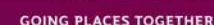




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# MIGRATION MITIGATION

In the strict legalese that the United Nations is accustomed to, the Madrid Climate Summit is called the 25th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). We will call it COP25 for short. After riots engulfed Santiago in Chile, the venue was shifted to Madrid — just as well because that reduced the carbon footprint of the gathering.

COP25 comes at a time when scientists have warned that the goals of the Paris Agreement of 2015 are outdated, and the targets for curbing carbon emissions need to be revised. Erratic weather, the melting of polar ice-caps, glaciers shrinking in the Himalaya and other climate-induced changes that scientists expected to happen in 2030 are already taking place.

The reason: carbon emissions are going up instead of down. The CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere crossed 408 parts per million last week — several orders of magnitude higher than before the industrial revolution, when it never rose above 300.

Just to put it in perspective, all the changes we see happening around the world due to global warming have been set off by a temperature rise of only 1°C since human society started burning fossil fuels like coal. Yet, in the best-case scenario global average temperature is set to rise by at least 2°C in the next 30 years.

In its *Emissions Gap Report 2019* last week, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) warned that countries need to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 7.6% a year between 2020 and 2030 in order to cap temperature increase at 1.5°C, as agreed in Paris. But the US has pulled out of the Paris Agreement, and major emitters of carbon dioxide have not reduced their emissions as agreed. To meet the Paris targets, greenhouse gas emissions need to be cut by 40% by 2030 and countries need to become carbon neutral by 2050.

COP25's motto is 'Time To Act', and it is hoped the 50 heads of state attending the meeting will do just that. Environmental activists are holding a parallel 'Social Summit for Climate' to pressure governments to not backtrack on commitments. Yet, conspicuous by their absence in Madrid are US President Donald Trump, Russia's Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro. Together they represent more than half the total emissions of greenhouse gases worldwide today.

Scientists have painted an apocalyptic picture of what will happen if the world fails to act. Rising global temperatures will lead to heat stress, falling food production, continental-scale forest fires, receding icecaps and rising sea levels. All these slow-

onset disasters will have an impact on food production and human habitation, forcing tens of millions to relocate. The climate crisis is already leading indirectly to political instability and conflict, which in turn adds to migration pressure.

Aside from all the other changes like mass extinction of species and collapse of natural ecosystems, it is migration that will have the most profound impact on human society. Some of these challenges are supposed to be discussed this week in Madrid, as delegations deliberate on the nexus between climate and migration. The UNFCCC's task force on displacement will present its report, and rich countries will also have to fund the under-pledged \$100 billion Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage.

To be sure, humans have been migrating throughout history, forced to move due to natural climate cycles or the advance of the Ice Age. However, this is the first time they will be migrating because of human-induced changes to the climate.

People migrate due to sudden disasters like cyclones, floods, wildfires or droughts. But they will also relocate because of slow-onset changes like sea-level rise and erratic rainfall patterns. The lesson of the past two years is that slow-onset is not so slow anymore.

The world has reached a tipping point, where small quantitative changes have created larger non-linear irreversible movement of people. This poses huge implications for politics and security.

People are leaving the mountains due to landslides and floods, drylands because of water stress and coastal areas due to sea-level rise. Their destinations are overcrowded

urban areas where they are even more vulnerable. A sign of things to come was Cyclone Fani, which forced 3.5 million people in India to be displaced earlier this year.

The World Bank estimates that by 2050, nearly 150 million people in South and Southeast Asia may become climate refugees. Sea level rise alone is expected to displace 50 million people from Bangladesh and India.

Unless Nepal's subsistence farmers get irrigation and other support to survive erratic monsoons, they will have no choice but to move. As our reports on page 14-15 show, outmigration of Nepalis is now increasing, partly due to climate change. With the men gone, women are left to cope with the impacts of the climate emergency on their own.

Nepal also needs to do much more to reduce petroleum demand — not just to save the planet but also to save its own economy.

In the end, it all boils down to vision and governance to recognise the climate crisis and be ready for its effects. Being unprepared will be much more costly in the long run.



GOPEN RAI

**This is the first time in history that people are migrating in such large numbers due to a human-induced climate crisis.**

## 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

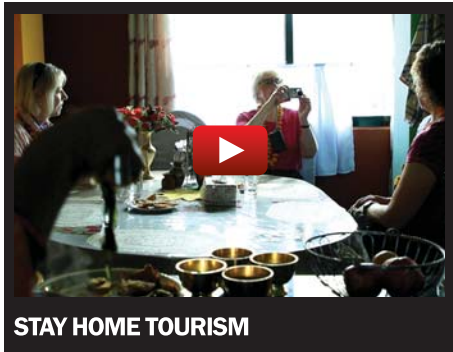
As world leaders gather in Madrid this week for the Climate Summit, it is interesting to note that exactly 10 years ago this week Nepali Times #479 was discussing the Copenhagen Climate Summit of 2009. Excerpt from an editorial from 4-10 December 2009:

'The people in the mountains of Nepal do not know that the futures of their children and grandchildren are tied up with how the international climate change conference next week in Copenhagen goes.

Will the rich countries agree to cut back to 40% of 1990 emissions in the next 10 years (which scientists warn is needed to keep the average rise of global temperatures to within two degrees Celsius) or will they stall at the 13% the Americans say is as far as they can go? The Copenhagen meet will also reveal whether the rich countries are actually willing to help developing countries make the switch from fossil fuel to renewables, and whether they will help to fund adaptation measures so the world's poor can cope with rising sea levels and receding snowlines.'

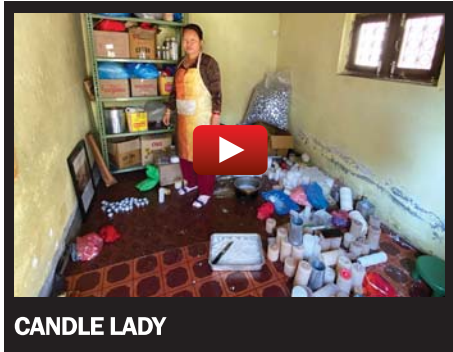


## ONLINE PACKAGES



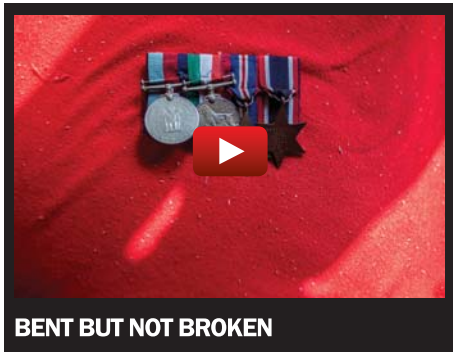
STAY HOME TOURISM

Visit a homestay community in Kavre to learn firsthand how both hosts and guests benefit from this unique way of people-to-people tourism, which injects income directly into grassroots Nepal. Story: *page 8-9*.



CANDLE LADY

Sita Tamang has come full circle — she dropped out of school, escaped the Maoist war by moving to Kathmandu, then started a candle factory. She is an example of how hard work and determination can open up options. Meet her in this edition of Made in Nepal. Story: *page 4*.



BENT BUT NOT BROKEN

They ate rats with rotten rice, were ravaged by malaria and beaten by their Japanese captors. Only four of the 300 Nepali prisoners of war captured in Singapore and transported to camps in Indonesia survived. Bal Bahadur Basnet, now 98, was one of them. Watch him relive his incarceration and survival during the Second World War. Story: *page 7*.

### GADIMAI

Nepal seems to be light years away from that heightened state of general awareness found in modern education regarding issues related to the environment and animal rights, avoidance of spiritual violence and violence against women.

**Nirmal Ghimire Sharma**

■ I respect religious traditions, but Gadimai is sending out bad impression of Nepal worldwide before Visit Nepal Year 2020.

**Ben-Erik Ness**

■ I am not sure what pleasure people get slaughtering animals. We must practice compassion and respect.

**Gyurme Dondup**

### GOVINDA BISTA

It's awful to see the head of the nation playing a foul game against such a hardworking countryman like Gokarna Bista ('Blood, sweat and tears', Editorial, #986).

**Sakar Aryal**

■ One of the few decent members of the government....gone!

**Alan Roadnight**

### TAKASHI MIYAHARA

Rest in peace Miyahara-san ('Miyahara-san: a life devoted to Nepal', Kunda Dixit, #986). Feel proud to have known you since the inception of Hotel Everest View, when you befriended a lost soul from Sikkim.

**N G Dorji Khangsarpa**

■ Lost a good friend. Heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

**Martin Lama**

## WHAT'S TRENDING



### Gharial found breeding in Nepal after 37 years

Good news on conservation: The nearly extinct Gharial has been found to be breeding in the wild for the first time in nearly four decades in Nepal's Bardia National Park, giving new hope for conservation of the critically endangered crocodile species.

**Most reached and shared on Facebook**

### Nepali villages cope with climate-induced floods

by *Sonia Awale*

Farmers displaced by the floods in Nepal's Tarai have returned to their villages and are not waiting for government help, but taking their own measures to protect themselves from future floods by planting cash crops like sugarcane and bamboo. Watch our video and read the field report at nepalitimes.com

**Most popular on Twitter**

### Nepal rises in Prosperity Index

Legatum Institute's 2019 Prosperity Index, released last week, saw Nepal ranked 115th in the world for overall prosperity, a rise of 13 places since 2009. But it's still the 22nd poorest of the 29 countries in the Asia-Pacific. Go to our website for a full report.

**Most visited online page**

### Miyahara-san: a life devoted to Nepal

by *Kunda Dixit*

A Japanese who became a Nepali citizen in order to contest elections so Nepal could be better governed, Takashi Miyahara died last week at the age of 87 and was cremated below Everest. Read this moving tribute online.

**Most commented**

## QUOTE TWEETS

**Nepali Times** @NepaliTimes

In the new federal system, people in Nepal are more positive about local govts than provinces or the centre. So why are they on the streets?

👍 🗨️ 🌟 ...

**Jainendra Jeevan** @jainendrajeevan

Your observation about local governments is true. Rallying in the streets has more often become a fashion, an attention-seeking endeavour, NGO/INGO sponsored event and a matter of strength show of political parties/groups, though at times they are genuine.

**Nepali Times** @NepaliTimes

In Kathmandu, 150 billion litres of rain fall on rooftops & paved surfaces in 1 year, that is 420 million litres daily. @OliviaCM1 & @watercmahon explore how green infrastructure would be the answer to managing stormwater in the city.

👍 🗨️ 🌟 ...

**Prabin** @shakya\_prbn

Historians, archaeologists, engineers and architects have found that each area of #Kathmandu Valley has a water system that is not only suited to the local environment but that also integrates ecology with #Nepa social and cultural practices. #SaveNepaValley

Weekly Internet Poll #986

Q. Will Nepal shine at the South Asian Games being hosted in Kathmandu?

Total votes: 139

Yes: **63%**  
No: **34%**  
Can't say: **3%**

Weekly Internet Poll #987  
To vote go to: [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com)

Q. Will the killing of animals be banned at the next Gadimai Festival in 2024?



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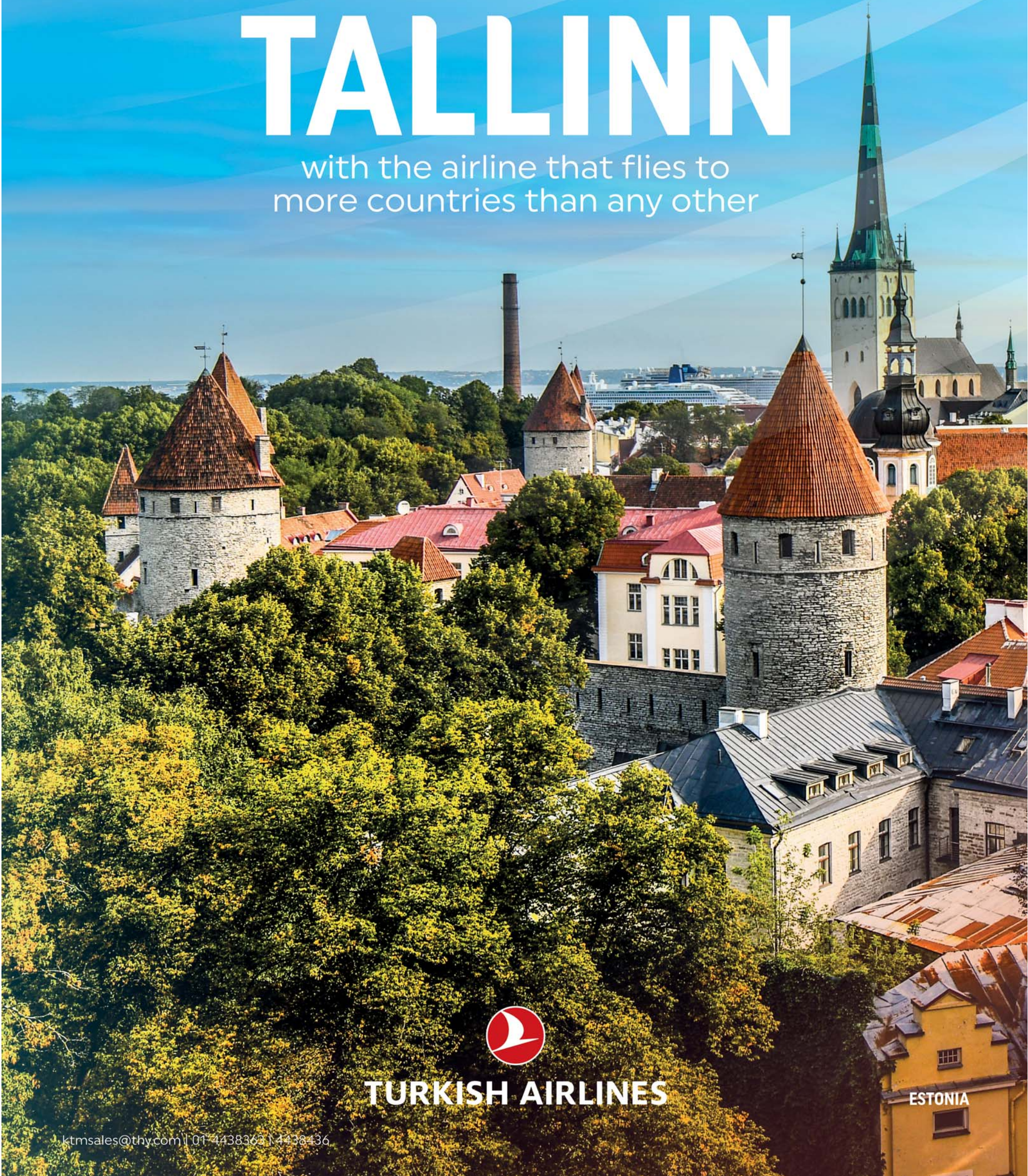




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# Lighting up her darkness

Sita Tamang dropped out of school in Rolpa, but that did not stop her from making a success of her life

Sita Tamang had a hardscrabble childhood in an isolated village in war-torn Rolpa. As the eldest child, she dropped out of primary school to help with family chores while her young brothers and sisters went to school. Her childhood was spent collecting fodder for livestock in the forest.



**MADE IN NEPAL**  
Naresh Newar

"I thought this is how my life would end — collecting grass. But I still held some hope that life had something better in store for me," recalls Sita, who learnt to knit from neighbours and won a prize for her skill in a handicraft show in Rolpa's main town of Libang.

Sita was gaining confidence, but soon the Maoist conflict engulfed the district. She was 16, an age when many of her peers were either being recruited by the Maoists or harassed by security forces. She escaped to the safety of Kathmandu in 2000, after getting married.

The city was new to her, and she did not know anyone. She and her husband rented a small place, but Kathmandu was too expensive to survive in. One day she bumped into local women in Bhaisepti who had formed a women's cooperative to make candles — taking advantage of the 12-hour daily power cuts.

"The timing was perfect to make and sell candles," recalls Sita, who got help from the Business Service Centre, run by women social entrepreneurs who offered

vocational training for women who wanted to start their own businesses.

Sita started with a small investment of Rs5,000 and took a Rs30,000 loan from the women's group. She bought the candle-making mould and raw materials, and started making candles in her small one-room apartment, using her own cooking stove and utensils to make candles from molten wax. The next big challenge was to find buyers.

"I went on foot to find the right market and potential clients, carrying hundreds of candles. I did not sell too many in the beginning, but I was determined to make it work," remembers Sita.

The candle business was competitive, and most buyers already had their own manufacturers. Sita explored the market further by visiting hotels, restaurants, shops and department stores. It was her participation in farmers' markets and handicraft events that finally brought her exposure — getting noticed by big hotels, restaurants, retailers, companies and rich individuals.

Sita's sales increased and her income skyrocketed, from Rs10,000 per month to Rs30,000, rising to Rs100,000 during festivals. She says she learned a big lesson: even someone without education could run a business and make a living.

Today, Sita is invited to business seminars to share her ideas, and even got to showcase her candles at an international fair in Thailand. Her advice to other aspiring entrepreneurs is to

research the market first, make quality products and establish a network.

"Usually, there are a lot of well educated people during those seminars and meetings, but I don't feel threatened as I believe I have created a good brand that is well liked by many buyers," says Sita, who now takes orders by phone and even makes custom-designed candles.

In the last four years, she has produced more than 80,000 candles for clients like Hyatt, Radisson and Dwarika's hotels, as well as shopping centres. Her tiny factory in Bhaisepti struggles to keep up with orders. Despite her busy schedule, Sita also trains other women in candle production and marketing.

"Starting a business is not easy. It is full of risk and you need a lot of family support," explains Sita, who appreciates the help she gets from her young children, siblings and especially her husband.

Sita Tamang saw a glimmer of hope while collecting grass that day in remote Rolpa. The hope turned into a dream, which she has now realised as a successful entrepreneur in the capital.

## NOT CURSING THE DARKNESS



Meet Sita Tamang face-to-face and hear her describe her struggle — from dropping out of school, to escaping the Maoist war by moving to Kathmandu, and then starting a candle factory. She is an example of how hard work and determination can open up options.

nepalitimes.com



PHOTOS: NARESH NEWAR

## prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS

### Samsung air purifiers

Nepal's air pollution is worse than ever and respiratory issues are on the rise.



Samsung air purifiers, with their five-step purification system and virus doctor, are designed to provide clean and fresh air in homes. The purifiers are

said to filter out 99% of PM2.5 particles. Available at Him Electronics.

### Thai turns 51

On 4 December 2019, Thai Airlines marked 51 years of service in Nepal. Thai International launched Nepal into the jet



age with its first regular flights between Bangkok and Kathmandu.

### Foster's Beer

Raj Brewery Pvt Ltd has officially launched Foster's Lager Beer in Nepal. Foster's is a crisp easy drinking lager inspired by the Australian beer culture, which delivers ultimate refreshment. Foster's Gold Strong Beer was also recently launched in Nepal.

### TSI Aviation Seats

A joint initiative of Turkish Airlines, Turkish Technic and Assan Hanil, TSI Aviation Seats provide aircraft seat options to airlines that are customers of Airbus. TSI manufactures



high quality, light, innovative and competitively priced products with a focus on weight, which directly affects aircraft fuel consumption.

### NMB Bankaward

NMB Bank has been awarded a SAARC Anniversary Award for Corporate



Governance 2018. NMB also received a Certificate of Merit in the South Asian Federation of Accounts (SAFA) Best Presented Annual Report Awards.

prabhu BANK





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# Writing about writing

Learning the craft in the fertile spiritual atmosphere of the Himalayan Writers Workshop

I'd like this one please." A loud voice in the peaceful garden café in the shadow of Boudhanath stupa startles me from my notebook. I see a lady stabbing the menu with her finger.

"But no salami, only the cheese, and be sure not to put in any salt, chilli or onion. And make sure the french fries are cooked brown and



**SO FAR SO GOOD**

Lisa Choegyal

crispy. And please make me an extra piece of toast because I am really hungry. And don't forget — no salami, no salt, no chilli and no onion."

She glances challengingly in my direction as I try to hide a smile, recalling a similar sequence in the movie *Five Easy Pieces*, but in an Alaskan highway diner.

Unlike in the film, the waiter nods obligingly and writes it all down with long suffering. She has a conspicuous *mala* of prayer beads and baggy meditation clothes, carries a well-used cushion and wears her Buddhism provocatively.

Despite the American accent and air of aging defiance, I worry for her. As I leave the restaurant careful to avoid her eye, she is still waiting for breakfast.

I am taking a break from the Himalayan Writers Workshop, a 10-day course of writing, meditation, introspection and literary self-indulgence to which I'm becoming addicted. This is my second time, but I'm still trying to find that elusive space to write my own memoirs.

My poet pal, James Hopkins, has interrupted his Buddhist practice to gather together an unlikely group of committed North American ladies and bookish gents to bask in Nepal's fertile spiritual atmosphere. Devised by James and offering several courses a year led by various literary luminaries from the US,



his Himalayan Writers Workshop attracts a wide range of overseas students, from aspiring to arrived, from young to not-so-young. What we all have in common is a desire to write more or write better, inspired by the unique Himalayan ambience.

This October course is promisingly titled Wild Writing, Calm Mind, and our guest teacher is Laurie Wagner, who brings Californian intimacy and relentless honesty to our literary efforts. With bouncing curls, penetrating gaze and feisty grin, Laurie challenges us beyond our comfort zone to push our penned limits, to face our deepest misgivings, to break through barriers, and to throw down words onto that daunting blank page.

Cradled within her carefully woven safety net, tears are not unusual as emotions are unleashed and nerves touched. Laurie stimulates us with selected verses and witty techniques: 'story slices' encapsulate a spontaneous moment in time, and 'wild writing', where the pen does not leave the page for 15 unguarded minutes, 'conjuring up stories that are waiting to be written'.

James embodies the power of poetry, though he has lost the blond greying ponytail. The designer stubble, zen clothing and energetic charm remain. "I'm not as nice as you think I am." But I disagree. He organises a local begging village to sew cotton quilts to educate their children, and his deaf-mute waitress friend joins us all for

dinner, gesturing in distress at the fast-moving conversation.


"I'll tell you everything later," he signals her back, his hands flying. Yellow petals float in a brass bowl. "I bought the roses around the stupa this morning — why are they wilting already?"

During James' early morning meditation sessions, we calm and awaken our writing senses. He helps us understand how Rinpoche teachings and Buddhist detachment can reveal unexpected truths — just be aware, let go and listen. Tempered with: "We all need a dose of chaos." Circling Boudhanath stupa at dawn we follow him in silence, focussing on sounds or smells. No wonder eavesdropped café conversations become so vivid.

The rest of the workshop days are spent on sightseeing walks to assault the senses, guest lectures to arouse contemplation and structured exercises to write, read, listen, edit, prune, narrate, share and trust. "Connecting our wild voices," as Laurie calls it. We continue the conversation in libraries, perched in teashops, gathered on temple steps, around sunny outdoor tables and on cane chairs in gardens full of marigolds.

We participants inhabit hotels near the densely divine centres of Swayambhunath and Boudhanath, before progressing to the open greenery and starry skies of Namobuddha. Sipping lemon grass tea amidst hills receding in waves of blue and grey, the local Namobuddha cottages are too small to swing a cat or perform a downward dog — I know because I tried. But the undisturbed hilltop resort is perfectly chosen for meditating and writing purposes.

During a group walk through the back alleys of Patan escorted by the incomparable fellow-columnist in this paper, Anil Chitrakar, I reflect on the value of seeing familiar sights with fresh eyes, and embracing unanticipated outcomes with courage. My first Himalayan Writers Workshop was with travel writer Eric Weiner three years ago, and the laboriously crafted piece I read out on our final night resulted in the first of these *Nepali Times* So Far So Good pieces. That was 72 fortnightly columns ago.

But I'm still trying to get started on that memoir. Singer songwriter Patti Smith wrote an entire book, mainly in a café drinking black coffee, on how hard she found it to write a book. How many times have I been told: "You have such an interesting life, a ringside seat at early conservation and tourism events, what changes you must have seen over 45 years in Nepal, all those historic people you met, and so many entertaining stories. You simply must write it all down into a book." Must I? 

[www.himalayanwritersworkshop.com](http://www.himalayanwritersworkshop.com)

**Lisa Choegyal** is a Brit who has made Nepal her home since the mid 1970s. She has been writing these bi-monthly columns, *So Far So Good*, for *Nepali Times* since February 2017. © LisaChoegyal

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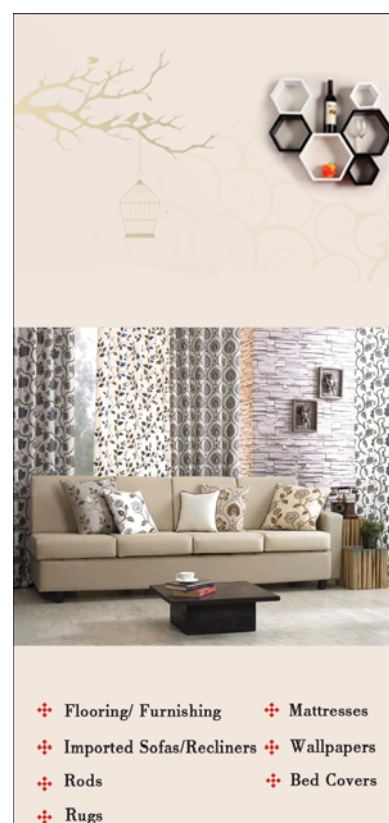
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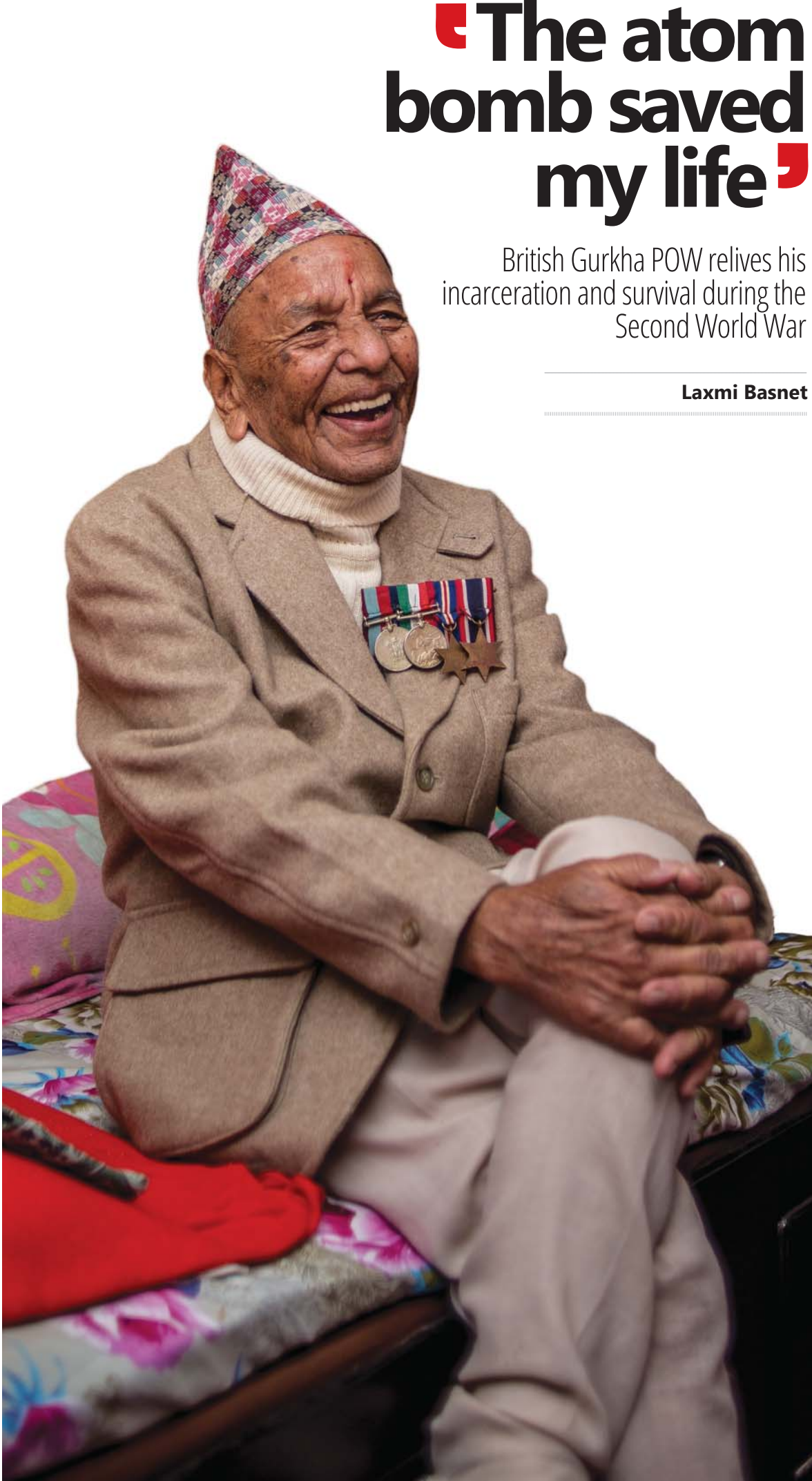


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Laxmi Basnet

# The atom bomb saved my life

British Gurkha POW relives his incarceration and survival during the Second World War



They ate rats with rotten rice, were ravaged by malaria and beaten by their Japanese captors. Only four of the 300 Nepali prisoners of war captured in Singapore and transported to camps in Indonesia survived. Bal Bahadur Basnet, now 98, was one of them.

The British Gurkha defending Burma from Japanese invasion during the Second World War had to flee to Malaya, and were captured as Singapore fell. Those who refused to surrender were executed.

First they were taken to Java, where the white soldiers were put in one camp, while the Indians and Nepalis were kept in dirty, insect-infested cells with little food.

“On empty stomachs we were made to work carrying heavy loads, and had to bury the bodies of our friends,” Basnet recalls, adding that punishment for disobedience was to have nails hammered into their foreheads in front of fellow prisoners.

Soon, the Japanese crammed the soldiers into vehicles and ships and took them to Java, then five months later to camps in New Guinea, where hundreds of prisoners survived eating coconuts and even grass. Many contracted malaria, while others died with painful boils all over their body.

Only four Gurkhas who were brought to New Guinea survived. “The dead were the lucky ones, those who were alive worried that there would be no one to bury them after they died,” remembers Basnet.

Basnet (*pictured, left, and with a knife that survived the war, above*) was good with scissors, so the Japanese made him the camp barber. He talked to his captors in broken English while he cut their hair, and remembers the Japanese were confident they would win the war.

“They told me they would conquer the world, and Nepal would soon be a part of Japan. But one day there was panic in the camp, the Japanese started melting away,” Basnet remembers. He found out only later that the Americans had bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

“The atom bomb saved my life,” Basnet says.

Basnet’s platoon had 1,300 members

at the start of the war, but only 300 remained when they were captured. Among them, 200 were wounded and could not walk, so they were left behind to die. Only 100 remained in New Guinea at the end of the war, and of them only four were Nepalis.

A month after the Japanese left in 1945, Australian soldiers arrived and took the POWs to Darwin, where they were given Australian Army uniforms and \$20 each for their trip to Bombay. After that it was a long train journey to Gorakhpur, where they were reunited with other Gurkhas who had survived the war.

Basnet hiked over the mountains to his home in Galkot of Baglung. After four years, his family and friends had given him up for dead. It was a surprise homecoming, and everyone was ecstatic.

But peace did not last. The Gurkhas were given a choice to join the British or Indian Armies. Basnet opted for the Indian Army, to be closer to home. And soon, India was at war with Pakistan and Basnet’s platoon had to go to Ambala from Dehradun. Again, Bal Bahadur Basnet lost many friends from the Gurkha brigade in the battles in Kashmir.

After that war, the Gurkhas who had served more than 15 years were given a choice to stay or retire with pension. Basnet says he raised his hand and quit the army.

“By then I was pretty tired of fighting other people’s wars.”



He ate rats with rotten rice, was ravaged by malaria and beaten by Japanese captors. It was an atom bomb that finally saved Bal Bahadur Basnet’s life. Go online to watch him recall his incarceration and survival during the Second World War.

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Some of the 17 members of the Panauti community homestay cooperative chapter.

# Nepalis open doors to a better life

Community homestay empowers women, uplifts communities and provides tourists a close-up of life in Nepal

Sanghamitra Subba  
in Kavre

Until recently it was not unusual for women in villages of Kavre to hide when they saw outsiders approaching. Today, they welcome tourists to their homes and are even learning English, Italian or Japanese to better communicate with guests.



Shila Amatya (*left*) was already running a beauty parlour in her house in Panauti when a group of women in her community asked if she could help them start homestays as well. She agreed, and they set up their homes. Then the women approached Royal Mountain Travels (RMT) to ask if the company would help them find clients for their community of homestays. Seven years later, what started as a corporate social responsibility initiative in a town in Kavre has expanded into a full-fledged social enterprise called Community Homestay Network (CHN) with chapters in 22 locations nationwide.

Guests from around the world can book rooms in homes of Nepali families that belong to the network, from high mountain settlements to the Tarai plains. While the price, activities and accommodations depend on where the homestay is located, the network ensures that local tourism is promoted and communities benefit. For a chapter to join the network, it must gather 10 homes, agree to follow guidelines and elect a leader. In turn, members are given access to English language classes, a crash course on cleanliness and hygiene, and are informed about the types of activities they should offer guests from various cultures. Families who wish to join a



Guests at a homestay in Panauti practice making roti in a host kitchen.

homestay program need to pay a yearly membership fee of Rs10,000 but are given loans from the network's Community Development Fund (CDF) which also helps support member families facing an unexpected financial emergency. The chapters work like cooperatives: from every guest booking, 85% goes back to the community, with most of the revenue staying with the host family, and 20% to the CDF. The remaining 15% goes to the network office in Kathmandu. While other homestay programs in the network are slowly gaining traction, at the flagship chapter in Panauti, business is booming. Once unsure of how to act around

visitors, women homestay managers now confidently greet tourists in trekking outfits, arriving from destinations as diverse as Denmark and Japan. The Panauti chapter has 17 families and Amatya is current community president. Demand is so great that they have to turn away new members. "As much as we want to let everyone be a part of the homestay network, we have to consider whether they would be a good fit to host guests," she explains. "We have to be stricter with our standards, and to continue having guests leave satisfied, we have to limit membership." Those high standards are not

# Homestays keep former



Chair of Ayodhyapuri homestay co-op, Mohan Bahadur Pun

Mukesh Pokhrel  
in Chitwan

Hari Bahadur Pun from Madi Valley in Chitwan returned from Malaysia three years ago, and has been running his own homestay since then. He is thankful he made that decision, and spends his day welcoming guests into his home. "The rooms are never empty because guests keep coming and I spend my time taking care of them. This is great work for myself, and good income for the village." The boundary of Chitwan National Park is 1km north of Ayodhyapuri village and the Indian border is to the south. An ongoing problem in the village is wild animals from the park raiding crops, which is why most young people here migrated overseas for employment. But today, homestays have given jobs to villagers. The guests are visitors from Nepal and abroad attracted by the rustic lifestyle, and wildlife tourism in Chitwan. Ward Chief Krishna Raj Adhikari says there is no shortage of guests, especially from October to May. Bookings need to be made by July, or visitors won't find a room. Says homestay operator Om Bahadur Pun Magar, "Many times, we have had to send tourists to

hotels after serving them meals but we don't like it when we have to do that. It spoils the whole homestay experience." Many people from the area who had migrated abroad for work have returned to open their own homestays, attracted by the income that can be made in their own houses. Many earn about Rs35,000 per month. The benefits go beyond individual homes. Previously there was no electricity in area villages, and streets were filled with mud during the monsoon and dust in winter. Today, roads are paved, and in the evenings the villages light up because of new solar-powered street lamps. The locals are less dependent on Chitwan National Park as well. "Before the homestay was established, everyone owned cows and buffaloes, and when we went into the jungle for grass we used to have run-ins with army rangers guarding the park," says Som Maya Pun. "Now, people have stopped raising livestock or stall-feed them, and are busy with running their homestays." The homestays have also allowed locals to reconnect with their culture. Years ago, Dambar Bahadur Pun, who migrated here from his home in Myagdi in the mountains, joined the Indian Army like many of his forebears. He used to return home every year for 45 days of vacation, travelling from Raxaul through Sauraha. But that trip took at least a month. Tired of spending most of his holiday



A guest is welcomed at the Ayodhyapuri homestay cooperative located in





PHOTOS: COMMUNITY HOMESTAY NETWORK



Guests learn how to wear sari from homestay cooperative members in Panauti.

the only reason why the Panauti program is thriving. It is also the charm of this historical Newa town with its melange of lifestyles, people, cultures and festivals, located at the intersection of urban and rural life in Nepal.

A well-kept museum with historical and cultural artefacts is walking distance from a river where ducks paddle away the day. Guests can take a five-hour hike through up-country Tamang villages led by a local guide, enjoy cultural dance performances, learn about the rich traditions of one of the oldest towns in Nepal and marvel at temples and stupas, while having access to wifi, western-style bathrooms, home cooked meals and cafes.



ALL PHOTOS: MONIKA DEUPALA

Biju Sainju (*above, left*) was a single mother raising two daughters and caring for her in-laws with the little income she made in the shop on the ground floor of her home in Panauti. Things were difficult, but she made ends meet.

After she joined the network, she had enough money to send her daughters to a good school.

“At first I was scared because I didn’t know much about it. I had to attend the English classes and felt nervous,” says Sainju, recounting how she has learned Italian words like *pepe nero* and *zenzero* to make it easier for her guests from Italy to follow her cooking classes.

“Joining the network has changed my life and my daughters’ lives,” Sainju says.



Kumari Tamang (*above*) is equally thrilled to be a part of the Panauti chapter. “I really enjoy having conversations with the guests. They love hearing our life stories and are fascinated by how we live in a joint family,” she says.

Poonam Gupta, impact manager at CHN, gets emotional just thinking

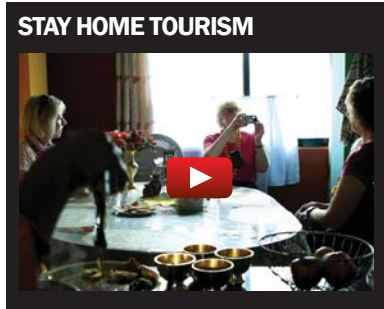
about how people’s lives have changed because of the network, including that of her own family.

A local of Panauti, Gupta became interested in tourism when she began helping her mother with homestay guests. She started acting as a translator and tour guide, and was then offered the job at CHN.

“I have experienced firsthand the impact of homestay tourism on my community,” she tells us.

The benefits spread beyond individual homes to the community. When homestay owners buy more produce from local vendors and guests shop from local stores, tourism income is injected directly into the grassroots.

Says Shila Amatya: “I am happy knowing that other women in my community and in homestay networks all over Nepal have the chance to earn money, send children to good schools, improve their homes, get involved in the community and most importantly, do something themselves.” 🇳🇵



Visit a homestay community in Kavre to learn firsthand how both hosts and guests benefit from this unique form of people-to-people tourism that injects income directly into grassroots Nepal.

[nepalitimes.com](https://nepalitimes.com) 🖱️

# migrants in Nepal



the Chitwan National Park buffer zone.

WWF

travelling, he moved to Ayodhyapuri, which is just three hours from his Indian Army base.

“We didn’t know much about our culture because we had not seen much of it,” says Khil Bahadur Pun, also from Myagdi. “But after we started our homestay, everyone was interested in the Magar culture again. We reconnected with our roots, and discovered our songs, dances and festivals.”

To perform for guests, locals learnt Maruni and Soreti, traditional Magar dances. Now a ‘cultural home’ has been set up so homestay visitors can gather for performances.

Supporting homestays can be a way of helping not only local economies but also conservation. People who live near national parks like Chitwan are often poor and rely on farming and livestock. Wild animals put livelihoods at risk. But by providing income from tourism, national parks can ease the burdens on those living around them.

Through the Tarai Arc Landscape program, the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) Nepal supported buffer zone communities to set up homestays, and the Madi cooperative is one of them. The 13 houses have hosted 11,000 visitors in the last three years, and the homestays are marketed by the adventure travel company Intrepid Travel.

Tul Bahadur Pun Magar, the secretary of the cooperative and operator of one of the homestays, himself used to work as a driver

and a construction supervisor in Bahrain, earning Rs70,000 a month. He is happy to be back near nature, and planning for the future.

“Through the homestays, we have learned to live with wild animals. Our guests love to see them and we have realised that they are precious,” he says. With the 13 homestays fairly well-established, Pun Magar has plans to create a bird sanctuary near his village.

Many operators of Ayodhyapuri’s homestays are women, who have been empowered by the income and exposure. “We never used to deal with people from outside the household,” says homestay operator Sharmila Rai. “Now we feel confident engaging with anyone.”

While only a few of Ayodhyapuri’s households host homestays, they generate income beyond lodging fees. All vegetables needed for feeding tourists is grown organically in the village, dairy products are made locally, and the fish and poultry are also raised by the village.

The growth of economic disparities within the village is a problem faced by homestay programs, particularly in places where for reasons of caste, there is already a socio-economic gap. In Ayodhyapuri, at least, the distribution of income-generating activities as well as the limit of one homestay per operator, seems to be keeping these disparities in check. 🇳🇵



EVENTS



KIMFF 2019

The 17th Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival will screen documentaries and experimental films about mountains, love and relationships, climate change and migration. Catch panel discussions, interviews with filmmakers and some of the best documentaries from around the world. For more information: kimff.org 11-15 December, Various Locations (01) 4440635

South Asian Games

The 13th SAG kicked off earlier this week with 7 countries competing across 26 games. Catch the best of athletes from South Asia in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Janakpur. For more information: 13sagnepal.com 1-10 December, Timings and locations vary

Making Natural Earrings

Get creative and crafty with Zofia Lisowska's workshop on DIY eco-friendly accessories. Turn orange peels into cute earrings. Participants will get to take their creations home. Pre-registration required: bit.ly/naturalearrings 8 December, 10am-1pm, Rs500 per person, Sattya Media Arts Collective, Dhobighat (01) 5521812



Bhaktapur Heritage Walk

In celebration of the Yomari Punhi festival, take a guided walk of Bhaktapur. You'll have the chance to view the temples and learn about the history and rich culture of the old town, all while enjoying yomaris and the classic juju dhau. 12 December, 2pm onwards, Chyamasingha Gate, Bhaktapur

Sunday Social

Hang out with new people, grab a drink or two, listen to live music and join the merriment. 8 December, 4pm-7pm, Musicology, Jhamsikhel, 9860368061



Yomari Punhi

Yomari Punhi is a Newa festival that celebrates the end of the rice harvest. On this full moon day, devotees worship Annapurna, the Goddess of Grains and make yomaris, a delicacy created from rice flour filled with chaku or khuwa. 12 December

Handicraft Market

Browse stalls lined with local handicrafts, meet Nepali artisans and support owners of small businesses. 7 December, 12am-7pm, Chhaya Center, Thamel



Interactive Storytelling

As part of KIMFF, join three Nepali conservationists for Tracking The Ghosts of the Mountain, an interactive storytelling session about researching and collaring snow leopards, and the science behind it all. 11 December, 2pm-3:30pm, City Hall, Kamaladi (01) 4440635

Altai by AMPM

Two of Bollywood's favourite fashion designers, Ankur and Priyanka Modi, will be in Kathmandu for a trunk show of Altai by their label AMPM. 10 December, Babar Mahal Revisited, Tanka Prasad Sadak (01) 4248747

MUSIC



Ester Quevedo Trio

Ester Quevedo, a Spanish pianist who has studied classical and jazz music, will be performing alongside Nepali bassist Sulav Maharjan and drummer Kashish. The trio will play a fusion of rock, classical and jazz music. 6 December, 8pm-11pm, House of Music, Thamel, 9849377915

Holiday Concert

Kathmandu Chorale's Holiday Concert will leave you in the holiday spirit. And with Christmas just around the corner, spread joy to those in need by donating to local charities selected by the organisers. 7 December, 3pm & 6pm, The British School, Jhamsikhel, 9803191927



Trishna Gurung

Trishna Gurung, known for her song Khani Ho Yahmu, has experienced a warm welcome this year after a five-year hiatus. Watch her perform her greatest hits. 6 December, 8pm onwards, La Villa Lounge & Club, Lazimpat, 9818104578

Fusion Instrumental

Immerse yourself in the hypnotising sound of fusion instrumental music by Sita Maiya Rajchal (sitar), Durga Khatiwoda (flute) and Naresh Prajapati (tabla). 6 December, 7pm onwards, Black Pepper Café & Pub, Jhamsikhel (01) 5521897

DINING



Haopin Hotpot

If you plan on visiting Haopin Hotpot anytime soon, make sure to take a couple of friends because hotpot is best served with a side of good, and hungry, company. This place offers a wide variety of meats and vegetables to dip in flavoured soups and delicious sides to keep you satisfied while it cooks. 10am-10pm, Narayan Chaur, 9808064999

Tamarind

If you're looking for a restaurant with great drinks and food, Tamarind is the place to go. And if you're in the mood to dance Salsa or just marvel at the moves of the regulars, stop by on Tuesday evenings! Jhamsikhel, (01) 5522626

Sam's One Tree Cafe

The murals of this cafe have appeared in the background of many social media posts and stories. Customers rave about the eatery's lively atmosphere, tempting sizzlers and quick service. 11am-9:30pm, Darbar Marg (01) 4222636



Pho 99

During the colder months, nothing sounds better than a piping hot bowl of soup, filled with noodles, vegetables, meats and sauces. And even in winter, you can get the refreshing summer rolls! 11am-9pm, Jhamsikhel, 9803203119

Choila

Shyam Dai Ko Haas Ko Choila (Shyam Dai's duck choila) is not for the faint of heart. It has been THE place to get choila for the last 24 years and only those who can handle their spice have dared to try the dish. But if you're looking to get a taste of the classic Newa dish, then this is the place for you. 8am-10pm, Dhobighat (01) 4280273

GETAWAY



Dwarika's Resort

If you're looking to get away for lunch outside the city or for a spa experience that will wash away all your worries, Dwarika's Resort is the place to go. A relaxing couple of hours of Crystal Salt Therapy will leave you feeling energised and ready to tackle the chaos of the city. Dhulikhel (11) 490612

Jagatpur Lodge

Jagatpur Lodge's private tents will take you to the heart of the grassland in the comfort of luxury amenities. Jagatpur, Chitwan (01) 4221711



Barahi Jungle Lodge

The first eco-jungle lodge in Chitwan, the lodge directly overlooks Chitwan National Park. Includes a spa, boutique guest rooms, individual and two-in-one private villas, and a suite with a private swimming pool. Megauli, Chitwan (01) 4429820

Eden Jungle Resort

Just beyond the reserve that houses elephants, with its thatched living spaces Eden Jungle Resort is a getaway surrounded by wildlife and greenery. Sauraha, 9855035071



Soaltee Crowne Plaza

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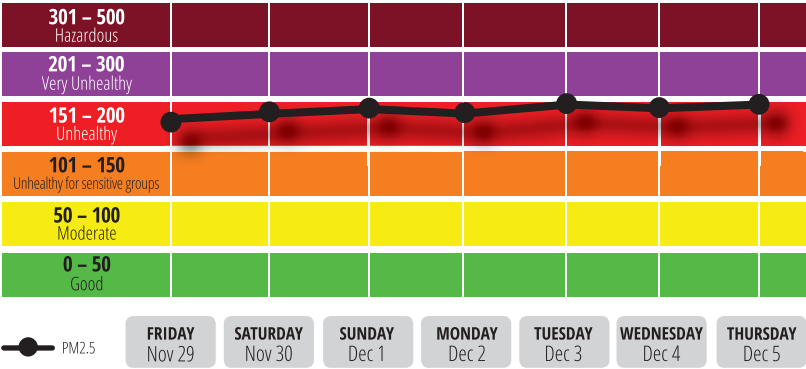


Opened in Kathmandu on 6 December

Knives Out is a thrilling mishmash of drama, family affairs, scandals and a murder mystery. When a crime novelist is found with his throat slit after his 85th birthday party, a detective is hired to get to the bottom of his mysterious death. The film, directed by the critically acclaimed Rian Johnson, features a star-studded cast of Daniel Craig, Chris Evans, Jamie Lee Curtis and Michael Shannon.

AIR QUALITY INDEX

KATHMANDU, 29 November - 5 December



Despite the brisk afternoon breeze, the daily average for the Air Quality Index (AQI) in Kathmandu City Centre remained in the Red Zone, which means it was unhealthy to breathe. But remember: that was just the daily average. During rush hour on some days in the mornings and evenings the AQI for particles below 2.5 microns crossed 300 -- which is in the 'Hazardous' Maroon Zone. That is when you do not even go out, and try to stay in a room with air purifiers on full blast. Outdoor activity is definitely a bad idea. <https://np.usembassy.gov/embassy/air-quality-monitor/>



# “Menstruation is not private business, it is everyone’s business”

Nepali activists mark 8 December as the Day for Dignified Menstruation

Reeti K.C.

Menstruation in Nepal has become synonymous with *chhaupadi*, the tradition of banishing women to cowsheds for five days during their periods. The practice is infamous in western Nepal — where another segregated woman died in Achham district this week — but the belief that a menstruating woman is dirty, impure and untouchable is pervasive country-wide.

Nepal is one among many countries globally to consider menstruation a taboo. The topic is spoken about in hush-hush tones and only among women who are on intimate terms — but one activist is fighting such attitudes.

“Menstruation is not private business, it is everyone’s business,” says Radha Paudel, who has been working to abolish the menstrual taboo for almost 40 years.

Paudel started to speak publicly about menstruation at age 15, when she was studying to become a nurse, and quickly realised that the taboo was due to lack of education. She vowed to teach people what she was learning, and her parents were her first students.



During her childhood, Paudel had seen her elder sisters being mistreated by neighbours and other villages when they stayed in the cowshed during their periods. It scarred and scared her. Traumatized, the nine-year-old left

her home in Chitwan to commit suicide because she did not want to live as a girl.

Paudel obviously failed to kill herself, but the young girl never stopped dreaming about being a man in a patriarchal society, where

**GRASSROOTS:** Activist Radha Paudel has spent her career working for dignified menstruation.

the odds were always against women. Now as a grown woman, she helps young girls accept and not be ashamed of the natural process.

“Out of 30 days, when 5 days of menstruation make no difference in the daily lives of women, that will be dignified menstruation,” says Paudel. She believes that excluding a woman from any daily activity amounts to destroying her dignity, whether it is barring her from a religious task or excluding her from a certain part of the house.

Paudel tells *Nepali Times* that upholding women’s dignity during menstruation should be activists’ priority, ahead of other issues like accessibility of sanitary products. The menstrual taboo, she argues, encourages men to be powerful and women to be powerless.

Two years ago, the Nepal government drafted a policy on dignified menstruation. This year, the Radha Paudel Foundation and its partners are taking the initiative to mark 8 December as the Day

for Dignified Menstruation. It will also be marked globally, by friends and partners of the Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation. An international workshop is scheduled to take place in May, 2020.

Menstruation activism has created a global solidarity of sisterhood. One example is the 2019 Oscar-winning documentary *Period. End of Sentence* by Iranian-American Director Rayka Zehtabchi. It focuses on women in India who fight the stigma of menstruation by opening a sanitary pad manufacturing company. It is evident in the film that their voices are being heard and the veil of ignorance is ripping apart.

But Paudel thinks the documentary’s approach is insufficient. “It talks only about a sanitary pad company and doesn’t talk about dignity.” Likewise, she does not support the idea of period poverty, labelling it a foreign concept: “It focuses on accessibility of sanitary products but not the taboo attached to them. Distributing pads without providing this information promotes the idea that sanitary pads are dirty and must be hidden, which creates a negative impression.”

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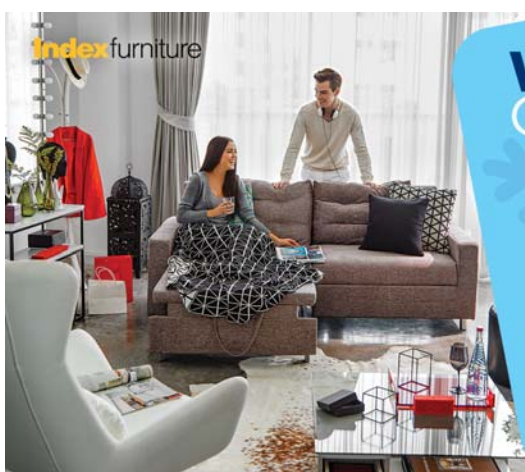


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NICOLA POLLITT / TWITTER

**WELCOME TO NEPAL:** Incoming British Ambassador to Nepal, Nicola Pollitt (*left*) on her way in a ceremonial horse-drawn carriage to present credentials to President Bidya Devi Bhandari at her residence in Shital Niwas on Wednesday.



JAMUNA BARSA SHARMA/RSS

**GOAL:** Nepal's women team made a winning start at the ongoing South Asian Games on Wednesday by defeating their Sri Lankan rivals.



**WHOOSH:** Nima Ghartimagar wins the 30th gold medal for Nepal in Wushu on Thursday at the South Asian Games, where Nepal dominated martial arts.



JAMUNA BARSA SHARMA/RSS

**FINE MOVE:** A Nepal team striker in action during a match against Sri Lanka on Wednesday. The hosts had to content themselves with a 1-1 draw after a thunderous 4-0 victory over Bhutan in the first match.



PRADEEP RAJ ONTA/RSS

**FINISHING LINE:** Soni Gurung won the gold in women's triathlon at the South Asian Games in Pokhara on Monday, completing the race in 1 hour 13 minutes and 45 seconds.



# KIMFF 2019 Festival of mountain films from around the world

## Sewa Bhattarai

The 17th iteration of the Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival (KIMFF) next week will not just feature documentaries and experimental films, but also movies from all over the world dealing with mountains.

The festival coincides this year with mountain-related events and anniversaries, including the centenary of Edmund Hillary and 60 years of Swiss cooperation in Nepal. This year too, the festival has an international competition, a non-competitive section and a

Nepal Panorama with more than 70 films in a wide range of genres.

The international competition has films about mountain communities in Asia, Europe and the Americas. Quite a few films are about adventure, climbing, trekking, paragliding and other mountain sports like rafting and canyoning.

Many of the entries examine the impact of modernity, big business, and migration on traditional lifestyles. Ethnographic portrayals from communities as far apart as Bosnia and Mustang take a close look at mountain communities.

"Filmmakers have worked on a variety of subjects. Development, gender, geography and culture

are recurrent themes," says festival coordinator Ramyata Limbu. "Together, the films show how difficult life on mountains is all over the world, and how the traditional way of life is disappearing everywhere."

In Nepal, the filmmakers seem interested in how the mountain terrain is connected with society. Many filmmakers have portrayed migration, economy and the hardships of mountain lifestyles. Social struggles and changes are also in focus, with films on Kamlari women, patriarchy and childbirth.

Another popular theme is love and relationships, with films on polyandry, teenage relationships and infertility.

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## Master classes

This year KIMFF has several free master classes by renowned artists.

**Ang Tsherin Sherpa**  
Thangka turned contemporary artist Ang Tsherin will be giving a class on the transformation from traditional to contemporary art. Sherpa, who studied Tibetan thangka with his father, Master Urgen Dorje, later went to the US and started integrating modern elements into his work. His paintings, which portray the disconnect between traditional and modern ways, have been exhibited at many world-class art museums.  
12PM, 13 Dec

**Michal Dillon**  
Famous adventure filmmaker Michael Dillon will hold a master class on filmmaking. The pioneering artist has over 50 years of experience in adventure movie making, and has filmed spectacular destinations, including the Himalayas, Andes, Antarctica, the Arctic, the Pacific and Africa. Dillon will share tips on not just filmmaking but also what equipment and attitudes to take along to adventurous destinations.  
1130 AM, 15 Dec

## Presentations and panel discussions

KIMFF features several discussions on topics related to mountains.

**Snow leopards**  
In this interactive session, individuals who have worked to conserve snow leopards will share their experiences. It also includes songs about snow leopards, and will interest nature and wildlife enthusiasts.  
2 PM, 11 Dec

**Rewriting her story**  
Plan International's global campaign, Girls Get Equal, kicks off its Nepal iteration at KIMFF. The discussion will focus on issues like girls' freedom of speech including online, discrimination, and damaging gender stereotyping in media, aiming at truthful representation of girls and boys in media.  
130 PM, 12 Dec

17th Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival  
11-15 December  
City Hall and Nepal Tourism Board




## HIGHLIGHTS

**Edmund Hillary's Centenary**  
The first man on Everest would have been 100 this year, and this is an important year for mountaineering. KIMFF brings together diverse films about the Kiwi mountaineer, opening with *The Ascent of Everest*. Directed by Antonello Padovano, the film has a voiceover by Hillary himself, as he relives and recounts key moments of the journey. *Ocean to Sky*, a film by Michael Dillon, reminds us that though Hillary was known for his Everest adventure, that was not his only achievement. Dillon's film takes us into other adventures with Hillary.

**60 years of Swiss Cooperation in Nepal**  
Being another landlocked mountainous country, Switzerland has always tried to make Nepal in its image. This year marks 60 years of Swiss diplomatic presence in Nepal, and KIMFF will focus on classic films from Switzerland. A re-adaptation of *Heidi*, a classic novel about a young girl who lives with her goat-herding grandfather, will have a special screening. Together with *Der Wildheuer*, the films show a lifestyle similar to Nepal in the Switzerland of yore.

**Paribartit Nepal**  
Every year KIMFF holds a short film competition for films under 3 minutes. This year, the theme Paribartit Nepal (changed Nepal) focuses on the transformations Nepal has gone through in recent times: from political changes like the constitution to natural ones like the earthquake. The theme has received submissions in a wide variety of subjects, and promises to be an interesting rewind of Nepal's recent history.

**Climate is key**  
Many films in KIMFF Are about the climate crisis. In Malaysia, excessive use of pesticides by farmers pollutes the Cloud Forest in Cameron Highlands and commercial expansion damages its ecological structure (*Cloud Kingdom*). In Iran, traditional farmers struggle to save their farm from newcomers and big businesses (*The Beginning of Desert*). In Patagonia, a herder finds his way of life under threat and embarks upon a challenging journey (*Crianceros del viento*). Nepali films are about how the changing climate forces young people to migrate away from their mountain homes.



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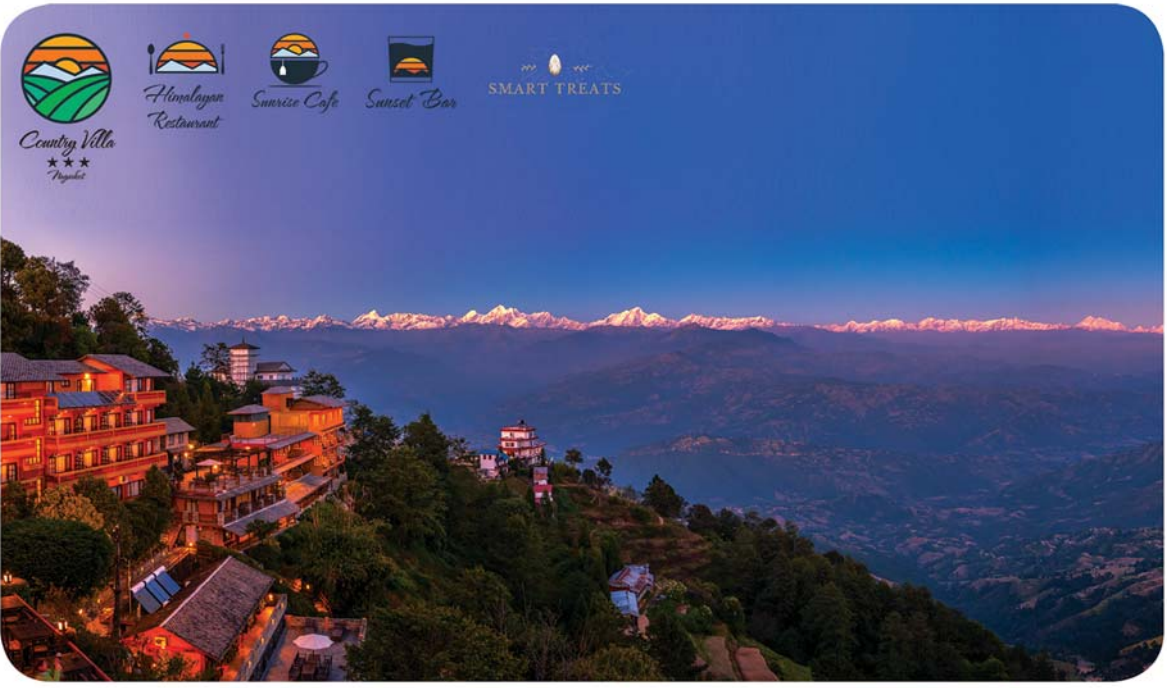
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UNFCCC

# Clock starts ticking at COP25

Josie Wang

Climate change has reached the “point of no return,” warned UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (*above*) ahead of the global climate conference, COP25, which started this week in Madrid and will focus on implementing targets agreed in the Paris Agreement four years ago.

In 2015, governments committed to limit average global temperature rise to only 1.5C above pre-industrial temperatures. This meant countries had to implement effective climate crisis solutions by the end of 2020, but that has not happened. In fact, some countries, like the US, have pulled out of the Paris Agreement altogether, and others have not been ambitious enough.

Norway, a leader in cutting emissions, continues to produce oil and gas. China too has taken action to reduce emissions, but failed to meet its targets, and might now even be increasing emissions. Despite moves towards renewable energy, India is investing in new coal-fired plants.

“China’s proposed coal expansion is so far out of alignment with the Paris Agreement that it would put the necessary reductions in coal power out of reach,” said Christine Shearer, an analyst from Global Energy Monitor, quoted in the *Guardian*.

As the Paris Agreement approaches its deadline, the main discussion at COP25 is Article 6, which focuses on providing financial support to developing countries to reduce emissions and on cutting emissions by using global carbon markets.

Carbon markets, which have existed since 1997, aim to limit greenhouse gas emissions by trading in carbon credits. The UN provides carbon credits to developing countries for emission reduction projects. Buyers (other countries) can use the credits to fulfil their own reduction targets and sellers can use the money to pave their way to carbon neutrality.

Under current trends, achieving the Paris target will be much more difficult than when the deal was finalised. “Ten years ago, if countries had acted on the science they would have needed to reduce emissions by 3.3% each year,” Guterres said. “Today, we need to reduce emissions by 7.6% each year.”

David Molden, Director of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) told *Nepali Times*: “A 1.5 degree temperature rise is already too hot for mountains, and it is already a state of emergency for many mountain people who are on the front line of climate change.”

There are ominous signs of the climate emergency as COP25 delegates meet in Madrid. Ongoing wildfires in Australia have forced more than 600 families from their homes, sea levels reached a record high in Venice and higher temperatures affected this year’s monsoon in South Asia, resulting in deadly floods. Cyclones have hit more frequently, including Cyclone Bulbul and Fani, which battered coastal areas of Bangladesh and India this year.

In the next 12 months, said Guterres, “it is essential that we secure more ambitious national commitments — particularly from the main emitters — to immediately start reducing greenhouse gas emissions at a pace consistent with reaching carbon neutrality by 2050.”

ICIMOD’s Molden said his organisation “would like to work closely with our member countries and other allies to make sure that the voice of the mountains is heard, and to build momentum for much more ambitious climate action, critical for mountain people.” 🇳🇵



The climate emergency makes all of the country's other crises pale in comparison

Sonia Awale

In the past, Nepalis have migrated to India for seasonal labour and military recruitment. Today they fly overseas for work. Tomorrow they may have to migrate in increasing numbers because of climate-induced disasters.

But the reason for migrating remains the same: reliance of Nepal’s farmers on rain-fed agriculture, which leaves them vulnerable to erratic monsoons. And as extreme weather events become more frequent due to the climate emergency, more and more Nepalis may be forced to move out.

Already, climate change is causing more frequent droughts, flash floods and rising temperatures, reducing crop yields across Nepal. Climate change has lowered the water table and dried natural springs, the snowline has receded across the Himalaya, and glaciers are retreating dramatically.

The shortage of water is already forcing entire villages to relocate, and the situation is expected to worsen in the next few decades as the dry season flow from snow-fed rivers declines because little ice remains to melt.

Nepalis have been migrating for centuries to escape poverty, indebtedness and monsoon failures. All these push factors have now been magnified by climate-related hazards, and are already resulting in increased mobility.

“We are witnessing a rapid rise in temperature and a resulting climate shift. But people in rural mountainous and coastal areas have not been able to adapt to these changes, forcing



them to move,” explained climate expert Manjeet Dhakal, who is in Madrid for the United Nations climate summit, COP25, citing the example of pastoralists relocating in Mustang district because of prolonged drought.

Scientists have had to revise estimates of the rate of global warming because the impact is being felt much earlier than expected, with heat waves, larger forest fires, more intense storms, unseasonal blizzards and extreme rainfall events. The past decade was the hottest ever on record, Europe saw its hottest ever June this year, sub-Saharan Africa experienced unprecedented drought, while

Cyclone Fani triggered the evacuation and displacement of 3.5 million people in Bangladesh and India in May.

Here in Nepal, over 80,000 people were infected with dengue this monsoon in an unprecedented outbreak that scientists said was exacerbated by a warming climate. Bara district recorded a rare tornado that killed 80 people, and razed villages. Floods in the Tarai are getting worse every year.

“There are many reasons for people to migrate, but the additional stress from the risks of increased floods and droughts, or changes in farming or water supply, may just push people’s

# Women in climate hot

Migration of men, poverty and poor working conditions diminish women’s power to act

Marty Logan

Women in Asia and Africa hardest hit by climate change have a tough time adapting to the climate emergency, even with support from family or the state, finds a new study. The results raise questions for global agreements designed to help people adapt to the climate emergency, it adds.

The findings are based on 25 case studies in three agro-ecological regions on the two continents: 14 in semi-arid locales, 6 in mountains and glacier-fed river basins (including one in Nepal) and 5 in deltas. The main livelihoods in these natural resource-dependent areas include agriculture, livestock rearing and fishing, supplemented by wage labour, petty trade and income from remittances.



KUMARACHARYA



# prepare for climate migration



GOPEN RAI

decision past the tipping point,” said David Molden, director of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). “For others, there may be no choice but to migrate if a water source is lost, or the damage from floods or droughts is too great.”

Migration usually begins as a temporary response, but many people have had to relocate permanently or have been displaced. Millions of climate refugees are moving across borders. Human mobility of any kind in the face of the changing climate will have an enduring impact on societies and economies. “When some members of a

family migrate, the country’s dependence on remittance will increase. When entire families migrate, the country will lose a major portion of its labour force. Eventually, dependence on remittance and a shrinking labour force will inhibit the economy,” said Dhakal.

As far back as 1990, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned that the single greatest impact of climate change would be on human migration. Now, experts are saying there may be 200 million climate refugees worldwide by 2050. By then, 42 million Bangladeshis and 36 million people in coastal India

**HIGH AND DRY:** Dhi village in Mustang is one of the increasing number of settlements that have been abandoned because of water shortage caused by climate change.

will have to relocate because of rising sea levels.

A recent Oxfam report named climate change-fuelled disasters as the number one driver of internal displacement over the last decade, having forced more than 20 million people to leave their homes annually.

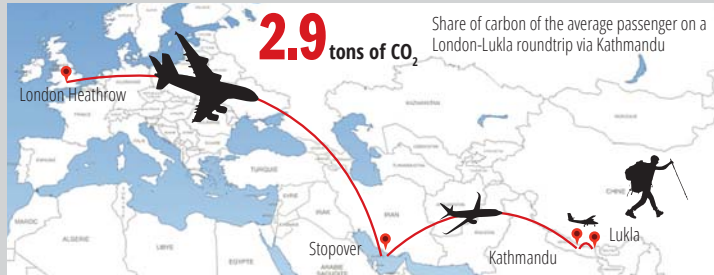
“If the current development pathway and governance persists, human mobility upheaval will have huge humanitarian and social costs. We in Nepal may not remain immune to this disruption even though we are landlocked,” says water expert Ajaya Dixit.

Following the 2015 Paris Agreement, the executive committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism established a task force on displacement to develop recommendations to avert, minimise and address displacement due to climate change. Agencies, including the International Organisation for Migration, are building support for the second phase of the task force in Madrid this week.

Climate migration is also being discussed in 25 panels and events at COP25. With a rising backlash against migrants and refugees worldwide, it is likely that climate change impacts will cascade, stretching institutional capacity and governance and increasing the cost of adaptation. As displaced people move onto other people’s land, political confrontation and conflict between native populations and migrants can result.

Governments represented in Madrid need to devise policies not just to reduce emissions, but to deal with the political, cultural and economic aftermath of climate migration.

Says Dixit: “The climate crisis poses an existential threat. Let us hope human ingenuity and collective wisdom will prevail to begin much needed transformative action.” 🇨🇪



## The carbon footprint of tourism

Transport-related emissions from tourism are expected to increase to 5.3% of all man-made CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the next 10 years, according to a landmark report from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). However as tourist numbers rise and awareness grows about low-carbon travel, emissions per passenger kilometre are expected to decline.

Launched at a side-event during the UN Climate Summit, COP25, in Madrid this week, the report, *Transport Related CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions of the Tourism Sector*, outlines emissions produced by different modes of tourism transport.

“It is now for the tourism sector, especially tourism policymakers, to use data in this report effectively, and ensure the sector plays a leading role in addressing the climate emergency,” said UNWTO Executive Director Manuel Butler at the launch.

Ovais Sarmad, deputy executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), added: “While tourism is mentioned in many nationally determined contributions as a big concern, not enough has yet been done. Industry must do more, but governments must align their policies, so that at the international level we can collectively work to increase ambition.”

Some of the main conclusions of the research include:

- Against the current ambition scenario, transport-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from tourism are predicted to increase from 1,597 million tonnes to 1,998 million tonnes between 2016 and 2030, a 25% rise.
- During the same period, international and domestic arrivals are expected to grow from 20 billion to 37 billion, mainly driven by domestic tourism (from 18.8 billion to 35.6 billion), followed by international arrivals (1.2 billion to 1.8 billion).
- Transport-related emissions from tourism represented 5% of all man-made emissions in 2016, and will increase to 5.3% by 2030.
- Tourism-related transport emissions represented 22% of all transport emissions in 2016 and will account for 21% in 2030.

# spots face challenges adapting

**SHOULDERING THE BURDEN:** The workload for women like Nanimaya Dhungana in Kavre (*left*) may have increased because of the climate crisis.

Environmental risks include droughts, floods, rainfall variability, land erosion and landslides, glacial lake outburst floods, heat waves and cyclones, all of which negatively affect livelihoods. The study, A Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Women’s Agency and Adaptive Capacity in Climate Change Hotspots in Asia and Africa was published in the journal *Nature Climate Change*.

It found that when households take steps to adapt to the impact of climate change, the result is that the strategies ‘place increasing responsibilities and burdens on

women, especially those who are young, less educated and belonging to lower classes or marginal castes and ethnicities’. This occurred even in cases where support appeared to be available in the form of families/communities or via the state.

Examples include when men migrate to find work because of climate change-induced impacts at home. While the money they earn can boost family incomes, when men are away women must shoulder a larger burden. As a result, most women ‘reported reduced leisure time, with negative consequences on their wellbeing, including the health and nutrition of themselves and their households,’ says the report.

In other cases, governments stepped in with support but during floods or droughts, for example, men dominated state-provided aid and relief facilities, making women rely on their male relatives to

receive support.

‘In a sense, women do have voice and agency, yet this is not contributing to strengthening longer-term adaptive capacities,’ concludes the report.

But in three examples in the study, one in Nepal, women did adapt to the increased burdens delivered by climate change. In Chharghare of Nuwakot district, support from a well-established cooperative enabled many women — excluding Dailit women — to switch from raising buffalo and cattle to rearing goats, which adapted better to growing rain scarcity.

“By enhancing women’s agency, we need to understand that we are helping them to create an enabling environment where a women’s right to make decisions about her own life is recognised, where women are economically empowered and free from all forms of discrimination and

violence,” said Anjal Prakash, who worked on the case study for the Integrated Centre for Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

Poverty is the main factor in the declining decision-making power of women in some hot spots, says the report, even when women share responsibilities in the family and work outside of the home. In semi-arid Kenya, for example, women of female-headed households sell alcohol to earn money to pay for children’s schooling, but this exposes them to health risks, such as engaging in sexual activities with their clients.

A 35-year-old woman told researchers, “Despite our efforts, there is a high level of malnutrition here. We can’t afford meat, we just eat rice and potatoes, but even for this, the quantity is not enough.”

The study notes that international agreements, such as the gender action plan of

the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) require information about what builds the adaptive capacity of women, and men, so that agreements can support sustainable, equitable and effective adaptation.

It suggests that effective social protection, like the universal public distribution system for cereals in India, or pensions and social grants in Namibia, could contribute to relieving immediate pressures on survival.

“This however cannot always be done on the “cheap” — investments are needed to enable better and more sustainable management of resources. ‘Women’s self-help groups are often presented as solutions, yet they are confronted by the lack of resources, skills and capacity to help their members effectively meet the challenges they confront,’ the report adds. 🇨🇪





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Erratum

As a newspaper of world records, we tell the tooth, the whole tooth and nothing but the tooth. However, reporters are also human, and we sometimes knowingly tweak the truth. And when we do, our strict Media Code of Ethics requires us to lie low and hope no one noticed. Just kidding. Actually, we issue a clarification to say that we were right to get it wrong.

Be it a tiny typo, a glaring grammatical gaffe, a huge factual blunder, or an alternative truth, the important thing is to alert innocent bystanders about howlers and learn from our mistakes so that we can make even bigger ones in future. Before we are hoisted by our own petard, some critical self-examination is called for. If caught with our pants down, we rectify our erratum with a corrigendum. It is SOP in our profession to issue corrections like these:

- We apologise to Comrade Madhav Kumar Nepal for triggering a major international incident with our bold headline on the Sports Page yesterday: 'India Mauls Nepal'. The reportage pertained to the table tennis finals of the ongoing 13th SAG. In no way did we imply that Comrade Nepal was seriously injured by Injuns during his ongoing pingpong diplomacy over Kalapani.
- Due to a bitter argument in the newsroom, the prime minister was incorrectly identified in yesterday's Editorial as Pushpa Kamal Oli. The present premier

is in fact the Right Honourable KP Dahal. We apologise to both prime ministers for the faux pas.

- A caption in the Entertainment Section misidentified the revolving restaurant near the airport as the Revolting Restaurant & Bar. It is in fact the Revolutionary Party Palace run by the ANNUS(R). The terror is regretted.
- A Page 1 report by Chicken Little datelined Madrid about COP25 gave the erroneous impression that the world is ending. We are happy to report that the world is still very much around, according to a higher up authority. "We'll let you know if and when we decide to terminate the world," The Almighty said in a statement, read out by a heavenly spokesperson. Sorry about the boo-boo.
- Comrade Laldhoj of the Socialite Party has informed us that a news item in yesterday's edition announcing the launch of a nationwide agitation was a huge mistake. The party shouldn't have done it.
- A small typo crept into an article last Friday about Kathmandu being developed as an International Humour Centre. Heh-heh. Sorry about that hilarious goofup. In actual fact, the city is turning into an International Tumour Centre.
- Due to a fact-checking slipup, an Obituary yesterday announcing the death of Mr Mark Twain was exaggerated. Air pollution in Kathmandu had actually made Mr Twain feel only half-dead.



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