

## With erratic rain and snowfall, Humla struggles to adapt to a changing climate

MARISA TAYLOR

HUMLA, JAN 4

In the warmth of the December sun, little children run around dusty alleys while elderly women, scarlet-shawled and bedecked in heavy brass ornaments, lazily smoke out of wooden chillums. The school is closed for the winter, so the children get to stay home for two months, and the elderly women have little else to do but bask in the sun while it is still warm outside. The water has not frozen yet, so the younger women wash clothes and bathe at the village communal tap. Early in the morning, tendrils of smoke rise from small stone-and-mud houses.

Winters in Simkot never saw this much sun just a decade ago. In fact, residents say that only a few years ago, snow would've completely blanketed the hills by December, making movement impossible—let alone playing outside or enjoying the sun.

"When I was a boy, we spent all our winters indoors, with our cattle locked in their sheds. We haven't seen that kind of snow in a long, long time here," says 60-year-old Choyang, who runs a small shop in Simkot, right next to the airport—the only way to get to Humla, the country's last district that has yet to be connected to the national road system.

"A few decades ago, during this time of year, there would be six to seven feet of snow. Now, we hardly see a foot or two," he says.

The ramifications of global temperature rise are being felt the world



On the way to Dandaphaya, local women crush walnuts in a pestle. Walnuts are one of the few crops that grow in Humla's arid climate.

PHOTO: LAXMI PRASAD NGAKHUSI/UNDP

over, but particularly in the fragile mountain ecosystems of countries like Nepal. In Humla, which is already struggling with food scarcity, extreme poverty and a lack of basic amenities, weather anomalies are slowly becoming a reality that cannot be ignored.

Many of the district's residents are subsistence farmers, and a slight change in climate patterns could push entire villages deeper into poverty, changing the way they live, eat and survive.

"Climate vulnerability is directly aligned with poverty and development," says Vijaya P Singh, assistant country director of the environment unit at the UNDP.

"The changes in climate can be the same all over the world, but the capacity to respond is not."

When it comes to natural disasters, Nepal is geographically vulnerable—evident as recently as 2015 with the devastating earthquakes. The World Bank classifies Nepal as one of the global 'hotspots' for natural disasters.

The Tarai is prone to flash floods induced by incessant rainfall; the hills, where the treelines are receding, are susceptible to landslides; and the Himalayas are extremely sensitive to climate change.

In these mountains, the mean temperature is higher than the global average—according to a report by ICIIMOD, from 1951 to 2010, the global average temperature rise was 0.6 degrees Celsius, but it was 1.5 degrees Celsius in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region. Here, climate-induced hazards are more likely to occur than anywhere else in the country.

&gt;&gt; CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

## Panel fails to endorse subcommittee report for want of revision

TIKA R PRADHAN

KATHMANDU, JAN 4

Report on aircraft procurement to be endorsed after correcting three major issues

recommended against incumbent Tourism Minister Rabindra Adhikari, and former ministers Jevan Bahadur Shahi and Jitendra Dev.

National Communist Party (NCP) lawmaker Ale said the panel had inquired all those indicted except for secretaries Rai and Shankar Adhikari. He admitted that their failure to quiz Rai and Adhikari was a mistake.

Following widespread criticisms of financial irregularities in purchasing the two Airbus A330 jets, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) had formed a subcommittee headed by Nepali Congress MP Rajan KC to investigate the aircraft purchase deal.

The KC report has held 34 incumbent and former government officials responsible in one of the largest corruption scandals in the country's history.

&gt;&gt; CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

### Rakhine rebels kill 13 Myanmar police in raids

**YANGON:** Thirteen Myanmar police officers were killed in raids on Friday by ethnic Rakhine rebels, the army said, in a brazen, co-ordinated attack on the country's Independence Day which adds a dangerous new dimension to conflict in the restive western state. Rakhine has seen a surge in violence in recent weeks between rebels from the Arakan Army—who are seeking greater autonomy for their ethnic Rakhine group—and security forces, displacing thousands. (Reuters)

With lawmakers from the ruling and opposition parties sharply divided over the report on wide-body aircraft procurement by the Nepal Airlines Corporation, the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee failed to endorse it on Friday.

Saying that the subcommittee's report was erroneous, ruling party lawmakers demanded revision to the report while those from the opposition Nepali Congress stood for its endorsement without major changes.

After a majority of the committee members stood for revision, the report will be presented at the next meeting scheduled for Monday with some changes.

Sources at the PAC said Home Secretary Prem Kumar Rai, who has been named in

the report for immediate suspension, will be removed from the list of officials recommended for action.

Prem Ale, one of the subcommittee members, clarified that they had named Rai based on the papers they had access to which said Rai had initiated the process to purchase old aircraft for the Airlines but it was found later that he had formed a subcommittee to buy new aircraft.

There will be separate paragraphs implicating NAC Managing Director Sugat Ratna Kansakar as the kingpin of the procurement scheme.

Similar actions would be

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Regency Watch

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Ram Bahadur Bomjan with his disciples.

POST FILE PHOTO

ed searching for their loved ones after Setopati published a series of reports on Bomjan, who is accused of sexually exploiting his female followers and using violence to intimidate those who spoke against him. When the families started searching for the lost ones, they couldn't find them in any of Bomjan's ashrams.

Bomjan has ashrams in Bara, Sarlahi, Sindhupalchok and Sindhuli districts. The ashram in Bara was sponsored by the Sushil Koirala-led government in 2014.

The families had previously believed that their dear ones were following the practice of Bomjan's ashram where the nun meditates in a cave for three years, three months and three days without contacting anyone.

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started and there are a lot of new things to come," added SP Marasini.

According to Nepal Police, Bomjan and his ashrams are being watched closely. Bomjan is said to have been in his Sindhuli ashram recently. The investigation has just

Families of the three start-

## Police search Bomjan's ashram

■ Say nothing suspicious found during raid ■ Investigation to continue

ANISH TIWARI IN SINDHUPALCHOK &  
NAYAK PAUDEL IN KATHMANDU

JAN 4

Police searched one ashram of the controversial ascetic Ram Bahadur Bomjan in the forest of Indrawati Rural Municipality, Sindhupalchok, on Friday, following complaints by the relatives of people who have been missing from his shelter for years.

The District Police Office inspected the ashram on Thursday with permission from the District Court but said nothing suspicious was found. "We didn't find any evidence that could provide us a lead in the case," Sindhupalchok Police chief SP Mukunda Marasini told the Post. "But it doesn't mean we won't find anything later. The investigation has just

started and there are a lot of new things to come," added SP Marasini.

According to Nepal Police, Bomjan and his ashrams are being watched closely. Bomjan is said to have been in his Sindhuli ashram recently. The investigation has just

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## NEWS DIGEST

**Four fall ill after wild bees sting**

**MAHOTTARI:** Four people have fallen ill after wild bees stung them at Jaleshwor Municipality-8 in Mahottari district on Thursday evening. Salatiyadevi Saha, 45, Mohan Saha, 40, Ahmed Ansari, 14 and Sagir Rain, 13, of Bajrakhari are receiving treatment at the District Hospital in Janakpur. They had gone to a field to collect grass when the bees stung them, locals said. (RSS)

**Elderly held on rape charge**

**CHITWAN:** Police arrested a 75-year-old man on charge of raping a 15-year-old girl in Ratnagar, Chitwan, on Friday. Sukbir Tamang, who is also a witch doctor, raped the minor on the pretext of treating her, said Deputy Superintendent of Police Dayanidhi Gyawali. Tamang was arrested based on a complaint lodged by the victim, police said. (RSS)

**Police launch drive against cyber crime**

**Baitadi:** The District Police Office has started a campaign in Baitadi against increasing cases of cyber crime. Police are running classes for students at 24 secondary schools while plans are afoot to hold classes at all the schools in the district. Inspector Gindra Bogati said they have been holding classes at schools on cyber crime as part of the Police-Community Partnership Programme. Police have also been conducting public awareness sessions on various topics. According to police, the programme was conducted at schools as students are a good medium to spread information in society. The topics of discussion include cyber crime and its impact, secured use of social sites and influence of narcotic drugs. (RSS)

## WEATHER WATCH

**FORECAST:** Partly to generally cloudy in the western region and partly cloudy in the rest of the country.

PLACES	MAX TEMP (°C)	MIN TEMP (°C)	RAINFALL (MM)
Dipal	22.5	2.0	0.0
Dadeldhura	14.5	1.9	0.0
Dhangadi	20.7	5.2	0.0
Birendranagar	21.3	2.0	0.0
Nepalganj	24.0	5.6	0.0
Jumla	14.0	7.0	0.0
Dang	20.6	4.2	0.0
Pokhara	19.0	5.0	0.0
Bhairahawa	23.1	7.4	0.0
Simara	24.4	5.5	0.0
Kathmandu	16.5	1.1	0.0
Okhaldhunga	15.0	3.3	0.0
Taplejung	14.5	2.2	0.0
Dhankuta	17.6	5.3	0.0
Biratnagar	24.0	6.0	0.0
Jomsom	8.0	-4.5	0.0
Dharan	23.4	11.4	0.0

Source: Meteorological Forecasting Division, Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, Kathmandu

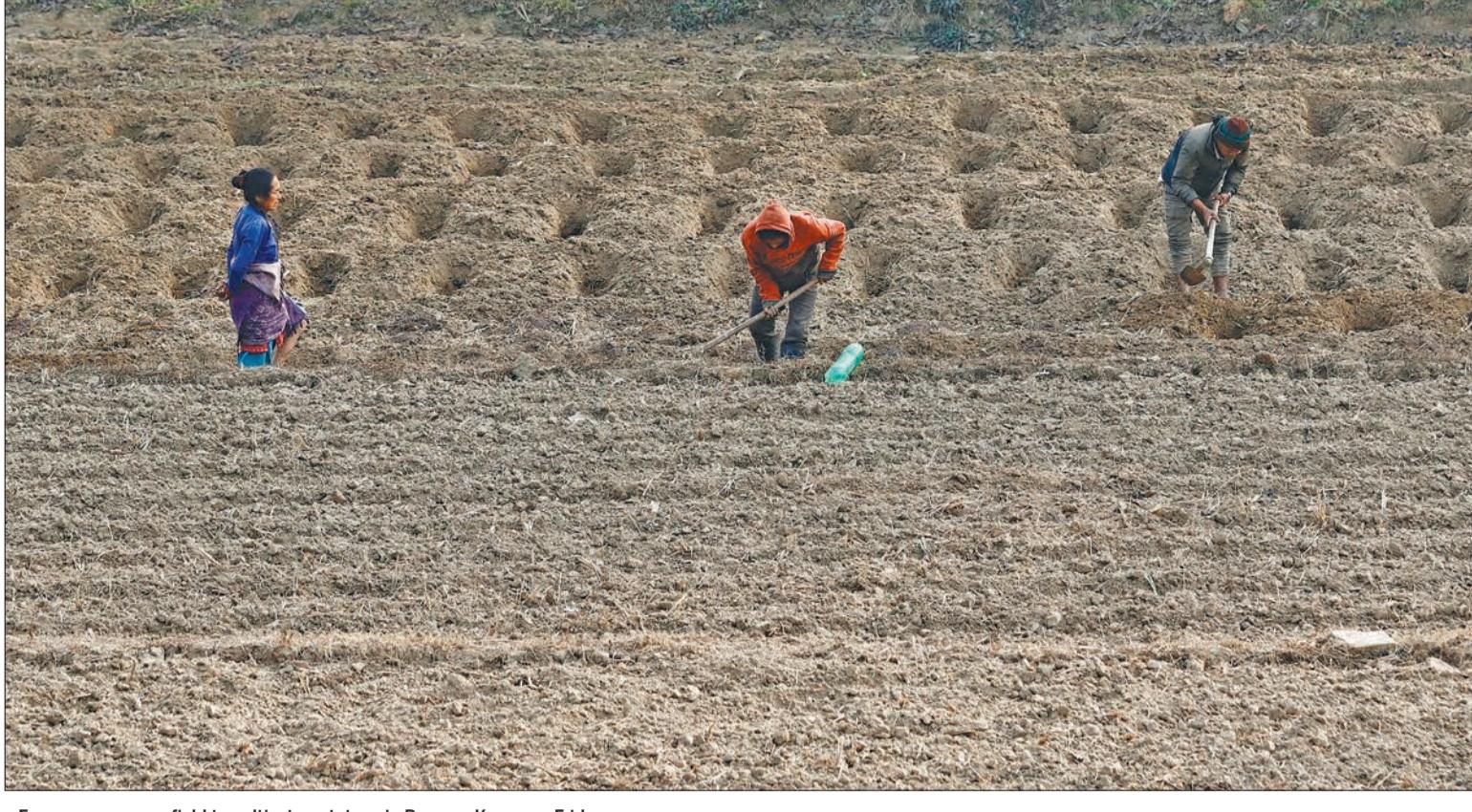
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Farmers prepare a field to cultivate potatoes in Banepa, Kavre, on Friday.

POST PHOTO: KESHAV THAPA

# Criminal Code ‘ineffective’ to end Chhaupadi practice

**BINOD GHIMIRE**

KATHMANDU, JAN 4

Despite the Civil and Criminal Code banning the practice of Chhaupadi, many women, particularly in western Nepal, continue to be forced outside their homes during their periods. Local administration and governments take no effective measures to enforce the law and raise awareness on the issue.

A preliminary report on the study of Chhaupadi practice in Dailekh and Achham districts by the National Human

Rights Commission made public on Friday states that even the government officials and the people holding public positions practice Chhaupadi to date, which has discouraged the activists and the locals from banishing the practice themselves. Officials involved in the study said political leaders do not raise their voice against the continuity of the practice as they fear that they might lose their vote banks.

The clause 168 (3) of the criminal code has a provision that anyone compelling a woman to live in the shed will

have to serve three months of jail term in addition to Rs 3,000 in fine. The penalty is even higher for those holding the public position. However, five months after the criminal code came into effect, the local police has yet to receive a single case against the offenders, the report states.

“Women and girls are reluctant to complain against their own family,” said Yubraj Subedi, a member of the study panel. He said at least 13 women from different parts of western Nepal have lost their lives while observing

Chhaupadi since 2005, the year the Supreme Court issued a verdict against the evil practice. Among them, four were found dead in Dailekh and Achham, the districts where the study was conducted, in the last two years. They died of hypothermia and snakebite in their sheds, the report states.

The apex court on May 2, 2005 had ordered the ban of Chhaupadi and asked the government to formulate a law that criminalises the practice. Only in August 2017 did the government formulate the law

that came into effect from August 18, 2018.

A member of the study team told the Post that the local police is reluctant to file cases against the practice due to a lack of public support. “The police will not be proactive without the cooperation from the society,” he said.

However, Mohna Ansari, member of the rights commission, said that although the older generation is adamant in their belief, the younger generation is gradually coming forward to bring about a change.

# Chitwan Park rhino delivers baby in human settlement

**RAMESH KUMAR PAUDEL**

CHITWAN, JAN 4

It's not an unusual sight to see rhinoceros roaming the streets of Chitwan district as the Chitwan National Park (CNP) is home to a majority of Nepal's endangered one-horned species.

However, locals were left stunned on Friday morning when they saw a rhino with a new born calf in Bahraghare area of the district.

“The rhino had entered the settlement alone on Thursday evening. But we saw it coming out of the bush with a newly delivered calf at around 8 on Friday morning,” said Sharaswoti Shrestha, a resident of Bahraghare. They suspected that the rhino might have given birth to the baby near the settlement.

However, conservationists said the rhino along with its newborn baby could be quite aggressive. Naresh Subedi, senior officer at the National Trust for Nature Conservation, suggested the local people to



POST PHOTO: RAMESH KUMAR PAUDEL

A rhino with her new born calf at Bahraghare in Chitwan on Friday.

be cautious of a possible attack from the mother rhino. According to the locals, the forest does not have enough grass required for the rhinos so they enter the human settlements in search of food.

Rhino's movement in the human settlements from Belchowk to Magalpur has increased significantly this year.

The local people have been demanding the CNP authorities to take necessary steps to stop rhinoceros from entering the settlements. Around 5-7 rhinoceros from the park regularly come to the village in search of food, they claimed.

According to the CNP, there are around seven-eight rhinos that frequently enter the settlements.

“Locals complain that the rhinos enter the settlements and destroy their crops. We are initiating efforts to prevent the rhinos from entering human settlements in the future,” said Bed Kumar Dhakal, chief conservation officer at the CNP. As per the latest census, there are 645 rhinos in the country, of which 605 are from the CNP alone.

The working guidelines, approved by a meeting of the executive committee of the National Reconstruction Authority, on Friday stated that damaged gumbas, bihars and stupas damaged in the devastating earthquakes of 2015.

The work guidelines, approved by the relatives of the lost ones in Kathmandu, Prem Dorje Bal Lama of Nepal Ahinshabadi Baudha Dharma Biswasanti Chakra Sangha Nepal, a Buddhist organisation which previously aided Bomjan, revealed that Bomjan used to beat up his disciples calling them CID agents.

The families had requested the government to inspect the ashrams of Bomjan and find the missing ones—dead or alive. “Police will take action against the guilty. The investigation has started and will not end without reaching a conclusion,” Central Police Spokesperson SSP Uttam Raj Subedi told the Post.

As the investigation is into a high-profile person, the police headquarters has also pledged help to the district police, which leads the probe.

“We are ready to send all the required resources and professionals to facilitate the investigation if the district police asks for,” added SSP Subedi.

# Government groups local federal units into four categories

**RASTRIYA SAMACHAR SAMITI**

KATHMANDU, JAN 4

The government has classified the country's 753 local units into four grades.

According to the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration, the local units were classified on the basis of infrastructure and social development status. Grade 'A' signifies most remote areas which includes 162 local units; Grade 'B' is remote areas with 218 local units; Grade 'C' refers to fairly accessible areas with 275 local units; and Grade 'D' is defined as easily accessible areas that has 98 local units.

According to Ministry Spokesperson Suresh Adhikari, the new classification would help in the determination of development priorities at the local level and in the management of employees deposited there.

The Ministry has called on the local units to lodge a complaint within the next seven days if they are not satisfied with the classification.

# General convention on time, says Deuba

**POST REPORT**

MORANG, JAN 4

Nepali Congress (NC) President Sher Bahadur Deuba has said the party's upcoming general convention will be held on time.

Talking to reporters in Biratnagar on Friday, the NC chief asserted that the party's conclave would be held on time.

Deuba's gave such remarks about the convention at a time when some of his party leaders have been calling for an early national conference. The NC's next general convention is due in March 2020.

In another context, Deuba claimed that the government failed to rule the country and maintain peace and order. He lambasted the government for its failure to arrest the murderer of Nirmala Pant.

Responding to the controversial procurement of two wide-body Airbus planes, Deuba said that the government could also probe into the case.

“The parliamentary committee cannot take action, it just recommends into the matter,” he added.

The government on Thursday formed a three-member high-level commission to investigate the procurement after subcommittee of Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee said that Rs 4.35 billion was siphoned from state coffers to purchase the planes.

# NRA passes guidelines for rebuilding gumbas

**SANJAYA LAMA**

KATHMANDU, JAN 4

The National Reconstruction Authority has endorsed the work guidelines related to the renovation, reconstruction and protection of gumbas, bihars and stupas damaged in the devastating earthquakes of 2015.

The work guidelines further stated that the gumbas, bihars and stupas, which have plinth area covering less than 2,000 square feet and are less than a 100 years old, will be rebuilt through concerned consumer committees.

According to the work guidelines, approved by a meeting of the executive committee of the National Reconstruction Authority, on Friday, standardised guidelines for the reconstruction work that are less than a 100 years old and have less than 2,000 square feet.

The consumer committee under the Gumba, Bihar and Stupa Management Committee should arrange the remaining 50 percent budget. Around 1,320 gumbas were damaged in the earthquake. Among them, 895 gumbas need to be reconstructed and 402 gumbas should be renovated.

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As the investigation is into a high-profile person, the police headquarters has also pledged help to the district police, which leads the probe.

“We are ready to send all the required resources and professionals to facilitate the investigation if the district police asks for,” added SSP Subedi.

Lawmakers including Amam Lal Modi, Surya Pathak, Lekhraj Bhatta and Hridayesh Tripathi were for correcting the report claiming that the principle of natural justice required the changes. They accused that the report was biased in recommending more action against Minister Adhikari than his predecessors.

NC lawmakers including former minister Minendra Rijal pressed for endorsing the report on Friday by correcting the grammatical errors in it. “Our duty is to make recommendations and we are not experts to determine the weight of every individual's fault,” Rijal said.

Rijal argued that the PAC should forward the report to the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority. He criticised the government for forming the commission to enquire about the procurement process.

If the government forms such commission, why do we need bodies like the PAC and the CIAA,” Rijal said.

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## Scenic fields



An aerial view of terraced fields at a village in Kavre district. Farmers in the district are busy planting winter crops these days.

POST PHOTO: PRAKASH CHANDRA TIMILSENA

# UN to enlist refugees who want to return

**ANIL GIRI**  
KATHMANDU, JAN 4

After Nepal rejected to locally integrate the Bhutanese refugees, the UN refugee agency is preparing to collect data of those refugees who want to be repatriated back to their country.

The Kathmandu-based United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is set to start the data collection in two refugee camps in eastern Nepal from the second week of January, officials said.

After collecting the data, the UNHCR will send it to Geneva, the headquarters of the UN refugee agency to put pressure on both Nepali and Bhutanese governments to start a formal dialogue for refugee repatriation. Another reason is to conduct advocacy and lobby for voluntary repa-



Bhutanese refugees rally demanding repatriation, in eastern Nepal.

POST FILE PHOTO

tion of the refugee.

Seventeen rounds of ministerial-level talks between Nepal and Bhutan in the past have failed to resolve the refugee crisis, with Bhutan outrightly refusing to take back the Nepali speaking Bhutanese who had been forced out of the country in early 1990s.

While more than 110,000

Nepal is also faces the imminent challenge of feeding the refugees as World Food Programs has cut the food aid for the Bhutanese refugees from December, 2018.

The government officials said after the third-country settlement programme began in 2008, the UN refugee agency had assured the Nepal government to support and pursue Nepal's bid and interest for repartition of the refugees and put pressure on Bhutanese government. The latest initiative of the UNHCR is being seen as part of that assurance.

More than 3,000 refugees living in two refugee camps have expressed their interest to return to Bhutan during a recent general survey. There are three separate groups inside two refugee camps in Jhapa and Morang, actively pursuing for repartition.

## MPS CRITICISE GOVERNMENT FOR FAILING TO DELIVER

**RASTRIYA SAMACHAR SAMITI**  
KATHMANDU, JAN 4

The delay in the progress of Postal Highway Project, unresolved Nirmala Pant rape and murder case and the embezzlement scandal surrounding the purchase of two wide-body aircraft were among the issues that figured on Friday's Upper House meeting.

The MPs expressed concern over the delay and the lack of quality workmanship in the construction of the Postal Highway, which is considered the lifeline of the Tarai.

They pointed out the government's failure to monitor the project to ensure the quality and steady work progress.

MP Chakra Prasad Snehi hit out at the government for failing to pay attention towards several problems seen in the project. He also blamed the contractor for negligence in executing the project effectively.

MP Tara Devi Bhatta complained about the failure of the government to solve the Nirmala Pant murder case.

The 13-year-old from Kanchanpur was raped and murdered on July 26.

Nearly six months after her death, the authorities are yet to identify the perpetrators in the crime.

MP Bindu Devi Rana and MP Ramesh Yadav demanded that the government take action against those involved in the embezzlement of billions of rupees while purchasing two Airbus A330 jets.

MP Singh Bahadur BK urged the government to provide proper relief to the victims of Jure landslide in Sindhupalchok district.

The government has announced to provide relief grants on part with the survivors of the 2015 Gorkha earthquake. MP BK said the amount was not sufficient as the families hit by the Jure landslide had also suffered devastation from the earthquake.

# Government signs deal with official trade union

**PRITHVI MAN SHRESTHA**  
KATHMANDU, JAN 4

Despite reservation from the Nepali Congress-affiliated trade union, the government and the Official Trade Union (OTU) signed a nine-point agreement on Thursday to resolve the standoff regarding civil servant adjustment plan.

The deal has possibly paved the way for smooth adjustment of government staff at all three layers of the government.

According to the agreement, the government has assured to address the demands concerning civil servants' career growth while the OTU has pledged to assist the adjustment process by setting up a help desk.

Earlier, the civil servants were protesting against the adjustment plan after the Civil Servant Adjustment Ordinance, endorsed by the House of Representatives on Tuesday, failed to include a provision on career growth as they had desired.

"We will draft the Federal Civil Service Bill by accommodating the agreement reached between the two sides," Adhikari said.

"We will send the draft of the bill to the Cabinet within a few days."

As per the agreement, the government will allow the civil servants adjusted at the provincial and local levels to join to the federal agencies through promotion.

The proposed bill will also ensure conditions and facilities enjoyed by the civil servants in line with the current Civil Service Act and include a provision in the bill to guarantee that the salary, allowance, retirement benefits, pension, family support, medical treatment, among other facilities, enjoyed by the civil servants are not deducted upon their transfer.

The existing seniority of the civil servants will not be affected even after they are adjusted at the provincial and local levels, the agreement states.

Similarly, the necessary legal provisions will be made for the promotion of non-gazetted staff adjusted in three layers of government.

The government side has also agreed to incorporate the issues of education, health and employees' welfare fund in the Federal Civil Service Act. It has also agreed to recommend the provincial and local governments to introduce laws for transfer of civil servants to the areas where they have permanent address after certain years.

The government has also agreed to ensure the representation of the OTU while drafting of policies and laws related to staff adjustment.

OTU Vice-president Bholu Pokhrel said the government agreed to address the key demands of the civil servants through Federal Civil Service Act.

"A joint team from both sides will discuss the draft of the Federal Civil Service Bill to ensure that it is compatible with the agreement," he said.

## Experts call for actions on the ground to deal with climate change

**CHANDAN KUMAR MANDAL**  
KATHMANDU, JAN 4

Climate change experts have urged the government to swing into action and address and implement adaptation plans rather than give hollow commitments on paper.

In an event organised in Kathmandu, on Friday, experts discussed the outcomes of the recently concluded Conference of the Parties (COP 24). They also discussed Nepal's plan of action in fighting the global problem, and stressed that only committing to the Paris Accord is not enough to address climate change problems.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari had participated at the COP24 in which countries had agreed on a 'rulebook' for implementing the 2015 Paris Agreement. The president attending and addressing the global event was seen as a strong political message. However, experts have pointed out that the government's dedication towards mitigation



President Bhandari addresses an environment conference held in Kathmandu recently.

RSS

and adaptation of climate change should reflect in actions not merely in speeches and policies. "Our actions are going against our policies. We are importing fossil fuels and also coal fire generated electricity from India, when we should be using our hydro-power electricity," said Dipak Gyawali, an academician of the Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST).

In defence, Maheshwar Dhakal, Chief of Climate Change Management Division under the Ministry of Forest and Environment, said that the government's failure to share its initiatives has resulted in people believing that it is not doing enough.

"We need to showcase our efforts to the outside world through regular reporting. While we can do minimal for mitigation, the country can do significant work through agriculture, forestry and other sectors for adaptation," Dhakal added. He added that we can either play the victim card and blame the developed world for climate change or take leadership and make changes.

## NEWS DIGEST

### 3 held with 4kg contraband gold

**DHADING:** Police arrested three persons in possession of 4kg smuggled gold in Gajuri, Dhading, on Thursday night. The fourth suspect is at large. Police said Sanjit Waiwa, 27, of Rasuwa and Surendra Tamang, 22, and Bikash Tamang of Nuwakot were arrested with the gold. (PR)

### Unknown group attacks NAC chief Kansakar

**KATHMANDU:** A group of unidentified persons smeared black soot on the face of Sugat Ratna Kansakar, managing director of Nepal Airlines Corporation, on Friday. It is suspected that the attackers belonged to the CPN (Revolutionary Maoist). Though the party did not own up the responsibility for the incident, its leader CP Gajurel said that his party supported the group's action. Kansakar is accused of his involvement in the controversial purchase deal of two aircraft. (PR)



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## Astral Reflections


**ARIES** [March 21-April 19]

Your understanding will blossom into a new, more accepting, loving view of society and the world, Aries. This week will bring far travel, higher education, publishing/media ventures, cultural and philosophical interests, and legal involvements, all with a big spoonful of good luck! So pick one or two, and charge ahead. You might fall in love with someone who would make a good wedding partner. Your career and social standing are under pressure. Circumstances insist that you work hard, but when it's time for reward everyone falls silent.


**TAURUS** [April 20-May 20]

A bright new world is opening up. During this time, you'll be more nervous or stressed than usual, yet also more friendly and social, and more ambitious. The most important 7 years of your career progress begins now. The more social you are, the higher you'll climb. A quirky person can be instrumental: befriend nerds and geniuses! Financially, you face huge good luck. Research, then follow your intuition. If you're unemployed and relatively broke, invest in something to get to work.


**GEMINI** [May 21-June 20]

If single, you could meet one you will marry. Business, public dealings, family relocation, partnerships and negotiations favour you all year. If married adventure awaits you in distant places. Reach out, make contact in almost any sphere of life, others will respond with friendly cheerfulness, and might grant you something crucial to your success. However, be cautious with investments, life style changes, medical procedures, psychiatry, therapy, crime, unsavoury associations, lust and extra-marital temptations, secrets and "power corridors".


**CANCER** [June 21-July 22]

There is a tremendous amount of work to be done and a tremendous amount of significance in relationships, especially business partnerships and love bonds. This week nudges you to deeply ponder your bonds and loyalties, what has been and what you want to be. Generally, it's not a good week to commit yourself to a major relationship. Avoid anything extra-marital. Bosses are critical and impatient but also are willing to promote you. Be eager, ambitious and not angry. Tuesday may shunt you into management spheres and closed-door meetings.


**LEO** [July 23-August 22]

Romance in some form MUST visit you this week, Leo. If single, you could fall in love with a cheerful, hot-tempered, optimistic, impatient and idealistic person, just your type! This could be one of the (or) the most powerful sources of bliss in your life. If you're not in the romance game, the same great fortune can enter your creative, child-raising, pleasure, speculative, sports, gaming or similar interests. One hint: dive in, don't hesitate nor defer pleasure for a future day, grab it now.


**VIRGO** [August 23-September 22]

This is a week of foundations and the warmth of new security, Virgo. If you want to succeed, to grow your life and bank account, focus on your home, family, residence. Sell and buy real estate, especially your own. If renting, seek a better place and deal. Buy furniture, decorate or renovate, build a great new garden, hug the kids, walk, hike or paddle in nature. It's a great time to "get back to the land," as the hippies would say. Enhance security, build a fence or install CCTV.


**LIBRA** [September 23-October 22]

The general picture is fairly simple this week, Libra. On one side, you'll feel restless, will likely engage in a series of short trips. On the other, your property or home will try to nail your shoes to one spot and will try to do this by creating problems in your domestic sphere. You'll walk into a flurry of errands, communications, visits, paperwork, and many easy, quick chores. But something quite fortunate might arise from these errands, etc. Keep calm and see the game go on.


**SCORPIO** [October 23-November 21]

You might have worked on a project (or simply made plans) intended to fatten your wallet. That might just pay off. Ask for a pay raise, seek better-paying employment, gather new clients, sell items, etc. You can find splendid bargains, but you feel generous, with a tendency to pay too much. Higher-ups are impatient, temperamental. Generally, your career/employment are in good shape. This is a good time to start your own business. However, on one level, love remains mellow.


**SAGITTARIUS** [November 22-December 21]

Wow, this is your week, Sag! Your luck and confidence soar! Be realistic but not limited. You can succeed in almost anything you choose, and your success could expand beyond your expectations. You'll probably travel internationally, attend school, write or publish, delve into a new philosophy or religion, attend cultural events and social rites, and embrace love, or of all humanity. In romance, casual amour ends now, letting you "revert" to ordinary, more passionate involvements.


**CAPRICORN** [December 22-January 19]

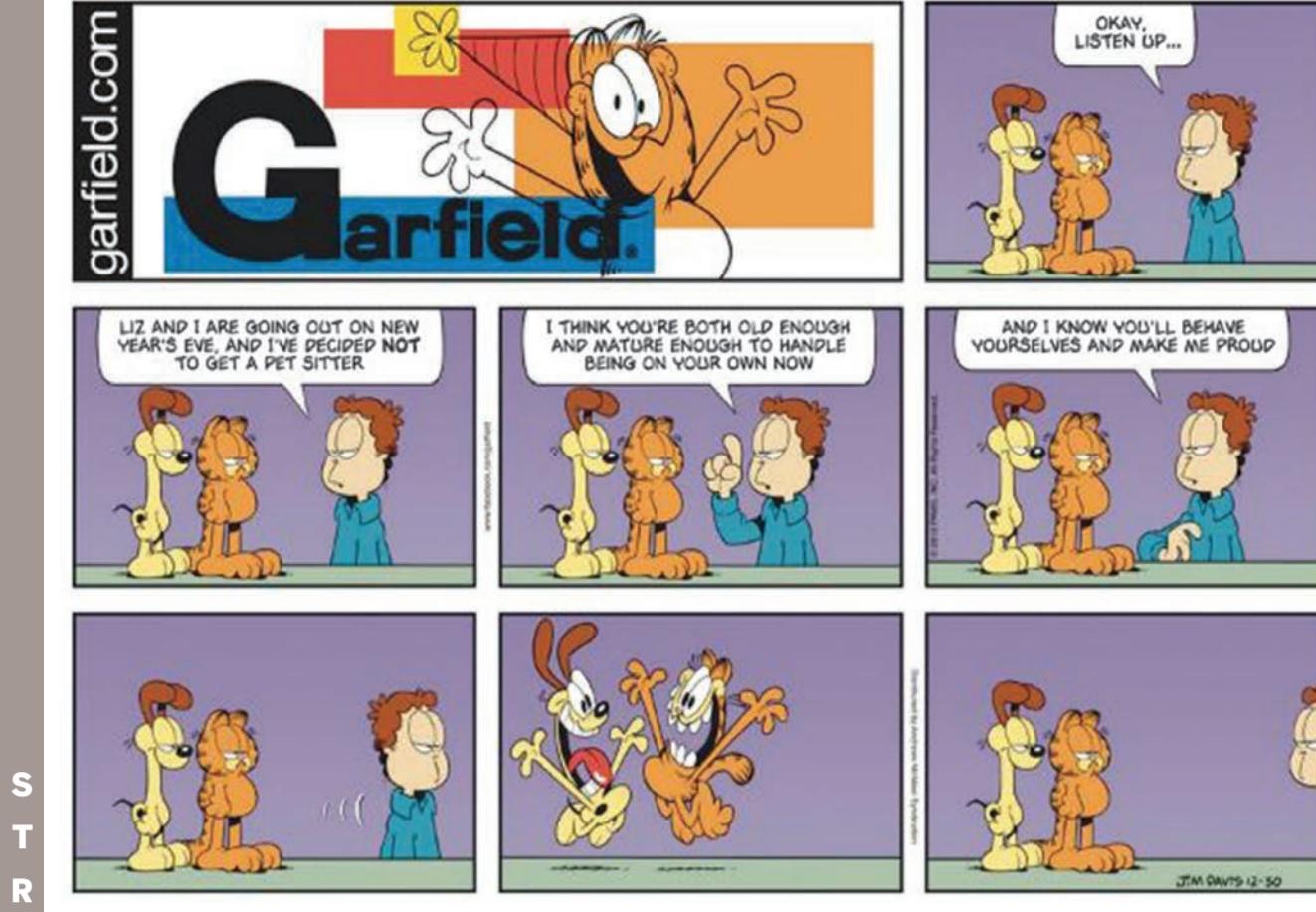
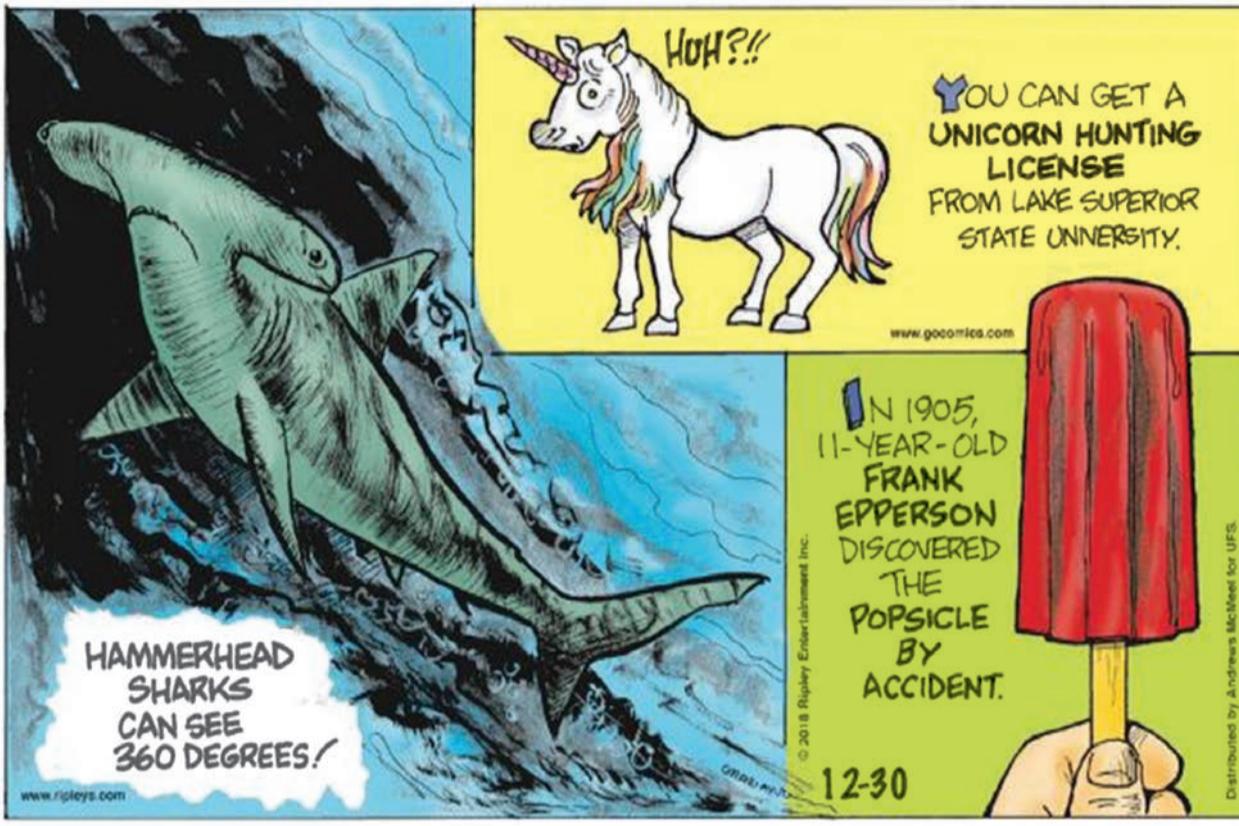
This is not your week to win big prizes or to attract fawning crowds. Instead, this year offers you a much-needed and deeply rejuvenating rest, a breathing space. Quietude comes easily. Use it to ponder your life. How did you get to this point, and where do you go from here? This process, though it might leave you wondering for awhile, will ultimately prove to be a good one, refreshing you, and bathing your life with newness. Brace yourself!


**AQUARIUS** [January 20-February 18]

It's a wish fulfillment time that brings a buoyant boost in popularity, happy social gatherings, flirtations and light romance, entertainment and optimism about the future. One thing: your wishes and social events can conflict with your money situation. You might end many projects. Your attachment to home will swell; you might even change jobs, to draw your income from construction, real estate sales, food and shelter areas, forestry or mining or any Gaia-related activities.


**PISCES** [February 19-March 20]

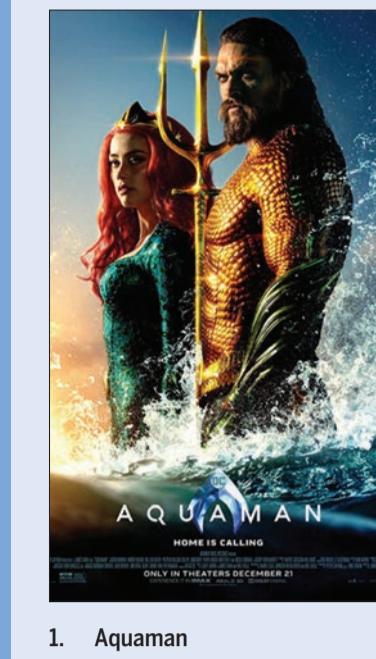
Your career or employment, your status in life, meets very fortunate conditions. You'll face at least two opportunities to move up. These chances to climb the ladder will likely come through your work, but some of you will move up by marrying, even by being "adopted." However, don't attempt to rise through social connections. If it happens, good; but if you pursue this, it will fail. Be cheerful, eager, hard-working and, above all, think big. That can be rewarding.


**Ripley's Believe It or Not!**


<b>KANTIPUR-TV</b>	5:00 Shuvaramba/Bhaktisur	Samachar	17:00 Headline News	00:00 Non Stop Nepali	07:30 Manavataki Lagi	15:00 Kantipur Dairy
	10:30 VMAG		17:05 Call Kantipur	Adhunik Songs	Hatemalo	15:15 The Game Show
	5:30 Radhe Radhe	Headline News	18:00 Kantipur News	01:00 Non Stop Nepali	08:05 The Good Morning	16:00 Quick Fix
	6:00 Jeevan Bigyan	Samkon	18:30 Nirbachan Sarokar	pop songs	Show	17:05 Music Lounge
	6:30 Jyotish Manthan	Kantipur	19:00 Kantipur	02:00 Non Stop Hindi	09:00 Kantipur Dairy	18:00 Bhanchin Aama
	6:40 Sky Shop	Samachar	Samachar	Songs	09:10 Traffic Updates	18:30 Kantipur Dairy
	7:00 Kantipur	12:30 Harke Halder Samachar	19:30 Info Plus	04:00 Non Stop Bhajan	09:15 Ghumne Mech	19:00 Nep Hop
	8:00 Kantipur News	13:00 Headline News	20:00 Kantipur	Songs	10:05 Games People Play	20:05 Abhimat-The Verdict
	8:30 Rise N Shine	13:05 Quiz Mania	Samachar	05:00 BHAKTI	11:05 Hit List	21:00 Kantipur Dairy
	9:00 Headline News	14:00 Headline News	21:00 Ditha Sab	ANUSTHAN/Achyut	12:00 Kantipur Dairy	21:30 Rumpum Hello
	9:05 Surshala Idol	14:05 Nepali Movie	21:30 Pulsar Dareventure	Junior	12:30 Kantipur Dairy	Mithila
	9:30 Ukali Orali	15:00 Headline News	22:30 Kantipur	15:05 Nepali Movie	12:10 Celiberty Hour	23:00 Eleventh Hour
	10:00 Kantipur	16:00 Headline News	23:00 Kantipur	16:00 Headline News	13:05 Top Ten	
		16:05 Headline News	23:30 Info Plus	16:05 Headline News		

<b>KANTIPUR-FM</b>	00:00 Non Stop Nepali	07:30 Manavataki Lagi	15:00 Kantipur Dairy
	Adhunik Songs	Hatemalo	15:15 The Game Show
	01:00 Non Stop Nepali	08:05 The Good Morning	16:00 Quick Fix
	pop songs	Show	17:05 Music Lounge
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	Junior	12:30 Kantipur Dairy	Mithila
	15:05 Nepali Movie	12:10 Celiberty Hour	23:00 Eleventh Hour
	16:00 Headline News	13:05 Top Ten	
	16:05 Headline News		

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<b>SIMMBA</b> : 8:15 AM, 11:45 AM, 2:00 PM, 3:00 PM, 6:15 PM, 8:15 PM, 9:15 PM, <b>JAI SHREE DAAM</b> : 11:30 PM			<b>BUMBLEBEE</b> : 8:00 AM   5:00 PM 11:00 AM 2:00 PM 7:30 PM <b>K.G.F CHAPTER 1</b> : 8:30 AM   2:30 PM 8:00 PM <b>ZERO</b> : 11:30 AM <b>JAI SHREE DHAM</b> : 5:30 PM			CURRENT SHOWTIME		
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4011643/45, 01-2112233 www.bigmovies.com.np facebook/bigmoviesnepal			XTRA SUPER 2 DAYS TUESDAY -190 WEDNESDAY ALL DAY LONG BSR owns the rights to change the show time			MOVIES ATMOS 1 ATMOS 2		



1. Aquaman
2. Mary Poppins Returns
3. Bumblebee
4. Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse
5. The Mule
6. Vice
7. Holmes & Watson
8. Second Act
9. Ralph Breaks the Internet
10. The Grinch

(SOURCE: IMDB)



1. Thank U, Next by Ariana Grande
2. Without Me by Halsey
3. All I Want For Christmas Is You by Mariah Carey
4. Sicko Mode by Travis Scott
5. Sunflower by Post Malone & Swae Lee
6. High Hopes by Panic! At The Disco
7. Happier by Marshmello & Bastille
8. Jingle Bell Rock by Bobby Helms
9. Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree by Brenda Lee
10. A Holly Jolly Christmas by Burl Ives

(SOURCE: BILLBOARD)

<b>SIMMBA</b>	QFX Chhaya Center : 08:45/12:15/15:30/16:15/18:45/19:30 QFX Civil Mall : 08:15/12:00/15:45/19:30 QFX City Mall : 08:45/12:30/16:00/19:00 QFX LABIM Mall : 09:15/12:30/16:00/19:15 QFX Kumar : 11:45/15:00/18:00
<b>3D : BUMBLEBEE</b>	QFX LABIM Mall : 08:15/12:15/15:30/20:00 QFX Civil Mall : 08:45/11/30/14:45/20:15 QFX Kumar : 09:00/12:00/18:30/20:00 QFX Chhaya Center : 09:00/12/15/18:30
<b>3D : AQUAMAN</b>	QFX LABIM Mall : 08:45/11/15/18:45 QFX Chhaya Center : 09:30/15:00 QFX Civil Mall : 17:00
<b>JAY SHREE DAAM</b>	QFX Chhaya Center : 08:45/12:15/15:30 QFX Civil Mall : 12:30/15:30/18:00 QFX LABIM Mall : 17:15
<b>3D : SPIDER-MAN - INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE</b>	QFX Chhaya Center : 13:00 ZERO QFX Civil Mall : 09:45/12:00/13:00 KEDARNATH QFX Civil Mall : 14:30

Tranquility Spa at Hotel Radisson, now offering Body Scrubs for Rs 3,000 (50 percent discount for members). Opening hour 8.00 am-8.00 pm. Contact Number: 01-4423888, 01-6200086

Avurveda Health Home has been providing ayurvedic treatments / massages, siddhara & counseling for stress, detox

# Though the effects of climate change are subtle, Humla feels them acutely



The airport is Humla's only link to the outside world. It is still the only district not connected to the national road network.

POST PHOTOS: MARISSA TAYLOR

> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Climate change is a natural phenomenon, but the natural process of change is slow," says Singh. "However, because of anthropogenic causes, the climate is changing at an unprecedented rate right now. And that is evident in the mountains, which have a fragile ecosystem." For example, in Humla, erratic weather events, such as incessant rainfall in some parts, severe drought in others, drastic decline in snowfall, etc., have become a recurrent phenomenon. In 2011, Limi, a village inhabited by 400 people in northern Humla, was hit by a glacial lake outburst flood, which swept away two houses and eroded 200 ropanis of fields. The flood is the fifth since 2006.

A climate vulnerability assessment, conducted in 2010 by the Nepal government, showed that more than 1.9 million people in the country are highly vulnerable to climate change induced weather events, while another 10 million are increasingly at risk. And this number is most likely to increase in the future.

**Livelihoods already affected**

"The most vulnerable communities in the world to climate change are often those who depend solely on their surrounding natural resources," says Singh.

Humla is a prime example of this frailty, considering its lack of development and poverty-stricken population. This means that the impacts of climate change will be exaggerated in Humla, say experts. And although there is a limited quantity of data currently available about the district, erratic weather patterns—indicated by levels of precipitation and temperature—have been noticed by the scientific community based on isolated events and climate shifts specific to the district. The impacts of such patterns on agriculture can be far-reaching. Along with destroying harvests, these unusual patterns—with their too wet, too dry spells—is affecting the quality of the soil, which has consequently affected the quality and quantity of crops. Locals say current weather patterns have thrown the crop cycle off balance.

Humla is the second largest district in Nepal in terms of area (565,500 ha), but very little of this land is arable, given its soil quality and arid climate. Currently, only 9,708 ha are cultivated. Of that, irrigation is available only for 1,072 ha, of which 397 ha get irrigation year

round, while the remaining 675 ha are irrigated only seasonally.

In Humla, during the monsoons, villagers grow maize, pumpkin, buckwheat, potatoes, cabbage, chilli, millet, and apples. In the winters, their production is limited to barley and wheat. And while places like Namkha, Hilsa and Limi receive a lot of rainfall, all of which are up further north from Simkot, many smaller villages like Dandaphaya do not receive sufficient rainfall year round.

A few hours' walk from Simkot and you are decades away. Untouched by any form of development, seemingly forsaken by the world, Dandaphaya is a deeply impoverished farming community that has around 120 families that depend solely on agriculture for their sustenance, producing around 400-500 quintal of marsi, a unique type of rice grown in Humla. This production is not enough to feed everyone year round.

Besides the lack of rainfall, locals have another major fear. "The soil here is loose. Every year, landslides occur. We are worried it will one day take away our homes," says Lal Bahadur Shahi, a Dandaphaya resident.

The lack of rainfall is also affecting the electricity supply in Humla. "The microhydro in Simkot, which used to generate 500 KW of electricity, currently only generates 200 KW, as the water level in Karnali has receded," says Dinesh Ghimire, Field Coordinator at the Nepal Climate Change Support Programme (NCCSP) in Humla.

In winter, the villagers depend solely on snow to irrigate their fields. "We sowed our seeds in the fields in Kartik, and by Mangsir, we should have seen some growth. But since the snowfall so far has been inadequate, the fields are still barren, and it's already Poush," says Rajesh Rokaya of Tallo Gau, Simkot.

Wheat needs 12 to 15 inches of water to produce a good harvest, and that cannot happen if the region witnesses scant snowfall. If enough snow does not fall in Humla soon, the people in Humla will be facing a cold, hungry winter. "Nothing grows here at this time of the year besides wheat and barley," says 60-year-old Rupa Singh, a Dandaphaya resident.

While Dandaphaya is water scarce, other areas in Humla are at the receiving end of too much rain in the monsoon. "This monsoon we received so much rainfall that all our potatoes went to waste," says Rokaya.

According to locals, with the temperature rising, migration patterns among locals have also altered. "It used to be so cold in the winters that people used to migrate to lower altitudes. People who lived in villages above Dharapani used to move down to the lower belts. But they don't do that anymore," says Choyang.

In Humla, according to the FAO, only 10 percent of households have sufficient food for the whole year while 18 percent have enough for six to nine months. An alarming 28 percent have food sufficient for less than three months. The annual per capita production of edible food in Humla typically does not meet even a quar-

ter of the demand, leading to the mass importation of food from other districts. In a district already under stress due to a scarcity of food, one can only imagine the impacts a changing climate will have on the population—a people who will have to pay the price for a problem they did not create.

"Whatever little food we grow, we eat. We sun-dry the vegetables we grow in the warm season so that we can consume it in the cold," says 18-year-old Kopila Singh, a resident of Dharapuri. "After we run out of food, we have to buy food either from Hilsa or Simkot, or we have nothing to eat."

Hilsa is a town on the northwestern corner of Nepal bordering Tibet, from where most locals purchase basic necessities—like flour, oil, ghee—at cheaper prices compared to Simkot. Rice costs Rs 3,500 for 30 kgs in Hilsa, while it costs Rs 4,500 for 25 kgs at Simkot. But there are restrictions on how much flour one can buy. "One person can buy three ghettas; one ghatta is 25 kgs, which means 3 ghettas is 75 kgs," says Singh. This does not last Singh's family more than four months. And Hilsa is a three to four day journey on foot. The prices of basic consumables are subsidised at the depot of the Nepal Food Corporation (NFC) in Simkot, but the stock at NFC is never enough for everyone. So, many resort to purchasing food at inflated prices, as everything has to be airlifted from Nepalgunj to Humla, which naturally increases the prices.

**What can be done?**

In order to address the adverse effects of a changing climate, the only step developing nations like Nepal can take is to adapt to changing weather patterns. To aid people in doing just that, the Government of Nepal prepared and started implementing the National Adaptation Programme of Action in 2010 and a Climate Change Policy (CCP) in 2011. The government also prepared and approved the National Framework on Local Adaptation Plans for Action in 2011, which closely works with local communities in 14 climate-vulnerable districts in the mid and far-western regions. NCCSP is the government body tasked with implementing the government's adaptation programmes.

According to NCCSP, 2,300 local adaptation actions have been implemented as of December 2017, benefiting over 6 million people in 14 climate-vulnerable districts. The activities implemented under local adaptation plans in Humla include building of irrigation canals, renewable energy projects such as micro-hydro stations, improved water mills, and providing alternative/drought resistant crops.

A recently constructed irrigation canal has brought great relief to farmers in Dandaphaya. The canal supplies water even during the winter to almost all the fields in the area, but this is just one of the many villages that need urgent adaptation interventions. Efforts must be made on a larger scale to ensure immediate relief.

In an effort to adapt to the changing climate, the people too have been applying their own adaptation measures, such as using makeshift 'greenhouses' to grow seasonal vegetables. Humla residents have also resorted to other alternatives to make ends meet, as their traditional ways of agriculture have become more unreliable. Most women have also taken up selling oil extract from walnuts, *churi*, *dudhilo*, etc. People have started collecting medicinal herbs, like *seto chini*, which grow in the wild and have slowly become a cash crop for the people in Humla. "We have to first search for the herb underground, then we have to clean them, cook them and dry them in the sun," says Kopila Singh. The process takes at least two-three months and they hardly get Rs 200 per kg for the herb.

**Why adaptation will be tough**

As a signatory to the 2016 Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Nepal's government is developing adaptation plans to address climate risks. The efforts that are currently being carried out are noteworthy, but not enough.

Years of institutional neglect has resulted in Humla being one of the least developed districts in Nepal. It is still cut off from the rest of the country, which makes it all the more challenging logically and financially for adaptation aid to reach the district. For lack of awareness, villagers pressed with solving immediate problems are more likely to turn to short-term, unsustainable solutions, further adding stress to the already fragile ecosystem, rather than thinking about the long-term implications of their actions.

Globally, as pollution levels continue to rise, the target of the Paris Accord—keeping global temperatures well below two degrees Celsius—has looked like a utopian dream. And with polluting polluters like the US and Russia, withdrawing from the Paris Accord, developing countries—and especially their most vulnerable people—have been left to fend for themselves.

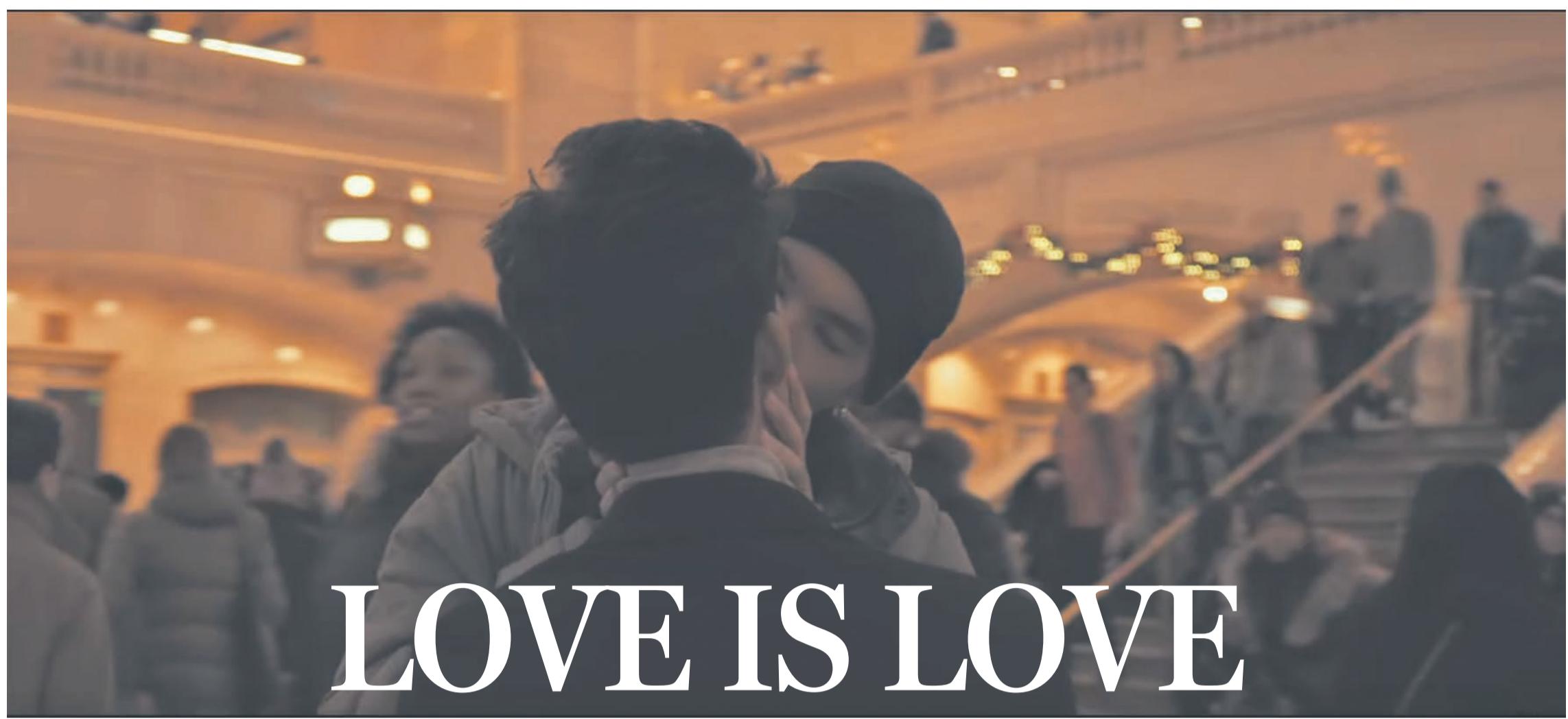
While countries most responsible for the changing climate continue to bicker among themselves, for people like Kopila Singh from Dandaphaya, weather anomalies and climate change are not sometime in the future; they are occurring now, forcing her to either make substantial changes to her lifestyle, or perish. ♦



In Humla district headquarters of Simkot, barren fields and landslides are an increasingly common sight.



In Simkot, sowed wheat seeds should have been sprouted by now. But without adequate snowfall, the shoots remain underground.



# LOVE IS LOVE

A new music video breaks social taboos and presents a poignant homosexual love story

ASMITA MANANDHAR

**V**young love is the stuff of many a film and music video. These depictions bank on the idea that love can be relatable to any number of audiences, as everyone has been in love or wants to be in love. But overwhelmingly, these portrayals are heteronormative, in that they present heterosexual relationships, where a boy meets girl. A recent music video, however, breaks that tendency and redefines love outside of these traditional norms.

The music video for Sajjan Raj Vaidya's *Hataarindai, Bataasindai*, directed by Nurbu Lama, was released on January 1 on Vaidya's YouTube channel. Set in New York City, the video's use of muted colours allows for the visuals to linger even as the audience focuses on the song and storytelling. There are two parallel stories running together, but not necessarily in chronological order, and there is a poignant twist.

As the video begins, a girl and a boy are each getting ready in their own spaces, both rushing out of their apartments to subway platforms. But halfway through the video, the audience realises that they are looking to meet their respective lovers and not each other—one heterosexual and the other, a homosexual couple, both equally in love and in rush—*Aaunu ma kaha timi maya, hataarindai, bataasindai* (come to me my love, rush like the winds).

In the video, the homosexual romance is never awkward, abrupt or preachy. It arrives and transitions effortlessly, as if this were just any other relationship. At first, the video lures the audience in with a traditional relationship, but at its own tender pace, it simply tells the story of love and its celebration, transcending social norms.

The story isn't complicated at all, in fact the director seems more inclined towards

capturing the simpler things in life, almost mundane everyday activities like getting ready and commuting. The actors too have minimal or no make-up and are wearing everyday outfits. With such a simple approach, it almost feels like the video is challenging the traditional perception of 'normalcy', presenting the story of two homosexual men by beautifully avoiding stereotypes and establishing that their love and relationship is as valid as any heterosexual one.

One of the most powerful moments in the video is an unabashed kiss scene between the two men. The actors, Jonsai Thapa and Arhant Shrestha, deliver what is arguably the

best kiss ever seen on Nepali screens. Until that scene, the video is all about subtlety, but when the two men fall into each other's loving embrace and kiss unashamed in the middle of Grand Central Terminal, it is almost as if the video is exploding, abandoning restraint and giving into passion.

The cinematography is basic yet powerful. The simplistic storytelling spills through the use of camera angles as well. The point-of-view shots help the audiences understand the narrative further, along with indulging in a spectrum of emotions, taking the audiences on a ride through the highs and lows of the characters' emotions in sync with the music.

To accomplish this in a little less than six minutes is a feat in itself.

There is nothing unnecessary in the video—the characters, outfits, train rides or even a prop as simple as a camera held by one of the actors. The end credits rolls the footage from that same camera, further displaying the director's meticulous thought process.

The only reservation with this music video is its setting in a foreign city. What the video is trying to accomplish would probably have been more impactful if it had been set in a Nepali city. Locating a story as bold as this inside Kathmandu would've allowed its message to resonate better with Nepalis.

Nepal has rarely seen such a frank depiction of homosexuality. Although *Soongava*, a 2012 feature film directed by Subarna Thapa, explores the tribulations of a lesbian couple, there have been very few mainstream films or videos that have gay or transgender characters that are not stereotyped or used for comic effect. While *Soongava* portrays a lesbian romance, a similar treatment with gay men seems almost impossible, especially given the patriarchal conception of masculinity in Nepal. After the video was released, many Nepalis, including members of the LGBTIQ community, took to social media to express their appreciation.

Lex Limbu, a celebrity blogger based in the United Kingdom, thanked Vaidya and his team for supporting the 'larger community' in a blog post. Ever since coming out on February 24, 2018, Limbu has been a vocal advocate for gay rights and has supported other Nepali men's coming out stories too.

The music video, which has already garnered more than 380,000 views in just four days, has certainly provided visibility to the stories of homosexual couples. Following Vaidya's rising popularity among the youth through hit singles such as *Mooskan* and *Hawaijahaj*, with this new music video, young gay men and women have a beautiful video to relate to.

Nepal has been relatively open towards the LGBTIQ community through policies in recent years but unforgiving social taboos still prevent sexual minorities from living openly. They are often subject to bullying and ostracisation—a line from Vaidya's song—*Timro ra mero, hamro katha ko sirsak dhairya banisakechha* (yours and mine, our story has been titled patience)—aptly describes the struggles of the gay community to become accepted, acknowledged and respected. ♦

Manandhar tweets @asmitamdr



## The 15 most anticipated films of 2019

What big-screen treats does the new year have in store? A look at the stories about notorious murders, palaeontologists in love and a media giant's downfall are among the starry movies heading our way



### Greed

Steve Coogan stars in this comedy from Michael Winterbottom about a ghastly retail mogul throwing a wild 60th birthday party in Greece. Isla Fisher is his wife, David Mitchell a journalist. Any resemblance to Philip Green is strictly coincidental.

### Ammonite

Francis Lee follows 2017's acclaimed 'Yorkshire Brokeback' *God's Own Country* with a tale of 1840s lesbian palaeontology starring Saoirse Ronan as famous fossil hunter Mary Anning and Kate Winslet as a gentlewoman sent to convalesce by the sea.

### Sorry We Missed You

With thoughts of retirement seemingly well forgotten, Ken Loach con-

### Memoria

New one from Apichatpong Weerasethakul? Yes please. Starring Tilda Swinton? Absolutely. About a Scottish woman travelling in Colombia who "begins to notice strange sounds", then "begins to think about their appearance"? Just try and stop us.

### Us

Jordan Peele's follow-up to *Get Out* is a supremely creepy-sounding horror about a family holiday by the beach upset by uninvited guests. Big scissors feature heavily in the promotion. Elisabeth Moss and Lupita Nyong'o star.

### Little Women

Director Greta Gerwig reunites with *Lady Bird*'s Saoirse Ronan and Timothée Chalamet for yet another version of the Louisa May Alcott yarn. Still, this one has serious pedigree: they're joined by Emma Watson, Florence Pugh, Laura Dern and Meryl Streep.

### The Irishman

Arguably Netflix's most high-profile capture to date, this passion project of Martin Scorsese's reunites Pacino,

De Niro, Joe Pesci and Harvey Keitel and takes aim at the mafia-union wars of the 70s. De Niro plays mob hitman Frank Sheeran and Pacino corrupt teamster union boss Jimmy Hoffa; the film is based on Sheeran's book in which he claimed responsibility for Hoffa's murder.

### The Souvenir

Joanna Hogg had a slight wobble with her third film, *Exhibition*, back in 2013, but this belated new one, due to premiere at Sundance next month, looks much more promising. Honor Swinton-Byrne stars as a young film student in the early 1980s who begins an affair a dubious older fella (Tom Burke). Swinton-Byrne's real-life mother, Tilda, plays her mother; Martin Scorsese executive produces.

### Untitled Roger Ailes Movie

Life moves pretty fast in showbiz. In May 2016, Fox boss Roger Ailes fell fast from grace after allegations of sexual misconduct from employees. After briefly serving as an advisor to Donald Trump, he died in May 2017; next year this very starry story of his ignominious end arrives, with John Lithgow in the lead, Malcolm



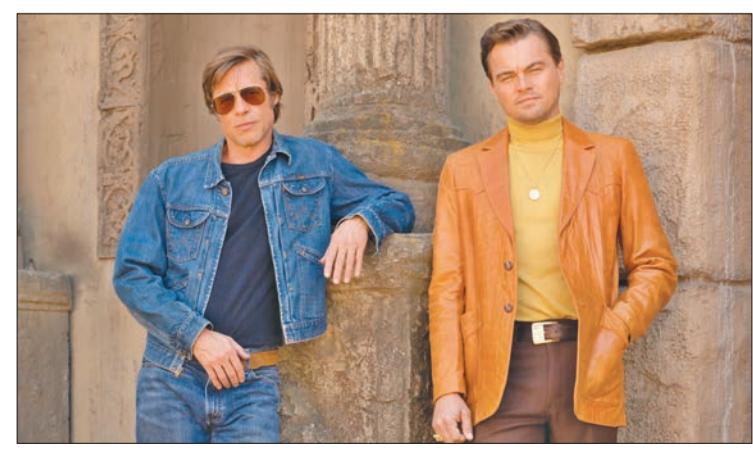
Dowell as Rupert Murdoch, and Nicole Kidman and Charlize Theron as two of high-profile accusers: Gretchen Carlson and Megyn Kelly.

### Toy Story 4

Pixar's original and best just keeps rolling along: this fourth chunk has been in the works since 2014 at least. A few major details have emerged: there's a new character—a fork—called, you guessed it, Forky, voiced by *Arrested Development*'s Tony Hale, and there's the usual mad trip outside, this time to rescue Bo Peep.

### Untitled Noah Baumbach Film

As yet untitled, this follow-up to *The Last Jedi* (and the third in the sequel-trilogy begun with *The Force Awakens*) sees JJ Abrams step back into the director's chair, after Colin Trevorrow left the project. Plot details are scarce as ever, but we know that unused footage from episodes seven and eight will be used to give Princess Leia a purchase in the storyline, despite the death of Carrie Fisher in 2016. ♦



### Misbehaviour

Keira Knightley is a women's libber who invaded the stage with 50 others when the Albert Hall hosted Miss World in 1970. Greg Kinnear is Bob Hope, the host upset by their football

### Frozen 2

Historically, Disney has tended to avoid sequels to its animated hits, preferring to dump follow-ups on straight-to-DVD and similar. But the advent of Pixar has changed all that, and the siren call of another *Frozen* film was too much to resist. Expect a second dose of inspirational girl-power stylings.

### Star Wars: Episode IX:

As yet untitled, this follow-up to *The Last Jedi* (and the third in the sequel-trilogy begun with *The Force Awakens*) sees JJ Abrams step back into the director's chair, after Colin Trevorrow left the project. Plot details are scarce as ever, but we know that unused footage from episodes seven and eight will be used to give Princess Leia a purchase in the storyline, despite the death of Carrie Fisher in 2016. ♦



■ Dron Bangosain, 35, started his noodle factory seven years ago with Rs 550,000. Now, he has three factories that are worth approximately Rs 2.7 million. He learned to make noodles in Kashmir, where he lived for two-and-a-half years working. After returning to Nepal he started his own factory, producing 70kg noodles daily.



■ Chandra Bahadur Balami, 35, started his copy factory two years ago after returning from Qatar, where he worked for 13 years. When he came home and saw that his village now has electricity, right then, he decided to not return to Qatar. Now, he earns Rs 25,000 a month.



## BRIGHT BUSINESS

PHOTOS AND TEXT: PRAKASH CHANDRA TIMISENA

**T**here are many villages in Nepal where labour migration has become routine—people go abroad for work and return home with some hard-earned money, and experiences. Every day, nearly 1,500 Nepali workers leave the country in search of greener pastures abroad.

However, Kharbang district in Baglung is different. Residents, who once prioritised going abroad as labourers, are self-employed these days, and are also providing employment opportunities for others. They are inspiring members of their community as they seek opportunities in their own backyard rather than going abroad.

The success of Girind Khola has rekindled economic activities within the catchment area, especially among the foreign returnees, has been able to tap into. The sustainability of the project has been ensured through productive uses of electricity. Poultry farms, copy-making industries, furniture workshops, and a noodle factory are a few local economic institutions providing employment opportunities to the community while also guaranteeing revenue, thus contributing to the preservation of local economic development and sustainability. ♦



■ Man Bahadur Thapa, 45, started his poultry farm seven years ago, after returning from Qatar where he worked for 15 years. When electricity came to his village, Thapa started his poultry farm, selling hens once every three months and making Rs 60,000 profit.



■ Til Bahadur Khatri, 41, established his guesthouse four years ago. He and his wife had lived in Dubai for six years. When they returned, they bought a hotel, from which he earns Rs 70-80 thousand per month.



■ A worker builds a grill at Kharbang, Baglung. There are a total of three grill factories in Kharbang.



■ Narayan Giri opened his medical shop 35 years ago but x-rays only became available eight to nine years ago.



■ Raju Ranapal, 35, worked in Malaysia for three years. Nine years ago, he returned to start a clothing and sewing shop with just Rs 30,000 and now, he is worth Rs 600-700,000, where he works till the wee hours at night.



■ A student does his homework at his home in Kharbang.



■ Shree Tribhuvan Secondary School was established in 2017 in Kharbang, Baglung. "There are about 1,000 students. We have 12 laptops, one desktop and a server in the school. As children lose interest, we keep computers to keep the students' interest in learning," says Dhalmani Bhandari, principal of the school.



■ Badri Kumari Giri, 34, started her mill five years ago with Rs 84,000. Now she earns Rs 9-10,000 per month, which she uses for her household expenses. Before she started her own mill, there were no others; now, there are nine additional mills. Maize, paddy, buckwheat, turmeric are grounded and refined.

## Heads and tales

## In the name of politics

The road to Singha Durbar is not in Dillibazar but in Delhi. When Delhi decides, our netas reconcile

## GUFFADI

**I**t seems that one can get away with murder, win election, go into hiding and meet the country's Prime Minister in a foreign land and then come back, surrender, stay in jail and then take the oath of office as one of our lawmakers and then go back to jail and wait for the government to hopefully withdraw the case soon. How on earth can a person who is in jail take the oath of office as a member of the House? It seems that our netas do not need to follow the laws of the land.

After all, this is New Nepal where anything is possible as long as you do it in the name of politics. Yes, one of our Madhesi netas is right when he says our Emperor and his so-called movement killed thousands of civilians and security personnel and he gets to be our Prime Minister and the government treats Resham dai as a criminal.

This is wrong. Resham dai should not be in jail. He should be freed and at least be made a mantri. Yes, let us not feel sorry for the police wallahs who lost their lives in Tikapur. We have not felt sorry for our security personnel who died during the so-called civil war, why feel sorry for Tikapur or for any such incidents that may occur in the future?

I think Nepal Police gets a bad rap for all the problems in this land. Let us not blame the police wallahs for the missing 33kg gold because our gold smugglers have the power and the money to transfer our police officers and even block their promotions because we all know very well that our netas have taken a cut from these smugglers.

We now can also suspect that the people involved in the Nirmala murder case are powerful folks and they are being protected by our netas as well. Nepal Police can solve criminal cases with very minimal resources but they seem to be hopeless in these two big cases that have rocked the country since last year. Our IGP Saheb is already tired and seems to be handcuffed by political pressure to do nothing. Let us feel sorry for him.

Once again, Nepal Airlines is in the news and our current mantri, the previous ones and hakim sahebs seem to be involved in taking home billions of Rupees as commissions for buying the planes. This is not a new story. We all know that our netas, hakim sahebs and con artists need the commissions whenever our government buys anything—be it planes, notebooks or pens.

This is the land where the government is broke but our civil servants and our netas make billions of rupees and invest their ill-gotten wealth in apartments, gas stations and other real estate projects in

the West. And here at home, they do invest in media, mega marts and mansions but in the name of their wives, cousins and even drivers. But at the end of the day, our mantris rarely go to jail except a few. Our hakim sahebs rarely go to jail except a dozen and the nation loses billions of dollars every year from corruption by these chors.

Oli Ba is not having a good year. He should have consulted an astrologer like Deuba does. Maybe he should have allowed Prachanda, our great Emperor to head the first part of their show instead. Today, Oli looks like a con artist while our Emperor looks like a saint because he doesn't have to take any responsibility of the nataks of this government yet. In a year and half, our Emperor will once again be our Prime Minister. Let us see how he performs when he gets to live in Baluwatar for the third time. Will he be a changed man and finally see the light? Nope. He will just be the same and will do all he can to help his cadres, cousins and contractors. After all, he is a politician and not a social worker. He is not here to change this country for good. He is just another politician who has come this far by selling us his dream which has turned into a nightmare and will haunt us for many decades to come.

Let us not blame Oli or Prachanda or Deuba for the problems in this land. Let us blame India because it's easy to blame our chimeki than blame ourselves. If it were not for the Desis, we would still be under the Shree Tins. We would have a thousand more palaces in the valley and we could now turn it into boutique hotels and earn millions from tourists.

We could still have been under the rule of House of Shah if it were not for our chimeki. Gyan Uncle would still be gracing the Jatras in the valley and some of us would still brag about our 'Gorkha Dakshin Bahu'. If it were not for the Desis then we would not have our Prachanda Emperor or our great blockade nataks that benefited no one.

Yes, the road to Singha Durbar is not in Dillibazar but in Delhi. When Delhi decides, our netas reconcile but when we the people take to the streets and demand justice for Nirmala, our netas tell us that we are stooges of the opposition or foreign hands. Maybe, we should all go to Delhi, and carry out our protest programmes there and only then our government will have the courage to take action against their own cadres, cousins and contractors. ♦

Guffadi is a grumpy old man who blogs at [guffadi.blogspot.com](http://guffadi.blogspot.com). You may contact him at [maguffadi@gmail.com](mailto:maguffadi@gmail.com)



PHOTO COURTESY: STOCKPHOTO

## IT'S A JUNGLE OUT HERE



PHOTO COURTESY: ASHISH THAKUR

In an increasingly concrete jungle, pockets of greenery become more and more vital in maintaining the avian diversity of Kathmandu

## PRIYA JOSHI

**A** few years ago, there was suddenly a new tree in my garden. Everyone was surprised, because no one had planted that tree. Yet when it stood, more than four storeys tall. We didn't know what type of tree it was, and we still don't know the name, but ever since it grew, it has attracted a lot more birds to our home.

Because our garden had plenty of fruiting and flowering trees, flowers and a diverse patchwork of shrubs, we were used to seeing frogs, snakes, shrews, chipmunks and mongoose. With a garden to play in and explore, I have always been familiar with the various birds, insects, reptiles, molluscs and tiny mammals who shared their territories with us. But as the walls between the neighbours grew taller and open grounds turned into tall, concrete buildings, these terrestrial animals have become more and more rare. But the sky has no walls, and the birds have not stopped flocking to our tiny oasis.

For the last decade or two, I did not have the luxury of exploring and playing in my garden like I used to when I was a child. But this year, I became a new mother. Suddenly, being home as a *sutkeri*, I once again had the time and opportunity to gaze out of the window onto my garden during those long, lonely hours with my *chori* when I was either breast-feeding her or keeping her company as she napped. I was once again able to reacquaint myself with my evolved garden. I began

noticing new birds and hearing unfamiliar bird songs.

Curiosity got the better of me, and I had plenty of time to spare. I dusted off my binoculars—which had once accompanied me to wild expeditions through the mountains and plains of Nepal, the Peruvian Amazon, the Kalahari and Okavango Delta in Botswana and Alaska during my trips as a wildlife researcher—and bought the latest version of a field guide to birds found in Nepal. Armed with these rudimentary ornithology tools, I was able to identify the chestnut-tailed starlings which I had never seen in our garden. I also realised that we had not one but multiple species of bulbuls and mynahs visiting us. I learned that the annual 'turtle dove' pair was actually spotted doves. It was also sobering to realise that what I had always just lumped together as 'sparrows' were in fact three different sub-species of sparrows: house sparrows, Eurasian tree sparrows and Russet Sparrows. I had failed to realise the uniqueness and diversity of something I deemed common and, therefore, perhaps not as valuable.

In addition to the year-round pigeons, crows and the aforementioned birds, I've also spotted coppersmith barbets, grey-backed shrikes, cinereous tits, oriental white eyes, oriental magpie robins, purple sunbirds, jungle mynahs, common mynahs, white-throated kingfishers and common tailorbirds on our trees, in addition to a possible thrush or lark species, a woodpecker and some owl species yet to be prop-

erly identified. Already a busy place for birds, our garden has become a whole lot noisier, ever since that tree suddenly grew.

When its 'flowers' bloom, the tree buzzes with pollinator insects of all sizes. Once the tiny berry-like 'fruit' clusters appear, flocks of rose-ringed parakeets, mynahs, chestnut-tailed starlings and various bulbuls come to feed daily. As the berries dry, red-vented bulbuls and parakeets flock every evening to feast on them.

Over the course of a year, I have counted up to 11 different species of birds on that tree so far, whether eating its fruit, building their nest or using it at a vantage point to scan, hunt or sing. There is no doubt that the diversity of fruiting and flowering trees in our garden attract and help sustain so many birds and mammals (fruit bats and monkeys) species year round. In an increasingly concrete jungle, pockets of greenery like our garden become more and more vital in maintaining the avian diversity of Kathmandu. Nestled among tall, grey buildings, it is indeed a treat to wake up to the courting song of a magpie robin or spend my evenings counting parrots camouflaged in the trees. From my window, I can study the behaviour of crows, watch the sunbirds sip nectar from flowers and laugh at the sparrows jostling for the best spots for their mud bath.

My *chori* is nearly a year old now, and I no longer sit at my window looking wistfully onto my garden. I look out with her, pointing out the various birds and butterflies, and we wave bye-bye to flocks of cattle egrets, playful swallows and lazily circling black kites as they make their way home in the evenings. I am grateful that, for now, we still have our miniature, ever-evolving urban jungle to relish. Thanks to these new mystery trees, she and I have been able to enjoy the cacophony of the diverse array of birds who share our garden with us. ♦

## BIBEK ADHIKARI

**H**e joins a private high school in 2010 and goes to a government college in 2012. It is amidst this crazy tumult of his late teens that he sees, albeit hazily, what kind of future lies in front of him.

During the most vulnerable yet most memorable period of his life, he breathes in lungfuls of poetry and quite naturally, gets high. He scribbles a line or two whenever he gets a chance—what a thrill it is when ideas swirl in front of his eyes—and thinks that the fluttering fragments of ideas will simultaneously make him euphoric and drive him insane. In the background, Bob Dylan sings in his usual melancholic voice, helping him sort out the tangled threads of metaphors. It is a life he seems contented with, the whole shebang.

If only he hadn't seen the opulence of the city. Around him, there are not only riches but royalty. He then thinks that life is an endless ocean stretching towards the horizon of poverty. Slowly and gradually, he begins to shrink. The poetry scribbler in him, once in a while, starts doing his perfunctory job that displays none of the passion and warmth that he once had. His vision begins to blur, and his ideas start to fade. He questions himself, as if he is viewing everything through the wrong end of a telescope.

Opulence and poverty, money and poetry, materials and ideas, clarity and disillusionment, science and arts, so on and so forth—the stuff of his confused yet auspicious nineteenth year hammer on his head.

## Best of both worlds

He is torn apart between the two extremes of life: money and poetry



PHOTOCOURTESY: JONTYSON

the unknown bridle path, he chooses the well-trodden road to success. He embraces money. He teaches more, he makes a little more money.

Kathmandu has given him an injection to induce the anaesthesia of capitalism. He is numbed by the power of money. He is appalled by the weakness of poetry. He's sure that if you are to examine the attributes of his life one by one, you will discover how confused he is, how unworthy his days are, and how he lives in a circumscribed life.

There is a special radiance, a godly glow that comes with monetary power. Although he is a student of science, he begins studying the basics of economics, wondering when this dreaded subject will make him rich. He watches the arrows go up and down, his heart skipping a beat at the sight of cash-flows. He notices how tax rates go up as soon as you start working too hard. He sees the endless, vicious cycle of demand and supply going in circles, like being trapped inside the cycle of karma. He passes through time as if watching a rather dull movie—the circle going round and round, never stopping.

Nevertheless, his heart pounds, his palms sweat, the lights come on, too late. He walks out of the theatre and

heads into a sweltering wilderness. For a long, long time, he neglects to learn any lesson from his past at all.

Since tutoring will not give him what he is looking for, he ventures into other alternatives. Writing for websites, copy editing, proofreading boring textbooks, translating pulp fiction, writing reports, proposals, micro theses—in short, cleaning a lot of other people's shit. There is no any need for original thinking—but who expects originality in such mundane tasks? All he wants is for them to be over as quickly as possible so that he will get a handful of cash in the end.

Money rules his head; money is his constant obsession. Sometimes he feels like unscrewing his head, shaking it, and looking at what's going on inside. Sometimes he recites lines from DH Lawrence's poem *Money Madness* into the air. One piece of wisdom he has picked up from the poem is that 'bread must be free for all.' Strikingly a Marxist perspective, yet it somehow soothes his capitalistically heavy head. While people around him are busy talking about the things that interest them: English Premier League, Justin Bieber's latest songs, new pornography websites, and Subin Bhattachari's novels, he is too busy breaking that threadbare Marxist advice into its fractals.

He is now torn apart between the two extremes of life: money and poetry. He doesn't have a clue about life. He lives a life oscillating between the two ends, entertaining himself with illusions, reading fantastically depressing books like *Think and Grow Rich*, creating more illusions to embrace, making it harder for himself to breathe. Carrying Baudelaire's *Loss of a Halo* and Kiyosaki's *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, he walks from one tea shack into another. The places are awful; people's endless conversations are grating to his ears. The wait for the ultimate truth is endless. He looks at his watch again and again, orders watery tea again and again, and envisions the mistakes of his past, again and again.

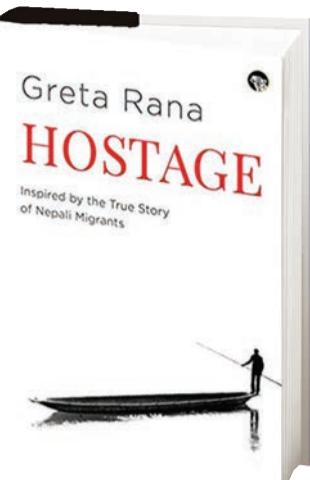
He is boxed in; he sees fences all around him. He has no real friends, his Facebook is flooded with strangers, and he scouring his memory for some moments of childhood happiness. He hasn't been able to break the walls that surround him, and he is aware of his powerlessness. Meaningless months pass by. Wandering, reading, savoring the incompleteness of life. He takes a pause, an interlude, a hiatus. He follows the laws of mindfulness—constant watching—all the time.

Time passes, people change. That much is always constant, no matter the situation. His two beloved subjects fall out of sync. He now knows what direction he is veering in. These days he still teaches, and he often scribbles poetry. He is attempting to strike a balance, trying too hard to get the best of both worlds. ♦

The writer tweets as @bibek\_writes

# A TOUCH OF DRAMA

Greta Rana's Hostage is heart-breaking but it often loses focus and turns needlessly melodramatic



**HOSTAGE**  
Author: Greta Rana  
Publisher: Speaking Tiger

ALISHA SIJAPATI

Over the years many harrowing tales have been told of Nepali men and women who go to toil in foreign soil and meet unfortunate ends. Perhaps the most brutal one remains the killings of 12 Nepali men in Iraq in August 2004 by Islamic extremists. Greta Rana's new book, *Hostage*, is a fictional narrative of the 2004 incident that shocked Nepalis across the world and brought hundreds to the capital's streets demanding justice for the victims.

Although fiction, the book is heavily inspired by the true stories of Nepali migrant workers. *Hostage* revolves around two men: Hari Prasad, a boatman from Rapti belonging to the Tharu community, and Siva Shrestha, an engineer who is disillusioned with the state of politics and decides to join the Maoist movement. Over the course of the book, which spans 14 years, the lives of these two men with starkly different backgrounds come to intersect and culminate in a tragic ending.

Hari is a boatman who is eager to retain his ancestral land and he sees no other alternative for a stable income apart from heading to the Middle East for work. Hari wants his children to be '*tuloh manches*'. As a reader, I grieved over Hari's financial constraints and his obligations, realising my own problems were minuscule in comparison.

Rana manages to generate emotions through Hari's ordeals, particularly seemingly mundane ones, as when Hari seeks help from a fellow passenger to fill out the departure. This inability to fill out a simple form is an empathetic moment, one that is emblematic of the experiences that many migrant workers go through.

However, the third chapter, where Siva is introduced, was a disappointment. Hari's chapter abruptly ends when he heads to Dubai, and the focus shifts to Siva. The first two chapters decide the fate of the book. I was already invested in Hari's narrative and was yearning to read more on his life. But with the abrupt switch to Siva, Rana loses her grip.

While Siva does interrupt the flow of Hari's narrative, his story's introduction is as compelling as Hari's. Siva is an engineer-turned-Maoist guerrilla, who is posing as a servant in a rich Nepali Congress politician's house. He is caught in a fix when Anjeli, the sharp, intelligent daughter-in-law of the house, finds homemade bombs under his bed. Here, the reader would want to know more about Siva's journey as a Maoist guerrilla, but instead, Rana chooses to focus on Anjeli's background.

Just when Siva's story starts gaining momentum, it is again interrupted by Hari's transition from Dubai to Jordan, where he meets Siva. The deviation from one character to another can confuse and lose readers' interest immediately. As the story develops, you believe that Hari and Siva are the two protagonists of this heart-wrenching book, but unfortunately, Rana loses her interest in Siva and begins to focus more on Hari. It is revealed that Siva has a soft corner for Hari due to how naive the latter is, whereas, Hari is rather judgmental

about him. However, the author fails to divulge further into the relationship dynamics between these two men.

The book takes a big leap in the chapter 'A dead-end job', when Hari takes up a new job in a desert depot that pays him \$2,500 a month. His dreams are shattered when along with 12 other Nepali men, he is taken hostage by the terrorists who mistake them for American spies.

Rana is at her best when she is writing about emotions that are hard-hitting enough to bring shivers down the spine to the most stoic of us all. It wouldn't be untoward to shed a tear or two for Hari and his unusual situation, which leads to a dead end.

However, on the other end, Siva's ending wasn't compelling enough, it felt forced and unoriginal.

Post Hari's death, the book hits rock bottom, as the story jumps from one character to another, making readers lose their patience. Rana could have merged two chapters 'Karim' and 'Arjun' into one and explained how they help Hari, the 13th Nepali man whose identity wasn't revealed by the media during the Iraq crisis.

Rana's *Hostage* left me confused in many instances. I had to re-read chapters multiple times just to get a grasp of the narratives surrounding each character. New characters are quoted out of the blue, which often

breaks the momentum. As Rana loses her flow in so many chapters, I felt like switching to another book but I decided to give her a chance. But with the chapter 'Karim', she goes overboard. She brings in Karim, Shahid and Hassan, all of whom are involved in providing justice to Hari, but the narrative goes haywire. It even took me a while to understand that Karim and Shahid were two different individuals.

When I read the blurb of the book, there was already enough of a hint of Hari's tragic ending. The book is predictable. Hari and Siva's hardship makes one introspect but the book lacks passion and depth. The book often turns Bollywood-esque, with so

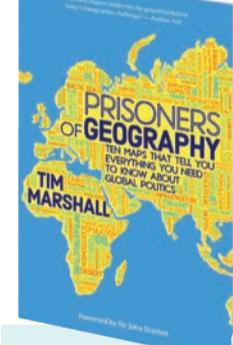
much drama happening, apart from the climax. Even Bollywood's propensity for coincidences makes an appearance when Hari's daughter Subhadra plans to marry Arjun, the man who Hari first met on a flight and who fights for his justice.

*Hostage* would have been an interesting book had Rana maintained the momentum of her characters and stuck to the flow of Hari's story. Often, there was too much happening, and even unimportant characters were described to a fault, which bores a reader.

The way Rana has described the story and developed her characters, *Hostage* would've perhaps worked better as a film than a book. \*

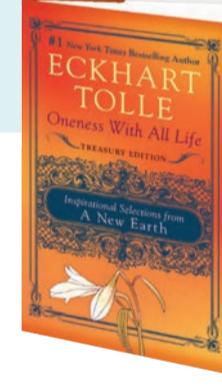


PHOTO COURTESY: CHUTTERSNAP



If you've ever wondered why Putin is so obsessed with Crimea, why the US was destined to become a global superpower, or why China's power base continues to expand ever outwards, the answers are all here. In ten chapters (covering Russia; China; the US; Latin America; the Middle East; Africa; India and Pakistan; Europe; Japan and Korea; and the Arctic), using maps, essays and personal experiences of the widely travelled author, *Prisoners of Geography* looks at the past, present and future to offer an essential insight into one of the major factors that determines world history.

**PRISONERS OF GEOGRAPHY**  
Author: Tim Marshall  
Publisher: Elliott & Thompson  
Pages: 256  
Price: Rs 958



**ONENESS WITH ALL LIFE**  
Author: Eckhart Tolle  
Publisher: Viking Press Publishing  
Pages: 192  
Price: Rs 638

In *A New Earth*, renowned spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle describes how our current ego-based state of consciousness operates. The purpose of this book is to bring about a shift in consciousness, or in his words, an awakening. An essential part of this awakening is the recognition of the ego, and our attachment to things, the past, and enemies. In *Oneness With All Life*, Tolle has picked the essential phrases and paragraphs—the gems of the book—that he feels are most important and reorganized them so readers can focus on the most powerful ideas.



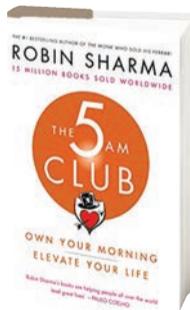
**BECOMING**  
Author: Michelle Obama  
Publication: The crown publishing group  
Pages: 426  
Price: Rs 1,598

As the former First Lady of the United States of America—the first African-American to serve in that role—Michelle Obama helped create the most welcoming and inclusive White House in history, while also establishing herself as a powerful advocate for women and girls in the US and around the world. In her memoir, Obama invites readers into her world, chronicling the experiences that have shaped her—from her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years balancing the demands of motherhood and work, to her time spent at the world's most famous address.

**MANDALA BOOK POINT**

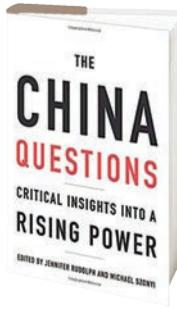
## BEST-SELLER LIST

### HARDCOVER FICTION



1. **The 5 AM Club** by Robin Sharma
2. **The Fork, The Witch, and the Worm** by Christopher Paolini
3. **Milkman** by Anna Burns
4. **To All the Boys I've Loved Before** by Jenny Han
5. **The Wayward Daughter** by Shraddha Ghale

### HARDCOVER NONFICTION



1. **The China Questions** by Jennifer Rudolph and Michael Szonyi
2. **South Asia-China Geo-economics** by Yubaraj Sangroula
3. **Kama: The Riddle of Desire** by Gurcharan Das
4. **Sapiens** by Yuval Noah Harari
5. **Why I am a Hindu** by Sashi Tharoor

Source: Mandala Book Point

## Why we are fascinated by miniature books

From the Divine Comedy to a Bible the size of a stamp, these strange artefacts are masterpieces writ small

ALISON FLOOD

It is known as the "fly's eye Dante": an 1878 edition of the *Divine Comedy* which is so small—just 11/4 by 13/4 inches—that it is said to have taken 11 years to print, and to have damaged the eyes of both its compositor and corrector. Bound in red leather embossed with gold, the world's smallest edition of Dante's classic poem, which was printed by the Salmin Brothers in Padua, is one of almost 50 officially designated miniature books housed in the London Library. Nomenclature is important here: according to the US-based Miniature Book Society, a miniature book "is no more than three inches in height, width, or thickness", and while the London Library has some 350-odd "small" books, of less than five inches, it has only 47 true miniatures. The library decided they were being overshadowed by their larger cousins, so now they are gathered together in a glass-fronted cabinet.

Alongside the Dante, there is the smallest Authorised Version of the *Bible*, first printed by David Bryce of Glasgow in 1896. Bryce said that when he "descended to the miniature, mite and midget size" he had "many a scoff and jeer as to the absurdity of the production". This edition of the *Bible*, just an inch across, comes with a tiny magnifying glass tucked into a pocket in its cover (unlike the Dante, which is small but perfectly legible, this book would be impossible to read without one). There is also a miniature edition of Kate Greenaway's *Alphabet* from the 1880s, and Dunia Garcia-Ontiveros, who looks after the London Library's collection, points to the 1828 edition of Horace's odes, the second book to



Jagadish Shukla holds miniature copies of a Koran, the Bhagavad Gita and the Bible.

ideas could easily hide tiny booklets in a secret bottom of their case, merchants could quickly retrieve from their belt a tiny but complete guide on the equivalence of grains prices, scales, measures and conversion, and foreign currencies value meanwhile closing a deal, or sharp businessmen could brilliantly define a legal contract".

Technological developments in the 1800s made it possible to print text even more. "That's when you get the truly mind-boggling tiny books," says Garcia-Ontiveros, citing everything from the Horace to Bryce's *Bible* to a complete set of Shakespeare's plays that can be held cuffed in two hands.

Simon Garfield, who recently published *In Miniature: How Small*

*Things Illuminate the World*, says his favourite is the Sherlock Holmes story *How Watson Learned the Trick*, which was written in the 1920s by Arthur Conan Doyle. "It's bound in red leather, measures under 4cm by 3cm and contains 503 words. That's about one page of a regular book, but it's handwritten and extends to 34 pages," says Garfield. (The original can be found in Queen Mary's Dolls' House in Windsor Castle.) "The title's ironic: the story, composed almost entirely of dialogue, begins with Watson thinking he's mastered the art of elementary detection, only to be defeated by Holmes proving him wrong on every count."

Around the world, collectors covet the Salmin Brothers' 1896 copy of Galileo's 1636 letter to his friend Cristina di Lorena, which Louis Bondy writes in his history of miniature books "was considered the smallest printed from movable type" for many years: it is half the size of a postage stamp. A copy is in MIT Libraries, in Massachusetts, alongside a handful of other miniatures: four addresses by Abraham Lincoln and extracts from Calvin Coolidge's autobiography. Both are as small as the Galileo, but neither were set from movable type. The National Library of Scotland has one of Bryce's most famous publications, a miniature *Koran* printed in Arabic around 1900, copies of which, it says, were often given to Muslim soldiers fighting with allied forces during the first world war; the metal locket allowing it "to be easily worn around the neck of the soldier".

"The 19th century was absolutely the golden age, the heyday of miniature printing," says Garcia-Ontiveros. "They were saying, we want to push this to the limit and see how far we can go."

Those limits have gone from inches to millimetres to micrometres. In 1952, a Munich publisher produced a five-by-five millimetre book containing the Lord's Prayer in Dutch, English, French, German, Spanish and Swedish (it sold for £1,300 in London in 2006). Guinness World Records lists the smallest reproduction of a printed book as *Teeny Ted from Turnip Town*, which measures 70 micrometres by 100 micrometres and was etched using an ion beam. Russian scientist Vladimir Aniskin believes he has beaten this with Levsha, his 70-by-90 micrometres book. The pages are turned using a sharpened metal needle.

What is it that makes the world of the miniature so appealing? "It's the feeling that you can hold the entire works of Shakespeare in your hands," says Garcia-Ontiveros. "Miniature books were never seen as serious books, they were curiosities, seen as fun objects, not the kind of books that would make it into libraries. They were the books people would have at home, and because they are tiny and often printed on cheap paper they don't tend to survive, so in any age miniature books are very rare. And they get lost! We ourselves had one fall behind a cabinet and it wasn't until we had some building work done that one of the builders saw it behind a cabinet. We'd been looking for it for years." For Garfield, it is less about content and more about the skill that went into making them at all. "Their size ensures that the reader takes great care in handling and appreciating them. This is the trick of so many miniature objects," he says. "The smaller they are, the more one looks."

—©2019 The Guardian

# Lunar rover begins its exploration

Reaction in China to the landing was muted—a sign that the novelty of space missions has faded. But it also appeared to reflect political and economic anxieties



■ The launch of the Chang'e 4 lunar probe in December. It has reached the far side of the moon, but some Chinese question whether the money was well spent.

STEVEN LEE MYERS

**H**ours after a space probe from China made humanity's first landing on the far side of the moon, sending images of its surroundings back to Earth, the spacecraft deployed a rover on Thursday to take still more photographs and scan the surface of terrain never before traversed.

The rover, weighing 300 pounds, rolled off a ramp on the lander at 10:22 p.m. Beijing time, laying deep tracks in the moon's soft soil, its solar panels spread like wings, according to a photograph released to state media. The rover is now programmed to roam across a barren vista toward a distinct crater.

Chinese scientists hailed the landing of the Chang'e 4 probe as evidence of the country's growing stature in space exploration. "It is human nature to explore the unknown world," Wu Weiren, chief designer of the lunar mission for the China National Space

Administration, said in an interview on the state television network, CCTV. "And it is what our generation and the next generation are supposed to do."

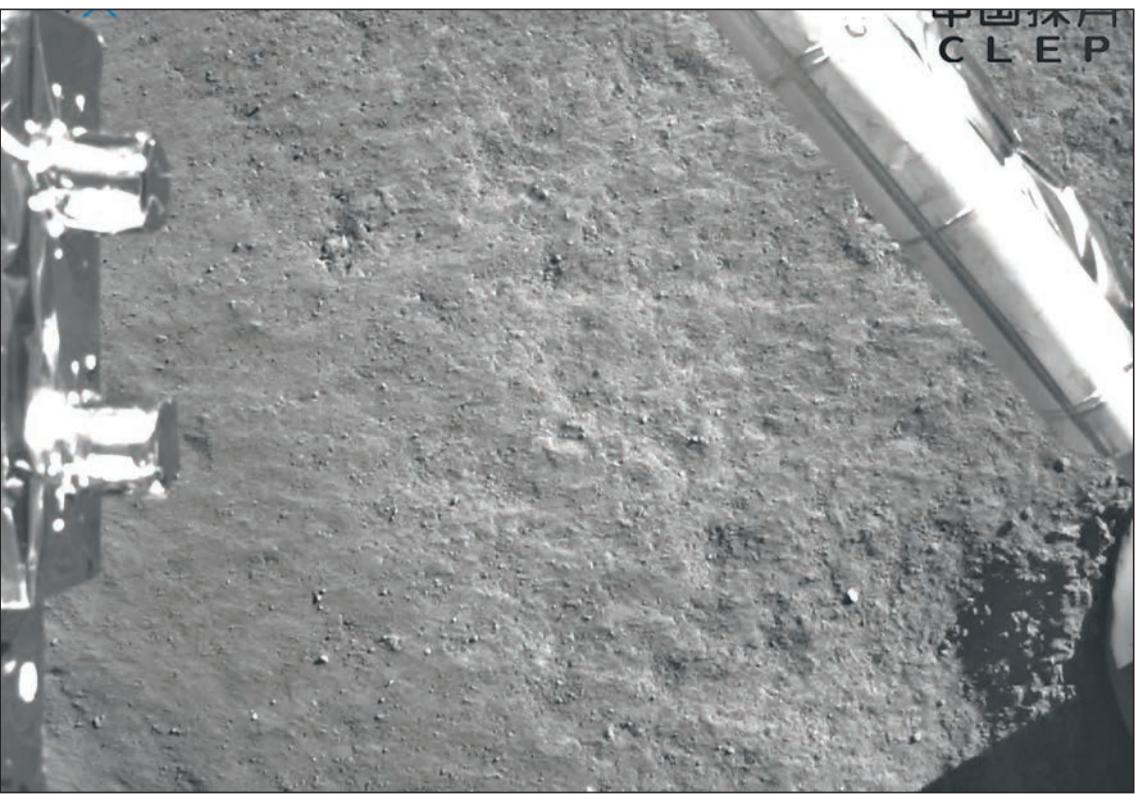
Compared with previous missions, however, the reaction to Thursday's milestones seemed strikingly restrained, both in the country's state-run news outlets and on social media. On China's most-watched TV news program early Thursday evening, the landing—declared a success by officials at mission control—not even one of the four top stories.

The doodle of China's biggest search engine, Baidu, paid subtle homage to the lander and its rover, but the news was relegated to the fifth item on CCTV's 7 pm news program. It followed three reports on the doings of the country's leader, Xi Jinping, and an item on a new government zone being developed outside Beijing. In interviews, several people said they had paid little attention to the moon

landing.

The muted reaction was a sign that the novelty of the country's space missions has faded. But the coverage also appeared to reflect political and economic anxieties at a time when Mr Xi's government is trying to negotiate a truce in the trade war with the United States and respond to worrisome cracks in the economy.

A woman in a cafe in Beijing, Liu



■ One of the first images sent by the Chang'e 4 probe. It has deployed a rover to scan the surface and send more images back to Earth.

United States. Officials have said the country hopes to establish a lunar base that could provide natural resources for the Earth but also serve as a launching pad for further exploration.

The first of three photographs sent by Chang'e 4 appeared a little over an hour after the spacecraft touched down as planned at 10:26 am, Beijing time, in the middle of a crater not far

and white, showed the lander descending.

The spacecraft was the first to land intact on the side of the moon that perpetually faces away from Earth. A Soviet satellite took the first photographs of the far side in 1959, and the Apollo missions circled above it between 1968 and 1972, but the difficulty of communicating with earthbound scientists had always made the idea of landing there more complex, if not necessarily prohibitive.

Dr Wu, in his televised remarks, said the landing had been a "great kickoff" for future lunar missions, including ones intended to land astronauts—something only the United States has accomplished, sending 12 men to the moon. Under the current schedule, China would send the first astronaut by 2030.

"We are building China into a space giant," he said.

To overcome the challenge of communicating from the moon's far side, China had previously launched a satellite called Queqiao, or Magpie

Bridge. It now orbits beyond the moon to act as a relay for transmissions to and from the mission control center on the northwestern outskirts of Beijing.

China's first lunar probe, known as Chang'e 3, landed on the near side of the moon in 2013. It also released a rover, but it was hindered by terrain and communication problems. After a month it came to a halt, and broadcast only intermittently following that.

Yi Guobin, a spokesman for the Chang'e 4 program, said in televised remarks that the detachment of the rover was the "more important historical moment."

NASA's administrator, Jim Bridenstine, congratulated his Chinese counterparts for the successful landing. In a message on Twitter, he called the mission "a first for humanity and an impressive accomplishment!" Twitter is banned inside China's Great Firewall, but his remark was widely quoted nonetheless.

—©2019 The New York Times

## China's moon landing

Ying, expressed pride in the space program but said she had not followed the landing closely. She then expressed wonder about the costs. "The economy is bad," she said. "Is it really a good thing for the country to spend recklessly?"

The government does not disclose how much it spends on its space programs, but it has made it clear that this launch was part of an ambitious goal to establish China as one of the world's space powers, rivaling the

from the moon's south pole. It showed a barren, undulating vista pocked by a smaller crater, as did another picture sent 12 hours later as the rover began its journey.

Contrary to the enduring but mistaken notion that the moon has a "dark side"—you can blame Pink Floyd for that, at least in part—the photographs showed the landscape bathed in an orange hue, casting the sharp shadows from the lander and the rover. The other two, in black

# 'It's a very big torture': the children growing up in hiding in Dubai

With sex outside marriage punishable by jail, migrant workers who become pregnant are often forced to keep their babies locked away

KATIE MCQUE

**A** sweltering, windowless room in an old district of Dubai, no more than five metres by three metres in size, is home to nine people from the Philippines. Eight are adults, working long hours in low-paid jobs so they can send money home to their families. The ninth is a six-year-old boy.

His name is Jerry and he shares a tiny bed with his mother, Neng. Jerry loves dancing, Peppa Pig and doughnuts. This small dark room is the only home he has known, as he's spent his life in hiding as a stateless child. Growing up without a birth certificate or any other identification means he has no access to education and has never visited a doctor. Officially, this little boy does not exist.

Of the UAE's 9.4 million inhabitants, about 70 percent are low-paid migrant labourers. As a vital part of the economy, they normally work in construction or retail, or as maids and taxi drivers.

Neng was one of them. A decade ago she came to the UAE from the Philippines to work as a domestic maid but ran away because her employers were abusive, she says. Having no job meant losing her visa and living in the country illegally. She got involved with a man who took her into his home but then he threw her out after she got pregnant.

Now pregnant outside of marriage, Neng knew she had broken the law in the UAE for a second time. Having sex outside of marriage is a crime under the country's Islamic laws, with convictions resulting in prison terms of up to one year.

"The moment that you get pregnant, and you cannot tell anyone and you don't know what to do, it's a very big torture," says Neng.

The legislation prohibiting sex outside marriage in the UAE is known as the Zina law and is often rigorously enforced. In some cases, even reporting a rape has been regarded by the authorities as illicit sex, and has led to victims being jailed.

Doctors in the country who diagnose an unmarried woman as pregnant are obliged to turn them over to the police. They can then face jail and deportation. Some women opt to leave the UAE before the pregnancy becomes visible and backstreet abortions are also common.

Figures supplied by the Philippines



■ A women-only carriage on the Dubai metro. Figures suggest several hundred migrant workers a year go into hiding after they become pregnant outside of marriage.



■ Neng and Jerry eat a meal in their tiny shared room. Jerry has no access to education and has never been to see a doctor.

Consulate in Dubai indicate several hundred migrant workers a year like Neng make the decision to go into hiding after they become pregnant outside of marriage.

"They are afraid of losing their jobs because that's the only means to support their family back home. To them, deportation is like the end of their life," says Barney Almazar, a lawyer at Gulf Law, who provides legal aid to migrant workers in UAE.

After carrying her baby to term having accessed no healthcare services, Neng gave birth to Jerry in a friend's apartment with the help of an informal midwife and without any pain relief.

Pain relief to find a job through official channels, Neng eventually managed to find work as a housekeeper and nanny for a fellow Filipino family, who live in a house 10 minutes' walk from her home. Her employers know she's illegal and can therefore get away with paying her just AED 1,000 per month (£216) for working 10 hours a day, five days a week. Often she is not paid on time. But she has no rights and cannot complain to the authorities.

With rent for their bed costing AED 500, the mother and son struggle to make ends meet. When she can, Neng tries to send AED 190 home to her family, who live in Zamboanga Sibugay, one of the Philippines' poorest provinces. This small amount of money is enough to compel her to stay in Dubai.

Neng and Jerry's bed is a lower bunk, just under a metre wide. Makeshift curtains made of bed-sheets hang over the front of the bunks to provide a little privacy. Meals are eaten in the room, and cockroaches and other bugs scuttle across the floor.

These living conditions have blighted Jerry's childhood. He is often overwhelmed with worry, which makes him ill. "I don't feel anything. I'm sick but I can't get better," he says.

Neng is preparing to surrender to the authorities, which will allow her to leave after serving a jail sentence, and obtain exit visas for herself and Jerry. Despite her difficult life in Dubai, she is reluctant to return home. The future there seems even more bleak to her. Her extended family don't have room to accommodate them and extreme poverty in her province will make life difficult.

Fearful of being caught by the police and unable to look after their children while working, many of these unmarried new mothers resort to abandoning their babies, leaving others in the community to look after them.

One such informal adoptive mother is Joanna\*. She is a Filipina nurse and has been living in Dubai for 10 years. For the past 15 months she's been bringing up a baby girl called Rosamie\*.

Joanna lives in a room with five other women in the Al-Karama area of Dubai. A year-and-a-half ago a newborn baby girl appeared in the room. The mother was a friend of her roommate and, after leaving the baby, she became uncontrollable. "It was 1am and [the baby] was crying and had been left alone," says Joanna. The baby was gone the next day, but she reappeared one month later and then again the next month, Joanna says.

"During that time she had been passed around to other houses. The third time I saw her she was covered in a rash." Joanna started to look after the child, expecting her mother to collect her soon.

"It was difficult that the baby is with us without documents. After two weeks I asked the Philippines Consulate what to do. I was told, 'Just wait, the mother will come,'" she says. "At this point, I decided that maybe this baby is for us."

Through Joanna's work, Rosamie has access to medical care. She is also very well looked after. The talkative little girl can sing her ABCs and

speak English in sentences. She loves wearing dresses and her favourite toy is a doll that she calls Baby Princess. Each night Rosamie and Joanna sing You Are My Sunshine to each other before going to sleep.

"I'm proud of being her mother. I always tell her that I love her very much," Joanna says. "She's so very sweet, she's lovely. I want her to have a normal future, not like this."

Joanna is very aware she could be jailed for keeping a baby that is not legally hers. She is desperate to find a way to legally adopt Rosamie but only Emirati nationals are permitted to adopt children in the UAE.

Other women looking after abandoned children in Dubai have approached Joanna, looking for advice. "So many kids here don't have documents," she says.

It is almost impossible to know how many parents and children are in the same position as Neng and Jerry across the country. Each month, about 40 mothers with children born out of wedlock seek advice and assistance from the Philippines Consulate in Abu Dhabi, according to a spokesperson for the consulate. This figure is likely to be a fraction of the number of mothers who are living in hiding in the country with their children, Almazar says.

At present, child and baby facilities in Dubai's jails are full, because of the high number of mothers who have come forward to surrender, so that they could leave the country after completing a custodial sentence. This has created a backlog of cases, the spokesperson says.

Yet there are signs of hope for these families. The Dubai Foundation for Women and Children is a government-run charity and shelter, which, in addition to rehabilitating human trafficking victims and caring for abandoned or orphaned children, deals with "tens" of cases of mothers who have had babies out of wedlock a year, says Ghanima Hassan Al-Bahri, its care and social services director. In all of the cases the foundation has worked on, the courts have been flexible and the mother has not served a jail term. This approach could be rolled out for wider implementation, she adds.

"I cannot speak about the police or the prosecution about whether they arrested women, I don't know. But from our experience, at the foundation, whenever a woman has called us, it is not like that," says Al-Bahri. "I do believe there is room for improvement... What's the point of putting them in jail?"

\*Names changed to protect identities  
—©2019 The Guardian



### Southee to captain T20 side

Tim Southee was named on Friday to captain New Zealand in next week's one-off Twenty20 match against Sri Lanka. Regular skipper Kane Williamson is to be rested along with Trent Boult and Colin de Grandhomme. Southee, who has captained Kiwis twice, admitted that leading a side in cricket's shortest form can be a bit of a gamble.

### Sharapova suffers injury blow

Former world No 1 Maria Sharapova's Australian Open preparations suffered a blow after a thigh injury forced her to retire from the Shenzhen Open quarter-final clash against Aryna Sabalenka on Friday. Sharapova, who won the Australian Open in 2008, tasted Tianjin Open success in 2017 after a 15-month doping suspension but has endured a difficult run at the Grand Slams.



### Muguruza sees off Cornet

Spain's Garbine Muguruza collected her first singles win of the new season, but also picked up an injury concern at the mixed teams Hopman Cup in Perth Friday. The dual Grand Slam champion and world No 18 had lost her two previous singles matches in Perth to top 20 duo Angelique Kerber and Ashleigh Barty.



## SPORTS DIGEST

### New Diamond Cup from Jan 9

**KATHMANDU:** New Diamond Sports Club is organising the second New Diamond Cup Open National Women's Volleyball Tournament from January 9-12. A total of eight teams are participating in the tournament which will be held at the New Diamond Academy volleyball court in Naikap. New Diamond Academy, Nepal APF Club, Tribhuvan Army Club, Tops Secondary School of Pokhara, Jawalakhel Volleyball Training Centre, Chitwan Tigress, Paramount School and Nepal Police Club are the participating teams. The champions will get Rs 301,000, while second and third place finishers will take home Rs 201,000, Rs 101,000. The best player will also pocket Rs 15,000, informed the organisers on Friday. (PR)

### Falgundana Gold Cup from today

**PANCHTHAR:** Jhapa XI is taking on Karna Singh Sonam Football Club of Taplejung as the 10th edition of Falgunana Gold Cup kicks off at the Phidim Secondary School ground on Saturday. The knockout football tournament runs until January 16. The eventual champions will receive a cash purse of Rs 400,000 and the runners-up will take home Rs 200,000. A total of 10 teams are participating in the tournament organised by the Phidim Sporting Club. (PR)

### APF, NPC enter quarter-finals

**SUNSARI:** Nepal Armed Police Force (APF) Club and Nepal Police Club (NPC) entered the quarter-finals of the second Sabhamukh Cup National Volleyball Tournament on Friday. APF defeated Province 5 26-24, 26-24, 25-15 and NPC got the better of Province 2 25-9, 25-18, 25-7. Province 5, however, bounced back to beat Province 7 25-16, 25-17, 25-19 to reach the last eight. In another match, Province 3 registered a 25-21, 29-27, 27-25 victory over Province 2 to make it to the quarter-finals. In the quarter-finals, NPC will take on Province 1, APF will play Karnali Province, Gandaki Province will be up against Province 3 and TAC will lock horns with Province 5. The top two finishers will get Rs 400,000 and Rs 200,000 respectively. (PR)

# Lowly Villarreal hold Real

REUTERS

VILAREAL, JAN 4

Real Madrid endured a frustrating start to the new year as they drew 2-2 at struggling Villarreal on Thursday and were left seven points behind the Spanish League leaders Barcelona.

#### STANDINGS

Teams	P	W	D	L	G	F	GA	PTS
Barcelona	17	11	4	2	48	19	37	37
Atletico	17	9	7	1	25	12	34	34
Sevilla	17	9	5	3	30	17	32	32
Madrid	17	9	3	5	26	21	30	30
Alaves	17	8	4	5	19	17	28	28
Betis	17	7	5	5	20	19	26	26
Getafe	17	6	7	4	18	13	25	25
Valencia	17	4	10	3	15	14	22	22
Girona	17	5	7	5	18	20	22	22
Levante	17	6	4	7	28	32	22	22
Celta Vigo	17	5	6	6	28	26	21	21
Valladolid	17	5	6	6	16	19	21	21
Eibar	17	5	6	6	21	25	21	21
Espanyol	17	6	3	8	18	24	21	21
Sociedad	17	5	4	8	18	20	19	19
Leganes	17	4	7	6	16	20	19	19
Villarreal	17	3	7	7	19	23	16	16
Bilbao	17	2	10	5	16	24	16	16
Rayo	17	3	4	10	17	32	13	13
Huesca	17	1	5	11	15	34	8	8



■ Villarreal's Santi Cazorla (second left) in action against Real Madrid's Dani Carvajal during their Spanish League match at the Estadio de la Ceramica in Villarreal on Thursday.

# Serie A under fire for men-only seats in Saudi final

REUTERS

MILAN, JAN 4

Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini on Thursday condemned as "disgusting" restrictions imposed on women hoping to see the final of the Italian Supercoppa, which is being staged this month in Saudi Arabia.

The encounter between Juventus and AC Milan will be played in Jeddah on January 16 as part of a three-match deal that Italy's Serie A signed last year with Saudi Arabia worth \$25 million. The decision to go ahead with the game in the wake of the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul had already caused controversy.

But the anger built this week when Serie A released information on how to get tickets, saying some category of seats were only available for men and explaining that women could only gain access by buying tickets in "family" areas. "To have the Italian Supercoppa being played in an Islamic country where women cannot go to the stadium unless they are accompanied by a man is sad. It's disgusting. I won't watch the game," said Salvini, a passionate AC Milan fan.

Giorgia Meloni, head of the far-right Brothers of Italy party, called for the final to be postponed. "It should be organised in a country that respects our women and our values," she wrote in a Facebook post.

The Supercoppa final, which pitches the Serie A champions against the winners of



■ Gaetano Micciche  
the Coppa Italia, has been played abroad several times, with the United States, China and Qatar the previous foreign venues.

The head of the Serie A, Gaetano Micciche, defended the decision to play in Saudi Arabia and said there would be no change of heart. In a statement he said women would not have to be accompanied by a man to get into the stadium, adding that this would be a "historic first". "Until last year, women (in Saudi Arabia) could not attend any sporting event," he said. "We are working to ensure that in the next games that we play in the country, women can access all the stadium seats."

A ban on women attending some football matches in the deeply conservative Muslim kingdom was lifted in January 2018 as part of a wider relaxation of social restrictions, with special family sections set up in three stadiums.

# Tway leads, Johnson one shot back

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

KAPALUA, JAN 4

Kevin Tway got off to a roaring start in his Tournament of Champions debut, firing a bogey-free seven-under 66 for one-shot lead in the PGA Tour's first round of 2019.

Tway had seven birdies and no bogeys as the Tour winners from 2018 kicked off the new year on Thursday at the Plantation Course in Kapalua, Hawaii. "When you're making a lot of birdies it makes everything better," Tway said. Tway led by one shot over Dustin Johnson, Justin Thomas and Gary Woodland, who sit at six under. Johnson and Thomas are the past two winners at Kapalua. World No 8 Rory McIlroy and No 14 Jason Day are tied for sixth at four under. World No 6 Jon Rahm is tied for 11th at three under.

Tway qualified for this winners-only field by capturing the Safeway Open for his first PGA Tour victory. "I was just trying to

drink a lot of water. But I didn't think I was going to play that good, to be honest," he said. "I hit the ball well, kept the ball in play, made a few putts, controlled my ball in the wind. It's windy where I'm from in Oklahoma so it's kind of like I was at home. Each shot's difficult so you're just focused on the trajectory and where I need to land it and where I need to miss it."

The first round of the new year featured a hole-in-one by Patton Kizzire who is at four under. Kizzire aced the par-three eighth hole for his first hole-in-one on the tour. "I was just trying to hit the green," he said. Bryson DeChambeau gave the spectators the first example of the new rules when he made a par putt with the pin still in the cup.

Kevin Na withdrew from the event before his scheduled tee time on Thursday because of a fractured bone in his right pinkie finger. Na said he injured the finger last week and estimated he would miss about a month.

Tway qualified for this winners-only field by capturing the Safeway Open for his first PGA Tour victory. "I was just trying to

### Tournament of Champions



■ Kevin Tway follows through his tee shot during the first round of the Tournament of Champions golf event in Kapalua, Hawaii, on Thursday.

# Chhetri's Kaptaan 1998 released

SPORTS BUREAU

KATHMANDU, JAN 4

Former Nepali national cricket team skipper LB Chhetri on Friday released his autobiography 'Kaptaan 1998'—

Chhetri is the first generation of Nepali cricketers who represented the country internationally through the 1996 ACC Trophy. He played under Uttam Karmacharya in the 1996 ACC Trophy—a regional 50-over tournament between the non-Test playing countries—as a vice-captain before going on to lead the country himself in the next edition two years later.

After beginning his cricket from Indian city Kolkata, Chhetri returned to Nepal in 1994 and started playing club cricket, gradually cementing his place in the national team. Chhetri is also known as the Father of Women's Cricket after he established a girls' cricket team in Nepalgunj.

The move, criticised by many at his

hometown, later on would lay the foundation to form a Nepali national women's cricket team which went on to set several records at the age-group internationals.

The 240-page book is an account of Chhetri's experience of playing in Kolkata, his journey from the Indian city to Nepal, playing for the national team, politics in Nepali cricket's administration and problems he had to face while establishing women's cricket. "In this book, I have tried to record my past and the things that went through me. I have written whatever I saw, experienced and believed was right. Its now on the readers how they judge it," said Chhetri during the book release at the Nepal Academy Hall.

Former Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) President Binaya Raj Pandey, Karmacharya, ex-national team skippers Binod Das and Pawan Agarwal along with former national women's team captain Neera Rajopadhyaya released the book.

# International coaching heavyweights seek success in Asia

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ABU DHABI, JAN 4

Sven-Goran Eriksson and Marcello Lippi coached against each other in the Italian league more than 20 years ago. The famous tacticians are just two of a number of high-profile international coaches preparing for the 2019 Asian Cup that begins in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

The tournament, expanded from 16 teams in 2015 to 24 teams in the United Arab Emirates, is the biggest ever. It remains to be seen if the competition, with venues also in Dubai, Sharjah and Al Ain, is the best. For the likes of Eriksson, in charge of the Philippines, or Lippi and China, success is not necessarily about winning the trophy. Eriksson, appointed in October, would simply like to survive the group stage in the country's first appearance

in the competition. "I think at this Asian Cup, with this generation of players, the Philippines have the chance that football is good in the Philippines and qualifying for the Asian Cup will help," said Eriksson, who took England to the quarter-finals of the World Cup in 2002 and 2006. "If we can go through that will mean a lot for the country."



For Lippi, coming to the end of an disappointing two-year spell in charge of China, success would be any sign that the country, still to win the Asian Cup, had made progress. As it stands however, the team enters the tournament with just one win in their last seven games, a run that includes disappointing draws against Palestine, India and Bahrain. "The players have performed well in the training camp we had," Lippi, expected to retire after the tourna-



ment ends, said. Hosts UAE have another high-profile Italian coach with performances under Alberto Zaccheroni disappointing. Zaccheroni took AC Milan to the 1999 Serie A title but in 11 games in 2018, the UAE, 1996 finalists,



scored just seven goals. Regional rival Saudi Arabia have been in better form under Argentine coach Juan Antonio Pizzi, who led Chile to the 2016 Copa America title. Compatriot Hector Cuper has been appointed by Uzbekistan. Former Real Madrid and



to be in the running for the final that takes place on February 1 in Abu Dhabi. Australia are the defending champions after winning the 2015 edition at home although the Socceroos will be without European-based stars such as

Mathew Leckie and Aaron Mooy. South Korea, led by former Portugal boss Paulo Bento, also has injury issues but possesses the biggest name in Asian soccer in Son Heung-min.

The in-form Tottenham Hotspur attacker will miss the first two group games and arrive in time to take on China on January 16, although he has apologized to the club for leaving mid-season.

"I feel sorry for my teammates, the fans and the coaching staff," Son said. "It's difficult. Sometimes you think it's a bit sad, but it is also important for my country. I hope I can keep my form for the national team and when I come back here again as well."

Japan, one of the few countries with a domestic coach in Hajime Moriyasu, was Asia's most successful team at the 2018 World Cup and are also considered to be a front-runner.

## SPORTS DIGEST

**Chelsea fan banned for three years**

**LONDON:** A Chelsea supporter has been banned from attending games for three years after being found guilty of homophobic chants during the club's Premier League game against Brighton and Hove Albion at the Amex Stadium last month. George Bradley pleaded guilty at Brighton Magistrates' Court on Thursday to the offence of using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour to cause harassment, alarm or distress. The 20-year-old was also fined £965. "We'd like to thank Sussex Police for their assistance in dealing with this unsavoury incident and we are very pleased with the outcome," a Brighton spokesperson said in a statement. (REUTERS)

**Andreeescu sends Williams packing**

**AUCKLAND:** Canadian teen Bianca Andreescu stunned Venus Williams in the WTA Auckland Classic quarter-finals to continue her giant-killing run on Friday, while defending champion Julia Goerges survived a scare. The 18-year-old Andreescu, ranked 152nd, beat Williams, 20 years her senior and a seven-times Grand-Slam winner, 6-7 (1/7), 6-1, 6-3. The come-from-behind victory came a day after she eliminated top seed and world No 3 Caroline Wozniacki. Andreescu will meet the winner of the match between Hsieh Su-Wei and Sara Sorribes Tormo in the semi-finals. Defending champion Goerges, who will play Viktoria Kuzmova in the other semi-final, fought back from facing match point to overpower Canadian Eugenie Bouchard 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (8/6). (REUTERS)

# Pujara, Pant all but seal series

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SYDNEY, JAN 4

A marathon century by Cheteshwar Pujara and a swashbuckling ton from Rishabh Pant all but ended Australia's hopes of saving the series on Friday as India built a massive 622-7 declared in the final Sydney Test.

India began the second day at 303-4 and proceeded to twist the knife against a demoralised home team that toiled in hot conditions with little joy. Unless Australia win, India will claim a first-ever series victory Down Under since they began touring here in 1947-48. They lead 2-1. Despite the tall task ahead Australia skipper Tim Paine said they were not ready to throw in the towel.

"We certainly won't be doing that, we will be fighting as hard as we can for the next three days. Cricket's one of those games, if you keep doing that it can turn really quickly," he said. "But you've got to tip your cap to India. They have worked extremely hard for three-and-a-half Tests to get us to where they want us today."

The methodical Pujara made a masterful 193 off 373 balls while Pant stroked his highest Test score in an entertaining 159 not out. Ravindra Jadeja chipped in with a lively 81 in a 204-run stand with Pant—a record seventh wicket-partnership at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Skipper Virat Kohli finally declared when Jadeja was out, with the tireless Nathan Lyon taking 4-178 off 57.2 gruelling overs. It left newlook Australian openers Marcus Harris (19) and Usman Khawaja (five) to negotiate 10 tricky overs before stumps after a tortuous day in the field. They ended at 24-0.

"Every hundred I score is special for me because I have just started my career. But I don't really think about hundreds, I only think about what the team needs from me," said Pant, who expressed



■ India's Rishabh Pant plays a stroke as Australian wicketkeeper Tim Paine looks on during the second day of their fourth Test match at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday.

## Australia-India Test Series

some sympathy for the Australian bowlers. "Obviously when you bowl for two days the body gets tired, but their body language was really good, they were pushing themselves and trying their level best."

Calm and collected No 3 Pujara started the day 130 not out and picked up where he left off. He drove his second ball through the covers for three before once again dropping anchor, blocking and targeting only loose balls.

Throughout his knock, he hardly played a false stroke in a demonstration of "old-school" Test batting, soaking up the pressure and counter-attacking when he saw an opportunity.

Pujara brought up his 150 with a boundary and seemed destined for his fourth Test 200 before attempting to whip Lyon down the leg side. Instead, he lobbed the ball back into the spinner's hands.

Sri Lankan batting legend Kumar Sangakkara summed up his innings in a tweet. "A great lesson to all batsmen in the series and tests in general," he said. "@cheteshwar1 showing how trusting your strengths and being unashamedly dogged in technique and concentration brings great rewards."

At the other end chirpy wicket-keeper-batsman Pant plundered only his second

Test century as he piled more pressure on a wilting Australian attack. The 21-year-old, in only his ninth Test, smashed eight boundaries in his ton and quickly passed his previous Test high of 114 against England last year, swinging his bat as he grew in confidence.

He was ably supported by allrounder Jadeja who raced to a 10th Test 50, unleashing his trademark celebration of

twirling his bat like a samurai sword. So desperate were Australia at this point that Khawaja was given a bowl—only the second time he has been called on in a Test. Jadeja was finally undone by a weary Lyon who could barely muster a celebration as he knocked the stumps over and Kohli called it a day.

Earlier, Hanuma Vihari added only three to his overnight 39 before he misjudged a sweep off Lyon and the ball feathered his glove, with

Marnus Labuschagne taking the catch. From the moment the coin landed in Kohli's favour, the Test has taken on a predictable tone. Whichever team has won the toss in the series has batted first and gone on to win the match.

## Summary

**Australia 24-0 (M Harris 19\*, U Khawaja 5\*) trail India 622-7 decl (C Pujara 193, R Pant 159\*, R Jadeja 81; N Lyon 4-178, J Hazlewood 2-105) by 598 runs at stumps on second day**

# Man City back into title race



■ Manchester City's Leroy Sane (right) shoots to score his team's second goal during their English Premier League match against Liverpool at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester on Thursday.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANCHESTER, JAN 4

Liverpool can't now win the Premier League unbeaten. Manchester City have renewed hope they won't be surrendering the trophy at all.

A title defense faltering a week ago is back on track for Pep Guardiola after City beat Liverpool 2-1 on Thursday, inflicting the leader's first league loss of the season in their 21st game. Completing the packed festive programme with an engrossing encounter, Liverpool threatened a comeback when Roberto Firmino canceled out Sergio Aguero's first-half opener but Leroy Sane struck the winner in the 72nd minute.

When Sadio Mane hit the post, City defender John Stones attempted clearance went straight onto goalkeeper Ederson's head. The ball looped back toward goal and Stones had to scramble to clear. It proved just enough, as goal-line technology ruled out the score.

With video review not entering the Premier League until next season, the eyes of referee Anthony Taylor saved City captain Vincent Kompany around the half-hour mark.

A sliding tackle into Mohamed Salah that Liverpool manager Klopp later said should have been a sending off only saw Kompany booked. "I thought it was a

## English Premier League

been trimmed to four points by City, who reclaimed second place from Tottenham.

"It's still in Liverpool's hands, but our performance was beyond anything else I've ever witnessed," City captain Vincent Kompany said. "We went toe-to-toe with a very physical and aggressive team and we matched them for everything, if not more."

City were spared from going behind by just 11 millimeters of the ball failing to cross the line in the 18th minute.

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great challenge—was it not?" Kompany said, chuckling. "I felt I got the ball, a little bit of the man but it wasn't naughty. I didn't try to injure him, that's for sure. It was that or let him go through on goal."

The hosts did go through on goal themselves—and scored in the 40th minute. Receiving Bernardo Silva's cross on his right foot, Aguero got away from Dejan Lovren and used his left boot to power the ball into the roof of the net. "We need Sergio in this kind of game. The finish was incredible," Guardiola said. "It was important we played with courage in our game and we were aggressive in our pressing."

So too was Liverpool in the second half, showing just why the Premier League era's perennial underachiever might yet win the English title for a 19th time. The equaliser was created by the fullbacks in the 64th. Trent Alexander-Arnold sent a diagonal pass to the far post where Andy Robertson volleyed the ball across the penalty area for an unmarked Firmino to head into an empty net.

Just when Liverpool was gaining momentum, City roared back in front from a blistering counterattack. Raheem Sterling cut in from the left and slipped the ball through to Sane, who fired a shot past Alexander-Arnold and in off the post. "It was a very intense game for both teams and we were unlucky with our finishing," Klopp said. "We could've drawn, we could've won it. We lost, but it's not the biggest problem."

### STANDINGS

Teams	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Liverpool	21	17	3	1	49	10	54
Man City	21	16	2	3	56	17	50
Tottenham	21	16	0	5	46	21	48
Chelsea	21	13	5	3	38	16	44
Arsenal	21	12	5	4	46	31	41
Man United	21	11	5	5	43	32	38
Watford	21	8	5	8	30	31	29
Wolverhampton	21	8	5	8	23	25	29
West Ham	21	8	4	9	29	32	28
Everton	21	7	6	8	31	31	27
Bournemouth	21	8	3	10	31	40	27
Brighton	21	7	5	9	24	29	26
Palace	21	6	4	11	19	26	22
Newcastle	21	4	6	11	15	29	18
Burnley	21	5	3	13	21	42	18
Cardiff	21	5	3	13	19	41	18
Southampton	21	3	7	11	21	38	16
Fulham	21	3	5	13	19	47	14
Huddersfield	21	2	4	15	13	37	10

# South Africa take lead

## Pakistan-South Africa Second Test

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
CAPE TOWN, JAN 4

South Africa moved into a first innings lead during a tense second morning of the second Test against Pakistan at Newlands on Friday.

South Africa were 188-4 at lunch, a lead of 11 runs. The hosts lost two wickets and could score only 65 runs in 27 overs against some hostile, accurate bowling. South Africa also benefitted, for the second time in successive Tests, from a television umpire overturning a catch decision by the on-field decision.

A consensus of television commentators was that there was no conclusive evidence to justify Wilson's decision. On Thursday, though, the footage suggested Ravi made the correct call.

catch was completed. Oxenford gave a "soft" signal of "out". After looking at numerous replays Ravi overturned the on-field decision because it appeared the ball had touched the ground.

The incident was similar to one at a critical stage of the first Test in Centurion, also involving Azhar Ali, when Dean Elgar survived against Shaeen Afridi after Wilson reversed the on-field decision. A consensus of television commentators was that there was no conclusive evidence to justify Wilson's decision. On Thursday, though, the footage suggested Ravi made the correct call.

## SPURS EXTEND ALDERWEIRELD'S CONTRACT

REUTERS  
LONDON, JAN 4

Tottenham Hotspur have extended defender Toby Alderweireld's contract until 2020, the Premier League club said on Friday.

The Belgium international's deal was set to expire at the end of the current season after which the 29-year-old centre-back would have been able to leave the club for free in the close season. Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino had confirmed in December that the club was looking to activate the one-year extension in his contract.

# BPL spends big to bash rival T20s

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
DHAKA, JAN 4

The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) starts this weekend with bad boy Australians Steve Smith and David Warner among foreign stars tempted by top-notch salaries that have made the BPL a leading Twenty20 tournament.

The two, who are serving 12 month international bans for ball tampering, will clash when Warner leads the Sylhet Sixers against Smith's Comilla Victorians in Dhaka on Sunday. Warner said the BPL is now "amongst the best". South African big hitter AB de Villiers with West Indies' Chris Gayle and England's Alex Hales will be playing for defending champions Rangpur Riders.

The league had feared an exodus to the rival Australian Big Bash League (BBL). Afghan leg-spin star Rashid Khan, New Zealand batsman Brendon McCullum and England's Josh Butler all played in the BPL last year but chose the Big Bash this time. But De Villiers and Nepalese spinner Sandeep Lamichhane—who will be in Warner's team—are leaving the Big Bash to take part in the BPL. The Bangladesh tournament finishes February 8 which enables



■ David Warner

them to return to Australia if needed.

Gayle has become a BPL fixture in recent years, hitting a world record 18 sixes in his 69-ball 146 for Rangpur in last season's final. But with each team allowed nine foreigners, compared to two for the Big Bash, there is a huge migrant contingent. West Indians Sunil Narine, Kieron Pollard, Andre Russell, Carlos Brathwaite, Evin Lewis and Sheldon Cottrell, Pakistan's Shahid Afridi and Shaheen Malik and England's Ian Bell are among other top names appearing for the seven teams.

The salary cap for draft players is \$200,000 but most of the foreigners negotiated non-draft individual deals for Warner. "At the moment, the BPL is starting against the BBL, at home. After this you have the Pakistan Super League and Indian Premier League. Most players tell me that this is definitely up there with the best," he added.

Former Sri Lankan batsman Mahela Jayawardene, who will coach Kulu Titans echoed Warner. "It is good for Bangladeshi youngsters to play with those guys, to learn a lot," he said. High-profile coaches such as Australia's Tom Moody, Pakistan's Waqar Younis and South Africa's Lance Klusener have also been drawn.

Moody and Waqar will coach Rangpur Riders and Sylhet Sixers respectively while Klusener will coach Rajshahi Kings. "It is great to have world-class players" in the BPL, said Moody.

Bangladesh batsman Mushfiqur Rahim said the presence of the foreign stars brought prestige to the poor nation but also helped develop young home players.

"It gives them the opportunity to learn," said Rahim. The BPL was dogged by match-fixing scandals and delayed pay for some foreign players after it started in 2011.

After a one-year suspension in 2015 it has been staged without serious controversy.