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BACHU BK

LEFT BEHIND

The Kailali killings this week indicate how the anger was boiling over in the western Tarai, how the constitution carvers in Kathmandu seemed to be insensitive or didn't care about the demands of the Tharu people for recognition, and how the radical breakaway Maoists were spoiling for a fight. All these factors led to the deadly confluence of events in Tikapur

that left nine dead, including a senior police officer and a two-year-old child.

Even before the Tikapur lynching, the Tharuhat Struggle Committee and Madhesi activists had shut down Nepal's plains for a week or more, essentially blockading the hill and mountains. In Kailali, serious ethnic tensions were building up between the Tharus and NC-

UML activists belonging to those supporting an 'undivided' far-west.

The top party leaders in Kathmandu added fuel to the fire by giving in to the demands in Surkhet after weeks of violent protests there by adding a province in the west, but ignoring Tharu demands. They have been so blinded in their dismissal of political rivals, they fail to notice things are slipping beyond the political realm, taking a dangerous communal turn.

Rulers here tend not to notice, or underestimate the anger outside. The Madhesi people may be disillusioned with their

MISSING MEN: Women of Manuwa village in Kailali wait for the return of the male members of their families who have all run away fearing arrests after the killing by protesters of eight policemen and a child on Monday.

leaders, but there is simmering distrust over Pahadi politicians in Kathmandu not treating them with enough respect.

The longer the political grievances remain unaddressed, the greater the danger of extremist takeover. The Kailali killings, disturbances in Nawalparasi, Rautahat and Saptari, all point towards this danger.

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SAPARU

The festival of death and rebirth on Sunday carries more relevance this year.

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VOTEBANK CONSTITUTION

Parts of this editorial were written before the Kailali killings on 24 August and indicate how the anger was boiling over in the western Tarai, how the constitution carvers in Kathmandu seemed to be insensitive or didn't care about the demands of the Tharu people for recognition, and how the radical breakaway Maoists were spoiling for a fight. All these factors led to the deadly confluence of events in Tikapur that left nine dead, including a senior police officer and a two-year-old child. Far from being extinguished, the violence threatens to spread elsewhere in the plains and has taken on ominous ethnic tones.

We have updated the editorial, with the story so far: the four main political parties made up of the ruling NC and UML with the opposition UCPN(Maoists) and MJF(D) signed an agreement on 8 June to speed up the constitution draft with a provision for eight provinces, but leave the demarcation of provincial boundaries to a future Federal Commission and their names to state legislatures.

After protests erupted, the parties said "oops" and went back to the drawing board earlier this month, demarcating boundaries not for eight but six provinces. How that number was picked out of a hat, we don't know. But it set off a maelstrom of protests by various groups which felt left out.

The people of the Province #6 in the west were for and against six and went on a weeklong arson spree in mid-August. The folks in Baglung and Rukum found their districts cut cleanly in half and were unhappy. The Tharus wanted their own homeland in the western Tarai and were on warpath. And the Madhesis were suddenly not satisfied with just the plains in Province #2 and also wanted a piece of the Pahad.

So the constitution framers went back to the maps and decided on seven provinces by dividing Province #6 into two: the trans-Karnali and the Mid-West. This put out the flames in Surkhet and Jumla, but angered the Tharus who felt their demands had been ignored by politicians from the west in the NC and UML.

It got serious enough for the Tharu chief of the MJF(D), Bijay Gachhadar, to disassociate himself from the four-party grouping and join other Madhesi and Janajati parties at the barricades. There is now quite a lot of evidence pointing at the involvement of ex-combatants from the Chand and Baidya factions of the Maoists, many of them ethnic Tharus themselves, in planning the killings in Kailali this week. That plan rested on exploiting Tharu anger at being left out again.

Even before the Tikapur lynching, the Tharuhat Struggle

Never to leave maps in the hands of politicians. Never mix politics with boundaries.



Committee and Madhesi activists had shut down Nepal's plains for a week or more, essentially blockading the hill and mountains. In Kailali, serious ethnic tensions were building up between the Tharus and NC-UML activists belonging to those supporting an 'undivided' far-west.

So, as the number of proposed provinces goes from the original 14 to 8 to 6 then 7, the number of parties in the constitution alliance goes from 4 to 3 and parties are leaving the Constituent Assembly. The NC-UML-UCPN(M) say they are determined to take the process forward with an

amendment bill, clause-by-clause debate and voting so that the constitution will be ready. But the legitimacy of such a constitution will be questioned if so many stakeholders are out of it.

While we can go along with the argument that there is no compromise that will satisfy everyone, the process so far has lacked transparency, appears arbitrary and reeks of vote bank politics of the main protagonists: Sher Bahadur Deuba of the NC, KP Oli of the UML, Bijay Gachhadar of the MJF(D) and Pushpa Kamal Dahal of the Maoists. It is also driven by the impatience of all these gentlemen to get to power in the national unity government after the constitution is passed.

Among the parties that have most reason to be aggrieved are the indigenous Tharus who have found themselves disenfranchised by the process. Even when the demands of the Karnali was heard by the Big Three in Kathmandu last week, they failed to meet the Tharu demand for greater autonomy in the western Tarai. This has brought the Tharus and Madhesis, who had no love lost for each other, together to find common cause. The government has to act urgently, and leaders including Gachhadar need to try to put out this fire instead of fanning it.

Those behaving the most irresponsibly are the Madhesi parties which lost in the 2013 elections and have been trying to whip up the Tarai to drum up support. They have pledged Rs 5 million to anyone who is killed in future street protests. Three Madhesi leaders had visited Kailali a week before the violence, making irresponsible and incendiary remarks exhorting the Tharus to take up axes and knives and chase the hill people out of the Tarai.

Meanwhile, Kathmandu lives in a bubble. Rulers here tend not to notice, or underestimate the anger outside. The Madhesi people may be disillusioned with their leaders, but there is simmering distrust over Pahadi politicians in Kathmandu not treating them with enough respect. But they are much angrier about the state's neglect of their region, the poorest in terms of Human Development.

The lesson from all this is never to leave maps in the hands of politicians. Never mix politics with boundaries. Demarcation is a technical subject with implications for viability that is best left to experts. Politicians just mess it up with their short-term time horizons. For immediate firefighting, top leaders from all parties and groups must find a way that doesn't involve more bloodshed.

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

POLL RESULTS

"What use are elections and public opinion surveys like this if politicians keep ignoring the people's voices ('None of the above', Editorial, #722)?" Good question but public opinion polls are necessary in a democracy to remind elected officials that the people are watching. And from the results to your poll this year it is clear that they do not like what they see.

Jens

■ Opinions of the Nepali people do not matter. There is a big gap between what they say and what they do. They say they dislike these leaders, yet keep voting them to power.

KK Sharma

■ Nepalis will be hard pressed to find able, passionate, young leaders who can steer the country in the right direction with most of its brightest minds already having left the country. Those who haven't will soon follow suit, and we all know who to thank for that.

Kriti Shrestha

■ The poll results represent the failure of the political elite to create domestic employment and address the need for social justice and real democracy ('Trust no one', Om Astha Rai, #722).

David Seddon

■ "This year, 88.8% respondents trusted the army (up from 80% in 2012) and one reason could be wide media coverage of the Nepal Army's role in post-earthquake rescue and relief." It is funny to see the author trying to pitch the army's popularity and the media's popularity together. It's a competition, is it?

Saurav

■ Excellent article that details the shocking lack of respect Nepal's leaders show for the people and their opinions. The politicians are so distant from the people they no longer even pretend to care. Thanks for putting this so eloquently into words.

FH

FEDERALISM
You know what happens to a croissant under unholy conditions ('Over-fermented federalism', Bidushi Dhungel,

#722)? It gets crushed, squished and becomes inedible, that is exactly what will happen to Nepal once the real political ill winds blow us all apart with the federalism nonsense. Focus on schools, hospitals, roads, internet, mobile towers, markets for our products, airport for our tourists, and public transport and stop with this federalism debate already.

Namah

■ Meaning a French baker could do a better job of running our country compared to our over-promising and under-delivering politicians. You know what, you're probably right.

Abhishek B

TOWER WOE
Shared telecom infrastructure is the way to go ('The subscriber cannot be reached', Sahina Shrestha, #722). Having multiple towers by different providers is a waste of space and material, not to mention create management issues.

Nam

■ Couldn't find a houseowner to talk to, could we? This is a one-sided

story showing house owners as extortionists and telecommunication companies as innocent victims. How about doing a piece on Ncell looting its customers through unfair balance reduction? Now that's a story I would like to read.

Binod R

ORGANIC FARM
A praiseworthy initiative ('Green is the colour of food', Stéphane Huët, #722).

Salil Pradhan

■ The Basnet sisters should also open a guest house there. The place looks absolutely gorgeous.

Sushma

ASS
"The Economist is a serious magazine, it doesn't make things up as it goes along like the Nepali Times ('Even more liveable Kathmandu', Ass, #722)." Love this self-deprecating humour.

Guy

■ Right then! I am coming back to Kathmandu.

Deep Ranjani Rai

Times

THIS WEEK



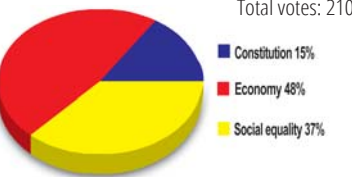
- Most reached and shared on Facebook**
Green is the colour of food by Stéphane Huët
- Most popular on Twitter**
Kailali carnage by Om Astha Rai (43 retweets, 37 favourites)
- Most visited online page**
Disconnect and discontent by Tsering Dolker Gurung (4,219 views)
- Most commented**
Disconnect and discontent by Tsering Dolker Gurung (13 comments)

Times

nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll #773

Q. What are you most concerned about?



Weekly Internet Poll #774
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Do you support the demand for a Tharuhat province?

Disconnect and discontent

Let's admit it: we in Kathmandu are a bunch of hypocrites

It is easy to make Kathmandu the centre of Nepal's universe and forget that other parts of the country even exist. In our parochial view, there is little difference between Saptari and Itahari, Pokhara to many of us is just Lakeside and the Tarai is the home of barbers, fruit vendors and scrap collectors.



BETWEEN THE LINES

Tsering Dolker Gurung

The pampered, insular denizens of the capital have a stereotypical view of the rest of the country. Caste discrimination, we believe, is an evil of the past. We don't understand why the rest of the country wants to settle down in the Valley. We consider ourselves to be liberal, unprejudiced, egalitarian and enlightened.

So when news like the one about an entire village in Siraha coming together to prevent a Dalit family from fetching water from the community well gets reported in the media (thanks to the presence of a movie superstar), we are supposedly outraged, and

call for an end to this inhumane treatment. But our anger is limited to Facebook, and meanwhile at home the Dalit maid eats and sleeps separately.

We claim to be so enlightened that stereotyping is beneath our intellect, that is a thought process of simple people who make oversimplified generalisations. Yet, our everyday lingo is laced with racially derogatory remarks. "You better be careful, he's a Tamang from Kavre." Just kidding. "How did you even fall for a Madhesi guy, they are so ugly." LOL. "For a Brahmin man you are actually quite generous." HEHE. Everything unacceptable can be said as long as you append a ROFL or a smiley sticker. We are not racist, you see, we just like to judge people by their association to the group they are born into.

Kathmandu's reaction to the ongoing bout of bandas is another case in point. It is an unacceptable form of protest as long as the Valley is affected, but the Tarai has been shut down now for nearly two weeks and one is hard-pressed to find mention of that anywhere in the Kathmandu-centric press. When a strike is enforced in Kathmandu, however, we hit back with hashtags, tweet pictures of ourselves walking to work with #dieNepalbandhdie, and boast about being banda defiers. An indefinite strike



KUNDA DIXIT

outside the capital is rarely a cause for concern, unless we have plans to take a road trip to Pokhara and Chitwan, the towns that let us behave like the expats we are not.

Banda enforcers, we argue, do not have genuine grievances, they are merely paid instigators with little idea about the cause they are promoting. We believe all ethnic groups, men and women of this country have been given equal rights and opportunities and thus even a mention of identity-based federalism irks us. That's a devil that's going to destroy the harmony of this country we write, but we collectively fail to propose

measures that would in other ways help ensure equal treatment of all and not make more than half of the citizens feel like they would better belong in the lands of our neighbours.

Deaths of protesters in Surkhet and Saptari earlier this month didn't touch us much. That there had been abuse of power by police was all but ignored, and our super-inept leaders slept through the ordeal. Life went as normal in the capital until a gangster, enjoying protection of a ruling party, was killed in a police encounter in Kathmandu, generating a hue and cry over police accountability. NC

lawmakers suddenly woke up from their slumber, questioning the police under ultimate command of a UML home minister and demanding that the deceased, a man accused of multiple manslaughter, be declared a martyr. Within a day everyone and their grandmother had heard that the Don was dead, thanks to extensive reporting on the matter. Strike-hit Saptari, Surkhet, Banke, or Kailali could as well be on another planet.

Kathmandu-based opinion makers and commentators, all well-educated citizens from right across the ethnic spectrum, have also failed to speak to the voices they seek to represent. Extremist, exaggerated, manipulated and partisan, these leaders mislead readers with their biases, and can be mostly blamed for damaging the legitimate struggle of the marginalised for their rights, to erode the gains in devolution, secularism and equal rights

Monday's violent clash between Tharu protestors and police in Kailali's Tikapur which resulted in deaths of nine people including the district SSP and a two-year-old child should serve as a warning to those in the capital that they can no longer afford to stay aloof. The longer we stay this way, the greater will be the discontent elsewhere. @Chenreeyang

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Ground Zero in Kailali

The Tikapur attack was premeditated, but the government set the stage for it to occur

OM ASTHA RAI

Piecing together eye-witness reports and information of sources within the movement for an autonomous Tharu province now confirms that the attack on policemen in Kailali on Monday was planned. The lynching, burning and shooting left eight policemen and a two-year-old child dead.

Leaders of the Tharuhat Struggle Committee had gathered ex-Maoist guerrillas in Tikapur from nearby districts with the intention of attacking security personnel, and had till the last moment tricked local authorities into believing that they would not resort to violence.

Suman Dhital, Chief of the Area Administration Office of Tikapur was with SSP Laxman Neupane, the senior most police officer to be killed by protesters, that afternoon. He knew most of the protesters, and he said one of them had called him to warn that thousands of Tharus from outside Tikapur were gathering carrying spears, knives and spades.

As SSP Neupane prepared to go out and calm the protesters down, Dhital stopped him and called Kailali district in-charge of the Tharuhat Struggle



PICS: BACHU BK

Committee Resham Chaudhary who had attended an all-party meeting a day before and promised to keep things peaceful during their agitation. He assured Dhital once again that protesters would not resort to violence.

Reassured, Dhital let Neupane go. The crowd had grown in the adjacent village of Manuwa and police were trying to stop them from advancing to Tikapur. There was a scuffle during which the protesters dragged down Neupane and stabbed him. Wounded, Neupane ordered his men to

open fire but the police only had tear gas and rubber bullets. They watched from a distance as Neupane and others were lynched and burnt.

“We asked the AFP but they had not received orders to do so,” recounted Makendra Chaudhary, an injured policeman receiving treatment in Kohalpur Teaching Hospital. AFP constable Surendra Hamal, also in the same hospital, confirmed: “We had guns and bullets but were not given the order from our commander. So we fled to survive.”

In revenge attacks, supporters of the ‘Undivided Far West’ which is against a separate Tharu province, burnt down the office of Fulbari FM radio and Fulbari resort owned by Resham Chaudhary. His whereabouts is still not known. They also set on fire the house of Tharu lawmaker Janak Chaudhary.

Bir Bhan Chaudhary, spokesperson of the Tharuhat Struggle Committee, denies the violence was premeditated and accuses the media of bias. “It was a spontaneous outburst of anger,

KAILALI CARNAGE: AFP personnel Netra Saud points to the spot where his two-year-old son Tek Bahadur was shot dead (left). A Nepal Police personnel holds out the charred vest of Ram Bihari Chaudhary who was burnt alive by protestors in Tikapur, Kailali (right).

our protesters were reacting to police firing,” he told us, “many Tharus have bullet wounds. Who shot at them if police did not open fire? Three Tharu protesters are missing; they might have been killed or detained. Has the media reported on it?”

Chaudhary accuses Police of arresting at least 31 Tharus after the Kailali incident and allowing supporters of the undivided Far West province to ransack their houses and the government of terrorising the Tharu community by imposing curfew and deploying the army.

“We regret what happened in Tikapur, but ours is a political problem and the government should address it politically,” he says. “We have no animosity with pro-Far West supporters, but the state seems to protect them even when they burn down other’s houses.”

Krishna Raj Sarbahari, a Tharu journalist, says the indigenous Tharus and their Bahun-Chhetri neighbours from the mountains

Windfall in Nepal

Industries that switch to wind power protect not just the ecology, but the economy as well

KUSHAL GURUNG

There are more than 30 cement factories in Nepal producing 2 million tons of cement annually. Even at the best of times that barely meets half the national demand. Nepal imported more than Rs 3 billion worth cement last year and with the earthquake that figure is expected to soar.

Why isn’t supply meeting demand? A look into another industry would clear the mystery. Tea is one of our major exports and is gradually losing ground in the international market. Despite growing consumption of tea, we have not been able to increase our market share proportionately as our tea has become more expensive than our competitors’, due to increasing production costs. The main reason for this is the need to use diesel electricity, which has increased production cost by Rs 50-100 per kg.

It’s the same story in all industries: during power shortages, industries have to rely on high-cost diesel power, which doubles their operating cost. A majority of the industries do not work at full capacity which, in turn, is hurting Nepal’s economic growth and is threatening the livelihoods of millions of people who are directly or indirectly



GETTING WIND OF IT

Industries like tea could be much more competitive if they used captive wind generation instead of relying on diesel electricity.

Cost of a 1MW wind turbine unit:
\$1 million

Time to install 10MW wind farm:
1 year

Payback period:
5 years

dependent on these businesses.

Production cost can be reduced by finding cheaper and reliable alternative energy sources, besides increasing efficiency. Captive renewable energy generation primarily for an industry’s own consumption can reduce costs.

Electricity generation from diesel power is not only expensive, but also climate



unfriendly. Renewable energy is cheaper and cleaner. Reducing our reliance on diesel through increased use of renewable energy sources such as wind, micro-hydro, solar, waste heat recovery, and biomass is crucial in shaping Nepal’s image, not just to save the ecology but the economy as well.

Nepal’s wind map shows that most tea factories and big cement industries in Nepal are situated

in areas that are feasible for wind energy generation. None of them has so far exploited this available source of captive renewable energy resource. There is one big barrier for many of these industries to switch into wind power generation: initial capital cost which is higher than for a diesel plant.

The average ex-factory cost of a megawatt size wind turbine is around \$1 million. On top of this, an energy storage system will increase costs. The government provides a subsidy on

capital cost for small scale projects through the Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC) but there is no provision for bigger industries. Even the AEPC’s newly launched financial intermediation mechanism Central Renewable Energy Fund (CREF) doesn’t address such big capital projects. Nonetheless, it is imperative to come up with different support mechanisms and innovative business models to overcome this issue of initial capital.

Despite the heavy capital cost, the payback period for a wind farm located in an area with a good wind speed is only up to five years. Given the fact that a wind farm can be built quickly, it would be a lucrative option for industries that are now relying heavily on diesel for backup power. A wind project needs at least one year of wind data for technical feasibility study and it takes less than a year to complete even a wind farm of up to 10MW provided there is good road access and equipment is available on time.

Wind is a quick fix for tea, cement and other energy-intensive industries. If we can have a mechanism to address capital cost, wind is the way to go. 🇳🇵

This article is part of a monthly series prepared jointly with the Energy Development Council of which Kushal Gurung, Wind Power Nepal is a member.



have been living in harmony in Kailali and Kanchanpur districts of the far-western plains for decades.

“But the Kailali violence has poisoned relations and the government should treat it with sensitivity and not be seen as siding with one side. This needs a political solution,” said Sarbahari.

But that is exactly what the political leadership in Kathmandu is not doing. Bijay Kumar Gachhadar, the most prominent Tharu leader and signatory of the 16-point agreement, was expected to be in Kailali to pacify the agitated Tharus, interact with pro-Far West supporters and call for harmony. But he is still in Kathmandu, issuing threats that his party will abandon the constitution-writing process.

NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba, who has been overtly lobbying for an undivided Far West province, invited journalists to his residence and claimed that he was never an anti-Tharu leader. “I was the one who granted land for

Kamaiya and Kamlari, how can I be anti-Tharu?” he asked. But when asked whether he would reconsider breaking Kailali between the Far West and the Tharuhat province, he retorted: “I was, I am and I will always be for an undivided Karnali.”

More than 322,000 Tharus live in Kailali, which has a population of 775,000. Nepal’s

aboriginal settlers of the Tarai want the district to be a part of an autonomous province stretching from Bardia to Nawalparasi. But NC and UML leaders from the region are against it.

It is now clear that Tharu leaders and ex-Maoist guerrillas of the breakaway Netra Bikram Chand and Mohan Baidya factions were involved in the killings and used the belief among some Tharus that violence was the only way to push through their agenda.

The top party leaders in Kathmandu added fuel to the fire by giving in to the demands in Surkhet after weeks of violent protests there by adding a province in the west, but ignoring demands of the Tharus.

Tikapur administrator Suman Dhital explained: “That was what created an impression among some Tharu activists that the only way their demands would be met was if they also used violence.”

With Bachu BK in Tikapur and Keshav Rana in Kohalpur

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Hyatt helps

Hyatt Regency Kathmandu has donated USD 25,000 to the Children’s Protection Home as part of its community service. It has also donated mattresses, computers and a printer to the organisation, which helps orphaned children.

Etihad awards

Etihad Airways hosted its annual Trade Awards in recognition of its top travel partners in Kathmandu. A total of 30 awards were handed out across seven categories. The ceremony was also attended by officials from Jet Airways, its partner airline.



Ncell's App Camp

Ncell has announced it will accept applications for its app development competition, Ncell App Camp, till September 20. Interested participants were briefed about the competition recently.

For more information, visit: www.ncellappcamp.com

Qatar Fun

Qatar Airways organised a Fun Day for its trade partners on Saturday. The day included breakfast, photo booth and games and races for its 100 trade partners.



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Whose constitution is it anyway?

The political interests of few leaders has superseded consensus in the constitutional process

The deteriorating situation in the Tarai proves that Nepal's political leadership is incapable of understanding and learning lessons.

In the winter of 2006, when people in the plains first came out on to the streets demanding federalism in the Interim Constitution, they were snubbed



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

by the NC, UML and the Maoist leadership, who were all on a high after their victory against the monarchy.

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's refusal to listen to that demand led to Madhesi leaders in his party walking out to join street protests which claimed nearly 50 lives. Eight years later, his cousin Sushil Koirala finds himself in the same predicament.

Twenty districts across Nepal's southern plains have been shut down for weeks, and the violence has claimed at least a dozen lives. On 18 August, a farmer on his way to the market was shot dead in Saptari by police chasing protesters. Six days later,



BIKRAM RAI

eight police officers were lynched in Kailali's Tikapur, one of them burnt alive, and a two-year-old boy was killed by a gunshot.

The next day, a 24-year-old man was killed in central Tarai district of Rautahat after police opened fire at protesters. For the first time after the end of the conflict in 2006, the government has mobilised the Nepal Army to restore order.

Yet, the government in

Kathmandu and the top leaders dictating the constitution writing process continue with their majoritarian stance. They have been so blinded in their dismissal of political rivals, they fail to notice things are slipping beyond the political realm, taking a dangerous communal turn.

The brutality with which police officers were killed in Kailali indicates this was not just a mob rage. The ghosts of the war

may have come back to haunt this constitutional process. Indeed, the dismantling of Maoist cantonments was reduced to a logistical process overlooking the need to dismantle the militant mindset of ex-combatants.

The government has rightly recalled the CDO of Kailali and the chiefs of the Police and APF. New faces could help douse some of the local anger, but just when we were tempted to applaud his tactfulness, Home Minister Bam Dev Gautam made an undiplomatic statement in the Parliament on Monday, accusing 'people from south' trying to destabilise the situation in Kailali and Rautahat.

Indian Ambassador Ranjit Rae paid Gautam a visit the next day, which the Home Minister projected in the media as the minister 'cautioning' the ambassador. Then the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi posted a communiqué about the phone call between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and PM Sushil Koirala on its website on Tuesday.

It is not unusual for a neighbouring head of the government to call his counterpart to extend solidarity in the time of national distress. But we all know

the subtexts to such diplomatic exchanges. Indians are clearly angry at being dragged into this even though they did host Sher Bahadur Deuba, KP Oli and Pushpa Kamal Dahal in New Delhi a few weeks ago.

At least three western Tarai districts are now under a curfew. Despite mobilisation of the army, an angry mob torched houses belonging to Tharu leaders. We must condemn mindless violence on both sides unequivocally, but we must also understand what led to those violent acts.

Two weeks ago, 42 Tharu lawmakers including those from the NC and UML walked out of the CA. Since then, people in western, mid-western and far-western Tarai have been on the streets, protesting against the federal demarcation. The Madhesi Morcha was already protesting on the streets in the eastern and central Tarai as well.

The longer the political grievances remain unaddressed, the greater the danger of extremist takeover. The Kailali killings, disturbances in Nawalparasi, Rautahat and Saptari, all point towards this danger.

In its final few weeks, Nepal's constitutional debate is being dictated by the personal and political interests of UML's KP Oli and Bhim Rawal and NC's Krishna Sitaula and Sher Bahadur Deuba. While Oli and Sitaula treat the eastern Terai districts to be their fiefdom, Rawal and Deuba think the same about the western Tarai. Irked by their high-handedness, MJD-Democratic's Bijay Gachhadar, who had earlier forged alliance with the top three parties, has threatened to quit the CA.

Sadly, PM Sushil Koirala has failed to show statesmanship and remained a clueless spectator throughout this process. His half-hearted calls to the agitating groups for talks are as unconvincing as his leadership.

Meanwhile, as the debate on the draft constitution moves into final days, the number of empty seats in the CA has gone up. 🇳🇵

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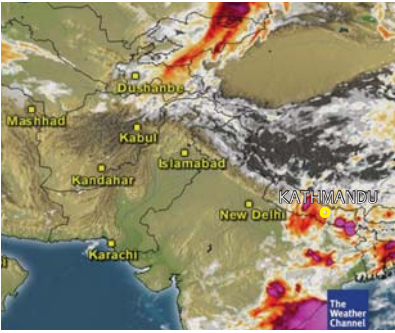
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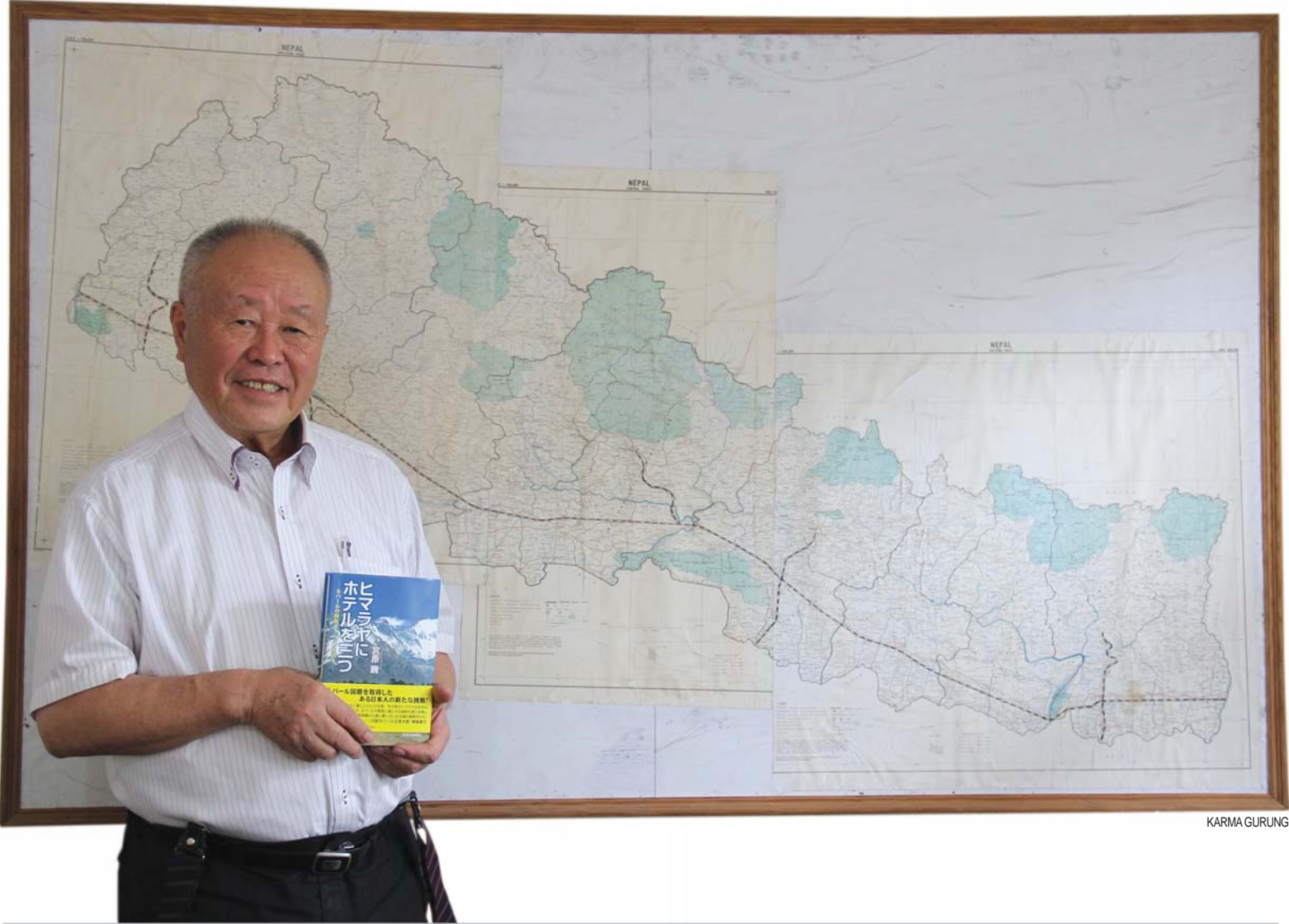
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BY THE BOOK: Takashi Miyahara in front of a map of Nepal showing his infrastructure-led vision for the future. His memoir has just been published in Japanese and will soon be translated into Nepali and English.

“Society lacks a moral compass”

Nepali Times caught up with Takashi Miyahara in his office in Patan for a chat about his political experiences.

Nepali Times: How different is Nepal since the first time you arrived in 1962?
Takashi Miyahara: Fifty years ago when I came to Nepal, Singapore, Bangkok and Kathmandu were almost at the same level of development. Why has Nepal lagged behind? The public must be aware of the political failure that led to this. Bureaucrats don't take decisions and just shift responsibility. There is greed, and society lacks a moral compass.

Is that why you wanted to enter politics yourself?
People criticise politicians for not doing their duty and for being corrupt, but they still elect the same people to power. Nepali politicians lack a vision for the country. Even the federal provinces are designed to secure vote banks, not for a development strategy. If you have to look for a visionary politician, you can find a little bit in Dr Baburam Bhattarai.

What is your vision, then?
I believe tourism is central to the development of Nepal. This will not only increase national income but also help Nepal become self-reliant. Using Nepal's natural resources like rivers and forests and moulding them for tourism purposes and also harnessing their potential through hydropower generation and transportation is the vision I have.

Why is that so difficult to do?
The people only vote for the same four main parties who are only looking at their own self-interest not the national interest. The youth leaders need to step up.

What lessons can we learn from Japan on post-earthquake reconstruction?
Japan has always been prepared for earthquakes. Here, only eight out of 75 districts were affected severely. During the reconstruction phase, we should restructure governance and infrastructure in the whole country, not just affected areas.

TAKASHI MIYAHARA 2020 VISION

KARMA GURUNG

“There is a Japanese saying that to make new things, you have to be young and foolish,” says Takashi Miyahara, the 81-year-old social entrepreneur who came to Nepal first in 1962 and never left. A mountaineer, he quickly fell in love with the beauty of Nepal's pristine mountains, a stark contrast to a rapidly-industrialising Japan that was rebuilding after the war. As it turned out, he also married a Nepali and started a tourism business. Frustrated at the slow pace of change and Nepal's inability to use its huge resources to uplift the lives of citizens, he opened a political party and even stood for elections in 2008. Miyahara does everything differently. When everyone was only just talking about

the unique attraction of the Khumbu, he overcame huge hurdles to establish Hotel Everest View at 3,880m in 1975, got the government to make an airfield at Syangboche to service it and introduced Nepal to up-market international tourists. The iconic hotel became a model for foreign investment in Nepal's nascent tourism industry. He started Trans Himalayan Tours and introduced organised trekking to Japanese tourists, bringing in 1,000 visitors annually. Miyahara always dreamt big, and tried to get Nepali officialdom excited about the potential that Nepal had in tourism, infrastructure, energy and nature conservation. Despite setbacks and official apathy, Miyahara persevered with his trademark Japanese tenacity. At a time when Nepalis were leaving the country in droves to settle in the West, Miyahara gave up his Japanese citizenship,

donned a Nepali cap and started the Nepal National Development Party in 2006 to try to change the political culture so that government would be more responsive to the needs of the people. The laid back “ke garne” mentality of Nepalis was not for him. Having travelled throughout Nepal on foot across most of Nepal's 75 districts, Miyahara knows Nepal inside out, better than most people born here. His vision for Nepal's future is based on intimate knowledge of the land and its peoples. Pointing at a map in his office, Miyahara shows a plan for an east-west railway artery linked to north-south feeder roads, he talks about shifting the capital to Narayangadh to ease the pressure on Kathmandu, a masterplan for hydropower, tourism and water supply. All these are included in his party's manifesto. His party didn't win a single seat in 2008, and in 2013 did not field any candidates, but Miyahara says he admires Baburam Bhattarai the only Nepali politician who shares his vision for Nepal's economic growth. After a full life one would expect Miyahara to spend his time with his family in quiet retirement. But that would be most unlike the man. After Everest View Hotel and Himalaya Hotel in Patan, Miyahara is busy with his next dream project: Hotel Annapurna View in Pokhara's Sarangkot which is scheduled to open next year. 🇳🇵

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HONDA

EVENTS



Activist documentaries,
Screening of *A world beyond humans* and *The invisible (r)evolutions*. The screenings will be followed by an interaction with the filmmaker Philippe Borrel.
5 September, 3pm and 5.30pm, Alliance française of Kathmandu, (01)4241163, (01)4242832, general.afk@gmail.com. www.alliancefrancaise.org.np

How far we've come?
A talk by Shail Shrestha, president of Kathmandu Cycle City 2020 on the issue of road safety for cyclists, in tribute to wildlife academic and conservationist Pralad Yonzon.
28 August, 3pm to 4.30pm, Wildlife Conservation Nepal (WCN) Office, Bafal, (01)4289818, mail@wcn.org.np, www.wcn.org.np



Saparu (Gai Jatra),
The festival of death and rebirth will be celebrated during a rally in the streets of Kathmandu (see page 10-11).
30 August, Basantapur

Pride parade,
Nepal's LGBT community comes together for the sixth annual Pride Parade.
30 August, 12.30pm, Himalaya Java, Trivedi Marg, Thamel

Get inspired,
USEF-Nepal has guest speaker Aakarshan Dhakal to tell his story of how he used simplicity and self-reflection to turn adversities into opportunities.
1 September, 2.30pm to 3.30pm, USEF, Gyaneswor, Kathmandu, (01)4444779, (01)4444780, fulbcomm@fulbrightnepal.org.np

Art Market,
A place to sell and buy paintings, prints, posters and design products.
5 September, 12pm to 4pm, The Yellow House, Sanepa, ange@image-ark.com, nayantara@photocircle.com.np

Homage,
British artist, Martin Travers explores the concepts of identity and self-empowerment through painting (review on page 13).
Till 6 September, 11am to 5pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, (01)4218048

Where to now?
A lecture by Nepali Times editor Kunda Dixit about the state of Nepal post-earthquakes.
Rs 400 for non-members (includes tea and snacks), 4 September, 9.30am, Moksh Café, Jhamsikhel, csgninkathmandu@gmail.com

Building better,
A workshop and discussion on the benefits of earthbag building and earthquake resistant design.
4 September, 10am to 5pm, The Summit Hotel, Sanepa

Images of Nepal,
An exhibition of black and white images taken by Jan Møller Hansen before and after the 25 April earthquake.
Inauguration 9 September, 5.30pm, till 22 September, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, (01)4218048

Run for Nepal,
A 5k virtual race to raise fund for Oxfam InterMón which is helping victims of Nepal earthquake.
12 September, www.irunfornepal.com

Call for submission,
Photographers, curators, photo-based artists, historians, anthropologists are invited to submit works and ideas for digital projection, discussions, performances on the theme 'TIME'.
Deadline 15 September, www.photoktm.com



Climate + Change,
A dynamic exhibition exploring the effects of climate change on the Hindu Kush Himalayan region.
Till 30 September, 9am to 5pm, International Mountain Museum, Gharipatan, Pokhara, (061)460742, immprk@fewamail.com.np, www.internationalmountainmuseum.org

Support,
A special fund-raising print sale to contribute towards the rebuilding of heritage sites in Patan by Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust (KVPT)
www.photoktm.com

Nepal Cup 2015,
A charity football tournament to raise funds for quake-affected schools in Nepal and promote the country as a tourist attraction.
2 to 4 October, Dasarath Rangasala Stadium, Tripureswor, info@nepalcup2015.com, www.nepalcup2015.com

Quake photobook,
Nepal425 launches a crowd-sourcing drive for printing a coffee table book featuring 700 pictures of the earthquake. All proceeds from the sales will go to quake-affected.
www.nepal425.com

Wholeness,
Artist Puran Khadka whose work is a meditative abstraction full of spiritual awakening exhibits his paintings.
Till 30 October, Park Gallery, Pulchok, (01)5522307, contact@parkgallery.com.np



The Yeti Run,
Test your strength, stamina and teamwork at Nepal's first obstacle race.
26 September, St Xavier's School, Godavari, 9841226397, pareshkshrestha@gmail.com

DINING



Uttar Dakshin food festival,
An opportunity to experience the authentic taste of North and South India's rich culinary heritage.
Kakori, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, (01)4273999, www.crowneplaza.com/kathmandu

The Village Cafe,
Authentic Newari food that comes straight from the heart.
Pulchowk Road, (01)5540712

The Heritage,
Escape the hodgepodge of the tourist hub as you relish delights like paella and panna cotta.
Thamel, (01)4254343

Trisara,
With dishes like flambeed prawns, crispy chicken, and khao soi, it would be a folly to ignore its aromas.
Lazimpat, (01)4410200

MUSIC

Open mic,
Calling all aspiring singers.
Every Tuesday, 7pm, House of Music, Thamel, 9851075172, sanzey@hotmail.com

Fusion Explosion,
Kanta Dab Dab is a trio of bass, drums and sitar that will take you someplace else.
Rs 200, 29 August, 8pm, House of Music, Thamel, Thamel, 9851075172, sanzey@hotmail.com



Reggae night,
Joint Family Internationale will be playing their prominent reggae music.
Rs 300, 28 August, 7pm, House of Music, Thamel, Thamel, 9851075172, sanzey@hotmail.com

Album launch,
Launch of Adrian Pradhan's new album, Abhiwaadan.
28 August, 7pm, Club 25 Hours, Tangal, (01)4437486, club25hours@gmail.com

GETAWAYS

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Pharping, Kathmandu, www.neydohotel.com

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Mahankal Mandir, Nagarkot, Bhaktapur, 9741020969



Waterfront Resort,
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Sedi Height, Pokhara. (61)466 303/304, 9801166311, sales@waterfronthotelnepal.com

Glacier Hotel,
Good value and friendly service for travellers on the lap of Lake Phewa.
Gaurighat, Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)463722, www.glacienepal.com



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Build back safer

A proven documentary to inspire earthquake-resistant construction for Nepal

In the past four months after the earthquake, as the event faded from prime time news, the real story is that April 25 was not the Big One everyone had feared. An even bigger earthquake is still likely to strike Nepal in future.

Since 2012, Anne Sanquini, a PhD candidate of Geological Sciences at Stanford University (*pic, right*) has led a study of seismic-resistant schools and public buildings suggested by the National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET) and engineers from the Department of Education with the help of Sundar Thapaliya, an MPH graduate from California State University.

When the earthquake hit just before noon on 25 April 2015, nearly 7,000 schools in Central Nepal came down. What seemed like sturdy pillars crumbled to dust, and empty classrooms pancaked. The few schools that survived were the ones built or retrofitted to be earthquake resistant.

In 2014, Sanquini was featured in a documentary about five earthquake-safe schools she had helped build. She and Thapaliya had worked with a group of film students from Kathmandu University



to produce what they hoped would be a video to test a theory on how people can be motivated to prepare for disasters.

The 20-minute documentary demonstrated how school communities and property owners could learn about earthquake-resistant construction. It was tested among 800 teachers, parents and alumni from 16 schools in Kathmandu Valley.

The research indicated that the film increased belief among viewers that it is possible to make a new building earthquake-

resistant, and even to retrofit an old one. It increased their knowledge of specific earthquake-resistant design, materials and methods. It also increased their intent to support a safe-school-building project and to recommend the construction of earthquake-resistant homes to others.

"The research required that we capture the true feelings of the people in communities who had invested in earthquake-resistant school buildings," Sanquini said. KU film students

Ashim Khanal, Sarun Manandhar, Bibhu Poudel and Kiran Shrestha of Baardali Films helped make the film.

Khanal was attending a class on that Saturday when the building he was in started shaking. "It disturbed me that as someone who helped raise awareness on retrofitted school buildings, I could have lost my life in an unsafe classroom."

After the earthquake, the Baardali team went back to the schools featured in the film and found out that they had suffered no damage. In fact, people from nearby areas




took shelter in the schools as the aftershocks continued.

"When I saw the retrofitted schools standing strong next to most structures that the earthquake had completely destroyed, it dawned on me that reinforcements really work," said Sarun Manandhar of Baardali.

Post-earthquake, the documentary has been updated to incorporate a positive and credible message about earthquake-resistant construction and has interviews with people who have successfully built such schools.

Naya Suruwaat (A New Beginning) features parents and teachers at construction sites, a cement store and a brick factory, learning about secure schools and discussing the safety of their children. We see local masons working their craft, and school principals acknowledging community support their schools received to make buildings secure.

The film manages to empower us on how we too, can build better. As we gather to build homes and schools, we must ensure that our foundations are stronger this time. 

Aparajita Acharya



nepalitimes.com

■ Watch trailer of *Naya Suruwaat*



After a long trek in which the staple fare is *dal bhat* the last thing visitors to Nepal may want is a dinner of rice, lentils and chicken curry. Or Nepalis may feel they can easily eat *dal bhat* at home so they don't need to go to Krishnarpan at Dwarika's Hotel.

How wrong they will be. Krishnarpan is unlike any other Nepali eating place in Kathmandu or around the world: it is a true pan-Nepali restaurant reflecting this country's ethnic and culinary diversity. You don't dine like this on treks, and this is an ideal place for Nepalis to bring foreign guests for a taste of Nepal.

The ambience at Dwarika's, Kathmandu's multi-award winning heritage hotel is exquisite. The waitresses are dressed in the costumes of Nepal's Magar, Newar, Gurung, Chhetri and Sherpa communities. The word that comes to mind is 'classy' and Krishnarpan also thinks big: it offers six, nine, 16 or 22 course meals. Warned beforehand about the sumptuous and scrumptious offerings, we opted for the modest six-course meal even though we were ravenously hungry.

The meal starts, as the restaurant's name suggests, with an offering to lord Krishna. We devote to the Gods bits of Wo, soybean, garlic, potato dish from the Newari *Samye Bajee* (*pic, left*) course which is an assortment of legumes, spices, vegetables and



Krishnarpan

meat traditionally used in religious ceremonies and later distributed among devotees.

The *Aila* is poured by a waitress in traditional *Haku Patasi* from a long-neck brass vessel in a thin, long perfectly aimed trajectory directly on tiny clay *Salincha* in which the *Aila* froths majestically. We first sprinkle drops of the spirit to the Gods, and then take sips of what can only be described as rocket fuel to wash down the raw marinated *Choyela* water buffalo

dish. But the chef has decided to fry the meat keeping the clientele in mind.

The second course (*pic, right*) is from the Tarai and is made up of deep fried *Puri*, and a spicy dish made of potatoes and chick peas. The *Puri* could have been softer, but the mushroom and cheese side dish made up for it by melting marvelously in the mouth. The next course were Momos, whose Tibetan antecedents represented the cuisine of northern Nepal. Both the buff


and veggie momos were succulent and the chutney hit all the right notes. The dumplings rested on a bed of betel leaf which we had fun nibbling at. The mixed vegetable soup came next, and it was just as described - liquid veggies. Thick and green, the texture didn't exactly scream 'tasty' but 'wholesome' was the word that came to the tongue after the first spoonful.

We didn't have much space left in our tummies when the main course arrived, and we admired the guests in the next table who ordered 22-course repasts. The dish had rice (both brown and white), yellow lentil gravy, chicken

or fish curry, sweet-gourd and soybean with thick gravy, stir-fried potato and sautéed spinach, *Mismas Achar* and *Lapsi* chutney. All grown organically by Dwarika's and made with Himalayan herbs. Not much to write home about for most Nepalis, but an overdose of exotica for visitors.

The last course of yoghurt with pudding and fresh fruits was light and appealed to the sweet tooth. The *Haluwa* samoline pudding was not greasy nor overly sweet, the *Sikarni* yoghurt flavoured with cinnamon was refreshing for our sated appetites.

After a meal like that, one may need help getting up from the cross-legged position, but manage to stand up we did. Krishnarpan has a guest book and a red clay brick token with one of the Astamangal, eight lucky symbols carved on it. You can also take the menu home as a souvenir and if you are a frequent visitor you get a personalised apron with your name embroidered on it.

Krishnarpan is open only for dinner and reservations are suggested. The six course is \$38, while \$46 for the nine course, \$56 for 16 and \$65 for 22 courses. Plus plus. 

Sonia Awale

How to get there: Krishnarpan is located inside Dwarika's Hotel at Battisputali.

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SAPARU

The festival of death and rebirth on Sunday carries more relevance this year

SONIA AWALE

Pratap Malla’s prosperous reign as the king of Kathmandu in the mid-17th century was when most of the monuments of the Hanuman Dhoka Palace were built. One day Pratap Malla’s young son died, and the grief-stricken queen was inconsolable. To show her that she wasn’t the only person to have lost a loved one, the king ordered everyone in the kingdom who had lost a relative that year to bring

out a huge procession. The king also asked them to try to make the queen laugh through skits that poked fun at Kathmandu’s rulers. Tears gave way to laughter, and thus began Saparu, the unique Newari festival of satire, death and rebirth. The festival is also known as Gai Jatra in Nepali because the procession includes young boys dressed as cows. This year, the festival falls on

Sunday, 30 August and will be accompanied by feasts, music, dancing and merriment. Saparu carries special significance this year because the earthquake caused almost 2,000 fatalities in Kathmandu Valley. Of the 8,844 people killed, 20 per cent were Newars. “Death is a reality of life and we have to accept it,” says Bhuyu Maharjan, 88 who survived the 1934 earthquake, “and Saparu gives

us the strength to deal with death in the family and move on.” Maharjan still remembers the Saparu festival after the 1934 earthquake as a chance for his community to come to terms with their collective grief. For a festival that commemorates death, Saparu is mostly filled with laughter, music and feasting and is a part of Kathmandu Valley’s exclusive cultural heritage. The focus this year will be on rebuilding lives

and reconstruction of fallen shrines and monuments. “The number of people taking part in procession will be higher but the route will be shorter because of the supporting beams blocking some streets,” says Maharjan. There are variations in the way Saparu is celebrated in Kathmandu, Patan or Bhaktapur. In Patan, there is an additional procession in memory of those who



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PICS: BIKRAM RAI

THE PAIN INSIDE

The events of that Saturday morning four months ago is seared in Nirmala Maharjan's memory. Her four-storey building in Patan collapsed crushing her husband, brother-in-law and his family.

"I may look all right, and I smile at people but only I know the pain inside," she tells us, eyes glistening. Nirmala (*pic, right*) will be joining the Matya procession this year with her two young sons, visiting the shrines in a route through Patan's narrow lanes in memory of the rest of her family that perished in the earthquake.

Says Nirmala: "I must go so that my family will rest in peace, it is also a way for me to start anew and take care of my surviving sons."

nepalitimes.com

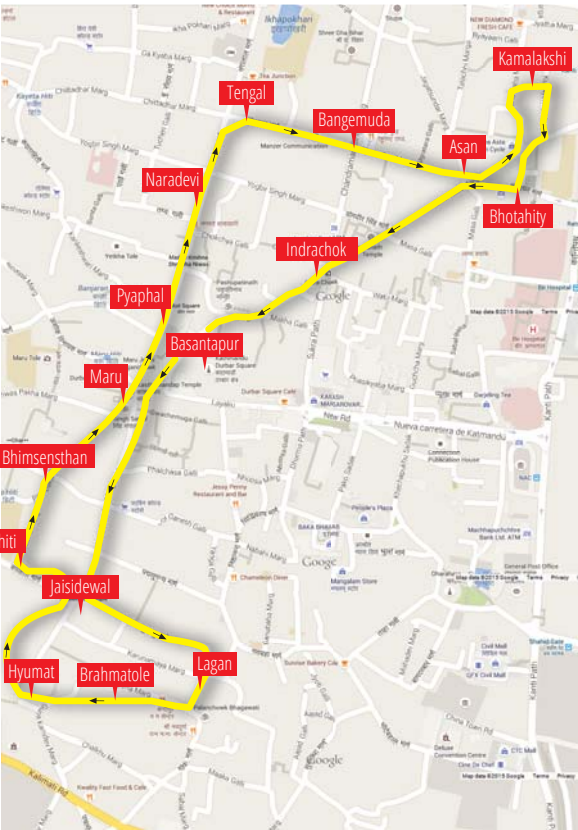
■ Watch interview



SONIA AWALE

SAPARU ROUTES

Kathmandu, Sunday 30 August



died during the previous year and the worship of the god of death, Yama, also known as Matya.

"It is a festival that helps families cope with death, and this year it will help the healing process and show the world that we are getting back on our feet again," says Sudhan Subedi of the Nepal Tourism Board which is promoting Nepal's festivals.

From early morning people dressed in traditional clothes

carrying pictures of the deceased, masked dancers and musicians visit various religious shrines offering fruits, incense, or coins. It is believed that if a family member of the deceased takes part in the procession, the dead will be cleansed of their sins and make it safely to the gates of heaven.

Historically, Saparu was also a unique way to do a rough death census of the

town's population after natural disasters or epidemics. Saparu is significant at many levels this year, not just with personal sorrow but the togetherness spirit that allows people to deal with bereavement as community.

However, as neighbourhoods become less cohesive in Kathmandu there is worry that Gai Jatra is losing its true meaning, becoming simply a vulgar excuse for people to ridicule others.

"It used to be a day when people used to lampoon autocratic rulers with creative satire," says heritage expert Anil Chitrakar, "we have to revive the original spirit of Gai Jatra that allows us to deal with calamities."

The procession and people's participation this year will of course reflect the death and destruction caused by the earthquake of 25 April 2015 but it will also be proof of

the tenacity and strength of the Nepalis.

Says Chitrakar: "It is the tangible things we lost, and we can rebuild those. But we still have the intangible part, our beliefs, our values and festivals. Gai Jatra is a way to show that Nepal is getting back to normal." 🇳🇵

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There is a special place for all the people in the world who love a well realised thriller. I'm speaking about those of us who adore something along the lines of a John Le Carré novel that has been



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

translated into film, preferably in the style of Jean-Pierre Melville - the famous French filmmaker whose films ooze with style, minutely planned out set pieces that add to the atmosphere of suspense, and are at the same time neo-realistic crime procedurals that bring you right into the gritty

(albeit stylised) world of the film, be it to do with bank robbers (*Le Cercle Rouge*, 1970) or with spies (*Army of Shadows*, 1969). Unfortunately, *Child 44* with all of its potential, written by Richard Price and clearly meant to shine in the aforementioned genre and produced by Ridley Scott himself fails as tribute to those films it seeks to emulate. While it successfully creates a whole world (that of 1950s post war Russia, ruled by Stalin) in which the main character takes on a serial killer who targets young boys, this is but a plot device which is put in place to develop the trajectory of one Leo Demidov (the usually wonderful Tom Hardy). Demidov inadvertently becomes a feted member of the insidious Ministry of State Security (MGB) after distinguishing himself in World

War II. With a budget of \$50 million, the film is beautifully, albeit dolefully shot, has a cast full of brilliant actors such as Gary Oldman, Noomi Rapace, Jason Clarke, and Vincent Cassel, and yet, this whole endeavour, which clearly looked very promising on paper, made just \$3.3 million at the box office. Even at a running time of 137 minutes, I continued to watch the film, hanging on to the hope that something would click into place (with actors like that, how can things go wrong?) to salvage this unwieldy self-serious film (there isn't a single laugh, perhaps not even a real smile) that never even lightens up or pays you back for your endless patience.

This is a classic example of how to go wrong while making a film; the script, which is usually the backbone of the film, is self-indulgent and without a disciplined director to anchor its weight. As Leo goes through a series of horrific persecutions in a terrifically paranoid Soviet era Russia, we learn about his life as a former orphan, his love for his wife Raisa (played by an unusually one note Noomi Rapace), and his instinctive compassion for children, yet we never ever grow to care, either for him, his troubles and certainly never for his oddly unemotional wife. What a shame to have to waste such talent in such a mundane manner. 🇷🇺



nepalitimes.com
Trailer

HAPPENINGS



INKED: Minister for Commerce and Supplies Sunil Bahadur Thapa and Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas of India Dharmendra Pradhan sign the MOU for construction of Raxaul-Amlekhgunj oil pipeline on Monday.



BEST WISHES: Tourism Minister Kripasur Sherpa hands over a Nepali flag to Japanese mountaineer Nobokazu Kuriki who is the first person to attempt Mt Everest climb post earthquake on Sunday.



BANDA: Nepal Police personnel patrol the streets of Satdobato in Kathmandu during the two-day strike called by Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) on Sunday.



R.I.P: Visitors pay final respects to SSP Laxman Neupane who was killed in Monday's clash between Police and Tharu protestors at Tikapur in Kailali.



BOOKWORMS: A Japanese stall owner entertains visitors at the Nepal International Book Fair at Bhrikuti Mandap in Kathmandu on Tuesday.

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HOPE AFTER STRUGGLE

STÉPHANE HUËT

British artist Martin Travers is a social worker involved with youth custody centres in the Netherlands. In 2015, he wanted a break from social work and applied for residence at Kathmandu Contemporary Art Centre (KCAC) to concentrate on his own art.

After collaborating with Nepali artists to make a mural on the wall of the British Council – launching the celebration of the bicentenary of Nepal-UK diplomatic relations – Travers went to Langtang where he was stuck when the earthquake hit Nepal on 25 April.

Even though he was advised by the British Embassy in Kathmandu

to return to Europe for security reasons, he stayed on to see if he could help.

“I wanted to utilise my skills to help students deal with post-earthquake trauma,” Travers says. He ran several workshops in schools of Nepal, each one being attended by about 100 children which were sources of inspiration during his residence at KCAC which lasted two months, instead of five as initially planned.

“Inner power and adversity are recurrent themes in my work and my experience after the earthquake just fit into it,” says Travers. But while working in KCAC’s studio, he wanted to add a Nepali flavour

to his paintings and came to know the work of Paubha artist Samundra Man Shrestha.

“Martin showed me the painting of a girl with a bright smile looking up, and asked if I could fill the background,” Shrestha says. He added the White Tara of Compassion painted on a cracked wall. This picture reminds us that religious buildings may have been damaged during the earthquake, but Nepalis are still buoyant.

“When I saw what Samundra had done, I knew it had clicked between us,” Travers says passionately. So they worked on two more paintings. Ten of 12

paintings Travers made during his Patan residence are currently shown in *Of struggles and dreams – a homage to the people of Nepal* launched last Sunday at Siddhartha Art Gallery.

This exhibition begins with a painting titled *25.04.2015 (pic)*, a poignant picture of a close-up of the eyes of an elderly woman in which we can see the reflection of collapsed temples. The impact of the Gorkha earthquake on Travers’ residence is clear.

But as we go round *Of struggles and dreams*, the pictures become more optimistic, even if the 25 April earthquake is referred almost every time. Like *Art Healing* which shows a girl crouching to paint. A Himalayan monal pheasant is flying away from her paper and another one is over the girl’s head. In the background are silhouettes of damaged buildings. This suggests that art might wipe away the children’s bad memories.

It is also interesting to see that among the 10 paintings shown at the launch, nine have female characters. It’s like Travers is saying that Nepal’s reconstruction will be led by women – which is somehow the case as many Nepali men working abroad couldn’t come back to Nepal after the earthquake.


Many drawings made by children during Travers’ workshops are displayed on the first floor of Siddhartha Art Gallery, many of them transcribe the raw experience

of the earthquake.

They show Swayambunath struck by a giant mouth coming from the ground, eating a clock stopped at 11h56, bricks covering a bleeding hand, a body falling from a waving Dharara Tower, or people running as houses are collapsing and a child asking ‘Mom, where are you?’.

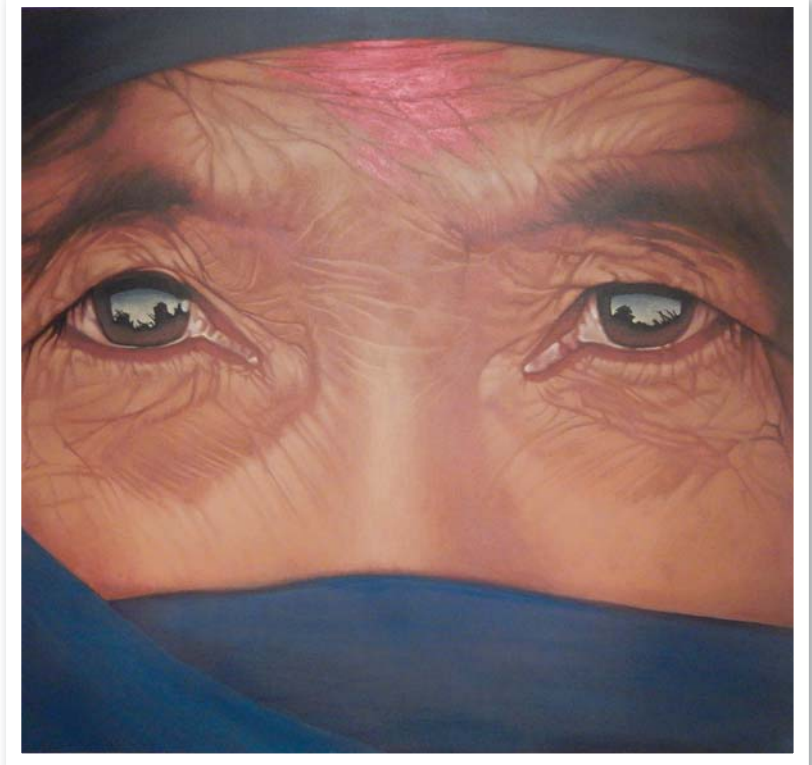
Some are more optimistic, like one illustrating a damaged temple titled ‘Today’, and next to it a rebuilt temple with the inscription ‘Tomorrow’.

During his workshops, Travers was moved by the students’ testimonies, and surprised that some of them had never painted before. That’s why he is working to help the introduction of arts in their curriculum.

A portion of the sale of Travers’ paintings will go to two schools of Kathmandu, Kanti Ishwori Madhyamik Vidhyalaya and Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi for this purpose. He has also trained teachers to conduct art classes. 

Of struggles and dreams – a homage to the people of Nepal
By Martin Travers, in collaboration with Samundra Man Shrestha
Siddhartha Art Gallery
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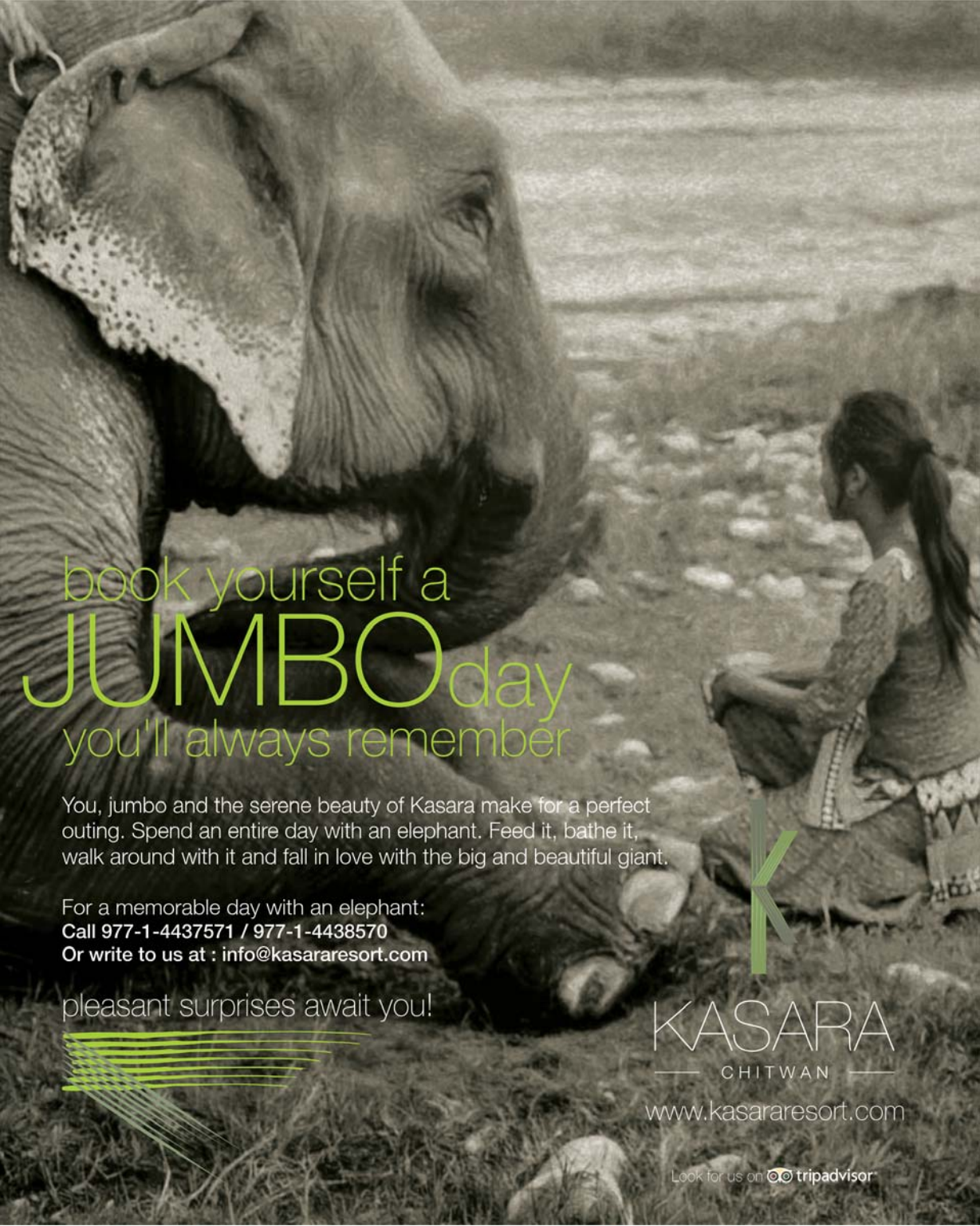
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Behind closed doors

Only 20 per cent of rape involving family members get reported

NAMRATA SHARMA
and **ARUNA UPRETY**

When a 15-year-old girl from Makwanpur confided to her mother recently that her father had been sexually abusing her she was told to stay quiet. Citing possible community backlash and the fear of social stigma, the mother asked her daughter not to report the crime. The teenager was unconvinced and with help from women's rights activists filed a complaint against her father who is now serving time in prison for incest.

In another case in the same district a student was raped by her teacher after inviting her home on the pretext of providing extra classes. It took the student several months of abuse to open up about the incident to a friend who immediately contacted the victim's aunt. Together, the three lodged a police complaint against the teacher. The student admitted that it was fear of bringing shame to her family that she hadn't spoken out sooner.

Although a majority of rape cases involve family members and close relatives, a report published by Anbesi last year showed that only 4 per cent of such cases are reported to the police. And even if they are, there is pressure from the community to settle the matter secretly in case of incest, or in many cases to get the victim to marry the rapist.

"It is difficult for children to speak out against perpetrators when they are people known or related to them," says Bishnu Ojha of Nari Sip Srijana Kendra in Hetauda which works with rape victims. Ojha frequently receives complaints from young girls who have been sexually assaulted by relatives and family members. "In such circumstances victims are also unsure about who to trust and where to seek help," he explains.

Family honour, lack of access to legal aid, and fear over being social outcasts seem to be the major deterrents for victims to report



BIKRAM RAI

rape crimes. Even when victims muster the courage to speak out, they are vilified and shunned by neighbours for bringing shame to the community.

Rather than questioning the perpetrator's character, it is the victim's behaviour that is put under the spotlight.

Many families also prefer to settle matter out of court in order to avoid public scrutiny of the case. In such circumstances it is the community members, village councils which hand out judgements, and those are usually in favour of perpetrators who tend to be powerful local men.

In Rautahat a gang rape victim was asked to leave the village while her perpetrators escaped scot free after paying the family Rs 25,000 compensation. A 60-year-old man from Kohalpur charged with raping a seven-year-old is still roaming freely because he enjoys political protection. Meanwhile the child faces constant taunts from neighbours.

"They try to make it seem like she is the one to blame," the child's aunt told us during a recent visit. The result is that the girls and young women often suffer emotion scars and mental trauma.

A 14-year-old girl from Hetauda was raped by a soldier who claimed the relationship was consensual. The girl's family charged the man with having sex with a minor, and he is now in police custody. Even though such cases of justice being served because of pressure from legal rights groups are few and far between, there is now pressure from the soldier's family to have him released if he agrees to marry the girl, who is pregnant.

The argument is that the girl will be stigmatised for life as an unmarried mother if she has the child. The reasoning of one neighbour illustrates the mindset in society: "He is a man, he will be fine even after getting released. Who will marry her and take care of the baby?" 🇳🇵

What the law says

In Nepal, sexual relationship with kin is a crime whether the relationship is between two consenting adults or forced. Although not uncommon, most incest cases do not come out in the open.

"Cases of incest generally involve power relations, meaning an elder member of the family abusing or molesting a younger one," says advocate Sapana Pradhan Malla. "Family prestige then is more important than dignity of the victim."

Article 15 of Nepal's Muluki Ain says that sexual relationships between family members within seven generations is a crime punishable by law. Ethnic groups where marriage between cousins is allowed are, however, exempt. Both men and women are liable for punishment in case of a consensual relationship while if it is forced, the perpetrator can be punished for both rape and incest.

"There is no distinction between consensual and non-consensual incest in our law. While incest-rape is and should be treated as a crime, the law for consenting individuals who may be distant relatives is unequal," says Malla. A husband is allowed to marry his wife's sister without it being incest, but a wife marrying her deceased husband's brother is treated as incest.

"Most cases coming out today are of rape by a relative," says Malla. Many cases involve girls being molested by their father, grandfather and uncles, and mothers often scold daughters if they accuse the father of molesting her. Sometimes the daughter is sent away to a maternal uncle's house while the mother tries to reconcile with her husband.

Apart from punishing the perpetrators, Malla says the law doesn't require any rehabilitation or psycho-social counselling for the victims.

Sahina Shrestha

Keeping it in the family

Approximately 4 in 5 of all rapes are committed by someone the victim knows, and 98 per cent never go to jail

ANJANA RAJBHANDARY

In HBO's show *Game of Thrones*, we notice the incestuous relationship between siblings Cersei and Jaime Lannister, and it is implied it has been going on since childhood. That is but one of the incestuous relationships in the series: what it fails to show accurately is the psychological, social and physical impact incest can have on individuals.

Earlier in the year, media reported the rape of a 19-year-old by her father and grandfather. The father had been raping his daughter for eight years and he only got 18 years in prison and a Rs 200,000 fine. The grandfather committed suicide to avoid public humiliation. The father and grandfather were exposed after the girl tried to commit suicide, which can be a common result of sexual violence.

Any form of sexual assault can have a range of effects on the individual. It is never easy to deal with it but it can be managed with the right help and support.



BIKRAM RAI

Sexual assault also does not come with a timeline of how long it takes someone to recover. It can take weeks, months, and years, and there are cases when some people never move on.

It is very common for victims of sexual assault to have posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. Many may engage in self harm such as

cutting oneself or suicide to cope with the painful memory. Some may develop eating disorders because they tend to become ashamed of their bodies, or may start engaging in substance abuse.

The awful memory of an incident caused by a family member, who should make an individual feel loved and protected, can lead to

sleeping problems, sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancies. Statistics on Rape Abuse Incest National Network (RAINN) says that approximately 4 in 5 of all rapes are committed by someone the victim knows and 98 per cent of rapists never go to jail.

After a couple of years of knowing her, a friend, now 32, opened up to me about her sexual assault. "I was 15 and met my cousin at the bar. He raped me behind the building. He told me to stay quiet and I did. I pressed my eyes shut the whole time but my tears did not stop, and neither did he. He said it was my fault it happened because I was wearing a short dress." She never reported it to the police.

Didn't that make you cringe?

In many cultures including ours, reporting a crime is not as prevalent because someone in the society will blame the victim as the cause for incest or rape. However, seeking justice can have a positive effect on one's recovery as it holds the perpetrator accountable for their actions and may prevent them from repeating it.

Incest takes away the essence of one's soul and it (temporarily) destroys one's desire to live and fight. Incest is not always about sex but can be a twisted form of showing one's power and sense of control over someone else. Recovering from this pain is always a long process.

But, we can help those who have had to suffer this unfortunate incident. The first thing is to make the victims feel safe, and give them the space to reach out and listen to their voices. These victims, who have survived need to take care of themselves. With the right support from family and friends without judgment, and maybe therapy or medication from a mental health professional and hope, we can help the survivors try to move on.

It is very important to let survivors know that what happened is not their fault. I have no sympathy for perpetrators of sexual assault of any kind because it is wrong and there is no gray area in the issue. There needs to be a longer and stricter jail sentence for rapists without any possibility of parole. 🇳🇵

As the major parties throw together a slapdash constitution that manages to upset everybody another season of strikes kicks off throughout the land. Much of the Tarai has been shut down for weeks, nationwide closures threaten Kathmandu every few days and word's already out to stock up on essentials in case it gets worse.



MOVING TARGET Foreign Hand

A recent eye-catching headline stated Nepal suffered 847 bandas in the past 5 years, an average of 169 per year. Reviewing the police list of major events is like taking a stroll down memory lane. The series of strikes called by the Maoists for 'Civil Supremacy' tops the list as the most disruptive (and gets my vote as the most idiotic), made worse by the fact all those months of rioting, taxi-burnings and wasted days achieved absolutely nothing.

Then we have the Madhesi Forum strikes that cut the valley off from the plains, unleashed chaos in the Tarai, and accomplished none of its goals. Baidya's Maoists made the list for their repeated attempts to sabotage the 2013 election, which took place anyways. You'd think it would be obvious by now, even to fools, that bandas simply don't work. So why have them?

During the first Jana Andolan that led to democracy in 1990,



BANDISTAN

A strike's success is no longer judged by how much support it garnered but by the amount of suffering it caused the people

BIKRAM RAI

strikes had genuine support and shops closed voluntarily to send a message to the government. That was the last time this form of protest had any legitimacy. By the mid 90's intimidation and fear of reprisal kept people off the streets. Once the Maoists began wrecking the country in earnest, bandas degenerated into little more than an exercise in bullying the people and destabilising the government. A strike's success was no longer judged by how much support it garnered but by the amount of suffering it caused. A banda that allowed a few shops to open and minimal traffic for emergencies was deemed less successful than one that scared everyone off the streets. Maoist strikes soon gained the reputation as the most violent, dangerous, and therefore the most successful, of all.

When your columnist asked friends who's calling a recent strike no-one knew for sure. Some guessed the RPP on the far right, others suggested Maoist factions on the far left. Apparently it's no longer considered worth knowing who's changing all your plans by

shutting the country down. Paying attention to such nonsense is depressing and why argue with a free holiday?

There was a time when bandas were held to publicise grievances that were often legitimate but now, with grievances galore, legitimacy or specific reasons no longer matter. Nobody seems to know why most bandas are called, or by who. That leaves us 'when', another frequent source of confusion. The most common response to the inquiry 'Is there a banda tomorrow?' is 'Not sure, wait and see'. That raises a philosophical question: If nobody knows who called the banda, or why, or when exactly, does the banda actually exist? Or is there any reason to follow it? Apparently so, as information passes telepathically through society and the streets are clear on strike morning, usually after a few hapless vehicles get torched first hour.

Newspaper reports confirmed a recent two-day shutdown was called by the Baidya Maoists, a splinter faction that boycotted the last election because they have

zero support and despise such bourgeois, reactionary, revisionist exercises anyway. They were backed by something called the 30-party alliance, a shadowy group we've heard about for months but nobody seems to know (or particularly care) who they are or what they stand for.

Which begs the question: why obey their call for a strike? Perhaps it's enough that '30 party alliance' sounds important, but a closer look reveals some of the party names are longer than their membership list. Many, in fact, are a party in name only, unrecognised by the Election Commission because they never got enough votes. In most democracies that renders them irrelevant but here it somehow grants them the right to interfere in your life whenever they're upset.

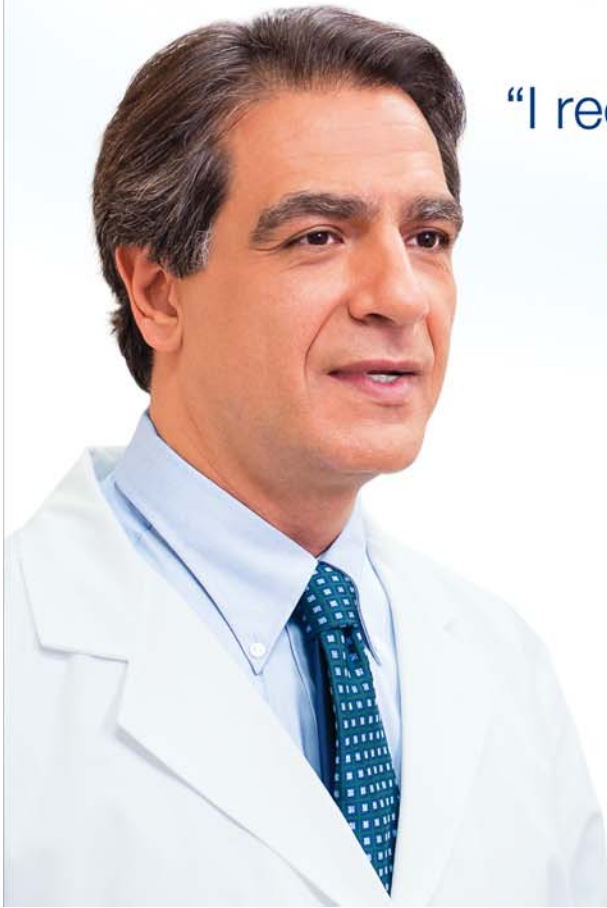
Reality check: imagine the UK Maoist party or even Labour calling a nationwide banda-cum chakka-jam. They'd be laughed off the stage and anyone caught burning tyres and trashing taxis would be unceremoniously tossed in jail. Better still, our Nepali Maoists

should try calling a strike in the land of their hero and see how the Chinese authorities react.

It's important to remind ourselves that forcing businesses to close and vehicles off the roads through coercion and the threat of violence is not a democratic right but a criminal aberration. Each party in turn displays their total lack of creativity by resorting to the same old bankrupt form of protest that's wrecked the country and never accomplished anything in the first place. Will they ever learn? In a word, no.



The fact the government does so little to ensure people can go about their daily lives unmolested indicates how little respect they have for those lives. More troubling, perhaps, is the passive acquiescence by most to whatever rumour makes the rounds: without needing to know who, why, or what for, people are quick to give up and stay home.

Until and unless that changes, it's highly unlikely the politicians will ever change their ways or respect the people's wish for a stable, banda free Nepal. 🇳🇵




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High time to lift ban

Nepal may need to rethink its 40-year-old law banning the cultivation of cannabis

SARTHAK MANI SHARMA

There are peals of laughter from a dim tavern in one of Patan's narrow alleyways. Wafting through the small eatery is the distinct aroma of marijuana. A man with a joint in his hand mumbles something incoherent, and the owner suddenly looks alarmed. "I don't allow marijuana here. I want him to leave," he explains.

Fifty years ago, these men who are now feared in Kathmandu's restaurants would be welcomed at Freak Street in shops called 'Your Old & Favorite Hashish Centre.' In the 1960s and early 70s, cheap and potent marijuana drew thousands of hippies to Kathmandu where they could readily buy one-kilogram boxes of the downer at a pittance.

In 1976, mostly under pressure from the American government which was worried about its young citizens becoming dope addicts, Nepal banned the use and sale of marijuana. The decision had far-reaching implications: the hippies left, tourism was hit, the government lost tax revenue, farmers lost a lucrative cash crop, and the trade in hash went underground, criminalising a legitimate livelihood.

In fact it is said that one of the reasons for the rapid spread of the Maoist revolution in 1996 was that the government's ban on the production of cannabis was so stringent that it angered the Kham Magars who cultivated it as a major cash crop.

Fast forward 40 years and the very country that got Nepal to ban cannabis cultivation

has now legalised it for both medical and recreational uses in some of its states. Some Latin American and other countries have also legalised the drug. In Nepal, however, a major cash crop remains illegal.

Experts have always maintained that the ban created more problems than it solved. The well-documented 'balloon effect', for example is a grave problem as people switched to more harmful opiates.

Rabi Raj Thapa, a retired Additional Inspector General (AIG) with the Nepal Police, explains: "When one drug is banned, consumption of another drug may rise. There is also so much corruption and criminality in the drug trade right now that it is time for the government to rethink its policies on marijuana."

In the 1970s, the ban initially raised the price of cannabis and then heroin, and local users moved to a dangerous mix of cheap prescription drugs known as 'Nepali cocktail'. Nepal, with its lax laws and corrupt enforcement, became a notorious transit point for drug smuggling to India, Europe, Japan and Australia. High-profile Nepalis were named or arrested in the West on smuggling charges.

The underground trade of the drug is now in the hands of shady criminals, who are known to lace it with chemicals. Marijuana today is six to eight times stronger than it was in the 1960s and 70s. Though police often conduct arrests (779 kg of hashish was seized in the first six months of this year alone) some Kathmandu restaurants still allow their

customers to smoke marijuana. A manager at a popular eatery in Patan says he just keeps the police on a retainer to avoid raids.


Taken in moderation, marijuana is said to be less dangerous than alcohol and may be even less harmful than coffee in terms of dependence and withdrawal symptoms. Its healing properties are also well known. Health workers in Nepal say that marijuana helps HIV/AIDS patients by stimulating appetite and relieving pain.

Nikhil Gurung of Recovery Nepal told this paper that marijuana also helps people get rid of their addiction to hard drugs. Recently, the US government itself acknowledged that cannabis can help kill cancer cells.

To be sure, Nepal has legalised the drug for medical purposes under prescription, but how much of it is allowed is not specified.

Experts say legalising and taxing marijuana may also be an effective way for the government to raise revenue. Another benefit of regulation is that the government can control the quality of the drug, asking licensed suppliers to indicate the amount of THC (marijuana's psychoactive element) on the drug.

Legalisation could spawn other problems, though. It is not clear if open availability of marijuana will increase the number of addicts. In a country that is known for lax regulation, legalisation may end up encouraging impunity.

We may have to believe a retired police officer like Thapa when he says: "The benefits of legalisation outweigh the harm. It is high time we legalised it." 

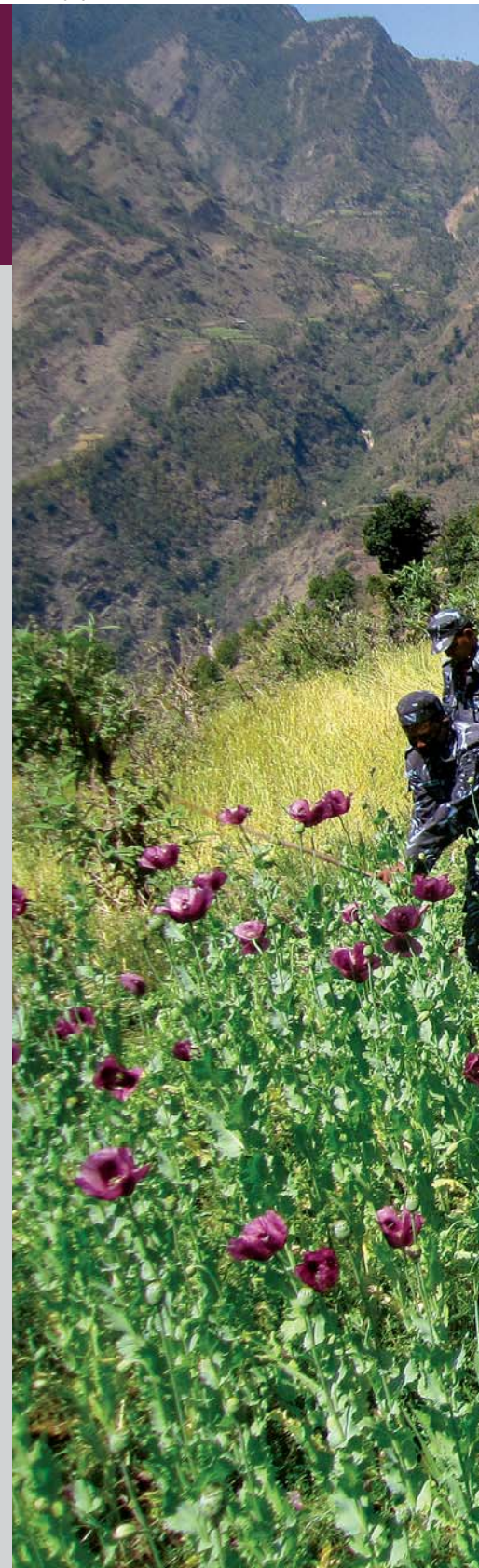


Before 2011, cannabis plantation was so common in Parsa district that elections, weapons, dowries – almost everything was financed by drug money. Sixty per cent of the arable land in Parsa was under cannabis and poppy, and their trade was controlled by Indian mafia from across the border.

District police chief at the time, Rajendra Man Shrestha, resolved to put an end to the cultivation. His efforts bore fruit: cannabis and opium cultivation went down by 95 per cent. "You will not see a single cannabis plant in Parsa now," he told *Nepali Times* in 2011.

As is customary for competent officials, Shrestha was transferred to another district soon after. Now the drugs are back. The Indian drug mafia also moved to mid-western mountains to source opium. Last year, 45 per cent of inmates in Birganj prisons were doing time for hard-drugs including heroin and opium.

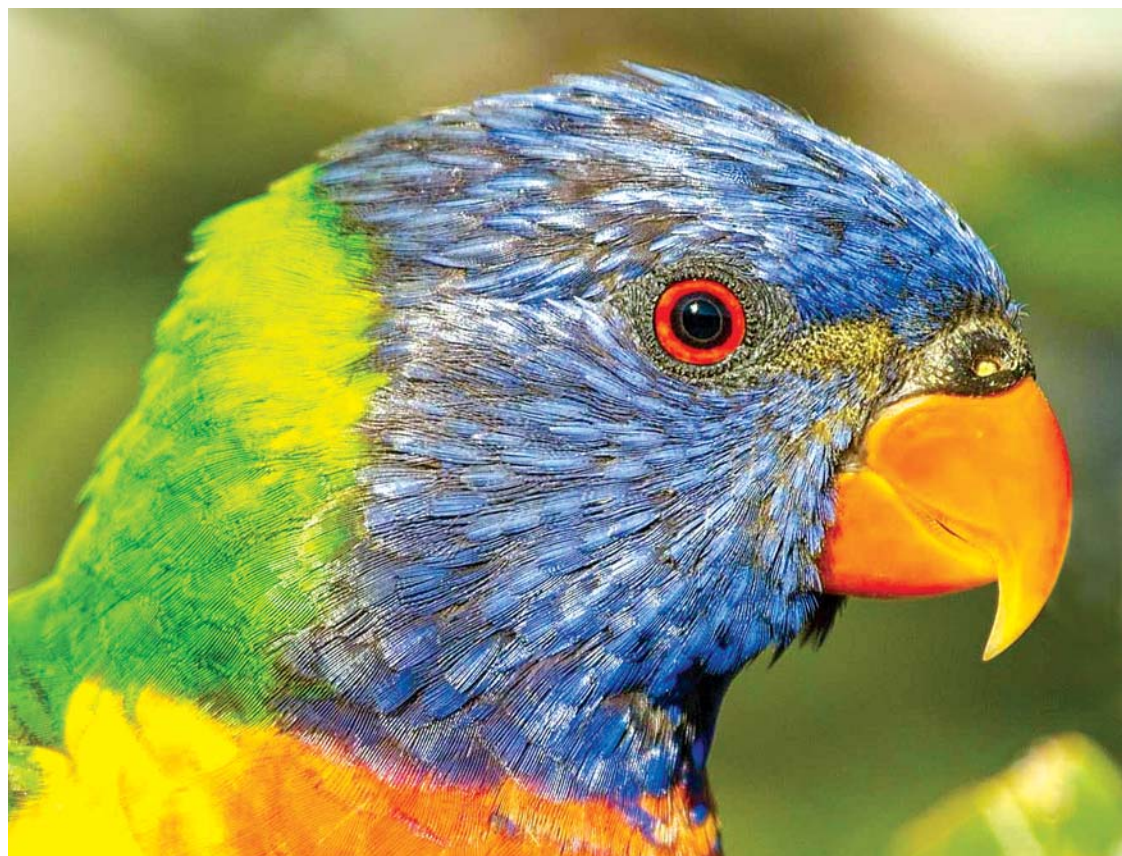
NEPAL POLICE



DAMODAR BHANDARI
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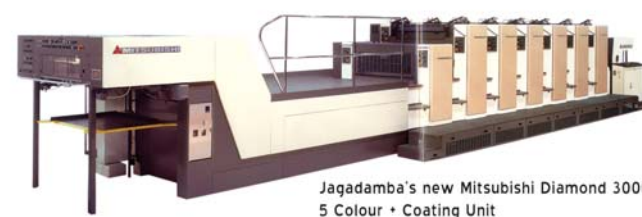
The remote poverty-stricken mountains of mid-western Nepal should be draped in purple fields of buckwheat or ripening yellow wheat. But these days terrace farms here are covered in white poppy flowers.

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NEW OPIUM EPICENTER

Farmers in western Nepal are lured to grow opium by Indian middlemen

soil conditions were considered ideal for cannabis. But after it was banned in the 1970s (*see story alongside*) the cultivation of this traditional cash crop was pushed underground. Lately, however, farmers have been lured by Indian middlemen to cultivate an even more lucrative crop: opium.

“Opium cultivation is now emerging as a serious threat,”

says Police DIG for Rukum Keshav Adhikari. “Lack of information and inaccessibility of the mid-western mountains are a major hindrance.”

Adhikari says police have got tipoffs, and between March and June nearly 150 acres of poppy fields were destroyed across Rukum. But that is just scratching the surface -- opium farms dot the villages in other mid-west

districts of Salyan, Jajarkot and Dailekh.

Indian middlemen and their Nepali suppliers have a network that is difficult to trace. They moved to these remote mountains after effective police action in Bara and Parsa of the central Tarai eradicated opium cultivation there six years ago. Police believe the opium mafia moved here because it is too remote and

inaccessible for the government to act.

Jagbir Rawal of Syalpakha village of Rukum district used to cultivate poppy, but his crop was destroyed by police earlier this year. “I knew it was illegal,” he said. “But that was the quickest way to earn money.”

Rawal was not arrested, police just warned him and other opium cultivators not to plant poppies any more. Inspector Puran Chhetri says: “Even if we arrest farmers, we cannot easily prove them guilty because they claim someone else planted poppies on their land.”

Indian traders have moved to Nepal because of crackdowns in Uttar Pradesh. The Indian state had allowed limited cultivation of opium as raw material for the pharmaceutical industry, but tightened rules after reports that the opium was being refined into heroin. This prompted opium suppliers to move across the open border to Nepal to source the crop.

Poverty, lack of irrigation and other government agricultural extension support means most farmers cannot grow enough food to feed their families and most men from these districts migrate seasonally to India for work. Police say Indian opium traders make contact with Nepali farmers through these workers and provide them with opium seeds and an advance. Farmers harvest opium pods within six months of planting and a kg of the crop fetches up to Rs 62,000.

“It is quick, easy and lucrative farming,” says AIG Surendra Bahadur Singh, who recently returned from the mid-western hills after an inspection trip. “State facilities meant for poor farmers do not reach beyond the district capital, poor farmers in remote villages have no option but to switch to opium.”

Police have seized 60.8 kg of opium from different parts of the country over the last five years and seized 47.9 kg of heroin manufactured from opium. Police admit their anti-narcotics cell is under-staffed and under-funded, and this is not even the tip of the iceberg of the trade in the contraband drug. 🇳🇵

KNOW YOUR GRASS

- Cannabis:** flowering plants from which hashish, hemp, etc. are made
- Marijuana:** usually refers to the leaves of cannabis which can be smoked
- Hashish:** a sticky resin made from the cannabis plant; more potent than marijuana
- Hemp:** made from the stalk and leaves of cannabis for fabric and textiles
- Bhang:** made from the seeds of the cannabis plant and used to lace food and drinks



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Balance sheet

Ramesh Sapkota, *Naya Patrika*,
23 August

NEPALI CONGRESS

- Income
 - Active membership fee: Rs 200 for membership and Rs 100 for renewal. NC collected Rs 31.7 million from its 317,000 members last year and hopes to increase its membership to 600,000 next year.
- Levy from CA members: Each CA member from the party is levied a charge of Rs 5,000 monthly, earning the party over Rs 1 million last year.
- Donations: The party raised Rs 30 million during its annual convention.

- Expenses
 - Office expenses: NC has employed 24 people to work at its central office and spends about Rs 550,000 on salary every month. Other utility expense including phone charge, electricity fee and repair and maintenance of vehicles amount to over Rs 57,000 per month.
 - Leaders' food expenses: The party doesn't provide its leaders food allowance, but special meals are served at

- every party meeting.
- Convention expenses: The party claims it spent over Rs 10 million for housing and food expenses for its members during its annual convention.

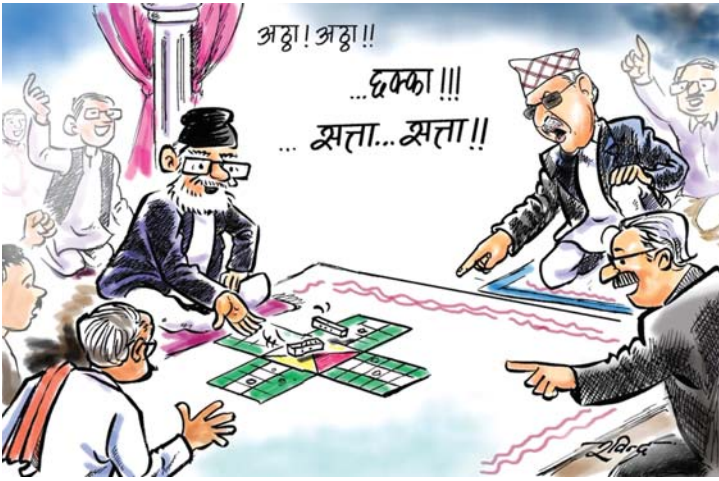
- CPN UML Income
 - Levy from CA members: The party raises Rs 22 million from CA members levied a monthly charge of Rs 10,000. It also asks for a 10% share from the income of those members who received political posts after the party's recommendations.
 - Membership renewal: Collects Rs 10 each month from its 258,671 members and last year raised over Rs 25.8 million.
 - Donations and support: Gets donations from its supporters and well-wishers during elections. This process is not fully transparent.

- Expenses
 - Salary for central members: Provides Rs 10,000 salary to its central members. 127 out of 184 members receive this salary.
 - Expenses for party wings: Spends about Rs 4 million yearly on its youth wings and sister organisations, paying each

- organisation Rs 25,000 monthly.
- Misc. expenses: Has employed 25 workers in its office and spends about Rs 3.5 million on them. It also bears the costs of its leaders' travel and fuel expenses

- UCPN MAOIST Income
 - Levy from CA members: Raises Rs 12,000 as levy from its 84 CA members every month totalling Rs 1 million monthly.
 - Levy from party members: Claims party has not raised levy from its members because its structure is in a mess.
 - Donations and support: Raises donations during elections and conventions. Not fully transparent.

- Expenses
 - Office expenses: Spends Rs 800,000 every month.
 - Health expenses for leaders: Supports leaders financially when they need treatment, but a proposal must be submitted to the office prior to treatment.
 - Other expenses: Spends most of its money on its annual convention, for which it must pay for the food and housing expenses of thousands of its members.



Eight! Eight!
Six!
Seven! Seven!

नेपाल

Rabindra Manandhar in *Nepal*, 23 August

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“I was, I am and I will always stand for an undivided Karnali.”

NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba speaking at a press conference on 25 August



BBC

Violence not solution

Rabindra Mishra interviews former kamlari and CA member Shanta Chaudhary in *BBC Nepali*, 25 August

BBC
नेपाली

BBC Nepali: You wrote on Facebook that innocent Tharus were used as a human shield in Tikapur to kill security personnel. Yes, some people fished in troubled waters. They used the Tharus' protest as an opportunity to settle their own scores. But Tharu leaders cannot get away saying that there were infiltrators. They should take moral responsibility. Whether there were infiltrators will be investigated later. They failed to keep the protests under control.

But isn't it true that thousands of protesters brandishing axes, spears and guns were indeed Tharus?

I don't think they were there to kill anyone. I am not defending them just because I am a Tharu. I believe in issues of class, not ethnicity. But Tharus consider themselves as descendants of the Buddha, and I don't think they can engage in such criminal activities. We should find out who used us and why. At a time when the new constitution is being written, it is natural for everyone to fight for their rights. But the country should be our foremost priority. If you burn your country down, you will be burning yourself.

Do you support the demand for a Tharuhat province? More than demanding a state, Tharus are fighting to be in one province. They do not want to be divided between two different provinces.

As a Tharu, do you have a message to your community at a sensitive time like this?

We should exercise restraint. Violence is not the solution to our problems. Although the government tends to overlook peaceful protests, we should not resort to violence. We should not tarnish our image of being peace-loving and honest people.



KESHAV RANA

Planning to kill

www.himalkhabar.com,
25 August

हिमाल
खबर पत्रिका

When Madhesi leaders Upendra Yadav, Rajendra Mahato and Amaresh Singh provoked Kailali's ethnic Tharus to drive away 'outsiders from their lands' three weeks ago, supporters of the Tharuhat movement were divided about their response. Attacking 'outsiders' would have sparked ethnic violence.

However, when a rally organised by hill settler supporters of the 'Undivided Far-west' province came across Tharu protesters in Tikapur of Kailali on 21 August the situation nearly

turned ugly. Police brought the situation under control by dispersing both groups of agitators, and the local administration got all parties to agree that future protests would be peaceful.

That night some Tharu leaders held a late night meeting in a village near Durgauli and planned to use violence to jolt the state and push through their agenda for an autonomous Tharu province. But they were divided over their target: some wanted to attack supporters of the 'Undivided Far-west' while others wanted to attack the police. They finally agreed to target the police because killing Far West supporters would spark communal violence.

Tharuhat Struggle Committee's

Kailali district coordinator Resham Chaudhary, Birman Chaudhary of the UCPN(M) and Phul Man Chaudhary and Nep Bahadur Chaudhary of the Baidya faction of the CPN-M were at the meeting. Birman was an elected member of the previous Constituent Assembly while Phul Man contested the second CA elections from the UCPN (M). Nep Bahadur is a former Maoist guerrilla commander and is now Kailali in-charge of the CPN-M.

"After that meeting, they gathered former Maoist guerrillas in Tikapur from nearby districts and scouted the places where they could trap us," said a top police source. "But our intelligence failed us, and we didn't know it beforehand."

The group planned to trick the police into believing that their rally would be peaceful. A day before the killings, Tharu leaders held an all-party meeting in presence of CDO Raj Kumar Shrestha and issued a press statement that they would not resort to violence. Birman and Nep Bahadur were signatories.

"That is why we were not on high alert because we did not expect any violence," said a top police officer. "But the way police officers have been killed suggests involvement of trained ex-guerrillas."

Officials claim that ex-guerrillas who are now affiliated with Netra Bikram Chanda and Mohan Baidya's Maoist parties were involved in the killings and that even the UCPN (M) allowed their Tharu cadres to protest.

The most desperate battle in history

This is part seven of the series about the Gurkhas at Gallipoli exactly 100 years ago this month

9 August 1915

The plan of the attack, as concocted by General Godley, had involved numerous other battalions, and a brigade of four battalions under Brigadier General A H Baldwin now set out to reinforce the forward unit of Gurkhas pinned down below the summit of Hill Q, but again the guides lost their way and this force failed to advance very far.

Baldwin's column was still a long way from the crest whence they should even now have been sweeping along the whole ridge of the mountain. And instead of Baldwin's support came suddenly a salvo of heavy shells. So, when the naval barrage designed to wreak havoc on the Ottoman positions lifted at 5.20 am on 9 August, only survivors of the first advance were able to make an assault on the hill top.

These were: the 1/6th Gurkhas, the North Staffs, the Warwicks, the South Lancs, the 1/5th Gurkhas, which had managed to join the others, and a Maori battalion – all much reduced in strength by now. They now launched their attack. John North, in his book *Gallipoli: the Fading Vision*, comments that 'the lonely advance of the British and Gurkha skirmishers to the crest of the ridge when the battle was already lost must always remain one of the most gallant episodes in the whole campaign'.

Major Allanson of the 1/6th Gurkhas recorded, after the barrage ended: 'I had my watch out, 5.15. I never saw such artillery preparation; the trenches were being torn to pieces; the accuracy was marvellous, as we were just below. At 5.18 it had not stopped and I wondered if my watch was wrong. At 5.20, silence; I waited three minutes to be certain, great as the risk was. Then off we dashed, all hand in hand, a most perfect advance, and a wonderful sight. At the top we met the Turks; Le Marchand was down, a bayonet through the heart. I got one through the leg, and then for about what appeared to be ten minutes we fought hand to hand, we bit and fisted, and used rifles and pistols as clubs. And then the Turks turned and fled and I felt a very proud man; the key of the whole peninsula was ours, and our losses had not been so very great for such a result. Below I saw the Straits, motors and wheeled transport, on the roads leading to Achi Baba.'

The Gurkhas succeeded in driving the enemy off the hill and for about 15 minutes occupied the crest, preparing a gap for General Baldwin's column of four battalions to exploit. But the



General Sir Ian Hamilton

reinforcements – Baldwin's four battalions – never came. And as the 1/6th advanced towards Sari Bair and Maidos from where one can see a large stretch of the Dardanelles, suddenly when they were about 300 feet down, they were shelled. Allanson believed it was the Royal Navy, mistaking them for the enemy, although that has been contested.

He recalled: 'As I looked round I saw that we were not being supported and thought I could help best by going after those who had retreated in front of us. We dashed down towards Maidos but only got about 200 feet down when suddenly our own Navy put six twelve inch shells into us and all was terrible confusion. It was a deplorable disaster; we were obviously mistaken for Turks and we had to go back. The first (of the shells) hit a Gurkha in the face ... the place was a mass of blood and limbs and screams, and we all flew back to the summit and our old position just below.'

This, combined with heavy fire from the direction of Abdel Rehman Bair and an Ottoman counter-attack, drove them from the summit. The position won at such cost after three nights and two days of fighting was lost, never to be regained. They were obliged to retreat to their earlier



position of the night before, below the crest of the Hill. For the whole of the following day, the Gurkhas and the British troops were marooned on the rocks below the peak, under the baking sun with no water and running low on ammunition. The wounded, of whom there were many including Allanson himself, were in a parlous state. Allanson and all the British officers except one having been either badly wounded or killed, it was Subedar Major Gambir Singh Pun who effectively commanded the battalion, together with the Medical Officer Capt Phipson.

By the end of 9 August the Allies retained only a foothold

on Chunuk Bair. 'This', General Hamilton, however, wrote in his diary, 'leaves us with a fine gain of ground, although minus the vital crest. Next time we'll get them'.

But there was no next time. The chance to capture Sari Bair was gone forever and with it the last opportunity for a successful conclusion to the Allied Gallipoli campaign. At daybreak on 10 August 1915, the Ottomans counter-attacked. First, they shelled the Allied troops and then attacked with a full division plus a regiment of three battalions. They managed to push the allies to a line along the lower slopes of the great ridge of Sari Bair. Hamilton noted later in his field report that 'the ponderous masses of the enemy swept over the crest, turned the right flank of our line below, swarmed round the Hampshires and General Baldwin's column, which had to give ground, and were only extricated with great difficulty and very heavy losses'.

The 1/6th Gurkhas suffered 200 casualties. Allanson was told that the Gurkhas would be withdrawn the next morning. Allanson himself was eventually 'carted' off, having told the general (presumably Cox) that if his Gurkhas were

forced to retreat they 'would have given up the key to the Gallipoli Peninsula'. The action seen of the 1/6th over the few days of the 'break-out' constituted probably the most outstanding fought in the Regiment's history and is unique in that the Battalion was for a time under joint command, with Capt Phipson communicating with the higher HQ and Subedar Major Pun passing the orders onto the companies. It was the considered opinion of Lt Gen Sir Reginald Savory, who served at Gallipoli with the 14th KGO Sikhs that the 1/6th Gurkha Rifles were "the outstanding battalion of the Gallipoli Campaign".

General Sir Ian Hamilton's secretary, in a letter acknowledging a Christmas card from the Regiment, says "It is Sir Ian Hamilton's most cherished conviction that if he had been given more Gurkhas at the Dardanelles he would never had been held up by the Turks".

Field Marshal Sir William Slim's introduction to the second volume of the 6th Gurkhas' history: 'I first met the 6th Gurkha Rifles in 1915 in Gallipoli. There I was so struck by their bearing in one of the most desperate battles in history that I resolved, should the opportunity come, to try to serve with them. Four years later it came, and I spent many of the happiest and from a military point of view the most valuable, years of my life in the Regiment'.

Allanson, recommended for a Victoria Cross, was eventually given a Distinguished Service Medal (DSO); Captain Phipson was also awarded the DSO and Subedar Major Pun the Military Cross. In all, 2 DSOs, 2 MCs, 2 IOMs and 1 IDSM were awarded to members of the battalion. Allanson's own comments, however, were understandably bitter:

'I left that battlefield a changed man; all my ambitions to be a successful soldier have gone; knowing all I know now, I feel the responsibility. The murderous responsibility, that rests on the shoulders of an inefficient soldier or one who has passed his prime to command.'

In all modesty, he was probably referring to himself; but his comment stands as an indictment of the more senior officers who were ultimately responsible for this particularly disastrous episode of the disastrous Gallipoli campaign. 🇳🇵

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Culture Shock Nepal



Every time human beings find themselves in a different cultural milieu than the one they are familiar with, they suffer from a phenomenon known as culture shock and need expert guidance in local customs and etiquette. This is especially true of countries like Nepal where the habits of easy-going natives may not be familiar to first-time visitors: like the tradition of taking a forced three-day nationwide holiday twice a month. The rules of the road are fairly simple: Two Legs Good, Four Wheels Bad, Three Legs Bad Unless It Is Three Wheels And Has Wings. Rollerblades Are OK, Cable cars Are Not. Rickshaws Are Fine, Autorickshaws Are Not. See, if you didn't know these quaint local customs you would be completely lost during a Nepal Bund. That is why we have taken the liberty of presenting a list of simple do's and don'ts and the general rule of thumb which is: while in Nepal, be as disgusting as us.

Public Grooming
Nepalis love to nitpick and can be seen doing this in public on the sidewalks, on terraces and balconies at all times of day and night. Usually anyone can nitpick anyone else, but since looking for lice on someone else's hair is an indication of some degree of mutual intimacy it is frowned upon if it involves two or more individuals of the same sex. It is perfectly acceptable, however, to approach a stranger sitting next to you in a long-distance bus and after necessary introductions start looking for nits in each others' hair. Besides being a great way to pass the time, it is also mutually hygienic. Toothpicking is another favourite past-time and, luckily in Nepal, there are no rules governing how people with advanced halitosis should pick their teeth in polite company. This is why many foreigners opt to make Nepal their home because they don't have to worry

about exhuming items of food from their molars within earshot of guests sitting around the table. We are proud to say that there is complete freedom within Nepal's territorial waters as far as self-exploration of the oral cavity is concerned. The nose is another orifice that we Nepalis are proud to call our own. Thanks to our ancestors who risked life and limb to explore its uncharted upper reaches, the terrain map has been handed from generation to generation through word of mouth so that today we modern Nepalis are quite familiar with our nooks and crannies. The probe of choice for nasal expeditions is the pinkie with a nail that is designed to grow into the shape of a tiny shovel that can efficiently mine nuggets of precious booty deep inside our snouts. Because of space constraints we can't go into the conventions of etiquette governing the grooming of each other's body parts. Suffice to say that Nepal also has a laissez faire attitude about expelling body fluids. A visitor to Nepal need not be unduly concerned about clearing the throat in public. It is done with a quick intake of breath to dislodge the primary target area in the oesophagus, pneumatically roll it into an aerodynamically stable glob, and then with the same technology used in shoulder-fired heat-seeking Stinger missiles expectorate this biological warhead at an innocent bystander. Next week we will be looking at the endearing Nepali passion of rummaging through the toolbox in public.



The Ass

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