



FURNITURE LAND STORE

www.furnitureland.com.np

Office: 01-4477581, 01-4477582, 20/21

					
bedroom	living room	dining	office	garden	garden

Tripureshwor

4-224797

Maharajgunj

4-016277

Maitighar

4-266372

Pokhara

61-536596

CLEARANCE SALE Get upto **50%** off on selected items

LAVAZZA
ITALY'S FAVOURITE COFFEE

Grand Hotel - Tahachal
Platinum Hotel - Tahachal

For Further Information Mail to :-
lavazza@subhashingalnti.com

CREATE YOUR "OWN"
ENVIRONMENT

Divine Wines

Divine Wine
White
4L

Divine Wine
White
4L

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



TRANQUILITY SPA
"Balancing Body, Mind and Spirit"

 **01-4420424**

 www.tranquilityspa.com.np



AMBIENCE LIFESTYLE PVT. LTD.
 BIJULI BAZAR, NAVA BANESWOR, KATHMANDU
 PHONE: 4781071, 4781072
 EMAIL: ambiencelifestyle@gmail.com

Recruitment Service Right Person at Right Place

The diagram illustrates a recruitment process flow:

- Top Row:** Seven cartoon characters representing different roles: Accountant, Receptionist, HR, Teacher, Admin, Test, Customer, and Driver.
- Process Flow:**
 - Left Column:** A box labeled "Drop your CV" with an orange "Apply" button below it.
 - Center:** A box labeled "Meeting" with "Participate in Interview" below it.
 - Right Column:** A box labeled "Enjoy Working With us" with a green "Selection" button below it.
- Arrows:**
 - A green curved arrow points from the "Drop your CV" box to the "Meeting" box.
 - A green curved arrow points from the "Meeting" box to the "Enjoy Working With us" box.
 - An orange curved arrow points from the "Apply" button back to the "Drop your CV" box.
- Labels:**
 - FOCUS: Opportunity** is positioned above the "Drop your CV" box.
 - FOCUS: Placement** is positioned above the "Enjoy Working With us" box.
 - FOCUS: Understanding the requirement.** is positioned below the "Participate in Interview" box.

Footer:

t : +977-1-4620741
 e : info@gtln.com.np
 w : www.gtln.com.np

greentick
 MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

Time flies

It has been two years since the 2015 earthquake, but many survivors still haven't got help to rebuild homes, and only half the money pledged by donors has materialised. Yet, families are doing the best they can and some are no longer waiting for the government.

Time stands still in many of the villages destroyed in the earthquake. A report by The Asia Foundation concludes that the situation of earthquake survivors is overwhelmingly bad, with 72 per cent of the 4,855 household respondents still unable to rebuild homes. (*See page 14-15*).

Another report by the Central Department of Population at Tribhuvan University this week indicates that many women survivors feel insecure as they continue to live in flimsy shelters.

Largely to blame for the delay is political interference in the functioning of the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), as political parties compete for disbursement and to take credit.

Another reason is that donors

have not put their money where their mouth is. Only half the \$4.1 billion pledged in June 2015 has actually materialised, and there is a shortfall of more than \$5 billion for earthquake recovery.

The NRA was supposed to be an autonomous agency to circumvent the slow-moving bureaucracy for fast-track reconstruction, but has itself been paralysed by red tape.


Newly re-instated CEO Govind Raj Pokharel says: "The NRA has to be made more autonomous with the power to mobilise and disburse its own funds."

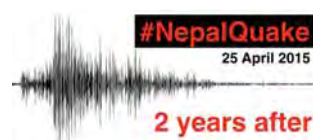
Many donors are spending their pledged amounts through their own aid agencies, and not through the NRA. Other donors haven't even sent a single dollar that they promised.

The Norwegian Embassy's Elin Linnestad told us: "Norway made a re-prioritisation within its existing development budget and in the interest of time decided to use already established partner organisations to channel the \$30 million pledged."

Despite the delays and

confusion, more than 90 per cent of families have got their first government grant, and need to build as per approved norms to be eligible for the next two tranches. Nearly 30,000 families have used their first grants, and applied for second and even third tranches.

Says a multilateral donor representative: "Two years is too early to expect fantastic results after a big disaster like this, even in developed countries. If the NRA is left alone to do its work, it would help expedite relief." 



BROKEN PROMISES

BY OM ASTHA RAI

Permanent scars, temporary relief

BY **RAINEESH BHANDARI**

PAGE 14-15



DUST TO DUST: Two years after the earthquake, a family in Namdu village of Dolakha is finally demolishing an earthquake-damaged house to rebuild.

RAJNEESH BHANDARI

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 القطرية

GOING PLACES TOGETHER

GOING PLACES TOGETHER

REAPING THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND

The expression ‘the child is the father of the man’ is very prescient to present-day Nepal, but not exactly in the way the poet William Wordsworth intended. Babies born in Nepal today will have to take care of far more elderly people than those born 30 years ago.

This is because of a phenomenon called ‘demographic transition’. Nepal has seen a sharp drop in child mortality, population growth and the average number of children per parent in the past 30 years. This is one of the most dramatic drops among low-income countries, but what it also means is that Nepal’s population is now ageing rapidly.

Ideally, such rapid declines in fertility can propel a country’s economic growth through a process known as the ‘demographic dividend’, but Nepal has limited time to take advantage of this potential. We are half-way through a window of opportunity lasting another 30



MARTYN ANDREWS

GUEST EDITORIAL
KRISHNA MURARI GAUTAM

Old is gold

After my father was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, and while caring for him, my eyes were opened to the plight of the elderly in Nepal. If this was how difficult it was for me to care for my father, what of those families that don’t have the resources? I realised that getting old in Nepal is a curse not just for this generation of older people, but for upcoming generations as well.

We pride ourselves in the respect we accord senior citizens: there is a premium in our culture for attending to older relatives. But the family safety net is collapsing as men migrate and joint families disintegrate. There are no policies and laws to protect older people in our society.

In 2009 after my father passed, I quit my job and opened a geriatric centre. It didn’t work because families that consigned their elderly to an old-age home were ostracised because of the social stigma of abandoning their parents. Others would come to the centre and demand to be cared for free. This notion that old-age homes should be run like charities stems from the government’s neglect of senior citizens and the homes being synonymous with helplessness and poverty.

As Nepal’s population ages, we need more knowledge and understanding of the elderly and their health care needs, through education and advocacy about care. This is much more important than opening unsustainable and poorly-staffed old people’s homes.

The problem of the elderly in Nepal is getting

years or so to get our act together and invest in the health, education and upbringing of children born today. Nepal can buy more time to care for larger numbers of older people if we raise the average year of marriage and ensure later births now. And a sure-fire way of doing that is to improve present female literacy levels, and reduce the dropout rate of girls.

Nepal’s age pyramid, which looks like a cone today (with large numbers of children), will be inverted by 2050 as today’s children grow up to live longer, and fewer babies take their place. As a report unveiled last week by the National Planning Commission, UNICEF Nepal and the Population Council points out (*see page 8-9*) Japan went through a similar transition 30 years ago. The only difference is that Nepal is experiencing this age shift at a much less advanced stage of economic development.

Nepal must also start investing in geriatric care, setting up homes for the elderly, changing laws to protect older people and spreading public awareness. As activist Krishna Murari Gautam argues in his Guest Editorial (*below*), there is an epidemic of loneliness among senior citizens as traditional family and community systems break down and more and more younger people migrate for work and study.

So, we know the problem. Experts have presented solutions, and they need urgent implementation. Rulers with longer time horizons and requisite political will are needed to prepare for this transition. Fewer and fewer younger people need to earn enough and be capable of providing for more and more elderly people. We have already squandered half the window of opportunity since 1992, let us not waste the other half till 2047.

more serious by the day because of the demographic transition. Last year alone, 126 bodies were found abandoned all over the country: most of them were of unclaimed elderly people.

The laws discriminate against senior citizens. Older people cannot sell their land without the consent of their children, they are not entitled to their own property if their sons banish them from home.

We have government programs for children, women and the disabled but not for the elderly. People talk about women’s rights as if women above 60 aren’t women anymore. Let us examine the way we treat elderly members of our own families. Do we really listen to them? Do we understand their isolation? Their need for company and communication? Or do we dismiss them as ‘senile’?

Kathmandu’s Newars have the guthi, which takes care of a community’s needs from birth to death, and the unique practice of jankhu that could be preserved and promoted to celebrate and value elders. Older people are people, too. They have human rights and the need to be treated with dignity like everyone else.



Krishna Murari Gautam is a social scientist and founder of Ageing Nepal, ageingnepal.org

ONLINE VIDEOS



OLDER NATION



Nepal is a rapidly ageing society. 14% of Nepalis will be above 65 by 2054. The good news is we still have 30 years before our dependent population outnumbers working-age adults. Watch a video of experts speaking about investing in today’s children to be better prepared for an ageing future.



REBUILDING HOMES

As survivors across earthquake-ravaged districts start rebuilding their homes, most have found the government’s reconstruction grant insufficient to build earthquake-resistant buildings and are taking loans. By the time they finish rebuilding, most will be debt-ridden with no reliable source of income. Watch a video of people in Sindhupalchok share their reconstruction woes.

LEVERAGE OR LIABILITY?

Nepal’s experience has shown that donor leverage at the hands of donor officials who lack understanding, experience and accountability could severely undermine Nepal’s chronically sluggish development efforts (‘Post-development era’, Kanak Mani Dixit, #851).

We owe the success of community forestry in Nepal to the nationwide network of forest user groups, the exclusive vehicle for local development. But after 1990, the new rulers in their fanatic bid to undo everything Panchayat, replaced the decentralisation act with legislation that fell far short of the power of user groups. By 1996, the donor community had so much ‘leverage’ that two of them, the UNDP and DANIDA, were engaged in cutthroat competition to usurp the ownership of decentralisation and get their own versions of the new bill. After three years of wrangling, the Local Self-Governance Act was passed but a highly diluted formulation allowing local strongmen more control.

The massive corruption at the local level is largely due to this ‘donor leverage’. It paralysed the professional potential of bureaucrats and integrity of the politicians. Nepal’s donors must reflect with humility that their 75 years of existence in the country has very little to show for it.

Bihari Krishna Shrestha

THE ONLY DEMOCRACY

An article that all Nepalis must read (‘Southerly wind’, Editorial, #851). The only democracy in this age is a secular democracy. Trying to force caste ism (another name for Hinduism) down people’s throat will end up in disaster. Look at India, its shining jewel is its secular democracy despite having about a billion Hindus.

AL Joshi

WHAT'S TRENDING



Most reached and shared on Facebook (11,154 people reached, 32 shares)

Trapped in transition

by Shreejana Shrestha

Continued economic and political instability in the Tarai is pushing children south of the border to a life of abuse and has increased human trafficking in an already vulnerable community. Go to Nepali Times online to watch how 33 Nepali children were rescued from squalid shelters in Bihar recently.

Most popular on Twitter (49 retweets, 70 likes)

Most visited and commented online page (849 views)

War and pieces

by Dirgha Raj Upadhyay

Nepali peacekeepers in South Sudan are witness to what happens to a country that mixes ethnicity with politics. A sobering lesson for Nepal.



QUOTE TWEETS

Nepali Times@nepalitimes
As decades of ‘development’ come to a close, we will hopefully move towards a true era of ‘progress’ <http://bit.ly/2ndEHfE> @KanakManiDixit

Shiwani Neupane@ShiwaniNeupane
I personally wonder if western donors are becoming weak because the dollar now buys less and less, even in Nepal.

Nepali Times@nepalitimes
#SouthSudan is an example of what can happen when you mix #ethnicity with #politics. A lesson for #Nepal. <http://bit.ly/2nMxB4T>

Vibhu Mishra@bullet350
@nepalitimes @KanakManiDixit why only ethnicity? Mixing identity with politics can be disastrous, no? Look in neighborhood.

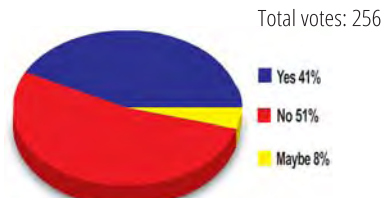
Nepali Times@nepalitimes
EDITORIAL: The new UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has openly spoken about restoring the Hindu monarchy in Nepal. <http://bit.ly/2n3MCew>

Prabir Rana@PrabirRana
@nepalitimes Hindu ethos & rightist values demonised and leftist barbarism glorified when Nepal policy was outsourced to CPIM by Cong I



Weekly Internet Poll #852

Q. Should Nepal restore a ceremonial monarchy?



Weekly Internet Poll #853
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Is the National Reconstruction Authority back on track?



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.jagadambapress.com



A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

WIDEN YOUR WORLD | **TURKISH AIRLINES** 



DISCOVER THE USA

WITH TURKISH AIRLINES

KATHMANDU-977-01-4438363/4438436
KTMSALES@THY.COM

TURKISHAIRLINES.COM



ALL PICS: CLARA BULLOCK

Cakes and Community

As more Nepalis develop an appetite for breads and sweets, bakers are rising to their communities' challenges

CLARA BULLOCK



The first thing you notice when approaching one of Kathmandu's many bakeries is the delicious smell of pastries and freshly-baked breads. It is almost impossible not to be drawn inside.

One of the city's first and most famous bakeries is Hermann Helmers German Bakery in Jawalakhel. It was founded by Ashok KC in 1982, after he learned the art of German baking in Bremen, Northern Germany. Ashok was so fascinated by German bakery culture that he decided to open his own place in Kathmandu.

Ashok's son Nirmal KC (*pic, left*) now runs the bakery. He has been working there since he was 16, when the bakery's clientele was mainly tourists. "About 95 per cent of our customers used to be foreigners," he remembers. "But now about 60 per cent of the people who come into our shop are Nepali."

Kathmandu's bakery culture has been rising among locals in recent years, coinciding with a change in food habits among Nepalis, who are starting to eat more western-style food. While many people in the West no longer eat gluten, a major

component of wheat products, Asian societies are starting to discover the world of breads and pastries. Consumption of wheat in Asia has gone up about 15 per cent in the last 3 years.

The change is due mainly to growing urbanisation and exposure to the West. The Valley's population is increasing at four per cent a year, making it one of the fastest-growing urban areas in South Asia. The hectic life in big cities doesn't leave much time for preparing meals, so the average Nepali worker is starting to buy food that is easy to prepare. Before work, younger people get breakfast and coffee at their local bakeries.

As the bakery business booms, bakery culture is also evolving and having an impact on communities in Kathmandu. There are bakeries that run cafés, offer spaces to meet people, showcase local art and even host events. Some bakeries are creating jobs for people in need. Higher Grounds Café and Bakery trains women and men who have been unemployed for years to become bakers. Higher Grounds founder Bimala Shrestha Pokharel says: "With our bakery we want to create a home for people who have a complicated background and never had a job before. We train and encourage them to open up their own place."

Pokharel focuses on giving a voice to the voiceless. The money she makes in the bakery funds her other projects, including workshops on raising awareness about abuse and Higher Grounds Crafts, where women learn how to make jewellery. For Pokharel, her bakery serves a bigger purpose: creating a community and helping those who need it most.

Likewise, Rasmita Baniya (*pic top*) opened an Austrian bakery in Jhawalakhel after customers in her husband's restaurant praised the bread she served there. After the bakery became a quick success, she began hiring help. But instead of getting trained and educated staff members, Baniya, who was trained by a German master baker, focused on hiring girls threatened by exploitation.

The growth in Kathmandu's bakeries is not only a sign of a growing middle-class, but of a desire for people to create a sense of community. Bakeries are becoming platforms for people who want to make something of their own and have an impact beyond the cash register. The pastries and breads are a delicious side-effect of that effort. 🇳🇵

Bagels on Saturdays

Every Saturday morning, Namgyal T. Lama (*pictured*) sets up his small booth at the Le Sherpa farmers market. Alongside people selling cheeses, coffee and bread, he is the only one offering homemade bagels.

Lama started his small business because of his own appetite for bagels. When he came back from studying and working in New York, he missed eating fresh bagels for breakfast. "Having learned to make bagels while in New York, I decided to sell them to people who miss bagels as much as I did," he says.

Lama established Bagels Kathmandu as a side-business: his main income-earner is carpets. His clients are mostly foreigners but also young Nepalis home after studying abroad: all of them miss the American practice of bagels for breakfast.

Lama's booth at the farmers market has become so popular that he is going to open a bagel shop in Thamel in May. "It's going to be Kathmandu's first bagel shop," he says proudly.

Interested in tasting a bagel? Lama recommends the Everything Bagel, which is flavoured with sesame seeds, garlic and salt.



The ideation of the nation

We need more nuanced and practical ways to imagine a Nepal for the future of Nepalis



DEVAKI BISTA

When I ask visitors what they think of Nepal some fumble, most blabber in readymade diplomatese, and a few have revealing insights. But the question itself is more revealing than the answers.

This recurring question is probably a result of something serious and damaging. Our sense of identity has faced a savage



blow in recent years. Young Nepalis across socio-ethnic-cultural strata feel a sense of loss about their identity. There is an urgent need for reassurance about who we are.

Journalist Subina Shrestha recently threw out 'a random question to all Nepalis' on Twitter about what it means to be a Nepali. The answers were intriguing. What emerged was a rejection by other communities of the traditional identity of 'Nepaliness' narrowly defined by the cultural symbols of the hill Khas-Arya community. There was no consensus on what unites us.

The violent events and atrocities of the last few years have ushered in a period of confusion and conflict. The politics of ethnic confrontation is seen as a result of ethnic hegemony in the definition of nationhood. This idea, most recently cemented by anthropologists like David Gellner, sees Nepali society as an interrelation of strict hierarchies of ethnicities. This is not only simplistic but also a dishonest way of categorising a society because it ignores all the other ways in which people see themselves.

Gellner's idea of Nepal as a precarious asymmetry of unequal ethnicities draws from the paradigm of anthropologist Diana Forsythe's analysis of German identity. What looks like a singular national identity, she says, is in practice a hierarchy. Thus, there are gradations of German-ness, proving that national identities usually have an 'ethnic core'.

In his book, *The Battles of the New Republic*, Delhi-based Nepali journalist Prashant Jha

builds on this paradigm of a hierarchy of ethnicities, and makes a political point in support of Madhesi regionalism. His unrestrained account of the childhood of a Madhesi in Kathmandu makes him feel 'more at home in the school in Delhi than in Kathmandu'. As a child in Kathmandu, Jha writes that he had to create a web of lies to sustain the 'fiction' that he was as Nepali as any other student in the classroom when asked 'How can a Jha be Nepali?'.

It is very easy to drag these histrionics into political meta-narratives. The Nepali political scene is dominated by the Madhesh issue, which is seen as a case study of an ethno-nationalist movement, and a result of the hierarchical ethnic exclusion sponsored by the Nepali state for centuries.

Gellner and Jha are partly right. But analysing the subtext, one can make out that Jha chooses his words and arguments carefully. When he quotes a child in Kathmandu as an example of how the Nepaliness of 'others' are questioned by the members of the 'Ethnic Core' he creates a hole in his own argument and ignores the reciprocal relations between ethnicities depending on their area of dominance.

It is argued that 'Nepali' is an ethnical representation rather than a national identity. Post-1990, in a reverse to everything that had been done during the Panchayat era in Nepal, vibrant intellectual energy was redirected from nation-building to ethnicity-building. Nepali has now become representative of a narrow group of ethnicities for some.

There is a need to redefine Nepali identity, but the approach has to be driven by a futuristic assimilation for progress rather than deep prejudices of the past. Some have outrageously even suggested changing the name of the country itself, saying that the idea of Nepal and Nepaliness has over the years assumed a narrow definition, at the core of which lies the cultural attributes of the Hill, upper-caste people. They believe it is too late to even try to change that meaning.

The real problem with this well-intentioned attempt to empower ethnicities politically by disassociating it from the

Nepali identity is in its inherent contradiction. This ideation of the nation as a compromise between otherwise hostile ethnicities leads to a miniaturisation of nationhood and suggests a precarious arrangement always on the verge of violent eruptions.

This confusion about our identity has transferred to foreigners as well. One friend making an effort

to learn Nepali after having spent almost a decade in Nepal, confessed that the reason she did not do so earlier was because she believed the act of learning just one of Nepal's many languages was itself a political statement supporting ethnic hegemony.

The idea of Nepal has been turned into a great conundrum by a one-sided dominance of scholarly, political and fictional narrative building over the years, mostly guided by a superficial foreign vision. We now need more nuance, and more practicality, to imagine a Nepal for the future of Nepalis. 🇳🇵

prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS

Air award

Qatar Airways was named 'Airline of the Year' at the 2017 Air Transport Awards held at Latrou Residence in Greece.



The airline was conferred the title for its innovation, service, hospitality and product design. Qatar flies from Kathmandu to Doha thrice daily.

Bridging the gap

Mobile network operator Ncell has reduced its call rate to 30 countries to Rs 1.99 per minute, excluding taxes. The offer, which was launched on 27 March, is valid for 15 days. Customers will need to activate the service to avail the offer. For more information: www.ncell.axiata.com



Fly away

Etihad will be introducing its Airbus A380 on its Abu Dhabi-Paris route. Equipped with a three-room suite, the flight will operate on one of its twice-daily services to Paris between 1 July and 28 October. With the launch, Etihad will be



connecting its passengers to cities including Bangkok, Delhi, Mumbai, Shanghai and Perth.

Care for customers

NIC ASIA Capital Limited recently received approval to provide Depository Participant (DP) Service on behalf of NIC ASIA Bank Limited. Customers can now



open a Demat account from its office at Siddhartha Insurance Building, Baber Mahal, as well as from all branches of NIC ASIA Bank. For more information: www.nicasiacapital.com.

New year offer

Laxmi Intercontinental, authorised distributor of Hyundai automobiles in



Nepal, launched a scheme to mark the upcoming Nepali new year. Customers can avail easy financing within a week at an interest rate of 0%.



TNT has a new Licensee in Nepal.

Contact Everest De Cargo at 1660-01-01111 (Toll Free), +977 1 4269248 or TNTservices@edc.com.np for your international shipping requirements.

Call of the wild

Forty years later, I can still taste the fear and feel my trembling knees as I cowered uselessly behind the tree to dodge the charging rhino



In khaki shorts and floppy hat I greet the arriving guests at the bottom of the wooden aircraft steps, the same ones used for boarding the elephants who are lined up patiently behind me, drivers lolling on their flat grey heads.



SO FAR SO GOOD

Lisa Choegyal

On this particular afternoon, soon after I first started work at Tiger Tops, I am meeting a group of middle-aged middle-Americans who chatter excitedly as I supervise their loading for the two-hour elephant safari through the national park to the Lodge.

The elephants heave themselves onto their feet to squeals of delight and clicking cameras.

"Please do not drop litter and be silent once inside the jungle so as to maximise wildlife sightings – rhinoceros, deer, wild boar, monkeys, crocodiles, birds and always the chance of leopard or tiger." A frisson of expectancy crackles through the group.

To the north, the shadowy white outlines of the Himalaya float above the wrinkled middle hills. Most days I take the open baggage vehicle back to the Lodge but today it is piled high with provisions so I elect to join the Americans on the elephant safari. My ride, Rup Kali extends her hind leg on command from Sultana, her wiry dark-skinned

driver, so I can climb up onto her back. He turns and nods as I clamber up the ropes, holding onto the howdah bar and balancing on her bony grey back in my thin plimsolls, feeling smugly like an expert. Off we all lumber, across the river and into the trees.

Having trawled the thick grasslands and passed a couple of pools left stranded by the ever-changing Tarai waterways, the wildlife safari is running its course and the afternoon light is fading to rose. Weary from hanging onto the swaying howdah and dodging branches, I decide it is time to get back to the Lodge. The elephants emerge onto a Park

AIRPORT TRANSPORT:

Elephants load up tourists at Meghauli airfield in 1972 before the ride to Tiger Tops.

track that I recognise, and I signal to Sultana that I'll get down and walk.

Setting off on foot down the long straight jungle road,

I ignore a sound in the bushes, my mind occupied with dinner recipes dependent on today's supplies and my legs enjoying the exercise. The crushed-insect scent of pale clerodendrum flowers is heavy in my nostrils and a fine dust rises with my footsteps. A shout alerts me. I turn in horror to see a large rhino emerging onto the open road behind me, a young calf close to her side.

Mercifully, Rup Kali and several other elephants are still on the track, not yet having faded

into the forest. The mahouts urge them backwards, anxious not to drive the rhino closer towards me. Stories of adrenalin-fuelled feats in the face of extreme danger flash through my frozen brain, but there is no way that I can find a climbable tree to scale from among the smooth trunks of the towering sal or solid silk-cotton trees whose horizontal branches are of unreachable height.

The rhino mother, short sighted and aggressive in protection of her young, pauses uncertainly on the track. Head high with concern, she turns first to me and then to the retreating elephants, assessing her options. Deciding I am the easier target she charges towards me, the baby close behind. Another revelation — how quick and nimble is an oncoming rhino, despite its massive bulk, and how impressive her huge size and great folds of rough skin, like armour plating. I have no hope of outrunning her, and can only clamber onto the high but inadequate buttress roots behind a handy bombax tree. Rup Kali with her load of startled tourists and Sultana in full cry hurtle down the road in pursuit, trumpeting, shouting, waving and throwing sticks. The rhino veers away and takes off into the undergrowth.

That evening much Khukri rum flowed in the elephant camp at my expense. I was mercilessly teased for my ignorance of the danger of walking alone in the Chitwan jungles. I can still taste the fear and feel my trembling knees as I cowered uselessly behind that tree. Too little knowledge and too much confidence is a treacherous combination in the wild. But I had survived the lesson, saved by Sultana and Rup Kali. 🇳🇵

 nepalitimes.com

■ For more pictures of Chitwan from the 1970s, go online.



Imitating nature

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



City Office
Bakhundol, Lalitpur
Tel: 977-01-5529210/11

Printing Plant
Hattiban, Lalitpur, Nepal
Tel: 977-01-5250017/18
sales@jppl.com.np
URL: www.jagadambapress.com



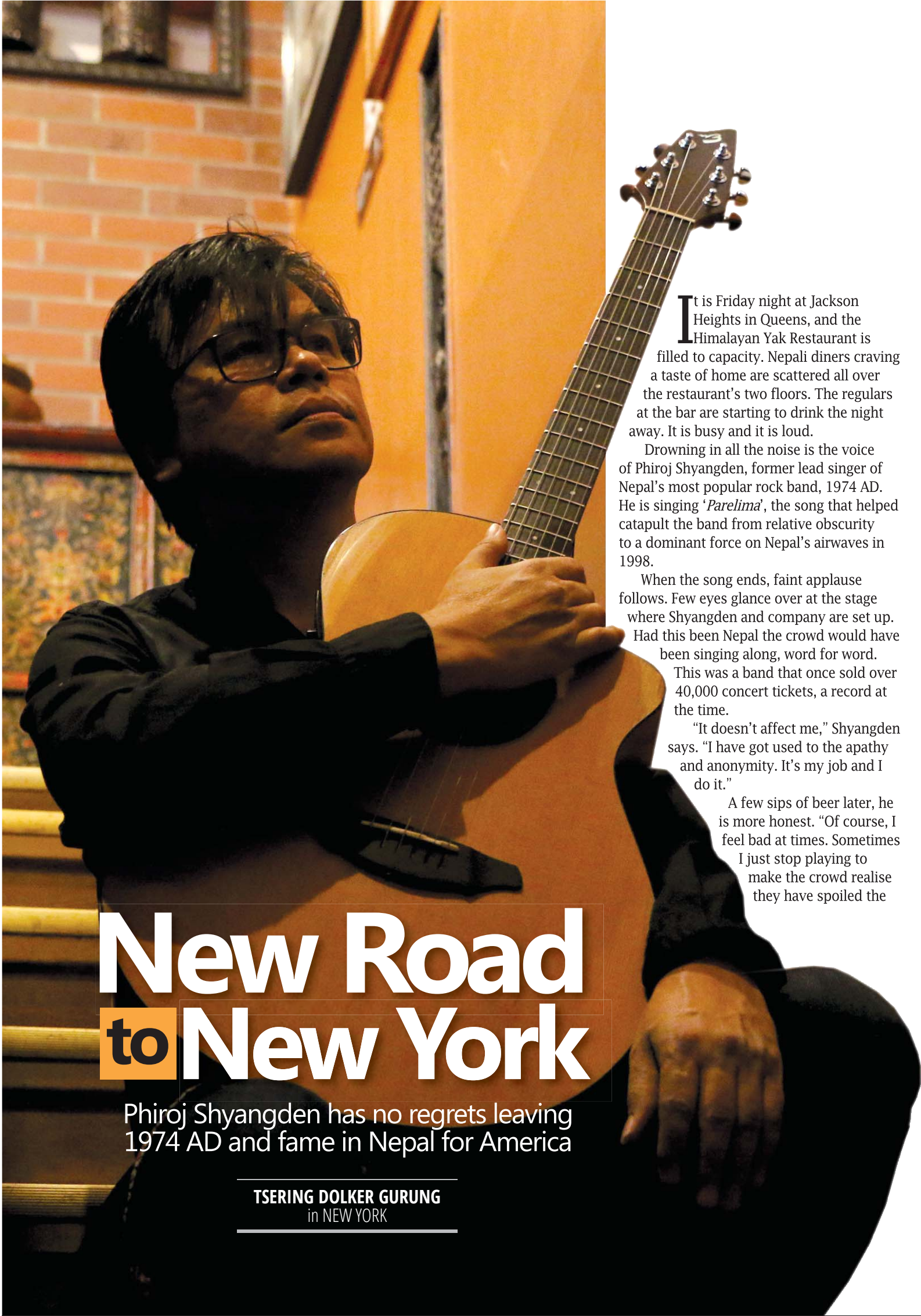


So you thought we'd be having glorious mid-spring weather? Think again. We are getting wave upon wave of low pressure systems floating in from the west, bringing overcast skies, and stormy rain. This pattern is set to continue into the weekend. Good news for corn farmers, but unfortunately not so good for trekkers. Lukla airport has been closed for four days this week. The high passes are snowbound and there is a risk of avalanche in some areas. The minimum temperature is creeping up, but the cloud cover is keeping maxima below average.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
 23° 14°	 23° 13°	 22° 13°



Going places together - qatarairways.com



New Road to New York

Phiroj Shyangden has no regrets leaving 1974 AD and fame in Nepal for America

TSERING DOLKER GURUNG
in NEW YORK

It is Friday night at Jackson Heights in Queens, and the Himalayan Yak Restaurant is filled to capacity. Nepali diners craving a taste of home are scattered all over the restaurant's two floors. The regulars at the bar are starting to drink the night away. It is busy and it is loud.

Drowning in all the noise is the voice of Phiroj Shyangden, former lead singer of Nepal's most popular rock band, 1974 AD. He is singing '*Parelima*', the song that helped catapult the band from relative obscurity to a dominant force on Nepal's airwaves in 1998.

When the song ends, faint applause follows. Few eyes glance over at the stage where Shyangden and company are set up. Had this been Nepal the crowd would have been singing along, word for word.

This was a band that once sold over 40,000 concert tickets, a record at the time.

"It doesn't affect me," Shyangden says. "I have got used to the apathy and anonymity. It's my job and I do it."

A few sips of beer later, he is more honest. "Of course, I feel bad at times. Sometimes I just stop playing to make the crowd realise they have spoiled the

atmosphere."

Shyangden's words carry no resentment: they are soft and composed. He has none of the airs of a celebrity. He politely ignores two drunks who say to him, "Hey, bro, you performing today?"

Shyangden was 22 when he started 1974 AD with bassist Nirakar Yakthumba and drummer Bhanu A in 1994. The three met while working at a school owned by Yakthumba's mother in Kathmandu. All shared a passion for Western music, especially of the '70s, and were inspired by American bands like Deep Purple and the Eagles.

"Back then we were total amateurs, we thought we were great because we could play covers of Western songs," recalls Shyangden, now 44. All that changed with the release of their first album *Time Out*. Fans loved it and the pop-rock ballad *Mayalule* became an anthem of sorts for young Nepali men in love.

"He changed the course of the Nepali music scene for good," says Prajwal Mukhiya, the 26-year-old singer who took over as 1974 AD's lead singer after Adrian Pradhan's departure in 2015. "He influenced me and many other musicians who are active today."

Seven more albums followed from 1998-2007, each more successful than the last. But success and fame in the Nepali music industry doesn't necessarily equate with financial prosperity.

"It's hard to survive as a musician in Nepal," says Shyangden. "Even though our band was selling out stadiums, it was the organisers who were making the money, not us."

But fans didn't know that. So, when news surfaced in 2009 that Shyangden had left the band to move to America, many were distraught. "The main reason was financial," Shyangden admits. "I wasn't financially stable and needed to make the move to be able to support my family."

His father still lives on the tea estate in Darjeeling where Shyangden grew up, and his wife is based in Kathmandu. Shyangden's daughter joined him in New York last year and is currently studying music at LaGuardia College.

Besides performing at Himalayan Yak, a restaurant owned by a trio of Nepali businessmen, three nights a week, he also teaches guitar privately, mainly to children of Tibetan and Nepali immigrants.

Shyangden has no regrets. Although he is no longer part of 1974 AD, he is still close to its members. He wrote two songs for the band's new album and joined them on stage during their US tour last summer. He also released two solo albums post 1974 AD, the latest titled *Zindagi Asal Cha*.

Says Shyangden: "Life's good here but I miss my family and friends and especially the food back home." 🇳🇵

TSERING DOLKER GURUNG



NEPAL
WHEREVER
YOU ARE.

Times.com

A much older tom

Nepal's population is ageing rapidly, so today's children must be better equipped to take care of the elderly and develop the country when they grow up

SONIA AWALE

Nepalis are living longer and parents are having fewer babies, more of whom survive than ever before. This demographic transition is good news, but it also means that today's children must be better able to take care of a larger population of elderly people in the future.

Today, about 12 working-age individuals support one ageing person in Nepal. That ratio will drop to 5.6 by 2050. Today's children must therefore be raised to become far more productive than today's adults by the time they grow up, according to a report launched recently by the National Planning Commission, UNICEF and the Population Council.

The report, Study on Demographic Changes in Nepal: Trends and Policy Implications, predicts that by 2028, Nepal will be an 'ageing society' where 7 per cent of the population is above 65. That figure will double by 2054, making Nepal an 'aged' society. The speed of ageing will be much faster than in countries like France (115 years), UK (47 years) or Germany (40 years).

"Nepal's transition from an ageing to an aged society is similar to Japan. This means Nepal has a very short time to prepare itself to adequately take care of a rapidly growing old population, and simultaneously continue to develop the country," said Tomoo Hozumi, UNICEF Nepal Representative.

Tomoo adds that unlike Nepal, Japan was already a



developed economy when that transition happened. Nepal is also in a 'demographic window of opportunity' - a period when the proportion of the working-age population is higher than the young and elderly dependents. This provides a time-bound opportunity for accelerated economic growth, and with fewer children the country can invest more in their development. The challenge is that all this needs to be done in the next 30 years.

Nepal's fertility rate has declined from 5.6 per woman in the 1980s to 2.3 today, and it is falling. The crude death rate has more than halved and life expectancy has increased by more

than 20 years since the 1980s.

"Nepal already looks like an advanced society because our demographic transition has progressed in a very non-traditional manner in a significantly short time and at a relatively low level of development," explained Ashish Bajracharya of the Population Council.

All this is impressive and good for the country. But experts like Hozumi and Bajracharya (see interviews) emphasise that a rapidly ageing population and a finite demographic window of opportunity also bring new challenges. Old-age dependency in Nepal is growing and will continue

to rise, which means increasingly fewer people to look after larger numbers of older people. Unless younger Nepalis are raised to become much more productive, earn more and pay more taxes, the country could face a crisis.

"It is not about the number of children but about whether they are raised healthy and intellectually more capable so that they become equal to these challenges," explains Hozumi.

Nepal's laws need to be made elderly friendly. Currently there are almost no special provisions for the healthcare of older people. Migration and nucleating families means the elderly population is losing its traditional support base.

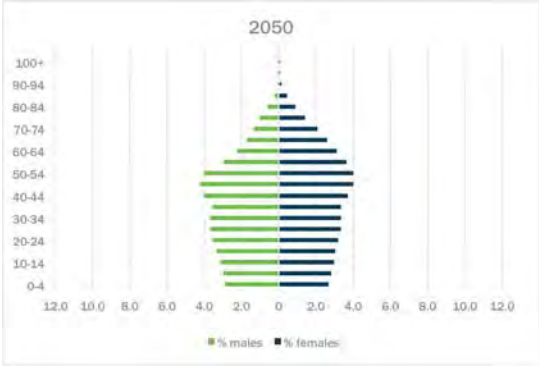
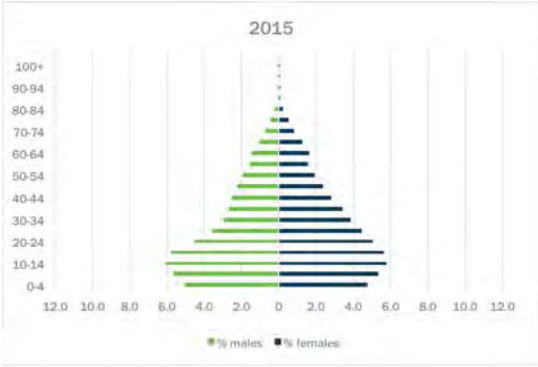
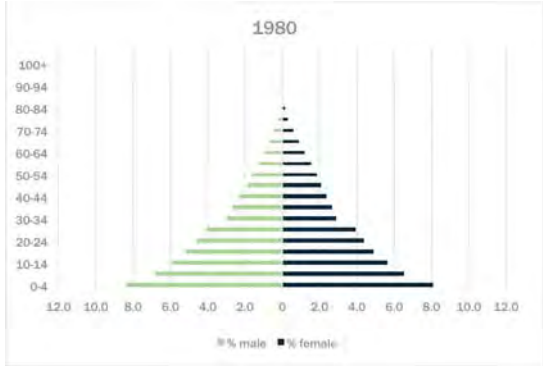
The migration of Nepal's working-age population also means they are not directly contributing to Nepal when the country has limited time to take advantage of the demographic window of opportunity.

"As people grow older, the problem of social security increases: the government has to come up with necessary care and resources. But as more people age, the focus of healthcare will have to change and the elderly should have separate provisions for geriatric care," says demographer Pitamber Sharma.

Nepal's demographic transition still gives us a 30-year window of opportunity, which means we have till 2047 to prepare for an ageing society and reap the demographic dividend - the period when working-age adults outnumber dependents.

Bajracharya says policies already need to focus on reducing dependency, making the population self-sufficient through pensions and financial savings, investing in the current workforce, helping youth to improve prospects, and developing human capital and investment

Demographic transition of Nepal: pyramid to kite



tomorrow



PICS: SONIA AWALE

skills. He highlights the need to improve women's participation in more productive sectors through later marriage and better work opportunities.

Krishna Murari Gautam, founder of the group Ageing Nepal, says young Nepalis need to be aware about what awaits them in future as they age, and to have backup systems in place if the government cannot cope with elderly care (see Guest Editorial).

UNICEF's Hozumi concludes: "We need to urgently invest in children and their education,

health and development on a priority basis. By the time they grow up, the responsibility of young Nepalis taking care of the elderly while simultaneously developing the country will increase exponentially. We need to invest in their growth so that they are capable of doing so." 🇳🇵



Nepal's population is rapidly ageing, 14% of Nepalis will be over 65 years by 2054. Learn about how the future of Nepal can be made brighter by investing in children.

nepalitimes.com

EXPERTSPEAK



Tomoo Hozumi, UNICEF

- Nepal has a demographic window of opportunity of another 30 years. In this period Nepal has to give priority to children, on their development, health and social protection.
- Children are a source of development and growth. How they are raised in terms of health and education has a direct bearing on how productive they can be when they grow into adults.
- Japan's response to ageing was too little, too late. Nepal's democratic transition is happening 30 years behind Japan.
- I don't want other countries to make the same mistakes we made in Japan. It is a matter of political will.



Ashish Bajracharya, Population Council

- The window of opportunity for rapid economic growth opens when a country has a smaller dependent population. But that is an opportunity only if social and economic policies are right and there is correct investment.
- We are ageing fast and we need to ensure that our policies are cognizant of this issue.
- Investing in early childhood development is the most cost-effective strategic intervention to address an ageing population. A focus on equity and justice is not just a matter of social justice but actually smart policy and economics.
- A successful family planning campaign, women's education, women's empowerment, advances in gender equality and higher primary school enrollment are all responsible for bringing down our fertility rate.
- We can extend the demographic window of opportunity by a number of years if we can delay age at marriage and subsequently delay first birth.



BIKRAM RAI

Age-old problem

Nearly half the young men in Nepal have left the country for work or study. One in every five children has one or both parents out of the country. Twelve per cent of Nepalis above 60 live alone. What these numbers suggest is that the country's senior citizens are losing their traditional support system in their old age. Families also do not live jointly and working couples move away, leaving elderly parents alone and vulnerable.

"Senior citizens have no family care, no social security and no retirement plan, and ageing itself has become a disability: the loneliness needs care and attention," explains Pramila Bajracharya Thapa of The Hope Hermitage, a elderly day care centre in Lazimpat.

As Nepal's population ages without a social safety net, senior citizen homes and care centres have sprung up in recent years. But there is still a social stigma attached to families who send their parents to shelters.

"Our culture expects the son to take care of parents in their old age, and those who send them to senior citizen homes are ostracised for abandoning their family," explained Krishna Murari Gautam of the organisation Ageing Nepal, who gave up his attempt to set up a geriatric home because of the stigma. He says old people's homes are considered charities for the old and poor. (see *Guest Editorial, page 2*)

In Nepal and worldwide, people are living longer, but not healthier. Terminal illnesses and neurodegenerative diseases are

replacing infectious illnesses, even in developing countries. There were 78,000 cases of dementia in Nepal in 2015, and this is projected to rise to 134,000 in the next 13 years and to 285,000 by 2050.

"Alzheimer's and dementia are misunderstood in Nepal," says Thapa, adding that the illnesses are treated as a form of madness. Families fear the stigma, and hide their relatives instead of seeking treatment.

In a country where mental health care has always been neglected despite a staggering 37.4 per cent of the total population suffering from some form of psychiatric disorder, treatment of the mental health of the elderly is almost non-existent.

"Government should set up care centres catering specifically to the needs of dementia patients, because their cases are more severe than those of other elderly people," says Thapa.

While Nepal exports geriatric caregivers to Israel and other countries, there is a shortage of trained personnel at home. Thapa couldn't find nurses for her centre so she hired unemployed young women, whom she trained in elderly care.

Hope Hermitage Nepal conducts 10-day trainings and produces qualified caregivers, many of whom are working in Kathmandu's 36 senior citizen homes or with individual families.

Says Thapa: "I'm at least assured that some elderly people are getting proper care. It has also helped empower women who would have been jobless otherwise."

Sonia Awale

<p>IONA COLLEGE</p> <p>75 REGIONAL UNIVERSITY RANKING</p> <p>Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET) Association of Advance Collegiate School of Business (AACSB)</p> <p>SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE - April 15, 2017 Merit-based scholarship available for both undergraduate & graduate</p>	<p>IONA COLLEGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 Undergraduate Majors • 30 Graduate Majors • Minimum English Proficiency TOEFL - 80 (UG) / 80 (PG) IELTS - 6.5 (UG) / 6.5 (PG) • SAT above 1050 • GRE/GMAT as per program requirement 	<p>UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND BALTIMORE COUNTY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40+ Undergraduate Majors • 30+ Graduate Majors • Minimum English Proficiency TOEFL - 80 IELTS - 6.5 • SAT highly recommended for scholarships • GRE/GMAT as per program requirement 	<p>UMBC AN HONORS UNIVERSITY IN MARYLAND</p> <p>159 NATIONAL UNIVERSITY RANKING</p> <p>Among the Nation's Most Innovative Schools US News & World Report (2015)</p> <p>Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET) American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation</p> <p>SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE - November 1st, 2017 UG Scholarships: \$1,000 - \$22,000 PG Scholarships: Graduate Assistantship available</p>
<p align="center"> PACASIA STUDY ABROAD </p>			

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

EVENTS



Kathmandu trail series,

Gear up for a picturesque run that passes through the Shivapuri hills. Escape the chaos of the city with fellow runners.
8 April, 7 am to 1 pm, Starting point: Himalaya Children's Foundation, Nayapati, For registration: <http://bit.ly/2o5xcdt>

Fool's night out,

Laugh your lungs out at this all women standup comedy event featuring Shailee Basnet and Seema Golchha. The headliner of the show will be Indian comedian Vasu Primlani.
1 April, 5.30 to 8 pm, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, Soalteemod, 9801200180, Tickets Rs. 2,000
Tickets available at: Neo, Jawlakhel & New Road; Dell, Maitighar; Ncell, Labim Mall, Pulchok

Art of Bangladesh,

Mark your calendars for 'UPHEAVALS', an art exhibition by eight Bangladeshi artists portraying present-day Bangladesh.
Until 9 April, 11 am to 7 pm, Park Gallery, Pulchok



KJC for kids,

A 10-day camp where kids get to learn about music, musical instruments, vocal workshops, song writing, studio recording and more fun activities. For children 5 to 12 years.
3 to 7 April and 9 to 13 April, 10 am to 4pm, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel, Package fee: Rs 9500, For more information: (01) 5013554

Bird watching,

Venture to Ranibari Community Forest with fellow bird watchers and spot a variety of these beautiful avians.
1 April, 7 am, Meeting place: Ranibari Gate, 9846076194

Chandragiri hike,

Gear up for a hike to Chandragiri hill starting from Macchegaun, going through forests and smaller villages, and finally reaching the top to get an impressive view of the city.
14 April, Meeting point: Boudhanath Gate, Rs 1000 per person, Registration till: 5 pm, 12 April, For more information: 9841704019/9861111466, hikinhnepal@gmail.com



Run for Parkinson's,

Mark your calendars for this run organised by Parkinson's Support Nepal and help raise awareness about Parkinson's.
1 April, 7 to 9 am, Nepal Tourism Board, Exhibition Road, Rs 500 per person, (01) 4256909

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.
More on page 6-7.
24 March to 9 April, Multiple venues, For more information: kt.artmandu.org

CSGN lecture series,

Attend a talk by former US-based investment broker James C. Hopkins, who has worked for a Tibetan monastery in Kathmandu for the last 10 years. Open only to members of Cultural Studies Group Nepal.
31 March, 9.30 am onwards, Hotel Shanker, Lajimpat, csgnkathmandu@gmail.com

MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI



MUSIC



Into the night,

Spend a musical evening with Nepali bands Mukti & Revival and Anuprastha.
31 March, 8 pm onwards, Reggae Bar, Thamel

Rock-a-mania,

Enjoy your weekend as Robin and the New Revolution belt out some of their hits. Opening performance by Nepali band The Strings.
1 April, 7 pm onwards, Karma Bar & Lounge, Tripureswor, (01) 4117148

Jai Nepal live,

Sway to the rhythms of Nepal rock band Jai Nepal and spend a relaxed Friday evening with friends and family.
31 March, 6.30 to 9.30 pm, Ai-La Lounge, Kumaripati, 9801018683



Food and music,

Tap to the beats of jazz, hiphop reggae, soul and electronic, and enjoy a great evening with friends and family with good food and drinks.
31 March, 4 to 7.30 pm, Kar.Ma Coffee, Jhamsikhel, 9843767232

Festive March,

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

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

Chez Caroline,

Authentic ambience, exquisite French food, glorious sunshine and more.
9am to 10pm, Babar Mahal Revisited, (01)4263070



Hotel Shangri-La,

Make the most out of your weekends and enjoy a relaxing Saturday brunch with live shawarma and pasta counters.
Every Saturday, 11 am to 3 pm, Shambala Garden and Club Sundhara, Hotel Shangri-La, Lazimpat, (01) 4412999 Extension: 7520/7508, Rs 1500 per person

Wunjala Moskva,

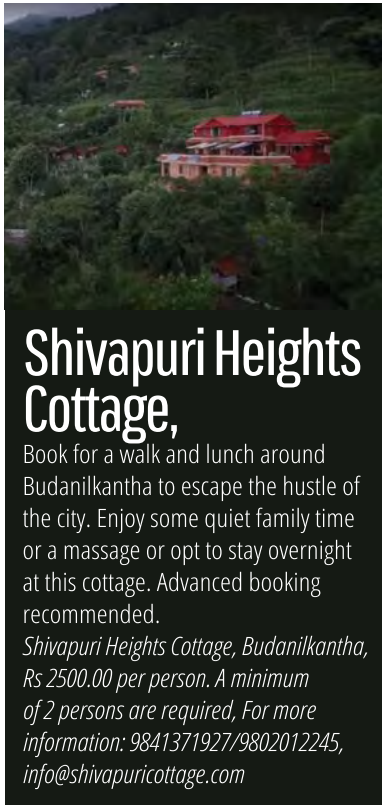
Treat your palette to Newari and Russian dishes in the lush garden with ancient trees and trickling streams.
Naxal, (01)4415236



Fire & Ice Pizzeria,

For the best Italian pizzas in town.
Thamel, (01)4250210

GETAWAY



Shivapuri Heights Cottage,

Book for a walk and lunch around Budanilkantha to escape the hustle of the city. Enjoy some quiet family time or a massage or opt to stay overnight at this cottage. Advanced booking recommended.
Shivapuri Heights Cottage, Budanilkantha, Rs 2500.00 per person. A minimum of 2 persons are required, For more information: 9841371927/9802012245, info@shivapuricottage.com



Milla Guesthouse,

If you prefer the quiet, and admire a mix of old and new, this is the perfect place to stay. Not too far away from the city, yet miles apart.
Bhaktapur, 9851024137

Raniban Retreat,

Situated at the other end of Phewa Lake and nestled inside Raniban forest and the World Peace Stupa, this retreat has one of the best views of the Annapurna range.
Phewa Lake, Pokhara, (01)4411855



Mango Tree Lodge,

Culture walks, rafting in the Karnali, wildlife exploration, and jungle safari at Bardia National Park.
Bhetani, Bardia,(84)402008, info@mangotreelodge.com





Since the men have all left, it is the women who helped rebuild the trails to Ripchet in the Tsum Valley, providing families with much-needed income.



Social mobiliser Sun Kumari Gurung collects information from widowed women in Uhiya for post-earthquake relief.



Kumari Ghale has been married eight years, and her husband is working in Afghanistan as a security guard. After the trail was repaired, it was possible for Kumari to open a provision store. Now she is less dependent on the money her husband sends home.

On the path to recovery



The Uhiya-Tatopani Trail generated income for local women during reconstruction after the earthquake, and now has made it faster and safer to take produce to market.

Repairing the trail to a tiny village near the 2015 epicentre made travelling safer, revived trekking and raised the income of local women

NIR PRADHAN
in GORKHA

Uhiya village clings to the vast side of a mountain high above the Budi Gandaki River, its cluster of houses stacked vertically on the

slope. To the northeast, there is a stunning view of Ganesh Himal. Only a few km from the epicentre of the earthquake that struck on 25 April 2015, Uhiya was almost completely destroyed. But unlike its more famous neighbours such as Barpak and Laprak, few had heard of this tiny

settlement. It remained cut off for months because rockfalls had destroyed trails and bridges. The monsoon rains that followed made the trails even more treacherous. As elsewhere, the outmigration of young men increased after the quake, and today there are only women,

the elderly and children left in Uhiya. Being single mothers, and with their limited Nepali, the women of Uhiya faced a double burden while trying to access help to reconstruct their homes. “The only way to reach our village was to walk through dangerous trails, clutching at clumps of grass on cliffs, so it was very difficult to bring food and relief here,” remembers Sun Kumari Gurung, a social mobiliser for earthquake relief. Two years later, Uhiya looks completely different. Most homes have been rebuilt, and the five-km trail to the market towns of Tatopani and Machakhola have been rehabilitated. Local women

were hired to rebuild the trail, which generated income and also provided new opportunities for small businesses. The path has brought down the price of food in Uhiya and villages up the mountain. The Uhiya-Tatopani and Philim-Ripchet trails in Gorkha, which were badly damaged in the earthquake, were rehabilitated by WFP with support from UK aid agency DFID. This has not just made it safer to walk: it has also raised local income with the return of trekkers on the Manaslu Trail. Other trails are being rehabilitated in Dhading and Rasuwa. 🇳🇵



Do these cause sensitivity in your teeth?

“I recommend Sensodyne.”
- Dr. Satbir Golar, dentist practising in the UK.



World's No.1 Sensitivity Toothpaste*

*Retail Value Sales data 12 months ending 30th April 2016.



© 2016, GSK group of companies or its licensor.



My expectations were low when I sat down to watch *Kong: Skull Island*, given its uninspired title. So, imagine my surprise when about 20 minutes into the film, I began to realise that it was actually really, really good. Part of the reason is that *Kong: Skull Island* has an excellent script, fast-paced

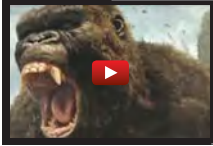


MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

without being mind-boggling, with some great lines that underscore an already good dialogue, free of the inanities you usually find in movies like this. Added to the script is an epic soundtrack: the film is set in 1973, so rock n’ roll classics underscore the incredible cinematography. A wide range of likeable characters bring the film to life, barring poor Samuel L. Jackson as the

demented Preston Packard, a US Lieutenant Colonel who loses it after his helicopters are annihilated by a furious Kong, the default protector of Skull Island. This is yet another origin story, but a good one. Kong is terrifying, regal, a lonely king in his remote island. While he is initially misunderstood by these explorers who come searching for this much talked about island, the film does a decent job of creating an aura around Kong that clues in the viewer to his true nature: he epitomises the romanticised trope of the noble savage. In addition to various, quite scary monsters, the film is populated by an ensemble cast including Tom Hiddleston as James Conrad, a quiet but charismatic former British Army captain (the film takes place at the tail end of the Vietnam War), and the talented, lovely Brie Larson as Mason Weaver, a famous photographer and pacifist who tags along on the

‘research mission’, which she senses might entail just a little bit more. Added to this mix, like icing, is John C. Reilly as Hank Marlow, a US lieutenant who has been stranded on Skull Island for 29 years, since his plane crashed there during the Second World War. The film is an ode to Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* – a homage evident from the surnames of Hiddleston and Reilly’s characters: Conrad and Marlow. (Marlow is the main character in Conrad’s novel of a man who slowly loses his mind, trapped in the African jungle). *Heart of Darkness* was adapted into the legendary Vietnam war film *Apocalypse Now* (1979), directed by Francis Ford Coppola, and it is easy to see the influences of both book and film on this Kong reworking. This imbues the monster movie with a bit of weight, trying to anchor it in the grave context of the Vietnam war and the woe it brought to generations of Americans as their men floundered in the tropical jungle. Whoever would have thought a film about Kong would be so entertaining and so thought provoking at the same time? The film is a surprising allegory of humankind’s lack of tolerance for anything it sees as ‘other’, an ongoing failing that may never be rectified.



Watch trailer online

nepalimes.com

HAPPENINGS



RSS

MEN IN BLACK: Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal met Chinese President Xi Jinping in the Great Hall of People in Beijing on Monday afternoon. The two leaders discussed bilateral issues for about half an hour.



INDIAN EMBASSY

STRIKE A POSE: Ambassador of India to Nepal, Manjeev Singh Puri, presents his credentials to Nepal President Bidya Devi Bhandari at Shital Niwas on Sunday.



KUNDA DIXIT

FULL MONTY: Wives of retired British Gurkha soldiers rest below a statue of Field Marshal Montgomery in London on Wednesday during protests over veterans’ pensions.



BIKRAM RAI

FLY HIGH: Abdullah Tuncer KECECI (*fifth from left*), General Manager of Turkish Airlines, with travel agents during an event at Hotel Yak & Yeti on Sunday.

EPSON
EXCEED YOUR VISION

M-Series Printers

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

Best for Office and Commercial purpose

M200- PRINT / SCAN / COPY

M100- PRINT

Just **25 PAISA** per print

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

JUST 12 WATTS POWER CONSUMPTION

UPTO 1 YEAR OR 50,000 PRINTS

HIGH SPEED PRINTING 34 PPM

MERCANTILE
OFFICE SYSTEMS PVT. LTD.

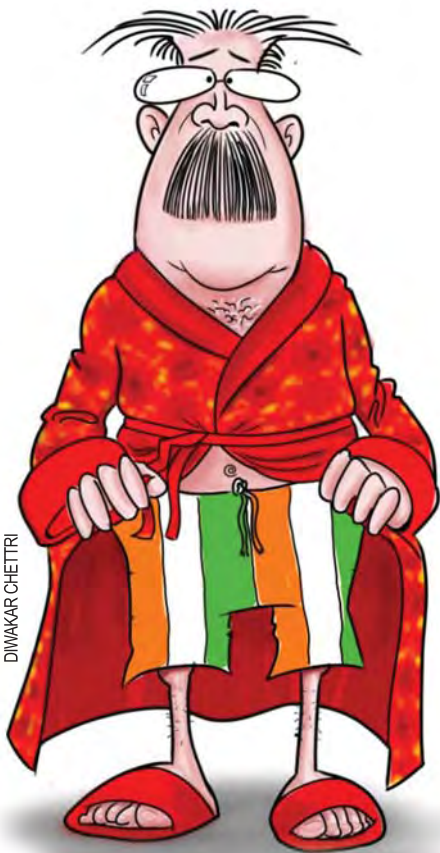
Authorized Distributor:
Hiti Pokhari, Durbar Marg
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 1-4440773/4445920

Kathmandu Valley Dealers:

Lazimpat : 4410423	New Road : 4220058
New Road : 4227854	New Road : 4260173
New Road : 4222384	Patan : 5538649
Putalisadak : 4268820	Putalisadak : 4415788
Putalisadak : 4227474	Putalisadak : 4436307
Putalisadak : 4417050	

Outside Valley Dealers:

Banepa : 011-860988	Biratnagar : 021-538729	Biratnagar : 021-532000
Birtamode : 023-540150	Butwal : 071-545399	Chitwan : 056-571764
Dang : 082-561022	Dhangadhi : 091-523601	Dhangadhi : 091-521392
Joralepur : 041-525585	Lahan : 033-561205	Mahendranagar : 099-523672
Nepalguni : 081-527092	Pokhara : 061-525300	Surkhet : 083-522488
Tulsiapur : 082-562575		



Dahal's China visit

Editorial in *Annapurna Post*, 29 March

अन्नपूर्ण

Pushpa Kamal Dahal visited India soon after becoming Prime Minister, but his visit to China was delayed for various reasons. As a result, he was dubbed 'pro-India' by the Chinese media. Dahal received a lot of support from India during the war waged by his Maoist party, and he also

invited New Delhi's mediation in Nepal's internal affairs. So it was not hard to understand the Chinese media's assessment, especially when Dahal wasn't making time to travel to Beijing although he had already visited New Delhi.

The Prime Minister finally visited Beijing and met Chinese President Xi Jinping this week. Xi apparently told Dahal to build trust between Nepal and China at the political level, and implement the agreements signed between the two countries. He was hinting that Dahal was indifferent to implementing the trade and transit treaty signed by the two countries during his predecessor KP Oli's visit to Beijing last year.

Dahal's willingness to implement the deal with China is being questioned even in Nepal. Xi knows that people's faith in the Prime Minister and other leaders is eroding, and the only way for them to regain the trust is to do what they say.

Kathmandu and Beijing have not signed a deal during Dahal's visit, but they have reached an understanding on some key issues: Nepal will join China's Road and Belt initiative, extend the Tibet railway to the Rasuwagadi border and then down to Lumbini, and reopen the earthquake-damaged Kodari highway. This should not be seen by India as a case of Nepal and China ganging up against it. Nepal must assure India that the collaboration is not anti-Indian.



From this year, Nepal is preparing to track climbers with a GPS device. Durga Dutta Dhakal, spokesperson of the Department of Tourism, explains why it is needed. *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 26 March-1 April.

हिमाल खबरपत्रिका

Why is it necessary to track climbers with a GPS device?

When climbers go missing or meet with an accident, rescue is often delayed because we cannot easily track their location. A GPS device will help us pinpoint their exact location.

At which stage is this plan?

We have had the first round of meetings with a supplier. We will now consult stakeholders and decide whether to go ahead.

Is it practical?

This may be a new technology

Tracking climbers

for Nepal, but many countries have already begun to track climbers with a GPS device.

their location. After returning from their expedition, they have to give the device back to us.

How does this device actually work?

We give climbers a GPS device before they set out on their expeditions. They cannot turn it off even if they want to. That way we will always know

Is it costly?

These devices cost Rs 30,000 apiece. If we get positive feedback from stakeholders, we can launch this program from the coming autumn season.



womenLEAD NEPAL

Career Opportunity

Women LEAD Nepal seeks an entrepreneurial and results-driven Nepalese citizen to join our Kathmandu-based team as Deputy Director to manage our talent, finances, and operations; liaise with the Government of Nepal, and take an active role in scaling up our impact by 2020.

Learn about this opportunity and other job vacancies at women-lead.org/get-involved

Apply by Friday, April 14 to help us build a better world where women leaders co-create the future.

Direct inquiries to team@women-lead.org or 01.6923979.

HYUNDAI | NEW THINKING. NEW POSSIBILITIES.

CRETA THE PERFECT SUV

“I AM PERFECT I AM CRETA”

Sagar Nath Upadhyaya
Classic Tech



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

Two years after the earthquake only about half the money pledged to Nepal by donors has actually been received

OM ASTHA RAI

On the first anniversary of the earthquake this time last year, most media coverage played the same angle: slow reconstruction, delayed relief and the \$4 billion pledged by donors squandered. On the second anniversary of the disaster, it will be the same old story.

To be sure, donors did pledge more than \$4.1 billion for Nepal's reconstruction at a conference in Kathmandu in June 2015, exactly two months after the earthquake. But the net pledge, excluding commitments for non-reconstruction work, was just \$3.43 billion.

Two years later, only \$2.73 billion has actually been received by Nepal. Moreover, much of that has been spent by donors to fund their own projects, and

FALLING BETWEEN CRACKS: Many families like this one in Nuwakot are still fixing the paperwork for their rebuilding grants even as Nepal waits for donors to make good on their pledges.



SHREEJANA SHRESTHA

Broken promises

hasn't gone to the government. Some donors have not sent a single dollar of the amount they pledged, yet some of them are blaming the government for slow response.

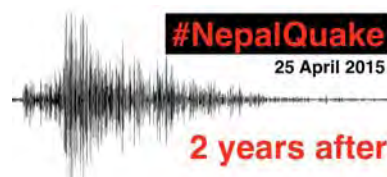
"There is a general perception that we have billions of dollars in

our account and we haven't spent it because of our inefficiency," says Govind Raj Pokharel, CEO of the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA). "The reality is that we face a huge funding crisis, and much of the reconstruction grant is not being spent through

our channel at all."

The Post Disaster Recovery Framework prepared by the NRA estimated that Nepal requires \$9.38 billion for rebuilding. It was readjusted after the government decided to increase the housing grant to NR 300,000

per household. So even if Nepal receives all the pledged money, there will still be a shortfall of more than \$5 billion. More than half the money (\$2.14 billion) pledged by donors is actually soft loans, so only \$1.97 billion is being given to Nepal as a grant.



Earthquake survivors wait for reconstruction grants that are too little too late

RAJNEESH BHANDARI
in SINDHUPALCHOK

It's midnight. Rain is making a din on the tin roof of Kanchaman Dong's one-room, four-bed shelter. This has been his family home for the past two years after the April 2015 earthquake.

Kanchaman tried to ignore the rain and cold, and just hoped for a warm sunrise in the village of Duwachaur, a jolting 8-hour ride across a rough mountain road. The earthquake killed seven members of the Dong community in Duwachaur: every household lost someone. A Lalitpur-based relief agency promised to rebuild the 36 homes destroyed here, but after making nine tin-roof huts, it didn't come back.

The relief agency says it left construction material for the remaining houses but had to abandon the project because of a disagreement with villagers about their contribution to the

reconstruction effort. It also says the Chief District Office in Chautara didn't show much interest in the help it was bringing.

Duwachaur is a story repeated right across the 14 earthquake-affected districts. It is a tale of how after initial interest, the government, aid agencies and relief groups slowly lost interest in helping survivors.

Meanwhile, Kanchaman Dong has just got the Rs 50,000 first instalment of the government reconstruction grant, but it isn't enough to buy the needed materials. In many earthquake-hit villages, the first instalment has been spent to buy food and essentials, and the rebuilding never started.

Kanchaman Dong's biggest item of expenditure is labour and transport costs. He says: "It is the transportation cost that keeps me afraid of attempting to build a house."

On the other side of the mountains from Duwachaur, in the village of Thokarpa, Tek Bahadur Mahat, 33, is rebuilding a one-storey home with help from his family members. But the Rs 50,000 is long gone. Mahat has already spent Rs 300,000 on 10 trucks of sand and gravel, Rs 200,000 on bricks, Rs 300,000 on iron rods, Rs 250,000 on cement and Rs 250,000 on timber for windows and doors.

By the time his house is finished, Mahat's home will cost five times more than what



the government has promised in reconstruction grants.

The Ministry of Urban Development's Design Catalogue for Reconstruction of Earthquake Resistant Houses has designs for homes made of stone and mud mortar, brick and mud mortar, stone and cement, and brick and cement. The cost to build

these seismic-resistant designs is between Rs 1-3 million.

Reconstruction in Kathmandu is even more expensive. Umesh Maharjan from Lalitpur is building a six-room house after his previous one was damaged in the quake. He hired a contractor for Rs 3.5 million to rebuild his house – 10 times more than

the grant he is getting from the government.

A government estimate showed that 602,257 houses were destroyed, and 285,099 houses partially damaged. It pledged Rs 200,000 in three instalments for reconstruction, and last year Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal raised that to Rs 300,000.

“It is not a free lunch, our children will have to pay this back,” says Bhisma Bhusal of the NRA, who coordinates with donors.

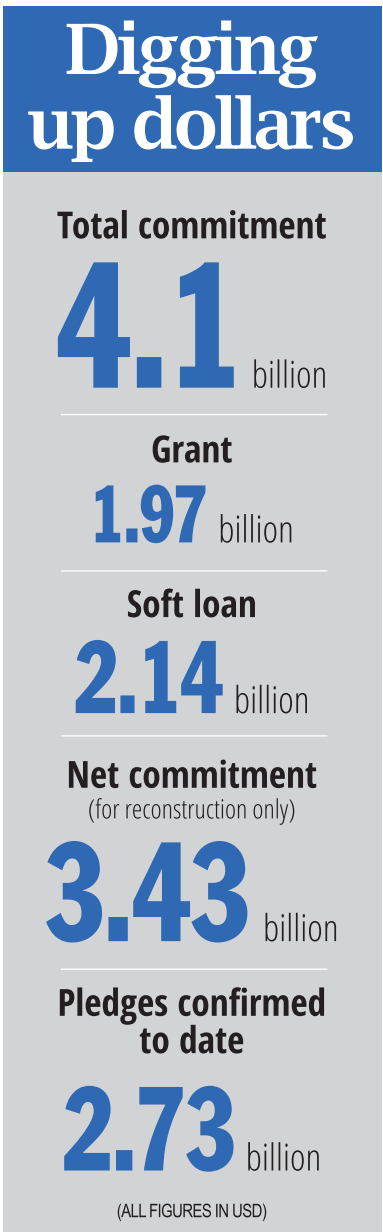
At the International Conference of Nepal’s Reconstruction, India was the biggest donor with a pledge of \$1.4 billion. But its net commitment was just \$1 billion, and three-fourths of that amount (\$750 million) was actually a soft loan.

Nevertheless, India is releasing its entire pledged amount through Nepal’s Finance Ministry, meaning that the NRA is free to choose to spend this money on the projects it selects. India is one of the few countries that have already signed an agreement with Nepal for disbursement of its financial support.

Apart from India, only South Korea, Germany, the EU, the UK’s DfID and the IMF have signed financial agreements with Nepal for all their pledged amounts. Others like Norway, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and Turkey have not released a single cent of their pledged amounts for post-earthquake reconstruction.

But Norway says it announced funding without pledging new money. “Norway made a re-prioritisation within its existing development budget and in the interest of time, decided to use already established partner organisations to channel the funds (about \$30 million),” said the Norwegian Embassy’s Elin Linnested.

“To instead establish a new contract agreement with the government would have taken a



very long time.”

China was the second largest donor with a pledge of \$767 million and the entire amount was a grant. However, unlike India, China has chosen its own

projects like repairing of the earthquake-damaged Arniko Highway, the Syabru-Rasuwagadi road and rebuilding the Nautaley (nine-storey) temple in Kathmandu.


China will simply inform the NRA when it completes these projects. Sri Lanka too chose itself to rebuild the Rato Machindranath temple in Bungmati. Huge portions of the pledges made by the US, Australia, Switzerland and others will also never get to the NRA: they will all be spent on the countries’ own earthquake projects.

Pokharel is now lobbying with political leaders to create a National Reconstruction Fund so the remaining pledge money is deposited at the NRA, and can be disbursed through a single agency. This is because government agencies are working at cross-purposes on relief, delaying disbursement.

Pokharel is also planning another conference to prod donors to release their pledged amounts urgently, and expedite reconstruction work. However, as Nepal prepares to mark the second anniversary of the earthquake, international attention is waning. ,

Although reconstruction in developing countries usually takes years, a lot of the blame for slow rebuilding must go to political interference in the workings of the NRA (see box). Pokharel was sacked when the UML took over the government in August 2015, and was reinstated by the NC-Maoist coalition earlier this year, resulting in two wasted years. 🇳🇵

Spending power



The National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) was set up to fast-track post-earthquake recovery. Govind Raj Pokharel (*pictured*) was appointed its first CEO by the NC government in 2015, but was replaced by Sushil Gyewali when the UML took over in October 2015. But when Pokharel was reinstated as CEO in January, the NRA was no longer the autonomous agency that he helped create.

“This is not the NRA we envisaged when we prepared the Post Disaster Needs Assessment report,” Pokharel told *Nepali Times*. “We wanted an autonomous agency with the authority to mobilise its own resources. This NRA has become tangled in bureaucratic red tape.”

During Gyewali’s one-year tenure, the law that governs the NRA was revised to curtail the CEO’s power by giving more discretion to the NRA Secretary and a five-member executive body. When Pokharel was reinstated he had the backing of the NC, but the four other executive members are from other parties. The tussle between them has slowed reconstruction.

For example, the Finance Ministry has already allocated a budget to retrofit the earthquake-damaged Singha Darbar. But bidding is delayed because executive members close to the UML want to demolish the Rana-era structure and rebuild it.

“One problem is the funding shortfall, but a bigger problem is the NRA bureaucracy,” complains Pokharel. “The NRA should be an autonomous body with its own fund and spending discretion. Otherwise, it will just be another government agency.”

temporary relief



RIISING FROM RUINS: Ruined homes, temporary shelters and a home being rebuilt in a village in Dolakha. Tek Bahadur Mahat (*right*) says it costs five times more than the housing grant to build a safe house.

PICS: RAJNEESH BHANDARI



Dangol of the Department of Urban Development.

Both in villages and cities, it is clear that the government grant, even when it does finally come, will not be enough. After completing their houses, both urban and rural builders have one thing in common: wait for the remaining grant from the government, and take on a huge debt for the remaining amount.


Tek Bahadur Mahat (*pictured above*) in Thokarpa, for instance, invested half of the amount from his savings and took loans of Rs 700,000 from friends to build his house.

“I hope the rest of the reconstruction grant will be useful in repaying the debt in 2-3 years with interest,” Mahat said. “The government’s Rs 300,000 doesn’t even buy the roofing material.”

In Kathmandu, Yubaraj

Khatiwada, former governor of the Nepal Rastra Bank and ex-chief of the National Planning Commission, is worried that indebtedness will rise in households with no other source of income. “The households without remittance income, no surplus cash crops or no local business, and those who do not qualify for housing grants for one reason or another, will be worst hit.” 🇳🇵

This story was supported by a grant from the Fund for Investigative Journalism in Washington, DC, and part of the project, “After the Quake: Waiting for Relief,” based at the Centre for Investigative Journalism-Nepal.



Watch a video of earthquake survivors in Sindhupalchok as they express their concerns to rebuild their homes.

nepalitimes.com

NOT MUCH HELP

The situation of survivors of the April 2015 earthquake is overwhelmingly bad, says the third in a series of surveys of survivors in 11 earthquake-affected districts.

Shelter, loans, aid and treatment for trauma are dire needs, adds the report *Aid and Recovery in Post-Earthquake Nepal*, conducted last September with face-to-face interviews with 4,855 household respondents.

Earlier surveys, with many of the same people, were held in June 2015 and February-March 2016. A fourth wave of surveying and fieldwork is planned for the second anniversary of the quake in April 2017.

One bright spot is that many respondents said their livelihoods had improved since the previous survey. For most income sources, 80-89 per cent of people said their livelihood had recovered in the preceding three months.

‘Almost everyone now says that electricity, drinking water, access to a medical facility, schools and motorable roads are provided by the government,’ notes the report.

But overall, the document calls for urgent action, starting with shelter. ‘The shelter situation remains worrying with 71 per cent in the most-affected severely hit districts continuing to live in temporary shelters. While many have moved back into their own house, others have left their house to return to shelters often recognising that they are unsafe.’

It adds: ‘Among those whose houses were badly damaged or destroyed, 72 per cent have not done anything to rebuild. The most common reasons for this are a lack of money (89%) and people still waiting for cash from the government (66%). Increases in the price of construction materials and labour have also hampered rebuilding.’

The survey was carried out by The Asia Foundation, with support from the UK aid agency DfID and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It calls for urgent action in four areas:

Shelter and housing: Roll-out of cash grants through the housing reconstruction program must be accelerated. A medium-term strategy to improve the quality of temporary shelters is still needed.

Debt and borrowing: Further cash grants, or the direct provision of construction materials rather than loans, are needed. Ideally, loans would be provided at low interest rates and from formal providers such as banks. The government may have a role providing incentives to open bank branches in rural areas.

Trauma: Enduring psycho-social trauma is a reality for many. There is a need to track trauma, and to develop programs to respond to it.

Marginalised survivors: ‘Those who were vulnerable and marginalised before the earthquakes—low income, low caste, the disabled—are those who are most likely to be struggling to recover. It is vital that more attention and resources are directed to these groups so they are not left further behind.’

Marty Logan





ELEVATE

YOUR EXPECTATIONS

CHARRED OAK BARRELS
FLAVOURFUL, SMOKY &
INTENSE CHARACTER

Gross National Sadness

Once more Nepal finds itself at the top of the heap of high-achievers. Last month, Nepal was recognised for being the third most corrupt country in Asia, and this week we have been voted the third happiest country in the region. There must be a correlation between being on the take and being blissful.

This just goes to prove that among the many failures of governance in the past decades, the most glaring is the inability of successive rulers to ensure that we Nepalis are consistently wretched. We elected our politicians to keep Nepal poor and sad, but not only have they allowed our multi-dimensional poverty rate to decline precipitously, they have also allowed us to be irrationally happy.

To mark this solemn and sad occasion of allowing Nepal to be the turd happiest country in South Asia after Bhutan and Pakistan, the Cabinet should forthwith declare three days of national mourning, with the national flag flying at half mast in all non-government buildings and diplomatic missions manned by manpower ambassadors. Attendance at memorial services will be mandatory so that we can mope, brood and figure out ways to be forlorn again.

We used to be a nation that took our unhappiness seriously. It is stressful to suddenly be foisted with clean and competent ministers, electricity 24 hours a day, wide roads, efficient public transport, a Bagmati devoid of garbage, and Melamchi water you can drink straight off the tap. What will we do now that there is no reason to whine? It's miserable to have to stop being miserable. Yet, we have to be strong as

a people, we have to put on a grumpy face and wipe the grins off our faces.

Happily, there are still Nepalis who are happy to just sit around and complain about how unhappy we are. That gives us hope that in next year's happiness rankings we will be back at the bottom of the heap. Which reminds me, what is it that makes Pakistanis so happy? What are they smoking? And who can compete with Bhutan, a country that is ecstatic because it's on ecstasy. The concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) was invented by King Jigme the Glad, who found a way to make his country happy by ensuring that 120,000 of them became sad.

Besides corruption, the other reason we Nepalis are unnaturally happy is probably because alcohol consumption per head in this country is growing at a phenomenal rate. Just look at the ads on this page. Which is why the time has come to set up the National Commission on Sorrow and Gloom (delayed by fierce competition between political parties for the pre-paid position of Chair) so that we can go back to our traditional way of life that involved lighting a candle and cursing the darkness.

Nepal needs another index to measure our hidden national angst. How about the Corruption Prevalence Ratio (CPR) which is arrived at by calculating the square root of GDP per capita with wealth-redistribution potential and multiplying it with an inverse decimal for the public expenditure as a proportion of total budget which this year amounted to 9 Kharab 24 Arabs 732 Corrodes and 87 Lacks. And if that won't make us sad again, nothing will.



The Ass

Fresh 2017 make

FORD ECOSPORT

Special offer available for Expatriates with Duty Free Privileges*

Now with 8" Infotainment Touchscreen

Door Ajar Warning Rear View Camera DVD Player (Video)

Offer also available for Ford Figo & Aspire

For Details Call

9801196000

Go Further

GO FORD, G.O. Automobiles Pvt. Ltd., Thapathali, Kathmandu
Thapathali Showroom: 4244254, 4257001, 9801201235,
E-mail: info@ford.com.np, Website: www.ford.com.np

- Biratnagar: 021-463593, 9802032225, 9802079409 • Birgunj: 051-533186, 9802951102, 9855021471
- Narayanganhat: 056-526672, 9855066171, 9802960171 • Butwal: 071-415033, 9857031014, 9802656281 • Birtamode: 023-544830, 9852677189
- Nepalgunj: 081-551248, 9802522771 • Dhangadi: 091-416515, 9858421850, 9801728082 • Pokhara: 061-541285, 9856036160, 9856056150
- Dang: 082-560794, 9857830336 • Bhairahawa: 9857031014 • Banepa: 011-691231, 9801186379, 9851053363 • Hetauda: 057-524589, 9802951101

Like us on: www.facebook.com/fordnepal

*Terms and conditions apply. Features and specifications shown may not be part of standard fitment, may vary from model to model and can change without any notice. Colours are indicative only and may vary due to printing constraints.