

शिकार स्वास्थ्य बीमा कम्पनी प्रा. लि. | Hotline No.: 1660014441

Shikhar Insurance
Shikhar Biz Center, Thapathali, Kathmandu.
Ph: 4246101, 4246102. Fax: 4246103, Website: www.shikharinsurance.com

LAVAZZA
ITALY'S FAVOURITE COFFEE

Grand Hotel - Tahachal
Platinum Hotel - Tahachal
For Further Information Mail to:
lavazza@subhashingalini.com

CREATE YOUR "OWN" ENVIRONMENT

Divine Wines

For Trade Inquiry | Ph.: 01-4032624 | Mob.: 9801215111

Step in for more varieties at

LIFE STYLE
DESIGN & DECOR

WEDDING SPECIAL

Show Room: SRD Building
New Plaza, Putalisadak, Te: 4425402

TRANQUILITY SPA
"Balancing Body, Mind and Spirit"

☎ 01-4420424
www.tranquilityspa.com.np

Your Online Kitchen Store . . .

Hamro kitchen
.com

Now Available On App Store
Get the App for Android & iOS
Be Smart | Buy Online

The elephant in the room

The killing of four people in police firing in Saptari on Monday has amplified calls of those who do not want local elections already scheduled for 14 May. However, across Nepal voters, candidates as well as election officials are already gearing up for elections to local councils, the first in 20 years.

Madhesi Front leaders met Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Wednesday and gave him a one-week ultimatum to pass constitutional amendments, or they would pull support. Sadbhavana Party Chair Rajendra Mahato told *Nepali Times* it was a make or break deadline.

"People are now so angry in the Madhes that they will not let us negotiate with the government even if we want to," he told us. "We will have to leave Kathmandu, go to the Tarai and launch a strong agitation unless the UML agrees to constitutional amendments."

The UML, however, has rejected the amendment bill tabled in Parliament by the Maoist-NC coalition. It has warned the government not to call off local polls. The Saptari clash happened during the UML's East-West roadshow, and the parties put off campaign rallies for now.

Meanwhile, the eastern Tarai is shut down. Cadre of the Tarai-centric parties are on warpath, vandalising the home of Chief Election Commissioner Ayodhi Prasad Yadav in Rajbiraj and attacking National Human Rights Commissioner Mohana Ansari when she visited the family of one of the Saptari victims.

Meanwhile, Dahal is said to be adamant about pushing through with elections, and has offered two ministerial berths to Kamal Thapa's RPP in return for his

party's support for the amendment bill. He had earlier refused, but after Saptari, accepted the offer. The ruling coalition still needs more MPs to pass the amendment, and has offered a berth to Bijaya Gachhadar's MJF (D) as well.

The RPP has cancelled its election campaigns in the Tarai, but wants the polls to go ahead. Spokesman Mohan Shrestha said: "What happened in Saptari was tragic, top leaders must engage in dialogue, but not cancel elections."

The Association of District Development Committees of Nepal insists the polls take place. The Association's Rishi Ram Lumseli said: "The Saptari violence was a political clash between two rival parties. It should not be an excuse to call off elections, it's our last hope for real decentralisation."

Om Astha Rai

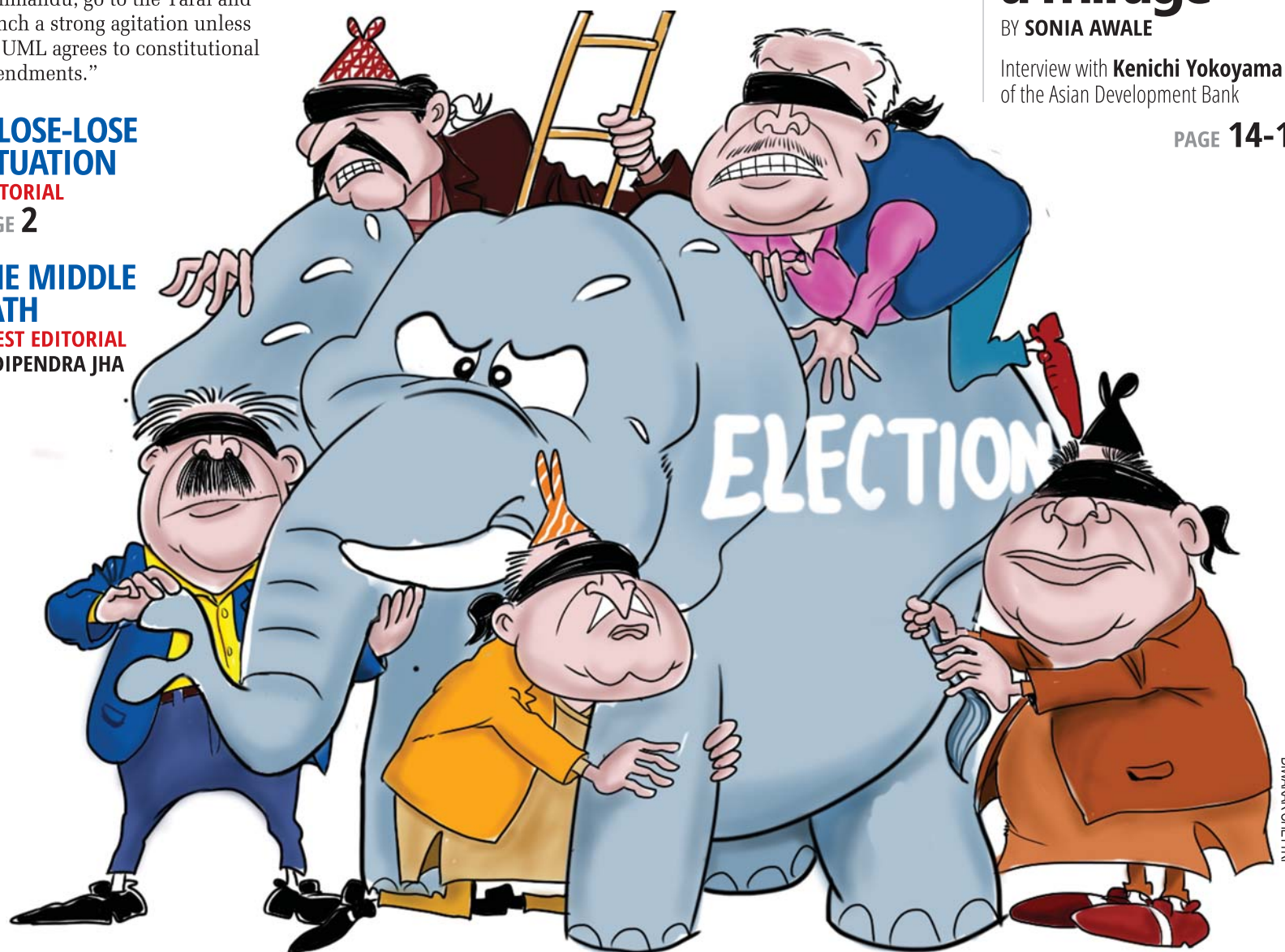
A LOSE-LOSE SITUATION

EDITORIAL

PAGE 2

THE MIDDLE PATH

GUEST EDITORIAL
BY DIPENDRA JHA



MELAMCHI

No more a mirage

BY SONIA AWALE

Interview with Kenichi Yokoyama
of the Asian Development Bank

PAGE 14-15

The most convenient way to book your ticket

Book online and pay cash. Qatar Airways offers the flexibility to book online and pay offline. Within 48 hours of making your reservation on qatarairways.com, you can either pay online or by visiting Qatar Airways office at Hattisar, Kathmandu.

Check-in online 36 hours prior to departure, skip the queue and save time at the airport.

Download our mobile app for greater convenience with each journey; book flights, check flight status or check-in on the go.

For more information and to book your tickets:

Visit qatarairways.com Call us on +977 1 4440467

QATAR AIRWAYS
GOING PLACES TOGETHER

A LOSE-LOSE SITUATION

Nothing revealed the state of Nepal’s politics more than the sight of a Madhesi leader and another from the opposition UML joking about taking a selfie on the sets of a tv studio after a fiery live interview in which the host had to intervene to separate them from breaking each other’s noses.

It was being broadcast on Monday just as police had begun firing at demonstrators protesting the arrival of the UML East-West roadshow in Saptari. Videos of the violence on social media are an eerie throwback to the killings in the summer of 2015 that left more than 60 dead, and resulted in India blockading the border for five-months. (Read harrowing accounts of survivors from nepalkhabar.com on p13)

The political brinkmanship that led to this latest loss of lives also shows that there has been no progress in ending the political deadlock over the constitution. The Madhesi parties, quite openly backed by New Delhi, still want substantial changes in the constitution. The Kathmandu establishment, meanwhile, would rather push through with the statute and elections.

The killings in Maleth had striking similarities to the pre-meditated and deliberate way the Armed Police Force fired on protesters two years ago: most dead and wounded had bullet wounds above the waist. There are reports the same police officer in charge of Birganj in 2015 was in Saptari this week.

It is clear that politicisation of police appointments has led to a breakdown of discipline and the chain of command. The anger of the Madhesi activists last year was directed at Prime Minister Oli, and

it is still against him, although he is now in the opposition. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal is said to be annoyed with Home Minister Bimalendra Nidhi and asked for an explanation about why he ordered the firing. In an interview with Setopati (*translated on p13*) Nidhi denied this. Relations are therefore strained not just between the Tarai-centric groups and the mainstream parties, but also within the ruling coalition. Prime Minister Dahal is bringing in the RPP and MJF-D into government to have the numbers to pass the amendment so elections can happen.

The immediate fallout of the latest violence is to throw local elections into doubt. The Madhesi parties have issued a one-week ultimatum to amend the constitution, but the UML is going ahead with its East-West campaign in the Tarai. The Madhesi parties were wrong in trying to stop the UML caravan, and the UML should have been smarter about gauging the anger in the Madhes.

The Kathmandu administration doesn’t seem to have learnt any lessons from the 2015 Madhes agitation, the police hasn’t corrected its procedures for riot control, the Madhesi parties seems to be going for broke because they are afraid of even greater electoral losses. This time bomb needs to be defused once and for all. Kathmandu has to address Madhesi grievances and treat them like Nepalis, and stop recklessly stoking pseudo-nationalism.

But all is not lost. The fact that Nepal’s politicians can still take selfies after nearly coming to blows means the channels of communication are still open. This offers a slim hope for the future.



23 NOVEMBER 2015



7 MARCH 2017

GUEST EDITORIAL DIPENDRA JHA

The middle path

The Saptari killing was largely the outcome of the UML’s arrogance and stubbornness. The party had the right to stage political programs in the Tarai to ‘educate’ the Madhesi people. But the people of the Madhes are already aware that the Constitution is flawed.

The government and the Madhesi Front are also responsible for what happened in Saptari. The police unnecessarily used live ammunition and shot people in the heads as if they were terrorists.

As for the Madhesi Front, there was no leadership on the ground to prevent the crowd from turning violent. It did not care to anticipate that things could turn ugly.

The UML has slammed the Madhesi Front for obstructing its programs. Fair enough. There should be no room for the politics of obstruction in a democracy. But was the UML itself not obstructing Parliament from debating and passing the Constitution amendment bill?

If we truly want to break the current political impasse, and make the Constitution work, both conflicting forces should play a constructive role. The UML should allow Parliament to debate the amendment, and be flexible on its content. The bill that is now stuck aims to amend four clauses of the Constitution: language, citizenship, participation in the Upper House and federal boundaries. It is a moderate amendment. The Constitution already treats all mother tongues as national languages. The

amendment just aims to put them in an annex, and that should not be a big deal.

The amendment ensures three seats of the Upper House for each province, and distributes the remaining in proportion to provincial populations. A consensus on this issue should not be difficult. As for citizenship, the original clause remains more or less the same.

The demarcation of provincial boundaries is the thorniest issue. If the dispute over Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Kailali and Kanchanpur cannot be solved now, let us put it on hold as the second amendment envisages and creates another plains province stretching from Nawalparasi to Bardiya. After all, this was a proposal previously floated by the NC and the UML, so why back out of it now?

If this amendment is passed, and at least 45 per cent local units are created in the Tarai, the Madhesi parties should come on board. The second amendment bill will not totally solve all the grievances of the Madhesi people, but it could offer a middle path for elections.



Dipendra Jha is a practicing constitutional lawyer.

Nepali Times.com

ONLINE VIDEOS



BUILDING WITHOUT MEN



Two years after the earthquake, a serious shortage of workers is hampering post-quake reconstruction. *Nepali Times* follows stories of earthquake survivors in Sindhupalchok who have money but no masons to help rebuild their homes. Listen to Sajina Tamang who is trying to put a roof over her head.



FINALLY, MELAMCHI

Two-decades after its initiation, the Melamchi Project will soon pipe snowmelt to Kathmandu taps. Engineers will use a diversion tunnel to send water down to Sundarjal by October. Go online to watch a rare video of the intake site in the Langtang National Park and visuals from inside the 26.5 km tunnel.



SKELETONS IN THE CABINET

You don't have to miss this week's Backside column. Go online to read the Donkey's hilarious take on the Cabinet expansion. Regards, The Ass.

BAD INVESTMENT

Corruption is Nepal's only growth Industry ('Making Nepal FDI friendly', Shyamal K Shrestha, #848). International investors know from direct experience that any investment made will fall foul to governmental syndicated corruption. Until Nepal addresses this (the real elephant in the room) things will continue to worsen. Nepali business refuses to invest its own money in anything, preferring to let others take the risks and, if successful, reap the rewards. This lack of self-confidence is apparent to all those who have the sense to look.

Alex Ferguson

GLOBAL WARMING AND POWER

We had to burn diesel to power offices and homes till last year ('Cloud with a dark lining', Om Astha Rai, #848). Imagine how much pollution it would have added this year. We were unproductive as we had to stay in darkness. Students couldn't study. Individuals couldn't work. Businesses suffered. We wasted so much money buying power generating devices. Were we not contributing to global warming then? Now that we are more productive and saving money we would have been spending on trying to power our homes and offices, we must now have foresight to invest the money in our own power sources and de-risk our dependency on this foreign energy.

Logical Analysis

NEPALI GENIUSES

How come no Nepali kid made a flightless helicopter this week? ('It is rocket science', Backside, #848) Are we getting complacent? Is the mainstream media not doing its digging to bring to light these magnificent achievements?

Bhaicha

WHAT'S TRENDING



In joy and in sorrow

Story of three men who have stood by their successful women and encouraged them through good times and bad.



Most reached on Facebook
(11,102 people reached)

THE GOLDEN KING

The gilt statue of Yognarendra Mall that was toppled in the 2015 earthquake was reinstated last week at Patan Darbar Square. Log in to watch how it was done.



Most shared on Facebook
(33 shares)

Interviewing Rabindra Mishra

From the Nepali Press

"If you clean up politics, you can clean up everything," says journalist-turned-politician Rabindra Mishra.



Most popular on Twitter
(47 retweets, 150 likes)

BROADCASTING PODCASTING

by Sahina Shrestha

Meet the women journalists breaking the sound barrier by streaming directly to audiences through the Internet.



Most visited online page
(1.985 views)

Cloud with a dark lining

by Om Astha Rai

Every time you switch on the lights, remember: Nepal carbon footprint just doubled.



Most commented

QUOTE TWEETS



Nepali Times@nepalitimes
This dry season, NEA is importing more electricity from India than is produced within Nepal. [@omastharai](http://bit.ly/2m1U8sn)



Sandeep@sandeepandgeek1
[@nepalitimes](#) [@omastharai](#) solar power is not the best alternative for small South Asian country like Nepal. NEA should raise its production.



Nepali Times@nepalitimes
Gender #equality cannot be achieved without women's economic #empowerment <http://bit.ly/2mShnCH>



Ashmita Sapkota@asmitaSapkotaa
Empowering women doesn't mean women acting like men it means 'women shouldn't act like men' in order to be powerful



Nepali Times@nepalitimes
This week we bring you three men who have stood by their women, and given them the freedom to fly <http://bit.ly/2mAezOq>

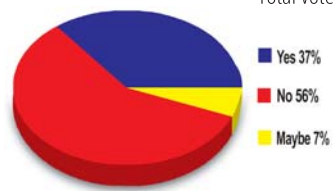


Shiwani Neupane@ShiwaniNeupane
I loved this piece in the [@nepalitimes](#). Nepali men who support their successful spouses - we need many such stories!



Weekly Internet Poll #849

Q. Do you support President Donald Trump's policy on immigration?



Weekly Internet Poll #850
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. How likely is it that local elections can be held on 14 May?



Nepali Times on Facebook
Follow @nepalitimes on Twitter
Follow @nepalitimes on Instagram

Publisher and Chief Editor: Kunda Dixit
Associate Editor: Om Astha Rai | Design: Kiran Maharjan
Published by Himalmedia Pvt Ltd | Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur | GPO Box 7251 Kathmandu
editors@nepalitimes.com | www.nepalitimes.com | www.himalmedia.com | Tel: 01-5005601-08 Fax: +977-1-5005518
Marketing: Arjun Karki, Surendra Sharma rachanas@himalmedia.com | Advertisers: Ram Krishna Banjara | Subscriptions: Santosh Aryal santosha@himalmedia.com
Printed at Jagadamba Press | 01-5250017-19 | www.jagadambapr.com



WIDEN YOUR
W O R L D

TURKISH
AIRLINES



FLY FROM KATHMANDU

JOIN THE HARMONY OF COLORS AT HOLI FESTIVAL
WITH TURKISH AIRLINES

TURKISHAIRLINES.COM

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

Restoring the king



KUNDA DIXIT



CLARA BULLOCK



GOPEN RAI

ROYAL RESCUE: A week after the earthquake in April 2015, the column where King Yagnarendera Malla's statue used to be in Patan Darbar Square (*left*). Austrian preservationist Martina Haselberger working to restore the damaged statue (*centre*) and the column after the king's brass figure was reinstalled on top of the column.

CLARA BULLOCK

When the ground started shaking with a mighty roar at 11:56 on Saturday, 25 April 2015 there were local people and tourists milling around the Patan Darbar Square. Three of the main temples came down in a cloud of dust, and the granite pillar holding up the brass statue of King Yagnarendera Malla and his two wives started swaying. The statue came tumbling down, with the queens and the serpent scattered in the debris. Within hours, even before some of those trapped underneath the rubble had been rescued, conservationists and neighbourhood people had started salvaging the temple artifacts and carried it into the courtyard of the Patan Museum for safekeeping. Among the statues rescued was the Yagnarendera figure, and even the tiny metal bird sitting on top of the serpent was found underneath the bricks and dust. Fast-forward nearly two years later, and the shiny golden statue restored to its original splendour was reinstated on top of the pillar. On hand to witness the installation was Austrian heritage conservationist Martina Haselberger and her team from the Institut für

Konservierung in Vienna who had been working for nearly two months to repair the statue. "We worked out of many original photographs of the statue and we could repair the damage as accurately as possible," said Haselberger whose team worked closely with Patan's coppersmiths. Parts of the fire-gilded surface of the statue was damaged and was repaired with gold leaf and epoxy resin used to close small fissures and diluted citric acid for cleaning. "Everything was smooth. The only problems we had were the adjustments us Austrians had to make regarding the weather and cuisine in Kathmandu," Haselberger told *Nepali Times*. The Institute has been involved in the restoration of the Patan Museum and the Bhandarkhal Garden since 2010, as part of an Austrian government effort to preserve Kathmandu Valley's cultural assets. The history of Austrian involvement in Nepal goes back to the Capuchin monks from Tyrol who set up a base in the Valley in the 17th century, and even gifted King Pratap Malla with a telescope. It was Austrian architectural historian Eduard Sekler who helped set up the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust in 1991 with help from the Institute of Conservation in Vienna. Also working

on the Patan Museum restoration was Austrian architect Carl Pruscha. In 2010, Sekler asked his colleagues in Vienna for help with restoration in Patan and the team has come to Nepal once a year to restore and maintain cultural artifacts. When the earthquake destroyed many of the monuments head of the Institute, Gabriela Krist, got help from the Austrian Development Agency for rebuilding. Haselberger says the preservation work has been more urgent and important after the earthquake to restore the ancient monuments and save them from further decay and theft. The column holding up the Yagnarendera statue has been carefully reinforced so it is safer in another earthquake. Rohit Ranjitkar, Director of KVPT, is appreciative of the help from the Austrians. "The institute has always been reliable and is known to be fast and efficient," Ranjitkar told *Nepali Times*. The feeling seems to be mutual, since Haselberger praised the cooperation: "With KVPT we have an excellent partner that is focused on solving problems." The Austrian team from the Institute for Conservation is returning in August to continue the restoration of the stone foundation of the Hari Shankar temple that was destroyed in the earthquake. 🇳🇵

prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS

Study in SAU

Nepalis wishing to pursue post-graduate or doctorates are eligible to apply for the country's SAARC quota in the South Asian University in New Delhi. The university



offers Masters and PhD programs in Applied Mathematics, Biotechnology, Computer Science, Economics, Legal Studies, International Relations and Sociology. The last date for application is 25 March with the SAARC-wide entrance test scheduled for 9 April. For more information: www.sau.int

Beauty queens

Japanese multinational company Rohto-Mentholatum Nepal has announced Miss Acnes. In addition to getting cash and gift hampers, the top three winners will be made the face of the brand for a year and will appear in the brand's social communication platforms. For more information: rohtomentholatumnepal.wordpress.com

Bigger and better

Vatsal Impex, sole distributor of Xiaomi in Nepal, recently launched Xiaomi MI



Mix. Equipped with a 6GB RAM, 16MP main camera and 5MP front camera, the phone will come with a price tag of Rs 89,999 till 10 March, and after that will be available for Rs 94,999. For more information: www.xiaominepal.com/booking



Fly high

National flag carrier airline of Turkey, Turkish Airlines, added two new flights to Voronezh and Samara from Istanbul, adding to its Russian destinations. Flights to Voronezh will start from 4 April, with a round trip fare of \$189 while flights to Samara will begin on 11 April with a round-trip fare of \$159.



Ford for women

Ford celebrated International Women's Day by supporting a 5k Run organised for women by Higher Ground Bakery. The company assisted the run with prizes, promotional materials and an escort vehicle for the runners on the day of the event. Additionally, the company is also giving special gift hampers for all vehicle bookings done in the name of women customers this week.

prabhu BANK

Do these cause a
sensation?
in your teeth

"I recommend Sensodyne"

Dr. Satbir Golar,
Dentist. Practising in the UK



No.1 DENTIST RECOMMENDED BRAND FOR SENSITIVE TEETH#

*As per TNS Dentist Toothpaste Research, December'13 conducted in India. Use as directed on pack. Visit your dentist regularly. SENSODYNE is a trade mark of the GSK group of companies.

© 2016, GlaxoSmithKline Asia Pvt. Ltd.

Stateless daughters

Every Nepali mother must be allowed to get Nepali citizenship as easily as a man, without if's and but's



In 2013, on International Women's Day, while struggling to acquire citizenship for my two daughters, I went to meet Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai. He told me to wait for the constitution to be promulgated with new provisions



COMMENT
Deepti Gurung

on citizenship for the offspring of foreigners or single mothers. It has been five years. There has been an earthquake, a blockade, three prime ministers and a new constitution. The past five years of activism for citizenship means that I have had to give up my job, live in limbo,

organise rallies, interviews, run around the Supreme Court, lawyers offices, government offices, and write columns like these.

My younger daughter was nearly stopped from giving her SLC examination because she did not have her birth certificate. I filed my case in Supreme Court and won at least for the birth registration, which was finally issued but in the name of 'Mr Thegan Nabhaeko' (Mr Unknown). I had married a childhood friend who was also struggling for citizenship through his mother, as his father had died when he was young. Five members of my current family are without citizenship, my two daughters, husband and two of his brothers.

Our demand is that every Nepali mother who is single and is raising her children without her husband's support or any Nepali mothers who is married to a foreigner and wishes her children to belong to Nepal must be allowed to do so without if's and but's -- just as easily as any Nepali man does.

Despite five years of activism, we feel like we are running against a stone wall. When we demanded 'citizenship through mothers', the politicians pretended they heard 'citizenship to Indians'. We demanded 'citizenship by descent to the children of Nepali women', and they heard 'full rights to naturalised citizens to become head of the state post'.

The new constitution mocked us, and deceived us. The leaders are deliberately misleading Nepalis out of paranoia, xenophobia and for their own petty interests.

If a Nepali man marries a foreign spouse then the foreign spouse can change her citizenship to Nepali and their offspring becomes Nepali by descent. But if a Nepali woman marries a foreign spouse then there is no clear provision as to how he can acquire Nepali naturalised citizenship. And their children may get

naturalised citizenship which is in discretion to the state. Moreover any Nepali woman who wishes to get citizenship for her children must present her husband's citizenship. To go and receive a ready citizenship card at the CDO office, either the mother or father can go which is perhaps the only concessions we got for our five years of activism: changing the preposition to 'or'.

If the mother is unable to identify the father of the child, there are reports that a citizenship can be acquired by descent only if mother agrees to file an application with the details of how the child is conceived. So, now our government wants to know who we had sex with?

The movement in the Madhes for citizenship is just an excuse. There are hundreds of Nepali Madhesi woman married to Indians. Their children were born and brought up here in Nepal. But the children are not considered Nepali and are stateless. But Madhesi leaders are more concerned about the rights for a naturalised citizen to be head of state. That is all they care about.

My elder daughter took up law because she was appalled by the injustice after being barred from giving her MBBS entrance exam. But if she doesn't get Nepali citizenship within two more years she will not be able to sit for her Bar Exam. My younger daughter is worried she cannot get a passport to study abroad.

It is excruciating to see my daughters growing up without being able to spread their wings. If I had left my daughters on the streets when they were young they may have been citizens by descent by now. Their only hope to be a Nepali now is to marry someone so they can get citizenship through their husbands.

On International Women's Day, I would like to disown this constitution and say that the fight goes on. 🇳🇵

RAYMOND WEIL
GENEVE

PRECISION
IS MY INSPIRATION

Scan for
watch details

SULUX CENTRE

SOLE DISTRIBUTOR & SERVICE CENTRE

Hotel Woodland Complex, Durbar Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal.

raymond-weil.com

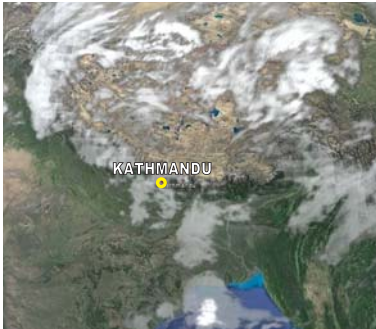


Imitating nature

Nepal's most modern printing facility, Jagadamba Press, now makes natural colours come alive with its state-of-the-art equipment.



(01) 5250017-19 | fax: (01) 5250027 | www.jagadambapr.com



This is the proper westerly front we have all been eagerly waiting for, the first spring rain. It is a wide system that has already drenched northern India and parts of western Nepal, and will arrive in Kathmandu on Friday dumping copious rain possibly with hail and thunder. It is a fairly fast-moving front so although Saturday will also be cloudy with chances of rain the weather will clear by Sunday. Maximum temperature will drop back into the teens, and the minimum temperature on Sunday will feel wintry again.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
17° 9°	14° 8°	18° 5°

oneworld

QATAR

AIRWAYS

القطرية

Going places together - qatarairways.com



LEARNING BY DOING: Public health expert Rita Thapa demonstrates the hazardous effects of smoking to eighth graders in Padma Kanya High School last December.

SARASWATI UPADHAYA

SMRITI BASNET

Thirty-two years of experience with UNICEF as a supply chain management professional took Narendra Shrestha to Denmark, India, Iraq, Mozambique, Nigeria and even North Korea. By 2010, Shrestha had had enough and he headed home to his family and country.

He approached government agencies with other returned international colleagues and offered his help, but although most promised to get back they never did. There are many Nepalis who have retired from their jobs in the UN, World Bank, or the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and have returned to Nepal to help in post-earthquake reconstruction and post-conflict only to find the government had no need for their expertise.

“But we are still available,” said Shrestha, who is now involved with Rotary Club and after coming back has worked with the UNICEF country office in Nepal as well. “Nepal is like a piece of heaven but we have not been able to utilise its full potential.”

Bhairaja Panday worked for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in hotspots like Bosnia and Burma, gaining valuable experience in post-conflict reconciliation. He offered his help for Nepal’s truth and reconciliation process, and even met the Prime Minister, but has now realised that exploiting the experience of retired Nepalis is not a priority for the government.

Rajesh Neupane also amassed 14 years of understanding of transitional justice while based in Rwanda with the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal. Seven years after returning to Nepal, he is disillusioned about what he sees.

“Politics has penetrated every

sphere of life, your abilities are not taken into account,” said Neupane, who now spends his time attending Rotary Club meetings and activities, and is currently the President Elect of the club.

While hundreds of thousands of Nepali youth migrate for work and education every year, many experienced and well-educated Nepalis are headed in the opposite direction. The more committed among them say that government foot-dragging and apathy is a given, the trick is to work around it.

Bindu Lohani who was the Vice-President in the Manila-based ADB,

the first Nepali in the position so far, retired recently after 30 years. He says he feels like a doctor on call waiting to be asked to help in the development field.

“I had a great opportunity to witness developments in Asian countries and that is where my main expertise and interest lies. I believe that there are many lessons Nepal can learn, successes as well as failures,” said Lohani, who says he would like to focus on empowering Nepali youth.

Public health expert Rita Thapa started her career in Nepal, worked for the World Health

Organisation's (WHO) offices in Manila, Geneva, and retired as a program director in the WHO regional office of Southeast Asia in 2001. After retirement, she has been in Nepal designing experiential learning modules for school children among other things.

She does the rounds speaking to students in Padma Kanya High School and others about the dangers of smoking. Using just a straw, discarded Coke bottle, a pen refill and tissue paper, Thapa demonstrates the deadly effects of smoking to Eighth Graders.

“My wish is to see fewer people landing up in hospitals, and I use every opportunity to help the government with policy planning,” says Thapa, who spends her free time on the golf course.

Bhairaja Panday is also often on the greens at Gokarna, and undeterred by official disinterest, has been lecturing and designing a water supply project in Dhading. He also serves on the board of the Institute of Crisis Management Studies and is Managing Director of Invest Nepal.

Said Panday: “Nepal is a bonanza for people like us. It is here that we can do what we want to do.”

Shrestha, Panday, Thapa and 60 other returnees are members of the Forum for International Professionals of Multilateral Organisations (FIPMO), which is chaired by Bhim Udas, who worked for the World Food Programme (WFP) for 30 years and was recently named Nepal’s ambassador to Burma.

“As a group we can come together and give back to the community and nation. Collectively, we have the technical knowledge and skills in different areas,” Udas said of FIPMO. “Nepal’s economic development should move forward and should not be derailed because of changing governments.”

Suresh Raj Sharma, the first Chief Financial Officer of Tribhuvan University (TU), who worked as Director of several divisions at WFP in Rome and in Sri Lanka, is also in FIPMO. He said: “Nepal has changed significantly since I served in TU thirty years ago. I am eager to contribute with the knowledge and experience I gained with the United Nations overseas in the new Nepal.”

Cultivating Partnerships

11 PRODUCTION UNITS

800+ EMPLOYEES

QUALIFIED TEAMS

25,000+ FARMER PARTNERS IN ALMOST 70 DISTRICTS

PARTNERSHIPS WITH DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ACTORS

9 COMPANY OWNED DEPOTS

600+ DEALER/SUB-DEALER NETWORKS & EXPANDING

25000 MT GRAIN STORAGE FACILITY

Animal Health & Nutrition | Livestock Feed | Feed Supplements | Soya & Maize Demo Plantation | Solvent Extraction

Nimbus Krishi Kendra (Agri Input Trading) | Poly-woven Fabrics | Non-woven Fabrics | Paint Chemicals & Resins | Edible Oil | Grain Packing & Trading

www.nimbusnepal.com

[nimbus.com.np](https://www.facebook.com/nimbus.com.np)

Animal Health & Nutrition | Livestock Feed | Feed Supplements | Soya & Maize Demo Plantation | Solvent Extraction

Nimbus Krishi Kendra (Agri Input Trading) | Poly-woven Fabrics | Non-woven Fabrics | Paint Chemicals & Resins | Edible Oil | Grain Packing & Trading

www.nimbusnepal.com

[nimbus.com.np](https://www.facebook.com/nimbus.com.np)

Mountains witho

OM ASTHA RAI
in SINDHUPALCHOK

Sajina Tamang (*pictured, right*) waited for her first installment of the Rs 300,000 reconstruction grant so she could rebuild her earthquake-damaged house. She finally got the first Rs 50,000 last year, but had to wait for months to begin rebuilding her home because she could not find workers.

There was hope after the earthquake that reconstruction would create jobs and even convince Nepali migrant workers to come home. However, the opposite seems to have happened with young men migrating in even larger numbers from the 14 affected districts, creating a crippling shortage of masons, carpenters and labourers.

In Syaule village 90 km east of Kathmandu, there are few young men left. There are only women like Tamang, waiting for someone to help lay the foundation to new homes without which they will not be eligible for the rest of the grant from the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA).



To be sure, young men had started deserting the district during the conflict. In Syaule the exodus peaked after the VDC Chair was murdered by Maoist guerrillas in 2004. Even after the ceasefire 11 years ago, the men haven’t returned, preferring to work in the Gulf, Malaysia or in Kathmandu.

Sajina’s husband, 22-year-old Raju Tamang, is in Malaysia and sent money home after the earthquake, but couldn’t get leave to return. Raju’s younger brother is also in Malaysia, and his wife lives with Sajina.

One sunny afternoon this week, Sajina and her sister-in-law were carrying stones salvaged from the ruins of their house. Their ailing father-in-law squatted nearby, and Sajina’s four-year-old daughter was playing in the dirt.

The family finally found two masons and a carpenter, and



PICS: OM ASTHA RAI

Sajina and her sister-in-law are now helping them because they cannot afford to hire helpers. She says: “They are the only men here who can build houses and are in high demand. Everyone wants them.”

Sindhupalchok was the worst-hit district in 2015, with half the nearly 8,900 fatalities here. In Syaule itself, 63 people were

killed and 1,164 houses damaged. The Safer Migration (SaMi) Project estimates that 8,000 men have migrated from Sindhupalchok after the earthquake, 450 from Syaule alone.

Bishnumaya Karki (*above, far right*) received the first installment of her reconstruction grant in September, and started digging a new foundation. But she can’t find

masons to begin rebuilding. She says: “I have the money and the material, but I am in the queue for masons.”

Karki has been living in a shed with her ailing husband and father-in-law, their two grown-up sons serve in the Nepal Police and live in Kathmandu with their families.

Only 250 families in Syaule have laid foundations or built new

houses, but the NRA doesn’t want to start distributing the second installment when a majority haven’t even spent the first cache to lay their foundations.

“Young men are scarce, but skilled masons and carpenters are even more scarce,” says Ramjee Thapa, Secretary of Syaule VDC. “People now have grants, but no manpower.”



NEPAL
WHEREVER
YOU ARE.
Times.com

out men

Two years later, a serious shortage of construction workers is hampering post-earthquake rebuilding



The NRA spokesperson Yam Lal Bhoosal admits the shortage of skilled masons and carpenters is hindering reconstruction in all earthquake-affected districts. "We cannot allow haphazard reconstruction," he says. "But for earthquake-resistant reconstruction, there is a huge shortage of skilled masons and carpenters."

The Nepal Army recently agreed with the NRA to conduct training for brick-laying and woodworking for villagers so they can rebuild houses on their own. But like everything else, it is too little too late for people like Raj Bahadur Shrestha of Syaule.

He says: "There are few young men left who can be trained in masonry and carpentry." 🇳🇵



Go online to watch video of women and elderly rebuilding earthquake-damaged houses on their own since the young men of the village are away in the Gulf, Malaysia or in Kathmandu.

nepalitimes.com



LEFT BEHIND: Even after receiving her reconstruction grant last year, Sajina Tamang (*left*) had to wait for months before beginning to rebuild her earthquake-damaged house. Her husband and brother-in-law are both in Malaysia, and there are not many men left in Syaule village of Sindhupalchok to help women like her.

Bishnumaya Karki (*above*) dug the foundation of her new home two months ago, but she has not found masons to rebuild her house yet.



Overbooked masons

Raj Bahadur Thapa (*pictured above*) has been a mason for 17 years but in his whole life has never been as busy as now. After the NRA distributed the first installment of reconstruction grants in September last year, everyone started rebuilding in his village at the same time.

Thapa is one of the few skilled masons in Irkhu of Sindhupalchok, where almost every house was destroyed in April 2015. After attending a week-long course conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Thapa is now leading a group of masons, carpenters and helpers to build a quake-resistant house for a blind earthquake survivors in Irkhu under a UNDP-funded program.

Thapa has built four houses back-to-back since November, and is booked for the next few months. "So many people want me to build their houses, but I can only work on one house at a time," he told us during a break from brick-laying.

Thapa earns Rs 700 a day in Irkhu, but can easily earn Rs 1,000 if he went to the district capital of Chautara. Thapa used to have few jobs before the earthquake, now he has too many.

Sanjaya Pariyar of UNDP says: "All masons and carpenters are now booked for months. They finish construction in one site, and immediately move on to the next one."



KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

188 NATIONAL UNIVERSITY RANKING

AACSB International

Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET)

National League for Nursing (NLN)

APPLY FOR FALL 2017 INTAKE

FALL 2017 DEADLINE **JUNE 1**

PUBLIC CO-ED INSTITUTION

- 1 of 23 accounting programs worldwide to receive IMA endorsement
- 250 undergraduate programs
- 50 graduate programs
- 21:1 class size
- Minimum English Proficiency TOEFL - 79 (UG) / 80 (PG) IELTS - 6.5 (UG) / 6.5 (PG) SAT (Optional for Admission) GRE / GMAT as per program requirement

Three Sixty Education Solutions Pvt. Ltd.
Prudent Building - 2nd Floor, Kamaladi, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 4222844/4251404 Email: info@360education.edu.np
website: www.pacasia.org facebook: PacAsiaNepal

in association with

PAC ASIA STUDY ABROAD

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY OHIO

EVENTS



Holi,
An eagerly awaited festival of colors. Join hundreds in Kathmandu and celebrate the advent of spring with unmatched enthusiasm and fanfare.
12 March

Musical holi,
Spend a musical day with 1974 AD, Kutumba, Kanta dAb dAb this Holi. Attend for circus performances, games, art installations, food, gift hampers and more.
12 March, 9 am to 6 pm, Gokarna Forest Resort, 9843137691, 9813798690, 9840090286, 9841181282, Tickets: http://bit.ly/2ncxpHC

Holi pub crawl,
A pre-Holi event in four different bars, exciting games and a chance to socialise with new people.
10 March, 6 to 10 pm, Meeting point: The Factory, Thamel, For booking: 9823764489

Canvas and cocktails,
Spend the evening painting on gender issues at this event organised by Ujyalo Foundation and WOW.
18 March, 5 to 7 pm, Shambala, Rs 1500

Portfolio reviews,
A 20-minute one-on-one portfolio review session with artists participating in this year's Kathmandu Triennale, an international arts festival.
15 to 19 March, For more information: (01) 4433930, info@artmandu.org

Maha Jodi,
Don't miss out on the performance of comedy duo Madan Krishna Shrestha and Hari Bansha Acharya. All proceeds go to Asha Deep Nepal.
19 March, 6 pm onwards, Radisson Hotel, Lajimpat, 9841355956, Rs 3000 (including dinner)

Outdoor fun,
A three-day outdoor festival filled with adventure sports and music. Choose from a host of activities: ride, run or rock climb.
17 to 19 March, Kakani International Training Centre, Kakani, For more information: himalayanoutdoorfestival.com



Redefining success,
A speaker series featuring women speakers like sports personality Nima Gharti Magar, designer Nuzhat Qazi, model and actress Paramita Rana, entrepreneur Amuda Mishra and more.
11 March, 12 to 5 pm, RS Moto, Naxal, 9851000214

Assorted exhibition,
An exhibition of Indigo Gallery and Rupert Smith Textiles's collection of Himalayan textiles and carpets, jewelry, Tharu furniture, antique beads, paintings and photographs by James Giambrone.
Till 12 March, 10 am to 6 pm, Taragaon Museum, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, Boudha, (01) 4413580



Watch Lion,
Don't miss out on the screening of award-winning movie, Lion. Stay back for a discussion on GIS Mapping.
12 March, 5 to 7.30 pm, Nepal Communitere, Pulchok, (01) 5555856

MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI



MUSIC



Ciney live,
A live performance by famed Nepali artist Ciney Gurung every Friday evening.
Every Fridays, 7 pm onwards, Shambala Garden, Hotel Shangri-La, Rs 2000 per person, (01) 4412999 Extension: 7520/7508

Holi music,
Celebrate the festival colors with a live performance by The Kathmandu Killers.
12 March, 7.30 pm onwards, House of Music, Thamel, 9851075172



90s grunge,
Listen to various artists as they pay homage to the grunge era of the 90s.
8 April, 1 to 6 pm, Purple Haze Rock Bar, Thamel

Music festival,
Be a part of this month-long festival and experience music in its entirety. Enjoy jazz, sarangi, reggae and many more genres.
1 to 31 March, Base Camp, Jhamsikhel, For more information: 9841226397, pareshkshrestha@gmail.com

Jazz and salsa,
A unique event combining gypsy jazz and salsa dance. Groove to the beats of both art forms with gypsy jazz maestro Hari Maharjan and salsa maestro Binayak Das Shrestha.
17 March, 7 to 10 pm, 25 Hours, Tangalwood, Naxal, 9801057609, Rs 500 (Advanced sales), Rs 1000 (Door sales)

DINING



Manny's,
Head down for some delicious Corn Fritters, Pad Thai Noodles, Crispy Crunch Potatoes and don't forget their signature Manny's Spicy Wings. All served with fine hospitality in an excellent space.
Jawalakhel, (01)5536919

1905,
Choose from a variety of local handicrafts and fresh produce at this Farmer's Market.
Every Saturday, 8 to 12 pm, 1905, Nagpokhari, Naxal, (01) 44111348



Barista Lavazza,
The Valley's best European inspired coffee-culture cafe serves excellent mochas and lattes, don't forget to try their grilled chicken sandwich.
Jawalakhel, (01)4005123, barista.nepal@gmail.com

Vootoo,
The new home of Newari cuisine that also has a safe continental menu for those who are not yet ready to experiment with new dishes.
Lajimpat, (01)4005222



Kaiser Cafe,
Enjoy a cuppa and an intimate meal in the blissful Garden of Dreams.
Thamel, (01)4425341

GETAWAY



Solid Rock,
Enjoy a relaxing stay in this traditional Nepali farmhouse away from the hustle and bustle of Kathmandu city.
Solid Rock Lodge & Restaurant, Dollu, near Pharphing, 9823233093

Famous Farm,
Wake up to the sounds of chirping birds and a fresh morning breeze wafting in through the aankhijhyal.
Nuwakot, (01)4700426, info@rural-heritage.com

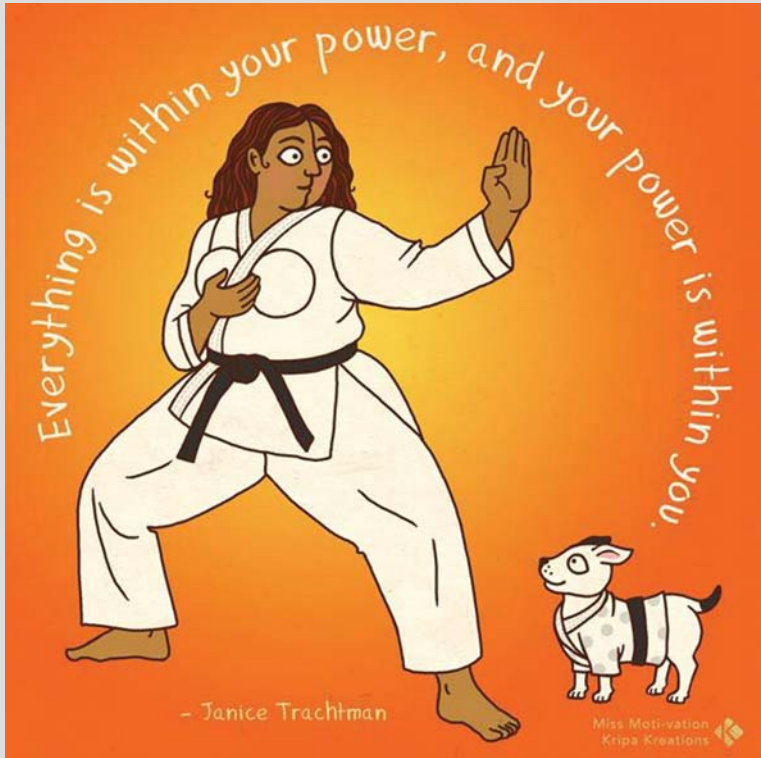


Barahi Jungle Lodge,
The first eco-jungle lodge of Chitwan directly overlooks the Chitwan National Park, spa, boutique guest room, individual and two-in-one private villas, including a suite with a private swimming pool.
Andrauli, West Chitwan, (01)4411113, bjl@barahi.com, www.barahijunglelodge.com

Tiger Mountain Lodge,
Situated 1000 ft above Pokhara valley, this resort offers spectacular views of Machhapuchhre, Dhaulagiri, Annapurna and Manaslu.
www.tigermountainpokhara.com, (01)4426427, 9849194874



The Yellow House,
Bed and breakfast for the light traveller.
Sanepa, (01)5553869/5522078, www.theyellowhouse.com.np



TRIPTI WATER FILTER

levels of filtration **4**

modernity in tradition

in **COPPER**

save time and money

ensure better health

Starting Rs 7300

Show this advertisement and get Special Discount

To book one contact - Smart Paani Pvt. Ltd.

P: 977-1-5261530, 5260506

Flooring/ Furnishing Mattresses

Imported Sofas/Recliners Wallpapers

Rods Bed Covers

Rugs

Enter the world of furnishing...

Banking Partner
NABIL • BILINSTALLMENT Available at 0% Interest to Nabil Credit Card Holder

New Madan Furnishers Pvt. Ltd.
Kupondole, Lalitpur, Nepal
Tel: 552 3236, 552 0318 Fax: 553 6927
info@nmfurnishers.com | www.nmfurnishers.com

Restoring the future

Antique carved windows of ancient houses damaged in the earthquake are being restored by artisans and apprentices

ANUTARA SHAKYA

Two years after the earthquake, the first sight that one sees when entering Basantapur Darbar Square is the half destroyed Gaddi Darbar standing on its own debris. But the earthquake not only destroy the city's manuments, it also damaged centuries-old residences in inner city Kathmandu.

Today, these alleys are covered in a fog of dust as damaged houses are being demolished to build new ones. Many have got tired of waiting for the Rs 300,000 government compensation, and at any rate that money would just about pay to build one room.

Since the earthquake mostly damaged brick and mortar buildings, the new buildings are mostly multi-storey ferrocement blocks. The danger is that the carved wooden windows,



ALOK SIDDHI TULADHAR

doorways and columns will be replaced.

But here in Itumbahal, a restoration workshop conducted by the Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) and Handicraft Association of Nepal is trying to preserve the ancient carved wooden windows. The 45-day pilot project allows 12 trainees to work with three master artisans and to learn the endangered craft.

Singh Raj Tuladhar, one of the trainer craftsmen conducting the workshop, is from Bungamati,

an ancient town famous for its woodcarvers. With 35 years of experience in the field, Tuladhar felt the need to pass on and conserve the skills he had. Every morning, instead of opening his workshop at home, he makes his way to Kathmandu to train the young apprentices. Apart from teaching the novices the art of carving intricate designs on blocks of wood, Tuladhar makes sure they know the value of heritage and the need for its conservation.

The team will repair as many structures as possible, preserving the traditional woodcarving craft of Kathmandu along the way. The repaired window frames are then returned to their owners. However, a similar wooden carved window today would cost anywhere up to Rs 3 million. This is why Shriju Pradhan of Kathmandu Metropolitan City is concerned about its preservation.

"The government hasn't provided much compensation for rebuilding, so house owners are tempted to sell antique windows to rebuild their homes although it is illegal to sell anything older than a hundred years," says Pradhan.

The workshop costs Rs 1.5 million to pay for the trainer artisans and paraphernalia. All the carved wood components that come to the workshop are recorded in detail and archived for future reference. Some of the windows and wooden carvings were earmarked for restoration even before the earthquake, but at the time KMC could only manage to stop the demolition of old houses. Despite initial objection from the house owners, Pradhan was able to convince them to hand over the items for free repairs.

Some of the damaged and destroyed houses in Kathmandu were 300 years old. One of them is the house of Sadchitta Nanda Vaidya that had to be taken down because of serious damage. the government provides Rs 500,000 as compensation to rebuild heritage homes like Vaidya's provided they adhere to the traditional design. But this money does not even cover the cost of a single window.

"I cannot afford to rebuild it in the original design. It is not just the windows but we also need *dachi appa* to complete the look," says Vaidya.

While the KMC has prevented rebuilding the old houses unless they retain their traditional looks, locals are getting impatient. Pradhan is looking after the restoration efforts at KMC and says preserving the wooden components through the workshop is the least her Council can do for now.

The KMC had released a formal notice to hand over wooden windows for restoration soon after the earthquake. Says Pradhan: "This will at least create some awareness about preservation and hopefully generate funds." 🇳🇵



Series coordinated by Alok Siddhi Tuladhar

NEW THINKING. NEW POSSIBILITIES.

“I AM PERFECT
I AM CRETA”

Anil Gurung
National Football Player

CRETA
THE PERFECT SUV

HYUNDAI Laxmi
SOLE DISTRIBUTOR OF HYUNDAI FOR NEPAL
www.laxmihyundai.com



If you are a fan of the Wolverine as played by Hugh Jackman over the last 17 years, then *Logan*, which is the given name of this X-Men superhero, is not your film. Grim, sometimes beautiful, but mostly just painful, this last installment is the story of the demise of a great hero, and it is heartbreaking.



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

Based on a graphic novel called *Old Man Logan* by Mike Millar and Steve McNiven, the film is adapted and directed by James Mangold, who clearly felt an affinity for a story about an ageing, dying Wolverine. Unfortunately, as with most films that are this apocalyptic, the nature of it is deeply self-indulgent, overly gloomy and with none of the biting humour and almost hidden tenderness

that Hugh Jackman nuanced his character with, making the prickly, quick to pounce Wolverine so beloved.

Set in 2029, the film tells the story of a world without mutants, where an evil corporation called, cleverly or not so cleverly I still can't decide, Transigen has created a virus released into the drinking water, wiping out the mutant gene. Not so originally, Transigen is also now creating made to order mutant soldiers with special powers, resulting in their experimentation on human embryos, a horrifying transgression that causes them to incarcerate their growing subjects: little children who have been experimented on with an end to making them killing machines.

Patrick Stewart reprises his role from earlier X-Men films as Charles Xavier, but, here too, the man is so altered as to barely represent the wheelchair bound free-thinker who warmed the heart of previous films.

It is astonishing to this reviewer that a film with two of the most loved characters in comic lore can have iterated into such a morose piece of cinema, one that makes you wince more than you breathe.

I will admit that watching the film in the cinema with fairly severe lower back pain compounded by excessive and also seemingly arbitrary screen blackouts from the Censor Board of Nepal (during crucial parts) did not improve my viewing experience. Why not just impose an age limit instead of massacring a film in such a hideous manner? I am also a bit suspicious that this film is one of those not so funny bro-pics that make directors like Mangold feel, well, manly as they plot the torture and demise of a screen legend.

If you think that I have given everything away, I really haven't, there are entire, compelling, new characters that originate in this film, possibly being set up for sequels as we speak, but if telling you that this film harks the death of Wolverine seems a spoiler, take a beat and think about what it means these days to say that this is (really) the end of Hugh Jackman's tenure playing a character that made him famous but also probably made him millions.



Watch trailer online

nepalitimes.com

HAPPENINGS



GOPEN RAI

THE DAY AFTER: CPN-UML leaders state that Madhesi Front should take responsibility for the Saptari killings during a press meet in Kathmandu on Tuesday.



POEM-MANDU: American poets Sarah Kay and Phil Kaye recite verse at a performance at the International Club Sanepa on Monday.



EMBASSY OF INDIA, KATHMANDU

RIGHTS WOMEN: Students of Nepal Law College interact with Anuradha Koirala, founder and chairperson of Maiti Nepal, in Kathmandu on Monday.



GOPEN RAI

MEN FOR WOMEN: People participate in the 'Men For Women, M4W' rally to mark International Women's Day 2017 at Jawalakhel on Wednesday.



GOPEN RAI

PHOTO TALK: *Nepali Times* Editor Kunda Dixit talks about photojournalism at a program organised by the Photo Journalism Club at Nepal Tourism Board on Sunday.

M-Series Printers

Get the most **ECONOMICAL B/W PRINTERS** ever

Best for Office and Commercial purpose

EPSON
EXCEED YOUR VISION

Just **25 PAISA** per print

8000 PAGES Print upto with initial starter ink kit

M200- PRINT / SCAN / COPY

JUST 12 WATTS POWER CONSUMPTION

M100- PRINT

UPTO 1 YEAR OR 50,000 PRINTS

HIGH SPEED PRINTING

34 PPM

MERCANTILE OFFICE SYSTEMS PVT. LTD.
Authorized Distributor
Hiti Pokhari, Durbar Marg
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 1-4440773/4445920

Kathmandu Valley Dealers:
Lazimpat : 4410423, New Road : 4220058
New Road : 4227854, New Road : 4260173
New Road : 4222384, Patan : 5538849
Putalisadak : 4266820, Putalisadak : 4415786
Putalisadak : 4227474, Putalisadak : 4436307
Putalisadak : 4417050

Outside Valley Dealers:
Bansaga : 011-860888, Birtamode : 021-538729, Birtamode : 021-532000
Birtamode : 023-540150, Butwal : 071-545399, Chitwan : 056-571764
Dang : 082-561022, Dhangadhi : 091-523601, Dhangadhi : 091-521392
Janakpur : 041-525565, Lahan : 033-561205, Mahendranagar : 099-523672
Nepalgunj : 081-527092, Pokhara : 061-525300, Surkhet : 083-522488
Tulsipur : 082-562575

Home Minister on Saptari killings

Home Minister Bimalendra Nidhi in *Setopati*, 7 March

सेतोपाठी

Setopati: There are reports that police opened fire in Saptari despite the Prime Minister’s order not to do so. What is the truth?
Bimalendra Nidhi: It wasn’t just the Prime Minister, I did not want police to open fire either. Our strategy was to mobilise the security forces as a barrier between UML and Madhesi supporters, and avert a clash between them. I had asked police to use only water cannons, batons, tear gas and rubber bullets if they needed to use force.

But police used live ammunition. Why?
The Local Administration Act allows the Chief District Officer (CDO) to order police to shoot at protesters below their knees to prevent the situation from spiraling out of control. The CDO does not have to wait for order from above. In Saptari, protesters had already snatched two communication sets from police. And they started beating up inspector Bijaya Shrestha trying to snatch weapons from the police. Despite the use of water cannons, batons, tear gas and rubber bullets, protesters nearly entered the compound of Gajendra Narayan Singh Industrial Zone where UML leaders were. If police had opened

fire only after the clash between the two sides erupted, many more people could have died.

But police did not use water cannons and rubber bullets. Did they?
Police used nine rounds of rubber bullets. They could not use water cannons much because the van was vandalised by protesters.



Police also charged batons and used tear gas. Security chiefs have briefed me that they opened fire after running out of all options and just before protesters were about to clash with UML supporters.

The police was criticised for using excessive force in the previous Madhes agitation. Is it possible that the police just cannot aim below the knee?
I have sought an answer to this question from security chiefs myself. I have asked them if our

security personnel have been trained to shoot below the knee when necessary.

Reports suggest Armed Police Force was excessively aggressive in Saptari.
I can answer this question only after an investigation into the incident.

Every time such incidents happen, the government simply forms a probe committee. The probe report is never disclosed.
I will this time conduct a thorough investigation, and make its report public.

Violent protests are erupting across the Tarai. How do you deal with this situation?
Right after the Saptari tragedy, I called UML Chair KP Oli and requested him to call off his party’s East-

West campaign. But the UML put its program on hold only for three days. I think the UML will do well to rethink and completely call off its rallies. People in the Madhes should also use restraint. Attacking political rivals when they are carrying out a peaceful program is not acceptable in democracy.

The root of this tragedy is the amendment of the constitution. Madhesi Front wants it. So does the government. But UML is dead against it. We need to talk and find a political solution.



Chair: Chief Secretary
Balloon: ADB job

नेपाल

Rabindra in *Nepal*, 6 March

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“ I will rather resign than call off local elections ”

Prime Minister Puhpa Kamal Dahal after Madhesi parties pressed him to call off local elections following the killings of four people in Saptari, *Annapurna Post*, 9 March

Saptari survivors

Sita Mademba in www.nepalkhabar.com, 8 March

nepalkhabar

Four people died when police fired at crowds in Maleth of Saptari on Monday, and of the 19 injured, 11 have been discharged and seven are recovering at the BP Koirala Institute of Health Science in Dharan.



Digambar Jha, 45, advocate
I started running to safety as soon as police opened fire. I was shot in my back, but kept running because I thought they would close in and kill me if I stopped. I was bleeding and found a motorcyclist, and asked him to take me to hospital. My nephew was there when I was shot, and he told others that I was dead. After reaching Dharan, I called my mother, and asked her to tell everyone her son is alive.



Ramdas Yadav, 35, labourer
I wanted to listen to the UML leaders, but the police were not allowing anyone to get close. As protesters began pelting stones, police threw tear gas shells and then opened fire. I ran away, but they chased me, and started kicking and hitting me with the butts of their rifles. I said I was not an agitator, but they did not stop until I fell to the ground. I spent the night lying in the wheat field. The next morning, I was found by my brother, and taken to hospital. The police broke my hip.



Sonalal Yadav, 45, pharmacist
I was curious to see UML leaders, but had not been able to get through the police who stood as a barrier between us and them. So I was just sitting outside a shop near the venue of the UML program. Riot police came to me, and began kicking me while using abusive words. They left only after I fell to the ground.



Dilip Yadav, 23, poultry farmer
Police and protesters were clashing on the road. I was among the villagers watching them from a paddy field. They opened fire on us. I was shot below my left armpit. I told others that I got hit, and they took me to hospital in a motorcycle.

PICS: SITA MADEMBA

Reviving the health sector

Rameshwor Bohara and Ramu Sapkota in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 5-11 March

हिमाल खबरपत्रिका

When Gagan Thapa was appointed Minister of Health six months ago, his Ministry did not have a proper working system. For example, there was no record of the number of doctors across the country. Since assuming office, Thapa has worked on policy and institutional reforms to improve the performance of the health sector. It has been nearly a decade since the government declared free distribution of medicines from government hospitals and health posts, but it has not happened.
As soon as he assumed office, Thapa delegated Rs 311.5 million to regional health directorates and Rs 1.8-8 million to district hospitals to buy medicines directly, bypassing an otherwise cumbersome procedure. The Ministry also gave district hospitals the authority to purchase Rs 500,000 worth of medicines for emergencies, and to buy medicines directly. Because of this, government hospital pharmacies are now well stocked.
In the past, 70 per cent of the total budget allocated for the purchase of free medicines went to the centre, 10 per cent to regional health directorates and 20 per cent to district hospitals. But the process of purchasing the medicines was time consuming and irregular, and stopped altogether after interference from the Lokman Singh Karki-led CIAA.

To ensure that the medicines reached all the districts, Thapa established a central coordination committee headed by an expert and appointed a focal person in each region, the budget was allocated on time and the process simplified. For years, the management of the human resources fell off the radar of the Ministry, which has around 800 permanent medical officers, 475 doctors who studied in government scholarships and 150 additional medical officers. But because they don’t want to go to rural areas to serve, many health posts and hospitals have been

without doctors for long.
Private hospitals and clinics wishing to appoint government doctors before 9 am and after 5pm now need to take permission from the Ministry. To address the scarcity of specialist doctors in government hospitals, the Ministry has made it mandatory for post-graduate medical students to serve in government-appointed districts for three months. The ministry is also working to provide free treatment for heart and arthritis patients, free kidney transplantation in government hospitals and establish the Sushil Koirala Cancer hospital in Nepalganj. The ministry is also starting a program in 500 health posts outside Kathmandu for similar services. To reduce the risk of renal diseases, the ministry is starting a free urine test program in schools from next year.

When Thapa was appointed, he announced his commitment to open dispensaries in all government hospitals, and so far central hospitals including Kanti and Bir, some zonal hospitals and 29 district hospitals have opened their own medical stores.

But Thapa’s journey hasn’t been without hitches, the main one being the budget. The only source for the ministry is the health tax fund. The ministry has asked to utilise the Rs 600 million from the fund. “If the health sector is to work effectively, the ministry has to be allocated around Rs 2 billion from next year,” says Thapa.

Thapa has also come under fire for making decisions without proper homework. Samir Lama, MDGP of Pyuthan hospital says that with the current human resources, it is not possible to keep the doctors and healthworkers in the hospital from 9 to 5.

Maybe because Thapa wants to do so much in such a short time, he has made some inappropriate decisions. A day before the dates for local elections were announced, for instance, he appointed people in key positions in the health sector. He has admitted privately that he was under immense pressure from his Nepali Congress hierarchy to push those nominations.



Melamchi not a mirage

Engineers have devised a clever plan to expedite the much-delayed project and finally bring snowmelt to Kathmandu

SONIA AWALE
in SINDHUPALCHOK

Although the Melamchi Water Supply Project stepped up tunnel digging after a change of contractors, it would still have been another year before the project was completed and Kathmandu finally got water from a snowfed river in the Langtang National Park. But engineers have come up with a clever shortcut so that the first fill of water will flow into Sundarjal by the October deadline.

More than 20 years after its initiation, the \$460 million project is finally nearing completion. Kathmandu roads have been dug up and the capital is shrouded in a perpetual pall of dust as new water mains are laid at breakneck speed to distribute the water when it arrives.

“We are hoping to bring water to Kathmandu by October 2017, the target set by the Nepal government,” said Ramakant Duwadi, Deputy Executive Director of the Melamchi Board. “But because the construction of intake weir was delayed, the project has devised a way to supply water to Kathmandu through the diversion tunnel.”

Project engineers came up with the ingenious idea to use the cofferdam that diverts the river water to allow construction of the weir and settling basin, and instead of emptying it back into the Melamchi River, are connecting the 210m channel into the main tunnel to Sundarjal. On Monday morning, scaling machines were hard at work cutting a mountain in

PICS: KUNDA DIXIT

“One of top five projects in Asia”

was the insurgency that did not allow such mega-infrastructure to move ahead, a lengthy debate about private sector involvement in a water utility ensued, and the termination of an ill-equipped tunnel contractor. But I think we have learned enough lessons to manage whatever is under project's control. We can expect the next Melamchi Phase 2 to be completed in three years after construction.

Last week in Kathmandu you also brought up political 'Bhagbanda' as the reason for delays in infrastructure projects like Melamchi, Bhairahawa and Kathmandu airports.

I said it is very important that Project Directors of national high priority schemes be deployed from among the best qualified staff of various departments. The rapid turnaround of Melamchi and Kathmandu water distribution projects in the last years was a case in point. Project Directors of both projects executed work worth Rs7.5 billion in 2016, and received ADB's best performance awards. The Project Directors of the two airport projects are also working very hard. If the projects always had such competent leadership from the start, progress today would have been much faster. There is a lot of evidence of progress of schemes boosted or nosedived after changes in the Project Director.

Where would Melamchi rank in Asia terms of size and importance to national development?

In view of the significance of project size and impact, difficulties encountered and overcome, and the level of expectation of millions of people in Kathmandu, Melamchi is the most important ADB project in Nepal, and among the top five across all ADB projects. It is also the best known project within the ADB. For us, it is really heartening to see the project now nearing completion. I think it will have a transformational impact in a country that has passed through one crisis to another, and help build confidence of the people and the nation that complex infrastructure projects can be undertaken.

What is your assessment of Nepal's recovery efforts post-earthquake and post-blockade?

If we look at the macroeconomic figures, production has come back to normal. Annual economic growth may reach 5.6% this year. But if we look at the recovery in earthquake affected areas, we are still at an early stage after almost two years. We need to take into account the vast damage across difficult rural terrain. But if we are to complete reconstruction in five years from 2015, a much stronger effort is needed by deploying more human resources, materials,

and finance. Much stronger political drive is also needed to help National Reconstruction Authority make fast and flexible decisions. There is even less progress for nationwide resilience building for future major earthquakes, which I hope to see reinvigorated.

As you end your 5-year tenure here, what is your hope for Nepal's future economic growth?

We are always hoping to help Nepal increase the average growth rate from 4+% to 7+%, by helping strengthen systems and capacities through our projects, to build physical infrastructure and human capital, and competitiveness of agriculture and industries. I think progress is slow but steady. For example, people talk a lot about low capital expenditure as problem, and the government is taking steps, such as setting up project banks and reforming procurement systems. Nepal's human capital remains a concern from investor perspective given its low completion rate, but the new 7-year school sector plan has included a lot of ingredients to drive change. Nepal is also endowed with a lot of competitive industries, although many are still latent and require discretionary efforts to tap their potential. While challenges like federal transition still remain, I am cautiously optimistic that Nepal can go into a higher growth trajectory over the medium-term.

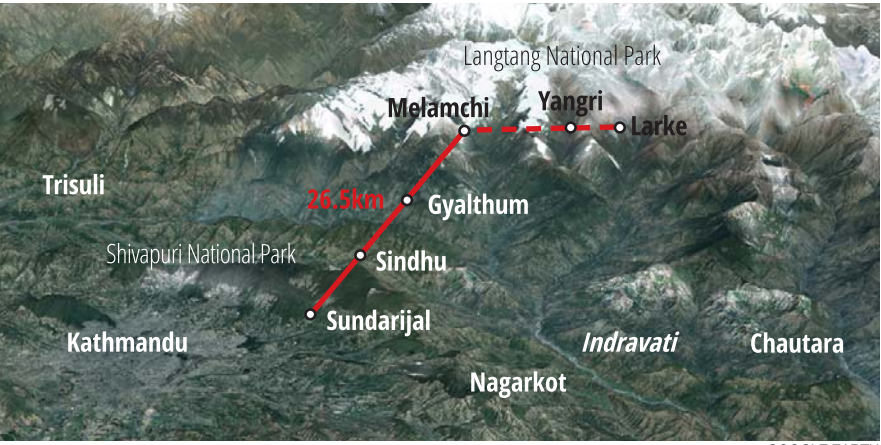


Outgoing Nepal Country Director of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Kenichi Yokoyama, spoke to *Nepali Times* during a visit to the Melamchi headworks this week.

***Nepali Times:* Why do you think the Melamchi Project was so much delayed?**

Kenichi Yokoyama: There is no doubt that the project has taken much longer time than it should. But we should keep in mind that it is a mega project of inter-basin water transfer that requires a lot of study and consultation to ensure social and environmental justice in the Melamchi river basin. Then there

anymore



GOOGLE EARTH

half to make space for the intake, but there is still another 25m of vertical rock still left to cut through to reach the river level.

Of the total 26.5km long tunnel, there is only 4.4km in two sections still left to drill through. Then there is the headworks and treatment plants in Melamchi and Sundarijal that need to be finished before consumers in Kathmandu can have Melamchi water piped to their homes.

The project is the biggest and the most expensive infrastructure scheme in Nepal today, and is being built with a soft loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and will bring 170 million litres a day to Kathmandu. However, Phase 2 of the project will also connect the Yangri and Larke Khola through two more tunnels and nearly triple the daily

water flow (*map, above*).

The project was plagued by chronic delays due to political meddling and conflict. In 2010, Chinese contractors finally started digging the tunnel but could only finish 6.4km in three years. They were replaced by the Italian contractor CMC di Ravenna which resumed work in 2013. Consultants were also replaced with Spanish Eptisa in 2015. However, the earthquake and blockade led to more delays with the estimated new completion date set for March 2018.

Drilling was progressing at 8 m/day along two faces, but it slowed by half when soft rock was encountered last month. The remaining tunnel construction for 2,200m between Gyalthum downstream to Sindhu upstream is now gathering speed again and breakthroughs are expected in July.

“The rock is now better and we hope to catch up, finish the drilling and start lining the tunnel. We are working very well as a team,” said CMC Production Manager Sergio di Girogio.

At a review meeting this week in Melamchi in the presence of ADB Nepal Country Director Kenichi Yokoyama, Duwadi urged the consultant and contractor to maintain the pace of work to meet the deadline. Speaking on behalf of the government, he told them: “The speed is still not fully satisfactory, please increase and maintain it to meet the October deadline.”

Melamchi is the second-longest water supply tunnel in Asia, and is an engineering feat. Experts say that the tunnel technology transfer in Melamchi can be applied to hydropower and highway construction in Nepal.

In an interview with *Nepali Times* (*overleaf*) the ADB’s Yokoyama said: “Melamchi will have a transformational impact on a country ... and help build confidence of the people and nation that complex infrastructure projects can be undertaken.”



After three decades of talk, the Melamchi Project is finally nearing completion. By March next year, consumers in Kathmandu should be getting piped water regularly. Visit the Melamchi intake site in the Langtang National Park and go into the 26.5 km tunnel in our dramatic video of the construction process.



The Melamchi Water Supply Project is the largest infrastructure scheme in Nepal today, and with a \$800 million price tag, including the future extension, the costliest as well. Its 26.5 km long and 3.7m wide tunnel in Phase 1 is the second longest tunnel for water supply in Asia.

In Phase 1, the project will provide 170 million litres of water per day (mld) which will be enough for daily fours of water supply for half the Valley’s 3.5 million residents. After the Yangri and Larke Khola are joined in Phase 2 with additional 12km of tunneling, the daily water flow will go up to 510 mld allowing most Kathmandu consumers to get 24 hour water supply.

The tunnel has a gentle gradient of only 8m between the intake in Melamchi and the outlet in Sundarijal. The velocity of water in the

first Phase will be only 0.5m/second which means it will take 45 hours for the water to complete its long underground journey. However, the speed will double once Yangri and Larke are connected to the main tunnel (*see map*).

In the dry season, the volume of Melamchi River goes down to 2.4 cubic meters per second but the project will only take 2 cubic meters per second of water, so river won’t go completely dry.

There are 1.5 km of access tunnels located near the intake in Ambathan, in Gyalthum and Sindhu. On December 28, tunnel digging from Sundarijal and Sindhu sites made a breakthrough. As of this week, only 4.4 km of tunneling remains in two sections.

Sonia Awale

MELAMCHI SAGA

1988

As Kathmandu population grows, Melamchi is identified as an alternative source of water supply

1994

In an election speech NC leader K P Bhattarai famously promises to “wash streets of Kathmandu with Melamchi water” if elected

1998

Melamchi Water Supply Development Board established

2000

Project begins ADB approves initial \$120 million soft loan

2002

World Bank pulls out

DECEMBER 2005

King Gyanendra stages military coup Norway’s NORAD and Swedish SIDA pull out

2006

Due to conflict, first targeted completion date not met

2007

ADB threatens to pull out after Maoist Minister Hisila Yami opposes privatisation of water supply

19 FEBRUARY 2009

Contract signed with Chinese company

APRIL 2010

Construction finally begins

SEPTEMBER 2013

Second completion date not met

25 SEPTEMBER 2012

Chinese contractor terminated

1 OCTOBER 2013

Spanish-Italian engineering firms hired

25 APRIL 2015

Earthquake

SEPTEMBER 2015 - JANUARY 2016

Indian border blockade

30 SEPTEMBER 2016

Third completion date not met

MARCH 2018

Estimated final completion date

Gharipatan (nearby Airport), Pokhara 061-466652, 9851054404
info@jalmahalpokhara.com | facebook.com/jalmahalpokhara



WORLD'S PUREST VODKA

NO SUGAR SYRUP, GLYCERIN OR ADDITIVES ADDED

www.8848vodka.com | facebook.com/8848vodka

100% WHEAT VODKA

मनाऔ होली रमेर

TUBORG
COLORS EDITION

**OFFICIAL BEER
OF HOLI**

#CheersResponsibly

A.D. FACTORY/017