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# LET’S GET BACK TO WORK

When the government went into hibernation for the SAARC Summit last week, Dialogue Committee Chair Baburam Bhattarai tweeted that since nothing was going to happen for a week, he was off to the movies. Now that the South Asian jamboree is over, it’s time to get back to work.

It doesn’t take a dead-heart transplant surgeon to figure out that this is a deeply unequal country. Aside from having the most dismal Gini coefficient in Asia, there is a long history of keeping out a large section of the population from political decision-making. The most glaring example of this is the traditional domination of hill ‘high’ caste groups in government, bureaucracy and politics. Just look at the surnames on the doors of Singha Darbar, Shital Niwas, Naryanhiti, NAC, NOC, NEA or NTA.

The new constitution is an opportunity for us to set right this historical wrong. It is probably the only chance we will get to spread out income, opportunities and power more equally among Nepalis. Compensating for centuries of exclusion calls for affirmative action in favour of the class, caste, ethnic group, gender which have been systematically sidelined.

The debate before us in the last few weeks before the 22 January deadline to finish writing the new constitution is to bring about structural devolution that would ensure societal equilibrium while at the same time being viable and just. A purely territorial 6-state federalist model as envisaged by the ruling coalition will not redress the deep sense of injustice felt by Madhesi, Janajatis, or Dalits. But the single-ethnicity 10-state federal model espoused by the Maoists would exacerbate inter-ethnic friction instead of safeguarding stability, building cohesion and fostering economic development.

Since this element of the new constitution has such far-

Stop haggling over power-sharing, and let the people’s representatives find a way out of the constitution deadlock



reaching consequences for Nepal’s future, it needs to be addressed with cool heads and rational debate. The tragedy of the past six years is that a matter of such long-term import for the nation is being handled by vengeful and venal politicians with extremely short time horizons.

In fact, there is now firm indication that the debate in the Dialogue Committee is deadlocked not because of federalism, but because of disagreement over who should be

president, prime minister and CA Chair the day after the new constitution is promulgated. If all this is political foreplay, then it is even more discouraging.

However, in case the real stumbling block is power-sharing and not federalism, then that gives us an opening on the constitution. The problem with the negotiations so far is that although the people elected members of the CA and their preferred political parties, the four top leaders of the four main parties are behaving as if they can decide everything among themselves. And now that they have proven that they can’t agree, it’s time CA members asserted their sovereignty, and put forward their own views on the constitutional deadlock. Our guess is that with the power-sharing equation out of the way, members of the CA will show more accountability and come up with an acceptable compromise.

Nepal has been a four-party dictatorship since 2006. The quadrilateral feud between the four netas means that federalism has become a zero sum game. Any compromise would be taken as a defeat by all sides. Handing decision-making to CA members would lift them out of rubber-stamp status, and restore power back to where it belongs: the people’s representatives.

After saying recently that a solution to the federalism deadlock could be found “within two hours”, CA Chair Subhas Nembang this week cast doubts about whether a final draft of the constitution would be possible in two months time. Deadlines are elastic in Nepal, and if we have waited eight years for a new constitution, a few more months would not matter. However, extending the deadline is not a good idea because it would prolong the uncertainty and allow cynical politicians to play divisive ethnic politics like Pushpa Kamal Dahal of the UCPN(M) is doing now.

Get back to work, stop haggling over power-sharing, and let the people’s representatives find a way out of the constitution deadlock.

## YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

**#SAARC**  
I heard that the Colombo Plan has been stopped and would urge leaders to restart it (“SAARC’s raison d’être”, Editorial, #733). Don’t think of this as only an education promoting exercise, but rather a long term diplomatic initiative. Young men and women who study in foreign countries are more likely to be open minded and willing to accept another’s point of view. It forms the basis of regional stability and peace, maybe not in 10, 20, but 30 years from today, we will see the result.

Namah

■ SAARC member nations have lost many golden opportunities to foster relations due to political animosities between countries, especially between India and Pakistan. As long as these two countries continue to remain at each other’s throats, SAARC will remain a useless organ.

Mahesh

■ SAARC is a dysfunctional organisation (“Pride and prejudice at SAARC”, Kanak Mani Dixit, #733). Other than photo-ops and some minor agreements, we cannot expect any major achievement from this meet. It would be more beneficial for Nepal to focus more on having bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements with the countries that matter most in the regional context: India, China, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka than SAARC.

Dev Batsya

■ I see that our foreign ministry and Nepali delegation are represented by the same dominant castes and groups. There are other groups in Nepal too.

Bal Tamang

■ India is the motor for change but must resolve issues with Pakistan and Kashmir.

David Seddon

■ Pakistan is the stumbling block in SAARC. It needs to realise that the summit is not the place to be engaging in bilateral disputes and territory bickering.

Shazia Immli

■ “While the Muslims in parts of Delhi are prevented from celebrating their festival by BJP leaders...” Where did you get this news (“Reimagining South Asia”, Anurag Acharya, #733)? It was Muslims who objected to Hindus celebrating Diwali in the same area. AAP leaders were found to be culprits in the entire issue. Are you reading news from mainstream Indian media? If so, then you will never be able to understand Modi and you will be doing disservice to Indo-Nepal relations.

Seetha Ramaraj

■ So, SAARC has been slow to take off. Is it because India dominates the region so thoroughly that smaller nations feel sidelined and thus unable to cooperate amongst themselves? This is a question that must be asked, for the region’s progress depends upon it and India will stand to gain as

much as any other nation, not least because it’ll erase the need for the region’s other nations to find an alternative association. This would be an unwise move, as India is the only country with the political and economic heft to push the region forward. Yet, it can’t do that without a finer appreciation of the problems of other nations of the region.

Anil Karki

■ I was in India about two years ago and trust me no one I talked to either feared or hated Modi. You really need to stop this kind of yellow journalism. (And yes, I did talk to Muslims and Roman Catholics and Sikhs as well!)

NA

■ Yet another melodrama (“Modi plays it safe”, Damakant Jayshi, #733). One thing hard to comprehend is whenever Delhi asks something of our leaders, they follow its order faithfully and wholeheartedly, so what is this whole drama of opposing Modi’s visit in Janakpur?

PurveliKT

■ Smart of Modi not to get into Nepal’s messy internal politics. Maybe, he needs to visit these places incognito!

N

■ This is contempt of democratically #modified govt and is subject to prosecution as per the law of neighbouring lands (“Just being SAARCASTIC”, Ass, #733).

Dr Basivat

**CLEANING UP JANAKPUR**  
I made my first trip to Janakpur in January last year and was shocked at the filth, poor road conditions, sewage systems and air pollution there (“Cleaning up Janakpur”, David Seddon, #733). We have yet to learn that cleanliness is next to Godliness. I would not want to return to Janakpur unless it transforms itself into a city that Goddess Sita would be proud of today.

Shyamal Shrestha

**GOSPEL AND GUERRILLAS**  
Ex- Maoist guerrillas are getting free will to choose their own religion, this is complete lie (“Preaching the gospel to Guerillas”, Luke Pender, #733)! The truth is there are many missionary groups inside the Maoist party who systematically operate to convert ex-Maoist guerrillas and their family and associate members.

Nepal

■ Christian missionaries have money and they sell their religion to poor Nepalis who will do anything for a little financial support.

Hurray

**GMO DEBATE**  
As a researcher on GMOs since the 1990s, I found the article (“Transgenic food”, Roshan Karki, #732) both misleading and inaccurate. For example, there is no scientific consensus on the safety of GMOs, as 300 scientists have stated. This is only one of many inaccuracies in the article.

Claire Robinson

## THIS WEEK



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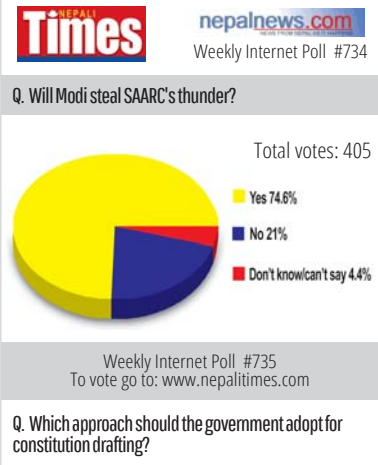
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SAARC Timeline by Ayesha Shakya (16 retweets, 21 favourites)

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# Changing life's trajectory

Sushil Tamrakar's memoir gives life lessons through poignantly told anecdotes

How do some Nepalis overcome adversity and poverty when most don't? Is it luck, or is it a combination of external support and one's own hard work that puts some with almost no chance of turning their lives on the road to achieve conventional success?



**CROSS CUTTING**  
Ashutosh Tiwari

Sushil Tamrakar's recently released memoir *Pitaji ko Soon ko Takma* (My Father's Gold Medal) gives us a poignantly anecdotal answer. Born in a large traditional Newar family in Kathmandu near Hanuman Dhoka, Sushil grew up believing that he was not cut out for formal education. His family did not value school, and everyone else in his tole made their living by crafting metal trinkets.

Quarrels with siblings drove Sushil's father to take his family to live separately in a dilapidated house nearby. Cut out from inheritance, the family slid further into poverty. Sushil had to work hard from a young age to help at home. Making handicrafts before and after school, Sushil contributed a paltry sum to the family income. Initially, he and his brothers coloured papers and sold them. Later, he began to assist his mother, sewing and stitching Dhaka shawls for sale. Life was hard, and the young Sushil rarely had enough to eat, let alone pocket money for snacks. In the 1980s, Kathmandu's urban poor, as now, struggled hard for food, livelihood and dignity.

The family's vulnerability became all the more stark when Sushil's father became ill. To pay for his treatment, Sushil and his brother sold family jewellery, silverware, and kitchen utensils. When that was not enough, they decided to sell the family's one and only proud possession: a gold

medal that had been awarded to his father in recognition of his civic leadership.

Having to sell the medal at 450 rupees at New Road to keep his father alive became a turning point in Sushil's life. He vowed he would earn 10 medals to compensate for the loss. He started taking his studies seriously, transferring to Viswo Niketan School, where he found encouragement from the teachers.

This support, Sushil writes, helped build up his confidence to excel in both studies and extracurricular activities, eventually earning him several medals, including one for being one of the top ten students in the SLC nationally. Building on that achievement, Sushil went on to study engineering in India, and later earned a PhD from Drexel University in the US, where he now lives.

Written in an enviably flowing, if literary, Nepali, the gritty memoir not only shows what it was like to be poor in Kathmandu, but also makes it clear that nothing in Sushil's

background predicted that he would achieve the kind of success that he has found.

After all, once in the trap of adversity and poverty, this can suck the vigour out of most people -- throwing them deeper into desperation. To be sure, studying hard at a school with supportive teachers helped Sushil push himself to complete his education. But throughout his formative years, the danger that he would drop out of school to forever sell trinkets for food was always present. Yet he somehow managed take a different path to go beyond the circumstances of his birth.

This could be well be one man's random luck. But a better explanation could be: In the face of poverty, Sushil showed remarkable character. He persevered through difficult times, showed abilities to seek help from authority figures, put in focused efforts, all of which, multiplied over time, and changed the trajectory of his life. Teasing out these lessons alone is well worth reading this book. 🇳🇵



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# Still at large

The Supreme Court has started pursuing convicted criminals who have evaded punishment



**BINITA DAHAL**

It has been more than one month since the Supreme Court under the new Chief Justice started a campaign to execute verdicts in which the convicted were at large, and evading punishment in criminal cases.

The Judgement Execution Directorate, which was formed under Supreme Court but had remained moribund, is now taking the initiative to carry out verdicts. Nearly 120,000 people are evading jail terms including nearly 1,300 foreigners. In total, the courts have not meted out more than 100,000 years of jail terms, and have failed to recover Rs 9 billion in fines from convicted criminals.

Now, the Supreme Court in coordination with Nepal Police and government attorneys have formed special cells in 16 districts

since 19 October, including in the capital which has the highest number of convicted criminals at large. In the first month since the cells started working 125 individuals have been detained to serve jail terms, and Rs 509 million recovered in unpaid fines.

The special cells are empowered to patrol the district to find criminals and they are sent to jail, or detained until they pay the fine. They plan to expand the campaign in all remaining districts to execute the verdict as per the Supreme Court's strategic plan that started from this fiscal year. The Supreme Court's main aim is to address impunity. By not pursuing verdicts passed down by courts, the public believes that criminals only get punished on paper, but not in practice, and this has impeded the rule of law.

However, the Supreme Court has hit a snag in trying to execute court verdicts that were passed down for crimes committed

during the conflict, but not related to the Maoist revolution. Political protection of criminals, and the precedent set by the government in scrapping investigations into war-era crimes has impeded the pursuit of justice.

The best known case is of former CA member Bal Krishna Dhungel who was convicted of the murder of Ujjan Shrestha in Okhaldhunga in 2004, sentenced to life imprisonment and even spent some time in jail. But he was later released, and accompanied Baburam Bhattarai in public events when he was prime minister. Another accused, Pushkar Gautam, was arrested recently and is now in jail.

In another case, Jayaraj Limbu (Samyak), assistant of Bijaya Kumar Gachhadar when he was Home Minister, was slapped a five year jail term in 2009 for attempting to murder Shekhar Rai who had to spent three years in hospital. But despite the verdict, and an attempt by the Rai family to get justice, Limbu is still at large.

The Supreme Court's senior Justice Kalyan Shrestha has formed a monitoring committee which includes Chief Secretary, secretaries at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice and the IGP of Nepal Police.

The court is also preparing a detailed database of convicts who are evading arrest and has passed them on to the police and the Home Ministry. Individuals on the data base will not be issued citizenship, passport, driving license and other documents. They will also be deprived from property transactions and basic facilities like telephone, electricity and drinking water. 🇳🇵

## prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS



### Pitch perfect

Ncell organised a training session on 'idea pitching and presentation' on 21 November for participants of the Ncell App Camp. 150 teams are in competition to win the App Camp. Selected teams will pitch ideas and

present prototypes of their apps on 1 December. Based on the presentation, four winners will be selected and awarded Rs 250,000 each, and one winner will win an additional Rs 500,000. Ncell also organised a business modeling training session for the participants last week.

### Golf zone

Nepal Golf Zone is now open for business. The golf driving range also has indoor golf simulation and is located in Bhatbhateni. The facility will also provide golf classes for people of all age.



### Silky good

Berger Paints has launched 'Silk Illusions Offer' through which 1,000 house owners can sample 50 square feet Silk Illusions texture and patterns for free. Home owners need to dial 1660-01-23433 or 9801571001 or

SMS <Silk> to 3377 to register their names and avail of this offer.

### Hat trick

Qatar Airways was named the Best Middle East Airline Serving China at the 2014 Business Traveller China Awards held in Shanghai. This is the third time that the airlines received the award.



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# Asia uncovered

The values of investigative journalism needed more than ever to counter state control and commercialisation

MANILA – The Philippines had just come out of two decades of the Marcos dictatorship when the 1986 pro-democracy movement erupted on the streets. But the euphoria of democracy soon gave way to disillusionment, the hard-won, fragile freedoms were threatened frequently by military coups.



**ON THE ROAD**  
Guna Raj Luitel

Frustrated with the ownership and control of the mainstream press, a group of intrepid and idealistic women journalists got together and set up the Philippine Centre for Investigative Journalists (PCIJ). They got a good Samaritan to pay their rent, borrowed furniture and started work without even an office phone.

PCIJ has come a long way in the last 25 years. Its reporters have been detectives doing gutsy investigative stories to probe corruption, digging dirt on the ill-gotten assets of presidents and officials. One of its stories led to the resignation of President Joseph Estrada, a scandal that is called the ‘Philippines’ Watergate’. And if that was Watergate, then the Filipino Woodward and Bernstein rolled into one was PCIJ’s founding director, Sheila Coronel.

Now Dean of Academic Affairs at Columbia University School of Journalism, Coronel is a legend in the Philippines, someone who showed through painstaking muck-raking reportages that it is possible to “speak truth to power”, as she put it in a keynote speech here this week at the ‘Uncovering Asia’ Investigative Journalism Conference hosted by PCIJ.

The conference hoped to



**INVESTIGATING TRUTH:**  
PCIJ founding director Sheila Coronel gives her keynote speech at the ‘Uncovering Asia’ Investigative Journalism Conference hosted by PCIJ.

UNCOVERINGASIA.ORG

replicate some of its techniques and methods in other countries in Asia. More than 300 journalists from 33 countries attended, with large contingents from India and China.

“Back in 1989, the term investigative reporting was little known in Asia,” Coronel told me, “the media landscape was dominated by pliant newspapers, insipid TV news programs and journalists who saw themselves as mouthpieces of government.”

Coronel worked for *The Manila Chronicle* where she was given the Malacanang beat to cover the presidential palace, and became increasingly dissatisfied with the superficiality of news. It was one-dimensional reporting about what the president said. If the president didn’t say anything there was no news.

The first duty of journalism is to protect the citizen’s right to know. The trouble is, there are vested interest groups that want to hide from the public the

most vital pieces of information. Democracy is sustained by a free press that plays an adversarial role and has the ability to uncover information in the public interest that those in power want to hide.

At a time when government controls or over-commercialisation of media has reduced the credibility and power of journalists across Asia, investigative journalism is needed more than ever before. But for David E. Kaplan of the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) the co-sponsor of the Manila meeting, it seemed at first to be a daunting task to bring the disparate countries and systems of the vast continent in one conference.

“The fact that we could pull this off meant that we are on the right side of history,” Kaplan said, “this is proof that rulers cannot keep doing what they want because journalists are watching.”

The Uncovering Asia conference also recognised

the work already done by investigative journalists, including in Nepal, India, Pakistan, Korea, Thailand, Japan and Indonesia. Concentration of media ownership and the media’s commercialisation has made many publishers and editors averse to rocking the boat for fear of treading on the toes of government or big business, and so investigative journalism centres have to step in to help support in-depth stories.

Even in countries with vastly different systems of government like India and China, journalists today face similar challenges in doing investigative journalism. One because of government controls, and other because of over-commercialisation. The biggest disappointment has been in India, participants heard, where despite a long tradition of democracy and free press some newspapers and tv stations are crossing the line by selling news content. “The largest newspapers


in India are guilty of unethical practices, news is now for sale,” said Sashi Kumar of the Chennai-based Asian College of Journalism, adding that tv viewers in India are suffering “scam fatigue” as channels broadcast sensational and selective “dig here, not there” reports.

In Pakistan, investigative journalist Umar Cheema’s story on tax-evading parliamentarians prompted the government to get MPs to make their tax records public, the only country outside the Nordic states where this is done. In Nepal, investigative reporters have gone undercover to expose corruption in the Supreme Court and ambulance drivers soliciting kickbacks from hospitals.

However, there are some media companies like *Asahi Shimbun* in Japan which set up an in-house investigative team to do its own in-depth stories. “Investigative journalism actually helped revive our paper at a time when circulation and credibility were going down,” said Tomohisa Yamaguchi of the *Asahi Shimbun*’s Investigative Reporting Section which exposed government cover-up of the 2012 Fukushima nuclear disaster.

Moderating a session on the future of investigative journalism in the region, Kunda Dixit (who is the editor of this paper and chair of the Centre for Investigative Journalism Nepal) highlighted the role of social media to bypass controls and provide an alternative outlet to a squeamish mainstream press. Citizen journalists, unbound by advertising pressure, are covering inconvenient truths through digital media outlets.

But technology is just a tool, in the end reporters need the passion and commitment to be agents of reform. Without this motivation for public service, journalists remain just cogs in the wheel of the commercial media industry.

The job of journalists is still to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted. Sheila Coronel sums it up: “Reporters need to be muckrakers, woodpeckers, watchdogs, and pebbles in the shoes of the powerful.”  @gunaraj



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# MANOJ BECOMES MODI

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## Nepali impersonator Manoj Gajurel's latest avatar is a hit both at home and overseas

Nepali stand-up comedian Manoj Gajurel has impersonated a lot of people in his long and hilarious career. But none have brought the house down as much as his latest imitation of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and it seems Manoj is earning fans even across the border in India.

It has become a part of Nepal's urban legend that in 2006, Manoj was such a perfect lookalike and soundalike of King Gyanendra that cops on duty actually saluted him. His imitation of Prachanda's mannerisms and speeches have made the audience fall of their chairs laughing.

Earlier this month, Manoj was getting himself into character backstage at a theatre in London's South Harrow neighbourhood. A one-man team, Manoj does his own hair, makeup and styling.

He is quick. In less than 25 minutes, the transformation was complete -- Manoj had become Modi and was ready to go (see pics).

The audience was made up of Nepalis and Indians. As with his other shows in the UK last month, his Modi act got the most applause. "In August, I went to the Nepali parliament to pay my respect to the 601 young bulls there and told them to hand over Nepal to me and I would transform it into Gujarat within five years and return it," joked Gajurel in Hindi.

"The audience has definitely been more responsive this time," Gajurel said of his six-week UK tour. Manoj first travelled to England in 2011 and says he's been to all continents except Africa to perform at shows organised by the

Nepali diaspora.

Among the hundreds in attendance at his Plymouth show was British-Indian MP Chaz Singh of the Labour Party who congratulated him for his performance. Gajurel was also recently interviewed by BBC.

Manoj says he was inspired to take on the Modi avatar after the Indian PM's Nepal visit in August. He had been in search of a new character to play and Modi seemed perfect as "he is a global figure."

Manoj admits impersonating Modi has been his most difficult act so far. He studied Modi's every move, watching tv clips over and over again to take notes on his speech, attire, mannerisms. The comedian knew he was on to something when the audience laughed wildly at his

Gajatra performance in Kathmandu.

Manoj once harboured a dream of becoming a politician himself, but found it easier to be a clown that imitates them. "I don't think I'd have been such a successful politician," he admits, "acting like one is hard enough."

His positive attitude towards life and optimistic nature is reflected in his routine. He does not just poke fun at politicians, but also dispenses serious advice. "After all, it is the leaders who can make a country, it only takes two good politicians to take the country in the right direction," he adds. 🇳🇵

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

■ Watch Manoj Gajurel perform his Modi act 

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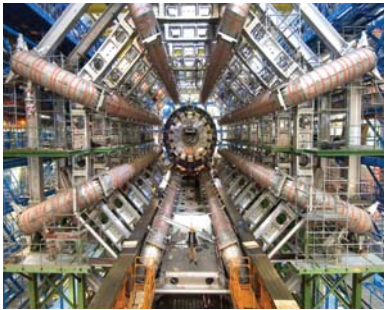
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Verma,

A One World Theatre production of the folk musical tragedy by the great Spanish poet and playwright Federico García Lorca.  
Rs 200 (adults)/ Rs 100 (students), 29 November to 21 December (except Mondays), 5pm onwards; 13 & 20 December, 1pm onwards, The Village Theatre, Lajimpat, (01)4001089, oneworldtheatre.np@gmail.com

Winter Bazaar,

A showcase of exquisite, cultural extravaganza of authentic arts and handicrafts, knit wears, music and culinary delights in a surreal ambience.  
29 November, 11am to 6pm, Babar Mahal Revisited, barshathapa91@gmail.com

Lahar Srijana,

Exhibition and sale of ethnic Nepali arts and crafts.  
29 and 30 November, 10am to 7pm, City Museum Kathmandu, Darbar Marg

Uncovering opportunities,

Discuss with young entrepreneurs and policy makers about the scope, challenges and steps for promoting entrepreneurship in Nepal.  
1 December, 3pm onwards, FNCCI, Teku

Mood of Nepal,

An exhibition of artist Seema Acharya's paintings that capture the essence of Nepali people and their various moods.  
29 November (opening), 30 November to 4 December, 10am to 7pm, Imago Dei Café and Gallery, Nagpokhari

Slam poetry,

A two-day workshop with slam poet Nasala Chitrakar on spoken word poetry.  
Rs 800, 29 & 30 November, 11am to 2pm, Sattya Media Arts, Jawlakhel, 9813485716

Visual art,

An exhibition of visual artists along with two performance arts by Ishan Pariyar (Ethos of Surrounding, 29 November, 3.30pm) and Sundar Lama (Pasal- The Shop, 29 November, 4pm).  
29 November to 3 December, Gallery Mcube, Chakupat, gallerymcube@gmail.com



Karavan Kathmandu,

Head on to this pop-up bazaar and shop for fine clothing, jewelry, home decors, arts and more for the holidays.  
30 November, 1 to 5pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel, www.facebook.com/karavankathmandu

Tokyo to Kathmandu,

Recollections in print of artist Kabi Raj Lama's artistic and spiritual quest from Tokyo to Kathmandu.  
30 November to 15 December, 11am to 5pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited

Natural dye,

An exhibition showcasing handmade clothes, shawls, jewelleries and carpets made from natural dye.  
Till 6 December, 11am to 7pm, Taragaon Museum, Hyatt Hotel, Boudha



Street fest,

The Mandala Street Festival is back again with lots of fun activities, food stalls and live music to raise awareness and funds for the Nyano Sansar (warm world) winter initiative.  
29 November, 9am onwards, Mandala Street, Thamel

DINING

Lal Durbar Restaurant,

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

Wunjala Moskva,

Treat your palate to Newari and Russian dishes in the lush garden with ancient trees and trickling streams.  
Naxal, (01)4415236



Saigon Pho,

Spacious interior with authentic Vietnamese dishes. Lajimpat



Dan Ran,

The best authentic Japanese food in this part of town. Jhamsikhel

Green organic cafe,

Eat fresh, right from the source. This cafe has its own farms where vegetables, grains, dairy and fruit are produced. Detox and indulge in healthy treats.  
Thamel, across Roadhouse Cafe, (01)4215726

Tian Rui,

If you're looking for genuine good Chinese food this restaurant is the best place to go. Thapathali



Thanksgiving,

Celebrate Thanksgiving with a traditional Thanksgiving-themed dinner complete with turkeys, pecan pies and free mulled wine.  
Till 29 November, 6pm onwards, Kilroy's of Kathmandu, Thamel, (01)4250440/41

Natssul,

Reminiscent of the establishments in Seoul's Hong dae district, this eatery strives to be the best Korean restaurant in town. Pokhara

New Tushita Restaurant,

Relaxing ambience and good food. Don't miss out on their penne with creamy bacon and mushroom sauce.  
Lajimpat, (01)44432957



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साप्ताहिक खबरपत्रिका

# हिमाल

ग्राहक योजना

१ कार्तिकदेखि

## हिमालको साथमा उपहार हातमा

विस्तृत जानकारीको लागि  
**हिमालमिडिया प्रा.लि.**  
पाटनढोका, ललितपुर, मोवाईल: ९८४१ २४८ ८९४, ९८५१० ५४ ७२९, फोन: ५००५६०१-०५, फ्याक्स: ९७७-१-५००५५१८  
विराटनगर: ०२१ ४६३ ६६१, पोखरा: ०६१ ५३८ ९१३, नेपालगन्ज: ०८१ ५५१ ६४८  
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३ वर्षे  
ग्राहक शुल्क रु ५२५० मा  
मगद छुट रु २५०  
TITAN नाडी घडी

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

१ वर्षे  
ग्राहक शुल्क रु १७५० मा  
मगद छुट रु ५०  
स्वीटजरल्याण्डको  
आकर्षक उपहार

गोल्ड स्टार

साप्ताहिक खबरपत्रिका

# हिमाल

हरेक आइतबार



## MUSIC

**Music Fest,**

A culture and music festival with performances by Nepali and international bands like Peshkar, Girish Khatiwada Abhaya and the Steam Injuns, Albatross, and Mukti and Revival.

12 December, 10am onwards,  
Bhrikuti Mandap,  
[www.nepalmusicfestival.org](http://www.nepalmusicfestival.org)

**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

**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

**Roots rock reggae,**

A live reggae night with Joint Family Internationale performing some of its classics and some new songs.

Rs 250, 28 November, House of Music,  
Thamel

**Melody,**

A Friday musical night with Nepali singer, N. Shakyia.

28 November, 6 to 9.30pm,  
Hotel Goodwill, Kanibahal

## GETAWAYS

**Shivapuri Cottage,**

Escape the hustle and bustle of Kathmandu and enjoy peace, tranquility, good food, and fresh air.

Budhanilkantha, 9841371927

**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

**The Last Resort,**

Test your limits with canyoning, hiking, rock climbing, rafting, mountain biking, bungee jumping.

Bhatekosi, Sindhupalchok, (01)4700525

**Buddha Maya Gardens Hotel,**

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Lumbini, (71)580220, 9801033109,  
[info@ktmgh.com](mailto:info@ktmgh.com)

**Park Village Resort,**

Far away from the madding crowd yet so close to the city. Budhanilkantha, (01)4375280, [pvh@wlink.com.np](mailto:pvh@wlink.com.np)



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**Sri Durbar Tole, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur**  
Tel: 5534318, 5542045, 5522614  
email: [rbs@mos.com.np](mailto:rbs@mos.com.np)

**Purplefest,**

Popular Bollywood singer Sonu Nigam will be performing with Nepali singers Sugam Pokharel, Yama Buddha. Also, Indian comedian Kapil Sharma and other Nepali comedians will join in on this fun-filled evening.

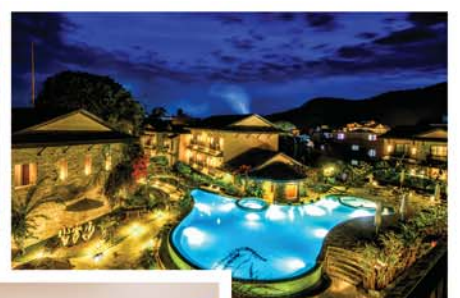
13 December, 3 to 7pm,  
Dashrath Stadium,  
[www.ncell.com.np/purplefest](http://www.ncell.com.np/purplefest)



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**REAL TO REEL:** *Sold*, a film based on Patricia McCormick's novel of the same name was screened at QFX Kumari last week. The film will be released worldwide in March 2015.

# TEACH TO FIGHT TRAFFICKING

STÉPHANE HUËT

Nepal ranks number 20 out of 162 countries in this year's Global Slavery Index 2014 published by the Walk Free Foundation. But the nature of trafficking of children for sexual slavery is changing: while earlier the girls were mainly sold to brothels in India, trafficking within Nepal has become as serious. An estimated 228,700 people, mainly

young girls, are enslaved in Nepal. Of the 2.6 million working children in Nepal, 127,000 are toiling in hazardous and difficult conditions with little or no pay.

UNICEF reports that 7,000 women and girls are trafficked out of Nepal to India every year, and around 200,000 are currently working in Indian brothels. International trafficking of Nepali women has also grown with women assured of jobs as domestics being lured into the sex trade, or facing

abuse within households in the Gulf. A majority of trafficked children were school dropouts and the risk of a child being trafficked was found to decrease by 80 per cent if she stayed in school until 16.

The shocking numbers came out during the launch in Kathmandu last week of the Jeffrey D Brown film, *Sold*, an adaptation of the novel of the same name by Patricia McCormick which tells the story of Lakshmi, a 13-year-



# Australian cricketers hit six

LUKE PENDER

Michael Clarke, David Warner and Michael Hussey are three of Australia's cricketing royalty, and they have found a unique way to raise money to help education in Nepal - by getting contributions from the public for every six they hit.

Over the course of last season all members of the Sydney Thunder raised funds to construct three new classrooms at the Heartland School in the Bafal neighbourhood of Kathmandu.

Ryan Carters (*pic*), a former wicketkeeper for the Sydney Thunders, came up with the idea of Batting for Change. He said: "I thought why not raise money from every six we hit in the Big Bash series for the Learning for a Better World charity. The Australian public really got behind the program with people pledging money for every time the batter hit a boundary."

All Sydney Thunder players also made personal donations to

the campaign, helping it reach the \$30,000 required for the classrooms. "Education is a gift that lasts a lifetime, and the team believed in that," says Carters. "And we chose Heartland School because of the work of the Centre for Learning and Children's Rights in giving life-changing educational opportunities for disadvantaged children."

In Bafal, construction funded by Australian cricket fans is underway. The school stands out with its child-centred approach and without verbal and physical humiliation as there is in other schools.

Principal Karan Singh Goyal, who has been here since the school started in 1999 says that the education of parents against corporal punishment and positive reinforcement is just as rewarding as educating children. Heartland has volunteer teachers from all over the world for teaching and teacher training.

The school offers some of the lowest fees in the area, enabling children to attend for as little as Rs 900 a month, and there is a boarding facility for those who cannot afford fees or don't have homes.

**THE MAXIMUM:** Australian cricketer Ryan Carters' Batting for Change raised \$30,000 for expansion of Heartland School (*pic, right*) in Kathmandu. The campaign sought contribution from public for every six hit by members of the Sydney Thunders during the Big Bash series.







CHILDREACH NEPAL

old Nepali girl, who is taken from her village to work in a brothel in Kolkata.

The group, Childreach Nepal used the premier to design a new campaign, #TaughtNotTrafficked which aims to work with rural schools to improve the education environment in Nepal. Tshering Lama of Childreach Nepal says the campaign aims at raising awareness in the general public but will also go where the problem is, in rural areas of Nepal. The campaign will support schools by designing a new curriculum, and providing teacher training, and build health centres and girls' toilets in central Nepal.

Humanitarian photographer Lisa Kristine, who inspired the role of Sophia in *Sold*, was also present at the launch. Her exhibition, 'Enslaved', was hosted at the Siddhartha Art Gallery from 19 to 25 November and highlighted the global problem of modern slavery in the world.

Also involved in #TaughtNotTrafficked is founder of Courageous Girls Silvia Vasquez-Lavado, a child abuse victim herself. Courageous Girls work towards providing healing through adventure and is preparing to walk up to Mt Everest Base Camp with five American and five Nepali survivors.

Also present at the *Sold* screening last week was Sunita Dunwar, a trafficking survivor who said that while educating children and controlling the borders are important, the most effective prevention would be to raise awareness among parents in villages. 🇳🇵

# kes for education in Nepal



LUKE PENDER

Anish Gautam is 13, and one of 20 orphaned children who live in the school. He is a model student and tops his class. He likes football, is a fan of Real Madrid and Cristiano Ronaldo and wants to grow up to be a hotel manager.

Anish was rescued from the streets three years ago, and says:

“For the first time, I feel loved and cared for, the teachers are helpful and look after me.”

Heartland now wants to add higher grades and also build a vocational centre for students, so they can get jobs when they graduate. “The school doesn’t want the students to get an education

and migrate overseas to work, we want them to go back to their communities and bring a change there.”

Ryan Carters plans to visit the school in May 2015 and added: “Sometimes I thought of the kids whilst at the crease, it gave every six a new dimension.” 🇳🇵





**J**on Favreau is a likeable guy. He is also incredibly good at what he does, which is: act (he is a comedian), write, and direct. His is one of those immediately recognisable faces that everyone knows but whose name few of us can remember partly because Favreau has perfected the art of playing the “everyman”.



**MUST SEE**  
Sophia Pande

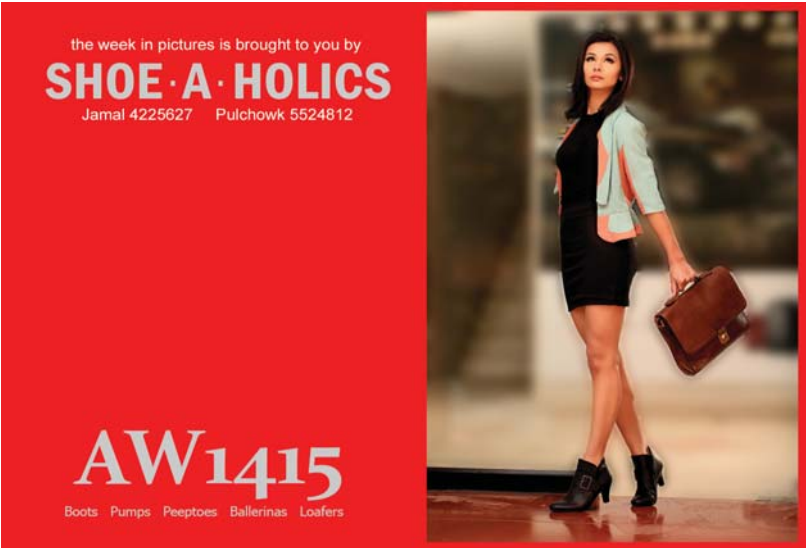
Straying away from writing and starring in charming comedies such as *Swingers* (1996), Favreau changed his trajectory when he signed on to direct the widely popular and incredibly good *Iron Man* in 2008. He even played Robert Downey Jr.’s (Iron Man) loyal friend and driver, Happy Hogan, in a tongue in cheek

# CHEF

homage to his usual roles in past comedies.  
Favreau wisely bowed out from directing the third Iron Man film, opting instead to write and direct other things, among which *Chef* which came out earlier this year is one of the most successful.  
While the premise of *Chef* is incredibly formulaic: a divorced chef has a breakdown and leaves his successful but boring L.A. based haute cuisine restaurant (suitably titled “Gauloise”) on the brink of bankruptcy so that he can finally experiment with food, his first love, it has its moments of sheer delight.  
Carl Casper (Favreau’s character) ends up on an epic journey with his highly articulate, internet savvy preteen son Percy (Emjay Anthony), when he opens

a food truck business, set up by his loving but fed up former wife Inez (Sofia Vergara) and ironically funded by Inez’s previous husband Marvin (perfectly played to oily perfection by Robert Downey Jr.).  
Why would such a film be interesting? Well, I had my own reservations at the beginning. But slowly, despite the obvious conclusion, there are happy surprises along the way. Favreau and Anthony work adorably well together in their portrayal of an estranged father and son who find their way together through food. There are also, in addition to Vergara, a stellar cast of supporting actors including John Leguizamo as Martin, Favreau’s sidekick and assistant chef, Scarlett Johansson plays Molly the hostess (of Gauloise) with a heart of gold, and Dustin Hoffman is Riva, the neurotic but ethical owner of said “Gauloise” who supports Casper up until his epic blowout with food critic Ramsey Michel (Oliver Platt) - yet another unexpected addition to the already wonderful cast.  
In just under two hours, *Chef* manages to serve a perfect mix of family drama, romance, and buddy comedy. Last but not least, it is a document of American cuisine at its best taking viewers on a culinary journey from Florida, through New Orleans and New Mexico to California. Don’t let your skepticism hold you back from giving this one a watch. *Chef* will surprise you pleasantly.

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



## HAPPENINGS



**STAMP IT:** Minister for Information and Communications Minendra Rijal places the cancellation stamp on the Special Commemorative Postal Cover to mark the SAARC Summit on Wednesday.



**THE BEGINNING:** Heads of the states of SAARC nations at the inaugural session of the 18th SAARC Summit at City Hall on Wednesday.



**MODEL GIFT:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi hands over a replica of a Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopter, Mark III, presented to Nepal Army by the Indian government, to Prime Minister Sushil Koirala on Tuesday.



**KEEP GOING:** Kumud Dhital (second, left), the world’s first surgeon to perform a dead heart transplant, receives felicitation from the Grande International Hospital team on Monday.

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# Tragedy on Thorong La

On the morning of 14 October 2014, Prakash Adihikari, executive officer of the Himalayan Rescue Association (HRA) opened his Facebook page, and saw a picture



**DHANVANTARI**  
Buddha Basnyat, MD

of a heavily snow clad Manang. While the picture was beautiful, it got Prakash thinking about the condition of the four porters he had hired to carry propane gas cylinders to the HRA Manang Aid-post.

While he was trying to reach out to people there (phone lines were dead), Adhikari got a call from the Israeli embassy, asking to see if HRA had any information about the conditions at Thorong

La (5400m). The embassy had received a note calling for help from Israeli trekkers at the pass, who had tied the note to a donkey going down to Manang. Prakash knew something bad was happening up there, but had no information that could help the embassy.

At a pre-arranged meeting regarding tourism promotion at the Trekking Agent Association of Nepal (TAAN) office, attended by the director general of tourism, representatives of Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA), and members of HRA, the mood was tense. Without any clear information about the ongoings in Manang, however it was hard to plan a rescue.

Worried and anxious, Prakash sent a message to Bamsi Acharya at the Ministry of Home Affairs, enquiring about weather conditions in Manang. Acharya in turn sent the message to the National Emergency Operation



Center (NEOC) at the Home Ministry, from where the message was forwarded to the chief district officer (CDO) of Manang and Mustang. Instead of answers, Prakash got a call from the Manang CDO asking him if he knew more. It seemed no one had any idea what was going on.

Early next morning, the HRA's Disaster Management Committee called a meeting to try to liaise with the Ministry of Tourism, the

Ministry of Home affairs, the Nepal Army, Nepal Police, TAAN, and NMA to help deal with the potentially dangerous situation at Manang.

The Nepal Army had begun their rescue from the evening of 14 October. A Nepal Army B3 Helicopter had flown out early in the morning of 15 October for search and rescue in Thorong La, and their MI 17 helicopter was mobilised in the afternoon of 15 October. The rescue mission was in full swing.

Along with many other institutions, the HRA played a significant role in communicating information to other agencies. But it was frustrating not having a well-managed "nerve center" to deal with the situation in the Himalayas. With the global change in the weather pattern, there is every likelihood that disasters such as the one on Annapurna will repeat. The government and all associated organisations need to learn from the October disaster.

Even something as simple as a documented list (a master list) of trekkers at any one time in the Nepal Himalayas would be very resourceful. During this tragedy, lists of trekkers in the area were hard to obtain and when the lists were made available, many names were badly misspelt (for example, Burush for Bruce) which did not help matters. The Nepal government charges lot of dollars to individual western trekkers to obtain a trekking pass, the least they can do to help these trekkers is to have a list of names of all trekkers properly spelt with their correct trekking destinations. 🇳🇵

## GIZMO by YANTRICK

## Cutting edge

It is not every day that we see real innovation in the smartphone battle, which is why Samsung's latest device, the Galaxy Note Edge, is a pleasant change from most smartphones that follow the black slab form factor to a 'T.' While it boasts most of the specifications to match Samsung's brilliant Galaxy Note 4, the Galaxy Note Edge introduces a unique curved edge that provides a secondary display, adding real value to the smartphone experience.

The Note Edge's rounded screen is instantly noticeable. The display curves off on the right hand side of the device, with the curved edge effectively acting as a small second screen that you can swipe with your thumb. The curved display can be personalised and used as a dock



for standard phone, message and email icons, or as a display for bits of information like weather updates, reminders and notifications, or even as a second screen which displays controls for video and camera apps.

Boasting a phablet-worthy 5.7 inch AMOLED

screen with display resolution of 2560 pixels x 1440 pixels, the Note Edge's display is sharp and vibrant, as expected from a top-of-the-line device. Design-wise, the Note Edge follows in the footsteps of the Note 4, including the same but improved soft faux leather back and metal banding around the outer edges for a premium feel, a definite improvement from the pure plastic of past Galaxy devices.

Available in black or white models, the Galaxy Note Edge comes with Android 4.4.4 version, and like the Note 4, packs in a quad-core 2.7GHz Snapdragon 805 processor and 3GB of RAM. Smartphone photography enthusiasts will be pleased with the 16 MP rear camera with Optical Image Stabilisation, which allows for incredibly detailed pictures and videos, while selfie-lovers will be more than satisfied with its front-facing 3.7 MP camera. A heart rate monitor which doubles up as a fingerprint scanner at the rear of the Note Edge is catered towards the health

conscious amongst us. For the media hoarders, the Note Edge packs in 32GB of internal memory, expandable up to 128GB via a microSD slot.

The Note Edge's battery life is also praiseworthy, lasting a full day of fairly intensive use, and the ability to fast charge to 50 percent in 30 minutes is a god sent. Further, the Note Edge packs in features like S-Pen, Download Booster, NFC, Bluetooth 4.1, MHL 3.0, IR Blaster, Gesture sensor, Accelerometer, Geo-magnetic sensor, Gyroscope, RGB ambient light sensor, Proximity sensor, Barometer, Hall Sensor, making this one nothing short of a mean machine. 🇳🇵

**Yantrick's Verdict: The Galaxy Note Edge is a gorgeous-looking smartphone boasting high-end specifications. Its curved second screen although a welcome upgrade has made the phone pricey with Note Edge retailing for above Rs 90,000.**

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-Dr. Spiro Condos, dentist practicing in the US

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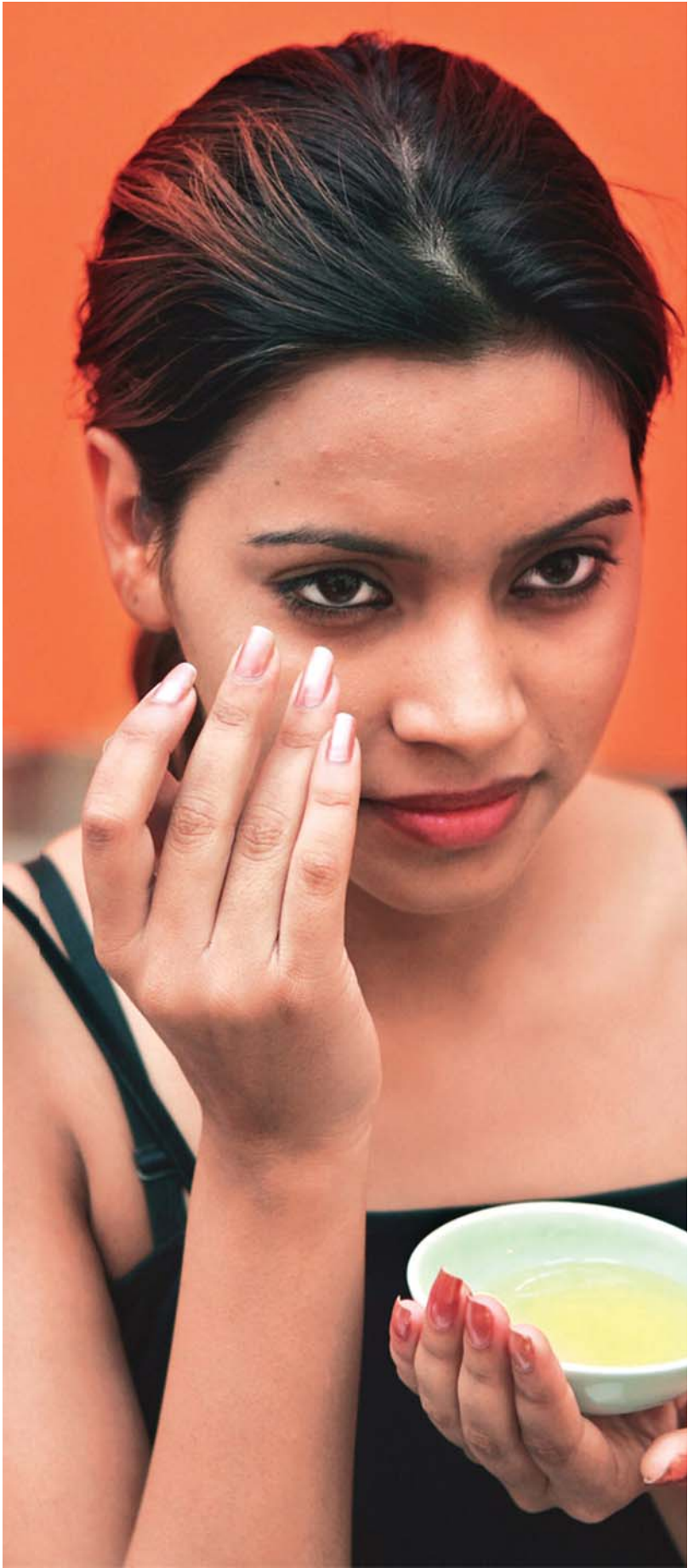
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- Stop smoking as it not only dulls the skin and causes blotchiness but also gives you wrinkles.
- Dab honey on an acne pimple at night as honey is a natural antibacterial agent.
- The biggest mistake you can make is leaving your makeup on overnight.
- Oil from your hair will get onto your pillow case as you sleep, so change your pillow case once a week to avoid sleeping on oil all night long.
- Rose water is soothing for all skin types to even out redness, and calms the irritation that may be happening.
- When you get acne, try your best not to pick at it. The dirt and oil on your fingers can make things worse with bacteria and you can get infection which leads to scarring and becomes double work to conceal for us makeup artists.
- Eating too many chocolates could also be the cause of breakouts, as acnes are likely to form just from the sugar in the chocolate.
- Stress can cause your skin to flare up, working out can reduce stress and acne. So exercise to keep your skin clear.
- Avoid skin care products with fragrance whether on face or body as they can irritate the skin causing redness and allergic reactions.
- Stop touching your face throughout the day! As you pick up bacteria from every surface you touch from the keyboard to your cell phone, all that bacteria floods your face once you start touching your skin. Keep your hands off, and you will see fewer breakouts.
- Don't use your hand towel as your face towel. The dirt that is left behind on a hand towel should not be used to rub against your face.
- Don't be afraid to use moisturiser even if you have got oily skin as using makeup on top of dry, flaky skin will only make your skin look even more dry and flaky so buy a light weight moisturiser to keep things smooth and clear.
- Try to cut back on fast food or anything fried as the excess grease over time will build up the acne and show effects.
- And lastly if nothing works, ask your dermatologist if it is being caused by nutritional deficiency. Probably sometimes you are not getting enough of a specific vitamin or mineral from the foods you're eating and this causes breakouts.



SNEHA RANA IS A PROFESSIONAL MAKE-UP ARTIST BASED IN KATHMANDU.

# CURE THAT ACNE

A lot of people want to know the cure for acne. What many forget is that acne is formed from the inside out, so shift your focus of the acne treatment to the inside, where acne actually gets started. Here are a few things you can be aware of and do to improve the condition of your skin.

- Drink plenty of water as being in a dehydrated state can cause acne to worsen.
- Avoid drinking caffeine as it triggers acne, so cutting back on your coffee intake especially if you are adding sugar can help clear things up.
- Avoid alcohol, as drinking alcohol with mixtures is as bad as drinking sugar.

## MYTHS BUSTED

Washing or scrubbing your face will help clear up acne



Frequent washing of your face will not do anything to help prevent acne. Rather, it irritates pores, which can cause them to dehydrate and become clogged. Wash your face only twice a day. Products that penetrate inside the pore to prevent acne from forming are suggested.



### Only teens get acne

Adult acnes are also a thing now. Studies show that 50 per cent of adult men and 25 per cent of women now experience adult acne at some point.



### Moisturiser will make you break out

Most people with acne are fearful of using moisturisers. While heavy moisturisers can cause pores to clog, there are light weight moisturisers that can get your acne under control and will prevent skin from drying.

### Sex causes acne

This is the oldest myth associated with acne and originated way back in time to discourage young people from having premarital sex. It is not based on scientific evidence.

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# HALF-WIDOWS OF WAR

Hand-in-hand, wives of those disappeared in the war help each other cope with life

**TRISHNA RANA**  
IN MORANG

On a pleasant Saturday afternoon in Biratnagar recently, Pashupati Basnyat presided over a meeting of the National Network of Families of Disappeared and Missing Nepal (NEFAD). She is composed and confident, but her outer calm belies deep physical scars and the anguish of having to live without knowing her husband's whereabouts for 13 years.

On 30 November 2001, Pashupati, her husband Himal Kaji Karki of Okhaldhunga, and six others were picked up by the police from Katari of Udayapur district. Himal was in the Maoist party, but she had no connection with the rebels and used to teach science at a local government school.

After 35 days in custody, Pashupati along with two detainees were separated from the group and transferred to Mirchaiya of Siraha district. The remaining five were never heard or seen again. After being moved from one cell to another over a period of 12 months, Pashupati was eventually released, but was told to report to the district police office in Okhaldhunga every Saturday. The security forces denied they had her husband.

"I am still hopeful, but at the same time the way they tortured us while in custody, makes me doubtful about my husband's fate," admits Pashupati, now 35.

In 2007, Pashupati moved with her daughter to Morang and says her education and experience as a teacher made applying for compensation easier. She says: "It took a lot of time to get even the smallest things done, but I eventually succeeded because I never hesitated to speak up and demand for my rights."

Not all women know how to do the paperwork, and for some it takes years to build up the courage to even get out of their homes.

On 19 October 2003, Lila Devi Tamang's husband, 30-year-old Tanka Tamang who was involved

with the Maoists, was arrested by the security forces. When Lila went to the police station in Rangeli to find his whereabouts, they told her they didn't know. She has never seen the father of her three children since that day.

Today, Lila is the vice-president of NEFAD at the national level, president of the inter-party women's alliance from the Maoist party, and has been a member of the Local Peace Committee for the past four years.

"When I used to stay indoors, my pain and suffering became magnified," she explains. "It was only after I started meeting other victim families at the CDO office and we began sharing our common experiences, that I felt more comfortable and confident. These friends became my source of strength."

Lila and Pashupati both took part in the Hateymalo Program organised by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) with the aim of helping victims connect with each other and develop deeper friendships within their community. The two women say Hateymalo has boosted their self confidence and aided in their healing process.

"Earlier, I didn't know other families of the disappeared. I used to be emotionally fragile and would break out in tears midway through sharing my story. But the more I interacted with others who have experienced similar pain, the more I realised that I am not alone," says Pashupati.

ICRC partnered with WOREC (Women's Rehabilitation Centre) in eastern Nepal and ran Hateymalo in Jhapa, Morang, and Sunsari. More than 1,300 people were disappeared during the decade long war, out of which 90 per cent were men, most of them married, and between 18-35. Since the sole burden of taking care of the household and raising children fell on the shoulders of young wives and mothers in the aftermath of forced disappearances, it left them with very little time to mourn or cope with their loss.

Ajay Yadav, ICRC's field officer in Biratnagar, says victims

suffer psychological disorders that have gone mostly undetected. Hateymalo also focused on identifying victims with mental health problems and offered counseling sessions. "Sometimes all the mothers or wives wanted was to have someone who would listen to them patiently," explains Yadav.

Wives of the disappeared also have had to grapple with being social pariahs. From blaming women for their husband's fate, pressuring them to carry out the last rites of their husbands, or not inviting them to religious and social functions, families and neighbours have treated the women unkindly.

Says Pashupati: "People used hurtful language to describe us and often told us that we deserved the suffering because our husbands were Maoists or in the security forces."

Women who dared to go outside in search of justice put themselves at even greater

risk: having their movements scrutinised, their characters questioned, and being accused of associating with other men. "When I went from place to place in search of my husband, I felt very uncomfortable about what my in-laws and neighbours would say and think about me," says Lila.

The women say that efforts to introduce victim families to others in the village including local leaders to administrators, neighbours and non-victims during the trainings have made the community more sensitive to their needs and problems.


"Our loved ones didn't give up their lives in vain. It is important for all Nepalis to understand that it is due to their sacrifice that there is peace and democracy in the country today," explains Pashupati.

Thanks to Hateymalo, victim families have greater social visibility in their neighbourhoods and their social

reputation too has improved. Mothers in particular are seen taking the lead in social activities like tree planting, building retaining walls on river banks, cleanliness drives.

The victims' desire to make meaningful and long lasting contributions to their hometowns led them to build public waiting areas in Morang and Sunsari and a war memorial in Jhapa out of their own resources.

However, Lila and Pashupati say the progress that they and other women like themselves have made in their personal lives in the past two years will be futile if the government does not follow up by setting up strong and independent commission to investigate disappearances and make the truth about their loved ones public.

"First and foremost, we need to know the whereabouts of our loved ones and why they were targeted. Until that happens our healing will never be complete," explains Lila Tamang. "Then we need free education and healthcare for our children and easier paperwork for single women like us."  [@TrishnaRana1](#)







**IN THE FRONT:** Pashupati Basnyat (*right*) and Sarita Apagain (*left*) lead a meeting of NEFAD (National Network of Families of Disappeared and Missing Nepal - Morang) in Biratnagar last week.

PICS: TRISHNA RANA



Tanka Devi Kafle, president of NEFAD-Jhapa, wants to set up a park around this commemorative monument, which was built by families of the disappeared, in Mai Khola this year.

# Remembering the missing

I had been living with my husband Shanti Ram Bhattarai in Kathmandu for five years when he was arrested from Jorpati on 21 November 2003. I was nine months pregnant at the time. We moved to the capital from our village in Baigundhura to work at a garment factory. My husband was a member of the Maoist-affiliated trade union.

I was unable to work while nursing a newborn and caring for two children, so I moved home to Jhapa soon after my husband's disappearance. It's easier to take care of a family when both parents are earning, but the moment you lose a bread winner, things become automatically hard.

I met other victim families at programs organised by the Maoist party. For the longest time, we believed that the party would provide us justice and help us uncover the truth behind our loved one's disappearance. When the Maoists came to power in 2008 and the leaders did not do anything on our behalf, we lost faith in them.

Initially, I was scared to speak out,

worried what people would say. But over course of training at Hateymalo, I realised if we as victims did not raise our voice, no one else would take up our cause.

As a WOREC volunteer, I have visited many victim families, and been met with anger because of my husband's affiliation with the Maoists. But, once we share our stories, it it becomes clear to them that we are all victims of the war.

We have built this monument in memory of those who sacrificed their lives for the country. If we get more money we could turn this into a nice park and charge a small fee for its upkeep. It's important to have monuments because after us no one will remember or search for our loved ones.

Generations from now can visit this spot and learn about history. If the government wants to build memorials, it should involve victim families and also support and expand projects that we have already started.

*Tanka Devi Kafle is the president of NEFAD's Jhapa chapter.*



# Another blow

Editorial in *Annapurna Post*,  
26 November

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

The final stage of the peace process is constitution writing. One cannot be finished without the other. The new constitution is a national responsibility, and a document representing the rights of sovereign citizens. It's the foundation on which the state functions and the people get to interact with the government.

Unfortunately, constitution writing is taking too long. The so-called senior leaders of the 'big parties' are involved in blaming each other and trying to internationalise their dispute. In addition, the Maoists who were a part of the peace process from the 12-point agreement of November 2005 onwards have split again. This has further weakened the 'progressive' and 'transformation' agenda of the party. To be sure, this was already proven by the poor performance of the party in the last election, and the downhill slide continues.



JON APPEL

Pushpa Kamal Dahal and other leaders summoned members of the diplomatic community this week and told them that the constitution could not be written by 22 January and blamed the ruling NC-UML for it. Two weeks previously, the top leaders of the NC and UML

had also called the ambassadors and blamed the Maoists for the delay in writing the constitution. Both sides should have first told the Nepali people about the delay in the constitution, not go around briefing the international community. Just goes to show the anti-democratic and anti-national character of the big parties.

All this has cast uncertainty over the constitution and also raised the risk of the country going back to violence because of the threats of the split from Baidya of the Biplav faction. Such a development would wreck the peace process and the efforts to write a new constitution.

The prime minister and the leaders of the 'big' parties seem to be oblivious to all these failures, and do not have the moral fortitude to take some responsibility for it. Dahal is waging a tit-for-tat with Koirala, and the government has suffered psychological blow from the fear of violence after the further breakup of the Baidya group. All this will have an important bearing on the people's desire to see a new constitution. The inability of the leaders to address this concern is a demonstration of gross incompetence.



Sewage  
Telecom

"Is the SAARC Summit over yet?  
I can't wait to dig this road up."

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

Basu Kshitiz in  
*Annapurna Post*,  
27 November

सार्क कहिले सकिन्छ हैँ? हयाँ  
भत्काउन नपाएर मेरो हात  
चिलाइसक्यो !

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“ It is surprising that PM Sushil Koirala didn't make any mention of late king Birendra who played a significant role in establishing SAARC in his welcome address. ”

RPP Chairman Kamal Thapa, *Naya Patrika*, 27 November



PAHILOPOST

# Ready to operate

CB Adhikary and Kalika Khadka in *pahilopost.com*,  
24 November



After much delay, the Nepal-India Friendship Trauma Centre is finally set to start operations this week. Built with Indian assistance, the hospital was handed over by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Prime Minister Sushil Koirala on Tuesday. Although the centre has a capacity for 200 beds, it will begin operations with only 50 beds, and the board hasn't yet decided how much to charge for operations.

"The government should allocate budget as well as manpower if we are to provide free services," said acting director of the centre, Ashok Ratna Bajracharya. The average cost for a patient is Rs 470 per bed per day with additional cost of Rs 3,500 for additional services.

The trauma centre's foundation stone was laid as far back as 1997 by Prime Minister I K Gujral. Construction started in 2006, and although it was completed three years later the handover was delayed. In 2012, the Ministry of Health and Population took over the responsibility of the centre from National Academy of Sciences after which, the Outpatient Department (OPD) was launched every Monday and Thursday.

The centre aims at providing comprehensive trauma care including neurosurgery, orthopedic surgery, plastic surgery and cardiovascular to injured patients. Every day three people die while 12 are injured in road accidents in Nepal. Trauma due to road accidents is the fourth highest cause of death in Nepal and will be the third highest by 2020.



# Sweet 16

*Himal Khabarpatrika*, 23-29 November

हिमाल  
खबरपत्रिका

There are dozens of young Nepali film actresses who are still waiting for their big break. But for 16-year-old Anna Sharma, her very first film was a hit and propelled her to stardom. The unconventionally made film, *Jerry*, has been a box-office hit and this has also brought Anna into the limelight. *Jerry* is well-directed, has attractive locations and fresh new faces with talent. "All the praise, has actually made me more serious about my film career," says the A-Level student. Anna is the daughter of choreographer Rachana Gurung Sharma and acts as a young girl from Pokhara who falls in love with a character played by Anmol, the son of noted actor Bhuwan KC. *Jerry* is directed by Hemraj BC, who also directed another recent popular release about teenagers, *Hostel*.

# Modi grills RAW

*Sanghu*, 17 November

साँघु

India's foreign policy vis-à-vis Nepal is expected to see a departure from the past after Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his displeasure about the way bilateral relations have been handled by India's foreign policy establishment and spy agencies. The briefing preceded Modi's forthcoming visit to Kathmandu for the SAARC Summit. Highly placed BJP sources said RAW Chief Alok Joshi became nervous when he couldn't satisfactorily answer Modi's questions about why India wasn't pursuing a policy of stability and peace in Nepal. Modi has praised Nepal's peace process and strides towards democracy as being a "role model" at the UN General Assembly and at the Republic Day function at Delhi's Red Fort in August. During his last visit to Nepal, he had told Nepali leaders to be united for prosperity. The spy chief is said to have been unable to provide a clear answer to Modi when queried about Nepal's present political situation and the constitution. "You do a good job, but there is no doubt you have tried to manipulate things," Modi was quoted as saying. Modi also asked about the when and what kind of constitution would be written, and if it would be



acceptable to all Nepalis, and if not, why not. What would be the negative fallout of a constitution not acceptable to the people? What is the position of the ex-king and the monarchists? What has been the position of other countries on the politics, religion and society in Nepal? The intelligence chiefs were speechless after this barrage of questions.

# Unsolicited advice

Editorial, *Kantipur*, 27 November

कान्तिपुर

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's second visit to Nepal has become more than just about attending SAARC. On his first day here, he held meetings across the political spectrum about the country's constitution drafting process, and advised them to go for a consensus. While his advice maybe valid, the Indian leader crossed the bounds of diplomatic norms by giving unsolicited advice on the country's internal political and constitutional issues. Modi's meddling has the potential to undo the goodwill his first visit in August generated for the improvement in bilateral relations between the two countries.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Trauma Centre in Kathmandu, which was built with Indian assistance, Modi said any other approach towards constitution writing would only lead Nepal to more turmoil. PM Sushil Koirala and CA Chair Subhas Nembang were present at the hospital handover program.

Even though the international community has been advising leaders to seek a consensus, Modi went a step further. By urging the government not to write a constitution based solely on numerical strength in the CA, Modi has dismissed the constitution writing process in Nepal's interim constitution which specifically mentions two approaches towards constitution drafting: a) political consensus, and b) a majority vote process.

Modi also asked leaders to not delay promulgating the constitution any longer and to meet the 22 January deadline based on consensus reached so far. Changes can be made in future if necessary, he added. At a time when the NC and UML have been pressing for a majority vote in the CA, Modi's words seem to be in favour of the opposition UCPN (Maoist) and Madhesi parties.



# Miles to go, promises to keep

Although the investment climate has improved, Nepal has to do a lot more to entice FDI in infrastructure

**ELVIN L SHRESTHA**

After making dramatic progress in health and education, Nepal will also be able to meet its self-imposed goal of attaining the status of a 'developing country' by 2022, but only if the government is serious about infrastructure-led growth.

The Infrastructure Summit held earlier this month highlighted the enormous need and investment potential for infrastructure development in tourism, energy, transportation and agriculture, among others. However, most participants which included government officials, bureaucrats and the private sector, cautioned that the investment climate needs to improve a lot for domestic and foreign private companies to want to put in money.

"If there is political backing, we can transform Nepal in five years," said Binod Chaudhary of the Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) that organised the Summit, "We've had enough of politics, it is time to move to infrastructure to accelerate economic growth, and there is a need to forge a strong partnership between the government and the private sector."

Nepal's planners have long realised that investment in infrastructure would immediately create jobs and reduce the need for Nepalis to migrate for work. And once completed, the infrastructure projects would lead to downstream benefits like energy self-sufficiency, redressing the trade balance through export of electricity, improving connectivity, increasing income from tourism, and upgrading agro-industries.

However, a decade of conflict, instability resulting from the prolonged transition and the lawlessness of the post-conflict period is still keeping investors away. Despite setting up the Investment Board Nepal, crucial decisions on infrastructure development are haphazard and ad hoc.

Investors seek cohesive and coordinated policies backed by transparent legal framework. "Policy reforms and confidence building measures from the government and the political class are needed to attract the private sectors investments," says Hari Bhakta Shrestha of the CNI.

The National Planning Commission says it needs to invest as much as US\$100 billion in the next few years to pave the way for Nepal's 2022 goal. One of the main reasons many infrastructure projects like the plans for an international airport in Nijgadh, Bara and the Kathmandu-Tarai fast track road have long been stalled, is the lack of clarity in government policy on it, as much as lack of investment.

Existing foreign investors *Nepali Times* spoke to said that while the investment scenario looks like it may improve in the medium-term, they complain of major bureaucratic hassles on corruption in legitimate issues like dividend repatriation, tax refunds for raw-material imports, or the

high-handedness of regulatory authorities.

"Word gets around about the kind of hurdles foreign investors here face in doing day-to-day business, and they think, why bother," one foreign investor told us on condition of anonymity. Perhaps the most emblematic indication of governance failure in infrastructure investment is the electricity shortage. Nepal today generates nearly 500 MW of electricity from captive gensets belonging to private individuals, offices, factories and businesses – representing half the grid capacity.

Lack of coordination between the Ministry of Energy, National Planning Commission, Nepal Electricity Authority, and Investment Board is largely to blame, but there is also local threats and extortion of power generation and transmission projects.

Land acquisition for infrastructure projects has always been a major hassle, and the lack of elected local leaders means hoodlums have made it a habit to harass and extort projects. It is worse when locals are backed by politicians, and the lack of clarity of the principle eminent domain in the absence of strong government has led to intractable disputes which have stalled some transmission and highway projects for years.

The NPC has forwarded a new Policy on Resettlement to the Cabinet that will hopefully expedite the process of land acquisition for infrastructure. The signing of a Power Trade Agreement (PTA) with India, and the Power Development Agreement (PDA) on the Upper Karnali and Arun hydropower projects have raised optimism for the country's investment arena, especially in the energy sector. But the country



is still in dire need of foreign investments. The government needs to make investment-friendly policies and needs to make an environment conducive to investments – one without unpredictable political turmoil, unsecure policies, or continuous obstructions from locals and political groups. "For creating an investment-friendly environment, political commitment is imperative," wrote Radhesh Pant of the Investment Board in a daily last week.

There are three main actors in infrastructure: public sector companies, domestic and foreign private sector investors. Public sector companies and autonomous regulators have, by all accounts, been a part of the problem. The domestic private sector is trying to get involved in large highway and hydropower projects, in

ropeway and telecommunications, but private sector investment in infrastructure is still insignificant, at only 0.6 per cent of GDP.

The Infrastructure Summit listed some of the reasons for this: unfair political interference in projects, unreliable contractors who leave the project unfinished or don't work on schedule, overly complicated permit systems and corruption. The current Public Procurement Act compels selection of contractors who quote the lowest price, even if the amount is unreasonably and impossibly low leading to absurd variation demands.

Potentially viable partnership models, like PPPs, are not preferred because of the long and tedious approval process with ambiguous and inconsistent policies.

On the other hand, there is a

lack of clarity in and duplication of jurisdiction. There is no coordination between government agencies and private companies, due to which there is confusion about policies, repetition of work and constant delays. The clash between the Ministry of Energy, CIAA and various parliamentary committees this month regarding cancellation of licenses for 10 hydropower projects, including the World Bank-funded 37 MW Kabeli project is not likely to encourage potential investors.

"The CIAA has become the most serious impediment to infrastructure projects," one private Nepali investor told *Nepali Times*, "it is heavy-handed and acts like a parallel government, and government officials are so scared of being hauled up by the CIAA no one takes decisions anymore." 🇳🇵

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National insecurity

The threats to our national security cannot be underestimated in these perilous times. There are countries that want to claim Buddha's birthplace as their own, others want to purloin Mt Everest from us, every so often our border pillars vanish, and aliens invade our air space. Not a day goes by that a Nepali somewhere in the world doesn't have to punch someone in the nose to prove that not all flags have to be rectangular.

We need to be on high alert against these expansionist forces, and be ready to defend our territorial integrity and national sovereignty tooth and nail. No price is too high to defend our borders, and we must not forget that those who want to takeover and overtake us may also try to invade us from the sky, which is why we have asked to be gifted a Super Dhruv attack helicopter armed to the teeth with heat-seeking air-to-air missiles.

Recently, Nepal's air traffic controllers went on high alert after noticing a blip on the radar at TIA that shouldn't have been there, and dismissed it as an alien spaceship from the Planet Voth which had come to abduct our women. Only later did they realise that it was a common house fly (Latin name: Musca domestica Linnaeus) sitting on the scope, and promptly squoshed it. That is how serious we are about guarding our skies.

Next time there is an aerial invasion, the standard operating procedure is to scramble the only flying helicopter of the Army Air Wing and intercept the intruder somewhere over the eastern sector and, according to accepted international rules of psy-war, shout obscenities into the radio.

Our fearless air traffic

controllers deserve the highest medals in the land for being on their toes throughout the SAARC Summit, and ensuring that VVIP jets were perfectly safe when in Nepal's air space. This they did by closing down the airport for all other traffic for five days to prevent any untoward incident.



The Ass has offered its services as a security consultant (free of cost in the national interest) and after a thorough appraisal of our current asymmetrical security scenario has come up with the following list of top-secret recommendations which are totally off the record and are published below on condition that readers don't pass them on to any suspicious looking farangs unless they know our password which I can tell you, but then I'd have to shoot you. For your eyes only. Please burn this paper after you read it:

- Our northern border is protected by high mountains, but our open border to the south is easy to infiltrate which is why we need to make an East-West Moat. All we need to do is ask the Indians to construct more embankments to permanently submerge no-man's land. This way, any invading army will have to call in the marines, and this would buy us valuable time to manufacture more leather cannons.
- NAST should live up to its name

and immediately begin plutonium enrichment at its secret reactor in Khumaltar. Experience from North Korea and Iran have shown that the only thing that will force the international community to take us more seriously is to have our own secret nuclear weapons program.

- Nepal's landmass is under constant surveillance from spy satellites, which means all VVIPs in Harihar Bhavan should henceforth be careful not to walk around their backyards in their undies. If, like me, they insist in doing so they should mandatorily wear a Groucho glass-and-moustache as disguise.

The Cabinet Room at Singha Darbar has miniature transmitting devices hidden under the table so the Council of Ministers should never discuss anything of national importance at cabinet meetings. They should also refrain from discussing state secrets at home, since there may be bed bugs there. In fact, they should never ever talk shop while in office, since one never knows who is listening.

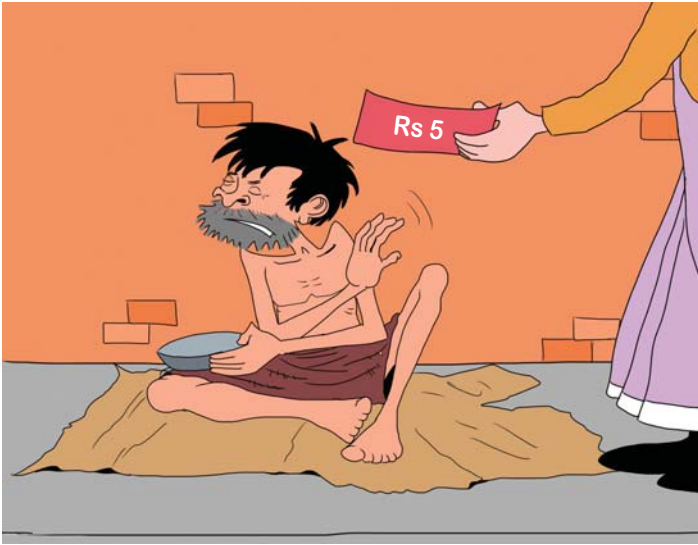
- We are doing a great job keeping our highways blocked by landslides, potholes, tottering bridges to thwart a possible enemy invasion. But more needs to be done to make Nepal even more impregnable.
- We must delay constitution-writing and prolong the political anarchy to demonstrate that this country is totally ungovernable as a deterrent against foreign powers tempted to take us over. There are countries with nefarious posterior motives which must be thwarted.



The Ass

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