Roadblocks

At a ministerial review meeting last month, Prime Minister KP Oli warned bureaucrats he would not take “ifs and buts” anymore in expediting infrastructure projects. This was his lateststrict instructions to ministries to deliver results.

Various Parliament committees have also issued similar instructions. Cabinet ministers and secretaries have repeatedly instructed government officials to be result-oriented. Yet, a report this week by the office of the Auditor General shows that four months into the fiscal year, only 11% of the budgeted capital expenditure has been spent. More frightening, the government spent three times that amount on salaries, administrative costs and overheads.

"It is clear that issuing instructions alone will not work," says economist Keshav Acharya. "Instead of more instructions we need to pinpoint obstacles to implementation of projects and remove them."

However, the government already has monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place at the Prime Minister’s Office, the National Planning Commission, and the Finance and other ministries have their own project assessment committees. Most experts blame the lack of accountability to the political leadership and a lethargic bureaucracy.

There was hope that with a strong government commanding a two-thirds majority in Parliament, and devolution of power to local governments, things would change. But not only has the development budget remained unspent, but there has been shocking over-spending in current expenditure (administrative cost, salaries, vehicle purchases, or allowances on foreign trips). In the first quarter, the national government spent three times more on current expenditure than on capital disbursement.

The government is spending on cars, but not on maintaining roads. Whatever little is disclosed is mis-spent on unnecessary projects like this road that cuts through an ecologically sensitive wetland in Pokhara Valley (above).

Most provincial governments have managed to spend even less—only about 1% of their capital expenditure in the first quarter.

The inability to spend the development budget has been a chronic malaise in Nepal, but this year, it is worse because of Kathmandu’s reluctance to devolve financial decision-making to local governments. This has triggered a credit crunch in the banking sector, stifled job creation and encouraged migration. At this rate the government will not meet its 8% growth target this year.

Says economist Dilraj Khanal: "The entire system of development administration has become so ineffective that unless it is overhauled, we will not see growth and progress."

Ramech Kumar

New species of dragonfly discovered in Nepal

COMMUNIST CAPITAL EDITORIAL PAGE 2

Always Innovating

At Qatar Airways, we are continuously innovating to redefine the standards of comfort and service in the skies. Our much anticipated Qsuite, which is set to revolutionize the Business Class experience has now launched, but this is just one chapter in our never-ending pursuit to deliver the most memorable flying experience in the world.

Visit qatarairways.com Call us at +977-01-4404547

Qatar Airways
Going Places Together
COMMUNIST CAPITAL

W e see signs of stalled development all around us, every day, all over Nepal. Drives, badly-finished highways, national pride projects like Tama Koshi and Manaslu delayed by decades, crumbling infrastructure. Where there is economic activity, it is usually extractive, and harmful at great cost to the environment — exposing corruption and lack of accountability in those in authority. All this has become such a given in present-day Nepal that citizens do not even bother to complain anymore. Since they do not expect anything from their elected leaders, the people are not even outraged by this lack of performance. Public feverishness and a high threshold for punishment has led politicians and bureaucrats off the hook, and encouraged impunity.

At the root of this deep malaise is poor governance and a lack of political will. It is that the first quarter of the current fiscal year, the central government has been able to spend only 11% of its budgeted capital expenditure. The situation in the seven provinces is even more alarming with one-fourth of the fiscal year finished they have spent less than 15% of their budgets. And the starkness of the relatively better-governed Gandaki Province has put only 5% of its budget in four months, and even that is mostly to cover overheads.

It is a supreme irony of our times that a strong government led by a monolithic Communist Party with no political opposition in sight, and one which has made prosperity its main slogan, should be so incompetent. Like in any business, it is a sign of good governance when a state maximises revenues, minimises running costs and prioritises development expenditure. Capital spending in productive sectors helps the economy by creating jobs, spurring development, and augmenting growth. At present we have got it upside down. In fact, the government’s own statistics show that in the first four months of this fiscal year, current account expenditure (for salaries, day-to-day costs of running government) was three times higher than capital spending. All this, this is nothing new. Even in the bad old days of the absolute monarchy, Nepal had a chronic problem of not spending its budget. This persisted after the democratic changes in 1990, and usually it was blamed on unsuitable coalition politics. In the past 12 years after the war ended, the excuse for the inability to spend has been the rocky political transition.

How long are we going to pretend that we are in perpetual transition? If a government with a two-thirds majority cannot get its act together, which government will? We now have political stability, the peace process is over, and governance has been decentralised to seven provinces and 753 elected municipalities.

Still, the reasons for the woeful inability to go projects off the ground and get them fast. They mostly stem from a lethargic political and bureaucratic class that is loath to sanction any project unless there is direct personal benefit. Then, there are structural issues like convoluted approval processes, not taking within and between line ministries, delays in signing and selecting tender bids, and the culture of spending most of the budget in the last two months of the fiscal year in order to maximise kickbacks and payoffs.

This points to a systemic defect in the state structure that has not been corrected by improved accountability and performance of elected governments.

The lack of visionary leadership at all levels of government means there is no one to untie the knots and untangle the nexus between a rent-seeking state and private greed.

Home Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa started off vigorously to try to wind back deregulation, tariff hikes, and speedier service delivery and expediting of waiting delayed projects. Most people have even forgotten about the on-again off-again promises.

One year after they were installed, even elected local governments which want to get projects off the ground have been stymied by Singha Darbar refusing to let go of the purse strings. The impact of capital budgets not being released has been further worsened by another credit squeeze in the banking sector that is rolling out a loan moratorium. It has slowed job creation and encouraged on-the-job cuts. At this rate we will not meet the 6% growth target this fiscal year.

The rot is deep and the solution is a structural overhaul of government. But the buck stops with the Prime Minister. It is he who will be blamed for failing to deliver even with such a strong majority government.

WHAT'S TRENDING

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

 Catch us on Twitter and Facebook for all latest news and updates. The Times Nepal is now on Facebook, where we share the latest news and updates. Follow us on Twitter for all the latest news and updates.

LUMBINI
Nepal should learn from the results of the catastrophic deforestation of the Amazon and preserve the precious few trees and greenery at the birthplace of the Buddha (Lumbini’s holy well). (Nastas Kralic, RM93.) Turning the site into a concrete jungle would be richly damaging to the Buddhist religion. The place should protect its nature and be kept sacred.

BARDA
The ecological links between tigers, deer and grasslands is a vicious circle. (It’s a jungle out there. (Kunda Dixit, RM90). At the top of the food chain are human beings, the most dangerous species for all other forms of life on this planet.

BUDHANIKHANA
Lisa Choyeug is my neighbour in Budhanikhana. (A house in Budhanikhana, Lisa Choyeug, RM93.) And she is right, the location is amazing with a cool breeze flowing down from the national park. There is no shortage of water, and the only problem is the poor road. Nevertheless, this is one of the best places to come home.

10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

The Nepal Electricity Board on 30 November - 4 December 2005 dealt with rising labour discontent fuelled by a dispute between Mount and MLC-labourers on the matter of their wages, however, the government was busy in other things, as we noted in editorial a year ago.

The blights have spread in the entire west Nepal hills with ever more farmers opting to grow a tobacco and rice due to bumper prices. But the problem is the same: how to deal with the crop to actually get rid of the crop?

In the wake of the change in the government, all parties are seeing the opportunity to play a political game. But the bitter truth is, the political game needs to be done with the power game, which is the issue for the entire country. The government needs to ensure that the political game does not overshadow the power game, which is the issue for the entire country.
FLY MORE WITH THE AIRLINE THAT FLIES TO MORE COUNTRIES THAN ANY OTHER

FARES STARTING FROM NPR 31000 TAXES NOT INCLUDED

EXCLUSIVE ONE WAY AND RETURN FARES TO SELECTED TURKISH AIRLINES DESTINATIONS

CAIRO → JOHANNESBURG → BAKU → TEL AVIV
BRUSSELS → PARIS → MUNICH → FRANKFURT
MILAN → ROME → ZURICH → GENEVA
AMSTERDAM → MADRID → WARSAW → PRAGUE

Sales Period: UNTIL 31 JAN 19
Travel Period: 01 DEC 18 - 28 FEB 19

TURKISH AIRLINES INC
EAST TOWER 1ST FLOOR
HITTINSAAM ROIYANA TURKISH
KIBRISLIU KUTUP
01-4435360/4435361
TURKISHAIRLINES.COM
A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER
Sikuma Rai

Just when Kiran Joshi was trying to get more business for his animation studio in Kathmandu ten years ago, one of his artists decided to quit. The reason was lack of support on his career choice from his family. Joshi had to do something, so he announced an Open House in which family and friends of his artists could come and see them at work.

More than 350 parents attended the event, and one of them was the mother of the artist who had applied to resign. She had tears in her eyes when she finally found out that her son was not playing video games all day at work.

Ever since, open houses have become an annual feature at Incensent Rain, not just to retain existing talent, but also to welcome new ones. This year’s Open House had 456 attendees, among whom were prospective artists who wanted to see what is now possible in Nepal through state-of-the-art computer animation.

Indeed, Incensent Rain Animation Studio has moved to a larger studio in Chhaubati, employs 30 full-time producing artists, animation and VFX projects for Walt Disney Studios, Fox Studios, Universal, Paramount, Warner Brothers, Netflix, Amazon, and many others.

"Nepal is on the world map for animation production, and that is thanks to the enormous talent pool we have in this country," says Joshi, who divides his time between California and Kathmandu.

The problem now is retention: how to ensure that gifted Nepali animation artists are not poached by companies in Singapore, Malaysia, or India doing similar work. While some have left for good, others have gone to gain more experience and returned to put it to good use back home in Nepal.

"Initially it is used to annoy me that artists are painstakingly trained right here for jobs abroad," Joshi confessed, "but I have come to accept that as a given." Nepali face stiff competition from Asia’s animation industry. Countries in the region have more human resources and get a big share of the live animation projects but Joshi says his emphasis on quality and reliability has projected Incensent Rain as a world-class studio producing high standard animation. The company has so far worked on 94 movies, 134 tv series, 28 commercials, 15 public service announcements, and 10 location based entertainment.

In 2015, Incensent Rain produced the documentary Mountaineers: the Ascension of the Red Cross on the stories of ten survivors of the 2010 earthquake in eastern Nepal, and allowed Dharma tower in Kathmandu to collaborate on a feature film that the film was criticised for. Joshi plans to organise an animation conference in Kathmandu to tap into young Nepali students with art backgrounds. The studio is also building an animation lab for art experiments and research. Incensent Rain is collaborating with Kathmandu University School of Arts to have animation as an elective course, under its Arts and Design faculty in Kathmandu.

Says Silicon Valley digital entrepreneur Bipjy Nuadke, "We need more people like Kiran, who has his feet in both East and West. He has worked tremendously in Hollywood, and because he is Nepali, he’s more to find, but we believe that he is one. He has also shown that it is possible to give back to Nepal while doing international work."

**Job satisfaction guaranteed**

As interesting as the character Shinta is in Kung Fu Panda, it is more interesting to learn that behind the design, is a young Nepali artist, Roni Shraddha. She joined Incensent Rain in Kathmandu in 2011 as a trainee for 3D animation and has since then animated some of the film's most famous characters like Master Monkey and characters in Inside Out. Shraddha now lends a full-time team of five texture artists.

"At first I had my doubts about managing a team, but we are all professionals and it is the work that binds us," says Shraddha, who had planned to move to Australia with her husband. "There is a lot of respect for the work we do here, irrespective of gender or age, so I do not regret not going abroad."

Project supervisor Kusand Bastad has been at Incensent Rain since the studio’s beginning, and oversees visual effects in animation projects. Originally from Lamjung, Bastad sold taught the basics of animation to himself and now supervises 3D animation. As soon as he gets a script, Bastad sits down with his team and breaks the story down into different types of work, resources and expertise. He is responsible for meeting the client’s expectations.

Says Bastad, "The creative satisfaction we get here is amazing. All the work is credited, we get a sense of belonging and everyone is eager to learn."
Security reduces poverty

Philippa Stroud

Nepal is one of the top 20 countries in the world with the fastest-rising prosperity over the last 10 years, a trend to be embraced by Nepali leaders and citizens. Nepal is among middle and low-income Asian Pacific countries like Indonesia and India that have shown the sharpest improvement in their levels of prosperity in the past decade.

The UNESCO Prosperity Index tracks prosperity in 140 countries, and its report released last week has good news: nine global prosperity indices are at 15-year highs overall. More countries are becoming prosperous, and more people are living prosperous lives.

The index also shows that rising wealth is linked to rising levels of prosperity. This might sound obvious, but there is a clear relationship between wealth levels and wellbeing, where rising wealth does not necessarily translate into greater happiness.

Prosperity entails much more than wealth. It includes beyond the financial into the institutions, the rule of law, and the well-being of the people of a nation— it is about creating an environment where each citizen can fully realize her potential. A nation is progressive when it has an open economy, inclusive society, strong institutions and empowered people who are healthy, educated and safe. This leads to higher levels of well-being.

Our analysis of which the top 20 rising countries have in common shows they all score highly for Safety and Security, one of the nine pillars used to measure prosperity and the key building block for prosperity. Rising war and conflict has promot to be the single most significant contributor to falling the prosperity of most rising countries, despite a wide improvement across all the other pillars of prosperity.

Nepal is a good example, having ended a decade-long war in 2006 after a peace agreement was signed between Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and Maoist leader Prachanda. Nepal saw the return to a transitional government.

This was an achievement of leadership at a time when war, terrorism and separatism are rising significantly around the world. The fact that 12 of the 20 rising countries have improved in this pillar illustrates that meaning of conflict and oppression can and must be overcome, before broader broad-based prosperity can be achieved.

In the past 12 years after the Comprehensive Peace Accord of November 2006, Nepal has witnessed a transition towards democracy, with the largest roles in Personal Freedom, Business Environment, and Education.

While Personal Freedom, the biggest changes have come from the increase in people enrolling in school and increasing literacy rates. This follows legal reforms, such as the anti-discrimination law, which have been effective since 1975. In fact, Nepal is the third highest ranking country in Asia Pacific (after New Zealand and Australia) in the sub-pillar of Social Tolerance.

Nepal’s weakest pillar, however, is the distribution of the natural environment with forest cover. In fact, Nepal scores nearly at the bottom of the countries surveyed in terms of climate protection. There are also problems with water quality, biodiversity, and air pollution.

In the last decade, India and China have lifted their populations out of absolute poverty and expanded access to health care, growing much faster than those in the West, making up eleven and six places respectively since 2001. Both countries are home to a growing middle class, but there are significant differences in the way they govern and the scale of freedom.

My ambition for the Prosperity Index is that it become a tool for leaders towards the world to help with their agenda for growth and development. The measurement of natural prosperity is an important tool for governments and for those who have to assess it. Nepal is a great example that Safety and Security is a foundation for any sustainable nation building and enables other pillars to follow.
Gap yah gals in the jungle

Such was the allure of adventure in Chitwan, parents actually paid for their offspring to work at Tiger Tops

SO FAR SO GOOD

Lisa Choegyal

The result was a succession of guest relations gals (gals), most of whom did not last more than a couple of seasons — such was the intensity of the task and isolation of life within Nepal’s Tarai national parks.

When I first worked in Chitwan in 1994, we all did everything. I could be found in my khaki shirt not only on airport duty and briefing the guests on arrival, but also scouting basefoul visits to the tiger blinds, explaining the careful husbandry of the elephant camp, or pointing out crocodiles and birds while floating down the Nangyani river in local wood boats with only the dip of a paddle or the call of an osprey to spoil the silence.

Most thrilling was driving gals in the battered green Land Rovers on afternoon excursions across the rickety bridges, through shallow streams and along the rough tracks carved each year out of the encroaching jungle. I could change one of the heavy tread tyres in less than eight minutes, and had to do so on more than one occasion — usually on some distant stretch of rutted road, never quite sure what creature might emerge out of the forest and grassland.

Early evening it was the usual roads to patrol their territory and spray-mark trees, leaving pungent cast-iron hanging in the air, and impossibly large gals inimpressed in the dust.

After I moved to the Kathmandu office, the boundaries became less blurred and the guest relations job description tightened to exclude driving — prompted by one enthusiastic dark-haired American gal collaborating based on around a jungle corner with the only other vehicle for miles.

Safaris, drives, boat trips and walks were deemed the most exclusive domain of operations staff, naturalists and nature guides. Guest relations/ focus was entirely on the feminine duties of housekeeping and the kitchen, planning menus, assigning tree-top rooms, arranging tents, and ensuring guests felt at home — more systematic perhaps, but not nearly so much fun.

I suffered the ultimate feminist indignity when, during a glossy London magazine fashion shoot that I had arranged in 1997 with top models and a celebrity photographer, and me posing at the wheel of an open safari jeep, a moustache was later photo-shopped onto my upper lip. If not women’s liberation, we did achieve 10 valuable pages of publicity for Chitwan’s wildlife tourism.

Our guest relations girls were mainly recruited from friends of friends, meaning we had a cache of Western girls (and the occasional gus) from the wide-open spaces of North America, and the more specialised British habitant of Stavane Squares, the Poty Club and titled country house parties. Double-barreled squames proliferated, and at one point we had a Cavilina, a Philippa, a Venetia and a Samantha in close succession.

In those conservative times, few Nepali or Indian girls were permitted by their families to work in the mostly male atmosphere of the lodges and camps, although we did find a few individuals who gained traction as attitudes relaxed. By definition, they were mavericks, pushing the boundaries. Anush moved on to Disney in the US, Pramoda still campaigns for animal rights, Christabel from Harpelling now lives in Melbourne, and Gaurav has risen to international lodge manager status in his own right.

Over the decades, Tiger Tops gals came and went, and many are still in touch. Those that did not succumb to suburban discovered their dastardly — many still work in hospitality and conservation. Some fell foul of the system for the boss’s kids and had to leave in a hurry. A few left their heart in the jungle and there were several Tiger Tops marriages.

Our English blood had to be rescued from an enamoured royal prince who was found installed in a Snauzer suite — that was tricky to explain to her mother in Surrey. Many took an interest in the food. A lovely lady from Tasmania would greet guests with “Have a nice cup of tea” and an older lady would return regularly to teach new European recipes. Nodding patiently, the eyes of the Nepali cooks would glaze over with years of conflicting instructions.

Such was the allure of adventure in the jungle that Tiger Tops developed a clever category of young kids whose parents actually paid for them to work with us. Un-catchily named the “Tigers for the Future”, TFF would spend a month or two training around, shadowing guides, and occasionally helping out in Chitwan and Bardia, often in their gap year between school and university.

Other than a few casualties — usually related to love, drink or homelessness — as ‘amazing’ time was had by all. One chap overdid the elephant camp party; one misunderstood the Khmer ram, and another got no further than the Thames thongs before being nursed back to Oxfordshire, but they were the exception.

Most of our guest relations’ gals and the transactional gus claim that the experiences in Nepal changed their lives, and I have no doubt that it did.
A sky full of images

Barika Eam Rai comes home to sing about home

Sewa Bhattacharai

Get up every morning
To chase a goal
That you don't even know.
Life is willingly away
In the corner of a Sujha Bus
Have you done it
To make you happy?

When Barika Eam Rai released the first song Khari on YouTube in 2016, it took Nepali cyberspace by storm. The song captured the existential angst of her generation: life wasting away in routine tasks as dreams are postponed. The lyrics were autobiographical, and the voice captured an inner emptiness.

Rai composed the song to share with her mother and close friends, and was taken by surprise when it spread like wildfire in the Nepali diaspora on the Net.

“Music comes from real life, from speech with social conditioning, identity crises, and existential questions,” the US-based singer said this week on a visit to Nepal. “A person is supposed to achieve certain things by a certain age, like getting a good job, being settled. These things apparently don’t work out that way. So I found my own conclusion into music.”

But instead of travelling in her newfound fame, Rai did what she had always done to cope: compose another song. Shunyu was to become part of her second album.

“The story is an accountant by day and composer by night. The voice was original, the words so genuine that each song goes viral as soon as it is released. Khari won her two Bikas FM awards. Best Female Pop Vocal Performance, and Song of the Year. She is in Nepal after almost five years on a concert tour.

Rai says down her feelings as they came, and only later反思了 these into songs that are distinctive from all other genres of Nepali modern music. She admits to being unsure at first about whether they would work at all.

“I was under the impression that Nepali audiences do not appreciate lyrics much, and are more into melodies,” she said. While many singers start with riffs and notes, I start with words. And the words are quite literary.

Nepali audiences proved her wrong, and she got over 4 million views for each song. The words and music seem to appeal to Nepali youngsters because they echo their own feelings. “My mother, a Nepali teacher, instilled a love of Nepali language in me,” Rai remembers. “When I was in high school, my friends’ parents would sneak in food, but my mother would leave letters for me.”

One of the letters read aloud available good wishes for you all —— funny instructions for a 9-year-old girl. Today, Rai courtesies on that tradition and includes Sanskrit words like pragati-prabhataya, and the title of her first album is RIMPUWATU which means ‘sky full of images’.

“From my early days, I grew up singing and admiring classic Nepali songs, but in school

I found out that everyone else was singing in English, and trying on them to see if you make it to the end of the line. The songs reflect her intensely private persona. And after the success of her first album, she felt pressure from audience expectations. Her second album had felt more intimate, with fewer about her deceased father, and slamming that gives a loved one permission to move on.

But doesn’t it feel vulnerable exposing heart and soul to strangers?

“Of course there is some negative feedback,” she says. “People harass you for being a girl, make sexist remarks, and that does make me anxious sometimes. I’m in the grand scheme of things, these things do not matter.”

What does matter to Rai is home, and she weaves the theme of homestories into many of her songs, with nostalgia of school and childhood. Even her Nepal tour is called Ghar, but the way homes where home really is.

“How in Nepal was I was always surrounded by writers and musicians. In the US, I felt lonely, and many of my songs are composed to that dark, empty space,” she says. “I realized I wanted to be back home, but Nepal has changed every time I come back. It is not what I left behind. So this question now is in what is the home that I really want to come back to?”

She is here for a month this time, and despite the inner torment in her lyrics, Barika Eam Rai’s songs leave listeners with hope:

Look at yourself!
How long has it been
Since you laughed truly?
Lived free?
Go, be...
Content in happiness
Find you in yourself...

SOUL TO SOUL

Catch up with YouTube sensation and US-based singer-songwriter Barika Eam Rai, who is also a member of the Nepali band the Deaf Boys. Watch her perform live at the Nepali Times’ Nepali Times Festival tour. Watch the video profile where she talks about her life in the US, her childhood, the emotional power of songwriting and her future plans.
Project Dragonfly

A new species of dragonfly is found in Nepal, but its existence is threatened by the destruction of aquatic habitats.
The morning was warming up in late spring, just last year when entomologist Karen Conniff took a boat across Phewa Lake in Pokhara for one of her regular walks to look for rare dragonflies. She was in search of a rare damselfly species called Photongia miranda which had been spotted in the same location before. After reaching the far shore of the lake, Conniff found her boat and climbed through the humid forest, paying special attention to springs in the undergrowth. But no sign of the elusive insect.

Just then, a small stream she spotted a black-green dragonfly sitting on a leaf speckled by a ray of sunlight filtering through the forest canopy. She managed to take a few photographs before the dragonfly flew off, and she headed back down to the boat.

Back in her hotel in Pokhara later that day, she downloaded the images to her computer and noticed that the dragonfly had peculiar-looking antennae, quite different from the ones previously found in 11 other known Photongia dragonfly species found throughout Asia. Immediately, she knew it was a species not recorded in Nepal before.

The process of publishing any new finding of a new species is a laboratory to going through peer reviews and strict scientific scrutiny. Finally last week, Conniff’s paper was published in the German journal, Zootaxa. It is the family, Photongiidae (the genus: Photongia, Photongia phasmatodes) is a new species of dragonfly endemic to Nepal.

Although she should be elated, Conniff is worried that the new dragonfly species and others may now be in grave threat of destruction and pollution of Nepal’s springs and rivers.

“The habitat of the dragonfly faces extreme stress from water pollution in Pokhara’s rapidly growing tourism centre,” Conniff told Nepal Times. “The habitat could vanish in few years if people do not stop drawing water from them.”

Dragonflies have survived for 325 million years on Earth, and the only ones used to have wingspans of up to 2 meters. But now have these creatures faced a threat to their survival as serious as they do today from human-induced habitat destruction, pesticide use and climate change. These scale and brightly coloured flying insects are now beating on the brink of extinction.

Scientists call dragonflies ‘bio-indicator species’, meaning that their presence is a proof of a healthy ecosystem. But when dragonflies start disappearing, it also shows that streams and ponds are going dry or polluted with chemicals.”

“Dragonflies are very sensitive, most of them require an absolute pristine habitat and as soon as humans mess that up, they are gone. They are the first ones who have been living in Nepal for more than a decade.”

Conniff co-authored the paper on the new dragonfly with noted Nepali butterfly expert Mahendra Singh Thapa, and the two often go exploring for butterflies and dragonflies on Pokhara Hills, or in other parts of Nepal. They decided to name the new species Photongia phasmatodes after Pokhara’s Phewa lake.

With the disappearance of many dragonflies, you know that nature is being disturbed. We humans cannot afford to disturb the ecosystem below.”

Besides toxins, the other looming threat to insects is climate change. Europe has lost nearly 90% of its insects in the last 30 years, and in America, the population of migrating research butterflies has dropped by 90% in 20 years. Concerns in India are even more serious—95-99% of the suitable habitat for various species of dragonflies and damselflies is lost.

“Some species of dragonflies are in direct peril because of the destruction of aquatic habitats.”

Says Conniff, “It is important to educate people about wetland protection and water management. Getting more people interested in nature and finding innovative ways to manage water is an effective approach.”

PST photo: Yamin Charaka

One of the Lake Commission’s first order of business will be to save Phewa, which has become a dumping ground for garbage and sewage (above). The lake is being encroached upon by real estate speculators, while sedimentation has shrunk the original lake area. In addition, the lake’s water level has gone down considerably. The Gandaki government is studying the construction of higher dams to replace the current one built 40 years ago, in order to increase the size of the lake.

Attracted by soaring land prices, however, local communities at Begnas Lake and elsewhere are lobbying to have the national restriction on building within 100m of a lake shoreline replaced by a 10m limit. In 1997, Phewa Lake was 1,000 hectares, today it has shrunk to half that size (prepared for this has affected populations of migratory bird species, insects and aquatic life.

Says Gandaki Chief Minister Priti Bhim Subba Gurung, “We will start with Phewa, and then we will be very strict about conservation of other lakes in Pokhara Valley.”

Tuyang Shrestha ©Nepro
Boulder Film Festival
Cabin Fever Adventure Film Festival will be
in Kathmandu as part of its Global World Tour. Join us to watch exciting narratives of adventure and be inspired.
6-8 December, 10:00 am, Motel, Thamel, 455000 or ask info@vishnusbayanaduseum.com

Same Time Next Year
A play about two people who meet for a
romantic rendezvous once a year for 14 years. A Katha Keller production with Devi
Dee and Anaokha Karik on stage
7-15 December (except Tuesday), 5 pm, $10
20,000 on Saturday, Motel Theater, Thika, 455000 or 458800
Musical at Malpi
Innervision’s International School is presenting
Ragas 2, a musical based on Bhims
Palastri’s famous book
12 December, 5 pm and 7 pm, Sanatik Park, Tose, Kodimchaur, Kathmandu, 01401911, 01454568

Albatross
Sing along with the band as they perform
director songs. You too will have a
dance to hang out with Albatross afterwards.
A December, 5 pm, Roxy Cafe: Outdoor
dance, Roxy Thapa Dkk, Thamel, 455000, limited space, 6000 rupees
Rahul Chaudhary, 9852607157

Tribute to Queen
Enjoy the Saturday evening with performances of songs by the Genius British band, Queen. Complete with live
guitar, keyboard, bass and drums, the event promises a vibrant musical night.
A December, 8 pm, Hard Rock Lounge, Roxy Thapa Dkk, Thamel, 455000 or 458800

Reggae Night
The Riddim Sana and young selected ensemble from Kathmandu Jazz
Conservatory, will be performing live reggae music.
A December, 11 pm, House of Music, Thamel, 499579715

Sufi with Sam
Bring your family and friends to enjoy a
nearby musical performance by Suff music.
3 December, 6 pm, Mane Khel, Lalitpur, 4945253

Park Art Fair 2018
Explore modern and contemporary art from a
wide range of artists in the 12th edition of the
art fair. 6-9 December, 10:00 am-6:00 pm, Park Gallery
Auqa, 4572577

Christmas Market
The Local Project Kailash is hosting its annual
Christmas Market with a range of attractions
including local foods, sustainable products and film festivals.
6-8 December, 9 am, Motel, Thamel, 8970718

Butterfly Effect
Sougat Pathak is organizing this event to
raise awareness and light a fight against domestic violence and women and girls. There will also be
dramatic performances. If 6, 5 pm, Tolekhawa, 9849518157

Skin & Bones
Join us for a sunny BBQ, sparkling wine,
items, chilled beer amongst live performances by Skin and Bones, an
amazing fusion ensemble of sound, guitar, tabla and percussions, and who
you have performed among caves of Despota, Sia and ED. S2 will be among other surprises.
8-12 December, 1:00 pm onwards, Palace Gardens
Ranawas, 49567450, 9890095785

Gairi Wildlife Camp
Backpacking in the central area of Chitwan National Park, the camp is a great
and 4x4 vehicle to reach the camp. Drive to Sauraha, and then the Camp folks will take care of you from there.
Apart from bird, 4954590, 4973461

When the Chocolate Runs Out
Internationally renowned cook of
Buddhist Vegan Restaurant Robin Gould will be
in Kathmandu for an exclusive retreat on
the edge of the Shukupur National Park. Don’t miss this amazing opportunity
to explore raw Buddhist principles and to look within in a safe and supportive natural environment.
7-9 December, 6 pm onwards, Gaur Village Resort, Budhanilkantha, 8170-250, 9800936930, www.jomtours.com

Milla Guesthouse
If you prefer the quaint and admire a mix of old and new, then this is the perfect place to stay.
Not too far from the city, yet worlds apart.
Shikhpur, 9817905155

Park Village Resort
Yoga, dances and ayurvedic treatment is
a quiet corner of Kathmandu. Enjoy the services of Himalaya Wellness Center, a one-step
center to relax your mind and body.
Wildflowers Peace and Wellness Center, Port
Village Resort, Bharatpur, 149523

Garta Wildlife Camp
Backpacking in the central area of
Chitwan National Park, the camp is a great

EVENTS
MUSIC
GETAWAY

TAWHOUN
12 - 13 DECEMBER 2018 #9837

LOOKING AHEAD

KATHMANDU, 30 November - 6 December

AIR QUALITY INDEX

KATHMANDU, 30 November - 6 December

Nursing Care
To provide effective care of patients or
sick and experienced doctors.

Health at home is an organization which facilitates home based health care services. Health at home services promotes health care i.e., out of hospital setting to the clients. Deeping the end of the kind in the whole Sub-Himalaya, Health at Home is home to cater to the needs of those who desire home health care facilities to bolster on their doormats.

Nepal Times

KATHMANDU, 30 November - 6 December

AIR QUALITY INDEX

KATHMANDU, 30 November - 6 December

AIR QUALITY INDEX

KATHMANDU, 30 November - 6 December

AIR QUALITY INDEX
The time has come for a Gurkha Peace Corps

Nepal-Britain relations can be recast as one between equals through a common force for peace and development.

It is now more than 200 years that men from Nepal have joined the British Army to fight, if need be, in support of Britain’s overseas interests. And it is 100 years since the end of the First World War, in which 200,000 Nepali men went to France, North Africa, Palestine and Mesopotamia to fight against the Germans and their allies. That is a very long historical relationship.

David Seddon

So, it is a good time to question the future of the British Gurkha and of the relationship between Britain and Nepal in this regard. Some may feel that the whole tradition of providing soldiers for a foreign army is an imperialist phenomenon which should be terminated. Others see it as a matter of pride, to be continued and even reinforced.

Successful cuts in the budget of the British Ministry of Defence (MoD) over the last few decades have significantly reduced the overall size of the armed forces, and particularly the British Army. The Brigade of Gurkhas now comprises fewer than 4,000 men. One might have thought, in the light of this, that the British government would have felt that time had come to call a halt to further recruitment from Nepal and to phase out this anomalous element of the British Army.

But even if the size of the British Army is declining, there is a serious shortage of recruits from Britain itself – the number of new recruits was down last year by 24%. It was therefore decided in November to allow members of the British Commonwealth, even if not resident in the UK, to apply for positions in the British Army. There remains keen competition among young Nepalis to join the Brigade of Gurkhas, even if the number of recruits each year has been reduced to only a few hundred. What more natural, then, than to increase the quota of recruits from Nepal? This would please those who believe that Nepal would benefit from such an expansion, but would upset those who argue that recruitment to the British Army has not been a relic of an imperial past, not to be continued let alone expanded.

Furthermore, there might be scope for women as well as men to take advantage of this apparent willingness of the MoD to recruit from abroad, including from Nepal, to the Gurkhas. In what to many was a surprising move, in July this year, it was decided to allow women to apply to join this historic all male outfit.

Is this just a nod to ‘equal opportunities’? Or the beginning of the redefinition of the role of ‘the Gurkhas’ – widely caricatured as ‘feared and ferocious’ – in favour of a softer image? In fact, the British Army already includes some 50,000 women in a wide range of roles, but in another surprise move in October, women were allowed to apply for and to take up combat roles.

All of this assumes a continuation of an essentially military role for ‘New Lahurs’. But what if the British and Nepalese were to agree, under the special conditions of their bilateral relationship, that in future there would be an expanded recruitment of young Nepalis – not to a military outfit serving mainly overseas, but to a jointly managed ‘Peace Corps’. Organised by the Brigade of Gurkhas, each a force would be committed to peace-keeping and community development in Nepal and elsewhere in the developing world.

This would be a gradual transfer of responsibility, and of funding, over a period of years for the new ‘Gurkha Peace Corps’ from the MoD to the Department for International Development (DFID) to collaborate with an appropriate government department in Nepal. Eventually, however, it would become a fully joint British-Nepal responsibility, able to provide young Nepalis with suitable training and experience, and to deploy them in various roles (including peace keeping and security, but also in community development) across the world, including Nepal.

The Gurkha Peace Corps would also be open to recruits from Britain, encouraging young people from Nepal and Britain to train and work together in Nepal and elsewhere. This would make it possible to sustain and renew the long historical relationship between Britain and Nepal through the Gurkhas, but recast it as one between equals, involving young men and women from both countries in a common endeavour for peace and development.
**HAPPENINGS**

**WOMEN SUMMITTEES**: President Bidya Devi Bhandari meets Mira Fernanda Simpson Garcés, president of the 73rd Session of UN General Assembly in Katowice, Poland on Monday at the 24th Climate Change Summit.

**NO CHILD MARRIAGE**: Acresheha Thapa participates in a campaign to end violence against women and girls by engaging men and boys to commit to end child marriage in Rabindra last week.

**ONE STEP AT A TIME**: People with dubh axes participate in rally to mark 27th international Day of Persons with Disabilities in Kathmandu on Monday.

**HIDDEN HIMALAYA**: Turkish Airlines and Nepal Tourism Board hosted a meet and greet evening with Hollywood actress Galavina Wright (photo left) to showcase hidden trails in the Himalayas. Other guests included Turkish Airlines Nepal manager Abdullah Tuner Adac (left) and Deepak Kajal jck of Nepal Tourism Board (right).

**GOLDEN JUBILEE**: The Airways marked 50 years of flight operations to Kathmandu on Tuesday at an event in Hotel Shangrila where top travel agents were felicitated.

---

**Bloody periods**

If you ask people what they know about menstruation in Nepal, the first answer will be the practice of dhikphusul, the menstruation exile. Most local and international media focus is on the taboo in the cow shed, even though the issue is much more complex, and there is a wealth of activity (in Nepal) to promote more dignified periods.

Activists are now challenging the media representation with visual images, photography, film and art. The Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management Alliance’s forthcoming MenStar Action on 13 December at the Kathmandu International Film Festival (KIMFF) will bring together film-makers and activists for a panel debate titled ‘Breaking Code Red’ — A Conversation on Menstruation and How to See It.

For many Nepali girls, menstruation means not only blood and cramps but also forced seclusion and social ostracism once a month. These traditional and religious beliefs have led to the death of some young girls who are forced to practice ritual segregation.

A new law in Nepal says that discrimination of young girls during their monthly period is illegal but how do the girls see the process? What are the fears and beliefs that force them to be a part of it? How do communities see it? What are the discussions around menstruation? The KIMFF sessions will explore this subject through photography, collaborative films, virtual reality, and a panel discussion.

Panellists include menstrual health and rights expert Pema Lhak, transmedia artist Poulandi Baru, researcher/ filmmaker Sara Bezzman, photographer Uma Bista and Sara Pachter. The session will be moderated by Dinesh Raj K.C. of The Feminist Memory Project. The collaborative film ‘Menstrual Practices and Displacement in Far-West Nepal’, which is an initiative of the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health and the Nepal Fertility Care Center, will also be screened.

The photography and virtual reality exhibition ‘Blood Speaks by Poulandi Baru’ and ‘I’m Pure by Uma Bista’ are presented in collaboration with Voice of Women Asia. Sana Pakhrin and Kay Standing of Liverpool John Moores University have been researching gender education and participation in Nepal over the past 25 years, and are currently working on a British Academy Global Challenges Research project with Tribhuvan University on the origins of menstrual beliefs and practices. They have been studying the impact of accessible sanitary pads. Called Dignity Without Danger, the project explores diverse range of beliefs, practices and historical and cultural roots that underpin menstrual health customs in all 7 provinces. The project is being launched at KIMFF whose theme this year is Women Move Mountains.

**Nepal Tourism Board**

---

**NEPAL MANAGEMENT CONCLAVE 2018**

*Nimble OfficeHRM*  
*Book your seat now!*

With a legacy of successfully organizing first of its kind international level management conference, Corporate Club Nepal proudly announces its second edition ‘Nepal Management Conclave 2018’ on December 19, 2018. With a theme ‘Lead for change’, this management conclave is the best platform for top-level management professionals to discuss management issues, leadership, change management, strategic planning and leading the people to attain the organizational goals. Do not miss a chance to meet international and national management gurus.

**Key Highlights**

- Influential sessions of prominent international and national speakers
- Panel discussion and a case study
- Participation of 200 top-level professionals from 100 + different organizations
- Platform to learn and share experiences
- Appreciation of participation
- Excellent networking opportunities

**For booking and further information**

- **9801014483 / 9801014404**
- **01-5514370 / 5339957**
- nepalmanagementconclave@gmail.com
- www.corporateclubnepal.com

**Price**: NRS. 10,000 exclusive of VAT

**Venue**: Soaltee Crowne Plaza, Kathmandu

**Date**: December 19, 2018, Wednesday

**Time**: 8:00 am onwards (breakfast available)

**Keynote Speaker**

Lt. Gen. Ata Hasnain

*Topic*: Transformational Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness in Turbulent Times

---

**AZIZEN LIFE**  
**OXFORD LIFE**  
**BRITISH LIFE**  
**NATIONAL LIFE**  
**STANDARD LIFE**  
**BANK GUARANTY**  
**GLOBAL IMF**  
**IMF**  
**AON**  
**PRU Bain**  
**Facts**  
**ACET**  
**EASTERN**  
**STATE**  
**LIFE**  
**JERUSALEM**  
**Facts**  
**RACEN**  
**GREEN**

---

**TICKETS CAN BE BOUGHT ONLINE OR AT THE DOOR.**
Corruption deep rooted in government

Sunil Sapkota in Nagarkot
5 December

In October, the government introduced a provision for civil servants to take an oath every day: ‘I will not indulge in corruption. I will prevent corruption and will honestly work for my country and people.’

Despite this, corruption is more rife than ever, according to a Nagarkot investigation. Of the 715 people who went to 15 government offices in Kathmandu and Lalitpur, 504 of them said they had to bribe the official to get their job done. The highest number of corrupt officials were in the Survey Department in Dill Bazar, where 54 out of the 45 of those who needed registration reported being asked for bribes to complete the work. In two other Survey Department offices in Kathmandu, 39 out of 65 submitted bribes. Officials from Register Officer and Land Revenue Office were also accused of corruption. Out of 180 people who went to four Land Revenue Officers in Kathmandu, 148 were forced to bribe officials.

Officials asked for bribes for a variety of reasons such as expenses for tea and lunch, coffee, and saying the payment would expedite the work. In many cases officials delayed work under various pretexts, and would not get the job done until handed a hankie. Officials said they offered a tip as a reward for the work being completed on time, which was not refused.

A spokesperson from the office of the Prime Minister Bimal Gurung said the anti-corruption idea was introduced to make citizens aware that they can register complaints if they encounter corruption. Gurung notes that with greater awareness among citizens, CINA has been able to catch more officials red-handed.

But the Chair of Transparency International, Shoshani Aryal says that as long as officials do not have a sense of responsibility towards the nation and people, no amount of anti-corruption measures can reduce corruption.

Aryal also pointed out that brokers must be removed from public offices as citizens are not deceived by them. The Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation has instructed the Survey Department and Land revenue offices to prevent middlemen from accessing documents.

16th Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival Opens Today

Highlights of the Day

**Rastiya Sabha Giriha**
(City Hall)

3:00 pm
RJ Ripper (20 min)
dr. Joy Scholker | Nepal/USA

5:00 pm
The Royalists (58 min)
dr. Tenzing Tsering | Nepal

6:30 pm
Ananta Yatra (15 min)
(The Eternal Journey)
dr. Sumit Pandey | Nepal

**Nepal Tourism Board (NTB)**

3:30 pm
Addicted to Altitude (15 min)
dr. Rudi Bankhor | Slovenia

5:00 pm
Break on Through (30 min)
dr. Peter Martini | Mary Hayes/Nick Beein | USA

Notes from the Wall (17 min)
Sita Khetri | Sam / Shastri / O’Dwyer/ Nandini Taniekar | France

**Photo Exhibition**

Blood Speaks: A Ritual of Exile, Isolation, an Immense Meditation
by Pavitra Bista

I’m Pure
by Uma Bista

‘Women on Top – First Nepali Women Journalists’
Everest Expedition 2018
The photo exhibitions will be showcased from 10:00 am-5:00 pm
7-11 December

Organised by:

Ad-space supported by:
Nepal should save its gorgeous gorges, and the Seti’s canyons are one of the most spectacular.

Hermann Warth
in Bajhang

Nepal’s rivers are older than the Himalayas, and their waters have been cutting channels over millions of years as the mountains rose. The Arun, Budhi Gandaki, Marsyangdi, Kali Gandaki, Bheri and Karnali all begin north of the mountains, and their waters have carved the most spectacular canyons in the world.

But by far the most stunning gorge in the Himalayas is located on the West Seti river on the trail from Simikot to Chhaupi. After crossing Chuspha La in winter conditions last month, we followed a trail traditionally traveled by traders to Tibet, and pilgrims to the holy Lake Manasarovar (map, opposite).

This landscape should be protected as part of Nepal’s natural heritage. However, like other gorges on other rivers, a new road now threatens the Seti canyon. Surveyors are already at work between Taltot and Utri La, the border pass between Nepal and China.

Local businesses want the road because they think it will increase pilgrim traffic. But is it really the aim of a pilgrimage to amass money? How does the promotion of pilgrimages justify the destruction of fragile slopes, rock cliffs and precious forests of oak, fir, pine, walnut and cedar? Roads in other parts of Nepal have already ravaged the landscape, and here in remote northwestern Nepal, it will be a sacrifice.

A road here would not just be environmentally and culturally destructive, a simple input-output analysis will show it is also economically unviable. The construction and maintenance will cost billions, and this will far exceed any future income from pilgrims. In fact, as seen in the rest of Nepal, the road will not bring down prices of essentials, but will promote consumerism, bring garbage and lead to an extirpation of young people.

Besides, there is an alternative road from Simikot to Hilsa that will soon be ready. Pilgrims who cannot endure the hardship of walking through the Seti gorge can use jeeps and buses plying these. Goods required by the villages between Talati and Bhalu are at present reliably delivered by mules, sheep and goats. They do this on well-built trails on which maintenance costs are negligible.

If just a small part of the road budget is used to improve the trail and repair bridges along the uninhabited Seti gorge, it would actually keep local jobs and ease access. Local communities could keep the trail clean, especially the litter at camp sites.

The West Seti Gorge should be registered as a natural heritage site at UNESCO with the help of the FGN and WWF in Kathmandu. The Seti Trail can be promoted as the longest, hardest and most beautiful pilgrimage route from Nepal to Manasarovar and Kailash.

The rest of the road budget could go to improve school and health posts in this underserved part of Nepal. At present the clinics lack medicine and classrooms are dark, cold and poorly built. Health and education are basic needs of any human being and should take precedence over unnecessary road construction.

The upper reaches of the West Seti are a natural jewel, and God’s gift to mankind. It should be our responsibility to protect it.

Hermann Warth was the former country director of the German Development Service.
“The Fair-Tread trekking model maximises impact of tourism on poverty-reduction and social justice in the Gurja Himal trail”

The picturesque terraced farms at the base of Gurja Himal in Nepal.

The Fair-Tread trekking model maximises impact of tourism on poverty-reduction and social justice in the Gurja Himal trail.

Joy Stephens in Baglung

A 17.19ths Gurja Himal is not high by Himalayan standards, and is dwarfed by the rock and ice pyramid of Mt Dhaulagiri to the west. The mountain is nonetheless impressive because of its imposing south face, rising nearly 3,000m vertically above the valley floor. One of the last villages near the mountain is Gurja Khani (right), a fascinating settlement tucked away in splendid isolation in the Dhaulagiri Valley. This area of Nepal is still untouched by roads, and much of the traditional architecture and way of life remains. Steep canyons make the valley inaccessible from below, and the only access is on foot over a 3,000m pass.

Near the wind-swept pass is a tea shop, and it is the last place you would expect to find a family of five, including a baby. Siddhie Man Biswakarma and his wife own the teashop, and because it is the only resting place between Lugal and Gurja Khani, they do brick business.

The Biswalkarmas set up shop five years ago to serve the trekkers, but as trekkers to Nepal try to find new and untested areas, there are now tourists who also stop by. “Nowadays we get foreigners as well. And during last year’s election, some politicians spent the night here while campaigning,” recalls Biswakarma, who makes about Rsl50 a day and plans to add rooms. He has also invested in two huts which he will rent out to those who want to reach Gurja Khani. Since it has not been exposed to commercial tourism, the Gurja Himal trek is a place where the Fair-Tread trekking model is being tried out over the past five years. It is based on the same principles as the fair-trade label on foodstuff, and urges trekkers to think about the impact they leave on the local people and economy.

Commercial trekking mostly involves booking with a trekking wholesaler in Europe or elsewhere, who sub-contracts to a Kathmandu company. This means that up to half the expedition expenditure never makes it to Nepal. Of the other half, much of it stays in Kathmandu and does not trickle down to places like Gurja Khani.

On the popular Everest and Annapurna areas, trekkers either camp or stay in purpose-built lodges established by companies in Kathmandu. Camping treks may be environmentally friendly, but their contribution to the rural economy is minimal, as the fees are paid to the trekking agency, and most of the food is sourced from outside. In contrast, even a poor family can invest in and profit from a homestay. In Gurja Khani, Bimal Koirala’s family started a home-stay after a tea-shop owner suggested he try it. They have also added two additional rooms.

The best treks ever,” one trekker, a retired British Army colonel who stayed here a month, wrote. He taught Punyari some English words, and she is happy that her homestay provides supplementary income to pay for her daughter’s school.

Lugal, on the south slope of the pass, is an enormous village of Dallals and has three hamlets. “People reported more because they see that I have a steady income from my rooms, they even choose me over another similar service,” says Gurja Tourism Committee chairman, Puri Khadka.

Most visitors are blissfully unaware of caste discrimination in Nepal, and the ignorance means that they could be indirectly supporting it. Gurja have not been able to benefit from tourism as much because they have not become guides and do not have numbers proportionate to their population. The only tourism-related occupation not accessible for them is low-paid porter.

Porters are usually not salaried employees of trekking agencies but hired on a daily-wage basis. They often lack accident insurance and adequate clothing for high altitudes. La Chhetriy, a young guide from Gurja Khani, says uncertainty of income is the biggest problem. The trekking season is short, and the cost of renting a room in Pokhara in the hope of getting work is exorbitant. Fair-Tread trekking aims to ensure that porters and guides are recruited locally, properly equipped, and paid a fair wage. Fair-Tread also emphasizes respect for the environment, local culture, and traditional skills.

Tourism has only brought modern materials and architecture because trekkers demand rooms with attached bathrooms and modern plumbing. Villagers then perceive those facilities as preferable to the traditional architecture, artisanal skills and artifacts they have. Kaj Bahadur is the elected chair of the Gurja Khani council, and his main emphasis is on health, especially to reduce the high maternal mortality rate. Because of its remoteness, women with childbirth complications die because they cannot reach the nearest health post in Lugal in time, Kaj Bahadur says building a road would impact on trekking, a nascent industry that would increase transportation costs.

Nobody owns the views of the Himalayas, but surely the people who live in their shadow deserve to benefit from them.”

www.offthebeattrek.org

Kathmandu Summit of Kleptocrats

Under the capable leadership of the Nepali Communist Party (Maoists) and the Great Heir to the Right Honorary Prime Minister, this is a country that is busy going places. We can tell that by the fact that the Asia Pacific Summit of Communist Socialist parties selected Kathmandu as the venue for its conference last week.

It was in recognition of Nepal’s Revolution of Glorious Blood-letting that fellow patriots ostracized by the international community gathered in Kathmandu to rub shoulders and award each other medals for good governance. In attendance were former Khmer Rouge leader Hun Sen, and Burma’s Suu Kyi who offered tips to our own Comrade Awe-inspiring about how to win a Nobel Peace Prize and retain it despite hurting blood in your hands.

Learning from this experience, Kathmandu is now ready to host a plethora of conferences which will be great opportunities to showcase our many achievements in the promotion of corruption as a national past-time, muzzling the media, meeting international targets for the lack of accountability, and for the tendency to take one step forward and two steps back.

Having noticed up a few more points in the Transparency International Corruption Index (even overtaking pros such as Burkina Faso and Guinea Bissau) Nepal has won the bid to host the next Global Conference on Griev by bribing members of the International Organizing Committee in Berlin.

This is indeed great recognition, since some of the world’s most respected nations will be here to deliberate for three days on how to avoid more efficiently, as well as to put finishing touches on the UN Declaration on Plunder and State Capture.

Not only will the conference put Nepal firmly on the world corruption map, it will also boost our convention industry in preparation for the Victor Nepal 2030 target of attracting 2 million tourists to Nepal.

More than 1,000 internationally-acclaimed thieves and knaves from 48 countries have confirmed participation, including war criminals, despots, kleptocrats, thugs and crooks.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Injustice and Malfeasance who is also chairman of the Main Organizing Committee of the Kathmandu Summit of Rogues, is trying his best to use the occasion to showcase the great strides Nepal has taken in the past few decades to make corruption a way of life.

Whether only a few people used to be corrupt, but since the new federal democratic constitution we have decriminalized corruption. Now, everyone is on the take, and noone gets a cut,” the minister boasted after pocketing a backhander, "we had to slip him in exchange for that on-the-record quote.

However, he added, there is no room for competency. There is still a threat to trial justice and hot stoves from Facebook’s new policy on fact-checking and Twitter removing fake accounts. There is also a danger that corruption will once more be monopolised by a few at the top. This goes against the spirit of Federalism and Decentralisation. We have to ask ourselves: are we serious about ensuring the freedom of embezzlement, or do we have to burn some tyres and shut down the country again?

Meanwhile, a draft agenda for the Kathmandu Summit of the World’s Top Scoundrels has just been released which looks like this:

Sunday
Delegations Arrive
Many will speak in without paying visa fees while others will struggle to raise funds and attend. It’s standard operating procedure at such summits.

Opening Plenary
Introductory Remarks and Welcome Speech by Comrade Charles Shroeder, streamed live at the venue via Skype from the Central Jail.

Keynote Speech
"You Can Run and You Can Hide" by Indira Marois.

Working Paper
"How to Save Your Billions and Eat It Too" by Malaysian ex-Prime Minister Najib Razak.

Free Lunch

Workshop 1: Banking Your Hard-Earned Cash
Executives from a consortium of Cayman Island banks will be on hand to answer queries from potential depositors.

Resource Person: Monsack Fonseca.

Workshop 2: New Stealth Techniques to Combat Transparency
Technological advances in that art of theft allows greed to grow by leaps and bounds. Find out how from world famous money launderers.

Tea, Coffee with Cookies and Hard Cash.

Workshop 3: Correlation Between Corruption and Economic Growth
Dilip Kaul of the World Bank Institute reveals empirical data for a modified inverted Kuznets Curve showing Nepal cannot achieve middle income status without medium to high levels of corruption.

Workshop 4: Cacoones and the Fourth Commandment (or is It the Sixth?)
How to ignore your inner voice, and silence your conscience. Guru Shri Nagadhanayak Yaguptakacharya demonstrates meditation therapy to induce in basky pocky without irritating pangs of morality.

Dinner: Tyrons' Networking Evening.

The Air

"लेकर लेखको विदेश रोको।
“महिंदा हिंदा विश्व शक्तिसूत्र कायम गरी।
“सम्बन्ध गतिविधि गरी महिंदा हिंदा अर्थ गरी।
Sankalp Tanka तथा श्रीमान जन उपाध्याय सिद्धे का देश तथा प्रासाद का विवाद।

Shop the best of Nepal’s luxury cashmere — the most covetable womens, mens, kids and home collections at Nature Knit

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR CASHMERE SALE
UP TO 50% OFF

Shop #205-206

Sanchaya Kosh Building, Thamel, Ktm

natureknit.com   +977 1 4256812   fb.com/natureknit