

FLAGGED OFF

A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of the Nepalese flag flying from a tall, weathered metal pole. The flag is vibrant red with a white border and a white emblem featuring a sun and a moon. The flag is caught in the wind, billowing out against a bright blue sky filled with soft, white clouds. In the bottom left corner, the corner of a multi-story building with balconies is visible. The overall composition is dynamic and patriotic.

BIKRAM R

A woman in traditional Tibetan clothing, including a red headscarf and a dark jacket, is harvesting golden grass in a mountainous region. She is holding a bundle of grass. In the background, another person is visible, and the landscape features steep, forested mountains under a clear blue sky. The Buzz magazine logo is in the bottom left corner.

40 years after George Shaller visited Dolpo, Dawa Palden follows his footsteps to find that the Shey Phoksundo National Park could play a more important role in conserving this fragile region.

PAGE 8-9

Visit qatarairways.com Call us on +977 1 4440467



QATAR 
AIRWAYS القطرية
GOING PLACES TOGETHER

HUNGER FOR CHANGE

Nepal's poverty rate may have gone down, the Human Development Index may have improved, but five km from the centre of the nation's capital, two-year-old Buddhi Maya Biswakarma is dying of hunger in her mother's lap. She is severely wasted, weighing half of babies her age. (See story on page 14-15) Her parents migrated to work in a Kathmandu brick kiln from Dang to pay off a loan from the Poverty Alleviation Fund for the purchase of two goats. A scheme designed to reduce poverty has pushed the family to starvation.

The plight of Nepali overseas migrant workers gets a lot of attention, but what of hundreds of thousands of workers migrating internally like the Biswakarma family? Desperate and destitute, they move to the cities to earn enough to feed their families and repay debts, but instead get caught in a vicious cycle of poverty.

Then there is the story (also in this edition) of Shambhu Kumar Ram in Saptari, whose death last year got much media attention. The 14-year-old probably died

of a combination of medical problems and opportunistic infections exacerbated by malnutrition, but it exposed a whole raft of issues that all tracked back to poor governance, deficient service delivery and the gross negligence of the state in protecting citizens.

Both deaths were probably preventable. Stunting has been nearly halved in Nepal in the last 15 years, but in that time the proportion of stunted children has stayed almost constant at 15%. The direct cause of preventable child deaths may be hunger, but it is a result of an uncaring state, a dysfunctional health service and the lack of a social safety net. The buck stops at the desks of public officials who don't give a damn, and those trying to remove a competent Health Minister to make way for *bhagbanda* politics.

To change this, we need the three elections envisaged in the constitution. The first is local elections which haven't been held for 20 years and are now slated for 14 May, and will install elected members of village, district and municipal councils.

This will re-instill accountability in those who hold public office.

Unfortunately, the fate of local elections still hangs in the balance because of obstructions by Tarai-based parties which want amendments to the constitution be passed first. Local elections are held even in totalitarian states, and there should be no connection between a future federal setup and voting for village and district councils.

The amendments could be more important for the other two provincial and federal elections, and can be sorted in the weeks ahead. For now, our strong recommendation is that we go ahead with local elections and cross the other bridges when we get to them.



GUEST EDITORIAL
RISHIRAJ LUMSALI

Back to the Golden age

The foundation of Nepal's progress in health and education was laid between 1992 and 2002. During that decade, 17,000 km of roads were built, 40,000 classrooms were added. That was when Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) and mothers' groups were strengthened, vaccination campaigns scaled up. Nepal's development parameters improved dramatically.

It was all possible because local government councils were run by the people's elected representatives. After the dissolution of elected bodies in 2002, unelected cartels have been plundering local resources. They have the authority to spend local budgets without having to be accountable to the people. Dubbed 'all-party mechanisms', they function as 'all-party crooks'.

Nearly 20 years after the last local elections, the people have an opportunity to elect their local representatives again. Across the country there is an election fever, voters are already thinking about whom to elect as mayors or village chiefs. The enthusiasm is not just because we have a date for elections (14 May) but because the people were always eager to exercise grassroots democracy.

It is just a handful of leaders of the Madhesi Front who do not want local elections. That is because they are against true decentralisation. The constitution has given much more authority to yet-to-be-elected municipal and village councils. The VDCs and municipalities that were

dissolved this week were not as powerful. Madhesi leaders are against local elections because they want to elect municipal and village councils under provincial governments. Their versions of local councils will be controlled by the provincial centres. Fortunately, the Madhes is not just home to the Morcha, but to the Nepali Congress, the UML and other parties.

The Election Commission is geared up and ready for 14 May. The people are ready to cast their votes. So the political leadership should not backtrack from elections just because a political force is against it. The people's right to periodic elections is enshrined in the Constitution as a fundamental right. If elections are not held, it will be a violation of the Constitution.

People in Province 2 also want elections. I do not think they will stay away from voting just because the Morcha boycotts elections. But if elections are disrupted in Province 2, it would not be wise to call off elections throughout the country. The decade of 1992-2002 was the golden age of local development in Nepal. We finally have a chance to revive that era. We should not squander this opportunity.



Rishiraj Lumsali is the President of Association of District Development Committees of Nepal (ADDCN)

Times.com

ONLINE VIDEOS



DYING TO EAT



Listen to the heartwrenching story of this debt-ridden Dalit family that is struggling to feed their youngest child, Buddhi Maya. Born underweight, she is now severely malnourished. Elderly and frail, her parents are working hard in a brick kiln in Lalitpur to pay off loans and support four other daughters. "I know she will die. She is here on Earth only for a short time," says Chuna Devi, Buddhi's 43-year old mother.

WHAT'S TRENDING



Melamchi not a mirage anymore

by Sonia Awale

Go to *Nepali Times* online for a trip to Melamchi and down a 26.5 km tunnel that will soon bring 170 million litres a day of crystal clear glacial meltwater from Langtang National Park to Kathmandu. Find out how engineers came up with a clever plan to expedite the much-delayed project.

Most reached on Facebook
(21,116 people reached)

Most shared on Facebook
(46 shares)

Most popular on Twitter
(48 retweets, 156 likes)

Most visited online page
(1,375 views)

Stateless daughters

by Deepti Gurung

When we demanded 'citizenship through mothers', the politicians pretended they heard 'citizenship to Indians'.

Most commented

QUOTE TWEETS

Nepali Times@nepalitimes
12 apprentice train under 3 master artisans to preserve the traditional craft of woodcarving. <http://bit.ly/2me052b>

Shriju Pradhan@ShrijuPradhan
Every single step counts for restoration of private heritage homes. A lot more to do by DoA, KMC and house owners.

Nepali Times@nepalitimes
Kamal Thapa is all set to become Deputy Prime Minister in the Maoist-NC government. @KTnepal <http://bit.ly/2IGRHNq>

mahesh poudyal@mpoudyal
Shows all these politicians couldn't care less about the people, all they care about is what ministries they can get #Nepal

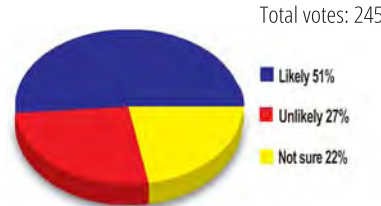
Nepali Times@nepalitimes
Despite 5 years of activism we felt like we were running against a stone wall #citizenshipthroughmothers @IWD2017 <http://bit.ly/2mAd02T>

इन्द्र गुरुङ@indragurung_SG
Absolutely unfair n unjust, despite constitutional provision that allows citizenship in mother's name, daughters a still stateless. #Nepal

Times

Weekly Internet Poll #850

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



Weekly Internet Poll #851
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. How will Narendra Modi's electoral gains in India affect Nepal?

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

Times

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



A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

WIDEN YOUR
W O R L D

TURKISH
AIRLINES 

DISCOVER ATLANTA

WITH TURKISH AIRLINES

TURKISH AIRLINES INC., EAST WING 1ST FLOOR, 495 NARAYAN HITI PATH, KATHMANDU, NEPAL | PH 977-1-4438363 | 4438436 | 4438856 | KTMSALES@THY.COM
TURKISHAIRLINES.COM

Trump, or no Trump

Why should environmentalists in Nepal suffer angst because Donald Trump got elected? How much worse can it get?

The former chief executive of a multinational petroleum company becomes the top US diplomat, and a lawyer who has repeatedly sued the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) becomes the head of that same agency. These developments in Trumpian America are about as close to ecological apocalypse as any environmentalist can imagine.

So where do I perceive a silver lining in the gloom that surrounds the US election (and the United Kingdom's Brexit vote)? In the possibility that Trump's presidency will invigorate environmental activism in the Global North. This, in



COMMENT

Dipak Gyawali

turn, might improve foreign aid-based endeavours to promote environment-friendly development in the Global South, specifically Nepal.

Solutions to climate change in Nepal will have to involve sagacious foreign aid and international development agencies. Over the last couple of decades, however, these agencies have often lost their way in procedural fetishism, and have become increasingly irrelevant to realities on the ground. My colleague Sudhindra Sharma has analysed six decades of foreign aid in Nepal and has shown that every decade saw a major shift in aid philosophy.

Import substitution was first emphasised, then an export-led growth, structural adjustments came next, meeting basic needs, then poverty alleviation. The latest fad is climate change. Almost every development activity today is forced to justify itself in terms of climate change adaptation: even protecting drinking water in remote villages, where the link to global warming is tenuous or non-existent.

A recent study investigated why springs across the Himalaya were drying up and fueling outmigration to city slums. The knee-jerk supposition was that climate change was to blame, but the study found otherwise. The areas showed no significant downward trend in rainfall. Rather, livestock numbers had declined, and buffalo wallows were contributing less to groundwater recharge. Farmers were shifting from dryland maize to

water-intensive crops such as tomatoes. Most significantly, water was being over-pumped with electric motors and PVC pipes instead of traditional hand-carried water pots and buckets.

If these issues are not addressed by the time the effects of climate change do become more severe three or four decades from now, problems with village water supply will become more pronounced, if not catastrophic. Unfortunately, little or no climate money is available now for concrete tasks such as safeguarding village water supply.

The bulk of climate funding is directed toward seminars, nebulous 'policy

impacts', and reports in English that are not read by anyone who matters. Contractors and sub-contractors working for the US Agency for International Development (USAID) or the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID) are practically forbidden to spend money on real grassroots mitigation measures. They have to work exclusively on adaptation and policy impacts.

Even with all the time, money, and expert resources that development agencies have directed toward climate change adaptation, fossil fuel consumption in Nepal has more than

doubled in the past six years. Clean energy is in decline: more than half of the electricity Nepal consumes is supplied by dirty coal-fired plants in Bihar.

In previous decades, Nepal was a major success story in biogas, having installed over 200,000 of them across the country. In the last few years, that success has stalled and may even be going in reverse. Electric vehicles present a similarly sad story. It is the same with ropeways, a climate-friendly and mountain-friendly means of ferrying goods.

If this is the result of two decades of climate adaptation funding in Nepal, why would any environmentalist here suffer angst because Donald Trump got elected president of the United States? How much worse can things get?

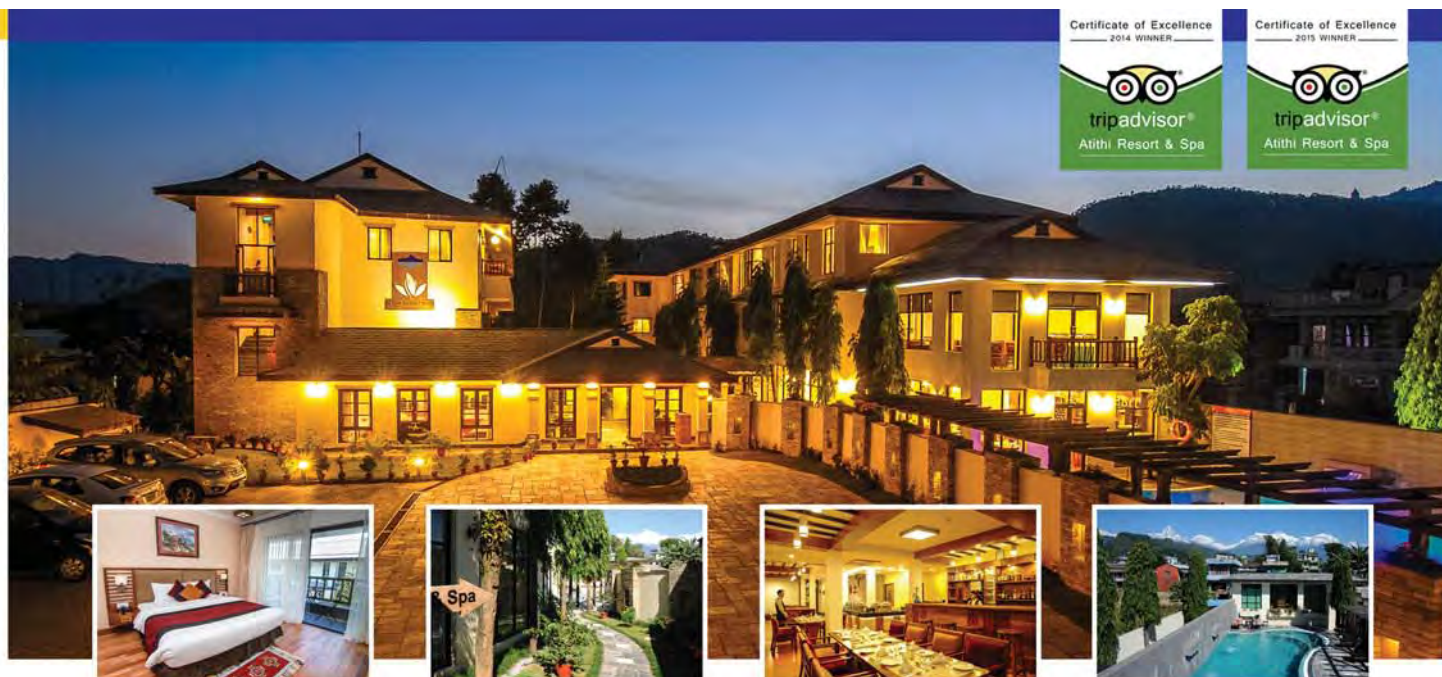
A few weeks ago, senior Nepali climate officials and activists, meeting under the aegis of Climate Action Network, concluded that both the 2016 Paris Agreement on climate change and Agenda 2030 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals were 'unfunded mandates' — which, given Nepal's experience with the erstwhile Millennium Development Goals, promised no meaningful funding in the future, Trump or no Trump.

The climate journey from Kyoto in 1997 to Paris in 2016 has primarily achieved the undoing of the idea that national responsibilities are 'common but differentiated'. So how could developing countries bargain for better, more meaningful climate funding even if Hillary Clinton had been elected president?

Northern non-governmental organisations (with a few exceptions, such as Oxfam and Greenpeace) are of no help either. Most are more preoccupied with raising funds to operate their own large outfits than with campaigning meaningfully for environmental sanity. Essentially, they have been tamed.

If environmental activists in the North wake up from their domesticated, activism-free, procedural slumber, Trump will have been just what the doctor ordered for climate change, no matter how bitter the medicine might be. If activists don't wake up, it makes no difference to us in Nepal who is in the White House. 🇺🇸

Dipak Gyawali is Chair of the Nepal Water Conservation Foundation. This is an abridged version of a piece that appeared in *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* on 2 March.



ATITHI RESORT & SPA

Shanti Patan, Lakeside, Pokhara - 6, Email : info@atithiresort.com
Tel : 061 466760 / 466761 / 465895, www.atithiresort.com

Kathmandu Sales Office:
Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel : 01 4002077/4002078



CAFFÈ
Italiano



LA SPA



Many transitions

Every time I visit my hometown in Syangja, the most frequently asked question is: Which way is Nepali politics headed? Since I have always been over-optimistic about Nepal's future, my answer is that there is hope.



CONNECTING DOTS
Dinkar Nepal

Waling in Syangja is where I grew up in an 'upper' caste family that was so poor that I used to be malnourished as an infant. When I was a toddler my family seriously considered giving me away for adoption to a Norwegian engineer working in the Andhikhola Hydropower Project. I was saved by the violent opposition of my mother. I have heard that story so often that it feels like a memory. Much later, I tried corroborating it in the historical context with economic data and the political condition of Nepal at that time.

Waling was at the centre of Garhaun Kot, one of the cluster of 24 states west of Kathmandu that was merged in to the Gorkha Kingdom during the expansion of the late 18th century. It was ruled by the Khand dynasty. Dilip Pratap Khand, the NC politician whose father was elected to the first parliament of 1959 and was himself elected Deputy Mayor of Waling municipality in local elections held 20 years

ago places this kingdom of his ancestors at the start point of the Shah dynasty. There is little history of the time, but it is not difficult to imagine that local states ran almost like a miniature Kathmandu darbar with the same court intrigues and whimsical ruling family. But unlike Kathmandu, even the rajas here were not rich and with no economic activity other than agriculture, their subjects lived in grinding poverty. Brahmins like my grandfather may have been high in the caste hierarchy, but were poor and oppressed by the rajas.

According to one family story, my great-grandfather was punished by the Raja because he dared challenge his favourite in a stone throwing competition. Being a Brahmin, grandfather would have been spared physical punishment but it was perfectly possible for him to be driven into exile. My grandfather had spent 30 years of his adult life in Northeast India. At the age of 76, grandfather faced a medical complication at Manipal Hospital in Pokhara and was referred to a big private hospital in Kathmandu. He was unconscious and died before reaching a city he had never seen while alive.

When I myself came to Kathmandu for the first time at age 17, I had already seen half of India while tagging along with my father who was in the Indian Army. Thirteen years later, I quit my own career in the Indian Army and returned to Nepal. The insurgency had ended, but the constitutional crisis was at its peak with the disappointing failure of the first Constituent Assembly.

We have come a long way. Politics has metamorphosed many times over. But as a society, we still carry the continuum of stories that have shaped our worldview, and every new event or trend is assimilated into that continuity. The three level federal structure imagined by the constitution is also seen in the context of the historical narrative by the people.

Here in the hills of central Nepal people are cautiously keen about local elections. In the beginning, even small things like the change of the ward number in one's home address may be difficult to adjust to. Speculation and conspiracy theories take over and the environment is politicised. Still, there is amazement at Nepal's remarkable and sometimes bewildering political journey.

"The Mayor is now more powerful than the minister, how will we manage this transition? Where will we get the skills and expertise? Can this change be sustained or will it collapse? Will there be ethnic tension? What of geopolitics? Which way is the nation headed?" Those are some of the worries of Nepalis in the hinterland.

I am still optimistic. As a Nepali living in the 21st century, I know that my life is not filled with hardship as my grandfather's was. But I also don't feel comfortable being a passive observer. There are thousands of battles yet to be fought and won, and many more transitions to adjust to.

Dinkar Nepal is the nom de plume of Dinesh Tiwari who is Executive Director of the Himalayan Initiative for Policy Studies.

Best food on air

Turkish Airlines has been awarded "Best Airline- Best Inflight Catering" by



the International Council of Pacific Area Travel Writers Association in a ceremony held at ITB Berlin 2017. The airlines had previously received several awards for its onboard food and beverages after it started joint venture partnership with TURKISH DO&CO.

Hyundai Open Golf

Laxmi Intercontinental Pvt. Ltd., the sole authorised distributor of Hyundai



Cars in Nepal, is organising 7th installment of the annual HYUNDAI Open Golf

Tournament on 18th March at Gokarna Golf Resort. The contest will feature 100 Nepali golfers and the winner will receive Hyundai Grand i10 car.



Qatar Qsuite

Qatar Airways has unveiled Qsuite, a new business class feature on the opening day of ITB Berlin exhibition, the world's largest travel trade. A double-bed has been introduced in business class with an option of seating configuration for four people that allows them to transform their space into private suite.

New Year scheme

Bajaj motorcycle distributor in Nepal Hansraj and Hulaschand has announced



its New Year Campaign – 'Sundar Ramaniya

Nepal'. Under the scheme customers buying Bajaj bikes will get a discount of Rs 7,400 and daily lucky draw winner will receive Rs 74,000 to travel to their favourite destination in Nepal.





Admission Open

Kinderpillar Pre-School

Maharajgunj



AMERICAN FORMAT

PRE-SCHOOL



AFTER HOUR SERVICE AVAILABLE

DAY CARE

EXTENDED HOURS
2:30 PM TO 5:30 PM

Toddlers, Playway,
Nursery, Jr. KG & Sr. KG



Our Philosophy
To provide vital support to our students for them to grow into confident, secure & empowered children, with positive traits & high self-esteem.



POWERED BY:
PROF. ELLEN BOOTH CHURCH, USA

- Our curriculum has been designed and developed by Prof. Ellen Booth Church who is a well known early childhood learning expert from USA.
- Our committed & dedicated staffs are mentored by our American Education Expert.
- We foster life long learner.
- We recognize individual learning style & provide flexible schedule based on need.
- We create active learning opportunities.
- We ensure a safe & secure environment.

KAPAN MARG, CHAKRAPATH, MAHARAJGUNJ, KATHMANDU | TEL: 01-4017746, 9849686835

“Join us on the land”

Remembering the legendary Boris Lisanevich, founder of the Royal Hotel

We recline on trekking mattresses on the sweet-smelling grass, bees and insects busy in the overgrown garden. Nursing a tin cup of Boris' signature bullshot, a mix of local vodka, tomato juice and home-made beef bouillon, I take a break from the lunchtime picnic



SO FAR SO GOOD

Lisa Choegyal

chat and gaze over the brick wall. Across the Valley stand the white peaks, crisp and clear in the luminance of 1970's Nepal light.

I turn back and see Boris slumped precariously in a plastic chair, his bulk overflowing under the arm rests and a flowered shirt stretched tight across his stomach. He gesticulates with delight, laughing at one of Jim Edward's more outrageous stories. Boris leans forward with difficulty and I hear him declare in his Slavic lilt: "I swear by vodka – it is part of life. I even have my head massaged with vodka!"

Other guests lounge on the ground, enjoying the wit, the lunch (always delicious pork schnitzel and rich potato salad) and strolling through "the land", as Boris and Inger's un-built plot in the south of Kathmandu Valley



was known. As in: "Please join us midday Sunday on the land." Regulars include painter and writer Desmond Doig, journalist Dubby Bhagat and Bernadette Vasseux of the French Embassy.

Boris Nikolayevich Lisanevich is a legend. One of the first non-official foreigners to live in Nepal, he was invited by King Tribhuvan in 1951 to open the Royal Hotel in Bahadur Bhawan. An ebullient White Russian ballet dancer and hunter born in Odessa Ukraine, Boris' exotic background included fleeing Bolshevik

persecution, performing with Diaghilev's Ballet Russes and Massine throughout Europe, and founding the 300 Club in Calcutta, the first to accept Indian members. With him in Nepal were his long-suffering Danish wife Inger, three small sons and a mother-in-law with a taste for collecting antiques.

By the time I knew Boris, the famous Royal Hotel had already closed, stories of its chaotic hospitality lost in the building's lofty arches but immortalised in Michel Peissel's book Tiger for



S DNEM ROZHDENIYA: Boris cutting this 75th birthday cake in 1980, and at the party Alexander Lisanevitch (Boris' son) Lisa Choegyal, Jim Edwards and Toni Hagen.

Breakfast. One of my favourites is how Boris had to be extracted from a spell in prison to manage Queen Elizabeth's 1961 visit. Today, the hotel building in Kantipath houses the Election Commission, but its corridors echo with the former footsteps of Boris' guests – Jean Paul Guerlain seeking ingredients for his perfumes, Jean Paul Belmondo making a film that was never made, and Queen Sophia of Spain on her honeymoon.

Jim greatly admires Boris and has helped him through many lean times as he struggled with a series of restaurants in Kathmandu, always strong on entertaining but light on business acumen. Boris had restaurants in Dilli Bazar and Durbar Marg, but the first and most memorable for me was his Yak & Yeti in Lal Durbar. Lute Jerstad, the blond, intense climber who summited Everest with the Americans in 1963, took me there for my 23rd birthday in 1974, and Tenzin and I had our first date perched in the uncomfortable window alcoves around the circular hammered-brass fireplace. I was mesmerised by Prince Basundhara, slightly the worse for wear, and the sophisticated choice of flavoured

vodkas, borscht, quail and becti fish.

Boris was always kind, enveloping me in a generous bear hug and whispering tonight's speciality. A highpoint for me was being asked to arrange his surprise 75th birthday party, where dinner-jacketed and bejewelled Nepalis mingled with guests from many continents, wine flowed and Desmond designed the layered chocolate cake.

Boris is long gone (he died at age 80 in 1985) inconveniently during Dasain so Jim and I had to mobilise a team of Mountain Travel Sherpas to dig his grave. Buried in the British cemetery, the funeral service was dramatic with Russian wailing, sobbing and embracing the coffin – followed by the final Boris party.

Outside today's Chimney Restaurant, where the decor and even the menu are little changed, a plaque in the Yak & Yeti Hotel garden remembers Boris as the father of Nepal tourism. At its unveiling a couple of years ago amidst in-laws, grandchildren and Kathmandu's travel industry, I was astonished to find myself the only person who had actually met him. 🇳🇵



Malpi International School

Panauti, Kavre, Nepal.

A School With A Difference

WE ARE SEEKING INNOVATIVE, DEDICATED AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL TO JOIN OUR TEAM IN A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FOR THE FOLLOWING POSTS

- Language Arts English ● Science ● Administrative Officer
- School Counsellor ● Office Secretary
- Librarian ● Hostel Supervisors ● Mess Supervisor

Email us your applications, alongwith detailed Curriculum Vitae at **malpi@mos.com.np** by **5 March 2017**

DO VISIT OUR WEBSITE (WWW.MALPI.EDU.NP) FOR REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE.

Malpi International School
Panauti, Kavre, Nepal. P.O. Box: 15116



Imitating nature

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



(01) 626017-18 | fax: (01) 6250027 | www.jagadambapress.com



NEPAL
WHEREVER
YOU ARE.

Times.com

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.

Saving Shey Phoksun

Nepal’s largest national park needs urgent attention to curb logging, poaching and raise incomes of residents

DAWA PALDEN
in DOLPO

In 1973, the writer Peter Mattiessen, George Schaller and a small team of Sherpas trekked through parts of Dolpo. Over 40 years later, Schaller returned to Dolpo last year to retrace their route to Ringmo, Shey Gumpa, Namgong, Saldang, Namdo.

The trip's purpose was to note cultural and environmental changes in Dolpo over the past decades, and most of what they found was negative even though Kathmandu declared the 3,555 sq km Shey-Phoksundo National Park in 1984 and later created a 1,349 sq km of buffer zone around its edges.

The team found that Shey-Phoksundo does not fit international criteria for a national park, given the extensive, permanent human activities throughout the park ranging from agriculture to livestock herding. It would be more accurate to call it a ‘conservation area’ like the Annapurna Conservation Area.

Park headquarters and staff are located in the far southern edge of the sanctuary, many days of trekking from the northern plateau. The six park rangers rotate every two years, and seldom leave headquarters, so there is little awareness of what is happening



in most of the Park. A common complaint of residents is: “The Park does not listen.”

There are, in addition, 200 Nepal Army personnel posted in the Park who mostly remain at their base at Suligad even though their logical duty would be to monitor the yarsa harvest season in May and June when thousands of outsiders invade the Park, and

poachers and robbers are active.

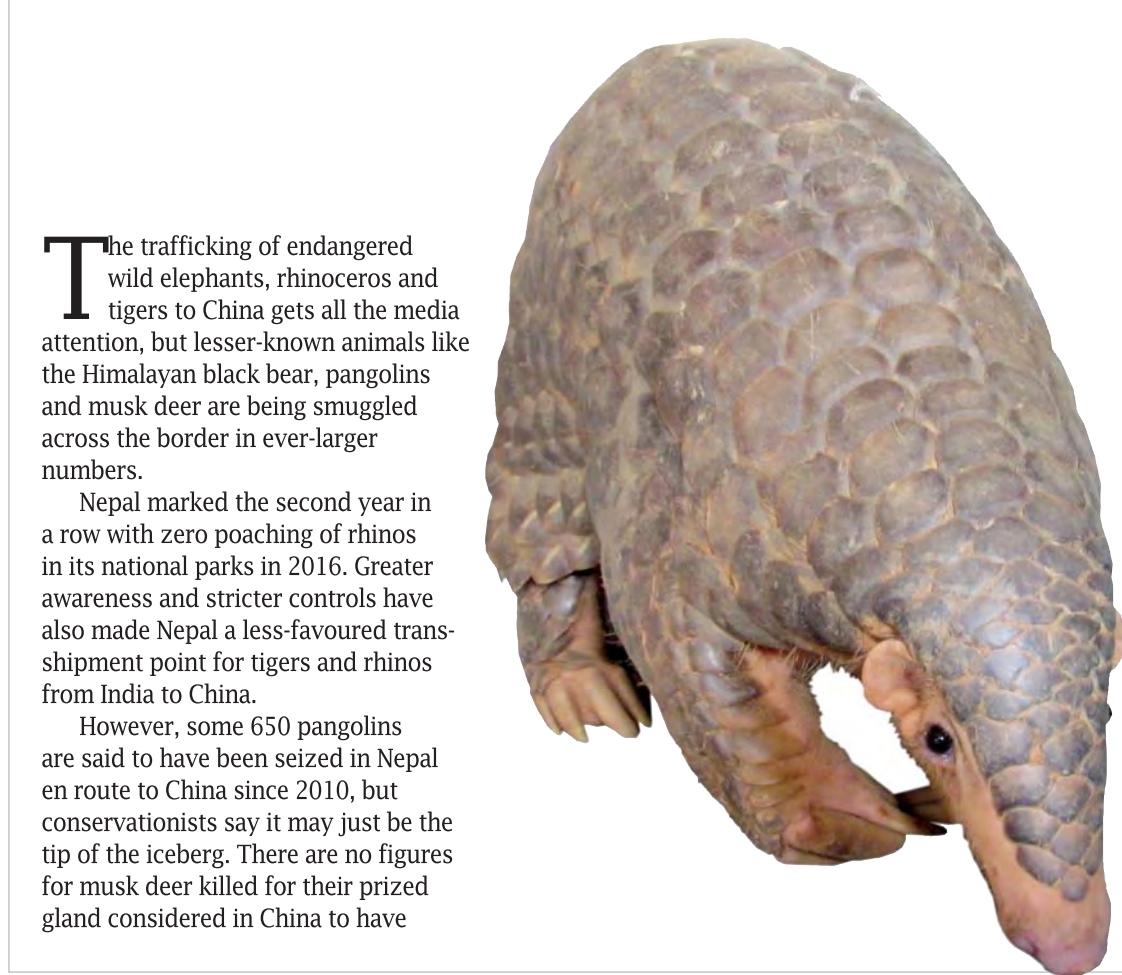
As the road network reaches Dunai, and more tourists, yarsa collectors and other outsiders come to Dolpo there has to be better regulation, improved garbage collection, and an effort to stop ugly construction.

A Lake Conservation Committee responsible for keeping the Phoksundo Lake clean was

formed four years ago, but hasn’t done much. The Phoksundo Buffer Zone User Committee has no staff.

The Park collects entry fees from tourists and yarsa collectors, all timber licenses have a price tag. Up to half the fees are supposed to be spent for maintaining trails and bridges, but they are not even repaired near the Park headquarters.

Although wildlife numbers are said to be up, the team found that there is poaching. Neither the Park nor the army does much to prevent it, and most blue sheep are killed during the yarsa season for meat. There are many traps, with snared marmots and musk deer. Wolves are usually not seen in small packs, suggesting that the pups had been killed in their den



The trafficking of endangered wild elephants, rhinoceros and tigers to China gets all the media attention, but lesser-known animals like the Himalayan black bear, pangolins and musk deer are being smuggled across the border in ever-larger numbers.

Nepal marked the second year in a row with zero poaching of rhinos in its national parks in 2016. Greater awareness and stricter controls have also made Nepal a less-favoured trans-shipment point for tigers and rhinos from India to China.

However, some 650 pangolins are said to have been seized in Nepal en route to China since 2010, but conservationists say it may just be the tip of the iceberg. There are no figures for musk deer killed for their prized gland considered in China to have

Protecting

Poaching of rhinos and tigers drops, but there is an alarming rise in smuggling of pangolins, musk deer and bears

aphrodisiac properties. Even though the musk gland can be harvested without killing the animal, many deer die in traps in Nepal -- even females which do not have the gland (*see above*).

The smuggling of various body parts of the Himalayan black bear also fetch high prices in China, and they are trapped and killed in northern Nepal by poachers. A bait lures a bear into a trap which crushes the animal under branches weighted with rocks (*pictured, right*).

Conservationist Sonam Tashi

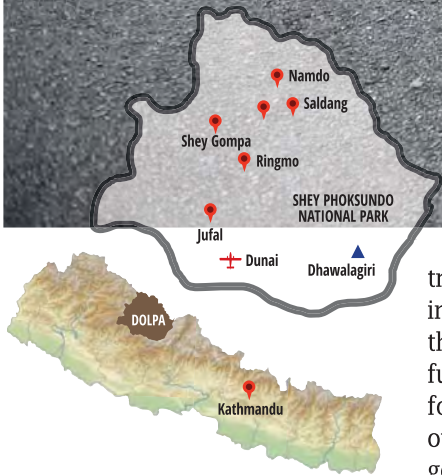
recalls being asked about wildlife parts during one of his monitoring trips from Olangchungola to Tibet in 2010.

“I was asked if I had bear bile and paws including other wildlife parts to sell,” says Tashi, adding, “Locals in eastern Nepal trap the bears in summer as soon as they come out of hibernation since the medicinal values of bile are high in China whereas meat is consumed locally.”

The Central Bureau of Statistics (CIB) confiscated 17 sets of bear bile and one paw in 11 different seizures in the last six years.

“There wasn’t much of a focus on pangolins because they were small, and

ndo



by villagers in retaliation for lost livestock. The Park needs dedicated teams in the field and prosecution in the courts, as well as sincere dialogue with communities.

By far the most serious problem is logging. Permits are often given for construction of non-existent schools and health posts. Recently, near Shey Gumpa here were over 150 yaks and horses heavily laden

with timber (*pictured, above*), most of it to be smuggled across into China.

The other big threat is the yarsa

trade. Half the annual household income for most families is from the rare and expensive caterpillar fungus. The Park charges Rs 600 for residents and Rs 3,500 for outsiders harvesting yarsa. One good yarsa can fetch up to \$10 in China, so the Park's fees are too low and do not compensate for the environmental impact.

The Park does not limit the

number of yarsa licenses and up to 20,000 people invade the highlands every summer. Over-harvesting of yarsa has led to a steep decline in production. With so many outsiders, there are often conflicts as happened in 2014 when two locals were killed in Dho Tarap by police during a dispute over harvesting.

The Park should reduce the

harvest season to two weeks in June, giving time for the larvae to grow. It should close the season entirely in certain years to allow the species to recover. Harvesting in the Park should be restricted to resident communities to curb over-exploitation, increase local income and help in conservation – which is what the National Park is supposed to do after all. 🇳🇵

ALL PICS: BETH WALD

less known species



SONAM TASHI

there was more attention to trafficking in rhinos, elephants and tigers,” says Ambika Khatiwada of the National Trust for Nature Conservation, “but now that the scales and meat of pangolins are in high demand in China, and the animal is becoming endangered we need to protect it too.”

Just in the past six months the CIB has found 22.88 kg of pangolin scales in three seizures and arrested eight people. In the past four years, the Bureau confiscated 52.34 kg of pangolin scales and two of the anteaters were rescued live. A live pangolin in China sells for \$1,000 per kg, and an average pangolin weighs up to 8kg. Scales fetch \$3,000 per kg.

About 100,000 pangolins are smuggled into China from Southeast Asia every year, ostensibly for the therapeutic value of its scales and meat. The smuggling became so serious that the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) formed a

Pangolin Specialist Group in 2012 and all eight species of pangolins were moved from Appendix II to I of CITES during an international conference last year.

Pangolins are found in 45 districts of Nepal, and it is estimated that there are only 5,000 of them left in the wild. It is the only mammal to be completely covered with scales, and contributes to the ecological balance by eating up to 20,000 ants and termites a day.

“Rhinos and tigers are relatively well protected because they live inside national parks and are guarded by soldiers,” explains Kumar Paudel of the group, Greenhood Nepal. “But pangolins have no such protection.”

Alarmed by the rise in poaching of Pangolins, the CIB is raising its vigilance at checkpoints along the northern border. But much more effective would be a public awareness drive for conserving the species, they say. CIB’s Prabin Pokharel says: “We will soon launch a special operation to break the powerful network involved in poaching pangolins which have high market demands.” 🇳🇵

Shreejana Shrestha

EVENTS



Films on rights,

Watch more than 90 films and documentaries from 38 countries to be screened in this human rights international film festival. Panel discussions will be held as part of the festival as well.

Until 19 March, For more information: www.hrffilms.org, (01) 4267325

Special art market,

Attend a special edition of the Art Market in collaboration with Kathmandu Triennale – 2017. Don't miss out on the art events, live music, and participation by both local and international artists. 18 March, 4 to 8 pm, RS Moto, Gahana Pokhari, ange@image-ark.com, nayantara@photocircle.com.np, pranidhi@image-ark.com

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)



Canvas and cocktails,

Spend the evening painting about gender issues at this event organised by Ujjalo 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 art festival. Until 19 March, For more information: (01) 4433930, info@artmandu.org

Kathmandu Triennale,

Familiarise yourself with the city through artwork of local and international artists and learn about Nepal's art history in this year's edition of the Kathmandu International Art Festival. 24 March to 9 April, Multiple venues, For more information: kt.artmandu.org

Mobile Monday,

A networking event to discuss market of mobile technology with a panel discussion featuring Ananda Raj Khanal, Biswas Dhakal, Anish Shrestha and Sixit Bhatta. 27 March, 3.30 to 7 pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel, Tickets: bit.ly/2nDw1hM, For more information: www.mobilemonday.us



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

Photos of Nepal,

Attend an exhibition of 115 pictures on Nepal that Toni Hagen clicked from 1951 to 1955. Opening: 22 March (will continue for next three months), 9 am to 5 pm, International Mountain Museum, Gharipatan, Pokhara, For more information: www.internationalmountainmuseum.org

MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI



MUSIC



Heritage music,

Mark your calendars for 'Echoes in the Valley', a community music festival showcasing local music, art, and performances of every day rituals. 25 March, For more information: echoesinthevalley.com

Music festival,

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

St Patrick's with reggae,

Sway to the rhythms of some reggae tunes this St.Patrick's day with Joint Family Internationale. 17 March, 8 to 11 pm, House of Music, Thamel, 9851075172, Rs.300



Midnight riders live,

Spend a musical evening with Nepali rock band The Midnight Riders on this Irish holiday. 17 March, 3 pm onwards, Irish Pub, Lajimpat, Reservations: (01) 4416027

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



Gout de Good France,

Enjoy this unique opportunity to savor French cuisine at its best with soothing French score in the background. 21 March, 6:30 to 11 pm onwards, The Chimney Fine Dining, Hotel Yak & Yeti, Darbar Marg, (01) 4248999, Rs 5000 plus taxes (5 course French meal with French wine)

Rox Bar,

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day, an Irish holiday, with a spread of Irish leeks and potato, oatmeal soup, traditional Irish beef stew herb rice, stuffed zucchini, Guinness airline chicken and many more. 17 March, 7 pm onwards, Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, Boudha, (01) 5171234

The Vesper House,

Great for leisurely dining, serves diverse foods that reflect Italian and Mexican lifestyle. Jhamsikhel, (01)5548179

Bodhi books & bakes,

A quiet, snug place offering a rich collection of cakes and pastries. Maharajganj, 9851193262



1905,

Heritage boutique suites with garden dining, 1905 Suites and Restaurants is now open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Bookings open for four boutique suites with promotional rates and offers open till June. Nagpokhari, Naxal, For more information: 9860374450

GETAWAY



Kasara Resort,

A luxury resort located in the lush setting of the Chitwan National Park. For those who value their privacy and prefer a more secluded stay, Kasara offers two private villas with private pools. Chitwan (01)4437571/4438570, kasararesort.com

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



Heli to ABC,

Take a picturesque helicopter ride from Pokhara to Annapurna Base Camp. Pokhara Heli Services, Lakeside, Pokhara, www.pokhareli.com, (061) 467241, 9819140555

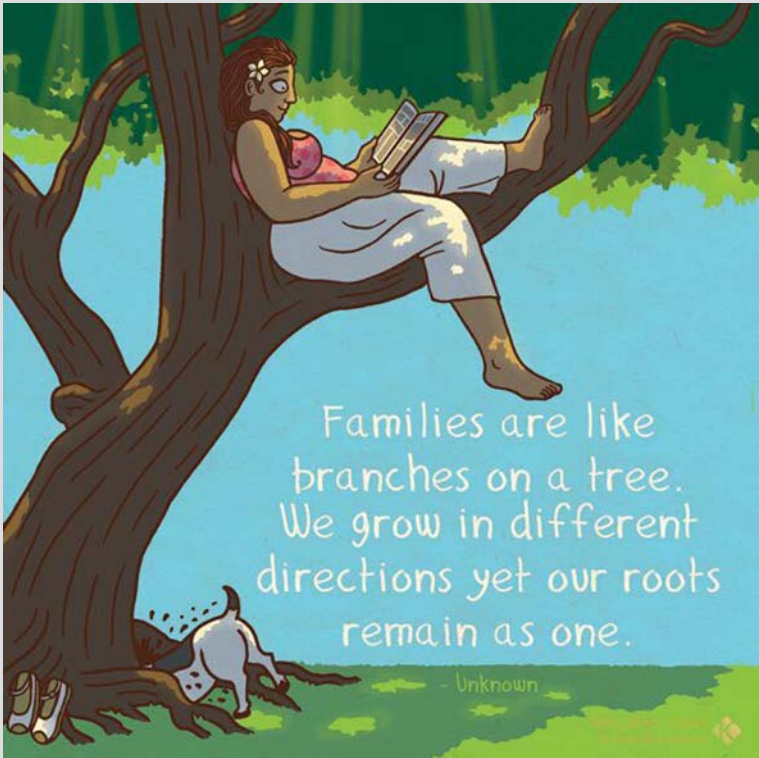
Club Himalaya,

For amazing mountain views and refreshing weekend escapades. Nagarkot, (01) 6680080



Rupakot Resort,

Get pampered in the lap of luxury amid stunning views of the Annapurnas. Maidan-6, Rupakot, Kaski, (61) 622660 / (01)4004687 /9856038043, www.rupakotresort.com



in **COPPER**

levels of filtration **4**

modernity in tradition

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

✦ Imported Sofas/Recliners

✦ Rods

✦ Rugs

✦ Mattresses

✦ Wallpapers

✦ Bed Covers

Enter the world of furnishing...

Banking Partner

N. BILINSTALLMENT

Available as 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

The price of growing rice

Can Nepal regain self-sufficiency in paddy production? Experts say yes.

SAHINA SHRESTHA

Eighty per cent of Nepalis live off the farm. Agriculture accounts for one-third of Nepal's GDP, but the country has turned from a net exporter to importer of rice.

Investment in irrigation, high-yield seeds, mechanisation, and pricing incentives can easily boost rice production and create jobs on the farm for Nepalis. All it needs is for agriculture to have more government priority than it currently receives.

The food balance sheet for 2015-16 shows a deficit of 1,106,892 tons in rice as production plummeted to 4.3 million tons. Things are looking better this year as harvests are up by 21 per cent to 5.23

million tons because of a good monsoon. The Prime Minister Agriculture Modernisation Project, if properly implemented, could decrease dependency on food imports, especially rice from India.

Since most farms are rain-fed, the single most important contribution to boosting productivity would be irrigation. Only 1.3 hectares of farms in Nepal get year-round irrigation – 18 per cent of the total arable land. Monsoon rice is planted in 1,450,000 hectares, while only 112,000 hectares grow spring rice because of the lack of irrigation.

Says Mukunda Bhusal, Crop Production Officer at Department of Agriculture: "Rice imports will go down if we can increase the production of spring rice, but that needs irrigation."

However, Nepalis are moving away from the land or migrating

overseas for work as soon as they leave school. Booming real estate prices and urban expansion have reduced total cultivated area. And cheap rice from India does not make it worthwhile for Nepali farmers to grow paddy.

"The other way is to change the food habits of Nepalis and replace rice with other grains," says Bhusal. But that may be easier said than done in a country where "Have you eaten rice today?" is a form of greeting, and people in the mountains are turning to rice from traditional millet and buckwheat.

The trend is most visible in Morang, once Nepal's grain basket. Out-migration of young men and the economics of agriculture has meant that it does

not make sense to invest labour in paddy farming.

"In Morang alone, 10,000 hectares of land has gone fallow in the past decade," says Rajendra Uprety of the Regional Directorate of Agriculture in Biratnagar, "land that was previously farmed is now used for non-agricultural purposes."

Along the border, Indian businessmen often come to Nepal to buy harvested paddy in bulk, dehusk it in their mills and sell the rice back to Nepal. Farmers are also forced to sell paddy at a lower rate to rice mills when there is a surplus in India and the excess rice dumped in Nepal.

Government apathy, lack of support and subsidies mean that there is little cushion for

farmers if the crops don't do well, or don't sell. There is no minimum price for food grain, although the Department of Agriculture has asked the Nepal Food Corporation to buy paddy, spring paddy and wheat at a minimum cost if sales are down.

Economist Rajendra Pradhan of the Department of Agriculture says there is little Nepal can do to stop cheap imports from across the open border. But boosting productivity would enhance food security so that with the spreading road network domestic supply can meet demand in remote areas.

Pradhan explains, "For national food security, production is not enough. People should have access to food and there should be opportunities of employment in agriculture as well." 🇳🇵



Leaving or staying?

Nepalis are selling their fertile farms and leaving to work in the desert for a pittance, while farmhands from India come to Nepal in the harvest season to earn up to Rs 50,000 a month.

RAJ UPRETY
in MORANG

Nepal's agriculture is caught in this paradoxical situation as more and more young men from the eastern Tarai join the exodus. Peer pressure and stigma mean a young Nepali man is considered lazy and good for nothing if he stays behind to work on the farm.

"He was roaming jobless here, at least in Qatar he will earn a living for his family," says Sitadevi Chaudhary of the youngest of her four sons. The other three

are already working abroad.

Migration is not new in Nepal, what is different is that young men are moving out in unprecedented numbers at a time when they could easily make a decent income in Tarai farms and post-earthquake reconstruction.

There is a severe shortage of agriculture labour here in the Tarai, and this has driven up wages. A Nepali in the Gulf actually earns less than a migrant worker from Bihar in a paddy farm in Nepal, and that is not counting the hefty commission to agents, cost of air ticket, visa and other fees that a Nepali migrant worker pays.

Samjhana Biswas sells 100 roast corn a day in a street-side market in Biratnagar. She has calculated a profit margin of Rs 8 per cob, which gives her

an average monthly income of Rs 20,000. Biswas says it doesn't make sense to grow rice in her 1 hectare farm anymore, she earns more selling corn.

Jitendra Mahato sells jhalmuri in Jhorahat of Morang, and earns Rs 70,000 on an average month. This is more than a bank manager in the city, so he doesn't farm anymore.

There are many young men and women across the Tarai for whom driving an electric rickshaw, selling ice cream, or setting up a pani-puri stall is less risky and more lucrative than growing rice.

Growth in agriculture is said to be twice as effective in reducing poverty than growth in other sectors, and despite the youth abandoning the land there are examples of Nepalis who have returned to set up job-creating agri-businesses.

Kopinder Singh returned from Malaysia convinced he could earn more back in Nepal. He set up a vegetable farm to grow tomatoes and cauliflowers, and was recently awarded the President's Prize for outstanding performance.

"If I had stayed in Malaysia I would I be a menial worker with no savings," says Singh, who now earns Rs 80,000 a month and employs five helpers.

Uday Shrestha is known as the mushroom tycoon of Morang. In 2004, his passport was destroyed when a recruitment agency in Kathmandu was set on fire following the killing of 12 Nepali workers in Iraq. That is the best thing that happened to him. He stayed back in Nepal and is now the main mushroom supplier in eastern Nepal. 🇳🇵

SONIAAWALE

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Accreditation Council for Business School and Program (ACBSP)

Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET

SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE - May 6th, 2017
Maximum Scholarship of \$10,000
Khursheed Fatima Scholarship (\$11,000)
Preference to South Asian Female Students

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY ARIZONA

- 150+ Undergraduate Majors
- 60+ Graduate Majors
- Minimum English Proficiency TOEFL - 71 (UG) / 83 (PG) IELTS - 6.0 (UG) / 6.5 (PG)
- SAT / GRE / GMAT as per program requirement

PAC ASIA
STUDYABROAD
www.pacasia.org

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY NEBRASKA

- 150+ Undergraduate and Graduate Majors
- Minimum English Proficiency TOEFL - 70 (UG) / 80 (PG) IELTS - 6.0 (UG) / 6.5 (PG)
- SAT / GRE / GMAT as per program requirement

C/o Three Sixty Education Solutions Pvt. Ltd.
Prudent Building - 2nd Floor, Kamaladi, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 4222844 / 4251404 info@360education.edu.np

UNIVERSITY OF Nebraska Lincoln

BEST VALUE COLLEGE
THE PRINCETON REVIEW - 2014 EDITION

3RD MOST POPULAR PUBLIC UNIVERSITY OF NATION
US NEWS & WORLD REPORT

SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE - May 6th, 2017
Chancellor Scholarship : Full Scholarship + \$2000 Annual stipend



Paul Verhoeven, the director of *Basic Instinct* (1992) and *Starship Troopers* (1997) has always pushed the boundaries of what is acceptable in cinema, in terms of how women are portrayed and how violence is subverted. With his newest film, *Elle*, nominated in the Best Foreign Language Film category this year at the Academy, and starring the famous French

have been forced to endure in the hope that something will change to justify the time and emotional investment they have been manipulated into putting into a film that poses a series of tricks that left me in a state of unanchored confusion which eventually gave way to something close to dismay and then fury.

Huppert plays Michèle Leblanc – an enigmatic, affluent, poised Parisian woman in her early sixties who finds herself the victim of a vicious assault in her own home, leaving her violated, physically and emotionally. Over the course of the 130 minute long film, there are more twists and turns than I could count as we try to understand Michèle’s motivations, feelings, and stance - not just regarding the assault but also her very peculiar relationships with her mother, son, former husband, lovers, employees, attackers, friends, and her deeply dark past.

Transgression after transgression is committed by

every single character against almost every single other character in the film, leaving everyone slightly giddy but also wondering if the screenplay, based on a novel, is actually really about character, or just plot points that exploited the reader and now the viewer, forcing them to hang on in the hope of a somewhat intelligible outcome. There is none.

The people in this film are awful, barring the character of Anne Consigny, who plays the role of Anna, the beautiful, funny, warm-hearted friend and business partner of Michèle, a role that is barely mentioned in the buzz of this film - a great lapse. Huppert’s performance is talked about in hushed tones by critics, but her stone faced cipher of a character seems more under-written to me; certainly not the fascinating study of a woman as the film’s title not so subtly suggests.

The word “nasty” is not my own when it comes to describing the film. A friend who is French described it as such, adding, memorably, that it was also a perplexing and bizarre way of trying to depict French women. Verhoeven got it wrong -- sometimes it is funny to confound expectations, other times, it indicates a sociopathic tendency that thinks it is clever but instead is just plain creepy. 🚩



Watch trailer online

nepalitimes.com

HAPPENINGS



PMO

THINK LOCALLY, ACT NATIONALLY: Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal at an event in Lalitpur Metropolitan City office in Pulchok with Deputy Prime Minister Kamal Thapa to formally announce the establishment of new local level councils on Tuesday.



BIKRAM RAI

DEMOLITION MEN: Police tear down temporary shelters inhabited by survivors of the April 2015 earthquake in Chuchepati, Kathmandu on Tuesday.



KUNDADIXIT

BREATH OF FRESH AIR: The Ministry of Environment rolled out its air quality monitoring station at Ratna Park on Tuesday with US Ambassador Alaina Teplitz and ICIMOD director David Molden.



BIKRAM RAI

IT’S CRICKET: Gyanendra Malla (centre) after Nepal’s victory over Kenya in the ICC World Cricket League Championship match at the TU stadium on Monday. Malla will captain Nepal for the ACC Emerging Nations Cup 25 March - 4 April in Bangladesh.



BIKRAM RAI

I SEE: A Grade 10 student on the first day of the Secondary Education Examination (SEE), previously known as the School Leaving Certificate (SLC), at Madan Smarak Secondary School, Lalitpur on Thursday.

M-Series Printers

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

Best for Office and Commercial purpose

EPSON
EXCEED YOUR VISION

M200- PRINT / SCAN / COPY

M100- PRINT

Print upto **8000 PAGES** with initial starter ink kit

POWER SAVER

JUST 12 WATTS POWER CONSUMPTION

WARRANTY

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:

Baranaga : 011-860888, Biratnagar : 021-536729, Biratnagar : 021-532000

Biratnagar : 023-540150, Butwal : 071-545399, Chitwan : 056-571764

Dang : 082-561022, Dhangadhi : 091-523601, Dhangadhi : 091-521392

Jorapur : 041-525565, Lahan : 033-561205, Mahendranagar : 099-523872

Nepalgunj : 081-527092, Pokhara : 061-525300, Surkhet : 083-522488

Tulsipur : 082-562575



SHREEDHAR PAUDEL

From Tikapur to Maleth

Rameshwar Bohara in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 12-18 March

हिमाल खबरपत्रिका

In August 2015, after four people were killed in violent clashes, police constables were allowed to carry only batons and tear gas. Guns were given to junior officers, but with a clear instruction not to use them unless as a last resort.

Five days later, eight policemen including SSP Laxman Neupane were lynched in Tikapur of Kailali in the far-western plains. One child was shot dead by protesters.

After the Tikapur tragedy, policemen were so terrified that they began opening fire whenever they felt threatened, often shooting people in the chest and head. Over 50 people were killed in the ensuing violence of the Madhes movement that lasted five months.

The deaths last week of five people in police firing in Maleth of Saptari showed that police are still scared of being lynched and panic when there is a mob throwing stones. Lack of training in crowd control and finite resources also mean they have repeated the mistakes of 2015.

Human Rights Commissioner Prakash Wasti, who has observed and analysed recent killings in the Tarai, says policemen lack the confidence and morale to control riots, and feel threatened by protesters. “This is why police

open fire even when the use of gun is not needed,” he says.

After the Tikapur lynchings of its personnel, Nepal Police sought non-lethal weapons worth Rs 3 billion: 22 water cannon, 22 riot control vehicles, 1,000 electric shock guns, 1,000 multi gas guns, 5,000 pepper sprays and Rs 20,000 bamboo batons.

“But the government did not give us anything,” a senior police officer says. “If we had enough non-lethal equipment, we could have controlled the crowd without killing anyone in Saptari.”

The officer adds: “People blame us for not using non-lethal weapons to control riots. But the only non-lethal weapons we have enough of are tear gas and batons. Policemen on the ground either have to kill or be killed.”

Armed Police Force (APF) personnel are also deployed to control protests, sometimes as a back-up and sometimes on the frontline. Set up to fight the Maoists during the insurgency, the APF is used to fighting wars. It does not use rubber bullets, but they are first trained to fire in the air and only then shoot below the knee.

Former AIG Nawaraj Dhakal says: “If policemen are not trained enough, they cannot control riots even if they have all necessary equipment.”

In Melath of Saptari, nearly 1,000 policemen were deployed to keep protesters off the venue

of the UML program. And 300 of them were fresh recruits who were yet to complete basic training.

The Saptari killings also exposed the lack of a strong police command in the field. Protesters in Maleth were trying to attack UML leaders from all sides by breaching the police cordon.

Police and APF personnel were also in various groups under different commands, and there was a lack of coordination between them. When protesters snatched away communication sets and tried to seize weapons, police and APF opened fire. It is not known which unit first started shooting.

Human rights commissioner Wasti says policemen deployed on the field are often exhausted, have not eaten or rested well, and often retaliate when they see their colleagues hurt by protesters.

“There is also a lack of discipline, which sometime results in defiance of the police command,” he says. “This has to stop.”

He who shouts loudest...

Editorial in *Nagarik*, 14 March

नागरिक

When telecommunication service provider, TeliaSonera sold 80 per cent of its shares to the Malaysian company Axiata last year it tried to dodge paying capital gains tax in Nepal, saying it was not within Nepal’s tax jurisdiction because it was an offshore transaction. International law and Nepal’s own laws dictate that the seller is entitled to pay tax on the profit made. Nepal’s tax authorities started the process of getting payment only after TeliaSonera had sold its shares and left the country. In fact, for a full year after TeliaSonera left Nepal, the tax office hasn’t even figured out how much Nepal is owed in tax. This is all very fishy, and there are plenty of grounds to believe that Nepal’s tax administration and politicians were under the influence

of TeliaSonera. Furthermore, a responsible official from the Large Tax Payer’s Office telling the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Parliament that TeliaSonera did not have to pay tax is in itself suspicious. In fact, the official must himself be investigated, as well as the conduct of a Swedish company that prides itself in zero tolerance about corruption.

Tax laws follow fairly clear rules and regulations. The tax administration has the authority to determine who should pay, how much, and how it should be collected. The fact that a senior official of the Large Tax Payer’s Office (LTPO) is letting TeliaSonera off the hook in the PAC hints at large amounts exchanging hands. The Cabinet decided last Thursday to instruct the Finance Ministry that as per accepted international norms, it was the seller’s responsibility to clear its capital gains tax. But far from trying to redeem the tax, the LTPO hasn’t even calculated the tax amount due.

In response to letters demanding payment, TeliaSonera has argued that the \$1 billion sale was done in the tax haven of St Kitts and Nevis and therefore it had no responsibility to pay Nepal tax. Payment of the tax would strengthen the rule of law and restore investor confidence in the country, as well as dissuade future tax dodgers. There should be an investigation and prosecution of whoever allowed the country to be deprived of tax revenue.



I am saddened by the incident in Kanchanpur

अन्नपूर्ण

Basu Kshitiz in *Annapurna Post*, 12 March

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“The Prime Minister’s proposal to pass the amendment bill by leaving federal boundaries untouched was not bad, but he could not convince us.”

Tarai Madhes Loktantrik Party (TMLP) Chair Mahant Thakur after withdrawing support to the Maoist-NC government www.onlinekhabar.com, 16 March



Congratulations

It gives us great pleasure to extend our warmest congratulations to **Mr. Sunil KC** on his appointment as the **CEO of NMB Bank**.

To an extraordinary banker and a great personality with excellent management skills, we are certain that you will inspire and lead NMB Bank to even greater heights of success.

We wish you all the very best.



www.appliedvalue.com.np



www.upeverest.com

THOUGHT FOR FOOD

Despite dramatic progress in nutrition, half of Nepal's child deaths are still due to hunger

MARTY LOGAN
in SAPTARI

When Shambhu Kumar Ram died in November last year aged 17, he looked as emaciated as a drought victim (*pictured, far right*). While severe malnutrition appears to have been the immediate cause of death, there were underlying factors. The boy's parents say they knew only that he appeared malnourished, and kept losing weight until he died at home.

How could his family, which had accessed the health system numerous times in the years before Shambhu died, know so little about what killed their son? Their experience illustrates some of the ways that the health system in Nepal can fail.

Sitting on a wooden bench outside of their bamboo and mud hut in the Dalit village of Danda, his parents describe a fruitless years-long quest to uncover the reason their healthy baby showed signs of malnutrition as a toddler and never seemed to recover. When he was four he spent a month at the Sagarmatha Zonal Hospital but there was no diagnosis.

Shambhu was healthy enough to go to a local school until he was 12, when he started to lose more weight. "I knew he wasn't going to survive so I did my duty and took him to Biratnagar," says his mother Shanti Devi Ram. But after 10 days they ran out of money and returned, no wiser about the cause of their son's weight loss.

During this period the family sold nearly half of its land to



finance treatment. They borrowed from neighbours, to whom they still owe Rs 45,000. A month later, they travelled to Bir Hospital in Kathmandu but after 15 days they ran out of money again and returned home.

"I had to beg to feed my child

in Kathmandu, but no one helped us," says his mother. Shambhu remained at home till he died. The death made headlines in the media, with most indicating it was a death from starvation.

But here in Rajbiraj there is a different story. Shambhu being

found on the streets of Saptari's district capital by a nurse in July 2014 and taken to the Nutrition Rehabilitation Home (NRH), which is usually reserved for under-5 children with severe acute malnutrition. The boy was 13, says NRH Project Manager

Buddhi Maya turned two this March. But she cannot sit upright, lies inert and limp on a hammock in the family hut. Her emaciated body weighs half of what it should at her age.

Her 60-year-old father, Nawaraj Biswakarma, moulds clay outside. The Dalit family moved from Dang to work a brick kiln in Lalitpur this winter. Nawaraj's wife Chuna Devi had four daughters one after another, and the couple was still trying for a son when Buddhi Maya was born.

At 43 Chuna Devi looks much older, she was anemic and was too frail to give birth to a healthy daughter. Buddhi Maya was underweight when born, and Nawaraj admits he was disappointed it wasn't a son.

One does not have to go far from the capital to see the face of hunger in Nepal today. Just 5 km from the city centre here in Badikhel, there are children literally starving and families who do not have enough to eat.



The face of hunger

A debt-ridden Dalit couple is on the verge of losing their daughter to malnutrition

Nawaraj used to work seasonally in India before Buddhi Maya was born. He had taken a loan of Rs 18,000 from the Poverty Alleviation Fund to buy two goats. He paid back

Rs 7,000 last year but needs to pay the next instalment next month and clear the remaining amount by November. He came to Kathmandu to earn enough to finish paying back the loan.

"I thought I would be able to feed my children well after buying the goats," he says. "But things got worse."

He earns Rs 1 for each brick he moulds, but he has no savings

after working for four months in Kathmandu. "Whatever I earn goes to feeding the children, I cannot sleep at night out of worry," he says.

If he cannot pay back the loan,



MARTY LOGAN

Rashmi Jha, and within days he had left, though doctors wanted to keep him for treatment. “He didn’t like the food here so the family took him home,” District Public Health Officer Nagendra Chaudhary told *Nepali Times*. “The cause of death



DHRUBA MANDAL

WASTED AWAY: Shambhu Kumar Ram (*above*) looked as emaciated as a drought victim when he died last year.

Shambhu's father Dev Narayan Ram and mother Shanti Devi Ram (*left*) sold land and spent all their savings to treat their son.

might be carelessness of family members, the doctor wanted to keep him in the hospital.”

Chaudhary says Shambhu had TB, was diabetic and might also have had HIV or AIDS. Back in their village, Shambhu's mother says she knew nothing about their son having TB or other illnesses: “No doctor ever told me that.”

Both parents say they did not get any support from the local health post, and the Female Community Health Volunteer never came to visit. Chaudhary says the local mothers' group led by FCHVs has meetings every month, and the system is working in every ward of every village.

He admits some poor families still do not know how to access the health system, but says the network is much stronger these days. 🇳🇵



PICS: OM ASTHA RAI

ALIVE SO FAR: Chuna Devi Biswakarma, a brick kiln worker on the southern outskirts of Kathmandu, tries to console her crying daughter suffering from severe malnourishment (*left*). She holds her daughter's palm, wrinkled with malnutrition (*above*).

Nawaraj says he will be evicted from his dwelling in Dang, and he is not allowed to sell the goats. “They are government goats. If I sell them, or feed my children, I go to jail.”

An outreach worker of an NGO running a tuition class for the children of brick kiln workers spotted Buddhi Maya recently and sent her to a Nutrition Rehabilitation Home in Lalitpur. In two months Buddhi Maya gained some weight but not enough, indicating that she has other medical issues as well.

Says Sunita Rimal at the Home: “Her parents are too poor

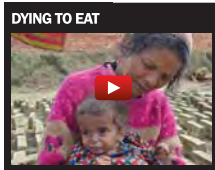
to buy more nutritious food, let alone getting a proper medical checkup.”

Chuna Devi was advised to keep her baby at the Home but she returned recently to her family at the brick kiln.

Buddhi Maya now weighs just 4.3 kg instead of the 9.1 kg for someone her age. She is severely wasted and stunted, the skin on her face and limbs are wrinkled, ribs protrude from her emaciated body.

On a cloudy afternoon after rains this week, Chuna Devi was feeding her baby milk with a spoon. “I know she will die. She is here on Earth only for a short time.” 🇳🇵

Om Astha Rai



Watch video of Chuna Devi and Nawaraj Biswakarma, a debt-ridden Dalit couple from Dang, struggling to earn enough from baking bricks to feed their five daughters.

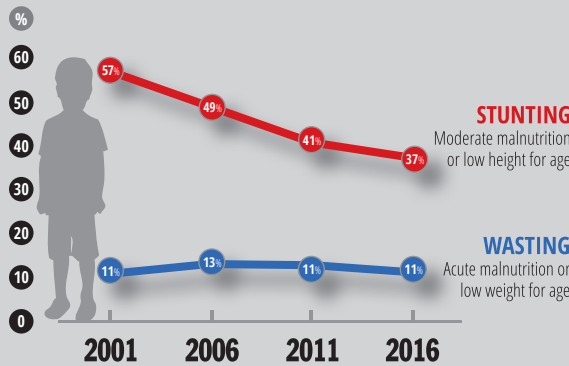
nepalitimes.com

Stunted and wasted

Wasting affected 11.3% of Nepali children under five, according to the Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey three years ago. Of them, more than a third had moderate malnutrition, or stunting (low height for age). Another survey in Saptari showed that 15% of children showed signs of wasting.

Nepal's malnutrition rate is among the world's highest, with more than half of preventable under-5 deaths each year attributed to insufficient food. But the country took remarkable strides in reducing stunting during and immediately after the conflict, the figure coming down from 57% in 2001 to 37.4% in 2014. Nutrition Rehabilitation Homes (NRH) and a program called Community/Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) contributed.

But nearing its halfway point, Multi-sectoral Nutrition Plan (MSNP), the blueprint for Nepal's fight against malnutrition is being reviewed. Experts agree it hasn't delivered as



promised. Inspired by the global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, the plan takes a multi-pronged approach to tackling malnutrition. Seven ministries are included in the MSNP which is coordinated by the National Planning Commission. It has been scaled up to 28 districts but is supposed to be effective in all 75 districts by year's end also addressing acute malnutrition, or wasting (low weight for age).

A 2014 review of CMAM found that in the preceding four years 21,782 cases of severely malnourished children had been treated, and 86.5% of them cured. Of the 795 children treated at the NRH in Rajbiraj only two had died.

Yet, CMAM has only reached 32 of the 35 districts, and NRHs are operating in 18 instead of 35 planned districts. Nepal will probably not meet the MSNP target to cut wasting to below 5% by 2017.

“MSNP hasn't been implemented as expected,” admits Raj Kumar Pokharel, Chief of the Nutrition Section in the Department of Health. “It should be reaching the household level but other sectors are not taking it seriously ... there is no culture of coordination.” At UNICEF, the head of nutrition Stanley Chitekwe agrees. “The architecture is there, but the implementation has issues. We need to ensure that each ministry makes malnutrition a core part of its business. We've realised that this hasn't happened enough.”

Nutritionist Aruna Uprety was named to one of two committees created by the National Planning Commission to address the problem, but says: “The plans have failed, implementation doesn't exist. The problem is that programs are created without knowing the reality on the ground.”

Asked why stunting rates have declined but wasting rates persist, Chitekwe points to “inequities in the way that malnutrition manifests itself” including the effects of geography, wealth, ethnicity and caste.

Pokharel says it is difficult to address these factors using a health approach only, good governance is also essential. The Rs120,000,000 earmarked to reduce malnutrition in Saptari was recently returned unspent to the treasury.



MERRYFAIR.

Comfort comes first and that is what Malaysia's No. 1 brand provides with the full range of chairs available.



100 years old American company with experience in comfort and durability, Spring Air has products for your home and hotels with 10 years guarantee.



Emporios
FURNITURE • LIGHTING • ACCESSORIES

Kathmandu Business Park, Teku
Tel: 977-1-4104522, 4104523, 4104524
Email: info@emporiosnepal.com
Web: www.emporiosnepal.com



We agree with critics of GONe who have serious misgivings about the size of the current Cabinet. They are absolutely right, it is just not big enough. How can the spoils be divided (and multiplied) with only 32 ministers, 12 ministers of state, and a handful of others lying in state?

For national construction and reconstruction to go on a war footing, we need an army of ministers, not just the pathetic platoon we have now in Singha Darbar. To make Nepal great again, we need to think big. It is a skeleton Cabinet with skeletons in its cabinet. Need to add meat to it.

This is the perfect opportunity to expand the cabinet and create new jobs. Every minister has a multiplier effect on the economy and the labour market.

The jumbo cabinet as a jumbo job creation opportunity that will bring down our national unemployment rate by several percentage points, reduce the number of Nepalis migrating abroad to work, and have downstream benefits.

Every minister hires bodyguards, peons, cooks, drivers, wives, personal assistants, hangers-on, flunkies, middlemen, goons,

But there just aren't enough ministries to fit a jumbo gobblement of national unity. So, in the national interest, we present a few new portfolios:

Ministry of Adultery: Will monitor all commodities to ensure that kickbacks have been paid to mix kerosene in diesel, sell underweight LPG cylinders, allow a thriving blackmarket in electricity

Ministry of Home: This is the most coveted ministry because the minister can work out of home

The new 185-member cabinet will need a separate ministry to take the roll call during cabinet meetings and ensure enough pakoras to go around.

Portfolios: These are cunningly left vacant to accommodate more disgruntled elements so they don't disrupt elections



The Ass

HYUNDAI | NEW THINKING.
NEW POSSIBILITIES.

CRETA
THE PERFECT SUV

**“I AM PERFECT
I AM CRETA”**

Dr. Keyoor Gautam
Samyak Diagnostic

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

Prismark/16