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SUMAN NEPALI

DARK TIHAR

Sudiksha Tuladhar

Nikita Gautam was watching angry street protests from the terrace of her home in Gaushala on 9 September when a group started attacking the police station across the road. Soon, it was on fire.

Police fired back, and a bullet tore through Nikita's chest and hit another neighbour who was also watching. Nikita died on the way to hospital.

Nikita, 19, had just completed high school and was among the 75 killed during the violent GenZ protests last month. For their families, Dasain was spent in mourning. Tihar will be just memories.

Bhai Tika, the sibling ritual which this year falls on 23 October, will be especially poignant for those who have lost their sisters or brothers in the protests.

Nikita's brother, Nirmal, is studying in Denmark. The siblings were very close, and he was trying to find a way to get Nikita into a Danish university as well.



"We used to talk daily on video call, she used to tell me whatever she couldn't share with our parents," a distraught Nirmal told us. "She was taking photos and videos of the GenZ protests and sending it to me."

Nirmal had not been back for Bhai Tika the last two years, but was planning to visit this year. He rushed back to Nepal after finding out about his sister, but there is no

LIVE ROUND: The police bullet that pierced 19-year-old Nikita Gautam, killing her, and was lodged in the body of a neighbour on 9 September. Nikita with her brother Nirmal (left) at Bhai Tika before he left for Denmark two years ago.

Nikita put a tika on his forehead.

The Gautam family, originally from Chitwan, moved to Kathmandu 33 years ago and lived in a rented flat 200m from the police station at the Gaushala intersection.

A month later, their mother Kalpana Gautam is still in shock. Nikita was a loving child who took care of the children in the neighbourhood.

What makes a Nepali?

EDITORIAL PAGE 2

She says: "With Nikita gone, we cannot console ourselves."

Nirmal has now returned to Denmark, and cannot come to terms with the void that losing his sister has left. "There is nothing left to do for me but to relive in my mind the countless memories of my sister."

MORE PAGE 12

INSIDE PAGE 6-7

IS NEPAL REACHING PEAK EV?
Two wheels good... electric even better

Nepali Times Wishes Readers Happy Tihar, Chhath and न्हूँदया भित्तुना ११४६
Because of the holidays there will be no print edition of the paper on Friday 24 October. The next hard copy issue of Nepali Times will be on 31 October 2025. Visit nepalitimes.com for daily updates and original multimedia content.

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Shristi Karki

In the aftermath of the GenZ protests last month, as new PM Sushila Karki chose the first members of her Council of Ministers, youth collectives urged that it reflect the country's diversity by including women, youth and people from various ethnic and socio-cultural backgrounds.

It took another couple of weeks for Karki to include bureaucrat and public health expert Sangeeta Mishra as Health Minister in her next tranche of ministers. Almost immediately, people dug up a video of Mishra calling herself "Nepali, but a native Indian".

She was telling it like it was: Mishra is a naturalised Nepali citizen. But there was outrage in the ultra-nationalistic cybersphere. Mishra's name was withdrawn from the list of ministers, with government officials citing an ongoing investigation at the CIAA.

With her Cabinet still incomplete a month after taking office, Prime Minister Karki was preparing to induct GenZ as ministers. A leak in the media floated the names, one of which was of Tashi Lhazom, a climate activist and filmmaker from Humla's Limi Valley.

Social media erupted with discriminatory, xenophobic and misogynistic epithets against her: that she supported a separatist movement, that she was a foreign agent, that her citizenship was disputed, that



BHANU BHATTARAI / NT ARCHIVE

she did not 'look' or 'speak' like a Nepali.

Political figures like Gyanendra Shahi, a prominent voice calling for the restoration of a Hindu monarchy, added fuel to the fire by making bigoted and false remarks about her heritage.

The former Commissioner of the National Human Rights Commission, Mohna Ansari, wrote on social media that it was shameful to question Lhazom's identity: 'Ms Tashi Lhazom is as Nepali as you are. Our society's ugliest face and biggest flaw is doubting our own. Real patriotism embraces diversity — fake nationalism must end.'

Ansari, a human rights lawyer and activist, has also often been subject to Islamophobic and derogatory comments on digital platforms.

What makes a Nepali?

Nepal's new polity must reflect pluralism and celebrate diversity of thought

In response, the Indigenous GenZ Collective released Lhazom's Nepali citizenship certificate to debunk the mistruths spreading on digital as well as mainstream media.

What makes a Nepali? What does a Nepali look or sound like? Who is a Nepali?

'Had my name been Tashi Poudel, Thapa, Bhattarai or Ghimire, this would not have happened,' Lhazom said in an interview with Kantipur, following an avalanche of bigotry against her. 'They questioned me because I do not look Nepali, or speak Nepali like a Khas. Because it is not my mother tongue.'

It is an indictment of Nepali society that indigenous Nepalis have to present proof, at the slightest inconvenience of mostly the dominant groups, of being a citizen of this nation simply because they might not fit into an imagined idea of Nepali nationhood by virtue of physical appearance, speech, geography, or faith.

And while we celebrate the successes of Nepal-born naturalised foreign citizens (some now hold elected office in the US) we refuse to afford the same respect to naturalised Nepali citizens and those born in Nepal to excluded groups, nor do we expect them to work in the national interest if they are given responsibility to govern. And women are singled out twice as much for scrutiny.

Then cyber Nepal went into a tizzy when videos appeared of a biker's group clad in black t-shirts emblazoned with

the acronym 'TOB' which was interpreted to stand for 'Tibetan Original Blood' and linked to the Free Tibet movement.

The accusations snowballed into disinformation, xenophobia, and even calls for violence against Nepalis of Tibetan heritage and the Tibetan community in Nepal.

In the aftermath of the September protests, the hope was that politics and the bureaucracy would finally be rid of orthodox political actors. But first, we as a nation need to collectively examine the biases and bigotry that exist in Nepal's socio-cultural space.

Otherwise, Nepal's multiculturalism will be limited to just words in the Constitution and political tokenism.

No one who is in government now or in future can be expected to be completely free of subjective opinions, ideology, affiliation to a cause, or prior activism. Such criticism falls disproportionately on activists, advocates, and members from underserved and underrepresented communities.

One cannot be apolitical and hope to participate in politics, and as we move forward to rebuild the system, it must not just reflect diverse communities, but also celebrate diversity of thought and beliefs.

Resorting to ethnocentrism, racism and chauvinism with conspiracy theories and discriminatory dog-whistling about fellow citizens is a disservice to Nepali nationhood. It is Nepal's diversity that makes us strong.

Trending Online

Jazz as healing music

by Nepali Times

Organisers of the 21st Jazzmandu decided to go ahead with the festival, believing in the healing power of jazz for a nation on the cusp of a new beginning. Read a round-up of the festival on page 9.

Most reached and shared on Facebook

One month on

by Shristi Karki

A month after Nepal's GenZ protests, PM Sushila Karki is caught between managing the expectations of a movement that appointed her, and working within the framework of her interim government's mandate. Read analysis online, and follow us for the latest developments.

Most popular on X



Prolific mountaineering clan

by Dirgha Raj Upadhyaya

Family members of Nima Tshiring Sherpa, who was a porter and guide from Phortse, have climbed Mt Everest a total of 92 times. Mountaineering special on page 10-11.

Most commented



Discordant democracy

Editorial

The youth want immediate course correction after the September protests, but idealism alone cannot make a state machinery function. Every decision during this sensitive transition must be taken without undermining previous gains. Read editorial by Sonia Awale on our website.

Most visited online page

Letters

DEVELOPMENT

Good questions on development in the story, the sooner we find the right answers, the better ('National interest vs community needs', Sabina Devkota, #1281).

Bharat Koirala

■ By definition, if we lack a clear realistic goal how can there be a strategy by which to reach it ('Deconstructing development in an age of crises', Kunda Dixit, nepalitimes.com)?

Tony Jones

■ Sure, someone had a goal, but the definition lacked a few words: 'clear', 'realistic', 'strategy, and a few others.

David Durkan

PROTEST JOURNAL

This is the second reporter who noted that the GenZ protesters were not the ones who brought violence ('Reporter's diary of 8-9 September', Bhadra Sharma, nepalitimes.com)

Shirley Blair

BIPIN JOSHI

I hope that every global leader — from those shaping peace talks to those with power and influence — will hear Bipin's name and remember his story and many more innocent souls will not continue to suffer ('Nepali hostage in Gaza not alive: Israel', nepalitimes.com). May compassion and truth guide those who speak of peace.

Dakini Delilah

CLIMBING CLAN

My father, the middle one in the photo in the report ('Nepal's most prolific mountaineering clan', Dirgha Raj Upadhyaya, nepalitimes.com)

com) and my uncles with my grandparents. Grateful to be part of this incredible Sherpa lineage.

Fura Doma

NEPALI DEMOCRACY

Nepal is comparable to a company and its shareholders ('Nepal's democracy keeps doubting itself', Ayusha Chalise, nepalitimes.com). All shareholders need not know every aspect of the operation but the management has to because its every act should justify the shareholders' objective.

Samnbiddev

MADAN PURASKAR

What a moving event of the Madan Puraskar award ceremony (Nepali Times Social Media post). Huge congratulations to Chuden Kabimbo for his outstanding literary work and Prem Giri for his lifelong dedication to music. Great choices for the awards.

Bishow Parajuli

Quotes



Nepali Times @NepaliTimes

A month after Nepal's GenZ protests, Prime Minister Sushila Karki is caught in the crossfire between managing the expectations of a movement that appointed her, and working within the framework of her interim government's mandate. Read the analysis:



pigreen1 @pigreen1

Measured analysis - as the contradictions deepen and a confrontation between Karki and Oli seems inevitable unless the latter can be persuaded by his own cadres to step aside



Nepali Times @NepaliTimes

"Even if they call us anti-development, we will continue to protest and demand what is our right and what is just." Skepticism remains about big projects trampling over the rights of those affected by large projects in Nepal.



Hem Sagar Baral @WorshipNature

Development that comes at the cost of environmental degradation, loss of livelihoods, & of cultural integrity must be opposed. Nepal should adopt examples from beyond its borders that demonstrate a balanced approach to development & conservation.

Online Package



VISIT NEPAL

The arson, loot and violence during GenZ protests sent a message around that world that Nepal was not safe for travel. But tourists here say it is safe and request others to visit. Watch video on our social media platforms.



JAZZMANDU 2025

The annual jazz festival was nearly cancelled after the GenZ protests, but the organisers decided to go ahead believing in the power of music for healing and restoration. Watch the video, and read story on page 9.

1,000 Words



SANGYA LAMSAL

GOOD IDEA: Nearly 800 vehicles were torched (above) during the GenZ protests last month all over the country. Almost the same number of 2- and 4-wheel former USAID vehicles are in storage in Chobhar (left). On social media, many are suggesting that the government talk to the Americans to replace the vehicles it lost.

Times

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Planning for the year 2100

The next 18 years of Nepal: a positive outlook

Sujeev Shakya

I used to write a weekly column for Nepali Times under the nom du plume Arthabeed, and in issue #471 on 9 October 2009 the commentary was titled 'Unleashing Nepal'.

It was about the country's economic potential and peace dividend, and I wrote:

"The list is endless and if we can make just a few of these ideas really happen, Nepal and Nepalis will surely be better off."

It was not a great time to be an optimist, but there was a desperate need to see some light at the end of the tunnel. A glance at the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) hosted at Institute for Conflict Management for 2009 makes one wonder how we survived those difficult times.

The situation was actually much worse than what it is today: The Constitution drafting process was stuck, there was never-ending political wrangling, the Maoist army was not yet integrated, and there were thousands of ex-guerrillas and guns around.

Then Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal tried to fire the Army Chief Rookmangud Katawal in May 2009, and had to quit for his pains. Even the New York Times wrote: 'Nepal's Premier Resigns After

Power Struggle Over Army Chief'.

Rumour mills were working overtime like they do now, though social media platforms were not as prolific as they are today. It was text messages, emails and phone calls along with lurid tabloid headlines.

The rumours around coups never ended, and there were rumours about rumours. One such report read 'Nepali Congress leader Ram Chandra Poudel said the rumour about a coup was spread by Maoists to demoralise Nepalese Army'. Poudel is now Nepal's president.

When in May 2010, the Maoist announced they would encircle Kathmandu and declared a five day strike, it was a civil society that stood up against the bullying.

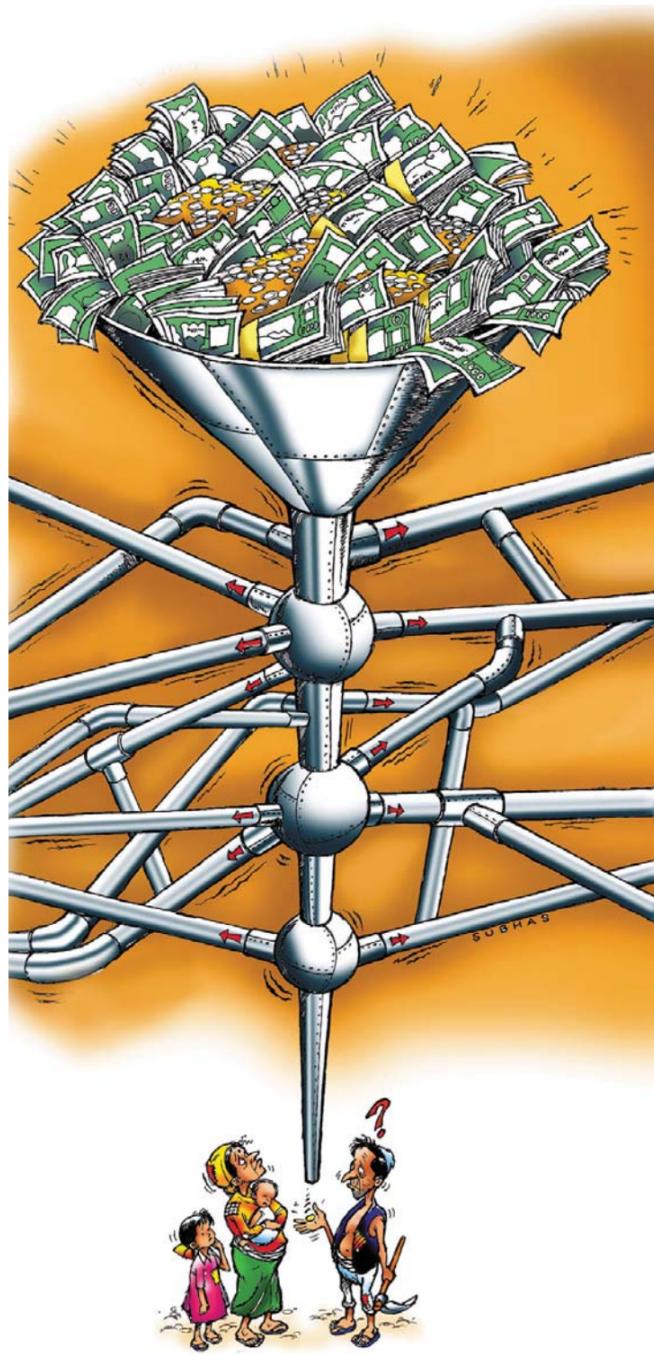
There was fear that the Constituent Assembly would be dismantled.

Behind every action, everyone saw a foreign hand. In another one of my columns, I wondered then if the food we are eating also was fed by some foreign hand.

It was during such anxious times that my book Unleashing Nepal came out. Sixteen years later, in similarly anxious times, my third book Nepal 2043: Road to Prosperity is being published this week.

What has changed in these 16 years? Nepal's economy had grown from \$12 billion in 2009 to \$44 billion in 2025. Remittances have crossed \$11 billion and Nepalis reside in over 180 countries around the world.

The 2015 Constitution installed



federalism with the concept of devolving power to the 25 million people living outside Kathmandu Valley. The size of banking and the stock market has grown, so has the size of the private sector.

Nepal is sitting on \$20 billion in foreign exchange reserves — enough to cover 18 months of imports.

Domestic tourism makes up 60% of earnings in the hospitality sector, with social functions, internal air and road travel, domestic pilgrims dominating earnings especially outside Kathmandu Valley.

Nepal's entrepreneurship has proliferated as online platforms help people sell, logistics companies transport goods, and digital payment platforms ensure easy financial transactions. There is close to 100% electrification and internet penetration has accelerated the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises, transforming lives and livelihoods.

Just as in 2009, I also take a long-term view now as Nepal can aim to graduate to a high-income country in 2043. That is the year that in the Bikram Sambat calendar we mark 2100 — the beginning of a new Nepali century.

CORRUPTION CARTELS

On a long-distance trek there are many difficulties, some foreseen, others unforeseen that have to be overcome. One of the biggest impediments to Nepal's economic growth have been corruption and cartels.

Last month's youth movement was propelled by an anti-corruption agenda, and the sacrifices of so many lives will not be in vain as cronies and cartels are curtailed. Nepal was embarking on the next set of reforms, and what could be better than having the person who led the High-level Commission on Reforms, Rameshore Khanal, becoming the interim Finance Minister.

No political party new or old can avoid initiating economic reforms in their election manifesto for the March



World Class Turkish

Turkish Airlines has received the World Class award by the Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX) for the fifth consecutive year. The flag carrier of Türkiye was also recognised for the second consecutive year as Best in Class in the World Class Sustainability category and this year received the newly introduced Best in Class in the World Class Food & Beverage Executions category.

IME dividends

Global IME Bank announced an 8% dividend for its shareholders based on current paid-up capital, pending Nepal Rastra Bank approval. The bank operates in all 77 districts with remittance services.

Khanal in DC

Finance Minister Rameshore Khanal is in Washington DC for the annual meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). He met the Bank's Anna Bjerde and the IMF's Bo Li and updated them about Nepal's situation. Khanal also addressed the Business Dialogue of the US Chamber of Commerce on Monday. Meanwhile, The IMF has projected a fall in Nepal's GDP growth for the coming year to 2% and raised India's FY2026 projection to 6.6%.

Tatopani reopens

Imports via the Tatopani border have surged after Dasain. Floods and landslides had caused a two-month closure. All roadblocks have now been cleared. Over 20 containers enter Nepal daily, mainly carrying fruits and clothes.

Samsung Tihar

Samsung is running a Tihar offer until 16 November under which customers can get up to 35% cashback and exchange bonuses of up to Rs7,000 on TVs, fridges and washing machines. Buyers will also be entered into raffles to win prizes including soundbars, microwaves, TVs. Financing plans with zero interest are available. Samsung is also running 20-53% discounts on Galaxy Buds and Watches when bought with selected Galaxy phones.

Jumla apples

Since mid-July, 4,700 metric tons of apples worth Rs330.75 million have been shipped from Jumla. Over 70% households farm apples, earning upto Rs100,000 per season.



Aloft on top

Aloft Kathmandu Thamel was awarded Nepal's Leading Hotel 2025 at the World Travel Awards Asia & Oceania Gala, held in Hong Kong which has recognised outstanding achievement in travel, tourism and hospitality since 1993. "This achievement reflects the tireless commitment of our team to deliver unparalleled guest experiences," said Aloft GM Vikram Singh.

Tata Utsav

The Tata Dhanteras Utsav, running 12-19 October, offers discounts and gifts when buying its electric or ICE cars. Perks include free lifetime DC fast charging, accessories and comprehensive insurance. Amid Lakshmi Puja and rising gold prices, the bumper prize is a gold coin.



Nabil SSE open

Nabil Bank is inviting applications to its School of Social Entrepreneurship program until 13 November. The program aims to help national development, alleviate poverty and empower the marginalised. There are two options: a six-month fellowship offering training, mentorship, networking and finance access, and a three-month fundamentals course.

Free Foton servicing

Foton is offering three years or 12 intervals worth of free maintenance on booking its Tunland pickup. The offer is valid until 31 October. The package covers air filters, diesel filters, AC filters, engine oil, gear oil and crown oil.

Forthing Tihar Vibe

Laxmi E-mobility's Forthing Tihar Vibe runs 13-20 October and is offering customers who book the Friday e-SUV (400km range, Rs50.96 lakh) discounts, an eight-year warranty, six years of free charging, a 7kW home charger, one year of insurance and road tax, an extra spare tire, and the chance to win an iPhone 17 Pro.

FM digitises

The Finance Ministry has adopted the Government Integrated Office Management System for paperless operations, becoming Nepal's first fully paperless government office. Developed by the Department of Information Technology, the system mandates electronic signatures for all decisions, orders, correspondence, attendance and records.

Buddha to Kolkata

Buddha Air is restarting Kathmandu-Kolkata flights on 19 October on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays on ATR-72s departing Kathmandu at 7am and returning from Kolkata at 9:20am. One-way fare is Rs13,353.

Middle Bhote Kosi

The 45MW Bhote Kosi Hydropower Project has agreed to handover 10% of its share for free to a local GenZ group that had forced the shutdown of the project in Sindhupalchok for more than one month. Other hydropower projects are facing similar demands from locals calling themselves GenZs. The Bhote Kosi project's private owner Tara Management is supposed to hand over the facility to the government in three years.

Land documents

The Department of Land Management and Archive has simplified the re-registration of land ownership records that were burnt in 16 land registration offices across the country during the GenZ protests. The process now only requires original certificates and citizenships, and claimants can also submit field books, plot registers, local government records or tax receipts. They must appear in person.



Thai Air at GBIA

Thai AirAsia has resumed flights from Gautam Buddha International Airport (GBIA) that serves Lumbini starting 11 Oct. Jazeera Airways is also planning to start flights after Tihar. GBIA opened in April 2022 but has been used only irregularly by international carriers.

Retrofitting Nepal for future shocks

New book lays out roadmap to high-income status by 2043

Sonia Awale

On the very first page of the first chapter of *Nepal 2043: The Road to Prosperity* are two maps. The first places Nepal right at the epicentre of Asia, and in the second Kathmandu is at exactly the midpoint between Mumbai and Beijing.

With his trademark optimism, author Sujeev Shakya says Nepal is not land-locked but land-linked to three billion people in China and India. We just need those two economic engines to pull us in the same direction.

Nepal is set to graduate from a low- to a middle-income country by 2026 and to a high-income country in 2043 — hence the name of the book.

The book delves into the past, present and future of Nepal and analyses enablers including hydropower, a fundamental transformation of which will drive the 2043 goal. The commoditisation of electricity will be the biggest transformation.

Nepal can deploy 'Cyber Gurkhas' to attract foreign investors, managing data centres with climate friendly renewable energy. Access to technology such as precision agriculture, a data-driven approach to farming to improve food production, reduction of environmental impact and enhancement of profitability could be Nepal's strategy into 2043 and beyond.

'Earlier, we needed ploughs and strong hands in agriculture. Now,

you need a computer and strong fingers,' a farmer tells Shakya at an Ilam teashop, citing a neighbour's son who inspects his crops from drone cameras. The farmer asks an AI questions in Nepali, and it answers promptly.

The biggest enabler of all is Nepal's young demography with 62% of the population in the active 15-60 age bracket, while dependency ratio has dropped to the lowest in history with 100 Nepalis having to support 62 dependents. But this demographic dividend window is closing. Nepal's total fertility rate declined from 2.62% in 1981 to 0.92% in 2021 — below replacement level. We have less than 30 years left to make the best use of the youth, many of whom are currently studying and working abroad.

Nepal's diaspora is spread across the world who send home \$20 billion a year. Migration is not just a necessity but an aspiration for many Nepalis, and they are an important source of contacts, investment and soft power.

This young and educated group has taken advantage of connectivity and digitisation in all arenas. As it stands, Nepal's software companies exported over \$1 billion worth of IT products last year. Next we need a change in the bureaucratic mindset to eliminate paper and manual processes, which would also contribute to reducing corruption.

Shakya comes up with many revelations: 81% of Nepalis live in houses they own, much higher than most other South Asian countries which means higher disposable income. The banking sector is twice

the size of Bangladesh despite Nepal having just one-fifth of its population. In 2021, 12.62% of Nepalis had demat accounts, while only 5.32% Indians had the same.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

With such figures and prospects, why did Nepal just experience a violent uprising?

One early chapter is actually dedicated to how Nepalis have always thrived in chaos. When people faced up to 20 hours of power cuts a day, people worked around the load-shedding schedule, waking up at ungodly hours to cook, stocking up on inverters. They did not put up a fight, or even protest.

'Generally, Nepalis are used to taking things lying down, and perhaps this also needs to change,' says Shakya, writing that line before last month's uprising. 'On the one hand, some of these issues speak volumes about the average Nepali's patience and perhaps optimism that things will change in the long run. On the other hand, one is also forced to wonder how much longer they will be able to put up with unfavourable conditions if things don't change.'

It seems Nepalis had enough with corruption, governance failure and political apathy to the concerns of ordinary people. The final chapter lists the non-negotiables to realise the 2043 Nepal Roadmap: democratic values and freedom of speech, a capitalist welfare state and socio-political transformation to tackle corruption and impunity.

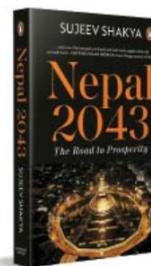
The book notes, 'Countries

transitioning to democratic rule experienced a 20% increase in GDP over a 25 year period compared to what they would have achieved under authoritarian regimes. After the end of the Shah rule in 2006, Nepal's GDP rose from US\$10 billion to US\$44 billion by 2024.'

The government's Vision 2030 document projects Nepal's GDP at US\$100 billion, and Vision 2043 estimates that it will be a US\$423 billion economy with a per capita of US\$12,100. However, it will need more than optimism and practical action to make these projections real. China and India loom large throughout the book with examples of small city states like Singapore which have taken advantage of their strategic location.

Sujeev Shakya is a great admirer of former Singaporean diplomat and author Kishore Mahbubani, who has written a blurb for the book. He quotes Mahbubani saying that for most of the past 2,000 years, Asian countries have dominated the world, and it is quite natural that the world's economic centre is returning to Asia.

And Nepal is strategically placed to make the most of it. We just have to get our politics right in this new Nepali century. 🇳🇵



Nepal 2043: The Road to Prosperity by Sujeev Shakya Penguin Books, 2025 352 pages Rs958

elections which will be fought on issues that meet the expectations of young Nepalis — jobs, investment and global mobility.

There will be challenges. Like in 2009, the failed state narrative will continue to appear with parachute consultants landing and supporting a section of Nepali society that has benefited from selling cynicism.

People who have taken politics as a profession and usurped power and money will fight tooth and nail to go their old ways, and the country with them. There will be confrontation.

Nepal also needs to send a message to the world that it is rounding up the criminals who escaped from prisons and tracking down the weapons that were looted. Businesses and citizens need to feel safe.

Finally, we have to remind ourselves that we cannot change our geographical location and the current world order has brought our neighbours closer to each other.

Neither China or India would like to see prolonged instability in Nepal and it spilling over. And Nepal has to be ready to hitch its wagon to those two engines of global growth.

Nepalis are very good at taking super-long term views like a belief in the afterlife, and undertake rituals to ensure a better incarnation next time. Perhaps we need to have a long term view about improving our current lives in our own lifetimes.

There are things to fix in the short-term, of course, but we have to plan for the future decades till 2100 Bikram Sambat. 🇳🇵



Sujeev Shakya wrote the column *Economic Sense in Nepali Times* from 2001-2011 under the pseudonym Arthabeed. His book, *2043: Road to Prosperity* is being released by Penguin this week.

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IS NEPAL REACHING THE ELECTRIC AGE?

The transportation sector is on an electric fast track



Hyundai Kona EV



DRIVE LINE
Arnav Upadhyay

Manufacturers Association which saw 35 new models, many of them EVs with 50 participating brands like Toyota, BYD, Hyundai, Kia, MG, Mahindra, Omoda & Jaecoo, Proton and Leapmotor.

The exhibition had a strong focus on two-wheelers aimed at affordable and easy mobility in a town now known for long traffic jams (see report). NAIMA attracted a record 100,000 visitors in six days.

The second one was the Nepal Automobile Dealer's Association Auto Show 2025 (NADA) to address the growing demands for cars and two-wheelers. It was a natural expression of new market

forces at work on one hand, and popular taste on the other — one influencing the other.

This year's NADA Auto Show was its 17th iteration, and carried a hefty legacy: exhibiting a contemporary lineup from manufacturers such as Tata, Suzuki, Xpeng and Nammi, but also classics for vintage car lovers like the 1928 Ford Model A and a rare 1955 Austin Princess Dm4 sedan.

It also showcased the Deepal eVTOL (a 2-seater drone), and a humanoid robot with dog. Curious onlookers at Bhrikuti Mandap thronged the show with footfall crossing 170,000.

Earlier this year, I had traveled

to attend India's largest auto show, the Bharat Mobility Global expo in January in New Delhi. It was part of a roadtrip from one capital to another with BYD Nepal on a Dolphin. The journey took three days through Bhairawa and then the Lucknow-Agra Expressway, a distance of 1200km one way.

The drive through the horrid Narayanghat-Butwal corridor alone was testimony that EVs are no longer fragile and could handle a beating. And while Nepal's economy pales in comparison to both India and China, it was evident that the private passenger segment is well on its way to electrification.

More than 70% of all vehicles sold in Nepal last year were electric. Sales representatives are unanimous: inquiries for EVs are at an all-time high and overshadow demand for ICE (Internal Combustion Engine)

vehicles. Besides four-wheelers, a fast-growing proportion of scooters were also electric.

I have spent the last two years reviewing many of these EVs. The days of battery-powered cars being small toy cars, with sub-par build quality and the range of golf carts have long gone.

Fit and finishing in both Chinese and Indian EVs are comparable to established brand names even in Japanese and European markets. But most significantly for us in Nepal, battery technology and range have made inter-city travel on our highways imaginable.

The media sometimes portrays Nepal as a prime testing/dumping ground for EVs due to lack of regulation and the proximity to the world's largest EV exporter (China) and our tough geographical conditions. That is just a part of the story. What actually stands out

We were used to getting stuck in Kathmandu's notorious traffic with gas fumes and horns blaring. We are still stuck in traffic, but now it is mostly the quiet hum of EVs, and street-level air is noticeably cleaner.

Alongside Norway, Nepal has the highest combustion-to-EV conversion rates in the world. And we are not even a middle-income country yet. How did we get here?

For the first time in Nepal's history, 2025 saw an unprecedented turn of events: two back-to-back auto shows a week apart in August, independent of each other. This was timed for the warm up to the Dasain season.

The first auto show 6-11 August was the NAIMA Mobility Expo 2025 by the newly established Nepal Automobile Importers and



Mahindra e20

Two wheels good,



BAJAJ Chetak 3501
Rs 3,24,900
153km
Solid metal body, hill hold assist



ATHER Rizta
Rs383,500
159km
Family-focused, long seat, large under-seat storage



Vishad Raj Onta

Three out of every four cars Nepalis buy is now electric, a huge step in reducing air pollution and the country's dependence on imported petroleum.

However, 80% of existing vehicles are still two-wheelers, scooters or bikes, and these still overwhelmingly run on petrol. All that may also soon be changing.

There are an estimated 1.3 million two-wheelers in Kathmandu Valley, which has a population of 3.5 million. They are the preferred mode of transport

because of affordability, mobility, ease of repair with spare parts and mechanics readily available.

And in the past two years, two-wheelers have also transformed transportation with ride-sharing companies, food delivery, and e-commerce companies.

Motorcycles even played a big part in the 8-9 September protests, when demonstrators tore through streets looking for targets. The controversial TOB biker's group was noisily patrolling the Mandala-Baneswar stretch, exhorting the GenZ rally. Many bikes were parked inside the Parliament compound, and social media posts show motorbikes revving hard right

up to the steps of the Parliament building.

While dirty exhaust from diesel trucks and buses are readily visible, the emissions from two-wheelers are unseen and odourless with carbon monoxide, ozone and other toxic gases adding to the Valley's hazardous air quality.

The next big step to clean up the air and make personal mobility more sustainable would be a switch to e-scooters and e-bikes. "The public mentality about electric two-wheelers is flipping," says Bijen Koirala at Yadea e-scooters Nepal. "People were sceptical about them but now trusted brands are involved. Over the next several

years, expect a majority of scooters to be electric."

Yadea is a Chinese manufacturer of electric bicycles, motorcycles, and scooters, and has a large presence across Asia, and in Nepal it sells five e-scooter models ranging in price from Rs175,000 to Rs370,000.

This range is exactly competitive with brand new petrol scooters from Honda, Yamaha, or Vespa. However, scooters can be bought second hand for under Rs100k. Koirala says an e-scooter would save customers close to Rs1.1 million over six years based on riders doing 90km a day using Rs500 worth of petrol. The same distance would only cost Rs27 worth of electricity. But most commuters

Nepal's revolution in battery-powered four-wheelers is spreading to e-scooters and e-bikes

HING PEAK EV?

fast-track, but the road ahead is bumpy



Tata Curvv.ev

is the incredible appetite for risk among Nepali buyers.

Since the Covid pandemic, charging infrastructure has spread across the country. My early trips between Kathmandu and Pokhara saw the possibility of topping up with just one charging gun at the Riverside Springs Resort in Kurintar – and I would have to wait in line, or the charger simply would not be working.

These days, by the time I cross Kurintar from Koteswor in my Kona, I will have passed at least 10 charging stations with multiple guns.

On my YouTube reviews, people from across the globe ask about range and handling EVs on poor road conditions like ours. The occasional skeptics also leave comments like: ‘If this works in the higher altitudes and mountainous roads of Nepal, then it should be a breeze down here in the flats of Australia and/or hills around Auckland!’

SATURATION?

However, both the NAIMA and NADA auto show also confirmed that we could be hitting a peak in EV. From having just one car in one budget segment, there are now multiple alternatives stretching from the entry of below Rs3 million to the premium and high-end Rs 10 million price point.

Furthermore, the price wars on EVs that started in China a year ago have also trickled across to Nepal. Models such as the MG S5, Nammi Vigo, BYD Atto 2 (and 1) and Deepal S05 saw aggressive pricing schemes and discounts that disrupted pre-existing quotas. Consumers can suddenly afford a lot more cars, and travel a lot further for a considerably smaller price tag.

However, booking numbers at both auto shows did not necessarily translate into actual deliveries. The fact remains that almost 80% of

registered vehicles in Nepal are still two-wheelers, and GDP per capita stands at just \$1500 — among the lowest in the world.

This means that early first-adopters are first-time buyers, and remaining customers in the market are more skeptical and less willing. But there are also those that are unlikely to consider EVs suitable to travel to off-road rural areas.

For the average Nepali family, upgrading or purchasing a new car is no small decision. It happens in five years or more with resale

values being a big determinant. The EV boom may be reaching saturation.

Both NADA and NAIMA shows drove home the message that Nepal’s transport sector is on an electric fast-track, but the road ahead will be bumpy.

Soon after the shows, the glacial debris flow on the Bhote Kosi knocked out the Rasuwa-Kerung border with China, and earlier landslides had already blocked the Koradi checkpoint.

Manufacturers are now using

the less convenient Korala border in Mustang. BYD, Leapmotor and Omoda & Jaecoo have begun rerouting their vehicles to make up for delivery deadlines.

Although the distance from the capital to the Korala border (470km) is four times longer than from Rasuwa (128km) and Tatopani (112km), it is still considered faster and more cost effective than shipping via India using sea routes.

And then Nepal was engulfed in turmoil after the youth-led protests of 8-9 September and its aftermath. Many automobile showrooms around Thapathali including Tata, Hyundai and CG were vandalised and torched.

Sushila Karki leads a caretaker government till elections are held in March, and the unsettled situation will affect the economy and investment climate as well as the automobile sector. 🇳🇵

Arnav Upadhyay reviews automobiles and promotes road safety under the handle Casually Annoyed Driver on YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, and this monthly column Drive Line in Nepali Times.

nepalitimes.com

Go online for videos.

BYD Atto 3



Jaecoo J6



electric even better



YADEA M6
Rs175,000
90km
Graphene battery, passenger back rest



GOGORO CrossOver
Rs274,000
150km
Battery swap and go technology



NIU NQi-GT
Rs495,000
100km
Top speed 80km/h

travel a maximum of 60km a day. Notably, the Yadea E8S Pro is billed at 150km, and according to Koirala, is consistently getting at least 110km on Kathmandu roads.

Another concern is after-sales service, battery life, resale value, and availability of parts. He points to electric four-wheelers, and how markets for their resell and maintenance have grown over the last years as they became so prevalent.

Petrol bikes will retain their popularity, at least in the near future, because many people use them for inter-city travel to Chitwan or Pokhara, and 100cc bikes are still primary vehicles for most families.

A recent boost in interest in e-scooters can be explained by two consecutive auto shows, NADA and NAIMA in August (see DRIVE LINE, above). A new player in the e-scooter market is Bajaj which launched its Chetak model after NAIMA, and is conducting trial sales in the Valley.

Chetak hopes to win buyers over with its design. Says Rameshwor Ghimire at Bajaj: “We surveyed customers and found out that 80% of them were turned off with e-scooters because of how they looked and were built like toys.”

The Chetak has a fully metal body and looks no different from a petrol scooter, although there is a

slight learning curve -- especially with the abrupt braking. For the average Kathmandu user riding 20-25km a day, using an e-scooter saves Rs70,000 in fuel every year.

Ghimire says the other plus point is that the Chetak is about Rs60,000 cheaper than other Indian e-scooters with similar real range.

At NAIMA, another e-scooter import, Ather, launched the Rizta. Suryansh Vaidya, CEO of Ather’s parent company Vaidya Energy, was pleasantly surprised by how well the model did at the auto shows, given that it was a ‘family’ scooter close to Rs400k, optimised for storage space rather than performance.

“We’re having some trouble understanding the Nepali market,” admits Vaidya, “it isn’t clear why the most expensive variant would be the best selling, perhaps people are just willing to stretch their budgets when they buy.”

Generally, the scooters that do well in Nepal are more energy-efficient, ‘performance’ scooters. But Vaidya points to four factors holding back e-scooter adoption: charging infrastructure, resale value, servicing, and less trust in the battery.

One obstacle is that mechanics have to usually be trained from scratch. “We hire technicians right out of college, and start them on

a 1-2 month long training,” says Vaidya. He points out that for EVs, mechanics must know both the hardware and the software of the vehicle.

Meanwhile, e-bikes need a lot more engineering to give them more effective range at affordable prices to make them popular. At the moment, electric motorcycles are expensive and are sold mostly as sports bikes.

But there is hope. Says Vaidya: “That is the strategy Tesla went with early in their life as a company, and look at them now. With the state of new battery research and development, it may happen sooner than later.” 🇳🇵



Events

Kag Tihar

A day dedicated to crows, considered to be the messenger of Yamaraj, the god of death. The birds are worshipped, and treats are left out for them.

19 October



Kukur Tihar / Laxmi Puja

Man's best friend and the goddess of wealth share the same day again this year. Pets and community dogs, also revered as Yama Raj's gatekeepers, and cows are worshipped, garlanded and fed treats. Later in the evening, families pray for prosperity and the goddess of wealth, Laxmi, is summoned.

20 October



Mha Puja

Kipoo House is hosting Mha Puja followed by a full-course sit-down Newā feast. The participants will go on a walking tour of the old Kirtipur city for an hour before the ritual begins.

20 October, 3-8pm, Rs12,500 per person, Rs20,000 for two, Rs24,000 for three and Rs26,000 for four, Kipoo House, Kirtipur

Nhu Daya Bhintuna 1146

Nhu Daya Bhintuna or Newa New Year falls on Mha Puja every year, the day the Newa community worships the self. People elsewhere pay homage to Gobhardhan, an avatar of Lord Krishna.

22 October

Bhai-Bahini Tika

Tihar ends with a celebration of the bond between siblings. Traditionally, sisters pray for the longevity of their brother's life and protection from Yama, the harbinger of death.

23 October



Chhath

An important festival in Nepal's Terai plains dedicated to the Sun God and his sister Chhathi Maiya. The day ends with ritual bathing in rivers and ponds.

27 October

PhotoKTM6

Photo Kathmandu will arrive in a month, but an exciting lineup of learning and other programs are now open for registration. All engagements are designed for image-makers - both still and moving - to engage in experimental processes with a wide range of other disciplines. Visit photoktm.com for registration deadlines.



Music

Biratnagar Music Fest

An electrifying night of music, dance, and celebration featuring SWAR, Purna Rai and Dajubhai Haru, Biratnagar's finest bands, energetic dance groups, food stalls, and much more.

17 October, 3pm onwards, Rs300 (general), Rs1,000 (VIP), Jain Bhawan Ground, Main Road Biratnagar

Singing Bowl Session

Release stress, restore harmony, and awaken positive energy using Himalayan singing bowls, chakra balancing, and energy alignment. Each healing experience is personalised. Organised by Sound Healing.

21 October, 5:45am onwards, Boudhanath Stupa



Live with Swar

Experience soulful melodies, high-energy beats, and an atmosphere charged with excitement as indie/alternative/pop-rock band Swar takes the centrestage.

25 October, 9pm onwards, Rs1,000 (general), Rs1,500 (VIP), Club Nova, Thamel

Blackout Pride

Save the date, Blackout Pride is back with its 7th edition with extreme bands from India and Nepal.

18 October, 1:45pm, Purple Haze Rock Bar, 9847900555

John & The Locals

Celebrate 15 Years of KTM Live Entertainment as an electrifying night with performances by John and the Locals X Tribal Rain, with Hulaki Band set the

vibe.

29 October, 6pm onwards, Rs1,000

(general), Rs1,500 (VIP), Nova Club, Thamel



Getaway



Shinta Mani Mustang

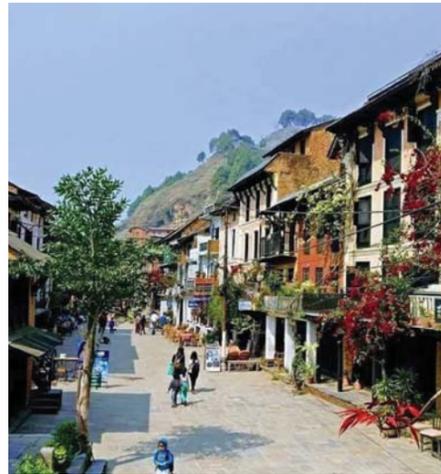
With elegantly designed interiors using local materials, hand-picked art and rich textiles, Shinta Mani creates an ambience of opulence and comfort for visitors.

Marpha, Mustang, 9802336386

The Fulbari Resort & Spa

The ultimate getaway in Pokhara, Fulbari is far from everything but at the centre of all that matters.

Pokhara (061) 432451



Bandipur Kaushi Inn

A small, rustic place to stay in the idyllic village of Bandipur, replete with cultural diversity and traditional architecture.

Bandipur (065) 520083

Peacock Guest House

Housed in a World Heritage Site, this three-story Newari-style building provides splendid views of the Dattatreya Square and the Bhimsenthana temple.

Bhaktapur (01) 6611829

Meghauri Serai

Relax with fine dining and wildlife safaris in Chitwan at Taj Safari's luxurious lodge.

Chitwan National Park, 9851218500



Dining

New Orleans

Offering a wide variety of western dishes that are scrumptious yet healthy. The rosemary chicken and hamburgers will draw visitors back again and again.

Jhamsikhel, 5522708

The Workshop Eatery

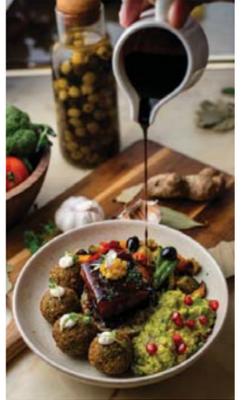
Forget about calories and indulge in an assortment of doughnuts, fries and burgers. The Nutella Doughnut and the Workshop BBQ Chicken Burger is a must.

Jhamsikhel, 9860431504

Nylgiri

Indulge in refined flavours and skyline views with an exclusive midweek and weekend offer. On Super Man Sundays, gentlemen receive 50% off all food and beverages while the same for ladies on Wonder Women Wednesdays.

Nylgiri, Aloft, Thamel, 9705568643



Vesper

What better way to spend the evening than indulging on freshly baked pizza, lasagnas and appetisers, and a wine to complement every dish.

Jhamsikhel (01) 5009240

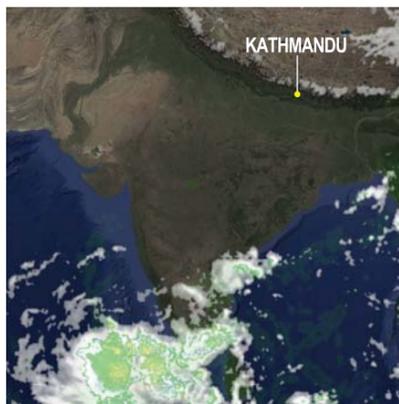


Kharayo Bakes

This bakery shop delivers gourmet brownies and other baked items at your doorstep. Their fudgy brownies are to die for.

9851132172

Weekend Weather



Autumn Tihar

Enjoy the autumnal weather as the wind direction changes and we get dry cooler wind from the southwest. But this also means the annual haze season is starting, and you will have noticed surface visibility falling in Kathmandu and the Terai. The minimum temperature will drop to 12°C-13°C in Kathmandu Valley, while the afternoons will remain in the high twenties. Some localised snow flurries along the trekking trails towards evening.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
27° 13°	27° 13°	27° 13°



Our Pick

Mike Flanagan's 2024 American fantasy drama *The Life of Chuck* based on Stephen King's 2020 novella of the same name follows significant moments in the life of Charles "Chuck" Krantz and occurs in reverse chronological order from his death to his childhood. The story begins at the last moments of 39-year-old Chuck's life—he lays in hospital dying of a brain tumor. Outside, the end of the world is happening at the same time. Stars Tom Hiddleston, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Karen Gillan, Mia Sara, Jacob Tremblay, and Mark Hamill, with Nick Offerman as narrator.

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 चिड्डा 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

Aditya Khare

Between Dasain rites and Tihar lights, the 21st edition of Surya Nepal Jazzmandu ended with a hearty deusi jam session at The Malla Hotel on Wednesday.

The festival began last week with a concert for a lively young crowd at St Xavier's School. Across town, the first bassline dropped at Jazz Upstairs with an impromptu ensemble as dusk fell over the city.

Over the intervening days, Jazzmanduites faced a delightful dilemma of choosing between a lineup of intimate venues, each sending waves of music across the valley.

"Because of the unrest, audiences from all over the world were inquiring and waiting for Jazzmandu," said Navin Chhetri, drummer of Cadenza Collective and co-founder of Jazzmandu. "The fact that they came was a testament to the power of music, and spoke of Nepal's resilience."

German artist Leona Berlin's R&B was the one to watch, while cymbals echoed during the Swiss quartet mohs. set with Nu Jazz and neo-soul. The enthralling and soulful ragas from Jonisha Poudel rose over Patan's brick courtyard as the sax joined in celebration.

"Jazz was born from struggle and social unrest – and what emerged was something beautiful.



LOCHAN GWAWALI

The healing power of music

The sound of jazz rose over Kathmandu, still shocked by September's death and destruction

In times like these, that spirit is something we can all aspire to," said Jason Amirhadji, a first-time visitor to Nepal.

Femke Smit and Mike Del Ferro from the Netherlands infused the air with the colourful, flowing spirit of Brazilian music. With Smit's voice and Del Ferro on the piano, the audience was swaying to the music.

"This is a synthesis between Nepali folk music and international jazz," explained flautist Roshan Putwar before hopping on stage to play a soulful set. Putwar has researched Dāphā music and performed across the world.

For the past weeks, the city's

pulse has been political: streets echoing with demands for change, there are still aftershocks of the upheaval that left the city weary and voices raw. And in the evenings, jazz acts too resonated with a quiet defiance. Musicians bent notes in response to the disquiet, and the audience imbibed it with eyes closed.

"It takes great courage to come to Nepal after what happened and with the artists' support we are able to revive unity and healing through music," says festival co-organiser Samir Chhetri, bassist of Cadenza Collective. "Music heals, and this festival brought positivity and

peace among all."

The Cadenza Collective shared the stage with Australian saxophonist and composer Nick Aggs, a Brisbane native and member of the fusion group Afro Dizzi Act in a mix called Afrodenza.

"It's a privilege to play with musicians all over the world, especially with Cadenza because I've known the boys since 1999," said Aggs.

On Saturday, musicians and fans gathered for an open-sky Jazz Bazaar at Gokarna Forest Resort. Brazilian singer and composer Catia Werneck's quartet got the audience on its feet to their

bossa nova and samba tunes. "It's the highest music festival in the world," Werneck beamed.

Every solo, every exchange between tabla and drums, sounded the amalgamation of east and the west here at the heart of Nepal. On Tuesday, the audience clapped and danced as a mix of artists performed songs like 'Blues Selo' and 'Shiva's Dance', at Yalamaya Kendra in Patan.

There were jazz fans who came to Kathmandu just for the music, like Namrata Raju from India. She said: "This was our second Jazzmandu. The artists were thoughtfully curated. There were people from all over the world, and the festival sets an example of music, peace and cultural appreciation."

Chethana Salian from Oman agreed: "This is my first time at Jazzmandu, and what a fabulous way to let your hair down with some foot-tapping music. Added a bunch of the artists to my morning playlist, especially Cadenza Collective."

Cadenza's Navin Chhetri sipped his beer, satisfied at the success of the festival: "Jazzmandu is becoming a tourism draw for musicians and audiences alike."

The Samundra band representing Nepal's Gandharva community opened the finale with rousing Tihar songs played on sarangi, flute and madal.

Joelle Loretan from Switzerland, another first-timer in Nepal, spoke of the positivity of Nepalis: "The people here are so welcoming and in good spirits despite what they have been through." 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Watch video and more pictures online.

ATHER

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Nepal's most prolific mountaineering clan

Family members of a Sherpa climber from Phortse have summited Mt Everest a total of 92 times

Dirgha Raj Upadhyaya

Scenic Phortse in the lap of Mt Everest is called 'the village of mountaineers' because just about every household has someone who has summited the world's highest mountain multiple times.

However, while the international mountaineers they assist to make it to the top go on to get fame and glory, their Sherpa guides from Phortse barely get a mention. It is a risky occupation for Nepal's high altitude guides, and every other family in this village has lost a member in Himalayan expeditions.

Sherpa guides are disproportionately more at risk on Mt Everest because they have to traverse the Khumbu Icefall many times during an expedition. One third of the over 300 climbers who have died climbing Mt Everest are Nepali high altitude guides and porters.

In 2014, 16 guides were killed when an avalanche fell on them while going up the treacherous Icefall carrying expedition gear. Then in 2015, the earthquake triggered a massive avalanche that killed 22 climbers at Base Camp. Many of the fatalities in both years were Sherpa guides from Phortse.

Despite the danger, Phortse honours and celebrates its climbers like heroes. One such is the late Nima Tshiring Sherpa, who was a porter and guide in the 1953 John Hunt expedition in which Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first to set foot on the world's highest summit.

Nima Tshiring and his eldest



Nima Tshiring's only daughter Mingma Yanjin and her husband Lhakpa Chhiri Sherpa.

son Pasang Gyalzen both reached 8,000m carrying expedition gear for the Hunt expedition in 1953.

Nima Tshiring had eight sons and a daughter and although he never submitted himself, most of them have climbed Mt Everest at least once. In fact, his children and grandchildren have been to the top

of Mt Everest a total of 81 times — a record for any family in Nepal.

"We were born in Phortse which is in the lap of Everest, our identity is Chomolungma," says one of his sons, Panuru, using the Sherpa name for the mountain. "In fact, I feel our entire family was born to climb Everest."



Nima Tshiring Sherpa with wife and children in Phortse. An unnamed Everest climber on right.

Phortse has a population of 350 people living in 95 households. Besides Nima Tshiring's clan, more than 75 of the inhabitants have climbed Everest, many of them multiple times.

Another one of Nima Tshiring's sons, Ngawang climbed Everest 11 times, his brother Mingma Dorje has summited 14 times, and another brother Ngati not only got to the top seven times, but was the first climber to reach the peak from the Chinese side and descend down the Nepal part of Mt Everest. Ngati was killed in an avalanche on Annapurna while climbing with an American expedition in 1993.

Panuru himself has reached the summit of Everest 16 times, and set up the Khumbu Climbing Centre in 2003 to train others in climbing techniques. Following in his footsteps was another brother Mingma Tshiring, who has been up 15 times and now lives in Colorado.

Nima Tshiring's only daughter Mingma Yanjin has also climbed Cho Oyu, Ama Dablam and other

Himalayan mountains. Her husband Lhakpa Chiri Sherpa has climbed Everest 11 times. Counting him, the total summits for the family would be 92. This number also does not include other Himalayan eight-thousanders besides Mt Everest that the family from Phortse has summited.

Nima Tshiring's youngest son is Danuru who has climbed Everest 16 times, and has been on top of North American peaks from his base in Colorado. He is giving Everest yet another try.

Even his grandchildren are following Nima Tshiring's footsteps up Everest. Panuru's son Lhakpa has climbed Everest from both sides and wants to break previous Everest records.

"It is a dangerous occupation, but the rewards in terms of fame and money are substantial," says Danuru. "One season's income is enough for a Phortse climber to support his family for a year. And we have Chomolungma to be thankful for." 🇳🇵

West meets East in the Himalaya

New book by Norwegian mountaineer examines the asymmetry in climbing expeditions, and much more

Kunda Dixit

Edmund Hillary once said that the Sherpa were the most researched, dissected and blood-taken ethnic group in the world.

Living below the highest mountains in the world, the trans-Himalayan traders were genetically adapted to high altitude, their culture spanning both sides of the border, and with average per capita income of the Khumbu five times that of the rest of Nepal.

But there are other less-known Sherpas in Nepal's periphery: in the Langtang, Barun and Rolwaling valleys.

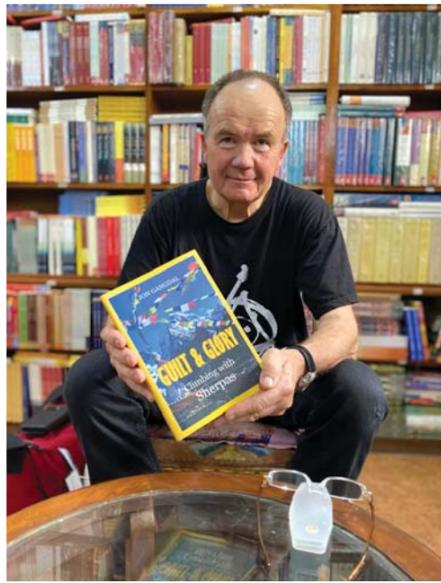
Norwegian mountaineer Jon Gangdal's latest book, *Guilt & Glory: Climbing with Sherpas* is about his deep personal and four-decade long association with his climbing partners from Rolwaling.

Guilt & Glory reads more like Gangdal's memoir and the mountains he has climbed, but it is also a tribute to the selfless friendship with fellow climbers from Nepal. It also exposes the inherently asymmetric relationship between expeditions and their employees in the Himalaya.

Earlier mountaineering narratives overlooked the role of Nepal's climbing guides in putting their clients on summits. But in recent years there has been increasing recognition that most expeditions would just not be possible without them.

SUMMIT SUPPORT

And that is where Gangdal's book fits in: between the glory of a successful summit and guilt about not giving due credit to the sacrifice and professionalism of a people whose surname and ethnicity is now a synonym for support staff of G-7 Summits.



BIDUR DONGOL

After failure and tragedy on a 1994 expedition on Everest West Ridge in which his climbing partner Mingma Norbu was killed in an avalanche, Gangdal is tormented by guilt and supports his widow Ang Sona and her family.

'The Art of Succeeding When You Have Failed' was the title of his lecture series in which Gangdal became an outspoken critic of military-style assaults on Himalayan peaks, and self-seeking climbers on them.

In a comment he wrote for Nepali Times in #704 in 2014 after an avalanche killed 16 Nepali guides on the Khumbu Icefall, he argued that equality and safety of climbing Sherpas could only happen 'if we turn the whole Everest pyramid upside down'.

He wrote: 'We can feel nothing but grief

and pain with the families of the brave boys who gave their lives for ... for what? For the glory of their nation, like at war? For the glory of their attention-seeking sahibs who have had the highest mountains in the world as their playground for more than a century? Or for what we all have to do: our daily duty to feed ourselves and our families.'

Guilt & Glory expands on that theme, weaving in his climbing adventures. He realises that the egalitarian Norwegian approach in decision-making does not work in the East where the prevalent notion is that a leader should lead. Gangdal notes that with a few tweaks, the twin of East and West can indeed meet.

In 1996 on the north face of Everest while a major tragedy was unfolding on the Nepal side, Gangdal tries to 'play Sherpa' hauling twice the load of his Sherpa companions and is knocked out with exhaustion and has to abandon the climb.

Climbers have often justified not helping fellow climbers in distress in the Death Zone saying that ethics at sea level do not apply at eight thousand metres high on a mountain.

Foreign climbers are on top of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and in a monastery below Manaslu, Gangdal once held a long one-sided discussion with the abbot on why people's basic needs need to be met before higher aspirations can be pursued.

The asymmetry in the relation between sahibs and porters is less glaring than it used to be. Many mountaineers have struck life-long friendships with bonds with their employees and their families in Nepal. And, as Gangdal writes, 'Education ... has helped reduce the asymmetry between the Sherpa people and us foreign climbers.'

Unlike other books about Himalayan

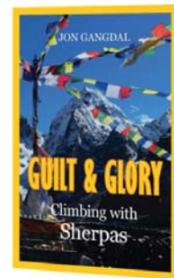
mountaineering this one focuses on the Rolwaling, the less visited and wilder valley in the shadow of Gauri Shankar, and protected by the goddess Tseringma.

Rolwaling also has a strong Norwegian connection, it is where Arne Næss who coined the term 'deep ecology', and mountaineer and eco-philosopher Sigmund Kvaløy did their research and exploration in 1971.

There is one interesting tidbit with contemporary non-mountaineering relevance from *Guilt & Glory*: Næss and Kvaløy's Rolwaling research was bankrolled by Arne's brother Erling Dekke Næss, a Norwegian shipping magnate.

But Rolwaling was a restricted area in those days because of Khampa activity, and the Norwegians approached Prince Gyanendra who granted them permission in return for setting up the Royal Nepal Shipping Corporation. Gyanendra became chair of that controversial company and Erling Næss was adviser.

Guilt & Glory is not just about mountaineering, and is sprinkled with anecdotes and encounters with everything from Maoists to yetis. It is written with compassion and a deep respect for Nepal and its people. 🇳🇵



Guilt & Glory
Climbing with Sherpas
by Jon Gangdal
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BARTŁOMIEJ PAWLIKOWSKI / RED BULL CONTENT POOL

The man who skied down Everest

Interview with Andrzej Bargiel who became the first to ski down Mt Everest without oxygen

Nepali Times: You just climbed Mt Everest without oxygen and then skied down the mountain. How does one even train for something like that?

Andrzej Bargiel: What made skiing down Everest possible was all the years of experience I've gained in high-altitude mountains. Spending a lot of time in the high mountains helps me read the snow, the conditions, and potential hazards. I need to ski often, especially in steep and exposed terrain, so that it becomes a place where I feel completely at home.

I also climb regularly, I am an IFMGA mountain guide. I also run, ride a bike, and work out in the gym. Like in any endurance sport, I have to prepare my body for the demands of an expedition.

What motivated you to do Everest?

This was actually my third attempt on Everest. After many years of ski mountaineering and racing, I felt it would be great to use that experience to take on a meaningful project in the Himalaya. It's about exploring what's really possible, testing my limits, and seeing how far I can go. I was inspired by people like Davo Karničar, Fredrik Ericsson, and Hans Kammerlander, who showed that skiing in the high mountains can truly be done.

What do you have to be most careful about when skiing at such high altitude?

You really have to manage your energy well, because you need to be ready to spend many hours at very high altitude — even above 8,000 metres. Risk management is essential. You have to read the signals nature gives you and make the right decisions, choosing safe moments to move. The dangers are always there: avalanches, crevasses, extreme fatigue, and exposed terrain, so you have to stay fully aware and focused. Safety comes first, always. You also need to stay open to changing your plans, because in the mountains, things don't always go the way you expect.

What was your favourite part this time?

The moment I remember most fondly was reaching the summit — and that first stretch just below the top, when I clicked into my skis and started moving down through surprisingly nice snow. It felt smooth and natural, a kind of free, easy glide down toward the Hillary Step. I could feel the movement, the flow, and at the same time this awareness that I was skiing from the highest point on Earth. It was just a really good feeling.

The Icefall was another special moment. I felt from a skier's point of view that it really worked. I could make my turns, and the descent itself was fun, technical, but a beautiful one too — full of variety, weaving through ice towers

and seracs that looked incredible in the sunlight. It was challenging, but also just pure joy.

And what was most challenging?

The hardest moment came on 14 September, during our first summit push attempt. We were breaking trail in deep snow and reached the South Col in the evening. I already knew we wouldn't be going higher that night, so I decided to stay there, to use the climb to acclimatise.

But after that attempt failed, the team completely lost faith that the project could still succeed. Almost everyone started packing up, convinced it was over, nobody thought that the snow would stabilise enough.

I skied down from the Col early the next morning in really good conditions, while the rest of the team descended on foot. Rebuilding belief within the team that it could still be done was the toughest part, mentally. It took me several days to bring that energy and motivation back, to make everyone believe again that we could try once more.

What was your support crew like?

I want to thank the whole team — all team members from Poland, all those who contributed to the project, all the sponsors, and the Seven Summit Treks crew, especially Dawa Sherpa, who had the courage to go to the top with me.

In the end, his courage made it possible. Doing it alone would have been almost impossible. With him there, I felt safe, and that made all the difference.

What potential for skiing do you see in the Himalaya?

Huge. There's massive potential here both for ski touring and for a more recreational form of skiing. In the Himalaya, there are so many mountains you can ski from, and they don't have to be eight-thousanders.

There is an incredible amount of snow even in the lower valleys during the winter, which makes it a really interesting place for skiing. You can find great powder and enjoy long, wide runs.

The key, I think, is to keep developing local guiding structures. There should be more certified guides in Nepal, Sherpas gaining guiding qualifications, and a proper professional rescue service. That would definitely increase the sense of safety for both skiers and tourists coming to the mountains.

I'd love to come back to the Himalayas one winter just to ski in those lower parts — in deep snow, on much longer and wider skis — that would be pure pleasure. At those lower altitudes, the fun can be so much greater, with a more relaxed, freeride kind of feeling.

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TEARS IN HEAVEN:
Sumitra Mahat's brother,
Umesh, was killed when
the police opened fire on
protesters on 9 September.



SUMAN NEPALI

No Bhai Tika for families of youth killed in the GenZ protests

words still ring in her ears, and they haunt Ayusha. Her posts on social media hold the police and previous administration accountable, demanding that the new government focus on justice and not festivities.

While the rest of Nepal celebrates Dasain, Tihar and Chhath, the families of those killed in the GenZ protests are making rounds of Singha Darbar and Baluwatar seeking justice.

They want information about who gave the orders and who executed those orders to shoot students point blank in the head and chest with live bullets from automatic weapons.

Families of the victims say their children were purposefully targeted and are angry that the investigation is too slow, and may absolve the culprits.

Sumitra Mahat is making rounds of government offices in Kathmandu. She says: "We have been going round and round in circles for a month from one office to another. No one listens to our demands for justice. We want the perpetrators punished, but it feels like they are dragging their feet." 🇳🇵

UMESH MAHAT

On the same day that he got his work visa for the UAE, 20-year-old Umesh Mahat was shot at the Gaushala intersection.

Umesh's sister Sumitra, 29, is the eldest of four siblings. Their parents are still in their hometown, Sindhupalchok.

"Our family's happiness has been snatched, there is a gaping hole that cannot be filled. There

is no Bhai Tika this year," says a tearful Sumitra.

Umesh was fun-loving, always respectful and willing to help others. He got along with everyone in the family, and was the glue that held it together. He was talented academically, and loved to play football.

Sumitra's 10-year-old son is still in shock, not quite comprehending the enormity of the

loss of his uncle.

Members of the family say that it is pointless living in a country that kills its own. Umesh has been declared a martyr, but Sumitra and the family want those who ordered shots to be fired to be held responsible.

"He used to tell me not to worry, that he is there and will always take care of the family," recalls Sumitra. "He is gone forever."

GAURAV JOSHI

Gaurav Joshi, 27, was also killed in the protests. His sister Ayusha has been posting videos and raising her voice through social media. She recalls the last conversation she had with her brother where he told her he was coming home soon after the curfew was imposed on 8 September.

Minutes later, he had been shot outside Parliament. His last




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