

## PAGES 14-15

Despite the chronic cynicism that pervades Kathmandu, there are many people across Nepal who are working with integrity and diligence to build a better country. They are not the types that will fold their hands and complain, or give up and migrate.

shown through dedication and determination that it is possible to build a better future for this country.

honest policeman who cleaned up football and restored respect to Nepal's national team. A journalist who struggled against a male-dominated profession and patriarchy to reform the Election Commission.

There are hundreds of Kulman Ghisings, Leela Mani Paudyals, Sitaram Kattels and Kunjana Ghimires, Swarnim Wagles and Bikash Gauchans working in the bureaucracy, in hospitals, police stations, courts, all over Nepal.

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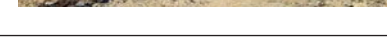
For every kleptocrat heading a public sector enterprise, there is another with integrity and vision to take the organisation and the country forward.

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King Jigme Dorje Palbar Bista, 86  
**TRIBUTE BY SIENNA CRAIG**

PAGES **4-5**



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## GOING PLACES TOGETHER



# THE POWER OF ONE

Individual Nepalis who have shown through dedication and determination that it is possible to build a better future for this country.

When the stench from the Bagmati started getting too much to bear and the banks of Kathmandu’s sacred river became a garbage dump, many of us just covered our noses, averted our gaze and blamed government. Then, top bureaucrat Leela Mani Paudyal led a citizen’s movement to collect trash every Saturday. In two years, Bagmati cleanup became a campaign that lifted hundreds of tons of rubbish. Paudyal is now our ambassador to China, but the momentum of his work continues.

Yet, there were those who accused Paudyal of tokenism. As Chief Secretary he should have solved the structural problem of urban garbage disposal instead of collecting the trash himself, they pontificated. Couch intellectuals wrote op-eds accusing him of (horrors!) trying to be popular.

Three years ago the UML’s Energy Minister Radha Poudel sacked Kulman Ghising for being too honest. When the Maoist Centre Energy Minister Janardan Sharma brought him back to head the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), Ghising stopped load-shedding in Kathmandu within three weeks. The capital hasn’t had power cuts for the past two months. As we reported in this newspaper last week Ghising simply stopped corruption in the distribution of electricity to favoured customers, and he would not have been able to prevail had he not got the political backing of Energy Minister Sharma.

We have become so conspiratorial in this country that even consumers who are now enjoying 24 hours electricity are cursing NEA Managing Director Ghising because (Oh, no!) he succeeded. It seems we are so disillusioned that many of us will believe the wildest rumours, doubt the most honest, besmirch the most righteous. We make sweeping generalisations about all policemen being corrupt, all bureaucrats being on the take, all politicians being greedy



GOPEN RAI

and power-hungry, all journalists being deceitful. And we believe our own misrepresentation.

To be sure, there is a lot to be cynical about. Two million survivors of last year’s earthquake are facing their second winter under tarps. In the heart of Kathmandu the Rastra Bank building and parts of the Singha Darbar secretariat are still in ruins. Parliament has not conducted business for two weeks because of a political deadlock over the constitution, yet its ‘honourable’ members just gave themselves a hefty raise. It has become a national trait to blame others (the rival faction, the other party, the neighbouring country) for our own failings, we excel at playing the demanding victim and cannot bear to see our own kind get ahead.

Happily, there are many like Leela Mani Paudyal and Kulman Ghising in this country, quietly and honestly doing their work without undue regard for reward or publicity.

The comedy duo Sitaram Kattel and Kunjana Ghimire (‘Dhurmus-Suntali’) put the government to shame by raising money and personally building a new village for earthquake survivors in Sindhupalchok. Last year, it was the tireless teamwork of Govind Raj Pokharel and Swarnim Wagle at the National Planning Commission that allowed the Needs Assessment Report to be completed in time so that the National Reconstruction Authority could be set up. Pokharel could easily find himself a cushy international position, and Wagle gave up a job at the World Bank to return to Nepal. Similarly, there are dedicated young innovators like doctors devoted to service like Bikash Gauchan at Bayalpata Hospital in Achham (see page 6), social media trailblazer Sumana Shrestha, politician Anusa Thapa, advocate Om Aryal, human rights activist Mohana Ansari, some of whom have been profiled in this issue.

For every kleptocrat heading a public sector enterprise, there is another with integrity and vision to take the organisation and the country forward. As the Melamchi tunnel nears completion after a 25-year delay, the water utility responsible for distribution is moving fast to upgrade the water supply network despite blatant interference from Nepali Congress politicians, as we reported earlier this month (#835). In the transportation sector, Sajha Yatayat has been revived to provide reliable and comfortable buses for Kathmandu and has prevailed despite a route mafia enjoying political protection and patronage. After decades of going nowhere, Nepal Airlines finally has political support from Minister of Tourism Jivan Shahi of the Nepali Congress, himself a pilot, and committed former DDC Chairman of Humla.

There are many other men and women who have shown through dedication and determination that it is possible to build a better future for this country.

Times

THIS WEEK

TEMBALAMA

**Most reached on Facebook**  
The Boudha Kora by Jessica Cortis, Smriti Basnet, Pan Lan, Qiu Tian  
A comprehensive guide to places to eat and things to do in Boudha (9,662 people reached)

**Most shared on Facebook**  
The Boudha Kora by Jessica Cortis, Smriti Basnet, Pan Lan, Qiu Tian

**Most popular on Twitter**  
The Boudha Kora by Jessica Cortis, Smriti Basnet, Pan Lan, Qiu Tian  
(50 retweets, 181 likes)

**Most visited online page**  
The Boudha Kora by Jessica Cortis, Smriti Basnet, Pan Lan, Qiu Tian

**Most commented**  
Heads we lose, Tails we lose, Editorial

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

**EDITORIAL**

Our politicians are manipulators, not leaders (‘Heads we lose, tails we lose’, Editorial, #837). Madhesi politicians provoked people in the Tarai last year, distorting facts and spreading lies that the constitution treats them as second-class citizens. It is now UML’s turn to manipulate people into believing that the second amendment to the constitution is antinational.

Jit Bidari

■ It does not matter whether Palpa, Gulmi, Arghakhanchi and Pyuthan remain in Province 4 or inserted into Province 5. It does not matter whether Sunsari, Morang, Jhapa, Kailali and Kanchanpur remain in hill provinces or added to Tarai provinces. People living there will not require visa to travel to other provinces. Federal provinces are just administrative units, which will decentralise power and increase people’s access to government services.

Surendra Niraula

■ Democracy is definitely the rule of the majority (‘Populism and polls’, Om Astha Rari, #837). But UML leader Pradip Gyawali must understand that the minority should not be left out.

Kiran Sundas

**THE BOUDHA KORA**

Boudhanath stupa’s reconstruction gives us hope that we can rebuild our heritage sites. (‘The Boudha kora’, Jessica Cortis, Smriti Basnet, Pan Lan and Qiu Tian, #837). But we need to do more to preserve our heritage sites.

Shalokya Pun

**HIGH-RISE**

The investigation on empty high-rises makes for interesting reading (‘Demand for flats flattens out’, Rameshwar Bohara, #837). We need more in-depth stories about those tall buildings that have been marked with yellow and red stickers which are still standing even two years after the earthquake, and we must be informed whether they are safe.

Pravaran Mahat

**THE ELECTRIC AGE**

The arrival of Kia Soul in Kathmandu is good news (‘The electric age’, Kunda Dixit, #837). It was a wise decision by the government to slash tax on the import of electric cars, but improving public transportation is the only solution to Kathmandu’s chronic traffic mismanagement.

Bhanu Shresetha

**Utsav Shakya**@utsavshakya  
This facility is leading by doing. Was very impressed by hospital team + services on @possiblehealth #Bayalpata hospital tour in Achham

**Nepali Times**@nepalitimes  
Safe delivery in a district hospital in remote western Nepal highlights importance of having trained family doctors

**Amir Joshi**@Amirjoshi  
#Nepali leadership is to be blamed for sinking its own ship as there’s no way out in this political limbo

**Nepali Times**@nepalitimes  
Separating hills and plains may lead to violence, keeping hills and plains together may also lead to violence.

Times

nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll #838

Q. What is the biggest threat to wildlife?

Total votes: 194

Weekly Internet Poll #839  
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Do you think 2016 will be better than 2017 for Nepal?

Times

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Mourning the loss of King Jigme Dorje Palbar Bista

SIENNA CRAIG

Jigme Dorje Palbar Bista (*pic, right*), the King of Lo, or Upper Mustang, died in Kathmandu on 16 December. He was 86, and had ruled his kingdom for more than half a century with equanimity. We shared an affinity for horses and a love of the landscape he called home.

In Nepali, people referred to him as the Mustang Raja, one of four ‘petty kings’ – including local rulers in Bajhang, Salyan, and Jajarkot – who retained regional power even as their territories were incorporated into the emerging nation-state of Nepal in the mid-18th century. These kings were recognised by Nepali law from 1961 until 2008, when Nepal transitioned from a Hindu monarchy to a secular republic.

In Tibetan, Bista was called Lo Gyalpo evoking a sense of respect and deference. The fact that Jigme Dorje Palbar Bista had been officially stripped of his raja title by the Nepali state did little to affect his importance in the



MACDUFF EVERTON



Presence and absence

lives of Loba, people from Upper Mustang.

Bista was 25th in a lineage of rulers that dates back to the late 14th century, and the founding of the kingdom by a western Tibetan leader named Amepal. In 1964, when he was in his mid-thirties, Bista assumed the title of Lo Gyalpo after the death of his father. He was his father’s youngest son. Bista married Sidol

Palwar, a refined, elegant woman who traveled from Shigatse, Tibet, to Lo as a bride in 1950, before the political upheavals of 1959. They had no living biological children, but the couple adopted their nephew, Jigme Singe Palbar Bista, as son and heir.

Over the past half-century, Bista ushered his community through massive political-

economic and sociocultural transitions: the stationing in Mustang of Chushi Gangdruk, the Tibetan Resistance Army, from 1961 until 1974, opening Lo to foreign tourists in 1992, the decade-long war (1996-2006) and its attendant impacts on all aspects of life in rural Nepal, even in a district that saw minimal direct conflict, the end of the Nepali monarchy in 2008, the

recent completion of a motorable road that now links Mustang with the Chinese border to the north and Pokhara to the south, and the earthquakes of Spring 2015.

Bista has also lived to see the impacts of climate change on Mustang’s environment, a complex social ecology that balances irrigated agriculture, pastoralism, and trade. Two of Lo’s villages have been relocated

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PICS: TOM KELLY

in recent years as a result of water shortages as some of Mustang’s glaciers shrink. This and the recent discovery of uranium deposits in Upper Mustang indicate some of the environmental and geopolitical crucibles facing this region. Bista also bore witness to profound internal transitions within Mustang’s communities, brought on through education- and economically-driven outmigration. Today, the population of Loba in cities in urban Nepal and India as well as those making homes in Queens, New York, rival those who live in Lo.

When I picture the Lo Gyalpo, I see his stately dignity. He was a beautiful, intense presence. During our meetings, be they formal audiences at Khar, the palace and his residence in the walled city of Lo Manthang, or over quiet cups of tea with his family in recent years in Kathmandu, I remained in awe of him. He could be serious, even stern, but then his expression would open up into a broad, friendly smile, his gold-plated tooth glinting brightly.

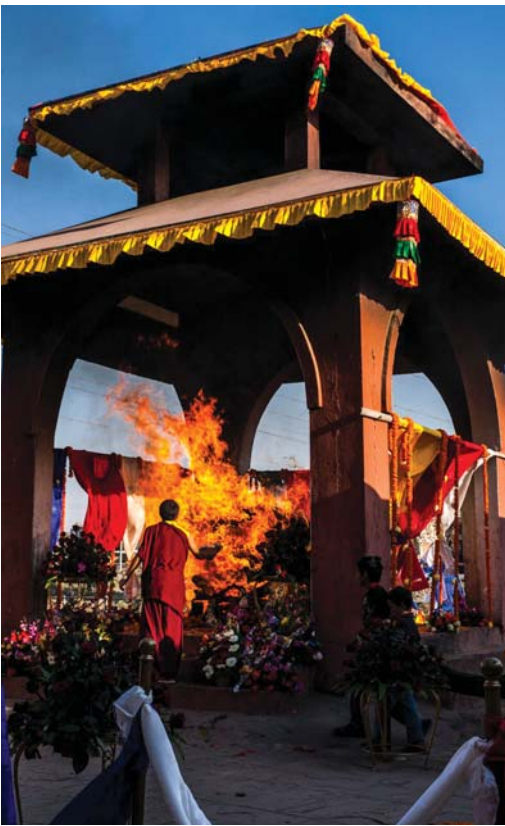
One of my most cherished memories of the king was traveling with him and his entourage up to the summer pastures north of Lo Monthang for days of sheep shearing, yak wrangling, picnicking, and ritually bathing his horses in a glacial stream. It was here that I saw him as a man at work, filled with purpose. I will hold on to that memory, and the one of him and his male companions walking kora early each morning, circumambulating the wall that runs around Lo Monthang, which means ‘plain of aspiration’. There was also deep purpose in such moments: of conversation, of communion.

The king’s heir, Jigme Singe Palbar Bista, along with others who belong to this generation of Mustang nobility, are invested in the future of Upper Mustang. The family remains very important to the social life of Lo, even without continued recognition by the Nepali state of the local monarchy. And yet the death of the king marks the end of an era. His last words to his family members were reportedly: “Never migrate from the village and the district.”

Bista loved his home fiercely, with his whole being. Despite the challenges and changes facing Mustang, those who bear

his lineage will do all they can to honour his wishes as they work to protect and thoughtfully transform their culture. 🇳🇵

*Sienna R Craig, Ph.D., is Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology at Dartmouth College in the United States*



**LEGACY OF LO GYALPO:** Jigme Dorje Parbal Bista was Mustang’s king until 2008 (*far left*), his funeral in Kathmandu this week (*above*), and the walled city of Lo Manthang where he ruled for half a century (*left*).

prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS

Vroom vroom

IMS Group recently acquired distributorship of Korean automobile company SsangYong.



With a state-of-the-art showroom, the company is aiming to expand in all major cities in Nepal and is also planning an exclusive SsangYong service centre.

Cars galore

Renault’s authorised distributor in Nepal, Advanced Automobiles, launched its ‘Renault Winter Super Celebration’ offer for its DUSTER and KWID models. The offer starts with EMI from Rs 27,999 for DUSTER and Rs 12,999 for KWID. This campaign is expected to last till late winter.



Mini port

Turkish Airlines recently launched Mini Port where customers can avail baggage transportation service between Taksim and the Atatürk Airport. With the added time until their flight departure the airlines hopes to offer customers a chance to explore the city.



Celebrating 43

To commemorate 43 years of its establishment, Laxmi Group hosted several events throughout the week. The company



organised blood donation programs, cleaning events, distribution of various essential items to students and the police in both Kathmandu and Pokhara.



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# Saving one mother at a time

Nepal's average maternal mortality rate fell from 901 per 100,000 live births to 258 in 2015. This dramatic progress took place despite a conflict and poor service delivery in rural areas. It was achieved by saving one mother at a time in underserved district hospitals across the country.



**COMMENT**

Bikash Gauchan

Among the facts that contributed to this drop was that the percentage of skilled attendants at birth went up from 4 per cent in 1990 to 53 per cent. Other factors included: lower fertility rates and increased age of marriage due to improving female literacy, better connectivity and transportation. But 258 mothers dying at child birth is still high, especially compared to the European average of 8 per 100,000 live births.

At the Bayalpata Hospital in Achham where I am Medical Director, we came across a delivery case that is representative of the challenges and opportunities we face in reducing the maternal mortality rate further.

Bayalpata is staffed by family doctors and provides free, high quality comprehensive essential primary and surgical obstetric and orthopedic care to people not just from Achham but surrounding districts as well.

Last week, a 23-year-old female was brought into the Emergency by her mother-in-law, sister-in-law and husband suffering from lower abdominal pain and loss of menstruation for nine months.

The family doctor assessed her and confirmed that she was in labour pain with cervix dilated, and membrane ruptured on the way to the hospital. Obstetric ultrasound revealed that the baby was in breech presentation, and she was in probable need of c-section delivery.

The husband did not like the idea. "She needs to work and if we do surgery it would be difficult



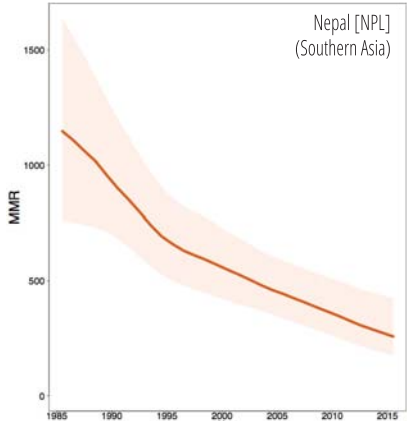
Safe delivery in a district hospital in remote western Nepal highlights the importance of having trained family doctors

PICS: POSSIBLE



**THEATRE OF OPERATIONS:** Clinical staff attend to the c-section at Bayalpata Hospital in Achham last week (above), and the mother's priceless smile after giving birth to a healthy baby. Nepal's Maternal Mortality Rate has fallen dramatically since 1990 because of better transportation, lower fertility rates and skilled attendants at birth.

for her to work in the fields later," he said. The family doctor explained that as the membrane had already ruptured, the baby had less amniotic fluid, and that



she would be fine even with a c-section. When he heard this, the husband ran away and didn't pick up his phone. After waiting eight hours, there were signs of fetal distress, and the doctors could not wait any longer to operate. Finally, despite concerns on the part of the mother-in-law and sister-in-law that the patient would not be able to work in

the fields after an operation, they gave their consent for the c-section, and she was rushed to the operation theatre. Bayalpata only had one family doctor at the time, and the only anesthesia assistant was on leave.

The doctor administered spinal anesthesia for the surgery and requested one of the medical officers to monitor the patient while she was scrubbed, painted and draped. He started the c-section and delivered a baby who was passing meconium with some amount found inside baby's mouth. The nurse and medical officer resuscitated the baby, which cried to the great relief and happiness of the mother, the medical staff and the family outside.

The value of first cry of a new born is so vital that it gives happiness not only to mothers but also to doctors who clinically care for them.

This story highlights the importance of family doctors in

saving the lives of mothers and neonates in rural Nepal. The significance of training family doctors during their residency in Doctor of Medicine (MD) for c-section so as to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality cannot be underestimated.

The Ministry of Health must create and recruit more family doctors for every district hospital so that the general public can have easy access to c-sections and similar life-saving services at rural hospitals around the clock. Although Nepal's success in reducing its maternal mortality rate by more than half in the past 15 years is commendable, 258 mothers out of every 100,000 dying at child-birth is still unacceptably high. Staffing rural hospitals with MDs with c-section training is vital in saving the lives of more Nepali mothers. 🇳🇵

*Bikash Gauchan, MD, is Medical Director of Bayalpata Hospital in Achham which is run by Possible.*



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After two months of cloudless skies and bright sunshine, we are getting some cloud cover. Eastern Nepal mountains may even see some precipitation. The high altitude clouds riding the jet stream will move fast, but will filter the sun enough to bring down the maximum temperature to below 20 in Kathmandu Valley. There still won't be any morning fog despite the low temperature because the air is still too dry. No winter rains on the horizon yet.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
19° 8°	18° 7°	18° 5°

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# THE ART OF PRESERVATION



GARY WORNELL

## SMRITI BASNET

Canadian-born Finnish artist Gary Wornell was introduced to local artisans in Patan during one of his trips to Nepal in late 2014, and it was then he decided the world needed to know about Nepal's endangered crafts.

As a photographer and print maker, Wornell has 25 years of experience as a ceramic artist. He felt real admiration for Patan's craftsmen and worried that it was a profession that was disappearing.

"I found a calmness and peace in their work, it was like a kind of meditation," said Wornell who was awestruck with the beauty of the process and the people, seeing them work with such grace equipped with barely any tools or facilities.

It could have been this connection to fellow artists that opened Wornell's doors to the world of Nepali artisans leading him to understand, connect and visualise their stories.

What originally started as an idea for a series of stories for in-flight magazines eventually took the form of a book with profiles of skills such as copper casting, thangka painting, wood and stone carving,

drum, jewellery and paper making and gilding. *Treasure of Nepal* will be launched at the Kathmandu Triennale in March 2017.

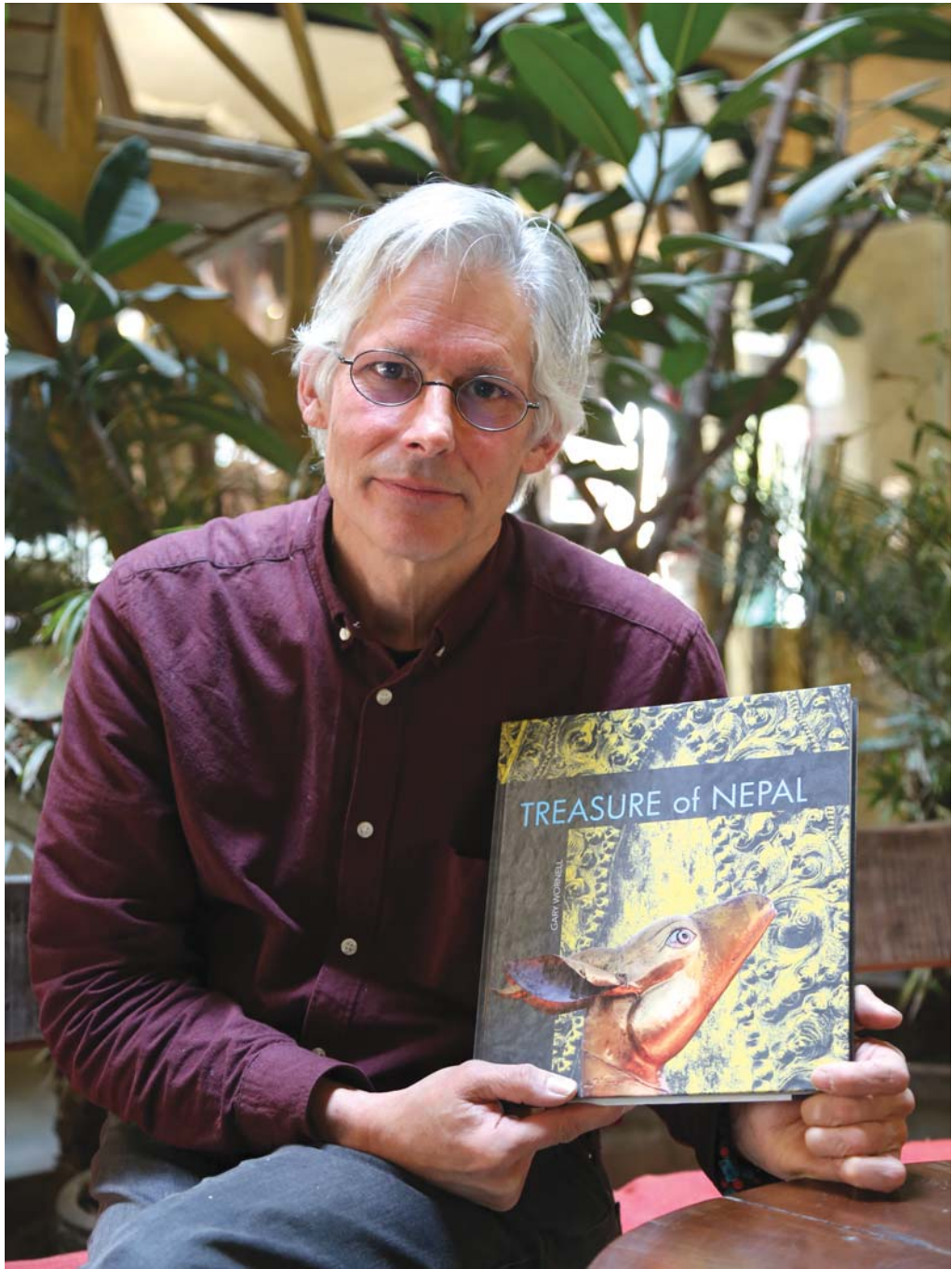
Having stayed with many of the artisans, Wornell shares photographs of them working. He also tells everyday stories and struggles of craftspeople like Nepal's only female stone sculptor and gives unique insights into their world.

In addition to the book, an exhibition of Nepali handicrafts that Wornell curated is being currently showcased in Lahti Art Museum in Finland. He spent \$20,000 buying the exhibits for display in his home country and the exhibition, that will continue till 29 January, has already got 5,500 visitors.

"I wanted to bring Nepali craftwork to Europe to show that if you learn to use your hands there is so much pleasure you can gain from it," said the artist who thinks the burgeoning IT industry and visual culture has increasingly pushed the Finnish people away from nature.

Hoping to recapture the essence of Nepal, the museum space in Finland has been decorated with prayer flags with sections of the walls dedicated to a specific skill. Each segment has the name of the craft painted in Devanagari.

But Wornell's motives go far beyond just



PAN LAN

the exhibition in Lahti and the book. Seeing that there is no institution in Nepal that teaches traditional crafts, he worries that the knowledge and skills will die out in 15 years.

"Family traditions which have been passed down from one generation to the next for hundreds of years will break down rapidly," said Wornell, who cannot hide his disappointment at seeing Nepal's priceless traditions and the customs slowly fade away.

"For craft to live, it will have to evolve into something that makes a statement about where Nepal is now as a country," said Wornell. He feels this can be done through institutions teaching such crafts and the willingness of the artisans themselves to morph traditional and contemporary techniques.

Wornell himself has learnt from Chinese methods for some of his clay work and feels it adds to one's wider understanding of its form and function. "When you train then you can take all those things and start to make your own work," he added.

Chronicling art forms which will soon disappear if not preserved, Wornell feels his Lahti exhibition of Nepali craft is unique and hopes to take it to China and other parts of Europe.

For now, Wornell is back in Nepal and actively involved with communities in Sindhupalchok and Makwanpur as part of Tearfund, a UK-based Christian relief and development initiative to help locals make video documentaries using mobile phones. 🇳🇵

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# Remote corner of Nepal's rem



1

Humla, the last district not yet connected by road, is closer to China than mainland Nepal

PHOTOS and TEXT by  
**BHARAT BANDHU THAPA**  
in HUMLA

In the remote northwestern tip of Nepal is Humla, the last district that isn't yet linked to the road network. At 2,900m elevation, Simkot is the highest placed district capital and has a busy airport that services Indian pilgrims going to Lake Mansarovar across the border in Tibet. After the earthquake destroyed the main Nepal-China border post at Kodari, the number of Indians on Kailash pilgrimage crossing the tiny border settlement of Hilsa grew three-fold to 10,000 this year.

As Nepal's trekking trails upgrade services, tourists seeking an unspoilt destination must go to Humla's Limi and Halji -- the remotest part of Nepal's most remote district. After flying to Simkot, it is a five-day walk to Limi Valley with its perfectly preserved villages and Bon Po culture. Kathmandu is so far away that locals do not expect anything from the Nepali state, and select their own elders to resolve local problems. In fact, it is China that is closer to Limi than mainland Nepal.



2



3



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# most remote district



1 Hilsa is a study in contrast between the Chinese side with its paved road, electricity, telecom towers and buildings, with the decrepit facilities and dirt track on the Nepal side. The Karnali River bridge was inaugurated by Prime Minister Dahal on Tuesday.

2 Mane shrines and ripening buckwheat crop on the track from Limi Valley to Simkot.

3 The village of Halji with its 1,000-year-old monastery is a hub for local culture and religion. There is no presence of the Nepali state here, and the locals have a form of self-governance. Halji is at 3,660m and it is a three-day walk from here to Simkot, but less than a day to the Chinese border.

4 The Karnali forms the border between China and Nepal near Hilsa.

5 Lapcha Pass is the spot in Nepal from where Lake Mansarovar is visible. The border post is open only seasonally for the inhabitants of Limi Valley to trade with Tibet.



6 The road that will ultimately join Hilsa with Simkot and the districts of northwestern Nepal. The Tibetan trading town of Taklakot is only 35 km from Hilsa.

7 The airport town of Simkot is not connected to Nepal's highway network. It is Nepal's highest district capital at 2,900m, and also serves as a gateway for Indian pilgrims to Mt Kailash in Tibet.



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Christmas Eve Buffet Dinner	The Cafe	24 December	3000
Christmas Brunch with kid's activity	The Cafe	25 December	2500

\* Free entry for diners at: Rox bar on Christmas Eve to enjoy live music from 8 PM - midnight.  
\* Complimentary glass of mulled wine or a Coca-Cola product at The Cafe.  
\* Complimentary glass of mulled wine and Jacob's Creek Moscato wine or a Coca-Cola product at Rox restaurant.  
\* The rates are exclusive of applicable service charge and government taxes.  
\* All prices quoted are in local currency.

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A Coca-Cola advertisement featuring several bottles of Coca-Cola. The bottles are arranged in a row, and the Coca-Cola logo is visible on each bottle. The background is dark and festive, with snowflakes and stars. The text 'TASTE THE FEELING' is at the top, and 'SAVOR THE SEASON' is at the bottom.



TASTE THE FEELING

SAVOR THE  
SEASON



## EVENTS

**Photo yatra,**

Take a walk with fellow photographers and photo enthusiasts through picturesque alleyways of the city organised by Kathmandu College of Management.

24 December, 7 to 11 am, Mangal Bazar, (01) 5201434

**Art talk,**

Meet Irish artist Bernardine Carroll and learn about innovative art styles the artist uses in her experimental digital and performance art.

23 December, 4 pm onwards, Sattya Media Arts Collective, 9813485716

**Yoga bootcamp,**

Mark your calendars for rigorous, energetic and intense four-day yoga bootcamp.

18 to 31 December, Sooriya Wellness and Yoga centre, Lajimpat, sooriyawellness@gmail.com

**Morning Coffee Queries,**

For interesting business ideas and experiences, entrepreneurs, students and start-ups can participate in Monday morning coffee queries.

26 December, 9 to 11 am, Bodhi Books and Bakes, Maharajgunj, Tickets: www.clockb.com/events/49

**Community arts,**

Take part in a two-day training for arts, activists and teachers facilitated by MABELLEarts's Leah Houston and Michael Burt from Making Room Community Arts.

25 & 26 December, NexUs Culture Nepal, Maitri Marg, nexusculturenepal@gmail.com, Register at: <https://goo.gl/forms/nwz2LoHRLpU2D5GD2>, Rs 500

**Holiday Specials**

A selection of the best Christmas events and activities in and around Kathmandu this year.

**Christmas ride,**

Gear up for a Christmas cycle ride followed by a sumptuous brunch at Moksh.

25 December, 9.30 to 11.30 am, Lifecycle Nepal, Jhamsikhel, (01) 5521120 9843288445, info@lifecyclenepal.com, Rs 1500 per person

**Maker gift exchange,**

Dedicate your day to make gifts and enjoy mulled wine, hot rum punch, momos and a bonfire. All gifts made will go to the Nepal Communitere Gift exchange.

23 December, 4 to 9 pm, Nepal Communitere, Pulchok, (01) 5555856

**Christmas carnival,**

Mark your calendars for a Christmas carnival featuring games, face painting, nail art, yummy food, prizes and more.

24 December, 12 to 7 pm, Bal Sansar, Civil Mall, Sundhara

**Jhilimili Christmas,**

Learn to make your DIY photo frames to brighten up your Christmas.

24 December, 2 to 5 pm, Karkhana, 9841067998, Register: <https://goo.gl/forms/T9CdLHbbJGfaULZs2>

**Merry making,**

Celebrate Christmas the German and Austrian way. Attend for songs, listen to Christmas stories and enjoy delicious food and drinks.

23 December, 2 pm onwards, VHS Bhaktapur, (01) 6611283

**MISS MOTI-VATION****KRIPA JOSHI**

Tension is who you think you should be.



Relaxation is who you are.

- Chinese Proverb

Miss Motivation Kripa Kreation

## MUSIC

**Live performance,**

Get into the Christmas spirit and come along to a day of live performances by 1974 A.D., Sabin Rai, Sugam Pokharel, Almoda Uprety and more. With mouth watering food from restaurants all around Nepal, don't miss out on a fun day of music.

25 December, 11 am to 6 pm, Jawalakhel football ground, 9861060827

**Artha live,**

An Irish Christmas with Artha Band. Listen as they belt out some of their hits.

24 December, 3 pm onwards, Irish Pub, Lajimpat, (01) 4416027

**Gypsy jazz,**

Spend a musical evening listening to gypsy jazz with Nomad Transition this Christmas eve.

24 December, 6.30 pm onwards, BAC Art Cafe, Pulchok, 9851147776

**Nabin live,**

Attend a live concert on Christmas Eve by 90s pop sensation Nabin K Bhattarai and band.

24 December, 4 pm onwards, Food Court, City Center, Kamalpokhari

**House of Music,**

Don't miss out on Four Blacksmiths and TMR Trio as they play live.

24 December, 8 pm onwards, House of Music, Thamel, 9851075172, Entry: Rs 500

## DINING

**Shangri-La Hotel,**

Make your Christmas eve memorable by treating your taste buds to a delectable meal. Menu includes turkey, pies, pudding and more.

24 December, 6.30 pm onwards, Lost Horizon Café, Shangri-La Hotel, Lajimpat, (01) 4412999, Rs 5555 (for couples)

**Hyatt Regency,**

Enjoy a scrumptious Christmas eve buffet dinner at The Cafe or go for a five course menu at Rox Restaurant with a glass of mulled wine.

24 December, 7 pm onwards, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, Boudha, (01) 5171234, The Cafe: Rs 3,000 plus, Rox Restaurant: Rs 4,500 plus

**Cafe with No Name,**

Support street children this Christmas, watch classic films and munch on some great snacks, mains and desserts.

24 to 25 December, 10 am onwards, Cafe with No Name, Thamel, 9810226559, julia@oursansar.org



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ALOK TULADHAR

## By locals, for locals

The Aju Dyo restoration 16 years ago should be a model for community-led rebuilding of sacred sites after last year's earthquake

MONALISA MAHARJAN

The 2015 earthquake caused immense damage to the temples and monuments of Kathmandu Valley. The Aju Dyo (Akash Bhairav) temple at Indra Chok in the city's historical core was unscathed in the earthquake thanks to its community-led reconstruction 16 years ago.

The idea to repair the roof and damaged portions of the Akash Bhairav temple first came up in 1983. Official permission from Department of Archeology took two years to obtain but it was another 16 years before rebuilding started. But the time was used well to plan the detailed renovation design, arrangement of funds and forming the working committee.

The temple was completely reconstructed from the base because committee members agreed that renovation during the regime of Rana Prime Minister Juddha Sumshere had added many non-traditional elements, making the temple lose its authenticity.

Thus, the inappropriate open veranda on the second floor was replaced with beautifully carved *tikijhya* (wooden latticed windows). Most of the other building materials in the temple were reused, such as old *jhingati* tiles on the roof and timber elements.

The community took an active part in the construction, and this included not only Guthi members responsible for religious and cultural rites at the Akash Bhairav Temple, but also local shopkeepers, devotees and the local government units. The reconstruction committee was divided into three groups -- conservators, working committee (which included the technical group) and sub-committee members for various other

responsibilities such as publicity, security, financial management, etc.

The presence of a strong local government during reconstruction facilitated the work greatly. Being the representatives of the people, local government officials identified well with the neighbourhood perspective, and had access to the means to navigate through bureaucratic procedures of the government.

Involving local people resulted in widely varying ideas from different people, which could sometimes lead to problems. Committee member Sarad Kumar Dongol recalls there were differences of opinion among Guthi members and others. However, all disputes were resolved amicably, after long and exhaustive discussions.

"The visit by King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya during the reconstruction phase was a great boost to people working on the reconstruction, which helped smoothen the process," Dongol says.

The major obstacle in reconstruction was financial. The estimated cost of rebuilding was Rs 14 million when it started, and the Kathmandu municipality and the local ward office were approached for support which provided Rs 4.3 million and Rs 1 million respectively.

Bikash Bhakta Shrestha, former chairman of the local ward office who also chaired the reconstruction committee, remembers: "We did not have the money when we started, and there were doubts about its feasibility. But local businessmen Krishna Bahadur Amatya and Nanda Lal Ghiriya encouraged us, promising to back us up."

Shrestha had also seen that the reconstruction of the nearby Yetkha Baha Temple had received lot of donations even though at the beginning it didn't have enough support. They were able to complete the project with donations from the people.

An office was set up on the street outside the temple, and donations started coming. "In the end, we got more money than the sum spent on the reconstruction," Shrestha recalls, "people gave generously because of their faith, and because of their deep attachment to their culture."

The extra money was used to rebuild the Guthi house behind temple, as well as the esoteric Agan Chhen. Even today, the committee has Rs 9 million in the bank and the interest is being used to maintain the tangible and intangible heritage related with the temple. 🇳🇵

Monalisa Maharjan is a researcher at the Interdisciplinary Centre for History, Cultures and Societies, University of Évora, Portugal.



## Kathmandu's ancestor god

Aju Dyo is worshipped by people of different faiths and ethnicities -- the Newar community calls it Aju Dyo, while non-Newars refer to it as Akash Bhairav. According to the Newar belief, most of the gods were once humans and have stories connecting with daily lives of the people. As a human, Akash Bhairav was the first king of the Kirat dynasty, also known as Yalamber, the founder of Kathmandu. Every year during the full moon day of Yenya Punhi (Indra Jatra) members of the Aju Dyo Guthi engage in elaborate rituals. Aju Dyo is considered to be the forebear of Kathmandu's present inhabitants, and the name means 'ancestor god'.

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# Rogue One: A Star Wars Story

When Disney bought all of the rights to the *Star Wars* intellectual property in 2012 no one quite knew what was going to happen, aside from a blinding clarity regarding infinite franchises based on beloved characters that have endured through decades. Unimpeded use of all this precious material, a feat, and a possible folly, was accomplished by paying a jaw-dropping \$4 billion to Lucasfilm, an entity that had been solely owned by the creator of the *Star Wars* franchise, George Lucas himself.



**MUST SEE**  
Sophia Pande

Since then, *Star Wars* has been resuscitated successfully with *The Force Awakens* (2012), the story of how Vader became, well, Darth Vader, a smash hit that was directed by J.J. Abrams, the go-to guy for all sci-fi doctoring. Now, with the added success of *Rogue One* the aforementioned acquisition looks more than ready to pay for itself.

*Rogue One*, a stand-alone film

with no intended sequels, centres around Jyn Erso, played against her usual type by the lovely Felicity Jones, a loner who is a crucial piece in the ongoing fight between the Empire and the Rebel forces. Jyn's story follows a classic *Star Wars* trope, she is strong and feisty but traumatised by the loss of her mother and the separation from her father Galen Erso (played by the wonderful Mads Mikkelsen), a talented engineer who seems to have turned away from the Force, choosing instead to build the Death Star. Running wild after she has been reluctantly forsaken by the rebel leader Saw Gerrera

(Forrest Whittaker), who saved her from her desert planet (ring a bell?), Jyn is the diamond in the rough, a female iteration of Han Solo or James T. Kirk, but fortunately without too much of the irritating, initial abandonment syndrome shenanigans displayed by the aforementioned archetypal space heroes.

Watching *Rogue One* in the theater sitting next to a highly excited sibling who grew up inhaling the original *Star Wars* films like myself was a particularly rewarding experience precisely because the film reprises everything that made the first three installments so great. The lushly forested, desert, and ocean-filled planets across the galaxy glow on the big screen making for breathtaking backdrops to epic battle sequences. The starships are implacable and sleek, the Death Star terrifies, the rebels break into seemingly impenetrable byzantine labyrinths on Empire controlled bases with the help of smart-talking robots who steal the show, and while there is only one light sabre in action, the valiance of the ensemble cast of characters more than make up for the lack of a Luke Skywalker or Princess Leia.

*Rogue One* is visually stunning, and full of adventure, non-stop, but not with the kind of senseless desperation of lesser films. Above all, it is a welcome and worthy addition to the *Star Wars* universe. 🇳🇵

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

Trailer

## HAPPENINGS



BIKRAM RAI

**GRIDLOCK:** Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, UML Chair KP Oli and NC leader Ram Chandra Poudel meet in Speaker Onsari Gharti Magar's office on Monday in an unsuccessful bid to break the political stalemate.



RSS

**BOTH LANDLOCKED:** Nepal's Foreign Affairs Minister Prakash Saran Mahat signs a bilateral agreement with Mongolia's Foreign Minister Tsend Munkh-Orgil in Kathmandu on Monday. These two landlocked nations were recently blockaded by respective giant neighbours to the south.



RSS

**NEW ENVOY:** Nepal's new envoy to China, Leela Mani Paudyal, submits his letter of credence to Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing on Monday.



RSS

**LIU CAME, XI DIDN'T:** The Communist Party of China (CPC)'s Political Bureau Member Liu Qibao (centre) poses on Monday for a photo at Bhaktapur's Nyatapola Temple that survived last year's earthquake. Liu is the seniormost Chinese leader to visit Nepal in 2016 when Kathmandu was expecting Chinese President Xi Jinping.



RSS

**LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL:** Joint secretary Baikuntha Aryal and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Chief Jun Sakuma sign a Rs 15 billion loan agreement on Thursday to build the 2.7 km Kathmandu-Nagdhunga tunnel bypass.



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# “Political will ended load-shedding”



Translated excerpts of interview with Energy Minister Janardan Sharma in *Himal Khabarpatrika* (18-24 December)

हिमाल

**Himal: So, no more load-shedding?**

**Janardan Sharma:** It is now getting increasingly more difficult to supply 24-hour electricity, with water levels going down in rivers. But we are exploring multiple options to ensure that people’s joy will not turn into sorrow.

**But how can we be sure?**

The pace at which the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur transmission line has been built in the last two months is one reason. If we get this trans-boundary transmission line ready, we can import more electricity from India. But that will still be insufficient to meet demand, so we will add solar electricity to the national grid and promote energy-efficient LED bulbs. We are confident that we can supply 24-hour electricity even in the dry season.

**How did you manage to provide Kathmandu with 24-hour electricity when others had failed?**

A week after I became Energy Minister, I presented a 37-point workplan to end load-shedding. To implement it, I formed an expert panel to recommend ways to curb leakage and pilferage of electricity and repair transformers.

When I was President of the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament, I had opposed to selling cheap power to industries by forcing the people to live in darkness. I wanted to redistribute electricity, and called a meeting with industrialists, but they were not bothered to attend the meeting. When I became minister, I instructed the NEA to redistribute electricity, and that is how it happened.

**But a lot of the framework had been laid by the former government.**

The former government announced an energy emergency plan, but that was not implemented. Ending load-shedding was possible because of our political will. We formed a strong team and moved forward step by step.

**But people are saying you did this by taking power from elsewhere to give it to the capital, and that you are draining Kulekhani.**

It is not true that we have diverted to Kathmandu electricity from other places. Kulekhani was built for peak power in winter, and it is not true that we cannot use water of the reservoir in other seasons.



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# DOING GOOD by BEING GOOD

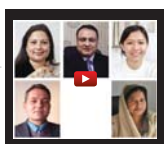
Despite the doom and gloom and the chronic cynicism of Kathmandu, there are many who are quietly building a better Nepal. You don't hear much about them in the media because they shun the public glare. In this edition of *Nepali Times* we profile a small sample of individual Nepalis who have shown through dedication and determination that it is possible to build a better future for this country.

There is a young woman who decided to leave an academic career in the United States, and returned home to Nepal to serve through politics. A Muslim woman from Nepalganj refuses to be a token human rights activist. A public interest litigation lawyer

gave up his passion for singing to pursue the corrupt. A honest policeman cleaned up football and restored respect to Nepal's national team. A journalist who struggled against a male-dominated profession and patriarchy to reform the Election Commission.

There are many more Nepalis across the length and breadth of this land for whom the common denominator is the quiet satisfaction of knowing that they have given all they can to their communities and their nation.

 **nepalitimes.com**  
Watch video



GOPEN RAI

## Young turk

What started as an anti-corruption protest movement led by young, educated Nepali professionals transformed itself into a political party in the 2013 election. Since its inception, Bibeksheel Nepali has been steadily working to build an image of an alternative political party that is not led by hardened politicians, but by average Nepalis with a vision for the country and looking for and being a part of change.

There are three elections planned for 2017, and if they happen (a big 'if') Bibeksheel hopes to secure seats in village, district and municipal councils including in Kathmandu. Bibeksheel means 'conscientious' and has always maintained that it does not compete with other political parties but strives to change the political culture of Nepal.

Anusa Thapa, a 31-year-old PhD, is representative of the kind of young people Bibeksheel has managed to draw in. Thapa is CEO of the party, the only political party in Nepal that has a Chief Executive Officer, and not a chairman or president.

"Even though I was never directly associated with politics, I always wanted to serve the people of Nepal. So my dreams from when I was little were always political in nature," says Thapa, who was born and raised in Singapore and returned to Nepal after completing her doctorate in life sciences from the University of Virginia in 2014.

The CEO's job is to lead the party's operations team so that the leaders can focus on strategy and planning out elections. Even if it doesn't win any seats in

upcoming elections, all eyes will be on the party to show if it maintains transparency -- a value its members place high in their agenda.

As CEO, Thapa heads the management of the party and is responsible for ensuring that the party runs like a well-oiled engine. After completing her education, Thapa realised that making a difference in the field of her studies would take a long time. So when she got an opportunity to work with Bibeksheel Nepali, the change she wanted to see in Nepal seemed clear.

"I felt that if people like them and I could get together then the change for the country that I envisioned would come faster," says Thapa.

She joined Bibeksheel Nepali as a volunteer after the second earthquake in May last year. A month later she was hired as International Coordinator and Alliance Building Officer. Ten months later, the party's Central Committee through the Executive Board headhunted and appointed her as the CEO of the party.

Thapa's new year resolution for 2017 is to improve her Nepali language skills, and work harder as an independent, successful woman. She is especially interested in contributing to Nepal's education, since it was the opportunity she got in schools abroad that opened doors for her.

"The zeal and the dedication of the Bibeksheel party members at home and abroad is what motivates me to work harder," says Thapa, "our hopes and aspirations are so powerful that I feel a renewed sense of enthusiasm to continue what I am doing."

Sahina Shrestha



SMRITI BASNET

## Not a token

It has been just two years since her appointment as a member of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and Mohna Ansari has already proved that she is not just a token Muslim woman in office.

Early this year, Ansari made headlines by demanding a probe into the killings of 55 people during the Madhes unrest during the UN's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) meeting in Geneva. Her bold statement angered Prime Minister KP Oli who reprimanded her for tarnishing Nepal's image at an international forum.

Ansari remains unapologetic about her statement, and insists that the state used excessive force to quell protests in the Tarai in 2015. "No one was shot at below waist, and some were even shot in the head," she said.

The observations were from Ansari's own visit to the Tarai last year to investigate the violence that followed the promulgation of the Constitution. She was equally critical of the lynching of eight policemen and shooting of a child by protesters in Kailali on 25 August 2015.

Today, amidst the political gridlock in Kathmandu with the main opposition UML rejecting the second amendment to the constitution and Madhesi parties threatening to launch a fresh agitation, Ansari's role of human rights commissioner will be even more critical in 2017.

Before the NHRC, Ansari served a full term as a member of the National Women Commission (NWC), and contributed to drafting of laws against dowry and witchcraft. She is firmly

convinced social awareness is more important than laws to combat these social maladies.

"Our political leaders themselves perpetuate the dowry system, just look at the recent disclosure of assets of our male ministers, they have all boasted about property they received from their wives," Ansari pointed out.

Born to a Muslim family in Nepalganj where girls needed to wear veils and were not allowed to study in the same classroom with boys, Ansari faced social and cultural barriers at every step, but that did not deter her from becoming Nepal's first female Muslim attorney.

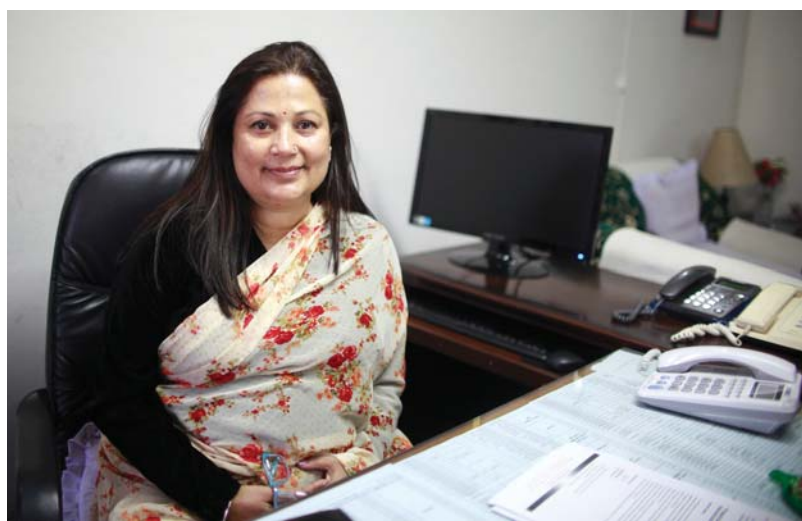
"My non-Muslim neighbours treated me like an untouchable, my in-laws wanted me to wear a veil after marriage," she recalls, adding that she never gave up, and continued to study after giving birth to two children.

Ansari came to Kathmandu after being asked by the National Inclusion Commission to write a position paper on Muslim women, recommending ways to uplift their socio-economic status. She then got a bigger responsibility as a NWC member.

Chief Justice Sushila Karki has publicly spoken about how her colleagues passed gender-insensitive comments within the Supreme Court chamber. Ansari is also often among male commissioners who are supposed to be more sensitive about gender issues. But even here, she often feels subtle harassment.

She says: "When male commissioners speak during the meeting, everyone listens attentively, but when I speak, there is always side talk. I may be wrong, but there is a persistent mindset that women are not as capable."

Om Astha Rai



GOPEN RAI

## Ila's elections

While the Big Three parties are bickering over the amendment and Parliament is stalled, elections are looking more and more iffy. But that doesn't mean Election Commissioner Ila Sharma can sit back and relax.

Political indecisiveness and instability have made Sharma's job at the Commission a constant challenge, but the former journalist is not one to give up. Her perseverance and determination to maintain the integrity and preparedness of the Election Commission keeps her going.

"Management-wise we are ready from our side," said Sharma confidently. This is her second election after her appointment in March 2013.

Sharma is relentlessly lobbying with Members of Parliament for important

reforms, such as public funding for elections and changes in the Political Parties Registration Act. The government removed some of these provisions from the draft election bill, but she is determined to reinsert them through MPs every time it is taken out.

"Whatever we do, we do for the people and democracy," said Sharma who is coordinating committees on legal drafting, political party relations, media, gender and inclusion, voter rolls, voter education and training.

Sharma's determination and focus comes from her previous career as a reporter in *Rising Nepal* and the constant sidelining of women journalists. "I was treated like a wall flower and was assigned softer stories when my real interest was

politics and economics," Sharma recalls, adding that the leadership ability of women is still being underestimated today.

Her grit and passion paid off, and it was only when she started writing editorials that her colleagues started viewing her in a different light. She needed all the personal strength she could muster when her husband was killed during the war.

One of her first initiatives after joining the Election Commission in 2013 was to introduce a gender monitoring system in elections. For the upcoming elections, she has introduced a gender responsive budget and has largely focused on women and youth when it comes to voter education. Even in the draft bill, Sharma has been pushing for a 50 per cent women representation in the local level.

"Women are ready for local leadership, and there will be a critical mass of women leaders who will be capable of taking on national-level leadership," Sharma said.

In order for the Commission to take a more proactive approach in the runup to the elections, Sharma has also been working on her pet project called the 'Knowledge Initiative'. She feels the Commission's duties transcend just holding elections, and the project takes into consideration engaging with the press, civil society and emphasising voter education.

With three elections slated for 2017, Sharma is busy and glances at her watch to signal that the interview should wind down. Her parting message is: "I am not afraid of anything. I may have been if I was vying for favour, fame or money. But I am not, and that makes me strong."

Smriti Basnet





SMRITI BASNET

# A man of conscience

**A**head of the Supreme Court hearing this week on whether Lokman Singh Karki's appointment as the head of the anti-corruption watchdog (CIAA) was legal, advocate Om Prakash Aryal appeared a bit worried.

Aryal is one of the key plaintiffs preparing to present evidence and arguments at the hearing to prove why Karki was not qualified for the job, but that is not why he is worried. After making headlines by bravely standing up to Karki's parallel regime by taking him to court in 2016, Aryal thinks powerful interest groups want to manipulate him. He is trying hard to avoid taking the bait.

"When I went after Karki, it wasn't to help anyone. It was the call of my conscience," he told us at his office in Thapathali. "But now various vested interest groups want me to file writs that could benefit them."

When Karki was accused of abusing his power as Chief Secretary during the 2006 Democracy Movement, Aryal was a lawyer at the National Human Rights Commission. He witnessed how Karki abused his authority to threaten pro-democracy activists, carry out a witch-hunt in the bureaucracy and muzzle media.

Aryal was therefore aghast when Karki was nominated to head the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) in 2013, and filed a writ against his appointment. His petition argued that Karki was disqualified for public service, and lacked requisite experience and moral character to head a constitutional body. His petition was quashed by a pliant court and Karki was

confirmed.

But when Chief Justice Sushila Karki reopened the case against Karki in 2016, the public interest litigator came into the spotlight again. Karki has already been suspended after an impeachment motion was filed against him in parliament in October. Karki now faces five legal cases, and four of them were filed by Aryal himself. Karki had to appear himself in one of the cases about his alleged attempt to disrupt court proceedings.

"People say I brought Karki down, but he has been brought down by his own arrogance, and disregard for the rule of law," says Aryal, who is also vocal about judicial corruption and politicisation of the judiciary. In 2012, when the then-Chief Justice Khilraj Regmi was named caretaker Prime Minister, Aryal had argued that it violated the doctrine of the separation of powers in a democracy.

"Regmi set a dangerous precedent, it told other justices that they too can have political ambitions, and this does not bode well for the future," he says.

Aryal came from Gulmi to Kathmandu to be a singer, but ended up being a lawyer instead. He knew Khilraj Regmi personally, but that did not deter him from taking a stance. He has never met Lokman Singh Karki, but says he will look him straight in the eye if they meet.

"People who are greedy are afraid," he says, "but I do not crave power or money, so I have no fear."

*Om Astha Rai*

# Fair play

**A**s an avid sports aficionado Senior Superintendent of Police Sarbendra Khanal knew about Nepal's football history. What bothered him was that instead of getting better, the performance of the national team was declining.

Nepal time and again failed to score during matches while mysteriously conceding multiple goals. Khanal had heard of match fixing scandals, and his intuition told him something wasn't right in Nepal's national team.

After three months of secret investigation exposed a nexus of corruption in 2015, Nepal saw its biggest sports scandal in history. Five national team players including captain Sagar Thapa, vice-captain Sandeep Rai and goalkeeper Ritesh Thapa along with two former national players Anjan KC and Bikash Singh Chhetri were arrested on charges of match fixing in national and international games.

Khanal and his team uncovered evidence that showed activities and transactions with links to international convicted fixers and even attempts at corrupting under-19 players who would have been paid to lose games.

"Other crimes affect a single person or community but here was a crime that affected the entire nation. Their activities affected the nation's image and pride so it was important to get the key figures who were involved," says Khanal.

"It takes a lot of courage to translate the findings of an investigation into reality," says Khanal, who was initially worried that if the team's performance receded after the arrests, there may be a public backlash.



GOPEN RAI

By the beginning of 2016 the Nepal team started playing much better. It defeated Bahrain to lift the Bangabandhu Cup in January and in February the team defeated India to win the gold medal in the South Asian Games men's football after 23 years. The crowning glory came in November when Nepal defeated Macau to win the AFC Solidarity Cup.

Following the performance of the team many have taken to social media to hail Khanal as a hero for his investigation that cleaned up football in Nepal.

"I always had a sense of responsibility to do something for the nation and the people and that is what drives me. I have to fulfill my responsibilities to make people's lives better," says Khanal, who is known for his integrity and hard work.

Khanal led the team that booked former Deputy Superintendent of Police Jagadish Chand in connection with the

murder of Jamim Shah, the chairman of Spacetime Network. His team from the Metropolitan Police Crime Division (MPCD) also solved the Badikhel murder mystery after 12 years where five members of the same family had been murdered.

Khanal's team also shot notorious gangster Kumar Shrestha 'Ghaite' in an encounter in Kathmandu. In his leadership, the police raided educational consultancies on charges of fraud as well as arrested and filed cases against two government officials and petrol pump owners for black marketeering.

Says Khanal, "There are a lot of sectors that need improvement. I believe security and development go hand in hand and the country can only develop with a secure environment. There will be zero tolerance for crime and corruption in the coming year as well."

*Sahina Shrestha*





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# One helluva move

Going to hell isn't as easy as it used to be. Flights are all booked, seats on economy are sold out, and there are only limited slots in Executive Class. Which means you have to be really, really wicked if you want to be consigned to the eternal flames.

It's not enough anymore to fleece migrant workers, pocket fat kickbacks from NEA consumers for 24 hours of electricity, or firebomb school buses. Everyone does that these days. No, the benchmark is higher now and all of you out there desirous of spending eternity in purgatory need to show a much greater aptitude for pure evil than you have so far.

Just look at the growing competition out there: mass murderers, narco-terrorists, hired assassins, droppers of

barrel bombs on children's hospitals, and you think you have earned the right to go to hell just because you scammed the Roads Department?

It pains me to say this but standards for depravity are slipping not just in Nepal, but globally. And it's a disgrace. There was a time when we had real pros around like Sir Adolf Hitler, Generalissimo Musolini, El Caudillo, Emperor Bokassa, Papa Doc Duvalier or Comrade Pol Pot. Alas, they don't make despots like that anymore.

To be sure, Unpresidented Trump is one helluva guy and shows promise, but he's still an amateur.

We hear Robert Mugabe is trying hard to go to hell, but sources in The Netherworld tell us it is still touch and go for him. Then there are an assortment

of wannabe tin pot dictators around the world, including one in a country that requests anonymity, and another president elect from BEEEEEEEP BEEEEEEEP of BEEEEEEEP, but he still has to prove to us the banality of his evil with action not just words.

So, in order to ensure that only the World's Most Heinous make the grade, Devil's Advocates (Nepal) Pvt Ltd, the firm responsible for Mr Satan's legal affairs here on Earth, has been contracted to carry out written exams for those applying for resident visas in the Godless Federal Republic of Hades.

Of course, for that, the applicant first needs to expire but due to the rush it is better to register early. Only if you pass this test do you get a slot in the long queue down to Hellfire. All those who

think they don't have a chance in hell to go to heaven are eligible, and women are encouraged to apply.

You have one hour, cheating via WhatsApp is allowed and beating up the invigilator during practicals will be a demonstration of eligibility.

**1. Give us one good reason why you want to go to Hell (tick one):**

a. I think I'd feel at home down there

b. So I can continue doing what I was doing here, but be even more evil

c. Because it's nice and toasty and it's getting cold in Kathmandu

d. All of the above

**2 What was your profession here on Earth?**

a. Really really bad guy

b. Kleptocrat

c. Enforcing indefinite bans by setting fire to taxis with drivers still inside

d. Convicted criminal with skeletons in the Cabinet

**3 How can we be sure that if your visa is approved you will stay in hell forever?**

a. I can lie in my asset declaration form to prove how untrustworthy I am

b. I could bribe the Devil

c. I'm cashing all my miles and not buying a return ticket

d. Anywhere is better than Nepal

The Ass

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