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**COMMISSION  
FOR THE ABUSE  
OF AUTHORITY**  
**EDITORIAL PAGE 2**

Parliament has gone into

Some NC leaders seem to be hoping that Karki will resign so

The NC's Sher Bahadur Deuba,

Bhattarai warned that federal boundaries cannot be readjusted, and the NC and the Maoists have to justify why other constitutional provisions need to be amended. "We cannot agree to everything that the NC proposes in return for its support for the impeachment process. If the Congress backs out now, it will pay a heavy price."

*Om Astha Rai*



## GOING PLACES TOGETHER



# Commission for the Abuse of Authority

It may be better to scrap the CIAA since it is prone to being hijacked by politicians for vendetta.

If you asked anyone in Kathmandu a week or so ago what the chances were of Parliament starting an impeachment process against Lokman Singh Karki, you would have been laughed out of the room. The political parties were too divided, and Karki’s reign of terror had silenced top leaders, MPs, the bureaucracy, police and most of civil society and media.

Yet, the impossible does happen in Nepali politics from time to time. And so it was that a motion for the impeachment of the dreaded head of the Commission for the Investigation of the Abuse of Authority (CIAA) was hurriedly registered in Parliament which started debating on it Tuesday before adjourning for a two-week recess.

Parliamentarians from across the political spectrum walking up to the lectern to lash out at Karki was a sight to behold. TV stations beamed the speeches live and national dailies the next day carried them prominently on page 1 — all in sharp contrast to the climate of fear and culture of silence that had descended over the country these past months.

That one person could wield so much power in a democracy, with all its checks and balance,s holds an important lesson for the future, and is a critical test for the new constitution. Nepal’s mainstream press and online portals which had been silenced by Karki in the past months are now publishing exposé after exposé of the man’s shenanigans. It is as if a lid has been lifted to allow an eruption of revelations of his sordid past.

After entering the bureaucracy through the backdoor of a royal appointment, Karki exhibited very early on hints of the traits that would one day make him notorious. After the 1990 People’s Movement, he cosied up to the Nepali

Congress and used choice positions in the bureaucracy to extort, embezzle and blackmail. When King Gyanendra tried to take the country back to the days of absolute monarchy, Karki returned as Chief Secretary and was later singled out by the Rayamajhi Commission for corruption and crackdowns on pro-democracy protests in 2006. He was even being investigated by the very agency he was later appointed to head, the CIAA.

Some of the recent investigative reports in the Nepali press about his appointment in 2013 raise strong questions about the collusion of top political leaders. Mystery shrouds the dramatic overnight turnaround by Prime Minister Sushil Koirala and President Ram Baran Yadav, which NC minister Gagan Thapa mentioned in his speech to Parliament on Tuesday (*see translated excerpt on page 13*). Other MPs unleashed a litany of woes: how Karki ran a parallel government, and commandeered all agencies of the state to target institutions and individuals for revenge or extortion.

Indeed, Karki’s modus operandi was to blackmail corrupt politicians and officials for payoffs, if he couldn’t find dirt on people he wanted to target he got government departments to manufacture dirt on them, and he also directly approached businesses and threatened them with investigation unless they paid up. As journalists in the mainstream Nepali language press have reported this past week, the CIAA also interfered with the medical education sector, even scrapping entrance examinations and conducting its own.

One intriguing question is why the top political leaders who all had a hand in his appointment suddenly turned against him last week. There appears to have been a tacit understanding between Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal

Dahal and Karki which would let Dahal off the hook on embezzlement of allowances meant for his guerrillas in return for Dahal convincing Chief Justice Sushila Karki to drop the Supreme Court’s investigation of his appointment. But both suspected the other of dishonesty, leading Dahal to support UML leader K P Oli’s move for impeachment. Sher Bahadur Deuba of the NC has no love lost for Lokman Singh Karki, and has given tacit approval for the impeachment. But there are mid-level leaders in his party who are beholden to Karki or are hand-in-glove with him.

So, in summary, this is turning out to be a battle between crooks and a Super Crook. These are the same political parties that didn’t lift a finger when Govinda KC was risking his life calling for Karki’s impeachment because of the CIAA’s corrupt meddling in medical education. They quashed the first attempt by Gagan Thapa to get the parliament to investigate Karki. They wouldn’t even allow three MPs to sign a motion of urgent public importance in September. But last week, suddenly and without much of a fuss, there were 157 signatures of UML and Maoist Centre MPs demanding impeachment.

What changed? Gagan Thapa said in parliament on Tuesday that there is something fishy. But there is something even fishier in the way Karki was appointed, and has been allowed to grow into a monster no one can control. Thapa aptly compared Karki to the way J Edgar Hoover used the FBI to hound political opponents.

Lokman Singh Karki is under suspension, and the politicians are once more huddling in backroom deals to find a 'package' agreement. The more important question is what to do with the CIAA whose original purpose was to add oversight to control corruption. An agency designed to curb graft has been used by successive governments for political vendetta. Karki is just the latest and most ruthless example. It may be better to scrap the CIAA since it is so prone to abuse for political vendetta.



Times

THIS WEEK

PHOTO: MADHU SUDAN DAHAL

Most reached on Facebook

A ridge too far by Madhu Sudan Dahal

“Even for the not so religious minded, the remote Badimalika Trek could be a pilgrimage to the natural wilderness” (7,098 people reached)

Most shared on Facebook

A ridge too far by Madhu Sudan Dahal

Most visited online page

The lonely struggle against tyranny by Bidhusi Dhungel

Most popular on Twitter

Restoring our faith in restoration by Alok Tuladhar (34 retweets, 74 likes)

Most commented

Suspended Animation by Kunda Dixit

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

CIAA

We always thought Nepali Congress MP Dhanraj Gurung was committed to fighting the tyranny of Lokman Singh Karki ('The lonely struggle against tyranny', Bidushi Dhungel, #830). But his real face has been unmasked in this article. Yet, he is bragging about how he almost singlehandedly fought against Lokman's tyranny.

Jiban Pradhan

Yes, political parties finally acted against Lokman Singh Karki, but only to save their own skins. The 157 MPs ganged up against Karki only when they knew the CIAA was preparing to take their leaders to the courts. If they were genuinely concerned about Lokman's tyranny, they would have acted long ago when Govinda KC was fasting unto death, and thousands of people were on the streets demanding Karki's impeachment.

Alankar Adhikari

This is the sort of write-up we had all been waiting for ('Who is afraid of Lokman?', Ameet Dhakal, #830). Anyone who loves Nepal should fight against those that work against democracy.

Diwakar Chettri

Lokman Singh Karki was offered the job he was not qualified for ('Karki's impeachment process', eSpecial, 20 October). But he took the offer, scared people in and out of government, some of them living beyond their salaries. Seeing the monster that Karki turned out to be, political leaders ganged up against him, and they are now determined to cut him into pieces. Punish him or reward him, but do it in public.

Shree Shrestha

SAARC MINUS X

Pradumna B Rana writes that South Asia was one of the most integrated regions of the world before 1947, and more than one-half of Pakistan's imports and nearly two-thirds of its exports were from India at that time ('SAARC minus X, Pradumna B Rana, #830). What? There was no Pakistan before 1947.

Tony

RED TO GREEN

It is a pity that we have not been able to exploit our resources to their full potential ('Going from red to green', Smriti Basnet, #830). If only we produced enough electricity to sell to our neighbours.

Sara Tamrakar

Nissim Raj Angdembay@nissimang

It's sad to know that 'leaders' are impeaching Karki because of plans to file cases against them. A puppet will then fill his role.

Nepali Times@nepalitimes

Why UML and Maoist Centre rushed impeachment motion in Parliament against Lokman this week? <http://bit.ly/2du2T6S>

Amulya R Tuladhar@AmulyaSir

great experience but too damn expensive even for middle class nepalese

Nepali Times@nepalitimes

The cable car facility has 38 gondolas and already caters to around 3,000 people on weekdays. <http://bit.ly/2dHe692>

Times

nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll #831

Q. Do you support the impeachment of Lokman Singh Karki?

Yes: 73.8%

No: 16.4%

Maybe: 9.8%

Total votes: 512

Weekly Internet Poll #832

To vote go to: [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com)

Q. Do you agree with the government's decision to declare a public holiday on the occasion of Indian President Pranab Mukherjee's visit?

Times

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# FLOWER POWER

Despite huge domestic demand, Nepal’s horticulture industry has been nipped in the bud



GOPEN RAI

## SHREEJANA SHRESTHA

When Pushpa Kamal Dahal was elected a Prime Minister for the second time in August, Chinese Ambassador Wu Chuntai and Indian Ambassador Ranjit Rae rushed to Baluwatar to congratulate him. They tried to

outdo each other not just to be first, but also competed on having a bigger bouquet (pictured top). The Chinese beat the Indians in floral diplomacy both by being first, and also by having a bigger bouquet. However, the Chinese chrysanthemums and gladioli were imported from India and bought at a local market. Nepali culture places a premium on fresh flowers for

garlands, and floral offerings to deities at temples. However, gifting imported ornamental flowers wrapped in plastic has become an epidemic. There isn’t a conference inauguration, or a welcome or departure ceremony at Kathmandu airport when dignitaries don’t have bouquets forced upon them. Two years ago, Prime Minister Sushil Koirala welcomed his

Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, with a bunch of fairly pathetic looking gladioli imported from Karnataka. Despite the cultural and religious demand for flowers at festival time and the growing demand for political and other functions, something is preventing Nepal’s floriculture sector to bloom and grow. More than a quarter of the

consumer demand for cut flowers in Nepal is met through imports, mainly from India. Even the traditional marigold, the must-have flower for next week’s Tihar festival, needs to be imported. Already, 200,000 garlands worth Rs 6 million have been imported from Kolkata.

“We have imported marigold flowers for Tihar because there isn’t enough production within Nepal,” says Kumar Kasaju of the Flower Association of Nepal. “We can supply enough flowers during festive seasons only if there is sustainable local market for the farmers throughout the year.”

Most flower shops in Kathmandu obtain cut flowers from India and Thailand, and flower seeds from Europe and the United States. The main demand, even in Nepal is on Valentine’s Day and during the winter season when local flowers are not available.

Floriculturists say marigold demand is very seasonal and it doesn’t make sense to grow them just for one occasion. They say they need more investment if they target to produce and sell flowers only during Tihar, and this will increase the price for the blooms.

Biraj Khadka of Khadka Nursery has been buying ornamental flowers worth Rs 1.5 million every month for his shop. “Selling flowers during Tihar is only possible because of the economy of scale that makes it feasible to import from Kolkata,” he adds.

Nepal, however, seems to be self-sufficient in *makhmali* (Gomphrena), another traditional festival favourite at Bhai Tika because it doesn’t wilt.

The demand in Kathmandu alone during Tihar festival is estimated at 900,000 marigold and 200,000 gomphrena garlands. The total turnover of the floriculture sector in Nepal last year was Rs 1.34 billion.

There are more than 650 registered nurseries in the country, but only 47 hectares of land is used exclusively to grow flowers. The largest producers are Kathmandu Valley, Chitwan, and Makwanpur.

Despite having an ideal climate for floriculture and a natural diversity of 6,500 floral species, the lack of infrastructure, investment and lack of government incentives have kept the industry back. Not only is Nepal importing more flowers, its exports of floral products sank from Rs 190 million to Rs 20 million in the last six years.

Anil Acharya at the Ministry of Agricultural Development sums it up by saying that more investment is needed to boost self-reliance in flowers. But isn’t it his ministry that should be providing those incentives, we ask.

He replies: “Nepal is ideal for commercial floriculture but we don’t have advanced technologies for storage and seed production. We have to rely on imported flowers because we don’t have continuous quantity production.”

## Carbon footprints of flowers

Next time you decide to gift a bouquet to a colleague for a promotion or a partner on an anniversary, you may want to do a background check on where the flowers come from and how much fossil fuel was burnt in growing and transporting it to Nepal.

The cut flower market is also dominated by India and Thailand during the winter season but the plant quarantine office at the airport doesn’t conduct laboratory test of those flowers. The flowers from Thailand are flown in as air cargo, while the ones from India come overland.

Buying locally grown flowers can help in carbon saving but the authorities either reckon this issue as a trivial one or are unaware about the environmental costs of importing flowers.

Anil Acharya at the Ministry of Agricultural Development agrees that locally produced flowers will boost the local economy and also be environmentally-friendly, but does not think the carbon footprint of imported flowers is significant.

Environmentalist Bhushan Tuladhar says improper management of wasted imported flowers have an adverse environmental impact. He adds: “Import of flowers come at a high environmental cost because of fuel burnt in their transportation. Using locally produced flowers will reduce their carbon footprint.”



GOPEN RAI





BIKRAM RAI

# Picture this

National Geographic photo editor Patrick Witty is at Photo Kathmandu to talk about visuals

At one of numerous talks he gave at an international festival of photography in Patan this week, Patrick Witty projected a slide of slides and asked: “Who knows what this is?”

On the screen was an image of a stack of Kodachrome slides with a black stripe down one side. The fact that there were some younger Nepalis in the audience who didn’t know what a slide was and that the black stripe was for the picture editor to figure out the right side proved how far and fast photography has come in the digital age.

“As a picture editor, I have tremendous respect for photographers who risk their lives to get the perfect image,” Witty said, “it is the photographs that make a story come alive.”

Six months as an intern in *National Geographic* in 1996, while sorting and stacking slides from world renowned photographers, Witty developed a keen eye for the visual and photography became his life.

Twenty years later, Witty has come a full circle and is back at *National Geographic* overseeing the digital end of things, after having worked at the *New York Times*, *Time* magazine and *WIRED*.

“It’s been an amazing journey. It feels like

the right place to be at the right time for me,” he said during his three-day workshop for Nepali photographers and editors at the Photo Kathmandu festival where he was also kept busy with portfolio reviews, an artist talk, networking events.

“As a photo editor you are the voice for photo journalists,” said Witty, who has himself travelled to Greece with photographers like James Nachtwey to do his own digital storytelling on Instagram of the arrival of refugees.

Witty’s career has also spanned the evolution of technology in photography. While at *New York Times* and *Time* Magazine he curated photo stories from conflict zones, designing cover stories and doing shoots. His last job before joining *National Geographic* was at *WIRED*, where his most exciting project was to travel to Moscow with an entire studio for a cover story on Edward Snowden.


Experimenting in different platforms has been one of Witty’s strongest traits, but what sets him apart is teamwork: the ability to collaborate with photographers, he believes in fostering long term relationships with them.

Having worked with *NYT*’s Michelle Magnelli and award winning photographers like Nachtwey and Eugene Richards, all of whom have had a big influence in his career, Witty says he is always amazed by the impact of photography through the media.

“A photograph can compliment text and tell stories, it can really elevate the stories. They are not competing, they are complementing each other,” he said.

As someone who has spent most of his career working for the print media, the transition to digital was not as difficult as he had imagined. In fact, for Witty digital platforms and new sites like Instagram and Facebook expand the viewership and audience of traditional media enormously and allow multimedia story-telling.

“Print will always be special and matter but being able to tell stories digitally, you can reach such a broader audience so much faster,” he said. Adding that from what he has seen, Nepali editors have not yet explored the full potential of the visual.

“Whenever photographs are crammed into space or used to fill gaps you are missing an opportunity to tell strong stories better,” he said. 

Smriti Basnet

**BIZ BRIEFS**

### Golden Soaltee

An event was organised to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Soaltee Hotel in Kathmandu recently. Founded in 1966, the hotel commemorated its



rich history of offering hospitality services and also unveiled its plans to expand to cities like Nepalganj and Pokhara in the future.

### Alma in Nepal

Asian subsidiary of Alma Lasers, Alma Medical, announced the opening of its marketing operations in Nepal during the SAARC Association of



Aesthetic Dermatology conference being held in Kathmandu. With Bollywood actress Gauhar Khan as its brand ambassador, the company will market its surgical devices in the country through Central Surgical Concern.

### Armani and Qatar

Qatar Airways in partnership with Italian fashion house Giorgio Armani



recently launched its new range of fragrances and beauty amenity kits. Designed in black featuring golden accents, these are available to first class passengers on select A380 flights.

### Fly high

Turkish Airlines will now have its presence in 50 destinations across 31 countries in Africa with its newest stop being Zanzibar in Tanzania.



Starting 12 December, the airlines will be operating flights from Istanbul to Zanzibar and back, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Round trip fares start at \$636, including taxes and fares.



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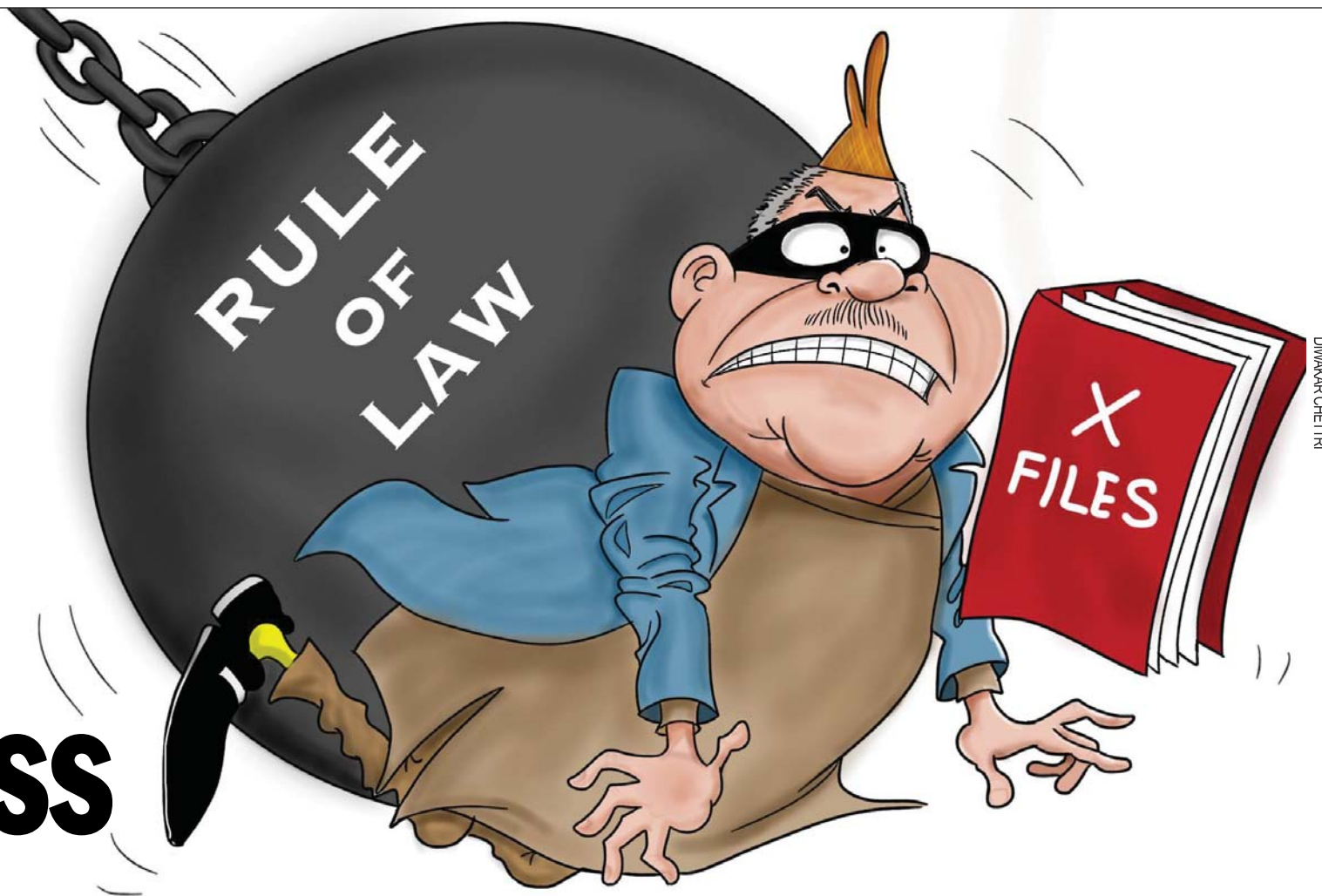
  
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# C'mon, Congress



We need to get it over and done with impeaching Karki, and move on to more pressing issues

What next? After the 157 MPs, including from his party, registered the impeachment motion against the CIAA Chief Lokman Singh Karki,



**AS IT HAPPENS**  
Om Astha Rai

UML Chair KP Oli quipped: "It is now *Deusi* time."  
But it looks like it is not

the UML-Maoist MPs but Karki himself who will be playing a lot of *Deusi* this *Tihar*. And it is because the country's largest party, the Nepali Congress, is vacillating.

*Deusi* is the ritual *Tihar* chant employed by democracy activists in the past against Gyanendra Shah's authoritarian rule, and later to prod the parties to speed up constitution writing. Oli says he had assurance from NC President Sher Bahadur

Deuba about the impeachment motion against Karki. This is why he was in a hurry to celebrate *Deusi* to mark the ouster of a man who ran a parallel government by abusing his power.

Deuba is also fed up with Karki, and will probably not try to protect him. But instead of persuading his party to take a quick decision, he preferred to let the party's Central Committee (CC) to bell the cat. Most Congress members are suspicious of the hurried way the UML-Maoist MPs ganged up against Karki. They saw it as a UML ploy to break the NC-Maoist coalition, and subvert the effort to amend the Constitution.

Deuba now wants to discuss the issue in the NC Parliamentary Party meeting which is likely to take place only after Karki defends the accusations against him in the Parliament's Impeachment Committee. There is nothing wrong in a party taking its own sweet time to make a decision, but the NC is giving Karki the opportunity to maneuver. This *Tihar*, he will certainly be lobbying at every power base in the capital to get Parliament to back off.

The NC proudly claims to be the custodian of democracy, but often has to be goaded by others to sign up for protecting hardwon freedoms. It was the last to champion republicanism, and flirted with the idea of a baby king until the monarchy was officially abolished.

Because of the NC's dilly-dallying, the House was adjourned on Tuesday after the first day of deliberations on the motion, and will convene only after *Tihar* and *Chhath* festivals. Until then, Karki will use all the resources at his disposal to reinstate himself. After the Big Three agreed to reach a package deal on Wednesday night, the NC will probably vote for the motion, but the likes of the NC's Khum Bahadur Khadka are not just talking about giving Karki a fair chance to defend himself. They are talking about defending him.

Nepal's political and social

activists first fought against Karki's appointment, and then his wrong-doings. He was the worst candidate to head the corruption watchdog, and his conduct and actions have been even more sinister.

Karki is now at the centre of national politics, and the impeachment motion, if foiled, could lead to the government falling, which in turn could also derail the constitution implementation and amendment process. Held guilty by the Krishna Jung Rayamajhi Commission of abusing his power to suppress the 2006 Democracy Movement, Karki was disqualified to hold a public office in future. Yet, he made a grand comeback in 2013 as the head of a constitutional commission that had previously investigated him in a corruption case.

Karki was not just above law, but he ran a parallel state. He reportedly tapped phone calls of the Chief Justice, the Speaker and political leaders, and deployed spies to hunt down personal enemies. His ouster was inevitable, but Parliament took too long to act against him.

After the promulgation last year of the new Constitution, the Big Three now face an even more challenging task. They have to implement the Constitution by electing local bodies, federal provinces and the new Parliament. They also need to negotiate with Madhesi-Janajati parties, amend the Constitution, determine the numbers and shapes of local bodies. The top leaders, mainly Deuba, must understand they cannot afford to delay Karki's dismissal. They just need to get it over and done with, and move on to more pressing issues on the Constitution.

The tragedy of Nepal's democracy is that its main custodian is a status-quoist party like the NC that constantly needs to be egged on to make progressive decisions. It is time for the NC to lead other parties, not to be led by others. 🇳🇵

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Autumn is finally here, with the sunshine getting weaker the mornings nipper and the rains staying away. It will stay like that this weekend and into next week. A depression in the Bay of Bengal that was meandering back and forth has finally decided to move north again, and we need to keep an eye on that. But it is expected to veer away because of the westerlies. Enjoy the sunshine this Tihar.

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PICS: JAZZMANDU/NIRANJAN SHRESTHA

The first faint strains of trumpet filtered through the trees at Gokarna, which is by far the most scenic venue during the annual Jazzmandu festival. The Jazz Bazaar is a fixture on the calendars of those who plan their Octobers around this music festival that promises great music from a variety of artists. Contrary to its name, Jazzmandu has gone way beyond its roots and incorporates a good number of genres.

Rocket Men, a five-man ensemble band from Hamburg are just starting their set, and the sound is a fusion of 'intergalactic jazz, drum and space'. The music takes the audience on a journey through vistas real and imagined and this was wonderfully epitomised in their track Istanbul from their album Weightless.

Jazz Bazaar at Gokarna is a



family affair and that is one of its enduring attractions. Picnic mats are strewn all around, there are children running everywhere, old grannies in their little camp chairs, shawls and blankets on the ready to combat the chill that evening will bring. There is no stuffiness, no pretence, just a whole lot of people enjoying some excellent music.

And as it gets dark, Gokarna gets magical. The lamps come on, roaring fires are lit, and Janysett McPherson takes the stage. This Cuban-French singer is a veritable powerhouse of large rich notes sung with honeyed silkiness, her version of Edith Piaf's La Vie en Rose had the crowd on its feet, dancing and singing along. She also set the right notes for the

much awaited next act- Cadenza Collective.

Navin Chettri, is one of the founders of Jazzmandu and is also one of the first in Kathmandu to blend Jazz with Afro-funk and Nepali folk beats to produce a sound that is distinctly unique and instantly recognizable. They were joined on stage by Philipp Puschel and Lasse Golz, the horns section from Rocket Men and once they got on stage, that's when the party really started. Mats were rolled away, seats pushed back and the dancing began. Momo Funk and Baja Gaja, two of Cadenza Collective's most loved tracks were performed with great gusto and were received by the audience with equal vigour.

Lyrics Born from the Bay Area of California are not a jazz band per se but infuse their music with hiphop, humour and just so much

energy that any arguments about whether they should be included in a jazz festival's line up becomes nit-picky and pedantic. Plus Tom Shimura can sing. His rendition of James Brown's 'It's a Man's World' was romantic, soulful and a strong reminder of the power of music to empower and heal. I Like it, I Love It and Lyrics Born has left Kathmandu with a legion of new fans.

Jazz Bazaar is reminiscent of large backyard cookouts with family and friends and familiar faces that ends with everyone partying and dancing and when it finishes, it leaves you with a tinge of remorse that you didn't do more to enjoy it and a promise to yourself that you'd make up for that lapse in judgement the next time around. C'est la vie- see you next year Jazzmandu. 🇳🇵

Rubeena Shrestha

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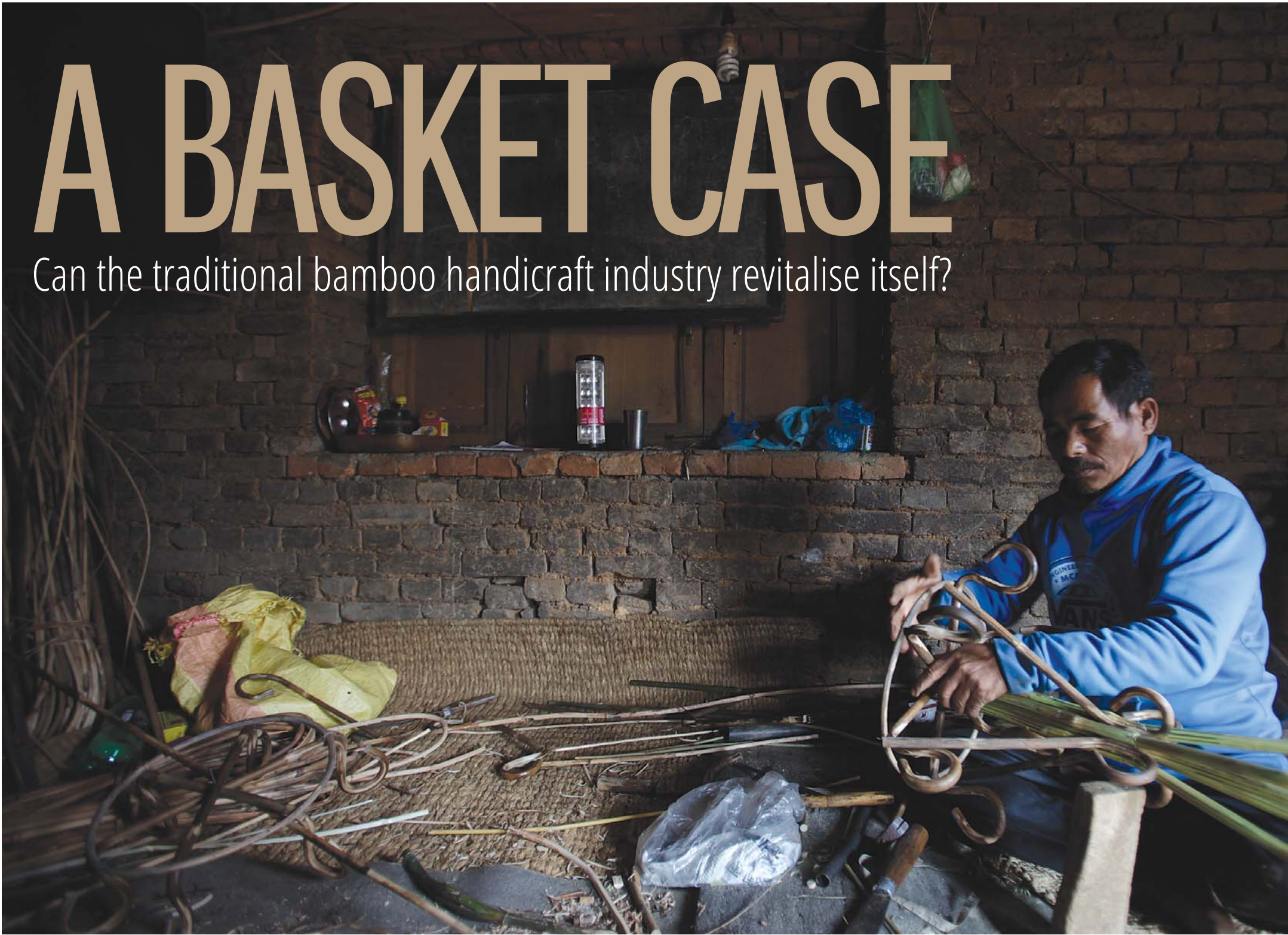
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# A BASKET CASE

Can the traditional bamboo handicraft industry revitalise itself?

SMRITI BASNET

Like his father and fathers before him, Ram Lal Nagarkoti is a craftsman in the town of Badikhel in the southern edge of Kathmandu Valley known for its bamboo products.

Bamboo weaving has been the family profession for at last four generations, but the traditional craft is on the verge of extinction.

Working on a hanger stand made of *nigalo* and *bet*, 40-year-old Nagarkoti said: “Many designs from the time of our forefathers have been lost. I myself have already forgotten most of the techniques, and no one seems to be interested to learn this anymore.”

Bamboo has been fighting a losing battle against plastic alternatives which are cheaper, and the younger generation doesn’t want to take up the ancestral profession.

“There was a decent demand for bamboo products which is now overwhelmed by plastic, which is cheaper,” explained Nripal Adhikary of ABARI, which specialises in bamboo and adobe buildings.

Half of the Badikhel families previously employed in bamboo craftwork have abandoned the profession, and have either moved to other professions or migrated abroad for work.

“It takes time and effort to make bamboo products, and



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**HARD DAY'S NIGHT:** 40 year-old Ram Lal Nagarkoti works on a hanger stand made out of nigalo and bet at his home in Badikhel, Lalitpur (*left*).

Bamboo retailer Narendra Shrestha in his store in Kupondole. Shrestha feels the stagnant bamboo industry can be revived with innovative product designs (*below*).

toiled as a labourer for almost two years he returned only to find that the bamboo market was stagnant.

His neighbour Thuli Maya Pahari's two sons also migrated to Dubai. But she says the money they send home is just enough to buy food for the family.

"I see a lot of potential in handicraft bamboo products, where quality can win over quantity if we upgrade the product design," said ABARI's Nripal Adhikary.

A paper by Department of Forest Research and Survey in 2011 estimates that only 10 per cent of traditional handicrafts have a competitive edge on the international market while the rest face competition from substitutes or international products.

Bamboo product retailer Narendra Shrestha is all for innovation and bringing in new designs but is not hopeful because he can't find skilled workers. "When we have such resources in Nepal why go work outside?" asks Shrestha who feels the government needs to intervene and provide incentives to exporters.

On a good day, a bamboo craftsman can earn as much as Rs 1000, but often it is much less. Coming up with new designs is too risky. Said Nagarkoti: "I have lost hope in the government, so we have to do this ourselves." 🇳🇵

 [nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)  
Watch video



## Innovating traditions

An unfinished bamboo basket with brown strips weaved into the patterns is the centrepiece of an exhibition in Siddhartha Art Gallery at Baber Mahal Revisited titled 'Contemporary Nepali Basketry'.

The exhibition has various styles of baskets made by women from Dhankuta, Dang, Banke, Sindhuli, Bardia, Kanchanpur, Kapilbastu, and Kathmandu using different locally sourced raw materials.

"It's our effort to use traditional skills and weaving structures to modify it to match a more modern lifestyle," said Shyam Badan Shrestha of the Nepal Knotcraft Centre (pictured above).

One of the women Hira Rai, originally from Dhankuta, comes from a family of bamboo craftsmen. She wanted to make a proper living out of her ancestral profession and moved to Kathmandu.

"When I left initially they said that girls are not

supposed to go and work out of the house. But I am the stubborn type," said Rai who wanted to ensure a good future for her children in Kathmandu.

Using local resources like bamboo, pine needles, water hyacinth and other improbable plants, the exhibition is not only a display of products of women like Rai but also a reflection of the immense potential Nepal holds in making unique products from local resources.

"There should be proper planning right from the plantation phase of such raw materials till it enters the market as a finished product," said Shrestha.

However, she is disheartened by the little value to the work. She has had enough of people asking why

products are expensive if made from something that is locally available, like bamboo. She says: "They never seem to take into account the skill that goes into making it."

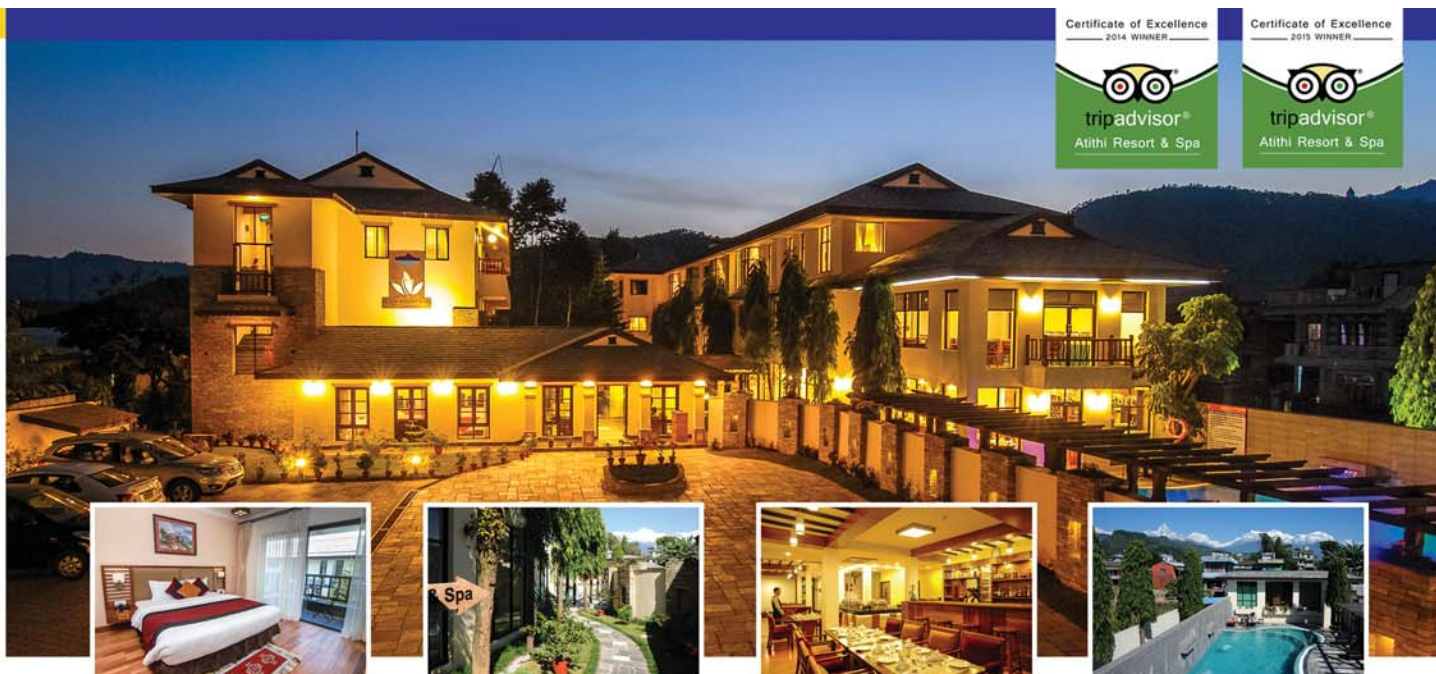
Until 28 October, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, (01) 4218048



the returns are meagre," says Nagarkoti, who has to take care of two children and wife, and save enough to rebuild their home which was destroyed in last year's earthquake.

The bamboo market in Nepal is estimated at around Rs 1 billion. Despite its potential to do better, the market is limited as craftsmen like Nagarkoti and his cousins still supply to only small retailers around the Valley.

Nagarkoti himself had left for Qatar a decade back. After having



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## EVENTS



### Tihar

One of the most widely celebrated festivals in Nepal, Tihar, also known as the festival of lights, is celebrated by worshipping goddess Laxmi. The five-day long festival represents the divine attachment between humans, gods and animals.

**28 October, Kaag Tihar:** On the first day of Tihar, crows are worshipped.



**29 October, Kukur Tihar:** A day to honour and worship man's best friend.

**30 October, Laxmi Puja:** People worship Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Houses are decorated and lit up to welcome the goddess in to their abode.

**31 October, Mha Puja:** The Newar community worships oneself on this day. People elsewhere pay homage to Gobhardhan, an avatar of Lord Krishna.

**Also, Nhudaya Bhintuna (Happy New Year!):** the Newari calendar turns a new leaf.



**1 November, Bhai Tika:** Brothers and sisters celebrate their bond and pray for protection from Yama, the harbinger of death.



### Mustang madness,

Register to participate in the cross-country MTB race in Mustang to enjoy the best biking trails of the Himalayas and win cash prizes. The 220 km long race is a mix of adventure, culture, challenge and discovery. 24 November to 1 December, Starts from Kagbeni and heads North towards Lo Manthang, 9818622466, 9860975472, [www.themustangmadness.com](http://www.themustangmadness.com)



### A quest for dignity,

An anthology of photographs exploring the various meanings of dignity for dalits in Nepal. Till 26 November, 10 am to 5 pm, Patan Museum, Patan Darbar Square,

### Kimff 2016,

Mark your calendar for the 14th edition of Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival (Kimff) and watch more than 80 films from 28 countries. This year's



festival will open with Nepal premiere of Seto Surya directed by Deepak Rauniyar. 8 to 12 December, QFX Kumari Hall, (01) 4440635, [www.kimff.org](http://www.kimff.org)



### MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI

## DINING



### Dhokaima Café,

Try indigenous cocktails at Rukhmuni Bar. Patan Dhoka, (01) 5522113 [dhokaimacafe@yahoo.com](mailto:dhokaimacafe@yahoo.com)

### Fire & Ice Pizzeria,

For the best Italian pizzas in town. Thamel, (01) 4250210



### Mulchowk,

Select your special dinner from a set Ala-carte menu or regular menu while enjoying classical fusion, and folk music by Mul band. Babar Mahal Revisited, (01) 4259801

### Irish Pub,

Don't miss Kathmandu's most hip and happening pub. Ananda Bhawan, Lajimpat, (01) 4416027



### Starry night,

Enjoy barbeque night along with a live performance by Ciney Gurung. Every Friday, 7 pm onwards, Hotel Shangrila -La, (01) 4412999, Rs 2,000 per person

## MUSIC



### Midnight Walkers,

Grab your drinks at happy hour and enjoy live music by Midnight Walkers. Every Friday and Saturday, 8 pm to 12 am, Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency, (01) 5178334

### Music mania,

Gear up for the third edition of Blackout Pride Phase featuring bands like Ugrakarma, Taamishra, Absorb, Undefined Human and more. 12 November, 12 to 6 pm, Thamel Reggae Bar, Thamel



### Open mic night,

Grab the mic and sing your heart out at the House of Music every Tuesday. House of Music, Thamel, 9851075172



### Superfuzz live,

Spend a musical evening with Superfuzz, good music and food. Every Saturday, 7 pm onwards, The Factory, Thamel, (01) 4701185

## GETAWAY



### Shangri-La Village Resort,

Escape to the lake city and celebrate Dasain availing their 'Special Sayapatri' offer that extends a two nights and three days package at Shangri La Village Resort in Pokhara. Gharipatan, Pokhara, (01) 4420252, 9860260894 / 9803553023, Rs 6999 per person (incl tax)

### Famous Farm,

Wake up to the sound of chirping birds and a fresh morning breeze wafting in through the aankhijhyal. Nuwakot, (01) 4700426, [info@rural-heritage.com](mailto:info@rural-heritage.com)



### Jhule mountain resort,

Resting 2,050 m above sea level, the eco-resort boasts of a farmhouse that stretches across a hill covered in fresh pine. Enjoy an organic homestay experience. Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park, Lapsipedi-3, Jhule, (01) 6212399

### Pataleban Vineyard Resort,

Japanese-influenced eco-resort with great views, jungle walks, and picnics. Chisapani, Kathmandu, 9841679364



### Tiger Mountain Lodge,

Situated 1000 ft above Pokhara valley, this resort offers spectacular views of Machhapuchhre, Dhaulagiri, Annapurna and Manaslu. [www.tigermountainpokhara.com](http://www.tigermountainpokhara.com), (01) 4426427, 9849194874

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compared to what lies within us.

- Henry Stanley Haskins

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# VROOM VROOM

## Motorbiking in Mustang



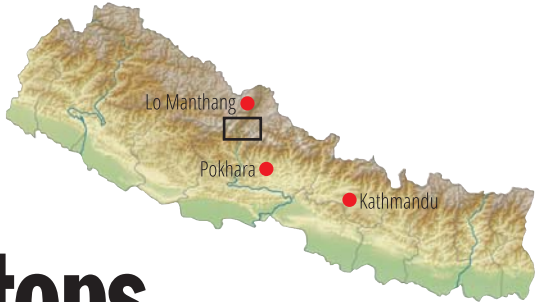
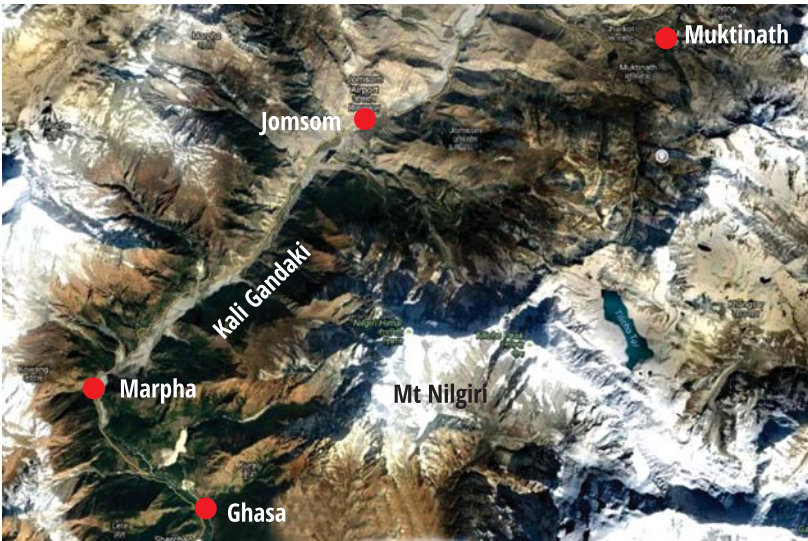
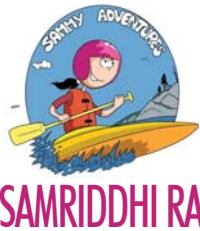
ALL PICS: RONISH RAUT

Late October may not be the best time to go to Mustang, but despite the freezing nights and mornings in this cold high-altitude desert region of Nepal, the days are sunny and bright. Above the pollution and dust, the post-monsoon sky is the deepest shade of blue. Unlike the rest of Nepal, the Himalayan peaks are to the south. After an eight-hour minibus ride from Mugling we reach Ghasa where we spot a motorcycle that belonged to a friend's brother. After a few test rides around the block, we decided to bike it up the Kali Gandaki Valley. We didn't know what we were getting into with this spontaneous decision to undertake a 100km off-road motorbike adventure. Ghasa to Muktinath is a rough road that is not for the inexperienced or faint-



hearted. The journey can be done in two hours by locals, but it took us double the time. The delays had less to do with falling off the bike frequently than with us stopping to admire the numerous waterfalls along the way and Nilgiri and Dhaulagiri towering over the deepest gorge

in the world. Who would believe that there is such a view just a few hours away from Kathmandu. The beauty of the place with the fresh air rushing past your face is a dream.



## Pit stops

Riding trips all the way up to Lo Manthang or even Chhosar of Upper Mustang is a biking adventure at a whole new level. The ride to Muktinath is more do-able and popular. Here is the route:

- Beni:** Bus terminal that connects travellers to Pokhara, Kathmandu, or Jomsom.
- Ghasa:** This is the entry point to Mustang, where there are still forests and the start-off point for the bike adventure.
- Marpha:** Famous for its brandy, this is a must-stop. Caution: don't drink and ride.
- Jomsom:** The airport town that has cafes with wifi, fancy hotels and restaurants.
- Kagbeni:** This is where you take off for Lo Manthang. Keep right to go up to Muktinath.
- Muktinath:** Our destination, and important pilgrimage sites for Hindus and Buddhists.



## Before you rev up

Riders ordinarily start their biking adventure from Beni onwards. But if you really want to extend your adventure, zoom off from Pokhara or even Kathmandu. The road from Beni up till Ghasa is the real challenge with narrow roads, dangerous cliffs and pesky pebbles on the roads that can trip up the bike. During rainy season, scenic waterfalls also means that the trail will be *hilo*.



From Ghasa up to Muktinath the trail is pleasant, with only the uphill turns that are tricky. Mustang is a desert so expect a lot of *dhulo*, which means wear gear that protects you from the sun, sand, wind and dust. Neck buffs, gloves, sun shades, boots and a full helmet—pack them all. In the mid-morning, the Kali Gandhi becomes a wind tunnel with hurricane-force wind blowing up the Valley carrying sand with it. Best to start the ride early in the morning and return to base by noon.





# Chhakka Panja

There is a limit to how much you can laugh in a movie that looks at the lighter side of migration and its bleak reality. The scenes begin to weigh heavily on your conscience. Revolving around the lives of five unemployed men in an unidentified village, Deepa Shree Niraula's directorial debut, *Chhakka Panja*, never gets out of its weak plot and odd jokes. Despite its popular cast and characteristic comic one-liners, it is as if this is too serious a subject to be laughing about. Deepak Raj Giri, who plays Raja, comes from a noticeably affluent family in a largely unemployed, poverty-stricken village during the post-conflict years. His three minions (Magne,

Saraswati and Buddhi) played by Kedar Ghimire, Jetu Nepal and Buddhi Tamang respectively, and himself spend most days at the nearby bhatti playing board games and reassuring each other of reasons to remain unmarried, mostly because they do not have the means to support a wife. They drink their worries away, make jokes about the only married (and hen-pecked) friend Buddhi, and watch on as most male members of the village leave for the Gulf or Malaysia, or win a DV lottery visa to the land of dreams and opportunities. As the movie progresses, the four friends are predictably pulled out from their cocoons and dragged into reality. Each of them either finds love, goes abroad for

work or both. And while in most movies, this would have been the 'happy ending' that ties all loose ends together *Chhakka Panja* goes on to show viewers the lack of assurance any of this provides in a corrupt, chaotic state that cannot give jobs to its people, forcing them to leave the country. The fact that this movie has lasted five weeks in cinemas amidst all the festivities does set it apart from other Nepali films of its kind. *Chhakka Panja* has the usual flaws: the transition between scenes is blotchy, characters and their trademark one-liners are unoriginal, the plot has loopholes, but what grates most is the trivialisation of hard-hitting issues that plague our society and country. And while it has been categorised as social satire and you're probably expected to take it all in good humour, some in the audience are left feeling bitter and guilty about having laughed at the pun on KC after you see Magne and his colleagues - One kidney less, but with a visible scar to remind them of the poverty they've been born into and the sacrifices they've had to make to survive. Jokes are made, songs sung and dances danced and it all comes across as escapism during the festival. While the audience in the cinema breaks into guffaws, you are left curling in your seat with distress because the humour invariably wilts. We leave the hall wiping tears not of laughter, but of the tragic reality of a visionless state, corrupt politicians and the feeling of impending doom. **Raisa Pande**

## HAPPENINGS



**THREE MEN:** Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal in a meeting with Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba and CPN (UML) Chairman KP Oli at Baluwatar on Wednesday to agree on a 'package deal' on impeachment.



**IMPEACHMENT MOTION:** CPN Maoist (center) lawmaker Mahendra Bahadur Shahi presenting the impeachment proposal against CIAA chief Lokman Singh Karki in Parliament on Tuesday.



**PRESSURE TACTICS:** Participants in a rally organised by Solidarity for Dr KC Alliance on Saturday in Kathmandu to exert pressure on the Parliament to impeach the CIAA chief Lokman Singh Karki.



**JAZZY BEATS:** Jim Funnell of AfuriKo performs on the first day of Jazzmandu at Jazz Upstairs, Lazimpat on Thursday.



**TIHAR AYO:** Children selling packets of colours, used during Bhai Tika, at Asan on Wednesday.

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# Lampooning Lokman

In the weeks before and after the impeachment motion against the CIAA Chief Lokman Singh Karki, Nepali cartoonists used humour and satire to expose him, but also the political leadership’s inability to get rid of him earlier. Selection of some of the cartoons:



Sher Bahadur Deuba:+ “Shall I throw it, or keep it?”  
कान्तिपुर  
Abin Shrestha in *Kantipur*, 23 October



Dasain  
Goat: Democracy  
Signpost: CIAA  
कान्तिपुर  
Batsyayan in *Kantipur*, 16 October



Big fish  
twitter  
Rabintra Manandhar in *Twitter*, 23 October

## Who defeated us?

Translated excerpt of Nepali Congress MP and Health Minister Gagan Thapa in Parliament, 26 October

Honourable Speaker,

A few months ago, crusading physician Govinda KC demanded impeachment of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) Chief Lokman Singh Karki. KC accused Karki of overstepping his mandate, abusing his power and promoting irregularities in the medical and other sectors.

Whether we needed to impeach Karki may be the subject of debate, but we should have discussed it in Parliament because the accusations against Karki were serious enough and substantiated by proof. So I registered a motion of public importance in Parliament, but the House did not discuss it.

Why not? I don’t want to dwell on it now. What I would like to dwell on is a blunder made by the top leaders of the major parties that recommended Karki as the CIAA Chief (in 2013). We were opposed to Karki, and cautioned our party President Sushil Koirala against appointing him. Koirala agreed, and said he would not give his nod to Karki’s appointment. We then met President Ram Baran Yadav who also assured us that he would not approve Karki’s appointment. But the next day,

Karki was appointed head of the anti-graft body.

We asked them why. They said it was beyond their power to stop Karki’s appointment, and they were tired and defeated. We asked them: defeated by whom? We are still asking: who defeated our political leaders? Unless they reveal who forced them to change their minds on Karki, and why they cannot overpower this unseen force, we will always be defeated no matter how many times we write our constitution.

The issue is not about Karki, but about our sovereignty and whether we are able to make decisions on our own. I hereby declare that I will support the impeachment motion against Karki.

Honourable Speaker,  
Karki’s appointment as the CIAA Chief was wrong, but we could have probably refrained from questioning it if he had honestly fulfilled his duty and responsibilities. The 157 MPs had to register the impeachment motion against Karki in a hurry, so they could not chronicle all

of Karki’s wrongdoings in their proposal. They have included only a few examples.

We have heard and read about J Edgar Hoover, the founding director of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Karki chose Hoover’s path, but we took a very long time to break our silence over his tyranny. Why were we afraid of him? Was it because we are also involved in corruption and we feared that Karki might go after us?

Some MPs are wary of the impeachment motion. They are suspicious that it might break unity among political parties and jeopardise efforts to amend the Constitution. But were we really united before this motion was filed? Is it not the same House where we broke chairs and furniture? Some of us are not even on talking terms. So this motion could be the beginning of a new unity among us. If we all support it, it will bring us together on the Constitution. It will not affect the amendment process.

Those who registered the motion need not brag about it. And others who dithered also need not feel like they didn’t act on time.



BIKRAM RAI



### Request for Proposals (RFP) for Event Management Service

The British Council is the United Kingdom’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities.

British Council In partnership with Southbank London is bringing the **Women of the World Festival** to Kathmandu. The mission of this festival is to champion gender equality, celebrating the achievements of women and girls everywhere and examining the obstacles that keep them from fulfilling their potential.

Our ambition is to recreate the excitement and energy of WOW in Kathmandu, bringing together leading women from the South Asia region for a one-day Festival celebrating the achievements of women and girls.

**We are looking for an Event Management Company who can work with us to make this festival happen in Nepal.**

#### Role of Event Management Company

The event management company will provide the complete solution to the various aspects of the Festival. The company will conceptualize the overall festival is the selected venue and manage all the logistics requirements of the different sections of the festival.

Detail Terms of Reference can be downloaded from [www.britishcouncil.org.np](http://www.britishcouncil.org.np)

**Who can apply:** All the RFPs are open to organizations having the following skills and experience:

- A strong portfolio of having managed such events/festivals in Nepal.
- Budget proposal which strongly reflects value for money.
- Legally registered with the Government of Nepal and must have up-to-date tax clearance, copies of these documents must be provided together with the RFP documents.

The technical proposals should reach the British Council office through email at [suchita.shrestha@britishcouncil.org.np](mailto:suchita.shrestha@britishcouncil.org.np) no later than **17:00 hours on 13 November 2016**.

British Council reserves the right to reject, in whole or in part, any or all bids at any time without assigning any reason or reasons whatsoever.



# Made in Nepal

Nepal-made products are steadily gaining visibility and recognition around the world

SAHINA SHRESTHA

When discussing products from Nepal, the first things that usually come to mind are handicrafts, carpets and pashmina shawls. Those were Nepal's traditional exports, but there are new Made in Nepal items that are steadily gaining popularity around the world. Entrepreneurs say pushing a product with a Made in Nepal tag actually adds value, but ultimately it is the quality that counts to compete in the international market. *Nepali Times* looks at entrepreneurs who have defied domestic odds and overcome obstacles to push Nepali products that are making a splash in the international market.



PICS: GOPEN RAI

## IT'S AN ADVENTURE

Around the world, the word Sherpa is synonymous with high altitude climbing and Mt Everest. Honouring the hardworking and courageous climbers from Nepal and celebrating the spirit of adventure is their namesake brand: Sherpa Adventure Gear. It manufactures outdoor, lifestyle gear with its flagship store in Kathmandu.

Ninety-five per cent of Sherpa's products are manufactured in

Nepal. From branding to product design, the company ensures that its jackets, base layer clothing, fleeces, wooden hats, and outdoor gear meet international standards. Sherpa products are now available in 21 countries, in shops in the US, UK, Japan, Australia, Germany, Switzerland and even Chile.

Since its inception in 2003, Sherpa's products have been regularly featured in the top 10 lists of *Outside*, *Backpacker*, *UK Climbing*, *Indybest* and others, and it is Nepal's answer to international brands like Patagonia and North Face.

"The whole image of Nepal, mountains and Sherpa worked

well in people's imagination. There was this small brand trying to sell high quality products, and it immediately earned the goodwill of customers," says CEO Ashutosh Tiwari. Competing in the international market is serious business, and Sherpa prides itself in delivering high end, high quality products with high production standards and designs. "That the products are made in Nepal adds to the appeal," Tiwari says.

Sherpa's products are manufactured in factories in Biratnagar and Kathmandu, down jackets are made in Vietnam and the fabrics are sourced from Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. All the mountaineering gear is tested by Nepali climbers in the Himalaya ensuring their versatility and reliability.

With certification, good standards, traceability, good communication skills, ease of doing business, reliability and productivity, Sherpa is proof that it is possible for Nepali brands to do well in the international market. Says Tiwari: "Basically to play the game at that level we have to have on time delivery and maintain the high quality of products."



## THE SECRETS OF AYURVEDA

Four years ago, while working in brand merchandising for a high-end store in the US, Shweta Upadhyaya felt a void in the market for authentic Ayurvedic products that celebrated the principles and practices of this ancient practice of wellbeing.

While there were many natural organic products in the market, Ayurveda remained unattractive and out of reach of consumers. Even in Nepal and the Subcontinent where the tradition originated, herbal products were seen as cheap and shoddy.

A student of Ayurveda and fashion

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रु ५०० देखि शतप्रतिशत नगद छुट ।  
सपिङ्ग भौचर स्मार्ट फोन ल्यापटप ३२" एल.ई.डी. टि.भि. फ्रिज

काठमाडौं: अन्नपूर्ण (९८५९९९९५५), विजय (९८५९८८८८८८), ब्रजेण (९८५९००८५८८), दिलिप (९८५९९९९९९९), कपिल (९८५९९९९९९९), पोखरा: शिवहरि (९८५९९९९९९९), इटहरी: नरेण (९८०९०८८८८८), विराटनगर: रोशन (९८५९०३०५८८), बुटवल: अमिल (९८५९०५०५०५), नारायणघाट: युधिर (९८५९०४८८८८)

वार्षिक ग्राहक दर रु ३,८००/- पुराना ग्राहकहरूले पनि नवीकरण गरी यस योजनामा सहभागी हुन सक्नुहुनेछ ।  
Bumper Prize मा २०७२ माघ १ तैदेखि २०७३ पुस मसान्तसम्मका वार्षिक ग्राहकहरूलाई सहभागी गराइनेछ ।





marketing, Upadhyaya created a brand using the best quality herbs researching and designing Laavanya Luxury Ayurveda which now carries 30 skincare products including creams, face packs, bath salts, hair tonics, rose water, soaps, serums, oils sold through two outlets in Nepal, online, and through boutique stores in the US.

“From the herbs to the formulation everything is based on ancient Ayurvedic texts and that is what makes us authentic and different,” says Upadhyaya. All of the products are manufactured in Nepal and the 60 per cent of the raw material is sourced locally. The products that are bottled and packaged in Bangkok, but the paper boxes and pouches used for packaging are all handmade in Nepal.

Ensuring high quality has paid off for Laavanya, even without aggressive marketing and advertising, it has a loyal clientele at home that is made up of 60 per cent Nepalis and 40 per cent expatriates.

“Those who really know about Ayurveda and are interested in it buy our products. There is a niche market for it,” shares Upadhyaya.

Upadhyaya is now looking to open a flagship store in San Francisco where her US office is based, and she eventually wants to expand to India, Europe, China and Dubai. But for now she is more focused on coming up with more products and making the quality better. She says: “You can’t just sell something because it is made in Nepal but if your product is of high quality you can’t go wrong.”

## SAY CHEESE

Pet dogs around the world are saying cheese, thanks to a new dog chew from Nepal. Made of milk, salt and lime juice hardened cheese known as 'Churpi' or 'Dhurkhwa' is traditionally a popular snack for people in the mountains of Nepal. But the chewy texture and flavorful taste and smell makes it perfect for pet dogs as well. Himalayan Dog Chew, a product of Himalayan Corporation, a US based company, has been creating waves around the world as a 100 per cent natural chew for the dogs.

"The product is originally manufactured in Nepal, it is then processed and packaged in a factory in US," says Sujan Shrestha of Himalayan Dog Chew. During the peak season, around 9,000 farmers in Nepal supply milk for cheese which is made in around 300 dairies in Ilam, Taplejung, Tehrathum, Dhankuta and Sankhuwasabha. The hardened cheese is then sent to the factory in US where it is further cleaned, processed and packaged for distribution through partners and Himalayan's own distribution centres.



MANARAM TECHNOLOGIES

The product is so popular that Manaram Himalayan which supplies the hardened cheese to Himalayan's US factory alone exported 300 tons of cheese worth \$2.5 million in 2015. Himalayan produced an additional 300 tons in its factory in US.

Shrestha believes that the Himalayan name and the "cheesy" story behind the product along with the quality sets it apart from the competition. "Marketing it as a product of Nepal adds value but it is the quality that earns customer's trust and confidence in the product especially in the West where people are really sensitive about their pets," he says.

## TIME AFTER TIME

When talking about cities around the world that produce high quality watches, Kathmandu is the last name that comes to mind. But all that is changing, thanks to Kobold watches.

Since 2012, Michael Kobold, founder of Kobold Watch Company, and his team has been assembling watches here producing 20 models with the Made in Nepal tag. The most famous of these is Kobold Himalaya Everest, a limited edition watch with a very special dial made of rock from the summit of Mt Everest (all 25 of them are sold out).

"In my view, a watch shouldn't be a sterile item, it should convey a story of adventure, and nothing spells adventure more than Himalaya and Nepal," says Kobold. Indeed, his watches have the



tagline: 'Embrace Adventure'.

Himalaya is the flagship model of the with prices ranging from \$3500-16,000. Kobold only makes 700 watches annually, 50 of which are assembled in Nepal and most of them sold in the US and to expatriates looking for high-end souvenirs in Nepal.

"When you advertise something it always sells better but we have never advertised Himalaya and it already always sells really well," says Kobold. "In certain markets like Germany branding something as made in Nepal is an asset."

Kobold also produces leather components like straps, iPhone cases, belts, wallet, card holders and key rings all handcrafted in Nepal and sold all over the world.

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# Grabbing them by their listicles

There is not a week that goes by these days that Nepal doesn't make it to some internet listicle or other. The latest honours are bestowed upon Nepal for being ranked #1 in World's Best Value Tourist Destination 2017, #2 in South Asia in the World Bank's Ease To Do Business Index. (Right up to here everything in this column has been officially certified to be 100% true: Rubber stamped by the Ministry of Information and Communicable Diseases) And just last week the World Wildlife Fund declared Kathmandu Airport the Top National Park Sanctuary for Endangered Himalayan Fauna.

Let's take the first one first. Lonely Planet's Annual Best in Travel List is probably the most prestigious award concocted by the world's travel industry to keep as many people as possible flying aimlessly around the world at any



given time, so that the Greenland Icecap will finally melt and the world's largest island can finally be put on top of a list of Last Place To Visit Before the Sky Falls Or The World Ends, Whichever Comes First.

That is why it is great honour that Nepal consistently makes it to the Loneliest Planet in the Solar System's inventory of places to visit. It must be some sort of Consolation Prize because it has become quite embarrassing for us Nepalis to be hogging the prizes every year. Someone might think there is some hanky-panky

going on. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding, being placed once more right on top of the list of countries that are "Best Value" is a much overdue recognition for the tremendous effort this country's travel industry has over the decades put into underselling our products and undercutting each other to make Nepal the cheapest tourist destination in the world.

Here's an idea: Nepal Tourism Bored can now change its motto to capitalise on the Lonely Planet Listicle and come up with even more attractive slogans, such as:

- Visit Nepal: It's Dirt Cheap
- Once Is Not Enough: Visit Nepal In Your Next Incarnation
- Supernaturally Nepal
- Feel Like God Already?
- Buddha Was Born In Nepal Before Nepal Even Existed!
- Nepal: Always 15 Minutes Ahead of India
- Tummy Trouble: Visit Kathmandu and Lose Weight Or Your Money Back
- Visit Nepal and Stay There
- Don't Trek In Nepal, Get the Runs
- All My Troubles Seem So Far Away When I See What Nepalis Have to Go Thru

defecation, otherwise we may fall in the World Bank Doing Business Report 2018. It is a matter of national prestige that we keep our lead, and for this we must remain ever-vigilant and not let our standards slip.

There is a direct correlation between the Ease of Doing Business Index and the Corruption Index. Which means that without graft and malfeasance, our economy would grind to a halt and no one would be able to do any business. It is kickbacks and the payoffs that lubricate our economy and keep the palms of government greased. There is now a strong possibility that with the suspension and possible impeachment of #Lockman, honesty and integrity will rise and make it impossible to do business. Hence, it is of utmost important that the next CIAA Chieftain have an impeccable record for fraud, embezzlement, extortion and open defecation.

These recognitions by Lonely World and Planet Bank put Nepal right up there as the top destination in the space time continuum — even though the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle may determine that as a nation we may not know precisely what our destination is at any given moment in time.

For a country that can't seem to figure out where it is we are going, we sure as hell are getting there fast. And that's what counts.



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The other feather in our topi this week came from none other than the World Bank Doing Business Report 2017 released this week which put Nepal at #107, which is higher than all other South Asian countries. Yay! Observing how we Nepalis go about our morning business by the river and in the forest, it is obvious that the ease of doing business should be the highest-rated here. In fact, we should pull back the campaign against open



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