

Bagmati River Festival 2025 - 25th Anniversary Celebration

The 25th Bagmati River Festival (BRF) marked a historic milestone in 2025, celebrating 25 years of cultural heritage, conservation, and community engagement. Organized by the Nepal River Conservation Trust (NRCT), the festival emphasized the Bagmati River as both a spiritual lifeline and ecological treasure, reinforcing the message:

“Our Bagmati, Our Responsibility.”

1. Inauguration Ceremony

Date: June 1, 2025 (Siti Nakha)

Venue: Teku Dobhan to Kupondole, Kathmandu

The festival began on the auspicious day of Siti Nakha, a traditional occasion to clean water sources before the monsoon. The inauguration combined ancient rituals with modern conservation values, promoting the cultural, spiritual, and ecological significance of rivers.

Key Activities:

- Sacred Water Offering (Jaldan): Water from 25 rivers across Nepal was collected and offered at Teku Dobhan.
- Deep Prajwalan (Sacred Lamp Lighting): Symbolizing purity, continuity, and enlightenment.
- Cultural Performances: Traditional music and performances by local artists reinforced cultural heritage.
- Sister River Partnership: Bagmati River (Kathmandu) declared sister river of the Thames River (London) for cultural exchange and conservation collaboration.
- River Walk: A symbolic walk from Teku Dobhan to Kupondole, emphasizing citizen connection with the river.

Participants: MPs, ward representatives, local leaders, community activists, cultural groups, and the general public.

2. Cultural Celebration & Conservation Activities

Date: August 16, 2025 (Bhadra 31, 2082 – Krishna Janmashtami)

Venue: Sankhamul

Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of BRF since 2001, the program combined cultural performance, environmental conservation, and community engagement.

Participants and Programs:

- **Student Performances:** Gurukul students presented dramas on contemporary social issues, recited Sanskrit verses about Bagmati, and performed an orchestral show.
- **Celebrity Presence:** Hari Bansha Acharya and Madan Krishna Shrestha inspired the audience with their participation.
- **Environmental Activities:** Riverbank cleaning (Sarsafai), tree plantation, handwashing campaigns.
- **Cultural Programs:** Dhime Baaja performance, Bagmati Oath led by Rajiv Raj Poudyal, Bagmati Stuti and Gopi Geet Path performed by Achyut Subedi and team.
- **Photo Exhibition:** Displaying 25-year journey of BRF.
- **Rafting Celebration:** Participants, including chief guest Hon. Teju Lal Chaudhary (Sports Minister), enjoyed rafting on Bagmati River.

3. Panel Discussion: Reviving and Sustaining the Bagmati Civilization

Date: August 19, 2025 (Bhadra 3, 2082)

Venue: HPCIDBC Hall

A panel discussion organized by HPCIDBC brought together experts, policymakers, and practitioners to address ecological, social, and economic challenges of the Bagmati River.

Panelists & Insights:

- **Dr. Deep Narayan Shah:** Highlighted expansion of the red zone, pollution impacts, and disease outbreaks downstream; observed biodiversity changes; emphasized community awareness and environmental education.
- **Mr. Prakash Aryal:** Proposed upstream water treatment using government land; integrated urban planning with ecological restoration; emphasized gradual treated water flow in urban areas.
- **Mr. Arjun Dhakal:** Advocated holistic restoration linking ecology, policy, and finance; promoted PPP models and CSR contributions from private sectors; suggested rainwater harvesting and stormwater management.

Key Takeaways:

1. Community engagement is essential for river revival.
2. Integrated planning across upstream, suburban, and urban areas is critical.

3. Multi-sector and holistic approach ensures sustainability.
4. Private sector contributions via CSR & PPP complement government efforts.
5. Environmental education ensures long-term behavioral change.

4. Closing Ceremony

Date: August 23, 2025 (Bhadra 7, 2082)

Venue: Kupondole Corridor, Lalitpur

The closing ceremony celebrated the successful conclusion of BRF 2025, highlighting the Bagmati River as a symbol of cultural heritage, environmental restoration, and recreational potential.

Morning Session (7:00 AM – 10:00 AM):

- Lamp lighting (Deep Prajwalan) on riverbank.
- River corridor cleaning led by Miss Nepal 2025 contestants and community members.
- Tree plantation program.
- Rafting program with 11 rafts carrying ~100 participants.
- Panche Baja performance and traditional dances at Balkhu.

Afternoon Session (3:00 PM onwards):

- Live stage performances (rock, classical, traditional, orchestral).
- Cultural entertainment by various artists.

Special Highlights:

- Chief Guest: Hon. Indra Bahadur Baniya, Chief Minister of Bagmati Province.
- Youth involvement: Miss Nepal contestants actively participated in environmental and cultural programs.
- Strong community engagement: Local clubs, women's groups, and media actively participated.

The Closing Ceremony reinforced the festival's core message:

“Our Bagmati, Our Responsibility.”

Photos & Media:

- Inauguration ceremony



- Cultural programs and performances



- Panel discussion



- Closing ceremony

