

GRAB OUR FESTIVE
DISCOUNT UPTO 50%

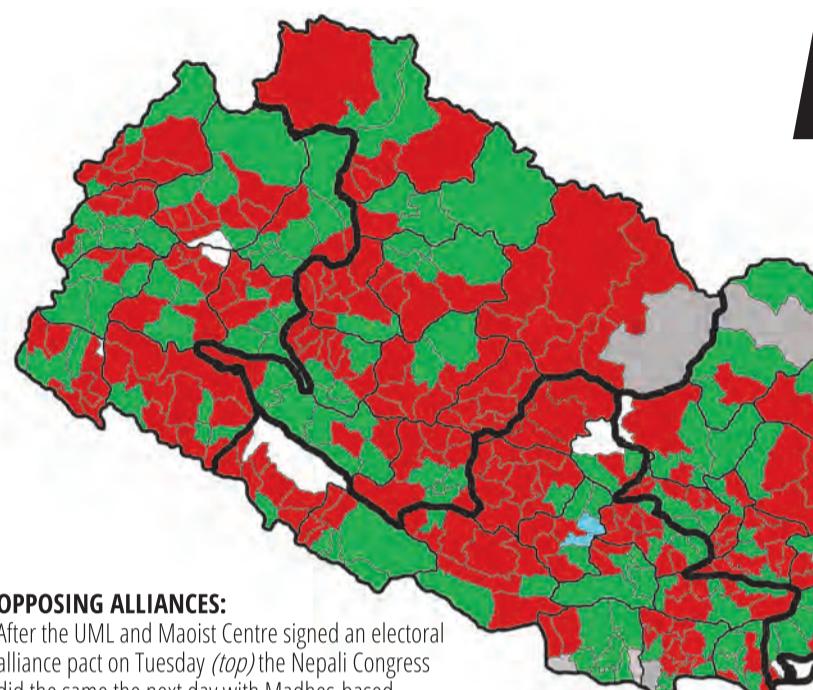
Indexfurniture
FURNITURE THAT MAKES YOU SMILE

METRO PARK, UTTARDOHKA, LAZIMPAT 441518, 4419308

STEEL TOWER, JAWALAKHEL 2201234, 5000270

A 2-party state

This is what the results of recently-held local elections for mayors of Municipalities and heads of Village Councils would look like if the UML and Maoist Centre merged (*red*) and the Nepali Congress united with the Madhes-based parties as well as the two RPPs (*green*). As Nepal prepares for parliamentary and provincial polls in November, it looks like the country may be divided down the middle into a two-party state.



OPPOSING ALLIANCES:

After the UML and Maoist Centre signed an electoral alliance pact on Tuesday (*top*) the Nepali Congress did the same the next day with Madhes-based parties and the RPPs (*below*).



The surprise announcement of unification of the main left parties (UML, Maoists and New Force) and the subsequent creation of a counter 'democratic alliance' of the NC, Madhes-based parties and RPPs signals the making of a two-party state in Nepal.

the path to prosperity, or push it into another cycle of instability. The outcome will largely depend on the results of federal-parliamentary polls in November, and how the parties react to their electoral performances.

As things stand now, and based on results for the UML and Maoists in the second CA elections in 2013 and this year's local polls, the unified left may win a majority, and rule the country for the next five years – a political feat never before achieved in Nepal's democracy.

TWO-HORSE RACE

EDITORIAL

PAGE 2

Economist Biswo Poudel is hopeful there will be political stability, a prerequisite for economic growth, under this two-party state. But he warns stability alone would mean nothing without investment in human capital and institutions.

Poudel argues that stability existed even during the Rana oligarchy and Panchayat, but that it did not actually translate

into Nepal's development.

"Political stability is necessary but

not sufficient for

growth," he told *Nepali Times*.

Nepal's Communist history is

replete with splits, and the UML and Maoists have deep ideological differences. Besides, dividing up

election tickets and creating space

for the leaders of the two largest communist parties will only be the first of many challenges for a unified left.

Political scientist Lok Raj Baral says announcement of the left alliance is just electoral politics, and is unlikely to result in a unified left, let alone a two-party state and political stability. "Look at our communist history, have these leftist forces ever stayed together?" he asks. "They unite only to split up again."

Om Astha Rai

But if the poll results do not meet their expectations, cracks will appear, and they may split once again. The so-called democratic alliance (*photo below, left*) looks weaker now, but it has an incumbent advantage for November.

Whichever alliance wins, there will no longer be an opportunity for a third king-maker party to oscillate between the two poles, toppling the government every nine months like the Maoists are doing now.

Economist Biswo Poudel is hopeful there will be political stability, a prerequisite for economic growth, under this two-party state. But he warns stability alone would mean nothing without investment in human capital and institutions.

Poudel argues that stability existed even during the Rana oligarchy and Panchayat, but that it did not actually translate

into Nepal's development.

"Political stability is necessary but

not sufficient for

growth," he told *Nepali Times*.

Nepal's Communist history is

replete with splits, and the UML and Maoists have deep ideological differences. Besides, dividing up

election tickets and creating space

for the leaders of the two largest communist parties will only be the first of many challenges for a unified left.

Om Astha Rai

Raze, retrofit or rebuild?

Instead of tearing down damaged Rana-era buildings, turn them into heritage hotels to give tourism a boost

PAGE 6-7





LAVAZZA
ITALY'S FAVOURITE COFFEE

Hotel Shanker-Lazimpat
Soaltee Crown Plaza - Tahachal
lavazza@subhashingalintl.com

CREATE YOUR "OWN" ENVIRONMENT



Divine Wines

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

Get Hired for
Account &
Marketing officer

greentick
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT



AMBIENCE LIFESTYLE PVT. LTD
Bijuli Bazar, Naya Baneshwor, Kathmandu
Ph: 4781 071, 4781 072
Email: ambiencestyle@gmail.com

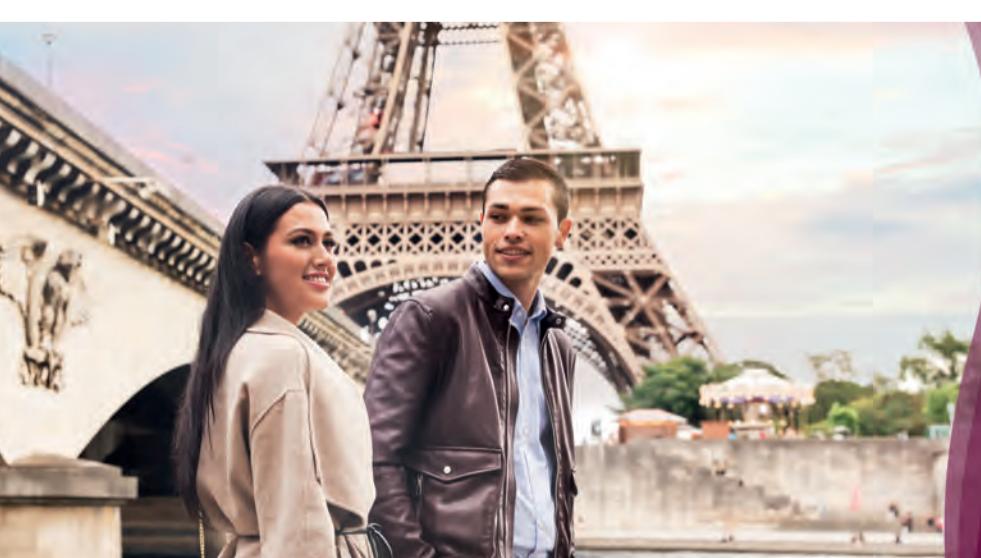


TRANQUILITY SPA
"Balancing Body, Mind and Spirit"

01-4420424
www.tranquilityspa.com.np




20 YEARS
AIRLINE OF THE YEAR
SKYTRAX 2017



Immerse yourself in Europe

Discover 40 majestic cities in Europe including London, Paris, Frankfurt, Copenhagen and Oslo.

qatarairways.com Call 977 01 4440467

*Terms and conditions apply.

oneWorld

QATAR AIRWAYS القطرية
GOING PLACES TOGETHER

TWO-HORSE RACE

In Nepal's over-politicised and polarised national milieu, it can only be a good thing that there will be fewer political parties – especially those of the Communistic persuasion. At one point after 1990, there were 17 registered Communist factions: from adherents of hirsute European philosophers of the 19th century, disciples of Comrade Vladimir Ilyich or Uncle Joe, those who admired Mao Zedong so much that they didn't just emulate his justification of mass murder but even copied his hair style, and those who still swear by Kim il-Sung.

After an ill-conceived war that left at least 17,000 Nepalis dead and devastated the country and its economy, the main Maoist faction has decided to form an electoral alliance with a party that, despite the ominous-sounding Communist Party of Nepal Marxist-Leninist name, is supposedly left-leaning. Contrary to the usual tendency of Communist factions to prefer alliances with the far-right rather than to a party immediately to the right of them, the comrades have decided to work together. Into this grand alliance, they have also invited the chief Maoist ideologue, Baburam

two-thirds majority in the new Parliament so that legislative negotiations and passing future amendments to the Constitution will not be deadlocked, as they are now.

It is understandable that the Nepali Congress is spooked. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba never expected coalition partner Pushpa Kamal Dahal of the Maoists to stab him in the back, and tried till the last minute to convince Dahal to reconsider. The Maoist leader told him the ship had left port, but assured him he would not disturb the election government. The NC has now forged its own poll alliance with the Madhes-based parties and the RPPs.

The love triangle between the UML's KP Oli, Dahal and Deuba goes back a long way, and this week's realignment proves once more that there are no permanent friends, or foes, in politics. This time it seems to have been prompted by necessity. The UML lost the Tarai in the Province 2 elections, and needs to regain the plains vote bank for November polls. The Maoists did better than they expected, which convinced Oli that he cannot yet write off Dahal. The strong showing of the NC in



GOPEN RAI

Bhattarai, who had been in the wilderness after having left the parent party.

It has become a habit here to be cynical about politicians, and that is because they have discredited themselves so badly since the restoration of democracy in 1990, and more so after the ceasefire in 2006. The fact that many of the main players are Brahmin men and relics from a generation ago doesn't help in acceding them more public respect and credibility. Don't expect any progress on transitional justice from this lot. Nepal is now effectively going to be a bi-partisan state and elections will be a two-horse race.

In spite of all that, we still believe the left alliance of the UML, Maoist Centre and the New Force is a positive step. If it can withstand greed and ambition after the November elections, and if it has visionary and cooperative leadership there is chance that this could indeed lead to the greater political stability that is needed for Nepal's long-awaited great leap forward. That is a lot of if's.

In their raucous pact-signing on Tuesday evening at the Nepal Academy, the three parties agreed to first join hands in dividing up tickets for election candidates on a rough 60:40 ratio, and ultimately to unite the three parties. The aim seems to be to ensure a

the Tarai also seems to have alarmed the Comrades. The NC and the Maoists appear to have belatedly realised that theirs was an unnatural and incompatible relationship. So, the recently divorced UML and Maoists got back into bed.

The political promiscuity among the NC-UML-Maoists had got pretty shameless. But it is proof that politics is the art of the possible. And necessity. Pre-poll alliances are better than post-poll bargaining for ministerial berths – proof of which is the current coalition with its mammoth 56-member council of ministers. The left alliance may also prompt some rethinking within the NC, which has lost its way from its founding egalitarian cause. The three parties have said they will pursue social justice and a socialist path to prosperity. We will have to wait and see if this semi-merger is indeed 'historic', or just an opportunistic electoral pact.

Dahal and Oli have justified the new alliance as a partnership between 'nationalist' forces. Waving the flag against perceived external enemies has always been a good electoral strategy. But the Nepali people are tired of hollow nationalism and empty slogans: the New Left has one last chance to convince voters it can actually deliver.



OLD GLORY

It was a Rana palace before it was converted into a hotel in 1964. After the earthquake, as the debate rages about whether to demolish or restore palaces, Hotel Shanker in Lazimpat is an example of how Nepal's tourism can benefit from converting restored Rana palaces into heritage hotels.



JAZZMANDU

Go online to check out what's in store at this year's edition of Jazzmandu.

DIVIDED OPINION

Thanks to *Nepali Times* for publishing a well balanced assessment of this health care crisis ('Assaulting the caregivers', Agya Mahat, Madhusudan Subedi, David Citrin, nepalitimes.com). Clearly much needs to be corrected before basic health care is evenly available to all Nepalis. Harnessing the resourcefulness of the community and the professional potential of the providers will be a tall task. Good coverage by responsible media can contribute.

Wilda Campbell

■ As long as poorly trained, uncaring, arrogant and condescending upper class, upper caste doctors and other health care workers provide substandard service and expect fees not commensurate, and there is no recourse to the courts for legal remedies, incidents such as this will occur. Rather than going on strike, doctors need to examine their own behaviour.

Konchog Dorje

■ I agree that there can be malpractice, but blaming the doctors without changing the system is not the solution. All medical colleges should revamp their curriculum to mitigate these incidents.

Joe Niemczura

■ As long as private medical colleges demand 1 crore 'donation' to produce doctors who can never fail, we will have malpractice and commercialisation of health care. The assault on doctors is a backlash from a public fed-up with inaccessible and unaffordable treatment.

Dr No

NEPAL AND CORRUPTION

Superb write up. ('Who teaches us democracy?', Kanak Mani Dixit, #877). Corruptionlessness is something that should be coming from within each society as a basic value for a just and equitable society.

Nirajan

■ The entire article is based on a single, simple premise that the current head of the state of the US is reckless and lacks moral character to be held as an example of the corruption free democracy. This article is an epitome of why Nepal has not managed to make its mark on the world stage: we are reluctant to learn from the experience of others.

Amrit Poudel



Hagen's Kathmandu

by Kunda Dixit

Those of you who missed the photo exhibition showcasing Swiss geologist Toni Hagen's pictures of Kathmandu in the 1950s, can still see some of them on *Nepali Times* online. This was the most shared item on our social media over the holidays.

Most popular on Twitter

(52 retweets, 83 likes)

Most shared on Facebook

Most visited online page



This Dasain, vegetate

Our video of recipes for popular Nepali dishes like Gundruk bhatmas and Aloo gravy was the most viewed through the holidays. If you're tired of eating all that meat this Dasain, you can still check out the preparations online on nepalitimes.com

Most reached on Facebook

(20,510 people reached)

Assaulting the caregivers

By Agya Mahat, Madhusudan Subedi, David Citrin As incidents of violence against health care providers continue unabated, our contributors emphasised the need for improved accountability measures. The piece generated vigorous debate online, which you can read, and contribute to.

Most commented

(87 retweets, 153 likes)

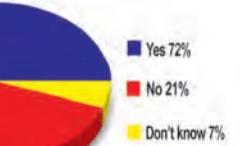
QUOTE TWEETS

Nepali Times @nepalitimes Art of the impossible: #Nepal's political love triangle gets a new twist http://bit.ly/2g8lhXf

Saros Vusal @vusal_saros Prachanda can do such things. He has been doing it for a long time. No other politicians can do politics like #Prachanda .

Nepali Times @nepalitimes "Donald Trump's speech from the UN rostrum brought out the worst in him," writes Kanak Mani Dixit. Read more at: http://bit.ly/2hrZvxm

bhusan dahal @DahalTbd Write more about the worst from home...let big D do his job @KanakManiDixit





TURKISH
AIRLINES

BEST PART OF THE JOURNEY
STOPOVER
IN ISTANBUL



During long transits, all our Nepalese passengers can now apply for e-VISA to Turkey at our sales office and get hotel accommodations or free tours*

*Terms and Conditions apply. For further information, please contact:
443 83 63-4438436-4438856 | KTMSALES@THY.COM | TURKISHAIRLINES.COM

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER



Alan Root 1937-2017

Innovative wildlife filmmaker and inventor of Root's Ruin



Have you ever seen anyone bite into a whole hardboiled egg – but with the shell still on? Or feed tidbits between his lips to a tame giraffe so a large tongue envelops his face? Or sport a wound in his calf large enough to pass through a Coca Cola bottle as the result of a hippo bite, or lose a finger, and

Credited with originating the genre and setting its standards, Alan's legacy is a collection of wildlife classics made with his first wife Joan. His uncompromising naturalist's eye shows us painstaking details of intimate wildlife behaviour – hornbills nesting, hippos swimming underwater, termites creating their mounds, cats fishing, cobras spitting, gorillas gesticulating and wildebeest migrating – each film taking years to create.

A talented mimic summoning species with perfect imitations (baboon alarms and tree hyrax calls were my favourite), Alan stopped at nothing in pursuit of his art, disguising himself in floats and hides, pioneering remote cameras, using hot air balloons as a camera platform, and flying (and crashing) helicopters specially modified for his puff adder-ed hand.

He won over 60 honours for

his work including an Oscar (for *Serengeti Shall Not Die*), an OBE and several lifetime achievement awards. Long-term collaborator Mark Keeble wrote: '(His documentaries) conveyed a knowledge of natural history and wildlife behaviour that few could equal ... To spend time with Alan's films is to enter a world where the wild animals are the stars, and the story is the way to engage with them ... Alan and Joan's films had a global audience of hundreds of millions.'

Tiger Tops used to attract many natural history filmmakers, including Survival Anglia television teams who based themselves with us for years at a time. Inspired and mentored by Alan Root, many had worked with him in Africa and the great man was invited for Christmas in Chitwan. His visit followed in the footsteps of such giants as Bernhard Grzimek of Frankfurt Zoo and David Attenborough of

SEASON IN THE SUN: Alan Root (left with binoculars) in Chitwan in 1977, with Nicholas AJ Spencer, watching a pig being roasted and (above) drinking tea with Joan, Jim Edwards of Tiger Tops and tiger ecologist Chuck McDougal.

the BBC.

Alan connected with the wildlife of Nepal, and we connected with him. He returned on several trips, the last with his (third) wife Fran and their two small blond boys Myles and Rory in 2007, and we visited them in East Africa. Alan met us on arrival at Nairobi airport, wearing a blue, short-sleeved shirt with pilot's epaulettes, for the few minutes' flight in his tiny aircraft across the national park to their stone house overlooking a ravine. Flying within inches of the ground was a speciality, and my sons were mesmerised, remembering with glee buzzing the springbok from the grass airstrip for our landing.

Alan's maverick enthusiasm for life often translated into a cavalier attitude to authority, exemplified by the arrangements for his marriage to Fran under a spreading fig tree on a secluded plateau in the midst of wildest

Tanzania. Guests arrived 'under the radar' across the border and we were shuttled up from the secret camp for the wedding from a bush airstrip. My young boys hung from the spreading branches directly above the joyous al fresco ceremony, and the African savannah stretched and shimmered below us.

Amidst all the accolades, tributes and stories of Alan Root being remembered this month, there is one special Nepal memory that has escaped wider notice. 'Root's Ruin' was a hot drink originally concocted by Alan in the Lodge bar late one chilly Chitwan evening – I recall that the flights had been cancelled. After trial, error and multiple tastings, the final recipe included Khukri rum, lemon, honey, cinnamon, nutmeg and hot water. The cocktail has become a firm favourite under its more politically correct name, Tiger Tops Special, but a few select Nepali bartenders still smilingly know what to serve if asked for a Root's Ruin. ☕

 nepalitimes.com

Go online to watch *A Season in the Sun*, a classic wildlife documentary produced by Alan Root in 1989, and a selection of other films.


SO FAR SO GOOD
Lisa Choegyal

luckily not a whole lot more, after an encounter with a puff adder? My personal favourite was the pet anteater named Million – because Aardvark a Million Miles for One of Your Smiles, of course.

But then the world is unlikely to see again the quirky brilliance of the great Alan Root, peerless wildlife filmmaker extraordinaire, who died last month at his home in Kenya aged 80.

He won over 60 honours for

Bhuwon Ratna Sthapit, 63

Bhuwon Ratna Sthapit did not believe in telling farmers what to do with their seeds: his laboratory was the terrace farmland around Pokhara where he let the local villagers guide him.

Sthapit's ideas changed the way agriculture scientists had been working in Nepal, inspiring a whole new generation to involve farmers in their research.

"Farmers possess valuable knowledge, and agriculture scientists can benefit a lot from it," he told me last year.

Sthapit's participatory agriculture research and in-situ and on-farm conservation of agriculture biodiversity are now internationally recognised. The rice biodiversity that he helped conserve and develop are not just popular in Nepal's mid-hills, but in many countries around the world.

Sthapit started out at the Agriculture Research Centre in Lumle of Kaski district, which the British set up to inspire Gurkha veterans to return to their land after World War II. But the soldiers had lost interest in farming, and were happy living off their pensions.



MAHESH BHAJU

In Chomrong, Sthapit got to know the wide variety of indigenous seeds adapted to the micro-climate and soil of the mountains, and he learnt from farmers about the characteristics of each of them. At altitudes of 1,600-2,600m, he discovered a nutrients-rich breed of rice that resisted

extreme cold and diseases. He named this breed after the village: Chomrong.

The seed's popularity transcended Nepal's mid-hills, and reached Bhutan, Bangladesh and Africa as well. But it found no takers in and around the village where it was discovered because it was reddish, and

Nepalis were more used to polished white rice by then.

So Sthapit crossed Chomrong with a Japanese breed, and developed Machhapuchre 3 and 9, which looked white, but were as nutrient-rich as Chomrong. Beside these two, IR 36 and Lumle 2 developed by him are also popular.

In 1996, the British government handed over the Lumle to the Nepal Government, which could not retain bright and committed scientists like Sthapit. Many of them left the country for greener pastures, but Sthapit stayed in his beloved Nepal and founded Li-Bird, the pioneering Pokhara-based agricultural research centre.

In the 20 years since its foundation, Li-Bird has developed 15 new varieties of rice, more than the number developed by the state-owned NARC. It has done more for agriculture in Nepal than the Government ever did.

Sthapit passed away last month in a US hospital, where he had been admitted for the treatment of tongue cancer. He was just 63. ☕
Yuvraj Shrestha

Sky is the limit for Sano Babu

The dream of holding the 2020 Paragliding World Cup in Nepal resonates with emergent global Nepalis

SYANGJA — Sano Babu Sunuwar is an adventurer who likes to take risks. In 2012, together with Lakpa Tshering Sherpa, he climbed Mt Everest, took off on paragliders down to the Khumbu Glacier, then kayaked all the way down the Kosi to the Ganges and finally to the Bay of Bengal. For this epic feat the two won the *National Geographic* Adventurers of the Year award.



CONNECTING DOTS

Dinkar Nepal

Readers will be astonished to know that before their feat, Sherpa could barely swim and Sunuwar had never climbed mountains professionally. But it was the combination of sports, audacity and friendship that made the adventure possible and won them the admiration of many around the world.

Now, Sunuwar is on another risky mission: to bring the 2020 Paragliding World Cup to Nepal.

"Nature has given Nepal the best nature: we have the highest peaks in the world, the wildest rivers and the loveliest valleys that soar from near sea level to the top of the world," explains Sunuwar. "Adventure is in our blood, and we have proved to be



the best in the world in many fields. Now it is time for us to take it to the leadership level."

Sunuwar, known as 'Babu' by his friends, was forced to drop out of school as the insurgency raged in his native district of Syangja. He trained as a river guide and now runs a thriving Paragliding Training School in Syangja. It is there that he wants to bring a series of international aero-sports competitions, culminating in the Paragliding World Cup in 2020.

The World Cup is a cross-country flying competition for paraglider pilots, organised by the Paragliding World Cup Association, based in Marlens, France. The first of these competitions will be held in November.

"Adventure tourism is a major contributor to tourism worldwide. We have the best natural setting for that. All we need is to take the initiative now," says Krishna Jung KC, a paragliding pilot and president of the Babu Adventure

Club, the main organiser of the International Open Paragliding Competition that will take place in the Andhikhola Valley, 1-5 November this year.

It is hoped that this series of international competitions will prove that Syangja has the ideal paragliding competition terrain, and that Nepalis have the organisational capability to hold the World Cup in 2020. This is a sport where Nepalis could easily repeat the international success they've had in mountain biking and ultra-marathons.

"A Nepali team winning a World Cup is a dream of many of us. I think this is the best opportunity to turn that dream into a reality. If we can hold a world cup, we can very well win it," says Sunuwar, who is realistic enough to point out that Nepal needs to show it has adequate infrastructure.

"To dream is not enough," he adds wistfully. "Just like you can't dream of making a football team without a football stadium, you need an aerial stadium for aero sports."

Sunuwar has launched a campaign to declare the Andhikhola Valley an 'aviation sports zone' because the region is ideal for paragliding competitions. While Pokhara is restricted to 1-km flights because of air traffic, Andhikhola has a

flight radius of more than 10km.

Dilip Bagale, Deputy Chairperson of the District Coordination Committee of Syangja, has lent his support to Sunuwar's venture, and local politicians, businessmen and social leaders are rallying behind the cause.

Megh Ale, a tourism veteran and river conservation activist who is doing for Nepal's rafting what Sunuwar is trying to do for its sky, has also lent his support to Sunuwar's idea of developing adventure sports tourism.

"In Nepal we have to pursue tourism as an 'ism', just like a religion," Ale says. "We have the highest peaks, the best rivers and the deepest gorges. We should take the lead to make Nepal an international venue for adventure sports."

CLIMB, GLIDE, FLOAT



Watch dramatic National Geographic video of the 2012 expedition in which Sano Babu Sunuwar and Lakpa Tshering Sherpa climbed Mt Everest, paraglided down, and rafted down to the Bay of Bengal.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZ46cuM62E>

nepaltimes.com

prabhu BANK

BIZ BRIEFS

World Bank training

The World Bank has approved a \$60-million credit to support a second phase of the Enhanced Vocational Education and Training (EVENT) Project in Nepal. The initiative is designed to upgrade the quality and strengthen the delivery of technical education and vocational training (TEVT), as well as improve access for disadvantaged groups.

Five-star Turkish

Turkish Airlines, which flies to more countries than any other airline, has been named a 'Five-Star Global Airline' by the Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX). The APEX awards ceremony was held at Expo 2017 in Long Beach, California. The prestigious award is based solely on passengers' verified feedback. Next week will mark four years since Turkish began connecting Kathmandu to the world.

Flying global goals

UNDP Country Director Renaud Meyer and Yeti Airlines CEO Umesh Chandra Rai unveiled the airlines' new ATR72-500



aircraft, branded with the logo of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Kathmandu last week. The initiative is part of Yeti's ongoing partnership with the UN in Nepal for the promotion and achievement of the SDGs.

Qatar's young talents

Qatar Airways and Rolls-Royce, one of the airline's major strategic partners, have successfully hosted a training program as part of the award-winning airline's Al Darb Qatarisation initiative. It grooms young talent to become future leaders at the Gulf-based carrier.

New Mango drink

Goodlife beverage, under Asian Biscuit and Confectionery and Asian Thai Food, has launched Goodlife Mango juice in Nepal. Available in 200ml packets, the product is priced at Rs25.



Enjoy your Smile



Leading technology behind your smile
made in Switzerland +

Trisa
OF SWITZERLAND

prabhu BANK



It doesn't look like the monsoon is retreating on schedule as it plays a tug-o-war with the resurgent jet stream. There is still a lot of transpiration moisture about, which will be augmented over the weekend by a low-pressure circulation over Bihar that will inject more water vapour to fuel storm cells right across Nepal. Expect brief but sharp passing showers, usually in the evenings and night, mainly in the mountains.

FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY
28° | 28° | 27°
17° | 17° | 17°



QATAR
AIRWAYS

القطري

Going places together - qatarairways.com

Raze, retrofit or rebuild?

Instead of tearing down damaged Rana-era buildings, turn them into heritage hotels to give tourism a boost



The Gaddhi Baithak at Hanuman Dhoka, which was devastated by the 2015 earthquake, is now being restored in partnership with the US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation.

ALL PHOTOS: GOPEN RAI

SAHINA SHRESTHA

Earlier this year, the government's decision to reconstruct Singha Darbar drew widespread opposition from archaeologists, conservationists and culture experts.

Following intervention from the National Reconstruction

Authority (NRA), a seven-member committee was formed and in September, the NRA called for expressions of interest from Nepali firms to retrofit the imposing main facade of the enormous complex completed by Prime Minister Chandra Shumshere Rana in 1908.

"We are trying our best to save the old palaces as they are an integral part of our heritage,"

NRA chief Govind Raj Pokharel told *Nepali Times*. "As far as possible, we will try to retrofit the buildings instead of demolishing them."

While Singha Darbar was saved, the Thapathali Darbar and Lalita Niwas, which housed the head office of Nepal Rastra Bank and were badly damaged, were demolished two years after the 2015 earthquake.

While efforts have focused on saving Kathmandu Valley's Malla-era monuments, the damage to stucco palaces, built by the Ranas copying the style of Victorian England more than 100 years ago, have been neglected. Critics say the government's motivation is to let the damaged buildings crumble so that they can be torn down and replaced with concrete blocks.

"It was a mistake on the part of the government to demolish the buildings and reconstruct them from the ground up," says Chanda Rana, an environmentalist turned heritage conservation activist, who has been working to save the palaces of her ancestors. "They should have at least tried to save whatever was salvageable from

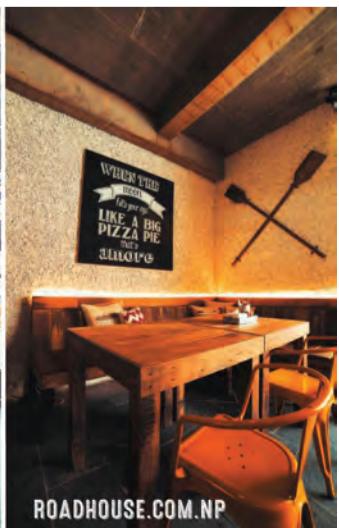


ROADHOUSE
CAFE
SINCE 1992
POKHARA

ROADHOUSE IS ALWAYS COMMITTED TO MAINTAINING THE HIGH QUALITY AND STANDARDS THAT OUR CUSTOMERS HAVE BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO.

NOW IN
POKHARA

HALLAN CHOWK, LAKESIDE



ROADHOUSE.COM.NP



The imposing Gallery Baithak in Singha Darbar was scaffolded after the NRA and heritage activists opposed the government's plan to demolish the historic façade.

GOVINDA POKHREL



The tottering façade of Sri Mahal in Pulchok is in a state of disrepair, while officials debate whether to restore or demolish it.



Babar Mahal, which housed the Department of Roads, will be restored. Although the department moved to Chakupat, Lalitpur, the building in Babar Mahal was only recently covered with a tarp.

HERITAGE
LIVE!



Harihar Bhawan in Lalitpur, which houses the Nepal Human Rights Commission, is set for demolition. Although the NRA instructed all damaged structures to be protected from rain, this one fell through the cracks.

both the buildings."

Following the earthquake, there has been a vigorous debate on whether to reconstruct or retrofit Rana palaces. In a bid to save the buildings, the NRA is now planning to turn some of them into heritage hotels under a public-private-partnership (PPP) model.

"At the moment it is just an idea and nothing has been decided yet. We will be holding meetings with stakeholders to discuss this idea and only then we can proceed," Pokharel added.

First built in the 1900s, the grand, white, stucco Rana palaces with their neoclassical designs stood out from the temples and Malla-era palaces of intricate wood carvings and red bricks. For the next 100 years they dominated Kathmandu's skyline.

When the oligarchy was overthrown in 1951, many of the lavish palaces were converted into government offices. Without proper maintenance over the years, many were damaged in the



earthquake and, three monsoons later, they have fallen into neglect and disrepair.

Activist Rana is positive about the NRA proposal: "The government had decided that if the cost of retrofitting was more than 30% of the original cost of construction, it would demolish the palaces. This meant that most of the palaces that could

have been saved would have been torn down. So, the NRA's plan to preserve and retrofit the palaces and turn them into hotels is welcome news."

Rana's grandfather Dilli Jung Thapa was the chief engineer of many of the Rana palaces, including Sita Bhawan and Lalita Niwas.

NRA Chief Pokharel says

Hotel Shanker is an example for others

Shanker Hotel in Lazimpat is an example of a palace-turned-hotel, and conservationists say the model could be replicated. Shanker was converted into a luxury hotel in the 1960s, keeping the façade intact and redesigning the interior to match visitors' needs and retaining other spaces in their original form.

The 2015 earthquake damaged Hotel Shanker's facade and roof, and the proprietors entrusted the rebuilding to the grandsons of the workers who had done the original conversion. To retain the originality, the workers used old photographs as reference. Most of the repairs are now complete. "Heritage hotels have more value. People come to Nepal to see the local heritage and experience the local culture, so keeping heritage alive is a big plus point in the business," says Prabhu Shanker Shrestha, executive manager at Hotel Shanker (*seen at left*).



LEADING THE WAY
Go online to watch a video of how Shanker Hotel is accurately restoring its Rana-era heritage property after the earthquake.

nepaltimes.com



FOODMANDU
THINK. TAP. EAT!

Available on
 
www.foodmandu.com
4444177



THINK IT. EAT IT!

Order food from the widest range of restaurants
at same table menu price



MEET THE ARTISTS



Julia Sarr Quartet

(Senegal / France)

Born in Dakar and now living in Paris, acclaimed singer and songwriter Julia Sarr is adept at drawing on Senegalese and jazz traditions. Her voice, known for its lucid timbre, has drawn praise from some of the biggest names in contemporary music: Lokua Kanza, Richard Bona, Youssou N'Dour, Salif Keïta, Oumou Sangaré, Mano Solo, Alpha Blondy and MC Solaar. Her 2014 solo album *Daraludul Yow* gave Sarr wide recognition.



Teerapoj Plitakul Trio, featuring David Parente (Thailand / USA)

This band is a rare combination of talents on the Thai jazz scene. All three members, pianist Teerapoj Plitakul, US-born drummer David Parente and bassist Nutchapon Choossakul are renowned in Asia, and beyond. Plitakul's style has been honed through collaborations with an array of Thai and international artists, and his leadership of the groove and funk ensemble Rootman.



Rabin Lal Trio (Nepal)

Tabla maestro Rabin Lal Shrestha has teamed up with Ishwor Joshi and Jonisha Paudel to mesmerise the stages this year. Shrestha has played with world-renowned flautist Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia, and has released four albums since 2012.

Jazz Comes Home

15 years of bringing people together

SHREEJANA SHRESTHA



Palouse Jazz Project (USA)

This dynamic sextet, established in 2006, performs mainly around north-western United States. Comprised of musicians who have studied with some of the top names in American jazz, the band plays both jazz standards and a variety of original numbers. It recently released an album of its own arrangements.



KANTA dAb dAb (Nepal)

This power trio from Kathmandu combines sitar, bass and percussion to create a unique fusion of traditional melodies. KANTA dAb dAb blends Eastern classical forms and rhythms from Kathmandu and various Western influences to create a contemporary sound. The trio has toured Europe and performed at numerous venues in Nepal, where members have worked with many of the country's best-known musicians.

Nepalis just celebrated their biggest festival, Dasain. As they wait for Tihar, they can revel in the annual jazz festival, Surya Nepal Jazzmandu, an event that has put Kathmandu on the international jazz map.

Since the first jazz festival in 2002, the event has redefined Nepal's local music scene and fostered artistic encounters between international bands and homegrown artists. Jazzmandu will take over the city from 12 to 18 October, marking its 15th birthday.

The festival's Samir Chettri says Jazzmandu's recipe for success is simple: "We try to bring the best international artists to perform in the festival every year, where they get to collaborate with fantastic local talent."

The festival will start with a special 'Concert for School Students' at Alliance Française de

Katmandou (AFK) in Jhamsikhel and end with artists bringing all their energy to a single stage on 18 October (See box, right).

As always, organisers have lined up a diverse collection of bands from around the world to play at the 7-day event, including: Filtron M NepaMali (Switzerland/Mali/Nepal/USA), Julia Sarr Quartet (Senegal/France), Samuel Wootton Toy Story (Germany), EleKtrip (France), Teerapoj Plitakul Trio feat. David Parente (Thailand/USA) and Palouse Jazz Project (USA). They will be accompanied by home-grown artists Cadenza Collective, Rabin Lal Trio, KANTA dAb dAb and Gandharvas.

Jazzmandu first-timer Alan Gemberling, of Palouse Jazz Project, says he's excited to be included among such a diverse group of musicians. "This is an opportunity to learn more about

the culture in Nepal," he adds.

AFK has been supporting the festival for many years, and this year is bringing in a band, ElektriP, for the first time.

"Not only does the festival bring international artists to Kathmandu, it also nurtures and encourages young Nepali musicians in their careers," says AFK Director Véronique Becchia.

"We are looking forward to sharing an energetic performance and a great time with the audience discovering French fusion and grooving jazz," she adds.

Thailand's Teerapoj Plitakul performed at Jazzmandu in 2012 with his popular project Rootman and returns this year with his new line-up, Teerapoj Plitakul Trio. He told *Nepali Times*: "I fell in love with Nepal when I performed here in 2012. Jazzmandu is one of the greatest festivals in Asia where people can listen to real music."



Filtron M (NepaMali)

(Switzerland / Mali / Nepal / USA)

New York-based, Swiss pianist and composer Manu Koch started Filtron M in 2012, as a project to combine the genres he encountered in his music career. NepaMali, a distinct incarnation of Filtron M, brings Manu together with several of his friends and collaborators from over the years.



ElektriP (France)

The members of ElektriP have played on many of Europe's most prominent stages. The bold quartet, rooted in jazz fusion, was formed in 2015 to play original compositions by guitarist Benjamin Guimbert, and also covers tunes by pioneers such as Billy Cobham and Mike Stern.



Samuel Wootton Toy Story (Germany)

All five musicians of Toy Story are adept at combining the improvisational freedom of jazz, the grooves of hip-hop, the intimacy of chamber music and aesthetics from a range of musical cultures to create a sound that defies categorisation.



Cadenza Collective (Nepal)

As the first Nepali jazz band, the members of Cadenza Collective combine jazz, Afro-funk and Nepali folk music into an irresistible blend pleasing to both body and mind. Led by drummer and composer Navin Chettri, the group has already released five albums of original music, claimed prizes at Nepal's leading music awards and performed in Australia, India and Europe.



Gandharvas (Nepal)

The Gandharvas represent a long tradition of travelling folk musicians who once roamed widely among Nepal's villages bringing music and entertainment. This group will deliver a medley of Nepali folk songs, accompanied by sarangi and traditional percussion instruments. Led by Sanu Kancha Gandharva, the band focuses on keeping Gandharva music and culture alive in Nepal.



WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN

1 Concert for School Students

12 October, Thursday

This is a Jazzmandu tradition of promoting music education and cross-cultural understanding. Jazzmandu artists continue the legacy by playing great music for young minds.

Time: 12:00pm to 1:30pm

Venue: Alliance Française, Jhamsikhel
Free Concert (Invitation only,
info@jazzmandu.org)

8 Sounds of West Africa

15 October, Sunday

Julia Saar and Filtron M present a special night of Senegalese and Milan music.

Time: 7:00pm to 9:00pm

Venue: Yala Maya Kendra (Dhokaima Cafe), Patan
Tickets: Rs1,500 (Limited seats)

9 Jazzmandu Vocal and Rhythm workshop

16 October, Monday

Musical life and culture in West Africa presented by Julia Sarr (Senegal) and Bala Tounkara (Mali).

Time: 4:00pm to 6:30pm

Venue: The Kathmandu Music Room, Naxal, Bhatbhateni
(Entry by registration. Limited seats. Register at: www.jazzmandu.com)

10 Jazzmandu Masterclasses

17 October, Tuesday

A special session where music students and enthusiasts can learn techniques and receive tips and career advice from international musicians.

Time: 11:00am to 1:30pm

Venue: Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel
Free entry (Limited seats)

11 Jazz at the Temple House

17 October, Tuesday

Cadenza Collective once again joins Nepali classical musicians and a selection of international artists for an evening of fusion in a gorgeous courtyard venue.

Time: 6:30pm to 8:30pm

Venue: Kantipur Temple House, Jyatha – Thamel
Tickets: Rs1,600 (Limited seats)

12 Jazzmandu Finale

18 October, Wednesday

Jazzmandu Artists bring all their energy to a single stage to light up the festivities in a climactic Grande Finale.

Time: 5:30pm to 10:00pm

Venue: Yak & Yeti Hotel, Darbar Marg
Tickets: Rs1,300 (Limited seats)



EVENTS



Jazzmandu,

The Kathmandu Jazz Festival turns 15 this year. The annual Jazzmandu will take over the city as various artists play their sets at intimate venues across the valley. Take your pick from a wide range of musical offerings. See page 8-9 for details.

12-18 October, 9803516450, info@jazzmandu.org

Photowalk,

Participate in Bhaktapur Durbar Square's Photowalk program to hone your photography skills. Those willing to meet photographers and learn about photography techniques can take part too. 7 October, 7am, meeting point: 55 Window Palace, Bhaktapur, Free entry, <https://www.facebook.com/Photowalkers.np/>

Photo contest,

Submit your three best pictures to participate in a contest organised by the Nepal Tourism Board, Samarth-NMDP and DFID on the occasion of World Tourism Day. Send your photos to: dfidnepal@gmail.com. Deadline: 31 October, (01) 5542980, www.facebook.com/NepalDFID



Morning Coffee Queries,

To discuss interesting business ideas and experiences, entrepreneurs, students and start-ups are invited to participate in Monday morning coffee queries.

9 October, 9 to 11 am, Bodhi Books and Bakes, Maharajgunj. Tickets: <http://www.clockb.com/events/48>

Rock climbing,

Explore the strength in you and try rock climbing, organised by Astrek Climbing Wall. The package includes lunch, a bottle of water, and climbing and safety gear. No previous experience required.

Every Saturday, 8am-5pm, Rs5,500 per person, (01) 4419265, 9841313561, www.facebook.com/astrek.climbing

Asia Threads,

Independent young filmmakers can apply for professional skill and network development trainings.

Deadline: 9 October, (01) 4251709, clinik.kathmandu@gmail.com,

Guitar workshop,

Register to participate in a free guitar workshop by famous Polish teacher Jacek Chmiel. 6 October, 5pm onwards, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Sanepa, Free, (01) 5013554, 9813556945, info@katjazz.com.np

MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI



MUSIC



Nima Rumba,

Your favorite pop singer is back to rock the stage. Reserve your seats.

14 October, 6-11pm, Tirsara, Lazimpat, (01) 4410200

Gypsy Jazz,

Tap to the beats of jazz with Hari Maharan. 7 October, 6pm onwards, Aanek Marg, Baluwatar, (01) 4441537

Mukti & Revival,

Book your tickets to watch Mukti & Revival perform live. Complimentary drink provided. 9 October, 7-9pm, Chulho, Saheed Chok, Narayangarh, Rs500, (056) 570151



Live with Bipul,

Don't miss a live performance by folk singer Bipul Chhetri. Tickets available at BaseCamp (Arun Thapa Chok), Durbar (Durbarmarg) and Calm (Tangal).

14 October, 5pm, Hotel Annapurna, Durbarmarg, Rs2,000, Rs 1,500 (pre sale), 9841226397 9801111406, 9801057609

OUR PICK



Opens in Kathmandu on 13 October

It's the year 2049, and bio-engineered humans exist alongside others in society. A young "blade runner," or police officer, (Ryan Gosling) searching for missing forms of these new humans comes across a long-buried secret and former blade runner thought to be missing for 30 years (Harrison Ford). Also starring Ana de Armas, Jared Leto and Robin Wright, Blade Runner 2049 is a blend of futuristic sci-fi and reality-bending action.

DINING



Vootoo,

The new home of Newari cuisine, it also offers a continental menu for those who want to play it safe.

Lazimpat, (01) 4005222

Chez Caroline,

Authentic ambience, exquisite French food, glorious sunshine and more.

9am to 10pm, Babar Mahal Revisited, (01) 4263070

Embassy,

Away from the hustle-bustle of the streets, enjoy the variety of multi-cuisine dishes at a place ideal for business meets and casual rendezvous.

Panipokhari, (01) 4424040



Manny's,

Kick off your Fridays with a selection of mouth-watering tapas, paired with red or white wine or a mocktail and a choice of sizzling meat for Rs999.

Jawalakhel, (01) 5536919

Fire & Ice Pizzeria,

For the best Italian pizzas in town.

Thamel, (01) 4250210

Saigon Pho,

Spacious interior with authentic Vietnamese dishes.

Lazimpat, (01) 4443330

The Vesper House,

Stop by for the best in Italian and all local favourites, in their breezy outdoors seating. Also a great venue for wine connoisseurs.

Jhamsikhel, (01) 5548179, www.vespercafe.com

The Bent Fork,

This European style restaurant offers the best salads and varieties of continental dishes. Enjoy cosy evenings with family and friends.

Bishal Nagar, 9802049888



Game bird,

Rox restaurant is offering a chance to sample unforgettable game bird flavours paired with wines to complement the food.

6-20 October, 6:30-10pm, Hyatt Hotel, Boudha, (01) 5171234,

www.kathmandu.regency.hyatt.com.

GETAWAY



The Last Resort,

Test your limits with canyoning, hiking, rock climbing, rafting, mountain biking, bungee jumping.

Bhotekosi, Sindhupalchok, (01) 4700525/1247

Meghauli Serai,

Enjoy the monsoon offer at Taj Safari's Meghauli Serai and relax with fine dining and wildlife safaris in Chitwan.

Chitwan National Park, 9801301969/9851001548



Rupakot Resort,

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

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

The Yellow House,

Bed and breakfast for the light traveller. Sanepa, (01) 5553869 / 5522078,

www.theyellowhouse.com.np



Club Himalaya,

For amazing mountain views and refreshing weekend escapades.

Nagarkot, (01) 6680080

Milla Guesthouse,

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

Bhaktapur, 9851024137

Gorkana Forest Resort,

Complete your weekend getaway with a round of golf or a day of pampering at the spa, away from the hustle and bustle of the city. Don't forget to get the Dashain offer. Gokarna, (01) 4451212, www.gokarna.com

Fulbari Resort,

Enjoy the scenic view of Pokhara as you pamper yourself with tennis, golf, drinks, and dinners.

Green Canyon, Pokhara, (061) 432451

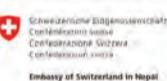


JULIA SARR SENEGAL/ FRANCE | FILTRON M NEPAMALI SWITZERLAND/MALI
PALOUSE JAZZ PROJECT USA | SAMUEL WOOTTON "TOY STORY" GERMANY
ELEKTRIP FRANCE | TEERAPOJ TRIO THAILAND

CADENZA COLLECTIVE NEPAL | KANTA DAB DAB NEPAL | RABIN LAL SHRESTHA TRIO NEPAL

www.jazzmandu.com

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT: RESPECTIVE VENUES: JAZZ UPSTAIRS: LAZIMPAT | NEPA MUSIC OUTLETS: THAMEL | KJC: JHAMSIKHEL | FOR INQUIRIES: 9803516450



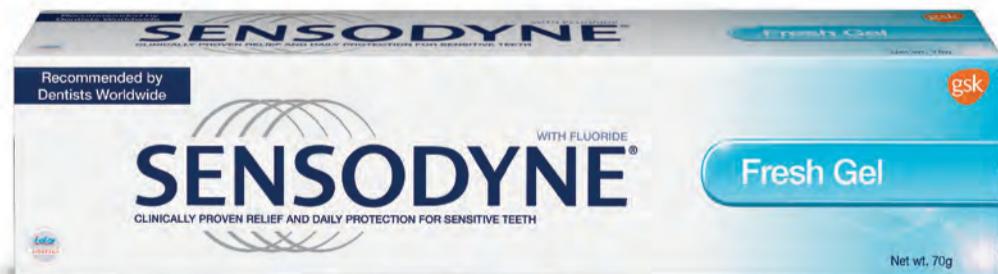
SENSODYNE®

gsk

Do these cause
sensitivity
in your teeth?



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



World's No.1 Sensitivity Toothpaste*

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

© 2016, GSK group of companies or its licensor.



NEPAL
WHEREVER
YOU ARE.

NEPAL
Times.com

Going rogue in Nepal

A s a wise Ass once said: when in a foreign land it is best to try to blend in. Try to be as inconspicuous as possible even if you are 6'3", have hair the colour of Ring Road dust, and have cultivated the habit of frequently saying "Namaste" and "Dhanyabad" to perfect strangers.

Just like the Romans, when in Nepal behave like the Nepalis. And throw away those tourist guidebooks that mislead visitors by inventing words like "Subha Prabhat" when we had perfectly useful morning greetings like "Did you empty your bowels today?"

To do as Nepalis do, you have to start with bodily functions like eating and attending to calls from nature:

- If your hosts invite you for tea, try your best to emulate the loud slurping sound that not only draws attention to the fact that you are taking pleasure from the offering but also helps cool the tea as it enters your gutt.
- It is considered polite in our society to burp loudly and heartily while partaking of a family meal in order to compliment the hosts on the repast. If it is exceptionally scrumptious, and just belching doesn't do it justice, you may want add more well-deserved accolade and audibly pass wind at the table.
- Visitors will have noticed that there are no toilets on Nepal's highways. This is deliberate. The driver will usually stop at a scenic spot and encourage passengers to line up and take a collective whiz while admiring the best of what Nepal has to offer in terms of flora and fauna.



The Ass

In a disaster-prone state

ASHUTOSH TIWARI

Given Nepal's topography and climate, floods are not unusual. In 1953, 1967, 1981, 1993, 1998, 2008, 2013 and 2014 the country was devastated by massive floods.

But you would be mistaken to think that the government learnt its lessons and put in substantial measures to save lives and property before, during and after the floods. This August's floods submerged almost all of the eastern Tarai — affecting 20% of the country's population.

Why is it that even when we know Nepal as a country vulnerable to disasters, we consistently fail to mitigate their effects? This is the question Ajaya Dixit sets out to answer in his book, *Nepal Ma Bipad* (Disasters in Nepal).

Dixit discusses seven types of disasters common to Nepal, with recent examples: avalanches, landslides, floods, blizzards, hailstorms, infectious diseases and even aircraft accidents.

Fourteen porters were buried alive on the Khumbu Icefall in 2014. The same year, a chunk of a mountain in Jure fell into the Bhote Kosi, blocking the river, uprooting villages along its path, killing 145 people and closing the Arniko Highway for weeks.

Nepal gets 80% of its rains in the monsoon, but both the frequency and the intensity of cloudbursts are increasing, and the heavy downpours lead to landslides and floods. Freak blizzards have become the new normal in the mountains, as fiercer cyclones from the Bay of Bengal batter the Himalaya. They cause planes to lose their way, kill disoriented trekkers and guides,

and destroy tourist trails, as they did in 2014 in the Annapurnas.

Jajarkot's epidemics of cholera in 2009 and swine flu in 2015 exposed the pathetic state of health services, made worse by the central government's slow response. And when an Airbus 330 veered off the runway at Kathmandu airport in 2015, it cut Nepal off from the outside world for four days.

Dixit explains that disaster-related



Nepal Ma Bipad

by Ajaya Dixit

Published by ISET-Nepal, ActionAid International Nepal and Practical Action Nepal (2016).

150 pages. Rs. 500

response is mostly confined to short-term rescue and relief, while long-term preparedness, prevention, recovery and reconstruction gets short shrift. Sporadic and uneven data collection makes it difficult to identify and help the victims. A lack of clarity about who-makes-what-decisions during emergencies, and with what discretionary power, delays government response. Amidst these systemic shortcomings, Dixit finds the increasing use of information technology, for example in some flood-warning systems, as a positive development.

The book distills 14 specific lessons, each of which challenges us to think beyond rescue and relief, which usually mark the beginning and the end of most post-disaster activities. It cites the need for better data and information dissemination at all levels. It argues that the mass media needs to play a more active role in risk reduction, and that more needs to be invested in training health workers, insurance and micro-credit to help reduce health-, income- and livelihood-related vulnerabilities.

Dixit points out that our approach to development — digging roads in villages — increases the likelihood of landslides. The habit of constructing houses, health posts and schools without the enforcement of building codes increases vulnerability. He calls for participatory local governance that is sensitive, proactive and responsive, not only to the nature of disasters but also to likely contributors such as climate change, lack of accountability and societal exclusion.

My quibble with the book is that it leaves out two disasters common in Nepal: frequent highway crashes, and the internal displacement of the poor due to conflict, natural calamity, financial ruin and lack of access to water and land.

Nepal Ma Bipad reads like a cross between a set of finely argued short editorials and a reference book: exposing the limit of Nepal's build-and-grow linear development and pointing to models that put people's welfare at the centre. The country's newly-elected local officials will do their constituencies a big favor if they read this book and make disaster risk reduction a key part of all their governance and development activities. ■

HAPPENINGS



RSS

WELCOME BACK: Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is welcomed by deputy Prime Minister Bijay Gachhadar at Tribhuvan International Airport last week. Deuba was in New York for the United Nations General Assembly, followed by a visit to Oman.



NARESH SHRESTHA

DOCTOR WHO: Doctors wearing helmets examine patients at the National Trauma Centre on Wednesday to protest assaults on health care workers.



GOPEN RAI

PLEASE RELEASE ME: A rally in Kathmandu on Tuesday demanded the release of Dev Narayan Yadav, who was arrested by Indian Police on trumped-up charges this week for opposing the construction of an embankment across the border in Bihar.



RSS

POET LAUREATE: Officers of the Sahitya Chautari of Jhapa honour Nepal's National Poet Madhav Prasad Ghimire at his home in Kathmandu on Thursday.



BIKRAM RAI

A NEW GODDESS: Three-year-old Trishna Shakya, the new Kathmandu Living Goddess is carried by her father from their residence to Kumari House on Thursday.

M-Series Printers

EPSON
EXCEED YOUR VISION

Get the most
ECONOMICAL
B/W PRINTERS ever
Best for Office and
Commercial purpose



MERCANTILE
OFFICE SYSTEMS PVT. LTD.

Authorized Distributor
Hiti Pokhari, Durbar Marg
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 14440773/4445920

Kathmandu Valley Dealers:
Lazimpat : 4410423, New Road : 4220058
New Road : 4227854, New Road : 4260173
Putalisodak : 4222384, Patan : 5536849
Putalisodak : 4266820, Putalisodak : 4415786
Putalisodak : 4227474, Putalisodak : 4436307
Putalisodak : 4417050

Outside Valley Dealers:
Banepa : 011-660888, Biratnagar : 021-538729, Biratnagar : 021-532000
Birtamode : 023-540150, Butwal : 071-545399, Chitwan : 056-571764
Dhangadi : 082-561022, Dhangadi : 091-523601, Dhangadi : 091-521392
Janakpur : 041-525565, Lahan : 033-561205, Mahendranagar : 099-523872
Nepalganj : 081-527092, Pokhara : 061-525300, Surkhet : 083-522488,
Tulsipur : 082-562575

Shock wave from the Left

Editorial in *Kantipur*, 5 October

कान्तिपुर

Two of the biggest Communist parties, UML and the Maoist Centre, have forged an unexpected electoral alliance, leading to ultimate party unity. The New Force Party has also joined the alliance. Talk of left parties uniting is not new. But the expectation was that the Maoists and the Nepali Congress partners in the ruling coalition would be the ones to make an alliance for the November parliamentary and federal elections. The Maoists have assured the NC that they will not break up the coalition before elections, however their continued participation in the government is now up in the air.

Electoral alliances and parties merging are part of the democratic process, especially if their vision

and ideology coincide. Since the root cause of chronic political instability is seen as the plethora of parties, the unity of parties should be seen as a positive move. The fact that proportional representation in forthcoming elections will mean that there will be no party with a clear majority must have prompted this alliance – reinforced by results from the recently concluded local elections.

Although they share a Communist ideology, the UML and the Maoists are far apart. One of them waged an armed struggle for 10 years and has been in parliamentary politics for only 11 years since the ceasefire. The UML has 26 years of experience of parliamentary democracy. Even Baburam Bhattarai, who declared that he had abandoned Communism to set up New Force, is now part of the alliance.



even if they unite they will implement the Constitution to bolster the federal democratic republic.

The UML-Maoist alliance has understandably put pressure on the NC to try to forge its own alliance. In fact, this can be an opportunity for the NC to reform and restructure itself. Having strong political parties will strengthen the nation, it will reduce foreign intervention and will ensure greater stability. Ultimately, having parties that can command a majority and establish sustainable alliances can allow the country to leap forward in terms of economic prosperity.

However, it is incongruous that the Maoists, as members of the ruling coalition, should be forging an alliance with the main opposition UML. It is therefore incumbent on the Maoists to prove that the alliance is just for elections and it will not break up the coalition. The main national priority now is provincial and parliamentary elections. We should not have a situation where an election government has to be changed.

NOT TOO FAR NOT TOO CLOSE

Weekend or weekdays Pataleban Vineyard Resort is the place to rejuvenate yourself with friends and family. A perfect gateway to get refreshed from your daily hectic routine.

We are here for your service with,

- Deluxe / Superior Rooms with Packages
- Family Retreat
- Day Conferences
- Resident Conference Packages
- Family / Corporate Day Picnics
- Orientation Programs
- Team Building Activities
- Wine Testing
- Day Hiking
- Forest Walk
- BBQ Facility

Contact US:

Chisapani-5, Baad Bhanjyang, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 00977 1 4316377, 9841679364
Kathmandu Sales Office:
Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 00977 1 4005220
Email: info@patalebanresort.com
www.patalebanresort.com

Pataleban Vineyard Resort
Managed By Banyan Tree Nepal

प्रकृतिको गर्सना जस्तै, सुगन्धित

NOW SAY **GOODBYE** TO DISPLEASING ODOUR

INTRODUCING DUBAI'S PREMIUM AIR FRESHENER... *Nature*

Lavender

Ocean

Sandal

Lemon

Rose

Jasmine

Summer Bouquet

Yellow Rose

Bakhoor

AVAILBLE AT ALL THE LEADING DEPARTMENTAL STORES AND MINI GROCERIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

Email : arshobha@shbnepal.com.np | Phone: 9808062041

Contact for dealership outside Kathmandu Valley.

In the shadows

Panic spreads on the sidewalks of the Kotaraya area of the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur as immigration police sweep in during one of their raids on undocumented migrant workers. There is a palpable fear in the air as those without documents attempt to flee, and are whisked away. But there is also a sense of solidarity among migrant workers as they urgently call out, warning others to run.

Mahesh worked as a security guard doing 12-hour shifts, but after passing out a few times due to the heat, he decided to quit. His employer refused him treatment, or to give him his passport so he could return to Nepal. Instead, he was locked up and abused. It got so unbearable that one day Mahesh jumped out of the second-floor window. By the time he landed on his feet, his status had changed to 'undocumented'.

There are thousands of Nepalis like Mahesh in Malaysia. Like him, they prefer to be undocumented than be exploited and mistreated by their official employers. They enter Malaysia legally, but prefer to quit difficult, low-paying jobs and leave their

passports behind, even though they know the risks of being undocumented.

When Ram realised that the 'company job' he had signed up for was a D3 (dirty, dangerous and demeaning) and required heavy lifting in front of a furnace 12 hours a day, he asked his boss to let him go. The employer demanded \$1,500 which Ram could not pay. Then there is Amish, who asked to go home after he heard that his father had died. His boss refused, even when Amish offered a month's salary as guarantee.

The push to become undocumented starts in Nepal, with recruiters who shape the expectations of the foreign dream among desperate aspirants. They lure workers with company names like Samsung, Panasonic and McDonald's, but send them to manpower supply companies. They exaggerate overtime earnings, which migrants rely on because this can sometimes add up to 80% of their base salary.

But most migrants find themselves trapped when they land jobs with lower salaries than promised and no overtime. On



THE FREEDOM

UPASANA KHADKA
in KUALA LUMPUR



Undocumented workers from Nepal on a farm run by a fellow Nepali who has lived in Malaysia without papers for a decade.

Going home

With crackdowns on undocumented workers and the depreciation of the ringgit, many Nepalis have decided to return to Nepal. They can exit Malaysia without a passport if they have temporary travel documents, but will be slapped a five-year entry ban. The documents are supposed to cost only \$360, but an agent will charge \$600. Even going home costs three months of income on average. "We took a big loan to come here thinking we could send money home, but instead are having to ask our families to send us money so we can return," says Mahendra.

A less common alternative for

undocumented migrants wanting to leave is to pay for a 'counter setting,' which entails bribing an airport immigration officer, also facilitated by agents for over \$800. But Binod, a Nepali restaurant owner who moonlights as an agent helping returnees, says the number of counter settings have decreased after authorities tightened up.

Using the first option, five undocumented Nepali security guards were on a recent flight to Kathmandu after not being paid for four months by a fellow-Nepali recruiter. "Living without money despite working hard got unbearable so we left," says Ramesh, showing a timesheet with over 100 hours a week clocked in. Adds Krishna: "We consider ourselves lucky because at least we could leave."

Suraj was undocumented for two months before being caught in an immigration raid then locked up with 90 inmates in a small room. "There wasn't enough food and we got skin rashes."

Adds Ratna, who spent nearly four

Staying on

Bharat owns a manpower company that sources Nepali workers, and says recruiting a foreign worker legally involves multiple trips to the immigration office for permits and fees. The whole process can be expensive, costing employers up to \$1,200 per worker, and there is much uncertainty about what type of worker they will get in return.

"So, employers and recruiters just hire

undocumented workers locally and insulate themselves from all legal responsibilities," explains Bharat. "Plus, language skills and familiarity with Malaysia among undocumented migrants can also be a plus point."

However, undocumented workers are vulnerable to exploitation. Tika has had eight jobs in the last five years because of unpaid wages and abuse. But he still prefers this to his legal employer, who made him work 18 hours a day for just \$150 a month, locking him in his apartment during off-duty hours. He says: "At least I know I have nothing to lose because if the next employer becomes abusive or unfair, I can just leave."

Realising that workers like Tika without passports can be flight risks, employers often keep a couple of months' salary as a



months in prison before being deported: "I will never forget 1329, my jail number. I was so excited to go home we walked out of Kathmandu airport barefoot, but it did not matter because we were home and free."

At Kathmandu airport, workers repatriated from Malaysian detention

centres stand out among other returning migrant workers because they are shabbily dressed, in flipflops or barefoot, and are not pushing trolleys with tv sets.

The Nepal Embassy and family members help immigration detainees to be repatriated, but there are 600 others in Malaysian jails who do not have the



ALL PHOTOS: UPASANA KHADKA

When migrants run away from their employers leaving their passports behind, photocopies of their passports and, if lucky, their original citizenship, are their most prized possessions (*far left, below*).

A raid in Kuala Lumpur's Kotaraya (*far left, above*). Immigration police check migrants' papers on a Sunday evening.

If migrants are able to show required documents during a raid, 'OK' is scrawled on their hands (*left*).

top of that, they are also expected to pay part of the rent, food, levy and utilities from their earnings.

Rita, a recent runaway, found out she would not get the promised overtime and had to pay other fees as well. For every small mistake at her job in a fish factory, her employer deducted \$15-30 from her salary. She escaped before her contract ended and joined the ranks of the undocumented.

With loans adding up back in Nepal, returning prematurely is not an option for many migrants. There is also the pressure of expectations from family, who collectively decide to send members abroad by selling assets or taking loans.

"My family does not know about my situation. Returning

to Nepal early can be an embarrassment and you are seen as a failure in the community, so I wanted to stay longer even if it meant being undocumented," says Gautam.

Even when bosses are kind and jobs decent, some migrants prefer to be undocumented. Hari works in a security company and knows of a Nepali who recently fled a job after being warned several times for showing up late and for his drinking habits. Hari explains: "When a worker doesn't perform well at work despite three warnings he can be sent back, and he knew he was getting close to that point. So he escaped."

Ram admits he left his official job as a cleaner after he heard he could earn more as a security guard. On the other hand, Nisha quit her job in Johor Bahru so she could be with her husband in Kuala Lumpur: both now work in neighbouring restaurants run by Nepalis.

In the monopsony of the labour market, employers wield significant power over migrant workers who lack safety nets and are unaware of their legal rights. Documented migrant workers have 'OK' scrawled on their hands by police, while undocumented ones are handcuffed and taken away.

OF BEING ILLEGAL

guarantee.

Staying on as undocumented workers has worked out well for others. Ram has lived in Malaysia without proper papers for over a decade, and has leased land to grow vegetables. It has become a profitable enterprise, and he now provides refuge and jobs for other undocumented workers like him.

"Locals do not want this job and need us, yet they hound us. When there is a raid, we just escape into the forests," says Ram, who feels relatively safe living on the outskirts of the city.

Malaysia recently introduced a new program for employers to rehire undocumented migrants. However migrants are reluctant to participate because they have to pay a levy. Plus, given that the permit is valid only till the end of 2018,

many don't want to come out in the open.

Undocumented workers like Nisha are risk averse and prefer to stay indoors at all times at the restaurant where she works. She says that living in the shadows within the confines of her room is a small price to pay for being able to spend time with her husband and to send money home for her daughter's education. There are others like Ram, an undocumented security guard pulling multiple shifts, who tries to live a normal life to the extent possible and shares: "I know what streets to avoid and how to handle myself during police raids."

Adds Ram: "The police shove us into their car and take us for a drive around the neighbourhood. We stay calm, make an offer and they let us go. Anything is possible with money in Malaysia."



An undocumented Nepali migrant worker taking vegetables to a road for pick-up.



Migrants at a hotel in Kotaraya (*far left*) waiting for papers from their agent. "It can be today, tomorrow or next week... who knows?"

Undocumented workers arrive in Kathmandu (*left*) where they will stay for a couple of nights before they go home to Panchthar. They are banned from Malaysia for five years, but have no intention of going back.

connections to be rescued, and 238 more are waiting for support to get air tickets home.

Back in Kathmandu there is no help to reintegrate these former migrant workers into society and deal with the trauma of forced deportation. Left on their own, returnees are disoriented and demoralised.

Names have been changed.



SAMSUNG

Galaxy Note8



Pre-order Now^

Get convertible wireless charger

Do bigger things

Galaxy Note8

MRP 102,990/-

[^]Pre-order now @
www.note8preorder.com
 & get convertible wireless
 charger (till stock lasts)



With every Galaxy Note 8

Get breakage insurance*
 valid for 8 months

Get 16GB 4G data-
 2GB every month for 8 months

Easy EMI available*



Authorized Distributors of Samsung Mobile for Nepal

Samsung Customer Care Call Center

NTC user : 166001-72667

Ncell user : 98015-72667

facebook.com/SamsungMobileNP
twitter.com/samsungmobilenp

Terms & Conditions apply. ^Pre-ordering can be done at www.note8preorder.com from 18th September to 6th October 2017. Pre-order confirmation amount is Rs 5,000/- . Pre-ordering customer will get convertible wireless charger, subject to the stock availability and shall be on as is basis. ~For more detail on Ncell offer, please visit nearest Ncell center. *For more details on Insurance visit www.shikharinsurance.com. For more details on EMI please visit our nearest Samsung Brandshops. Offers are subject to change without prior notice. Product images are for representational purpose only, actual may vary.