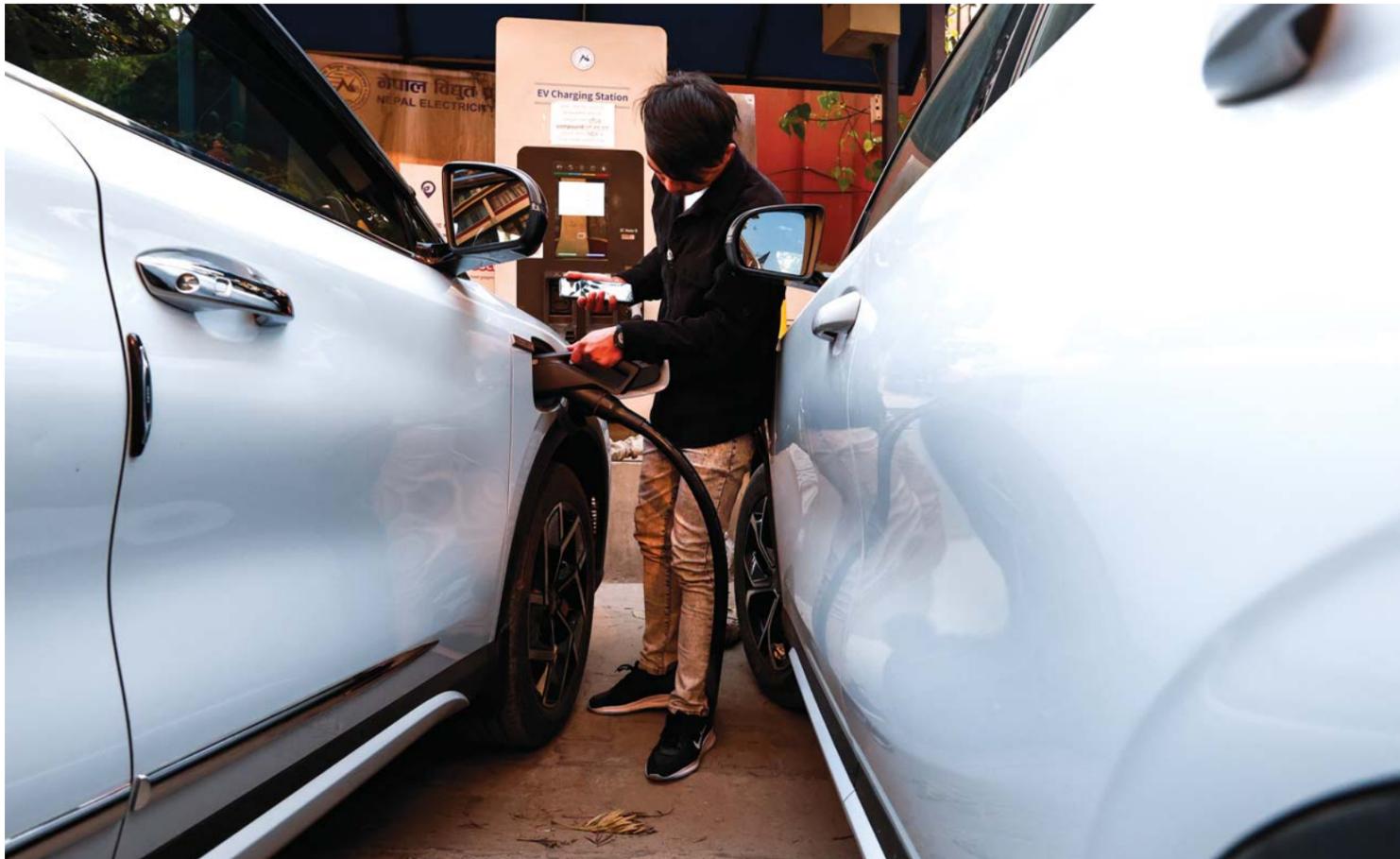




Experience

our 24x7 Client Care Centre at +977 1 4791800/5424198



SUMAN NEPALI

EV YEAR २०८१

■ Sonia Awale

On World Health Day on 7 April this week, the Air Quality Index (AQI) in Kathmandu exceeded 300 – one of the dirtiest in the world. Breathing was literally lethal.

Although the main source of pollution this week was smoke from brushfires, vehicular emissions are a bigger source of harmful particles and toxic gases.

The sale of electric four-wheelers is growing, accounting for one-third of total car imports. Outside Kathmandu, vans, minibuses and three-wheelers are switching to electric as never before.

This despite ex-Finance Minister Prakash Mahat increasing the tax on smaller EVs and electric vans while inexplicably reducing the tax on luxury SUVs.

This year, all eyes are on

the new Finance Minister Barsa Man Pun, who is under pressure to raise government revenue. Instead of lowering taxes and even announcing subsidies on electric cars and appliances, he may increase them. He could also do it selectively to favour certain EV brands imported by cronies.

“The government should be more careful about taxes on electric vehicles,” says environmental activist Bhushan Tuladhar. “It should be consistent, predictable and guided by science, it can’t be a kneejerk reaction.”

One large electric bus can replace at least 10 cars, easing road congestion, improving air quality and reducing petroleum imports. But taxes make a battery-powered bus five times more expensive than a diesel bus of similar capacity.

Says Kulman Ghising of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA): “We will soon have surplus power even in winter. What we really need is to electrify our mass transport to reduce our petroleum import bill.”

Petroleum imports account for one-fourth of Nepal’s total imports. Reducing petroleum consumption by just 10% would save the country over Rs30 billion whereas even exporting all of our current power generation of 2,800MW would earn us just half that amount.

A battery-powered taxi can be fully charged for just Rs106, and will have a range of 180km. A petrol taxi would need Rs3,500 to cover that distance.

“At a time when the whole world is moving towards clean energy, Nepal’s contradictory policies on EVs send out the wrong message to the business community, especially ahead of the Nepal Investment Summit” says climate expert Manjeet Dhakal. “In the next budget, we must incentivise electric buses.”

Two-wheelers make up nearly 80% of total vehicles in Nepal, but few of them are electric. Successive governments have been flip-flopping taxes on electric vehicles.

Not long ago a former finance minister was caught questioning how the government would earn its revenue if it didn’t tax electric vehicles. Nepal relies on taxing imports for revenue, when revenue should be based on local industries and manufacturing.

“Financial policy is based on politics and that is the sad reality, more so now with coalition governments,” says Tuladhar. “But unfortunately, people who are making policies aren’t riding buses so they have no interest in public transport or don’t even know what to do with it.”

EV special



Sajha's green buses go greener

PAGE 4

EVs, hybrids, and plug-ins

PAGE 6-7

Fuel of the future is here

PAGE 12

हिमाल भित्तेपात्रो

वैशाख २०८१							APR-MAY 2024						
सुक्रबार	सोमबार	सोमबार	सोमबार	सोमबार	सोमबार	सोमबार	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
३०	३१						१	२	३	४	५	६	७
८	९	१०	११	१२	१३	१४	१५	१६	१७	१८	१९	२०	२१
२२	२३	२४	२५	२६	२७	२८	२९	३०	३१				

Nepali Times wishes readers and partners all the very best in the new year 2081.



20
Outsource Your Non-Core Staff Through **Suvidha Staffing**

Licensed Company by DOL, MOLESS
ISO 9001:2015 Certified
100% Statutory Compliance

+977- 9851247213
www.suvidhasewa.com.np

zen garden

Available at SalesBerry

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2081
Dinner Party with **LIVE MUSIC**
12TH & 13TH APRIL
6 PM ONWARDS
New Orleans Cafe
THAMEL, 01-4700736

eScan Anti-Virus

TOTAL PROTECTION for Computers, Mobiles & Tablets

An ISO 27001 Certified Company
Contact no.: 01-4330980
www.escanav.com

10% Off

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2081

NATUREKNIT CASHMERE REDEFINED

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2081

UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON.

New year, same difference

While Nepal's calendar enters the eighties on Saturday 13 April, this is a good time to pause and think about what might lie ahead for Nepal and the world in Gregorian year 2081.

The world is too late to limit the global average temperature to 1.5°C. By 2081, ocean expansion and heat stress will lead to mass migration to higher latitudes and altitudes. Multi-disasters, conflicts and food shortages will stalk the planet.

At the present rate of birth rate declines, China's population will have shrunk to 850 million. By 2081, there will only be half as many Koreans as there are today. Nepal's population pyramid will have inverted by then, and total inhabitants will decline to 22 million.

The outmigration of Nepalis from the mountains to the plains will likely start reversing in the next few decades. The Gulf states will be too hot to work in. Half the remaining Himalayan glaciers will have melted off, reducing the dry season flow of our rivers.

These are changes we know are coming, so we might as well prepare for them. Alas, the world is still in business as usual mode. Most politicians do not recognise the urgency of the crisis, and are haggling over who gets to sit in the best chair on the tilting deck of the Titanic.

India, China, US
Meanwhile, 2081 BS will see elections in the two biggest democracies, India and the United States, that will have a bearing on the region and the world. Proximity means Nepal will be impacted more immediately by the outcome in India, where a third term as Prime Minister for Narendra Modi seems to be a foregone conclusion in marathon elections from 19 April to 1 June.

Nepal is already feeling the spillover of India's election fever as shown by Hindu-Muslim riots in Sunsari last week, and the anti-secular pro-monarchist rally in Kathmandu on Tuesday.

Under the Hindu-supremacist BJP since 2014, India has slid into dangerous authoritarianism, intolerance and systematic persecution of minorities. There is now not even a modicum of decency as opposition leaders are thrown into jail on trumped up charges, and their vilification amplified by a pliant mass media.

The West looks away as the BJP tightens control and squelches the media and democratic values, since India's 8% growth is important for trade. New Delhi is even excused for breaking sanctions against Russia. India's economic engine will pull Nepal along, but its politics could tear the intricate ethnic fabric of our society.

Over on the other side of the planet, Joe Biden and Donald Trump are readying for a second face-off. Much like in Nepal, US politics also seems to be populated by tired old men reluctant to let go.

Much like how photographs from Vietnam swayed domestic public opinion against the war, the daily bombardment of images of children maimed and killed in Gaza has turned US public opinion against Biden. His administration parachutes food into Gaza, while shipping more bombs to Israel.

The war may prolong Benjamin Netanyahu's hold on power in Israel, but it may cost Biden a second presidential term. Trump will be no better on Palestinian independence, and his threat to pull out of NATO is already ringing alarm bells in Europe.

Trump is campaigning on an anti-immigrant platform, and exaggerating the threat on the Mexican border. He wants immigrants only from 'nice' countries, and not from 'shitholes' like Nepal.

America's domestic polarisation, Trump's rejection of multilateralism, Biden's unpopularity on the world stage because of Gaza, and panic in Europe over losing the American security umbrella to confront Putin's Russia has geopolitically weakened the West. This means that for Nepal, the looming presence of next door India and China will be felt even more than before.

It was the West that traditionally pushed for human rights, transitional justice, democracy and the free press in Nepal. Now, we have to contend with two giant neighbours who do not believe in those concepts, and have in fact undermined them within their own societies.

Here and now

Back in Nepal, the government has selected more than 400 Nepalis to work in Israel as caregivers. Nepalis continue to enlist in the Russian Army even as the Labour Ministry prepares to lift the ban on work permits in Russia.

The new UML-Maoist-led coalition has reaffirmed the transient nature of Nepali politics. Political allies become rivals overnight, and the RSP on whom many Nepalis had pinned their hopes is behaving like the mainstream parties it once vowed to hold to account.

Public disillusionment with Nepal's party politics has emboldened populist and nationalist forces that are set on dismantling the 2015 secular, federal republic constitution.

Such political disarray will not help us in Nepal face the challenges wrought by the climate crisis in the decades ahead.

Shristi Karki

हिमाल भित्तेपत्रो						
वैशाख २०८१			APR-MAY 2024			
सोमबार	मंगलबार	बुधबार	दुधबार	शुक्रबार	शनिबार	रविवार
३०	३१					१
१२	१३					१३
२	३	४	५	६	७	८
१४	१५	१६	१७	१८	१९	२०
८	१०	११	१२	१३	१४	१५
२१	२२	२३	२४	२५	२६	२७
१६	१७	१८	१९	२०	२१	२२
२८	२९	३०	१	२	३	४
२३	२४	२५	२६	२७	२८	२९
५	६	७	८	९	१०	११

As we mark a new Nepali year, let us pause and think about what might lie ahead in Gregorian year 2081.

ONLINE PACKAGES



GET, SET, GO GREEN

As the demand for electric four-wheelers increase, electric two-wheelers, especially cycles, are relatively on the sidelines. Electric bicycles enable a healthy way of travelling and enhance one's performance. Cyclists need not exert nearly as much energy pedalling, and can ride further without taxing their bodies. Watch the video and read our EV special issue with stories on pages 1, 6-7, 12 and 13.



HOMEMAKER'S WORTH

Homemakers make no money. But if all of their work was monetised, they would be the highest earners in most families. Most women with regular jobs have the added burden of balancing home and work, and often homemakers sacrifice their careers because they are needed at home. Watch this video on our YouTube channel and subscribe for more multimedia content.

EDUCATION

There are systemic issues plaguing Nepal's education, from rampant cheating in examinations to the lack of industry and quality instruction ('Lessons not learned, homework not done', Editorial #1206). The author rightly criticises the ineffective reforms and populist measures that fail to address the root causes of educational shortcomings.

Rak Hee

■ Kanya Mandir School in Kathmandu where Muslim students have a dedicated space for prayers is a good example of harmonious living. I wish many others would follow such examples.

Turja Islam

CLIMATE MIGRATION

This makes us wonder if the decades-long trend of Nepalis migrating from the hills to the Tarai should be understood more in terms of climate than the socioeconomic drivers that are usually cited ('Climate crisis → drought → food deficit → migration', Mohan Mainali, #1206).

Nepal Now: On the move

■ The effects of climate change have increasingly compounded existing socio-economic inequities leading to migration, especially in the context of low-income nations like Nepal.

Abhushan Gautam

LESS MOUNTAINEERS

China has opened its permits from the Tibet side, which could have had some impact ('Where have all the mountaineers gone?', Vishad Raj Onta, #1206). It's early still, but I think they will get record numbers again.

Patrick O'Keefe

■ Finally, the mountain can have a much-needed break from human traffic.

Varvāra H.

■ Safety has been compromised with bottlenecks and long queues. In a long, unmoving queue, you are no longer dependent on your own capabilities but at the mercy of others in front of you.

Debbie Lynch

Times.com

WHAT'S TRENDING

Inclusiveness not just theory

by Shamshad Ahmad
Recognising the challenges of its Muslim students, Kathmandu's Kanya Mandir School provides a dedicated space for them to offer prayers immediately after their exams. Read how the school has put inclusiveness into practice on our website.

f Most reached and shared on Facebook



Lessons not learnt, homework not done

Editorial
Every time governments have tried to improve the quality of education in Nepal, they have made it worse. Local governments have also not done any better when given the authority, making populist, cosmetic changes. Join the discussion online.

X Most popular on X

Where are the mountaineers?

by Vishad Raj Onta
Nepal's mountains have seen a dramatic drop in expeditions this spring season, no one seems to know why. The drop this year also translates into a decrease in the total number of climbers and the royalty the government collects from climbing fees. Read more at nepaltimes.com

66 Most commented

Climate crisis → drought → food deficit → migration

by Mohan Mainali
Rainfall data from eastern Nepal collected over the past 70 years point to a strong correlation between chronic drought and outmigration. Repeated and more frequent monsoon failures forced more and more people to abandon villages. Read the second in this three-part series on page 14-15.

🔥 Most visited online page

QUOTES

Nepali Times @NepaliTimes
Mt Everest sees a dramatic drop in expeditions this spring season, no one seems to know why.

Jamie Uhrig @himmoderator
It wouldn't have anything to do with the way that the Department of Tourism #Nepal @hello_dotnpl keeps records, would it?

TTeacher @TaraTeacher1
Too expensive? Too many people in previous years? People choosing other routes that are less touristy?

Om Prakash Pant @pantodom
Worldwide recession effect

1,000 WORDS



HIS MAJESTIC: Rastriya Prajatantra Party Chair Rajendra Lingden at a rally on Tuesday supporting Nepal's return to a Hindu Monarchy. The rally created a monstrous traffic jam that brought Kathmandu to a standstill for six hours.

ASHISH POKHREL/X

20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Baisakh Ek

20 years ago this week as we were celebrating the Nepali New Year 2061, everyone in the country had one wish: for peace to prevail and for the conflict to end. It took two more years for that wish to come true. But in all these years after the war we've realised that peace is not the absence of war.

Ordinary Nepalis are still fighting for a just society, they still face class and caste discrimination, they still need to work the system. But above all, it is the lack of governance, accountability and corruption at high places that is forcing thousands of Nepalis to abandon hope and leave.

Excerpt from the editorial published on issue #191 9-15 April 2004:

Peace is in everyone's lips—from the war victims thronging to greet King Gyanendra during his walkabouts, the wounded policemen who survived the Beni attack and the villagers in the Maoist heartland whom the state regards as rebel sympathisers.

The king, the political parties and the Maoists are

CEASE FIRE IN THE NEW YEAR

Things have gone beyond just hoping for a happy new year. For those who command the destiny of this country, the time has come to act in 2061. They have to seize the initiative and give the Nepali people what they crave the most: peace.

Peace is in everyone's lips—from the war victims thronging to greet King Gyanendra during his walkabouts, the wounded policemen who survived the Beni attack and the villagers in the Maoist heartland whom the state regards as rebel sympathisers.

By now the palace should realise that the tide of public opinion is beginning to turn. It needs to be less obsessed with symbolism, and launch a concrete conflict resolution drive.

One new year gesture next week would be for both sides to declare an unconditional and indefinite ceasefire in the new year. The Maoist unilateral release on Tuesday of 37 security personnel and officials they captured in Beni in the ICRC was a positive gesture. The government needs to respond, and a ceasefire would not be seen as a weakness. It not just provides much-needed relief to Nepalis, it would also be a forceful confidence-building gesture for further de-escalation, a return to elections and the constitutional process. What could be a more auspicious time for that than Baisakh Ek?

As we watch the last bloody sunset of this ghastly year, it is time to work

also be a forceful confidence-building gesture for further de-escalation, a return to elections and the constitutional process. What could be a more auspicious time for that than Baisakh Ek?

For archived material of Nepali Times of the past 20 years, site search: nepaltimes.com

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

A PERFECT MOMENT TO RELAX

Connect to peace and have a rest on
our fully reclining seats.



TURKISH AIRLINES

01-4538363 | 4538436 | ktmsales@thy.com

Products and services are subject to change depending on flight duration and aircraft.

Sajha's green buses go greener

Public transport company gets green light for Nepal's biggest charging station and more battery-powered buses

■ Vishad Raj Onta

Sajha Yatayat formally inducted 40 new electric buses to its fleet and inaugurated Nepal's biggest simultaneous charging station for them in Patan on Tuesday.

The 1.1MW charging station shows that Nepal's energy transition to renewables is not just environmentally beneficial, but also economically viable. The green buses seen on Kathmandu Valley routes are now fully green — running on hydroelectricity that Nepal itself produces and not on imported diesel.

The 40 new e-buses are made by CHTC company in Nanjing and the entire fleet can now be charged at the new charging station.

Kulman Ghising of the Nepal Electricity Authority was on hand at the inauguration and extolled the virtues of going electric, mainly that battery-powered buses are 33 times cheaper to run. However, the capital cost for an electric bus is much higher than diesel, and the outlay has to be recovered over a decade of operation. Government tax subsidies for electric public transport would help.

"Focusing on public transport yields a much bigger impact on reducing emissions," Ghising said. "While the number of private vehicles may be higher, public vehicles run all day."

Kathmandu's air quality further plummeted this week with AQI reading 300 and higher. While wildfire smoke was mostly responsible for this instance, petrol and diesel emissions make Kathmandu one of the most polluted cities in the world.

As such, battery operated vehicles would help clean up the air. Electric vehicles are already saving Nepal Rs20 million



PHOTOS: GOPEN RAI



a day with reduced petroleum consumption. Further reduction in petroleum use by 60-70% would help reduce Nepal's trade deficit with India.

Electric buses, however, are

expensive up front even though they are cheaper to operate over time. Sajha bought the 40 buses with a Rs300 million investment from the government.

"The government must promote

financial packages as it is too expensive for private companies to go electric on a massive scale on their own," said Sajha Yatayat chair Kanak Mani Dixit at Tuesday's event. "Buses charge at night when there is an electricity surplus. We are blessed with renewable hydro, while most countries have coal-powered electricity."

Night routes and digital travel cards for commuters would spur Kathmandu's economy. Electric buses may need to be charged for one hour on longer trips, but solutions exist: a relay system for passengers to swap buses at charging points.

The inaugural event also showcased a Sajha diesel bus that has been converted to electric

(above). For the moment, the model is only a prototype, made for research and learning purposes.

"It is a lot more than just a straight engine swap -- we have also implemented a cooling system," engineer Janak Risal, who worked on the conversion, tells Nepali Times. "We ran simulations of digital models to see whether having the components in the back made the bus bounce too much."

Sajha worked with the EU-supported SOLUTIONSplus which made prototypes of remodelled Safa-tempos for passengers and cargo. The building team and Sajha are holding a workshop on 25 April to discuss conversion, as well as the viability of manufacturing battery-powered cars in Nepal. 🇳🇵

NMB BANK
एनएमबि बैंक



Turkish back in Tripoli

As of 28 March, Turkish Airlines resumed flights to Tripoli, the capital of Libya. There will be two flights on Thursdays and one each on Tuesdays and Sundays. Flights will cost \$379 to Tripoli, and \$299 back. With this resumption, the carrier now flies to 62 destinations in Africa, and 346 worldwide, connecting 130 countries.

Ncell improves 4G



Ncell improved its 4G services in various districts in Bagmati and Lumbini provinces, upgrading access to networks and higher speeds in places like Kulekhani in Bagmati, and Tansen in Lumbini. Ncell made similar efforts in February in the Madhes and Gandaki provinces. As of October 2023, Ncell had 6.8 million 4G customers.

Samsung discounts 2081

Samsung is offering up to 38% new year discounts on TVs, and up to 30% on refrigerators and washing machines. Customers buying select Samsung TVs will get discounts on soundbars. On certain models above 75 inches, soundbars



will come with the TV. The offer lasts until 15 May, and also includes a monthly instalment option with 0% interest. These offers are available at Samsung dealers across the country, and online at arkostore.com.



StanChart in Dharan

Standard Chartered opened a new branch in Mukumlung Complex Dharan on 7 April with ample parking space, ATM, and meeting rooms. The bank says it sees Dharan as a rapidly growing market.



New year, new Tata

Tata distributor Sipradi Trading has announced a 'New Year, New Car 2081' scheme for the Nepali new year. Customers will have the opportunity to look at and test drive various models at Tata showrooms, including the electric Nexon EV. There are further offers as part of the scheme, including attractive exchange bonuses, insurance for a year, and free accessories and fast chargers.



Mahindra 3-wheelers

Mahindra held a rally for owners of Treo, its electric three-wheeler, from Birtamod to Kakarbhitta in eastern Nepal, a distance of about 20km and attended by 30 riders. Although quite recently introduced, the Treo model has proved popular, especially in the Jhapa area. Auto drivers with outstanding records were recognised.

Glocal After School

Glocal After School organised the 5th edition of Skill Week 2024 in Kathmandu. Madan Krishna Shrestha and Hari Bansha Acharya were recognised for their achievements in Arts and Culture. King's College director Narottam



Aryal was awarded for Entrepreneurship. Chhaya Sharma, founder of Nepal College of Travel and Tourism Management, was recognised for her work in Tourism and Hospitality. Cardiothoracic surgeon Bhagawan Koirala was awarded for his work in medicine.

Indian school aid

The Indian Embassy has donated Rs40.29 million to Diding Elementary School in Sankhuwasabha to build two storey buildings with rooms for educational and



administrative purposes as part of India's contribution to Nepal's education and health care sectors. In the past, India has been helping establish hospitals, and donated ambulances and school buses to Nepal.

BYD

BYD ATTO 3

ENERGY AWAKEN

NEPAL'S FIRST SPORTY ELECTRIC SUV



WITH
**REVOLUTIONARY
BLADE BATTERY**



NEPAL'S MOST AWAITED SUV BYD ATTO 3 COMES WITH THE TOP OF THE CLASS FEATURE EPI TOMIZING DESIGN AND PERFORMANCE.



CIMEX INC. PVT. LTD.
Naxal, Kathmandu
01-5912037, 5912038,
9801390408, 9802390351

LALITPUR: 9801981531, 9801981533 | **BHAKTAPUR:** 9851038377, 9802356481 | **BANEP:** 9801846261 | **CITY STORE:** 9801188666, 9801091100
BIRTAMODE: 9817021197, 9842752415 | **NEPALGUNJ:** 9857821460, 9857821410 | **BIRGUNJ:** 9855022964, 9855027530 | **JANAKPUR:** 9801671611, 9844039594
BIRATNAGAR: 9820730353, 9802720125 | **BUTWAL:** 9857026149, 9857031014 | **NARAYANGHAT:** 9801368497, 9855063204 | **DHANGADHI:** 9800695925, 9841292682
POKHARA: 9801671611, 9844039594 | **ITAHARI:** 9802600501, 9802678144 | **DANG:** 9857821460, 9857821460 | **BHAIRAHAWA:** 9857088804, 9857026149



MG4 EV

Power 99kW
Torque 250Nm
Acceleration 8.5 s 0 (100km/h)
Battery Capacity 64kWh
Maximum speed 160km/h
Range 435km
Charging Time 30mins (0-80%), 7hrs (100%)
Rs4,149,000

TATA Tiago EV LR XZ+ Tech

Power 49.01kW
Torque 114Nm
Range 315km
Charging time 58mins (10- 80%),
 8.7hrs (10-100%)
Rs2,899,000



EVs, hybrids,

Whichever you choose, there is a range of choices of models and propulsion systems

■ Vishad Raj Onta

Nepalis looking to splurge on a new car for the new year might want to think about electric or hybrid options. Gone are the days of small, claustrophobic EVs, there are now battery-powered cars that are as green as they are cool.

If you have been out on Kathmandu's roads these days, and with the air quality being what it is this week we understand if you have not, there seems to be a lot more battery-operated vehicles on the streets. As range improves, there are a lot more EVs even on the highways, negotiating the mud and dust.

The numbers back this up. By March, nearly 6,500 electric vehicles

had been imported into Nepal in the six months of the fiscal year. During the same period last year, this number was only 2,198.

The battery-powered cars in Nepal are imported from China, India, Indonesia, the United States, South Korea, and now from Germany. Import numbers of electric three-wheel taxis also show an increase of 54% from 5,380 to 8,303.

This means the contribution of vehicular emissions to air pollution levels in Kathmandu Valley is going down, although the other sources (wildfire smoke, roadside dust, and transboundary

pollution) are getting worse.

The bigger change can be in Nepal's petroleum import bill, which makes up nearly a quarter of total imports. Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) reports that petrol and diesel demand has gone down slightly, but there will have to be a lot more electric public transport and private cars to make a dent on the trade deficit.

Besides fully battery-powered cars, hybrids and plug-in hybrids are also available, although the numbers so far are tiny. Only 17 hybrids were imported in February-March, and 21 in March-April.

Hybrids tend to be more



MG ZS EV Deluxe

Power 99kW
Torque 280Nm
Acceleration 8.5s (0-100km/h)
Range 320km
Battery Capacity 51kWh
Charging Time 60mins (0-80%)
Rs.5,299,000

Audi Q4 Sportback e-tron

Acceleration 5.0s (100km/h)
Battery Capacity 82kWh
Maximum Speed 160km/h
Range 420km
Charging Time 45mins (80%)
Rs7,740,600



BYD Dolphin

Power 70kW
Torque 180Nm
Acceleration 12.3s (0-100 km/h)
Battery Capacity 44.9kWh
Charging Time 42 mins (20% - 80%)
Range 340km
Rs3,980,000



TATA Nexon

Power 49.01kW
Torque 245Nm
Range 453km
Charging time 60mins (10-80%), 8.7hrs (10-100%)
Rs4,299,000



MG Comet EV

Power 31.26kW
Torque 110Nm
Battery Capacity 17.3kWh
Range 230km
Charging Time 5hrs (10-80%), 7hrs (0-100%)
Rs1,799,000



Hyundai Ioniq 5

Power 125kW
Torque 350Nm
Acceleration 5.2s (0-100 km/h)
Battery Capacity 58kWh
Range 375km
Charging Time 30mins (20-80%), 6hrs (0-100%)
Rs10,296,000



BYD ATTO 3 (Superior)

Power 100kW
Torque 310Nm
Acceleration 9.7s (0-100 km/h)
Battery Capacity 60.48 kWh
Range 420km
Charging Time 45mins
Rs6,588,000

and plug-ins

expensive than fully electric cars, and they also need more specialised maintenance backup since they have both a gasoline engine and an electric motor.

The difference between regular hybrids and the plug-in hybrids is in how the battery is charged to power the electric motor. Regular hybrids charge their batteries while driving, and there is regenerative braking which means the motor turns into a generator to charge the battery. Also, when the petrol engine is producing more power than the car needs, the car's computer routes the extra energy to the battery.

Plug-in hybrids have these capabilities as well, but can also be plugged in to wall sockets for charging. While the electric motors in regular hybrids only assist the gasoline engine, plug-in hybrids can run entirely on the charged battery just like in EVs, and switch to gas when it runs out.

Regular hybrids, plug-in hybrids, and electric vehicles all save fuel and are better for the ecology and economy than petrol or diesel cars. There are, however, trade offs in choosing any one kind.

A fully electric vehicle will use no fossil fuels at all, so it is the best in reducing emissions. But they can

be expensive up front, and are limited by range because of the lack of charging infrastructure. Charging is slow, which is not ideal during long trips.

Electric cars have not been around as long as regular ones, so maintenance experts and replacement parts are harder to come by.

A regular hybrid does not need to be plugged in at all, so there is no range anxiety. However, it is going to use more fuel, leading to a higher running cost and some emissions. There are more components, so there are more things that can go wrong.

A plug-in hybrid offers the most flexibility as it can run on either electricity or fuel. However, the battery capacity is limited and fuel is the option on longer drives. The price tags of these cars are much higher.

There is some debate about battery-powered cars not being as climate friendly as claimed because of the lithium, cadmium and other raw materials needed for batteries and electrodes have to be extracted through energy-intensive methods.

A lot more lithium and other resources goes into making fully electric cars simply because they need higher capacity batteries. The

same lithium could be used to make many more gas-electric hybrids or plug-ins, leading to a lower carbon footprint over the lifetime of the cars. A Toyota document states that 90 hybrids can be made with the resources to make one fully electric vehicle, reducing carbon emission by 37 times over their lifetime, compared to the electric car.

Whatever you choose to buy, there is a range of choices of models and propulsion systems. BYD, Tata, Hyundai, Tesla, and Audi all offer fully electric vehicles. Toyota and Subaru have popular hybrid options. 📌



Hyundai Kona Electric

Power 100kW
Torque 395Nm
Battery Capacity: 39.2kWh
Maximum Speed: 155km/h
Range 312km
Charging Time 50 mins (20-80%), 10hrs (0-100%)
Rs6,496,000



Subaru 2024 Crosstrek Hybrid

Power 115 (156)kW @6000rpm
Torque 196 (20.0)Nm @4000rpm
Acceleration 10.5s (198 km/h)
Fuel Tank Capacity 63l
Fuel System Direct fuel injection
Fuel Consumption Urban 9.4l/100km
Rs14,000,000



Tesla Model 3

Power 198kw
Torque 340Nm
Acceleration 5.8s (0-100km/h)
Battery Capacity 58kWh
Maximum speed 225km/h
Range 440km
Charing Time 25mins (10-80%), 6hrs 15mins (0-100%)
Standard Range Rs12,500,000
Standard Range+ Rs14,500,000
Long Range AWD Rs16,700,000

Features:
 Dedicated Ncell SIM,
 software updates, massive
 moonroof, 5 star NHTSA
 safety rating



Toyota Yaris Cross

Output 97 BHP @5,200 RPM
Torque 142 Nm @3,600 RPM
Fuel Consumption 15-20km/l
Rs18,100,000



ONE NIGHT IN BHADGAON

Go to Bhaktapur for the Bisket Jatra chariot festival and stay overnight

Text: **Vishad Raj Onta**
Photos: **Suman Nepali**

A trip to Bhadgaon is a commitment. You need to get on that Arniko Highway, and race Enfields and micros zooming eastwards at 80kmph. Bhaktapur is only 11km from the Ring Road, and 20 minutes away at night. But at rush hour, there are bottlenecks that make it seem farther than it is.

This is the week of Bhaktapur's biggest chariot festival, the Bisket Jatra, the first day of

which is known locally as Dhwo kwabijyaigu or 'the god carried downwards'. It might be a good idea to extend the day trip to see the festival and stay overnight to really get to know the city of devotees.

By evening, most of the tourists and visitors will have left, and Bhaktapur once more belongs to its residents. A good place to hang out to watch the goings-on in the Darbar Square is from one of the window seats at the Temple View Restaurant, popular for its Newari menu but also Chicken Thali complete with masala tea and juju dhau at Rs795.

Nearby is Taumadhi Square, dominated by Nepal's highest temple Nyatapola. This sturdy five-roofed temple withstood the 1934 and 2015 earthquakes, perhaps because it is guarded by five pairs of stone bodyguards.

It is in the evening that Nyatapola looks even more impressive, glowing in the light of the square and standing out against the darkening sky. Climbing the long stairs, one gains a vantage point overlooking the square and the town beyond the surrounding rooftops.

There is usually an evening puja going on in the Bhairavnath temple to the east of Nyatapola, with chanting and cymbals, a great soundtrack to the bustling, busy square as well as a reminder that temples are not only selfie spots for tourists, but also places of worship.

Despite it being night, motorbikes race diagonally across Taumadhi, so be prepared to dodge these easy riders as you make your way to our next night-time attraction: Dattatreya Square.

The street there is lined with curious passages that must be stooped through into courtyards. Down a narrow lane off to the side of the square is the famous peacock window, and the first floor of a house opposite offers the best eye-level view. The light and shadows of the night make the carved wooden window look even more delicate and exquisite.

Bhaktapur is loyal to traditional ways of life and architecture. The styles of buildings are consistent and well preserved. The restaurants





and shops, at least the ones in the main squares, are housed in centuries old heritage buildings.

It is at night that Bhaktapur brings out the best of itself, radiating art and culture. Many new cafes have opened, and shops that sell souvenirs and intricate thangkas. The red brick roads give the town elegance and character different from the tourist haunts in other parts of the Valley.

Many businesses on the streets play music, prayer hymns, and burn fragrant incense. There is always a procession going past, giving night time Bhaktapur a spiritual ambience.

By late evening, there are fewer motorcycles and the pedestrians start shuffling home. Community dogs take over, guarding the guardians of the gods on Nyatapola's steps. In a neighbourhood falcha, some elderly devotees are still chanting hymns to the gods. Clouds towering over the mountains to the north are lit up by the pink neon of silent lightning.

Bhaktapur is not just a town, it is a way of life. 🇳🇵

Places to Stay

Peacock Guest House

Located near the Dattatreya Square, this guest house is simultaneously a hotel, café and handicraft shop all rolled into one. The café is what you walk into, with seating extending into a courtyard. It is all very compact and tasteful. A man who appears to be the owner sits at one of the tables and is drawing.

Peacock Guest House is Bhaktapur in a microcosm in the way it incorporates heritage. It has narrow wooden staircases and doors, intricate windows, and a copper water jar. The rooms are cosy, and come with a bookshelf featuring interesting titles.

There is a traditional carved window in each room that must make guests feel like the Kumari. The second floor has a large showroom with many statuettes and carvings. On the roof terrace, the evenings are cool and quiet.

Rs7,000
Dattatreya Square
(01) 6611829

Milla Guest House



A five minute walk away from Dattatraya Square, Milla Guest House is a bed-and-breakfast designed by Götz Hagmüller, architect of the Patan Museum and the Garden

of Dreams in Kathmandu. The hotel uses brick, wood, and terracotta tiles and balances modern with traditional designs. Rooms have attached bathrooms, and two of them come with balconies. On the top floor is a terrace and kitchen, and breakfast is complimentary.

Rs12,000
Dattatreya
9817849759

The Nanee

A luxury boutique hotel located just before you get to the Darbar Square, The Nanee is an 'immersive lodging experience,' with detailed tours of Bhaktapur led by local experts, as well as food tours of traditional dishes and restaurants. The rooms and lobbies are expertly designed with fusion pieces of traditional art with modern twists. There are suites on offer as well.

Rs21,000 onwards
Itachhen
(01) 5915110

नयाँ वर्ष २०८१ को बहार

MG सँग आकर्षक उपहार

MG4 EV

MG ZS EV

MG COMET EV

MG HECTOR

MG HS

MG ASTOR

BENEFITS

UNLOCK BENEFITS*
UPTO Rs. 7 LAKHS

FREE*
SPARE TYRE

7 KW*
AC CHARGER

FREE*
ROAD TAX

*T&C Apply

EVENTS

**Woodcarving exhibition**

The Revival of Newari Woodcarving 2024 is an exhibition showcasing the works of Nepal's noted contemporary woodcarving artists, alongside photography by Kishor Kayastha.

18 April, 3pm - 6pm and 19-21 April, 10am-6pm, Patan Museum

Toyota Women's Rally

Register now to participate in the Toyota Women's Rally, open to all the women. Visit <https://www.toyota.com.np/en.html> for details.

20 April

**Space Con 2024**

Space Con 2024 is a great chance to meet fellow space enthusiasts and learn about the latest advancements in space science and technology.

12 April, 9am onwards, Square Hotel, Pulchowk

Le Sherpa Market

Support small and local businesses. Shop for fresh and organic vegetables, fruit, cheese, bread, meat products, honey, and much more at Le Sherpa farmers market.

Saturdays, 8am-12:30pm, Le Sherpa Maharajganj

**Collective Expressions**

Curated by Hem Rana and coordinated by Jasbeer Kaur, the showcase Collective Expressions from India features a diverse range of Indian artists.

Until 22 April, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babermahal

DINING

**On the Grill**

If you are in the mood for some Korean BBQ, head to On the Grill for some sizzling bulgogi and banchan feast.

Jhamsikhel, 9808380064

MUSIC

Fusion night

Join The Greens for a fusion night of spoken word poetry, Nepali folk, hip hop, and western blues. Also catch DJ Qna and Juju.

12 April, 6pm onwards, The Curve, Jhamsikhel

**Rock n' Roll**

Get ready to rock this Nepali New Year's Eve as the Heartbreakers join forces with Jesse Foster for a memorable musical performance.

12 April, 7pm onwards, The Hard Rock Cafe, Darbar Marg

**Enchanting melodies**

Get ready to be swept away by the enchanting melodies of Happy Village Orchestra this Friday.

12 April, 7pm onwards, EDN Sanepa

**Jazz and food**

Spend the beginning of 2024 with some live jazz music while indulging in continental delights.

New Orleans Café, Thamel (01) 4700736

Dance party

This weekend, dance the night away to sets by Dry Skunk and DJ Monika.

12 April, 7pm onwards, Beers N' Cheers, Jhamsikhel

**Tukuche Thakali**

Head to Tukuche's new Jhamsikhel branch. Indulge in their legendary Thakali feast, featuring momo and the delightful kanchamba.

Jhamsikhel (01) 5904323

Feels

The new Jhamsikhel brunch spot, Feels, offers the perfect antidote: a quirky interior, delicious treats, and guaranteed good vibes.

Jhamsikhel, 9702681263

GETAWAYS

**Summit Rivers Lodge**

The expansive Summit River Lodge boasts an infinity pool, semi-tropical vegetation and Nepali cuisine made from local organic produce. The rustic lodge incorporates traditional wood designs with minimalistic accents.

Kurintar, 9801151166

Gokarna Forest Resort

Escape the city and explore Gokarna's scenic forest and golf resort, where deer and monkeys wander freely.

Gokarna (01) 4451212

**Vishuddhi Alaya**

Head to Vishuddhi Alaya's peaceful retreat in Namobuddha for a nature-focused getaway. Rejuvenate your mind, body, and spirit through yoga and ayurveda.

Namobuddha, 9818154225

Temple Tree

Celebrate this new year at Temple Tree in Pokhara. Savour delicious food, stunning mountain views. Recharge at the massage parlour and sauna.

Pokhara (061) 455819

**Kasara Resort**

Immerse yourself in this luxurious jungle retreat near Chitwan National Park. From cycling to wildlife viewing, Kasara Resort has activities to keep the whole family busy.

Chitwan, 9801249337

Sapporo

Satisfy your sushi and noodle fix at Sapporo, which offers authentic Japanese dishes including katsudon, sushi, and refreshing cold noodles.

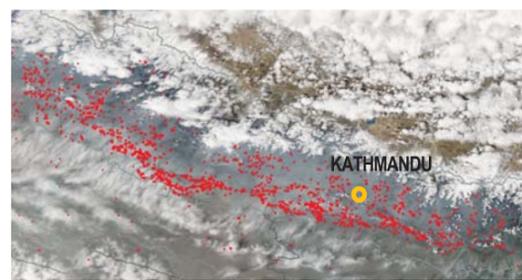
Baluwatar (01) 4512355

**Curilo**

Try the tandoori pita sandwich, fettucine bolognese and apple crumble pie at Curilo, opposite the British Embassy.

Lazimpat (01) 4005079

WEEKEND WEATHER

**Smoke in the sky**

There is no end in sight to the brush fires raging across Nepal, as we see in this NASA FIRMS image on Thursday. Most of the fires are in Parsa, Bara, Chitwan, Nawalparasi, and Dang along the East-West Highway; but the smoke blankets the entire country because of up-valley winds. There is a slight chance of a localised shower on Sunday, but it will not be widespread or heavy enough to douse the flames. The smoke will filter the sun over the coming days, capping the maximum temperature in Kathmandu at 27-28°C.

OUR PICK

12th Fail, the 2023 Hindi-language biographical drama directed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra, tells the real life story of Manoj Kumar Sharma and his journey from failing his 12th grade exams to becoming an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer. The film's simple but well-done rags to riches plot is true to its tagline 'Haar nahi maanunga' (Never Give Up). Beautifully crafted, this critically acclaimed film is an inspirational story about persistence and winning despite the odds. Stars Vikrant Massey, Medha Shankar and Anant Joshi.



MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI



Your direction is more important
than your speed.

— Richard L. Evans

गर्मी मौसममा संक्रामक रोगबाट बचाउ र बचाऔं

- गर्मी मौसममा मलेरिया, कालाजार, डेंगी, हैजालगायतका विभिन्न संक्रामक रोगहरू फैलिन सक्छन् ।
- संक्रामक रोग फैलाउने झिँगा, लामखुट्टे, भुसुना आदिको नियन्त्रण गरौं ।
- संक्रामक रोगबाट बच्न शुद्ध र उमालेको पानी पिऔं ।
- बासी तथा सडेगलेका खाना नखाऔं ।
- घरभित्र र वरपरको सरसफाइमा ध्यान दिऔं ।



नेपाल सरकार
विज्ञापन बोर्ड

The world's moral failure in Gaza

Without immediate action to alleviate Gaza's suffering and stop Israel, the worst may be yet to come

■ Graça Machel

The relentless siege on Gaza is a dark reflection on humanity. Well over 100,000 Palestinians have been declared killed, injured, or missing over the past six months, and the overwhelming majority are innocent civilians who bear no responsibility for Hamas' 7 October attack.

The United Nations Security Council has finally passed a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire and the immediate release of hostages held by Hamas. Now, all UN member states, particularly Israel's political and military allies, must do everything in their power to ensure that the resolution is implemented in full as soon as possible.

For Gazans who survive Israel's military assaults, a lethal combination of displacement, hunger, and disease awaits. Israel's blockade of humanitarian supplies, food, and clean water has made life in the enclave a nightmare.

Aid agencies report mothers giving birth without anaesthetics, babies dying from dehydration and malnutrition, and sickness ravaging entire communities. With no one in Gaza safe from massacre, we have reached the threshold of population-scale annihilation.

The trauma is now reverberating across the whole region. Gazans are haunted by post-traumatic stress disorder and grief, and more than one million children are in dire need of psycho-social support. The latest devastation adds to the suffering inflicted by Israel's 18-year-old blockade of Gaza.

And in the West Bank, Palestinians face multiple threats, from unconstrained settler violence and forced displacement to the constant threat of arbitrary detention.

At the same time, more than 100 Israelis and many foreigners are still held hostage by Hamas, in contravention of international humanitarian law, prolonging the pain felt by their families and those of the civilians killed on 7 October.

Worse may come if Israel defies warnings from its closest allies and moves ahead with its plans for an assault on Rafah, which is currently host to 1.5 million people, including over 600,000 children.

Many of those seeking refuge in this border city have already endured the trauma of multiple displacements over the past half-year. A full-scale Israeli military incursion must not be allowed to happen.

I write these words as someone who looked into the eyes of young Palestinians while preparing the 1996 UN report, *The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*. Speaking to children in refugee camps, we promised that their suffering would end. Not only have we failed to make good on that promise, we have left an even more hostile world for children who happen to be born Palestinian. I carry this haunting failure



NAAMAN OMAR / AP/IMAGES

with me. I also write these words as a member of The Elders, the group of independent global leaders that I co-founded with my late husband, Nelson Mandela, and which was chaired in its early years by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Madiba (Mandela) gave us a mandate to work for peace, justice, and human rights worldwide, and he always considered Palestinian liberation to be key to achieving a just and free world for all.

How can any of us speak credibly of universal human rights and the international rule of law when we permit brutality and occupation to continue for decades?

Amid such despair and lack of moral courage by those with the power to stop the current carnage in Gaza, I am proud of the exceptional leadership that South Africa has shown in bringing a complaint against Israel for violating the Genocide Convention at the International Court of Justice.

The ICJ's preliminary ruling on 26 January and the additional measures ordered on 28 March explicitly condemn the atrocities taking place in Gaza and are unambiguous about the steps Israel must take to protect innocent Palestinians, including unhindered provision of humanitarian assistance at scale.

Israel and the countries providing it with military and financial assistance must

heed the court's findings and adhere to their obligations under international law. But we are not helpless in the face of this monumental suffering.

As members of one human family, we have an ethical duty to speak out against these injustices in our own circles of influence. We can wield power through our own individual and community activism. With our votes and protests, we can – and must – demand accountability from our political leaders.

Here is what we must demand. First, additional humanitarian land routes urgently need to be opened to meet the overwhelming need for life-saving aid. The safety of aid deliveries must be guaranteed at all times.

Air drops and the recently proposed maritime corridor are insufficient, and must not be allowed to absolve Israel of its own responsibility to civilians in Gaza.

Second, world leaders must use military and financial leverage to compel Israel to cease its violations of international law and comply with the ICJ's orders. All countries providing military assistance to Israel should immediately put these shipments under review and set new conditions for future provision. Those that continue supplying arms are enabling the carnage and may be complicit in war crimes.

Third, decision-makers must provide

full financial and political support to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). Many donors have rushed to suspend funding for the organisation, pending the outcome of investigations into Israel's allegations that some UNRWA staff participated in the 7 October attack.

This premature, disproportionate response is now irresponsibly endangering the rights and well-being of millions of Palestinian refugees. The Israeli government has made no secret of its desire to dismantle UNRWA once and for all. Will we allow it to become yet another casualty of the war?

The situation cries out for concerted action by a broad coalition of countries committed to a just and permanent peace that enables Israelis and Palestinians to co-exist under conditions of mutual respect, self-determination, dignity, and security. Palestinian and Israeli lives and security are of equal worth. If this fundamental truth does not prevail on political leaders and ordinary citizens, we will continue to forsake generations of innocent children. 🇺🇸



Graça Machel is a Mozambican politician, Deputy Chair of The Elders and founder of the Graça Machel Trust. She is the widow of former President of Mozambique Samora Machel and former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela.

SalesBerry

COMING SOON

GRAND OPENING

Salesberry Tower, Maharajgunj

Fuel of the future is here

Nepali researchers test hydrogen-fuelled car, but much fine-tuning still needed

■ Sonia Awale

A year-and-a-half after the Nepal Green Hydrogen Summit, Kathmandu University (KU) last week successfully tested a hydrogen fuel cell car for the first time in Nepal.

KU's Green Hydrogen Lab used 10kg of water and 45 units of electricity costing \$5 to produce 1kg of hydrogen to give a Hyundai SUV a range of 100km. Using petrol to drive the same distance would cost Rs1,400 at the gas station.

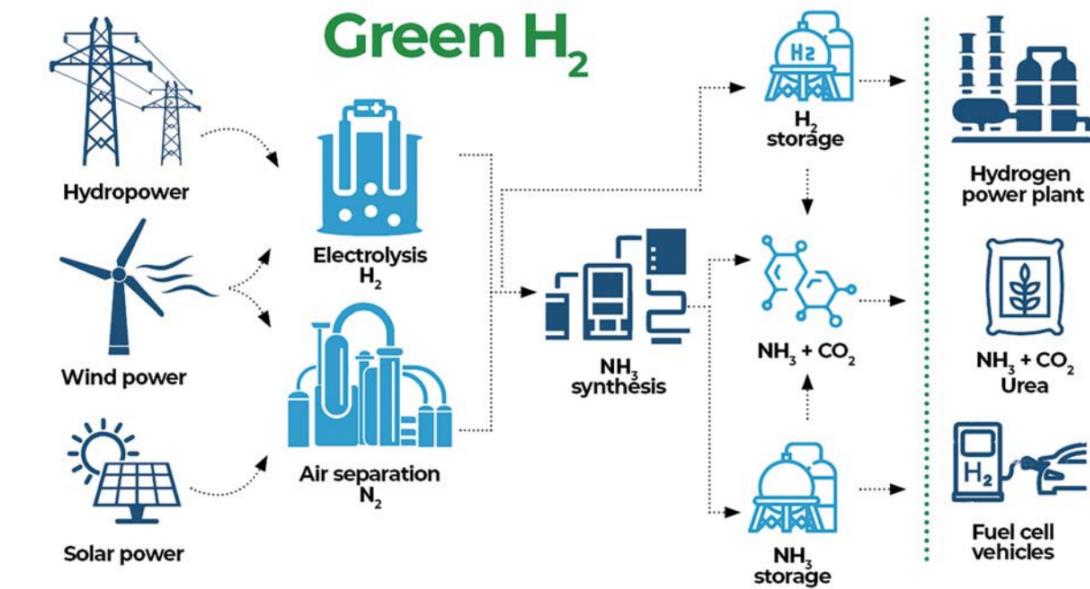
At present, running an EV is even cheaper, because a battery-powered car needs Rs106 of electricity to go 100km.

The technology is not new—industries and factories have been using hydrogen for over 100 years to manufacture chemicals and fertilisers, refine oil, and process food, among others.

But earlier processes used fossil energy for the electrolysis to separate hydrogen and oxygen in water molecules. Called Grey Hydrogen, it had a large carbon footprint. There was also Blue Hydrogen produced from methane in natural gas.

Green Hydrogen from electrolysis of water uses renewable energy sources like hydropower or geothermal. Carbon dioxide is not released or involved at any stage, and the clean hydrogen in fuel cells can be used to heat homes and offices and power transportation.

"We in Nepal have an opportunity to use our abundant



hydroelectricity to produce hydrogen which can replace imported petroleum," says Biraj Singh Thapa, who heads the university's Green Hydrogen Lab.

Nepal's existing generation capacity is 2,800MW and the government's target is to reach 30,000MW by 2035. Monsoon hydropower surplus is going waste because of lack of demand at present, while electricity production falls in the dry season.

But with more hydropower plants coming online, Nepal will soon have a winter surplus and new demand has to be created so electricity does not go to

waste. Export is one option but it is more beneficial to use the excess electricity within the country to replace petroleum.

If diesel, petrol and gas consumption is reduced by even 10%, Nepal can slash Rs30 billion from its import bill. But even if we sell all of our electricity to India, we will earn just half that amount.

Energy experts say hydrogen is the fuel of the future. Battery-powered cars are replacing petrol cars, and ultimately hydrogen will replace EVs.

"Hydrogen will complement EVs," says Thapa. "For short distances, electric vehicles are the

ideal mode of transport, hydrogen is better suited for long-distance buses and trucks that carry heavy loads.

After the successful test, KU's Green Hydrogen Lab is working on policies to operationalise and ultimately commercialise hydrogen fuel production. The government has a Green Hydrogen Policy, but it does not yet have working guidelines and directives to move things along.

"There is still a lot to do. How do we tax hydrogen vehicles, number plates, blue plates, and then there is standardisation of refuelling stations," explains Thapa. "We can have hydrogen refuelling

stations ready in six months or less, but need policymakers and leaders to make the move."

This scenario seems too optimistic to some experts who see many hurdles before hydrogen can replace petrol and diesel — most important will be the cost.

"Unless electricity tariffs come down to \$0.4 cents and the electrolysis process down to \$500/kW, it won't be commercially viable to produce hydrogen in Nepal," maintains Hitendra Dev Shakya, former Managing Director at Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA).

He adds: "At current prices, hydrogen as transport fuel will be very expensive and does not make much sense. Maybe a couple of years down the line when the technology has further evolved. But not now."

Hydrogen has also been discussed as a way for Nepal to store spilled energy during monsoon for use in the dry season. But experts say there is too much efficiency loss, making it commercially not viable.

Besides transportation, hydrogen from electrolysis of water may have other applications. It can be combined with nitrogen in the atmosphere to produce ammonia, which can be further combined with carbon dioxide to manufacture fertilisers like urea and Diammonium Phosphate (DAP).

"The real application of hydrogen in Nepal is in the production of ammonia and fertilisers, so Nepal can be self-sufficient," adds Shakya.

TATA MOTORS
Connecting Aspirations

NEXON EV MAX

MOVES YOU TO THE MAX

Now at Rs.

45.99

Lakhs*

For online booking

SIPRADI TRADING PVT. LTD.,

An ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 45001:2018 Certified Company

Toll Free No.: 16600155777, 9801575777

SIPRADI



GREEN HYDROGEN LAB

“Furthermore, ammonia can be liquefied and stored for weeks whereas hydrogen can be stored just for a few days at most, and converting it back to electricity loses much of its efficiency.”

Nepal suffers from a chronic shortage of chemical fertilisers every year, affecting agricultural production. Farmers across the country need at least 700,000 tonnes of urea worth Rs20 billion, which has to be imported and heavily subsidised.

Ammonia production using hydrogen from water and nitrogen

from the air is fairly energy-intensive, but using hydropower and channelling carbon dioxide from the cement industry can bring down costs. Capturing CO₂ from cement factories would also reduce Nepal’s carbon footprint.

Ammonia is also a refrigerant gas and can purify water. It can also be used in the manufacture of plastics, explosives, textiles, pesticides, dyes and other chemicals. The Nepal Army imports Rs13 billion worth of ammonia for explosives every year. 🇳🇵



दिगो भविष्यको लागि हाम्रो प्रयास

विद्युतीय सवारी खरिद गर्दा **५ वर्ष** सम्म
१०.१०% स्थिर ब्याजदर पाउनुहोस्।



*यो अफर सबै विद्युतीय सवारी साधनमा लागू हुनेछ।

थप जानकारीका लागि: ☎ ०१-५९७०१५० ✉ call@nmb.com.np



NMB BANK
एनएमबि बैंक
समृद्ध नेपालको लागि

LEADER MEMBER



FMO
Financial Markets Foundation
for Eastern Europe
The Netherlands

Member of



Global Alliance for
Banking on Values



Bank of the Year, ASIA 2021



Bank of the Year, Nepal
2017, 2018, 2020 & 2021



TOYOTA

WHY HYBRID ELECTRIC?

REFUEL AS USUAL

Refueling your hybrid is easy. Top up with petrol as normal at fuel stations.

DRIVE LIKE YOU ALWAYS HAVE

Toyota Hybrid Electric models seamlessly switch between electric energy and a blend of petrol and electric power to optimise driving performance.

SELF CHARGING

The self-charging hybrid battery charges when braking or coasting – so there is no need to plug in.



People and mountains are



This is the second in a three-part series on the water shortage driving outmigration from eastern Nepal. The third and last instalment will appear on the 26 April edition.



MOHAN MAINALI

Governments invest in pumping water up from rivers to convince farmers not to migrate out

■ Mohan Mainali in Terathum

For decades, water scarcity, subsistence farming and debt had been driving farmers away from the village of Aathrai in this district of eastern Nepal. The elderly here tell the true story of one lot of people who decades ago were on their seasonal migration down to Jhapa in the plains.

In their four-day trek south, they were spending the first night under a tree by the banks of the Tamor River. As night fell, they heard a crowd of people with their livestock, coming down the path. They held flaming torches, talked loudly and their laughter carried across the river.

The travellers thought they were seeing ghosts, and watched warily. The people on the opposite side filled their brass jars with water, the cows drank their fill, then they climbed slowly back up the steep path along which they had descended.

The migrants watched the torches until they reached the top of the ridge and disappeared into Terathum district. The next morning they found out those were villagers who came down every night with their cattle to collect water because springs up the mountain had gone dry.

That is when the people from Terathum realised that their home



villages had it much better because the villagers of their district did not have to make nightly water ferry trips up and down the mountain.

More, but still not enough

Till recently, wards in Chhathar village in Terathum used to have such a severe water shortage that families had to borrow water like they borrowed money. The nearest spring was two hours walk away, and there would already be up to 60 jars in the queue. It was the job of women to fetch water, and they would trudge home with two jars in baskets on their backs and two plastic containers in their hands.

"This added to the drudgery of women, would delay the preparation of meals for the family and sending children to school, there was no time to clean the house, the livestock were always thirsty and would give less milk," explains Tara Kharel Dhakal, deputy chair of Chhathar Rural Municipality.

She adds: "There are settlements where water shortage is still acute, but we have managed to pipe drinking water to 90% of the households."

Ward 3 Chair Deuman Limbu agrees that drinking water is less of an issue now, but says lack of water is still affecting dairy and vegetable

farming which would have improved nutrition and increased cash income of villagers.

Chhathar's water shortage was alleviated by building a channel from a stream 14km away. There are cliffs along the way where pipes have been laid, but these are often damaged by landslides, wildfires, and maintenance is difficult.

In large parts of Nepal, including here in the east, the main reason people migrate out is because of the lack of drinking water. And although most people here remember the water crisis being much more serious in the past, there is still not enough in the dry season.

There used to be a tradition in Nepal's mountains that travellers could get free food and lodging for the night from villagers along the way, and this would be reciprocated when they themselves needed to stop for the night. It was the same with water: those walking along foot trails would be offered water for free since people believed it would earn them merit in heaven.

But not in villages like Thoklung today, where travellers know how precious water is, and offer to pay for a drink.

Springs are going dry across



QUIET FLOWS THE TAMOR: The glacier-fed Tamor River originates below Kangchenjunga seen here on the horizon (above), and flows below fields waiting for rain.

Before lift pumped water was distributed in Syabrumba of Panchthar district, villages had to wait for their quota of water (left). Today, 60% of the household has piped drinking water.

near the river and pump the water up the mountain and distribute drinking water to 2,000 of the 3,200 households in Kummayak.

But chronic drought has reduced the dry season flow in the Tamor, and villagers had to divert the river's channel closer to the well to maintain water supply. The Tamor Drinking Water Pumping Project is now digging another well at a cost of Rs10 million to augment supply.

Learning from Kummayak, 11 other projects are planned to pump Tamor water up to mountain villages. Some villages that would have benefited, like Aathrai, have just heard the bad news that the federal government does not have the budget to fund their Rs20 million well and pumping station.

Part of the reason there is not enough money is because budgets are also being misused. For example, the central and provincial government are working at cross-purposes and duplicating drinking water schemes. The federal government has a Rs3.5 million pump project in the same place where the Kosi Province has set aside Rs2 million also to lift drinking water.

The water shortage is even more severe in Dhankuta district, where in Chaubise village Ward 3, a Rs80 million project is underway to pump water up from a spring down the mountain.

All these districts of eastern Nepal have lost more than a third of their population in the past 20 years, and local governments see improved water supply as a way to bring their people back. The population of Thoklung village

Nepal's mid-mountains from east to west, partly due to erratic rainfall caused by the climate crisis but also because of over-extraction. Spring water used to be mainly for household use and the extra water would flow down the mountain, seep into the soil and recharge groundwater. These days, farmers pipe water to their homes from nearby springs to irrigate cash crops like cardamom or vegetables.

"New roads drain water away, preventing recharge," explains watershed expert Madhukar Upadhyay. "Paddy terraces used to store water that slowly seeped into the slopes, but with outmigration there is less rice being planted which in turn has affected the water table."

Power to pump water

Necessity is the mother of invention, so desperate villages in eastern Nepal have adopted innovative new ways to ensure water supply. Thirsty families in the parched Kummayak village of Panchthar used to look down longingly at the blue-green waters of the glacier-fed Tamor River.

They decided that instead of migrating to the Tarai, they might as well try to pump the water to their village. Nine years ago, they launched a project to dig a well

thirsty in eastern Nepal



PHOTOS: GIRIRAJ BANSKOTA

of Terathum was 40% less in 2021 than what it was in 2001, so its municipality is working on a pumping scheme to lift water from the Tamor to distribute every household in Ward 7.

Ward Chair Rohit Kandengwa, however, is worried that the project's electricity bill would mean that the household water tariff will be too high.

Indeed, spring water can flow down to a village by gravity. But pumping water from a river to a

ridgetop village can be expensive. The Kummayak project, for example, has an electricity bill of Rs600,000 per month.

"Water has value. We charge 10 paisa per litre of water and that could be expensive to those who are used to free water, but it is better than no water at all, and it is cheaper than water from tankers," says Nirmal Ghimire, chair of Kummayak Ward 5.

But there are other non-monetary benefits from

water pumps, like in curbing outmigration. For the past two years, no families have migrated out of Kummayak village since it got regular water supply.

To be sure, ensuring water supply alone will not stop people since there are other push factors at play: difficulty to access medical care, low quality of public schools, lack of jobs, the government's low priority for agriculture driving people away from farming.

"Farmers here used to sell

WATER OF LIFE: Water gushes at the well on the banks of the Tamor River that pumps water up to Kummayak Rural Municipality. More and more villages in eastern Nepal are now pumping water up from rivers for drinking and irrigation.

milk, but they have not been paid for their milk since nine months," says Chhathar Ward 4 Chair Pushpa Karki. "They cannot sell their goats, middle men fix the price for cardamom and ginger."

The chhurpi and ghee industries have dried up, and dairy farmers have no place to sell milk. It is also a seller's market, and farmers have to buy everything, without credit, and cannot determine the price of their produce.

Lack of connectivity is another reason people migrate from these remote districts. It has been 12 years since construction began on the bridge at Lumughat across the Tamor River that would have linked Terathum and Panchthar, making it easier to take produce to market towns.

Better roads would also improve the quality of instruction – the other reason many families move to Dharan or Kathmandu. Accessibility would motivate teachers to stay in villages.

There is also a herd mentality that drives migration. If one household moves out, the entire neighbourhood ups and moves. Ten of former school principal Hari Narayan Bhattarai's neighbours locked up their homes and moved down to the Tarai partly due to lack of water. Bhattarai lost the support

of next door families that he used to rely on, so he also moved to Birtamod of Jhapa in the plains. Households in the mountains need each other to survive. Neighbours help neighbours to plough, plant and harvest.

And then there is the litany of woes that all Nepalis face: the delays in getting driving licenses, work permits, and other services. People move to where life is easier.

Outmigration also makes pre-existing problems of the mountains worse. Where forests are growing out of fallow terrace fields, with no one to forage for dried undergrowth fire risk has increased, crops are damaged by wildlife, and the decline in livestock has reduced soil fertility.

"The main reason for outmigration is lack of water and low productivity," says Chhathar Deputy Chair Dhakal whose village announced grants of up to Rs500,000 to start up agrobusinesses. Thirty families did return. However, there were no takers for Dhakal's offer of Rs10,000 to households farming their fallow fields again.

Even if rural municipalities find the money to install well and pumps for water supply, paying for maintenance or repairs of broken pipes or pumps can be a problem due to lack of budget.

Watershed expert Madhukar Upadhyay concedes that pumping water from a river to villages in the mountains is only a short-term fix, but not a sustainable solution.

"Over the long-term we must think of reviving traditional system of ponds near springs where water can collect and re-charge groundwater," he explains. "That way we address the thirst of both the people and the mountains." 🇳🇵

This is the second of a 3-part series supported by Barbara Foundation.



Journey with Purpose, Drive with Power



- SYMMETRICAL AWD SINCE 1972
- e-BOXER
- EyeSight Driver Assist Technology
- SI-DRIVE 3 Engines in 1
- X MODE
- HEV

| Top Fuel Efficiency
| Reduced Emissions
| Enhanced Battery Life
| Seamless Integration





Scan for more details



Vijay Motors Pvt. Ltd.
Naxal, Kathmandu
www.subaru.com.np
9801026540 | 9801026541



aloft
KATHMANDU THAMEL

MARRIOTT
BONVOY

Celebrate Nepali New Year 2081 in Exquisite Style

Gala Buffet Dinner | Refreshing Welcome drinks

Nook New Year's with
a buffet to devour, and good vibes galore!

Treat yourself and your loved ones to this unforgettable experience!

Rs. 3500
nett per person

Rs. 6500
nett (For a Couple)

Friday, April 12th, 2024 | 6:30 PM - 10:30 PM



For reservations,
Please contact us at +977-9801976054

