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OPINION
Dipak Gyawali



VIEWPOINT
Arup Rajouria



ARTICLE
Aagya Pokharel

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KYABJE SHYALPA TENZIN RINPOCHE
Pursuit of Global Peace and Sanctuary for the Heart

INSIDE



RELIGIOUS RIOTS
Government Failure



TIGER POPULATION
Double in a Decade



ENERGY MINISTER SHRESTHA
Mission to Destroy Kulman

Editor and Publisher

Keshab Poudel

Contributor

Sabine Pretsch

Design/Layout

Sahil Mokthan, 9863022025

Marketing Manager

Madan Raj Poudel

Tel: 9841320517

Nabin Kumar Maharjan

Tel: 9841291404

Editorial Office

Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 977-1-4530250

E-mail

spotlightnepal@gmail.com

P.O.Box: 7256

Website

www.spotlightnepal.com

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Notes From The Editor



As global and national turmoil continues to unfold, individuals everywhere are seeking both inner tranquility and physical harmony. To address this need, His Eminence Kyabje Shyalpa Tenzin Rinpoche is leading an initiative to construct the Universal Peace Sanctuary in Lumbini. Known for his humility and gentle wisdom, Rinpoche travels worldwide to champion his message of peace, garnering support across international borders. Despite facing resistance from certain figures within the Lumbini Development Trust, he remains steadfast in constructing this sanctuary at the birthplace of the Buddha to advocate for global harmony. In this issue's cover story, we highlight Rinpoche's life, mission, and enduring vision for a world united in peace. The Saint's vision paves the way toward achieving inner peace by offering a clear spiritual framework in an increasingly chaotic world. Rather than focusing solely on external conditions, the Saint's teachings guide individuals to look inward—cultivating compassion, mindfulness, and selfless service. By providing actionable wisdom and a harmonious environment for reflection, this vision helps people dismantle internal conflict, quiet the mind, and discover a lasting sense of tranquility that remains unshakable regardless of life's outer turmoil.

In our secondary coverage, we look at Nepal's remarkable conservation success: doubling its tiger population over the last decade through strategic planning and dedicated effort. However, sustaining this achievement remains challenging amid intensifying human-wildlife conflict. Finally, we address the recent unrest in Nepal's southern plains. Though the violence has subsided, the events exposed growing religious tensions following the constitutional shift from a Hindu kingdom to a secular state. We analyze these dynamics alongside the failure of local, provincial, and federal authorities to prevent the crisis.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

CONTENT

ARTICLE

Aagya Pokharel 3

NEWSNOTES 4

BUSINESS BRIEF 8

OPINION

Dipak Gyawali 12

FORUM

Dr.Prabin Manandhar 16

RELIGIOUS RIOTS

Government Failure 17

VIEWPOINT

Arup Rajouria 20

ENERGY MINISTER SHRESTHA

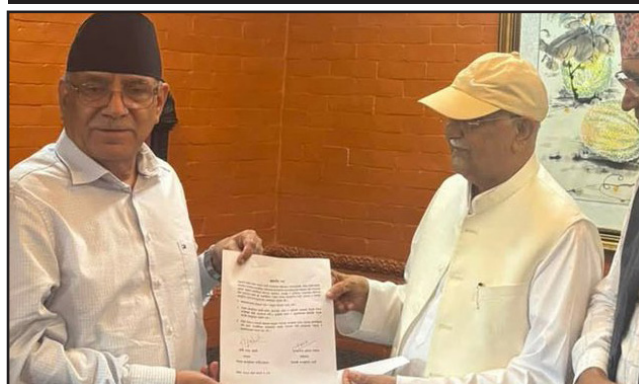
Mission to Destroy Kulman 22

ENVIRONMENT

Batu Uprety 24



COVERSTORY: Kyabje Shyalpa Tenzin Rinpoche: Pursuit of Global Peace and Sanctuary for the Heart 26



MAOIST AND UML UNITY: Backfire or Strategy?

14



TIGER POPULATION: Double in a Decade

31

Strengthening Accountability In Humanitarian Action



BY: AAGYA POKHAREL

In every humanitarian response, accountability is ultimately about people. It is about ensuring that families affected by crises are heard, respected, and meaningfully involved in decisions that shape the support they receive. Beyond systems and procedures, accountability is about building trust with communities and recognizing their right to have a voice in matters that affect their lives. The Humanitarian Accountability Report (HAR) 2026 highlights encouraging progress in this regard, demonstrating how humanitarian organizations are working to make assistance more responsive, inclusive, and grounded in the realities of the people they serve.

As conflicts, climate-related disasters, displacement, and economic challenges continue to drive humanitarian needs worldwide, accountability has become more important than ever. HAR 2026 shows that humanitarian actors are increasingly placing affected populations at the center of decision-making, recognizing that effective assistance depends on listening to and learning from the communities they serve. This shift reflects a growing commitment to ensuring that humanitarian responses are not only timely and effective but also respectful of the dignity, rights, and priorities of crisis-affected people.

One of the report's most significant findings is the improvement in community feedback and complaint mechanisms. Through help desks, hotlines, community meetings, suggestion boxes, and digital platforms, affected populations were given more opportunities to share concerns and recommendations. These improvements demonstrate the value of creating accessible channels through which communities can influence humanitarian programming and help improve service quality.

The report also highlights progress in promoting inclusion and participation. Women, persons with disabilities, older people, youth, and marginalized groups were increasingly involved in humanitarian processes. Notably, women's participation in feedback mechanisms increased from 45 percent to 58 percent, reflecting efforts to ensure that diverse voices contribute to program improvement. Such progress reinforces the understanding that humanitarian action is most effective when it is informed by the perspectives of all members of a community.

Another important area of advancement was safeguarding and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH). Humanitarian organizations strength-

ened staff training, awareness campaigns, reporting mechanisms, and survivor-centered approaches, reinforcing their commitment to protecting the dignity, safety, and rights of affected populations. At the same time, stronger financial oversight, audits, and fraud prevention measures helped improve transparency and responsible management of limited resources.

HAR 2026 also emphasizes the growing importance of localization. Local and national organizations continued to play a critical role in crisis response due to their contextual knowledge, community relationships, and long-term presence. Increased collaboration and capacity-strengthening efforts helped reinforce local leadership and support more sustainable responses.

While HAR 2026 presents encouraging evidence of progress, it also reminds us that accountability cannot be measured solely through improved statistics and systems. The true test lies in whether communities genuinely influence decisions and experience meaningful improvements in their lives. Importantly, communities are not homogeneous. Within every community are individuals and groups facing multiple and overlapping forms of vulnerability shaped by factors such as gender, age, disability, poverty, social exclusion, and displacement. Adopting an intersectional approach is therefore essential to understanding and addressing these diverse experiences and ensuring that no one is left behind. Persistent challenges, including funding constraints, access limitations, and barriers faced by the most vulnerable groups, highlight the need for continued learning, adaptation, and improvement across the humanitarian sector.

Ultimately, HAR 2026 delivers a powerful message: accountability is essential for effective, inclusive, and dignified humanitarian action. When communities are informed, listened to, and empowered, humanitarian responses become more relevant and impactful. While accountability is fundamental to humanitarian action, its importance extends far beyond times of crisis. The same principles of listening, transparency, participation, and responsiveness are equally vital in development cooperation, where lasting change depends on keeping communities at the heart of decision-making.

Aagya Pokharel is a results-driven development and humanitarian professional with extensive experience across Asia and the Middle East. She currently serves as Team Leader at Helvetas Nepal. The views expressed are her own. She can be reached at aagya.pokharel28@gmail.com

NEWSNOTES

Nirmal Purja and All Missing Broad Peak Climbers Confirmed Dead After Avalanche

Mountaineer Nirmal "Nimsdai" Purja has died following a devastating avalanche on Broad Peak in Pakistan. The expedition company Elite Exped has confirmed that all members of the climbing team involved in the accident also lost their lives.

organization led by Nirmal Purja confirmed on Saturday afternoon that, along with Purja, his colleagues and guides, including Purbahadur Gurung (Yukta) and Nima Sherpa, were among those who perished in the tragedy.

In a statement of condolence, Elite Exped said:

"Today, we have lost not only Nims but also our trusted climbing companions and guides, including Purbahadur Gurung (Yukta), Nima Sherpa, and everyone else who lost their lives in this tragedy. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and loved ones during this unimaginable loss."

Nirmal Purja was widely regarded as an exceptional and fearless mountaineer. Elite Exped noted that through his extraordinary courage, humility, and unwavering belief that "human potential is limitless," he inspired millions of people around the world. He founded several organizations, including Elite



Exped, the Nimsdai Foundation, Skydive Nimsdai, and the Nimsdai Store.

The company also expressed gratitude to the rescue teams and all supporting agencies that carried out search and rescue efforts despite extremely difficult weather and hazardous conditions.

The avalanche struck at around 9:00 a.m. on Thursday while the team was climbing Broad Peak in Pakistan, leaving a 10-member expedition, including Nirmal Purja, missing.

The climbers disappeared between Camp 2 and Camp 3, at an altitude of approximately 6,600 to 7,000 meters.

According to reports, the avalanche hit the team as they were ascending toward the summit, sweeping them nearly 1,000 meters downhill, after which all contact with the expedition was lost.

Ambassador Maeda Congratulates and Encourages JDS Fellows Heading to Japan

MAEDA Toru, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, hosted a send-off party at his official residence in Tahachal for Nepalese government officials selected for the Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS).

The JDS program provides young Nepalese civil servants

with opportunities to pursue higher education at reputed Japanese universities, offering two-year Master's degree courses and three-year Doctoral programs. This year, a total of 22 officials—20 pursuing Master's degrees and two undertaking PhD studies—will depart for Japan next month.



During the reception, Ambassador Maeda congratulated the fellows and encouraged them to acquire advanced academic knowledge and professional expertise while experiencing Japanese culture, values, and society first-hand. Wishing them every success, he expressed confidence that the knowledge, skills, and perspectives gained in Japan will strengthen Nepal's public institutions, enhance policymaking and governance, and drive sustainable socio-economic development upon their return.

Highlighting that this year marks the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Nepal, Ambassador Maeda expressed hope that the scholars would act as bridges of friendship, further strengthening the longstanding cooperative ties and mutual understanding between the two nations.

Including this year's cohort, a total of 231 Nepalese government officials have received JDS scholarships to pursue higher studies in Japan.

Foundation Stone Laid for New School Building in Banke

Gitanjali Brandon, Counsellor at the Embassy of India in Kathmandu, alongside Dambar Bahadur B.K., Chairman of Khajura Rural Municipality, jointly laid the foundation stone for the construction of Shree Jana Kalyan Secondary School in Khajura Rural Municipality-4, Banke District, Lumbini Province.

The new school building is being constructed with financial assistance from the Government of India worth approximately NPR 32 million. Implemented through the Khajura Rural Municipality, this initiative marks the 8th High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) undertaken in the Banke District.



During the ceremony, the Chairman of Khajura Rural Municipality and other stakeholders expressed their appreciation for India's ongoing developmental support. They noted that the updated infrastructure will significantly improve the learning environment for both students and educators in the area.

India and Nepal enjoy a close neighborly relationship support-

ed by wide-ranging, multi-sectoral cooperation. The continued implementation of HICDPs highlights the Indian government's commitment to augmenting infrastructure in priority sectors and supporting Nepal's broader development goals.

Communications Minister Dr. Timilsina Holds Courtesy Meeting with Israeli Ambassador

Minister for Information and Communications, Dr. Bikram Timilsina, held a courtesy meeting with Shmulik Arie Bass, Israel's Ambassador to Nepal.

During the meeting, held at the ministry on Friday, the two sides discussed the longstanding friendly bilateral relations between Nepal and Israel, matters of mutual interest, and opportunities to expand cooperation in information technology, digital transformation, telecommunications, agriculture, education, and human resource development.



On the occasion, Ambassador Bass noted that the friendly relationship between Nepal and Israel, established in 1960, has continued to grow stronger over the years.

He reaffirmed Israel's commitment to expanding cooperation with Nepal in areas such as information technology, digital innovation, and agricultural modernization.

Minister Dr. Timilsina stated that Nepal is prioritizing good governance and effective public service delivery through the use of information and communication technology. He emphasized that Nepal could benefit from Israel's experience and best practices in digital infrastructure, telecommunications, and innovation. He also requested greater opportunities for Nepali youth in training, education, and professional experience in the fields of information technology and innovation.

Both sides also exchanged views on further strengthening cooperation in information technology, digital transformation, and collaboration in multilateral forums.

Nagdhunga Tunnel Project Marks Completion, Ushering in a New Era of Transport Connectivity in Nepal

The Nagdhunga Tunnel Project, Nepal's first road tunnel project, celebrated its official inauguration with a commemorative ceremony attended by distinguished representatives from the Government of Nepal, the Government of Japan and JICA.

During the ceremony, the ribbon cutting was jointly carried out by the Honorable Minister Sunil Lamsal, MAEDA Toru, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal and Dr. TANAKA Akihiko, President of JICA, marking a significant milestone in Nepal's infrastructure development journey.

With construction now completed, the tunnel is expected to open to the public soon. The 2.68-kilometer Nagdhunga Tunnel is set to transform travel along one of Nepal's busiest transportation corridors, significantly improving connectivity between Kathmandu Valley and other key regions of the country.

Developed with the support of a Japanese ODA Loan provided through JICA amounting to approximately 22.336 billion Japanese Yen, the project commenced construction in November 2019. As Nepal's first highway tunnel, the project represents a landmark achievement in modern infrastructure development and engineering innovation.

The tunnel is expected to reduce travel time across the Nagdhunga section to less than one-third of the current duration, making transportation faster, safer, and more efficient for both passengers and freight vehicles. In addition to easing traffic congestion, the project is anticipated to make travel safer by avoiding landslide prone areas, reducing fuel consumption, lower vehicle operating costs, and contribute to the reduction of air pollution.

Designed with international safety standards, the tunnel includes a dedicated parallel evacuation tunnel equipped with emergency routes, ventilation systems, jet fans, lighting and communication system, all of which will be monitored from the control room to ensure the safety of road users during emergencies.

Beyond its physical infrastructure, the Nagdhunga Tunnel Project represents a significant achievement in capacity building and technology transfer. For the first time in Nepal, local technical personnel and workers were extensively involved in the construction of a highway tunnel, providing valuable hands-on experience and strengthening national expertise in tunnel engineering and construction. The project therefore serves as an important model for future tunnel development projects in Nepal.

The completion of the Nagdhunga Tunnel Project contributes directly to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9:

Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, reinforcing Japan's continued commitment to supporting Nepal's sustainable economic growth and infrastructure modernization.



Foundation Stone Laid for School Building in Kanchanpur

The foundation stone for the new Shree Maheshwar Secondary School building in Bheemdatt Municipality-10, Kanchanpur, Sudurpaschim Province, was jointly laid today by Mr. Basist Nandan, First Secretary at the Embassy of India in Kathmandu, and Mrs. Nilam Lekhak Joshi, Deputy Mayor of Bheemdatt Municipality.

NEWSNOTES

The new building is being constructed with financial assistance of approximately NPR 19 million from the Government of India. Implemented through the Bheemdatt Municipality, this project marks the 11th High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) undertaken in the Kanchanpur district.



Speaking at the event, the Deputy Mayor and other local stakeholders expressed their appreciation for India's ongoing development support. They shared confidence that the improved infrastructure will significantly enhance the learning environment for both students and teachers.

Preparations Are Underway for High-Level Visits: MOFA Spokesperson Lok Bahadur Poudel Kshetri

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is preparing for possible high-level visits from Nepal to neighboring countries such as India, China, and other nations. During its regular press briefing on Friday, the ministry stated that it is actively engaged in preparations for such visits.

Ministry spokesperson Lok Bahadur Kshetri said that the ministry is carrying out the necessary groundwork for the possible visit of Prime Minister Balendra Shah to India.

Responding to journalists' questions about the rumored India visit, spokesperson Kshetri said, "Although the date and time have not yet been fixed, the ministry is continuously engaged in preparations for high-level visits. Information will be provided once the schedule is finalized."



Regarding the possible visit of Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) Chairman Rabi Lamichhane to China, Kshetri said the ministry would coordinate if an official request is received.

When journalists asked about Prime Minister Shah's Chief Adviser Kumar Ben's reported visit to India and his meeting with senior Indian security officials, Kshetri stated that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had no information on the matter.

The spokesperson also noted that Nepal is closely monitoring the recent developments in West Asia and emphasized that ensuring peace and stability in the region through diplomatic efforts remains a top priority.

He further informed that Vice President Ram Sahaya Prasad Yadav visited Qatar to express condolences on the death of former Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, while Foreign Minister Shishir Khanal signed the condolence book at

the Embassy of Qatar in Kathmandu.

The UNSDCF Joint Steering Committee Reviews Progress and Endorses Roadmap for Next Cooperation Framework (2028–2032)

The Government of Nepal and the United Nations convened the annual meeting of the Joint Steering Committee for the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

The meeting was co-chaired by the Dr. Gunakar Bhatta, Vice Chairperson of the National Planning Commission, and Her Excellency Ms. Lila Pieters Yahia, UN Resident Coordinator for Nepal. The Committee reviewed current progress, established priorities for the final eighteen months of implementation, and endorsed the roadmap for Nepal's next Cooperation Framework (2028–2032). This formally launches a joint preparation process that will conclude with the signing of the new Framework in July 2027.



Prepared under the joint leadership of the Government of Nepal and the United Nations Country Team, the upcoming Framework aligns with Nepal's Sixteenth Plan and its transition from Least Developed Country (LDC) status. Speaking at the meeting, Dr. Gunakar Bhatta expressed appreciation to the UN system for its continued partnership in advancing shared priorities.

These include implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), preparing for graduation from LDC status, financing sustainable development, driving climate action, and strengthening institutions. He highlighted that emerging opportunities—such as the demographic dividend, rapid digital transformation, clean energy potential, and global diaspora networks—can become powerful drivers of Nepal's long-term prosperity.

As formulation for the UNSDCF 2028–2032 begins, Dr. Bhatta emphasized that the next Cooperation Framework must be ambitious, forward-looking, firmly aligned with national priorities, and grounded in evidence to meet Nepal's development needs and aspirations.

The Committee also evaluated key results achieved through the current Framework, including: Climate & Disaster Resilience: Advances made via the Climate Change Financing Framework, NDC 3.0, the Living Sagarmatha Mountain Resilience Strategy, and anticipatory action measures. Agriculture & Inclusion: A national model linking school meals to local agriculture, alongside expanded skills, financing, and enterprise opportunities for women and youth.

Economic Development: Enhanced private-sector engagement and the creation of decent jobs and employment opportunities. Social Equality & Governance: Progress on ending

child marriage, addressing gender-based violence, executing the National CEDAW Roadmap, implementing legal identity reforms, and providing electoral support to build a more inclusive society.

Public Health: Joint UN and Government efforts that have strengthened Nepal's healthcare system—eliminating rubella, sustaining kala-azar control, and immunizing millions of children and adolescent girls to build human capital for inclusive economic prosperity.

With less than five years remaining until 2030 and LDC graduation approaching, discussions focused on accelerating progress by expanding women's economic participation, investing in youth skills and decent jobs, strengthening small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and advancing climate-resilient growth alongside digital transformation.

Senior Australian and Nepali Officials Reinforce Partnership and Advance Future Cooperation

A senior Australian Government delegation, led by Sarah Storey—First Assistant Secretary of the South and Central Asia Division at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)—has concluded a three-day visit to Nepal.

The visit reaffirmed the strong, enduring partnership between the two countries while identifying new opportunities for cooperation in trade, investment, education, climate action, and sustainable development. During the visit, Ms. Storey co-chaired the Third Nepal-Australia Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) alongside Amrit Bahadur Rai, Foreign Secretary of Nepal.

She also co-chaired the inaugural meeting of the Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement (TIFA) Committee with Narayan Prasad Sharma Duwadee, Secretary at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Supplies. This meeting marked an important step forward in expanding economic cooperation between the two nations.

The discussions underscored both governments' shared commitment to deepening bilateral ties and advancing mutual interests in regional and multilateral forums.



Australia also recognized the significant contributions of the Nepali diaspora in Australia, whose skills, entrepreneurship, investment, and hard work continue to enrich people-to-people bonds and strengthen bilateral relations. In addition to these official talks, Storey met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs Shisir Khanal, and the Minister for Finance. Dr. Swarnim Wagle.

Highlighting the importance of education in the relationship, Ms. Storey connected with inspiring Nepali alumni from Australian universities during an evening reception.

She also engaged with students, academics, youth leaders, and foreign policy practitioners at Tribhuvan University, where she led a discussion on the future of Australia-Nepal relations.

Addressing the audience at Tribhuvan University, Ms. Storey emphasized the core values driving the partnership: “Our shared commitment to democratic principles and the rules-based order is a key pillar of our relationship and provides a strong foundation for working together to advance our shared interests,” Ms. Storey said. She also visited the Living Mountain Lab at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

Reflecting on Australia's partnership with ICIMOD and its commitment to tackling climate change, she highlighted Australia's support for regional cooperation and its dedication to sharing expertise in natural resource management, climate adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.

Overall, the visit reinforced the growing momentum in Australia-Nepal relations and highlighted key opportunities for deeper collaboration in the years ahead.

United States Hands Over Nepal a refrigerated freezer van and Other Medical Equipment

Scott Urbom, Charge d'Affaires a.i., joined officials from the Government of Nepal at the Department of Health Services in Teku to mark the handover of a refrigerated freezer van and a comprehensive package of maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) equipment valued at one million dollars amid a function today.

According to social media post of US Embassy in Nepal, the freezer van will strengthen Nepal's national immunization program by safely transporting vaccines at -20°C from Nepal's Central Vaccine Store to all seven provinces, helping ensure vaccines reach communities across the country.



The MNCH equipment will be distributed to provincial, district, and tertiary hospitals across the country, equipping front-line health workers with the critical tools they need to provide quality care and save the lives of mothers and newborns.

This contribution reflects the U.S. enduring partnership with Nepal and our shared commitment to building resilient, locally led health systems that improve health outcomes for the Nepalis - consistent with the America First Global Health Strategy.

BUSINESS BRIEF

Deepmala Dhakal Crowned Miss Nepal 2026



Deepmala Dhakal has won the title of Miss Nepal 2026. She was crowned at the grand finale held on Saturday at The Plaza, Pulchowk, Lalitpur.

Arya Nishant was declared Miss Nepal International 2026, while Kashish Subba was named Miss Ne-

pal Cosmo 2026.

The Miss Nepal pageant was organized by The Hidden Treasure.

Global IME Bank Introduces Bank Account Opening Through Nagarik App

Global IME Bank Limited has launched a new service in collaboration with the Nagarik App, allowing eligible users to open a bank account directly through the app.

Nepali citizens registered on the Nagarik App can now open a personal savings account using their National Identity Card. Users can scan the QR code available on the bank's website through the app to begin the account opening process.



The required QR code can also be accessed via the following link: <https://nagarik.gibl.com.np>.

This is the first service of its kind in Nepal and is expected to make the account open-

ing process more convenient and accessible for the public.

Under this service, Nepali citizens aged 18 years and above who have obtained a National Identity Card and are registered with the Nagarik App can open a Global IME Bank account entirely online.

With the customer's prior consent, the bank will securely retrieve the personal information required for account opening directly from the Nagarik App. This eliminates the need for customers to re-enter their personal details while also ensuring the privacy and security of their information.

To activate and operate the account, customers must complete verification either by visiting their nearest Global IME Bank branch or through Video Know Your

Customer (Video KYC).

With the introduction of this service, Global IME Bank has further expanded its secure, simple, and reliable digital banking services by leveraging Nepal's government digital infrastructure.

The bank believes that its collaboration with the Nagarik App will make the account opening process easier, more transparent, technology-friendly, and provide customers with a modern banking experience.

Recognized for its adoption of modern technology and commitment to excellent customer service, Global IME Bank has received several prestigious national and international awards, including Bank of the Year 2014, Best Internet Bank 2016, and Best Bank Nepal for three consecutive years—2024, 2025, and 2026. The bank has also won the Euromoney Awards for Excellence in 2022, 2024, and 2025, as well as honors such as Best Bank ESG Nepal 2024 and Best Employer.

NACEUN 22 Anniversary: Redefining Community Power

Established in 2005, the National Association of Community Electricity Users-Nepal (NACEUN) has demonstrated how community involvement in power distribution can help reduce leakage and improve supply quality.

As NACEUN organized an event to mark its 22nd anniversary, founding president Dilli Ghimire, former energy minister Deepak Gyawali—a key figure behind implementing consumer-based electricity distribution—and current president Narayan Gyawali stood together on the dais in a show of solidarity. Having led the organization for over 15 years, President Gyawali has significantly strengthened its foundation and expanded its organizational capacity.

In his address, Deepak Gyawali recalled early efforts to promote community electricity, noting that establishing an appropriate legal framework remains the primary challenge today. He also pointed out that consumers investing in rooftop solar energy are not receiving expected returns under the current net billing system, emphasizing the urgent need to transition to an effective net metering mechanism.

Founding president Dilli Ghimire reflected on how the community electrification movement played a vital role in expanding energy access through public participation during a time when state resources and investment were severely limited. He noted that consumers initially contributed up to 50 percent of grid expansion costs—a share that was later reduced to 20 percent and eventually 10 percent. However, he argued that the state has

failed to adequately recognize or value these vital contributions made by local communities. He also recalled the early struggles of expanding the organization, particularly in forming user groups and securing support from the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA).

As Nepal transitions from a unitary to a federal system, NACEUN faces a new structural challenge: redefining its space across three tiers of government, especially given that distribution rights now lie largely with provincial authorities. In his presentation, energy expert Sher Singh Bhat emphasized that NACEUN must now collaborate closely with provincial governments to adapt to this shifting regulatory landscape.

Since its establishment in 2005 under the NGO Registration Act, the National Association of Community Electricity Users–Nepal (NACEUN)—a national federation of Community Electricity User Groups—has grown into a strong network comprising over 300 Community Rural Electric Entities (CREEs) across 53 districts in Nepal. Its members share a common vision to drive sustainable socio-economic growth in communities reached by rural electrification initiatives.



Over the next three years, we aim to double the number of Nepali households with access to electricity through community user groups from 0.5 million to one million. We will

achieve this by advocating for enabling policy changes, leveraging new technologies and additional resources, and continuously improving our organizational operations and management.

With electricity access in Nepal nearing universal coverage, stakeholders emphasize that the community electrification campaign must now shift its focus from expanding coverage to promoting sustainable energy use, institutional reform, and effective tariff management.

The Role of Community Organizations in the Electricity Sector Needs to Be Redefined

With electricity access in Nepal having reached nearly universal coverage, stakeholders have emphasized that the community electrification campaign should now shift its focus from expanding access to promoting sustainable use, institutional reform, and effective tariff management.

Speaking at the 22nd Foundation Day of the Nation-

al Federation of Community Electricity Consumers Nepal, participants stated that the role of community organizations should be redefined to reflect changing circumstances and current needs.

Addressing the event, Ravilal Pant, Secretary of the National Planning Commission, highlighted the importance of community electrification and outlined the government's policies, the priorities of the 16th National Plan, and various aspects of future energy development. He also praised the federation's contribution to the country's energy sector.

He said that Nepal aims to generate around 12,000 megawatts of electricity by the end of the 16th National Plan and achieve 100 percent electricity access across both the country's geography and population. He also noted that the government plans to reduce electricity system losses from 13 percent to 10 percent, stressing that community organizations have an indispensable role in achieving this goal.

Energy expert and former minister Deepak Gyawali recalled his early efforts to promote the concept of community electricity. He stated that the main challenge now is developing an appropriate legal framework. He also pointed out that consumers who have invested in solar energy are not receiving the expected benefits under the current net billing system and emphasized the need for the effective implementation of a net metering system.

The federation's founding president, Dilli Ghimire, recalled that the community electrification movement played a vital role in expanding electricity access through public participation at a time when the state faced limited resources and insufficient investment.

He noted that in the initial phase, consumers contributed up to 50 percent of the cost of electricity expansion. Although this share was later reduced to 20 percent and then 10 percent, he argued that the state has not adequately recognized or valued the investment and contribution made by local communities.

Federation President Narayan Gyawali said that the community electrification movement is directly linked to Nepal's energy development and rural prosperity. He reaffirmed the federation's commitment to remaining actively engaged in advancing the campaign in a positive direction.

Energy Minister Shrestha Calls Private Sector To Expand Nepal's Green, Clean And Reliable Energy

Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Biraj Bhakta Shrestha has said that private sector participation in electricity trading is becoming

BUSINESS BRIEF

increasingly necessary to expand Nepal's clean, green, and reliable energy competitively in regional markets. He clarified that the government is positively studying whether the existing legal framework is sufficient or whether new legislation is required to facilitate such participation.



Speaking during a meeting with officials of the Independent Power Producers' Association, Nepal (IPPAN) at the ministry on Friday, Minister Shrestha noted that while

the private sector has made a significant contribution to electricity generation, it has not yet been given adequate opportunities in electricity trading. Considering the changing energy market and the growing potential for regional electricity trade, he said it is time to make appropriate policy decisions regarding private sector involvement.

The minister said he is positive about granting the private sector the necessary approvals to explore international markets through a business-to-business (B2B) model in coordination with the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA).

He added that, as Nepal is implementing its domestic energy consumption and electricity export strategies, electricity trading could become a new avenue for investment and business opportunities for the private sector.

Minister Shrestha emphasized that while allowing private sector participation in electricity trading, the role, authority, and responsibilities of the Nepal Electricity Authority must remain protected, and the state's financial returns should not be compromised. He also stressed the need for detailed studies on issues such as open access to the transmission network, shared use of transmission infrastructure, allocation of responsibilities, and digital management of electricity trading.

Expressing confidence that the expansion of the energy sector would make a significant contribution to Nepal's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the minister said the sector could play a decisive role in achieving the national goal of expanding the economy to NPR 100 trillion. He added that the government has prioritized the expansion of transmission lines during the current fiscal year and will focus on strengthening the electricity distribution system next year. Accordingly, he urged the private sector to prepare for greater participation in electricity trading.

During the discussion, former Energy Ministry Secretary Dinesh Ghimire said that private sector participa-

tion is essential for creating a competitive electricity market. He argued that involving private companies in electricity trading would help effectively market surplus electricity generated during the monsoon season, ease pressure related to Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), and ensure fair electricity pricing.

Nepal Earns NPR 29.32 Billion from Electricity Exports

When Kulman Ghising was appointed Managing Director of the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) ten years ago, Nepal's total generation capacity was around 700 MW against a peak demand of 1,800 MW, resulting in daily power cuts lasting up to 14 hours. At the time, few believed Nepal could ever export electricity to the Indian market, let alone turn a profit.

By opening Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) to encourage private sector investment in hydropower, expanding transmission and distribution networks, reducing technical losses to an all-time low of around 14%, strengthening institutional relations with Indian power entities, and implementing a robust energy security plan, Ghising—who also served as Minister of Energy for four months last year—has demonstrated how visionary leadership can transform a country's energy landscape.



"Ten years ago, Nepal was enduring the severe hardship of daily power cuts lasting up to eight hours during the monsoon season and as long as fourteen hours in winter. Today, that same Nepal is exporting electricity worth nearly NPR 29 billion. This is not merely a change in statistics—it is a landmark transformation in the nation's energy history," writes Ghising in his Facebook status.

In just ten years, exporting electricity to India and earning foreign currency has become a reality, disproving the narrative pushed by self-proclaimed nationalists who claimed India would never purchase Nepali power.

As the NEA set a new record in cross-border electricity trade during the fiscal year 2082/83 (2025/26), Ghising, widely recognized for bringing light back to the nation and reshaping its energy sector, is now touring the country as the leader of the Ujyalo Nepal Party.

Breakthrough Surge in Export Revenue

According to statistics on cross-border electricity im-

ports and exports released by the NEA, Nepal achieved a major milestone during FY 2082/83. Nepal earned NPR 29.32 billion (NPR 29.3247 billion) from electricity exports to India and Bangladesh, representing a 67.96% increase compared to the previous fiscal year.

In FY 2081/82, Nepal exported 2.3829 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity, generating NPR 17.46 billion in revenue. In FY 2082/83, export volume surged by 62.89% to 3.8775 billion kWh. This historic revenue was realized at an average rate of NPR 7.56 per unit through India's competitive electricity markets—including the Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) Day-Ahead Market (DAM), Real-Time Market (RTM), and NVVN—as well as the historic trilateral trade agreement with Bangladesh.

Dr. RAM PRASAD DHITAL'S APPOINTMENT

By appointing Dr. Ram Prasad Dhital—who possesses extensive experience in Nepal's energy sector—as Chair of the Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC), the government has put the right person in the right position.



During his previous tenure as Chairman, Dr. Dhital led key initiatives to properly regulate Nepal's electricity market, balancing benefits for producers, consumers, and distributors alike. His reappointment

ensures continuity for these vital reform measures.

The newly appointed Chair of the Electricity Regulatory Commission, Dr. Dhital, along with the newly appointed members, officially took the oath of office and secrecy on Thursday. Minister for Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation Biraj Bhakta Shrestha administered the oath.

Following the ceremony, the Chair and members formally assumed office at the Commission that same day. The appointments follow a Cabinet decision made on Wednesday, naming Dr. Ram Prasad Dhital as Chair, and Jayaraj Bhandari, Balram Silwal, and Lokraj Pathak as members.

Dr. Dhital previously served as Chairman of the Commission before being relieved of his position a few months ago when leadership was restructured via government ordinance. His reinstatement by the latest Cabinet decision restores experienced, steady leadership to the regulatory body.

Among the newly appointed members

Jayaraj Bhandari and Balram Silwal are retired directors of the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA). Lokraj Pathak brings recognized expertise in energy, water resources, and regulatory affairs.

With these appointments, the government brings the Commission closer to a full organizational structure, pending the final female member appointment.

The Electricity Regulatory Commission operates as an autonomous body responsible for overseeing the electricity sector, setting tariffs, protecting consumer interests, and regulating the market.

Dr. Dhital was originally appointed as ERC Chair through an open competitive process on June 20, 2024 (Ashar 7, 2081 B.S.). Previously, he was also the first person selected as a Commission member through open competition following its establishment.

Discover Korea 2026 Held in Kathmandu

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Nepal, in collaboration with Bhat-Bhateni Supermarket, is hosting "Discover Korea 2026," a two-week event featuring Korean products that kicked off on Wednesday, July 22.

The promotional retail event is officially underway across Bhat-Bhateni Supermarket outlets, showcasing a vast selection of premium South Korean consumer goods. The campaign highlights the growing popularity of Korean lifestyle and culture—frequently celebrated through diplomatic and cultural initiatives such as Kathmandu's K-Vibe Festival.

The flagship event at the Bhat-Bhateni Supermarket in Maharajgunj features a dedicated Korea Section, a photo zone, a Hanbok try-on experience, food and ramen tastings, and a lucky draw for customers spending over Rs. 1,000 across five participating branches.

On July 25, 2026, Korean Ambassador Park Tae-young attended the promotional event and food-tasting activities at the Maharajgunj branch. The day's highlights included public food samplings, a live chef demonstration starting at 11:00 AM, and showcases of prominent Korean brands, including Nongshim.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Park expressed his gratitude for the special collaboration with Bhat-Bhateni Supermarket and highlighted the opportunity to bring authentic Korean products closer to the people of Nepal.



Not Colonized Or Mentally Colonized? Challenge In Reimagining The Social Sciences



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

The opening lines of [Tanka Subba's Mahesh Chandra Regmi Lecture](#) were provocative enough: *"Nepal was not truly independent, not even politically, at least since the Treaty of Betrawati (1792), which made Nepal a tributary state of China. Its sovereignty was further compromised by the British under the 1816 and 1923 treaties. Nor was her sovereignty fully restored in practice after the much-hyped treaty with Britain and the 'unequal' 1950 treaty with India."*

Subba does not delve into the diplomatic acrobatics that small countries hemmed in by big neighbours need to indulge in to preserve their self-rule as Nepal has done for over a millennia, a skill that Henry Kissinger praises in his book [World Order](#). Instead, he uses that observation to pivot to his main theme – a de-facto Euro-American hegemony in framing the social sciences and their research ranging across sociology, anthropology, education, media as well as democracy and governance.

He argues that decolonizing social sciences in Nepal means reclaiming intellectual sovereignty by minimizing dependence on Western funding for research, prioritizing our own local tradition, histories and community practices, and revising social science curriculum in universities based on local research even while openly engaging with Western framing. All true; but what this leaves out is the history of the import of social sciences in Nepal: it was brought in via Patna University and Nepalis who studied in British Raj India.

That genetic imprint means examining where things stand in those ancestral lands where many Nepalis still acquire their higher education. And the best place to start is even further afield away from the Indian periphery to the very Western center. That global picture of the evolution of modern social sciences has been best done by the report [Open the Social Sciences](#) of the Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences.

"In the present state of their evolution, should overcoming the existing disciplinary structure not be considered a central dilemma for the social sciences?" With this foreword, the report explores how social science was historically constructed, how disciplinary compartmentalization occurred from the eighteenth century till the end of the

Second World War, how developments since then have questioned the conventional division of labour in the humanities, and finally how the social sciences might be intelligently re-structured in light of recent debates.

Since the sixteenth century, social science consciously defined itself as the search for truths that went beyond received (religious) or deduced (philosophical) wisdom. As an enterprise of modernization heavily influenced by the progress in natural sciences, especially Newtonian physics and the matter-mind distinction of Cartesian dualism, it set itself the task of developing systematic secular knowledge about societal reality that was empirically validated. This intellectual search drew sustenance from the voyages of discovery and colonization by European merchantmen to distant climes.

The physical sciences studying nature had clearly defined for themselves a socio-intellectual legitimacy that was different from another knowledge form called philosophy. It received independent support from expanding business and industry because of their promise of practical results. The social sciences on the other hand needed first to define their domain as the human world and second to find a suitable home that the modern state could draw on to base their decisions. To organize and rationalize social change, it first of all had to be studied, and to do so, the English and the French turned to Newtonian physics as the model to emulate. The Prussians who had undergone much social disruption needed to reknit national historical accounts in terms of "what really happened". That divide persists even today as continental and analytic traditions with exponents spread out like a fan covering a range of epistemological positions.

That suitable home became the university, which had been moribund institutions till the sixteenth century because of their close association with the church. They were revived in the late eighteenth century as the principal institutional locus for the production of this new societal knowledge and the reproduction of its producers. The transformation of the university began by relegating theology to a sub-unit within the faculty of philosophy, jettisoning medicine to the professional domain, and subdividing the faculties of law and philosophy into multiple autonomous disciplinary structures.

Between 1850-1914, the disciplinary structures of the social sciences as we know them today were formalized in the universities of five principal locales – England, France, the Germanies, the Italies and the United States. The first autonomous disciplinary existence in the social sciences was achieved by history, with forays into areas such as “administrative sciences” to manage nation states. Political economy made its appearance in the eighteenth century in England and France. It was replaced in the nineteenth century by economics to assert the naturalness of *laissez-faire* principles.

Because economics was very present-oriented, the Germanic schools tried a mixture of economic history, jurisprudence and sociology that was called “sciences of the state”. By the early decades of the twentieth century, the term was displaced by “social sciences”. Sociology had developed earlier in the second half of the nineteenth century through the work of social reform associations (of which the Marxists are the most well-known). However, these reformers surrendered their active reformist roles by moving their work into a university setting in the twentieth century. In their domestication, and to consummate their break with social reform associations, sociologists began to cultivate a positivist (or descriptive) thrust as opposed to interpretive approaches.

The quartet of history, economics, sociology and political science became established in the big five locales, but the European encounters with different kinds of people led to the growth of anthropology outside of the university walls. With colonization and the need to administer these strange lands, Oriental Studies came into being. Because of the conceptual baggage of progress inherited from the renaissance, the undertone remained temporal and linear with the consequent neglect of the spatial dimension of the newly globalizing world. This attitude had a severe impact on an established discipline like geography which remained a poor cousin of social sciences and an adjunct to history.

In this fluid situation, three developments since the middle of the twentieth century have had a profound impact on the structure of the social sciences. The first was the emergence of the US as the overwhelming economic power in constant tussle with its political opponent, the USSR. This bipolarity led to a re-structuring of geopolitical realities wherein non-European peoples were able to find a niche of increased independence, which led to the second phenomenon of

increased productivity and population worldwide. This in turn led to an extraordinary expansion of the university system everywhere, with inbuilt pressure for scholars far and wide to find new niches to define their originality.

To cope with these challenges and meet the needs for universalism, a notable academic innovation was introduced: area studies that managed to desegregate Eurocentric social science boundaries as defined in the big five locales a century earlier. Social sciences such as economics, which had modeled themselves after the natural sciences, found it difficult to hold onto the claims of universalism. They were premised (like physics) on an expectation of quantifiable accuracy in their predictions that they almost never met, which led to the re-emergence of political economy. All theoretical premises of disciplines studying society were subjected to the inspection of hidden and unjustified assumptions, whether relating race, gender,

class or even the Westphalian state as providing the only boundary within which social action can occur.

The report sees hope for creative experimentation in redefining the social sciences in the US with its multiple, diverse and decentralized university systems,

in Africa where traditional disciplines are not strongly institutionalized, in post-communist countries where erstwhile structures have been discarded, in Latin America with para-university institutions not beholden to conventional categories of knowledge, and even in a uniting Europe with the active encouragement of pan-European research projects.

Sadly, in this very broad global intellectual reconnaissance, South Asia was not even a faint blip on the screens of this distinguished body. Perhaps that alone speaks volumes about the entrenched colonial mindsets in these lands of ancient civilizations and populations a fifth of the globe. Its Kundalini sleeps in a state of deep *tamas*, not fired up to explore the day and age with healthy scientific skepticism of received wisdom. Tackling this is where scholars like Subba and those in the Social Science Baha might like to bravely venture further.



MAOIST AND UML UNITY

Backfire or Strategy?

Why are Oli and Prachanda seeking provincial cooperation: Leftist unity or electoral maneuvering?

By A CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the CPN-UML and the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) maintain that their recent agreement to form joint provincial governments is, for now, strictly confined to provincial politics.

While some observers view the move as groundwork for a broader leftist alliance, eventual party reunification, or strategy for next year's local and provincial elections, leaders from both parties insist the cooperation is aimed solely at ensuring provincial stability.

Meanwhile, the Nepali Congress (NC)—which now faces ejection from several provincial cabinets—states that it prefers remaining in opposition to preserve a credible balance of power.

Less than a year after the Gen Z movement triggered the collapse of the federal coalition between the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML, the provincial partnership between



the two parties has also unravelled across all seven provinces.

On Saturday, CPN-UML Chairman K.P. Sharma Oli and CPN coordinator Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" signed a three-point agreement committing both major leftist parties to joint provincial governance.

Under the terms of the agreement:
CPN-UML will lead governments in

Koshi, Bagmati, and Lumbini provinces.

CPN will lead governments in Karnali and Sudurpashchim provinces.

Madhesh and Gandaki provinces will see leadership structures and coalition details finalized following consultations with regional political partners.

The immediate fallout of this deal is

that Nepali Congress Chief Ministers in Bagmati and Sudurpashchim are likely to be replaced shortly. However, in Madhesh and Gandaki—where the NC also holds executive power—there remains a slim numerical possibility that the party could retain control with backing from smaller parties.

Resolving Provincial Deadlocks

"This agreement is an attempt to resolve the growing tensions, instability, and misunderstandings among the ruling parties in the provincial governments," CPN leader Barshaman Pun told the BBC, explaining the core rationale behind the move.

"In Sudurpashchim, the province was facing a complete budget deadlock. We initially proposed a three-party government, but after the Congress refused, we decided to break the impasse ourselves."

"We were left with two options: hold midterm elections or cooperate. Given that regular elections are scheduled for next year, and public scrutiny over federalism is high, going to the polls right now would be counterproductive," Pun added.

CPN-UML Secretary Padma Aryal described the agreement as a natural resolution to an escalating crisis.

"Once disputes flared up, a solution became imperative. After the Congress Chief Minister in Sudurpashchim unilaterally dismissed UML ministers during the budget dispute, it was clear that either all parties needed to align, or stability had to be restored through cooperation with the CPN," she said.

Though leaders from both leftist parties claim they invited the Nepali Congress to join the broader arrangement, NC leadership maintains that such a setup was unfeasible on principle.

"We have reviewed the two-par-

ty agreement regarding provincial governance. While we remain open to dialogue, our principled stance is that a healthy democratic system requires a robust opposition," said Nepali Congress Vice President Pushpa Bhusal.

A Tactical Alliance or Long-Term Partnership?

Some political analysts argue that parties sidelined at the federal level following the last election are already maneuvering for next year's local and provincial polls.

The formal agreement between the two leftist figures has naturally fueled speculation regarding a larger electoral front or eventual reunification. However, representatives from both sides dismiss claims that this is



an immediate push toward unified leftist politics.

"If cooperation eventually leads us in that direction, there is nothing wrong with it—it is natural for like-minded parties to draw closer. But this agreement is tailored strictly to address the immediate crisis," Pun clarified. "There is still ample time before the elections, and no decision has been made on whether we will contest together or separately."

UML Secretary Padma Aryal echoed those sentiments, stressing that the agreement is not a permanent fixture.

"The top leaders may have discussed broader themes, but this agreement is not meant to last indefinitely. It is simply a functional alliance; there is no consensus on merging the par-

ties," she said, adding that electoral pacts would only be discussed closer to election season.

An Analyst's Perspective on "Left Unity"

While party leaders assert that conditions for full leftist reunification are not yet mature, political analyst Rajendra Maharjan questioned the fundamental premise of the "left unity" debate altogether.

"The primary question is just how 'leftist' these parties actually are," Maharjan noted. "I see nothing uniquely leftist in the three-point agreement. In what tangible way

will these new provincial governments differ from their predecessors? Where is the progressive agenda?"

"This is merely another power-sharing exercise devoid of ideology, policy, or vision. Aside from distrib-

uting chief ministerships and cabinet seats among loyalists, I do not expect anything genuinely original to emerge from this deal."

Maharjan argued that rhetoric surrounding "leftist unity" holds little substance in the current political climate.

"Driven by existential pressure, they may team up for the elections out of convenience. But do not mistake it for ideology—no political philosophy will stop them from doing whatever it takes to survive politically."

Youth Optimism Between Western And Eastern Democratic Values



BY: DR.PRABIN MANANDHAR

Young people today are redefining the future of democracy. Connected through technology and social media, Gen Z is the first truly global generation, sharing ideas and aspirations across borders in real time. As they confront challenges such as climate change, inequality, unemployment, corruption, and political polarization, an important question emerges: should they draw inspiration from Western democratic values or Eastern democratic traditions?

The answer lies not in choosing one over the other, but in learning from both.

Western democratic values are often associated with individual liberty, freedom of expression, human rights, political pluralism, and the rule of law. These principles have empowered citizens to challenge injustice, hold leaders accountable, and participate actively in public life. Countries such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom have built institutions that protect civil liberties and encourage civic participation. These systems have fostered innovation, independent thinking, and social mobility.

For many young people, these values remain highly attractive. The freedom to express opinions, organize around causes, and influence public policy provides a strong foundation for civic engagement. Yet Western democracies also face challenges. Political polarization, misinformation, declining trust in institutions, and short-term policymaking have exposed weaknesses in democratic governance.

Freedom is essential, but freedom alone does not always guarantee social cohesion or effective collective action.

Eastern traditions offer a valuable complement to these strengths. Many Eastern societies emphasize community, social harmony, collective responsibility, respect for institutions, and long-term thinking. These values encourage citizens to view themselves not only as individuals with rights but also as members of a broader social community. Countries such as Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and India demonstrate how social responsibility can contribute to stability and development.

Such perspectives are increasingly relevant in a world that requires collective action. Climate resilience, sustainable development, public health, and social stability depend on

cooperation and shared responsibility. However, Eastern approaches also have limitations. An excessive emphasis on harmony can sometimes discourage critical perspectives and open debate, while a reluctance to challenge authority may reduce opportunities for reform and innovation. Democracy flourishes when stability is balanced with freedom and consensus coexists with constructive dissent.

Interestingly, youth movements across the world demonstrate that Gen Z is already moving beyond the traditional East-West divide. In Nepal, young people have become increasingly vocal on issues of governance, accountability, and social inclusion. In Bangladesh and India, youth continue to demand greater transparency, democratic participation, and social justice. Similar trends can be seen across Asia, Europe, North America, Africa, and Latin America, where youth-led movements have mobilized around climate action, human rights, equality, and accountable governance.

What unites these movements is not geography but aspiration. Gen Z values freedom of expression and human rights while also recognizing the importance of community, inclusion, sustainability, and collective well-being. Rather than viewing democracy as a choice between East and West, young people have an opportunity to build a culture that draws on the strengths of both.

By combining freedom with responsibility, rights with community, and innovation with long-term thinking, Gen Z can help shape a democracy that is more inclusive, resilient, and better suited to the challenges of the twenty-first century. The future of democracy may not belong to either East or West alone, but to a generation confident enough to learn from both and create something better.

Dr. Prabin Manandhar is an international development expert with experience across Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. He is the Country Director of Helvetas Myanmar, former Chair of the Association of International NGOs Nepal, former Convenor of ACT Alliance in Nepal and Iraq, and an International Editorial Board Member for the Journal of South Asian Cultural Studies, UK. He also teaches at Kathmandu University. The opinions expressed are his own.

Contact:prabin.manandhar11@gmail.com

RELIGIOUS RIOTS

Government Failure

Provincial and Local Governments Also Seen as Having Fallen Short Alongside the Federal Government During Communal Tensions

By A CORRESPONDENT

After communal tensions that erupted in Sunsari District of Koshi Province spread to districts in Madhesh Province, Nepali Congress President Gagan Thapa called Madhesh Chief Minister Krishna Prasad Yadav and urged him to take the initiative.

Thapa's message to Yadav, who is the chief minister from his own party, was clear: do not simply wait for the federal government to act.

"This is not just an issue for the federal government. The provincial government also has its own responsibilities," Thapa said in a video message released on Thursday. Referring to his conversation with Chief Minister Yadav, he added, "He informed me that some work is already underway. But that is not enough. I told him that he needs to take further initiatives."

Situation After the Home Minister's Visit to Sunsari

According to Thapa, he also spoke with ward chairpersons and other elected representatives from Sunsari and several local governments in Madhesh Province.

"I told them that people have great expectations from you at this time. This is not only the government's responsibility; we also have greater responsibilities, as do the political parties," he said.

The Nepali Congress stated that on Fri-



day, Thapa also held a Zoom meeting attended by central party leaders along with representatives of the Koshi and Madhesh provincial governments, local governments, and party leaders from districts and municipalities.

"We are the main political force; we are the guardians," Thapa said during the meeting. "Whoever started the fire, it is our responsibility to extinguish it and restore order."

At a time when Prime Minister Balendra Shah ("Balen") and the federal government's role have been widely criticized, Thapa appears to be encouraging political parties—with their ex-

tensive grassroots networks—to take a more active leadership role.

Although the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) holds nearly a two-thirds majority in the lower house of the federal parliament, almost all members of the National Assembly (the upper house), the governments of all seven provinces, around 550 provincial lawmakers, and representatives of the country's 753 local governments belong to parties other than the RSP.

For this reason, some observers believe the current political situation offers provincial and local governments an opportunity to demonstrate leader-



ship where the federal government is perceived to have fallen short.

Actions Taken by the Madhesh Government

Chief Minister Krishna Prasad Yadav said his government has coordinated with security agencies to maintain law and order while ensuring only minimal use of force. He also said party workers had been mobilized across districts and that the provincial government had made various necessary decisions.

"Perhaps people's expectations are tied to constitutional powers," he said. "We do not have those constitutional powers, but since we are the government closest to the people, we are doing what we can."

BBC News Nepali's attempts to contact Koshi Province Chief Minister Hikmat Karki, where the unrest first began, were unsuccessful.

Lack of Coordination Among the Three Levels of Government

Khimlal Devkota, a decentralization expert and former National Assembly member, said that both provincial and local governments had taken various initiatives on their own.

"There may be differences in the degree of involvement, but they have taken the initiative," he said. "The biggest issue was the lack of coordination and trust among the three levels of government. The prime minister himself failed to coordinate in time."

He also noted that public distrust toward the traditional political parties—

which have led provincial and local governments since before the elections—has still not diminished.

Devkota further argued that once a person was killed by police gunfire, the issue became directly associated with the federal government, prompting dissatisfied groups to focus their demands on the center.

Former Additional Inspector General of Nepal Police Bhim Dhakal said that dissatisfied groups tend to look to the federal government for leadership.

"People may feel a sense of ownership toward provincial governments when it comes to local development projects," he said. "But the general public still has expectations centered on the federal government. There is a widespread belief that negotiations and solutions must ultimately come from the center."

The very first item in the constitution-

al schedule listing the powers of the provinces is "Provincial police administration and public security."

Former Additional Inspector General (AIG) Dhakal says that provincial and local governments have been holding all-party meetings in their respective areas and coordinating with local security agencies.

However, he argues that because the police and the administrative apparatus remain under the authority of the federal government, the province's role in security-related matters is currently limited to coordination and is largely symbolic.

"This is not the time to argue over authority; it is the time to solve the problem. If I were the Chief Minister, the province itself would have brought the situation under control—the federal government would not even have been needed," claims Saroj Kumar Yadav, former Chief Minister of Madhesh Province and a leader of the Janata Samajbadi Party Nepal. "I have handled disturbances even bigger than this."

He recalled that during his tenure as Chief Minister, clashes had also broken out in Sarlahi, Rautahat, and Parsa districts, and curfews had been imposed.

"The police were saying that vehicles might be set on fire. I told them, 'Even if two vehicles are burned, don't worry—I will buy four new ones. But do not open fire. Keep the situation under surveillance and bring it under control,'" he says. "Even without full au-



thority, work can still be done. Neither the police nor the federal government wants lawlessness in the province. Let me tell you—if your intentions are sincere, your actions are right, and you have the capability, there is no place where it is easier to work than Madhesh Province."

Former lawmaker Devkota believes that the political instability seen at the provincial level during such a sensitive period has also undermined the province's effectiveness.

Following the agreement between the CPN-UML and the CPN to cooperate in government, the Nepali Congress has been pushed out of the ruling coalition in most provinces. Although the Chief Minister of Koshi Province is from the UML, there had been speculation that the party would replace him.

"Whichever level of government it may be, it needs public legitimacy. It cannot function effectively amid instability," he says. "After the coalition broke apart, Madhesh Province has not escaped the uncertainty caused by political instability."

'The Prime Minister Failed'—But Where?

As tensions escalated and criticism mounted, Prime Minister Balendra Shah ("Balen") addressed the nation on Thursday and also intensified consultations and discussions.

According to his secretariat, during meetings with leaders of Tarai-based political parties, he also discussed the



constitutional powers of the provinces.

The secretariat stated that Shah emphasized that "only the full and effective implementation of the Constitution can truly empower all provinces." It added that the current government is fully committed to ensuring that the federal government transfers constitutional powers to the provinces and enables them to further delegate authority effectively to local governments.

However, former National Assembly member Khimlal Devkota believes it is the federal government that has fallen short.

"There is the Inter-Province Council chaired by the Prime Minister, which includes all the Chief Ministers. There is also a committee comprising the federal and provincial Home Ministers," he says. "There is even a National Coordination Council that includes local governments. It is the responsibility of the federal government to activate these institutions. In a situation like this, they could have been used as needed, but the federal government did not appear to make use of them."

Government Committed to Bringing the Guilty to Justice: Prime Minister Shah

Prime Minister

Walendra Shah has said that the government is fully serious and sensitive regarding the incidents that occurred in Dewanganj, Sunsari, and Siraha, among other places. Addressing the nation on Thursday evening, Prime Minister Shah stated that a fair and impartial investigation would be carried out and that those responsible would face legal action.

He said, "The Ministry of Home Affairs has already formed an investigation committee to conduct an impartial inquiry into the incidents and ensure strict legal action against those found guilty. I want to assure everyone that this investigation will be completely fair and transparent. Whoever is found responsible, regardless of who they are, will be brought within the ambit of the law. The government is committed to ensuring justice."

Prime Minister Shah also said that the Government of Nepal is continuously working to prevent the situation from deteriorating further, protect the lives and property of citizens, and restore an atmosphere of trust at the local level.

He further urged everyone not to spread or promote false or unverified information, rumors, hate-filled content, or statements that could increase hostility between communities through social media or any other medium during this sensitive time.



Discipline, Despair And The Fire In Tripureshwor



BY: ARUP RAJOURIA

A young man's fire in Tripureshwor forces Nepal to confront decades of undisciplined governance, policing failure, and the moral burden now resting on a political class that includes, but is not limited to, Prime Minister Balen Shah.

Nepal's crisis of indiscipline did not arrive overnight; it is the slow buildup of regimes that wielded authority without accountability, even as the country earned international respect for thoughtful conservation through national parks, conservation areas and buffer zones. For years, Nepal showed how protected areas and community forestry could be managed with rules, participation and long-term vision. Yet today, systemic failure is visible everywhere—from ministries working in silos and fragmented risk governance leaving citizens exposed, to a shocking act of self-harm in the heart of the capital. It erupts at the exact moment a new Prime Minister is trying, at least in part, to restore institutional discipline and dignity.

On a July afternoon in Kathmandu, that failure took a devastatingly personal form. In Tripureshwor, a young driver from Mugu set himself on fire and later died during treatment. Investigations indicate that he had been fined and wheel-locked for a minor parking violation while struggling to support his family. His death in Tripureshwor cannot be dismissed as a minor parking case gone wrong but it signals a deeper failure in how our country and cities are governed and how ordinary people are treated. The details are painful and contested, and they deserve sober, compassionate handling rather than sensationalism. But one conclusion is hard to escape: when a citizen reaches a point where setting himself on fire in a crowded public space seems like the only way to express frustration and despair, something has extremely gone wrong in how the state listens, protects and responds.

This did not happen in a vacuum. The Rana and Panchayat eras normalized centralized power with minimal accountability, and post-1990 transitions merely replaced old autocrats with party patronage, factional bargaining and politicized unions that hollowed out the bureaucracy. Over time, party-affiliated student unions invaded the education system, turning campuses into proxy battlefields where burning tyres, padlocking, intimidation and disruption displaced learning. The result is an inherited culture of

indiscipline where rules are flexible if you have influence, yet ruthlessly rigid if you are powerless. Parliamentary sessions dissolve into shouting matches; laws are rushed or stalled for short-term gain; oversight bodies alternate between hyperactivism and paralysis. The culture of selective



discipline-strict for the poor-negotiable for the powerful, has seeped into policing, procurement, cooperatives and campus politics alike.

Recent legislative behavior only deepens this impression. The Cooperative (First Amendment) Bill, 2026, and related ordinances reshape regulation of savings-and-credit cooperatives. On one hand, they promise stronger supervision and some relief to small depositors. On the other, they introduce reconciliation mechanisms that can allow individuals accused of misusing cooperative funds to avoid tougher consequences if they repay what they took, fueling concern that serious financial wrongdoing may be settled quietly rather than confronted openly. That debate sits alongside long-running disputes over whether lawmakers accused of crimes should ever be suspended, reinforcing a pattern in which those with influence can negotiate their way around rules while ordinary citizens face immediate sanctions for minor infractions. Seen from the pavement in Tripureshwor, discipline can look less like a shared standard and more like a one-way street.

When the state models disorder and selective discipline, society follows. Traffic laws are treated as suggestions. Civic spaces become arenas for noise rather than deliberation. Young people absorb a cynical lesson: merit and hard work are praised in public, but in practice, networks and patronage carry more weight. Confronted by systemic humiliation, some exit via migration; others slide into quiet resignation; and a few reach breaking point in dramatic, self-destructive ways. The metropolitan police, who witness such crises in the public square, are both agents and products of this environment. They are asked to enforce order in a system that rarely shows them consistent discipline from the top, they are left to manage the flames, not the causes.

The tragedy is especially blunt because Nepal has already demonstrated that it can operate with discipline when it chooses. The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), the buffer-zone model around national parks, and the country's community forestry program all had their genesis here and have since become global reference points for people-oriented conservation. Together, they showed how clear rules, inclusive local institutions and steady implementation could reverse deforestation, protect wildlife, strengthen local economies and earn international recognition. Early work on glacial hazard reduction in Tso Rolpa and other the mountains offered another glimpse of what careful coordination between scientists, engineers and communities can achieve. At the same time, the wider Hindu Kush-Himalaya region, of which Nepal is a key part, holds glaciers and permafrost that sustain huge downstream populations of over 2.5 billion through the rivers they feed. In that context, disciplined governance around land, water and risk is not a luxury; it is a responsibility that reaches far beyond national borders.

Where, then, did we miss out when the crisis shifted from local deforestation to global climate change? Instead of building on these home-grown successes to craft an integrated climate strategy, Nepal allowed climate and disaster policy to sit on the margins of development planning, fragmented across ministries, driven by short-term projects rather than by a sustained national commitment to managing risk.

Yet the habits of discipline seen in conservation have not fully migrated into the broader machinery of the state. Climate and disaster strategies appear on paper, but line ministries hold tight to their own mandates, projects and budgets. Hydropower, agriculture, urban planning, social protection and policing often move on parallel tracks. Policies are drafted without genuine cross-sector alignment, and implementation stalls at the boundaries between agencies. The same erosion of discipline is visible in municipal practice, campus politics, cooperative management and everyday service delivery. Over the decades, the need for consistent discipline—in how laws are made, enforced and lived—has been quietly sidelined by convenience, deal-making and short-term calculation.

Against this backdrop, it is only fair to note that the current

government has taken some steps in a different direction. Under Balen Shah, there has been an effort to reset diplomatic conduct, introduce clearer codes of behavior for ministers, and move towards more transparent, merit-based appointments in key positions. Collective briefings for cabinet members, more structured engagement with envoys, and a



visible emphasis on competence in some senior postings suggest that someone at the center recognizes that discipline must begin with those who govern. These are early, incomplete moves, but they are departures from past practice.

The real test is whether such changes will extend beyond protocol and a handful of appointments into the deeper structures that shape citizens' daily experience: law-making, policing, campus life, cooperative regulation and climate-sensitive development. In a country whose glaciers and rivers help sustain vast populations downstream, and whose own citizens now resort to extreme acts to signal their despair, discipline across all sectors and strata of society is no longer merely about dignity. It is about safety, fairness and survival.

True discipline is not authoritarian control or wheel-locks deployed as punishment against the working poor. It is predictable rule of law, merit-based appointments, time-bound execution of policies and transparent accountability that applies as much to those in office as to those on the margins. If political leaders, administrators, security agencies, universities and local governments can reclaim that broader understanding of discipline, Nepal has enough experience and institutional memory to once again be seen as a regional leader—this time not only in conservation, but in resilient, just governance. If they cannot, the country will continue to drift through comfortable disorder, punctuated by searing moments like the fire in Tripureshwor, each one a warning that when a state refuses to listen, its people will risk everything just to be seen.

Mission to Destroy Kulman

Biraj Bhakta Shrestha as Minister of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation, forms a committee to investigate procurements initiated during Kulman Ghising's tenure at NEA. Critics argue that the committee's objective is to undermine his track record and challenge his performance at NEA.

By A CORRESPONDENT

Over the last four months, following the appointment of Biraj Bhakta Shrestha as Minister of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation, Nepal has been facing frequent power disruptions.

Despite having a power surplus over these past four months, power tripping remains a recurring issue. In response to regular complaints, Prime Minister Balendra Shah reportedly directed Energy Minister Shrestha to resolve the problem.

Built over the past eight years, Nepal's distribution and transmission network effectively links various parts of the country, as well as connections with India. Till few months back, infrastructures provided uninterrupted electricity to households

Instead of taking concrete steps to direct the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and its management, Minister Shrestha—a non-technical background official—blamed transformers installed in the past for the frequent outages. He then constituted a high-level committee to inspect the technical aspects of transformer purchases made over the last eight years.

However, the committee submitted a report stating that the power tripping was unrelated to the current transformers. Dissatisfied with the initial committee's findings, Minister Shrestha formed a second committee to investigate all procurement processes conducted over the past few years.

Surrounded by more than 20 advisors—including recent graduates, former NEA employees, local experts, and a recent returnee from the US who opposes exporting electricity to India and signing new PPAs with the private sector—Shrestha now appears convinced that entangling Kulman Ghising, a former

minister and current MD of NEA, in controversy is a strategic move to cover up his own managerial shortcomings and poor leadership.

Ghising, however, stated that he is not surprised by the ministry's recent move. He noted that former leaders, from former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli to former Minister Deepak Khadka, have previously tried to draw him into controversy, only to find themselves sidelined from politics and power.

“If ending load shedding, turning Nepal into a net exporter of electricity, and improving energy infrastructure are against national interests, then I am ready to face any challenge,” Ghising, who is now president of Ujyalo Nepal Party, told New Spotlight.

Ghising—widely celebrated as Nepal's “Light Man” for ending decades of debilitating load-shedding and transforming the nation into a net exporter of electricity—finds himself once again in the crosshairs of the ruling administration.

Ghising—a former minister and Managing Director who led the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) for over seven years prior to his dismissal by the KP Sharma Oli administration—spearheaded a remarkable turnaround at the authority. Beyond shattering the long-standing narrative that India would refuse to purchase electricity from Nepal, he drove strategic decisions that expanded generation capacity from 700 MW to 3,700 MW and brought grid access to 99 percent of the population.

Now heading the Ujyalo Nepal Party, Ghising has been vocal about the country's recent rise in power outages and other mounting energy sector issues, sharply criticizing the leadership of current Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation Minister Biraj Bhakta Shrestha.

Rather than addressing internal inefficiencies or his own administration's shortcomings during his first 100 days in office, Minister Shrestha has deflected blame onto infrastructure—claiming



that equipment like transformers, which were previously efficient and fully functional, are responsible for the current crisis.

In a move widely seen as politically motivated, Minister Shrestha initiated a formal investigation into past procurements of transformers and electricity meters, as well as the underground cabling project. During a Wednesday meeting of the NEA Board of Directors—chaired by Minister Shrestha—a three-member investigation committee was officially formed, led by board member Shambhu KC.

Meanwhile, political jockeying over the NEA's leadership continues behind the scenes. As Prime Minister Balendra Shah considers a proposal from the Energy Minister to appoint Acting MD Dirghayu Kumar Shrestha as full-time MD, Minister Shrestha and his inner circle are actively maneuvering to block the Prime Minister's potential favorite, Manoj Silwal, from taking the post.

Minister Shrestha is far from the first political figure to target Ghising. Former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and former Minister Dipak Khadka previously

made several moves to undermine his standing.

Tensions reached a boiling point recently over Ghising's insistence on recovering over NPR 20 billion in outstanding electricity dues from prominent industrialists—a stance that reportedly infuriated Minister Shrestha. Observers note that a powerful coalition of former senior NEA officials and influential business groups appear to be backing the Minister's latest campaign against Ghising.

Who Will Be Committee

The committee will consist of experts in technical, legal, and procurement matters. An Managing Director designated by the NEA will serve as the member-secretary.

The committee has been given a two-month mandate to complete its investigation.

Earlier, Minister Shrestha had publicly stated that transformers removed from areas experiencing frequent power outages were being inspected to determine whether they contained the required amount of copper and other materials.

According to reports, the investigation was launched over suspicions of financial irregularities in previous procurement processes.

Board member Anshu Kiran Shahi said the committee was also formed because the NEA has recently received a large number of complaints regarding transformer and electricity meter procurement, as well as various Authority projects.

He said that 668 complaints related to transformer and electricity meter procurement had been received within the past two months.

"There may have been complaints before as well, but they may not have been addressed. In just the last two months, more than 668 complaints have been filed," Shahi said.

He added that there were numerous complaints concerning the underground electricity cable project supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and transformer procurement.

The underground cable project had been

launched during the tenure of former NEA Managing Director Kulman Ghising.

When asked whether the committee was



specifically formed to investigate procurement decisions and projects undertaken during Ghising's leadership, Shahi replied:

"The committee has not been formed specifically to target Mr. Kulman. Since the new Board took office, many complaints have been received. The investigation will cover previous procurements, ongoing projects, and all related matters."

Shahi also referred to the prolonged power outage in Birgunj some time ago, saying that technical problems had been found in the underground cable system.

"The investigation committee will examine how work was carried out in a way that resulted in such technical problems," he said.

Regardless of what Minister Shrestha and NEA officials claim, the committee's ultimate aim appears to be scapegoating Ghising while exploiting the scandal for political gain. At a time when the government already faces widespread opposition on multiple fronts, Minister Shrestha's move against Ghising—guided by Minister Shrestha—is likely to create fresh trouble for Prime Minister Balendra Shah.

Electricity Tariffs Under Review

The government has also begun the process of reviewing electricity tariffs.

At Wednesday's meeting, the NEA Board decided to form a committee to develop a new, consumer-friendly tariff structure aimed at increasing domestic electricity consumption.

The committee has been established in line with the government's policy of introducing separate electricity rates for the dry season and the monsoon season, taking into account the higher electricity generation during the rainy months.

The committee, chaired by Board member Anshu Kiran Shahi, includes representatives from the Ministry of Energy, the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), consumer groups, energy and finance experts, and the Deputy Executive Director of the NEA's Distribution and Customer Service Directorate as Member-Secretary.

The committee has been given 15 days to review the existing tariff structure and prepare a new proposal.

Based on the committee's report, the government will initiate the process of approving new tariffs through the Electricity Regulatory Commission.

According to Shahi, the study will focus on addressing the surplus electricity generated during the monsoon season, which currently cannot be fully utilized. The goal is to provide cheaper electricity to industries and households during that period to encourage greater consumption.

"During the monsoon, we have excess electricity that often goes to waste. Instead of wasting it, we want to make it available at lower prices so consumers benefit and electricity use increases," Shahi said.

He added that offering cheaper electricity to industries during the rainy season could reduce production costs and enable manufacturers to produce and store more goods.

Shahi said the revised tariff structure is expected to be cheaper overall than the current rates.

The NEA also stated that it aims to provide greater concessions to household consumers while ensuring affordable electricity for productive, high-consumption industries. The Authority expects the changes to reduce monthly electricity bills for consumers and lower production costs for industries.

Development-induced Threats In Pashupatinath Area



BY: BATU UPRETY

Taking note of precautionary principle, Pashupatinath temple is largely threatened by two proposed infrastructures. Nepal is accessing loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to construct a 95 m tall concrete face rockfill dam on the Nagmati River - a tributary of the Bagmati River system. If the dam is constructed in the geologically weak and seismic zone, it will slightly increase the volume of water in the Bagmati River. If the dam collapsed during the operational stage, it will wash away lives and assets, Pashupatinath temple - an UNESCO World Heritage Site, including cultural and religious sites from Uttar Gaya downwards, and adversely affect the culture and civilisation along the Bagmati River

<https://www.spotlightnepal.com/2024/02/08/call-degazetting-shivapuri-nagarjun-national-park/>

The JICA study team is finalising the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Kathmandu Valley Urban Transport System Master Plan (KVUTS-MP). This note is based on the expert's presentation on the components of the Master Plan and its SEA during its 3rd stakeholder consultation on 31 July 2026.

As per the request of the Government of Nepal (GoN), JICA assisted to prepare the Master Plan for road development in the valley in 1993, 2012, 2017 and 2025-26. Its objective is to promote road projects implementation based on KVUTS-MP for sustainable economic growth, and reduction of environmental burdens - traffic congestion and air pollution.

For road and traffic management in the Valley, twenty-two projects have been identified in the Master Plan. Of them, two projects, namely Chabahil-Gaushala Underground Tunnel, and Chabahil-Bagmati River Elevated Highway will affect the protected heritage site - Pashupatinath area, and Widening Ring Road (Gaushala-Tinkune) may also affect parts of Pashupati area.

The study team conducted the SEA of the KVUTS-MP using the JICA Guidelines for Environmental and Social Considerations (2022) and in the spirit of the provisions of Nepal's Environment Protection Act (EPA, 2019) and its Rules (2020), including international good practices. SEA is applied in this Master Plan to ensure integration of environmental and social considerations at an early planning stage.

SEA is conducted globally for a policy, plan, or programme. Nepal's EPA (2019) does not recognise SEA. Section (9) of the EPA (2019) provisions for SEAn (Strategic Environmental Analysis) prior to the implementation of a policy, programme, or project (3Ps). The Act provisions to prepare

environmental study report for the prescribed proposal which may be any plan, project, or programme. Hence, legal flaw remains as IEE/EIA and SEAn is proposed for a project. Nepal's EPA (2020) provisions to conducting SEAn for 3Ps after

Cabinet approval. SEAn is conducted based on the scoping document which is also approved by the cabinet. Once

SEAn is prepared, it is made public for 30 days and finalised based on received suggestions. The final SEAn report is submitted to the cabinet for approval.

SEA conducted for this Master Plan is technically appropriate. However, GoN has followed a 'hybrid' or 'cocktail' approach to prepare the SEA report. No doubt, laws must be complied with, but 'mixing' might 'derail'.

The draft SEA of the KVUTS-MP analysed 4 alternatives: (i) without project; (ii) comprehensive mass transit; (iii) road-oriented improvement; and (iv) integrated transport strategy. The study team selected the 4th scenario (integrated transport strategy) as preferred option, using multi-criteria evaluation with technical, economic, financial, environmental, and social aspects.

The draft SEA has reviewed Nepal's relevant policies, laws and institutional framework, identified potential environmental and social impacts, and evaluated thirty items such as air pollution, noise, land acquisition, and impacts on heritage site. It estimated greenhouse gas (GHGs) emission reductions (159,244 t-CO₂eq/year by 2050) and proposed Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for sensitive infrastructure. The draft SEA includes environmental and social management plan, with mitigation measures, and environmental and social monitoring plan for construction and operation of the project(s). It outlines the framework for land acquisition and resettlement system, assesses risks like gender-based violence on public transport, provides grievance redress mechanism and proposed roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Infrastructure Development (MoID), including project offices and consultants for the effective implementation of the environmental and social management framework. Technically, the draft SEA has evaluated potential environmental and social impacts, and proposed generic impacts-based mitigation measures, as other SEAs.

The study team has flagged key concerns, inter alia, on the need for clarification of HIA process, but has not expected any specific significant indirect, secondary, or cumulative impact (at this stage). It has analysed key environmental and social risks and opportunities in areas of climate change and air quality, cultural heritage safeguards, land acquisition and resettlement risks, social vulnerability and GEDSI, urban flooding and hydrology, and construction in

narrow streets area. Furthermore, the draft SEA report includes risks related to overlapping mandates and conflicting interests, shortage of technical personnel, opposition from existing transport syndicates, lack of continuous environmental baselines, and irreversible damage to traditional sites, along with corresponding counter measures.

As next step, the study team is expected to incorporate suggestions of the stakeholder consultations (of 31 July 2026). MoID may make the draft SEA report public; and finalise it by incorporating inputs received from the public. The SEA report will be a part of the KVUTS-MP, and will be submitted for cabinet approval.

Impact Assessment (IA) is a predictive tool. It might be Environmental IA, Social IA, Biodiversity IA, Health IA, or Heritage IA. It can be used as a comprehensive planning tool as EIA or ESIA, or a compartmentalised tool such as assessing impacts on biodiversity, health or on heritage through 'dedicated' IAs. The project level IA is more specific than SEAs and latter is sufficiently generic, and it focuses on prediction of environmental and/or social impacts. In sensitive areas, adverse impacts mitigation measures are costly.

The proposed three projects of KVUTS-MP, as mentioned above, will pass through the protected heritage site - Pashupatinath area. Taking note of review of policies and legislations as mentioned in the executive summary of the draft SEA report, lack of experience on HIA, Nepal being the State Party to the World Heritage Convention, recalling Convention's status as per Section (9) of the Nepal Treaty Act (1990), including other relevant laws on protected heritages, MoID may wish to consider the following to update critical issues related to the UNESCO Heritage Site - the Pashupatinath area.

1 Nepal is a State Party to the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) since 20 June 1978 and inscribed Kathmandu Valley, Pashupatinath Temple as the World Cultural Heritage Site since 1979. The Sagarmatha National Park and Chitwan National Park were inscribed as Natural Heritage in 1979 and 1984, respectively. Other sites are also listed in the World Heritage list. Article 6 (3) of the Convention provisions State Party, inter alia, 'not to take any deliberate measures which might damage directly or indirectly the cultural heritage'.

2 In 1989, GoN planned to construct East Rapti Irrigation Project to irrigate about 9,500 ha of agricultural command area in Chitwan by diverting water to the canal network through a low dam in east Rapti River, with support from

ADB. As one of the side the dam was within the Chitwan National Park area - World Natural Heritage Site, EIA was conducted which recommended to launch Farmers Management Irrigation Scheme (FMIS) and the project was brought back to the reformulation stage. It means, dam construction was abandoned in the Natural Heritage site.

3 The draft SEA does not mention review of additional relevant laws, related to Pashupati area. The Ancient Monument Preservation Act (2013 BS, with amendments) provisions to take permission for the prescribed works, including road (Section 3.5). The Pashupati Area Development Trust Act (2044 BS) provisions for the Executive Council which shall, inter alia, approve and implement its master plan and annual plan, set-up standard including for road construction in Pashupati area (Sections 10.1.15 & 17, 17.1 & 2 etc).

4 The proposed HIA of projects passing through the Pashupati area - culturally, religiously, and environmentally sensitive area - may follow the 'stereo-type' of environmental assessment (EA) report preparation process. Although, EAs are conducted legally in Nepal for the 'prescribed proposals' from the last 3 decades, quality of EA reports and their implementation is always questioned. People normally think EAs simply fulfilling a legal requirement. One saying is, once EA report is approved, 'environment is automatically managed'.

5 In addition, twenty-two projects as included in the Master Plan might undergo EA process - IEEs or EIAs. If so, assessing impacts of road construction and operational activities in and around the cultural heritage site can be addressed additionally through ToR (Terms of Reference) of each project. Opportunities exist for less sensitive sites.

It is, therefore, advised exploring other alternative road near the Pashupati area. The cultural heritage criteria should be applied to reject three projects that might adversely affect Pashupati area. The government may wish to follow Dhobi Khola corridor, by diverting, may be, from Om Hospital, Chabahil to avoid foreseeable threats to Pashupatinath area, including temple, from the proposed tunnel, elevated highway along the Bagmati River, and the road expansion. Timely action on site selection, alternative to Chabahil-Gaushala areas, will greatly benefit the people and cultural heritage of Nepal from the proposed roads as included in the KVUTS Master Plan. Economic and financial aspects should be secondary or tertiary criteria for this sensitive heritage site.



KYABJE SHYALPA TENZIN RINPOCHE

Pursuit of Global Peace and Sanctuary for the Heart

Kyabje Shyalpa Tenzin Rinpoche's "Despite opposition from certain individuals in the Lumbini Development Trust, His Eminence Kyabje Shyalpa Tenzin Rinpoche continues building a peace monastery at the birthplace of Buddha to pray for global harmony from Nepal. A renowned spiritual leader, Rinpoche has established a global legacy of peace through the creation of the Universal Peace Sanctuary in Lumbini."

By KESHAB POUDEL

Perched on the serene heights of Kapan Hill—just 14 kilometers north of the bustling streets of Kathmandu—the Shyalpa Monastery feels like a world apart. Here, amidst the gentle murmur of chanting, the aroma of incense, and the flutter of prayer flags, His Eminence Kyabje Shyalpa Tenzin Rinpoche begins his day.

For the more than one hundred young monks and nuns who call this monastery and its partner nunnery home, Rinpoche is far more than an international spiritual icon; he is a

father figure, a guide, and a patient teacher. While his daily routine is anchored in quiet prayer, meditation, and guiding his students through the ancient wisdom of Dzogchen, Rinpoche's gaze extends far beyond the quiet sanctuary of Kapan Hill.

He carries a bold, deeply personal dream: transforming his homeland of Nepal into the world's beating heart for peace.

Building Bridges in Buddha's Birthplace

At the center of Rinpoche's vision is the creation of a Universal Peace

Sanctuary and International Peace Convention Center in Lumbini, the revered birthplace of Shakyamuni Buddha.

The journey has not been without its hurdles. Project logistics and bureaucratic friction from local entities like the Lumbini Development Trust have tested the project's timeline. Yet, those who know Rinpoche closely describe a man whose resolve only deepens in the face of adversity. He meets friction not with anger or political maneuver, but with patience and unwavering moral courage, viewing

every challenge as an opportunity to practice the very composure he teaches.

To bring this mega-structure from concept to reality, Rinpoche spends months every year traveling across continents—from Switzerland and Malaysia to North America and Taiwan. Whether addressing world leaders at the World Economic Forum in Davos, speaking at Harvard and Stanford, or visiting the White House, his message remains remarkably grounded: technology and progress mean little if we fail to cultivate the human heart.

“Lasting world peace isn’t built in summits or boardrooms,” Rinpoche often reminds those he meets. “It begins quietly, inside every single individual.”

Wisdom with a Human Touch

What sets Kyabje Shyalpa Tenzin Rinpoche apart is his extraordinary warmth and accessibility. Though recognized as an awakened Himalayan Buddhist master and humanitarian, he shuns pretense. In conversation, he connects as easily with a young novice monk



adjusting to monastery life as he does with global policymakers seeking guidance on ethical leadership.

Rinpoche views our modern world not with cynicism, but with deep hope. He frequently advocates for open dialogue between ancient contemplative practices and modern science, arguing that artificial intelligence, technology, and economic growth must be anchored in empathy and ethical responsibility.

Through the non-profit and charitable organizations he has established worldwide, Rinpoche continues to

turn high ideals into practical, life-changing acts of service—building schools, supporting communities, and offering spaces where people of all faiths, backgrounds, and generations can gather.

For Rinpoche, the Universal Peace Sanctuary in Lumbini is not just a building made of stone and mortar; it is a gift to future generations—a living gentle reminder that, despite our differences,

our desire for dignity, peace, and connection is entirely shared.

A Bridge-BUILDER Between Wisdom and Tomorrow’s Technology

A bridge-builder between timeless wisdom and tomorrow’s technology, he is focused on peace as something to build, not just talk about. Deeply interested in how artificial intelligence can serve humanity rather than simply automate tasks, he has been actively developing the Universal Peace Sanctuary Foundation in Geneva—leading its public events, strategic vision, and outreach.

He moves seamlessly between spiritual leadership, organizational strategy, and practical detail—one moment discussing profound philosophical questions about AI, and the next refining event layouts and schedules. Caring deeply about presentation, he ensures every message feels both inspiring and professionally executed. As a visionary, builder, and teacher, he continues to explore how compassion, technology, and global collaboration can shape a more peaceful future.

The Spark Behind the Sanctuary

When asked what first inspired his commitment to the Universal Peace Sanctuary—whether there was a specific experience or turning point—Rinpoche shared:

“I see that all beings suffer, and so many take life for granted. Throughout human history, no one has





truly inspired peaceful living without attaching a particular agenda, dogma, or philosophy. I felt it was my calling to establish world peace through inner peace—to make peace more fashionable than war so everyone can prioritize peace and celebrate life in this very moment, as if there is no next moment. Currently, I am a one-man army, but I need to find others who will step up, take ownership, and become true stakeholders in this universal vision of peace.”

Making Peace “More Fashionable Than War”

The idea to “make peace more fashionable than war” is a powerful reframing. Peace is no longer presented as a passive or idealistic concept, but as something vibrant that people are proud to embody and celebrate.

Fashion spreads through culture,

storytelling, music, design, technology, and social influence. For peace to become truly fashionable, it requires symbols, rituals, art, and communities that people genuinely want to join—not out of obligation, but because they experience authentic meaning and joy.

However, a strategic challenge remains: people rarely unite around “world peace” when it feels like an abstract, distant goal. They rally around concrete experiences and actions. Rather

than calling on people to “help me build world peace,” the vision invites them to:

“Become a custodian of peace in your own life, your family, your workplace, and your community.”

This shifts the dynamic from passive spectatorship to active personal ownership.

Living in the Present Moment

Another core strength of this philosophy is its emphasis on the present. Rather than presenting peace as a distant future destination, it asserts that peace begins right now.

Peace is not a political agenda, a religion, or an ideology; it is humanity’s shared responsibility. Every moment offers a choice:

- To create fear or understanding
- To build division or connection

Living in the present moment as if there were no next isn’t merely about avoiding conflict—it is an invitation to live with deep presence, gratitude, and responsibility. It is a concept that transcends culture, faith, and doctrine.

From a “One-Man Army” to a Movement

While describing oneself as a “one-man army” demonstrates admirable dedication during difficult times, lasting movements must eventually transcend a single individual. For the Universal Peace Sanctuary to endure for generations, the true task is not just inspiring millions directly, but empowering thousands of leaders who will, in turn, inspire thousands more. A movement gains resilience when its values are carried by many.

Absolute Intelligence and Artificial Intelligence

Addressing the intersection of technology and consciousness, Rinpoche noted: “I am a strong advocate for AI. I have often spoken about the positive potential of artificial intelligence and the need to collaborate with Absolute Intelligence to bring lasting benefits to humanity.”

While AI can process vast amounts of data, recognize complex patterns, and solve technical challenges, it lacks wisdom, compassion, and consciousness. Those qualities stem from human experience and deep inner cultivation.

AI serves as a powerful tool to think, write, analyze, and build—but human wisdom, lived experience, and ethical judgment remain indispensable. AI can support the mission, but the vision itself springs from values that no algorithm can generate on its own.

A Shared Future

Ultimately, the goal is for the Universal Peace Sanctuary to grow into a home where people of every nation, culture, and belief feel they belong—united not by uniform agreement on everything, but by a

shared commitment to protecting human dignity and the preciousness of life itself.

Humanity's Unconditional Home for Peace

Neither is complete without the other: humanity decides the destination; AI can help navigate the journey.

"Technology should evolve with wisdom. Intelligence should serve compassion. Progress should be measured by the reduction of suffering and the flourishing of life."

Perhaps one day, when future generations look back at this era, they won't remember it simply as the dawn of artificial intelligence. They might remember it as the moment humanity learned to align intelligence—both human and artificial—with wisdom, compassion, and peace. If that happens, it will be because people chose to build that future together.

A Defining Moment for Humanity

At pivotal moments in history, humanity is presented with an opportunity to redefine its future. Today is one of those moments.

Throughout history, every generation has inherited the world from those who came before it. Yet only a few generations are entrusted with the opportunity to shape the future in ways that will be remembered forever. Ours is one of them.

Humanity has accomplished extraordinary things. We have expanded scientific discovery, transformed technology, advanced medicine, explored space, preserved cultural treasures, and connected the globe in ways once thought impossible. Yet while our knowledge has grown, many challenges within the human heart remain:

- Conflict continues to divide nations.
- Fear separates communities.
- Loneliness, suffering, and misunderstanding touch lives across every culture and generation.

Perhaps our greatest challenge is no longer learning how to build a better physical world, but learning how to actualize our true, unconditional nature. The future will not be determined by innovation alone; it will be shaped by the values we choose to live by, the compassion we choose to practice, and the example we set for those who follow.

We now have an unprecedented opportunity to build something humanity has never had before: a permanent home dedicated not to one nation, religion, culture, or philosophy, but to humanity itself.

The Vision: The Universal Peace Sanctuary

The Universal Peace Sanctuary Foundation offers a new paradigm:

- Imagine a place where every person—regardless of nationality, religion, culture, race, or ideology—is welcomed with dignity, respect, and unconditional love.
- Imagine children growing up believing that compassion is true strength.
- Imagine leaders discovering that lasting peace must be built on the foundation of unconditional love.
- Imagine ancient wisdom and modern innovation becoming inseparable partners to inspire practical solutions for a peaceful world.



- Imagine a place where every individual feels they rightly belong.

This is the vision of the Universal Peace Sanctuary—humanity's home for peace. It is a place where people from every corner of the world can gather, learn, heal, serve, and remember the values that unite us all. It is not being created for one generation alone; it is a gift to every generation to come.

Throughout the ages, we have built monuments to power, prosperity, knowledge, and technological achievement. We have created sanctuaries to protect wildlife, preserve fragile ecosystems, and safeguard our shared cultural heritage. Yet never before have we established a permanent sanctuary dedicated to nurturing the very foundation on which every flourishing civilization depends: the awakened human heart.

More than a destination in the

COVERSTORY

Himalayas, the Sanctuary is a living expression of what becomes possible when we choose understanding over division, compassion over indifference, and peace over conflict. It marks the birthplace of a new era in which peace becomes humanity's highest aspiration.

A Call to Stewardship

The Universal Peace Sanctuary belongs to all of humanity. Its purpose is to inspire people everywhere to embrace peace as a way of living, awaken the inner wisdom and compassion within every heart, and establish a legacy for generations to come.

Every person is invited to become a steward of our shared future.

The question is not whether this vision matters; the question is what role each of us will choose to play in bringing it to life. No individual, organization, or nation can accomplish this alone. Peace has always been humanity's shared responsibility, and its unconditional home must be created through humanity's shared commitment.

Today, you are invited to help write humanity's next chapter and become one of the Founding Guardians of a legacy that will continue serving the world long after our generation has passed.

One day, our children, grandchildren, and generations yet unborn may ask what our generation chose to do when humanity stood at this crossroads. May your answer be one they remember with gratitude:

We chose peace. We chose compassion. We chose unconditional love. Together, we helped create

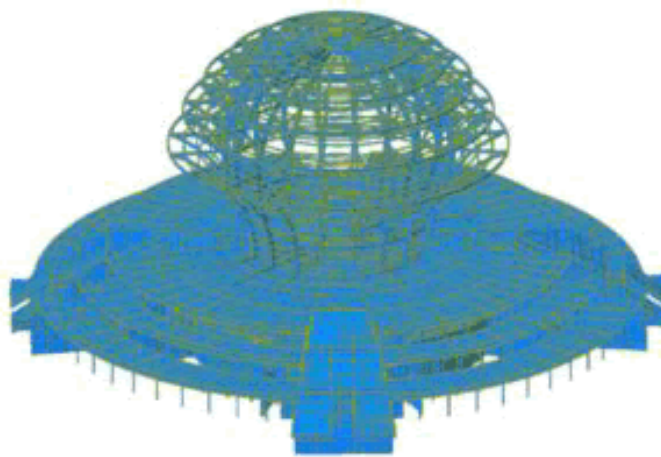
Humanity's Unconditional Home for Peace.

The Universal Peace Sanctuary Foundation

The Universal Peace Sanctuary Foundation rests on a fundamental truth: lasting peace cannot be forced from the outside; it must be cultivated within each individual and expanded globally. Our aim is to build a worldwide movement fostering inner peace, ecological responsibility, intercultural harmony, ethical leadership, and compassionate action.

The Foundation offers an inclusive framework bridging:

Ancient wisdom & modern



innovation

Spirituality & science

Education & diplomacy

Environmental stewardship & sustainable development

Local communities & global leadership

Global Anchors

Geneva, Switzerland (Diplomatic Heart): Serves as headquarters, leveraging its status in international governance, diplomacy, and philanthropy to foster global partnerships.

Lumbini, Nepal (Spiritual Heart): Home to the Universal Peace

Sanctuary—a living center for wisdom, dialogue, and inner transformation that belongs to all humanity, transcending specific religions or nations.

Together, Geneva and Lumbini unite outer global cooperation with inner awakening.

A preeminent Himalayan Buddhist master, humanitarian, and peace leader, Shyalpa Rinpoche has spent decades promoting compassion, education, and global stewardship.

The Foundation represents the culmination of his lifelong mission. He invites everyone to co-create humanity's next chapter and help shape the future of civilization.

Shared Truth &

Call to Action

Peace is not an invention, but our innate nature and shared birthright—welcoming everyone without judgment. When we remember this truth, peace becomes the natural expression of our humanity.

Future generations will remember whether we chose fear or peace at this crucial crossroads. Let us be the generation that chooses peace and builds Humanity's Unconditional Home for Peace.



TIGER POPULATION

Double in a Decade

Over the past decade, Nepal achieved a remarkable milestone: through rigorous management and strategic planning, its wild tiger population drastically increased. Yet this conservation triumph has brought a critical dilemma to light. While tiger numbers are booming, their natural habitats are shrinking, triggering a sharp rise in human-tiger conflict. As fatal encounters increase, communities living on the fringes of national parks are growing resentful, questioning the true cost of this "successful" preservation. Protecting apex predators cannot come at the expense of human safety and livelihoods. The time has come to shift focus from mere population numbers to peaceful coexistence. To build lasting harmony between wild cats and local residents, the government must prioritize human-wildlife conflict prevention and deliver concrete economic incentives to the communities bearing the brunt of conservation.

By KESHB POUDEL

Through successful planning and strategic conservation, Nepal has established itself as a global leader in protecting Bengal tigers. With wild tiger numbers steadily climbing, the country continues to demonstrate remarkable progress in safeguarding this endangered species.

According to the latest national census, Nepal's Bengal tiger population

has reached 429. For conservationists, this milestone provides a powerful example to the world of how a species once pushed to the brink of extinction can recover in formidable numbers.

Steady Growth and Census Findings
The Ministry of Forests and Environment unveiled the results on Wednesday to mark World Tiger Day. The findings were officially released by

Gita Chaudhary, Minister for Agriculture, Forests, and Environment. Nepal has conducted a nationwide tiger survey every four years since 2009. The previous census, conducted in 2022, recorded 355 adult tigers in natural habitats across the country.

The latest six-month survey—conducted under the leadership of the Department of National Parks and

Wildlife Conservation using camera traps—shows that 74 tigers have been added over the past four years.

Distribution Across Protected Areas Chitwan National Park and its surrounding forests continue to hold the highest concentration of tigers, with 145 individuals recorded.

Deputy Director General of the department, Bed Kumar Dhakal, noted that growth has been particularly encouraging in areas where tigers were previously relocated. Past translocation efforts moved tigers from Chitwan to Banke and Shuklaphanta to help build viable populations in those habitats."As a result, tiger numbers have increased in those regions, as well as in Parsa, which was previously considered a weaker habitat," Dhakal said.

The overall breakdown across protected areas includes: Chitwan National Park: 145 Bardiya National Park: 112 Parsa National Park: 71 Banke National Park: 51 Shuklaphanta National Park: 50 A Slower Growth Rate and Emerging Challenges While the population growth remains positive, Director General of Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Dr. Buddhi Sagar Poudel highlighted that the rate of growth has slowed.

The population grew by 51% in the 2022 census cycle, whereas the latest assessment reflects a 21% increase. Dr. Poudel explained that prey avail-

ability, habitat quality, human encroachment, and an aging tiger population have all contributed to this deceleration.

"When prey populations rise, tiger numbers follow. Conversely, a decline in prey reduces tiger growth," said Dr. Poudel. "This is a natural ecological process that reflects a balancing ecosystem.

"However, the survey also identified 36 tigers roaming outside core protected areas. Officials caution that this

park authorities.

Time to Focus on Tiger Management

The Minister for Agriculture, Forests, and Environment, Gita Chaudhary, emphasized that Nepal must now shift its focus from purely increasing tiger numbers to managing the growing population effectively.

Speaking at the World Tiger Day ceremony where the census results were unveiled, Minister Chaudhary stated: "Our priority is no longer just increas-

ing the tiger population; it is also about managing it effectively. As tiger numbers rise, incidents of human-tiger conflict are inevitably on the rise."

She highlighted ongoing government efforts to mitigate these challenges, including capturing problem tigers, housing them in holding centers, and providing relief compensation to affected families. Additionally, the government is exploring long-term strategies, such as expanding zoos and establishing dedicated tiger conservation



DG. Poudel

expansion into buffer zones increases the risk of human-tiger conflict. Nepal's tiger population has trajectory shown clear long-term progress: starting at 121 in early surveys, the population rose to 198, then to 235 in 2018, 355 in 2022, and now stands at a record 429. While this success validates decades of effort, it also brings new complex management challenges for surrounding communities and

sanctuaries.

At the same event, Ministry Secretary Dr. Rajendra Prasad Mishra urged researchers to use the latest census data to inform future conservation policies. "The time has come to explore how wildlife conservation can actively contribute to the country's economic growth and development," Mishra noted.

Dr. Chiranjibi Pokharel, Member Secretary of the National Trust for

Nature Conservation, added that tiger conservation must now be approached from multiple perspectives. Other conservation experts echoed this sentiment, stressing the urgent need for innovative strategies to minimize human–tiger conflict as populations expand.

Population Distribution and Historical Context

The census breakdown across protected regions and surrounding forests reveals:

Bardiya National Park: 112 tigers

Parsa National Park: 71 tigers

Banke National Park: 51 tigers

Shuklaphanta National Park: 50 tigers

Global Commitments and Long-Term Trends

In 2010, global wild tiger numbers stood at a critical low of approximately 3,200. That same year, at the landmark Global Tiger Summit in Russia, tiger-range countries pledged to double their wild tiger populations by 2022.

In line with this commitment, Nepal intensified its conservation efforts—building upon action plans first initiated in the 1990s. Official data reflects steady, continuous growth: from 198 tigers in 2014, to 235 in 2018, 355 in 2022, and reaching 429 today.



Minister Chaudhary

Methodology: How the Census Was Conducted

The National Tiger Survey 2025/26 (2082/83 BS) was conducted over four months, running from December 16, 2025 (Poush 1, 2082 BS) to April 23, 2026 (Baisakh 10, 2083 BS).

Researchers utilized camera trapping across Nepal's five tiger-bearing national parks and adjoining forest corridors. To ensure systematic coverage, habitats were organized into three main complexes:

Chitwan–Parsa Complex

Banke–Bardiya Complex

Shuklaphanta–Laljhadi Complex

Survey Scale and Analysis

Grid Mapping: The three complexes were mapped into 2 km×2 km grid units.

Coverage: A total of 3,696 automatic camera traps were deployed across 1,848 grid cells, covering 7,393 square kilometers.

Operation: Pairs of camera traps were installed in each grid cell and monitored continuously for at least two weeks.

Individual Identification: Biologists identified individual tigers by analyzing the unique stripe patterns captured in the photographs.

The operation was supported by the Government of Nepal and partner donor agencies, involving hundreds of field technicians, park staff, and community volunteers.

Next Steps: Full Report and Future Carrying Capacity

Statistical modeling estimates Nepal's total wild tiger population between 402 and 500, with a point estimate of 429 tigers.

Department spokesperson and Deputy Director General Bed Kumar Dhakal noted that these results showcase the success of Nepal's holistic conservation approach—focusing on habitat protection, anti-poaching enforcement, prey restoration, and corridor preservation.

A full technical report containing detailed analyses on tiger density, hab-



THE KATHMANDU POST

itat occupancy, and prey population health will be published shortly. As population numbers reach historic highs, the publication will help address two critical questions facing conservationists: What is Nepal's ecological carrying capacity for tigers, and how can human–tiger coexistence be sustained?

Community Impact and Concerns Over Sustainable Conservation

While officials and conservationists have welcomed Nepal's recorded increase to 429 adult tigers, local communities living near core habitats view the milestone with caution.

M a n i s h a Singh Tharu, Vice-Chairperson of Rapti Sonari Rural Municipality in Lumbini Province—a region overlapping Banke National Park—stressed that population growth brings immediate risks to residents.

"Since local governments were established, around 10 to 15 people in our municipality have lost their lives to tiger attacks," Tharu said. "That is why local communities cannot celebrate an increase in tiger numbers without reservation."

Experts agree that population growth alone does not equal complete success. "An increase in tiger numbers is certainly a milestone, but ensuring human safety is paramount," said tiger conservation specialist Baburam Lamichhane. "Conservation can only be considered truly sustainable and meaningful if human casualties

caused by wildlife are reduced to zero."

Conservationist Kumar Paudel echoed this view, noting that without community buy-in, conservation remains incomplete. "As long as local communities living alongside tigers cannot safely and happily coexist with them, this achievement should only be regarded as a partial success."



Department spokesperson and Deputy Director General Bed Kumar Dhakal acknowledged the growing responsibility facing authorities. "Over the past four years, the adult tiger population grew by roughly 5% annually. While encouraging, it also means our future management obligations are significantly higher."

Habitat Quality and Ecological Carrying Capacity

As tiger numbers expand, questions remain regarding how many individuals Nepal's protected areas can realistically support.

While international studies suggest ideal habitats can support 15 to 20 tigers per 100 square kilometers, Dhakal emphasized that localized density depends heavily on habitat quality and management.

"If an area features sufficient water, abundant prey species, quality grasslands, and minimal human disturbance, a single tiger's territory may shrink to just 7 or 8 square kilometers," Dhakal explained. "Conversely, poor habitat quality requires much larger home ranges."

He noted that core populations in Chitwan and Bardiya National Parks are now approaching their maximum carrying capacity, though minor natural fluctuations remain expected.

Despite recent gains, Lamichhane pointed out that current numbers remain modest compared to historical baselines: "Historical records show that around a century ago, over 100 tigers were killed in

single hunting expeditions. Today's figures simply demonstrate that populations are gradually being restored."

Mitigating Human–Tiger Conflict

Data indicates that between 2010 and 2024, Nepal recorded 245 tiger attack incidents, resulting in 141 fatalities. Although incidents spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict numbers have gradually declined due to targeted mitigation strategies.

Lamichhane emphasized the importance of community awareness and practical risk-reduction steps:

"Educating residents on tiger behavior is crucial. Because tigers are most active during early morning and evening hours, community members are advised to exercise heightened caution during those times. Clearing dense brush near village edges and strategically planning walking trails have also helped reduce unexpected encounters."

Dhakal added that the government continues to invest in physical barriers, such as installing perimeter fencing around vulnerable settlements adjacent to high-density forest zones. Conservationists maintain that moving forward, long-term policy must balance species protection with community safety and landscape management.

Here is an edited and polished version of the article section. It removes repeated information (such as technical census methodology details already established in prior sections), fixes grammatical errors, improves sentence flow, and organizes the narrative logically into clear subheadings.

Balancing Population Success with Human Safety

"It is extremely encouraging that tiger numbers have rebounded after once teetering on the brink of extinction. This proves that dedicated conservation efforts and strong anti-poaching measures are working," noted conservationist Kumar Paudel. "However, equal effort must now be devoted to reducing human-tiger conflict."

Under current Nepalese law, the government fully covers medical treatment expenses for individuals injured in wildlife attacks. In cases of fatal encounters, the victim's family is entitled to NPR 1 million (10 lakh rupees) in government relief compensation.

Key Drivers of Nepal's Tiger Recovery

Park authorities attribute Nepal's remarkable conservation victory primarily to effective habitat management, high prey availability, and strict anti-poaching enforcement.

In Banke and Bardiya National Parks, officials report that tiger populations have nearly tripled in recent years. Ananath Baral, Chief Conservation Officer, credited this rapid growth directly to zero-poaching success:

"Poaching has been effectively eliminated over the past three years, prey



populations are thriving, and habitat management has improved significantly," Baral said. "As a result, tiger numbers continue to rise. Field observations regularly spot healthy tiger cubs alongside adult tigers, signaling continued growth for future census-es."

Infrastructure, Habitat Improvements, and Challenges

Historically, a primary threat to wildlife survival in western Nepal was the seasonal scarcity of water, which forced animals to migrate toward major rivers like the Karnali, Babai, and Rapti. During these movements, tigers and other species faced severe risks when crossing busy highways. In the previous fiscal year alone, 52 wild animals were killed in road accidents around Banke National Park.

To mitigate water scarcity and reduce dangerous highway crossings, park authorities implemented major habitat improvements: Watering Holes: Constructed over 100 artificial ponds in Banke National Park and more than 100 in Bardiya National Park.

Corridor Management: Expanded habitat restoration into adjacent forest corridors outside core park boundaries to accommodate growing territories.

Emerging Threats and Enforcement

Despite these achievements, conservationists warn that expanding infrastructure and forest clearance in the name of development threaten

to shrink available tiger habitats in the future.

To combat ongoing risks, park officials maintain strict surveillance to intercept illegal trade networks. Under Nepalese wildlife protection laws, individuals convicted of illegal wildlife trafficking face severe penalties, including fines between NPR 500,000 and NPR 1,000,000, imprisonment for 5 to 15 years, or both.

While judicial processing faced temporary backlogs during COVID-19 lockdown periods, authorities remain committed to prosecuting all wildlife offenses to safeguard Nepal's tiger legacy.