

NEPALI Times

#738

26 December 2014 - 1 January 2015

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2015

The 2015 Constitution

We have to make a constitution that is right for us, not one that fits the rightist agenda in the neighbourhood.

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MIXED SIGNALS

Twice during an India-Nepal think tank conclave in New Delhi’s Habitat Centre this week, the power went off. It was proof of just how inured Nepalis and Indians have become to power cuts that the panelist kept on speaking in the darkness, and there were no oohs or aahs from the audience.

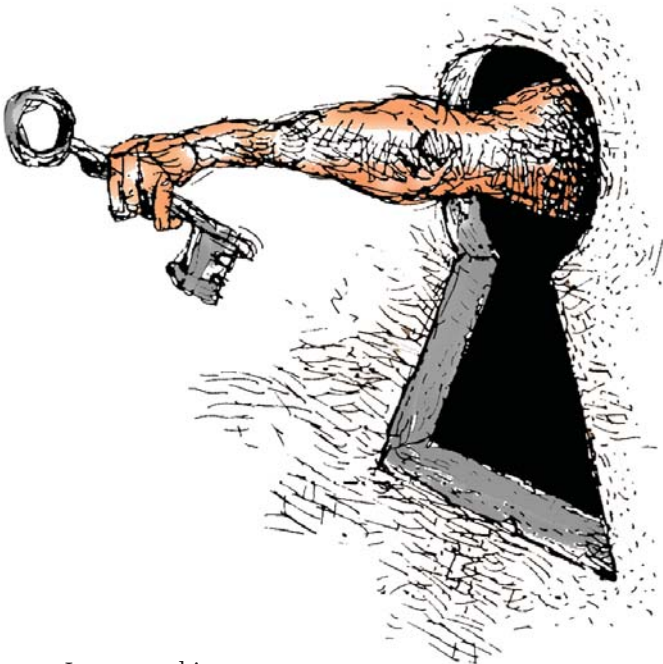
Ironically, the panel was discussing how the two visits by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Nepal in 2014 rebooted India-Nepal relations and led to dramatic new headway in hydropower projects that had been stuck for decades. The signing of the Power Trade Agreement (PTA) between the two countries and deals on the Upper Karnali, Arun 3 and Pancheswar on mutually favourable terms could ease power cuts in India and Nepal.

The paradigm shift in politics in India removed mistrust with Nepal, led directly to progress in economic cooperation and created the political will to move ahead on power, confidence-building measures, border management and security. The question on everyone’s mind is: how does the Modi administration view the deadlock over the new constitution?

In Kathmandu, with less than a month to go for the 22 January deadline, the upbeat mood of the previous weeks has suddenly soured again. After coming very close to striking a deal on federalism, form of government and election rules, the two sides have drifted apart, press statements have become belligerent. An alliance of Madhesi, Maoist and smaller Janajati parties have announced street agitations to push for their agenda on federalism based on ethnicity.

Whatever the public pronouncements of the leaders, the real disagreement seems still to be over power sharing after January. UCPN(M) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal has been telling interlocutors that if they agree to make him president, he will remove the constitutional logjam. Dahal is clutching at straws, and his announcement of strikes and protests in the run-up to the deadline seems to be a bargaining tactic. The Madhesis are also negotiating for choice berths in a

We have to make a constitution that is right for us, not one that fits the rightist agenda of a governing party in the neighbourhood



post-January cabinet.

In fog-shrouded New Delhi this week, there was discernible divergence of views between Hindu-right politicians on the one hand, and the bureaucrats with security agencies, who have directed India’s Nepal policy since the 12-point agreement of November 2005, on the other.

Even so, the BJP government appears to have been convinced by the foreign policy establishment that with the deadline on the constitution looming, any attempt to dismantle its building blocks of secularism, republicanism

and federalism would jeopardise the Indian-brokered peace process which is nearing its climax. Reverting back to monarchy or Hindu state would destabilise Nepal, and that would not be in India’s national security interest.

Some sections of the BJP are listening. One senior adviser gave us what he said was the party line: if Nepalis wanted to restore the monarchy it was up to them, that multi-ethnic Nepal could learn from India’s success with federalism, and that secular India wasn’t pressuring Nepal to become a Hindu state. While unequivocal, these remarks are in stark contrast to the anti-federal and anti-secular advice given to Nepali politicians by senior BJP figures in recent months. In India itself, parliament is stalled over opposition protests about a controversial campaign by RSS cadre to reconvert Muslims and Christians back to Hinduism. Modi has been mum on the issue.

It is due to these mixed signals that politicians like Kamal Thapa of the RPP-N and the powerful Khum Bahadur Khadka wing of the NC have been trying hard in the time that is left to derail a secular, federal, republican constitution. Positions have hardened in constitution talks. The UML’s KP Oli has suddenly become vociferously opposed to federalism with ethnic characteristics, even though it was already agreed that the names of future provinces would be finalised by future provincial legislatures. Dahal of the UCPN(M) has abruptly resurrected his call for a form of government with executive presidentship, a post which, presumably, he would fill.

Needless to say, Nepal’s national identity should be defined by our cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic diversity, not just by the Hindu-ness of our past rulers. We don’t need to change that just because some sections of a rightwing party in India thinks so. We need to decentralise and devolve political power, but the Indian union may not exactly be the right model for us. We have to make a constitution that is right for us, not one that behooves a religious right governing party in the neighbourhood.

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

CONSTITUTION

If there was a national referendum on federalism based on ethnicity, I doubt if it would get more than 15% approval ('One month to go', Editorial, #737). In fact, CA2 was a defacto referendum on the issue which the NC/UML should have used to push for their agenda. We have seen from India and elsewhere that federalism and demarcation of borders will play havoc in the path to progress and peace.

Namah

■ Pushpa Kamal Dahal, the next president of Nepal? Are you insane? **Brian Metters**

■ Narrow legalistic interpretation of our current political course sits uneasily with the spirit of consensus that has been the hallmark of the transitional Nepali polity ('Contentious consensus', Anurag Acharya, #737).

Anil Karki

■ The Maoist 'revolution' was hardly based on social justice hence I am not surprised that the new constitution will be a political compromise. PKD only wanted power. He used unsuspecting innocent Nepalis to propel himself onto the national political scene and since then has been doing the same. Now, his only chance for redemption is to ensure that his agenda of identity politics is included in the constitution. If not, he will settle for a post that will ensure his legacy in

our nation's history, all the while willfully ignoring public opinion.

N

■ Is this a move towards 'a new Nepal' or a form of status quo?

DS

■ Re: interview with CA Chair Subhas Nembang ('the clock is ticking', #737). It's been ticking for some years now.

Satish Pandey

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Everyone has the right to choose his religion so Ambassador Andrew Sparkes is not wrong in that regard ('Only half free', Damakant Jayshi, #737). But, no one has the right to damn other people's cultures and beliefs, and to preach that they are destined to go to hell unless they convert to another religion. In contrast to Eastern religions like Hinduism and Buddhism, this happens to be the basic tenet of the Abrahamic faiths like Christianity, Islam. It is another matter that many Christians and Muslims may not truly agree, but Missionaries and Jihadists who proselytise (and are very well funded for this purpose) do firmly believe this. Such beliefs lead to contempt and hatred for other religions, and causes disharmony in society.

The UK has the Anglican Church as its official religion and the Monarch is considered to be the defender of the Anglican faith. Only a person belonging to the Lutheran Evangelical Church can be a King in Norway. Many other European countries have similar restrictions.

So, the question is not whether people have the right to choose their religion (of course everyone has that right) but why people in countries like the UK are not asked to choose between remaining a Christian state or being a democratic state (Britishers most likely would say they are both) and why people in Nepal are being asked to do that? It is a false dichotomy.

Dev Batsya

■ Any other country would have declared the British Ambassador persona non grata and expelled him. A country that has seen a 50-year religious war has no right telling us Nepalis how to or how not to deal with our religions. These white men still think they rule over us. Besides, our interim constitution provides for full religious freedom. So why did Andrew Sparkes have to talk about right to conversion, is he an evangelist?

Jim Limbu

■ Touché. Everything of relevance to us is in the last two sentences of Damakant Jayshi's column: 'It is double-standard on the part of those who speak against Hindu Rastra but have no qualms in calling for single ethnicity-based federation. And vice-versa for the advocates of Hindu Rastra.'

N Sherpa

■ The British ambassador just poured cold water on any chance of a healthy debate on 'Hindu Rastra' vs Secularism and Proselytisation.

Nam

WALKING THE TALK

Without foreign currency, it would have been impossible to bring technologies like mountain drilling machines being used in Melamchi ('Walking the talk', Gunaraj Luitel, #737). That said, aid should be limited to technologies. And, other prerequisite for infrastructure development is motivation.

Himanshu Ghimire

CANINE KATHMANDU

What a transformation Mango has seen ('To the rescue of Kathmandu's canines', #737). Count me in for a monthly contribution. Thank you *Nepali Times* for bringing this in.

PK

■ Brilliant work.

Diana Fielding

JUSTICE DENIED

Nanda Prasad Adikari's story is extremely sad, he had to die in order for the authorities to finally wake up from their deep slumber ('The sad saga of the Adhikari family', *Nepali Times* Online). What good is a country where murders are free to roam?

Thinker



NOTICE

Due to Christmas holidays in Hong Kong this edition of *Nepali Times* does not include China Daily.

Times

THIS WEEK



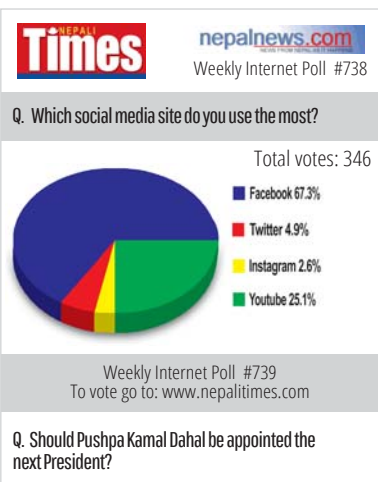
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MALLIKA ARYAL

Where are all the men?

“Sometimes I forget there are men in our lives.”

It is 8AM in the 3,700 meter-high Kyangin Gumba Valley. Penjo Lama, 26, is dashing around her four-room guesthouse. She has already been up for a few hours. Her guesthouse was full for the last two days, but some of the guests are leaving today, freeing two rooms.



INTERESTING TIMES
Mallika Aryal

As she prepares breakfast, she can't help but worry about whether or not she will find guests to take the rooms that are empty.

“Everyday a room stays free, we lose financially,” she says, stoking the fireplace.

Penjo's husband Jhandu is off in Kathmandu dropping off their children at a boarding school. The nearest primary school is a few hours walk away. Apart from her children's education, the Lama couple is still paying off the loan they took out to build the guesthouse.

At noon, Penjo hurries towards Kyangin Gumba. There are already women there crowding to find guests. By noon everyday trekkers start trickling in from Lantang Village, a three-hour walk away, and if Penjo is not proactive she won't find any guests for her lodge.

After spending over two hours, however, no one turns up and she has to return to her guesthouse disappointed. It is mostly women who run the guesthouses here.

“There may be exceptions, but most men in this town are useless,” says Jhuma Tamang, 30. The only time they miss men's presence is when a big supply of food and other items have to be carried up from another town.

Jhuma has been married for over 10 years to Lhakpa, and has been running a guesthouse all by herself. Her husband just brought in a supply from town today and has taken off with his friends.

They are sitting under the sun playing cards.

“It is our rest day,” he explains, diligently shuffling cards. Lhakpa works as a porter during trekking season. Jhuma says that kind of work is unreliable. “If he could help me at the guest house, we would make better business,” she tells me.


During the busiest time of the year Lhakpa goes away for days leaving the running of the business to Jhuma. “I don't mind that, but when he is back he sits around for days waiting for work while I juggle family and business.”

Women like Jhuma and Penjo do not get rest days. Women help each other the best they can, but the absence of men in Kyangin Gumba is obvious because women here work harder and longer. “Sometimes I forget there are men in our lives,” says Sonam, 21.

Despite their contribution to the family economy, the women here have very little decision-making power. The husbands deal with all money matters. The women want their work to count, their decisions be respected. Penjo says men cannot just wait around for work to happen for them, they need to see that there is already much to improve in the business, community, life they already have.

Trekking on the Langtang trail is booming. It is one of the closest trekking trails to Kathmandu Valley, and being a national park, there are no roads spoiling the trails as has happened in the Annapurnas. Improved roads to the entrance of the park have led to more trekkers this year, well past what was initially considered to be the trekking season.

Penjo and other guesthouse owners want to capitalise on this boom. But Penjo says she cannot do that unless her contribution is counted and she shares the power to make decisions about her family and finances.

“It is not about disrespecting my husband's decision,” says Penjo “I know we can do okay by ourselves like we have been for so many years, but working together is better.”  @mikaness



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Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal

Call for Proposal for an International Consultant Team Leader to lead an independent Mid-Term Review of Multi Stakeholder Forestry Programme in Nepal

The Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal invites a proposal from an experienced, interested and competent international expert to lead an independent Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Multi Stakeholder Forestry Programme (MSFP) in Nepal. MSFP is a programme of the Government of Nepal implemented by the Government and Non-Government Implementing Agencies in collaboration with the Governments of Finland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The Embassy has the main responsibility of acting as the Lead Donor on behalf of the Co-Donors regarding the MSFP implementation in the initial phase initiated in 2012.

The purpose of the MSFP is to maximize the contribution of Nepal's forestry sector to inclusive economic growth, poverty reduction and tackling climate change. It focuses on four major areas of interventions (a) development and implementation of forestry sector strategies, policies and plans through multi stakeholder processes; (b) creating jobs and income in forestry through partnership with private sector and other actors; (c) supporting rural livelihoods - especially of the poor, women and disadvantaged and climate vulnerable people, and (d) sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation and climate resilience. Designed for ten-year, the MSFP is currently working in the first phase of four years starting from 2012. It has reached to 43 districts of Nepal through working with multi-partnership approach following the three implementation modalities (e.g. full-fledged programme, thematic programme and Innovation Fund).

As the current phase of the Programme ends by July 2016, an independent MTR is planned in April/May 2015. This MTR expects to make an overall assessment on the achievements made by the Programme against the results, and to provide strategic direction and recommendations for the design and modalities for the next phase.

Therefore, the international consultant to be selected as Team Leader of the MSFP MTR should have worked as team leader of project/programme evaluations, have strong experience in forestry and must be familiar with Asia with a focus on Nepal. She/he will lead a team of four experts (Nepali and non-Nepali) for the MTR and thus will be involved in the process of selecting the other experts. The terms of reference for the MTR and the Programme Document of the MSFP can be requested through email addressed to kathmandu@eda.admin.ch

International experts /Organizations interested in this assignment shall submit a 5 page proposal indicating methodology, approaches, timeline and fees required for undertaking the MTR and an updated 5 page CV to the following address latest by **1700 hrs Thursday, 15th January 2015** clearly marked in the subject as **"Proposal for Multi Stakeholder Forestry Programme"**. Any individual experts affiliated to a company or organization can also apply.

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The result of the proposal selection process will be notified to all applicants by **Friday, 30th January 2015** from the Embassy. SDC reserves the right to cancel the bidding process without giving any reasons.

Playing the shame game

After nearly 5 years, it feels good to be back in Kathmandu, visiting family. Despite some shiny new buildings and wider roads it doesn't appear that much has changed: dusty dogs still sprawl in the gutters, sun seekers emerge onto the sidewalks with the rise of the winter morning sun, and the electricity disappears for large chunks of time each day.

All these invoke some sort of twisted nostalgia, admittedly available only to those of us with a return ticket in our pockets.

What I find irksome though is that the Birendra International Convention Centre (BICC) which was converted into a Constituent Assembly remains home to 601 Nepalis ostensibly at work drafting a new constitution. To an outsider, what really appears to be happening is that the same handful of 'leaders' are jockeying in the back rooms for political, and personal, gain at the expense of nearly 30 million people.

I have always marveled at the patience of the Nepali people. And how utterly disappointing it is to think back to April 2006, when I walked with tens of thousands of people on the Ring Road, men, women and children marching purposefully to a bright new future. Today, they are still sitting in the dark for half the day.

Editorials in the *Nepali Times* are still optimistic that the new constitution will happen, and remove a yoke that has been dragging down the country's development for six years. I wished I shared that optimism.

However, in the interest of doing something other than naysay, I propose the following: tally up the amount of money that has been spent so far paying the salaries of CA members, start a meter running from that figure and update it every second, like a clock. Place that running total on a sign near the BICC where the party leaders are likely to see it each



day. It will remind them, and everyone else passing by, that they are being paid to do nothing, at least based on the lack of a constitution to date. If the leaders are in fact influenced by public opinion, this just might turn up the heat.

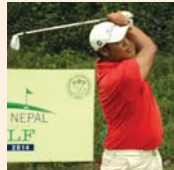
If authorities don't allow a physical sign to be erected, I suggest that an online news site put one on a conspicuous part of its homepage like the 'Death Clock' that looks at how tax dollars for federal security spending in the United States could be reallocated through interactive graphics.

I've been told that Nepalis no longer care about the millions being spent on constitution-making, or even if a new law of the land emerges by 22 January. While I couldn't blame them for such apathy and pessimism, part of me would mourn the death of the revolutionary spirit that I witnessed on the Ring Road in 2006. 🇳🇵



Marty Logan worked in Nepal from 2005 to 2010, first as a desk editor at Nepali Times and then at the United Nations. He now lives with his family in Canada.

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Golf tour

Surya Nepal Western Open, a 54 holes professional golf event, will be played at the Himalayan Golf Course from 24 to 26 December. Twenty nine professionals and 18 amateurs will participate in the event.

Power backup

Agni Energy has been appointed the distributor of Kevin Power Solutions' power backup products in Nepal. With the addition of Kevin Power Backup Solutions, Agni Energy now holds both batteries and UPS segment.



Colour trends

Pashupati Paints conducted a workshop on 'Paints and Color Trends' on 21 December at The Everest Hotel. Reputed interior designers, architects and colour experts participated in the workshop.

Connect application

AV Digital, a digital marketing company has launched a new application called 'Connect'. Targeted towards educational institutions, the application notifies parents about their children's activities, notices and events at schools.



Anniversary offer

Subisu Cablenet on the occasion of its 14th anniversary launched its "Amazing Anniversary Offer". For Rs 4,999 customers can now get a package of

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PICS: BINITA DAHAL

A KIDNEY HAS NO GENDER

But transplants are heavily skewed in favour of men

BINITA DAHAL

Lack of awareness about fluid intake and overwork has exposed many Nepalis to the risk of kidney failure, but a breakdown of kidney transplants reflects a deep gender disparity. After transplants were first performed in Nepal six years ago, nearly 400 patients have received kidneys from donors. But 90 percent of them are men, and 80 per cent of the donors are women. The Human Organ Transplant Centre (HOTC) in Bhaktapur (*pic, right*) has performed 56 kidney transplants in the past year of which only eight are women. One of them is Zarina



Shrestha, 33, whose story is emblematic of the problems faced by female kidney patients needing transplants. When her body started swelling a year ago, Zarina became a double victim: of the disease and her husband's unkindness. When both her kidneys failed, she needed a transplant. On the way back from hospital, she remembers hoping that her husband could donate her one of his kidneys. Instead, he got angry in the car and shouted at her for having contracted such an expensive disease. "I never thought my

husband could say such harsh words when I needed his support the most, he screamed at me saying how unlucky he was to marry me and said he would marry another woman to help him with household work." Zarina sobbed as she related this from her hospital bed (*pic, above*) last week after finally receiving a kidney from her brother. She needs a dialysis twice a week and the procedures cost her Rs 35,000 each time besides the Rs 500,000 for the transplant operation itself. "My father passed away when I was a toddler, so my brother took his place for me, he has been taking care of me since and came to my rescue," she says, adding that her brother is also paying for all her expenses. Zarina has a 12-year-old son who came forward to offer one of his kidneys when he found out his father refused. Zarina's brother immediately said he

would donate his kidney to his sister when he heard of her need. The HOTC's Pukar Chandra Shrestha says Zarina is the first woman who was offered kidney by her brother. He said it was rare for a male donor to come forward to help a female relative. There are only a few cases where a husband donates a kidney to the wife. "I am ashamed to say that Nepali men are very selfish and don't offer to save the lives of female family members, even when they know that the donor can live with one kidney," Shrestha told us. "Mothers, sisters, wives come forward readily to donate their kidneys to ailing relatives, but not the husbands and brothers, that is the bitter truth." To address this gender disparity in kidney donation, HOTC and Aarogya Foundation have started giving Rs 50,000 to male donors. Zarina's brother was the first donor to receive the incentive. Every year, 3,000 Nepalis need kidney transplants and this number is growing with urbanisation and lack of awareness about precursor factors like dehydration, chronic infections and untreated hypertension. Only 10 per cent of kidney patients get proper treatment, and most patients can't afford transplants. "Dialysis is not a long-term solution, kidney patient must transplant to have a longer life," Shrestha said, "but it is expensive, even I can't afford the expenses if I got a transplant." Nepali law forbids kidney transplant outside immediate family members to control the illegal kidney trade, but experts say an amendment is needed to prevent people from going to India for transplant if a family member doesn't agree to donate. Zarina is grateful to her brother for saving her life, but many other female kidney patients in Nepal are not so lucky. For doctors like Shrestha this is a manifestation of patriarchy that they see every day in their kidney ward. He says: "I have seen parents pressuring their sons not to donate kidneys to their daughters-in-law, in most cases the feeling is if she dies he can always marry a healthy woman."

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■ Staying alive, #290

■ Worst disease for a Nepali, #97

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The news woman

A successful
Indian TV
journalist
and her
Nepali roots

SANJEEV SHARMA

When acclaimed Indian TV journalist Smita Sharma spoke to former Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai in Nepali, it was his wife Hisila Yami who was most surprised. Smita had gone to Baluwatar to interview Bhattarai and still remembers the look on Yami's face when she explained her Nepal connection.

Smita's grandparents, originally from Syangja, had to move to India because they were an inter-caste couple. "Their marriage wasn't accepted by the society," says Smita, who is now in charge of foreign affairs at TV Today Network, one of India's leading news television networks.

Growing up with her family in a small town in West Bengal where the Sharmas were based, Smita always dreamt of moving to the big city. She says journalism attracted her because of its vast domain, story telling opportunities and the right to question.

Smita began her career in 2003 as a junior correspondent for *Doordarshan*, the Indian public broadcaster but, it was anchoring for a youth talk show for another news channel that made her a tv celebrity in the Indian media.

"Many people in small cities across India remember me from that program," says Smita who studied English and has a PG diploma in Mass Communication from Jadavpur University, Kolkata. She also topped her batch while studying Broadcasting Journalism at Indian Institute of Mass Communication in New Delhi.

In an industry where sensational journalism is so widespread, Smita has carved a niche for hard-hitting live coverage of world events. Whether it is riots in Egypt, protests in Bangladesh or elections in Pakistan, Smita has been on the scene to report it all live for viewers back home in India.

In 2013, she received the prestigious Ramnath Goenka Excellence Award in Journalism for her reportage on Kashmir Valley uprising in 2010. Smita has reported for both the Hindi and English channels of Network 18, where she has been working since 2005.

A simple google search is enough to yield an impressive list of her work on domestic as well as foreign affairs. Smिता's report on Badrinath floods last year and her interview with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi earlier this year top most searches.

“Journalism is a profession of perseverance and diligence,” says Smita, who considers the sensational news stories in Indian news channels just competition for eyeballs.

Smita was in Kathmandu to cover the SAARC Summit and her moderation in the 'India Today Global Round Table' during the summit was well received.

"For SAARC to work it is imperative that India and Pakistan resolve their differences," says Smita, adding that the luke-warm relations between the two countries was evident in the Kathmandu symposium as well. She is a bit more positive about Nepal-India relations: "Considering PM Modi's tendency to keep everything under control, the Nepal-India ties will be dealt at a political level rather than through security agencies."

Smita's book *Travelogue in Pakistan* is set to be released soon. 📖

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EVENTS



Slam it,

Sarah Kay, an internationally acclaimed spoken word poet, will be performing live in Kathmandu.

Rs 700, 27 December, 2 to 5pm, Alliance Française, Tripureshwor, (01)4241163

#Occupy,

A collection of art objects with global conscience.

Till 7 January 2015, 10am to 6.30pm,

The City Museum Kathmandu, Darbar Marg

Photography workshop,

A unique photography workshop for all budding photographers - hobbyists, non-professionals and beginners.

Till 29 December, 7 to 9am, SCC Kathmandu, Kupondole, www.facebook.com/scc.kathmandu

Tokyo to Kathmandu,

Recollections in print of artist Kabi Raj Lama's artistic and spiritual quest from Tokyo to Kathmandu.

Till 30 December, 11am to 5pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited

Malini,

A charity show of Rabindranath Tagore's *Malini* in support of Nepal Critical Care Development Foundation.

Rs 500, 15 January 2015, 4.30pm to 6pm, Theatre Village, Lajimpat



Pedal power,

Hop on your cycle and rally to St Xavier's School in Godavari to collect money for the underprivileged children of the area.

Rs 400 (students) & Rs 600 (others), 27 December, 9am onwards, Patan Darbar Square, 9849200119

Newari folk,

Dhon Cholecha, an adaptation of Satya Mohan Joshi's *Buddhimati Dhon Cholecha*.

Till 5 January 2015 (except Tuesdays), 4.45pm, Shilpee Natya Samuha, Battisputali

Ultra run,

Participate in an ultra distance trail race in the northern hills of Kathmandu starting at the Shivapuri National Park.

3 January 2015, Shivapuri National Park, More information and registration: www.ultratrailkathmandu.com, info@trailrunningnepal.org

DINING

New year at New Orleans,

Celebrate New Year's Eve with Peking duck and roast pork cooked Danish style with great wine deals and more.

6.30pm onwards, Thamel, (01)4700736

Mike's Breakfast,

Huge breakfasts and a never-ending supply of coffee amidst a lush garden setting characterise this café, popular among tourists and locals alike. *Naxal, 4424303*

The Old House,

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

Fire and Ice,

For the best pizzas in town, and much more. *Thamel, 4250210*



Mul Chowk,

Executive chef Dil Bahadur Maharjan brings in his culinary expertise to match the charms of a bygone era at this special place. Enjoy a special New Year evening with a five course meal, mulled wine and classic desserts.

Babar Mahal Revisited, (01)4259801

Alfresco,

For homemade pastas and other lip-smacking Italian delights.

Soaltee Crowne Plaza, (01)4273999



New year dinner,

Celebrate the Eve with a buffet dinner (Rs 4,700) at The Café, or have a five-course meal with champagne and dessert wine (Rs 6,000) at Rox Restaurant.

31 December, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, Boudha, (01)4491234

Trisara,

With dishes like flambéed prawns, crispy chicken, and khau soi, it would be foolish to ignore this restaurant's charms. *Lajimpat*

Lal Durbar Restaurant,

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



Chez Caroline,

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थप जानकारीको लागि: www.wannapumapost.com

MUSIC



Deathfest

Accomplished – local and international – Extreme Metal bands come together to celebrate the glorious genre. 9 and 10 January, www.facebook.com/NEPAL.DEATHFEST



Night

Popular new school folk band Night launches their new album *Ani Ukali, Sangai Orali*. Rs 700 (with CD), 27 December, 5 to 7pm, Theatre Village, Lajimpat

Rocking it

1974 AD and Anuprastha perform with students, food and game stalls. 27 December, 1pm onwards, Jawalakhel Ground, 9843147057

New beginning

Tap your toes to DJ music and special dance performances followed by a lavish gala dinner for New Year's Eve. Rs 5,999 (single), Rs 9,999 (couple), 31 December, Garden Pavilion, Hotel Shangri La, Lajimpat, (01)4412999



Musical Eve

Celebrate New Year's Eve with live performances by 1974AD and Parbati Rai, dance shows and a special dinner. 31 December, Summit Hotel, Kupondole, (01)5521810, (01)5524694

GETAWAYS

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Waterfront Resort,

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Buddha Maya Gardens Hotel,

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Pleasure	रु. ५,२७२ .२६

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Katniss Everdeen, the heroine of the super successful *The Hunger Games* series, may have made many pick up their bows and arrows in the west, but in Nepal the sport still lags behind in popularity.

Hoping to change this is entrepreneur Navin Basnyet whose latest venture, The Best Archery, is the first of its kind indoor archery

shooting range in Nepal.

"Although our primary goal is to attract amateurs to take up archery as a recreational activity, we also want to promote archery as a sport in Nepal," says Basnyet.

The shooting range in Jhamsikhel is a standard 18m indoor facility. Opened last month, the place has been getting a fair number of aspiring bowmen.

Professional archer Ongyal Gurung (*pic, above*) who has represented Nepal in several international competitions and now conducts classes at the range says: "This is an excellent startup because there is a shortage of shooting ranges in Kathmandu."

Gurung himself practiced shooting arrows at dumping sites near Chobhar.

Archery has long been part of culture of people from the mountain communities but modern archery has yet to take off. Gurung wants to bridge the gap between the two by bringing archers from Manang to Kathmandu to train and practice at the range.

"When I took a few classes in rural areas, I noticed that some

people were holding their bows horizontally instead of vertically. They have the skills but lack knowledge," says Gurung who would like to see more Nepali archers at international stages.

The Best Archery welcomes all interested to play.

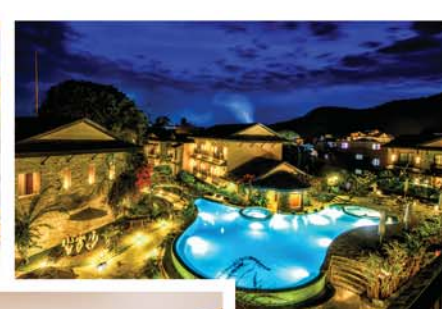
"Archery has no height, age or gender barriers and I believe anyone will enjoy it within minutes



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Bringing back archery

ELVIN L. SHRESTHA

Pokhara next week is expected to select a team to send to the Asia Cup 2015 starting 12 January in Delhi.

Basnyet plans to hold mini-tournaments at his facility and also assemble a team of archers to compete in the national championship. He also runs the popular Mahalaxmistan futsal centre in Lalitpur.

He says: "I hope that the range can contribute to the sport nationally by producing archers who can bring home medals from international competitions." 🇳🇵

(01)2299904,
thebestarchery@gmail.com,
www.facebook.com/thebestarchey

of practicing," says Basnyet, who is also learning the sport along with his clients.

The Best Archery aims to encourage untrained enthusiasts to play professionally, and novices to try it at least once. "Our facility is for both professionals and amateurs," says Basnyet.

The National Archery Championship set to be held in

BIKRAM RAI



PICS: ELAINE WANG YIWEI

Practice golf

Want to practice your strokes but the December cold is preventing you from driving all the way to Gokarna or Gaushala? Or you are worried the rain will play spoil sport? Indoor golf simulation may just be what you are looking for.

But, wait. You can only use the simulation room at the Nepal Golf Zone (NGZ) in Gairidhara after the inhouse instructor has given you a pass on your golfing ability.

"Because the simulator is of high quality and very expensive, we have to be very careful," says Pawan Chitrakar of NGZ.

However, for those just starting out, NGZ also has a driving range (pic, above) where for Rs 300, a person can strike 100 balls. And for Rs 500, you get to strike unlimited balls.

The place also has a membership plan which costs Rs 3,000 per month. A professional coach will be made available for an extra Rs 5,000.

Once you finish your course, and are deemed 'ready', you can enjoy golfing in the Indoor Golf Simulation room which accommodates two to six players. There are also a myriad of courses to choose from.

After taking over the establishment from previous owners, Chitrakar has been working to revive the place. An open bar where sports fans can enjoy watching football has been added to the backyard, and there is plans to open a cigar room for "the gentlemen".



What remains the same is Maan nam, a Korean restaurant inside the complex, a popular place for lovers of Hankook cuisine.

While Tuesday evenings are for Salsa, it is live music time on Friday nights and on Sunday mornings, Maan nam hosts a farmers' market. Crafted in Kathmandu, a handicrafts manufacturer also has a small outlet at the NGZ building. 🇳🇵

Claire Li Yingxue

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The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies



For someone like me, who grew up reading (and loving) J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and, inevitably, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, it was with bated breath and not a small amount of apprehension that I awaited the cinematic adaptations of these classics by



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

Peter Jackson, a relatively unknown director at the time. By my standards, his adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* books couldn't have been better. Perfectly cast, and lovingly adapted, the films are a delight. When rumours began circling about Jacksom helming *The Hobbit*, fans (this reviewer included)

had only one question: could we really hope for more of this kind of same? Unfortunately, the Hollywood marketing machine, capitalising on the spectacular success of the first trilogy, decided to do the same with the adaptation of *The Hobbit*, a slim volume that while dense with the lore of Middle Earth hardly warrants three films. So it would just be bad judgement to claim that this latest trilogy, parceled out over the last three Christmas seasons aren't made with the intent of extorting money from viewers who wish to prolong their sojourn in Tolkien's beloved Middle Earth for as long as possible. The final chapter begins where *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* (2013) ended. Smaug, the dragon (voiced by Benedict Cumberbatch) has desolated Laketown near the Lonely

Mountain in his rage after discovering that Bilbo Baggins (Martin Freeman) has sneaked in under his nose to steal his vast treasure. Equally menacing is a planned assault on the treasures of the mountain by the Orcs (a deadly force spawned by Sauron, the Dark one), and by the elves and the people of Laketown all of whom have been promised a share of the fabled unimaginable riches hoarded by Smaug. While non-fantasy lovers might find themselves impatient of this final film that winds up the fortunes of our favourite characters including Gandalf (Ian McKellan), Galadriel (Cate Blanchett), Legolas (Orlando Bloom), and Thorin Okenshield (Richard Armitage), I would say that for the most part, I thoroughly enjoyed this well made indulgence. Peter Jackson as usual stays true to Tolkien's work, while bowing perhaps just a little to Hollywood's avarice.

If this review appears incomprehensible to you, I apologise. This particular week, the column was written for lovers of Tolkien who are up to speed on their Middle Earth trivia. Perhaps, it will prompt those who are intrigued to go out and read the books? They will keep you company for the rest of your life. That is a promise. You can decide for yourself if you feel the same way about the films.

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■ Trailer

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HAPPENINGS



WARM WELCOME: Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi receives a warm welcome at Apex College in Kathmandu on Friday. Satyarthi, who was on a three-day vist to the country, gave a talk at the college.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Prime Minister Sushil Koirala attends a photo exhibition celebrating the life of former Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai on the occassion of Bhattarai's 91st birth anniversary on Tuesday.



WAKE UP: Members of 11 student unions participate in a 'slumber' rally in front of the Constituent Assembly Building at New Baneshwor demanding CA members draft the constitution on time.



DID IT: Susmita Maskey, the first Nepali woman to climb all the tallest mountains of the seven continents, at the Tribhuvan International Airport on Friday.

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ART FOR HEART'S SAKE

In November 2012, a young Nepali woman returning from Saudi Arabia, was raped and robbed by immigration police in Kathmandu, prompting protests across the capital. Public outrage over the crime spilled into the streets in front of the Prime Minister's official residence in Baluwatar and expanded to include other incidents of violence against women in the country. The movement spread through social media and was called Occupy Baluwatar.

Many artists took part in the demonstrations, but one piece of artwork conceived specially for the occasion



was never shown: Aditya Aryal's image representing a topless Kumari holding hands on her head, with butterfly wings behind her back with the inscription 'Rape Me' over the top.

Two years later, this audacious artwork is finally on display as part of #Occupy: an expression of global conscience that is on at the City Museum till 7 January. The exhibition gathers images from the Occupy movements in New York (Occupy Wall Street), Hong-Kong (Occupy Central) and Kathmandu (Occupy Baluwatar).

Museum director Kashish Das

Shrestha curated the exhibition to relive the worldwide outrage that had its own manifestation on the streets of Kathmandu. "It was a social experiment stirring reflection," he said, "and I hope the audience will feel something in their hearts."

Aryal himself felt the Kumari image was too sensitive to be exhibited at the time. "The street art scene of Kathmandu was still fresh," Aryal explained. "I didn't want to spoil it before its breakthrough with a provocative artwork."

There was and is an epidemic of rape and violence in India and Nepal, and

Aryal remembers thinking: "If we worship goddesses, why cannot we respect real women?"

The wings on the Kumari are a throwback to the Nirvana album *In Utero* and the song *Rape Me* was written by Kurt Cobain to express his feelings about his family's privacy being constantly 'raped' by the media.

After Occupy Baluwatar, Aditya Aryal (pic, left) became a well-known street artist who goes under the pseudonym of Sadhu-X and his works have been exhibited in Kathmandu with those of his friends from ArtLab Life collective.

He tried to put up 'Rape Me', but no gallery in Kathmandu would risk putting it up. As in India, artists and galleries have been threatened and attacked for depicting religious motifs. Aryal maintains that he doesn't intend any disrespect to anyone's faith.

City Museum's Shrestha knows he is dealing with a sensitive issue, but adds that he felt it was important to shock people about impunity and injustice. He sums it up: "There's no reflection without provocation."

Aditya Aryal says he is glad Shrestha agreed to take the risk. "I try to make people face their contradictions," he said, "and I'm happy that a Nepali, moreover a Newar, curator understood my work."

Stéphane Huët

#Occupy: an expression of global conscience
The City Museum
Until 7 January 2015
www.thecitymuseum.org



fresh, and bursting with flavours. If you like flour-made dumplings, opt for the steamed bun (Rs 50 per piece), another traditional northern Chinese food.

For beef eaters, the Stir fry beef (Rs 500) and boiled slice beef with hot flavour sauce (small Rs 150) are recommended. The beef fried with onion, celery and dry chili, will satisfy those who prefer a little hotness in their dish while the boiled slice beef

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9:30PM



PICS: ELAINE WANG YIWEI

When in doubt, settle for Chinese is my eating out philosophy. And, that's how we landed in Lao Beijing, amongst the many, many restaurants at Lakeside in Pokhara.

The narrow path that leads to the restaurant reminded this writer of Hutongs in Beijing from where the owner, Liu Xiansheng, comes.

Liu came to Pokhara last year, fell in love with the place, and decided to stay. Dissatisfied with presentation of Chinese cuisine as an oily and spicy fare, he decided to open Lao Beijing in May this year to introduce traditional, northern flavours to diners who

Lao Beijing

are only familiar with Szechuan-Chinese dishes.

"All our dishes are prepared with minimum oil and spice, ours is more home style cooking," said Liu. We thought so too.

The first dish that we tried - the Soya bean paste noodles (Rs 400) - set the precedent for rest to follow. The noodles, prepared by hand, (Lao Beijing serves both handpulled

and machine made noodles) was served with shredded cucumber and tomato slices and had an authentic Beijing taste - courtesy of the sauces that Liu imports from the Chinese capital.

We also ordered two other noodle dishes: Sesame paste noodles (Rs 400) and Noodles with gravy (Rs 400). Both tasted divine, and celebrated its ingredients that

are unique to Chinese cuisine. The gravy, prepared with pork, dry lily, agaric, eggs is a traditional Chinese family recipe that all foodies should try.

Lao Beijing also offers a variety of Chinese dumplings. Unlike the Nepali way of cooking it, the dumplings at Lao's are poached. We tried the one with pork and Chinese cabbage (Rs 400). It was

which is cooked for hours, was another crowd pleaser.

Fried pork with cabbage (Rs 350) and fried Chinese cabbage with vinegar and dried chili (Rs 250) were two other dishes that we ate which helped quell a little bit of the homesickness we were feeling.

The average price per person comes down to Rs 500, a bargain for the taste and quality of the dishes on offer if you ask me.

Claire Li Yingxue

How to get there: Lao Beijing is at Lakeside, Pokhara next to Standard Chartered Bank.

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Legionnaires' Disease

Legionnaires' Disease (LD). The term may sound unfamiliar to Nepalis, but the type of pneumonia LD refers to, was recently found in some patients in Kathmandu. Luckily, there have been no reports of new cases.

LD is classically thought of as pneumonia that is contacted from water sources. The



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

bacteria, *Legionella*, lives in water and also inside amoebas (single cell organisms) that are found in water.

The water sources most often implicated for harbouring *Legionella* are shower sprays, air-conditioners,



humidifiers, decorative fountains, respiratory therapy equipment and even roadside puddles which are plentiful in Nepal. Although proper chlorination of the water may help to fight off the bacteria, it is known to easily resist low levels of chlorine in the water.

The good news is that person-to-person transmission is not known to happen with this disease, meaning unlike respiratory

illnesses such as viral diseases and tuberculosis, LD is not transmitted by droplet infection.

How this pneumonia got its name is an interesting story.

In the summer of 1976, at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia, USA, the American Legion (organisation of US war veterans) was holding its 58th annual convention. The water in the hotel's air conditioning system was contaminated with *Legionella* and the infection quickly spread to the attendees. Presentations ranged from mild flulike symptoms to multisystem organ failure. Of the

182 people infected, 29 died.

Although *Legionella* was not identified until 1976, the bacteria was found in a clinical specimen from 1943. Many pneumonia outbreaks in different parts of the world that predate 1976 have also been traced to *Legionella* on examination of archived specimens.


Worldwide prevalence reports for LD have increased with time, likely due to doctors being more aware of the disease and also the availability of better diagnostics. In countries such as Nepal, it is probable that LD infections may now be detected because of increased usage of air-conditioning and other environmental and behavioral reasons.

How can we detect it in a patient? If a person has pneumonia, LD has to be in the differential diagnosis and the symptoms may be very mild to life threatening as was noted in the outbreak at the meeting of the American Legion. Non-specific signs such as fever, cough, diarrhea, lethargy, and muscle pains may be the first

presentations of LD.

The microbiological diagnosis is hard to make in Nepal chiefly due to lack of availability of the tests. But it is true that even in countries where facilities are available, the diagnosis of LD is very often missed because the diagnosis is not entertained and tests are not done; but even where tests are available, the current tests may not be accurate enough.

The simple antigen test in urine is the most commonly used diagnostic method and treatment starts with an antibiotic. Many of the commonly available antibiotics in Nepal such as azithromycin or the newer quinolones are usually effective against LD.

There is no vaccination against this pneumonia like there is for the more common pneumococcal pneumonia- the pneumococcal vaccine which all people over 65 are highly recommended to take once in their lifetime. The pneumococcal vaccine is available in Nepal in many hospitals and clinics. 

GIZMO by YANTRICK

Picture Perfect

Sony has always been at the apex or thereabouts of the best television pyramid with the Bravia line of LED TVs especially offering highly desirable screens. The 2014 line of Bravia televisions is no different and the 55 inch W800B 3D LED TV is the jewel in the crown.

The W800B sports an unmistakably stylish Sony design, with its near-invisible jet black frame standing on a solid silver stand. The bezel features a thin, attractive black aluminum frame that wraps around the edges of the television, giving the illusion that the TV is "all screen."

All the connection ports are at the rear of the W800B, where two analog audio inputs, a component/composite input, four HDMI inputs, an Ethernet connection, a digital audio jack, a subwoofer out, two USB 2.0 inputs, and a

headphone jack are located. Also included in the box are a standard Sony remote control and a pair of active 3D glasses. Once on, the W800B features a straightforward smart TV platform with a decent selection of apps, features, and the all-important internet connectivity.


Picture quality is where the W800B excels in. Remarkable video clarity is the name of the game with the W800B, and high-definition content looks jaw-droppingly awesome on the Sony screen. The W800B supports video resolutions up to 1080p, with an aspect ratio of 16:9. The dynamic contrast ratio is more than one million to one, which result in dark blacks, bright whites



and vivid all-around color. The W800B also boasts an impressive refresh rate of 240Hz to keep your movie playback smooth and seamless. It also has decent 3D features up its sleeves with 2D to 3D conversion working like a charm.

The built-in Wi-Fi connects the W800B to many online streaming services, and the web browser lets you surf the internet from the couch. The W800B also sports a comb filter and noise

reduction, which ensure that you do not lose video quality during playback. The Energy Star certification means you do not have to worry about the inverter battery running out during load shedding hours. Sound quality on such a slim screen is also admirable with decent sound clarity for movie viewing. The W800B is also a delight for gamers, with its ability to handle fast-paced action at high-refresh rates ideal for your shiny new PlayStation 4.

Retailing for approximately Rs 200,000 and packed with solid features and pleasing design, the Sony Bravia 55W800B is surely a bang-for-the-buck for all the big screen loving gadget-aficionados. 

Yantrick's Verdict: The Sony Bravia 55W800B is a stellar TV, high on performance and with a great set of features and applications, ideal to hold the mantle as the centerpiece of any living room.

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HAIR FACT CHECK

■ Both men and women might suffer from androgenetic hair loss, but it's more usually seen in men.



■ The commonly-seen, coin-shaped hair loss spot is called alopecia areata, which normally recovers by itself.
■ There are several medications for hair regrowth, for example, finasteride (Propecia), dutasteride (Avodart), and minoxidil (Rogaine).



■ You can prevent hair fall by several ways, such as pay attention to good hair cleanliness, use regular shampooing, and keep good nutrition for hair.
■ If you want to check the reason for your hair loss, you should take the blood tests, which includes iron level, vitamin B, thyroid function tests (TFT) and blood count (CBC).

MY FAVORITE WINTER HAIR MASKS

Honey and olive oil for dry hair

Mix 4 tbsp honey with 6 tbsp of olive oil. Leave it on for 15 to 30 minutes. It's a nurturing mask which will transform your hair.



Egg, Olive oil and avocado mask

Mix one egg, one tbsp olive oil and half an avocado. It adds shine and moisture back into your hair.

Avocado, Olive Oil and Honey

Mash one ripe avocado and add one tbsp of honey and two tbsp of olive oil. Blend it well and apply for 20 minutes. I always prefer to leave it for an hour. You can wrap a plastic bag over it to maximise the effect.

THE FALL OF THE TRESSES

Every time you wash your hair, you see the drain clogged with your mane and when you comb your lovely tresses you see strands left behind on the comb. You may try to hide the slightly visible bald patches on your head with a new hairstyle or try one of the hundreds of hair fall products available in the market to solve the problem but the truth is until you get to the root of your problem, the fall won't stop.

Hair fall is a common problem. I know it can be very frightening and confusing especially when you don't know what's causing it.

Here are few causes and remedies for hair fall that will be very handy this winter.

Many factors including thyroid disorders, anemia, chemical treatments of the hair and even genetics cause hair fall. My suggestion is to first contact a dermatologist and get his/her advice.

As we all know hair is made up of a protein called keratin so having a balanced diet with the right blend of proteins, iron and essential vitamins is crucial for hair growth.

With age the body's capacity to absorb nutrients decreases and hair starts thinning. To ensure your locks remain healthy, intake of soy beans, dairy products, fish, eggs and lots of nuts is a must. You can also take fish oil tablets like seven seas which is rich in omega 3. Personally, I take tablets which have amino acids, as lack of amino acids too causes hair loss.

Change in hormones and stress also cause hair fall. Although hair fall caused

due to stress is not permanent, practicing meditation and yoga to de-stress as well as taking deep breathes and drinking water helps keep it in check.

Heredity and prolonged illness is also another cause for hair loss. Chronic diseases like cancer, typhoid and jaundice as well as vitamin B deficiency can trigger hair loss. Beautiful hair is a reflection of good health, so if there is any problem with your general health it reflects on your skin and hair.

Hair fall also occurs if you take medicines on a regular basis. But worry not, hair fall due to medications is temporary.

Excessive use of heated rollers, straighteners and chemical treatments like colouring, perming, rebonding, etc can not only destroy the hair texture, but also cause breakage and split ends.

Dramatic weight loss as well as disorders like anorexia, bulimia are other factors that cause hair loss.



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Two women guerrillas who survived the war, struggle to survive the peace

FORGOTTEN



DEEPAK ADHIKARI



MEMORY OF WAR: Dil Kumari Malla (Comrade Darshana) holds a photo of her first husband, (left) Dhan Bahadur Pun, a PLA platoon commander who was killed in an aerial attack in 2005 in Rukum.

Darshana (above) poses for a photograph with her second husband Surjit Buda at a photo studio in Bijauri, Dang. Buda was disqualified in UNMIN verification. Darshana (below, in red scarf) with a group of PLA fighters in a remote area of Baglung district in 2003.



DEEPAK ADHIKARI
in DANG

The battle of Khara in Rukum on 7 April 2005 dealt a devastating blow to the Maoists, and forced them to reorient their strategy from war to peace. But for Dil Kumari Malla (Darshana) the name ‘Khara’ will always be a painful reminder of where she lost her husband.

Darshana had been married to Dhan Bahadur Pun, a 21 year-old platoon commander, for three years. She was just 18 and they had only spent a couple of months together when Pun was deployed to Bhojpur in eastern Nepal. They had to spend long periods apart without letters or phone calls.

Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal ordered hundreds of guerrillas of his ‘People’s Liberation Army’ to attack the strategic hilltop base of the Royal Nepal Army in Khara. More than 150 were killed in the battle in which the army used night-vision helicopters to repulse the attack.

Following the rout, surviving guerrillas retreated to Dalsinge, a remote hamlet in Rukum and had been holed up there for five days when they were caught in a helicopter attack by the army. Four of the guerrillas were killed, including Darshana’s husband.

A company commander ordered Darshana to hand over



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FIGHTERS



DEEPAK ADHIKARI

her rifle and told her to go home, saying she looked unwell. A few weeks earlier, Darshana had had an abortion while three months pregnant. She wasn't told her husband was dead, and she never got to see his body before it was buried on a hillside.

"We were fighting a war so it was normal that some of us would die. If it was not him, it could have been me," Darshana, now 28, says matter-of-factly. She had heard his name on the list of casualties that day and even saw a bloodstained rifle that belonged to him. "But they denied it was his," she recalls with a lingering hint of bitterness.

Nearly ten years later, the war is a distant memory. With her sad, faraway eyes Darshana tends to her livestock taking them to the forest across a stream to graze. She lives with her second husband, another former guerrilla Surjit Buda, in a cluster of houses in Sakram village of Dang district, a 15-minute walk from her former camp. The region's bewitching beauty belies a harsh, hardscrabble life.

Surjit went to Kathmandu to seek a job abroad but his war disability made him unqualified. They live in a two-storey mud-brick house, with a communal tap in the courtyard and a small shed for the animals. Even though they look poor, Darshana and Surjit are well-off by the standards of this impoverished district.

PEACE TIME: Kamala Oli, 30, (left) was part of a Maoist unit that attacked a police base in Bhalubang on the East-West highway. Today, she spends most of her time looking after her grocery store in Dang.

Surjit is one of six children of a former soldier in the British Army, and his family had two hectares of paddy fields in Salyan district. In 2002, barely months after the Royal Nepal Army entered the war, Surjit joined the Maoists.

Darshana, for her part, was in Grade 6 at a local school when police came to her house looking for her elder brother who had joined the Maoists. The police pointed to the photograph of her eldest brother, Ranjit Kumar Malla in an Indian Army uniform, and mistakenly thought he was wearing a Maoist combat fatigues.

The brutality made even young girls like Darshana think of the police as their enemy, and she eventually joined the Maoists as well. Despite her brother's insistence that she study to become a doctor, Darshana became part of the wave of thousands of rural boys and girls who swelled the Maoist ranks. Some were forcibly conscripted, but some like Darshana joined voluntarily.

"We were inspired by their slogans of radical change in the country," recalls Darshana, whose commitment to the revolution grew after each battle that she took part in. "We were told that we would have our own state, which would ensure food and shelter to the poor. We were told that rich people's mansions would be distributed among the homeless."

Today, the slogans sound hollow to Darshana and dozens of other former Maoist guerrillas who have clustered around their

former camps, which are now occupied by Armed Police Force. Nearly 250 former Maoist fighters have settled in Bijauri village near where they fought.

Kamala Oli, 30, was part of a Maoist unit that attacked an armed police base in Bhalubang on the East-West highway, not very far from where she now lives with her two school-going children. Plans for the attack got leaked, and as a result the raid was unsuccessful. Eight Maoists were killed and dozens injured.

The war has now faded from her memory "I had learned how to shoot, how to make bombs, but now I have forgotten everything," she says. "What's the use now?"

There are other urgent tasks she has to attend to these days: plucking radish from the fields, looking after her tiny grocery store. She doesn't even have time to speak to a journalist who shows up unannounced at her door. Her husband, Dil Bahadur Oli, 30, who like Kamala was injured in the war, is preparing to leave for Malaysia. "He decided to go abroad for the future of our young children," she says, and disappears into the fields.

Compared to Kamala, life has been harsher on Darshana and she appears angrier. "My husband cannot work because of the war injuries. I have heard of NGOs that support former fighters. But no one cares about us," she says. "Our leaders keep telling us that they will look after us. But they have done nothing for us. I feel like killing them." 🇳🇵



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In a stateless state

Meena Sharma in
Himal Khabarpatrika, 22 December

Eighteen-year-old Neha Gurung had dreams to become a doctor. But, when she went to submit her forms for her MBBS entrance exams, she was rejected. Neha was asked to submit her citizenship certificate, but she didn't have one. So, she had to search for a subject course that didn't require her to show citizenship papers and went on to get top marks in the Nepal Law Campus BA/LLB exams.

Neha's mother Deepti Gurung (pic above) has been fighting relentlessly to get her two daughters citizenship, but despite repeated visits to the ward office at Lalitpur, Deepti's citizenship application still hasn't been accepted.

"They say my husband's citizenship, land ownership certificates and tax papers are required to approve my daughters' birth certificates," says Deepti whose husband walked out on her years ago.

Last year she had to take the fight to court when her younger daughter's application for district level exams was turned down

by the Department of Education, Lalitpur on grounds of failure to produce a birth certificate. It was only after the Supreme Court intervened that her daughter got to sit for her exams. However, Deepti is worried that after completing high school, she will also suffer the same fate as her sister's.

Deepti who has been in the tourism business for the past 18 years, has had to abandon her job to devote full time to focus on her legal battle with the state. She filed a writ to procure citizenship certificate for her daughters, and the hearing is on 8 January.

"Let's see what the Supreme Court's decision is," she says.

Although Nepal's Interim Constitution 2006 and Nepal Citizenship Act 2006 provides for citizenship under the mother's name, it remains largely unimplemented, leaving many like Deepti and her daughters without an identity, citizenship and travel documents.

Sami Thapa, a divorcee has been to the KMC ward number 29 office multiple times but even with her marriage registration certificate, divorce papers, copies of her ex-husband's citizenship and her own citizenship in place,

she has been unable to obtain an infant identity card for her son. "They refused to issue the identification card saying that my husband will take my son once he turns 16," says Thapa.

Diwakar Chettri, a well-known cartoonist also knows what it's like to be humiliated by government authorities, when trying to get a citizenship through the mother.

"I applied for a citizenship certificate 23 years ago at District Administration Office, Lalitpur. But they humiliated me saying I was a child born to an unmarried mother," says the 40-year-old, "After that I couldn't muster the courage to go back there again."

In the absence of a citizenship certificate he hasn't been able to buy land, open a bank account, get a driving license or even continue his education. His case for a citizenship has been pending in the Supreme Court for the past two years.

Arjun Kumar Sah, 25, an MBA student at Himalayan White House College couldn't go to Bangkok on an educational tour because he didn't have a passport. Without a citizenship certificate, he will also not be eligible for internships at corporate houses.

"I don't know what to do," says Sah, who has been making the rounds of the District Administration Office in Mahottari ever since he turned 18. He filed a writ at the Supreme Court on February, 2013. His hearing is scheduled for 12 January this year and he has his fingers crossed.

It is not only the children of divorced mothers who are struggling to obtain citizenship certificates. Those born out of rape, prostitution and live-in relationships face the same difficulties. According to Menuka Thapa, president of Raksha Nepal, an NGO working for sexually exploited women and their children, most of Raksha Nepal children do not have birth certificates meaning it will be next to impossible to obtain a citizenship.

Letter to PKD and BRB

Kathmandutoday.com, 21 December

KATHMANDU TODAY
काठमाण्डु दुहे

I am Saptanath Neupane (pic), a farmer from Nuwakot who can't afford two square meals a day. Since I was 12, I have been a day labourer. You probably don't have time to listen to me and I doubt that even if you do you will do anything about it.

We grew enough food on our land to feed the family, but I toiled as a porter to put my eldest son Arjun through school so he got a college degree. Arjun was born in 1975 and after completing his SLC from Tupche, he enrolled in Saraswati Campus in Kathmandu. He was a good student and even got a scholarship in college. He never fought with anyone and couldn't bear to see anyone in distress. After graduation, he got a job at the Uttargaya School in Tupche. In 2001, he went underground to join the Maoists. My fourth son joined the Maoist army after he completed his SLC and became a commander.

Baburamji, I heard your daughter is now doing her PhD. I won't begrudge you that, you have money and power that gave her that opportunity. My son may have also done his PhD if I was better off. I also heard that you took your father on a religious pilgrimage. That's what sons are for. If you hadn't waged a war, my son would also have been home and taken me on a pilgrimage. Prachandaji, you have your family around you. I don't.

I wasn't a Maoist, yet the torture I suffered for having sons who joined your revolution will take days to describe. Security forces



dragged me out of the house on a cold winter night. I get goosebumps remembering what they did to me. They looked at my rough farmers' hands and accused me of carrying guns, if I had red eyes they'd say I'd been up all night plotting a revolution. If I spoke, they asked me to shut up. If I kept quiet, they'd taunt me. I was locked up for weeks on end, and had to pay for meals out of my own pockets. Let's not talk about the torture. I still can't stand straight. Another son working in the capital disappeared, we had lost all hope of him returning but somehow he came back.

You have become politicians in Kathmandu riding the backs of people like my sons, yet you have forgotten their sacrifices. If those who supported you throughout your struggle don't support you now, what is the use of your politics? My son couldn't find any alternative to pay off his debts, so he went to Malaysia. I went to your headquarter thrice to get a job for my eldest grandson. No one met me.

How will you take care of the entire country if you can't even take care of one family that suffered for you? You needed young people like my son to get to power, and now you have abandoned them. You gave them hope, and turned them to ashes.

My son had integrity and worked for the community, he built a computer lab in his school. If he hadn't joined your so called revolution, my son would have been the head master instead of being a security guard in Malaysia. I know you will call him again, when you need him.

After my son left, the village council hasn't met for a meeting even once. I know there are others who have suffered more than I have. The wounds you inflicted on us haven't healed.

2014 IN TOONS



Consensus

नेपाल

Rabindra in *Nepal*, 29 December



Faster! Faster!!

कान्तिपुर

Abin Shrestha in *Kantipur*, 3 April



Sign: Teaching Hospital
Tag: Nanda Prasad Adhikari

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

Suman in *Annapurna Post*, 25 September



Plaque: Political Dialogue and Consensus Committee
Dahal: Meeting? Can't I just crawl into this bunker and go to sleep?

कान्तिपुर

Batsyayan in *Kantipur*, 12 November

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“ My party is split, it is not in power anymore, and our agenda is being ignored. Why should I grovel and sign anything? ”

UCPN(M) Chairman Puspha Kamal Dahal to NC's Krishna Sitaula quoted in *Jana Aastha*






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High resolutions

As we approach 31 December, the question humanity must ponder is whether it is really such a good idea to embark on a new year at this juncture. Do we actually want to go through another 365 days of this? If your answer is in the affirmative, and you have made up your mind to take the bull by the horns of a dilemma in a china shop, then let me compliment you on your courage, shake you by the hand, and wish you god speed.

And for that you will need the Donkey's blessings for 2015. May your days in the new year be filled with joy, prosperity, happiness, an absence of coliform bacteria in your bottled drinking water, an annual average concentration of less than 550 parts of million of soot particles below 10 microns in the air you breathe, a mobile



data plan that won't drive your family to starvation, and a new constitution by the end of the Quaternary Epoch. Without naming names, there are among you valued readers of this column some chronic pessimists who like to wallow in hopelessness. You see a new year approaching, and you insist on looking at 2015 as a glass half-empty. And then there are perennial optimists like yours

truly who will stagger across to the bar and get myself a refill. Given the way things are going in Nepal and our immediate vicinity, I have decided to pay my dues as a life member of the Nepal Bar Association which means you will find me most evenings this week at the friendly neighbourhood watering hole nursing a double Black Dog on rocks, and already well on my way to fulfilling my personal new year resolution which is to make an even more complete ass of myself in 2015 than I already am.

My other new year resolutions (which are copyright, protected by the International Biopiracy Covenant, and may not be reproduced, stored in, or introduced into a retrieval system, and transmitted in any form electronic, mechanical, photocopying or by telepathy) are:

- To be grouchy and cantankerous throughout the coming year. After all, what is there to be cheerful about?
- To be a teetotaler by totally avoiding tea since it causes ulcers. And take up whiskey instead.
- It's dangerous to keep anger bottled up, so I will personally strangle any motorcycle that tries to overtake me from the left on the Lazimpat Uphill by choking its windpipe. But as a believer in non-violence, I will let the driver off.
- I will spend less time aimlessly stalking people on Facebook this year, and switch to Candy Crush Saga.

Like it or not, the new year is upon us and, like it or not, tradition demands that

we all come up with new year resolutions, or face the consequences thereof. I have been going around the past few days asking important Nepalis to tell me completely off the record what their resolutions, if any, are:

- Assembly Chair Nembang:** "Try not to do today what can be done tomorrow."
- UCPN(M) Chair Comrade Awesome:** "Become president by hook or by crook. Mostly by crook."
- Comrade Baburam:** "Have more followers on Twitter than in my party."
- Prime Minister Jhusil Da:** "Try not to do anything in 2015. If a government does nothing, nothing can go wrong."
- KP Oily:** "Tell all foreign hands that they needn't bother trying to destabilise our country, we're doing that just fine by ourselves."
- Bijay the Gutch:** "We will meet our nationwide bandh target to ensure the government machinery is well-rested, and functions smoothly in 2015."
- Comrade Energy Minister:** "What? There are still some mega hydropower projects that are nearing completion in 2015? Quick, cancel their contracts and extort them!"
- NEA Chief:** "Reduce danger of high voltage electrocution by increasing load-shedding in rural areas to 24 hr/d."
- Comrade Big Plop:** "Try not to learn any lessons from the history and move onward with the great proletarian revolution and the strategic counter-retaliation offensive campaign against running dog imperialists and their blood-thirsty hegemonistic expansionist reactionary fascist mongrels."
- Dog loitering at the BICC premises:** "Being a son of a bitch, I guess I'll strive to be an even greater son of a bitch in the new year."



The Ass

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