





Show Room: SRD Building New Plaza, Putalisadak, Tel:4425402



The cost of light

N ext week as Nepalis celebrate Tihar, the festival of lights, few will remember that it will mark the second anniversary of the end of paralysing power cuts.

Sometimes lasting up to 18 hours a day, the load-shedding increased the people's hardship and crippled the economy. The man credited for ending power cuts, Kulman Ghising of the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) said this week: "Light up your houses this Tihar, there is enough electricity."

The NEA estimates that demand next week will peak at 1,270 MW, but Ghising says there is enough supply from domestic generation and Indian imports to meet it. The reason for Ghising's confidence is that 30MW has been added this year, his efforts to manage supply and cut leakage have increased capacity, and the Kulekhani reservoir is full. Even all this would not have ensured enough power - the real reason there

will not be a dark Tihar is because of electricity imports from India.

This year, Nepal's electricity demand reached 1,281MW, but domestic generation never exceeded 525MW. The shortfall was made up by importing up to 505MW of electricity from coal-fired thermal plants in Bihar. Even with that, industries and some districts still suffered power cuts.

The end to loadshedding has come at great environmental and CLIMATE economic cost. The average per capita carbon footprint of Nepalis is still low, but it has doubled because of fossil energy bought from India. The electricity import bill this year added Rs20 billion to the Rs150 billion Nepal was already spending to buy petroleum products from India. The government defends the power import, arguing that it is only a stopgap measure and transmission lines built to import electricity from India

can later be used to export Nepal's surplus power to the Indian market.

Former Minister of Water Resources Dipak Gyawali says that is not likely to happen because Nepal's electricity demand is growing 100MW per year, and there is a lot of suppressed demand that not even big projects

a lot of suppressed demand that not even big projects like Tama Kosi (440MW) can cover. Instead of building

cross-border transmission lines, Gyawali urges the NEA to focus on connecting small hydro projects to the national grid to meet future

domestic growth in consumption for cooking and transportation. Sadly, even while importing







KUNDA DIXI

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IRLIN

CLIMATE CLIMAX EDITORIAL PAGE 2 electricity generated from dirty coal from India, NEA cannot buy clean hydropower from private plants like the 6MW Khani Khola because they do not have transmission lines connecting them to the grid.

Says one hydropower investor: "This is the irony of it all: we want to sell our electricity to NEA, but it is buying power from India." *Om Astha Rai* FOSSIL FUEL ADDICTION

Nepal's carbon footprint doubles

PAGE 14-15

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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

CLIMATE CLIMAX

orget the horror movies, no more science fiction, stop watching post-apocalyptic Hollywood. We have the real thing coming to a planet near you.

If things were not scary enough, the latest report from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released in Incheon earlier this month paints a terrifying picture of a dving Earth.

This year saw record heat waves and droughts across Europe, Australia, Japan and the United States. Every new hurricane and typhoon breaks world records for wind speed. The hottest years since records started being kept were in the last 10 years, but 2018 was just a trailer of what is to come.

If the current pace of warming continues, millions will start dying in heat waves across northern India and sub-Saharan Africa by the middle of the century. Droughts, flash floods and storms will be even more intense and frequent, there will be water shortages leading to starvation and famine. Coral reefs will all



die, affecting fish populations. Sea level rise will submerge coastal cities, a fourth of Bangladesh's land area will go underwater, the Maldives will disappear. Nepal's mountains and glaciers will lose much of their permanent ice.

dependence on India. And that is probably the best-case scenario if warming cannot be capped at 1.5° by 2040. In reality, it will probably exceed 2°. By the end of the century, we are looking at average global temperatures at 4° warmer – this means we should replace the term climate change with 'climate collapse'.

Many of us who have been writing about the climate for the past decades have been called 'alarmists' or 'fear mongers', but this time it is the scientists who are panicking. The reason is that at a time when action on emission reduction is urgent, populist climate deniers are being elected in democracies across the world. It is getting so scary, citizens and politicians are burying their heads in the sand.

These alarming changes have happened with just an average 1° warming since the industrial age. The IPCC report makes clear that in the next decades, whether the warming is 1.5° or 2° will make a world of a difference -1.5° means heat waves will be less severe meaning millions will not die, the polar ice caps will not melt as fast, fewer plants and animals will become extinct, sea level will not rise by as much, fewer coral reefs will bleach. However, the report warns that governments only have 12 more years to implement measures so that global warming will be less than 1.5°.

Now that we know how bad things are, what are we going to do about it in Nepal? For years we have argued that since we did not create the problem, and what we do is not going to save the planet, we should just try to adapt. But, as a new report State of Climate Action in Nepal shows, Nepal also needs to take mitigation action - not so much to slow global warming, but to save the country's economy from collapse.

Despite international treaties Nepal has signed, and successive governments paying lip service to a renewable economy, the country's

fossil energy imports are soaring, including through electricity imports from thermal plants in India. Solar and biogas programs have languished, and there has been nearly no tangible progress on electric public transport.

'Nepal's move towards a sustainably renewable future is sluggish, and indeed often regressively heading towards more fossil fuel addiction,' the report concludes.

The most glaring lapse is in sustainable harnessing of Nepal's hydropower. Chronic governance failure and sheer stupidity of our rulers have resulted in Nepal now importing half its electricity from Indian coal-fired plants, doubling our carbon footprint. New hydropower plants are expected to add 2,000MW

in the next two years, but these will barely meet suppressed demands and since they are all run-of-river schemes, the winter ruining the environment power shortage will continue.

The number of vehicles is nearing 3 million, with public transport vehicles making up less than 3% of the total, and the number of electric vehicles is negligible. There is weak

political will to promote more efficient and reliable public transport because of the lobbying power of bus syndicates. Although taxes for electric vehicles have been slashed (see page *8-9*), there is no sign of a proactive strategy to wean transportation from fossil fuels.

All this is impacting public health due to a proliferation of two-wheelers and lack of emission controls. The poor condition

Much more worrying is that Nepal's annual trade imbalance with India. (See page 14-15)

Flawed energy policy is not just ruining the

Times.com

ONLINE PACKAGES



ELECTRIC-CITY

As the global climate warms up and the world weans itself away from fossil fuels, there is suddenly a rush on battery-operated vehicles. In Nepal too, electric cars, scooters and public buses are gradually becoming popular and establishing strong roots in the market. Watch video about new electric car models coming to Nepal and how such vehicles can lift the economy. Story: page 8-9



THE LIGHTMAKERS

The courtyards and sidewalks of Bhaktapur are covered in clay lamps with the Prajapatis busy making traditional pala as the festival of lights approaches. Watch these deft craftsmen at work and hear about their struggle to preserve an ancient profession in changing times, and develop new products. Story: page 7

STUDENT MIGRATION

It seems many young Nepali students are getting into financial problems using credit cards to cover periods of unemployment ('Migration Certificate', Prakriti Kandel, #932) It is not easy getting employment in Australia and education and daily living costs are extremely high so I believe many of these kids are not prepared for this reality when they arrive here. Migration agents should be taking more responsibility to ensure these kids have adequate means to support themselves before leaving Nepal. Australia is a hard country and not the promised land that some migration agents may make it out to be.

Mike Hogan

EXCHANGE RATES

I'm not convinced by India's blaming the price of oil as the reason for their tanking economy ('Dollar Laxmi', Anil Chitrakar, #932). Pretty sure the demonetisation fiasco has a lot to do with it. Also Nepal should unpeg against Indian Rupee and peg against Yuan Alex Ferguson

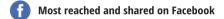
GOING DOWN

NTC's downfall has definitely begun ('Nepal Telecom, or go?', Ramesh Kumar, #932). With Ncell and Smart Telecom providing better service plans at relatively lower cost, most people are switching to these companies. Moreover, customers are sure to get better service from them.

WHAT'S TRENDING

Murder, not accident

The short report on the death of 38-year-old Shyam Sundar Shrestha in Kirtipur after he fell and drowned in a sewer generated public outrage against the gross negligence of KUKL and Municipality. Do you have a photograph or video of a dangerous pothole or open drain in Kathmandu Valley? Mail to editors@ nepalitimes.com and view pictures of these death traps on the Nepali Times website.



20% electric by 2020

by *Om Astha Rai* Nepal has taken its first step towards electric public transport, and PM Oli has promised to turn 20% of public vehicles into battery operated ones by 2020. How feasible is the government's commitment? Read this and more on our continuous coverage of electric vehicles and vehicular pollution at www.nepalitimes.com.



Most commented

Migration Certificate

by Prakriti Kande

Student visas are now the preferred method for young Nepalis to emigrate. Go online for interactive maps and graphics to find out about the most recent trends in foreign studies, and learn what the students have to say about the opportunities abroad.



QUOTE 🎔 TWEETS

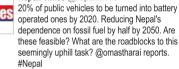
Nepali Times @nepalitimes Do Kathmandu Valley's mayors have a strategy to reduce air pollution? And what can Nepal learn from Mexico City, with similar topography to Kathmandu and once declared the most polluted city in the world? @EmbaMexInd @icimod @CE_Nepal



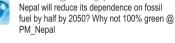


Rita Thapa @bheribas First, Mayor Jyu, remove all the pot holes & stop making our roads full of dust damaging our lungs

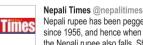
Nepali Times @nepalitimes



... **†**73 ICT Watch @ITwatch_np



Ashish Shrestha @ashishreztha Oct 24 We want better roads rather than advanced vehicles ... #nepal @kpsharmaoli



his column '1/2 Full'.

not hinterland of Bihar.

Sushma Joshi @joshi sushma

17

Nepali rupee has been pegged to Indian currency since 1956, and hence when its value falls the Nepali rupee also falls. Should the Nepa currency be un-pegged or should we set a new

peg-rate to the Indian currency? Anil Chitrakar in

Peg it to Sagarmatha, not Delhi. Let's think

high, not low. Switzerland of the subcontinent,







of roads and highways has decreased the efficiency of vehicular transport, but has increased pollution levels.

spending on petroleum products has more than doubled in the last two years, increasing our



petroleum is not just

and banrupting our

economy, it is also

increasing our political

environment and bankrupting the country, it is also increasing Nepal's political vulnerability to the outside world.

10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

In the #423 issue of Nepali Times of 31 October-6 November 2008, the Editorial dealt with the elected Maoist government getting back to business after the holidays on the matter of integration of thier milita with the national Army. Excerpt:

'Government formation, the prime minister's foreign trips, then there was Dasain-Tihar. Finally, there are no more excuses for the government to start governing. But there is one more potential distraction: army integration. The January deadline for UNMIN's mandate is beginning to focus everyone's minds on dismantling cantonments and containers. Those bankrolling the UN are not in the mood for another extension.

Given the extreme posturing and grandstanding by doctrinaire Maoists led by Defence Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa and the centre-right supporters of status quoists in the Nepal Army, integration won't be easy. Thapa's rash public pronouncements, and the kangresis whipping up a storm over rumours they heard that Nanda Kishore Pun was being proposed as army chief has needlessly polarised the debate.



Chonang Rai Rodung

MAYORAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mayors of Nepal seem to be participating in many such events, but the outcome seems to be zero ('Mayoral Airs', Sonia Awale, #932). Subhash Singh

Dream on. To expect Kathmandu's mayor to do anything about fixing the garbage, reconstruction of Rani Pokhari or Kasthamandap, fixing the roads so bicyclists don't kill themselves, clearing the sidewalks, making the street lights work, is all unrealistic enough. But to expect him to clean up Kathmandu's air pollution is too ambitious. Give the man a break.

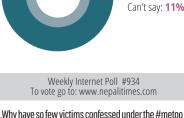
Naren Pradhananga

Interesting to know Kathmandu is learning Mexico City's experience to curb pollution. Zhang Haizhou

Times Weekly Internet Poll #933 Q. Can Nepal turn its 20% public vehicles into batteryoperated ones by 2020? Total votes: 138 Yes: 25% No: 64%

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Q.Why have so few victims confessed under the #metoo movement in Nepal?

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#TheyToo

Recent #MeToo accusations barely scratch the surface of widespread hidden abuse of women in Nepal

Viewers of the popular reality tv show *Nepal Idol* got a rude shock last week when guest Sandip Chhetri hugged host Reema Bishwokarma, apparently against her will. She cringed, backed off, then complained playfully, "Me too!"



Chhetri retorted, "Me three!" Host Asif Shah joined in on the merriment with "Me four, me five!" The audience roared.

This was the latest example of just how little understood (or misunderstood) the #MeToo movement in Nepal is, how harassment of women is accepted as normal, and victims do not have platforms for protest.

A year after American actress Alyssa Milano went on Twitter to ask victims of Harvey Weinstein to use the hashtag, the aftershocks finally arrived in Nepal, but only after India was rocked by accusations against Bollywood musicians, journalists, actors, and former editor and now minister M J Akbar who had to step down.

In Nepal, while the movement generated debate on social media and some women including journalists Subina Shrestha and Meena Kaini and theatre artist Akanchha Karki have spoken up, only one person has been named. Former journalists Rashmila Prajapati and Ujjwala Maharjan accused Province 3 minister and former Kathmandu mavor, Keshav Sthapit, of harassing them. Doubtless, it has been difficult for women to speak out even though the #MeToo movement has made their accusations credible for the first time. But most Nepali women with horrific accounts of mistreatment and cruelty are outside the public sphere, or do not want to speak out because of stigma. Leaving aside rape and domestic violence, even workplace abuse of power that #MeToo has been associated with has not come out. Long before #MeToo, actresses Shreesha Karki in 2002 and Jessica Khadka in 2012 committed suicide after their nude images were leaked – indicating that sexual abuse has been rampant in Nepal's entertainment industry. Aside from film and media, there are also the dance bars, cabin restaurants, dohori (duet-song) venues and massage parlours in which up to 50,000 young women

are employed as entertainers. Most have been abused, says former *dohori* singer Sirjana Pun and founder of the Women Forum for Women.

"Customers do not treat women as professionals, but as animals they can abuse at will," says Pun. "We have nowhere to go for redress, because the police refuse to register our complaints. Things are changing slowly, but the complaints are still more about labour contract violations than sexual abuse, because those go nowhere."

Surprisingly, even Pun has not heard of the #MeToo movement, and neither have most trafficked women who have survived unspeakable violations. Sapna Poudel at Shakti Samuha, which was founded by trafficked women, says: "Women here have experienced dreadful sexual abuse, but many do not even open up to their counselors, let alone go public with accusations."

As the #MeToo movement gains more traction in Nepal, Shakti Samuha is planning to orient survivors, so they can decide whether they want to go public. Few women trafficked to brothels in Nepal, India or overseas and suffer sexual abuse come out, and others in occupations not covered by labour laws like household help have nowhere to complain about sexual abuse.

The Kamlari system of bonded labour was prevalent in western **STAGE FRIGHT:** On the popular TV show Nepal Idol, guest Sandip Chhetri, the comedian, hugged host Reema Bishwokarma who cried out "Me too!" Chhetri and the other host Asif Shah, however, joked to "Me Five!"

and abuse of generations of women from her community. It was common for employers to rape young Kamlaris, father children and abandon them. Chaudhari's aunt committed suicide at 21 after word spread that she was pregnant.

'We face our abusers every day in the village, but we do not want to rake up the past. Abused women have settled into their new lives, they do not want the stigma from reopening old cases," says Chaudhari, who is studying to be a lawyer but has not heard of #MeToo. Nor have most of the 13,000 former Kamlari who want to focus on difficult battles for recognition, identity and ancestral property for children born of abuse. Most of the 20,000 Badi women whose traditional occupation used to be the sex trade have not heard of #MeToo either.

Even though 63% of Nepalis now have access to the Internet, the #MeToo movement here is limited to a small circle of educated people. There are headlines about murder, rape, assault, coercion, manipulation and harrassment, and detractors are using the distinction to

TK meets HX

Turkish Airlines and Hong Kong Airlines have commenced a new codeshare partnership following an agreement signed by both airlines in Istanbul on 29 October. Hong Kong Airlines will now add Istanbul



and popular destinations in Europe, including Paris, London, Barcelona and more to its international network, while Turkish Airlines will extend its reach to other major destinations beyond Hong Kong.

Dreamliner services

Etihad Airways has introduced the new Boeing 787-9 on its daily scheduled services from Abu Dhabi to Kuala Lumpur, effective 20 December, and to Brussels, effective 3 January 2019. The new two-class



787 Dreamliner service features Etihad Airways' next-generation Business and Economy Class cabins configured with 299 seats - 28 Business Studios and 271 Economy Smart seats.

Not easy to do business Nepal has fallen five places to rank 110th

Nepal has fallen five places to rank 110th out of 190 countries in a list of ease of doing business, says the World Bank's Doing Business 2019: Training for Reform report this week. Nepal ranks 158th for paying taxes -- its lowest ranking among the 10 indicators. Nepal also ranks low in other indicators including enforcing contracts (154), dealing with construction permits (148), and getting electricity (137). The report said Nepal needed to make paying taxes easier by simplifying the process of paying medical insurance and accident insurance by employers who already face considerable bureaucracy.

5th must see city

Qatar Airways organised a function to celebrate Kathmandu's recognition as the fifth must see city in the world by Lonely Planet, with Nepal Tourism Board, NATTA



Till now, 67 lucky customers have won Rs100,000 cash prize each, and out of them, 44 winners have received the cash prize.

New ESCAP chief

Armida Alisjahbana has taken office as the new Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok, which is taking the lead in implementing ambitious targets set out by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region. Alisjahbana was formerly Minister of National Development Planning in Indonesia.

Toyota facility

United Traders Syndicate, the authorised dealer for Toyota in Nepal, has appointed



Basant Classic Automobiles as the authorised 3S dealer in Dhangadi, Province 7 on 29 October.

Data-driven tourism

At a conference in Manama, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) introduced a Tourism Tech Adventure: Big Data Solutions forum bringing together the ecosystem of tourism innovation and raising the sector's role in the digital agenda. Panellists debated how open data platforms are revolutionising tourism, along with how to stimulate venture capital and greater gender equality in tourism and technology.

11.11

Daraz has announced the launch of 11.11, a one-day sale event on Daraz App similar to Black Friday, for the first time in Nepal.



Scheduled for 11 November, the event will feature personalised and supercharged lineup of activities, in addition to massive mega deals, flash sales, thousands of brand vouchers, mystery boxes, giveaways and many more.

IMF report

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) issued an annual report which showed the recovering state of Nepal's economy from the 2015 earthquakes and Blockade, as growth reached 6.3% and inflation average 4.2% in FY2017/18. Two successive favourable monsoons, accommodative fiscal and monetary policy, a pickup in reconstruction activity, and markedly improved electricity supply are credited for the growth. For FY2018/19, the projection of growth is moderately at 5% and inflation to pick up to 5% as activity begins to run up against capacity constraints.

Former Kamlari Bishnu Chaudhari, 24, has horror stories about slavery

Belaboured Laws

As the #MeToo movement gains momentum, questions have also been raised about why victims are taking to social media instead of going through proper legal channels. However, are the labour laws of Nepal adequate to curb workplace harassment?

Many legal professionals do not think so. Nepal's Sexual Harassment Prevention Act came into effect in 2015, which defines workplace as "entities owned by government, corporate bodies or institutions, and firms licensed to carry out business." This definition leaves out vast areas where women work in and are abused, like household labour and informal sector.

The law does define many acts of harassment, but gives the victims only ninety days to complain about them. "Three months is not enough, victims should be able to complain about harassment any time they want to," says senior advocate and women's rights activist Meera Dhungana.

Dhungana also finds the punishment for the crimes too mild. While offenders may be jailed for six months or pay a fine of Rs. 50,000, their supervisor can also solve the problem by transferring them. "If the offender is transferred, he or she may continue offending at another location. It is not a deterrent at all," says Dhungana. "Higher fines and jail terms can make offenders think twice before they commit such crimes." undermine the movement.

Outside Nepal, many #MeToo accusers are now facing a troll backlash, and in Nepal, many women in media, entertainment, and corporates have remained silent. Former mayor Keshav Sthapit mocked the movement by calling the accusations "a rape of men's rights".

Nepal's #MeToo movement has lost some of its momentum as other campaigns against abuse like #JusticeforNirmala and #RageAgainstRape remain more effective on social media. The possibility of #MeToo movement helping obtain justice for victims in Nepal remains dim.

But Nirmala Sharma, Chair of the Centre for Investigative Journalism, has not lost hope. "Twenty years ago, when women activists demanded equal property rights for daughters, people laughed. But today we have that law," she says. "Likewise, most women may not have heard of #MeToo today, some may poke fun at it, or it may be limited to a small circle, but it is a start. With time, it will help women come out, and end sexual assault."

and Travel fraternity of Kathmandu. Country Manager Jayaprakash Nair addressed the event praising the effort of all tourism stakeholders on increasing tourism movement for the 2 million tourists target in 2020.

Ncell awards

Ncell handed over cash prizes of Rs1,000,000 to the lucky winners, selected through live draw program broadcasted



in AP1 Television, of the fifth, sixth and seventh week of the 10-week long 'Recharge and Win' offer on 25 October.

Dust

Dust, a Nepali documentary film about children working in brick factories in Nepal is participating in the 1st Global University Film Awards in Hong Kong from



7-9 November. Originally titled *Chhaaro*, the film is 50 minutes long and has three chapters. It has been selected in 17 international film festivals, picking up four awards.

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*মর্নে নেথা নিখেন্সরুক লাসু हुनेछन्। বিস্কুন সালকার্যকী লাসি। নাসকীকা আঘিকাধিক শ্বিস্ঠনোকানা মন্দকে সন্ধুনিন। খা খাঁসনা মানমঙ্ককা নিংখিবন স্থলদৈরে আনানহতনা असोস ৭४ देখি নামিব ৭৪, ২০০২ মনন নাসু हुनेछ। प्रस्तुत সাধিকা থা খাঁসনা हिम হলকটোনিক্ষ নথা সিবীগা ব্যোদাহব্লাব্য आ-আएকু নির্णখিদ্ধাব্য ঘ্রেনে তাখিচকা हो। साथै समपूर्ण दाবी/दाथित्व हिम इलेकट्रोलिक्स तथा त्रिवेणी व्यापारमा निहीत रहेने छ। यो योजना विनासूचना परिवर्तन एवं संशोधन ठार्न सकिने छ। यहाँ देखाइएका तस्वीरहरु वास्तविक उत्पादनसँठा मेल नखान पनि सकछन्।

NATION

Recreating Tiger Tops in the tropics

The beginnings of Borneo Rainforest Lodge in Sarawak followed a the Chitwan model from Nepal

Inever met any during my time in Sarawak, but the Penan people were one of Asia's last true nomadic hunter-gatherer groups, championed by anthropological and human rights activists against being settled by modern Malaysia during the early 1990s.



Sheltering from the rainforest downpours and damp under plaited leafs and twig canopies, they were skilled weavers making rattan mats and baskets. Hunting with blowpipes, and eating plants and small animals, the Penans were noted for practicing *molong* which means never taking more than necessary. They survived in the ever-shrinking patches of rainforest that had evaded the devastating decades of logging that made British Borneo, later Malaysian Borneo, wealthy.

Ironically, it was a Malaysian logger who first invited me to Borneo in 1991. Rudy Tangit Kinajil was one of the 'big boys', head of Sabah State forestry and a stalwart of Malaysia's timber industry but remarkable in that he came from a local tribe, the Kadazan-Dusun, and had risen through the ranks. Rudy wanted help create a natural history lodge, and had decided that it should be modelled on the wildlife conservation concepts pioneered by Tiger Tops Nepal, but adapted to his tropical Borneo environment.





TRANSLOCATION:

The Borneo Rainforest Lodge, modelled after Tiger Tops in Chitwan has won many ecotourism awards for its green footprint. The canopy walkway (*left*) is the highlight of the property.

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Sunk in the deep leather seats of Rudy's vast silver BMW, we drove the private gravel logging roads into the back blocks of Sabah through a green tunnel of towering trees as he showed me the realities of his world. Where the trees had been felled. there were great glaring gaps of open light. I was horrified by the destruction of biblical proportions, the Armageddon of devastation left by the loggers and their massive machinery. The loamy ruined soil was rutted naked to the sky, erupted roots exposed and discarded branches left to rot on the beleaguered battlefield. Rudy surveyed the wreckage and waste with a rueful smile. Borneo logging concessions are

valuable, government organised and highly controlled by the State, but the inevitable result is forest loss, not only for the indigenous people who depend on it, but for the 10,000 species of plants, nearly 300 species of birds, and a medley of animals ranging from the tiny pygmy squirrel, the iconic orangutan and 12 other primates, and herds of elephant. Amongst the unique flora are some 3,000 types of trees, 2,000 orchids, pitcher plants and the foul-smelling Rafflesia, the world's largest flower with a diameter of one metre, named for Sir Stamford Raffles. The huge trunks of the *dipterocarps* are reduced to plywood in the sawmills that Rudy showed me by the coast, then loaded directly onto ocean-going cargo ships to feed the world's need for building materials Rudy was trying to do his best. He hired Clive Marsh, a gangly enthusiastic British biologist from Cambridge University, as the Sabah Foundation (Yayasan Sabah) eco-warrior and social conscience. Together they

pioneered the early practice of carbon trading, the innovative idea of exchanging environmental impacts across the globe. For the first time, improved and lessdamaging forestry techniques in Borneo were offset against power company effects in North America.

Under Rudy's watch, 43,800 hectares had been set aside as the Danum Valley Conservation Area, an island of untouched and unlogged tropical rainforest, protected for its undisturbed biodiversity and complete with a research facility managed by scientists from the UK's Royal Society.

The Field Centre and its pristine setting was attracting so much attention from curious visitors that Rudy and Clive felt a separate tourist lodge would allow the scientific work to continue in peace. Clive was despatched to Nepal to visit the famous Tiger Tops and seek our assistance in planning the new lodge. A suitable riverside site had been selected nearby, and designs commissioned featuring forest materials, river stones, Dusan-style chalets, and an airy main building with spacious verandas set on columns of *belian*, Borneo's famous iron wood.

Rudy insisted the buildings be set well back in case of flooding – he never forgot the childhood trauma when his village was washed away in a flash flood. Otherwise, Clive and I were given a free hand with the market positioning, wildlife operations and nature-based activities. Malaysian staff were sent to train in Chitwan, Nepali naturalists visited to run courses and perfect the programs, I prepared a marketing strategy, and Borneo Rainforest Lodge opened in 1994.

For the uninitiated, the matted undergrowth and dense vegetation makes it hard to see much in tropical rainforests except the occasional dung beetle, butterfly flash, strange snail or huge centipede, but sound effects are a cacophony of bird calls and a melodic screech of insects that span every note on the scale. Clive designed thick cotton 'leech socks' to protect guests on guided rainforest hikes. From the suspension bridge near Danum Valley Field Centre, a flying squirrel glided every evening on his parachute-winged legs, accompanied by a symphony of six o'clock crickets. Wildlife viewing from the network of nature trails and canopy walkways that Clive built at Borneo Rainforest Lodge was more rewarding, and especially when the jungle became habituated to the increasing flow of visitors. Borneo rarities include the Sumatran rhinoceros and Bulwer's pheasant, and Danum is still one of the best places to spot the highly endangered orangutan, the beguiling 'person of the forest', living in the wild. 💟









Going places together - qatarairways.com

Bhaktapur's potters adapt to survive

Descendants of clay lamp makers carry on an ancestral profession for the festival of lights

Monika Deupala

Tihar is right around the corner, but the festival of lights is not going to be a holiday for the Prajapatis of Bhaktapur. They are busy with their ancestral occupation of moulding clay to make earthen lamps called *pala*.

This week, the courtyards and sidewalks of Bhaktapur are covered in clay lamps, soaked in coloured water, and drying in the sun until they can be fired.

Das Ram Prajapati has been carrying on the profession of his forebears, and says proudly that his family sold 25,000 clay lamps last year, earning Rs80,000. But even though modern LED garden lights from China have replaced earthen lamps in many households, the clay oil lamps are still regarded as auspicious for Laxmi Puja, Mha Puja and Bhai Tika, which fall between



a machine to make pottery, my grandfather taught me to use the *chakra* when I was a boy and I still enjoy using it," says 74-year-old Lalit Prajapati, the only person making *pala* the traditional way in

the Talako area of Bhaktapur. His skill of turning a clay mould into beautiful pottery attracts tourists by the hundreds to Talako. "It is necessary to preserve our tradition, rather than going for mass production and money. We should not forget why we are making them in the first place," he adds. is that the young have gone abroad for education or jobs, or have taken up other professions. There is no next generation to carry on the tradition.

Also, there is now a scarcity of the special black clay needed for making pottery because of

the urban sprawl around Bhaktapur. Shiva Kumari Prajapati and her family traditionally sold *pala* in the markets of all three towns of the valley before Tihar. Residents of the Valley sought the Bhaktapur *pala* because they knew it was the best quality. Dasa Ram Prajapati says pottery production shifted to Bhaktapur because Patan and Kathmandu ran out of proper clay. But now the concrete jungle has spread to Bhaktapur as well, houses stand over former clay pits.

"I am using my two-year-old stockpile of black clay that I bought for Rs2,000 back then, it is much more expensive now," he says.

Nhuchhe Ram Prajapati sources his clay from Harisiddhi, from outside the Valley, or from someone PHOTOS: MONIKA DEUPALA

with design and texture of his clay products. "I see it more as an art than a profession," says Shumsher, who sells double the number of earthen lamps in Tihar compared to the rest of the year.

His *pala* have better designs and finish, and now come with inbuilt wax and wick already attached. He has also started making scented lamps with wax of different colours. His son Samrat takes the lamps to the Asan market in Kathmandu every morning in a van. The father and son say their greatest problem now is to find suitable clay, not buyers.

THE LIGHTMAKERS



7-10 November this year.

Many of the Prajapati clan have started mass producing the lamps with a wheel machine, but the purists still stick to traditional manual chakra to produce potteries the old fashioned way.

"I don't feel good about using

What Lalit Prajapati is particularly worried about



who is building a tall house that need foundations deep enough to reach the black clay layer.

Shumser Prajapati is the owner of Samrat Ceramics, and the only one from his generation to still be involved in the ancestral profession. He has been innovating



The courtyards and sidewalks of Bhaktapur are covered in clay lamps with the Prajapatis busy making traditional *pala* as the festival of lights approaches. Watch these deft craftsmen at work and hear about their struggle to preserve an ancient profession in changing times, and develop new products. nepalitimes.com





Electri-City Cars

Do your bit for the ecology and economy by switching to a battery car, and save money, too

electric car market is poised for growth.

• बा १३ च ३ ८ ५१ •

Agni Incorporated, which imports the popular Mahindra e2O, plans to convert its popular petrol KUV crossover to battery and bring it to Nepal early next year. With a 180 km range, the eKUV will cost Rs3,500,000 and be able to comfortably get to Pokhara with a fast charge along



Sikuma Rai

A fter serving as a toy for the rich, for making an environmental statement, or be a hobby, electric cars have suddenly become a necessity. As the global climate warms up and the world weans itself away from fossil fuels, there is suddenly a rush on battery-operated vehicles.

In Nepal, the government deliberately refused to provide incentives to battery-operated vehicles for many years because it would reduce revenue, but two years ago, slashed taxes on electric vehicles and increased the taxes for diesel and petrol cars. Since then, electric car sales in Kathmandu have soared.

At present there are over 500 electric cars, more than 1,500 battery two-wheelers and a few thousand electric three-wheelers on Nepal's roads. But with Sajha and other bus companies poised to induct electric buses, and private owners showing a keen interest, the the way.

Agni has already sold 400 two- and four-door e2O, and slashed prices on them from Rs3,100,000 to Rs 2,200,000 by reducing the range for city driving, and the model is selling well in Kathmandu and other metros.

Continental Trading Enterprises introduced the electric version of its KIA Soul two years ago and sales have picked up after the tax on similar petrol vehicles was hiked. Despite its boxy look and price, the e-Soul is doing well, and KIA is preparing to introduce the e-Niro crossover with a range of 380km next year.

China's BYD made high-profile launches of its e6s by having President Bidya Devi Bhandari, the National Planning Commission and the Nepal Electricity Authority ride around in them. But its main market is in buses, and earlier this month, got the Prime Minister to launch two of its e-buses on trial for Sajha Yatayat.

"We would like to use our best technology, and share our knowhow to serve the Nepali market and the next generation, we see possibilities for e-mobility here," Liu Xueliang of BYD Asia-Pacific Auto Sales Division told *Nepali* *Times.* BYD hopes to establish a training school for electric vehicle engineers, and provide electric buses for airside conveyance at airports like Kathmandu, Bhairawa, Pokhara and elsewhere.

The main challenge for the spread of e-vehicles has been the lack of charging stations. KIA has installed a fast-charger in Kurintar halfway to Pokhara, and hopes to install 12 more around the country. Mahindra is also planning to build charging stations in Naubise, Mugling, Bharatpur and Pokhara for inter-city drivers.

"Actually most e2Os are used for city driving, so the lack of charging stations is just a psychological barrier. Still, we will need them when the longer range KUV starts selling here," says Agni's Cabinet Shrestha, who





KIA Soul EV Korea Range: 180km Price: Rs5.5 million

Mahindra e20 Plus India Range: 120km Price: Rs2.2 million



THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

NIU

China Range: 80km Price: Rs249,000

Bella

Italian

(Assembled in Nepal)

Range: 100km

Price: Rs130,000

PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT: President Bidya Devi Bhandari steps out of her electric BYD e6 limousine at Sital Niwas after an official function last week. The head of state using an EV has sent a positive message about renewable energy to the public at large.

E-xperiences



GG Driving my **REVA** is stressfree since the car is easy to drive, clean, I can park anywhere and there are no hassles about refuelling. Sudha Basnet, Physician



Before buying the KIA Soul, l was aware it was a city low ground I was more attracted by its

cost, air conditioning and no gear clutch. Being associated with research on air pollution in Kathmandu, I wanted to take the initiation towards

Arnico Panday Regional Programme Manager; Atmosphere

two-wheelers has been increased. and electric three-wheelers have

The 50 paisa per litre that consumers pay as Petroleum Tax has now grown into a kitty of a billion rupees, and could be invested in clean energy public Rs150 billion worth of petroleum the previous year. (See page 14-15) The country's strategy should be to reduce this fuel import bill by switching to EVs. Says Tuladhar: "I do not see electric cars taking over Nepal's roads any time soon. Petrol and diesel vehicles will be around but we must make a start with electric public transport. It is good for public health because it will reduce pollution, and for the national economy." 🔽

E-scoots

ArbindaTuladhar, 60, has been using electric scooters to commute 16km one way from Swayambhu to Kathmandu airport. Being an electrical engineer, he has struggled with many brands of battery-powered twowheelers but always found the torque inadequate.

Finally, he has found one with enough comph: the Japanese-made Terra Eco. "With this one, I don't have to stop half-way up the incline on my daily commute."

Terra is one of several two-wheeler brands in Nepal that offers many advantages over petrol-powered ones. It started selling in Nepal in 2014, and has sold more than 1,000 units.

Now, Chinese scooters brands like Bella and NIU have also opened showrooms and are tapping the greater awareness about the environment among Nepal's priceconscious vouth.

Says Shyam Sapkota of Terra Motors Nepal: "We did a survey last year and found out that out of 1,800 respondents, most were senior citizens who wanted comfort and ease, and youths who wanted affordability."

Arbinda Tuladhar, for instance, spends Rs250 on average on electricity and maintenance, compared to Rs4,500 a month if his scooter was petrol. The upfront cost of electric scooters also range from Rs100,000 to Rs260,000, which is similar to the prices of petrol scooters. the pricetag could come down further if the government cut the 10% customs duty and 13% VAT, and since battery prices have gone down worldwide, the price of e-scooters will be even lower in future.

The scooters provide up to 80-100km on a full charge, and can pull a pillion rider even on the uphill of White Gumba. They can be charged at home like mobile phones. Terra and Bella both plan to introduce more powerful scooters in 2019, as customers want fast charge and extended driving range. NIU is setting up a scooter charging station in Labim Mall.

Electric scooter drivers in the past did not need a driving license nor did they have to register their vehicles, but the government has now made both mandatory. This dampened demand, but now it has picked up again. Competition is also growing, and Terra now offers free lifetime maintenance, while NIU will exchange your petrol scooter and minus it from the price of a brand new one.

E-scooters are also spreading outside the Valley. Terra has dealers in Narayanghat, Butwal and Lahan, NIU has reached Pokhara, Itahari and Butwal, and Bella has 18 dealers across the country.



Terra Eco

Japan

Range: 80km

Price: Rs138,000



GG

car and it has clearance. But

plus points like low operating

being a part of the solution.

ICIMOD

been banned in some Tarai cities.

transport. Last year, Nepal imported products, nearly double of the value

program on infrastructure and market, and financial incentives. The Plan hopes to turn 20% of public buses into electric ones by

Continental agrees: "Till now, no

running out of charge, EV owners are smart and think ahead, but it is

our responsibility to add charging

The National Plan of Action

for Electric Mobility that the Prime

Minister unveiled this month has

three priorities: setting up a new

entity to promote EVs, a national

stations.'

one has ever complained about

The Nepal Electricity Authority is already putting up 20 charging stations around the country to encourage electric transportation. For Bhusan Tuladhar of Sajha Yatavat, this is a great leap: "The introduction of the Action Plan means the government has taken ownership of e-mobility promotion."

The other obstacle for e-mobility future is still taxes. Although customs duty on e-cars has been slashed to 10%, the tax on electric





As the global climate warms up and the world weans itself away from fossil fuels, there is suddenly a rush on battery-operated vehicles. In Nepal too, electric cars, scooters and public buses are gradually becoming popular and establishing strong roots in the market. Watch video about new electric car models coming to Nepal and how such vehicles can lift the economy

nepalitimes.com

GOKARNA JAZZ BAZAAR SATURDAY, 3rd NOVEMBER SHOW TIME - 2:30PM TO 10:00PM I VENUE - GOKARNA FOREST RESORT I PRICE - NRS 1400/-CNNTHIA ABRAHAM QUARTET FRANCE | DAVE FEUSI & THE GROOVE GANG SWITZERLAND | DACH AUSTRIA CNNTHIA ABRAHAM QUARTET FRANCE | NICK'S COUSINS USA | ADRIEN BRANDEIS QUINTET FRANCE CNNTHIA ABRAHAM DUARTET IVE NEPAL | RABIN LAL SHRESTHA NEDAL A ABRAHAM DUARTET TRUE BRAZIL I NICK'S COUSINS USA I ADRIEN BRANDEIS DUINTET FRANCI EDUARDO MENDONCA BRAZIL I NICK'S COUSINS USA I ADRIEN BRANDEIS DUINTET FRANCI UARDO MENDOROTIVE NEPAL I RABIN LAL SHRESTHA NEPAL GADENZA COLLECTIVE NARIA NEPAL/SPAIN I PROJECT O COLLECTIVE NARIA NEPAL/SPAIN | PROJECT SARANGI NEPAL 🗅 💿 🌕 www.jazzmandu.cor TICKETS AVAILABLE AT RESPECTIVE VENUES, JAZZ UPSTAIRS, LAZIMPAT | MY MART, THAMEL | KJC, JHAMSIKHEL C af <u>up</u> Times MERCANTILE dokc **OYAMAHA** room Ja77 The Himalayan

2 - 8 NOVEMBER 2018 #933

EVENTS

Kaag and Kukur tihar

On the first day of Tihar, crows are worshipped as they are believed to be messengers from the gods. The second day celebrates the loyalty of dogs with food offerings and garlands. 5 and 6 November

Gai tihar and Laxmi puja

On this day, cow, the symbol of wealth and motherhood in Hinduism, is worshipped with flower garlands and treats. Laxmi, the goddess of wealth, is also worshipped and people light oil lamps in her honour. In the evening after puja, girls visit their neighbours in groups singing and dancing in return for treats or money. 7 November

Goru tihar and Mha puja

Mainly oxen are worshipped on this day by offering food. It is a new year for Newar community so they celebrate by worshipping themselves. This day is for boys to sing and dance around the neighbourhood. 8 November



Bhai tika The final day of Tihar celebrates the love of brothers and sisters, as they share gifts, garlands and prayers with each other. 9 November



BFI Flare Film Fest

Screening of 9 LGBT short films along with pre/post discussions, with Blue Diamond Society and Photo Kathmandu. Films: We Love Moses, I am a Woman, Crush, Strings, Take Your Partners, Balcony, Jamie, Where We Are Now, and Chance.

4 November, 5:30pm onwards, British Council, Lainchour, 9851122197



Chinese artist Zhao Jianqiu displays his iconic ink-wash paintings of Nepal at the free space, as he continues with his effort to enhance trans-Himalayan cultural and art exchange. Free tea and talks. *Himalayan Light Culture House, Jhochhen, Basantapur, 9880324300*

They Shall Not Grow Old

Screening of They Shall Not Grow Old by Peter Jackson to mark 100 years of Armistice Day. A first of its kind, this film uses archival footage shot during World War I with digital colors.

11 November, 5pm, British Council, Lainchaur, (01) 4237700

Jazz Bazaar

A marathon of jazz and traditional Nepali folk and classical music performed by top musicians from Nepal and across the world. Outside food, beverages or pets not allowed, but free shuttle available. Anyone arriving by bicycle will receive a 25% discount on a ticket.

3 November, 2:30-10pm, Gokarna Forest Resort, Thali, Rs1,400, info@jazzmandu.org



Israeli Film Festival

The selected films tell stories of families, Jewish traditions, struggles and successes. Enjoy the cinemas and feel the colorful culture of Israel and Jews. 2-4 November, 3-6pm, QFX Chhaya Center, Thamel, For schedule: embassies.gov.il/ Kathmandu, (01) 4413419 / 9841413727

Jazzmandu Master Classes

An opportunity for music students and jazz enthusiasts to interact with visiting musicians, share their experience and stories and learn techniques and tips on various instruments and vocals.

5 November, 11am-1:30pm, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel , free entry (limited seating)

MUSIC



Jazz at the Temple House

An evening of Nepali classical music fused with Jazz in a rich and soulful ambience. International musicians share their musical ideas and energies with Nepal's top classical musicians and Cadenza Collective at the fabulous Kantipur Temple House. 5 November, 5:30-8:30pm, Kantipur Temple House, Jyatha, Thamel, Rs1,600

Jazzmandu Finale

The finale big jam! Musicians from different bands come together on one stage to light up the festivities creating a high-energy, improvised musical treat. 6 November, 5:30-10pm, Hotel Yak & Yeti, Durbar Marg, Rs1,400



Alley Jams

The valley will resound with the sounds of jazz! Different venues in Kathmandu will feature performances by various Jazzmandu artists. Take your pick and go where your favorite band will be jammin' 2 November, 6-9pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel/ Jazz Upstairs, Lazimpat/ House of Music, Thamel/ Manny's Eatery and Tapas Bar, Jawalakhel, Rs600, info@jazzmandu.org

Sounds of Latin Jazz

Experience the vibrant sounds of Brazilian rhythms and Latin jazz. 4 November, 7pm-9pm, Dhokaima Cafe, Patan, Rs1,600, info@jazzmandu.org



Le Sherpa

With a focus on seasonal and local vegetables and fruits, the chef creates seasonal menu that delights your appetite. Try fresh homemade ravioli with Dolpa morels. Maharajgunj, (01) 4428604

Dhokaima

Tender chicken breast marinated with herbs and grilled, served with spinach sauce, corns and salad on the side, otherwise known as Chicken Florentine, for dinner at the café. Patan Dhoka, (01) 5522113



Buingal

A multi-cuisine restaurant and bar, great for a casual get-together with relatives and friends. Vegeterian sekuwa is finger licking! Maitidevi, (01) 4421393

La Dolce Vita

Probably the best ristorante Italiano in Thamel, it comprises three floors with a restaurant, an espresso bar and a terrace. Pizza, pasta, steak, illy coffee and more. Thamel, (01) 4700612



Krishnarpan

GETAWAY



Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge

The resort with a Gold award from Travelife for sustainability, offers a model for the kind of tourism Nepal should be promoting: homegrown high-value eco-tourism that uses local products and showcases the best of Nepal's scenery, nature and culture. The weather is perfect for view of the world's 8,000m magnificent peaks. Kandani Danda, Pokhara, (01) 4720580

Gokarna Forest Resort

The resort is a numinous paradise, thick with century old trees rustling out natural tunes and great restaurants for fine dining. Golf anyone? Thali, (01) 4450002



Soaltee Westend Premier

The new hotel stands out for its elegant architecture and interior design. It is the first Leader in Energy and Environmental Design certified Silver Category hotel in Nepal, a designation awarded by the US Green Building Council for following strict energysaving and eco-friendly criteria. Nepalgunj, (081) 551145



The Pavilions

Luxury boutique eco resort with boutique villas, swimming pool, organic farm, restaurant lounge and bar. For refreshing morning walks, therapeutic and relaxing day-ins, authentic gastronomical experience and quiet nights. Chisapani, Pokhara, (061) 694379



Health at home is an organization which facilitates home based health care services. Health at home service promotes health care i.e., out of hospital setting to the clients. Being the first of its kind in the whole South Asia, Health at Home is here to cater to the needs of those who desire health care facilities to be delivered at their doorsteps.

Doctor on call Visit by qua generalist. ified and well experienced doc

Nursing Care 24 hours nursing care at home by qualified and experienced professionals.

Lab on Call

All kinds of lab re ated work by professional technician

Elderly Care Assistant

Fine and professional care by our qualified and experienced care giver

Appointment Management

Apointment management with required doc in different hospitals.

Physiotherapy on Call

Physio/Electro/Acupuncture therapy by qualified and experienced physiotherapist.

Travel Support for Sick Clients

Travel support for sick clients are provided by professional.

Equipment Rental & Drug Supply Drug supply at your doorstep and best quali medical equipments in rent.



Opens in Kathmandu on 2 November

This movie depicting the meteoric rise of the

famous musical band Oueen has generated

popularity. Its director Bryan Singer and stars

have the difficult task of staying true to the story,

appealing to its legions of fans, and creating a

work of art. Admirers of the British band and

its lead songwriter Freddie Mercury await this

movie eagerly.

Rami Malek, Lucy Boynton and Gwilym Lee

a lot of hype already, due to the band's

FEARLESS LIVES FOREVER

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY

The restaurant at Dwarika's has become a must-see for expats and tourists. Even locals who can eat dal bhat at home find its spread and service exquisite. The Dwarika's Hotel, Battisputali, (01) 4479488 / 4470770

Shangri-La Village Resort

2 nights and 3 days special package at the village resort. Welcome autumn with the Himalayas. Till 10 November, Gharipatan, Pokhara, Rs19,888 (couple), (061) 462222

AIR QUALITY INDEX KATHMANDU, 26 October - 1 November 301 - 500 201 - 300 151 - 200 101 - 150

50 - 100 0 - 50 PM2.5 THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY Oct 29 Ozone Oct 27 Oct 28 Oct 30

The Air Quality Index (AQI) has been consistently Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups, but saw a spike in ozone levels on Wednesday possibly due to an increase in motorcycle traffic. On Thursday morning, measurements at Phora Darbar for particles smaller than 2.5 microns were already in Unhealthy Red Band by 9am. Follow live AQI updates on nepalitimes.com and on https://np.usembassy.gov/embassy/air-quality-monitor/

NATION

Nepal's fake poor

Politicians, traders and teachers have wangled IDs meant to help the poorest people

The Poor Household Identity Cards Program was designed as a social safety net for the poorest in the most isolated parts of Nepal, but it has been hijacked by local movers and shakers.

The program uses 18 indicies like household fuel, access to education and social status to determine those who live below the poverty line. The pilot phase has been implemented in 25 districts including Bajura and Bajhang here in Province 7.

Past surveys showed 64% of people in Bajura living below the poverty line, but that has grown to 71%. Similarly, Bajhang, which had 57% poor in 2009, now has 63% living below the poverty line. Why is this happening if the national poverty rate has gone down from 46% to 24%?

The answer: the real number of poor has not grown, it is just that the well-off have gotten their names on the list to claim benefits. Households earning less than Rs19,600 a year fall under Category A extreme poverty. Those with less than Rs31,600 fall into the Category B, and Category C covers those who earn less than Rs40,000 a year.

Even people who earned Rs25,000 a month and with property in the cities got themselves into the Category A list of the poorest. When asked, all of them said they have no idea who put them there. Most of the real poor are not listed, and even if they are, they fall in Category B or C.

Janak Raj Giri is a well-known



Bajura lawmaker from the NC, and even served as assistant minister for land reform in the Deuba government in 2002. His ID number in the poorest category is 266240. Giri says he has no idea how his name got there: "My mother was at home during the data collection, I was away. I do not know anything."

Rajit Bika is a sharecropper in Giri's farm, but is not in the list or poor. Bika is a member of Haliya comunity of former slaves.

Ajay Bahadur Malla's ID number is 269556. Far from being poor, he has served as UML District DDC member twice. Last year, he stood for the chair of Himali Rural Municipality, but was defeated and now runs a welding workshop and a transport company in Martadi. He also claimed he had no idea how he came to be classified as poor.

Narabir Kami is the Îather of Rupchandra Biswakarma, a physician who heads the Bajura District Health Office. His name is listed in Category B (ID Number 216020). When asked, Biswakarma said, "I do not know how my father's name got there. If true, I will have it removed." It is the same story with accountant Khambir Buda, health coordinator Bhakta Kaila, Brij Bahadur Bam the father of school principal Prakash Bahadur Bam, and Ratna Bahadur Malla, the father of another teacher Dev Kumari.

The list of well off people on the poverty list is a long one. The government prepared it after a survey and issued ID cards for those categorised as poor. Though the full benefits have not been announced, up to Rs50,000 will be provided for medical expenses and a Rs25,000 insurance to poor households with five members. It will pay 100% insurance premium for Category A, 75% for Category B and 50% of the fee for Category C poor.

It has been ten years since the government banned bonded laborers, and although 1,500 Haliyas have been identified in Bajura, they have not been resettled and have received no compensation. Many still plough the fields of their former masters, and are not in the list of poor. Accountant Khambir Budha has got himself registered as a Category C poor, but Birkha Bhiyal, who works in his farm is not included.

The situation in neighbouring Bajhang is no different. When he heard that his neighbours Dhan Bahadur Sunar and Pyaru Sunar were among the Category C poor, Gagan Badi was surprised because they are his employers.

"How can this happen? They are landowners, since when were they poor? Maybe they paid off people to be declared poor," said Gagan Badi, visibly irate.

The Badi community in Bajhang are often victims of loan sharks who charge exorbitant interest, doctor documents and forge signatures. Yet, they are now 'poor', while the farmers they exploit are not on the list. In fact, four landless Badi families who beg on the streets are not in the list.

The abuse of the poverty list is widespread in both districts. Rana Bahadur Kathayat heads the Bajhang District Post Office, owns a four-storey house in Chainpur, has his own vehicle and property. But he is listed as Category C poor.

"I don't understand on what basis they collected the data," says Municipality chair Akkal Dhami, "the rich people are listed as poor while the poor are not listed."

Principal Wakil Bahadur Singh of Bannichaur School is the richest man in the village. He owns houses in Mahendranagar and Dhangadi and property in Kathmandu, Kanchanpur and Bajhang. He is Category A.

It became so embarrassing that Bungal Municpality has stopped the distribution of IDs for the poor. "All the rich people from here have been enlisted as Category A, it is a travesty," says Mayor Dhan Bahadur Bista.

Other local bodies in Bajhang have also held back ID distribution. Barka Rokaya, Chair of Khaptad Chhanna Municipality said IDs will be handed out only after a through verification of the beneficiaries. Says Govind Malla of Himali Municipality of Bajura district: "The list has excluded the poor people. It is dominated by well-off people. We will correct the list."

Additional reporting by Basant Pratap Singh in Bajhang for Centre for Investigative Journalism-Nepal.

e verito

Nimendra Shahi in Bajura





Wishing you a very Happy Festive Season! The Agni Family



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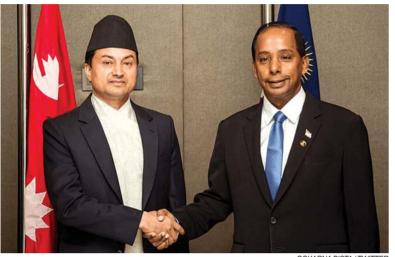
IN HIL

SUPRO

HAPPENINGS



WELCOME TO QATAR: President Bidya Devi Bhandari is received by the Qatar Minister of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs H E Issa bin Saad Al Jafali Al Nuaimi at Doha Airport on Monday as she arrived on a four-day visit.



GOKARNA BISTA / TWITTER

SELAMAT DATANG: Labour Minister Gokarna Bista and Malaysian Minister for Human Resource M Kulasegaran sign a government-to-government labour pact in Kathmandu on Monday that will protect Nepali contract workers.



MEET AND GREET: Newly appointed Ambassador of the United States Randy Berry meets Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali in Singha Darbar on Sunday.





They Shall Not Grow Old

Young and confident faces smile into the camera, eager to enlist in a war that has just broken out after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914. It is hard to believe that they will soon be cannon fodder in the trenches of Flanders Field.

Director Peter Jackson has put together a documentary of rare clips from the Imperial War Museum and the BBC archives to mark the centennial of the Armistice on 11 November 1918. The movie camera had just been developed then, and even carrying the equipment to the front to shoot these frames must have been an act of heroism. And 100 years later, with the propaganda value of the film peeled off, the grainy footage in *They Shall* Not Grow Old bear witness to the hardships, courage and carnage, and the utter senselessness of the bloodshed.

Jackson whittled down 600 hours of testimonies, over 100 hours of clips, and many contemporary posters to this 99 minute film, parts of which are digitally enhanced and coloured. For those who are fans of Jackson's epic battle scenes in *Lord of the Rings*, this film offers something different -- war's grim reality.

We see the moments just before soldiers go 'over the top', leaping into deadly fire from German machine gun positions. Time loses its meaning. "It was the longest and shortest moments of my life," says one warrior. We see the moments of anxiety in the faces of men conscripted from normal civilian lives: "I learnt how to use a gun, but would I be able to kill a man if I had to?" Jackson has chosen to be nuanced, even as he retains his penchant for the visually grotesque. The wounded develop gangrene when rain turns trenches into mud pools. Their bodies are infested with lice. There is the anxiety of killing and dying as smiling faces fade into images of fresh corpses and decomposing bodies. This is unsanitised war, a film not for the fainthearted.

The storytelling is immersive, we are taken back a century right into the frontlines. Jackson combines hundreds of voices which give a constant commentary. A soldier talks of how impossible it is to have even a moment of respite from the constant gunfire and explosions. Viewers don't get much respite either.

Jackson even manages to find some humour and humanity amidst the carnage, we see not only the terror but also friendship as soldiers bond over tea, cigarettes, and gambling. The open toilets where men did not cover up because "there were no women". We get glimpses of wagons and war horses, the novelty of mechanised tanks.

Soldiers start to sympathise with the German boys just like them on the other side, who are also missing their families. United by common misery, towards the end they "got on very well together". The soldiers on both sides were past caring who won as long as they got to go home alive. When a soldier says that the Armistice was "the flattest moment in my life", we realise that real warfare is very different from whipped up patriotism. It is just about men who they do not fit in anymore. 'Never again', many said after World War I, and it is to remember not to forget the brutal reality of war, and not make glorified assumptions about it, that documentaries like these are important. Jackson's work is dedicated to his grandfather who served in the war.

Some 200,000 Gurkhas fought in World War I in Gallipoli, Mesopotamia and the Western Front. One in ten did not return home to Nepal, and 2,000 were decorated for bravery in battle. But there is no trace of Gurkhas in this film, although we catch a brief glimpse of some marching Sikhs. The sacrifice of the Gurkhas and of the colonial armies is once more air-brushed, just as it is in the Imperial War Museum in London. This is about what white men went through while fighting other white men, not about the brown boys from Nepal who helped them.

It has taken 100 years to produce a film that at least begins to look at the folly of the war, and to wipe away the distinction between victors and the vanquished. How much longer will it take for film makers to shed their Euro-centrism and document the sacrifices of tens of thousands of brave young men from Nepal and India who laid down their lives for a king and country not their own?

Popular culture has a great impact in shaping collective memory. Jackson's documentary could have been a milestone to set history right, but it is an opportunity missed and the exclusion rankles. Sewa Bhattarai

PRAVEEN CHETTRI

WE ARE ALL SHAHIDUL: Nepali photographers trained by detained Bangladesh photographer Shahidul Alam don masks with his face as they receive the Photo Kathmandu Award on his behalf. Alam has been jailed by the Bangladesh government.

want to finish the job.

But the war is not over even after it is over. The men are unemployed and unwanted back home. No one wants to talk about the Great War, no one understands what they went through. Like veterans before and after, they find

They Shall Not Grow Old Screening: British Council, Lainchaur 5:00 PM Sunday, 11 November







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Decarbonise now

Anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions pose an existential threat to the planet -- and to Nepal

'he conclusion of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C could not have been more blunt: human-induced global warming poses an existential threat to the planet. And to Nepal.

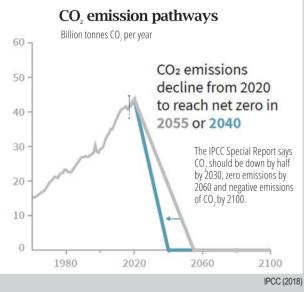
To avert this, the report has called for pathways that look unachievable. The US government has already indicated it will withdraw from the 2015 Paris Agreement that agreed on measures to limit worldwide average temperatures rise to 1.5-2°C by 2100. Developing countries like India and China



are now the biggest producers of greenhouse gases. Actions that could help climate change risk have been

slow. Part of the reason is socio-cultural. Citizens in developing countries feel they were not responsible for the problem, the impact may be felt at some point in the future, so why worry? There is a prevalent view that weather extremes have always been with us, people are used to coping with them, and have carried on with their lives. Some feel human ingenuity will prevail, and there will be a technological solution.

Leaders of developing and least developed countries that suffer the worst consequences of global warming argue that their priority is economic



development, and they can invest in clean energy later when they can afford it.

The net global CO₂ emission pathways in the IPCC Special Report requires the curve to come sharply down after 2020 and reach zero emission by 2040 or 2050 (see graph). How will this happen? To answer this, we have to first ask how we got here in the first place.

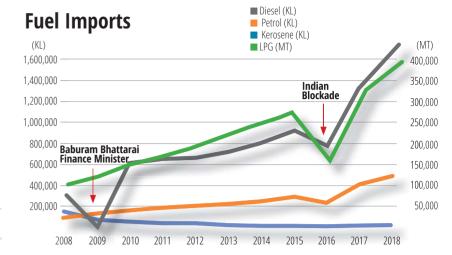
Climate change is a consequence of the global economic order of the past two centuries that was powered by burning fossil fuels. It has brought benefits, but also given the world inequality, dependence, degradation of nature, and nationalistic populism. In the US that is a partisan divide between climate change believers and deniers. Liberal democracy is faltering in Europe.

In the past six decades, many developing countries including Nepal sought foreign aid to lift living standards, but the strategy did not bring about structural changes that would have helped ensure social welfare and environmental protection. The economic model was western-inspired wasteful consumerism. In Nepal, this led to social and political movements, and country suffered three border blockades, a decade-long war, five constitutions, a palace massacre, and the replacement of a monarchy with a federalised republican order. Nepal's current socio-politics shows signs of regression, while the economy is built on ecologically-destructive extractive practices.

Most solutions are externally imposed, and have only worked when coproduced with communities. Past investments have been piecemeal and have not yielded the desired systemic impact. Similar inertia prevails in almost all countries: the status guo is too comfortable, and the ruling classes benefit from business as usual. Added to that is the populism of deniers. Given the prevailing dogma in both the rich and poor countries, it is unlikely that carbon curve will become less steep as hoped for in the IPCC Report. Nepal's Prime Minister K P Oli, while launching the fist electric buses in Kathmandu last week, announced a National Action Plan for Electric Mobility under which 20% of public transport will be battery operated by 2020. This proposition, theoretically, can offset some emission and fuel cost, but without clear thought-through investment strategy, petroleum import will not fall. Since 2000, import of petroleum products has increased by more than three times. Weaning the economy towards renewables needs statesmanship and vision – both of which our rulers lack. Imported electric vehicles will not build backward linkages in the economy, and the trade deficit will continue to grow. Without a fundamental reorientation of its economy towards a more self-reliant clean energy supply, and a stronger commitment to protecting ecosystems, Nepal will not meet decarbonisation targets. Globally, bringing carbon emissions to zero in the next 30 years will need incentives on investments globally and within individual countries which promote social equity, protect nature, improve governance and prioritise a low carbon lifestyle. 💟

From a fossil past to an

Nepal's addiction to petroleum is more an economic problem than an ecological one



Om Astha Rai

resident Bidya Devi Bhandari will be leading the Nepali delegation at the Climate Summit (CoP24) in Poland next month, and environmental activists are lobbying with the Nepal

government to get her to make a far-reaching policy statement on renewable energy.

They say Nepal's commitment of turning 20% public vehicles into battery-operated ones by 2020



PIPE DREAM: Part of a 69km petroleum pipeline connecting Amlekhganj in Nepal to an oil refinery in India, under construction in Patlaiya. The pipline is proof to many that the Nepal government has no intention of switching to renewable energy any time soon.



Vehicle Imports Registered vehicles

400,000

350,000

Peak Power

Electricity Supply and Demand (MW)

The National Plan of Action

envisages a separate unit at the Ministry of Environment for the promotion of electric transport, but many are skeptical about it, given Nepal's poor track record

the President can announce in Katowice more meaningful steps towards electric mobility. In a symbolic move to end Nepal's fossil fuel addiction, President Bhandari is already riding an electric car (see page

is not ambitious enough, and

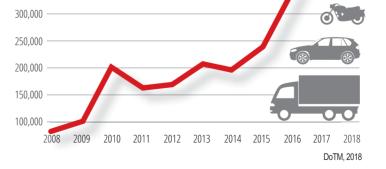
8-9) but activists say that is not enough. She needs to create political momentum by getting her government to announce a cut-off date for Nepal to turn all public vehicles into electric ones

Manjeet Dhakal, adviser to the Least Developed Countries (LDC) support group at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), says: "Nepal can move towards electric mobility if its head of the state announces a goal to this effect at the international climate change conference in Poland."

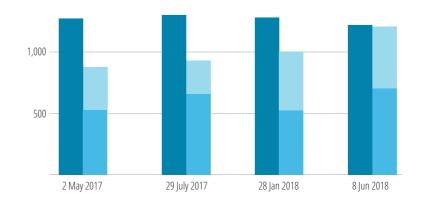
Last week, Prime Minister KP Oli flagged off Nepal's first five electric buses in Kathmandu, and unveiled the country's first National Plan of Action for Electric Mobility.

Bhushan Tuladhar of Sajha Yatayat, the public transportation company that got the first lot of electric buses on loan from the Lumbini Development Trust for Kathmandu routes, says: "Public transport is directly related to public health, and it is also linked to Nepal's economic well-being. This can be the beginning of a new era in clean transportation."

Ajaya Dixit is Executive Director of Kathmandu based ISET-Nepal. His monthly column Climate for Change in Nepali Times deals with the impact of global warming in Nepal.



Peak Demand Total Nepal Supply Import from India



in implementing commitments.

A recent report by Nepal Climate Action Network South Asia (N-CANSA) says Nepal is actually moving in a reverse, non-renewable direction despite many past policies, strategies and international obligations to lower its dependency on fossil fuels – the biggest source of CO₂ emissions.

Nepal's Climate Change Policy 2011 and the Environment-friendly Vehicle and Transport Policy 2014 aimed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by steadily reducing imports of petrol, diesel and LPG. In 2016, Nepal passed its National Determined Contributions (NDC) aiming to turn 20% public vehicles into battery-operated ones.

But since then, the country's addiction to fossil fuel has only deepened. All the policies and strategies did not make a dent on imports. In 1993/94, the year Nepal ratified the UNFCC, Nepal's total import of petroleum products was worth only Rs5 billion. By 2008, it had grown to nearly Rs40 billion, and in

electric future

the past ten years it has more than tripled to an annual Rs150 billion. (See graphs)

The reason is the explosive growth in the number of fossil fuel vehicles from only 84,000 ten years ago to 438,000 today. Most of the increase was during the tenure of Maoist finance minister Baburam Bhatttarai in 2008-9. Part of the reason for the growth in petroleum imports was also the corruption-driven artificial shortage of electricity which saw a proliferation of diesel generators. Import of diesel grew five times in the past ten years.

For every Rs100 earned from its exports, Nepal spends Rs169 just to import petroleum from India. Nepal is now also importing half of its electricity need from coal-fired thermal plants in India. Although it went down slightly with monsoon supply and new hydro powerplants coming on stream, Nepal imported 424MW of electricity from India this summer, which was about 35% of peak demand.

Says Durga Upadhyay, a coauthor of the CANSA report: "If it was not for remittances, our foreign currency earnings from exports would not even pay for petroleum imports."

Despite policies and symbolic moves to reduce petroleum imports, Nepal's consumption is growing as the road network spreads and vehicle imports increase. The government's plans to build a 36km cross-border petroleum pipeline from India and storage stockpiles in each Province indicates that there is no end in sight to the country's fossil fuel addiction.

Manjeet Dhakal says these moves indicate that Nepal's policymakers believe the cost of ending the dependence on petroleum is too high. "But that is an outdated concept," he says, STATE OF CLIMATE ACTION IN NEPAL:

"it is now possible to drive a country's economy without using fossil fuels. PM Oli should learn from Costa Rica, a country he visited recently.'

Some argue that Nepal's economy is so petroleum dependent that it cannot switch suddenly to renewable without assistance for the conversion of cars, and to add new hydropower plants. Nepal's per capita carbon footprint is negligible, they add, so whether or not Nepal goes for electric mobility is not going to save the planet.

However, former energy minister Dipak Gyawali says: "The volume of carbon emitted by Nepal might be small, but the rate at which we are increasing it is even higher than the industrialised West."

Gyawali says Nepal should immediately declare a peak emission year, pass a policy to gradually replace all government vehicles with electric ones and impose a tax on fuel that can be used to subsidise electric vehicles.

Nepal needs to do this more importantly to reduce its balance of payment deficit, save the country from bankruptcy, and reduce its political dependence on India, than to save the world from global warming. 💟 Go online to download full CANSA Report.

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A Comment

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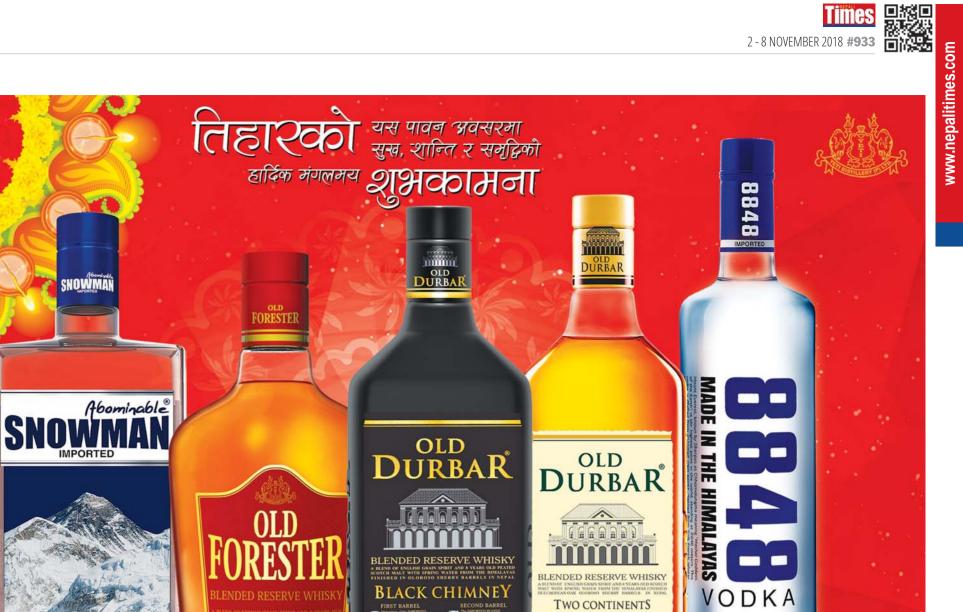
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