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WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

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Bhairahawa Jomsom

TODAY

NATIONAL

The Rolpa District Prison in Libang in ward 4 of Rolpa Municipality is in a dilapidated condition, accommodating prisoners twice its capacity. According to the acting chief, the prison built in 1982 was for 50. Pg 2

The Koshi Provincial Assembly on Friday endorsed a resolution motion directing Chief Minister Kedar Karki to seek a vote of trust. As many as 52 members in 93-strong assembly voted for the motion. Pg 3

WORLD

Explosions echoed over an Iranian city on Friday in an apparent Israeli attack, but Tehran played down the strike and indicated no plans for retaliation—a response gauged towards averting a region-wide war. Pg 4

MONEY

The World Bank has agreed “in principle” to lead the consortium of international financiers for the development of the 1,063 MW Upper Arun hydel project in Sankhuwasabha, the Finance Ministry said on Friday. Pg 5

SPORTS

Nepal's hopes of qualifying for their second Asia Cup ended after they lost to the United Arab Emirates by six wickets in the semi-final of the ACC Men's T20 Premier Cup in Al Amerat, Oman on Friday. Pg 6



CULTURE

When Pabitra Badi was 16, her and Bimala BK's families put pressure on them to split and marry others, unable to accept their mutual attraction. Relatives harassed them, warning of a legal case to keep them apart. Pg 8



A sadhu displays his inked finger after casting his ballot at a polling station in Haridwar in the Indian state of Uttarakhand on Friday. India began voting in a six-week poll with an all but assured win for Hindu nationalist Narendra Modi, as the opposition is pushed to the sidelines.

Indians vote in first phase of world's largest election

If Modi wins, he'll be only the second Indian leader to retain power for a third term, after Jawaharlal Nehru.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

Millions of Indians began voting on Friday in a six-week election that's a referendum on Narendra Modi, the populist prime minister who has championed an assertive brand of Hindu nationalist politics and is seeking a rare third term as the country's leader. People began queuing up at polling stations hours before they were allowed in at 7 am in the first 21 states to hold votes, from the Himalayan mountains to the tropical Andaman Islands. Nearly 970 million voters—more than 10 percent of the world's population—will elect 543 members to the lower house of Parliament for five years during the staggered elections that run until June 1. The votes will be counted on June 4. This election is seen as one of the

most consequential in India's history and will test the limits of Modi's political dominance. If Modi wins, he'll be only the second Indian leader to retain power for a third term, after Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first prime minister. Most polls predict a win for Modi and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, who are up against a broad opposition alliance led by the Indian National Congress and powerful regional parties. It's not clear who will lead India if the opposition alliance, called INDIA, wins the election. Its more than 20 parties have not put forward a candidate yet. The BJP controls much of India's Hindi-speaking northern and central parts, but is now trying to gain a foothold in the east and south.

>> Continued on page 2

Beijing's message: Won't tolerate anti-China activities in Nepal

Parties and stakeholders should be involved in projects, CPC leader tells Nepali Maoists.

ANIL GIRI
KATHMANDU, APRIL 19

A senior leader of the Communist Party of China warned that Beijing will not tolerate any third-country activities in Nepal targeting China.

During a meeting on Thursday with the general secretary of the ruling CPN (Maoist Centre), Dev Gurung, who is currently in Beijing on a 10-day visit, Liu Jianchao, minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee (IDCPC), told Gurung and the Maoist delegation that Beijing will not tolerate any actions in Nepal by third countries targeted against China.

The IDCPC is in charge of maintaining relations with political parties of other countries, especially fellow communist parties.

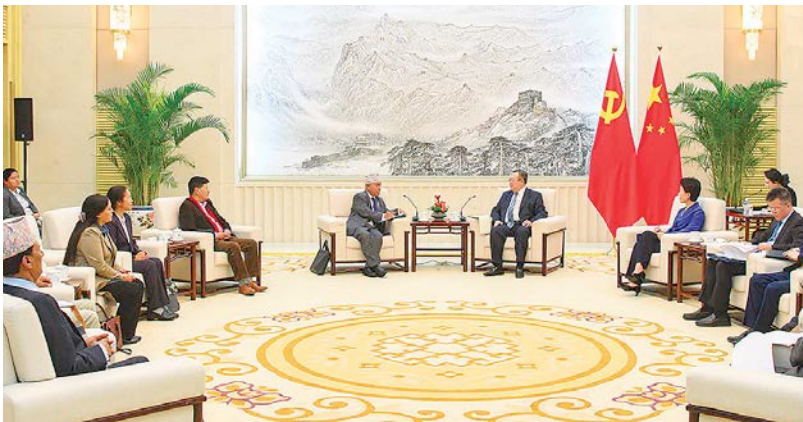
A jumbo delegation from the Maoist Centre is currently in China at the invitation of the IDCPC and it held talks with Liu and other leaders in Beijing on Thursday and Friday.

“We are in favour of world peace,” Liu told Gurung and the visiting Maoist delegation. “If any country tries to act against China in Nepal, we will not tolerate it.”

But Liu, who is being spoken of as the next foreign minister of China, did not name the country, Gurung told the Post over the phone from Beijing.

Earlier in January-end, Sun Haiyan, vice-minister of the IDCPC, made similar remarks in Kathmandu during a roundtable with major party leaders. Sun had alleged that some countries were trying to disrupt development cooperation between Nepal and China and defame bilateral relations.

“...Some criticise our relations. Some are trying to sabotage our bilateral relations and some have increased



In this image provided to the Post, Maoist Centre politicians meet Chinese leaders in Beijing.

activity against China,” Sun had said during a consultative conference in Kathmandu between Nepali political leaders and the Communist Party of China. Her statement had sparked a controversy in Nepal.

During their Thursday meeting, Gurung told Liu that Nepal is quite aware about the elements trying to destabilise Nepal-China relations and creating misunderstanding and conflict between the two countries.

“Their [Liu's] focus was mostly Western countries but he did not name any particular country,” said Gurung, adding that Nepal's priority is stability and it will continue to focus on the principles of Panchasheel.

Besides discussing what China wants to see in Nepal, other issues included Nepal's failure to present a list of projects to be executed under the Belt and Road Initiative, according to Gurung.

Liu also proposed involving political parties and other chan-

nels including stakeholders to facilitate the execution of various Chinese initiatives in Nepal, Gurung said.

This is the first-of-its-kind proposal from Beijing whose blueprint remains unknown.

Beijing is also displeased with the progress on the BRI, delays in implementing Chinese-funded projects in Nepal, and the slow progress of projects undertaken by the Chinese contractors and firms.

>> Continued on page 2

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KMC bars private schools from collecting admission fees from continuing students

Warns of legal action. But schools say law allows them to levy some charge annually.



ARJUN POUDEL
KATHMANDU, APRIL 19

The Kathmandu Metropolitan City has instructed institutional schools operating within its jurisdiction not to charge admission fees when they move up grades in the same school.

The KMC's Education Department has also instructed schools not to charge new students more than a

month's fee for admission.

Issuing a statement on Friday, the KMC has said schools charging students in violation of the instructions will face legal actions. “There have been complaints over some institutional schools operating in the metropolis charging additional fees.”

The city office reminded that the Kathmandu Metropolitan City School Education Act 2018, the

Kathmandu Metropolitan City School Education Management Regulations-2018, and Rule 4.2.6 of Institutional Schools Criteria and Operation Directives-2013 prohibit schools from charging amounts other than the monthly fee of the respective class during new admissions.

Rule 4.2.7 of the same directive also prohibits schools from charging admission fees of students who are already enrolled in the same school.

“We will send school inspectors to schools and take legal action against any schools found charging additional fees,” said Deepak Adhikari, joint spokesperson at the metropolis. “This time we are committed to strictly enforcing the existing rules and regulations.”

Operators of institutional schools, however, claim that the law allows them to collect an annual fee every year—two months' worth of monthly fees from existing students, and three months' worth of monthly fees from new students.

“We don't know if schools have charged more than what the law permits,” said DK Dhungana, president of Private and Boarding Schools' Organisation Nepal (PABSON).

>> Continued on page 2

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Domestic lives of delightful characters

In ‘The Gurkha’s Daughter’, a collection of eight short stories, Prajwal Parajuly delves into the intricate inner worlds of familiar characters.

ANUSHA DHAKAL

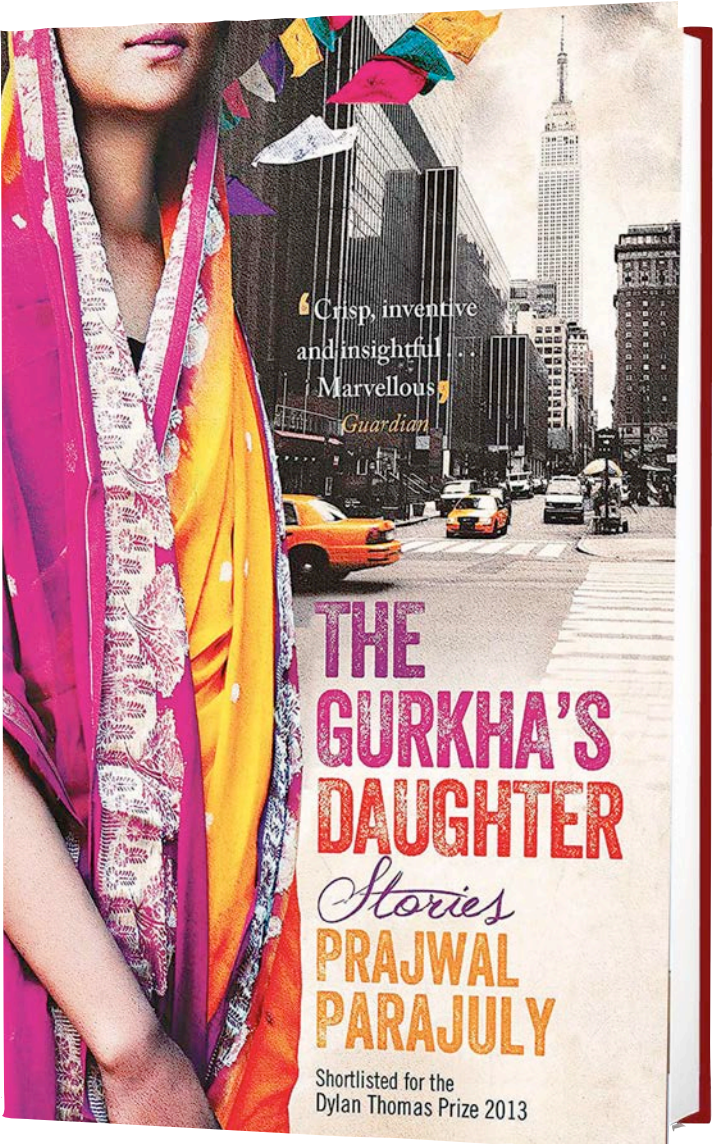
When does a book become truly memorable? Perhaps when it resonates deeply, evoking a sense of familiarity and reflecting one’s own experiences. ‘The Gurkha’s Daughter’ by Prajwal Parajuly left a lasting impression on me precisely for this reason—it exuded a comforting familiarity that lingered long after I turned the final page.

This collection of eight short stories revolves around the common theme of ‘dis-belonging’, a sense of not quite fitting in. Parajuly, himself a Nepali-Indian who was raised in India, explores this theme with profound understanding. Throughout the stories, the intricate layers of mixed identity and the palpable feeling of being out of place resonate powerfully.

All of Parajuly’s characters are relatable and easy to empathise with. He avoids embellishing or vilifying their personalities.

In each of his stories, Parajuly guides us through the everyday lives of his characters, weaving in larger societal issues that impact their existence. While some characters may be more endearing than others, Parajuly possesses a remarkable talent for breathing life into each of them, ensuring they remain etched in our memories. He refrains from resorting to clichéd writing tactics to achieve this; instead, his characters feel authentic, like individuals we might encounter in our own lives.

Parvati, featured in ‘The Cleft’, embodies the archetype of the Nepali aunty, grappling with a strained relationship with her mother-in-law. Rajiv, portrayed in ‘Mixed Blessing’, mirrors the struggles of a once-promising engineering student who finds himself adrift and burned out. Ravi, from ‘No Land is Her Land’, embodies the archetype of the distant relative plagued by anger issues, trapped in soci-



THE GURKHA’S DAUGHTER
Author: Prajwal Parajuly
Year: 2012
Publisher: Quercus

etal expectations. And Gita, in ‘The Gurkha’s Daughter’, resonates as the childhood friend who drifted away, leaving a void in our lives. Through these charac-

ters, Parajuly crafts a narrative that feels deeply personal and universally relatable.

All of Parajuly’s characters are inherently relatable and easy to empathise with, as he avoids embellishing or vilifying their personalities. Instead, he presents them as raw and unapologetically human. This approach allows readers to connect with them on a deeper level, rec-

ognising the nuances in their interactions, prejudices, inclinations, choices, and backgrounds. Despite the multitude of characters introduced in this collection of short stories, Parajuly demonstrates a rare talent for making each one memorable. This ability to craft distinct and memorable characters within the confines of short-story fiction is a testament to his skill as a storyteller.

The book also delves into significant cultural and social issues, addressing topics such as child labour, caste-based discrimination, gender prejudices against female children, the Bhutanese refugee crisis, and the phenomenon of brain drain. Parajuly approaches these themes without adopting a saviour complex; he refrains from offering solutions or assigning blame. Instead, he observes his characters grappling with these complex issues, humanising them poignantly. As the narrator, he doesn’t position himself above the characters; rather, he simply tells their stories as they unfold.



BOOK REVIEW

People are shaped by their circumstances, and Parajuly captures this truth eloquently. The progression of his characters through life events feels natural and authentic. An excellent example of this is his portrayal of Anamika in ‘No Land is Her Land’. Anamika stands out as a strong female character; her self-awareness threatens the men around her, yet she remains unapologetic about her identity and choices. Despite acknowledging that her decisions may invite differential treatment, she exudes confidence and makes bold decisions. This portrayal not only endears Anamika to readers but also embodies a compelling depiction of a resilient female character—one who embraces her identity amidst challenges and choices.

In ‘The Immigrants’, Parajuly’s narrative echoes his own experiences as a Nepali-Indian living abroad. The character of Amit emerges as particularly approach-

able, embodying the archetype of the successful immigrant thriving in New York City with a six-figure salary and his own apartment in Manhattan. Amit’s tendency to casually mention his achievements, especially to a white woman he encounters, exudes a subtle vanity and boastfulness which reads in a very comical manner. As the story unfolds, Amit’s desperate attempts to assimilate into his new environment provide both entertainment and a mirror to the immigrant experience.

When he encounters Sabitri, another Nepali immigrant woman who hasn’t achieved the same level of success financially or academically, their unequal footing becomes apparent. Despite Amit’s initial superiority, his world is shaken when his visa application is rejected, thrusting him into a shared sense of desperation with Sabitri. At this moment, regardless of their achievements, they are both immigrants grappling with a sense of not belonging. Amit’s visa troubles and Sabitri’s linguistic challenges highlight the universal struggles faced by immigrants, reminding readers that, despite their efforts, they may always feel like outsiders in their adopted homeland.

All the stories in this collection are marked by clever, synchronised endings. A notable aspect is the consistent use of open-ended conclusions, which add to the intrigue of each narrative. What sets Parajuly’s stories apart is the unexpected behaviour of his characters in these concluding moments. This pattern of contradictions between expectation and action emerges as a recurring theme throughout the book. While this stylistic choice may have been effective in some stories, it feels somewhat overdone and detracts from the collection’s playful and cheeky tone. In particular, the ending of ‘The Immigrants’ feels forced and inorganic, as the author attempts to impose a synchronised conclusion. This departure from the natural flow of the narrative diminishes the impact of an otherwise engaging story.

Overall, ‘The Gurkha’s Daughter’ offers a captivating and effortless read, characterised by delightful characters navigating the intricacies of their everyday lives. Parajuly’s skillful portrayal of these characters, with all their quirks and complexities, adds a layer of charm to the narrative, making it a truly enjoyable experience from start to finish.

EVENTS

For the Record: Celebrating Record Store Day

Sattya Media Collective is hosting a celebration of record store day, where attendees can exhibit or sell their cherished records and record players/turntables.

Where: Sattya Media Collective, Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur

When: April 20

Time: 2:00 pm onwards

Entry: Free

Blood Donation Drive

Pasang Lhamu Foundation is organising a blood donation in her honour as the first Nepali woman to conquer Mount Everest.

Where: Shankha Park, Pragati Tole Marg, Kathmandu

When: April 20

Time: 8:00 am onwards

Procurement and Contract Management Practice in Nepal

Crown Engineers and Builders is organising a Procurement and Contract Management Practice training session. The 10-day online training is open for engineers, project managers, planners and consultants working on related field, government officials, lawyers, and academicians.

Where: Online

When: April 23 onwards

Time: 6:30 to 8:30 pm

Participation: Rs8,000 (individual participants), Rs10,000 (institutional participants), pre-registration required

Kandara Live in Dharan

Nepali Lok-pop band Kandara will perform live in Dharan this Saturday. The event organised by Silver Entertainment promises to bring a big dose of entertainment through different live performances.

Where: Dharan Rangashala, Dharan

When: April 20

Time: 5:00 pm onwards

Entry: Rs300 to Rs1,500

Oxygen Exhibition

Gallery Mcube is organising an exhibition by six contemporary artists from Germany: Armin Baumgarten, Bernd Zimmer, Carsten Fock, Claus Fottinger,

Helge Achenbach and Yuliia Balabukha.

Where: Gallery Mcube, Chakhupat, Lalitpur

When: Till April 28

Time: 11:00 am to 7:00 pm

Entry: Free

Balaju Food Festival

The Balaju Food Festival is happening this Tuesday. The event will have a stalls with a variety of foods and musical performances from Nepali artists, including John and the Locals and Anuprastha.

Where: Macchapokhari, Balaju Aarati Party Palace Ground, Kathmandu

When: April 23

Time: 12:00 pm onwards

Entry: Rs500 to Rs1,000

‘Ticket to Hollywood’ Play

The Sagar Khati Kami directed play, ‘Ticket to Hollywood’, starring Milan Karki and Sudip Khatiwada will open at Mandala Theatre on Saturday.

Where: Mandala Theatre, Thapagaun, Kathmandu

When: April 20 to May 5

Time: In ‘The Gurkha’s Daughter’, a collection of eight short stories, Prajwal Parajuly delves into the intricate inner worlds of familiar characters.

Tickets: Rs300 to Rs500

Meaning within Meaning

Takpa Gallery is hosting a solo exhibition by Bhuwan Thapa titled ‘Meaning within Meaning’.

Where: Takpa Gallery, Lazimpat, Kathmandu

When: April 21 to May 5

Time: 11:00am to 7:00pm

Entry: Free

Ruma Music Festival

Attend an unforgettable music festival at Ruma Village, Myagdi, in western Nepal. The three-day festival is presented by Music for Education, a not-for-profit, non-religious, non-political educational programme, based in Pokhara, Nepal.

Where: Ruma Village, Myagdi

When: April 22 to April 25

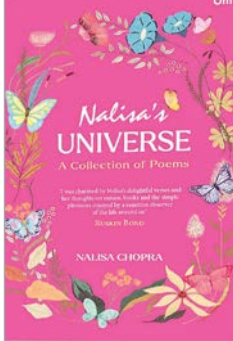
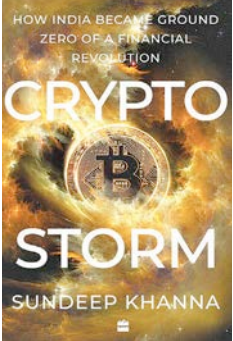
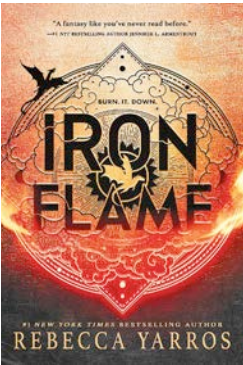
Time: 11:00 am to 11:00 pm

Tickets: Rs5,000

BEST-SELLERS | NEW RELEASES

Fiction

- Iron Flame by Rebecca Yarros
- The Housemaid’s Secret by Freida McFadden
- The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo by Taylor Jenkins Reid
- The Covenant of Water by Abraham Verghese
- A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini



Cryptostorm
Author: Sundeep Khanna
Price: Rs798
Publication: Harper Collins

Sundeep Khanna’s ‘Cryptostorm’ explores the transformative impact of cryptocurrencies in India and beyond. Khanna navigates the regulatory uncertainties surrounding cryptocurrencies, demonstrating the potential for significant gains and devastating losses in this rapidly changing market. He also investigates the experiences of ordinary people whose lives have been altered by the allure and risks of digital assets through moving stories. As cryptocurrencies move from the margins to the mainstream, Khanna emphasizes the critical need for stakeholders to understand and engage with this disruptive force in finance. By amplifying the voices of those exploring this new financial frontier, ‘Cryptostorm’ serves as a timely call to action.

Nalisa’s Universe
Author: Nalisa Chopra
Price: Rs952
Publication: Om Books International

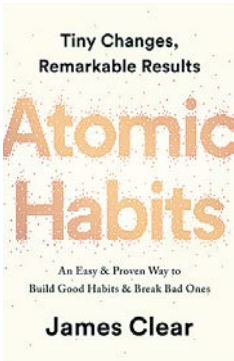
‘Nalisa’s Universe’ provides an emotional glimpse into the soulful musings of Nalisa Chopra, a young poet whose love of verse shines through on every page. As a student aspiring to be a celebrated poet, Chopra finds inspiration in the mundane moments of daily life, creating these into an ensemble of emotion and reflection. Her collection is divided into seven thematic sections, including Mystical, Nature, Romance, and Feminist, which reflect the variety of her experiences and convictions. Chopra’s simple yet evocative language captures the essence of her thoughts, dreams, and memories, inviting readers on a journey of self-discovery. With enchanting visuals, ‘Nalisa’s Universe’ is a captivating testament to the beauty of the ordinary and the extraordinary.

Doing Business in Uncertain Times
Author: Ramesh Nair
Price: Rs638
Publication: Penguin Books

‘Doing Business in Uncertain Times’ by Ramesh Nair is an influential exploration of controlling economic turbulence, drawing on Nair’s extensive experience leading organizations through crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2008 economic downturn. The book is divided into fifty insightful chapters and provides a comprehensive understanding of the complexities and challenges of economic downturns. Nair offers valuable advice to entrepreneurs and business leaders through a multifaceted lens, encouraging them to unlearn and relearn, to challenge conventional wisdom, and to realise their untapped potential. Focusing on key elements, Nair’s book provides readers with the tools they need to adapt and innovate.

Non-Fiction

- Atomic Habits by James Clear
- The Song of The Cell by Siddhartha Mukherjee
- Killing The Legends by Bill O’Reilly and Martin Dugard
- What Happened To You? by Bruce D Perry and Oprah Winfrey
- Beyond Disruption by W Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne



Ekta Books

