

standard chartered

ISSUER RATING BY ICRA [NEPAL]

► Nepal's safest bank. Five times in a row. ◀

DIWAKAR CHETTRI



## New year revolutions

■ Shristi Karki

On Tuesday, leaders of the monarchist RPP once again gathered on Kathmandu's streets under skies darkened by pollution, to deliver fiery speeches. This time there was no arson and looting, no need for riot police to fire live rounds or tear gas.

RPP leaders demanded the release of vice-president Rabinendra Mishra and MP Dhawal Shamsher

Rana who were arrested during the violent 28 March rally.

They demanded the restitution of a Hindu kingdom, and accused the government of provoking a peaceful demonstration. Police fired at least 100 live rounds from assault rifles at the crowd, and 21 of the 120 injured had bullet wounds. Two people were killed.

Tuesday's protest on the Ring Road in Balkhu was comparatively subdued. The violence in the previous protest cost ex-king

Gyanendra support, especially for anointing medical tycoon and bank defaulter Durga Prasai as 'commander' of the Tinkune rally.

Some monarchists acknowledge Gyanendra's mistakes when he was king from 2001-2008, but say he has had a lot of time to reflect on his shortcomings and is more committed to nationhood.

"Nepalis were promised better service delivery, opportunities for the underserved, as well as more honest use of state resources, but

the people in leadership have not been able to deliver on their commitments," says RPP leader Prakash Chandra Lohani. "The gap between their rhetoric and reality has widened, the people feel betrayed, and the respect Nepali people had previously had for them has changed to revulsion."

Independent commentators have also warned the three main parties that their days may be numbered unless they reform.

"The UML, NC and Maoist leaders must reform their ways," warned Gunaraj Luitel, editor of Nagarik, in an op-ed. "They are leaders for life, and may save themselves from public anger, but will not be able to save the system."

Rifts between radical royals who want a return to Panchayat-style absolutism and moderate monarchists who favour a constitutional king have weakened the movement somewhat.

The split between the RPP and RPP-Nepal cost the royalists numbers in Parliament in 2022. The irony is that the same royalists who want to scrap the republican Constitution had formed electoral alliances with the UML during the 2022 elections. RPP-Nepal chair Kamal Thapa has not taken part in the two rallies. And the RPP's Rajendra Lingden has been hesitant to censure radicals.

Analysts have questioned why supporters of the monarchy have decided to reestablish an institution that would not ultimately have executive decision-making power. And authoritarian-minded Gyanendra will not be satisfied being a ceremonial king.

"The Nepali people will not accept an absolute monarchy at this point of time, and both the public as well as king Gyanendra are fully aware that there is no other possibility beyond a constitutional monarchy," asserts the RPP's Lohani. "The traditional monarchy's institutional capacity might have been enough to meet the needs of feudal Nepal, but an absolute monarchy is impossible both in concept and practice in the context of modern day Nepal." 🇳🇵



### Inside

Subscribers to the print edition, get a free 2082 calendar with this issue.

### 82 in 2022

Profiles of six Nepalis born at around the turn of the Bikram Sambat century in 2000.

PAGE 8-9

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2082  
Dinner Party with  
LIVE MUSIC  
13TH & 14TH APRIL  
6 PM ONWARDS  
New Orleans Cafe  
THAMEL, 01-4700736

21 YEAR

Outsource Your Non-Core Staff Through  
Suvidha Staffing

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

+977-9704805213  
www.suvidhasewa.com.np

eScan Anti-Virus

#1 in Digital World

TOTAL PROTECTION for Computers, Mobiles & Tablets

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

YOUR WELL-BEING IS YOUR GREATEST WEALTH

TRANQUILITY SPA  
"Balancing Body, Mind and Spirit"



new year, new you

NATUREKNIT

www.natureknit.com

01-5354812 | Sanchaya Kosh Building, Thamel, KTM | Shop #204, 205, 206

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2082!

UNITED BY LOVE

UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON.

DURBARMARG PH-5321454 | LABIM MALL PH-9801270033

# Bhairab Dai's shining light

Journalist, environmental activist and pioneer of Nepal's community radio movement, Bhairab Risal died at age 97 at a hospital in Kathmandu on 6 April.

Risal's journalism career spanned more than half a century, taking him from chief reporter at the national news agency to hosting regular broadcasts on Radio Sagarmatha, Nepal's first community radio station. He spoke extempore from the studio about everything from plastic pollution to the concerns of senior citizens.

When not in a newsroom or radio studio, he roamed the country, funding underserved school children to distributing solar lighting. He was perhaps the only journalist who had been to all of Nepal's 77 districts.

Risal was born in 1927 in the Tikathali village of Bhaktapur, where he lived all his life. He was jailed for criticising the Panchayat system, and kept a diary while in detention which he later published as साधुलाई सुली (Skewered Saint).

Once released from jail, he joined Bhaktapur's Nepal Workers' Peasants' Party in the 1991 parliamentary elections, but lost by only 1,300 votes. It is intriguing to speculate what would have happened to Bhaktapur and Nepal today had he won that election.

He then turned to environmental activism and was one of the leading figures in the Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ). A guru to many of us younger journalists, Bhairab Dai (as he was fondly known) demanded the same professional high standards and integrity from us that he practiced himself.

Once in 1967, Risal was sent to cover a press conference by visiting UN Secretary General U Thant. This was before recording devices, and not knowing a word of English, Risal transcribed what U Thant said in English into his notebook in phonetic Devnagari and got someone back in the newsroom to translate it into Nepali.

He told this newspaper in 2000 on his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday: 'I think it is the company of enthusiastic young journalists that re-energises me all the time. I feel younger every day.' Indeed, Risal was actively lecturing and writing well into his 90s, until his physical health started declining in the past two years.

After hearing that Nepal's medical colleges imported corpses from India, Risal and his wife Sushila willed that their bodies be donated to medical science at Patan

Hospital. Although always hard up, Risal would mobilise funds for initiatives like a trust fund for married women students, and raise money to light up homes in remote districts with solar-powered batteries.

Risal was deputed to far-western Nepal as an enumerator for the 1961 national census, and wrote about his experience for Nepali Times in 2021. He collected household data in the villages of Gunji, Nabi and Kuti in the disputed Limpiyadhura region on the Indian border that was historically a part of Nepal.

'The fact that the government had

conducted a census there in 1961 was irrefutable proof that the territory east of the main channel of the Kali River has always been a part of Nepal,' Risal wrote.

He launched the Light Up Humla campaign during the insurgency, and when the roadless district still did not have electricity. The initiative provided solar-powered lights for 7,000 households in a district where people used

sooty pine resin lamps for indoor lighting. Humla then had the highest infant mortality rate in Nepal.

Risal's plan was to raise money from 7,000 Nepalis, as he explained to this newspaper: 'We

will ask one Nepali who enjoys the benefits of modern electricity to support another who is living in darkness.' The plan worked.

I visited Humla with Bhairab Dai in 2006 to report on his solar light campaign. The conflict had just ended, and the war had pushed Humla further back. An under construction hydropower plant was abandoned because of the violence.

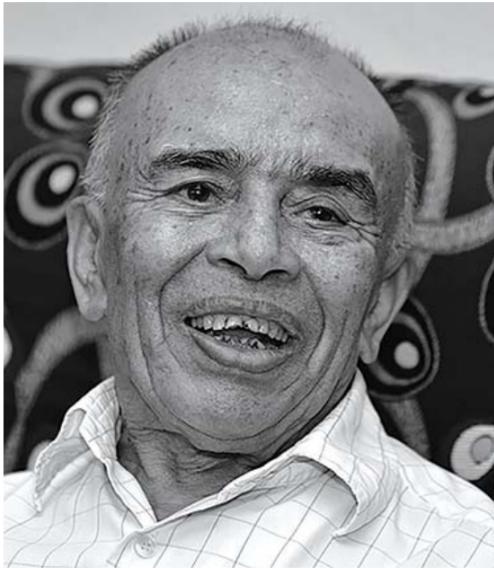
In the village of Langduk, a day's walk from Simkot, Gore Sunwar was emotional to finally meet the man who had brought a lamp to light the darkness of Dalit homes.

I remember him holding Bhairab Dai's hands, and saying: "You are the only one who thought of us poor people, no one else did. My children are in school, they can now finish their homework at night and they don't cough anymore."

Later, on the trail back to Simkot, Bhairab Dai told me raising money was the easy part. It was harder to ensure training and backup for the batteries.

Bhairab Risal was a recipient of many awards, including the Jagadamba Shree lifetime achievement prize in service of the Nepali language.

**Kunda Dixit**



**Journalist, environmental activist and philanthropist leaves a legacy of professionalism and compassion**

## ONLINE PACKAGES



**ON SHAKY GROUND**  
As we mark 10 years of the 7.8M earthquake on 25 April 2015, Nepali Times delves into why quakes are so devastating in Nepal, how to build infrastructure that can withstand intense tremors, and how retrofitting can be an economic approach. Video on our YouTube channel.



**GREAT EARTHQUAKE OF 1934**  
It has been over 90 years since the great earthquake of 1934 that killed over 10,000 people across Nepal and India. Man Maya Maharjan, Asta Maya Bajracharya, Sanu Nani Bista and Sukucha Maharjan have all lived a full life and remember the absolute terror of the 8.3M quake. Watch them recount the disaster. Subscribe for multimedia content.

### BHAIRAB RISAL

What a contribution Bhairab Risal made, to journalism and to Nepal ('Bhairab Dai's shining light', Kunda Dixit, page 2).

**Marty Logan**

■ Saddened to hear news of Bhairab sir's passing. He was a national treasure. Among his many pioneering activities was promoting community seed banks to preserve Nepal's potato varieties. It was during this project that I first met him.

**Prem Jung Thapa**

### LANGTANG CHEESE

We lived and worked as a team out in a village during the 80s and I remember this wonderful round of cheese coming out to us each week. It was the best cheese ever ('Langtang after 10 years' Sonia Awale, #1255).

**Sigmund Stengel**

### ROYALIST PROTEST

Gyanendra should be on trial for treason and conspiracy to provoke a violent insurrection ('Who'll blink first?' 20 Years Ago This Week, #1255).

**Aksel Lydersen**

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Public transport is a syndicate in Nepal—it seems that if the private sector can benefit from moving to EVs, the market will bring in EV public transport ('The public in public transportation', Sonia Awale, #1254). I am not sure that the government has the budget or expertise to set up a department to focus on sustainable transportation.

**Prachin Lal Shrestha**

### NEPALI IN TASMANIA

This is encouraging and sad at the same time ('Nepali building bridges in Tasmania', Hum Gurung, page 12). We are not seeking new political parties to govern the nation. Rather, we need visionary leaders who can effectively utilise the country's resources, create opportunities, and address people's needs by generating jobs, improving healthcare, developing infrastructure, and more.

**Bibek Shrestha**

■ While the Nepal government brings in engineers from China to build our bridges, Nepali engineers are leaving the country to build them in Tasmania.

**Mabindra Rana**

## Times.com

### WHAT'S TRENDING



#### Building bridges in Tasmania

by Hum Gurung  
From the highlands of Nepal to the shores of Tasmania, Purna Gurung has spent over three decades building bridges. At 55, he leads a team of Nepali engineers on Australia's longest bridge project. We profile him on page 12.

**Most reached and shared on Facebook**

#### Langtang after 10 years

by Sonia Awale  
The Langtang Cheese Production Centre, Nepal's oldest cheese plant, survived a catastrophic earthquake and was rebuilt. Ten years later, its existence is in doubt again due to youth migration, the climate crisis, and state neglect. Full story on our website.

**Most popular on X**

#### Bhairab Dai's shining light

by Kunda Dixit  
Journalist, environmental activist, and pioneer of Nepal's community radio movement, Bhairab Risal died this week at age 97. He leaves behind a legacy of professionalism and compassion. See editorial, left.

**Most commented**



#### 11:56 25 April 2015

by Kunda Dixit  
The 7.7M disaster in Burma is a reminder that earthquakes are a regular phenomenon along the Himalayan arc, and there is a seismic gap in western Nepal where a mega quake is long overdue. Join the discussion online, and follow us for the continued coverage in the lead-up to the 10 years of #NepalQuake.

**Most visited online page**

### QUOTES



#### Nepali Times @NepaliTimes

Aerial shots show Kathmandu and Bhaktapur blanketed by smog due to wildfires burning across the country. Kathmandu has been ranked the world's most polluted city for the third day in a row with residents complaining of various health issues. Photos: AJAYA HAKUJU AND SUMAN NEPALI



#### Saumya | सोम्या @SaumyaPandey\_

The political 'background' of ethnographic writing includes smog and the inability of people to breathe.



#### Helen Hardy @H\_Hardy

So worrying for those who live here. More needs to be done to tackle the air quality

## 20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

### New Year 2062

As we mark Nepali New Year 2082 next week, take a look back at our editorial 20 years ago this week where we said that we need both peace and democracy to move ahead, amidst the Maoist war and political instability. Perhaps Nepalis need to be reminded once again that there is no real peace or stability without democracy. Excerpt of the editorial from issue #242 8-14 April 2005:

King Gyanendra, addressing the Royal Nepali Army's cadet graduation ceremony at Kharipati on Monday, said:

"The alternative to democracy is democracy, not terrorism."

There will be very few people in Nepal who will disagree with that: not even the political party leadership which excels in seeing a dark cloud behind every silver lining. For some Kathmandu-based diplomats, who were present at the king's address, it was exactly what they wanted to hear. And most Nepali people would whole-heartedly endorse their monarch's sentiment. So where is the problem?

In fact, we seem agreed on just about everything about the future course this country should take. We all know (or should



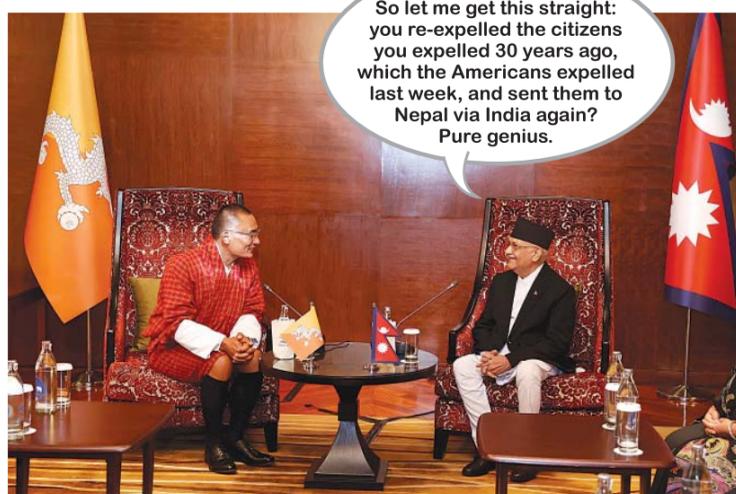
admit we know deep down) there is no military solution to the insurgency. Even some in the Maoist leadership have admitted this publicly. In reality, all that the revolution has achieved in the past decade is to bring ruin and misery to Nepal and Nepalis, postpone reforms, demolish democracy, dismantle hard-earned freedoms, encourage rightwing adventurism and

push us to militaristic tendencies...

...Why not agree to a roundtable conference to discuss constitutional reforms—there isn't a constitution in the world that can't be improved. Delaying a resolution by engaging in deadlocked debate about which comes first, peace or democracy, doesn't get us anywhere. We need both, together. That should be our new year resolution for 2062.

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

## 1,000 WORDS



RSS

**KASTO CHHA:** Prime Minister K P Oli with his Bhutan counterpart Sherring Tobgay at last week's BIMSTEC meeting in Bangkok. They reportedly did not discuss the issue of Bhutan forcibly sending to Nepal the former refugees resettled in the United States, recently deported.



Nepali Times on Facebook  
Follow @nepalitimes on Twitter  
Follow @nepalitimes on Instagram

Editor: Sonia Awale | Special Correspondent: Shristi Karki  
Reporters: Sudiksha Tuladhar, Vishad Raj Onta | Layout: Kiran Maharjan  
Publisher: Kunda Dixit, Himalmedia Pvt Ltd, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur | GPO Box 7251 Kathmandu  
editors@nepalitimes.com | www.nepalitimes.com | www.himalmedia.com | Tel: +977 1 5005601-08 Fax: +977 1 5005518



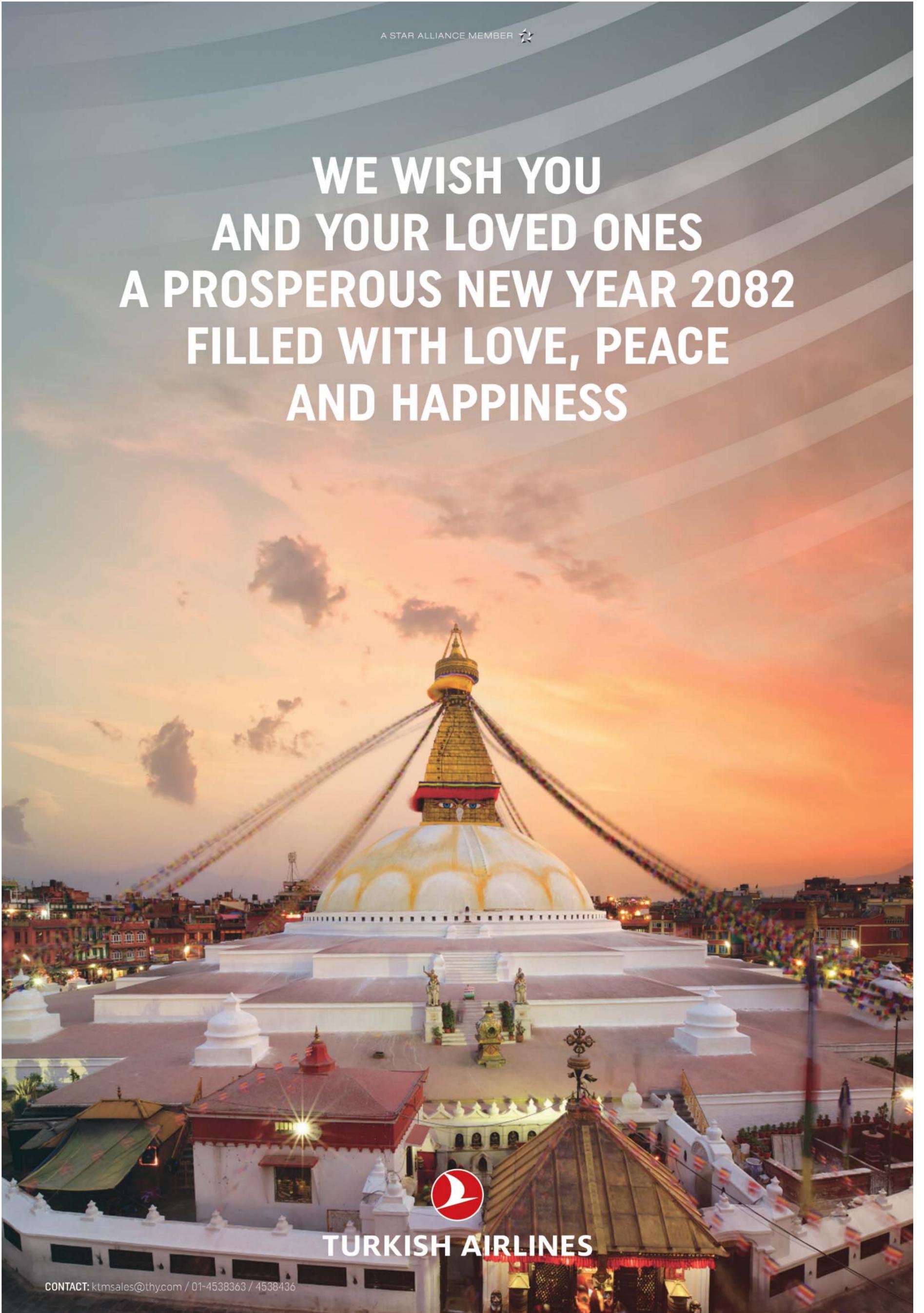
A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

**WE WISH YOU  
AND YOUR LOVED ONES  
A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR 2082  
FILLED WITH LOVE, PEACE  
AND HAPPINESS**



**TURKISH AIRLINES**

CONTACT: [ktmsales@thy.com](mailto:ktmsales@thy.com) / 01-4538363 / 4538436



# Trump tariffs would have benefited

But a global recession will harm economic mainstays: remittance inflows and tourism

■ Ramesh Kumar

US President Donald Trump's announcement of hefty tariffs, then a 90-day pause on all countries except China are reverberating worldwide. There have been wild swings in stock markets, and fears of recession.

After global uproar, Trump announced a 'pause' on all reciprocal tariffs he slapped last week. But there is a looming trade war between the world's two largest economies: the US and China.

Nepal had got away with only 10% tariffs, prompting some to see an opening to increase Nepal's exports to the US. But any benefit Nepal could have derived from lower tariffs could be diminished by a global recession.

Revealing its Asian Development Outlook on Wednesday, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) predicted a 4.4% growth rate for Nepal this year and 5.1% in 2026. But this calculation was made before the Trump tariff turmoil.

'Ongoing tariff rises may cause a global economic downturn, affecting Nepal's tourism receipts and remittances, and lower foreign aid could negatively impact growth as Nepal relies on foreign aid to finance development needs,' ADB's Nepal office said in a statement.

Despite the 90-day pause the massive 125% tariffs on Chinese exports remain, and Beijing retaliated Wednesday with its own 85% tax on US imports.



**NMB BANK**  
एनएमबि बैंक



## Turkish awards

Turkish Airlines Legal & Compliance Department was recognised as the best legal team in the Transport & Logistics — Team category at the Lexology European Awards 2025 in London. "The company's forward-thinking and dynamic strategy has played a crucial role in shaping a strong and impactful legal department," said Berkant Kolcu, Turkish Airlines Senior Vice President of Legal and Compliance.



## Lemon Tree walk

Lemon Tree Hotel organised a Walk for Health on World Health Day 7 April. Over 200 participants walked from Narayanchaur to the Lemon Tree premises in Budhanilkantha. One of the goals of the walk was to call for cleaner air, as Kathmandu faces an air pollution crisis due to wildfires in the Tarai.

## Economy to grow

The Asian Development Bank expects Nepal's economy to grow 4.4% in fiscal year 2025, up from the 3.9% estimated for FY2024. They put the improvement down to increased domestic demand, private sector reform, and a revitalised tourism industry.

## Gogoro swaps

Gogoro has activated 45 e-scooter battery swap stations across Kathmandu Valley. Riders can instantly swap their dead batteries for charged ones at the stations, which have been placed every 2-3km at petrol pumps, marts etc. The company reports 100 swaps per day already.



## Motorcycle-cafe

SJ Moto and Himalayan Java jointly launched a cafe in Lakeside, Pokhara where customers can get coffee, buy motorcycle gear and accessories, and meet other enthusiasts.



## Hetauda Cement

The Hetauda Cement Industry has resumed production after a gap of almost five months. The break was due to a lack of electricity. The industry, which employs 195 and produces 12,000 cement sacks a day, needs 8MW of electricity per day mainly to crush limestone.



## India Nepal tests

Indian customs points will now accept certificates issued by Nepal's National Food and Feed Reference Laboratory on eight exports: juice, jam, jelly, pickles, candies, ginger, fresh fruit, vegetables, and instant noodles. This greatly benefits Nepali producers, who previously had to pay high prices for testing in India.



## Tomato prices crash

Wholesale tomato prices have dropped to the lowest in decades, with farmers selling at as low as Rs10 per kg. The decrease is due to high supply due to big harvests and imports from India. While good news for consumers, tomato farmers are struggling to recover investments.

## Foodmandu New Year

Foodmandu is offering several deals to mark the Nepali new year in between 7-20 April. These include discounts of up to 82%, flash sales, party packs, and buy-one-get-one free offers. The food delivery company partners with over 1,000 restaurants in Kathmandu Valley, Pokhara, Chitwan, and Butwal.

## Maternity deaths

Gilbal maternal deaths have declined 40% from 2000 to 2023 according to the UN. Nepal's maternal mortality rate has also declined by over 70% to 142 per 100,000 live births. But worldwide funding cuts threaten to slow further progress.

## UNESCO calls probe

UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay has condemned the killing of Suresh Rajak, a photojournalist who was covering the pro-monarchy protests in Tinkune on 28 March. In her statement, Azoulay called for a thorough investigation into the death and ensuring safety for journalists.

## Women in Motion

Nabil Bank held the Women in Motion-Accelerate Action program, aimed at encouraging female leadership in managerial positions in the banking sector, and at preventing workplace violence.



## Digital payments surge

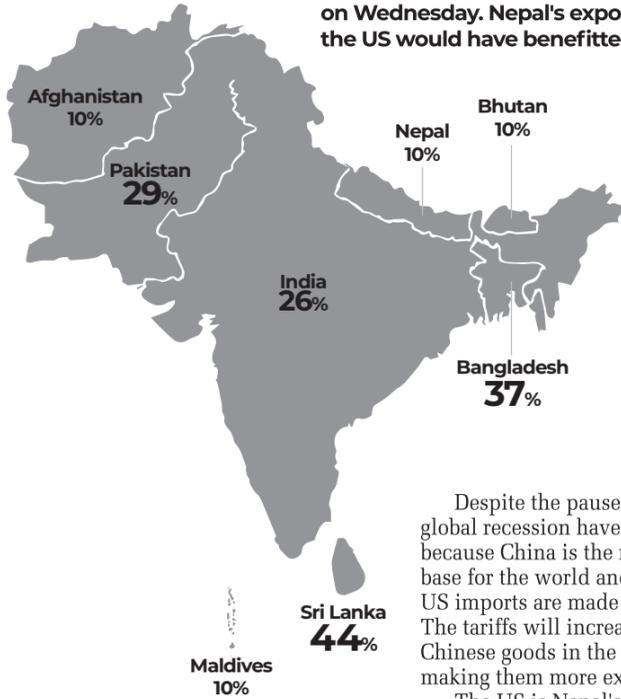
There was a 230% annual increase in digital payments between the fiscal years 2021/22 and 2023/24. Increases in mobile banking, QR payments, digital wallets and internet banking are behind the growth. Many more businesses now accept digital payments: 2.34 million QR merchant codes had been issued by mid-Jan 2025.

# Nepal



AISHA MACDOUGALL

Donald Trump announced hefty tariffs on most South Asian countries, before announcing a 90-day pause on Wednesday. Nepal's exports to the US would have benefitted.



Despite the pause, fears of a global recession have not gone away because China is the manufacturing base for the world and 14% of all US imports are made in China. The tariffs will increase duty on all Chinese goods in the US, ultimately making them more expensive.

The US is Nepal's second-largest export market, with goods worth Rs17.31 billion exported during the last fiscal year. These include chhurpi dog chew, woollen carpets, pashmina, ready-made garments, and handicrafts.

Dog chews and woollen carpets account for more than half of Nepal's total exports to the US. Nepal exported nearly 1,000 tonnes of dog chews last year.

Except for those two items, Nepal's readymade garments compete with those made in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India and had the



tariffs gone ahead, Nepal's apparel exports would be cheaper in the United States.

Trump had jacked up tariffs for India (26%), Pakistan (29%), Bangladesh (37%), and Sri Lanka (44%) because of its trade deficit with those countries.

Following the 2015 earthquake, the US granted Nepal duty-free treatment for 77 items under its Nepal Trade Preference Program (NTPP). These non-reciprocal preferential trade benefits will end on 31 December 2025.

It was not clear if the 10% tariff would have applied to those items during the course of this year, and the ultimate fate of the NTPP.

"The NTPP was passed as law by the US Congress a decade ago, so we can assume that the current administration will not revoke it through an executive order," says Ravi Shankar Sainju, also the former joint secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies.

The US is unlikely to extend the trade benefit to Nepal, as Nepal has not taken necessary steps to renegotiate the NTPP.

Kiran Saakha, president of the Nepal-USA Chamber of Commerce and Industry, doubts that the NTPP will end immediately, but adds: "The US Embassy was unable to provide us with a clear answer. But as far as we understand, the benefits Nepal has received under the NTPP remain in place for now."

Nepal has not been able to increase exports of the 77 specified products and reap full benefits of the zero tax facility.

"The countries in the region export goods to the US that Nepal can produce," says economist Poshraj Pandey. "With the US

having imposed a relatively lower tariff on Nepal, there is a potential to actually increase exports to the American market."

Saakha agrees that demand for Nepali goods could increase, but the country must be more competitive. Nepal had a booming ready-made garment industry leading up to the early 2000s with 500 units employing 85,000 workers, and accounted for a quarter of the country's exports.

But the termination of the WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing in 2004 ended quotas that benefitted Nepal. Cotton and polyester garments from Nepal are subject to 18-20% customs duty in the US market.

"Nepal has the opportunity to increase the export of ready-made garments once again," Bhim Kumar Giri of the Garment Association Nepal told us before the 90-day pause announcement. "It is time to dust off our old machines and bring them back into production."

To take advantage of any tariff differential, Nepal would have to be much more investment-friendly. "Trump may reimpose the tariffs, but Nepal should not count its chicken before they hatch," says trade expert Ravi Shankar Sainju.

High production and transportation costs and low productivity hurt the competitiveness of Nepal's products in the international market. Raw materials required to produce goods in Nepal have to be imported, and the country's landlocked location increases cost of production.

The cautious optimism that followed Trump's tariffs and the prospect of being more competitive than Nepal's South Asian neighbours has now given way to uncertainty about what the White House will come up with next. 🇺🇸

## New Calendar. New Roads. New Momentum.



**FORESTER**

Spacious, capable and ready for the road less travelled.

**CROSSTREK HEV**

Advanced self charging hybrid Electric SUV.

**OUTBACK**

Built with Subaru's EyeSight Driver Assist Technology.

Vijay Motors Pvt. Ltd. | Naxal, Kathmandu  
www.subaru.com.np | sales@vmpl.com.np  
9801026541 | 9801026542



# It better be better next time

A decade after the 2015 disaster, there are lessons for Nepal in coordination of international relief

■ Sudiksha Tuladhar

On the morning of 25 April 2015, as shocked residents of Kathmandu were sifting through the rubble of collapsed homes and temples, there was thunder in the air. Many thought it was another earthquake.

A formation of six Indian Air Force MI17 helicopters were flying low over the Lalitpur to land at the airport. Soon after, the Chinese Air Force dispatched its own MI17s, flying over the Himalaya.

In the week that followed, the US Marines flew in V-22 Ospreys from Okinawa with mid-air refueling along the way. Then C-17s landed in Kathmandu with UH-1L helicopters in their bellies. Singapore, Israel, Japan, Thailand sent military aircraft with relief and also evacuated their nationals.

The Nepal Army only had three small helicopters at the time. So, the most urgent need after 25 April was air support to lift injured people out of remote areas, fly in relief supplies, and conduct aerial surveys of the most affected regions.

“The international response was commendable. It was immediate and overwhelming,” recalls Sagar Shrestha of the Nepal Red Cross Society. Indeed, it may have been too overwhelming: the airport soon ran out of apron space as heavy jets started coming in one after another.

Despite the intensity of the shaking, there was no damage to the runway and terminal building and the airport was immediately operational. This meant that within 16 hours of the earthquake, a Turkish Red Cross emergency response team had already landed in Kathmandu (pictured).

The Nepal Army set up a command and control centre at its hangar at the Airport to coordinate relief and conduct medevacs from affected areas. Army personnel accompanied the helicopters to navigate in high terrain.

But in the immediate aftermath, it was local communities that sprang into action to dig survivors out of the rubble. Since most of the collapsed buildings in Kathmandu were not concrete high rises, it did not need specialised equipment.

Before long, the Nepal Army, Armed Police Force (APF) and the Nepal Police came together in the search efforts, carrying out most of the rescues, pulling babies out alive after 22 hours.

“The APF was responsible for search and rescue and the army had the job of transporting wounded people,” recalls Govinda Raj Pokhrel, vice-chair of the Nepal Planning Commission at the time.

The government declared a state of emergency and requested international help within 3–4 hours of the earthquake, and relief flights started arriving immediately. In parts of Kathmandu where concrete structures had collapsed like Gongga Bu, their carbon dioxide life detectors and listening equipment helped locate buried survivors.

But it was old fashioned pick and shovel and sniffer dogs that sufficed in most collapsed structures in Bungamati, Bhaktapur, Sankhu and other badly-affected towns. Local first responders and the APF and Army were responsible for most of the rescues.

Lack of information to international relief agencies meant that most arrived with equipment that was not really needed. There



WIKIPEDIA



NEPALI TIMES ARCHIVE

**DECADE HENCE:** Nepali Times featured the safe rescue by the Nepal Army of 4-month-old Sonish Awal from the rubble of his home in Bhaktapur 22 hours after it collapsed (top). A Turkish search and rescue team (above, left) arrived the very next day after the earthquake because Kathmandu airport was not damaged. Most of the rescue of survivors was carried out by Nepal Army and APF (above, right).

was also duplication with foreign search and rescue teams stepping on each other's toes in ruined neighbourhoods.

“The government launched coordinated rescue efforts, assigning specific responsibilities to each ministry. For instance, the Ministry of Forests was tasked with managing helicopters arriving from foreign countries to ensure smooth logistics,” adds Pokhrel.

Sushil Koirala who was the prime minister at the time, coordinated with the ministers and assigned them responsibilities. The government was slow to coordinate international assistance, and when it finally took charge, it insisted aid go through a ‘one-door policy’ to the Prime Minister’s Relief Fund.

This was heavily criticised on social media by Nepalis and foreigners alike, and actually dissuaded many wishing to help to either withdraw or delay providing monetary and in-kind support.

The other government decision that was ridiculed was an over-enthusiastic Customs Department that wanted to tax relief material. Although some of the clothing, food and home repair supplies were low quality or inappropriate, obstructing help during an emergency was not a good idea.

“There were issues at the airport

as large numbers of foreign aircraft were flying in. And the one-door policy for donations to be through the prime minister’s fund became a problem,” admits Pokhrel, adding, “the government was in full control though, which is required during such large-scale disasters.”

Pokhrel helped organise an international pledging conference within two months after the earthquake. Even while aftershocks rocked Kathmandu, international donors from 34 countries responded generously with promises of \$4.4 billion. However, some of that money was calculated in the help already sent, and much of the pledges never materialised.

“Some foreign assistance did come in, but there was no clarity to mobilise and coordinate the relief, which should have come from the government,” says Sagar Shrestha of the Red Cross.

The earthquake struck just as Nepal was preparing to promulgate a new Constitution with controversy about its provisions. Unhappy with it, India blockaded border checkpoints for six months, relief supplies was stuck, and there were shortages of food, fuel

and medicines. “Nepal was in political transition, so some lack of coordination was understandable, but given the circumstances we did as much as we could,” says Pokhrel of the post-disaster period.

Nepal also could not say no to international offers to rebuild monuments which it could have done itself. Large flags of American, Chinese and other countries were painted at reconstruction sites of destroyed monuments.

Help comes with strings attached, and it was obvious some countries were deriving propaganda value from it. Because of Nepal’s strategic location, the presence of so many aircraft from India, China and US gave the impression that this was more of a military exercise — especially near sensitive northern border regions.

Ten years later, there are lessons to be learnt that will be useful when the next disaster strikes, as it surely will in future. Foreign assistance was robust and rapid, but coordination struggled with logistical, political, and capacity constraints.

There was also a glaring need to upgrade urban search and rescue

capacity of the security forces — especially for collapsed multi-storey concrete structures because next time we may not be so lucky.

Pneumatic drills, rotary rescue saws, concrete cutters, chipping hammers, hydraulic shoring, and life detectors like thermal, CO2 and snake-eyes have to be prepositioned in various parts of the country.

Nepal Army also needs more heavy helicopters and station them in bases in Surkhet, Pokhara and Dharan for rapid deployment. The rescue of people from a fire on a high-rise in Itahari earlier this month needed a helicopter to fly all the way from Kathmandu, and that may have been too late if the fire was more serious.

Raging forest fires in the past two weeks all over Nepal has also exposed a woeful lack of aerial firefighting capacity, a gap which the Nepal Army could fill with water dropping equipment. This is important because the next earthquake could also be followed by uncontrolled urban fires.

Says Sagar Shrestha of Nepal Red Cross Society: “The biggest lesson is that there needs to be better communication about what is needed after a disaster and coordination between Nepal’s agencies and the internationals to make relief flow smooth.”

10 YEARS  
25 APRIL 2015

BYD

# WORLD'S NO. 1 NEW ENERGY VEHICLE SALES CHAMPION



BYD ATTO 3



BYD DOLPHIN



**CIMEX INC. PVT. LTD.**  
Naxal, Kathmandu  
01-5970733  
9802396101

LALITPUR: 9801981531, 9801981533 | BHAKTAPUR: 9851038377, 9802356481 | BANEPA: 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 | POKHARA: 9801671611, 9844039594  
ITAHARI: 9802600501, 9802678144 | DANG: 9857821460 | BHAIKAWA: 9857088804, 9857026149 | DHANGADI: 9858420415

# 82 in २०८२

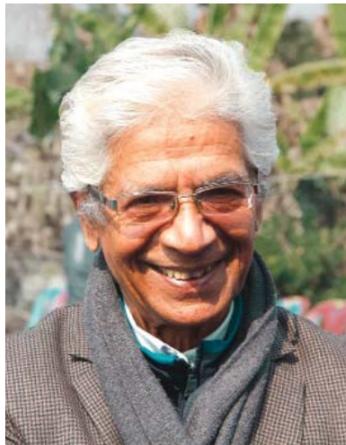
Nepalis born around Bikram Sambat year 2000 remember what life was like, and how it has changed



**DURGA BARAL**  
Artist and cartoonist, Pokhara

My actual birth date is in 1999BS, so I may not qualify for your selection of 82-year-old Nepalis. My earliest memory is of going from our home to our mother's place crossing that rickety wooden bridge with bamboo handles across the Seti Gorge where the Mahendra Pul is today. I must have been about 6, and remember being really frightened.

Childhood in Pokhara in those days was heaven. Our home was small and thatch-roofed. Every house was surrounded by a garden



of fruit trees and flowers. In spring, the air would be scented.

Of course, life was difficult, my grandmother had to wake up at 4 every morning to fetch a गण्ठा of water after waiting for 1 hour in line. But people were decent and happy, contented, satisfied with what we had.

Pokhara's scenic setting, the mountains and lakes and its ethnic diversity made people here tolerant. We grew all the food we needed, and only had to rely on चुन, तेल, कपडा from the market.

Today, of course, everything is from the shops or imported. Everyone is in a hurry, no one has any time to sit back and if they do they are on their phones. People

are stressed and have all kinds of worries. Things are not peaceful anymore in the country, either.

As an artist I have always been inspired by the sight of Annapurna and Machapuchre from my house. I have painted them so often that I know their shapes and texture by memory. But this winter, the sight of the back pyramid of Machapuchre was shocking. I have never seen it so devoid of snow.

But people are so busy running hither and thither, they do not even notice that the mountains are melting in front of their eyes due to climate change.

I took on the pen name Batsayan for my cartoons in which I used to lampoon leaders with elastic morals, the sycophants and hypocrites — and there were plenty of them after 1990. One of my cartoons after the 2005 coup was of a soldier escorting a underclad farmer carrying a Rolls Royce on his back into the royal palace. I think it has some relevance today.

But as the violence got worse during the conflict, I felt cartooning was not adequate to convey the national trauma. That is why I went back to painting the pain and suffering of war.

Pokhara perhaps because of its scenery has been an incubator of the arts. We are insulated from the shenanigans in Kathmandu, and have a different perspective.  **As told to Kunda Dixit**

**REWATI RAJBHANDARI**  
Author and Poet

Here I am having a conversation with Sudiksha about my memories of life and family. I have completed my second जन्म celebration. It has been indeed a wonderful 82 years.

I was very naughty as a kid, and my friends gave me the nickname 'Caterpillar'. They used to tease me saying, "She's a caterpillar, she doesn't sit in one place and keeps moving from here to there."

Me and my cousins were always creating a nuisance, jumping on haystacks and other mischief.

As soon as my periods started, my mother did not allow me to go to school despite my father insisting. I did not mind not being allowed to go to school, I was happy playing at home. I was very close to my grandaunt, she was the only person who could stop me from crying. It was difficult to come to terms with her death.

I was married off at an early age and had three sons, the youngest who was sickly died despite our efforts to save him. I was devastated, so much so that my husband was worried for me. Then, I started reading books voraciously and also writing poetry which I never published.

Then, one day an incident occurred that changed my life. My husband and I were walking past Bhote Bahal, which at the time was full of trees. I saw an abandoned baby girl and this tore my heart to pieces.



I asked my husband if we could adopt the baby, but he refused. I remember what he said to this day: "The person who abandoned this child is just like you because you also throw away the poems you write."

That remark was an epiphany. From that day onwards, I never threw away any verse I wrote and started collecting them, aiming to have them published. I have to thank my husband for opening my eyes, he has played a great role in supporting and encouraging me. He was there with me through thick and thin till he was killed 30 years ago during the People's Movement.

My first publication named खिचडी came out in 1988, and I dedicated my collection of poems to my mother. It was my mother who introduced me to poetry by chanting certain sloka and mantra, and she used to say the words in it were written by god. Her pronunciation was so pure that we could hear the sacred sounds and feel closer to the Almighty.

I must have inherited the



genes for writing poetry from my mother. I just could not stop writing, and by now have 20 published works in Nepali and Newari with poetry, story collections, storybooks for children and my autobiography as well.

With age, my writing has slowed, but I still have a few collections to publish. I am planning to bring out a book in Newari soon and then get it translated and published in Nepali as well since the Nepali reading audience is much larger than that of Newari.

There are a lot of things I still want to write about. But, Sudiksha, one last message I would like to give to your younger readers is to keep reading and writing. If you want to be a writer, there is only one thing to do: write and keep writing, whenever you feel like it, wherever you are, and whatever is in your mind. And, oh yes, never throw away what you have written.  **As told to Sudiksha Tuladhar**

**SHYAM BADAN SHRESTHA**  
Entrepreneur

I was born in Gau Bahal in Patan. I did not have a father growing up. And for that, my mother and I were regarded as inauspicious. Being poor was already a burden, but women without a man to protect or provide deepened the scorn.

I saw how society turned its face on us. I remember the weight of that gaze. I studied till Grade 6 in Patan then we had to move to Janakpur. I spent three years there, studying in a local school where I was the only girl in my class. People used to believe that educated girls would become wayward and a threat to society.

We used to wake up at 2AM to the sound of grain being ground in the dhikki and jato. Finishing household chores, we rushed to school. It was hard to adjust between languages.

At home, I was accustomed to speaking in Newari but classes were in Hindi, and the villagers



spoke Maithili, and we also had to study Nepali. Back in Kathmandu, I juggled work and study.

At age 13, I made a decision to change the course of my life by getting a higher education. I must work hard and make something of

**DHRUBA CHANDRA GAUTAM**  
Novelist

I have been writing for a long time. Seven decades now. I was drawn to writing from a young age. My brother was a writer as well. I grew up around words.

My first poem was published at age 16. Looking back, the writing was somewhat immature. I didn't choose the best word, or get across an emotion the way I wanted to. It took another six years or so for my writing to gain maturity.

The subject matter that I write about has also changed. I used to write a lot about love at first. Then I wrote about relationships between two people, not necessarily romantic. I liked to see how individuals interact with each other.

Later, when the mood in the country turned revolutionary, it was reflected in my work as well

as of other Nepali language writers. I read a lot: the Mahabharat and Swasthani. I read voraciously at the university libraries. Life is short and fleeting, and there is so much I haven't read, even on my own bookshelf.

My favourite book would have to be the Mahabharat, mainly for how it lays the story out. It was one of the earliest books I read and to this day I still go back to it. I have read it in different languages and versions. They say that everything that happens in life happens in the Mahabharat, but there are things that happen in the Mahabharat that do not happen in life.

The Mahabharat describes how people were in the Kali Yuga -- they aged quicker, for example. This is also a Kali Yuga. People are slaves to their weaknesses. There have

**PRAKASH CHANDRA LOHANI**  
Former Finance Minister

I was brought up in a joint family. My grandfather had eight sons, and with their families, we were 45 people. My uncle was Nepal's first physicist, my father an engineer.

The importance of education was thus impressed upon us at a young age.

After my studies in Nepal, I got a PhD in Economics in the United States, and returned around 1970. In the absence of institutional infrastructure in Nepal to accommodate the financial theories I had learnt I decided I could be more productive in politics.

I won a seat in the 1971 election under the Graduate Constituency which reserved four seats in the Rastriya Panchayat from a pool of around 10,000 university graduates across the country.

Nepal was changing rapidly. Access to education and information enabled Nepalis to question themselves, their role in and relationship with the state, and their connections to communities that were not their own.

This was also a time when people began to realise whom the state resources belong to, which helped establish Nepal's budget and regulatory systems. King Mahendra had realised that the monarchy could not justify its leadership purely as the will of god.

The king set up administrative mechanisms and introduced many reformist policies. The Public Service Commission was launched, marking a move towards



this life. That conviction carried me through.

I went on to complete my Bachelor's in Education (BEEd). I excelled in Nepali which is not my mother tongue, and for that I credit my teachers as well. I loved to teach

myself, but grew disheartened by how politics snuck into everything, even the classroom.

So, I chose a new path. With 20 rupees in my hand, I bought thread and began crafting potheads, something unheard of in Nepal at the time. There was no one to guide me, but knot by knot I set up Nepal Knotcraft Centre in 1984.

Today, we see machine-made goods everywhere, but handmade crafts have a soul. They carry the warmth of the maker's hands, the rhythm of tradition passed from mother to daughter. To me, handicraft is not just work, it is therapy. It is art. It is identity. All that we must preserve and pass on.

Today I see girls going to school and women working, speaking up, making their own decisions. Back then, women were not to be seen, let alone heard. They were married off, to cook,

serve in-laws, raise children, and stay quiet.

I have lived through that silence, fought it, and now I watch as it slowly breaks, and for the better. Technology has also transformed our lives. In our time, only a few families had radios to which we would huddle around to catch a bit of music. And now? The world is in the palm of our hands.

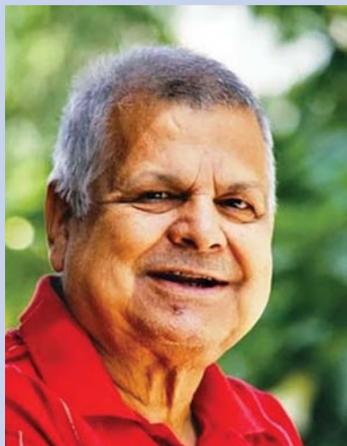
I hope Nepal continues to embrace technology in a way that can strengthen our roots. We need research and innovation to preserve our culture and explore our land's available resources for eco-friendly products and local industries to thrive.

And for our crafts, we must keep our hands moving so the heritage lives on for generations to come. 🇳🇵  
**As told to Sangya Lamsal**



been different political regimes since 2000BS. But the way people live has remained largely the same.

For the people in power, ideals have become like a bag that is hung from a rope to be pointed at. But I am not a political person. Writers have to be honest, of course. They



have to be true to their work, and ideally in the lived life as well. A writer better not be corrupt.

Technology has brought a change in how people live. People are indoors more often, watching TV or on phones. The computer came along in the 90s, but I have always

just used a fountain pen. The computer made writing easier and led to more of it, and I don't know if that is a good or a bad thing.

My writing habits have changed too. When I was young, I used to write all the time, day and night. I could leave a story halfway done and come back later and finish it with ease. I used to wait for reasons to stop writing, but now I give myself excuses not to start. I tell myself that it is too cold to write, or too hot. I think some of that is because of my age. I have just been writing for so long.

The New Year 2082 is upon us. I think we should approach it with hope and optimism, as if it were a newborn. You always want a baby to grow up and do well, to do something new. Let us hope we all get what we need, and that this fog lifts. 🇳🇵

**As told to Vishad Raj Onta**



meritocracy. He also established the Planning Commission, and introduced land reforms. Nepal moved towards import substitute industrialisation.

We were also able to establish Nepal's identity as an independent sovereign nation. During the Cold



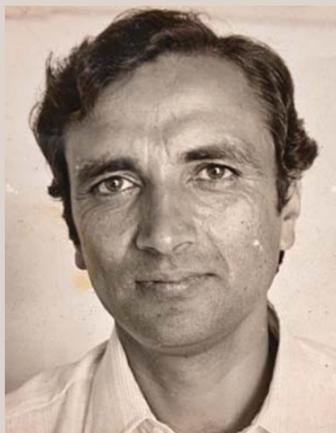
War we leveraged our relationships with the US, Soviet Union and China to get development aid into the country.

A society constrained for one-and-a-half centuries had been opened up to new ideas. As we moved towards a conventional

Parliamentary system, emerging leaders, including politicians like me who had brought a new perspective through our overseas academic backgrounds, also played a role in Nepal's socio-political evolution.

In 1980, King Birendra held a referendum on the nature of the political system that was most suitable for Nepal. A new legislature that enshrined the principle of one-man, one-vote was set up with substantial power vested in the monarchy. I was elected as a member of the new legislature from my home district in Nuwakot in the election held under the new Constitution, and was subsequently appointed Finance Minister.

At the time, there were only two state-owned banks in the country, and financial development was primitive. I felt that my first task was to reorganise the financial sector as an effective instrument



## BHARAT KOIRALA

2002 Ramon Magsaysay

As the youngest son in a middle class Nepali family of seven that moved from Gorkha to Kathmandu, I must have been quite pampered. It was a privileged upbringing, and I was one of the first students at the newly-opened St Xavier's School at Godavari in 1957. The Jesuit education provided me exposure, ethical, moral and spiritual values.

After graduating, I attended morning college and worked as a tourist guide at the Royal Hotel run by Boris Lissenavitch. Later, I joined the press division at the British Embassy where, because I got to read the British newspapers, I became interested in journalism.

The government launched The Rising Nepal, and I joined as a reporter, profiling international visitors and accompanying King Birendra on official visits. There were not too many journalists fluent in English, and I heard that the newspaper was used in a well-known school as an example of how not to write English!

I also edited the Gorkhapatra for some years and in both papers my priority was in human interest stories about the lives of ordinary Nepalis. Trained journalists were in short supply, so I went on to help establish the Nepal Press Institute (NPI) and the Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ). We specialised in training reporters to write on development and environment. In 1995, after five years of constant lobbying with the government, NEFEJ with help from UNESCO, set up Nepal's, and South Asia's, first community broadcaster, Radio Sagarmatha.

In all my journalism, I maintained good relations with those in power in different regimes, but always kept a distance. Despite greed and power struggles, regime changes,



conflict, political instability, Nepal has made progress.

One wonders how much further ahead we would have been if we had a better government. Some credit must go to some enlightened politicians. No matter which system of government Nepal had or who was in power, we have made socio-economic progress.

Being in the media, I had the privilege of spending time with King Birendra and we used to have long chats during his visits to different parts of the country. He was genuinely concerned about the welfare of Nepalis, and listened patiently to ordinary people, giving instructions to officials to follow up.

In my media career, I worked with letter press, offset, telex machines, computer typesetting, and now things are moving faster with the Internet, social media, algorithms and AI. With all the multimedia content, I am nostalgic for the time when we had to think twice before adding a photo to a story because we needed to make an expensive zinc block.

Technology itself is a double-edged sword. It is good or bad depending on how we use it. Parents, schools and societies working for the welfare of families and communities must work harder to teach young people the value of new technology, especially social media. They also need to inculcate moral, ethical and spiritual values that give their lives meaning.

The younger generation enjoys many privileges that we never had. But these are mainly materialistic comforts and physical changes, which usually come at the cost of the erosion of moral values. Today's students need the exposure to think more about the environmental health of the planet, societal and individual wellbeing, and compassion towards all living things. 🇳🇵

**As told to Kunda Dixit**

for mobilising resources and investment through the private sector.

I was able to convince people that Nepal's banking sector must be competitive to bring about innovation and productivity. I maintained that for the rapid development of the financial sector, Nepal should allow new banks collaborating with foreign financial institutions and investment, Nepali entrepreneurs, and the public.

During my term in office, I inaugurated the Nepal Arab Bank, now known as Nabil Bank, and the Nepal Indosuez Bank, now Nepal Investment Mega Bank. The Nepal Finance Company Act was promulgated to make space for Nepalis who did not fit the clientele of big banks. A new stock market was also established.

We also facilitated the Agriculture Development Bank to collect deposits from urban centres to invest in rural areas. In fact, I

was the first to make a deposit. Ultimately those deposits ended up being spent on urban development instead, but that is another story.

This was Nepal's silent banking revolution, in which I played a role. Today, the challenge is to direct available finance into sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, and small businesses.

As Minister for Housing and Physical Planning in 1988, we formed a road network plan, as well as a Kathmandu city urban development blueprint that would prohibit building along floodplains, green the embankments for flood control and ecological preservation.

Had we been able to put that plan in place, Kathmandu would have been far more liveable today. The encroachment into river banks is unfortunate, and it is still not too late to implement those plans. Sadly, that does not seem to be a priority at present. 🇳🇵

**As told to Shristi Karki**

## EVENTS



## Saturday hikes

Join Hike For Nepal to explore hidden trails around Kathmandu, every weekend. Call to register for upcoming hikes, and for route details.

Saturdays, 9828054244

## Annapurna summit 75

The exhibition Summit of Friendship at Alliance Française marks 75 years since the first ascent of Annapurna. Explore the enduring legacy of one of mountaineering's greatest achievements.

Until 18 April, 9am to 5pm, Alliance Française, Dhobighat



## Mandala play

The play Arko Euta Dronacharya, being shown at Mandala Theatre, is about a teacher inspired by the legendary Dronacharya to fight corruption and attempt to restore character in academia.

Till April 20, 5:15pm onwards Tickets: Rs500, Mandala

Theatre Nepal, Thapagaun

## Chitra Katha

Siddhartha Art Gallery's ongoing exhibition is a collection of contemporary work from 28 Bhaktapur artists.

11 April-11 May, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited



## Horticulture Expo

Learn how to cultivate and care for fruits, flowers, and more at this year's National Horticulture Expo. Also see multi-grafted fruit trees and learn about the latest advancements in agriculture.

Till 13 April, Bhrikutimandap

## Networking @ NTB

Project Abhaya's upcoming session The Abhaya Dialogue: Redefining Power & Progress 2025 will bring together notable young Nepalis—meet people, exchange ideas, and build your network.

11 April, Nepal Tourism Board



## Labim Bazaar

Support small and local businesses at Labim Bazaar. Shop for fresh baked goods, clothes new and thrifted, handicrafts and much more every Saturday.

Saturdays, 10am-4pm, Labim Mall, Pulchok

## MUSIC

## Oshin Karki

Go with friends and family to listen to Oshin Karki's soulful melodies this New Year's Eve. Get tickets now.

13 April, 7pm onwards, Tickets: Rs1,000, Club 10X



## Rockheads

With their blend of rock and modern sound, Rockheads are set to make this new year memorable. Catch their show next week.

14 April, 6pm onwards, Tickets: Rs1,000, Infinity Lounge



## The Elements

The Elements have a unique indie experimental pop sound—catch the trio at The Big Four Festival 81' this New Year's Eve.

14 April, 7pm onwards, Tickets: Rs1,500, Purple Haze Rock Bar



## KatJazz festival 2025

Paul Tynan will join Nepali and international musicians for an evening of improvisation and musical exchange at the 2025 KatJazz Festival.

20 April, 8pm onwards, Jazz Upstairs

## Soulful Wednesday

Join Vivek Lama for a relaxing evening of acoustic guitar, a perfect midweek escape in Sanepa.

23rd April, 7pm onwards, Mesohat, Sanepa

## DINING



## New Year at Aloft

Celebrate the New Year with a festive evening of traditional delicacies, global flavors, and lively music at Aloft's Nook restaurant. The curated dinner buffet will be accompanied by a live DJ.

13 April, 6:30pm - 10:30pm. Price: Rs2,500 per person Aloft Kathmandu Thamel, 9801976054

## GETAWAY



## Barahi Jungle Lodge

Nestled in the heart of Chitwan, this lodge offers a perfect blend of comfort and wildlife. Check out its infinity pool and full-service spa. The lodge is offering new year deals that include bed, breakfast and gala dinners for couples.

Rs:26,999 per couple per night, Meghauri, Chitwan (01) 4511113



## Sarangkot Mountain Lodge

Featuring 28 deluxe rooms and 2 suites, Sarangkot Mountain Lodge offers breathtaking views of the Annapurna range, Seti River, and Phewa Lake. Their new year package valid on 13 April includes bed, breakfast and dinner.

Rs28,999 per couple, Pokhara, 9851354455

## Aabas

Celebrate the new year with a cosy stay at Aabas with its home-like boutique ambience. Rs5,000 per couple per night, Lakeside (061) 455901

## Hotel Barahi

Enjoy New Year's Eve in Barahi's luxurious rooms along with a grand buffet dinner, accompanied by DJ sessions and karaoke. Rs14,999 Nett per couple, Pokhara, 9856044383



## Mountain Glory Resort

Mountain Glory Resort's two-person New Year's package includes a one-night stay in their deluxe rooms, buffet breakfast and free cocktail, sauna and jacuzzi, and discount on spa treatments and adventure sporting activities.

Price: Rs13,999 for 2 people, Dovilla Pokhara, 9806709658



## Barahi Kathmandu

Indulge in a delicious buffet dinner with live stations, sip on selected drinks, capture the night with a 360° picture camera, and enjoy other new year surprises at Barahi Kathmandu.

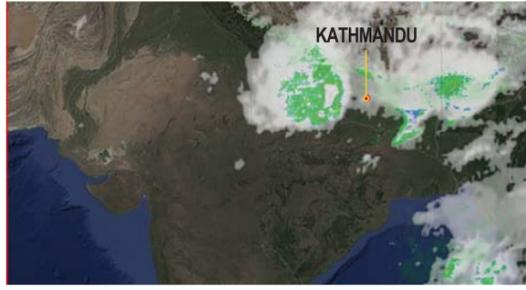
13th April, Price: Rs3,500 nett per person (New Year's Eve) / Rs3,000 nett per person, (New Year's Day), 9851354455

## Feels

Feels offers the perfect blend of music and city views, making it an ideal place to unwind or catch up with friends. While there, try the sizzling grills, freshly brewed coffee, or a glass of craft beer.

Jhamsikhel, 9702681253

## WEEKEND WEATHER



## Relief Rain

There is some relief in sight after this prolonged drought and wildfire season with thunderstorms and rain forecast over the central mountains on Friday and into next week. A deep low-pressure trough over the Bay of Bengal (pictured) is injecting moisture, and this will rise along the mountains due to thermally-driven anabatic winds. There is a heat warning in northern India and this is expected to contribute to towering cumulus formation on the southern slopes of the Himalaya. The low pressure is not expected to intensify into a cyclone and will hit the Odisha coast on Friday before moving northeast.

## OUR PICK



In Antonio Campos's 2022 crime drama miniseries The Staircase, crime novelist Michael Peterson is accused of murdering his wife Kathleen after she is found dead under suspicious circumstances at the bottom of a staircase in the couple's home. What follows is a 16 years of public scrutiny and never-ending judicial battles as the embattled author maintains his innocence. The series is based on Jean-Xavier de Lestrade's 2004 true crime docuseries of the same name, and stars Colin Firth, Toni Collette, and Michael Stuhlbarg.

## 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

## Sizzling by Doko

Satisfy your cravings at Sizzling by Doko with its bold flavors. Choose your pick from their platters, juicy burgers, loaded fries, and comforting rice bowls.

Jhamsikhel, 9801046708



## Kharayo Bakes

Known for its handcrafted desserts, Kharayo Bakes serves an array of pastries, cakes, and cookies, from its classic cheesecakes and flaky croissants to custom cakes for special occasions.

Hanuman Dhoka, 9851132172

## Le Sherpa

Enjoy European cuisine at Le Sherpa with dishes like chicken cannelloni, morel mushroom ravioli, and grilled chicken leg with morel mushrooms, all crafted with fresh and local ingredients.

Maharajgunj (01) 4528604

## Fire and Ice

One of the first pizzerias in Kathmandu, Fire and Ice offers genuine Napolitana pizza and dozens of variants to choose from. Try their popular Paesana pizza or the classic Margherita.

Thamel (01) 5350210

# Il y a d'autres Annapurnas dans la vie des hommes

France and Nepal mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first ascent of an 8,000m peak

■ Sangya Lamsal

There are other Annapurnas in the lives of men.' That is the famous last sentence in French climber Maurice Herzog's adventure classic, Annapurna, published after his expedition's first ascent of an eight-thousander in 1950.

Annapurna I is the deadliest in the world to climb, with one third of the mountaineers who attempt not making it down alive. This week, two Nepali mountain guides perished in an avalanche on the north face, the same route taken by the French expedition 75 years ago.

Towering at 8,091m, Annapurna is the world's tenth-highest mountain, but because maps were not accurate back then Herzog's expedition started climbing Dhaulagiri before realising that they were on the wrong mountain.

The French Embassy and Alliance Française in Kathmandu are marking the anniversary with a series of events, starting with an exhibition titled Summit of Friendship: 75 Years of Annapurna Ascent. Curated by Swaraj Man Chitrakar, the panels take visitors through the triumphant summit and the dramatic descent.

The exhibition highlights the often-overlooked story of Nepali high altitude guides and porters like Ang Tharkay who made the historic ascent possible.

"This is not just a celebration of a French success, it is a tribute to the Sherpas and Nepalis who were part of the ascent of Annapurna and whose professionalism and passion



**WELCOME BACK:** Nepal's Prime Minister Mohan Shumsher Rana in a jewel-bedecked crown welcomed Maurice Herzog at Singha Darbar after his expedition's first ascent of an 8,000m peak in 1950. Herzog had to have all his fingers amputated due to frostbite on descent from Annapurna I. In the presence of the French Ambassador, Mohan Shumsher conferred on Herzog the Gorkha Khukri Cross, saying: "We welcome you here as a very brave man." This is one of the photos at the exhibition, commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the climb.

has been a part of Himalayan mountaineering ever since," French Ambassador Virginie Corteval said at the inauguration on 4 April.

The exhibition at the Alliance Française, which is also projecting a contemporary documentary of the climb, will be on till 18 April. Herzog's book Annapurna has been translated into 60 languages, the Nepali edition will be launched on 3 June, the exact date of the

climb in 1950. Later this year, the Embassy is also organising a colloquium on the impact of climate breakdown on the Himalaya. When Maurice Herzog and Louis Lachenal became the first climbers to reach the summit of Annapurna I, the feat captured international attention in a world still traumatised by war. Nepal was just emerging from the Rana regime, and the book propelled the country

into the international arena.

The Gorkhapatra in Kathmandu and Paris Match ran extensive coverage of the expedition, chronicling the extreme risks, the harsh realities of climbing in thin air, and the harrowing descent that nearly cost the climbers their lives, but lost their fingers and toes nonetheless.

Head guide Ang Tharkay has been given a special spotlight in the exhibition as he played a crucial role in ensuring the safe descent of the frostbitten summiteers, even though he chose not to accompany them to the very top. Tharkay was later a part of other Himalayan climbs and left an iconic legacy in the history of mountaineering.

The exhibition also pays tribute to milestones in Nepali mountaineering that followed the legendary 1950 ascent. It was not until 27 years later that the first Nepali, Sonam Wolang Sherpa, summited Annapurna I.

"We wanted to inform people not just about what happened in 1950 but also what has happened since," Director of Alliance Française, Sylvain Choin explains. "The exhibition is also accessible to everyone, so we translated every card, caption, and anecdote into Nepali."

The success on Annapurna I in 2021 of an all-women Nepali expedition with Purnima Shrestha, Dawa Yangzum Sherpa, Pasang Lhamu Sherpa Akita, Dabhuti Sherpa, Sharmila Tamang, and Maya Sherpa is also honoured in the exhibition.

Annapurna Rural Municipality is now promoting the North

Base Camp trek as the Maurice Herzog Trail, and is organising a commemoration at base camp with a statue of Herzog and another function on 3 June in Narchyang.

Named after the Hindu goddess Annapurna meaning 'giver of nourishment', Annapurna lives up to its name with its rivers and forests feeding the stream and rivers all year round. But climate breakdown has affected the mountains, with repeated failures of winter rains, floods, landslides and streams going dry. Mountaineering has also become more dangerous with more rockfalls and avalanches.

With the popularity of mountaineering expeditions on Annapurna's North Face, waste has also been piling up at base camp and the route up the mountain. This week alone, 32 Nepali and international climbers stood on top.

The exhibition nods to this growing urgency through a powerful example: a large-scale cleanup effort led by French climber Luc Boissard and a dedicated Sherpa team managed by Glacier Himalaya Treks. Together, the expedition removed over 1,100kg of waste from Annapurna's Base Camp and Camp I.

Said Ambassador Corteval: "This anniversary does not just mark a milestone in mountaineering, but is also a symbol of the enduring friendship between Nepal and France." 🇳🇵

*Summit of Friendship: 75 Years of Annapurna Ascent*  
Until 18 April  
9AM-5PM  
Alliance Française Kathmandu

HBL

घर कर्जा

## घर त्यहाँ बन्छ, जहाँ मन रन्छ

सरल, सहज हिमालयन बैंकको  
"घर कर्जा" सुविधा

विशेषताहरू:

- आकर्षक ब्याजदर
- २५ वर्ष सम्मको लागि २ करोड सम्म

विस्तृत जानकारीको लागि नजिकको शाखामा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोस् ।

HBL हिमालयन बैंक लिमिटेड  
Himalayan Bank Ltd.

himal@himalayanbank.com | www.himalayanbank.com

Follow us on

f himalayanbankltd x @himalayanbanknp y Himalayan Bank Ltd. z Himalayan Bank (Viber)

QR SCAN  
FOR MORE  
DETAILS.



# Go Türkiye

A new summer destination for Nepalis who might otherwise be doing the usual Bali-Bangkok circuit

With its wide range of attractions, varied landscape and moderate weather, Türkiye is fast becoming a favourite holiday destination for travellers worldwide, including Nepalis.

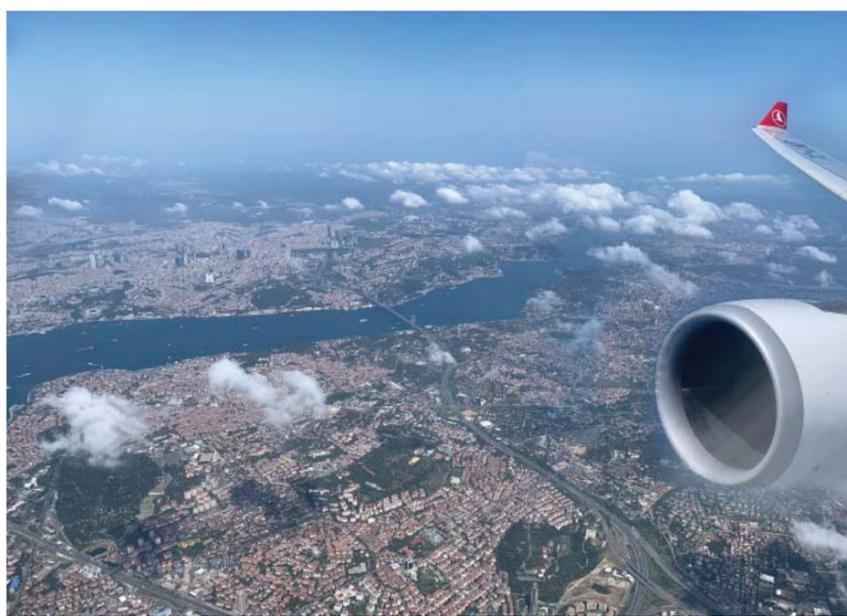
Direct air links, easy visa processing and even free stopover offers, the country that straddles two continents is just a hop away from Kathmandu. It could be as accessible as Bangkok and Bali, the traditionally preferred holiday destination for Nepalis and Nepal-based expats.

Increasingly, Türkiye has also become an affordable and more convenient half-way meeting point for South Asian families including Nepalis with relatives in North America and Europe, especially as visa restrictions tighten.

Türkiye was the sixth biggest global tourism destination last year, with 51.2 million visitors in a country of 85 million people. Tourists are drawn by its rich heritage, culture, cuisine as well as shopping.

And there are some unforgettably iconic destinations like the Bosphorus that divides Asia and Europe, Cappadocia, Konya, Antalya, Mardin. More and more Nepalis who are looking for Instagram posts of places other than Bali's Kuta beach or Thailand's Koh Phi Phi may want to inquire about tours to Türkiye.

"Everyone knows and wants



KUNDA DIXIT

to go to Istanbul, but there are also some very popular destinations like Cappadocia with its hot air balloon rides in summer, and skiing in winter," says Serkan Başar, General Manager of Turkish Airlines in Nepal. "Then there is Konya, the historical city famous for its Sufi heritage and a big annual festival with dance, music, poetry and food."

Konya is the final resting place of the renowned 13th century Persian poet, scholar and Sufi mystic, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad

Rūmī. The annual Şeb-i Arūs festival which translates into 'the night of reunion' commemorates Rumi and is famous for Türkiye's hypnotic dancers, called the dervish.

Apart from its sporting attractions, Cappadocia, is known its unique soft-stone landscape featuring cone rock formations, cave churches, fairy chimneys, rock houses, and entire underground cities. 'Cappadocia is a geological oddity of honeycombed hills and towering boulders of otherworldly

**INTERCONTINENTAL:** A Turkish Airlines Airbus A330 from Kathmandu flies over the Bosphorus as it approaches Istanbul Airport. The carrier is the only one connecting Nepal directly with Europe.

beauty,' gushes Lonely Planet guide. Travellers can choose to stay in one of the several cave hotels the town offers as they explore the fresco-adorned rock-cut churches of Göreme Open-Air Museum and the subterranean refuges of Derinkuyu and Kaymaklı.

Türkiye is a perfect holiday destination as it serves different types of tourists: those on a limited budget, and those who want a premium experience. Turkish Airlines flies to over 300 destinations and is the only European airline serving Nepal, operates direct flights between Istanbul and Kathmandu five times a week. The timing is convenient: departing Kathmandu at 7:30 AM, passengers arrive in Istanbul at noon after a 7-hour flight.

The resort city of Antalya on the Mediterranean coast is famous for its beaches and coastal scenery and is gaining a reputation for

destination weddings. Water sports is popular in the crystal-clear Mediterranean coast astride the golden sands of Lara and Konyaaltı beaches.

Mardin is a treasure trove for those wishing to explore heritage and archaeological sites, with ancient ruins, castles, mosques and churches dating back to Biblical times. Also known as the city of golden stone because of golden yellow limestone buildings on its strategic location on a rocky hill, Mardin is an open-air museum.

## Istanbul tour and stopover

Turkish Airlines offers transit passengers with 6-24 hour layovers a free hotel stay through its Touristanbul service. Those interested can select one of the six tours offered as per their itinerary and will be picked up, and driven back to the airport.

The airlines also offer a Stopover in Istanbul package for passengers with a connection period of at least 20 hours wherein they can stay free of charge in program-contracted hotels as they explore the city. Economy Class passengers get one night in a 4-star hotel while Business Class passengers get two nights in a 5-star or boutique hotel.

Nepalis going to Europe, the UK, and the US with a visa validity of 180 days and more are eligible for Türkiye evisa at \$37. Others can apply for a tourist visa via VFS. 🇹🇷

## A Nepali building bridges in Tasmania

Engineer is taking a big leap Down Under, constructing bridges and tunnels

### ■ Hum Gurung in Tasmania

Ever since leaving his home village in Syangja, Purna Gurung has been crossing bridges when he comes to them. And here he is at age 55, supervising the pile-driving for a new bridge in Tasmania, 10,000km away from home (pictured, right).

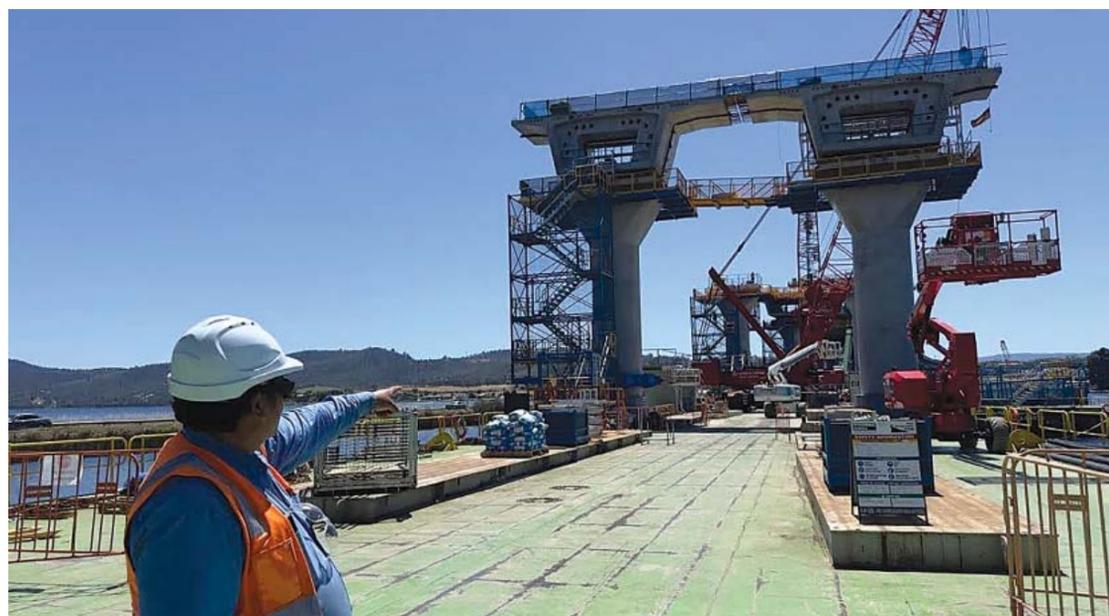
Gurung has built bridges in Africa, worked on tunnels in Hong Kong, and moved up the ranks in teams building complex infrastructure projects across the world. All that experience is standing him in good stead in Australia, where he came 15 years ago.

Purna Gurung has brought other Nepali engineers to join him in the bridge project here. He got his former co-worker Mansuba Gurung to come from New Zealand, and other Nepali engineers from the Australian mainland.

"We are a professional and energetic team, born in the high mountains of Nepal and now working on this historic bridge in Tasmania," says Gurung, as he drives a recent visitor to the construction site, and points out the piers and girders from the window. "My role is to maintain professional integrity and motivate my team, especially the Nepalis here."

The feeling appears to be mutual. Gurung is regarded as a sort of guru by the other Nepalis at the site, and he is respected for his expertise in bridge-building, his capacity for taking on difficult tasks and teamwork.

At the site itself, one could easily imagine oneself on a



construction site in Nepal: workers in hard hats are shouting instructions to each other in Nepali. Indeed, Nepali is said to be the most spoken language in Tasmania after English, and there are at least five Nepali restaurants in Hobart alone.

Despite its bucolic setting with neat, clean and green environment, many Tasmanians migrate to the mainland or abroad to seek new opportunities. Which is why the Australian government provides higher wages and encourages immigrants from Nepal and elsewhere a fast-track to permanent residence if they move to the island.

Nearly half of Tasmania is protected wilderness which has many species found nowhere



PHOTO: HUM GURUNG

else in the world. Nature-based tourism is becoming the mainstay of Tasmania's economy, Australia's smallest state.

There is also a new infrastructure drive, and this includes the Tasmania's longest bridge over the River Derwent which Purna Gurung and his team are working on. The Derwent flows down from Lake St Clair in Tasmania's Central Plateau and 182km later discharges into Storm Bay.

Compared to delayed bridge-building which is the norm in Nepal, construction here is progressing on schedule, and was preceded by an environmental assessment and measures to ensure that aboriginal and cultural sensitivities were addressed.

Despite criticism about high cost of the \$786 million Bridgewater Bridge, it appears to be worth it because cyclists and pedestrians have been given high priority with a safe three-metre-wide shared path on the upstream side of the bridge. A temporary bridge has also been built to streamline work, and will be dismantled later.

Purna Gurung is popular with his team members, especially his colleagues from Nepal. After completion of the Tasmania bridge later this year, he has already got a commitment to work on a tunnel project in Adelaide.

He has not thought about retirement, and tells us: "I have spent over three decades of my life building bridges and tunnels, and all that experience is very useful as I take on more challenging work." 🇳🇵

ALL NEW HYBRID ELECTRIC VEHICLE

# YARIS CROSS

Choose your own path and hybrid your style! Check out the stunning exteriors of the All-New Toyota Yaris Cross!




Scan here



*Move your world*



**BARAHI**  
HOSPITALITY & LEISURE

# Celebrate

SUNRISE SERENITY TO SUNSET SPLENDOR

Discover a new rhythm of life with Barahi Hospitality and Leisure





Tel : 977-1-4511113, 4515735 | Cell : +977 9851331247 / 9851331249  
Email : sales@barahi.com, cityoffice@barahi.com

# What is invisible is more dangerous

Kathmandu Valley's air is not polluted, it is poisonous

■ Sonia Awale

Besides multiple street demonstrations that gridlocked Kathmandu's traffic for the past weeks, public discourse in Nepal has also been dominated by dangerously high air pollution levels.

Caused mostly by hundreds of forest fires raging across the country, the smoke contains suspended soot particles that harms human health. Thursday's rain have cleared the air somewhat, and many people will soon forget how bad the air quality was. But the time to address the roots of next summer's fire season is now.

The reason everyone was talking about air pollution was because the smoke from wildfires was visible. But much more toxic are the invisible and odourless gases from vehicular and industrial emissions which have always been there.

The theme of World Health Day on 7 April this week was 'Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures' dedicated to preventing maternal and newborn deaths. It is estimated that in Nepal, 30% of neonatal mortality can be blamed on air pollution.

But that is only part of the story. Harmful as fine particulate matter is to human health, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ground-level ozone and other gases in vehicular emissions are more hazardous to health.

While the concentration of suspended particulate matter tinier than 1.5 microns (PM2.5) is closely monitored, these toxic gases are invisible, not measured much, and the public is not aware about the dangers they pose.

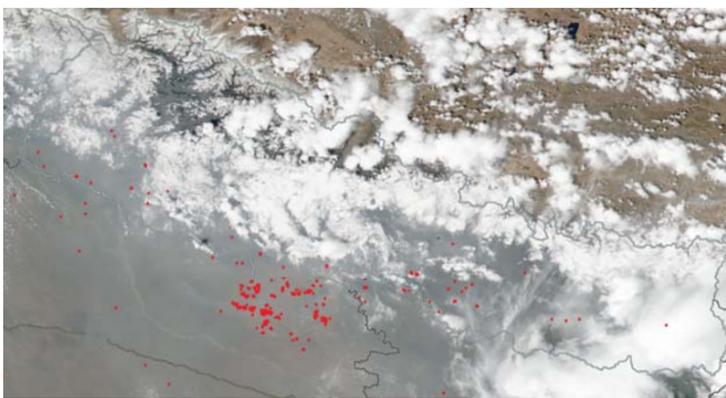
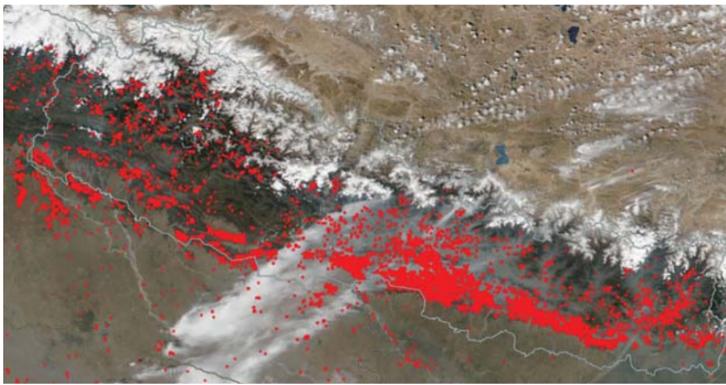
Surface ozone is produced by the interaction of various gases found when burning fossil fuels. Besides being poisonous, ground level ozone contributes up to 0.23°C to global warming because it is also a greenhouse gas.

A new policy brief by the Clean Air Fund titled The Case for Action on Tropospheric Ozone blames surface ozone for a half a million premature deaths every year, 54.8% of which are in South Asia. Ozone also stunts plant growth and reduces crop yields by 26% globally, and 11% loss in forest productivity, the report adds.

Ground-level ozone is not



PHOTOS: GOPEN RAI



## EXTINGUISHED

Forest fires raging all over Nepal in the week after 3 March (above) that reduced air quality, creating a public health hazard in Kathmandu and across the country. Each red dot is a fire detected by infrared sensors on the NASA Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS) satellite. But the rain on Thursday doused most of the fires (below) with more rain forecast over the weekend.

emitted directly into the air like other gases, but is formed when oxides of nitrogen (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) released from automobile tailpipes or industry smokestacks react chemically with each other in the presence of sunlight. The main source of carbon monoxide in Kathmandu Valley are its 1.2 million two-wheelers.

"Usually the concentration of carbon monoxide is 200-500 parts per billion (ppb), this has increased up to 3,000 in Kathmandu. Meanwhile, ground-level ozone has gone from 70-80 ppb to 150 ppb," says Ravi Sahu, regional air quality specialist with the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

Sahu says rampant forest fires of the past weeks have also added to carbon monoxide and ozone in the air, not just the fine particles that make up the visible smoke. He adds, "There isn't much awareness about ground-level ozone and carbon monoxide, we need to urgently look into it."

A distinction must be made between good and bad ozone. Stratospheric ozone protects living beings from harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.

Tropospheric ozone can again be separated into two types: ozone in the free atmosphere which is a greenhouse gas much more potent than carbon dioxide, and ground-level ozone which has adverse impacts on health and agriculture.

'Cutting tropospheric ozone presents a unique challenge as it requires smart and fast action across multiple greenhouse gases and air pollutants, as well as multiple economic sectors,' notes the Clean Air Fund's policy briefing. 'It is a growing and neglected problem that needs an integrated approach on both a local and global level to tackle climate change and air pollution together.'

## Dying young

There was a time when Nepal made it to international news bulletins only if there were fatalities on Mt Everest. Now, Kathmandu's bad air frequently makes headlines all over the world.

This past week, the concentration of PM2.5 that harms human health was up to 40 times the WHO recommended guideline — adding to the poisonous gases already present from vehicle emissions.

The Department of Environment says 40% of the pollution in the past weeks was from wildfires sparked by nearly 6 months without substantial rain over central Nepal. Most of the rest is from vehicular and industrial emissions from Kathmandu itself and across the southern border.

NASA's Fire Information and Resource Management System (FIRMS) which issues daily maps of fires, showed hundreds of blazes raging across Nepal on Wednesday, mainly in Chitwan, Parsa and along the East-West Highway.

"If we look at the figures for the last few years, it is clear that wildfires have become the biggest source of air pollution, they are seasonal but have overtaken vehicular emissions," says urban planner and environmentalist Bhushan Tuladhar.

"Forest fires, stubble burning, and open burning of garbage are the bigger problems now. Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan are at risk every year, we shouldn't further delay in finding solutions," warned air quality expert Bhupendra Das during an event on air pollution organised on 7 March by the Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ).

Indeed, studies have shown that in winter 60% of the air pollution over Kathmandu is transboundary from the south, and in November it is compounded by smoke from crop residue burning by farmers in India and Pakistan blown in by prevailing winds. Forest fires are a regular pre-monsoon occurrence in Nepal, often intentionally set by farmers and herders to stimulate new grass growth for livestock. Winter rains have failed for eight of the past ten years, and this means the fires often spread out of control.

The other reason for the increase in wildfires is the doubling of forest fires to 46% of the country's area in the past 25 years. But this has happened simultaneously with outmigration, with some mountain districts losing 30% of their population between 2011-2021.

With less pressure on forests for fodder and firewood, the undergrowth of community forests is loaded with dry fuel just waiting for a spark. The bowl-shaped topography of Kathmandu, Pokhara and other valleys further concentrates pollutants as they are trapped by surrounding mountains.

But a year with a high number of wildfires is usually followed by a year or two with fewer incidents. For example: there were 6,537 fires in 2021 but the following year the number was down to 1,528. There were 5,216 fires last year, this year the number has already reached 1,800, and the trend is likely to be broken.

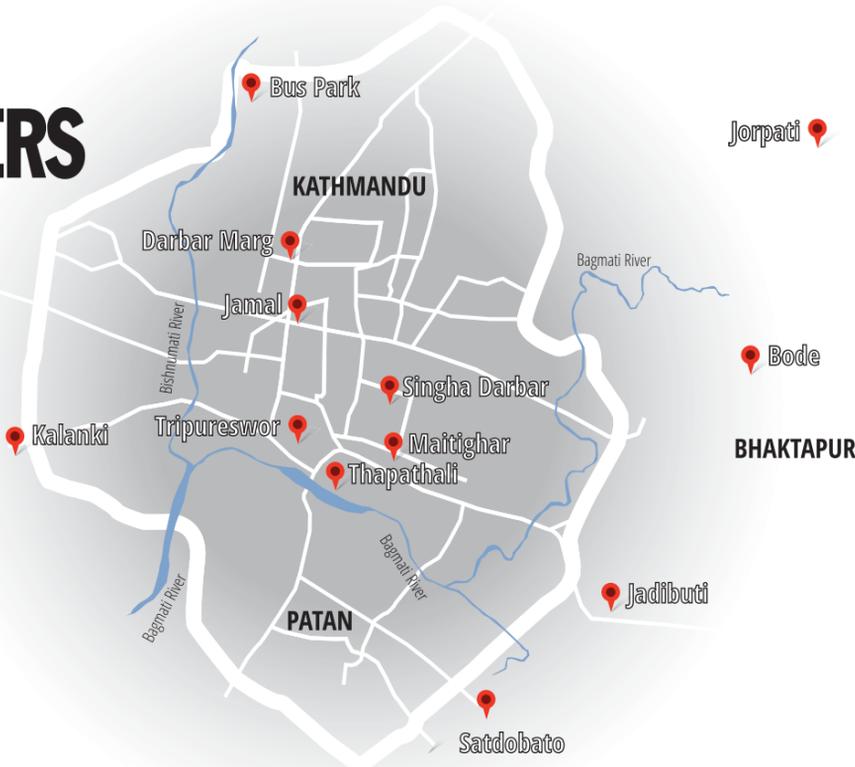
Heavy rains forecast for the coming days are expected to douse some of the fires and clean up the air. But the damage has been done: Kathmandu residents of all age groups this week crowded clinics and hospitals with burning eyes, itchy throats, difficulty breathing, headaches, and dizziness.

But in the longer term, soot particles that are tiny enough to jump the blood-air divide in lung capillaries do not just cause Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), asthma, but also cancers, heart attacks, strokes, birth defects and other chronic diseases.

The latest Air Quality Life Index (AQLI) report by the University of Chicago shows that the annual concentration of PM2.5 in Kathmandu's air rose from 17.87µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 1998 to 31.33µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2022. Air pollution has got worse by 75%

## GAS CHAMBERS

Traffic hotspots in Kathmandu with high concentrations of dust, soot, carbon monoxide and ozone.



SOURCE: TRAFFIC POLICE

in Kathmandu in 25 years.

During this time, air pollution has reduced the average life expectancy of Kathmandu's residents by 3.5 years. According to the Health Effects Institute in Boston, dirty air is among the biggest public health concerns in Nepal killing over 42,100 a year.

The adverse impact of high levels of air pollution is not limited to public health, it is seriously affecting tourism. Operators in Pokhara this week said that there were many negative online posts by visitors unable to see the famous panorama of Machapuchre and the Annapurnas even from Sarangkot.

Aviation is also affected, as planes have to circle sometimes for hours burning a lot of fuel because of runway visibility being below minima at Kathmandu airport. The higher fuel cost is just passed down to customers, making air tickets in and out of Kathmandu some of the highest in the world.

Kathmandu, with a population of four million, has not implemented a concrete policy to curb toxic air despite having formulated various action plans and repeated commitments by the government to protect the environment and control air pollution.

The Department of Environment's 2017 Air Quality Management Action Plan for Kathmandu put forward a policy to reduce air pollution caused by vehicles which was approved by the Cabinet, but has yet to be put to practice.

The action included the immediate implementation of the Euro 5 emission standard to reduce pollution emitted by vehicles. However, Nepal has not even been able to implement Euro 4 standards so far. India, meanwhile, has already moved forward with the implementation of the Euro 6 standards.

Says Ravi Sahu: "Air pollution in Nepal is not just about air pollution, it has ties to tourism, aviation, the economy so we must be prepared for annual conditions like forest fires, and this requires urgent interdisciplinary collaboration." 🇳🇵

# SILENT KILLERS

## Carbon monoxide

The colourless, odourless, and tasteless gas carbon monoxide (CO), present in vehicle exhaust, is highly poisonous. This gas results from the incomplete burning of fuel and should not be confused with carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), which is vital for plants but also the main greenhouse gas contributing to global warming.

Motorcycles are particularly known for emitting CO but while a small number of two-wheelers might not be harmful, the presence of a large fleet, such as the



1.2 million in Kathmandu Valley, contaminates the air we breathe.

Doctors say that prolonged exposure to carbon monoxide is a slow-acting poison that causes various heart diseases. CO reduces the body's oxygen-carrying capacity, leading to respiratory complications.

Hemoglobin (Hb) in red blood cells, which carries oxygen, has a much stronger affinity for CO than O<sub>2</sub>, about 240 times more, preventing oxygen uptake and leading to suffocation and death.

## Ozone

Unlike other pollutants, ozone is not directly emitted to the atmosphere. It is formed due to chemical reaction between carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, and nitrous oxides from vehicle exhaust, industries and even fires in the presence of sunlight.



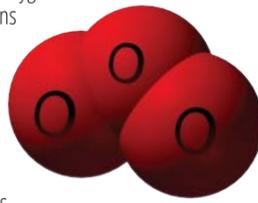
## Carbon monoxide poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a lethal gas given off during incomplete combustion of fuel.

This 'bad' ozone also called tropospheric ozone and includes ground-level ozone, is different from 'good' stratospheric ozone that blocks harmful solar UV radiation. The ozone molecule is composed of three atoms of oxygen, unlike the oxygen we breathe which contains only two atoms. This also makes ozone highly reactive.

A 2017 study published in the journal Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics measured ground-level ozone at various points in Kathmandu and found that it was highest in the day, during pre-monsoon months, and at higher altitudes on the Valley rim, exceeding the WHO standard.

As vehicular emissions increase, bad ozone builds up during warm sunny days, harming lung functions. Kathmandu hospitals have recorded a sharp increase in patients with chronic respiratory diseases, and higher concentration of surface ozone is one of the factors.



### Haemoglobin

Haemoglobin (Hb) is an iron rich protein found in red blood cells in mammals, that carries oxygen to various parts of the body. It has an affinity to oxygen, but binds much more readily with carbon monoxide. When CO attaches itself to Hb, it prevents vital oxygen from reaching various tissues and organs.

### Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning (% CO concentration)

#### Mild poisoning

**0.08%**

Headache, asphyxia, dizziness, dry cough, chest pain, nausea, vomiting, hallucinations and high blood pressure.

#### Moderate poisoning

Up to **0.32%**

Motor paralysis and loss of consciousness.

#### Severe poisoning

Above **1.2%**

Convulsions, respiratory arrest, coma, leading to death in 3 minutes.



# Curvv.ev

SUV coupé



top variant price  
**Rs. 56.99 Lakhs**

SIPRADI TRADING PVT. LTD.  
THAPATHALI - 01 5350643, 9802333164 | RADHE RADHE - 01 5914771, 9802333160



**SIPRADI**



Ring in the

# Nepali New Year 2082

with

**aloft**<sup>®</sup>

KATHMANDU THAMEL

Partake in traditional delicacies & taste the world with a gala feast

Curated Dinner Buffet and Live DJ Station

-  April 13<sup>th</sup> 2025
-  6.30 P.M. - 10.30 P.M.
-  Rs. 2500 nett\*  
(Per Person)

 **nook**

\*Children aged 6-12 years dine at 50% off and children under 6 years dine for free

For Reservations: +977-9801976054, [Nook@aloftkathmanduthamel.com](mailto:Nook@aloftkathmanduthamel.com)