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GOPEN RAI

Delhi run

In September 2008, the theme of every speech that Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal made during his first official visit to India after being elected was: "Trust me." The message is the same during his second state visit this week as well.

Eight years ago, Dahal was given a rousing welcome in New Delhi despite having miffed some quarters by visiting China first. Everyone wanted to shake the hand of the man who had gone from being a guerrilla commander to an elected Prime Minister. The Indian media couldn't get enough of him.

However, there was some skepticism of his commitment to parliamentary democracy and free market. Dahal tried hard to convince Indian investors that he was a man they could do business with. But it was his step-by-step attempt to grab absolute power when he returned that soured his relations with India and ultimately led to his resignation in 2009.

It has taken him eight years to be accepted enough to make another visit to New Delhi, and regain that displaced trust. In the

next few days, Dahal will be trying to convince India's top leaders that he has learnt his lessons, and will not dabble in political adventurism.

Nepal's former ambassador to India, Lokraj Baral, says Dahal needs to talk less and work more to show that he has matured. He needs to try to reconstruct Nepal-India relations from its post-blockade low.

"India has its own interests, but the current trust deficit between Kathmandu and New Delhi is the result of our failure to put our own house in order," Baral said. "He will gain India's trust if he addresses Madhesi grievances by amending the Constitution."

Dahal justified his party's defection from the UML coalition by blaming the KP Oli government for not solving the Madhes crisis. But he failed to register a constitution amendment bill in the Parliament ahead of his India visit, and Madhesi parties are now angry and suspicious.

Dahal needs the support of the UML to meet Madhesi demands on the amendment, and needs to balance relations with India and China. He already seems to have annoyed Beijing by inviting Indian President Pranab Mukherjee to Kathmandu before the official visit of the Chinese President Xi Jinping to Nepal, and by his indifference towards implementing the trade and transit treaty.

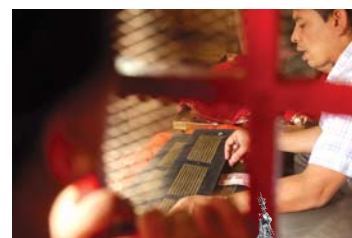
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has denied that Xi's visit is cancelled, but it has not confirmed it either.

During his four-day India visit, Dahal will meet Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday. He is then scheduled

to fly to Himachal Pradesh on a helicopter on Sunday to inspect a 1500 MW hydropower project. Dahal briefed his party on Wednesday that his 'goodwill' visit will focus on implementing the past pacts on earthquake reconstruction, Tarai Feeder Roads and power trade.

Om Astha Rai

YOGA DIPLOMACY
EDITORIAL
PAGE 2



Rich Ritual
HERITAGE LIVE!
PAGE 11

MUCKRAKERS MEET



The Uncovering Asia conference of investigative journalists 23-25 September will be the largest international media conference ever held in Kathmandu.

PAGE 4-5

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YOGA DIPLOMACY

Prime Minister Dahal said before his India visit he had the right ‘chemistry’ with Narendra Modi. But it may be the ‘physics’ he needs to get right this time.

When Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal arrived in New Delhi on a state visit on Thursday, he must have recognised some familiar landmarks. After all, he spent most of 1996-2006 during the revolution he unleashed on Nepal safe within his party’s secret headquarters in the eastern suburbs of the Indian capital. He will also remember some of the pomp that accompanied his first state visit here in 2008 after his party’s landslide victory in the post-conflict election.

Compared to his last visit, though, Dahal may find the Indian welcome a trifle muted. The reception he got from officialdom and media in 2008 was nothing short of ecstatic. It was almost as if the Indian establishment wanted to portray his visit as the successful culmination of the 12-point agreement it brokered between Nepal’s democratic parties and the Maoists in New Delhi in November 2005.

In fact, the media portrayed Dahal as a role model for India’s own Maoists — someone they could emulate. Look at your comrade from Nepal, they seemed to say, he gave up his armed struggle and got elected, and so could you. A full page interview in an Indian newspaper during the visit highlighted his call to Naxalites to learn a lesson or two from him.

But, as we know, it did not take long for Dahal’s relations with India to sour. New Delhi stopped trusting him perhaps because he did not deliver on some undisclosed promises, or maybe owing to moves he made to capture total state power with the removal of Army Chief Gen Rookmangud Katawal as the last straw. Dahal resigned the day after President Yadav reinstated Gen Katawal, and thereafter blamed New Delhi scathingly for being behind the move.

However, Nepal’s rulers and opinion makers seem to have made up their minds that the main reason New Delhi was ticked off with Dahal was that he visited Beijing first. Whatever we may think about India micromanaging



Nepal’s political affairs, it is unlikely that India’s foreign policy establishment would be so petty as to punish Nepal’s leader simply for going to China first. India has bigger fish to fry, and contrary to perception here, the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi doesn’t spend all its daylight hours obsessing about goings on in Nepal.

Even so, Dahal seems to be still smarting from the ignominy of his resignation in 2009. Which could be why he is hurrying off to do Delhi before attending the United Nations General Assembly a week later so as not to risk ruffling Indian feathers again. He is doing the usual rounds in Delhi, and even courting the BJP constituency by attending a Patanjali yoga session.

Dahal may have to rely on more than just yoga to restore bilateral relations. After a bruising blockade and India’s open disdain for the coalition led by Prime Minister K P Oli of which the Dahal-led Maoists were a part, Nepal-India relations need to be rebooted. Dahal has tried hard to break the ice by giving conciliatory pre-visit interviews in which he said he and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has the right ‘chemistry’. However, it may be the ‘physics’ he needs to get right.

India’s main agenda on Nepal seen during the blockade and during the visit is to push through amendments in our constitution passed by the Assembly last year — especially provisions related to the two Tarai provinces and the inclusion of five disputed districts, citizenship rules, and electoral boundaries. Dahal will be under pressure to show flexibility, but since all politics is local, his antennae will be attuned to public opinion back home.

UML leaders K P Oli, Madhav Nepal and Jhala Nath Khanal met Dahal before his visit and warned him not to undermine the country’s sovereignty during his visit. It is clear Dahal’s hands are tied because the arithmetic of parliament means that he will need the UML to pass the amendments. Oli wants revenge on Dahal for stabbing him in the back, and will drive a hard bargain for the necessary votes.

Last year’s blockade has been a public relations disaster for India, and the antipathy runs so deep that it will undermine India’s national interest here unless something is done. As Nepal’s neighbour and dominant trading partner, Nepal cannot afford to have antagonistic relations with India. Dahal also has to ensure that ties with China are on an even keel. Beijing is irked by the recent regime change in Kathmandu, as well as Nepal’s lukewarm response to President Xi’s pet project: the One Belt One Road connectivity project for Eurasia.

Besides his southern yoga diplomacy, Dahal may also need to practice tai chi before heading north.

Times

THIS WEEK



SHYAM INGNAM

Most reached on Facebook

Tunnel vision by Sonia Awale (10,529 reached)

The experience Nepal's have amassed digging tunnels for Hong Kong's subway system could be harnessed for hydropower projects back home

Most shared on Facebook

Tunnel vision by Sonia Awale (24 shares)

Most visited online page

Tunnel vision by Sonia Awale (1,222 views)

Most popular on Twitter

Tunnel vision by Sonia Awale (36 retweets, 82 favourites)

Most commented

The tears never stop by Om Astha Rai

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

WARTIME JUSTICE

No one should forget the plight of people who survived the decade-long conflict. ('Hungry Ghosts', Editorial, #825). It is very important to remind everyone of the painful stories in an attempt to deliver justice regardless of the judicial outcomes.

Nepal should learn a big lesson from such horrendous war-time activities and work towards providing justice to the victims. Political leaders need to take a more active role in making sure that justice is delivered.

Amar Basnet

Ganga Maya Adhikari has ended her hunger strike after almost two months, but Puspha Kamal Dahal's government is still apathetic towards her suffering. Dahal is now in New Delhi for a state visit. A series of political events in the last five years have made it apparent that victims will keep fighting but the government will keep ignoring their pleas. Dahal should use his tenure as an opportunity to win people's trust by saving the life of Ganga Maya.

Manisha Nepali

Apologies and sympathy towards the

bereaved souls of the conflict would somehow ease the pain of the family members. ('The tears never stop', Om Astha Rai, #825). Our Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal should personally or publicly apologise to Nutan who lost her father in such a gruesome manner. An apology from the PM will not bring back the dead, but acknowledging the crime would at least give some solace to the victims.

Usha Rai

Narjit Sir is a hero. I have a huge amount of respect for him. ('Narjit Sir', Prabir Dadel, #825). His contribution, as a teacher, proves how much he loves the country. His brother is gone but the government can at least provide some compensation to him so that he can treat the injuries inflicted on him during the conflict.

Madan Koirala

Narjit Sir is not the only teacher who suffered during the war. The Maoists killed those teachers who taught poor children in the villages, but the children of their leaders are now studying abroad.

R Bista

Frank Ginsbach@Phranken

Decentralization important for inclusion & long-term stability, but excess devolution to local gov should be avoided

Nepali Times@nepalitimes

Nepal opted for federalism because it was accepted that power needed to be decentralised

Kashish Das Shrestha@kashishds

Certainly wasn't for scientific reasons [pesticide levels/type] it turned out (from their own week-later lab test)

Nepali Times@nepalitimes

#POLL Did India ban the import of Nepali ginger due to political reasons?

Times

nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll #826

Q. Did India ban the import of Nepali ginger due to political reasons?

Total votes: 348

Yes 66.66%

No 12.36%

Maybe 20.98%

Weekly Internet Poll #827

To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Is Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's India visit fruitful?

Times

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Media muckrakers coming to town

Kathmandu prepares to host its largest-ever international journalism conference next week

SONIA AWALE

More than 300 journalists and speakers from 30 countries will be attending the second Asian Investigative Journalism Conference, 22-25 September, in Kathmandu, the largest ever-international media conference to be held in Nepal.

The event is organised by the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) and co-hosted by the Kathmandu-based Centre for Investigative Journalism Nepal (CIJN), and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung of Germany. It is expected to bring together some of Asia's best muckrakers, data journalists and media law and cyber-security experts from around the world.

Recent crackdowns on press freedom across Asia have made it difficult and dangerous for reporters, especially investigative journalists. Media has had to battle censorship, overt state control, harassment, and reporters have been killed even in countries with long traditions of free press such as Philippines and India.

However, Asia has also seen courageous journalists expose corrupt leaders for their ill-gotten wealth, kleptocratic state machineries, investigated



Sheila Coronel, Columbia University, New York

cross-border financial crimes, trafficking, illegal logging and has uncovered large-scale plunder of state coffers like the 1MDB scandal in Malaysia.

"Now, more than ever, Asia needs powerfully reported stories that uncover wrongdoing by powerful individuals and institutions," says Sheila Coronel of Stabile Centre for Investigative Journalism of Columbia University, whose expose of Philippine President Josef Estrada in 2001 led to his downfall. "The Kathmandu conference is a unique opportunity to foster cross-border collaboration among investigative journalists in the



Steven Gan, Malaysiakini

region and elsewhere." Coronel is a speaker at the conference together with the Pulitzer Prize winning team that investigated the Seafood Slaves story for the Associated Press. Walter V Robinson of the Boston



Globe whose investigative story on paedophile priests featured in the Oscar-winning film, *Spotlight*, will be giving the keynote speech.

Ying Chan who has just finished her tenure as dean



Wahyu Djatmika, Tempo, exposing Panama Papers in Indonesia Paul Myers, BBC Academy

of the Journalism and Media Studies Centre at the University of Hong Kong, Steven Gan of the independent news portal, Malaysiakini, and strong teams of investigative and data journalists from India and Pakistan will be in attendance.

"We're witnessing an extraordinary response to the Kathmandu conference, not just in the number of investigative journalists participating, but also in the high calibre of speakers," GIJN Director David Kaplan told the *Nepali Times*. "What happens in Nepal next week will influence Asian journalism for years."

The first Uncovering Asia conference was held in Manila,



Ying Chan, University of Hong Kong

Philippines in 2014 and got such a positive response that GIJN decided to hold another one, and proposed a partnership with CIJN.

"At a time when it is becoming increasingly difficult to uncover the truth and present facts to the public, the conference will provide huge motivation to Nepali journalists, especially investigative reporters," says Namrata Sharma, Chair of CIJN. "At the same time it a matter of pride for Nepal to host an event in which so many globally well-recognised journalists will be participating."

The conference will have more than 60 workshops and panels: from a forum on the Panama

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सामाज्य सङ्गठ

सि.अ.	सङ्गठको नाम	आयोजक/आयोजिका	विजयीता
क.	बहुमूल्य-मधुर सम्मन्ता	अनिल सिंह	किशोर धुमिरे
ख.	अक्षता	सन्तोष लामा	रोशन मडुगई
ग.	मधुगाला	सत्यराज आचार्य	विन्दासिनी म्जुजिक
घ.	मेलोडि	टिका प्रसाई	टिका प्रसाई
ङ.	नमस्वाले	रेखा सुनुवार	रेखा सुनुवार

सर्वोत्कृष्ट गीत

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	राज्य	आयोजक/आयोजिका
क.	पिलायो साथीले ...	निहारिका लक्ष्मी शाही	शिव परिवार
ख.	आकाश उडि...	हेम कुमार लालति	बालिका प्रज्ञान
ग.	मायालु मुहार...	रोशन मडुगई	सन्तोष लामा
घ.	गोरी भन्दा...	सत्यराज आचार्य	सन्तोष लामा
ङ.	धुवाँ धुवाँ...	सानु शर्मा	निखिता थापा

सर्वोत्कृष्ट गीत रचना

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक/आयोजिका	रचनाकार
क.	मछु सजिले	किरण गजमेर	सौरभ तिमिल्सिना
ख.	लड्डी त	दिपक खरेल	रञ्जित आचार्य
ग.	मलाई माया गर्ने	मिमता दाहाल	योगेन्द्र माथि दाहाल
घ.	छुटाउन खोज्नेहरू	सुनिता प्रधान विष्णु	दिनेश अधिकारी
ङ.	म हुरेमा	रामकृष्ण डकाल	रमेश वि.वि.

सर्वोत्कृष्ट संगीत

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक/आयोजिका	संगीतकार
क.	मनलाई छोएर	अजर जंगम	रिपक जंगम
ख.	रंगारंग चित्रका	अनिल हुमाना	सविन सिंह
ग.	गोरी भन्दा	सत्यराज आचार्य	सत्यराज आचार्य
घ.	मायालु मुहार	सन्तोष लामा	नू वडाचार्य
ङ.	ओईलिएर भर्ने	आर्जन पाण्डे	किरण कडेल

सर्वोत्कृष्ट नव कलाकार

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक
क.	किर्तिमल किर्तिमल	सायब पराजुली
ख.	त्यो छुट्टै दिन	रविन्द्र राई
ग.	एक्लोपन	हृदय गहतराज
घ.	राई भुम्फाको	राब मल्ल
ङ.	ओईलिएर भर्ने	आर्जन पाण्डे

सर्वोत्कृष्ट सङ्गठ गायन

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक/आयोजिका
क.	हे कान्छा	आर्जन पाण्डे/निखिता थापा
ख.	निमी नहुँदा	रविन शर्मा/बालिका प्रज्ञान
ग.	उर्बेरी	एडुरिन प्रधान/रजिना रिमाल
घ.	कान्छो नापीदेउ	उदेश श्रेष्ठ/मोसमी मरु/राजिब संगीला
ङ.	हृदय निम्ना	बाबा पाश्चिम/अन्जु पन्त

सर्वोत्कृष्ट चलचित्र गीत

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक/आयोजिका	चलचित्र
क.	सुके पैली खे	राजन राज शिवाकोटी/अन्जु पन्त/राज वि.क.	बडा नं. ६
ख.	यस्तो माया	निखिता थापा	सुधी
ग.	मेरो सुखले	अनिल पाखरेल	ठमेल डट कम
घ.	मिटो मिटो	आकाश बस्याल	चलेछु बतास सुनरी
ङ.	म यस्तो	सुनाम पोखरेल/अन्जु पन्त	प्रेमगीत

सर्वोत्कृष्ट राष्ट्रिय भावनाले अभिप्रेरित गीत

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक/आयोजिका	रचनाकार
क.	अब उठौ	धर्मेन्द्र सेवान	धर्मेन्द्र सेवान
ख.	एकताको गीत	शिव परिवार/शेखरी चेम्जोङ	पद्मा विद्या मगर
ग.	समाहारे सोजे	सुमित खट्का	पुष्प राज पौडेल
घ.	कोही भन्छन् मैथि मेरो	सुरज कुमार थापा	उमेश सम्माल
ङ.	तिक्षो देशमा	सन्जु पौडेल/हेमन्त राण/विष्णु चेम्जोङ	प्रकाश बज्राचार्य

लोक सङ्गठ

सर्वोत्कृष्ट गायन लोक गीत

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक/आयोजिका
क.	मट्ट मक	विमल राज क्षेत्री/रितु थापा
ख.	आमा तिमी देखी	विमल परियार
ग.	अकबरी सुन	राजु बुंगेल/नविन बुंगेल
घ.	एक्ले छु आमा	बिरही काकी
ङ.	बाग्लु बजारमा	बसन्त थापा/कुलमाया के सी

सर्वोत्कृष्ट गायन दोहोरी गीत

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक/आयोजिका
क.	फुन्यो बागरी	कुमार पुन/घिरी आले
ख.	सुरास फुले	बिरही काकी/बिरता काकी
ग.	एड पछिच हुने	पद्म थापा मगर/जुना श्रीष मगर
घ.	वर बारीमा	बाई पगेनी/मिरा गिरी
ङ.	जाले रुमाल	मन्जु पौडेल/कुसेन्द्र बि.क.

सर्वोत्कृष्ट लोक गीत संकलन

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	संकलक
क.	म जन्मेको गाउँ	तारापति सुवेदी/जीवन दाहाल
ख.	बाग्लु बजारमा	बसन्त थापा
ग.	स्वाङ्गा गए पाप्या गए	यानेवर गौतम/समुन्द्र गिरी
घ.	जाली रुमाल फाट्यो	राजन ठकुरी
ङ.	एक्ले छु आमा	बिरही काकी

सर्वोत्कृष्ट दोहोरी गीत

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	विजयीता
क.	फुन्यो बागरी	घिरी आले
ख.	भयाउरे जिते	निता पुन मगर
ग.	निगातीको पोयाले	बन्दा पाण्डे/प्रमिता लामा
घ.	तल तल लाग्यो	मन्जु पौडेल
ङ.	सुरास फुले	बिरही काकी/सरिता काकी

विशेष सङ्गठ

सर्वोत्कृष्ट गायन (पुरुष)

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक
क.	छोका दिने	मनोज राज
ख.	गोरी भन्दा	सत्यराज आचार्य
ग.	मेरो जस्तै	अजर जंगम
घ.	पिलायो साथीले	शिव परिवार
ङ.	निमाउने नआउनु	प्रमोद खरेल

सर्वोत्कृष्ट गायन (महिला)

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजिका
क.	धुवाँ धुवाँ	निखिता थापा
ख.	बरे डुन्यो	अन्जु पन्त
ग.	ए बत्ताल	सुनिता काकी
घ.	बाँकी जीवन	दुर्गा खरेल
ङ.	आकाश उडि	बालिका प्रज्ञान

सर्वोत्कृष्ट गायन पप (पुरुष)

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक
क.	ओई भुम्फा	प्रमोद खरेल
ख.	माया हो	सुवास सुन्दास
ग.	सम्भन्ना	अनिल सिंह
घ.	सन्धिन बिर्सन	उदेश श्रेष्ठ
ङ.	बैरमा	भरत सिटोला

सर्वोत्कृष्ट गायन पप (महिला)

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजिका
क.	त्यो काले केटा	दुर्गा खरेल
ख.	पागल	जुना प्रसाई
ग.	आलोप	अक्षता
घ.	तिमीलाई हेर्ने	रेखा सुनुवार
ङ.	मलाई रन देऊ	आकाश बस्याल

सर्वोत्कृष्ट संगीत संयोजन

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक	संगीत संयोजक
क.	छोका दिने	मनोज राज	सविन सिंह
ख.	लड्डी त	दिपक खरेल	किरण कडेल
ग.	निमाउने नआउनु	प्रमोद खरेल	गोपाल रसाईनी
घ.	बिच्यो आँधी जिवन	शानिस महर्जन	हरिशरण साय्मी
ङ.	पागल	जुना प्रसाई	उदयरज पौडेल

सर्वोत्कृष्ट गीत स्रष्टा

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक	रचनाकर्ता
क.	मेरो जस्तै	अजर जंगम	शम्भु के. तन्हुकार
ख.	छोका दिने	मनोज राज	किशोर थापा
ग.	सामो बाटो	प्रधन शास्त्र	शैलेन्द्र प्रधान
घ.	धुवाँ धुवाँ	निखिता थापा	मिर लामा
ङ.	माथि तिमीले	रामभक्त जोशीजु	शुकुलाम बिस्वकर्मा

न्यूजिक भिडियो सङ्गठ

सर्वोत्कृष्ट न्यूजिक भिडियो

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक/आयोजिका/सङ्गठ	विजयीता
क.	ओईलिएर भर्ने	आर्जन पाण्डे	आर्जन पाण्डे
ख.	Let's Join Hands	सामूहिक गायन	महेश बाबु तिमिल्सिना
ग.	नखरा	द साईन व्याण्ड	बारकोड प्रडक्सन
घ.	जादु सरे	रविन शर्मा	रविन शर्मा
ङ.	माया	निखिता थापा	निखिता थापा

सर्वोत्कृष्ट न्यूजिक भिडियो बिदेसक

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक/आयोजिका/सङ्गठ	बिदेसक
क.	माया हो	सुवास सुन्दास	निखित चन्द
ख.	नखरा	द साईन व्याण्ड	सतिश श्रेष्ठ
ग.	सुनरी	रोशन अधिकारी	पासाङ योञ्जन लामा
घ.	तिमी तिमी छौ	बिबेक सिटोला	जिवन थापा
ङ.	एक्लोपन	हृदय गहतराज	विमोद पोखरेल

सर्वोत्कृष्ट न्यूजिक भिडियो धार्मिकार

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक/आयोजिका/सङ्गठ	धार्मिकार
क.	सुके सधै	रविबका बन्दा	प्रमोद काकी
ख.	मेरो खबर	स्वस्वरज आचार्य	हरि हुमागाई
ग.	तिमी तिमी छौ	बिबेक सिटोला	अनिल के मान्छर
घ.	तिमी भिन्न	न्यास स्टुडियो	शौरभ मान्छर
ङ.	ओईलिएर भर्ने	आर्जन पाण्डे	धिरज जंग शाह

सर्वोत्कृष्ट न्यूजिक भिडियो सम्पादक

सि.अ.	गीतको शीर्षक	आयोजक/आयोजिका	सम्पादक
क.	बैरमा	भरत सिटोला	टैकेन्द्र शाह
ख.	पाउजुले	रत्न सुब्बा	उज्ज्वल डकाल
ग.	निमाउने नआउनु	प्रमोद खरेल	भरत रेग्मी
घ.	देव	नवरज श्रेष्ठ	प्रविन श्रेष्ठ
ङ.	मेरो मुटु	तुषाधर दर्नाल/निखिता थापा	माधव बेल्बासे

प्रतियक व्हाइस अवार्ड

सि.अ.	बिदेसक	आयोजक/आयोजिका	प्रतियक	बोर्डि कोड
क	ओई भुम्फा	प्रमोद खरेल		PCA<space>1
ख	फन्ट्यास्टिक	अन्मोदा राना उप्रेती		PCA<space>2
ग	त्यो काले केटाले	दुर्गा खरेल		PCA<space>3
घ	सुके पैली	राजन राज शिवाकोटी	बडा नं. ६	PCA<space>4
ङ	पिलायो साथीले	शिव परिवार		PCA<space>5

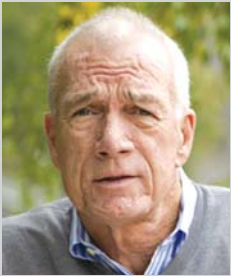
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www.imagekhabar.com
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UNCOVERING ASIA

Some of the notable participants attending the Asian investigative journalism conference:



Walter V Robinson, Boston Globe editor featured in Oscar-winning film *Spotlight*



Mar Cabra and 20 members of the International Centre of Investigative Journalists' Panama Papers Team



Nils Milvad, European Journalist of the Year, 2005



Clare Rewcastle Brown, investigating Malaysia's 1MDB scandal



Brant Houston, author of *Computer-Assisted Reporting: A Practical Guide*

Papers to panels on investigating corruption, climate change, health, to a session assessing the state of investigative journalism in Nepal. Journalists from *Kantipur*, *Republica*, *Annapurna Post*, *The Kathmandu Post*, *BBC Nepal*, *Nagarik*, *Ujyalo* and other Nepali media portals are expected to participate.

There will also be a

demonstration on the use of database managers and a workshop on security for investigative journalists. Advanced mapping, Internet detective, Media Law Clinic, virtual reality and hands-on training in data journalism and digital protection are other aspects that the conference is scheduled to cover.

"The era of the lone wolf

is over. An increasingly interconnected world needs journalists who can work across borders to hold power to account," says Sheila Coronel. There will also be panels on the best cross-border investigative stories on post-disaster reporting, data mining, covering conflict, human trafficking and slavery, organised crime and terrorism.

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Safety information

Cathay Pacific and Dragonair have issued a travel information to ensure the safety of passengers and crew members. The airline advises its



CATHAY PACIFIC

passengers to power off Samsung Galaxy Note 7 smartphones and not connect it to any power source while onboard. These devices must also be kept out of checked baggage.

A Huawei Dashain

Huawei recently announced its Dashain Festival Scheme in Nepal. Slated to end on 8 October, it will give out prizes like power banks, smart phones, cycles with kits on a weekly basis. As part of its fortnightly draw it will be giving out a Vespa and a Royal Enfield to two customers through a live lucky draw.

Under one roof

Golcha Organisation has opened its new multi-brand showroom-

Switch On at Narayan Chaur, Naxal. Consumers can now buy a range of mobiles, TVs, refrigerators, washing machines of multiple brands like Samsung, Himstar, Bajaj Electricals, Timex and more under one roof.

Everest Glacier

Dynamic Dream Group has launched the Everest Glacier artesian mineral drinking water in the Nepali market.



Extracted directly from the height of 8844 metres from the Tibetan side of Mt Everest, the water is produced by Tibet Qomolangma Glacier Water Company Ltd, Tibet, China. It is imported by Freedom Export, Kathmandu, Nepal.

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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Checking and balancing

When the executive and legislature are not functioning at optimum, it is up to the judiciary to act

During the parliamentary hearing to ratify her appointment, Chief Justice Sushila Karki presented herself so boldly that Members of Parliament looked visibly dazed listening to her. She came across as a no-nonsense, straight talker who believed and practiced the law with integrity.



LEGALESE
Binita Dahal

Ever since, Karki has been equally audacious in carrying out her duties at the Supreme Court. There were murmurings about her gender when she was first appointed and doubts floated among the male-dominated legal fraternity that she might not be able to withstand the various pressures and inducements that came with the position. There were worries that the Chief Justice would be a weakling, and that she would not be able to take leadership of the judicial administration.

Karki had a shaky start to her tenure with the political distraction of a regime change three months ago and with the Parliament taking forever to conduct the hearing to ratify her appointment by the Constitutional Council. She then had just eight of the required 19 justices, and a huge backlog of cases to handle. Since the Chief Justice is responsible for any wrongdoings by the justices in verdicts, it was tricky. The Parliament finally also endorsed the remaining 11 justices, and the Supreme Court is now fully functional.



GOPEN RAI

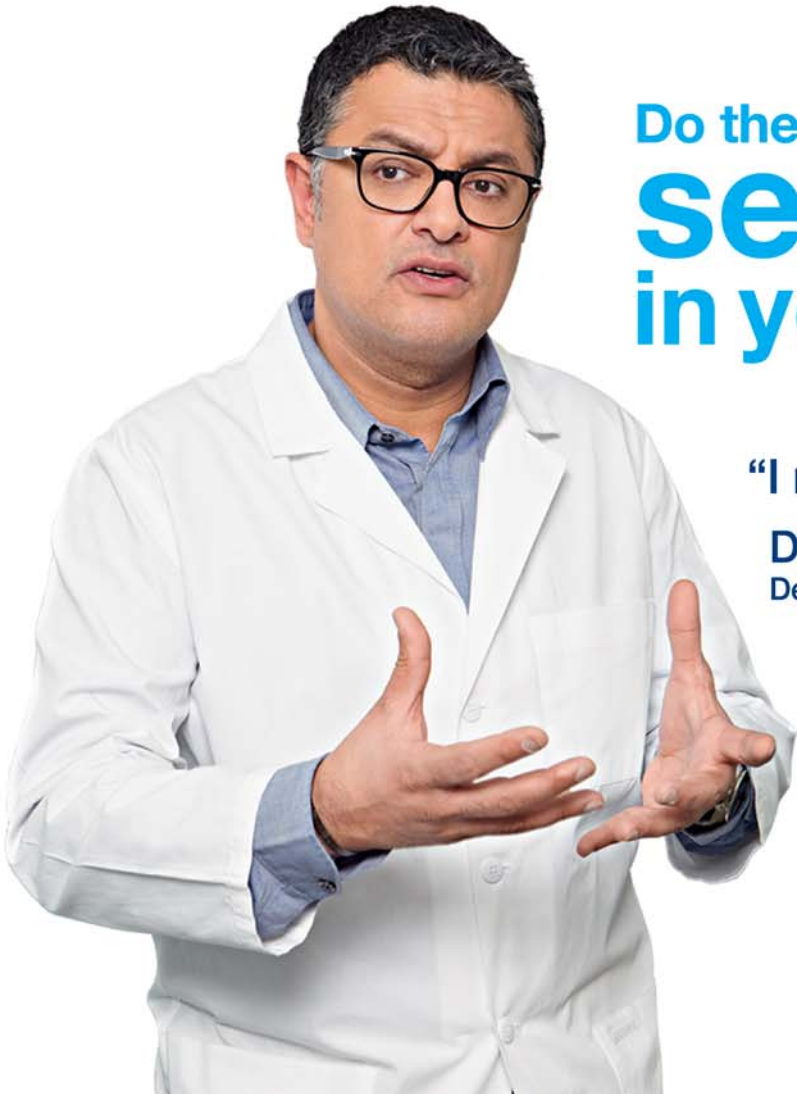
Karki has shown impartiality and has refused to bow to political pressure during her tenure as Chief Justice. Despite her Nepali Congress antecedents from Biratnagar, she revived corruption cases against senior NC leaders Khum Bahadur Khadka and Govinda Raj Joshi. It was her bench that convicted sitting minister Jaya Prakash Gupta on a corruption case by overturning a

verdict of the Special Court. Karki has always preferred to maintain a low profile, displaying none of the flamboyance of her predecessors even though her verdicts tend to thrust her into the limelight. As Chief Justice she has given strong decisions censuring the Commission for the Investigation of the Abuse of Authority (CIAA) for overstepping its jurisdiction. At a time when

the bureaucracy, politicians and even the media appear to have been silenced, these decisions have reinforced her reputation as an impartial judge. Sushila Karki is also busy allocating cases and forming committees. She has curtailed the activities of power brokers and middlemen who in the past played a role in distributing cases by offering inducements

to justices. Lawyers say it was standard operating procedure that middlemen negotiated pliant justices for cases in return for favours during the tenures of Damodar Prasad Sharma and Ram Kumar Prasad Sah. The power brokers had their wings clipped when Chief Justice Kalyan Shrestha was in office. Karki has publicly vowed to stop this practice. Karki has challenges ahead in the management of judges and human resources of the Supreme Court. On Sunday, the Parliament passed a bill related to the formation of High Courts in seven provinces and she has to form these provincial courts. As head of the Judicial Council, it will be Karki's responsibility to place Judges of the Appellate Court to the High Courts. Equally challenging is the management of pending cases from Appellate to the High Courts. Karki's leadership will be severely tested by her decisions.

The concept of High Courts in a federal structure is itself a difficult proposition because of the number of provinces, their boundaries and capitals. Each province should have a High Court, and then there is the tough job of converting 16 Appellate Courts to seven High Courts. The remaining nine months of Karki's tenure will show how well Nepal's first female Chief Justice will meet these challenges. When the other pillars of democracy, the executive and legislature, are not functioning as they should, it is essential for the judiciary to step up to the mark. Under Karki, the judiciary seems to be serving as a credible check and balance to authority. 🇳🇵



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The monsoon is not going away without a bang it seems. Just when we thought we had enough there is another depression brewing over Central India and the Bay of Bengal which will move northwest towards Nepal. It will bring the first snow flurries below 5,000m in the trekking passes. For Kathmandu, expect some squall-like rain in the afternoons accompanied by thunder. Weekend will have rain interspersed with sunny spells.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
27° 19°	26° 19°	27° 19°

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Paw-ssible future

Let's keep Kathmandu Animal Treatment Centre alive so it can give a better life to our dogs

After 12 years of rescuing, sheltering and rehabilitating stray dogs, Kathmandu Animal Treatment (KAT) is facing a serious financial crisis, and may have to shut down its operations unless donors step up.

KAT's facility in Budhanilkantha is not renewing its lease beyond September, instead it is looking for a new home - a crowd funding initiative has not yielded the expected revenue.

"We have not received the kind of response we hoped we would get," said project consultant Pushkar Pal, who says only \$11,545 of the \$127,000 needed has been raised. "In Kathmandu, there is reluctance when it comes to adopting stray dogs because people only want good breeds."

Despite the crisis, KAT's dedicated volunteers continue to make sure that the dogs are taken care of. Phone calls for rescue start as early as seven in the morning and last till midnight on some days. Cleaning the wounds of dogs, feeding them, cleaning their kennels and ensuring that each gets its medicines on time are all in a day's work for the volunteers.

"But we have seen some noticeable changes towards animals over the years, people now feel that animals needs to be helped," said Pal.



TRUE DEVOTION: The KAT Centre team, despite uncertainties, continues to work for the welfare of the stray dogs.

PICS: BIKRAM RAI

With over 22,500 stray dogs in the capital the municipality this July launched a vaccination and sterilisation campaign starting with the centre of political power itself - Singha Durbar. But there are at least 15 dogs caught in road accidents every month, with many of them landing up at KAT.

When KAT was founded in 2004 by British artist and author of *Faces of Nepal*, Jan Salter, it primarily emphasised birth control of canines. This was at a time when the municipality used to poison stray dogs to

control their numbers. Introducing a more humane approach to tackling the growing number of strays, KAT began sterilising the dogs, particularly female, as they healed faster.

Today, KAT's work has diversified and its responsibilities have increased. In addition to birth control, the centre also immunises every dog coming to the centre against rabies, it sterilises cats as well and conducts rescue operations. During last year's earthquake, KAT tended to more than 400



Emigrating dogs

Babu was a four-month-old stray pup with severe skin disease when rescued from Maharajgunj. After a month at the KAT Centre in Maharajganj, Babu had recovered, got his hair back and was a playful, friendly dog.

"Babu's life changed drastically, it was a huge improvement for him," said Deepesh Dhakal of KAT Centre in Budanilkantha, who takes care of dozens of other strays at KAT which are up for adoption.

Interestingly, most of the dogs are adopted by foreigners and about 15 are taken abroad every year. Babu (*pic, above*) was adopted by an American visitor, and is in the United States. Next in line is Bandit who is getting his documents ready to emigrate to Canada with his foster parents. Zimba is going to Germany.

injured dogs, providing them with food and on the spot treatment.

KAT hopes to develop a new model where communities take ownership of dogs to manage them in a more sustainable manner. "The stray-dog issue in Kathmandu can be solved overnight if everyone is willing to shelter one each," said Pal.

If it gets enough funding to move to a new space, KAT hopes to create a better animal-friendly space, with more capacity, improved diagnostic facilities and better-equipped operation theatres. Having settled a deal for a land not more than a few kilometres from their current place, it plans to build everything from scratch. But first, it needs to raise money. 🇳🇵

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Smriti Basnet

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TREKKERS WALK ALONG THE KALI GANDAKI RIVER BED NEAR CHUKSANG IN UPPER MUSTANG



A BALCONY AT TAMUDHI TOLE IN BHAKTAPUR

malayan andscape

ALL PICS: SUJOY DAS

Longtime Nepal resident Lisa Choegyal has teamed up with noted Indian outdoor photographer Sujoy Das to bring out a unique picture book on Nepal that is a deeply personal account of the country, and how it has changed their lives. *Nepal Himalaya: A Journey through Time* is exactly that — a story told in text and pictures of the lives and travels of two people through a country they have grown to love and cherish.

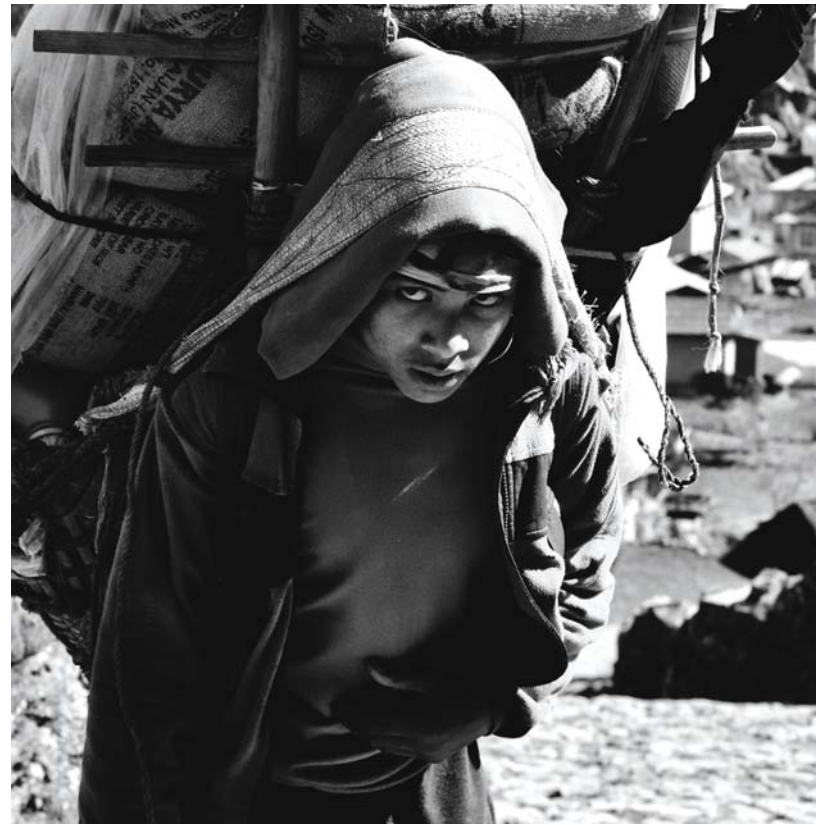
Choegyal first came to Nepal in 1974 when she was 23 years old at a time when young westerners disillusioned with materialism and war came to seek nirvana. Kathmandu was the end of the road, and many found their spiritual selves here. Choegyal describes herself in the book as 'not a successful hippie'. That is because she decided to stay on, get a job and get married, raise a family and make a career out of tourism development and conservation in Nepal.

Forty years later, Choegyal writes: 'Something about this place makes me feel deeply at home.' The text part of the book is a shortish memoir of her life in Nepal, the Nepalis she made friends with (the book is dedicated to the people of Nepal), the expats she met (everyone from Edmund Hillary, Boris Lissanevitch, Jimmy Roberts, etc) and the places she visited.

'My respect for the *schicksalsergeben* (resigned to one's fate) and strength of the Nepali people is infinite,' writes Reinhold Messner in the foreword to the book. Indeed, Choegyal returns time and again in the following pages to the dignity and legendary ability of Nepalis to overcome hardships.

Sujoy Das' stark black-and-white photographs are a visual testimony to this resilience. The photographs are divided by themes: into the landscape, the humanscape, the natural and urban heritage as well as the culture of Nepal. We have seen many coffee table books with superb colour photographs of the Himalaya, and yet the monochrome of Das' images heighten the topographical extremes of Nepal, and juxtapose them against portraits of Nepalis who have to live and make a living in such breathtakingly difficult terrain.

The black-and-white images accentuate the ramparts of rock-ice, the texture of clouds, wrinkles



A BOY FROM THE TERAI CARRIES LOADS FOR A LODGE OWNER IN NAMCHE BAZAAR



YAK IN THE SNOW NEAR PANGBOCHE VILLAGE IN THE EVEREST REGION

on the faces of villagers, terrace farms clinging to shoulders of mountains. There is a series of photographs of porters on trekking trails, and one striking double spread of them carrying long timber beams walking sideways up the mountains. Das explains in his own Photographer's Note how he was initiated into mountain photography after watching Machapuchre from Pokhara 30 years ago, and how there has been no looking back. He had fallen hopelessly in love with Nepal.

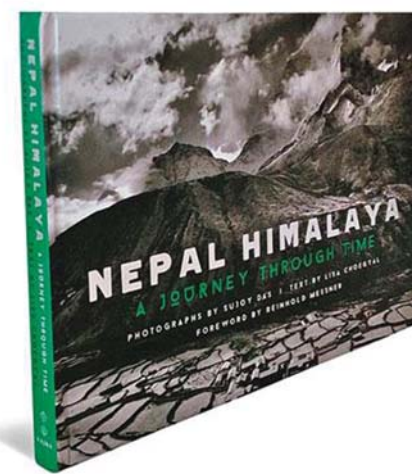
Because of her involvement with tourism ever since her work with Mountain Travel and Tiger Tops, Choegyal devotes much of her text to tourism. The setting up of the Chitwan National Park to rescue tigers and rhinos from the brink of extinction and the Annapurna Conservation Project that ploughed trekking fees directly to lift living standards, were models for eco-tourism that

have now been copied elsewhere in the world.

'Nepal was ahead of its time in appreciating and adopting what have become widely recognised core ecotourism values ... but seems to have lost its way,' Choegyal writes pointing out that militant unionism has pushed away investors and led to a deterioration of service standards and affected tourism promotion.

But, reflecting the strength we see in Sujoy Das' photography, she ends with a positive outlook: 'Considering the country's unparalleled combination of natural and cultural resources, I believe Nepal's best hope still remains with tourism - an industry that creates many jobs, has the ability to reach far into these beautiful mountains, and can tangibly improve the lives of the admirably resilient people of Nepal.'

Kunda Dixit



**Nepal Himalaya:
A Journey through Time**

Photographs by Sujoy Das,
Text by Lisa Choegyal
Vajra Books, Kathmandu 2016
164 pages
www.vajrabooks.com.np

EVENTS



Ride to Khokana,
Contribute to restoring Nepal's cultural heritage by participating in a cycle ride program from Kathmandu to Khokana, organised by the Khokana Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Committee.
20 September, 7 am onwards, Price: Rs 600

KtmWalks Kilagal,
Enjoy a vehicle free Kilagal and be part of the heritage walk, an open forum, pilukisi dance, cultural programs, games, food stalls and other fun activities.
17 September, 7 am to 7 pm, Kilagal, ktmwalks.wordpress.com

Godavari Running,
Choose from a variety of activities: an obstacle race, trail running, ultra run or basketball and spend your day outdoors.
24 September, 11 am onwards, Godavari Football Ground, 9841298400/9841729965

Yin yoga,
Calm your mind with an hour of yin-inspired yoga followed by a singing bowl session.
1 October, 6.30 to 8 am, Sooriya Wellness Yoga Studio, sooriyawellness@gmail.com, Fee: Rs 1,500

BAC Mela,
Local products, foodstuffs and a second-hand garage sale plus entertainment for the whole family at BAC's monthly mela.
24 September, 1 pm onwards, BAC Art Cafe, Pulchok, 9851147776



Art exhibition,
Attend an art exhibition by artist Shyam Lal Shrestha titled 'Images Through Time II'.
Till 7 October, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, (01) 4218028/4433930

Piano lessons,
Register for jazz piano lessons and get to know about jazz theory, harmony, improvisation, and composition with Indian musician and jazz pianist Shanoi.
Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel, (01) 5013554



Fashion photography,
Learn the tricks and trade of fashion photography with Sanjog Rai in a three-day workshop. Profits will be given to charity.
16 to 18 September, Evoke Café & Bistro, Jhamsikhel, 9851111051, Registration: Rs 6500, On the spot registration: Rs 7000

Rhythm and soul,
Enjoy an evening of Kathak and Flamenco performances by well known artists like Subima Shrestha and Maradee de Guzman. All proceeds go towards Tewa for a fund to support women.
23 September, 6 to 7.30 pm, Nepal Army Club, Bhadrakali, www.sushilaartsacademy.com

Go green,
Pick tree saplings of Rudraksha, Jacaranda, Ficus Benjamina, Camphora or Kaiyo from the 1080 Chandra Gurung Conservation Foundation is giving away and make your city green. Followed by performances in Moksh.
24 September, 3 to 6pm (Collect saplings), Natural History Museum, Swoyambhu, Tickets: Rs 999, Rs 499 (Students), www.cgcf.org.np

MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI



Life is like riding a bicycle.

To keep balance you must keep moving.

- Albert Einstein

Miss Moti-vation
Kripa Kreationz

DINING



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Nepali dal-bhat, Newari khaja, Swiss Rösti, Italian risotto or Thai green curry – take a pick.
Jhamsikhel, (01)5542986

Hyatt Regency,
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16 to 25 September, 6.30 to 10 pm (dinner only), Rox Restaurant, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, (01) 4491234



Kaiser Cafe,
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Thamel, 4425341

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Thamel, 9816696571



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Jhamsikhel, 5535294

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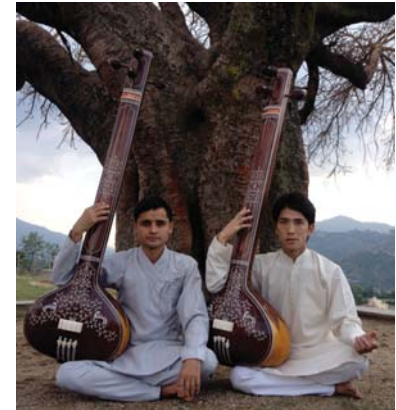


Kutumba live,
Tap along the beat of soul-stirring music, as Kutumba performs live.
16 September, 6 pm onwards, Patan Museum

Edge Band Live,
Unwind with the popular Edge Band on a Saturday evening as they belt out some of their hits like Nachodnu yo sath, Kasari and Mero Aashu.
17 September, 7 pm onwards, Karma Bar & Lounge, Tripureshor, 9803652949/981015442 9/9808607891

Jazz night,
Enjoy a jazz night alongside celebrations of the opening of Trans Culture Camp, an open studio and exhibition of the work created in community outreach camps in Gorkha and Kathmandu.
17 September, 6.30 pm onwards, BAC Art Cafe, Pulchok, 9851147776

Bass Day,
Get to meet and listen to some of the well known bass players from around the city.
24 September, 2 pm onwards, House of Music, Thamel, 9851075172



Gharana Music Festival,
Mark your calendars for the second edition of the international classical music festival organised by the Gharana Music Foundation. Read more on Page 7.
14 to 18 September at Hotel Yak and Yeti, 17 September, 4 pm, at Tangalwood, Tangal, 9813284480 / 9851006246, www.gharanamusicfoundation.org. Tickets: Rs 700 (general admission), Rs 250 (students), Rs 2,000 (four-concert package)

GETAWAY



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Bhetani, Bardia, info@mangotreelodge.com



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SHUVECHCHHYA PRADHAN

The full moon in the holy month of Gunla is when Buddhist Newars have flocked to the bahals of the Valley to listen to priests read ancient sacred scriptures. The teachings of Lord Buddha is in a book written in gold and silver letters in the sacred texts of Pragya Paramita.

The four known places that house the important texts are Bhagwan Bahal, Itum Baha and Piganani of Kathmandu along with Kwa Baha of Patan (see map). Each of the books with identical stories were written during different times, and there are different rules governing their ritual public readings.



The four volumes in Bhagwan Bahal, for instance, are displayed during the festival to be read by the priests. This is the monastery looked after by the Pradhans, the only Buddhist seshya (Newar administrative class) of the valley. The other monasteries are usually managed by Shakyas, Bajracharyas and Tuladhars.

Different venues have different practices during Gunla. The text in Itum Baha is no longer read and is only kept on display with the members collectively reading a printed version in Devnagari every evening throughout the holy month. Although it is one of the oldest and most important monasteries in Kathmandu, the tradition of reading the original text was probably lost because of squabbles among priests.

The book in Piganani, a courtyard of the Tamrakar community, is only brought out on the day of Panchara in Juga Chharey, the annual alms-giving event that falls on the 14th day of the dark half of the month.

Probably the most easily accessible and best preserved is the one in Kwa Baha where the members of the monastery wait for their turn for as long as eight months to have the priests read the book in their names. The tradition of book reading is thought to have started 400 years ago during the time of Kulapad Bajracharya of Nyakhachuka, who had six sons: four from the first wife living in Nyakhachuka and two from the second wife in Tangal Baha along with one priest in Kwa Baha reading the script.

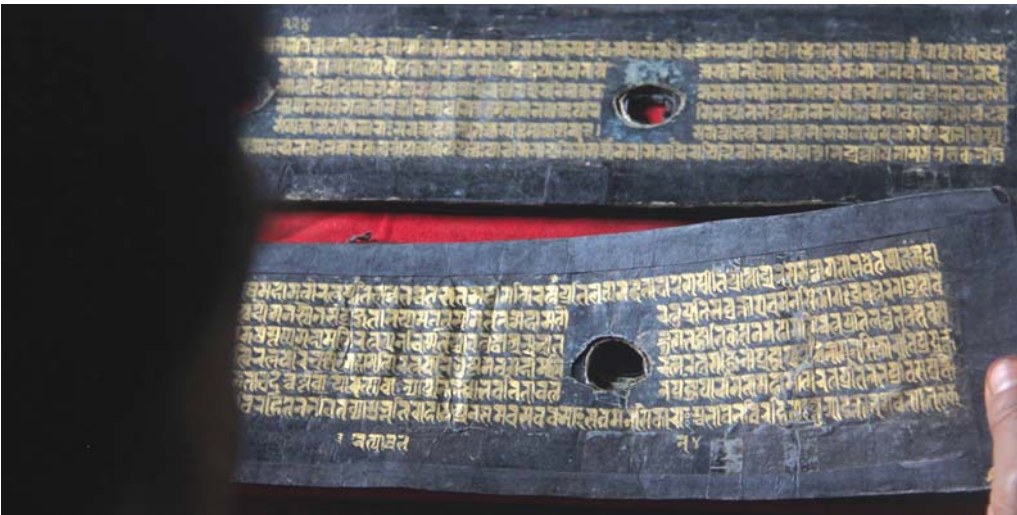
Later on, the Kwa Baha guthi decided to add three more priests making it easier to distribute the 300 page book among themselves. Although the text was initially only read at certain times of the year, nowadays it is read for almost as many as 300 days. The books are not in constant use and the priests use the month of Purshottam Mas (the leap year month according to the lunar calendar) to restore and rewrite the document. The few gurju priests who know the script get the job



PICS: ALOK TULADHAR

The legends of Pragya Paramita

Kathmandu Valley's heritage is not just its monuments but its culture and rich rituals



of restoring the books, and the gold ink is donated by the community.

One of the main reasons for the inaccessibility of the Pragya Paramita books is the fear of losing it. The one at Bhagwan Bahal is dated back to 1223 BCE, and the Piganani book is almost as old. The books at Itum Baha and Bhagwan Bahal are written in gold and silver letters while the one at Piganani is written in banana leaves. The fragility and value of the books means that they are kept away for safekeeping, read and are read only during Gunla so they aren't handled frequently. But what the guthis are overlooking is how accessibility helps in preservation and promotion of the tradition,

as shown by Kwa Baha.

All the books in the four monasteries are in Sanskrit language, and use the Ranjana Lipi script. Knowledge of Sanskrit and Ranjana opens many doors for the gurjus to learn about the traditional art of Kathmandu Valley. At the same time, the daily practice of reading the Pragya Parimita at Kwa Baha provides extra economic support to the priests and the guthis.

The Bhagwan Bahal guthi has found a novel fund-raising idea: It charges at least Rs 3,000 from everyone who wants to get a glimpse of the holy book. Guthi member Gehendra Pradhan says the book is wiped clean with a ball of cotton once a year, and

rules out getting a digital scan of the book. "The older generation of the guthi believe that the book would lose its tantric powers if we did that," he explains. The guthi denied the Department of Archaeology permission to microfilm the sacred text.

But there is public clamour to make the holy texts more accessible to its people, and to copy them in case of damage which would also aid researchers of Pragya Paramita.

The best way to preserve Kathmandu's living heritage is to allow the public to participate and enjoy the traditions. So, the more we use the Pragya Paramita, the more we contribute towards its preservation for the future generations. 🇳🇵



Glossary of terms

BAHA/BAHI
The monastery courtyards and clan yards of Kathmandu Valley are called baha or bahi. The term Baha or Bahal is derived from the Sanskrit word, vihara, which means a Buddhist monastery, according to late Jesuit historian, John Locke. The chief difference between baha and bahi is the infrastructure and location. Bahas are located in a residential area, while bahis are built over a raised plinth and are not residential.

GUNLA
This is one of the holiest months for Buddhist Newar community that falls from the new moon of Shrawan to the new moon of Bhadra (September). During this month, Newars visit different bahaas and bahis, play Gunla Bhajans, read holy scriptures and fast. Many other important events like Pancha Daan and Mataya also fall in this month.

PRAGYA PARAMITA
The term translates into 'perfection of wisdom' and is one of the important scriptures in Mahayana Buddhism. Its practice is said to be the essential elements of the Bodhisattva Path. There are various editions of Pragya Paramita: the Kwa Baha (*pāṭ*), Itum Baha and Piganani editions are the Ashta Sahashrika Pragya Paramita, meaning they have 8,000 stanzas. The book at Bhagwan Baha is said to be Satasahashrika Pragya Paramita: 10,000 stanzas.



THE HUNTSMAN: WINTER'S WAR

It is unfortunate when an already unexceptional movie spawns a sequel. “*Snow White and the Huntsman*” (2012), starring the over-rated, frankly miscast Kristen Stewart as the famous maiden with porcelain skin and



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

raven hair, was a fairly enjoyable, occasionally annoying, but ultimately mindless extravaganza that yielded over \$396 million at the box office, inevitably spawning this lesser sequel that,

nonetheless, astonishingly, was able to retain not only Charlize Theron as the beautiful but evil sorceress Ravenna (she actually does use the words “Mirror, Mirror, on the wall”), but also the blustery, charismatic Chris Hemsworth as Eric, the titular Huntsman of both films.

Even more surprisingly, this foolish tale has also gained the incredible Emily Blunt and Jessica Chastain as Freya, the (initially) innocent sister of Ravenna, and Sara, a fellow Huntsman and wife of Eric. In a hodgepodge of a story, which takes elements of Disney’s animated hit “*Frozen*” (2013), and steals outright from C.S. Lewis’s *Narnia* books, Freya comes into her magic powers when she is betrayed by her illicit lover who apparently would rather burn their infant daughter to death in her cradle rather than leave his wife. Freya, in a not so subtle reaction to her daughter’s hideous death by fire, becomes a wielder of ice and snow, retreating to the “North” to become a ruthless conqueror of kingdoms, using her “children”, whom she takes

from their families, as soldiers or “Huntsmen”, to fight for her ruthless ambitions.

Eric and Sara, Freya’s favourites recruited as children, fall in love as adults, defying the wintery queen’s prime rule, that “love” does not exist, and that betrayal is the only thing that can come of it. Eric and Sara are torn apart, and this story, which takes place after Ravenna is defeated in “*Snow White and the Huntsman*” deals with the fight over the magic mirror, which still holds a great deal of power, and perhaps something even more deadly, behind its malevolent surface.

There are a few, obvious surprises that I will not ruin for you here, but mainly, aside from some laughs, one particularly objectionable scene that is extremely rude about dwarfism, and the grim determination of Chastain, Blunt and Hemsworth, there is very little to love about this film. It will keep you mildly entertained on television or in an airplane, but Theron’s one note performance as Ravenna, and the absolute banality of the plot are rarely leavened by the misguided special effects. There are goblins that have been modeled along the lines of gorillas, and Ravenna’s gold ensemble in contrast to Freya’s silvery loveliness can only be described (kindly) as garish. The only other relief is that Stewart’s grating, overly self-conscious Snow White makes no show in this silly, self indulgent fairy-tale.

nepalitimes.com
■ Trailer

HAPPENINGS



ANANDRAM DONGOL

HAND OVER: Former Prime Minister and UML Chair KP Oli warns Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Sunday against signing anti-national treaties during the latter’s India visit.



RSS

FRIENDLY AGAIN: Minister of Foreign Affairs Prakash Sharan Mahat shakes hands with his Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj in New Delhi a few days before PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal’s scheduled visit to the neighbouring country.



GOPEN RAI

NO GO: People hold a rally protesting against Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal’s visit to India at Maitighar.



GOPEN RAI

CLEANING UP: Young boys wash up before attending the mass prayer on the occasion of Eid al-Adha at Kashmiri Jame mosque in Kathmandu on Tuesday.



ANANDRAM DONGOL

PAINTING THE GOD: Locals paint the mask of Sweta Bhairav for the Indra Jatra festival at Kathmandu Darbar Square on Tuesday.

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Dahal in Delhi

Editorial in *Kantipur*,
13 September

कान्तिपुर

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's Delhi visit this week is an opportunity to strengthen Nepal-India ties, and take steps that could benefit both neighbours.

In Delhi, Dahal must clearly put forth Nepal's concerns, but avoid mixing our internal affairs with bilateral issues. Amending the Constitution to address Madhesi demands, most importantly redrawing boundaries of federal provinces, is a domestic affair, and it needs to be addressed internally. Dahal must not involve India in deciding when and how to do it.

Dahal looked anxious before the visit, and was promising to register a bill in the Parliament to amend the Constitution before embarking on a four-day visit to the South. It does not solve the problem it instead blurs the line on what internal matters are.

Dahal must focus on bilateral agendas, especially points that were previously agreed upon but not implemented. Nepal and



GOPEN RAI

India have failed to prepare a joint Detailed Project Report of Pancheswor Multipurpose Project even after inking a deal on it. Expediting the construction of the Tarai Feed road is discussed every time Nepal's PM visits India, but it remains neglected.

There is a growing perception that India just wants to sit on hydropower development projects in Nepal to keep its neighbour poor. India must clear this perception by beginning hydropower and other development projects that it has agreed to build in Nepal. Dahal must also raise issues of inundation and encroachment by India, but must not promise anything on the contract of the Kathmandu-Tarai fast track to any Indian company.

Dahal must not sign new agreements without proper groundwork, and it is equally important for the ruling Maoist-NC coalition to win the main opposition UML's trust on this matter. If he signs new deals imposed upon him without understanding their nitty-gritties they will be disastrous for the country.

Dahal's Maoist party shares a bittersweet relationship with India. He is not visiting India as the CPN (Maoist-Centre) Chair, but as Nepal's Executive Head. He must not be thinking of what his party will gain or lose from his visit. As the PM of a sovereign nation, he must show confidence, and raise issues of national interest with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

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The horseman of Lumbini



SATAN TO SAINT: Murali Kuswaha, a dreaded vigilante, posed for this picture (*left*) with his shotgun and bandolier in 2001 in Kapilvastu where he was hired by the Army to hunt down Maoists. After the war, he became a sadhu and now seeks solace in god (*above*) and has a horse as his friend (*right*).



PICS: DEEPAK GYAWALI

DEEPAK GYAWALI
in NAWALPARASI

In April 2005, just a day after the Nepali New Year, the Maoists stormed into a village in central Tarai, bombing houses of local landlords and slaughtering villagers, including children.

The bloodshed in Bargdawa was splattered across national media the next morning. It was the result of bad blood between local zamindars and landless Dalits in which 11 people were killed. During the Maoist war, the two sides sought help from the state and the rebels, and a minor land dispute could escalate into a bloody feud.

Golahi Chamar, a Dalit, had

bought half an acre of land from Nanda Kumar Chaudhari, a village landlord. But the transaction was not registered at the local land revenue office. After Chaudhari's death, his sons tried to evict the Chamar family from the disputed land.

The Maoists exerted pressure on the Chaudharis to return the disputed property to the Chamar family. But the Chaudharis

sought help from a local Retaliation Committee instead. This was a vigilante group formed by the Army to hunt down insurgents.

The Maoists abducted and killed a Chaudhari. The vigilantes countered by killing a Chamar. That tragic summer night, it was the Maoists' turn to respond, and by dawn they fled the village leaving a pile of corpses and



**20/10
CONFLICT
ANNIVERSARY
1996–2006–2016**

A future that didn't come

A former Maoist child soldier is disappointed his dreams of revolution were dashed



MUKUNDA BOGATI



GANESH CHAUDHARY

WAR MEMORY: Mukunda Bogati's photograph of child soldier Tej Bahadur Dong, in Ramechhap (2001). His uncle was trying to talk him into going back home to his parents (*left*). Dong at a UN-supervised camp in Shaktikhor in 2009 (*above*) and today, at 34, in his rented room in Kathmandu where he lives with his wife and two sons (*right*).



SHREEJANA SHRESTHA

SHREEJANA SHRESTHA

Tej Bahadur Dong was 15, and father to a child, when he joined the Maoist militia in 2001. After months of waiting for him to return, Tej Bahadur's parents sent the boy's uncle, Bhim Bahadur Tamang, to meet him at a guerrilla camp in Ramechhap to convince him to come home.

The two were sitting on a ledge, the boy cradling a long .303 rifle, deep in conversation with his uncle. *Kantipur* reporter Mukunda Bogati spotted them, and remembers being touched on spotting such a young boy in military uniform. He snapped a picture and wrote an accompanying story which was published in *Kantipur*. It brought the reality of the

conflict to readers nationwide.

"I was instantly moved on seeing the young boy in a combat dress, and I think it was one of the few pictures from the war that depicts the use of child soldiers," Bogati told *Nepali Times*. The photograph was selected for *A People War*, the trilogy of photo books on the Maoist conflict.

Almost one-and-half decades later, Dong is now 34, and lives in a rented room in Kathmandu with his family. He has memories of more than 30 battles he participated in, and nods as he compares it with the current political situation. "I regret that we couldn't be agents of change the way we hoped to be," he says.

His military uniform is still stored, neatly folded, inside a wooden cupboard on the ground floor of a three-storied building at Balaju Height. He hasn't

worn them since he opted for voluntary retirement in 2010.

Tej Bahadur was married, had become a father and a revolutionary guerrilla — all before he was 15 years old. He says he joined the Maoists to protect himself from being detained and killed by the police, and after indoctrination by the party, fervently believed that he could make a difference by creating a classless society.

"It is difficult to see any dramatic changes that the conflict brought to the country, I feel like we sacrificed our lives for nothing," says Dong, listing lack of opportunities, unemployment, slow-paced development, poor health care and political instability among an array of problems nepalis are faced with.

He got Rs 100,000 when he left the UN-supervised Shaktikhor Interim Camp

in Chitwan where he served as a battalion deputy-commander. He chose voluntary retirement because he didn't get promoted to Major in the Nepal Army.

Altogether 1,420 Maoist guerrillas were integrated into the Nepal Army and out of them, only one became a Colonel, two were Lt Colonels and 13 became Majors.

He lived with his two sons and wife in Chitwan, but moved to Kathmandu because he was ostracised by neighbours for being a Maoist. "I was driven to depression by the way we were treated."

He is now dependent on his wife's income from knitting and weaving, to run the household and to pay the monthly rent. He dabbled in pig farming in Kathmandu investing his compensation money on it, but it failed. He has sold his ancestral property in Ramechhap to pay for his sons' education

in Kathmandu.

Dong regrets not having gone to college, he joined the Maoists soon after his SLC. "I was trained to use guns, but where will I get a job that matches my experience now?"

Dong is still affiliated with the CPN (Maoist –Centre) of his erstwhile Supreme Commander Prachanda, who is now Prime Minister. As a member of the Kathmandu District Committee he says communism still flows in his blood. But he no longer introduces him by his nom de guerre, Urja. He doesn't think about the future anymore, and takes each day as it comes, leaving everything to fate. He wants to invest in his children's education so they will have a future. He adds: "This combat dress is my history, it feels good to replay the memories of a time when I fought for the future of my country." 🇳🇵

When the conflict degenerated into violence of villagers versus vigilantes

burning homesteads.

A day after the Bargdawa massacre when reporters reached the village, Murari Kushwaha, a dreaded vigilante, was guarding the village. He was carrying a gun and wearing a bandolier.

Kushwaha pointed his gun at me and the other reporters, threatening to kill us all. Once we convinced him that we were journalists, he was ready to talk and be photographed.

His photo appeared on the cover of Samaya newsmagazine, and unmasked the face of vigilantes mobilised by the state against its rebels. The photo was also a solid proof that the state was actively inciting the people to rise up against the Maoists. It had started training unemployed youth, including convicted criminals from India, to fight the rebels with shotguns and rifles.

Kushwaha was one of the first to be trained and armed by the Army in Nawalparasi district. He was reportedly fleeing prosecution for crimes in India, but already had Nepali citizenship. Kushwaha quickly expanded his reach beyond his village, and overtly supported the Chaudharis in Bargdawa. He boasted of having killed many rebels, and was on the Maoist hit list.

After the 2006 Peace Accord, Kushwaha disappeared from his village, and reappeared as a priest. I tracked him down, and my picture of him wearing a

garland of rudraksha is included in Kunda Dixit's *People After War*.

During the war, local landlords used to call Kushwaha for help when threatened by the Maoists. Today, people still seek help from him, but not to kill anyone. As a member of a local peace committee, he mediates land disputes, and persuades them to find a peaceful settlement.

Last week, when we caught up with him in his village near Buddha's birthplace of Lumbini, Kushwaha had just finished his morning prayers and was busy facilitating negotiations to settle a dispute affecting classes at a local school.

"I am happy that people now need me for peace, and not for war," he told Nepali Times. "When I worship, I find inner peace - I do not want to remember the past."

Most men in the Tarai either ride motorcycles or bicycles, but Kusawaha rides a horse around the village. "This is not just a horse, but a friend who keeps me company," he says. "He cheers me up whenever I get upset thinking of my violent past."

At a time when a Maoist faction is preparing to launch a new war against the state, Kushwaha urges Nepalis to never resort to violence again: "I have seen it all, and I know how it feels to live through a war, we don't need another one."

RAYMOND WEIL

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No laughing matter

It has come to the notice of investigating authoritarians that despite a state of national urgency, there is still a lot of uncontrolled and spontaneous laughter going on in isolated parts of the Democratic People's Federal Express Fast Track Secular Republic of Nepal. There is clear and present danger that such unrestrained mirth could spread and be detrimental to national security, especially at a time when the Left Honourable Prime Minister Comrade Awesomeness is on a state visit to a neighbouring country to the South which we always refer to in superlatives, and therefore should be nipped in the bud forthwith. This is no laughing matter.

Our founding grandfathers, in their wisdom, promulgated the Laughter and Satire Act 2007 BS which categorically states that in times of grave national crisis



the state can for a limited and stipulated period temporarily suspend an individual's perfectly natural urge to giggle, snigger, chuckle, chortle, twitter, or all of the above. These curtailments of fundamental freedoms are sometimes deemed necessary for the collective good, even if the individual in question may have no idea what that good is exactly.

Since such a crisis is now at hand, and considering that wild guffawing is highly

infectious and can spread by word-of-mouth thus lowering the morale of our civil and uncivil servants, the state is now invoking Article 27 of the Laughter and Satire Act and banning all unauthorised laughter until further notice. Guards! Take that chap who has fallen off his chair to the dungeons and tickle his armpits.

Where were we? Oh yes, compared to the DPRK which has just executed the Education Minister for falling asleep during a Cabinet Meeting, we lag far behind in enforcing the laughter ban. (Speaking of North Korea, when is Comrade Bujukche of the People's Democratic Republic of Bhaktapur going to congratulate The Great Successor Comrade Un for conducting another underground nuclear test?)

Be that as it may, notwithstanding, and nevertheless we are a civilised society,

and realise that in rare cases those of unsound mind may need to laugh at regular intervals for medical reasons. For these cases, exceptions have been made so they can do so in designated sound-proof Laugh Cells. But they must bring their shrink's prescription in triplicate duly notarised by the Joker-in-Chief of the governing coalition stating the psychosomatic and physiological reasons why the said patient needs to chuckle gustily, and more importantly, whether there is actually still something to laugh about in this country. These strict regulations are required to thwart abuse, and to prevent the entire country from pretending that it has gone insane.

Appendix 1: Non-Nepali residents and diplomats are also exempt from the laughter ban since their conduct in the host country is governed by the Vienna Convention and its Annex 13 (d) which states: 'In cases where the recipient state has suspended its sense of humour, consular missions and their resident staff may on occasion enjoy

diplomatic impunity and be allowed to vent off a little steam as long as they don't indulge in boisterous jocularity in public.'

Appendicitis 2: Nepal Telecom has been given the go-ahead to resume its hitherto immobile phone service (oops, did I just say something funny?) after all subscribers were fingerprinted and had to sign written affidavits declaring that they will send only officially-sanctioned unfunny jokes to each other via SMS.

Appendectomy 3: Despite draconian crackdowns it is inexplicable that some miscreants insist on defying state-sanctioned regulations and staging laugh-ins at Baluwatar. In all seriousness, what is there to laugh about? Don't they know that under the current Authoritarian, he who laughs best laughs last?



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