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JIYALAL SAH

Fogbound Tarai

No one in the Tarai remembers the winter fog being this dense and lasting so long. They are used to summer heat and sultry monsoons, but not a ground-hugging fog so thick that the sun does not shine for days, sometimes weeks.

BORDERLINES

Chandra Kishore

There is no specific meteorological English term for the Indo-Gangetic शीतलहर, a phenomenon in which cold winter air saturates moisture at ground level. In the old days, the sun used to burn off the mist by mid-morning. But the spread of winter irrigation increased water vapour, allowing droplets to condense on tiny suspended particles in the soot and smog.

People burning straw and buffalo patties in smoky fires to stay warm increase air pollution, thickening the fog further. The sun does not get a chance to heat the ground and the fog lingers for days on end. The people of the lowlands are just not equipped to deal with these intense cold waves.

This murky miasma of winter

is emblematic of Nepal's current purposeless politics, with the 7-party coalition struggling to survive domestic and external efforts to dismantle it. The NC-UML rivalry over who gets to be the next president on 9 March is holding governance hostage.

The coalition calculus has implications for the plains: CK Raut's Janamat and the Tharu-based Unmukti Party in the western Tarai are also in the 7-party coalition, but neither is happy with portfolios.

The media reports on the fog as a one-off event, not as a worsening trend. People are dying of exposure, but it is blamed on old age. It is not the cold that kills them, but poverty. Like all calamities in this disaster-prone country, it is the poorest who die first, neglected by society and state.

This year's शीतलहर fog has not been as severe as 2022's, but it has lingered longer. And now that the winter is nearly over, the government and the media will again forget about this annual disaster till next year.

The fog closes schools, it affects crops, disrupts transport, and increases the incidence of respiratory infections and road accidents. People need to turn on lights in the daytime.

"Commerce grinds to a halt, factory production drops, workers report sick," Madhesh Province chair of FNCCI Ganesh Lath told me one foggy afternoon when Birganj was colder than Kathmandu.

The people of the Tarai have been on a two-month hibernation. With the mercury now rising, they are stirring awake, but as usual the hardships will be forgotten until next winter.

There is not much we can do in the short-term, but precautions and relief measures that can be put in place.

With weather extremes induced by the climate crisis, the fog is likely going to be thicker and last longer in coming winters. More than 52% of Nepal's population lives in the Tarai, and many parts of

the plains have a lower per capita income than corresponding regions to the north.

An entrenched caste system and gender ostracisation means that the 'lower' castes and women bear the brunt of cold waves. Those affected by monsoon floods in Kailali were still in makeshift camps when the fog persisted this winter, many of their children have pneumonia.

Almost every household in Madhes Province has someone working in India, the Gulf or

LOST IN THE MIST: Bicyclist in Birganj on Wednesday morning. Worsening winter fog in the plains is a metaphor for the country's directionless politics. But poor air quality is also a serious health risk for children, the elderly and women in the plains, and it affects agriculture and disrupts transport.

Malaysia. Many villages have only women, children and the elderly, and they are the ones most at risk from the cold. The men are usually seen huddled around smokey fires, while the women work outdoors or in smoky kitchens.

The provincial and federal governments need to prepare a hazard map of the Tarai for next year's winter, and declare certain areas disaster zones. This is a calamity affecting more people than landslides and floods in the mountains.

The Department of Meteorology and Hydrology must have localised forecasts, and there must be cross border cooperation. The fog knows no boundary, and some weeks this winter, it stretched from Peshawar in Pakistan to Chittagong in Bangladesh right across the Indo-Gangetic plains (*see image online*).

Waiting till next December will be too late to save lives. Urgent action needs political will, which is in short supply in the present government dysfunction. 🇳🇵

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Geopolitical tectonics

In the same week that Maoist chieftain and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal declared 13 February ‘People’s War Day’, he will take the salute at Tundikhel on Nepal Army Day on Saturday, 18 February.

It is one of the successes of Nepal’s peace process that the two militaries that clashed during the second half of the Maoist conflict from 2001-2006 have now buried the hatchet. More than 1,500 former Maoist guerrillas were inducted into the Nepal Army, one of the few instances in recent history that warring sides have come together so effectively.

However, this reconciliation has come at a cost. Tens of thousands of conflict survivors, victims of torture, those maimed for life, and relatives of civilians murdered or disappeared still have no closure.

It is no coincidence that the Nepal Army Day military parade and fusillade has historically been timed for Shivaratri, when tens of thousands of Indian pilgrims throng to Kathmandu. Nepal’s rulers have historically used this occasion as an opportunity to wage psywar, and let Indians take back with them stories of Gorkha military might.

Then in October, the Nepal Army has another show of force on Tundikhel at Phulpati — traditionally the time Tibetans would be in town to barter mountain goats and wool during the Dasain festival. They were supposed to be so awed by the warlike Gorkha Kingdom, that they would spread the word when they returned to Lhasa.

For the past half-century or so, there has been less need for Nepal to put the fear of god on visitors from the neighbourhood. The Tundikhel military display during the Panchayat was directed more at Nepalis themselves, with the not so subtle message to behave themselves.

A fly past by six transport helicopters, all different models and pre-World War I brass cannons firing blanks, are not likely to impress the Defence Attaches of our northern and southern neighbours — especially since Nepali nationals fight in one army against the other. Why the Nepal Army continues to conduct this wasteful and utterly futile exercise twice a year is unfathomable.

Nepal was always squeezed in the geopolitical fault line between India and China. But now with intensifying Sino-US rivalry, the country is not just a yam between two boulders, but three. And to update Prithvi

Narayan Shah’s analogy, the tuber has gone all squishy with political decay.

The three powers appear worried about Nepal’s wobbly politics, which is why we are witnessing increased frequency of diplomatic comings and goings. Indian Foreign Secretary and former ambassador to Nepal, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, air dashed to Kathmandu this week, the visit overlapping with the arrival of US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Afreen Akhter.

Akhter herself was preceded by USAID Administrator Samantha Power and US Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland. Power announced a \$58.5 million grant (“subject to availability”, what does that even mean?) to shore up Nepal’s democracy, civil society and free press.

And the Chinese are coming in March, with a slew of visits by senior officials to make up for a two-year Covid hiatus. Details about the visits are sparse, but it can only mean that the Sino-US Cold War is entering a new freeze.

New Delhi’s tacit policy towards Nepal has reportedly been to maintain ‘controlled instability’, and if true, it seems to be getting its wish. Insiders say Kwatra was mainly interested in the condition of the coalition and the election of president on 9 March.

Beijing has never hidden its effort to unite Nepal’s Communist parties. And Washington’s strategy is exactly the opposite: to turn the Maoists and UML away from China, and prevent them from getting together.

In this new Great Game, the West is willing to overlook India’s rulers systematically muzzling the media and persecuting religious minorities. Interestingly, the raid on the BBC offices in New Delhi and Mumbai on Tuesday happened on the day Air India announced it was buying 470 Airbus and Boeing aircraft — one of the biggest orders in aviation history.

The US and European governments do not react to anti-Western verbal vitriol spouted in international fora by Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar. And there is enigmatic silence about India’s dealings with Vladimir Putin’s Russia, even as New Delhi prepares to host the G20 summit in September.

The New York Times has belatedly woken up to what is happening in India with an editorial on 14 February that said in part: ‘... American and European leaders should remember that it is only as a democracy, with a free and vibrant press, that India can fulfil its global role.’



PMO



PHOTOS: RSS

Nepal is being squeezed by the collision of the Indian, Chinese and American plates.

ONLINE PACKAGES



CLIMATE CRISIS IN THE MOUNTAINS

National and international figures weigh in why the Himalaya matters and how their accelerated melt is a threat to the entire world, not just Nepal or mountain countries. Watch the video on our YouTube channel. Subscribe for more original multimedia content.



HUNGRY FOR LEARNING

World Food Program has been delivering rice, dal, salt and oil for school meals in various districts of Nepal for 45 years. The Nepal government has been gradually assuming responsibility for those districts and expanding into others, 71 to date, since it launched a separate cash-based program in 2008. But can it meet the expectations? Watch video online.

MAOIST CONFLICT

Yes, the Maoist war should be in curricula, so such history does not repeat (‘Delay, dilute, deny’, Shristi Karki, #1148).

Tshering Sherpa

■ Current Nepali society and politics are becoming reactive — they immediately troll and forget (‘All is fair in war (and peace)’, Rajendra Dahal, #1148). But it will help if the younger generation understand history better. This simple article of *Nepali Times* may be useful for them.

Namindra Dahal

VILLAGE OF CLIMBERS

Hard work for mountaineers and their family (‘Village of the climbers’, Monika Deupala, #1148).

Anne Marie Kennedy

TOXIC TRASH

No mention of the huge amounts of dust caused by building and roadworks (‘Kathmandu’s toxic trash’, Sonia Awale, nepalitimes.com). Neither of these clean up after the work is ‘done’.

Glen Pallier

■ What has Balen done for sustainable solid waste management of Kathmandu Metropolitan City? Dumping waste on other districts won’t help.

Art DS

AI ASS

Nothing can replace the original Ass (‘News about Nepal generated by ChatGPT’, #1148). I didn’t even get one chuckle out of this AI generated ass. The Ass used to have me snorting uncontrollably. Maybe we need an andolan to bring back the Ass. We will never be the same without the Backside column.

Karen Ale

CHILDREN’S BOOKS

Such a captivating story and beautiful images (‘Adventures of a little dumpling named Momo’, Sahina Shrestha, #1146). It is a beautiful piece of art that will forever live in our collections.

Kneha

■ What fun! Can’t wait to check out the whole book.

Himalayan Children’s Charities

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BALUWATAR TO BALKOT: Visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra greets former Prime Minister K P Oli at his residence in Balkot on Monday. Although it was supposed to be a bilateral foreign secretary-level meeting, Kwatra met leaders from the entire political spectrum in Kathmandu, raising speculation about the real purpose of his trip.

War and Peace

Back in 2003, it had been seven years since the Maoists launched their armed struggle. There was a truce, and there was hope of peace in the western hills of Nepal. These hopes were quickly dashed. It took another three years and 10,000 more lives before the peace accord was signed in 2006. Even then the peace didn’t translate into stability, true political devolution, or prosperity for Nepalis.

Excerpts from a page 1 report from Khalanga in Salyan published on *Nepali Times* 20 years ago this week on issue #132 14-30 February 2003:

Seven years after the Maoists launched their armed struggle in these hills of western Nepal, war-weary villagers are hoping against hope that the ceasefire this time is for real. When the truce was announced by radio on the night of 29 January, it was greeted with whispers in dark streets silenced by curfew. Two weeks later, there is watchful hope here in Khalanga, the district headquarters of Salyan district.

Villagers displaced by the fighting haven’t yet mustered the courage to return to their homes. Khalanga goes quiet after four in the afternoon and the fortified district headquarter still has the look of a town under siege. Rajendra Dhakal, Salyan police chief tells us, “We have been

fooled in the past, so we are still on high alert. We can’t trust the Maoists.”

Outside Khalanga, a group of plain-clothed armed Maoists look relaxed as they patrol the trail. They stop by to chat. “The talks will be successful and Nepal will become a peoples’ republic,” says one of them, munching on roasted bhatmas, as a captured army sub-machine gun dangles from his shoulder.

The lack of trust is mutual. Platoon commander Badal who takes orders from the Maoists’ First Battalion in Mangalsen recalls that his comrades were arrested by the police in Pyuthan during the 2001 talks and later disappeared. “We will watch the government’s attitude first,” he says. This time, the Maoists look like they are preparing to use the truce and dialogue period to strengthen political programs in case they have to join the mainstream. At present they are preparing for nationwide commemorations of the seventh anniversary of the start of the “peoples’ war” on 13 February.

From archive material of *Nepali Times* of the past 20 years, site search: www.nepalitimes.com



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Editor Online: Sahina Shrestha Executive Editor: Sonia Awale Layout: Kiran Maharjan
Publisher: Kunda Dixit, Himalmedia Pvt Ltd | Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur | GPO Box 7251 Kathmandu
editors@nepalitimes.com | www.nepalitimes.com | www.himalmedia.com | Tel: +977 1 5005601-08 Fax: +977 1 5005518



himalmedia

40 years after the Sino-US thaw

Wonder what Richard Solomon would have to say about the new Cold War between China and the US

■ Bhaskar Koirala

On 19 June 1972, a Boeing 707 of the US Presidential fleet, touched down at Peking Airport at 7:30PM on what a *New York Times* report referred to as ‘a warm bright evening’.

This was still during the early phases of the thaw in Sino-US relations on the heels of the historic visit of President Richard Nixon to China in February 1972. Significant distrust was still in the process of being worked out.

China's Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei was on hand to receive the US National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger. This would be Kissinger's fourth visit to Beijing in less than a year: his secret visit to Beijing via Pakistan took place in July 1971, followed by an officially scheduled visit in October of that year, then accompanying Richard Nixon during the President's historic visit in February 1972.

Behind Kissinger was 35-year-old National Security Council (NSC) staffer Richard H Solomon. In the history of this critical period of diplomacy between the US and China, which continues to shape events to this day, the role of individuals like Solomon is sadly relegated into the background.

Richard Solomon died in 2017 at age 79. He was a central figure that helped end more than two decades of diplomatic estrangement between China and the US.

In today's politically charged environment in Sino-US ties, it is easy to forget just how important



that breakthrough was, and continues to be. In less than 20 years after Nixon's groundbreaking visit to China, the Cold War effectively ended, leaving the US the sole superpower.

This was largely due to a US strategic posture that balanced China against the former Soviet Union. Solomon noted in a 2011 interview that the “shared security threat” is what welded the two very unlikely societies together.

China's engagement with the United States in the early 1970s, set in motion processes that would lead to China's integration into the global economic order, and subsequently its unprecedented economic growth that lifted hundreds of millions from poverty.

In the broad sweep of the history of Sino-US relations (and diplomacy more generally) Solomon was a scholar-practitioner par excellence, the likes of which

are increasingly rare today.

His contributions are overlooked and left unacknowledged compared to Kissinger and Nixon. Solomon was appointed to the US National Security Council in 1971 as a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow.

At age 34, he arrived at the White House and ‘immediately got heavily drawn into the whole process of normalising US relations with China’. Prior to this, he was a PhD student at MIT under Lucian Pye, the noted political scientist and China watcher.

A serendipitous event in 1961 in Pye's office, appears to have launched Solomon's career. He and Pye were at a table when the telephone rang. On the line was the famous American economist Walt Whitman Rostow, author of *The Stages of Economic Growth*:

A Non-Communist Manifesto. Rostow was then running the Policy Planning staff in the Kennedy Administration, and told Pye that ‘intelligence information indicated that the Chinese were in the midst of a major food crisis, and he wondered if Pye knew anyone who could analyse some of the information that was beginning to emerge on how the Chinese were dealing with this food crisis’.

Pye looked across his office table and responded to Rostow: “Well, we have a young man right here who might be right for this project. I'll get back to you.” This call set off a chain of events in the career of the young PhD student who then went on to study Chinese for the next five years at Yale, Harvard, the Taiwan National University and in Hong Kong.

His PhD work was based out of Hong Kong and Taiwan where he did actual empirical interviews with ‘100 Chinese refugees from the mainland of China who represented the three existing generations: the generation who had lived most of their lives under the Qing dynasty that collapsed in 1912; those who had lived during the Warlord period; and the more recent generation who had grown up, at least in part, under the communists’.

This could not have been a better way to understand the ‘political culture’ for his PhD, the seemingly ‘simple’ notion that people from different cultures or countries think about and experience politics in radically different way. He was perhaps

not so simplistic and way ahead of his times in trying to grapple with what makes Chinese politics and political practice distinct, instead of naively assuming or expecting, as one example, that there would be an automatic correlation between the opening up of its economy and the evolution of liberal western-style democracy in China.

Solomon's work at the NSC started with devising possibilities for academic and other such exchanges with China that led to his assignment as Nixon and Kissinger's representative in ping-pong diplomacy of 1972 -- one aspect of the ‘signaling’ from Mao and Zhou Enlai and from Nixon as early as 1967 indicating serious interest for engagement in the US and China.

His primary remit was to understand as best as possible the mood and views of the Chinese ping-pong delegation (pictured, left, playing with Chinese table tennis champion Zhuang Zedong).

In 1976, Solomon left the National Security Council to work in academia as head of the political science department RAND Corporation. The most important study he carried out during his time at RAND was one that was commissioned by US intelligence agencies that was expressly focused on Chinese political negotiating behaviour. The project resulted in a book titled *Chinese Political Negotiating Behavior, 1967-1984*, required reading for successive US administrations. 🇺🇸

Bhaskar Koirala is an independent analyst associated with Peking University.

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VENUE



Vacant homes become homestays

Women left behind turn their homes into tourist destinations, as the menfolk migrate for work

■ Bhadra Sharma in Lamjung

When Satya Ghale left his village in Lamjung for Hong Kong for work, there was no one left in his ancestral home, and it began to fall apart. He could not return to renovate the house in the scenic village of Khasur, nor could he entrust the upkeep to someone else.

His neighbour Chandra Kumari Ghale was in a similar dilemma 12 years ago. Her sons moved out, and since she could not bear to be alone, she joined her elder son in Besisahar.

Once, during a visit she was sad to see that her home in Khasur was derelict, so Chandra Kumari decided to let the local women's group in the

village turn it into a restaurant.

Most of the women in the group were single women, whose children or husbands had moved out for work. Many had gone to Kathmandu, while others had migrated overseas.

Like many Himalayan districts of Nepal, Lamjung's population has been decreasing, and is now 20% less than what it was 20 years ago. Many village schools have closed, farm terraces are fallow, and only the elderly, women and young children remain. Many of the quaint stone houses with slate tile roofs have fallen into disrepair.

Khasur is across Marsyangdi River from the nearest town,

Besisahar. The surrounding mountains are all draped in thick forests, there is a spectacular view of Lamjung Himal, and folds of ridges to the south.

The village's cobblestone paths wind past stone houses built in the traditional architectural style of the Gurung people. But of the 64 households, 20 or so are vacant. With few of the families returning, residents are worried that their culture and way of life will also soon disappear.

Which is why Rupa Ghale has brought together other women in the village and formed the Pragati Nari Samaj (Progressive Women's Group) to convert abandoned homes into

homestays, so that the houses can be maintained with the income.

One of those houses is Satya Ghale's ancestral home. Inspired by Chandra Kumari, he too renovated the building at his own expense and gave it to the women for free to run a homestay for tourists.

Village elder Prithvi Man Ghale, teachers, government officials and entrepreneurs have promised support and cooperation for this women-led initiative for sustainable tourism. In return, those who have left Khasur have their family property taken care of, and they also have a place to stay when they return for holidays at festival time.

"When people began to leave,

the houses started falling apart and there was no money to fix them," Prithvi Man Ghale says. "And we thought homestay tourism was the perfect way to generate income for the upkeep of the houses and for the families taking care of them."

The women of Pragati Nari Samaj currently run three homestays and have coordinated operations for 10 more. Another 17 houses are in process of getting permits, and there are more unused houses that need to be looked after.

"When guests arrive, the first priority is always to place them in a home where we operate a homestay," says Rupa Ghale. "If there is no space here, we arrange



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Spare parts memo

Aeromechanics Association of Nepal and Butwal Auto Engineering association have submitted a memo to the Rupandehi District Administration office on curbing illegal imports and smuggling of spare vehicle parts across the Nepal-India border.

Hackathon winner

Team Code Crafters won the Shequal Foundation and Ncell's Hacking for Humanity hackathon. The winners won a prize of Rs150,000 for their idea on how to help people understand sign language. The runner-ups were Team Sahayatri and Team Pi.

Hyundai electric

Laxmi Intercontinental, Hyundai's official dealer in Nepal, launched an offer for customers to get a Bosch washing machine when purchasing the Hyundai Kona and Ioniq 5 under its 'One more reason to go Electric' campaign.



Chaudhary poetry

Basant Chaudhary held a solo poetry recital this week on Valentine's Day. The poems, verses and ghazals were based on the theme 'Love is in the air', and 150 people attended the recital at Mandala Theater.



MAW electric

MAW Group and SERES have agreed to bring electric vehicle SUVs, Sedans and mini cars to Nepal. Seres is China's first company to enter the European auto market.



Tata generator

Tata motor's GenVoltz has been sold in maximum numbers in Nepal. The machine comes with 25 to 125 KVA power and a durable battery.

BYD ATTO launch

Cimex, authorised distributor of BYD Auto industry, has launched its highly-anticipated BYD ATTO 3 100 kW motor version in Nepal. The sporty electric SUV comes



with fast charging, high battery capacity and a ultra-safe blade battery. Prices start at Rs6.49 million and will be delivered starting 15 March.



Samsung launch

Samsung launched the Galaxy S23 series in Nepal this week. The phones come with better camera, mobile gaming experience and construction made from recycled materials.



ALL PHOTOS: KHIM GHALE



to host guests in other houses in the village.”

It is now the single women of Khasur who have turned their village into a model for the preservation of Gurung culture and architecture. The income for the homesteads are divided among the 16 members of the group, and a part of it is budgeted for upkeep of the facilities.

All hands are on deck to turn Khasur into a prominent tourist destination to rival nearby Ghalegaun. The community has approached the state and local governments for assistance with infrastructure development, training and publicity.

For road improvement, Gandaki Province has allocated Rs1 million, Besisahar Municipality Rs500,000 and the ward office Rs200,000.

While the Khasur Homestay Committee has been formed to arrange homestay options for visitors, the three houses run by Pragati Nari Samaj has become

a secretariat. The welcome and farewell programs for the guests are at Chandra Kumari Ghale’s restaurant which has also become a venue for planning.

The women have also made familiarisation visits to Sirubari, Ghalegaun, Manang and Mustang, where homestay tourism has taken off in recent years. For the Gurung people of Khasur, all this is just an extension of their traditional culture of hospitality.

The initiative is also a perfect antidote to the depopulation of these villages because of the out-migration, mainly of young men. It helps preserve the festivals which revolve around the farming seasons, and restores the economy and vibrancy of the community.

“While many of our guests right now come from Beshisahar for lunch and return, we hope to attract people from Kathmandu and even abroad,” says Rupa Ghale, who adds this has restored Khasur’s traditional hubbub. 🇳🇵



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LIGHTS CAMERA ACTION

Nepal as a prime location
for international movies

■ Ashish Dhakal

In 2005, Hollywood actress Cameron Diaz hosted a documentary series for MTV called *Trippin'*. The show had celebrities visit ecological locales around the world to educate young viewers about nature.

The first episode was filmed in Nepal, featuring Diaz with actress Eva Mendes, rapper Redman and Mark Hoppus of the hit rock band Blink-182. The film was shot on location in Kathmandu and Chitwan.

Carolyn Syangbo was a production liaison for the show in Nepal, and recalls the producers being concerned about paparazzi in Nepal. In South America, the shoot was nearly ruined because fans and media recognised Diaz and Mendes.

"In the end, I said, look, I am going to be really honest and burst your bubble. No one knows who Diaz is here," Syangbo says. "It took me ages to convince them that we did not need a security protocol to control paparazzi here."

When Michael Palin was in Pokhara in 2004 to shoot his BBC series *Himalaya*, he was pleasantly surprised not to be recognised at all by Nepalis — until he was mobbed by a British tour group while filming in Boudha.

In 2015, Benedict Cumberbatch was being filmed near Pashupati dressed in a frayed overcoat followed by a camera crew and a microphone attached to a pole overhead for Marvel's *Doctor Strange*. But after the first photo went viral, crowds mobbed Thamel, Indra Chok, Swayambhu and Patan to catch a glimpse of the actor.

Director Scott Derrickson decided to film *Doctor Strange* in Nepal to feature an "Eastern city" that would not be familiar to audiences. In the original comic, Strange travels to Tibet, but that was cancelled because of fears of Chinese censorship.

Cumberbatch and Derrickson came to Nepal despite the 2015 earthquake so the film could potentially boost tourism here.

On top of that, any Nepali watching

the film would have felt a connection to see the title card 'Kathmandu, Nepal' about 21 minutes in, followed by a minute-long montage of Strange walking around the familiar historical and cultural sites in Kathmandu Valley.

Bollywood has also chosen Nepal as a location for its many films, starring major stars like Dev Anand in *Haré Rama Haré Krishna* in 1971 and Amitabh Bachchan in *Uunchai* last year. Finding one's country represented in a Hollywood or Bollywood blockbuster, that too as an important piece in the story, is a moment of instant recognition and special delight.

Philippe de Broca's 1965 adventure-comedy *Les Tribulations d'un Chinois en Chine* (later retitled *Up to His Ears*) starring the French screen idol Jean-Paul Belmondo features 15 minutes of Kathmandu landmarks and the Himalayan backdrop.

Several scenes of the 1986 fantasy martial arts film *The Golden Child* with Eddie Murphy were also filmed around Asan, Indra Chok and on a Royal Nepal Airlines jet, with some Nepali extras.

Eric Valli's Oscar-nominated 1999 docudrama *Himalaya* (also titled *Caravan*), was shot in widescreen over nine months on location in remote Upper Dolpo.

Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1974 fantasy adventure *Arabian Nights* includes a sequence with a character named Yunan, whose story begins and ends in Nepal. In one scene, he plays hide and seek with his friends in and around the Jaisi Deval Temple, Kathmandu Darbar Square, Patan's Sundari Chok and Pujari Math in Bhaktapur.

The Hong Kong supernatural film *Witch from Nepal* and the British movie *To the North of Katmandu*, were both shot on location in Nepal in 1986.

Then there is Bernardo Bertolucci's ambitious drama *Little Buddha*, filmed in 1992 and released a year later, starring the pre-*Matrix* Keanu Reeves as Siddhartha





MOVIELINE

Selection of foreign films shot in Nepal.

- 1964

Les Tribulations d'un Chinois en Chine / Up to His Ears
- 1970

Johnny Mera Naam
- 1971

Haré Rama Haré Krishna
- 1974

Arabian Nights, Ishk Ishk Ishk
- 1983

Mahaan
- 1986

The Golden Child, Witch from Nepal, To the North of Katmandu
- 1987

The Legend of Wisely
- 1992

Baraka
- 1993

Little Buddha
- 1998

Gharwali Baharwali, Windhorse, Everest
- 1999

Himalaya: Caravan
- 2002

The Touch

- 2009

The Third Generation
- 2012

Katmandú, un espejo en el cielo / Kathmandu, A mirror in the sky
- 2013

Deng Feng Lai / Up in the Wind
- 2014

Highway to Dhampus
- 2015

Everest
- 2016

Doctor Strange
- 2019

Sher-E-Hindustan, The Man from Kathmandu
- 2021

14 Peaks: Nothing is Impossible, The Summit of the Gods
- 2022

Le otto montagne / The Eight Mountains, Uunchai



Gautam. The film follows three children, one American and two Nepali, who might be the reincarnation of a Buddhist spiritual teacher Lama Dorje, and their story is told in parallel with the story of Gautam Buddha.

Lisa Choegyal, who was a production liaison for *Little Buddha* in Nepal, remembers how the Bhaktapur Darbar Square had been transformed with fibre-glass sculptures and wood trellises to stand in for Prince Siddhartha's Kapilvastu palace.

Choegyal wrote in her *Nepali Times* column in 2017 that local residents were confused because the recreated sets could not be differentiated from the real thing.

"It was the most elaborate, ambitious movie to be filmed in Nepal then," recalls Choegyal. "This was after the 1990 People's Movement and Girija Prasad Koirala was prime minister. The Tourism Ministry really got behind us because it was the same crew who had done *The Last Emperor* in Beijing."

The Last Emperor had gone on to win 13 Oscars, and after its release visitors to China increased by 25%. And that is why the production of *Little Buddha* was backed by Koirala's cousin Niranjana who was adviser to the Ministry of Tourism. The Prime Minister's Office also assigned a special official to iron out any problems while filming.

"So, in the 10 months of preparation and three months of filming, we didn't lose a single day," recalls Choegyal.

Little Buddha was a box office hit in France, and made around \$48 million globally. It also featured in several year-end lists, including *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. This kind of exposure, Choegyal says, is valuable for Nepal's tourism and economy.

Little Buddha's production actually contributed to one-tenth of 1992's tourism revenue in Nepal. *Doctor Strange* employed around 70 Nepalis in the production side of things and 500 extras.

But lavish productions like *Little Buddha* are no longer possible on the same scale. The cost of filming on location has gone up, as has the development of CGI and visual effects. For instance, BBC's *Black Narcissus*, a 2022 three-episode series partly filmed in Jomsom, was made almost entirely in studios with only a handful of scenes filmed in Mustang.

Unlike the 1998 IMAX documentary *Everest*, the 2015 movie *Everest* starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Josh Brolin about the 1996 deaths on the mountain, was shot only till Base Camp. The rest of the climb was recreated in the Italian Alps and Pinewood Studios in the UK, with real-life pilot Vijay Lama playing the character of the helicopter rescue pilot, Madan KC.

Producers are also avoiding location shooting because of more expensive and stricter insurance and liability laws in the US and the UK. Kathmandu's notorious pollution could also be another reason.

Bertolucci had clear blue skies and stretches of green hills, but Syangbo recalls filming for the upcoming film *Tiger's Nest* in Chitwan and Surkhet: "The sky in the footage was just grey and murky. We were down there filming, and we couldn't breathe and sometimes, we couldn't even see well."

It is not cheap to film in Nepal, and poor infrastructure adds to the risk. Ram Krishna Pokhrel of Icefall Productions has helped with location scouting for NatGeo, BBC, HBO and others, including working on the 2021 French animated film *The Summit of the Gods*.

"Our government doesn't fully understand filmmaking and there has been no change in its attitude towards international filmmakers," Pokhrel laments. "They celebrate when a film comes out but are not supportive during production. Policies are not clear and there are too many restrictions."

Pokhrel believes that Nepal needs to keep up with international developments in

filmmaking techniques to boost the country's tourism. Nepal could also give tax incentives like New Zealand, the UK and Iceland for international producers who want to shoot on location here.

"It is not surprising that feature films which require large crews are not shot in Nepal," says Pokhrel. Documentaries and short films, by contrast, have smaller production teams and are still coming.

When foreign filmmakers come to Nepal to shoot, it is also an opportunity for the local crew to learn and be familiar with what is happening in the industry outside Nepal.

Kiran Bhakta Joshi of Incessant Rain Studios wants to promote Nepal as a location destination to create jobs and generate foreign exchange. Right now, mountains remain the most popular subject, but Joshi believes we also need to explore our arts and culture in our films, whether narrative or documentary.

"We could create content ourselves and export abroad," he adds. "In addition, the system right now does not allow for open competition and works almost like a syndicate. We see the same names making films in Nepal, and even though there are young, talented artists, they haven't been able to enter the mainstream. This needs to change."

Joshi previously worked for Disney and co-developed the herding system for the wildebeest stampede sequence in *The Lion King*. He left the company in 2017 to establish Incessant Rain, and has worked on visual effects and set extension for *Stranger Things*, *House of the Dragon* and *A Series of Unfortunate Events*.

"We can even create a studio hub here, with a proper sound stage, green screen room," adds Joshi. "Film-makers from the US, Italy, even India will want to come and make films here in Nepal. We should think about promoting Nepal not just as a shooting location, but a filmmaking destination." 🇳🇵



EVENTS



Critical mass
Love to cycle? The cyclist meet-up, Critical Mass, gathers cyclists to reclaim the streets through short rides each month.
17 February, 5.30pm onwards, Jawalakhel

Blood drive

Hard Rock Cafe Kathmandu is organising a Blood Drive supported by Pragati Youth Club and Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS)-Khokhana. All the blood collected on that day will be donated to NRCS Khokhana.
18 February, 9:00am – 11:00am, Sherpa Mall, Darbarmarg

Pauline’s pop-up

Celebrate the weekend with live painting, jazz funk, tattoo initiation, ink workshop, folk blues and house sundown at an under-construction building in the city. Check their Instagram page for time and venue details.
16 – 18 February, Jawalakhel

PhotoKTM 5

photo.circle returns with the fifth iteration of its thought-provoking and transdisciplinary series PhotoKTM. This year, the photo festival, with all its exhibitions, is dedicated to exploring nature and the current issues surrounding climate change.
24 Feb – 31 March, www.photoktm.com



Walk for heritage
Mark the dates for the heritage walkathon which is raising funds to rebuild Bhaidega in Patan Darbar Square. Register now.
18 February, 7am onwards

DINING



South African fusion
Taste South African fusion cuisines with panipuri at the Deli Himalaya pantry.
19 February, 12:30pm - 2:30pm, Rs3,000, HUB Boudha, 9851253236

ONLINE ARCHIVES

Aji’s Podcast
This is a great way to be inspire and learn. Listen to extraordinary life stories from the elderly community of Nepal. Aji’s Podcast can be found on YouTube, Apple Podcasts, or Stitcher.



MaPuPu
Browse through the collection of Nepali archived content, such as manuscripts, newsletters, sketches and photographs, on the Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya database.



Minesweeper
Brush up your childhood memories with the single-player puzzle game. Google ‘Minesweeper’ and start playing online.



Virtual street festivals
In a festive mood? Google's Colorful Street Fests & Carnivals is a virtual tour of eight of the most vibrant street festivals in the world. It includes the La Tomatina food fight in Spain, Oktoberfest in Germany, and the Mardi Gras in New Orleans.




Shilpee Theatre
Sit back and enjoy some good drama. Watch COMA, or the theatre's adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's Hedda Gabler on the theatre's YouTube channel.

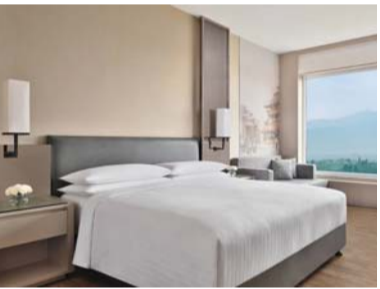


GETAWAY


Buddha Maya Hotel
Stroll along the Lumbini World Heritage Garden and visit the historical Maya Devi Temple, all a short distance from the beautiful Buddha Maya Garden Hotel.
Lumbini, (71) 580219




Balthali Village Resort
This cosy retreat offers beautiful views of green hills and ochre houses. Spend the day hiking and immerse in the beauty of Kavre.
Panauti, Kavre, 9851087772



Gokarna Forest Resort
Once a protected sanctuary, Gokarna Forest Resort offers a quiet retreat away from the city life. Perfect for a weekend with family.
Gokarna, (01) 4450002



Tiger Tops
Get up close and personal with wildlife and the local Tharu culture at the Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge, located four kilometres away from Chitwan National Park.
Kawasoti, Nawalparasi, (07) 8690721

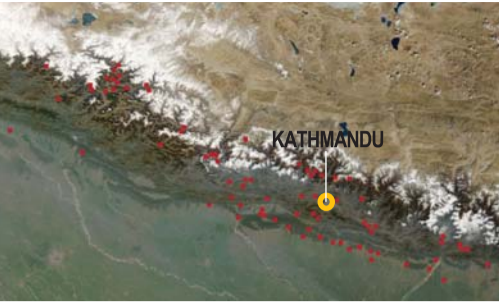


Marriott Kathmandu
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Naxal, (01) 4443040

Garden Terrace
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Soaltee Crowne Plaza, Tahachal, 9801067222

African BBQ
Make your Fridays lively with a lavish African BBQ Dinner and live music at Radisson Hotel.
Fridays, 6:30pm - 10:30pm, Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat, 9851048311

WEEKEND WEATHER



High and dry
It is time to officially declare a drought in Central Nepal, with no rain now since late September. The jetstream is crossing over western Nepal to the Tibetan Plateau across the Himalaya, bringing some westerly precipitation, but leaving the rest of the country high and dry. Some of these clouds will graze the higher mountains and the trans-Himalayan districts. The wind brought down the temperature this week, but it will start warming up by the weekend. All this does not bode well for wildfire season, as this NASA FIRMS map shows (left). Slight chance of rain late next week, but don't hold your breath.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
23° 8°	23° 9°	23° 9°	23° 9°	24° 9°


OUR PICK

Ridley Scott's 1982 science fiction classic *Blade Runner* is an adaptation of Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Set in a dystopian future Los Angeles of 2019, in which synthetic humans known as replicants are bio-engineered by the powerful Tyrell Corporation to work on space colonies, the film follows the burnt-out cop Rick Deckard as he hunts down a fugitive group of advanced replicants led by Roy Batty that have escaped back to Earth. Stars Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer, Sean Young and Edward James Olmos.



MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI




You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.
- Martin Luther King Jr.

Miss Moti-vation
©Kripa Joshi 2023

सामाजिक सञ्जाल प्रयोगमा सचेतता अपनाऔँ

- सामाजिक सञ्जालमा अपरिचित व्यक्तिको साथी बन्ने अनुरोधलाई विश्वस्त भएर मात्र प्रतिक्रिया जनाऔँ ।
- अपरिचित व्यक्तिलाई जथाभावी साथी बन्न अनुरोध नपठाऔँ ।
- सामाजिक सञ्जाल तथा अन्य विद्युतीय माध्यमबाट चिन्ना पुरस्कार जस्ता आर्थिक प्रलोभनका प्रस्तावको भरमा नपरोँ ।
- आफूले प्रवाह गरेका सन्देश वा सूचनाबाट समाजमा पर्नसक्ने नकारात्मक प्रभावको ख्याल गरौँ ।
- आफ्नो सन्देशले कुनै व्यक्ति वा अन्य कुनै समुदायको आत्मसम्मानमा चोट नपुऱ्याऔँ ।



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Turkey and Nepal face similar seismic risks

Nepal must prepare itself for an overdue mega earthquake with retrofitting and better building codes

■ Surya Narayan Shrestha

The deadly 7.8M earthquake in Türkiye and Syria on 6 February occurred on the East Anatolia fault that had not suffered a major earthquake since 1138. There is a similar seismic gap in western Nepal where there has not been a mega quake since 1505.

At 7.8M, the Türkiye-Syria earthquake was about the same magnitude as one that hit Nepal in 2015, but it lasted two minutes — more than double the duration of the Nepal quake.

Preliminary reports suggest a surface displacement of 3m, whereas in Central Nepal seven years ago it was about 1.2m. The devastation in southern Türkiye and Syria is therefore much worse, with many concrete high-rise apartment blocks coming down at 4:15AM when families were still sleeping, leading to a great loss of life at over 41,000.

Even though the 2015 earthquake in Central Nepal was not a mega earthquake, it still killed 8,857 people and made millions homeless. Most of the buildings that collapsed in Kathmandu were brick mortar structures, but multi-storey ones also came down in areas like Gongga Bu and Charikot (pictured).

The 1934 earthquake was 8.3M epicentred in eastern Nepal, and killed at least 16,000 people. Historical records show that such mega quakes hit Nepal once every 100 years, while smaller ones like the 2015 ones are more frequent.

The large seismic gap in western Nepal between Pokhara and Dadeldhura means so much stress



KUNDADIXIT



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has built up there because of the convergence of the Indian and Eurasian plates that an earthquake of more than 8 magnitude could happen any day.

A mega quake in western Nepal will impact the whole country, including northern India. We must waste no time in reinforcing infrastructure, since two-thirds of all buildings in Nepal are not seismic resistant.

After 2015, there is a general misconception that concrete buildings are safer because many of them survived the quake. But most reinforced concrete structures in Kathmandu would not have survived if the intensity then was

slightly higher and the shaking had lasted as long as the earthquake in Türkiye-Syria.

Given how disaster-prone we know Nepal is, we must seriously put our efforts and money into reducing the risks. This means design earthquake resistant structures, and monitor building compliance.

Awareness alone does not save lives, people need to change their attitude and practice. Many of us have already forgotten the destruction of the 2015 earthquake, and people have gone back to building unsafe houses.

Individuals must invest a bit more to ensure that their buildings

are safe, while the government can provide technical expertise. This means retrofitting especially public buildings which can be a lifesaver. None of the schools in Central Nepal retrofitted by our organisation NSET suffered damage in 2015, many served as shelters during aftershocks.

Nepal received immediate help from the international community in search and rescue (SAR) operations in 2015. There were 141 teams from 34 countries with 4,521 personnel that could fly in because Kathmandu airport was not damaged.

A search and rescue team from Türkiye was one of the first to arrive on 26 April 2015 with 82 rescue members, 2 canines and stayed for

two weeks. It also sent 16 tons of supplies including tents, food, water and supplies for children.

Several other Turkish agencies including the Humanitarian Aid Foundation, Turkish Red Crescent, Search and Rescue Foundation and Confederation of Public Servants Trade Unions had sent emergency and medical supplies, doctors and search and rescue experts.

Nepal has so far sent 22 tons of relief materials to Turkey. Our medical teams with expertise in orthopaedics, trauma care and essential medical supplies will also be useful since responders have themselves been caught up in the Turkish disaster.

In the medium term, Nepal's experience in rural housing reconstruction can help during the recovery. Organisations like NSET and others have amassed experience in helping recovery and reconstruction in other earthquakes in Gujarat, Bam, Banda Aceh, Kashmir, and Nepal itself.

We can offer human resource support in dealing with the planning and implementation of housing reconstruction. Technical assistance to transfer Nepal's experiences, lessons and good practices for both urban and rural reconstruction will be of much help. Additionally, Nepal can pledge support for recovery and reconstruction. 🇳🇵



Surya Narayan Shrestha is the Executive Director of the National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET).

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Poetry of a migrant nation



**DIASPORA
DIARIES 21-22**

Nepali migrant worker who wrote poetry at construction sites in the Gulf

■ **Mahendra Thulung Rai**

This is the 21st instalment of Diaspora Diaries, a regular series in Nepali Times with stories of Nepalis living and working abroad.

I was sitting on the terrace of a building that was under construction in Doha. Night had fallen, but it was still hot.

Beads of sweat dropped on the page of my diary on which I was writing a poem, making the words illegible. Illegible but indelible. I still have that poem with me.

Words are all I have. I have worked in three Gulf countries, I have composed poetry at construction sites, under a lamppost in my labour camp, or in a crowded room with 11 other Nepalis.

After a hard 12-hour day in the outdoor heat, being humiliated by an overbearing supervisor, it did not matter that I was in a noisy, crowded room. I became oblivious to my surroundings. When my heart ached and venting in my diary was my only escape.

People talk of foreign employment as a compulsion and not a choice for Nepalis.



For me, writing poems is a compulsion. When I see the failures in our society that disproportionately impact the weakest, I have to get it out of my system through verse.

I feel power in words, in books, in literature. Growing up in a remote village near Dharan, my friends and I had started a मिर्चे wall newspaper. We used to buy large drawing papers and hand-write news, copying the style of publications that did not make it to our village.

There was no photocopy service then, so we had to transcribe everything by hand from the master copy. It was difficult, but we loved it and assigned beats for village news, interviews, and literature to the news team.

I was in charge of the literature section and sought contributions from the community. We stuck the newspaper on a wall at a busy intersection so as many people as possible could read it.

Indeed, townspeople would swarm around after every edition came out. Seeing the popularity of the paper, they made a stand so the paper could be protected from the rain. Sometimes, when available, we used to paste original photos of contributors or interviewees to illustrate the content. This would create quite the buzz, and inspire others to contribute as well. We had quite a fan following, and could influence village discussions on social issues.



When I migrated overseas for work, this desire to inculcate a reading habit among others followed me. It was not easy when access to books or newspapers was limited.

In Qatar in 2004, news from Nepal was not readily available to us migrants. When people came from Nepal they brought gifts like pickles wrapped in newspapers. Sometimes the news in those pages would be more valued than the pickle itself.

We would read those pages, and share it among ourselves. It did not matter if the news was outdated, or if the paper was crumpled — it was a valuable connection to our homeland.

We saved the clippings under our

For better or verse in the Gulf

After 20 years in the UAE, another Nepali migrant returns to make a living from his passion for poetry

■ **Dalbir Singh Bairali**

When I remember my poverty-stricken childhood, what comes vividly to my mind is how my mother and sisters walked for three days from my village in Ramechhap to Godar with sacks of potatoes and returned with salt, masala and tobacco.

Dasain evokes many memories of childhood in people, but for me the festival was a time to finally eat rice, a welcome break from *makai* and *kodo*. I used to run around barefoot and it used to be painful, so after seeing an image of Ram and his *paduka* in a copy of the Ramayana, I improvised my own wooden slipper.

My parents had to struggle taking care of us 12 children. But my mother had strong management skills, and those were abundantly evident in how she allocated to all of us specific household duties every evening for the next day. Somehow, this 'homework' allowed her to ensure a semblance of order in that chaos.

Education was never a priority even though my school was just five minutes away. This was unsurprising because tattered



clothes, unpaid school bills and struggling to buy notebooks do not particularly lend themselves to high performance.

A dozen children in my house meant I was always amidst siblings and relatives. But in those days the village itself was bustling with people, unlike these days when it is empty because many in the community have moved for work.

Back then, money had no value in rural Nepal. Neighbours helped each other build or repair homes, and during the harvest season everyone pitched in. Now, even if you are willing to pay, it is difficult to get farm help or hire construction workers.

The irony of our village life is that when there were no services and facilities in the village, it was full of people. Now that there is a motorable road and shops, there is no one left.

My parents were irregular with paying school fees, but we had a roof over our heads and relied on subsistence farming for food. That was until the weddings of my brothers, when my father borrowed Rs3,000 from the village money lender. He had to pay 3 *pathi* (1 *pathi* = 4 litre container) for every 100 rupees. I remember the moneylender used to show up with an empty sack for his 'interest' payment every month.

After being buried in debt and giving away our produce as interest, we had to go to bed with an empty stomach. That was a new low for me and my family.

I soon left home to work on the Miteri Bridge and other road projects, or wash dishes at the Karna Purna restaurant in Maha Boudha in Kathmandu. These stints allowed me to survive until an uncle helped me get enlisted into

the Nepal Army.

It was a good opportunity, although I often felt suffocated with the discipline, being someone with a knack for writing ghazal odes, and for storytelling. The rigid military environment was not for me. Even then, I knew it was my ticket to serve as a UN Peacekeeper overseas so I waited my turn to serve in the Golan Heights in Lebanon for six months before resigning from the army after 11 years of service.

It was a unique opportunity that allowed me to earn \$450 a month. I could have bought land with the savings, but I spent it instead on household items and paid off my parents' loans. Buying property for myself when my family was struggling did not seem right.

Then, a friend in the UAE sent me a letter, encouraging me to come there for work. This was the 1990s, so it was a letter by post. Soon

enough, I was on a plane to Dubai where I ended up spending the next 20 years.

At that time, there were only a few thousand Nepalis in the UAE. Meeting fellow Nepalis used to be rare and exciting.

I worked in the security sector and was lucky to be promoted to a supervisor position. In one of the commercial buildings where we were posted, I once found a computer in the trash bin. It worked fine, so I took it to my dorm and taught myself to type in Nepali, one key at a time.

A tech-savvy Nepali brother taught me how to use pageview and, within three months, I started publishing a monthly paper called *Sahayatra* (Fellow Traveller) that included news and current affairs from Nepal and ghazals.

This was the pre-smartphone era, and we used to make 10,000





■ Nicole McCloskey

Tenzing Chogyal Sherpa grew up in Namche Bazar, amidst the bustle of trekkers and mountaineers en route to Mt Everest. His childhood was spent learning about the deep relationships his family had forged with the mountains. Tenzing’s grandfather was part of the first successful expedition to Mt Everest in 1953. With views of Thamserku and Kongde peaks, Tenzing saw the importance of glacier-fed streams and the frozen parts of the planet that are essential to life. He grew up listening to his parents and grandparents talk about how thick the glaciers used to be, how ice was melting to form lakes, and how winter snowfall had become rarer. During his childhood, Tenzing celebrated Sherpa festivals, which reflect harmony with nature. He developed a healthy appreciation for his mountain environment. When Tenzing left Namche Bazar to study environmental science at Kathmandu University in Dhulikhel, he found a way to combine his love for his home with a passion for science and glaciology. The study of ice resonated with him. It was important, and personal, for him to methodically study how quickly the planet is warming, and what complex risks



Climactic change

Young Nepali glaciologist
Tenzing Chogyal Sherpa studies his melting Himalayan home

these changes present to mountain and downstream communities. Since completing his postgraduate studies, Tenzing has been part of numerous glacio-hydrological expeditions and geophysical surveys across Nepal to study how the climate crisis is affecting the Himalaya, and the impact that melting glaciers will have on 1.5 billion people living downstream from these mountains. In 2018, Tenzing joined a team of experts on the British-led EverDrill project, which made a breakthrough by drilling 150m deep into the Khumbu Glacier. The team found that the internal temperature of the debris-covered glacier was two degrees warmer than the mean annual air temperature outside. In other words, the Khumbu Glacier is warming up, and this change is reaching a tipping point. Once the temperature crosses zero Celsius, the glacier will melt from the inside out as well as from the

outside in. Computer simulations have shown that there will initially be an increase in the water flow of the rivers that drain the Everest region, but as the available ice begins to diminish, the water flow in the dry season will decline. Accelerated melting will also expand glacial lakes, increasing the risk of them bursting. These changes in the glaciers have cascading, devastating consequences downstream, but there has been a gap between local communities and scientists when it comes to solutions and action. Tenzing believes this historic gap can be bridged by educating younger people in mountain communities. He believes glaciers are the most visible representations of climate collapse, and adds that the incentive and motivation to act already exist. “We need to include local

people from the initiation of any research activity, incorporate indigenous knowledge, and utilise local resources, creating a positive relationship with that community,” he stresses. “If you involve people in the research, they are more receptive to what you have to say. And they will understand you much better.” Tenzing was recently featured in a BBC Earth video asking the ominous question: ‘What Happens if Everest Melts?’ The short film presents the alarming discovery of the Khumbu Glaciers’ warming temperature from the EverDrill project and explores the inevitable changes that will irreversibly alter the realities of Nepal’s mountain communities and ecosystems. In the film, Tenzing speaks passionately about the gravity of these changes: ‘It is essential to keep the frozen parts of our planet healthy... because they are the water towers of the world. They

feed more than a billion people downstream.’ Tenzing now works at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Kathmandu, where he uses remote sensing and geo-information technology to understand the dynamics of the changing cryosphere in the Himalaya. His work is inspired by a love for his melting home, and expertise in using rapidly improving technology to monitor the impact of climate change, so adaptation measures can be undertaken. While local communities have adapted to harsh mountain environments for centuries, the climate is now changing so rapidly that traditional ways of life are under threat. Blending science and local knowledge is an effective way to support communities in making informed decisions. It is also a way for Tenzing to give back to his people back home. “Mountain communities can play a crucial role in formulating climate policies that support and fund adaption strategies,” he says. As Tenzing looks to the future, he sees a world in which young climate scientists must constantly evolve with emerging technologies to keep pace with environmental change. “Over the next decade, we will be talking about extremes very often – it will be too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry,” he says. The window of opportunity to take concrete climate action is rapidly closing. Tenzing, and many other young scientists, are working to make sure their research contributes to mitigating risks in the coming decades. 🇳🇵

Watch BBC documentary ‘What Happens If Everest Melts?’ | Our Frozen Planet | BBC Earth - YouTube

breaking the layers that cage my soul i choose to live without pretense,
bare my soul without a mask, i’m right, i’m wrong, i’m me, i’m free

I’M NUDE

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