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GOPEN RAI

# TO-LET

■ Sahina Shrestha

Assaulted daily by news of politicians getting away with larceny, convicted criminals being freed, impunity and then the tragic news of 10 students brutally killed by Hamas in Israel, the mood ahead of Dasain this year is subdued.

Adding to the woes are everyday economic worries about inflation, low purchasing power, a slump in retail trading. Street front shops are shuttered, and have to-let signs.

But at the macro-economic level, things are looking rosy, with Finance Minister Prakash Sharan

Mahat trying to raise spirits this week by declaring that the death of Nepal's economy was exaggerated.

The World Bank has projected that the economy will grow by 3.9% this fiscal year, and by 5% in fiscal 2025.

Removing import restrictions, loosening monetary policy, surging remittances, and the locomotive of India's economic growth together appear to be pulling Nepal's wagons along.

But the Bank also warned of risks: an erratic monsoon that could harm agriculture, a new spike in commodity prices due to India's food export ban. Higher inflation could keep policy rates elevated, increase domestic debt servicing costs, and drag growth.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) projected Nepal's economic growth at a slightly higher 4.3% for fiscal 2024, up from 1.9% in 2023. But both projections are far short of the government's 6% growth target,

and behind India, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

The overall scenario does not look precarious because of bulging forex reserves driven by last year's import restrictions and remittances.

From suffering daily electricity rationing Nepal is now exploring exports, the IT sector is booming, e-commerce has taken off, and agriculture is going from subsistence to commercial.

However, all this could have happened much more rapidly with better policy implementation. Money Nepalis abroad send home is not being invested in productive sectors.

"Nepal needs \$7-8 billion in investment per year. Capital formation is low, so we have to get more FDI. The scale of projects that need to come up has to be larger so that it can drive legislative and

**KILLING TIME:** A clothing vendor waits for customers on Wednesday evening in Lagankhel, a week ahead of Dasain when it should have been busy with shoppers. Businesses have reported a decline in sales despite the upcoming festive season.

institutional reforms," says Sujeev Shakya of Beed Management. "Only then can we create jobs, accelerate the economy and stem migration."

Nepal's economy has been stagnant in recent years, with high inflation, fiscal imbalance, inadequate investment, low domestic production, deteriorating bank asset quality, and mass out-migration. Export continues to lag further behind burgeoning imports.

Nepal's economy is still reeling from long-Covid complications, but many of the underlying problems are structural, and lack of strategic thinking.

The economy did reap the peace dividend in the 2006-2016 decade after the peace agreement: fiscal management was in good shape, public debt was decreasing, the external sector was robust, and resources for expanding credit was adequate.

Investment in infrastructure at that time could have boosted growth and created jobs, but the private sector opted for quick returns on real estate, stock market speculation and trade. Politicians also never followed through on grand speeches about attracting and retaining foreign investors.

Coalition politics, bureaucratic inefficiency and counterintuitive policies remain major hurdles. The private sector shielded by insular policies do not want the status quo to change, even though there has been no major economic reform legislation for four long years.

One does not need a Nobel Prize in Economics to figure out what to do: move on the next set of macro-fiscal reforms, create a genuine investment friendly environment, and curb the rampant rent-seeking mindset.

Often accused of being a compulsive optimistic, Shakya maintains that although the road is serpentine, Nepal is moving in the right direction. "Nepalis are resilient," he notes.

"We overcame war, earthquake, blockade and Covid. We are generally happy with what we have, but what Nepal needs is forward-thinking policies and transformative reforms to actually drive the economy forward." 🇳🇵

**The migration myth**  
GUEST EDITORIAL  
by Brabim Bikram Thapa  
PAGE 2



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# New Arrivals

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# The migration myth

Nearly 900,000 Nepalis left the country last year to work or study overseas, making it the largest mass exodus of Nepalis in Nepal's history.

Except for during the Covid shutdowns, the number of Nepalis going overseas has increased every year for the last decade. Most



**GUEST EDITORIAL**  
Brabim Bikram Thapa

leave for jobs in the Gulf and Malaysia, or to study in US, Australia, and Canada.

The accepted reasons for outmigration are: Nepal failing to reap its demographic dividend, lack of employment, and the lack of economic stimulation. Most analysts conclude that bad governance, corruption, and the lack of opportunities are the reasons behind this mass migration.



SUMAN NEPALI

These conclusions are based on assumptions, anecdotal evidence and the blame game in Nepal's political leadership. But commentary based on limited research and extrapolated inference has its limitations, and does not help in a broader understanding of something that is as complex, comprehensive and multifaceted as migration.

The discourse surrounding outmigration from Nepal is largely reactionary, and needs more nuance. For example, many young people cite the impact of poor governance as the main reason for wanting and choosing to leave. Yet many Nepalis who actively benefit from Nepal's political and economic structures are also among those with passports and boarding passes at Kathmandu airport.

People who benefit from the status quo, and those related to the business-political class, those already earning decent incomes or own real estate are also sending their children to study abroad.

The idea that all young Nepalis choose to go abroad due to a lack of opportunities within Nepal must be put to the test. A recent study by IIDS showed that Nepal's IT exports exceeded \$500 million in 2022, creating more than 66,000 jobs. The IT sector contributed 1.4% to Nepal's GDP and accounted for 5.5% of the foreign exchange earnings.

Rapid advances in information technology means qualified Nepalis need not leave the country for jobs overseas.

In the meantime, while hundreds of thousands of people leave Nepal to work for menial unskilled jobs in the Gulf or Malaysia, there is a widespread labour shortage within Nepal.

My survey in Dolakha showed there was plenty of work available in the villages, but there was no one to do them despite wages having increased.

The scope of development and employment across rural Nepal has widened after federalism. Young Nepalis who have chosen to stay back in Dolakha, for example, say that they can easily earn up to Rs60,000 a month farming, construction, or livestock. Salary levels nearly commensurate with what they would earn toiling in the desert.

They would also not have to take loans to pay recruiters, and for tickets and other pre-departure documentation. Working at home would mean they save most of what they earn.

It may be human nature, or a characteristic of Nepali society to follow the herd rather than undertake to do something risky. This

appears to be true for migration, which has gone from being a necessity to becoming a trend.

However, someone's decision to migrate is not only influenced by what is happening within the family, community, and country, but also by global structures and circumstances. Technology, social media, and consumer habits have perpetuated

a culture of instant gratification, whereby it is tempting to gamble on improving one's living standard quickly to make up for even minor personal and professional setbacks.

The youth are giving up jobs even in banking and finance which were previously considered popular career choices. New entrants in banking, for example, may give up their jobs if they miss one promotion, choosing instead to try their luck outside.

It is therefore important to look at the context of migration through multiple political, socio-economic and sociocultural angles so that we do not form an inaccurate stereotypical assumption.

We also need to recognise that the pull factors of migration are global, and extend beyond the lack of opportunities within Nepal, the country's political state, economic structure, or socio-cultural circumstance. The study, discussion, research and solutions for outmigration must therefore extend beyond easy suppositions, frameworks and administrative tools.

Could the current migration discourse be influenced by media magnification of factors, and is public opinion being shaped by the competition for content that offers pat conclusions? And is this need for quick fixes in turn driving half-baked policy interventions?

*Brabim Bikram Thapa is pursuing Mphil in Anthropology at Tribhuvan University.*

## Moving beyond anecdotes to pinpoint push factors

## 20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

### Shit Show

Given its successes in household biogas plants, Nepal has used farm waste energy in a mass scale. Twenty years later, there are industrial-scale biogas plants but much more investment is required.

Biogas is a good clean alternative that reduces waste while producing cooking fuel as well as manure for farms, reducing dependency on imported petroleum and fertiliser.

Excerpts from a Nepali Times report published on issue #166 17-23 October 2003:



easy-to-make prototype that worked beautifully. There are virtually no moving parts, and the underground digester keeps the slurry insulated from the cold.

Nepal's biogas campaign really took off after 1992, when the Biogas Support Program (BSP) began to subsidise farmers who had to take out a soft loan to finance the construction of the plants.

BSP engineers are currently experimenting with biogas plants that can work in even colder regions in high altitude villages where deforestation is rampant.

Even though biogas plants produce methane, which is a powerful greenhouse gas, most of it is burnt and its volume is negligible compared to emissions from fossil-fuel burning cars.

**For archived material of Nepali Times of the past 20 years, site search: nepalitimes.com**

## ONLINE PACKAGES



MADE IN NEPAL

An up-and-coming business led by a Japanese entrepreneur is set to put a remote district in eastern Nepal on the world map for its premium natural peanut butter. The company has built a factory in Khotang, training impoverished women farmers, providing them with skills and income. Watch the video and subscribe to our YouTube channel for more original multimedia content.



TALE OF CHURE

Illegal sandmining on Chure rivers is displacing farmers across Nepal's mid-hills and Tarai with worsening floods and landslides while decimating already fragile landscape. Take a trip to Mahottari and watch for yourself how the crusher industry is destroying lives and our landscape in this video on our website.

### NEPALIS IN ISRAEL

The fact that our government won't work hard enough to bring back Nepalis is even worse ('Nepalis confirmed killed in Hamas attack', nepalitimes.com, more on page 9, 10 and 11). How can the government be trusted to do anything?

**Pratik Gauchan**

■ This is such devastating news about the deaths in Israel. Why is it always Nepalis? May the departed souls rest in peace and hopefully the stranded Nepalis are rescued peacefully.

**Saurav**

### CYCLING

Cycling is a blessing — and off-road cycling is heavenly ('Life cycle', Sonia Awale, #1182).

**Agnostic Girl**

### IT EXPORTS

Thank you Nepali Times for your recent article that provides an encouraging outlook on the dynamic landscape of Nepal's IT industry ('IT is it', Sahina Shrestha, #1182).

**Fusemachines**

■ Wow, with IT products already commanding 20% of Nepal's exports and earning over \$500 million per year, Nepal has a bright digital future, and even more so with proactive efforts to enlist more female professionals. Let there be more Incessant Rain!

**Hima Gautam Memorial Trust**

### DASAIN TRANSPORT

Where is the 'digital Nepal,' where such basic ticketing services would be just a click away? These queues, nowhere else but in Kathmandu, are very revealing about our 'digital revolution', 'digital access' and 'digital literacy' in 'all digital sectors.'

**Mugling Jharesi**

### KANCHENJUNGA

The article, unfortunately, typified the kind of top-down, we-know-best approach to conservation taking place inside KCA and other conservation areas in Nepal ('Saving Kangchenjunga', Alton C Byers, #1181). In this formula, local residents appear only as a resource-hungry nuisance who don't understand the impact of roads and have to be trained to build their own resilience against climate change. A truly people-led approach to conservation would begin with humility by genuinely listening to communities who have lived in KCA for hundreds of years.

**James Sharrock**

## 1,000 WORDS



HARIRAM BHETUWAL/RSS

### MOTORCYCLE GRAVEYARD:

A pile of motorcycles seized by traffic police at Gongabu station this week.

## WHAT'S TRENDING

### Women animators

by Sewa Bhattarai

After making his name as an animator providing sequences VFX footage for movies in Hollywood, Incessant Rain is opening the Nepal affiliate of Women in Animation (WIA) which will provide scholarships to Nepali women eager to get into animation, and eventually expand to training film editors, cinematography, scriptwriting, and production. Get more details online.



**Most reached and shared on Facebook**



### Life cycle

by Sonia Awale

Over 1,100 women in Patan have learned to use bicycles in the last two years as part of an initiative by a local social media group called Women for Women. The women have gained mobility, freedom, economic opportunity and a sense of benign belonging on bicycles. Read more at nepalitimes.com and watch video.



**Most popular on Twitter**

### IT is it

by Sahina Shrestha

With growing IT and its adjacent industries, 20% of Nepal's export last year was in IT services. The skilled workforce, the high quality of service that companies here provide, and the cost-effectiveness have helped place the country on the world map. Read more at nepalitimes.com



**Most commented**

### Sikkim's warning to Nepal

Editorial: The devastating flood last week in Sikkim is another shocking proof of what can happen if rampant, unplanned and poorly engineered infrastructure are built along Himalayan rivers at risk from climate breakdown and weather extremes. Join the discussion online.



**Most visited online page**

## QUOTE TWEETS



**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**

The discourse surrounding outmigration from Nepal is largely reactionary and needs more nuance. The Migration Myth | Brabim Bikram Thapa



**Neha Choudhary @neachoudhary**

A culture of migration is prevalent in Nepal. However, it was never just about dearth of opportunities - it was lack of 'decent' ones for sustained livelihoods where a quality of life with protection is ensured. If only we could refrain from labelling certain types of work 'menial'



**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**

People queue up at Naya Buspark, Gongabu to book their tickets home for Dasain on Tuesday. Many of them lined up outside the ticket counters since midnight for their pass home.



**AgnosticGirl @laarne**

So many decades later, travelers are still lining up for bus tickets when everything else is becoming electronic.




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# Surveying Nepal's digital landscape

Why it is important to track consumption habits of the increasing numbers of Nepal's internet users

■ **Bhumiraj Chapagain**  
and **Madhu Acharya**

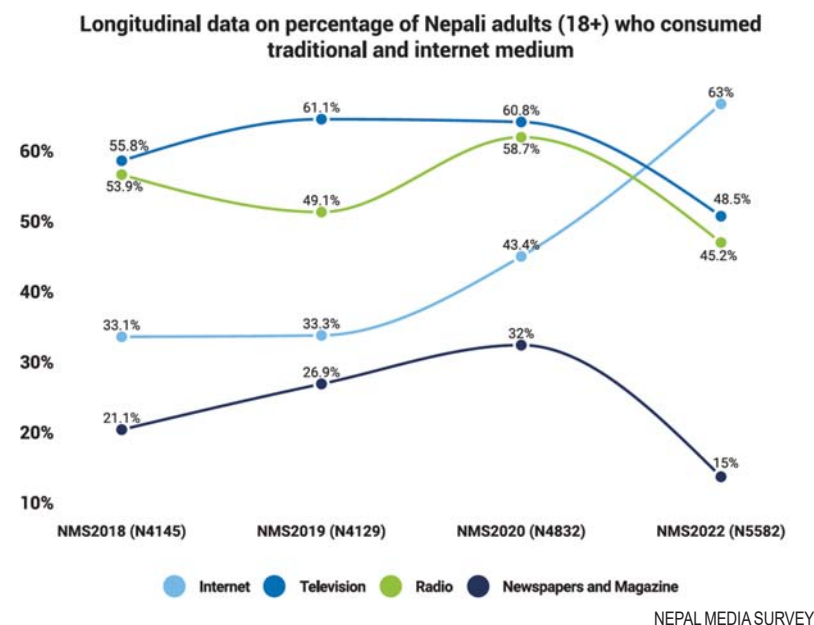
Nepal's digital topography is undergoing dramatic change, with traditional mass media being rapidly subsumed by digital portals and social media platforms as the primary source of news and information. This has resulted in a fragmented radio, tv, and print with a migration of audience eyeballs.

While a significant portion of Nepal's population is engaged in the internet and social media, the noise in this sector also poses challenges. It is essential to leverage accurate and up-to-date data to develop an effective media campaign strategy. This holds true for political figures, election publicity, marketing of products, and even for the media business itself.

To navigate this dynamic environment successfully, having live and accurate analytics on media consumption patterns is crucial. Nepal Media Survey (NMS) by Sharecast Initiative has been filling this gap by providing valuable insight into media industry stakeholders, institutions using media for advocacy, and others interested in audience data.

The annual NMS report sheds light on media consumption patterns, trust levels, and access to media, enabling organisations to refine their strategies and connect with their target audience more effectively. Nepali Times has been analysing the data emerging from these surveys every year to forecast future trends in device use and popularity of platforms.

The survey adopts a multi-stage cluster sampling design



with the first sampling unit being the district, followed by municipalities, then wards and finally households. The probability-proportion-to-size method is used for the first three stages to ensure representative selection. We employ the right-hand rule in the fourth stage to identify the household. In the final stage, we conduct a random lottery method to select respondents.

The survey collects critical demographic and geographic data about each survey respondent. Each question can provide additional insight that helps understand user perception and behavioral aspects, and create a more comprehensive market understanding.

Apart from age, gender, and geographic location (Probability proportional sampling (PPS) method at the provincial level),

the survey covers income level, education level, occupation, living standard measurement, mobile device ownership, and internet access. Each question can be cross-referenced or correlated to another question covered in the survey.

Past polls found a sharp increase in access to the internet and digital media platforms in 2022 compared to 2020. Trends since 2018 reveal a radio listenership spike during key socio-political events and natural calamities. The average national listenership for radio was 45% in March 2022. That year, 48% said they watched tv regularly, a surprising 12.3% point drop compared to 2020.

Newspaper readership continues to decline. Compared to 2020 (32%), only 15% of respondents said they read newspapers regularly in 2022.



NT ARCHIVE

dependency on personal mobile devices to get online is expected to increase further.

This changing pattern of consumption of media content is now determined by access to new devices and services. Just as FM listenership surged with Nepal's rural radio revolution in the 1990s, the beginning of 2000, television took the audience away from print during the same period.

The second decade of the millennia put radio, tv, and print in the same boat, and they compete with the internet for eyeballs and revenue share.

This year's NMS will continue to track users of legacy media while also tracking access to mobile devices and quality of the internet, digital media platforms covering user behaviour on major social media platforms. We are especially interested in testing the trust level and knowledge to test the validity of the information they receive through different platforms.

The 2023/24 survey also has new questions to help understand e-commerce behaviour and consumption of Nepali online news portals, influencers, harassment/cyberbullying/misinformation, and disinformation patterns.

Sharecast Initiative plans to release separate reports for digital and legacy platforms and thematic areas for this year's survey, and will continue to monitor the ranking of significant legacy media which will be valuable for companies and advertisers to reach consumers and gauge their media preferences.

*Bhumiraj Chapagain is the co-founder and program director overseeing research and Madhu Acharya is the CEO and President – both Sharecast Initiative Nepal.*



**NMB BANK**  
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## Turkish 7.9 mil pax

Turkish Airlines carried 7.9 million passengers in September, a 9.2% increase compared to last year. Load factor on international flights was 84.6% and transit passenger volume increased by 14.6% to 2.7 million this year. The carrier has one of the largest route networks, and a fleet of 429 airliners.

## Samsung winners

Between 19 September to 2 October, nine customers won a TVS 125cc scooter each as part of the Samsung Mobile Chyappai, Scooter Jhyappai



Dasain scheme which is valid until 20 October. Winners are selected via a lucky draw of participants who purchased Samsung Smartphones or Tablets during the promotional period. So far two winners Lila Gamal from Kumaripati who purchased Samsung Galaxy M14 5G and Jenny Bhalandyo from Bhaktapur who purchased Samsung Galaxy A24 have claimed their scooters.

## Electric scooters

Vaidya Energy, a subsidiary of Vaidya's Organisations of Industries and Trading Houses (VOITH) has launched a strategic collaboration with Ather Energy, India's leading electric vehicle manufacturer for fast-charging stations called Ather Grids while Ather will set up its retail outlet and the deliveries of its flagship Ather 450X electric scooters in November.



## Hard Rock kids

Hard Rock Café in Kathmandu and select outlets worldwide have curated the first 'Messi Menu' for kids named after its global brand ambassador. The Messi X Burger, the Messi Golden Chicken Sandwich and other kid-friendly options come with a complimentary mini golden soccer ball toy, poster and activity sheet.

## Toques en Chablais



Executive chef of Aloft Kathmandu Thamel Rajeev Shrestha is participating at the Toques en Chablais International Gastronomy Festival where he will showcase Nepali cuisine alongside Michelin star chefs from around the world. The festival fosters cross-cultural learning, creating a unique opportunity for culinary exchange and enrichment in collaboration with Charles Baudelaire Institute and Lycée Hôtelier Savoie Léman of Thonon-les Bains, France.



## Indian tourists

More than 80 Indian visitors from various offices of ACAPS in India and UAE participating in a conference in Kathmandu chartered two ATR 72 Yeti Airlines sightseeing flights to Mt Everest on 7 October, sending a positive message about Nepal's tourism rebound.

## Yamaha FZ FI V3

MAW Enterprises launches the Yamaha FZ FI V3 Standard in Nepal at a price of Rs379,900. It features double disc and advanced BSVI engine technology. Available in new colour options the two-wheeler is powered by a 149cc air-cooled 4-stroke single-cylinder with mileage of 45-50 km/l.



## Global IME climate fund

Global IME Bank Limited (GIBL) and the Global Climate Partnership Fund (GCPF) have signed a \$25 million loan agreement to promote climate-smart lending in Nepal and a first for GCPF in Nepal. The funds are earmarked for financing energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

## Dasain Tata

Siprati Trading has launched a Dasain, Tihar and Chaath festive scheme for customers purchasing Tara Ace cars to get a benefit of up to Rs730,000 in cash discounts, annual vehicle tax rebates, one-year insurance, exchange bonus and accessories. Tata eVs also get benefits.



## New CIJ chair

Journalist, author and publisher of Nepali Times Kunda Dixit has been elected the new chair of the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) Nepal. A new working committee including Ramyata Limbu, Rameshwor Bohara, Ravin Sayami, Krishna Gyawali, Bidhya Rai and Navin Jha was also elected.



## Streax Show

Streax Professional along with celebrity stylist Vipul Chudasama presented its latest collection of hair colours and styles, Mercurial, at a fashion event in Kathmandu this week. Vipul has led more than 520 illustrious hair shows, seminars and exclusive masterclasses and styled top celebrities.



# Activating the new aerial gateways

How Pokhara and Bhairawa airports can be made to succeed as international portals

■ Kanak Mani Dixit

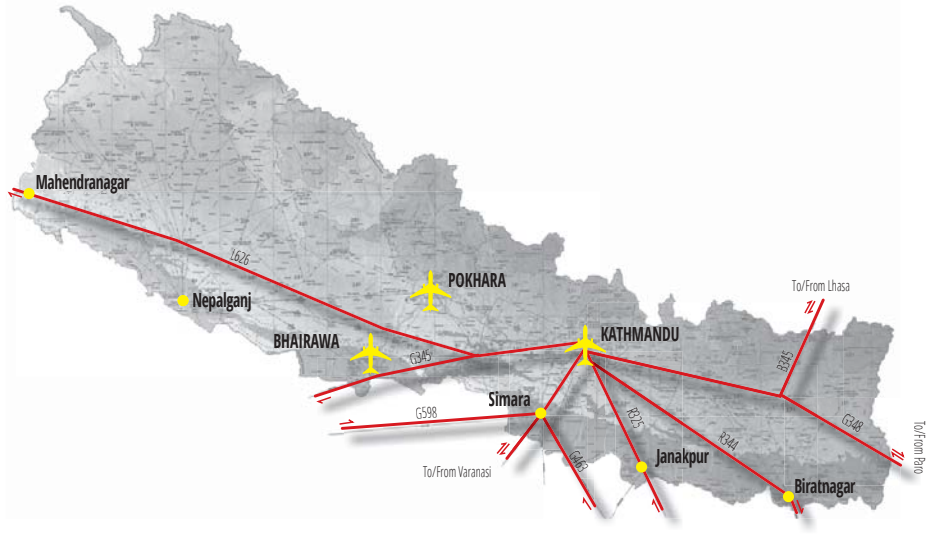
Chinese President Xi Jinping ahead of his visit in Kathmandu in 2019 said that the Chinese people specially want to visit Nepal. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi extolled Nepal's beauty, speaking before Parliament in 2014.

The incapacity of Nepal's government and private operators is that they have not been able to cash in on these disclosures and admiration of President Xi or PM Modi, to use as marketing tools to fly in high-end tourists from all over China and India.

But all we do in Nepal is bemoan our fate that the hotels are empty, or that neither Pokhara and Bhairawa airports have international flights. The air bridges are rusting with lack of use at the \$215 million Pokhara airport, and foreign airlines have not shown an interest in using Bhairawa.

The blame is mostly placed on New Delhi which, to be sure, has made things difficult for Nepali aviation. Inbound international flights have to be routed through the Simara waypoint, while only outbound flights can use Mahendranagar or Janakpur. New Delhi has also not allowed inbound flights to descend through Indian air space to Bhairawa airport.

Himalayan Airlines, which has Chinese investment and more jets



than Nepal Airlines, is barred from serving Indian cities. At Kathmandu airport passengers boarding Indian-owned airlines have to pass through cabooses attached to the ramps to be frisked by Indian security staff.

But Nepal's do complain too much while doing very little to find solutions.

One can be sure that Sher Bahadur Deuba and Pushpa Kamal Dahal have not made a strong and continuous case on the air corridors that Nepal needs.

There are also existing opportunities that do not have to involve India at all. Bhairawa airport is the gateway to the Lumbini-Kapilvastu Buddhist circuit, and we should be drawing in pilgrims directly from China, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia, Vietnam, Singapore

and Sri Lanka.

All these countries are located to the east of Nepal. Which means not getting descent clearance over Indian air space into Bhairawa is immaterial since all flights from Lhasa/Chengdu or Bangkok/Yangon would track to Simara anyway before approaching the airport from the east (see map).

Flights to Pokhara or Bhairawa descending from the west would just have to take an extra dozen minutes to route via Simara, which seems a handicap that could be managed. Departures are no problem from both airports since airway L626 towards Dhangadi is open for outbound flights.

Pokhara, meanwhile, is one of the most exotic destinations in Asia, with its proximity to Annapurna, lakes, trekking,

adventure sports, and ornithological wonders. It is also the staging point for Muktinath, Mustang and the Annapurna Circuit/Sanctuary. The city became popular with Chinese travellers pre-Covid after a Chinese tv serial called it 'a place to visit before one dies'.

Pokhara is right at the centre of Nepal, whereas Kathmandu is towards the east. If there are flights, many migrant workers who make up more than half the outbound passengers from Kathmandu could choose to fly out of Pokhara.

We cannot simply build hotel rooms and hope the tourists will come. In the case of both Pokhara and Bhairawa, the lethargy of government is complemented by the lack of marketing imagination of the private sector. Pokhara, for example, has the hotel-bed capacity to host a dozen international flights a day.

There are also new dimensions and challenges to tourism today that need to be addressed. Regional air pollution is obscuring the views of the Himalaya, which is adversely impacting tourist. Given that tourism contributes up to 10% of global carbon emissions, there is eco-guilt and flight shaming which are discouraging tourists from long-distance travel, particularly from Europe.

There is also much to be done to get Beijing to open up the China-Nepal land borders for tourism. The Humla route into Manasarovar needs to be preserved, and the exotic faraway view of Manasarovar-Kailash from Limi in Humla needs promotion and the route infrastructure.

Tourists will not flood through Bhairawa just because it serves Lumbini. Most pilgrims want to do the entire circuit including Kushinagar, Bodhgaya and Sarnath in India.

Presently, most international Buddhist pilgrims make a quick half-day trip from India to Nepal even though they do not have a Nepal visa. Mostly, they bring lunch packets and make a quick turnaround.

To make Bhairawa airport viable, Nepal's politicians need to sit down for some hard talk with their counterparts in New Delhi. They need to make the argument that if overseas pilgrims can come across Nepal, they should have access to the Indian side as well. Granted that there are more places to visit in India, but a border is a border.

If tour operators alert pilgrims that they should also get Indian visas, they can arrive in Nepal through Kathmandu, Pokhara or Bhairawa, also tour Indian holy sites, return to the Indian side as well. This is not impossible to do, it just needs some commitment to tourism and the economy, and some imagination. 🇳🇵



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Rhododendron hodgsonii, Jamyang Wangmo



Magnolia, Water colour, , 22"×30", 2023 Jari Laukka

# Flowering ARTFORM

Exhibition shows how botanical  
art can help us find our place in the  
natural world

■ Aisha MacDougall

Botanical art exists in the space between art and science, beyond aesthetics. It predates photography, and the original purpose of the discipline was to capture and document plant life to aid scientific study.

Flower drawings were first done in Nepal in 1802 by Francis Buchanan-Hamilton who collected and documented over 1,100 plant varieties mainly in eastern Nepal, taking samples and illustrations back to Edinburgh for further scientific inquiry.

Despite occupying only 0.1% of the earth's surface area, Nepal has 3.2% of the planet's flora, making it the 27<sup>th</sup> most bio-diverse country in the world.

Now, Studio Petal's unique exhibition 'Blissful Nature' showcases the work of five contemporary artists, each with brilliant individual skillset but collectively illustrating the intricate beauty of Nepal's plant life and few other exotic species.

Neera Joshi Pradhan of Studio Petals has taken Nepal's rich botanical art history and expanded it, making the discipline accessible and using her decades of experience to educate and equip the next generation of Botanical Artists to leave their mark.

Joshi Pradhan has exhibited her floral work many times since she set up Studio Petal in 2004. However, this is the first time her

students are showcasing their work alongside the mentor.

Jamyang Wangmo is a Spanish Buddhist nun who has been painting and documenting Nepali plant life for over 20 years. She originally started out with thangka and depictions of deities, but after noticing the beauty of altar flowers she turned her artistic passion to floral drawings.

"I just knew I had to paint it," Wangmo says simply.

Despite botanical art's proximity to objective science, Wangmo's art comes from intuitive inspiration. In particular, the bright and joyful depiction of the five holy flowers in her debut exhibition comes directly from the pages of Tibetan texts but it is brought to life by her own imagination, evoking a sense of wonder among viewers.

JoAnne Pach Koirala, on the other hand, is an educator who has lived in Nepal for 40 years. Born into a family of artists, she was surrounded by art her entire childhood, but it was only five years ago that she started creating her own work.

Initially inspired by the botanical life in her own garden, it is her loved ones that really spark her creative spirit. Working on her watercolours, she often thinks of those closest to her so that they are subtly invoked in her art, giving shape and life to the still images.

For Amy Ingham, botanical art is simple yet a calming undertaking. "Botanical painting is wonderful in its simplicity, but deceptively so. Its pure observational drawing requires such a level of precision and accuracy where there isn't really anywhere to hide," says Amy

Ingham, one of the five artists at the exhibition.

She adds: "There's something calming about that process, as well as the subject matter and end product."

Jari Laukka is a Finnish environmental scientist who originally came to Nepal to work on water and sanitation projects. Biodiversity was always an interest, but it was not until 2020 that Laukka got interested in botanical art. After completing his assignment, Laukka took Joshi Pradhan's course at Studio Petal which ignited his passion for the discipline. Botanical art is now a full-time pursuit, and Laukka is currently taking courses at Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden, all set to start a new career.

Botanical art allows not only for increased attention and visibility for plant life but also for preservation. Threatened flora can be protected in a way that gives hope to preserve the actual plants.

In fact, botanical art is more than an art form, it can teach people about evolution and ecology, especially at a time of greater climate consciousness. "I hope botanical art can be used to educate people about the environment and how we can protect and manage Nepal's rich biodiversity," says Laukka.

The exhibition Blissful Nature is a must-see for students and the next generation of Nepali artists. But hurry, the show is only till Friday. 🇳🇵

Blissful Nature  
Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal  
Until 13 October



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# Reviving a wondrous past

Rajasthan-based miniature painting atelier brings the once vibrant artistic style to Kathmandu

Rajasthan-based miniature painting atelier Studio Kishangarh is exhibiting miniatures inspired by historical Mughal artwork to the contemporary reimagining of the tales of Krishna.

The miniature painting tradition can be traced back to ancient China, but the genre gained prominence during the Mughal period in India before being banned by Aurangzeb in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The artists dedicated to creating these lavish paintings would sit in the royal court gaining access to the influential and powerful from foreign dignitaries to royalty — their art became microcosms of the rich cultural exchanges that characterised the Mughal court.

Once a centrepiece of the Moghul Empire, miniature painting is now a dying art form. Younger artists are into more financially viable pursuits, abandoning artisanal practices like miniature painting skills that are passed down from generation to generation.

Unlike modern studios, Studio Kishanagarh is an atelier, a rarity in the modern art world, dedicated to restoring passion for the endangered practice of miniatures.

It is a collaborative space where artists are permanent employees, given a steady, consistent income and work in tandem to create pieces.



Some of these are in the Domains of Wonder exhibition at the Siddhartha Art Gallery, and were created by at least three artists each with different specialties. One worked on the borders, another carefully created trees.

The Kathmandu exhibit was opened on 8 October by Indian Ambassador Naveen Srivastava (pictured left with Studio Kishanagarh founder Princess Vaishnavi Kumari). Vaishnavi returned to Rajasthan after completing studies in London to preserve the culture of her ancestral home.

The masters of miniature paintings are ageing. Vaishnavi hopes the Studio's artists can reignite interest in the practice, allowing a new generation to take up the mantle and prevent the practice from going extinct.

The Kathmandu show is the first time these pieces are being exhibited in public, and it is an acknowledgement that many

members of India's princely states and their descendants are married to Nepal's aristocracy. The Studio's next exhibition shall be at the historic Bikaner House in Delhi in December.

Vaishnavi eventually wants to open a training centre in Rajasthan where young people can hone the craft of miniature painting, securing the future for this sacred artisanal practice.

From extravagant pieces that look like they belong to the royal courts of Shah Jahan to paintings that are reminiscent of Andy Warhol, Studio Kishangarh's Domains of Wonders is proof that the ancient practice has a future after all. 🇮🇳

*Aisha MacDougall*

*Domains of Wonder  
Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal  
Until 16 November*



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EVENTS



**Varuna**  
An exhibition of artworks by Sculptor and Visual Artist Sanjeep Maharjan.  
*Till 28 October, 10am-7pm, Dalai-la Art Space, Thamel*

**Photowalk**  
The theme of the upcoming photo walk organised by Photowalkersnp is Fixed Aperture (F8). Participants must submit their best 5 photos within 48 hours, and will have a chance to get the works published on Photowalkers' social media.  
*14 October, 7am, Basantapur Darbar Square, 9861101791*



**Bhoomi Folk Fest**  
Immerse yourself in a day-long cultural experience of Nepali and Indian art, culture, and music.  
*3 November, Tirhituya Gacchi, Janakpurdham*

**Spoken word**  
Dead Poets Society Nepal's upcoming spoken word शून्य- Volume 3 is a collaborative event by Book Club Bhaktapur and Baakhan Nyane waa. Join and listen to up and coming poets.  
*15 October, 1pm Aastha Theater, Bhaktapur*



**Beer fest**  
The Garden Beer Fest this Friday at Be Perky Garden Boutique Restaurant will include beer stalls, beer games, food, live music and more.  
*13 October, 2pm-8pm, Tin Khamba Marg, Kupondole, 9813385666*

DINING



**Seafood Night**  
Indulge in all things seafood at Terrace Garden's Friday dinner buffet, accompanied by live music. Call for reservations.  
*Fridays, 6:30pm-10:30pm, Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat, 9851048331*

MUSIC

**Samikshya Dahal**  
Spend a soulful musical evening with Samikshya Dahal, who will take the stage to serenade audiences at Dailo Daily See Us Restaurant.  
*13 October, 6pm onwards, New Baneshwor*



**Tribute to Arijit Singh**  
An evening of soulful rendition of Arijit Singh's popular hits featuring Ashish Gubaju.  
*15 October, Trisara, Lazimpat*



**Live in Tangelwood**  
Groove to the beats of indie Nepali artist Ankita Pun and Shailu Rai to kick off the festive season.  
*15 October, Rs1000, Calm, Tangelwood, Naxal*



**God is a woman**  
Celebrate the women in Nepali hip-hop scene with performances by Amazumi, Dmriti, Suski, Rosha and more.  
*14 October, Rs500 (Pre-sale) Rs1000 (Door-sale), Karma Bar and Club, Tripureshwar*

**Bass Day**  
Nepali bass players will come together in a celebration of rhythm and melody for the 8th Bass Day Nepal. Also, register for Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory's Foundation in Music Bass Classes on Bass Day without having to pay registration fee.  
*14 October, 4pm onwards, Rs500, Moksh, Jhamsikhel*



**Sapporo Japanese**  
Experience authentic Japanese food and drinks at Sapporo, a restaurant known for homemade fresh noodles, ramen, udon, soba and more.  
*Anamika Marg, Baluwatar, 9803445405*

**Wine Bar**  
Spenda quiet evenings at South Side Wine Bar with its curated selection of more than 20 different wines served with Panini (Grilled Sandwich) and cheese platters.  
*Gyanmandala, Jhamsikhel, 9861119954*

GETAWAY



**Buddha Maya Garden Hotel**  
Wake up to the sounds of birds and chill in the beautiful garden in the evenings. The rooms are comfortable and well facilitated. A major bonus: the Maya Devi Temple is within a walking distance from the hotel.  
*Lumbini, (71) 580219/220, 9801033114*

**Sapana Village Resort**  
At Sapana Village Resort, experience the rich Tharu and Chepang culture, watch elephants lumber through the forest and marvel at the beauty of the lush national park at the heart of Sauraha.  
*Sauraha, Chitwan (56) 580308*



**Mystic Mountain**  
Situating amid the forest of Nagarkot, the resort features ultra modern designs to provide world-class comfort.  
*Nagarkot, (01) 6200646*

**Park Village Resort**  
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*Budhanilkantha (01) 4370286*



**Hotel Heritage Bhaktapur**  
A Newa boutique hotel that incorporates the rich art and architecture of the ancient city of Bhaktapur.  
*Suryabinayak, Bhaktapur, (01) 6611628*

**Chez Caroline**  
Tucked away from the street noise and fumes, this is the place to visit for authentic French and continental cuisine in Nepal. Try the Truite Amandine and Steak d'Autruche grill  .  
*Baber Mahal Revisited (01) 4263070/ 4264187*



**Gangnam Galbi Barbeque**  
Gangnam Galbi Barbeque offers Korean barbecue, as well as a wide variety of other Korean dishes. Don't miss out on the stick food.  
*Lal Colony Marg, Naxal (01) 4434780*

WEEKEND WEATHER



FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
23° 14°	22° 15°	22° 14°	23° 13°	23° 13°

**Haze after rain**  
With the official withdrawal of the monsoon from Nepal's air space, the rain has been replaced by an early onset of seasonal haze from the Indo-Gangetic plains. This is quite unusual, and it is a mixture of pollution plus windblown sand from the deserts carried to the mountains by prevailing westerlies. This has filtering action on sunlight, which has brought down the maximum and minimum temperature earlier in the season than is the norm. Some mountain valleys may get rain and snow flurries.

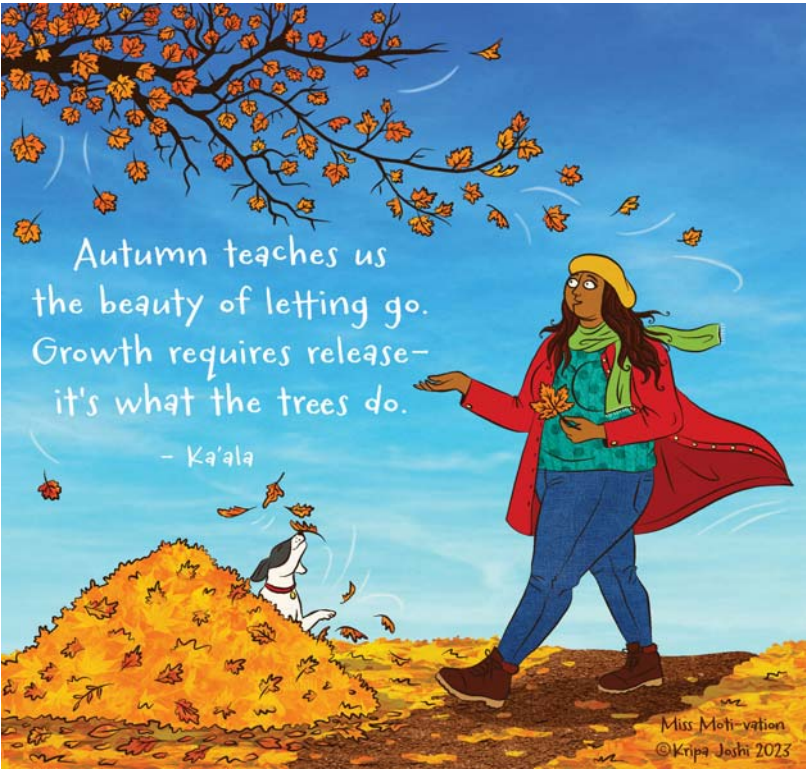
OUR PICK

Based on the nonfiction book of the same title by Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey, *She Said* follows the two New York Times journalists in their dogged pursuit to expose Harvey Weinstein and the years of intimidation, harrasment and rape of young female actors and junior staff. Kantor and Twohey's articles galvanised the #MeToo movement with a number of women coming forward with their own stories of sexual harassment and assault. Adapted by Rebecca Lenkiewicz and directed by Maria Schrader, the film stars Carey Mulligan aand Zoe Kazan.



MISS MOTI-VATION

KRIPA JOSHI



गर्मी मौसममा संक्रामक रोगबाट बचाउँ र बचाऔँ

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- संक्रामक रोग फैलाउने झिँगा, लामखुट्टे, भुसुना आदिको नियन्त्रण गरौं ।
- संक्रामक रोगबाट बच्न शुद्ध र उमालेको पानी पिऔं ।
- बासी तथा सडेगलेका खाना नखाऔं ।
- घरभित्र र वरपरको सरसफाइमा ध्यान दिऔं ।



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विज्ञापन बोर्ड





Dipesh Raj Bista



Padam Thapa



Ganesh Kumar Nepali



Ashish Chaudhary



Rajan Phulara



Lokendra Singh Dhami



Narayan Prasad Neupane

# War in Israel, earthquake and grief in Nepal

These are the individual tragedies of seven of the 10 Nepalis killed in the Hamas attack on Saturday whose bodies are being taken to their families in Far Western Nepal. One Nepali student is still missing. They were among 49 agriculture undergrads from Sudurpaschim University in Tikapur selected for the Israel government's 'earn and learn' program. They were all working at Kibbutz Alumim near the Gaza border, and were killed in two separate attacks by Hamas fighters on bunkers near the farm.

**Dipesh Raj Bista**, 24, was hiding in a bunker with other Nepali students at Kibbutz Alumim. One of them, Ganesh Nepali of Bajhang, had to go to the restroom and had just stepped out of the door when he was gunned down by Hamas militants outside. Dipesh then went out of the door with his hands up shouting "Don't shoot, we are Nepali!" But he was also felled in a hail of gunfire. The militants then lobbed two grenades into the bunker. Another Nepali, Bipin Joshi from Dhangadi threw one of the grenades out, but the other one exploded killing and injuring the remaining Nepalis.

Dipesh was from the village of Lekum in Darchula, and was the sole support of the family after his father died of cancer. His mother fainted on hearing the news and has been admitted to hospital.

**Padam Thapa** got a fond farewell when he left his home in Doti for Israel last month. Friends and relatives wished him good luck in social media posts. Western Nepal had just suffered an earthquake, and his sister-in-law Mekhu Adhikari had told him in a call that there had been scary aftershocks. When she checked her phone again there was a text from Padam: 'I am dying, bhauju.' She tried calling back but could not reach him.

Padam's father Tikaram, 65, has hypertension, and had to be hospitalised. Padam was the youngest of the four siblings, and the most enterprising and cheerful.

**Ganesh Nepali** called from Israel on Friday evening, he was worried that the epicenter of the earthquake that had just struck western Nepal was in his home district of Bajhang, and he told his elder brother Bikash to take care of their parents and stay safe.

The family house had been damaged in the earthquake, but it was Ganesh who was soon going to be in a dangerous situation. When Bikash found Ganesh's name on the Nepal Embassy list of 10 fatalities, he could not tell his parents.

Bikash used to always help Ganesh with his homework, and had been a guardian to him. Ganesh was studying to specialise in tissue culture.

**Ashish Chaudhary** spoke to his 70-year-old grandfather Kanaiyalal in Kailali from Kathmandu airport last month, saying he was about board his flight to Israel. Twenty-five year old Ashish's parents work in Bangalore, and he was taking care of his grandfather who in turn had taken care of him single-handedly

since childhood in his village. Kanaiyalal's wife had died earlier, and his daughter is paralysed.

Ashish was excited about learning new farming techniques in arid regions while in Israel and to apply some of those skills in Nepal when he returned in 11 months.

Between sobs, Kaniyalal tells us, "What do I have to live for now? Why didn't death take me instead of my grandson?"

Ashish was among 13 Nepalis who survived a previous Hamas grenade attack, and had sought shelter in another bunker along with 20 Thais. Suddenly, Hamas militants stormed that bunker also. They took away seven Thais along with one of the Nepalis, Bipin Joshi, and sprayed the rest with bullets and lobbed several grenades.

Ashish was killed on the spot along with five other Nepalis.

**Rajan Phulara**, 23, dreamt of coming back home to Doti and applying for the Civil Service exam. Only a week ago, during a video call with his uncle Rajendra Phulara, he had shared his plans for when he would be back in Nepal.

"I'm going to learn new things here but I will implement them in my country, after my civil service exam," Rajendra, who works at Doti Hospital, recalls his nephew saying.

During the call, Rajan had turned the camera around towards Gaza. "That right there is Gaza," he had said. "There can be an attack any time, we have been told to seek shelter in a bunker if there is one."

It was in one of those bunkers

that Rajan together with Ashish Chaudhary (see above) and four others were gunned down by Hamas militants.

**Lokendra Singh Ghami**, 24, had spoken to his wife in Darchula on Friday and was in high spirits, asking about his five-year-old daughter and two-year-old son.

Dhami's brother is in the Nepal Army, and by coincidence is posted at the UN Peacekeeping contingent in Lebanon. Already shocked by Lokendra's death, his parents are now worried about their other son.

A family that was preparing for Dasain festival, is now preparing to receive his body.

**Narayan Prasad Neupane's** 70-year-old father Hari Krishna

keeps fainting ever since he was told his young son is dead. Narayan had lost his mother at age 5 and was very close to his father. A friendly boy, Narayan was also good in studies, and his elder brother working in Bangalore had paid for his studies.

"He used to say he wanted to contribute to Nepal's progress by bringing new farming skills from Israel," his sister Manju recalled. "He was very passionate about agriculture. We want to see him one last time, that is all we want from the government."

*Translated from reports by Khagendra Bahadur Singh, Paramnanda Pandey, Shivaraj Bhatta, Sundar Singh Dhami, Mahadeya Awasti, Pratap Oli from Paschim Today, Dhangadi. <https://paschimtoday.com> Longer versions of these stories online.*

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# Bringing Nepal to Israel

A Nepali who miraculously survived the Hamas attack this week finds new Nepali family in Israel



DIASPORA  
DIARIES 43-44

■ **Prabha Ghimire** in Jerusalem

*This is the 43<sup>rd</sup> instalment of Diaspora Diaries, a regular series in Nepali Times with stories of Nepalis living and working abroad.*

Waiting outside the operation theatre in Jerusalem, I was getting restless as Prabin Dangi, one of the Learn and Earn students who miraculously survived the Hamas attack was getting surgery inside. I learnt from a Nepali social media group chat that he had been brought to a hospital in Jerusalem where I live, so I rushed over. He had been shot in both the legs. Other bullets that killed his friends in the bunker, ricocheted off the wall, missing him. A video of him hiding in his bunker saying “My mother is very sick. Please save her. I think I will die” had gone viral and yet, he made it out alive. I found myself cheering for a stranger in a foreign land. But then again, he was not really a stranger.



He was my son’s age, I had to help. He was not just a Nepali, but family. The whole of Nepal is now wishing him a speedy recovery. The operation took six hours. I convinced the medical staff to let me see him after the procedure. In that chaos, rules did not matter, and they allowed me in.

I introduced myself as his sister. He asked me if he still had his legs. I assured him that he did. Despite the injuries, much to his relief, his legs did not have to be amputated. I tried to steer the conversation away from the nightmare, that despite the situation he was very lucky.



**HOME AWAY FROM HOME:** Prabha Ghimire with Prabin Dangi after his surgery in a hospital in Jerusalem. Dangi was shot in both the leg in the Hamas attack this week. Ghimire who works as a caretaker for an elderly with her son in the United States.

builds an appetite, we will take turns to take Nepali food. He knew his father's number by heart, so I called him during our first meet. His father cried but those were tears of relief. I cried with him. What must be going through the family's mind when your son, who had just recently gone overseas with big dreams, saw such tragedy. Unexpected long-distance bad news is perhaps one of the most difficult realities for transnational families like us. Your life just turns upside down in an instant with news of a death, sickness, accident, or a terrorist attack. I myself went through a similar experience when news came from home that my husband passed away seven years ago suddenly, unexpectedly, of a heart attack. He was a loving husband, and I never got over the loss. I do not know how I made it to Nepal, neither do I know how I made it back to Israel. It is all a blur. But once I returned, the caregiver in me needed care myself. I was sick, and used to faint. I had lost my appetite and was weak. My blood pressure was low and I had to be escorted back to my room as I would pass out unexpectedly. Grief hits you in different ways, and I struggled to cope. Luckily, the Israeli family I work for was understanding. They even offered to let me go so I could be with my family. I insisted on staying on.

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In the end, it was the thought of my sons back home in Nepal that gave me the strength to try harder. With my husband gone, I was their sole guardian. I had to pull myself together for their sake.

Fifteen years abroad is a significant part of your life. The caregiver job has had its ups and downs, gains and losses.

The earnings are good, and I have invested in educating my sons. They are now in Canada and the US, well-educated and doing well for themselves.

But how do you weigh that against not knowing what it is like to be close to your children -- watching them grow up. They too do not know what it is like to have their mother around.

How do you measure this tradeoff, especially given the loss of my husband in the midst of our long-distance marriage?

We were married in Nepal when I was just 14, just a child myself. My mother-in-law had passed, and even as a teenager I had to assume the role of guardian of my husband's eight younger siblings. They too treated me like their mother. At first I was unsure of what I was doing as I learnt to cook, chase and clean after them.

Perhaps this trained me well for my later caregiver role here in Israel when I came in 2007. Since then I have changed three employers. Sadly, the reason the last two times has been the passing of my elderly patients. It's easy to get attached to these frail seniors who become more and more dependent on you.

When I go home to Nepal on yearly breaks, the substitute who usually is a Nepali calls me to tell me to come back as soon as possible as savta (grandmother) misses me.

I have had one employer who

till her last day made it a point to put make up on every morning and look dolled up. She loved to eat outside and had a zest for life that was infectious. My first employer who died within the first year I had come to Israel taught me how to make new recipes like yalanchi. Everytime I prepare or eat those dishes, I think about her.

My current employer who I have been working with for 11 years has been hospitalised since the last few years, and my only role is to keep company throughout the day. I tell her about what is going on, and I know she understands me based on her gestures. She turns 99 next week. She will be my last employer. After this, I will spend time with my own family. When I visited my son in the US, it felt like I had really laughed from the heart for the first time since his father's passing. We talked, and I cooked for him. I plan to do more of that in the coming days, as we have to make up for lost time.

In my years in Israel, sirens have been common. You rush to the bunker to hide every time it goes off. But this week was unlike anything I have experienced before. In life, you can never say what will happen next.

The fact that a young man from Nepal in his 20s is lying in a hospital thousands of miles away from family after surviving such a horrific attack that killed his friends shows just how unpredictable life can be. 🇳🇵

*Diaspora Diaries is a regular column in Nepal Times providing a platform to share experiences of living, working, studying abroad.*

 [nepalitimes.com](https://nepalitimes.com)  
Read the longer version online

# A Nepali's lucky escape from Hamas

■ Nischal Pandey  
in Netivot, Israel

*This is the 44<sup>th</sup> instalment of Diaspora Diaries.*

It was a Saturday morning. Tired from the week's work in the farm, we were looking forward to resting and catching up with families back home. It had been just over a month since we arrived in Israel.

But early morning at 5am on 7 October, we were woken up by earthquake-like jolts. We rushed outside, and there were missiles streaking across the sky and explosions.

We found it all very exciting at first, but when the sirens went off we got worried and rushed to our little bunker to hide. There we started getting frantic calls from fellow Nepali students at Kibbutz Alumim which was 18km away.

They video called us and asked for help, 17 of them had taken shelter in a bunker, but had come under attack from terrorists.

We had arrived in Israel just a month before under the 'Learn and Earn' program. We were just settling in and getting a hang of things.

In the bunker that first day, I was worried that my family was worried about me because I could not do my weekly call. The minute I got a chance, I called them to let them know I was safe.

In the three days we spent in the bunker, it was difficult to speak to my family to describe the situation. I could not tell them everything that



NISCHAL PANDEY  
Nischal Pandey with 259 other Nepali students at Tel Aviv waiting to board the Nepal Airlines rescue flight home on Thursday. Bodies of 10 Nepalis who were killed are coming back in a few days.

was really going on because they would panic.

The farm dogs are also scared, and join us the in the bunker. We first thought we should chase them out since they might bark and draw attention to us, instead we welcomed their companionship and they slept next to us.

In the morning we called everyone that we could think of: the Nepal Embassy, government back home, everyone. Sometimes, we had to step out of the bunker to make calls. When we first got the call from the embassy to get ready, we were thrilled. The next day and 32 of us from different farms were escorted by the Israel Army out of the Netivot area to Ramat Negev farm.


Finally, we realised how the accumulated stress and fatigue of the last three days had worn us out. There was fear from constant


sounds of sirens and explosions, and the urgent need to coordinate with different agencies for our rescue, assure our families we were okay. Most importantly, we grieved the friends we lost. Our friend Bipin is still missing, there is no news about him.

Here at the farm, besides us Nepalis there are others from Thailand and Zimbabwe. After what feels like ages, we finally got to eat warm food which felt good and made us happy, that too in the company of friends.

We are in touch with our families who are also relieved that we are away from the frontline. But they are desperate for us to come home. And so are we. 🇳🇵

 [nepalitimes.com](https://nepalitimes.com)  
A longer version of this translated testimony is online.

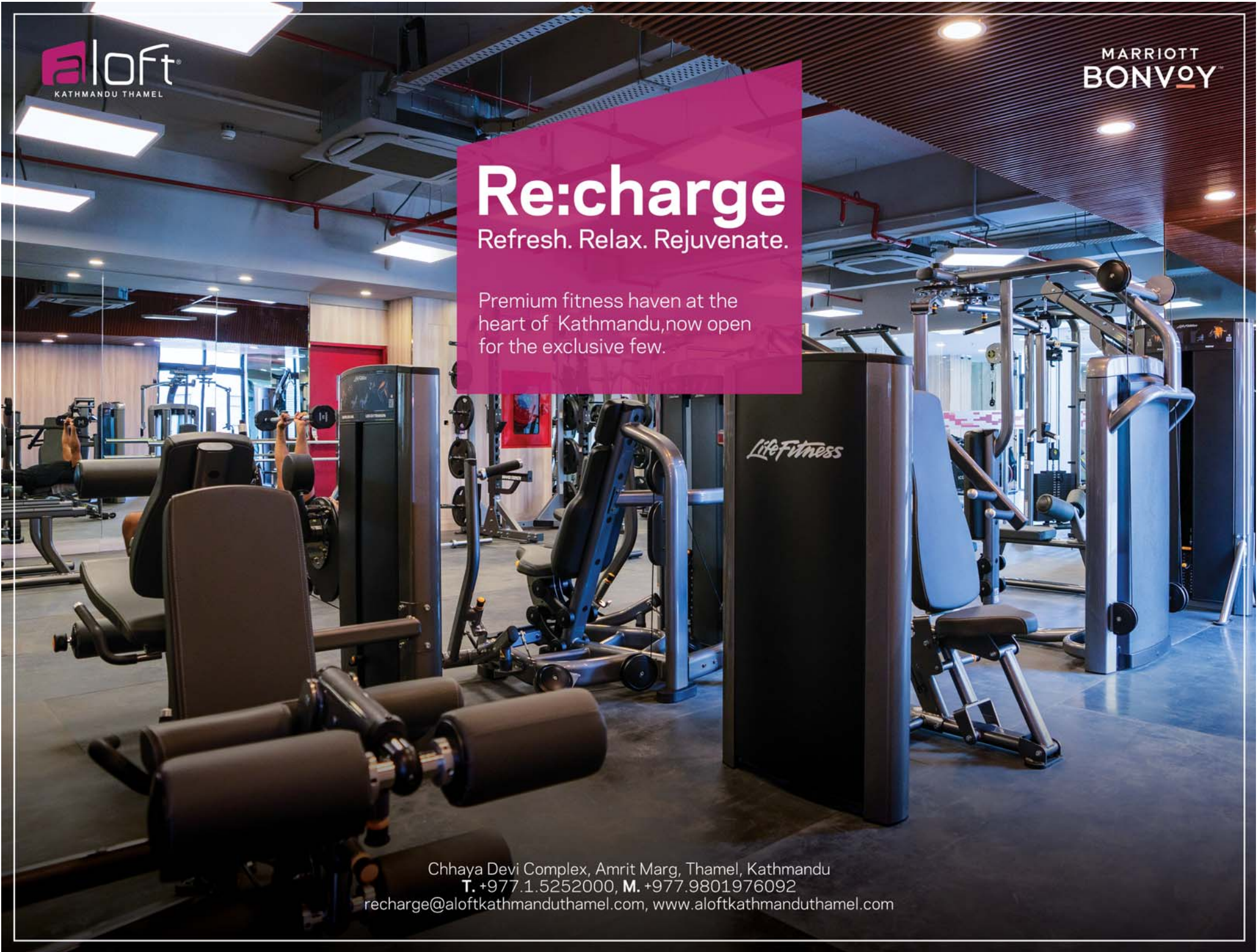




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# Bass and No Treble

Norway-Nepal musical tour

■ Sajeet M Rajbhandari

While the Covid pandemic halted many musical events, it did launch a unique collaboration between a Norwegian string trio and Nepali singer song-writer Rachana Dahal. Dahal met Eivind Mossback Heier of Trio No Treble during a concert at the Norwegian Embassy in Kathmandu just before pandemic hit, and found both personal and musical harmony. But the lockdowns put their collaboration on hold.

They are now making up for lost time, and have just concluded a brief tour of Kathmandu Valley performing at a sold out concert at Dhokaima Cafe on 4 October with Dahal's powerful delivery of songs with angst-filled lyrics.

Organised by the Audeamus Music Foundation, the band also played at five venues including a flash mob at Patan Museum, shows for the students of Ullens School, Imperial World School, United School, and Sangeet Pathshala.

Cellist Heier first came to Nepal eight years ago as an instructor under the Norway-Nepal Orchestra Project, and has worked closely with Nepal's orchestral scene through the years.

This was the Heier's ninth



TRIO NO TREBLE

visit to Nepal and this time the Trondheim-based Trio No Treble collaborated with other musicians from a mix of genres ranging from folk music to pop artists. Besides Heier on cello, Trio No Treble consists of Lars Marius Hølås on the viola, and Jostein Bolås Brødreskift on the double bass.

"Music is an international language, it is just the styles that are different," says Eivind, adding that the trio did not just come to perform but also collaborate and

learn more about Nepali musicians like Amrit Gurung and Narayan Gopal.

"I would also bring back the philosophy of Eastern music and how discovering it now takes me back to how I felt when I first started playing music as a kid," says Björn Gao, who filled in on the viola for Hølås this time in Nepal.

Though this year's tour was brief, the trio hopes to return for more concerts, including in locations outside Kathmandu with other Nepali artists. Says

Brødreskift, "We have a few projects we are working on, and a few concerts for Christmas as well. We also wish to continue collaborating with other artists such as Rachana."

The term 'treble' refers to a higher-pitched range of sounds, and is often performed by instruments such as the violin, flutes, and clarinets. However, cellos, violas, and double bass are all instruments that are incapable of producing any treble notes.

Instead, they produce deep

full-bodied sounds, hence the name 'Trio No Treble'. The trio quite literally is all about the bass, and no treble.

First coming together in 2017, all three members met as students in the Norwegian University of Science and Technology's Department of Music. It was not until the three parted ways for an exchange program in different countries that they realised how well they worked as a trio.

Once back, they decided to start playing together officially. "It was actually because we went away from each other that we decided to play with each other," quips Brødreskift.

But while the three worked well together as musicians, their combination as a string ensemble without a treble instrument is something that is rare in orchestral music.

"There aren't a lot of compositions written solely for viola, cello, and bass. So that means that we have to do a lot of our arrangements ourselves," Heier explains.

The lack of pre-written compositions meant that the three musicians had to constantly experiment with new arrangements and work with a lot more variety. And that is why they find Nepali collaborations so enriching.

This out-of-the-box approach is evident in the group's discography: the two studio albums 'Christmas in the Ear' and the self-titled, 'Trio No Treble', released in 2020 carry distinctively different musical inspirations.

Says Brødreskift: "It was quite clear to us that Eivind really loves Nepal. He's always telling us good things about the country every time he comes back from a visit, so a Nepal tour was something that we really wanted to do." 🇳🇵

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**७,३०,००० सम्मको फाइदा**

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१ वर्षको वीमा सुविधा

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