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DIVAKAR CHETTRI

## THE GATE

Nepal's gateway is its international airport where passengers wait 1 hour and 15 minutes to get visas after a two hour flight. Skydiver and businessman, Ted Atkins, starts his new column *Outside In*.

PAGE 6

## WATCHING THE WATCHDOG

Just because an elected government displays unaccountability, it doesn't mean that all the authority to prosecute alleged thieves is handed over to an unelected entity like the CIAA.

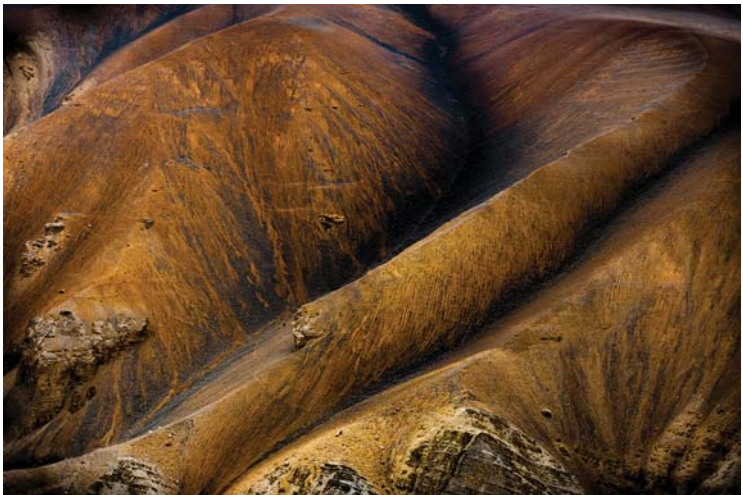
EDITORIAL PAGE 2

## HOLY LAND

Italian restorer Luigi Fieni's photographs of Mustang include stunning images of an ancient, wrinkled landscape, monks and monasteries, and painstaking restoration to preserve rare, sacred murals.

PAGE 10-11

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



LUIGI FIENI

buizz

## MIRA RAI

Nepal's trail running superstar leaves the world far behind in ultra-long distance races. Mira Rai takes her role as a role model seriously, wants to encourage Nepali girls in sports, and credits her parents with encouraging her to dare to dream.

PAGE 7



BIKRAM RAI



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# WATCHING THE WATCHDOG

When faced with a crisis, the Nepali polity has the tendency to prescribe a medicine that is worse than the disease. That is the case with the unfortunately acronymed CIAA, the Commission for the Investigation of the Abuse of Authority. After it was set up in 1977, it has tried to fulfill a check and balance role, from the absolute monarchy days when decision-making was centralised at the royal palace to the post-1990 era of absolute anarchy when corruption was itself 'democratised'.

But it was after the appointment two years ago of current chief commissioner Lok Man Singh Karki that the CIAA has aggressively investigated and prosecuted those allegedly involved in graft. With corruption, lack of transparency, extortion and abuse of power endemic in the current phase of our political transition, many had hoped that the anti-corruption watchdog could clean things up. At a time when politics is criminalised and hard-core crooks of every hue openly enjoy political protection, no one expects Nepal to be 100 per cent corruption-free overnight. But the expectation was that with a strongman at the CIAA, governance and service delivery would improve.

But the questionable choice and non-transparent circumstances under which Karki was brought in out of nowhere raised eyebrows. He was Chief Secretary during the brutal crackdown on pro-democracy protestors in last days of the royal regime in 2006. But a bigger irony is that Karki is heading an agency that had itself investigated him for abuse of authority in the past.

Since then, we have seen the CIAA involved in hooking small fish, indulging in petty vendetta, witch-hunts and psychological blackmail. Like the Panchayat-era Janch Bujh Kendra, the CIAA has overstepped its mandate and become a law unto itself. Just because an elected government displays unaccountability, it doesn't mean that we hand over the entire authority to prosecute alleged thieves to an unelected entity.

In parliament's Public Finance Committee last week, CA member Sher Bahadur Tamang asked: "Who will watch the

Just because an elected government displays unaccountability, it doesn't mean that all the authority to prosecute alleged thieves is handed over to an unelected entity like the CIAA



watchdog?" The last straw seems to have been the CIAA's directive to scrap the license for the World Bank-funded 36.7 MW Kabeli A hydropower project in eastern Nepal. The decision appears to have been taken because there was a delay in financial closure caused more by bureaucratic delays than abuse of authority.

Indeed, the CIAA has been acting almost like a parallel government, cancelling contracts, hauling up entrepreneurs, cancelling appointments and poking its nose into internal civil service matters. In the past months, the CIAA has cancelled the license for 10 hydropower projects. While some of these were schemes that dubious investors were sitting on hoping to cash in big time, others were genuine projects that had been delayed because of red-tape, local opposition or kickback demands from government ministries. The CIAA, instead of investigating malfeasance, punished sincere investors in the energy sector at a time when the country is reeling under crippling power cuts. At a time when investor confidence is improving, the CIAA action threatens to dampen it again.

Aside from the CIAA's willful abuse of its own authority, the agency also needs to clean up its operating procedures. Currently, if anyone has a gripe against anyone, is motivated by jealousy, wants to bring down a rival company that legitimately won a contract, all they have to do is draft a complaint to the CIAA. An investigation then begins which publicly pronounces a person guilty until proven innocent, and puts multi-million dollar projects on hold as has happened with the ADB and JICA-funded Tanahu Project.

"I will put the CIAA on you" has become a potent threat that has paralysed decision-making in the bureaucracy and the administration. The buck stops at Baluwater. Karki is powerful because we have a weak and feckless prime minister who can't even nominate the six remaining commissioners to the CIAA. Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat told the parliament committee that the CIAA was "sabotaging the investment climate". If so, he should get his boss to rein Karki in.

## YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

### KE GARNE

It is hard for a sociologist like me to accept the theory of cultural determinism to explain the loss of life in last month's Annapurna blizzard, the epidemic of road accidents and the sorry state of Kathmandu airport, but the editorial may be on to something here ('Better safe than sorry', Editorial, #730). Ke garne fatalism has been the hallmark of modern Nepal from leaders to citizens -- all seem to have embraced the concept. Nothing will change until the people can take their destiny into their own hands, and the first step towards this would be a constitution and local elections.

Spencer

defaulting to the standard, crowded routes.

Louise Currie

■ Hope the villagers won't encroach on the new roads by setting up shops, hotels and businesses haphazardly like in Kathmandu. 'Walking with the times', Kunda Dixit, #730) Villagers need to prevent rural areas from becoming an eyesore, or else we will have no visitors soon in future.

Kaley

■ Not just 'trekking' - need to develop a new form of 'engagement' with local people where walking is not an end in itself.

David Seddon

### TREKKING

I visited Dobato and Khopra ridge with a camping group back in 1988 so I find it somewhat amusing this is still regarded a 'new' trekking route in 2014 ('Mulde Peak', #730). Government will is definitely required to support the success of new trekking trails, however the will of others is important too. TAAN and the government should collaborate to ensure the recommended minimum wage for registered guides and porters is enforced by all agencies, to entice well trained and motivated Nepali trekking staff to lead tours into new areas. Individual trekking agencies must be willing to investigate and promote new trekking options to tourists. And tourists themselves should take advantage of the internet and social media to research all the trekking options available in Nepal rather than just

### CHAMPION COUNTRY

Quite a satisfying thought ('World champion country', Ashutosh Tiwari, #730). But I wonder if you are too romanticised with INGOs. Yes, I agree, INGOs have catered to a lot of human development indices, but how about the contribution from remittances, the growing exposure of our young labourers, even if they mostly work blue colored jobs (be it in middle east or western hemisphere) how about our progressive young generation? I still believe most of the social development is indigenous, home grown than an INGO-led process.

Cognitive dissonance

■ It is unfortunate that our Ministry of Health (MoH), which should be the primary provider of health services, cannot be credited much for the achievements Ashutosh Tiwari cites. Embroiled in its own bureaucracy

and corruption, the MoH has left most responsibilities to donor organisations, allowing NGOs and INGOs to run program parallel to the MOH instead of simply complementing its efforts. There is no effort to create a sustainable model which the MoH can continue after the donor funding is over.

Bal Bahadur

■ Dependency upon NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies and Volunteers is growing. It is high time the state take full responsibility of people's health care.

Mero Bichar

### KUMUD DHITAL

Nepal's contribution towards making Cardiothoracic Surgeon Kumud Dhital is nil and we should refrain from glorifying the achievements of an individual who has earned every bit of it by dint of his hard work and perseverance. ('I would like to help Nepal in a practical way,' #730). The last lines of the interview sum it all, '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.' This is a telling reply to all the medics in Nepal who bask in the glory of self adulation and mass deification.

Salil Pradhan

■ Dr Kumud Dhital's work is obviously something to celebrate, but this nationalistic pride is misplaced. Nepal likes to sing praises about a successful person with some national ties when they are abroad but when it comes to actually allowing them to do something in the country, they rarely get the needed support. If and when Dr Dhital

decides to come home he meet the real Nepalis who will do everything they can to bring him down.

Anonymous

### INCONVENIENT TRUTHS

A reasonable compromise would be adopting the United Kingdom's approach ('Inconvenient truths', Damakant Jayshi, #730). Even though it is officially a Christian country with recognition of the Anglican Church as the official church of the country, and requirement that the Monarch be an (Anglican) Christian, nobody argues that there is no religious freedom there. Many other EU countries like Spain, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, etc also have some form of Christianity as their official religion, but that hasn't derived the minority of their rights. Nepal could just follow one of those examples.

Dev Batsya

### THE WORSTEST

I was coerced into greasing the hand of the first luggage xray official before I could barely check in for my flight home last week ('World's 3rd worst airport', Ass, #730). If the airport officials fail to cast a bad impression of your beautiful country on our way in, they surely strive harder to do so on our way out.

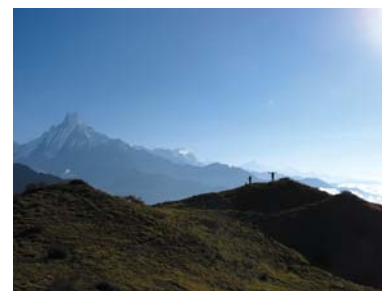
Jacqqq

■ Close the VIP lounge for the time being. Let the ministers use the same toilets that ordinary travellers are forced to.

Danny

Times

## THIS WEEK



KUNDA DIXIT (82 LIKES)

### Most liked on Facebook

Most liked on Facebook  
Trekking with the times: Nepal needs to reinvent trekking and make it safer if it is to contribute to poverty alleviation in rural areas.

### Most shared on Facebook

Where to be a Gurkha?  
by Kunda Dixit (66 shares)

### Most reached

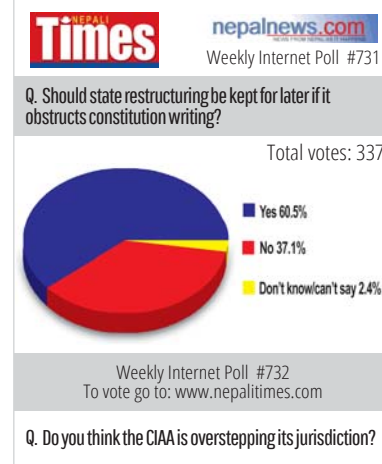
Top 10 treks (28 retweets, 27 favourites)

### Most visited online page

Where to be a Gurkha by Kunda Dixit (29,380 people reached)

### Most commented

World's 3rd worstest airport by Ass





# Keep talking

On Monday, the two ruling parties Nepali Congress and CPN-UML came up with a document listing their common position on contentious issues of constitution drafting.

The position paper received mixed reactions in the mainstream and social media. Not surprisingly, it irked the opposition which



**BY THE WAY**  
Anurag Acharya

is calling it an arm-twisting strategy by the ruling coalition against them. The document was discussed briefly at the dialogue committee's meeting on Tuesday following which Chairman of the committee Baburam Bhattarai abruptly called off the meeting stating that the document must be discussed at the highest political level for consensus.

Given their political calculations, the opposition was expected to find fault in the document, but there is no reason why they can't treat it as a talking paper.

On the contentious issue of form of governance, the proposed document leaves a room for negotiation by acknowledging that Nepal's parliamentary practice has bred political instability. This, weighted against the risks of authoritarianism or a paralysing standoff between directly elected executive and the legislature or the judiciary, experienced by many countries, opens up a unique opportunity of arriving at a model that best suits our own needs.

Similarly, the document proposes a separate constitutional bench within the apex court instead of a constitutional court to resolve disputes over jurisdiction between constitutional bodies or those related to interpretations of the constitution. The parties must now rationally decide if a separate bench is sufficient to deal with the volume of cases involving the provinces, union government and the constitutional bodies, and not make it a matter of contention.

As expected, the trickiest part is related to federalism. But there is room for debate here as well. To begin with, the Madhesi parties could argue in favour of retaining some parts of Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari in the proposed Tarai (Janakpur) province, unless the ruling parties can give proper justification or the rationale behind lumping huge swathes of the plains with the proposed hill province of Kosi. Similar arguments could be made on the possibility of retaining the lower belt of Tharu dominated Kailali and Kanchanpur with the proposed Lumbini province. Beyond political and economic calculations, the

## The foundations of a New Nepal cannot be laid on faultlines of the past

Tarai's regional autonomy from the hill administration may help to heal its historical grudge against Kathmandu mending the ruptured social fabric between the Pahades and the Madhesi living in the region.

In the last column, I had argued that the parties could limit the number of states while meeting demands by ethnic groups by recognising one or more autonomous regions within a state where cultural, linguistic as well as political rights of the groups are protected. The proposed document by NC-UML seems to make similar proposition.

This is a welcome step. However, the ruling parties must

prove that their proposal is aimed at empowering marginalised groups and recognising their identity, rather than a strategy to limit the number of provinces. For this, the parties must agree to promote self-rule within the autonomous regions by reserving the constituency seats from the regions for the group. For instance, making it mandatory for the parties to file a Sherpa candidate from the declared Sherpa autonomous region.

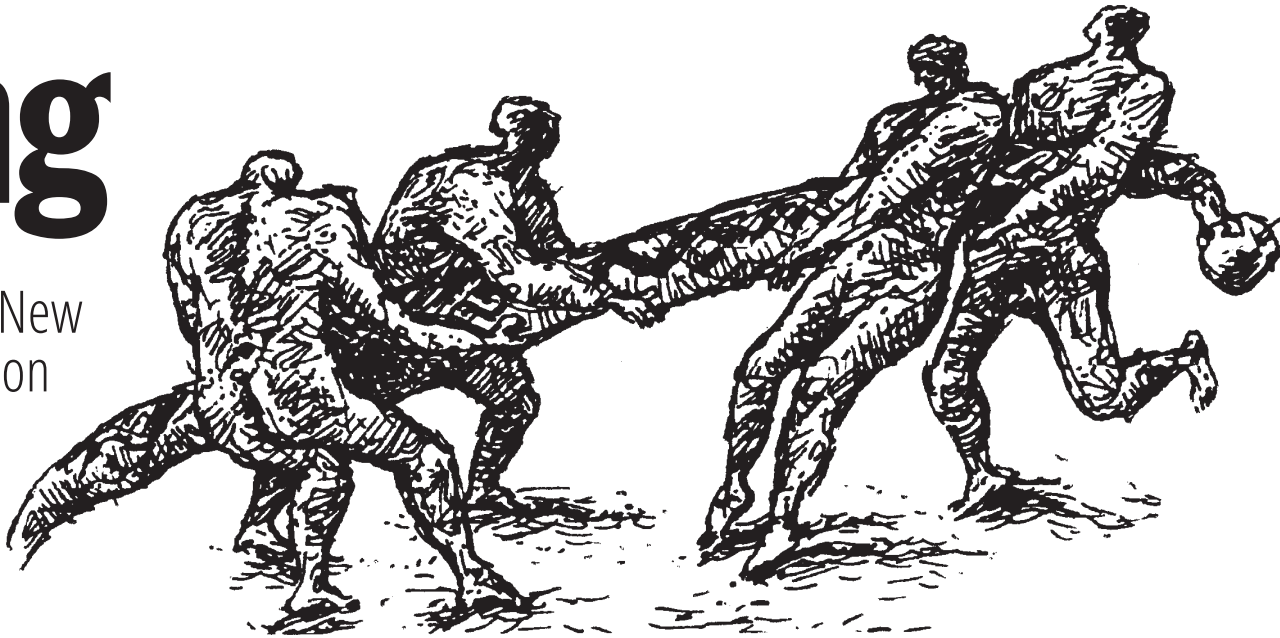
Such provisions guaranteeing inclusive candidacy list, along with reservations for women and Dalits will ensure sufficient representation of minorities in the state and union legislature.

The current proposal by the NC-UML is a fresh departure from their earlier rigid stance of north-south provinces. At a time when demands for identity and self-rule are still viewed as divisive within both parties, the common proposal can be a starting point

for gainful negotiation.

However, the ruling parties must refrain from projecting the document as a bait to trap the opposition. If the disagreements persist, the final solution, including the options of going for a vote must be mutually agreed upon.

The senior leaders on both sides should be mindful not to lay the foundations of a New Nepal on faultlines of the past. @Anurag\_Acharya



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# A multi-tasked life

At 72, Karna Sakya is busier than ever writing books and building hotels

What amazes forester, entrepreneur, writer and positive thinker Karna Sakya the most? Everything around him. He points to an excavator working at his project site and ponders on its power. The machine's articulated claw works like a human hand, but can lift weights a thousand times more.



**ON THE ROAD**  
Guna Raj Luitel

Singapore's founder leader Lee Kwan Yew once praised the humble air conditioner as one of the greatest inventions in human history. Lee said the coolers allowed people to work and remain productive in the tropics despite the heat and humidity. Sakya has a similar ability to see the extraordinary in the ordinary.

At 72, Sakya's passion for

work hasn't diminished. The tourism pioneer who established Kathmandu Guest House that helped Thamel grow from a sleepy backwater to a tourism hub, is working on a new hotel project in Hattisar. "I feel like a painter," Sakya tells me, "a painter uses a brush and colours to produce art. Building a new structure is also a creative enterprise."

Sakya's family is from Asan, and he grew up making slippers from used tyres. After a degree in forestry, he helped establish national parks, and then his business mind took him to develop eco-tourism products. In the past 40 years, Sakya has been involved with Kathmandu Guest House, Hotel Ambassador, Club Himalaya and Marco Polo Business Hotel.

Today, Sakya has turned into a popular philosopher sharing the experiences of his multi-tasked life with his readers. His books, *Soch* (Imagination) *Khoj* (Investigation) and *Moj* (Enjoyment) have been best-sellers, exhorting readers to have



a positive mental attitude, to imagine, explore and implement new ideas.

Sakya is impatient with talking heads who only tell others what should be done. He wants to see things done. Meditation or physical exercise are futile for him, he gets his relaxation and

exercise from keeping body and soul engaged in his new projects.

His books are about his life experiences and offer practical tips. He started writing *Soch* while Nepal was engulfed in violence, it was a time of sadness and despair. Investors abandoned the country, and even Nepalis had lost faith in their nation's future.

But for Sakya, darkness was not the only reality. He started out reminding himself about what he admired most about Nepal, and the book became an exercise in reviving the author's own confidence in Nepalis. He admits he is not a natural writer. "I can't write a poem about a rose if you ask me to," he says. "I have my own philosophy and am guided by my own reality. However, I wanted to communicate to fellow Nepalis the practical and positive things I learnt in my life." His other books are about entrepreneurship. *Ma Sakchu* (I Can) was inspired by the US president Barack Obama's election. Sakya also wrote the script for a Nepali film *Pal* (Moment).

The Hattisar hotel involves

renovating an old Rana-era palace where he has lived for the past 35 years into a heritage property called Maya Manor. In Pokhara, besides Waterfront Hotel, he is also building the Mountain Front on Sarangkot.

Sakya's life is full of projects and pragmatism, he has no time for rigid ideologies. He is a happy man and doesn't have any regret in his self-made life. His legacies are his hotels and his books, and he is now working on his dream home in Panipokhari, "a place where I can spend my last days".

What strikes me the most about Karna Sakya is his determination not to sink into fashionable cynicism or hopelessness, he doesn't just look at a silver lining; he wants others to see it too. He wants to infect other Nepalis with his never-waning optimism about the country, and hopes that he can inspire others to achieve as much as he has.

He glances back at the excavator with boyish curiosity, and remarks on the symbolism of the operator's ability to magnify his power and do so much with such ease. Sakya seems to be quoting from one of his own books when he summarises his life's philosophy: "The person who has never seen suffering will not seek happiness. Necessity is the mother of invention."

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# Simplicity, elegance, taste



To visitors and Kathmandu inhabitants alike, the valley has become an increasing hodgepodge of urban sprawl, barely punctuated with greenery or quiet spaces. Every metropolis needs to place such areas very strategically in the middle of their city centers to afford relief to its inhabitants.

Unfortunately for Kathmandu dwellers and tourists, this kind of urban planning seems to be far from the minds of the city's architects and administrators.

Equally problematic for a city (and country) that relies on tourism is our utter disregard for facilitating buildings that add to rather than take away from the natural graces inherent in this beautiful green valley.

With the advent of recent dubiously designed large hotel projects within the Valley, it

would be heartening to see taste triumph over scale, with people moving towards using existing spaces to create the smaller more intimate type of boutique hotels that favour character over the woefully generic.

Now, with the opening of '3 Rooms by the Paulines' (started by two French women who coincidentally share the same name and already run a well established gemlike idyll in the foothills of the Shivapuri National Park) perhaps some sort of precedent will be set in valuing smaller buildings, giving greater attention to detail, and with the idea that architecture need not be flashy to be beautiful.

This new little hotel, indeed just the three rooms, is inside the first courtyard of the Babar Mahal Revisited complex, and is truly an exercise in simplicity

with elegance and taste. The spaces are built with the perfect mixture of earth and light tones that accentuate the ethnic furniture and genuine Nepali antiques that occupy each room. Gone too is the almost laughably characterless artwork that most hotels unabashedly sport. Instead the Paulines have decided to support their photographer friends who hang their work in the rooms for the guests to purchase should they happen to fall in love with a particular piece.

With each of the rooms having their own special character, it is hard to choose a favourite, but I can imagine myself being happy in any of the three as a guest, each has its own specific draw. Adding to the already great charm of this intimate hotel is the collaboration with neighbouring Chez Caroline which will make its full menu available to the hotel guests for room service, although of course one might also be tempted to just roll out of bed and walk the sixty odd seconds it takes to get to the restaurant itself for one of its unsurpassed brunches.

Suffice to say that most aspiring hoteliers could learn a lot from these three rooms. As for these intrepid Frenchwomen, one can't help but wish them a great deal of luck for having established something so quietly beautiful in the center of our beloved but rapidly expanding city.  *Sophia Pande*

## prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS

### Ncell hosts mobile app seminar

Ncell held a seminar on mobile application trends at Hotel Everest this week as part of its facilitation program for participants of the Ncell App Camp 2014.



President of Cash On Ad, Biswas Dhakal was the keynote speaker. Dhakal in his speech encouraged young developers to make their ideas creative. "Encouragement is another important aspect. You should plan in advance how you can bring users to your product", said Dhakal.

His speech was followed by a panel discussion on potential and challenges of mobile application development in Nepal. Panelists stressed on the growing trend of using apps as business tools to minimise cost and increase connectivity.

Out of the 150 ideas in competition, six from each category-- agriculture, tourism, education and corporate solutions--will be selected to compete at the finale to be held from 9 to 11 December.

### Book online, pay offline

Qatar Airways has introduced an offline payment solution for reservations made on its website for Nepal. Passengers can now book tickets online and pay at any branch of Standard Chartered bank within 48 hours of the booking. Customers with credit cards can complete their travel arrangements online.



### Internationally recognised

Chief Business Officer of Mega Bank Nepal, Raveena Desraj Shrestha, has been named one of the winners of Singapore's Lady of Excellence Award. The organisers SEASIA stated that Shrestha was being recognised for her contribution to the banking sector and for her social work. The award ceremony will be held on 5 January 2015.

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often only complain if I care to see improvement. When I say nothing, it's because I don't intend to come back. We give feedback to our children because we care how they turn out. A bad parent says nothing even when the child is headed down the wrong path. Only later do they see the result of not saying anything. We all know that it is the beginning of the end when we stop communicating in any relationship. Sometimes this communication will not be what you want to hear. This is the time to listen hard.

I used to live in France. I did not care much for living in France and decided to move. This meant selling my house so the first thing I did was paint the gate. The gate of my house is the first thing that anyone coming to buy the house will see. This will be their 'first impression'. There was a fascinating article some time ago about first impressions. In tests, a person was assessed for first impressions by someone who did not know them. Later the interviewer compared their impressions to someone who knew the person well. In over 80 per cent of cases the first impression proved highly accurate. Now this may not seem like big news, as we all agree that first impressions are important.

The gate to Nepal is its international airport. It is where I stood once again for 1 hour and 15 minutes to get a tourist visa. My flight from China was 2 hours 30 minutes, and I spent half of this time for a visa. Again. It is always like this. The next day my friend waited for two hours to collect his luggage. In Europe if I go to a shop to buy bread and they make me wait for an unreasonable time, I go to another shop. It is a huge mistake to think that you are the only shop and therefore you can do as you please. I often lecture to young people about business and I state that my first rule of business is never to make an existing customer look elsewhere.

P.S I sold my house. 🇳🇵

*Ted Atkins is a former RAF Chief Engineering Officer and now partner/owner of 4 international companies. This is the first of his exclusive column, Outside In, in Nepali Times.*

My name is Ted Atkins and I have an office with Asian Trekking in Thamel. I think like a businessman because I am one, I have no choice. I visit Nepal often on work, up to half of each year.



**OUTSIDE IN**  
Ted Atkins

My company produces oxygen and other support equipment used on Everest and runs the Everest Skydive venture. I do this

# THE GATE

The first rule of business is never to make an existing customer look elsewhere

because it's what I choose to do, because I like being here, I like Nepal and I like her people.

As my work place, I view Nepal through the eyes of a businessman, and as an outsider looking in. In the west we have a bunch of people, often very well paid people who we call consultants. Consultants look at

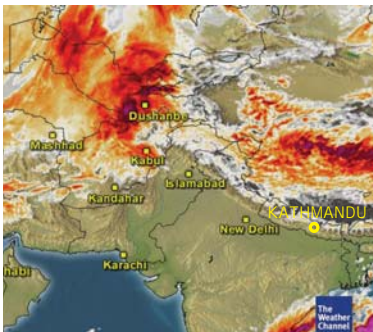
your business from the outside and tell you what you need to do to either improve your business or fix it. When we get too close to the job we often cannot see the problem. We keep doing what we always did and if 'you always do what you always did, you will always be who you always were'.

I see myself as a businessman

as well as a guest and a client of Nepal. As such, I may be in a good position to offer some advice or to make observations. In my business, I place a very high value on the feedback I get from my clients. We don't want to get negative feedback, but this is the most important information of all. What use is it to be told that your product is perfect? It's nice to hear, but apart from a warm feeling you cannot use the information. However, if a client comes and tells me that he would prefer it if I make my product bigger, cheaper, last longer or make it in the colour red then I listen hard. As a result, I am still here, still in business.

A complaint is feedback. I





With the cyclone in the southern Bay of Bengal veering away towards Burma, the chance of another wet spell has been dispelled. The circulation has also pulled dry and colder air from the west, clearing the haze from the plains. However, Kathmandu Valley's own smog and morning inversion will keep the capital's weather misty, delaying morning departures and arrivals at the airport. Maximum temperature will climb to the mid 20s because of the unfiltered sun. Mornings will be nippy, though still in double digits.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
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THE INSPIRATION OF A  
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNER

"Trail running is like being  
home for me, it's natural."

It is hard to believe that the first ultra-long distance race 23-year-old Mira Rai took part in was only earlier this year. But in just two months after that Rai had won three international trail races.

Rai participated in the 50km Himalayan Outdoor race in March in harsh weather wearing a cotton T-shirt, sports trousers and just a bottle of water. She was the only female Nepali runner, and was the first in her category to touch the ribbon. Recognising her talent, Trail Running Nepal provided her training and arranged her participation in international races.

"Our challenge is to help Mira make her own choices and find funding for races she chooses to take part in," says Richard Bull from Trail Running Nepal. "We make sure that it remains enjoyable for her."

This summer, Rai won with surprising ease the Mustang Trail Race. She has innate talent, but it was her early life that prepared her for such races. After dropping

out of school, she worked as a trader carrying upto 28 kg sacks of rice up and down mountains. "Many considered this to be a hard life, but now I see it was really good training," Rai laughs.

This September, Rai participated in and won the Sellaronda Trail Race (57km) and the Trail Degli Eroi (83km) in Italy within two weeks of each other.

"I grew up in a remote Himalayan village where walking on trails for collecting food was normal," she told *Nepali Times*. "So trail running is like being home for me, it's natural."

While in Europe, Rai also spent a few days at the North Face Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc, one of the world's most difficult endurance races, meeting international professional runners.

"I watched Rory Bosio and learned how to make some corrections in my own running," she says.

Last month, Rai was the star attraction in the MSIG HK 50 in Hong Kong (*pict, left*) where she finished fifth overall and won the women category in 5h 30m 32s. She will be back in Hong Kong for the MSIG Lantau 50 in December.

Originally from the remote village of Sano Dumba in Bhojpur district, Rai feels a sense of achievement running races all over the world. "I am happy that I got to go to these places where no one in my family has gone before," she told us.

Rai doesn't just race, she's also trained in karate, and won several climbing wall competitions only after six weeks of doing it for the first time. "She is a gifted athlete and has an ability to take to different sports easily," says Niraj Karki of Astrek Climbing Wall in Kathmandu.

Rai takes her role as a role model seriously, and credits her parents with encouraging her to dare to dream. "Many girls are told to keep quiet and be satisfied with their lower status in society," she says, "but they have to take their destiny into their own hands."

Rai now wants to help other girls like her: "Life is short. I want to do something good and earn an international reputation for Nepali women."

Stéphane Huët

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HONDA



## EVENTS



### Restoring Mustang,

An exhibition of photographs by Luigi Fieni, taken during his stay in Mustang for restoration works.  
*Until 12 November, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, sthapa@mos.com.np, (01)4218048*

### Udhyami bhetghat,

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*

### Plast Nepal,

Nepal's first plastic exhibition, with participation from international and local exhibitors.  
*14 to 16 November, Bhrikuti Mandap Exhibition Hall, www.plastnepal2014.com*

### Photo Annapurna,

Join and learn from Ariel Estulin and Louis Au on 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*



## The last yak herder of Dhe,

Screening of the documentary *The Last yak herder of Dhe*.  
*7 November, 5.30pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, sthapa@mos.com.np, (01)4218048*

### Electric ride,

Join hundreds of EV-riders as they rally from Kathmandu to Sangha for Spinal Injury cause. After a tour of the Spinal Centre, participants will head to the Hilltake resort, followed by performance from Kutumba.  
*15 November, 8am to 3pm, Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre, spinalinju@wlink.com, (01)1660847*



### The visionary,

Talk by CNN Hero Dr Sanduk Ruit on his medical journey and more.  
*7 November, 4pm, Nepal-Bharat Library, Nepal Airlines Building, New Road, Entry free*

## DINING



### Lhakpa's Chulo,

Nepali dal-bhat, Newari khaja, Swiss Rösti, Italian risotto or Thai green curry – take a pick.  
*Jhamsikhel, (01)5542986*

### Backyard,

Modest and simple food at incredibly reasonable prices at this no non-sense restaurant.  
*Jhamsikhel, (01)15548968*

### Vesper Café,

Fine Italian, continental cuisine and wine in a relaxed environment.  
*Jhamsikhel, (01)5548179*

### Saigon Pho,

Spacious interior with authentic Vietnamese dishes.  
*Lajimpat, (01)4443330*

### Tass and Tawa,

Savour a wide variety of Nepali meat dishes and reserve your palate for the heavenly Chusta.  
*Jhamsikhel, (01)5548499*

### Degaa Resto Lounge,

For mouth watering Newari and Indian cuisine.  
*Kumaripati, (01)5008679*

### Fuji Bakery,

Tucked in Chakupat this bakery offers homemade goodies like apple pie, pain du chocolat and banana cake.  
*Chakupat, (01)5543678*



### La Casita de Boudhanath,

Enjoy a host of Mediterranean cuisine with a breathtaking view of the Boudhanath Stupa.  
*Boudha, 981-3614384*



## Noyoz,

This tiny little joint serves food that tastes like your mother's cooking.  
*Bhatbhateni, (01)4439856*

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## MUSIC



## Himalayan Blues,

Kniki and Mike Beale Project (Australia) opens the Himalayan Blues Festival in Nepal  
15 November, Manny's Eatery and Tapas Bar, Jawlakhel

## Tribute to rock,

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

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

## Deathfest,

Accomplished — local and international — Extreme Metal bands join together at a place to celebrate the glorious genre.

9 and 10 January, venue to be announced



## Music Fest,

A culture and music festival with performances by Nepali and international bands like The Edge Band, X-Mantra, Steve Iko (Denmark), and Thermal And A Quarter (India).  
13 December, 12pm onwards, Bhrikuti Mandap, www.nepalmusicfestival.org

## GETAWAYS

**Shangri-la Village Resort,**  
experience of a paradise on earth at the winner of World ITravel Awards 2014.  
*Gharipatan, Pokhara, (61)462222, (01)4412999*

**Temple Tree Resort and Spa,**  
Peaceful atmosphere, a tranquil swimming pool, massage parlour, and sauna, it'll be hard to leave once you go in. *Gaurighat, Lakeside, (061)465219*

## 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*



## 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*

## 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*

## PLAY TIME



## Manche banne rahar

A play based on the satirical writings of R.C. Rijal depicting the lives of societies in rural Nepal.

Until 9 November, 5pm, Theatre Village, Tej Bhawan, Uttardhoka, Lajimpat, (01)4001089

## Jaar

Watch actors bring to life the story of love, relation, society and dilemma of a village in eastern Nepal, in the play directed by Sunil Pokharel. *Rs 200/100(students), until 16 November (except Mondays), 5pm, Mandala Theatre, Anamnagar, www.mandalatheatre.com, (01)424967, 9841605535*



## Tapu

The students of SOS Children's Village take you on an introspective journey from the known to the unknown and back. *Rs 200/300/500, until 10 November, 12pm and 5 pm, Shilpee Theatre, Battispatali, 9802087021*

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Sumptuous images of Mustang's fragile culture and ecology

# MUSTANG MURAL



**STÉPHANE HUËT**

Most people who have seen Luigi Fieni, the Italian restoration artist, perched on a platform painstakingly helping restore murals in the Tupchen Gomba in Lo Manthang, will be pleasantly surprised to hear that Fieni is also an accomplished photographer. An exhibition of his pictures taken in Mustang over 16 years is on display at the Siddhartha Art Gallery till 12 November.

Fieni first landed in Nepal in 1999 by chance. His professor at the Ars Labor Conservation

Institute in Rome, Rodolfo Lujan Lunsford, had been called by John Sanday Associates to work on the restoration of rare Tibetan frescos dating from the 15th century at monasteries in Mustang. Fieni accompanied his teacher to Nepal.

"I was 25 years old and I

wanted experience," recalls Fieni, "I couldn't miss the opportunity".

Fieni didn't know how long this project would last, but after five years Lunsford left the mission and Luigi became project chief. He has been restoring these sacred wall paintings for 16 years

now, and documenting his work through photographs.

"At first, I just took snapshots to show to my family where I was working," says Fieni, who mastered the art of photography on his own. His pictures have been published in *National Geographic*, *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*.

Now, a selection of these sumptuous images are on display. 'Restoring the Murals of Mustang: A Journey through Body, Soul and Heart' is a sacred visual journey in itself, celebrating Mustang's fragile culture and ecology.

"The exhibition is not only about the restoration," Fieni hastens to add. "It's a retrospective

of my 16 years in Mustang."

And what a retrospective: the ground floor of the gallery is dedicated to the 'soul', the life and spirituality of the Mustang. Fieni has caught intimate moments of monks praying or preparing mandalas. About a striking picture of the interior of the Tupchen Monastery, the photographer says modestly: "When you have beautiful places and people, it is easy to take nice pictures."

On the first floor, the 'body' gets all the attention it deserves. The high-angle shots give the sculpted, arid landscape of Mustang a life-like quality. The pilgrimage path of Damodar Kunda, the Kali Gandaki caves or a



STÉPHANE HUËT





**HOLY LAND:** Italian restorer Luigi Fieni's photographs of Mustang include stunning images of an ancient, wrinkled landscape, monks and monasteries, and painstaking restoration to preserve rare, sacred murals. The pictures are on display at Siddhartha Art Gallery till 12 November.

huge cumulus etched in an azure sky are hypnotic, almost mystic, images.

In the beginning, Fieni and Lunsford found it difficult to convince Mustang's monks to let them touch the ancient, holy murals. "But they gradually understood the importance of our work and joined us," Fieni remembers.

During the restoration process, some locals wanted to depart from planned restoration. As Buddhists need images to pray, they wanted to repaint missing limbs of their deities to make them whole. Such type of intervention was unthinkable for the Italian restorers.

"We first had this very Western notion of restoration, but we finally did what the local people wanted," he adds. The two groups learnt to understand each other. What was supposed to be purely a restoration activity then became a social and development project.

"I am confident that the Lobas can do the restoration by themselves," explains Fieni. Some 30 farmers from Mustang have trained to be artists, and five of them have even gone to China to train restorers there.

All these aspects of Fieni's involvement in restoring Mustang's precious murals are depicted in photographs on the second floor of Siddhartha Art Gallery which is dedicated to the 'heart' -- the people and their centuries of tradition, faith and devotion.

This final stage of the exhibition has 34 smaller pictures of the different restoration steps, and seem to show the reasons why Fieni has left a part of himself in Mustang. "We are family now," he says.

In the last 16 years, Fieni has worked with local artists to restore over 2,000 sq m of walls that had been damaged by water, wind and smoke. But now that local expertise has been built, Mustang will no longer have to depend on foreign restoration experts in future.

Says Fieni: "When we will have finished, I'll be proud of us, and at the same time, sad to leave this place." 🇮🇹

*'Restoring the Murals of Mustang: A Journey through Body, Soul and Heart'*  
Until 12 November  
Siddhartha Art Gallery  
Babar Mahal Revisited

+977 1 4218048  
[www.siddharthaartgallery.com](http://www.siddharthaartgallery.com)







In 2012 Gillian Flynn wrote a thriller named *Gone Girl* that pretty much became the book equivalent of a blockbuster. As things go in these days of extreme commercialisation, *Gone Girl* was picked up by 20th Century Fox and made into a film with backing from heavy weight producers like Reese Witherspoon, and directed



**MUST SEE**  
Sophia Pande

by none other than David Fincher who made, among many other Hollywood successes, *The Social Network* (2010) - that unlikely hit about the founding of Facebook. With all of these things working in its favour, *Gone Girl* really

should have been better than it actually is. The book, which starts out with incredible promise, has alternating narratives by Amy and Nick Dunne, a writer-couple who meet in New York and have been married for 5 years. Both lose their jobs when recession strikes, and they decide to move back to Nick's hometown in Missouri in order to save money and take care of Nick's ailing mother. As we hear of the Dunes' slowly disintegrating marriage from each side, it is hard to tell who is the good guy, or if indeed there even is a better half, in this once golden but now embittered couple. So when Amy goes missing one day from their McMansion in the heartland of American suburbia, Nick is immediately suspected, especially as various seeming transgressions on his part come to light. The film version has astutely

cast the blonde, patrician Rosamund Pike as Amy, a Harvard scholar, and the daughter of two children's book authors. Their best-selling series titled 'Amazing Amy' is actually modelled after their own flawless daughter. The always slightly wooden Ben Affleck plays the unfortunate Nick Dunne in a lack luster performance that picks up a little into the film but never enough to save his acting credentials. The man has always been a much better director than actor. Just as the book veers into melodrama and extreme violence, so too does the film, which was adapted for the screen by the author herself. And as with her mistakes on the page, when the book starts to trade suspense for horror and farce, so too does the film, which is a mere, tedious, blow by blow adaptation of the novel. *Gone Girl* would have benefitted from an entirely new writer, and one wishes the makers might have had the courage, as with most successful adaptations, to make the film their own, turning away from the problematic ending and perhaps making up something slightly more believable. This is a film that really strikes into the heart of the problems that eat at modern marriages, even just for this, it is essential viewing. 🇳🇵



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HAPPENINGS



**ALL EARS:** UCPN(M) leader Baburam Bhattarai at a meeting of the Political Dialogue Consensus Committee at Singha Darbar on Tuesday.



**REINING IN:** A meeting of the Parliamentary Accounts Committee held at Singha Durbar on Tuesday decided to summon CIAA Chief Lokman Singh Karki over issues of the CIAA violating its jurisdiction.



**THE CHAMPION:** Captain of Nepal Cricket team Paras Khadka signals fans on arrival in Kathmandu after the team's victory at the ICC World Cricket League Division 3 tournament in Kuala Lumpur.



**ACROSS BORDERS:** Indian filmmaker Shyam Benegal inaugurates the third edition of Culture Nagari in Lumbini on Tuesday.

साप्ताहिक खबरपत्रिका

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१ कार्तिकदेखि

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साप्ताहिक खबरपत्रिका

# हिमाल

हरेक आइतबार



# JAAR

Polygamy maybe a crime and infidelity only a sin, but there was a time when multi-marriage was accepted and philanderers could be put to death. Those caught in-flagrante would be disowned by family and stripped of their caste. And according to royal decree, if the guilty man refused to apologise at a village-council trial, he would be chased for seven days and nights by the cuckold and wasn't allowed to return blows in case he was caught.

This is the premise for Mandala Theatre's latest production *Jaar: bhaekai euta katha*, adapted from a short story by the formidable Indian-Nepali writer Indra Bahadur Rai. On the surface, it is about relations between Nepali men and women, but watching it staged in contemporary Nepal goes some way in explaining why we are still conservative.

Somewhere in East Nepal, a newly migrated Ghale family hosts a Magar family for dinner. Over raksi, domesticities are shared (the two families have a lot in common besides migration) and a strong



SUNIR PANDEY

friendship is formed. Inevitably, trouble arrives in the form of puppy love.

The Ghales' son Rudra Man, a lieutenant at a nearby army camp, and the Magars' elder daughter Thuli fall in love, although they have just met. Truly infatuated, they exchange gifts and compliments in a scene that is reminiscent of old Bollywood. It seems obvious they will get married.

But their hope of a union is shattered when their younger sisters, the inseparable

Debi and Maiti, are tied for life as 'meetjyus'. In effect this makes the Ghales and the Magars family - mourning is shared and marriage is forbidden - and Thuli and Rudra Man become reluctant siblings.

In Rai's original, these sequences are used sparingly to establish the story and to give a hint of the impending tragedy. But playwright Khagendra Lamichhane, not having the writer's advantage of repeat readings, has taken the liberty to indulge the

audience.

The play takes a turn for the tragic after Debi and Maiti become meetjyus. Thuli gets married to Harshajit, an army captain. Rudra Man reappears and threatens Thuli he will kill his senior and force Thuli to run away with him. They are caught as they bicker and so the jaar (in Nepali: a man with whom one's wife has an affair) trial begins.

Anyone familiar with Mandala's productions will recognise the rustic types that are on stage. They are loud and verbose but inarticulate, they make crude jokes and laugh forever, they are naïve but also foolhardy.

In the midst of these carbon-copy buffoons, with their slapstick and their unfaltering moral compasses, Ankit

## REVIEW

Khadka (Rudra Man) and Kenipa Singh (Thuli) stand out due to their layered and complex characters. Props also to the team for using an original soundtrack, which gives a sense of authenticity and newness which well-known tunes just cannot bring forth. Sunir Pandey

*Jaar: bhaekai euta katha (Jaar: a true story) Based on a story by Indra Bahadur Rai Directed by Sunil Pokhrel Written by Khagendra Lamichhane Starring: Ankit Khadka, Kenipa Singh, Sunil Magar, and students of the Theatre Lab run by Mandala Theatre Rs 200/100, Runs till 16 November, 5pm onwards, Mandala Theatre*

Clean is the word that first enters your mind on entering Burger Shack- a tiny one shutter diner styled burger place just round the Jawlakhel roundabout. Bright red chairs add a spot of colour and cheer in a largely white décor and go a long way in creating a place that is basic, fuss-free and completely lacking in pretensions. Just like the food and the service- matter of fact yet gratifying.

Burger Shack specialises in burgers. They have over nine types on offer and a variety of add-ons so the options are limitless and even the most fussy of eaters can create a burger that suits their demands. Then there are the mandatory extras that best complement this amalgamation of bread and meat patty- French fries, onion rings and cheese fries.

We had the double buff burger (Rs 200) and the bacon chicken one (Rs 250). The latter comes in a spicy version -the spicy patty works very well with the barbeque sauce and is duly satisfying. The true winner of the burger though is the bread that encases the meat. A burger is only as good as the bun that it is made with and sadly most



## Burger Shack

burger places in Kathmandu totally ignore this, serving extremely expensive burgers in bread that is stale, crumbly or just bad-tasting. At Burger Shack, the bread is soft and tasty and doesn't fall apart at each and every bite.

The cheese fries (Rs 180) is a plateful of greasy gooeey mess that is truly unhealthy but delicious nonetheless. The onion rings (Rs



PICS: RUBY TUESDAY

120) were nicely browned but had more batter than vegetable, because the onion had been sliced so thin. I like my onion rings to have a bite and a crunch to them that was lacking in the plate set in

front of us.

The chicken salad (Rs 190) is a surprise and a good one at that. It's a bowl of goodness- fresh green lettuce, tomatoes and strips of breaded fried chicken served

with either a Caesar or an Italian dressing.

We washed all of this down with their Refresher (Rs 100), which is an icy cold sweet mint lemonade and one of the best I've had this side of the bridge. The chocolate premium shake (Rs 185) (other flavours on offer are strawberry and vanilla) was thick and milky and had a generous swirl of whipped cream- only gripe with it being that it would have been that much more satisfying if they hadn't been so stingy with the chocolate. Same complaint with the cold coffee (Rs 170) - not enough coffee in it!

I really liked this husband-wife run operation. It has a down-home feel to it and is a nice place to go grab a quick meal, though they don't mind if you choose to sit and linger either. And while our meal can definitely not be categorised as being healthy, they do have salads and veggie delights on offer to suit those striving to achieve a healthier palate.

Ruby Tuesday

*How to get there: From the Jawlakhel roundabout, take the road that leads to Kumaripati and look to your right, a few shops before Standard Chartered Bank and opposite to The Bakery Café.*



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In the olden days when people were infected by scabies or *Luto* as is called in Nepali, they burnt firewood and hurled them as far as they could with the hope that doing so would magically cure



them of the disease. While such silly superstitious treatments are no longer the norm, it helps to be wary of scabies and other skin bugs infestation. Scabies patients suffer from intense chronic scratching leading to discomfort and added bacterial infection in the affected region of the body. Scabies infestation can also lead to underlying bone



infection (osteomyelitis), blood infection, and kidney infection. The elderly, sexually active young adults and unhygienic people are especially susceptible to scabies. Scabies is also known to spread through pet dogs. Other common skin bugs are bedbugs, fleas and lice which like scabies cause excessive

scratching. These bugs (except lice) are usually not visible on physical examination as they do not live on the skin. They thrive in impoverished areas where there is overcrowding and living conditions are poor. Bed bugs for example are generally found in places of shared accommodation such as hostels, hotels, hospital or

a dorm room. Patients with bedbug bites typically have 3 or more lesions in a row on the forearm or legs. Lice (*jumra*) appear on the scalp and are easily identifiable with a magnifying glass. Besides head lice there are body lice and pubic lice. Body lice are uncommon in the Western world with the exception of few cases in shelters, refugee camps and jails. These bugs are susceptible to cold so they stick to areas where the temperature is warmer like in the waistband. Lice can also transmit systemic diseases such as typhus. However, limited studies conducted on fever patients in Nepal show that body lice have not been a common transmitter of any systemic illness here. Like bed bugs, fleas are also not found on skin during examination. The diagnosis is made by discussion of the patient's history of exposure to animals. The ankle area is a common flea bite area. Out of all the skin infestations (scabies, bedbugs, fleas, and lice), rat fleas (*C. felis*) are particularly dangerous and can

cause fever and pneumonia. Rat fleas carry a special kind of typhus bug (murine typhus) which can get transmitted to humans through a bite. After typhoid fever, the second most important, documented common cause of non- viral fever in Kathmandu is murine typhus. The best drug to treat murine typhus is doxycycline. But this drug is not commonly prescribed to patients in Nepal, and doctors tend to suggest use of stronger antibiotics which is not able to contain fever. The topical treatment for scabies and lice is permethrin based medicine which is available in Nepal. Bedbugs and flea bites do not have specific treatments except to use some mild topical cream to decrease the inflammation. Since house pets may carry fleas and mites, it is important to keep them clean and treat their infections so that they do not transmit the diseases to humans. 🇳🇵

**GIZMO by YANTRICK**




GoPro cameras have been the go-to devices for adrenaline junkies the world over. Compact, convenient, rugged, and remarkably capable, GoPro has been able to make the action camera market its own with its stellar series of Hero cameras. Following in the footsteps of the extremely popular GoPro Hero3 cameras, the Hero4 iterations look to up their game with the Hero4

Silver and Hero4 Black models. This review is based on the reviewer's use of the Hero4 Silver variant. The GoPro Hero4 Silver retains the same dimensions as its Hero3 predecessor. Slightly larger than a Zippo lighter and weighing a feather-light 83 grams, the Hero4 Silver is convenient to lug around anywhere. GoPro has included for the very first time a


touch screen with its camera, making navigation on the 1.7 inch screen a treat; a welcome change from past models. The camera's button layout remains the same, but what was the Wi-Fi power button on the right side in the Hero3 models is now a button which doubles as the settings menu, and the 'HiLight Tag,' which makes finding that cool frame faster when viewing in GoPro's free mobile app or Desktop Studio software later. You can also change settings, review and transfer content using GoPro's mobile app on your iPhones, Android phones and Windows phones. All you have to do is connect the Hero4 Silver via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth directly to your smartphone and you are good to go. The Hero4 Silver truly comes in its element when recording fast paced action, and can shoot at up to a ridiculous resolution of 4K. The catch though is videos are recorded at a frame rate of 15 fps. So, for smoother videos stick to the full HD mode (1080p) at 60 fps and 720p videos at 120 fps. While it's clear the Hero 4 Silver is no DSLR, it's

12 MP cam is capable of taking pictures, detailed enough for the most of us. It also allows for customisation of ISO, colour profile, sharpness, exposure compensation, and shutter speed control via its Protune menu, so photography enthusiasts can play with it a little more. GoPro usually includes a ton of accessories with its cameras, and this doesn't change with the Hero4 Silver. For your money, you will get a waterproof housing (up to 131 feet), skeleton and touch back doors, two adhesive mounts (one flat and one curved), horizontal and vertical quick-release buckles, and a three-way pivot arm, besides the camera itself. However, no MicroSD card is included, so add the cost of a MicroSD card (supports up to 64GB) from the onset. 🇳🇵 **Yantrick's Verdict: Available for upwards of Rs 40,000, the Hero4 Silver brings touch screen convenience, 4K video capturing, Protune for photos and videos, among a raft of other upgrades from the GoPro Hero3 series.**

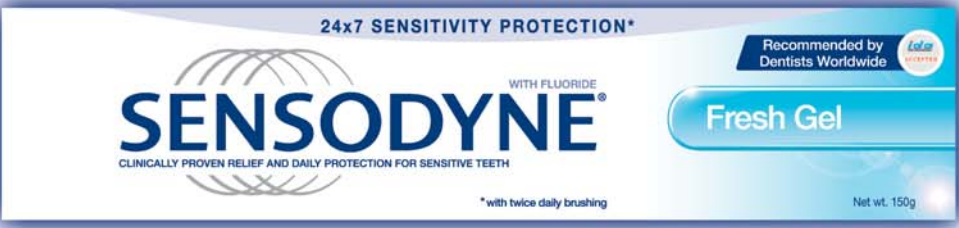


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# Rebuilding lives in Jure

Three months on, traumatised survivors struggle to come to terms with the deadly Bhote Kosi landslide



NASA EARTH OBSERVATORY

**DAVID SEDDON**  
in SINDHUPALCHOK

Three months after the massive landslide at Jure on the night of 2 August killed 145 people, blocked the Bhote Kosi and cut the Arniko Highway, relief operations have been reasonably effective but reconstruction and rehabilitation seem a long way off.

The blockage of the main road has been largely removed, but vehicles are obliged to take a perilous detour around the landslide debris. Those living upstream have to walk several hours to reach the food distribution centre, and a few houses there still remain submerged.

The most affected were Mangka and Ramche VDCs, with Jure and parts of Tekanpur. Only 33 bodies were recovered, some could not be identified. Those who lost family members were provided Rs 40,000 as compensation and funeral expenses, and families whose property was destroyed got Rs 5,000 to help with reconstruction.

A 14-year-old boy we met, whose entire family had been killed, had received nothing apart from a basic allocation of food and clothing. The relief was coordinated by the CDO and LDO with help from the border security police. Rice (15 kg a month for those over 10 years), dal, vegetable oil and clothing had been handed out from the distribution centre. But many survivors (usually women) had to walk a considerable distance to receive their allocation.

The buildings of a former manganese factory were put to good use, and tents for a dozen or so families were set up in the grounds. A further 16 families were provided with tents which they took and set up themselves some two to three hours walk up at Kukudena, where some of them had land. Others found refuge with family and friends nearby, or rented accommodations in town. A British NGO had promised 31 shelter boxes for those still without accommodation.

Local officials and

community-based groups of various kinds had been effectively mobilised, and were providing what support they could. A women's cooperative of 120 members, 50 of whom had been affected by the landslide, seemed a promising source of future support.

While relief operations appear to have been reasonably effective in the short run, reconstruction and rehabilitation seem a long way off. With their fields and livestock largely destroyed, ripped off the hillside or buried under tons of rubble, a return to farming will be difficult for most of those affected. Some have relatives working outside the area and a few have been able to take up temporary work, but for the most part it will be difficult to rebuild livelihoods and anything like normal life for many months and even longer.

Cash donations amounting to Rs 20.4 million have accumulated, but remain largely unspent because there was no clear plan in this regard. Funds from UNICEF and other organisations have been effectively deployed in the construction of temporary accommodation for Bhan Sanghu Secondary School, but most were not even contemplating rebuilding their homes. It will be years before the shattered hillside will be available for use for livestock production, let alone agriculture.

Already, even those living in tents since the disaster occurred have started to drift away, as they have found sources of income or relatives who will help them and alternative accommodation. The campsite with a dozen tents at the manganese factory where 42 persons used to live now only has seven people.

The scar on the landscape will gradually heal and the river will resume its full flow, the roadside areas will see new construction and reconstruction. But those from the areas directly affected, who lost family members and neighbours as well as their livelihoods will

find it much harder to recover.

Some -- like the man who had survived the landslide but spent three weeks in hospital recovering from his injuries and was now living alone in a tent -- may never really recover and will remain traumatised possibly for the rest of their lives. While many of those living nearby were sympathetic and generous towards those directly affected, no professional

**VISIBLE FROM SPACE:** The Bhote Kosi landslide in an image taken in 13 September 2013 (left) shows smaller precursor landslips, and one taken on 18 September 2014 (right) shows the size of the slide and the impounded lake on the Bhote Kosi.



David Seddon is the vice president of Crisis Recovery International.



nepalitimes.com

■ Landslide survivors struggle to survive aftermath, #720

support or counselling is available. The psychological effects of the disaster were not even mentioned in our conversations. 🇳🇵

## Hearty Congratulation!



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# BAD BLOOD

The war was used by many to settle personal scores, and the sense of revenge still in the Tarai

**KALPANA BHATTARAI**  
in NAWALPARASI

A minor land dispute in Bargdawa of Nawalparasi district is an example of how the conflict period was used by many to settle personal scores and property disputes. The two sides pleaded for help from the Maoists and the state. When it all ended, 13 people were dead, 39 families were permanently displaced, and eight years after the war ended none of them have received any relief.

It all began 40 years ago. Golahi Chamar came to live as a farm help at Nanda Kumar Chaudhari's household. He had bought half an acre of land from his landlord for Rs 300. Ten years later Garbhi Dhobi, another helper, bought an acre for Rs 14,000 from Chaudhari. Neither land sale was officially registered.

When Chaudhari died in 1987 all his land, including what was sold to the two servants, was divided among his sons Bhagwat, Satya Narayan, and Bharat Mani. All three asked those who had bought land from their father to pay more money before agreeing to register the transaction. They



refused.

"We were already rightful owners of the plots when we bought it back then," says Dhobi. "And we poor servants did not have any more money."

The VDC told them the brothers' demand was legitimate

and asked them to pay the present-day value. Bhanu Prasad Chaudhari, the coordinator of a local peace committee, said he had mediated between the parties and got them to agree to a compromise. But two sides sought support from the state and the

rebels, which were fighting a war.

In 2001, Chamar's son Ram Kishun Harijan wrote to Chinak Kurmi, the Maoist chief in Nawalparasi seeking justice. Even after three years of Maoist threats, Bhagwat refused to give up the land so the rebels kidnapped his

## Vigilante justice

The Nepal Army formed Retaliation Commiss in all of Nawalparasi's 16 VDCs to hunt down Maoists. Among its 400 vigilante members, 200 were escaped convicts from India. They were trained for 15 days by the border security wing of the army's Bajradal Battalion in Tribeni, and armed with low-grade weapons. Murari Kushwah, Munna Khan, and Radhe Mukhiya were most-wanted criminals across the border. Today Radhe Mukhiya is in jail in Bihar, convicted of a dozen crimes including theft, kidnapping, and murder, while Bhagwat Chaudhari (pic, left) is also in India but because he fears for his safety

youngest son in November 2004. In December Bhagwat gave in.

After losing their land to Chamar, Bhagwat's family attacked Dhobi's family at home and vandalised property. In revenge, the Maoists dragged Bhagwat's eldest son from the



**IN EXILE:** Garbhi Dhobi currently lives with his family (*pic, left*) in Uttar Pradesh on his in-laws' land. Bhagwat Chaudhari (*pic, below*), also lives in the same neighbourhood, but they do not speak to each other. Neither feels safe enough to return to Nepal.

house on 1 January 2005, took him to a school 300m away, and shot him dead.

Bhagwat survived because he wasn't at home. But his family had nowhere to turn to except the district's Retaliation Committee, one of many vigilante groups trained and armed by state security forces to curb Maoist activities.

After convincing them Ram Kishun and his father Golahi collaborated with the Maoists to kill his son, Bhagwat had Ram Kishun kidnapped and killed on 18 March, 2005. Ram Kishun's daughter-in-law Shanti recalls that his body wasn't found for days.

So far, the two sides had killed one each. But the revenge blood-letting didn't stop there. To avenge Ram Kishun's murder, the Maoists bombed Bargdawa on 15 April 2005, a day after new year saying they were targeting members of the Retaliation Committee.

Eleven people were killed that night. Kamal Dhobi was dragged out of bed and shot, as was his youngest brother Chandrabhan. Ram Suraj Yadav's 14-year-old son Hridayesh was shot and killed in front of his own mother.

"They also killed my nephews Kamlesh and Bharat," remembers Ram Suraj, whose brother Ram Preet fled to India.

Ram Preet is still living across the border in Uttar Pradesh. He breaks down when asked what happened a decade ago in his village in Nepal. He still owns an acre and half of land back in Bargdawa. He wants to return home, but is worried about his safety.

"We did nothing wrong, we were caught in the middle between the two armies. No one, not even the Nepal government have reached out to us," says Ram Preet.

On the landlord's side, Bashistha Prasad Chaudhari's brothers Dipendra, 19, and Dinesh, 16, were shot inside their homes. Bashistha was in the Gulf, so he survived. Teacher Bijay Chaudhari and son Abhimanyu were dragged out of bed and shot in their temples. His wife Premani Devi ran away with their son and daughter.

"We survived, but we are dying every day as we live. No one cares about our suffering," says Premani Devi.



PICS: KALPANA BHATTARAI

## Caste war

The Retaliation Committee declared all Dalits Maoists and attacked all Chamars, Dhobis and Harijans. From Ram Preet Chamar's (*pic, above*) house, they stole chickens, goats, grain and clothes and stabbed Ram Preet above his hip with a spear. He was rushed to hospital and had to mortgage his land to meet the Rs 40,000 hospital bill. But Ram Preet couldn't pay his creditors and was forced to give up his land. He has not received even a rupee in compensation.

Others killed that night were Rajendra Loniya of Jahada, who was staying over at Harish Chandra Loniya's place, and 14-year-old Dinesh Kohar. Says Dinesh's elder brother Munnar:

"They killed my brother and bombed our house, but no one gave us commiseration, let alone compensation."

Because this incident happened during the insurgency, the police is not accepting complaints. Altogether 13 people were killed over six months in

Bargdawa over a dispute over a small parcel of land, but it is still classified as an 'insurgency-related case' that cannot be investigated.

Bhagwat Chaudhari and his family of 14 also fled across


the border to Belaiha, Uttar Pradesh. In Nepal, Chaudhari was a teacher at a local high school and earned Rs 12,000 a month. His 3 acres in Bargdawa produced enough for his family. Now he has to make do with the INR 4,800 he earns at a private school across the border.

"After they kidnapped my son, I gave them what they wanted. They didn't have to kill my son," says Bhagwat. "I am ruined. If I felt safe, I would return home."

Garbhi Dhobi also lives in the same neighbourhood as Chaudhari in Belaiha, but they don't speak to each other. The Retaliation Committee later destroyed Dhobi's house saying he was a Maoist supporter. His son Chandra Ghosh was a policeman but had to resign and moved to India too.

"Everyone blamed me for the trouble, so I had to leave. I can't go back," says Dhobi.

As the conflict got worse, both the Maoists and the state treated the villagers as spies and traitors. Families who could live off the land were forced to flee to live as labourers and servants elsewhere.

Golahi Chamar died in 2010 without obtaining ownership of his land. The disputed two acres lie fallow, barren and unclaimed. 

(Centre for Investigative Journalism)

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

■ Read original in Nepali



## Women had it worse

When the Maoists attacked Munna Khan's house ten years ago, Mainuddin Miya of Paklihawa was also killed, just because he was walking along the same road. Fearing her in-laws would kick her out of the house, his wife Aisha Nesha married his brother. But after her new husband returned from Malaysia, he married another woman. Says Aisha: "I am fighting for my property in court now, but my husband and in-laws are forcing me to give it up."



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# By car to India

Kantipur, 3 November

क्रान्तिपुर

A new Indo-Nepal Motor Vehicle Agreement to be signed during the SAARC Summit will remove the hassles of permits and fees and allow Nepali cars to travel within India for a period of one month at a time. Nepal's Transport Secretary Tulsi Sitaula and Indian Road Transport Secretary Vijay Chibber finalised the draft of the agreement on Saturday in Kathmandu.

Under the agreement, cars from one country will be allowed to drive to another country for one week without fees, and for one month after paying a fee. The permission will be granted at the border itself. Nepali cars entering India currently have to get a permit from the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu and deposit a large sum of money. Indian vehicles coming to Nepal have to pay Rs400



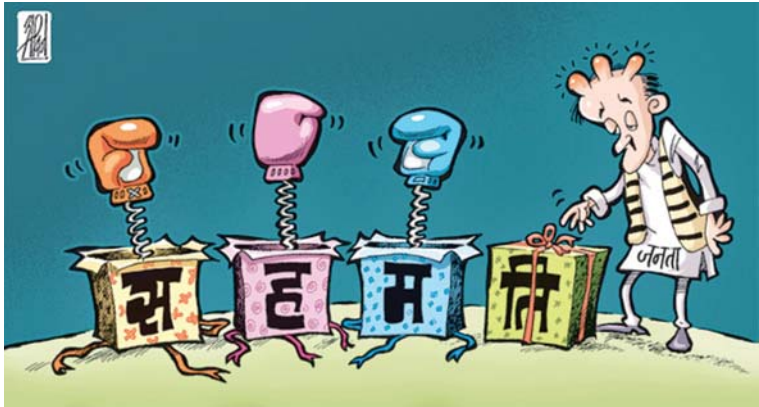
per day, but after this agreement they will not have to pay a fee for a week and can stay for up to a month at a time.

The agreement was expedited after Indian prime Minsiter Narendra Modi's visit to Nepal in August during which he had pushed for easing travel restrictions. Nepal had been

pushing for such an agreement for a long time, but the Indian side had not responded before this. Since the agreement will not be ready in time for the visit here of Indian Transport Minister next week, it will probably be signed by Modi himself during the SAARC summit.

"We were waiting for a long time for this to happen, finally now it is becoming a reality," Secretary Sitaula said. "Everything will be streamlined, the permit will be available at the border and there will be no fee for one week."

Along with private vehicles, the agreement will also allow the operation of bus service between Kathmandu and Varanasi and Delhi, and between Pokhara and Delhi. The new regular bus service between Kathmandu and Delhi will also be inaugurated during the Modi visit.



AG-REE-ME-NT  
Man: Citizens

क्रान्तिपुर

Abin Shrestha in Kantipur, 5 November

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“I am trying to make everybody come to a consensus. I don't want there to be another conflict.”

UCPN(M) leader Baburam Bhattarai on *ratopati.com*, 5 November

# Banking on agriculture



BIKRAM RAI

BBC Nepali Service, 3 November

BBC  
नेपाली

The Agriculture and Water Resources Committee of the Legislative-Parliament on Sunday announced a working procedure on low-interest agricultural loans for youngsters. Young Nepalis willing to invest in agri-business can now apply for a maximum Rs 10 million loan at a subsidised interest rate of six per cent.

Those between 21-45 years are eligible to get

agricultural soft loans at the subsidised rate. The government will pay four per cent of the 10 per cent interest rate to the banks on such loans.

This is a government initiative to attract young people towards agriculture, to address growing rate of youth unemployment and migration of young Nepalis to foreign countries.

The initiative issued by the Ministry of Finance through Nepal Rastra Bank, identifies vegetable and fruit production and animal husbandry among others as eligible areas for subsidised farm loans.

According to committee chairman Gagan Thapa, although many issues were discussed on Sunday, the concerned ministry and banks had raised concern over not being consulted during the preparation of the new government initiative.

"Unless we are fully satisfied with the proposed programs, they will not be implemented. Decisions will be made following discussions on Friday," he said.

The committee is all set to investigate the initiative during the implementation phase.

"We will be submitting a report to the committee within three months and if any irregularities are found while issuing loans or people can't get loans easily, we will make necessary amendments," Thapa clarified.



# More power

Laxman Biyogi, *Nagarik*, 6 November

नागरिक

At a time when the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has been trying to get the government to increase security for the construction of transmission lines, the Nepal Army has offered to ensure that local opposition doesn't delay projects.

Acting COAS Pawan Jung Pande proposed this at a meeting with the Agriculture and Water Resources Ministry, saying the Army had enough technical know-how to help solve local conflicts.

Pande added the Army couldn't intervene where the police and the APF were already present, but could help settle local disputes.

NEA Executive Director Mukesh Raj Kafle said it would be a catastrophe if transmission lines weren't built in the next three years, saying the government had no alternative but to guarantee security to ensure timely construction of the projects.

"We see the Army's willingness to help manage security in problematic areas as a positive sign. But we want this to be a temporary arrangement," said Kafle.

Inspector General of Police Upendra Kanta Aryal, who was also present at the meeting, said the problems were becoming unmanageable in some places.

"There is danger that the whole project could collapse because of local obstruction in some places," said Aryal. "In addition to misunderstanding over land acquisition and compensation, project sites are now being targeted."

Local gangsters issued threats to construction crews and threatened local administration to stop pylons being put up.

The 200kV Khimti-Dhalkebar transmission line was started 10 years ago but has been obstructed by locals and politicians, leading the World Bank to have second thoughts about the project. Similarly, the 132kV Thankot-Chapagaun-Bhaktapur transmission line has been stalled for 14 years due to locals' obstruction in Kathmandu Valley, and the Hetauda-Kulekhani-Matairtha line has not seen any progress in the last four years.

Rajeev Sharma of the NEA's Grid Development Department says the process of adding double circuits on these lines is also being obstructed. If the lines aren't completed in the next two years, Kathmandu will continue to face loadshedding.

But it isn't only locals who are bickering with the NEA. In Sindhupalchok, politicians have been fighting over the Singati-Lamosanghu 132kV transmission line that will bring electricity from Tamakosi to Kathmandu. Elsewhere, the Hetauda-Bharatpur, Bharatpur-Bardaghat, Chilime-Samudratar, Trishuli-Kathmandu 220kV lines are also being objected by locals as well as the forest and environment ministries. Work has also hit a standstill on the Marsyangdi, Kali Gandaki and Solukhumbu corridors.

[nepalitimes.com](#)

■ High tension in Sindhuli, #703

# Parliamentary hoax

pahilopost.com, 3 November

पहिलो पोस्ट

Maoist parliamentarians in Nepal have drawn the government's attention to the prospect of the world being enveloped in darkness for six days, and asked what the authorities are doing about it.

Obviously, UCPN(M) CA member Janak Raj Joshi and Agni Sapkota didn't know that the postings on social networking sites are a hoax, and raised the matter in parliament-legislature for the second day. Speaking during the Zero Hour of parliament on Monday, Joshi said: "The government needs to inform citizens about the six-day solar disturbance and what effect it will have."

Joshi used to be the vice-chairman of the Poverty Alleviation Fund and a secretary



at the National Planning Commission. He was among 26 nominated under the Maoist quota to the Constituent Assembly tasked with writing the country's new constitution. Sapkota is the spokesman of the Maoist party.

On Sunday Sapkota had also

raised a question in parliament: "What are the government's preparations for the six days of darkness?"

The hoax had been repeated by many Nepali online portals and posted on Facebook and other social networking sites in Nepal.



Editorials in three main Nepali language newspapers this week after nearly 300 people died on Nepal's highways in one month.

Annapurna Post, 3 November

अन्नपूर्ण पोस्ट

Highway accidents and heavy loss of life have become common occurrences in the country. And yet, the transport companies, drivers, and the government continue to evade responsibility for these unnatural and untimely deaths. They remain unconcerned and unaccountable. The government had mandated overnight buses to have at least two drivers. But has anyone bothered to check whether the rule is being implemented or not? The most important thing would be to make bus drivers realise that their primary duty is the safety of passengers. The Department of Transportation Management along with traffic police have not been able to educate drivers on this important factor of road safety. Transport entrepreneurs also need to abandon their mentality that when a passenger dies, they can easily be paid off with compensation, this has encouraged drivers to be more reckless. Drivers also feel that if it is their negligence that leads to fatalities, their owners and syndicates will always bail them out.



RSS

# Carnage on the highways

Nagarik, 3 November

नागरिक

The first order of business to bring down the number of road accidents would be to change the existing laws and the government's attitude towards highway mishaps. Unless the government puts passenger safety first, such tragic loss of life will continue to occur. Present laws and government efforts are centred mostly on transport entrepreneurs and drivers. As soon as we start prioritising passenger safety and

road quality, the accident rate would come down. Besides monitoring fares, the government has shown little interest in enforcing transportation safety. If a vehicle owner or driver responsible for a road mishaps were booked and severely punished, they would not take the lives of passengers so lightly. Syndicates which monopolise routes are another problem, preventing willing entrepreneurs from introducing new services. The tourist bus service from Kathmandu to Pokhara has a

minimal accident record. This proves that better management can minimise accidents. Freeing our highways from the stranglehold of syndicates would immediately reduce the number of accidents. Unions, syndicates and bus committees always come to the rescue of negligent drivers, forcing families of victims to withdraw cases. And if officials stopped taking bribes, drivers would respect them more. Controlling highway accidents should not be delayed anymore. It has already cost enough lives.

Kantipur, 4 November

कान्तिपुर

Recent highway accidents have shown that the main reason for the growing fatality rate on the roads is due to reckless drivers. Not all drivers are negligent, of course, but the last few accidents have been due to the irresponsibility of drivers and bus owners. In Doti, Nuwakot and Makwanpur, drivers and owners have been driven by greed to overload buses or to drive under the influence, costing many innocent lives. The collision in Makwanpur that killed 10 passengers cannot just be ascribed to negligence on the part of the driver and bus owner, but a crime. Both should be prosecuted. Various studies have shown that up to 89 per cent of accidents are due to driver negligence, and that is where reforms should start. Most bus drivers involved in accidents are below 30 and license distribution should be strictly regulated. A government's job is to protect the safety of citizens, ministers should take this job seriously.



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३६ महिनाको किस्ता, डाउनपेमेण्ट बाहेक सेवा शुल्क, फाराम शुल्क, रजिस्ट्रेशन शुल्क, कविप्रोक्सिम इन्स्योरेन्स तथा शेयर सदस्यता डिपोजिट तिर्नुपर्नेछ ।

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Federal express

No political discussion in Nepal these days is complete unless you have uttered the f-word. When the talk around the family dining table turns to constitution-writing, as it often does, minors have to be sent to bed early because their parents start punctuating their sentences with “WTF” (What the Federification). In fact, not a second goes by without someone somewhere between Mechi and Mahakali arguing about the prose or corns of federalissimo.

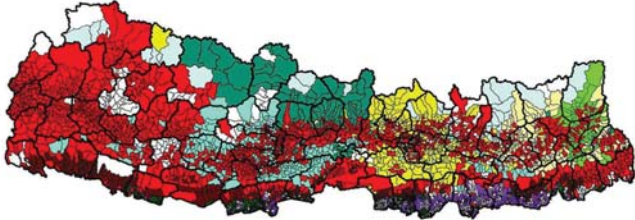
So, to summarise: the NC and UML have finally agreed among themselves on a seven-state federal model demarcated along geography lines, and the Maoist-led 22-party alliance has maintained a 10-state model carved out along history lines. So, essentially, it's all about geography, history and arithmetic. The mule's mole has it on good authority that the High Level Political Mechanics are not really stalled over the number and types of federal units, they are haggling about who should be

prime minister the day after the constitution is insallah promulgated in January.

As far as the Ass is concerned, federalism is a no brainer. It doesn't have to be complicated at all, and to assist in hastening a decision by the HLPM and CPDCC, we have visualised below the various options available for federalism in easily-understood graphics so as to make it quicker for His Highnesses to decide which one would be most suitable for us:



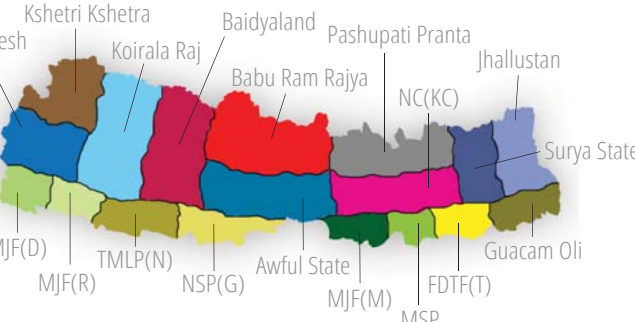
**The 123-State Model**  
All ethnic groups and castes in Nepal will have their own federal enclave, wherever they want it. And since all ethnicities will be equal in the New Nepal, the Kusunda Province will be as big as the Bahun Province. If inclusive is what you want, you can't get more inclusive than this.



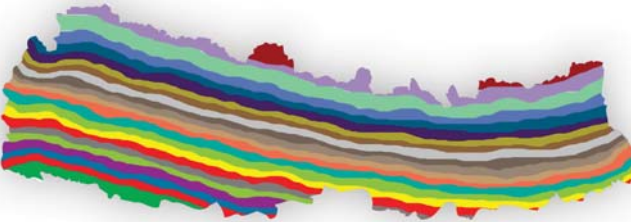
**The 3,948-State Model**  
Since all politics is local, this model would ensure as many federal provinces as there are VDCs in the country. To make them easy to administer, the provinces will not have names but area codes.



**The 3-State Model**  
If the NC, UML and Maoists cannot come up with a mutually acceptable formula for federalism in the next few days, they will simply carve up Nepal into three slices – one for each on them and their allies.



**The 18-State Model**  
Inevitably, factions within parties will also want their own federal provinces. Hence the 18-state model to accommodate all present and future factions within all the main political parties. Anyone left out? We have space for a couple more.



**The 22-State Model**  
To persuade the 22-party alliance from launching a street agitation, each can have east-west federal province since they are against north-south provinces. Comrade Awesome will have a state all by himself called Prachanda Pranta 1,000km long and 5km wide.



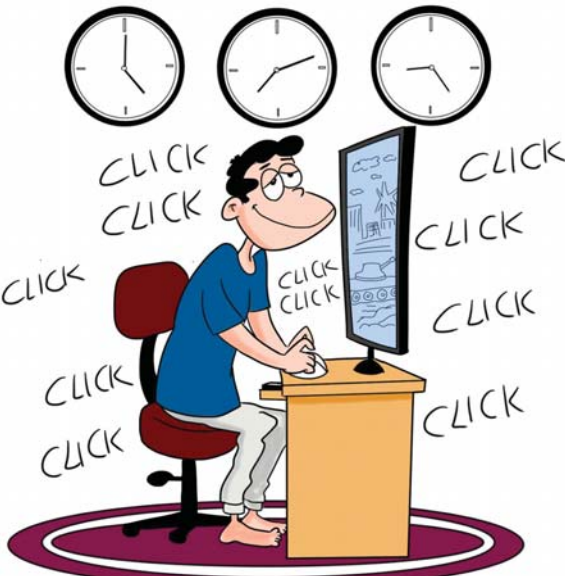
**The 0-State Model**  
This would be the most egalitarian formula because it would have no federal provinces at all, so nothing to fight about.



The Ass

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