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# Two to tango

■ Shristi Karki

Inter and intra-party rifts have deepened as Nepal's political leaders jostle for advantage in the next elections in 2027.

The top leaders seem to fear rivals within their own parties more than they do politicians from other parties. The three main parties that have taken turns ruling Nepal since 2008, the Nepali Congress (NC), the UML and the Maoist-Centre, all suffer from internal feuds.

Former President Bidya Devi Bhandari has decided to re-enter politics, amidst much criticism from within her party and outside. She is said to want to lead a faction within the UML that is not happy with Oli's onemanship.

Oli has reasons to worry, as Bhandari has made it clear that she intends to run for party chair in the next UML general convention. There are also those

within the UML who have grown resentful of Oli's leadership, and this has polarised the party into two camps with leaders like Ishwar Pokharel in Bhandari's corner.

"Now that I have been released of my previous political responsibilities, I have renewed my party membership with the righteous intention of remaining in the CPN-UML and continuing the party's political journey," Bhandari said, not very convincingly.

It is a similar story in the Maoist-Centre, but with a twist. There, party chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal is bringing in Vice-president Nanda Kishor Pun into the fray to counter another former guerrilla commander Janardan Sharma, who wants to dislodge Dahal.

The alpha males in all three parties have used the same tactics to sideline and purge rivals within their ranks to reign supreme. But as the 2027 elections approach, they also see the need to gain the upper hand against long-standing threats in other parties.

Speculation is rife of a rift between the two largest parties in the coalition, the NC and UML. The two parties have been bitter rivals since 1990, but are now partners in government, preparing for the final lap before election campaigning starts next year.

In public, the two parties have maintained that the coalition remains as strong as ever. Oli is said to be considering recalling some of his ministers to pacify the NC's dissatisfaction with UML cabinet members. Deuba seems determined not to let the coalition collapse ahead of his turn to be prime minister for the sixth time next year as per a 'gentleman's agreement' with Oli.

The cement that binds the coalitions together is the mutual threat they feel about corruption probes of their leaders. The former RSP-NC-Maoist coalition collapsed last year after Deuba and Oli got wind that Home Minister Rabi Lamichhane had started investigating the involvement of their top leaders on the fake

refugee and tea estate scams.

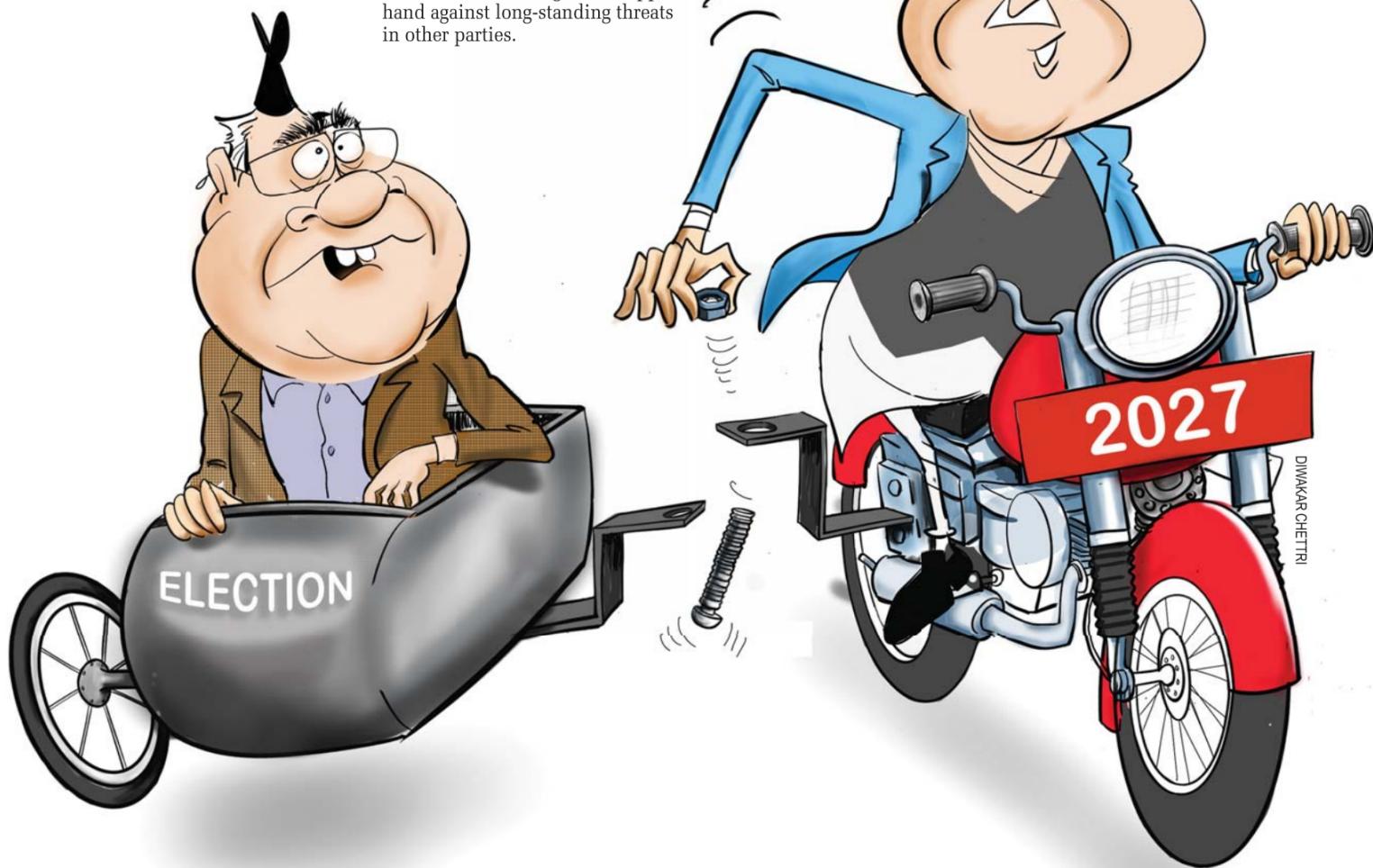
The rumblings got louder after the fringe Janata Samajwadi Party and Nagarik Unmukti Party withdrew from the coalition. This does not threaten the NC-UML government, but shows that discontent is simmering – especially among Tarai-based parties.

For the moment, though, it seems as though the relationship between Oli and Deuba is more stable than the support both leaders have within their own parties. But the question as the elections approaches is, for how much longer.

FULL STORY PAGE 4

■ Melt pools

■ Rasuwa flood likely a GLOF PAGE 6-7



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# Rethinking digital platform design

In 2025, we stand at a crossroads in the digital era. Our platforms have become the new public squares, but rather than fostering democracy and dignity, many are optimised for manipulation, division, and profit. The Council on Technology and Social Cohesion's Blueprint on Prosocial Tech Design Governance offers a systems-level response to this crisis.



**GUEST EDITORIAL**  
Lisa Schirch

Digital harms are not accidental. They stem from deliberate choices embedded in how platforms are built and monetised. Infinite scroll, addictive recommendation systems, and deceptive patterns are not technical inevitabilities—they are design policies that reward engagement over truth, attention over well-being, and outrage over dialogue.

These antisocial designs have proven devastating: eroding mental health, fuelling polarisation, spreading disinformation, and concentrating power in a handful of corporate actors.

Tech companies blame users for harmful content online, avoiding their own responsibility in how they design platforms. The Blueprint shifts the focus from downstream content moderation to upstream focus on platform design.

No technology has a neutral design. Companies choose what their platform will allow you to do, prevent you from doing, and what the design will persuade, incentivise, amplify, highlight, or manipulate people to do or not do online.

Like building codes in architecture, the report proposes a tiered certification system for prosocial tech, outlining five levels of increasing ambition—from minimum safety standards to fully participatory, socially cohesive platforms. This is not window-dressing. It is a structural intervention to address the root causes of harmful designs.

Tier 1 begins with establishing baseline protections: Safety by Design, Privacy by Design, and User Agency by Design. These are not abstract ideals but concrete practices that give users control over what they see, how they are tracked, and whether manipulative features are opt-in rather than default. Tier 2 scales up with low-barrier user experience tools like empathy-oriented reaction buttons, friction to slow down impulsive posting, and prompts to reflect before sharing.

In Tier 3, prosocial algorithms that highlight areas of common ground and diverse ideas replace engagement-maximising recommender systems that offer news feeds skewed towards polarising topics. Tier 4 introduces civic tech and deliberative platforms explicitly built for

democratic engagement, and Tier 5 pushes for middleware solutions that restore data sovereignty and interoperability.

The report highlights the need for research to understand how platform design impacts society and open data standards for measuring social trust and cohesion. It calls for mandated platform audits, researcher safe harbours, and public infrastructure to enable independent scrutiny of algorithmic systems and user experiences. Without these safeguards, crucial insight into systemic harms—such as manipulation, bias, and disinformation—remains inaccessible.

Meanwhile, market forces drive antisocial and deceptive tech design. Venture capital funding is the main source of financing for many tech platforms. It entrenches antisocial tech design, expecting rapid scaling, high returns, and market dominance, often at the expense of ethical development.

Market concentration inhibits innovation and confines users within systems that prioritise profit over well-being. Numerous large technology companies function as monopolies, employing opaque strategies and dominating value chains. Such technology monopolies pose significant challenges for smaller, prosocial platforms seeking growth. When a limited number of tech giants control infrastructure, data, and user attention, smaller platforms with ethical, inclusive, or democratic designs encounter difficulties in achieving visibility and viability.

The report recommends shifting market forces by codifying liability for platform-induced harms, enforcing antitrust to level the playing field for ethical alternatives, and identifying a range of options for funding and monetising prosocial tech startups.

Too often piecemeal tech regulation has failed to show the flood of toxicity online. Using a system's approach, the report offers a comprehensive plan to make prosocial tech not only possible, but competitive and sustainable. Just as we expect bridges to be safe and banks to be audited, the Blueprint insists we treat digital infrastructure with the same seriousness. Platforms cannot be allowed to profit from harm and hide behind the myth of neutrality.

At its core, the Blueprint argues that platform design is social engineering. Platforms that currently amplify outrage could, with the right design and incentives, foster empathy, cooperation, and truth.

Now the question is political will. Will regulators adopt tiered certifications that reward responsibility? Will investors fund platforms that prioritise well-being over profit? Will designers centre the needs of marginalised communities in their user experience decisions? The Blueprint gives the tools. The next step is collective action for governments, technologists, and civil society.

*Lisa Schirch is Research Fellow with the Toda Peace Institute and is on the faculty at the University of Notre Dame in the Keough School of Global Affairs.*



**A better internet that supports democracy rather than undermines it is possible**

## ONLINE PACKAGES



**LAKE RISK**

The Himalaya is melting twice as fast as the rest of the world due to a phenomenon called 'elevation dependent warming', and receding glaciers have led to an increasing number of transboundary GLOFs, like this week's flood on the Nepal-China border. Watch video on our YouTube channel. Also go to page 6-7.



**GRANNIES IN SCHOOL**

Inspiring grandmothers break barriers and enroll in school to get an education. Watch video on YouTube to see how their journey is paving the way for a brighter future in Nepal. Subscribe to Nepali Times' YouTube channel for multimedia content.

### GLOFS

I don't mean to add to any angst, but concentrated glacier and general ice melt plus monsoon rains are in store ('All our trouble seem far away', Kunda Dixit, Newsletter #1268), and recent cases are a mere example.

**Tony Jones**

■ This week's flood was likely due to glacial outburst ('Rasuwa flood likely a GLOF', Nepali Times, page 6-7). Time will tell but no surprises if the two are linked.

**Ian Wall**

■ DHM installed a station in Rasuwagadhi one year back. But I have never seen the data in their website. Was it operational any time? That could have saved lives.

**Suraj Sthapit**

■ Real-time transboundary data sharing on rainfall and river flow is critical for early warning systems, especially in the context of GLOFs. The devastation caused by sudden floods like the recent one in Rasuwa could potentially be minimised, if not fully avoided through timely alerts backed by reliable upstream data. Unfortunately, the reported reluctance from China to share such crucial hydrometeorological data reflects a worrying gap in regional cooperation. Climate change is a global challenge, yet when it comes to practical, lifesaving coordination between neighbours, the politics still outweigh the science and humanity.

**Sunil Sakya**

■ Money, business, political greed causing warming of oceans and atmospheric air is resulting in catastrophic events in each country, leading to loss of life and property damage.

**Grace Greenland**

■ This is very interesting but disturbing research ('Mapping Kangchenjunga glacial flood risk', Gabe Allen, nepalitimes.com, page 6-7).

**Peter Hinze**

### URBAN HEAT

Evidence shows clearly that trees in streets and parks reduce temperatures, they also soak up CO<sub>2</sub> ('Dead Heat', Sonia Awale, #1268). Meanwhile, ponds and small lakes are also cooling. Kathmandu Valley urgently needs to embark on a program of planting and watering with local committees perhaps responsible for maintenance. Public buildings also need to adopt low energy methods of cooling internal temperatures.

**David Seddon**

## Times.com WHAT'S TRENDING



### Rasuwa GLOF

by Nepali Times  
The massive flood on the Bhoite Kosi Tuesday morning, due to a glacial lake outburst, washed away a strategic bridge on Nepal's main border crossing with China, with dozens missing. See page 6-7.

**Most reached and shared on Facebook**

### Where is Mira Rai?

by Dirgha Raj Upadhyay  
Mira Rai went from carrying heavy loads as a child to becoming Nepal's most celebrated trail runner. She is now raising funds through the Mira Rai Initiative to help other athletes. Read about her life and work, page 12.

**Most popular on X**

### Dead Heat

by Sonia Awale  
Climate breakdown is going to widen the class divide in cities as summers become unliveable. We need more parks, tree-lined streets and water bodies to cool cities down. Read analysis and join the discussion online.

**Most commented**



### SLAPP in the face of democracy

Editorial by Kunda Dixit  
Nepal's politicians, bureaucrats and the business community seem to be taking lessons from other despots on how to buy off, intimidate the media with Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP). Comments on nepalitimes.com.

**Most visited online page**

## QUOTES

**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**  
Just days before his 90th birthday, the Dalai Lama has confirmed he will reincarnate after his death through a video message to religious leaders in Dharamshala, India, whereas the impact of his succession on Nepal remains uncertain.

**Madhav Acharya @Maddietwit**  
Denials of his attempts to visit Nepal—after his 1987 eight-hour trip to Lumbini—have angered the Dalai Lama that he may not choose Nepal as the "free country" for his successor's birth. He recently even contended Buddha was born in Nepal.

## 1,000 WORDS



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## Times

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## 20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

### Then, and now.

Back in the 2000s, during the height of the Maoist war, Nepal was not synonymous with growth: everything was plummeting, from the GDP and purchasing power to remittances, revenue, agricultural and industrial production, and income from tourism. Today, we are planning to graduate to middle-income status by 2030.

Excerpts of the report published 20 years ago this week in issue #255 8 - 14 July 2005:

It is simple arithmetic: if a country's GDP growth is less than its population growth rate then its citizens are getting poorer. Nepal's population is growing at 2.24 percent a year, GDP growth this year will fall to 2.1 percent.

If the inflation rate, which has climbed from 1.7 percent last year to nearly 6 percent this year, is counted it means sharp erosion in purchasing power. Add to that the drop in investment, fall in tourism, plummeting agricultural and industrial production and it is clear that Nepal is getting poorer by the day.

Finance Minister Madhukar Rana, who is preparing the



budget for presentation next week, has an unenviable task of paying for more with less.

Remittances from Nepali workers abroad, which served as a parachute for Nepal's economy, only grew by 3.7 percent this year (compared to 4 percent last year) even though the number of workers went up and money transfer became more streamlined. Nepalis aren't sending their money home and political instability has spurred capital flight.

Tourism revenue is down 33 percent this year, third country exports have fallen by 20 percent and there is a severe shortage of Indian currency to pay for imports. The Rastra Bank chartered a 757 recently to air-freight Rs 4 billion worth of cash from Bombay that it traded for US dollars. Private banks are awash in cash, but they have Rs 3 billion invested in unproductive sectors like housing and consumer lending.

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



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# Uncontrolled instability

Former president Bidya Devi Bhandari last week officially made her comeback to national politics at an event commemorating her late husband UML leader Madan Bhandari's 70<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary.

Bhandari's announcement was not a surprise, nor was the furious flutter it created both within and outside the UML. A former president returning to party politics sets a dangerous precedent, many said.

Nepal's Constitution does not prohibit a former head of state from returning to active politics once their presidential term is over, essentially leaving such decisions to ethics rather than any legality. But her return to the UML fold has angered party leaders who considered themselves Oli's successors as well commentators who saw it as yet another example of the deep rot in Nepal's politics.

'Bidya Devi Bhandari has not tired of 'serving' us despite having held multiple ministerial positions, high-level party positions, and serving two terms as President, but the country and its citizens are tired of her unceasing and immoral 'service', political commentator Muma Ram Khanal wrote sardonically on social media. 'Please do not embarrass us through your lifetime 'service'.'

Bhandari tried to mollify critics by pledging to forego all perks and facilities she is entitled to as a former head of state. This was met with enthusiastic cheers from supporters at the public function. Prime Minister K P Oli, sitting right beside her on the stage, remained stone-faced. He has been against Bhandari's political comeback, and has tried to talk her out of it.

Oli wields absolute authority over the party, particularly after he sidelined and silenced rivals Madhav Kumar Nepal, Jhalanath Khanal, and Bamdev Gautam.

He has removed the party's 70-year age limit to hold leadership position so that he can continue to be chair even as he approaches the end of term limit, and questions about his health after two kidney transplants.

Bhandari wasted no time in wading right into politics to forge alliances. Last week, she met Kathmandu Mayor Balen Shah to discuss "latest developments". She is said to have urged Kathmandu's popular independent mayor to enter national politics through a party. The mayor is keeping his cards close to his chest.

The former president's return to active politics did not sit well with other parties, either. Nepali Congress (NC) president Sher Bahadur Deuba, and Oli's coalition partner, is said to have raised issue with Bhandari's comeback. The NC Central Committee meeting this week was abuzz with corridor talk about how retired presidents returning to politics affects not just the UML, but undermines Nepal's democracy.

The UML is not the only party roiled in internal strife. The NC Central Committee meetings turned lively as the rank and file demanded an overhaul of the leadership, fed up with long-serving Deuba and the higher political profile, Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba, his wife.

The surname Koirala still has strong brand equity in the NC,



and a rival faction led by Shekhar Koirala has questioned Deuba's competence and has intensified calls for the party's next general convention to be held on time. His cousin, Shashank Koirala also supports a constitutional amendment to revert Nepal back to Hindu state – possibly with an eye on the 2027 election.

The NC's young turks are no longer young. Party General Secretary Gagan Thapa is approaching middle age while waiting for a greater leadership role with the promise of fresh new blood to rejuvenate the party.

Meanwhile, CPN-Unified Socialists chair and former prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal

is facing calls for resignation from within his party after being charged with corruption by Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) for alleged involvement in the Patanjali land scam.

Nepal has been stripped of his lawmaker status, and is currently out on bail. He has said the case against him is politically motivated, fuelled by one-time comrade K P Oli's vendetta.

The CPN-US members do not seem keen on Nepal taking the already beleaguered party down with him. Firebrand leader Ram Kumari Jhakri called for a new leadership at an event of the party's youth wing last week.

"The party chair is facing legal and constitutional challenges, we cannot move forward with this dead weight on our shoulders," Jhakri said, calling for an early general convention to choose new leadership.

CPN-US leadership has since admonished her gently about her remark, but others like Jhalanath Khanal and Ghanashyam Bhushal have lent their support. Khanal, a former prime minister himself, even asked for Nepal's resignation at the party's secretariat meeting earlier this week.

Over at the Maoist-Centre, Pushpa Kamal Dahal is also said to be at loggerheads with top comrades, particularly Deputy General Secretary Janardan Sharma, who used to be a guerrilla commander during the conflict.

Dahal and Sharma's relationship has been strained since the party's

last general convention, when Dahal bypassed Sharma for General Secretary. The two have traded barbs in public and private since then.

Sharma has long called for competition in party leadership, but like Oli and Deuba, Dahal is reluctant to give up the reins. Dahal has reportedly been reluctant to hold a general convention fearing he will be voted out of his chairmanship.

In response, Dahal has attempted to fill the ranks with his own confidants, including actively lobbying for the return of former vice-president Nanda Bahadur Pun to active politics despite objections from the party. Like Bidya Bhandari, this has not been welcomed within the party and outside.

And then there is the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) the fourth largest in Parliament whose chair, former tv anchor leader Rabi Lamichhane is in detention for multiple charges of frauding cooperatives.

The three main parties see the RSP as a threat in 2027 and want to tie Lamichhane up with court convictions, but his prolonged detention has actually allowed him to gather some public sympathy – at least on social media.

The RSP has rallied around Lamichhane in public, but there are rifts within the party. In April, MP Sumana Shrestha resigned as the party's joint general secretary, levelling criticism at the leadership and the lack of intra-party democracy and calling for reforms. But Lamichhane's legal troubles have put a dent on the RSP's Mission-2084 election campaign, bringing it to a standstill. 🇳🇵

**Shristi Karki**



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## Macro economy up

Nepal balance of payments has increased from a surplus of \$3.2 billion to \$3.62 billion, and the current account surplus is also at \$2.26 billion. Foreign exchange reserves are also up to \$18.65 billion, up from \$15 billion last year. The country registered an economic growth rate of 4.8%, compared to 2.2 last year mainly due to improvements in industry and infrastructure. Robust growth in hydropower generation and consumption, finance and insurance sectors, and mining showed double digit growth. Agriculture also grew, but by only 3.6%.

## Digital Nepal

WorldLink Communications has announced a \$29 million partnership with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Standard Chartered Bank Nepal Limited (SCBNL). The amount will be used to expand fiber networks to underserved communities, develop Nepal's first EDGE-certified sustainable data centres and enhance access to high-speed internet.

## JICA-Nepal

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Nepal have signed a grant agreement for 2025 scholarships valued at JPY572 million to enhance Nepal's



civil service capacity through advanced education. Each year, the scholarship offers 20 seats for two-year master's degree course and two seats for three-year doctoral level course in Japanese universities in fields such as judiciary, economic policy and administration.



## TVS Jupiter 110

TVS Motor Company launched the new TVS Jupiter 110 scooter on 7 July. The scooter is powered by a 113.3 cc, single cylinder, 4 stroke engine which generates a power of 5.9 kW at 6500 rpm and a torque of 9.8 Nm at 5,000 rpm in the Dawn Blue Matte colour starting at a price of Rs257,900 at all authorised TVS dealerships of Nepal.



## Justices appointed

President Ramchandra Paudel appointed three new justices to the Supreme Court: Senior Advocate Meghraj Pokharel, Janakpur High Court Chief Judge Shreekanth Paudel, and Dipayal High Court Chief Judge Shanti Singh Thapa.

## MG Windsor

Paramount Motors launched the MG Windsor EV on 2 July. The Windsor has a 38kW battery that is warranted for 8 years, 332km range, 604l of boot space, and a 15.6' touch display.

## Daraz sale

Daraz's 'What the Flash' sale 7-11 July offers up to 70% discounts, free delivery over Rs499, and Rs6m in vouchers. The sale features health and beauty, fashion audio, wearables, furniture, and home decor.



## Tata 7.7 Exchange

Official Tata dealer Sipradi hosted the '7.7 exchange program' this week, offering customers the chance to exchange old vehicles for the Tata Tiago, Punch, Nexon, and Curve EV models. Offers include a couple's trip to Thailand, free Autoplus insurance, accessories, free charging, embossed number plates.



## Yamaha turns 70

Yamaha Nepal marked the company's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 1 July with cake cutting at showrooms, a blood donation drive, tree plantation, community service at an old age home, and road safety training.



## Karnali Bailey bridge

PM Oli inaugurated a Bailey bridge over the Chuwakhola River in Karnali, which is hoped to enhance connectivity and connect Humla, the last district in Nepal not connected to the rest of the country by road.

## EV Service Centre

MAW Vriddhi plans to launch two EV service centres in Balkumari and Basundhara for Deepal, Dongfeng, and Seres EVs. The centres will have 25 service bays each and are expected to open this year.



## NADA Autoshow

NADA has finalised stall allocation for its Autoshow 18-24 August at Bhrikuti Mandap. There will be 45 four and two wheeler companies exhibiting including EVs and a special pavilion for Made in Nepal vehicles.

## Power Summit

IPPAN is to hold its Power Summit in Kathmandu 17-18 September with the theme 'Mission 28500 Megawatt', the target for electricity generation through domestic and foreign investment with wind, solar, hydro as well as storage hydro projects.

# Full equality vs status quo

Nepal's Citizenship Act (Second Amendment) yet to guarantee gender justice

■ Neha Gurung

The news headlines this week said: 'The House of Representatives passed the Nepal Citizenship (Second Amendment) Bill that now makes acquiring citizenship through the mother as equal as through the father.'

Could it really be true? There is genuine confusion or deliberate misunderstanding in the public about the Bill. Here is an explainer:

## What is the Bill?

The Second Amendment to the Nepal Citizenship Act 2006 was tabled by the government on 11 March, 2024. The lengthy list of amendments underwent a detailed discussion within the State Affairs and Good Governance Committee of the HoR which presented a shortened list of agreed amendments.

The HoR passed this amended list of amendments on 28 June. While the original Bill contained eight amendment proposals, only three major amendments were presented by the Committee, and approved by the HoR.

## Has it become law now?

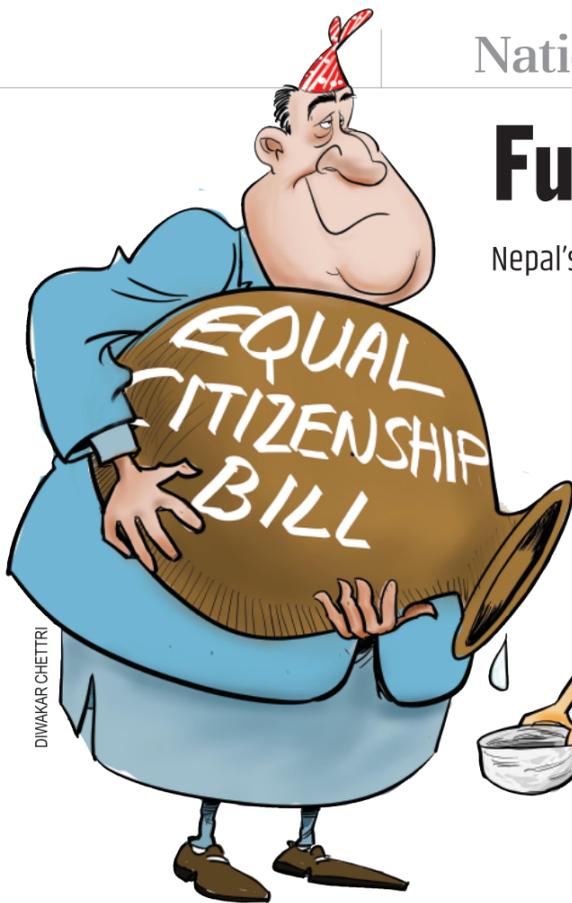
No. It is yet to be passed by the National Assembly and endorsed by the President.

## What exactly is contained in the amendments?

1. Addition to Section 5 of the Act: 'For citizenship applications, a father's identity is deemed unknown if the applicant and their mother both provide a self-declaration stating that the father is unidentified, as per Section 5, even if his name is listed on the person's birth registration, educational qualifications, or other certificates, yet his other identity is not available and is currently out of contact.'

This simply provides a definition to what the Act means by 'father unidentified' or 'father untraceable'. Section 5 derives its authority from Article 11(5) of the Constitution that grants citizenship by descent to children whose mother is a Nepali citizen, but father is unidentified or untraceable.

The Nepal Citizenship Act 2006 and Regulation 2006 (both promulgated prior to the present 2015 Constitution) was amended in 2023 to incorporate the provisions of the new Constitution. In doing so, it included the procedural rule requiring both the applicant and



DIVAKAR CHETTRI

their mother to sign a self-declaration form.

The result: a lot of people who claimed citizenship under this provision were still denied access, simply because their educational or other documents mentioned the name or address or some information about their father. The officials interpreted the presence of such information as father's identity being known and assumed the applicants were hiding facts.

The Supreme Court in one of such cases had clearly interpreted the meaning of 'father unidentified'.

'It seems neither lawful nor just to compel an individual to accept someone as an identified father merely because their biological father's name, surname, or address is claimed to be known or mentioned in educational or other documents. It would be just to consider the father's identity as "unidentified"; if the individual has not received paternal affection or care, and the alleged father has never taken any responsibility, borne any obligation, or been physically present before the children, leading to a situation where the children haven't even seen their face. Such an alleged biological father should remain "unidentified" for these children until they formally acknowledge them as their son or daughter, or, in their absence, their family provides reasonable proof to confirm the fact and identifies the relationship through a process acceptable to the children, or until such a

confirmation becomes impossible.'

Based on this decision, multiple implementation challenges, and growing advocacy around this concern, the government included the above-mentioned addition in the Bill.

## Is it new?

The proposed addition is neither an introduction of the new right, nor does it provide anything beyond what the Constitution mandates. Since the Constitution itself uses the term 'father untraceable or unidentified', the most a legislation can do is to ensure that the constitutional provisions are interpreted and implemented in its true meaning. Therefore, the current Bill only serves to clarify the existing misinterpretation of the phrase 'father unidentified'.

In a country where about 17% of the population are single mothers, this clarification may provide certain relief for those whose father's name was mentioned in the document and the father is now unidentified. However, the addition does not grant anything new.

The gender discriminatory citizenship, where the legal identity of a person is always dependent on one's husband or father, still remains.

However, the current addition does not completely incorporate

the Supreme Court's decision which is broader and more comprehensive.

## 2. Addition to Section 18 of the Act:

i. Unless otherwise provided in this Act, a person dissatisfied with an order or decision made by an official under this Act may file a petition with the **Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs** within 35 days from the date of such order, **through the District Administration Office or directly through Nepal Government.**

ii. Upon receiving the report pursuant to sub-section (1), the **Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs shall (must) issue their decision or order after obtaining the report from the official who issued the order or made the decision, within 30 days from the date of appeal,** and such decision or order made by them shall be final.'

This provision is already present in the Act itself, and the Bill simply amends or adds the parts that are in bold letters. The positive part is that it makes the right to redress mandatory.

Earlier, it depended on the government's discretion to hear the appeal, but if this amendment is passed, it now becomes the State's obligation to ensure this as a due process of law.

This makes it easier for individuals denied citizenship, by the CDO, to register an appeal in the higher office, which is the Home Ministry. However, in cases concerning a certain category of naturalised citizenship that falls under the jurisdiction of the Home Ministry, its decision becomes final and cannot be appealed.

Nepal has two categories of naturalised citizenship. One that falls under the jurisdiction of CDO, such as naturalised citizenship to foreign women via marriage relationship. Another that falls under the jurisdiction of the Home Ministry, such as naturalised citizenship to persons born to Nepali mother and foreign father or foreigners who intend to acquire citizenship via stay requirement. Only the former can be appealed if the applicant is not satisfied with the decision.

3. Addition of Section 22(a) to the Act: 'Shall provide a minor's identity card to a person who is under 16 years of age, if either mother or father is a Nepali citizen.'

The Constitution of Nepal in Article 39 (1) states that 'every child shall have the right to name and birth registration along with his or her identity'. The current Bill extends this right to a minor's ID card. However, a minor ID card does not guarantee a citizenship certificate, which in Nepal, a person is eligible to apply only at the age of 16. This means: even though the child has the minor's ID card and perhaps also a passport based on it, while applying for citizenship at the age of 16 or beyond, the person is bound by citizenship laws — which as we have seen is heavily dependent on the father's identity.

## The conclusion?

The current amendment does not ensure any dramatic legal reform nor ensure a complete gender equality in nationality laws, simply because it technically and legally cannot.

When the Constitution itself uses gendered language such as 'mother', 'father', 'Nepali citizen man', and 'foreign citizen woman', a legislation cannot override it. Nevertheless, recent amendments to the Act, including the first amendment, shows the government's leniency towards gender equal citizenship laws.

Additionally, Article 49 of the Constitution also recognises equal lineage right of women, meaning that the family descent is legally recognised to be carried on by both genders. Hopefully in the nearest future, Nepal will carry this same principle to shape its citizenship law as well.

A transformative reform by ensuring gender equal nationality rights through constitutional amendment is still possible. Nepal, a member state to the CEDAW and CRC, is still in the list of 24 countries in the world that have gender unequal citizenship laws. It has the obligation as well as potentiality to become a pioneer in recognizing women's equal rights to confer citizenship to their children and spouse in par with men. 🇳🇵

Neha Gurung is a human rights lawyer dedicated to advocating for equal citizenship rights.

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**घाम-पानी छेक्छ,  
१० वर्ष टिक्छ**







चर्को घामबाट बचाउँछ



मुसलधारै वर्षाबाट जोगाउँछ



१० वर्ष वारेन्टी



# Nepal urgently needs to be more proactive in reducing glacier hazards



VITTORIO SELLA

■ Alton C Byers in Taplejung

The flood on the Bhote Kosi on Tuesday was a timely reminder about the risks Himalayan communities face from melting permafrost and glaciers, as well as the need for transboundary early warning systems.

In the spring of 2024, I once again visited the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA). While in the village of Kampuchen (4,145m) I met Nupu Sherpa, owner of the Kampuchen White House Lodge, to share a new paper we had just published about an ice-debris avalanche that had occurred in 2022 in the upper Nupchu valley.

Although Nupu was interested in the results and implications of the avalanche, he was even more concerned about the recent and rapid development of several large, pro-glacial lakes upon the terminus of the Kanchenjunga glacier, an hour walk north of Kampuchen and across the seasonal yak pasture of Ramdang Kharka (4,375m).

Like many high altitude, low gradient glaciers in the Himalaya, those in the Kanchenjunga region had shrunk to mere shadows of their former selves during the previous 125 years, leaving behind debris-covered remnant ice and small meltwater ponds.

Nupu's fear was that the lakes might soon coalesce to form a large and potentially dangerous glacial lake. Given a large enough trigger, such as a massive landslide or avalanche, a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) could damage local villages along Kampuchen, Ghunsa,

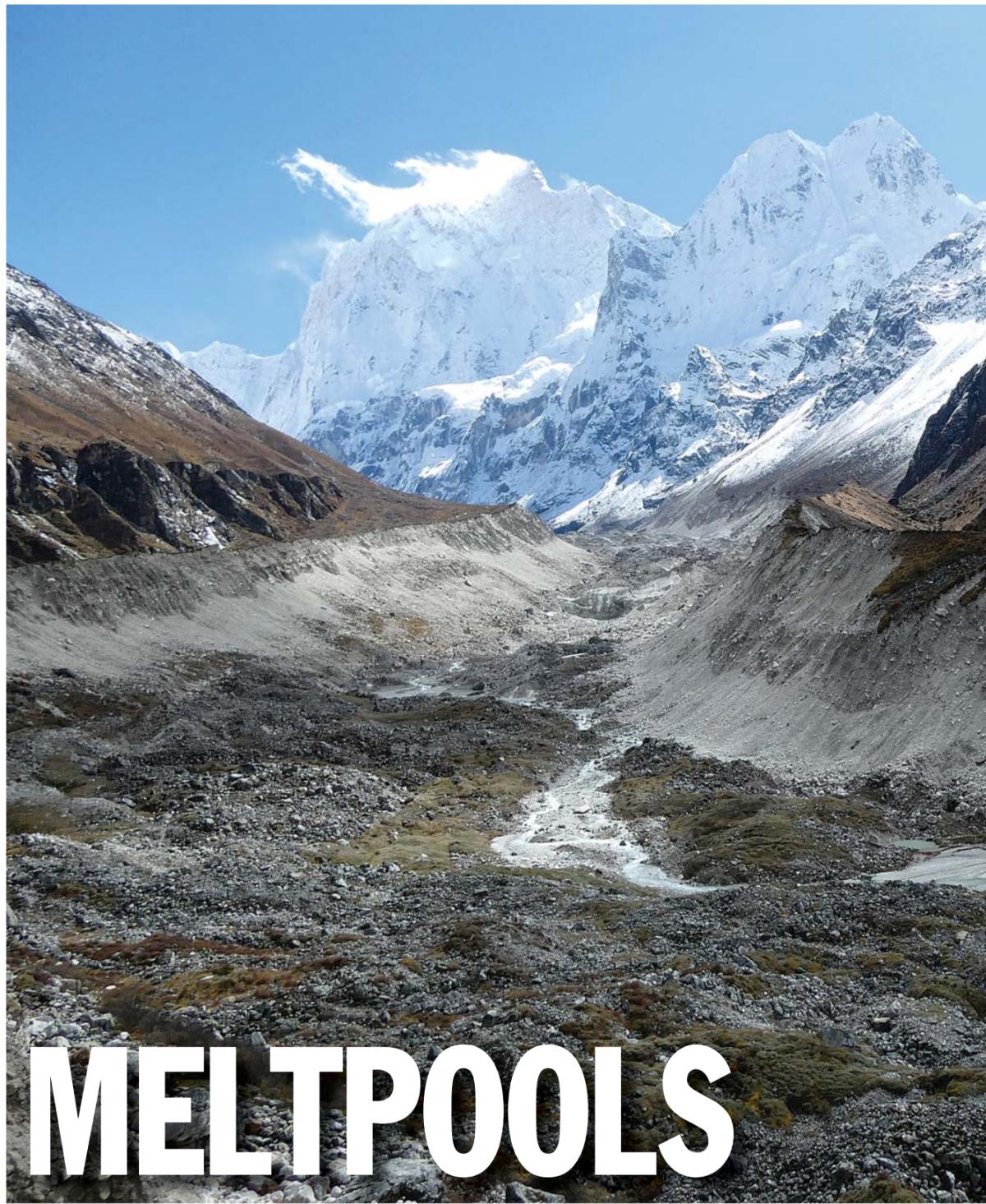
Phale, the Kangchenjunga Base Camp trail, and even beyond the lower Tamor into India.

Since I was on my way to the village of Lhonak (4,792m) I stopped to take a look at the new lakes. Sure enough, from a lookout point on the lateral moraine of the Kanchenjunga Glacier I could see as many as ten newly formed and growing meltwater ponds upon the terminal moraine region of the glacier.

To try and understand the situation better, glaciologist Sonam Wangchuk of ICIMOD put together a time series composite of lake development over time, from 2016 to 2024, where it was clear that the majority of the new lakes had only formed since 2019.

Sonam Rinzin of Newcastle University estimated the potential depth and volume of the future glacier lake using standard procedures based upon the surface slope of the Kanchenjunga Glacier combined with volume-area curves for similar glacial lakes, estimating that the future lake would have a volume of approximately 33 million cubic metres of water and depth of more than 116m. Other modelling methods enabled the mapping of probable ice, debris, and/or rock avalanches into the lake that could trigger a GLOF.

A third model was then used to simulate four different avalanche scenarios that could trigger a GLOF: from small (debris avalanche of 3 million cubic metres) to the worst case (15 million cubic metres) of



# MELTPOOLS

fast-moving debris. Even under the small magnitude scenario, avalanche-triggered outburst floods would travel distances of almost 120km downstream, and under the worst-case scenario the floods would reach the Indo-Gangetic Plain and cross the border into India, damaging or destroying up to 90 buildings and 44 bridges.

The prospective triggers of a future GLOF, however, are not limited to a nearby rock avalanche. A sudden release of water from water-filled caves further up the glacier could trigger a surge wave

capable of breaching the terminal moraine complex holding in the lake water.

Weakening permafrost at the highest altitudes could result in massive ice-debris avalanches, such as those believed to have triggered recent and catastrophic floods in the Seti River, Barun Khola, Chamoli, South Lhonak lake, and Tuesday's Bhote Kosi flood in Rasuwa.

Weakening and eventual collapse of the terminal moraine complex through sub-surface piping could also result in an outburst



This red box of Kosi and Lende wa is magnified b

# Rasuwa flood likely a GLOF

Deadly Nepal-China border flood could have been glacial lake(s) that burst in Tibet

■ Ramesh Kumar

The sudden and massive flood on the Bhote Kosi early Tuesday morning washed away a strategic bridge on Nepal's main border crossing with China for trade, tourists and pilgrims.

Slurry from the nearly 10m high debris flow left 9 dead and 20 missing, 12 of them Nepalis and six Chinese nationals, and 150 others were rescued by helicopter.

Four hydropower plants Rasuwagadi, Trisuli III, Trisuli, Benighat and the Trisuli substation sustained heavy damage, knocking out 230MW of Nepal's power

supply – approximately 8% of the total. Over 100 cargo trucks and new electric vehicles parked at Timure Dry Port were swept away.

Officials had initially thought the Bhote Kosi had flooded due to heavy rain in Tibet. However, the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) now say a Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) is likely.

NDRRMA spokesperson Suresh Sunar said it was too early to tell which one, but the flood was most likely the result of one of the glacial lakes in Tibet. Bhote Kosi begins on the north slope of the Ganesh Himal near the Nepal-China border, and its tributary Lende drains the catchment area north of Langtang. The slurry flood on Tuesday was on the Lende (map).

"Preliminary study suggest that the disaster was not caused by rain in Tibet, but by a glacial lake burst,

or another accident," said Kamal Ram Joshi of the DHM.

The level of water at a self-monitoring station in Timure in Rasuwa increased by 3.5m at 3:10AM on Tuesday morning while 13km downstream in Syabrubesi, the level rose by 3.65m at 3:30AM. The same station recorded 5.37m ten minutes later, after which it stopped giving a reading, possibly because the station was also washed away. The flood reached Betrawati by 5AM, and some of the debris flow reached Mugling.

On Wednesday, several remote-sensing experts using Copernicus satellite images pinpointed the cause of the flood to Purepu Cangbu 普热普藏布 where supraglacial ponds had merged in June to form a large lake which did not burst, but overflowed and found a channel through englacial conduits to the headwaters of the Lende. The river meets the Bhote Kosi at the Nepal-China checkpoint in Rasuwa.

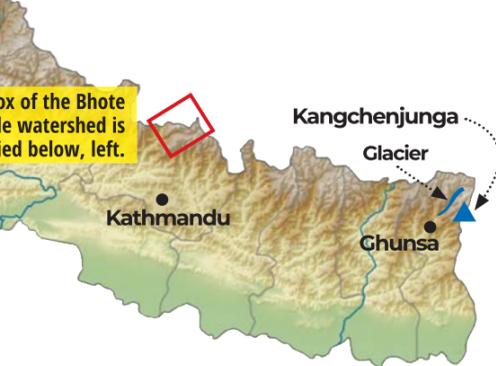


This red box of the border checkpoint in Rasuwa is magnified right, showing the Miteri Bridge that was washed away on Tuesday



ALTON C BYERS

## Mapping Glaciers in Real Time



**MORTAL MORAINES:** The Jannu Glacier photographed in 1899 by Vittorio Sella (above, left) showing how the level of the debris-covered glacier reached the top of the lateral moraines. More than 120 years later in 2022, the same glacier had shrunk (above) to several hundred metres below the moraine crests.

On the right is the theoretical Kanchenjunga glacial lake of the future (blue) formed by coalescing melt pools, contained by a frontal moraine (purple), with a flood possibly triggered by a massive rock avalanche (red).

flood. And a range of cascading processes currently unknown to scientists could trigger a flood as well.

But will a large and potentially dangerous glacial actually form at the Kanchenjunga glacier? There is really no way to tell at this point, although the rapid development of lakes since 2016 is a strong indicator that a large lake is in the process of forming. And rather than wait and see, our current uncertainty does not diminish the need for a more proactive approach to the development of a large glacial lake at some point in the near future.

For example, the lower Kanchenjunga Glacier clearly needs to be regularly monitored over the coming years to keep track of glacial lake growth and potential hazards. This could be done by the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM), ICIMOD, or Kathmandu University with results regularly shared with local people and local governments.

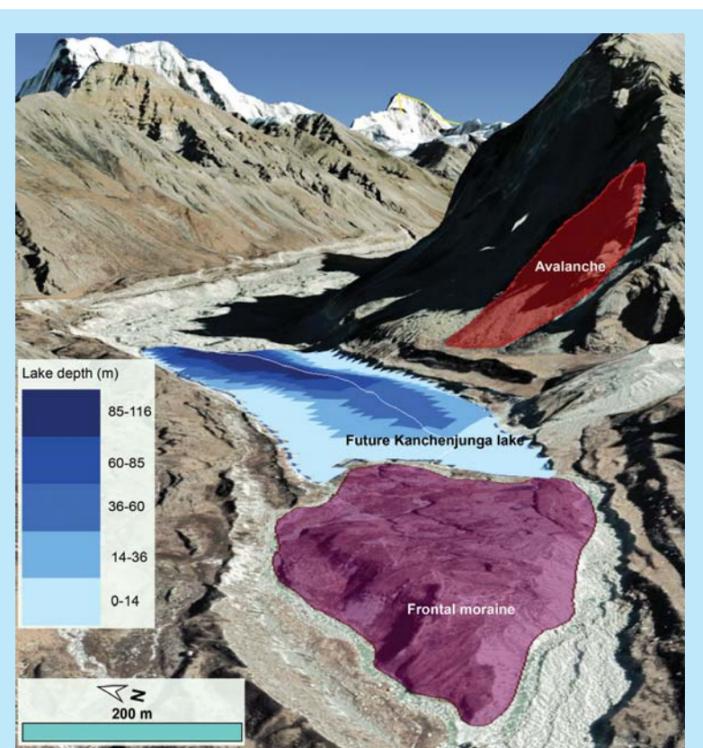
Inexpensive, locally appropriate, user-friendly early warning systems (EWS) need to be developed for the Kanchenjunga region now, instead of waiting for a tragedy to happen.

While the different options and costs are being assessed, the installation of new cell towers in the upper Ghunsa Khola would assure that local residents have access to one of the most effective and proven EWS systems available: cell phones, combined with a lake level monitoring device that broadcasts data and connects to cell phone alarm systems.

For example, hundreds of lives were saved when upstream witnesses called their family and friends downstream to warn them of the Seti River flood near Pokhara in 2014.

New zoning policies that prohibit the construction of lodges and other infrastructure in high-risk floodplain regions need to be developed now. Where the infrastructure already exists, villages should be encouraged to install gabion rock-filled wire cages along susceptible river channel or river interfaces to divert the flow of water during a flood event, a method used successfully in both highland and riverine Nepal. 🇳🇵

*Alton C Byers is a faculty research scientist at the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research (INSTAAR) University of Colorado at Boulder and has visited the KCA including a six-month residency in Ghunsa supported by the Fulbright Nepal Scholar Program. This article is largely based on Evolution of a Potentially Dangerous Glacial Lake on the Kanchenjunga Glacier, Nepal, Predictive Flood Models, and Prospective Community Response. Water, 2025. (Byers AC, Rinzin S, Byers E, Wangchuk S.)*



## Glacial lake reduction

Nepal has been awarded a \$36.1 million by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to confront hazards from glacial lake outburst floods. The grant will be implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM). There are some lessons to be learnt from the past decades of field work in Nepal and Peru:

**1** The DHM wants to use the project to reduce GLOF risks in the Kosi and Gandaki basins and glacial lake reduction programs are planned for Thulagi, Lower Barun, Lumding Tsho, and Hongu 2 glacial lakes.

However, the planned lowering depth for Tso Rolpa in 2000 was 20m, with the project ending once 3m lowering was achieved due to lack of funds. Imja lake, which scientists also determined needed to be lowered by at least 20m, was in fact lowered by 3m in 2016 'because that's what they did at Tso Rolpa'.

Lake lowering should be based on good science, and reduced to an effective depth as per Peru's experience, otherwise it will be a waste of funds.

**2** Although large glacial lakes will always get most media and even scientific attention, even small glacial lakes can be

just as deadly, given the correct sequence of cascading events, rainfall, snowmelt, and/or other triggers.

The 2017 Barun flood and 2024 Thame flood are two examples. Methods for assessing the flood risk of glacial lakes will need to be revised to include smaller glacial lakes as well, in addition to the 21 large lakes already considered dangerous.

**3** Existing Early Warning Systems can be made cheaper, more local, and possibly more effective. In 2015, villagers below Tso Rolpa complained that they had no idea how a recently installed EWS worked, what it sounded like, and what to do in the event that it went off.

With improved phone services and real-time lake level monitoring apps, locals could check on the lake, as opposed to waiting for some kind of communication from Kathmandu.

**4** The GCF grant is an opportunity to become the 'go to' place for communities throughout highland Nepal to report their concerns related to glacial lakes and other cryospheric processes. This service could facilitate local people's ability to adapt to, mitigate, or prevent a range of climate change-related hazards largely unknown to previous generations.



DINESH BHANDARI / PMO

"Analysis of weather forecasts and satellite data shows the Tibet region did not receive enough rain to cause this scale of flooding," explained Binod Pokharel, associate professor of hydrology and meteorology at Tribhuvan University. "The flood could have been caused by a GLOF."

Two weeks ago, Chinese officials had reportedly warned the Rasuwa District Administration in

Nepal to be on high alert for floods on rivers that originate in Tibet.

It could be that Chinese scientists had observed the alarming expansion of glacial lakes in the Lende and Bhote Kosi catchments. If that was the case, it is an example of the kind of trans-boundary forewarning that would be critical to save lives in future.

However, Rasuwa's Assistant Chief District Officer Dhruv

Prasad Adhikari seems to have no knowledge of any warning from the Chinese side, either formally or informally.

"The Chinese Embassy has said the cause of the flood is unknown, that it will coordinate with Nepal to find the cause," Adhikari told us. Chinese Ambassador Chen Song and Prime Minister Oli visited the border on Tuesday (pictured).

The sharing of real-time

trans-boundary rainfall and river flow data would be crucial in early warning about the risk and consequences of GLOFs to reduce human and material loss. But Nepali officials say China has been reluctant to share weather-related information and data not just in this disaster, but in the past as well.

"There is no mechanism or system in place for us to obtain hydrological and meteorological

data of the Tibetan region," said DHM Director General Joshi.

The Himalaya is melting twice as fast as the rest of the world due to a phenomenon called 'elevation dependent warming', and receding glaciers have led to an increasing number of transboundary GLOFs.

According to a 2018 ICIMOD study, of the 47 of the most dangerous lakes that threaten Nepal, 25 are on glaciers in China, 21 in Nepal and one in India. Many of these glaciers are expanding rapidly due to global warming.

One of the authors of the report, glacial lake expert Samjwal Bajracharya, says that the report was based on data from 2015. But climate change has accelerated since then. Moreover, seismic activity has further destabilised the landscape, adding to GLOF risk.

"Considering the rapid rate of snowmelt and consequent increase in size of Himalayan glaciers, studies should be conducted every year, and a monitoring system should be set up on the glaciers," says Bajracharya. "However, no studies have been conducted in the Himalaya in a decade, which has been our biggest weakness." 🇳🇵

With contribution by Sania Awale.

## EVENTS

**Waterfall hike**

Take a refreshing escape to nature through hidden waterfalls, lush trails, and beautiful views during a hike to the Chilaune and Lakhanchuli Waterfall.  
12 July, 7am onwards, Fee: Rs1,400 (newcomers) / Rs900 (regulars), Bhirkutimandap

**The Missing Dog**

The Missing Dog is a thought-provoking play that invites the audience to reflect on how the legal system, despite its pursuit of justice, can fail the innocent.  
Till 20 July, 4pm onwards, Tickets: Rs500, Mandala Theatre Nepal, Thapagaun

**Zestiva Carnival**

Join in on the fun at the Zestiva fest, a day filled with delicious feasts and refreshing brews accompanied by groovy performances from bands including Chumbak and Grunchiez.  
19 July, 11am onwards, Ticket: Rs1,000, The Malla Hotel

**Farmers' market**

Support small business and browse through local goods and fresh produce at the Le Sherpa Farmers' Market. Also explore stalls featuring everything from handcrafted treats to artisanal crafts.  
12 July, 7:30am onwards, Le Sherpa, Maharajganj

**Sickroom**

Sickroom at Katha Ghera is the story of Kalina and Diwas, who keep finding their way back to each other through time, pain, and endurance. Directed by Akanchha Karki, the play is an adaptation of Rajiv Joseph's play Gruesome Playground Injuries.  
Till 12 July, 5:15pm (except on Tuesdays & an additional 1pm show on Saturdays), Ticket: Rs500, Kausi Theatre, Teku

**Devi**

Devi, an exhibition by Emily and Tara, takes viewers into a world where the feminine divine takes fierce, iconic, and intimate forms. (Review on page 9)  
Till 26 July, 11am-6pm, (Tuesday-Thursday) / 11am-7pm (Friday-Sunday), Takpa Gallery, Lazimpat

**Art exhibition**

Interdependence, curated by Michelle Lama, delves into the interconnectedness of Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Space through the works of nine Nepali women artists.  
Till 12 July, 11am-7pm, Nepal Art Council, Baber Mahal

## MUSIC

**Laure**

Do not miss out on Under Wraps ft. Laure for it will be a night of pure hip-hop energy. Catch the acclaimed hip-hop artist live as he delivers hard-hitting bars.  
19 July, 7pm onwards, Ticket: Rs1,000, Omnia Club, Thamel

**Rockheads**

Blending classic rock influences with contemporary music, Rockheads are all-set for another powerful performance next week.  
16 July, 6pm onwards, Ticket: Rs500, Senate Club, Thamel

**John Chamling Rai**

The soulful vocals of John Chamling Rai is set to carry audiences through a night filled with music and memories.  
12 July, 9pm onwards, Ticket: Rs1,000, XO Club, Thamel

**Live Music**

Make your Friday memorable with live music at Tyandro, where great performances meet authentic Newari cuisine. Bring friends and family along.  
11 July, 5pm onwards, Cafe Tyandro, Sano Thimi

**Phosphenes**

Experience an intimate evening with Phosphenes at EDEN Live Sessions, as the band reveals the stories behind their music. Also get an exclusive first listen to unreleased tracks from their upcoming album.  
11 July, 6pm onwards, Ticket: Rs1,000, EDEN Sanepa

## DINING

**Monster Meal**

Try the fan-favourite spicy wings at Monster Meal or explore a wide variety of options from cheesy burgers to loaded fries, and other flavours of wings.  
Baneswar, 9802360505

## GETAWAY

**The Dwarika's Resort**

The Dwarika's doubles as a living museum, featuring centuries-old wood carvings, and offers a luxurious spa experience inspired by Ayurveda and ancient Himalayan wellness. Savor a slow-dining with their multi-course Nepali feasts while there.  
Battispatali (01) 4570770

**Lemon Tree Premier**

Plan your next chic urban retreat at Lemon Tree, explore their elegant all-day cafe, and stunning infinity-pool with views of the Himalaya.  
Budhanilkanta (01) 5900928

**Hotel Goodwill**

Nestled in the heart of Patan, Goodwill offers a peaceful retreat, combining traditional Newari architecture with modern comfort. The ideal getaway for travelers looking to unwind while experiencing local culture.  
Kanibahal, 9765341026

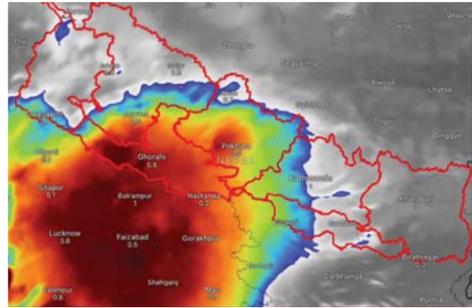
**Kasara**

Kasara Chitwan makes for the perfect nature-infused getaway with their villas providing personal water-garden courtyards. Partake in their guided thrilling activities where one can enjoy jeep and elephant safaris, canoe rides, birdwatching, and much more.  
Bharatpur, 9801249337

**Jal Mahal**

Cool off this summer at the family-friendly Jal Mahal with their infinity deep pool, a family splash pool, and a kids' pool.  
Gharipatan, Pokhara, 9856087030

## WEEKEND WEATHER

**Flood Warnings**

The monsoon took a short breather early this week, but is back in force with a massive pulse moving across Nepal which means red flags all along the banks of main rivers. There is still thunderstorm activity, which could point to cloudbursts that can be destructive even along smaller tributaries. Friday and Saturday will see a slight letup, but by Sunday and Monday another trough will be passing across central Nepal dumping more rain. Taking our lesson from recent floods (page 6-7), special care needs to be taken along glacier-fed rivers like the Trisuli, Bhoté Kosi, Seti or Kali Gandaki.

## OUR PICK



A six-part 2024 television detective dramedy Ludwig follows John Taylor, an unsociable puzzle maker who publishes puzzle books under the pseudonym Ludwig. When John's sister-in-law calls out of the blue to tell him that his twin brother James, who is a detective in the Cambridge police force, had vanished, John is tasked with going undercover to infiltrate the police department by posing as James to try to solve the mystery of his brother's disappearance. Stars David Mitchell, Anna Maxwell Martin, Diplo Ola, Izuka Hoyle, Gerran Howell, and Dorothy Atkinson.

## सामाजिक सञ्जाल प्रयोगमा सचेतता अपनाऔं

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



नेपाल सरकार  
विज्ञापन बोर्ड

**Crunch In**

In the mood for a quick snack? Head to Crunch In and try their katti rolls, spicy shawarma, chicken popcorn, or explore bigger combo deals if you're looking for value meals.  
Baluwatar, 9705376786

**Sesame Bakery and Coffee**

Explore a selection of freshly baked goods from mousse cakes and macarons, to strawberry and grape shortcakes packed in bento-size boxes. Sip on a warm cup of coffee on the side.  
Bakhundole, 9860554396

**Sicily by Ts**

A stylish pizzeria offering artisanal pizza, creamy pasta, and refreshing cocktails, Sicily is the go-to spot for authentic flavours with a modern twist.  
Thamel, 9820114953

**Mangolicious Nights**

Savor the taste of summer's sweetest sensations through a four-course mango-inspired dinner at Nook, this July. From zesty starters to decadent desserts, indulge in mango like never before.  
Fridays and Saturdays, 6:30pm-10:30pm, Rs2,799 (Vegetarian) / Rs2,999 (Non-vegetarian), Aloft Kathmandu Thamel, 9801976054

**The Big O**

A great spot to enjoy a variety of dishes, including their popular chicken doner kebab and flavorful slushies in six different flavors. The restaurant also serves grilled wings, and loaded fries.  
Sanepa, 9702156951

# The divine Devi

Exhibition explores iconic feminine expressions of deities and their interconnectedness with nature and being



TAKPA GALLERY

■ Sangya Lamsal

Devi does not just stand for different goddesses who embody creation, destruction, and the cycles of life. It is symbolic of feminine energy in both spiritual and human forms. The goddesses mirror cultural and social ideals of womanhood, celebrating the essence of feminine power and strength. The many forms of Devi transcend religion, borders, realities, and personal awakenings.

Devi is form yet formlessness, elemental and elusive, mystical and mundane, beautiful yet brutal. This multifaceted nature of female deities finds quiet expression in the stillness of Takpa Gallery, through the collaborative work of Emily Avery Yoshiko Crow and Tara Di Gesu. Crow is from Colorado, and has been living and learning art in India, Nepal and Canada. Di Gesu learnt classical thangka painting in Nepal, adding a new delicate quality to the sacred artform. Crow's artwork of layered

lotuses forming the image of Lotus Tara (pictured, right) is a contemporary interpretation of the revered goddess, rendered in mixed media photo collage. Through soft blue and pink pastels, Lotus Tara radiates tranquility. In contrast, Marigold Tara emerges from a deep, dark backdrop, with her form shaped by fiery orange marigolds. In Red Tara Realm, digital collage and paint meld to create a hypnotic, multi-dimensional effect where the many forms of the deity in red overlap and intertwine



within a single frame. A simpler, original version of Red Tara sits nearby, counterbalancing the dynamic fusion. One of her more intriguing works is Kalavinka, painted on handmade Indian paper with mineral pigments featuring a colourful bird's body paired with a feminine human head. The human head embodies intellect while the bird represents instinct and agility. Offering Devis is another unique display, made with rose petals, gathered from Mandala offerings that Crow collected, dried, pressed, and painted onto delicate Japanese paper. Tara Di Gesu's artwork evokes bolder and more spiritually intense themes, drawing inspiration from the style commonly found in traditional thangka paintings. Kali and Khrodikali portrays the fierce Hindu goddess using mineral pigment, gold, and watercolour on silk. Adorned with a garland of skulls, Kali is a fearless embodiment of feminine strength, and a potent reminder of the divine life force. The Little White Vulture has softer and delicate tones in which the goddess glows with power, as she soars serenely. The exhibition also invites reflection on caring for nature and the deep interconnectedness of all living beings, the beauty and the fragility of our planet, with Crow's use of eco-conscious materials. Her watercolours Earth in Peril and Earth in Harmony depict

the stark divide between flood and fire, yet a figure stands strong at the centre, entwined with hopeful touches of greenery and natural elements, while the latter bursts with lush life involving birds, flowers, and leaves in full bloom. Emily Avery Yoshiko Crow and Tara Di Gesu delve into both the intimate and iconic expressions. For both artists, Devi is more than art, it is an act of devotion celebrating the ineffable.

Devi  
Till 26 July  
Tuesday-Thursday: 11AM-6PM  
Friday-Sunday: 11AM-7PM  
Takpa Gallery, Lazimpat

हिमाल मिडिया मेला २०२५

**JOURNALISM REBOOT**

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# INDIA BOUND

From Gujarat and Rajasthan to Maharashtra and Karnataka, Nepalis migrate for work and education



## Mahesh Chowdhury

I am from Kanchanpur, headed to Gujarat where I work as an electrician. I came home for my vacation.

I earn well there, above INR27,000 a month and my supervisor is entirely reliant on me. My father also worked in India back in the day as a driver. I was 15 when I first went to India 12 years ago, and had to do so given my family's situation.

I started at the bottom, but as I learnt work and gained experience, my earnings improved. I do not need to go to any other country like the Gulf or Malaysia. One of my

uncles insisted that I go to Malaysia but I said no.

I am doing just fine in India, and I can keep visiting Nepal as I please. I have built a house already with my savings. I do not have any trouble finding work in India as my contractor gets a lot of jobs which he delegates to me.

I came home for two weeks to see my mother who is sick and to take her to the hospital.

I don't like the idea of going to third countries beyond India. When my great aunt died, I came for her last rites but her own son could not come home from Malaysia.

## Hem Raj Panta

I was born in Baitadi, and after completing Grade 10, tried my hand at modern agriculture. But this did not do well because I did not have access to markets, cold storage or roads.

I moved to India to work in a garment factory. The monthly earning of INR7,000 barely helped cover our household expenses, and we had outstanding loans. So, I decided to go to Dubai, where I worked in garment and delivery for a monthly salary of Rs45,000.

My brother was already working in Malaysia. In fact, we met in Kathmandu when he was returning from Malaysia and I was headed to Dubai. Later, I also worked in Malaysia at a company that manufactured vacuum parts.

Although the earnings were good, I decided not to renew my contract. My parents were

aging, and my son was growing up. I wanted to be around them.

I attended the same school which my father went to in Baitadi. It was quite a distance from home and the only option was to rent a room near the school. My father was concerned that he could not prioritise his studies, and neither could he do the same for us.

He did not want the same fate for his grandson, so I decided to break the cycle. I moved my son to Dhangadi where he now has access to better education. I drive a rickshaw that I bought with my Malaysia earnings.

I earn enough in Nepal now to take care of my household expenses and also enjoy the freedom of working on my own terms. Most of all I like eating at home with my family every day, unlike the food we ate in plastic bags when I was overseas.



DIASPORA  
DIARIES 69-70

These are the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> episodes of Diaspora Diaries, a Nepali Times series in collaboration with Migration Lab providing a platform to share experiences of living, working and studying abroad.

# Paying it forward

A Nepali once sponsored by a German couple now supports fellow students from his hometown of Ramechhap

## ■ Buddha Barali

I was lucky to be supported by a German couple when I was a student in Ramechhap because I was a bright student with good grades.

They had interviewed me, and asked what I wanted to do in life. I remember replying that I want to return to my village school to teach English.

For someone from my background to be supported financially right through to my Bachelor's meant a lot. I could study comfortably without having to worry about whether I could afford the fees.

Once I completed my undergraduate studies, my sponsors suggested I teach for two years back in my village after which they would again support me for my Master's. In particular, they wanted me to train teachers and even gave

me the first month's salary and supplies.

But going back to my village felt like I would be regressing, and I wanted to move forward in life. Despite my promise to my sponsors, the option did not appeal to me at all. I had my heart set outside Nepal.

I went missing in action, and got in touch with my sponsors only when I reached the UAE. I explained my situation. Thankfully, they were very understanding and told me they just wanted me to do well in life, no matter what path I chose. I was relieved.

Working at a petrol pump in Abu Dhabi with a Bachelor's degree was probably not ideal, but I do not have any regrets. I got a chance to see the world, meet different kinds of people. Back home, folks often look at Gulf countries differently compared to those who migrate to the UK, Japan or Australia. But the UAE showed me the world.

One thing that struck me was



how Westerners who came to the petrol pump were kinder, and they treated me like an equal. Their mannerisms made me feel like we were all the same, just from different contexts. That made me dream of migrating to their part of the world one day.

I recall how shocked a Yemeni customer was when he found out that I had an undergraduate degree. He was a supervisor, and used to come to our petrol pump with his employees. He himself was a school drop out, but had a job that paid him three times more than

what I, with a degree, was making. He could not believe it.

But I had told myself this was a temporary phase, and did not let this dissuade me. I just needed to keep upgrading myself. In the two years I was in the UAE, I was able to support my family.



## Ramesh Bhul

I am going to rejoin my job as a household help in Rajasthan. I clean, cook and it has been five years since I worked there.

I came home to Kanchanpur for almost a year to help with farmwork this time. I am going back to Rajasthan with my brother and his entire family who also work in the same house as me. My wife did not accompany me though.

I first went to India when I was just 12, and am 23 now. My father passed, so household responsibilities fell on my shoulders at a young age. I would have liked to go to countries like Malaysia, Dubai and Qatar, but I cannot afford it. I have had to borrow money just to go to India.



## Prem Khadka

I am from Dadeldhura. There were no hospitals or roads in my village then. I studied till Grade 10, and I went to Delhi when I was 18. I worked in a canteen as a tea-boy, and slowly worked my way up. I had neither the skills nor the experience for anything beyond.

Now I am a cook in Maharashtra, where I earn almost INR30,000 at a five-star hotel. For those with good education and experience, India offers opportunities. Because I had neither, it took a long time to get there.

The starting phase in India can be very difficult because we have to learn skills and gain experience, but things get better. You also need good references to move ahead. It was the same with me. I have

done it all: washed dishes, cut vegetables, worked in the boiling area and so on.

You watch and learn to advance, you step up whenever there is an opportunity to earn the team's trust and you gradually work your way up. There is no short cut, especially when you do not have references. Now I am happy with where I am at, and am glad I am a reference for many Nepalis who go there seeking opportunities.

I come home twice a year and time it around agriculture seasons so I can help at home. I myself have not tried applying to five stars in Gulf countries but I have seen friends who despite having the practical skills got kicked out during interviews or got cheated by fraudulent recruiters.

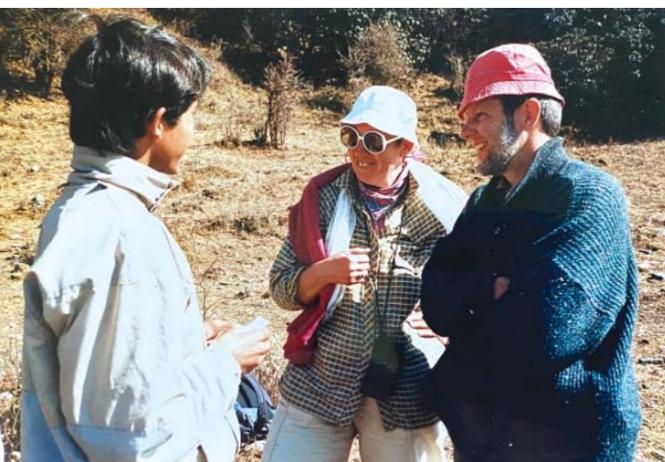
## Lalmati Mahara

My husband's attempt to go overseas did not work out because he failed his pre-departure medical tests. We go back and forth between India and Nepal quite frequently.

Before the paddy planting season, my husband and I were in Bangalore. I work as a household help and he works at a company. But as Bangalore is too far, we are now going to Delhi. He will work at a cooler company arranged by my brother-in-law and I will again find work as domestic help.

My in-laws take care of our children, and we earn INR10-15,000 each. We will again come home during the harvest season. That is what life is like, we time our trips around the agriculture seasons.

We have lived in many places across India. In Nepal, we cannot find work. That's why we go, we come back, we work in the fields, and go back again. We do it for the kids.



**HELPING HANDS:** Buddha Baraili with the three students he now supports financially to pursue their undergrad education, like he himself was sponsored (left, in middle).

Baraili with the German couple who paid for his Bachelor's, before and after (above, and above right). Baraili couldn't follow through with his promise of going back to his village to teach, but supports the community in other ways.

Baraili spent over three years in Cyprus before heading to the UK (far right).

Even more, I learnt to work within a system, interact with people from all over the world and be professional and independent.

After two years, I returned to Nepal. While everyone invests overseas earnings in land and houses, I decided not to do that

because I needed that money to migrate again, this time to Europe.

The UK was too expensive, so I went to Cyprus as a student. I worked in the hospitality sector, met many British clients and before I knew it, I landed in the UK.

I pursued my Master's degree, and on the side did a lot of odd jobs including as a delivery driver, waiter, security guard, and rose from a receptionist to operations manager at a hotel. My ten years in the UK till 2017 alternated between work permits and student visas pursuing two Master's degrees before I finally got my permanent residency.

After ten years of struggle, I remember telling my family members that getting the PR felt like Neil Armstrong landing on the moon. I have been able to help some of my relatives also migrate

here including my niece and nephew who are now well settled. When one of us makes it, so do our family members.

I used to make deliveries from a restaurant run by an elderly Bangladeshi, and took over from him. Even though your responsibilities increase, running your own business also gives you freedom. I am now also working on my PhD on developing Nepal's tourism sector.

Back in 2000, when I went to the UAE to work in a petrol pump while my brother was already there working as a security guard. In fact, I told him I was also in the UAE after I got there.

We used to meet up, but not as much as we would have liked as we lived two hours apart and were both busy. He stayed on for 20 years, while I left after two. He



would have stayed even longer as he had a good job, but we decided he should go back to Nepal to take care of our ailing mother.

It was not enough for us to just be able to support her financially in her last days, and I am grateful that one of us could be there close with her before she died.

Looking back at the last 25 years, I am glad I chose not to go back to my village to teach after my Bachelor's even though it may have felt like I let down my sponsors. A few years back, I got in touch with them again to pay them back for their generosity.

But instead of paying them back, they wanted me to pay it forward. I currently support three students from the same high school in Ramechhap where my sponsors had found me. Two of them are doing their

Bachelor's and one is enrolled in a Health Assistant course. I support them with monthly contributions till they complete their degrees.

Individuals from my village currently residing in the UK including those who attended the same primary school as I have also contributed to the school's trust fund that helps support students.

I did not go back to my village, but am finding ways to contribute even from the diaspora to pay back the generosity of the kind German couple who bet on me.

One does not have to be present physically in one's birthplace to give back. The attachment to your roots never goes away, no matter how far you are, or for how long.

Perhaps that is why even today, when someone asks me where home is, I say Ramechhap. Not Kathmandu, and not the UK. 🇳🇵



# Where in the world is Mira Rai?

She is fundraising for her initiative to train aspiring female trail runners like herself

■ **Dirgha Raj Upadhyay**  
in Colorado

She made headlines in 2014: a young woman from the mountains of eastern Nepal had just won the 50km Himalayan Outdoor trail race.

Mira Rai was 23 then, the only Nepali woman in the race. She had no training, no proper shoes, just a cotton t-shirt and shorts, and did not even know what trail running was. Two months later, helped by organisers who saw her talent, she won three more international races.

Mira Rai has been running all her life. She grew up running up and down her village, she ran to market town in Hile across the Arun River, carrying sacks of salt or rice with her mother.

At age 12, Mira was already carrying 12kg on her back, while her mother carried 60kg on the two-day roundtrip to Dhankuta.

One day in 2004, while carrying rice on the trail, she was caught up in a Maoist ambush of a Royal Nepal Army patrol. She escaped as bullets whizzed by.

At 14, she became a child soldier for the Maoist militia (pictured). She did not see action, and after the ceasefire in 2006, she was sent with other guerrillas to the demobilisation camp in Sindhuli.

There was not much to do there, and she excelled in running, taking part in the 5km and 10km marathons. Because she was still 17 and a minor, she was 'disqualified'



RICHARD BULL / NT ARCHIVES

by UNMIN peacekeepers, and went on to finish high school.

Ten years after winning her first race and being catapulted to fame, Nepal's most famous runner is in the United States raising funds for her Mira Rai Initiative, earning

money on the side, and running weekends on trails in the Rockies.

In 2020, grounded by lockdown and recovering from a knee injury, she led anti-pollution drives in Kathmandu and launched the Mira Rai



Initiative, helping other youngsters in athletics.

The program trains up to six Nepali trail runners a year, which from November will be conducted from her new Training Centre on the outskirts of Kathmandu. Among runners she has trained in the past are Sunmaya Budha and Humi Budha Magar, who have gone on to win in international championships.

"First I ran with my mother to support the family, then I ran for my country, now I run for myself and others like me," Rai told us from across the table at a Nepali restaurant in Denver.

Mira Rai has stopped counting her trophies. She won gold medals in the 180km Mustang Trail Race,

the 56km Sellaronda Ultra Trail in Italy which she completed in 6 hours 36 minutes and 30 seconds.

She came first in the Hong Kong 50km MSJK HK ultra race and won a silver in the Kings of the Hills. In 2015, just after the earthquake back home, she won the Mont Blanc Sky Race, and held up the Nepal flag as she broke the record.

In 2017 she won gold again in the 120km Ben Nevis Race on Britain's highest hill, setting a new record of 14 hours and 24 minutes.

A documentary about her, titled Mira, was shown to much acclaim at the Banff and Vancouver film festivals, and she is featured in the Lily Dyu book Fantastic Female Adventurers. 🇳🇵

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