



DIWAKARCHETTRI

## BATTLE OF BALLOTS

One of the great mysteries of these polls is why Deuba clings on to the Maoists to the detriment of his own party. One theory: it is geopolitics. Beijing is supposedly bent on reuniting the Maoists and UML, while the US and India are trying their best to prevent a monolithic Communist party.

Whatever the reason, this has meant we have strange bedfellows on the hustings. Deuba and Dahal are on the campaign trail together. Deuba has ostracised colleagues who refused to support coalition candidates and are contesting as independents. The UML's Oli has also ousted party rivals.

**FIFA WORKER'S CUP**  
**EDITORIAL**  
**PAGE 2**

But it is the women, Dalit, indigenous communities and other minorities across party lines who are the biggest casualties as the two

coalitions circumvent constitutional quotas for them.

In a mature democracy, coalitions are formed after election results are out. But Nepal's pre-poll cartels (called "political plotting" by one analyst) have rigged the votes so that it is impossible for the Big Boys to lose (page 10-11).

The 2022 elections will be remembered for bringing together parties with diametrically opposed ideologies just to ensure that the kakistocracy remains in power. Candidates have been forced by party HQ to ally with people that they ran against in 2017.

Some parties have given tickets to survivors of Nepal's Maoist insurgency. But the electoral alliance has meant that the parties of perpetrators and victims have been forced to fight on the same side in the battle of the ballots – just so their party bosses get to be prime ministers again.

On social media, voters have been urging each other to replace superannuated politicians with competent new leadership. But it remains to be seen if Nepalis will indeed say #NoNotAgain in the voting booths.

**FULL STORY PAGE 10-11**

### ● Shristi Karki

“For too long we have been taken for a ride by politicians. It is time we took politicians for a ride.”

A group of balladeers were singing to the accompaniment of traditional instruments one late afternoon this week in Kathmandu old town square.

Across Nepal, new political aspirants and voters are trying to build critical mass for radical change in who governs Nepal after 20 November. But how much they can loosen the stranglehold of the established parties and their two coalition clusters this time we will

only know when the results are out.

During local elections in May, Nepal's five-party ruling coalition extended the alliance it formed to oust former Prime Minister K P Oli into an electoral partnership. It paid off: Prime Minister Sher Bahadur's Nepali Congress (NC) won big, it allowed Pushpa Kamal Dahal's Maoist Centre to gain a stronger foothold, and give the new Unified Socialists the relevance it needed.

But not everyone fared as well. Madhes-based parties like Upendra Yadav's JSP split from ex-Maoist Baburam Bhattarai after a less-than-stellar

showing in the polls. Mahanta Thakur's LSP also underperformed.

Rabindra Mishra stepped down from the progressive Bibeksheel Sajha party after dismal election results to join the royal-right RPP which is more in line with his views on monarchy and federalism. The JSP and LSP also switched allegiance.

In the run up to 20 November, there was some doubt about whether the governing coalition would hold. Analysts and some top NC leaders felt the party could win on its own, and did not need to team up with the Maoists.



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# FIFA Worker's Cup

● **Meenakshi Ganguly** and **Mohna Ansari**

On 18 December 2022, the Men's World Cup football final will be held at Qatar's Lusail Stadium. It will mark the end of a journey that started in December 2010 when Qatar was awarded the tournament hosting rights.

Millions of migrant workers have toiled to make the 2022 World Cup possible, building key infrastructure, including the stadiums in Qatar. However, these workers have always been at the margins, and the authorities have been less than responsive to their abusive work conditions.

Qatar's Labour Minister recently rejected proposals for a remedy fund for abuses faced by migrant workers, including uncompensated deaths, further highlighting the lack of recognition for the people who perform the vast majority of the country's labour. FIFA, football's governing body, has not made a decision.



But South Asian governments, too, share responsibility for these abuses. They wasted many opportunities to collectively push for reforms to address shared concerns, including numerous unexplained, uninvestigated and uncompensated deaths, high recruitment fees, and wage abuses.

The preparations for the tournament owe a lot to South Asia. It is not just that the footballs are made in Sialkot, Pakistan. Every state-of-the-art stadium in Qatar, and all of the \$220 billion in surrounding infrastructure, is largely built by South Asians. Migrant workers from the region are also employed in stadiums, hotels, malls and airports, providing key services. The remittances these workers send to their families are often the only source of income for many families.

FIFA, football's global governing body, has been a complacent enabler of abuses, while Qatar, the host country, has faced well-deserved criticism for the high human cost of the Road to 2022. FIFA did not carry out human rights due diligence over the abusive kafala labour sponsorship system in Qatar, or

the prohibitions in Qatar that keep workers from forming unions or striking.

After years of pressure, the Qataris introduced reforms that partially addressed key abuses. The government set up a Workers' Support and Insurance Fund that became operational in 2020 to ensure that workers are paid even when companies fail to do so. Over \$320 million has been disbursed as of September 2022.

Companies affiliated with Qatar's Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, the body responsible for planning and delivering World Cup infrastructure, have committed to reimburse over \$28 million in recruitment fees to 48,814 workers in Qatar. While positive, its impact is inadequate to cover most workers.

Qatar deserves credit for attempting reforms, but the benefits have been limited due to their late introduction, narrow scope, or poor enforcement. Qatar and FIFA still have a chance to shape the legacy of the World Cup. They have the resources and responsibility to remedy these abuses.

FIFA has provided a total of \$260 million of what it calls 'legacy funds' for humanitarian causes to host countries for three previous tournaments: in South Africa (2010), Brazil (2014) and Russia (2018). Qatar should be no different. It needs

## Migrant workers who built Qatar's World Cup infrastructure deserve, need compensation

to set up a remedy fund for abused workers and the families of those who died, unless it wants its legacy of the 2022 World Cup to be about worker abuse.

There is one last opportunity for South Asian governments to back the call for a remedy, and to work to ensure stronger protections for their workers. In particular, they are well placed to respond to Qatari authorities who claimed there is no data to establish these funds, with the Qatar Labour Minister asking: "Where are the victims, do you have names of the victims, how can you get these numbers?"

The problem of establishing a compensation fund for migrant workers and their families has never been about data, which is available, but about political will.

Only if there is remedy will this tumultuous, 12-year journey end on a more humane note on 18 December, the day of the final of the 2022 World Cup, which also happens to be International Migrants Day and Qatar's National Day.

*Meenakshi Ganguly is the South Asia director at Human Rights Watch and Mohna Ansari is former member of Nepal's National Human Rights Commission.*

## ONLINE PACKAGES



LAKE RISK

As Nepal's glacial lakes expand, there is a danger of them bursting due to water pressure, or because of earthquakes and avalanches falling into them. As the average temperature in the mountains rises by 0.056°Celsius every year, the threat of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) will only grow. Watch video on our YouTube channel and read our continued climate special package this week on *pages 6-7*.



BAD AIR

Winter is upon us. So is the peak air pollution season. Kathmandu Valley for the past two weeks has been getting smoke from crop residue burning in India which combined with the capital's own pollution has led to AQI levels rising to 200 in some parts of the city. Watch this video and subscribe to our YouTube channel for more original multimedia content.

### MACHAPUCHHRE

Are we prepared for the repercussions of reopening Machapuchhre to climbing? Do not test the fury of nature ('To open Machapuchhre for mountaineering, or not?', Juddha Bahadur Gurung, nepalitimes.com).

**Bhavita Karma Bhumo**

- Culture and traditions need to be respected.

**Lesley Junlakan**

- Some mountains should be left alone. This is one.

**David Durkan**

### PUTALI BAJE

I have always looked up to and admired Colin Smith since I got to know him in 1977 ('A life dedicated to Nepal's butterflies, Anil Rai', nepalitimes.com). He possesses knowledge and a gentle personality, and he knew everything about butterflies. An unforgettable man. Best wishes and prayers for Putali Baje.

**Ben-Erik Ness**

- Putali Baje is a man to be honoured and remembered.

**Samuel Sharmila Budhath**

### STREET DOGS

Be kind to dogs every day, not just on Kukur Tihar ('Kathmandu's street-smart dogs', Sonia Awale, #1133).

**Chun Gurung**

- Great article. My experience with Nepali street dogs is that they are affectionate, loving and loyal sweet babies.

**Rosanna Salerno**

### ASHOK BANSKOTA

So wonderful to see this profile about our beloved and inspiring HRDC founder Ashok Banskota ('A life devoted to healing', page 5).

**American Himalayan Foundation**

### THE ASS

LMAF. A mixture of irony and reality about why Nepalis are so happy. ('Why Nepalis are so happy', Ass, #1134)

**Colette Moreau**

### EROTIC ART

In 1997, I took pictures of erotic sculptures in a small temple in Pharping, Kathmandu Valley ('Mimesis of love', Ashish Dhakal, #1134). They were painted. I never found a convincing explanation for them, and this article is interesting when it says those sculptures mixes serious tantric artefacts with shocking imaginary stuff for the sake of discouraging the ignorant.

**Etienne Loyon**

### NEPALI NURSES

Not sure how Nepal can have a surplus of nurses given the state of the country's healthcare, particularly outside Kathmandu and the remote regions ('Nepali nurses now Britain-bound', Radha Adhikari, #1134).

**Adrian Price**

### VULTURES

Fascinating insight into one of the cultures in Nepal ('Reviving Himalayan vulture and culture', nepalitimes.com).

**Christine MacDonald**

### MANUSHI YAMI BHATTARAI

How is the Bhattarai family connected to the everyday Nepali ('A daughter also rises', nepalitimes.com)?

**Abhishek Shah**

### GREEN KTM

This initiative to plant trees along streets is very important, and needs to be implemented all over Kathmandu ('Campaigns to green Kathmandu's Ring Road', page 4).

**Trek Dream Nepal**

### TIKTOK

TikTok has taken personal data from Nepali users by storm too ('TikTok has taken Nepal by storm', Tayama Rai, nepalitimes.com).

**Tee M Vee**

## 20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

### Unity in Disunity

*Prithvi Narayan Shah might have preached to Nepalis about unity in diversity but our politicians clearly did not get the memo. In fact, throughout our recent political history, they have tried their best to divide and conquer. Take Nepal's current make-up, break-up politics of party splits and mergers devoid of ideology or dogma, leading up to the federal and provincial elections slated for 20 November.*

*Back in 2002, we published an editorial on why Nepalis, than any other people, are prone to disunity which might as well have been written today except there is now even more distrust and disenchantment than ever before. Excerpt from the editorial published 20 years ago this week from issue #118, 8-14 November 2003:*

There is something in the Nepali character that makes us more divisive and prone to disunity than any other people. Perhaps our shared history is so faint, its symbols so ephemeral, our future so abstract, that it breeds individualism. The "patriotic songs" every morning on radio extol the virtues of the impeyan pheasant, Mt Everest and Lumbini. But they sound like parodies.



Communist parties the world over are known for their divisiveness, but even by international standards, our comrades have set world records in disunity.

Congress vs Congress vs Congress, UML vs Congress, UML vs ML, ML vs ML, RPP vs RPP, ironically, even the leftist party that called itself "Unity Centre" eventually split. Usually the reasons are not ideological, but personal envy, jealousy and pride.

Somehow, the Maoists have not split yet. But give them time. They are Nepalis after all.

Democracy should celebrate differences of opinion but in Nepal, people tend to disagree with the person. And because we take things so personally, we haven't as a nation been able to transform our genuine and deeply-felt sense of national pride into a unity of purpose. We will probably keep on fighting each other until there is nothing left to fight over.

**From archive material of *Nepali Times* of the past 20 years, site search: [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com)**



## WHAT'S TRENDING



### The delta of kāma

by *Ashish Dhakal*

There are around 60 temples, *falcha*, and secular buildings with erotic carvings in and around the Kathmandu Valley. They are explicit, expressive, and their meaning just as elusive. Read the full story online.

**f Most reached and shared on Facebook**



### Nepali-origin American wins US state election

by *Nepali Times*

On the November 8 US mid-term election, first-generation Nepali health and climate activist Sarahana Shrestha won a New York state assembly seat. Shrestha, who became a US citizen in 2019, championed a climate-related platform focused on developing a clean, renewable and affordable power supply. Read more on page 10.

**t Most popular on Twitter**



### Nepali nurses now Britain-bound

by *Radha Adhikari*

Nursing workforce managers and researchers in Nepal, Britain and in international agencies have drawn attention to the fact that the nurses are being diverted from greater need back in Nepal to fulfil the UK's shortfall. Join the discussion.

**💬 Most commented**

### Proud to give back to Nepal

by *Prakash Katuwal*

Nepali chef Prakash Katuwal recounts his journey from working in China to co-owning a restaurant in Kathmandu, proving that hard work eventually pays off. Read Katuwal's story on nepalitimes.com

**🔴 Most visited online page**

## QUOTE TWEETS



**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**

On Wednesday, a 6.6 magnitude tremor rocked western Nepal, which hasn't seen a major earthquake in 600 years, killing at least six people. The earthquake mainly affected the far-western districts in Nepal and was also felt in cities in Northern India including Delhi.



**Mark Pickett @DrMarkPickett**

Sad. Still a lot of tension built up along fault lines. 6.6 is big enough to bring down houses but not big enough to release much of that tension.



**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**

Nepal has to stop playing the victim all the time and invoke climate change for 'loss and damage' compensation. We should instead put our minds (and money) into implementing domestic low-carbon policies. #COP27



**licensed to drive (a scooter) @neesh\_chal**

Good luck getting Nepali leaders to not take the easiest route of action.



**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**

A large majority of deaths of Nepalis in Qatar are attributed to unexplained causes. 'Died in his sleep' (सुत्ता सुन्दै मर्यो) has become a colloquial Nepali term and the fatalities were attributed to 'natural causes'.



**iMan @crypto\_iman**

While watching #QatarWorldCup2022 don't forget to think of those who lost their life as modern slaves in #Qatar. #BoycottQatar2022



**This Isn't Football @IsntFootball**

The true legacy of #Qatar2022. @FIFA must compensate all their families! #ThisIsntFootball #PayUpFIFA <http://ThisIsntFootball.org>



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# Daraz back with 11.11

Daraz Nepal's 2022 edition will feature up to 80% discounts in over 1.1 million products from 15,000+ sellers. In the lead-up to the 11.11 shopping bonanza, *Nepali Times* chatted with Daraz Managing Director Aanchal Kunwar, Chief Customer Officer Samjhana Subedi, and Chief Commercial Officer Temple Pyakuryal. Excerpts:

## How does the 11.11 campaign tie into Daraz's goals?

**Aanchal Kunwar:** Our vision as a company is to uplift communities through the power of commerce and 11.11 is one of the key events to do exactly that. It is about bringing sellers, brands, buyers together to celebrate online shopping in the best way.

This is the biggest online shopping festival that we look forward to every year. Our preparations for this event start months in advance where we work closely with our sellers to curate the best selection, partner with banks and sellers to bring the best offers for our customers, ramp up our operations to ensure timely delivery, and gear up our customer service team to address any customer concerns during the campaign. Besides the 80% discount on 1.1 million products from 15,000+ sellers, we have also partnered with 20 payment providers and have 11 Mi tv for 11 lucky winners.



## What is the easiest way for customers to get support when shopping from Daraz during 11.11?

**Samjhana Subedi:** Customer experience lies at the core of all the decisions at Daraz, not only during 11.11 but throughout the year. We've been prepping for this by making sure that all

our executives are well-versed in the processes and systems setup, the various types of scenarios that can crop up, and possible quick fixes. This will make sure that customers will have the smoothest and quickest possible resolution possible. As in the past, we're expecting customers to take full advantage of the biggest sale of the year and to cater to customer inquiries, we have trained over 100 executives specifically for the 11.11 campaign.

Our Live Chat services will be available from midnight till 2AM for those who are looking to grab early sales, and again from 7AM till midnight on 11 November. Customers can also connect through Instant Messaging on the app.



## How has Daraz prepared for 11.11 from a commercial perspective?

**Temple Pyakuryal:** Providing good deals and quality products, while ensuring the best customer experience, is at the heart of everything that we do here at Daraz. With the exponential increase in

e-commerce in Nepal, the scale of our campaigns have also increased. We are constantly working with all brands and products to ensure the best prices, the largest variety of products, and trusted quality. We have been working with many brands to get exclusive deals, launches and offers in categories like electronics, beauty, fashion, home decor and many more. Goldstar, Baltra, WoW, Lotto, Basemark are joining this 11.11 with special offers.

## Turkish to use biofuel

As the Climate Summit COP27 is underway in Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt, Turkish Airlines has been awarded the Airline Sustainability Innovation of the Year by CAPA-Centre for Aviation, for its contribution to developing the world's first carbon negative Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) using hydro-processed fatty acids and hydrothermal liquefaction methods. The airline's Microalgae Based Sustainable Bio-Jet Fuel Project worked with scientists at Boğaziçi University to produce the world's first carbon negative SAF.

"As the airline that flies to more countries than any other carrier in the world, we appreciate the sustainable aviation fuel as a key element in our sustainability strategy on reducing aviation's environmental impact," said Turkish's Chief Investment & Technology Officer Levent Konukcu (pictured above, right) at the award ceremony.

He added: "Beyond the use of biofuels, the fact that our support to scientific studies in the production of this fuel is crowned with an award here today makes us proud as it proves the correctness of the steps we have taken. As the Turkish Airlines family, we will continue to invest and support sustainable aviation fuels, and focus on the future of our world."

Turkish Airlines plans to use this biofuel in its flights after the engine tests which are to be carried out by Turkish Technic in Istanbul, making it one of the few global companies to do so. Said Konukcu: "Being one of the signatories of the SAF Declaration proves how much we focus on sustainable aviation fuels in the fight against climate change."



## Ncell greening Kathmandu

One of the more visible examples of public-private-partnership in re-greening Kathmandu has been the section of the Ring Road between Balkhu and Ekantakuna in Lalitpur. The manicured grass on highway embankments, foliage and flowers are initiatives of the telecom company Ncell in collaboration with the Department of Forest and Soil Conservation and the Lalitpur Municipality.

The telecom company will ultimately landscape the 10km stretch of the Ring Road from Kalanki to Koteswor. It has ensured the maintenance of the green belt with 90 full-time workers since it launched the project in July, and it will have more than 6,000 trees in the next four years.



"This greening initiative will contribute to a healthy environment for the community as a whole and support Ncell's climate action goals," said Ncell CEO Andy Chong. "This is an excellent example of public-private partnership and how we can collectively realise projects like these."

Ncell says it hopes that other corporate groups as well as communities in Kathmandu will replicate its PPP model to work with local municipalities to green the city, create foundations for businesses to take up social causes, and also help companies transition from fossil fuels to beneficial renewable ones.

Earlier, Ncell had planted 50,000 trees in 33 hectares of degraded land in Dhanusha, following which the government declared the protected area an 'Illicit Felling and Open Grazing Free Zone'.

## prabhu BANK



## Manthali-Lukla

After Kathmandu-Lukla flights were halted due to congestion, Manthali airfield has taken off operating 11 flights to and from Lukla a day. In October this year, there were 334 flights from Manthali to Lukla. The flight time is also reduced from 30 minutes to 15 in Tara, Summit and Sita Air, although passengers have to take the 3-hour drive to Ramechhap.

## Petroleum price hike

The Indian Oil Corporation has hiked the price of petrol, diesel, kerosene and aviation fuel in its new price list to Nepal. There has been an increase of Rs0.61 paisa per litre in petrol, Rs5.76 in diesel, Rs4 in kerosene, and Rs4.77 in jet fuel. The price of LP gas has come down a bit. NOC has however decided not to hike the price at pumps.

## Cold chain for Nepal

The Ministry of Health and the Department of Health Services, with non-profit One Heart Worldwide and the support of Direct Relief, have set up Nepal's first Rs27 million cold chain system management building to store Covid-19 vaccines and stockpile other emergency vaccines. The building accommodates one walk-in freezer, two coolers, office space, additional storage and a generator house. The facility will also have an ultra-low freezer room with temperatures up to -25° Celsius.



## B&B turns 25

B&B Hospital set up by doctors Jagadish Lal Baidya and Ashok Banskota celebrated its 25th anniversary this week. Baidya and Banskota are also involved in volunteering, with Banskota having founded the HRDC Children Hospital (page 5) that provides free orthopaedic treatment to underprivileged children. B&B also trains postgraduate doctors, many of whom assist at HDRC. The hospital now is preparing to open a new wing.

## Roadhouse lucky draw

Roadhouse marked its 30th year with a lucky draw for 11 prizes and a pizza carnival. Winners won prizes



including Rs200,000 in cash, a round trip to Istanbul, diamond earrings and more. The pizza carnival is scheduled on 12 November, to be held in Pokhara.

## Mishra at StanChart

Standard Chartered Bank has appointed Sarbendra Mishra as the head of its financial markets and treasury. Mishra has over 24 years of banking experience and had previously served as a group treasurer for Sunrise Bank.



# A life devoted to healing

Much-awarded Nepali paediatric orthopaedic surgeon has public service in his bones

When people who have gone on to devote their lives to public service are asked who has been their greatest inspiration while growing up, many cite parents, teachers or spiritual gurus.

For Nepal's noted paediatric orthopaedic surgeon Ashok Banskota, the inspiration was an author few today have heard of, and a book even fewer have read: *Adventures in Two Worlds*, the 1952 biography of Scottish doctor and novelist A J Cronin and his dual career in a Welsh coalmine.

"The story of a doctor rushing about in a motorcycle to treat miners somehow left a powerful imprint on my mind," says Banskota, recalling days spent in the library of St Xavier's School in Godavari in the 1960s where Jesuit teachers also inculcated values of service, integrity and perseverance.

Those ideals have been the guiding principles of the Nepali surgeon who was awarded the SICOT TKS Gold Medal for Outstanding Work by an Orthopaedic Surgeon in a Developing Country at a ceremony in Kuala Lumpur in September. The prize is given by the Brussels based SICOT (Société Internationale de Chirurgie Orthopédique et de Traumatologie) and named after the veteran Indian surgeon T K Shanmugasundaram.

This is just the latest of many awards Banskota has been conferred over a career of nearly 50 years. After getting his MBBS from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS) in Delhi, Banskota went to the United States where he specialised at various hospitals including Johns Hopkins.

He came back to Nepal in 1977, where he had to pull powerful strings to get appointed as a 'medical officer' at Bir Hospital because officials would not recognise his American degree. After being discouraged and given the run-around, Banskota recalls tearing up his appointment letter in disgust.

"Come hell or high water, I made up my mind never to work for an outfit that was so unmotivated in a place where the need was so great," he says.

Banskota then volunteered at

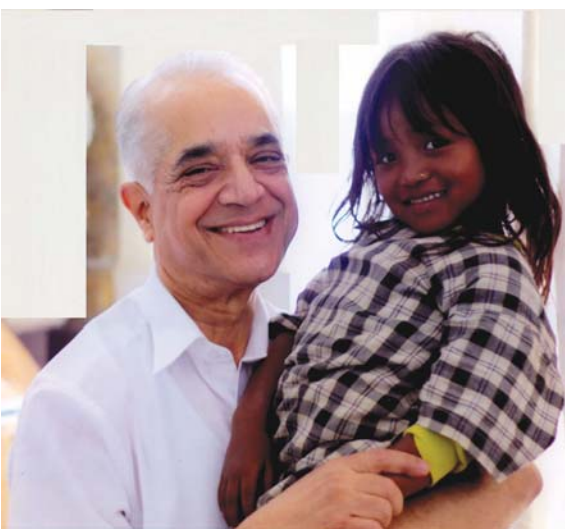


Shanta Bhawan as a paediatric surgeon under Archie Fletcher, and felt that he had finally found his calling in life – helping children from underprivileged families who could not afford treatment. After Shanta Bhawan merged with Patan Hospital in 1982, Banskota turned down an offer to join Fletcher in Seattle, and continued volunteering at Anandaban Leprosy Hospital doing hand reconstruction, and at the Scheer Memorial Hospital in Banepa.

It took another seven years of fund-raising and painstaking preparation for Banskota to finally set up his dream project: the Hospital and Rehabilitation Center for Disabled Children (HRDC) in Banepa in 1992.

"As a young surgeon looking for challenges, I couldn't have asked for more," Banskota recalls. "The plight of the children was heart-breaking, and the personal sense of fulfilment of having the privilege to make them better was the greatest reward I could have. Yet, there was so much more to do and so little to do it with."

The hilltop facility in Banepa



was also a great escape from the grime and congestion of Kathmandu for Banskota, who worked on a parallel project to set up the private B&B Hospital with fellow-physician Jagadish Lal Baidya.

Juggling two jobs was not easy. When not supervising construction and overseeing administrative work, he was operating nearly non-stop in the surgery from early morning till

late at night. "I did not have much of a family life," he admits.

HDRC offers free medical care for children with congenital and trauma-related disabilities, infections in its six operating theatres, and offers physiotherapy and rehabilitation. Since the children are away from home for so long, the hospital also runs a school, so they do not miss out on studies.

This is a unique model, where a private city hospital supports a rural charity facility. Besides Banepa, HRDC also runs a Community Based Rehabilitation program with four satellite centres and mobile clinics all over Nepal. In the past nearly 40 years, HRDC has changed for the better the lives of 105,000 children, nearly half of them female.

More than in Nepal, it appears that Banskota's contribution is recognised internationally. Besides the SICOT TKS Award he received the World of Children Health Award in 2011, the Stars Impact Award in 2014 and a citation in 2016 from the World of Children Hero Award.

HRDC employs former patients like Juddha Nepali on whom Banskota performed hip surgery when he was 13 years old in 1992. Today Nepali is a technician in the prosthetic department. He says, "There is a place in Nepal where children with physical disability can receive world-class treatment irrespective of their caste, ethnicity or economic status. I am a living example of that."

Sumitra was born in remote western Nepal with scoliosis, a deformity on her back and was often stigmatised by peers. A visiting HRDC mobile clinic came to her village, and took her to Banepa for spine surgery. Sumitra's life has been transformed: she finished college, passed her civil service exam and now has a government job.

HRDC's Community Based Rehabilitation has conducted more than 30 camps in 22 districts all over Nepal, operating and offering post-operative physiotherapy to nearly 30,000 patients just in 2021.

Ashok Banskota is not one of those flamboyant surgeons who crave celebrityhood. At 74, he is more at home in his clinic or operating theatre, but now devotes more time mentoring young surgeons and health workers, and inculcating in them the same sense of commitment to public service that motivated him all his life.

And when he needed spine surgery himself recently, Banskota got the doctors he trained to operate on him in his own hospital.

He says, "Whatever is good enough for my patients, is good enough for me." 🇳🇵

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# Walking the talk on climate

The rest of Nepal can learn from the Khumbu on ways to cope with climate breakdown



The water level in the 2km long Imja Glacier at about 5,000m has been reduced with a outlet weir.

KIRIL RUSEV



Ang Rita Sherpa above Pheriche, with the Chola Tso lake and Chola Tse peak peering over it.

THE PARTNERS NEPAL



Chola Tso lake was formed due to melt accumulation blocked by the moraine of a lateral glacier.

## It's sink or swim for the

### Poor planning, geopolitics and climate change complicate the integration of water management

● Kunda Dixit

The Himalaya is a hotspot in more ways than one. Climate breakdown is melting its ice at an unprecedented rate, countries that border the Himalaya are not in speaking terms, and the world's youngest mountain range is in a seismically active zone.

Geopolitics and geotectonics collide along the 2,400km Himalayan arc, even while its glaciers shrink and the snowline recedes. The Siachen Glacier at

6,000m elevation is the world's highest battlefield where the militaries of India and Pakistan have been eyeball-to-eyeball since 1984. Thousands of troops have died either because of altitude or by avalanches, few in actual fighting.

India and China have over 60,000 troops facing each other in a disputed part of Ladakh, and dozens on both sides were killed when clashes erupted in 2020.

Accelerated melting of Himalayan glaciers have created hundreds of new lakes along the mountains. Because they are dammed by fragile moraines, these are in danger of bursting — a risk that has been compounded by earthquake danger.

The climate crisis is a water crisis, and nowhere is this more acute than in the Himalaya. What happens at the UN Climate Summit (COP27) in Egypt this week will determine whether greenhouse gas emissions that thaw the Himalaya

will be reduced in the coming decade.

Some 2 billion people living downstream depend on rivers that originate in the Himalaya and the Tibetan Plateau. In fact, as the permanent ice in the Himalaya melts, water will be a strategic commodity that could further inflame geopolitical tensions in an already volatile region.

In their new monograph *Governing the 'Water Tower of Asia': The Case for a System of Integrated Knowledge for the Hindu Kush Himalaya*, Jayanta Bandyopadhyay and Sayanangshu Modak of the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in New Delhi make a strong case for integrating water management of the ten river basins of the Hindu Kush Himalaya mountain range.

The circulation of water vapour in the atmosphere, along rivers, and of underground water does not respect international

boundaries, but policies governing the water cycle are national in scope. The authors propose the creation of 'integrated knowledge' that is essential for combined management of water in future as the climate crisis magnifies current problems. Such knowledge has to be trans-boundary as well as trans-disciplinary, they argue.

In their study, Bandyopadhyay and Modak come up with the concept of SINK (System of Integrated Knowledge) that tries to transcend present fragmented planning to include inter-disciplinary knowledge.

'Nature organises itself in a systematic and integrated manner, (but) the reductionism that has predominated the contemporary governance paradigm interrupts nature's systems,' they write.

The Himalayan landscape is a 'climate-maker' that precipitates water from sky rivers as snow and rainfall. The ice on mountains

has accumulated over millennia, advancing and retreating with the Ice Ages, but the present glacial retreat is different because of its pace, and since it is caused by anthropogenic carbon build-up in the atmosphere.

Although ice and snow are more visible and get most of the attention in the climate debate, it is groundwater stored in deep aquifers and released slowly through perennial springs into rivers on which most people depend. In fact, besides being the 'Water Tower of Asia', the Himalaya has also been described as a gigantic sponge.

Both the ice and groundwater storage is now being impacted by global warming and the changes in landcover due to deforestation, haphazard infrastructure, or mining activities. The hydrology of Himalayan rivers from the Amu Darya to Brahmaputra, the Ganga and its Nepal tributaries, the Mekong, the Burmese rivers, and



● **Sonia Awale**

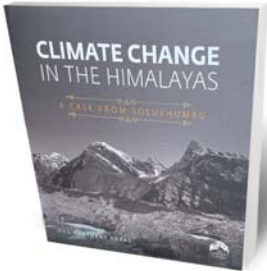
In the lead-up to the UN Climate Summit COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh this week, the young activist Greta Thunberg told the BBC how the youth could cope with climate anxiety and the fatalism.

This year has seen heat waves, record-breaking rains and hurricanes across the world. News about a climate collapse has paralysed many into inaction, even when action is needed even more urgently. But Thunberg said: ‘The things we are dealing with are existential threats to

humanity. So it’s understandable not to know exactly where to begin and what to do about it. I started to read, educate myself. And I knew what I could do.’ For the young Swedish activist, it was a decision to start a school strike to press for climate-friendly policies. For others, it could be planting a tree or shifting to electric cooking. But the message is clear: do what you can from where you are. The problem is global, but local action can help achieve carbon reduction targets. And engagement of youth can be catalytic. A trek in Nepal is the perfect exercise to get citizens of the world so awestruck by

the raw beauty of the icy wilderness that they develop the urgency to protect it. The Himalaya can be the place to mobilise a global movement towards saving the planet from climate breakdown. This is already happening. Sagarmatha National Park below Mt Everest is a model for sustainable tourism and collective action to save nature. Local authorities have banned cutting dwarf juniper for fuelwood and the use of plastic bags and bottles.

The ‘One Day, One tree’ campaign spearheaded by Ang Rita Sherpa of the non-profit The Partners Nepal is reforesting parts of Khumbu after careful study of the ecology of each location. Visitors and tourists can buy saplings of native species at just Rs500, and 18,000 trees have so far been planted. The program will be extended across Nepal. “I was fed up with all talk and no action. And from my experience with forestry, I thought planting as many trees as possible was an immediate solution for adaptation as well as decreasing availability of water,” says Sherpa. “We have employed locals so they own the program.” Much of this is detailed in *The Partners Nepal’s Climate Change in the Himalayas: A case from Solukhumbu* which is a powerful introduction to the changes in the Everest region targeted at the youth and school children in Nepal and abroad. The book is divided into impacts of climate change in the Khumbu, glaciers and glacial lake outburst floods, testimonies of climate witnesses, and adaptation and mitigation efforts. Sherpa plans a handbook on climate change for children to develop awareness from an early age. In one of the testimonies, Apa Sherpa, who climbed Mt Everest 25 times, recalls how shocked he was: ‘In 1989, when I first climbed Everest, there was a lot of snow and ice, but now most of it has just become bare rock. As a result, it is causing more rockfalls, which is a danger to climbers.’ Tourism entrepreneur Ang Tshering Sherpa says climate change may lead to a decline of climbing as a profession: ‘Just over a decade ago, the appropriate climbing season for mountaineering used to be September-November. Today it has shifted to May and is moving later and later into the summer... it



*Climate Change in the Himalayas: A Case from Solukhumbu*  
Ang Rita Sherpa  
The Partners Nepal  
Spandan 2020  
102 pages

snows when it is time to rain and rains when it should snow.’ Besides tourism, families in the Khumbu depend on farming and livestock, but changing precipitation patterns, declining soil fertility and weather extremes, including flashfloods, are reducing the productivity of the region. ‘Climate defines the length and quality of tourism season, and it plays a vital role in the choice of destination and tourist spending,’ the author notes. But the number of glacial lakes is increasing. There are 3,252 glaciers in Nepal, including the Khumbu Glacier where Base Camp is now 50km lower than when Hillary and Tenzing climbed Everest in 1953. Nepal’s longest glacier, Ngozumpa, is now riddled with melt pools and debris. Imja Lake did not exist on trekking maps till 25 years ago, and now is a waterbody 2km long. Nepal’s glaciers are shrinking three times faster than in 1998.

*Climate Change in the Himalayas* also delves into historic glacial lake floods including the one in Ama Dablam in 1977 and the Langmoche in Bhote Kosi in 1985. These are ominous reminders that there could be bigger ones in the future. It also profiles Imja Tso at 5,000m, where a weir has been built to reduce the water level. The book will be a useful reference for Nepal’s schools to make the next generation aware of the crisis that awaits them. But it also shows a way out — how one community below Mt Everest has decided to cope and adapt to the changes. Says Himalayan researcher Alton Byers: “Floods are more destructive but people are building gabions and higher bridges to protect their property from disasters. The Khumbu people know what the dangers are, and they are not waiting for others to come and help them.” 🇳🇵



KIRIL RUSEV

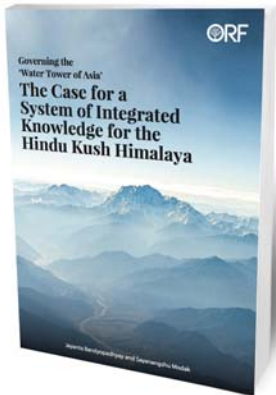


THE PARTNERS NEPAL

Locals plant trees as part of the One Day, One Tree campaign.

# e Himalaya

the Yangtze and the Yellow Rivers are all changing rapidly. Because of the transboundary nature of water, the author’s SINK model cannot be nationally defined. The way a country tampers with its river-floodplain ecosystem does not just affect its own population, but spills over the border to people living downstream in another country. The monograph examines each of the ten Himalayan-Hindu Kush river basins. It cites the silt load on the Yellow River, the disruption caused by the three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze, dam-building by China on the Mekong and its impact on Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, the Chinese dams on the Salween and Irrawaddy that flow into Burma, the Brahmaputra-Yarlung Tsangpo that flows from China through India into Bangladesh, and the Ganga basin. Studies have shown that only 9% of the total flow of the Ganga



*Governing the 'Water Tower of Asia'*  
*The Case for a System of Integrated Knowledge for the Hindu Kush Himalaya*  
Observer Research Foundation,  
New Delhi. 2022  
119 pages  
www.orfonline.org

is from glacial melt (it can be up to 50% for the Indus) More than 60% of the annual flow of the Ganga is from tributaries in Nepal, and up to 80% of that goes down during the four monsoon months. The Ganga plains in India is one of the most densely-populated parts of the world, and 70% of its area is intensely farmed — mostly along fertile floodplains. Besides seasonal fluctuation in its rivers, distribution of water in the basin is also unbalanced, with the western parts much drier than the east. All this has historically had a bearing on flood control embankments in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, large-scale irrigation projects, and over-extraction of groundwater in the dry season. As the authors note, big flood control projects in India have exacerbated the crisis because sedimentation raises the river bed, embankments are breached, the floodplains are deprived of nutrient-rich silt. Then there are geopolitical implications for the construction of storage reservoirs to regulate flow and generate electricity from the Ganga’s tributaries in Nepal. But the authors warn, ‘Upstream water storage is an attractive proposition

to control the spate of flooding but research indicates that it could, at best, reduce the intensity of flooding.’ A key paragraph in the text underlines the importance of cross-border interdisciplinary planning on rivers: ‘Monsoons and the resultant high flows in the river system are a key ingredient for the ecological integrity of the whole basin. They allow for the geomorphic actions within river corridors – generation of sediments, their transportation and deposition, recharge of aquifers and water bodies, and help enhance the productivity of land in a landscape that is still closely integrated with the natural system. The integration between the economy, ecology and society needs to be rewired to create harmony and balance preferably at a river basin or large watershed scale to respect the natural process of integration. Alas, within countries and in trans-boundary rivers there is a disregard for crossborder planning, and a fragmented approach that exploits river flows unsustainably and harms the

entire ecosystem. These man-made disturbances are further upended by climate breakdown. The monograph devotes an entire chapter to expounding in detail about SINK by integrating three disciplines: natural sciences, social sciences and indigenous knowledge. It rejects the historical reductionist engineering paradigm that has governed river planning. Local knowledge and re-defining ‘development’ are emphasised in the SINK approach. The authors list governance challenges for professionals while addressing the multiple crises in the Himalayan basin: surviving extreme weather aggravated by climate change, sustainable sediment management, conserving biodiversity, reducing river pollution, and one that is particularly relevant to Nepal: intra-basin hydropower development. Bandyopadhyay, who earlier served with ICIMOD in Kathmandu, hopes that the recommendations will help policymakers to shift from a business-as-usual model to governance that makes integrated water management ecologically and economically sustainable — and socially just. 🇳🇵



## EVENTS

### Lakure Bhanjyang Hike

Enjoy a great seven-hour hike to Lakure Bhanjyang and the refreshing scenery of Ranikot, Bhaktapur, and the greenery all around. Call for more details.  
12 November, 8am onwards, Rs1000, Lamatar bus park, 9863039845

### Pranayam workshop

Understand and practice Pranayams with Prakrit Thapa. Learn Hathenas, Nadi Suddhi, Kapalbhathi and Bhramari Pranayam.  
12 November, 6.30am-9.30am, Avata Wellness Center, Baluwatar



### Masquerade Salsa party

Winter is incomplete without a masquerade salsa party. And don't worry if you feel you don't know the moves: the professional dancers are ready to help you out.  
12 November, 7:30pm onwards, Prive Nepal, Hotel Soaltee Crowne Plaza

### Specific feeling

Interested in photography? Participate in the 'Specific Feeling' photo program. Capture any instance that shows a specific emotion and submit them to be published on the Photowalkers page. Call for more details.  
12 November, 7am onwards, Mama's Tea, Basantapur Darbar Square, 9843957479

### Walkathon

Support and participate in the World Diabetes Day Walkathon from Metro Kathmandu Hospital to Teaching Hospital to Gangalal and back.  
14 November, 7am-8am, Metro Kathmandu Hospital, Maharajganj

## DINING



### Tip Top

How about something Indian? Enjoy sweets, South Indian cuisines, and other delectable treats at Tip Top. Their Chola Bhatura is a must-try.  
New Road, (01) 4240470

## MUSIC



### Nepathya

Nepathya travels Nepal for a month-long tour as the band participates in the 'humanity promotion campaign'. Cities include Biratnagar, Birganj, Hetauda, Narayanghat, Nepalganj, Dhangadi, Surkhet, Butwal, Pokhara and Kathmandu.  
10-31 December

### Ecstatic Dance

Ever wondered what dance meets gentle yoga, pranayam, and beats with DJ Max is like? Call for more details.  
12 November, 4pm-7pm, Utpala Café, Boudbha, 9810700763

### Live music

Head over for good beats and great tunes from the band Thirsty Souls.  
11 November, 6pm-10pm, Knight Lounge, Pepsicola

### G BOB

Enjoy rap? Attend the live performance from rappers G BOB, DIVIDE and SWOPNIL.  
12 November, 6pm onwards, Club Fahrenheit, Thamel, 9841726830



### Aditya Narayan Jha

This one is for the Aditya Narayan Jha fans out there: live performance and a lovely evening. Book tables now.  
26 November, 6pm onwards, Club Fahrenheit, Thamel, 9841726830

### Ventures Café

Stop by for a wonderful fusion menu with local favourites, and enjoy the breezy outdoor seating. A great venue for beer connoisseurs.  
Baluwatar, 9851228014



### Jimbu Thakali

Not in the mood to cook? Head over to Jimbu and enjoy a healthy, tasty and traditional Thakali meal.  
Jhamsikhel, (01) 5544011

## GETAWAY

### Kinjjala Spa

Kinjjala Spa was established as a healing centre in Nepal 15 years ago. Now, it offers a variety of spa treatments, like massages and facials, alongside therapeutics.  
Jhamsikhel, (01) 5532630



### Godavari Village Resort

Spanning 14 lush green acres, Godavari Village offers mountain views and traditionally-styled cottages and buildings overlooking vast rice fields.  
Godavari, (01) 5560675

### Hattiban Resort

Hattiban Resort is the perfect place to get away for the weekend. Grab breakfast from the hotel's buffet, lounge by the sunny courtyard overlooking the mountains, get a massage at the spa, and take a tour of the nearby Pharping, Champadevi Temple and Khokana Village.  
Hattiban, (01) 6916140



### Gaida Wildlife Camp

Bordering the rhino zone in the central area of Chitwan National Park, the camp is a great place to reconnect with wildlife. Drive to Sauraha and the Camp folks will take care of all from there.  
Chitwan, (01) 4215409/ 4215431

### The Pavilions Himalayas

This resort has Nepal's first lake-side tented luxury eco-villas that offer every amenity one could need. The hotel spa also has some of the best treatments that guarantee rest and relaxation.  
Pokhara, (975) 600 8117



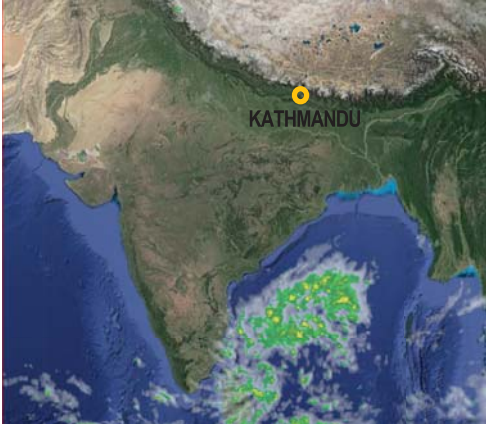
### Haadi Biryani

Some Biryani to kick off winter? Haadi is just the place. Their slow-cooked biryanis are seasoned with a secret spice blend and the clay pots enhance the experience.  
Dilli Bazaar, (01) 4438444

### Le Trio

The posters that line the walls and rustic wooden tables give the impression that one has stepped into a 1960s Parisian café, but the menu is very much local in taste. Try Grilled Chicken Cheese Burger for a happy lunch.  
Jhamsikhel, (01) 5521674

## WEEKEND WEATHER

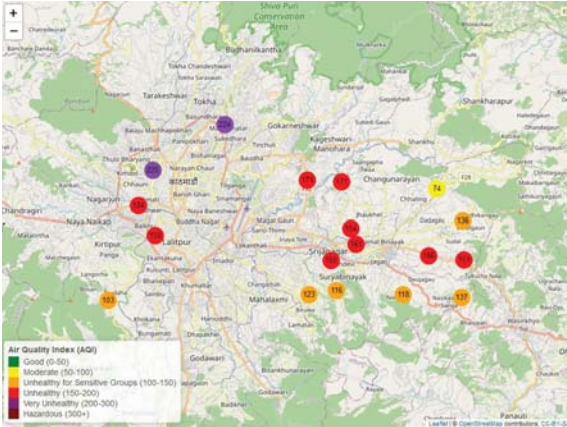


### Colder Nights

Winter is now truly setting in, with the minimum temperature in Kathmandu Valley this weekend dipping into single digits for the first time, and the maximum falling to 23°C. Part of this is due to clear nights and daytime solar radiation filtered by smoke from India and Kathmandu's own smog. There is a weak westerly front seeping into northern India, but it does not contain much precipitation aside from wind-blown snow flurries down to 4,000m especially in central and northwestern Nepal. There is no other disturbance on the horizon that will bring much change to this forecast into next week.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
23° 9°	23° 9°	23° 9°

## AIR QUALITY INDEX



Kathmandu Valley is now getting smoke from crop fires that have blanketed most of north India for the past two weeks. It is being blown in by prevailing westerlies, as well as up-valley wind in the afternoons. Combined with the capital's own pollution, the crossborder smoke will worsen air quality. We already see AQI levels crossing 200 in Kalanki and Bhaktapur (left). The topographical character of the Valley means these pollutants will be concentrated mostly at night and early morning, when it mixes with water droplets to reduce visibility, affecting flights.

## OUR PICK

Something a little lighthearted this weekend. After the chilling Tewkesbury affair, Enola is now a full-time detective, with her own detective agency and everything ... Except no cases, nor clients, unlike her brother Sherlock. That is, until a match-girl named Bessie asks her to help find her missing sister Sarah Chapman and takes Enola to the factory, which is currently experiencing a deadly typhus epidemic. What follows is a thrilling mystery which takes you by surprise at most turns. This boisterous take on the Young Adult detective stories, with a strong feminist theme and independence, stars Millie Bobby Brown, Henry Cavill, David Thewlis, Louis Partridge, Susie Wokoma and Helena Bonham Carter.



## दूषित पानीका कारण हुने रोगप्रति सजग रहौं

फोहोर पानीले झाडापखाला, हैजा, टाइफाइड, आउँ, जन्डिस जस्ता रोगहरू लाग्न सक्छन् ।

त्यसैले;

- खोला, धारा वा मूलको पानी सीधै नपिऔं ।
- पानी उमालेर वा शुद्धीकरण गरेर मात्र पिऔं ।
- पानीलाई पीयूष, अक्वाट्याब्स वा अन्य क्लोरिनजन्य कुराहरू हालेर शुद्धीकरण गरौं ।
- पिउने पानीलाई सफा भाँडामा छोपेर राखौं र सफा भाँडाले पानी झिक्ने गरौं ।



नेपाल सरकार  
विज्ञापन बोर्ड







## LIGHTS, SHADOWS AND SPACE

Japanese artists Izumi Tanabe and Hideo Iida return for a third exhibition of their artwork in Nepal

● **Ashish Dhakal**

During the day, beams of sunlight push in obliquely through the glass windows at Galley Mcube in Lalitpur, dividing the white walls in angles of coolness and warmth in a mysterious harmony. This mystery is heightened this month by the paintings by two Japanese artists, Izumi Tanabe and Hideo Iida that hang on the walls, adding an alluring array of colours and texture to the open gallery.

Collectively titled ‘Crossing Nepal-Japan’, the two solo exhibitions focus on the confluence of cultures in a shared space, through explorations of nature, body, space and time. This is the third time the artists are in Kathmandu to show their works, the most recent exhibition was in 2019 at Mcube.

Izumi’s soft oil paint on canvas decorate the walls upstairs, titled the ‘Hanabi’ series. These give the viewer an image of shifting colours as eyes adjust and readjust to the changing scheme of light in the room. One of the paintings shows branches billowing in the wind, against a blue, watercolour sky. The wintery look is balanced by the earthy tones that lightly drape the canvas.

Nature is prominent here, and the landscape is reminiscent of Nepali countryside. One painting looks like hills amidst a thick layer of mist seen through a green lens, while several canvases share a crumpled and knotted motif. The angles and the movements remind one of bodies, and are hypnotic and sacred, delicate and at once enduring.

To Izumi, the inspiration comes from the mountains and the rice paddies that she visited during her childhood in Japan. She writes, ‘I saw [the women] standing and walking, leaning into the wind. They were the ones I looked up to.’

The transience and strength of the women Izumi saw and met had a startling impact on her imagination, prompting her to want

to draw the images standing with dignity, surrounded by greenery. To a Nepali audience, this strikes a familiar note. All worldly condiments are pared off to reveal the pure objective expression in a dance of light and shadow, drawing attention to the arduous journey of women for survival, expression and freedom.

Hideo’s acrylic paints are not so different in their pursuits, even though they may at first glance appear as if looking outwards and away into an entirely new dimension. While Izumi’s work is characterised by a sweeping subtlety, Hideo’s paintings are more intense in their use of colours.

Space is central to Hideo’s works, and two paintings immediately strike one as being images of the earth, with clouds breezing past over the deep blue sea. Impressions of gridlines, with the margins and gaps, appear like longitudes and latitudes.

The search for space began for Hideo during his college years when he took interest in the structure of conch shells.

Silver washes over in the paintings, creating a dazzling layer that works well with the gold and green surface, adding to the otherworldliness. But on second look, one wonders whether the viewer is really looking outwards exclusively, or really into the caverns of one’s own self.

Both Izumi’s and Hideo’s works are spiritual in their essence. While they may be difficult to understand at once, they invite the viewer to return for a second look, and then a third and so on. The myriad of colours harmonise to reveal worlds that are familiar and foreign simultaneously, and relatable. They ask you to revel in the serene quietude and look around: after all, art transcends words. 🇳🇵

*Crossing Nepal-Japan:  
Solo Exhibitions by Izumi Tanabe and Hideo Iida  
Gallery Mcube  
Chakupat, Lalitpur  
Until 13 November 2022*

## Culture and nature in eco-art

● **Tayama Rai**

In Siddhartha Art Gallery, contemporary artist Binod Pradhan depicts the mythical Beyul, sacred hidden valleys in the Himalaya that offer peace and refuge in times of crisis.

Pradhan returns after an eight-year hiatus with ‘Sacred Realms’, marking his ninth solo exhibition. He combines Nepal’s landscapes, cityscapes, culture and fragility into an ultimate form of self-expression.

“Development and the climate crisis have changed the landscape of my childhood home,” Pradhan explains, “I wish to spread and preserve its memory through my paintings.”

He records his experiences through nostalgic strokes and altered colours. Indian red reminiscent of the disappearing slopes of Mustang and grounds of the Darbar Squares illuminate the landscapes of Pradhan’s imagination.

Pradhan uses his signature technique: watercolor application for acrylic painting which give his work depth typically found in pieces employing multiple art supplies.

“Writers write to fight for their cause. I paint for mine,” says Pradhan, “Through trial and failure, I invented a way to texture my paintings to communicate my experiences better.”

The muddy remains of a dried-up Fewa Lake is patiently layered acrylic in *Fewa Lake Existing*, and one can almost smell the lake bed. Inspired by an article about the shrinking of Fewa lake, he painted the gorge empty of water. *Sapanako Dunga (Boat of Dreams)* holds the Barahi temple in the composition as



the climate threat and uncontrolled development tarnish the lake. Safe to say, he embraces intertextuality and intergenerativity.

In *Natural Touch*, a piece completed in 2020, Pradhan references Michelangelo’s *Creation of Adam*. Amidst the erosion of bright, beautiful colours, hands of rocks, some bare and some covered in green, touch.

“Nokia used Michelangelo’s hands to symbolize human connection,” he adds, “I painted his hands to symbolise our connection with nature.”

On either side, a temple and a *chorten* stand aloof on top of mighty mountains. The connecting hands might also portray the harmony between Hinduism and Buddhism in Nepal. Pradhan grew up with merging influences from both, and he communicates his nostalgia with surrealism, smearing watered-down white acrylic as clouds to create a dream-like haze.

The red-brick monuments of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and

Patan decay in Reflection Realms. Pradhan again uses clever, confident brush strokes to create texture in the decay lit by a golden sky. The puppet of Akash Bhairab, the god of death, stands out, blue in contrast to the striking yellow background.

Sacred environments are not places to escape the world, but to enter it more deeply. Pradhan, who experienced the era where the locals and visitors treated heritage and nature with reverence, knows all too well the interrelationship between the two.

“Every Beyul is located in the lap of nature in Nepal,” says Pradhan. “We artists convey ourselves through collections that take years to complete. I hope to start a dialogue for a progressive future.” 🇳🇵

*Sacred Realms  
by Binod Pradhan  
Siddhartha Art Gallery,  
Baber Mahal Revisited  
Until 25th November 2022*



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# Countdown begins for Nepal

There is more enthusiasm among candidates than voters for polls on 20 November

● **Shristi Karki**

As the countdown begins to Nepal's parliamentary and provincial elections, there top political leaders and other aspirants appear to be more excited about the polls than their voters.

Still, on 20 November many of the country's 17,988,570 registered voters will head to the polls to elect 275 members to the House of Representatives and 550 members to Nepal's 7 provincial assemblies. Of them, 165 Members of Parliament will be voted in directly, while the remaining will be selected from the list of Proportional Representation (PR) candidates.

Similarly, 330 provincial seats will be filled through direct voting while the remaining seats will go to PR candidates.

There are 2,412 candidates, of whom only 225 are women contesting the parliamentary election under the first past the post (FPTP) election system, and 867 of them have registered independently. Similarly 3,224 FPTP candidates, of which 280 are women, will contest provincial elections.

Of the total registered voters, 50.8% are male, while 49.2% are female. A little more than a third of voters are between 26-40, making up the largest age group in the electorate. Nearly 20% of all voters are concentrated in Bagmati Province, while Karnali has the fewest voters at 5.6%.

On Election Day, Nepalis



GOPEN RAI

will cast votes via four ballot papers, two each for the FPTP and PR elections of Parliament and provinces.

The 2022 election has made partners out of once arch enemies Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and Pushpa Kamal Dahal, splintered powerful Communist parties, and brought Dahal and former Maoist ideologue Baburam Bhattarai back together.

It has led the Hindu right-wing Rastriya Prajatantra Party to ally with the UML, as well as to Nepal's two primary Madhes-based parties, the Janta Samajwadi Party (JSP) and the Loktantrik Samajwadi Party (LSP) switching allegiances between the coalition

government and the opposition at the last moment.

In the days leading up to the election, each of Nepal's political parties and candidates have unveiled election manifestos, outlining their stance on the economy, employment, education and healthcare, infrastructure, the environment, social security, election reform.

But as it stands, the election has been defined by unusual, fickle political alliances more than ideology and real commitments to tackle urgent environment, economic and employment crises.

After Nepalis shunned the established parties and voted for independent candidates during

the May local elections, more independent aspirants have stepped up, hoping to cash in on voter disillusionment with the establishment. Nepalis are also urging other Nepalis, via voter collectives like #NoNotAgain, to vote out career politicians from Nepal's halls of power. 🇳🇵



## The Big Boys

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba of the Nepali Congress (NC) is contesting from the sole constituency of his home district Dadeldhura, from where he has been elected to office six times. Deuba will face his former secretary Karna Bahadur Malla of the rebel Nepali Congress (BP) who is backed by the opposition UML. He also faces four independent candidates, notable among them 31-year old engineer Sagar Dhakal.

NC Central Committee member and the Prime Minister's wife Arzu Rana Deuba is on the list of PR candidates, unlike in 2017 when she contested the election directly from Kailali's fifth constituency. Rana Deuba lost the election to the UML's Narad Muni Rana after being branded a 'tourist candidate'.

Dilli Raj Pant, member of the provincial assembly of Sudurpaschim Province 5(B), is on the party's parliamentary ticket this time, the Prime Minister's nephew Prakash Deuba seeks Pant's seat in the provincial assembly.

Opposition leader and former Prime Minister K P Oli of the UML is running in Jhapa-5, where there are a total of 25 candidates in the fray, including Khagendra Adhikari of the NC.

The Unified Socialist's Madhav Kumar Nepal and Jhalanath Khanal are vying to represent Rautahat-1 and Ilam-1 respectively. Nepal currently

# Nepali-origin American wins US state election

First-generation Nepali health and climate activist Sarahana Shrestha wins New York state assembly seat

With the Democrats not doing as badly as predicted in the US mid-term elections, there is rejoicing in faraway Kathmandu because a first-generation Nepali has been elected to the New York State Assembly.

With her home country of Nepal also going to the polls in 10 days, Sarahana Shrestha, 41, defeated real estate tycoon Patrick Sheehan by a vote of 35,493 to 23,104 to win the 103<sup>rd</sup> New York State District Assembly seat on Tuesday.

She is the oldest of Gyanendra Das and Seema Shrestha's three children and grew up in a family of photographers. She became a US citizen in 2019 and championed a climate-related platform focused on developing a clean, renewable and affordable power supply.

"So many people do not have a voice in what happens to the world, who is affected by war, ecological disaster," Shrestha said. "As an American citizen, we can do a lot."

Before moving to the US, Shrestha published and edited the Kathmandu youth magazine, ZING! during her SLC break in 1997. She also spent her entire holiday that year editing all the mistakes she found in her school text books.

She then worked for three years as a radio show host and producer on IMAGE FM 97.9. She is an avid photographer and videographer herself, is a published author, and plays the piano and guitar. Shrestha was also a self-taught graphic designer and website developer before deciding to pursue it in college in New York in 2001.

Shrestha has always had activism in her blood. For example, she set up the website, samudaya.org, in Nepal to spread awareness amongst youth about democracy, pluralism and free press. It



COREY TORPIE

Sarahana Shrestha with New York State assemblywoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez who endorsed her campaign.

was among the sites banned in Nepal by the royal regime in 2005 after king Gyanendra's coup.

Once in the US, she was active in politics, organising support for healthcare rights and climate activism in the scenic Hudson Valley in New York State.

Shrestha's campaign for state assembly was endorsed by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (above) who herself was re-elected for a second term on Tuesday.

Sarahana campaigned door-to-door tirelessly and battled headwinds from rich real estate developers who circulated

negative emails about her and other candidates, calling them 'extremists'.

In June, she had defeated career Democratic Assemblyman Kevin Cahill in a primary election for the party for the seat. Cahill was a 13-term incumbent, having held the seat since 1999. Shrestha is now the first socialist member from upstate New York for the state legislature in Albany.

Shrestha has recalled in media interviews about how her political thinking was shaped by being stuck in a school bus in Kathmandu during the 1990 People's Movement while riot police clashed with protesters outside. After school, she visited parts of Nepal affected by the Maoist conflict to understand what was driving the insurgency.

In Kathmandu, Sarahana's parents are excsatic. "When she announced her run for primaries, I was very nervous because anti-Asian hate crime in America after Trump. So her safety was frankly my biggest concern. Otherwise, she has always been good at everything she does. I guess she took some political genes from the family, after all," said her mother Seema whose father, Dil Bahadur Shrestha served as Home Minister of Nepal in the 1980s.

Her father Gyanendra Das told *Nepali Times*: "There was warm support from the Nepali community in the US even if they could not vote for her, because her constituency has almost no Nepalis. I was worried when her opponent engaged in aggressive negative campaigning. As parents, her victory is a relief. It is a proud moment for Nepalis, and a candidate like her was much needed in American politics."

Sarahana Shrestha lives in the town of Esopus with her husband, their dog, and some chickens. 🇳🇵



# elections

represents Kathmandu-2 in parliament, while Khanal is the incumbent of Ilam-1 and will be challenged by Mahesh Basnet, who is currently an MP from Bhaktapur. JSP leader Upendra Yadav is contesting from Saptari-2, while LSP chair Mahanta Thakur will run from Mahottari-3.

## Unholy alliances

Maoist Centre chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal will stand from Gorkha-2, which is currently represented by Baburam Bhattarai in Parliament. Dahal had previously contested from Kathmandu and Rolpa in 2008, Kathmandu and Siraha in 2013, and Chitwan in 2017. Bhattarai relinquished his seat for Dahal, who needed a sure win ostensibly in return for Maoist support for his daughter in Kathmandu and, some say, assurances of being nominated President.

In Jajarkot, old political rivals Shakti Basnet of the Maoists and Rajeev Bikram Shah of the NC have become allies this election cycle, with Basnet running for parliament while Shah contests provincial polls to become Chief Minister. The two ran against each other in Jajarkot in 2017 and Shah won.

Chitwan-3 is currently represented by Dahal in Parliament, but the coalition ticket has gone to physician Bhojraj Adhikari of the Federal Hospital Bharatpur. His opponent will be Dinesh Koirala, who defied the NC and is standing as an independent candidate.



DIWAKAR CHETTRI

Koirala is among 74 NC members against whom the party has taken action for failing to support coalition candidates. Koirala will be supported by the UML, which withdrew its own candidate.

In Makwanpur, Kamal Thapa of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal (RPP-N) is not just allying with the UML, but is actually contesting the election under the UML's 'Sun' election banner amid protests from the local chapter of the party. Thapa will be challenged by coalition candidate Mahalaxmi Upadhyaya of the NC as well as 14 other candidates.

Some of Nepal's most high-profile candidates are vying for parliamentary positions from Kathmandu's 10 constituencies. Rabindra Mishra, who exited Bibeksheel Sajha Party to join the Rajendra Lingden's Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) as

vice-president is standing in Kathmandu-1 on a royal-right platform. He will be up against the NC's Prakash Man Singh. Maoist leader Onsari Gharti Magar will contest from Kathmandu-2.

## Younger and independent

In Kathmandu-4, ageing youth leader Gagan Thapa of the NC is up against Rajan Bhattarai of the UML, who lost the constituency in 2017. This is Thapa's stronghold where he won during the 2013 and the 2017 elections.

Ranju Darshana, who lost the bid for Kathmandu mayor by a smaller-than-expected margin in 2017, is running as an independent from Kathmandu-5, where she will be up against UML senior Vice-president Ishwar Pokhrel and the

NC's Pradip Poudel.

Manushi Yami Bhattarai, daughter of Baburam Bhattarai and Hisila Yami, is contesting from Kathmandu-7. Suman Sayami, who finished fourth in the Kathmandu mayoral race in May, will contest the federal election from Kathmandu-8. Milan Pandey of the Sajha Party is standing for the second time from Kathmandu-9 constituency.

Elsewhere, former tv personality and founder of the Rastriya Swatantra Party Rabi Lamichhane will face off in Chitwan-2 against State Minister for Health and Population Umesh Shrestha, a coalition candidate and close ally of PM Deuba. Noted actress Rekha Thapa, who has long been part of the RPP, will be competing against Tourism Minister Bhanu Bhakta Dhakal in Morang-3 constituency.

## Politics as usual

In Sindhuli-1, NC candidate Shyam Kumar Ghimire and the UML's Pradeep Katuwal who went head to head in the provincial election in 2017 will face off in parliamentary elections.

Across the country, conflict victims like Sushila Chaudhary, who lost her brother and sister to the Nepal Army in the war, and Maina Karki, whose husband was killed by the Maoists, are some of the first conflict victims to be on the PR list from the Maoists in the NC respectively.

As coalition candidates, victims and survivors from both the government and rebel sides during the insurgency given tickets by their parties will essentially be allied because of the NC and Maoist coalition.



**CONGRATULATIONS**  
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# Election dos and don'ts

The Chief Election Commissar is a busy hombre these days. With the intention of cracking down on violations of the election Code of Conduct, he is tied up firing off letters demanding explanations from candidates found to be contravening guidelines. In fact, he has been so busy issuing clarifications that he has no time to enforce any of them.

In order to help the EC to remind candidates and parties about the dos and don'ts of election campaigning, the Ass assists by recapping below some of the salient points of Clause 46(1) of the Election Commission Act:

**Don't:** Character assassination on social media is banned with immediate effect. Candidates are advised to also desist from actual assassination of rivals.

**Do:** Under Nepal's democratic system, mass murderers, plunderers, pillagers, rapists and those accused of other minor offences can campaign openly in broad daylight hours.

**Don't:** Candidates who have partaken meeting allowances in the past 40 years are barred from either standing or running in elections.

**Do:** Those who have embezzled billions in airport contracts, telecom licenses or in inaugurating highways that never got built may hit the campaign trail along those same non-existent highways.

**Don't:** It has come to the EC's notice that a certain candidate wore a baseball cap with his party's election symbol during a rally in Gorkha-2. The Commissar has asked the candidate in question to furnish an appropriate clarification within 24 hours, failing which the cap in question will be confiscated forthwith.

**Do:** Candidates from the ruling 5-party collision, may be draped with 25 kg marigold garlands provided they are not allergic to pollen.

**Don't:** The EC takes umbrage at the #NoNotAgain campaign, saying the hashtag contains a double negative that could confuse voters.

**Do:** Even so, established parties are allowed to embellish, exaggerate, falsify, fake, tamper, or lie about their achievements during the last 30 years in office on Facebook and TikTok as long as the jingle has a catchy tune. To set an example, the EC posted on YouTube a melodious song composed by its own talented storekeeper exhorting Nepalis to vote.

**Don't:** Candidates are not allowed to have stickers with party symbols at the back of the cars that they have hired from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

**Do:** But the Firstest Lady is allowed to threaten voters to cast ballots only for a Better Half who flies in on a helicopter.

**Don't:** Candidates found ringing temple bells will be given a stern warning about noise pollution. If they insist on ringing out the old and ring in the new, they will be rusticated on the spot. Playing madal or other traditional percussion instruments is in contravention of the Election Code of Conduct Article (13), Clause (1) and Sub-clause (d).

**Do:** Parties are allowed to use fleets of Boleros to blare their anthems through loudspeakers. The Co-Finance Minister can take part in a Tharu Peacock Dance even if he is making an ass of himself.



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