

Tripartite tête-à-tête

If Nepal doesn't set its politics right it will continue to be treated as a footnote to history.

There has been detailed deconstruction of the chance meeting between the leaders of India, China and Nepal at the BRICS-BIMSTEC Summit in Goa last week. As far as we can make, out the get-together was indeed unscripted, but it turned out to be serendipitous. It is not an easy job for the organisers of summits to choreograph the comings and goings of heads of government in alphabetical sequence with barely seconds of separation between each other. One leader spends an extra few minutes chatting with another and the whole meticulous timeline goes haywire. That is what seems to have happened when Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Chinese President Xi Jiping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi ran into each other at the lobby of the conference centre in Goa.

That encounter would have gone unnoticed had the scion of Prime Minister Dahal and his personal secretary, Prakash, not been there to capture the scene in his mobile camera. Even so, no one would have known had Prakash not gone on to post the picture on his Facebook wall with a press statement of his own inferring that his Dad had extremely good body language with President Xi and that the three had agreed to work together. For the Indian foreign policy establishment, ‘multilateral’ is a bad word. India does everything bilaterally — especially with neighbours. Which must be why the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson issued an immediate clarification that the meeting was just a coincidence, and not a trilateral summit in any way. Whatever it was, and however one looks at Prakash Dahal’s over-reach in bypassing Nepal’s Foreign Ministry to

issue off-the-cuff pronouncements, the image of the three leaders sitting together was highly symbolic at many levels. If the tripartite tête-à-tête was not planned, it should have been. It may have been a coincidence, but it was a good coincidence. Despite its aversion to multilateral approaches, and however much the organisers had plausible deniability that the meeting was pre-planned, it is India that benefited the most from the leak. The message to Nepal (and especially Prime Minsiter Dahal) couldn’t have been clearer: don’t try to play us off against each other because India and China are on the same page vis-à-vis Nepal.

That is also the advice that the Chinese leadership has been giving various Nepali netas from all four main parties when they have visited Beijing in the past: "Sort it out with New Delhi, and don't rock the boat". Which must be why although the picture breached protocol for the very protocol-conscious Chinese, they did not publicly express any serious displeasure about it. For Dahal, the photograph was the perfect opportunity to clear his image back home in Nepal where he is seen to have sold out to India. Op-eds and editorial cartoons in the Nepali media have lampooned him as kowtowing to the Delhi Durbar to get himself back as PM, even if it was just for nine months. Having his son leak the photograph through social media was a master stroke because it suddenly showed Comrade Prachanda as a regional statesman rubbing shoulders with the high and mighty and ostensibly having the blessings of both. The Maoist-Nepali Congress coalition is also blamed within Nepal for having botched the planned visit by President Xi which should have taken place just about now. Prime Minister K P Oli had worked hard to set up the visit, but just as he fell victim to geopolitics the visit was also cancelled. Nepal is not important enough for China to jeopardise its trade relations with India over. Which is why the Dahal father and son had to assure folks at home that all was well on the northern front. In the final analysis, all this navel gazing in Nepal serves no purpose. As long as we cannot put our own house in order, set our politics right and steer the country towards economic growth, we will continue to be treated as a footnote to history by our big neighbours.



DIWAKAR CHETTRI

Times

THIS WEEK

	Japan	15
	Pakistan	15
	Turkey	15
	Thailand	15
	Hongkong	15
	China	15
	Philippines	15
	Colombia	15
	India	20
	Nepal	35

Ten nations with the highest number of public holidays

Most reached on Facebook
Regular breaks by *Manish Jha*
"Nepal tops the list of countries with the most public holidays with 36 days a year" (16,768 people reached)

Most shared on Facebook
Regular breaks by *Manish Jha*
(42 shares)

Most popular on Twitter
Regular breaks by *Manish Jha*
(86 retweets, 99 likes)

Most visited online page
Regular breaks by *Manish Jha*
(1,337 views)

Most commented
The Republic of Insomnia,
Editorial

YOUR SAY

www.nepalitimes.com

EDITORIAL

Nepal has only one government run psychiatric hospital which already goes to say how much the country is willing to help its citizens ('The republic of Insomnia', Editorial, #829). This should be a wake up call to all political leaders running after power and 'economic development' to give their undivided attention, investment and research in the mental health sector.

Sarita Baskota

While the citizens are awake, afraid of their future, the leaders are happily snoring with their pockets full.

Hem Lal Shrestha

ODE TO GOAT

We human beings have considered ourselves as the most important species on earth ('Ode to goat', Chetan Dulal, #829). The two biggest religions of our country have so much to teach us and yet we twist and turn it to justify our deeds or rather misdeeds.

Hurray

THE GOAT RUSH

While people in developed countries have started to eat less meat due to animal cruelty, we have increased our meat intake

Akanshya Gurung

('The goat rush', Shreejana Shrestha, #829). If people start eating more meat, we will need more animal farms. We will start treating animals as goods and to make the farms more profitable, we will make those animals suffer.

Hurray

The government should promote animal husbandry and ensure easy access to the market for the farmers. The goats from Mustang wouldn't be so expensive if there were proper roads and if the farmers there were rearing them more commercially. If the goats are sourced from within the country, it will be beneficial to both farmers and consumers.

Sharmila Maharjan

REGULAR BREAKS

All the government offices remain closed on public holidays ('Regular breaks, Manish Jha, #829). Although holidays are willingly adhered to by lazy bureaucrats, the government needs to cut down on public holidays and improve its work pace. We are in the phase of development and as a diversified and culturally rich country, we have enough time for socialisation.

Akanshya Gurung

Manish Nepali@RaiManish2
Let the local people take initiative to involve stake holders, agencies, professionals, for promotion as new destination

Nepali Times@nepalitimes
With its scenery, Dolakha could easily rival Pokhara as an adventure tourism destination.
<http://bit.ly/2dWAjwY>

Ryan Conlon@JconlonRyan
Unless you don't eat meat, or can't afford it, or don't celebrate dashain. But real nepalis aren't like that..

Nepali Times@nepalitimes
No Dasain is complete for a Nepali without mandatory meals of goat curry and rice.
<http://bit.ly/2d4TUfF>
@shreejanas

Timesnepainews.com

Weekly Internet Poll #830

Q. Does Nepal need so many public holidays?

Total votes: 714

Weekly Internet Poll #831
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

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

Times

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Going from red to green

China’s strategy for a clean energy future holds important lessons for Nepal

SMRITI BASNET
in SHAANXI

China sees its future in green technology not just because it wants to reduce the country’s large and growing contribution to global warming, but also because switching to climate-friendly energy makes economic sense. Nowhere is this more visible than in this city bordering Inner Mongolia.

Once dominated by smokestacks spewing coal smoke, the outskirts of Yulin today has wind turbines and photovoltaic parks to take advantage of the region’s steady, year-round wind and abundant sunshine.

“Renewable energy is spreading rapidly in Shaanxi and we see a bright future for solar power,” says Liu Huaicheng, showing visitors around his Jingbian Photovoltaic Industrial Park that is spread over 825 hectares and generates 70 million kWh of electricity per year. “We have already reduced the demand of thermal power plants for coal by 22,500 tonnes per year.”

The electricity is fed into northwestern China’s grid, and the solar park hopes to produce 2 megawatts of electricity by 2020. This is part of China’s plan to raise solar power to 15 per cent of all renewable energy production.



China subsidises photovoltaic generation by buying solar power at 1 Yuan per unit, whereas the government buys coal-fired electricity at just 0.30 Yuan. Such incentives have encouraged companies in north-western China where there are more sunny days annually than elsewhere, to diversify to renewable energy as well.

In September, China joined nearly 100 countries to ratify the Paris Climate Agreement. Although its per capita carbon emission is still much lower than the United States, this was a historic turning point. China is

the world’s largest producer of carbon dioxide, emitting nearly 9 billion tonnes of the greenhouse gas per year — more than a quarter of the global total.

Here on the ground in Yulin, the warm autumn sunshine reflects off a sea of new solar panels. The city is trying to clean up its image of being “China’s Kuwait” and also distinguish itself from the other city with the same name in southern China known for its annual dog meat festival.

“As one of the world’s biggest producer of greenhouse gases, it was a compulsion for China

to adopt clean energy. It is now adding energy in a big way from hydro, solar and wind,” says Gyanendra Lal Pradhan of Nepal’s Federation of Nepalese Commerce and Industries (FNCCI) who visits China frequently. Foreseeing a growth in both India and China’s energy demand, Pradhan believes it is already late for Nepal to realise its own potential for hydropower and solar energy.

“China’s strategy to incentivise clean energy is relevant for us in Nepal to emulate,” says Pradhan.

For Govinda Raj Pokhrel, who used to head Nepal’s Alternate Energy Promotion Centre (AEPCC)

and the National Planning Commission, the story in Nepal is of missed opportunities to tap the estimated potential of 43,000MW in hydropower. “We need to adapt success stories of countries like China in our context,” Pokhrel told us in Kathmandu.

Indeed, state-owned Shaanxi Huadian Yuheng Coal and Electricity Company now generates up to 37 per cent of its energy from wind and hydropower. “We see a future in renewable energy, but we also want to make coal and gas power cleaner and more efficient,” said Yang Xiaofei of the company.

Speaking at the Yulin International Coal and Energy Industry Expo recently, Hu Zhiqiang of the Yulin municipality said the city hoped to be self-sufficient in clean energy. “To be innovative, collaborative, environment friendly, accessible and sharable is our guideline.”

There are challenges for Yulin to wean itself away from its historical reliance on cheap coal. Despite state subsidies, the production cost of solar power is high and its gestation period, long.

Yulin is trying to also diversify its economy away from coal by promoting tourism. Says Cui Yuan of Yulin Tourism and Foreign Overseas Chinese Affairs Bureau: “Our aim is to transfer our income source from being reliant on energy to tourism. It is going to be the pillar of our economy in the future.”

**nepalitimes.com**
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Reducing usage

Triveni Byapar Co. Pvt. Ltd, the authorised distributor for Samsung in Nepal has introduced three new products in the HVAC segment-360



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Seven stars

Qatar Airways’ Al Safwa First Lounge at Hamad International Airport has received the Seven Star First Class



Lounge Award presented by the Seven Star Hospitality and Lifestyle awards. Al Safwa is the first lounge to be presented with the special award.

Iconic phone

Starck Tech, a subsidiary of Jyoti Group has launched the Obi MV1 smartphone in the Nepali Market. The MV1 comes with a 5-inch floating display and runs on Qualcomm Snapdragon 212, 1.3 GHz quad-core processor. The dual sim phone has a 2 megapixel front facing and an 8 megapixel rear camera. It is priced at Rs 15,699.



Mobile app

Turkish Airlines has launched its new mobile app for its passengers. Users can buy tickets, make reservations,



check-in, their manage Miles & Smiles account and follow departure and arrival status via app.





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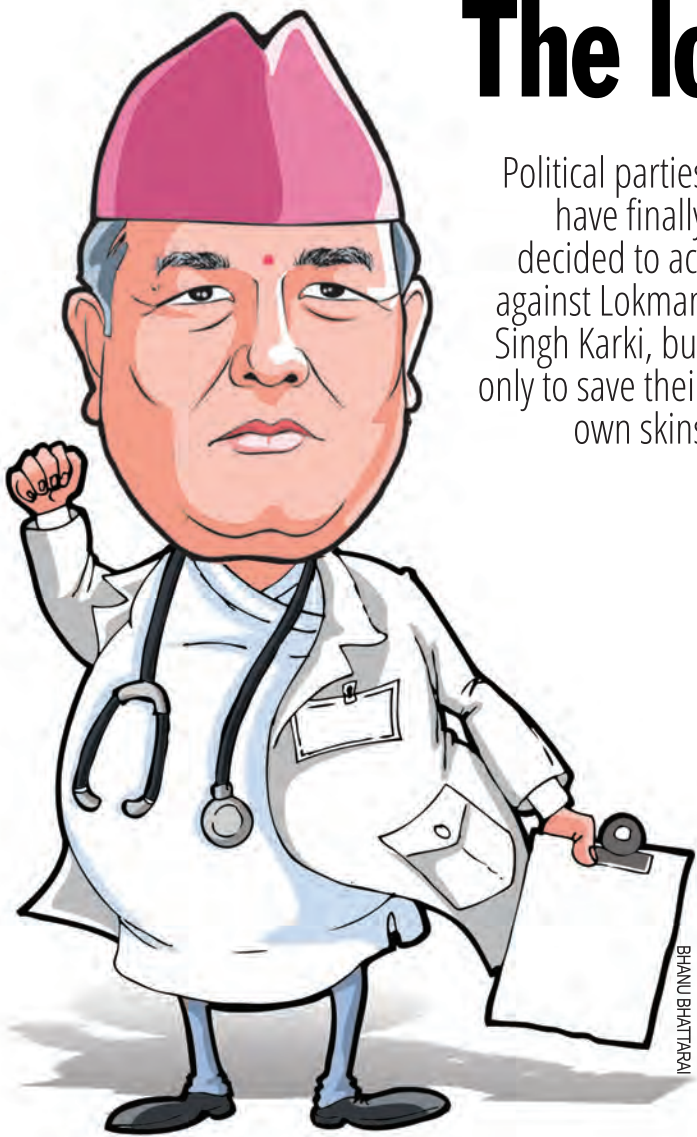
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KEEP WALKING



The lonely struggle against tyranny



Political parties have finally decided to act against Lokman Singh Karki, but only to save their own skins

In December last year, social and political activists, journalists, lawyers and a few politicians started meeting regularly in Kathmandu to discuss the new parallel power centre that had emerged in Nepal. They strategised over coffee about how to deal with the Commission on the Investigation for the Abuse of Authority (CIAA) and its chief, Lokman Singh Karki, who seemed to be an unstoppable force threatening the basic tenets of democracy.



ONE TO MANY
Bidushi Dhungel

At that time, people spoke his name in hushed tones, the walls had ears and there was the threat that Karki would slap his 'tera-pane' (the 13-page asset declaration form) that was used to persecute opponents. Om Aryal's case for Karki's impeachment had been dismissed by the court and while Aryal

stood fearless in filing an appeal, there was a palpable feeling of dread. Other efforts, like Suman Shrestha's appeal under the Right to Information Act to release property details of the CIAA chief went some way in garnering media attention and breaking the culture of silence on Karki's regime.

But matters only came to head after May. While Kanak Mani Dixit's arrest energised sections of civil society to overcome its fear, a welcome change of guard at the Supreme Court propelled Chief Justice Sushila Karki as the most integral protagonist in this saga.

Then Govinda KC began his eighth fast unto death demanding Karki's impeachment. The street movement around the crusading physician increased pressure on Parliament and politicians to act. An alliance coalesced around KC's demands bringing together activists like Jiwan Chhetri, Jagannath Lamichhane, members of Bibeksheel Nepali party and medical students at TUTH.

The role of investigative

journalists Krishna Gyawali, Deepak Dahal, Shiva Gaunle and Hari Bahadur Thapa were central to exposing malpractices of the CIAA chief, providing fodder for daily headlines. For a couple of weeks, the media, courts and the street supported each other to highlight the CIAA's excesses. But one by one, the media was silenced into submission through pressure on publishers. *Setopati* and other digital portals stood their ground at great risk to themselves.

But it was the search for three members of parliament to register an impeachment motion that exposed the real character of Nepal's political class. It was difficult to find even three MPs out of 595 to take a stand against Karki and challenge their party whips. Like everything else in Nepal, a 'consensus' among party honchos was necessary. Despite our door-to-door lobbying with 300 MPs over a two month period, it was futile. When 200 MPs confirmed they would attend interactions to brainstorm about impeachment, only 15 would show up.

Dhan Raj Gurung of the Nepali Congress agreed to sign on and but wanted to take the motion forward himself, and a couple of days later he stopped taking our calls. When we showed up in front of his house one morning with the necessary paperwork, he made us wait outside for hours and then slipped away to Sri Lanka. Not only did he not sign, he even called another MP already on board to dissuade him.

Ram Hari Khatiwada of the NC promised to meet us on three occasions, but left us waiting in the rain for hours and stood us up many times. In contrast, the young Maoist leader Aman Lal Modi was a refreshing straight-forward change. He made it clear he was committed to the cause and tried hard to win the consent of his party Chairman, but he could not go against his orders. In the end there were only Shyam Shrestha and Surendra Chaudhary out of 595 MPs willing to sign up.

We were still frantically searching for a third person when on Wednesday morning we got orders to deliver our collection of evidence against Lokman Singh Karki to the high and mighty. Hours later, an impeachment committee was formed in parliament and soon after, that motion was passed with 157 lawmakers.

The MPs were finally on board, but till press time on Thursday the Nepali Congress had still not come agreed. Knowing the character of our politicians, we cannot rejoice until the job is fully done. The 157 who did sign did not act to defend the public interest or democracy, but were simply obeying the orders of their masters. And the party leadership appears to have acted only because Karki was plotting to take them to the courts, and they got wind of it.

The people will not be fooled into thinking this impeachment, when and if it is successful, is the doing of our politicians. If it works, it will actually represent the triumph of the public interest over party interest to tackle head on a serious threat to our hard won freedoms.

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The monsoon retreat is now complete, although the maximum temperature is still about 2 degrees above normal for this time of year. A large high pressure system is sitting over northern India, and the westerlies are beginning to assert themselves. Some moisture remnants will set off brief, isolated local showers over the weekend. Keep a watch on the enormous depression over the Bay of Bengal that threatens to turn into a typhoon to see if it veers towards us next week.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
26° 13°	25° 13°	24° 14°

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A destination for family outings and weekend getaways

PICS: GOPEN RAI

Situated on the southwestern rim of Kathmandu Valley, Chandragiri overlooks the ancient trail connecting Kathmandu to the plains. The 2,500m ridge commands a view of the Valley and the central Himalaya beyond, offering a hike for city folks seeking respite from the urban chaos.

History buffs know Chandragiri as the place from where Prithvi Narayan Shah first set eyes on Kathmandu Valley in 1760, saw the golden roofs of the temples and made up his mind to conquer the kingdoms. The once thick forests of Chandragiri fell victim to charcoal vendors who sold the fuel to the brass and silver craftsmen of Kathmandu. In the last 25 years, the woods have regenerated thanks to community forestry.

Now with Chandragiri Hills Ltd operating cable cars from Thankot to the summit, it is making a name as a tourist destination perfect for a family outing and a weekend getaway that Kathmandu much needed. The 2.5 km long ride takes



the riders from a height of 1,564 m to 2,520 metres in about 14 minutes.

The cable car facility has 38 gondolas and already caters to around 3,000 people on weekdays, during public holidays the number of visitors double. Nepalis and visitors from SAARC countries have to pay Rs 415 for a one-way ride and Rs 700 for round trips, foreigners pay \$13 and \$22

respectively.

Once on top, Chandragiri offers spectacular panoramic view of the Kathmandu Valley, lush green forests and the Himalayan range. The sweeping panorama of the northern horizon stretches from Dhaulagiri in the west to Mt Everest and beyond in the east. A tower with a 360 degree view is also being constructed as a part of the project, and plans



are underway for an amusement park, boutique resort, shops and a theatre.

“Our aim is to promote Chandragiri as a tourist destination complete with facilities that meet international standards,” said Abhishek Bikram Shah, managing director of Chandragiri Hills Ltd. He said the company is also looking at paragliding and zip line adventures.

As for now, visitors can dine at the cafe or sit down for drinks at the bar in Chandragiri Hills, and there is a free playground with a climbing wall, swings, slides and other fun activities to keep the children entertained for hours.

Bachhu BK

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MADHU SUDAN DAHAL
in **BAJURA**

Most religions require devotees to make difficult and arduous pilgrimages to holy sites in part to show their dedication to the faith and to prove that they are willing to undertake any sacrifice. The hardships are supposed to be

a symbolic reminder of the impermanence of life and how fate is in the hands of the omniscient being.

Popular Hindu pilgrimage sites are Muktinath, Kailash or Gosainkunda which draw devotees not just from Nepal but all over the world. Less well known, but as difficult to reach and just as rewarding is Badimalika, the Shiva shrine high in the mountains of far-western Nepal in Bajura district.

Although the big mela at Badimalika, just as in nearby Khaptad or Gosainkunda, was on Janaipurnima in August, the holy trek can be undertaken at any time of year except perhaps in winter when it is snowbound.

But even if you are not religious, the Badimalika trek can be a pilgrimage to nature. The sheer remoteness of the place has kept it preserved from the outside world and the ‘development’ that has accompanied tourism destinations in other parts of Nepal. In fact, for a glimpse of what Nepal looked like before ‘trekking’ arrived, a trip to Badimalika is an eye-opener.

The shrine itself derives its religious significance from the Hindu myth about Vishnu deploying his Sudarshan Chakra on the body of Sati as it was being carried around by the grief-stricken Shiva, and various parts of her anatomy falling to earth. Badimalika is where her left shoulder is supposed to have come to rest.

Badimalika’s popularity with surrounding parts of Nepal and neighbouring India is supposed to have increased after Prithvi Narayan Shah visited the site during his westward conquests in the 18th century. Priests at the temple say that the Badimalika Bhagwati is the eldest sister among 112 goddesses, and should be worshipped first and the deity has the reputation of granting wishes.

At 4,200m the mountain-top temple is

situated above the treeline and the last part of the hike is along knife-edge ridges with Alpine meadows festooned with flowers this time of year, and grass that is like velvet underfoot.

There are very few tea houses and lodges, so trekkers are advised to carry their own food and tents. Unlike Khaptad or Rara, the area is not a national park and the trails are unmarked, so taking along a local guide is advisable.

The best way to get there from Kathmandu is to take the one hour flight to Dhangadi, and embark on the long and winding road via Dadeldhura to Martadi from where Badimalika is a steep 3 day walk. On the second day one reaches holy Triveni, the confluence of three crystal clear streams where pilgrims perform ritual dips so their dead relatives and ancestors find peace in heaven.

The scenery is stupendous, with the Api-Saipal range spread out over the northern horizon, and the wilderness has a spiritual feel to it. The trek is still passable till December, but after the first snow it is advisable not to be on this trail till next spring. 🇳🇵



nepalitimes.com

Watch video



A RIDGE TOO FAR

Even for the not so religious minded, the remote Badimalika Trek could be a pilgrimage to the natural wilderness





EVENTS



Mustang madness,

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

Autumn camp,

Register for an International youth minicamp to get connected with young people from around the world. This cultural exchange facilitates great team building activities and meditation during the five-day camp.
23 to 27 October, www.camp.youthlegend.com, \$ 450 per person



Jazz workshop,

Participate in a free jazz workshop by a Japanese saxophonist Sadao Watanabe.
24 October, 3pm to 5 pm, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel (01)5013554

Photography festival,

Mark your calendar to attend talks, workshops, slideshows and panel discussions during the second edition of photo Kathmandu.
27 to 28 October, Multiple venues, www.photoktm.com

Ktm walks,

Enjoy a car free day, traditional music competition, a slow cycle race, skate board competition and more at the second Kilagal Ktm Walks event this year.
22 October, 7 am to 7 pm, Kilagal, 9861032880



A quest for dignity,

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



Breast Cancer awareness,

Participate in a Walkathon organised by Rose Foundation Nepal to raise awareness about breast cancer and promote breast self-examination.
22 October, 8.30 am to 3 pm, Starts at Patan Darbar Square and ends at Jawalakhel football ground, 9813688226/9803557302/9849035012, rosefoundationnepal.org



MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI



DINING



Starry night

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

The Heritage,

Escape the hotchpotch of the tourist hub as you relish delights like paella and panna cotta. Thamel, (01)4254343



Embassy,

Positioned in Lajimpat's embassy-laden lane but away from the hustle and bustle of the main road, this restaurant has a menu with Nepali, Indian, Italian, Thai and Japanese dishes on offer.
Lajimpat, (01)4424040

Vootoo,

The home of Newari cuisine also has a safe continental menu for those who are not yet ready to experiment with new dishes. Lajimpat, (01)4005222



Koto

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MUSIC



All about jazz,

Tap to the beats of international jazz musicians in the fourteenth edition of the Jazzmandu festival.
20 to 26 October, Multiple venues, www.jazzmandu.org

Superfuzz live,

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



Jazz concert

Celebrate the 60th anniversary of Nepal-Japan relations by participating in a Jazz concert. Legendary saxophonist Sadao Watanabe will be performing in the concert organised by the embassy of Japan.
22 to 23 October, Tribhuvan's Army Officer's Club, Sundhara (01) 4426680

Music mania,

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



Open mic night,

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

GETAWAY



Neydo Monastery,

A monastery and guest house, Neydo is home to many significant religious sites of the great siddhas. Leave your troubles behind and book a room. Pharping, Kathmandu, www.neydohotel.com

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Himalayan Peace and Wellness Center, Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha (01)4375280, 980106661



Mum's Garden Resort,

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The Last Resort,

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Bhotekosi, Sindhupalchok, (01)4700525/1247



Pataleban Vineyard Resort,

16 km west of Kathmandu city, the resort is a perfect place to spend your weekends with food and wine. The resort offers astounding views of sunset and the Himalayan range of Langtang, Ganesh, Manaslu and Annapurna.
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RESTORATION FRAMEWORK: The Panchamukhi Hanuman temple being readied for restoration after it suffered major structural damage from multiple earthquakes over the years.



Demolition of the walls revealed hidden structural elements—wooden posts, beams and pegs, that prevented the temple from total collapse.



An elaborately carved lattice window had been concealed behind a brick wall during a previous restoration job.



Archeology and iconology experts carefully examine the carved struts that provide support to the roof.



Existing wooden elements and bricks are used without compromising on the added strength and the original ambience of the building.



A new five-layered wooden cornice was added to the south facade, duplicating the existing one in the east facade.

Restoring our faith in restoration

When a god decides to remain hidden from humans, restoring its temple becomes a complex challenge for devotees

ALOK TULADHAR

In 2014, when the authorities decided to renovate the ageing Panchamukhi Hanuman temple in Kathmandu to mitigate possible damage from future earthquakes, they faced an unexpected challenge. Only designated priests were allowed to enter the sanctum room where the Hanuman figure is kept.

The god was allowed to be worshipped only by the royal family and their priest, and it had been at least a couple of decades since the last known priest entered the sanctum for ritual worship. The practice had been inexplicably discontinued.

The restoration of the 25 m high temple built in the 17th century was stopped because no engineer could enter the sanctum to assess its structural condition. It was impossible for architects to take measurements of the inside of the temple. The wise and the elderly quickly came up with a solution: perform a *Kshyama Puja*, the ritual ceremony asking for forgiveness from the deity on an auspicious date by qualified tantric priests from the

Taleju Temple. This allowed the relocation of the Hanuman figure to a secure site until the renovations were completed.

A team of seasoned engineers and architects immediately went to work to determine the best way to strengthen the temple and its adjoining wing to increase earthquake resistivity. Sophisticated computer-generated modeling helped the team decide on the strengthening measures to be taken.

Simultaneously, funding was channelised from the Ministry of Culture, supplemented with a grant from the US Embassy. A public discussion was held to gather opinion from experts about the proposed conservation work and approvals were obtained from the Department of Archeology. All administration procedures were set in place to start the conservation work. Then the earthquake struck on 25 April 2015.

The temple standing atop four floors of a rectangular building with its unique five circular, tiered roofs had already suffered damage from the smaller earthquakes of 2012 and earlier, and needed renovation. But last year's quake was a

higher magnitude and severely damaged the temple. However, within two months of the earthquake, the project team went back to the drawing board to make a fresh conservation plan.

When the actual renovation started in late 2015, there were more surprises in store. An entire hidden floor less than a metre high, was discovered. As layers of weakened brickwork were peeled off, previously unseen wooden frames that tied the walls in place were revealed.

A previous restoration job, perhaps hurriedly done, had buried a finely decorated latticed window under several layers of brick. Other unexpected findings during the restoration necessitated a redesign to adjust for the new discoveries, causing delays.

The new findings added tremendously to the available knowledge on medieval-era construction techniques that our ancestors had developed and mastered over centuries to make buildings safe, strong, graceful and functional all at the same time.

To conform to national as well as UNESCO archeological norms, all retrofitting work was carried out with traditional building materials

— brick, wood and lime mortar. Cement and steel were not used, as that would have compromised the authenticity of the building.

Interventions were kept to a minimum, without compromising on the added strength and the original ambience of the building. Utmost care was taken to salvage and reuse existing bricks, mud mortar and wooden elements.

All unusable wooden artefacts, such as windows, cornices and struts, were replaced with exact reproductions, carved meticulously by talented craftsmen from different parts of Kathmandu Valley. Authorised chemical treatment was applied to increase the longevity of wooden and metal parts. Today, the Panchamukhi Temple is one of the first monuments to be restored post-earthquake even though the preparations were underway before 25 April, 2015. The project also has exhaustive visual and engineering documentation painstakingly collected, with lessons for similar restoration projects.

The restoration also provided on-the-job training to several young architects and engineers, paving the way for them to become conservation technicians. 



ALL PICS: ALOK TULADHAR

A keeper of history



PABLO BARTHOLOMEW



SOPHIE SCHE

CAPTURING PAIN: Photo of the child victim of the Bhopal gas Tragedy that won Bartholomew the World Press Photo POY in 1985.

this delivered the world one of its most striking images: the picture of the half-buried child after the Bhopal gas Tragedy in 1984 (*top*).

The sixty-year-old's lens has seen it all, and he is here in Kathmandu this week to attend Photo Kathmandu 2016, the annual international photography festival in Patan next week.

Bartholomew's career has given him an appreciation for documentation and archiving of images.

For the past week, Bartholomew has been conducting a workshop with Kathmandu University students exploring various themes and

motifs emerging from each student's personal family photos. "It's been an interesting process for me and for the students. It was a different trajectory of history that was much more intimate and hidden," he explained. The selection will be exhibited in a slideshow on 24 October in Pimbahal as part of the Photo Kathmandu festival.

Bartholomew's own personal efforts to archive his work and that of his father, the noted art critic Richard Bartholomew, is running side by side. One such project of his is *Outside in - 70s and 80s - A tale of 3 cities* - a collection of photographs of family and friends which he terms as his "teenage diaries". He regards it more as a historical marker of that time and period than just a family photo album and is determined to bring it to Nepal soon.

Having worked for Gamma-Liaison, TIME, Newsweek, National Geographic, LIFE, Stern, Le Figaro, GEO and The New York Times the photographer is now giving personal projects all his attention. "While working for the media you lose something, to get out of that and re-invent yourself takes time. I am still in that process," he said.

These days Bartholomew captures stories of migration, displacement and family histories. Part of it has to do with tracing his own family history after a family member of his father, a Burmese who came to India during World War II, got in touch with him in 2009. He will be presenting this body of work, which is still in progress, at the photo festival on 23 October at Yala Maya Kendra. **Smriti Basnet**

HAPPENINGS



BIKRAM RAI

HOMEWARD BOUND: Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal at Tribhuvan International airport upon his return from BRICS-BIMSTEC Summit in Goa on Monday.



PERMANENT MISSION OF NEPAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, RSS

TALKING SHELTER: Minister of Urban Development Arjun Narasingh KC addresses the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador on Tuesday.



RSS

TOGETHER FOR WOMEN: Minister for Foreign Affairs Prakash Sharan Mahat during a conference on Women, Leadership and the Economy in South Asia in Kathmandu on Wednesday.



BIKRAM RAI

HEALTHY CHILD: A health worker measures four year-old Ranjan Basnet for signs of malnutrition in Baneswor on Tuesday.



BIKRAM RAI

KICK OFF: A group of boys plays football at the break of day in Tundikhel on Monday.

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Who is afraid of Lokman?

Ameet Dhakal in *setopati.com*, writing before the impeachment motion was registered in Parliament on Wednesday.

सेतोपाटी

Historically, whenever Nepal's political class has failed to defend democracy, it has been the media that has had to come to the rescue. Today, both these pillars of democracy are being tested.

The head of the Commission on the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) Lokman Singh Karki has tried with all his might to silence the media. He has overstepped his jurisdiction, and mobilised other agencies of government to gag the press.

This time, his weapon has been the Internal Revenue Department which has been used to force a full audit on Republic Media, the publisher of *Nagarik* and *Republica* newspapers. He has forced a three-year full audit of Himalmedia. It has forced the Money-laundering Investigation Department to probe Kailash Sirohiya of Kantipur, Nepal's top media house.

A friend who works in a private bank called me the other day and said he had got a letter from the Central Bank asking him to furnish details of my account. I wouldn't know if the Central Bank sent the letter on its own or at the behest of the CIAA. But I can confirm that the CIAA has been calling advertisers of *Setopati* where I am Chief Editor to stop advertising with us. It is clear that Karki's strategy is to silence media critics by tangling them in financial investigations.

At *Setopati*, our accounts are above board. We have tried to set an example by being transparent about where we receive funds from, and have publicised them in the past even without being asked. Personally, I have paid 25% taxes on my salaries and all remunerations from international organisations. That means I have been contributing a quarter of all my work and time to the Nepali state. I am proud of the fact that the time I have not spent with



my family and five-year-old daughter is devoted to the upkeep of the Nepali state. My taxes are deposited in the national treasury which pays Nepal's politicians and Karki's salary. Therefore as a responsible citizen I have earned the right to question politicians and also Lokman Singh Karki whom they appointed.

I never thought I'd ever have to do this: go public with my personal tax revelations. And the only reason I am doing it is that Karki is trying to trample on individuals and institutions by exploiting their weaknesses. The politicians were incapable of challenging him. Nepali society is doomed if Karki gets his way, and that is why it is important to stand up to him.

It is clear that the issue is not about whether media companies have paid their taxes or not. Karki has used a section of his lapdog media for propaganda, and launched an offensive on the papers that were opposed to his actions to exact revenge on them. But there is no reason for media companies to be afraid of Karki. The real question for journalists is whether they will stand up for the citizen's right to information despite the campaign to isolate and frame charges against them.

Coincidentally, Karki's targets

this time are the same individuals who had stood up against the royal regime. At that time I was News Editor at *The Kathmandu Post* and still remember being censored by Army majors. The Chief Secretary of the royal regime then was none other than Karki himself, and he used to threaten us about our news content. But at a time when politicians were in jail and the Maoists were still in the jungle, the publishers and editors decided to stand up and take an initial leadership role as the 'Eighth Party' against the royal regime.

I do not believe that the media that once stood up so resolutely against the royal regime will today cave in to threats from an appendage of that establishment. I haven't given up on the politicians either. It is still possible to reinvigorate them so that the political parties can build up the correct direction and momentum. A small group of conscientious youth are ready to rise up, and the Bibeksheel Nepali Party can in the future lead if the mainstream parties continue to wither. If Bibeksheel can't do it, another party will come up. Nepal's will not tolerate forever the musical chair of these discredited parties.

Article 119 (3) of the

Constitution clearly spells out the criteria for the appointment of the head of the CIAA: the candidate needs at least 20 years experience in designated fields. I want to ask the politicians, does Karki have the requisite experience? Not only is Karki not qualified, he was also named as being unsuitable for government service for his role in the suppression of the pro-democracy movement in 2006. Yet, his appointment was pushed through with the connivance of the intelligence handlers of a neighbouring government. Lokman Singh Karki himself boasted to relatives and close friends about this.

It is now clear that Nepal's politicians are not going to speak out against Karki's appointment. The Supreme Court will not decide whether it was constitutional or not. However, politicians will have no choice but to react to Karki's activities after he became head of the CIAA. The latest victim of his arbitrary action is the research thinktank, Social Science Baha. And the CIAA again overstepped its mandate by asking the Baha to furnish its internal documents and also distorted the truth to publicly defame the organisation.

The CIAA has repeatedly defied the Supreme Court's order not to overstep its jurisdiction, first in the case of advocate Sambhu Thapa, after that in the decision on journalist Kanak Mani Dixit, then the doctors of Teaching Hospital. Karki has time and again thumbed his nose at the orders of the apex court.

On the day that the Supreme Court was starting its investigation on his appointment, the CIAA called a sudden press conference at an hour's notice in which it said it had asked 30 Maoists leaders to appear and explain corruption in the internment camps for fighters. It has been 17 days and no such summons have gone out. It is clear this was just the CIAA trying to blackmail and scare Maoist leaders.

I want to ask the politicians: are you on Karki's side against the media? Democracy does not guarantee development or prosperity. It doesn't guarantee resolution of problems. Democracy only ensures that there will be free debate. But you don't want to talk about Karki at all? Like ostriches you want to bury your heads in the sand? Why isn't there a debate in Parliament about Karki's anti-constitutional activities?

You have discredited the movement for democracy to such an extent that you can't even gather three representatives in parliament to register an impeachment proceeding against Karki. And the reason is that they are afraid of being disciplined by their own party leadership.

Politicians, you now have just two options: either you revive democracy by asking three MPs from each party to register an impeachment motion against Karki. Or you do nothing, let things drift, and go home to binge on mutton curry. Youth politicians, are you silent because you have chosen the second option? If so, remember Nepal's political map will change either through a rebellion or widespread hopelessness. Either way, it will sweep you away.

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SAARC Minus X

Boycotting summits is not the answer, South Asian countries need to set aside politics and be more flexible to foster trade and connectivity

India and four other countries pulled out of the 19th summit of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) which was to be held in Islamabad in November. This was a fallout of the deadly attack on the Indian Army base in Kashmir on 18 September. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka followed suit and



GUEST COLUMN
Pradumna B Rana

this led to the cancellation, and the pronouncement by several commentators that 'SAARC is dead'.

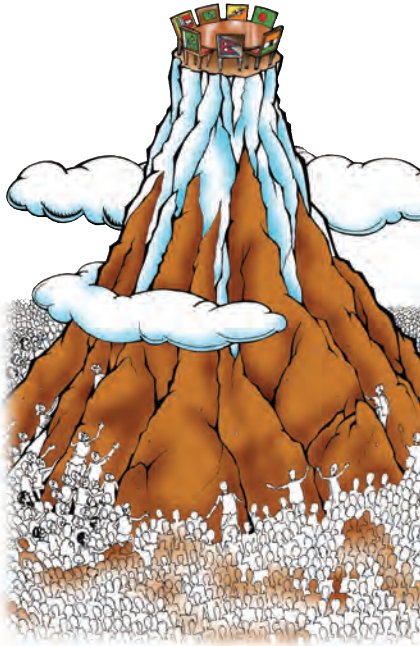
However, this is not the first time for a SAARC Summit to be cancelled. They have either not been held or postponed in roughly half the times. In all the cases, the main reason has been tension between India and Pakistan, the club's two nuclear-capable members. The death of SAARC, however, may be exaggerated.

Even so, boycotting the summit will weaken further a weak institution. Member states should instead work to strengthen

SAARC mechanisms to address regional concerns. Decision-making is often stymied because SAARC needs a full consensus of all its members. ASEAN is more flexible because it has the 'ASEAN Minus X' scheme under which members that are not ready to commit to an initiative can opt out so that progress will not be held up. SAARC Minus X could be a helpful mechanism.

South Asian countries should also venture out of the SAARC framework through bilateralism and sub-regionalism. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi supported this approach at the 18th Summit in Kathmandu in 2014, where he remarked that regional integration in South Asia should go ahead "through SAARC or outside it, among all of us or some of us".

Bilateralism was a key pillar of Prime Minister Modi's 'Neighbours First Policy' and his first day in office in May 2014 was dedicated exclusively to bilateral meetings with the leaders of SAARC countries. His first state visit was to Bhutan and then Nepal. Unfortunately, the outcomes of this grand vision have been disappointing and limited to a number of connectivity projects with



SUBHAS RAI

three countries, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

Sub-regionalism could also be less sensitive for SAARC members. These include the ADB-led South Asia Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) whose members are India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The ADB has approved 40 infrastructure and IT projects worth \$7.7 billion for this grouping.

The Bangladesh-India-Bhutan-Nepal (BIBN) is another sub-regional grouping that shows

promise after the signing in June 2015 of the BIBN Motor Vehicle Agreement. This Agreement enables vehicles to enter any of the four countries without the need for trans-shipment thereby reducing costs. Plans for energy cooperation are also under consideration.

South Asian countries should also enhance their inter-regional linkages with ASEAN, their largest market. Historically, commercial and religious links between South and Southeast Asia were strong and led to a prosperous and integrated Asia.

More recently, economic relations between South Asia and Southeast Asia have surged but their full potential has yet to be realised. South Asian countries need to implement policies to link themselves to production networks in ASEAN and to develop production networks within their own countries. Such policies will lead to a win-win situation for all countries, and help to jump-start economic integration in South Asia.

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is the appropriate institutional framework to promote inter-regional

cooperation because it connects South Asian countries (except Pakistan and Afghanistan) with some East Asian countries (Myanmar and Thailand). In a survey of Asian opinion leaders four out of five leaders felt that BIMSTEC should play a more active role in promoting regional connectivity and integration in Asia.

India hosted the BIMSTEC Summit in Goa last week on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit where issues related to transport as well as electricity and broadband connectivity were discussed. Another inter-regional grouping is the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in which the recently held India-led Indian Ocean Conference 2016 is a step in the right direction.

Before the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, South Asia was one of the most integrated regions of the world. At that time more than one-half of Pakistan's imports and nearly two-thirds of its exports were from India. It is estimated that the volume of intra-regional trade in South Asia then stood at about 20 per cent of its total trade. This has fallen to a dismal 5 per cent due to political conflict and mistrust.

Boycotting the SAARC is not the answer. South Asian countries should adopt SAARC Minus X with bilateralism, sub-regionalism, and inter-regionalism outside of the SAARC framework. 🇳🇵

Pradumna B Rana is Associate Professor at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

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Drinks are on the House

Since you are all still burping loudly from Dasain feasts while couchsurfing re-runs of the Clinton vs Trump debates on Saturday Night Live, I know you don't really have time to read this. So I will be brief and get straight to the point.

At the rate our legislature and judiciary are transmogrifying Nepal's socio-political landscape and finally showing that their members have the collective gonads and/or zygotes to not remain a rubber stamp body anymore, it is only a question of time before Nepal is declared a secular country where marijuana is legal because Lord Shiva smoked weed.

This is the beauty of living in a post-quake democracy: Parliament can be whipped to make any

proclamation it wants as long as the three-party political cartel allows it to. In this slow-motion transition from the Tantrick Kingdom to a Loktantrick Republic, us good citizens can sit back and let the good times roll. Drinks are on the House.

But while fully applauding the audacious decisions undertaken by the August House this October, we do have some creeping doubts about whether the honourable members aren't slacking off a bit asking for bigger allowances, bigger cars and a chance to make bigger asses of themselves. I speak especially of MPs of the Kangresi persuasion who refuse to bring the House down.

The main talking point in Kathmandu's social circles this week wasn't Lockman as some of

you may think, but the rabbit that Prima-facie Minister Awestruck pulled out of the hat by posing with Chinese and Indian leaders in Goa. He is understood to have given both leaders invites to visit Nepal together ("No backing out this time, you two."). And what was truly remarkable wasn't that he made the triangular talks happen, but that he had deployed Comrade "Son Also Rises" Prakash for the Facebook photo-op. What he should have also done was taken a selfie and tweeted that in Hindi, just to keep up with @NarendraModi's Nepali tweets.

The Donkey is privy to inside information that the meeting wasn't a coincidence at all but a result of The Fierce One's efforts to build Sino-Indian

rapprochement for which he must surely be put on standby for this year's extra Nobel Prize in case Bob refuses to receive it. As someone who once used dynamite to blow up buses, it will be appropriate for Comrade Terrifico to receive a prize instituted by Alfred Nobel.

For a guy who once threatened to invade India through tunnel warfare, the sight of Prime Minister Lotus Flower's grovelling in Goa was a sight to behold. The Dear Helmsperson has come a long way from being persona non-grata to being persona non-grateful and it has taken ten years for the Chairman Fierceness' roar to be a meow.

The other national accomplishment this week was that Nepal has climbed in the global corruption rankings of Transparent International from number 90 to 117. Now, some of you may think that is bad news.

But it all depends on whether you are counting from the bottom or from the top. And since in development circles in Nepal we have traditionally taken a bottoms-up approach on these matters, this is great news. We certainly got our money's worth since we had to bribe them to be ranked higher in the Corruption Index.

And last but not least it is heartening to note that Tribhuvan Interminable Airport is adhering to its heritage of being a pasture by allowing livestock into the runway. Over Dasain goat ingress forced some aborted landings, adding to the thrill and excitement of Nepal being an adventure tourism destination.



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