



Carbon Trading For Sustainable Future

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THE RISING NEPAL

# Friday

SUPPLEMENT



Chobhar Blues:  
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# Transformative Funding For Education



Manjima Dhakal

In Nepal, education discourse often revolves around the inadequacy of budgets. The conventional financing approach has raised concerns regarding insufficient funds for education. The government of Nepal spends about 11 per cent of the total budget on education. The amount is insufficient for free and compulsory quality education, as we assumed in the constitution. Stakeholders are demanding at least 20 per cent budget allocation in education. However, it's time to explore new approaches to education financing, as global practices suggest, which can be best for countries like ours with low financing. Innovative investment in education is becoming a prominent approach in developed nations like Finland, Denmark, and Norway, which have strong education systems. To drive positive changes in education in Nepal, innovative financing models are crucial.

There are several challenges associated with the traditional method. Traditional budget allocations, based on historical trends, may not keep up with these evolving needs, leading to insufficient funding for education. In traditional systems, almost 80 per cent of the allocated funds are used for administrative and operational expenses, leaving a smaller portion for direct educational activities. This inefficiency can hinder the improvement of educational infrastructure and resources. Likewise, traditional budget allocation models often lack flexibility and creativity. They may not encourage innovative approaches or adapt to changing educational requirements. And it also resulted in disparities in educational access and quality. In Nepal, the government allocates about 11 per cent of the total budget, where most of the budget is spent for administrative work, and as a result, the budget is not sufficient for academic work. Therefore, private sector involvement in education is also found in Nepal. Likewise, private financing plays a role in the education sector in Nepal. But it can also result in disparities in access to quality education. Nepal faces several challenges in education financing, including insufficient funding, inequality, quality improvement, and administrative efficiency.

Nepal faces several challenges in education financing, including insufficient funding, inequality, quality improvement, and administrative efficiency.



Photo generated by AI

**Concept**

Innovative financing in education offers a solution to these challenges by introducing fresh and creative approaches to funding education. Innovative finance includes mechanisms and solutions that increase the volume, efficiency, and effectiveness of financial flows. There is no universal model for innovative financing; instead, authorities in each specific location can develop and implement a financing model that aligns with local needs and circumstances.

But innovative financing in education entails thinking creatively and unconventionally about how to raise and allocate funds to improve educational outcomes, access, and quality. These approaches aim to address the challenges and funding gaps that may exist in traditional education financing models. Innovative financing seeks to support educational initiatives and reforms, particularly in situations where government budgets alone may fall short of meeting the demands of a growing and evolving education system.

Innovative financing in education encompasses various creative methods, like receiving extra tax from areas like tourism, airlines, hotels, and others. Likewise, providing digital devices, internet access, and educational content to students, especially in remote areas, can minimise the budget expenditure as well as fulfil teachers' requirements, and collaboration between governments and private sector entities to fund and operate educational facilities, such as schools, universities, and vocational training centres, can benefit from philanthropic support.

Besides that, government-issued vouchers are also popular globally now, where the government gives a check or voucher to students while parents search for the best schools for them.

Creative financing approaches foster innovation both in funding models and in the development of new educational solutions. They encourage experimentation and creative thinking to find more effective and efficient ways to address educational challenges.

Innovative financing can promote greater equity in education by targeting resources where

they are needed the most. For low-income countries facing budget constraints, innovative financing opens the door to a wider pool of capital sources.

And innovative financing models tie financial incentives to achieving specific educational outcomes. This ensures accountability and a results-driven approach, where investors or funders are rewarded based on the actual impact of the programmes they support.

As the municipality is doing its best out of its own model, educationalist Dr. Baburam Adhikari also suggested developing one's own model of innovative financing rather than copying from international practices. "We have to set the indicators of innovative financing according to our context rather than copying from others. Only self-motivated indications can be implemented successfully; therefore, we have to develop the indicators by keeping three-layer governments at the centre.

Dr. Bal Chandra Luitel, another educationist, suggests strengthening the public financing model that we are adopting now. This involves increasing investments in the education sector and optimising the allocation of resources to ensure that schools receive the necessary funds to improve both the quality and accessibility of education. "We have to explore additional revenue sources to strengthen public financing. One proposal is to consider implementing extra taxation in certain areas, such as the tourism and airline sectors. These targeted taxes can serve as dedicated sources of revenue specifically earmarked for the education sector, potentially providing the necessary financial boost to enhance educational facilities and resources.

Likewise, he suggested utilising technology for content development. Harnessing digital tools and resources can revolutionise how educational content is created and delivered. Another critical aspect that Dr. Luitel stresses is the importance of effective budget management. He suggests that the existing budget can be sufficient for addressing educational needs if it is managed efficiently and transparently. Proper budget management ensures that the available resources are used optimally, allowing for a greater impact in the education sector.

Lastly, Dr. Luitel recommends looking up to developed nations as examples. Many developed countries have a history of substantial and consistent investments in education, even during their development phases. Studying their approaches and best practices can provide valuable insights and guidance for Nepal as it seeks to strengthen its education system.

Dr. Pramod Bhatta, another educationist, advocates for the decentralisation of education in Nepal. He emphasises that local governments should play a more significant role in monitoring and overseeing the education system. This approach can increase transparency and accountability within the system, as local authorities are better positioned to understand and address the specific needs and challenges of their communities.

The arrangement of "Ghumti Teachers" who move from school to school may minimise the budget expenditure. The provision can be effective mainly in remote areas that have been facing teacher shortages most of the time.

Furthermore, Dr. Bhatta recommends implementing targeted programmes like 'Padhdai Kamaudai', earning together with learning. Such initiatives can help identify and support children who are out of school or at risk of dropping out. By providing tailored support to these students, Nepal can work towards a more inclusive and equitable education system. Dr. Bhatta also emphasises the importance of utilising technology in education management and delivery. This

can include digital tools for administrative tasks as well as online or remote learning to reach students in remote areas and promote flexibility in education delivery.

Lastly, Dr. Bhatta suggests exploring the voucher system, where students receive educational vouchers that can be used in various schools. This approach can widen school choice and promote healthy competition among educational institutions, potentially leading to improved quality and innovation within the education sector. He said implementing these new models according to the needs of local levels can be taken as one's own model of innovative financing.

These expert suggestions encompass a wide range of strategies to enhance the education system in Nepal, including financing, governance, technology integration, and targeted programmes. The implementation of these approaches, in combination, holds the potential to significantly improve the quality and accessibility of education in the country.

**International practice**

A number of developed nations have adopted innovative financing models with great success. These models have led to improved access to quality education, enhanced infrastructure, and better educational outcomes. By embracing these global practices, countries like Nepal can learn from the experiences of others and adapt similar models to their specific contexts.

For example, the UK has been practicing financing models like education venture funds, debt conversion development bonds, diaspora bonds, and travel savings funds for development.

In Denmark, public support for students is excellent. The two main institutes responsible for dealing with student support are the agency and the ministry. The agency deals with student applications, communicates with educational institutions, pays out grants and loans, and writes budgets. The Ministry does the general planning and budgeting and is also in charge of any amendments to the system. Foreign students (unless under special status) are not able to use educational assistance. Of those able to use support, about 50 per cent take advantage of the loaning system.

Likewise, Norway's education system is mainly funded by public expenditure, with very little private funding. Public primary and secondary schools are free of charge. Only 3.3 per cent of children in Norway attend private primary and lower secondary schools, and most private schools receive some state funding.

There are different practices around the world in terms of how government money is spent on education. One such practice is the voucher system.

**Voucher system**

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 88 countries worldwide (25 out of 34 OECD members) have some form of voucher system in place. This system is also known as the School Choice Programme, as it allows students (parents) to choose their school.

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, and Ireland are the countries that partially or fully embrace the voucher system. India, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, and the USA can also be placed on this list.

Implementation of the school voucher system in these countries is not uniform. Some offer vouchers to attend a private school of the student's choice, while others allow vouchers to be used only by religious schools or schools that serve minority, disadvantaged, or low-income students.

Voucher systems not only reduce the burden on the government to provide education but can also increase the efficiency and accountability of educational institutions. Children can go to the school of their choice.

Efficient use of resources can reduce the cost of public education and increase teacher and student attendance at school. Most importantly, competition creates pressure for public schools to improve.

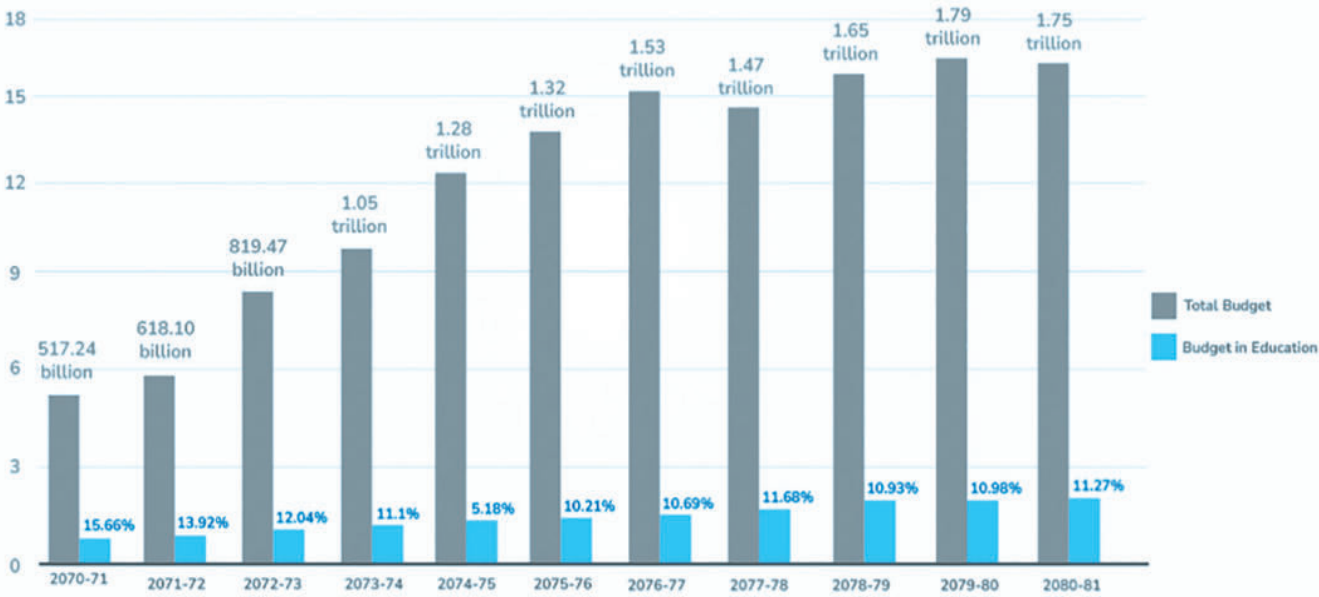
The government of Nepal spends about 11 per cent of the total budget on education. The global average is 17 per cent. Although lower than this, it is higher than the South Asian average (9 per cent). Looking at the budget for the last few years, it seems that the government of Nepal spends an average of 18,000 rupees annually on each student studying in public schools. It also provides separate scholarships and financial assistance for the poor and other identity groups.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the status of education financing in Nepal faces significant challenges, including insufficient funding, inequity, and administrative inefficiency. Experts have suggested and showcased innovative financing models through local initiatives to address these issues and bridge budget gaps. These models encompass strategies such as targeted taxation, technology integration, improved budget management, decentralisation, and voucher systems. Learning from global practices, countries like Nepal can adapt successful models to their unique contexts, as demonstrated in other countries. These innovative approaches hold the potential to improve the quality and accessibility of education, ensuring a better future for the youth of Nepal.

(Dhakal is a journalist at The Rising Nepal)

Notable Increase: Education Budget Grows Despite Overall National Budget Decrease



Source: edusanjal



# Planet View And Meteor Watching



Dr. Rishi Shah

As it darkens, the long night skies of this chilly winter month will provide excellent opportunities for stargazing, planet viewing, and meteor watching. The rocky planets Mercury, Venus, and Mars would be congregating in the pre-dawn sky during this first month of 2024. Both elusive planet Mercury and romantic Venus would be fleeting across the southern sector of the broad constellation Ophiuchus (serpent bearer) and the northern side of the constellation Sagittarius (archer). Mercury would reach its greatest western elongation from the sun on January 12. It would be the best time to marvel at Mercury since it would attain its highest place above the eastern horizon in the morning. The planet would otherwise lie low in the eastern sky just before sunrise before it would be lost in the solar haze. Planet Venus would be visible in the southeastern sky shortly before sunup. It would slowly be evanescent at daybreak. The red planet Mars will stay out of sight this month. It would be hugging the eastern horizon at daybreak. It would be marching across the northern section of sprawling Sagittarius during the day.

The mighty planet Jupiter, with its mesmerizing moons, could be observed in the southeastern sky after sunset. It would be ascending in the southern sky until midnight and would thereafter sink towards the western horizon. It would be resting relaxed in the southern region of the compact constellation Aries (ram).

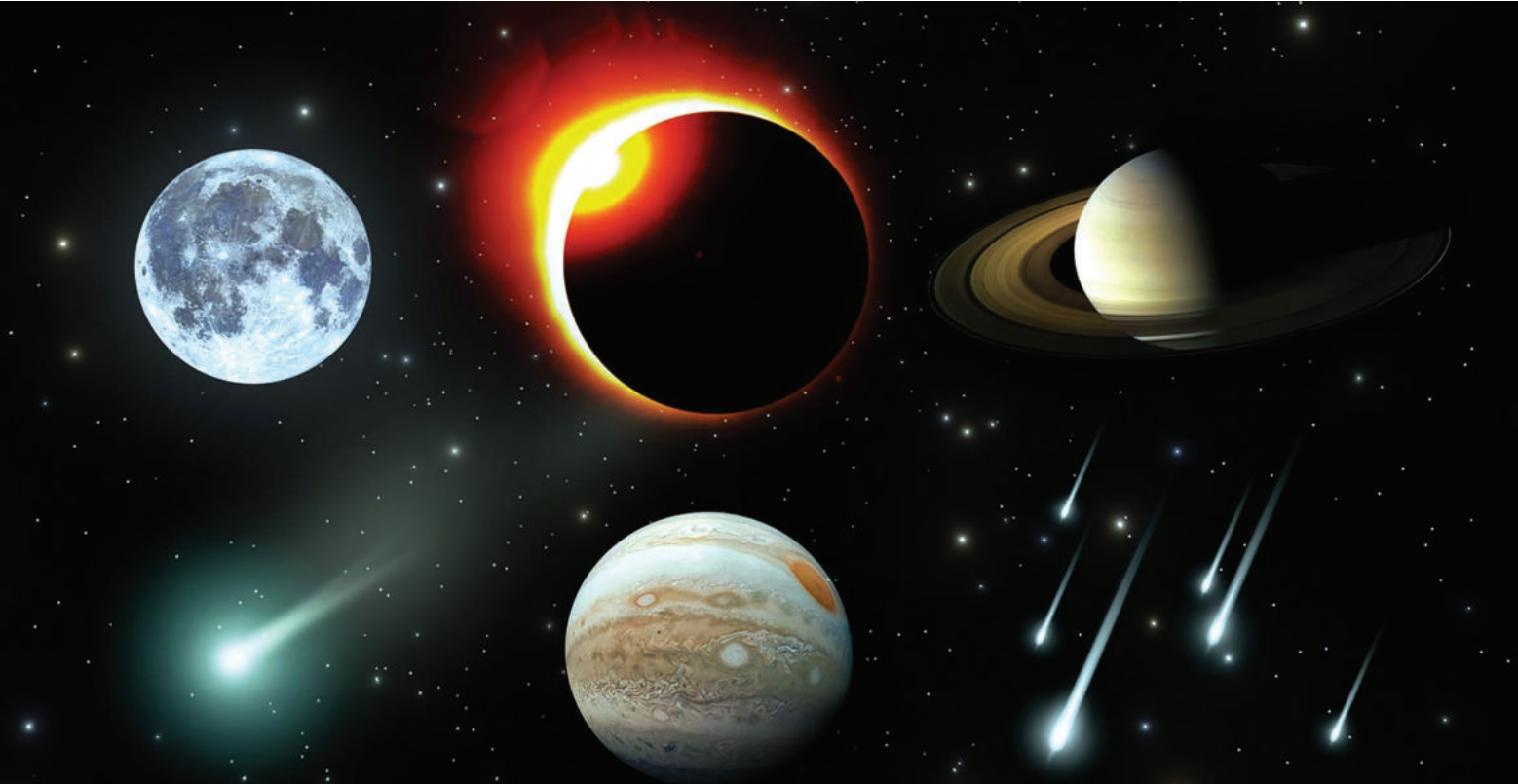
The distant planet Uranus would be gleaming to its east. Planet Neptune would be lying below the curious circlet asterism of the constellation Pisces (fish), and the ringed planet Saturn would be standing in the southern segment of the constellation Aquarius (water bearer). They could be followed by strange scintillating spots of lambent lights among the twinkling stars. The ringed planet Saturn could be seen in the southwestern sky briefly after sundown. It would be descending towards the horizon and setting. Planet Uranus would be perceived in the eastern sky at dusk.

It would be climbing in the southern sky until late in the night. It would then creep towards the western horizon. Far-flung blue planet Neptune could be glimpsed in the southeastern sky after nightfall tersely. It would be slinking towards the horizon.

For one complete orbit (revolution) around the sun, our planet Earth would require simply 365.256 days, during which time it would have journeyed whooping 940 million kilometers. Earth's average speed along its track would indicate a meager 29.78 kilometers per second.

Earth would be closest to the Sun (perihelion) at fairly 147.1 million kilometers and farthest (aphelion) at a staggering 152.1 million kilometers. Earth would be nearest to the sun on January 3, 2024, when we would experience winter in the Northern Hemisphere. We would be most remote from the sun on July 5, 2024, during our summer. Clearly, the earth's distance from the sun would not be the predominant reason for our seasons.

Earth's path around the sun is not circular but elliptical. Thus, it is not earth's span from the sun that would trigger our winter and summer, but instead, the mere tilt of our planet's axis, amounting to circa 23.5 degrees with respect to its spin, would cause seasons. In winter, our part of the earth would be inclined away from the sun. In summer, the earth would lean toward the sun. The slight slant would alter the angle of sunlight falling on earth.



## NIGHT SKY IN JANUARY

The Quadrantid meteor shower could stupefy fervent skygazers with up to forty fabulous meteors per hour at its peak, which would transpire this year from the late night of January 3 to the morning of January 4 in magnificent moonlight. Quadrantids have been allegedly produced by dust grains left behind by an asteroid dubbed 2003 EH1. The lucent last quarter waning gibbous moon, 55 per cent illuminated, would rise around midnight and shine through the rest of the night. It would wash away the fainter meteors, but patient onlookers could still savor the shiny show of sparkling shooting stars. They could be witnessed well from tenebrous locations after midnight. Meteors would exclusively exude from the constellation Bootes (herdsman). Quadrantids would usually be active between the end of December and the second week of January. The radiant of Quadrantids would soar in the north-northeast sky after midnight and be elevated eminently before day-start. It could also be imagined as residing in the now-obsolete constellation, Quadrans Muralis (Mural Quadrant). It would apparently make an approximate right angle with the circumpolar constellation Ursa Major (big bear or Sapta Rishi) and the amazing star Arcturus (Swati) shining serenely in the kite-mimicking constellation Bootes. Stars Merak (Pulaha) and Dubhe (Kratu) inhabiting constellation Ursa Major could point at Polaris (Pole Star or Dhruva Tara) dwelling in constellation Ursa Minor (little bear). Dutch American astronomer Peter Jenniskens had proposed that the parent body spawning Quadrantids would be an astounding asteroid nicknamed 2003 EH1, which was believed to be a decidedly dormant or extinct comet. The Lowell Observatory

Near-Earth Object Search (LONEOS), based near Flagstaff, Arizona, had identified 2003 EH1. The asteroid would need a paltry 5.5 years to scamper around the sun. During its immediate approach to the sun, it would come within an immense 179.517 million kilometers. Arcturus would form one corner of the so-called Spring Triangle asterism, while the other shimmering star Spica in constellation Virgo (maiden) and resplendent star Regulus in constellation Leo (lion) would depict the other two corners. Located at Hammy 36.7 light-years from the Sun, Arcturus is a single-red giant aging star practically 7.1 billion years old that has used up its core hydrogen and evolved off the main sequence stage. Similar in mass to the sun, it has expanded enormously to 25 times its size. Its diameter would be about 35 million kilometers. Spica would be a spectroscopic binary star and a rotating ellipsoidal variable. It would contain two stars that are squeezed together to become egg-shaped rather than spherical. It would be outright 250 light-years away. Regulus would actually be a quirky quadruple star system composed of four stars that are organized into two pairs. They would lie ornately 79 light-years from the sun. Regulus, along with five distinguishably dimmer stars, have collectively been acclaimed as the sickle, which has been an asterism that would mystifyingly characterize the hypothetical head of a lion. The new moon would befall on January 11, while the full moon marking Shree Swastani Puja would begin to enthrall moon-lovers on January 25. This full moon has been popularly known as the wolf moon because, during this time of year, hungry wolf packs would be howling and roaming outside the settlement camps.

Large, stony main-belt arcane asteroid (flying between Mars and Jupiter) 354 Eleonora would be directly opposite the Sun (opposition) on January 20. It would coincidentally make its tight tryst with

## ASTRONOMY

earth (termed its perigee) appear brightest in the night sky. It was divulged by the French astronomer Auguste Charlois on January 17, 1893, in Nice. Eleonora would be veritably 149.0 kilometers in diameter and conduct its single twirl every 4.28 hours. It would trudge around the Sun every 4.68 years, coming to the Sun's neighborhood at surely 372.49 million kilometers and being far away at plainly 465.25 million kilometers from the Sun. NASA has not yet classified Eleonora as potentially hazardous because its route would not bring it worrisomely to Earth's vicinity. Eleonora would become accessible in the evening, when it would rise above the eastern horizon. It would vault aloft in the sky at midnight above our southern horizon. It would become inaccessible in the early morning when it would slide towards the western horizon. It would be tumbling across the confounding cute constellations Cancer (crab) and Canis Minor (lesser dog), where the peculiar star Procyon (Manda) would be dazzling dramatically. It would be passing within approximately 231.88 million kilometers by earth. But still, Eleonora would look like a foggy object beyond the grasp of her naked eyes. Good binoculars or telescopes with a moderate aperture would be needed to pursue it passably. It would be refulgent by a 9-day-old waxing gibbous 76 percent fulgurating mysterious moon. Procyon would contain a white-hued main-sequence star hurtling around an oddly obscured white dwarf companion. This baffling binary stellar duo would be unerringly 11.46 light-years away from us.

(Dr. Shah is an academician at NAST and patron of NASO)

# Carbon Trading For Sustainable Future



Suravi Rijal

As the global community confronts the pressing challenges of climate change, sustainable development has become more than just a buzzword; it's a critical imperative. The ever-increasing levels of greenhouse gas emissions, primarily carbon dioxide, are creating a host of environmental and socio-economic issues. The unsustainable levels of carbon emissions resulting from human activities such as industrial manufacturing, transportation, and energy production have contributed to the deterioration of the climate. Recognising the urgency to address this problem, governments, organisations, and individuals alike have sought solutions to reduce and mitigate their carbon footprint. One such solution that has gained momentum in recent years is carbon trading.

### Concept

Carbon trading is an economically oriented approach aimed at addressing the challenge of global warming by curbing the release of greenhouse gases, notably carbon dioxide, stemming from the combustion of fossil fuels in the framework of carbon markets. Businesses and individuals have the opportunity to compensate for their emissions by acquiring carbon credits from organisations committed to diminishing or eradicating their own greenhouse gas outputs. This system essentially creates a financial incentive for emissions reduction and fosters environmental responsibility within a market-driven context.

Since the Kyoto Protocol, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), there has been a notable increase in the worldwide implementation of clean development mechanisms (CDM) and emissions trading systems. The targets for the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol covered emissions of the six greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide.

Carbon trading is a market-based approach that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

by putting a price on carbon. It enables companies and governments to trade emission permits, which represent a certain amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions. By implementing a cap on total emissions and allowing entities to trade these permits, carbon trading creates a financial incentive for reducing emissions and investing in cleaner technologies.

If a company exceeds its allocated emissions limit, it can purchase extra permits from another company that has managed to reduce its emissions below its allocated limit. This transaction benefits both parties, as the emitting company avoids paying potentially higher fines for exceeding its limit, while the reducing company gains a financial reward for its efforts.

### Carbon trading

In 2001, the government of Nepal entered into a significant agreement with the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership (FCP). This landmark Emission Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA) paves the way for Nepal to receive up to US\$45 million in support aimed at curbing carbon emissions resulting from deforestation and forest degradation. Over the course of the agreement, spanning until 2025, Nepal is expected to achieve a remarkable reduction of 9 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions, specifically within the Terai Arc Landscape. Under this agreement, Nepal will receive USD 5 for every ton of carbon dioxide emissions successfully mitigated.

Nepal as a least developed country has the opportunity to participate in the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) programme, which allows developed countries to purchase carbon offsets from countries like Nepal. Basically, REDD+ is a voluntary climate change mitigation framework developed by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that plays prominent role in the conservation and sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. In the pursuit of sustainable and greener futures India has made a significant step by introducing the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS).

The Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022, through which this innovative scheme is brought into force, gives the federal government the authority to create a framework for carbon trading. With the CCTS, India aims to create a thriving domestic carbon market, encouraging industries and entities to reduce their carbon emissions through a market-based approach.



### Significance

One of the major benefits of carbon trading is that it unlocks the potential for sustainable development. By putting a price on carbon, it encourages industries to adopt cleaner technologies and energy sources, such as renewable energy, to reduce their emissions. This not only helps combat climate change but also fosters economic growth and job creation in the renewable energy sector.

Furthermore, carbon trading provides a source of funding for sustainable development initiatives. The revenue generated from the sale of emission permits can be reinvested in projects that promote sustainability, such as reforestation efforts, renewable energy infrastructure, or energy-efficient building programs. These investments not only lead to reduced emissions but also have positive social and economic impacts on local

communities.

Carbon trading has opened doors to a new era of international collaboration through the exchange of carbon credits. This globally recognised tool is instrumental in bridging nations and unifying their efforts towards a common goal: mitigating the devastating impacts of climate change. Countries across the globe can participate in emissions trading schemes that facilitate the exchange of carbon credits, solidifying international partnerships in the face of this worldwide crisis. Such collaborations strengthen the ties between nations and encourage the transfer of cleantech expertise, research, and resources. Also, the mechanism of carbon credits intersects with goal 7, goal 8, goal 13 and goal 15 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Carbon trading facilitates such collaboration at international as well as at regional levels. These

schemes bring nations together, transcending geopolitical boundaries. The European Union's Emission Trading System (EU ETS) is one of the world's largest carbon market which works on 'cap' and 'trade' principles. It aims to make polluters pay for their greenhouse gas emissions, helps bring emissions down and generates revenue to finance the EU's green transition. The EU member states under European Climate Law aim to become climate neutral by 2050.

Nepal has a vast potential for renewable energy, such as hydropower, solar, and wind energy. By investing in these renewable energy projects, Nepal can reduce its dependency on fossil fuel-based energy sources and generate carbon credits, which can then be sold in the international market. Nepal has set a goal to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2045, which aligns with the growing global focus on climate change mitigation. Many developed nations have made commitments to reduce their emissions and are actively looking for ways to achieve these targets. By participating in global carbon markets, Nepal can contribute to these efforts and receive financial support for its sustainable development initiatives. The participation in carbon trading can provide Nepal with access to climate finance and technology transfer. Developed countries often channel funds to developing nations through mechanisms like the Green Climate Fund to support their climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. By engaging in carbon trading, Nepal can demonstrate its commitment to reducing emissions and attract financial assistance to support its transition to a low-carbon economy.

### Positive impacts

In order to fully harness the potential of carbon trading, governments and organisations shall establish the frameworks that ensure transparency, accountability, and integrity in the carbon market by preventing any fraudulent activities or market manipulation. Additionally, it is important to ensure that the benefits of carbon trading reach local communities and vulnerable populations. Investments generated through the sale of carbon credits should be directed toward projects that have positive social and economic impacts. This includes initiatives that promote community development, enhance livelihoods, and protect the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

(The author is a BALLB student at Kathmandu School of Law.)



# Story Of Pain And Tragedy



Narayan Prasad Ghimire

Death is defined and interpreted in many ways. Medical science sees it as a complete dysfunction of vital organs, leading to lifelessness, while spiritual perspectives regard it as a journey to the next world. It is believed that the fate of the dead in Yamalok is determined by their deeds in the Martyalok. Where there is life, there is death. It is unavoidable, but untimely death is a disaster. It is disastrous indeed for the relatives who are loved and brought up by the departed.

There are myriad causes of death, ranging from natural calamities to human-caused accidents. In many cases, knowingly or innocently, people make themselves diseased, leading to the termination of their lives.

Whatever kind of death we face, it is appalling and agonizing. Life, despite challenges and hostilities, is full of love that emotionally binds family members and relatives.

It is therefore a huge emotional setback for one when he or she loses loved ones.

The book under review, 'Mrityu Diary: Biyog-dekhi Yogsamma' penned by Dr. Tulasi Acharya, revolves around the above issues, with a special focus on death. The description of death is incomplete if it is not compared to life and love. These issues are dwelt on thoroughly while explaining suffering, parental care and fuss, and children's responsibility towards parents in the book, where there is a story of a double disaster—the deaths of parents in five months' gap—to a daughter.

The diary or book is written by a relative, the son-in-law (jwai) of the victims: the father-in-law (Sasura) dies at the age of 62, and the mother-in-law (Sasu) dies at 51. The father-in-law dies after five months of the passage of the mother-in-law. As the mother-in-law died all of a sudden, the suffering began in the daughter's life.

It is the account of a witness to the tragedy that befell his wife. The book is therefore a real story involving parents, two daughters, and two sons-in-law. The events take place in Pokhara and Kathmandu cities.

Time is so cruel that Nepal was engulfed by COVID-19, spreading terror and threats to life as the young ones strive to treat diseased seniors. The two daughters and two sons-in-law continue engaging with the treatment of an ailing father or father-in-law who suffers from cancer, despite the utmost adversity.

The roles of parents and subsequent traumatic experiences, especially those of the writer's spouse, are centred in the book.

Her mother's death comes more unexpectedly than that of her father's, as there were no symptoms or signals of any illness in her, while her fathers was later detected to have cancer. Emotionally enfeebled after the mother's death, the agonised state of the daughter, Kripa, is shed light by the writer, who also involves assuaging the spouse's pain.

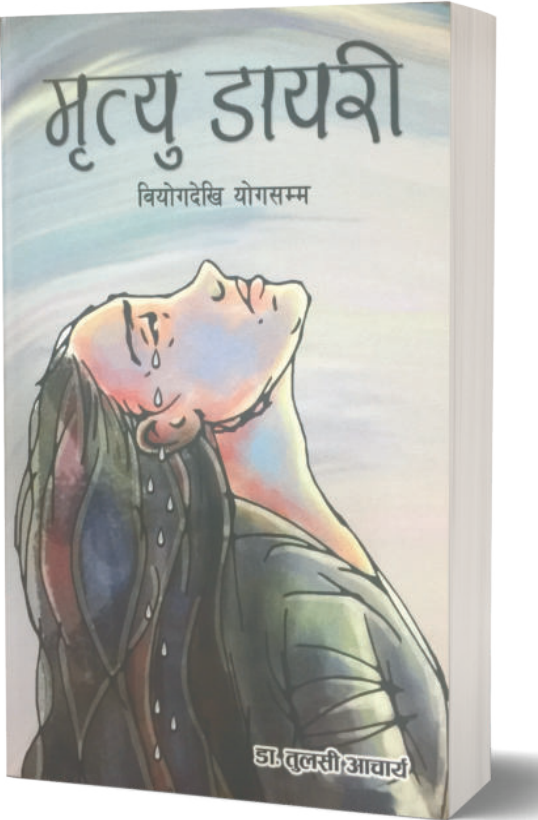
Kripa's husband and youngest son-in-law, who writes the book, has to make frequent travels to and from Kathmandu and Pokhara despite his recent opportunity to teach at a university in the US after acquiring a PhD. He also faces the question of whether to quit his job in the US and continue caring for and collaborating with his wife, who has faced unprecedented tragedy in life. Luckily, his boss allows virtual teaching, citing his quandary and crisis.

In addition to the suffering faced by the two daughters after the sudden passing away of their parents, the book talks in length about Nepal's health system, which is full of hassles for patients, and gender bias. As the couple meeting untimely deaths had no sons, the daughters had no option but to carry out additional responsibilities.

However, the entrenched gender bias in Nepali society grates the writer's wife, Kripa, when she is not allowed to mourn her father's death equally as her senior sister during the death ritual of kiriya (obsequy). She was even censured that if she observed obsequy for more than five days, the dead ones (pitris) would face problems! Kripa also writes a media article about the discrimination she faces while observing priti karma.

The writer is engrossed in life, death, and meaningful life, with extensive references from philosophers, poets, essayists, and ethicists. The allusions range from a revered Hindu scripture, 'Mahabharat', and from 'Waste Land', a seminal modern poem by TS Eliot. The invocation of philosophy on the termination of life and yearning to seek meaning makes the book meditative and literary.

"The views of eminent figures indicate that living a meaningful life is fostering humanity, understanding others' sorrow, and responding properly to the birth (life) and death of anyone who undergoes



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- As the book is a diary on death, it relates much about the throes of the person facing imminent death. But it fails to adequately share the 'lived experience' of death—burnout, spasm, frantic pain, and throes undergone by the person in the ultimate days of life.

anguish," the writer states (p. 244).

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'Lived experience' is the firsthand personal experience. But the 'live experience' or the indirect experience of suffering is described more.

Although callous death comes to claim his life by making his vital organs non-functional, he does not explain or even share.

He seems to welcome death, but daughters and relatives are panicked by his pain and afraid of death and the subsequent loss of attachment and emotion.

Losing a mother and father in a five-month' gap is the biggest tragedy in one's life, which is described meticulously in this book. Finally, the reader can wonder: Is the book a diary or literary work? It delves into both genres.

The literary features of fiction have lifted it out of mundane death details, while the notes on death bring lively facts.

It is a memoir as well. The narration of tragedy with a special application of suspense, climax, and denouement finely draws traits of fiction from this oeuvre.

Research is another equally important aspect of this memoir, where the writer studies much on pancreatic cancer, the influential people losing lives to this sort of cancer, palliative care with the administration of 'morphine' and even the experience of a doctor while undergoing death pangs of cancer. The memoir is the writer's honour to his spouse's devotion to parents, which reflects many such stories in our society.

The book is published by Bhundipuram Prakashan.

# Chobhar Blues: A Good Reading

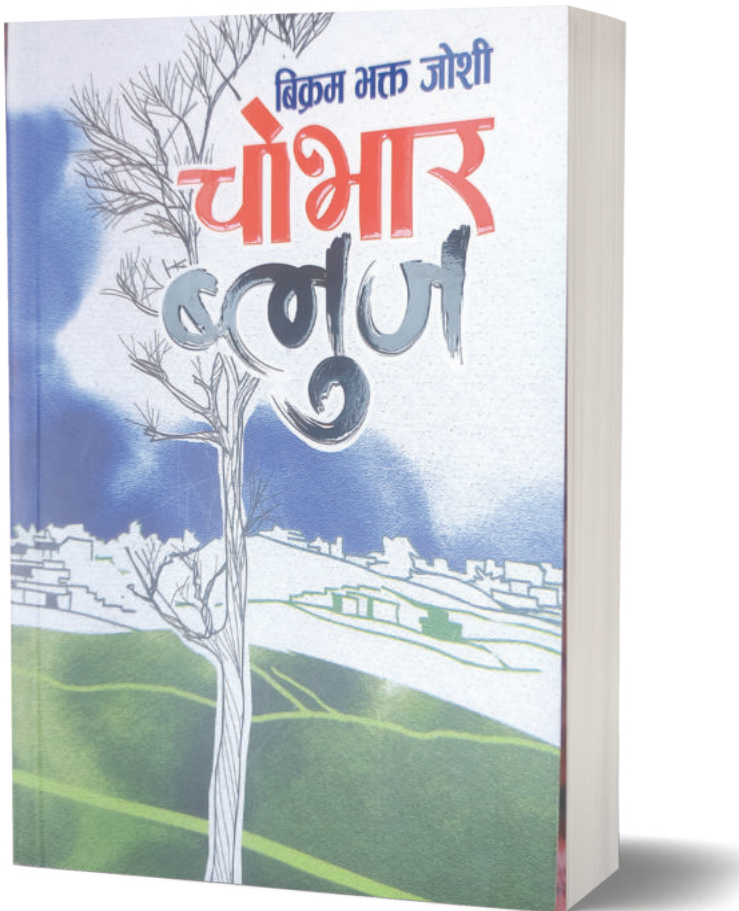


Bishnu Gautam

Chobhar Blues, a collection of stories by Bikram Bhakta Joshi, is a good read. Published by Sahitya Post, the book gives an unconventional test to its readers. No reader can rightly guess the ending of each story even after reading half of it. And if one tries to do so, he is sure to be wrong. Of course, an unexpected ending is the main feature of all the stories included in the collection.

Interestingly, it is the debut literary work of a banker by profession and an engineer by study, but it can captivate the readers. Bikram Bhakta studied engineering. But later, he became a banker. A man with a deep passion for literature, he also quit the job of a banker and jumped into the literary world as a learner.

The book under review, published last year, is his first work. However, he has succeeded in winning the hearts of readers with his debut work. Like his life, the 19 short stories included in this collection do not move in a straight line. So, the readers cannot rightly guess the ending of the stories. They swirl like the flooded streams of summer.



Most of his stories tell the tale of the pains of the people. The first story, Utsarga, has a tale of poor, lonely Lady Goma, who has nothing other than a few goats to live with in a hut at Pharsidol. She is alone because she was unable to tie the nuptial knot because she had a small brother to bring up when she was of marriageable age. But her brother went overseas to stay with his son, leaving his old sister Goma alone. Similarly, there is a story of an old goat herder in Bosandanad. Likewise, in Sunko Poko, there is a character named Sante, a poor man who dared to jump into floods in the hope of getting some gold by saving a bundle of gold from the sinking house in Pune. But neither he came up with gold nor his life; we went missing in the flood. In other stories, there are Harke, Bange, and Bisancha, who have been living through the pains of poverty and other problems in the hope of overcoming them one day, which never comes in their lives. There is also a story named Morokwal (more equal), which deals with the animal world similar to the Animal Farm of George Orwell.

Of course, story writer Joshi has presented not only the story of poverty and loneliness but also the betrayal of love. Chobhar Blues and Anichchhit Samabandh are the stories of such a betrayal. As his stories are full of pain, they end in tragedies.

However, as said above, most of the stories do not move ahead in a straight line. They take unexpected twists and turns, confusing the readers, as the plots of the stories change unexpectedly. In Anichchhit Sambandh, two men who have married their ex-girlfriends happened to share the same table while drinking in the evening. Likewise, in Planner Fantasy, the story writer all of a sudden turns into a wise sage and starts roaming in the sky of Kathmandu.

While telling the stories of men and women, the author has beautifully presented the life and culture of the people of the Kathmandu Valley. The settings and characters of almost all stories are from the Kathmandu Valley. While telling the stories of people, Joshi has beautifully explored the cultural and geographical beauties of the valley. His story, Khyak, Manchhe Ra Kukur, tells many things about the cultural aspects of the valley people.

As the stories are focused more on the Kathmandu Valley, its people, lifestyles, and culture, the writer has given insights into many of the cultural practices as well as the impacts of modernity. Joshi has also used Newari words in abundance. He has also used English words, which are commonly used by the learned men and women of today. Hence, his stories are about both the people of the older and younger generations and are relevant to all readers.

- D. N. Lohani

## FUTURE WATCH

(Based on birth names)

January 5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> 2024



ARIES

Fear and confusion can reside within you, delaying your success. You will only retain partial progress. The first two days will contain progress. The remaining period will comprise challenges. The study will gradually advance.



TAURUS

Major tasks will be completed successfully. Health concerns for yourself or your family will increase expenses. Decisive ability will guide you ahead. Trade and profession will both turn profitable. Job will provide some support.



GEMINI

Expenditure will surpass income. Opponents will remain active. Don't trust everyone completely. Travel is in store, but it may not yield much return. Study will take a progressive course.



CANCER

Initially Health disorders are predicted to cause some expenses. circumstances will improve on Sunday afternoon. Trade and profession will both turn profitable. Religious travel can take place. The job will contain concerns.



LEO

Work will be completed after causing expenses. You will find it difficult to save. Children's education will increase expenses. You will be keen to travel abroad. The love life will take a progressive course. A new friend can join the circle.



VIRGO

Handle valuable goods cautiously during the initial period. circumstances will improve from Sunday. You may have to endure a stomach disorder during the concluding period. The profession will yield some return.



LIBRA

Celebration and recreational get-togethers with interesting ones will make the start pleasant. Undertaken assignments will be completed successfully. The family will cooperate. Good friends can join your circle. Important meetings can take place toward the end.



SCORPIO

You will find it difficult to save. The business will yield a limited return. Distant friends will provide great support. Employees will remain dissatisfied with their progress. Recreational activities will attract you.



SAGITTARIUS

Prevailing confusion will not cause any problems. You will enjoy a partial gain. Study will take a progressive course. Some of you will succeed in going abroad. The love life will take a progressive course.



CAPRICORN

Work will be completed after causing extra expenses. A new venture will face restraint, so it's better to wait some time. Employees will observe an ordinary period. The expenditure level will rise toward the end.



AQUARIUS

Major tasks will be completed successfully. Travel to the west is likely. Don't expect much support from relatives. Trade and profession will both turn profitable. Additional investment will pay off.



PISCES

Progress will be lower than expectations. With some effort, writing skills will improve. Study will take a progressive course. You will be eager to gain new knowledge. Investments will yield returns.



# Asian Openbill Sanctuary In Kapilvastu



Kapilvastu, an ancient city in Nepal, has rich biodiversity and is a habitat for various bird species and small animals. Among its notable physical features is the expansive Jagadishpur wetland, the largest man-made bird sanctuary in the area, surrounded by small lakes, ponds, canals, and rivers. The region is renowned for its cultivation of paddy, wheat, and mustard, creating an environment conducive to the proliferation of snails.

One prominent resident bird found in the area is the Asian openbill, scientifically known as

"Anastomus oscitans" and locally referred to as "Ghughifor" in Nepali or "Ghoghila" in the local language. This large wading bird, a member of the stork family Ciconiidae, lives in groups, often resting on trees across the landscape. The Asian Openbill's primary diet is snails, fish, and small aquatic creatures, including freshwater crabs.

In the winter, migratory birds visit Jagadishpur wetlands, with some opting to make it their permanent home. This influx enhances the ecological diversity of the region. The Asian openbills are useful for Kapilvastu farms because their droppings, which are full of nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen, gather under their nesting trees. When it rains, these nutrients flow into the fields, making the soil better for farming and benefiting the local farmers a lot.

Historically, the Asian openbill was first definitively recorded in Nepal in Kuria Mahan of Chitwan National Park in 1964-65. Subsequent research by ornithologists documented their presence in various locations, both within and outside protected areas, including Rupandehi and Kapilvastu. According to local residents, the population



of Asian openbills has increased significantly in recent years, emphasising the importance of preserving their habitat and recognising their ecological contributions to agriculture.

**Features**

The main distinguishing features of the Asian openbill are its long bill and legs and the hollow point of its bill. Its feathers are white, grey, and black, especially the wings. During breeding season, this bird is very bright, and the legs are light pink. The tail of this bird has 12 feathers and is tufted into a gland. After breeding, their colour becomes lighter, and the droppings appear grey. These birds are bigger and fatter than great egrets and smaller than cranes. This bird is called an openbill because of the opening in the middle of its beak. The shape of the beak helps the snail

break out of its hard shell and eat it. This bird is completely carnivorous.

The cutting edges of mandibles have a fine, brush-like structure that gives them a better grip on snail shells. These birds look like white storks or oriental storks from a distance. Asian openbills are broad-winged and depend on hovering between warm air thermals for sustained flight. This bird rests in flocks while sitting in trees. The average body length of the Asian openbill is about 68 to 81 cm. Its wingspan is 147 to 149 cm, and its weight ranges from 1.3 kg to 8.9 kg. This bird stands at a height of 68 cm.

**Ecology and habitat**

Asian openbills tend to ascend thermals during the warmer part of the day and descend quickly to their feeding areas. Groups of birds may forage

together in shallow water or marshland, where they can walk slowly and steadily. Asian openbills feed mainly on large molluscs, especially Pila species, and they use the tip of their beak to separate the shell from the mollusc's body. The lower tip of the beak is often turned to the right. The tip is inserted into the snail's shell, and the body is pulled out with the bill underwater. Thomas Caverhill Jerdon, an ornithologist, mentions that this bird is able to catch snails even with a blindfold. Small snails are often swallowed whole by this bird.

This bird is found in Nepal, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Bhutan, Laos, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Vietnam, and Thailand. This bird is a resident that migrates locally depending on the water conditions.

**Breeding**

The Asian openbill faces severe threats, primarily from the loss and degradation of wetlands, ponds, and lakes, coupled with tree felling, illegal hunting, and pesticide use in agricultural fields. The species is particularly vulnerable due to a lack of public awareness, leading to locals climbing trees, creating obstacles, and stealing eggs and chicks. Additionally, young chicks in nests are preyed upon by various birds of prey like imperial, steppe, and great-spotted eagles. Samjhana Kawan, a biologist with extensive experience researching large bird species, identifies Kapilvastu as an ideal habitat for the Asian openbill. This district boasts the highest number of lakes and ponds among Nepal's lowland regions, supporting massive paddy plantations through irrigation canals and boreholes during the monsoon.

The wetlands, paddy fields, and scattered tree patches with tall trees like Peepal (Ficus religiosa) and Seemal (Bombax ceiba) provide an optimal environment for both the Asian open-bill and its prey, the apple snail (Pila globosa). Despite being widely distributed, the apple snail faces harvesting pressure, particularly from the Tharu community, which makes up 12.3 per cent of the district's population. Notably, Kapilvastu hosts more than 80 Asian openbill nests in a single tree, underscoring its significance as a highly suitable habitat for this species.

(The author is a wildlife photographer. The photos used in this article are by the author himself.)

## TRN CROSSWORD PUZZLE NO. 1772

1	2	3				4		5	
6					7				
8					9		10		11
12	13						14		15
17						18			

Name .....  
Address .....  
Signature .....

Last date of entry:  
January 10, 2024

Win a prize of Rs. 600. In case there are more than one correct entry the prize will be split into three sums of Rs. 200 each. The winner will be selected by a lucky draw. Only cuttings (not photo copy) that include the Crossword Puzzle no. will be accepted.

- Across**
- Make more modern
  - Shake abruptly
  - Attack in deceitful manner
  - Facts
  - Material prosperity
  - Evades rules
  - In addition
  - Your recorded lineage
  - Correct language
  - Make a comment
- Down**
- A shopping centre
  - Hard to deal with
  - Vaccinate
  - Smallest in amount
  - To be very tall
  - Stop living
  - A mixture
  - An American pay television network
  - Well founded
  - Guide the course of
  - Set in competition with

## Solutions to TRN Crossword Puzzle No. 1771

- ACROSS:** 1. ASYLUM 4. RARE 6. CROSSING 8. YETI 9. FIGURE 12. WINNER 14. ICON 16. SCORPION 17. SIGN 18. POETRY
- DOWN:** 2. SURGE 3. LESBIAN 4. RIG 5. REFER 7. INFERNO 8. YAW 10. GLIMPSE 11. EON 13. INDRI 15. ODOUR 16. SIN



LUCKY  
WINNER

Mahendra Kumari Nath  
Sheela Shrestha  
Bal Krishna Shrestha

## ALL CORRECT ANSWER

Kumari Nirmala Giri, Khadendra Nath, Sunil Sharma Bhattarai, Smriti Shrestha, Surya Shakya, Archana Devi Shrestha

## CREATIVE CORNER



Ligya Bajimaya, Grade I, LIFE School Dhobighat, Lalitpur



Shaman Paudel, Grade V, Occidental Public School Anamnagar, Kathmandu

## TRN PUZZLE NUMBER-404

All you have to do is to fill up in the seven boxes below with the numbers in such a way that the sum will be 553 whether you go diagonally, horizontally or vertically. The numbers should be 55 to 103 between. The number should not be used twice.

	93	102	55	64	73	
92						83
100	60		71		89	91
		70		88		
67	69				98	58
75		86	95	97		66

63	72	81	34	43	52	61
71	80	40	42	51	60	62
79	39	41	50	59	68	70
38	47	49	58	67	69	78
46	48	57	66	75	77	37
54	56	65	74	76	36	45
55	64	73	82	35	44	53

## TRN PUZZLE SOLUTION-403

Prepared by: Bishwo Nath Kharel

## Western Dreams In Youths



Lizala Maharjan

According to the Economic Survey 2022/23, above 15 per cent of Nepal's population is below the absolute poverty line, which means these populations live below \$1.90 a day.

In today's world, it seems that a large number of youths are drawn towards the Western world. Western culture has influenced today's generation in many respects. They romanticise the Western world as the ideal place to sustain their lives. What actually does western society have? "Romanticism towards the Western world" generally means the idealised perception of the people towards the Western world, where the positive aspects are exaggerated more while the negative aspects are suppressed. Many young people, especially from countries like Nepal, tend to see the grass greener on the other side and are too quick to idealise the Western world.

But is seeing the West through rose-coloured glasses really a good sign for a country like Nepal?

If you ask the students about their future, most of their answers would be to fly off to the West and start a new life there. It's like their coping mechanism to fly off to the West in order to escape the reality of their present condition. According to the Economic Survey 2022/23, above 15 per cent of Nepal's population is below the absolute poverty line, which means these populations live below \$1.90 a day. So, for people like them, it is quite obvious to idealise the Western world to escape the predicament that they are struggling with.

They tend to perceive the Western world in the form of new hopes for opportunities and freedom.

There are a number of reasons why Nepali youths are scrambling abroad. Number one is their exposure to the idealised portrayal of the Western world. Today, the social media generation tends to live their "online life" more than their real life. Many youngsters are being exposed to things that are inappropriate for them. They don't know how to differentiate between right and wrong. The media has portrayed western life as the "ideal lifestyle."

It is shown that people in the West live in big mansions and lavish homes, drive expensive cars, have huge celebrations for the smallest things, wear trendy clothes, and much more. This has created a fake impression about the Western world among youths

today. They have glamorised the West as being free from problems like poverty, crime, and social inequality.

It seems that people are building castles in the air. They are in delusion, levitating in unrealistic fantasy about the Western world, which exists nowhere but only in their imagination. While busy romanticising the West, they tend to forget the hardships the people living there have to face. The West is a diverse and complex region with its own share of problems and challenges.

The media has neglected to show the harsh reality of the Western world. They have failed to paint the full picture of the Western world, where they have only portrayed the positive aspects and not the negative aspects like social divisions, racial discrimination, gun violence, economic disparities, and mental health challenges.

In order to put a full stop to this, we all need to work together to acknowledge and address this issue. This false idealisation has already done much damage to this generation, and it is in our hands to put an end to it. Introducing media literacy education at schools can be the ice-breaking step in this situation.

Students are the building blocks of the future, and teaching young minds at school about this situation will help to combat it. It can give them knowledge on how one can critically analyse the things portrayed by the media and break the idealistic stereotypes of the Western world.

We must also motivate today's generation to broaden their perspective on burning topics like these and promote other sources of information, like books, rather than the media alone.

In this regard, the government must also acknowledge this problem and help the youngsters solve it. If we all collectively work together, then we can definitely empower people by breaking the unrealistic fantasy and romanticism of people towards the Western world and building a more realistic and original perspective about it among people.

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