

But unknown to Bhumika at that time, the soldier was already married with children. Today, 14 years after being married, Bhumika lives alone in a house in Kathmandu that she jointly owns with her husband. Even though polygamy is illegal, in 2012 the Supreme Court recognised the two as husband and wife and ordered him to pay monthly alimony along with lump sum compensation.

The 34-year-old says she still receives verbal and physical threats from her husband and his family and is sad about being denied love, affection, and a chance at motherhood. But she also counts herself as fortunate to have the support of her parents who give her the strength to carry on her legal and personal battle.

Says Bhumika: "I try to speak up about my mistreatment, so that others can learn. I had done nothing wrong so why should I be afraid? But there are many women out there who have suffered physical or sexual abuse during war and they are understandably terrified to open up about their past because of the immense stigma and fear of public humiliation."

However, with no formal education and qualification, and having to rely on alimony and house rent which she uses to repay her bank loan, Bhumika feels trapped within the confines of her four walls. She hasn't received any compensation meant



for war victims from the state and since the Army does not recognise their union, she is not eligible for family benefits like free healthcare either.

Five years ago, despite her lack of education, Bhumika started a small centre in Hetauda to assist victims of gender violence with legal paperwork." Women come to Kathmandu from far corners of the country with their legal grievances, but they don't even know where to register their case," she explains.

Like many others affected by the conflict, Bhumika is frustrated by the sluggish pace of progress on the transitional justice front. "Victims go from one meeting to another in the hope that perhaps we'll get closure, but so far the process has only reopened old wounds," she explains.

"The government doesn't have to hand over billions to us, even small actions like acknowledging our contribution to the

**HERE ALONE:** Bhumika Adhikari of Makwanpur married the soldier who raped her, but was physically abused and eventually abandoned by him.

country, creating an identity for us, helping us become qualified and skilled, and providing space to show our capacity will go a long way in healing."

While there is no official data on the number of wartime marriages, the practice was prevalent among both the security forces and the Maoist rebels. There are said to be more than 700 cases pending at the Maoist-affiliated All Nepal Women's Organisation office of women deserted by their guerilla husbands after the end of the war.

"During their long marches across Nepal during the war, young homesick recruits got into relationships, and the party would encourage inter-ethnic couples to get

married," says Aruna Rayamajhi, a former Maoist who has written about wartime marriages. "However, with the end of the war many of these relationships fell apart and the men went back to marrying within their own ethnicity or caste."

A 2006 study by the Institute of Human Rights Communication Nepal includes testimonies of 14-17 year old girls married to soldiers and police who abandoned their wives after they were transferred elsewhere. Some women married out of their own accord, some as a result of unwanted pregnancies and sexual abuse, while others were lured into sexual relations on the false promise of marriage by security forces.

Many war-time marriages were not legally recognised by the state as a result of which women find themselves vulnerable to abuse at the hands of their husbands and family, and pushed into poverty. Even as some families have accepted single mothers, most were left to fend for themselves and their young children.

In a country where women who were raped or sexually abused during the conflict (see page 17) and war widows who remarried have been denied compensation by the government, it is hard to imagine a future Truth and Reconciliation Commission being sensitive or willing to hear the suffering of invisible 'conflict wives'. Similar to survivors of rape and sexual violence, providing justice for abandoned wives and single mothers will require much more commitment from the state to offer legal help, psycho-social counseling, rehabilitation, and change our archaic criminal laws.

However, with the recent turn of events it seems that justice and closure for victims will once again be sacrificed for the sake of political expediency. Including Rs 200,000 compensation for families of those killed and disappeared during the civil war and the people's movement as part of the five-point deal between the three major parties was a calculated attempt to appease victims, and drown out their demands with money.

With UCPN (Maoist) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal chairing the revived High Level Political Committee, his party will undoubtedly seek to influence the future of the TRC and influence how prosecution and truth seeking are handled. ■

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- Love in a time of war, #563
- Where is the justice?, #728
- Death of justice, #726

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# RAPE AS A WEAPON OF WAR

TUFAN NEUPANE

Gayatri used to study in a secondary school. In 2001, the security forces took her into custody and raped her every night. Nandita was gang raped by soldiers in front of her children. Manorama was raped 11 days after giving birth. A Maoist cadre in Humla who was eight months pregnant was raped, beaten and then shot in the back.

The Maoists detained Mina for refusing to join a re-education camp, and treated her like a sex slave for four months. They threatened to kill her if she told anyone. A 12-year-old girl who was cutting grass was raped by a local Maoist commissar. Maoists entered a home and forced a young woman to cook for them, and when they found out she was alone in the house they raped her at knife-point.

These war-era crimes between 1996-2006 are among hundreds investigated and detailed in two recent reports by Human Rights Watch (*Silenced and Forgotten*)

and the UN's OHCHR (*Nepal Conflict Report*). However, the government hasn't yet recognised wartime rape as a crime, which has prevented the victims from receiving compensation as other conflict survivors and their families have.

Although detailed lists have been prepared since the 2008 Comprehensive Peace Accord about summary executions, torture and disappearances, rape has been ignored. Both the HRW and OHCHR reports say a majority of the cases investigated were perpetrated by the Army, Police or APF. They say the state has failed to address the need to investigate rapes, try and prosecute the guilty, extend compensation and provide psycho-social counselling and medical attention to the survivors.

Under a section on sexual violence, the OHCHR report says: "There is currently not enough information to establish whether sexual violence committed by Security Forces was institutionalised or systematised. However, it does appear that implicit consent was given at higher ranks which served to encourage a culture of impunity for opportunistic sexual violence, and suspicion of Maoist affiliation was used as an excuse to avoid scrutiny or accountability."

Mandira Sharma of Advocacy Forum which helped in the HRW report, says: "The state's behaviour has protected perpetrators, and it has trampled on the rights of the rape victims."



## Purna Maya wants UN help

Purna Maya, 41, ran a tea shop with her daughter on the road to the remote mid-western district of Dailekh. In 2004, an Army patrol took her into custody on suspicion of having given food to the Maoists. Purna Maya's husband was a Maoist based in Jumla at the time. The soldiers blindfolded her and took her into the Army Base where she was gang-raped by soldiers and an officer, and then dumped on the street outside.

Purna Maya (*pictured*) lodged a complaint at the District Administration and Police, but nothing happened. After the conflict ended in 2006, Purna Maya took all her medical reports and once more lodged a written complaint. Police refused to accept it because they said her cases had exceeded the 35 day limit to lodge rape complaints. She then filed a writ in the Supreme Court which dismissed it for the same reason.

After this, Purna Maya appealed to the United Nations. In an affidavit registered with the UN OHCHR, Purna Maya has asked that the Nepali state be held accountable for her rape and torture.

## Perpetrators of conflict-era sexual violence walk free as women suffer in silence and fear

One rape victim tells human rights investigators: "My family did not overreact to whatever happened to me because almost every woman here has been raped, some countless times. Some have been so badly injured by repeated rapes by different army personnel that they are barely able to stand."

There is a need to amend the current criminal code for sexual violence because under existing laws, perpetrators have used loopholes to evade prosecution. The definition of rape has to be broadened so that penetration should not be the only criteria for a violation to be considered rape. HRW has found incidents where security forces inserted various objects, including salt and chilli powder, into the vagina of prisoners to torture them.

The statute of limitation of 35 days for evidence to be permissible in the case of rape has been used by the state to dismiss all conflict rape complaints that have been filed. Which means that even if the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is formed and starts investigating wartime sexual violence, they will be dismissed.

"If the definition of rape is not amended, and unless new laws are drafted, the Commission will try future cases on the basis

of existing laws," explains human rights lawyer Sapana Pradhan Malla. "In most parts of the world, the statute of limitation does not hold for cases of gross violations of human rights like rape."

Activists say although 35 days is not a short time, it is impractical to insist on that time limit for war rapes. Many victims did not tell their families for fear of ostracisation and never sought medical treatment, and now that much time has passed it is difficult for them to get justice.

Says Mandira Sharma of Advocacy Forum: "The accounts of eye-witnesses or of other rape victims should be accepted as evidence in the courts, and with proper training doctors and psychiatrists can determine if the person is a victim of sexual violence or not."

Sharma says the state must be careful to ensure that the cases are handled discretely, and the privacy of the victims is respected. The victims should then get justice, compensation and long-term medical and psychiatric care if the survivor has been physically or mentally scarred.





# “Great sense of satisfaction”

Interview by SBS Nepali, Australia with Kumud Dhital who carried out the world’s first transplant of a dead heart, 25 October

**SBS Nepali: How important to medical science were your transplants?**

**Kumud Dhital:** It is quite important because DCD (Donation after Circulatory Death) transplants had not been attempted before. It involves taking the heart and other organs out immediately after the heart stops beating, putting it into a machine to provide it with the necessary nutrients, and the heart starts beating again. We monitor how well the heart is working, and only if it is working well do we prepare a recipient and transplant it. We have now done this three times. In that respect, taking the heart that had stopped beating, transporting it to another hospital in a machine and transplanting on a patient had never been tried before.

**How quickly do you have to perform the transplant?**

Within 30 minutes of the heart beat stopping, we should already have preserved the heart in the nutrient fluid, otherwise that heart won’t work. Only then do we put it in the machine for transportation. DCDs had been tried in transplantation of

kidneys and lungs, but we are the first ones to have tried it on hearts.

**Is this going to make it easier to address the problem of donor shortage, or are there complications that we have to be aware of?**

Our first patient got the transplant three months ago, the second got a heart two weeks ago and are being discharged from hospital, and the third only a few days ago. So far they are doing well. And we think the outcome will be the same as with transplants from brain dead donors. As you say, this technique will make it possible to increase the number of potential donors from the DCD pool at a time when there is a real shortage of donors. For those wait-listed for transplants, this is going to make a big difference. Some patients die waiting for a heart.

**Asians are said to have a higher incidence of cardio-vascular diseases, will it help them?**

In Sydney, we do about 30 transplants a year and about 100 all over Australia. In countries like China and India there is a big problem of heart failure, yet the transplant program is very small. Also, due to cultural reasons, they find it difficult to source hearts from donors in ventilators. So the DCD path could be easier for

them, and this could increase the number of transplants in those countries as well.

**Are there any religious sensitivities about taking the heart of a dead person and putting into another person?**

Yes, such questions are bound to be raised. We don’t meet the donor’s family, we have no interaction with them. Only once the patient is declared dead does the patient come to our operating room. Brain dead patients, in many countries including Australia, are considered to be legally dead but are kept on a ventilator to keep the organs alive. This allows us to carry out organ retrieval in a controlled fashion. In DCD transplants, however, it is slightly more risky. But we have been able to carry it out successfully in these three patients.

**How does it feel to be the first in the world to successfully carry them out?**

My team and I are really happy that the operations went well. You get a great sense of satisfaction that a patient who was bed-ridden is now climbing stairs.

**nepalitimes.com**

Listen to interview



# Federal later

Balram Pandey in *Nagarik*, 29 October

नागरिक

The major parties are now looking to prepare the first draft of the constitution and decide on federalism later. A meeting of Political Dialogue and Consensus Committee (PDCC) discussed this idea after it couldn’t reach a consensus on the names and number of states by its 31 October deadline.

“Why don’t we solve the issues we can agree on now, like form of governance, electoral process, judiciary and how states will be formed,” said NC leader Gagan Thapa at the PDCC meeting. “We could make this first draft public and see what people say about it.”

Thapa also proposed that leaders could seek consensus on

contentious subjects after getting feedback on their proposals instead of deciding to vote on it.

“We still can’t decide whether to take this to voters and also what to vote on, so discussing these will only create obstacles to constitution writing,” said Thapa.

Sadhbhavana Party leader and PDCC member Laxman Lal Karn also agreed with Thapa, saying that prolonged discussion about what to include for voting would only mean the PDCC would miss its deadline.

“I think it is best to prepare a first draft by including a list of contentious issues and the different proposals to address them so that we can get people’s feedback,” said Karn. “Playing the numbers game in the CA will only dilute trust in each other.”



“Read with left eye shut.”  
“Read with right eye shut.”  
“You need to visit a shaman.”  
“Long live the new constitution.”  
“Down with the new constitution.”

twitter

Rajesh KC in *Twitter*, 30 October

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“ We could include all our proposals in the annex of the first draft and get people’s feedback. ”

NC leader Gagan Thapa on keeping contentious issues for later, *Nagarik*, 29 October

# Robbed by security

RV Silvanus in *mysansar.com*, 25 October

मेरो संसार

It was a few days after Tribhuvan International Airport was named the third worst airport in the world when I learnt of my friend’s mistreatment at Bharatpur Regional Airport. Whether it is regional or international, it seems airports all over Nepal are the same -- mismanaged and filled with corrupt staff.

My friend, Paul Miller, an American was boarding a Yeti Airlines flight to Kathmandu. At the security check prior to boarding, he was frisked by the personnel on duty. The security officer then opened Paul’s hand luggage and came across a bag of chocolates and pens. My friend who suffers from diabetes always has sweets, chocolates with him for times when his sugar level gets low. Instead of putting the things back into Paul’s bag, the personnel put them into his own, rubber-stamped the sticker on Paul’s bag and asked him to go. Earlier, Paul had seen the same police pocket a packet of gum from another traveller.



CATHY CAVANAUGH

I am sure Miller is not the first traveller that this security personnel has harassed. Travellers are frequently harassed by security personnel not just at the airports but even on roads for no apparent reasons. Are we forgetting our philosophy of treating guests as gods? Do the security officials plan to open a shop with all the robbed goods? How can he enjoy those treats knowing he took it from someone else forcibly? Is his job to provide security or harass travellers?

It is the taxpayers’ money that goes into paying him, now his activities have brought shame to all Nepalis. Hope that this case will alert Nepal Police, Civil Aviation Authority, CIAA and bring them to work together to better manage Bharatpur Airport. Such misuse of authority should be punished.



# Inconvenient truths

Let's not leave out the guarantee of freedom of expression from the preamble of our new constitution

ATLANTA – From the other side of the world and in the larger scheme of things, the differences between the political parties on state restructuring, which haven't narrowed down a bit in recent negotiations, seem to be petty and easily reconcilable.

And in all the toing and froing about federalism, a critical aspect of the new constitution seems to



**THE DEADLINE**

Damakant Jayshi

have been forgotten: the freedom of expression. The Preamble of the Interim Constitution of Nepal speaks of 'full commitment to democratic values and norms including...complete freedom of the press...'. So there is already an implied limitation here for others. If one does not belong to the media, does it mean a citizen does not have the freedom of speech and expression?

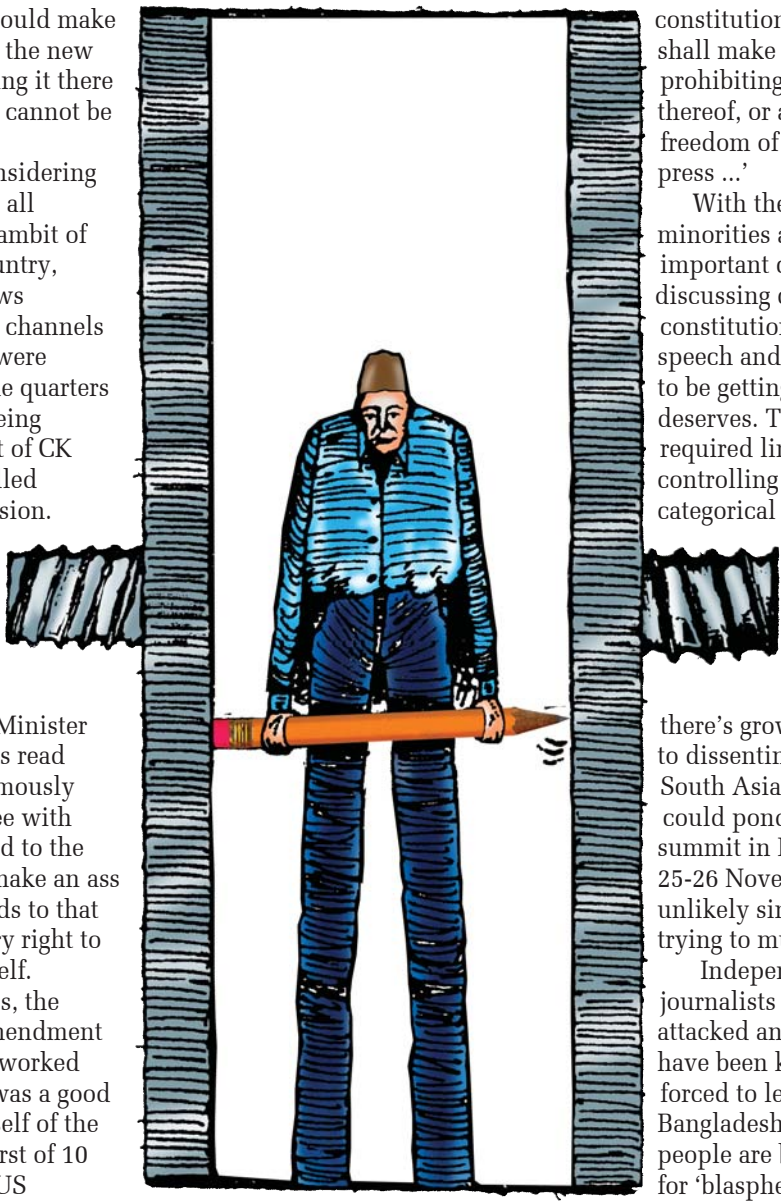
After all, the freedom of press is not the right of journalists, it actually protects the citizens' right to know. We in the fourth estate are just the custodians of that right. We don't know yet

whether this right would make it to the preamble of the new constitution, but citing it there would ensure that it cannot be amended easily.

This is worth considering since it would cover all those left out of the ambit of the 'press' in the country, including online news portals, tv and radio channels and citizens. There were arguments from some quarters that this right was being violated in the arrest of CK Raut who openly called for the right to secession. Whether one agrees or disagrees with Raut, it remains that he had the right to voice that opinion.

I doubt if Home Minister Bam Dev Gautam has read Oscar Wilde who famously said: "I may not agree with you, but I will defend to the death your right to make an ass of yourself." Or words to that effect. Raut had every right to make an ass of himself.

The United States, the Land of the First Amendment and the city that networked the world in news, was a good place to remind myself of the Bill of Rights. The first of 10 amendments to the US



constitution says: 'Congress shall make no law... prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press ...'

With the rights of religious minorities and identity - all important considerations while discussing contents of the new constitution- the freedom of speech and expression needs to be getting the attention it deserves. There could be some required limitations, like controlling hate speech, but a categorical mention of this right of citizens, irrespective of their identity and background is a must.

Worryingly, there's growing intolerance to dissenting opinion in South Asia. SAARC leaders could ponder over this at their summit in Kathmandu on 25-26 November, but it is unlikely since they are the ones trying to muzzle the media.

Independent Sri Lankan journalists are being harassed, attacked and intimidated. Some have been killed, others were forced to leave the country. In Bangladesh and Pakistan people are being arrested for 'blasphemous' content

in newspaper and social media platforms.

India, the largest democracy with a long tradition of free press and more or less independent judiciary has seen harassment of people deemed critical of the new prime minister, Narendra Modi. Books, first published years ago, are being banned in India. Bhutanese authorities believe that a monolithic religion, universal language and dress code are the ingredients of happiness. In Nepal, there have been arrests of journalists, film reviewers and others for their comments, reports and posts in traditional and social media.

Compared to countries in the region, Nepal seems to be much better off. But if intolerance to dissent grows across the region, we are going to catch a cold too. The pressure on the government here to sync in would be too hot to handle. Despite sharp ideological differences in their party constitutions and election manifesto all leaders behave almost in identical manner when it comes to withstanding pressure from China and India. They usually cave in.

The members of Constituent Assembly would be doing the federal democratic republic a great service by ensuring that the right to freedom of speech and expression, among other inalienable rights, gets mentioned in the preamble of the new constitution.

'If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.' That was from George Orwell. May our CA members keep this in mind. 🇳🇵



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# World's 3rd worstest airport

The news last week that Tribhuvan Incontinental Airport has been voted the third worst airport in the world was greeted with great dismay in tourism circles here. The questions in everyone's mind was: How come Kathmandu airport didn't make it to Number 1? What did we do wrong that we had to be satisfied with only the Third Worstest? How can we correct this and aspire to be even more worse next year? All very good questions which I will promptly refer to a higher up authority.

Indeed, it is a crying shame that we could not win this year's CNN Worst Airport in the

popping.) But we must not rest on our laurels, we cannot sit back and relax just because our toilets are now world famous, we have to doubly redouble our effort to devise ways to make them even more obnoxious.

Besides, there are still the Rudest X-ray Men Category, the Sloppiest Ground Handling Category, the Hugest Rats in the Departure Concourse Category, and the Categorically Catastrophic Luggage Carousel Category that we must try to win back next year.

The Ass is glad to announce that on a recent inspection visit, I found TIA's overall standards had dropped most encouragingly

happen? Heads must roll, and we must reinstate the long lines pronto if we are serious about maintaining our lead as one of the rottenest airports in the known universe. There are other areas that need immediate attention:

1. Clearly, a lot of work has gone into keeping the loos in the arrival and departure areas crappy as always. However, the upstairs lounge has soap, running water and toilet paper. That is disgusting. We must maintain uniform standards so that the business class restroom also contains gaseous ammonia and methane roughly in the proportion found in the atmosphere of the planet Youranus.

2. Dear and departing passengers these days receive only three patdowns from check-in to boarding. Service is slipping, there used to be a time when passengers used to be frisked at least six times: 1st xray, Security Check, Customs, 2nd xray, Boarding Gate, Aircraft Ramp. We need to reinstate unisex fullbody massages so tourists leave with a good impression of Nepal.

3. The immigration and luggage line at arrival for tourists without visas is now only one hour long. This won't do, visitors must be made to wait at least two hours for their visas. That should be our modus operandi, our a posteriori and our standard operating procedure. If necessary, we can add a geriatric ward for those who grow old while waiting for their checked-in luggage to emerge.



The Ass



World trophy even after decades of tireless effort on the part of successive Tourism Ministers and directors of the Uncivil Aviation Authoritarians of Nepal. This calls for deep introspection so that we can re-examine what we could have done worse in the past year, we cannot remain complacent and be satisfied with mere mediocrity when there is such stiff competition out there from airports like Ougadougou, Bfanabfana and Hakuna Matata.

But all is not lost. Kathmandu Airport did manage to bag the first prize in the Smelliest Airport Loo Category. (Yes, that was the sound of a champagne bottle

(see notice in loo, pictured) and at this rate of deterioration there is no doubt in my mind that we will easily win the 2015 Contest, bringing pride and glory to our motherland. If we do it right the aptly named Tribhuvan (means Third World in Sanskrit) International Airport will itself be a major tourist attraction, people from all over the world will want to visit Nepal just to experience its famously malodourous aerodrome.

A note of caution, though. There have been some worrying signs of improvement at the airport. For example, there was no queue at the customs x-ray before check-in this week. How could such a lapse be allowed to occur? Who let it

## TREKKING WITH THE TIMES

Nepal needs to reinvent trekking and make it safer if it is to contribute to poverty alleviation in rural areas.

OFF THE BEATEN  
TREK ON MULDE PEAK

VALUE-ADDED HIKING  
with DONATELLA LORCH

PAGE 10-11

HUDHUD AND  
THE HIMALAYA

Lessons learnt  
by Project Himalaya

PAGE 5

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