



## Vishad Raj Onta

The September protests and worry about what is in store for Nepal in 2026 have added more uncertainty to a struggling economy. Real estate transactions are stagnant, industries are operating below capacity because of declining domestic demand, the construction sector is slack, and investors are in wait-and-watch mode.

In contrast, total bank deposits increased by Rs124 billion in the month before mid-October to Rs7.4 trillion. Official remittance inflows hit a record \$13 billion in the past year. Nepal's banks are flush with cash, with nowhere to put it.

"The economy has flatlined. Non-performing assets are up, and real estate is at a standstill," said Ashoke SJB Rana, CEO of Himalayan Bank. "There is excess liquidity in the market, with not many places to invest."

The main reason seems to be

that both domestic and foreign investors were spooked by the targeted violence of 9 September, and are so worried about the runup to elections in March that they are holding on to their wallets. Not just businesses, the political uncertainty is keeping individuals from making big financial decisions.

Sujeev Shakya, author of the newly-released book Nepal 2043, notes that the current doldrum is due to Nepalis playing it safe with their money.

"People are holding on to their assets, and keeping their cash," he says. "They are not investing in real estate, and avoiding buying gold because it is so volatile."

One sector in which banks have a lot of exposure is hydroelectricity, but even here recent floods have shown that this investment is increasingly at risk from climate breakdown.

Nabil Bank, with its focus on sustainable banking, for instance, has financed 56 hydropower

projects with an installed capacity of 3,000MW.

Says Nabil CEO Manoj Kumar Gyawali: "We cannot ignore unpredictable rainfall, increased glacier melt, more frequent glacier lake outburst floods, and landslides. These risks mean that while hydropower is essential, Nepal must diversify its energy mix."

An open secret in the banking sector is that much of the liquidity is suspected laundered money. Banks also have close ownership links with big businesses, and this means that even with a slow economy, banks lend to themselves or to each other to keep transaction volumes up.

This is one reason for a high default rate. In the first three months of this fiscal year, 4.86% of bank loans were non-performing, meaning one out of about every 20 borrowers had defaulted. A year ago, this figure was 4.04%. Banks are therefore reluctant to lend, dampening the

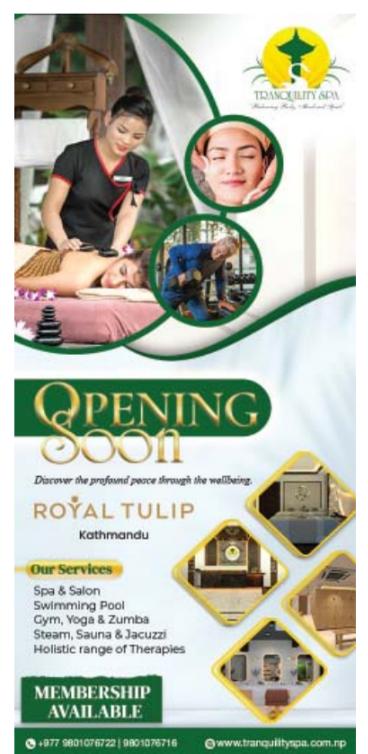
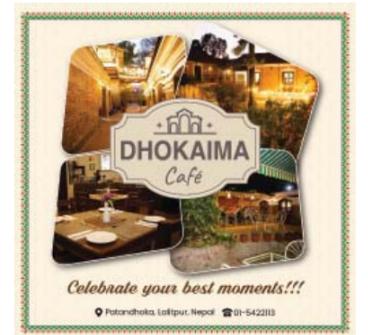
overall investment climate.

Ironically, the high default rate is keeping mainstream newspapers in Nepal afloat at a time when the media business is also in crisis. Even as they suffer from a massive drop in advertising revenue, most daily newspapers often add pages to fit notices to borrowers about repayment, or announcements of bank auctions of collateral property.

"While banks may be making a much smaller percentage of income compared to a few decades ago, they are still making a profit," notes Shakya. "And so they are actually quite happy to be in this low-risk situation. Banks are conservative organisations after all."

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# Election vs escalation

Which comes first: prosecuting those guilty of the 8/9/25 massacre, or elections on 5/3/26?

Prime Minister Sushila Karki is under pressure from GenZ activists and families of the victims to go after officials in the previous government responsible for the murders of 19 youth at Parliament on 8 September. But prosecuting perpetrators risks street protests from elements in the previous government.

Former Prime Minister K P Oli is not making it easy for his successor. Smarting from his downfall, he is itching for revenge. He has unleashed his attack dogs, and flexing his party's muscle with rallies.

Oli is using the threat of protests to send the message: don't come after me, or else. Prime Minister Karki cannot risk escalation which could hurt chances of elections.

The NC is also suffering post-traumatic stress from the shock of the GenZ uprising. Its leader Sher Bahadur Deuba had stepped down as party chief, but he seems now to want to prove his astrologer right that he can be prime minister seven times. Meanwhile, the NC is imploding with no-longer-young-turks demanding a party overhaul before elections.

Maoists are no longer Maoists. Thrice prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal has joined up with leftist parties to form the Nepali Communist Party which has two more superannuated former prime ministers. Maoist ideologue Baburam Bhattarai has also abandoned Maoism to launch a new party to 'uphold GenZ demands'.

The long and short of all this is that Nepal's legacy parties are oblivious of the public outrage even after the carnage and conflagration ten weeks ago. Even a little bit of enlightened self-interest would have allowed them to see how sticking to their guns and not



AJAY HAKAJU

handing over the party to a younger cohort will mean certain ignominious defeat in March. But being gerontocratic authoritarians, they still believe their vote banks are intact, and are betting on the GenZ fervour fading by March.

Twenty years ago in this same space, we wrote: 'Our politicians are not satisfied with being top dog, they want to be the only dog.' Nothing has changed, history is on rewind

in slow motion. To take the canine analogy further: you cannot teach old dogs new tricks.

There is a shameful lack of remorse from the former prime minister down the chain of command for what happened starting at noon on 8 September. Even if he did not give the order to shoot, being the head of government he should have taken responsibility for the death of 19 young Nepalis outside Parliament. The Judicial Commission of Inquiry headed

by former justice Gauri Bahadur Karki has another month to submit his findings. K P Oli has said he is not going to any deposition, while his Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak has indicated he will if asked.

Much of the evidence for the killings, arson and looting are in the public domain. There are videos and photographs of the Special Task Force commandos who knelt, took careful aim, and fired at protesters. Many of the arsonists and looters posted selfies in which they can be easily identified.

What has angered the GenZ is that while the Home Ministry has been arresting some of those who set fire to Singha Darbar and Parliament, it has not tracked down the shooters. Home Minister Om Aryal says he is waiting for the Judicial Commission report.

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) investigation titled Nepal: Unlawful Use of Force During 'Gen Z' Protest has a timeline of what happened on the two days, corroborated with interviews with eye-witnesses. It found that the STF started shooting within five minutes of the curfew being announced, and most protesters did not hear any warning, 34 were detained inside Parliament overnight, beaten and mentally tortured.

The victims had high-velocity gunshot wounds on their heads, chests and abdomens. The arson and looting the following day appears to have been instigated by a mass SMS sent from a fake Myagdi account, after which Discord posts directed protesters to attack specific locations.

Many more questions need to be answered by the Judicial Commission. Prime Minister Sushila Karki is treading a careful middle path through this minefield till election day.

## Trending Online



### Nepali worker in Japan

by Nepali Times

The Tokyo High Court this week ordered the Tokyo Metropolitan Government to pay over \$250,000 in damages to the family of Nepali migrant worker Arjun Bahadur Singh who died in police custody eight years ago. Read the report at nepalitimes.com

**f** Most reached and shared on Facebook

### Bihar's elections and Nepal

by Chandrakishore

Indian politician Nitish Kumar became Chief Minister of the Indian state of Bihar for the tenth time following the state elections. Kathmandu is obsessed with New Delhi, but it is what happens in Patna that affects Nepal's borderlands more directly. Read the column online.

**X** Most popular on X



### Here comes the sun

by Sonia Awale

Nepal's solar power potential is nearly 10 times higher than its hydropower generation capacity. But the nation's attempt to diversify away from hydroelectricity is stymied by restrictive domestic energy policies and geopolitics. Details on our website.

**66** Most commented

### Meme movements

by Nobel Rimal

Nepal, Peru, the Philippines, and Morocco may have few similarities, but the common thread running through their demonstrations were symbols spread on social media platforms. Read online about how digital visuals offered a new language for youth to organise.

**🔥** Most visited online page

## Letters

### SOLAR POWER

This is not a case of either-or ('Nepal, here comes the sun', Sonia Awale, #1286). What good fortune to have both and then to optimise both. We in Nepal have already invested big in hydro. EV's and AI are and will make huge additional demands. Both hydropower and solar power have their place in the eco-energy scheme of things and both are already well-advanced in-situ technologies.

Tony Jones

■ Solar power is badly needed in Nepal. Rooftop PV + batteries is a huge, massively underused energy resource the country should urgently tap into. There is no need for land rights, no

need to expensive grid upgrades, it is cheap, and can be deployed in no time. And it is a far less risky and cheaper alternative to large scale hydropower plants which take decades to build and are now facing significant GLOF and other unprecedented environmental risks.

Vassort Frederic

■ I worry about earthquakes with hydro dams in the Himalaya, not to mention migratory fish and riparian vegetation

Marg Wheeler

■ The fact that 70% of Nepal can be energised by the sun was concluded by Japanese research a long time ago, if not for geopolitics.

Stoneage Permaculture Farm

■ Yes, harvest rain from roofs, ponds, and make large water

impoundments to collect rain water ('Storing rain inside mountains', Sudiksha Tuladhar, #1286). We cannot live a day without water.

Rajendra N Suwal

### SUNMAYA BUDHA

Sunmaya is an absolute star ('Nepali ultra-marathoner claims World Trail Majors title', nepalitimes.com). Together with Mira Rai she has put Nepal on the global trail running scene. I am very impressed.

Carsten Kjærgaard

■ Congratulations to Sunmaya Budha. This is a great achievement for the nation.

Surya Gurung

■ This is fantastic news. What dedication Sunmaya has.

Gill Porteous

■ Sunmaya's win is a big achievement in trail running.

Pratyoush Onta

### DOLMA

The single thing this interim government can do is to have a flat tax of 10% to supersede all other taxes ('Double trouble with taxes', Vishad Raj Onta, #1286). It will remove all corruption and jump-start the economy that died with King Mahendra.

Bijaya K. Shrestha

### HRW NEPAL PROTEST

It's time for those responsible to be held fully accountable for their inhumane actions ('Security forces targeted protestors disproportionately: HRW', nepalitimes.com). Rest in peace to the young and innocent lives we lost.

Thapa Nabin

## Online Package



### CLIMATE MIGRATION

Mustang's Dhe village is one of the best-documented examples of climate migration. The impact of climate change in high altitudes limits livelihood options. Watch on YouTube.



### CASSETTE COMMUNICATION

Ram Dhani Yadav was the first to leave for the Gulf from his village in 1992. Times were different--overseas Nepalis communicated with families by sending cassette tapes back and forth. Subscribe for multimedia content.

## 1,000 Words



US EMBASSY

**SPADE WORK:** Finance Minister Rameshore Khanal and US ambassador Dean Thompson lay the foundation of a substation in Butwal on Wednesday under the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) grant. The project is building cross-country transmission lines and upgrading highways. The MCC got a top-up last week to take the total US outlay to \$550 million. Nepal is chipping in \$197 million.

**Times**

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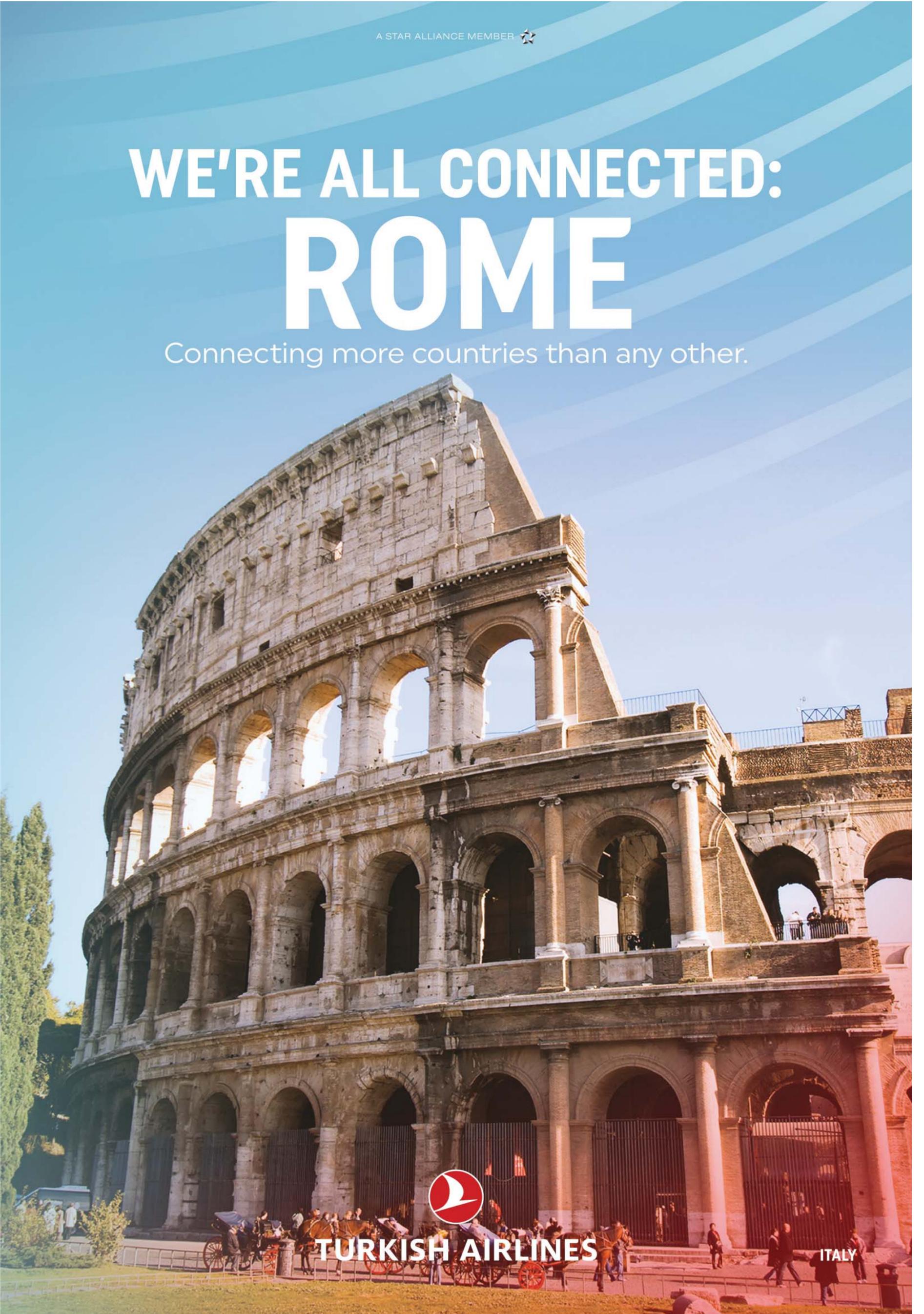
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# Sustainable banking protects the ecology and economy

Nepali Times spoke to Manoj Kumar Gyawali, CEO of Nabil Bank about the post-GenZ economic condition of the country. Excerpts:

**Nepali Times: With COP30 in Brazil having failed to agree on tangible goals on phasing out fossil fuels, how important is the concept of sustainable banking in Nepal?**

**Manoj Kumar Gyawali:** Sustainable banking is not optional for countries like Nepal. It's essential. We are one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world. Nabil's membership of the Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials (PCAF) encouraged us to take a closer look at our financed emissions. It pushes you to rethink how and where you deploy capital.

Sustainable banking is about more than compliance, it's about directing finance toward sectors that safeguard the environment, uplift communities, and strengthen governance. Transparency and accountability not only improve our own decision-making, it also positions Nepal to tap into blended finance and other concessional funding streams that reward responsible, forward-looking investments. For Nepal, sustainable banking is not a niche activity -- it's central to how we operate.

**But is sustainable banking itself sustainable?**

This is a concern I hear quite often, and it's valid. Global climate finance must increase, especially

for countries like Nepal. Our economy is already feeling the impact of climate change across agriculture, hydropower, tourism. Sustainable banking is about managing these risks more intelligently, understanding the footprint of our own portfolio, and reallocating capital toward climate-positive and resilient sectors.

These are things we must do anyway if we want long-term financial stability. So, even if global climate finance remains inadequate, sustainable banking is sustainable for Nepal in the long run. It strengthens the resilience of our financial system, safeguards our clients, and positions banks to tap into emerging opportunities in the green economy. It ensures that Nepal's development pathway remains environmentally responsible, socially inclusive, and anchored in good governance.

**Nepal's banks, including yours have a lot of exposure in hydropower. Is there not a need to diversify Nepal's energy mix?**

Hydropower is and will remain Nepal's strongest natural advantage. At Nabil, we have financed 56 hydropower projects across 37 rivers in 21 districts with a total installed capacity of over 3,000 MW, so we understand the scale and importance of this sector.

But we also cannot ignore the realities of climate change — unpredictable rainfall, increased glacier melt, more frequent glacier lake outburst incidents, floods, and landslides. While hydropower

is essential, Nepal must diversify its energy mix to remain resilient.

The good news is Nepal has enormous solar potential and wind corridors. Our national commitments already call for at least 15% of total energy demand to come from clean energy, with 5–10% from solar and other renewables. This creates real opportunities for banks like Nabil to support solar, wind, and clean

technologies alongside hydropower. We have already approved financing of five solar projects with a total capacity of 120 MW.

**Tax rebates on EVs allowed Nepal to take a lead in adopting battery-operated vehicles in Nepal. How can we build on this to reduce our petroleum import bill?**

The EV push has already shown results — we saw a reduction of nearly Rs22 billion in our petroleum import bill in 2024/25. That's a notable achievement.

But if we want to truly scale EV adoption, we need three things: More charging infrastructure that is reliable, widespread, and commercially viable, local assembly and value creation, and stable policy that gives people and businesses confidence to invest.

**Has the banking sector's role changed after the GenZ protests?**

The Gen Z movement is more than a protest, it's a clear message. Young Nepalis are demanding transparency, good governance, and real opportunities at home, and their concerns could be considered justified. The banking sector has a major responsibility: we need to direct more lending toward the real economy, sectors that create jobs, build

productivity, and strengthen long-term growth, while also encouraging businesses to adopt stronger ESG practices.

**Do you have guidelines about projects that result in environmental degradation?**

Absolutely. We cannot afford to support development that harms the environment, it eventually becomes a financial risk as well. Haphazard development may look profitable in the short term, but it leads to long-term economic, social, and ecological losses and ultimately becomes a financial risk.

Every project we finance must meet both local regulations and international standards. If it doesn't, we simply don't fund it.

**Nepal's macroeconomy is looking good, remittances are up, but the economy is not growing as fast as it should. Do you see a light at the end of the tunnel?**

Remittances are strong, reserves are healthy, and liquidity is available. Yet investment appetite remains subdued because of structural issues like political instability, slow government spending, and weak investor confidence.

That said, I do see early signs of improvement. Lower interest rates are beginning to restore public and business confidence. Rising remittances provide a safety net and fresh investment capacity for households. If government capital expenditure improves, it will boost private sector activity.

I believe Nepal is on a path toward gradual but meaningful economic recovery.



## Turkish World Golf Cup

The Grand Final of the 10<sup>th</sup> Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup (TAQQGC) was held at Antalya Gloria Golf Resort between 17-21 November with 120 international amateurs from all taking part. This is the world's most extensive and largest corporate amateur golf tournament, and taking part was Nepal TAWGC winner Swadesh Gurung. Since 2013, more than 750 tournaments have been held in 85 countries and 130 destinations, with over 60,000 amateur golfers participating.



This year, more than 10,000 golfers have competed in over 122 events in 83 countries around the world. The World Golf Cup 2025 gross champion was Adeel Shafqat from Pakistan who secured a score of 151, 7 over par. Competing in the Gold TAWGC Category was Jose Garcia San Juan from the UAE, who won the title by earning 73 stableford points over two rounds. Seifeddine Zarzour from Algeria came second while Abdul Rehman Qureshi from Pakistan came in third. The winner of Silver Category was Agustin Valdes Kato from Mexico, second was Michael Sharaiha and third Wang Fan from China.

"Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup has become a valuable platform that goes beyond being just a sports event, strengthening the strong bonds we have built with our guests around the world," said Turkish Airlines Senior Vice President Ahmet Harun Bastürk.

## NMB BANK एनएमबि बैंक

### TikTok well-being

TikTok has introduced new Time and Well-being features to help users build good digital habits. These include an affirmation journal, a soothing sound generator, and breathing exercises. They have also launched well-being missions that reward getting consistent sleep and sticking to screen time limitations.

### Samsung Tab

Samsung's Tab A11 with 8.7" display, a 5100mAh battery, and a Helio G99 processor is now available for costs Rs30,999 and the 4GB/64GB Wi-Fi variant costs Rs19,499. Discounts of 11-23% on Samsung washing machines and refrigerators under a 'Warm Winter' offer lasts 21 November-14 January.

### NPL gambling

Illegal bets totalling over Rs20 million were put on games in the second season of the Nepal Premier League. Nepal Police arrested Indians and Nepalis involved in trying to bribe players, and individuals betting real-time from the stands. Authorities believe other operators may still be active.



### inDrive awards

inDrive handed over the grand prizes to the winners of its Platinum Drivers Giveaway Campaign to recognise its most committed drivers. The two winners were Hari Pandey in the taxi category, who won a TATA Xpres-T EV, and Aakash Tamang in the Bike category, who won a TVS Raider. Both winners were selected from a pool of drivers who had consistently maintained Platinum status, 75 other participants won smartphones, earbuds or smartwatches.

### Kumari + Bandipur

Customers of Kumari Bank will get discounts on services provided by Bandipur Cable Car, including cable car tickets, sky cycling, zipline, and dining at the Dive In restaurant.



### Pokhara EV

Official distributor of Kaiyi and Forthing EVs, Laxmi E-Mobility, inaugurated a showroom in Buddha Chok in Pokhara. Laxmi is running a Grand Opening Offer with discounts, free Bosch appliances, one-year insurance and road tax, and a one night couple getaway. Laxmi has set up over 63 RE-Lax EV charging stations across Nepal.

### SMA awarded

Kathmandu-based Sustainable Mountain Architecture won the Ammodo Architecture Award 2025 for the Bankatta Community Initiative in Madi Valley. The project works with the Bote people of Bankatta to create sustainable infrastructure, homestay houses, a community hall, and access to clean water. The Amsterdam-based Ammodo Architecture Awards is an annual international prize presented to socially and ecologically responsible architecture.

### Kathmandu eye

A study on common ocular diseases in 5,396 Kathmandu residents aged 40 or older has shown that 97.7% had eye disease, mostly cataract or refractive error. About 70% had high blood pressure and about half had diabetes, although rates of retinopathy due to either were low (1% and 7%).

### Android card payments

NMB Bank, working with VISA, signed an agreement with the Nepal chapter of the Pacific Asia Travel Association to expand the use of NMB SoftPOS, which allows businesses to accept card payments on Android smartphones, eliminating the need for a card reading machine. This will make transactions more convenient for tourists and customers.

### Nabil expands service

Nabil Bank expanded its appointment banking service, previously available only at its Thapathali headquarters, to 12 branches in Kaushaltar, Boudha, New Baneshwor, Maitidevi, Koteswor, Bijuli Bazar, Lalitpur, Ghantaghar, Kumaripati, Maharajganj, New Road, and Tripureswor. Appointments can be made through Nabil's website or app.



### Artudio Un(Seen)

Art collective Artudio's new Patan wing in Nakabahal opened this week with (Un)seen, an exhibition by 21 young artists with autism. The pieces were made during workshops conducted at Artudio and Autism Care Nepal in collaboration with Aakar Foundation. 'Their practices illuminate the essence of art as a field of presence and possibility, unbound by external rules,' says Artudio founder Kailash K Shrestha, who is also curating the exhibit.

# Investing in a better investment climate

Among the most striking videos of the September protests that was shared globally by tens of millions of people was the Hilton and Hyatt hotels and the Ncell building burning.

That recognisable international brands were targeted did not just cause huge losses to owners, but also damaged Nepal's overall investment climate. Looting Bhat-Bhateni and homes of businessmen also sent a negative message, spurring capital flight.

"That was very bad optics for potential investors, you simply worry about the security of your investment when you see things like that," says Himalayan Bank CEO Ashoke SJB Rana.

Nepal will graduate to Middle Income Country status next year, and donors are set to move from aid to private investment. While this could reduce misuse of money, it could dry up grants and soft loans to the health and education sectors.

But the harm may go deeper than just the aftermath of the September events. The recent double taxation issue involving the Dolma Impact Fund, and an earlier controversy over Ncell's capital gains tax have also put Nepal's business climate in negative spotlight internationally.

The banking sector is firmly on the side of investors. Says Ashoke Rana at Himalayan Bank: "This is a tax regime, it is absurd to order the payment of these taxes retrospectively. When investors see that the rules of the game can change arbitrarily, they won't really want to put their money here."

One of the positive changes in the ways Nepalis are using money is digital transactions



BHANU BHATTARAI / NT ARCHIVE

through QR codes and mobile banking. With smartphones making up 70% of all mobile phones, QR transactions are easy and have become a part of daily life.

### ONLINE BANKING

Most businesses and ride shares have this feature on board, and people do not need to carry a lot of cash or multiple bank cards. But as digital payments become the norm, the days of free transactions may be coming to an end.

"Right now these transactions are free for the most part. This is a subsidy by the banks, because of course, it does cost something to make sure the payments go through," says Rana at Himalayan Bank. "However, as income decreases, banks may have to look for ways to make money, so they may charge small percentages on

each QR transaction."

Rapid digitisation has changed not only how customers use money, but also how banks think about their offices. Himalayan Bank's new Thamel branch, for example, has cancelled plans to redesign the office for 20 tellers.

"We realised that people were able to do so much of what they wanted digitally that we plan to have only four tellers," says Rana.

But cutting down on facilities and staff has not always made for a better customer experience at some bank branches.

Economist Sujeev Shakya conducts ghost customer experience checks for banks which involves decoys entering banks to evaluate what it is like for somebody to set up a bank account.

The stealth missions found that standards of service have

regressed, with banks having a working environment reminiscent of government offices.

Shakya points out that the general experience of going to the bank should be much better. "Sometimes it's a knowledge issue -- banks may try to ask for non-disclosure contracts even when they don't know why they want them," he says.

Despite digitisation, many banks still require paper-based forms and documents. Bankers and customers alike note that it feels archaic, almost absurd, to have to carry multiple copies of documents, sometimes only in Nepali lokta paper, across several family members and fill out what seems to be the same form over and over even though digital files exist.

That could soon be changing as well. As more and more Nepalis adopt the National ID, banks have adopted pilot programs that use it to create bank accounts, replacing the myriad documents that customers had to previously present to officials, making all banking transactions more efficient and less of a hassle for the customer.

### DIGITAL SECURITY

As Nepalis move their cash online, digital infrastructure needs to become more secure as well.

Bankers spend quite a lot to make sure necessary digital security infrastructure is in place, but some banks could be using pirated software which are not trustworthy.

There has to be better regulatory oversight to prevent phishing and fraud as online payments and digital banking spread across Nepal.

Banks must also be innovative and ambitious. Says Shakya: "Nowhere else in South Asia are bank loans such a high

ratio of the nation's GDP. This actually points to a well-developed financial system and we have to take advantage of it."

Shakya also notes that many bank executives in foreign countries, like Myanmar are actually Nepali, and that banks from Nepal could use their staff and know-how to partner with or acquire banks overseas.

While these innovations are all welcome, it is unclear how Nepal's banking sector can jumpstart economic activity in the country. Nepal's political future looks uncertain and stability is not a guarantee.

In the face of continuing progress in hydro electricity and the IT sector seems to be the way forward to stimulate the economy.

The GenZ movement was a wakeup call also to financial institutions and the need for greater transparency. Nabil Bank CEO Manoj Kumar Gyawali (page 4) says the September protests sent a clear message that young Nepalis want an end to corruption, good governance, and real opportunities at home: "The banking sector has a responsibility to direct more lending toward the real economy, sectors that create jobs, build productivity, and strengthen long-term growth," he says.

Despite a subdued investment climate, Gyawali is optimistic. "I do see early signs of improvement. Lower interest rates are beginning to restore public and business confidence. Rising remittances provide a safety net and fresh investment capacity for households," he says. "If government capital expenditure continues to improve, it will boost private sector activity." ■



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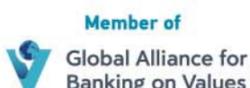
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# Too little snow, too r

Nepal's trans-Himalayan district of Mustang foretells the impact

## Diya Rijal in Mustang

The COP30 climate summit in Brazil ended this week without tangible commitment from countries to reduce fossil fuel emissions. Halfway around the planet, Mustang is already seeing weather extremes.

Mustang is on the Tibetan Plateau, north of the main Himalayan chain. It is a high altitude desert in the rainshadow. While winter snow has failed for eight of the past ten years, unseasonal blizzards and glacial collapse lead to frequent floods.

The Kali Gandaki Corridor follows one of the deepest gorges in the world between Annapurna and Dhaulagiri, the world's seventh and tenth highest peaks.

Lush pine forests cover the southern flanks of these mountains, but within a few kilometers the vegetation undergoes a dramatic change to a landscape of red, brown and grey cliffs. It gets more arid the further north you go.

The sun has set, the temperature plummets, and the wind howls outside. In the ancient walled city of Lo Manthang, elderly men gather at a local tea shop to drink the salted butter tea. Some sip home-made liquor infused with medicinal herbs. Everyone agrees that snowfall patterns have shifted.

"The weather has changed drastically over the years," says Lopsang Tsonfel Bista, chair of Lo Dekhar Municipality. "It doesn't snow in winter, but it does when it is not supposed to."

The lack of snow means that in spring, the pastures where nomadic herders graze their yaks and goats do not have enough grass. Previously, winter snow on the meadows would seep slowly into the soil with the spring thaw, bringing out fresh grass shoots.

In recent years, even if there is winter precipitation, it falls as rain. The soil is not able to soak in as efficiently, and torrential downpours increase the risk of soil erosion and floods.

"There used to be up to 1,500 mountain goats in every village, but now they have stopped keeping livestock," says Bista. This is due to the lack of grass, as well as new lowland diseases that are moving up the mountains.



Mustang has lost 28% of its population between the censuses in 2011 and 2021. Outmigration also means there are fewer people left to carry on a pastoral lifestyle.

"Herders have asked for vet services in their communities because there are new insect-borne diseases," says Yangchen Dolker Gurung of the Lo Gyalpo Jigme Foundation.

At the rate global average temperatures are rising, scientists predict that the Himalaya will lose up to two-thirds of its remaining ice caps. Mustang is flanked to the east and west by mountains that rise up to 6,000m, and glaciers on their slopes are melting fast, turning into lakes. With the rising temperature, the risk of Glacier Lakes Outburst Floods (GLOFs) has also risen. Downstream water supply is also affected.

### FLOODS

Ringzin Sangbo Gurung in Chumjung village recalls the devastation caused by a GLOF on 8 July this year that swept away a newly inaugurated bridge. The floodplain is now strewn with boulders and sand brought down by the flood, which caused damage worth Rs28 million.

The flood also damaged irrigation canals that feed riverside farms where locals grow potato, buckwheat, millet and spinach. Nyima Wangmo Gurung runs a homestay in Nyamdok village, and says: "We don't have water when we need it. And there is too much when we don't."

With warming temperatures, farmers in Mustang are growing lowland vegetables in plastic greenhouses, which was not possible before. The farms depended on snowmelt in spring to irrigate their fields, but there is less

snow to melt in past years.

"The last heavy snowfall in winter was about eight years ago, since then we have got little or no snow," says Tashi Norbu Gurung, Chair of Lo Manthang Rural Municipality. "This affects farmers during the April planting season."

It is not just the lack of snowfall that is a problem. Springs have gone dry, and some villages like Dhey have been forced to relocate because life became impossible without water.

Villagers of Samjung also migrated to Namashung, near a river when water sources dried up. But now the new settlements are threatened by GLOFs.

Karma Gurung, who runs a lodge in Choser, remembers the big flood of 35 years ago which swept away farms and covered them with debris. Since then, there have also



been more frequent, destructive floods in Kagbeni, Lubra and other valleys.

### MUD WALLS

Because snowfall has been replaced by rain, Mustang's traditional mud-wall architecture is now in danger of collapsing. The homes here are closely packed, have flat roofs stacked with juniper branches for firewood. With heavy rainfall instead of snow, the roofs now leak.

Women in Thinkar village say their walls are falling apart. Some homes have collapsed, forcing families to move out.



# much rain

act of climate breakdown



Yangchen Dolker Gurung of the Lo Gyalpo Jigme Foundation says locals need plastic sheets, cement walls and corrugated roofs to cope with the rain.

But this would mean that Mustang's villages would lose their traditional architecture style.

The king's palace, monasteries, and the ancient 1.5m-thick mud walls around Lo Manthang built 600 years ago are also at risk.

"Changes in the intensity, frequency, and timing of rainfall and snowfall have damaged traditional and cultural

infrastructure, particularly mud-built private and public buildings as well as religious and heritage sites," explains Bhawani Pandey at the Lo Gyalpo Jigme Foundation. "Monuments and stupas made of mud have been eroded too. They are in a dilapidated condition."

The Lo Manthang Rural Municipality and the Lo Gyalpo Jigme Foundation are working on a Local Adaptation Plan of Action and the Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan, which the Nepal government has made mandatory for every municipality.

"We took a bottom-up approach and collected data from each village. They know best the local impact of climate change and what their needs are," says Yangchen Gurung.

To address the hazards of climate change, local communities and municipalities are adapting through their own resources, without waiting for outside help to improve water conservation, control soil erosion and protect themselves from floods.

Says Pandey, "We are returning to conserving traditional drought-

resistant crop varieties, organic pest and disease control, cultivating high-value crops and fruits, and practicing sustainable pasture management through rotational grazing. We have also developed new building codes for homes that incorporate water-resistant coating for mud roofs and walls." 

*Additional Reporting by Tashi Wangyal.*

#### CLIMACTIC CHANGE:

(Clockwise from above, left) The terrain around Lo Manthang at 3,850m shows an arid landscape with receding snowlines in surrounding mountains.

The flat mud roofs are leaking because rain is now falling where there used to be snow.

The mud walls of monasteries and homes are crumbling because of unseasonal rainfall.

 [nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)

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## Events



### Artudio Patan Exhibit

Sublimation is an exhibition by multidisciplinary artist Anastasiia Koroleva, that marks the conclusion of her Artudio International Artist Residency and offers a glimpse into her diverse perspective. **28-30 November, 5pm onwards, Nakabahil, 9823490390**

### Aura of Togetherness

Stop by Kathmandu Art Gallery to see Aura of Togetherness, its latest exhibition featuring artist Sabita Dangol. **Till 28 December, Kathmandu Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited**



### के? Us

Katha Ghera's latest play के? Us is a dark comedy created and performed by Eelum Dixit and Bijay Ananda Tamrakar. **28 November- 7 December (except Tuesdays), 5:15pm, Kausi Theatre, Teku, 9842156109 / 9842574607**

### Curation Workshop

Learn how to curate multi-artist photography exhibitions in a hands-on workshop led by Macy Castañeda Lee. Explore sequencing, visual selection, and working with printed photographs. Application deadline: 30 November. Apply through PhotoKTM's Instagram. **3 December, 2pm-5pm, Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal.**



## Music

### What The Funk

What The Funk is performing live for a fundraising night in support of Nyano Ghar, with funk, energy, and a community-driven cause. **5 December, 7:30pm onwards, Rs500, Moksh, Jhamsikhel**



### Club Nova

Swar takes over Club Nova, bringing high-energy beats and an exciting atmosphere. Join fellow music lovers for a celebration of rhythm, passion, and live entertainment that will keep you dancing all night long. **5 December, 8pm onwards, Rs1,000-Rs6,000, Club Nova, Thamel**

### Grasslands Carnival

Grasslands Carnival features acclaimed artist Hanumankind as the main act, alongside Madboy Mink, Dr Sagar, and more for a high-octane night of music performances. **29 November, Rs2,499-Rs12,000 (5 pax), Club Nova, Thamel**



### Kutumba Live

Kutumba's ensemble masterfully blends traditional instruments like the sarangi and tungna to create soul-stirring, contemporary melodies. Witness a unique cultural celebration that preserves and reinterprets indigenous Nepali music. **6 December, 8pm onwards, Rs1,000 onwards, XO Club, Thamel, 9801986771**



## Getaway



### The Fulbari Resort

With its distinctive Nepali architecture, The Fulbari Resort offers a different space than the other getaways in Pokhara. And with unparalleled spa amenities, it is the perfect place to wind down. **Pokhara (061) 432451**

### CG Retreat

This nine-hole course is open to golf enthusiasts and visitors seeking a getaway from the city. With cosy and luxurious rooms and activities for everyone, the CG retreat is perfect for families. **Nawalparasi, 9826444611 / 9805442901**



### Park Village Resort

Yoga, detox and ayurveda treatment in a quiet corner of Kathmandu. Enjoy the services of Himalayan wellness centre- a one-stop centre to relax the mind and body. **Himalayan Peace and Wellness Center, Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha (01) 4370286**

### Green Valley Resort

Located 5.5km away from Budhanilkantha Temple, the resort is a perfect getaway for city people. The first ray of winter sun warms you up, making way for a perfect stroll around the Tamang Valley. **Shivapuri National Park (01) 5248091**

### Retreat at Damaar

Retreat at Damaar is a humble stay within the forestry of Kavre. This getaway is ideal for those seeking a peace of mind, scrumptious food and a home away from home. **Bethanchowk, Kavre, 9851052442**



## Dining

### Nylgiri

Indulge in refined flavors and skyline views at Aloft's Nylgiri rooftop bar, where men get 50% off food and beverages on Super Man Sundays, and ladies get the same deal on Wonder Women Wednesdays. **5pm-11pm, Nylgiri, Aloft Kathmandu Thamel, 9705568643**

### Lhakpa's Chulo

Nepali dal bhat, Newari khaja, Swiss Rösti, Italian Risotto and Thai green curry. Lhakpa's Chulo has a variety of cuisines to offer. The garlic chilli prawn is a must-have. **Jhamsikhel (01) 5542986**



### Akari & Koko

Vivanta Hotel's Asian-inspired fusion restaurant and bar serves an impressive assortment of East Asian dishes with modern twists. Try their sushi and pad thai during the visit. **12pm-10:30pm, Jhamsikhel (01) 5525002**

### Tasneem King's Kitchen

Tasneem's mouthwatering authentic Bohra Muslim cuisine is ideal for anyone who loves flavorful, spicy and savoury dishes. From slow-cooked Dum Biryani to traditional 10-course Bohra Thaaals, Tasneem is a place that brings food lovers together. **Pulchowk, 9801121212**



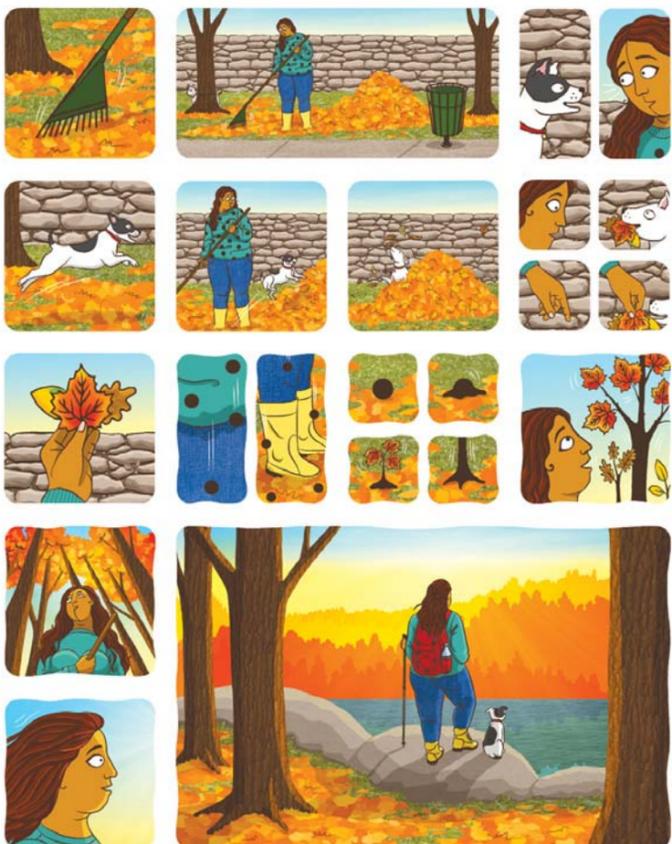
### Fire & Ice

Fire & Ice's pizza is beloved by both Nepalis and tourists alike. Try the lasagna and Penne Al Forno if you are in the mood for something different. **8am-10:30pm, Thamel (01) 4250210**

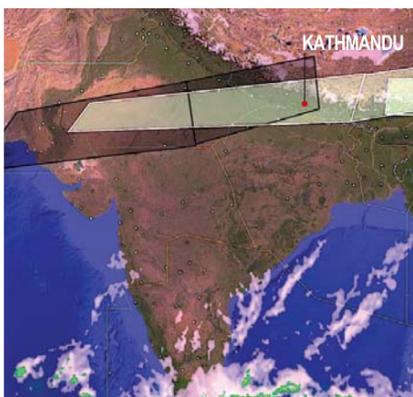
## Miss Moti Escapes

Kripa Joshi

### MISS MOTI AND THE LEAVES



## Weekend Weather



### Ash and Pollution

Flights to Nepal were disrupted this week because of the ash and smoke from the Haili Gubbi volcanic eruption in Ethiopia. Prevailing winds blew it over the Himalaya into China (flightradar24.com image). At ground level, north India is choking in thick pollution, with AQI reaching 800 in some cities. So far, Kathmandu has been largely spared, AQI was 140 on Thursday morning. Fringes of a circulation from the Bay will bring clouds over Nepal on Monday, but otherwise sunny days and chilly nights.

FRIDAY 21°  
8° SATURDAY 21°  
7° SUNDAY 21°  
9°

## PLURIBUS



### Our Pick

The 2025 American post-apocalyptic science fiction tv series follows fantasy author Carol Sturka, who is among only 13 people in the world immune to an extraterrestrial virus that has turned humans into a peaceful, relentlessly optimistic hive mind. As the virus seeks to assimilate the remaining immune individuals into the mind, Carol must find a way to uncover the goings-on and free humanity from a state of perpetual bliss. The series, by Breaking Bad and Better Call Saul creator Vince Gilligan, stars Rhea Seehorn, Karolina Wydra, and Carlos-Manuel Vesga.

## 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 चिह्न 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 ।



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# Living and leaving



**Labour Mobility**  
Upasana Khadka

“गरि खान देउ” is a compelling call that resonates with Nepalis, reflecting the desire of people wanting just to live and get by. In relation to foreign employment, it also means that because it is difficult to live, Nepalis leave.

The Nepal government should be evaluated more than on its ability to retain youth within Nepal. Its ability to ensure that those who choose to migrate have access to safe, transformative, well-managed migration pathways that provide high return opportunities without high costs and hassles.

In the context of foreign employment, “गरि खान देउ” extends to “गरि जान देउ” which would mean ‘Let us leave to live’. This is particularly pertinent now because our international labour market is so shaky. Because access to Nepal’s biggest migrant destinations are in jeopardy, labour diplomacy that puts workers at the centre is now more important than ever.

Malaysia had been closed for almost two years, and it recently issued a ten-point list for recruitment agencies that seems to favour the better endowed recruiters while displacing smaller ones that care about worker welfare and recruitment standards.

After the GenZ protests,



the UAE stopped issuing visas to Nepali workers, ostensibly because of jailbreaks and looted weapons. They have reportedly begun allowing it recently, pending attested police reports.

While the preference of Nepali youth may be shifting toward Europe, in terms of scale and accessibility especially for those with low education, limited English skills, or little work experience, traditional destinations in the Gulf and Malaysia are crucial and continue to make up a major share of overall migration.

But the way many leave for work abroad can be considered ‘compromised migration’. The lack of choices abroad is not necessarily the absence of rewarding options globally, where there are severe worker shortages and unfulfilled vacancies, but rather our inability to

seize those opportunities.

The Japan Specified Skilled Worker scheme, for example, is an underutilised migrant labour pathway due to lack of procedural clarity. Nepalis do not need to look for a backdoor as students or trainees, because Tokyo has opened the front door and designed a work scheme to address labor shortages.

Where it has worked, like with the Employment Permit Scheme (EPS) for South Korea, there are stories of transformation. There are pilot innovations for Nepali workers in Korea, including for their reintegration back in Nepal.

The UK-Nepal G2G pilot initiative did not require any fees and offered transparent terms of employment. It was for a quota of 100 nurses, but only 40 managed to meet the criteria. With or without well-executed labour mobility

schemes, people still migrate and gain from it. Because migrating, despite the costs, hassles and struggle, still allow for earnings that are relatively better and regular.

But ‘better’ is a comparative term, the outcomes may be better than in Nepal, but not as good as they could be abroad if we had access to better implemented bilateral labour partnerships and a more competent and honest labour mobility industry.

Evidence shows that much of Nepal’s poverty reduction can be attributed to remittances -- despite involving high cost, skill mismatch, limited choice of good employers or decent jobs, weak labour diplomacy, and a failure to attract top employers.

Fixing the foreign employment sector need not be at odds with fixing the domestic labour market.

When the Nepali diaspora does well, Nepal does well. Remittances far outperform FDI and foreign aid, are more resilient and directly reach families.

People leave and will continue to leave to live. But where to? How? For what kind of jobs? What are the returns? At what cost? And what safety protections are in place?

Despite the possibilities for better life outcomes that migration offers, why are there no active demands from the public for good emigration? Immigration is a politically divisive topic in many migrant receiving countries. But in Nepal the duress to leave (बाध्यता) has become part of our public narrative — while the compulsion to choose less rewarding overseas opportunities by migrants has not.

Even the new faces, new voices that have emerged after the GenZ protests refer to migration largely as an outcome of state failure, a problem that needs to be solved. This is not surprising because people are leaving and villages are emptying. Such perceptions are not baseless, but are rooted in stories of abuse that migrants face overseas.

Without romanticising बिदेश or legitimising struggles workers face overseas, migration has enabled transformation for countless Nepalis who did not want to be confined by circumstances of birth.

Considering youth aspiration, the demographic shift that have expanded temporary labour programs globally, and the immense power of the Nepali diaspora waiting to be unlocked, “गरि खान देउ” should have a beyond-border outlook. If not for more migration, certainly for better migration. 📌

*Upasana Khadka heads Migration Lab, a social enterprise aimed at making migration outcomes better for workers and their families. Labour Mobility is a regular column in Nepali Times.*

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# Nepali migrant workers rebuild

How survivors of the earthquake on 3 November 2023 have found new hope for the future in Malaysia



## DIASPORA DIARIES 74

This is the 74<sup>th</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.

Excerpts from conversations with Malaysian-based workers from Jajarkot, hired under a responsible recruitment drive 18 months ago. Some of the candidates were interviewed last year on the first anniversary of the 3 November 2023 earthquake.



ONWARD: Jeevan Shahi, Janak Bahadur Singh, Khadak Singh and friends at Kathmandu airport in 2024 before leaving for Malaysia.

### Khadak Singh

After the earthquake I came to Malaysia, and with my earnings I have paid off our Rs800,000 loan for my father's medical expenses. I have also bought land in Kohalpur.

Paying off the loans is a big relief to the family, since the debt trap created a lot of tension in the household. Now we are free from that burden.

I plan to stay here for another five years or so. Other than the first tranche of the Rs50,000 we received from the Nepal government to build a temporary shelter, there has been no other help. We added some of our own money to make decent temporary living quarters.

Uncertainty about government reconstruction guidelines for more support has delayed our plans to rebuild our house. I don't have

much expectation, but will build a house regardless in Kohalpur and bring my family down.

I continue to write songs in Malaysia, and when the time and situation allow it, I plan to record them in a studio. When I last migrated to Malaysia, it was just to get out of Nepal and I did not achieve much. This time, I am planning better and working hard to achieve my goals.



### Jeevan Shahi

As the eldest son, I support 10 family members: my wife and two sons, my parents, my brother's family while he prepares for the civil service exam, and my sister who is a student back home.

I am content to be a migrant worker overseas helping 10 family members. My sons are now 14 and 12. They are growing up quickly, and I miss them. Mostly, I miss my elderly parents. They tell me they think of me when they are eating good food, especially when my mother cooks meat. My mother also misses me when there are fresh apples or cucumbers from the field. I worry about my parents the most.

I recently sent them a smart phone which my father is still trying to learn how to use. Until recently, I could only see their faces when my family members were visiting them. I watched them this Dasain, and it made me homesick. Once my father learns to use the phone we can have more frequent video calls.

Before coming to Malaysia, I had only gone to India to work. But when I saw that we did not have to pay any recruitment fees for this job, I thought, why not give it a try. It turned out to be a good decision.

Otherwise, I would have gone to India where I could earn Rs20,000 at most. Here, with overtime, I can earn over Rs100,000. With my savings, I have bought land near the market in Kohalpur where I moved a few years back. I plan to build a house and run a small ice cream business there.

I have to think about a viable business plan because unlike in the mountains, you have to even buy water in the Tarai. My father has suggested we bring down two of our buffalos from Jajarkot to Kohalpur for the ice cream venture. I am not impressed with the watered down milk from the dairy.

I will have to invest in ice-cream makers, refrigerators, physical facilities and several pushcarts. I will engage all my family members, and it will be a lucrative business.

I vividly remember the earthquake two years ago. It still makes my body tremble. We had gone to Jajarkot to my parents' house from Kohalpur. We were fast asleep when the earthquake struck at 11PM. When the house started shaking, we thought it was ghosts.

We rushed outside. There was no phone signal, and people were blowing whistles. We dared not go back to the house. It was difficult to go to sleep. It was Jajarkot's black day.

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# lives



## Janak Bahadur Singh

Within a month of arriving in Malaysia, my mother fell sick. She needed surgery and had to be rushed to Nepalganj and medical costs were more than Rs400,000. We took loans from colleagues in Malaysia to cover the costs.

Having a family member abroad makes it easier for folks back home to borrow money. I have now paid off my loans, and my mother is doing better. I had to postpone plans to rebuild our house, and had just paid an advance to builders. But just before Dasain, my brother's two daughters were swept away by a river in Nepalganj and drowned. We are in mourning and have postponed construction for six months.

Since we will not be using my savings immediately for the house, I might invest it for my sister's plan to migrate to Japan.



## Bir Bahadur Karki

When I was working in Saudi Arabia, I had once visited a goat farm in the desert. After seeing how 150 goats were raised in such an arid place, it made me think of everything we could do back in our village in Nepal where there is more vegetation.

These thoughts kept recurring, and I was so determined to run a livestock farm back home that I resigned from my job, and returned to Nepal.

Many advised me I could get better returns if I invested elsewhere, but I put all my money into buying land and building sheds for goats, chicken, and fish ponds. I did not have much experience, but started with different goat breeds. But they got sick and I suffered heavy losses.

I sought help from the government, but there was



no support besides a small grant and recognition as a 'Best Farmer'. I struggled to pay my taxes, so I decided to migrate overseas so I could save enough to invest in agriculture in Nepal.

My heart is still in it, and my only hope is to one day become the best livestock farmer. So far, I have saved Rs1.5 million and am planning to eventually set up a dairy farm in Nepal.

My wife is already doing lemon and orange agriculture back home with saplings from the government although we don't have much income from that business yet.

I advise her from Malaysia, and we both discuss and make decisions together. I am confident that we will do better in future.

My family in Jajarkot is still living in a temporary shelter. There has been no housing grant, and the guidelines are confusing.

My wife was expecting when I came to Malaysia, and my son was born three months after I came to Malaysia. I was extremely nervous when my wife went into labour. When my sister-in-law called to tell me that the baby was born, I was relieved and shared the good news with my friends.

I plan to stay on in Malaysia since I have loans to pay off. I will be home next Dasain, and that is when I will get to see my son for the first time.



## Srijung B K

It has been two years since the earthquake, and 18 months since I came here. We have not received support from the government other than the Rs50,000 to build a temporary shelter.

With my overseas earnings, we have bought land in the market area since the family home is in a remote place. My long-term plan is to start an agro-vet shop and poultry farm, for which the new location is more suitable. I hope to start building a house in the coming year.

This is my first overseas work, and I plan to stay for another six or seven years if all goes well. I miss my family and the village environment back in Jajarkot, but it helps that many of us from my village are also here.

Remittances have helped my family cover household expenses. My father used to support the family with his carpentry job but his health is failing as he ages. So I have stepped up.



**घर कर्जा**

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# Sunmaya wins World Trail Majors title



PHOTOS: WORLD TRAIL MAJORS

Nepal's ultra-marathoner Sunmaya Budha won her fifth gold medal of 2025 at the Ultra-Trail Cape Town 100km championship in South Africa on 22 November, claiming the World Trail Majors title. This is the biggest achievement ever by a trail runner from Nepal.

Budha completed the 99km trail with an elevation gain of 4,676m in 12 hours 25 minutes and 55 seconds, and was nearly an hour ahead of her second-placed competitor.

The 27-year-old endurance runner has done six races this year, and has racked up outstanding performances.

In September, Budha earned a silver medal at the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Mountain and Trail Running Championships, becoming the first Asian athlete to have ever finished that high in the Long Trail World Championship.

Budha then won golds at the Anta Hong Kong 100 in January, the Chengdu Trail 60 in March, the Ultra-Trail Mount Yun 30K in

April and Annapurna Marathon 42K in June.

Budha was born to a farming family from Jumla, and trained as an ultra marathoner on Nepal's rugged mountain terrain.

"I have traveled to many countries, but the best place to train is in my village in Jumla," Budha said after her win last week. "I have a big team supporting me, and this win is for everyone who believes Nepali runners deserve a future as professional athletes."



## SUNMAYA BUDHA 2025 SEASON

- Anta Hong Kong 100 (18 January)**
  - Distance: 102km, 4,882m elevation gain
  - Result: 1<sup>st</sup> place (Winner)
  - Time: 11:11:47
  - New course record (27 minutes faster than previous record)
- Chengdu Trail 60 (29 March)**
  - Distance: 58.2km, 2,650m elevation gain
  - Result: 1<sup>st</sup> place (Winner)
  - Time: 05:41:48
  - Overall: 9<sup>th</sup> out of 926 runners
- Ultra-Trail Mount Yun by UTMB - 30K (20 April)**
  - Distance: 29.7km, 1,751m elevation gain
  - Result: 1<sup>st</sup> place (Winner)
  - Time: 03:10:12
  - Overall: 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 1,144 runners
- Annapurna Marathon 42K (3 June)**
  - Distance: 42 km
  - Result: 1<sup>st</sup> place (Winner)
- World Mountain and Trail Running Championships - Long Trail (27 September)**
  - Location: Canfranc-Pirineos, Spain
  - Distance: 82 km, 5,413m elevation gain
  - Result: 2<sup>nd</sup> place (Silver Medal)
  - Time: 10:23:03
  - Winner: Katie Schide (USA) - 9:57:59
- Ultra-Trail Cape Town 100k (22 November)**
  - Distance: 99km, 4,676m elevation gain
  - Result: 1<sup>st</sup> place (Winner) - World Trail Majors Champion
  - Time: 12:25:55
  - Nearly one hour ahead of 2<sup>nd</sup> place

Budha is part of the Asia Pacific Adventure Group, led by team director Ryan S. Blair and coach Andy Dubois. She is ranked world 8<sup>th</sup> for 100km category events and 17<sup>th</sup> in the world by the International Trail Running Association (ITRA).

"As countries with strong sporting traditions celebrate their athletes as national treasures, Nepal must do the same, honouring runners not only when they win, but throughout their careers," said Preeti Khattri of Nepal Trail Series and team lead for the Nepali contingent.

She added: "Athletes like Sunmaya carry the nation's identity, discipline, and resilience onto the world stage." 🇳🇵




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