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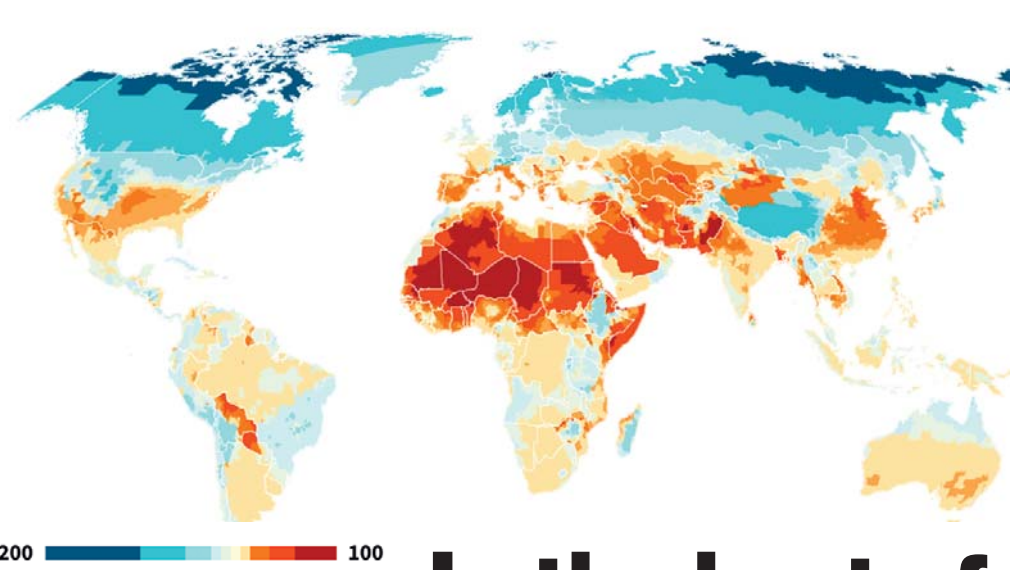
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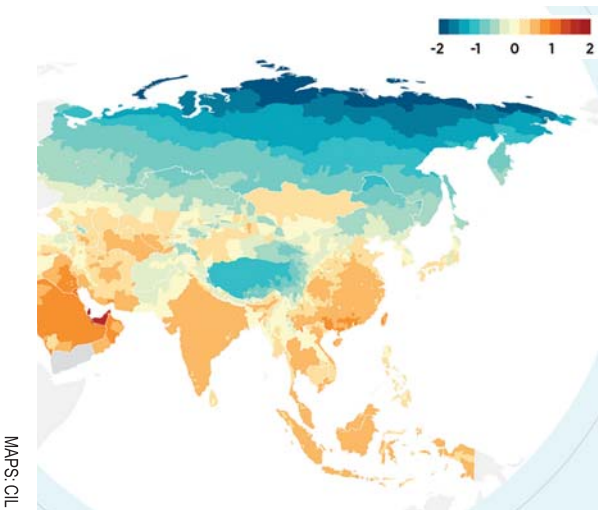
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GLOBAL WARNING

Change in mortality rate (deaths per 100,000) due to increasing temperatures



Change in electricity consumption (GJ/capita) in Asia



In the heat of the moment

Sonia Awale

Heat-related deaths in Nepal due to global warming is projected to rise by 24 per 100,000 people, according to a new global study from Chicago-based Climate Impact Lab (CIL) released this week. Most at risk are people in the Tarai. Nepal is among the 18 countries the report identifies as caught in a ‘Mortality Cooling Trap (MCT)’ due to lower electricity availability for fans and air conditioners to cope with the heat. “The Mortality Cooling Trap identifies areas that are projected to see both large increases in temperature-related mortality and small changes in electricity consumption due to climate change,” explains co-author Emily Grover-Kopec. “Areas at greatest risk will not be able to adapt to heat through electric cooling.”

POWER DOWN
In Nepal, electricity consumption could decline by 0.01 GJ per capita due to climate impact, reducing ability of 32% of the population to cope with heat stress. Load-shedding and expensive electricity would deprive many families from cooling devices. This is despite Nepal’s power generation capacity reaching 4,300MW. The government plans to generate 30,000MW by 2035, and export 10,000-15,000MW to India and Bangladesh. **URBAN HEAT ISLAND**
Cooling with fans and air conditioners adds to the urban heat island (UHI) effect, making core city centres up to 5°C hotter than less crowded suburbs. Heat-trapping concrete, dark asphalt surfaces, lack of vegetation and waste heat from air conditioning and vehicles add to UHI (page 9).

Already, the city core within the Ring Road in Kathmandu is up to 4°C hotter during the daytime and up to 3°C hotter in the evening than the outskirts. Green-blue spaces can lower temperatures by up to 1.2°C. **CLIMATE MIGRATION**
Despite being listed as one of the countries in the ‘Mortality Cooling Trap’, Nepal’s average elevation makes it relatively cooler. Besides trans-boundary migration to the mountains, within Nepal people will start moving back up to the mountains from the plains. Warns co-author Ashwin Rode: “While migration offers a way to avoid the harms of a warming climate, it is also a costly adaptation strategy that will be particularly burdensome to the poorest, most vulnerable populations.”

Energy

Measuring the impact of rising temperatures on mortality to target adaptation planning

Emily Grover-Kopec, Ashwin Rode, Genevieve Miracle, Michael Greenstone, Tamma Careton July 2026

Nepal's new migration corridor to Europe

EDITORIAL PAGE 2

How to cool Kathmandu's heat bubble

PAGE 9

NOMAD CENTURY

HOW TO SURVIVE THE CLIMATE UPEHEVAL

GAIA VINCE

JULIAN HATTEM

SHELTER FROM THE STORM

FROM THE

HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS CREATING A NEW ERA OF MIGRATION

MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

KELSEA BEST, KAYLY OBER, AND ROBERT A. MCLEMAN

THE FORCES UPROOTING US

MOVE

PARAG KHANNA

THE MINISTRY FOR THE FUTURE

A NOVEL

KIM STANLEY ROBINSON

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

MIGRATION IS A HOT TOPIC

Gaia Vince's 2022 book **Nomad Century** estimated that up to 3.5 billion people will be affected by unsurvivable heat and will be on the move. Mass migration is inevitable so governments might as well get used to the idea.

Julian Hattem's **Shelter from the Storm: How Climate Change Is Creating a New Era of Migration** (2026) notes that mass human displacement due to heat is already happening and plots trends into the future.

Migration and Displacement in a Changing Climate by Kelsea Best, Kayly Ober, and Robert A. McLeman (2025) examines how climate shifts interact with human societies, infrastructure, and regional adaptation measures.

Move: The Forces Uprooting Us by Parag Khanna looks at which countries people will move from and where to escape the impacts of climate change. The future will be messy.

Science fiction writer Kim Stanley Robinson's 2019 novel **The Ministry for the Future** begins with the mass death of 20 million people due to a heat wave in northern India. But world governments come together to finance adaptation.

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Nepal's new migration corridor to Europe

The country's migration and remittance landscape is changing, labour and economic diplomacy must follow

Editorial

Shristi Karki

After the youth-led protests last year and the regime change that followed, there was hope that the number of Nepalis leaving for work abroad would come down.

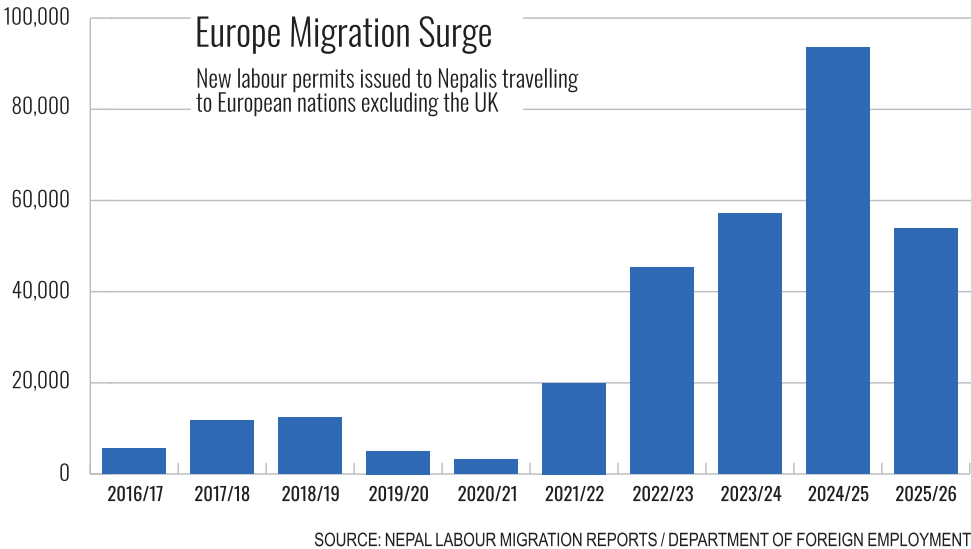
The RSP leadership pledged to create 1.2 million new jobs over the next five years, and the Nepali diaspora enthusiastically supported the party's election campaign.

But more Nepalis are leaving than before for greener pastures abroad. And their destination is no more just West Asia or Malaysia, they are travelling further afield to Europe.

Remittance inflow surged to \$14.59 billion in the first 11 months of this fiscal year, the highest yet. The push factors are higher salaries in Europe's service and manufacturing sectors, the chance of permanent residency, cooler climate, and worries about escalating conflict in the Persian Gulf.

European countries, on the other hand, need cheap labour to make up for shortage, and allow calibrated numbers to work there. Migration to Europe from Nepal has increased 21-fold in the last decade.

Of the 792,187 labour permits issued in fiscal year 2025/2026, 93,508 were to European nations. More than 53,000 of those workers secured new labour permits. Romania is the most preferred destination for Nepalis, serving as a springboard for eventual movement to other Schengen states.



Meanwhile, the share of people migrating to the GCC has fallen from 77% in 2024/25 to 64% last year due to the conflict. These trends were documented and analysed by Nepal Economic Forum (NEF) in an EU-commissioned report on the Nepal-Europe migration corridor.

The report shows that Nepalis are drawn to Europe because of the prospect of better education and higher wages, legal and social protection, and political stability. Europe needs to replenish a dwindling workforce across all skill levels.

Nepali migrants to Europe tend to be better educated: more than 75% have finished high school, half have vocational training. About a quarter are women. The jobs range

from construction, caregiving, and agriculture to healthcare, engineering, and IT.

ONE SIZE FITS ALL

Despite the increasing importance of Europe, Nepal's governance and regulatory frameworks do not reflect this trend, it is still one-size-fits-all.

The impact of this gap in policy means Nepalis seeking migration to Europe pay more in recruitment fees, and skill mismatch forces them to work jobs that do not correspond to their education and qualification. Therefore they cannot use skills and savings earned in Europe to invest back in Nepal on return.

Nepal must now take a more proactive diplomatic initiative to ensure migrants get

better opportunities across Europe, and are not cheated by recruiters here. Nepal currently has bilateral labour agreements with only Germany and Romania.

Europe is undergoing a dramatic demographic shift. By 2050, its working-age population will fall by almost 30 million. Nepal's outbound working population has a window of opportunity to take advantage of this.

Nepal's new leadership cannot suddenly create the 1.2 million domestic jobs, but it can start by ensuring safe and exploitation-free migration and a hassle-free investment climate for those who return. Over half the migrants surveyed by NEF said that they want to eventually return home.

"When migrants come back to their home country they want their skills, their ambitions for enterprise creation, and their economic and social remittances mobilised for their home country and community life," said NEF researcher Rojika Maharjan.

Another priority is having a more accurate count of just how many Nepalis are working in Europe.

Nepal does not need to start from scratch. Migration, labour, and reintegration policies already exist, they now need to be tailored to the priorities and the resources of Nepali migrants in Europe.

Rojina Tamrakar, Executive Director of the Institute of Foreign Affairs, put it best: "Migration is no longer simply a labour issue, it is increasingly an issue of foreign policy. It is a part of economic diplomacy, international cooperation, and human development." 🇳🇵

Trending Online



BROCRACY

by Shristi Karki
Four months in, Nepal's RSP-led government, which rode in on a wave of Discord and digital clout, is facing internal discord. Read the heavy readers' engagement at nepalitimes.com.

Most reached and shared on Facebook

Social media age bans

by Kelly Stonelake
The blanket-ban approach treats addictive social media as inevitable. It isn't. It is the product of years of corporate lobbying and governments' reluctance to regulate. Read the analysis on our website.

Most popular on X



The early years of flying in Nepal

by Dan Edwards
In the latest of his series on the history of transportation in Nepal, Dan Edwards explores the highs and lows of the first four decades of Nepali aviation from 1933-1973. Look at the timeline online.

Most commented

Blending faith and fashion

by Sudiksha Tuladhar
Kathmandu's streets used to be lined with mehendi artists during Shrawan. But stricter rule against street vendors from the municipality forced artists to shift to other medium -- including now on social media, especially TikTok. Details on the website.

Most visited online page

Letters

PMO HAPPENINGS

How does a Meme/Troll page admin becomes PM's chief adviser ('The Balen-Ben duo', Kunda Dixit's newsletter, nepalitimes.substack.com)?

Shubham Bhandari

■ My question is: how did you guys know there is rift between PM & FM, did the PM come and tell you ('Nepal's Brocracy', Shristi Karki, #1321)?

Bisistha Gautam

■ Anup Tamu is probably the most influential cartoonist in Nepal. Big fan.

Áaroñ Bhāñḍārī

■ Shouting for meritocracy when in opposition, but nepotism and cronyism once in power. His Majesty Balen.

Adam Hero



■ These bros have made a mockery out of the nation.

Deepak Bista

NEPALI AVIATION

I flew on that DC 3 when I was a little boy ('The early years of flying in Nepal', Dan Edwards, #1321). I still remember flying to Dang with my mother.

Ajaya Satyal

■ The late Belgian Consul Mr Reiffle,

bless his heart, was also one of the founders of Nepali aviation, wasn't he?

Kurtlandt Kurtlandt

■ Thanks to India, the USAID, and Canada, among others, Nepalis could see assorted planes before people from Bihar.

Deepak Shrestha

URBAN HEAT

Great to finally see emphasis in

useful intellectual discussions in Nepali news portals besides politics ('How to cool down Kathmandu's heat bubble', Prasesh Pote Shrestha, page 9).

Prateek Shrestha

■ The modernisation of infrastructure such as water and sewer drainage systems, urban gas, and electrical facilities, and improving infrastructure within Nepal is the most important and most effective approach to combat urban heat islands.

Megumi Muraki

SOCIAL MEDIA BAN

Even the US cannot accomplish this ('Social media age bans won't make children safer', Kelly Stonelake, nepalitimes.com). Multiple individual state governments have taken Zuckerberg to court and nothing changes.

Oatmeal Wigglebutt

Online Package



WOMEN PAINTING WALLS

Women in Kathmandu are painting walls with vibrant murals as expressions of collective identity, solidarity, and empowerment. Watch video on our YouTube channel.



KINSHIP AND KUNG FU

The Kung fu nuns based in Nepal practice the martial art form at the Druk Amitabha Nunnery near Kathmandu, wielding swords, sticks and paper fans. Subscribe for multimedia content.

1,000 Words



NEPAL EMBASSY

SUPREME SUMMIT: Nepal's Chief Justice Manoj K Sharma and his Indian counterpart Surya Kant at the Nepal Embassy in New Delhi on 25 July. Justice Sharma was visiting India for the 60th anniversary event of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

Nepal's Constitution Commission appointed Chief Justice Sharma in June after an ordinance changed the voting rules, allowing him to leapfrog more senior justices.

Justice Surya Kant's controversial remark comparing India's unemployed youth to "cockroaches and parasites" triggered the GenZ rallies across India. The protest was called off on 26 July after Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned.



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Editor: Sonia Awale | Special Correspondent: Shristi Karki

Reporter: Sudiksha Tuladhar | Layout: Kiran Maharjan

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GATE

A gateway to Nepali hospitality

One man's vision to produce qualified professionals for the tourism industry at home and abroad

Sudiksha Tuladhar

Decades ago, Khem Lakai was working in a hotel in Bahrain when he encountered many young Nepali migrant workers. Unlike his job, many were working back-breaking, low-paying unskilled jobs.

The pay was low, and many had paid recruiters hefty sums for which they had to borrow from loan sharks, which they then had to repay with savings. Only after that could they start sending money to families back home.

"When I was in Bahrain, I saw many young Nepalis doing odd jobs for low pay," recalls Lakai. "I thought that if they only had marketable skills, they would not have such a difficult life and could earn more."

Lakai had studied hospitality in Switzerland and accumulated considerable skill and experience in

many countries by this time.

After witnessing the struggle of his compatriots, the idealistic Lakai made up his mind to return to Nepal and put his experience and contacts in the service of his country.

His goal was simple: provide Nepalis structured hospitality education and training to produce skilled human resources that could contribute to the country's economy and compete in the global tourism market.

Nepalis have an advantage, Lakai says, because guests are traditionally treated with warmth and respect. "Hospitality is more than a service industry here," he says. "It is part of our culture, a lived experience that can be turned into a pathway to employment."

The Nepali ethos "अतिथिदेवो भवः" in which guest is god became the foundation for the Global Academy of Tourism and Hospitality Education (GATE) that Lakai would go on to found in Nepal in 2007.

GATE grew to offer a Bachelor's in International Hospitality Management (BIHM), a Bachelor's in Professional Hospitality (BPH), and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) programmes.

The professional hospitality course is affiliated with Kathmandu University, while the other programmes are in partnership with international institutions, including an Australian public university.

Alongside degree programmes, the college also runs vocational courses for students from lower-income families. These shorter, skill-based courses are designed to help learners enter the job market more quickly.

"The vocational courses are for those students seeking jobs abroad who cannot afford to enroll in a full-fledged degree course," Lakai explains. "These skills will give them a leg up overseas and help them earn better livelihoods."

Lakai believes Nepal must place

greater emphasis on polytechnic and skill-based education that can help young people find employment even when formal academic qualifications alone are not enough.

GATE's alumni are employed in both domestic and international job markets. Graduates have gone on to work across the tourism and hospitality sector in Japan, Australia, Malaysia, and West Asia.

"Students stand much to gain from going abroad to get insight into the global hospitality sector," Lakai says. "That kind of industry know-how helps them gain valuable experience."

In Nepal, the college collaborates with leading hotels like The Soaltee, which has employed graduates across its branches.

But Nepal's hospitality sector faces significant challenges, largely because trained Nepalis emigrate permanently, leading to a shortage of trained professionals in the domestic market.

But this also means there are openings as Nepal's internal tourism flourishes. And Lakai has also seen a growing number of Nepalis returning after gaining experience abroad and bringing new skills—just like he did many years ago.

HIGH-VALUE TOURISM

Lakai believes Nepal's hospitality industry needs better planning, especially as it moves towards high-value tourism. Nepal does not need to look too far, the country sits between the two biggest potential sources of visitors: India and China.

High costs of travelling to and within Nepal compared to other nations is another barrier. In most tourist destinations across the world, notes Lakai, visitors tend to spend a smaller share of their budget on transport and more on adventure and experience.

The opposite is true for Nepal, high ticketing and travel costs can leave visitors with comparatively less amount of money to spend on activities once they arrive.

GATE plans to expand its outreach and train more professionals, the college has a branch in Pokhara and aims to expand to other parts of Nepal. Meanwhile, international hospitality institutions have also approached the college for exchange programs.

Nepal's tourism sector, and the nation, depends heavily on the impressions visitors carry home. Hospitality professionals remain central to the Nepali tourism experience. Travellers may remember Nepal for its mountains and culture, but they also remember its cuisine, and its friendly people.

Lakai's advice to young professionals entering the hospitality and service sector: find joy in your work so that you make those you serve also happy.

"You need to enjoy your job," says Lakai. "If there is enjoyment in what you do, work and life are one and the same, and therein lies the balance between personal and professional life." 🇳🇵

BRIEFS



Turkish joins SAFFA

Turkish Airlines has signed an agreement to participate in SAFFA Fund I, LP, an investment fund managed by Burnham Sterling Asset Management LLC to accelerate the production of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) in line with its long-term growth strategy, green targets, and supply chain security. Says Chief Investment & Strategy Officer Levent Konuk: "We aim not only to contribute to the development of the sustainable aviation fuel ecosystem but also to maintain our active role in supporting innovative projects that shape the future of the industry."

Upaya expands

Upaya Logistics has recorded a 54% increase in business volume in the current fiscal year. The logistics company has around 400 branches and more than 5,000 distribution centers. It is opening a 3PL (Third-Party Logistics) warehouse at Sanga that is expected to enhance nationwide fulfillment and distribution capabilities.

American drones

A US-manufactured Freely Alta X Gen2 drone completed multiple test flights on Mt Ama Dablam between Base Camp (4,600m) and Yak Camp (5,050m). It ferried oxygen cylinders and equipment up 1,600m of steep terrain. The flights were conducted by US Embassy Nepal, Seven Summit Treks and The Coca-Cola Foundation.

Samsung innovation

Samsung Nepal has launched an AI course to equip youth with digital skills. Through Samsung Innovation Campus a recent batch of graduates will be trained in coding and programming. Chang Uk Jung, Managing Director of Samsung Nepal says, "Through Samsung Innovation Campus, Samsung is equipping young people with the skills, confidence and innovative mindset to help lead Nepal's digital future."

Nabil awarded

Nabil Bank has been awarded Best Commercial Bank at the Emerging Asia Conclave and Awards 2026 in New Delhi. The awards ceremony was hosted by the Indian Chamber of Commerce, with participant countries including India, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand and Bangladesh.



Darchula school

The foundation stone of Gokuleshwor Secondary School in Darchula to be built with financial assistance of Rs75 million from India, was laid by Basist Nandan, First Secretary of the Embassy of India in Kathmandu, and Bijay Singh Dhami, Mayor of Shailyashikhar Municipality.

Kumari Bank & Nimbus

Kumari Bank and Nimbus Group have signed an agreement to collaborate on data packages and international travel services. After installing the Nimbuzz e-sim, users can apply for data packages at affordable rates and apply for international travel permits through Kumari Bank's app as well.



Shinta Mani Mustang

Shinta Mani Mustang has been named No 1 hotel in the annual Robb Report's 50 Greatest Luxury Hotels on Earth 2026. Namgyal Sherpa, CEO of Sherpa Hospitality Group says, "This recognition from Robb Report demonstrates that Nepal can stand alongside the world's most celebrated luxury destinations while remaining authentic to its identity."

JICA scholarship

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Nepal have signed the grant agreement for The Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) 2026. Valued at 410 million Yen, 20 seats are allocated for a two-year master's program and 2 seats for a three-year doctoral program for Nepalis every year.

Nagdhunga inaugurated

The 2.6km Nagdhunga-Sisnekhola tunnel was inaugurated last week after six years of construction. Infrastructure Development Minister Sunil Lamsal, Japanese Ambassador Maeda Toru and President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Tanaka Akihiko were present for the ribbon-cutting ceremony carried out by a construction worker of the tunnel.

Ecommerce website

An e-commerce website, gtradea.com, expected to bridge the gap between Nepali and international traders through direct global supply access has been launched. Users have the option of direct preferred bank payment and insurance as well.

Madhya Chameliya

The Madhya Chameliya Hydropower Project in Darchula is moving ahead with construction after the completion of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). At a cost of Rs6.23 billion, the project is expected to be completed within three years.

GIBL Nagarik App

Customers seeking to open an account at Global IME Bank can now do so through Nagarik App. Users can scan the code at the bank's website and then follow the process. User details required for the account will be pulled from the Nagarik App with consent.



inDrive women

inDrive Driving Naari Nepal concluded its first cohort through a certification ceremony wherein ten women trained in two-wheeler driving over three months to pursue safe and independent livelihoods.

Devendra Raj Panday's 'idea of integrity'

Administrator, economist, civil society activist and author of a new pathway against corruption

Prem Jung Thapa

Devendra Raj Panday who died on 15 July in Kathmandu lived a remarkable life that was a shining multidimensional mosaic. The constant guiding beacon he followed and espoused for others was 'integrity'.

He himself was exemplary in the practice of integrity in both his personal and professional lives, and this was widely known and appreciated in Nepal and abroad. It was his defining trademark, making him a genuine rarity.

Later in his career, he became engrossed with a different perspective: the 'idea of integrity' as a foundational normative principle necessary to create a just and equitable society and nation.

His initial exposition of this idea was related to his steadfast role as an anticorruption campaigner in Transparency International. He was not just appalled at the level of public corruption in Nepal, but sought to better understand and analyse the causes and consequences of corruption more generally.

As he read the wider scholarly literature on corruption and economic development, he was dissatisfied with conventional frameworks used to identify causes and prescriptions to control it.

His key insight on why anticorruption campaigns in Nepal and elsewhere have been ineffectual, regardless of the menu they followed, is that they missed the critical element of integrity in their underlying values systems.

He espoused a broader meaning of integrity as a fostering value focused not just on self-interest, but also on genuine concern for 'the other'.

'Integrity deficit disorder' in political or socio-economic systems leads to many other ills – injustice, inequalities, discrimination, and even violence in such communities.

He developed this in the scholarly 2018 book, *The Idea of Integrity and the Universe of Corruption and Anticorruption*. On periodic family visits to the United States over several years, he went to university libraries and diligently took copious notes that resulted in this enthralling book.

The Introduction chapter begins with: 'The best way to be acquainted with a subject is to write a book about it (Benjamin Disraeli)'. I came upon his book late during a call on him in mid-2025, when I received a now cherished autographed copy. I had only read it cursorily and was looking forward to discussing his views and his scholarship in my next stay in Kathmandu this year. But alas that was not to be.

I first met Devendra Raj Panday on starting work in 1981 at the then Integrated Development System (IDS, now the Institute for Integrated Development Studies, IIDS). He was Executive Director and new to IDS, which itself was



new. As with new and small things, we had a lot of close interactions that helped define my career and world view. It was my very good fortune.

Reviewing and even critiquing some aspects of his 'idea of integrity' is now my way of paying tribute to my mentor, an institution builder and distinguished scholar.

His grand thesis was the need to develop integrity at the system level as a prerequisite for a just and fair society, without corruption.

This is an extensively researched book, covering many different academic disciplines and perspectives on the sources, types, and consequences of corruption. He delved into copious citations from and analyses of the grand themes in the philosophical, political, and religion and ethics literature on corruption.

He also reviewed narrower perspectives on the economics of corruption, focusing on the design of incentives and punishment that can make the expected returns to corrupt behaviour lower than the returns to honest behaviour.

He is critical, however, of this narrow economic approach which sometimes lead to the absurd conclusion that some level of corruption may not only be inevitable, but even desirable.

He also analyses concrete examples of different types of corruption, especially political corruption from many countries, including the US. There is even a short Appendix titled 'US and Nepal: same game?' to illustrate his key point that despite great differences across countries with unique histories and different levels of democratic processes and economic development, there is also a common source for

corruption due to a value system deficient in the idea of integrity.

In other words, while political structure and socio-economic contexts differ across countries, and over time within a country, corruption is always on the menu. In the case of Nepal, it is indeed a big disappointment for him that corruption has persisted so strongly, despite several major political paradigm shifts and advances in the democracy journey that he himself helped usher in.

His other disappointment was that despite the rapid expansion in anticorruption advocacy globally, such as by Transparency International and now including major donor agencies like the World Bank, there has been little improvement to show for it all.

Again, he notes the missing link is the absence of an integrity framework that defeats the anticorruption agenda.

He also worried about the dangers of anticorruption activities and corruption going hand in hand. Anticorruption agencies and actors themselves become protectors or shield for their corrupt political masters, and also engage in vindictive campaigns against political opponents or preceding government officials.

There is not much discussion in the book on what the specific stepping stones are to build and enhance the integrity framework. Nor does it offer advice on specific practical steps needed to design an effective anticorruption toolkit even when the integrity framework is not fully developed.

But even in this limited dimension of the book, he has a clear message: the proper metric for assessing the effectiveness of anticorruption remedies is not the

processes or legal actions taken, but rather the changed outcomes generated for the common citizen.

Since the direct and indirect costs of systemic corruption are mainly borne by ordinary people, the effectiveness of any remedies should also be based on what has changed in their outcomes and lived experiences.

This is a novel and valuable insight – rooted not much in the corruption literature he mastered but more so in his vast experience and insights gained from the rural 'swabalamban bikas' campaigns at IDS starting from Jhadewa of Palpa, and later at the Rural Self-reliance Development Centre.

Another prescription in this book is the special role attached to professional groups (engineers, doctors, lawyers) in building the integrity framework. Professionals are enjoined not just to be experts in their fields and to practice it well, but also to build character based on the values and norms they wish to stand for and advocate for others.

This is no doubt a reflection of his civil society activism campaigns that he ably led, and which demonstrated the great merits of coordinated action by professional and other groups based on shared values and visions.

Given the usual secretive nature of corruption, it is not feasible to empirically test the novel thesis of this book: that building integrity at a systemic level is the key pathway to reducing corruption. There are no easy ways to devise an 'integrity index' and relate it to the also difficult-to-measure levels of corruption in the real world.

However, there is some indirect corroboration of this thesis from a surprising source: the now growing literature on laboratory-based experiments conducted by economists and other corruption researchers.

SIMULATING CORRUPTION
These experiments create specific settings that simulate the environment in which corrupt decisions are made, with small but real monetary payments made to the players (usually university students) as per the rules devised for this game.

There are of course problems in studying corruption through laboratory experiments, and the generalisations to be made from them. But well-designed useful insights do follow because such experiments make it possible to directly observe corrupt behaviour at the individual-decision level in a specific controlled setting where other confounding factors are absent.

One strand in this experimental literature focuses on the role of intrinsic motivations of individuals in the fight against corruption. The results show that the control of corruption depends on incentives embodied in existing institutions, and the broader accepted values.

One person's decision to engage in or abstain from corruption in

a simple experiment can depend critically on the level of corruption shown by other players in these experiments. The results are that the levels of corruption in the game playing are unpredictable. There can be multiple outcomes with varying levels of corruption even if the underlying rules of the game and monetary incentives are the same.

The real world inference is that corruption levels can differ in unexplained ways even if the political and socio-economic settings are similar across different countries. Multiple 'corruption equilibria' are possible for any given setting.

And some countries can converge to the lower ends (worse types) of these multiple equilibria, creating a 'corruption trap' from which it is extremely difficult to escape.

When corruption becomes so systemic, one needs a 'big push' to get out of this trap. And such a system-wide big push is something I can readily relate to the 'idea of integrity'.

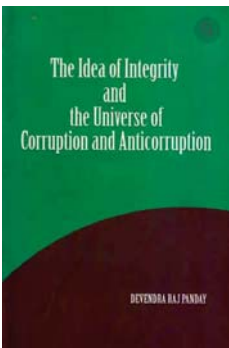
Another indirect validation comes from an intriguing laboratory bribery experiment done with a sample of Oxford University students from over 40 countries, characterised by markedly different levels of corruption.

The findings showed that even in a faraway laboratory setting the corruption preferences behaviour of these students could be predicted by the level of corruption in the students' home countries, as proxied by Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index.

I believe this reflects the persistence of the 'idea of integrity' that individuals inherit from the settings they have grown up in.

Let us then say farewell to Devendra Raj Panday with the conviction that the efforts to find strong antidotes (vaccines?) against corruption must be built on the DNA of his 'idea of integrity' at the systems level, notwithstanding how difficult that task is. 🇳🇵

Prem Jung Thapa is an economist, with degrees from the University of California at Berkeley and The Australian National University. He worked at IDS for ten years from 1981 and for most of this time Devendra Raj Panday was the Executive Director and a mentor.



The Idea of Integrity and the Universe of Corruption and Anticorruption by Devendra Raj Panday Redink Books, 2018 524 pages \$47

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Nepal's biggest export to India: INSTAGRAM REELS

Not palm oil. Not hydropower. Footage.

Nobel Rimal



A clip from Kathmandu, September 2025. A young man plants himself in front of a police water cannon, letting the water jet smash into him. Ten months later the same frame is circulating in Indian feeds as fan art, recoloured and captioned: Let's go Indian GenZ.

However many in India, including the Cockroach Janta Party, have tried to say that what happened there this month is fundamentally different from Nepal, Bangladesh or Sri Lanka, there are parallels. Especially in the world of memes.

Several genres of reels have gone across the border. In one, an Indian creator walks through Kathmandu praising the civic sense of Nepalis as evidence about his own country's failures.

In another, a Nepali creator films an Indian tourist cooking on a Pokhara footpath and holds him up as evidence for Indian tourists polluting Nepal.

The same message is coming from opposite directions. Both do the same work — for a certain kind of Indian content creator tourist visiting Pokhara, Nepal is not just a neighbour but a reference image in the feed.

Seventy-six Nepalis died in September 2025. In Delhi's BJP protests there were batons, tear gas, detentions and a 26-day hunger strike, but no one was killed although dozens of earlier suicides were blamed on leaked NEET exam papers.

What interests me is the trade route. Nepal's actual exports to India move through Birganj. They queue at customs, get weighed, pay, and wait. But an Instagram reel crosses in a fraction of a second, pays no duty, needs no transit agreement, and clears Raxaul without anyone at the border knowing it happened.

The only party taking a cut is the Dalal - Meta™. And Meta Sahib takes it in attention rather than rupees. This is the most efficient smuggler on the virtual border between India and Nepal, and the products are memes and meme formats.

During the September protests I made a meme setting the 'who was interested in each other first?' TikTok sound, normally a couples' bit, against a line of riot police. It did about 2 million views. The same sound turned up on Indian feeds this summer, pointed at the same target.

I made one of these, so I know exactly how little effort it takes and how far it goes. The Subway Surfers chase edit crossed too. So did the water cannon. Memes are meant to be shared, remixed, and redistributed. Yet what memes are redistributed, remixed or shared tells us more than the likes, comments or shares.



SUMMONS AND DRILL

In Nepal, the memes were about showing up, and most of them were made after showing up. The aura shot in front of the water cannon. The silhouette against the burning building. What spread hardest was footage of arrival, of bodies present where they were not supposed to be. Our meme was a summons.

Jantar Mantar in Delhi had a lot of them too. But there was a second layer. Indian memes were also about dodging: how to take a water cannon, finding loopholes so that the police do not beat you. One meme was cut like a film scene, captioned: 'Me at the protest saving a 10/10 baddie from the water cannon', showing a hero pulling the heroine clear of

the water cannon, saving her from the state's violence.

That is what watching a neighbour gets you. India's youth did not only replicate our memes, they studied our footage and worked out what a protest against the government actually requires.

COSTUME AND INSIGNIA

Jantar Mantar had Superman, Spider-Man and at least one T-Rex. It had a man dressed as Mahatma Gandhi captioned 'wild card entry', on the joke that things had got bad enough for Gandhi to come back from the dead and protest. That post got 600,000 likes. People carried printed memes as placards.



PHOTOS: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Kathmandu had the skull-and-bones and straw hat. Straw hats turned up at Jantar Mantar, but as guests. They were not the host language. The costumed appearances were individual bits, each its own post, each competing with the others.

AURA ECONOMY

There is a name for this: aura farming. It works for the movement, in the crudest possible way. An outrageous costume at the protest trends. Trending brings traction. Traction brings the next crowd. The joke is load-bearing.

Look at what it costs, though. The T-Rex flattens the thing it is standing inside. What



happened at Jantar Mantar was a generation revolting against a system that has failed it for years and buried some of its peers. In costume, it is photographed as a festival. And people who arrive having seen a festival come to film one.

I think it's important to understand that we underestimate how badly the young want to go viral. Ask any gen-alpha kid what they want to be when they grow up - they will most likely say vlogger, youtuber, or gamer. This week three Nepali tots walking from school in colourful raincoats were filmed on TikTok, went viral, and they were handed scholarships.

Virality is no longer only social capital. It is a working economic instrument, and for a

lot of young people it is the only one available without connections.

That pull gets people to dance in front of a camera. It gets them to say outrageous things on livecam. It is not why anyone marched on Sansad Marg last month or in Baneswor last year. But it was somewhere in the mix, which tells you something about my generation worth sitting with.

IDENTITY SLOT

When the Chief Justice of India called unemployed young people cockroaches and parasites, the next morning there was a graphic reading Main Bhi Cockroach, and within four days the account carrying it had more followers than the BJP.

India is not short of identities on offer. Religion, caste, class, region, language, are all older than the republic and all contested. The cockroach is keyed to none of them. To claim it you need nothing except to be online. Put the emoji in your bio and you are in.

Note the direction, though. Our defining insult pointed up. Nepo kid was the youth naming the elite. In India, it came down from the Chief Justice, the elite naming the youth as vermin, and it was caught in mid-air and worn. What a catch.

ENDINGS DIFFER

None of this explains why one movement took a government and the other only took a minister.

Leaderlessness does. A movement with nobody at its head cannot be negotiated with. It can only be survived or fled from, and K P Oli fled. India's Cockroaches had a founder who is a professional communications strategist, a manifesto, named spokespersons. On 24 July they sat down with two union ministers. On the 25th Dharmendra Pradhan resigned. That evening they went home.



Me at the protest, saving a 10/10 baddie from the water cannon.



State capacity matters a lot. Nepal also banned 26 platforms before the protest, India withheld one account and got a replacement titled Cockroach Is Back, with a bio saying 'cockroaches do not die'.

Delhi had watched Dhaka in 2024 and Kathmandu in 2025 and drawn the obvious conclusion that a 'GenZ' movement handled badly does not stay a student movement. Its police were trained for a job ours had never expected to do.

SCAPEGOAT

René Girard argued that a community in crisis resolves it by converging on a single victim. Expel him and peace returns, while whatever caused the crisis stays exactly where it was.

We do this constantly. A rural road washes out in the first monsoon after it is blacktopped. The district engineer is suspended, his name runs in the papers, the anger has somewhere to go. The contractor who has won that tender for a decade bids again in the autumn. Nobody suspends the procurement process. That is the scapegoat, to redirect people's anger towards a person instead of a system.

A memetic movement is unusually good at producing a mimetic scapegoat, because both run on imitation. A meme is imitation that spreads. A scapegoat is imitation that converges. The format wants one face in the frame.

You could meme the National Testing Agency, but you cannot scapegoat it. It is too abstract a structure. You can meme a minister, and you can scapegoat him. Done and dusted. Guyz, the education minister resigned, all problems fixed! Not.

Pradhan is gone. The leak that made 2.2 million Indian students sit the same exam twice is not addressed by his absence. Neither is the education policy, nor the revolving door between the bench and the Cabinet that the CJP named in its own manifesto. The sacrifice worked and that is exactly the problem.

FROM HERE

I only know the Indian protest through what my Meta™ Dalal chose to hand me. It is possible I only saw the memes.

But I know what the week after feels like. We got our scapegoat in three days. We burned down Parliament, cremated our dead, and we elected a prime minister who is better at Facebook than anyone else in South Asia. Ten months on, the grievance that put us on the street is intact.

A resignation is a receipt, not a reform. My message to GenZ Indians: Ride the wave. Then, watch the next exam cycle instead of the next trend.



Events



Chimteshwor Mahadev Hike
Join Hike For Nepal's Chimteshwor Mahadev hike this weekend and walk through scenic, monsoon-fresh trails.
1 August, Rs1,000, 6:40am, Brikuti Mandap

Charcuterie and Conversations

Conversations, cocktails, connections. Sounds like your thing? Register for this networking event and meet like-minded people
31 July, Rs799, 5pm onwards, Caffeophilia, Paknajol



Lego Exhibition
Explore a curated LEGO exhibition and a paid two-day workshop where you can build and your own creations. No age limits Check KGH Facebook page for more details.
1-2 August, 11am-6:30pm, KGH, Thamel

Jolene

A social drama, ‘जेलिन्’ has different takes on love as both sanctuary and prison. Starring Meera Khadka, Anoj Pandey, and Nishan Khatri.
Until 14 August, 5:15pm (Except Tuesdays), Kausi Theatre, Teku

Chromatic Psyche

Experience a collective exhibition where creativity, emotion, and artistic expression come together.
Until 23 August, 10am-7pm, Annapurna Gallery, Radhe Radhe, Bhaktapur



Chhaya Friday Bazaar
Indulge in wide varieties of bakeries and other delicacies, along with handicrafts by local artisans, clothing and more. Support local businesses.
Fridays, 12pm-6pm, Chhaya Center, Thamel

Shabdhakiri: Raw Sessions

Join with close ones for an intimate evening with poetry and stories. Book seats through esewa.
1 August, 6:30pm onwards, Rs500-Rs1,500, Attic, Gyaneshwor



Music

Rock Junction

Experience electrifying performances by The Edge band and The Chumbak this weekend. Get tickets through Khalti.
1 August, Rs1,000-Rs6,000, 8pm onwards, Club Nova, Thamel

Ghazal Evening

Enjoy a soulful musical performance by Yatsarga Band, accompanied by good food and a cosy ambience, with friends and family.
31 July, 6:30pm onwards, Bhumi Restaurant and Bar, Lazimpat



Delly Rai & KJC

Hong Kong-based musician Delly Rai, frontman of Dibya Dristi, will perform alongside musicians from Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory for the first edition of Mosaic, KJC's new live music series.
1 August, 7pm onwards, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel

Apurva Tamang Live

Watch Apurva Tamang perform some of his crowd favourites and entertain the audience. An evening of pop music awaits.
14 August, Rs1,000, 7pm onwards, XO Club, Thamel



Mark Band

Mark Band serenades the crowd this weekend with some of their greatest hits. Head to Hard Rock Cafe for some good music and great food.
31 July, 6pm-9pm, Hard Rock Cafe, Darbar Marg



Getaway



Hotel Barahi

Located just beyond the banks of Phewa Lake, Hotel Barahi offers stunning views and luxury rooms. The rooms are decorated with rustic pieces, earthy tones and a clean design that will leave you feeling relaxed.
Lakeside, Pokhara, (61) 454850 / 9856063526

Maruni Sanctuary Lodge

Chitwan National Park is home to a wide range of flora and fauna. From the comfort of the cabins and cottages of this lodge, one can take a peek at the wandering wildlife and nature of the park.
Sauraha (01) 4700632



The Old Inn

This B&B consists of two beautiful timber and brick Newa townhouses and traditional design, overlooking a serene, traffic-free bazaar. The view of Central Himalaya from Annapurna in the west to Langtang and beyond in the east is magnificent.
Bandipur (065) 520110 / 9808882270

Grand Norling

Enjoy a calm and relaxing stay at the Grand Norling's spacious bedrooms with adjoining bathrooms, a large balcony with sights of the golf course, monkeys and deer herds, and not to forget, the garden.
Gokarna (01) 4910193

Chandragiri Hills

Chandragiri Resort sits atop lush green hills overlooking Kathmandu Valley. Catch glimpses of mountains, marvel at stunning sunsets and take a dip in their infinity pool before the summer ends.
Chandragiri (01) 5970796



Dining

Breakfast triangle

Start your morning with a delightful breakfast spread, featuring fresh favorites, local delights, and international classics. Buy two breakfasts and get 1 free.
Until 15 August, Rs1,200 per breakfast, Holiday Inn Express Kathmandu

Mechung

Eat the best of Tibet at this authentic Tibetan restaurant. The sha phaley, thukpa and gyuma are a must.
Boudha (01) 4477759



Achaar Ghar

Satisfy the desire for home-cooked meals along with the various choices of pickles prepared using recipes passed down from generations.
Kupondol (01) 5912440

Merhabha Turkish Restaurant

With over 90 items in their menu, Merhabha offers the best and most of Turkish food. The Iskender kebab and Turkish Pizza are must-tries. Ask the chef for recommendations if the menu overwhelms you.
Chaksibari Marg, 9840931141



Donut Drool

From custard, cinnamon to strawberry, blueberry to their signature cream cheese, Donut Drool has a wide variety of tasty treats. Other bakery items including cookies, bread, cake and their signature drinks are also on the menu.
Pulchok, 9802367543 / Dhapasi, 9861792555

Weekend Weather



A Mature Monsoon

The monsoon took a short breather this week, as the low pressure system moved westward over Central India and skirted the Himalaya. But another monsoonal trough is amassing over the Bay of Bengal (seen in the satellite image). This system is expected to bring more showers next week, some of it thundery because of thermal updrafts.



Our Pick



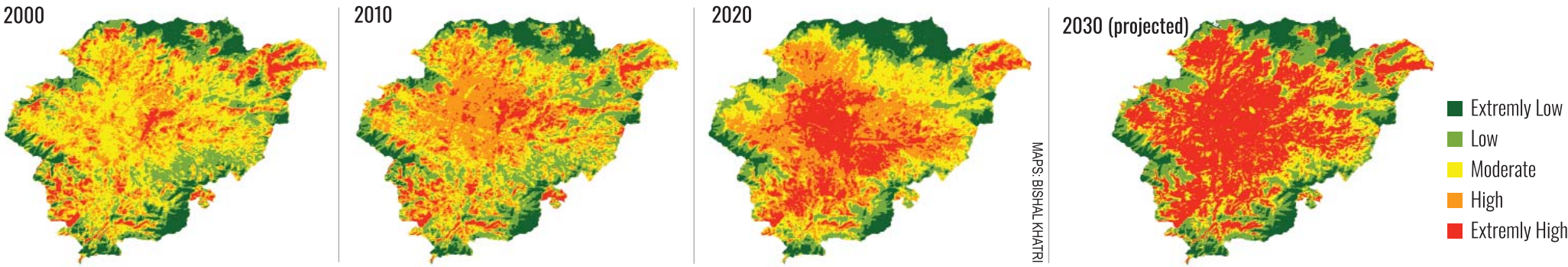
Four years after the events of No Way Home, Peter Parker--forgotten by all of his loved ones--works full-time as Spider-Man, saving New York City one villain at a time. But the alienation from MJ and Ned combined with the pressures of his crime-fighting life sparks a physical change in him that Peter cannot figure out, even as he faces one of the most powerful threats since he began his superhero career. Spider-Man: Brand New Day stars Tom Holland, Zendaya, Jacob Batalon, Sadie Sink, Jon Bernthal, Florence Pugh, and Mark Ruffalo. Now showing at nearby theatres.

सामाजिक सञ्जाल प्रयोगमा सचेतता अपनाऔं

- सामाजिक सञ्जालमा अपरिचित व्यक्तिको साथी बन्ने अनुरोधलाई विश्वस्त भएर मात्र प्रतिक्रिया जनाऔं ।
- अपरिचित व्यक्तिलाई जथाभावी साथी बन्न अनुरोध नपठाऔं ।
- सामाजिक सञ्जाल तथा अन्य विद्युतीय माध्यमबाट चिड्छा पुरस्कार जस्ता आर्थिक प्रलोभनका प्रस्तावको भरमा नपरौं ।
- आफूले प्रवाह गरेका सन्देश वा सूचनाबाट समाजमा पर्नसक्ने नकारात्मक प्रभावको ख्याल गरौं ।
- आफ्नो सन्देशले कुनै व्यक्ति वा अन्य कुनै समुदायको आत्मसम्मानमा चोट नपुऱ्याऔं ।



नेपाल सरकार
विज्ञापन बोर्ड



HOT, HOTTER, HOTTEST: Summer Urban Heat Island effect in Kathmandu Valley.

How to cool Kathmandu’s heat bubble

We know the problem of the urban heat island effect, we know how to solve it, we just need decisive action



KUNDADIXIT

Prasesh Pote Shrestha

Like other South Asian cities, Kathmandu also grapples with the trilemma of rapid urbanisation, ever expanding and often unplanned grey infrastructure, and an increasingly challenging thermal environment for its dwellers.

With another Rs120 million intersection project planned, the inescapability of this crisis proves once more that infrastructure expansion without taking climate change into account may deepen the vicious cycle of poor urban planning and escalating heat stress.

Kathmandu Valley summers have become noticeably hotter in recent years. Although pre-monsoon precipitation plays a crucial role in determining the intensity of summer heat in a given year, it cannot reduce the temperature gap between Kathmandu’s urban core and adjoining areas.

This year, for example, above-average pre-monsoon rainfall kept the valley’s summer temperatures moderate and within the 30°C threshold. But the city core within the Ring Road remained 1°C to 4°C hotter than the surrounding outskirts.

This phenomenon - known as the urban heat island (UHI), or the trapping and retention of heat in concrete-dense conglomerations of built-up areas, is making Kathmandu increasingly oppressive during summer.

Over the past three decades the Valley has seen more than fourfold increase in built-up areas, with approximately 100 sq km of vegetation and agricultural land replaced per decade between 1990 and 2020. The share of open space within the Valley itself has also declined drastically from 2.34% in 2014 to 0.5% in 2025.

This outward and inward expansion of built-up areas underscores the scale and pressure

of urbanisation unfolding in the Valley. Population density has also surged in parallel, rising from 8,480 people per sq km in the 1991 Census to 17,440 in 2021.

Over the last 50 years Kathmandu’s urban area has expanded nearly 2.5 times, reaching 49.45 sq km in 2025/26. This expansion implies a higher proportion of impervious surfaces, greater reliance on natural gas and petroleum products for domestic and commercial heating or cooling, transportation, and increasing loss of urban greenery and wetlands.

Together, these changes reduce natural cooling capacity while intensifying the UHI effect, compounding both environmental stress and public health risks in the valley.

SOLUTIONS

Although UHI is growing persistently with anthropogenic climate change and global warming, it is manageable if not fully eliminable. Emerging examples from across Europe and the US demonstrate how a suite of mitigation strategies combining green infrastructure, reflective materials, water-sensitive design, and strong policy frameworks, can reduce UHI intensity.

Kathmandu, too, has community-led tree planting, open parks, and peri-urban forests and remaining wetlands that support natural and evaporative cooling. These green-blue spaces can lower local temperatures by 0.85°C to 1.2°C compared to nearby concrete-dense built-up areas. However, these spaces are shrinking and managing them remains a challenge.

In line with UN-Habitat’s recommendation of allocating 15%–20% of urban land to open green public spaces, Kathmandu city authorities have set a target to raise the share to only 5% –7% of the total city area by 2035.

Nepal’s National Land Policy 2019 can bolster this effort through its provisions to control illegal

encroachment on public and government land, reclaim such areas, promote land pooling and readjustment through community participation, and support the conversion of vacant and unused Guthi land to open spaces, among other measures.

Moreover, Kathmandu has heritage architecture which can work as a climate adaptation tool with cooling through courtyards and cross-ventilation in traditional Newari designs.

Building on this traditional knowledge system, the National Urban Policy 2024 envisions Kathmandu as a traditional, cultural, and historic city, encouraging the integration of heritage-based design principles into the modern built-up environment. Such measures can be instrumental in managing the Valley’s UHI challenge - particularly by embedding the design and making the choice on bio-based building materials.

In Bhaktapur, Kirtipur and Kathmandu, many of these actions—including fired brick mud housing

with clay roof tiling, rooftop farming, green river corridors, local ponds or water sprouts revival and courtyard islands – are still common. While such initiatives are encouraging, they remain largely scattered and non-incremental.

Further, Nepal’s National Urban Development Strategy 2017 and several municipal climate action plans already include UHI-related measures, even though their implementation remains uneven.

Given the disconcerting intensity and frequency of extreme temperature events in Nepal and across the Hindu Kush Himalaya region, it is imperative to amplify UHI mitigation actions with speed and proactivity.

We must remember that while climate change is irreversible, UHI effects can still be contained. But only if right interventions shape the development aspiration and nature-based solutions are scaled up and implemented decisively. 🇳🇵

Prasesh Pote Shrestha is an environmental engineer who was affiliated with ICIMOD.

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Case stacked against sexual violence s

Graffiti artist who crusaded against sexual violence, is himself accused of rape and abuse

Aishwarya Baidar

In 2023, Mira received a private message on her Instagram. It was from graffiti artist Aditya A, better known as SadhuX. Mira, who was 17 at the time and interested in graffiti, was excited to be contacted by an established artist.

The private message turned into a conversation where Aditya A, who was also connected to Mira’s ex-boyfriend, a fellow graffiti artist, gave her advice on rekindling her relationship.

“He had liked and shared a picture I had posted. Then, he sent me a DM, calling it cool,” Mira recounted. “I was interested in graffiti, and when he offered to teach me art, I was excited.”

Aditya A then invited Mira to visit his Lazimpat studio, promising art lessons and advice on the relationship with her ex. She arrived at the studio between 8PM and 9PM, but was unnerved to find him much older than she expected.

Her unease grew when she realised his ‘studio’ was a bedroom. Sensing that something might go wrong, she wrote a note on her phone, ‘If something happens to me tonight, I am at SadhuX studio,’ and secretly began an audio recording.

First, Aditya A asked Mira her age and when she told him she was 17, he replied that that could be a “problem” for him. She jokingly asked him if he was a pedophile and

he replied that he was “a good pedophile”. He then asked her to take off her jacket and tried to touch her inappropriately. After she protested, he stopped and said that he wouldn’t do it anymore. Aditya A then offered her lavender tea and an unknown substance to smoke, after which she felt dizzy. Then, Aditya A raped her.

“He tried to forcibly kiss me, and I couldn’t breathe,” she told me, her voice trembling. “He held my hands firmly, pinning me down. I felt weak and unable to move. I said no over and over, but he forcefully did what he wanted.”

Mira alleges that Aditya A took nude photos of her that night, and she met him a few days later to demand that he delete them. Aditya A deleted the videos, but continued contacting her on Instagram, inviting her back to his studio.

Aditya A, 42, is a well-known graffiti artist whose work can be seen across the Kathmandu Valley. His art, including murals of sadhus alongside cartoon-like figures with spray cans, is part of a broader spread of street art that includes stencils, paste-ups, and tags.

A former co-founder of an art gallery, Aditya A has exhibited in galleries such as the Millerntor Gallery in Hamburg and St+ART in India. His work claims to interrogate social taboos, including ‘rape culture’. His stencil work of the Kumari with the words ‘Rape Me’ underneath attracted significant media attention in 2015. It was portrayed as a bold statement against the contradiction of pervasive rape in a society that reveres girls as living goddesses.

Despite his public stance against sexual violence, Aditya A has been accused of rape, sexual abuse, and physical violence by at least four individuals – three women and one man.



Their accounts, taking place over multiple years, include harrowing experiences of brutal rapes and beatings.

Sara is also in the art field and says she endured repeated abuse and violence during her eight-year relationship and marriage with SadhuX who she accused of repeatedly physically assaulting her. She was reluctant to end the marriage because of her immigration status.

“I had broken ribs, and my face was bruised, I was bleeding all over, and there were bite marks in my ear,” she recounted.

Two friends corroborated Sara’s account of her ordeal. One told me: “There were bruises all over her

face. Her ears had bite marks, and she told us Aditya A attacked her and locked her.”

Anna, a 38-year-old hospitality worker, said Aryal raped her when they were dating in college in 2004 when she was 15. “We frequented clubs and pubs in Thamel, where Aditya A smoked weed and used heroin,” she said.

One night, she said an intoxicated Aditya A took her to a hotel. “I was unconscious and couldn’t really move, but it was a different era so I didn’t understand what happened. I liked him and if he had just been nice to me, I would have slept with him,” she said.

They dated for two years, and it took a long time for Anna to realise

that Aditya A had raped her when she was too impaired to consent. But she was young and it was Nepal before the MeToo era. “Had I filed a [police] complaint then, nobody would have believed me,” she said.

Aditya A was arrested in January 2026 when police raided a party at a resort in Godavari. Nine individuals, including six foreign nationals and three Nepalis, were detained with six pieces of LSD, 22.240 grams of cannabis, 61 grams of charas, one piece of MDMA, and four grams of magic mushrooms from the site.

Aditya A also preyed on men. Rahul, a 31-year-old gay man, described Aditya A’s predilection towards violent sexual encounters.

Nepal needs to overhaul its rape l

Too much is left to the subjective discretion of men in misogynistic agencies



Every now and then Nepal is reminded of its misogyny, when a rape case becomes so tragic that the country is taken aback by its own violent gender hierarchy.

Girls who do not survive gain national attention, making the country rally against rape and gender based violence.

Civic discourse and media coverage spotlight names such as Nirmala Pant and Inisha BK because their stories are too jarring, too mysterious, and too tragic not to tell and retell.

But there are more survivors, in its literal sense, those living after enduring repeated violence, verbal and physical abuse, intimate partner violence and blatant misogyny. Nepal’s collective attention does not dwell on those crimes, or easily tolerates them.

In 2024, Nepal police reports put the number of rape cases at 2,507. The number of domestic violence cases was 16,416. Behind these numbers are women who have had their dignity stripped away, often violently — in 91.1% of cases by someone she knows.

Rape or sexual violence against women is also a political weapon used by men, and an example is the case of Amisha Parajuli. When she spoke in favour of K P Oli, who was politically unpopular post GenZ protest, she was inundated with threats of violence and rape.

Sexual violence is a tool of power that men have often wielded when they want to shrink women’s space in society. Female candidates who campaigned in the March election were met with intense sexual objectification. Women survivors are accused of scheming to honeytrap influential men such as Sagar Lamsal aka Bale, Sandip Lamichhane, or Paul Shah.

In March, Suraj Singh Thakuri’s Inside the Bunker on YouTube featured two women with indescribable accounts of surviving violence. “I believe I am a fighter,” said one of the survivors, comparing herself to Nirmala Pant. Even though she survived, she says

she has been denied justice because of lack of support from family and her perpetrators enjoying impunity.

She is sheltered by Rakshya Nepal which is advocating for death penalty for perpetrators of rape. Another survivor endured rape not just from her father but with other men he pimped for. In Thakuri’s studio she recounts being forced as a child to have sex with men as her father watched.

She attempted suicide 14 times and had multiple abortions. She confided in her mother who was in denial. The father is now in jail sentenced for life, which she believes is not enough punishment.

Gita KC Darnal, the founder of Sajha Sahayatri Nepal that shelters survivors of rape and other sexual violence, says most were abused by someone they knew, particularly immediate male family members. Some were girls as young as five when they were rescued.

Darnal says that perpetrators of rape must be separated from other criminals because of the nature of their crime. Society condemns theft or murder but outrage towards sexual and gender-based violence is left to the subjective judgement of people in law enforcement.

“As long as people are not

taught to respect women, to see women as worthy of respect and as long as people don’t understand consent, the problem of rape will persist,” Darnal told us. “In prisons, men and underage boys must be reeducated against their misogyny and taught skills to reintegrate back into society so that they do not recommit crimes.”

LAWLESS

Nepal’s laws have played a role in legitimising rape and denied justice to survivors through the gaps and hierarchies they encode. The two-year statute of limitations on rape is based on a penal code that tells survivors that their trauma has an expiry date. The standard argument is that evidence deteriorates over time and becomes unreliable.

“If evidence degradation is the primary concern, what meaningful legal distinction separates 180 days from one year, two years, or three years? Biological evidence does not survive any of these windows,” says rights lawyer Jesselina Rana.

The evidence rationale, she argues, is neither a principled legal position nor a survivor-centric one, but rather an excuse that has been recycled to justify each

incremental extension while resisting full repeal.

“Most serious crimes in Nepal carry no comparable time restriction,” she adds, arguing that the statute of limitations on rape functions as a targeted barrier that applies specifically to survivors of sexual violence. It is a choice that reflects social stigma written into law rather than any neutral legal logic.

Under Section 229(2) of the National Penal (Code) Act, 2017, as amended in 2022, an adult survivor has two years from the date of the crime to file a complaint. For a minor, that clock does not begin until she turns 18. Incest, meanwhile, carries no time limit at all.

Rana adds, “The one glaring provision, even within an already limited timeframe is where the offence of rape is committed against someone in detention, under captivity, or held hostage. In those cases, the window shrinks to just three months from the date of release of the person. That is the shortest limit of all, applied to some of the most vulnerable survivors.”

Nepal has ratified international treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the

e survivors



PHOTOS: SUMAN NEPALI

After meeting Aditya A at a club a few years ago, they went to Rahul’s home to “hook up”. The sex was consensual, but it was rough and violent. “I had bite marks from my neck to my upper body, I was badly scarred. I still have a permanent mark under my nipple,” Rahul said. “I also found he had urinated on my room’s floor.” Only one of the survivors, Sara, reported Aditya A to the police. But she was told to resolve the matter mutually since they were in a relationship. The others did not because of social stigma and fears of targeted retaliation. Aditya A’s father is a former high-ranking police officer, and

survivors feared the police would favour him and disregard their complaints, opening them up to counter-persecution. For Mira, who was 17 when she was raped by Aditya A, going to the police was never an option. Coming from rural Nepal, she feared her family would blame her for the assault, potentially forcing her to return home. “I am very scared that my parents will find out. My village is very male-dominated and it’s always the fault of women if something goes wrong,” she said. “If they find out, they won’t pay for my education anymore.” We called Aditya A on the phone and he strongly denied the accusations, saying he was being framed: “What is the validation for these accusations? Just because a woman said something doesn’t mean that something like that happened, it’s not fair. I’m in favour of women. Anything that causes injustice to women is not something that would happen from me.” He added that he was familiar with the accusations against him, but did not know why they were being made: “This is some feminist group who I don’t know. On what basis are they accusing me? They are making accusations against me just because I talk to them nicely.”

INSULTS AND THREATS When women do pursue legal channels for redress, they pay the social cost. In 2022, when Gaushala-26 accused the cricketer Sandeep Lamichhane of rape, her identity was leaked online, and she faced a barrage of insults, mockery, and threats. Although the Kathmandu District Court initially convicted Lamichhane of rape, the verdict was overturned by the Patan High Court on appeal. Gaushala-26 declined to appeal at the Supreme Court, citing her deteriorating mental health after years of abuse and harassment by the cricket star’s supporters. Earlier this year, artist Sujan Chitrakar, a faculty at the Kathmandu University School of Arts, was accused of grooming and unethical behaviour in pursuing a relationship with a student. Chitrakar sued the student, but the case was dismissed by the Kathmandu District Court in

February. In 2019, two TU students accused lecturer Krishna Bahadur Bhattachan of sexual harassment. In 2024, sculptor Gopal Das Shrestha ‘Kalapremi’ was accused of sexual abuse by former students. In 2025, former attorney general Yubaraj Sangroula was accused of sexual misconduct and harassment by dozens of students at the Kathmandu School of Law, where he is a teacher and executive director. None of the individuals faced any real consequences for their actions, even as the survivors still suffer social ostracisation and stigma. The emboldening of perpetrators and silencing of victims is both a societal issue and a systemic problem. Nepal’s law has set a statute of limitation of only two years for adult women to report cases of rape while minors are provisioned a period of three years after they turn 18. But advocate and criminologist Astha Dahal says: “The three year statute is not sensible from a global perspective, it is not enough time for a victim to process what happened to them.” Neither India nor China, for instance, place a statute of limitation in rape cases, allowing victims to speak out at any point in their life. “Investigation systems should bear the burden of solving cases rather than burdening victims with a deadline,” adds Dahal. Last year, Nepal Police launched its Gender-based Violence Investigation Piloting Program under which 10 district police stations have started investigating gender-based violence. In collaboration with the United Nations, the program trains female police and have reportedly built 58 gender-friendly police units across 30 districts. Only 12% of the police force is women despite a national target of 33%. Nepal Police set up its Women, Children, and Senior Citizens Centre (WCSC) in 1996, but Kriti Thapa, a Gender and Social Inclusion Officer at UNOPS, says it does not carry out investigations and is only a frontline unit to provide primary care to survivors, some with mental health support training.

“But the services they provide is only short term and cases are transferred to Crime Investigation Department and other units,” says Thapa, adding that the new piloting program only investigates domestic violence cases and serious cases are forwarded to the Nepal Police.

SOFT POLICING Advocate Dahal welcomes the progress, but says soft policing on gender-based violence reflects problems within the value system of Nepali society at large. “The police receive little training to tackle the complex policing required for gender-based violence and instead themselves affirm stereotypes,” she says, describing the pervasive view about fake cases. Manju Kumari Pokharel at the National Woman’s Commission (NWC) says there are survivors who have reached out when the police refuse to register their case: “The collective response from representatives of government and law enforcement was that they could not trust someone to be a victim and open an investigation based on allegations and until there is proof they can only view it as a case of inappropriate behaviour.” Being based in Kathmandu limits NWC’s ability to help. Dahal says the NWC is hostile and unserious: “When victims go to follow up on a case, the Commission states that there have been staffing changes and no handover has been carried out. The commission has the power to hold the police accountable so why don’t they use that power?” She raises similar concerns about the National Human Rights Commission: “Victims that go to the NHRC are asked to do all the work, she is made to feel undignified and violated as she is asked to present proof as if it’s the court of law and nothing comes out of it.” If the initial position begins with mistrust, the system is fundamentally flawed and creates more barriers for survivors. She adds, “Victims feel interrogated and the trauma of being disbelieved is just as large as the trauma of being violated.” Dahal stresses the need for a specialised police force dedicated to policing gender-based violence

which would enable it to respond in trauma-informed ways and adopt victim-centered approaches. Nepal’s court system was reformed in recent years but better implementation is required before victims feel empowered to seek justice. Section 4 of the Crime Victim Protection Act 2018 ensures the right to secrecy and anonymity of victims of harassment. “In most cases, judges don’t preside over witness examinations which is a problem as sexual harassment and rape are sensitive issues and crucial part of evidence for criminal trials but they treat it like witness protection is not important,” says Dahal. As a criminal lawyer, Dahal also sees the need for new policies in evidence preservation, confidentiality safeguards. Despite all this, she is hopeful that the political shift brought by the GenZ movement will work in favour of victims. “Younger men are starting to understand power differentials, women are forcing society to reckon with the amount of abuses they have suffered over the years,” adds Dahal, who says there are pockets of resistance in the GenZ movement against entrenched patriarchy. Speaking out publicly or pursuing legal action against powerful and influential men comes with social costs. Aditya A’s behaviour has been common knowledge in the Nepali graffiti art scene for years, survivors say, yet he continues to be invited to events where young women are present. “Abusers like SadhuX are enabled because people give them social credit,” Rena, one of Sara’s friends who corroborated her account, said. “Despite rumours, his work is still showcased in galleries and events. People need to ostracise such individuals.” On Instagram, Aditya A brands himself as a ‘shaman’ who offers individual and group ‘healing sessions’. Survivors fear he is doing the same thing to other women and men under the guise of healing. For lawyer Astha Dahal, the root of the problem is societal: “We still do not believe victims, we doubt them. We silence them.” 🇳🇵

All names of survivors have been changed for their safety.

e laws

Child, but the country’s sentencing framework for rape directly contradicts both. Punishment should reflect the nature of the crime or culpability of the perpetrator, but Nepal’s law links the sentence to the age of the victim. Perpetrators of violence against older survivors get lighter punishment, placing the burden of rape on the victim rather than on the person who committed it. The problem is compounded in cases of marital rape. The National Penal Code caps the sentence at a maximum of five years, with no provision to account for aggravating factors or the severity of the offence. This does not treat marital rape as rape, but as a lesser category of crime. It sends the message that rape in marriage is less of a crime. By recognising only women and girls as rape victims, the law also renders the sexual violence experienced by men, boys, and transgender individuals legally invisible, signalling that their suffering does not merit the same protection. Established after the Maoists integrated into mainstream politics, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission received over 66,000



complaints but resolved none involving conflict-related sexual violence. The definition of sexual violence in the TRC Act falls short of international standards, and there is a lack of victim-centred approaches. Says Darnal: “The police practice of pushing survivors to make financial settlements, combined with judgmental questioning and the undervaluing of survivor testimony in court, means that even the protections

that exist on paper are routinely denied in practice.” The Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Sobita Gautam has formed a committee to reevaluate the existing laws on rape, but the parameters for reevaluation of the laws have not been revealed. Jesselina Rana’s recommendations to the parliamentary committee are that legislative reform must be grounded in evidence and built through consultation with human rights lawyers, women’s rights advocates, and civil society organisations, rather than being drafted in isolation at the ministry. For example, there has to be legal recognition of intimate partner violence as a distinct category, separate from the broader and often inadequate framing of domestic violence. She says: “There is currently no legal definition of consent in Nepali law, and that must change. We need

to refer to international standards and build more progressive frameworks within the law that take into account the realities survivors face.” The Ministry of Education has an equally critical role to play. The national curriculum needs a serious re-evaluation, with meaningful and comprehensive sex education. “We also need to look at how young people are consuming media and engaging in conversations within the manosphere,” Rana adds. “Why do men, young and old, feel it is so easy to send rape threats online? What are the long-term implications of normalising such behaviour?” Whatever legal frameworks there are, enforcement remains weak due to deeply entrenched patriarchal norms, low reporting rates driven by stigma and fear of social ostracism and victim blaming, and an underfunded justice system where cases are many a time settled informally under community pressure. The new government must also address the structural drivers of women’s economic dependence and underrepresentation in political and judicial institutions, since countries with greater gender parity consistently see lower rates of sexual violence. 🇳🇵

Ayusha Chalise is a communication and development scholar specialising in how politics is experienced in the digital space. This is her regular column, Cyberia, in Nepali Times.



The snow leopard man

Rodney Jackson first visited Nepal in 1976, and was the first to radio collar a snow leopard. At 83, he remains active as the founder of Snow Leopard Conservancy. Environmental journalist **Ramesh Bhushal** spoke to Jackson when he was in Kathmandu recently.

Ramesh Bhushal: What first brought you to Nepal in 1976, and how did you end up working on snow leopards?

Rodney Jackson: In 1976, nobody knew about snow leopards. My visit to Nepal was just a side trip on my way back to Africa, where I was born. I had wanted to study the common leopard there, but I came to Nepal instead, where I met incredible people.

George Schaller had tried to study snow leopards but made limited progress. In 1981, I received the Rolex Award for Enterprise, which funded my radio-collaring work. I had originally hoped to work in Ladakh, but when I visited Mugu I knew I had found the right place to write a paper that appeared on the cover of National Geographic.

When did you first see a snow leopard?
It took a long time. My closest encounters were when we trapped them for telemetry, five altogether. The fur was so soft and deep, a beautiful whitish-yellow on the undercoat. Recalling that moment of touching a snow leopard still sends a shiver down my spine. Even seeing one through a scope at three or four hundred metres, they have this intense stare. They look straight through you to see who you are.

After 50 years, what more do we know?
That they move completely unseen yet have a great impact. Like any predator, they hunt what is easiest to kill, and livestock have lost all their anti-predator behaviour. Because of



KAMAL THAPA / WWF



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that, people saw snow leopards as pests. My goal has been to help communities see them as an asset from which they can benefit.

Why does a snow leopard kill so many livestock inside a corral without eating them?
Because the setup is unnatural. In the wild, when it attacks blue sheep, it gets one and the rest scatter. In a corral, the livestock cannot escape. A snow leopard's hunting behaviour is triggered by movement, so whenever something moves, it must attack

to immobilise it. It gets caught in a loop of predatory reflex. Then people arrive, see dead sheep and goats with nothing eaten and tooth marks on their throats, and conclude it is an evil animal that sucks blood.

Fifty years on, we still do not know how many snow leopards there are.
Scientists love numbers, and so do governments. But does it really matter whether there are 200 or 300 in an area? That does not improve conservation. Villagers who are losing livestock and receiving no compensation are not concerned with figures. Arriving at a single global estimate is difficult. Sending an international team into every country is nearly impossible because of permits and bureaucracy. Chinese researchers now estimate their population at about 4,000. Massive resources go into estimating populations, while far too little goes toward protecting communities and reducing conflict.

What emerging technology looks promising for monitoring?

Camera trapping is still the main tool. Scent and hair posts remain difficult; if two cats visit consecutively and you do not collect the hair immediately, the samples mix and you end up analysing an 'imaginary' leopard that does not exist. Non-invasive scat collection has improved: if you collect in cool temperatures so the DNA does not degrade and verify it is a snow leopard, you can run individual analysis. Drones also have potential. However, the real priority for technology should be conflict detection and mitigation, not counting.

Should the snow leopard be listed as "Endangered" or "Vulnerable" on the IUCN Red List?
The push to keep the snow leopard listed as Endangered is mostly about funding, because endangered species attract more donor money. Globally, across all 12 range countries, the snow leopard is Vulnerable. In Nepal, however, a population of about 300 animals could still be considered nationally endangered, especially if genetic connectivity across the border with China is lost. International researchers have not been allowed to work in China since around 2006 or 2007. Mongolia has good data, with about 980 animals, which is slightly lower than earlier estimates. India, Nepal, and Pakistan have more robust and transparent data.

Where are we heading in the next 20 years?
I feel good about places where conflict with humans is being actively mitigated. When the conflict stops, the cats show themselves, and local youth can track signs, manage tourism, and take visitors out. The snow leopard survives under incredibly harsh conditions in only twelve countries. In 20 years, it is going to become iconic, like the lions of Africa, an animal people across the world want to see.

Read full interview at: himalayaspeaks.com





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