

# NEPALI Times

#940 28 December 2018 - 3 January 2019 18 pages Rs 50

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2019

Introducing Bedroom Sets for Rs. 98,000/- + VAT  
(INCLUDES 5FT BED, WARDROBE, DRESSER, STOOL AND NIGHTSTAND)



Bedroom



Living



Dining



Furniture Land Store

www.furnitureland.com.np

Showrooms Tripureswor: 4224797 | Maitighar: 4266372 | Maharajung: 4016277 | Pokhara: 61-536596

**LAVAZZA**  
ITALY'S FAVOURITE COFFEE

Oskar Bar & Grill - Lazimpat  
Embassy Restaurant - Lazimpat  
lavazza@ssinepal.com

CREATE YOUR "OWN" ENVIRONMENT

**Divine Wines**

Divine Wine  
4L

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

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

**ISO/IEC 27001**

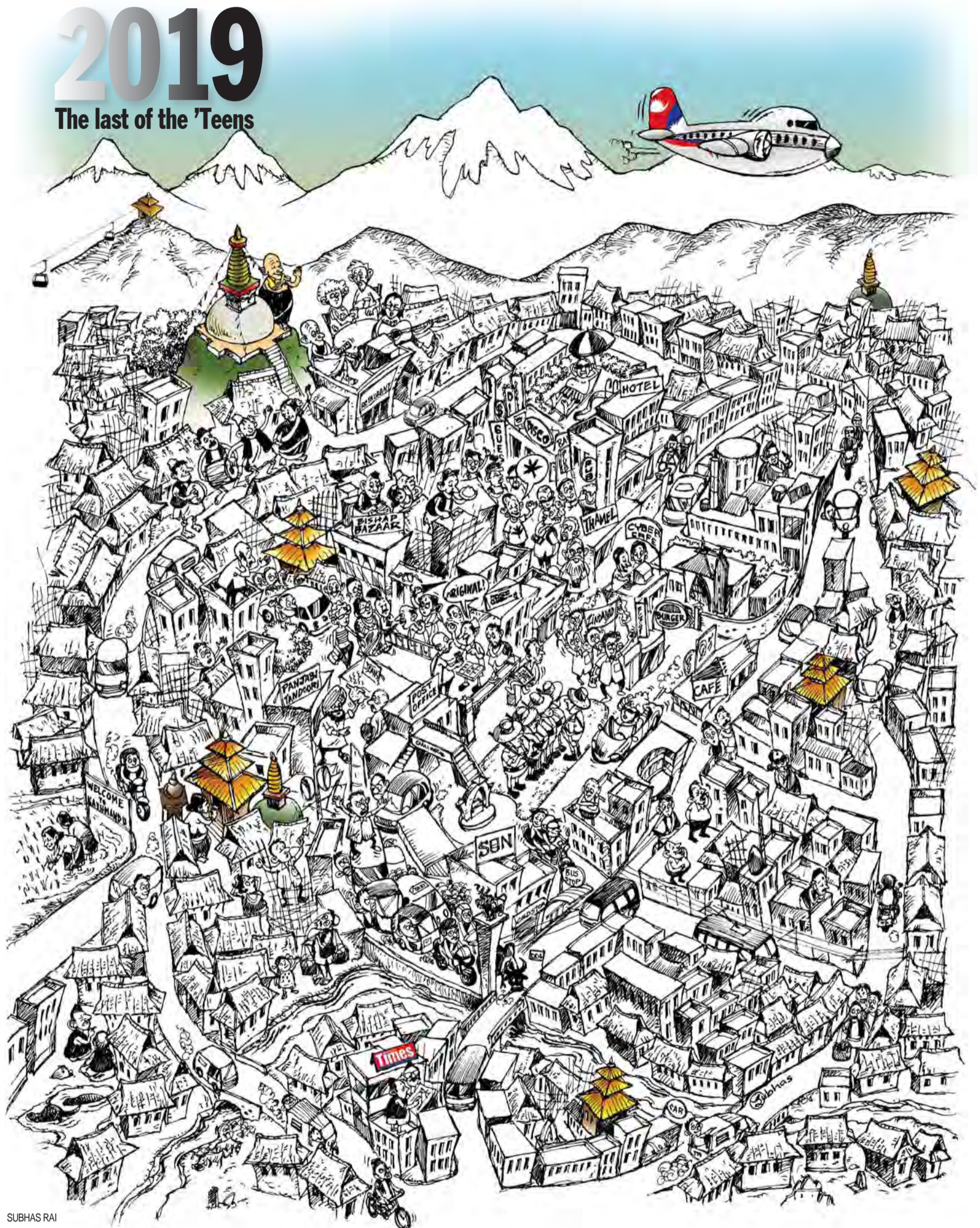
We facilitate you in implementing and maintaining your Information Security Management System

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

**greentick**  
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

**TRANQUILITY SPA**  
"Balancing Body, Mind and Spirit"

☎ 01-4420424  
www.tranquilityspa.com.np



SUBHAS RAI



## Book now, pay later

Take advantage of our flexible payment options by booking your next journey online at [qatarairways.com](http://qatarairways.com) and paying for your flight in person within 24 hours of making your reservation.\*

Simply choose your preferred form of payment and then proceed to make your purchase at our Qatar Airways sales office.

✉ [qatarairways.com](http://qatarairways.com) ☎ Call +977 01 4440467

📍 Contact our Qatar Airways sales office or your preferred travel agency

\*Terms and conditions apply; please review at the time of booking.

**QATAR**  
AIRWAYS القطرية

GOING PLACES TOGETHER

oneworld

# A YEAR WASTED

After ten years of blood and 12 years of trying to come to terms with why it was shed, Nepalis had great hopes for 2018.

Last year this time, there was a sense of achievement and optimism. The first elections for three levels of government under the new Federal Constitution had been held. The UML Maoist alliance swept the elections, and the expected unification of the two parties was supposed to mark the end of unstable coalition politics, and finally deliver development. We had a straight-shooting can-do prime minister, who despite failing health, had shown gumption and promise during campaigning.

One year later, much of the euphoria has evaporated. The past year has been one of missed opportunities, miscues, inaction and blatant blunders. Two months after the election results became clear, the lameduck Nepali Congress prime minister finally stepped down and the two communist alpha males K P Oli and Pushpa Kamal Dahal decided to co-chair their united party, and rotate the prime ministership.

Formal party unification took another month. Still, there was hope that Oli would hit the ground running, even if it was through showcase development, cleaning up the roads of the capital and launching major projects.

Alas. It may have been unrealistic of us to expect the same septuagenarians from the same parties to suddenly govern with accountability and efficiency. The Nepali people did not expect much, so they were not surprised to see no improvement in their lives. The roads were still dug up, the bus syndicates that Home Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa promised to eradicate were still around, tanker operators were still striking for the right to steal oil, the culprits who absconded with 33 kg of smuggled gold were never caught, nor those responsible for the rape-murder of Nirmala Panta in Kanchanpur.

**We hoped to be able to wish our readers a happy new year 2019. But Nepal and Nepalis will probably just muddle through another 52 weeks.**

There were some bright spots, and these were mostly in sectors led by efficient and relatively young former UML ministers in the Cabinet like Rabinendra Adhikari (Tourism), Gokarna Bista (Labour) or Yubraj Khatriwada (Finance). But even they are finding it difficult within their ministries to get the wheels of government to turn.

The rent-seeking state is so habituated to extortion and extraction that Bista has run into a wall in implementing his ground-breaking accord with the new regime in Malaysia to remove exploitation and costs for Nepali migrant workers. Adhikari, despite all his efforts, cannot go beyond cosmetic improvements at Kathmandu airport. Khatriwada's valiant efforts at fiscal discipline and capital spending are not yielding results, and this has resulted in a liquidity crisis that threatens the banking sector (*See page 6*).

If that is how honest politicians are prevented from delivering, one can imagine what is happening in the ones led by corrupt and ruthless ministers lining their pockets as if there was no tomorrow. The sordid list of impunity and abuse of authority is long and makes for thoroughly depressing reading every morning: ambassadors on the take from traffickers, justices who hurriedly clear criminals ahead of their imminent retirement,

absconding multiple-murderers appearing on stage with the CDO and police, and a ministerial secretary demanding a Rs250 million bribe to release funds for the much-delayed Melamchi water project.

What is worse is that the public is now so cynical about officials plundering the state that these investigative reports do not even raise eyebrows anymore. Media exposes cause a brief flutter before society shrugs, and moves on.

We hoped to be able to wish our readers a happy new year 2019. But Nepal and Nepalis will probably just muddle through another 52 weeks.

## 2018 COVER IMAGES



### ONLINE PACKAGES



#### UNDER BUDDHA'S GAZE

Boudhanath has always been sacred to Nepal's Buddhists, whether Newars of the Valley, Tibetan Buddhists from the mountains, or from China. Go online to watch video about Boudha, and how the heritage site combines a lively cosmopolitan ambience with the original sanctity and tranquility.

Story: pages 8-9



#### THE CHINESE ARE COMING

Watch video of how Justin Zhao and Liang Ye are preparing for the huge influx of Chinese tourists in 2020 Visit Nepal Year by educating them about the art, culture and architecture of the Himalayan nation. Story: page 7

#### TULSI GIRI

He was always right ('Tulsi Giri, 93', Editorial, #939). Some may call him arrogant, but the fact is people in rural areas still do not have basic understanding of what it means to elect someone. They just want honest and good governance.

Jay

■ Giri had the foresight of a true political leader. Democracy has indeed not worked the way people had expected.

Prakash Moktan

#### AN INSPIRATION

Manisha is a remarkable inspiration to all those suffering, and gives hope ('Manisha Koirala's new life', Rupa Joshi, #939). I just wish this book was out years ago.

Ajay Paul Patel

■ Well spoken Manisha, we get to see the human side of a charming actress.

Dev Shetty

■ Well said. Your sincere words can encourage people.

Sufian Ibn David

■ Beautiful and inspiring profile.

Indira Ranamagar

■ Looking forward to reading #Healed.

Shikha Prasai

#### INCREDIBLE STORY!

What a heart-warming story about the incredible people to people bonds between Nepal and the US ('Aama's village, Broughton Coburn, #938')! Thank you Nepali Times team for publishing this powerful story of love & respect.

US Embassy Nepal

■ Aama's village of Kolma in 1974 and now is a fascinating story that captures changes in the economy, and how migration and remittances have transformed the socio-economic and political landscape.

Chandan Sapkota

■ Best thing in the Internet today. Had tears in my eyes.

Kalyan Nemkul

### WHAT'S TRENDING



#### Manisha Koirala's new life

by Rupa Joshi

Nepali Bollywood star Manisha Koirala battled cancer and won, and since then has written a deeply personal story of her struggle against the disease. Visit nepalitimes.com to read review and watch video on Nepali Times Studio.

**Most reached and shared on Facebook**

**Most popular on Twitter**

**Most visited online page**

#### Tulsi Giri, 93

Editorial

The passing of Tulsi Giri marked the end of an era in Nepal's recent political history. Many fans and critics of Giri wrote to us about his conviction that Western-style democracy did not suit Nepal. Go online to join the discussion.

**Most commented**

### QUOTE TWEETS

**Nepali Times @nepalitimes**  
EDITORIAL  
The monarchy and democracy were never compatible in Nepal, but it must be said that a decade after Nepal abolished the monarchy, and under a new federal republican constitution, many Nepalis feel things have not got any better.

**Dipak Gyawali @dipak\_gyawali**  
No!! Nepal has incompetent leaders masquerading as visionaries of revolutionary stripes! Authoritarianism result when such hollowness gets hold of power.

**Db Chhetri @DbChhetri17**  
Yes, it indeed is an irony. In fact the people have started drawing comparison between the two forms of rule and more or less seem to prefer the monarchical system over the other.

**pigreen @pigreen1**  
That's because Nepal has an authoritarian but incompetent government and is mired down in irrelevant political struggles and re-structuring

**abhijit @basnetabhijit**  
But democracy is far better than one person rule

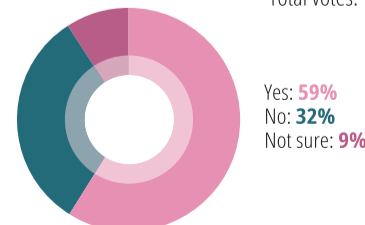
**Nepali Times @nepalitimes**  
Two new books, one by a retired British Army General Sam Cowan and another by a pioneer Nepali nature conservationist Hemanta Mishra look at the history of Nepal's security and conservation, and overlap in Khampa raid on Tibet.

**manohar budhathoki @drmanohar04**  
Just ordered my copy on amazon. Looking forward to reading this book.

**Times** Weekly Internet Poll #940

Q. Are you reading less books because of facebook?

Total votes: 176



Weekly Internet Poll #941  
To vote go to: [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com)

Q. How will Nepal fare in 2019?





TURKISH  
AIRLINES

# FLY MORE

WITH THE AIRLINE THAT FLIES TO  
MORE COUNTRIES THAN ANY OTHER

FARES STARTING FROM  
**NPR 31000**  
TAXES NOT INCLUDED

EXCLUSIVE ONE WAY AND RETURN FARES TO SELECTED TURKISH AIRLINES DESTINATIONS

CAIRO	JOHANNESBURG	BAKU	TEL AVIV
BRUSSELS	PARIS	MUNICH	FRANKFURT
MILAN	ROME	ZURICH	GENEVA
AMSTERDAM	MADRID	WARSAW	PRAGUE

Sales Period: UNTIL 31JAN19

Travel Period: 01DEC18-28FEB19

TURKISH AIRLINES INC  
EAST WING 1ST FLOOR,  
HITISADAN 495 NARAYAN HITIPATH  
KATHMANDU NEPAL  
01-4438363/4438436/KTMSALES@THY.COM

**TURKISHAIRLINES.COM**

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER



# Nepal, Inc in 2019

Outmigration will only stop if the government starts behaving less like a tax collector, and more as an investor

During a survey of the Manaslu Trail in northern Gorkha three decades ago, the noted botanist Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha and I talked as we walked about developing such remote regions of Nepal.



**1/2 FULL**  
Anil Chitrakar

One day, as we rested near a stone spout, I came up with a somewhat provocative thought that it was futile to try to come up with an economic development model based on service delivery to such small populations in remote areas.

“Would it not make economic sense to just take all the people and settle them outside the Ring Road in Kathmandu?” I asked.

The good doctor is known for his understated wisdom, and answered: “If we do what you suggest, some day there will be Nepalis, but there may be no Nepal.”

These remote areas of Nepal continue to receive services, allowances and projects from the Nepali state at enormous expense. Donors pour money into these regions, and the cost of projects is high because of their isolation.

The hope that the people



SEBASTIAN WOLLIGANDT

there will stay in their villages and prosper is not a new one. In the Panchayat days, kings went on winter tours to these areas to be ‘with the people’. The royal entourage included the entire government machinery that travelled with the king, and unfortunately, left when he left.

Last week, I moved upcountry from Biratnagar to Ilam and Phidim with New Zealand-trained

environmentalist Shailendra Thakali. The roads are good, there is access to government services, technical schools and banks have opened up. Entrepreneurs are looking to strike it rich through tourism, high value commodities, agriculture, and a range of energy projects.

Yet, the young are leaving in droves, and wealth also is moving out as soon as it is created. Men and

women are moving to the cities, and many from these parts were in Tundikhel in Kathmandu last week to celebrate Udhauli. Their villages back home are empty.

How can we ensure that the hills will stay alive with the sound of music? Historically humans have always sought greener pastures, so this is nothing unusual. Yet, under Nepal’s new federal map, we have seven provinces and 753 local governments – and they have been allocated more resources than ever before in the country’s history.

The government is fond of telling us how much more revenue

it has raised, but it seems to be unable to spend it. And if they do, much of its effectiveness is questionable. The bigger question is will this be enough to keep Nepalis in the remoter regions of Nepal?

What is the central purpose of such spending? And how effective is it when delivery is still through beaurocrats, doctors, engineers and teachers who do not really want to go there? Federal Nepal could be the answer, but not in the hands of half-hearted people with a letter of appointment from Singha Durbar.

As we drove along the winding roads above the Tamor River, Thakali showed me the picture of a village north of Pokhara with one of the most stunning sceneries in the world. It was empty. His clan spent a lot of money for the upkeep of their deserted villages. There is money for caretakers, the expenses of keeping the livestock. All because it was emotionally not justifiable to sell off ancestral homes and property.

Like many Nepalis, Shailendra Thakali has a plan: high-end tourism, energy project, and cultivating high value natural commodities for export. But for this to happen the government has to invest, it cannot just be a tax collector.

Let us hope that in 2019, all three levels of elected government are more accountable to every Nepali and start behaving like a shareholder of Nepal, Inc. 🇳🇵

**Anil Chitrakar** is President of Siddharthinc.

www.yetiairlines.com

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year!

2019

Like us on:

[www.facebook.com/yetiairlines](#)
[www.twitter.com/FlyYeti](#)
[www.youtube.com/FlyYetiAirlines](#)

prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS

**Turkish and IndiGo**

Turkish Airlines and India's largest domestic budget carrier IndiGo signed a codeshare and mutual cooperation agreement enabling both airlines to

provide more flexibility and choice to customers. Turkish Airlines will now be able to offer new destinations in India through IndiGo, and IndiGo passengers can fly to Europe and US through Turkish.

**Nissan Winter Offer**

Pioneer Moto Corp, the authroised distributor of Nissan four-wheelers in Nepal, has introduced a Winter Fest Offer for all ranges of Nissan four wheeler cars such as

Nissan X-Trail, Terrano, Navara, Sunny and Micra Active.

Prospective buyers will receive discounts of upto Rs500,000. The scheme extends other offers such as 2 years health insurance for nearest family members, three years of warranty and free servicing for three years.

**Chhaya Centre**

Chhaya Center has opened a new 15-floor complex in the tourist hub of Thamel with

three multiplex theatres, an assortment of shops, airline offices, travel agencies, banquet and seminar halls, restaurants, clubs and bank branches.

**Qatar to Da Nang**

Qatar Airways group CEO Akbar Al Baker celebrated the airlines' inaugural flight to

Da Nang in Vietnam recently. This marks the airlines' third destination in Vietnam and the flights will be operated four times a week to and from Doha by Boeing B787 Dreamliners.



HAVE BOLD TASTE  
AND INTENSE CHARACTER

KEEP WALKING



Global Trading Concern (P) Ltd.

PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

# Banking on a course correction in 2019

A slippery slope is what banks have been treading on in the last few weeks by engaging in a price war on deposits. One can understand the soup they are in. Higher interest rates do not bring in significant new deposits, yet they are compelled to raise the rates to retain what they have.



**COMMENT**  
Suman Joshi

They will also be nervous about upcoming outflow from the banking system towards mid-January when first tranche of annual corporate income tax is due for payment. Depositors are happy for now but imagine the plight of businesses dependent on bank debt.

How long will the crunch last? There will be some relief once the government releases payments to vendors and suppliers of various goods, services and development work normally bundled toward latter half of a financial year. But judging by how banks behaved in the last three years, there is no guarantee the crunch will not resurface next October.

Band aid solutions will not work anymore. A strong medication must now be administered. It will be painful but, in many ways, banks brought it upon themselves. There are fundamental issues with our economy and banking sector that have direct relationships with monetary equilibrium.



BHANU BHATTARAI

Here are examples of initiatives banks may consider without any support or concessions from the government or the central bank:

**Ration credit.** Banks resorted to aggressive credit expansion following mandatory increase in paid up capital and in anticipation of rapid economic growth post installation of a stable government. But their reading of monetary environment proved to be wrong again. Deposit mobilization has

not kept pace nor has it aligned with growth in loan books. The only way forward is to direct credit flow solely into areas that will help productivity until the deposit-loan growth mismatch is corrected. The financial system is banking-heavy as alternatives like private equity and venture capital are emerging.

**Expansion of formal economy.** There is no denying that the Nepali economy is growing, albeit driven mostly by private sector. Private wealth has multiplied in value and people are generally better off than they were. Whilst income disparity may have widened, there are reasons to believe that anticipated government spending on infrastructure and creation of enabling environment will help us continue to grow in the medium term. However, a significant part of the economy is in the shadows of formal transactions. The size of our informal economy is estimated at anything between 50 to 100% of the formal one. And we remain a predominantly cash

economy. Regulations aimed at channeling financial transactions through banking institutions must be put to use effectively. Banks, on occasions, have resisted implementing regulatory guidelines on cash transactions for fear of losing deposits. We must expand the formal economy to have more money staying within the banking system. Banks can play a catalytic role in encouraging businesses to avoid cash payments.

**E-payments.** Digital banking is an important tool to help expand formal economy. Banks need to take their ongoing initiatives on digital channels to the next level through deeper collaboration with small businesses. For example, it should be possible for a bank (or a number of banks together) to pilot a No Cash Zone in say, Durbar Marg area, or the restaurant district of Jhameel, by getting all shops or restaurants to sign up in a campaign to accept digital or card payments only. These are locations frequented by more affluent customers. It can

gradually be replicated elsewhere. If people can pay for basic purchases like milk and vegetables conveniently through a credit card or a digital wallet, they will carry less cash. That money will stay as bank deposits until spent.

**Cooling period.** A casualty of rapid business expansion has been quality human resource within the banking industry. Growth in banks' business and branch network create new positions which are often filled by people with lesser skills and experience. Many young bankers hop-sotch their way up through a number of banks and assume positions of responsibility without necessary skills and experience. Add to that generally aggressive lending behavior with excessive reliance on real estate collateral. Frankly, potential for sub-standard loan assets and operational risk in many Nepali banks is cringe-worthy. The IMF has already expressed their concern over quality and sustainability of unnatural growth achieved by the sector in recent years. Just like a cooling period has been made mandatory for CEOs, a mechanism must be put in place to arrest the tendency among employees at supervisory and managerial levels to move to another bank at short intervals for quick gains. Why would a bank invest on training and grooming an employee if only for another bank to offer him a higher position? Many organizations in the western world have stringent non-compete clauses in employment contracts.

I have been a career banker and spent 24 years in the industry. Some may think I am critical of banks because I have retired from banking profession. But I've had a fulfilling banking career and I feel deeply indebted to Nepali banking sector for making me who I am. Raising contemporary banking issues is my way of giving back to the industry. Also, it sometimes is not feasible for practicing bankers to voice their concerns.

All said and done, banking remains the most transparent sector of the economy; its contributions to growth have been unmatched. I will continue to share my *dui paisa* to help regain its stature as a well-respected sector. 🇳🇵

*Suman Joshi is an ex-banker and Chair of True North Associates, a private equity firm.*



AMRITAH  
WELLNESS

f /amritahwellness

01-5541305

Sanepa, Lalitpur  
(Opposite to consulate general of Greece)



# New Year Eve

**PARTY NIGHT Live**  
WITH  
**Audio Farm Band**  
+ DJ Session

Date : 31<sup>st</sup> Dec. 2018 | Time : 7:30pm onwards | Venue: The Traders Hall & Garden , Shangri~La Village Resort, Pokhara

Sponsored By:







With the change in wind direction midweek to west-northwest, the Indo-Gangetic smog that had smothered Nepal for the past week was suddenly blown away. The bluish tint in this satellite image (left) is the haze covering northern India and being blown out to sea. This has also brought colder air, and Nepal is reeling under a cold snap. Temperature is expected to drop to zero on Friday, with the maximum climbing only to 14 Celsius. Things will warm up somewhat over the weekend.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
13° 0°	16° 3°	18° 3°

oneworld

QATAR

AIRWAYS

القطرية

Going places together - [qatarairways.com](http://qatarairways.com)



**NORTHERN LIGHT:** Justin Zhao (*left, above*) and Liang Ye (*below*) with their art gallery in Jhochhen and Boudha. They call themselves “volunteer envoys” working to improve people-to-people ties between China and Nepal.

# The Chinese are coming

Two entrepreneurs prepare for the expected influx of Chinese tourists by educating them about Nepal

Ask a person in China about Nepal, and the answer is mostly that it is a happy Himalayan country of Buddhism and mountains. Justin Zhao and Liang Ye have decided that is not enough for the 400,000 Chinese tourists that are expected during Visit Nepal Year 2020.

When they first arrived in Nepal as tourists themselves, the duo decided that the country had a lot more to offer. Many more Chinese would visit if they knew about the culture, history, art and architecture of Nepal.

Zhao and Ye have set up Himalaya Light Culture House in Jhonche to exhibit and propagate Nepali art, modern paintings, historical books and local handicrafts. By deliberately locating in the former Freak Street, not Thamel, the two wanted to reboot Nepal’s tourism brand among mainlanders.

It is easy to miss the signboard for Himalaya Light Culture House amidst the *thangka* and scarf shops, the momo eateries



PHOTOS: RUIXUE ZHANG

and bars in this street off Darbar Square that used to be the haunt of hippies. Through a narrow passageway, after turning right on a sundeck, is the Culture House.

“No wonder so few people visit our Culture House, even I sometimes get lost,” jokes Ye, who was at Darbar Square when the 2015 earthquake destroyed the monuments here, and remembers weeping when he saw the devastation.

For his part, Zhao has been to Nepal 18 times since 2013, and cannot seem to stop coming back. He was drawn by Kathmandu’s rich heritage, sculpture and handicraft, and decided to establish a new museum, guest house and restaurant here.

Zhao says that after the earthquake, many Chinese gave up their businesses and went back, so he had to start from square one. But now he is one of the most influential persons for trans-Himalayan cultural exchanges.

Ye, 36, used to be a doctor, first came

to Kathmandu in 2014, became a travel writer. “At first, I chose Nepal because of its tourism potential, but now Nepal is like my lover,” he admits, smiling.

After seeing the devastation in 2015, Ye started posting scenes of the damage on Chinese social media to explain that Nepalis revered Lord Shiva the creator and destroyer, and saw the earthquake as part of another divine cycle. The posts helped spread a huge response in China for relief aid.

Zhao has always been fascinated by Nepali modern art and wants to bring it to the attention of Chinese collectors. “Nepali artists are deeply rooted in their society, and their work carry socio-cultural meanings,” explains Zhao, “but the average Chinese tourist only knows about *thangkas* and wood carvings.”

Ye has been in Nepal long enough to understand geopolitical sensitivities.

“Nowadays, the relationship between China and Nepal is like friends while Nepal and India are like brothers,” he says diplomatically, “brothers can fight but will always be brothers. China will always be a close friend.”

Ye and Zhao say they want to go beyond government-to-government links to be China’s “volunteer envoys” to connect the peoples of China and Nepal.

In the past three years, Zhao has taken young Nepali artists to China, held exhibitions and discussions about paintings and music. Zhao’s father Zhao Jianqiu is a famous Chinese artist whose exquisitely detailed ink and brush paintings of Nepal’s mountains and Kathmandu’s temples have been exhibited in Beijing and Kathmandu.

Tourism in Nepal has gone through many phases: the world jet-set ‘discovered’ Nepal in the early 1960s, the hippies came in the 1970s, trekkers and budget travelers after that. Ye and Zhang perhaps represent a new breed of Asian tourists who are drawn by Nepal’s unique natural and cultural heritage, as well as its modern creativity.

**Ruixue Zhang**



Go online to watch video and interviews with Justin Zhao and Liang Ye explaining what brought them to Nepal. Both believe Nepal has a lot more to offer to Chinese tourists.

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)



TRY OUR  
HOT STONE MASSAGE

FOR RESERVATIONS : 01-5528137

HOTEL SHALIGRAM  
JAWALAKHEL



MANTRA  
Spa & Wellness

Sewa Bhattarai

Three elderly people look up with wonder and reverence, palms pressed together at the Boudhanath stupa towering over them. Sonam Yangjung Lama, Yangja Phuti, and Samten Lama (*pictured, right*) are from Humla, and have undertaken a once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to the Kathmandu shrine.

“Boudha is the holiest place in Nepal, and I had never seen it,” beams Yangja Phuti. “Now that I have finally seen it, I am overcome by its beauty and holiness. Now, I can die happy, and go straight to heaven.”

Boudhanath has always been sacred to Nepal’s Buddhists, whether Newars of the Valley, Tibetan Buddhists from the mountains, or from China.

The pilgrims from Humla had to walk for a day to Simikot, and then take a plane to Nepalganj and Kathmandu to get here, since Humla is the last district in Nepal not yet connected to the road network. But they say it has been worth the time and money.

This fulcrum of Buddhism was first built in the 5th century, according to Shange Dorje Lama, who heads the Lama Department of Boudha Ghyang Guthi, the trust responsible for religious activities at the shrine. Boudha has been destroyed and rebuilt many times, including after the 2015 earthquake.

“The stupa stands on a five-layered platform, signifying the five elements of nature,” Lama explains, pointing at the imposing monument. “The dome signifies the



earth, while the eyes of the Buddha represent compassion and wisdom. The 13 tiers above it are the thirteen steps to enlightenment, and the cupola signifies the protection that the dharma gives. Finally, the spire represents Nirvana.”

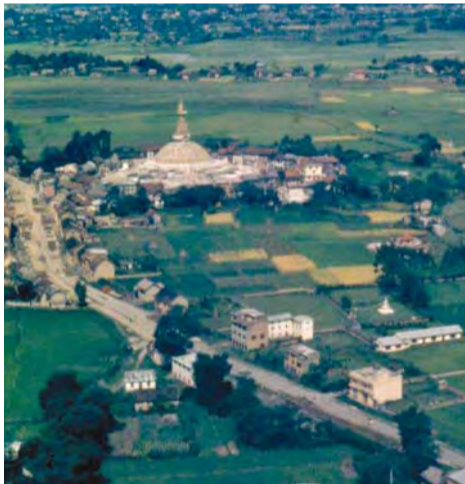
Despite being swallowed up by Kathmandu’s urban sprawl and over-run by the Chabahil neighbourhood, Boudha retains its spiritual charm, with hundreds of devotees doing the ritual circumambulation, rotating prayer wheels, counting rosaries, or performing prayer rituals. Boudha has also grown as a tourist attraction for locals and Asian visitors who can be seen taking selfies.

Xin Liu, a journalist from China, is among them. “I once saw a picture of Nepali people many years ago. I loved their smiles. And it has always been my dream to come here,” she says, between trying to take a perfectly timed shot of pigeons at the temple.

Many Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese and even Westerners come here, mixing tourism with pilgrimage, but for many foreign tourists Nepal is also an attraction because it is much more affordable. Chinese tourists, especially, say they find a Nepal holiday cheaper than anywhere else in Asia.



OLD PHOTOS OF NEPAL, 1940



JACQUELINE DELLETTERY, 1965

# A temple by another name

Renaming Khasti by calling it Boudha removed an important identity of the shrine

Aashish Mishra

Until a few decades ago, the white dome of Boudha capped with its gilded tower and finial, and all-seeing eyes was so prominent it could be seen from all over the once-emerald Valley.

Today, one of the country’s holiest Buddhist shrines is over-run by Kathmandu’s rampant urbanisation. The stupa itself is dwarfed by surrounding hotels, malls and apartment blocks. Boudha has lost a lot more than its serenity, it is losing its uniqueness.

Boudha is said to have been first built by Emperor Ashoka’s daughter who arrived in the Valley more than 2,500 years ago. Boudhanath is actually the Sanskritised name given during the Panchayat era in the 1960s. Its original name is Khasti Mahachaitya, which means ‘great stupa of the dew drops’, and there is an interesting story about how that name came about.

During the Lichhavi period (400-700 CE) the palace of King Bikramaditya was located

where Narayanhiti is today at Durbar Marg. The king had constructed three water spouts at the southern edge of the palace, but it did not give any water. Astrologers recommended a human sacrifice of a male possessed of all 32 perfections. However, only the king himself and his son had those attributes.

As the story goes, the next morning the king ordered his son to kill a man sleeping by the water spout. The prince did as he was told, and the water started running from the spouts. But he found out that the man he had killed was his own father, the king. Ridden with guilt, he consulted the priests about how to absolve his great sin.

They suggested that he should release a white bird from the top of Bajrayogini Temple and construct a stupa wherever it landed. The bird landed at the current location of Boudha.

However, there was no water to mix the clay for the construction of the stupa since Kathmandu Valley was suffering a prolonged drought. So determined was the young king that he instructed the people to harvest water by collecting dewdrops every morning.

Which is why, when it was finally built,

Nowhere better than lively and holy Boudhanath to usher in the new year



# million dewdrops



DESMOND DOIG



speaks fluent Chinese and has named his restaurant Chongqing Noodles, with the signboard in English and Chinese.

“We get lots of Chinese guests from China, Singapore and Malaysia, and they like it that the menu is in their own language,” Rangdol says.

Boudha is proof that despite the chaos of a teeming city, the spiritual energy of the shrine has preserved its tranquility

and sanctity. The tourists and pilgrims may be enjoying its picturesque and insta-friendly location, but they are earning karma points for 2019 at the same time. 🇳🇵

## UNDER BUDDHA'S GAZE



Go online to watch video about Boudhanath, and how the heritage site combines a lively cosmopolitan ambience with the original sanctity and tranquility of the place.

[nepalitimes.com](https://nepalitimes.com)



MEL GOLDMAN, 1967



NEIL RAWLINS, 1970



KUNDA DIXIT, 2018

the stupa was named Khasti, similar to other place names ending in ‘ti’ in Kathmandu such as Chalati and Kusunti – all made from millions of dewdrops. The name was changed from Khasti to Boudha possibly to make the shrine conform to the concept of a unified Nepali nationhood.

Today, Boudha’s original architectural space of a central dome surrounded by a circle of small mud houses is marred by taller buildings. Yet, such is the magic of the place that it still draws pilgrims and tourists from all over the world, especially after it was rebuilt following damage in the 2015 earthquake. (*See report, above.*)

Boudha is not the only example of identity loss in Kathmandu. For instance, the name Jwo: Falcha in Nepal Bhasa means two rest houses built for travellers along the trade

route to Tibet. The name has now changed to Jorpati which just means an even number of rest houses.

The name Jaa Hwulyu Khya: is a name alluding to the practice of throwing rice as an offering. Today, both the practice and the name have disappeared and the place is called Jawalakhel.

The name Kisi Ga: used to mean the ‘Elephant Stable’ from where the White Elephant (Pulukisi) used to emerge during Indra Jatra. Its present name Kilagal means ‘Bed of Nails’ which will not be found there.

A name change alters the identity of a place, and occurs after regime change throughout history and all over the world. In places like Khasti in Kathmandu Valley, they have also detached monuments, cultures and entire communities from their roots. 🇳🇵

EVENTS

MUSIC

DINING

GETAWAY

NEW YEAR 2019

New Year hike

Usher in the New Year and keep fit with a hike to Nagarjun or Phulchoki through forests, flowers and a view of Kathmandu Valley.  
Contact *Nepal Trek and High Adventure:* (01) 4212843 or *Zumbandu:* 9803266533

New Year's Eve

Treat friends and families to New Year's Eve celebrations with stand-up comedy, live music and loads of good food.  
31 December, 4pm, Ticket Rs200 for normal and Rs600 for VIP, *Cliff Restro N Bar, Lalitpur Mall, Lagankhel*, book for limited seats at 9860151323

Red carpet for 2019

Nothing like a fun-filled night of camp fire, face painting, live music, BBQ and dinner, cash voucher and door prizes to mark the beginning of the New Year.  
31 December, 6-9pm, Single Rs4499, double Rs7499, overnight single Rs9500, overnight double Rs13,999, *Park Village Hotel by KGH Group, Budanilkantha*, (01) 4375280

Project Sindhuli

A project to uplift women entrepreneurship in Sindhuli where the women receive training to utilise resources for socio-economic growth. Support them through a fun event full of music, food and drinks this New Years eve.  
31 December, 5-11pm, *Patan Museum*, 9818242261

New Year Birdwatching

Begin your new year in harmony with nature. Join hundreds of other nature lovers for this birdwatching event at Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park.  
29 December, 7am-12pm, *Bird Conservation Nepal*, Meeting place *Fulbari Gate*, 9841330576



The Gala Day

Live music, dances, poetry, games and other exciting activities to raise money for orphanages lacking basic facilities. A fun-filled event for a good cause.  
29 December, 1pm, *Rock Tunnel Resturant and Lounge, Gairigaun, Tinkune*, 98237744536, 9808074623

Self Science

A session to reflect about yourself and help figure out your emotions and ideas. For all those wishing to make some changes in life, this will be a good place to get started on thinking about some important things.  
29 December, 12-4pm, Rs2500, *I Am The Gardener, Dhumbarahi*, 9841283102



Tamu Losar

Gurung families will come together, dress up in traditional costumes and sashay en-mass to folk tunes and make merry to mark the Gurung Calendar New Year and celebrate the festival as old as Nepal's civilisation.  
30 December, *Tundikhel*

Kanchanpur diaries

A remembrance and fundraiser for two victims who were injured during the fight for justice following the Nirmala Panta rape and murder case. The event will feature artists like 1974 AD, Albatross, Blues Co among the 10 different artists performing. All funds are to support to uplift the lives of victims.  
29 December, 12pm, Rs500 at door, *Moksh, Jhamsikhel*, 5528362

New Year's Eve

Base camp brings the sounds of Zero Mile to start the evening, and tunes by Dj Ranzen to finish off.  
31 December, 7pm, Rs500 at door, *Base Camp: outdoor lifestyle, Jhamsikhel*, 9841226397



Arbitrary Experience

Musical performances by Bipul Chettri and the traveling band, Swopna Suman and the Elements to enjoy the last day of the year.  
31 December, 6pm, *Malla Hotel, Thamel*, (01) 4418385

Kta Haru

Listen to Kta Haru for the last time this year and enjoy the evening with their fun tunes.  
31 December, 7:30pm, *Doko Deli*, (01) 5555041

Sunset Vibes

Deep House tech at the Yard will feature DipsoMan from 2-4pm and Crikey from 4-6pm.  
29 December, 2-6pm, *The Yard, Sanepa*, 5532965



Serendipity

Bring in the new year with a full range of celebration including live music by Mingma Sherpa and The Juke Box Band, dance performance by Wild Ripperz, Music by Dj Rupesh and Dj Sishir, tasty snacks, a lavish buffet and more.  
31 December, Rs7999, *Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat*, (01) 4411818, *aparajuli@radkat.com.np*

OUR PICK



Opened in Kathmandu on 21 December

Arthur Curry (Jason Momoa) thinks he is just the son of a lighthouse keeper, but turns out his mother was the queen of Atlantis, the underwater kingdom thought to have been destroyed. With his half brother Orm, king of Atlantis, trying to wage a war against the surface world, Arthur is forced to face his destiny as leader of the underwater people. DC's latest superhero movie directed by James Wan also stars Amber Heard and Nicole Kidman. It promises a visual treat with enticing underwater scenes, and an action packed plot.



Fire and Ice

The best place for pizza lovers in town, Fire and Ice offers genuine Napolitana pizza and dozens of vegetarian and non vegetarian variants to choose from. A warm pizza will be the perfect, hearty meal on this New Year's.  
*Thamel*, (01) 4250210

The ultimate countdown

Enjoy the last day of the year with an unlimited flow of snacks, lavish buffet and a variety of drinks. There will also be music by His Will Band, DJ Newa and Bollywood dances.  
31 December, 7:30pm, Rs7500 Nett (single), Rs13000 Nett (couple) and Rs5000 nett(child), *The Courtyard Garden, Gokarna Forest Resort*, (01) 4451212



New Year Delight

A special new year's menu in all restaurants. The Cafe will offer an extravagant buffet including Asian, Arabic, Italian, Japanese, and Indian specialties. Enjoy a specially prepared five-course set menu in the Rox Restaurant. Live music by The Heartbreakers along with DJ Sanju at Rox Bar. And a delicious brunch spread at The cafe on New Years' Day.  
31 December, 6:30 to 10pm, *The Cafe (Rs5200++) and Rox Restaurant (5700++)*, 8:30pm-1am, *Rox Bar (Rs2100++)*  
1 January, 12:30-4pm, Rs2800++, *The Cafe, Hyatt Regency, Boudha*, (01) 5171234

New Year at Soaltee

Welcome the new year with an enjoyable night at Soaltee Crowne Plaza, including vibrant performances by the funky boys, and a flow of premium drinks, snacks and dinner.  
31 December, 8pm, Rs12000 nett (single) and Rs22000(couple), *Soaltee Crowne Plaza, Tahachal*, (01) 4273999 Extn, 6910,6922



Club Himalaya

For amazing mountain views and a refreshing weekend escape, special packages available for Nepalis and expatriates.  
*Nagarkot*, (01) 4410432

Hotel Heritage Bhaktapur

A Newari-style boutique hotel that incorporates the rich art and architecture of Bhaktapur. The culture starts and ends at the gate of the hotel.  
*Suryabinayak, Bhaktapur*, (01) 6611628



Barahi Jungle Lodge

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

Balthali Village Resort

A small, cosy retreat with a bird's eye view of green terrace fields dotted with ochre painted houses.  
*Panauli, Kavre*, 9851087772

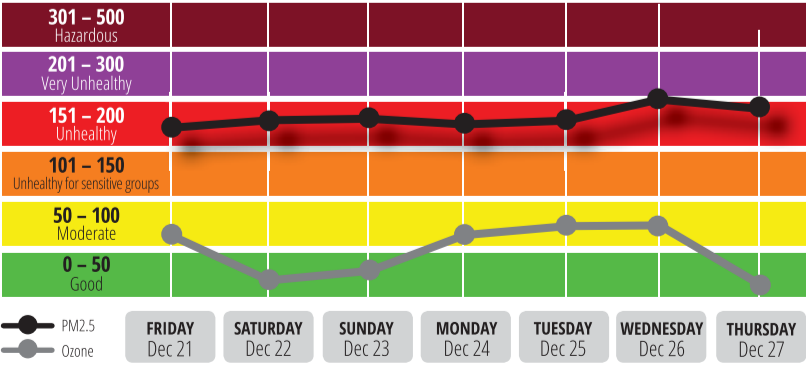


New Year at Shangri-La

Spend the night at the hotel which is bringing a special 1 night, 2 day package for the new year. A deluxe room accommodation, lavish gala dinner, attractive door prizes, and buffet breakfast.  
31 December, Rs20019, *Hotel Shangri-La, Lazimpat*, (01) 4412999, 4419743

AIR QUALITY INDEX

KATHMANDU, 21 - 27 December



This week, surprisingly the PM 2.5 AQI numbers have come down a bit although the air is still pretty smoggy. We were all expecting higher levels in the AQI graphs, but thankfully the air is better than last week. Kathmandu's AQI is still in the Unhealthy Red Zone at a daily average of 180 this week, but it is still better than the following readings for major cities around Asia on Thursday morning: Delhi 999, Ulaan Bataar 558, Kolkata 353, Bangkok 220, Kathmandu 187, Beijing 171, Seoul 72, Tokyo 50. For hourly AQI measurements at the US Embassy monitoring station at Phora Darbar in Kathmandu, go to [www.nepalitimes.com](https://np.usembassy.gov/embassy/air-quality-monitor/)  
<https://np.usembassy.gov/embassy/air-quality-monitor/>

“लैङ्गिक हिंसा र दुर्व्यवहारः  
छैन हामीलाई स्वीकार”  
"Orange the World: #Hear me to"

नेपाल सरकार  
सञ्चार तथा सूचना प्रविधि मन्त्रालय  
सूचना तथा प्रसारण विभाग

# Cheers to NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

**THE CAFE**  
The Café offers a lavish buffet dinner to ring in the New Year with a glass of sparkling wine or a Pepsi product.  
\*Complimentary entry to Rox Bar

Event: New Years' Eve Buffet Dinner  
Time: 6.30 PM onwards  
Rate: NPR 5,200 per person plus taxes  
Grand dessert buffet will be laid in the lobby

**ROX RESTAURANT**  
Enjoy an exquisite five course menu with choices for each course with a glass of champagne and dessert wine or a Pepsi product.  
\*Complimentary entry to Rox Bar

Event: New Years' Eve Set Dinner  
Time: 6.30 PM onwards  
Rate: NPR 5,700 per person plus taxes  
Grand dessert buffet will be laid in the lobby

**ROX BAR**  
Party at Rox Bar as we count down to midnight and ring in the New Year. Live music by The Heartbreakers along with DJ Sanju.

Event: New Years' Eve Celebration  
Time: 8.30 PM onwards  
Rate: NPR 2,100 per person plus taxes inclusive of 2 bottles of beer and a complimentary snack.


**THE CAFE**  
Welcome 2019 with a delicious brunch!

Event: New Years' Day Brunch  
Time: 12.30 PM onwards  
Rate: NPR 2,800 per person plus taxes

\*Reservations recommended.  
\*Be part of this festive season and win exciting prizes!


**HYATT REGENCY KATHMANDU**  
Boudha  
+977 1 517 1234  
sales.kathmanduhr@hyatt.com

The HYATT trademark and related marks are trademarks of Hyatt Corporation or its affiliates. ©2018 Hyatt Corporation. All rights reserved.



**HYATT  
REGENCY™**  
KATHMANDU

# LIVE FOR NOW !



**pepsi®**

**Beverage Partner**

CONTAINS ADDED FLAVOURS. CONTAINS NO FRUIT. CONTAINS CAFFEINE.



**HOTEL  
Himalaya**

# New Year's Eve

WITH LIVE BAND

# AAROHA

Sumptuous International Buffet with  
**5 Complimentary Drinks**  
Lady Singer Rachana, Dj SaHaZ,  
Door Prize Galore at  
**Himalaya Hall**  
31st December 2018, 7 pm onwards

**Rs 17,999/- nett per couple**  
**Rs 9,999/- nett per person**

**For Reservations call : 5523900**





TASTE THE FEELING





SOMERSBY  
APPLE CIDER

















make.believe



**Probably the best beer in the world.**

# Love and Loo

It is a sight repeated tens of millions of times every morning across northern India: groups of women carrying water *lota* making their way to the fields before dawn to defecate. They need to do this before daylight, and ahead of the men.

The off-Bollywood movie *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha* begins with women carrying lanterns and *lota* ducking behind bushes. But this morning there is a slight complication: an 'eve-teaser' passes by driving a tractor and the women are caught in the headlights. They freeze and hurriedly cover their faces with the *pallu* of their saris.

Director Shree Narayan Singh plunges directly into the ugly reality of India where 300 million people still defecate in the open, an activity that is especially risky for women. He uses scatological humour to tackle a serious taboo.

*Toilet* tells the tale of 36-year-old Keshav Sharma who dreams of getting married but cannot unless he finds a girl with two thumbs in her left hand, as per the requirement of his priest father. He is also made to marry a black buffalo in an attempt to rid him of a fault in his horoscope.

But after a chance meeting outside a train toilet, Keshav immediately falls for Jaya Joshi, who eventually reciprocates his feelings. Keshav makes a fake thumb for Jaya to wear to get his father's approval for marriage. But the very next morning after their wedding, Jaya, a graduate from



a well-to-do educated family, is shocked to find that Keshav's house does not have a loo.

Initially Keshav does not understand what is the big deal. Why doesn't his new wife socialise with the other *lota* women at dawn? She refuses, so he tries to convince his orthodox father to make a latrine inside the house. Dad thinks that would be sacrilegious. Keshav then comes up with hilarious temporary solutions to stop Jaya from ultimately leaving him, but we won't tell you what they are.


*Toilet* is not just about the lack of latrines. At a deeper level it deals with India's entrenched patriarchy, the irrational orthodoxy

of religious fundamentalists, bureaucratic disinterest and corruption. Which is all very familiar to us here in Nepal, albeit less pervasive.

The film was one of the highest grossing Hindi movies ever, but has already come and gone in Kathmandu theatres in 2018. Those who missed it can stream it online.

This movie will probably be more effective than thousands of editorials and public service announcements to stop open defecation. *Toilet* is edutainment cinema at its best, communicating a public health message while addressing the underlying social contradictions.

Veteran actor Anupam Kher as the self-confessed 'dirty mind but clean hearted' uncle of Jaya, and Divyendu Sharma playing Keshav's bother add the much-needed comic relief in this at times preachy film. Sudhir Pandey as the father of Keshav deserves a special mention for his brilliant characterisation of a devout Hindu priest set in his ways. Relative newcomer Bhumi Pednekar has stage presence as the strong-willed Jaya. Akshya Kumar as Keshav is perfectly cast, if a little too old for the part.

*Toilet* does suffer from the typical Bollywood plot-holes: too many happenstance and ironically larger than life events for a movie inspired by a true story. But it is still a stark portrayal of a society where mobiles are more prized than toilets. 

Sonia Awale



MOFA

**BEING DIPLOMATIC:** Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Gyawali addressed the Asia Society Policy Institute in Washington DC last week. Nepal's Ambassador to the United States Arjun Karki is at left.



UN WOMEN

**SUOMI FOR WOMEN:** Ambassador of Finland to Nepal Pertti Anttinen and Maria-Noel Vaeza of the UN Women sign an agreement worth €4 million to support women's economic empowerment, political participation, and poverty eradication in Nepal.



ROSHAN SAPIKOTA/RSS

**REBUILDING IN FOTOS:** National Reconstruction Authority CEO Sushil Gyawali at a photo exhibition to mark NRA's 3rd anniversary at the Nepal Art Council on Wednesday.



KRISHA NEUPANE/RSS

**UNMASKED:** A girl inspects an unfamiliar costume at the first Shukla Gandaki Festival organised by Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Dulegauda, Tanahu on Wednesday.



KASHIRAM SHARMA/RSS

**DHARARA RESURRECTED:** A replica of Dharara is built for visitors at Bardia's regional agriculture, tourism, and industrial trade fair.



## FIRE AND ICE



### PIZZERIA

Fire And Ice first opened its doors in Kathmandu in January 1995. It immediately became a very popular restaurant amongst travelers, climbers and local residents as the place to meet for a morning cup of Italian espresso, or later on in the day to share stories and travel tales with friends whilst savoring delicious Pizza, Pastas, Organic salads, desserts and even a Grappa after Dinner.



Come and join us at Fire And Ice and  
Enjoy a little piece of Italy here in Nepal!!

219- Sanchaya Kosh Bhawan, Tridevi Marg, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal

For Reservations: 4250210, E-mail: fireandicepizzeria@hotmail.com  
www.fireandicepizzeria.com

# Melamchi delayed by government extortion

Bikash Thapa in  
Annapurna Post, 24 December

अन्नपूर्ण

Just as the much-delayed Melamchi water supply project neared completion with 90% of its tunnel construction complete, it is once more in limbo. Every politician in the past few years has been promising the citizens of Kathmandu Valley adequate water supply from the project. The deadline has been pushed back repeatedly for the last 30 years, and the latest official completion date was mid-February 2019.

The Italian contractor had asked for Rs 1.61 billion compensation for delays caused by the earthquake and Indian Blockade in 2015. A



KUNDADIXIT

Dispute Resolution Board decided in October to award the contractor Rs 350 million, and to pay the amount by 16 November. But when the money did not materialise, the contractor

said it could not continue the work and wrote a letter to the ministry saying it was withdrawing from the project. The talk in the ministry is that Secretary of the Water Supply Ministry Gajendra Thakur and Surya Raj Kandel of the Melamchi Project were 'bargaining' with the contractor for kickbacks. Secretary Thakur has a reputation for even forcing subordinates in every ministry he has worked in to pay up to be evaluated positively. The contractor refused to fork out any kickback. Thakur and

Kandel then retaliated by refusing to sanction the compensation payment.

Thakur even complained to Prime Minister Oli that the contractor was going to flee the country with Rs 2 billion. Oli ordered action to be taken against Cooperativa Muratori e Cementisti di Ravenna (CMC). Italian and other nationals from the project who were going home for Christmas holidays were stopped at the airport and their passports confiscated. Thakur himself accompanied Police on a raid in a hotel in Thamel where some CMC staff were staying.

The extortion and corruption of this sordid case is bound to have a negative impact on Nepal's investment climate, besides further delaying Melamchi. Thakur even called

Nepal's top companies, offering them new contracts to complete the project.

The tunnel work is nearly finished, but the headworks construction has not even started, and this will take another year-and-half. Thakur's plan was to award this contract to someone else, by more than doubling its cost to Rs 4 billion.

There is also evidence that Secretary Thakur is working with the knowledge of Minister Bina Magar. It is a shame that a bureaucrat who has left a trail of corruption everywhere he has served should be in charge of a National Pride Project like Melamchi.

Corruption in Melamchi is not just corruption, it is a crime against the people.

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.

CHBAN/CHSENO/0015/17

© 2016, GSK group of companies or its licensor.

# New Year Eve

Date :31<sup>st</sup> Dec. 2018 | Time : 7:30pm onwards | Venue: Pavilion & The Courtyard @Hotel Shangri~La, Lazimpat

Sponsored By:

\*Unlimited sponsored drinks from 7:30pm to 10:00pm\*



# Good riddance to 2018

MADRID – Sadly, 2018 will not be remembered as a year of political and diplomatic success. Though the international order had already begun to erode in 2017, the global political environment became downright chaotic, combustible, and hostile this year. That is no coincidence, as these are perhaps



ONE WORLD  
Javier Solana

the three adjectives that best describe the United States under President Donald Trump. Since January 2018, when the Trump administration announced tariffs on imported solar panels and washing machines, the year has been marked by an escalating 'trade war', waged primarily – but not exclusively – by the US against China. The ongoing tariff disputes have seriously undermined the World Trade Organization and deepened mutual distrust in Sino-American relations. For its part, China this year eliminated presidential term limits, raising fears that President Xi Jinping's so-called new era will end the period of collective leadership ushered in by Deng Xiaoping's reforms, which were themselves a corrective to Mao's cult of personality. This move could also herald a further deviation from Deng's trademark foreign-policy restraint. Similarly, Russian President Vladimir Putin was reelected in March, to no one's surprise. Under Putin, Russia has been re-emerging



as a geopolitical force. And yet, its economy is essentially stagnant, owing in part to its excessive dependence on hydrocarbons. In the absence of growth, Putin has relied on foreign policy to shore up his domestic popularity. The Kremlin's recent decision to blockade Ukrainian ports in the Sea of Azov may also have been designed to boost Putin's domestic approval rating, among other goals. The danger now is that both the US and Russia will cease to implement the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, posing a new and acute threat to Europe in particular. Meanwhile, the Middle East has continued to serve as a battlefield for some of the world's most violent conflicts. Though the Islamic State has continued to lose ground, it is far from defeated – contrary to what Trump has claimed – and the death toll in Syria's civil war continues to climb. Likewise, the humanitarian calamity in Yemen has deepened, though negotiations that ran aground in 2016 have at least resumed and made some progress. In Afghanistan, what is widely regarded as the longest-running

war in US history continues, and it is estimated that the Taliban now controls more territory than at any time since their government was overthrown in 2001. The US has reaffirmed its support for the axis of Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, which it regards as a bulwark against Iran. In May, the Trump administration moved the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. That same month, it abandoned the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and announced an abusive re-imposition of sanctions. Moreover, by siding with the Saudi government over his own intelligence agencies in the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October, Trump has made clear that opposing Iran and purchasing US arms is one of the quickest ways to his heart. The result of his broad approach to the Middle East has been to empower military hardliners throughout the region. In fact, Israel and Iran this year engaged in their first-ever direct military encounter. Trump has also contributed, in one way or another, to the advance of populism around the world in 2018. In Latin America, Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) and Brazilian President-elect Jair Bolsonaro have shown that 'populism' can encompass diverse ideologies. In October, Italy's government instigated a conflict with the European Union by proposing a budget that defied EU fiscal rules. Italy's leaders justified their policies in the name of an outdated interpretation of 'sovereignty', one similar to that of the United

Kingdom's Brexiteers, whose haphazardness has left the UK's future shrouded in uncertainty. There were a few positive developments in 2018. Certainly, the easing of tensions between the US and North Korea, and the even deeper rapprochement between North and South Korea, should be welcomed. Much credit belongs to South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who used the occasion of the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang to reach out to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. Trump's subsequent turn toward diplomacy – which led to his historic summit with Kim – should also be applauded, though his administration has yet to achieve anything more than symbolic progress toward denuclearisation. The result of the US midterm elections was also good news. Democratic control of the House of Representatives means that, from January 2019, there will be more checks on Trump's policies. In the Senate, a recent resolution condemning Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for the murder of Khashoggi, and another to end US support for the Saudi campaign in Yemen, passed with bipartisan support. In Europe, the prospects for 2019 will depend primarily on three factors: Brexit, Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron's push for EU reform, and the European Parliament election in May. Those who oppose democracy have had a good year. But they would be mistaken to think that those who uphold them have lost the will – and the ability – to cultivate a spirit of cooperation. © Project Syndicate

**Javier Solana** was EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Secretary-General of NATO, and Foreign Minister of Spain.

BACK TO THE TEENS-FOREVER YOUNG

Welcome 2019

at Soaltee Crowne Plaza

Rock off and Rave on

with the

FUNKY BOYZ

Single : 12000 Nett

Couple : 22000 Nett

Time : 8 pm onwards

Includes : Free flow of premium beverages, snacks & dinner

Garden Terrace (Gala buffet dinner with DJ)

Adult : 6000 Nett | Child: 3000 Nett

Time : 7 pm onwards

Includes : Free flow of regular spirit, wine, beer and soft drinks.

Bao Xuan (4 course special menu)

Adult : 4000 Nett | Child: 2000 Nett

Time : 7 pm onwards

Includes : A bottle of nepal ice beer/a glass of red wine/a glass of soft drink

Kakori (4 course special menu)

Adult : 4000 Nett | Child: 2000 Nett

Time : 7 pm onwards

Includes : A bottle of nepal ice beer/a glass of red wine/a glass of soft drink

SOALTEE CROWNE PLAZA

AN IHG HOTEL

KATHMANDU

LIVE FOR NOW !

pepsi.

CONTAINS ADDED FLAVOURS. CONTAINS NO FRUIT. CONTAINS CAFFEINE.

Beverage Partner

Event Partners:

Sponsors:

# INTRODUCING THE MOST LUXURIOUS XUV500 EVER.

**STARTING AT  
Rs. 62,10,000/-\***

 <b>[ NEW ] BOLDER, STYLISH FRONT GRILLE</b>	 <b>[ NEW ] CLASSY TAILGATE AND SPLIT TAIL-LAMPS</b>	 <b>[ NEW ] SOFT-TOUCH, LEATHER WRAPPED DASHBOARD AND DOOR TRIMS</b>	 <b>[ NEW ] PREMIUM, QUILTED, TAN LEATHER SEATS</b>	 <b>[ NEW ] BIGGER, SPORTY, DIAMOND-CUT ALLOYS (235/60 R18)</b>	 <b>[ NEW ] STUNNING LED DAY-TIME RUNNING LIGHTS (DRLs)</b>
---	---	---	--	--	--

**Agni Incorporated Pvt. Ltd.**, Panipokhari Showroom: 01-4006711/12/13/14/15, 9801239330, Naxal Showroom: 01-4415368, 9801305300, Patan Showroom: 01-5532641/5532328, 9801303100  
Branch: Birgunj, Tel: 051-419323/419456, 9801239322, Fax: 051-419259, Bhairahawa, Tel: 071-429324; Itahari, Tel: 025-585742; Kohalpur, Tel: 081-541522

**Balaju Auto Works Pvt. Ltd., Workshop:** Balaju Industrial Area, Tel : 01-4350994 **Spare Parts Outlet:** Balaju Ring Road, Kathmandu, Tel: 01-4352806/4384176; Kuleshwor, Kathmandu, Tel: 01-5165235 **Authorized Service Center (Inside Kathmandu Valley)** Balkhu, Tel: 01-4277864; Jorpati, Tel: 01-4910533; Baikumari, Tel: 01-5186180; Gaushala, Tel: 01-4478502; Sinamangal, Tel: 01-4116618; Bafal, Tel: 01-4302828; Dhumbarahi, Tel: 01-4009123 **(Outside Kathmandu Valley)** Bardibas, Mobile: 9801627781, Nuwakot, Tel: 010-560810; Hetauda, Tel: 057-522007; Lahan, Tel: 033-562157; Dhading Besi, Tel: 010-521024

**Authorized Dealers & Service Center:** Sakushi Trade Link Pvt. Ltd., Birtamad 023-541114, Taplejung 024-460495, 9852681315, Phidim 024-521101, **Royal Auto Enterprises**, Biratnagar 021-461178, **Royal Motors Traders**, Dharan 025-523068, Manaram Motors, Khadbari 029-575147, **Usha Enterprises Pvt. Ltd.**, Rajbiraj 031-522666, Lahan 033-562411, Katari 035-450399, Galghat 035-421757/9842575555, **Shree Krishna Distributors Pvt. Ltd.**, Janakpur 041-528881, Sindhuli 047-520094, **Suyansh Auto Pvt. Ltd.**, Lalbandi 046-501110, **Central Auto Zone Pvt. Ltd.**, Bharatpur 056-522168, Hetauda, Makwanpur 057-524953, **Batas Brothers Pvt. Ltd.**, Pokhara 061-532468, Dumre 056-580259, Baglung 9856033606, Hatiya 068-410003, Beni 069-521099, Gorkha 064-421571, **Karki Multi Trading Concern Pvt. Ltd.**, Charikot, Dolakha 049-421402, **Shrestha Auto Concern Pvt. Ltd.**, Banepa, 011-664302, **Lok Sushila Auto Concern Pvt. Ltd.**, Butwal 071-545986, Kawasaki 9857040936, Tanzen 9857062131, Tamghas 9802620965, Sandhikharka 9802620968, **Kala Incorporated Pvt. Ltd.**, Dhading 010-520660, **Kala Motors**, Nuwakot 010-560036, **Samridhi Enterprises Pvt. Ltd.**, Bhairahawa 071-527254, Ghorahi 082-525270, Birendranagar, Surkhet 083-525270, **Bhusal International Pvt. Ltd.**, Nepalgunj 081-403090, **Dakshinkali Incorporated Pvt. Ltd.**, Dangadi 091-416058, Dipayal 094-412281, **Option Nepal Pvt. Ltd.**, Mahendranagar, Mahakali 099-520854

Url: www.onlineagni.com Email: onlineagni@agnilnc.com.np Service Helpline No.: 16600-100-200 (NTC), 980-157-1212 (Ncell) www.agnigroup.com np twitter/AgniGroup instagram/AgniGroup facebook.com/MahindraAgniGroup

\*Conditions apply.



\*Terms & Conditions apply.

INTRODUCING

# THE WORLD'S CLEAREST VODKA.

FEEL **EVERYTHING**. SEE NOTHING.

The finest master distillers and blenders have come together to create **Ruslan Ultra Premium Vodka**. Crafted from premium hand-picked grains, purest water from the Himalayan glaciers and the deepest aquifers, perfected through multiple quality and filtration processes, we invite you to experience the world's clearest vodka.

Your friends from Jawalakhel remind you to celebrate responsibly.

# 12 years later, justice is a mirage

A proposal to find a way out of the transitional justice impasse splits the victims' movement

**Sewa Bhattarai**

Twelve years after the end of the conflict in 2006, victims and relatives suffered another setback this week with a nasty split in the movement seeking truth and justice for wartime atrocities.

The Conflict Victims' Common Platform (CVCP), an umbrella body made up of activist groups seeking reparations, marked the 12th anniversary of the Comprehensive Peace Accord this year with a charter demanding a new high-level mechanism to address war crimes that would include victims, the government, and political parties.

This prompted a component of the CVCP to split from the group on Wednesday, saying the government had 'infiltrated' the movement to let perpetrators off the hook. The 2006 peace accord between the rebels and the government had agreed to 'probe serious violations of human rights and crimes against humanity' to help in reconciliation.

In 2014, the government had finally formed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Commission for the Investigation of Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP) to investigate wartime abuses. Activists and victims groups initially welcomed this, but it was soon clear that the Transitional Justice Act was too lenient, allowing pardons, amnesty and proposing 'open-air jail' and community service as punishment

to perpetrators.

The CVCP proposed a new high-level mechanism as a way out of the lack of progress by the two commissions, unsatisfactory laws, and expecting greater involvement of all stakeholders.

"Other components of the peace process like the constitution and army integration succeeded because political parties took ownership of these initiatives, but that is lacking in the two commissions, which is why they have stalled. We want a space where they too can be accountable," said Suman Adhikari, a former president of CVCP and a supporter of the mechanism. Adhikari's father, Muktinath Adhikari, a teacher and human rights activist, was executed by the Maoists in January 2002 in Lamjung.

However, a faction led by Ram Bhandari, Devi Sunar, Sabitri Shrestha, Gita Rasaili and others said the participation of party cadre in the new mechanism would invite political interference in the transitional justice process, and this week they united under the banner of a new National Alliance of Conflict Victims.

"What the CVCP is proposing will make it lenient towards perpetrators, and we are concerned

that this will lead to a general amnesty," said Devi Sunar, mother of 14-year-old Maina, who was tortured, raped and killed in Army custody in 2004. Despite the names of the perpetrators being known, they have never faced justice.

The group is concerned that the proposed mechanism will nullify the complaints registered at the two commissions, and even scrap them. Ram Bhandari, whose father was disappeared by the Army in Lamjung in December 2001, says the proposal to form a new mechanism would "hijack" the transitional justice process and would invite political interference in the victims' movement.

"The Conflict Victims' Common Platform has in fact become perpetrators' common platform. Being in the same forum with perpetrators will not give us justice," said Bhandari.

An emotional Sabitri Shrestha agreed: "This move to go for cursory reconciliation is not acceptable to us."

However, CVCP President Bhagiram Chaudhary says its charter does not seek to dismiss

the two commissions but to strengthen them by interacting with all concerned through a new mechanism.

"The Commissions were foisted on us by the government, and never had meaningful participation of victims. The independent body that we propose will take the needs of victims into account. It will focus not just on truth, but also on reparation," Chaudhary explained.

Independent experts agree that the two existing Commissions have lacked teeth, and an alternative was needed to address the diverse needs of victims: displaced persons have not been rehabilitated, many struggle with financial needs for food and education, families of the disappeared, especially widows, struggle with legal difficulties in transferring property.

The government's compensation for victims has been ad hoc and isolated, and two categories (the tortured and those who suffered

sexual abuse) have not received any compensation at all.


"Victims should not wait for truth and justice before their other concerns are addressed, they should go side by side," says activist Tika Dhakal. "The two commissions only address one part of transitional justice: truth finding."

Dhakal adds that reparation and institutional reform are equally important as are research, archiving, and memorialising.

"If internal mechanisms for justice fail, victims will have no option but to take their cases to the international court," Dhakal said.

Nepal's movement for post-conflict justice used to be seen as robust compared to countries where victims' voices are not as strong or united. But the proposal for a high-level entity has been divisive, and has now fragmented victims' demands for truth and justice.

Even though the 'high-level mechanism' is just a proposal so far, it has already generated much heat. The Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs who was present at the unveiling of the CVCP charter has made no further commitment to set it up.

Complicating matters is that the ruling NCP is made up of the UML whose cadre were usually victims of war crimes, and the Maoists together with the security forces were responsible for perpetrating them. The tenures of the two commissions end on 9 February 2019, and the government has not yet decided to extend its mandate, or address the CVCP demand. 



SUBHAS RAI

## Justice in transition

The international community has seen transitional justice as a barrier to the peace process rather than a necessary part of it

totally ineffective as vehicles for establishing 'the truth', promoting 'reconciliation', or bringing the perpetrators of war crimes and human rights abuses to justice.

The victims of conflict have been poorly served by these Commissions, and it is not surprising that there is pressure to dismantle and not to extend their terms of office. But the proposal to establish a new 'independent' entity raises further questions.

'Independent' cannot again mean a cross-party entity because it would then include members whose independence cannot be taken for granted. To be truly independent it should have a membership entirely

unrelated to the political parties: respected figures from the academic community and/or the judiciary perhaps, and certainly representatives of the victims.

Of course, those who fear that 'transitional justice' would lay them open to shame and dishonour, and more crucially to judicial proceedings not only in Nepal but also in other jurisdictions (given that war crimes can be tried outside the country in which they were committed) have been and remain fearful of the work any effective independent commission might do. They and those who protect them have done everything possible so far to block effective progress on all fronts. They have been successful.

The officers and men of the Nepal Army and Police, on the one hand, and the Maoist leadership and cadres of the PLA and the Party, on the other, have the most to fear from a serious enquiry into each of the many thousands of alleged incidents and instances of human rights abuses and war crimes. It is they, and those who speak for them and protect them, who bear the greatest responsibility for the blockage of the peace process, the perpetuation of the suffering experienced by the victims and their families, and the injustice done to them. And for the fact that the country still bleeds from this running wound.


Successive governments have failed to provide necessary support to the two Commissions to enable them to act effectively as legitimate independent bodies, immune from the pressure of vested interests and particularly of those individuals who were liable to investigation and prosecution. Indeed, they have been responsible for initiatives to undermine due process within Nepal and abroad.

No effort was spared, for example, by the government of Nepal, first to prevent and then to subvert the trial in London of Colonel Lama who was accused by two Nepalis of torture, when the British police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) had charged him with war crimes. Eventually, that trial was brought to an inconclusive halt when the CPS withdrew its proceedings against

Colonel Lama.

Also, the so-called 'international community', while calling for the completion of the peace process started by the CPA in November 2006 and taken forward over the next two years –and even supervising aspects of it (like integration via UNMIN) -- has tended all too often to regard transitional justice as a barrier to the peace process rather than a necessary part of it. The political parties appear to wish to model the new proposed entity on the integration process, but UN involvement has been ruled out on the advice of one foreign delegation in December 2017.

More recent secret initiatives by the Swiss and German representatives in particular (and possibly others as well) which seem to propose resolving the issue by effectively sweeping the whole thing under the carpet certainly run counter to the thrust of the CPA and to the rights of the victims and their families to be heard, to be heeded and to secure justice. Few of those demanding justice will agree that the CIEDP has almost completed its work.

It is time for transparency, for a truly independent body, perhaps with judicial oversight, to investigate fully and process properly the claims and allegations of the victims of human rights abuses and war crimes, and for those found guilty of perpetrating such abuses and crimes to be brought to justice, in Nepal and, if considered appropriate, in the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague. 



**GADFLY**

David Seddon

of specific institutions dedicated to uncovering the truth about war crimes and human rights abuses during the conflict, to discovering what happened to those who had 'disappeared', and to bringing those responsible to justice.

There were already at that time well-known and well-documented examples of atrocities committed during the conflict by the Royal Nepal Army and Nepal Police, the Armed Police Force (APF), the Maoist PLA and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). It was anticipated that other crimes would be discovered and pursued, and instances of disappearance, ill-treatment, torture and extra-judicial killings would be revealed and dealt with, sensitively but with due process.

Two Commissions were to be established, but it took two years for them even to be formally constituted. Supposedly 'independent' they were in fact 'multi-party' bodies (not the same thing) and were wracked by party, political and personal divisions. They have proved to be almost

# Tulsa's sons

Dipak Gyawali  
in Rupendehi

Posters of gods and goddesses adorn the dark interior of the tin hut in Sainamaina village in Rupendehi district. Below them, Tulsa Pandey has hung a photograph of herself with her husband Jhabindra and two sons Durga and Yubaraj (pictured below). Only Tulsa is still alive. During the war, the posters used to be of Marx, Engels, Mao and Nepal's communist leaders. Having lost the men in her life, Tulsa has now devoted herself to god, and helping others. Her husband Jhabindra died of a heart attack a year before the family moved from Gulmi to the Tarai 30 years ago. Yubaraj joined the Maoists and was wounded during a battle in Bamitaskar in Gulmi in 1998. He was taken by his comrades to Delhi for treatment, and on return became involved with the party's



underground propaganda activities. Security forces captured him in 2000, and he was disappeared. His older brother Durga joined the Maoist out of a sense of vengeance, and while on his way to a Maoist gathering in Rupendehi was killed by the security forces. "First they shot him, and then they beat him to death, they wouldn't give us his body," Tulsa recalls.

It has been nearly 20 years since Tulsa lost her two sons, and says: "Even today at meal time, I expect them to walk in through the door and call out to me."

Tulsa's daughter Kamala's brother-in-law was killed by the Maoists towards the beginning of the conflict. Her other daughter, Bishnu, used to be married to a soldier in the erstwhile Royal Nepal Army but left him after he brought a second wife.

Tulsa Pandey received Rs2 million from the government as compensation for the loss of her sons. Adding money from her savings, she has set up a fund to upgrade roads in her village. She has also built a memorial for her sons, and a scholarship for students who cannot afford school fees.

For her part, Tulsa is living hand-to-mouth. She has diabetes and other ailments, but cannot afford medical treatment. She has no other income besides the Rs 1,000 single women's allowance.

"After my sons were disappeared and killed, their commanders haven't bothered to visit. The leaders live in big villas in Kathmandu," she says. At a recent family wedding, she saw young men who were as old as her sons would be if they were still alive. She came home, and looked at the photographs of her sons for a long time. She could not sleep that night.

## God created WINTERS, we created HOT RUM PUNCH

- Khukri XXX Rum
- Cinnamon Powder
- Lemon Juice
- Star Anise
- Cardamom
- Hot Water
- Honey
- Clove



NEPAL WHEREVER YOU ARE.

Times.com

ZIPAL COMPANY PVT. LTD.  
Official Distributor

THE ALL AMERICAN CLASSIC WINDPROOF LIGHTER

zippo

NOW IN NEPAL



Choose and Customize your very own Zippo at [facebook.com/zipponepal](https://facebook.com/zipponepal) or [instagram.com/zippoinnepal](https://instagram.com/zippoinnepal) Contacts: +977 9803024740 and +977 9818066750  
For details regarding customization [zipal@yahoo.com](mailto:zipal@yahoo.com)



# Do we really need a new year?

There are unconfirmed reports coming out of the Office of the Astrologer General that, if all goes according to plan, the Earth will complete yet another orbit around the sun on Tuesday.

If this rumour turns out to be correct, it calls for a celebration. After everything we humans have done to wreck the planet, it looks like the planet is doing just fine, spinning merrily on its axis oblivious to climate change, species extinction, wars and Donald Trump. It is still orbiting the sun without a care in the world.

However, as responsible citizens, we must ponder: Is it really such a good idea to embark on a new year at this point in time? Do we actually need a brand new year? What's wrong with the old one? Can we individually and collectively take another 365 days of this?

At the rate things are going the new year is going to be a lot crappier than the last one. At least we were getting used to being miserable 2018-style, now, in the new year we will have to get used to a whole new set of unfamiliar events. What if they complete Melamchi? Imagine the shock to the system. What if the Sankhu Road is paved? How will we ever deal with a six-lane highway from Thankot to Kalanki? How will we handle an upgraded Kathmandu Airport?

So, to cope with new year surprises, we should petition The Higher Up Authority to please let us continue with 2018, and leave things the way they are.

However, as a fall back, in case our petition is rejected, we better be ready with our 2019 new year resolutions. Here are mine:

1. I am going to get myself a life membership of the Nepal Bar Association Pvt Ltd. And that is probably where you will find me during 2019: nursing a large Famous Grouch on the rocks. And I am going to make sure I always see the glass as half-empty, so I am eligible for a refill at Happy Hour.
2. I will cut down on carbs by cutting the cake into smaller slices before eating it.
3. I hereby resolve that in the new year I will not work harder than I have to, I will not do today what I can do tomorrow.
4. I will hold my head high in 2019 and tell all firanghis they needn't bother trying to destabilise our country, we're doing that just fine by ourselves.
5. I will stop giving cash bribes to get stuff done. In the interest of transparency, palms will be greased strictly by account payee cheque.
6. I will not waste time aimlessly surfing the net on my phone in 2019, I'll do it on my PC.
7. I will stop drinking and driving. (I will stop driving, and only drink.)
8. I will stop smoking two packs of cigarettes a day. (I'll just breathe Kathmandu air.)
9. I will stop using bad words. WTF, I'll just use internet slang like STFU, LMFAO.
10. I will continue to make a complete Ass of myself every week in 2019.



The Ass

