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## Hornets nest

“The people must take leadership in a democracy... and elected leaders should listen to them,” Prime Minister Oli said in a speech at Oxford University last week.

But back home, protests over the controversial *Guthi* Bill had snowballed precisely because his government had ignored the will of the people in trying to ram that and other legislation through Parliament.

Combined with the Media Council Bill, which would have dampened freedom of expression, the National Human Rights

Commission Bill, which could undermine the constitutional body’s independence, an attempt to interfere with academic appointments, and other decisions, Oli showed an inclination to centralise power and go it alone.

The charitable explanation for these missteps is that the Oli administration is receiving bad advice that is landing the Prime Minister in trouble. However, there is also the strong possibility that the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) is not really committed to upholding democratic values.

Although he tried in Davos

earlier this year, and during last week’s visit to the UK, France and Switzerland, to play down his government’s ‘communist’ image by speaking about his adherence to an open society, Oli’s actions at home speak louder than words.

While the *Guthi* Bill was supposedly intended to regulate the opaqueness in the management of some trusts, there it was a blatant attempt to grab valuable urban real estate.

That bill stirred a hornet’s nest, especially among the Valley’s Newa community. And despite the government shelving it, tens of thousands of people poured into Mandala Square on Wednesday in an unprecedented show of force. They wanted the *Guthi* Bill to be scrapped and ministers who have made disparaging remarks to be sacked.

Conspicuous by his silence in all this is NCP co-chair and impatient prime minister-in-waiting Pushpa Kamal Dahal. He seems to be letting Oli stew in his own juice. The government tried earlier to squeeze the press with the Media Council Bill, but that too backfired badly. Indeed, Oli has centralised so much power in himself that when things go wrong, like now, he has to take the flak.

It is not just the new laws that have badly exposed the government’s intent. Nearly two years into its tenure, the ruling party made up of former UML and Maoists has little to show for itself. Laws concerning local governments are in limbo, creating uncertainty over

jurisdiction and decision-making. Says advocate Radheshyam Adhikari:

“We see the government go from one blunder to the next, and it begs the question of whether the Prime Minister is in charge.”

It is hard to see what Oli can do now except take recourse in a cabinet reshuffle. A cabinet face change is a time-honoured, time-buying tactic of Nepal’s rulers, and that could be his next move.

Kunda Dixit

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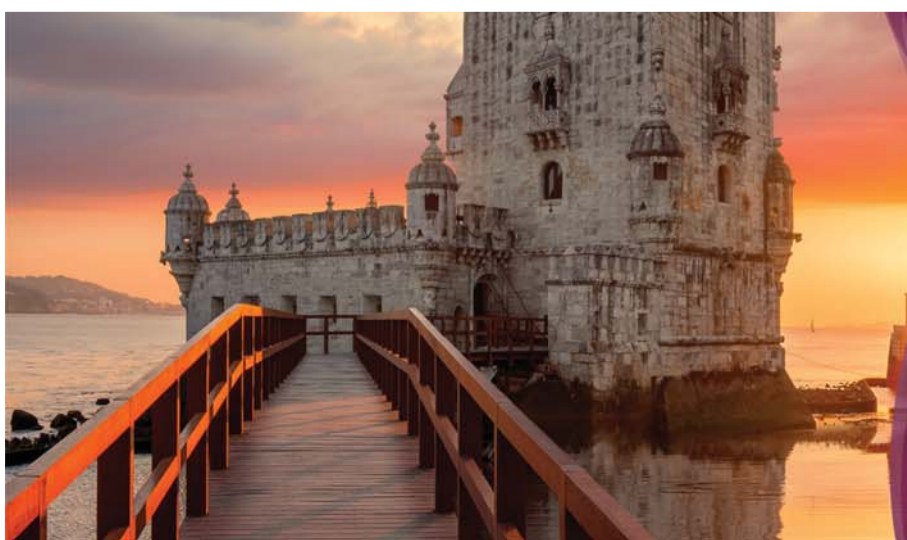
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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

# OWN WORST ENEMY

The Nepal Communist Party does not need enemies. It is doing its best to undermine itself. It is squandering its two-thirds mandate with every act of omission, every utterance by Prime Minister KP Oli, and every bill he tries to ram through Parliament.

The hubris comes out of its mistaken belief that a majority government can get away with anything. Ever since it came to power 18 months ago, the Oli administration has centralised power not just in Singha Darbar, but at Baluwatar Darbar. Irony of ironies: under a federal system that has theoretically devolved power to local governments, we have a government that is nearly as centralised as the Rana oligarchy. And it is displaying similar autocratic tendencies.

From the very outset, Oli brought various agencies of the state under his own office. One after another he has stirred the hornet's nest by interfering in academia, the education sector, citizenship and pushing through complicit Parliament measures like the Media Council Bill, the Commission on Human Rights Bill and the National Security Agency Bill. The latest is the *Guthi* Bill, which sought to nationalise community trusts.

The bills were not supposed to streamline or reform those sectors, but to extend political control, restrict information or to usurp real estate. The measures were greeted with sporadic protests, but none has been as sustained and intense as the outrage over the *Guthi* Bill. Besides being a travesty of the democratic process, the bill threatens to undermine ethnic harmony. For Kathmandu Valley's Newa community, already outraged by the erosion of its heritage and civilisation through rampant urbanisation, the *Guthi* Bill was the last straw.

Indeed, Oli does not need enemies. He has himself. By making statements like the recent one in which he said that local government should be under the purview of the federal state, he rubbed everyone the wrong way. Instead of trying to allay fears that he is centralising power, the Prime Minister does not seem to care what anyone thinks.

To be sure, Oli comes with a huge mandate, which itself was a reward for his handling of immediate post-earthquake response, promulgation of the Constitution and the Indian Blocakde in 2015. If the election victory of the UML-Maoist combine and the ensuing unification of the party made the NCP a strong political force, why then is it behaving like it is weak and thin-skinned?

Governance failure, a corruption pandemic, internal strife within the NCP, and the threat from the Biplav radicals would require full-time attention from the government. But the Prime Minister has been too busy making one foreign trip after another to devote time to these urgent crises. Instead, his government brings down the entire wrath of the state by jailing a hapless movie reviewer for panning a bad movie. Instead of being magnanimous and visionary, what we have is a petty leadership that is intolerant and populist. All this has undermined the Oli government's few accomplishments in the past year.

Oli's other headache is internal — there are factions within factions that have prevented practical unification of the two parties. Pushpa Kamal Dahal is getting impatient to take his turn at the helm, and seems to suspect that Oli is never going to quit. Oli, in turn, appears to have lost touch with what the public is thinking, and has lashed out at intellectuals, civil society and media for criticism, when his real enemies are those who wish to dismantle the secular republican Constitution, undermine federalism and return the country to violence.

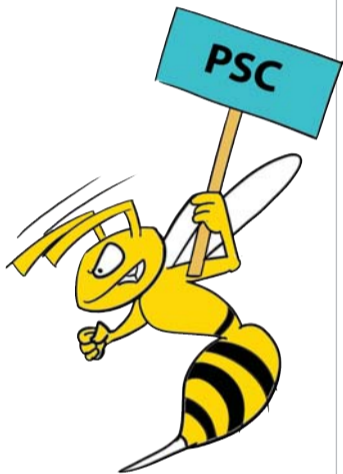
Yet, all is not yet lost. There is still a chance for the NCP to redeem itself and win back the people's trust, even if it is with token high-visibility projects. There are some young doers in the Cabinet who can deliver if given the chance. Oli has no alternative but to take the people along with him for his own sake, for the sake of his party, and the nation.



Why is Nepal's strongest elected government behaving like it is weak and thin-skinned?



After the opposition Nepali Congress obstructed Parliament as Prime Minister Oli tried to speak on Tuesday, the government backed down. Protesters were not mollified, and staged a mass rally at Maitighar on Wednesday calling for the bill to be scrapped altogether. Although the NC acted shabbily in trying to stop Oli from addressing the House, it may be just as well because with his abrasive and rude repartee the Prime Minister would probably have shot himself in the foot.



## 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

A New Delhi datelined report by Kunda Dixit in *Nepali Times* issue #456 of 19-26 June 2009 analysed the defeat of the BJP in elections that year and the implications of a ban on India's Maoist insurgents. Things change but a lot remains the same. Excerpt:

'The rout of both the BJP and the CPI-M in April's election represented setbacks for the Hindu-right and the Maoist-left in Nepal. In India itself, post-election politics has been dominated by a surge in the activity of India's restless Maoists, prompting the federal government on Monday to ban the party.'

How India's state governments now deal with their Maoist insurgencies will have a bearing on Nepal because the Indian revolutionaries have often said they want to "liberate everything from Tirupathi to Pashupati". Similarly, the future political trajectory of the Maoists in Nepal will be keenly watched by both India's ultra-left as well as the central government.'



## ONLINE PACKAGES



FIRE IN THE BELLY

Go online to listen to excerpts from revolutionary songs from the Maoist era, as well as to hear about how many feel abandoned as the leaders who led them are now themselves trying to control the freedom of expression. Story: *page 14-15*



ADOPT A GOAT

Meet the nomads of Upper Mustang and hear how this winter's blizzard killed much of their livestock. Many of them have not got any help from the government. Video by Kamzang Journeys. Story: *page 11*

### SOLO TRAVELLERS

Deep respect for the 49-year-old lady who found her calling at 48 ('Wider world for women', Sewa Bhattarai, #964). Truly an inspiration. Nice article by the way.

Karma Tenzing Nyangmi

### HUMLA ROAD

Humla is slowly being opened up to the outside world. The biggest downside is the spread of trash in pristine landscapes. ('Cars in the Karnali', Prakash Singh, #964).

The Nepal Trust

### CHANDRAGIRI

It is a beautiful undiscovered side of the valley. Let us hope the forest does not have to give way to blacktopped trails for motorbikes. Reading the end of the article about who will be the future guests at the resort makes me worry.

Tom van Groenigen

### GUTHI BILL

People will show the government in the next election. With attacks on culture, religion, and now on *guthi*, it clearly shows the beginning of the end of communism. Start counting the days.

Sazan Paudel

■ This corrupt government is sick. How can they destroy *guthis* which is our cultural identity?

Ramkumar Suyog

### YAK CHEESE

Proud moment for not just the cheesemaker, but also an inspiration for all Nepali entrepreneurs that things done with passion and dedication with time results in a winner ('Nepal's yak cheese is on world map', Sheilin Teo, #964).

Sabin Shakya

### FREEDOM OF SPEECH

I am extremely worried about freedom of speech in Nepal. This is just a preview of what could happen to journalists if the Media Council bill is passed. By the way, freedom of speech does not mean that everything goes. Europe and the US already have defamation laws that can be used if someone publicly lies about someone else. Nepal should simply copy them. However, the right to an opinion should be absolutely protected.

Ludo Van Vooren

## WHAT'S TRENDING

### Nepal's yak cheese is on the world map

by Sheilin Teo

Yak Blue cheese from the mountains of Ramechhap district recently bagged a prestigious Super Gold Medal at a cheese mela in France. This article was read by thousands and widely shared on social media, with many readers complimenting François Driard.



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### Culture revolution

by Sewa Bhattarai

The government's latest attempt to dismantle centuries-old traditions safeguarded by *guthi* community trusts prompted tens of thousands of people to take to the streets in protest. Visit nepalitimes.com for latest updates and join the online discussion.



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## QUOTE TWEETS



**Nepali Times** @NepaliTimes  
Until she was 48, Eka Kumari Karki had never travelled alone. Then she heard of Swo-Yatra, and soon she was exploring eastern Nepal in happy solitude. @sewa\_ditee reports on the unique challenge that is helping women explore the country. @nepalitrsvelers



**anita** @aphapa  
what a wonderful read!! I hope at least half of the applicants will travel on their own even if they aren't selected for this year. #solotravel #Unstoppable #Nepaliwomen



**Nepali Times** @NepaliTimes  
#POLL Will the government be able to fix all the emerging issues before the next election? #Nepal #GuthiBill #FreedomOfSpeech



**Bijaya Shrestha** @bijaya\_shrestha  
I have always had faith in our system, I was open to new ways, but time and again the government we made has failed us. I have lost hope in the current status of our country.



**Nepali Times** @NepaliTimes  
Pranesh Gautam forgot one crucial point when reviewing the movie Bir Bikram 2: You can no longer free speak your mind in #Nepal, writes @shashankji of @Katha\_Haru and KookyDunk. #FreedomOfSpeech #memenepal#PraneshGautam #PressFreedom



**rahul chapagain** @RahulChapagain2  
This is also an encroachment of his right to employment and make a living. He is a YouTuber, gets paid for similar work, and how has that broken any laws. #ANARCHY



**Nepali Times** @NepaliTimes  
Yak Blue from the #mountains of Ramechhap district has been awarded Super Gold Medal at a French #cheese mela @mondialfromage. With this French cheesemaker François Driard and his team have put #Nepal on the world cheese map.



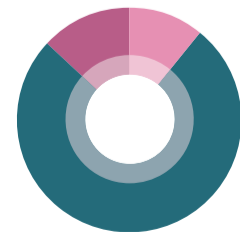
**French Embassy in Nepal** @FranceInNepal  
Cheese from Ramechhap district receives a gold medal in France. Proud of François Driard and his team for their dedication and for putting Nepal on a global cheese map! -FXL



Weekly Internet Poll #964

Q. Will the government be able to fix all of the emerging issues before the next election?

Total votes: 184



Yes: **11%**  
No: **76%**  
Can't say: **13%**

Weekly Internet Poll #965  
To vote go to: [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com)

Q. Do you approve of Prime Minister KP Oli's performance so far?



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# Pre-school pedagogy puts kids first

July’s Reggio Emilia Summit will examine early childhood education methods relevant for Nepal

Prakriti Kandel

As the focus of education in Nepal shifts to quality from enrolment rates, a major international conference is being held in Kathmandu to review the latest findings about the importance of early childhood education.

The internationally acclaimed Italian pre-school pedagogy called the Reggio Emilia approach believes in placing children at the forefront of their own education. Kids are able to channel their interests and curiosities to shape their learning, rather than simply absorbing information from an adult.

Founded by Loris Malaguzzi in 1945 in Italy after the end of the Second World War, the Reggio Emilia philosophy has been adopted in 34 countries. The approach has been corroborated by recent research that proves pre-school education lays a child’s foundation in motor skills and learning capacity in later life.



The summit, which will showcase this technique in Nepal for the first time, is being jointly held by the Ministry of Education and Rato Bangala Foundation (RBF), and will feature two Italian practitioners of the philosophy.

“We were very inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, which provides children with the experiential learning they need from very early years,” says Milan Dixit of RBF.

In Nepal, private kindergarten institutions have proliferated and government schools maintain an early childhood development (ECD) class that precedes Grade 1. But ECD for many children is just rote memorisation and writing basic letters, numbers and shapes, leaving little space for genuine learning.

But pre-school is an instrumental learning period and has a lifelong impact on a person’s cognitive, emotional and language skills because neural connections in the brain are formed fastest and in the highest amount during early childhood. Indeed, the Harvard University Center on the Developing Child says that over 1 million connections are made per second in a child’s brain in the first few years.

In the Reggio Emilia approach, children’s creativity and ability to learn are nurtured by teachers. Parents are actively involved in their child’s learning and the environment is considered to be the third teacher. The curriculum is not perceived as a fixed set of ideas that need to be taught, but rather as an evolving entity depending on the child’s interests.

“The child has a hundred languages,” Reggio Emilia’s founder Loris Malaguzzi famously said, meaning children communicate in myriad ways and must have the freedom to express themselves in school, whether through words or art or motion. Documentation of

the child’s progress by teachers, such as in video recordings and photographs, is another crucial element of Reggio Emilia.

The July summit will share experiences about the Reggio Emilia approach, with themes such as Image of the Child: Taking Children Seriously, From Display to Documentation, and emergent Curriculum. It is an

optimal opportunity for teachers, parents and educators to learn about implementing Reggio Emilia.

The summit is also a pre-event leading to RBF’s Second International Conference on Quality Education, scheduled for August.

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# Divine intervention by ex-Kumaris

The combined power of eight former living goddesses brought down an April storm on a book launch

During my first days in Kathmandu, I ventured into the medieval courtyard to catch a glimpse of the child peeking through the richly carved windows of the Kumari Ghar's upper storey. I could only imagine the daily routine of the diminutive living goddess in that mysterious



gloom, tended with sacred concern and seldom permitted to emerge into daylight, paraded at festivals through the palace squares and venerated in her gilded palanquin.

Tripping on the uneven flagstones and shielding my eyes from the piercing blue sky, I gazed upward, trying to discern how she spent her days and what thoughts could be passing through her childish mind. Once regaled by her *pujari* attendants, her face painted and her small body swathed in gold brocade, the shy restless child looking down at curious tourists is transformed into a stately goddess, her altered presence commanding respect and reverence from all Hindus, including the nation's royalty and rulers.

This searing image of the royal Kumari emerging from dark shadows in her carefully guarded life continues to be a tourism staple, encapsulating the clash of culture between ancient Newar Tantric custom and the distractions of modern life. Honoured with bloody animal sacrifices as the incarnation of Taleju, the young girls are selected from the Shakya clan for a strange childhood separated from family until puberty returns them home.

Like so many who lacked any real knowledge of the Kumari, my information was limited to clichés trotted out by uninformed guides — the girls are shunned once they return to ordinary life, none ever marry, lack of education paralyses their prospects — none of it true. In early days, pre-pubescent children were worshipped as living goddesses in multiple Valley towns. There were even whispers



ISABELLA TREE

that in remote corners, propitious offerings to the demanding deity Durga extended beyond buffaloes, goats and chickens to requiring human sacrifice.

It was only in 2014 that a new book by Isabella Tree (*pictured above with Chanira Bajracharya, the former Patan Kumari*) shone a startling light on the hidden practices that had successfully been obfuscated and concealed for generations. For uninitiated readers such as myself, it was a revelation. Unimaginatively titled *The Living Goddess*, it reads like a historical thriller, exploring the tangled politics of the Shakyas and explaining the origins of their Tantric traditions. Over many visits from Britain, Issy digs deep to expose the complexities of Newar heritage, religious beliefs and Kumari worship. For me, Valley customs would never seem the same again.

First visiting Freak Street on a university holiday with her childhood sweetheart and future husband Charlie, Issy became obsessed with uncovering the details of Kumari lives. It took her 13 years to win the trust of their custodians and caretakers,

and to coax them to reveal their judiciously kept secrets. The timing was right: the social upheavals caused by the royal massacre, new regimes and millennial change were challenging the relevance of hidden Newar religious practices judiciously kept secret over many centuries. With perfect pitch she was there with her notebook at the right moment to receive their confidences, interview the protagonists and 'journey into the heart of Kathmandu'.

Isabella Tree casts a slender figure, a pixie haircut and an air of applied energy. Her Nepal book is one of several written in her modest writing shed, tucked away in the walled garden of her English home. The most recent is an acclaimed account of how she and Charlie 're-wilded' their Sussex farm, bringing back a profusion of wild flowers, insects and animals to save the environment.

I arrived late for supper one autumn evening, and Issy was putting the final touches to a wild mushroom risotto on the kitchen Aga whilst Charlie perused a plant catalogue and Highland cattle grazed peacefully beneath the lime trees in the parkland beyond the

gothic windows. 'Can you help me arrange the launch for *The Living Goddess* book — I have family and friends coming from all over, as well as many former Kumaris, their relatives, guardians and priests whose support was so essential for my study insights. I want something relaxed and informal in which we can all feel comfortable together.' April is a gentle month and I suggested we hold it outside in the Garden of Dreams.

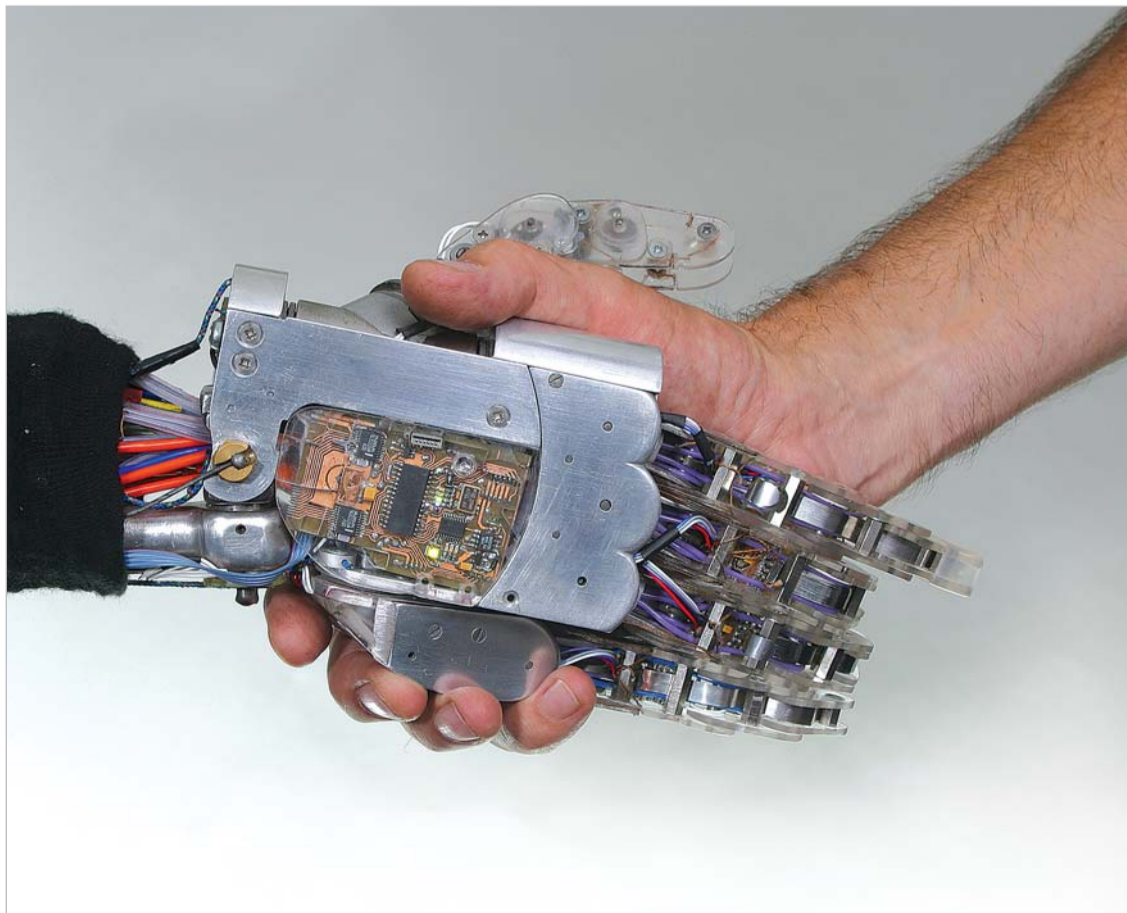
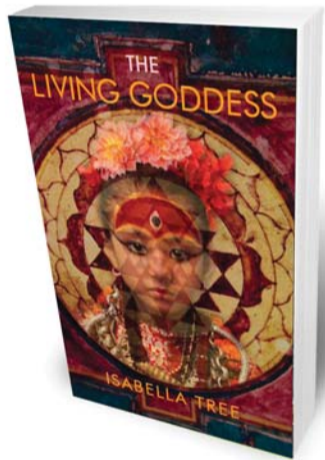
The spring afternoon was clear as guests gathered at Kaiser Mahal for the book launch event. The fountains flowed, the bamboos rustled and waiters hurried across the grass lawns marshalling their plates and glasses. But then, with no apparent warning, the sky blackened and leaves swirled in sudden gusts. Books and drinks and guests were rushed under cover.

Within minutes we were drenched by the unexpected rainstorm, lightening streaked the sky and thunder crackled overhead with ominous persistence. The Garden of Dreams is not the place for a large group to get caught in an April deluge. The bar pavilion at the western end was solid with cheerful guests, even though the

servers could hardly move with their precarious trays amongst the noisy, damp bodies beneath the mirrored metal ceiling. I was pressed between the large American Ambassador's grey suit and writer William Dalrymple in flowing Indian dress, hair plastered against his forehead. A self-conscious Hollywood actor was pinned helplessly against a jaunty elderly artist in floral print.

When the downpour abated we made our way to the shelter of the Kaiser café. Brahmin clerics greeted their former Shakya and Vajracharya charges — eight ladies who had progressed from a childhood as living deities to become college graduates, professionals, wives and mothers. Despite their divine background they seemed like regular young women to me, dressed for the day, and excited to meet up with Issy and her young family. Although we had forgotten they are unable to eat from communal plates for purity reasons, so there was a scramble to prepare special canapés.

The launch went ahead with prayers and speeches drowned out by the auspicious storm, and stacks of books soggy around the edges. Issy was pleased and philosophical, smiling beside a wizened *pujari* elder leaning heavily on his walking stick. 'It is rare for so many to be together in one place. The combined power of eight former goddesses is so immense and convincing that of course the elements are influenced. We should not be surprised by the effect of their presence on the weather.'



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Typhoon Vayu hovered offshore from Gujarat kicking off the monsoon with a bang over the Western Ghats. However, the system associated with it has bolstered the westerlies, pushing back the advance of the monsoon into Nepal and northern India. This tug-o-war between monsoon flow from the southeast and the westerlies will continue, and delay the onset of the rains in Kathmandu by a week or so. Still, there is plenty of moisture around, which will continue to trigger localised thunder showers into the weekend, reducing the impact of the heatwave.

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# Motorcycle Grandma

Women should rise above their station in life, says easy rider Pushpa Lata Acharya

Gopal Gartaula

During her recent two-week road trip from Kathmandu to Delhi and back, people who had heard of Pushpa Lata Acharya's journey through YouTube lined up by the highway to greet her as she roared past on her Royal Enfield Bullet motorcycle.

At every stop along the East-West Highway there were long queues of youngsters who wanted to take selfies with the easy-riding grandmother astride her powerful 380cc Bullet.

The 61-year-old is an avid biker and has travelled to 70 districts across the country on her preferred mode of transport. On this journey, she rode the 700km Delhi-Agra-Lucknow circuit on a single day, averaging 400km every other day. She travelled the 3,200km roundtrip with her son Andip and his friends, but met them only at the end of each day, preferring to ride on her own.

"There is just something about travelling alone, being independent and carefree," says Acharya, who is now busy planning a Mechi-Mahakali motorcycle traverse of the country from east to west.

Acharya first learned to drive two and four wheelers in 1988. By 1997, she was riding a Yamaha RX

on the streets of Kathmandu, and since then has changed her 'ride' three times. She bought her latest, the Bullet, in 2017 for Rs600,000.

Acharya says she never liked being a pillion rider, but used to ride on the back when her husband Atma Ram Acharya was still alive. When he died five years ago, she defied custom by not wearing traditional white. Many bad-mouthed Pushpa Lata, but she is the type who doesn't care what others say about her.

This sense of independence and empowerment is her personality, and through motorcycle trips she has become an inspiration for other, much younger, Nepali women. Acharya is also demonstrating to Nepali widows that life does not stop after the death of their partners, and they should live life to the fullest.

Pushpa Lata has been undertaking ever more adventurous trips on her Bullet, and is showing no signs of slowing down. Besides cross-country and cross-border journeys, she also uses her two-wheeler to distribute books to schools in rural areas whenever she is free.

Preparing to drive off from Kathmandu to her parental home in Ramgha of Lamjung recently, she told us: "Every time I ride, it is with the message that each and every woman should take a step up to rise above their station in life." 🇳🇵



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# DRUM ROLL

Nepal's newest music festival is guaranteed to start with a bang.

Surya Nepal Drum Jatra next week will feature the heavy beats of metal, wood and leather drums alongside delicate sounds of bells and singing bowls. The *dampphu*, *madal* and *dholak* will inject a Nepali flavour to this international event.

"We want to showcase the variety of styles we have in drums because Nepal is so rich in them, but we hardly ever celebrate drums," says festival organiser Navin Chhetri. "Every major city in the world has drum festivals, except Kathmandu — we wanted to start something new."

Kathmandu will reverberate 24-29 June with Drum Jatra concerts that will

feature Nepali sounds like Naykhibaja, the drumming of the butcher community in Bhaktapur, which was almost lost due to caste stigma, and Tamang Selo, which embodies the history of that hill community. Foreign rhythms will sound out courtesy of the Australian didgeridoo and in the person of Esad Halilovic, an acclaimed drummer from Vienna who will add a Balkan flavour.

Along with performances, a series of workshops by experts will allow aspiring drummers to tap into Nepali percussion styles and Afro-Brazilian beats. Events will take place all over the city, culminating with the finale at Summit Hotel on 29 June. 🇳🇵

**Sewa Bhattacharai**

ALL PHOTOS: MUSIC ROOM / DRUM JATRA

## Salil Subedi

A pioneer didgeridoo player who has explored the ancient wind instrument's potential beyond music, employing it in theatre, performance art, sound art, and social and public art for educational, social and cultural causes. His central theme is nature and spirituality.

**Performs:** unique styles of didgeridoo as a percussive and rhythmic instrument, revealing the versatile nature of the instrument and the performer.

## Esad Halilovic

Jazz drummer, composer and teacher based in Vienna the trio-playing Halilovic has presented his compositions at renowned international jazz festivals. He will also be giving workshops on hand techniques for drummers and improvisation of drum sets.

**Performs:** traditional folk music from the Balkans in the language of contemporary jazz.

## Kathmandu

### Baja Puca

A young group performing in the Naykhibaja tradition. Nay refers to Newar butchers, with whom the tradition originated, *khiri* means drum, and *baja* denotes an instrument or musical ensemble. The butchers were considered untouchable, and their musical legacy was forgotten as youngsters rejected it because of the caste stigma.

**Performs:** The recovered Naykhibaja repertoire with pride, with determination to preserve it for future.

## Abhaya Krishna

### Shrestha

Musician, composer and ethnomusicologist with expertise in processional drumming in Kathmandu Valley, Shrestha documents different Nepali drumming traditions, exploring ways to bring them into the academic realm and international contemporary music. His initiative to learn the Naykhibaja of Bhaktapur's Newar butcher community has raised its profile.

**Performs:** Dhimaybaja, Navabaja of Bhaktapur, Naykhibaja of butchers of Bhaktapur, and Dapha music.



## WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

### 24 June

10:00 am- 11:00 am / Hand technique for Drummers - Esad Lolovich  
11:00 am - 12:00pm / Nepali Folk Percussion Presentation - Abhay Shrestha  
1:00pm - 2:00 pm / Essential Grooves for Jazz Drummers - Navin Chhetri  
2:00pm- 3:00pm / Afro - Cuban / Brazilian Rhythm Section - Navin Chhetri

### 25 June

10:00 am- 11:00 am / J Dilla on Drumset - Kiran Shahi  
11:00 am - 12:00pm / Madal Tarang - Nareesh Prajapati  
1:00pm - 2:00pm / Essential Grooves for Drummers - Navin Chhetri



## Kiran Sahi

A drummer and percussionist with a long record of performance and teaching. Sahi's best known for playing with the Nepali progressive rock band Jindabaad and the jazz ensembles Le-piro Quintet and Mad Jazz Quintet.

**Performs:** Drums and other percussion instruments with a flavour of progressive rock and jazz.



## Rabin Lal Shrestha

A leading figure of classical music in Nepal, and one of the country's most respected and renowned musical performers, recording artists and educators, Shrestha taught music in the royal palace for over two decades. He has lectured and headed a department at the Fine Arts Campus of Tribhuvan University.

**Performs:** Percussion instruments in classical style.



## Naresh Prajapati

A percussionist specialising in Madal Tarang. Prajapati studied traditional Nepali percussion under the maestros Nurchhe Bhadur Dangol and Rabin Lal Shrestha, and his work appears on albums such as *Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia Live* in Nepal.

**Performs:** A wide range of traditional drums like madal, tabla, dholak, shimmy and khi.



## Navin Chettri

A percussionist, vocalist, composer and music educator, and founder and artistic director of the Kathmandu Jazz Festival (popularly called Jazmandu). Chettri is a pioneer of jazz in Nepal, and a driving force behind its growth.

**Performs:** Jazz, Nepali folk, Indian classical, West African, Afro-Cuban and Brazilian rhythms



## Mangal Man Maharjan

An accomplished singing- bowl artist, as well as theatre practitioner and Charya dancer, Maharjan is a keen collector and historian of singing bowls, and strives to unearth the ancient roots of the bowls in Newari culture.

**Performs:** Singing bowl, in order to preserve and revive its traditions in the Kathmandu Valley.



## Tamba Group

A group performing in the Tamang Selo style, a musical tradition central to Tamang culture. Tamba songs are one of the oldest and most prized parts of Tamang musical tradition and integral to rituals and habits that mark the course of every Tamang's life, from birth to death. This ensemble presents a glimpse of Tamang culture and history.

**Performs:** Tamang rituals, folktales and beliefs to the rhythmic accompaniment of the Damphu drum.



## Cadenza Collective

A unique and eclectic band in Kathmandu. From humble beginnings in the early 1990s as a rock, funk and reggae outfit, Cadenza went on to become among the first bands to experiment with jazz in Nepal, pumping vitality into the country's improvised music scene.

**Performs:** Jazz, afro-funk and Nepali folk music, creating a genre-bending sound that's irresistible to the ears.

1:00pm - 2:00 pm / Essential Grooves for Jazz Drummers - Navin Chettri

2:00pm - 3:00pm / Afro - Cuban / Brazilian Rhythm Section - Navin Chettri

### 26 June

10:00 am - 11:00 am / Drum-set Improvisation - Esad Loliovich  
11:00 am - 12:00pm / Healing with Singing Bowls - Mangal Man Maharajan  
1:00pm - 2:00 pm / Essential Grooves for Jazz Drummers - Navin Chettri  
2:00pm - 3:00pm / Afro - Cuban / Brazilian Rhythm Section - Navin Chettri

# CONCERT SCHEDULE

### 26 JUNE

#### DRUM JATRA AT UPSTAIRS

**'Cadenza & Multi Drummers'**

**Show Time:** 8:00pm to 10:00pm

**Venue:** Jazz Upstairs, Lazimpat

**Ticket:** Rs 500/-

Multiple drummers come together with Cadenza Collective to create a night of infectious grooves at Jazz Upstairs.

(Gates open at 7:30pm. Seats are based on a first-come, first-served basis, and are not guaranteed with a ticket).

### JUNE 27

#### DRUM JATRA AT MOKSH

**'Cadenza & Multi Drummers'**

**Show Time:** 8:00pm to 10:00pm

**Venue:** Moksh, Jhamsikhel

**Ticket:** Rs 500/-

Bringing Cadenza & Multi Drummers across the bridge to Moksh, a special showcase of multiple drummers with Cadenza Collective.

(Gates open at 7:30pm. Seats are based on a first-come, first-served basis, and are not guaranteed with a ticket).

### JUNE 28

#### EKTAAL

**'Subtle Sounds of Percussions'**

**Show Time:** 7:00pm to 9:00pm

**Venue:** Kantipur Temple House, Thamel

**Ticket:** Rs 1000/-

Featuring the subtle, delicate and charismatic colours of drums at Kantipur Temple House with visiting drummers and some of Nepal's top traditional percussionists.

(Gates open at 6:30pm and closes at 7:30pm. Seats are based on a first-come, first-served basis, and are not guaranteed with a ticket).

### JUNE 29

#### DRUM JATRA FINALE

**Show Time:** 7:00pm to 9:00pm

**Venue:** Summit Hotel, Sanepa Height

**Ticket:** Rs 800/-

The Finale will showcase some of the top festival performers, with high-energy drumming traditions spanning from western percussion ensembles, African drumming styles and Brazilian rhythms to traditional Nepali drums, such as Madal tarang and Women's Tamang Selo ensemble.

(Gates open at 6:30pm. Seats are based on a first-come, first-served basis, and are not guaranteed with a ticket).

EVENTS



Let’s Hike

Spend the weekend surrounded by nature and hike to stay healthy or just to have fun. The 4-5 hour hike will lift the week’s stress.  
22 June, 8am-5pm, Rs700, Fulbari Gate-Jamacho, 9847557794

Embraces

This solo exhibition of works by Sabita Dangol presents an exquisite collection of paintings on intimacy, love and symbolic ways to help us pursue optimism to resolve our problems.  
21 June, 5:30-8pm, Image Ark, Kulimha Tole (01) 5006665

Understanding the Himalaya

Understanding the Himalaya —Sustainable Livelihood and Mountain Conservation, is a one-day workshop with keynote speeches, a panel discussion, engaging with maps and a storytelling workshop, followed by an interactive working session to help design a framework to conduct a climate story camp.  
23 June, 9:30-4:30pm, British Council Nepal, Lainchaur (01) 4237700



Private is Political

To mark its 25th anniversary, Kausi Theatre is staging ‘Private is Political’ as a fundraiser so it can perform the play outside of Kathmandu.  
21 June, 5:30-7:15pm, Rs500/1,000, Kausi Theater, 9861315317



Living Tradition

Come and see this exhibition of the collection from the Living Traditions Museum, which displays the work of Judith Conant Chase.  
Until 23 June, 4-7pm, Taragaon Museum, Boudha (01) 6201035

Music Marketing

Enjoy a free workshop on social video monetization, mechanical licensing, sync licensing, social media endorsement, SoundCloud, iTunes, Google Play music, Deezer, Spotify and Pandora, their challenges and opportunities.  
22 June, 1:30-3:30pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel (01) 5543554



Kleśā

Kleśā aims to generate a new perspective for looking at the story of the Ramayana. Enjoy the reinterpreted work of sage Valmiki through a purely contextualised theatrical composition.  
Until 23 June, 5:30-7pm, Mandala Theatre Nepal, Anamnagar (01) 5705761

Cityscape

Drop by to view the solo exhibition ‘Cityscape’ by Masae Suzuki along with a screening of the film ‘My Love,’ directed by Japanese filmmaker Toshiaki Itoh with Ganesh Man Lama in the lead role.  
21 June (exhibition until 30 June), 5-8pm, Gallery Mcube, Chakupat, 9851170110

MUSIC

Music Day 2019

Join the 2019 edition of Fête de la Musique with an amazing line-up of artists. On World Music Day, celebrate sounds while enjoying snacks and a fresh drink, and don’t stop grooving.  
21 June, 3-9pm, Chhaya Centre, Thamel (01) 5009221



Republic Weekend

Celebrate World Music Day by promoting music and Nepali artists; enjoy performances by Prasanna Adhikari, Sugam Pokharel and the band (Gaja Baja), along with Girish Khatiwada. Experience great music, food and a delightful ambience.  
22 June, 5-11:30pm, Rs1,000, Trisara, Lazimpat (01) 4410200

Flekke + KJC

Flekke, an electronic experimental pop project, and the KJC Folk Choir, an acapella ensemble, will perform in a new kind of show, bringing together two very different musical worlds.  
21 June, 6-9pm, Rs500, Hardik Lounge, Jhamsikhel, 9841226397

The Mid Night Riders

Celebrate the 10th anniversary of The Mid Night Riders with live blues and rock & roll by the band.  
21 June, 6-9pm, Rs500, Hardik Lounge, Jhamsikhel, 9847687537



Fantastic night

Have a fantastic night moving and grooving to the songs of Almoda. Invite your family and friends for bigger fun.  
21 June, 6pm onward, Odaan Restaurant & Lounge, Bansbari

DINING



Kaiser Cafe

A very quaint restaurant, with a nice menu and attentive service hidden in a corner of the Garden of Dreams. Enjoy fine dining after a relaxing walk around the serene garden.  
Kaiser Café, Thamel (01) 4413217

Baan Thai

The oldest Thai restaurant in town serves authentic Thai cuisine in a charming ambience, with space for a meeting or celebration. The place to go for Thai food enthusiasts.  
10am-10pm, Ekantakuna (01) 5000614



New Orleans

Offering a wide variety of western dishes that are scrumptious yet healthy. Rosemary chicken and hamburgers will draw you back for more.  
Jhamel (01) 5522708

Evoked Cafe & Bistro

This café and bistro is a space whose smells, colours, sounds and shapes will dazzle your mind. Pick your favourite: pita bread, baguette or multigrain, and enjoy a sandwich served with homemade fries and salad on the side.  
Jhamsikhel, 9851111051

Pizza & Pasta

Be it Pappardelle Carbonara with Shrimp and Litchi or Cappelletti with Porcini Mushroom Sauce, share the joy of eating Italian food from the special a la carte menu curated by the chef, and enjoy a glass of ‘buon vino’.  
Until 29 June, 6:30pm-10:30pm, Olive Garden, Radisson Hotel (01) 4411818

GETAWAY



Park Village Resort

Yoga, detox and ayurveda treatment in a quiet corner of Kathmandu. Enjoy the services of the Himalayan wellness centre — a one-stop shop to relax your mind and body.  
Himalayan Peace and Wellness Centre, Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha (01) 4370286

Gaida Wildlife Camp

Bordering the rhino zone in the central area of Chitwan National Park, this camp is a great place to reconnect with wildlife. Drive to Sauraha, and the Camp folks will take care of you from there.  
Chitwan (01) 4215409/ 4215431



Mount Princess Hotel

The hotel offers magnificent views of the surrounding valley and mountains, and is a peaceful retreat amidst nature for those wishing to escape the city’s madness. You can book your stay at OYO 256 Mount Princess Hotel through the OYO app.  
Dhulikhel (011) 490616

Yatri Suites and Spa

Treat yourself to a relaxing spa treatment that includes full body massage, body scrub, sauna and steam.  
Amrit Marg, Thamel, 9802063086



Namo Buddha Resort

Constructed in traditional Newari style and surrounded by lush greenery, the resort is an oasis of peace and tranquility, offering spectacular views of the Himalayas on clear days.  
Namo Buddha, Phulbari, 9851106802



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OUR PICK

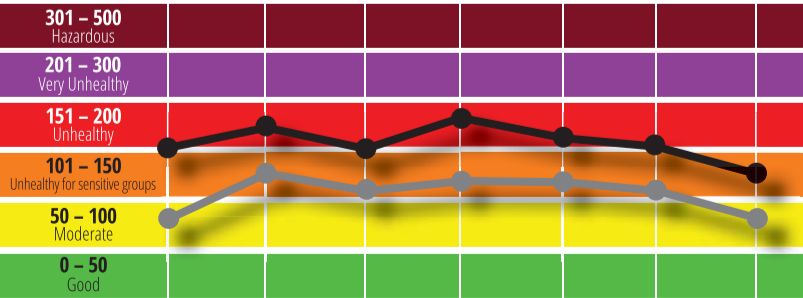


Opened in Kathmandu on 14 June

Along with protecting the Earth from the scum of the universe, in this latest adventure The Men in Black have to tackle their biggest threat to date: a mole in their organization. In this newest instalment of The Men in Black series, Men in Black: International, directed by F. Gary Gray and written by Art Marcum and Matt Holloway, additions are made to the Men in Black organization. It is interesting to see how it all unveils.

AIR QUALITY INDEX

KATHMANDU, 14-20 June



With the advent of pre-monsoon showers, Kathmandu Valley’s Air Quality Index (AQI) has improved somewhat, but that is a relative concept. The concentration of toxic particulates smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter from vehicular emissions is still in the ‘Unhealthy’ yellow zone during the morning and evening peak hours. The only good news is that we have now started seeing more orange and yellow instead of red and purple. The graph above shows us what we breathed this week:  
<https://np.usembassy.gov/embassy/air-quality-monitor/>



# Art of everyday living

The exhibited collection of Living Traditions Museum gives history and art lovers the sense of diving into Nepal’s rich cultural past



Incense perfumed the hall as visitors entered a room full of photographs hung on the white walls of Taragaon Museum on a recent Saturday evening. The guests quickly dispersed, drawn by the pictures from every corner of the country, photographed by Judith Conant Chase in her travels criss-crossing Nepal since 1976. Below the photographs 400 everyday objects were lovingly displayed from Chase’s collection. Together, such photos and objects make up the Living Tradition

Museum, opened by Chase in 2012 in Changu Narayan, but damaged in the 2015 earthquakes. Luckily, the collection was saved and after rebuilding, the museum will re-open in a few months. The photographs present a vivid replication of the past. An 88-year-old Newari woman with a wrinkled face walks holding the hand of a woman in *haku patasi* Newari dress behind three small monks as they celebrate her 88 years, 8 months and 8 days *jankhu*. The objects displayed are

simple items, like a brass vessel used to store and carry water, a spinning wheel for weaving shawls and mats, and a special coat called a *gyanma* worn by the men of the Nyinba ethnic group from Humla district. Most of these everyday objects of decades ago are a rarity now. “I appreciate an old pot, *gagri*, for the workmanship,” says the exhibition’s curator James Giambrone. When he first came to Nepal in 1970, all the items exhibited were in daily use. Today, these objects of purpose are to be seen and admired. “One of the things we wanted to showcase here was that people make *murti* to worship, not to showcase,” Giambrone added. The exhibit reminds us of the rich culture and diversity of Nepal, from the Tarai, to the hills and the high Himal. It opens a window for younger generations to see how utilitarian objects were created and used in daily life. ‘Communicating the basic nature of Nepali arts and cultures, emphasising the distinguishing qualities unique to each culture, i.e. why things are made, how they are made, how they fit into the social and religious context,’ is the goal of the Living Tradition Museum. Judith Conant Chase’s book, *The Beauty of Purposeful Living*, which documents the places and people she has visited and the objects that are essential to their daily lives, was also launched at the opening. **Reeti KC**



**DAZED:** Prime Minister K P Oli after visiting the CERN particle physics laboratory near Geneva during his Europe tour last week.



**GUNS AND ROSES:** Popular singer Yogeshwor Amatya hands flowers to riot police at Maitighar Mandala on Wednesday as the protest against the *Guthi* Bill escalated.



**BLOOD DRIVE:** US Ambassador Randy Berry donates blood at the Nepal Red Cross Society in Kathmandu last week.



**NO SACRIFICE:** Activists march in Kathmandu demanding a ban on animal sacrifices at the Gadhimai festival, which sees the mass slaughter of animals every five years in Bara.



**SPORTS DEAL:** Country Manager of Turkish Airlines Abdullah Tuncer Kececi and Sagarmatha Cement sign a sponsorship deal for the annual Nepal Sports Journalists' Forum Pulsar Sports Awards slated for 2 July.

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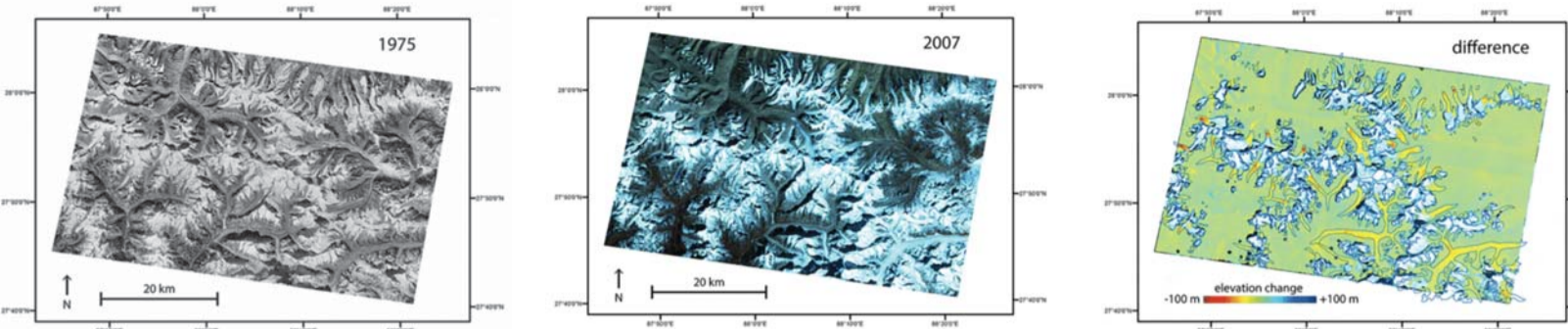
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**DATA MAPPING:** Comparison of satellite images taken in 1975 and 2007 of the Nepal-India border reveals changes in the elevation of glaciers.

# Himalayan meltdown from space

Declassified US spy satellite images confirm Himalayan glaciers are melting faster than we thought

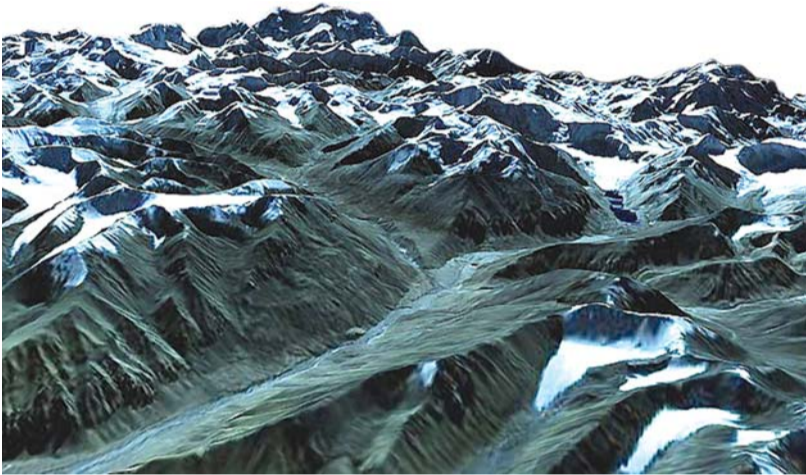
**Nina Pullano**  
in New York

US spy satellites that secretly kept watch over the Himalaya during the Cold War are helping researchers piece together the most detailed view yet of the region's accelerating ice loss.

The US military used the satellites to take thousands of photographs worldwide as part of its surveillance of the Soviet Union, China and other countries, dating as far back as the 1970s.

Now declassified, the satellite data is helping researchers track the melting of the Himalayan glaciers, and it is revealing changes across the region that scientists say are consistent with global warming. The results could help communities in Nepal, India, China, Bhutan and downstream countries that rely on those glaciers to prepare for future flooding and changes in their water resources as the climate changes.

Scientists analysed images of 650



JOSH MAURER

Himalayan glaciers as the ice changed over four decades and found that, on average, the glaciers melted twice as fast between 2000 and 2016 as they did from 1975 to 2000.

"This is the clearest picture yet of how fast Himalayan glaciers are melting over this time interval, and why," said Josh Maurer, the study's lead author at Columbia University's Earth and Environmental Sciences program.

The melting was driven by increases in air temperature due to the greenhouse effect, according to the study published Wednesday in the journal *Science Advances*. Since the melting was consistent across the region, the researchers could not attribute it to more variable, localised effects, such as black carbon, which darkens ice so it absorbs more energy, or precipitation.

**EYE IN THE SKY:** A 3D model of the changing Himalayan glaciers using spy satellite images from different angles dating back to the 1970s.

"That doesn't rule out impact by these other sources," said study co-author Summer Rupper, of the University of Utah. But the evidence suggests warming temperatures are driving the extensive melting, and both are picking up speed.

Being able to track changes over time helps researchers parse out trends connected with global warming. "You remove some of that year-to-year variability and you get what the actual long-term change looks like," Rupper said.

Until now, researchers have mostly looked at changes in the amount of land the glaciers cover, Rupper said, adding, "but that doesn't actually tell us how much ice or water is being lost."

To gauge the change in glacier volume, the scientists created a method to 'essentially do what our eyes do naturally', using

overlapping images to construct a three-dimensional image of the terrain.

The satellite data spans India, China, Nepal and Bhutan. Each of those countries, in addition to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan, are members of the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), which has been studying the changes now underway in mountain glaciers.

ICIMOD released an assessment earlier this year stating that, in a best-case scenario, Himalayan glaciers will lose more than one-third of their mass by the end of the century. And if greenhouse gas emissions continue at current rates, two-thirds could be gone.

That melting could have devastating consequences for communities in and near the Himalaya, many of whom already face poverty and malnutrition. Glacier melt adds to those vulnerabilities, threatening floods, landslides and the loss of their water supply.

"With glacier melt, the impact is biggest for mountain communities who are directly dependent on glaciers," said ICIMOD's David Molden.

Communities that rely on Himalayan glaciers for water already see the effects of shrinking ice, Molden said. As canals that channel glacier water to communities run dry, they have to dig new ones, higher in the mountains. "You can look at the mountain and kind of see these stripes of canals hitting the glacier," Molden said.

Researchers hope their findings can create a framework that will help communities adapt to potential changes and hardships as temperatures continue to warm. "What does that change actually mean in terms of downstream water resources? We can give some sense of projections to communities."

Molden said the spy satellite findings could be important in helping to persuade policymakers to plan for the effects of climate change: "It's strengthening the case that climate change is coming more rapidly than we expect."  [insidclimatenews.org](https://insidclimatenews.org)


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# The fire has not gone out

With the nation in ferment, banned revolutionary songs from the past find resonance again

Sewa Bhattarai

Men and women in unisex combat fatigues dance energetically on stage. Their modernistic, martial moves would not look out of place in a tv reality show. But the lyrics tell a different story:

It is time to sharpen the shining khukri again

This YouTube video clip shows members of the Samana Cultural Group affiliated with the Biplav faction continuing where the mainstream Maoist party left off after the ceasefire in 2006.

Songs like these were hits during the insurgency, when Maoist propaganda units toured the country performing and mustering public support for the revolution. In many places, it worked.

But even though Nepal has gone from war to peace, from monarchy to republic, and many of the performers have either migrated for work overseas or turned to other professions, members of the Biplav faction are still singing to show that the revolution continues.

The tradition of revolutionary songs did not begin with the Maoists. Ranudevi Adhikari, the first female voice on radio, sang songs against the Rana regime that were broadcast from clandestine stations in 1949. One of them went:

Nepali, Nepali, Let's march forward with the flag of revolution in our hands

The genre came to be known as *janabadi*, and the songs were revived during the Panchayat when four youngsters, Raamesh, Raayan, Manjul and Arim, established a group called Ralfa.

“At the time, the only songs were about love, not about the harsh life of poor people,” remembers Raayan, who today heads the Nepal Academy of Music and Dance. “Our intention was to bring awareness and to change society through music.”

The group went on to create rousing songs like *Gaun Gaun Bata Utha* and *Gariba ko Chameli*, and toured Nepal singing songs protesting against the Panchayat regime and establishing the *pragatishil* genre, which shares many features with protest music worldwide.

The lyrics mainly dealt with social inequities and injustice. The music was often martial and easy to repeat and understand because it was based on simple folk tunes. When performed as dances, the songs were deliberately non-sexual, featuring uniformed men and women.

The tunes were instrumental in the success of the anti-Panchayat people's movement of 1990 and the 2006 anti-monarchy protests. During the 1996-2006 insurgency, the messages focused



on injustice and an exhortation to rise up and fight. There were *krantikari* (revolutionary) songs eulogising courage on the battlefield and mournful ones about martyrs.

“The function of revolutionary songs was to recruit people to the revolutionary cause, and to rally the people,” recalls Mani Thapa, who headed a Maoist cultural group. “They were relevant at a particular moment in history, and we don't really sing such battle-ready songs anymore.”

Many of the songs are now lost because they were never recorded, but also because the

cause dissipated after the war. Writer and music analyst Raman Ghimire believes this is the fate of all revolutionary songs: “They are associated with a particular ideology and are only relevant as long as the movement needs them. They are never going to be popular in the mainstream.”

The Maoist party's cultural wing attracted many talented lyricists, composers and singers, but it was later dismantled. “After the ceasefire we had intense debate about which way we should go, towards peace or towards another revolution

(*shanti ki kranti*),” remembers Laxmi Gurung (pictured overleaf) who joined the Maoists out of revenge after her leftist father was disappeared by state security and her husband killed. It is her voice in dozens of revolutionary songs, including *Rana Maidan Ma*, in which a line says, ‘the lives of brave warriors bloom in the battlefield’.

“More bloodshed will not be good for the country,” says Gurung now, adding that it is hard to survive as a singer in peacetime. Other members of her troupe, like Maila Lama who sang songs exhorting guerrillas to battle, have



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यसरी हातहतियार र खरखजाना बुझाउन ल्याएमा यसअघि ती अवैध हातहतियार र खरखजाना राखेको कारणले मात्र त्यस्ता व्यक्तिलाई कुनै कानूनी कारवाही नचलाइने हुँदा तोकिएको समयभित्र अवैध हातहतियार तथा खरखजाना अनिवार्य रूपमा बुझाउनुहुन सम्बन्धित सबैमा जानकारी गराइन्छ । यदि इजाजत प्राप्त नगरी आफूसँग रहेका हातहतियार तथा खरखजाना तोकिएको अवधिभित्र स्वेच्छाले नबुझाएमा त्यस्ता व्यक्ति उपर प्रचलित कानून बमोजिम कारवाही हुने व्यहोरा समेत सूचित गरिन्छ ।



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become politicians.

Pragati Mahara of the Maoist Pratirodh Cultural Group today sings songs about social ills and transformation. “The songs about battles are a part of history,” says Mahara. “Now that our revolution is over, we are more focused on the need of the day.”

Meanwhile, the original Ralfa generation is still active, perhaps more so than the Maoists who came after them. But even they have distanced themselves from politics. As head of a government institution, Raayan is focused on promoting Nepal’s folk art.

Raamesh also shuns political affiliations, even though Ralfa’s songs were used by many political movements: first against the Panchayat, then by the Maoists, who saw them as precursors to their own revolutionary songs, and finally by political parties during the 2006 anti-monarchy protests.

Raamesh is now more active as a children’s song creator. “We sing people’s songs, which speak up for the poor and disenfranchised.

If anyone wants to use them for a good cause, they are welcome. But using it for vested political interests is a crime,” he says.

Unlike Maoist songs, Ralfa’s numbers are evergreen because they speak of the larger causes of justice and equality. There is a lesson there in what makes a song endure, while others disappear.

Jeevan Sharma, who established the Raktim Cultural Group, is among the few revolutionary singers who has gone mainstream. “The people always need a voice, and songs that speak truth to power. If they do that, songs do not need to be associated with any political party – they can have a life of their own.”

Sharma’s own song of the life of the disenfranchised, *Simali Chhaya ma Baseri*, has that long shelf-life.

Since the Raktim Cultural Group was associated with the NCP Masaal led by Mohan Bikram Singh, Sharma’s songs were unofficially banned during the monarchy days and the composer himself



SAILENDRA KHAREL



**WAR SONGS:** ‘Comrade Pratishta’, 14, dances to the tune of a revolutionary song at a Maoist mass rally in Dang in 2001 during a Dasain ceasefire (*left*).

Two members of the Maoist Jana Sanskrit Cultural Group practice revolutionary songs in Kailali district during a lull in the fighting in 2005 (*above*).

Laxmi Gurung (*left*) joined the Maoists after her father and husband were killed. She did vocals for dozens of revolutionary songs.



FIRE IN THE BELLY



Go online to listen to excerpts from revolutionary songs from the Maoist era, and to hear from those who feel abandoned as the leaders who led them are now themselves trying to restrict freedom of expression.

nepalintimes.com

was semi-underground during the Panchayat and the war years.

Ironically the Maoists, who once promoted revolutionary songs, are today cracking down on protest songs. Those who claimed to speak for people’s rights now try to ban songs like Pashupati Sharma’s *Lutna Sake Loot*.

Raamesh himself is still writing songs, and his latest shows the fire has not gone out:

**A great storm arose  
To raise the fallen head of justice  
Their deceitful face is now clear  
Now we know they are regressive**

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# Boutique Airport FAQs

In preparation for #VisitNepalYear2020, Kathmandu's Tinkune International airport (TIA) has been rebranded as Boutique Airport Nepal (BAN). This is a cunning strategy to take the minds of passengers off all the facilities that a normal airport should have, but which are lacking at Nepal's only international gateway.

So, what exactly does a Boutique Airport have that an International Airport does not? I put some FAQs to the head honcho of the Civil Authoritarians of Nepal's Transportation (CAN'T), and got a rundown of the following features:

- The only airport in the world that has a life-size rhinoceros with calf ready to charge at deplaning passengers.
- In keeping with Nepal as an adventure destination, the airport gives visitors a pre-taste of what to expect in Kathmandu, proving once more that Nepal is not for the faint-hearted.
- Kathmandu Airport has been voted among the Top Ten Worstest Airports in the World for the third year in a row. This is a clever move by CAN'T to get free international publicity for #VNY2020
- A Boutique Airport must stand out by not having a boring steel and glass concourse. Which is why the Department of Irritating Customs has ensured that arrival formalities are a maze: there are separate serpentine queues for filling out the e-visa form on a dysfunctional console, to pay the visa fee, for the immigration stamp, lining up for an hour at the x-ray

- to check if you are mettle free and have no gold stuck up your Ass. This is all a very subtle way of showing Nepal is such a popular adventure destination that people are lining up just to get in.
- The baggage carousels at a Boutique Airport have to be designed differently from other international airports. Which is why at KTM no information is provided about which conveyor the luggage from your flight is on. This keeps arriving passengers on their toes, keeps them guessing, and there is never a dull moment at the start of a Nepal horriday.
  - The decibel level of the public announcement system at a Boutique Airport is always deliberately kept at maximum as a courtesy to those who are hard of hearing. The audio volume is also adjusted so as to bust the ear drums of those who have normal hearing.
  - Arriving from Hong Kong, you are shangaied by taxis.
  - To give you more bang for the buck, the Ministry of Tourism and Maoism has now ensured your trek starts at the airport itself by allowing passengers to descend a steep trail with the assistance of Sherpas to a parking lot located in the valley below.
  - To make it easy for tourists to navigate, departure procedures at the Boutique Airport are in exact reverse order of the arrival process.



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