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# Trumpet Call

2016-2029



sanctions, India imports oil from Russia.

Says Akhilesh Upadhyay at the Strategic Affairs Center, IIDS: "From a traditional security perspective, Nepal is bang in the middle of China and India. China and America have a great power rivalry, and it is unclear which way Indian axis will go."

India will also benefit if Trump follows through on threats of tariffs on Chinese exports.

"On the one hand, India is close to US in Quad, but on the other hand, it works with Russia and China in BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation," adds Upadhyay.

Since the enemy of an enemy is a friend, Washington has regarded India as a bulwark against increased Chinese economic and military clout in the region. But New Delhi has not always gone along with US strategic interests, and does not like the Americans being too involved with its South Asian neighbours.

In any case, Nepal could leverage America's India policy and benefit from greater US engagement in the South Asian region.

Upadhyay cautions about reading too much into the power change in Washington. He says, "We should look beyond the leader to the administration. There are checks and balances in American politics, I don't think any president can singlehandedly make or break rules and policies."

Other experts agree that for Nepal, it does not really matter which party is in power in the White House. But a Trump win

could mean less development assistance to Nepal, particularly in reproductive health, human rights, and social safety.

Nishchal Pandey at the Centre for South Asian Studies in Kathmandu recalls that the few state-level visits between the US and Nepal (from King Mahendra's address to the joint session of US Congress in 1960 to US Secretary of State Colin Powell's visit in 2002) have been during Republican administrations.

"Historically, Republican presidents and administrations have been interested in Nepal than Democratic ones," he says.

More directly, Nepalis aspiring to migrate to the United States could now find it more difficult. Trump has threatened a 20% tariff on Mexican imports if it does not stop migrants and says he will deport 11 million undocumented people. Even Nepalis already in the US may now be sent back.

America's moral authority to lecture countries like Nepal on transitional justice, human rights, democracy, and press freedom will also be diminished during the second Trump term. Reproductive rights, support for family planning projects in Nepal through the UN system may also fall.

But the more profound impact of a second Trump term will be on a planetary scale as he tries to roll back on climate mitigation. This will mean accelerated melting of the Himalayan ice cap with major impact on water supply downstream in Asia.

"America's climate commitments and goals will be affected by Trump who doesn't believe in climate change," says Paudyal. "The current work on loss and damage, and carbon trading, that depends significantly on US funding, would be scaled back."

Adds Upadhyay: "While Trump's commitment to climate change does not look as strong as other administrations, the Himalaya is a global heritage, and extreme weather patterns is not just a regional issue, it is a global loss, and it will impact the US too."

If Trump can bring the Ukraine war to a close by cosying up to Putin, a peace deal may improve fuel and food situation globally. There are thousands of Nepalis in the Russian Army, at least 50 have died, and they could finally come home.

Concludes Upadhyay: "The Trump administration should see Nepal as a sovereign nation on its own right rather than through the prism of great power rivalry between US and China." 🇳🇵

## ■ Shristi Karki

The shock wave of the return of Donald Trump to the White House, as well as the Republican control of the Senate and perhaps the House will impact not just America, but the planet.

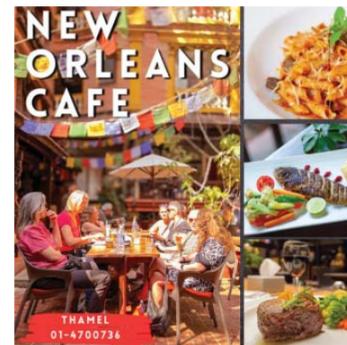
The impact on Nepal will be indirect — through the more unpredictable ways Washington will now deal with its two giant neighbours, China and India.

"There is fear that Trump will abandon multilateralism and dump allies, pushing the world to more polarisation," says MP and

former Foreign Minister Bimala Rai Paudyal. "But Nepal is small fry in the grand scheme of things. We must ensure that we establish our independent status between two rising powers."

India and China can both now fill the gap left by Trump America's retreat from global and regional leadership, and take advantage of Trump diluting relations with or abandoning traditional allies in Europe and Asia.

Although India is in the western camp, New Delhi calls its own shots, and uses its growing economic clout to thumb its nose at the EU and the US. Despite western



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# Home is where the heart is

At the annual Non-resident Nepali Association (NRNA) conference in Kathmandu last month, the mood was sombre.

The optimism of the past year after Parliament passed the Nepal Citizenship (First Amendment) Bill has passed. The bill allows Nepalis overseas all the rights of Nepali citizens, except the privilege of voting and running for political office.

That Bill itself took eight years to pass after the 2015 Constitution stipulated that non-residents could 'enjoy economic, social, and cultural rights in accordance with federal law'. The provision is not for dual citizenship, but for second citizenship.

As far back as 2008, the government had introduced the Non-Resident Nepali Act, categorising them as individuals of Nepali origin who had acquired foreign citizenship, or any Nepali citizen residing abroad for more than two years. It excluded Nepalis residing and working in SAARC member countries.

yearly household income is more than \$100,000.

Nepalis can run into compatriots in just about every corner of the globe, and the money they send home annually just through official channels totals \$11 billion. The real figure is much higher.

The Non-Resident Nepalese Association (NRNA) was established in 2003 and now has 97,000 members and chapters in 87 countries. Those with NRN citizenship can now technically acquire property through purchase, inheritance, or investment. They can also obtain 10-year visas, are entitled to run any business in Nepal, open bank accounts, bring in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) or make investments just like Nepali citizens. NRNs are exempt from taxes on investment, and may repatriate the investment and profits to their home country.

But it looks like no one has told Nepal's bureaucracy about these provisions. There is just too much red tape, rigmarole, restrictions, kickbacks and payoffs every step of the way.

Inheritance rights only exist on paper, NRN citizens are made to jump through hoops to purchase property, and many have just given up. The word has spread in the NRN community that despite the 2022 Bill, Nepal is not for the faint-hearted.

Tara Baral from Jhapa spent 20 years and is a US citizen. He decided to move

back to Nepal last year, and got an NRN citizenship to buy an apartment in Kathmandu. Even though he was not buying real estate, bureaucrats told him foreigners were not allowed to buy property. Baral was asked at the Immigration Department to pay for his

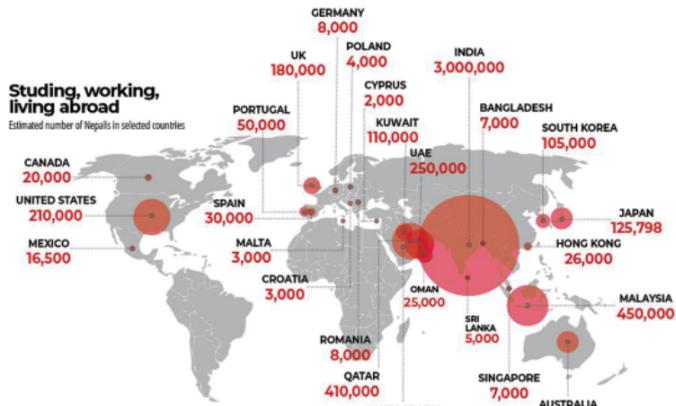
visa renewal.

Basudev Ghimire, an American with NRN citizenship is asked at Kathmandu Airport to pay a visa fee every time he enters Nepal despite the 10-year gratis visa rule. He has not been able to buy any property.

Nepal's main political parties have maintained strong ties with the diaspora for dollar donations. Leading politicians make frequent fund-raising forays abroad. The NRNA is now politically compromised, reflecting power struggles back home, and fist-fights break out at NRNA chapter elections abroad.

Nepal's parties have been loath to address the issue of NRNs because they feel overseas Nepalis are inherently anti-incumbent. Parliament has stalled a bill that would give Nepali passport holders working and studying abroad absentee voting rights.

Heaping blame on just the politicians would be unfair. The bureaucracy has become a den of thieves. No wonder there was not much to enthuse delegates at the annual NRNA jamboree in Kathmandu.



## Overseas Nepalis want to contribute to the country's socio-economic future, but Nepal makes it difficult for them

Lately, overseas Nepalis have found that the process of obtaining an NRN citizenship is needlessly convoluted. District Administration Offices refuse to issue US-based NRNs a second citizenship without their Social Security number despite American laws prohibiting the disclosure of the number outside of the US. NRNs have had to pay visa fees even though there is a government directive that they do not have to do so.

The idea was to make it easy for many to invest in Nepal, or retire in their motherland in the hope that this would boost the economy. Many first and second-generation Nepali émigré across the world have children and grandchildren who want to discover their heritage.

Nearly 750,000 Nepalis went abroad for employment in the past year. Another 112,000 left initially on student visas, many of them also to work and emigrate. These figures do not include those who went to India or left through unofficial channels. Back of the envelope, it would mean at least 1 million Nepalis left Nepal last year.

Besides these there are Nepalis settled permanently overseas, spread across North America, Europe, Australia, and East Asia. There are 290,000 documented people of Nepali origin in the US alone – their average

## ONLINE PACKAGES



The mountains of Palpa in central Nepal are famous for Dhaka weaves. But besides the colourful handcrafted fabric, Palpa is now also the centre of lemon cultivation, thanks to an enterprising couple, Goma and Hum Nath Bhandari. Watch the video on our YouTube channel to learn about their entrepreneurial journey.



For people of Lalbojhi and Bhajani villages in Kailali district, Manish Chaudhary acts as the human bridge, ferrying people, bikes and four-wheelers in an old wooden boat from one bank to the other. Watch the video on Nepali Times' YouTube channel, and subscribe for multimedia content.

### SAFF SEMI-FINAL

This is a great read, and the only article that has written clearly pointing out the horrendous refereeing during the SAFF semi-final ('Ruckus at the Rangasala', Vishad Raj Onta, nepalitimes.com). As one of the spectators inside the stadium that day, I could completely relate to every word here.

Aashish Pakhrin

■ This is a well-written article, and the only one I found that explained what really transpired inside the stadium during the semi-final and why. A fantastic read.

Cryjoe

■ What a great piece. The details of the game are so vivid and interesting.

Pradeep Bhandari

### NT NEWSLETTER

I always find publisher Kunda Dixit's weekly newsletter to be both entertaining and useful ('Trafficking in Kathmandu', Kunda Dixit, <https://nepalitimes.substack.com/p/trafficking-in-kathmandu>). I recommend it to everyone who likes to spend time reading for pleasure, as well as for more knowledge.

Bharat Koirala

■ This week's newsletter on Kathmandu traffic was hilarious and spot on.

Kusum Athukorala

### MIYAWAKI FOREST

What a wonderful project to plant trees on the banks of Bishnumati in Kathmandu ('Saving cities with trees', Vishad Raj Onta #1233). I hope both the authorities and citizens will come to realise the importance of trees and appreciate the commitment of these volunteers. We should be grateful for people like them.

Martin Max Aart de Jong

■ My friends who live along the river in Teku lost their home. They sent me a video of their rooms full of mud. It was devastating especially as they are desperately poor and many are now homeless. Sadly, as the article points out, the government will do nothing to promote this project. It will be paved over soon enough.

Margaret Kerr

## Times.com

## WHAT'S TRENDING



### "I lived a simple, boring life"

by Harka Lal Bishowkarma  
The 51<sup>st</sup> Diaspora Diaries column is the story of Harka Lal Bishowkarma who was born in Mumbai to a family from Achham, and now drives an autorickshaw in the city after working all his life to raise his three children. Read about his extraordinary life at nepalitimes.com and watch the video.

Most reached and shared on Facebook

### Home is where the heart is

Editorial  
Non-Resident Nepalis want to contribute to the country's socio-economic future, but Nepal makes it as difficult for them as possible. Nepal's political leadership's strong ties with the diaspora for their dollar donations has ended up politicising the NRN community, reflecting the divisions back home. Read the editorial, left.

Most popular on X

### Ruckus at the Rangasala

by Vishad Raj Onta  
Despite its loss in the finals to Bangladesh, Nepal's women's football team held its own at the SAFF tournament. But more importantly, the semifinals with India had a lot of lessons: about repeated refereeing inconsistencies, overdone, premature celebrations after goals, wildly partisan home supporters, and a warning for crowd control in future. Join the discussion online.

Most commented

### East meets West at Kathmandu Jazz

by Pinki Sris Rana  
The 20<sup>th</sup> edition of Jazzmandu brought western and eastern musicians together, and made it clear that cultural interaction has been more prominent with the collaboration that have taken place between national and international artists. Read the round-up of this year's festival on page 9.

Most visited online page

## QUOTES

**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**  
#Editorial The Non Resident Nepali Association is hosting a global conclave in Kathmandu 27-28 November. They say overseas Nepalis want to contribute to the country's socio-economic future, but Nepal makes them jump through hoops.

**Krishna Joshi @krishna\_joshi01**  
States the case very mildly. It is quite clear Nepal's bureaucrats are against this idea of NRN Citizenship & acquiring property. Politicians as usual are subservient to bureaucrats on such matters. In any case, the NRN issue is right at the bottom of their priorities.

**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**  
A second Trump term to affect US ties with China and India, because of that will impact Nepal as well. #USElections2024

**pigreen1 @pigreen1**  
Time for Nepal to consolidate its relations with both China and India

## 20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

### Maoist tourism

The Maoists were at one point a tourist attraction in Nepal. In this report from November 2004, foreigners narrate their close encounters with friendly mountain guerrillas who charged them a 'revolutionary tax'.

Excerpts of the report published 20 years ago this week in issue #220, 5-11 November 2004:

It was bound to happen sooner or later: Maoists have become Nepal's latest tourist attraction. Trekking lodges along the Annapurna Base Camp trail are abuzz with hikers exchanging experiences on their encounters with the rebels and passing around precious souvenirs: Maoist tax receipts emblazoned with portraits of Lenin, Stalin and Mao.

Compared to last year, when many tourists were apprehensive about meeting Maoists and felt uncomfortable about paying a 'revolutionary tax' to a group espousing violence, this season's trekkers seem to have taken the rebels in stride.

"They behaved like friends," said Joni Lundstrom from



Sweden, "they gave us a receipt for Rs 1,000 and told us they would provide us with security."

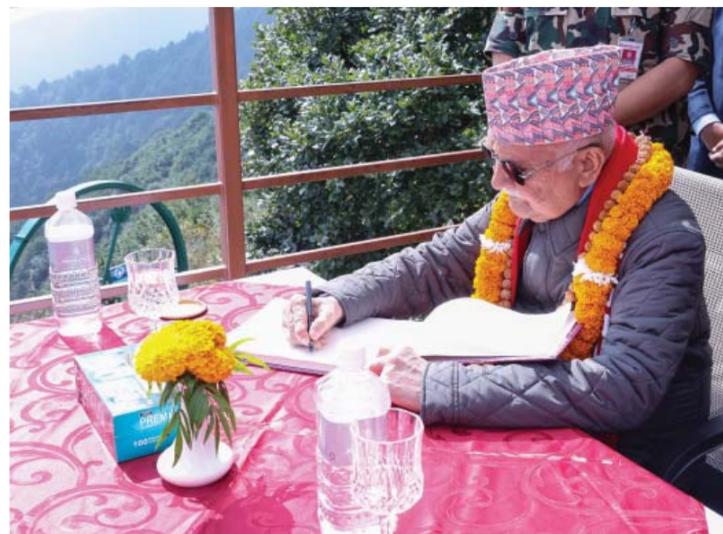
There is an apparent paradox here: anywhere else in the world news of violence dissuades tourists but in Nepal it seems to be turning out to be something of a draw. Part of the reason is that the young Maoists that trekkers have met on the Annapurna Base Camp trail are non-threatening, friendly and helpful. The result is that the Annapurna trail has seen a spurt in trekking compared to the last season when publicity

about firefights near Ghandruk forced many to go to Khumbu instead.

Although the war tax is mandatory, it doesn't seem to bother individual trekkers much, they see it as just another fee that tourists have to pay the authorities every step of the way in Nepal.

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

## 1,000 WORDS



PMO / RSS

### HALE AND HEARTY:

K P Oli at Chandragiri resort on Friday, 1 November enjoying what his office said was the prime minister 'creating literature'. This photograph appears to have been put out to dispel rumours that PM Oli was not well.



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# The silent danger of lead

One in three urban Nepali children have dangerously high blood lead levels

The corridor between Simara and Birganj is Nepal's prominent industrial area. Proximity to the Indian border, and location astride the main highway to Kathmandu also makes it an important trade route.



**BORDERLINES**  
Chandrakishore

However, these very attributes also bring about many problems and health risks. Pollution of the waterways by factories is one hazard. Toxic effluent leaches into the soil contaminating groundwater.

The other less visible but insidious health hazard—on both sides of the border—is lead poisoning. Neither in India nor in Nepal is there much awareness about the long term impact of lead in the environment.

The solution to this problem should also be crossborder, but like with every other transboundary issue there is very little discussion about it between the two governments.

Worldwide, the lead exposure risk has reduced after it was discovered that environmental lead causes reductions in IQ and cardiovascular disease. Leaded gasoline was phased out.

In Nepal, however, research by the group CEPHEP (Center for Public Health and Environmental Development) in Kathmandu has shown that lead is still present in paint. Lead chromate is used in colour dyes, especially during Tihar. It is also in cooking utensils. Perhaps this is a factor in Nepal having the lowest average IQ according to the World Population Review report.

Another Rapid Market Survey by the group Pure Earth that analysed hundreds of household



GOPEN RAI

items in Nepal found that 14 types of ceramic, aluminium or plastic kitchenware had levels of lead above safe limits. Recycled aluminium cookware that leaches lead is the most common of the three sources.

Here in the Tarai, there is evidence that lead content in the kajal traditional eye-liners used daily by women is high enough to be a health hazard too.

The frightening thing is that despite the known risk, there have been no studies in the borderlands between India and Nepal about the lead content in the bloodstream of the population, especially of women and children.

There are some extrapolated global statistics that suggest

one third of urban Nepalis have blood lead levels that are higher than the safe threshold. Even Amarnath Thakur of the Mangalam Diagnostic Centre in Birganj says there are no reliable figures on lead contamination.

There was a paper published in the Journal of Pathology of Nepal in 2016 that said the blood lead level among school-going children was 'alarmingly high'.

"There has not been enough definitive research, but the condition is probably not very good, especially among children," says paediatrician Sailash Thakur, who thinks it is largely because of the proximity of the industrial corridor.

In Kathmandu, two out of every three children could grow into

adults with limited mental and intellectual capacity because of high blood lead content.

"Imagine what this will do to our country," paediatrician Imran Ansari at Patan Hospital told Nepali Times in 2018. A 2013 survey of school children in Kathmandu Valley calculated that every extra 10µg/dl concentration of lead in the blood resulted in a drop in IQ of 2.35 points.

Here in Birganj, children and pregnant women are exposed to high lead content, but there is little awareness, no strategy to tackle it, and no action on the part of local, provincial or federal governments.

Awareness is especially necessary before festivals like Diwali, Chhath, or Holi in which

spices, vermilion and coloured powders with high lead chromate content are used. These things also have highly toxic heavy metals like cadmium and strontium.

The paint industry uses lead to make products shinier, make paint dry faster and reduce rust. Even though the companies say that they voluntarily no longer use lead, there is little monitoring whether they have actually stopped.

One research in the Tarai found groundwater contaminated with lead and arsenic, but municipalities here have never heard of either.

It has been ten years since the Ministry of Forests and Environment issued a gazette notice fixing the maximum lead concentration in paint to 90 ppm (parts per million). But that regulation seems to exist only on paper, and the government has abandoned its primary responsibility of safeguarding the health of people.

Lead poisoning is not like other types of toxic ingestion. Children and adults can be exposed to it ambiently through air. Once it enters the bloodstream, the lead has long term effects on the brain and other organs. Children have been found to be especially vulnerable.

Lead poisoning can critically harm the foetus if a pregnant mother is exposed to it.

There are many sources of contamination: carelessly disposed lead acid batteries, inverter batteries, e-waste, leaded paint, water coming out of lead pipes. But the general public is mostly unaware of these risks.

Lead poisoning is a hidden danger, and if the federal government does not care, it should be the Madhes Province that does by spreading public awareness, monitoring sources of lead, and providing safe alternatives. Cooperation with local governments across the open porous border in India would also be essential. 🇳🇵

Chandrakishore is a Birganj-based political commentator. @kishore\_chandra

## NMB BANK एनएमबी बैंक

### Turkish wins big

Turkish Airlines won three awards at the APEX/IFSA Global Expo in California: the 'FTE Pioneer' award, 'Best-In-Class' in sustainability, and 'World Class' recognition based on performance across safety and well being, service-guest experience, and sustainability. "This triple recognition underscores our dedication to enhancing passenger experience, driving innovation, and integrating sustainable practices across our operations while delivering a world-class experience for our guests," says Turkish Airlines Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee, Ahmet Bolat.



Adds APEX Group CEO Joe Leader: "Their unmatched global network, combined with a passenger experience enriched by world-renowned Turkish hospitality, sets a high bar for excellence. With the unveiling of their new Crystal Business Class suite in 2024, featuring enhanced privacy, larger seating, and exquisite design details, Turkish Airlines continues to elevate the standards of premium air travel, truly embodying the essence of APEX World Class by YATES+."



### Bhairawa airport

Kuwait's Jazeera, Fly Dubai and Thai Air Asia are set to begin flights to Bhairawa airport. CAAN had insisted that budget airlines also serve the airport near Lumbini by using the partial 10 hour closure of Kathmandu airport from 8 November to 31 March. The strong-arm tactics seems to have worked, but the airlines are still flying to Kathmandu before flying back to their home bases, so it will not reduce congestion in Kathmandu by much, experts say, which was the original intention.

### Chilime-Trisuli green-lit

The 220kV Chilime-Trisuli transmission line which is crucial for power export to China has been completed seven years after construction first began. The transmission line will evacuate electricity from the 111MW Rasuwagadi and 42.5MW Sanjen hydropower projects, as well as other projects under construction or planned in Rasuwa by Chilime Hydropower.

### DishHome deals

On subscribing to a 200/300Mbps annual package of DishHome, customers will get an extra three month gratis. There are weekly lucky draws for home appliances, smartphones, earbuds, and a 4k streamer. There is also a bumper lucky draw for a washing machine, and discounts of up to 70% on products.

### IME Yeti

Customers will get Rs500 cashback on Yeti Airlines tickets bought through Global IME's 'Global Smart Plus' app with code 'FLYETI.' The offer can be used up to three times and is valid until 29 November.

### Enfield honour

Royal Enfield Nepal gave a Rs95,000 prize to Dipak Sah for his victory in the Rally of Himalayas. The 600km route tested the riders and the Royal Enfield Himalayan 411's



capabilities on long distances over rugged, high altitude terrain including Rohtang Pass (3,978m), Kaza, Spiti Valley and Kundzum Pass (4,551m).



### Sipradi bus handover

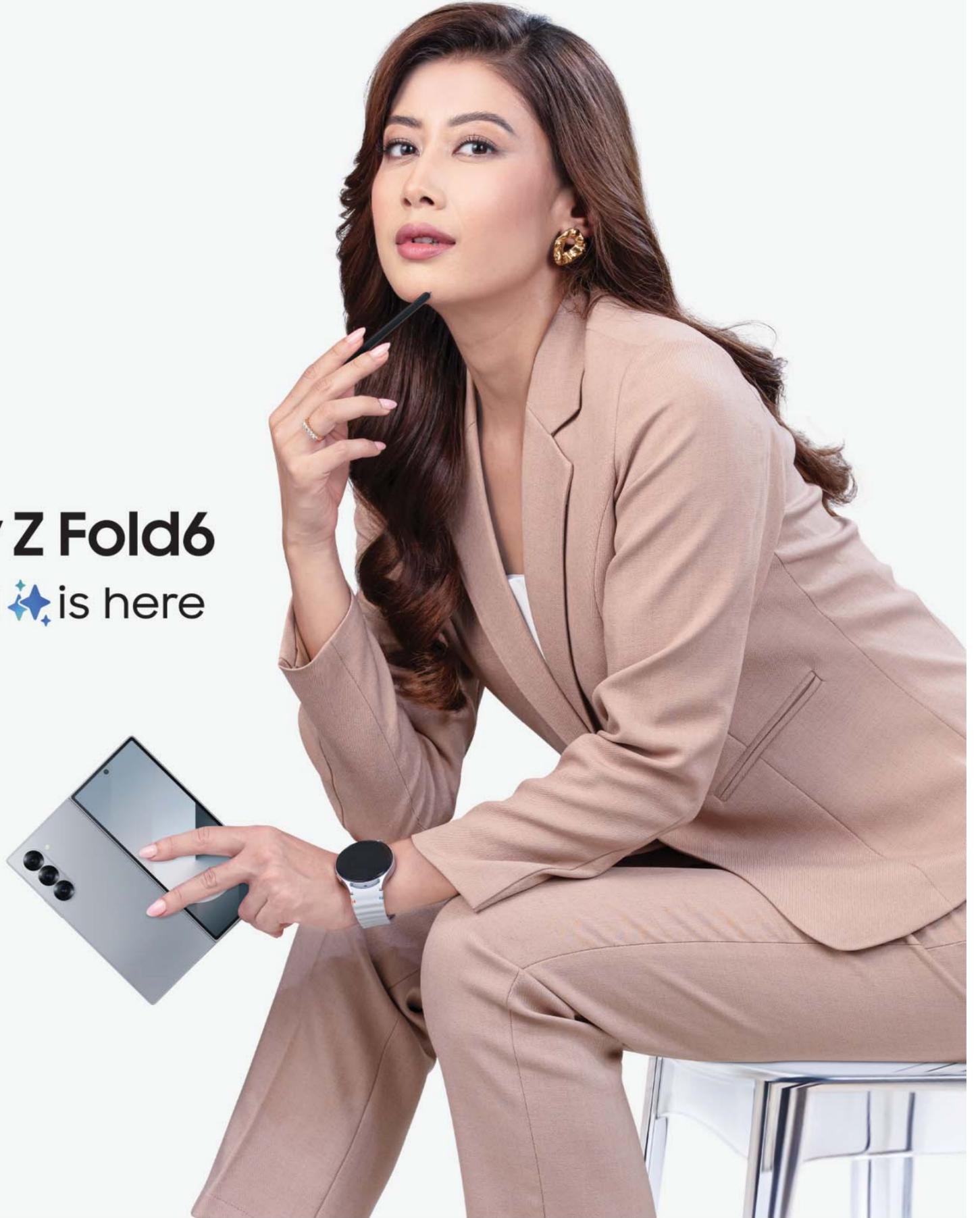
Sipradi handed over ten TATA Magna Buses to Trishakti Pashupati Darshan Yatayat at an event in Pathardanda, Rupandehi this week. The buses with AC have 44 seats and are designed to be environmentally friendly with efficient engines, emission filters, and a diagnostic system. The company will operate the buses on a Lumbini-Delhi route.

### KTM airport status

Starting 8 November, Kathmandu airport will close from 10PM to 8AM for construction on the taxiway system to allow more efficient takeoffs and landings. The reduced hours have caused the price of airline tickets to and from Nepal to soar, in some cases by more than 500%. This has led to some cancellations in hotels that were previously booked to capacity. Tourism has rebounded in Nepal, with over 124,000 visiting in October 2024. This is 6% higher than October 2023, and 93% of the number of arrivals in pre-pandemic October 2019. Most tourists in the past month came from India and the US.

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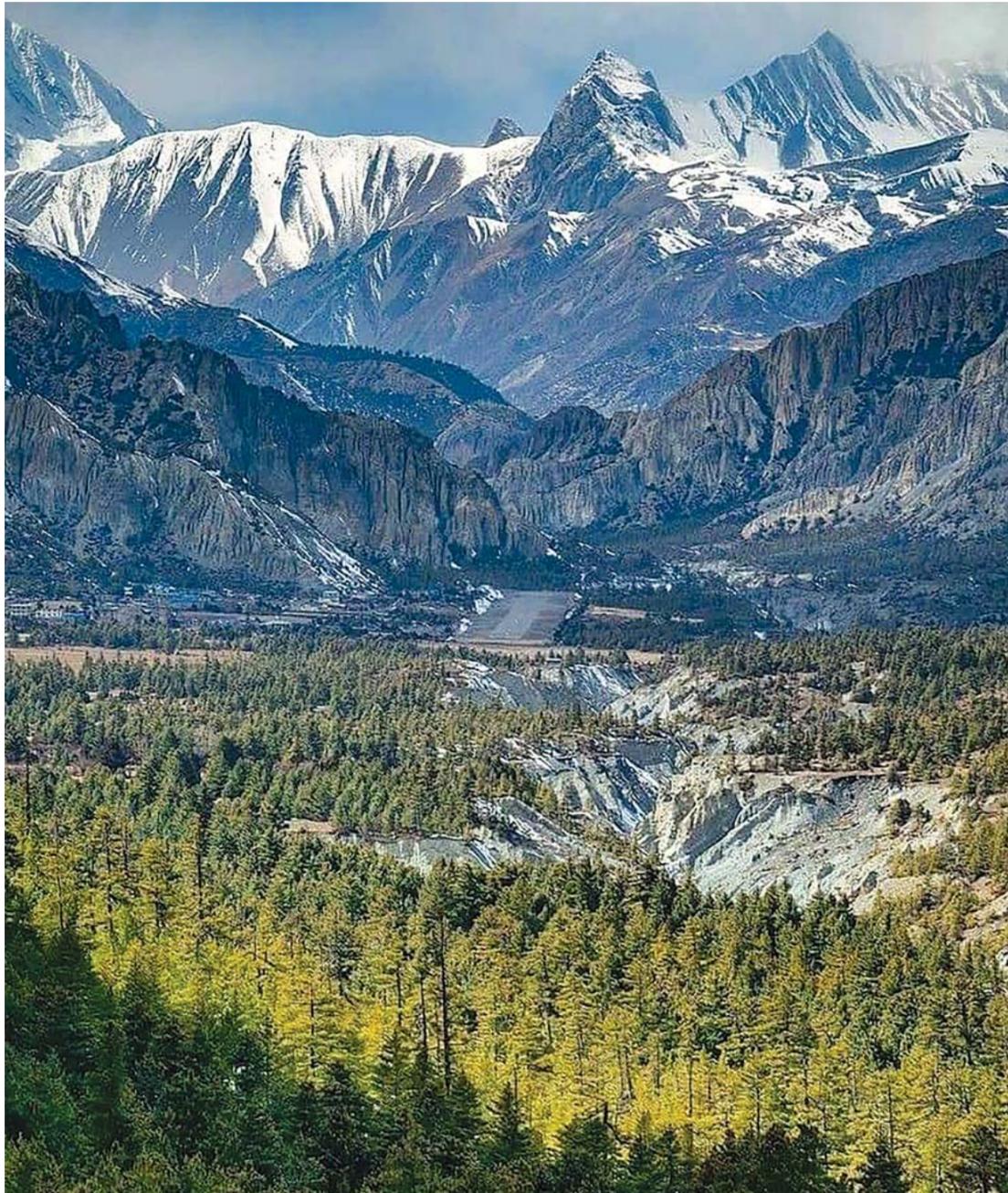
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SOCIAL MEDIA

# Airfields with

Of the 49 airports in Nepal, more than 25 have no



Simkot, Humla



NO FLY Z

### Airports in regular use

- |             |              |               |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1 Simkot    | 9 Jomsom     | 17 Rajbiraj   |
| 2 Rara      | 10 Bhairawa  | 18 Phaplu     |
| 3 Bajhang   | 11 Pokhara   | 19 Lukla      |
| 4 Sanfe     | 12 Bharatpur | 20 Bhojpur    |
| 5 Dhangadi  | 13 Kathmandu | 21 Tumlingtar |
| 6 Surkhet   | 14 Simara    | 22 Biratnagar |
| 7 Nepalganj | 15 Janakpur  | 23 Bhadrapur  |
| 8 Dolpo     | 16 Ramechhap | 24 Taplejung  |

# Keeping pilots flying to remote

Nepal's domestic airlines are finding it difficult to retain pilots who fly to challenging mo

■ Ajay Pradhan

Ever since the first flight into Kathmandu of a Beechcraft Bonanza in 1949 and the rapid development of civil aviation, Nepal's terrain has necessitated the use of Short Takeoff and Landing (STOL) aircraft that serve small mountain airstrips.

Building roads and infrastructure to connect remote communities was always expensive, and until recently many districts were only accessible through STOL airfields, or by foot.

Despite a growing road network over the years, STOL operations continue to be a vital lifeline to isolated settlements in the mountains.

Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation began its operations in 1958 with World War II vintage DC-3s, but for shorter airfields it inducted the de Havilland DHC-6-300 Twin Otters in 1970. At one point, Nepal's flag carrier had an assortment of 19 aircraft, including nine Twin Otters and three Pilatus Porter PC-6 STOL aircraft.

The airline also briefly flew the STOL-capable Harbin Y-12E in 2014 and has only two airworthy Twin Otters. However, it



Tumlingtar in 1980

SOCIAL MEDIA



was the STOL operations of Nepal Airlines 50 years ago that laid the foundation for the entry of private domestic STOL operators.

The government's open skies policy in the 1990s dismantled the monopoly of the state-owned Nepal Airlines, heralding the privatisation of Nepal's domestic aviation market and the arrival of many STOL-only airlines, of which Sita Air, Summit Air, and Tara Air are still operating today.

However, flying STOL aircraft has become a less preferred job option for pilots, and flight crew retention has become a challenge for them.

After initial progression, STOL pilots typically encounter career stagnation and face two alternatives: remain in the same company with the same flight responsibilities, or take on additional management responsibilities with fewer flight hours.

The rapid expansion of non-STOL flights by other domestic operators has created a third option: career enhancement with higher salaries. While employees tend to remain in organisations as long as they receive continuous, nominal salary increases, the lack of STOL pilot bonuses can make alternative jobs more attractive.

As a result, the STOL pilot has the choice of remaining satisfied with the financial

# Short-haul airplanes

not been in regular use for decades, yet more are being built



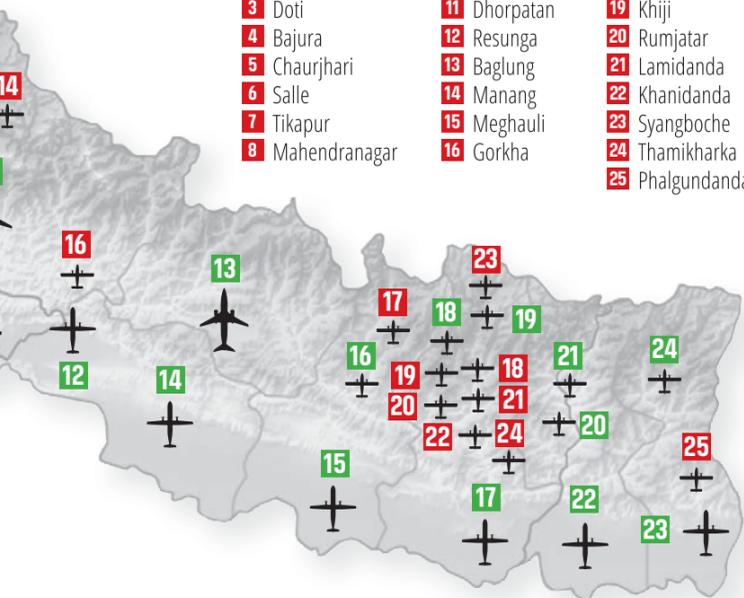
Jomsom, Mustang

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## Y ZONE

Abandoned, non-operational STOL airfields, or with irregular flights

- |                 |              |                 |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 Darchula      | 9 Dang       | 17 Jiri         |
| 2 Baitadi       | 10 Rolpa     | 18 Kangeladanda |
| 3 Doti          | 11 Dhorpatan | 19 Khiji        |
| 4 Bajura        | 12 Resunga   | 20 Rumjatar     |
| 5 Chaurjhari    | 13 Baglung   | 21 Lamidanda    |
| 6 Salle         | 14 Manang    | 22 Khanidanda   |
| 7 Tikapur       | 15 Meghauli  | 23 Syangboche   |
| 8 Mahendranagar | 16 Gorkha    | 24 Thamikharka  |
|                 |              | 25 Phalgundanda |



There was a time 40 years ago when most of Nepal was still roadless, and aviation became a lifeline for many districts, even in the plains.

After the DC-3s of Royal Nepal Airlines started being replaced with short takeoff and landing (STOL) de Havilland Canada DHC-6-300 Twin Otters, many airfields with grass runways came into operation from Bajhang in the west to Taplejung in the east.

At that time, the national airline had 10 Twin Otters, and even though they flew mostly on loss-making routes, the state subsidised them to ensure connectivity.

The decline of Royal Nepal Airlines began, like most other parastatal corporations, with post-1990 political interference and corruption. A flock of new private airlines took off, and despite a government regulation that they also serve STOL airfields, air services to many remote areas were scrapped.

Of the 49 airports in the country, 37 are STOL airfields and more than 20 of them have not seen flights for years, if not decades (map). Despite this, the government used an Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan to black top the runways and aprons of even

disused airfields in the hope that some private airline would start flights. Yet, more airfields are being built in Arghakhanchi, and Kamal Bazar of Achham under political pressure.

Now that bulldozers have defaced Nepal's mountains with badly engineered roads, local governments are on an airfield building spree without necessary homework on feasibility. Nepal Airlines has only two airworthy Twin Otters left, and private STOL airlines focus on tourist airfields like Lukla, Jomsom or Jufal for 'dollar passengers', and do not want to fly loss-making 'rupee routes'.

On the other hand, domestic air travel volume has shot up this year because the heavy monsoon damaged many highways. But most of the traffic increase has been on trunk routes between Kathmandu and Pokhara, Surkhet, and Tarai cities. This Dasain, Kathmandu airport saw a record 560 flights in one day, most of them by domestic carriers. The total domestic passenger volume in 2024 is expected to surpass 4 million.

Yet, many of the derelict airports have returned to being grazing grounds for goats and cattle. There is housing encroachment into some airfields like Palungtar in Gorkha, and roads slice across what used to be runways at other unused airfields. Yet, the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) still allocated a budget for many of these airfields, including for air traffic controllers who have little to do.

The Auditor General's Report last year found that the state was losing Rs1 billion a year in the upkeep of abandoned airfields, or airports that were built recently but where there have been no flights after the fanfare of an inaugural landing. Yet there is public pressure on elected officials to build airfields just so they do not have to make long and tiring journeys by road. New airfields are therefore built without a proper business plan, and in the absence of guarantees from private airlines that they will fly there. A further incentive is the kickback local officials get from construction companies.

A case in point is Dharan where mayor Harka Sampang is pushing for an airport for his city even though Biratnagar airport is only an hour drive away. He is quoted in the media as saying that airports are like toilets because "every home must have its own toilet ... one can't use a neighbour's toilet".

New airports like Kotbada in Achham and Phalgundanda in Ilam,

or upgraded ones like Baglung, Baitadi, Manang are inaugurated by ministers who fly in from Kathmandu to be garlanded on the tarmac, and then all is forgotten. The runway reverts to becoming a site for TikTok videos.

Airport construction is becoming an epidemic. There are now seven old and new airfields in a 40km radius around Rumjatar: in Ramechhap, Khiji, Phaplu, Kangel, Lamidanda, Khanidanda and Bhojpur (map). Similarly, although Baitadi's airfield has been blacktopped, a new airport is being proposed 12km away for Dadeldhura, the constituency of former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. A new airfield is being built at Kamal Bazar of Achham, even though it is only 20km from a functioning airport at Sanfe. Doti, which was an important airfield serving roadless neighbouring districts, was upgraded in 2016. But has never been used.

A probe by the Centre for Investigative Journalism found that former Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister Prem Ale allocated over Rs1.3 billion to blacktop grass runways and build new airports at 10 sites in the far west. Despite more and more new airports seeing no flights at all, there are at least 20 more in the pipeline: in Dang, Dhankuta, Humla, Piuthan, Tehrathum, Udaypur, Sindhuli, Kalikot and Mustang. It looks like every district now wants an airport as a status symbol, even if it has a non-functioning one already.

Private airlines do not want to fly loss-making routes, but surprisingly they do not even serve airfields with vast tourism potential like Rara or Manang – especially when roads to those trekking destinations are so poor and dangerous.

Underused mountain airfields in Nepal are just an extension of the new international airports in Bhairawa and Pokhara which together cost more than \$300 million to build with international loans, but have not seen regular international flights for nearly three years.

The severely congested Kathmandu airport is the only one that actually makes money, but that is because it also has some of the highest landing and ground handling charges in the region. To summarise: passengers enduring shoddy service and delays at Kathmandu are paying to build airfields across Nepal that may never be used. 🇳🇵

## Remote areas

mountain airfields



Rara, Mugu

and social aspects of a current job, or seek alternative non-STOL pilot options on ATRs, Q400s, and CRJ of other domestic airlines. The higher salary of STOL pilots is a dominant factor affecting retention.

Pilots join the aviation industry for the glamour, salary or career prospects of flying jet aircraft. Pilots choosing to remain in STOL operations typically prioritise salary over career prospects, while pilots who leave

STOL operations choose career prospects as their primary motivation.

As they get older, a pilot's priorities also change, although there does not seem to be a correlation between age and retention as a STOL pilot. Other factors, such as safety, compensation and benefits, and non-monetary factors like supervisor relations can affect the retention of STOL pilots.

Communication, incentive structures

and a guanxi network can be helpful in pilot retention as appropriate to the organisation's cultural context and leadership style. However, the departure of pilots can cause significant economic loss to the airlines which invested substantially in their training.

A survey of STOL pilots currently flying and those who had quit for better opportunities elsewhere found that while sufficient salary was necessary to retain pilots, the reasons for pilots leaving depended on whether they were family-oriented or extrinsically motivated.

Additionally, the responses suggest that STOL pilots did not view salary, bonuses, incentives, medical benefits and annual leave as separate components of salary but rather tended to see all these as a total package of monetary and non-monetary benefits.

STOL pilots typically draw a base salary for a predetermined number of flight hours that they need to fly, which can range between 40–60 hours a month, after which they receive an hourly rate for every extra flight hour. In addition, when deputed out of the base station, they receive a daily meal allowance and daily night-stop allowance.

The salary has been structured to incentivise them to fly more flights willingly, even though Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) regulations restrict pilots to a maximum of 1,000 flight hours a year and 100 flight hours a month. STOL pilots typically approach 100 hours a month during the peak season and 40–50 hours a month off-peak.

Since the STOL pilot's salary is based on the flight hours, there is a tendency to push the acceptable limits during marginal

weather. Furthermore, even though STOL pilot salaries are lower than non-STOL pilots, their standby hours waiting for weather improvements in airfields with few navigational aids are significantly higher than non-STOL pilots.

Hence the challenge of retaining STOL pilots must also be seen in the broader context of the expansion of the road network. The new STOL airfield construction spree due to political pressure has not increased passenger demand (adjoining report).

Domestic airlines flying STOL aircraft like Twin Otters, LET410s, and Dornier Do228 subsidise their Nepali passengers by charging higher USD rates on tourist sectors like Lukla, Jomsom or Jufal. Therefore, STOL operators in Nepal are not in a financial position to offer competitive salaries, incentives, and bonuses to their pilots, which can impact their retention.

On the other hand, STOL pilots with managerial responsibilities in an airline tend to be retained by the airline better than other pilots.

In the past, STOL pilots used to be paid more than their counterparts flying bigger non-STOL planes. Nevertheless, broader options in non-STOL airlines in Nepal and overseas show that salary alone is no longer a sufficient factor in recruitment and retention of STOL pilots.

Operators therefore have to fulfil other retention factors to keep STOL crew motivation and retention high. 🇳🇵

*Captain Ajay Pradhan has over three decades of experience in STOL operations and has completed his doctorate on retention of Nepali STOL pilots from Australia.*

## EVENTS



## Sadhana

Stop by Siddhartha Art Gallery and see the ongoing exhibition featuring solo artwork from Sundar Sinkhwal.

Until 25 November, Sunday to Friday: 11am-5pm, Saturday: 12pm-5pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal

## Maha Jatra

Nepal's acclaimed comedy duo Madan Krishna Shrestha and Hari Bansa Acharya make their return with this upcoming comedy show. See two of Nepal's most regarded artists showcase their craft.

14 November-16 November, 5pm onwards, Ticket: Rs799-Rs2,399, Nepal Academy Hall, Kamaladi



## Otaku Jatra

Otaku Jatra 2024 will provide a platform for Nepali fans of anime, comic, and pop-culture to be creative and turn their fantasy world to reality.

9 November, 10am onwards, Ticket: Rs500, Silver Oak Banquet and Events, Gairidhara

## Boudha Farmer's Market

If you are planning a tour around Kathmandu on the weekend, then this farmer's market might be a good stop. Discover fresh produce, dairy products, baked goods, crafts, and more. Support local businesses.

Every Saturday, 8am-3pm, Utpala Cafe, Boudha



## Pottery Workshop

Get your hands dirty, try and learn a new skill, and create traditional pottery with friends and loved ones.

Everyday, 9am to 6pm, The Pottery Training Centre, Bhaktapur

## DINING



## Pho 99

As the days get cooler, nothing sounds better than a piping hot bowl of the Vietnamese Pho—a soup dish filled with noodles, vegetables, meats and sauces.

Jhamsikhel, 9803203119

## MUSIC

## Jam sessions

Chitra Art Centre's live session promises an evening full of live music, food and drinks. If you are an aspiring musician, the mic is all yours.

8 November, 7pm onwards, Chitra Art Center, Lazimpat



## Yodda Live

Fans of Nephop have the opportunity to see Yodda perform live. The evening promises to be full of raw energy, hard-hitting bars, and Yodda's famed stage presence.

9 November, 7pm onwards, Ticket: Rs500, Club Platinum, Darbar Marg



## Hip Hop Carnival

The Kuza Hip-hop carnival will bring together Nepal's top-tier hip-hop artists on one platform. The line-up includes artists Vten, Laure and Bad Kompany.

9 November, 12pm onwards, Ticket: Rs1,500, Everest Hotel, Baneshwar



## Sunflower Weekenders

Be part of this two-day musical experience that blends music, art and wellness into one festival amidst the greenery of Godavari.

15-16 November, 12pm onwards, Ticket: Rs3,000, Godavari Village Resort, Godawari

## Kathmandu Calling Kandara

Get ready to shake a leg with folk rock band Kandara, who are set to perform live for the first time in Kathmandu to mark their 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary.

9 November, 8pm onwards, Ticket: Rs1,000, LOD, Thamel



## Bhojan Griha

Experience Nepali cuisine made from locally-sourced organic ingredients in a 150-year-old heritage building. The dining experience includes a folk-dance performance.

Dillibazar, 9841682735

## White Zambala

Tucked away in a hidden alley in Boudha, this restaurant has the best comfort Tibetan food. Try their sweet and sour pork, shredded potato and sizable dumplings

Boudha, 9866999999

## GETAWAYS



## Chandragiri Hills Resort

Set on a journey above the verdant pine forests and awe-inspiring panoramic views of the valley below as you indulge in relaxation with Chandragiri Hills Resort.

Chandragiri, (01) 5970796/ 9802326541

## Tiger Palace Resort

From an international casino to six different places to eat within the resort, this getaway is a must visit for travellers venturing south of Kathmandu Valley.

Rupandehi, Bhairawa (071) 512000



## Jagatpur Lodge

Jagatpur Lodge's five-star tents and rooms with private viewing decks that open to breathtaking views brings visitors closer to nature.

Jagatpur, Chitwan (01) 5325241

## Dom Himalaya

Dom Himalaya offers a space for visitors to indulge in traditional Nepali cuisine, relax with Tibetan singing bowls and bask in the vibrant chaos of Thamel.

Thamel (01) 5316813



## Club Himalaya

A blend of natural and modern services. The famous Nagarkot sunrise and sunset can be viewed from the private balcony of each room.

Nagarkot (01) 6680080/01

## Fryday's

Fryday's fish and chips are the crispiest and most perfectly seasoned fish dish you can find in Kathmandu. Their homemade sauce and tartar sauce are a must-try.

Jhamsikhel, 9808224159

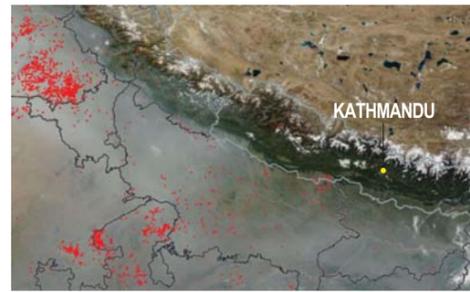


## Cafe Hessed

This place has limited items but serves the best kind of cupcakes and doughnuts. For those who do not have much of a sweet tooth, their gimbab is a must-have.

Pulchowk, (01) 5430933

## WEEKEND WEATHER



KATHMANDU

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
23° 13°	23° 13°	23° 14°	23° 14°	23° 13°

## Hazy Sunshine

The stubble burning is moving eastwards from Pakistan into northern India, following rice harvests with the retreating monsoon. This NASA FIRMS satellite image shows farm fires blowing smoke our way. There are more fires in Punjab than Haryana states, perhaps indicating state government crackdown on crop residue burning. New fires are seen in northeastern Uttar Pradesh near Nepal. Hazy sunshine in Kathmandu, with some passing clouds-on Sunday.

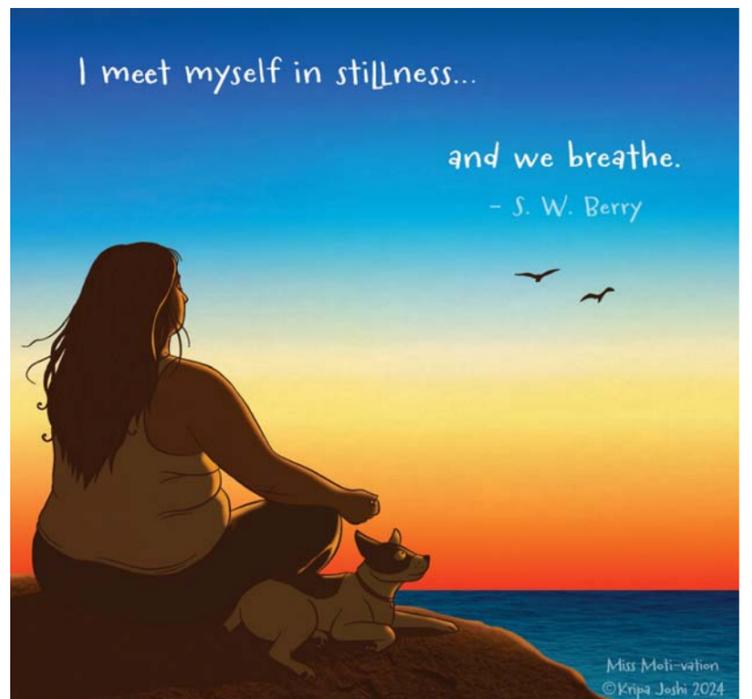
## OUR PICK



The 2024 Hindi-language biopic Srikanth tells the story of Indian industrialist Srikanth Bolla, who is visually impaired. In the small village of Seetharamapuram in India, a father names his newborn Srikanth after the famed Indian cricketer, having great aspirations for his son. When he realises his son is sightless, his father tries to bury the baby, but his mother saves his life. The film follows Srikanth's life as he enrolls in a special school, goes on to attend MIT, and eventually sets up his own business, Bollant Industries, providing opportunities to people with disabilities. Stars Rajkumar Rao, Jyothika, Alaya F and Sharad Kelkar.

## MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI



## सामाजिक सञ्जाल प्रयोगमा सचेतता अपनाऔं

- सामाजिक सञ्जालमा अपरिचित व्यक्तिको साथी बन्ने अनुरोधलाई विश्वस्त भएर मात्र प्रतिक्रिया जनाऔं ।
- अपरिचित व्यक्तिलाई जथाभावी साथी बन्न अनुरोध नपठाऔं ।
- सामाजिक सञ्जाल तथा अन्य विद्युतीय माध्यमबाट चिठ्ठा पुरस्कार जस्ता आर्थिक प्रलोभनका प्रस्तावको भरमा नपरौं ।
- आफूले प्रवाह गरेका सन्देश वा सूचनाबाट समाजमा पर्नसक्ने नकारात्मक प्रभावको ख्याल गरौं ।
- आफ्नो सन्देशले कुनै व्यक्ति वा अन्य कुनै समुदायको आत्मसम्मानमा चोट नपुऱ्याऔं ।



नेपाल सरकार  
विज्ञापन बोर्ड

# East keeps meeting West in Kathmandu

The 20<sup>th</sup> edition of Jazzmandu last month brought western and eastern musicians together again in a jazzy jamboree

■ Pinki Sris Rana

It was festival season in Kathmandu, and together with Dasain, Tihar, Nepal Sambat new year and Chhat there was also the annual Jazzmandu jamboree.

There was more than usual anticipation this year because of international performers including Swiss-French trumpeter Erik Trufazz, Aussie Owen James Newcomb, jazz saxophonist, flamenco singer and composer Antonio Lizana, our very own Cadenza Collective and artists from the Dhrupad Gurukul in Kathmandu jamming together.

The guitar, drums, piano, flute, sarangi (even tap-dancing flamenco feet) and other musical instruments fused on stage every evening, producing soulful melodies to keep the audience warm through Kathmandu's autumn chill. This was the 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the jazz festival which this year started on 24 October and went on for a week.

"I really like it here in Nepal, people are friendly, there is virtually no road rage," Erik Trufazz told Nepali Times about his first impressions on his first visit to Nepal. "I have known about Jazzmandu for a while, my sound technician has been with the festival for a quite some time but only this year did everything align for me to be here too. The audience has been warm and receptive."

The annual event (except for the Covid years) first started in 2002 at the height of the Maoist insurgency with the intention of uniting people through music and simultaneously prioritising cultural interaction, music education and promoting tourism in Nepal. Nepali Times has partnered with Jazzmandu from the very first year.

"The first edition was rather easy. Everything fell into place. It was as if destiny was leading the way," recalls Navin Chettri, one of the founding members of Surya Nepal Jazzmandu who is also the vocalist and drummer of Nepali folk Jazz band Cadenza Collective. "What is harder is to maintain the legacy."

The jazz scene is ever-evolving and so is the festival, but in the recent editions, it is clear



## Jazzing it up in Gokarna

The third day of Jazzmandu, dubbed Jazz Bazaar, took place at Gokarna Forest Resort on 26 October. This was the longest day, starting at 3PM and running until 10 at night.

The stage and the stands for food and drinks were set up in an open meadow at the expansive Gokarna Forest Resort. There were bonfires set up which provided quick bursts of much needed warmth in the chilly Tihar evening.

Perhaps owing to the location, the crowd seemed much younger than at most of the other days of the festival. There were many children and young adults, both Nepali and foreign.

Many were tourists from the South Asian region, Europe, the USA, or Australia. The audience either sat in chairs or benches set up opposite the stage, or on mats on the floor right in front of the musicians.

One of the main acts of the night was Swiss-French trumpeter Erik Trufazz



PHOTOS: SUMAN NEPALI



that cultural interactions have been more prominent with the collaboration between Nepali and international musicians. Their experimental improvisations have evolved into a genre that can be called 'Himalayan Jazz'.

"Jazzmandu has stayed true to the essence of what it was," says Owen James Newcomb of Australian Jazz band Afro Dizzi Act who was here for the first edition in 2002, and was back after 22 years for this edition.

Nick Aggs of the same band has been performing in Jazzmandu for the past six years, and agrees: "Kathmandu has a fertile soil for music to flourish. The cross-pollination happening here says it all."

Jazz has often been credited for embracing culture and diversity, and is known for collaboration between different genres of music. Here in Kathmandu, the festival has taken a step further to blend jazz with eastern music genres. For example, this year a Spanish flamenco performer tap danced to the beat of classical Nepali tabla.

"We've been performing jazz all

over the world and the perception of jazz can be sectioned. The open mindedness people here in Kathmandu when it comes to jazz is the most exciting," said Shannon Sol Carroll of Afro Dizzi Act, speaking to Nepali Times before

the finale at the Malla Hotel on 30 October.

The demographic of the Kathmandu audience is also changing. While expats and tourists still make up a large proportion of those attending, younger Nepalis are now a significant presence.

There are others like Zoe Meister, 20, who is in Kathmandu as part of her exchange program. The first experience has already left her wanting for more.

Women still remain a minority in the jazz scene globally. But this edition of Jazzmandu featured an all female band Sheroes from the US and highlighted singer Alma Naidu and her quartet from Germany and classical singer Jonisha Paudel (pictured, left) from Nepal.

Paudel's high notes (shall we call it 'Ragajazz?') underlined the amalgamation of eastern and western music. On initial

hearing, the music did come off as Hindustani Classical but as the performance progressed, the sound of tabla, sitar fused with trombone and bass guitar to enhance the symbiosis. Her performance at Yalamaya Kendra on 29 October brought the house down.

On the same day, Sheroes sang its own version of My Favourite Things from the 1965 musical The Sound of Music. Seeing the majority of women perform on the same stage made the concerts even more inspiring.

As this year's Kathmandu's jazz fest ended, Chettri said, "When younger Nepali musicians come up to me and tell me they are inspired seeing artists in our festivals, I believe we have been successful in setting up a jazz culture in Kathmandu and leaving our legacy." ■



SURYA NEPAL  
PRIVATE LIMITED



20<sup>th</sup> Kathmandu Jazz Festival 2024

MUSIC FOR UNITY, PEACE & COMPASSION

A big thank you to our musicians, audience, partners, patrons, volunteers, staff and technical team for your immense support and energy for making Jazzmandu 2024 "The Biggest Jazz Party in the Himalayas"!

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BARAHSINGHE



Dark Fantasy



Nepali Times



The Malla Hotel



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Kathmandu School of Music



B&T BASS & TREBLE



MERCANTILE  
COMMUNICATIONS PVT. LTD.



((NEPA-SA))



GOKARNA FOREST



Dark Fantasy Jazz

The Himalayan

# Politicians and cronies blamed

Uncovering the hidden owners of mining companies that made September's floods more deadly

■ Archana Darji and Shamshad Ahmad in Kavre

Rajesh Humagain lives by the Rosi River in Panauti, directly downstream from a quarry company. His was one of many houses swept away by the deadly mudflow on 28 September.

The flash flood last month was not the first time stone mining has caused problems for Humagain and other residents of this village 40km east of Kathmandu. They have protested unregulated quarrying and sand mining on the river that has caused sedimentation and springs going dry downstream.

"When it rained, the debris that had piled up in the quarries was swept down in a wall of mud that took away my house and everything I own," says Humagain, who now rents a single room in Panauti town.

Before the flood, boulders would fall on houses below, and dust clouds from the crushers that produced aggregates to feed Kathmandu's construction would shroud the village. The air would be thickly polluted in an otherwise pristine valley.

"The rain was very heavy, but these mines and crushers made the destruction much more serious," Humagain says, while his neighbours nod in agreement.

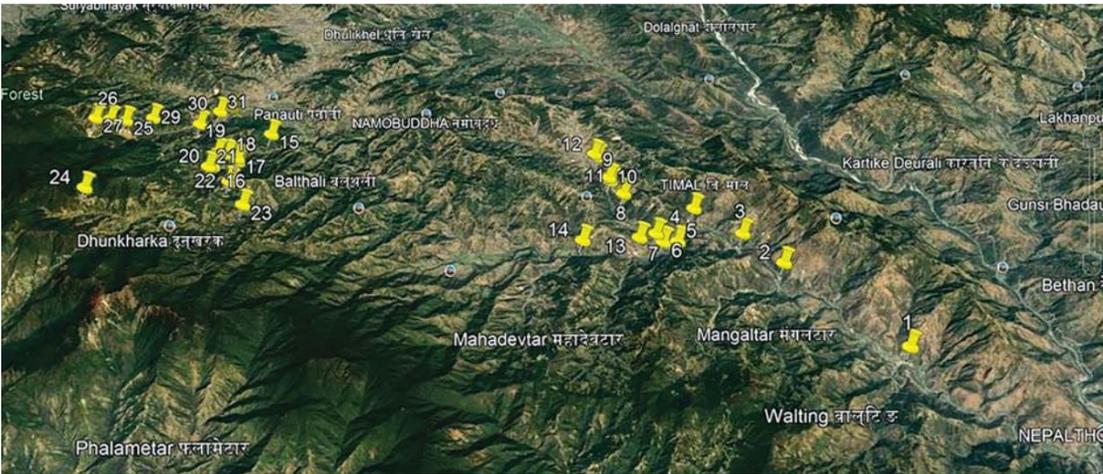
The quarry is owned by Bhaleswar Roda Dhunga Udyog and its directors Rabi Shrestha and Ramhari KC. It started operating in 2022, and because it provides locals with employment many people we approached were reluctant to talk.

Humagain himself was a tripper operator for a decade at Diamond Roda Dhunga Udhuyog, another crusher company nearby. He ferried aggregates to Kathmandu every night. Now, most of the quarry has been swept away, and all that is left are overturned trucks, earth-movers and equipment scattered about.

A mudslide also destroyed Rajesh Khatri's house and shop near the quarry, and his family is now a refugee in the town. "The mines and the crushers are entirely responsible for our plight," he tells us, looking over his shoulder to see if anyone is within earshot.



ARCHANA DARJI



There are 22 crusher companies and stone mining operations along the Rosi Khola Valley (top). Panauti and quarries in the Rosi watershed in this Google Map image taken in May 2024 (below).

The flood swept away 500 houses and killed 20 people in Panauti Municipality alone. Farmers lost 2,000 livestock, and paddy ready for harvest was destroyed. Downstream along the Rosi, dozens more were killed. Across central Nepal, nearly 200 people were killed.

The Rosi River had also flooded in 1981, but there had not been nearly as much damage and the river's course did not change. Last month, the river flowed through towns and streets.

In the village of Bhaleswar, the river now flows through a gaping hole in Kumar Tamang's house, cutting through what used to be his farm. "We have been living by the Rosi for generations, but never once had the river ever caused us such grief," says Tamang, looking forlornly at an overturned tanker truck that washed up on what used to be his doorstep from a stone quarry upstream.

Section 11 of Nepal's Standards Related to the Sale and Management of Stone, Gravel, and Sand Excavation 2020 states that crusher companies must operate at a distance of 2km from residential areas.

It is clear from this trip that the law has been openly flouted, which would not be possible without collusion of local government. The



mountains above Ramesh Khatri's house have been gouged out by bulldozers, and rocks used to fall on his house frequently. "And the constant

noise from the crushing equipment was unbearable," he said.

When the village became unliveable, Khatri's family—like many others in his village of Kharkhola—sold the land to the quarry company for Rs6 million. But that was just on paper. The company agreed to pay the money within a year, but so far Khatri has only received a Rs1.6 million advance.

"They have taken away our land documents and used them to obtain bank loans to operate their mines and crushers, but are not paying us," says Khatri. "What's more, the owners are not even from here. We have not received the money, and the flood has made us homeless."

The Khatri and Humagain families have been complaining about the unregulated mines for the last two decades, but no one has listened. Says another Bhaleswar resident Dinesh Gurung: "The mining companies are owned by powerful people so our problems and pleas have fallen on deaf ears."

Section 11 of the guidelines also stipulates that highways must be given a right of way of 500m from quarries. But the Nangsal Dhunga Roda Udyog had damaged the BP Highway even before the floods and was documented two years ago by the Kavre District Coordination Committee.

उद्योगको विवरण	ठेगाना	हालको ठेगाना	संचालक र प्रोपाइटरको नाम	श्री विरेन्द्र बापा श्री रमा देवी विभिरे श्री उदय प्रसाद काफ्ले श्री प्रवीण सामा
गौरीशंकर रोडाडुंगा उद्योग	खापंचोक १ काभ्रे हाल रोशी गा.पा.	रोशी	प्रविण लामा समेत ४ जना	
अंससत्यसाई स्टोन क्रसर उद्योग प्रा.लि.	कटुन्जेवेशी १ काभ्रे हाल रोशी गा.पा.	रोशी	राजेन्द्रप्रताप अर्वाल	राजेन्द्रप्रताप अर्वाल
मा चण्डेश्वरी एग्रिगेट स्टोन प्रा.लि.	भीमखोरी २ काभ्रे हाल रोशी गा.पा.	रोशी	राजभक्त प्रधान समेत २ जना	श्री राजभक्त प्रधान श्री युद्ध बहादुर बापा
मोरखा एग्रिगेट प्रा.लि.	भीमखोरी २ काभ्रे हाल रोशी गा.पा.	रोशी	विजय मल्ल समेत ३ जना	श्री विजय मल्ल श्री नारायण प्रकाश धर श्री विष्णु उद्वाघोडी
धनेश्वर रोडा उद्योग	मुज्यागाड ९ काभ्रे हाल पनौती न.पा.२	पनौती	शोपनारायण सुवाल प्र.न.पा. ९	श्री शोपनारायण सुवाल
डाइमण्ड स्टोन एण्ड माइनिङ इन्डस्ट्रीज प्रा.लि.	कुशादेवी गा.वि.स. २ काभ्रे हाल पनौती न.पा. काभ्रे	पनौती	दिपक ब्रह्मचारी समेत २ जना	श्री दिपक ब्रह्मचारी श्री जितेन्द्र के सी
उदयादेवी रोडाडुंगा उद्योग	कनारी भुमीडाडा काभ्रे हाल पनौती	पनौती	राजेश डंगोल	श्री राजेश डंगोल
नाडसान डुंगारोडा उद्योग प्रा.लि.	खापंचोक २ काभ्रे हाल रोशी गा.पा.	रोशी	दिपक कुवर समेत ३ जना	श्री दिपक कुवर श्री सुजन लामा श्री प्रमोद राज सुवाल
दिप लक्ष्मी एग्रिगेट एण्ड माइनिङ प्रा.लि.	कनारी भुमीडाडा काभ्रे हाल पनौती	पनौती	प्रमोदराज सुवाल प्रदिप बोगटी समेत ४ जना	श्री मुकुती लामा श्री प्रदिप बोगटी श्री महेश मान सिं
पलाञ्चोक भगवती बालुवा डुंगा उद्योग प्रा.लि.	साविक खापंचोक गा.वि.स ६ काभ्रे को फि.न रोशी गा.पा. ९	रोशी	सुजन सिं तामाङ	श्री सुजन सिं तामाङ

अनुगमनका क्षेत्रहरू	ठेगाना	संचालकको नाम
मा चण्डेश्वरी एग्रिगेट स्टोन प्रा.लि.	रोशी ११, कालढुंगा	रवि श्रेष्ठ
कालढुंगा एग्रिगेट एण्ड स्थाण्ड प्रा.लि.	रोशी ११, कालढुंगा	मिन्दु लामा
सुप्रिम स्टोन प्रा.लि.	रोशी ९, दाडन्जे	अशोक लामा
पलाञ्चोक भगवती बालुवा डुंगा उद्योग प्रा.लि.	रोशी ८, नाके	सुजन लामा
एस.एम.बालुवा डुंगा उद्योग प्रा.लि.	रोशी ८, नाके	महेश्वर गौतम
जय नेपाल सप्लायर्स प्रा.लि.	रोशी ८, नाके	प्रविण लामा
गौरी शंकर रोडा डुंगा उद्योग प्रा.लि.	रोशी ८, स्थाउलेबजार	प्रविण लामा
नाडसान रोडा डुंगा उद्योग प्रा.लि.	रोशी ८, डिप्सा	महेश्वर गौतम
मंगल रोडा डुंगा उद्योग प्रा.लि.	रोशी ७, चारसयवेशी, डिप्सा	सूर्य लामा
ओम सत्य साई स्टोन क्रसर उद्योग प्रा.लि.	रोशी ७, कटुन्जेवेशी	गणेश लामा

**घ. रोशी गाउँपालिका, काभ्रेपलाञ्चोक**

**१. कालढुंगा एग्रिगेट एण्ड सेण्ड प्रा.लि**

- कसर दर्ता मिति:- २०६१/०३/१६
- दर्ता नं. ६०/७/०६०/०६१
- दर्ता भएको निकाय: धरेलु तथा साना उद्योग कार्यालय, काभ्रेपलाञ्चोक
- संचालक:- सुरकृष्ण वैद्य, किरण थापा, गोवर्द्धन श्रेष्ठ (सम्पर्क नं. ९८२९०८९८७६, ९८०३८४२४९९)
- ठेगाना:- रोशी - ११, कालढुंगा
- जि.पि.एस.

E	N
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Government documents (above) bearing the names of the owners of the quarries in Rosi and Panauti.

# for Kavre floods



Tipper trucks owned by crusher companies were swept away along with homes, roads and bridges along the Rosi.

The report blames the industry for not following directives to reduce dust and debris produced by its quarry and crushers, as well as to level the ground after excavation.

Nangsal was registered at the Kavre Office of Cottage and Small Industries in 2009 and after federalism also registered with the Kavre District Coordination Committee to operate a crusher unit.

Documents from the Cottage and Small Industries office show that two of the company's directors are Bagmati Province Minister for Water Supply, Energy and Irrigation Tirtha Bahadur Lama from the governing Nepali Congress (NC) and Grande International Hospital Chair Deepak Kunwar. The third director is Sujan Lama. Grande Hospital Chair Deepak Kunwar is also a shareholder of SM Baluwa Dhunga Udyog which

has been operating since 2015. Kunwar joined company directors Maheshwar Gautam and Sulabh Karki as a shareholder in 2021.

The NC's Ganesh Lama, who has a fearsome reputation here, is also the owner of Om Satya Sai Stone Crusher Udyog on the banks of the Rosi near the densely populated village of Kutunge right off the BP Highway that connects Kathmandu to eastern Nepal.

Lama's company is only licensed to operate a crusher, but has also been sand mining without a permit. Debris and other waste material produced by the crushers and the mine were piled high by the river when the floods came.

Bagmati Province Health Minister Kiran Thapa along with Sur Krishna Vaidya and Govardhan Shrestha are owners of another



Quarries along the Rosi River in Khusadevi.

company, the Kaldhunga Aggregate in Kaldhunga village. Thapa has since sold his shares to Rabi Shrestha, but an official change of ownership has not been registered, and documents still list Thapa as a director.

Thapa told us he had sold his shares and the quarrying had been going on in an unregulated manner. He said: "As Health Minister, I myself inspected the Rosi damage after the flood, and saw the destruction. The local government has been awarding contracts purely

to increase its tax revenue without any monitoring. But the damage from the flood is far more than the revenue will ever be."

Former Ward Chair Pravin Lama of Kavre's Temal Rural Municipality owns three mining and crusher companies with various partners in Rosi Rural Municipality. His Gauri Shankar Roda Dhunga Udyog, Jay Nepal Suppliers, and Mangal Roda Dhunga Udyog have all been found to be operating in violation of mining and excavating guidelines.

They don't have proper permits from the rural municipality, and financial or other relevant details of these companies have not been made available to local governments. Excavation debris was just dumped along the Rosi banks, and Mangal Roda Dhunga Udyog was found to have exceeded its permitted volume.

In total, there are 46 stone quarries and crushers on the banks of the Rosi in Panauti and Rosi Municipalities. All had been found to have violated existing mining guidelines and laws even before the floods last month.

A monitoring report by the Kavre District Coordination Committee two years ago had concluded that quarries and crushers did not have proper permits and did not fully comply with the laws, resulting in over-mining.

The report stated that waste material from the mines had been poorly managed, excavation areas had not been mapped and relevant registration and accounting documents of operational mines and quarries were nowhere to be found.

The monitoring committee subsequently recommended that the local government close down unlicensed mines that had been operating on public and private land without permit. But the municipality did not heed the directive, nor did other government agencies. Impunity is rife, and mine and quarry operators openly admit to violating standards. Most are said to have powerful protectors in local wards, municipalities and provincial councils.

One crusher operator told us: "Most of the mines and quarries here have been running like this even after their licences expired. It is just the way it is done here and everywhere. The local government is letting this happen because they only care about the revenue." ■

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# Doctor who does not just treat symptoms

Nepal's pioneering orthopaedic surgeon redefines healthcare for the country's most needy

■ Naresh Newar

Orthopaedic surgeon Anil Shrestha's journey into medicine was laid down even before he was born. His father, noted industrialist Juddha Bahadur Shrestha, had aspired to become a doctor, but was turned away by a medical school in India.

"It became his mission that one of us, his sons, nephews, or nieces, would don that white coat," recalls Shrestha. That dream fell upon him, the youngest son, and he enrolled at Calcutta Medical College.

He returned to Nepal after graduation and hoped for a comfortable post at a hospital in Kathmandu. Instead, he was assigned to Jumla, a district which was even more remote and underserved than it is today. But that posting 40 years ago would prove transformative.

"It was an eye-opener. I had no idea what rural Nepal was really like. When I reached Jumla, I had to ask myself why we became doctors in the first place. It is because we have to make a difference," he recalls.

The moment that would forever shape his approach to medicine happened at a government-run medical camp. An injured man had travelled from a remote village all the way to Kathmandu for surgery, selling his land to pay for it. He needed to remove his implants but would have to sell more of his



property to afford the procedure.

"I thought to myself: we treat the x-rays but we don't treat the patients," Shrestha told us in an interview. "What good is a perfectly functioning hand if this man could no longer have his land to plough?"

The encounter made the physician realise that healthcare in Nepal should look beyond symptoms and diagnoses, and consider the socio-economic reality of patients. He made it his mission to provide care that didn't just fix bodies but addressed the underlying factors affecting people's lives.

He co-founded the Nepal Orthopaedic Hospital in 1998 to provide high-quality surgery at affordable prices. But when he arrived at the site near Gokarna, it was just two blocks of a rudimentary one-story structure. He realised buildings don't make hospitals. You need doctors, you need equipment, you need patients.

With a bold plan and support of friends and international donors,

Shrestha started with 15 beds, providing care to anyone in need, regardless of their ability to pay.

Initially, 93% of the operating expenses were covered by international donors but in less than 10 years, it had reversed the figures so that most of the cost was locally covered. The hospital is self-sufficient today and does not turn away any patient that cannot afford the cost.

But Shrestha's job was far from over. Realising the chronic lack of proper spinal care in Nepal, he got involved with the Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Center in Sanga in 2001, offering holistic treatment to paraplegic and quadriplegic patients. It was a leap of faith started with a few friends, a handful of nurses, and no specialised doctors.

"We just knew the need. People, especially women were falling off trees and cliffs, injuring their backs," Shrestha says, "They needed rehabilitation and physiotherapy, and we thought, why wait? You start small, and if you're doing well, others will help."

Shrestha had long believed that healthcare in Nepal needed to reach the farthest corner, and after working with Nick Simons Institute (NSI) he realised that partnering with government hospitals can better strengthen the overall health system. Shrestha's journey took another turn when he was asked to join the board of One Heart Worldwide, whose mission to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality in Nepal's most

underserved areas resonated deeply with him.

Shrestha's approach to leadership is as grounded as his approach to medicine, it was never about control but rather enablement. He recalls a time at the Orthopaedic Hospital when funds were so tight that salaries could not be paid. The trust was so great that staff worked without pay for three months.

Shrestha has a vision to one day open centres for spinal rehabilitation across all seven provinces of Nepal to provide specialised care – since the number of spinally injured patients rises dramatically because of highway accidents.

He wants a health system where each district's hospital is properly equipped and functional, thereby discouraging referral of critical patients to Kathmandu over long and bumpy roads.

His message to the next generation of Nepali doctors and social entrepreneurs: "You don't have to wait until everything is perfect to get started. All you need is an idea, and if you see a need, jump into it. Start small and you will always have people to help if you're passionate and clear about your goals."

Shrestha avoids the limelight, and had to be convinced to agree to this profile interview. He says, "When you build an institution, don't think it's yours. It belongs to everyone who helped along the way." 🇳🇵




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