



HIGH WATER

Scientists trace the origin of the damming
of the Arun River in April to a bursting
glacial lake near Mt Makalu
BY ALTON C BYERS PAGE 6-7

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BIKRAM R.

PAGE 2



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EQUIDISTANCE OR ASYMMETRY?

Once more, and for the fourth time as prime minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba is following the well-established tradition of a new leader in Kathmandu making an obligatory pilgrimage to New Delhi.

Why this has to be so is rooted in the central dilemma of Nepal's diplomacy vis-a-vis its neighbours: while a policy of equidistance between the two giants is desirable, the geopolitical reality is that Nepal's overwhelming economic dependence on India makes those ties asymmetrical. Nepal may want equi-proximity towards its neighbours, but geography puts New Delhi nearer than Beijing.

The blockade that followed the earthquake in 2015 was starting to redress the equilibrium in relations with north and south as UML Prime Minister KP Oli leaned over backwards to seek China's support. But such nationalism has never been sustainable in Kathmandu and sure enough, Oli had to go, to be replaced by a more pliable Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who has allowed the 10-point agreement on trade and transit that his predecessor signed in Beijing to lapse.

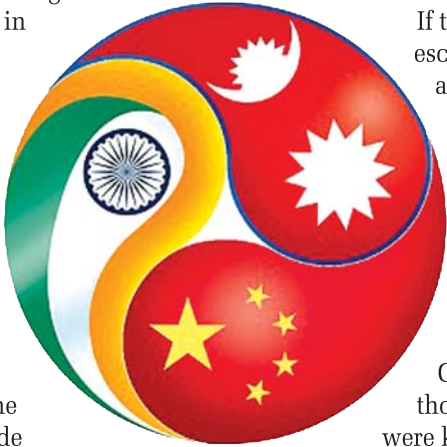
Foreign Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara has already been to Delhi to do the spade work for PM Deuba's visit. He met External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to work on the agenda. But we know from the past that no matter what the agenda, it will be the unscripted one-on-one between the two prime ministers behind closed doors that will determine the outcome.

Call it the small country syndrome. To give some credibility to equidistance, however, Foreign Minister Mahara is expected to dash off to Beijing before Deuba goes to Delhi. (See Guest Editorial by Nishchal N Pandey below)

This is a particularly sensitive time to be making these visits because of the tension building up along the Himalayan arc between Nepal's two giant neighbours. Some have advised Deuba to postpone both visits, fearing that he may make a gaffe and mess up the equidistance doctrine. Even if Deuba doesn't sign any agreements in Delhi, there will be efforts to portray the visit as proof that Nepal is siding with India on the Bhutan-China border dispute. Or, if he goes to Beijing soon after, it will raise hackles in Delhi.

If the Doklam dispute escalates, Nepal will feel the aftershocks. Nepali troops serve in the Indian Army and on the frontlines — a deterioration of India-China relations will increase interference by both sides in Nepal's internal affairs. The last time India and China fought a border war thousands of Nepali soldiers were killed. But it was the skilful diplomacy of King Mahendra that did not allow this to sour relations with China. This time we don't have leaders with such statesmanship.

Even if the visit goes ahead as planned, we don't expect much from it. All we can hope for is that it will help repair Nepal-India ties badly bruised by the blockade, and that our prime minister will not do anything to erode and undermine Nepal's independent foreign policy.



GUEST EDITORIAL NISHCHAL N PANDEY

Himalayan rumblings

Nepal should be worried that the ongoing Indo-China spat at Doklam marks a renewed phase of geo-strategic and geo-economic rivalry as China and India rise as 21st-century heavyweights.

Uncertainties about the Trump administration's foreign policy direction leave a large space for other giants, such as China, Russia and India, to occupy. How relations between these big powers shape up and how they behave with regional actors will be key questions. In such a geopolitical climate, Nepal will only benefit from strengthening trust-based relationships with neighbours and being a robust international actor.

During the 1962 Sino-Indian war, Nepal maintained strict neutrality and did not permit either side to use its soil or airspace. Our neighbours realised that Nepal, a buffer between the Himalaya and the Indo-Gangetic plains, could become a headache if it slid into chaos and instability.

Nepal went on to sit on the UN Security Council (twice), became one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping missions worldwide, and has hosted world leaders, including Queen Elizabeth and Emperor Akihito. In the last six decades, two Indian mountain states on our border disappeared in political geography but Nepal managed to survive because we have never hesitated to practise and project an independent foreign policy of our own.

Bhutan has always been inward-looking. We ought not to forget that its airspace was used in the 1962 war. It has done remarkably well in terms of maintaining political stability, harnessing its hydro-resources and making environmental protection its top priority. However, it does not have diplomatic relations with the

P5 countries of the UN Security Council and maintains only a handful of missions, in Delhi, Dhaka, Geneva, Bangkok, etc. There are only three foreign embassies in Thimphu.

We in Nepal have realised during recent blockades that despite having a relatively large international footprint, it is not easy to get our viewpoint across to the international media, let alone to foreign governments. As geopolitics shifts towards the Himalayan states once more with consequent ramifications for regional security, a small country like Bhutan needs to seriously reconsider its policy of self-isolation.

It is disheartening to see the two Asian giants sparring at a time of increased connectivity and easy travel. What is needed are railways, fibre-optic cables, roads and ports to run unhindered across South Asia, not new bunkers and eye-to-eye confrontation that will only harm our collective quest for economic development. We would like to reap the benefits of the rise of China and India, not suffer the fallout of their rivalry. As current Chair of SAARC, Nepal must convene a meeting of the Council of Ministers to at least create a platform to meet and discuss urgent issues. Unfortunately, our highly unstable politics is being led by an egoistic and myopic leadership. All they know is to request visits to Delhi and Beijing without even realising that their ability to fulfil the promises they make there is questionable.



Nishchal N Pandey is Director of the Centre for South Asian Studies, Kathmandu, and has a PhD in Nepal-Bhutan Relations.

Times.com

ONLINE PACKAGES



LAKE BURST

On 20 April a flashflood on the Barun River blocked the Arun, forming a lake that threatened settlements in eastern Nepal. Watch dramatic eye-witness videos of the torrent washing away houses. Follow Alton Byers as he overflies the Makalu region to find out how the flood was triggered when a mountain fell into a lake.



INTO THE WILD VALLEY

When it rains, it pours in the Madi Valley. Flash floods are common here and many have been swept away by the swollen Riyu Khola. But a community-based early warning system that monitors rainfall data and water levels successfully alerts villages downstream. Watch how people in the valley are helping each other survive flash floods.

IN THE NEWS

Thanks for the consistently insightful issues of *Nepali Times*, and the hilarious Ass-inine columns. The article 'Power without paisa' (Om Astha Rai, #866) left me very angry at the news about the draft Inter-governmental Fiscal Transfers Bill. Please do what you can to keep this in the news and help civil society to protest.

Cap Miller SJ

AIN'T DEMOCRACY

What don't the Maoists get ('Metro without mayor', Om Astha Rai, #868)? It was a democratic and fair election, tearing up the voting papers should be perceived as a threat to the law of the land and those responsible should be held responsible with legal action taken against them.

Sue Chamberlain

DELAYED RECONSTRUCTION

It has been more than two years since the earthquake ('Rebuilding for all', Govind Pokharel, #868). The NRA's performance has been dismally slow and bureaucratic.

Birat Simha

POWER CORRUPTS

Local body setups were easier said than done ('Sinkhole', Om Astha Rai, #868). Sher Bahadur Deuba and Pushpa Kamal Dahal seem to have realised that it was going to undermine their control.

Anupam

USA VS RUSSIA

Your assumption and interpretation of western-backed media in the certainty of Russian involvement in electing Trump is naive ('Manchurian candidates', Damakant Jayshi, #868). Russian intervention in its neighbouring countries with aggression only began when NATO started pushing its Thad and Patriot missile defence systems (under the pretext of defence) beyond the originally understood and recognised sphere of influence which was to be observed during the end of the Cold War. Hence Russian involvement in the American election is just as much a media-backed hoax as American NGOs supporting anti-Putin demonstrations.

Pczar

WHAT'S TRENDING



#EnoughAlready

Backside

The Ass's spoof on Nepal's rainy season and flooded streets that literally swallow cars and people was most popular among readers last week. It got unprecedented shares on social media and unleashed lively engagement online. Visit nepalitimes.com to read the piece and feedback.

- Most reached and shared on Facebook** (16,100 people reached)
- Most popular on Twitter** (27 retweets, 29 likes)
- Most commented**
- Most visited online page** (1,007 views)

QUOTE TWEETS

Nepali Times@nepalitimes
Pedestrians have a difficult time getting across a flooded street during a downpour in Boudha, #Kathmandu on Sunday. Pic: Gopen Rai

← ↻ ❤ ...

Tashi Tewa Dolpo@TashiTewaDolpo
Will you guys ever write/report about its causes and possible solution?

Sushma Joshi@joshi_sushma
New Nepal engineering ethos: Slap on the asphalt and completely block every drainage possible.

@फदयाइ-रो™ AP Says@punkanat
This is Kathmandu and one of the important places for tourism. If this situation continues Boudha will soon be removed from world heritage site.

Nepali Times@nepalitimes
See how 'Protecting life' under the US Trump administration will put more Nepali women's lives on the line <http://bit.ly/2uMNUi3>

Saral Israel@saralsth
So let's fund non-abortion care providers and not put unborn children's "life on the line."

Nepali Times@nepalitimes
Join us for a hair-raising ride down the Mugling Highway, skirting excavators & wrecked vehicles Full video & story: <http://bit.ly/2tPMx47j>

Andy Hart@landsleideandy
Drove this on Dec 16. Very scary but shows the challenge of trying to widen busy road in very steep & unstable terrain with traffic still running!

Nepali Times@nepalitimes
Locals in Bhaktapur build and burn effigy of Ghantakama, a mythical demon, during the Gathamuga festival More photos: <http://bit.ly/2ukKX8Y>

david seddon@pigreen
I was told last night by a friend to hurry home before dark because of ghosts & demons... good advice. Got back before torrential downpour!

Weekly Internet Poll #869

Q. Who is mostly to blame for the state of roads?

Total votes: 170

- Politicians 46%
- Bureaucracy 45%
- Private sector 9%

Weekly Internet Poll #870
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Should the PM visit India or China, or just stay home, when the two giants are sparring over borders?



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Missing a creative curator

We must complete the projects and plans that Dina Bangdel had for Nepal

There would not be many Nepalis worldwide who could give a professional tour of the Louvre's collection of European art from the Medieval to the Renaissance to Impressionism, Modernism and Late Modernism. But there was Dina Bangdel. The usage has to be tragically in the past tense because all of a sudden she is no more: taken from Nepal, the Himalaya and South Asia by a freak illness.



ON THE WAY UP
Kanak Mani Dixit

In June 2013 we happened to be together in Paris for different events, and the grand Louvre museum, of course, was only a part of Dina's interest. The city was also a pilgrimage destination for her because her father, Nepali master of modern art Lain Singh Bangdel (1919-2002), had lived and painted here in the early 1950s, walking the lanes of Montmartre where the great Impressionists browsed. Dina's plan was to retrace her father's steps in Paris, and also to build a permanent collection of his works back in Kathmandu. Having spent her student and



Memory album: The author with curator Dina Bangdel in the Louvre museum in Paris in 2013.

SHANTA DIXIT

professional life overseas, Dina was on a trajectory back to Nepal, where her infirm mother lived. To be closer to home, she moved from the US to Doha, to head the Art Department of Virginia Commonwealth University. Art history and curating

were Dina's passion and career, this self-made professional who carved a niche for herself in the rarefied field. She curated shows internationally and in Kathmandu, helped in the revival of the Nepal Art Council, and encouraged Nepali artists with her curatorial skills.

I was fortunate to be working with Dina on two projects related to Nepal's traditional art and iconography. We were part of a team, including the recently departed Sukrasagar Shrestha as well as the America-born artist Joy Lynn Davis, working for the return of Nepal's stolen statuary. The campaign would be based on diligent documentation and expert knowledge, and Dina had the skills we needed, besides the international recognition and credibility. Dina was also energised by her father's deep interest in the challenge of idol theft. Distressed by the loss of statuary and knowing the value of documentation, Lain Singh Bangdel built a vast photographic record of before-and-after images, an exercise he completed at great risk and which ended with the publication of *The Stolen Images of Nepal* (1989).

In the early 1990s, the artist was shocked to see a Kathmandu Valley Uma-Maheshwar (13th Cent) and a Vishnu-Laxmi-Garuda (12th Cent) exhibited at the Musee Guimet in Paris. He informed the museum and the two artefacts were promptly moved to basement storage. A few years ago, the museum allowed Dina Bangdel access to the two idols. The emotional weight of Dina's encounter with the statues in the Guimet basement would have been profound, for she was as devoted a daughter as she was an authority on Newar iconography. The grandeur of Kathmandu Valley's historic artistic outpouring convinced Dina of the need for an international exhibition showcasing Nepal's ancient and traditional art. There has not been a major exhibition

on Nepal since one was put up at the selfsame Musee Guimee in 1966, inaugurated by King Mahendra. Dina single-handedly worked to convince the museum, including its Asian Art Department head Natalie Bazin, to return the two statues. The museum demanded assurance of security for the idols once they were restituted to Nepal. Bazin also agreed that there should be a grand exhibition of Nepal's ancient and traditional art, and that the Vishnu and Uma-Maheshwar would be exhibited one last time at the Musee Guimet before being repatriated. Dina's plan was that the exhibition would travel around the world, including the US, Austria, Singapore and Japan, before arriving in Kathmandu. Her international credibility and expertise were vital to pull off this grand exhibition, which would also have marked the formal start of the campaign for the return of stolen gods and goddesses that grace museum pedestals and personal collections globally. The Paris exhibition was originally planned for 2016, but delayed by the continuous political turmoil in Nepal. This exhibition should now be moving into the planning stage, but the impresario has departed. Dina Bangdel would have wished that her ideas should move ahead, even in her absence: including the dedicated Lain Singh Bangdel Collection, the campaign for the restoration of stolen Nepali iconography, and the international exhibition of Nepal's ancient and traditional art at the Musee Guimet, to start with...

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BIZ BRIEFS

Discover Africa
Passengers in Kathmandu now have an opportunity to explore Africa thanks to exclusive fares offered by Turkish Airlines. Round-trip tickets are available from Kathmandu to Cape Town, Johannesburg, Kigali, Khartoum, Accra and Dar es Salaam.

Students tour
Ullens School in Kathmandu has taken their high school students to the US as part of their annual international tour. The tour team travelled to the US via Qatar Airways.

JICA's assistance
The Supreme Court of Nepal is implementing The Project for Strengthening the Capacity of Courts for Expedient and Reliable Dispute Settlement, with technical assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The project aims to establish the foundation to improve the court's function to promote expeditious and reliable dispute settlement.

Health with Thai
Thai Airways is holding a blood donation and cardiac check-up program on 31 July from 10am to 3pm in Annapurna Hotel in Kathmandu.



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SONIAAWALE

Woman’s best friend

As a young girl, Shreejana Thakuri used to tell her parents she would go to school only if she could bring street dogs home with her. Her parents soon got used to their daughter doing just that: returning with strays she picked up on the streets.

Thirty years later, Shreejana is still at it. Now 42 and the mother of a grown son, she still brings abused and abandoned dogs to her shelter in Baneswor, where there are 47 rescued animals at present.

“I’m the kind of person who prefers dogs over people: I always had a soft corner for them,” says Thakuri, who estimates she has rescued more than 300 dogs. She even cares for animals that vets would put down because they’re in such bad shape.

Thakuri was married at age 15 and had her son a year later. After high school, she went to the US with her husband and was studying child development when she heard her father was diagnosed with terminal cancer. She left everything and came back to Nepal, but while caring for her father found out her son had autism.

“It was a very stressful time. I



had lost faith in family, life and humanity,” recalls Thakuri. “Then I started bringing home dogs just like when I was young, and their loyalty restored my hope in life.”

She introduces a visitor to Chanti, a dog that recently arrived at the shelter and is recovering from an acid attack. Most dogs there have been abused, are malnourished or suffering from diseases. From the affection the dogs give her, it is clear Thakuri has found her true calling.

Among the animals are month-old puppies, and dogs pushing 15 years. Ten of them are partially paralysed and some are undergoing cancer treatment. Most are mongrels, but there are German Shepherds, Golden

Labradors and Japanese Spitzs, abandoned by owners because of a disability or disease.

There are an estimated 30,000 street dogs in Kathmandu, and despite occasional spaying campaigns by organisations like Kathmandu Animal Treatment (KAT), the numbers are not decreasing.

Thakuri had nearly finished building a spacious shed and playground for her dogs on a leased plot in Kusunti, but after spending all her budget the work has been stopped because of a complaint by a powerful Maoist leader who owns a nearby property. The leader is pressuring Thakuri to move out, claiming that her dogs will spread disease

HAVE A HART

Most street canine management programs in Nepal have been restricted to Kathmandu Valley. Now the Himalayan Animal Rescue Trust (HART) has started collaborating with municipalities to control the street dog population as well as combat rabies.

So far, the mobile units have been at work in Pokhara, Bharatpur, Dharan, Birtamod and Khandbari in partnership with District Livestock Service Offices to vaccinate dogs against rabies and break the chain of rabies transmission from dogs to humans. This is done by vaccinating at least 70% of the dog population and controlling the dog population through neutering programs.

There are no reliable statistics but it is estimated that 100 livestock die of rabies in Nepal every year. In addition, 1,000 livestock and 35,000 humans receive post-exposure injections every year, and the annual human fatality rate fluctuates between 50-100. The numbers of human who die from rabies could be much higher because of underreporting.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has set a global target of ‘zero human rabies by 2030’.

The HART program this year vaccinated 1,449 dogs in Pokhara, 1,248 in Bharatpur, 314 in Dharan, 128 in Birtamod and 236 dogs in Khandbari. In more than 800 dogs were sterilized in those cities.

The vaccination campaign achieved 78% coverage of the total dog population in Bharatpur and 75% in Pokhara -- exceeding the recommended minimum of 70% for rabies control.

“HART and others are doing their best to address the dog population and rabies management through sterilization and campaigns to meet the WHO 2030 target,” says Khageshwar Sharma of Trust.

HART is funded by donations and works through its two bases in Pokhara and Chitwan throughout the country.

<http://www.hartnepal.org/>
HART: 9806617975

in a residential area.

“Laws are rarely followed in this country, justice is an afterthought. But how humane is it to hassle a single woman with a handicapped son who is just trying to provide a better shelter for rescued dogs?” asks Thakuri, who says this is the fifth time she has been asked to move because of complaints from neighbours.

Caring for four dozen, four-legged friends isn’t easy. It is also a costly business: medical treatment and food cost Rs200,000 per month. Thakuri sold her house in Hatiban to cover the bills and gets help from her husband, and donations.

“I have spent half of my life taking care of dogs. I want to

spend the rest of it doing the same. I wish people took better care of their pets,” says Thakuri, who offers her dogs up for adoption.

Eight-month-old Chintu suffered broken bones after being hit by a car. It took three months of treatment for him to recover fully. He has been adopted and taken to the US with his best friend Tuk Tuk, whom Thakuri nursed back to health after he got pneumonia.

Fighter is five months old, and was picked up on the streets with a dislocated leg. After surgery to insert a steel rod, he is now on the mend and waiting to go to a new home in Canada.

Sonia Awale

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1 Saldim Peak 6,388m, showing where the slope failed near the summit on 20 April



2 Icebergs and boulders that fell on Langmale Glacial Lake

At 4pm on 20 April a flood came down the Barun River and blocked the Arun River, forming a lake up to 3km long and 500m wide above the village of Barun Bazar. The rising lake displaced 10 families and threatened downstream communities in Bhojpur and Dhankuta districts. The Nepal Army and Nepal Police were deployed, but the lake drained spontaneously the next day. There was speculation the flood was the result of heavy

rains or a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) from the Lower Barun glacial lake, one of Nepal's potentially most dangerous lakes. On 2 May we overflowed the Barun Valley and discovered that the flood's source was the small Langmale glacial lake. The beautiful Barun Valley had been transformed from a lush, green Shangri-La into a barren wasteland. No one was killed, but three buildings in Yangle Kharka were lost and captured in a dramatic video by a visiting

German climbing team. Three weeks later, I returned to the Barun Valley to study the origin and impact of the flood. Tashi Sherpa in Langmale pointed to the most likely trigger: a massive rock wall that broke off from the southwest face of Saldim Peak (6,388 m) on the day of the outburst flood, a slope failure possibly linked to the April 2015 earthquake. Climbing guide Dendi Sherpa was camped 200m above Langmale Lake with a client. He says there were two rockfall events that afternoon, although fog prevented him from seeing them. The first slope failure was small and caused only a minor rise in the Barun's water level, but the second consisted of over 1 million m3 of solid rock that plunged 300m down to the Langmale glacier, creating a massive blast upon impact that hurled house-size boulders and icebergs up to 1km in all directions. The resultant flood and debris flow of mud, sand and rocks cascaded to the valley below, creating a huge torrent that picked up more material and debris as it barrelled down the Barun River. At least 24 yaks were killed as the flood continued downstream to dam at the Arun River confluence with the debris-choked floodwater. Although Nepal has most likely



3 Outlet of the glacial flood in the Barun Valley below Langmale Lake

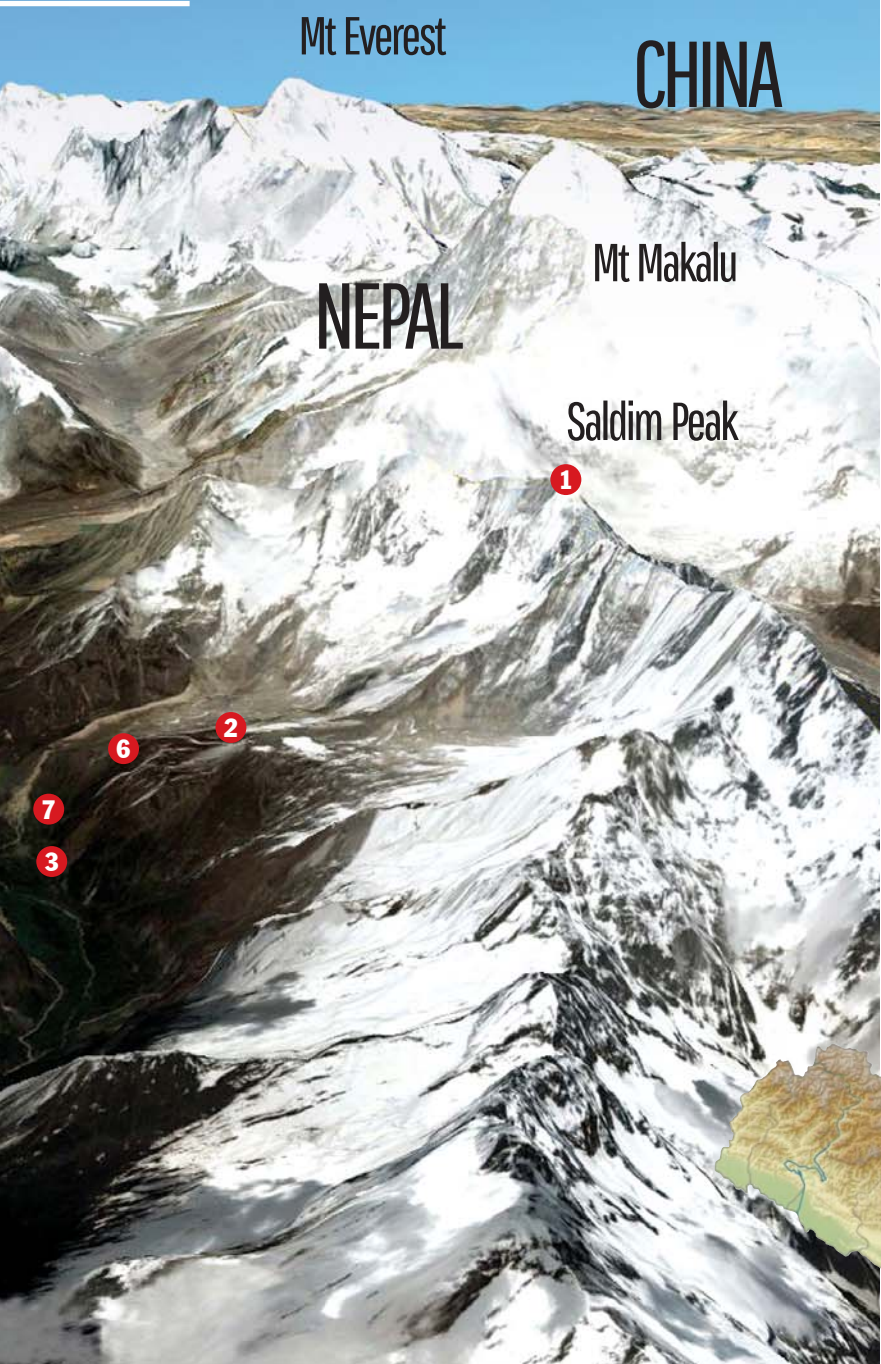


4 Debris and scarring in Barun River at Riphuk Kharka and Ama Buchun (left)

WATER

The damming of the Arun River in
glacial lake near Mt Makalu

ALTON C BYERS
ARUN VALLEY



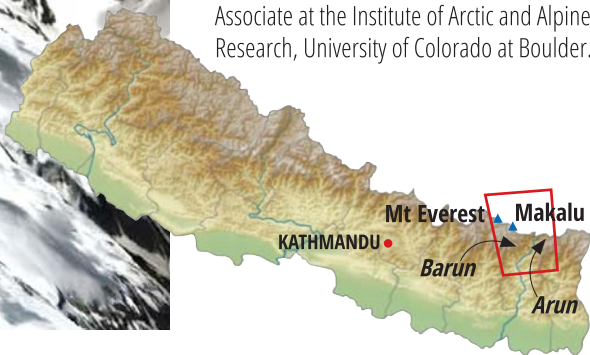
8 The remains of Yangle Kharka, downstream from the Glacial Lake Outburst Flood

entered an era of increased GLOF and glacier flood risk, these are natural events and a normal part of Himalayan geomorphology. The Langmale flood shows how GLOFs are not only the result of climate change but also of the dramatic geologic setting of the Himalaya.

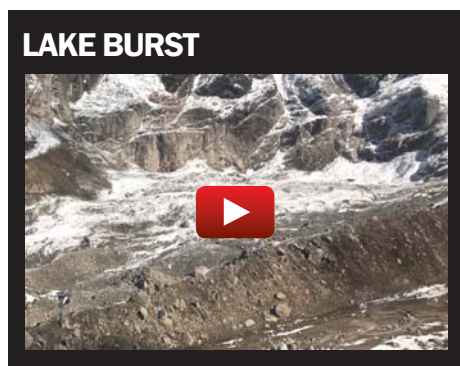
As earthquakes continue and more glacial lakes form with each passing year, scientists need to continue their work to better understand these hazards, their formative processes and mitigation techniques.

Downstream infrastructure, like hydropower projects, need to recognise and plan for these events. Risk awareness and disaster management training will also be of critical importance to people living in villages, and even cities like Pokhara, located downstream of high mountain glaciated landscapes. 🇳🇵

Alton C Byers, PhD, is a Senior Research Associate at the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research, University of Colorado at Boulder.



7 Dust and mud on a mani wall in Langmale



Go online to watch dramatic video of the Barun glacial flashflood in April captured by eye-witnesses. Follow Alton Byers as he overflies the Makalu region to piece together evidence and reconstruct what exactly happened when a mountain fell into a lake.

nepalitimes.com



5 Lower Barun Glacial Lake



6 The terminal moraine that was breached by the waves

EVENTS



Layering The City,

Save the date and visit an exhibition of lithographs and woodcut prints by Bhavika Dugar.
30 July-10 August, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, (01) 5260607

Monkey talk,

Register your name to be a part of a talk program that aims at raising awareness about the status of monkeys in Nepal. Researcher Sabina Koirala will share her research experience.
29 July, 8-9am, Ranibari Community Forest, Ranibari

Vocal workshop,

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

Click away,

Participate in a 5-day beginners' photography workshop. Bring your own DSLR or compact camera.
Application deadline: 5pm, 25 July. 1-5 August, 10am-12pm, Sanskriti Space, Goswara Road, Birganj, Fee Rs2,000 9855092943



True stories project,

An art exhibition to raise awareness about and against gender-based abuse, exploitation and human trafficking.
14-31 July, 10am-6pm, Patan Museum Lalitpur (01) 4218048

A life in poems,

Spend an evening celebrating the poems of poet and writer Greta Rana.
30 July, 5:30-7pm, The Tulip International Club, Sanepa, 9801132008



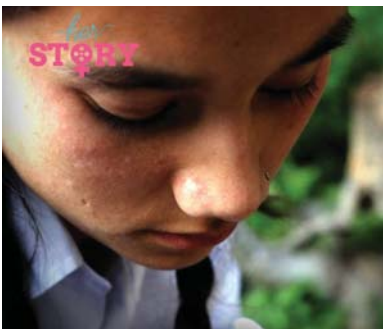
Comic con in Nepal,

Fans of Marvel, DC, Anime, games and the comic genre are in for a treat. Participate in an event that will host international cosplay artists from Japan, the Philippines and India.
9 September, 10am-8pm, Heritage Garden, Sanepa, (01) 5013096



Obstacle race,

Be adventurous and test your strength at Nepal's first obstacle race.
9 September, 6am, Godavari Football Ground, Rs1,000, free for ultra run

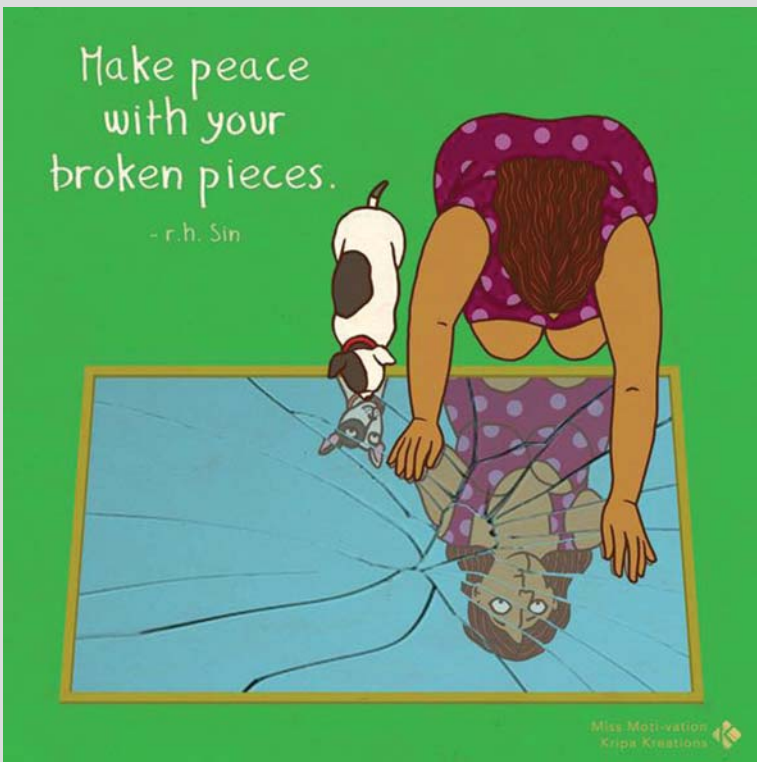


Her story,

Save the date to watch three short movies and documentaries aimed at promoting women's rights, produced by 22 young women of Nepal.
29 July, 5 -7:30pm, Nepal Tourism Board, 9851077430, 9841842878

MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI



MUSIC



Kanta dAb dAb,

Book your seats for a musical night with Nepali fusion trio Kanta dAb dAb.
18 August, 5:30pm onwards, Base Camp: Outdoor Lifestyle, Jhamsikhel, Fee Rs500, 9841226397

Musical evening,

Warm up your weekend listening to a classical music performance by members of the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, The Felix Trio and Korea National University. Invitation only.
30 July, 4:30pm onwards, Himalaya Hall, Hotel Himalaya, (01) 5523900

Live with Renders,

Enjoy live music by Renders band, and get a complimentary drink.
28 July, 5:30pm onwards, The Crust Pizza, Mid-Baneswor, Free entry, (01) 4483383



Minute to Midnight,

Spend the weekend with close friends swaying to the rhythms of Minute to Midnight.
28 July, 5:45pm onwards, Ai-La Lounge Restaurant, Kumariapati, Lalitpur, 9801018681

The Midnight Riders,

Spend your weekend with The Midnight Riders.
28 July, 5:45pm onwards, Old School Café & Pub, Dhobighat

The Feather\$,

Don't miss the chance to listen to live music by The Feather\$ and get complimentary snacks and shots of *aaila* (Newari liquor)
28 July, Laptey Newari Cuisine, Jhamsikhel, (01) 5548968

OUR PICK



THE DARK TOWER

Opens in Kathmandu 4 August

This action and adventure film is based on Stephen King's eight-book Dark Tower series. Director Nikolaj Arcel's film stars Idris Elba as Roland, the Gunslinger, who must defend the Dark Tower from the Man in Black (Matthew McConaughey). If the tower falls, the universe will be destroyed.

DINING



Around the Corner,

Spend an evening for a dine-in-nature experience. The homey environment at this full service restaurant adds flavours to your food.
Bansbari (Inside The Standard Nursery), 9861631197

Ventures Café,

Stop by for the best fusion menu and all local favourites, and enjoy the breezy outdoors seating. A great venue for beer connoisseurs.
Baluwatar, 9851228014

The Bent Fork,

For a cosy evening with friends and family. This European style restaurant offers some of the best salads and varieties of continental dishes.
Bishal Nagar, 9802049888

Monsoon Sundays,

Food connoisseurs can relish a succulent barbecue with a choice of African, Arabic or Mediterranean specialties, along with access to the swimming pool.
23 July onwards, 12:30-3:30pm, Rs1,999 per person, Hyatt Regency www.kathmandu.regency.hyatt.com



Oriental Kitchen,

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

1905,

Heritage boutique suites with garden dining, 1905 Suites and Restaurants is now open for breakfast, lunch and dinner.
Nagpokhari, Naxal, For more information: 9860374450

Saigon Pho,

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

Mezze by Roadhouse,

Spot a superstar at one of Kathmandu's most popular restaurants.
Mercantile Plaza, Darbar Marg, (01) 4223087

Lakpa's Chulo,

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Jhamsikhel, (01) 5542986

GETAWAY



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Gokarna, (01) 4451212, info@gokarna.net

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www.tranquilityspa.com.np

Dwarika's Resort,

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Dhulikhel (11) 490612, info@dwarikas-dhulikhel.com



Monsoon madnness,

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Shangri La Village Resort, Pokhara, (01) 4420252, 9861388277/9804116774
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Club Himalaya,

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Nagarkot, (01) 4410432

Shivapuri Cottage,

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Budhanilkantha, 9841371927

The Famous Farmhouse,

Its converted old buildings are family friendly, the gardens and bougainvillea intertwine, the furniture and fittings are an antique collector's delight.
Nuwakot, (01) 4422617



Neydo Monastery,

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Pharping, Kathmandu www.neydohotel.com

Stratospheric pollution

Top atmospheric scientists are in Nepal to study how particles high above the Himalaya affect the monsoon

Forty of the world's top atmospheric scientists were busy this week at Kathmandu Airport calibrating equipment and rigging it up to a strange-looking plane with such a wide wingspan that it didn't fit inside the Buddha Air hangar.

They are part of StratoClim, a European project to study aerosols and dust particles in the stratosphere above the Himalaya, and how it affects the South Asian monsoon. They have rented a converted Soviet spy plane, the M55 Geophysica, which can fly 25km high and has been used to study the atmosphere all over the world.

"The Asian monsoon, how it is affected by man-made pollutants and aerosols, is not well understood," explains Markus Rex, a professor at the Alfred Wegener Institut in Germany. "This is the only place on the planet with such high concentrations of particles so high in the atmosphere, and it happens only during the monsoon. We want to study how it affects global weather, and also the impact of climate change on this process."

Scientists have found that the Himalaya is the only region where such particles go as high, and think they may be sucked up by the low pressure created by the intense heat over northern India at the start of the monsoon. However, the particles also affect the progress of the monsoon, and may impact on weather across the globe.

Says Rex: "What we want to see is how much of this is aerosol or natural mineral dust and how much is industrial pollution." The M55, which looks like the American U-2 spy plane, bristles with sophisticated sensors that can collect individual aerosol particles at more than 21,000m above sea level to analyse them with onboard spectrometers to pinpoint their origin.

If the findings show a large concentration of chemical pollution, scientists will then want to know how it is blown all over the world and if it is affecting monsoon precipitation, so that Asian countries can take steps to clean up emissions. Researchers at the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) have been studying wind-blown cross border pollution in South Asia at lower altitudes, and have found evidence that the deposition of soot particles on the Himalaya adds to snow already melting from global warming.

But StratoClim is interested in pollution at a much higher elevation. It will fly the high-altitude plane in carefully planned routes above Nepal's airspace four hours at a time till mid-August, taking samples of air from the edge of the stratosphere to analyse. The data will be used for computer modeling of monsoon systems by scientists from Germany, France, Italy and the United States.

The plane will be flown by




PICS: KUNDA DIXIT



FLYING HIGH: Markus Rex (left) of StratoClim poses next to the M55 high-altitude research plane being prepared for flights in the Buddha Air hangar in Kathmandu.

Oleg Shchepetkov, a test-pilot with type rating for dozens of Soviet-era military planes. He will be dressed in a space suit to be able to survive decompression at high altitude. Notably, the M55

can only accommodate one pilot since the rest of the plane is taken up by equipment. Asked why the project doesn't just put sensors on the top of Mt Everest, Francesco Cairo of the Institute of Atmospheric Sciences and Climate in Rome told Nepali Times: "Mt Everest is too low for us. This plane can take us nearly three times higher, and that is what we are interested in."  **Kunda Dixit**

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The Autopsy of Jane Doe

I gave up watching horror movies around the time that I realised that the scare was not worth it. The thrills were stale, and the formula repetitive. *The Autopsy of Jane Doe*, which premiered at the Toronto Film



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

Festival in September 2016, made waves when it opened in cinemas late last year. It is now out on DVD and given the buzz, it seemed worth a try.

Directed by the Norwegian André Øvredal, the film begins extremely promisingly with the appropriate idyllic, rural setting. In a beautiful family home, a couple have been brutally murdered, the scene is bloody, there is no evidence of a break-in, and in the basement the unmarked body of a beautiful young woman is found, totally naked and half buried.

The Sheriff (Michael McElhatton), thoroughly unsettled by the ferocity of the crime, takes the body of Jane Doe (Olwen Kelly) to the home of the Tilden's, the neighbourhood coroners, seeking a cause of death. Brian Cox and Emile Hirsh, respectively, play the father and son team, Tommy and Austin, and the strength of the film rests on the relationship between these two main characters. The Sheriff hands over the body late in the evening, insisting on a theory by morning about how this mysterious young woman might have died. The duo get to work, Austin abandoning a date with his girlfriend Emma (Ophelia Lovibond) to work with his father, who is his mentor when it comes to the forensic analysis of bodies.

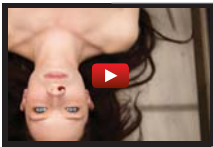
What begins as a terrific medical and detective work procedural slowly devolves into a perfectly clichéd horror movie as Jane Doe's body slowly yields clue after awful clue. If only the makers and writers had had the

wits to stick to the strengths, combining a whodunit with hints of horror instead of going into all out misogynistic horror mode, where witches are malevolent, the dumb, ghoulish girlfriend gets unsentimentally offed, and corpses come to life while doors lock and unlock as lights dim during the inevitable apocalyptic rainstorm.

You can watch the first half of *The Autopsy of Jane Doe* and when things start to seem sickeningly familiar, you can turn it off and imagine your own ending. Anything would be better than the utter, horrible banality of what actually happens.

The horror genre has slowly but surely become the genre of absolutely unimaginative filmmakers, who whip the same dead horse until it is painful all around.

If you want to watch something really, really good, then I'd advise seeing *Let The Right One In*, a wonderful vampire-horror film from 2008 made by the Swedish filmmaker Tomas Alfredson. Alfredson understands that real horror is in the everyday and not in the grotesque. Evolved audiences are tired of the old tropes of horror where women and witches are the culprits, little girls are possessed along with their poor innocent dolls, and everyone in the film is so lamentably senseless you're not even sorry when they die.



Watch trailer online

nepaltimes.com

HAPPENINGS



DINESH GOLE

JUMBO CABINET: President Bidya Bhandari, Vice President Nanda Bahadur Pun, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and Speaker of Parliament Onsari Gharti Magar with newly elected ministers at the presidential palace in Kathmandu on Wednesday.



BIKRAM RAI

FINALLY TOGETHER: Rabindra Mishra of the Sajha Party and Ujjwal Thapa of Bibeksheel Nepali after the unification of their parties in Kathmandu on Wednesday. The name of the new party will be Bibeksheel Sajha Party.



GOPEN RAI

CRUSADER DOCTOR: Dr Govinda KC announces his 11th hunger strike to force reforms in the medical sector, at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu on Monday.



TURKISH AIRLINES

ALL SMILES: Turkish Airlines Country Manager Abdullah Tuncer (*far left*) and Anand Gurung and Gagan Pradhan of Himalayan Java announce the grand prize winner of their joint campaign Together for Better, in Thamel on Friday.



QATAR AIRWAYS

BON VOYAGE: Students from Ullens School pose for a group photo in Kathmandu before leaving for their US tour via Qatar Airways on Friday.

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The girl in the photograph



SANJOG MANANDHAR

Sujata Gole in *Kantipur*, 26 July
कान्तिपुर

The road to my rented room near Boudhanath Stupa was flooded after a downpour that evening. So I took a detour through the monastery. It was still drizzling, and a wheelchair-bound man was stuck in a deluge of muddy water.

He looked helpless, and asked for help. But no one stepped in. So I did. He said: “No, no. Not you.” But I helped him any way. My shoes got wet. I did not have an extra pair of shoes to wear the next day. So I had to dry them. When I stepped forward to help him, I did not

care about getting my pants and shoes wet. I just went about helping him. After my mother committed suicide, I felt disturbed all the time in my earthquake-hit village in Dolakha district. So my father brought me to Kathmandu, and I enrolled in the ninth grade in another school. If we do not help people in need, there is no point going to school or university and gaining knowledge. What I did that rainy evening was not something to brag about. I just did it, and will always do. Shouldn’t everybody be helping each other if we want to create a better society?

(Photo journalist Sanjog Manandhar’s picture of Sujata Gole helping a wheelchair-bound man despite his refusal became the talk of the town early this week).



A photo from cartoonist Rajesh KC’s Twitter handle

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“ We could not achieve economic prosperity due to political instability. It is high time Nepal adopted the directly elected executive system.”

CPN (Maoist-Centre) Chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal in *Annapurna Post*, 27 July

Just women

Tufan Neupane in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 16-22 July
हिमाल

Nepal’s new Constitution requires all political parties to choose women either as chiefs or deputy chiefs of recently elected self-governing local councils. Political parties blatantly disregarded the spirit of this provision by fielding women candidates mostly for deputy mayor or deputy village chiefs.

The parties received a lot of flak for not showing faith in the ability of women to lead municipalities and village councils, but another provision of the same Constitution may partially redress the injustice. Article 217 has given the responsibility to head judicial committees (JCs) of local councils to deputy mayors or deputy village chiefs, which means that women will lead most local courts because nearly 90% of deputy mayors and chiefs are women. 566 of the 617 municipal and village councils elected in the first two phases of local elections have women as deputy mayors and deputy village chiefs. They will be heading three-member JCs responsible to hear and rule on disputes related to land, other properties, cattle, communities and natural resources. Their precise jurisdiction and roles will be determined by a law that is now in Parliament.

Advocate Nirupama Yadav, who was the Sajha Party’s candidate as deputy mayor in Kathmandu, says: “If women head local JCs, it will increase women’s access to justice.” Mediation and reconciliation committees will also be set up under these committees, which will function exactly like district courts. But all deputy mayors or deputy village chiefs may not have the necessary knowledge and skills to head local courts. So the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) is preparing to train all deputy mayors and deputy village chiefs on the roles and responsibilities of local JCs, how they function and how cases are mediated and reconciled.

“Once these local courts come into effect, most property disputes will be solved at the local level,” says Dinesh Thapaliya, MoFALD Secretary. Hari Prabha Khadka, deputy mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, says their roles as local judges will be huge, but they are capable of this. “If we face legal or technical problems, there will be experts to help us,” she says.

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Chitwan village spreads early warning of flash floods through mobile phones

After a rainstorm during last year's monsoon, Dhaka Mohan Timalsina saw a flash flood rumbling down the Riyu Khola, the river that usually meanders through Madi, the valley that is sandwiched between the jungles of the Chitwan National Park and the Indian border.

A grocery shop owner in Ayodhyapuri village on the southern-most rim of the valley, Timalsina immediately alerted another villager downstream, who relayed the message further along.

The message ran faster than the flood and finally reached Sita Timalisina, who runs a restaurant in Gardi village on the northern-most edge of the valley. She quickly informed local government authorities, police and other villagers.

The flood took nearly two hours to charge through the valley before finally reaching the Narayani River. By then, people living along the Rihu Khola had already fled to safety, freeing cattle and securing important documents like citizenship cards and land ownership certificates.

"It was scary, but everybody got the message in the nick of time," Sita remembers.



WATER WARNING: Villagers carefully cross a flood-swollen river in the Madi Valley (*top*). Sunil Pokharel (*left*) and Rudra Pariyar of the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology monitor rainfall in the valley.

People in Madi have been helping each other to survive flash floods since the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) installed a community-based early warning system two years ago under a scheme supported by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Dhaka Mohan and Sita are from two of the four community-based disaster risk management committees in Madi. A resident of the upstream village of Ayodhyapuri, Dhaka Mohan is able to see flash floods before anyone else.

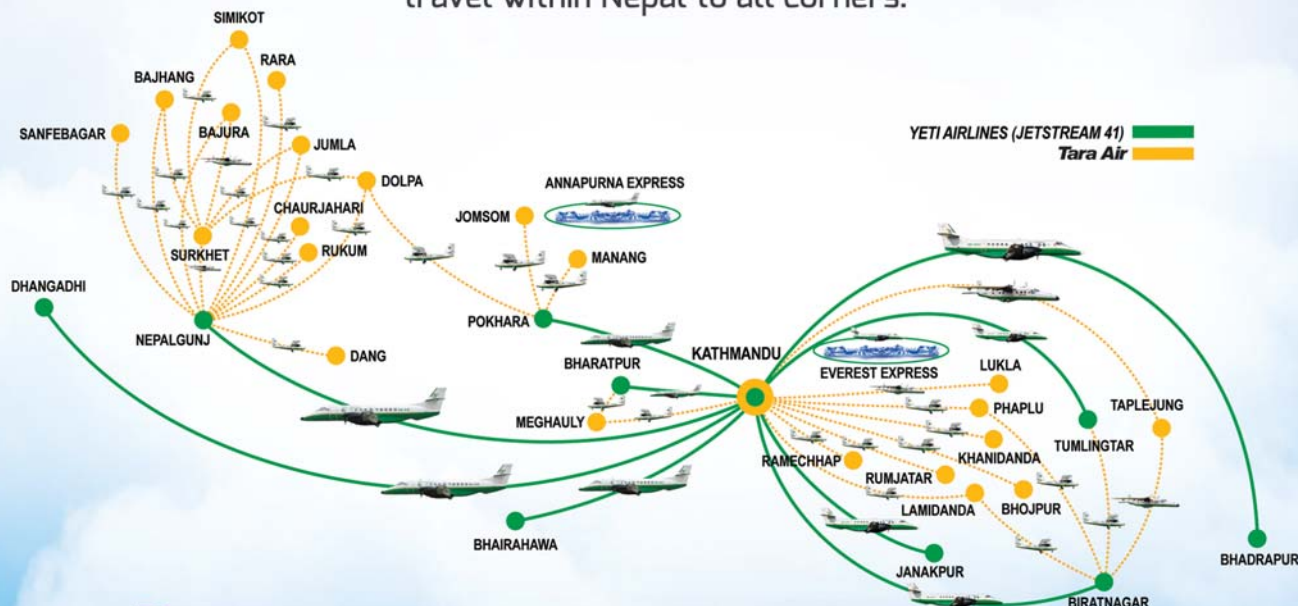
He says: "We rely on each other to survive in this wild valley surrounded by jungles."

rivers in Madi Valley flow south to north, from the Siwalik to the Narayani. Flash floods are common here, as the rivers meander across the floodplains that are filling up with human settlements. Last year, two people were swept away by the swollen Rivu.

Denudation of the Chure hills to the south adds to the intensity of floods, which often carry with them sand and boulders. Ganesh Poudel, a Nepali Congress cadre in Kalyanpur village of Madi, says: "When it rains, it pours here. And what looks like a dry river now swells up in just a few hours. It is dangerous."

Nepal has installed early warning systems in nine river basins. The DHM's flood forecasting section constantly

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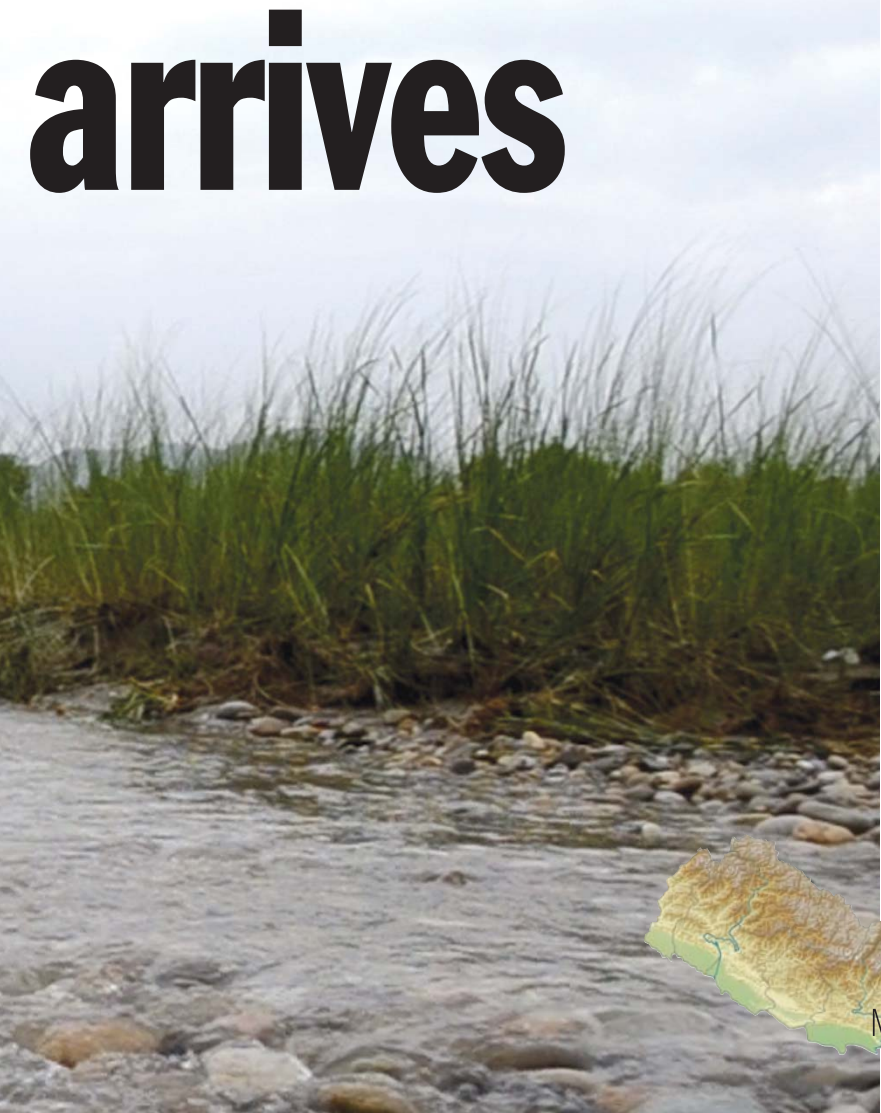


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PICS: OM ASTHA RAI

monitors rainfall data and gauges water levels. If it crosses the danger point, people living nearby are immediately alerted through bulk text messages. Last year, the DHM sent more than 2.5 million SMSs to people living in the Narayani, Kankai, Bagmati and West Rapti river basins.

In Kathmandu, UNDP Country Director Renaud Meyer says: “Local people have an amazing ability to sense what is happening around. All you need to do is to equip them with some technology. And this is what we have done in Madi.”

But many flood-prone areas outside the major river basins lack such systems. Early this month, the swollen Mahuli khola breached its embankment and submerged villages in Saptari.

There was no advance warning.

Sunil Pokharel, a hydrologist at the DHM, says: “The focus is on major rivers, but small rivers are as dangerous, especially due to erratic weather. Madi is a model for other flood-prone areas in Nepal.”



Watch how people in the Madi Valley are helping each other to survive flash floods through a community-based early warning system.

nepalitimes.com

Good news in Madi

The Madi Valley, which crosses the protected forests of Chitwan National Park, has always been in the headlines, but for the wrong reasons.

A deadly Maoist land mine that blew up a passenger bus at Badarmude on 5 July 2005, killing 38 people. Two soldiers who had boarded the bus, and were probably the target, had got off already. So powerful was the blast that the bus was lifted 25m into the air, eye witnesses said, killing most of the passengers sitting inside. Those who

were clinging to the roof and back of the bus survived, but were severely injured.

That was the single worst Maoist attack during the conflict, and was dubbed a crime against humanity by human rights activists. Maoist leaders, too, later admitted that it was “a grave mistake”.

In 2012, seven years after the Madi massacre, 40-year-old widow, Dhegani Devi Mahato, was burnt alive by her own relatives who accused her of practising witchcraft. Eight people were sentenced to life in prison for torturing and feeding her faeces before killing her.

“When I say I am from Madi, people say ‘oh, that place of the bus blast’ or ‘oh, that place where a woman was burnt alive’,” says Ram Krishna Timalisina. “All I can say is yes, the memories of those crimes continue to haunt us.”

Then in December 2012 a wild elephant called Dhrube ran amok, trampling several people to death here. The tusker had bene in the news as the Park tried to trap it without success. Then it deployed sharpshooters to try to kill it, but the elephant disappeared into the wild, and has been unheard of since.

Now, after much bad press Madi finally



has some good news to share: it finally has a mayor after 15 years without locally-elected representatives, Maoist candidate Thakur Dhakal (pic, above).

The Maoists were not expected to win the mayoral race here, but Dhakal pulled off a surprise victory partly because Madi is now a municipality composed of four erstwhile VDCs. Badarmude voted against the Maoists for the 2005 bus bomb, but there appeared to be people in other parts of the municipality who support ex-rebels.

Dhakal also won because of his straightforward commitment to development. Elected as a VDC Chair in 1997, people still trust him as a man committed to local progress. Since being elected, Dhakal has already worked with Park authorities to improve the dirt road that cuts through the jungle, making it easier for locals to travel.

“Burns caused by fire will heal through fire,” he says. “Similarly, the wounds caused by Maoists in Madi can only be healed by the Maoists. As mayor of Madi, I will do my best to reconcile with the victims of the bomb by building a peace park and providing jobs to families of the victims.”

Om Astha Rai

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Whitewash™

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Now that we have those legal niceties out of the way, let me begin by saying that contrary to public perception, Nepal is making steady progress towards gender equity. The proof is that after decades in which only women could avail of fairness creams, multinationals have finally found that there is a market for lotions and potions among the malehood, too. Finally, those of us of the masculine persuasion will no longer be discriminated against on grounds of sex — we can also say we have a headache.

As our womenfolk become more empowered and self-reliant, and less dependent on various beauty products, it is up to us boys to take up the cudgels to preserve our craggy good looks and ruggedly handsome faces pock-marked with pimple craters. We need to protect them from the ravages of time and the Earth's gravitational pull which is mass times the square of acceleration. (Editor's Note: Make sure 'cudgel' isn't a rude word and report back to me immediately.)

This Tij Season, after fulfilling the onerous duty of holding up the sky for most of human history, we men can now safely bequeath to the womenfolk the responsibility

of holding up not just their half of the sky, but also our half. This will free us to engage in various pursuits that we previously never had time for, like: powdering our noses, threading eye-brows and plucking our armpit hair. And among the new activities will be the right to use White Man's Burden™ skin lightening cream, which works by replacing melanin from the epidermis with talcum powder.

The manufacturers moved ahead when a recent market survey showed that 80% of men on the subcontinent snuck into their wives' dressing tables to steal their fairness cream. (The other 20 percent dressed up as women and bought Crème de la Crème™ from their friendly neighbourhood drug store.)

However, since us men tend to be more thick-skinned and more hirsute in certain parts of the anatomy, creams like Whitewash™ meant for the fairer sex were just not effective enough, which is why a stronger oinkment like Albino™ containing titanium dioxide, zinc sulphate and used in weatherproof outdoor emulsion paint, was needed to turn men white.

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