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OMASTHARA

Sweet home

When the earthquake last April destroyed her house in Majhigaun of Sindhupalchok, Bishnu Maya Majhi (pictured above) moved with her family to a bamboo hut nearby. Nearly a year later, the 48-year-old grandmother is still living in the shed.

Majhi is among 2.5 million Nepalis who will have to wait another rainy season, and perhaps even till next winter, in temporary shelters. A government distracted by street agitation, the blockade and political infighting is just not equipped to provide relief.

The National Reconstruction

DECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY
EDITORIAL
PAGE 2

Authority (NRA) was to start distributing grant assistance of Rs 200,000 from Singati of Dolakha on 3 March, but was postponed.

"Singati will be a pilot project. We will use lessons from it in earthquake affected areas in Dolakha and other districts," NRA head Sushil Gyewali said.

In the first phase 6,000 families will get the Rs 50,000 first installment transferred to their bank accounts. They get the second installment of Rs 80,000 after the house design is approved, and the final installment of Rs 70,000 after completion of the house.

But locals are skeptical. "We have heard all this before, and waited too long. Every time the deadline nears it is postponed," said Sundar

Shrestha of the Dolakha Chamber of Commerce.

Some 1,300 families have opened bank accounts, but many say Rs 200,000 isn't enough. "It won't even buy us the timber," says Shrestha.

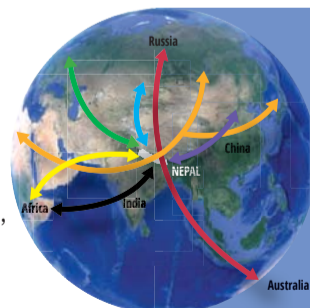
While survivors have given up hope on the government, Nepal's donors and relief agencies are getting increasingly impatient with the delays. They accuse the NRA of trying to control everything when it should be urgently facilitating reconstruction.

Sahina Shrestha

Full story page 14-15



MONEY MIND
ONE TO MANY
BY BIDUSHI DHUNGEL
PAGE 3



buzz BIRDS of PASSAGE

Long-range migratory birds that make stopovers in Nepal.

PAGE 8-9

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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

DECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

The government should stop trying to be a control freak, and open up the space for earthquake survivors to easily rebuild their homes

In just over a month, it will be one year since last April's earthquake devastated central Nepal. The international media has started trickling back for the mandatory first anniversary story. You can already see their headlines: 'One Year Later, Nepal Earthquake Survivors Still Await Aid'.

The government was ill-prepared for an earthquake everyone knew was coming. Some donor initiatives like the National Emergency Operation Centre were in place, but its protocols were inadequate to cope with the scale of the disaster. There was an almost complete absence of government in the first two weeks — politicians simply vanished.

But even in the absence of elected village and district councils and requisite resources, the local administration did a remarkable job in damage assessment and first response. Volunteers and relief groups self-organised spontaneously through social media and filled the gap left by the central government. There were other bright spots: the work of Armed Police and Nepal Army rescue teams, the Department of Health's logistics office in delivering the right medical supplies and equipment to the right places, the state broadcasters in disseminating information. The much feared outbreaks of disease in the shelters did not happen.

But because no one was coordinating international relief, there was a lot of duplication, overlaps and inappropriate aid. Even though most destroyed buildings were mud and brick structures, we had emergency squads specialising in collapsed concrete structures. Rescue teams were stepping on each other's toes in the capital, and were not where they were needed the most.

In the absence of accountability and leadership, the government produced one gaffe after another with ad hoc, confusing and contradictory directives that made us a laughing stock of the world. At a time when we needed all the help we could get, the government announced it would tax relief material. Then, it ordered all cash donations to



OMASTHA RAI

go to the Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund. The Rastra Bank came out with the outrageous rule that individual donations would be 'confiscated' if it wasn't sent through proper channels. The Nepal Army refused the Royal Air Force's offer of Chinook helicopters when logistics was the main bottleneck for relief distribution. We didn't even say thank you properly: the government abruptly and bluntly told relief teams to go home. One disaster was followed by another public relations disaster for the country.

Amidst all this, it was the National Planning Commission under the leadership of Govind Raj Pokhrel and Swarnim Wagle that stepped in to short circuit decision-making. It delegated authority and put together a comprehensive needs assessment report in record time for a successful donor conference in Kathmandu last June that pledged \$4.1 billion.

But we became victims of our own success as politicians started drooling over the money. A bill to set up the authority was allowed to lapse in parliament, and Pokhrel found himself CEO of an agency that didn't exist anymore. Six

months after the earthquake, Prime Minister KP Oli of the UML finally brought his own man to head the Reconstruction Authority, Sushil Gyewali.

Despite his proven track record in the Town Development Fund, Gyewali has found it tough going because of his junior rank and UML tag. The Authority is short-staffed, and recently told relief agencies to stop reconstruction activities. It sowed more confusion by warning survivors they may not get the Rs 200,000 package if they rebuild without following guidelines.

Meanwhile, a government distracted by the crippling blockade did little to alleviate the misery of the 2.5 million survivors still living in temporary shelters. Major donors are also getting impatient with delays in their budget expenditure authorisation. About \$860 million of donor aid from the World Bank,

ADB, JICA and others has been committed and is waiting to be disbursed. But instead of expediting implementation, the Authority is working on a five-year reconstruction strategy, a logo competition and planning a second donor conference.

When it should be facilitating rehabilitation of homes and livelihoods, it is tangled with procedural issues and seems to be more interested in controlling the purse strings than in fast-tracking reconstruction. The Authority should not obstruct implementing agencies from moving ahead, and speed up the long-delayed cash disbursement for home reconstruction. Donors should also not insist on next-to-impossible procedures as a prerequisite.

As our reportage on page 14-15 shows, the need is too vast and relief is needed too urgently for the Authority and the government to tangle itself in red tape and politics. Soon, millions of families will have to hunker down for their second rainy season out in the open. The government must loosen its rules, stop trying to only control and regulate, widen the scope for rehabilitation, and make it as easy as possible for people to rebuild homes.

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

Times THIS WEEK



GOPEN RAI

Most reached on Facebook

Right fight
On the occasion of International Women's Day, Nepali Times caught up with a few female athletes who have done the nation proud in recent international tournaments. (57,046 people reached)

Most shared on Facebook

Land of our daughters, Editorial (27 shares)

Most popular on Twitter

Right fight, International Women's Day package (119 retweets, 258 favourites)

Most visited online page

Right fight, International Women's Day package (974 views)

Most commented

United Arab Emigrants by Om Astha Rai

LAND OF OUR DAUGHTERS

While two girls won two gold medals for Nepal, it took a whole team of boys to win a third ('Land of our daughters', Editorial, #798). But it seems that the medal won by the boys is much more valuable than the ones won by the girls — a reflection of our patriarchal society. We must get rid of it, or else we'll remain underdeveloped, even if we prosper economically.

Hari Maharjan

- We have a female President and a female Speaker of the House. So, we have made tremendous progress as Nepali women. But we still have discrimination and violence against women. It's changing slowly and someday soon there will be gender equality in Nepal.

Bimala Shakya

- There is no respect of women in Nepali society. Just look at the trafficking of women, before mostly to Mumbai and now all over the world. If Nepali male leaders and the general male population had even a shred of respect for our mothers, daughters

and sisters, we would not be selling them to brothels around the world. If a chauvinistic, male-dominated Nepal learns to empower and respect women, it would transform from a hellhole to heaven.

Shanta Basnet

UNITED ARAB EMIGRANTS

The government and NGOs must urgently give attention to directing some funds towards building sustainable economic development and business investment

Trevor Moyle

- Sad they have to leave home to earn enough money

Suzanne Ryan

- If we relied on remittance and better-skilled manpower for the Middle East it will contribute to the home country economy. People just flock to the Gulf without any knowledge any idea about what awaits them, and will very few skills. We need to empower our people with skills that will sustain them abroad and when they return home. A lot of hard working people

started from the bottom and have move to the top with their own hard work. But with a little help from the government everyone could do better.

Yalam Rai

TABOO NO MORE

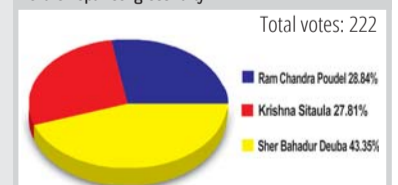
Traditionally in ALL cultures, sexuality is linked to fertility ('Taboo no more', Ayesha Shakya, #798). To be able to feed all mouths we had to control fertility, hence control women. Babies born out of wedlock starved to death. Not evil... just survival.

Gemma Morrow

Times nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll #799

Q. Who do you want to see become the new president of the Nepali Congress Party?



Weekly Internet Poll #800
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. How do you rate the performance of the Reconstruction Authority so far?

The whirlwind of the Nepali Congress General Convention and the election for a new party leadership has finally come to an end. The general sentiment seems to be that under Sher Bahadur Deuba's stewardship the likelihood of addressing grievances is higher. There is also talk of a great 'balance' in the party brought forward by the Deuba-Shashank Koirala team.



ONE TO MANY
Bidushi Dhungel

Even before the election, an image of Deuba as the 'progressive' leader for the party and the likes of Paudel and Koirala as a 'regressive', and the Sitaula alliance as the 'Indian hand' were more or less established.

But if past records are anything to go by, whichever 'camp' is leading is unlikely to make any difference except among supporters and patrons who will now cash in on the new leadership. The idea that a Deuba-led party would somehow be more amenable to the Madhesi cause, for example, seems almost baseless. A cursory look at his past premierships and his positions on the undivided Far West should be proof enough. Instead of giving him support, Madhesi pundits should be raising eyebrows.

Perhaps the Madhesi Front trusts Deuba more because he may well be the 'most lenient' in the NC leadership to agree to whatever demands come his way, so long as he gets his seat in power. Ram Chandra Poudel,

whom Deuba defeated, lags only a few steps behind in this respect.

But at this point, every leader in every political party will pretty much do anything for power, signing on to whatever comes their way to ensure two things: sustained power and the inevitable and unhindered loot of the coffers. In real terms, it should be evident to all Nepalis that there is no real difference between Deuba and Paudel, between the NC and UML and the Prachanda-led Maoists. Even Chitra Bahadur KC's Jana Morcha and Kamal Thapa's RPPN seem to have bartered ideology for power. In reality, differences are exaggerated during times of political sensitivity like it was during the convention, but they

mean very little beyond those days and weeks. Now you can hardly tell one leader or party from another

Major political parties in Nepal are all, in theory, left of centre. In practice none of them have a substantial binding political ideology aside, of course, from an entrenched belief in malpractice and corruption. They carry policies and actions which are simultaneously neo-liberal, conservative, socialist, fascist, nationalist and everything in between, so long as the actions yield results in their political – and thus economic – favour.

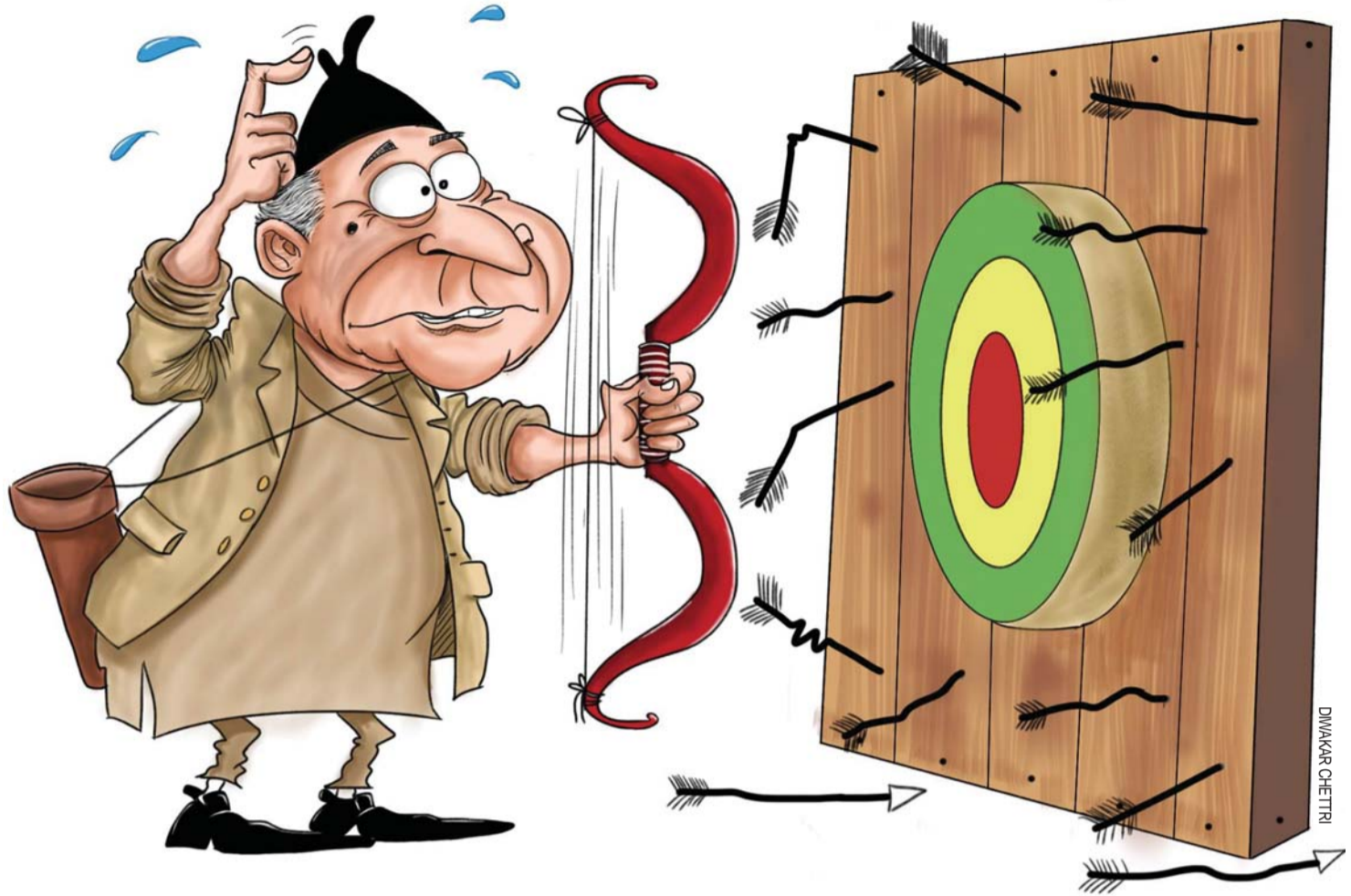
Most recently, the parties have also become nationalists. The KP Sharma Oli government in particular was able to use

nationalist rhetoric to suppress the movement in the Tarai, place all blame on neighbouring India while raking in billions from the thriving black market. Nationalist rhetoric was cleverly espoused, not to establish race superiority as some might argue, but indeed to become wealthy.

One doesn't even have to analyse the blockade politics or the Madhes movement to understand the root of the unholy alliance of the current government. Fundamentally, a coalition should not even be possible if ideology (or integrity) were a binding factor. For example, the day Comrade Pushpa Kamal got on stage in Tundikhel some months ago and espoused the sentiments

of poet Madhav P Ghimire on nationalism, the supremacy of greed over ideology and belief became evident. For now, nationalism was going to be the choice vehicle that had little to do with national sovereignty.

Truth be told, Nepal is reeling under a conservative spell along with the rest of the subcontinent and perhaps even the world. That would be less worrying if that at least meant more growth and development, as is often the case. Unfortunately, a kleptocratic state and society will not even allow that much. With the parties working hand-in-glove with the bureaucracy and business elite to plunder and loot as their priority agenda, the immediate future not looking so great for any of us. ❑



MONEY MIND

The parties work hand-in-glove with the bureaucracy and business elite to plunder and loot in our kleptocratic state



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Deuba, Delhi

Something is brewing again in Kathmandu's political cauldron after the Nepali Congress convention

After the Nepali Congress jamboree that ended this week, the question on the minds of all op-ed writers is: what next?

The Convention got inordinate media coverage with banner headlines in all the national broadsheets for days on end. Gauging the media frenzy, one would have thought this was a general election to parliament.



GUEST COLUMN
Navin Jha

Although many analysts remarked on the passing of the torch to a new non-Koirala clan leadership, I doubt if anything will change in the way the Nepali Congress functions. Three-time PM Sher Bahadur Deuba is the new party president, and he is no maverick. If he could change anything, he would have done so 20 years ago, so don't expect anything dramatic from him.

More interesting is how the



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and Oli

Madhes movement of the past five months affected a party that once got most of its strength from the Tarai, and had leaders from the plains in the party hierarchy.

The Madhesi parties are getting restless again with what they see as an erosion of their demands or amendments to the constitution and have announced a new spate of agitation next month to fulfill their 11-point demand.

But it is not likely that either they or the Madhesi people have it in them to go through another prolonged agitation. The reality is that they will now be trying to infiltrate the NC, and work towards a change in the political equation for a national unity government.

That is also not as easy as it sounds. It is clear that New Delhi just about tolerated Prime Minister Oli and his whims during his recent official visit, and doesn't trust him to do its bidding. And next week he is off to China, and who knows what he will agree to there.

This is why Deuba's future road map becomes important for New Delhi because he knows that New Delhi knows how impatient he is to become PM again. And India would prefer a

pliable Deuba to the volatile Oli, it goes without saying. Sources close to the Indian establishment have remarked on several meetings with Deuba emissaries who have assured them that their leader will be more amenable to India's concerns.

At the back of the minds of Indian strategists must be how to prevent Oli and his brand of nationalists from going it alone and double crossing the Madhes again. That is why their officials from Prime Minister Modi right down to Ambassador Ranjit Rae have publicly reiterated that stability in Nepal is not possible without a political settlement of Madhesi demands. I have it on good authority that Deuba has assuaged Delhi that he'll fix that if he becomes PM.

Meanwhile, top Madhesi leaders have trooped off to New Delhi again, and the public perception is that they have gone to receive instructions. A Madhesi Front leader told me they don't have any other agenda than to speak at a panel discussion in Delhi, but that is hard to believe.

This week, one influential Madhesi leader Hridayesh Tripathi told me that he didn't see an alternative to another round of street protests in the

plains. He thinks that is the only way to settle the provincial boundary dispute once and for all. Tripathi firmly believes the mainstream Kathmandu parties are not ready for that. As vice-chair of the Tarai Madhes Loktantrik Party, he will be in Delhi along with his boss, Mahant Thakur, to attend the same interaction. The party has been trying to keep the agitation momentum alive with protest programs across the Tarai last month.

Ironically, both used to be in the Nepali Congress, which this week saw most Madhesi leaders sidelined. All they could muster was a female treasurer. Meanwhile, Maoist chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal also seems to be getting impatient about being in the sidelines for so long, and has expressed his desire for a national government.

Will he now abandon the UML and get into bed with the NC? However improbable that may have seemed a month ago, it suddenly appears not so far-fetched after the NC convention and the dawn of the Deuba era.

The pot will start boiling while Oli is away in China, and who knows what kind of political equation he will return to. 🇳🇵

prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS

New in tech

Samsung Electronics Nepal announced the launch of two new smartphone models: Samsung Galaxy S7 Edge and Galaxy S7. Sporting



an advanced camera, streamlined software functionality and easy connectivity to various products, services, and experiences, the two models are suited for today's tech savvy consumers.

Tucson in town

Laxmi InterContinental Pvt. Ltd., authorized sole distributor of Hyundai vehicles for Nepal, recently launched the All-New Tucson. Available in both gasoline and diesel powered engines, the All-New Tucson delivers 513 liters of luggage capacity with all the seats up.



Wine and Dine

Soaltee Crowne Plaza Kathmandu hosted a special wine tasting session for Jacob's Creek Wine recently. In the event, the Australian wine brand introduced the recently launched Jacob's Creek Moscato in addition to wine tastings of Jacob's Creek's Reserve Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Riesling



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What next in the Madhes?

Madhesi protesters are ready to go back to the streets again, but only if their leaders behave

JYALAL SAH
IN BIRGANJ

Walking through the streets of Birganj today, one would be forgiven for doubting that this was the epicentre of the violent agitation that crippled the country for six months. The city's iconic Clock Tower is ticking, horse carts are plying, and there are virtually no traces of what was going on until just one month ago.

But listen to people at tea stalls and they are talking of nothing else but the recent Madhes movement. Everyone is asking: what's next?

The Madhesi Front, the force behind the Madhes movement, is trying to reignite the fire which was abruptly extinguished ahead of Prime Minister KP Oli's India visit last month. Jata Shankar Gupta, a local Madhesi leader in Birganj, says: "After the upcoming Holi festival, we will hit the streets once again."

But common Madhesi people who fought for their dignity and against the state's apathy rule out the possibility of another street movement of the same intensity. Bikram Sah, (pictured) one of the few Madhesi protesters who took part in the sit-in at the Birganj-Raxaul crossing till the last day, feels the battle is not over, but he is not sure if the protests will be of the same nature or duration.

"It all depends on how leaders reach out to us," he says. "If they want us to go back to the streets again, they must clearly tell us for what and for how long?"



JYALAL SAH

A 55-year-old farmer from Ramnagari village near Birganj, Sah was on a pilgrimage to India when Madhesi protesters began blocking the Birganj-Raxaul checkpoint in September last year. He returned home on the fifth day of the blockade, and was carried away by the fiery speeches of Madhesi leaders.

The next day, Sah stuffed his mat, blanket and pillow into a sack and reached the border

bridge where hundreds of Madhesi protesters were staging a sit-in to put pressure on the Big Three parties in Kathmandu to amend the constitution. Even as days, weeks and months passed, the Big Three did not relent and the number of protesters dwindled.

But Sah was determined to fight till the end. In November, police chased away protesters, including him. A violent clash

ensued in which an Indian protester was killed. Sah was also beaten up. "They broke my leg, but when I was discharged from the hospital, I did not go home. I went straight to the border," he said.

In February, when local traders from Birganj and Raxaul burnt down the tent set up by Madhesi protesters at the border six months ago, Sah was again injured. "This time, I got a deep

cut near my right eye, but what was more painful was the way our leaders called off the strike – we moved back without getting what we fought for," Sah said.

One morning this week, Sah was in his garden tending to garlic plants. He said: "I had to sell a cow to make up for the loss that I incurred in the past six months, so I will think twice before believing leaders next time."

Kanhaiya Prasad Sah, a motorcycle mechanic in Birganj, did not take part in protests till the last day, but he was a regular in the early days of the movement. He said he lost interest when he saw Madhesi leaders trying to finish off each other in Birganj.

"Everyone wanted to be our messiah, but nobody really cared about rising above caste and religion," he says. "Each political party is trying to expand its base in Birganj, and even Baburam Bhattarai's New Force is trying to gain a foothold here, but I don't think there will be another uprising anytime soon."

Most Madhesis feel embarrassed by the way their leaders conducted themselves in front of Indian leaders, or their involvement in black-marketing of fuel during the blockade. Sah says: "Our leaders must correct themselves to win our trust again."

In Kathmandu this week, Madhesi leaders say they want to continue protests. But on the ground here, it looks like it is easier said than done. They first have to win back the trust of their own people. 🇳🇵



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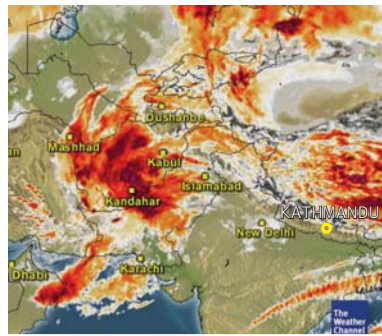
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The much-awaited snow is finally arriving in the higher elevations of western and central Himalaya this weekend. It will take the form of afternoon buildup and storms over the higher valleys, this is a weak westerly system combined with spring thermals that have started to pick up. However, not much by way of precipitation for the mid-hills, and the east will remain largely dry. Kathmandu Valley will see sunshine filtered by pollution haze, with fresh afternoon breeze.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
26° 11°	26° 14°	25° 12°

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Birganj for beginners

comments, and Giri remembers thinking that the story of Birganj (and indeed the Madhes) could not be told in a few thousand words.

Giri's new book, *Birganj: Mero Saharko Katha* (Birganj: The Story of My City) is in Nepali and is the result of his attempt to introduce various dimensions of his hometown to a wider audience. The book is based on the accepted truism that the hills have not understood the plains. Giri, who is from the hills but lived in the Tarai, views the issue differently. His intent in writing the book was to open the minds of those who form opinions about the Madhes while living in the geographically and psychologically distant Kathmandu.

"We have not been able to fathom the pain of the people who have lived in Nepal for centuries and how they feel when they are called Indians," says Giri, "we call the Tharus ethnic people but classify the Bajjika speaking people as outsiders."

Giri's journalistic career began in Birganj, working for national dailies like *Kantipur*

and *Nagarik*, and he later spent four years in Australia. While he always wanted to be a writer, he worked on other projects like a translation of Ani Choying Drolma's book, *Fulko Ankhama*, and made a documentary on Birganj's football team, *Team Nepal*.

Although Giri moved to Kathmandu, his heart is still in his hometown. He returns to Birganj often to renew ties with his childhood home and neighbourhood, where the story of his book begins. On the journey back home, he writes about the obstacles he faced while crossing the highway in Simra, as he details the struggle of the protesters.

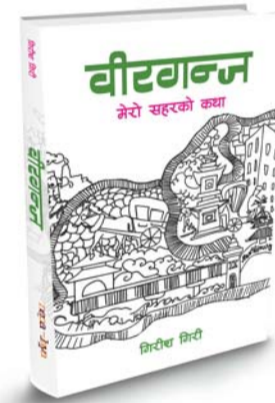
He chronicles stories from the birth of Birganj, mixing its development and history with its more interesting and mysterious protagonists. "The main characters of my book are those people who live on the streets, the experiences of whom not only defines the current situation of the city but the entire nation," he says.

The writer also comments on the politics of Birganj, the formation of the Sadbhavana Party and the history of both

the native and the newer Madhesi. He breaks down the myths and stereotypes, the generalisations and the ostracisation of the Madhesi people in the hill mind. This is a sympathetic book that will be one of the first literary attempts to stitch back the torn fabric of hill-plain relations in Nepal.

Giri hopes

the launch of the book on Friday will encourage other writers to produce similar work. He says: "I believe the book will be a window not only to Birganj but the entire Madhes." 🇳🇵



DAMBAR K SHRESTHA

blockade, amidst all the black marketing and vandalism, he felt he had to do something. The entire country was reeling under fuel shortages, but Birganj and its people were affected more than any other place.

While in Birganj through the turmoil, Giri wrote articles in the online publication, Setopati, describing the protests, analysing the appearance and tone of the demonstrators on the streets, and talking to ordinary people caught up in the violence. The articles opened a floodgate of

After Girish Giri's father, Gopal Giri, the mayor of Birganj during Gyanendra's reign was murdered by the Maoists in 2005, his family renounced politics. But as a young idealistic journalist, Giri felt that he could not abandon the town he grew up in.

When Giri visited Birganj recently during the violent street protests and border

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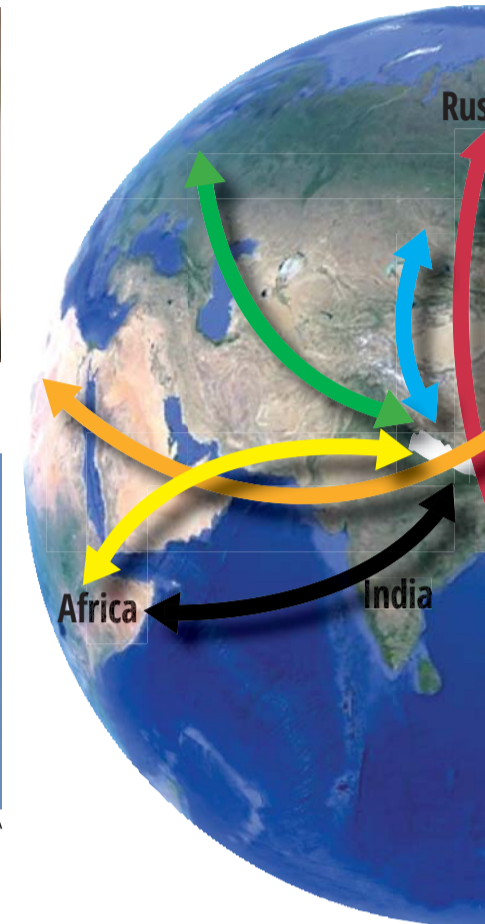
■ Ruddy Shelduck

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■ Bar-headed Goose

DILIPSINH CHUDASAMA



LIEW YU WEI

The global environment crisis caused by human activity is leading to a loss of biodiversity worldwide, and one of the most serious the loss of birdlife.

Among birds, it is migratory species that are most vulnerable because breeding areas along their routes like forests and wetlands are being converted into farms, and pollution of the air, soil and water harms them.

But putting a price tag on the loss of ecosystems is not a simple matter. Calculating the cost in dollars and cents of the loss of nature is complicated because it benefits more than one country. For example, conserving migratory bird species alighting in wetlands in Nepal on their long-distance international flights will save them for humanity, not just for Nepal.

“We undervalue the services that are

provided by nature,” explains Cristi Nozawa, Regional Director of Bird Life International (BLI). “Environmental conservation is not seen as something with economic value.”

Because of a vertical topography that rises from 80m above sea level in Jhapa to the nearly 9,000m summit of Mt Everest within a horizontal distance of 100km and a climate that ranges from tropical to arctic, Nepal has enormous avian diversity. Indeed, with 876 species identified, Nepal has more types of birds than North America. But of these, 39 species are on the endangered list.

Of these, more than 100 are migratory species, and they tend to be more vulnerable to the threats along their flight paths. Nepal serves as a stopover for migratory birds flying down from Siberia, Mongolia and Tibet in September, and returning to their breeding grounds in April. The really adventurous ones migrate from Europe, Africa and Southeast Asia.

Even the Himalaya are not a barrier, and the birds have found routes along the river

valleys that traverse the mountains. Some species of bar-headed geese have been found flying at more than 7,000m over the mountains.

Nepal’s geographic location at the boundary between Asia’s two eco-biological domains makes it a prime stopover point for birds on long-distance migratory routes. Examples of wintering birds are waterfowl and birds of prey, while species like sunbirds and cuckoos migrate to spend the summers in Nepal.

Near Kathmandu, Taudaha Lake is one of the best places to observe migratory waterfowl like wintering mallards and ruddy shelduck. Just 8km southwest of Kathmandu, the quiet lake and surrounding greenery attracts up to 126 bird species.

But across the country and the world, such havens for birds are increasingly harder to find. In Nepal itself, migratory bird stopovers are suffering human encroachment and pollution.

“Conservation is not just about saving



■ Eurasian cuckoo

PANKAJ MAHERIA

birds, but helping the community,” said Jyotendra Thakuri, Conservation Officer at Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN), “people don’t care about the environment until they realise the benefits it brings to them.”

Climate change is also forcing birds out of their usual habitats. Even species usually found in the lowlands are moving up to higher elevations, like the ashy wren-warbler.



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Cattle Egret waiting for fish on the banks of the polluted Bagmati.

HEM BAHADUR KATUWAL



Kathmandu's urban birdlife

Usually birders trek into the hinterland to peer at nature through binoculars. But Nepal's bird diversity is so rich that you can count species even within the city.

Bird Conservation Nepal recently conducted its first round of Urban Bird Monitoring to record urban birds, and to see how seriously urbanisation, pollution and loss of vegetation is impacting populations of resident and migratory species.

"This was our first initiative in the Valley and our aim is to do long term monitoring," said urban bird coordinator Hem Bahadur Katuwal.

The first of its kind to be carried out in the country, the three-day monitoring program involved counting the numbers and species of birds in Kathmandu Valley. Excluding the national parks and hills surrounding the valley, the results reflected a total of 84 species and approximately 6,509 individual birds, within city limits.

More than 20 per cent of the birds in the city were found to be winter migratory species. However, owing to climate change the migratory patterns of birds have changed. Species like Ashy prinia (Tuntuk ghase phisto) which are originally lowland birds are now increasingly found in Kathmandu.

Urbanisation is also affecting the nesting and breeding patterns of urban birds. "There is rapid and haphazard urbanisation now. Species like house sparrows and owls have lost their homes for nesting because of modern architecture," says Katuwal, adding that installing nest boxes or getting people to carve out small niches on walls and buildings will help save some species. *Smriti Basnet*

The next bird watching program by Bird Conservation Nepal will be at Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park on 12 March. For more details: Vimal Thapa (9841330576 / 9801024777)

Migrants within Nepal



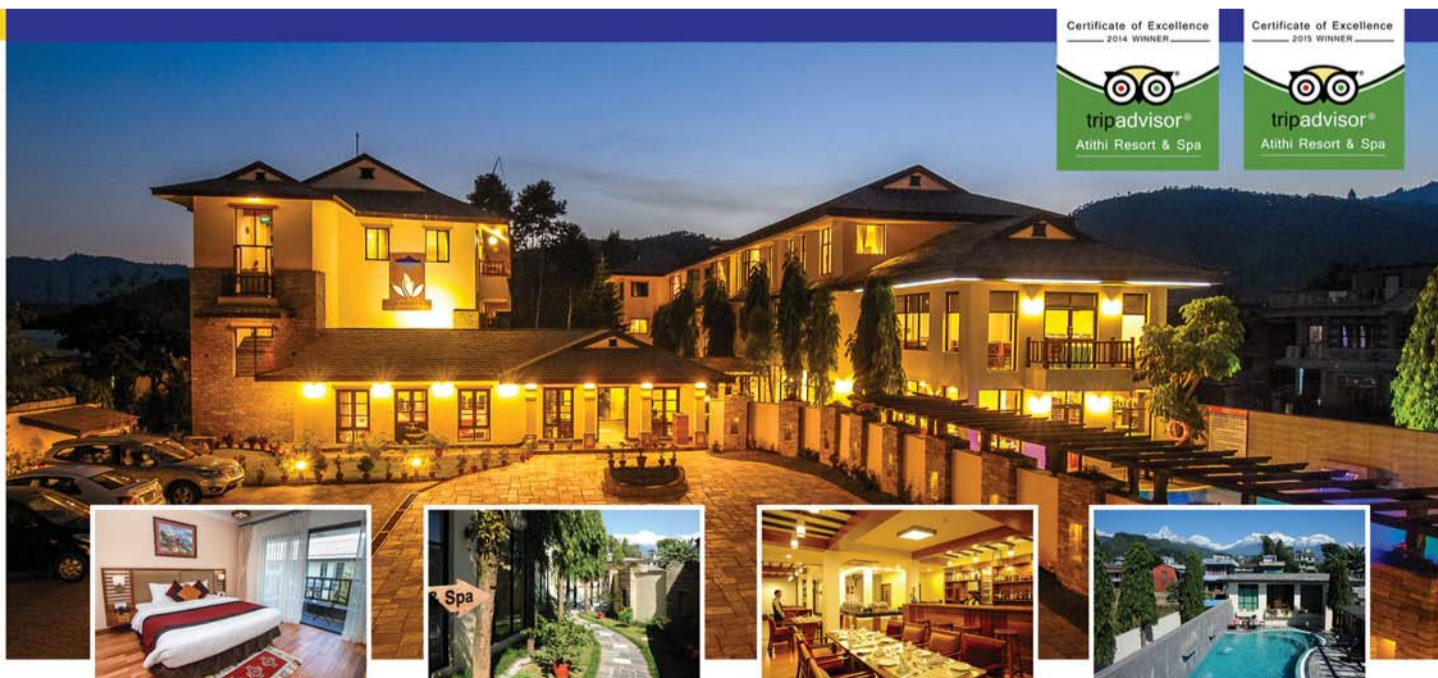
Less food and cover are available at higher elevations, where the land is less fertile and resources less easily replenished. A large-scale migration of birds to higher elevations will also put a greater strain on the land, possibly leading to land degradation.

"Even a 2°C increase in temperature will result in a dramatic impact on bird

species and their behaviours and habitats," said Hum Gurung, Nepali naturalist with Bird Life International (BLI) in Singapore. "Environmental conversation cannot remain a luxury." 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

■ Interactive bird migration map



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EVENTS



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 Deadline to enter is 25 March at 23.59 (GMT +5.45). For more information: greathimalayatrails.com/photo-competition/

Art exhibition,

Appreciate the artwork of five Nepali artists done during their residency period at Bindu
 13 – 29 March, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal, 981-8996169

Book launch,

Mark your calendars for the book launch of famed journalist Girish Giri's first book "Birganj – Story of my City". More on Page 7
 11 March, 3 pm, Nepal Academy, Kamaladi, 9803919266



Call for writers,

Apply for SAFEI's initiative commissioning writers to pen articles on the arts. It will be offering up to NRs 10,000 for the articles.
 Till 20 March, www.facebook.com/SAFInitiative, 9849519933 (Nischal Oli) / 9818239744 (Sujan G. Amatya)

Master class,

Learn all you need to know about music with composer, pianist and music educator James Miley and his faculty from Willatmette University.
 22 to 28 March, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel, (01) 5013554

Talk about arts,

Attend a lecture by New Delhi based art curator Rahaab Allana and photo journalist Akshay Mahajan.
 11 March, 5pm to 7pm, Yalamaya Kendra, Patan Dhoka, (01) 5522113

Portrait workshop,

Learn the art behind capturing portraits with 49 Hours Studio.
 12 to 15 March, Malekhu, (01)5555099, 9849497778 / 9851134999 / 9849227952, 49hourstudio@gmail.com

Trade Expo,

A three-day trade expo organised by the Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal (FWEAN).
 1-3 April, 10am to 5pm, Army Officer's Club, Bhadrakali, (01)2003080, fwean.info@gmail.com, www.fwean.org.np

Himalayan Rush,

Gear up for the fifth edition of the Himalayan Rush triathlon series and experience the thrill of trail running, cycling and fresh water swimming.
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 12 March, 6 to 10.30 pm, Moksh Jhamsikhel, (01)5528362

Hits FM Awards,

Enjoy a musical afternoon with various Nepali artists at the Hits FM Music Awards 2072
 11 March, 2.30 pm, Nepal Army Officers' Club, Bhadrakali



Concert for a cause,

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 17 March, 5 pm onwards, Taragon Museum, Boudha, 9843722329/9849105889

Musical theatre,

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Anna in the Tropics

SMRITI BASNET

Through the ages, Cuban cigars have been accorded a special status - exotic, sophisticated, and unmatched in quality. However, little do we hear of those toiling day and night to make them. Nilo Cruz's *Anna in the Tropics*, set in 1929 in a factory in Tampa, Florida (also known as Cigar City), brings to light the unsung lives of cigar rollers during the Roaring Twenties.

Interpreting the story to suit a Nepali audience, the 2003 Pulitzer Prize winning play is being staged by One World Theatre in Kathmandu. Directed by Deborah Merola, the play evokes contemplation, is well crafted and captivating.

The play opens with the stage divided in half, presenting two simultaneous scenes. On one side of the partition is Santiago (Sajag Rana), the owner of the cigar factory, and Cheché (Hemanta Chalise), his half brother, betting on rooster fights and on the other, Ofelia (Loonibha Tuladhar) and her two daughters, Conchita (Kavita Srinivasan) and Marela (Rojita Buddhacharya), wait



PICS: YUWEI LIEW

for the lector's (Divya Dev) arrival. It is his introduction and reading of *Anna Karenina* that sets the pace of the story - with each reading, the workers are inspired by the characters in the novel, which in turn influences the dynamics of their own relationships.

The strength of the play lies in its no-frills presentation, aiding the smooth transitions between scenes and focus on the characters within them. The minimalist staging under Merola's direction suggests



the dearth of satisfaction and mundane lives of the workers, compelling audiences to pay more attention to the dialogue rather than be distracted by lavish set

designs.

With a muted backdrop, strong performances by the actors take centre stage, as several scenes stay with the audience long after they end. The scene that depicts Santiago confiding in his wife Ofelia about his misgivings and trying to win back her confidence is perfectly timed, escalating from hilarious tiffs between an old couple to soul searching conversations about dignity. Another beautifully crafted

scene marks the beginning of Conchita's extramarital affair with the lector, exemplifying their unparalleled love with flawlessly synchronised movements.

The only area where the play was lacking was in the actor's enunciations, which at times made it difficult to follow the dialogue. But what was lost at times in the actor's accents was made up for by the exceptional expression and delivery of Cruz's original lines.

Over the course of a play draped in the words of Leo Tolstoy, what the viewer leaves with is an exploration of impassioned emotions and impossible love. It not only brings out the hardships faced by the immigrants in Tampa, but also gives a glimpse into a culture that craves knowledge and the fulfillment of repressed desires. Merola's production marvelously captures the genius of Cruz, delivering a play that is a must watch. ■

Anna in the Tropics will run everyday at 5 pm (except on Wednesdays) at Theatre Village, Uttara Dhoka till 13 March. There will also be a Saturday Matinee on 12 March at 12pm. Tickets are Rs 300 for adults and Rs 200 for students with IDs.

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ELEMENTARY

Now that the Academy has handed out its awards for the past season, a new year of scrambling will start. While there is always a hope that Hollywood will improve and give us some gems, the chances are slim at a time when the best films are no longer being made in the United States.

budgets, are still the best at developing and executing some of the most riveting television to date.

With the recent proliferation of Sherlock Holmes mythology pervading literature, cinema, and television, the concept of Elementary - a show named after the fictitious detective's most famous phrase, seemed a stretch. Setting a scene for Holmes in modern day Manhattan, with Johnny Lee Miller as lead, and with a surprise twist that turns Dr. Watson into a woman (Lucy Liu plays Holmes's ever-present, trusty, but subordinate, partner) could have gone terribly awry.

Fortunately, the creators are neither obvious nor stupid. Now in its fourth season, the show continues just as strong as when it started, with excellent writing, an ensemble cast populated with

the likes of Aidan Quinn as Captain Thomas Gregson, the long suffering NYPD detective with whom Holmes and Watson work on a consulting basis, and storylines that are a rare mix of police procedural with intriguing problems, clever often hilariously tongue in cheek detective work, and full, round characters that stick in the mind.

Miller and Liu, both of whom have had their own successful cinema careers, work extremely well as the odd couple, a trope that has always made the Holmes-Watson partnership so successful. Thankfully, here, the norm of Watson being the trusty but slightly dim sidekick has been dispensed with. Dr Joan Watson is quite the detective herself, and with her steady brand of intellectualism. Holmes, always socially awkward bordering on unbearable, finds himself all the more humanised by the surprising partnership.

The enduring popularity of Sherlock Holmes has always been inextricably linked to two things, Holmes's abilities as a detective unparalleled by any other mind, and, his friendship with Watson, a relationship without which these stories would not have had a heart, providing only cerebral interest to readers, and now, to viewers. The success of Elementary lies in the ability of its writers to stick to the ethos that makes Holmes beloved, even while taking liberties from its Victorian conventions. The series is a highly recommended palette cleanser that will delight even the snobbiest viewers.

nepalitimes.com

Trailer

HAPPENINGS



BIKRAM RAI

VOTE FOR ME: Three-time prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba waves to supporters before party elections on Sunday. Deuba defeated Ram Chandra Poudel in the second round for the post of Nepali Congress president.



ANANDRAM DONGOL

LET HIM EAT CAKE: Prime Minister K P Oli feeds a cake to UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal on his 64th birthday at Baluwatar on Sunday.



BIKRAM RAI

TWIN SETS: Bal Gopal Maharjan, head coach of the national football team at the launch of the new Samsung Galaxy S7 and S7 Edge at Hyatt Regency in Kathmandu on Wednesday.



SMRITI BASNET

VAGINA DIALOGUE: Thirteen female actors from theater groups in Kathmandu staged *Vagina Monologues* on the occasion of International Women's Day at Rato Bangala School on Tuesday.



PRATAP THAPA

SINGING SERENADE: Singer/songwriter Bipul Chettri performed some of his top hits in a concert at Victory Lounge, Durbar Marg on Monday.

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Educating inmates

Makar Shrestha in Nepal, 6-12 March

नेपाल

On a typical day at the women's jail in Kathmandu, every inmate occupies herself with a different activity, whether it be knitting sweaters, soaking up the sunshine or buying vegetables in the courtyard. And in a separate room, a group of middle-aged women gather to learn the alphabet.

Among them is Pyuthan's Chuma Pun, 28, who is enrolled in Grade 1 at Sundhara's school inside the women's jail. Imprisoned two years ago on drug charges, Pun's only aim to learn is to be able to write to her daughter and two sons. "I have not been able to share my feelings with my children. I want to study because I want to write to them about this," shares Pun, who claims nobody has come to visit her since she has been jailed.



Chini BK from Dhunche, who was sentenced to 8 years on charges of trafficking, says she still does not know what was written on her chargesheet. "The police read it out to me quickly, and I gave my thumbprints wherever they asked me to. It was then that I realised the importance of education," she shares.

A total of 59 students are enrolled in the school from Grade 1 to Grade 5, but because classes only run until the fifth grade, many women repeat examinations to remain in class. BK, for one, claims to have taken Grade 5 examinations twice.

Resources are also a problem for education within jails, as Sapana KC, the 28-year-old principal of the school, knows well. "There are more people interested in studying but they cannot because of the lack

of availability of classrooms," she shares. KC, who was caught on drug charges, has been appointed by the government to the post of temporary primary teacher and splits her salary with four other teachers.

Similarly, Nakhu jail runs a lower secondary school and Central Jail runs a Higher Secondary school, accommodating 242 students. These schools charge no fees up to Grade 10, but have recently introduced a registration and examination charge for 10+2 level.

At Central Jail's Jagannath Higher Secondary, both teachers and students are prisoners as well. Inmates receive two months cut from their sentence for every year they teach. None of these teachers are trained and they are simply chosen on the basis of their qualifications. The teaching staff consists of 3 convicted of murderer, 6 sentenced on drug charges and 1 charged with rape.

Yograj Pandey is the former principal of the school and was convicted of rape. Pandey received a salary like any other teacher in a community school and used to pay his taxes from inside the jail, where he also completed a postgraduate degree in Accounting and English. "It was my hard work that got me to a leadership role in the school. I tried to search for light in the darkness," shares Pandey, who was released from jail in February.

Anup Shrestha (Joshi), who has also completed his postgraduate studies in rural development from the inside, will be taking over Pandey's post. Shrestha, sentenced to 8 years on drug charges, had just finished his Bachelor's when he was caught. Now, he's teaching English for the 10+2 level.

"After enrolling in the school, prisoners have changed for the better. Even we, as teachers, have grown," shares Shrestha.

Sindhupalchok's Kishor KC, who is in his second year of a MBS after being charged with murder, also shares Shrestha's sentiments. He says: "Education is going to help us re-establish in the society after we are freed."

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NO RELIEF

2.5 million earthquake survivors have waited one year for help while the Reconstruction Authority discusses procedures and guidelines

SAHINA SHRESTHA

The Red Cross Society was all set to start building houses for 100 families in Ramechhap, one of 14 districts affected by last April's earthquake, when the government suddenly announced a temporary ban on reconstruction of private homes. The work had halted.

In a terse notice, the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) directed all relief agencies to stop reconstructing private homes destroyed or damaged in the earthquake without its approval. It said it wanted to 'bring uniformity', 'avoid duplication', and ensure that the new homes were seismic resistant.

"The ban is only till the procedure guidelines for non-governmental agencies to work in reconstruction come out," explained Suresh Adhikari, spokesperson for the NRA. "We don't mean to stop INGOs and NGOs from reconstruction projects, just to bring them under our jurisdiction."

The draft guidelines, which will be presented to the next Cabinet meeting, includes following government-approved

house designs, ensuring transparency in the source of funding and avoiding overlaps.

The Authority's latest ruling has come under blistering attack from relief agencies that had stepped in to make up for delays in rehabilitation in the past year. The 2.5 million survivors have waited nearly one year for assistance, and critics say it is too late to be discussing procedures and guidelines.

The Reconstruction Authority's second CEO, Sushil Gyewali, who was appointed only in December by the Oli administration, has blamed delays in setting up the body on the shortage of staff and lack of inter-agency coordination.

To many relief groups and volunteers who have been doing what the government should be, the excuses are all too familiar. In the past year they have seen many examples of government lethargy, confusing directives, and misplaced priorities. Although the blockade and the constitution are given as excuses for the delay, the real reason is infighting between the NC and the UML that delayed setting up the Reconstruction Authority.

There was much hope when Gyewali was appointed CEO because of his reputation of being



Seeing both forest

Gains in community forestry have come in handy during post-earthquake reconstruction

OM ASTHA RAI
IN RAMECHHAP

Nearly one year later, the houses that went down in last April's earthquake are still in ruins along the banks of the Tama Kosi. None of the 200 families living in temporary huts here have begun to rebuild their houses.

They are all waiting for the first installment of the Rs 200,000 grant to be distributed by the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA). But there is another reason they haven't rebuilt yet: the shortage of timber.

"Our community forest has thinned because of drought and encroachment," says Babur Jung Shrestha, a member of Gadwari Community Forest Users' Group (CFUG) near Manthali. Villagers

are now dependent on other community forests for timber for the nearly 35,000 houses damaged by the earthquake in Ramechhap.

A preliminary study by the Ministry of Forest (MoF) shows a severe shortage of timber for reconstruction in 11 of the 14 earthquake affected districts. Only Rasuwa, Makwanpur and Sindhuli have sufficient timber for post-earthquake reconstruction.

"Only around 60 per cent of the timber for reconstruction can be managed locally," says Durga Shrestha of the Federation of Community Forest Users Nepal (FECOFUN) in Ramechhap. "We need to import the rest from elsewhere."

In neighbouring Dolakha, the epicentre of the 7.3 magnitude 12 May aftershock, survivors have salvaged wooden poles, beams and planks to rebuild their houses. They can also get more timber from private and community forests, but they are worried about the shortage of hardwood timber needed to build doors and windows.

"We have forests everywhere, but sal trees are very rare," says Krishna Bahadur Basnet, a member of Hanumane Community Forest Users' Group in Japhe, Dolakha. "So we are not just waiting for the reconstruction grant, but also sal timber."

The Hanumane CFUG is only



"We are not just waiting for the reconstruction grant, but also sal timber."

Krishna Basnet, Dolakha

providing three cubic feet of timber for each of its 80 households. "At least 300 cubic feet are required to rebuild one house, but we are getting only three cubic feet," he says. "When everyone starts rebuilding this summer, there will be a huge crisis of timber."

Fortunately, Nepal has enough forest cover and timber for the massive post-



"Our community forest has thinned because of drought and encroachment"

Babur Jung Shrestha, Ramechhap

earthquake reconstruction. After the earthquake, the Department of Forest (DoF) carried out an assessment of the need and availability of timber and found that Nepal had at least 2 million more cubic meters of timber for post-earthquake reconstruction.

"There is only one challenge: the bulk of timber is in the Tarai, but we need it in the hills," says Resham Dangi, Director General



IN RUINS: Homes destroyed in the 12 May aftershock in Manthali are still in ruins, and 200 families have been living in shelters for the past year on the banks of the Tama Kosi.

ALL PICS: OM ASTHARA

a doer. But one of his first actions after taking over was to announce a competition for the Authority's logo. This month it was reported that employees would retroactively receive double their current allowances.

Many families have not rebuilt their homes fearing they will not get the promised Rs 200,000 compensation if they do so. Instead of clarifying this, the Authority has now ordered the suspension of even reconstruction that had already started.

If everything goes according to plan, people in Singati of Dolakha will receive the first installment of Rs 50,000 on 13 March followed by Rs 80,000 after the approval of their house design and the remaining Rs 70,000 once the work is completed. Apart from the Rs 200,000 in aid, families will also be eligible for Rs 2.5 million in soft loans, but Rastra Bank hasn't yet finalised guidelines for the credit.

The Authority's census of damaged houses is delayed, and not even half of the 600,000 homes have been inventoried yet. The deadlines of April to complete the assessment so that reconstruction can begin by 25 April are not likely to be met. Now, Gyewali says rebuilding is not possible before the monsoon.

In urban areas, many have decided not to wait for the Rs 200,000 and have started to rebuild on their own since the money will not even pay for building one room.



Relief agencies and major donors are also getting impatient with the excuses and delays. They are surprised that instead of concentrating on speedy implementation, the Authority wants to convene another donor conference and work on a 5-year reconstruction plan. Of the \$4.1 billion pledged at the International Conference of Nepal's Reconstruction last June, \$860 million is committed, but none of that money has been spent.

"Let the work start, we have waited too long," said Kenichi Yokoyama, Nepal Director of the Asian Development Bank. "The NRA should not regulate but facilitate, what we need now is quick decision-making."

Being a political appointee, Gyewali is facing opposition from the bureaucracy, and many competent civil servants have refused to join the Authority because he is their junior. The office needs at least 208 staff, but has hired only 60 so far.

"The government of Nepal is not ready yet. It is working as best as it can but it is not at all efficient and the capacity is limited," said a high-ranking bilateral donor official. "It isn't only that the NRA is understaffed, line ministries are not cooperating and they don't even attend donor meetings."

Government foot-dragging and obstruction could also undermine the work relief agencies are doing with the remnants of VDCs in places like Singati and Langtang.

Says Norwegian social worker, Olav Myrholm: "If this goes on, local people will lose the little trust they have of the central government. Most relief agencies would love it if the government came in to help, but all they see are delays and hurdles." 

and trees



Forest farming

Prem Narayan Shrestha, 55, has been living in a temporary hut in Manthali after the May aftershock last year flattened his house that was partially damaged by the April earthquake.

Like most earthquake survivors in this central hilly district, Shrestha (pictured, left) is still waiting for the Rs 200,000 housing grant from the government. But as President of Sallaghari Community Forest Users' Group in Kathjor village he is not worried about timber.

In February, members of his forest user group felled trees in one of six sections of the 92 hectare jungle. They will fell 70 mature pine trees for timber for rebuilding.

The scientific management of forest means that trees will be felled in each section by rotation. Says Ram Sundar Sah, an assistant forest officer in Ramechhap. "If we systematically chop trees, we will have enough timber without deforestation."

In the last decade, Nepal is experimenting with modern forest management in community as well as collaborative forests. Mature trees are cut so younger ones grow faster. The Ministry of Forest has targeted to get more than 20,000 cubic meters of timber from scientifically-managed forests for reconstruction of earthquake-damaged houses, schools, hospitals and infrastructure.

of the DoF. "We are simplifying procedures so that timber can be easily transported to wherever it is needed for reconstruction."

FECOFUN says at least 60 per cent of the timber needed for post-earthquake reconstruction can be generated by managing community forests. "We have timber, all we need is permission to use it," says Ganesh Karki, the FECOFUN

President. "If we can fell trees that have stopped growing, we will have more than sufficient timber."

Karki is not for chopping every tree, but felling mature trees in a scientific way to prevent forest degradation and fires. In the last two decades, according to a Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) report released in Kathmandu this week, Nepal's forest

cover has increased by 5.15 per cent.

Dharma Upreti, a community forestry expert at the Multi-Stakeholder Forestry Program (MSFP) supported by the Swiss, British and Finnish governments, credits this to community forestry initiatives launched in the 1980s. He says: "If we didn't have community forestry we would not have enough timber to rebuild after the

earthquake and the forests also saved lives by preventing landslides after the quake." 

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Gross National Holiday Index

One of the measures of a country's well-being is the amount of leisure time its citizens enjoy. How many hours a week does the average citizen work? How many days of vacation are salaried employees entitled to?

Which is why although Nepal may rank somewhere near the bottom of the heap in terms of GNP per capita, we are a country that is more advanced than most advanced countries when it comes to the Gross National Holiday Index (GNHI). Going by this parameter, Nepal is one of the most productive nations on earth.

Our civil servants, schools and industries are closed for 302 days in a year giving us a GNHI of 75% — which puts us in the same league as OECD countries in terms of spare time citizens enjoy. It is a tribute to our can-do attitude that despite being so lackadaisical we as a nation miraculously still manage to write a

constitution, and ensure a thriving black market in gas cylinders.

This week, for instance we had three-and-half days off: two days for men and three days for women. Transgender people were entitled to four days off. Civil servants went about as if the whole week was a holiday because this is a country where you don't need a holiday to have a holiday. And we have holidays for every animal: Gai Jatra, Ghode Jatra, Kag Puja, Kukur Puja. Which brings me to my pet peeve: if horses have their own day why don't donkeys? Good news: I have it on good authoritarians that the jabberment is set to declare Gadhya Jatra a national holiday during the Cabinet Meeting scheduled for Monday, unless of course Monday is declared a national holiday to mark the forthcoming lunatic eclipse.

Despite all our efforts, Nepal

doesn't yet have an entry in the Guinness Book of World Records for the highest number of holidays per capita per year. We urge the Ministry of Record-keeping and the Department of Broken Records to immediately take this up with the unconcerned authorities and set it right. It is a matter of national prestige that needs to be addressed with the urgency it deserves. It is high time that Nepal was known not just as the country where Gautam Buddha was born, and the land with a half-slice of Mt Everest, but also the headquarters of Workaholics Anonymous.

Despite all our holidays, however, we must not rest on our laurels. This is no time for complacency. We need to gird up our loins and other body parts to inculcate an even more laid-back attitude. Other countries like Tonga and São Tomé and Príncipe have just announced more national holidays, and they will soon

आइतबार SUNDAY	सोम MONDAY	मंगल TUESDAY	बुध WEDNESDAY	बिही THURSDAY	शुक्र FRIDAY	शनि SATURDAY
३० ₁₃						१ ₁₃
२ ₁₄	३ ₁₅	४ ₁₆	५ ₁₇	६ ₁₈	७ ₁₉	८ ₂₀
९ ₂₁	१० ₂₂	११ ₂₃	१२ ₂₄	१३ ₂₅	१४ ₂₆	१५ ₂₇
१६ ₂₈	१७ ₂₉	१८ _१	१९ _२	२० _३	२१ _४	२२ _५
२३ _६	२४ _७	२५ _८	२६ _९	२७ _{१०}	२८ _{११}	२९ _{१२}

- Secularism Day (7 March, jointly celebrated with Shivaratri)
- Constitution Deadlock Day (To Be Announced)
- Second Thoughts About Federalism Day (24 April)
- Day of National Mourning for Sugauli Treaty (2 December)
- Great Leap Forward Day (29 February)
- Buddha Was Born in Nepal Day (6 May)
- Nepal Was Born in Nepal Day (6 March)
- Comrade Prachanda Birthday (11 December)
- Women's Day (8 March)
- Man Days (9-17 March)
- Indian Independence Day (15 August)
- Indian Blockade Day (24 September)
- Losar #1 (9 February)
- Losar #2 (9 March)
- Losar #3 (12 April)
- Losar #4 (14 April)
- Losar #5 (TBA)
- Losar #6 (Undecided)
- Losar #7 (Open-dated)
- 12-Hour Load-Shedding Per Day
- Black Market Every Day
- Pollution Will Kill You One Day
- No Water Night or Day
- Jaundice Day
- Diarrhoea Day
- Cholera Day
- Pay Day (Once in 6 Months for Journalists)



The Ass

overtake us if we do not announce more national holidays.

The new federal, democratic, elusive constitution must in its preamble declare that the government should henceforth cease all work, because a government that does nothing can't make mistakes. It should be our constitutionally-guaranteed right to have a non-functioning state.

Here are some suggestions for holidays for days in the calendar that still not in red and that can be declared national holidays:

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