



Chhyasal locals engrossed in a game of *Chhappanash*



Students at Newa Kindergarten enjoying a boof cock fight

Photos: Ranjan Shakya / THT



*Chi Musi Chi*, the classic song-game to amuse children, and even adults

## REPLAY: Games we played

Shaurya Kshatri goes on a quest to find traditional games and unearth the forgotten charms of playing age-old games and rekindle childhood as the games slowly fade into oblivion

It was the early 1950s. The 104-year-old Rana Regime had just come to an end and the nation was entering a new era of democracy. But little did young Pannaratna Maharjan, who was to later seal his fate as a writer of a number of books in the Newari language, know or even care about the major implications of the time. To him, the most pressing matters concerned regaining his lost marbles in a game of *Guchcha* or to win while racing spare bicycle tyres on the streets of New Road, then Juddha Saddak.

Today, that bicycle tyre of his has been replaced by the little wheels of his grandson's skateboard, which sits in the corridor of his house at Khusibu, Kathmandu. Maharjan is now 72 years old.

"To a child, time always drags, and then one day you realise you are 70," he says.

Maharjan has written a number of books on varied subject matters such as *Suanigahya Wa Bali* (Paddy Cultivation in Kathmandu) and *Andhawishwasay Likunachwangu Bigyan: Nigugu Bwa* (The Science Behind Superstitions), all in his native tongue, the Nepal Bhasa. Yet despite the serious nature of his books, while remi-



A boy tries to catch the fish (forefinger) in the quintessential *Machha Machha Bhyaguta* game



*Samrajya*, an original Nepali board game

niscing his childhood, his eyes light up just like an innocent child.

It was perhaps this fascination and love for games that he was propelled to jot down a collection of traditional games of Kathmandu Valley in his book called *Jhigu Kasa* (Our Games). The book is Maharjan's way of preserving the good old memories of the past before they are lost and forgotten by the unrelenting passage of time. He lists 74 traditional recreational games, most of which the youngsters of today might never have

played or even heard of.

Yet some such games bring back cheerful memories for many people. One among them is Zaira Bano, a 32-year-old, who runs a small tailoring shop in Chhyasal.

Spotting the illustrations in the book, old memories came flooding back to Zaira. She remembers spending her time salvaging rubber bands in order to bunch them altogether to make a *Chungi* — a favourite pastime among children. "That is why my *chungs* were always colourful — an amal-

gamation of red, black and yellow rubber bands," she says.

But the craze of *Chungi*, like many other traditional games like it, is disappearing.

"Parents don't encourage their sons and daughters to go out and play anymore," says Maharjan. He believes that it is in part because, most families prefer living in nuclear rather than joint families.

"The school timings are also to be blamed. My grandson, who is in Class IX, leaves home at around 8:00 am and returns somewhere between 5:00 to 6:00 pm when it's already dark," explains Maharjan.

This might perhaps be why adults, rather than children, can be seen getting together

in the *falchas* (resting places) to enjoy board games. In all the mounting pressures of life, Sunil Awale, 46, finds solace in the company of his friends with a game of *Chhappanash* (a racing board game where players have to roll the dice and make moves towards 'Home'). Awale and a bunch of his friends don't mind playing a make-shift game of *Chhappanash*. Even with a proper board lacking, they find a way by drawing out the grids with a piece of brick, gathering a few stones for pieces.

"Fancy toys and gadgets were scarce, which only spurred our creativity in the past, as children developed games with the mini-

mum means and lots of imagination," believes Kriti Shakya, co-founder and Creative Director at Kazi Studio.

In a bid to revive traditional games, Kazi Studios introduced the first-ever original Nepali board games *Samrajya* (2017) and *Jatra* (2018). While *Samrajya* retraces the journey of Prithivi Narayan Shah's conquest through board games like Snakes and Ladders and Ludo, *Jatra* is built around the *Gai Jatra* legend, where a king institutes a festival to cheer up his queen grieving the loss of their son. These games are very well developed, especially the latter, which inspires children to make stories, act as different avatars, and conjure circumstances straight out of their imagination.

At Kathmandu Newa Kindergarten, Naya Bazaar, children are encouraged to play traditional games. The teachers draw references from *Jhigu Kasa* to know the rules of the games, which they are passing down to the students. Academic Coordinator Hasna Maharjan says the school even conducts games such as cock fight and hopscotch in its annual sport meet held every Poush (December or January). "Not only do these games bring smiles on their faces, but they also help to keep them active, and competitive," she says.



Pannaratna Maharjan

### Pong it all the way



Come June 21, and you can have some fun while you sip on your beer. Head on to Level 3 located at Labim Mall in Lalitpur for a game of beer pong, that will definitely give you a fun evening. Organised by Mr.Foodie\_Nepal, Asahi Beer Pong is an event to enjoy unlimited beer and barbeque.

Get tipsy as you attempt to knock your opponent out by landing your balls into your opponent's cups as hot and scrumptious barbeque accompanies your drink. Consisting of two players in each team, the winners will be awarded exciting prizes.

**Asahi Beer Pong**  
Level 3, Labim Mall  
Time: 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm

### Selection of dumplings and soup

If you love soups and dim sums, you might want to consider the 'Soup and Dim-Sum festival' at Vivanta, which will be held from June 19 to 29. Embracing all things festive, the hotel has come up with the monsoon food festival, offering a wide range of Cantonese cuisines especially curated for the monsoon season.

The press release issued by Vivanta states that dim sum literally translates to 'touch the heart' designed to satisfy the soul. And come June 19, the culinary experts at Akari and Koko, the two in-house eateries at Vivanta, will do the job.

Popular types of dim sums range from dumplings, steamed buns, wraps and noodle rolls often filled with a mixture of seafood, meat and vegetables, most of which are going to be on full display for gourmands from 12:00 noon to 8:00 pm.

As per the release, the 11-day event will offer 23 varieties of dim sum and 16 varieties of soup consisting, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, which will include choice of vegetables, chicken, lamb, beef, pork and seafood.

**Soup and Dim-Sum Festival at Vivanta**  
Akari and Koko  
Vivanta, Jhamsikhel Road  
Contact: 9863191511 (For reservation)



### Valley foodie's trail

A slew of food festivals happening around the City promise taste of different cuisines and cultures



#### The taste of Italy

Hotel Radisson, Kathmandu is presenting a two-week authentic Italian food fest with its 'Pizza and Pasta' celebrations. The event, which started on June 14 and ends on June 29, pays homage to Italian cuisine everyday from 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm at the Hotel's in-house eatery, Olive Garden.

As per a press release issued by the establishment, the event will give food enthusiasts a unique opportunity to explore traditional Italian taste with a rustic look of hand-crafted pizza and homemade pasta. The experts have selected some special wine to go with and put them on offer. So be it a Pappardelle Carbonara with Shrimp and Litchi or Cappelletti with Porcini Mushroom Sauce, share the joy of eating from special a la carte menu curated by the chef with a glass of Buon Vino.

**Pizza and Pasta**  
Olive Garden  
Hotel Radisson, Lazimpat  
Contact: 01-4411818

### Nawabi flavours

Fairfield by Marriott is celebrating the spirit of Nawabi culture and bringing alive the streets of Lucknow in the Capital by organising the 'Lucknowi Food Festival' at its in-house Kava Restaurant. The festival that commenced on June 14, claims to have its connoisseurs spoil for choices as they find themselves among the usual spread and the festival's speciality.

The menu offers a diverse selection of vegetarian and non-vegetarian authentic food from delectable starters to main course and mouth-watering desserts, all prepared by Chef Shahnawar Quereshi.

Fairfield by Marriott has flown the celebrity chef from Lucknow to give patrons the taste of Awadhi Cuisine showcasing varieties of kebabs, biryani, curries and stuffed naans, prepared locally with organic ingredients.

Every guest is first welcomed with the cool refreshing Aampanna drink before enjoying the spread of offerings.

The festival will continue until June 22 from 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm.

**Lucknowi Food Festival**  
Kava Restaurant  
Fairfield by Marriott, Thamel  
Contact: 01-4217999

