

ECS NEPAL

THE NEPALI WAY

ECS NEPAL
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The show must go on / The frequent flyers of nepal / Into the wild / Waiting for the tiger / Green hiker, green planet trek

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MEDIA

JUNE 2011

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

Nepal's largest production continues to run a year-long show set on a historic plot of land since 1932 A.D.

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56 THE FREQUENT FLYERS OF NEPAL

Nepal's unique climatic and geographic conditions make it the favored country for a wide variety of avian species.

74 GREEN HIKER, GREEN PLANET TREK

The entrepreneurial spirit of Langtang locals has made sure that the villages on the trail are more than just quaint looking destinations.

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Arniko's combination of design and sport-smarts lends a refreshing contemporary spin to the craft scene in Nepal.

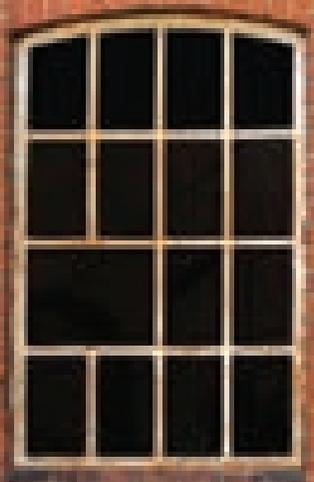


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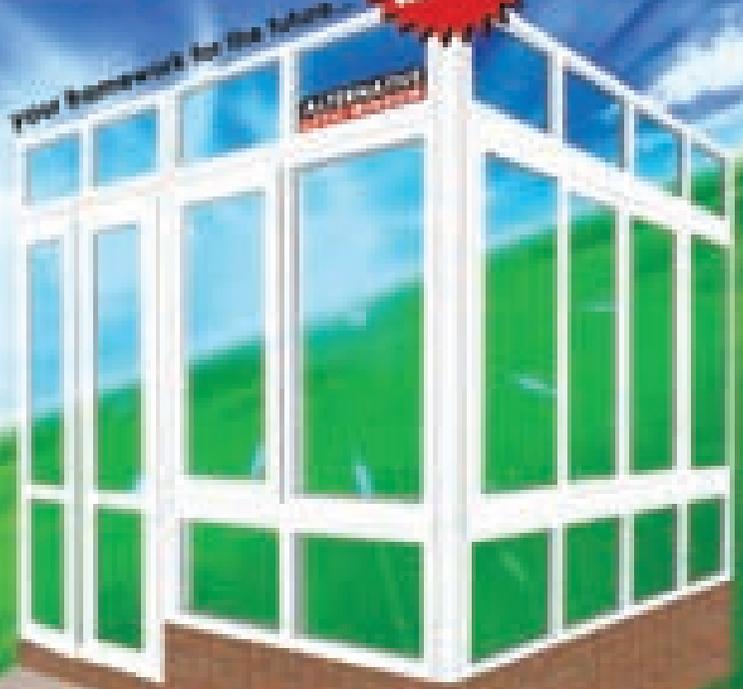


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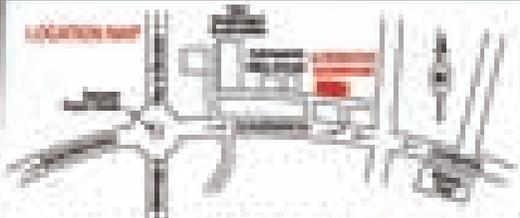
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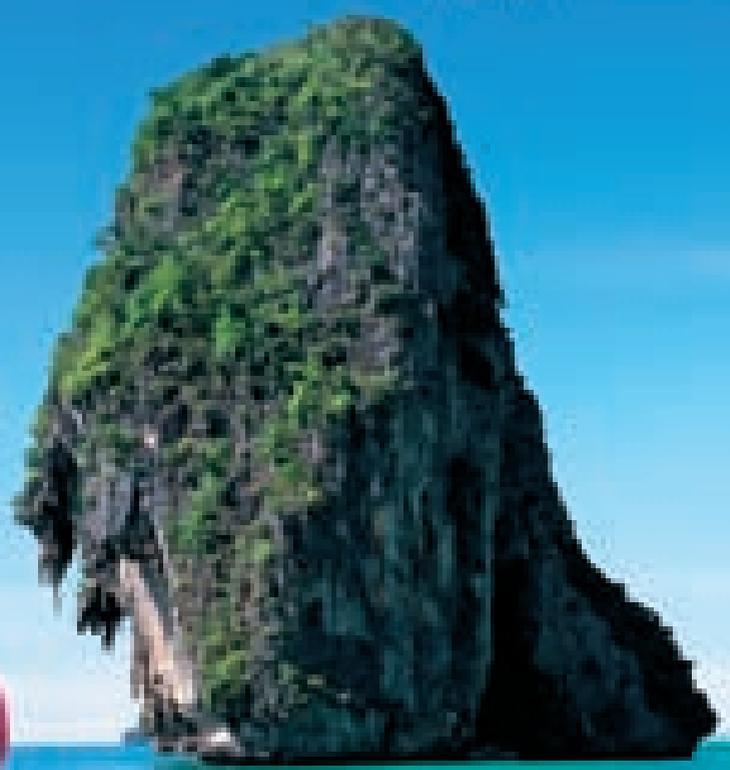


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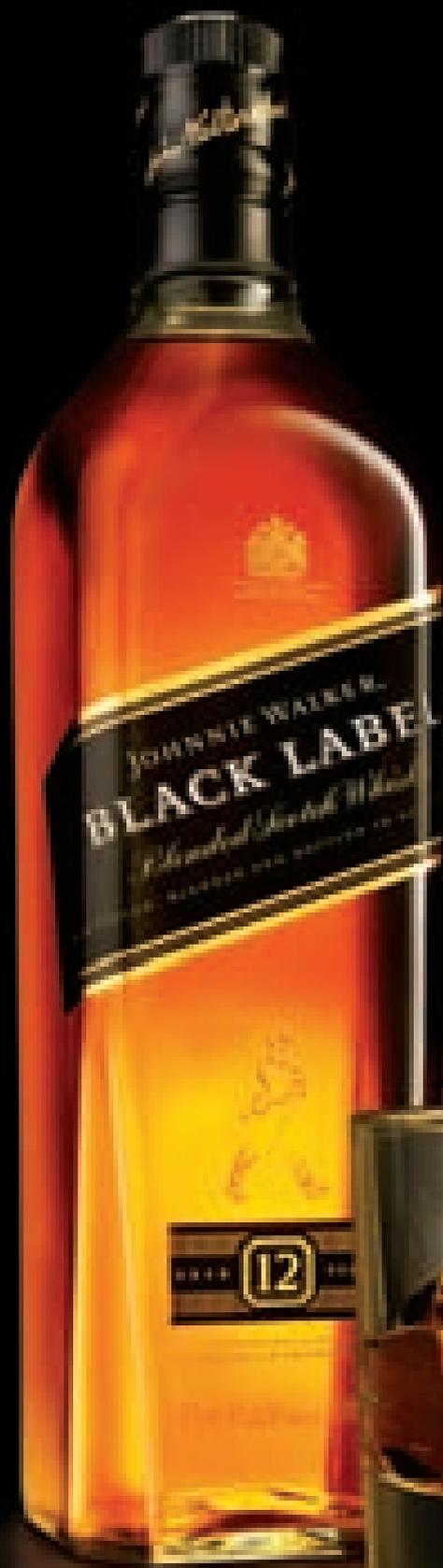
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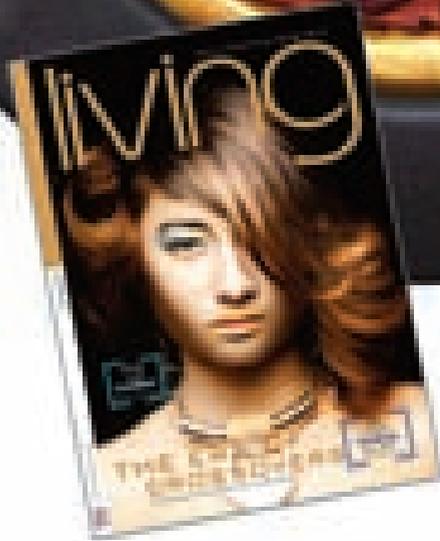
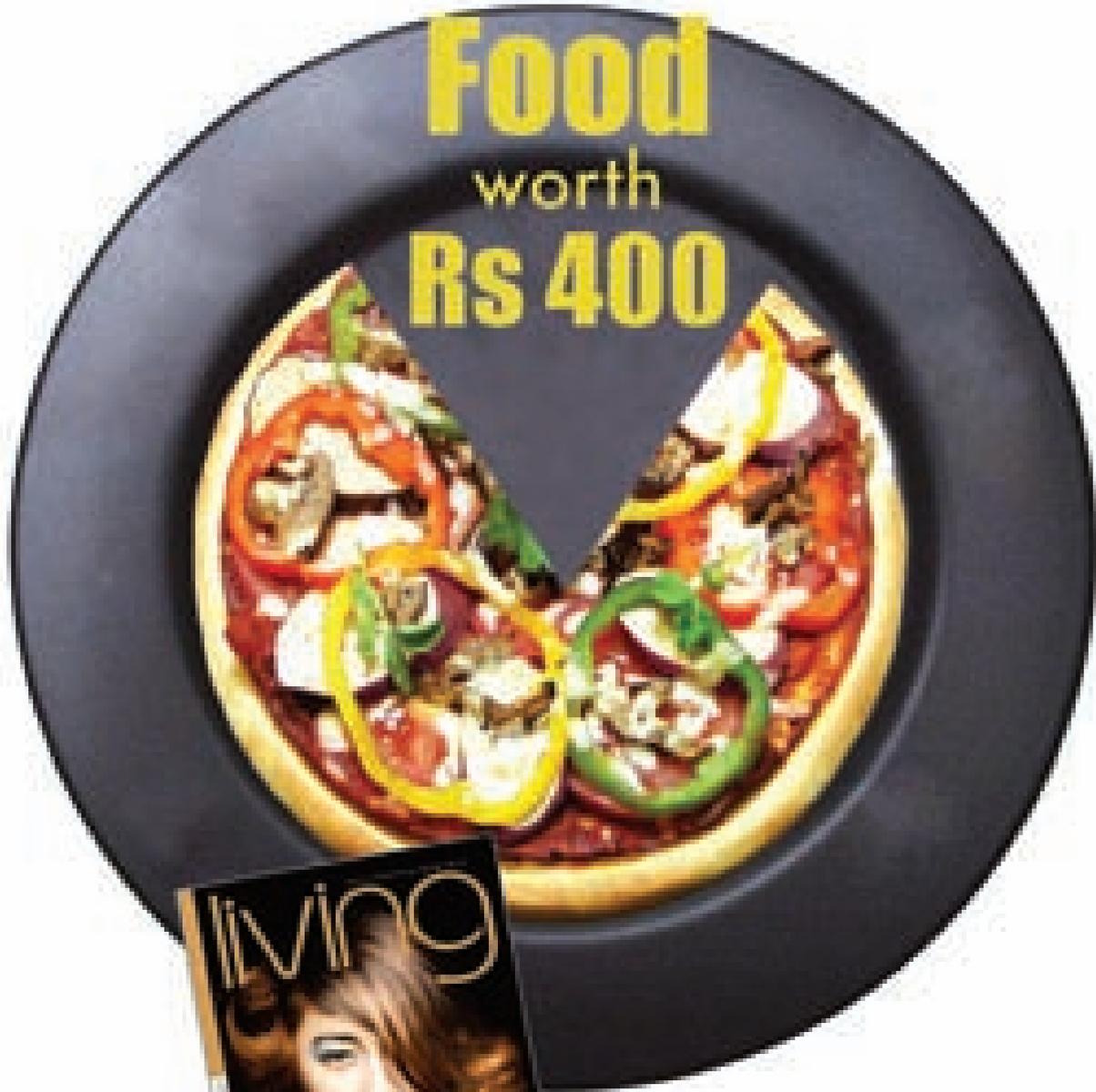
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Nepal's largest production continues to run a year-long show set on a historic plot of land since 1932 A.D.

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By Kapil Bisht

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By Amar B Shrestha

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The elusive Royal Bengal Tiger is one of the most sought after animals in the world. In an ironic twist of its fate, the king of the jungle finds itself waited upon by visitors from across the globe.

By Kapil Bisht

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Red panda, sisnoo soup and a volleyball tournament.

By Anil Chitrakar

ON THE COVER

Nepal's biggest show has enthralled audiences for years on end. This is the story of how they to do it.

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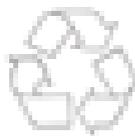
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GREEN PLANET

Our only “green planet” is losing plant and animal species at an alarming rate which scientists tell us is about one hundred times the normal rate of extinction. This means that as human beings, we are losing our future sources of food and medicine as well as narrowing down our future options to survive in a changing climate. We then resort to taking responses such as planting trees on World Environment Day with T-shirts and caps painted with nice slogans. Raising awareness is good and having a dedicated day in a year is also good; but not enough.

Nepal’s climatic and topographical variations in a very short physical distance make it an ideal habitat for numerous plants, animals and birds. We have a high proportion of the world’s biodiversity and hence we also have an unfairly large portion of the responsibility to conserve them. It was with the intention to learn more about what local communities, the national parks system, and Nepal’s development and conservation partners such as USAID and WWF were doing, that I participated in the **Green Hiker, Green Planet** trek to Langtang National Park. The diverse team and the magnificent setting made us all very humble and determined to do more.

Animals in captivity may not be a very popular idea for many and we can all be sure that animals in cages are a thing of the past. Even well managed zoological gardens do not really have a bright future except when they are doing cutting edge research or captive breeding for endangered species. Young children are really not going to enjoy seeing these beautiful creatures in cages when they have the option to see them in the wild. In Nepal, the Chitwan National Park is accessible today for everyone. The captive animals are still generally very popular for the rural folks that come to Kathmandu, and the Jawalakhel zoo is still a “must visit” place on their check list. It therefore serves very well

as an urban conservation education center. The state of the place has really improved over the past decade.

To the south of the Kathmandu valley is the scenic and lush green area of Godavari, the home of the famous botanical gardens. There is a fish farm and the St. Xavier’s School. The area is the water source for the Panch (five) and Nau (nine) Dharas or water spouts that supply clean and fresh water to the valley towns. There are sacred spots here for all faiths as well. Unlike Shivapuri to the north, Godavari and Phulchowki still await legal protection status. I guess we need to visit this place, fall in love with it and then campaign hard to protect it.

In this issue of ECS, the team has worked hard to bring to you writers, philanthropists, and entrepreneurs and of course the artists who make Nepal the unique place it is. We hope that these stories about their work and life enable the creation of new spaces where everyone gets a chance to grow and contribute to society. ECS has proven itself to be a great platform for this purpose. Talking of places, Okhaldhunga, in the eastern hills of Nepal, must become a place we all determine to visit once in our lifetime. The place has become famous for many reasons, one of which is a song written by Siddhi Charan Shrestha and sung by Narayan Gopal, “*Mero pyaro Okhaldhunga...*” Whatever you do this month please make time for *the Nepali way*.

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Charlie Gurung Wins Ruslan Vodka New Year Golf 2068

Charlie Gurung won the Ruslan Vodka New Year Golf 2068 tournament held at the Royal Nepal Golf Club on Baisakh 3, 2068 BS. This tournament played under ¾ Stable Ford format witnessed 85 golfers participating on that day. This tournament has been held for the last four years.

Winner Charlie Gurung accumulated 37 points while Joseph Nathan finished close second with 35 points. Major Man Bahadur Limbu won the Best Gross title. Captain Mailal Thapa won in the Senior Category while Major General Kiran S Thapa was the 1st Runner Up.

Mrs. Rekha Ghimire was the winner of the Ladies Competition with 39 points. Mr. Ang Norbu Sherpa won the Longest Drive title. Mr. Indra Thapa won the Most Birdies title & Captain Bishnu K Rai clenched the Closest to the Pin title. The winners got Kathmandu-Bangkok-Kathmandu return tickets for two while the Runner Ups won Kathmandu-Delhi round ticket for two. (Gaurav Thapa)



Strong and Stylish

Batas Brothers Motors Limited, the authorized distributor of Fiat Automobiles in Nepal, launched the Fiat Grande Punto and the Fiat Linea on 10 March. The Grande Punto is a mini car while Linea belongs to the sedan series. Grande Punto arouses strong emotions with its sleek, aggressive lines and conveys an impression of elegance and compactness.

The Grande Punto's sporty and muscular styling can be attributed to 'Car Designer of the Century' Giorgetto Giugiaro. The Grande Punto strong character is defined by a sleek and aggressive nose, which conveys an incredibly real dynamism. Internationally, Grande Punto's track record is excellent with one million units already sold.



The Linea represents a quantum leap as far as quality, safety and engineering are concerned. The car is expected to create a new sub-segment between the mid-sized and the luxury segment due to its unique design, comfortability, performance and features.

Designed in Italian style, the car has met with strong success across the world. This sedan stands out in terms of originality, functionality and drivability, in addition to offering a very competitive price/content ratio. The price range of Fiat Linea is Rs 3205999 to Rs 4123999.

Contact: Batas Brothers Motors Ltd, Gairidhara, 400576 (Anshu Khadka)

Amateur annexes crown

Rashid Khan won his first professional title Surya Nepal Masters 2011 at the Gokarna Forest Resort Golf Club on April 15 while playing in his debut season of professional golf at his twentieth age. "I had dreamt of a victory in my debut year but I did not think it could come so early in my professional career," said an ecstatic Rashid. Leading by two shots when they teed off in the morning, the champ from India submitted an error-free card of six-under 66 to finish the tournament at 20-under 268, seven shots clear of Sri Lankan Mithun Perera.

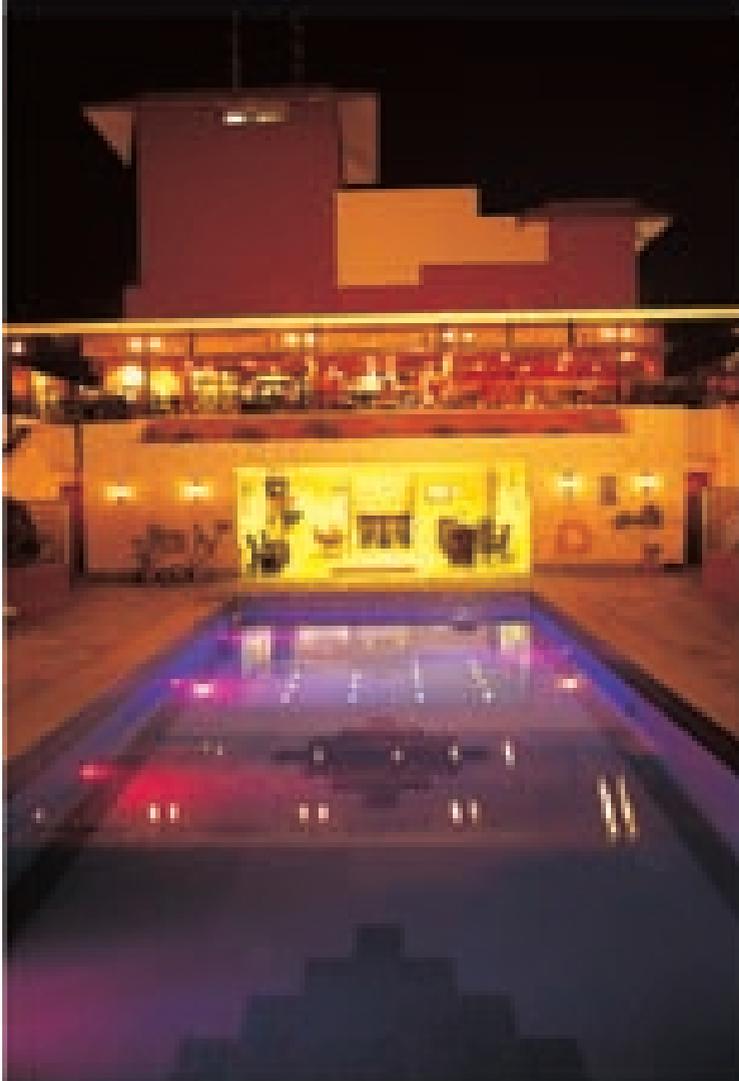
For the brilliant performance, Rashid received the winner's cheque of NRs 6.46 lakh. Mithun from Srilanka, who held the second position with a score of 275, carried away Rs 4.46 lakh and



Nepal's best bet Shiva Ram Shrestha went home with Rs 2.5 lakh after scoring 276.

The prizes were given away by Subash Chandra Nembang, Rt. Hon. Speaker, Constituent Assembly. An interactive CD made by Surya Nepal to promote Nepal as a golfing destination was released by Prachanda Man Shrestha, CEO, Nepal Tourism Board. (Samita Tamrakar)

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Mega Bank Inauguration

On 18th April 2011, Mega Bank Nepal Limited announced the formal inauguration of 12 branches by Chairman Dr. Madan Kumar Dahal. In a statement, the Chairman said, "Mega Bank is committed to providing financial solutions to not just the top, middle or bottom of the pyramid, but to strive towards providing financial solutions and economic linkages to the 'Entire Economic Pyramid'."

Mega Bank commenced operations from 23rd July last year. The bank was established with 1,219 promoters; mainly from middle class families spread over 63 districts of Nepal. Within 9 months, Mega Bank has already formed over 19,000 customer relationships and mobilized deposits in excess of Rs. 3.4 billion and disbursed loans over Rs. 4 billion. According to Chief Executive

Officer Mr. Anil Shah, Mega Bank intends to open another 15 branches in the coming fiscal year, working towards establishing a network of 50 branches over the next four years. The branches will serve as a hub from which Mega Bank will use technology, agent partners and other innovative alliances to penetrate into rural areas as they endeavor to stay strongly committed to their vision to become the 'Banker of every Nepali from Plough to Power – Halo to Hydro'.

All 12 branches are currently equipped with ATM services and are able to provide full service banking connected on an on-line real time centralized network utilizing the Oracle Flexcube core banking system. (Eunice Chan)

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Qatar Expands Wings

Qatar Airways has planned to extend its services to ten new destinations. The airlines will now provide services to Shiraz, Venice, Montreal, Medina, Kolkata, Sofia, Oslo, Entebbe, Baku and Tbilisi. With this, Qatar Airways has reached a historic milestone of now flying to 100 destinations.

"Qatar Airways is marking a momentous chapter in the airline's history and we are proud to be celebrating it here in Aleppo, one of the oldest cities in the world," said the company in a press statement. "The airline's first route was Abu Dhabi, and so it is a true achievement for Qatar Airways which has crossed the world over the past 14 years, flying to many diverse business and leisure cities and back, to launch



its 100th destination in this strategically important and historic destination," added the press statement.

Qatar Airways is to significantly increase flights to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the introduction of a fourth destination and additional services to existing markets, representing a dramatic 71 percent rise in frequency. (Anshu Khadka)

Welcoming Spring with Springwood

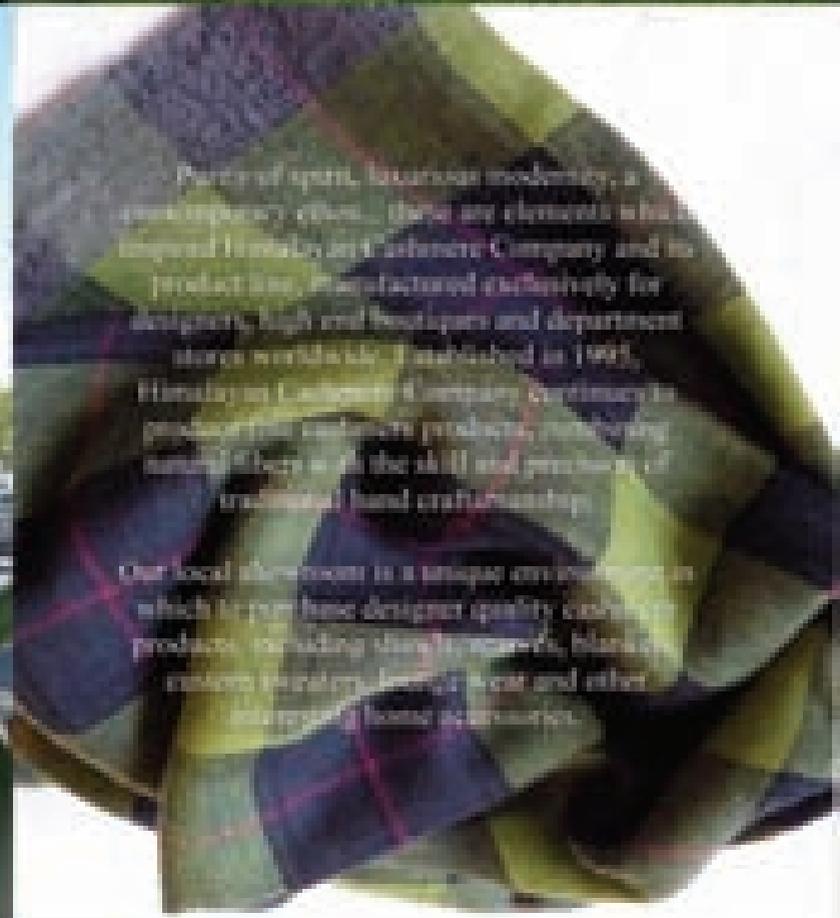
Summer is here, and so is a brand new summer T-shirt range from Springwood. The brand, a product of Surya Nepal Private Limited, has launched a new range of colorful, cool and chic tee designs across all its stores.

With designs inspired from everyday fun themes like Facebook to patriotic Nepal Tourism Year 2011, the range is expected to be well received by the urban youth who want to look effortlessly cool and fashionable. "The ideal choice for everyday wear, Springwood t-shirts give you complete

comfort with a contemporary style. Also, a stylish Nepali flavor in the design make these the perfect choice for a cool summer look", claims the brand in its press release.

The brand, barely 3 years old, already has a widely loved collection of shirts, trousers, T-shirts, jeans, cargoes and jackets in variety of style and materials. It has continually expanded its range of clothes and products to cater to more customers. With a print campaign already underway for the same, this new range is sure to win hearts. (Liza Paudel)

HIMALAYAN CASHMERE MANUFACTURING COMPANY



Part of spirit, luxurious modernity, a contemporary class... these are elements who inspired Himalayan Cashmere Company and its products are manufactured exclusively for designers, high end boutiques and department stores worldwide. Established in 1995, Himalayan Cashmere Company continues to produce the finest products, using the finest wool with the skill and precision of traditional hand craftsmanship.

The local department is a unique environment which is run by hand designed quality control products, creating their own style, blend, making garments like sweaters and other accessories in those countries.

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Ranjit's Revival

An art lover's must-attend art exhibition, 'The Revival' will showcase the crème de la crème of the works by senior artist Mr. Krishna Gopal Ranjit. A self-taught artist who is credited as the founder of commercial art in Nepal, Ranjit will be exhibiting series like 'Passing Culture', 'Living Culture', 'Nature to Culture', 'The Foggy Morning', 'New Horizon', 'Himalayan Views' and 'Moonlight Panorama'.

"The Revival" will be followed by another two-week exhibition by Ranjit, himself. This exhibition will showcase his current series of paintings and will be inaugurated on 5 June. The exhibition continues till 18 June and vouches for the

growing sophistication and elegance in his elegance with his every exhibition.

Renowned for his paintings of Nepalese culture, tradition and cultural landmarks of Nepal mostly captured mostly during festivals, Ranjit has never limited him self to any specific theme or medium. He is well known for his innovative paintings such as the collection entitled 'New Horizon' which he created with smoke residue out of a tukki.

Throughout the exhibition, there will be interactive art-programs such as art talks and interactions, student visit to artist studios, post card sale and canvas stretching workshops.

Life in Black and White



black and white images at the Patan Museum Keshav Narayan Chowk. 19 year old Maharjan opines, "Black and White photography brings life to a frame. It may look simple with no hues but it has the ability to capture the soul and true emotions." The Life in Black and White photo exhibition had 45 pictures on display. The photography consisted of portraits, candid frames and conceptual pictures which captured the lifestyle of cultural and natural Nepal. The title given to each picture shared a connection with the theme. A photo titled 'Pain' had a small baby crying while the other named 'Mother Nepal' had a mother nursing her baby in the middle of the crowd.

On 29 April, Shishir Maharjan disclosed the stories of many Nepalis, in more than a thousand words. But he did not speak; instead he narrated their tales through

All pictures were priced at Rs. 6000. The exhibition that closed on 1 May was successful in depicting the beauty of black and white. (Mannat Shrestha)

Welcoming the New Year

A new year's eve is a time when every restaurant, bar and disco in Kathmandu hosts a party. One event that stood out last Wednesday was Aarambha Entertainment's party at 1905, Kantipath. Lights bright enough to flood the lush gardens of 1905 and music loud enough to shake up the entire place, this outdoor party was an excellent venue to usher in the New Year. With great DJs, airport-like tight security and various TV channels broadcasting the event live, Aarambha's party, was a classy, world-class affair. DJ Kranti of Revolution Records was heating up the crowd with his hit mixes while DJ NVN, DJ Saroj and DJ Sur each worked the crowd in their own ways. The techno and house records were pretty intense and well-appreciated by the crowd. (Prashant Pratap Shah)

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Festival of Books



A book fest is probably the most beloved choice of outing for those into reading. The Bookworm Book Fest 2068, organized by Bookworm at Gyan Mandala was one such occasion for all booklovers. The book fair - literary festival inaugurated by Nepali actor Rajesh Hamal opened on April 21 and was on until the 24th.

The first day of the fest centered on a review of Buddhisagar Chapain's 'Karnali Blues'. Chapain shared with the audience his nostalgic story of how a child perceives his father and plowed out the realization that a person understands the value of others when they are no longer there. Rajesh Hamal as a reviewer appreciated Karnali Blues as a universal and realistic novel. Relating it to his own life, he touched on a few of his past memories too – similar to and different from those in the novel.

The book fair also enabled attendees with the opportunity to grab books at heavy discounts. "Such events should be organized time and again as they really encourage people to read books," said artist Erina Tamrakar. (Samita Tamrakar)

Talking Paubha

The Indian Cultural Center organized a talk on 'Manifestations of Devi: A Program on Newar Paubha Painting' by Deepak Joshi on April 15. Joshi, who started painting at the age of 10, said that unlike Thangka paintings, Paubha was still lacking behind and that the art form is concentrated within a few Newar communities, "However, new generations too have reckoned its importance and thus have started painting the same."

Paubha, comprising of two words 'Pau' and 'Bha,' means depiction of god in flat form. "However, Paubha and Pauva are different in the message they convey," Joshi shared. "Paubha implies message

from Buddha, while Pauva means message from monastery."

Although Joshi dwelt much into history, legends, myths and folklore, he conveyed little about the talk's topic - manifestations of Devi. The earliest Paubha paintings date back to the 13th century, the Araniko era, Joshi said, adding, "Unlike present day paubhas which use chemical colors, those paintings survived because they used stone colors." The artist, who trained under Paubha master Prem Man Chitrakar said, "There are no schools or curricula that teach these paintings, and it's high time someone did that." (Pratik Rimal)

Pedaling for Lower Emissions

The World Cyclist Foundation - Nepal (WCF-N) organized Kathmandu Nagarik Challenge - a 22km cycle rally on 23 April. Shradha Thakuri, Event Coordinator, informed that the motive of the event was "to encourage people to get into the habit of cycling."

With the catch line "Pedaling for education," the event was a success with more than 500 cyclists participating. "We're trying to educate and create awareness amongst people to cycle as this can help reduce carbon emission and pollution in Kathmandu valley," Thakuri said. "For a start, we request riders to leave their motorized vehicles at home once a week and ride cycles instead," the coordinator added.

Cyclist Pushkar Shah, who has toured the world on his bicycle, and came from Dolakha just for the event, called it his

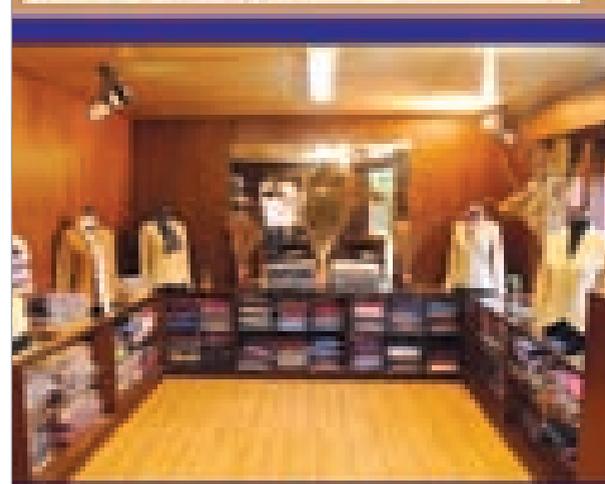
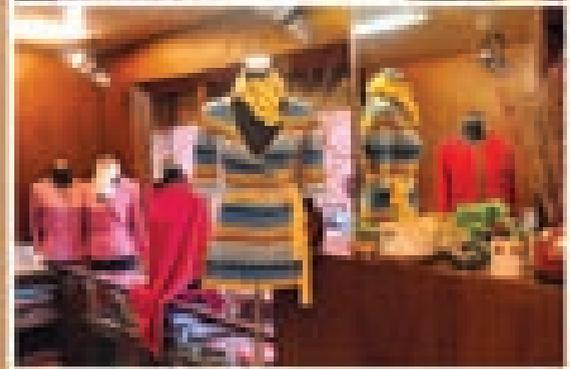
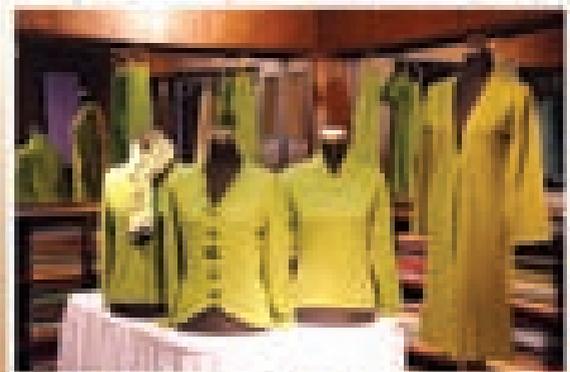
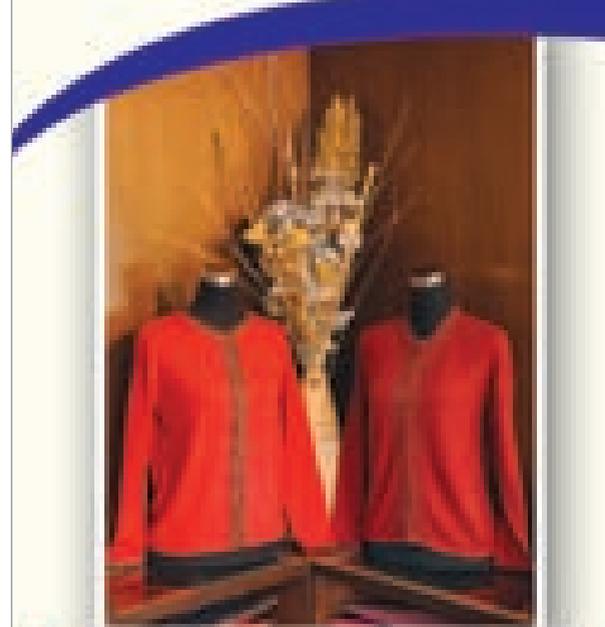


"bike day" and led the participants from Jawalakhel Football Ground to Satdobato, Chapagaun, Tika Bhairab, Bhainsepati, Champi and back. WCF-N plans to contribute a portion of the proceeds to a school in Dolakha. (Pratik Rimal)



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Hole that ball for 4 Million!

A putt, a pitch, a punch - the biggest golf event of the year in Nepal took place at the beautiful Gokarna Forest Golf Resort on April 13. Despite the unexpected drizzle, the largest-domestic-prize-money-event kicked off with unwashed enthusiasm from everyone. Curtains were raised for the five-day extravaganza by Surya Nepal Masters with top-notch, professional golfers from India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh like Mandeo Pathania, Gurbaaz Mann, Kumar, Feroze Ali, Ajeetesh Sandhu, Arshdeep Tiwana, Om Prakash Chauhan, Harindar Gupta, Miithun Perara and of course

our local sports persons Shiva Ram Shrestha and Deepak Acharya, to name a few. A co-sanctioned event with PGTI (Professional Golf Tour of India), it was a perfect opportunity for amateur golfers to measure their growth against some of the best golfers in the world.

With the twin objectives of promoting Nepal as a golf destination and enhancing the golfing talent of our players, Nepal Tourism Board will definitely see a rise in sports tourism, especially involving golf. (Chhoksum Bista)

Change Fusion Nepal

The fellows for 2011 were announced by Change Fusion Nepal, an NGO that promotes social entrepreneurship within the country, on 19 April at DECC, Agni Hall (UWTC) in Tripureshwar. The Fellowship 2011 was announced in December of last year inviting proposals from dedicated, creative and passionate Nepalese youth between the ages of 18 to 35 who had a vision towards social change for a better society.

The shortlisted applicants were closely evaluated by the juries and the mentors throughout the 3-day Capacity Building Workshop from 15-18 April in terms of the "project and the person," where the project had to be conceivable with a social/environmental impact and the person had to be visionary, passionate, committed and devoted to the project.

The ideas presented by the 2011 fellows were of energy conservation, provision of easy access to medicines by the less privileged, biogas, audio books for the visually impaired, setting up a resource centre for youth mobilization and setting



up a grinding and saw mill. Dr. Kevin Allyn Rushing, USAID Mission Director to Nepal was the Chief Guest at the event and the jury panel consisted of Sunit Shrestha (Founding Director of ChangeFusion Thailand), Jose Luis Ruiz Munain and Queralt Capdevilla (Sport Mundi, Spain), Samar Borges (Shanti International, United Kingdom), ChangeFusion Nepal Fellows of 2009 (Puhpa Basnet, Ranjit Kanswar and Rita Shrestha), Lindsey Friedman (Advisor, ChangeFusion Nepal) and Amod Rajbhandari (Mercantile Group). (Nimma Adhikari)

Our Village Our Life

A book, 'Our Village Our Life' – a Sikles development concerned group community photography project, edited by Sara Parker saw release. The book was designed and printed with the association of PowerComm, a leading marketing communications company.

Dr. Sara Parker is a lecturer of geography at Liverpool John Moores University in UK. In 2007, she came up with an idea to involve the local community of the Sikles in documenting their own lives through cameras, and hence the Sikles in canvas Community Photography Project was born. This book is an outcome of that project.

The event was attended by Kunda Dixit, Hom Bahadur Gurung, chairman of Chandra Gurung Organization, and HE John Tucknott, British Ambassador to Nepal among other guests. All the proceeds of the book will go towards Sikles Development Community Group (SDCG), a community-based organization in Pokhara that aims to promote local development projects in Sikles. (Shreeya Joshi)



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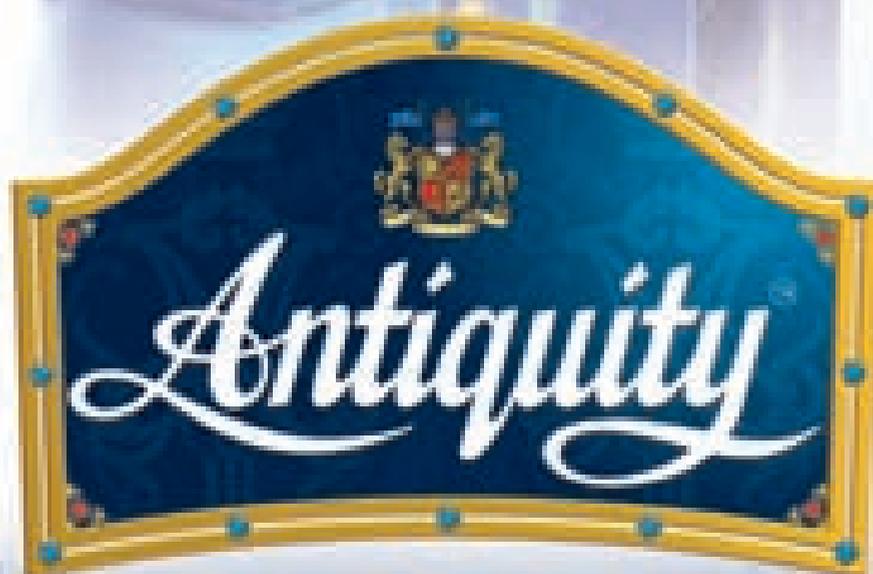
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what's on

things to do this month

Music Week Concerts



Opening Date: 21 June (Tuesday)
Closing Date: 26 June (Sunday)
4242621, 4241163, general.afk@gmail.com

This summer solstice, beat the heat with music. Alliance Française is organizing 'La Fete de la Musique' comprising of two music concerts and a music contest in celebration of the 30th anniversary of International Music Day. The concerts aim at promoting music for amateur and professional musicians.

1. Music Day Concert
Date: 21 June (Tuesday)
Time: 3 pm
Venue: Dattatraya Square, Bhaktapur

Alliance Française in Kathmandu along with Service Civil International is organizing an outdoor concert in Bhaktapur with students of AFK, students of Kathmandu University School of Music and Manandhar cultural group.

2. AFK Music Contest
Date: 22 June (Wednesday)
Time: 4 pm
Venue: Alliance Française in Kathmandu
9841017348

For all young musicians below the age of 30, the music contest organized by AFK on the event of international music week presents the

perfect opportunity to display their talents. The winners of this competition, selected by a jury of professionals, will get the chance to share the stage with French pop band Betty Argo at Nepal Academy Hall on 26 June. To participate, download and fill out the forms available on AFK's website www.alliancefrancaise.org.np and send it to scasiulis@gmail.com cc: direction.afk@gmail.com or drop it at Alliance Française in Kathmandu Reception.

3. Betty Argo Concert
Date: 26 June (Sunday)
Time: 6 pm
Venue: Nepal Academy Hall

Betty Argo, a French band that plays amazing indie pop songs is all set to rock Kathmandu. This event is a great chance to see four incredible artists inspired by electro and rock perform live.

Entry: By invitation only, available at Alliance Française.

Music & Fashion
Date: 11 June (Saturday)
Time: 6 pm onwards
Venue: 1905 Restaurant and Bar, Kantipath
4225272

The fashion music fest aims to promote Nepal's upcoming fashion designers and supporting the fashion industry of Nepal. Three sequences from formal dresses to casual summer wear will be showcased by two designers studying at IEC. There will also be musical performance by Naren Limbu, Sirish Thapa, Bijaya Gurung (Kalind band) and Shadows in the beginning and in between the sequences. The event will be followed by an after party with Dj Flow and Dj Keeran.

MISCELLANEOUS

Documentary Filmmaking
Opening Date: 5 June (Sunday)
Closing Date: 10 June (Friday)
Time: 10 am to 5 pm
Venue: Sattya Media Arts

Collective, Jawalakhel
collective@sattya.org

Sattya Media Arts Collective is organizing an intensive six-day course on documentary film making. Along with providing the basic knowledge required for film making this workshop will also help participants brush up their practical skills as all participants will be involved in producing a documentary movie right from the start. Topics that will be covered include image/sound control, composition, pre-production, shooting, and post-production. The workshop is open to anyone with a serious passion for film and storytelling though some filmmaking experience is preferred. Application can be downloaded from the website www.sattya.org and sent to collective@sattya.org by 28 May.

Cost: Rs. 3000

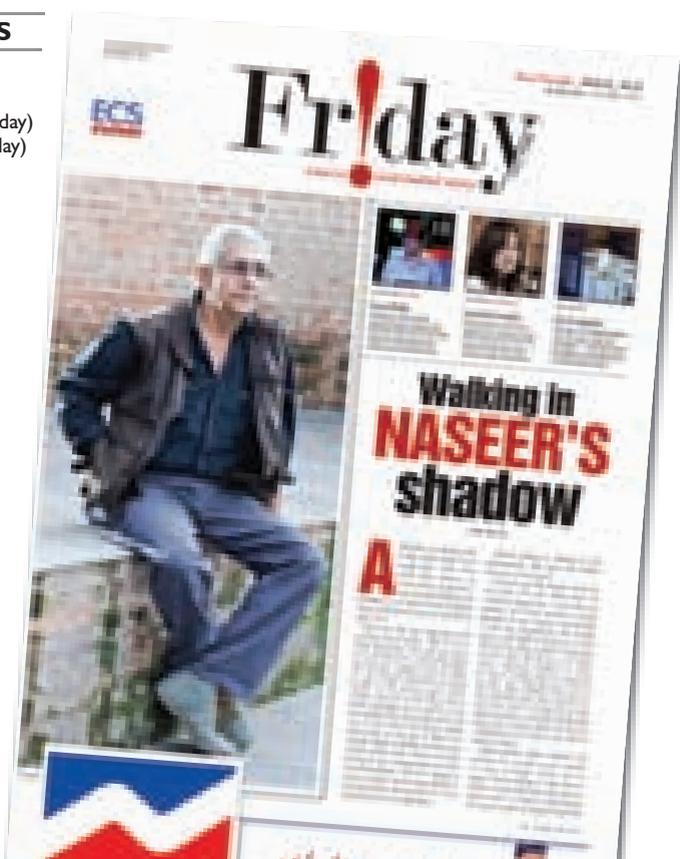
Youth Against Climate Change
Deadline: 15 June (Wednesday)
9808459342, 4499067, www.iccn-n.org/
forms

International Climate Champion Network – Nepal (ICCN- N) has launched an innovative educational program "Rural Urban Connection" which aims to spread awareness among the youth and empower them to take action against climate change and work towards conserving the environment. Interested candidates between the ages of 17 to 25 are encouraged to apply. About 200 candidates will be selected as Climate Messengers and they will be responsible for conducting activities in their communities that create awareness on climate change and draw the attention of policy makers to address the issues.

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Garden Symphony



Studio Petals organized “Garden Symphony”, a first of its kind solo exhibition of watercolor and gouache paintings by Emira Doric Muffic from 17 April to 29 April at Park Gallery RN Joshi Center for Fine Art, Pulchowk. The exhibition displayed a collection of watercolor and gouache paintings on botanical subjects: an outcome of Emira’s yearlong experimental stint in the studio and several field visits to the environs of Kathmandu valley.

Emira considers the beauty and harmony of the colors of Nepali flowers to be her inspiration in giving the flowers life in her canvas. Besides this she also counts, her teacher, artist, botanical illustrator and curator

Neera Joshi Pradhan as inspiration. She believes that when painting flowers on her canvas, the act of adding colors to the flowers is analogous to a symphony, which is why the exhibition was titled “Garden Symphony”. Some of the best botanical paintings were of rhododendron arborium, magnolia soulangeana and lily using gouache and gladiolus II using watercolor.

The exhibition was also supported by the music of Hari Maharjan and Chakra Lama. This art exhibition was formally opened by Stephane Jaquemet, the Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Nepal. (Nimma Adhikari)

Inspirations From Nepal

“Inspirations from Nepal,” the first art exhibition by Lieutenant Colonel Mark D Vickers was showcased at Park Gallery RN Joshi Center for Fine Art at Pulchowk on 25 April through 6 May. Mark is the Deputy Commander/Chief of Staff for the British Gurkhas Nepal and proudly says that Nepal inspired him to paint after almost 30 years.

The collection of paintings showcased by Mark was basically done in acrylic and water color mediums. The paintings did exhibit diversity, as it varied from landscapes to people to several tranquil faces of Buddha. Being a Buddhist himself, Mark attributes the inspiration behind most of the paintings of Buddha to his teachings of peace and cohesion.

The artist has tried to capture the splendid landscape, unique architectural forms of houses and temples, faces of Nepali people and our culture in his canvas. The paintings are expressive and some even carry a symbolic stature. Mostly, the paintings of women and Buddha show depth of understanding on the part of the artist. A few paintings in the exhibition are actually not inspired from Nepal but are



showcased anyway, as they were painted after Mark arrived in Nepal.

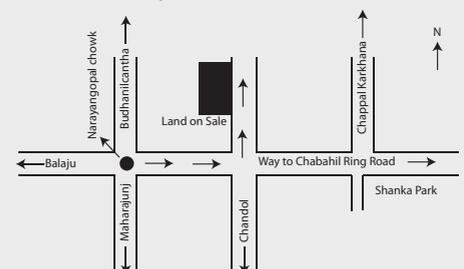
The paintings showcased are for sale and Mark intends to donate half the profit to HOPAD Child and Woman Promotion Society, a non-profit non-government organization that is dedicated to the welfare of children and women in Nepal. (Nimma Adhikari)

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Location Map



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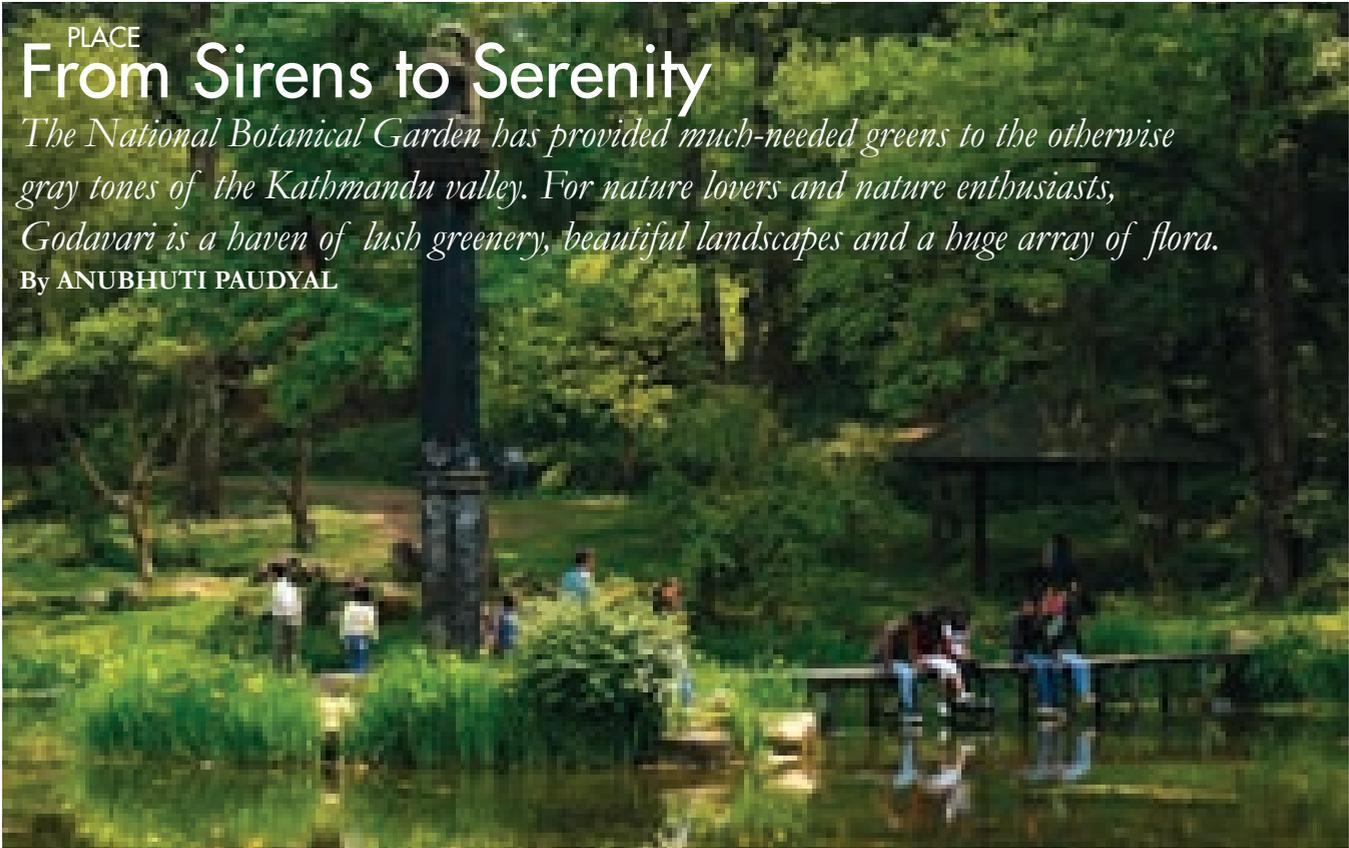
PLACE | PEOPLE | FOOD | LIFESTYLE | LOCAL LISTENING | PAGETURNER

PLACE

From Sirens to Serenity

The National Botanical Garden has provided much-needed greens to the otherwise gray tones of the Kathmandu valley. For nature lovers and nature enthusiasts, Godavari is a haven of lush greenery, beautiful landscapes and a huge array of flora.

By ANUBHUTI PAUDYAL



ECS Media

The chaos of city life can get on your nerves quite easily. More often than not, we look for ways we can revive ourselves, both in body and mind. For those of us living in Kathmandu, recreation is mostly an indoor pub with loud music and junk food. However, there are people who love nature, with its lush greenery, soothing colors, its beauty and serenity. For these people, the answer could be the National Botanical Garden in Godavari.

The National Botanical Garden is located on the base of Phulchoki (2715m) at the Southeast corner of the valley. It is conveniently close to the city but feels as far away as possible from urban chaos and pollution. Since its establishment, it has worked in conserving indigenous plants of Nepal and in collecting them for scientific research as well as educational and recreational purposes. Surrounded by rich natural forests with sections of the garden populated by ornamental plants and flowers, the garden is spread over an area of eighty two hectares. Needless

to say, the gardens provide much needed relief from the city.

Established in 1962 A.D by the then Prime Minister, Surya Bahadur Thapa with the interest of king Mahendra Shah, the garden is known today for its grand landscape and rich biodiversity of both flora and fauna. More than 550 species of plants including ferns, gymnosperms, cactus, succulents, medicinal and ornamental plants, orchids are found here along with 290 species of birds and 250 species of butterflies according to a report published by the Department of Plant Resources.

The orchid house, wetland flora, tropical house, rock garden and physic garden are some of the many attractions of the place. The garden is also home to some rare as well as indigenous species of flowers. *Lilium nepalensis*, *Brassica*, *Chrysanthemum*, *Clivia miniata*, *Valeriana jatamansii* and *Blooming Orchid* are some of the varieties of plants that attract many to the garden.

Spring and autumn are regarded as ideal times to visit the garden when the

plants and flowers can be seen in their full magnificence. Entrance fees for Nepalese is NRs. 10, SAARC country nationals will have to pay NRs. 25 while other foreigners will have to part with NRs. 100. It is open every day and around the year.

Whether it is an educational visit to know more about the plant species in Nepal or a recreational visit to get away from city life, National Botanical Garden has something for you. The best thing about the garden is its proximity to the city, which makes it a key destination for the residents of Kathmandu valley. Outsiders who are on a visit to Kathmandu will find that the garden a rather elaborate collection of the natural floral diversity that has become representative of Nepal. A visit to the National Botanical Garden will ensure a hearty experience in which people of all ages can enjoy the place and can take very different but significant experiences out of the visit. It is one of the finest natural treats that Kathmandu valley still has on offer. ■

A greener way to fly...



We at Indi Airlines share your concerns about climate change and are doing our bits to help the world grow into a greener place. In its partnership with the Dhurgal OAU, Greater Nauru and Levels, Singaporean-legal and Dhurgal based Success Programs, we have launched our pilot Green Program. For every passenger flying on the Nauruair-Dhurgal-Nauruair and Nauruair-Nauruair-Dhurgal routes, we will plant a suitable tree in one of the chosen community forests in the various coastal areas of Nauru.

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The United Nations' August 12, UNICEF, with a focus on the for all people are, and works towards for a partnership with legal representation, addressing the real issues of poverty, growing for peace and justice for all, addressing community's needs that are not met.



ICIRC is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that advocates welfare of human and human rights, violence, cultural and children's rights, and also the violation of children and human rights in legal.

EVERY ONE

- Save the Children's Every One! Campaign has raised voice for the rights of healthy life of children below 1 year of age.
- It is every family's burden to bear weight less than the normal weight attached to a baby. A mother who is not breast-feeding helps in increasing the weight of the baby.
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 - Washing your hands properly before touching your baby, will reduce the susceptibility of infections.



A Woman with Courage

A woman who expelled at many roles, Shanti Mishra's accomplishments have made it easier for women today to take up unconventional roles.

By SHREEYA JOSHI

Wearing a simple sari, Shanti Mishra's eyes sparkle with a genuine happiness and kindness as she welcomes me into her home with open arms. However, although her clothes may be ordinary, at age 77, Shanti Mishra is by no means an ordinary woman.

Shanti Mishra is, truly, a woman of wisdom and words. She has broken free of all the traditional clutches of our somewhat male-dominated society and has always progressed forward, reaching heights that no other Nepali woman of her time has. With a Masters in History from the University of Calcutta as well as a degree in Library Science, Mishra is the first lady-professor in Nepal. Additionally she is also the first Nepali librarian and thus instrumental in starting the modern library movement.

Of her experiences as the first-lady professor, she says, "You might expect me to have been ostracized for trying to break free from the traditional roles of a Nepali woman, and trying out the profession of teaching, but I was not. I am lucky that even then, when society was still conservative, people did nothing but encourage me to continue teaching. From my parents to the professors at Tribhuvan University, everyone loved me and was proud of me."

However, teaching was not the only profession that she would be doing. Life had much bigger plans for her. "I have seen Tribhuvan University grow into the university that it is now. When I started teaching there, the place was very small and we only had a handful of students. It needed help to grow and for that the government stepped forward and so did people from USAID (it was called USOM then). When people from USAID came to see the university, they were appalled that there was no library."

That was when her life changed. A woman who doesn't believe in just achievement and success, unless she has succeeded by competing with others or with herself, was chosen, among all the teachers, for the task of learning Library Science in the United

A woman who doesn't believe in just achievement and success, unless she has succeeded by competing with others or with herself



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States of America. Though a bit skeptic at first about getting a second Masters' in a subject that was so new to Nepal, she finally agreed after everyone encouraged her to go for it. "They arranged everything for me and I flew to the U.S. However, even after I got there, I still thought it would not be fruitful for me. I tried it out anyways, and when I got straight A's in my first semester, I became more optimistic and finished the 2-year course in one year."

Coming back to Nepal, she immediately set out to put her education to use. With the help of John Haferektor, an Education Adviser whom she claims as the person behind the Shanti Mishra that people know today; she opened the first modern library in Nepal in a small room. The place started with 1200 books and Mishra became the first Founder Chief Librarian in Nepal. However, that was just the beginning. "When you start asking for help from the beginning, you get used to being dependent on other people, so I never asked for help. I wanted the library to be independent and I worked towards making this possible. When the British Book Development Group came in 1969, they were so pleased with the library that they called it 'among the most unique libraries in South-East Asia'; this was even broadcasted in BBC," she claims.

Mishra left the university later, after it started leaning towards politics, but not before she had turned the small library into a huge one, with thousands of books. However, her life did not end there; neither did her courage. Breaking the caste system by marrying Narayan Prasad Mishra, a Brahmin in whom, she says, she found her soul mate, fighting for the rights of women by participating as the Secretary of Commission, Development and Sustainable Development in the International Woman's Year 1975 on a national level and rebelling with a society that was not okay with her having a daughter and no son; Mishra has broken free from every tradition that Nepalese women were bound by in her time and even today. A literary genius as well, her books - *Voice of Truth: The struggles and challenges of a Nepali Woman*, in which she has written about all her experiences and *The Widow's Gift*, a novel - were on the bestselling list. "I still receive letters from people who read my books and like them," smiles Shanti Mishra proudly.

Only a few of us can ever say that we have lived a completely fulfilling and active life - Shanti Mishra is one of those people. She is indeed a woman of spirit and courage - an admirable woman. ■

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A Taste of Home

A Frenchman is instigating a different kind of revolution in Kathmandu. Planning his next move from atop the clouded hills of Kakani, he plans to capture one and all.

Text & Photos by PAT KAUBA



Francois overseeing work on his hillside farm

It had been a while since I last caught up with Francois Driard, creator of the ever-expanding *Himalayan French Cheese* empire and one of the main instigators behind Kathmandu's food revolution. He has not rested on his laurels though. Since November, he has been busy constructing his new farm in Kakani on the Trishuli side—a new place for his cows and elegant cheese to call home. It is a chilly place for April, but that's what happens when you are in the clouds, and on the north side of a mountain. "Yes it's colder here, but that's better for the cows and the cheese, but maybe not for me", jokes Francois as he oversees the roof being laid on his cheese-cave—bigger than his old one in Tokha.

It has been difficult he surmises, yet worthwhile. It took a long time to find the right land and enough of it for the expansion. Since Himalayan French Cheese came into life, its popularity and demand has soared, with even five star hotels from India wanting his product. He has also expanded the farm's products to succulent French sausages and specialty hams. With this demand and

potential, he has decided to take the leap, fully investing his future here.

Francois beams like a schoolboy as the farm takes shape. A long cow house, a big cheese making room, a double-chambered curing cave and pigpen are all nearing completion. There is also one smart addition - an underground manure tank for capturing cow waste and turning it into methane gas. This he hopes to bottle into at least seven cylinders of gas a month.

He has also been busy starting two new organic markets in the valley - at the 1905 restaurant in Kantipath on Saturday mornings and at Moksh, Pulchowk on Sundays. This has helped bring Kathmandu's specialized food producers together. It also seems the Frenchman's knowledge about European fine food is in demand. Driard is also a consultant for the new food import outlet *Sol*, which recently set up in Babar Mahal. The outlet imports quality foods from France, Italy and Spain, such as Beaufort mature cheese, Roquefort blue cheese, Camembert and Brie cheese, various Italian salamis, divine Parma ham, *foie gras*,

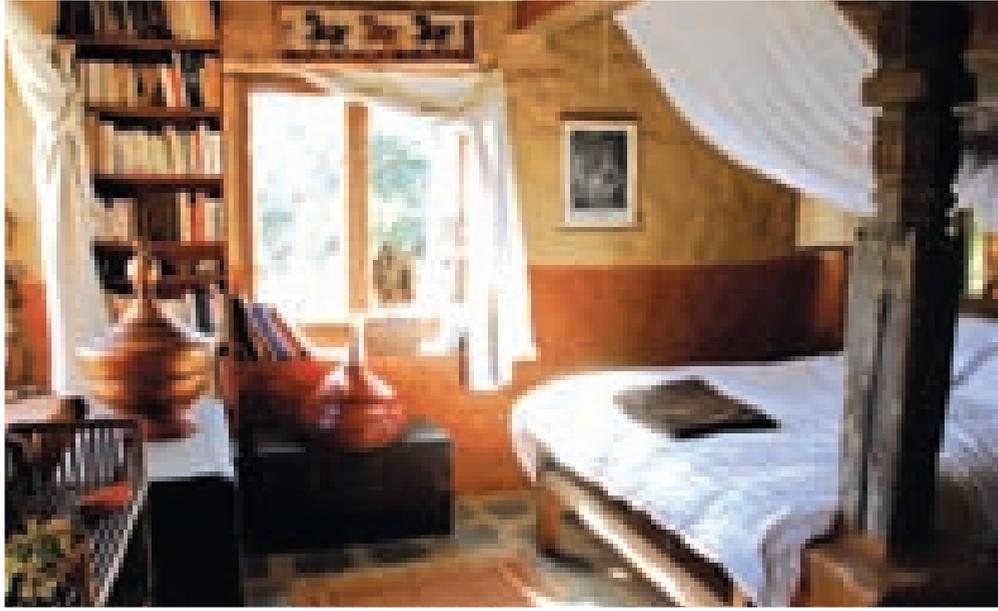
olives, chocolates and more. *Sol* also imports wines, mescals and tequilas. Plans are in the pipeline to expand both the selection and the business with a *tapas* bar.

The only thing that Francois feels regret about is that due to all the running around for finding land and building the farm, he has not been able to be as fully hands-on with the cheese making as he would like to be; until now. He smiles warmly, thinking about being able to give a hundred percent on it once again. This is after all the reason why he is here; not just for business but for the love of making quality, choice French foods.

Those of us with pride in local cheese can all breathe a sigh of excitement. Nepal's status world wide, as a quality producer of gourmet cheese is about to grow. And, those of us with European tastes are about to get treated to even better treats.

Viva le Revolution! ■

Pat Kauba is a freelance writer and photographer, with a love for heavenly tastes. He can be contacted at patkauba@gmail.com.



The French Experience

Feel like escaping to France? Want exotic French cuisine and soak in some French countryside style hospitality? Find your way to Pauline's.

Text & Photos by PAT KAUBA

Excitement hung in the morning air, as sunshine warmed the farmstead. A cow had just given birth and its calf now hobbled into the world. The two Paulines, both from Paris, smiled, as another joined their flock, and continued with their tasks. Not much time for stopping with gardens and vegetables to tend, animals to check and works to supervise. And that's just the farm, secondary to their main lives. Paulines Guesthouse, outside Tokha, after the Chandeshwori Temple, is Nepal's only *Mason d'Hotes*—a country home, offering more than just Bed & Breakfast.

The guesthouse, built from cut stone, is a fusion of European and Nepali country construction. It could easily be the French countryside, sitting at the foot of Shivapuri National Park. Ricefields perch ahead of one's view, with Kathmandu's skyline filling the middle—silence greets the ears. At dinner the night before, rusty memories were stirred at the dinning table as the *merlot* (of the french variety) wet my pallet. A vegetable pie with fresh rosemary pastry for the vegetarians and a tasty porkchop with creamy mushroom sauce for the carnivore were being prepared. Served with green leaves and balsamic

dressing, it was perfect for the year's first warm evening.

The red terracotta floor tiles and a woodburning stove next to me made me feel like I was holidaying in Europe, visiting a friend with warm banter and simple luxuries. The ladies explain it's the country feel of home that they are trying to recreate. Working over a decade in mass communication in Paris, they had dreams of opening their *Mason d'Hotes* in the Alps. Until Pauline Driard, came to visit her brother Francoise, who was making *Himalayan French Cheese*, from the farm in Tokha. It was many years since Pauline had left Nepal, after her father was the French ambassador here during her childhood.

Pauline was impressed by the lifestyle on Francoise's farm, and the wonderful home he'd built. Pauline Bryard arrived soon after and together they considered taking over the farmhouse after Francoise moved his farm to Kakani. They thought it over back in Paris, where the ladies were also running a Bed & Breakfast, from their Paris home and finally decided—Nepal!

Maybe I am a foreigner who hasn't been home for quite a while and I definitely am not French, but the experience made me feel like I was *home*. French and Nepali antiques, curios and books adorne

the guesthouse's walls, intriguing my eye. The cosy livingroom has a couch and wood stove, for lounging away winter. Excess heat from the stove warms upstairs, where there is a big shower shared by two bedrooms, with grand beds, cotton sheets, warm duvets and massive views. The guesthouse was empty, so I choose sleeping downstairs. A big open room, with raised bed, pure white cotton sheets, a desk for working and shelves filled with literature from around the world. Three big windows pour in light by day, with amazing views accompanying the warmth—still offering privacy. The adjacent stone walled bathroom comes with a huge bathtub.

The next day, I felt sad to leave the warmth of their guesthouse; I also didn't have time to explore the forests for their wonders. For the two Paulines, it was another busy day, getting ready for the three donkeys coming from Godawari sanctuary, feeding cows, rabbits, dogs and cat, as well as preparing the bathing pool for the warm season. All done while keeping an eye on the newest member, struggling confidently, into his new world. ■

Pat Kauba is a freelance writer and photographer with a love for things European, contact him at patkauba@gmail.com. You can contact Pauline at 9808873096.

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A love letter to Nepal

RATO MATO BY DIWAS GURUNG

By Utsav Shakya



Diwas Gurung played lead guitar for Nepali alt rock band Albatross before leaving for the U.S. to pursue higher education. His strong riffs and classy solos powered Albatross’ thrash metal mayhem, introducing them as a band to keep an eye on in Kathmandu’s underground metal scene.

Diwas Gurung plays lead guitar in a progressive rock band called Ayurveda in the U.S. Ayurveda’s signature sound, if ever they were going for one, seems to be songs that alternate between whispered confessions over haunting bass lines to stomping guitar riffs that walk all over you. Their relentless touring includes locations ranging from seedy bars to large theaters, colleges and universities, winning them a steadily growing fan base of locals and Nepalese living in the U.S. In each show, supported

by his band, Diwas makes sure he drops a Nepali tune or two.

The fact that in mid 2009, Diwas Gurung came out with a collection of covers of Nepali folk tunes entitled Rato Mato stands testament to his versatility and talent. The album name borrows from the Nepali saying ‘Rato mato, chiplo bato’, Nepali for ‘red mud equals a slippery path’; is a reference to his choice of dedicating his life to music, which is never a safe career choice for any artist, anywhere.

However, Rato Mato’s music is definitely a safe bet. Anyone with a good ear will notice the effort Diwas has put into ensuring that he stays true to the original flavor of the songs, adding instead what he can, to make it more contemporary in terms of music arrangement. “Mai Runchhu” is a delicious ballad, light on music yet heavy on teary-eyed emotion. Likewise, with “Asarai

Mainama’’, a popular folk tune with lyrics already dripping with heartbreak and longing, Diwas displays a mature understanding of Nepali folk music, of which he is a very new student. His singing demonstrates amazing restraint as he lays equal if not more importance to the silence between notes.

On his terrific cover of his father O.B. Soaltee’s “Machi Kadaile’’, dry, swaying guitar work lays a base from which his joyful shouts of “Ahail’’ and “Lahail’’, create a mood that celebrates Nepali music. The upbeat delight on the album is a cover of popular Nepali folk tune ‘Lekali’’, originally sung by Ram Thapa, with Diwas’ melodious voice gelling really well

The album name borrows from the Nepali saying ‘Rato mato, chiplo bato’, Nepali for ‘red mud equals a slippery path’

with strumming guitar. Even when he does veer off this path of folksy tunes, it is a delight. His cover of 1974 Ad’s hit “Sanjha ko belama’’ is a solid rock track, with scorching guitar work and a plenty distortion, unabashedly giving away the singer/songwriter’s influences from modern rock and his work with Ayurveda.

Diwas does not try to hide the influence of his favorite musicians, alt rock band Radiohead and progressive rock superstars Tool along with Nepali legend Gopal Yonzon and folk rock heroes Nepathya in his music. Yet, Diwas’ warm, folksy voice and neat guitar work allow him to own this offering completely and to re-introduce an important body of work to a generation that for the most part has ignored this genre of Nepali music. Going by this album and his work with Ayurveda which has already made him a recognized guitarist in the American indie rock scene, slippery paths should pose no problem to this talented singer/songwriter.

(Rato Mato was released in Nepal at House of Music, Thamel on May 14, 2011) ■

A Widow's Gift

BY SHANTI MISHRA

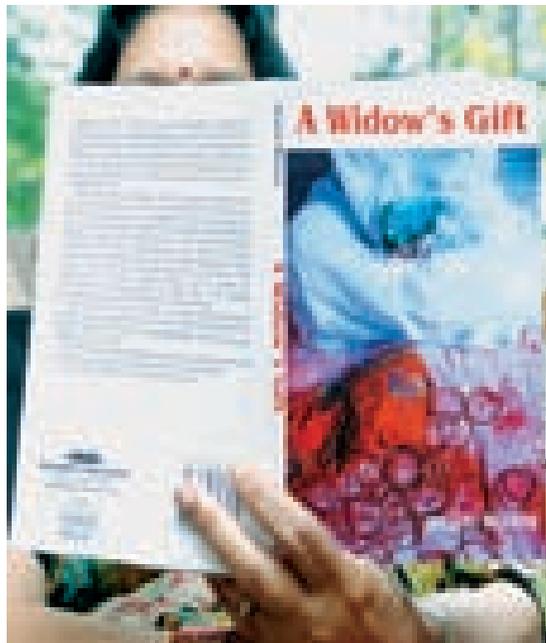
Reviewed by DON MESSERSCHMIDT

“Widowhood was like a contagious disease” is part of the storyline in *A Widow's Gift*, Shanti Mishra's praiseworthy first novel. As the book opens, Radha, a Brahmin girl child, is married to a young man. But, “Whereas a boy is regarded as an asset to his parents, who expect him to look after them in their old age and to perform rituals on their death..., a girl is always regarded as a burden.” Overcoming that burden is the key to Radha's story. When her youthful husband unexpectedly dies, Radha's life is fundamentally redefined. Thereafter she suffers the “disease” of widowhood, as a debilitating burden, painful to heart and soul. Mishra captures these sentiments well, alongside those of love and affection that define Radha's life. It is Radha's development as a caring person despite her cultural “disease” that is the theme of the book.

From the first page, Radha's story reveals daily life in a strict Brahmin society, including the near curse-like restrictions on widows. But Radha as a girl, and in time as a stalwart woman, perseveres and sets an example for all by her generous outgoing nature. The story moves along quickly, there are no slow parts. Yet, the author is able to provide great detail about the richness of Brahmin culture. It is unusual in works of fiction to see footnotes, but Mishra uses them to good effect, unobtrusively, to explain to non-Hindu readers some of Hinduism's key social and ritual concepts.

There are many moments of reflection in this story. On seeing the young girl wearing her life-long white mourning dress for the first time, “Her grandmother could not control herself and burst

into tears, knowing her grandchild's dark future...” And, Radha's grandfather explains that she has “no option but to resign herself to her fate. Even if she remarried, she would remain a widow, and that is why even an old Brahmin as poor



as a beggar would feel indignant at the very suggestion of marrying her, though she might be rich and beautiful.”

Early in the story, after a devastating earthquake, Radha is left with only her in-laws, and a brother and his resentful wife, a spiteful woman who strives to make Radha's life miserable. Eventually, however, Radha learns to read and write, then proceeds to make the most of her destiny. It is not always easy. On the annual day to honor Sarasvati, goddess of learning, her feelings come out. She “was excited and wished she could jump and sing as other girls of her age did in their homes during the festivals. Alas, Radha could do no such things! She was a widow wrapped always in

white attire. Still, by the grace of God, Radha invariably looked both beautiful and cheerful.”

The book's main theme pits Radha successfully against stark odds. Do we detect something of the author's own feelings about the man-made conditions that circumscribe women's lives? “Whenever she looked into the mirror,” Mishra writes, Radha “regretted not being able to wear colourful dresses like married women of her age. Thinking again about the man-made customs for widows in society, she prayed to God to give her more strength to slowly overcome them. She had to sacrifice and display great patience, so she looked always calm, smiling and loving, though her mind was much occupied by convincing opponents to change their outlook...”

Without giving away any more of the plot it is important to reveal something of the conclusion, for the message it tells. “Remember,” says Radha on her deathbed, “don't cry when I leave you all behind. My role in the worldly theatre is over. It's your turn to play your own ideal roles to make this society a paradise. Treat everyone equally, without any discrimination because of caste, creed or wealth – especially widows...”

A Widow's Gift is recommended for its insightful glimpse into the richness of Nepalese women's lives, with the challenge to make them better. It is also an important contribution to Nepalese women's literature. *A Widow's Gift* is available at Vajra Books in Jyatha/Thamel at NRs. 295 ■

The reviewer is a contributing editor to ECS Nepal magazine; he can be contacted at don.editor@gmail.com. The novelist, Shanti Mishra, can be contacted at narayanshanti70@gmail.com.

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The Show Must Go On

“The future of human kind greatly depends on extensive and effective environment and conservation education. The zoos of the world have a unique role to play in the global effort to educate people.”

By UTSAV SHAKYA

From a distance, the setting sun appears to have set the evening air ablaze as it filters through the surroundings. In the golden light, the silhouettes of a group of people huddle together, eyes straining to get a glimpse of what they came to see, point and shoot cameras aimed in the same direction, mouths agape with excitement. The object of their affection finally decides to make an appearance. The crowd lets out a collective shriek of delight, pushing amongst themselves to get nearer.

Comfortable with the attention by now, the star of the show strolls out, its gait unmistakably confident and leisurely. The crowd goes crazy, cameras start clicking away and the parents go mad trying to restrain their children from getting too close. After all, a wild bear, bored of killing time in a walled premise, could eat a child alive at the drop of a cage key.

Soon after, the star retreats, the crowd leaves after waiting for one last glimpse and darkness embraces the entire area. The show is over for the day.

LOOKING BACK

The Jawalakhel Zoo, home to 116 species of mammals, reptiles, birds and fish, is the oldest and largest zoo of the country. Every day though, the scene resembles that at a rock show – a huge production that goes on for all 365 days of the year, seven days a week with the animals as its star attraction. The huge star cast never disappoints. Worthy of mention, is how the zoo came about in a time when the rulers were less inclined towards conservation of animals and more trigger-friendly.

The establishment of the zoo dates back several decades, to the time of the Rana oligarchy in Nepal. Our history books are rife with accounts of how Rana

Kapoor trees line the pathway, catching the morning sunlight and bathing the area in a warm haze.



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The serene central pond where visitors love to circle the *Saras Cranes'* floating island on pedal boats was actually a source of water for the residents of Patan. The pond however, was built during the rule of Malla dynasty king Siddhi Narsingh Malla.

rulers were always looking to impress visiting dignitaries. One way they did this was by taking these guests into the wild of the Tarai for game hunting. Several books documenting the times carry pictures of these Rana rulers alongside these guests posing with their killings.

Interestingly, Rana era Prime Minister Juddha Shumsher Rana, known to be more progressive than what was the norm then as well as a reformist, established the zoo as a private body in 1932 A.D. Historians mention how the zoo's present premises were actually the stable grounds of the extensive collection of animals belonging to the Rana rulers. The serene central pond where visitors love to circle the *Saras Cranes'* floating island on pedal boats was actually a source of water for the residents of Patan. The pond however, was built during the rule of Malla dynasty king Siddhi Narsingh Malla.

With the political changes of 1950, the ownership and management of the zoo

came under the Government of Nepal (GoN). On the auspicious occasion of the golden jubilee birthday celebration of former king Birendra Shah in December 1995, the GoN formally entrusted the overall management of zoo to the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), an autonomous, non-profit making organization for 30 years.

RUNNING A TIGHT SHIFT

With so many different animals brought together from all over the country and even flown in from different corners of the world, 1,013 individual animals in total representing 116 different species of mammals, birds, reptiles and fish within 6 hectares of walled greenery, there is a lot of drama at the zoo to keep the 73-strong staff busy.

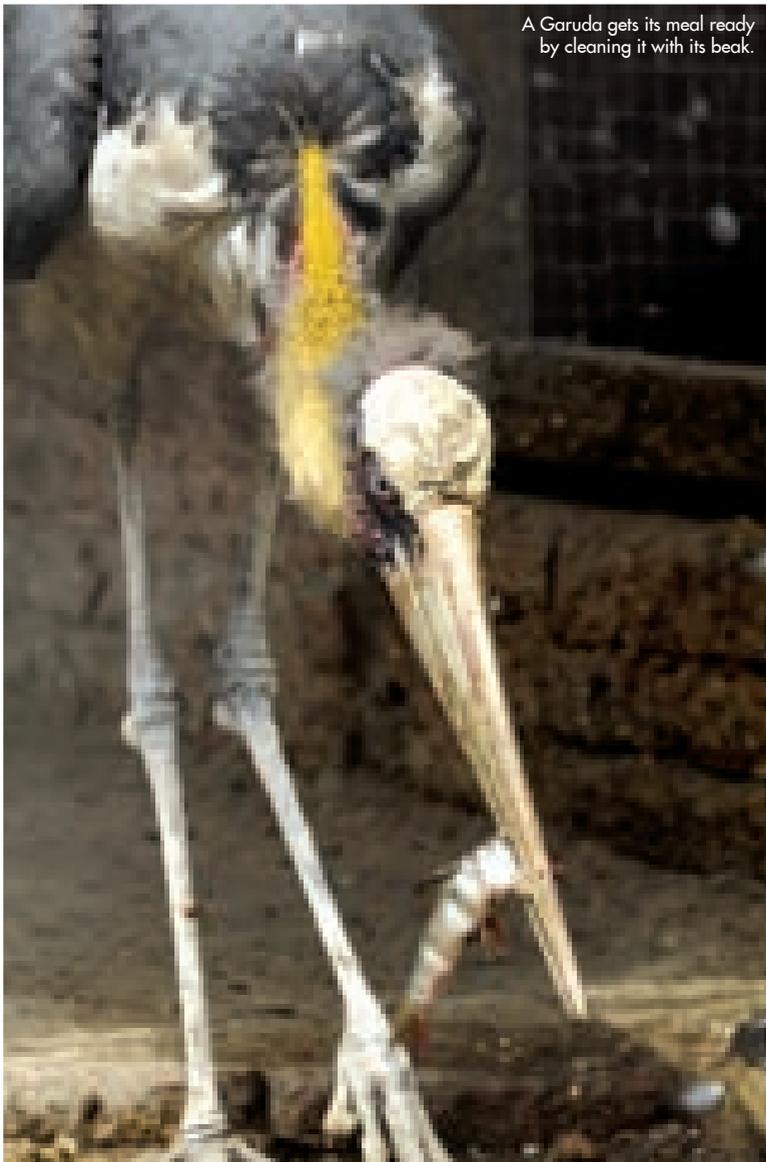
From issuing the tickets at the entrance, supervising huge numbers of both animals and visitors to preparing and feeding ►



The kitchen staff prepares for the day's meals.



Here comes the food!



A Garuda gets its meal ready by cleaning it with its beak.

Photos: ECS Media

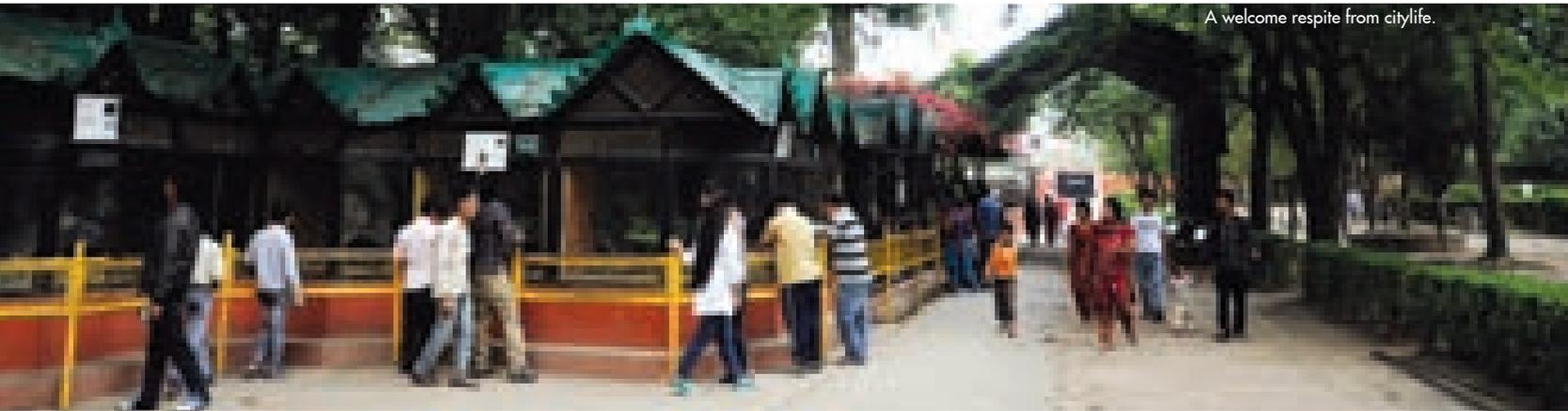
the animals' carefully designed diets, it is a huge undertaking; one that the behind-the-scenes team handles with élan.

The zoo also has its own in-house veterinary team, a very important part of the staff who continually monitor the health of the animals, their diets and make critical decisions regarding when to keep cage-mates together and when to separate them.

Another important part of the establishment that requires a huge amount of work is the zoo's kitchen. The kitchen prepares at least a hundred kilos of buff, chicken and fish combined and four hundred kilos of different kinds of beans every day for the animals. A huge amount of fodder is also a part of the animals' diet. In order to educate children about animals, the zoo's education program organizes activities where students can help around the kitchen as well as feed the animals in a controlled environment.

An astounding figure of a million people visit the zoo annually, with the premises seeing close to 34,000 visitors during the annual *Bhoto Jatra* festival. The festival sees tens of thousands through the area, to catch a glimpse of a historical *bhoto* (vest) strewn with precious stones, is celebrated right outside the premises of the zoo. Before and after the festival, huge crowds descend on the zoo, a rare day off for people working in the capital's government offices. In this context, the zoo is also a site of historical and cultural significance for multi-ethnic communities, a place where people can mix, interact and socialize even, bound by a common enthusiasm and curiosity regarding animals.

A welcome respite from citylife.



FRIENDS OF THE ZOO (FOZ)

The central zoo has been successfully running a special membership based program called the Friends of Zoo, with a network of schools in Kathmandu Valley. Aimed at imparting conservation education through activities based at the zoo, the program organizes annual scheduled conservation educational activities for FOZ members. Students who are members can participate in various activities and events such as competitive essay and drawing programs, training programs for solid waste management and bird identification, summer and winter camps, animals feeding for zoo animals and night guided tour in the zoo.

On top of this, FOZ members receive free issues of the zoo newsletter. The program is open to all national, international, individuals, families and students. Membership is open to all including foreign nationals.

Such a large crowd also means a lot of waste, in the form of candy wrappers, plastic bags and the like. Besides this, the zoo produces a lot of from its everyday operations. The zoo's waste management system processes the organic portion of this waste. A private company handles the management of the inorganic waste.

A tour of the zoo with a guide gives one an idea of just how much hard work goes into getting the zoo "ready" for its visitors every day. The behind

the scenes efforts of the team deserves much appreciation. Enrichment of the space entails small things that most visitors will miss but that are essential for the wellbeing of the animals. For instance, the greens in an enclosure might seem random, but it seldom is the case. They are actually specific plants that are conducive for the health of the animal. Much thought goes into the design of the enclosure. What a visitor will assume to be a dirty enclosure for birds with

A family of Biaman monkeys originally from Indonesia.



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The star cast consists of more than 33 mammal species, 61 different kinds of birds, 8 reptiles and 17 fish species. Of the 38 endangered species found in Nepal, the zoo exhibits an amazing 15. This allows guests to a unique experience with no other destination in the country and probably in the world having these 15 animals together within a common compound.

dry twigs and leaves is actually raw material for them to build their own nests. Similarly, food placement on branches and slightly hard to reach places ensure that the animals will make an effort and get some exercise in the process.

The zoo's hospital uses the Animal Record Keeping System (ARKS) software - which is the standard software used by zoos around the world as well as the International Species Information System (ISIS) to keep track of all the animals. However, even with a system in place, not everything goes according to plan. When Kanchha, 20 and Kanchhi 22, 2 Indian Rhinoceroses, were housed together in hopes of procreation, it made international news with headlines reading, "Rhinoceroses in honeymoon suite". As far as the zoo authorities are concerned, the rhinos have never mated - a fact attributed to its previously small enclosure. With a new and larger enclosure, offering more privacy, hopes are high for a baby rhino joining the family soon. Nepal's rhino population fell dramatically during the 10-year Maoist rebellion that ended in 2006, as army guards stationed in wildlife reserves to deter poachers left to fight the rebels. There are roughly 450 rhinos in Nepal now. The new enclosure was financed by Ace Development Bank, a local bank whose mascot is the one-horned rhino.

A MULTINATIONAL STAR CAST

The star cast consists of more than 33 mammal species, 61 different kinds of birds, 8 reptiles and 17 fish species. Of

the 38 endangered species found in Nepal, the zoo exhibits an amazing 15. This allows guests to a unique experience with no other destination in the country and probably in the world having these 15 animals together within a common compound.

A prized possession here, amongst the endangered species list is the Royal Bengal Tiger, a breed that is in rapid decline in the world and only 121 of which are of breeding age remain in the country's wild. The zoo has four Royal Bengal Tigers at present. The Great Indian One-horned Rhinoceros too falls in the endangered category. Found in Nepal's Tarai region, especially in the lush forests of Chitwan National Park and Bardia National Park, their numbers are thinning too with less than 250 of them remaining.

Besides endemic species, the zoo also houses some exotic species. The African Hippopotamus lounging about in a small pond in its enclosure is from Thailand and was exchanged with a pair of *Daanphes*, the national bird of Nepal. Similarly, the Siamangs are from Malaysia and in exchange for a pair of Saras Crane. The African Ostrich that prances about its area, a look of perpetual surprise on its face, was brought in exchange for a common leopard.

Some species on the other hand, have been rescued during crackdowns on animal traffickers before they and the animals or birds hop on an international flight. Numerous exotic pheasants, a sulphur-crested cockatoo and several lorikeets have been rescued from the airport and have since found a home at the Jawalakhel Zoo.

ZOO TO THE RESCUE

A very interesting and important part of the zoo's operations is its rescue operation services. Owing to deforestation in previous habitats of the wild, there are several cases of wild animals venturing out into villages and even towns. Most times, animals such as deer are only out for a drink of water, other times they come out by accident. In such cases, nervous villagers often trap the animals, sometimes even harming the animal physically. The zoo's rescue team is approached in some cases wherein the team helps pacify the animal, brings it to the zoo's hospital for a medical inspection and upon being fit, they are freed in their natural habitat.

Narayani, a five-year old Royal Bengal Tiger, was rescued by the team after its mother, a man-eater was killed by locals in Divyanagar Village Development Committee. After spending time in a small cage in Kasara, the tiger was presented to the zoo in December, 2010. After being placed a strict quarantine, she was finally "mixed" with a mal tiger - Shiva, and placed in her present enclosure. Today, Narayani draws a maximum of visitors to the bridge over her enclosure, as she basks in the sun or strolls down neared for a drink, much to the delight of camera-happy visitors.

Kanchhi, an Indian Rhinoceros was rescued too after a flood ravaged the area near the Rapti river where she is presumed to have been living. Chitwan National Park authorities immediately launched a successful rescue operation, after which the month old rhino was brought to the zoo. ►

A Royal Bengal Tiger wakes up after a leisurely siesta.



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HELPING HANDS

Under the zoo animal welfare scheme, the zoo has already started an Animal Sponsorship program since 1997. This program is mainly to support animal feeding. The sponsorship cost varies according to the species, number and enclosure size. The sponsorship program will allow the sponsors to earn an appreciation from the million visitors through advertising their name at designated place provided by the zoo.

Nepali business houses and banks have not shied away from doing their bit either. The VOITH group, in addition to

its various social welfare activities under its "Little Things We Do" campaign, has also sponsored building the entrance to the zoo as well as the enclosures for the tiger and the chimpanzee.

Bank of Kathmandu and Ace Bank too have done their part. Ace Bank sponsored the rhino enclosure to facilitate breeding; the rhino is also the bank's choice for company mascot. Bank of Kathmandu

A PLACE OF LEARNING

The zoo has four fundamental objectives - conservation of animals, education

about animals, research and recreation. Different zoos focus on different objectives based mostly on the requirements of the animals housed there. Many zoos focus on breeding while some focus on wildlife behavior.

The Jawalakhel Zoo has tried to give equal attention on all four objectives. However, its educational programs deserve special mention for outstanding performance in imparting crucial education on the zoo and its significance to anyone and everyone who is interested. The zoo has through its own initiative, conducted successful education programs since 1997. Keeping in mind

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An unexpeted afternoon downpour brings out the green at the zoo; the tone lends the place more drama.



The zoo's premise also houses an old temple that has been a part of the property from the beginning.

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that educating children is the best way to ensure a zoo and wildlife-friendly future, the zoo has special initiatives for young animal enthusiasts. 200,000 students have gained from these programs.

Children can take part in animal feeding sessions before which they get a tour of the kitchen where they can help prepare the animals' meals. Afterwards, interested children can take a guided night tour of the zoo where expert guides speak on the behavior of various nocturnal animals such as porcupines and the clouded leopard. Center for Environmental Education (CEE), India verified the quality and effectiveness of these programs. Children can join partake in the education programs either through a request from the child's school or through a membership of the Friends of the Zoo (FoZ) program.

The zoo is also an excellent place for research work. For one, it provides a large and important variety of animals that represent different environmental systems. These systems refer to locations around the country and across the globe too. Second, since the animals and birds are housed in secure enclosures, they provide the re-

searcher with an opportunity to inspect the animals and their behavior closely.

These opportunities are but a few of many activities that the zoo can play host to. An oasis of greenery smack in the middle of the up and coming district of Lalitpur, the Jawalakhel Zoo, even with a million guests each year, remains new and unexplored for a large part of its population.

One rainy afternoon at the zoo, I sought refuge under a large tree by the huge zoo pond. The foliage around me turned shades of green no city dweller could have witnessed. I smelt deliciously damp earth, heard the sounds of birds and animals I didn't know the names of and felt a joy that was alien to me. If I were to ignore the few and far in between concrete structures, I could easily imagine myself in a different place, in a different time.

The great news then is that the zoo is here, now. The show is on, when will you go? ■

Opening Hours - 10am – 5pm
Location - Jawalakhel, Lalitpur
Additional summer attraction - Fishing at the zoo's pond from April to October

THE FREQUENT FLYERS OF NEPAL

With over 850 species of birds calling Nepal home at different times of the year, birding in Nepal is a pleasure.

BY KAPIL BISHT



In the early 1820s, when Brian Hodgson was living in Kathmandu as the Resident appointed by the British East India Company, Nepal was still cloaked in mystery. Hodgson was one of the few foreigners to whom Nepal had opened her doors. In return, Hodgson revealed Nepal to the outside world. Hodgson's most valuable contributions to Nepal, besides other fields, were in ornithology. Although, like all foreigners, he was forbidden from venturing beyond the Kathmandu Valley, Hodgson was able to collect bird specimens by sending out local hunters beyond the valley for collection. In this way, he amassed almost 9000 bird specimens during his 22-year stay in Kathmandu. When he finally left Nepal with his massive collection of birds, and subsequently wrote of his discoveries, he aroused the interests of naturalists the world over. It had become clear that Nepal was an ornithologist's paradise, where numerous species occurred that were still unknown to science.

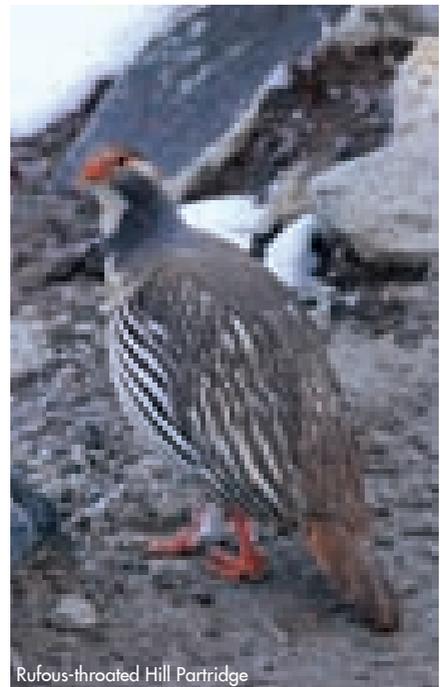
Although Kathmandu only retains traces of the days when Hodgson lived here, some of the places where he collected his specimens have remained relatively pristine. Birds first discovered by Hodgson still inhabit pockets of forests left within and in the vicinity of Kathmandu. A single day's birdwatching in and around Kathmandu is certain to yield a variety of bird species.

The Phulchoki forest in Kathmandu's Southeast is one of the richest areas in terms of birds. The Godavari Botanical Gardens at the hill's base is a good place to start one's bird watching. Species like the Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon, Grey-chinned Minivet, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Grey-throated Babbler, numerous species of Laughing-thrushes, Black-throated Sunbird, Eurasian and Lanceolated Jays, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Rufous-throated Hill Partridge, Black-throated Parrotbill, Hodgson's Redstart, Slaty-backed Flycatcher, and Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker are found in the garden. It is also home to the Spiny Babbler, Nepal's sole endemic bird.



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Bronze-winged Jacuna



Rufous-throated Hill Partridge

Bird sightings increase with altitude in the Phulchoki hill. A total 288 species have been recorded from Phulchoki, a reflection of its richness in birdlife and importance as a habitat. The forest is especially important for two restricted-range species: the Spiny Babbler and the Hoary-throated Barwing. Some of the resident species of Phulchoki include Besra, Black Eagle, Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Kalij Pheasant, Common Hill Partridge, Ashy Woodpigeon, Mountain Scops Owl, Collared Owl, Golden-throated Barbet, Crimson-breasted Pied and Rufous-bellied Pied Woodpeckers, Spotted Forktail, Chestnut-headed and Grey-bellied Tesias, Chestnut-crowned and Black-faced Warblers, Lesser Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler, Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler, Cutia, Nepal Fulvetta, and Brown-throated Treecreeper. Other species, like the Barred Cuckoo-Dove, Bay Woodpecker, Blue-naped Pitta, Pygmy Blue Flycatcher and Red-tailed Minla, are scarce and it is unclear whether or not they are residents. Speckled Woodpigeon, Golden Bush-Robin, Plain-backed

and Long-tailed Mountain Thrushes, Greater Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler, Fire-tailed Sunbird and Pink-browed Rosefinch are seen during the winter. The forest sees summer visits from the Crested Serpent Eagle, Lesser Cuckoo, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Asian Sooty, Ultramarine, Little Pied and Snowy-browed Flycatchers, and Blue-capped Rock-Thrush.

There is more birding in Shivapuri, in the valley's north. Although designated as a national park only in 2003, Shivapuri has had more protection from human encroachment historically than most other forests of Kathmandu. It was first set aside, albeit partially, as a protected area in 1975 under the Shivapuri Watershed Development Board. This early attempt to protect it has helped maintain 50 percent of its forest cover.

Shivapuri National Park is home to 178 species of birds, including significant numbers of the Spiny Babbler and Hoary Barwing. Other resident species of the park are the Speckled Piculet, Rufous-bellied Niltava, White-browed and Green Shrike-



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Babblers, Blue-winged and Red-tailed Min-las, Yellow-browed Tit and Brown Bullfinch. Grey-bellied Plaintive and Lesser Cuckoos, Jungle Nightjar, White-throated Needletail, Indian Blue Robin, Tickell's Thrush and Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler are common during the summer. In winter, visitors to the park can see species such as the Northern Goshawk, Maroon-backed Accentor, White-tailed Rubythroat, and Scarlet and Gold-naped Finches. This ease of viewing had Carol Inskipp, a prominent ornithologist and authority on Nepali birds comment that Shivapuri's lower slopes are one of the easiest places to spot the Spiny Babbler.

Another must-go birding destination is Nagarjun - an extension of Shivapuri National Park. Formerly a playground for hunting-happy former Nepali royalty, the area has remained largely unaffected by the city's growth. Besides the species found in Phulchoki and Shivapuri, rarer species like the Northern Eagle Owl and Forest Eagle Owl have been sighted here. Gokarna for-

Globally Threatened Birds Recorded In Nepal

Nepal is a haven for a number of globally threatened birds. This disturbing list includes the Swamp Francolin, Cheer Pheasant, Baikal Teal, Baer's Pochard, Sarus Crane, Black-necked Crane, Bengal Florican, Lesser Florican, Wood Snipe, Indian Skimmer, Pallas's Fish Eagle, White-rumped Vulture, Slender-billed Vulture, Indian Spotted Eagle, Greater Spotted Eagle, Imperial Eagle, Lesser Kestrel, White-bellied Heron, Lesser Adjutant, Greater Adjutant, Spot-billed Pelican, Kashmir Flycatcher, Hodgson's Bushchat, Grey-crowned Prinia, Bristled Grassbird, Jerdon's Babbler, Slender-billed Babbler, Black-breasted Parrotbill, and Finn's Weaver.

est in the valley's east is ideal for those with a penchant for viewing owls. Brown Fish and Brown Wood Owls are two resident species of owls here.

TERAI'S BOUNTY

How can I see the maximum number of birds in Nepal? All bird enthusiasts that come to Nepal are sure to ask themselves this. Kathmandu offers numerous birds, but most of them are forest-dwelling species. If bird watchers wish to see as many of Nepal's total 865 species as possible, they must travel out of Kathmandu. Chitwan National Park is the ideal place to begin this quest. The country's oldest national park is located 120 kilometers south-west

of Kathmandu in the country's lowlands, known as the Terai. The park holds an incredible 540 species of birds—more than half of Nepal's total figure.

This richness of avifauna is a result of the diversity of habitats found in Chitwan; hardwood Sal forests, riverine forests, grasslands, and a number of lakes comprise its total area of 932 sq. km. Due to this diversity of habitats, Chitwan is a refuge for Nepal's birds; nearly two-thirds of Nepal's globally threatened species are found here. It also holds healthy populations of grassland birds such as the Bengal Florican, Grey-crowned Prinia, Slender-billed Babbler and Lesser Adjutant. It is the only place in Nepal where the Slender-billed Babbler has been ►



Nepal's Important Bird Areas

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are places of international significance for the conservation of birds at the global level. In Nepal, 27 IBAs have been identified by Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN). These sites cover around 18% of Nepal's total land area. These areas offer some of the country's best birdwatching.

Annapurna Conservation Area
Barandabhar forests and wetlands, Chitwan
Bardia National Park
Chitwan National Park
Dang Deukhuri Foothill Forests
Dharan Forests, Sunsari
Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve
Ghodaghodi Lake, Kailali
Jagdishpur Reservoir, Kapilvastu
Kanchenjunga Conservation Area
Khaptad National Park
Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve and Koshi Barrage
Lantang National Park
Farmlands in Lumbini Area
Mai Valley Forests, Ilam
Makalu Barun National Park
Nawalparasi Forests
Parsa Wildlife Reserve
Phulchoki Mountain Forests
Rampur Valley, Palpa
Rara National Park
Sagarmatha National Park
Shey-Phoksundo National Park
Shivapuri National Park
Sukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve
Tamur Valley and Watershed, Dhankuta
Urlabari Forest Groves, Morang

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Koshi Tappu, the largest wetland in Nepal, is an important site for migratory birds. Every year it serves as the staging point for several species of migrating waterfowl and waders.

recorded and it's speculated that it might hold the largest population of the species in the entire sub-continent. Chitwan is also the only place where the Grey-crowned Prinia is common. It is also one of the few places in Nepal, where the globally threatened Indian Spotted Eagle has bred. Chitwan is apparently a favorite amongst the birds of Nepal, especially those whose existence is at risk. Out of 22 of Nepal's near-threatened birds, 15 are found in Chitwan.

The primeval-looking Great Hornbill and the Sarus Crane, which is one of the world's tallest birds, can be seen in Chitwan. Other globally threatened species found in Chitwan include Swamp Francolin, Ferruginous Pochard, Bengal Florican, Lesser Florican, Black-bellied Tern, Indian Skimmer, Pallas's Fish Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Lesser Fish Eagle, White-rumped Vulture, Slender-billed Vulture, Cinereous Vulture, Red-headed Vulture, Pallid Harrier, Indian Spotted Eagle, Greater Spotted Eagle, Imperial Eagle, Lesser Kestrel, Laggar Falcon, Darter, Painted Stork, Black-necked Stork, Lesser Adjutant, Greater Adjutant, Kashmir Flycatcher, Hodgson's Bushchat, Bristled Grassbird, Rufous-rumped Grassbird, Jerdon's Babbler and Yellow-breasted Bunting.

The birds of Chitwan can be divided into three categories on the basis of their habitats: those who live in forest, those that are found in grasslands, and those that spend most of their time in or near rivers. This not only gives a birdwatcher numerous choices but also presents an opportunity to combine birdwatching with other activities such as jungle walks, elephant rides, and canoe rides for viewing jungle species, grassland species, and wetland species respectively. During a

walk along the park's three rivers, one might come across species like Black-necked Stork, Bar-headed Goose, Great Stone-Plover, Little Pratincole, River Plover, Great Black-headed and Brown-headed Gulls, River Tern, Sandlark, Rosy Pipit, Temminck's Stint and Kentish Plover. Wetlands such as marshes and lakes are frequented by Little Cormorant, Darter, Cinnamon Bittern, Black-crowned Night and Purple Herons, Asian Openbill, Wolly-necked Stork, Lesser Whistling Duck, Cotton Pygmy Goose, Purple Gallinule and Bronze-winged Jacuna.

Sharp eyes and a good pair of binoculars are needed in the forests inhabited by Brown Fish Owl, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, Kalij Pheasant, Emerald Dove, Orange-breasted Green and Pompadour Green Pigeons, Moustached Parakeet, Oriental Pied Hornbill, Large Woodshrike, Black-naped Monarch, Puff-throated Babbler, Streaked Spiderhunter, Rufous-bellied Eagle, Forest Eagle and Tawny Fish Owls, Red-headed Trogon, Slaty Woodpecker and Little Spiderhunter.

Grassland species are elusive and difficult to spot. Some birdwatchers spend days just to see some of the species found in Chitwan's large grasslands. Those that are fortunate may see the Pied Harrier, Striped, Yellow-legged and Barred Buttonquails, Bengal Florican, White-tailed Stonechat, Large and Bristled Grass Warblers, Black-breasted Weaver and Red Avadavat. With exceptional luck, one may get a glimpse of the Grass Owl.

THE GREAT CONGREGATIONS

The aforementioned sites are known for their diversity of bird species. However, if you are keen on combining variety with quantity, then Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve ►



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Eagle Owl

and the Koshi Barrage area are the more important destinations. The total number of bird species recorded from Koshi Tappu is 485 and it is this huge number that has earned it a special place amidst Nepal's birdwatching sites. The total bird count for a single day in February of 2003 was 9,800.

Koshi Tappu, the largest wetland in Nepal, is an important site for migratory birds. Every year it serves as the staging point for several species of migrating waterfowl and waders. It is considered one of the best wetlands for birds not only in Nepal but also for birds from all over Asia. Its value as a habitat is evident from the fact that it holds the largest heronry in Nepal, with nearly 26,000 nests being recorded.

There is a high presence of globally threatened birds in Koshi Tappu and Koshi Barrage area; twenty of them have been recorded from here. The habitat in the area is congenial for a number of wetland and grassland species such as Baer's Pochard, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Greater-Spotted Eagle, Imperial Eagle, Lesser Adjutant and Spot-billed Pelican. The area also has the highest number of Swamp

Francolin, a globally threatened species, in Nepal. Another rare species, the Bristled Grassbird, is seen in good numbers here. Out of Nepal's total 22 near-threatened birds, 13 are found in Koshi.

Wildfowl occur in great numbers in Koshi Tappu. Some 25 species have been recorded from the area, including Bar-headed Goose, Comb Duck, Cotton Pygmy Goose, Falcated Duck and Red-crested Pochard. One can also see numerous wader species. Pacific Golden Plover, Temminck's Stint, Pintail Snipe and Marsh Sandpiper pass through the area annually. Great Black-headed and Brown-headed Gulls, and Gull-bellied, Caspian and Whiskered Terns also pass through as well during the winter.

This mass gathering of birds also draws several birds of prey. These include the Brahminy Kite, Pallas's Fish Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Indian Spotted Eagle and Greater Spotted Eagles, Steppe and Imperial Eagles, Pallied and Pied Harriers, Short-toed Eagle, and Lesser Kestrel. There is also a great variety of vultures

here: Eurasian Black Vulture, White-rumped, Slender-billed, Cinereous and Red-headed Vultures. Other notable species include Indian Skimmer, Laggar Falcon, Black-headed Ibis, Painted Stork, Black-necked Stork, Hodgson's Bushchat, Grey-crowned Prinia, Yellow Weaver, Yellow-breasted Bunting, Purple Heron, Lesser Whistling Duck and Little Pratincole.

Birdwatching in Nepal is a rewarding experience. It offers one a chance to see some of the rarest birds in the world, that too in a matter of days. Those who have done some birdwatching in Nepal are certain to go home and tell their friends and family what Brian Hodgson must have told his: 'You've got to go to Nepal.' ■

The information and facts on birds mentioned in the article have been gleaned from Hem Sagar Baral and Carol Inskipp's *Important Bird Areas In Nepal* (2005) and Carol Inskipp's *A Birdwatcher's Guide To Nepal* (1988). The statement made by Carol Inskipp's about the occurrence of the Spiny Babbler is from the latter book. The author is grateful to Dr. Hem Sagar Baral for his valuable help.



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INTO THE WILD

In Nepal's lush green forests, wildlife enthusiasts will come across a huge variety of animals.

By AMAR B SHRESTHA



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The total number of tigers in Indian states sharing a common border with five of Nepal's national parks in Parsa, Chitwan, Banke, Bardiya and Sukhlaphanta increased to 353 from 297 in the same period.

Experts believe that 100 years ago the global tiger population numbered 100,000 and they roamed forests across Southeast Asia. The latest estimates as revealed at the International Tiger Conference in India this March puts the number at 3200. Additionally, of the nine recognized subspecies of the tiger family, three are extinct while one is considered functionally extinct in the wild. However, a tiny ray of hope – India's tiger population (Royal Bengal Tigers) grew by 295 to 1,706 last year as compared to 1,411 two years earlier (2008). This fact carries weight because India's Royal Bengals make up more than half the world's tiger popu-

lation including the Siberian Tiger, the Malayan Tiger, the Indo-Chinese Tiger, the Sumatran Tiger and the South China Tiger; the last mentioned being almost extinct now. Nepal on its part, is home to 155 adult Royal Bengal Tigers. A small number you might say, but there is more to it than meets the eye.

A report at the aforementioned conference revealed that the number of adult tigers along the Indo-Nepal border has increased over the last four years. The total number of tigers in Indian states sharing a common border with five of Nepal's national parks in Parsa, Chitwan, Banke, Bardiya and Sukhlaphanta increased to 353 from 297 in the same period. This means that conservation efforts in Nepal are not only important for its own small tiger population but for that of its giant neighbor's too, and thus, for the whole world. However, that is not the only reason why Nepal is an important center for wildlife conservation. The country has a diverse physiography that ranges from an elevation as low as 67 m above sea level in the lowlands to as high as 8,848m in the Himalayas. This extreme variation within a comparatively short distance has given rise to a fascinating variety of flora and fauna including unique and endangered varieties.

PARKS, RESERVES AND CONSERVATION AREAS

Nepal's wildlife is spread over its ten national parks, three wildlife reserves, one hunting reserve and three conservation areas. It would be pertinent to point out here that about 15,000 sq. km of the country or almost 18% of the total area is falls under the protected areas tag. The national parks comprise of Chitwan National Park, Sagarmatha National Park, Langtang National Park, Bardiya National Park, Rara National Park, Khaptad National Park, Makalu Barun National Park, Shey-Phoksundo National Park, Shivapuri National Park and Banke National Park (established 2010). The wildlife reserves are Shukla-

phanta Wildlife Reserve, Parsa Wildlife Reserve and Kosi Tapu Wildlife Reserve while Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve in Dhaulagiri Zone of West Nepal is Nepal's only Hunting Reserve. Similarly, the conservation areas are Annapurna Conservation Area, Manaslu Conservation Area and Kanchenjunga Conservation Area. All of them are home to many remarkable animals, some of which are critically endangered. Listed below are the more interesting ones.

The Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris bengalensis*): According to conservationists, the Terai Arc of India and Nepal (along the border between the two countries) is one of the global tiger family's four greatest remaining strongholds, the others being the Russian Far East, the northern forests of Myanmar, Bhutan and India and the Tenasserim forests between Thailand and Myanmar. As mentioned before, the tigers in the Terai Arc region (Royal Bengals) are doing quite well currently.

The Royal Bengal is distinguished by its magnificent coat which is yellow to light orange in color, with stripes that vary from dark brown to black. They have white bellies, and the tail is white with black rings. The males measure from 270 to 310 cm in length while the females measure 240 to 265 cm. These big cats' tails are pretty long, measuring on average from 85 to 110 cm. At the shoulder, they are from 90 to 100 cm high. Male tigers in Nepal weigh around 235 kg each while the females weigh around 140 kg each.

The Greater One Horned Rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*): Like the tigers, these too are an endangered species. There are only about 2,000 one horned rhinos left in the wild, primarily in India and Nepal. About 408 of them were recorded in the Chitwan National Park in 2008, up from 372 in 2005, according to a National Geographic report (544 was the recorded number in 2000). The ▶



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The rhino's horn, which is prized for its use in Chinese medicine as well as for its reputed aphrodisiacal properties, has been the reason for the imposing animal's downfall.

same report also stated that there were 31 rhinos in Royal Bardiya National Park and six in the Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve, both in western Nepal. These unique beasts are impressively built with fortified bodies. The males are slightly larger than the females, standing some five to six feet tall and weighing up to 2700 kg each. The rhino's horn, which is prized for its use in Chinese medicine as well as for its reputed aphrodisiacal properties, has been the reason for the imposing animal's downfall.

The Snow Leopard (*Panthera uncia*): These rare and endangered animals are tremendous leapers able to jump as far as 15 meters. They live at altitudes of 3,000 and 5,500 meters. Weighing between 27 and 54 kg each, the body length varies from 75 to 130 cm, with a tail of nearly the same length which comes in handy for balance and as blankets against the severe mountain chill. They have thick fur, and dark grey/black rosettes with similar but smaller spots on their heads and larger ones on their legs and tail. Their ears are small and rounded while their wide feet have fur on their undersides for better traction.

Bharal or Himalayan Blue Sheep (*Pseudois nayaur*): These animals are very sure footed and are found grazing at altitudes of over 4260 meters. They are actually neither blue nor a sheep but a cross between a sheep and a goat, although larger than either. They have rounded horns that are smooth and curve backwards. Moving about in large herds, they have the ability to scramble up and around the roughest hilly terrain. They are frequently preyed upon by the snow leopard.

The Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*): The wild population of gharials (a slender snout nosed crocodile species) has shrunk to a few hundred living only in India and Nepal. Its name is derived from the Hindi word *ghara*, a clay pot similar in appearance to the bulbous growth on the mature male's nose. Having a light olive tan coloring and oblique dark blotches on the body and the tail, they can be five to six meters long. They have webbed feet and are sexually dimorphic (males and females being different) thus making them unique among crocodiles. They eat only fish and require a specialized habitat of swiftly flowing rivers with

sandy banks where the females lay their eggs. They spend most of their time submerged in water. They are found in various rivers of Nepal with the Chitwan National Park having a breeding program for this endangered species.

Danfe (*Lophorus impejanus*): Designated as the country's national bird, the Danfe (also known as Impeyan Monal) is an exotic pheasant species. Adult males are characterized by multicolored body plumage and metallic green crests. The back and sides of their necks have reddish copper color and they display a white back and rump when in flight. When dancing, they display a splendid variety of colors by spreading their wings and tail feathers. The females, meanwhile, are dull colored (brown) and have a white patch on the fore neck and a white strip on the tail. The Danfe can be found on the high regions of the Himalayan range.

Himalayan Griffon Vulture (*Gyps himalayensis*): Having a huge wingspan of 102-114 inches, the adults are 41-43 inches long and weigh from 8 to 12 kg each. They have pale plumage overall ▶

with bald white heads, a white neck ruff, yellow bill and short tail feathers. Larger than the European Griffon Vulture, they are found in the Himalayas and in the Central Asian mountains. They breed on mountain crags, laying a single egg at a time. A scavenger, they feed mostly on animal carcasses.

Deer, Nilgai and Arna: The Suklaphanta Reserve (near Mahendranagar in South-west Nepal) supports the largest herd of

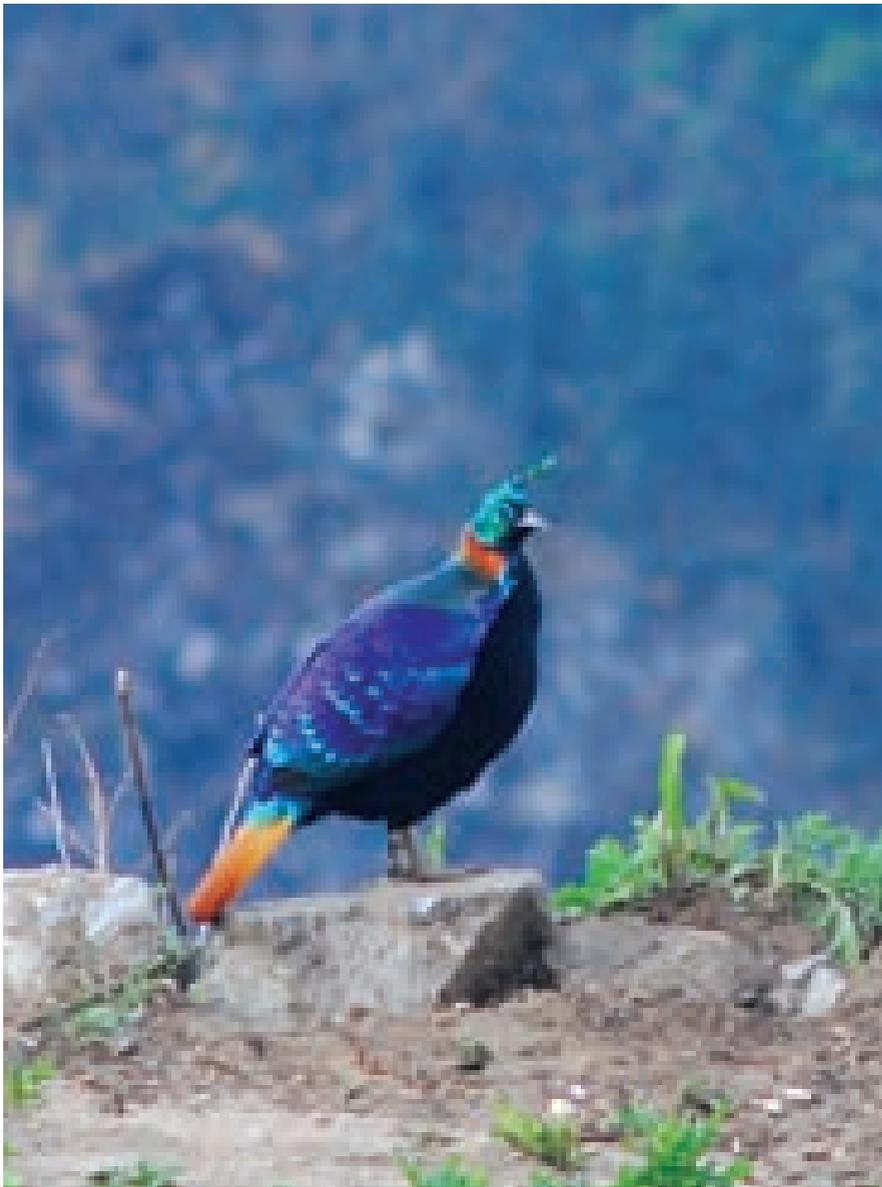
swamp deer (local name: *baraha singhe*) in the country. Other deer like chital and hog deer are found in plenty all over the country. The largest antelope of the sub continent, the Nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*) are found in parts of southern Nepal. Arna (*Bubalus arnee*), the fierce ancestor of domestic buffaloes, number about 150 in the country and are only found in the Kosi Tapu Reserve in East Nepal. Gaur Bison (*Bos gaurus*), the world's biggest wild cattle, are found in the Churiya hills.

Butterflies and birds: Nepal has about 650 species of butterflies (about 4.2% of the global butterfly population) but more than butterflies, it is for bird watching that Nepal is particularly renowned, with almost 870 species recorded around the country. Especially interesting specimens are the Eurasian Griffon, the Black Kite and the Lammergeyer, a magnificent eagle having a 3 meter wing span. The Sarus Crane and the Demoiselle Crane (*karyang kurung*) are popular migratory birds that can be seen during the 2nd week of October. Including the Lesser Adjutant Storch and the slender billed White-Rumped Vulture, there are around 20 globally endangered bird species in the country. However, the Barn Owl, which is in imminent danger in many countries due to indiscriminate use of harmful chemicals, is comparatively safe here, as is the Eurasian Large Owl.

AND, IN CONCLUSION

There is cause to believe that Nepal's wildlife as a whole can only thrive and grow further due to the sustained efforts of many national and international bodies, which augurs well for the country's rich biodiversity. There is no doubt that Nepal's wildlife is varied and exotic. Rhinos, tigers, sloth bear, Himalayan black bear, brown bear, wild boar, common leopard, clouded leopard, snow leopard, red pandas, jharal (Himalayan mountain goat), bharal (blue sheep), arna (wild buffalo), birds of all hues and color, butterflies - name it and we have it. All this certainly goes a long way towards making Nepal into an exciting destination for all wildlife lovers. ■

Ref: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2008/03/080327-nepal-rhinoceros.html>; Nepalnature.com (P) Ltd, and other sources



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Waiting For The Tiger

The elusive Royal Bengal Tiger is one of the most sought after animal in the world. In an ironic twist of its fate, the king of the jungle finds itself waited upon by visitors from across the globe.

By KAPIL BISHT

“A foreigner is staying here and he has already seen two tigers,” said Tulasi, a guide at the Bardia Adventure Resort. In one sentence he had bloated my expectations of Bardia National Park. He sounded as though spotting a tiger in Bardia was more a thing of will than chance. I had gotten off my bike and fallen straight into that psychological bog that claims almost all visitors to a jungle. Tulasi had gently nudged me into it.





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That evening Tulasi and I walked to the park headquarters. We were standing under the big wooden gateway, watching an orphaned Blue bull calf cavorting around, when two men arrived from the direction of the jungle. “How did it go, Lewis?” inquired Tulasi. Lewis was the guy who had already seen the tiger. “It was okay. We saw two rhinos,” replied Lewis. He clearly did not care much about what he saw, which was the envy of the entire area ever since word had spread about his good fortune. Guides spread word of tiger sightings with the same eagerness and pride as hunters who had killed a tiger did in the old days. You saw a tiger; all of Bardia heard of it.

Tulasi suggested a visit to the Tharu Museum. Of all the numerous objects of the Tharus, from the fishing nets to the intricate jewelry, I particularly liked the statuettes of deities in the museum. Thread was wound around these miniature figures. This is believed to keep the deity from leaving the altar. These gods, although seemingly held against their will, are believed to protect the household. After watching the lethargic marsh crocodiles and gharials, whom an

artist could have used in an exhibition to symbolize indifference and immobility, at the crocodile breeding center, we returned to the resort.

After dinner Lewis and I sat around a fire. The tiger didn’t seem to have aroused in him the same excitement and thrill as the spider in his hut—a replica Tharu house made of mud with thatched roofing. “I love the spider in my hut. Last night a mouse entered the empty packet of potato chips I had left on the floor and made a noise for a long time,” he told me. His yarn on Bardia, I am sure, will feature the rustlings of a mouse inside a packet than the roar of a tiger. He liked Bardia for its quaintness, for the archaic way of life people still lived here. (The morning he arrived in the resort, the entire village was up at 4 a.m. to ward off a rogue elephant that had wandered near the village at night.) “This place is like what Scotland was 150 years ago,” he remarked, munching on a pan cake. He snickered thinking how it had taken him 18 hours to get there from Pokhara when his flight from Kathmandu to Scotland would only be 17 hours. He had seen two tigers and half-a-dozen rhinoceroses in

two days. Although he would have been just as happy if he hadn’t seen anything other than the spider and the mouse, his success became a benchmark. Sighting the tiger had become an obsession. Tulasi considered it his duty.

Early next morning – early by my own standards, not of the jungle’s – I climbed the resort’s iron machan. It had been the envy of the neighboring resorts for sometime because in the past a leopard could be seen regularly from there at night. This had got the resort a mention in the Lonely Planet book. In the distance, along the dew-carpeted grass beside an irrigation canal, two fowl were grazing blissfully. A chef from Kathmandu, who had come to train the resort’s cook, proclaimed they were jungle fowl. The agility they were displaying, he said, could never be matched by domestic fowl. I tip-toed to the pair, and discovered that they were chickens.

Although Tulasi was a wonderful guide, upholding the principle of ‘client safety first’ thoroughly, he was nonetheless afflicted with the same disease that is common amongst all guides. Guides, I soon learned, dwell on the past. Whenever ▶

we saw a footprint on the sandy trail beside the river or on the bank, Tulasi would bend down, examine it, and proclaim, 'If only we had been here an hour ago, we'd have seen the tiger.' Or we would be passing through a place when he'd begin to reminisce. "Last year I was guiding some Westerners, and we saw a tiger and her two cubs exactly in this spot." It turned out that we were almost always a few minutes late in arriving at a place through which an animal had recently passed.

RIVERSIDE SEATS

As soon as we crossed the river and entered the jungle on our first morning, Tulasi gave me a run through on the safety measures to be adopted when confronted by different animals. "If we come face-to-face with an elephant, we run, not straight but in a meandering manner. If it's a rhino in front of us, we climb up or rush down steep embankments. If we meet a tiger, we maintain eye contact and walk backwards," he advised. I wondered what'd happen if we met an elephant in a grassland devoid of trees, if the rhino charged at us where there were no embankments. I wasn't too sure the tiger would like the eye contact. These were unsettling thoughts, but they also added to the excitement.

Walking between grass ten feet high we arrived at Baagh Machan, a 40-foot

wooden tower on the bank of a river. The site on which the tower stood had formerly been one of the favorite haunts of the park's tigers. Ironically, tiger sightings had gone down after the construction of the machan, which it was hoped would provide visitors with a good view. We were late and the chances of seeing a tiger were even slimmer in the late morning. So after a brief stop atop the machan we headed along the river to the other "good spots".

The nearest of these spots from the machan was a little up river. It was a spot on the edge of the high river bank, leveled by the rumps of many hopefuls that had sat there waiting for animals to show up. Overhanging branches from the trees screened the viewers from the potential sights. This spot was already occupied by two clients and a guide when we got there. Quietly, we took our place beside the trio. The field guide, Birds of Nepal, with its colorful cover lay on the sand, abandoned in preference to the empty little beach and the river in front of us. We began our wait for the tiger.

For about 30 minutes we watched the area before us. A kingfisher in a fallen tree beside us dived into the shallow water intermittently, producing a deep sound that was amplified in the silence. We gazed at the beach in same manner as he did at the water. Occasionally we would raise the binoculars to our eyes,

only to realize that the distant object was just driftwood. Tulasi decided to wait in another spot further up the river. We took our leave, flashing smiles and wishing each other luck with raised thumbs.

As we walked along the stream Tulasi showed me where Lewis had seen the tigers. He also showed me numerous pug marks on the sand. A herd of spotted deer ran up the high bank in front of us. How mundane they looked when one was out to see a tiger!

We came to a bend in the river. In the distance, where the river slightly straightened, I saw a yellow figure on the bank. Without using the binoculars Tulasi told me it wasn't a tiger. "A tiger is huge, very long," he said. We spent all afternoon beneath a tree on the river bank. In that time it was only deer that came out to the river.

BIG SIGHTINGS

We reasoned that our first day in the jungle had started too late. The next morning we entered the jungle at first light. Like regular theatre-goers we took our cold seats on the sand, and began the day's wait for the actors to appear.

Sensing the spot was not going to yield anything on that morning, Tulasi decided to go further up river, to the place where the previous day we had seen spotted deer. We were walking along the sandy bank when to-▶

BARDIA NATIONAL PARK

Bardia National Park, with an area of 968 sq. km., is the largest protected area in Nepal's Terai. It was established under the name of Royal Karnali Wildlife Reserve, which was changed to Bardia Wildlife Reserve in 1982. The reserve was turned into a national park in 1988, and given its present-day name.

'Bardia', which is the Tharu word for herdsmen, remains one of the most unspoiled wilderness areas in Nepal. It was only the sturdy Tharus that dared to settle in this region when it was still infamous for being a hive of malaria. Tulasi told me about a saying from the days when Bardia was scourged by malaria, which portrays what the civil servants in Kathmandu thought of it. 'In Bardia,' the saying goes, 'a month's rice as

well as that for use in the post-death rites can be bought with a rupee'. The belief was that anyone from outside the region that came to live there would not outlast his month's ration of rice.

What was hazardous for humans has always remained a haven for wildlife. Diverse topographical features, which include the Churia Hills and the Bhabar, a low-lying, semi-arid region, have resulted in a multitude of vegetation: Sal forests, grasslands known as phanta, and riverine forests constitute the park. These features of Bardia have helped shelter endangered species like the Royal Bengal Tiger and Asian elephant. The One-horned Rhinoceros was introduced to the park from Chitwan, and has proved a success story. Other rare species include the Asiatic Wild Dog,

Smooth-coated Otter, Blue bull (Nilgai), Black buck, and Swamp deer (Barasingha).

Bardia's landscape is often touted as one of the most picturesque in Asia. This claim is sure to have been made, as guides in Bardia will testify, with special reference to the Babai Valley. Named after the Babai River, which flows through it, this area is known for its secluded pockets of grasslands. Visitors have to attain special permits from the park administration to enter the Babai Valley.

Bardia is no longer the feared backwater it once was. A rupee can hardly get you anything today in Bardia, but a visit will give you an experience to last a lifetime.



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The herd vanished into the thick jungle across the river. Tulasi and I were thrilled. The wait started all over again. Tulasi, who doubled as a priest to the resort's little shrine, was on a fast. I had decided that I wouldn't return to the resort for lunch either, dedicating the entire day to the elusive tiger.

ward our left a school of four smooth-coated otters scampered down into the water. They hadn't seen me and I decided to get closer to the water while they were still under it. I moved quickly to the edge of my bank and waited for them to surface. A little later an otter broke the surface. The first thing he saw was my face, which must have frightened him, for he dove into the water again. He must have communicated the frightening image to his friends underwater; none of them surfaced. I saw them emerge on the opposite bank at the same spot from which they entered the water. They turned around just before entering the jungle to look at us, allowing me to photograph them.

We reached the watch post under the tree and took our seats. We had been there for 30 minutes when a large brown figure with a streak of white appeared about two hundred meters up river from us. It was a wild elephant. Soon several more elephants appeared, descended clumsily on to the river.

The first elephant came to a standstill in the middle of the river. His white tusks

stood out in the hazy morning. Mothers with babies at their knees crossed the river and waited on the other side. A slow procession started to unfold before us. One after the other elephants of all sizes, ranging from babies to adolescents, started wading across the river. Their legs worked like mighty oars against the water. In the middle of the river the tusker stood, fulfilling his duty as the herd's guardian, waiting patiently for everyone to cross.

The herd vanished into the thick jungle across the river. Tulasi and I were thrilled. The wait started all over again. Tulasi, who doubled as a priest to the resort's little shrine, was on a fast. I had decided that I wouldn't return to the resort for lunch either, dedicating the entire day to the elusive tiger. Although Tulasi was pleased at my having seen the elephant herd, he conceded that the chances of seeing the big cat had gone with the appearance of the big beasts. He was annoyed at the behavior of the two mahouts from another resort that had arrived in the area a little after the wild herd. They had been talking loudly. It

was a solecism. "How can one expect to see a tiger when there's so much noise?" he asked. Around mid-day we moved further up to another waiting place.

Tulasi gently shook me. I had been asleep on the sand (we took turns sleeping), and the cautious manner in which he woke me and signaled with a finger on his lips to be quiet had led me to believe that a tiger was nearby. I got up, trying to make as little noise as possible, and peering through the branches of tree to where Tulasi was pointing, saw a Sambar doe. She seemed to be admiring the reflection of her shapely body on the mirror-like water. She was beautiful, but the fact that I had expected a tiger in her stead undermined the scene's aesthetic value.

A little later her partner appeared. He was a handsome stag. The pair had hardly spent a few minutes together, when in the distance two figures, one tall, one short, appeared. The deer's ears opened up like little radars. They stiffened their necks to look at the approaching figures. As the figures got closer the deer saw that they were the ►

Activities Galore

Walking is just one way to explore Bardia. Numerous rivers, the most prominent being Karnali, flow through or skirt the national park. These waterways can be explored leisurely on a raft. A rafting trip is one of the best ways to see elusive species such as the marsh crocodile and gharial. The biggest attraction of rafting is the possibility of getting a glimpse of the Gangetic dolphin, only a handful of which are known to exist in these rivers.

Bardia is one of the richest areas of Nepal in terms of birds. Its total of 426 species of birds is almost half of the total number of birds found in

Nepal. Bird watchers in Bardia have an opportunity to see birds like the Great Hornbill, Sarus Crane, Bengal Florican, Lesser Florican, Black-bellied Tern, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Painted Stork, Black-necked Stork, and Lesser Adjutant. Bardia's birds include 11 globally threatened species and half of Nepal's near-threatened species. The community forests near Thakurdwara, where most of the resorts are situated, offer great bird watching.

There are numerous Tharu villages in the park's buffer zone. These villages, made up mostly of mud-and-thatch huts, are examples

of a sustainable lifestyle, which the Tharus have led for generations. The intricate ties of the Tharus to their surroundings are manifest in their household objects and daily activities. The Tharu Museum at the park headquarters also showcases Tharu culture in great detail. Tharu cultural shows are also organized by resorts at the guests' request.

The rivers of Bardia offer some of the best fishing in Nepal. One of the world's most prized freshwater catch, the Mahaseer, is found here. (For more on angling in the Karnali River see *Chasing The Dream* in ECS Nepal's July 2009 issue.)

eternal party-spoilers, and ran into cover. The figures were the guide and client duo we had met earlier in the morning. We decided to return with them. On hearing of our elephant sighting the diminutive guide proposed we head straight into the patch of forest the elephants had gone into. Tulasi refused straight away. Seniority and common sense prevailed, and we walked along the river to the machan.

THE LAST HERD

The day's events were awe-inspiring; everyone we met in the jungle, and later in the evening in the resort, was impressed. Tulasi and I broke our fasts. We also decided to break the routine of entering the jungle. The next morning we decided to go to see the Black Buck.

After a rough hour on motorbike I was standing before a board that read 'Black Buck Conservation Area'. That board, I was soon to learn, served not only to inform visitors but to make the whole area more credible. A school was on a picnic. A tractor was plowing a patch of land. A cart track ran between an expanse of grassland and tilled land. The area on either side of this track was the conservation area.

We spotted a herd in the distance. As we moved towards it, I noticed that ahead of us a group of children were running straight towards the herd. I feared they would frighten the animals. To my surprise and relief the Black Buck turned out to be tolerant to hu-

man presence. In fact, they were flirtatious—inviting advances and yet always maintaining a distance. This distance is the slimmest I've seen any wild animal keep from humans. It is small wonder that these animals have gone extinct from all over Nepal except in Bardia's Khairapur. Black Bucks have had too much faith in people and kept too little a distance from them for too long.

I returned from the trip less enchanted from their beauty, which is unmatched by any herbivore of the Terai, and more amazed by the setting.

MISTY CURTAINS

We were back in our hideout by the river the next morning. Although smaller creatures were already going about their daily activities, the morning was suspended and silent; even the place seemed to be expecting something big to appear. In this quiet surrounding, to which we supplied the expectant air, sounds played tricks: dewdrops falling on leaves sounded like an approaching animal's footsteps. Looking out from the window created by the foliage on to the river I thought that the stage we had given the tiger to make an appearance in was minimal. Mist hung over the river, greatly reducing visibility. It added a dramatic effect to our wait.

The next evening we almost ran headlong into drama. Tulasi and I were walking along the trail in the jungle on the river's bank when suddenly Tulasi stopped. He whispered to ask me if I could hear something. I listened

carefully and from not very far away ahead of us came the sound of cracking. The sound was getting louder and whatever was making the sound was coming towards us. Tulasi told me it was an elephant. We stood and listened for as long as we could before turning back to the machan.

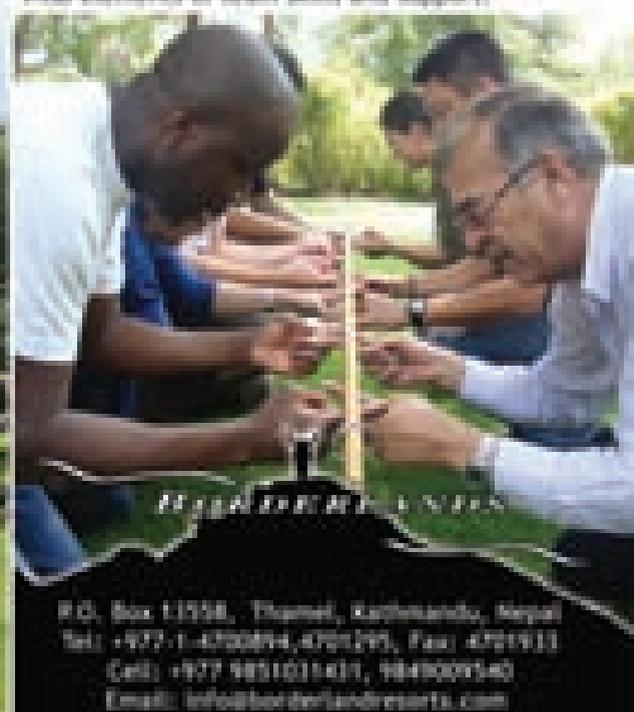
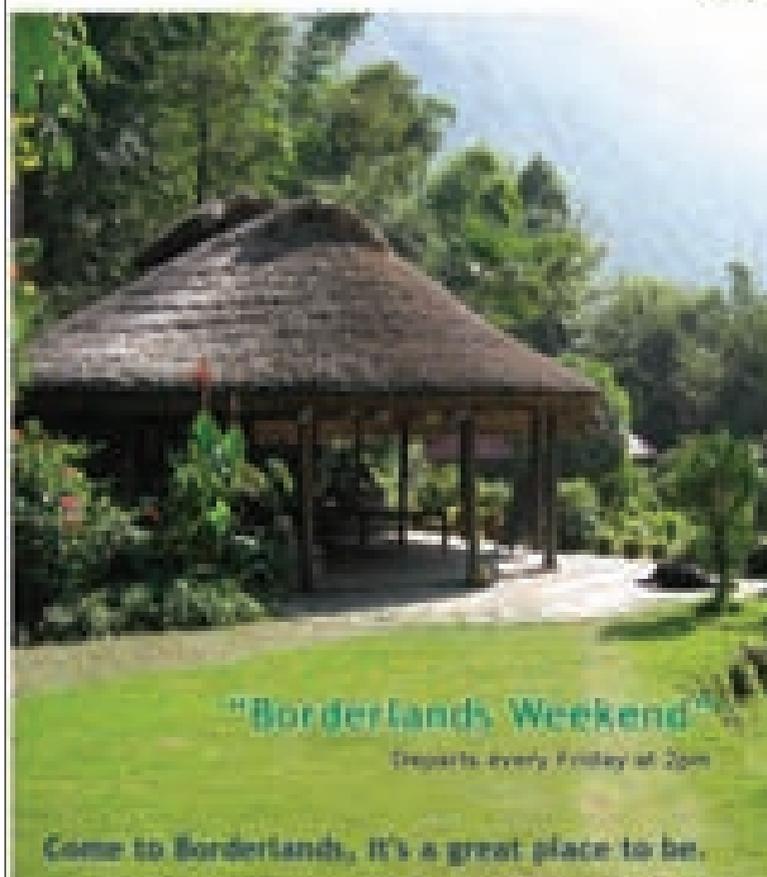
From the machan we saw a domesticated elephant carrying tourists move into the area where we'd heard the sounds. It then turned around and left abruptly. The reason for the domestic elephant's hasty retreat soon became clear. From behind the trees a large elephant appeared, flapping its enormous ears. It was getting dark and after watching the lone tusker for a while we alighted from the machan. My last day in Bardia ended.

We had come as close to an elephant as Tulasi would have allowed. The tiger, judging from the pugmarks we saw, remained just out of reach. Tulasi was disappointed that the star of the arena hadn't put in an appearance. He offered me a rain check. "Come in the spring," he said, as though the weather was behind our not seeing a tiger, "you'll surely see a tiger then." ■

The writer is yet to see a tiger in the wild. He can be reached at papercloudfree@hotmail.com. For a stay in Bardia, he recommends the Bardia Adventure Resort, which caters to those who want to spend time in luxury or in the company of a mouse. For more information see www.bardia-adventure.com. For booking call 084-696335 or email at bar_bardia@wlink.com.np. The writer relied on *Important Bird Areas In Nepal* (Baral and Inskipp, 2005) for information on Bardia's wildlife.

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**TEXT BY ANIL CHITRAKAR, PHOTOS BY PRASHANT SINGH,
ARPAN SHRESTHA AND UJJWAL THAPA**

The famous Nepali poet Laxmi Prasad Devkota described Nepal as “*Sundaar, Shanta, Bishaal*”- beautiful, peaceful and huge or ‘endless’. If you wish to experience the words of the famous poet, pick up your bag, put on your walking shoes and set out towards Langtang National Park. The pristine forest, the clear rivers, waterfalls and lakes, the colourful flowers, wildlife and birds, make every step you take worth while. Add to this the food, the local drinks, the music and cultural dances, the monasteries and the *chortens* and you

will forget the effort you put in to get to these amazing sites. It is also a perfect venue to launch the “academic trek” in which people can get a real exposure to climate change, its impact, adaptation strategies and mitigation measures. Portions of the trail we walked on could be part of the proposed Great Himalayan Trail (GHT) that has been designed not just as a tourism product but will serve to provide connectivity for all settlements at the foothills of the Himalayas. It will form an integral part of Nepal’s adaptation plan against climate change. ▶

ALL RENEWABLES- SOLAR AND HYDRO

At each of the lodges and tea houses that we had our meals or spent the night, there was either solar power or clean hydro power. The area is fortunate to have three hydro power plants- Devighat, Trishuli and the Chilime with potential for many more. The world is today putting out ninety million tones of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each day. Under normal conditions, the atmosphere should contain only 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide, but today has reached 387. Rasuwa district can easily become renewable energy self sufficient and 'sell' the surplus to Kathmandu and launch a domestic carbon trade mechanism. As it takes a lot of human effort to move goods up and down the slopes of Rasuwa, electricity powered ropeways can be a real possibility here. Biogas plants are also getting popular in the villages in the south of the district.

RED, WHITE AND BLUE

Each day we saw red and white rhododendron flowers along the trail against the clear blue sky. It did rain and it did snow, but it

cleared up quickly to give us spectacular views of the flora and landscape of the area. Red, white and blue are the colors that make up the Nepali national flag and it is Nepal Tourism year. We all carried the flag, sticking out of each of our backpacks as we climbed up and walked down the slopes of the Himalayas. Recently there has been some debate as to whether we should change the flag. As you walk through Langtang, the blue becomes the sky and the numerous rivers, the white becomes the purity of the glaciers and the rhododendron, the red is the rhododendron and the blood of the entrepreneurial spirit of the people; and as long as the sun and moon comes up each day over the ridge to the east, this country will be there. The first night of our trek, we were greeted by a full moon. Red, blue and white also make up the flag of the USA whose 60 years in Nepal we were celebrating.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The theme of the trek was to observe the impact of climate change and to see what efforts were underway to help and enable local people to adapt to these changes.

We all had mixed feelings at the end of the trek. On the one hand climate change and its effects were real. We heard of changing rainfall patterns to new species of plants that were killing local livestock. We were told about change in habitat for local endangered species of flora and fauna and the unreliability of water supplies from traditional sources. A local woman had even composed a poem about climate change. What was really heart warming was to see how local communities had begun to create a seed bank to protect local gene varieties of crops. We saw how renewable energy sources were being harnessed to reduce pressure on the local forest such as biogas. We were delighted to see so much production of 'organic' food and to meet young people who were well educated about the complexity of climate change.

TROUT AND STRAWBERRY

Rural Nepali villages, are not just about maize and soybeans or millet and buckwheat anymore, but have created good food out of local stinging nettle or ▶

The milk and the cheese of the local areas are of really good quality. Everywhere we also had yogurt, alcoholic drinks made from locally grown millet which were offered as a welcome gesture in silver decorated cups and served from traditional decanters.





“sisnoo.” When prepared and served in style, the local dish can be quite a delight. Further, it is also a pleasant surprise to see so many farmers have begun strawberry farming in the area. Others are big into the Himalayan Rainbow Trout farming. The people are so enterprising and will do well against all odds. One does see “ready made noodles” of different brands everywhere along with carbonated drinks. We do not need to do much except give the trekker a choice and educate them about the value creation in the local economy if we eat local food. The milk and the cheese of the local areas are of really good quality. Everywhere we also had yogurt, alcoholic drinks made from locally grown millet which were offered as a welcome gesture in silver decorated cups and served from traditional decanters.

60 YEARS AND 50 YEARS

The people of the United States of America have been helping the people of Nepal for sixty years now. The US Agency for International Development USAID has helped so many Nepalis to acquire higher education and various

trainings. World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has been helping protect Nepal’s globally unique flora and fauna for fifty years. The green hike, green planet trek was part of these anniversary celebrations. The American people have given so much to Nepal including highways, higher education institutes, ropeways, and so much more. WWF has helped Nepal become a global leader in conservation of rich flora and fauna. Both deserve our gratitude and commitment to do more for ourselves as Nepalis. We need to take ownership of our challenges and begin to become proactive. Climate change, adaptation and mitigation could very well be an area where Nepal could take the lead. We watched the final game of a local volleyball tournament and gave away the WWF sponsored Red Panda Trophy and medals to the winning team!

RASUWA GADDI TO GALCHI

The trade volume between India and China in 2008 had exceeded a value of US \$ 50 billion. The question that many ask is, can this go through Nepal? We do need to be organized if Nepal is going to

take advantage of this instead of just a handful of “clever people” as in the past. The Rasuwa Gaddhi to Galchi highway is nearing completion with support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). We drove back along this road and began a conversation centered around how this may serve as a green corridor between Nepal and Tibet, China that will enhance conservation and management of natural resources. Local people in Rasuwa aspire to send fresh “organic” food each day into Tibet. There is talk of a “green special economic zone” in the area as well. We have to make sure that illegal wildlife body parts do not travel on this road. We must also ensure that the “clean” river that currently flows along the highway does not suffer the same fate as others in the past.

JUST DO IT

Langtang is waiting for you. There cannot be an excuse not to go enjoy and pamper yourself. It is a good place to mix work and holiday as well. Over the next weeks and months, many pilgrims will be going up to Gosaikunda. Choose when and how you want to go, but do go! ■



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Editor-in-Chief, Republica National Daily

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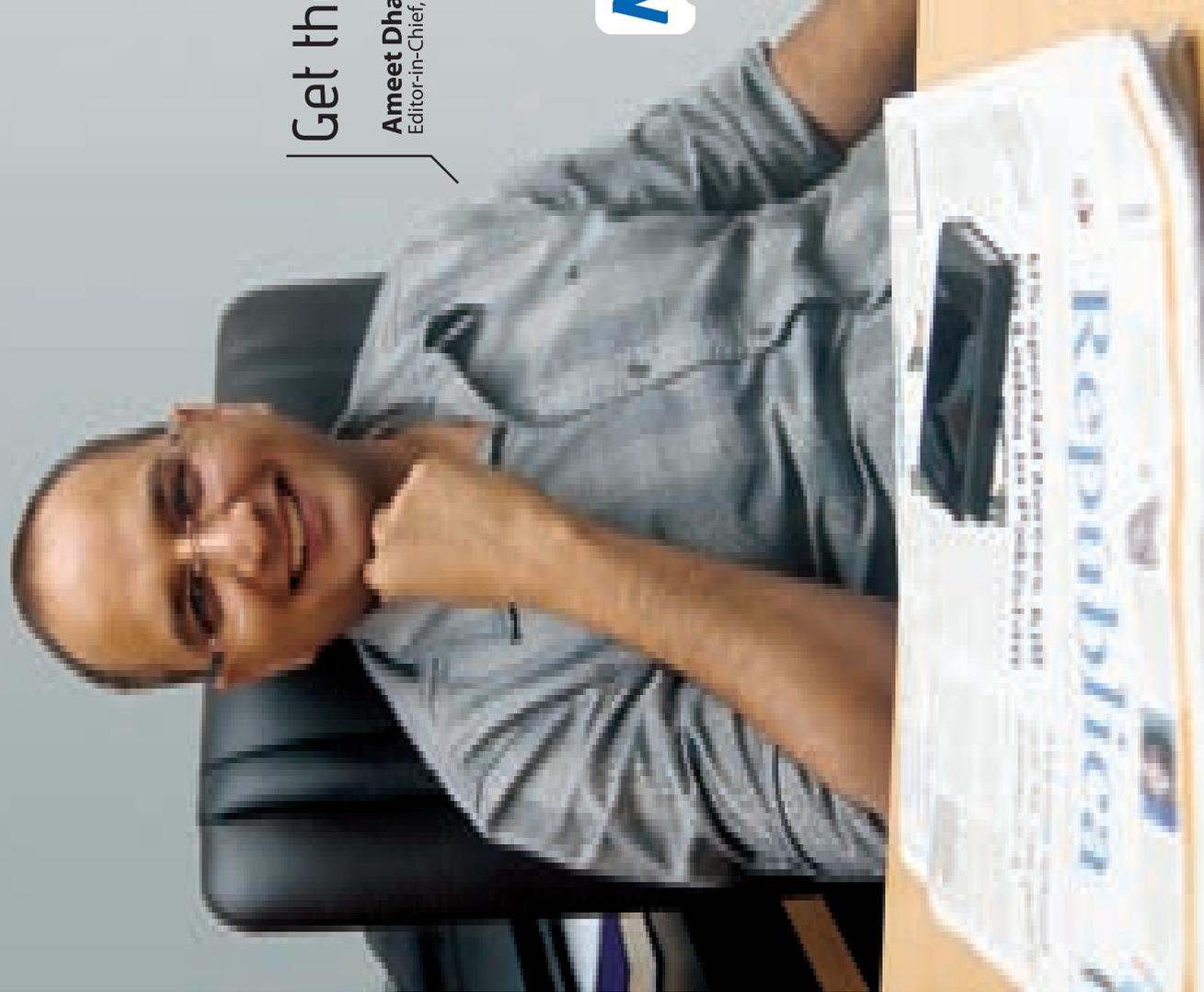
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ONE FINE DAY

Text By YUKTA BAJRACHARYA, Photos By HARI MAHARJAN



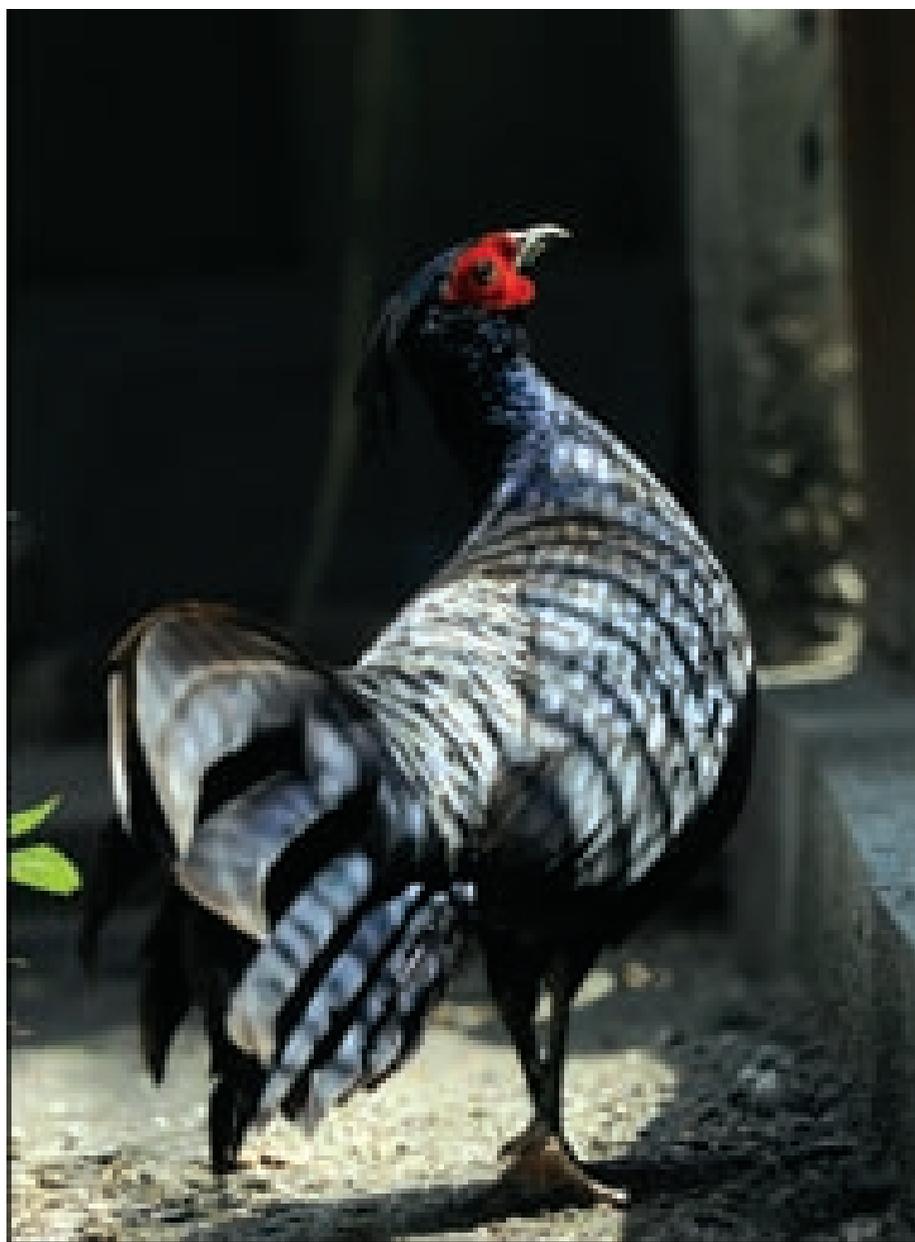
I stumbled across a woman
at the zoo,

Who with childlike glimmer in her eyes,
asked me if I wanted to take a small tour,

Of the zoo, we walked one bound animal after another
some majestic beasts, some colorful winged beauties.

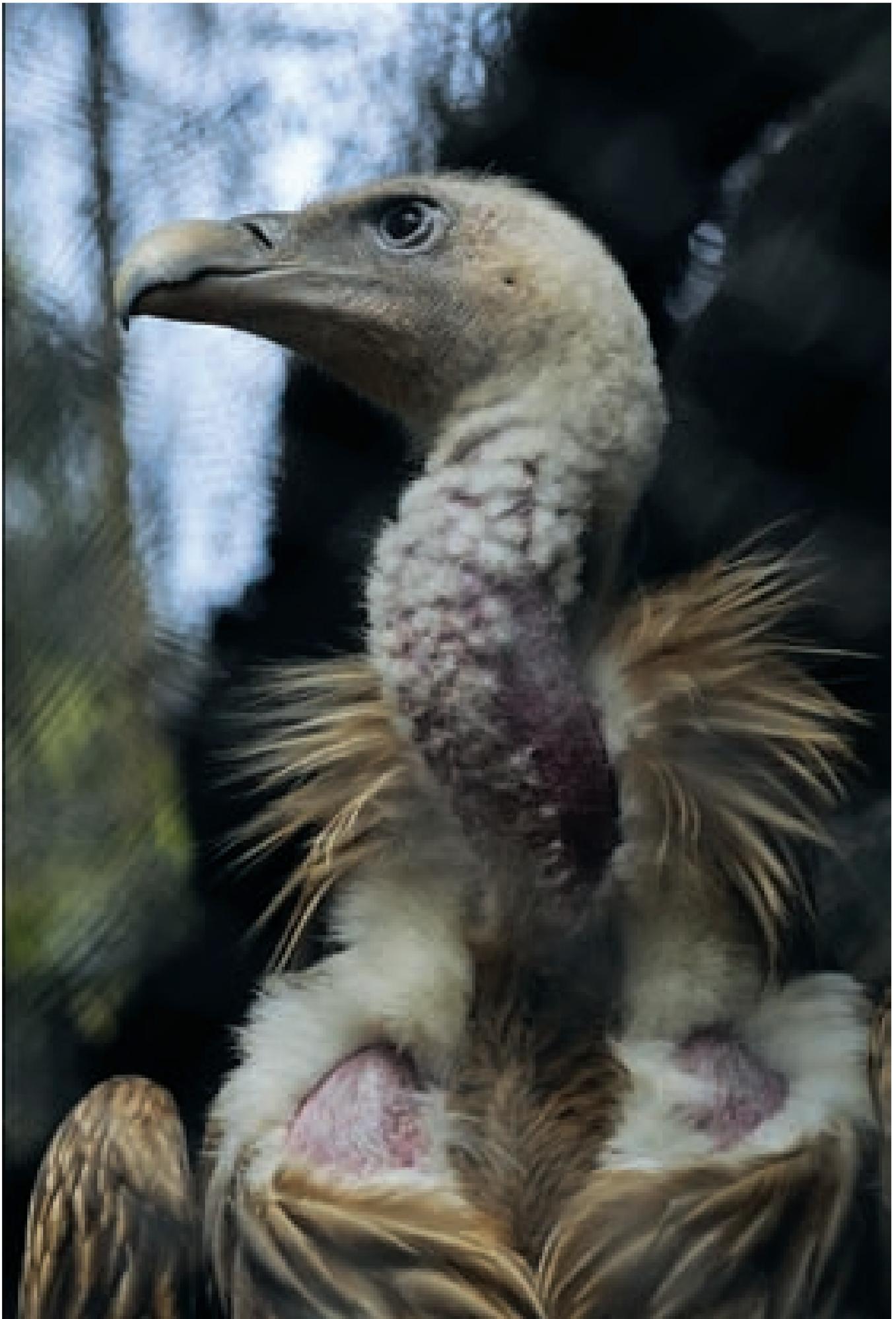
She giggled at the lazy hippos yawn
and exchanged words with the love birds
Waved to the monkeys
and counted guinea pigs
listened to the songbird sing
and the porcupine lament...

This women I met at the zoo,
she made me believe
that there are, in deed,
some people in the world whose heart beats for animals,
the same way it beats for (in)humans.

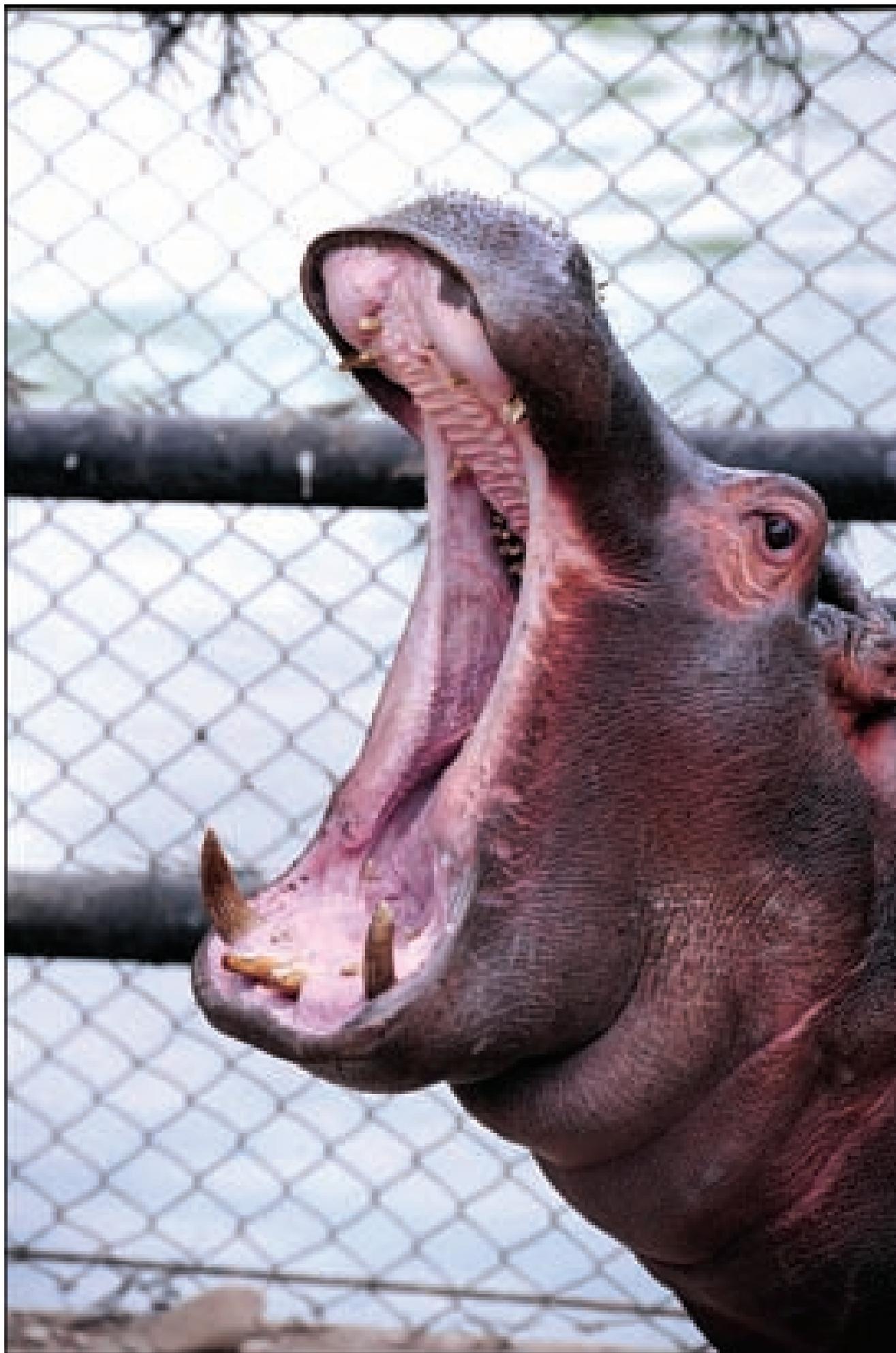










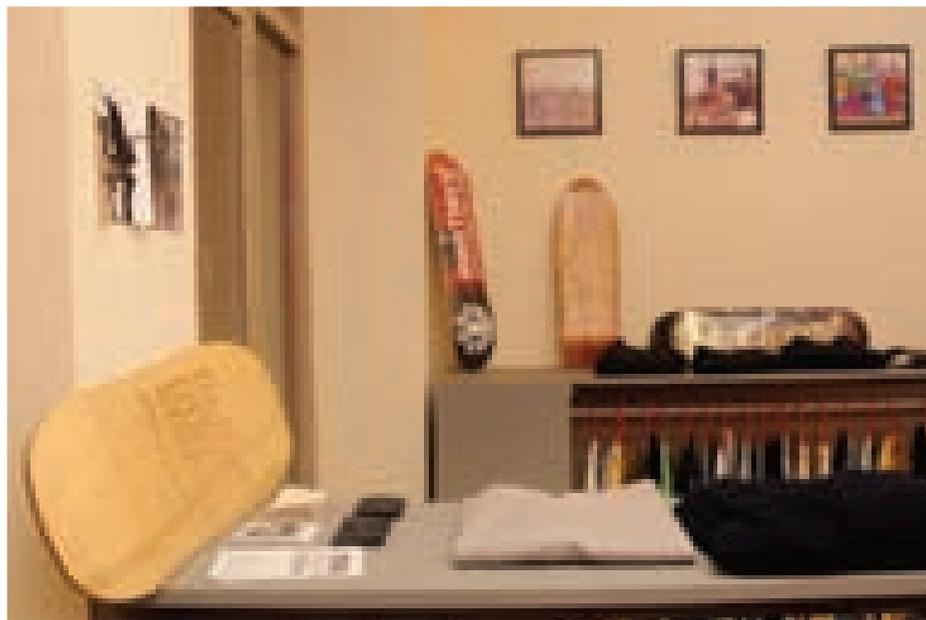


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CRAFTS

FEATURE | CRAFT OF THE MONTH | SHOP REVIEW

FEATURE



ECS Media

Craft in Motion

By ANUBHUTI PAUDYAL

Thamel is popular for its diversity and vibrancy not just amongst locals but also amongst visitors. With much on offer by way of shopping and eating out, Thamel is hard to miss and impossible to forget. One unique offering is Arniko Skateboards, on the first floor of Sagarmatha Complex. Since 2007, Arniko Skateboards has been serving Nepalese and foreigners alike by manufacturing quality skateboards. The well cut skateboards with intricate carvings and trucks that have been imported to provide the best quality are some of the reasons that make the shop and its products interesting. As one enters the shop, the red wall with an interesting Arniko logo catches one's eyes. The skateboards are neatly arranged on the walls and beside them are pictures of people who have been involved with the shop ever since its establishment.

Marius Arniko Arter was born in Nepal and lived here for the first few years of his life. His parents, originally from Switzer-

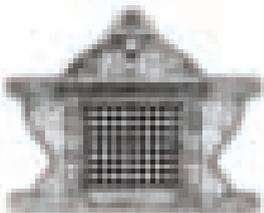
land, moved back there when he was still young. It wasn't until 2007 that he came back to Nepal for a visit and decided to extend his stay to know Nepal better. It has been four years now and it was in this time that Arniko Skateboards was established. His uncle was one of the first skateboarders of Switzerland and it was through him that Arter was first interested in the sport. Today, the shop holds some of the most interesting skateboards with products for those who love to slide and those who love performing stunts on the skateboard. Arter cuts the wood himself, which is Canadian maple, and works with finesse to get striking results. He hires locals to carve intricate details on the skateboards. Some contain the company logo while other details are more intricate and meaningful, borrowing from Nepali art.

It was in the spring of 2010 that Arniko Skateboards went international. Their store in Zurich, Switzerland is very similar to the one in Thamel and has the same collection too. What is interesting about the shop is its

collection of Arniko merchandise besides the skateboards themselves. Cotton t-shirts, jeans and jumpers with cool patterns, all made in Nepal fill a corner of the shop. The t-shirts are made of organic cotton imported from India for those who love to have a share in saving the world.

The price for the skateboards ranges from Rs. 6000 to Rs. 10,000 without the trucks. A readymade skateboard with trucks cost somewhere around Rs. 21,000. The imported trucks and skateboards are a great investment and of a great quality. T-shirts range from Rs. 900 to Rs. 1000 while jackets cost somewhere between Rs. 2500 to Rs. 2900.

Arniko Skateboards employs Nepali carvers and in a way takes Nepalese art to the international market. Additionally, it is environment-friendly and promotes healthy labor. The shop is an interesting combination of western and eastern cultures. A stop at the shop will ensure an interesting experience and for those who love to shop for a cause and with a cause, a visit to Arniko Skateboards is a must. ■



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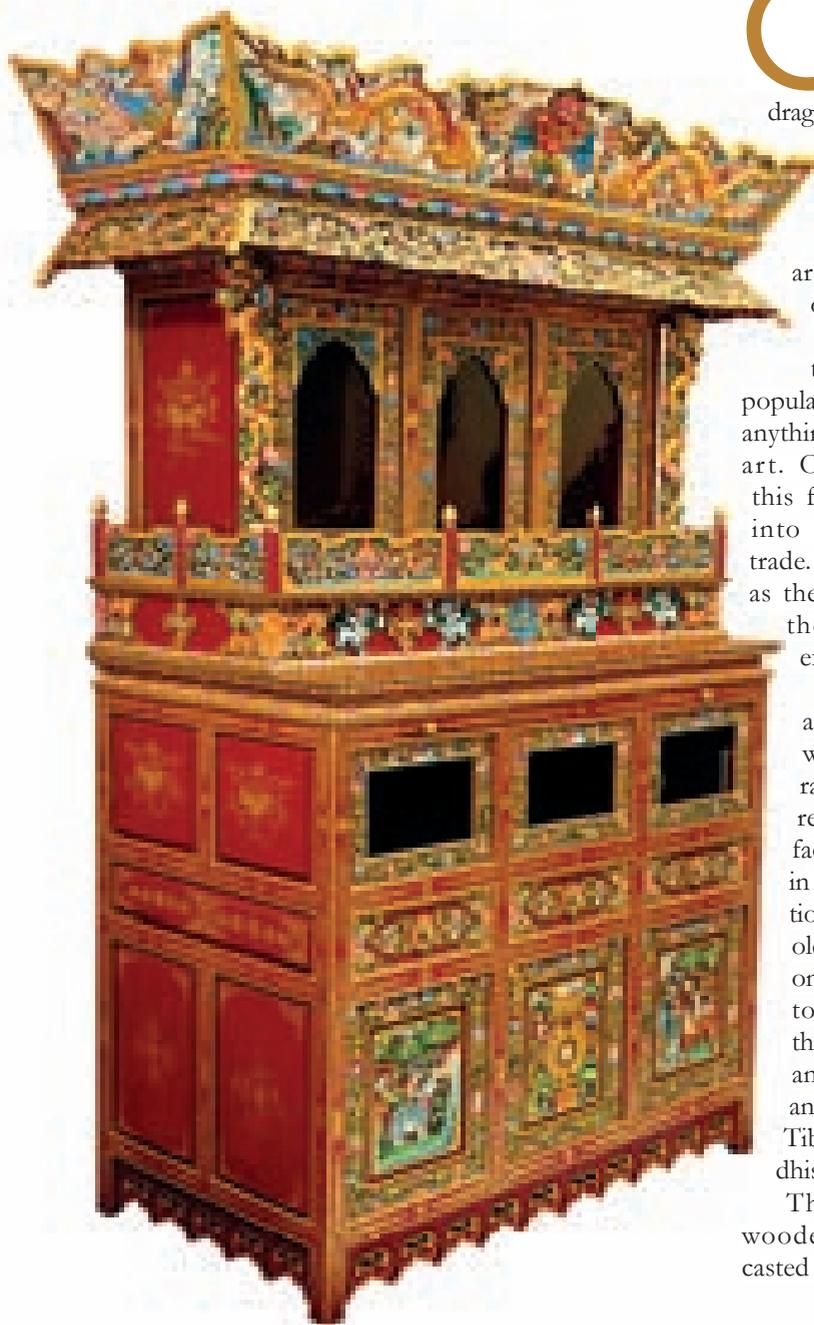
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Stories of Tibet

By YUKTA BAJRACHARYA



Cabinets carrying intricate embodiments of mythical black phoenixes and golden dragons, jewelry boxes designed with lotuses, partitions carrying paintings from centuries ago—Tibetan and Nepalese artistic furniture have their own charm to add to any space. This kind of traditional furniture is popular amongst those who love anything vintage and everything art. Originally from Tibet, this furniture culture seeped into Nepal mainly through trade. Dating back to as early as the 18th century however, these antiques are quite expensive.

To make such artifacts affordable for everyone who would want to decorate their rooms with them, replications of these artifacts have been introduced in the market. These replications are built by using age-old methods passed on from one generation of craftsmen to the other. They carry the same essence that their antique counterparts carry and simultaneously, keep the Tibetan and Nepalese Buddhist art alive.

This type of traditional wooden furniture is carved, casted and painted by hands of

skilled artisans. While the designs on them are mostly influenced by the Tibetan culture, some designs are also customized according to the needs of the customers. While the colors used are mostly bright earthy hues, the early methods are kept intact through the use of wood and brass joints. Much attention is given to detail and the final piece is rounded off with antique finishing.

The use of traditional furniture is advantageous because it gives the traditional touch to any space without occupying much space. They can be used anywhere and are available as cabinets, chests, jewelry boxes, wall décor, partitions, dressing tables and TV holders amongst other options.

“While the antiques are popular amongst art collectors, the demand for genuine products have been degrading ever since the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. On the contrary, the demand for their replications is on the rise mainly due to the fact that they are easily affordable and artsy,” says Reetu Shakya of Deva’s Art – an established abode for traditional artifacts and artistic products.

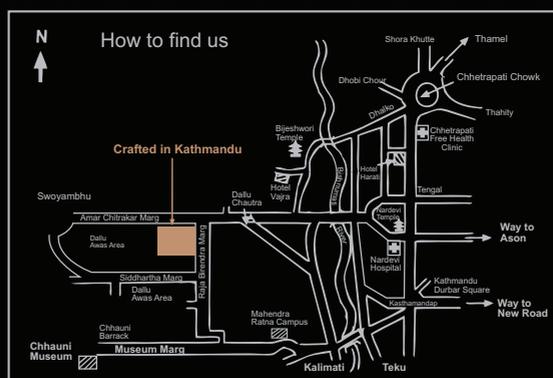
The price for such traditional furniture starts at and average of Rs. 14,000 and can go up to Rs. 50,000.

Traditional Tibetan and Nepali Furniture can be found at: Deva’s Art, Durbar Marg ■

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WOODEN TREASURES

By ANUBHUTI PAUDYAL

One of the first things one notices in a visit to Nepalese cultural sites, is the wood craft. The wood craft of Nepal is known for its intricate details and peculiarity and a rather interesting combination of religion and art. A visit to a religious or cultural site is a treat to the eyes of those who have learnt to appreciate the beauty of skill. Today, the love for wood craft has increased its boundary of adoring just the religious sites. They have now entered the lives of people through decorative items. Today, wood craft is not just something that is appreciated but also something that is owned.

Shiva Handicrafts and woodcrafts, located in Babarmahal Revisited, can be a delight to the lovers of wood art. As one enters the shop, the first experience can be overwhelming. Attractive and intricate wood works are beautifully placed for display on the shelves. A person who knows the effort it takes to create some of these works can find it difficult to decide which ones stand out among others. Wide *Kumari Jhyals* (Kumari windows), *Aakhi jhyal* and *Mayur jhyal* (Peacock windows) hand-

somely cover a large section of the walls. The shelves mostly hold beautiful statues of God and Goddesses, namely, *Ganesha*, Buddha, Green tara and White tara. At the center of the store is a large statue of *Maitri Buddha* which on first look might look fine enough to be a normal stone statue but a closer look shows the wood work and the finesse with which the work has been done.

For those who are looking for smaller objects, mostly for souvenirs and gifts, Shiva wood carving and handicrafts is not a disappointment at all. Hand *Mane* and Stand *Mane* which has come to become representative of Nepalese culture in international arena, can be found here. There are darker woods and lighter ones as well for choice. *Furma*, statues of *Kal Bhairav*, wooden bangles, *Mandala*, incense boxes are some of the many items in the shop which might be of interest to art lovers.

There are equal numbers of Nepalese and foreigners visiting the shop which is good news to Nepalese handicrafts which has seen days of less appreciation in Nepal. The wood work can be great decorative items. People from around the world, who have more knowledge of this

art than most Nepalese through research and study, find the place enlightening.

Shiva Maharjan, being an artist himself, knows the importance of traditional and cultural items of Nepal. Through the shop, artists who have a hand to carve beautifully are getting appreciation and monetary benefits. The shop collects items from such artists and displays them for the customers. It can be given the credit in bringing the skill of our traditional artists for Nepalese and foreigners to appreciate.

The price ranges from few thousands to over a lakh according to the size and skill required to create the craft. Smaller items like *Mane* cost somewhere around Rs. 1000 while the larger structures like *Aakhi jhyal* cost nearly Rs. 50,000. The price range is really diverse and depends solely on the items.

A visit to the shop is a must for the lovers of Nepalese wood crafts. It is a known fact that a lot of Nepalese are unaware of the beauty and history of these crafts. Therefore, proper appreciation of the skills required to create something beautiful is important. Shiva wood carving and handicrafts might be a place that holds some of the most diverse collection of wood crafts in Kathmandu city. ■

SHOPPING



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They Haul Their Heavy Loads

21ST CENTURY PORTERS

Text & Photos by PAT KAUBA



Havoc! The last two tractors of the day jammed on a frightening corner

They haul their heavy loads for seven or more days at a time, up the snaking mountain road from Surkhet town in the Tarai to the mountain bazaar of Jumla. A mere 200 odd kilometers; but over the monsoon obliterated track they push both themselves and their mighty beasts to the edge, onwards, upwards and back again.

Pulling steel-framed trailers of countless tons, filled with rice, flour, diesel, cloths and other basic necessities for the people of remote, far-flung Jumla District is no easy task. The torque of the engines on their load often rears them on their back wheels, like beast of war, charging into the fray. Humble porters

and mule trains share the broken road with these mechanical beasts.

I had the opportunity, due to necessity, to ride downhill with young Binod and his tractor. My friend Amir and I were in a rush to Kathmandu and Binod was kind enough to let us hop in with him. The journey to Surkhet is but a mere two days downhill, all tractors move down empty and then up full, making it easier for one tractor to be manoeuvrable on the perilous course if two should jam on a tight corner. Returning however is seven days of fierce struggle, fighting with their heavy haulage, negotiating strewn boulders and fellow haulers on the narrow road—not much wider than the walking trail it replaced some years back.

WRONG FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I met young Binod in the market town of Ngangma, bordering Kalilot and Jumla Districts. A manky, muddy one street bazaar, filled with all the Chinese and Indian goods one could ever require. He had stopped for the night on his way down from Jumla Bazaar for his next load. Young, no more than 25 years, wearing a muslim patterned bandana, making him look like some hip-hop gangster, far removed from the mean streets of L.A. At first I was apprehensive. But the next two days would shame me and my first impression. For me Binod became a shining example of a “good man”. Constantly fighting with any greedy teashop owners

and *chai-wallahs* who dared try charge us visitors too much.

He's known at all the little shops along the route—he's a regular. His stained red teeth, show when he smiles. I have never met anybody who injects so much *Pukar*, scented mouth tobacco, as did our Binod. Smiling, he frightenly gestures to me how it keeps him awake on the trail—from going over the constantly precarious edge. He's single and happy, in love with his *Deutz Fahr* tractor. Never are we allowed to pay for a thing when we stop, he says Kalikot people are greedy, I pay!

Whenever a tractor passes who's driver he knows, he halts, and a comical exchange ensues—trying to get more *pukar* from the other driver, even if he has plenty himself. It becomes a pleasant moments respite and child's play for the two drivers. *Pukar* won and in the mouth, a swift goodbye follows and onwards we all move—Binod smiling away to himself.

BROKEN AND STREWN

As the day progresses, my body is broken over and over from the tractor leaping up, down and over boulders, through

pot-holes the size of craters and streams that are far from tamed. A tractor may be faster than walking, but it definitely ain't comfortable folks—however much it works. The driver's seat is the only place to be.

Night approaches as we enter Manma, the district capital for Kalikot. Binod doesn't want to spend the night, and after staying here on our way up we agree with him and move on out as the sun slips under the mountainline. Soon, in the pitch black dark, things go wrong. We meet a tractor with its heavy load of rice on a corner, it's no good, the driver doesn't handle it well, and we are halted for hours. The last two tractors of the night, stuck. There's nothing to do for the first while. The offending driver's voice is on the edge of tears, we are all thinking the same thing: there goes *dal-bhat*, our bellies rumble with the long day ending.

As the clock ticks by, my respect for these people grow more. Sure the humble porter is also a great man, but these are the 21st century's version. Without them Jumla would be a very different, isolated and poor place. The only vehicles that can ply the roads year round are these beasts, although

they tend not to in the rainy season—too unpredictable.

“COMETH THE HOUR, COMETH THE MAN”

Eventually Binod takes charge, slowly building up a track of boulders with which to drive one side of his trailer “up” on and along, giving clearance of a mere 20cm for the other driver to move. Binod moves his *Deutz Fahr* right to the edge, while his trailer moves upwards, into the air. Holding my breath, I pray his brakes are good. He cajoles his beast's nose right over the precipice at a downward angle, his trailer becoming pure pressure on the hitch. The other driver begins revving his sub-par *Swaraj* tractor, my heart races, maybe while hauling the load he'll knock Binod over? First attempt: not enough torque, second attempt: he slips further back, then third time: lucky, *pow*, he pushes through. With instant reflexes Binod clears the danger, turning from the eerie precipice, moving downhill. Back in we get and rattle along into the pitch-black night.

As midnight approaches we arrive in some random, one street bazaar; Binod disappears into the dark street on foot, soon returning with a place to sleep and people willing to cook us a late night meal.

After Binod has a glass of *raksi* to ease his nerves, we share a hot meal and turn in for a few restful hours sleep. Sitting back into the beast in the morning, Binod sees we are aching bad after the previous days shaking. Arriving into Dailekh District, where the road opens again to “normal” traffic, Binod puts us into a comfortable bus seat, his smile wide and strong and teeth stains shining true.

Back in the comfort of my home, in the hustle and bustle of the big noisy city, I still think of this amazing young man—to me the pride of a nation, hauling his load with his mighty *Deutz Fahr* up and down that far-flung trail in far-western Nepal—doing his day's work with a smile. ■



Amir enjoys the sunset as we descend from Manma

Pat Kauba is a freelance writer and photographer who loves the human spirit. He can be contacted at patkauba@gmail.com.

FEATURE

A Day on the Roshi Fishing for a Good Cause

A day out fishing with the boys is still a great way to reconnect with nature and to rejuvenate tired senses.

Text & Photos by RAVI M SINGH



Amused doctor Jha looks on as the gen-set breaks down.

I jumped at the idea of a trip to *Roshi Khola* (river), because we were going fishing! And, sure enough, my anticipation brought on a fitful night's sleep. In the morning, my angler friends admitted the same. Besides hooking fish—every angler's excitement—we would escape from the city's dust, smog, noise, and monotony. But this fishing expedition was different. It had purpose (beyond mere catching fish), and a bit of scientific technology (electro-fishing).

Electro-fishing is a process of stunning fish by using electric current powered by a portable backpack generator or battery. The current is delivered by a pair of electrodes that comes with the equipment. Exclusively used for scientific surveys, fisheries biologists use it as a most humane way of catching fish, before releasing them back into the wild. In this case, I was joining several friends in the scientific survey of the Roshi river to determine the fish abundance, density, and species composition. Electro-fishing, when done properly, results in no permanent harm to fish, though some fishermen have invented crude replicas of this equipment to illegally and unethically kill fish for non-scientific purposes, for eating and selling.

Our expedition started, as usual, almost two hours late. Fishing trips have a way of doing that. Given bad traffic on the Kathmandu-Bhaktapur road, it was almost noon when we arrived at the Roshi bridge. All eyes turned to the clear Roshi that tumbled past rocks and boulders strewn all along the watercourse as it snaked through the narrow valley.

The river Roshi is named after a tiny village (*Roshi Gaon*) located on a hillside some three kilometers from the old historical Newar town called Panauti, eight kilometers South-east of Banepa. Noted for delectable *asla* (snow trout), the spring-fed river drains from the high Phulchoki hills (above Godavari), and converges on the Tama Koshi river at a small settlement called Dumja (on the new Sindhuli-Bardibas highway) that goes south to the Terai from Dhulikhel. I still remember when people from Kathmandu travelled as far away as 40 km to Panauti situated on the banks of the Roshi to try fried trout served by the local eateries. It was well worth the trouble, for the fish from the cold Roshi were, indeed, exceptionally delicious. That, however, was more than a decade and half ago. The Roshi today

stands depleted and degraded. Overfishing, escalation in river encroachment and pollution, ever growing human settlement, development works (like the new highway)—and the worst—massive excavation of sand, gravel and boulders, has violated the once pristine river.

Our destination was the long stretch of Roshi on the Sindhuli-Bardibas Highway, some 55 kilometers from Kathmandu. Our team was a mixed bunch, five in all. Arun worked in an international bank; Vikas ran a restaurant; Kumar, although qualified as an environment graduate, dabbled in real estate; I gave up business to freelance writing; and the last, Professor Bibhuti Ranjan Jha, was a guest and our mentor. Everybody addressed him as “Jha sir.” A senior environment scientist at Kathmandu University, Dhulikhel, he had volunteered as our ‘guru’. The equipment and all the paraphernalia for the survey was provided by courtesy of Jha sir.

Except for Professor Jha, we four anglers represented an NGO involved in the conservation of aquatic resources of our country. And curiously the NGO was created by coincidence. A bunch of avid anglers met on the Internet, rendezvoused, shared common grievances about the plight

NEPAL'S AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY

Nepal is extremely rich in aquatic resources with more than 743,563 hectares of wetlands consisting of rivers, lakes, reservoirs, ponds, paddy fields and marshland. These support an estimated 183 species of fish belonging to 93 genera. Besides fish, Nepal's aquatic biosphere supports an estimated 43 species of amphibians and some reptiles, several species of mammals, and around 193 species of birds which have adapted to an aquatic environment or are dependent on aquatic life forms for survival. Some of these, like the Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) have been rescued from the brink of extinction—thanks to conservation efforts. The fate of, however, others like the Gangetic Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) and a number of other species of fish is uncertain. The legendary Golden Mahseer (tor putitora), which has drawn international acclaim among the angling fraternity, the snow trout (*Schizothorax*), the Rajbam (*Anguilla bengalensis*) and the formidable for its size, the Gouch

(*Bagarius bagarius*), a catfish species, are some of the indicator species, which are under serious threat of extinction.

What is certain is that, the aquatic ecosystems are under tremendous pressure from anthropogenic exploitation resulting in destruction of spawning grounds of fish and breeding grounds of birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals dependent on aquatic habitats. Infrastructure development, like roads, weirs and dams, and massive deforestation has also contributed to the degradation, taking its toll on the already fragile ecosystem. Furthermore, destructive fishing practices are rapidly exhausting the remaining stocks of fish in our rivers and lakes. Much has been done to conserve the Gharial crocodiles and the Dolphins. A myriad of other species remain, however, sidelined—neglected.

Our NGO called *Sahar* (Save Himalayan Aquatic Resources) was recently established by a group of like-minded anglers-turned-conservationists,

concerned about the degradation of freshwater ecosystems in Nepal. *Sahar* seeks to achieve conservation and equitable and sustainable use of water resources through community based approaches that include: conducting scientific research in the rivers and lakes of Nepal, raising awareness on aquatic biodiversity conservation through effective lobbying with conservation agencies and government organizations, encouraging local communities dependant on riverine resources to embrace sustainable harvesting practices, alleviating the incidence of poverty among river dependant local community by seeking out alternative livelihood options, implementing restocking programs to augment natural fish stocks in the rivers by operating fish hatcheries, assisting in the development and implementation of productive policies on aquatic biodiversity conservation, and promoting sustainable angling opportunities based on the principle of ‘catch-n-release’ as a major tourism attraction.



Releasing the catch



weighing the catch

of our rivers and the aquatic resources, got down to some serious brainstorming, then set up the organization.

As we drove down the highway surveying the river that flanked the road, we passed by a stone-crushing site. Surprisingly, no work was in progress at the factory. Some months back on my angling jaunt to Sunkoshi, what had been a glass clear river to that point suddenly turned unbelievably turbid, and continued that way—getting worse as another of those installations spewed silted water into it—till it finally merged with the big Sun Koshi at Dumja. The sight of the pollution at the confluence was disturbing. The Roshi, always gin clear at the time (my visit in October), was a dark chocolate in stark contrast to the turquoise Sun Koshi, as it poured into the big river.

We selected a place called Chitre as our survey site. The balmy day with sun not too strong promised fantastic weather. So, without further ado, the team pitched into work. No small feat, though. Care had to be taken, as the underwater surface was uneven with slippery gravel and stones.

Off went the foursome into the Roshi, waist deep, struggling against the strong current. Kumar, weighed

down by a bulky generator on his back, clumsily waded through the water holding the ominous looking stick with the electrode, which he kept poking into the water while the other hand fiddled with a switch that delivered electric current. Arun and Vikash in their unwieldy waders flanked Kumar, holding long staffs with dip nets, which they kept jabbing left and right in a frenzy to trap the stunned fish. Professor Jha brought up the rear with a plastic bucket that held the fish netted by Arun and Vikash. All were wearing chest long mandatory rubber waders to avoid getting mildly electrocuted.

At first sight, it looked like total bedlam. “Hey, try that eddy... No, no not that one, the one on your right,” an over-excited Arun screamed at Kumar. “Shove the stick deeper. Try to reach underneath the big boulders.” Everyone had to yell over the sound of the rushing water. Now it was Vikash’s turn to shout: “There, there... Arun, the fish are to your left.”

Professor Jha apart, the young men (in their early thirties) acted with a raucous bubbling energy, worth watching. Excitement mounted with the

passing of every minute. Words flew. The yelling took newer heights. As expected, the entire scene of frenetic activity coupled with the noise successfully drew a small local crowd of local villagers, who watched in awed silence. I was spared the physically demanding work of plowing through the water; so, I elected to be the team-photographer instead. But neither I nor the watchful crowd was any less excited at the fishy going-on in mid-stream.

Then suddenly, when only five minutes remained to complete the first leg of the operation (15 to 20 minutes to be done at two different stretches), the generator coughed, sputtered, belched out black smoke, and died, to a mutual “Oh, No-o-o-o!” Despite several attempts, the gen-set refused to re-start. All four reluctantly waded out of the river. Suddenly, Vikash stumbled, lost his footing, and crashed into the water to guffaws from the crowd on the river bank. Even the waders did not ▶



Inspecting water temperature.

Arun and Vikash in their unwieldy waders flanked Kumar, holding long staffs with dip nets, which they kept jabbing left and right in a frenzy to trap the stunned fish.

help. Neither did the cool March day, for without a change of clothes, the slightest breeze made him shiver involuntarily.

As it turned out, the gen-set's spark plug had fouled. Back on the shore, a quick scrubbing of the plug did the work and the gen-set kick-started, to a spontaneous "H-u-r-r-a-y!" Since that particular stretch was already disturbed, we worked up the river from a different spot, and then breezed through other run a kilometer downstream.

It was time for a break, and much needed lunch. As we munched on hefty tuna sandwiches (courtesy of Arun), Kumar checked on the day's catch stowed in two different buckets. The last combing operation had yielded more fish, finger size and smaller, than the first. Then, it was time for the final work that needed painstaking attention to detail. Every fish had to be taxonomically categorized by its native identification, scientific name, weight and length. The total count of each species assessed its abundance in the river. We were required to carry subsequent experiments at Roshi at four times during the year: early in the spring (this one), in June (summer or pre-monsoon), October (autumn or post-monsoon), and January (winter), both upstream and downstream.

The mundane work of fish sampling took time. The other members of the team took care of that, while I took a little time off to satisfy some of the local fellows' curiosities. One in particular, a local fisherman named Krishna, seemed the most interested to know what we were doing, which I explained. Then I asked, "So, how

is your own fishing going on." "Very little, sir; it's not like what it used to be. Ten years ago, my cast-net brought enough fish to make a livelihood. Today, I fish in my spare time only, doing odd jobs to earn a living", he lamented. "What with the coming of the two stone-crushing industries and massive excavation of sand and rocks from the river, the fish have diminished disastrously. To make matters worse, electro-fishing is on the rise—and by far the worst, pesticides are being used to kill fish," an indignant Krishna said, shaking his head.

And to his curiosity, I explained that we represented an NGO. Careful not to confuse him with scientific jargon, I used simple words. "Look Krishna, as you just said, the Roshi holds less and less fish every year. We have, in pursuit of greater wealth and development, brought disaster to our rivers. Our children and their children's children, too, hold equal rights to enjoy the fish from the rivers like we have. If we do not think about some way to save our fish and the rivers, no fish will remain in the future for them to enjoy, right?" Krishna nodded in approval. "It is for this reason, we have started an organization to address this problem and raise awareness about the conservation of our rivers and fish. And this is possible only if conscientious fishermen like you join hands in the campaign", I concluded. Krishna looked impressed.

Of the eight different species captured, totaling 214, *Bhote gadelo*, a loach (*Schistura rufipetula*), was most abundant (106 total count), followed by Katle, the copper mahseer (*Neolissocheilus hexagonolopis*), 53, and *Buche Aasla*, Blunt-nosed snow trout (*Shizothorax richardsonii*), 12, to name a few of the common

ones. Disappointingly, none of the catch included the popular golden mahseer. Given that the Roshi, as a subsidiary of the Sun Koshi, offered adequate rocks, pebbles and a gravel bed to form a perfect spawning ground for golden mahseer, our expectations were high. A survey done by us in the Tadi Khola last autumn, however, held a fair number of mahseer fingerlings.

On the banks of the Roshi, our research over, it was time to release the fish. Arun volunteered, and grinned from ear to ear at the camera. The locals watched in awe; somewhat bewildered at the entire catch being released (although we had explained).

Darkness approached while we packed up for the day. We shook hands with Krishna and the local bunch who kept us company, got back into Arun's battered 30-year old jeep, and with its screeches and groans, headed back home.

A little later as we crossed the Roshi bridge I looked back at the river to see it as a streak of silver winding a path across the darkening valley. Gentle hills stood out on two sides in somber silhouette, a blissful shimmering pale ethereal glow in the diffused light of the setting sun until it finally dipped below the horizon in a burst of deep orange, vermilion and indigo. It looked like a flawless work of abstract art. I felt good and happy. We had a good day of fishing... and for a truly good cause. ■

The author is a freelance writer and outdoorsman. He can be contacted at atravimansingh@hotmail.com. Inquiries about the NGO Sahar, its activities or issues of aquatic biodiversity conservation in Nepal can be addressed to info@saharnepal.org.

EYES ON THE HILLS

Trekking in Nepal is a must-do with scenery that ranges from great to jaw-dropping amazing. Make sure your eyes are well protected to enjoy the view with shades that are perfect for traveling.

BY ANUBHUTI POUDYAL



Time spend in Nepal would be incomplete if one were not to partake in some trekking. To Nepalese people and foreigners alike, trekking stories are the ones they share once they have made their way back from the steep terrain of a remote district or from one of the magnificent mountains up north. The peace that the walk provides along with breathtaking views of the surroundings will undoubtedly please the heart. However, there are a few things the body requires when it make its way through trying pathways and rough weather conditions. One of those integral details is the protection of one's eyes during the trekking.

Trekking is an adventure sport that involves walking in unfriendly conditions. The terrain might sometimes be too dusty like in sites around Mustang or might even involve snow. In either condition, it is important to protect the eyes from any harm. Ultraviolet rays can affect the eyes especially during walks or hikes that last for hours. Light reflected from the snow or the dust from rough surfaces can both irritate the eyes and even cause permanent damage. Long hours in the sun can cause serious irritation to the eyes.

There might be hundreds of options for trendy goggles or shades. However, during trekking one needs to take care of a few things while buying such a necessity. The shades must have UV protection and must cover the eyes completely, leaving no room for light or dust to enter through the sides. In the

Many options are available in the market today. However, only a few will serve the purpose well.

For women, the popular brands for shades are Dior, Gucci, Armani and Police with prices ranging between NRs. 7000 - 15000. If the prices seem a bit too steep, go for Vicito shades for products below NRs. 6000. These shades are both trendy and comfortable for trekking.

For guys, Ray ban and Marc Jacobs are popular. The price range is almost similar to that of girls. A nice pair of Ray-bans however will set you back by almost NRs.10000 while Marc Jacobs' go for around NRs. 9000. However, the price differs according to the models.

The Gift Shop at City Center provides an extensive collection of shades for both men and women. They import the brands directly from Italy, France and Singapore and therefore assure a minimum ten percent less prices than those who have retail price to cover. If you want to get assurance about the quality and originality of the shades, then the model of the shades can be checked online with the prices.

Regular glasses might be cheaper but for trekking, it is important to buy good quality products. Prolonged use of low quality shades will irritate the skin while high quality is comfortable and provide coolness to the eyes. Trekking can be an exciting experience only if the basic requirements are fulfilled. If an expensive pair of shades can protect the eyes perfectly and can assure a better experience, then it's definitely worth the money. ■

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Power cutoffs ?? Now face internet cutoffs

The power cutoffs...
The power cutoffs...
The power cutoffs...



The power cutoffs...
The power cutoffs...
The power cutoffs...

Derra's Demure Visit

Derra's Demure Visit...
Derra's Demure Visit...



TALKING ABOUT WEIGHT

The study...
The study...
The study...

The study...
The study...
The study...

The study...
The study...
The study...

turn to P3

Absolutely Thunderous

The roar of the throttle against the stop the tach needle climbing towards the red line and the roar of the inimitable engine would turn even an angel into a misanthropic spirit.

coming soon

UP IN THE AIR

A writer discovers that 15,000 feet up in the air is no place for newspapers but for introspection.

Text & Photos By NIRAJ KARKI

I like coffee – *good coffee*. While what I'm writing isn't necessarily about coffee, coffee is usually a good starting point for many things (yes, dates and also I started writing this while sipping coffee). I like the art that is coffee; it is a joy whether you're the customer or the barista – grinding fresh beans, tamping, the perfect espresso and milk steamed on an Italian La Marzaco. The best cup of coffee I've had so far however isn't from Starbucks (Charbucks to some), AMT, Java or anywhere as such. It was a cup of instant 3 in 1 powdered sugar, coffee and cream – available from your airhostess on evening flights on board Yeti airlines. I should mention this was 15,000 ft up in the air and at 15,000 ft. in the air your mind wanders.

I was flying back home – watching the sunset over the mountains, taking pictures to share what I'd seen. All the pictures you see here were taken on board flights to and from Kathmandu

My camera, the window seat on a flight and a cup of coffee – I don't see journeys getting better than this. Think about it - how many times in your life do you get to drink coffee at 15,000 ft up in the air? That too, I should add, while watching the ever changing, yet last golden rays of the sun setting over mountains?

I love the feeling of take off – that feeling – akin somewhat to what a friend of describes as the first instances of

romance of butterflies in your tummy. A mild rush of adrenalin and the anticipation, waiting to be airborne, remembering childhood dreams of flight and my favourite bumper sticker - 'I'd rather be flying'.

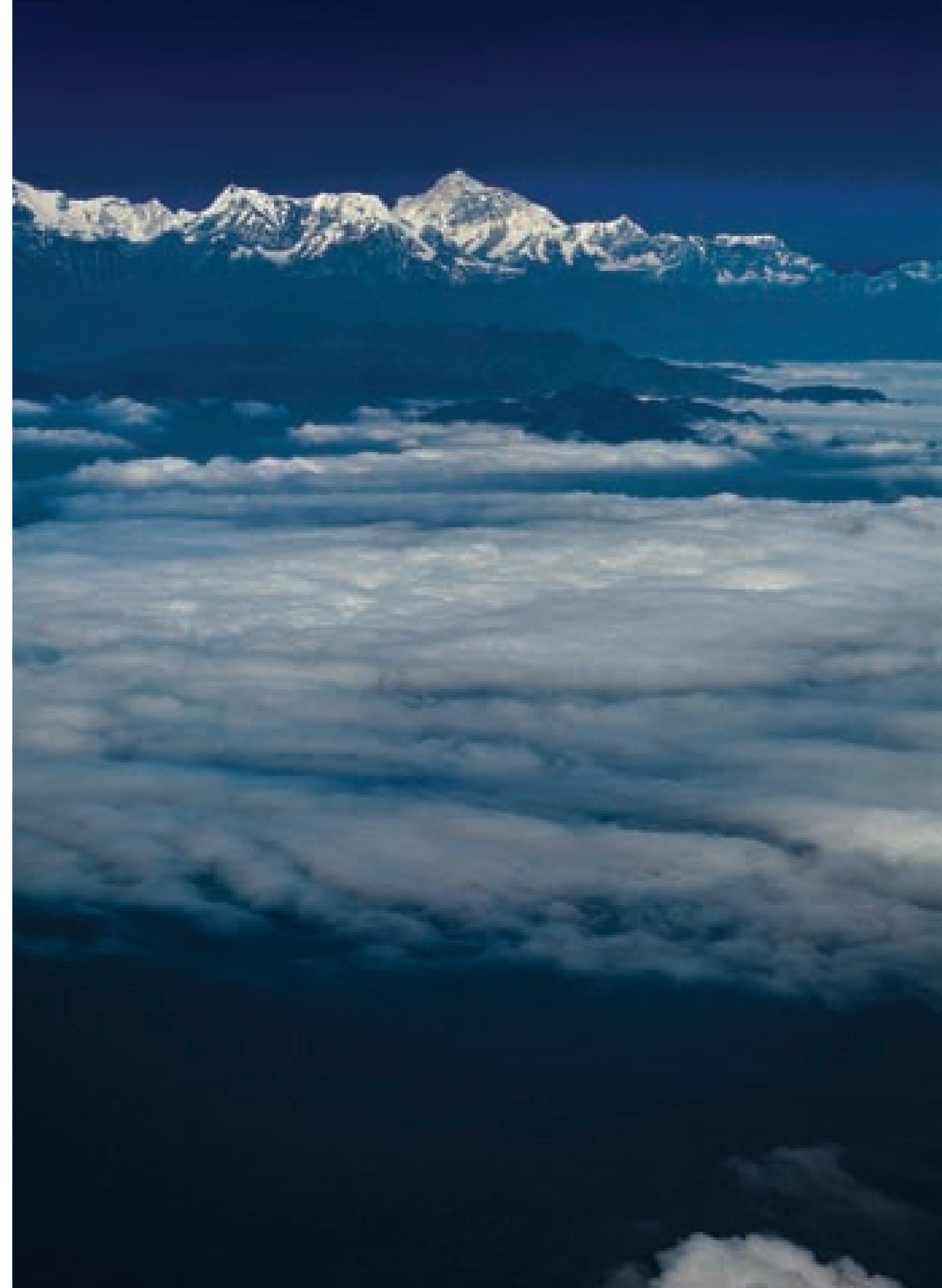
Back in the quasi-mundane world of the cabin it's the cheesy security briefings – learning how to use your seatbelt. While I wonder how the airhostesses maintain such impassive looks during the routine demonstration, I especially like how the procedures invent a sea or an ocean within Nepal 'in case of a landing on water' in the course of domestic flights. Last time I checked regarding the sign that says 'use bottom cushion for floatation' Nepal was landlocked although there are flights where you end up flying over ponds and some over lakes if you count the flights over Pokhara.

In the cabin again its 'Candy, Sir?' I terribly cheesy and I like it, probably because like most people I don't know what to say? *Oh no thanks, I'm not 5.. but then you did...*

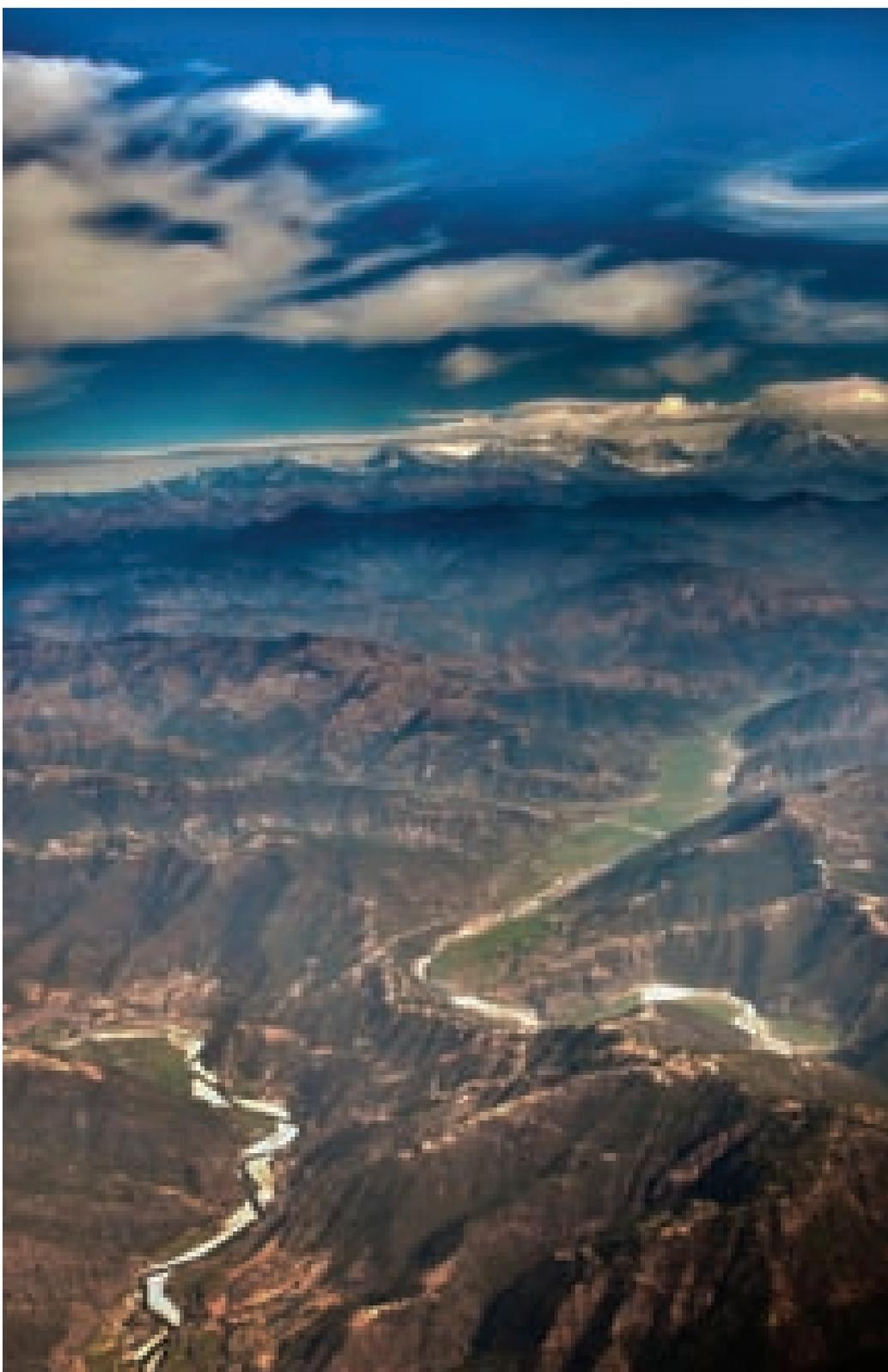
I really don't see the point in reading newspapers on the plane – I mean seriously, up in the air to me is the wrong place to be worrying about the same everyday things that happen below you, 15,000 ft below you. For me every flight is a reprieve from the mundane terrestrial world, a few

thousand feet closer to heaven and still nowhere near it. I end up assuming that because everyone does it that all those on board planes are business executive too busy and too lost to sit back and waste the hour or so of the flight. Of course with the amounts of delays we have airports in Nepal make wasting time a very annoying yet natural part of your journey (*so that's what the candy, nitrogen packed peanuts and coffee are for!!*).

Jokes aside, flying in Nepal is if nothing else practical. While as Nepalese we pride ourselves on the Himalayas, the rest of the terrain with the hills and valleys (add bad roads, landslides etc.) makes travelling very long; in terms of physics - great distance, little displacement. There are spectacular drives with endless scenic views, don't get me wrong but considering that it takes over 12 hours to get to Nepalgunj from Kathmandu while a flight takes under an hour, the practicality of flying is evident especially when planning a holiday or a weekend break). The best of destinations in Nepal aren't accessible for short breaks and if you are travelling to these places (close to mountains) be warned! Nepal's airports are among the most dangerous in the world and the one in Lukla sits atop the danger list. What do I say to that... go Nepal's dangerous ▶



Flying back home, in utter simplicity I love evening flights and flying to Kathmandu in the dark –it holds a mystic romance of sorts – knowing that within a space so small there is almost everything to meet the demands of any traveller, or a resting place between destinations, that towards mountains.



airports! and pilots and airhostesses! and controller and support staff!

Flying back home, in utter simplicity I love evening flights and flying to Kathmandu in the dark –it holds a mystic romance of sorts – knowing that within a space so small there is almost everything to meet the demands of any traveller, or a resting place between destinations, that towards mountains. The countless temples, the street life of Thamel, diverse restaurants and bars, corner shops, streets full of culture and tradition – Pashupati, Swayambhu.. and oh yeah - pollution!

None of these pictures were taken on mountain flights. I adore the mountains and yet they are only part of the greater experience of being up in the air. I hope these pictures give you a clue of evening flights the dark hills looming in the distance.. the fading sunset and the silhouette of the mountains and hills and sometimes chancing to see the moon on your flight. Flying is entering a different world, and flying in the evening a further metamorphosis of a thing of such beauty. Alien, vast, tranquil... a calling of the unknown.

A couple of tips from my limited experience as photographer – taking good shots from the inside of a plane is difficult because you're shooting through (very often dirty – airlines, please keep the windows clean!!) layers of glass of the windows which will reflect light from the inside of the plane when you try to take a photo through it. Also when taking shots of mountains through the window the trouble you have apart from the reflections is that you will mostly end up with an over exposed image because the reflectance of snow is very high (which explains sun burns in the mountains). Remedies – use a polarizing filter to cut off the reflections and haze (it also brings out more blue in the sky) and if you're not a Photoshop person then dial in a stop of negative exposure. Try bracketing at different exposures and don't limit yourself to the mountains – cirrus, stratus and cumulus clouds adorn the sky and you can shots from up above you never could otherwise.

This and so much more -experiences you never could live otherwise, except when you fly... so the next time you fly, just open your senses – flying is more than the means to an end. After all, life is a journey not the destination. ■



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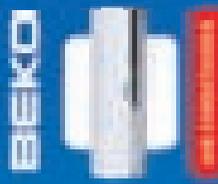
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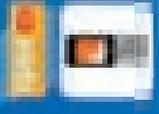
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3 Price



Search



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ECS COURSES

In order to improve the skills and knowledge of your household staff, ECS offers the following courses this month. Please let us know if you are interested in enrolling your staff for these courses.
Contact ECS 442.6439, 98510.07.900 or services@ecs.com.np to book a place.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Many excellent staff are registered with us, including cooks, guards, gardeners, maids and drivers. Our list is constantly updated. Interviews are carried at our office to help resolve language problems between our clients and the staff. If you are looking for efficient and reliable staff, please come and discuss your requirements with us and don't forget to register your staff with us before you leave.
INTERVIEW FEE: Rs. 1,500 PLACEMENT FEE: Rs. 2,500



NEPALI LANGUAGE CLASS FOR FOREIGNERS

ECS Services has been supporting foreigners to learn the Nepali Language (speaking, reading and writing) for many years. If you would like to learn or improve your Nepali vocabulary, please call us. Group or individual classes are available.

BASIC ENGLISH READING & WRITING

FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

Our clients and their staff often face problems when not communicating face to face. If your staff could read and write memos or notes, things could be easier for you. We present this reading and writing course that will enable your household staff to read notes/memos, write simple sentences, and take telephone messages. This will also help your staff to get employed after you leave. This is a two months course, 5 days a week, one hour a day. **FEE: Rs. 8,000**

BASIC ENGLISH LANGUAGE

FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

Our English class for household staff enables them to communicate with you in simple English. Language structures are taught along with vocabulary that is related to household matters (for daily use). Oral communication skills will be emphasized in this course rather than reading and writing skills. This is a one month course, 5 days a week, one hour a day. **FEE: Rs. 4,000**

NEPALI LANGUAGE CD

The revised ECS Nepali language CD is now available. It gives you the chance not only to listen but also to practice your Nepali along with the CD. We feel that this improved CD will help you learn the Nepali language more effectively. A booklet comes with the CD. **PRICE: Rs. 999 (including booklet)**

FOOD HANDLING & HYGIENE

FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

ECS is organizing food handling and hygiene course for your household staff. If you are unsure whether your staff is aware about hygiene then this is the ideal course. This hands-on class includes daily hygiene, importance of hand washing and preparation of fruits and vegetables. We will teach them the proper way of cleaning - tables, windows, kitchen floor and bathroom. We will also teach them how to take care of a refrigerator. We will discuss how illness is spread and why the corner and behind the door is important to clean. We intend this course to help your staff to clean the house properly. Two days course, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
VENUE: Maharajgunj

SPECIAL COOKING

FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

ECS cooking course is an opportunity for your maid or cook to improve his/her cooking skills. At the end of this course, participants will be able to work as a cook independently and can even organize a small party. The course content includes information on different food items for practical cooking and will also make them aware about kitchen hygiene. We teach them how to prepare Indian, Chinese and continental items, as well as basic Western cooking techniques like simmer, sauté, etc. We will also discuss how to organize a kitchen, to prepare menus, cutting techniques, steps for serving food during small and big parties. We will also teach them how to keep food and the kitchen hygienically clean. This course helps them improve their skills so your staff will not only serve you better while you are here, but they will find it easier to find a job when you leave. Duration of course: 6 weeks, five days a week and two hours a day. **VENUE: Maharajgunj FEE: Rs. 15,000**

INDIAN COOKING COURSE

FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

Participants will be able to cook the following items.

1. Butter Naan
2. Pumpkin Pudding
3. Methiko Parautha
4. Kerako Raita
5. Bhatara

DATE: 26 June 2011
TIME: 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm
VENUE: Maharajgunj
FEE: Rs. 1,200



THE FRENCH COOKING COURSE

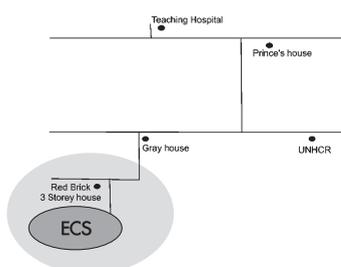
Participants will be able to cook the following items.

1. Fish raisins couscous
2. Green beans with cheese
3. Vegetable stew
4. French bread
5. Chicken mushroom casserole

DATE: 31st July 2011
TIME: 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm
VENUE: Maharajgunj
FEE: Rs. 1,200

ECS

Maharajgunj, Kathmandu
Phone: 442.6439/98510.07.900
services@ecs.com.np
Office Hour:
11:00am to 3:00pm
(Monday through Friday)



ECS Services offers staff employment services (cooks, watchmen, gardeners, housemaids and drivers); courses for household staff (cooking and health); Nepali language for expatriates and English language for household staff. We hope that these services provided by ECS help make your life more comfortable.

United World Trade Center

Fifth Floor:



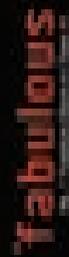
United Boulding

Fourth Floor:



EcoSolutions

Second Floor:



VOGUE



U & B

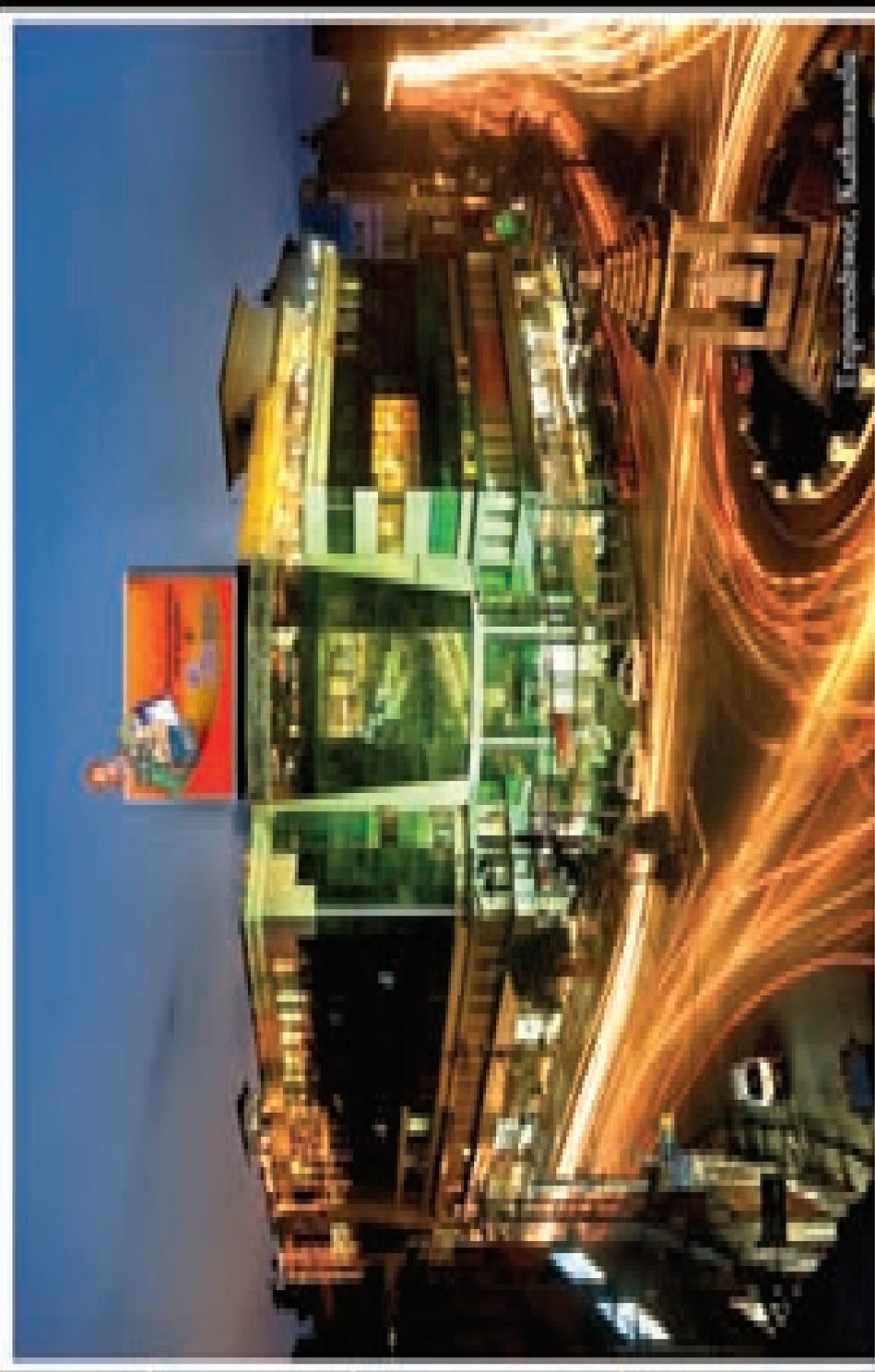
World

First Floor:



ROSARINI

JAMES PUNZIO



Ground Floor:

SŪMARI

HOT STATION *Style*

Beja & Blay *McKENNEDY*

Restaurant & Bars

NANGLO BAKERY CAFÉ

BAKERY CAFÉ NEW BANESHWOR

Tel: 4488528
Chicken sizzler Rs 250
Chicken mo mo Rs 120
Taglatella at sungi Rs 190

BAKERY CAFÉ PULCHOCK

Tel: 5010110
Buffet set lunch Rs 310
Chicken barbeque Rs 195

C: Mo mo Chicken Rs 130

BAKERY CAFÉ BOUD-DHA

Nepali lunch set Rs 240
Club sandwich Rs 225
Bandel tareko / sandeko Rs 205

BAKERY CAFÉ TEKU

Tel: 4265987

Margherita Pizza Rs 165
Chicken Burger Rs 145
Grilled fish with rice Rs 250

BAKERY CAFÉ TINDHARA

Fpaghetti alla bolognese Rs 190
Masala dosa Rs 105
Mutton Mo mo Rs 160

CHINESE CUISINE

THE GHANGRI CAFÉ

Pulchok Lalitpur
Tel: 5528703
Chicken Sumai Mo:Mo Rs.70
Cordeu Blue Mutton Rs.150

CAFÉ DU TEMPLE

Patan Durbar Square
Tel: 5527127
Spaghetti Bolognese Rs.175
Temple Special Chicken Rs. 225
Nepali Style Grilled Fish Rs. 250

ITALIAN RESTAURANT OLIVE GARDEN

Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat
Tel: 441818
Italian Cuisine
Gourmet Trout Rs. 800
Dinner 6:30pm onwards

FIRE AND ICE

Pizzeria
Thamel,
Tel: 4250210
Pizza's Spaghetti
Ice Creams

BODERLINE CAFÉ AND BAR

United World Trade Centre
Tripureshor, Tel: 4117010
Chicken Ala Kiev Rs. 180
Garlic Chicken W/ Chips Rs. 170
BBQ Chicken Pizza Rs. 220

THAI CUISINE

YING YANG RESTAURANT

Thamel, 4701510
Prawn Tempura-Rs 595
Chicken Satay- Rs 385

THIRD EYE RESTAURANT

Thamel, 4260289
Wrapped Prawn- Rs 595

Potato Cush Bara with
Peanut sauce -Rs 145

JAPANESE AND KOREAN CUISINE

KOTO RESTAURANT

Durbar Marg
Sakeyaki Rs. 290
Donburi Rs. 310
Tempura Rs. 260

EZER BOOK CAFÉ

Sanepa
Tel: 5546578
Katsu Don Rs. 260
Cutlet Rs. 260
Bulgogi Rs. 250

FRENCH CUISINE

COURTYARD RESTAURANT

Kamaladi
Tel: 4253056
Signature Cuisines
Roasted Chicken Rs. 295 ++
Grilled Fish Rs. 280++
Chicken Steak Rs. 270++
Half & Half Pizza Rs. 350++
Spagetti With Black Olive & Crapers Rs. 240++

DELICES DE FRANCE RESTAURANT

Thamel
Tel.4260326
Chicken Sandeko
Salad: Rs 290/-
Salmon with cream & Wine Sauce: Rs 760/-
Mediterranean Platter: Rs 580

CONTINENTAL CUISINE

CHAPTER 9

Pulchowk
Tel: 5525979
Woo Rs. 100 - Rs. 150

Paneer Chatpata Rs. 225
Murgh Boti Kabab Rs. 410

TFC

Radisson Hotel
Lazimpat, Tel: 4411818
Congi Lamb Rs. 600
Seasame Chicken Rs 500
Fillet Mignon Rs. 550

CAFÉ OLLA

RESTAURANT & BAR

Kantipath, Jamal
Tel:4232673
Golden Fried Prawn: Rs.320
Sea Food
Pizza: Rs.200
Shring Chicken: Rs.125

THE FACTORY RESTAURANT & BAR

Thamel
Tel: 4701185, 4701187
Chilled Gazpacho Rs. 150
Cottage Cheese Steak w/Ratatouille Rs.320
Fried ice-cream Rs.220

CHEZ CAROLINE RESTAURANT

Mediterranean and French food
Babar Mahal Revisited
Tel: 4263070 / 4264187
Soup of the day Rps 205
Pepper steak, french fries, salad Rps.700
Lemon tart Rps. 225

CAFÉ DE PATAN

Patan Mangalbazor
Tel: 5537599



BlueBird Food Court

Tel: 4228833, Ext. no. 4476
Newari Samay
With Chicken Rs.175
Nepali Thali Rs. 190
With Buff Rs.150

COURTYARD RESTAURANT

Kamaladi
Tel: 4253056
Roasted Chicken Rs.195
Chicken Steak Rs.190
Mix Pizza Rs.220

RISE & BOWL RESTAURANT

Tripureshor
Tel: 4251678
Hakka Prawn Rs.550
Jambo Prawn Special sauce Rs.950

JALAN JALAN

Tel: 5544872
Keweb Cut Chicken Rs.390
Jalan Praion & Bacon Rs.550
Pork House Stake Rs.490

WALTER'S RESTAURANT AND BAR

(Continental Gourmet)
BabarMahal Revisited
Tel: 4253337
Fried Salmon With Cumin Rs. 850
Sea Food
Platter Rs. 950
Creper A La Goat
Cheese Rs. 550

OR2K

Thamel
Tel: 4422097
Mint Lemonade Rs. 70
Stuffed Vegetable Combination Rs. 290
OR2K Combo Platter Rs. 310
Beautiful Antipasti Platter Rs. 180

STATION BBQ

Jhamsikhel 552208
Shredded pork with spring onion-500
Pork Chop-450
Burrito-350
Spicy whole Fish-700

NEPALI AND NEWARI CUISINE

BHUMI RESTRO LOUNGE

Lazimpat
Tel: 4412193
Mix Bara: Rs.90
Mix Chatamari: Rs.90
Choyela : Rs.100

BAITHAK

Babar Mahal Revisited
BabarMahal
Tel: 4267346
Feast Of Rana Maharaja
Normal Menu Rs. 1040
Royal Menu Rs. 1430
Delux Menu Rs. 1595

UTSAV

Durbarmarg
Tel: 4430170
Samay Baji Rs. 450
Chicken Bara Rs. 260
Chicken Chatamari Rs. 310

CAFÉ & BAKERY

Bu Keba The Organic Village

Bakhundole, Lalitpur
5524368
Buck wheat Pan Cake-0- Rs 280
Mediterrain Platter- Rs 480

HYATT REGENCY KATHMANDU

Taragaon, Boudha, Tel: 4491234

ROX RESTAURANT

Melting Chocolate: NRs 750
Smoked Trout & Salmon Cutlet: NRs 690
Prawn and Salmon Risotto: NRs 1050
Skewers: NRs 1150-1450

THE CAFE

Pepper Steak: NRs 800
Arabic Chicken Shishta-wouk: NRs 800
Japanese Pork Chop: NRs 800

PLAYGROUND OF THE BOLD & BEAUTIFUL



SOALTEE CROWNE PLAZA

Tahachal, Kathmandu, Nepal

INDIAN

Kakori
Tel: 4273999 Extn: 6555
Kakori Seekh Rs. 750
Raan E Awadh Rs. 1575
Doodhiya Paneer Rs. 575
Lahsoni Methi
Chilgoza Rs. 775

ITALIAN

Alfresco
Tel: 4273999 Ext. 6123
Norwegian Salmon
Rs. 1195
Australian Lamb Cutlet
Rs. 1195

Pizzas Rs. 395
Chocolate surprise Rs. 395

CAFÉ

Garden terrace
Tel: 4273999 Ext. 6152
Prawn and Salmon Fantasia Rs. 1295
Chicken Chutney
Roll Rs. 550
Grilled Churrasco Steak
Rs. 695
Bhujure Rs. 595

BAR

Rodi Bar
Tel: 4273999 Ext. 6224

Red label Rs. 450 per peg
Beer Rs. 350
Black Label
Rs. 1000 per peg

CHINESE

China Garden
Tel: 4273999 Ext. 6159
Corn Cream Rs. 400
Gin Chicken Rs. 575
Chicken Lung Fung Soup
Rs. 275
Soya Wine Chilli Pomfret
Rs. 1050
Sapo Chicken Rs. 600
Honey Pork Ribs Rs. 575

CAFÉ CHEENO

Krishna Galli
Tel: 2210423
Paneer Skewer Rs. 475
Salmon Fillet Rs. 875
Fish and Chips Rs. 475
Chicken Burger Rs. 250
Home made Veg/Non-Veg
lasagna Rs. 275/350

COFFEE SHOP

Durbar Marg
Tel: 4221711
Masala
Dosa Rs. 175
Chicken MoMo Rs. 250
Chicken Kathi
Roll Rs. 250

DHOKAIMA CAFE

Patan Dhoka
5522113
Grilled Australian Steak
Rs. 1099
Grilled Shilake Mushroom
Rs. 359
Blackened Norwegian
Salmon Rs. 999
Chicken Fricassee Rs. 399

KFC RESTAURANT

Durbarmarg, Tel: 4226287
Signature Cuisines
Hot & Crispy Chicken (Large
Bucket) Rs. 949 ++
Hot Wings (Large Bucket)
Rs. 949++
Zinger Meal Rs. 269++
Veggie Feast Meal Rs.
219++
Krushers Rs. 99 ++

MIKE'S BREAKFAST

Naxal, Tel: 4424303
Country Breakfast Rs.
435++
Mikes Special Breakfast Rs.
330++
Breakfast burrito Rs. 345++
Special Waffle Rs. 345++
Suevos Rancheros Rs.
330++

THIRD EYE BAKERY

Thamel, 4701510
Mango Mous Rs. 240
Almond Cake Rs. 170

VINTAGE CAFÉ & PUB

Durbarmarg, Tel: 4254831
Vintage Platter Rs. 400
Wines Rs. 250
Vintage Steak Rs. 350
Crispy Corn Rs. 200
Chicken Sandeko Rs. 250

BAR AND LOUNGES

ABSOLUTE BAR
Hotel Narayani Complex,
Pulchowk
Tel: 5521408
Bandel Tareko Rs. 300.00
Chicken Chowela Rs. 300.00
Fresh Garden Green Salad
Rs. 100.00

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4442615
Bacon Potato Roll- Rs 200
Chicken Wings with Hot Garlic
Sauce Rs 350

BRONCO BILLY RESTAURANT & BAR

Harihar bhawan, Pulchowk
Tel: 5526212
Chicken Quesidillas Rs. 300
Beef Chimichanga Rs. 350
Chicken Tacos Rs. 350
Mexican Steak Rs. 500
Grilled Salmon Rs. 700

BOURBON ROOM RESTRO BAR

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Tel: 4441703
Nachos Grande Rs. 400
Grilled Pork Chops Rs. 400
Hot and Spicy Pizza Rs. 320

CINNAMON GRILL LOUNGE

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Tel: 5521339
Chicken Rag Out Rs. 350
Grilled Pork Chop Rs. 425
Grilled Chicken Parmesan
Rs. 380

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Mutton Fokso Tareko-Rs 90
Chicken Egg Bara- Rs 110

EATEMPUS THE EATING LOUNGE AND BAR

Anamnagar, 4221037
All kinds of BBQ- Indian
Continental and Nepali
ET Hot Wings and Mo: Mo

THE CORNER BAR

Radisson Hotel
Lazimpat Tel: 4411818

THE AMBIENCE RESTAURANT & BAR

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galbazar, Tel: 5538980
Newari Set- Rs. 250
Roast Chicken- Rs. 185
Nepali Thali (veg)- Rs. 225

FOOD BAZAAR

Thamel, Kathmandu
Newari Khaja (Non veg)-
Rs. 120, Beef Sizzler- Rs. 200
Chicken Tikka Kabab-
Rs. 250

GARDEN COURT RESTAURANT AND BAR

Tukuchamarga Gairidhara,
Kathmandu 4429207
Chicken Houro as one of the
speciality
Rainbow Trout

HIMALAYAN JAVA

Thamel, Contact: 4253956
Mixed Pizza: Rs. 285
Chicken Pasta: Rs. 180
Chicken Fajita: Rs. 160

JATRA

Thamel, Tel: 4700043
Sukuti Ko Achar Rs. 110
Sandwich Steak &
Cheese Rs. 360
Tenderloin Steak Rs. 220

K-TOO BEER

Thamel,



Picasso- *Artiste de le Cuisine*
Jhamsikhel Lalitpur
01-5009076



Tel No: 4250440
Steaks 365-955, Mexican
Chicken Fagita 440,
Apple Momo 220

KILROYS OF KATHMANDU

Thapathali
Tel No: 4250440
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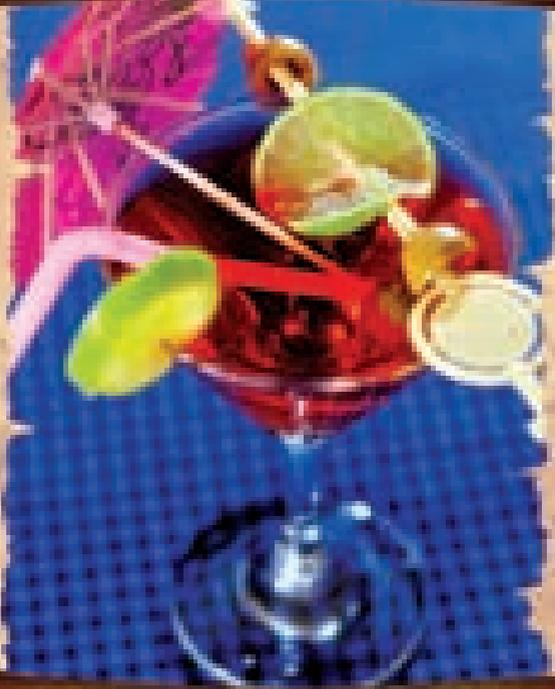






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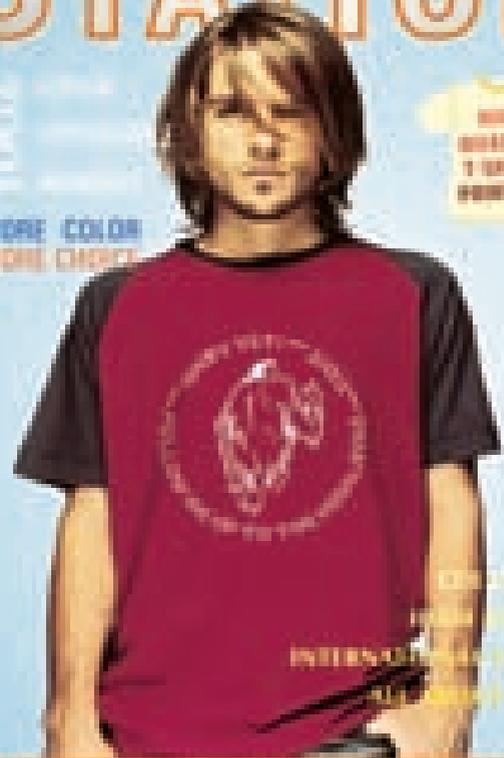


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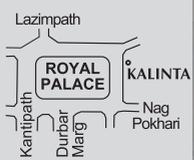
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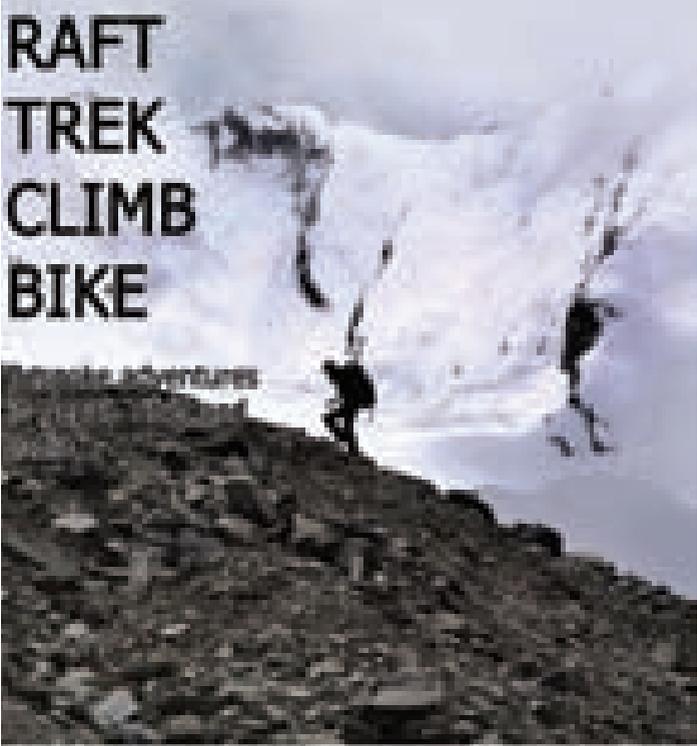
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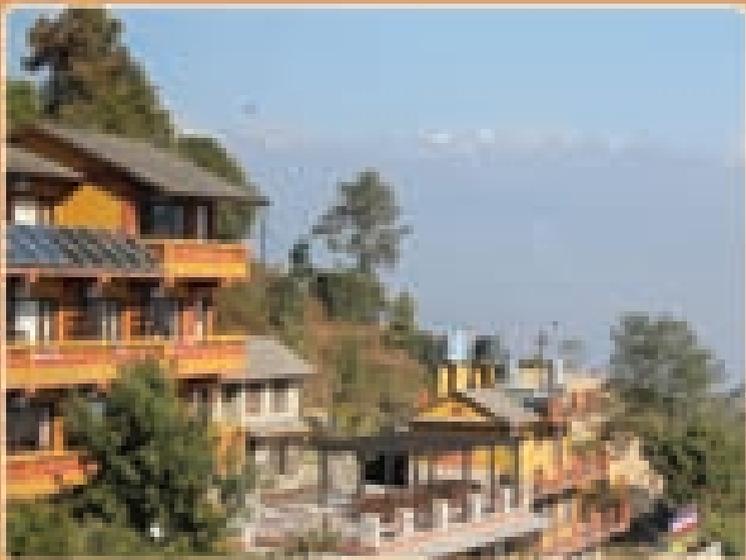
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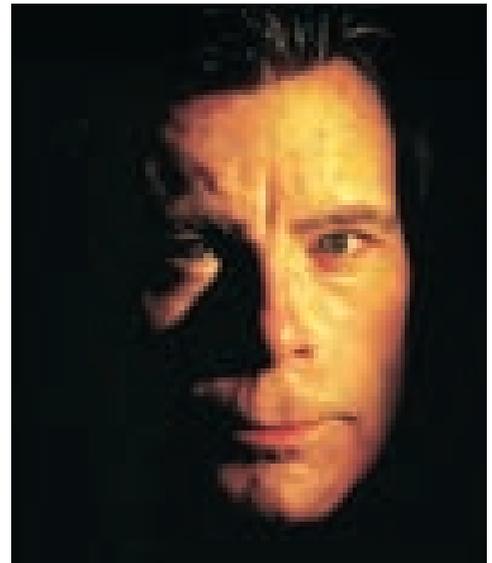
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Shattered and Made Whole

On the writing wisdom of novelist Stephen King

By DON MESSERSCHMIDT



Stephen King writes spooky thrillers, horror, and fantasy. His many books, short stories and screen plays enjoy a hugely popular following. King began writing novels in the 1970s and is still going strong, with one shattering interruption. His novels tend to have provocative titles that ring with macabre images derived from a vivid imagination (and your own worst nightmares): *The Shining*, *Rage*, *Night Shift*, *The Dead Zone*, *Dans e Macabre*, *Creepshow*, *Pet Sematary*, *Cycle of the Werewolf*, *It*, *Misery*, *Insomnia*, *Bag of Bones* and others.

One afternoon in June 1999, King was accidentally hit by a car while walking along a road absent-mindedly reading a book. In the hospital he was diagnosed with a collapsed lung, multiple fractures of one leg, and a broken hip. His doctors almost amputated the leg, but managed to save it with five operations in a period of 10 days. His hip was so badly shattered that the pain became nearly unbearable. The accident put a serious dent into his writing career. But not for long.

Some months earlier he had prepared the draft of a book about his craft. He called it *On Writing*, but he had put it aside unfinished. While recuperating from the accident, King went back to the book manuscript and whipped it into shape.

I may be biased, but of all of his writings I think King's *On Writing* is the best. I recommend it to all aspiring writers for its wisdom about writing, and to his avid fans for its autobiographical insights.

Here is a sampling of King's wisdom:

"Words create sentences; sentences create paragraphs; sometimes paragraphs quicken and begin to breathe. Imagine, if you like, Frankenstein's monster on its slab. Here comes lightning, not from the sky but from a humble paragraph of English words. Maybe it's the first really good paragraph you ever wrote, something so fragile and yet full of possibility that you are frightened. You feel as Victor Frankenstein must have when the dead conglomeration of sewn-together spare [body] parts suddenly opened its watery yellow eyes. *Oh my*

God, it's breathing, you realize. Maybe it's even thinking. What in hell's name do I do next?"

Did that paragraph hook and keep your attention by alluding to the Frankenstein monster? Why not? Stephen King likes horror and fantasy!

Near the middle of the book King posits two simple theses: One is that good writing consists of mastering the fundamentals – vocabulary, grammar, and the elements of style. The other is that while it's not possible to make a competent writer out of a bad one, it is possible – with hard work, dedication, and timely help – to make a good writer out of a merely competent one. So, if you are competent there's a chance that, with due diligence, you can become "good."

King also has a rule that I firmly believe in: "If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot. There's no way around these two things..., no shortcut." Since he is so successful he must be a good writer, so it's probably a good idea to advise merely competent writers who aspire to become good ones to read some of King's novels, too, to see how he does it.

In a Postscript entitled 'On Living', King reflects on the meaning of life (after his accident). Writing isn't about making money or getting famous, or a whole lot of other personal ambitions, he says:

"In the end, it's about enriching the lives of those who will read your work, and enriching your own life, as well. It's about getting up, getting well, and getting over. Getting happy, okay? Getting happy..."

"Writing is magic, as much the water of life as any other creative art. The water is free. So Drink."

■ *Good reading and writing!* ■

Don Messerschmidt is a contributing editor to ECS Nepal magazine. He may be contacted at don.editor@gmail.com.

Chinlancho

By ANIL CHITRAKAR



ECS Media

Kirtipur literally means the “city of glory”. At the highest point of the eastern end of the ancient city is the glorious monument of **Chinlancho Stupa**, historians tell us that it is perhaps the oldest monument in the “citadel” town. The whole complex is really beautiful and quite large and consists of the stupa at the top, a monastery (mahavihar) to the south and residential houses on all other sides. There are a number of smaller stupas at the four corners of the main stupa. Historians, local people and scholars all tell us that the foundation of the stupa goes back to the time of the visit by Mauryan Emperor Ashoka, which makes it about twenty three hundred years old.

Kirtipur, the “citadel” city, lies to the south west corner of the Kathmandu valley. This city has a history of being able to resist attacks from external forces and have never given up without a real fight. Even today, during major political upheavals, the country waits to see which side the people of Kirtipur will choose before predicting which side will win. In 1880 Ambrose Oldfield wrote, “Kirtipur in the early history of Nepal was the capital of a small independent principality, but was afterwards annexed to Patan”. The location and layout of Kirtipur even today makes it very strategic and could serve as the logical place to take the last stand. Oldfield goes on to say, “It stands in a commanding position upon the level crest of one of the low rounded hills and overlooks the city of Kathmandu to the north and that of Patan towards the east....Kirtipur has never been

an extensive city, but its almost impregnable position gave it an importance disproportioned to its size”.

From the base of Kirtipur, as one climbs up the narrow lanes and stone steps to the high point of the Chinlancho Stupa, one gets a sense that the entire design and layout of the town was done like a maze or labyrinth that was meant to fool the enemy. On the way up to the Chinlancho Stupa, we will see the deepest well, small and large monuments, water tanks, and the beautiful houses with unique features and beautifully carved struts and windows.

The high wall and gates that you can see at the western end of the town gives you a real sense of control and safety. It is little wonder that the people of Kirtipur have earned a name for themselves as “glorious”. These are certainly not the ones to give up very easily. Try and visualize Kirtipur with the monuments on top, the residences on the slopes, the wall and gates, the forest all round and then the farms and fields extending to the far ends of the Kathmandu valley. We must all work to preserve this place.

For the visitor today, there are a few restaurants and eating places that have come up. What Kirtipur needs at this point in time are visitors who will help instill a sense of pride in the local heritage and help create a special identity for the way of life in Kirtipur. The city has master builders who have been employed all over the valley and beyond to build and restore temples and homes for centuries. They can and will restore Kirtipur to its old glory in no time. ■



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