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KUNDA DIXIT

## Try Visiting Nepal

Charles Shobhraj once claimed that he could pass an elephant through Nepal's customs, and that is still true at Kathmandu airport, where inadequate facilities are compounded by what insiders say are wide-open loopholes for big-time smugglers while innocent passengers are hassled.

After outrage from passengers, Tribhuvan Airport is getting a facelift, but most of it superficial. As a \$100 million upgrade lies in limbo, Nepal's only international gateway gives a poor impression to passengers.

Tourism Minister Rabindra Adhikari says not everything at the airport is under his ministry, and it is difficult to coordinate between the 171 government, security and private entities there. His effort to turn TIA into a 'boutique airport' is being ridiculed as it takes hours to get through visa lines, customs x-ray

bottleneck, and luggage carousel. Then passengers are forced to negotiate an obstacle course to a new parking lot 200m down without trolleys, and a tourist broke his leg last month after slipping in the dark.

Chief of airport customs Gajendra Kumar Thakur passes the buck to the ministry: "We have only half the staff we need, and that means we are overwhelmed when many planes land together."

One afternoon last week, angry passengers muttered profanities as they waited for 45 minutes to be checked if they were 'metal free' at the arrival x-ray (photo, above) supposed to detect passengers bringing in more than the allowable 1 litre of liquor, or 50g of gold ornaments.

Two passengers are apprehended every week, but the x-rays do not seem to have deterred

smugglers who pass gold by the kilogram.

The airport's reputation as a den of smugglers was spotlighted anew after the scandal involving 33kg of seized gold that went missing last year. A Parliamentary committee recommended plugging loopholes, but the passenger bottleneck remains, inconveniencing passengers ahead of Visit Nepal Year 2020 by when the country hopes to bring in 2 million tourists.

"We found that the biggest problem lay in the customs mechanism," Janakraj Joshi of the parliamentary sub-committee revealed. The report was presented to Parliament's Good Governance and Monitoring Committee last year, but Joshi says nothing happened.

Airport officials promise the arrival concourse will have

two more conveyor belts by May. Spokesman Pratap Babu Tiwari says the runway and apron expansion will resume soon, the terminal will have free WiFi and "soothing music."

After waiting hours at immigration and customs, the last thing passengers want to hear is blaring muzak. **Sewa Bhattarai**



### HORSE SENSE

PAGE 8-9

**AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET**  
EDITORIAL  
PAGE 2

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GOING PLACES TOGETHER



# AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET

What makes Nepal scenic is also what makes it seismic. The country is located in one of the most vulnerable regions of the world for earthquakes, and our ancestors were used to them happening regularly. They knew that as they rebuilt after one earthquake, they had to prepare for the next one.

A scientific paper published in *Nature Communications* this month gives us a sobering reminder of this danger. Even as we catch up with reconstruction and rehabilitation after 2015, we have to scale up to the whole country our preparedness for the Next Big One.

Himalayan earthquakes fall into two main types. There are moderate intensity quakes like the ones in 2015 and 2008 which are accompanied by a lot of shaking, but do not deform the surface. Then there are gigantic upheavals like the 8.3 magnitude 1934 quake epicentred in eastern Nepal which destroyed much of Kathmandu, and the 8.7 magnitude Assam earthquake in 1950, described as the greatest earthquake to hit the Himalaya in recorded history. Megaquakes like these uplift the surface and are what formed the Himalaya.

Seismologists studying data from the 2015 event have concluded that the Gorkha Earthquake ruptured eastwards, and stopped underground somewhere south of Kathmandu Valley, and instead of releasing the stores stress, increased

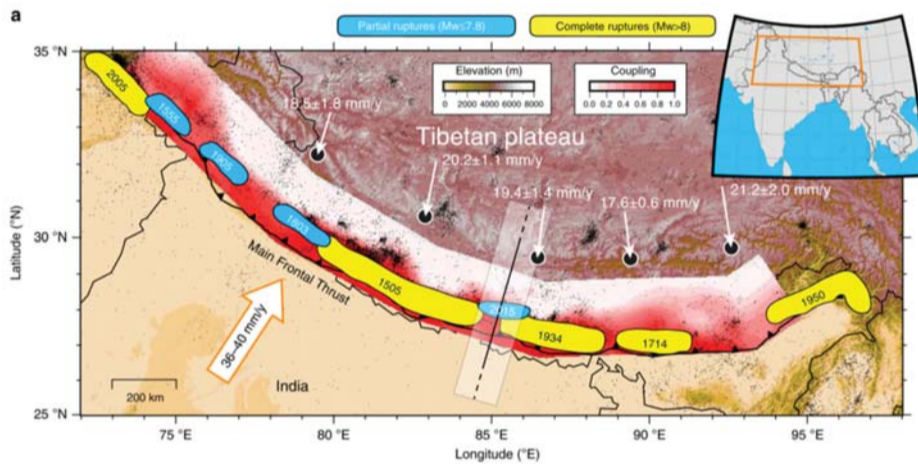
gap in western Nepal which has not seen a megaquake since 1505. The western half of the country was not affected by 2015, and is at double risk because of the long seismic gap and relatively low awareness there about earthquake safety.

The focus on rebuilding in 14 districts of central Nepal hit by the 2015 earthquake should not stop us from getting western Nepal prepared for the Big One. Indeed, the whole of Nepal, northern India and the region should brace itself because a megaquake of 8.5 magnitude in western Nepal would cause widespread death and devastation across northern South Asia, which is the world's most densely-populated region of the world. Seismologists warn it could possibly be the worst disaster in human history in terms of loss of life.

Response to the 2015 earthquake should now encompass the whole country, schools need to be retrofitted, hospitals and public buildings reinforced, and disaster management plans be put into place. But as with everything else in Nepal, we tend to focus on a disaster that has already occurred than on the one that has not struck yet. The answer may lie in provincial and local governments enforcing building codes and drawing up preparedness plans, a job for which the national government has so far been deficient.

The 2015 earthquakes were an important warning for us to be better prepared for the really big one. Despite

**Response to the 2015 earthquake should now encompass the whole country, as we await the Big One.**



tectonic tension underneath Central Nepal. They say moderate quakes like 2015 can actually trigger future megaquakes as the rock layers release accumulated stress along faults.

These urgent warnings came as Nepal marked the anniversary of the 1934 megaquake last week as National Earthquake Safety Day. As if to remind us, there were two tremors in the rupture zone below Kathmandu this week.

Himalayan seismologist Roger Bilham says the 2015 earthquake was not the Big One which scientists had feared. In fact, it is still collecting energy beneath us and it could be let off in the near future just as the 1833 earthquake in Kathmandu was followed by another one 30 years later. The second quake this time could cause more damage because its epicentre may be directly beneath Kathmandu Valley.

Added to the unfinished business of 2015, there is also the danger posed by the seismic

the tragic loss of 8,900 lives, Nepal got off relatively lightly three years ago for a quake of that magnitude. It struck on a Saturday when schools were closed, the telecommunication network was functioning, highways were open, electricity supply was restored fairly quickly and Kathmandu Airport was not damaged. Next time we may not be so lucky.

Monks in Tibet noted the exact time of the last big quake in western Nepal at 6AM on 1 June 1505. Estimated at 8.9, that earthquake devastated north India, destroyed Agra and other Moghul cities, may have triggered the Annapurna slope collapse that dammed the Seti River which burst to create the debris field where Pokhara is located today.

There is now so much slip deficit beneath western Nepal that a sudden elastic rebound can move the entire half of the country southwards by a shocking 14m. The Gorkha Earthquake three years ago was just a forewarning of an even bigger disaster to come.

## 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Ten years ago in #435 of *Nepali Times* for 23-26 January 2009, Prashant Jha in his column Plain Speaking wrote about the simmering anger in the Tarai two years after the Madhes uprising. Kathmandu's inability to heed this warning led to further violence when the constitution was promulgated in 2015. Excerpt:

*Two years after the Madhes movement altered Nepali nationalism, the Tarai is in a mess. Anger against Kathmandu was the defining feature of this period. Now, a mix of disillusionment, rage, helplessness and fear prevails. Macro politics is more fragmented than ever, across party and caste lines. And at the micro level violence has become the only tool to resolve political and personal disputes.*

*Kathmandu can appoint a credible minister for Tarai affairs to handle political grievances, local killings, micro disputes, administrative weakness, agreement implementation. Full time, sensitive, and sincere engagement with the plains is the only hope.*



NATURE COMMUNICATIONS

Times.com

## ONLINE PACKAGES



### MISSING NEPAL

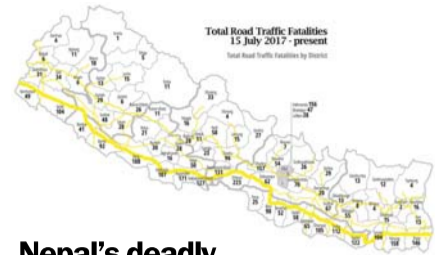
Watch video of the British Gurkha grandparents as they share their grief of living in a foreign land. After retirement, they do not have much to do in London and miss their family and the place they were born in. Visit their living spaces and hear stories of what keeps them in the UK. *Story: page 14-15.*



### HORSING AROUND

Join our video team on a visit to the Wind Horse Stables and take a ride on one of the magnificent animals. Learn how horses bond with humans who ride them, and how they have mood swings just like people. *Story: page 8-9.*

## WHAT'S TRENDING



### Nepal's deadly roads take their toll

by Gopal Gartaula  
1,176 people have been killed across Nepal in road traffic accidents in the past 5 months, a sharp increase from the same period in previous years. Yet the government does not even seem to acknowledge that road safety is its responsibility, taking an 'accidents happen' attitude. Go online for interactive graphics and district-wise breakdown of fatalities in this most widely shared Nepali Times story last week.

**Most reached and shared on Facebook**

**Most popular on Twitter**

**Most commented**



### The new reality of Nepal's virtual celebrities

by Sewa Bhattarai  
A new brand of celebrities called 'influencers' now propel themselves to fame through social media, and the phenomenon is also turning the traditional advertising industry on its head. This package was very popular among the readers online, as it should have been. If you missed it visit nepalitimes.com and meet Nepal's virtual celebrities.

**Most visited online page**

## QUOTE TWEETS

**Nepali Times @nepalitimes**  
1,176 people have been killed across Nepal in what police call road traffic accidents in the last 5 months. The fatalities have gone up sharply in the past decade. It is no longer correct to call them accidents, this is slaughter.

**Puspa Raj Pant @Puspa\_RPant**  
Strongest ever #Nepal media stand against road-rage: "it is no longer correct to call them accidents" @nepalitimes's calls for a change on reporting. Ugly face of #RoadDeaths in Nepal, infographic presentation in @NepaliTimes.

**Lalit pant @Lalitpa25773497**  
License distribution process should be standardised, strict laws are necessary.

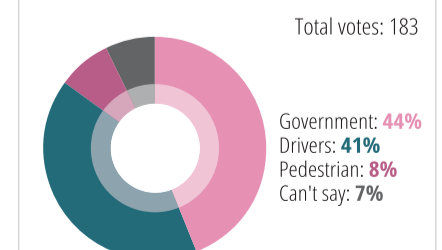
**kalash shrestha @KalashShrestha**  
This is not accident. This is murder. Murder assisted by poor roads, incompetent drivers, poor traffic rules, sub-standard buses vehicles, overcrowded buses, etc.

**Nepali Times @nepalitimes**  
Many ask why or how Nepal has a Communist Party in power with a majority popular vote. Nati Bajra, a relatively unknown linguist, writer and song composer who passed way last week made a big contribution. Find out how in this latest by Anil Chitrakar..

**Anna Stirr @annastirr**  
His bookshop made a great impact. And so did his songs!

Weekly Internet Poll #944

Q. Who is the most responsible for road accidents?



Weekly Internet Poll #945  
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. What is the worst part about Tribhuvan International Airport?

Nepali Times

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Publisher and Chief Editor: Kunda Dixit  
Design: Kiran Maharjan  
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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

# Kathmandu Airport is

The only aerial gateway of the country leaves a first and last impression

In a country ruled by a Communist Party, one would expect that its egalitarian philosophy would prompt the people in power to remove the VIP arrival and departure gates at Nepal's only international airport.

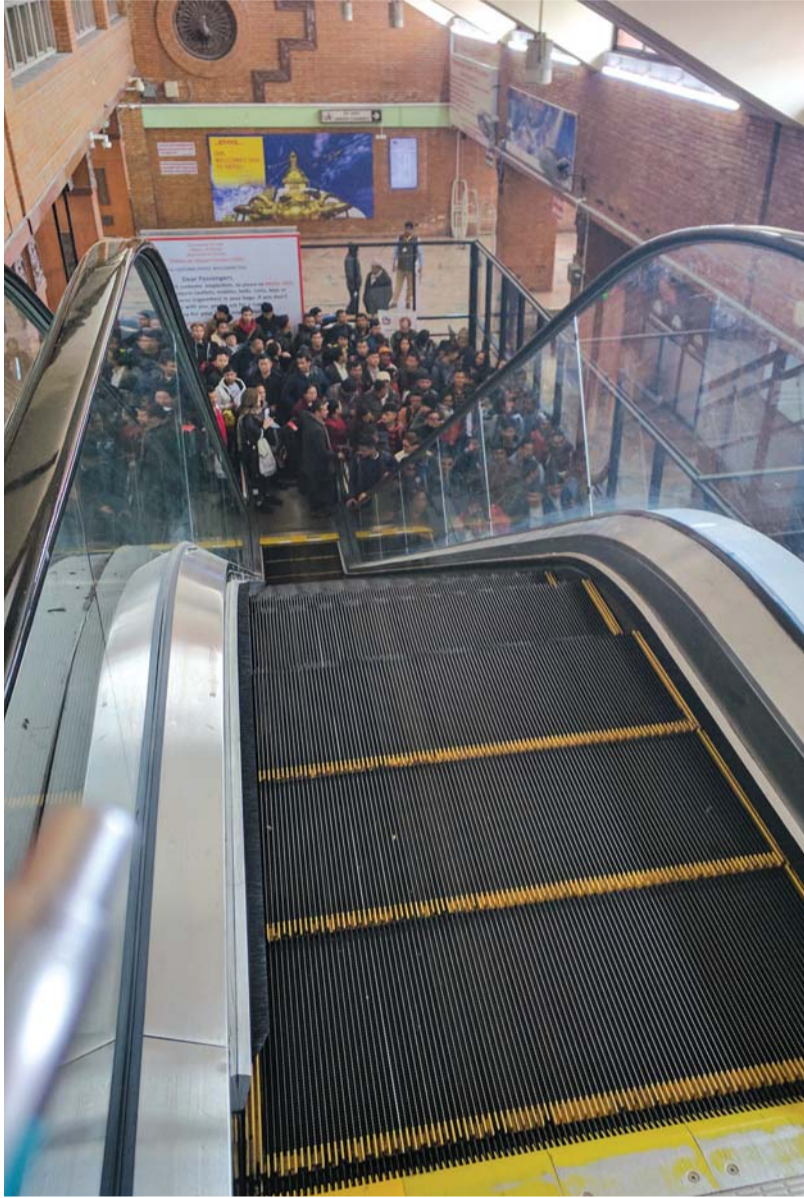


1/2 FULL  
Anil Chitrakar

It would be a symbol and a message to the whole world that Nepal is moving towards a classless society, and that all forms of feudalism have come to an end thanks to our glorious revolution. If the rulers of this country were to make an example of themselves and use the same facilities as the people, they would go through the same terrible experience that passengers have to endure on a daily basis. After that, perhaps things would improve for everyone. But don't bet on it, we live in a real-life Animal Farm.

Airports around the world may look different, but they all have the same basic function. Kathmandu's terminal building with its brick façade is actually unique because it is not an anonymous glass and steel sculpture. Tourism Minister Rabindra Adhikari has a point: we should call it a 'boutique airport'.

However exotic an airport is, and whatever you call it, airports need to keep passenger convenience top on their list of priorities. Kathmandu



BIJAY NIROULA



airport is not just inconvenient, it is a torture chamber – and that says a lot about the state of the country.

If airports create the first impression of a country, then we are doing a horrible job of it. The experience of going through the Kathmandu airport is not simple, not easy, not smooth, not efficient, not welcoming, not respectful, not friendly, and definitely not fast. Getting to the parking lot and

finding a ride out has just gotten much more complicated.

Who came up with the idea of the 'lower level parking', anyway? A tourist broke an ankle two weeks ago while negotiating the steep path to the new parking lot off the Ring Road. And the horrendous queue at the 'Metal Free' x-ray after arrival immigration is an absurdity that deserves a whole new column.

Systems and systems thinking

## Bicycling in Waling



JUKSON

On 1 February, Waling in Syangja District will be the venue of the first annual world class mountain biking championship. The 100km International Open Mountain Biking Marathon to be held every year 60km south of Pokhara starting this year will be one of the toughest one day MTB events in the world.

The mountain biking adventure has a total ascent of 4,000m which has to be covered within just 10 hours.



Located in the mid-mountains of Nepal with a stunning backdrop of the Himalaya in the Andhi Khola valley, the trail offers a run through a culturally diverse area.

The first Waling 100 offers one of the highest prize money in the MTB racing world with the title prize of Rs500,000 and a historic opportunity for the Title Winner to name the trail. The female biker who comes first will get Rs300,000. The race

is being organised by the Wonder Waling initiative with Waling Municipality and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and will have 25 foreign and 150 Nepali start in Waling Bazar, and will travel through Mirdi, Jagat Bhanjyang, Dumre Bhanjyang and back to Waling.

"Waling and Syangja are rich in natural and cultural diversity, we want to combine the two and promote the district as a prime tourism destination," says Dinkar Nepal of Wonderful Waling. **Yuvaraj Shrestha**

### prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS

#### Exclusive fares

Turkish Airlines introduces a new promotional campaign valid till 31 May 2019. Passengers can now fly to selected destinations in Europe from



Kathmandu at exclusive return fares starting from Rs31,000 (excluding taxes). Destinations included are London, Paris, Hamburg, Munich, Frankfurt, Milan, Zurich, Rome and Geneva. Contact (01) 4438363/4438436

#### Summit on aeropolitics

Qatar Airways will be hosting global aviation industry leaders for the inaugural 'CAPA Qatar Aviation, Aeropolitical and



Regulatory Summit' in Doha 5-6 February. The high-level forum will feature expert speakers from the airline, legal and government sectors to discuss the latest developments in international aviation regulation.

#### Sun power

NMB Bank has signed a private power purchase agreement with Saral Urja Nepal for a 50kW grid-tie solar roof-top with net metering at its head office in Babar Mahal. Saral Urja will install, own and operate the solar roof-top for 15 years, and NMB will purchase all the electricity generated at a price lower than their retail grid electricity tariff with no up-front investment.

#### Cricket ambassadors

JGI's Ruslan has appointed national cricket team heavy-weights Paras Khadka, Gyanendra Malla and Sharad Vesawkar



as its brand ambassadors. The year-long engagement will see both the teams working closely to promote cricket among the youth and to help regulate and develop the sport in the country.

#### IELTS on screen

British Council Nepal has introduced IELTS on a computer, providing an alternative to the traditional paper-based test, without changing the content, timing and structure. However, the oral test remains face-to-face with a certified IELTS Examiner. Participants can also get their results faster, typically between 5-7 calendar days after the test has been completed.

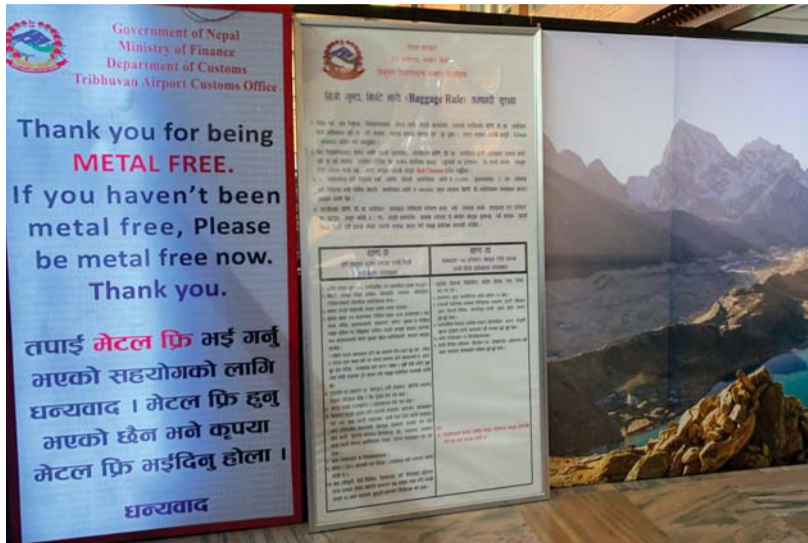
prabhu BANK

# Nepal in a microcosm

of Nepal for visitors, and it is not pleasant



PHOTOS: KUNDA DIXIT



serve their own personal interest. Systems would mean you would have to get in line like everyone else. No one in power would like that to happen.

Kathmandu Airport is also unique because the people who 'work' here and manage the various services report to the

forementioned 19 bosses. There is no one person given the requisite authority to manage the airport and hence, very conveniently, no one can be held responsible. We love the term 'accountable' in our new republic, but no one can be held accountable for our collective and individual bad experience at the

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS:** Passengers have to wait at the top of the escalator because of the overflow from the 'metal free' x-ray gate in the arrival concourse at Kathmandu Airport (*far left*). It takes passengers 45 minutes to reach the x-ray (*middle*). There is little coordination between the Customs Department and the Civil Aviation Authority that manages the airport (*left*).

airport. This makes it easy to blame someone else.

Most of Nepal's infrastructure, including the Kathmandu airport, were built at a time when the volume of people using them was much less. It is the same with power generation or water supply, roads, hospitals, offices, they are all too small to handle the exponential increase in people seeking services. That is where efficiency comes in, the idea of doing more with less has to be central to management in our economy.

In a multi-party democracy, competition should be the key that

drives political decision making and choosing the best people to do the job. In Nepal, we really have to wonder if there is any competition. Everything seems to be about syndicating, cartelling, and 'setting', so that the same people benefit no matter who wins the elections.

The young no longer believe that this situation is going to change anytime soon, and hence are voting with their feet – as can be seen at the airport with 2,000 students and workers leaving the country every day. They are looking for opportunities around the world where their skills and knowledge will be valued and rewarded.

There are good, competent people here, but they would not fill the criteria the rulers look for. It is clear that improving the airport for the passenger is never the agenda. Extracting resources, extorting hapless travelers and making it as inconvenient as possible is at the centre of political decision making in Nepal today. 🇳🇵

**Anil Chitrakar** is President of Siddharthinc.

can be taught, and there are exams for it. Kathmandu Airport does not have a system. In fact, there are at last count 19 different government agencies represented here from customs to immigration, civil aviation to duty free, and no coordinating body.

Nepal's rent-seeking rulers like to keep everything ad hoc so that they can use their power, access, network and influence to better



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Better late than never is all we have got to say about the westerly front that dumped all that rain and snow all over Nepal on Tuesday and Wednesday after a prolonged drought. Although western and eastern Nepal had received precipitation, this frontal system brought much-needed rain for winter crops and to wash off the dust and pollution. The rain will taper off by Saturday allowing daytime temperature will go up with sunshine temporarily unfiltered by haze.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
13° 6°	14° 4°	17° 3°

# Why Nepalis are learning Mandarin,

**Rachel Zhang**  
in Kunming

Study in China is no free lunch for Nepalis

**K**ung fu, paper decoration and calligraphy – those are the classes management student Prakash Nepali is attending these days in this southern Chinese city. The reason: He is interested in computer programming, but he cannot do hands on practice because there is only one PC in the lab and the professor uses it for his powerpoint for the class.

Nepali has been studying logistics management with a full scholarship in China's Yunnan University since 2017 and gets \$360 a month from the Chinese government to cover his living expenses. It sounds like a good deal, but Nepali says he would not recommend it to others back home.

As bilateral trade and investment increase, there is growing interest among Nepali students to study in China. In 2017 alone, more than 6,400 Nepalis flew over the Himalaya to the north for their higher studies. They were attracted by the chance to learn Mandarin as well as government scholarships. But not everything is what they expected.

"I've forgotten why I came here. I got into a study program not relevant to the trade business that I want to be involved in when I get back," Nepali told us.

Bishwash Shrestha and Nepali have been friends since high school. They applied for the same college together by paying \$4,000 to an education agent. They are the only two Nepalis in the Silk Road Program of Yunnan University.

"Everything is ok here, except



we end up having to teach ourselves. The level of instruction is not what we expected," says Shrestha. Nepali had 11 compulsory courses in his first semester last year. Besides main courses such as management, microeconomics, mathematics, he had to take eight other intensive courses introducing Chinese language, art, and policy.

All the subjects are taught in English, but the two say the Chinese professor's English is not even as good as theirs and it is difficult to understand. They say the syllabus lacks focus, and even their teachers in Nepal had better motivation. Another Nepali student, Pawan

Gole, however, has no complaints. He is satisfied with his studies and in two years, speaks Mandarin fluently. He says, "Of course, you have to work hard, if I don't I would lose face in front of my classmates who work hard."

Feeling optimistic about his future, Gole has given up the thought of going back to be a Chinese teacher. He thinks he has a better career as a Mandarin interpreter as Chinese investment and trade with Nepal grows.

Babu Ram Paudel is also doing well, and has been at Yunnan University for three years and is now a post-doctoral fellow in biology. His paper on Himalayan biodiversity was printed in the journal *Evolution* last year.

Outside of class, Gole has Chinese friends, but other students say they do not mix much with their local classmates. "Maybe people ignore me because I look Chinese," jokes Suman Pradhan, another student at Yunnan University.

Most Nepali students here hang out with international students from 12 countries, cooking with Thai classmates and Pradhan says he can speak Bengali because he spends so much time with his Bangladeshi friends in Kunming.

A week after the interviews in Kunming, the students are moving on. Nepali is excited that he does not have to take calligraphy and kung fu classes next semester. Gole is travelling to Beijing for Chinese New Year, Shrestha and Pradhan have returned to Nepal for winter holidays with suitcases full of presents for relatives and friends.

We ask Nepali on WeChat how it is going. He replies with an emoji that means 'hard to say'.

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**MUTUAL ADMIRATION:** Chinese students at the Nepal Embassy in Beijing (*left*). Chinese students with their Nepali professor at Tribhuvan University (*below*) in Kathmandu. More than 300 foreign students are currently studying Nepali at the university.

# and Chinese are learning Nepali



ALL PHOTOS: RACHEL ZHANG

When Bala Ram Aryal first started teaching Nepali language in 1988, there were six other teachers, but only one foreign student. This year there are more than 300 foreign students learning Nepali in Tribhuvan University's foreign Language Campus.

Similarly in 2017 only one university in China had a Nepali language department. This year, three more universities are teaching Nepali to Chinese students.

*Nepali Times* reached out to three students who study Nepali in China, and all said they chose the major following suggestions from their families.

Wei Lin, the only Nepali professor at the Communication University in Beijing, says: "Most of my students don't know what they want to do in future, and I tried to convince them that there is potential in learning Nepali."

Qunyu Zhao is a handicraft worker who does not even speak English but

wants to settle down in Nepal and open a business.

"I found a Nepali language book and found the rules were simple. Now, I can read street signs even though I don't know what they mean," says Zhao after five months of learning Nepali. He plans to finish the 6-semester program at Tribhuvan University and move his family to Kathmandu and give his children a more international education.

Xiaoli Liu has never been to Nepal, but is passionate about learning Nepali. When *Nepali Times* gave her a call last week, she was in the library preparing for her final exams in Nepali.

"I enjoy learning new languages and Nepali was so exotic for me because so few foreigners can speak it," she said.

Xiaoli admits that when she was admitted to the Communication University two years ago, her mind went blank. "I knew nothing about Nepal and the

Devnagari letters looked more like drawings than characters," she recalls. Now, Xiaoli can fluently communicate in Nepali and will come to Kathmandu for an exchange program next year.

Not everyone is like Liu and Zhao whose study coincides with their interests. Most students learn it for other reasons. Aryal says most of his students enroll because they need visas for long-term stay in Nepal. Many never show up in class after the first semester.


Most Chinese people study Nepali because they need it for their businesses. Huan Wang quit her job in China and started a building material business in Kathmandu three years ago. She uses her Nepali language to build trust with her Nepali business partner to show that she has long-term plans to stay in Nepal, and this gives him the confidence to cooperate with her.

Chinese professor Lin attributed the increase in interest in Nepali language

to China's belt Road Initiative: "Under the initiative, there will be more Chinese projects in Nepal and this means there is more interest in learning Nepali."

Yiwei Wang, Lin's student, says her relatives used to ask her why she was learning a "useless" language. She says her seniors found good jobs in big companies because they spoke Nepali, and she wants to do the same.

Meanwhile, in Nepal there is also greater interest in learning Chinese because of the prospect of higher studies in China, and the increasing number of Chinese tourists and investors coming to Nepal.

Sumit Tuladhar has been studying Mandarin for one month at a monastery in Kathmandu, and says he wants to work in tourism, where he thinks knowledge of Chinese will help him. Tuladhar's friends are also learning Chinese now for higher studies or business in China. 

**Rachel Zhang**



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# Developing a horse sense in Kathmandu

Horses help humans heal, bond with animals and compensate for the nature d

**Prakriti Kandel**

The most unique aspect about equestrian sports is that it requires perfect coordination between two different species: the horse and the human who rides it.

Understanding and respecting horses, bonding with these powerful creatures is a crucial element of the sport, which is catching on in Kathmandu. Once an activity restricted to royals, there are now horse riding schools catering to a growing interest in the public.

One of them is Wind Horse Stables in Gokarna which started 11 years ago and has a stable of 13 horses and 100 members who learn to ride and even practice modern Dressage.

Says owner Niroj KC: "To learn riding, you first need to build that connection with the horse, to understand their moods and psychology."

Indeed, riders and groomers must be able to decipher the horse's body language, its intricate flick of the ears, rolling of eyes, or feet movements.

Horses require extensive care, an adequate diet, regular grooming, exercise, and training to prepare them for rides. But physical fitness alone does not suffice, horses have mood swings just like humans, and need tender, loving care. Horses in fact mirror human emotions, if treated with love, they reflect that affection. If abused, they respond with violence.

Wind Horse Stables and others in Kathmandu teach Dressage, an equestrian sport in which horses are trained to perform walks and moves. Riders must communicate efficiently through movements to elicit required responses from their horses. Horses are also involved in games such as polo, show jumping, horse racing, vaulting, or rodeo.

Even though they are used today predominantly for recreation, horses have been a part of human civilisation for thousands of years. Believed to be

originally domesticated for meat and milk in Eurasian steppes, the horses' subsequent use for transportation gave speed to humans unattainable before, helped expand human settlements, agriculture and economies.

In Nepal, horses are still used for transportation in some Himalayan settlements because of their ability to navigate through difficult terrain. In the First and Second World War, horses have battled alongside the Gurkhas.

The cavalry in Nepal was first established in 1849 by King Surendra Bir Bikram Shah, and horses were used in battle in the 1855-56 war with Tibet. Today, the Nepal Army cavalry owns the greatest number of horses in Nepal with 107, and more are being bred in Bharatpur. The army cavalry also has its own riding school at its headquarters at the Narayanhiti Palace Museum.

The former war horses today mostly have a ceremonial role in festivals, and during official ceremonies. The annual Ghode Jatra festival is possibly the most important, where army riders perform a range of equine stunts

and games in Tundikhel. Myth has it that the thunderous sound of horses' hoofs repels child-eating demons.

Hari Prasad Chauhan of Nepal Army Cavalry says the animals now have a largely ceremonial role, as mechanised transport takes over military and civilian roles of the animals. An increasing number of women are now interested in riding and handling horses.

Jagannath Devkota took up horse-riding a year-and-half ago and says, "Horse-riding has natural healing power, and it replenishes people suffering from nature deficit. Riding helps me overcome anxiety and become more concentrated and calm."

Devkota, managing director at Manakamana School, adds that riding is good exercise, helps reduce weight, and to stay physically fit. He brings his students once a week to Wind Horse Riding Stables so they too can experience horses' love and soothing power.

"Working with horses just brings out a sense of inner happiness," says Madan Pandey, who worked in the Army Cavalry






## Deficit of city dwellers

with horses for 16 years, and performed at Ghode Jatra. He missed his horses after retirement, and got a job as a groom at Wind Horse Stables. 📍

### HORSING AROUND



Join our video team on a visit to the Wind Horse Stables and take a ride on one of the magnificent animals. Learn how horses bond with humans who ride them, and how they have mood swings just like people.

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

### IF WISHES WERE HORSES

#### Riding Schools in Kathmandu

1. Wind Horse Stables, Gokarna  
9803771117
2. Flying Horse Nepal, Dhapakhel  
9801007705 , 9801001407
3. Angel Horse Stables, Baluwatar  
(especially for wedding carriages)  
9808140918

ABOUT TOWN

EVENTS



Flute with Manose

Flute maestro Manose Singh is giving a close and personal workshop on flute. 25 January, 6:30pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel, Free admission, (01) 5543554

Stand-up comedy

Enjoy the grand stand-up comedy show where the laughter revolves continuously. 26 January, 1pm and 5pm, Outdoor Adventure Centre, Thamel, Rs200/ Rs250, (01) 4433515

Transformative Tech

Join in to understand how portable Electroencephalography (EEG) tools can be used to calm your mind. EEG is a new business opportunity, designed to enhance psychological well-being, cognitive function and physical capabilities. 2 February, 9am-12pm, Moksh Bar, Jhamsikhel, Register here: bit.ly/2AVyKwB



Writing101

A workshop by Prajesh SJB Rana on writing fiction is open to anyone wanting to improve the skill and to overcome creative block. Learn to translate the story in your head onto a paper. 26 January, 11am-3pm, Evoke Café & Bistro, Jhamsikhel, Rs500, 9851111051

Coffee brewing course

The most affordable coffee brewing foundation and intermediate combo course by one of the highly talented and reputed Specialty Coffee Association Certified Instructors. Miss not! 12-14 February, 9:30am-5pm, NCA Coffee Lab and Training School, 9802023082

Facing our Time

Celebrating the 70th anniversary of bilateral relations between France and Nepal, The French Embassy in Nepal, Alliance Française Kathmandu and the Nepal Economic Forum are organising a panel discussion on "exploring the emerging discourses from a multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary approach". RSVP by 28 January. 31 January, 3pm, Hotel Himalaya, Lalitpur, communication.afk@gmail.com



Mithila Cosmos

Mithila Cosmos, Songs of Innocence & Experience is an exhibition of paintings by S. C. Suman. 25 January- 20 February, 10-5:30pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited

Mask Unmask

Nepal Improv, an improvisation theatre troupe, will be creating characters and stories on the spot without any script or rehearsal. See the performers embrace uncertainty to create dramatic pieces. 26 January, 4pm onwards, The Yantra House, Mahankal, Boudha, Rs400



Jewels of Newar Art

The second edition of the art exhibition displaying some of the best traditional Newar arts along with works from other diverse fields. It is also the inaugural of the gallery. 25 January - 2 February, 11am-7pm, Bodhisatva Gallery, Inar, Pulchok, 9851091255

MUSIC



Arko Mukherjee

Amazingly talented singers Arko Mukherjee featuring Hari Maharjan and Rohit John Chhetri are going to give you full musical pleasure. Have a musical weekend getaway with your family and friends. 26 January, 1pm onwards, Riverside Spring Resort, Kurintar, Rs1,500, 9803000885

MadJazz Quartet

The jazz band has repertoire stretched from Kurt Rosenwinkel, Jesse Van Ruller to Clifford Brown and Miles Davis. Madjazz Quartet delivers something which should be listened and not just heard or seen or danced to. Come if you really want to listen to the craft. 28 January, 8-10pm, Jazz Upstairs, Lazimpat, Rs300, (01) 4416983

Kanta dAb dAb

Kanta dAb dAb, a well-known trio band with sitar, percussion and bass playing some unique contemporary compositions, creating a soulful fusion groove. 25 January, 8pm onwards, Helena's Restaurant, Thamel, (01) 4266979

OUR PICK



Opens in Kathmandu on 25 January

This weekend will see Indian actress Kangana Ranaut's ambitious project Manikarnika on the big screen. The 19th century queen of a small Indian town Jhansi was famous for her bravery. She fought a losing battle for Jhansi as she resisted the advancing British empire, and her striking story has seen many small screen adaptations already. Audiences are curious to see whether the big screen adaptation will be better. Directed by Radha Krishna Jagarlamudi, the movie also stars Danny Denzongpa, Atul Kulkarni and Anika Lokhande.

DINING

Trisara

Trisara, the third garden of heaven, is a picturesque outdoor restaurant offering the most sumptuous food and drinks. Try their Burnt chili garlic fried rice. Lazimpat, (01) 4410200

Buingal

A multi-cuisine restaurant great for a casual get-together with relatives and friends on a sunny winter day. Vegetarian sekuwa is finger licking! Maitidevi, (01) 4421393



Beer and Barbeque

Enjoy succulent barbecues along with a sumptuous buffet spread, all accompanied by a bottle of chilled beer. Every Saturday, 12:30-4pm, The Pizza terrace, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, Boudha, (01) 4217123

Krishnarpan

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, Battispatali, (01) 4479488 / 4470770

GETAWAY



Pancrides to Helipad

The most exciting downhill trail around the edge of Shivapuri to Helipad. It is 50km medium difficulty route headed by Rajan KC. Viber or WhatsApp to book your presence. 26 January, 6:30am, Pancbike, Kantipath, 9803469300

Pataleban Vineyard Resort

The Winery Resort boasts three stunning vineyards, spreading across about twenty acres of land and at the varying altitude of 750-1600 meters. From over 20 different varieties of European and Japanese grapes, small batches of hand-crafted wines are manufactured here. Chisapani, Kathmandu, (01) 4316377, 9841679364

Raniban Retreat

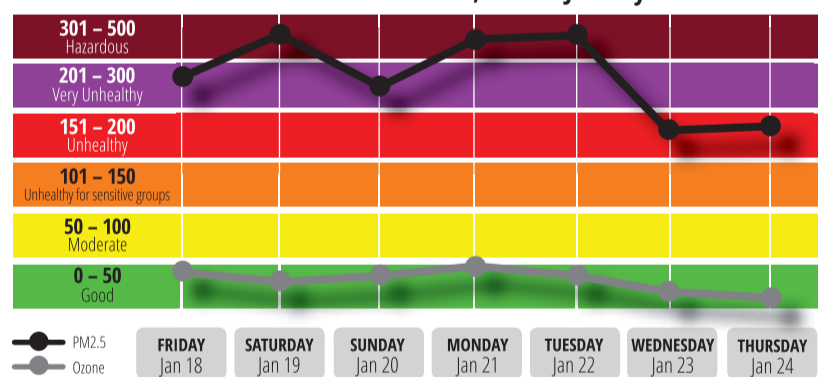
A unique boutique hotel located on the secluded hillock of Raniban forest, offering an eco-friendly environment specifically tailored for guests. A must visit for peace and serenity and views of Himalayas. Pokhara, (01) 5185435

Green Valley Resort

Located 5.5km away from Budhanilkantha Temple, the resort is a perfect getaway for city people. The first ray of sun warms up winter's cold breeze, making way for a perfect stroll around the Tamang Valley. Shivapuri National Park, (01) 5248091

AIR QUALITY INDEX

KATHMANDU, 18 - 24 January



The rains this week washed some of the pollution from Kathmandu Valley, but then vehicular emissions pushed the figures right back into the Maroon Hazardous Band with AQI for PM2.5 for two days in a row. With more moisture in the air due to the rains, the dust particles condensed around water droplets making the smog thicker. In fact Kathmandu had one of the worst air quality in the region on those days. For daily averages of the past week see graph (above). For hourly live updates go online to www.nepalitimes.com <https://np.usembassy.gov/embassy/air-quality-monitor/>

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# Nepali restauranteurs fined in Finland

Owners accused of trafficking and exploiting fellow Nepali workers

**Namrata Sharma**  
in Helsinki

Nepali restaurants in Finland have become so popular in the past 20 years that in many places they have started replacing Indian diners in Helsinki and other cities. It now looks like there was a dark side to this success: four Nepali restauranteurs in Finland have been found guilty of human trafficking, discrimination and tax evasion.

One of the Nepali migrant restaurant workers, Maila, was brought to Finland by an accused to work in Mount Sherpa restaurant in the town of Varkaus. Police started investigating the establishment after he filed a complaint, and found two more Nepalis were also underpaid.

There are a range of Nepalis in Finland from engineers and managers, teachers, as well as students who sometimes work on the side as cooks and waiters. Earnings are good, and Nepali restaurants have become popular in Finland with their modified menus that combine naan and curry combined with dal bhat and momos.

But beneath the surface, there have been indications that all is not well. There was no problem if they worked in Finnish companies as the labour laws are clear and strict. But when workers are brought to Finland through personal connection, they have to accept the salary offered so they can pay back loans. Few Nepali workers are willing to talk for fear of losing even the jobs they have, but the Finnish press has reported on South Asian restaurants selling work visas,



trafficking, and violating Finnish labour and tax laws.

Last month, Finnish District Court Judge Minna Koskinen from North Savo District Court found four Nepalis Basanta Adhikari, Purna Adhikari, Srijana Ghimire and Ava Pokhrel guilty, fined them a total of € 227,199 and sentenced the main employer to prison for one year and eight months and another to six months. They also had to compensate Maila, Kancha and Sailla with back pay.

Maila has a masters degree in Business Management, but could not find a job so took cook training to work abroad. When a friend approached him to go as a cook to

Finland where his brother owned a Nepali restaurant, he readily agreed to migrate.

An agreement he signed with the owner set a full salary as per Finnish government rules, and working hours stipulated by local labour laws with weekends off. However, he was made to work round the clock with no weekends. The employer also opened two accounts in Maila's name, one having salaries as per the contract to show the Finnish authorities. But he kept bank cards which he and his wife used for personal expenses. He deposited some money into Maila's other account. Police used evidence from the two bank

cards in their investigation, and presented it to the court.

Maila says he learnt this was standard operating procedure in many Nepali restaurants in Finland. After a year-and-half, Maila filed a complaint, but first had to prepare to be ostracised by the Nepali community. He says he wanted to make his employers and other South Asians here accountable to their workers who were mostly not educated, not aware of their rights, or afraid to raise their voices against their employers.

"As laws in Finland are very strict, we do not get involved in legal issues of Nepali workers

here," explains Basanta Gautam of the Non-resident Nepali (NRN) National Coordination Council of Finland, "however, we think there is a need of awareness to both employees and employers regarding employment rules and regulations in Finland."

As per Finnish law, since all five perpetrators admitted to their crimes and agreed to pay all financial obligations together with interest and taxes, they have been exempted from imprisonment, but will be remain under probation.

Another Nepali in Finland says many migrant workers have come to Finland on verbal agreement with a restaurant owner, but they are desperate to get a toe-hold in Europe. Employers think they are actually doing the workers a favour by bringing them over, and some restauranteurs say not all worker complaints are valid and they "play the victim card".

NRN CEO Hemant Dawadi says: "Safe Migration and respectable foreign employment concerns us, and we provide advice and counselling whenever approached." He admitted that NRN had no figures for the number of Nepalis who work in establishments owned and managed by the diaspora. Although the organisation gets frequent complaints, Gautam says the NRN Association is not a policing authority.

After the verdict, Maila has had to endure threatening messages from his former employers. "I was aware enough to know my rights, but most Nepalis who come here are not. I wanted to show fellow Nepalis that they have to be aware of the risks." 

*Some names have been changed.*



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**Times.com**

# New Newa art

**B**odhisattva Art Gallery has been active in documenting and preserving Kathmandu Valley's traditional art, and is now back with its first exhibition after the 2015 earthquake. *Jewels of Newar Art* contains stunning paintings in the Paubha style, and sculptures made from the lost wax method.

The exhibition features detailed portraits of Hindu and Buddhist deities including the Green Tara, White Tara, Manjushree, and Avalokiteswar. While most of them follow techniques for devotional paubha paintings, including using natural colours and painting deities according to classical specifications, we can also see many improvisations.

One such work depicts deities in a wall apparently damaged by the earthquake. Others break away from traditional formats of the principal deity in the centre, and show gods in new, contemporary compositions. The exhibition shows us not just how rich Newar art is, but also how it is evolving in the hands of contemporary painters whose motif is art and not religion.


For centuries Kathmandu has been famous for such ritual artwork, prized for aesthetic beauty and attention to detail. Everything about the deities, from

their complexion to their poses, is replete with many layers of meanings: for example the Green Tara's green complexion symbolises compassion. While these paintings and statues are valued by

reside in museums around the world. However, it comes as a surprise to many to learn that the art forms are well and alive in Kathmandu. The exhibition at Bodhisattva attempts to bring such contemporary artworks to viewers' notice.

"Many believe the art is dead and can now be seen only in museums, but in fact Kathmandu continues to produce world-class artwork of great value," says Anjana Shaky of the Bodhisattva Art Gallery. "The art was dying at one time because the artists did not make money, and the only way to ensure its continuity is to make sure that the artists can access the right market. We aim to promote the artists by connecting them to national and international buyers who are interested."

Indeed the gallery calls its exhibits 'museum quality', and they sell for anything up to Rs 3.5 million. Three of the pieces will be showcased in Vienna in April in an exhibition of Nepal's finest contemporary art. The exhibition at the Bodhisattva is an opportunity to appreciate home-grown art that may soon end up in famous

museums around the world. 

**Sewa Bhattarai**

*Jewels of Newar Art  
Bodhisattva Art Gallery, Kopundole  
Until 2 February*



SEWA BHATTARAI

Kathmandu's Newar community for worships, a layperson also finds lot to admire in these works.

Coveted by art lovers all over the world, stolen and pillaged, many of Nepal's antiques now



MOFA

**SPOTLIGHT:** PM K P Oli speaks at the session 'Shaping the Future of Democracy' with Colombian President Iván Duque Márquez, Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan, publisher of New York Times A.G. Sulzberger and Daniella Ballou-Aares, CEO of Leadership Now Project in Davos on Wednesday.



NEPALARMY

**COMRADES-IN-ARMS:** The new Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Hou Yanqi meets with Nepal Army Chief Purna Chanda Thapa at the Army Headquarters in Bhadrakali last week. The two talked about strengthening bilateral relations between the two counties.



EMBASSY OF INDIA/TWITTER

**POWER MEETING:** Minister for Energy and Water Resources Barsaman Pun meets AK Bhalla, Secretary at India's Ministry of Power, in Singha Darbar on Tuesday.



RABINDRA MISHRA/TWITTER

**SICK NATION:** Rabindra Mishra and Surya Raj Acharya of Bibeksheel Sajha Party visit Govinda KC at Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu on Sunday who is on a fast-unto-death since 9 January demanding reforms.



RSS

**SNOWFUN:** Tourists enjoy skiing and snowboarding in Humla on Wednesday morning, as winter rains brought snow and rain across the country this week.

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# Dry port at Chobhar faces resistance

hamrakura.com 17 January

हाम्रा कुरा  
hamrakura.com

Prime Minister KP Oli inaugurated the construction of a dry port in Chobhar last week, despite protests from the local community. A leader of the Chobhar residents Panchalal Maharjan informed that 26 people had been taken into custody for peacefully protesting at the inauguration site. They were concerned that the project had not consulted with local people and would eventually displace them. Some of the protesters were injured during the conflict with security personnel.

The site had been previously occupied by Himal Cement, which closed down due to local residents' concerns about environmental pollution. Four years ago, the government made an agreement to acquire Himal Cement's land at



DESH SANCHAR

Chobhar. With a Rs1.5 billion grant from the World Bank, the Ministry of Finance is building a cargo terminal and an exhibition area

over more than 40 hectares. The government plans to directly link the dry port to Indian and Chinese Railway stations. It is expected to

accommodate 350 trucks and 600 containers, and a 6-lane highway to access the dry port is also planned, linking it to Kathmandu's Ring Road at Balkhu. According to a 2013 agreement with the World Bank, the government would finish constructing the port by 2019.

A meeting in mid-November between the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies Matrika Yadav, the World Bank and builder company Intermodal had decided to take the concerns of local people into consideration. But the construction began without such a step, according to locals. Their main concern is that the proposed road for the dry port would go through the land of more than 200 people who have not agreed to it. They are also concerned that the project will damage Chobhar's historical, religious and cultural heritages.

The Chobhar Protection Committee claims that the project has begun without an Environmental Impact Assessment, and that could prove disastrous for the entire Kathmandu Valley because Chobhar is a fragile point which is the only outlet for the Bagmati from Kathmandu Valley. They allege that the so-called 'democratic government' is behaving in a dictatorial manner, and imposing a project that is bound to create noise and air pollution on unwilling residents.

Chobhar residents are already tired of the pollution from Himal Cement factory, and are angry that the government's compensation from cement dust never materialised. They say the 5-point agreement was never implemented, and they demand an immediate stop to the construction process.

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# काठमाडौं स्टील

## नयाँ आधार... दिगो भविष्य

### नयाँ प्रविधि (MECHANICAL SPLICING)

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# Gurkha Grandparents

Despite free health care, elderly ex-Gurkhas and their families in UK ache for home



**Sikuma Rai**  
in London

**S**hakha Ratna Rai, 61, was at Kathmandu Airport last month, waiting to return to the UK after a family visit. Like many army wives, she had left Nepal with her husband, former British Gurkha soldier Bal Bahadur Rai, 78.

The Rais feel more at home in Nepal, but were attracted to stay in the UK because of the monthly allowance, free medical facilities, house rent, and even an extra heating allowance for the winter for ex-Gurkhas – but most of all it is the free health care.

Rana Bahadur Thakali, 76, and Krishna Sherchan, 65, have been living in the UK for four years now, and are happy they came here. “If I was in Nepal I would have suffered or even died by now,” says Thakali

who has hypertension and thyroid problems. Sherchan shows a drawer full of medicines she and her husband have to take.

“If we had stayed in Nepal, we would have had to sell our house to afford these medicines,” she says. Despite the free drugs, however, elderly Nepalis have to find someone to take them to hospitals, which are sometimes far away. Because they lack English, many cannot even call for an ambulance.

“We have everything we need here, but it is not home. We miss our families in Nepal,” says 75-year-old Jan Bahadur Rai who was waiting outside a Nepali shop in Feltham near London for his wife, Ganga Maya Limbu, whom he married after his first wife died. “It is even harder to live here if you don’t have a partner,” he adds ruefully.

Indeed, most elderly Gurkhas and their spouses here say they are living in the UK for the sake of their



1816

Sugauli Treaty formally allowed The British to recruit Nepal's 'martial races' into their army



1914-1918

Some 20,000 Gurkhas died in World War I



1939-1945

Another 25,000 Gurkhas died in World War II

1947

The Tripartite Agreement between the United Kingdom, India and Nepal gave continuity to Gurkha recruitment

1990

Gurkha Army Ex-Servicemen's Organisation (GAESO) was formed in July to end discrimination of Gurkhas in the British Army

1997

In July, Britain handed over Hong Kong to China, moving the Brigade base to the UK

2000

Gyanraj Rai filed a case against the Government of Nepal to review the agreements and maintain equality for British Gurkha

2001

British Gurkha Study and Research Centre formed to research problems and grievances of British Gurkhas

## Timeline of How Retired Gurkhas Ended



ALL PHOTOS: SIKUMARA

**HOMESICK:** (Clockwise from top left) Rana Bahadur Thakali and Krishna Sherchan with Bishnu Maya Bangshi.

Bishnu Maya shares a kitchen with the Thakali couple in an adjoining room.

Jan Bahadur Rai and Binda Maya Limbu with Rai's wife in the background at Limbu's place.

Tej Bahadur Gurung and Kesari Gurung miss their two sons who live in Kathmandu.

not served the 15 years needed to qualify for an Army pension.

These Gurkha veterans or widows have been provided with welfare pensions by The Gurkha Welfare Trust.

After a long agitation, the British government in 21 May 2009 officially allowed settlement visas for all former Gurkhas who have served in the British Army for at least four years, along with their spouses and dependent children. Even some widows of ex-soldiers have been allowed to stay since then. Most of the elderly Gurkhas interviewed for this report admitted that they would go back if Nepal offered better medical facilities. One ex-Gurkha who was reluctant to relocate to Britain was 81-year-old Tej Bahadur Gurung, a veteran of World War II and his wife Kesari Gurung, 77. Both appeared infirm. They were happy enough living in their ancestral village near Pokhara, but the 2015 earthquake destroyed their home. They had the choice of either coming to the UK, or using a grant from Gurkha Welfare Centre to rebuild. They chose to come here.

Himal Rai, a retired British Gurkha Captain and an activist now says, "After a long struggle Gurkhas who could not complete full service were provided a redundancy package," says Rai, "however the protests are still ongoing to review the package and for other benefits."

When asked which country they would choose to stay in, nearly all ex-Gurkhas and their families said they would return to Nepal if there was better health care there. On a recent flight back from Heathrow to Kathmandu, the plane was full of elderly Gurkha couples heading back to Nepal to avoid the English winter. One ex-soldier and his wife had re-entered the UK a month ago, but are heading right back to Nepal. He said: "We miss our children, and the land we were born in. We had enough of England, we are going back to Nepal for good." 🇳🇵



extended families, and the medical care.

"All we do here is sit around and pass the time, but at night many thoughts run through my mind and I cannot sleep," confides Jan Bahadur Rai in one of his fellow ex-Gurkha's room. Here, there is no tv, no radio, a table, two chairs and pages of a newspaper on the table to protect it from *bidi* ashes.

If the sun is out, Nepali retirees take the free public transport to the park to get some fresh air. But English weather being what it is, the couples mostly stay indoors.

"Some people even die within a few months of coming here from Nepal," says Binda Maya Limbu, another Gurkha wife. "One Limbu lady down the road died a few days ago, she had been here only five months. Her relatives took her body back to Nepal in December."

When Rana Bahadur Thakali and Krishna Sherchan lived in the cantonment town of Aldershot,

they recall the Council asked Gurkha retirees to avoid using public transport during working or school hours since the buses were getting too crowded with Nepalis. Some Nepalis have taken to drink, but mostly they can be seen strolling through malls while their grandchildren shop.

Bishnu Maya Bangshi, a 67-year-old widow, has been living by herself for two years, and to overcome her loneliness takes English lessons twice a week, and uses a smartphone to keep in touch with relatives back home.

"The first year was the most difficult time for me. I would sit on my bed looking outside the window feeling homesick and sad. I had to come here for the sake of my three children in Nepal for whom I am applying for visas," she says.

After the end of numerous wars, there was a significant reduction in the number of serving Gurkhas in the British Army. Many had

**MISSING NEPAL**



Watch video of the British Gurkha grandparents as they share their griefs of living in a foreign land. After retirement, they do not have much to do in London and miss their family and the place they were born in. Visit their living spaces and hear their stories of what keeps them in the UK.

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

**Up Residing in the UK**



**2003**

A High Court in London ruled that there was discrimination against the Gurkhas

**2004**

The British Government granted Gurkhas the right of settlement in Britain if they served on or after 1 July 1997

**2005**

The British Secretary of State for Defence announced a reviewed terms and conditions of service for Gurkha soldiers serving in the British Army

**2009**

The UK Government allowed all former Gurkhas, who had served in the British Army for at least four years, settlement in the UK with their family

**2013**

Gyanraj Rai went on 15-day hunger strike for equality among British Gurkha and British Army soldiers

**2018**

Ex-Gurkha associations submitted a petition to the Nepal and British Governments about pensions, redundancy package, medical support in Nepal

**2019**

A Nepal Parliament Committee under Yogesh Bhattarai is investigating the issue of discrimination

As of **28 February 2018**, there are **3,500** Nepali men serving in the British Army, **15,780** service pensioners and **7,616** welfare pensioners.



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**OLD DURBAR**

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# Tax Heaven

If you can't turn Nepal into Switzerland, then take your money there. Even better: go there yourself. That is Nepal's new national slogan, and it seems our rulers are abiding by it in all earnestness.

It was Comrade Awe Inspiring and PM-At-Large who first said after his Vermicultural Revolution that his first order of business after surprising himself by being elected PM was to turn Nepal into Switzerland in 10 years.

To achieve this goal, he had to stash his cash there for temporary safe-keeping. Now, we have to be thankful that at least he is repatriating his Kharabs, Arabs and Corrodes back to Nepal through the British Virgin Islands and Cyprus. And since the money is laundered, it is not dirty anymore. We don't want no ill-gotten wealth in Nepal, so good thing he sent it to the dry cleaners first.

But maybe we heard it wrong. Perhaps what Chairman Lotus Flower actually meant was he would turn Nepal into Sewageland, in which case he is on the right track. And now that he is preparing for his Second Coming, maybe he can at least turn Nepal into Swaziland.

Meanwhile, there are indications that Nepal is itself turning into a tax heaven because our grabberment wants to tax everything that moves. The best proof of this is Kathmandu Airport, where the responsible authoritarians are taking their responsibility very seriously by cracking down on gold smugglers, the ones that bring in

an extra ring on their finger.

Any items of jewelry that are seized are then miraculously turned by our taxidermists into copper, and confiscated gold biscuits promptly become digestive biscuits when they arrive at the Police Station. The ones carrying 33kg of gold bullion in their false bottoms are permitted to exit the arrival concourse through a secret tunnel with direct access to the new white building that has come up on the Wring Wroad.

What many readers may not realise is that Nepal has secretly already turned into Switzerland, which Prime Minister Oily found much to his surprise in Davos this week. Here is a partial list of similarities between Nepal and Switzerland:

1. We are both landlocked.
2. Neither was colonised.
3. Out troops protect Queen Elizabeth with Khukris, and the Pontifical Swiss Guards protect Pope Francis with Victorinox.
4. They are a confederation we are a federation.
5. If the RPP has its way we may have a referendum on everything.
6. They have cantons, we had cantonments.
7. We treat Swiss banks as our own.
8. They have cuckoo clocks, we have cuckoo leaders.



The Ass

**God created WINTERS,  
we created HOT RUM PUNCH**

**Khukri XXX Rum**

**Khukri XXX Rum**

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