

Comprehensive Report on Maha Shivaratri & Karnali-Saryu Conservation Initiatives: A Sacred Effort to Preserve the Holy Karnali and Khus Civilization



Nepal River Conservation Trust-NRCT

March,2025



Introduction

Maha Shivaratri 2025 marked a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to protect and promote the cultural, ecological, and religious significance of the Karnali-Saryu River. This event, which commenced in Kathmandu with the active participation of the Ministry of Tourism and Nepal Tourism Board, extended to the sacred confluence of Pilu Paduka and Deurali, Karnali. The celebrations were further reinforced by an MoU between Nepal River Conservation Trust (NRCT) and Panchsheel Development Trust (PDT), strengthening Nepal-India collaboration in river conservation efforts.

The Karnali Dialogue & Discussion was successfully organized by the Nepal River Conservation Trust (NRCT) on February 13–14, 2025, at the Nepal Tourism Board, Kathmandu. This two-day event served as a platform to bring together policymakers, environmental experts, researchers, legal professionals, hydropower stakeholders, tourism entrepreneurs, and media representatives to discuss the challenges and opportunities related to Karnali River's sustainable management and development.

The Karnali River, Nepal's longest and last free-flowing river, holds immense ecological, cultural, economic, and scientific significance. However, its future faces increasing challenges due to infrastructure development, climate change, hydropower expansion, and governance complexities. This event aimed to foster dialogue on policy, legal frameworks, hydropower management, climate resilience, and tourism potential to ensure a balanced and sustainable future for Karnali.

The program featured keynote speeches, expert panel discussions, a film screening, a photo exhibition, and a book display to facilitate knowledge exchange and inspire collaborative efforts toward responsible river management.

This report comprehensively documents the activities conducted, key outcomes, community engagement, and future plans, including our upcoming visit to Saryu River during Ram Navami.

Objectives of the Event

- To foster dialogue on sustainable river management and development.
- To explore the role of tourism, energy, and policy in river governance.
- To showcase research, photography, and scientific explorations related to the Karnali River.
- To strengthen collaboration between policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders.

Kathmandu Event: Inauguration & Awareness Campaign

Key Highlights:

Photo Exhibition

The Nepal River Conservation Trust (NRCT), in collaboration with the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), successfully organized the 'Photo Nepal' series (figure:1), featuring a special photo exhibition on the Karnali River. The event was inaugurated (figure:2) by the Minister for Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation, Badri Pandey, who marked the occasion by taking a selfie with the participants (figure:3).

Originally initiated in 2016 by NTB, the 'Photo Nepal' series had been on hold for some time. However, this year, NRCT took the initiative to revive it, showcasing breathtaking photographs that captured the essence of the Karnali River. The exhibition ran for three days at the Nepal Tourism Board, from 10 AM to 5 PM, attracting a large number of visitors.



Featured breathtaking images of the Karnali River by Navin Baral, captured during a 45-day, 1,080-kilometer journey, showcasing the river's natural, cultural, and environmental significance.

❖ *Official inauguration by the Honorable Minister of Tourism.*

During the event in Kathmandu, Minister Pandey expressed concerns over powerful nations exploiting nature and disrupting the Earth's balance. He stated that due to the overuse of natural resources, the equilibrium of the five elements—earth, water, fire, air, and space—has been disturbed.





"Powerful nations have exploited nature in various ways, leading to disruptions in the balance of the Earth's essential elements," he remarked.

Minister Pandey also emphasized the immense potential of the Karnali River. "Karnali River holds significant possibilities. Its tributaries alone can generate more than 7,000 MW of electricity. Why should we encroach upon, exploit, or fragment the main river? This discussion has now begun," he stated.

He further stressed the importance of continuing this conversation with seriousness, as global discussions on river conservation and environmental balance are already underway.



❖ *Commitment from the Ministry of Tourism to integrate river conservation in eco-tourism strategies.*



The Ministry of Tourism committed to integrating river conservation into its eco-tourism strategies, recognizing the vital role of sustainable water resources in promoting responsible tourism.

Sister River Documentary Screening

Sister River, a documentary featuring the **Karnali and Hudson Rivers**, directed by **Oscar-winning film editor Josh Pearson**, was screened. The documentary included insights from **Tracy Brown (President, Hudson Riverkeeper)** and **Megh Ale (President, NRCT)**, highlighting the shared conservation challenges and opportunities between the two rivers.



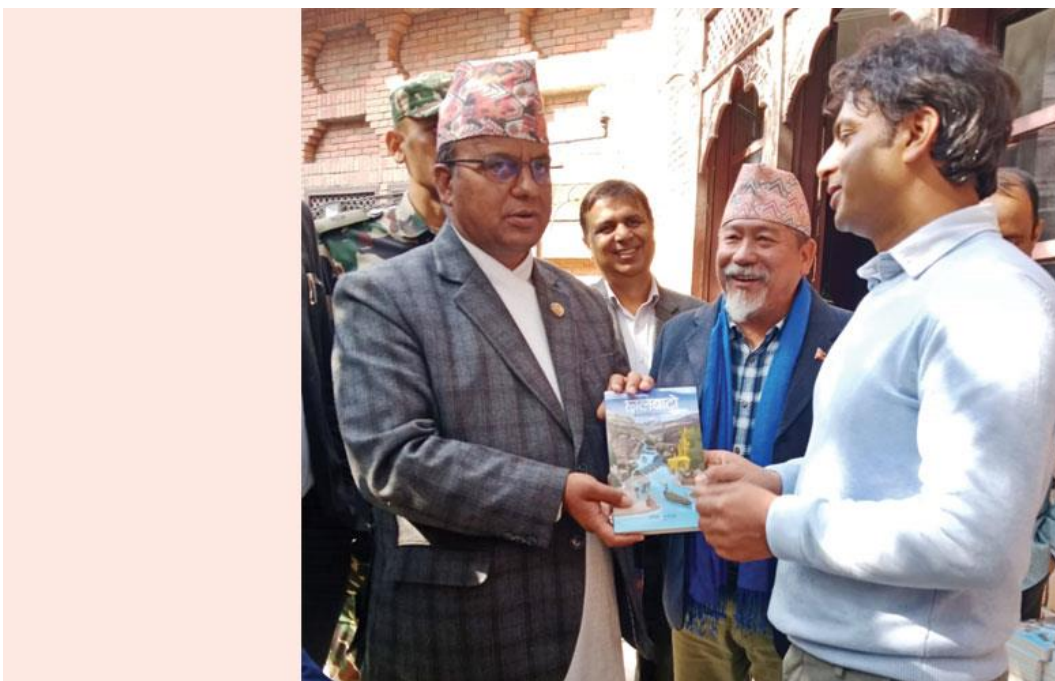
Book Showcase

‘Chhal Bato’, written by Ramesh Bhusal, was introduced at the event, with over 25 copies sold, including purchases by Minister Badri Pandey and other dignitaries.

which explores the **journey, significance, and challenges of the Karnali River**. It captures the **ecological, cultural, and social aspects** of Nepal’s longest and most pristine river. Through **in-depth research, compelling narratives, and stunning visuals**, the book highlights the **threats posed by unsustainable development, dam projects, and climate change** on Karnali and the communities that depend on it.

The book serves as an **advocacy tool for river conservation**, promoting awareness about **sustainable water management, biodiversity protection, and eco-tourism opportunities** along the Karnali River. During various events, including **the Karnali River conservation campaign**, *Chhal Bato* has gained significant attention, with **many copies sold to conservationists, policymakers, and local stakeholders**.

It has been instrumental in **inspiring discussions and initiatives for the protection of free-flowing rivers in Nepal**, reinforcing the message that Karnali is not just a river but a **lifeline for culture, nature, and livelihoods**.



February 14th Sister River Documentary Screening

The screening took place at the Nepal Tourism Board in Kathmandu a venue that is easily accessible. The audience comprised former minister of water resources of Nepal representatives from Government of Nepal, Researcher Environmental Lawer, Historian and cultural expert local community members, policymakers, media personnel, youth organizations, and activists.

INVITATION AS A GUEST
FOR DISCUSSION ON
"CHALLENGES IN KARNALI CONSERVATION, MANAGEMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT"
On behalf of the Nepal River Conservation Trust, we are delighted to invite you to participate as a guest in our upcoming discussion on
"The Challenges of Karnali Conservation, Management, and Development."
This discussion is part of a two-day event taking place on **February 13-14, 2025**, at the **Nepal Tourism Board**. We would be honored to have you as a guest to share your expertise and insights on conservation and sustainable development.
Date: February 14, 2025 | Venue: Nepal Tourism Board, Kathmandu | Time: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Program Highlights:
→1:00 PM - Registration & Welcome Tea
→1:30 PM - Opening Ceremony & Film Screening Sister River
- A documentary featuring the Karnali and Hudson Rivers, directed by Oscar Award winning film editor Josh Pearson, with insights from Tracy Brown (President, Hudson Riverkeeper) and Megh Ale (President, NRCT).
→Introduced by the Chief Guest
- Dr. Narayan Prasad Regmi : Director General, Department of Tourism
→Karnali River Photo Exhibition
- Showcasing the natural beauty and significance of the Karnali River.
→Book Display : Chhal Bato by Ramesh Bhusal
- Documenting the first scientific expedition of the Karnali River from Kailash to the Ganga.
→2:00 PM - Panel Discussion
Experts in environmental law, energy, development, tourism, and governance will engage in a meaningful dialogue


Dr. Narayan Prasad Regmi
Director General, Department of Tourism


Dipak Gyawali
Former Minister of Water Resources of Nepal


Dr. Santosh Nepal
Water Resources and Climate Change


Dr. Ramesh Dhungel
Historian and Cultural Expert


Prem Kaidi
Advocate


Padam Shrestha
Senior Advocate, Environment Lawyer


Ganesh Karki
President, IPAN


Dr. Nil Kamal Koju
Research Fellow,
Nepal Academy of Science and Technology

→4:00 PM - Closing & High Tea

Supported By






Presence of key stakeholders from the tourism sector, conservation organizations, and the media.

Panel discussions

In order to ensure representative participation and amplify the voice for Karnali, formal invitations were extended through **official emails, formal letters, and various digital platforms** (including social media, organizational websites, and professional networks). These invitations were sent to **government authorities, policymakers, environmental experts, hydropower representatives, tourism stakeholders, legal professionals, and media organizations**, encouraging active engagement in the *Karnali Dialogue & Discussion* held on February 13–14, 2025. This multi-channel approach facilitated wider outreach, fostering meaningful discussions on the sustainable management and development of the Karnali River.



focusing on the impact of climate change, hydropower development, and the need for sustainable tourism models around Karnali.

*These experts and stakeholders played a crucial role in discussions surrounding **Karnali's management, sustainable tourism, legal frameworks, hydropower, and climate resilience.***

Expert Panel & Moderation:

- Dr. Ramesh Dhungel – Moderator
- Dr. Prem Kaidi – Advocate
- Dr. Neel Kamal Koju – Research Fellow, Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST)
- Dr. Narayan Prasad Regmi – Director General, Department of Tourism
- Dr. Santosh Nepal – Water Resource & Climate Change Expert
- Mr. Ganesh Karki – President, Independent Power Producers' Association, Nepal (IPPAN)
- Padam Bahadur Shrestha (Supreme Court Senior Advocate & Environmental Lawyer)
- Dipak Gyawali (Former Minister & Water Policy Expert)

Media coverage highlighting the historical and ecological aspects of the river

Photo Exhibition on Karnali River held



The Rising Nepal

Fri, 14 February 2025

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By A Staff Reporter, Kathmandu, Feb. 14: Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Badri Pandey emphasised the need to take river conservation seriously. He made this statement while speaking at the exhibition titled Karnali River: Photos from Three Countries by Nabin Baral, organised as part of the relaunch of Hashtag Photo Nepal, which originally started in 2016, and the screening of the film Sister River.

Minister Pandey said that discussions on conserving the Karnali River and preventing the exploitation of rivers should be taken seriously.

He expressed concerns that establishing crusher industries along riverbanks and constructing hydropower projects have been affecting the natural form of rivers.

He stressed that infrastructure and physical structures should be developed in a way that does not harm the natural beauty of rivers.

Highlighting the impact of unbalanced natural exploitation by developed nations, he further added that climate change is intensifying.

<https://risingnepaldaily.com/news/57102>

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NA's second meeting postponed by issuing notice

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	+0.00% +88.00	+7.80% +81.00	-1.20% -1.80	-0.75% -1.00	-2.88% -10.40	+0.00%

यसअघि सन् २०१६ देखि बोरिले बस्ती भुङ्काला गर्दै आएको थियो । बीधमा रोलिएको थियो । अहिले बोरिले 'क्यापली नदी' का तस्वीरहरू प्रदर्शनीमा राखेको छ ।



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Four advertisements for Indian banks are displayed in a row. From left to right: 1. Janhitima Bank advertisement with a red background and white text. 2. Global IME Bank advertisement with a blue background and white text. 3. A small advertisement for 'ALANKAR' with a green background. 4. A small advertisement for 'NARS' with a white background.

યસવંતી સન્ ૨૦૧૬ દરિયે બોરીને યતો મુંઝાણ નઈ આપ્યો થિયો । લેખન્ય તોરિયાલો થિયો । અરિયે બોરીને
‘કર્ગાલી નઈ’ વડ તસ્યોત્તર પ્રદર્શન્યા રાજ્યો છ ।

પ્રદર્શની લીન દિનસત્ય બોર્યા થયો છ । રિહાન ૨૦ દરિય ૬૧સમ તસ્યો પ્રદર્શની દુને બોરીને આપ્યો છ ।
૪૫ દિનસ ૮ હજાર ૮૦ ચોરિયોર થાથા નઈ રાજિયોલ તસ્યો પ્રદર્શન્યા તરિયોલ છન ।



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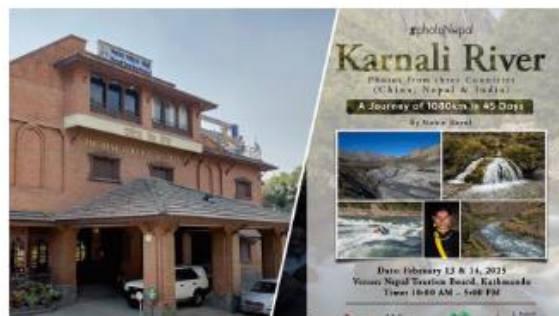
पर्यटन बोर्डले 'फोटो नेपाल प्रदर्शनी' पुनः थाल्ने, कर्णाली नदी प्रदर्शनीमा

यो शृङ्खला विशेष बनाउँदै नवीन बरालका 'कर्णाली नदी' नामक तस्वीर प्रदर्शनीमा राखिने भएको छ । १२२ फागुनमा यस्ता तस्वीर पर्यटन बोर्डमा अवलोकन गर्न सकिने छ ।



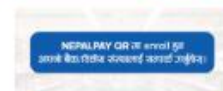
अनलाइनखबर २०७५ माघ ३० गते १३:५५

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३० माघ, काठमाडौं । नेपाल पर्यटन बोर्डले 'फोटो नेपाल प्रदर्शनी' शृङ्खला पुनः सुरु गर्ने भएको छ । सन् २०१६ मा यस्तो शृङ्खला सुरु गरिएको थियो ।

जसमा नेपालको प्राकृतिक र सांस्कृतिक सम्पदालाई फोटोग्राफी मार्फत उजागर गर्ने गरिन्छ । यो शृङ्खला विशेष बनाउँदै नवीन बरालका 'कर्णाली नदी' नामक तस्वीर प्रदर्शनीमा राखिने भएको छ । १२२ फागुनमा यस्ता तस्वीर पर्यटन बोर्डमा अवलोकन गर्न सकिने छ ।



https://www.onlinekhabar.com/2025/02/1622903/tourism-board-to-resume-photo-nepal-exhibition-karnali-river-at-the-exhibition?fbclid=IwY2xjawIaHNNleHRuA2FlbQlXMQABHRcCFckRfbBq07Su1ZYkss49hJPH-8uWYZYis1mz7fZtwqbG8jIbN9X8cw_aem_UZwBpBVCA8uVt9vDhV8GBw&sfnsn=wa



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शक्तिशाली राष्ट्रहरूले पृथ्वीको सन्तुलन बिगारे : पर्यटनमन्त्री पाण्डे



अनलाइनखबर ३०.०४.२०२५ १२:२५

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बिहीबार काठमाडौंमा आयोजित कार्यक्रममा बोल्दै मन्त्री पाण्डेले प्रकृतिको दोहन गरेर शक्ति राष्ट्रहरूले पृथ्वीको सन्तुलन बिगारेको आरोप लगाएका हुन् ।

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Global IME Bank

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'शक्तिशाली राष्ट्रहरूले प्रकृतिको विभिन्न किसिमले दोहन गरेर त्यसबाट पृथ्वीको सन्तुलन नै पृथ्वीको जल, तेज, वायु, आकाशको जुन पञ्चतत्वको सन्तुलन छ त्यो सन्तुलनमै समस्याहरू खाँडा भएको छ ।'

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२१:२६:५०

पुनिसौते

English

गृहपृष्ठ	प्रिन्सिपल स्टोरी	राजनीति	बजार अर्थतन्त्र	विचार	नेपाली ब्राउट	समाज	कथा	बच्चा	खेल/खुड	गवैषण	कमर स्टोरी	Search
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कृषि	प्रादेशीय	अन्य	एडुकेसन									



सतर्क हो, सुरक्षित रहो ।
डिजिटल ठगीबाट बचौ र अफलाई पनि बचाओ ।



'फोटो नेपाल' प्रदर्शनी फेरि नियमित गर्दै पर्यटन बोर्ड



सेतोपाठी संवाददाता
काठमाडौं, पौ ८

22



Global IME Bank
नेपाल अन्तराष्ट्रिय बैंक लि.

राजस्व

आवेदन शुल्क

विल/माह-सुल

टर्स्टर

A Journey of 1080km In 45 Days

By Nabin Baral



Date: February 13 & 14, 2025

Venue: Nepal Tourism Board, Kathmandu

Time: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM



नेपाल पर्यटन बोर्डले 'फोटो नेपाल' प्रदर्शनी श्रृंखला पुनः सुरु गर्ने भएको छ।

प्राकृतिक र सांस्कृतिक सम्पदालाई फोटोग्राफीमार्फत देखाउने उद्देश्यका साथ यो श्रृंखला सन् २०१६ बाट सुरु



<https://www.setopati.com/kinmel/tourism/350897>

- <https://www.ratopati.com/story/298246>
- https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=618693970918088&id=100083324712140&rdid=6hkDhlMk7FU3HS0Z#
- <https://www.prasashan.com/2025/02/12/638544/>
- <https://www.prasashan.com/2025/02/12/638544/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=928438746170505&id=100070131650035&set=a.515531044127946>
- <https://himalpress.com/2025/02/202047/>
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केपीएमजी ओली

नेवारी कांग्रेस

पुष्पकमल दाहाल 'प्रचण्ड'

नेकपा एमसेले

प्रहरी

यौरभट्टा देउवा

भारत

तत्कालीन

चीन

BHAT-BHATANI

2PM

KEOREN RAMEN

SO HOT SO DELICIOUS

NIMB

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उद्यमशील कर्जा

विशेषतः

अवसर कमाउने प्र

नदी संरक्षणमा सबैले सहकार्य गरौं: पर्यटनमन्त्री पाण्डे

रिपोर्टर्स नेपाल

39

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काठमाडौं, १ फागुन । संस्कृति, पर्यटन तथा नागरिक उड्डयनमन्त्री बन्दी पाण्डेले नदी संरक्षणमा सबैको सहकार्य, समयमै आवश्यक पर्ने भन्दै यो विषयलाई सबैले गम्भीरताका साथ लिनुपर्ने बताएका छन् ।

12-12

CLASSIC

नेपाल पर्यटन बोर्डले सुरु गरेको 'फोटो नेपाल प्रदर्शनी' अन्तर्गत नवीन बरालको 'कर्णाली नदी: तीन देशका तस्बिरहरू' मा तस्बिर लिएर उद्घाटन गर्दै उनले नदीको प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्य नबिग्रिने गरी पूर्वाधार तथा भौतिक संरचना बनाउनुपर्नेमा जोड दिए ।

"कर्णाली नदीसहित मुलुकमा रहेका अन्य महत्वपूर्ण नदीहरूको संरक्षण गर्ने, अवैध दोहन नगर्ने विषयमा गरिएका छलफललाई गम्भीरताका साथ लिनुपर्छ", पर्यटनमन्त्री पाण्डेले भने, "नदीको किनारमा क्रसर उखोग खोल्ने, हाइड्रोपावर निर्माण गर्नेलगायत कार्यले नदीको प्राकृतिक स्वरूपमा अप्ठेरो आइसकेको छ । मानवका रक्त नली जस्तै नदीहरूको सम्बन्ध पनि भूगर्भसम्म रहने गर्छ ।"

उनले विकास निर्माणका क्रममा नदीको प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्य नबिग्रने गरी द्विगो रूपमा पूर्वाधार तथा भौतिक संरचना बनाउनुपर्नेमा जोड दिए । मन्त्री पाण्डेले विकसित राष्ट्रहरूबाट अस्तुतिल रूपमा भएको प्राकृतिक दोहनका कारण जलवायु परिवर्तनको असर बढ्दै गएको बताउँदै अझपूर्ण आधार िबिरसहित अन्य हिमालहरूमा हिउँ नभएकोव्रति चिन्त व्यक्त गरे । मन्त्री पाण्डेले हिमालको हिउँ पत्तेर हिमाल, पहाड र समुद्री तट हुदै राम्रर विश्रमा असर परिरहेको बताए ।

बोर्डका प्रमुख कार्यकारी अधिकृत दीपकराज जोशीले फोटोशाहीका माध्यमबाट नेपालको पर्यटन प्रवर्द्धन गर्न 'फोटो नेपाल' प्रभावकारी मञ्चका रूपमा रहेको बताए । जुई दिने प्रदर्शनीमा नवीन बरालद्वारा प्रस्तुत 'कर्णाली नदी: तीन देश (चीन, नेपाल र भारत) का तस्बिरहरू' बाट प्रदर्शन गरिएका छन् ।

प्रदर्शनीमा राखिएका तस्बिर ४५ दिनमा एक हजार ८० किलोमिटर ताम्रो साहसिक पात्रमार्फत कर्णाली नदीको अन्तर्गत सौन्दर्यलाई केट गरिएको बोर्डले जनाएको छ । रासस/फाइल फोटो

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हरियाली नेपाल

Key Outcomes & Recommendations

- Need for stronger policies to balance development and environmental protection.
- Encouragement of community-based river management approaches.
- Promotion of sustainable tourism in the Karnali region.
- Call for scientific research and regular monitoring of the river ecosystem.
- Strengthening collaboration between government, NGOs, and local stakeholders

Conclusion

The Karnali Dialogue & Discussion successfully engaged key stakeholders and opened doors for collaborative efforts toward the sustainable management and development of the Karnali River. The discussions and recommendations from this event will serve as a foundation for future initiatives and policy interventions.

Maha Shivaratri Celebration at Karnali Confluence

Journey to Shivaratri in Karnali

The Maha Shivaratri conservation initiative began in Kathmandu with a high-profile event featuring a photo exhibition and panel discussion at the Nepal Tourism Board Hall. The exhibition showcased the rich biodiversity of the Karnali River and the threats it faces due to unregulated hydropower development. Panelists, including environmentalists, government officials, and activists, deliberated on sustainable conservation measures and policy recommendations for preserving Nepal's last free-flowing river.

On the auspicious occasion of **Maha Shivratri** and in alignment with the **Maha Kumbh Mela**, a historic **Karnali/Saryu River Worship and Ritual Ceremony** was conducted on **February 26, 2025**, on the sacred banks of Karnali at **Pilu, Paduka, and Deurali Karnali Confluence**. This event marked the **first-ever** official celebration of its kind, bringing together religious leaders, social activists, journalists, and local communities to honor the river's spiritual and ecological significance.

On February 26, 2025, the sacred confluence of Pilu Paduka and Deurali Karnali became the site of an extraordinary religious and cultural gathering. For the first time in history, a grand ritual worship of Karnali/Saryu River was conducted with the participation of Dharma Gurus, journalists, and social activists from Nepal and India.

The event witnessed the presence of **esteemed Dharma Gurus**, along with **journalists and social activists from Ayodhya and the Saryu River, India**. Additionally, **local government officials, social leaders, and people from all walks of life** participated in the rituals, demonstrating a shared commitment to preserving the sacred river and its surrounding ecosystem.

The event served as a cultural and spiritual bridge between Nepal and India, highlighting the **historical and religious significance of the Karnali/Saryu River** in uniting civilizations from the **Kailash, Khas, and Ganga regions**.

The Shivaratri event began with our arrival in Nepalgunj, where we welcomed the Indian delegation before proceeding toward Bajura, Kolti, and Triveni the following day from Surkhet.

Our team received a warm welcome at both Hotel Siddhartha in Nepalgunj and Hotel Shuva in Surkhet, where each participant was honored with a Rudraksha garland, a symbol of respect and spirituality.

During our journey, we encountered the majestic Karnali River while traveling along the Karnali Highway from Surkhet. We then crossed the iconic Karnali Bridge at Khulalu, entering the Bajura-Karnali Corridor, marking a significant transition into the heart of Karnali's landscape.

Objectives of the Event

1. Establishing a cultural and religious linkage between Kailash-Karnali and Saryu-Ganga.
2. Promoting community-based conservation efforts.
3. Strengthening Nepal-India collaboration in river conservation.
4. Documenting traditional river conservation practices and promoting their revival.

Shivaratri in Karnali: A Journey of Conservation and Spirituality

Our Shivaratri event was not only a religious celebration but also a commitment to Karnali River conservation, engaging local governments and communities along the way.

Key Activities and Highlights:

Worship & Workshop at Rakam Karnali

We conducted a special puja and workshop at the Shiva Mandir on the riverside of Rakam Karnali, focusing on the spiritual and environmental significance of the Karnali River.

This event aimed to raise awareness about conserving the river while integrating cultural traditions into conservation efforts.



Meeting with Local Leaders at Aathbis Municipality



A formal discussion was held with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and ward representatives of Aathbis Municipality (Rakam Karnali) to encourage local government participation in Karnali conservation efforts.

Visit to Kolti, Bajura

We traveled to Kolti, Bajura, where we were warmly welcomed by the Mayor of Budhinanda Municipality.

The meeting emphasized collaborative conservation strategies and the importance of community involvement in protecting the Karnali River.



Inauguration of Shiva Mandir at Himalai Rural Municipality

On the banks of the Karnali River, we installed the statue of Lord Shiva and officially inaugurated a new Shiva Mandir, reinforcing the connection between spirituality and river conservation.



Sacred Pilgrimage to Pilu Paduka Deura Triveni Dham



We then proceeded to Pilu Paduka Deura Triveni Dham, where we engaged in a traditional puja before crossing the suspension bridge over the Karnali River.

पिलुपादुका देउरा धार्मिक क्षेत्रको विकास र प्रवर्द्धनका लागि यस त्रिवेणी धामबाट बग्ने कैलाश कर्णाली नदी भारतको भूमीमा गंगा, घाँघरा र अयोध्याको राम मन्दिर अगाडी सरयूको नामबाट वर्षेनि करोडौंको उपस्थितिमा पूजा अर्चना गरिन्छ। पिलुपादुका देउरा धाम र अयोध्याको धार्मिक सम्बन्ध स्थापना गर्ने उद्देश्यले आयोजित विशेष पूजामा महा शिवरात्रीको अवसरमा भारतको अयोध्या तथा नेपालबाट पाल्नु हुने धर्म गुरु र विज्ञ टोलीलाई

हार्दिक स्वागतम्

स्वामीकार्तिक खापर गा.पा. (नक्सरापथी/मध्याह्निक)
स्वामीकार्तिक खापर गा.पा. (नक्सरापथी/मध्याह्निक)
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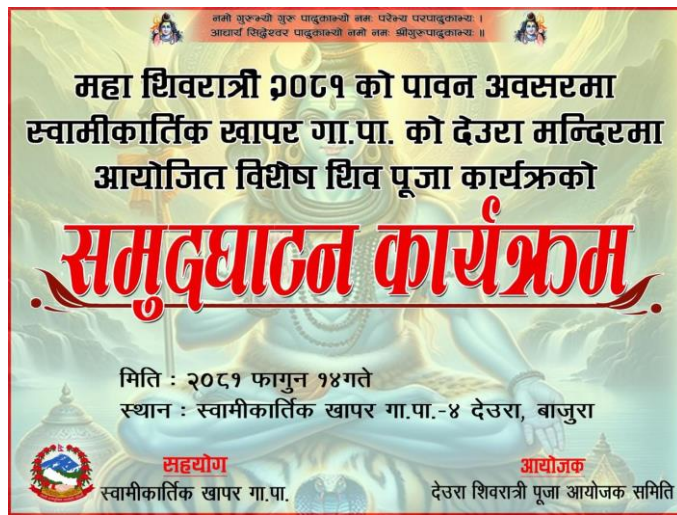
मिति : २०८१ फागुन १४ गते
स्थान : स्वामीकार्तिक खापर गा.पा.-४ देउरा, बाजुरा

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Workshop and Inauguration at Swamikartik Khapar Rural Municipality- (Community-led River worship and conservation pledge)

Before the event, we received a warm welcome from students of the Ved Vidya Pitha, who are dedicated to preserving **ancient Vedic knowledge and traditions**. Their participation added a **spiritual and cultural depth** to the event





Another puja and conservation workshop was held at a Shiva Temple on the banks of the Karnali River.



Sacred bathing and pilgrimage sites along its banks. A vital part of ancient trade and spiritual routes connecting Nepal and India.

Discussions on the religious and environmental significance of the Karnali-Saryu River.

We also inaugurated a new Shiva Mandir at this sacred site, further uniting local communities in river conservation and religious harmony.



Religious & Cultural Importance:

The river is linked to Hindu mythology, particularly to Lord Shiva and Lord Ram.



Threats & Conservation Challenges

Despite its immense significance, the Karnali-Saryu River faces severe threats, including:



Hydropower Development:

- *Four major dams approved on the main stem of Karnali, jeopardizing its free flow.*
 - *Potential risks of large-scale displacement and ecological disruption.*

Climate Change & Disaster Risks:

- *Increased occurrences of flash floods and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs).*
- *Precedents from disasters like the 2023 Teesta River flood and the 2008 Koshi flood.*

Pollution & Habitat Destruction:

- *Industrial and domestic waste contaminating river water.*
- *Destruction of natural habitats due to encroachment and deforestation.*

MoU Signing between NRCT and Panchasil Development Trust

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Nepal River Conservation Trust (NRCT) and Panchsheel Development Trust (PDT) marked a significant step towards transboundary river conservation. The key aspects of the agreement include:



Joint conservation campaigns across Nepal and India.

Scientific research on biodiversity and ecological restoration.

Community empowerment through sustainable development projects.

Advocacy for policy interventions to protect the Karnali-Saryu ecosystem.



To strengthen conservation efforts, NRCT signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Panchasil Development Trust, establishing a formal commitment to Karnali River protection and sustainable development.

Next Steps: Ram Navami Visit to Saryu River

Following the success of the Maha Shivaratri event, NRCT plans to conduct a similar event on Ram Navami (April 6, 2025) at the Saryu River. This visit will:

- Continue advocacy for river conservation.
- Strengthen cross-border collaboration.
- Engage local religious and community leaders in awareness programs.

Documentation & Media Coverage

Throughout the events, extensive documentation was carried out, including:

- Photographic evidence of community participation.
- Video footage capturing rituals, discussions, and commitments.
- Interviews with local leaders and stakeholders.

A compiled video report is attached along with this report, providing visual insights into the impact of the initiatives.

river

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-C3sskGVac>

<https://badimalikakhabar.com/2025/02/14/196492/>
<https://nawalpurtoday.com/65998/>
<https://budhinandakhabar.com/news/KiKg7h-2024-01-03-065103>

Conclusion & Recommendations

Conclusion

The **Shivaratri in Karnali** event successfully combined **spiritual devotion with environmental advocacy**, engaging **four municipalities** actively in **river conservation efforts**. Through **worship, discussions, and partnerships**, the event highlighted the **urgent need for local and governmental collaboration** in protecting the **lifeline of western Nepal—Karnali River**.

The Maha Shivaratri celebration and associated events marked the beginning of a new era in river conservation advocacy. Moving forward, we recommend:

1. **Policy Advocacy:** Urging both Nepal and India to recognize the Karnali-Saryu as a protected river system.
2. **Community-Based Conservation:** Empowering local communities with sustainable livelihood opportunities.
3. **Sustainable Tourism Development:** Promoting eco-tourism along the Karnali-Saryu corridor.
4. **Scientific Research & Monitoring:** Conducting in-depth studies on the ecological and hydrological dynamics of the river.

The NRCT remains committed to leading these efforts and looks forward to continued collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Nepal Tourism Board to ensure the long-term protection of this sacred and ecologically vital river system.

Acknowledgments

NRCT extends its gratitude to all speakers, panelists, government officials, media representatives, and participants who contributed to the event's success. Special thanks to **the Nepal Tourism Board and all partner organizations** for their valuable support.

 **For further inquiries or access to event materials, contact:**

 **Email:** nepalrivers@gmail.com

 **Website:** www.nrct.org.np

 **Phone:** 9851031431 / 9849907352

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MoU)

Between

Nepal River Conservation Trust (NRCT) & Panchsheel Development Trust (PDT)

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is made between.

Nepal River Conservation Trust (NRCT) – An organization dedicated to river conservation in Nepal, actively we are campaigning for the protection of Karnali, the most pristine and last free-flowing river of Nepal.

Panchsheel Development Trust (PDT) – An organization committed to the conservation and well-being of the Saryu River (also known as the Ghaghra River in India).

Background and present status of the Karnali/Saryu River:

3. Kailash Karnali Karma...!

Rivers are the lifelines of the Earth and the source of human civilization. Life is impossible without rivers, and the Earth itself cannot survive without them.

The Karnali River connects the Tibetan Plateau, the Himalayas, the Mahabharat Range, the Chure Range, and the Terai in Nepal, before flowing into the Gangetic plains of India. The Karnali Corridor is extremely rich in biodiversity, providing a habitat for valuable plants, rare wildlife, birds, and numerous aquatic species. Even WWF has classified it as a High Conservation Value River. Originating from Holy Mount Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva, the Karnali is one of the world's rarest and most sacred rivers.

It is the only river on earth that connects three great civilizations: the Kailash Civilization Tibet/China, the Khas Civilization of Nepal, and the Ganga Civilization of India. It is known as Mapchakhamba in Tibet, Humla Karnali or Karnali in Nepal, Ghaghara in India, and Sarayu when it reaches the Lord Ram Temple in Ayodhya, before merging back into the Ganges. One can only imagine how many thousands of times Lord Rama must have bathed in this sacred river!

The most Pristine and Last free flowing River Under Threat:

Karnali/Saryu - the most Pristine and Last Free Flowing River of Nepal, 507 kilometers of the Karnali remain pristine and free-flowing in Nepal.

We are in the era of devastating Global Warming and Climate Crisis, there has not been any big earthquake over 600 years in this western region of Nepal. If we block the main stem of Karnali/Saryu with many big dams, if big natural disasters occur with 8+ rector earthquakes with big cloud burst due to climate crisis those big dams will not be able to hold and damage will be irreparable in lowland of Nepal and Ayodhya. We have witnessed Oct. 4, 2023, Tista River disaster in Sikkim, in 2013 we have witnessed Kedarnath and Mahakali disaster, the Koshi Disaster in Sept 2008, Barrage has become sorrow of Bihar almost every year. We all must keep in mind before we destroy our Karnali/Saryu River ecosystem. The government of both countries and policymakers must do sufficient studies first before the destruction of root of our civilization.

Instead, the government has approved four big dams hydropower projects on the river's main stem, totaling nearly 3,000 megawatts, along with 7,000 MW on its tributaries. Shouldn't we preserve the main stem as a free-flowing passage as a precaution for any future disasters and build on tributaries first?

While we support sustainable energy development, we must ask:

- If electricity can be generated from other rivers and tributaries, why destroy a river with immense religious, cultural, and ecological value?



Shumlam



Shurelo

- Nepal has over 6,000 rivers and streams suitable for energy, production why not utilize them instead? We have to potential of over 100 thousand Megawatts of Hydro Energy.

- With around 320 sunrise days a year, Nepal has vast potential for solar and wind energy. Why not prioritize these alternatives? India will have still enough energy to import from Nepal.

It took over 500 years to rebuild the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. Likewise, if the Karnali/Saryu River is disrupted in the name of development and economic gain, it will take more than thousand years to restore it. Can human life truly survive if our civilization, religion, culture, traditions, and nature are destroyed?

Destroying the Karnali/Saryu River is not progress—it is an irreversible loss.

Additionally, the Girjapur Barrage on the Ghaghara River must be reassessed to ensure it is more environmentally friendly and allows greater water flow into the Saryu River in Ayodhya.

Purpose

Recognizing the shared cultural, ecological, and historical significance of the Karnali/Saryu River, both organizations agree to collaborate on initiatives aimed at preserving its pristine condition, protecting its biodiversity, and promoting sustainable community development.

Areas of Collaboration

1. River Conservation & Cleanup Campaigns

- Both organizations will work in their respective countries to ensure the cleanliness, conservation, and protection of the Karnali/Saryu River through cleanup drives, pollution control measures, and awareness programs.

2. Community Empowerment & Development

- Joint efforts will be made to support local communities residing along the river by enhancing their livelihoods, health, education, and cultural heritage preservation.

3. Environmental Research & Awareness

- Both organizations will collaborate on scientific research, reports, and awareness campaigns to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable river management.

4. Conservation & Protection of Heritage Sites

- Efforts will be undertaken to identify, document, and preserve cultural and historical heritage sites along the river, ensuring their protection and sustainable cultural practices.

5. Strengthening Nepal-India Relations

- Both organizations will work towards fostering stronger Nepal-India ties by sharing knowledge, technologies, and conservation strategies for the mutual benefit of both nations.

Commitment

This MoU serves as a formal commitment by both organizations to work together on the agreed-upon initiatives.



[Handwritten signatures and stamps]

There are two circular stamps. The one on the left is the NESC stamp. The one on the right is partially visible and contains the text 'RIVER CONSERVATION' and 'Nepal'. There are three handwritten signatures in blue ink over the stamps and the page number.

Both parties, represented by their authorized signatories, hereby agree to implement the terms of this understanding in the best interests of Karnali/Saryu River conservation and the communities that depend on it.

Signed on: 1st March 2025 at Olive Eco village Hotel, Kolti, Bajura, Karnali River bank

For Civil service concern forum

For Nepal River Conservation Trust (NRCT)

For Panchsheel Development Trust (PDT)

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Designation: _____

Designation: _____

For consultant:

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Designation: _____



