A decade after the end of the conflict in Nepal, the perpetrators of war crimes want to bury the truth while the families of victims are still trying to dig it out.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal commanded the Maoist militia and is charged with war crimes. His coalition partner Sher Bahadur Deuba of the Nepali Congress used to be prime minister for most of the war years and allowed human rights violations.

Neither Dahal and Deuba now want to take the pain. The former enemies have ensured that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission for the Investigation of Enforced Disappeared Persons (CEEDP) have weak mandates. If it wasn’t for a Supreme Court verdict, there would probably have been a few by now granting blanket amnesty and pardon for war crimes.

The CEEDP drafted a law last year to avoid previous incorrect single or double counts, but the government ignored it. Without strong laws, even if the real truth about what happened to the disappeared comes out, no action can be taken against perpetrators.

“The truth is what we want, but we also want the guilty punished,” says Shyam Chaudhary of the National Network of families of Disappeared and Missing Nepali Chaudhary is from Bardiya which saw 25% of the 1,334 in the list of the disappeared prepared by the international committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

His daughter and sister-in-law were disappeared by the Army during the Deuba government in 2001. “We want the truth about what happened to them so we can perform their final rites,” says Chaudhary.

The CEEDP’s Balkhu Pathak says his agency cannot do much with its limited mandate, time and resources. But the families of the disappeared say money is not the issue. It is the lack of political will.

Sunita Chaudhary: “The commission is not free and impartial. It is merely a political tool to protect Deuba and his partners in crime.”

On Asha Rai
NOT PLAYING BALL
On the first anniversary of the seventh constitution in seven decades, Nepal is stuck again.

A
fter the bloodshed in the Tarai that followed the promulgation of the ‘fast track’ constitution last year left nearly 60 people and a dozen policemen dead, it is once more decision time. The onus is on Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal on his return from India to carry out a second amendment to the constitution to satisfy Madhesi and Janajati dissidents.

But on the first anniversary of the seventh constitution in seven decades, Nepal is stuck again. The first constitution in Nepal’s history that was drawn up by a sovereign assembly elected by the people is supposed to be the last step in a peace process that began with the ceasefire in 2006.

There is hardly any precedence in recent world history of a constitution being passed by nearly 90 per cent of elected representatives. Despite that there was dissatisfaction in the Tarai, which some Madhesi-based parties used to launch an agitation aimed at gaining back the support they had lost in the 2013 elections. The protests turned violent, and brutal police response on the streets led to many deaths.

The hurried promulgation of the constitution, despite misgivings from New Delhi, then led directly to a border blockade supported by India that crippled the country’s economy. The human disaster of the earthquake was followed by a humanitarian disaster of the blockade.

Through Nepal’s recent history of Maoist violence, the 12-point agreement in Delhi, the downfall of the monarchy and the decade-long transition after 2006 we have seen the impact of geopolitics on Nepal’s internal affairs.

Although both Nepal’s neighbours say they want stability in Nepal, the question remains of whether both want it in the same way. The elections of 2013 were fought for control of the narrative by Nepal’s two dominant political players: the ruling UML and the匡igning parties that observed Constitution Day this week as a ‘black day’ and burnt copies of the statute may be acting at the behest of this outside force.

It is difficult to see how supporting such divisive politics of ethnicity benefits any domestic or foreign entity. How does uncertainty, anarchy and a constitutional limbo help a country with which we share a long, open border?

The main message that Pushpa Kamal Dahal attempted to give to both his Indian interlocutors and the public back home during his New Delhi visit this week was that he had restored India-Nepal bilateral relations to its earlier bonhomie. He may have succeeded in giving that impression in New Delhi, but back home the joint communiqué and purported secret deals have reinforced the belief that Nepal’s leaders have once more sold out to India. Even if it is not true, the perception that he did so is neither good for Dahal, nor for the country.

The fact that two of the four main demands of the Madhesi parties were addressed within five months in the first amendment is actually proof of the pragmatism and flexibility of the new constitution. It showed that democracy is alive and well, and taking legitimate democratic decisions. The Madhesi parties who want their other two demands to be fulfilled through the second amendment are a part of the constitutional process to press for those changes. The fact that they are working to achieve those ends through committees in the legislature is a healthy sign.

As we have emphasised in this space before, the demands of the Madhesi parties on border demarcations of the two Tarai provinces and the demand on citizenship cannot be fulfilled without the UML being on board. And the UML seems set to make it as difficult as possible so that it can extract its pound of flesh.

This deadlock is delaying all pending legislations governing the implementation of the new constitution which stipulates local, provincial and national elections to be held by January 2018. As former CA Chair Subhas Nembang says in an interview (page 13), the Election Commission’s deadline for poll preparations have already lapsed. If voting at all three levels cannot take place in a little over a year, it could lead to a constitution crisis and bring us back politically to square one.

Parliamentary elections need to be completed by January 2018, and elected federal assemblies can only function if local and provincial elections are held so that the National Assembly can elect a president and vice president. That in turn is only possible if there is agreement on the number of provinces, their boundaries — and for this the Madhesi parties need to be on board and the UML has to play ball. A deal is not in sight, and time is running out.

CHIEF JUSTICE
Kudos to Chief Justice Sushila Karki for restoring faith in the judiciary ‘Checking and balancing’, Brita Dahal, @#26.

Under her leadership, the Supreme Court is functioning pretty well. But Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal has reportedly said that the Chief Commissioner of the Investigation of the Abuse of Authority (CIAA) Chief, Lokman Singh Karak has made a secret deal with Chief Justice Karki. If true, this is serious. Chief Justice must prove these allegations wrong by delivering a fair verdict on the CIAA Chief’s appointment.

YOGA DIPLOMACY
Last year, the then-Prime Minister KP Oli’s India visit was a failure because he could not sign a joint press statement with his India counterpart before returning home (‘Yoga diplomacy’, Editorial, @#25). This year, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal had the opportunity to do so, but his visit was still considered a failure because India did not welcome the Constitution. As a sovereign nation, why do we have to get our Constitution endorsed by India?

Why is the success or failure of our PM’s India visit judged by whether he can secure New Delhi’s approval on our Constitution?

Mahesh Sharma

RICH RITUAL
What a rich culture the Kathmandu Newari community has! ‘The legends of Pragya Paramita’, Shuvechchhya Gyawali, @#26. He knows how it is like to be in a war. He knows that wars are not for the people but only for the benefit of a few leaders.

Sita Prasain

YOUR SAY
www.nepalitimes.com

Santosh Aryal

Weekly Internet Poll #827

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

@PM_Nepal you teach us to carry guns for government now you are the one who will carry guns for government even if it means we will turn to our graves.

@jhomsomjack

Gyurme Dondup

Weekly Internet Poll #827

Q. Will the Constitution of Nepal be enforced as per the provisions of the new constitution?

@pradhanpradeep8

Mohan Baidya

Weekly Internet Poll #827

Q. Who would be the most suitable candidate for the role of PM?

@PradhanPradeep8

Gyurme Dondup

Weekly Internet Poll #827

Q. Will the Constitution of Nepal be enforced as per the provisions of the new constitution?

@pradhanpradeep8

Gyurme Dondup
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Still waiting for the truth

Nearly 15 years after her son was disappeared, Ramkrishna Chaudhary has finally given up hope that he is alive.

TULA CHAUDHARY
in BARDIYA

LOSTING HOME: The picture (left) of Ramkrishna Chaudhary was taken in 2002, a few months after her son, Bhabin Chaudhary, was disappeared by the army. Fourteen years have now gone by and Chaudhary (right) still does not know of his whereabouts.

TULASHI CHAUDHARY

FOUR YEARS after her son was disappeared by the army, Ramkrishna Chaudhary used to look out every time a vehicle approached her mud house. She had held on to the hope that her son was alive, and would come home someday. Not anymore.

She is now hard of hearing, but that is not why she has stopped looking out at cars on the road. She has just lost hope that her son, Bhabin Chaudhary, is still alive.

“He would not have kept me waiting for so long, he was a responsible boy and always cared for his family,” she says, eyes brimming with tears.

In September 2000, seven young men from Moripur village, including Bhabin, were on their way to India in search of jobs. They were stopped by an army patrol near the border.

Ramkrishna Chaudhary thought her son had already crossed over to India. Four days later, she heard from villagers that Bhabin and his friends were detained at the Chisapani Army base.

Bhabin was 25 then, a quiet and hard-working man and not a Maoist. He just wanted to escape the violence and support his pregnant wife, aging parents and younger siblings. After his disappearance, his wife gave birth to a daughter who is now 14, and has never seen her father.

Bhabin’s younger brother dropped out of school to support the family.

Chaudhary and the mothers of six others who disappeared, searched for their sons and finally learnt that they were kept at the Chisapani base. But the army denied they were there.

One of the men detained along with Bhabin was released because his relatives were in the Army, and that is how Chaudhary knows that her son was at the Chisapani base. He said they had been tortured, sometimes with socks of rice piled on top of them on which soldiers sat.

In 2004, under pressure from the National Human Rights Commission, the Army finally admitted that three of the six detainees were “killed in an encounter”. But it refused to say anything about the other three, including Bhabin.

Throughout the years that followed, Chaudhary kept up her struggle to find her son. Borrowing money from villagers, she traveled to Chisapani many times to ask the Army to either release her son or show her the spot where he might be buried.

Once, even though Bhabin was allowed to visit Chisapani, and asked the soldiers at the gate to give them to him. The soldiers replied that they would set fire to his clothes and that he would not be with them. Those clothes, a few photographs, and her son’s citizenship certificate are the only reminders left of her son.

Journalist Ramnath Baburam’s photograph of a distraught Ramkrishna Chaudhary holding up her son’s citizenship card became one of the representative images of the plight of the families of the disappeared in the war. It was one of the pictures included in the A People War trilogy of photobooks on the conflict.

“When I took this photo, no one knew that so many Tharu youths had been disappeared by the army in Bardiya,” says Baburam. “So this photo exposed the extent of enforced disappearances in this district, and prompted the National Human Rights Commission to look into the matter.”

Early this year, Chaudhary finally registered a case at the Commission for the Investigation of Enforced Disappeared Persons (CEEDP), one of the two transitional justice bodies set up nearly a decade after the end of the war. She wanted the Commission to find out why Bhabin was detained, where and how he was tortured and what happened to him.

“I am old, ill, and I don’t have much time,” she says. “I want to know before I die where my son is and why he was killed, what happened to his body?”

But there is not much hope that the short-staffed CEEDP, with its limited mandate and resources will be able to find out the truth. With more than 200 people disappeared, Bardiya had the most reported disappearances during the conflict. Most of them, like Bhabin, were young men from the Tharu community detained by the Army for interrogation and never heard from again.

The notorious Chiwapa Barracks and prison set up to guard the Jardiya National Park were used in the Army’s counter insurgency operations for detention, torture and execution. Bhabin’s father, Amit Lal Chaudhary, worked as a Kamayabi - bonded farmer - but was lucky to be freed even before the slavery phenomenon came to an end in 2000. Bhabin and his brothers, therefore, did not have to work as Kamayabi.

Bhabin’s brother Ramesh, says his brother’s disappearance cost the family dearly. “He worked so well I could go to school, but with him gone I had to leave my studies,” he says. Thaggus goes to India once in a while to earn money but mostly supports his grandmother.

The government has given a compensation of Rs 400,000 to Bhabin’s family. But Ramkrishna Chaudhary has not been able to spend this money because it is deputed in a joint account with Bhabin’s daughter, and can only be taken out when she turns 16 in two years. “The money is for my granddaughter’s future,” Ramkrishna Chaudhary says. “As far as I go, I just want to know what happened to my Bhabin.”

Toothless commission

OM ASTHA RAI

A decade after the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Accord, the government, last year, finally set up the promised commission to investigate enforced disappearances during the war. But only four months remain of the two-year tenure of the Commission for the Investigation of Enforced Disappeared Persons (CEEDP) with investigations still in their preliminary stages.

The CEEDP has collected 2,870 complaints from families of the disappeared, mostly from Bardiya (284), Dang (124) andバック (121). The CEEDP is verifying these complaints before beginning the actual investigations.

The CEEDP has limited time, resources and legal instruments to find the truth about the disappeared persons and recommending legal actions against perpetrators. There is also a lack of will from the state, which is composed of the warring parties who would like to sweep their excesses under the carpet.

The Commission’s tenure can be extended for one more year, but without resources and a stronger mandate it will not be able to carry out meaningful investigations.

The Commission’s success would also depend on the government, the courts, the police, and the NGO community to cooperate with the Commission.

The CEEDP lacks strong laws to take legal actions against perpetrators. It could only recommend prosecution of perpetrators, but could not file any case.

Most importantly, the CEEDP lacks strong laws to take legal actions against perpetrators. It could only recommend prosecution of perpetrators, but could not file any case.

The government has not forwarded it to Parliament yet. With CPM, Bangladesh Centre for Justice & Peace, and ActionAid supporting the Commission, the CEEDP is unlikely to be passed. And without it the truth will not be known, perpetrators will walk free.
**BIZ BRIEFS**

**Golf open**
Turkish Airlines will be hosting the fourth edition of the Turkish Airlines Open in Anantara starting from 3 November to 6 November. Fourteen times champion Tiger Woods is also scheduled to appear for the event which will take place in the Caya Golf Club.

**Education award**
Eleven Nepali schools were awarded with the International Schools Award by British Council Nepal in an event last week. Endorsed by the Ministry of Education, the eleven schools were selected on basis of nurturing global citizenship in young people and enriching teaching and learning.

**Spread the love**
Coca-Cola announced a new campaign ‘Man Khubum Coca Sangha’ for the festive season. Customers can now express their feelings to their loved ones with customised messages on Coca-Cola’s new label pack.

**A fine evening**
Sorrento Crowne Plaza hosted ‘Our Table’, an evening of fine dining with wine tasting, with Perdom Richard Winemakers Alexandre Barra. Guests were served delectable dishes like Rice Vermicelli and Farroed Meat paired with suitable Jacob Creek wines.

**Fly to Colombo**
Himalaya Airlines recently introduced its second direct scheduled flight to Colombo, Sri Lanka. The airline will be flying from Kathmandu to Colombo on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays with airlines starting from Rs 29,191 for one way and Rs 58,041 round trip, inclusive of governmental taxes.
Muckraking among bottomfeeders

Nepal is an interesting case study for the 350 investigative journalists in Kathmandu this weekend for an international conference

Last week, I reviewed a documentary screening in Kathmandu on the transition of the Muladhar into a mafia state. To make up for the loss, I found the video on YouTube—an Al Jazeera investigative series—and watched it from the comfort of my own couch at home.

ONE TO MANY
Bidushi Dhungel

The hour-long video follows a massive leak of information from three iPhones belonging to the former Vice President of the Muladhar, Ahmed Adel, a self-proclaimed boss of all gangs in the archipelago and various illegal activities he was reportedly involved in, including money-laundering, illegal business deals, and bribes in the executive, parliament, and judiciary.

The documentary tells the story of how the caustic half of the ex-President’s government were parallel states that thrived on ex-post corruption, and how they were involved in the country’s power and political elite. The revelations are not only scandalous, but also show a sense of fearlessness and boldness of a country and its citizens.

By the time the documentary comes to a close, the audience is left with a glimmer of hope for the Muladhar, a Nepal listener cannot help but be left with mixed feelings. Is Nepal a country where truth prevails and democracy will prevail? Perhaps nothing has illustrated that hope in more than the dealings of the Supreme Court and its Chief Justice Sushil Karki in the past few months and weeks in particular.

Among the executive, legislature, and judiciary, the latter has been the last stand against the complete failure of the state to safeguard its citizens and the democratic spirit.

There is little hope that Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal can address this crisis of democracy. He has not yet shown the public that there exist a sense of responsibility, and that ‘agreements’ have been reached with both himself and the judiciary and the head of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) which would absolve him and his party of plundering billions in compensation from the state to his ex-cabinet ministers.

Thus far, one can only hope the judiciary is propagandized and posturing. Since little can be expected of the executive, we have no choice but to root for further strength in the judiciary and actively work to embolden it. The few members of parliament who have shown the guts and sense of responsibility to address the CIAA’s warnings and its impact on the functioning of our fledgling parliamentary democracy will also require more support.

The activities of the CIAA necessitate little elucidation now, for even what is yet to be proven is obvious to anyone who dares to look. In the Muladhar documentary there are glaring similarities—both physical and behavioral—between the former Vice President Ahmed Adel and Nepal’s CIAA chief. If it took an independent team of investigative reporters and journalists, with plenty of resources to uncover and expose the irregularities of the Muladhar state, here in Nepal, local journalists and activists will have little to no resources have done a commendable job in exposing the messes between the CIAA and the political and bureaucratic class.

Even in an atmosphere of hostility, fear, blackmail and intimidation, much has surfaced in the past months that show Nepal is headed in the exact direction of the Muladhar unless immediate action is taken. Little could be more worrying than the persistent lack of interest on the part of the International community which used to once be found upon corruption and governance.

Even with much to lose and at risk, some journalists despite threats of injury and death and despite the lack of support and resources, have been dogging for information. And there’s a lot to discover in the agencies that itself supposed to expose abuse of power.

From direct intervention in government to study business deals, gold smuggling and blackmail. It all reads like a crime-tastic political thriller with the CIAA at the epicenter. This could be an interesting case study for the 350 investigative journalists from 35 countries who are in Kathmandu this weekend for the Unsaying Asia conference organized by the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIN).
"Unless women are free, men will not be free"

SAHINA SHRESTHA

On an open-air stage in Lalitpur this week, 34 women from a dozen countries whistled, laughed loudly and danced. Where they come from, doing any of those things would be considered unbecoming for a woman.

It was a symbolic act of defiance and empowerment by graduates of the SANGAT workshop – a month-long training on feminist capacity building. The participants are now ready to break gender barriers and take on the world.

On stage with the women is Kamia Bhasin, a noted Indian social scientist and gender activist. This is her 21st cohort for a workshop. It was originally designed for young feminists from South Asia but in recent years has attracted participants from Burma, Iran, Australia and countries in Africa.

These month-long workshops, organised by the SANGAT network, make participants understand patriarchy, gender, feminism and help monitor misogyny. For the rest of the year, Bhasin conducts gender sensitisation trainings for members of parliament, journalists, activists, students, teachers and police across the subcontinent.

“I do more workshops with men because there aren’t enough men in South Asia who have understood that unless women are free, men cannot be free,” explains Bhasin. “The struggle for gender equality is not between men and women, it is among two ideologies: one that says patriarchy is better, and the other that says equality is better.”

In her workshops, Bhasin explains patriarchy as the exploitation of women where their physical power, reproductive power, sexuality, mobility are all controlled by men. It is based on violence or the threat of violence.

“Nurture created difference, diversity. There are no two human beings in the world who are exactly the same, but human beings have created discrimination for power, control and exploitation,” says Bhasin.

It is not only men who dominate women in patriarchy; women are dominated by women as well.

It is difficult to fight because it exists inside homes, with family members as perpetrators. Patriarchy also colourizes men by boxing them into expectations of protecting women and ingraining the use of violence as normal.

In the last five years, anti-misogynistic women make up to 33 per cent of parliament, marital rape has been recognised, but cultural and religious patriarchies have not been challenged enough,” she says, “We are afraid of religion and even the women’s movement hasn’t succeeded in hitting hard it.”

Bhasin is also critical of what she calls “capitalist patriarchy” in which businesses make money portraying women as objects as does pornography, trafficking, the cosmetic industry and advertising. She says that in Nepal and the South Asian region, the women’s movement is challenging patriarchy but is not doing enough against capitalist patriarchy.

“Girls are told, if you are not fair, you are not lovely and then we have Bollywood songs and India’s media perpetuating misogyny.”
Surrounded by rough terrain and scenery, Kathmandu Valley’s rim is a trail runner’s delight.

SMRITI BASNET

With the monsoon nearing its end, the hills around Kathmandu Valley will be emerging into their best season for hikers and runners. Shary green forests under incredibly blue skies, everyone wants to make the best of this window between the rainy season and winter haze.

For trail runner Raj Pradhan, the post-monsoon season is the best time to indulge in his passion. Ever since he was introduced to the sport six years ago, trail running has become an addiction leading him to explore many off-track roads around Kathmandu.
“Once you hit the trail, it is no more about losing weight. You do it because you enjoy being amidst nature, the energy just flows into your body,” said Pradhan who recently completed a four-day trail run all the way from Pokhara to Kathmandu with Australian Tim Blair and Nepali runner Narayan Acharya.

The trail running trend is becoming increasingly popular around the world, and is finally catching on in Nepal. Taking it as an opportunity to escape the daily hum-drum of congested cities, many locals and expats alike have been latchimg on to this form of running.

“The variety of trail possibilities is endless, which is what makes the Valley a special place,” says Roger Besse, former managing director of Summit Hotel and considered in running circles to have introduced and popularised the sport in Kathmandu.

Trail Running Nepal, Kathmandu Trail Running group, Lalitpur Trail Running group, and events like Flash House Trail Runners, which take place every Saturday, are encouraging many to head for the hills.

“The people who know the trail properly can guide those who are new to the place, which gives us the opportunity to socialise and for them to explore new places,” says Saman Ranab had that founded the Lalitpur Trail Running group in April 2014. They meet once a week for a minimum run of 20kms. For runners like Bimala Shrestha Pokhrel, the aim is beyond just socialising. “I have been partnering with communities, motivating Nepali girls to get out of their comfort zone and enjoy running,” says Pokhrel, who was inspired to do so after she saw poor representation of women in the Annapurna Run and the Tenzing Hillary Everest Run. She now organises group runs of up to 10 km in the Chobar area.

Trail running is catching on with events like the annual North Face Ultra Marathon, Godawari Running Festival, and mountain races like Annapurna Ultra Mountain, Tenzing Hillary Everest Marathon which have become international events. Individual efforts of American runner Seth Wolf and British ultra runner Elizabeth Hawker, who ran continuously for several days and nights to complete the Kathmandu Valley Rim circuit, in addition to Nepal’s inspirational ultra runner Muna Rai have encouraged many runners to follow suit.

“There is growing local interest, participation and opportunity to run races. Nepali runners are becoming more visible on the international scene and have started receiving recognition within Nepal,” says Henke.

Narayan Acharya sees trail running as a sport that can boost eco-tourism if trails leading to remote areas of the Valley are maintained. “It is a whole new world out there, and it is waiting to be discovered.”

WHERE TO RUN?

NAGARJUN

Now part of the Shivapuri National Park, the trail is the most visited of the city is heavy forest and thriving with birdlife. It also has a pleasant trail running to the top.

CHANDRAGIRI

Situated in the southern edge of the Valley, the ridge offers a wide selection of trails. Known for its scenic view of the city below and mountains beyond, runners can pick from the Chobar trail or the picturesque run from nutation towards Champa Devi.

SHIVAPURI

The national park offers a wide range of trails from the standard push to the summit from Bishenkot to Shivapuri, or the run up to Bagalkot, the source of the Bagmati.

PHULCHOKI

The highest point on the Kathmandu Valley rim at 2,700m, the steep trails running up the forested mountain is a good place to acclimatise for high altitude runs. With rich biodiversity, it provides nature and adventure.

TRAIL GURU

A far as he remembers, Iari Rokaya has been running all his life. Having grown up running up and down mountains in Jaitala, the three-time Everest Marathon runner was born to trails.

He is now inking young athletes with the same urge of making Nepal renowned globally like Ethiopia and Kenya as a country famous for long-distance running. “God has gifted us with such beautiful mountains and hills for mountain runs. We have to make Nepal known in the world,” says Rokaya.

Rokaya set up the Kamal Sports Club in Jaitala in 2006 which has trained 30 young athletes. He sees immense potential in Nepali runners and believes they can easily earn a good reputation if they compete in international runs.

So far the club has produced ultra marathon runners like Bibhya Maya Bucha and Utpal Deka Ran who have participated and won in international races in Hong Kong and China.

WHAT TO PACK

Although adventurous and exciting, runners need to be aware of their surroundings and always have an emergency kit at hand with:

- 2 litres of water
- Food
- Headlamp
- Whistle
- Mobile phone
Rhythm and soul.

Enjoy an evening of Kathak and Flamenco performances by well-known artists like Subima Shrestha and Malekire de Guzman. All proceeds go to Tewa for a fund to support women.

23 September, 6 to 7 pm, Nepal Army Club, Bhadrakali. www.makaartiesthali.com

Yin yoga,

Calm your mind with an hour of yin-inspired yoga followed by a singing bowl session.

1 October, 6:30 am, Soosno Wilness Studio, soosnowerc@gmail.com, Rs. 1,500

Godawari Running

Choose from a variety of activities: an obstacle race, trail running, ultra run or basketball and spend your day outdoors.

23 September, 11 am onwards, Godawari Football Ground, 9814798048/9814799985

BAC Mela,

Local products, foodstuff and a second-hand garage sale purr entertainment for the whole family at SCAK’s monthly mela. 24 September, 11 am onwards, BAC Art Centre, Patan, 9851147795

Go green,

Pick tree seedlings of Tulsi, Achar, Jana, Peepal, Camphor or Goma from the 108th Chandra Guri Gang Conservation Foundation give away and make your city green. Followed by performances in Mahal by 1947 A B and Word Warriors.

24 September, 3 to 6 pm (Collet spices), Natural History Museum, Swayambhu, 9815 695 499 (Goutama), www.gcf.gy.org

Mul Chowk,

Nestled in a sumptuous Samurai Suit while watching the lake roar, Kathmandu north and varnas at Mul Chowk as part of its post India tour celebrations, 24 September, 9 pm onwards, Mul Chowk (face mask required), 01-459881, 9806522352, muckowk@gmail.com

Alfreresco,

Top nine选择 some pastas and other lip-smacking delights.

Soobha Crowne Plaza, (01) 4527999

Barista Lavazza,

The Valley’s best European-inspired coffee culture café serves excellent motohs and cappuccino. Don’t forget to try their grilled chicken sandwich.

Jowasheel, (01) 5348597, barista.renp@gmail.com

Bass Day,

Men and listen to some of the well-known bass players from around the city, 24 September, 7 pm onwards, House of Music, Thamel, 9815057157

Open mic night,

Grab the mic and sing your heart out at House of Muse every Tuesday, House of Music, Thamel, 9815057157

Wunjala Moskva,

Treat your palate to Nepali and Russian dishes in the lush garden with ancient trees and trickling streams.

Narad, (01) 4115236

Shangri-La Village Resort,

Escape to the lake city and celebrate Dasain with their “Special Sayapak” offer that gives two nights and three days package at Shangri La Village Resort in Pokhara.

Chomrong, Pothana, (01) 4807372, 8802650896 / 9803553321, Rs. 6999 per person

Famous Farm,

Wake up to the sound of chirping birds and a fresh morning breeze wafting through the sunflowers.

Kavrepalanchok, (01) 502364, info@famous-heitage.com

Gokarna Forest Resort,

A luxurious paradise that excites you and encourages meditation, just a 10-minute walk away from Kathmandu.

Gokarna, (01) 4813570, info@gokarna.com

Hotel Landmark Pokhara,

For the best view of Fewa Lake. Enrich your stay with cultural performances every night.

Lakeside Pokhara, (01) 482908, 9831019090

Patalabhan Vineyard Resort,

Just 16 km west of Katmandu city, the resort is a perfect place to spend your weekends with food and wine. The resort offers astounding views of sunset and the Himalayan range of Langtang, Gahun, Manaslu and Annapurna. Chisapani, Kathmandu, 9841979394, patelbhan.com nepal@patelbhan.com

Miss Motivation

Kripa Joshi

Give light and people will find the way

- Bill Baker

REMO
Research & Monitoring System

REMO is a system that can capture, analyze, and present data in real-time. It is designed to provide timely and actionable information to the decision-makers. REMO is a suite of tools for data collection, analysis, and visualization. REMO can be used in any field and can be tailored to your specific needs. The data collected by REMO is automatically integrated into the system allowing for real-time analysis and decision-making. The system also provides a variety of data visualization tools to help you understand the data in a more intuitive way.

Regional Water Management Committee

“REMO has been instrumental in collecting and analyzing data from various sources, which has helped us make informed decisions on water management projects.”

Institutional Water Management Committee

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23 - 29 September 2016 #2827
Running for Nepal in Denmark

Last week, the town of Viborg in Denmark came together to raise funds for children’s education in five villages of Madh, Chitwan. Through a run titled ‘Children in Denmark run for Children in Nepal’, the event saw over 2,000 young participants, some along with their parents, take part in the 4.2 km run.

For parents like Michael Kalskaff, the event was the “greatest experience” as their children got to make friends and interact with Nepalese children. His daughter, Marie, who completed the race within 45 minutes, was quick to make friends with Pratik Sewal, a Nepali boy living in Denmark.

Having been to Nepal no less than three times and also having visited Madh along with his 14-year-old son, Kalskaff said he plans to visit soon. “It was so easy staying in a village with children. I was always sure that wherever my son was, there would be friends around him,” said Kalskaff.

With the funds raised in last week’s race, the organisation is planning to arrange a Bus Library which will tour the five villages continuously, with at least one day in each village. Equipped with books and two staffs, the bus will also host different children’s events once it is in operation.

After a successful event in Denmark, the organisers are now planning for another children’s run. Only this time, the venue will be Madh itself. Justland village development in Nepal’s Chitwan. Along with co-ordinator of Alborg City Marathon and half-marathon, the co-ordinator of the children’s run, will be visiting Madh in November to plan for the race to be held on 12 April 2017. Selected children from Denmark along with families will also be present during the run next year.

Anders C. Andersen in Viborg

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A HOLOGRAM FOR THE KING

Those days, with great television shows, Netflix and other streaming options, and a faster transfer from screen to DVD, it really doesn’t pay to make a mediocre film. Tom Tykwer, a German film maker who is known for experimenting with the traditional film form, has somehow managed to make a wounding, often boring, cliché of a film with his adaptation of A Hologram for the King, originally a novel by Dave Eggers from 2012. Starring the likeable, easy to adore Tom Hanks, who has excelled at playing the everyman, the film follows Alan Clay (Hanks), a once successful middle-aged salesman who finds himself on a business trip to Saudi Arabia, sent on a hapless mission to try and sell a new 3D communication technology to the Saudi government via a face-to-face with the King, a meeting that never seems to materialise.

This is a story of a man who is lost, finding himself in an utterly foreign country. Unfortunately, what could have been an uplifting fable, like 2011’s excellent, hilarious, heart-warming Salmon Fishing in the Yemen, also adapted from a novel, falls totally flat due to the utterly banal predicaments that Alan faces, along with a script, adapted by Tykwer, that seems to have been written by an amateur with no idea of drama, dialogue, and dislocation – an astounding lapse from the man who made the tightly wound, riveting Run Lola Run (1998) and has since toyed, fascinatingly, with sci-fi in semi-successful but nonetheless mind-expanding experiments like Cloud Atlas (2012) and the Netflix series Sense8 (2015).

Tykwer’s mistake seems to have been in trying to adapt a story for which he has no real affinity, resulting in a lack-lustre character (he really doesn’t shine) that even Tom Hanks cannot bring to life. Alan Clay gets to Saudi Arabia, gets drunk, constantly oversleeps in his cookie-cutter hotel room, meets and befriends a Saudi man who is more American than him, and, please do not think I am giving this away, falls in love with a gorgeous Saudi doctor played by Sarita Choudhury, the only light in this dull film.

If you think that A Hologram for the King will give you an insight into Saudi Arabia, don’t. This is self indulgent nonsense that seems to have been forced upon Tom Tykwer’s usually knocky sensibilities, making for so much dissonance in the film that every character seems almost tone dead. I winced many times through the film, but continued, hoping for Tykwer’s usual magical sleight of hand, which never materialised. Tom Hanks’ miserable mien in the film is one of the most depressing things I’ve seen in cinema in a while, making me question how a filmmaker like Tykwer could have drifted so far from his usual, delightful experiments.

nepalitimes.com
Ex-speaker speaks out

Interview with Subhas Nembang, Chair of the now-dissolved Constituent Assembly in Himal Khaborpatra, 19 September

Himal Khaborpatra: How do you review the first year of the Constitution?
Subhas Nembang: We have failed to show the wisdom and capacity needed to implement the Constitution. The political parties that stood together to promulgate it are now divided, and it has hindered its implementation. A constitution gives us rights, outlines our duties and shows us the way to govern a country. But it does not give us the knowledge, wisdom and ability that we need to take the country forward.

Why are the parties that promulgated the Constitution not serious about its implementation?
They say they are committed, but their actions contradict this. The previous government had passed a timetable to implement the Constitution, but the new government has neither followed it nor replaced it with a new weekplan. We are delaying the passage of key laws required for the smooth implementation of the Constitution. For example, the Election Commission needed election laws by mid-September to hold local, provincial and parliamentary elections by January 2018, but we have not even drafted the election laws yet.

The new Constitution was amended shortly after its promulgation, and is likely to be amended once again. Is that normal?
The Constitution can and should be amended from time to time, and we are not against that. But it has to be justified. When the Constitution was amended for the first time in January, the parties that now run the government said in Parliament that the Medhini and Janajati demands were addressed. They had caused an uproar when the amendment bill was delayed for a few days. But the same parties are now preparing to amend the Constitution once again. Why? They need to explain this.

Why are those who signed the Constitution last year now saying it is "discriminatory"?
Even those who rejected the Constitution took part in prime ministerial elections. They are now members of various parliamentary committees. Some of them have committee president posts and draw their legitimacy from the same Constitution. So there is no question about the legitimacy of the Constitution. It has already been accepted.

So what next? There is no legitimate body that can pass another constitution to replace the Constitution endorsed by an elected assembly. So we have no choice but to implement it. The parties that passed the Constitution must be held accountable for its slow implementation. Instead of blaming each other, they must stand united again until the end of the political transition.

What if local, provincial and parliamentary elections are not held by January 2018? The Constitution implementation process has certainly been slow, prompting people to doubt the parties’ ability to hold all three elections within the stipulated deadline. But it is still possible to meet this deadline. People must exert pressure on the parties to work harder and more swiftly. The parties must explain why they are delaying the process. They cannot get away with missing the election deadlines, and pushing the country into further uncertainty.
Waiting for an industrial revolution

Failure to foster entrepreneurship is driving Nepalis abroad for work

Prithvi Narayan Shah built the imposing fortress palace in Nuwakot in 1762 as he swept eastwards towards Kathmandu Valley as part of the conquests that led to the formation of the nation state of Nepal. Just like the Mallas palaces of the valley, the Nuwakot palace signified prosperity, and was a symbol of a promising culture.

King Prithvi Narayan’s other purpose of keeping the Nuwakot Palace was to guard the trade route to Tibet via Rasuwa and Kerung. It is interesting that after the earthquake and landslides damaged the Kodari Highway, Nepal’s link to Tibet and China has reverted to this ancient route. The fact that easily three centuries ago, Nepal had a strong economy that thrived on trade with its neighbours means that we have a history of entrepreneurship and private investment. You don’t trade unless you have something to sell, or buy.

Yet, in the modern era Nepal’s first private enterprise was only registered in 1923 by which time Michigan University had already launched its first course in entrepreneurship. Somewhere along the way, we got lost in fostering private businesses. We abandoned the heritage of trade that once made Nepal a vibrant entrepôt. Kathmandu’s Asan and Indreshar specialize in trade.

The politics of the past six decades did not foster business. And that lapse has led to the lack of jobs and is the prime reason behind the outmigration of Nepalis to India, Malaysia and the Gulf, for work.

During the Rana regime, we forgot to lay the foundations of private business, and institutionalizing the process of entrepreneurship. And the past 60 years, trade came to be synonymous with smuggling. Nepal became a convenient place for trafficking goods destined for the protected Indian market. Successive regimes became complicit in this.

Promoting the domestic industry was just not the priority. With the rate of return from smuggling so high, and with the prospect of making profits overnight, there was no incentive to invest in manufacturing and industries that would create jobs. The gestation period was just too long.

Perhaps the number of grocery stores is the reason that the industrial sector lost its sheen over the past two decades of democracy.

55,000 grocery stores. But when we check, we find many haven’t really expanded. Nepalis are entrepreneurs, we just don’t seem to have the skills to sustain businesses, and make them grow. Nepal’s history of industrial development is short. In 1936, after the formalization of the Nepal Companies Act, the Biratnagar Jute Mills was established as the first joint-venture industry. A few more government-owned industries were opened in the 1950s and 60s, often with support from China and the then USSR.

By 1986, there were 2,054 industrial establishments employing about 125,000 workers. And today there are 6,228 industries of which 13 per cent are large scale, 23 per cent are medium scale, and 64 per cent are small scale enterprises. Together, they employ about 512,000 people with nearly half of them in the big factories. This is the opposite of the rest of the world where small and medium-scale enterprises provide a bulk of the employment.

Analyzing the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Nepal we see that most industries have a short lifespan. Many would-be entrepreneurs lack planning and do not have a proper business plan, or strategies. Moreover, they face constant legal and political hurdles which affect business operations. This has not only made difficult it to sustain businesses, but also discouraged many aspiring entrepreneurs.

Lately, there is a realization that only by reviving the traditional entrepreneurship of our forebears and providing incentives to investors will Nepal be able to generate new jobs and stop the outmigration of its population. That presupposes a visionary governance with a long-term strategy.
CELEBRATE WITH JOHNNIE WALKER
HAPPY DASHAIN
Govt mulls taxing kickbacks

As continuous Nepali tax payers, it is deeply satisfying for many of us to know that the government is putting our hard-earned taxes to good use by coming up with creative new ideas for new taxes. In this way, some of us who still have some disposable income will not just be stuffing our pockets unnecessarily on our non-performing assets, but will finally get off our shoulders.

Still, this is not the time to be happy and how, as far as bulbs. It is the time for every Nepali to be active to ask himself and her/his own pressing questions: is the government doing enough? Is it making any statues or destroyers to enlarge the tax bracket and widen the tax net? My personal feeling (and this is entirely my opinion and does not in any way reflect the opinions, if any, of all my present employers, or all the various organizations that I have worked for in the past, and may work for in the future) is that it is not.

The government is not doing enough. It is being complacent. It is avoiding raising taxes. The Right Honorable Prime Minister, Mr. Khadga Prasad Oli, is busy re-igniting Nepal’s non-aligned foreign policy that he has no time figuring out ways to increase state revenue. He better come up with new things to tax, otherwise there will be no tax-payers’ money for him to publish. Chairman Telli must go boldly forth where no government has gone before to come up new things to tax, otherwise at the rate he is going he will never meet the Fifth Plan target for profiteering, waste and revenue leakage.

In the interest of transparency, it is my civic duty as Ebony-in-Chief to bring to the attention of interested readers at the present juncture that there may be a slight conflict of interest in going any further with this column since the Ministry of Finance, Pvt Ltd has just hired the same (otherwise known as “you’re truly”) and hereafter referred to as “Mr. K” as a consultant to advise the government on a more favorable tax policy line on the national interest. It is my duty to privately look to you the salient points of my suggested recommendations to Him, provided you do not tell anyone. Promise? OK, here goes:

1. **Torture.** The government has stepped short of using this time-tested emotive-riseling method of tax dodgers. This technique, which involves actual physical contact at the sub cellular level between the taxman and the financiers of the payees has guaranteed efficiency. It is currently being used with excellent results in Guantamnos and torture chambers around the first world.

2. **Graft Tax.** The Fifth Amendment is soon to set up a Department of Kickbacks whose responsibility it will be to slap a 10 percent VAT, 2 percent Service Charge and 4 percent Natural Corruption Surcharge on every kickback and backlog and for given within the current boundaries of Nepal.

3. **Capital Flight Levy.** No, contrary to what you think, the government is not going to reintroduce an airport tax on all flights leaving the country. It is actually a 50 percent cut on all cash being smuggled inside the fake borders of surging parliament.

4. **Adulteration Tax.** All fuel stations committing adultery by adding subsidized liseram to the diesel they sell at gas stations are over and beyond the present 50 percent mixing they carry out must hand over half the money stolen to the Nepali GCI or Corruption at Adjacent Tax. Otherwise, the gas station in question will be caged and cooked for black marketing.

5. **Sunshine Tax.** It has come to the notice of the Taxation Department that civil servants and officials have been sunbathing on the terrace of Singha Durbur for free. A solar tax has therefore been slapped at a flat rate of Rs 50 per head per hour of sunshine. A Lunar Eclipse will also be announced soon as a way on the extra income of moonlighters.

The above five bright ideas will put the government in a comfortable position to meet any exigencies by mobilizing internal resources, and reduce our dependence on donor support.

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**The Ass**

**Even these doves don’t think I’m a hawk anymore.**

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