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## Election countdown: 4 MORE MONTHS

Sonia Awale

Prime Minister Sushila Karki may look calm, composed and unruffled, but with elections only four months away, she faces mounting pressure from all directions.

Despite reiterating that her only agenda is to hold polls on 5 March 2026, there are distractions and detractors. The Supreme Court has rescinded her decision to recall ambassadors, industrialists whose electricity has been cut off are on warpath.

This is why in the past week, she convened the first meeting between GenZ and the political parties, consulted with Nepal-based ambassadors, met the chief ministers of all seven provinces, met the chiefs of security agencies, and invited editors from

the mainstream press to Baluwatar.

Her message to all of them: my core priority is elections. But the message she got from most interlocutors: current conditions need to improve if elections are to be free, fair and peaceful.

The biggest obstacle to credible elections is that the three main parties are convinced that they will be trounced, and are too busy resolving bitter internal power struggles. The RSP could lead the charge, but with its leader in jail the party is floundering.

New parties are being formed right up to the deadline. The newly-formed GenZ Front led by Rakshya Bam appears to be the precursor to a new party. But there is disagreement within the youth movement as well as in the established parties (as well as between them) on the elections themselves.

The prime minister comes across as someone genuinely interested in putting the country back on the right track, and her remarks are candid and not rehearsed. She said at one point: "Why don't the party leaders just remove themselves, and make way for new faces?"

It is widely believed that Karki's name was first proposed by Kathmandu mayor Balen Shah to the GenZ whose followers then voted for her on Discord.

Shah sees himself as a kingmaker, and is irked that the government does not listen to him. This week he shot off an abusive social media post at midnight that he immediately deleted, lashing out at India, the US and China as well as the three main parties. He has now said he is not going to stand in elections, and will complete his mayoral term. Karki and Shah have met several times in the past month, and the prime minister denied any disagreement: "I regard him as my son, and he sees me as an elder sister."

She called her government a mediator between GenZ groups and political parties, and urged businessman Durga Prasai, who has been threatening protests to

reinstate a Hindu monarchy, to contest the election.

Karki justified the recall of ambassadors, saying it was necessary because they were political appointees who had been bad-mouthing her caretaker government and were corrupt.

In front of the editors, Karki confronted her ministers about whether they had electoral ambitions. Energy and Infrastructure Minister Kulman Ghising stared unsmiling at his notes. Ghising is said to be in talks with the RSP to find a way for his Ujjalo Party to work together.

The Prime Minister appears not only committed to elections, but convinced that security, infrastructure, budget, participation, registration of candidates and voters are in place to make it happen. She has no time to think of what will happen if elections do not happen. The scenario is quite unthinkable: if elections are postponed till May, the interim government's mandate expires, Parliament is reinstated.

This is the scenario K P Oli and his UML seem to be counting on, but which most analysts say will lead the country into a long dark tunnel of extended instability. 🇳🇵



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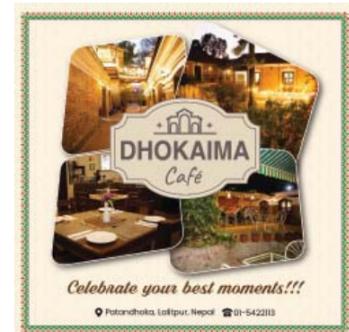


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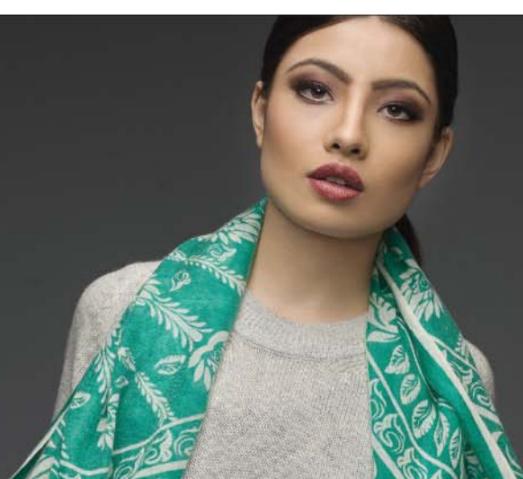
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# Development finance must shift away from aid

National development banks, sovereign wealth funds, debt swaps, and PPP can foster sustainable investment and help reduce energy poverty.

Justin Yifu Lin and Yan Wang

Traditional donors have sharply scaled back their aid commitments to developing countries over the past year. Some, like the United States, have virtually eliminated their aid programs. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), official development assistance (ODA) from member countries declined by 7.1% in 2024, its first annual drop in six years.

This trend was not limited to a few major donors. Of the 33 members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), 22 slashed their aid budgets, and only four countries met the United Nations' target of allocating 0.7% of GNI to ODA.

The outlook for the coming year offers little hope for improvement, as major DAC donors have announced additional cuts. Most notably, US President Donald Trump's administration has suspended most foreign aid and dismantled the Agency for International Development (USAID), which dispersed most US government aid dollars.

Meanwhile, the United Kingdom plans to reduce aid spending from 0.5% of GNI to 0.3% by 2027. Similar retrenchment across Europe and North America is reshaping international assistance, disrupting humanitarian and climate-related programs, and creating financing gaps in critical sectors such as health, education, and clean energy.

As reliance on aid becomes untenable, the international community must mobilise



WHO NEPAL

a broader array of financing sources to advance green and sustainable growth. This includes national development banks, industrial investment funds, sovereign wealth funds, and institutional investment in public markets, as well as innovative mechanisms such as debt swaps and public-private partnerships (PPPs). These tools can unlock domestic resources, attract long-term investors, and create synergies between public goals and private capital.

Equity investment offers a promising avenue for engaging non-traditional development partners while reducing developing countries' dependence on debt. Government investment funds, public and

private financial institutions, and other private actors can participate by taking equity stakes in public enterprises, financing infrastructure projects, or joining PPPs. Such participation not only alleviates debt burdens but also improves the performance and management of public assets.

As government-funded, mission-driven institutions, public development banks (PDBs) have the potential to provide patient capital for green and sustainable investment in emerging and developing economies (EMDEs). Building on the pioneering database of public development and financial institutions created by the Institute of New Structural Economics at Peking University,

future research can identify effective ways to harness these institutions to fuel low-carbon growth.

## GREEN TRANSITION

Responding to growing demand from the Global South, development partners have adopted an "entire value chain" approach to the green transition in recent years. This strategy facilitates transfers of low-carbon technologies, diffusion of digital innovations, and industrial modernisation, enabling countries in China's BRI to accelerate their shift toward sustainable development.

To meet the evolving challenges of development finance, both traditional and non-traditional donors and creditors should move beyond aid and adopt multidimensional strategies that combine trade, investment, infrastructure, green technology, and digital connectivity to support EMDEs.

To be sure, there have been missteps along the way. China's financing of coal-fired power plants before 2021, for example, had slowed reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. But these outcomes, once recognised as policy errors, can help strengthen accountability and foster self-correcting mechanisms within the international development ecosystem. Through ongoing learning and adaptation, global partners can build a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable framework for development finance. © Project Syndicate

Justin Yifu Lin is the honorary dean of the National School of Development and director of the Institute of New Structural Economics at Peking University. Yan Wang is Senior Academic Researcher at Boston University's Global Development Policy Center.

## Trending Online

### Air pollution killing seasons

by Nepali Times

The winter air pollution season started early this year with emissions, Diwali firecrackers and the burning of crop residue making the air unbreathable across north India, before rains last week brought brief respite. Pollution and domestic emissions killed 41,300 Nepalis in 2023 according to the State of Global Air 2025 report. Details at nepalitimes.com.

Most reached and shared on Facebook



### Artful devotion

by Sudiksha Tuladhar

Twenty-two Bhaktapur artists pay homage to faith, myth and heritage in meticulous paubha paintings at the ongoing exhibition Masters of Devotion at Kathmandu Art Gallery in Baber Mahal Revisited. Review on our website.

Most popular on X



### Nepal needs animal law

by Julie Palais and Varnika Singh

Even when individuals attempt to report animal cruelty, the police do not take it seriously unless humans are directly affected. Complaints are neglected. Nepal needs to enact and enforce animal law. More on our website.

Most commented

### Who gets to recruit for Malaysia

by Upasana Khadka

On 27 October, Malaysia's Foreign Ministry informed five countries including Nepal to 'rationalise the number of licensed private recruitment agencies permitted to facilitate recruitment and placement of workers to Malaysia'. This risks punishing good migration actors. Updates at nepalitimes.com.

Most visited online page

## Letters

### ANIMAL RIGHTS

The older generation are the ones to blame ('Nepal needs to enact and enforce animal law', Julie Palais and Varnika Singh, nepalitimes.com). Go into any neighbourhood in Nepal and see how the older generations treat stray dogs. You see a true reflection of a lack of education and empathy. The younger generation is more empathetic to animals.

Subarna Upreti

We worship animals for a day to bribe the Gods and abuse them for the remainder of the year. Laws aren't going to change anything to help animals unless the Nepali people themselves don't change.

Subash Shrestha

Those who misbehave with

animals must face strict legal action, and teams must be circulated nationwide to ensure that no animal is mistreated.

Lekha Koirala

A huge amount of important work is needed to ensure our animals are treated fairly.

Eileen Weintraub

### DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

There is still a popular opinion that aid is insufficient and will never compensate for colonial greed. ('Development finance must shift away from aid', Justin Yifu Lin and Yan Wang, nepalitimes.com)

Tony Jones

### UNDP

Thanks UNDP Nepal for your outstanding contributions in the fields of health, education and rural infrastructure development in Nepal ('Think locally, invest locally', Bidhya Rai, #1283). Pity the new Nepali sanghis who

think INGOs are just here to spread Christianity and foment social disharmony.

AirlineGuy

### AIR POLLUTION

I lived in Nepal for many years. One of the reasons I left was pollution ('Air pollution killing season starts early', #1283). I had constant respiratory problems. I miss the days when there were few cars, the valley was green, walking was wonderful in the city. It could have been so different with careful city planning. I think it is too late for change.

Margaret Kerr

### RATO MATSYENDRANATH

It is amazing to think that this celebration we see here in the Valley also has roots that stretch across borders ('Divine chariot', Sangya Lamsal, nepalitimes.com). It is a powerful example of how cultural heritage can transcend national boundaries.

Ayushma Budhathoki

## Quotes



**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**  
The arson, loot and violence during GenZ protests sent a message around that world that Nepal was not safe for travel. But tourists say it is business as usual and request others to visit.



**Gus Ferguson @xander\_fero**  
The message that was sent around the World is that Nepali Armed Police literally got away with Murdering 22 innocent children.



**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**  
On the 60th anniversary of @UNDPNepal, uplifting story of how rural Nepalis have developed. It is tantalising to imagine how much more progress Nepal would have made if their work could be replicated nationwide and upscaled to the state-level.



**pigreen1 @pigreen1**  
Has the UNDP programme over six decades ever been seriously evaluated to assess its real impact - if any? It would be interesting to know.

## Online Package



### LOVE OF LAPSI

The beloved lapsi comes in many forms, such as in umami titaura and sweet or spicy pickle. Watch our YouTube video about how lapsi ko achar is prepared from start to finish, as it is peeled, boiled in a sugary syrup and spiced to perfection.



### BACK TO SCHOOL

Inspiring grandmothers break barriers to enroll in school to achieve lifelong dreams of getting an education. Their journey paves the way for a brighter future. Subscribe to our YouTube for multimedia content.

## 1,000 Words



**NO MEN LEFT OUT:** The Maoist-Centre, Unified Socialists and eight other leftist parties united on Wednesday to form the Nepal Communist Party with Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Madhav Kumar Nepal and Jhalnath Khanal at the helm. All three men are almost 70, have been prime minister at least once and have been leading political figures for the past 30 years. There were no young cadres or women on stage during the inaugural gala at Bhrikuti Mandap in Kathmandu this week.



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# Henry Barclay Todd, 80

Larger than life mountaineer and leader of Himalayan expeditions dies

Billi Berling

Climber, expedition leader and later a supplier of bottled oxygen to Himalayan mountaineers, Henry Barclay Todd died on 3 November 2025 in his favourite place on earth, Kathmandu.

Todd was larger than life, a metaphor often used, yet it could not be more fitting. Standing nearly 2m tall, and possessing an unshakeable will, he lived life on a grand scale, both in body and spirit.

Todd was a pillar in the Himalayan climbing community, supporting many mountaineers across Nepal and Pakistan, making it possible for them to fulfil the dream of standing on the world's highest peaks. He believed deeply in the strength, skill, and potential of the Sherpa people, and offered them opportunities that might otherwise have remained out of reach.

"Thank you, Henry. Your trust changed my life. Rest in peace, my leader, my teacher, my friend," said Dorjee Gyelzen Sherpa in his tribute.

Born in 1945 to Royal Air Force officer Henry Todd and May Todd of the Women's Royal Air Force, Henry spent his early years in Singapore. He led a lively childhood with his two brothers, far removed from the mountains that would later define his path.

A gifted swimmer like his father, Henry never pursued the



sport professionally. Instead, after returning to Dundee as a teenager and attending seven different schools, he set off for London, where he began working for an insurance company before finding his true calling in adventure.

Henry Todd first came to Nepal in the mid-1980s and made his first attempt on Ama Dablam in 1987, an expedition that marked the beginning of an extraordinary and colourful climbing career.

The Himalayan Database lists 61 expeditions that he led in Nepal alone — there were more in the Karakoram, Argentina and the Alps.

But Todd would joyfully say that a few hard Scottish ascents held a more personal meaning to him than even the greatest Himalayan summits.

Over the decades, he crossed paths with many legendary climbers like Anatoli Boukreev, Jerzy Kukuczka, Doug Scott and Chris

Bonington as well as celebrities including members of Pink Floyd and Nobel Prize laureates whom he befriended.

He had a gift to never name-drop, but would simply mention that he had had lunch with Minnie Driver (niece of his long-time friend Andra) or that he had bought his first car from Donald Sutherland. For Todd, these were not bragging rights, they were simply part of the colourful

tapestry of his life.

Todd's life was filled with extraordinary experiences from surviving plane crashes, avalanches and earthquakes to quietly solving countless problems, which was one of his favourite past-times. His hands, famously large and steady, were always ready to help whether in the chaos of the mountains or the calm of a base camp.

With his sharp sense of humour and the beloved exclamation "Whoopie!", he could bring lightness even to the toughest moments. He never tired of taking on challenges or helping when someone was in need, and he enriched so many people's lives with his endless stories.

His legacy is immense. He helped build the human backbone of Himalayan climbing, enabling generations of climbers to test themselves in the world's highest places. With his passing, an era of bold, spirited Himalayan guiding has come to a close.

Todd survived by a loving family, many close friends and a global community of climbers and Sherpas who will never forget him and his endless tales.

His family said in a statement: 'Henry's strength, warmth and unyielding belief in others will live on far above the clouds. He was indestructible in our eyes and in our hearts, he always will be.'

There will be a memorial service at Pashupati Temple in Kathmandu on 8 November 2025 around lunchtime. 🇳🇵

## NMB BANK एनएमबि बैंक

### 10 climbers killed

Cyclone Montha hit Nepal on 27 October during the peak of the trekking and climbing season, and 10 people have been killed in avalanches and accidents on Nepal's mountains. Seven were killed on Dolma Khang, one Korean climber died on Himlung and two French mountaineers died earlier on Ama Dablam. Eight climbers injured in a deadly avalanche on Dolma Khang in Dolakha were airlifted to Kathmandu. Thousands of trekkers were stranded in Annapurna, Manaslu and Khumbu after Montha dumped nearly 1m of snow last week.



### Airbus symposium

Over 100 aviation professionals attended the Airbus Helicopters symposium on safety and services in Kathmandu on 31 October hosted jointly with CAAN. The event covered maintenance, safety systems, and accident prevention with sessions on global safety vision, data monitoring and customer testimonials.

### Visa centre

South Korea plans to launch a visa centre in Nepal for migrant workers. Ambassador Park Tae-young has also requested the GoN to utilise the skills of Korea returnees and pledged to facilitate Korean investments. Over 110,000 Nepalis have migrated to Korea since 2008, with 14,224 just last year.



### Leapmotor sells >70,000

Leapmotor sold over 70,289 vehicles in October 2025. This marks an 84% year-on-year increase and eight consecutive months of top sales among Chinese EV startups. In Nepal, Leapmotor offers the T03 (Rs2.8 million), B10 (Rs5.7 million), C10 (Rs6.5 million).

### IN-SPAN applications

India-Nepal Startup Partnership Network (IN-SPAN) invites Nepali entrepreneurs to apply by 15 November for an eight-week funded program at IIT Madras Pravartak with training, mentorship and internships available for scalable ventures.

### Tourism up

Nepal's tourism has picked up to pre-pandemic levels despite global publicity of the violent unrest. October saw nearly 150,000 visitors, taking the 2025 total to nearly 1 million. The Annapurna Conservation Area saw a record number of visitors this autumn with both domestic and foreign tourists.

Nepal collected over Rs255 million in royalties from 1,450 climbers on 59 peaks this autumn. Ama Dablam saw 436 climbers, followed by Manaslu at 374, Himlung at 186 and four for Everest. Trekkers came from 83 countries.

### Ncell 4G towers

Ncell activated 20 new 4G towers in 10 days across the Madhes, Bagmati and Koshi provinces. Locations are in Bara, Parsa, and Sunsari. The company is planning to install 170 more over the next two months. 4G is now available in all 77 districts and for 95% of the population.

### Aloft Road to Give

Aloft Kathmandu organised its 11<sup>th</sup> Road to Give Charity Fund Session at Naxal with a walkathon. Funds collected were donated to Manjushree Children's Home and Shree Rescue Animal Welfare.

### Driving licenses

Driving license printing resumed on 3 November after a pause due to fire damage during the GenZ movement. Security Printing Center will produce 500 licenses daily. These come with a new QR code, replacing chips. Around 2.5 million licenses are pending.



### Miteri Bridge

Reconstruction of the Miteri Bridge connecting Nepal and China at Rasuwagadi, swept away by floods in mid-July, is nearly complete and will be back in operation next month. The loss of the bridge has so far caused an estimated Rs15 billion revenue loss.

### Samsung S25 FE

Samsung Nepal launched the Galaxy S25 FE at Rs99,999 (8GB/256GB) marketed at young professionals. It comes with a 4,900mAh battery, 45W charging and 6.7-inch AMOLED display. It includes AI features such as personalised insights, ProVisual Engine for photo and video editing, and Generative Edit. Zero percent interest EMI plans are available via Samsung Insta Finance.

### E-taxi service center

Sipradi Trading opened a service center for Tata Xpres-T electric taxis in Bhaktapur, the third location after Balkumari and Gongabu. Fast chargers also operate in Ekantakuna, and Tikathali. One-year free insurance, three-year free servicing and 160,000km battery/motor warranty are available when buying the Xpres-T.

### Land clearance

KMC and KVDA have given notice to clear encroached government land along the Dhobi Khola corridor by 7 November. If not vacated, dozers will be used to demolish structures. Encroachments include houses and businesses. Minister Kulman Ghising directed immediate action after a task force report.

### Chetak in Mustang

Auto vlogger Dhiren Man Shrestha rode to Lo Manthang and the Korala border at 4660m, on the Bajaj Chetak electric scooter to prove its ruggedness. "I never imagined an electric scooter could handle such extreme conditions," said Shrestha. The Chetak has a range of 150km and starts at Rs325,000.



### Bajaj Pulsar NPL

Bajaj Pulsar is the Two Wheeler Partner for the second Nepal Premier League after CAN and the Golchha Group signed an agreement on 30 October. The batsman with the most runs, the bowler with the most wickets and the best emerging player will win Pulsar N160s. The NPL starts 1 November.

# Deadly autumn in Himalayan climbing

Storms, delays in rescue permits, and new uncharted peaks increase mountaineering risk this season

Vishad Raj Onta

The autumn mountaineering season is not over yet, and already there have been 12 fatalities on Himalayan peaks in Nepal.

Of the 1,450 climbing permits issued, 436 were for Mt Ama Dablam (6,812m), 374 for Mt Manaslu (8,163m) and 186 for Himlung Himal (7,126m). There were deaths on all three mountains.

The death of two French climbers on Ama Dablam happened before unseasonal blizzards hit the mountains. But Cyclone Montha from the Bay of Bengal brought on high winds and up to 1m of snow in the peak trekking and mountaineering season.

This increased avalanche conditions, and made helicopter evacuation of stranded and injured climbers difficult. Lower down the mountains, more than 1,000 trekkers from Nepal and around the world were stuck in the Annapurnas, Manaslu circuit and the Khumbu.

However, there have also been allegations that it was not just the weather that delayed rescues. Multiple levels of bureaucracy and the need for flight permits to restricted areas like Manang and Manaslu critically delayed evacuation flights.

Italian climbers Farronato Stefano and Caputo Alessandro were found dead in their tent at



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Panbari Himal Camp I (6,887m) in the Manaslu area. They had been trapped by heavy snowfall since 28 October, and their bodies were found on 4 November by a team from the expedition organisers, Sherpa Alpine Trekking Service. The team was made up of high level mountain guides and expedition leader Valter Perlino.

The team had been climbing to Camp III but decided to descend to base camp because of thrombosis in Perlino's left foot. The two climbers who would eventually get trapped decided to break at Camp I, a decision that would prove fatal after the projected six-day snowfall arrived two days early.

"They were sleeping in a tent and were buried under 2.5 metres of compacted snow. It happened during the night between Thursday

and Friday. While they were sleeping, absurd," said Perlino.

A deadly incident took place the morning of 3 November, when five foreigners and two Nepalis died in an avalanche on Yalung Ri at 5,630m in the Rolwaling. They were part of a larger group of 15 that were acclimatising for an attempt on the nearby Dolma Khang (6,332m).

Local authorities in Gauri Shankar Conservation Area say calls were immediately made to helicopter companies as well as various ministries in Kathmandu that have to issue permits to fly to the region bordering China.

But the permits for rescue flights to Rolwaling Valley were delayed by eight hours. Rescue flights in these areas require permission from the Ministry of Tourism, the

Ministry of Defence, the Home Ministry, and the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN). Experts say this should be exempted in emergencies when time is of the essence. CAAN spokesperson Pratap Babu Tiwari claimed to not know of the avalanche on Yalung Ri and deflected questions to the permission department.

There was a similar tragedy on Himlung Himal (pictured) in Manang as well. Australian Chin-Tark Chan, 49, was climbing with 8K Expeditions and fell ill on 27 October at about 6,800m, developing snow blindness and loss of mobility. The guides immediately called the US insurance company Global Rescue for authorisation of a longline rescue.

Global Rescue refused, saying

a rescue at that height would violate Nepal's aviation rules and put the pilot at unacceptable risk. They asked the guides to transport Chan to Camp III at 6,400m to a permitted altitude. Seeing it was a life-or-death situation for its client, 8K called in an aerial rescue anyway, but the helicopter could not land due to bad weather. Chan died slightly below Camp 3 on 29 October.

Global Rescue said in a statement that it was ready to send in a helicopter after Chan had been transported to Camp III, but several hours were lost for that attempt, and the weather did not get better in the next few days.

To underscore just how dangerous helicopter rescues in the Himalaya can be in bad weather, a chopper from Altitude Air skidded off the helipad at Lobuche below Mt Everest while trying to rescue trekkers in whiteout conditions.

CAAN announced a ban on flights during blizzards or dense fog. While rescue missions are often heroic and courageous, they should not be foolhardy if conditions are unsafe and the risk to pilots and rescuers is too high. This autumn was a lesson for future expeditions and for the Nepal government.

The Italian duo on Panbari were caught out by snow that arrived two days ahead of schedule, but the group on Yalung Ri should have postponed their ascent after multiple warnings from the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology to avoid high altitudes. 🇳🇵

## ग्लोबल आइएमईको भर, आफ्नै कार र घर

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स्थिर ब्याज दर  
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वार्षिक ब्याजदरबाट सुरु हुने

फ्लोटिंग ब्याजदर  
**६.८%**  
वार्षिक ब्याजदरबाट सुरु हुने  
(रिस्क प्रिगिचम सहित)

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**६.८%**  
वार्षिक ब्याजदरबाट सुरु हुने  
(रिस्क प्रिगिचम सहित)

\*यो योजना सीमित अवधिको लागि मात्र।  
\*सर्तिसु लागू हुनेछ

# The saga of Nepal Jayna

Travelling at 15km per hour in the eastern Tarai for

Dan Edwards

Prime Minister Juddha Shamsheer Rana built the NJJR probably to transport logs cut on his forested birta land north of Janakpur to sell in India. The 2'6" narrow-gauge railway extended north from Jaynagar in India, 29km to Janakpur and another 22km to Bhutaha/Bijalpura. It cost 680,000 Indian rupees to build, and opened for business in December 1937.

The Nepali engineer in charge of construction was Capt Tilak Bahadur Rayamajhi, who in 1908 was one of the first Nepalis to receive a civil engineering degree in India.

After 1950, the line from Janakpur to Bhutaha had little commercial value and was out of service.

Until the late 1970s, there were no proper motorable roads connecting Dhanusha and Mahottari districts with India. The NJJR was the only transportation alternative for people who had to otherwise go on foot, bicycle or ox carts to India.

The NJJR also played an important role in religious tourism, as hundreds of thousands Indian pilgrims visited Janakpur annually to participate in the Bibaha Panchami, Rama Navami, and Janaki Navami. For the Bihari peasant bound for Janaki Mandir in 1955, sitting on the roof of a slow-moving train was a luxury compared to trudging 29km on foot from the Indian border.

Rama and Seeta, the railway's first two appropriately named locomotives, were built in Berlin in 1936. In view of the rising power of Adolf Hitler's Germany at that time, was Prime Minister Juddha trying to cultivate the Third Reich in hopes of reducing Nepal's virtually total dependence on British India?

In 1939 Adolf Hitler gifted a Mercedes-Benz 230 Pullman Landaulet to Juddha as a way to convince him not to let the British use their Gurkha regiments against Germany in World War II. The car had to be disassembled and carried over the mountains to Kathmandu and reassembled.

The Nepali Congress-led campaign against Rana rule received considerable support in Janakpur and the eastern Tarai. In December 1951, King Tribhuvan rode the NJJR from Jaynagar to Janakpur, and thousands thronged to catch sight of a king of whom they had heard but never seen.

As operations on the Nepali Government Railway came to an end, its European-made engines



were transferred to the NJJR. King Mahendra ordered two more locomotives named Chandra and Surya for the NJJR in 1962. They were built in Leeds and traveled from Liverpool to Calcutta to Jaynagar to begin their service.

The NJJR was renamed Janakpur Railway (JR) in 1965 and became the Nepal Railway Company in 2004. Unlike most government-owned enterprises in Nepal of that era, the JR and Nepal Government Railway operated at a profit for many years. In 1947, its total income was 225,000 Indian rupees,

with a profit exceeding 100,000 rupees.

Only from the mid-1980s did the railway begin to lose money. Yet warning signs appeared in the 1970s that the railway was living on borrowed time.

A foreign consultant conducted a comprehensive study of the railway in 1975 and concluded that 'the entire railway is very old and worn out, and unless a total rehabilitation' of the railway was undertaken, it would 'be forced to close in a very short time'.

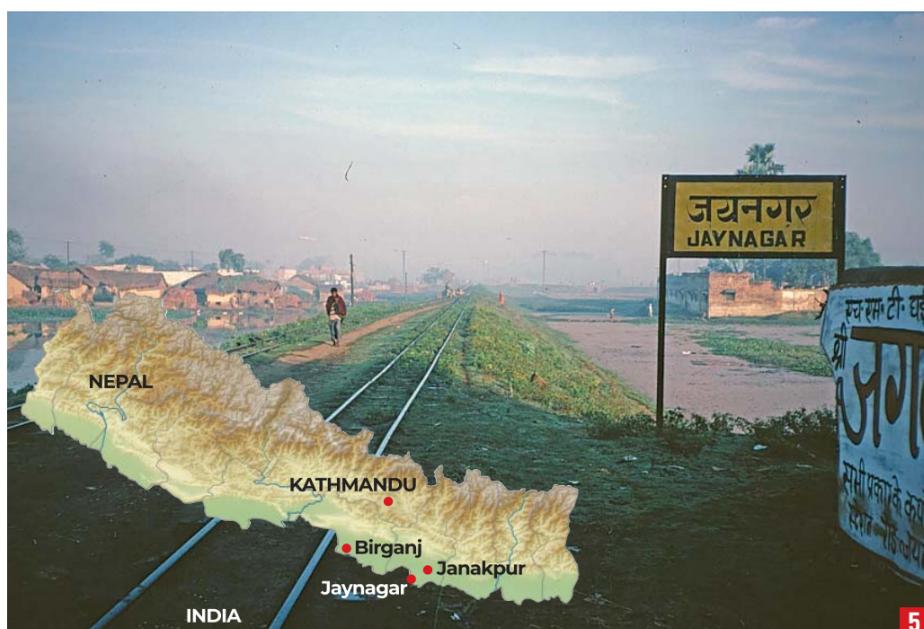
## CHUGGING ALONG

An investment of two million rupees resulted in some improvements between 1976 and 1979 but rolling stock and most infrastructure were neglected for another 15 years. Yet somehow the JR's trains kept chugging along for the next 42 years, often late, with service frequently suspended due to floods. Nearly every year, monsoon rains swept away some of the 135 bridges and tracks and embankments.

There were also accidents.

Trains made only two or three roundtrips daily between Jaynagar and Janakpur and ran at slow speeds, so there were few passenger fatalities, but there were frequent derailments due to the worn rails and overloaded carriages. Gangs of dacoits occasionally boarded trains and robbed passengers.

Strikes and political protests also stopped the train from time to time. From the early 2000s Maoist and Tarai-based groups enforced stoppages with threats and intimidation that closed schools, shops, government offices, and



5 FUZZ JORDAN



6 BASIL ROBERTS

# Janakpur-Jaynagar Railway

For 76 years, the NJJR was a part of Nepal's history



1 DAVID CHARLESWORTH



2 GORDON EDGAR



3 GEOFF WARREN

brought transport services to a halt.

The railway came to a standstill in May 2004 after Maoists set fire to the Mahinathpur station. During February-March 2006, the Maoists obstructed rail service six times. A cylinder bomb exploded inside a train near Parbaha station in May 2009, injuring 30 passengers.

Between 1993-2003, the railway had nine general managers who had influence with Kathmandu's political and bureaucratic elites, but none of whom knew much about railways. Revenue 'leakage' was significant, as perhaps twenty

percent of the passengers rode without tickets. Railway staff was bloated, in 1996 there were 340 on the payroll, many of them with political connections. Safety measures for railway operations were non-existent.

There were no performance reviews, no criteria for promotion, and no training opportunities for workers to improve their skills. But the locals continued to ride their beloved railway.

For 56 years, the Janakpur Railway received no foreign assistance. That changed in 1994

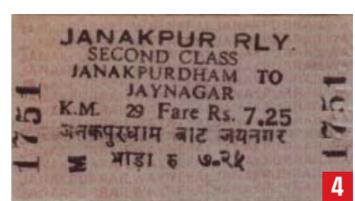
when the Indian government provided two used diesel locomotives and 12 used coaches. Two years later, India supplied two more engines and 12 more coaches and promised some upgrades.

This gave the railway a new lease on life, but the road network in the eastern Tarai had expanded, making the railway redundant. It also did not connect with the East-West Highway, nor could it seamlessly interconnect with India's broad-gauge rail network at Jaynagar. The last steam excursion ran in 2006, and after that, foreign

interest in the railway evaporated. Cascading financial losses and government indifference coupled with irregular, unreliable service finished on the Janakpur Railway.

Seventy-six years of remarkable narrow-gauge railroading in Nepal ended not with a bang but a whimper on 20 January, 2014. Sic transit gloria. 🇳🇵

*Dan Edwards was a Peace Corps volunteer in 1966 and is the author of several books on Nepal. This is the third instalment in a new limited series in Nepal Times on the historic transportation infrastructures of Nepal.*



4 FUZZ JORDAN

- 1 The NJJR did a booming passenger business as seen in this picture taken in Khajuri station. Ridership increased from 197,000 in 1960/61 to 1.4 million in 1977/78. Revenue increased from Rs770,000 in 1966/67 to Rs2.6 million in 1974/75.
- 2 A steam train excursion for foreigners in 1999. The last steam excursion on the Janakpur Railway ran in 2006.
- 3 Inside the Nepal Janakpur Jaynagar Railway workshop at Khajuri. By the early 2000s, management was unable to control rising payroll and administrative costs nor secure adequate funds for the railway.
- 4 A second class ticket issued in 2004 costing Rs7.25 between Janakpurdharm to Jaynagar.
- 5 Narrow-gauge tracks in Jaynagar in India going north toward Nepal.
- 6 Coal was unavailable, so Seetaa-Rama, the railway's first two locomotives, burnt wood for fuel.
- 7 Pashupati, Nepal's first locomotive, in retirement at Khajuri in 1996.



7 FUZZ JORDAN



## Events



### Dhap Dham Hike

A scenic day hike from Sundarijal to Dhap Dam through forests and villages, perfect for a weekend escape. Enjoy serene trails, mountain views, and fresh air. Meeting point: Bhrikuti Mandap Exhibition Hall Complex.

**8 November, 6:40am-5:40pm, Rs1,000/Rs1,500, 9851014616/9841178536**

### Milarepa

A spiritual and dramatic play based on the life of Milarepa depicting his journey towards wisdom and repentance. Directed by Buddhi Tamang and Umesh Tamang, with segments of music, dialogue, and performance.

**Until 7 December, 5:30pm (Saturday 1pm too), Mandala Theatre**



### An Eternity of Reflection

Solo exhibition An Eternity of Reflection by Binod Pradhan. The show will be inaugurated by Cabinet Shrestha, Managing Director of Agni Group.

**7 November-5 December, 11am-5pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited (01) 4218048**

### Freaky Farm Festival

A fun-filled family festival at Tabela Nepal, Bhaishapati, featuring spooky décor, games, a lively market, food stalls, and special performances by D Next Step, Srijana, and Rachana Dahal. Horse riding, a petting zoo, and a play area for the kids.

**8 November, 2pm onwards, Rs1,500, Tabela Nepal**



### Heritage Walk

Join journalist and storyteller Aashish Mishra as he takes visitors on a heritage walk of Patan through sites that often escape internet's attention.

**8 November, 8:45am-11am, Balkumari temple**

### Portfolio Night

Step into an evening of creativity and inspiration, where young creatives showcase their work, connect with industry professionals, and celebrate artistic expression. Winners may get a chance to join Google's Global Boot Camp or an all-expenses-paid trip to New York for The One Club Creative Week.

**7 November, 3pm onwards, Rs1,000, Aloft Kathmandu, Thamel**



## Music

### The Composer's Desk

Experience a unique musical evening where global sounds blend with Nepali folk and cinematic scores, featuring Ganga Thapa and 25 talented artists performing live.

**8 November, 4pm onwards, Rastriya Sabha Griha**

### The Bluegrass Journeymen

Enjoy a night of classic bluegrass music performed by The Bluegrass Journeymen, who are also teaching an after-school music program this semester.

**7 November, 7pm-9pm, Ramsterdam Cafe, Boudha**



### Pariwartaan

An intimate unplugged performance by Pariwartaan Band, featuring stories, emotions, and a night of musical connection.

**14 November, 7pm onwards, Rs500/Rs1,000, Moksh, Jhamsikhel, 9851014616/9841178536**

### Samir Shrestha ft. GoodBoyz

Experience the live premiere of the "Mero Maan Ma" music video and a performance by Samir Shrestha ft. GoodBoyz.

**7 November, 7pm onwards, Rs1,000, XO Club, Thamel**



### Sajjan Raj Vaidya

Sajjan Raj Vaidya performs in India for the first time, promising an unforgettable live show at Utssav Resort, Siliguri.

**8 November, 4pm onwards, Rs2,535-5,071, Utssav Resort, Siliguri**



## Getaway



### The Famous Farm

Experience traditional Nepali housing with a touch of comfort at Famous Farm, a restored Newari manor in the Himalayan foothills. Colorful gardens, serene spaces, and the charm of rural life right outside your doorstep.

**Kuwapani, Nuwakot (010) 413044**

### Tiger Mountain

A rustic retreat in rural Pokhara, Tiger Mountain Resort combines fresh, home-grown ingredients, a relaxing spa, and a range of activities to satisfy both adventure lovers and those seeking tranquility.

**Pokhara (01) 4720580**



### Gokarna Golf Course

Set within the 470-acre Gokarna Forest Reserve, this 18-hole, par-72 golf course offers lush fairways, bent grass greens, and breathtaking views of the Himalayas. The resort's luxury accommodations and spa treatments make it an ideal spot for a stay, a play, and a getaway.

**Gokarna (01) 4451212, www.gokarna.com**

### Club Oasis Spa

Enjoy a weekend to yourself at Hyatt's luxury spa. Take a dip in the jacuzzi, get a facial and a full-body massage, and step into a sauna before indulging in the hotel's delectable weekend brunch.

**Hyatt Regency, Boudha (01) 5171234**

### Baber Mahal Vilas

Built and managed by the descendants of Maharaja Chandra Shumsher Rana, Baber Mahal Vilas showcases four distinct architectural styles within the historic Baber Mahal Revisited complex, offering a unique and enchanting stay.

**Tanka Prasad Ghumti Sadak (01) 4257655/4248747**

## Weekend Weather



### SUNNIER, COLDER

A westerly front passed through Nepal this week adding more snow to the mountains, but not much by way of precipitation elsewhere. It has also sent the mercury down, with Kathmandu Valley's minimum temperature dropping to the single digits for the first time this season. The maximum will hover around 23C. Expect smog build up in the Valley with the inversion layer.



## Our Pick

Inspired by real events, the 2025 South Korean black comedy film Good News begins as a passenger plane is hijacked by a Japanese armed militant group soon after leaving Tokyo Airport. As the hijackers demand to be flown to Pyongyang, where they expect to be celebrated as heroes, the plane's captain persuades the hijackers to land the plane at Itazuke to refuel and acquire a map so that they can make it to North Korea. Meanwhile, a team committed to save the passengers work in secret. Stars Sul Kyung-gu, Hong Kyung and Ryou Seung-bum. Stream on Netflix.



## Dining

### Imago Dei Café

A modern bakery and café offering a range of beautifully crafted cheesecakes, classic British bakes, and elegant cupcakes. Perfect for dessert lovers seeking a cozy spot to sample sweet treats.

**Nag Pokhari, Naxal (01) 4442464**

### Prazada

Enjoy Prazada's selection of chilled draught beers in the lush garden with aromatic food and special pizzas accompanied by relaxing music on Fridays. They also host a pop-up market on Saturdays.

**Baluwatar (01) 4410473**



### Nylgiri at Aloft

Indulge in refined flavors and skyline views at Nylgiri. Gentlemen get 50% off all food and beverages on Super Man Sundays, and ladies get the same deal on Wonder Women Wednesdays.

**Aloft Kathmandu Thamel, 9705568643**

### Kyubi's Kitchen

Named after Kurama, the legendary Nine-Tails from anime lore, Kyubi's Kitchen is Nepal's first anime-themed restaurant. It serves a mix of Japanese, Korean, and local dishes. Check out their winter bestseller Ichiraku Ramen: perfect for a cozy, flavorful meal as it gets colder out.

**Jhamsikhel, 9810298050**



### Over Easy

Nestled in the busy streets of Bansbari, Over Easy is an all-day breakfast spot and a cozy hangout for friends. Enjoy a peaceful getaway in the valley, surrounded by vibrant wall art, a welcoming interior, and a charming garden outside.

**Bansbari, 9841587695**

## 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



**PRIME TIME:** Prime Minister Sushila Karki instructing Nepali Ambassadors and Heads of Missions abroad during an online conference call on 8 October, ahead of the government decision to recall 11 ambassadors.

Nepal's September protests were preceded and succeeded by similar movements in the region and around the world. In light of this global eruption of youth frustration, and desire to lead from the front, the hardline governments of Nepal's two neighbours are undoubtedly wary of the possibility of similar unrest within their own borders.

'India advocates democratic legitimacy, while China prioritises control and predictability. Recent upheavals demonstrate that neither democracy nor stability alone suffices for sustainable nationhood,' Upadhyaya wrote in a recent blog.

With early elections scheduled for 5 March, the main challenge for Karki's transition government is to maintain dialogue and establish consensus between youth groups, political parties, and other agitating forces to participate in polls — all while ensuring there is no covert external influence.

Indeed, with Nepal's democracy at stake as well as new political forces with competing interests set to battle it out in a new political landscape, experts warn that there could be powers that will want to fish in troubled waters.

Explains Dovan Rai: "Along with soft power, foreign countries including our neighbours could intervene in the online information space to promote their interests in Nepal. Fake narratives and disinformation could be spread through digital platforms. We must be careful and vigilant." 🇳🇵

# Neighbourhood watch on Nepal

Nearly two months after the GenZ protests, next-door nations keep a watchful eye on the country

**Sudiksha Tuladhar**

A little more than one month into its six-month term, Nepal's interim government recalled ambassadors from 11 countries: China, Japan, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Russia, Spain, Germany, the UK, and the US.

Mostly appointed by previous governments, the diplomats have to return to Kathmandu by 6 November. The envoys who have been retained, even if they were political appointees, seem to be women or from various ethnic minorities.

This recall has met with criticism. Prime Minister Sushila Karki is blamed for borrowing a page out of her predecessors' playbook. Although it was a symbolically inclusive move in a diplomatic corps dominated by established groups, the government may have got its timing wrong.

On Sunday, however, the Supreme Court issued an interim order against the government decision to recall the 11 ambassadors. The court questioned the necessity and justification of such a move, concerned that it could affect Nepal's relations with the host countries.

Karki has said her priority is to hold elections in March, and by recalling Nepal's emissaries from important capitals like Washington, London, Berlin, Tokyo, Abu Dhabi and Kuala Lumpur, her government has cut channels of communication and support from development partners and the international community.

Nepal's anti-corruption GenZ protest and the devolution of the youth movement into arson, looting, and violence after the targeted killing of protestors in September put the nation in the international spotlight. And the interest was especially keen in neighbouring New Delhi and Beijing.

The Nepal unrest has sparked similar protests across the world from the Philippines to East Timor, Madagascar and Peru. But there is also worry in India where exposure of #nepokids on social media as well as corruption in high places could instigate copycat

youth unrest.

And in China, there is still a lingering memory of the deadly protests in 1989 Tiananmen Square. But the Chinese also suspect that some in the GenZ movement have links to free-Tibet.

Foreign policy experts in Nepal reject conspiracy theories about foreign backing for the GenZ, characterising it as mostly triggered by home-grown outrage over chronic corruption of the governing elite.

Throughout its history Nepal has always had to balance the geo-strategic interests of its neighbours: the British in India and the Chinese Empire, and more recently independent India and Communist China.

When former PM K P Oli resigned, he had just returned from a visit to Beijing and was a week away from making an official visit to India. A new Nepali prime minister typically makes the first visit to India, but Oli broke that tradition last year by going to China to sign the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) framework agreement.

"Oli was China's trusted partner supporting Nepal's participation in BRI and SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization)," says geopolitical analyst Sanjay Upadhyaya. "Now, some in Beijing are apprehensive that there is external support for the youth protests that contributed to Oli's sudden departure. It is perceived as a strategic setback for China."

Despite an ongoing dispute with India over a 364 sq km border territory, Nepal is heavily dependent economically on India with which it has an open border.

Rulers in Kathmandu have usually bent over backwards to be closer to China to counterbalance India's gravitational pull following a strategy of 'equidistance' between the two giant neighbours.

Growing American and Western disinterest in the region is making India and China more assertive towards smaller nations. Educator Dovan Rai says, "China is also becoming more aggressive and trying to show its presence in and around South Asia."

She adds, "Nepal is an important neighbour for China, especially considering issues it

regards as sensitive, like the Dalai Lama and Tibet."

Indeed, the Chinese are said to be suspicious about the links that the GenZ movement was infiltrated by elements linked with Free Tibet or with US-based interests.

What must have especially raised eyebrows at the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu was that the Dalai Lama's office in exile in

India congratulated Sushila Karki — the first time in history it has sent such a greeting to a new prime minister of Nepal.

Although Nepal's two neighbours do not see eye-to-eye, both agree and are worried about instability in Nepal, and if it might trigger a refugee crisis, empower extremist factions, or attract Western interference.

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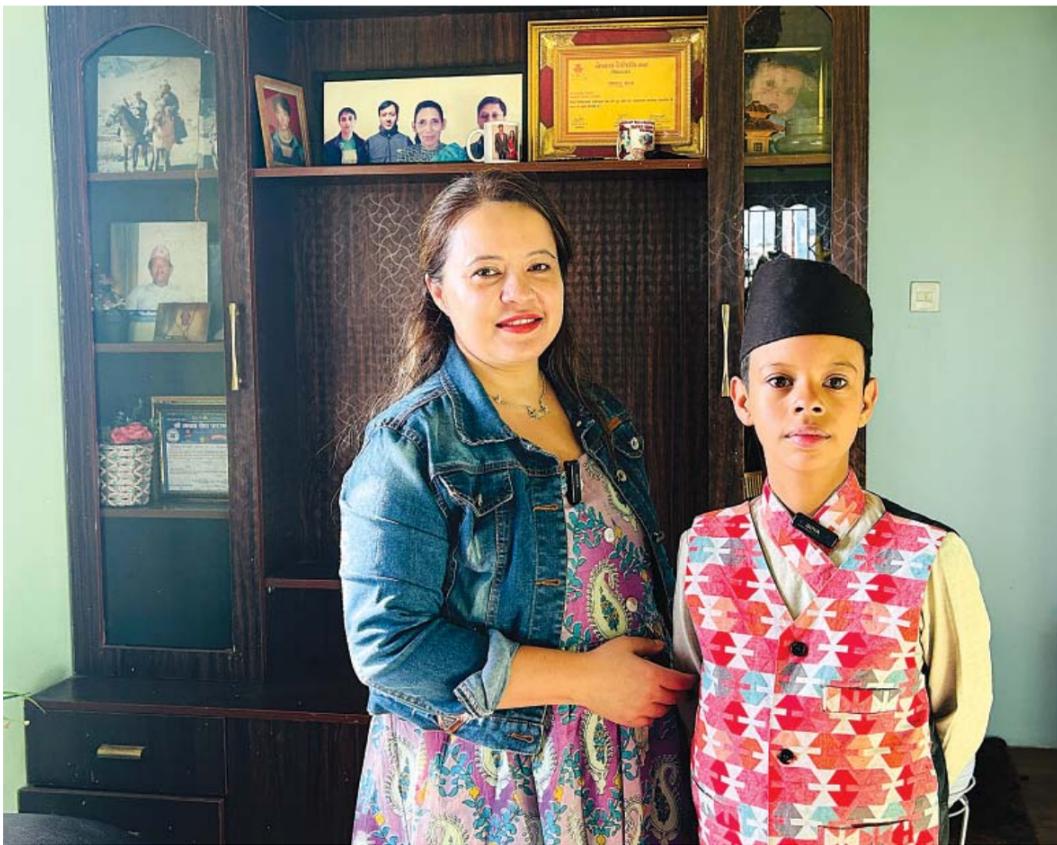
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## State and private sector apathy drives nurses abroad

Shristi Karki

**A** month after September's GenZ movement in Nepal, nurses working in private hospitals took to the streets demanding better work conditions, and salaries equal to what government nurses are paid.

The strike started at Pokhara's Manimal Teaching Hospital before spreading nationwide, and nurses working at government hospitals joined in.

Nurses at private hospitals are forced to work for far less than Nepal's minimum monthly wage of Rs19,550 — without overtime, breaks, and other benefits and under physically and mentally taxing conditions. This is driving many qualified nurses to emigrate.

For newly-appointed Health Minister Sudha Sharma Gautam in the interim government, the strike became her first order of business. She met representatives of the Nursing Association of Nepal (NAN), the protesting nurses, and others from the health sector.

An agreement was reached under which private hospitals and medical colleges will pay nurses a minimum monthly salary of Rs34,730. "It is a shame that nurses have been working under such exploitative conditions all this time," says Radha Adhikari, at the School of Health and Life Sciences of the University of the West of Scotland. "The agreement is basic, and there is a long way to go to improve their working conditions. But it is a start."

NAN chair Chandrakala Sharma has said the ministry's task force to look into working conditions will also look into facilities for nurses in government hospitals. "We are committed to solidifying the wage agreement by amending relevant laws within this month," Sharma said in a video posted by NAN on Facebook. "Our movement is not over, we are still protesting and following up with the Ministry."

NAN issued an ultimatum to the government to implement the agreements within 48 hours. That deadline has now lapsed and the nurses are back on strike. Many of those protesting now accuse NAN of betraying them.

Jyoti Ranabhat of the Nurses Struggle Committee was present in the meeting, but refused to sign the agreement. "It did not address what we were demanding, we will now go it alone into Plan B," she tells *Nepali Times*.

Previous grievances of the nurses did result in similar agreements, but private hospitals failed to comply with government's past directives — most recently the minimum salary and benefit determined by the state in December 2024.

The Nepal Nursing Council says there are 126,580 registered nurses, specialists, midwives, and Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) professionals in Nepal. Yet, nursing positions at hospitals remain vacant. The reason for understaffing is a mass emigration of medical professionals, including nurses. Nursing student enrollment is also declining and there is disinterest

# "I felt like I was born to be a nurse"

A Nepali nurse immigrates to the UK for the treatment of her son diagnosed with Williams Syndrome



DIASPORA  
DIARIES 73

This is the 73<sup>rd</sup> episode of *Diaspora Diaries*, a *Nepali Times* series in collaboration with Migration Lab providing a platform to share experiences of living, working and studying abroad.

Alpana Adhikari

**I** don't remember playing with dolls as a little girl. There is not much to remember from my childhood.

My responsibilities began at a very young age, as I had two younger brothers to take care of. I was born in Sarlahi, but we moved around quite a bit as my father was in the government and got transferred frequently.

From Rasuwa to Dang, from Nepalgunj to Kathmandu. I struggled to adjust in Kathmandu because I joined Grade 9 in the middle of the term. The education was different and fellow students also did not support me initially. But over time, I adjusted and made friends.

I did not dream of becoming a nurse. It was by accident. I wanted to pursue medicine, but failed the entrance exam by a few marks. I did not want to lose a year, so decided to take up microbiology instead.

I got married after my undergraduate, and my husband encouraged me to take up something more technical like nursing or engineering instead of Masters in Microbiology.

As my quantitative background was weak, I chose nursing. I felt like I was born to be a nurse. Juggling my married life and studies was

difficult. My teachers would often ask me why I am falling behind. It was not easy, but I managed and took up a full-time job as a nurse.

There are challenges being a nurse in Nepal. You are overworked, underpaid, there is lack of appreciation. Superiors can be overbearing. These problems persist. But the bright spot is that you get to serve fellow Nepalis, and be close to your family.

Just like I had no intention initially of becoming a nurse, I had no intention of migrating overseas. But life had different plans for me.

After my baby boy was born, I noticed that something was off. Even at nine months he had not started crawling or sitting. As a nurse I knew something was wrong, and I took him for check-ups. He tested negative for down syndrome, but he had a heart defect.

The cardiologist recommended that I take him to India where he was diagnosed with Williams Syndrome, a rare genetic condition that affects 1 in 10,000 people. It delayed his development. I looked for therapy. It was either not effective, or too expensive. Some schools also refused to admit him, and it drove me to tears.

My family members overseas in the UK, US told me to emigrate as there were better facilities for differently abled children. So I decided to apply to the UK. Luckily just then there were calls for candidates under the Nepal-UK government-to-government pilot scheme for 100 nurses. Only 40 met the criteria, and I was one of them.

I still remember the day I received the news on the day of my puja. There were people around me, and they told me that it was the result of my fasting and devotion on that auspicious day. Perhaps it was. Life was taking a new turn, and I was happy.

I made it to the UK in February 2024 without paying a single paisa to any broker. The G2G scheme was unique as we were treated with dignity and valued for our skills: they covered costs for the ticket

and visa, reimbursed us for exams we had taken and costs involved in the preparation and testing of the Objective Structured Clinical Examination were also covered.

It was of course difficult to leave my son behind. But I was doing it for his future. I had the option of taking him from the start, but it was a new place and I wanted to be well-settled and knowledgeable about the options available for him before bringing him along.

As I packed, he would ask me to take him with me in my suitcase. It did not seem like he was affected by my departure, and it was only later that his teachers said that he would express his feelings more openly at school. He just did not know how to tell me he missed me, and he would tell teachers he was worried I had forgotten him if we did not speak for a day.

He missed me, and that realisation made me emotional. But I had to carry on. Life in the UK was difficult in the beginning. Even so, I wanted to prove to myself that I could do it. Fortunately I had cooperative staff who patiently answered my questions. I think I would have been irritated if I were in their place. But they did not seem to mind, and their support and guidance made it easy for me to adjust to the new work environment.

### APPRECIATION

I still struggle to understand the accent of my English patients, and have ask the matron for help. They compliment me on my English, but I can speak better than I understand.

The good thing about working in the UK is that you are appreciated for your work, which can be motivating. Sometimes, after a long day's work you get a message from your supervisor acknowledging your work with a thank you. That's enough to erase your tiredness.

So far I have received 32 WOW nominations which are acknowledgements from patients

for a job well done. It can be motivating, especially in the beginning. The main difference between the Alpana who first left Kathmandu for the UK and the Alpana now is that I am a much more confident person.

What makes a good nurse? Skills, knowledge and qualifications are of course a given. But mostly, you need humanity. A smiling face. The way you communicate. Your empathy. These attributes can already solve many problems that patients are facing.

This is my second time back home in the last 20 months. And this time, I have arranged for my son's visa. I will go back after Tihar with my son and husband.

I am happy, but also a little nervous about what awaits us. What kind of school will I put him in? Will it really be different from schools here? Will his needs be addressed? Will it be like here, or will he be able to adjust?

But I am determined to make it work. Success for me would be if he adjusted well and there is a change in his condition. He still cannot recognise alphabets and read words like kids in his age group. Hopefully he will get learning support in the UK.

He also has a knack for music, and this is common among individuals with Williams Syndrome. His ears perk up when he hears music, and he takes part in musical events at school. He still does not recognise letters but he uses voice commands to search for guitar videos on YouTube. I will enrol him in music classes, and help him develop this gift.

For now, I worry how he will behave on his long flight. He has a short attention span and gets restless. He is also very social and will want to speak with everyone around him, and might irritate fellow passengers.

I have already started trying to make him understand that he will need to behave on the flight. He nods in agreement. Let's see how it goes. 🇳🇵

# Nepal haemorrhaging nurses



NARESH NEWAR / NT ARCHIVE

in a profession that does not afford health workers quality of life, respect, or dignity. "Our fight is not with the private sector, it is by definition profit

oriented, our grievance is with the state," says Ranabhat. "The government is responsible to provide us dignity, respect, and fair pay."

#### GREENER PASTURES

Poor pay and working conditions are driving doctors and nurses abroad in large numbers in recent years. Many have simply quit the

profession, leading to a shortfall in medical professionals.

This shortage is a global phenomenon, and countries like the US, UK and Australia have compensated for their shortages by offering jobs to nurses from countries like the Philippines, India and Nepal.

Nepal Nursing Council data shows that outmigration of nurses rose sharply after 2002, and an estimated 20,000-45,000 nurses have left since.

"The state's denial, derision, and disregard of nurses has caused resentment and disillusionment in the community, driving nurses out," says Ranabhat. "Ultimately, Nepalis will pay the price when there are no nurses left here."

Many Nepali nurses who have gone abroad are happy with the respect and quality of life in their jobs abroad (read story, left).

But many others face exploitative recruiters in Nepal and employers abroad. Nursing consultancies have mushroomed as nursing colleges struggle to meet demand.

Adhikari herself worked at United Mission Hospital Tansen before moving to the UK 30 years ago, and remembers that working conditions then were much better for nurses.

"Nepal's health sector has gone downhill since privatisation," she states. "Medical colleges are only concerned with supplying doctors and nurses internationally, because that is what makes money."

But once Nepal's nurses are abroad, there is no guarantee that they will find jobs in the nursing sector. Many find themselves working outside their field of expertise, in hospitality or sales.

"Nepal has become a production hub for nurses, and Nepali nurses have become products for export," adds Ranabhat. "People might think this will add to remittances, but no one is thinking about what will happen to Nepal's health sector."

For many, nursing has become a way out of Nepal rather than a vocation. In 2022, the government signed an agreement with the UK to send Nepali nurses to work there at zero cost, with benefits and protection equal to UK nurses.

The pilot phase was expected to recruit 100 nurses, and applications opened in July 2023, with 45 nurses said to be selected by Britain's NHF representatives by the end of 2023. Forty-one of them obtained labour permits.

They may be treated well, but the reality of working in the international health sector is not as straightforward.

Radha Adhikari told us from Scotland: "Market saturation, exploitation, discrimination based on race, gender, and foreignness prevent nurses from finding the right, respectful jobs even here. Ultimately, migration cannot be sustainable for Nepal's nurses." 🇳🇵




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