THE MASTER OF THE GAME: The Woman Who Won’t Let Donald Trump Mumbai

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ABSTRACT
Mumbai’s real estate is amongst the most expensive per square foot anywhere in the world. Property developers dominate the city’s political economy and public culture, and are portrayed as sovereigns of its skyline, whom newspapers refer to as “the builder-politician nexus”.

Builders’ unique appetites for risk make visible and channel the desires of millions for new and better futures (or to make things “great again”). Both real estate and politics are shadowy domains which demonstrate how money, time and space are sources of social power in the contemporary city. The games of language and number played with them favour those who can challenge norms, wait out long battles, and anticipate changes in the rules. Rather than seeing those who play them as gamblers, populists or moral failures, we need to understand their business strategies as the materialisation of uncertainty.

On the occasion of the U.S. Election Day, my talk will focus on the business of building a luxury high-rise Trump Tower in Mumbai and Donald Trump’s Indian apprentices and opponents, first on the disputed site of a charitable hospital and community housing trust, and later in an old textile mill compound. This presentation is part of an ongoing ethnographic and archival project on the real estate speculation and property redevelopment in post-industrial Mumbai.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER
DR SHEKHAR KRISHNAN is an historian and anthropologist of South Asia. He currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow with the Asia Research Institute (ARI) at NUS and a Consulting Editor with the Economic & Political Weekly (EPW) in Mumbai, India.

He completed his PhD in the Program in Science Technology & Society (STS) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), U.S.A. (2005-13) and was a Post-Doctoral Fellow with the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Mumbai (2014-5).

He has been a consultant for the New York Public Library (NYPL) and the Library of Congress, U.S.A. (2008-14) and was co-Founder and Associate Director of PUKAR (Partners for Urban Knowledge Action & Research), Mumbai (2000-3). http://shekhar.cc

DATE Wednesday, 9 November 2016
TIME 3.00pm to 4.30pm
VENUE AS8 ARI Seminar Room, #04-04, Singapore 119260

Please email to sassec@nus.edu.sg to register