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Deuba's roadmap



BACHU BK

In his fourth tenure as Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba has a chance to end what started when he first was in that post 20 years ago.

The seven priorities that Deuba listed on Wednesday for his new government largely deal with a crisis that began in his first stint and worsened during the other two times he was prime minister: the conflict. He has to deal with its legacy.

If he succeeds, Nepal will enter a new era of stability and prosperity. If he fails, the rocky political transition will continue to impact on the economy.

Analysts are cautiously optimistic, but Deuba's aides claim that he is now a man with a mission with a keen sense of how history will judge him. The signs are not encouraging: his choice of cabinet of cronies looks like old wine in an old bottle.

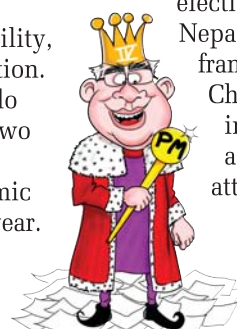
Here is Deuba's checklist:

- ✓ Deuba's first order of business is to complete the process of reviving grassroots democracy by holding the second phase of local elections on 28 June. That will probably go without a hitch because the two Madhes-based parties voted for him and they will probably participate if cases against those arrested during the Madhes agitation are scrapped.
- ✓ Holding provincial and parliamentary elections later this year will be more knotty. Madhesi parties will insist on a constitutional amendment beforehand. If Deuba fails, so will the Constitution and the country will be in a political void.
- ✓ The mandate of the two transitional justice bodies will expire in nine months. Deuba must deliver justice to conflict victims, but he and his coalition partner Maoist Chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal, also face charges of wartime atrocities. How he deals with this will determine the future of the peace process.

- ✓ The government is meeting nearly half the post-earthquake reconstruction budget from its own coffers. This gives the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) more flexibility, and can expedite reconstruction. Deuba must show he could do more for survivors than his two predecessors.
- ✓ Nepal achieved an economic growth rate of 7% this past year. Deuba's coalition needs to sustain it by boosting infrastructure, inviting

more FDI and preventing looming power cuts this winter.

✓ Deuba is said to be keen to visit India next month after local elections. At a time when Nepal has just signed a framework agreement on China's Belt and Road initiative, Deuba cannot afford to give less attention to Beijing.



FUSION OF POWERS
EDITORIAL
PAGE 2



buizz

BAGMATI

The proposed Bagmati River Park will give Kathmandu new breathing space and could lead to urban cultural renewal.

PAGE 8-9

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FUSION OF POWERS

Ever since the 18th century, a basic tenet of democracy has been the doctrine of the separation of powers. The functions of the three branches of government (legislature, executive and judicial) are delineated so that they don't step on each other's toes. The aim is to have checks and balances and avoid the concentration of power in any one branch. Sometimes, we in the media are called the 'fourth estate' as another layer of scrutiny to defend the citizen's constitutionally guaranteed right to information.

Democracy also requires specialised and independent constitutional bodies like the Supreme Court, the Election Commission, the Public Service Commission, etc. The Supreme Court is the institution of last resort, and can adjudicate in matters pertaining to all branches of government and even other constitutional bodies, including the Election Commission.

Nepal's political evolution generally after the 1990 People's Movement, and in particular after the conflict ended in 2006, has seen the lines deliberately blurred between the branches of government -- along with blatant political interference into constitutional organs. It has now become so common for one branch of the state to interfere in another that it doesn't even raise eye-brows anymore. Our greedy and semi-literate rulers are directly responsible for the steady erosion of pluralism, a constriction of freedoms and democratic decay. It is a basic trait of Nepal's democratic parties that they fight long and hard for an open society with great personal sacrifice, courageously standing up again and again to dictators, endure incarceration, and then they go and repeatedly squander hard-won freedoms.



GUEST EDITORIAL
DAVID SEDDON

Muddy road to middle-income

Many commentators, including Swarnim Waglé (*Guest Editorial last week, #861*) may have got carried away by the first local elections in 20 years in deciding to elevate Nepal to a middle-income country by 2030.

The economic growth rate this year reflects the very poor performance after the earthquakes, and the Blockade. The economy is still heavily reliant on the performance of the agricultural sector, which in turn depends on favourable rainfall. The trade deficit continues to widen, especially with India. Infrastructure looks promising, but Nepal remains poorly connected to its external markets. Skills training and domestic job creation are woefully inadequate, and Nepal loses its most productive people abroad.

The disruption and added expenditure of the elimination of DDCs and VDCs with which Nepalis have grown familiar for several decades, and the creation of entirely new local bodies and provincial administrations, will far outweigh any potential benefits to be derived from the massive transfer of funds to local bodies.

The risk of local elite capture of these funds or, alternatively, of continuing control from the centre, raises real questions about whether this 're-structuring' will prove effective, or even genuinely democratic. Waglé's idea that this change means that 'parts of Singha Durbar will now be located in every Nepali village', may come to be so, but not in the way he presumably anticipates.

He identifies five D's which he sees as positive

What we see in Nepal today is not a separation, but a fusion of powers. Most recently, it started with the appointment of Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi as caretaker prime minister to oversee elections in 2013. That fatal foray into mixing up branches of government led to even more objectionable appointments, like that of a royal bureaucrat indicted for embezzlement and suppression of the pro-democracy movement of 2006 as the anti-corruption czar.

Since the end of the conflict, the Big Three parties have behaved like a political cartel, exploiting the democratic void to plunder local budgets and divide up the spoils of office. The Executive has essentially captured the Legislature and ruled it by whipping up proxies. Politicians got Parliament to register an impeachment motion against the CIAA chief last year not for his extortion and abuse of power, but because they suddenly became suspicious of his political ambitions. Then, last month the Maoist-NC coalition got its MPs to file an impeachment motion against Chief Justice Sushila Karki before she retired, just

so that she would not be able to hear the IGP sacking case, and high-profile corruption cases against their cronies.

Chief Justice Karki has spilled the beans in a scathing interview (*translation on page 13*) in which she accuses Prime Minister Dahal of pressuring her on sub judice cases.

The latest most egregious interference was the Maoist-NC arm-twisting of the Election Commission to order a re-poll in Ward 19 of Bharatpur even after Maoist cadre tore up ballot papers after they started trailing.

All this does not bode well for the future of Nepal's democracy, as Prime Minister Deuba takes over for the fourth time with old wine in an old bottle.

elements in Nepal's rosy future, but Distance will remain a major problem for Nepal. Demography means a continuing need every year to create hundreds of thousands of jobs. Democracy remains an issue, with the people offered limited choice from a few major parties, none of which has a clear and coherent strategy for the radical transformation that is so badly needed.

Digitisation is indeed potentially revolutionary, but so far it has not been effectively harnessed. The Diaspora is a reflection of the failure of Nepal over the last century to create a suitable environment for investment and employment for millions of its most enterprising and ambitious citizens. Luckily, many of them do send remittances back home, but until Nepal itself creates suitable pre-conditions, they will be reluctant to commit their own hard-earned savings to invest.

Nepalis are right to be excited about having a voice in their own future through local, parliamentary and provincial elections, if these all come to pass. But realism, and willingness to act, rather than un-mitigated optimism must be the watchword. I have confidence in the ordinary people of Nepal, but much less in those who preside over them.



David Seddon David Seddon is co-author of *Nepal in Crisis: Growth and Stagnation at the Periphery* (1980).

Times.com

ONLINE VIDEOS



UNHOLY RIVER

Bagmati was once a holy river, today it's a sewer. With unmanaged urbanisation and a population boom, the river has become synonymous with smelly water and garbage. Watch a *Nepali Times* film that follows the Bagmati from a clear spring in Shivapuri National Park, down through the city to Chobhar. Learn about efforts to clean up the river and whether the planned Melamchi Water Supply Project and new sewage treatment plants can help clean the river.



HELLO KITTY

In Nepal, canine is divine, but not feline. While there are many shelters for stray dogs in Kathmandu, only one is solely devoted to cats. Watch a video of rescued kittens playing in the Catmandu Lovers shelter in Patan, where they are being raised in a loving environment with personalised care.



BURNING ISSUE

Nepali Times coverage of the rise in serious burn injuries especially among children growing up in crowded earthquake shelters elicited a lot of sympathy from readers. There have been inquiries about Sahina Shrestha's profile of 8-month-old Saroj Tamang (*above*) who was severely burnt in the fireplace in a shelter in Sindhupalchok. The baby needs another operation and the family is running out of money. If you would like to help, please write to **editors@nepalitimes.com** and we will facilitate assistance to the Tamang family.

REALISTICALLY OPTIMISTIC

Thank you Dr Waglé for putting the record straight ('Nepal 2030', Swarnim Waglé, #861). There are Nepali and foreign consultants who make a living predicting the worst for Nepal and rejoice when their forecasts come true. These lords of poverty profit from keeping Nepal poor. Thanks for being realistically optimistic about our future.
Astha S Mainali

ASSYLUM

The Ass (Backside, Seeking asylum in Nepal, #861) forgot another Prachanda achievement: giving his son a medal.
Prakash

WHAT'S TRENDING



The Rana Reign

by Kunda Dixit

Singha Durbar: Rise and Fall of the Rana Regime of Nepal by Sagar Rana is a compelling history of Nepal's other royal family, and the review was widely accessed on social media. Go online if you missed it and watch Kunda Dixit in conversation with Sagar Rana about his book on *Nepali Times* Studio.

Most reached on Facebook
(9,039 people reached)

Nepali street names in London

A small parish town southwest of London, home to thousands of Nepali soldiers from the British Gurkha regiments for the past 30 years was sold to private developers, who have given Nepali street names to the upscale housing estate.

Most visited online page
(1,530)

Most shared on Facebook

Deuba IV

by Om Astha Rai

"This is his last chance for redemption. He won't have a second chance," says political scientist Lok Raj Baral of Sher Bahadur Deuba as he prepares to be prime minister for the fourth time.

Most popular on Twitter
(82 retweets, 86 likes)

Nepal 2030

Guest Editorial by Swarnim Waglé
This optimistic economic outlook presented by a National Planning Commission economist generated a lot of comment on social media and was widely shared. Waglé says Nepal's priority now should be job-creating economic change, propelled by large investments in infrastructure.

Most commented

QUOTE TWEETS

Nepali Times@nepalitimes
#Nepal can attain lower middle income status by 2030, but conditions apply Read more: [@omastharai](http://bit.ly/2qMPIKm) #economy



Damir Cosic@chosa
Nice piece! However, thought that you would cover the role of cartels in the economy and how they sap productivity? No?

Nepali Times@nepalitimes
The diplomatic row between Qatar and its Gulf neighbours could deal a blow to Nepal's remittance economy @omastharai <http://bit.ly/2rCUcqe>

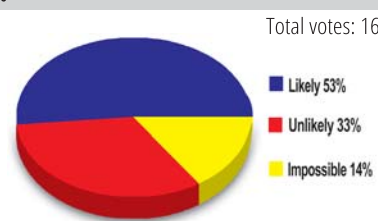


Richard Howard@RichardHILO
This reasserts the need to make migration safe, orderly & regular.



Weekly Internet Poll #862

Q. Can Nepal maintain its 7% economic growth in coming years?



Weekly Internet Poll #863
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. What is your assessment of Sher Bahadur Deuba's prospects as Prime Minister?



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Bringing aid back to basics

Nepal's foreign donors can now go directly to the people through elected local governments

There is a widespread notion in Nepal that foreign aid in the last two decades has helped stoke social disharmony and ethnic tension. The government has brought this up with donors, pressuring them to channel aid away from sectors like democracy and human rights to infrastructure and development.



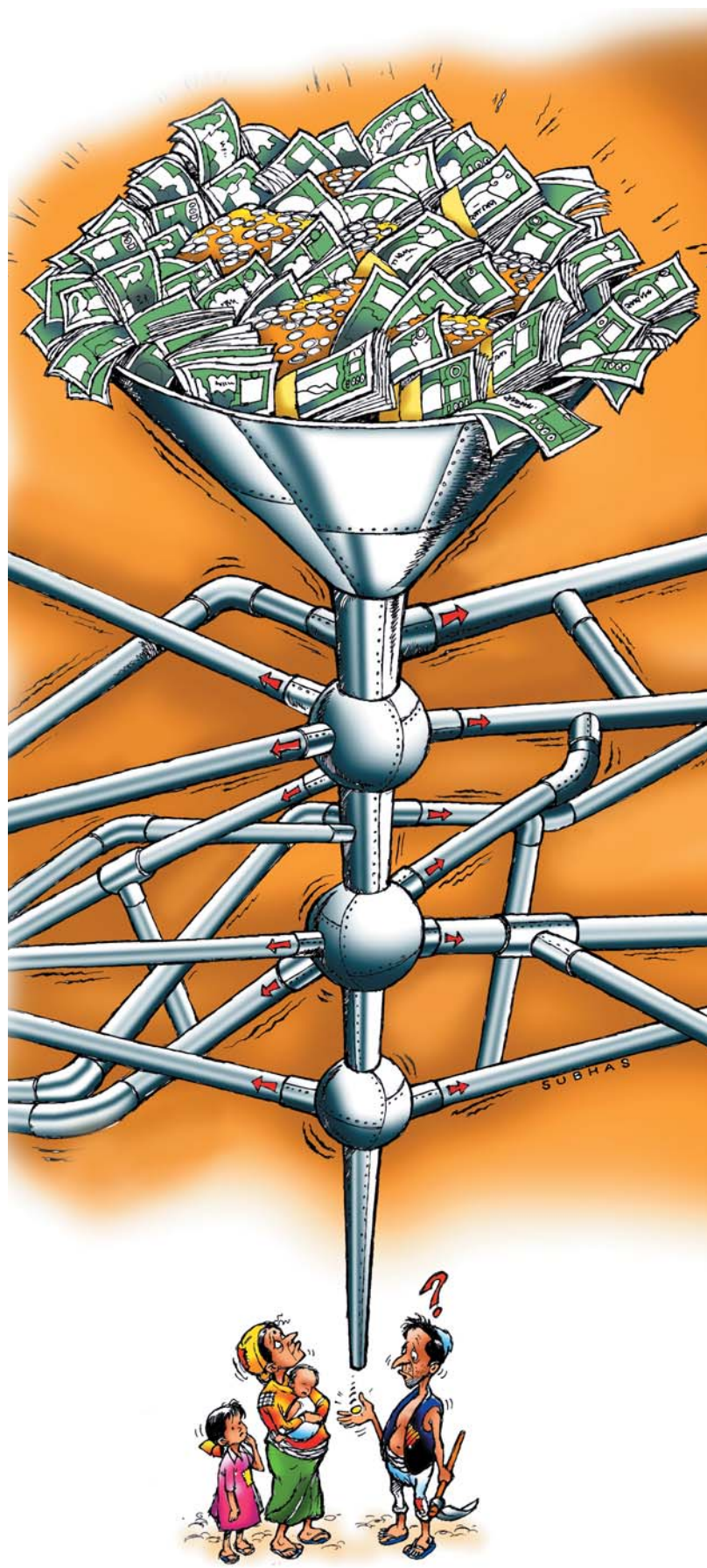
CONNECTING DOTS
Dinkar Nepal

The agencies clarify that this is selfish cribbing of the traditional elite, and there is some truth in that. But large amounts of funding can be traced to direct or indirect support for individuals or organisations working towards ethnic causes.

Whether this support is principally wrong, and whether donors had ulterior motives for such an approach is a matter of deeper debate later. But assuming that much of the Aid Industry should be driven by humanitarian impulses and enlightened moral self-interest, the time is apt to suggest a course correction in the way Nepal gets its aid and where it is disbursed.

The 2015 earthquake was a good opportunity to re-orient foreign aid to make it more respectable and acceptable to a wide spectrum of Nepali people, but that did not happen. Not only have most donor pledges for reconstruction fallen short, but instead of strengthening the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), donor agencies have been busy creating their own fiefdoms for short term glory.

Bypassing the NRA could be the result of a lack of trust in our polity, but there are not too many other examples of phenomenal success in the last 70 years of aid involvement in Nepal. Considering the total amount of money poured into Nepal over those decades in the name of aid,



SUBHAS RAI

this is an astonishing failure. Aid has abetted a corrupt ecosystem dominated by a selected few who align with whatever opinion foreign donors in Nepal hold at that particular moment. The misconceptions thus created and reinforced in the echo chamber is one of the causes of failure of many initiatives.

Eugene Bramer Mihaly, after studying the first 12 years of the aid industry in Nepal, wrote in his book *Foreign Aid and Politics in Nepal (1965)* that foreign aid programs were not successful because they were based on faulty foundations. One of the first scholars to research aid as a political tool, he concluded after studying results of the aid efforts by various countries like India, China, the US, Switzerland and Soviet Union between 1951-62 that the basic assumptions that guided aid-based interventions in Nepal were wrong.

'Time and again, an apparent reason for a program's failure was traceable to flaws in two conceptions that were the foundation and the framework of the majority of the aid programs,' Mihaly wrote. The first of these was a 'belief in the readiness of Nepal for social, economic, and political change' and the other was the aid donor's assumption that 'the Nepal government was able and willing to administer development projects of considerable complexities'.

Mihaly proves his point by indicating the type of projects that were successful: the small and highly specialised projects of the Swiss like the dairy initiatives. His analysis that these efforts were effective because they did not depend on the Nepal people and the government could, however, be hotly contested today. There are many examples of aid that has worked because the government, especially at the local level, was involved.

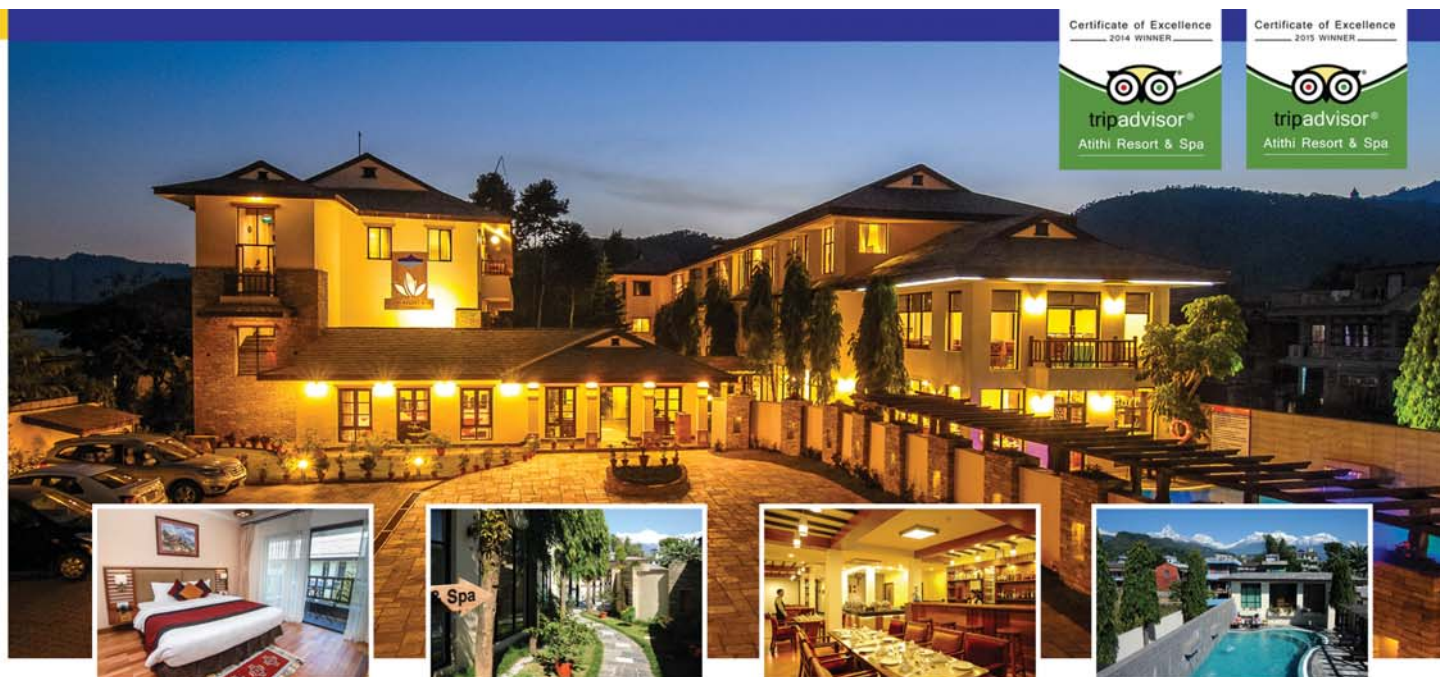
About people, Mihaly writes,

'Nepal at that time was not in the grip of a revolution of rising expectations. The majority of its inhabitants were unaware that a way of life different from their own even existed.' And about the state of the government, he says, 'Most donors eventually learnt through harsh experience that the government lacked the administrative capacity and the political will to govern.'

Things have changed. The aid industry has altered prescriptions many times over in the years that followed, but the insights Mihaly came up still remain broadly valid. Globalisation has ensured that Nepal is now in the grip of a 'revolution of rising expectations' and the new Constitution has created grounds for a local government which is compelled to deliver. This changed scenario brings governmental stability to the local level, thus making it possible to have long-term strategic partnerships between the municipalities and donor agencies.

The new local governments can now be the most effective vehicles to implement programs based on the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Most of the 17 goals fall under the exclusive rights and duties of local governments, which are best placed to implement them because of their proximity to the resources and people at the grassroots.

What is needed now is an immediate push for programs on governance, health, community empowerment and education in collaboration with the local governments. The technology and knowledge available to us today, the new system of local governance Nepal has entered into, and the fundamental changes in Nepali society as a result of globalisation can be put to use for constructive transformation. This is a golden opportunity for the agencies to get back to the basics of development assistance, especially to meet humanitarian needs. 🇳🇵



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Nepalis in Qatar worried

The Saudi-led blockade of Qatar has isolated the country and fanned fear about the future among Nepali migrant workers in the Gulf region because of a lack of information.

Ram Hari Neupane, a salesperson at a supermarket in Doha described the city as being normal, but said his compatriots were worried about what would happen.

“Our managers haven’t told us anything yet. All the information we are getting is from social media. This has caused fear as to what will happen if the situation worsens,” he said. “People at my supermarket are stocking up on daily supplies. We get a lot of produce from Saudi Arabia and we are running out of them.”

For those planning trips to Qatar, the ban on flights has had an immediate impact on purchase of cheap air tickets. Even though there has been no direct effect on migrant workers in Doha yet, experts say there could be longterm impact.

“It all depends how the Qatari government responds. With the decline of oil prices, the number of Nepali migrants to the GCC was slowly decreasing but Qatar was the only country constantly accepting migrants as in previous years because of its construction boom,” said Ganesh Gurung, an



PATTABI RAMAN

expert on migrant issues. “But because of this ban, many Nepalis could lose their jobs and affect remittances.”

Immediately after the diplomatic boycott was announced, the Philippine government declared that it would stop sending foreign workers to Qatar until further notice -- citing food shortages as a major problem should the situation worsen.

“After hearing about the decision taken by the Philippine government, we are worried now

about what will happen to the Nepali workers there because many of the Nepalis fall under the same category as Filipino migrant workers,” said Som Prasad Lamichane, Secretary General at Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee, an organisation run by returnee migrant workers in Kathmandu. “We are all just waiting for the government to inform us about what next steps Nepalis in Qatar should take.”

Nepalis flying to Doha on Emirates-based airlines like Etihad, Air Arabia or Fly Dubai have been affected and have to either switch to direct flights on Qatar Airways, Nepal Airlines, or take Oman Air via Muscat.

“Nepali migrant workers now have limited options to fly to Qatar,” said Bimal Dhakal, President of the Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies (NAFEA). “They will have to buy more expensive tickets.”

Currently, more than 600,000 Nepalis migrant workers are in Qatar. Saudi Arabia now attracts more migrant workers, but it is also directly involved in the current crisis. Another 500,000 Nepalis work in Bahrain, UAE, Oman and Kuwait.

Karma Dolma Gurung

prabhu Bank BIZ BRIEFS

LH-RA deal

Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) is bringing in Lufthansa Consulting as strategic partner to manage engineering, operations, finance and marketing



for five years. NAC is augmenting its two Airbus 320s with two more widebody and 330s, and needs a partner to upgrade its management.

Budi Gandaki go-ahead

Before stepping down as Energy Minister Janardan Sharma finalised a deal with the China Gezhouba Group Corporation (CGGC) to develop the Rs200 billion Budi Gandaki dam that will generate 1200 MW when completed in five years.

Qatar airlift

Qatar Airways operated three flights to airlift stranded passengers from Saudi Arabia to Doha via Muscat. An additional flight on Wednesday brought remaining passengers in Saudi Arabia to Doha via Kuwait. The airline is ensuring everyone is rerouted within 24 hours of flight cancellations in response to the Gulf crisis.

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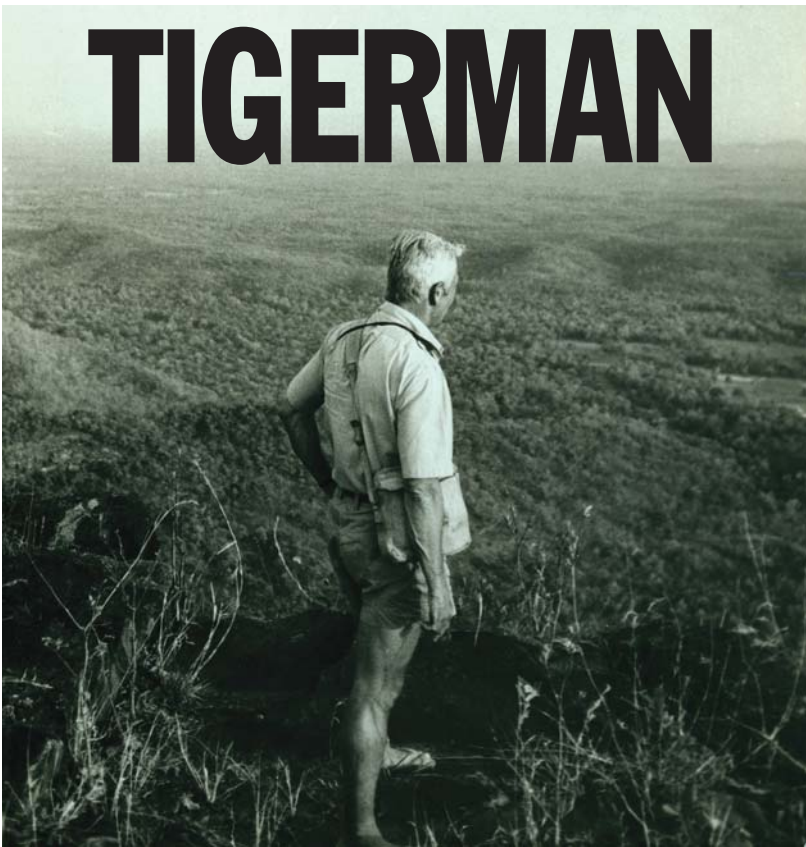
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It sounded more like a cough to me, but the rasping gasp from the depths of the forest was a tiger’s mating call. In the dawn stillness, the jungle seemed to hold its breath in awe. Chuck paused on the trail, listening intently. “Bang! Pothei,” he muttered softly, before hurrying



SO FAR SO GOOD
Lisa Choegyal

on silently through the trees in his rubber thonged sandals, canvas bag slung across his shoulder. The tigress with a crooked pointed toe was one of the resident females around Tiger Tops lodge whose habits Chuck knew well. Bird song broke the spell, and a distant langur monkey signalled a grunt of alarm at the tigers’ presence. With trackers Krishna, Sukram, Baburam and eager binocularled trainees in noiseless pursuit, the party was keen to find pugmarks to identify the courting male. Every morning Chuck McDougal and his team checked on the previous night’s tiger activity, and on their newly invented system of pressure-plated camera trap photography where every tiger can be recognised by its individual pattern of stripes and facial markings. A male tiger took the very first picture of himself on the ridge above Tiger Tops in 1974. These morning walks were not only part of Chuck’s tiger studies, but also a chance to impart first hand jungle lore to Tiger Tops’ cadre of young naturalists and nature guides. Hard science



SELFIE: The first-ever photo taken by the tiger of itself using a camera trap developed in Chitwan in 1974. (below) Chuck McDougal (left) scanning the tiger range from a ridge in Chitwan.

and no bullshit, was his creed. Recruited from throughout Nepal and India, this elite taskforce was entrusted with introducing visiting tourists to the intricacies of Tarai wildlife, and to keep it safe in tiger terrain. With Jim Edwards, Chuck had taken over Tiger Tops in 1972 and together their brand of business acumen mixed with purist wildlife expertise melded commerce with conservation, putting Nepal on the map as an eco-tourism pioneer before the term was invented. Ever sparing with words, Chuck was a gifted mentor, generously sharing knowledge and offering encouragement to acolytes in his reticent drawl. I did not often accompany these jungle excursions, being busy with more mundane tasks, but the names of my naturalist colleagues echo down the decades: Ashish, Bhim, Bir Bahadur, Balaram, Devi, Dhan, Dinesh, Gun Bahadur, Hashim, Kalu Ram, Karan, KK, Mash, Pun, Pradeep, Rahul, Raju, Wangdi, Yam and others. Although widely scattered, many are still committed to the tourism and conservation mantra that we preached with a zealous passion. When he was not roaming the jungle and training naturalists, Chuck was writing up his notes on tiger behaviour, attended by his wife Margie. Published in 1977, The Face of the Tiger

was the result of thousands of hours of observation and tracking, establishing this quiet anthropologist from Colorado as a leading expert on tigers. Living deep within Chitwan, Chuck was able to record the lifetime reproduction of 35 females and followed many more tigers throughout their entire lives, applying his anthropological training in plotting their kinship systems. The high rate of camera trap success depended on his intimate understanding of tigers and their travel ways. When challenged, he and Sukram proved their mastery by correctly identifying 51 out of 52 different sets of tiger tracks -- the one miss was a sub-adult they thought was a new tiger. Chuck’s tiger monitoring reports are bound in the Smithsonian Institute library, and his work continues to inform authorities concerned with protecting these nocturnal cats as the apex predator -- in essence, the preservation of habitat with plentiful prey species and minimal disturbance. Nepal’s subsequent conservation initiatives are considered a major success. That elusive brown-striped shadow can still thrill the soul of those lucky enough to catch a glimpse through the tangled grasslands orforest’s green mosaic, as the most majestic of beasts conducts its secretive circuits. Recent government reports tell the story: the number of adult tigers has grown 63% to 198 individuals, protected areas cover almost one-quarter of the country, and 10,000 sq km are potential tiger territory. Nepal is better placed than other tiger-range countries to reach the pledged target of doubling its wild tiger population by 2020. Regular tiger monitoring continues, and counts are still made by the tracking and camera trapping techniques perfected in Chitwan. Chuck McDougal died a year ago, but his legacy lives on. 🇳🇵



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As the westerly jet-stream weakens, the monsoon is creeping up from the Bay of Bengal. Although it is called India's south-west monsoon, the rains in Nepal actually arrive from the southeast. So far the pre-monsoon showers have been caused by localised updrafts, and this will be replaced by warm water vapour from the sea condensing as it rises over the mountains. Expect storm clouds and increasing precipitation levels into the weekend in Kathmandu before the monsoon sets in.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
27° 17°	27° 17°	27° 18°

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HELLO KITTY: Neha Dangol (*left*) takes care of 12 abandoned cats at the Catmandu Lovers shelter in Patan which she runs with Norfaizah Ramli (*above*) seen with Ukus and Mukus, rescued from the streets and now adopted by a Kathmandu family.

Ash (*below, left and centre*) was rescued at a few days old, eyes still closed. She is now a month old and has been adopted. Messi (*below, right*) is three and used to be scared of people because of mistreatment. He is still shy, and is up for adoption by an experienced cat owner.

Cat man do

Visitors to Nepal have often wondered why there are no cats in Kathmandu. There are dogs all over the place, but hardly any cats. In fact the cats you hear the most about in Kathmandu are the leopards that frequently stray into the city, and have to be darted and relocated back to Shivapuri National Park.

“Actually there are lots of cats in Kathmandu, but you don’t see them because they are all hiding from the dogs,” explains Norfaizah Ramli, a Singaporean married to a Nepali who has been living in Kathmandu for 14 years. “Dogs are worshipped once a year, but there is a superstition that cats are inauspicious.”

While canine is divine, there is no such veneration for felines. Kathmandu has many organisations working with stray dogs, but few that look after cats. Which is why Norfaizah Ramli (‘Richi’) decided to set up her own care home two years ago called Catmandu Lovers.



“I loved cats, I grew up with them, my grandmother, cousins and aunts all had cats,” says Richi, who pulled out five cats from the animal care she was volunteering in and set up Catmandu Lovers to take care of abandoned newly-born kitten, injured and diseased cats from the streets and rehome them.

The fact that cats can give birth four times a year and have eight kittens in each litter, means there are lots of abandoned kitten and not enough animal centres

specialising in feline care.

Catmandu Lovers is a home-based care centre that gives personalised attention to abandoned, seriously-malnourished as well as sickly and injured kitten.

“We are not an animal shelter, and we believe that kitten adjust better and injured cats heal faster in a family environment rather than in cages at a shelter,” says Richi who runs an adoption centre in Pulchok and a treatment facility in Bhaisepati together

with her friend, Neha Dangol.

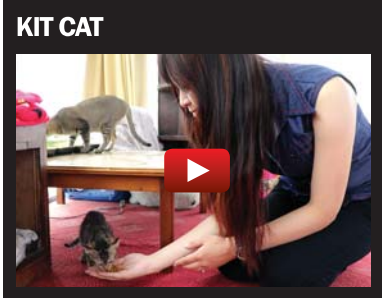
In a penthouse apartment eight-stories above Patan with a stunning view of the Valley, Dangol looks after 12 mostly short-haired tabbies, Bengals and Abyssinians waiting for adoption, as well as three of her own pets. She says: “I grew up loving animals, but after I met Richi I developed a fondness for cats, and I also saw that they need help.”

When the cats are ready for adoption, Dangol spreads the

information through Facebook and can usually place pets almost immediately. “We are blessed because we have a 100% adoption rate, even from families that have never had cats before,” says Richi.

Catmandu Lovers runs on personal contributions from adopters, supporters and rescuers. It also runs a Cat Hotel for people to board pets when they travel. Income pays for vet care and cat food for the 60 or so cats it takes care of every year.

Pema S Lama



Watch video of Catmandu Lovers shelter where 12 rescued kitten are being raised in a loving family environment before being put up for adoption by Kathmandu's pet enthusiasts.

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Kathmandu is one of the fastest growing cities in South Asia, and the rapid transformation of the metropolitan area of the Valley over the past decades has been dramatic – especially in the reduction of the green spaces. Nepal's capital today ranks as among the most congested cities in the world, bringing with it a slew of other environmental problems like air pollution, garbage, etc.

The most emblematic evidence of this decay is the Bagmati River. Along with its tributaries, the river is a key landmark, the

artery of the Kathmandu Valley civilisation. But what used to be a living river with clear water flowing across a sandy flood plain a few decades ago has been reduced to a smelly sewer.

The city's citizens have spontaneously started a cleanup campaign. To add to the work of volunteers picking up solid waste dumped on the river, there needs to be a vision to transform the banks of the Bagmati, and give the river back to the citizens so they can bond through green, human and cultural connectivity.

A proposed masterplan to revitalise the Bagmati and the city includes building a green belt along the river banks from Manohara to Bishnumati to promote bicycle and pedestrian traffic which will reduce both congestion and air pollution, providing a completely new way of moving around the city for both commuting and recreational purposes.

A Bagmati River Park along a 5km

stretch of the river separating Kathmandu and Patan will bring green public space to where the city needs it most. The unique area is carefully designed to include wilder areas inspired by Nepal's biodiversity and vegetation types, as well as more traditional park space with promenades, intimate space to escape from the city's bustle, as well as bigger places for cultural gatherings. There will be areas for both organised and spontaneous sports activities in the city's new green lung.

Since the park area already has important temple complexes like Shankhamul, Thapathali and Teku which were once sacred to pilgrims, but have been neglected and allowed to decay a heritage walkway along the Bagmati Park is proposed to reconnect the people with their temples and preserve festivals and the cultural heritage.

Such a holistic approach to urban planning taking rivers into account have been seen in cities around the world. They

RESURRECT THE R

The proposed Bagmati River Park will give Kathmandu new green space

OSKAR

The Bagmati River Park



DHOBIGHOLA

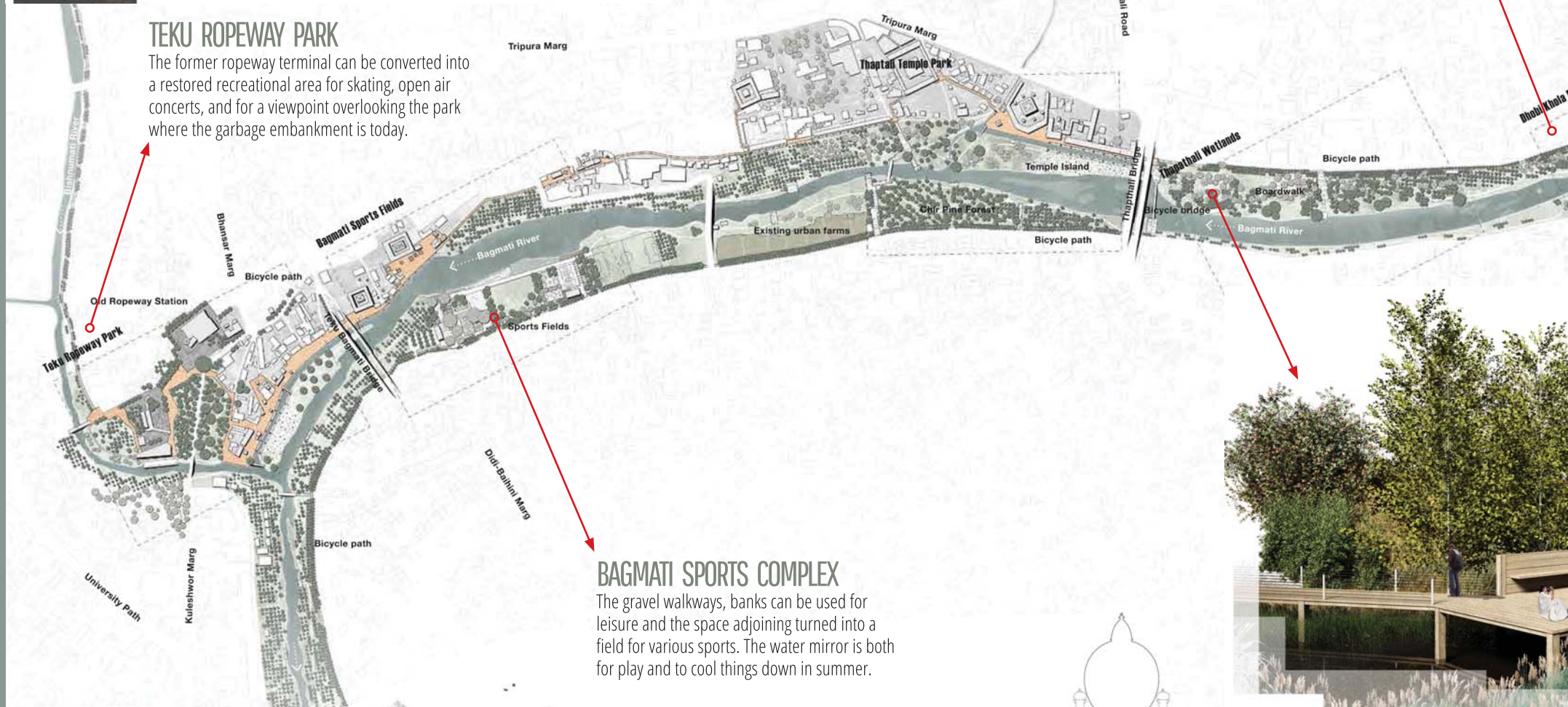
This floating bridge could follow the seasonal changes where the two rivers meet, providing visitors with the experience of walking on water. The garden can serve as a recreational space with a *chautari*.



Dasharath Rangasala Stadium

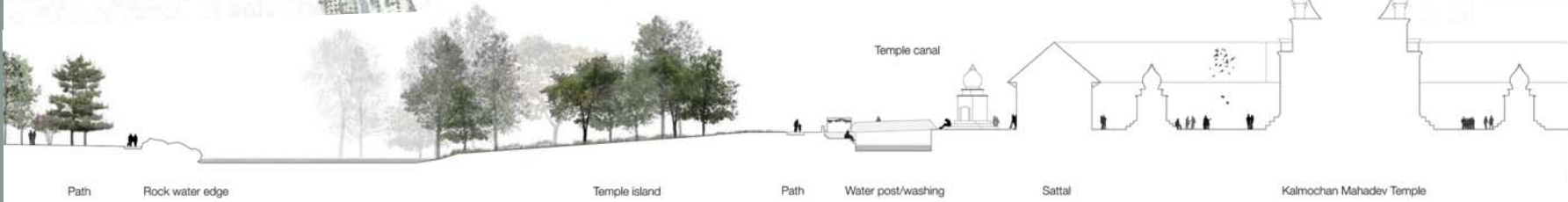
TEKU ROPEWAY PARK

The former ropeway terminal can be converted into a restored recreational area for skating, open air concerts, and for a viewpoint overlooking the park where the garbage embankment is today.



BAGMATI SPORTS COMPLEX

The gravel walkways, banks can be used for leisure and the space adjoining turned into a field for various sports. The water mirror is both for play and to cool things down in summer.



THAPATHALI

The banks here can have a lot of greenery to attract birdlife and revitalize the water level will also improve.

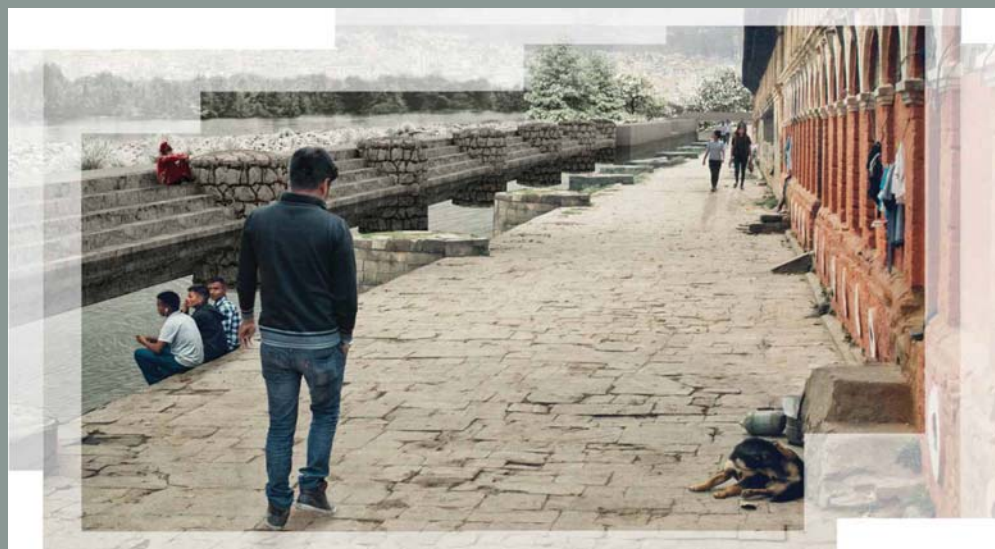


The Valley's new green lung

The proposed Bagmati River Park will be a green membrane for the stretch of the river from Manohara to Bishnumati that will use the river as a major artery for the urban transformation of Nepal's capital. Kathmandu and Patan have merged into one metropolitan area, and the Bagmati River between them has been treated as a barrier, the space neglected and misused.

The restored riverscape (left) can resurrect Kathmandu by giving the waterway back to the people. The Park will fill a void in the heart of a divided city and help reorganise the urban fabric of Kathmandu and Patan, becoming an anchor for the transformation of the twin towns.

The Park will create a new identity for Kathmandu, charting out a bold move towards a greener path to urban planning and development within its historical context.



RECTING RIVER

Bagmati River Park will
new breathing space

FRELIN

have rejuvenated urban areas, and the banks have revitalised communities. Kathmandu already has many local initiatives but as the nerve centre of urban life, the city needs a braver plan with wider metropolitan perspective capable of leading the way to future development. With the first elected mayor and new ward members in 15 years, the time is now.

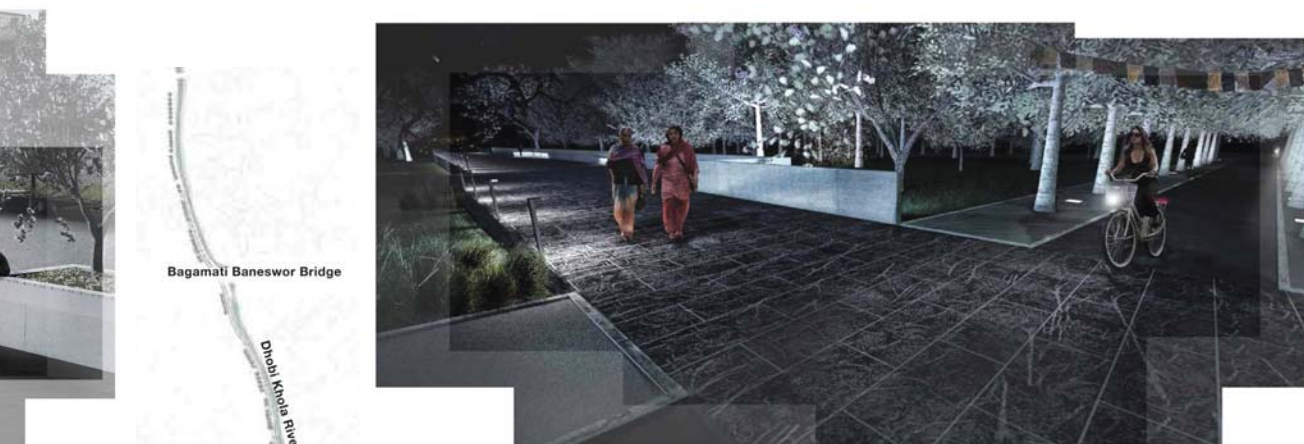
There are cities that have changed completely by starting large urban greening projects. These have not only benefited the people who use it every day, but also helped rebrand cities and promote tourism. Greening the Bagmati can have a far-reaching impact to bring not just the river, but the city and the Valley back to life. 🇳🇵

This proposal for a Bagmati River Park is part of the masters thesis of two Danish students, Oskar Frelin and Jens Hansen Holm who spent six months in Nepal in 2016. Illustrations on this page are from their thesis, which can be viewed in full on www.nepalitimes.com



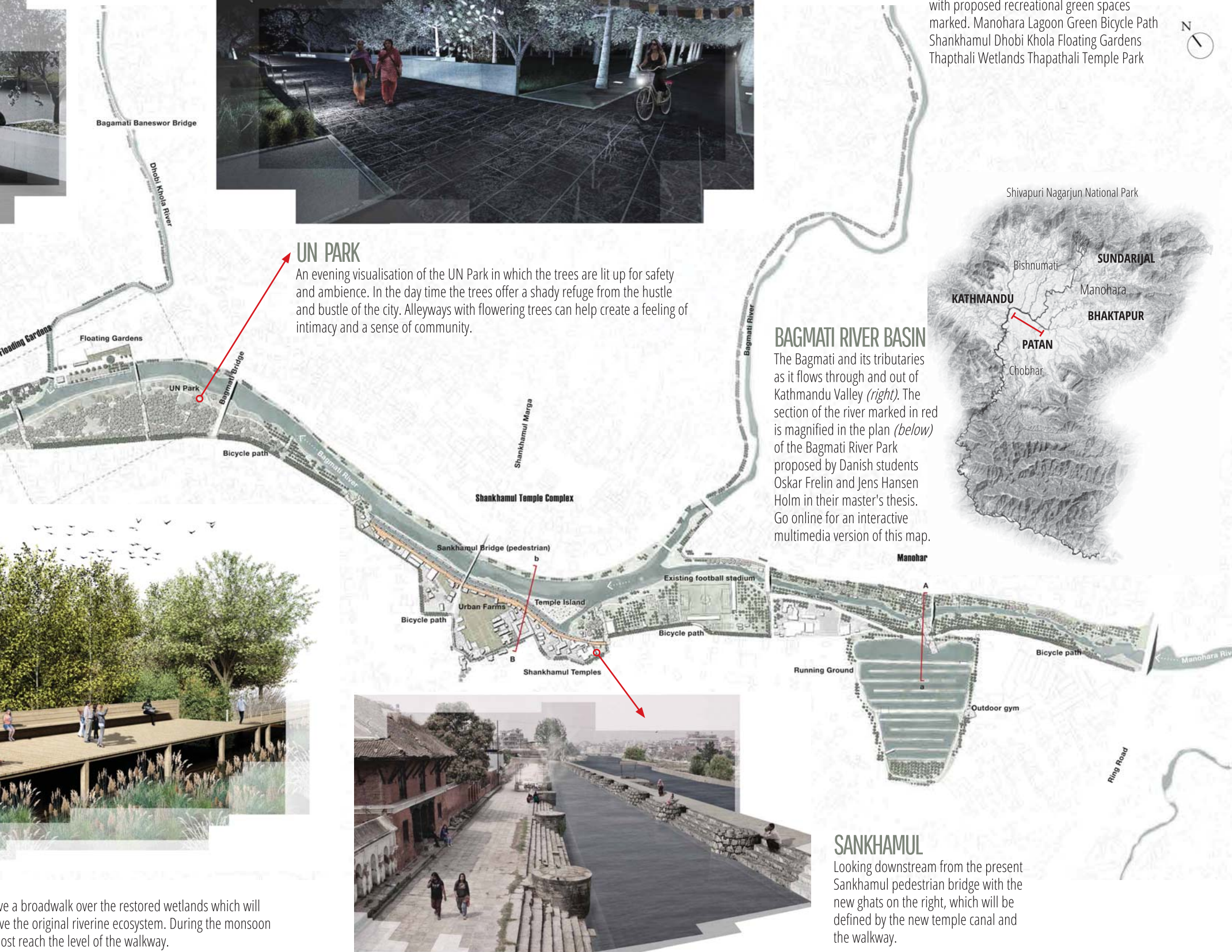
GREEN BELT

This is what the Bagmati River Park would like from the air from above the Manohara Lagoon looking westwards towards Thapathali with proposed recreational green spaces marked. Manohara Lagoon Green Bicycle Path Shankhamul Dhobi Khola Floating Gardens Thapthali Wetlands Thapathali Temple Park



UN PARK

An evening visualisation of the UN Park in which the trees are lit up for safety and ambiance. In the day time the trees offer a shady refuge from the hustle and bustle of the city. Alleyways with flowering trees can help create a feeling of intimacy and a sense of community.



BAGMATI RIVER BASIN

The Bagmati and its tributaries as it flows through and out of Kathmandu Valley (*right*). The section of the river marked in red is magnified in the plan (*below*) of the Bagmati River Park proposed by Danish students Oskar Frelin and Jens Hansen Holm in their master's thesis. Go online for an interactive multimedia version of this map.

SANKHAMUL

Looking downstream from the present Sankhamul pedestrian bridge with the new ghats on the right, which will be defined by the new temple canal and the walkway.

ew green membrane

Kathmandu is overbuilt, and the Park will offer calm areas where people can rest, relax and recharge. The banks will be filled with trees, shrubs and plants. The unused space can be turned into an air purification area. The rest of the riparian stretch will change from a wasteland to a recreation space.

The Park will use the river to reconnect citizens, connecting them to nature and their cultural heritage.

GREEN CONNECTIVITY

The Park will make urban greening along the river banks denser, and connect to existing open spaces so that the river becomes a green corridor. It re-establishes the natural aquatic habitat and the banks acts as a green lung for the city.

HUMAN CONNECTIVITY

The river and its banks can become the urban green

infrastructure by promoting walking, bicycling, relieving the city of traffic pressure, giving citizens a healthy transportation alternative and add new space for social interaction.

CULTURAL CONNECTIVITY

The Bagmati and its tributaries are the site of many places of religious significance, ghats and temples which will be connected by the river with a cultural 'temple walk'.

UNHOLY RIVER



Watch this *Nepali Times* film that follows the Bagmati from a spring in Shivapuri National Park, through the city to Chobhar. Learn about plans for five new sewage treatment plants, and efforts to clean up the river.

nepalitimes.com

EVENTS



Vocal workshop,

Register to learn singing techniques from renowned jazz vocalist Diandra Danieli hosted by Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory.
5 July to 30 August, Registration: (01) 5013554, Information: <http://www.katjazz.com.np/vocal-teacher-diandra-danieli/>

Laughter for life,

Be a part of fundraising event that is being organised to save cancer patients. Popular singer Dharmendra Sewan and comedian Sandip Chettri will be rocking the stage.
14 June, 7pm to 2 am, Karma Bar and Lounge, Tripureshwar, (01) 4117148, karmaloungektm@gmail.com



Ride for refugees,

Mark this year's World Refugee Day by participating in a cycle rally from Patan Durbar Square to Khokana to show solidarity for refugees.
17 June, 7:30 to 11 am, Patan Durbar Square, 9841729965, www.cyclecity.org.np/ride4refugees2

Empowering league,

Support your favorite basketball team at the Turkish Airlines ENGAGE Empowering League organised to sustain physical and mental wellbeing of players with physical disabilities.
10 June, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, British School, Jhamsikhel, ID cards are mandatory, 9843499639, bharat.engage@gmail.com

Youth conclave,

Discover a unique platform to promote Nepal-Bangladesh connectivity. Young leaders from South Asian region will be sharing their experiences and discussing about a common forum to foster the regional cooperation.
10 to 11 June, 9 am to 6pm, Nepal Tourism Board, Exhibition Road, (01) 4256909

World youth festival,

Apply to participate in world's biggest youth and students festival in Sochi, Russia. The online registration deadline for the festival is 10 June.
14 to 22 October, 2017, Information: <https://reg.russia2017.com/en/members>



Mud fest,

Celebrate this rice-planting festival by getting soaked in the rain, playing in mud and mingling with locals. Includes a sumptuous Newari fest at the end of the day. 24 June, 7 am to 3 pm, Khokana, Rs 1950 for adults, Rs 999 for children, free for children below 4, Information: <http://www.socialtours.com>

Kora Cycling,

Join hundreds of cycling enthusiasts and ride 50, 75, or 100 km to raise funds for a cycling trail in the Bungamati Area of Kathmandu valley.
15 July, 7 am onwards Patan Darbar Square <https://www.facebook.com/ktmkora/>

Bloggers networking,

Sign up for a free networking event for Rising Junkiri. Aspiring bloggers and writers can participate too.
10 June, 2-8 pm, Octave Kathmandu, Woodland Complex, Darbarmarg, Admission: Free for members, For more details: risingjunkiri@gmail.com

MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI



MUSIC



Album launch,

Gear up for the album launch by celebrated band Anuprastha. The Axe band, Robin Tamang and Jack and Toon will be performing too.
9 June, 7:30 pm, Reggae Bar, Thamel, (01) 4700654



Acoustic Friday,

Tap to the acoustic beats of Woods band. Enjoy a bottle of free beer when you buy a tower beer.
9 June, 5 to 11 pm, Jingle Restro and Bar, (01) 4228078



Drum circle,

Groove to the rhythms of a drum circle this full moon night. Bring along your own drums or just sit back and enjoy the music.
9 June, 6 to 11 pm, House of Music, Thamel, 9851075172

Jay Sean Live,

Book your tickets now to listen to British singer and songwriter Jay Sean perform live in Kathmandu.
28 June, 7 am onwards, Black Religion, Kathmandu,



Soul Saturday,

Spend a musical evening with your friends and family. Singer Dauth Rai will be taking the stage with melodious Bollywood and Nepali tunes.
10 June, 7 to 10 pm, Empire Restaurant and Bar, 9813967032

DINING



Oriental Kitchen,

Devour authentic Chinese and Indian food this weekend. Tip: try momos and dragon chicken.
Baluwatar, (01) 4443110

The Bent Fork,

A charming European style restaurant offers best salad and varieties of continental dishes.
Bishal Nagar, 9802049888

Hotel Shangri-La,

Let the subtleties of Arabian cuisine tease your palate or opt for pasta if you're not too adventurous with food.
Every Saturday, 11 am-3 pm, Shambala Garden, Hotel Shangri-La, Rs 1500 nett per person, (01)4412999 (Ext. 7520/7508)



Utopia,

For a relaxed ambience and mouth-watering food. Delivery services available.
Ekantakuna, (01) 5000584

Phat Kath,

Offering French-ish food, a takeaway crêperie, low tables and hookahs for hippies, tables and chairs for normal people, and a formidable hip hop soundtrack for everyone.
Thamel, 9816696571

Coffee Pasal,

A place to idly sip on a good cup of coffee while looking at the Narayanhiti museum.
Darbar Marg, (01) 4246483



Déjà Vu,

Spend an evening at this budget restaurant that offers more than six types of momos. Try chicken kurkure. Good music guaranteed.
Naxal, (01) 4428829

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

Saigon Pho,

Spacious interior with authentic Vietnamese dishes.
Lajimpat, (01) 4443330

GETAWAY



Monsoon madness,

Head down to Pokhara and enjoy an exclusive two nights three days package with Shangri-La Village Resort.
Pokhara, Rs 6,299 per person (01) 4420252 / 9861388277 / 9804116774

Jhule mountain resort,

Resting 2050m above sea level, the eco-resort boasts a farmhouse that stretches across hill covered in fresh pine. Enjoy an organic homestay experience.
Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park, Lapsiphedhi-3, Jhule, (01)6212399

Barahi Jungle Lodge,

The first eco-jungle lodge of Chitwan directly overlooks the Chitwan National Park. Spa, boutique guest room, individual and two-in-one private villas, including a suite with a private swimming pool.
Megauli, Chitwan, (01) 4429820

Neydo Monastery,

A monastery and guest house, Neydo is home to many significant religious sites of the great siddhas. Leave your troubles behind and book a room.
Pharping, Kathmandu, www.neydohotel.com



Kasara Resort,

A luxury resort located in the lush setting of 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

Balthali Village Resort,

A small, cosy retreat with a bird's eye view of green terrace fields dotted with ochre painted houses.
Balthali, Kavre, 9851075818

Dwarika's Resort,

A holistic lifestyle retreat, drawing on ancient Himalayan knowledge and philosophy of care for nature and for oneself, set in magnificent natural surroundings.
Dhulikhel, (11)490612, info@dwarikas-dhulikhel.com

Mango Tree Lodge,

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



Gokarna Forest Resort,

A numinous paradise that relaxes you and encourages meditation, just a 20-minute drive away from Kathmandu. Gokarna, (01)4451212, info@gokarna.net



Don't wait for Melamchi

Even if there is water in your tap, it makes sense to harvest rainwater

TYLER MCMAHON

One question that I encounter a lot is “What will happen to rainwater harvesting after Melamchi comes?” Until recently, it was a question fairly easily ignored since Melamchi seemed like a literal pipe dream. Then as the years went on, Melamchi progressed very quickly including the equally necessary distribution pipe improvements. This means that the targeted 2018 completion date and delivery of water is likely.

Melamchi is a much-needed project for Kathmandu. Better municipal water means a healthier population and less groundwater extraction. One must applaud the progress of the project, although we would have wished for a little less dust.

But once snow melt from Melamchi starts flowing into our taps, does it mean rainwater harvesting is no longer necessary? No.

Melamchi is years late, it was originally forecast to meet the demand at the beginning of the new millennium. Now the demand is approaching 400 million liters per day, with a current wet season supply of 150MLD before leakage. That is a shortage of 250MLD, excluding leakages, which is more than Melamchi Phase 1 will bring. Rainwater harvesting for direct use is still needed to reduce continued groundwater extraction.

Even before 2000, groundwater over-extraction from deep wells in Kathmandu was already a problem. Additionally,

shallow groundwater depletion is obvious with household and community wells, *dhunge dharas*, and local *pokharis* going dry.

Before cities were made, stormwater infiltrated into the ground through farms, forests and grassland. Now stormwater washes pollutants off the roads and (sometimes) flows into wastewater treatment systems. In a monsoon climate, like Nepal where nearly 1.5 meters of rainfall is packed into six months, this creates an undue burden on wastewater treatment systems. It also makes a high risk for combined sewer overflows, where heavy rainfall causes untreated wastewater from working wastewater treatment systems to overflow into the river. Already, there are problems with the few existing, partially functional, systems in Kathmandu stormwater flows make them worse.

Combined sewer overflows are a problem even in cities like New York and Philadelphia which are investing billions into natural retention and recharge systems (Green Infrastructure) to minimise wastewater costs and sewage spills. These interventions were chosen because of their cost-effectiveness, both in up front capital and operation costs, and the many secondary benefits.

Green Infrastructure includes various technologies to trap and replenish rainwater, including green roofs, rainwater collection and recharge, bioswales, permeable pavement, rain gardens and more. Many of these technologies are attractive and cost-effective, and rainwater harvesting is already well-recognised and



KUNDA DIXIT

practiced in Kathmandu.

Kathmandu is blessed with an amazing network of historical water infrastructure, from stone spouts to *pokharis* to community wells. This infrastructure should be restored as well. One way to help do this, especially for many of the historical ponds and some stone spouts, is increasing recharge again. This can be done in a combined way through modern green infrastructure like other cities are investing in, and restoring old, historical sites with a bit of creativity.

In addition, Green Infrastructure have many secondary benefits including carbon sequestration, urban heat island mitigation and green spaces, reduced energy demand through shading from vegetation, improved air quality and quality of life. There are other good examples of rain gardens being used to offset areas for pedestrians and cyclists from the roads.

Kathmandu Valley has a good opportunity to do this right now, especially with newly elected Mayors and Ward Committees. All of them are talking about water, energy and sustainable transport and this can be one way to help clean up Kathmandu. Since everything is being dug up, the right time to invest in this infrastructure, instead of the large sewers which are coming later, is now.

Kathmandu has an advantage because rainwater harvesting (*left*) has gained momentum over the past decade and a growing body of data on groundwater and recharge potential is also becoming available. The only thing remaining is continued coordination between government agencies including the road, electricity and wastewater treatment works.

Five wastewater treatment plants are being built, so integrating stormwater planning, rainwater harvesting and other green infrastructure (including household incentives for their own systems, including already built ones), and historical water infrastructure planning with the future plans for wastewater treatment will be the next step. 🇳🇵

Tyler McMahon is an adviser at One Planet Solution and SmartPaani



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Disney's 1991 animation *Beauty and the Beast*, along with its other classics like *The Little Mermaid* (1989), and *The Lion King* (1994) still stand today as the go-to classics for kids, with equally delighted adults viewing these yummy morsels side by



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

side. In recent years Disney has sought to revive its old classics in live action with the likes of the wonderful, biting *Maleficent* (2014), the quite charming *Cinderella* (2015), and most recently last year's fun, fabulous *The Jungle Book*. This year's *Beauty and the Beast* marks yet another enormous success for a classic production company and studio that has remade its old successes into pure box office gold - the film has grossed over \$1.2 billion to date against a budget of \$160 million.

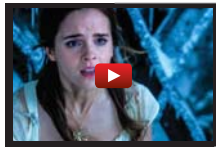
For those who remember the cartoon, this live action remake is almost word for word, and yet it manages to take on a life of its own, mainly due to the absolutely convincing, heart-warming performance of Emma Watson, who plays Belle, quite literally the Beauty of the title. Filled with star power, the film is fortified by delightful performances from Ian McKellan, Emma Thompson, Ewan McGregor, and Stanely Tucci who appear (I do not want to spoil the guessing game) as the various staff in the palace that, along with the cursed Beast (Dan Stevens), have been turned into objects of furniture, decorative pieces, or crockery by a mysterious enchantress.

Dan Stevens himself, mainly of *Downton Abbey* fame, is magnificent as the Beast, showing a range that I had not previously thought him capable of, to the extent that his reversion to a (sort of) handsome prince, was somewhat disappointing - the Beast was so much more

interesting: humourous and grumpy, than the shiny haired, toothy Disney prince he reverts to that seems modeled for another generation when getting your happily ever after was the primary objective for little girls and young women.

Which brings me to Disney's evolution from those classic tropes of princesses and princes to the more nuanced endings such as in the other smash hit *Frozen* (2013), and, of course *Maleficent*. In both these films, as well as in *Beauty and the Beast* the main characters are tenacious women who have courage, brains, and more nuance than the usually sap-headed, big-eyed characters who moon about hoping for salvation from handsome young men.

There is nothing wrong with wanting a good love story, but it just isn't true that that is all there is in life, these days. Thankfully, it appears that some influential people realise the power of cinema in perpetuating certain tropes and with these new iterations of old beloveds, children, both boys and girls, can find so much more than just the love stories, songs and dances from before. They are now given another lens into the world where things may not always end well, but courage, compassion, good will, and well, yes, love, do usually win the day. 🍷



Watch trailer online

nepaltimes.com

HAPPENINGS



GOPEN RAI

BETTER HALF: First Lady Arzoo Rana after congratulating her Prime Minister husband Sher Bahadur Deuba during his swearing-in ceremony at Shital Niwas on Wednesday.



RSS

CREDENTIALS: Ambassador Sakir Ozkan Torunlar of Turkey presents his letter of credence to President Bidya Bhandari at Shital Niwal on Monday.



NEPALARMY

KAMON ACHEN: Major General Purna Bahadur Silwal of Nepal Army welcomes Bangladesh Army Chief Abu Belal Muhammad Shafiul Huq at Kathmandu airport on Tuesday at the start of a five-day visit.



RSS

ROYAL PRAYERS: Former princess Himani Shah and her son Hridayendra Shah on their way to family's patron diety at the Gorakhali temple in Gorkha on Tuesday.



GOPEN RAI

BEAUTIES: The winners of this year's Miss Nepal beauty pageant- Nikita Chandak, Rojina Shrestha, Niti Shah and Sahara Basnet after being crowned in Kathmandu on Saturday.

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Yes, prime minister

Editorial in *Naya Patrika*, 7 June

गयाँ पत्रिका

After serving as Prime Minister twice under the constitutional monarchy and once under an active monarch, NC President Sher Bahadur Deuba has become Prime Minister for a fourth time in a republic. Congratulations to Deuba, and we hope that Nepal finds a mature leader in the septuagenarian PM.

Deuba’s tenure this time could be relatively easier. The coalition that he is leading has already ruled the country for one year, and is unlikely to unravel for another year. Deuba is expected to hold all three elections by November, and the Maoists will certainly not pull out of this coalition before that.

Preparations for the second phase of local elections are in full swing, and Deuba will get due credit for holding them. But he would face bigger obstacles in holding provincial and parliamentary elections. Madhesi parties are pushing for redrawing of federal boundaries before provincial elections. Persuading them to participate in



GOPEN RAI

Editorial in *Nagarik*, 7 June

नागरिक

New Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has two priorities: holding all three elections before January and amending the Constitution. Success or failure of his fourth tenure as PM will largely depend on how he deals with these challenges.

Deuba was sacked by King Gyanendra for failing to hold parliamentary elections during his second tenure. As he returns to power after 12 years, he again faces a similar task. He needs to hold the second phase of local elections in 20 days, and provincial and federal elections before 28 January. This is going to be his foremost challenge.

Deuba’s second challenge is to bring Madhesi dissenters on the board by amending the Constitution. The Madhes-based Rastriya Janata Party has threatened to disrupt local elections if the Constitution is not amended beforehand. Nearly two-thirds MPs have voted for Deuba, and he just needs a few more to amend the Constitution. But it is not certain whether all the MPs who voted for him will also support the amendment bill. So securing a two-third majority for the amendment is still not as easy as it looks.

Deuba has other challenges. Of late, India and China have shown heightened interest in Nepal and Deuba will have to maintain equidistance. Deuba and his coalition partner Pushpa Kamal Dahal have a common position on transitional justice, but they have to respect international principles. The UML will not allow them to have their way on this issue.

Deuba’s party constantly criticised the UML government for delaying post-earthquake reconstruction. When it formed a new government with the Maoists, it sacked the CEO of the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), a UML appointee. Now the NC leads the government and its man is at the NRA’s helm. Deuba will face more criticism if reconstruction is not expedited.

CJ exposes PM

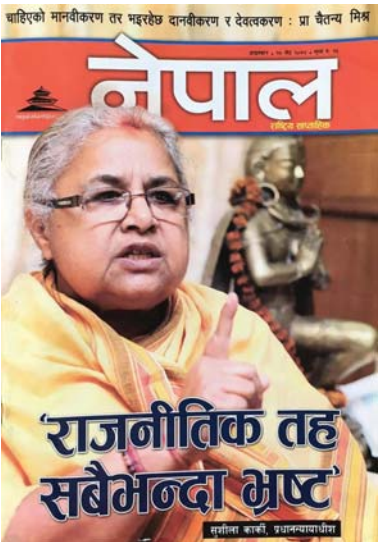
Chief Justice Sushila Karki in an interview with *Nepal*, 4 – 11 June

नेपाल

Nepal: How do you evaluate your term as Chief Justice?
Sushila Karki: I could not complete all the work that I set out to do. There were too many obstacles along the way.

Did you anticipate the extent of political pressure you faced in the Supreme Court?
I never thought the political leaders would go that far. Was it necessary for them to suddenly file an impeachment motion against me when I was in the middle of hearing a case? If they really needed to impeach me, was it not necessary for them to first have a public debate about my mis-doings?

They said you refused to meet their emissary, Maoist leader Barshaman Pun.
Why should I need to meet politicians? It is just not ethical for a judge to meet and consult politicians before hearing a case. Can Pun instruct me to do his bidding? Should I listen to him? If I do, what will society say?



How did you react when you heard about the charges against you?
They accused me of lacking good conduct. How? There is no explanation. They accused me of not allocating cases to some justices. But I never excluded any justices from the case lists.

Could it be possible that some justices were interested in some particular cases, and you did not assign such cases to them?
Cases are assigned to justices depending on their seniority, capacity and expertise. To decide which justices should which

cases is within the jurisdiction of a Chief Justice. I just exercised my right. And none of the justices complained about it with me, so I don’t know where the politicians got the idea.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal publicly claimed several times that he had ‘a deal’ with Chief Justice. What really transpired during your meetings with him?
He called me over three times. I did not spend more than five minutes on any occasion. I saw it as a courtesy meeting between the heads of two state organs. But every time I met him, he told the media that he had a deal with me. During a chance meeting at a party organised by the Army, he raised the issue of the case against Balkrishna Dhugel and sought my help. I told him straight to his face that I would not want to see him again. I was cautious about meeting him. This is why I refused to meet him the last time. (Just days before the impeachment motion in Parliament.)

How did the PM want you to deal with the Lokman Singh Karki case?
Now that I am stepping down

from the Supreme Court, I must tell people about it. A day after his return from India, the PM called me over. During his stay in New Delhi, I had ordered a review of the Supreme Court verdict on the writ against Karki’s appointment as the CIAA Chief. He told me: “You created problems by ordering a review of this case. Lokman has threatened me. I am in the PM’s seat only for seven more months now. Why don’t you postpone this case and deliver your verdict once I step down?” I told him that the case was already set in motion, and it was not in my hands to stop it.

Did Lokman himself pressure you?
Those who knew me did not have the guts to be Lokman’s mediators. But lots of my own relatives tried to talk me out of this case. Some of them even wept in front of me.

Why do you think political leaders tried to impeach you?
I was not the first justice to face impeachment. Justice Ananda Mohan Bhattarai had also faced it because he was an honest and competent justice. Why did they try to impeach him? To intimidate him. Our politicians think they are all powerful and everyone should fall in line. Just like the king. They accused me of overstepping my jurisdiction

and interfering in the workings of the executive. But that is what the justice system is supposed to do – the Constitution mandates an independent judiciary.

Is the Supreme Court delaying its final verdict on the IGP appointment case because of the impeachment motion you faced?
This is one of the cases in which the Office of Attorney General has an interest. Government attorneys come and tell us that the bench should include this justice or should not include that justice. Justices are generally averse to hearing such controversial cases. This is also delaying the case.

What is your retirement plan?
Instead of being surrounded by corrupt and greedy people, I would rather spend the rest of my life feeding birds, in gardening and talking to flowers.

What if the state gives you a responsibility?
I will not accept any government appointment.

Any plan for social service?
I wish I could serve the society with my own money. I see no point in collecting donations and distributing it. I would rather stay home, and read and write.



HOW TO AVOID POWER CUTS THIS WINTER

Demand will outstrip supply and load-shedding will resume unless NEA can push its energy efficiency plan

SHREEJANA SHRESTHA

When Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) Chief Kulman Ghising restored uninterrupted electricity supply seven months ago, his predecessor Mukesh Raj Kafle challenged him to sustain it through the winter. Ghising not only did that, he ensured consumers did not suffer power cuts in the following dry season as well.

He accomplished that by managing distribution, stopping big companies from bribing NEA officials to ensure 24 hour power, and importing electricity from India to cover the shortfall. However, even Ghising now admits that he may not be able to prevent power cuts this winter.

It is the simple arithmetic of supply and demand: peak demand this winter can reach 1,550 MW but there will only be 1,000MW of supply from domestic sources and imports

from India (*see graphics*).

“Our priority is to manage power supply by generating more electricity from new NEA and private hydropower plants to end load-shedding in winter, but we also plan to reduce demand by promoting energy efficient programs and introducing solar net metering,” Ghising told *Nepali Times* in an interview his week.

Ghising’s strategy for this winter is to reduce demand by a mass nationwide replacement of 20 million incandescent bulbs

with efficient light-emitting diode (LEDs). But when he announced this plan in April, there was an uproar in the media over alleged corruption in the government-to-government deal to import the bulbs from India.

NEA plans to sell 9 watt LED bulbs from Philips with a three-year warranty for Rs 140 each. The bulb’s market price is above Rs 500. Ghising hopes that when all 20 million bulbs are distributed, the grid will save up to 200MW this winter.

“That is like adding an expensive new 200MW hydropower plant that would take years to build,” said Ghising, who brushed aside criticism of the deal. “Look, I am not in the bulb business. People now understand that they were being ripped off buying expensive bulbs, so there was resistance from some quarters.”

NEA’s other plans are to further reduce demand by encouraging people to use energy efficient fans, tv sets and

Generating more power by

With improved electricity supply and reduced load-shedding, the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) must be feeling like the victim of its own success.



ANALYSIS
Bishal Thapa

Buoyed by the improving reliability of grid electricity supply, consumers are accelerating purchases of appliances that they might have put off earlier because of power cuts. The gap that the state-owned

electricity utility needs to fill is getting larger – the prospects of another winter with long hours of load-shedding suddenly looks hauntingly real.

To meet the challenges of ever-growing demand and persistently short supply, NEA must aggressively adopt what might seem a bit counter-intuitive to its business: get its customers to stop buying its electricity by saving more of it.

Electricity demand is increasing faster than anticipated after reliable electricity supply uncorked latent demand and encouraged the rapid spread of mechanisation. In Nepal, reliable electricity supply, just like economic growth, is a big driver of power demand on its own.

Studies commissioned by NEA and the Investment Board of Nepal (IBN) project that peak demand could increase between 8.5%-10% per year to reach 3,200MW and 3,660MW respectively by 2025–2026. Even at these growth rates, energy demand will be approximately 15,460 million units or 483 units-annual-per-capita, placing Nepal as one of the energy poorest countries in the world.

If NEA offers reliable supplies, if it allows demand to come on to the system, Nepal’s electricity demand will easily be double of what has been projected. From a visioning perspective, Nepal’s energy demand must not be pegged to what we can supply but rather to our true aspirations

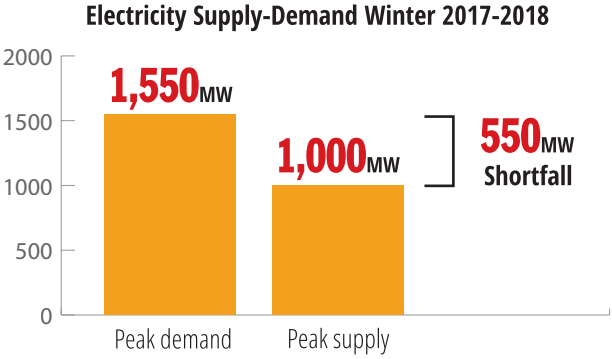
and needs. One way to address Nepal’s energy challenge is to integrate energy efficiency centrally within the national strategy.

Energy efficiency can help address Nepal’s complex challenges. In developed countries where there is a demand-supply balance, energy efficiency is about reducing the overall energy (and environmental) footprint. Our goals for energy efficiency are different: 30% of Nepal’s population doesn’t yet have access to electricity. Seventy percent of our energy mix is still traditional biomass fuels. We are dependent on energy imports and our supply chains are vulnerable. These challenges all stem from one common constraint: we don’t



GOPEN RAI

FALLING SHORT



This winter, the electricity demand will hit a new high, and the NEA will try to plug the shortfall of 550MW with the following 6 measures to avoid load-shedding:

- 1. Imports from India**
With new crossborder transmission lines, Nepal can import:
550MW
- 2. New Hydropower**
Capacity addition from new NEA and Independent Power Producers
194MW
- 3. Switching to LED**
Replacing 20 million incandescent bulbs with LED all over Nepal will save:
200 MW
- 4. Net metering**
If 20% of households in Kathmandu install solar panels and feed surplus power to grid it will generate:
220MW
- 5. Solar Farms**
New NEA plants in Trisuli and Devighat
25MW
- 6. Leakage control**
NEA targets reducing 200MW lost to leakage and pilferage by 2-3%.
250MW

refrigerators. It is also reviving a scheme first mooted by Water Resources Minister Dipak Gyawali in 2005 to install net metering (*see box*) through which every household with a solar panel can sell surplus power to the grid.

On the supply side, NEA will install 25 MW solar plants in Trisuli and Devighat in addition to several other private power projects like Chameliagad (30 MW) and Kulekhani III (14 MW) before the end of the year. The

Upper Tamakosi (465 MW) slated for completion in December 2018.

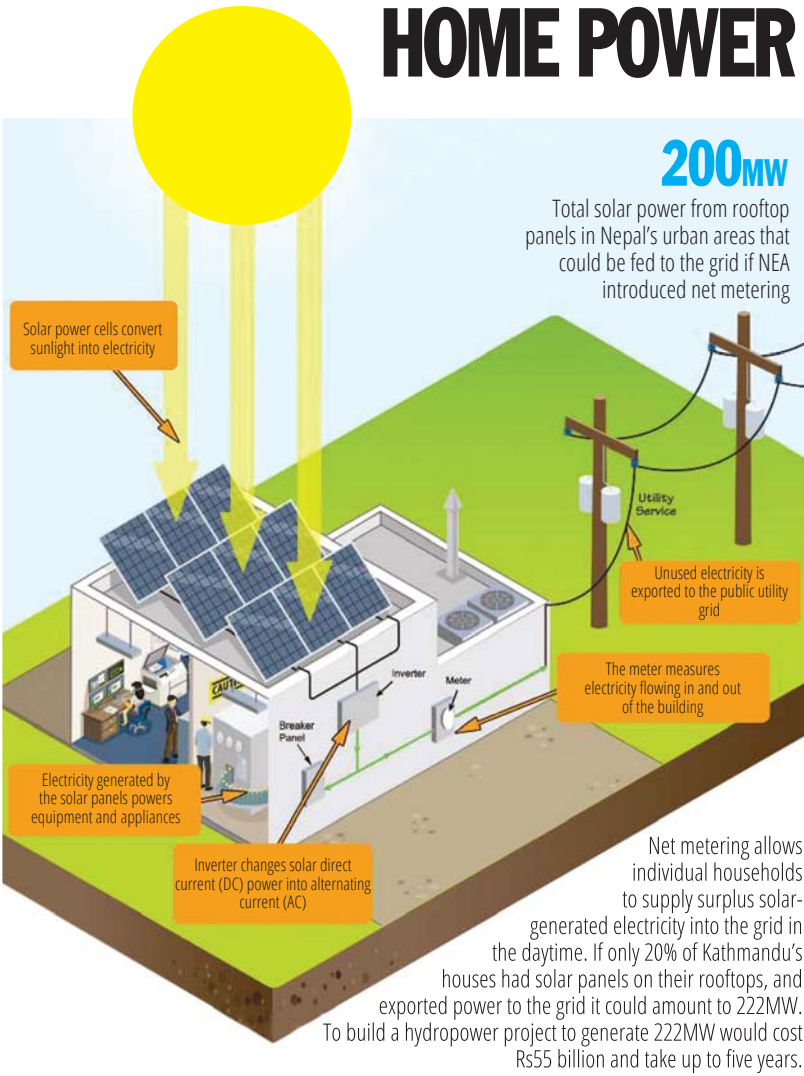
Imports from India will also need to go up to prevent load-shedding. The Dhalkebar-Muzzafarpur transmission line will be upgraded to 220KV capacity before winter, allowing Nepal to import up to 550MW from India. Nepal will be able to import even more power next year once the capacity is increase even more to 400KV.

NEA Deputy Managing

Director Sunil Kumar Dhungel said: “Our dependence on India will continue for the next few years as internal generation catches up, but once we have a surplus we can use the same transmission lines to sell power to India in future.”

The other demand-side interventions that NEA is trying to implement are: controlling leakage and pilferage which totals a staggering 250MW nationwide, replacing old transformers and repairing distribution lines. 🇳🇵

HOME POWER



Self-powered

The restoration of 24-hour electricity supply put many of Nepal's solar, battery and inverter suppliers out of business. They had seen a bonanza during the decade of worsening of power cuts, and couldn't keep up with demand.

Now, there may be good news for solar panel importers and also for families which had installed photo-voltaics on their roofs. NEA is soon going to implement its much-awaited solar net metering cheme which will allow households that generate more than 500W of power to sell surplus electricity to the grid.

Under this system, if a household consumes 4,000 kWh annually, it will be allowed to inject 90% of that energy (3,600 kWh) to the NEA grid. The household would be charged for only 10% (400 kWh) of its electricity use for the entire year.

“Solar net metering is a viable system of alternate energy for Nepal, and many households that had installed solar panels during load-shedding can make money from it by selling power to us,” explains NEA Chief Kulman Ghising who hopes that this will allow NEA to reduce household demand, increase grid supply and help reduce power cuts this winter.

The NEA Board of Directors has given the green light to the by-laws on net metering, and is all set to call a tender for bi-directional energy meters which is a household gauge to measure how much solar power is fed into the grid. A 500W solar installation, the minimum capacity needed for the scheme, costs Rs 75,000, but there is a 50% subsidy from banks approved by the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPD).

Experts say net metering holds the key for reducing supply and increasing demand and will transform the grid. “The NEA will never have a shortfall as long as people consume only 10% of the grid electricity,” says Prof Jagan Nath Shrestha, founder of the Centre for Energy Studies at the Institute of Engineering.

Shrestha has calculated that if only 20% of Kathmandu's houses had rooftop photovoltaics, that could generate up to 222MW during the daytime. Despite being rich in hydropower, Nepal can save a lot of energy from storage hydropower projects if it replaces the grid with solar (*see column by Bishal Thapa, below*).

Dipak Gyawali, who tried his best to push net metering when he was Minister of Water Resources in 2005, says NEA is starting way too late: “Had NEA got into net metering earlier, people would not have faced load-shedding for such long hours in the past.”

Shreejana Shrestha

saving energy

have adequate energy supply.

And that is exactly where energy efficiency plays a big role. Doing more with less through energy efficiency will enable us to transfer our savings to those that don't have electricity. We will be able to reduce imports and the vulnerability to supply shocks. With energy efficiency, we may not be able to reduce our total energy usage but we will be able to make better use of our limited supply.

There are many opportunities for energy efficiency in Nepal that could deliver immediate impact. NEA's program of 20 million LED bulbs could deliver immediate saving of 200MW. But why stop there? Why not import more LED bulbs? Why not

completely ban incandescent bulbs?

There are similar opportunities across commercial and industrial establishments: in water pumping, street lights, government procurement, better integration of distributed roof-top solar. If pursued systematically, savings from energy efficiency could fully offset electricity imports and current levels of load shedding.

The unique thing about energy efficiency in Nepal is that it could unlock Nepal's true hydro potential. We can get to 10,000 MW or 20,000 MW of hydro power faster if we first start by saving energy.

The single biggest constraint to adding new hydro plants in Nepal is the need for

storage capacity. A reservoir hydropower plant that delivers electricity at peak periods would diversify the system and allow many more run-of-river plants to come online. Storage hydro requires large reservoirs, which are expensive to build, hard to finance and have high social-environmental costs.

Could energy efficiency replace the need for a large reservoir based storage hydro plant? Absolutely. What is the difference between a storage plant that provides energy at peak hours versus a smart energy efficiency system that can reduce selected loads at the same peak hours? There is none.

An institutional approach to energy

efficiency is urgently required. Enabled by today's technology and management systems, distributed energy efficiency can deliver the same system benefits as a reservoir based storage hydro plant – and more. We have been intoxicated by the prospects of bountiful hydro power potential for so long that we have cast energy efficiency as a national antithesis. But if adopted and implemented properly, energy efficiency can meaningfully help address Nepal's challenges on energy access, security and import dependence. 🇳🇵

Bishal Thapa is Managing Director of Saral Urja Nepal, an energy services company.



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#momowasborninnepal

It was to be expected, given what the country had to go through during his past three eventful tenures as prime minister, that Rt Hon'ble Share Budder would plunge headlong into a full-blown national crisis as soon as he was sworn in this week. No, it wasn't the Saudi blockade of Qatar and its impact on 600,000 Nepalis there who have to endure yet another godforesaken blockade. It wasn't even the sordid saga of the Varatpur Vote Vandalism. The national crisis in question, of course, is the move by a BJP leader in Jammu who on Tuesday announced a ban on momos because (kid you not) teenagers in his state were getting addicted to dumplings.

So, how many times have you been prime minister?



What us patriotic flag-waving Nepalis want to know is what Prime Minister Dubya IV is going to do about India declaring war on our momo? Are we going to just summon the Indian Ambassador to hand him a diplomatic démarche and/or aide-mémoire, and leave it at that? Do we have the gonads to go as far as threatening to cut off diplomatic ties unless dumplings are restored their rightful place in Kashmiri cuisine? If you agree, tweet with hashtag: #momowasborninnepal

In the oath of office he took before the President on Wednesday at Shitall Niwas, the prime minister swore to defend Nepal's sovereignty and territorial ambitions, while

safeguarding our glorious symbol of national identity — the jhol momo. No matter where in the world the lumps of meat are wrapped in foreskin to be steamed, momos have been and will always be an integral part of the Nepali way of life, and any attack anywhere on our dumplings will hereby be deemed an attack on us. We are even prepared to invade Lhasa again to defend our intellectual property right over the dumpling recipe. And that's a threat.

Soon after his swearing Prime Minister Dubya swore again when he saw the news about the J&K momo ban. So, he sat down with his new FinMin and discussed priorities:

1. Holding three elections before January 2018 and making sure that all other relatives of outgoing PM Dahal are assured victories in mayoral, vice-mayoral or ward mafia don positions. Candidates trailing in future vote counts will be given full authority by the Erectile Commission to tear up ballot papers to force retallies, and once victorious winning candidates will be conferred Suprabal Janasewasri Padak awards on the next Republican Day or Democratic Day, whichever comes first.
2. Require all foreign investors who paid cronies kickbacks to sign Projects of National Pride and Prejudice just before PKD gobblement stepped down to fork out additional monies to new cronies to revalidate license.
3. In the interest of the smooth functioning of the state, uphold the grand tradition to promote junior unqualified police chiefs, arm-twist the Chief Justice and threaten Election Commission if they don't do as instructed.
4. Sign an executive order allowing prime ministerial motorcades and motorcades of all 15 deputy prime ministers to toot their own horns and nearly mow down pedestrians on zebras.
5. If India bans momos, ban pani puris in retaliation.



The Ass

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